



HOLY BLOSSOM TEMPLE Bulletin



5778 YEAR IN REVIEW



Life can blossom here.

LIVING OUR VALUES THROUGH MEANINGFUL MEMBERSHIP

Holidays and Festivals 5779 at Holy Blossom Temple

Selichot | September 1, 2018

Rosh Hashanah | September 9–11, 2018

Yom Kippur | September 18–19, 2018

Sukkot | September 23–30, 2018

Simchat Torah | September 30–October 1, 2018

Chanukah | December 3–10, 2018

Tu BiShvat | January 20–21, 2019

Purim | March 20–21, 2019

Passover | April 19–26, 2019

Yom HaShoah | May, 1–2 2019

Yom HaZikaron | May 8, 2019

Yom HaAtzmaut | May 9, 2019

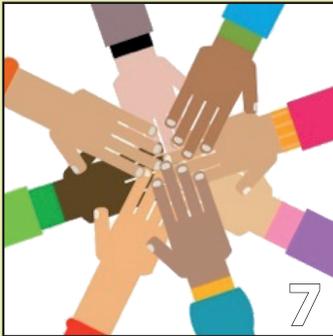
Yom Yerushalayim | June 2, 2019

Lag BaOmer | May 22–23, 2019

Shavuot | June 8–9, 2019

Tishah B'Av | August 10–11, 2019

Selichot | September 21, 2019



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Holy Blossom Temple

5778 Year in Review

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On the cover: Holy Blossom Temple Choir; Touring the Renewal Space with Rabbi Rick Jacobs; celebrating our amazing Torah & Haftarah Chanters; Irene Chow and her daughter enjoying delicious Hamentaschen at the Family Hamentaschen Bake; Lyla Madras with her grandmothers at Little Blossoms; Fun and games with YEAH! at Beach Blast; HBT Youth at the Tzedakah Fair; Morning worship at the daily Shacharit Service; celebrating Rose Roth's 100th birthday at Mondays@theTemple

PREPARING FOR ASCENT IN SPACE AND SPIRIT

Rabbi Yael Splansky, Senior Rabbi



RABBINIC REFLECTION

Twelve Tribes

Our Rose Window is our public face to the world. The grand façade seen from Bathurst Street is an emblem of beauty and strength. Erected in 1937/1938 when anti-Semitism was widespread, our congregation sent a message of pride and courage for all to see. The Lions of Judah stand on guard and the Twelve Tribes of Israel stand united. It isn't chance that the façade has been granted heritage status by the city of Toronto. It isn't chance that expert restoration of the Rose Window was the very first part of our Renewal Project. It isn't chance that the Rose Window has become the logo of Holy Blossom Temple.

We are those twelve tribes.

We are young and old and every life-stage in between. We are newcomers and we are fifth and even sixth-generation members of Holy Blossom Temple. Recently or long ago our families came from Britain, Germany, Poland, Iraq, Turkey, Hungary, the United States, South Africa, Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, India and Israel. We are born as Jews; we have chosen to become Jews; and we are raising Jewish children. We are right, left, and centre on the political spectrum. We are life-long learners and social justice seekers. We are prayerful and playful. We are believers, doubters, and skeptics. We are traditionalists and innovators. We attend a few times a year and a few times a week.

Remarkably, we all belong to Holy Blossom Temple. Truly, we all make

Holy Blossom Temple what it is. Just this week a community leader from another synagogue privately commented on "the strong identity of Holy Blossom Temple." I agree. Other congregations may show similar diversity in its ranks, but few come together with such a clear sense of congregational identity as we do. We feel ourselves a part of something larger. There is a sense of common cause among us. It's one of the things I most admire about our congregation. Here we become both inheritors of Jewish history and guarantors of the Jewish future.

Approach

Every time we come to the Temple we reenact a scene plucked from the Bible. Holy Blossom was built on a hill for good reason. When we approach there ought to be a scene of occasion, of ascent – both physical and spiritual. Our ancestors made pilgrimage to Jerusalem's Temple Mount with their hearts filled with longing. We, too, approach with lofty aims. We come to express gratitude and to mourn, to be inspired by sacred music and challenged by Jewish wisdom. We come ready to give and ready to receive.

The original architect would have us climb the Bathurst Street steps like the ancient Levites. Just as the twelve tribes of Israel would flock to Jerusalem to be united with God and with one another, so do we, in all our wondrous diversity, open the doors just beneath the stained glass tribes. Through ritual and prayer we unite

our "tribes" to become one sacred congregation.

Our current team of architects from Diamond-Schmitt has been tasked with creating an additional entrance from the new Atrium into our historic Sanctuary. There are no steps of the Levites here, as this entrance will be fully accessible, but there will still be a sense of occasion and ascent. Twelve large panels are designed to create an anteroom to the Main Sanctuary from behind the bima. While the Atrium will be open and bright, the twelve panels create an intimate chamber, so we can prepare our intentions before entering the sanctuary. This transitional space is designed to be very quiet. Even the flooring under our feet will change to signal an internal shifting of the soul. Each panel is carved with an emblem of one of the twelve tribes, just like in our Rose Window. No matter which entrance we use, let us approach as individuals with the intension to ascend and become part of a greater whole, a greater blessing.

**"All these are the twelve tribes of Israel, and this is what their father [Jacob] said to them when he blessed them. He blessed them, every one with the blessing appropriate to each individual."
(Genesis 49:28)**

OUR YEAR IN REVIEW AND LOOKING AHEAD

Judy Winberg, President, Holy Blossom Board of Directors



FROM THE PRESIDENT

The excitement is building as we prepare to move into the new spaces at Holy Blossom Temple. Our spirit remains strong as our space is being readied.

At this point, six months into the new term of the Board of Directors, I look back with enormous pride at all that has continued uninterrupted while we undergo the most ambitious project in Canadian synagogue history.

