

COMMUNITY MESSENGER

Community Messenger features spiritual announcements from Oakland County religious institutions. Write: Community Messenger, c/o Beliefs & Values Editor, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham, MI 48009. Our fax number is (248) 644-1314.

TOUGHLOVE MEETS
First United Methodist Church, 1689 W. Maple Road, Birmingham, is hosting ToughLove from 7 to 8 p.m. on Thursday, March 26. ToughLove is a network of parents and professionals working together to bring change into the lives of teenagers in trouble. If your family is in trouble because of the self-destructive behavior of a teen, take this opportunity to find out how a ToughLove parenting support can help you.

COOKING WORKSHOP
The Taste of Tradition 2, a cooking workshop designed for individuals in interfaith relationships, will be held at 6:45 p.m. on Thursday, March 26, at the Kitchen Glamour in the Novi Town Center. Mimi Markofsky of Mimi's Just Desserts will lead the workshop, which focuses on new Passover ideas. The program features recipes for the Seder and the weeklong holiday, a Jewish celebration with dietary restrictions. The user-friendly workshop is specifically designed for individuals in interfaith relationships or their family members, or new Jews-by-choice. There is a small charge to attend. The program is sponsored by the Interfaith Connection, a program of the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit, Agency for Jewish Education and Jewish Family Service. Call 1-(800) 397-4876.

JAZZ SERVICE
Temple Beth El, 14 Mile and Telegraph Road, Bloomfield Township, is holding a Jazz Sabbath service at 8 p.m. on Friday, March 27. The annual service features the "New Orleans Klezmer All-Stars Band" with Cantor Stephen Dubov and the Beth El Adult Choir. Be prepared to pray as traditional liturgical melodies come alive in a mixed musical "jumble" of jazz, blues, scat, dixieland and klezmer sounds. Come early as seating is limited to 1,600. Of course there's no charge. It's a worship service. All are invited.

CHURCH WOMEN UNITED
Church Women United's forum meeting will be held at 10 a.m. on April 3, at Holy Name Catholic Church, 645 Woodland, Birmingham. Everyone is welcome to attend. Coffee and conversation begins at 9:30 a.m. The guest speaker is from the Christian Communication Council of Christian Churches. Childcare is available.

INNER HEALING
St. Hugo of the Hills Roman Catholic Church, 2215 Opdyke

Road, Bloomfield Hills, is holding Inner Healing Day from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, April 4. Anyone who wants to have the Lord heal the hurts caused by someone in the past can receive individual prayerful ministry. A prayer team will lay hands on each person and ask God to heal emotional, mental or spiritual brokenness. Charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit may also be used. This will enable a healthier and more productive life free of painful memories that can hold you back from a deeper walk with the Lord.

EASTER CONCERT
Evanston Church of God, 2601 E. Square Lake Road, Troy, presents a dramatic Easter service entitled, "He's Alive!" at 6 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday, April 4 and 5. The unique musical program focuses on the life of Jesus, from his birth through his ministry, agonizing crucifixion and triumphant resurrection. Principal Bible characters that surrounded Jesus during his life on earth take you inside their deepest thoughts and reflections about Jesus and themselves. Admission is free. The public is encouraged to attend. For a full slate of Holy Week activities, call (248) 878-9240.

FAMILY EDUCATION
Cong. B'nai Moshe and Shir Tikvah will hold a joint family education program from 10 a.m. to noon on April 5, at the Agency for Jewish Education, 21550 W. 12 Mile Road, Southfield. The program is the culmination of this year's combined Ancient Roots and Modern Branches curriculum shared by the two schools in conjunction

with the Jewish Experiences for Families program. Students in kindergarten through grade 7 and their parents will continue to explore the connections between ancient and modern day heroes. The program features storytellers, puppet making, movies, music and a re-creation of the annex in which Anne Frank hid with her family. The program concludes with a tribute to local heroes Perlmutter Budzin of B'nai Moshe and Ron Elkus of Cong. Shir Tikvah. For information, call (248) 738-4994 or (248) 788-3900.

