



# Temple Israel

Portsmouth, New Hampshire

**Rabbi**  
**David Rafael Senter**  
*Spiritual Leader*

**David Bachrach**  
*President*  
**David Olken**  
*Ritual Vice President*  
**Sam Berg**  
*Education Vice President*  
**Joanne Samuels**  
*House Vice President*  
**Amy Borne**  
*Treasurer*  
**Jen Sebeny**  
*Financial Secretary*  
**Beth Salzman**  
*Recording Secretary*  
**Fran Berman**  
*Immediate Past President*

**Trustees**  
**Bob Bradbard**  
**Tobey Harman**  
**Amy Hyett**  
**Mel Proskoff**  
**Steve Sacks**  
**Ira Schwartz**  
**Margie Wachtel**

**Professional Staff**  
**Laura Sher**  
*Early Learning Center  
Director*  
**Elian Tackeff**  
*Hebrew School Director*

Dear Friend,

Shalom! We are delighted to welcome you to our community and to tell you about Temple Israel of Portsmouth.

We are an extended family dedicated to preserving and continuing over 200 years of Jewish heritage, values and traditions in Portsmouth, which began with the arrival of the Isaac family in 1789. *Come join us.*

Our diverse, egalitarian, Conservative congregation is active religiously, socially, culturally, philanthropically and educationally. We welcome the non-Jewish spouses of members and encourage their participation in our community. We are young and old, with families and without, married or single. *Come worship with us.*

Our commitment to education is paramount. Starting with preschool, continuing through grade school to Bar and Bat Mitzvah, and fostering new learning with our adult educational programs, we allocate our highest level of financial and resource support to educational programs. *Come learn with us.*

We would be happy to answer any questions you may have about our Temple Israel community. Our website, [www.templeisraelnh.org](http://www.templeisraelnh.org), is full of information. We also invite you to get in touch with us at the email addresses below or through the Temple Israel office at (603) 436-5301 ext. 10.

We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Best personal regards,

David Bachrach, President (David.Bachrach@unh.edu)  
Margie Wachtel, Chair, Membership Committee (may12@comcast.net)

*An Engaging, Diverse Jewish Community*



*Temple Israel*  
Portsmouth, New Hampshire

שלום  
*Shalom*  
*welcome*

Dear friend,

Thank you for taking an interest in Temple Israel. I have been blessed to serve this congregation since July of 2014. As a relative newcomer to the Seacoast, I continue to discover the beauty of our area and the amazing blessings of our Temple community.

Temple Israel embraces the diversity of the community we serve. People of different religious, cultural, socio-economic and political backgrounds come together creating a unique spiritual community. Our community embodies the teaching "my house will be called a house of prayer for all people" ( Isaiah 56).

Here you will find a spiritual home and loving community that treasures your presence and seeks to engage you spiritually, intellectually and emotionally.

If you have any questions about our community, please feel free to contact me. I welcome the opportunity to get to know people on a one to one basis.

With Torah blessings,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David Senter".

Rabbi David Rafael Senter

Cell: 516 450-5117

RabbiSenter@gmail.com

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## Welcome!

Temple Israel exists as a Jewish home for people interested in Jewish life, culture, and tradition, regardless of their level of observance or knowledge of Judaism. We strive to create a warm, friendly, inclusive religious environment. Our members come from varied backgrounds: Conservative, Reform, Reconstructionist, Orthodox, secular, and non-Jewish. Our doors are open to all.

Our members come from more than 40 Seacoast towns. We offer religious services, cultural and educational programs for children and adults, preschool and religious school, social action groups, holiday observances, social gatherings and activities, and more.

## What makes Temple Israel special?

Temple Israel maintains a blend of history and modernity. Our congregation, meeting since 1905, is the oldest Jewish congregation in New Hampshire, and it has occupied our beautiful historic sanctuary since 1912. However, our shul is fully engaged in the present. Our social action groups work on important issues like the environment and homelessness, and our Brotherhood and Library Committee sponsor lectures and movie nights on contemporary topics. Our services are a blend of traditional Conservative and contemporary styles. We are an open and diverse community. We welcome your visit!

