JEWISH LIFE

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TEMPLE NAME: Temple Beth Solomon of the Deaf, Northridge, California

FOUNDING DATE: June 1, 1960

NUMBER OF MEMBER FAMILIES: 60

CLERGY: Rabbi Deborah Goldmann

OUR SPECIAL DISTINCTION: The only synagogue in the world established and run by deaf Jews.

We have survived the destruction of two major earthquakes, the passing of 95 of our original 120 charter members, and financial ups and downs. But with good leadership, good fortune, and the support of the URJ, we have made it to this day. Without the help and advice of the Union's then regional director, Rabbi Solomon Kleinman (after whom the congregation is named), we might never have come into existence. And in 1987, the Union's regional office assisted us in organizing a three-year fundraising campaign that raised $36,000 and got us out of debt.

LEFT: **SHABBAT GATHERING, OCTOBER 2009.** ***RIGHT:*** **PRESIDENT JOE SLOTNICK CARRIES THE TORAH DURING THE HIGH HOLY DAYS, 2004.**

MOST UNIQUE FEATURE: Because we are deaf, our primary mode of communication is visual; therefore, our "music" services and activities are all in sign language.

MOST SUCCESSFUL ACCOMPLISHMENT: Our 1983 Crying Hands Program, a conference and art exhibit open to the larger community about the forced sterilization and mass murder of thousands of deaf people during the Holocaust because of their disability.

MOST WONDERFUL MILESTONE: Celebrating our 50th anniversary this year!

HOW WE CAN ASSIST OTHER TEMPLES: Providing information on accommodations for hard of hearing and deaf individuals, and teaching congregations how to be culturally sensitive to deaf people. For example, sign language should not be appropriated as an aesthetic touch for the hearing community, as it is an integral and cultural part of the deaf community. It is our language.