

Temple Israel of Highlands County
1305 Temple Israel Drive
Sebring, Florida 33870
863-382-7744 *January 2025 / 5785*



Temple Israel's Web Page www.templeisraelofhcfcl.org

Temple Israel is a Reform Temple that promotes the enduring and fundamental principles of Judaism.

Through prayer, study and friendship we strive to enrich our lives and insure Jewish continuity in Highlands County.



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voiceofgladness@aol.com

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Oy Vey! It's 2025!!!

We Jews utter the Yiddish words “Oy vey” so many times, I wondered what the history was of us using those words as a grand expression of our emotions?

Oy vey! Oy vey is mir! Oy gevalt! Or quite simply: Oy! – is an iconic Jewish expression that conveys the weariness of a people overly familiar with hardship and oppression, as well as the resilience of a people that finds hope and even sometimes humor in catastrophe. It's both heavy and light. It's tragic and funny. It's so much better with a thick Yiddish accent. But where did it come from?

The word “oy” goes back thousands of years, all the way to the Hebrew Bible. In that classical biblical mode, there is nothing funny about it – “oy” is simply an expression of anguish, and may well be etymologically related to that English word “woe.” Of all the biblical authors, the prophet Jeremiah uses it the most, a total of eight times.

Today we think of “oy” as a Jewish exclamation, but in the Bible, it is used by all peoples. Another sworn Israelite enemy the Philistines, have this to say when they realize that the Ark of the Covenant is back on the battlefield, protecting the armies of Israel:

“Oy to us! Nothing like this has ever happened before.” (1 Samuel 4:7)

From Proverbs 23:29: “Who cries “oy!” and who “avoy!”? Here, “oy” and “avoy” sound similar and clearly mean the same thing.

Other variations of “oy” appear in Aramaic, the language closely related to Hebrew that was the common language of Jews for many centuries in antiquity (and it also the language of the Talmud).



The Talmud's Aramaic version of "oy" is the word "vay" – which may well give us the "vey" in "oy vey."

Although "oy" seems to have been a nearly universal expression of lament, today the expression "oy vey" comes to us in English through Yiddish, where it feels very much a part of the Jewish character of that language. Merriam Webster dictionary traces "vey" not to the Aramaic "vay" but to the Middle German "vey" – which also means "woe."

Yiddish also gives us all the variations of this lament, most notably *oy vey iz mir* ("woe to me!") and *oy gevalt* ("woe! violence!") This might sound disturbing, but it is usually the one used in the most comical way.

So, as we enter 2025, I leave you with these two last thoughts and words from the highs and the lows of "Oy."

- ❖ "Oy!" we are still living through painful times. We continue to grieve for our brothers and sisters in Israel. We struggle with antisemitism in the United States, experiencing a level of fear and concern that feels totally different than what we have encountered in the past. But as we go through this, one statement keeps ringing out: *Am Yisrael Chai!*
- ❖ "Oy! We had such a wonderful year at Temple Israel in 2024! – Love and friendship and prayer and song – everyone working together for the good of the whole!" And Oy gevalt! Vey iz mir! Can we top it in 2025? You bet we can!!! We are about to celebrate our 100 Year Birthday! The best is yet to come!!!!

Cantor Riselle Bain



January 2025 / 5785

Message From the President

Dear Friends and Family;

Julia Ruden

Our Chanukah celebration was awesome. It was wonderful to see so many of you and hope you all will continue to come in person to services when you can. You are missed when we don't see you but are thankful you join us online. Grateful for the upgraded technology.

Thankxoxo you Phyllis and Bruce Behrens, Mary Ann Romer, Cathy Blumenthal, Sara Rosenbaum, Rolph Rosenberg and Cantor Riselle Bain for all the effort you put into our Temple and our celebrations! Cathy your Latkes were amazing as they are every year! Andrew Haines for your latkes which were fabulous. Donna Ruden Thankxoxo for the delicious sufganiyot (Israeli homemade donuts) again! I see the LOVE and LIFE for our Judaism and our Jewish Community every time I'm at Shul.

