

## Holidays

# 2016-2017

October 3, 4	Rosh Hashanah
October 11	Kol Nidre
October 12	Yom Kippur
October 17, 18	Sukkot
October 24	Shmini Atzeret (Yizkor)
October 25	Simchat Torah
December 25, 2016 – January 1, 2017	Chanukah
February 11	Tu B'Shvat
March 12	Purim
April 10	First Seder, Passover
April 18	Passover ends at sundown (Yizkor)
May 1	Yom Hazikaron
May 2	Yom Haatzmaut
May 14	Lag B'Omer
May 31 – June 1	Shavuot



## Temple **Reyim**

We are a traditional, egalitarian, inclusive, participatory, spiritually-focused congregation that engages the mind and nurtures the soul.

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2016-2017 | 5777

# Siporei Reyim

## Stories of Friends

## סיפורי רעים

Our community stands on many pillars, which uplift and support us. They are deeply rooted in our congregational history, while moving us to envision our future. Our booklet this year tells stories of Reyim members, who through their energy, warmth and vision, illustrate five core pillars (family, friendship, learning, social impact and spiritual openness). May these anecdotes inspire our growing, loving community.



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סיפורי רעים

## Rabbi's Story

I recently sat with Reyim members to consider a motif for our annual *Siporei Reyim* booklet, which means Stories of Friends. I love that our members have become the primary “texts” from which we learn about our community.



This year, we framed these stories around five “pillars.” It was a fun and creative process to consider the building blocks upon which our community was founded and continues to thrive. We decided on *Areyvut* (social responsibility), *Talmud Torah* (learning through text and reflection), *Re'ut* (friendship), *Ruchaniyut* (spiritual openness) and *Mishpacha* (family). These pillars are the essence of a strongly-connected Jewish life and a vibrant Jewish community.

I learned about the many entryways into Judaism from my grandparents and parents. Growing up in a small town with few Jewish families, my spiritual life was formed at home. Many years later, as I began my rabbinic training, I realized I had taken a path back toward these roots.

Often I am asked: “how did you get here?” In response, I always share my commitments to these five pillars: family; social impact; learning; meaningful relationships; and a traditional, open-hearted, spiritually-focused life.

Inside you will find stories from members of our loving community. I encourage you to share yours with family and friends.

## President's Story



I grew up surrounded by family. My grandfather had four brothers and one sister. All of them lived in Baltimore. In fact, they all were born and raised in Baltimore. Their kids were raised and lived in Baltimore, too. I could not meet a new person without them asking, “are you related to...?” For me, I always planned to live and raise my family in Baltimore.

Family gatherings were frequent and always on the High Holidays. We all went to shul in the morning, then to my Aunt Ida's house for honey cake, apples and candy. We were a tight-knit family. This time of year, I think about my extended family and growing up in my home town.

High holidays to me means family. While I no longer live in Baltimore, I always make a special effort to connect. I call my siblings and my Mom. Several years ago I visited Beth El, our synagogue, and the graves of my Dad, grandparents, great aunts and great uncles. These are my roots.

Reyim has that same spirit. Families, many of them inter-generational, sharing all that Judaism has to offer, in a community of caring, chesed and kindness. Our culture is our most valuable asset. It is very similar to what I grew up with in Baltimore and what I am most proud to be a part of today. However, I still miss the honey cake.

Areyvut

Social Responsibility

עֲרֵבּוּת

Judaism instructs us to care deeply about our local and global communities. We bring this commitment to life by supporting those in need and protecting our environment. This year, our Social Responsibility Committee will be launching a variety of programs that encourage your participation. Look for details in the bulletin and on our website.

## Bonnie Glickman (member since 2014)



From a very young age, I learned the valuable lesson of giving to others and respecting all human beings. My father taught me that acknowledging and helping a stranger in need is fundamental to our humanity. Gratitude for the good fortune of being born in a free country with access to education is not something to take lightly. Since the circumstances of others could well have been ours, it is actually a privilege to help those less fortunate.

Due to a full work and family schedule, at first I declined an invitation to chair the Social Action Committee. However, current events reminded me that this was a tangible way to make a contribution and inspire others, so I accepted.

