

Temple Beth Shalom, Polk

Chai Lites

June 2025

Farewell Rabbi Herzfeld!
Thank you for 13 wonderful years
at Temple Beth Shalom!



A FINAL REFLECTION ON 13 YEARS

Dear Friends:

As I write this final article for “Chai Lites,” my heart is full. After 13 years serving as your rabbi, the time has come for me to step away and take a new path in life’s journey. It is hard to believe that more than a decade has passed since I first stood on the bimah, looked out at our sacred community, and began what would be one of the most meaningful chapters of my life.

Thirteen is a powerful number in Judaism. It is the age at which a young person traditionally becomes Bar or Bat Mitzvah, stepping into the responsibilities of Jewish life. In many ways, this milestone year feels like a coming-of-age for our relationship, too. We have grown together, weathered challenges, and shared countless moments of holiness - moments that personally have left an indelible mark on my soul.

Over the years, we have prayed together on Shabbat and holidays, mourned losses, celebrated simchas, and studied Torah. We have built a community that is compassionate, curious, joyful and resilient. I have witnessed quiet acts of kindness that revealed the deep strength of our congregation.

Retirement is not an end, but a transition. While I will no longer serve in an official capacity, my love and hopes for this community remain steadfast. Hopefully the Temple Beth Shalom leadership will forge a bright road ahead for our synagogue. Hopefully, too, your next spiritual leader will bring new, creative ideas to nurture the Temple Beth Shalom family. You are in good hands because you are in each other’s hands.

To our officers, board, lay leaders and every member who has shared this sacred work - thank you. You have lifted me up, challenged me to grow, and supported me in ways both seen and unseen. Your partnership and your friendship has been a gift.

I leave this role with immense gratitude - for your trust, your laughter, sometimes your tears, also your prayers. May the Temple Beth Shalom community go from strength to strength (**chazak chazak v’nitchazek**), and may each of us find blessing in the next chapter of our story.

L’Shalom ve L’hitraot,

Rabbi Garson Herzfeld

Pictures from the Rabbi's party





Some words about Rabbi Herzfeld from our members

I've always enjoyed Torah study because although I do read the Parshas regularly, it has more meaning when we do it together and Rabbi Herzfeld imparts his knowledge to us. He always comes prepared and ready to explain in further detail whatever is asked of him.

I also remember Rabbi Herzfeld calling me when I was still in Maui to inquire how I was doing. He was so easy to talk to even though at that time I didn't know him very well well.

I appreciate the calls he makes when I let him know if someone is ill or would just like to talk to him.

I also appreciate the fact that he gives back to our community. He volunteers at the humane society, is a docent at the museum in Tampa and furthers his knowledge by studying in Israel every summer.

I am glad that Rabbi Herzfeld has been our Rabbi and hopes he enjoys his retirement.

- **Arlene Greenberg**

Rabbi Herzfeld was an intuitive and excellent teacher for us. His sermons contained novel perspectives for us to consider and some delightful stories. Torah Study was always fun, and Rabbi Herzfeld made the ancient scriptures applicable to our personal lives and some contemporary issues. I valued how he did not usually interpret the Torah for us, but challenged us to understand it for ourselves. Something else we will always have from Rabbi Herzfeld is what he taught us about how to observe as Jews: Shabbat services, High Holidays, annual cycles. The expert teacher shares some knowledge, models some skills, and encourages you to develop yourself.

