

# Ha Shavuah B' Sha'arey Israel

December 24 - December 31, 2009

7 Tevet - 14 Tevet 5770



Candle lighting time 5:16 pm  
Friday December 25

Friday Evening Kabbalat Shabbat Services begin at 6:15 pm  
Saturday morning Shabbat Services begin at 9:30 am

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## Parashat Vayigash (Commentary on Page 4)

Annual (Gen. 44:18-47:27): Etz Hayim, p. 274

Triennial (Gen. 46:28-47:27): Etz Hayim, p. 283

Haftarah: Etz Hayim, p. 291



### Best Wishes for a Speedy Recovery to:

Art Besser, Elaine Dreizin, Nathalie Goodrich, Mel Haskins, Fran Kirsh, Henry Koplín, Paul Kruger  
Ida Miller and Viola Schwartz

### We wish a Happy Birthday this week to:

Estelle Nirenstein, Sandra Singer, Michael Kruger, Joseph Hirsh, Francie Marshall and Steven Kent

### We wish a Happy Anniversary this week to:

Sharon & Larry Elowitz and Fran & Alan Kirsh

### This week we remember the Yahrzeit of:

Israel Peter Cohen, Alfred M. Kessler, Nathan Oxlander, Pierce G. Annes, Tillie Benn, Esther G. Galkin,  
James Greasley, Bessie Satlof, Frances Shapiro, Stella Backer, Milton Abrams Schlesinger, Rae Shier,  
Julia Kell Chanin, Lona Isaac Tyner, Rachel Zarks, Sally Funk



*Thanks to everyone  
who participated in the Blood Drive yesterday.  
The Red Cross met its goal!*

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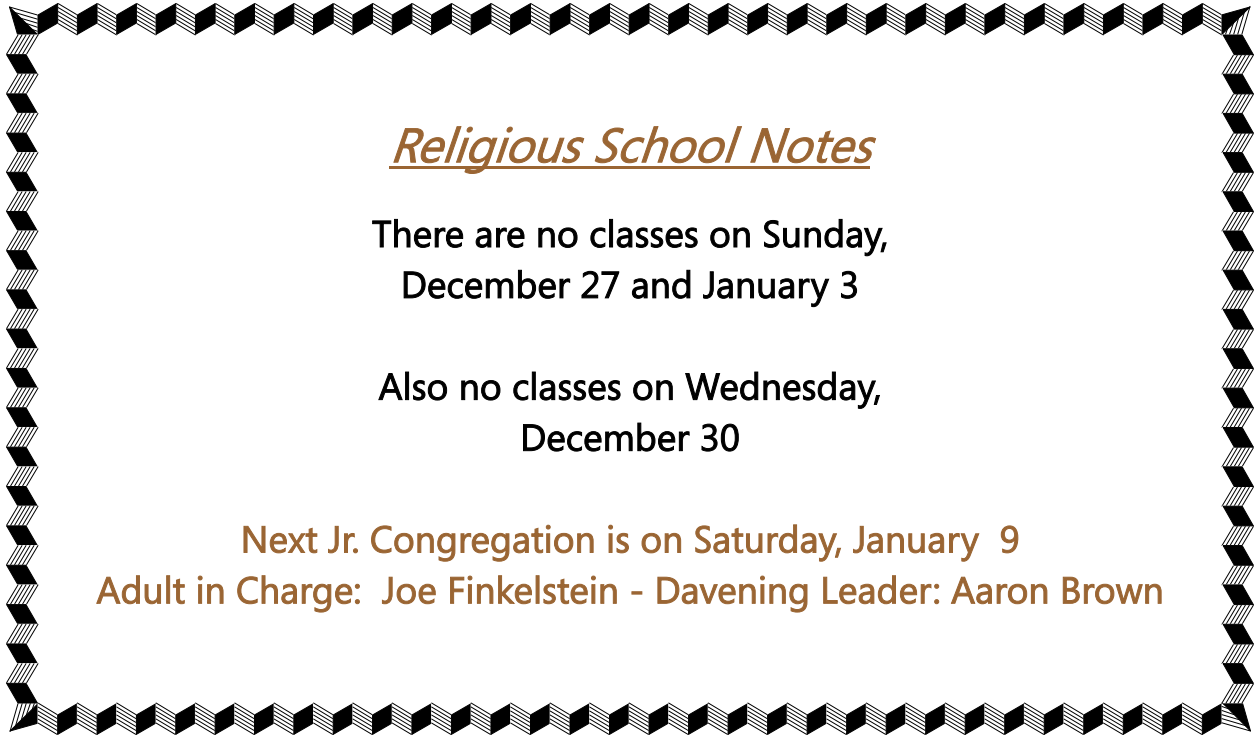
**CONGREGATION MEETING**  
**SUNDAY – JANUARY 10, 2010 – 4:00 PM**  
More details will follow in the January Bulletin

