

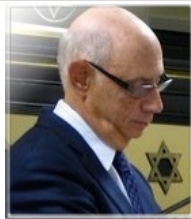


# THE ILLUMINATOR

Or Emet – The Minnesota Congregation for Humanistic Judaism

Winter 2017

Published in December 2016



## Madrikh Message

by Harold Londer

### *Not a Word of My Own to Add*

When writing this, it is two weeks since election night. Jan and I sat in front of the screen (CNN, of course), ready for celebration. As the results trickled, and then poured, in it became obvious that ours was not going to be a victory party. I am sure many of the Or Emet family had similar experiences. The thrill of our first female president, the progressive agenda, a liberal-leaning Supreme Court, all trickling down the drain with that last (lukewarm by now) glass of “celebratory” white wine. We could barely make it through Trump’s victory speech. We stayed up awhile, uncertain if Hillary was going to speak. It was 2:30 am. We didn’t sleep well. We are still not sleeping well.

Since then it has been a parade of analysts trying to explain what happened: politicians, pundits, TV personalities, radio personalities, Republicans, Democrats, newspaper editors, academics, dozens of consultants, and “experts.” They are on television, radio, Facebook, and many other social media sites. My favorite New York Times Magazine article compared the Trump victory to Jesse Ventura’s 1998 gubernatorial victory in Minnesota. One of my deepest, darkest secrets is that I voted for the wrestler.

Rather than attempting to say something new, I turn to the words of those I have looked to for entertainment, education, and guidance. We will miss Leonard and Gwen. And Bob Dylan should attend the Nobel Prize ceremony.

*Underneath the different colors  
Underneath the different speech  
Underneath the different costume  
We are all human beings.*

Sherwin Wine

*History shows that people do cast their  
votes for amorphous reasons...  
the most powerful of which is the need for change.*

Gwen Ifill

*O see the darkness yielding  
that tore the light apart  
Come healing of the reason  
Come healing of the heart*

Leonard Cohen

*No matter how thin you slice it  
there will always be two sides.*

Baruch Spinoza

*Darkness cannot drive out darkness.  
Only light can do that.  
Hate cannot drive out hate.  
Only love can do that.  
The measure of a man (sic) is not where (s)he  
stands in moments of comfort and convenience,  
but where (s)he stands at times of challenge and controversy.*

Martin Luther King

*Every nerve in my body is so naked and numb  
I can't even remember what it was I came  
here to get away from  
Didn't even hear the murmur of a prayer  
It's not dark yet, but it's getting there.*

Bob Dylan



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## **Co-Presidents' Message**

### **Janet Mayer and Lisa Gardner-Springer**



As we write our Co-Presidents' article it is still unseasonably warm and one week post-election. What is the weather and the political climate now? President Obama astutely observed that the sun still came up on November 9<sup>th</sup>, and he will still be president until January 20<sup>th</sup>. We know the Or Emet community will be watching the transition closely and responding to the climatic changes with social justice/action participation...and a snow shovel (or umbrella) at the ready.

Or Emet's season began with a warm summer party, a lively brunch for new and prospective members, and wonderful Shabbat services, adult Friday and Sunday programs, five grades of Jewish Cultural School classes, High Holiday services, a Sukkot party, a St. Stephen's Shelter dinner, donation drives for those in need, and social justice attention to criminal justice reform and the Dakota pipeline situation. Our Hanukkah party is near and from December through February we switch to Saturday morning Shabbat services. In 2017 we offer an adult education class series entitled *Outstanding Individuals through a Humanist Lens* in January, February and March (more information on page 10).

The Or Emet Leadership Team met in November. Fifteen to twenty volunteers gather together three times each year to report on what their committees and task forces have been doing, to share their wisdom, to offer help, and to discuss challenges, opportunities, and concerns coming up. This communication helps Or Emet bond as a community. Our discussions encompassed the Jewish Cultural School sessions, ritual leadership and certification/education support, technology security, and membership directory access, food and celebration coordination, and social justice/action activities. We provided Lisa with the wishes and concerns for her to bring to the fall board meeting of the Society for Humanistic Judaism (SHJ).