Thankxoxo you Stacy Naroditsky for celebrating again with us with your festive guitar playing.

Thankxoxo so much to everyone that helped me celebrate my birthday at the Chanukah party. It was Fanflippintastic!!

Members mark your calendars for:

Friday, February 14th 100th Anniversary Shabbat Service;

Saturday, February 15th 4:30 PM Special Havdalah Service and dinner at the Shul (invitation only for members and no cost to you) We have an anonymous donors for this. Thankxoxo You So Much!

If you have not received an invitation and are in good standing with dues, please let me know ASAP!

January 2025 /5785



Message From the President, Cont.

Julia Ruden

Sunday, February 16th "From Gershwin to Garfunkel" Concert 3PM

Tickets are \$20.00 and limited to 150 people.

Contact **Mary Ann Romer for tickets ASAP!** at matromer@aol.com

Our Temple is open because of donations, we are all volunteers and the only one that gets paid is our clergy, Cantor Riselle Bain, and our Security for every service.

Thankxoxox you everyone for all you DOooo and keeping Temple Israel Alive!

We still light a third candle on Shabbat and holidays for all the IDF and innocent suffering souls of this war! The hope lives for World PEACE, Tikkun Olam! Bring them home NOW!

Continued prayers for Israel and all of the hostages, their families and the world!

Continued Prayers Mi Shebeirach for all those who are recovering and healing.

May we continue to go from strength to strength!

Be thankful for everything, everyone, everyday – I am!!

Have a SAFE and Happy New Year 2025.

Love Julie

Temple Israel of Highlands County
Presents a 100th Anniversary Celebration Performance
Sunday, February 16, 2025 at 3PM
“From Gershwin to Garfunkel”
Gary Kurnov and Cantor Riselle Bain
Piano accompaniment by Joy Katzen-Guthrie
Tickets: \$20/person made payable to Temple Israel
Order your tickets ASAP by contacting Mary Ann Romer
matromer@aol.com
Cell: 352-442-0830 or Home: 863-314-0422



History of our Czechoslovakian Holocaust Torah

At Temple Israel of Highlands County in Sebring, we are privileged and honored to be guardians of Czech Memorial Scroll #409. It was written in 1890. The tragedy of this extraordinary scroll is that it is the only surviving relic of the Prostejov Jewish community whose members were deported and exterminated in the Nazi death camps during World War II. Every time we read from our Torah #409, we honor the lost lives of our extended mishpacha – our extended Jewish family who lived in Prostejov until the Holocaust wiped them out.

What is the history of our precious Holocaust Torah. Our Temple Israel Torah scroll #409 comes from the town of Prostejov which is right over the border from Vienna in the Czech Republic. This scroll and others like it with its biblical teachings, was used by Jewish communities to guide their conduct and values. It is one of 1564 scrolls which were gathered into an unused synagogue in Prague after World War II. Twenty years later the Communists, who had taken over Czechoslovakia, needing hard cash, sold the scrolls to an art dealer in London who worked with a rabbi to repair them.

What was Prostejov like for the Jews who lived there before it was decimated by the Germans?

Indeed, Prostejov was for centuries home to one of the most significant Jewish communities in the eastern part of the country known as Moravia. The Jewish philosopher Edmund Husserl was born here, and his relatives were buried at the town's Jewish cemetery, as were family members of celebrated author Stefan Zweig.

History of our Czechoslovakian Holocaust Torah, Cont.

The local Jews used the cemetery from 1801 until the beginning of the 20th century. Before the Nazis took over, the Jewish community rejected proposals from City Hall to sell the site. After the transport to the Terezin concentration camp of nearly all the town's 1,442 local Jews, as well as 250 others who came as refugees, the Jewish graveyard was doomed to destruction. Only some 200 of those sent to Nazi camps survived the Holocaust, and most of them left the country to live in Israel and elsewhere. Today, there are less than a dozen Jews living in Prostejov.