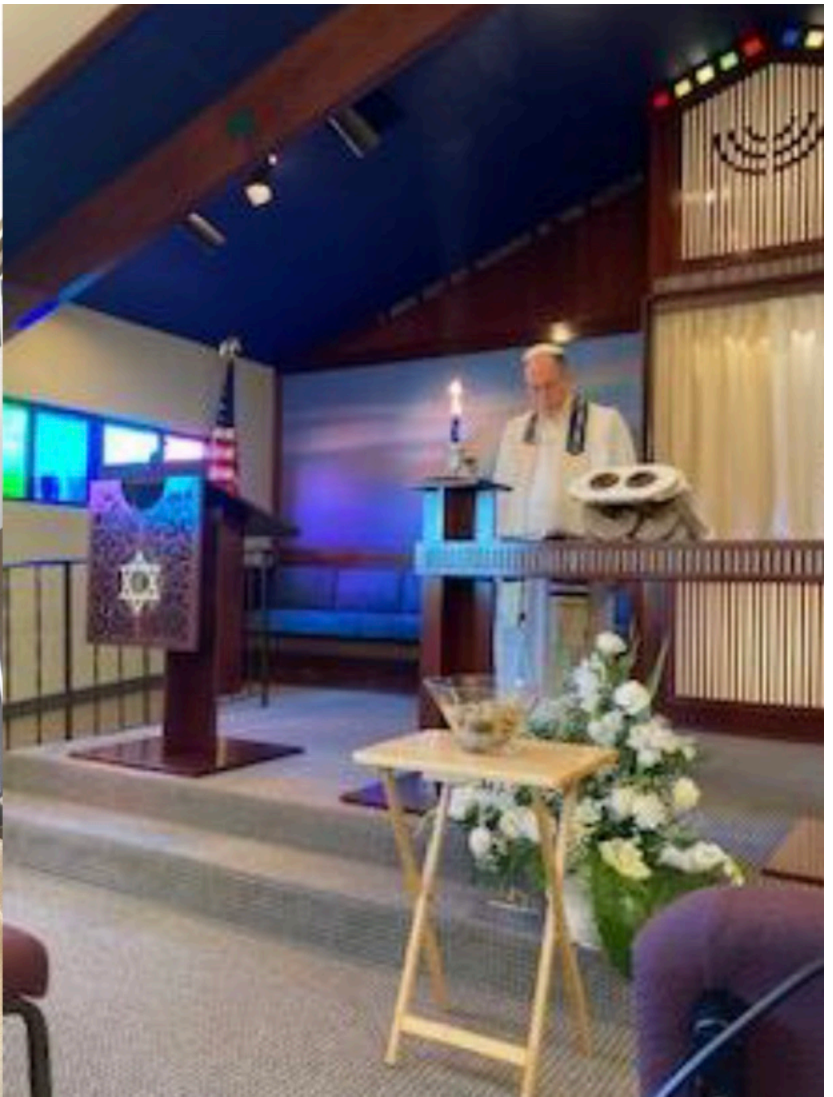
- **Margo Fleisher**

Dear Rabbi Herzfeld,

Thank you for your years of dedication to Temple Beth Shalom. May you have a healthy and peaceful retirement.

l'chaim.

- **Beverly Lerner**



Reflections of Rabbi Garson Herzfeld:

I have been a member since 2016. Only a short time when compared to Rabbi Herzfeld.

I enjoyed the time before Covid. Covid and Zoom changed the world. Was this an act of God?

Torah Studies was my most joyous time with Rabbi Hertzfeld. It was a time of relaxation and learning.
Thank You Rabbi.

- ***Joseph Rodriguez, President***

I moved to Winter Haven with my family in early 2020, right at the start of the pandemic, after relocating from New York. For a while, we continued attending Zoom services with our old congregation, but eventually, I started looking for a local Reform community. That search led us to Temple Beth Shalom, a wonderful congregation here in Winter Haven, where we were welcomed with open arms — and so much of that warmth and kindness came from Rabbi Herzfeld.

His sermons have always resonated with me — thoughtful, insightful, and deeply meaningful.

Rabbi, thank you for everything. Wishing you all the best in your retirement — may it be full of joy, health, and new adventures!

- ***Ethan Feldman***

My memory of Rabbi Herzfeld relates to Torah study.

For the longest time Rabbi kept after me to come to Torah study. On evening at services he said if I showed up on zoom for Torah study he would fall off his chair. As we left temple I noticed that we were parked right next to Rabbi. I left a note on his windshield saying "perhaps." He thought he had gotten a ticket!!!

The next morning I woke early enough to make it. I got on zoom. As promised he fell off his chair. His fur baby Mutig thought oh boy Papa is on the floor it must be play time!

