

FAITH & COMMUNITY



SEEING THE LIGHT: Rabbi Marc Labowitz leads the Temple Adath Or congregation in a traditional Jewish song during a recent Friday service at the Sandler Center on the campus of the Levis Jewish Community Center, west of Boca Raton. Staff photos/John L. White

The spirit moves them

BY LISA GODDARD
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

With roots in the Torah, Kabbalah and other traditional ancient Jewish sources, Temple Adath Or has a spiritual approach to Judaism.

The Broward County congregation has started conducting monthly Shabbat services on the campus of the Levis Jewish Community Center, west of Boca Raton. The next service is 7:30 p.m. Aug. 19.

Calling itself a Jewish Renewal synagogue, Adath Or got its start in Fort Lauderdale 18 years ago, said **Rabbi Marc Labowitz**, 37. Services were relocated to Hollywood three years ago, and have taken place in Miami Beach for several years as well. The temple, which emphasizes music, meditation and mystical teachings, also has a religious school and other classes for adults and children, he said.

"We're a warm and personable community, and people feel like they're coming home when they're here," said Labowitz, whose mother, **Shoni Labowitz**, a rabbi, author and artist, founded the congregation. "Jewish Renewal allows your soul and heart to expand and really enjoy the spiritual experience."

Labowitz, who was ordained at Ateret Tzvi Academy, Orthodox Yeshiva in Chicago, Scottsdale Torah Institute and through the Alliance for Jewish Renewal's Rabbinic Studies Program, says the movement welcomes all

Jewish Renewal synagogue brings its mystical teachings to Boca Raton.



IN TUNE: Brian Roderman, his wife, Holly, and daughter Brenna sing during the service. The next service will be at 7:30 p.m. Aug. 19.

denominations.

"We're an eclectic group. We take all the flavor of mystical Jewish practice and combine it with more traditional approaches," said Labowitz. "I love to introduce people to their own divinity, and Jewish Renewal does that."

Labowitz teams up with his father, **Phillip Labowitz**, a rabbi and cantor, to lead services on the JCC campus and in the other locations.

"Heaven on earth is being able to pray with my father by my side. We enjoy each other so much that it ripples out into the community," Labowitz said.

Temple Adath Or is one of many

draws people of various backgrounds.

"My husband, who has passed away, was Jewish, but not raised in a traditional Jewish manner and was drawn to Jewish Renewal. My parents were Quakers, but I just find this a very welcoming community," said **Kathy Leonard**, of Delray Beach, who has attended Adath Or services in Fort Lauderdale and Hollywood for several years and now attends the services at the JCC. "The emphasis on the heart and mysticism reaches me. It's a very vibrant community, and I always leave feeling inspired."

Fred Galland, temple president, has been involved for five years.

"It's a temple without walls, which means there's no building or building fund, we rent or lease space," said Galland, 61, who lives west of Boca Raton. "We're bringing Jewish Renewal to an area that didn't have it, and it allows many unaffiliated Jews to participate in services and get in touch with their roots."

Rabbi Dan Levin, of Temple Beth El, a large Reform synagogue in Boca Raton, said there's room for different approaches.

"The beauty of Judaism is that there is such a wide range of observance and worship, there are so many ways to build our covenant with God," Levin said.

The Sandler Center is at 21050 95th Ave. South. Call 954-252-1313 or go to www.templeadathor.org.

Jewish Renewal communities throughout the country that belong to the alliance, an outgrowth of a fellowship founded in Philadelphia in 1962, according to the group's Web site.

"We call it joyous Judaism, with singing, dancing and drumming," said **Hindy Zeifman-Stegman**, executive director. "We felt there was a need to do community outreach, and it's been very well-received because we are so all-encompassing. It doesn't make a difference whether you can read Hebrew or not, and you can come dressed however you like."

A relaxed approach to services