Knowing that the world is filled with endless challenges, the committee agreed that we could not simply take on the “easy ones.” We’re still in the formative stages, but we have started projects that will make a big impact. We have revamped the environmental sustainability of our building by increasing recycling, adding composting and reducing the amount of waste we send to landfills. We also sent 18 filled backpacks to students at The Second Step in Newton, who otherwise would have started the school year without them. Also in progress is an initiative to work with other faith groups to sponsor a refugee family in the Boston area. Already it’s gratifying to see how many members are excited about what’s coming and offered their help.

The world cannot afford for its inhabitants to be indifferent. Judaism is a religion of action and Temple Reyim is a congregation where thoughtful participation is encouraged. It is our collective, moral responsibility to make an impact. It will be exciting to see the connections forming among participants from our community and beyond who also share this passion.

## Mara Bloom (member since 2010)



The temple I belonged to as a child was committed to social responsibility so this all seems very natural. As a mom with a demanding career in the healthcare industry, I have been searching for a way to get involved that extends beyond the work day. *Areyvut* is a way of fulfilling community needs and showing that we care. It provides a great deal of satisfaction when we are able to help others on a very personal level.

I’m impressed that the Social Responsibility Committee members identified three key issues that will engage the diverse interests within our community. There is a breadth of opportunities that may appeal to the various generations represented within our congregation.

The first initiative involves Second Step, which is located near my home and has evoked many personal connections for people. It was even a teaching moment with my son to explain that the backpacks we were purchasing weren’t for him, but for other children who will start school better because of our generosity.

The second initiative is a refugee project, which also is exciting because we’ll be working with other interfaith organizations to manage the logistics of resettlement. The Green initiative focuses on recycling and reducing waste, which we all feel is important to improve the environment and hopefully save money!

It’s rewarding that everyone I’ve met at Temple Reyim shares a core sense of what is important, asks good questions and are eager to learn. Progress by this committee won’t take long because there are so many doers among us to lighten the load.



The Second Step in Newton is an organization that helps parents and children who have experienced abuse. These backpacks were part of a project we worked on and were bought, filled with school supplies and donated by generous members of Temple Reyim. They were greatly appreciated by the folks at The Second Step.

By learning from the wisdom of our ancient traditions, we not only gain more insight into our own lives, but also inspire others to learn as well. Our community is rich with diverse learning opportunities. As students and teachers, we embrace varying perspectives inquisitively and respectfully, which builds an enlightened community.

### Vlad Elgart (member since 2013)



In high school and college, I developed close friendships with people by sharing ideas and being open to alternative opinions. The same is true for any community environment, where exchanging information and viewpoints can bring people closer together.

As we all know, learning is not limited to the classroom. However, I prefer to study in a group setting because it helps me remember the key points that were discussed.

Finding a congregation with members who are passionate about learning was very important to us. We found what we were looking for at Temple Reyim because there are many opportunities to study ancient texts, traditions and synagogue customs, while engaging with very curious and perceptive shul-goers. Our kids love that regardless of your age (young or old), your thoughts and perspectives are respected and discussed. This is a great way to form long-lasting relationships.



### Carol and David Stollar (members since 1964)

Studying and learning are essential elements of our Jewish identity. Some consider it the most important mitzvah because knowledge leads to actions. The reward is deepening insight, particularly in group settings that include a healthy exchange of information, ideas and opinions.



A two-year Reyim class on *Tzion*, for example, engaged 28 people with a wide range of political views. We read and met with an outstanding teacher for more than two hours on 40 Tuesday evenings. Everyone's depth of understanding and awareness of nuances increased even if basic positions were not changed. Now, we have a stronger bond with each other than if we had studied individually.

Both of us appreciate the great variety of learning choices at Temple Reyim, including the breadth of interests, great teachers and texts Rabbi Berman brings for the *Beit Midrash* series. Our studies of *Torah*, *Talmud* and *Midrash* have given us insights that affect our daily lives.



Taking classes at Temple Reyim motivated me to earn a Master's degree in Jewish Studies from Hebrew College. Based on our learnings, we've also adapted our religious practices both at home and in the synagogue because we know more of the "why" and "how."