- ***Polly Weinmann***

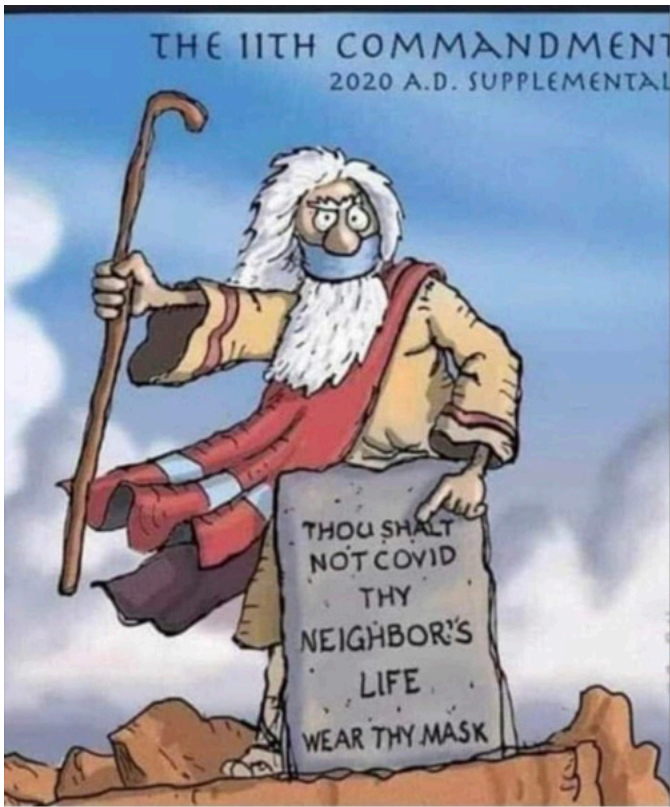
We would like to express our gratitude towards Rabbi Herzfeld. He has been more than a Rabbi to me and my family.

My fondest memory is when Rabbi would come to my house and spend High Holiday with us. Rusty our dog enjoyed spending time with Rabbi so much that he would leave fur all over Rabbi Herzfeld saying take me with you to temple.

Thanks again for being there. We wish you the best.

Happy trails to you.

- ***Debbie and Sandi Grinker***





Temple Beth Shalom Slate Officers 2025-2026

President: Joseph Rodriguez

Vice President: Uriah Rose

Secretary: Margo Fleisher

Treasurer: Lee Ann Martinez

Past President: Lorraine Mixer

Brotherhood/Sisterhood President: Beverly Lerner

Trustees:

Diana Kramer

Arlene Greenberg

Bobby Baum

Ethan Feldman

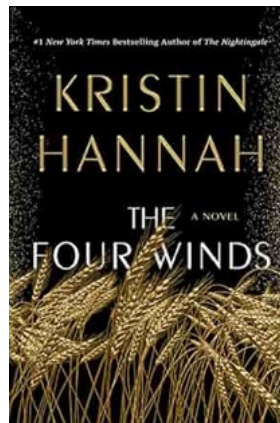
Jeffrey Goldblatt



The Book Club will meet at 11:00 a.m. on Tuesday, June 10th.

The December choice is:

The Four Winds by Kristin Hannah



Notes from the Pres

2025 June Chai Lites

“Others have seen what is and asked why?
I have seen what could be and asked why not?
~ Pablo Picasso

Shalom Aleichem!

After more than forty years of existence, Temple Beth Shalom of Winter Haven, the congregation now reflects on its journey of growth and community service. These decades have been filled with moments of introspection, celebration, and unwavering resilience, marking a legacy that continues to inspire. We are dedicating this month to the longest Rabbinical - Congregate Relationship in our Community History – over twelve years. And how do we celebrate? With a dinner! Just think how brings the congregates out.

After a month in office, our board is preparing the Rabbi Emeritus Dinner, Summer Lay Service Schedule, Cabaret Risque Fun Afternoon, High Holiday Schedule, and our yearly schedule services and activities.

“Aleichem Shalom” – “to you peace!”

Joseph Rodriguez, President

JrodTBS2021@gmail.com

See us on Facebook or our Website.