At the SHJ meeting, Lisa joined representatives from around the country to share with and learn from other communities what successes they celebrate and what challenges they face. She heard from SHJ's new Executive Director, Paul Golin, who has a bold and ambitious vision for the broader national movement. Everyone in the room was excited and energized by the fresh ideas from the new leadership, which all reflect our threefold identity as Secular, Humanist, and Jewish, and which can support and build up our communities from Minneapolis to Phoenix to New York.

Both of us are grateful for the caring, generous and thoughtful community that is Or Emet. We step up to challenges, step in to help others in need, and step back to give voice to those who need to speak up. It is an honor to co-lead this amazing community.



## Now More Than Ever: We Stand for Equality and Against Hate Silence Equals Acceptance of Bigotry and Racism

Submitted by Paul Golin, Executive Director of the Society for Humanistic Judaism



Paul Golin

What kind of America will our children inherit? The day after the election, I flew to the leadership gathering of Humanistic Judaism in North America. I heard unanimous concern for the future of the United States and its role in the world. The question was not whether we'd experience a setback in strides made on social issues like LGBTQ, racial or gender equality, but how far back we'd be set.

This is not about one political party or another. Our movement includes Republicans, Democrats, Independents, Libertarians, Greens, and others, and as a nonprofit we do not endorse candidates. This is not about one economic philosophy over another, or a foreign policy approach including stances towards Israel, all of which have a robust spectrum of viewpoints and debate among our membership.

This is about the mainstreaming of hate, giving hate groups a seat at the table and empowering racists. This is about scapegoating, the pitting of one group against another. As Jews, we carry a long history of persecution. The blaming of innocent people was applied to us with devastating cruelty for centuries. We learned that when someone has spent years promoting and enacting bigotry and hate, you don't then "just give 'em a chance" to see if they will change their stripes after ascending to the pinnacle of power.

We applaud voices in the Jewish community calling for the exclusion from government of professional hatemongers, and we add our voices to theirs. And we're dismayed by those who are cowed into silent acquiescence, or, worse offering accommodation and cover.

*Forward* editor Jane Eisner wrote, "If Jews excuse the far right's hateful behavior because some people doing it favor certain policies in Israel...then they've abandoned the natural allies in the fight for a more tolerant America. And even worse, they've abandoned their fellow Jews."

The rise in anti-Semitic vandalism, rhetoric, and online harassment is deeply disturbing. Yet Jews are not at the top of the current target list. We were not the only targets in Nazi Germany either, as the famous quote from Pastor Martin Niemöller reminds us. I hope in the coming years we do not have to update that quote to read:

*First they came for the Undocumented Mexican Workers, and I did not speak out— Because I was not an Undocumented Mexican Worker.*

*Then they came for the Muslim Immigrants, and I did not speak out— Because I was not a Muslim Immigrant.*

*Then they came for Family Planning Providers, and I did not speak out—Because I was not a Family Planning Provider.*

*Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me.*

As Jews, we must speak out against hate. As Humanists, we must speak up for equality and reason. Secular Humanistic Jews share a core set of values that we must now fight harder for than we have in recent memory.

*This is an edited version of the original article. The full article can be found at [shj.org](http://shj.org).*

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### Donations



High Holiday contributions

In honor of Arty and Colleen Dorman and their children—Michal Moskow donated flowers

In honor Or Emet—Karol Rubin made a donation

In honor of the birth of granddaughter Leela Anne King—Michal Moskow

In celebration of Harold Londer's lifetime Madrikh certification and dedication to Or Emet  
Alan Miller

David and Joan Barnett

In memory of Paul Rem's mother—David and Joan Barnett

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## Jewish Cultural School Update

by Eva Cohen

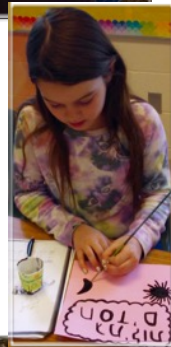
Director of Or Emet Jewish Cultural School and Juniors Teacher

The 2016-2017 school year is in full swing with 32 students enrolled in the Jewish Cultural School (JCS). It's great to see our school grow and benefit from an expanding group of young people, their families, and teachers.