Confronting the dark legacy of the Holocaust, in 2015, a small team of researchers began working to reassemble the Jewish cemetery in the eastern city of [Prostejov](#) that was destroyed during the Nazi occupation. The Nazi death machine killed 6 million Jews in the Holocaust, wiping out a third of world Jewry - and didn't even let those already dead rest in peace.

The Once Lost Jewish Graveyard in Prostejov, Czech Republic, was finally being reassembled. A small team of researchers began looking for 1,924 tombstones that were destroyed by the Nazis circa 1943.



Cantor Bain reading the Torah

History of our Czechoslovakian Holocaust Torah, cont.

The renovation project was spearheaded by New York philanthropist Louis Kestenbaum (whose father Rabbi Zvi Kestenbaum was active in [lobbying for the creation](#) of the U.S. Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad) and [Tomas Jelinek](#), who lead the search for "Prostejov's lost graveyard." Louis Kestenbaum first drew attention to the cemetery when he was looking for the tomb of Prostejov Rabbi Zvi Horowitz, who died in 1816.

"His (Rabbi Horowitz's) writings are still revered in Jewish communities throughout the world," Kestenbaum told The Associated Press by email. "For Rabbi Horowitz and other great rabbis from the region, Prostejov was known as a major seat of Jewish learning and culture. This makes the cemetery an important monument in both Jewish and Czech history."

Among the project's earliest discoveries is of a Jewish tombstone that was repurposed and used as a hen house doormat in the small village of Žešov. Turned upside down and after a bit of cleaning, the tombstone found at the entrance to the henhouse revealed a Hebrew inscription that was hidden for decades. Bearing the name Juli Rosenthal, it reads: "Here lies a modest and righteous woman, Mrs. Yittel, the wife of our dear teacher Mr. Leib Rosenthal, may he be long alive, who passed away 76 years old."

Another discovery was a whole backyard of a house in Prostejov that was paved with some 50 large tombstone blocs. One Prostejov resident, Anna Holestova, said she moved to her grandmother's home 25 years ago, and was told her grandfather brought the stones there since they were given out for free during the war.

Using archival material from the Jewish Museum in Prague, the team of tombstone trackers were able to attach identities to some of the stones found. All 1,924 tombstones were desecrated, likely in 1943, and no documents were available to clarify their fate. The search for a site that disappeared such a long time ago in the wartime chaos looked like mission impossible at the beginning, said Tomas Jelinek. "At the start, we had no clue, experts knew nothing," he said. "But we thought that it was impossible for such a big number of stones, and some of them were quite big, to completely evaporate without a trace."

That hunch was proven right after they published an announcement about the project in a City Hall newspaper. The team didn't have to wait long for responses from people with information about stones they had in their homes, or tips on where they could be found.

History of our Czechoslovakian Holocaust Torah, Cont.

Preserved plans and details of the cemetery, including the inscriptions stored at the archive of Prague's Jewish Museum, make it possible to identify the people they belonged to. Their living relatives now have an unexpected chance to rediscover their family past - previously considered lost forever.

Our Sefer Torah #409 is a permanent memorial to those martyrs – their lives and their legacy were blotted out, just because they were Jewish. Our Torah is filled with their blessed memories.



Cantor Bain reading the Torah



Cantor Bain and Julie Ruden holding the Torah and the certification at the honoring of the Torah at the Memorial Scroll Trust ceremony



Announcements

JANUARY 2025 / 5785



January Onegs are sponsored by:

January 10, 2025 – The Board
January 24, 2025 – The Board

Challah, wine, decaf coffee & fruit are the basics for our onegs. If you would like to sponsor an Oneg contact Karen del Valle 863-260-0325



LUNCH BUNCH

The next Ladies Lunch Bunch Group Monday, January 27, 2025 at:

Country Club of Sebring
Albatross Restaurant
4800 Haw Branch Road
Sebring, FL 33875

Contact Renee Tepper
863-414-8811 or
reneetepper@gmail.com
and let her know you'll be there.



