

Beth Israel Sinai News

The Monthly Newsletter of Beth Israel Sinai Congregation

February 2024 Shevat / Adar 1 5784

Rabbi's Message

The beginning of the festival of Tu B'Shevat (The 15th of the Hebrew month of Shevat), started its 24 hour celebration from Sundown on Wednesday, January 24, 2024 until sunset on Thursday, January 25, 2024. Though an ancient festival, after the destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans in 70CE, it only regained its popularity after the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. Tu B'Shevat falls midway between fall and spring. Half of the winter has passed. The cold is not as severe. The foundation has been established to begin the process of planting. Tu B'Shevat marks a turning point when under all the cold and snow the sap of trees is increasing in preparation for spring. Throughout the Torah and our history, trees play a critical part in the lives of the Jewish people. As the Torah says "man is a tree of the field." We celebrate the 15th of Shevat by eating different types of fruit. Many Jews follow the traditional observation of conducting a seder on the eve of Tu B'Shevat. The table is set with flowers and the following items: wine or grape juice; fruits with a hard pit such as apricots or cherries; fruits with shells or peels, such as oranges, almonds and walnuts; and challah. In addition, fruits like olives, dates, grapes, figs and pomegranates, which are famous in the land of Israel, are also consumed. The following blessings are recited **The blessing for the fruit of the vine:** Baruch attah Hashem, Elokainu Melech ha'olam, borei pri ha'gafen. (Blessed are you, Lord or G-d, King of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the vine). **The blessing for the fruit:** Baruch attah Hashem, Elokainu Melech ha'olam, borei pri haretz. (Blessed are You, Lord our G-d, King of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the tree). If tasting the fruit for the first time of the season, the Shehecheyanu blessing is also recited. Baruch attah Hashem, Elokainu Melech ha'olam, shehecheyanu, vekiyamanu, vehigianu lozman hazeh. (Blessed are You, Lord our G-d, King of the Universe, who has granted us life, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this occasion).

Since the beginning of the Zionist movement,, it has become customary for families and individuals to plant trees in Ertz Yisroel. Under the leadership of the Jewish National Fund, this is how we all participate in the continuing miracle of making the Israeli desert bloom. In fact, the highest humanitarian reward of the JNF is called the Tree of Life Award. By planting seeds in Israel, we ensure a bright future for the Jewish community both in Israel and the rest of the world.

See you in Shul

Rabbi Marty

Buy Israel Bonds. The war in Gaza is expensive. Give an Israel Bond to mark any occasion. Bonds are issued with several interest rates and maturities. Contact Israel Bonds at 800-253-2779 <https://israelbonds.com>

In March we will be celebrating Purim, please keep an eye out for the date in of next months newsletter. We will have a guest Cantor coming for the service.

Cemetery Notes

The Racine Jewish Cemetery is five acres located at 612 Lathrop Ave. It is a well maintained, park-like setting. A resting place for all Jews. .

There is a Reform section of the cemetery where Jews and their non-Jewish family members can be buried together.

For more information about the purchase of cemetery plots or perpetual care, please call Marc Greenberg 702-465-4805

ZOOM LINK INFO

Meeting ID 86963820547

Passcode 812975

Phone Number

1-309-205-3325

The Presidents Message

You can easily join our synagogue family we have affordable full memberships and we have associate memberships for those who may live too far from us to become an active member. Whether you want to attend weekly or just when you have time please consider joining with a membership. Your membership helps to keep our synagogue open and vital.

If there are any programs you think would be interesting and they are on zoom let us know and we can try to have the program on zoom for you to enjoy at the synagogue. You can reach me by phone 262-945-7675

Joyce Placzkowski President

Rabbi Adelberg is offering free Hebrew classes to children. Please call Rabbi Adelberg 847-529-1609 to setup appointments. Donations to the Rabbi's discretionary account are always welcome, and tax deductible.

Manfred Oelsner

May 1, 1907—February 8, 1977

Manfred Oelsner met Gerda Kuba in Forst-Lausitz, Germany June 26, 1932. They married June 26, 1938. In the meantime, Hitler became Chancellor of Germany and Manfred lost his job running the tobacco concession in a Nazi bowling alley.