JCS now has five classes—*Littles* (ages 3-4, teacher Josh Kaplan), *K + 1* (kindergarten-1<sup>st</sup> grade, teacher Liza Finestack through November), *Middles* (2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> grade, teacher Renee Dorman), *Juniors* (4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade, teacher Anna Burnstein Gillette), and *Bar/Bat Mitzvah Prep* (6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> grade, teacher Eva Cohen). Sarah Berman-Young continues as our music/Hebrew specialist, rotating into classrooms to teach holiday songs and vocabulary.

JCS parent Liza Finestack has been a terrific addition this fall, temporarily filling the new K + 1 teaching slot. Her full-time work as a professor at the U of MN and mother of three children keeps her busy. Fortunately, we've found a new teacher for the K + 1 position. We're excited to welcome Colline Roland. Colline's background is in sustainable agriculture and working with kids. She is pursuing a Masters in Teaching at Hamline University.

The Or Emet *Sukkot* party was a fall highlight, bringing together JCS families and congregation members in the Talmud Torah *sukkah* for a short holiday service celebrating *Sukkot*'s history and the harvest season. For party refreshments, students in my Bar/Bat Mitzvah Prep class cooked lots of *sabih*, a delicious Iraqi-Jewish Israeli pita sandwich with fried eggplant, sliced eggs, tahini sauce, Yemenite spicy sauce, and Middle Eastern/Israeli salad. My sister, Julia Cohen, a professional cook who works at The Bachelor Farmer, joined us for the cooking lesson and party.



In the classrooms, the Littles have been learning about the holidays and Shabbat, decorating *Shalom* signs, and doing art projects like making *shofarot* for the High Holidays, leaf mobiles, and model *sukkot* with the K + 1 class. K + 1 students also read *Tashlich at Turtle Rock* and went on a nature walk/scavenger hunt inspired by the book for the High Holidays. The Middles class has been making *tzedakah* boxes and learning about Jewish holidays and history, and the Juniors class has been learning about Yiddish literature—reading Yiddish stories in translation and creating puppet shows to retell them—as well as learning about anti-Semitism in modern Jewish history. Bar/Bat Mitzvah Prep students have been working on Hebrew letter recognition and writing skills, exploring Hebrew's connection to Yiddish, reading and discussing a funny Yiddish story in translation about a *kaporos* chicken strike, cooking Mizrahi Jewish food, and learning about Humanistic Jewish values through discussion, role-play, and text art-making.

While no students will be preparing for their humanistic bar/bat mitzvah this school year, a cohort of at least seven students will be preparing for bar/bat mitzvah during the 2017-2018 school year. It's exciting to have so many thoughtful, talented young people approaching this coming-of-age-milestone!

**As always, you are welcome to contact me** at [evarosecohen@gmail.com](mailto:evarosecohen@gmail.com) or 651-285-0406 with JCS-related questions or concerns. I'm looking forward to the upcoming school year!

## *Jewish Cultural School News*

### ***Sammi J. Bergren's Bat Mitzvah Presentation — In Her Own Words***

Samantha (Sammi) Bergren became a humanistic bat mitzvah on August 28, 2016. She has attended Or Emet's Jewish Cultural School since 2010, and over the past year she also participated in our bat and bar mitzvah prep program. In this program, which meets an additional time each month, Sammi and Or Emet's bar mitzvah candidate this year, Noah Lindeman, selected and took part in a broad range of Jewish cultural activities as well as *tzedakah* and *tikkun olam* activities together with program leader Eva Cohen, Madrikh Harold Londer, their mothers, and other members of the congregation and broader community. To prepare independently for her bat mitzvah, Sammi completed intensive research on a topic of Jewish interest to her, created a presentation based on this research and also wrote a humanistic commentary on the *parshah* (Torah portion) corresponding to the week of her bat mitzvah. Here is Sammi's summary of the program experience and her research project.