We think our members best articulate what it means to be part of Temple Israel. Here's what a few of our congregants have to say:

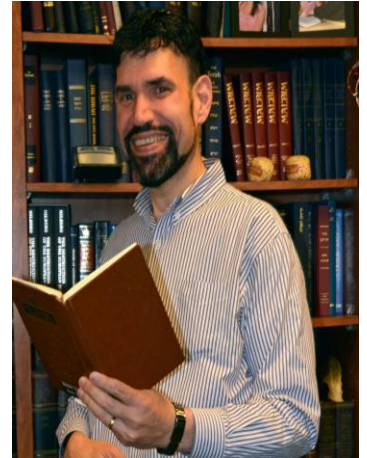
- *It's not like in Brookline or New York City -- we are a small minority in New Hampshire and Temple Israel IS our Jewish affiliation.*
- *I had no Jewish education before I joined Temple Israel. Now I have had my (adult) Bat Mitzvah and have learned so much.*
- *I love the annual senior picnic, which brings young and old together.*
- *I came to Temple Israel as the non-Jewish spouse in my marriage. I wasn't sure how to feel, but I have been welcomed in this community as a member of a Jewish family. I am not alone in my situation, and I think this makes Temple Israel very unique.*
- *This congregation is really nice -- people are caring and supportive of each other, and very welcoming to visitors and newcomers.*

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## About Rabbi Senter

My background is somewhat unusual. I am a fourth generation rabbi who is proud of his lineage.

After studying in Shor Yoshuv Rabbinical College, I continued my studies on a seminary level at Kol Yaakov Torah Center, where I received ordination in 1985. In 1996, I left the rabbinate and established the kosher concessions at Shea and Yankee stadiums. After two years in the business world I decided to return to my true passion – the rabbinate.



So what type of Rabbi am I? Orthodox? Conservative? Reform? Reconstructionist? I guess I am a “paradox.” One of my colleagues dubbed me a “Reconstructed, Neo-Chasidic, Orthoxative, Reformed, Yeshiva boy.” I view myself as a constantly evolving Under-Constructionist Jew.

As an Under-Constructionist, I understand that religion is a very personal matter, and the individual must find the level of observance they are comfortable with. Judaism is like a buffet; I want to help you take as much or as little as you are ready for.

The demographics of the Jewish community are in a constant state of flux. People rarely fit into the preconceived notions of Orthodox, Conservative or Reform. Couples come together from different segments of the Jewish community, sharing history and creating new history together. Interfaith families are a significant constituency with unique needs and concerns. The diverse nature of the evolving Jewish community challenges rabbis to meet people where they are: spiritually, physically and emotionally.

Being there for people in their times of joy and sorrow is one of the most rewarding aspects of the rabbinate. Each lifecycle event leaves an indelible mark on my soul and shapes who I am as a rabbi. I am thankful for the opportunity to share in these special moments.

Every aspect of the rabbinate is an amazing opportunity to connect with people. The most significant piece of a successful rabbinate is creating a *kehillah kedoshah* (sacred community), one relationship at a time.

I am proud to be a personal rabbi to each and every member of Temple Israel and the greater community.

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## Worship at Temple Israel

Temple Israel offers many opportunities to come together in prayer. We are an egalitarian Conservative congregation that celebrates our wealth of holidays, our life cycle events, and our gift of Shabbat.

**Friday evening services** begin at 6:15. We commence with song and continue with familiar prayers and readings in English and Hebrew and a discussion of the Shabbat morning Torah portion or another topic. At the close of Friday evening service we come together for an Oneg, a delightful taste of challah and dessert and a brief time to visit with friends.

Our **Shabbat morning services** begin at 9:30. We start with Shacharit, morning prayers, and proceed through *Pesukai d'Zimrah*, psalms; Torah service; a brief conversation about the week's Torah portion; Haftorah; and closing prayers. A Kiddush follows, offering a chance for a light lunch and conversation.

**Tot Shabbats** are held on occasional Fridays during the school year. These services offer families with young children an opportunity to celebrate Shabbat with song and become familiar with our prayers. Following the services the families enjoy a family friendly Kiddush.

Our Bar and Bat Mitzvah students and community lay leaders contribute to our joyful, diverse services on a regular basis. Congregants regularly take part by leading parts of the service, chanting Torah and Haftorah, and sharing their thoughts on the week's Parsha.

We join together to celebrate our **holidays**, including Rosh Hashanah, a sweet beginning; breaking the fast as a community on Yom Kippur; dancing to a live klezmer band on Simchat Torah; greeting Purim with groggers, hamentashen, and a children's Purim carnival; and holding community seders for Pesach and Tu b'Shevat.

Temple Israel welcomes you to join us in song, in prayer, and in celebration of Jewish community.

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## Jewish Education Programs at Temple Israel

Our educational programs provide opportunities to discover and expand our Jewish world, explore our rich history and continue to grow as life-long learners. Temple Israel offers educational programs for all ages.

Our New Hampshire licensed preschool, the **Early Learning Center**, promotes creative play, fosters academic growth and invites parental involvement. We provide a nurturing and stimulating environment where children can grow socially, emotionally and spiritually. Jewish values and concepts are integrated into everyday activities and Jewish holidays are woven into the curriculum. We welcome diversity and children of all faiths. Our program is Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 8:45 a.m.–1 p.m., for children ages 2 years-9 months to 5 years. For information on tuition and fees or to arrange a visit, please contact Laura Sher, Director, at 436-5301 x23.