This column is the final article written by Joseph Rodriguez, who sadly passed away over the weekend. Joseph served our community with passion, humility, and vision—as president, past president, and a constant presence of support. With Rabbi Herzfeld’s retirement and Joseph’s sudden passing, our congregation stands at a moment of transition. Both men, in their unique and meaningful ways, have guided Temple Beth Shalom forward and made space for new leadership and direction. We honor their legacies with deep gratitude and love.

Dues

Polk County Reform Jewish Congregation
Affiliated with the Union of Reform Congregations

Dear Temple Beth Shalom Member,

Your membership and participation with the Jewish community through Temple Beth Shalom is greatly appreciated. As your President and Treasurer and members of the congregation, it is our hope that you can appreciate the challenge Judaism faces in a small community. Our congregation dues, fundraisers and special donations keep us financially solvent.

Your support as a member makes a difference. Our dues structure remains unchanged for 2025-2026. Family or married couples remain at \$900 with single persons at \$500.

Special Dues arrangements should be directed to my attention, including if you wish to pay your Dues in monthly or quarterly increments. If you are currently paying monthly or quarterly, no further notification is necessary.

Please note on your check whether your payment is for Dues or donation, so it gets applied appropriately.

Please consider this message as a statement of your dues.

Your check should be made payable to:

Temple Beth Shalom
P.O. Box 313
Winter Haven, FL. 33880-0313

You may also pay via Zelle to: web@templebethshalompolk.org

You may pay with a credit card when the Square device is available (Square does charge a fee for usage). If you wish to use a credit card, please contact Lorraine Mixter at: lorrainemixter@aol.com.

Any additional support for the building fund as an annual capital contribution, yahrzeit donations or recognition for individuals are also greatly appreciated.

Thank you for your continued participation in our congregation.

Joseph Rodriguez
Temple Beth Shalom Incoming President
jrodtbs2021@gmail.com

Lee Ann Martinez
Temple Beth Shalom Incoming Treasurer
ghkory17@hotmail.com

June Calendar

Jun 1	9:30 a.m.	Brotherhood/Sisterhood at Temple Beth Shalom
Jun 3	10:00 a.m.	Chair Yoga with Joyce Preston
Jun 3	12:00 p.m.	Maj Jong
Jun 8	9:30 a.m.	TBS Board Meeting followed by Calendar Meeting
Jun 10	10:00 a.m.	Chair Yoga with Joyce Preston
Jun 10	11:00 a.m.	Book Club
Jun 10	12:00 p.m.	Maj Jong
Jun 14	11:00 a.m.	Lay Service
Jun 17	10:00 a.m.	Chair Yoga with Joyce Preston
Jun 17	12:00 p.m.	Maj Jong
Jun 22	1:30 p.m.	Cabaret Risque
Jun 24	10:00 a.m.	Chair Yoga with Joyce Preston
Jun 24	12:00 p.m.	Maj Jong
Jun 27	7:00 p.m.	Lay Service
Jul 8	9:30 a.m.	Brotherhood/Sisterhood at Temple Beth Shalom

For more information, please email: web@templebethshalompolk.org
or call: 863-292-0722

Summer Lay Service Schedule

Our wonderful members take turns during the summer giving us presentations on hobbies, holidays and past experiences.

We have brief services following their presentations.

Saturday June 14 th	11:00AM
Friday June 27 th	7:00PM
Saturday July 12 th	11:00AM
Friday July 25 th	7:00PM
Saturday August 9 th	11:00AM
Friday August 22 nd	7:00PM

If you wish to lead a Summer Lay Service, please contact Margo Fleisher @ 863-873-8969 / margosfb@hotmail.com.





The Brotherhood/Sisterhood membership is open to all TBS members and their spouses.

We brunch @Schalamar Creek Golf & Country Club Restaurant
4500 U.S. 92, Lakeland, Florida 33801

Come join us on the First Sunday of each Month.

@ 9:00 am for social time and monthly meeting following.

Dues are \$25.00 per year for Family Voting Rights.

Everyone is Welcome to all our Events.

The Brotherhood/Sisterhood is an active, vibrant part of Temple Beth Shalom. While our main purpose is to raise money for the Temple, we are involved in many other valuable functions.

