

HISTORY OF TEMPLE SHALOM

January 20, 2000, Temple Kickoff

Before the Temple was built, we were known as The New Jewish Congregation, and prior to being a religious organization, there was a social club in the Villages called the The Jewish Friends Club.

January 20, 2000, Meeting to decide to form the Temple

On January 20, 2000, at one of the meetings of the Jewish Friends Club, which met once a month on Sundays at the Hacienda Center, it was suggested that a Temple should be formed to benefit our members. A sheet of paper was passed around with the intent of seeing if there was enough real interest to pursue the idea. Jack Vitale was chosen to be the President. From that small beginning the dream was started using the Oxford Community Center as the meeting place of worship. Services were held once a month. Dues were \$25.00 per year per family. Sy and Janet Rosenblatt donated a small Torah, and about 25-30 people attended services.

June 1, 2001, Donations, Service Director, and first Service Location

Although the Oxford Community Center was our first meeting place, and our board meetings were held there as well. We had a small torah, a pulpit stand, and a blue background drape with a Star of David. Butch and Sandy Ballot donated a sound system and an Israeli flag. Sheldon Skurow started conducting the services in June, 2001.

September 1, 2001, First High Holiday Services at the Village View Community Church

Our first High Holiday Services were held at the Village View Community Church in the Spruce Creek Shopping Center, after an exhausting search to find a place large enough to accommodate our growing congregation. Reverend Marty Shea offered his Church for the services and the kitchen for the break fast at no charge. After about a year and a half our membership had outgrown this modest building.

March 1, 2002, Moved to the Lady Lake Methodist Church

We then found a new home at the Lady Lake Methodist Church on 27/441. They had just finished building a new facility so we were able to take over their social hall for our services. Services there lasted about a year. While meeting at this church we purchased our first Torah, and our choir was formed under the direction of Evy Feinberg. When we had outgrown this church we moved to the Oxford United Methodist Church on CR 466. This place welcomed us with open arms. On Fridays the Church would be transformed into a Temple, with a portable Ark and a full size Torah. The congregation had grown in number and activities in a short period of time. A dream of our own building was then conceived.

January 1, 2005, First Presidents

When we formed our first president was Jack Vitale. Once we incorporated as the New Jewish Congregation, Marlene Frank was elected, and Jack Vitale became editor of our newsletter, The Shalom. The next president was Aubrey Garson, followed by Sy Rosenblatt. In 2005 Saul Truskin was elected and served for four years. During Saul's tenure our building was constructed.

August 1, 2005, Groundbreaking

Although 5 acres of land was originally donated on Rolling Acres, it was discovered that deed restrictions would make it impossible to build a Temple on this parcel of land. After the Board rejected the proposal to purchase the former movie theater in Wildwood, the current property on CR 101 was found. In time the building and feasibility committees were formed, and the contractors and architects began. Groundbreaking took place in August, 2005, and when the building was completed a Kadima March walked our Torah from the Oxford Church to our new home, Temple Shalom. Every member was invited to carry the Torah a short distance along the three mile walk.

January 1, 2007, First Regular Shabbat Services

In January, 2007 Shabbat Services were held on the 1st, 2nd, and 4th Fridays.

September 1, 2007, Weekly Shabbat Services Begin

After Rosh Hashona 2007, Shabbat Services were held every Friday.

January 1, 2008, Larry Wallace Elected President

April 1, 2008, Saturday Morning Shabbat Service Introduced

Saturday morning Shabbat Service was introduced for the last Saturday of the month.

August 15, 2008, Our First Adult B'Nai Mitzvah

Our first Adult B'nai Mitzvah of 11 men and women. Our membership is approaching 600 people. Sheldon Skurow is our spiritual leader and continues to lead our services. Evy Feinberg is our music director, and our choir has eighteen members under the direction of Rose Eberle.

September 10, 2008, Two Torahs Donated

On Rosh Hashona 2008 the congregation was presented with two more Torahs donated by two families.