*My bat mitzvah was a life-changing experience that started a year before my ceremony. I completed an inspiring program with my teacher, Eva Cohen, which prepared me for my bat mitzvah. We attended many Jewish cultural activities around the Twin Cities and gave back to our community through volunteering. My bat mitzvah taught me so much about my culture and changed my perspective on what it means to be Jewish. I am so glad I was able to have a bat mitzvah and celebrate with my family, friends, and the Or Emet congregation.*

*The topic for my bat mitzvah research presentation was, "The Soviet Jewish People and Their Journey to America." I picked this topic because my mom's side of my family is both Russian and Jewish. My mother, along with many other relatives, emigrated from the Soviet Union in the late 1970s. I read books, researched on the Internet, and interviewed my grandparents about their experience immigrating to America. My project included the story of the Soviet Jewish immigrants and also parts of my family history. It was very interesting to learn about the struggle and experience of my family; I only knew the general story of their immigration before my bat mitzvah, but when I understood the whole story, it was very meaningful and made me feel so grateful to live in America and to be part of my family. I am excited to now be considered an adult in the congregation and, to make it official, I even have my own name tag.*



*Mazel tov, Sammi!  
Or Emet is proud of you.*

## *Member News*

### ***Ben Drucker — Selected for Prestigious Wisconsin State High School Music Honor***



After intense auditions, Ben, a violinist, was chosen for the highly selective Wisconsin State High School Honors Music Project. The program united Ben and other musically talented students for rewarding musical experiences. They participated in a demanding summer music camp and also rehearsed and performed with the nation's finest conductors in professional and highly disciplined settings.

After months of preparation, the honors ensembles performed in October during the Wisconsin Music Educators Association Conference in Madison.

Ben and his family have been active members of Or Emet for several years. He became a bar mitzvah in 2013. Ben continues to contribute as a teaching assistant in JCS classrooms. He is a junior at Memorial High School in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

### ***From the Ground Up: Or Emet Social Justice/Social Action Committee***

Submitted by Arty Dorman, Social Justice/Social Action Committee Co-Chair

Wow, for a small committee within a small congregation, we have had a busy season. This fall, the Social Justice/Social Action Committee drafted a resolution for Or Emet to take a position in support of the Standing Rock Sioux Nation's opposition to the Dakota Access Pipeline. We also requested that Or Emet make a monetary contribution toward the protest's legal defense fund. Both requests were approved by the Executive Committee. As a follow up, our January 21 Shabbat program will address this topic with speaker Kathy Hollander, a full time activist involved in the protests. Thanks especially to Allan Malkis for drafting the resolution and Molly Wilbur-Cohen who arranged for our speaker.

Last year's work on reforming the criminal justice system, a partnership with Jewish Community Action, continued with a Community Summit held December 4th to forge future focus areas and plans. Look for announcements of upcoming opportunities to be involved.

We continue collecting personal care items for Listening House and are now directing donations of used clothing to the St. Louis Park Emergency Program. We also participated in the St. Paul Jewish Family Service Hanukkah gift drive through the collection box at Talmud Torah and provided dinner at St. Stephen's Shelter on November 6.

Coming up: Our next St. Stephen's dinner will be on Saturday, January 21, and Or Emet group volunteering at Second Harvest Heartland will be on Saturday morning, February 18 (more info on page 12).

Thank you all for your support of Or Emet's Social Justice/Social Action initiatives.