Our **Religious School** strives to instill a strong sense of community and Jewish identity. Our experiential curriculum includes Bible, Hebrew, Judaic studies, prayer and history. Sounds of joy permeate our school as students and teachers engage in learning and experiencing Judaism as a community. Together we study our rich heritage and create lasting memories of Gemilut Chassadim (kindness), Kehila (community) and Ruach (spirit). We are inspired to discover the beauty and depth of the Jewish religion, culture and heritage. For more information, contact the School Office at 436-5301 x14.

**Teen Madrichim (teachers aides):** Many of our alumni return as madrichim to continue their Jewish learning in a leadership context. Our Madrichim program offers teens the opportunity to increase confidence, develop leadership skills, model Jewish values, and learn practical skills by assisting in the classroom. The madrichim program also provides participants with a Jewish social context. For more information, contact the School Office at 436-5301 x14.

Our **Continuing Education** programs address a range of ages and interests: Our Adult Education classes range from the secular to the sacred, spanning topics from the Holocaust to contemporary ethics, beginning Hebrew to Torah chanting, kosher cooking and wine-tasting to Jewish film. We continue to develop classes and workshops to meet the interests of our Seacoast Jewish community.

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## How Can I Get Involved at Temple Israel?

As a TI member, you will have the opportunity to participate in ...

**Adult Education Committee**, offering courses to further Jewish education.

**Brotherhood**, a social and service organization for the men of the congregation that sponsors latke making, bagel and lox breakfasts, Sukkah building, temple beautification projects, card nights, and baseball outings.

**Cemetery Committee**, showing respect for our departed by maintaining and caring for the cemetery.

**Chesed Committee**, visiting and providing meals and support to the ill and elderly in our community.

**Chevrah Kadisha**, our burial society.

**Development Committee**, coordinating and overseeing fundraising and donor stewardship activities and programs

**Education Committee**, overseeing the operation of our religious school and adult education programming.

**Endowment Committee**, managing the endowment fund and allocating interest earned.

**House Committee**, ensuring the safety, maintenance and continuity of our physical facility.

**Library Committee**, overseeing the Nancy Mae Shaines Memorial Library's extensive collection of Jewish fiction, nonfiction, movies, DVDs, and reference materials.

**Membership Committee**, encouraging recruitment and retention of membership in Temple Israel.

**Ritual Committee**, determining policy and procedures related to Jewish practice within TI.

**Seacoast Family Promise**, a community response to homelessness. Volunteers provide meals and overnight support for families experiencing homelessness as part of an interfaith hospitality network.

**Sisterhood**, making connections among women and offering support to the TI community by sponsoring High Holidays childcare, Simchat Torah ice cream party, book group, women's discussion group, cooking classes, and more.

### Family and Children's Groups

**PJ Library**, for families with children ages six months to eight years, enabling parents and children to connect with each other and with Judaism in fun, exciting and energetic ways.

**TI Youth Group**, offering social activities within a Jewish context for children in grades 4-7.

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## Portsmouth's Jewish Community: 1780 to Today

Adapted from "A Brief History of the Portsmouth Jewish Community" by George Sherman

In 1780, Abraham and Rachel Isaac were the first recorded Jewish family to settle in Portsmouth. The Isaacs were a religious family who observed the Jewish holidays and kept their shop closed on Saturday. After Mr. Isaac's death, his wife moved away to live with her adopted son, leaving Portsmouth with no active Jews for 50 years.

By the late 1880s, a nucleus of 16 Jewish families lived in Portsmouth, trying to maintain their Jewish traditions. In order to conduct religious services, the men would meet at various homes. At the turn of the century, their numbers had increased to 30 families. In 1905, Morris Port moved to Portsmouth from Newburyport, Massachusetts. He came from an established Jewish community and decided that the local Portsmouth Jewish residents should become organized.

The newly organized congregation hired a room where meetings were held and religious services conducted. They called themselves the Temple of Israel. Their first order of business was to find a religious leader: Harry Liberson. Along with his work as religious leader in conducting services, he taught Hebrew school and prepared young boys for Bar Mitzvah. Among his other attributes, Liberson was a *schochet* and a *mohel*. He opened the first kosher butcher shop in Portsmouth.

The second order of business was to establish a Jewish burial ground. A committee representing Temple of Israel purchased an acre of land on Banfield Road in Portsmouth. This became Temple of Israel Cemetery, and the first Jews were buried there in 1908. The area continues to be used as a Jewish cemetery. In 1910 Temple of Israel became a legal religious group recognized by the city, county and state.