On a frigid night in December, we gathered to unveil the cornerstone that will be placed at the new Ava Road entrance. Over the winter months, there was steady activity in all aspects of life at Holy Blossom. Daily morning and evening services continued and the addition of Mincha and Havdallah services at the close of Shabbat provided congregants and guests a warm and welcome sanctuary for prayer and community. Our Temple Singers, musicians and programs through the Musical Heritage program continued to entertain and inspire us.

New chavurot, groups of like-minded congregants have formed, and we continue to seek new participants and programs. Cohorts like the YAD, Young Adult Division of HBT have been well attended. How thrilling is it that we have over four hundred young adults who regularly receive updates through email and social media to connect them to Holy Blossom!

The Sisterhood, members of the larger Women for Reform Judaism movement have been working to offer meaningful programs such as Rosh Chodesh celebrations and video conferences with our sister congregation in Israel.

The Terumah membership model welcomed new families with babies and young children to the Temple. Whereas membership in a synagogue may have been out of the financial reach of many, our thoughtful approach to inclusion has been appreciated by new young member families.

A myriad of adult education programs through the Gerald Schwartz/Heather Reisman Centre for Jewish Learning brought in guest lecturers, authors, social activists and politicians. The Centre for Arts and Culture brought outstanding book and film reviews.

Our beloved Early Childhood Centre continued to offer a warm and meaningful introduction to formal Jewish learning. The Youth Education Centre introduced an off-site religious school program weekly in North Toronto.

When tragedy struck in Parkland, Florida our HABSTY teens joined other young leaders in the U.S. Reform movement in expressing their indignation and need for greater gun control.

Holy Blossom Temple continued to provide sanctuary, support, overnight respite, and hot meals for our weekly Out of the Cold program guests.

Holy Blossom, regarded as a centre for social justice, continued to direct attention to the welfare of Syrian refugee families as well as the plight of African asylum seekers in Israel has been raised at the Board table.

And most recently, in response to the horrific act of violence on Yonge Street in Toronto, it was our own Rabbi Splansky who led the city in a

community wide vigil. Once again, because of our Rabbi, Holy Blossom Temple landed on the front pages and live newsfeeds across the country.

Significant improvements to our print, website and social media have been well received and the creation of the Communications Advisory Group is helping to provide a more relevant presence in our rapidly changing media driven world.

Looking Ahead

When the original Temple building that housed the sanctuary and administrative wing is once again connected to the school wing, we will have direct access through a magnificent glass covered atrium to new Temple offices, Judaica shop, café, library, classrooms, the Max Enkin Boardroom, and the Philip Smith Congregational Hall.

The environmentally sound, Silver LEED certified building will feature beautiful new simcha spaces, a dedicated youth lounge for our future leaders, archival display space and outstanding art collections.

We have incredible programming, we'll have an outstanding building but most importantly, we will continue to have a strong, caring, welcoming membership committed to pursuing meaningful opportunities for personal growth and family fulfillment at every stage of life.

Holy Blossom Temple is about our people and is always open to new members. Encourage your family and friends who are not yet with us to consider joining us. Our doors are open.

Oh, what a year it has been...*so far!*

An update from Executive Director, Russ Joseph



I have had many opportunities to send brief messages to our membership these past few months, but I have not provided a full report since our last Annual General Meeting in the fall. While space here does not even permit such an exhaustive review, allow me to touch on some of the highlights (and disappointments).

Immediately after the AGM, we began looking to replace our outdated accounting system. We had some ambitious goals in mind, the most important being that we wanted to find an easy-to-use product that would enable us to see at a glance how we were trending against the key performance metrics that we established for the Temple. We are so pleased that our wonderful congregant, Marlene Orenbach, a skilled CPA, agreed to come on board as our Interim Controller, when Chello Sittambalam announced his retirement in January. Marlene has been working diligently to learn the intricacies of our complex organization, and has already led us through a move to an updated payroll system as well as taking over the accounting system challenge.

This has taken much longer than we had hoped it would but with the help of Vice President, Jeff Meilach and

others, we have stepped through this to a good conclusion.

I published a list of all the other staff changes that have taken place during this fiscal year in our online publication *Life@holyblossom*. This natural evolution, has seen some very positive new additions to Holy Blossom. We saw the promotion of Jim Westcott to the newly-created position of Director of Facilities, recognizing his commitment to Temple. I urge you to get to know our staff when the opportunity presents itself, or visit the staff section of the website (holyblossom.org) so you can see at a glance who can provide you with the services that you need and in a timely fashion.

Our long-time congregant (and past Executive Director), Gary Posen, stepped in to help about a year ago when I was off sick. Gary has stayed on as Interim Operations Manager but he will be leaving at the end of June and he will return only as a congregant (as well as a part-time volunteer). I am grateful to Gary for his sage advice and assistance. Before he leaves, Gary is committed to launching the new, updated employee handbook that he and Office Manager, Judy Amsterdam have been spearheading under the leadership of Vice President, Administration, Avra Rosen.

There has been much happening in the areas of communications, led by our Director of Communication and Marketing, Deanna Levy (with the support of her lay partner, Ellen Cole) and on the membership front under the guidance of Director of Member Engagement, Tema Smith (with the great help of a committee

led by Cheryl Sylvester). The fruits of their labour may be seen elsewhere in this publication as well as all over our social media feeds.

Thanks to Gary's involvement, his support has enabled me to spend a considerable portion of my work day (and often nights), involved in our exciting Renewal of Space. Working closely with an outstanding Steering Committee under the leadership of Tom Friedland, the Building Committee led by Cary Solomon, the Fundraising Team under Joan Garson's remarkable hands (and supported by our Director of Development, Jonathan Ain) and the Transition Committee that was led by our President, Judy Winberg and is now being headed up by Gary Posen, has been a true joy and is the highlight of my Holy Blossom career thus far. With Rabbi Splansky guiding the Renewal of Spirit that will animate these great spaces, we are all feeling the excitement as we prepare to move back in very soon.

