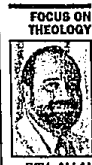


Take time to hear what the silence is telling you



REV. ALLAN ECKELMANN

friend. I've come to talk with you again ... Simon and Garfunkel were telling us that all true communication arises out of silence.

Silence is hardly ever more silence; rather, it is expressive of many moods. There is the deafening silence that occurs between married partners when conflict between them charges the air with tension.

There is the stillness of a warm summer's night, when every moment seems to fade into eternity and the silence seems to go on forever.

There is the cosmic silence, out beyond our earth's atmosphere, that echoes into the next galaxy. There is the silence of two lovers who gaze into each other's eyes, being content to know one another without the need for words that would only get in the way. There is the golden silence of hateful words never spoken, and there is the cowardly silence of those who stand still in the face of injustice.

Silence has many moods, and it is true that all real communication requires silence.

When disputes arise between labor and man-

agement, between husband and wife, between parent and child, between have and have-nots, it takes silence for people to listen and wisely reflect before responding. Intelligent speech, itself, is not possible without the punctuation of silence.

When there is no silence to separate the words into sentences, speech breaks down as all the syllables run together. Silence is required for the making of music, for the rhythms any piece of music are defined by the silence that breaks the sound.

We live in a society in which silence is little appreciated or respected. It is a society that is a swirl of noises and distractions. We break the silence of sleep with a noisy alarm, as if getting up is an alarming thing.

We fill the air with the din of mechanical noises that all come together in an indistinguishable groan.

We fill the room with voices shouting, while no one is listening. It seems that we will do almost anything to kill the silence.

Perhaps this is because we are afraid of any true communication.

After all, when we really communicate, we are exposed for who we really are.

There is nowhere to hide in the midst of silence, and the truth will come out. This is why it is written, "Be still and know that I am God ..."

God speaks to use out of the silence, but we must have the courage to enter into silence so that God's truth may speak to our need.

BELIEFS & Values

Lunch and learn program at Shir Tikvah

BY BARRI PETER TEMPLETON
SPECIAL WRITER

Congregation Shir Tikvah, in Troy will host a lunch and learn program welcoming business people and others in and around the area to take their lunch break and enjoy an on-going invigorating weekly discussion in a new series entitled, "Jewish Spirituality: Our Sages Speak."

"We sent out invitations to lots of the conservative and reform congregations in the metro-Detroit area," Janet Schenk, publicity chairperson said. "We want them to tell their congregates who work in our area to stop by during lunch on Mondays."

Sessions will begin on Monday, Aug. 10 at 12:15 p.m. Modified after a lunch and learn format, the discussions will represent a liberal approach to the study of pre-modern Jewish texts through active learning.

The sessions will take a participatory approach, rather than a passive one, as guests discuss their own insights from the text. "This is not a lecture series," Schenk said. "And there is a lot of text to read but this is not a book club."

The group's main idea is to bring people back to the Jewish traditions by reading the text and framing their own opinions about it.

"We want to say, 'Hey guys,

we don't have to listen to what other people are saying all the time. It's not just about listening, let's actively participate in a roundtable discussion about it," Schenk said.

The text, "Pirke Avot" (Ethics of the Fathers), is edited and translated by Leonard Kravitz and Kerry Olitzky who present a fresh, new approach to a Jewish classic. The book also includes traditional commentaries from Rashi and Maimonides as well as selections from more contemporary Jewish philosophers.

"And this is pretty rare to invite congregates from another church to attend things, but our building is brand new and we want to try new things and get

the word out that we are here," Schenk said.

Congregation Shir Tikvah was founded 15 years ago and held services, social events and educational functions at various locations before opening their own facility off Watlies between Crooks and Coolidge, last April.

"We are about the only reformed congregation east of Woodward," Schenk said. "And we feel very blessed to be here."

Those interested in attending the lunch sessions can purchase their food at the church or participants may "brown bag" it. There will be no charge to participate.

For more information call the Temple office at (248) 649-4418.

COMMUNITY MESSENGER

Community Messenger features spiritual announcements from Oakland County religious institutions. Write: Community Messenger, c/o Beliefs & Values Editor, Observer & Eccentric! Newspapers, 400 E. Maple, Birmingham, MI 48009. Our fax number is (248) 644-1314.

JEWISH ART

Eliu Eilu, the joint adult Jewish learning project of Congregations the Beth Abraham Hillel Moses, Beth Shalom, B'nai Moshe, and Shaarey Zedek; Hillel Day School; and Women's League for Conservative Judaism-Michigan Branch, is offering a two-part Let's & Learning series with Rabbi Aaron Bergman at Borders Books and Music in Farmington Hills, entitled, "Jewish Representational Art: The Depiction of the Akedah (The Binding of Isaac) Through the Ages." The series will meet on Monday mornings, Aug. 10 and 17, from 10-11 a.m. Tuition is \$5 per session for members of the sponsoring organizations, \$7 per session for others. Advance registration is not required. Eliu v Eilu welcomes all adult learners regardless of affiliation, background or previous Jewish study experience. For more information call (248) 737-1931 or e-mail eilulearn@aol.com.

SUNLIGHT ISLAND

Shepherd Ki Lutheran Church in West Bloomfield will host "Sunlight Island" Vacation Bible School Aug. 10-14 from 9:30 a.m. to 12 noon. Children preschool through sixth grade are welcome to attend. Those interested in registering can call (248) 855-4720.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

"Space Mission Bible Camp" will be the theme for Vacation Bible School at First Congregational Church of Rochester in August. All children who have completed grades K-6 are welcome to attend. The camp will be held on Aug. 11-14 from 9 a.m. to noon. Registration fee, which includes a T-shirt and cassette, is \$10 for the first child in every family and \$7 for each additional child. Non-members are welcome. Call (248) 661-6225 to register.

CLASSES EXPANDED

At the request of participating students, Eliu v Eilu, the metro-wide Jewish learning partnership of Adat Shalom Synagogue, Beth Abraham Hillel Day School and the Women's League for Conservative Judaism-Michigan Branch, is extending its current Summer Conversational Hebrew classes

through the end of August. New students are welcome to join a class if the level is right for them. Tuition will be provided according to the number of sessions attended. Beginner Conversational Hebrew meets on Monday nights from 7:30-9:30 p.m. Basic familiarity with the Hebrew alphabet is a prerequisite for this class. Tuition for each two-hour session is \$15 for Eliu v Eilu members and \$18 for others. In addition, an intensive intermediate class meets on Thursday nights in Southfield from 7:30-9:30 p.m. for each two-hour seminar is \$20 for Eliu v Eilu members, \$25 for others. For more information, including directions to the class location, call (248) 557-2739 or e-mail Sabra19@aol.com.

AN OPEN HOUSE

Congregation Shir Tikvah invites the public to attend its annual open house for new and prospective members on Aug. 15. The morning will begin at 10 a.m. with a Shabbat service led by Rabbi Arnie Steutberg using Shir Tikvah's prayer book, which was compiled by congregants and has received many accolades. Following the service, at noon, congregants will host a luncheon for all guests. Congregation Shir Tikvah

is located at 3500 Northfield Parkway, (south of Watlies between Crooks and Coolidge) in Troy. For more information, call the Temple office at (248) 649-4418.

JEWISH HEROINES

"Beyond Miriam, Deborah & Ruth: Later Jewish Heroines" will be the topic of discussion on Tuesday, Aug. 18 when Rabbi Sheila Goloboy will be the guest lecturer at the noon luncheon of the Beth Elders of Temple Beth El. The luncheon, to be held in the Temple's Handelman Hall, is open to the community. Cost of the event is \$8 for members and \$9 for guests. For reservations please call (248) 352-5882 or (248) 477-1950 prior to Aug. 13.

TWO NAMED TO CAMPAIGN

Linda Z. Klein of Bloomfield Hills and Peter M. Alter of West Bloomfield Twp. have been named chairs of the Bloomfield Hills-based Jewish Federation's 1999 Allied Jewish Campaign, the Detroit Jewish community's largest fund-raising appeal. The Campaign funds humanitarian programs and services for Jews in Detroit, Israel and 58 countries around the world. Klein is a member of Temple Beth El. Alter is a member of Congregation Shaarey Zedek.

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