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*Please join us  
for the  
Auf Ruf  
for  
Blair Kent  
and  
Michael Kruger*

*Saturday, December 26*



*Religious School Notes*

There are no classes on Sunday,  
December 27 and January 3

Also no classes on Wednesday,  
December 30

Next Jr. Congregation is on Saturday, January 9  
Adult in Charge: Joe Finkelstein - Davening Leader: Aaron Brown

The next Tefilat Lev Shaleym whole heart one  
hour service is scheduled for Saturday, January 30th  
beginning at 10:30am

# EXPERIENCE JEWISH HISTORY AND PRAYER

Adult Education classes taught by Rabbi Rachel Bat-Or

**Tuesday nights, 7:15 - 8:15pm**  
at the synagogue

Please Note  
Time Change

**Jan. 12, 19, 26, Feb 2, and 9 - Jewish History, Part I**

**Feb. 23, March 2, 9, 16 and 23 - Jewish Prayer**

**April 13, 20, 27, May 4 and 11 - Jewish History, Part II**

The format of the class will be discussion based on material read and questions from class participants. It will not be a lecture class.

If you would like to join the classes and/or need additional information, please contact the Rabbi, 478.745.0182 or Stephanie Kross, 478.405.0643.

For the history classes we will use, A Short History of the Jewish People by Raymond Scheindlin. We can order this book in bulk before Dec. 28th.

## *Family Shabbat Dinner*

*Friday - January 15th*

Services begin at 6:15 pm featuring our 4th Grade Class  
with dinner to follow

Dr. Paul Kross will give a short talk on "Hereditary Breast and Ovarian  
Cancer Syndrome"

Adults - \$10, Children - \$7, Kids under 3 free  
All Religious School students are free

Please call 745-4571 or email: [secretary@csimacon.org](mailto:secretary@csimacon.org)  
to make a reservation

## Dr. Lawrence A. Haskins Memorial Trust

In 1980 Gertie and Harry Haskins established a memorial trust in memory of their son Lawrence, a Periodontist, born and raised in Macon. Dr. Haskins died at the age of 34, leaving a wife and two young daughters. The purpose of the trust, as endowed, is "to perpetuate and enhance Jewish education for CSI students."

**Given the ever-increasing cost of Jewish education, camp, and activities, the scholarship award has been raised to \$2,000.** It was the fondest hope of the benefactors that their generosity would further our young congregants' knowledge of Judaism, and enhance their commitment to our religion and to the Jewish people.

The award is designated for young people between the ages of 10 and 20 and has three requirements: (1) potential recipients must have attended religious school at Sha'arey Israel for at least one full year, and (2) achieved scholastic excellence. (3) The application process requires a letter of recommendation from a congregant familiar with the nominee's character and academic achievement.

Recipients will be selected by the Haskins Memorial Trust Committee, which also must approve the use of the funds. There is no limit to the number of recipients in a calendar year.

The scholarship can be used to defray the cost of attending a Jewish camp, conference, seminar or convention sponsored by a Jewish organization with which Sha'arey Israel is affiliated. Additionally, recipients may use the award to attend a Jewish studies course in the United States, Israel, or anywhere in the world at an accredited institution.

Dates to remember regarding the Haskins Memorial Trust:

**1. Nominations for the award must be received by December 31, 2009.**

2. Decisions will be made by January 15, 2010. A letter of award notification will be sent to each recipient.

3. If payment has not been made to the camp or educational institution, payment will be sent directly to the camp or school. If the family has completed payment, payment will be sent directly to the family, with proof of payment.

4. The Haskins Memorial Trust Award will be presented to each recipient at closing religious school exercises in May.

5. Each recipient will be asked to speak briefly on his/her camp or educational experience at opening religious school exercises in the fall and at a Shabbat service. Guidelines will be provided.

Parents and congregants, please encourage our young people to apply for this generous scholarship. If I can answer any questions about the fund or application process, please contact me.