### **Or Emet Tikkun Olam in Action!**



Or Emet community makes a difference



Providing dinner at St. Stephen's Shelter



Packing food at Second Harvest Heartland



### ***The Illuminator: An Invitation to Or Emet Members*** by Susan Weinberg and Joan Barnett

The Illuminator is published in August, December, and April and we always welcome contributions that fall within the newsletter's guidelines. We encourage you to write about topics that are meaningful to you and that you believe will be meaningful to Or Emet members. If a holiday is coming up, you may want to write about what meaning it holds for you or a special memory that you have of it; perhaps a book review, recent or upcoming events (Or Emet or elsewhere), reflections or observations on your Jewish experience, Humanistic Judaism or Jewish history or values. High resolution photos submitted with articles are greatly appreciated. We also welcome contributions of artwork on timely Jewish themes.

Most submissions should not exceed 400 words. Submissions are evaluated by the editors to determine suitability for publication and are subject to editorial review for length and content. Please let us know if you would like to submit an article.

We need and appreciate your contributions for this member newsletter.



## ***Hanukkah and the Celebration of Religious Freedom***

Submitted by Naomi Rockler-Gladen

I used to roll my eyes at Hanukkah. I've sung my share of token dreidel songs at school Christmas concerts. I've fielded my share of questions from people who think that Hanukkah is the "Most Important Jewish Holiday Ever." Hanukkah is the Harriet Tubman of Jewish holidays—you know, like the one Black History figure that many white people recognize?

These days, though, I've come to appreciate the festival of Hanukkah. It is, after all, a celebration of a story about religious freedom, and of the importance of fighting for religious freedom. What could be more worthy of celebration for Humanistic Jews?

And moreover, after the 2016 presidential election, what could be more relevant?

As the great-granddaughter of a Holocaust victim, I have a fundamental obligation to stand up against religious persecution. During this presidential election, I watched as the winning candidate garnered support by fueling Islamophobia. He falsely claimed that New Jersey Muslims were celebrating 9/11, and at one point promised to prohibit Muslims from entering the country. Now that the election is over, it's unclear exactly what actions will be taken, but there's been serious discussion of creating a Muslim registry, and the parallels with Jewish registries in Nazi Europe should cause us outrage. Moreover, since the election, many Muslims have been harassed, including women who have been told to remove their hijabs.

At the same time, the Vice President-elect is one of the biggest proponents of so-called "religious freedom" laws. This "freedom" is Orwellian double-speak for allowing Christians of a certain mindset to discriminate against the LGBTQ community and to impose their beliefs on others. As Governor of Indiana, the Vice President-elect pushed through a state law allowing businesses to refuse to serve LGBTQ individuals.

The explosion of both Islamophobia and so-called "religious freedom" laws is a direct infringement upon the freedoms of religious minorities. That is what the Maccabees fought for in the legendary story of Hanukkah. This Hanukkah, in addition to our latkes and dreidels and family celebrations, perhaps it would be a good time to make a donation to the American Civil Liberties Union or to a Muslim organization, or to contact members of Congress about the importance of religious freedom. After all, what better way to celebrate Hanukkah than to fight for religious freedom?

### **OREMET'S PRE-HANUKKAH PARTY**

**Saturday, December 17, 2016, 5:00 – 7:30 pm**

**Neighborhood House at the Wellstone Center  
179 Robie Street East, St Paul - free attached parking**

- Latkes with a light potluck meal
- Music, dreidels, gelt, games and plenty of fun
- Hanukkah music and singing
- Special entertainment by Jewish Cultural School children
- Hanukkah blessing and candle lighting



**Reservations are open December 2 - December 14**

**RSVP online [potluck.oremet.org](http://potluck.oremet.org) — Questions/late reservations [signup@oremet.org](mailto:signup@oremet.org)**

## *Or Emet High Holidays 2016 / 5777*

### **High Holidays 2016/5777**

by Barry Cohen, High Holiday Committee Chair



Or Emet celebrated the High Holidays with services and a Break-the-Fast. Harold Londer, our Madrikh, led services and was honored for his many years of dedication to Or Emet. As Humanistic Jews, our observances glean from traditions and historic texts. Their meaning and values reaffirm our roots and are applicable to our daily lives. In words and song we have created new rituals that connect us with our past and recognize our responsibilities to care for each other and the world. Ours was a communal celebration with dozens of members playing voluntary roles: leading and reading portions of the service, writing and delivering commentaries, conducting songs and music, and much more.