L'Shalom to all. Enjoy the summer but don't forget to complete your membership renewals using either the Portal to Meaningful Membership (our on-line tool), or long-hand, as early as possible. We are looking forward to seeing everyone soon.

Membership

An update from Tema Smith, Director of Community Engagement & Cheryl Sylvester, Vice President, Membership

Another year has flown by, and the work of the membership department has been in full swing. This past year, we welcomed 106 households to our congregation, including twenty-one young families with children under the age of 8. We strengthened our connections to our Early Childhood Centre, and continued the important work of engaging our members across all lifestyles – from our newly rebranded and vibrant YAD (Young Adult Division) – through to our seniors, many of whom have belonged to the Temple community for a very long time.

Pirchei Kodesh Club

On Shavuot, we celebrated the “Chai” anniversaries of 45 of our member families – one celebrating their 72nd anniversary of membership at Holy Blossom Temple, fifteen celebrating their 54th anniversary, ten celebrating their 36th anniversary, and nineteen celebrating their 18th anniversary. These inductees into the Pirchei Kodesh Club remind us of the strength of community, and we look forward to continuing this tradition in years to come.

HBTogether

With our indefatigable co-chairs Jill Kamin and Karen Kollins, we began the work of creating new small groups, sometimes called *chavurot*.

With launches of diverse groups – including Daytime

Moms,
Manulife
Centre,
Arts &
Culture,

Zentangle, Mussar study, and others, we look forward to continuing to build these communities within our broader Holy Blossom community.

We are especially excited to be building groups under the following themes:

HBTogether Affinity Groups
Brought together by like-interests or shared hobbies.

HBTogether Lifestage Groups
Bringing together Temple members of a similar age and stage.

HBTogether In My Neighbourhood
Meet your neighbours and bring Holy Blossom Temple closer to home.

HBTogether My Jewish Year
Mark the moments of the Jewish year with other Temple members.

HBTogether Professional Groups
Network with your colleagues and discuss issues related to your work through a Jewish lens.

Have an idea for a small group? It's easy to start one – Tema, along with Jill and Karen, are here to support you, and our Leaders' Handbook will provide you with tips and tricks to hosting meetings and sustaining your group as it develops.

Portal for Meaningful Membership

Building on the successful launch last year of our Members' Portal for online membership renewal, this spring, we launched the Portal for Meaningful Membership. This is an opportunity for our congregants to

connect with Temple more deeply. This Portal allows Holy Blossom members to tell us their stories – about their skills and hobbies, their interests and their wants. It also gives members an opportunity to tell us about their families. As we learn from our members in this way, we look forward to being better able to know and serve our congregation, and to create connections within our Holy Blossom community.

Haven't had a chance to complete yours yet? Login at <http://holyblossomtemple.congregationconnect.com/> today!

If you do not know your login information, please contact the Membership department, who will email you a login link.

Life Can Blossom Here

As we gear up for the next year, we hope that you will share this exciting moment in Holy Blossom Temple's history. If someone you know – a friend, a family member, a neighbour, or a colleague – is looking for a Jewish community, please connect them with Tema. Sometimes a personal invitation makes all the difference.



Yad (1857 - oldest artifact of Toronto Jewry) inscribed "given to the sacred congregation of Pirchei Kodesh (blossoms of holiness) in the City of Toronto...as a gift in perpetuity"

Worship at Holy Blossom: Come for a Gift of Peace

A message from Jill Hertzman & Jeff Denaburg,
Holy Blossom Department of Worship

Recently, a fellow congregant described how she felt leaving a weekday evening service where she marked the Yahrzeit of her mother. It was as if she had been given a gift of peace. Not the peace we march or negotiate for, but the peace our tradition gives us -- a wholeness, a completeness.

It seems that daily life is anything but peaceful these days. We try our best to keep up or “keep it together” at work and at home, all the while managing the “barrage.” That would be the barrage of change, choices, and electronic connectivity, the rapidity and frequency of which was unheard of a generation ago.

When you come for worship at Holy Blossom, you unplug from that frenetic pressure. You enter another space in a place that makes it possible to find (as Scripture describes) “the still, small voice.”

Let the wisdom of Torah, the sounds of the Hebrew language, the beauty of joyful sacred music enter your consciousness. Let the rhythm of the service calm you and ground you. You may come away with a renewed sense of wonder, inspiration, or gratitude which can frame the rest of the day or week.

We are here for you and open 365 days a year.

Come for a gift of peace.



Music at HBT: Looking back and Looking Forward!

An update from Cantor Beny Maissner

Music is the universal language of human kind

Music reaches where words do not live

Music heals and cleanses the soul

I have tried to model our musical life at Temple and live by these principles.

This year, like so many of my blessed years at Holy Blossom Temple, music has captured not only my own heart but the hearts of our congregation.

Week in and week out we celebrate Shabbat Festivals and the High Holidays with wonder and awe.

Our Shabbat and festival services are always filled with exuberance, vigor, energy and the authenticity and sincerity to match the mood of the occasion.

Our weekly Minyanim have grown and become so meaningful to the many congregants who seek comfort and solace, as well as comradeship and a sense of community.

Our choirs – both Temple Singers and our Professional Choir – are a permanent feature almost every

Shabbat and for all festivals. Their commitment to our Temple is exemplary and heartwarming. Their presence enhances our services and moves the congregation into spiritual spheres that cannot be described in simple words. They give their endless time and heart to every project.

This year our Musical Heritage concert series has been phenomenal and inspiring. It is only through the generosity of donors and supporters that I am able to bring this kind of Jewish musical experience to Holy Blossom. Through their volunteering time and commitment our music committee has helped shape the program and its success.

Our Shabbat Minchah service brought Mitch Smolkin to present a tribute to Theodore Bikel.

On Shabbat Shira, we celebrated with Rabbi Noam Katz and the young generation. I was privileged to present: The Sermon In Song:

EVERYTHING WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT ADON OLAM.

The seventh night of Pesach resounded with the best of HALLEL OF ALL HALLEL.

