

Temple Solel Discusses Belonging and Mindsets

Years of scientific research underscores the importance of belonging. Whether it is our community, people group, socially or even young students; feeling respected within that context is something comforting and supportive we feel as a result. Not belonging can result in troubles we experience at a personal level. Even our children feel it as extreme examples are playing out in the forms of bullying, mass shootings, and other atrocities taking place all over the world. Very early in our text we see the inclusivity of God, when it reads in *Bereshit* (Genesis) JPS 1:26, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." We may not know who was there, but the importance of belonging is also expressed in a different way in 2:18, "It is not good that the man should be alone."

Carol S. Dweck, Ph.D., is one of the world's leading researchers in the field of motivation and is the Lewis and Virginia Eaton Pro-



High Holiday services.

From the youngest teenager to the eldest in the room, Edie asked us, "What do you lose track of time doing? What activates your sense of adventure to keep an open mind and not accept status quo?" She spoke about having a spontaneous conversation in line at a store in Israel, or asking for help from a stranger, and even what her experience was like try-

23, 1943. Fania "belonged" to a group of another 100 escapees from the Vilna Ghetto who fought valiantly against the Nazis.

It seems as Jewish people, our High Holy Days are a way we come together in our sense of "belonging," but it is difficult to envision that lasting a full year. That's why during her Rosh Hashanah speech, President Shel-

the Lewis and Virginia Eaton Pro- what her experience was like try-



Left to right: Ron and Vicki Weller, Phyllis Grossman, Nate, Oscar and Lizzie Rodriguez, Edie Yakutis, Shelley Pawlyk, Russ Cobe, Helaine Yancy, and Al Rogat

fessor of Psychology at Stanford University. She writes, "As life gets more complex and change impacts our lives at an ever-accelerating pace, the belief that we can learn new skills, think in new ways and relate to the world differently than we have in the past becomes increasingly essential."

This mindset came to life when Edie Yakutis recently shared her experiences as a seasoned business professional formerly with Microsoft, turned-second-year-student at Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion, class of 2023. She was one of Temple Solel's lay leaders before retiring from a corporate career to answer the Rabbinic call.

ing to blend in with the culture by dressing a certain way "to feel like she belonged." She went on to explain what it was like to live in Jerusalem, "In Israel you have little choice but to live a Jewish life." In hearing those words, we couldn't help but think about our own lives in the US. Are we choosing to live a Jewish life every day?

Edie went on to tell us about meeting the tenacious 96 year old, Fania Brantosovsky in Lithuania. She is the survivor who lost her entire family in the Holocaust and escaped the Vilna Ghetto several moments before it was encircled by police preparing for its final liquidation on September

Shanah speech, President Shelley Pawlyk emphasized the importance of being a part of the community and to seek relationships. "It doesn't mean we have to be at services every time the door opens, but it is living out an 'intentional' commitment towards building relationships and belonging to the community in a deeper way throughout the year," she said. Shelley challenged us to attend one service or event per quarter and to be an initiator in a conversation like Edie, where we are the first to speak to a person instead of waiting for them to speak to us. She said, "By doing so, we just helped someone else feel like they belong and now we do too at the same time."

For more information how to belong, write us at info@temple-solelsc.org or call 803-610-1707. Temple Solel holds regular Shabbat services at 7 PM on the second and fourth Fridays of each month at Belair UMC Family Life Center, 8095 Shelley Mullis Rd., Fort Mill, SC 29707. ☆