We get together for social, cultural, and educational activities during the year. We meet for dinner at local restaurants, tour museums, and visit local parks and water ways in and around Polk County. When we're not busy socializing we serve as ushers and greeters during Shabbat and holiday services.

Our monthly meetings are fun, lively and informative. Please join us on Sunday, June 1st at the temple at 9AM for breakfast. The meeting will begin at 9:30. Membership in the Brotherhood

Sisterhood is \$25 for the year.

Joseph Rodriguez, treasurer

Jeffrey Goldblatt, vice president

Beverly Lerner, president

Ethan Feldman, secretary





Good Cheer Committee

Our resident artist, Polly Weinmann is our new Chairperson of the “Good Cheer Committee”.

Please share your name and date if you wish to receive greetings on your birthday, anniversary or at times when you just need an uplifting note.

Email: mom2furkids1@gmail.com

NAME	ADDRESS	PHONE	BIRTHDATE (NO YEAR)	ANNIVERSARY
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Onegs (also known as Kiddush)

The mitzvah of sponsoring an Oneg is a wonderful way to celebrate any milestone from a birth, birthday, bar/bat mitzvah, anniversary, graduation, or a loved one’s yahrzeit.

A Congregational Oneg not only provides a meaningful tribute to a loved one with an acknowledgement in Chai Lites and a charitable donation receipt, but it more importantly provides blessings to the family with the words spoken by friends, members, and attendees to the sponsoring family. Kiddush/Oneg sponsorship helps strengthen your connection to the community while enhancing our community’s Shabbat experience.

To celebrate your milestone with an Oneg, please contact Arlene Greenberg.
Please contact Arlene to reserve your Oneg spot or to volunteer to take over this responsibility at:
arlenegreenberg@gmail.com



2024 – 2025 Directories are ready

Many thanks to Ethan Feldman for his diligent work formatting our 2024 – 2025 Directory.

If you received an email copy, the printed version has many corrections.
Members only are invited to pick up a copy of the printed version.

Thank You's: there is always something to be thankful for!

- Thank you to Diana Kramer for organizing *Aliyahs* on Shabbat.
- Thank you to Bobby Baum for providing delicious homemade Challah.
- Thank you to Arlene Greenberg for organizing our Onegs.
- Thank you to Margo Fleisher for her photography and directing skills during our Zoom Services and our Board meetings & Torah Study as well as her secretarial skills.
- Thank you to Meryl Crews' family for coordinating and paying for the exterminator.
- Thank you to Meryl Crews for sending out Chai Lites to those who do not have access to email.
- Thank you to Beverly Lerner for sending thank you notes.
- Thank you to Polly Weinmann for sending greeting cards.
- Thank you to the Maj Jong ladies for their donations.

Donations

- Barron Krisher has made a donation in honor of the Jewish people.
- Gerry Heyman has made yahrzeit donations in honor of Jeanne Heyman and Nat Heyman.
- Korina Masters has made a donation to the building fund.
- Arlene Greenberg has made a donation for the Dinner with the Rabbi.

The Brotherhood/Sisterhood Presents:

Cabaret Risque

Limited Seating

COME TO
**CABARET
RISQUE**
LAUGH, LEARN & ENJOY YOUR FRIEND'S TALENTS
A BROTHERHOOD/SISTERHOOD PRODUCTION

Snacks Available

Drinks Available
Soda, Soft Drink, Pop,
Fizzy Drink, Soda Pop,
Carbonated Drink

Tickets:
\$10.00

Headliner: Comedian
Ethan Feldman

For Tickets : Contact
Joseph Rodriguez
JrodTBS2021@gmail.com

June 22, 2025 @ 1:30pm
Temple Beth Shalom
1029 Bradbury Road
Winter Haven, FL

Updates on this event will be announced at a later date



Maj Jong Ladies



The Mah Jong ladies meet every Tuesday at noon.

We love our Maj Ladies. They are sharing the expense of using our building. Thank you, ladies, for your contributions of water, soda, paper towels, flatware, etc.!

Feel free to bring your lunch and eat with them before they play. If you would like to learn how to play Mah Jong, they will teach you.

