

Temple Solel Keeps Our Friends Closer

On forbes.com there is a quote: "It's not too often that Sun Tzu, the brilliant Chinese military strategist and Al Pacino of *The Godfather* give the same wise business advice: Keep your friends close and your enemies closer."

While this statement may present a manner of truth in business, it certainly doesn't apply to friendship when you know the people who are among you. One friend of Temple Solel was deeply grieving the loss of her beloved husband of 35 years. Lillie expressed the comfort she felt growing up in a Jewish neighborhood and how the synagogue served as a refuge for whenever she suffered a personal crisis in Westchester County, NY. A fellow church parishioner from St. Phillip Neri Church suggested she visit Temple Solel and insisted, "They are such lovely people. They will help you get over your husband's loss and I know the ladies would love to see your Bar/Bat Mitzvah sign-in scroll." Within a couple of hours of sending an inquiry email, she received a reply, "Of course. We'd love for you to visit us anytime."

Reflecting upon her early years, she said, "The Lord kindly sent me Jewish mothers, Sadie and Ruth, to rescue this 13 year old chubby Catholic Italian girl. It was through these wise ladies I learned about Jewish traditions. But most of all they taught me about love of family and friends."



Lay leader Russ Cobe reading Torah

Before the Kaddish prayer was said at the end of the service, the Lay Leader, Russ Cobe, asked the congregation, "Would anyone like to remember a lost loved one?" Without hesitation our friend lifted her hand and mentioned her beloved husband's name with the words spilling forth and tears flowing down her cheeks. The *Ima* (Jewish mother) beside her stroked her hand, "It's okay. It's okay." While explaining the experience our friend said, "I needed to hear these comforting words from a Jewish person. I have found a new place of peace and know I will be back."

She continued telling her story, "My rabbi in Connecticut addressed the issue of bias between religions and peoples. 'We just can't make it without each oth-

er,' he repeated every so often. To preserve the strength of this wonderful country and its precious freedoms we must extend our minds and hearts to one another. Most of our bias is simply based on listening to the wrong people." She also quoted Pope Francis' reflections on Vatican II: "Our future consists of living together. It is a call that challenges, a path to be taken together, for the good of all and with hope. May the religions be wombs of life bearing the merciful love of God to a wounded and needy humanity. May the doors of hope penetrate the walls created by pride and fear." Then she said, "Thank you Temple Solel." Our reply back with a hug, "We thank you too Lillie, and are so glad you come see us often now that we are friends."



Mark Halpern

Temple Solel is a URJ Affiliated Reform congregation and welcomes interfaith families where in many cases, both spouses become members. Couples attend services on Friday evening and then also go together to their spouse's church on Sunday. We choose to keep our friends closer using Jewish tradition and spirituality as a foundation where sharing, inclu-



Temple Solel's party in the Sukkah.

sivity, and positive relationships are valued.

On December 9, at 7 PM, Temple Solel SC is excited to host Rabbi Steve Burnstein from Kibbutz Gezer-Birkat Shalom in Israel to update us on progressive Judaism and keeping us connected over the miles.

On Tuesday, December 10 at 7 PM, as a Beneficiary Agency of the Charlotte Federation of Greater Charlotte, Temple Solel is sponsoring guest speaker, Mark Halpern. Mark is a member of the Executive Committee and Board of Directors of Jewish Records Indexing - Poland. The newly formed chapter of the Jewish Genealogical Society is led by Elissa Boyet. Please RSVP to her at niftie@msn.com or 203-731-1882.

All are invited to join us at our annual Chanukah Celebration featuring The Ruach on Friday, December 27 at 7 PM. Bring your chanukiyah and some friends.

For more information see templesolelSC.org, write us at info@templesolelSC.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. ☆