The name of our congregation comes from our fundamental commitment to and blessing of friendship. We experience Temple Reyim as a second home and use every opportunity to form connections among our members. We're proud that prospective members and guests often comment about how welcome they feel once they walk through our doors.

### Amy and Bob Worth (members since 1989)

Temple Reyim is a community, where everyone can be themselves. We greet each other with a hello or a smile whether we know each other or not. It's similar to a family, where everyone has both unique and similar experiences.



When we joined, we had many opportunities to meet other young families during children's services, nursery school events or on the playground. Then, it evolved to meeting people through committees, as Board members, during holidays and at special celebrations.



I knew some members from when our kids were young, but really felt connected by playing Brotherhood softball. During practices, in the field or on the bench, we enjoyed the relaxed atmosphere of joking around and chatting as much as playing the game. We certainly liked winning, but we understood that there was more to it than that. This really demonstrates the down-to-earth, easy going nature of fellow congregants.

Throughout the years, all our clergy have made it a priority to know each family member and recognize their unique contributions. Everyone in the community feels passionately about something and is encouraged to engage others with common interests.



Serving as temple President was a huge growth moment. I was supported in taking risks and offering new ideas. I never expected to take on this role, but at Temple Reyim everything feels possible because our community is a safe environment. Now, I have more friends inside the temple than outside and really enjoy interacting with new members, too!

### Emma Sullaway (family member since 2004)



When my brother and I were younger, our parents brought us to Reyim every week to attend Tot Shabbat and later Mini Minyan youth services. As our B'nei Mitzvah approached, I realized that I had made important friends over the years. Now, I choose to attend Shabbat services weekly because of the special relationships I've formed. When I think about the definition of home – it's where you love everyone.

Since this is how I feel about the friendships I've made, it's why I call Temple Reyim a second home.

Many kids my age think going to temple is not fun and it can be difficult to feel motivated as we get older. I remember when my mom challenged us a few years ago to learn Anim Zmirot and as a reward promised a trip Taam China, a kosher Chinese restaurant. We supported each other, learned it and were very proud to sing it well. In fact, we still do it most weeks, but have not yet enjoyed our Chinese feast!

USY is another way to get involved and meet new friends from Reyim and New England. A few years ago, I was scheduled to attend the Blue Man group event after coming back from an exhausting, two-day hiking trip. My parents would have let me skip the evening event, but I was too excited to see my friends. We took pictures with each other in the limo as well as with the performers. I was really glad we could experience this together.

What's really great about USY is that all different age kids come together for various events. As a USY Board member, I noticed that now I'm either hanging out or talking with many of my Reyim friends at least once a week. Also, don't forget to join USY – the coolest and best chapter in all New England!



An open heart and imaginative mind are the essence of Jewish spiritual life. By approaching traditional, Jewish observance and learning with curiosity and openness, we learn to be accepting, compassionate, forgiving and kind.

### Josh Siegel (member since 2013)



My Jewish background always has been connected with a participatory, lay-led congregation. That kind of inclusiveness and informality opens me up spiritually and enhances my experience. When looking for a congregation to join, my family and I knew a synagogue with a more formal approach would not be a good fit.

The experience at Temple Reyim enables all of us to participate in our own meaningful ways, while feeling part of a special community. Each individual can follow their own path, yet everyone is warmly embraced.

On Saturdays, my twins get very excited to see the Torah come out of the ark, kiss the scrolls as they pass and even walk up to the *bimah*. It would be gratifying as a parent if they continue developing a love of Judaism based on these experiences that may last a lifetime. I know they're on the right path so far by learning rituals, *tikkun olam* and *mitzvot*.

My wife, Rachel, and I are very happy that we picked Reyim – a *shul* that fits our needs of religious and spiritual openness. It has set us and our children on a solid spiritual foundation.

Opening my mind and heart is a conscious practice that has enhanced my life. It's a blessing that Temple Reyim offers an environment where I can be myself and feel connected at the same time.



