**October Judean**
**COVER**

Every Saturday morning in our congregation the Rabbis call up to the bima all of the generations of family members that helped bring Torah in to the life of the B'nai Mitzvah. They stand in a line in front of the open ark, from the oldest to the youngest . And then as the congregation looks on, we pass the Torah from hand to hand on down the line till it arrives on the shoulders of the B'nai Mitzvah, representing the newest link in that hopefully unending chain of tradition. The Torah Scroll is heavy, it is awkward, and not one person that I have ever assisted in passing it has ever wanted to let go of it. From the oldest to the youngest, there is a connection that occurs when they hold it their arms, like a parent hugs a child they haven't seen in a long time. Looking at it, while standing next to them on the bima, it is almost unclear who is holding whom. While each individual certainly supports the Torah, for the briefest of moment it may appear that the Torah is supporting them. This sacred moment is the embodiment of the words found in our siddur about the Torah itself, "It is a tree of life to those that hold fast to it an all of its supporters are happy."

What is it about this scroll, its yards of parchment and ink, its beautifully crafted ornaments, its dark wooden handles that makes it so heavy in significance and holiness, and yet so light in the arms of those who embrace it? Perhaps it is knowledge of the commandments concerning the treatment of a Torah, the penalty for dropping one being 40 days of fasting. Maybe we recall some old Hebrew School lesson that if a Torah becomes damaged beyond repair it must be buried with the same honor given a human being. Maybe it is our historical memory of how Jews have risked their lives to read and study from this sacred scroll. Perhaps it is wholly other, something cosmic, spiritual, beyond even the most general description. Whatever the explanation, I know this much to be certain, hold a Torah for a few moments in your arms and the weight is carried not in your hands but on your soul.

This year Temple Judea celebrates its 50th year as a congregation, fifty years of Jewish worship, fifty years of Jewish learning, fifty years of being a Jewish community, fifty years of Torah. To mark this occasion we are commissioning the writing of a new Torah scroll. Part of that celebration will be the opportunity for every family to sponsor a passage in our new Torah, from a word to an entire book, in honor and in memory of family and friends. Every family that participates will also have an opportunity to sit with our scribe, grasp hold of the quill and with his guidance write a letter in our new Torah. In so doing you will leave an indelible mark not only in our Torah, but create a Jewish memory that you will carry with you always.

We, the clergy at Temple Judea look forward to meeting with each family to help you choose the word, verse or passage in the Torah that best represents your family and the memory of those you honor through this sacred mitzvah. May the New Year be one of health and peace, and may Torah be, for all who accept it, the pathway to a richer, more meaningful life.

Rabbi Dan Moskovitz