The High Holiday observances were well-received owing to the substantial effort of the planning committee members: Arty Dorman, Joan Barnett, Barry Cohen, Liza Finestack, Sharon Miller, Sarah Berman-Young, Harold Londer, and Jack Spencer.

## *Member Commentaries*

*We are publishing three of the member presentations featured at Or Emet's 2016 High Holiday services. Our members' original commentaries offer their unique perspectives and have become an enduring and meaningful tradition for our congregation.*

### **Kol Nidre Reflections**

Submitted by Allan Malkis

Traditionally Kol Nidre is a time for Jews to look back at the year and consider ways we failed to live up to our intentions and promises to ourselves. As a Humanistic Jew I take this in a secular way. I will share three ways in which I have not fulfilled all my intentions and look forward to what I can try to do differently next year.

First, I want to take responsibility as a White male for my privileges which let me go about my daily life without fear that I will be pulled over by police for the color of my skin and possibly even killed for no better reason than the fear my race provokes in someone else. I want to take action in support of Black Lives Matter and do what I can to change the climate that leads to killings of so many Black men. I can make my opinions known to elected officials and those they appoint to run our law enforcement agencies and tell them I do not support these racist killings.

Second, I think about the way men mistreat women and abuse and harass them. In the wake of the revelations about Donald Trump and his statements and behaviors, I need to take responsibility as a man and let other men know that I don't think it is OK to express those attitudes, even if they are supposedly said "in fun." Allowing that type of speech encourages and normalizes the sexism in our society and it is my hope I will do my part to say it is unacceptable.

Finally, I am concerned about the impact of global warming and climate change. We are called as Humanistic Jews to remember we are all connected to the rest of the world and its people. The energy I use in America impacts millions of people living in coastal areas across the globe. America has 5% of the world's people and uses a huge percentage of the total energy. Anything I can do to reduce the impact America's energy use has on rising sea levels and changes in weather is important. I can lobby decision-makers and work to reduce our impact on these potentially disastrous changes.



## ***The Akeda: An Ongoing Lesson***

by Ami Berger

The overarching narrative of Akeda criticism is that no one agrees on anything, except for the story itself, which goes like this:

1. God tests Abraham
2. The test is to see if he will sacrifice his son Isaac
3. Abraham is willing to sacrifice his son
4. God has to stop him



And thus the controversy begins. Some scholars argue that Abraham passed the test, others feel he failed miserably. There is thought it isn't a test at all, but a political statement about the immorality of human sacrifice.

I view all text as metaphor, and this is especially true when I think about the Torah—such stories are not “truths” with a capital T. They are parables to be learned from.

The question I take from the Akeda is this: how much do we sacrifice our personal relationships to our personal beliefs? Which is more important: people in our lives or principles in our hearts?

We hold our family relationships and friendships dear, and yet it is not uncommon for these questions to tear families and friends apart. Much like Abraham, we may sometimes feel called by deeply-held personal truths to abandon—to sacrifice—those we love, whose truths are different.

The current political situation bears this out. This presidential election is forcing us to face the uncomfortable reality that ideas that seem so clearly right to about one-half of us are just as clearly wrong to the other half. Sometimes these halves are across the country, and sometimes they are across the dinner table. And so the question of the Akeda rears its head: at what point is the belief so important that it seems imperative to slit the throat, so to speak, of the relationship that will not fit its boundaries? Do we shut out the coworker? Unfriend the college classmate on Facebook? Disinvite the uncle from Thanksgiving?