Happy Anniversary

Jay & Rebecca Clarke	1/14
George & Pearl Zelma	1/18
Judy Albin & Clint Wallbank	1/24
Amy Rose & Mel David	1/24

תודה רבה - Thank You Alan Wildstein for your continued and generous support for Alan Jay Automotive for our transportation to and from Services! And for ALL YOU Dooo!

Please Contact Cantor Riselle Bain 813-600-8013 if you need assistance to get to services.



We Remember



January Yahrzeits

** Memorial Plaque in our Shul

Miriam E. Amster **	Freda Moscowitz
Elliot Berkowitz **	Milton M. Myers **
Louis Biener	Gertrude Pearl
Mary D. Blumenthal **	Bella Romer
Mariah H. Brenner **	Calman Rosen **
Sam Chinsky	PFC Seymour C. Rosen **
Irving Dorfman	Max Rosenbaum **
Samuel Fishman	Frank Roth
Nora Good **	Simon Ruden
Nathan Gottlieb **	Nate Sadowsky
Jordon Greenberg **	Arthur Schwartz
Ralph Greenberg **	Ida Schwartz
Ralph Jaret	Esther Sewelson
Olivia Johnson	David Sheldon
Marc Randall Kahn	Jennifer Aimee Sherr **
Jacob Kamen	Elmer D. Spence
Bernard Krasner **	Joan Spero
Jack Kravitz**	Nettie Spero
David Levy	Sarah Vinik
Jennie Liss	Charles Wasoff
Judy Mass	Olivia Wortman
Michel Miller **	Gladys Zenchoff



We Remember Yahrzeit Donations



Given By:

Cathy Blumenthal
Herb Moscowitz
Julie Ruden
Jill Liebeck
Mary Ann Romer
Jay & Susie Luck
Sara Rosenbaum
Rolph Rosenberg
Gloria Soltes
Norman & Anna Spero
Ron & Renee Tepper

In Memory Of:

Mary Blumenthal
Frieda Moscowitz
Simon Ruden
Gertrude Pearl
Bella Romer
Judy Mass, David Sheldon
Max Rosenbaum
Narola & Fritz Rosenberg
Frank Roth
Joan & Nettie Spero
Ida Mazen



To plant a tree, email your information of who you're honoring/remembering to jruden18@gmail.com.

Mail check (\$18.00/tree) to the Temple. Write "Tree" in the memo line on check.



Mrs. Blumie's Porcelain Doll Studio

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CARDS SENT

(All donations go to Temple Israel.)



**To send a birthday, anniversary, get well, sympathy or mazel tov card contact Mary Ann Romer at matromer@aol.com.
Write "Temple card" in the email subject box.
Send your minimum \$5.00 donation to temple.**

Get Well Greeting Cards Sent

By: Congregation, Board of Directors & Trustees, Cantor Riselle Bain

To: Seanna Makepeace, Naomi Makepeace, Dixon Taylor

Cantor Bain's Schedule:



Future Erev Shabbat Services

6:30 PM (subject to change)

<https://www.facebook.com/662042600572611/live/>

Friday 1/10/25 – Torah portion Vayechi

Friday 1/24/25 – Torah portion Vaera

Friday 2/14/25 – Shabbat Service

Celebration of 100th Year Anniversary of Temple Israel

Saturday 2/15/25 – Havdalah/Dinner Celebration,

Congregation members invited 100th Year Anniversary of Temple Israel

Sunday 2/16/25 – 100th Anniversary Temple Celebration Concert

“From Gershwin to Garfunkel” – 3 PM

Friday 2/28/25 – Torah portion Terumah

Friday 3/14/25 – **Purim**

Friday 3/28/25 – Torah portion Pekudei

Saturday 4/12/25 – **Passover**

Friday 4/25/25 – Yom Hashoah Torah Portion Shmini

Friday 5/16/25 – Torah portion Emor

Friday 5/30/25 – Shavuot -- Torah portion Bamidbar