Jami Gaudet  
Haskins Memorial Trust Chair

## Parashat Vayigash

Genesis 44:18-47:27

*This week's commentary is by Rabbi David Rosenn, the Executive Director of AVODAH: The Jewish Service Corps.*

**Feeling Another's Pain** - As God promises to accompany Jacob into exile, we learn that sometimes the challenge of being fully present and sharing in someone's pain is greater than relieving their suffering.

One summer, when I served as a student chaplain at Beth Israel Hospital, I was assigned to spend part of my time in the hospice wing, a place for patients at the end-stages of life. Unlike my visits with patients in other parts of the hospital, which often centered on hopes for a quick and full recovery, the time I spent with these patients had a different quality.

They and their loved ones also had hope, but not for recovery. During many visits with dying patients and their families, I discovered that they hoped for peace and dignity in life's last moments. Above all, I realized that the family and friends of dying patients all hoped that they would not be left to face their last moments alone, but rather would be surrounded by those who cared deeply for them.

As part of the hospice staff, I understood that it was my job, together with family and loved ones, to create a presence at their bedsides that reflected God's companionship with all of us in times of suffering. Jewish tradition teaches that the shekhina, God's intimate presence, dwells at the bedside of anyone who is ill (Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Nedarim 40a).

### **No One Dies Alone**

During that summer, I came to understand that passage to mean that we have a responsibility to ensure that no one is left to die alone. On one level, this meant accompanying God at the person's bedside. Being there for him or her wasn't only an act of kindness, but also a way of emulating God's compassion in the world: "Just as God visits the sick, so too should you visit them..." (Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Sotah 14a)

But deep down, I wondered if we were accompanying God, or rather serving as God's representative at the bedside. It occurred to me that since all of us are created in God's image, perhaps we are responsible for bringing that image to the sick person's bedside in the first place.

Or perhaps God is there but not quite visible, and it's the presence of others that enables the patient to see a manifestation of God at that moment. However I chose to explain it, it became clear to me that simply being there for one who is facing a difficult and frightening time is a godly act.

### **Joseph is Alive**

In this week's Torah portion, we witness Jacob, who for years has believed that his favorite son, Joseph, was dead, learn that Joseph is in fact alive and prospering in Egypt. Naturally, Jacob wants to see his long-lost son. But rather than making a short visit, he finds that it's become necessary to move his entire family to Egypt due to famine in the land of Canaan. The idea of leaving his homeland frightens him.

Sensing Jacob's fear, God appears to him in a vision and says: "Jacob! Jacob!...I am God, the God of your father. Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you into a great nation there. I Myself will go down with you to Egypt, and I Myself will also bring you back..." (Genesis 46:2-4).

Commenting on God's promise to personally accompany Jacob into exile, the Rabbis teach: "The relationship between God and the Jewish people is like the relationship between twins. When the head of one aches, the other feels it, too. Therefore, we see that the Holy One said to Moses, 'I am with him in distress' (Psalms 91:15) and again, 'In all their afflictions, [I], too, was afflicted. (Isaiah 63:9). Are you not aware that I am wracked with pain when Israel is wracked with pain? Take note of the place from where I am speaking to you--from the midst of a thorn bush. I am [if one may ascribe such a statement to God] a partner in their pain'" (Sh'mot Rabbah, early medieval collection of midrashim on the Book of Exodus, 2:5).

## Real Companionship

We are so often focused on relieving pain and suffering--and rightfully so!--that we sometimes lose sight of how important it is to provide real companionship to those in pain. We search for ways to remove pain because we genuinely want to do everything possible to bring their suffering to an end. But we also do so because opening ourselves up to sharing in someone's fear and suffering is extremely difficult and uncomfortable.

Yet as I learned in the hospice that summer, sometimes it simply isn't possible to provide immediate or permanent relief to those who suffer. At such moments, being fully present is all we have to offer; distracting ourselves by seeking a way to do something is avoiding the real work before us.

To promise to be there with someone in difficult times isn't a small thing. It's what we do when we establish communal structures that ensure that children with disabilities, recent immigrants, or the frail elderly receive not only services, but also the knowledge that they will not be left to their own devices. It's what we do when we form committees to visit the sick and to make minyan to comfort the mourner. It's what God promised our forefather Jacob and his family on their way down to Egypt and, when we act at our best, it's what we promise and provide to one another.

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### Contact information:

#### CSI Board of Governors:

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