There are some situations, of course, when the path is clear: when a relationship is toxic or abusive. When the question is a difference of opinion and experience, the choice is less obvious. When it seems so clear that our moral compass—our “God”—is being violated by another's beliefs, what do we do?

My own answer is informed by the Buddhist sentiment that everyone who comes into our lives is a teacher. If we cut ourselves off from those who think differently—if we sacrifice those relationships—we may feel better and enjoy our Facebook feed more, but we also may have lost a teacher. This is what I hold onto, even as I am outraged by the hateful rhetoric of those who deny human rights and common decency. I let this political season be a lesson—this rage I see and don't understand. Where does it come from? Is there something worth listening to underneath the hate? How do we apply the lessons of history to today?

Perhaps the Akeda is less a final exam and more an ongoing lesson in owning our part in what we call *tikkun olam*—repairing the world. In the Akeda, it is God who has to put a stop to the murder of Isaac. Humanism teaches us that we have that power. We have the power to see clearly, act compassionately, and hold strong to our principles without demeaning those who do not share them. This is my hope for this moment in our nation's political history, and my hope for 5777 and beyond.

Shanah tovah.

## ***The Jonah Impulse***

Submitted by Don Larsson

Biblical stories are rarely ends in themselves. One of the best-known Midrash commentaries has Jonah touring the seas and the underworld in a submarine-like fish with transparent eyes for portholes.



One of the things making Jonah interesting is that he's one of those crotchety prophets who wind up arguing with an even more crotchety God. In one Midrash tradition, Jonah had earlier been called to preach to Jerusalem that if it did not mend its ways, God would destroy the city. Jerusalem did mend its ways and was spared, but then the citizens taunted Jonah—which Jonah did not take kindly. He wanted “justice,” not mercy. That, according to the Midrash, is the real reason he ran away.

In the biblical story, after the *tsuris* of running away, nearly drowning, living inside the dark stinking belly of a great fish, and then schlepping three days journey to Nineveh and preaching, Jonah has to put up with the same result: Nineveh repents, and is spared. “That’s it?” he asks. “Where’s the justice in this?” Once again, mercy is not on his mind.

God’s ironic reply: “. . . should not I have pity on Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than 120 thousand persons that cannot tell their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?” Jonah is not given a come-back line.

One thing I take from this story is the temptation of “the Jonah Impulse.” Right now, we see many individuals and movements driven by their definitions of a “justice” based on retribution and revenge. We have to remember—as Jonah learned—that death, destruction, and annihilation also fall on the ignorant and the innocent. And justice without pity or mercy is no justice at all.

In his essay *Inside the Whale*, George Orwell suggested another reason for the appeal of Jonah’s story. Orwell writes, “being inside a whale is . . . very comfortable, cosy, homelike. . . . countless people have envied [Jonah] . . . The whale’s belly is simply a womb big enough for an adult. There you are, in the dark, cushioned space that exactly fits you, with yards of blubber between yourself and reality, able to keep up an attitude of the completest indifference, no matter what happens . . . Short of being dead, it is the final, unsurpassable stage of irresponsibility.”



We all have to seek our own ways to get outside of the whale.

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**Save the dates!**

**Or Emet Adult Education Series**

~Free and open to the public~



***Outstanding Individuals Through A Humanist Lens***

Wednesdays 6:30 - 8:30 pm

St. Paul JCC, 1375 St. Paul Ave, St Paul, MN

**January 11, 2017 — *Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg*  
Presented by Molly Wilbur-Cohen**

**February 1st — *Outstanding Philosopher of the 20th Century - Ludwig Wittgenstein*  
Presented by Von Gillette**

**March 1st — *Jewish Humanist Role Model of 2017 - Physicist Rosalind Franklin*  
Presented by Allan Malkis**

**SHABBAT PROGRAMS****ON FRIDAYS AND SATURDAYS**

Programs are at the Sabes Jewish Community Center 4330 South Cedar Lake Rd, St. Louis Park.