For more information sandigrinker@gmail.com 863-207-7440.



Temple Beth Shalom introduces:

Chai Lites Boosters, a Wish List for much needed upgrades for our building.

By donating Chai, \$18 your name will be published as a "Chai Lites Booster" in our monthly newsletter for a period of one year.

Yes, I want to be a Chai Lites "Booster."

Enclosed is my check in the amount of \$_____ for _____ years.

Please show my name as: _____

Please indicate Chai Lites Booster on your check.

Please mail your check to: Temple Beth Shalom

Attn: Boosters

P.O. Box 313, Winter Haven, FL 33882

Donor Name	Month	Expiration	Donor Name	Month	Expiration
Diana Kramer	3-Mar	2026	Joseph Rodriguez	13-Aug	2026
Janis Koike	26-Jan	2027	Beverly Lerner	9-Jun	2028
Brotherhood/Sisterhood	4-May	2031	Jeffrey Goldblatt	13-Jun	2026
Jerry Kosten	19-Jul	2026	Jerry Heyman	16-Jun	2026
Bobby Baum	3-Mar	2026	Your name here		
Barbara Brooks	28-Aug	2027	Korina Masters	18-Aug	2025
Arlene Greenberg	13-Jun	2025	Varda Rottenberg	3-Mar	2026

June Yahrzeits

Yahrzeit Date	Deceased	Relationship
1-Jun	Claire Poller	grandmother of Robert Poller
3-Jun	Susan Heller	
5-Jun	James Doddemeade	father of Joni Doddemeade
6-Jun	Alexander Mayer	grandfather of Max Mayer
6-Jun	Sylvia Mervis	mother of Allan Mervis
7-Jun	Irving Tarnower	grandfather of Jett Segal
9-Jun	Carolyn Goldblatt	wife of Jeffrey Goldblatt
9-Jun	Sarah A. Lerner Hightower	perpetual yahrzeit
10-Jun	Audree Neuberger	mother of Stuart Neuberger
11-Jun	Herbert Baum	cousin of Bobby Baum
11-Jun	Lawrence Peckman	father of Renee Cohen
11-Jun	Carol Brett Hodes	sister-in-law of Lorraine Mixter
12-Jun	Rose Granison	perpetual yartzheit
13-Jun	John Cornell	father of Diane LeShay
13-Jun	Daniel Kalus	father of Carolyn Neuberger
15-Jun	Molly Meyer	mother of Lee Ann Martinez
17-Jun	Forest H. Doddemeade	mother of Joni Doddemeade
19-Jun	Maida Lamoureux Spadaro	mother of Michelle Chain
20-Jun	Pearl Kosten	Jerry Kosten
28-Jun	Leonard S. Kogan, Ph.D.	uncle of Brenda Poller
30-Jun	Lillian Greenbaum	mother of Korina Masters
30-Jun	Lillian Goldstein	mother of Marsha Kramer

Yahrzeit Reminders - May their memories be a Blessing.

A candle should be lit the night before at sundown.

You may say Kaddish with the Temple Beth Shalom community during Friday services. It is customary at this time to give tzedakah in memory of your loved one. To make a donation to any Temple Beth Shalom fund or to purchase a yahrzeit plaque, please contact us at:
863-292-0722.



A great action photo of the Tuesday morning Yoga practice.

From Left to Right: Joyce Preston (yogi), Sybil Weiss, Arlene Greenberg, Beverly Lerner, Judy Richter and Sandi Grinker.

Chair Yoga at the Temple

Join us for chair yoga at the Temple. Temple member and certified yoga instructor Joyce Preston guides us through this gentle, beneficial activity using simple props, music, and clear directions. Joyce makes it fun and easy while still challenging for even our more advanced participants.

Come join us. \$5 per session.

Contact Beverly Lerner for more information. 863-294-6042 (home)

Bevlerner@aol.com



**Thank you to all the members and families who donated
and thank you to our 2024 Advertisers:**

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Steven Greenberg Insurance

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Temple Beth Shalom Brotherhood/Sisterhood

Joyce Preston

Crews Transportation