ELUL STORIES
Sharing our stories, sharing lives, creating community

Elul is the month leading up to Rosh HaShanah. Each day during the month, a different Temple Beth Torah congregant will share a High Holiday reflection to help us prepare for this season of prayer, repentance and tzedakah.

From Generation to Generation
Lynda Arnberg

We moved to Roosevelt NY in 1951. Roosevelt in those years had quite a few farms and very few Jews. Our Temple was old even in 1951. It had 20 steps up to the building. The building consisted of 2 classrooms and a sanctuary at the back of the building that seated 50-60 people. We had a part-time Rabbi who traveled from Brooklyn and stayed w/the shamash for Rosh Hashona and Yom Kippur as well as B’nei Mitzvah. The shamash was an elderly Jewish Holocaust survivor. We could not even afford a part time Cantor. We had lay people lead Friday night services.

I was the first girl to have a Bas Mitzvah at the Temple. Of course it was on a Friday night and not on a Saturday. No party either!!! My parents financially supported the Temple but seldom went. I now realize that we were three day a year Jews.

But, on the holidays we always went. School was not closed but I was not permitted to go to school. We sat as a family for hours upon hours in Temple. My Mom wore her silver mink stole and a hat and gloves. And I spent many hours braiding the tsisis of my Dad’s tallis.

And when it came to Passover, my mother would send me w/matzo sandwiches to school for 8 days. Matzo and cucumbers, matzo and peanut butter, matzo and jelly. It was a tough week!!!! Remember, most of my classmates were not Jewish so it made for interesting talk!!!

But religion was never important in our family. I now realize that my parents took us to Temple because it was the "right" thing to do. My brother and I attended a tiny Hebrew school in a comparatively strong, tiny conservative synagogue. And, my cousin who lived around the corner never went to Temple because her Dad was Catholic. I was so jealous of her because she always
had a Christmas tree. He even played Santa Claus in his red outfit for Christmas. We always put up stockings on our fireplace. They were cute little stockings w/our name on them. And they were always full on Christmas day. What a mixed bag for a religion in our household.

Going forward, after we moved to Dix Hills we joined South Huntington Jewish Center. It just wasn't a "fit" for us. We then joined Temple Beth Torah and it became our "home".

My parents joined later and became the 500th family to join TBT. Rabbi Gellman always reminded them that they were his oldest congregants. My Dad was about 70 at the time. This became their home too. They no longer were three day a year Jews. When we went to Temple, they always came w/us.

Having four children means lots of B'nai Mitzvah (friends and their own) and my parents were delighted to join us on Friday nights.

Temple Beth Torah is more than just a religious place for me. It is my foundation and has been with me in good times and in bad times. We came, brought our children, raised our family here, buried my husband here and continued to be comforted by this very same Temple. And I am still here enjoy the joys of being Jewish w/my family.

I am very lucky that my children and grandchildren are at this Temple also and hope they feel the same joy I feel for Temple Beth Torah. While I have already experienced the joy of four B'nei Mitzvah of my grandsons, last week I was privileged enough to see the Bar Mitzvah of my 5th grandson. It was extremely poignant for me because it was at Temple Beth Torah. Three generations at one Temple.

Lynda Arnberg has been a member of TBT for 37 years. She and her husband Henry, z"l, raised their 4 children at the Temple. Lynda served on the Board of Trustees for 17 years. She recently celebrated her grandson, Mason Slater Arnberg’s Bar Mitzvah in our Arnberg Slater Sanctuary, which she and Henry donated in memory of their parents.

Would you like to share your story? It can be a High Holiday memory, a first experience or a ritual that is special to you at this time of year. Send your stories to ravsusc@gmail.com. If you missed any of the previous Elul Stories you can go to www.tbtiny.org (media galleries/elul stories).