

Welcome to Temple Beth Shalom

Temple Beth Shalom was founded in 1982 by a small group of Jewish families who recognized the need for a Reform Jewish identity in Polk County, Florida. We associated immediately with the Union for Reform Judaism. During our early years, we gathered in facilities leased from schools, churches, and community organizations. Our first Religious School was held in a chandelier showroom.

In the early 90's, we purchased land on Bradbury Road midway between Winter Haven and Lakeland. On April 26, 2003, 21 years after our first meeting, we dedicated our own building. In addition to a newly remodeled sanctuary, our facility includes a social hall, two classrooms, a kitchen, a library with a collection of children's books as well as contemporary fiction and non-fiction for adults, and an office which also serves as the rabbi's study. The building is located on a lovely, landscaped lot that is large enough for future expansion.

Beth Shalom is a **welcoming congregation**. Our membership includes families and singles from throughout Polk County. Our greatest benefit might be our size: we are large enough to satisfy the needs of our members yet small enough to provide a relaxed setting with genuine warmth and friendliness. Interfaith families are welcome.

Our religious services are designed to meet the needs of a diverse congregation. Men and women participate equally in all temple activities. The mixture of Hebrew and English in our services varies, though the English content is always sufficient to



make the service meaningful for everyone. *Yarmulkes* and *talises* are available and their use is optional. Our Congregation likes to sing; we are led by a small choir, the Shabbatonz.

Rabbi Garson Herzfeld joined our congregation in 2012. He leads Friday evening services, adult education, student confirmation classes, Bar and Bat Mitzvah lessons and other special activities twice a month. Rabbi Herzfeld conducts High Holiday services. He is also available for conversion classes, private consultations and life cycle events.

Rabbi Herzfeld has enjoyed an eclectic rabbinic career. He has served congregations in Dollard des Ormeaux, Quebec; Geneva, New York; Brockton, Massachusetts; Winchester, Virginia; and Brooklyn, New York. He was the Hillel Foundation Director at University of South Florida in Tampa and Jewish Chaplain at Hobart and William Smith Colleges, Colgate University, and most recently, Grinnell College. He has also held positions in the Jewish communal field (Federation and Jewish Community Center). He has been active in numerous organizations, both civic and Jewish, and has served

on CCAR committees. In 2008, he was named a "Senior Rabbinic Fellow" at the Shalom Hartman Institute, Jerusalem where he often studies in July.

Our Torahs. Temple Beth Shalom was privileged to acquire a rescued **Czech Holocaust Torah** from Caslav-Golcuv- Jenikov. The Torah is on permanent loan from the Westminster Synagogue in London. After an additional 25 years of use, it became very fragile, and in 2011, we dedicated a new Torah for daily use. Both Torahs occupy a place of honor in our ark.

As participation in **life-cycle events** is an important part of Jewish family life, Beth Shalom provides for all observances including baby naming, Bar and Bat Mitzvah, marriage, funerals, and *minyans* for *shivah*. We own a Jewish Cemetery located within the Rolling Hills Cemetery of Winter Haven.

High Holiday services are open to the community and copies of Gates of Repentance prayer books are provided for everyone. A reception follows the Rosh Hashanah evening service, and a break-the-fast follows the *Yom Kippur Neilah* and *Havdalah* service. A special service for children is held Yom Kippur afternoon at the same time as the *Yizkor* service. Reservations are required and contributions made by non- members may be applied toward membership.

Other religious holidays—*Sukkot*, *Simchat Torah*, *Chanukah*, *Purim*, and *Shavuot*—are typically celebrated with family services at the Friday evening Shabbat service which falls closest to the holiday. A community *seder* is held on the second night of Passover.

Religious School meets Sunday morning during the academic year. Classes are for children in kindergarten through confirmation. In addition to classroom instruction, the school sponsors a Passover Model Seder, a special Shabbat service with student participation, and a year-end family social.

Volunteer teachers provide religious education to our children. We use text books published by the URJ and Behrman House, materials found on the internet, and the imagination of our parents and teachers to provide a Jewish atmosphere in a community with a very small Jewish population. One of the best things about our school is the fun and friendship experienced by our young people every Sunday morning.

Social, holiday, and educational programs include restaurant outings, mahjong afternoons, covered dish dinners, movie nights, family picnics, theater parties, a book club, a Brotherhood, and adult education. We also sponsor a Chanukah party and Purim Carnival. Committee participation is part of congregational life. Through our website and Email publication *Chai Lites*, we reach the greater Jewish community in Polk County. We also publish an annual membership directory. The calendar is available on our website.

Temple Beth Shalom has purchased a section of the **Rolling Hills Burial Park of Winter Haven**. This area is marked by two stone pillars donated by Beth Shalom families. There is a separate publication on funerals, burial and bereavement.



We are very proud of Beth Shalom. We hope you will take advantage of the many activities our congregation offers and experience the joy and camaraderie of being part of a Jewish identity in Polk County. We invite members of the community to visit our temple and get acquainted.

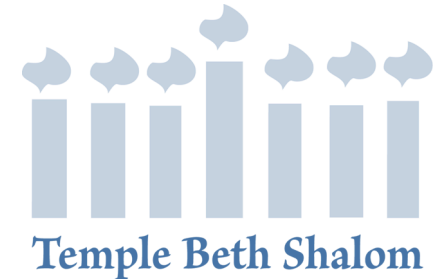
Temple membership is open to Jewish families and individuals who uphold the principles of Reform Judaism. Membership rights are never denied or restricted based on financial circumstances.

If you have any questions or comments, please call us at 863-292 0722, or contact us through our website: www.bethshalompolk.org.

Membership applications can be downloaded from the website.

Membership Committee
09.23.2012

Welcome



Rabbi Garson Herzfeld, D.D.

Sandi Grinker, President



**1029 Bradbury Road
Winter Haven, FL 33881**

**Mailing Address
P.O. Box 313
Winter Haven, FL 33882-0313**

(863) 292 0722

www.bethshalompolk.org