

# JEWISH LIFE

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LEFT: TESCA MEMBERS FRANK ISRAEL (THE LEAD CERAMICIST), LINDA BENJAMIN, AND ANDY BENJAMIN GLAZE A CHANUKIAH. RIGHT: A VASE CREATED BY THE CERAMIC GROUP: DR. FRANK ISRAEL, JAY WOLF SCHLOSSBERG-COHEN, SHAM DONATO, AND ANDY BENJAMIN

**NAME:** Temple Emanuel of Baltimore, Reisterstown, Maryland

**FOUNDING DATE:** June, 1955

**NUMBER OF MEMBER FAMILIES:** Almost 250

**SPIRITUAL LEADER:** Rhoda JH Silverman, who serves our temple in both rabbinic and cantorial capacities

**WHY JOIN US:** We are a small temple with a big heart. Everyone knows each other by name, and every person has the opportunity to get involved in worship, study, and social action that bring Reform Judaism and Torah to life.

**WHAT MAKES US UNIQUE:** Art and music infuse congregational life, engaging members in serious study, the pursuit of social justice, communal involvement, and in prayer. In 2009 we established TESCA: Temple Emanuel Studio of Cooperative Artists, a committee of 15–20 artists who work with member/volunteer artist-in-residence Jay Wolf Schlossberg-Cohen to inspire us to express ourselves artistically. Participants engage in small group discussions of rabbinic, biblical, or liturgical literature—and, sometimes, our “poet-in-residence” Jill Solomon’s creative modern *midrashim*—and offer commentaries through art. TESCA functions as a fund-

LEFT: SEVENTH GRADE STUDENTS PAINT A MURAL ON THE RELIGIOUS SCHOOL HALLWAY WALLS. RIGHT: A NIGHTTIME IMAGE OF TESCA’S SELF-DESCRIBED “THE BEST SUKKAH EVER BUILT,” A COLLABORATION OF THE ENTIRE CONGREGATION—TESCA MEMBERS DESIGNING, BROTHERHOOD BUILDING, AND RELIGIOUS SCHOOL CHILDREN DECORATING, 2009.



raising arm, too; we sell handmade *tallitot*, *chupot*, *mezzuzot*, *chanukiot*, *havdalah* sets, *ketubot*, and more at the spring TESCA art show.

We also integrate music and art during worship. At the occasional service in our social hall, congregants sit at tables accessorized with paper, pencils, and paints; while singing, they pray with their hands, creating visual art.

**BEST EXPERIENCE:** Our annual tradition of building “The Most Beautiful *Sukkah* in the World!” We kick off our school year by engaging the entire community in a *sukkah* building and decorating project which includes lots of creative painting (evidenced by the permanent marks of paint splatter on the pavement outside our building). Member/architecture student A.J. Benjamin designed a frame with a Star of David in the “roof”; when you look up, the sky is literally viewed through a Jewish lens.

## **PROUDEST ACCOMPLISHMENT:**

Participating in the *Empty Bowls* fundraising project organized by The Renewing Life Family Center, a Baltimore-based organization committed to reducing poverty and hunger one family at a time. Temple Emanuel members of all ages crafted hundreds of beautiful, original ceramic bowls and sold them during a big dinner event, raising more than \$7,000 for the center. We plan to do it all again next year.

**MAIN CHALLENGE:** Maintaining our vibrant, intimate character while meeting our small community’s fiscal challenges.

## **HOW WE CAN ASSIST OTHER**

**TEMPLES:** We are delighted to share how we’ve successfully integrated art and music in congregational life. Please contact Cantor Rhoda JH Silverman, [clergy@templemanuelofbaltimore.org](mailto:clergy@templemanuelofbaltimore.org).

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