YOM YERUSHALAYIM and ISRAEL's 70th anniversary brought four community choirs together to Holy Blossom to celebrate this significant milestone.

To top it off, Jewish Music Week featured the MUSICIANS OF TOMORROW - children of 11 - 14 captured our hearts and souls with their incredible artistry.

We have just begun to conceptualize our plans for the coming year to keep bringing the best of Jewish music – all kinds and styles – to engage our diverse congregation and the larger community.

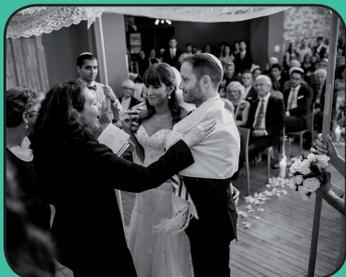
Stay tuned and please help support us by becoming donors, sponsors and friends.

With warm wishes for a pleasant summer and prayers for a good new year.



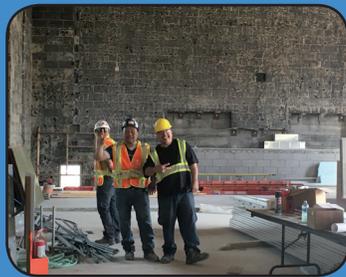
HBT By the Numbers

Life can blossom here



234
Life Cycle Events
Shared

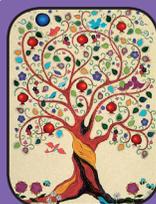
- 50** Confirmations & Consecrations
- 35** Member Funerals
- 42** B'nai Mitzvah
- 29** Weddings
- 46** Baby Namings/ Blessings
- 12** Conversions



100+
Tradespeople
working on our
Renewal of Space



125
Volunteers supporting or
participating in Holy Blossom
Services as Assisting Clergy, Gabbiam,
Ushers, Greeters, Chanters, Shofar
Blowers, and Doctors on-call



1,780
Adult Education
participants in
36 programs



35
Staff involved in Temple
operations
(full & part-time)



426
Y.E.C, ECC,
and Little
Blossoms



1,800
Member Households

- 284** Over 50 years of Holy Blossom membership!
- 510** 25-50 years of membership
- 260** 15-25 years of membership
- 344** 5-15 years of membership
- 402** under 5 years of membership
- 146** Young Families
- 240** YAD: 20s & 30s members



67
Talented volunteer
musicians in Temple
Choirs & N'ginah Band

365
Days of the year
Holy Blossom is
Open

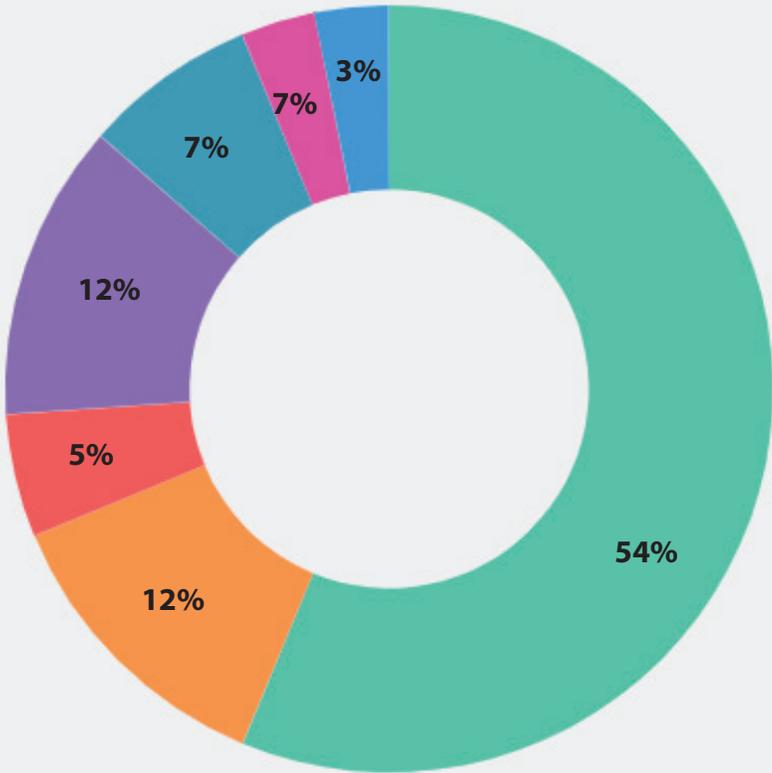


\$27.87 million
Pledged for Canada's
largest synagogue building
project

HBT Financials

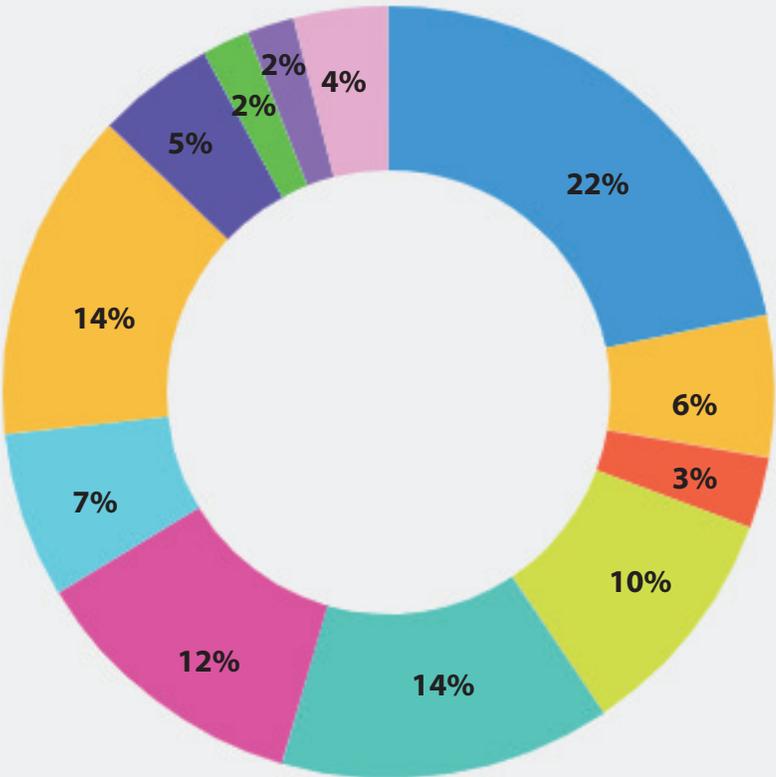
Revenue

- Membership Contributions (including security fee)
- Annual Campaign
- Religious School Tuition
- ECC Tuition
- Foundation & Grants
- Cemetery
- Other