**Friday** programs are from 7:30 - 9:00 pm.

**Saturday** programs are from 10:00 - 11:30 am.

Programs include a brief Humanistic Shabbat service and Oneg.

**SATURDAY, January 21 at 10:00 am**

***The Standing Rock - Minnesota Connection: the Bulldozers of Crude Oil***

**Presenter:** Kathy Hollander, a volunteer with MN350, she specializes in extreme oil extraction and transportation in MN

**SATURDAY, February 25 at 10:00 am**

***Beautiful Tree, Severed Roots***

A film documentary about a Socialist Jewish family who fled Romania in 1940 and rebuilt their lives in Kenya

**Presenter:** Dr. Richard Logan, President of the Society for Humanistic Judaism, Past-President of Or Emet and formerly a faculty member at the University of Nairobi (Kenya)

**Friday, March 24 at 7:30 pm**

***Humanistic Jewish Values and the Middle East***

**Presenters:** Or Emet members Allan Malkis, Barry Cohen and Howard Schneider

**Friday, April 28 at 7:30 pm**

***The Jewish Czech Experience: Historical Overview and Personal Journey***

**Presenter:** Dr. Tina Scott Edstam, Or Emet member, will share exploration of her Czech family's experiences during WWII through correspondence and imagery.

**Friday, May 19 at 7:30 pm**

***The State of the State of Minnesota***

**Presenter:** Minnesota State Legislator TBA

**SUNDAY PROGRAMS**

**Sunday** programs are at the Talmud Torah Building 768 Hamline Ave. South, St. Paul

Adult programs meet from 10:00 - 12:30 pm (concurrently with Jewish Cultural School classes).

**January 8**

***A Life in the Theater - But Not on the Stage***

**Presenter:** Arty Dorman, Or Emet member.

Arty will share how, after a career in education, his life-long love of theater led to his current work as the Twin Cities Theater Critic for *Talkin' Broadway*.

**February 12**

***Showing Empathy in the 21st Century: An Open Discussion***

**Discussion Leader:** David Zukor, Or Emet member

**March 12**

***Interfaith Families: Raising Interfaith Children and Grandchildren***

**Presenters:** Barbara Rudnick, Program Manager for Family Life Education at Jewish Family and Children's Services

**April 9**

***Four and Soon-to-be Five Generations in the Workforce***

**Discussion Leader:** Alex Schwartz, Human Resources Manager delivering tactical programs in a global environment at GNet Group; Or Emet member

**May 7**

***2nd Annual Member Art and Music Show***

**Discussion Leaders:** Dave Zukor and Don Larsson  
Or Emet artists and musicians will exhibit their works, perform and share experiences.



**Pre-Hanukkah Party • Saturday, December 17, 5:00 - 7:30 pm**

Neighborhood House at Wellstone Center, 179 Robie St. East, St. Paul — more information on page 7

**Adult Education Series: *Outstanding Individuals Through A Humanist Lens*** — more information on page 10  
January 11, February 1, March 1, 2017 • 6:30 - 8:30 pm • St. Paul JCC, 1375 St. Paul Ave, St. Paul

**St. Stephen's Shelter dinner • January 28 and April 29, 7:00 - 8:30 pm**

A volunteer opportunity for families - children over 8 years are welcome

**Second Harvest Heartland Food Bank in Golden Valley • February 18, 9:00-11:30 am**

A volunteer opportunity for families - children over 8 years are welcome

**Humanistic Passover Seder • Saturday, April 15, 5:00 - 8:00 pm**

at The First Unitarian Society, 900 Mt. Curve Ave, Minneapolis 55403

**Annual Meeting and Picnic • Sunday, June 4**

- Annual Meeting and election of officers 10:00 am - 12:00 noon

- Potluck Picnic 12:00 noon – 2:00 pm

at Lake Nokomis Community Center, 2401 East Minnehaha Parkway, Minneapolis 55417