The third crucial need was to find a proper building to be used as a synagogue. In 1911, the Methodist Church on State Street offered its building for sale and the Temple of Israel purchased it. They occupied the new synagogue in the fall of 1912. By this time, the community had increased to 38 families and was continuing to grow.

Jewish families settled in an area called "Puddledock" close to the synagogue, where there were two kosher butchers, a Jewish bakery, and three Jewish groceries. Today most of the area has been restored and is known as Strawberry Banke, with historical houses and museums. By the end of World War I, the Portsmouth Jewish community had grown to 50 families, and by World War II the membership had risen to 75 families. The congregation was renamed Temple Israel.

In 1940 an adjacent building was purchased for use as a Hebrew school, and a full-time rabbi was hired. In 1967 Temple Israel, now with a membership of 125 families, expanded the facilities and built a community center. Now, in the 21st century, membership is over 300 families, comprising more than 750 individuals, and the religious school has an enrollment of more than 100 children.

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<b>MEMBERSHIP DUES</b>					
	<b>Young adult</b> Age 21-29, single or married, no children	<b>Single</b> Age 30 and over, no spouse, no children	<b>Single with child(ren)</b> Parents who are single, or who have a non-Jewish spouse who is not a member	<b>Couple</b> Two adults with no children under age 21	<b>Family</b> Two adults with children under age 21
<b>First-Year Members</b> <sup>1</sup>	\$300	\$650	\$820	\$900	\$975
<b>All Other Members</b> <sup>2</sup>	\$300	\$1,100	\$1,440	\$1,600	\$1,750
<b>High Holiday Seating Included</b> <sup>3</sup>	1 seat	1 seat	1 seat; no charge for children under 21	2 seats	2 seats; no charge for children under 21
Lack of ability to pay the full dues should never be a barrier to becoming a Temple Israel member. To request a dues reduction, please check the appropriate box on the Membership Application.					
<sup>1</sup> Reflects half of regular dues, plus fees to support Building, Security and Cemetery funds.					
<sup>2</sup> Reflects full dues, plus fees to support Building, Security (first 2 years only) and Cemetery (first 10 years only) funds.					
<sup>3</sup> High Holiday Seats for guests of members living outside the Seacoast are \$60 per person per holiday. Seats for non-member Seacoast residents are \$260 per person per holiday.					

**Membership privileges include:**

- Temple e-newsletter and calendar
- Preschool through Bar/Bat Mitzvah education (see rates below)
- Reduced rate for Preschool tuition
- Adult classes/groups (fees may apply)
- Listings on the Memorial Board (fees apply)
- Reduced rates for use of social hall, kitchen and sanctuary
- Parking stickers for Temple lot (available through the TI office)
- High Holiday seating (information packet mailed in August or September)
- Cemetery plots for Jewish and non-Jewish members (fees apply)

Accounts must be up-to-date in order for members to be eligible to vote at Annual Meeting and to receive tickets for High Holiday seats.

<b>RELIGIOUS SCHOOL TUITION</b>	
<b>Preschool: Early Learning Center (M/W/F, 8:45 a.m. to 1 p.m.)</b>	\$4,010
<b>Grades K through 2</b>	\$610
<b>Grades 3 through 8</b>	\$830
<b>Bar/Bat Mitzvah fee</b>	\$950
If your needs do not match any of the above categories, please consult the office for the correct fee.	

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Date \_\_\_\_\_

## TEMPLE ISRAEL MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Please complete this form for our records and return to the Temple office with your dues payment.

**Membership Type** (please circle): Young Adult - Single - Single with Children - Couple - Family

	You	Your Spouse/Partner
<b>Name</b>		
<b>Birth Date</b>		
<b>Address</b>		
<b>Phone Number (Home and Cell)</b>		
<b>Email Address</b>		
<b>Hebrew Name</b> (please transliterate to English)		
<b>Previous Affiliation</b> (i.e., Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, Reconstructionist, None, or Non-Jewish)		
<b>Are you a Kohen, Levi, Israelite</b> (or don't know)?		
<b>Occupation</b> (current or former)		

FOR CHILDREN UNDER 21			
English Name	Hebrew Name	School Grade/College	Birth Date
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			

- I would like to receive information for Preschool and/or Religious School.
- I would like to be matched up with a synagogue member who will contact me about upcoming programs and events, as well as connect me with others in the community.

### DUES PAYMENTS

Please consult the Dues and Fees Schedule to determine which membership category is right for you and what your dues payment should be. Then return this application to the address below, along with your check for the appropriate dues, made payable to Temple Israel. Credit card payment is available with a 3% processing fee. Payment on a monthly/quarterly installment plan is available by arrangement with the office.

**Inability to pay the full dues should never be a barrier to becoming a Temple Israel member.**

- I would like to be contacted confidentially to discuss a dues reduction.