Expenses

- Worship & Pastoral Care
- Programming & Adult Education
- Congregational Hospitality
- Youth Education
- ECC
- Administration
- IT/Security
- Facility & Maintenance
- Cemetery Upkeep
- Reform Affiliation Contributions
- Communications
- Other



Adult Education

An update from Debbie Spiegel, Director of Education & Les Rothchild, Chair, Adult Education Committee

Programming in our Schwartz/Reisman Centre for Jewish Learning has been far reaching. We have loved all areas of our learning. It has been a fantastic year for sharing with our adult learners. A few of our highlights include:

Jewish Communities Around the World series: Thanks to our beloved Sisterhood, and assistance from Bonnie Lawrence Shear of Toronto's Jewish Mosaic, we are able to invite Torontonians who have grown up in various countries and shared information about Jewish life in those communities. This year we were fortunate to learn about the Jewish communities of Scotland and Zimbabwe.

We also embarked on a unique program with York University. We had four separate programs, with professors from York, each sharing their expertise. It was a pleasure hosting all four professors, each with their unique abilities – Professors Carl Ehrlich, Laura Wiseman, Kalman Weiser and Judith Cohen each brought a marvelous session to our table. It was a joy to learn from the experts!

Sharon Singer's Sunday Book Club continues to inspire our readers. A very devoted cadre of students learn from and share with each other on the selection for the given month. It is a pleasure to be an observer of this eclectic group! They often take walks in the summer months when programming is at a lull – just to maintain the friendships and engagement!

Cynthia Good has created the Centre for Jewish Contemporary Literature – bringing high calibre writers to us. This was a fantastic year where we had many high-level authors join us! Roberta Rich, Alice Hoffman, Simon Sebag Montefiore and Alison Pick were on tap this year. AND we look forward to welcoming Daniel Silva, award-winning author to our home this summer on July 25th. It is a must-see event.

A surprise to all of us this year was the Conversational Yiddish group! This group of Yiddishists has met for many 5-week courses and are having a great time just chatting in Yiddish! What a joy to have Yiddish back as a spoken language for so many people.

A new program this year which had great cooperation and attendance was the series that the "Three Rabbis" held. Rabbi Splansky led the team of Rabbi Chaim Strauchler from Shaarei Shomayim and Rabbi Bruch Frydman Kohl of Beth Tzedec as they tackled important conversations for our "southern community." Hearing from and learning about "What we talk about when we talk about..." Israel and anti-Semitism were both fascinating conversations and brought people from each congregation to the audience. What a pleasure it was to be with our community leaders in one room!

Rabbi Satz has focused on two new areas of content in his teaching. One program which continues to be a highlight is the Mussar group. Mussar, instruction in the Jewish ethical

and moral way of life, has become a very popular program. Many students of Mussar have learned from Rabbi Satz and from Rabbi Alan Morinis the Director of the Mussar Institute in California, who came for a visit this Spring.

Business Chai Mitzvah is a new initiative which took off nicely. Business people of all kinds in the downtown core study with Rabbi Satz monthly over lunch. The program studies ethical issues in the world of business. There is always something to talk about!

And finally, our love of Israel abounds with numerous programs at Holy Blossom. Here is a taste of a few.

We never shy away from the political conversation regarding Israel, and there have been many. Retired Major General Amnon Reshef, Rabbi Shlomo Riskin, Rabbi Uri Regev, and Professor Gabriel Ben Dor, all gave us their individual views from their perspective, and brought so much to our thinking table.

Along with Dr. Gillian Helfield, our ShinShinim led three "Eye on Israel" movie events. Each film and subsequent discussion were informative and challenging. Life in Israel is never simple, and neither is their film, art or literature. These film nights gave us an inkling into some of the various facets of Israeli life as portrayed through film. The ShinShinim showed us a different side of their personalities and it was great to have a thoughtful discussion about Israel in this format.

Continuing the theme of Israel, there were a few "fun" Israel programs. Israeli Cuisine with Chef Benny Cohen was a great evening at a members home, where 15 people gathered to eat together and to enjoy each other's company over the topic of Israeli cuisine. We also had a fantastic program on African American basketball players who travelled Israel to play ball. The key component for all of these players is the love, affection, and life that they have built for themselves immersing into Israeli society. Yom Hazikaron/Yom HaAtzmaut brought out an evening of love and affection for Israel. Through stories from the ShinShinim, personal accounts about life in Israel from other Israeli guests, and a loving song session, we laughed, cried and applauded 70 years of Israel's growth and independence.

What's ahead?

Many wonderful new programs, but please stay tuned for our newest endeavour! The Florence Melton School of Adult Jewish Learning is coming to HBT! The Melton School offers adults the opportunity to acquire Jewish literacy in an open, intellectually stimulating learning environment. We look forward to sharing much more information. Please watch for this exciting new endeavour.

Our Youth Education Centre is always busy!

An Update from Debbie Spiegel, Director of Education & Dylan Aster, Vice President, Education Department

If you wander our hallways on any given Sunday over the school year, you will hear and see the wonders of Jewish learning throughout. Children singing, playing, studying and sharing are just a few of the many things that happen here.

A taste of Israel

Our ShinShinim bring a taste of Israel each week. We have learned so much from our ShinShinim this year; Israeli games, geography, music, dance and so much more! Our students have all had a chance to learn from these wonderful Israeli teens who have delayed their army service to do a year of service in Canada. What a joy it is to have them with us in our 11th year of the program. We can't imagine life without ShinShinim.

Making the grades

At the heart of Y.E.C is our commitment to nurturing Judaism and Jewish values in each child. Our lessons are crafted through the lens of our history and traditions to bring meaningful experiences. In each grade, we provide our students with a joyful, safe, and meaningful Jewish experience. Here are some highlights from our Y.E.C curriculum this year:

Grade 1 students and parents prepared for Consecration! We mark this ritual life-cycle experience and celebration each year and it is always an exciting time. Children watch in awe as the entire Torah is unrolled before them: it is one of the best days in the calendar!

Our Junior Choir is a wonderful new addition. Their beautiful voices grace our corridors each week when they practice and have shared their sounds at various events this year, including at our Y.E.C. services, the congregational Chanukah party and Kabbalat Shabbat services. We look forward to hearing their voices grace our halls for many years to come!

Our Intergenerational Y.E.C. Day was incredible. Grandparents, great aunts and uncles, parents and friends joined us for a fun-filled day of learning, creating, eating (of course) and shmoozing. What a memorable day for all and we can't wait until next year! Save the date: November 18, 2018!

Grade 2 students have been learning Hebrew all year – mastering each letter and vowel. We celebrate how far they've come with our ceremony called, "Siyum HaSefer" - finishing the book. The students creatively share the wonders of the Hebrew language through poetry and song. It is always a joyous event!

Grade 3 students learned about, prepared for, and participated in their own Mock Wedding. Two wonderful congregants (already married) agreed to "get married again." Under a beautiful chuppah, and with a gorgeous ketuba (marriage contract), the "mothers and fathers," the witnesses, the flower girls, and more all joined to see the lovely couple get married by our own Rabbi Helfman.

Our Grade 4 students learned about Israel all year. At the end of the learning, each student chooses something in Israel that excites or interests them to share with the rest of the class. We applaud our students for their creativity and ingenuity. We are always amazed at their final presentations!

Our Grade 7 students as Pre-B'nei mitzvah and our Grade 6 students as "pre-pre-B'nei Mitzvah" always impress us. We invite each group to their own special Shabbat family dinner. Our Grade 7 students and their families meet in the Fall as they embark on a wonderful year of learning. At the special Shabbat dinner each student receives a Plaut commentary as a thoughtful gift from Brotherhood. The anticipation of the upcoming year is exciting, as families come together and share their hopes for their children and for each other.

Lessons learned

Each week our students prayed, laughed and were so very thoughtful with our superb prayer leader, David Gershon. The joy that exudes from our children is palpable. We encourage parents and others to join us: every class is a remarkable and uplifting experience. In particular, our Grade 5s show their leadership, at our weekly tefilla (service) alongside David.

As another memorable school year ends, we look forward to another

wonderful year of creative learners, happy parents, and motivating teachers. We are always looking for fun and engaging ways to inspire and nurture Jewish values. Stay tuned for news on a new Hebrew track for students who want to learn more Hebrew in a fun environment. We are committed to ensuring that life can blossom for all of our extraordinary students.

Also, we look forward to welcoming young families to our Sunday program through PJ Plus. Under the auspices of PJ Library we will offer a weekly parent/tot program which uses PJ Library books as their springboard. We look forward to welcoming children within the age range of 18 months-3 years with a parent or grandparent.



Youth Activities: A year in review

An Update from Lisa Isen Baomal, Director of Youth Engagement

5778 has seen youth at HBT active in a myriad of programs, activities and events, volunteering, creating, baking, learning, playing, celebrating, and having fun, all while creating and strengthening friendships and bonds with one another, and growing our active youth community.

Highlights:

- A meaningful teen Kol Nidre service, planned and led by teens
- HBTeen Mitzvah bakers who met each month to make baked goods for Out of the Cold and Ve'ahavta
- Groups of teens volunteering at Out of the Cold, congregational festivals, and participating in our Madrichim/student teaching program
- Weekly HABSTY lounge nights that included activities and programs run by HABSTY members and our ShinShinim, with a different snack each week!
- Two HABSTY members served as regional song leaders for our NFTY region NFTY-NEL: North East Lakes
- Another successful HABSTY Bagel Project, delivering yummy bagel breakfasts to family members and friends in our community, as well as to deserving women and children living in shelters across our city. Funds were also raised for our Youth Activities Awards, which helps teens attend conferences and other teen trips and travel opportunities, as well as camp scholarships.

Our B'nei Mitzvah students (grades

6&7) participated H.O.M.E. (Hands On Mitzvah Experience) and H.O.S.T. (Hang Out Social Time) each month. Favourites were baking and cooking for Out of the Cold, Ve'ahavta and Bikkur Cholim, and Minute to Win it games!

There were also a couple of Saturday night Havdallah programs at RINX and DIRGE, Virtual Reality Playground. We had a blast ushering out Shabbat together, and of course eating pizza together!

Younger members of our youth community in grades 3-5 continued to enjoy YEAH events (Youth Excitement At Holy Blossom). From our adventure in an escape room, to frying our own sufganiot, an afternoon at the beach and more, kids had the opportunity to hang out with their HBT friends, our ShinShinim, and some of our teen Madrichim. A group of Holy Blossom kids enjoyed a great weekend of camp in the fall together at Taste of George – at URJ Camp George in October.

Holy Chag Sukkot and Pesach were fun afternoon holiday celebrations, which included music and holiday skits with David Gershon, puppet making at Sukkot, escape room-style games at Pesach, and lots of holiday themed food and fun! Our younger friends always love spending the afternoon with our teen Madrichim, and having fun together in our building!

And our youngest friends in Kindergarten and grade 1 continued to have KEF (fun) every Sunday following their YEC classes in our afterschool program, KEF. They

made delicious food to share with their families, met interesting animals, created films and more!

