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## