

# Congregation Anshe Emeth

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## Message from Rabbinic Intern Caroline Sim:

### (en)Scribing



Letter Peh & Rabbinic Intern Caroline

Over the winter break I flew to Israel to begin training to be a Soferet, a female scribe. During my time there I learned many of the rules, as well as the artistry, for writing sacred Hebrew texts.

All the Hebrew letters have certain requirements that a scribe must meet in order for them to be kosher. This has to do with the size of the letter, how components of the letter are drawn, additional accent lines (*tagim*) added to the letter, making sure letters don't touch or invade each others' spaces, among other considerations. However, there are also ideal forms of the letters, forms that are kosher, but also more complete for their beauty. While the baseline for determining if a letter is kosher

## Upcoming Events

### Saturday, February 8

Tu B'Shvat Seder & Service  
10 AM

### Saturday, March 11

10 AM Shabbat Service  
Oneg lunch to follow  
1 – 2:30 PM "INSCRIBED FOR A  
BLESSING" Class

**See & share flyer on the last page. The public may attend.**

Congregants listen to Rabbinic Intern Caroline on "Origins of Reform Judaism" prior to our January Shabbat Service. See page 2 for more information.



## MISHEBERACH

Wishing all a full  
recovery of body, mind,  
and spirit!

Rosemary Kaufman,  
Mike Swanger,  
ClaraGee Kastner  
(Stamaty) Ziment

## Yahrzeits

IN FEBRUARY WE  
REMEMBER WITH LOVE!

SAM KASTNER  
MORRIS  
KAUFMAN  
ROSE LOUIS  
LEO SHAPIRO  
SALLY SHUCHAT

## THANK YOU

...FOR YOUR DONATIONS

CORY & SHARON LEMON

HILLARY ZIMMERMAN

RICH & LOIS FOSTER  
(Clara and Herman Barr  
Fund)

SHELDON BENJAMIN &  
MIRIAM ROSENBLUM given  
in memory of Jerry  
Benjamin.

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...Caroline's remarks continued from page 1...

has remained largely unchanged, the characteristics of the idealized form is a bit more malleable. In recent years, פ is a letter whose ideal form has shifted. There is an additional black half line added to the interior of the letter, so the negative space in the interior of the פ forms a ב. According to the the Torah, God spoke the world into existence. The name for the letter פ is פה (peh), which in Hebrew means "mouth." The first word in the Torah, the first word in Creation, is ברשית (B'reishit), which begins with a ב. So the letter פ, in its ideal form, embodies the act of creation. But ב is not a closed or contained letter; it has only three sides, the fourth is open. Similarly, Creation or life, as symbolized by ב in ברשית is never finished, is something that continues to be created day by day.

The symbolism of the פ is probably the most meaningful part of the instruction I received. When writing the פ, the scribe has to pay attention to the lines being drawn, to what is inked, in order to have a kosher letter. But to have a beautiful letter, an ideal letter, the scribe also has to pay attention to the negative space, to the places that are not inked. The balance and the beauty of the פ is in the interplay between positive and negative spaces, and the crisply delineated boundaries between them. As I continue my scribal training, I will continue to pay attention to the presence and intention of the forms of the letters, and to create them clearly. As I approach the end of rabbinical school and begin my career, I also hope I can develop crisp, clean lines for my Jewishness, both on and off the page.

Prior to services in January, Rabbi Caroline led a class (see photo page 1):

### Origins of American Reform Judaism

Thirteen congregants were completely engrossed in rabbinic intern Caroline Sim's class on January 11<sup>th</sup>. So much so that we kept her talking until 10:30 and just shortened the Shabbat service afterward. We also asked her to continue the history lesson in the spring.

So many fascinating stories about how the American Orthodox movement began in response to Reform and how Isaac Meyer Wise's influence was pervasive. His connection to HUC and to our congregation in 1860 brings this story home.

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