Looking Ahead

A new HBTeen Council has been launched for the 2018-19 school year. This council, made up of teens in grades 8-12, will work on creating opportunities for teens to earn volunteer hours, start social action initiatives, develop leadership skills, and make connections outside of our own community, while making lasting friendships. Lindsay Mockler, our new Teen Engagement Coordinator is very excited to be working with this new group of teens!

Holy Blossom Temple has become an Award Unit for the Duke of Edinburgh Award. The Duke of Ed is an internationally recognized program for young people, building their skills, and helping them to find their passions. We are excited to help students realize their own personal goals in this program, and help them develop skills, engage in community service, and experience new things!

We have already begun to create a calendar of youth activities for the coming school year. We are exploring some different out of town experiences for our teens and tweens, in addition to programs, events and volunteering opportunities here at home. The summer is a great time to explore and research all the amazing experiences our city has to offer for our youth to take part in together! I'm already looking forward to an amazing year ahead!





Early Childhood Centre

An Update from Jessica Lipinski, Director of the Early Childhood Centre at Holy Blossom Temple

It has been said that, *“A population that does not take care of the elderly and of children and the young has no future, because it abuses both its memory and its promise.”* At the ECC one of our longstanding traditions is to engage the most senior members of our community with the youngest, thereby taking care of our elderly and our young. Research has shown that programs that bring generations together have tremendous benefits for all involved. At the ECC we also know this to be true. Not because of research, but because of practice.

For years we have connected with seniors at Baycrest and in our own ECC families and the benefits have been immeasurable. Each month one of the nursery classes travels to Baycrest to visit with the guests of the Samuel Lunenfeld Mountainview Club, a day outpatient program for seniors living with Alzheimer's and dementia. The children sing songs with the program participants: familiar standards like Hevenu Shalom Alechem and You are My Sunshine and some of the children's new favourites too. The senior members of the group are just beaming; thrilled to see these small children singing songs that they remember from their youth. The children stand tall, excited to sing for their new friends. On a recent visit, one of the children stood-up and began to

sing Ma Nishtana. The teachers were thrilled that all of the seniors joined in singing too! What an incredibly special moment! After singing some songs and sharing juice and cookies, the children distribute flowers that have been purchased with their tzedakah money. Many of the children give out high fives and hugs along with their flowers. The first time I traveled to Baycrest with the children in June 2016, I was so moved by the sincere elation of both the children and the seniors. Seeing the joy first hand as the seniors looked at the beautiful young faces of the children - the future and *promise* of our Jewish community - and listening to them sing songs that honour our Jewish heritage and *memory*, I couldn't help but cry. When the children arrive back at school, it is always with great excitement and pride. They know that they've done a great mitzvah and they feel good about themselves knowing they brought joy to others. As educators, we recognize that this is an invaluable lesson that cannot be taught in a classroom.

This year the children had the opportunity to sing some Purim songs for our Mondays at the Temple participants. It was just as special as when they sang at Baycrest, but perhaps more so because it was at “home.” We hope to have more opportunities to share in their program

in the future.

At the end of April, we invited the children's grandparents to come in and spend a morning with us. Some of them are members whose own children were ECC students, some of them completely new to the HBT community, all of them filled with excitement and pride to be a part of such a special event. The grandparents sat with their grandchildren and participated in a big sing-along then engaged in a variety of fun activities facilitated by our incredible teachers. Our children's grandparents left at the end of the morning just radiating with happiness.

It's an unfortunate reality that society's youngest and oldest members are often discounted, thought to have nothing to contribute. We have proven time and time again that both of these groups have a tremendous amount to give - especially to each other. By continuing to participate in programs that facilitate partnerships between the youngest and most senior members of our community we honour our past and strengthen our future.

Tikkun Olam: A Year in Review

An Update from Rabbi Michael Satz & Jascha Jabes, Holy Blossom Tikkun Olam Department

This spring, our Board of Directors, endorsed Holy Blossom Temple becoming a signee of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism's Canadian version of "Brit Olam—a Covenant with our World." By signing this statement, our congregation is pledging to continue the hard work of social justice in Toronto, Canada, and the world. We are joining together with Reform congregations all over North America to stand with the Religious Action Center to place Tikkun Olam as a core value of Judaism.

The statement reads:

For A World of Compassion, Justice and Wholeness: We are calling this a Brit Olam - a Covenant with our World - because we seek the world we want, not the world as it is. Across North America and around the world, vulnerable populations face profound challenges. As the Reform Jewish Movement, we are committed to meeting the urgency of now with moral leadership through congregational and community-based action.

Holy Blossom is committing to:

- Fostering a culture of sacred and civil dialogue in our congregation where all opinions are heard
- Acting in solidarity with vulnerable communities
- Building relationships across lines of difference in our local community
- Acting at the local, provincial, and/or federal levels to address the root causes of injustice and advocate for systemic change
- Participating in one of the National Social Action Committee's (NSAC) campaigns:
- Responding to the global refugee crisis
- Developing and strengthening relationships with Indigenous communities
- Working to end poverty in Canada

This year at Holy Blossom, we had a wide variety of social action programming. Some programs were educational about issues, some were advocacy oriented, and some were hands-on service.

Our longest running - and the Tikkun Olam program that touches the most volunteers - is Out of the Cold, our weekly fall-winter homeless shelter and hot meal program for the vulnerable and isolated populations of Toronto. With the hope of someday not being need, this year was again, unfortunately, a "success." Hundreds of volunteers

fed, housed, and entertained our guests. We were honoured to be featured this year in the Toronto Sun. We thank all of our volunteers and our co-chairs Julie Solomon and June Sonberg.

This year we also continued our partnership with the Jewish poverty organization Ve'ahavta with our community Seder where we ate, sang, and shared stories with our Out of the Cold guests and Ve'ahavta's clients. We also partner and supply volunteers for Ve'ahavta in our kitchen, making food for their outreach van.