### Rebecca Kornblatt (member since 2014)



I summoned *chutzpah*, courage and a desire to connect when I rang the doorbell of a Reyim family I'd never met. They had invited me for Rosh Hashanah dinner at Rabbi Berman's suggestion. The Zissmans made me feel immediately at home with their warmth, engaging conversation, generous hospitality and holiday rituals. This evening exemplified what is spirituality meaningful to me: connection and open-heartedness.

Temple Reyim has offered many opportunities to foster connections. These include the warm smiles from members at Shabbat services; personal stories shared at the synagogue's version of The Moth Radio Hour; genuine welcomes to learn and share knowledge in classes; and meaningful *tikkun olam* projects.

The fact that both congregants and the rabbi lead services demonstrates that everyone's voice matters and together we make both small and big differences. In addition, Rabbi Berman's openness, joy and psychological curiosity inspires my participation and unites me with fellow congregants. His *divrei Torah* and insights in study groups challenge me to think differently on subjects I wouldn't have paid attention to otherwise, such as *Hasidic* theology, or considered in the same way.

As a relatively new member, I appreciate the opportunity to serve on the Board, which might not happen in a more hierarchical congregation. I am moved by the honesty, curiosity and respect in action at Temple Reyim Board meetings, where members had frank discussions and offered complex, thoughtful consideration to address difficult issues.





Family is at the heart of Jewish life. Just like our own families, our Reyim family can be authentic, dependable and intimate during joyful and challenging times. We are very proud that the Reyim community was founded with a family feeling that still exists today.

### Lina Zaslavsky (member since 2009)



When we moved from Brighton to Newton, we were looking for a friendly and welcoming congregation. We found it at Temple Reyim. Instantly, members invited us to various events. This positive energy helped us feel connected much sooner than we expected.

My husband, Dan, and I grew up with different Jewish experiences so it was important for us to find a synagogue that made each of us feel comfortable. What

works for us at Temple Reyim is that there are members with diverse interests, knowledge, levels of observance and commitment. It is refreshing that everyone is embraced here.

Our children, Elan (now 10) and Ariel (now 8), were toddlers when we joined. It has been nice over the years to see them making friends with other children as well as developing their Jewish identity in a place where they like to spend time. Now that they're older, we can enjoy a Shabbat Reyim by chatting with other parents, while they're off with their friends. It's comforting to know that we all found our "communities" within the congregation.

Every experience reminds us that this was the right decision for our family. Whether it's organizing a Purim party or serving on the Board or playing piano in an impromptu concert, we enjoy contributing to this vibrant community.



## Sally Green (member since 1955)



When my husband, Lou, and I moved to Newton with our five-year-old daughter, Carol, we were looking for a *shul* that would meet both our religious and social needs. Neither of the large, established synagogues felt right so we connected with 20 or so people, who were starting a new temple of friends – Temple Reyim. The congregation's name clearly reflected the bond between the founders and still describes the many members we have today.

First, we met at varying homes until we bought what is now the All Newton Music School. As our congregation grew, we built what is now the present Temple Reyim, which won an architectural award. For many years, this beautiful building was missing an identifying sign. Even though there was a large menorah on the outside, many people passing by wondered if it was a library or school. In memory of our beloved Lou, my children and I donated the sign we have today to be seen by all.

Both of my daughters, Carol and Susan, loved learning in the Hebrew school. Carol even taught in the Hebrew school for one year, while she attended Hebrew College and Simmons College simultaneously. Susan continues to love Judaism and Hebrew. She graduated from *Me'ah* as well as participated in Tzion and many Kallah weekends.

I've been involved in Sisterhood, served as Treasurer of the PTA, became a Board member (now emeritus) and even performed in temple musicals because I love to dance. Many years ago, I organized two New Year's Eve parties with my husband for the *shul*, a Sisterhood meeting with local political candidates and a 120-member Passover seder at Temple Reyim. Our synagogue started with a goal and exceeded it because so many members care enough to suggest and participate in new programs each year.

Temple Reyim feels like my second home. I not only go there to commune with God or pray, but also because it's where I feel most at peace. Looking around the congregation, I often *kvell* when I see new, young members as well as the familiar faces I've known for many years. Although having the right rabbi is important (and we certainly have the right rabbi now), it is the people who make Temple Reyim so special and what it is today. That's what I love the most!



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