The day after Kristallnacht, Manfred was sent to Sachsenhausen concentration camp where he convinced an SS officer to give the prisoners the leftovers from the guards' supper. It was served without utensils. Manfred didn't eat. The SS officer reproached him furiously. Manfred explained he would not eat with his face in a plate like an animal. The next day the officer gave him sandwiches. Manfred had a brother-in-law who was a friend of the secretary to the Argentinian consul in Warsaw. The consul issued a request to meet with Manfred and his father-in-law, Max Kuba also a prisoner. They were released on February 7, 1939. For years, Manfred observed a fast on February 7. The Sturmfuherer who supervised the release warned, "The reach of the Gestapo goes around the whole world." and ordered him to leave Germany by May 7.

Shanghai, China was the only place on earth a Jew could go without a visa. Transportation to Shanghai was limited and expensive. Manfred went ticket shopping every day. Gerda asked him to skip the shopping trip on February 26 to celebrate her first birthday of their married life. Manfred skipped the trip to spring their neighbor's two sons from Sachsenhausen. Near the end of April, three first class tickets became available. The agent for the Jewish relief organization said he was not allowed to pay for first class. Manfred leaned on his case worker who leaned on the agent. On May 9, the family boarded a twenty-seven day cruise to Shanghai. Formal attire was required for dinner. Manfred explained his family had nothing to celebrate and would not dress for dinner. They were allowed to eat in the main dining room after the others had eaten. In Singapore they met a local Jew who encouraged them to remain in Singapore, The British Consulate was closed and the ship was leaving in the morning so, the fellow promised to contact the consulate when it reopened and write to them. Two days later the Japanese captured Singapore and sent all the Jews on a death march.

June 4, 1939 the Oelsners disembarked at Shanghai and traveled by flatbed to a refugee camp. Forty-five beds per barracks. Manfred and Max obtained a hand cart and "kept above water" carrying the luggage of new arrivals from the docks to the shelters. Manfred and Gerda moved to more commodious quarters, a room shared by only ten people. Max remained in the shelter the entire time he was in Shanghai. The cart was stolen. The police recovered it. The thief got six months. The police asked for \$500.00 to return the cart. The money, the police said, was to pay informants to turn in the thieves. They accepted \$100.00.

December 3, 1939 Manfred rented a 14' x 7' store front and opened a cigarette shop. It was open from 6:00 am until 1:30 am the following day, every day, except Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Max helped run the store. Neither money nor merchandise could be left in the shop overnight. Everything had to be shlepped twice daily. By this time, Manfred and Gerda had moved into a room of their own.

Their daughter, Edith, was born January 30, 1941. She became sick in 1942 and needed to be hospitalized. Manfred had no money. He asked the hospital director if he needed blood for transfusions. "All the time." They cut a deal.

July, 1942, as the Sturmfuher had promised, the Gestapo came to the Ghetto and insisted that the Japanese exterminate all 18,000 European Jews in Shanghai. The Japanese refused, but they did agree to create a ghetto.

October 1942, the Oelsners moved into their store. Seven square feet of living space, no sewer or toilet.

The Japanese believed the Allies would not bomb a heavily populated civilian area so, they built munitions dumps in the ghetto. A month before VJ Day the Allies bombed it.

In 1948, Manfred, Gerda and Edith were accepted into the U.S. Their ship stopped in Hawaii where Edith saw grass for the first time. In 1950, Max was transferred to a D.P. camp in Germany via San Francisco and New York, finally being allowed into the U.S. in 1952. They all became citizens in 1954.

Sisterhood

If anyone is interested in sponsoring a Kiddush just let Joyce Placzkowski know, 1-262-945-7675. The charge for a dairy Kiddush is \$50, meat Kiddush is \$100. The kitchen can always use paper goods. If you are interested in helping to make food for the Kiddush or a Shabbat dinner just let Joyce Placzkowski know.

Donations

Laura Hulbert Goldmeier in Memory of Leonard Hulbert

Mary Vite general donation

The Staigars in honor of Rita Matzger

Joyce Placzkowski general donation

Beth Israel Sinai
3009 Washington Ave
Racine WI 53405

262-633-7093

Email:

president@bethisraelsinai.org

treasurer@bethisraelsinai.org

rabbi@bethisraelsinai.org

Web: www.bethisraelsinai.org

BETH ISRAEL SINAI
February 2024
Shevat / Adar 1 5784

Shabbat & Holiday Candle Lighting Times

February 2 4:47
February 9 4:56
February 16 5:05
February 23 5:14



February 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3 10 am service in person and zoom
4	5	6	7	8	9	10 10 am service in person and zoom
11	12	13	14	15	16	17 10 am service in person and zoom
18	19	20	21	22	23 Purim Katan	24 10 am service in person and zoom
25	26	27	28	29		