Helping the homeless and vulnerable is important work, but we cannot forget that Jews are also called to try to change the structures that make poverty possible. Throughout the years Holy Blossom has been a part of two interfaith coalitions, Faith in the City and the Interfaith Social Assistance Reform Coalition (ISARC), that advocate before City Hall and Queen's Park to create a more equitable society.

On Yom Kippur, we hosted the Federal Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Ahmed Hussen. He told us his story of coming to Canada and taught us about the government's commitment to absorbing refugees. Minister Hussen also commended Holy Blossom's long history of supporting refugees. And congregants continue to support Syrian families. Our volunteers, under the leadership of Jacque Friedland, are organizing to welcome Yazidi refugees.

This winter, as news from Israel about the plight of African asylum seekers and refugees was making headlines, we as a congregation decided to act. We had an info session about the issue partnering with CIJA, Jewish Immigrant Aid Service (JIAS), Canadians Helping Africans in Israel (CHAI), and the New Israel Fund to learn about what is happening and what we can do. There is now an opportunity for Holy Blossom members to sponsor asylum seekers and refugees in Israel to come to Canada. If you are interested in donating money and/or volunteering, please contact Rabbi Satz.

These are just some examples of Tikkun Olam at Holy Blossom. As social justice is a part of our history and mandate, we will continue to work to better our community and the world.

IN MEMORIAM

HOLY BLOSSOM REMEMBERS CONGREGANTS WHO HAVE DIED THIS YEAR

Edward Abady

Sheila Bacher

Phyllis Benjamin

Dr. Harvey Brooker

Reba Clodman

Goldie Garson Davis

Clara (Clare) Denaburg

Florence Donnenfield

Fay Eriksen

Donald (Corky) Farb

David Fleishman

Rose Fluxgold

Barry Goldblatt

Dr. Ivan Hronsky

Daisy Hadassah Jacobs

Jake (Julius) Karlinsky

Roey Kert

Leon Lenchner

Abbey Lipson

Blanche Magder

Adele Mamott

Pnina Margoless

Norman May

Joyce Milrod

Teddy Moses

Luke Sklar

Dr. Leonard Smith

Vladimir Steinberg

Ingeborg (Inga) Waldman

Marvin Martin Warsh

Lucy Cherniak Weinstein

Jonathan Wolfe

Herbert Wolfson

Marlene Zeldin

Ernest Zucker

זכרונם לברכה

May their memory be a blessing

Annual Congregational Appeal

Thank you to our early donors

Holy Blossom Temple is truly a blessed congregation. With our storied past as Toronto's first congregation and our unmatched variety of services and programs, Holy Blossom is positioned to continue to blaze new trails as our country's leading Reform Congregation. At Holy Blossom Temple, we proudly serve our members 365 days a year as we strive to create a community that is welcoming, diverse, and immersed in Jewish values and culture.

On a personal level, Holy Blossom's many services are energized through the devotion of its clergy, staff and volunteers. On a financial level, the synagogue operates annually through a combination of membership fees, school dues and generous gifts -- including those made through the Annual Congregational Appeal. At Holy Blossom, we never turn away a congregant who wishes to be part of our sacred community. The Annual Congregational Appeal is a collective initiative of our members to ensure that everyone can participate with dignity, even if challenging times or financial difficulty does not allow for a sustaining membership contribution.

Please find a listing of all those members who have contributed so far.

On behalf of the Congregation, we extend our sincere thanks to all those who have made their annual gift. Your generous participation in the Congregational Appeal is greatly appreciated as together we ensure we are living up to our deeply-held shared values of openness, inclusion and Tzedakah.

In order to reach our Annual Appeal goal of \$600,000, we need your support. To make your Annual Appeal gift, please contact Anna Gurevich at: agurevich@holyblossom.org or at 416.789.3291 ext. 227. Gifts may also be made online at: www.holyblossom.org/donate.

Donors of \$600 or more will be listed on our Annual Appeal Donor Wall outside the main sanctuary which will be prepared in time for Rosh Hashanah 2018. Donors at all levels will be listed in the Bulletin and on our website.

Holy Blossom Temple
Life can Blossom here.

Donations received before May 19, 2018

Holy Blossom Temple High Holy Days 5779

Wishing you a healthy and sweet New Year

SELICHOT, SEPTEMBER 1, 2018

Study Session & Dessert Reception.....6:00 PM
Service.....Service to follow

KEVER AVOT, SEPTEMBER 16, 2018

Ceremony.....10:00 AM, Brimley Road Cemetery

Rosh Hashanah

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2018

Erev Rosh Hashanah

1st Adult Service.....6:00 PM
1st Family Service.....6:00 PM
2nd Adult Service.....8:00 PM

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2018

First Day Rosh Hashanah

1st Adult Service.....8:30 AM
1st Family Service.....9:00 AM
2nd Adult Service.....11:30 AM
2nd Family Service.....11:30 AM
Tashlich & Picnic.....4:45 PM, Cedarvale Ravine

Little Blossoms (age 5 & under).....3:30 PM
Young Readers (age 6-8).....3:30 PM

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2018

Second Day Rosh Hashanah

Adult Service.....9:30 AM
Family Service.....10:30 AM

Yom Kippur

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2018

Kol Nidre

1st Adult Service.....6:00 PM
Family Service.....6:00 PM
2nd Adult Service.....8:30 PM
Teen Service.....8:30 PM
YAD: 20s & 30s.....8:30 PM

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2018

Morning Services

1st Adult Service.....9:00 AM
1st Family Service.....10:00 AM
2nd Family Service.....11:30 AM

Afternoon Services

Study Session.....1:30 PM
Little Blossoms.....2:15 PM
Young Readers.....2:15 PM
Afternoon Services & Yizkor.....3:30 PM
Neilah.....6:00 PM (approx.)

**New
Service
Times!**

High Holy Days 5779

www.holyblossom.org