RENT PREMIER
Cong. Shir Tikvah of Troy undertook a massive fundraiser by buying all the tickets for the Fisher Theater's April 8 premier of the award-winning show RENT. Tickets are being sold as a benefit in honor of Sam and Jean Frankel, real estate developers of Somerset Collection of Troy. Honorary chairs for the evening are Arthur and Gina Horwitz, Henry and Linda Lee, Abram and Rhonda Meadow, Irving and Barbara Nussbaum and David and Ilene Teshner. Honorees and honorary chairs are not Shir Tikvah congregants, but Jewish patrons who fervently believe in Shir Tikvah's vision of having a home in Troy. Detroit-area Conservative and Reform rabbis and cantors will serve as honorary clergy for the evening. Ticket prices start at \$75, but anyone purchasing tickets for \$125 or above are invited to attend a buffet dinner donated by Matt Prentice's Unique Restaurant Corp. For information, call (248) 706-1703.

Take time for reflection



REV. TIMOTHY F. BABCOCK

A few weeks ago, newspapers carried articles about the tradition of "Ash Wednesday" — the practice of accepting upon oneself the sign of ashes, a very ancient symbol of repentance. During this time of year, many Christian religions observe, in various forms, the season of Lent. Lent is a time of religious review, a time of re-focusing, a time of repentance and strengthening our relationship with God and, to some extent, with our own religious traditions.

While, for Christians, this time is specifically geared toward the celebration of Easter, I would like to propose that there is a value to what this season represents for everyone. This practice of a period of self-review, of re-ordering one's life has similar expressions in the Jewish and Muslim traditions as well.

Self-review is not an easy thing for many modern people to do. This means the willingness to step back and take a look at one's attitude and values. It means acknowledging that there are spiritual values in our life that need to be renewed periodically.

Such a discipline also means accepting that there are values and norms outside of ourselves according to which we should be measuring ourselves. It acknowledges that we are called to values and behaviors that may be above our own wants and needs. For people who identify with an established religion, this is not a difficult concept, though applying it to one's life is a challenge for anyone. Objective norms and values are a problem for many in our society.

At the same time, there is clearly a search today for some spiritual meaning and values. Bookstores are crammed with various forms of books about spirituality. These mean little, however, if we are not willing to accept them into our own style of life and allow them to guide our attitudes and actions. Nice thoughts are one thing. Inspiring thoughts, that move us to make changes in our life are something else. Without goals and goals that direct your life, spiritual reading has little purpose.

I can remember many years ago reading an article about the "un-reflected" life. This is the life in which a person seldom, or never, asks himself or herself "what kind of person should I be?" It is the life which simply floats along, mostly directionless from a perspective of faith and values. It is a life which allows circumstances, society, and even one's own feelings to determine what direction it will go.

The meaning that comes to mind is the difference between a canoe

drifting down a river moved along by the current, but careening off of obstacles along the way, spinning here and there wherever the river takes it, and a canoe which is directed by a skilled person, using appropriate paddles to direct it. It would not take a lot of observation to note that there is a big difference between these experiences, and in how far, and how well, one gets in the journey.

The "unreflected life" will not have the level of meaning, or satisfaction, that one has who is willing to ask questions about the direction of one's life, to accept some standards for living and measure one's own life against them, or to recognize with renewed awareness the goals one is striving for and re-affirm efforts to get there.

If you are not formally observing Lent, take this time to do some self-reflection. Re-clarify the values and goals that direct your life. Assess how the present pattern of your life is, or is not, moving toward the goals you seek. Consider not only what you want or desire, but what you are called to as a human being, a child of God. Re-commit yourself to concrete steps and practices which will make the values you seek more operative in your life.

If you are willing to make this investment, this can be a time of renewed life for you as well. Through this process you will find new meaning, and much greater satisfaction.

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Center Director: Michael Wallace, MD
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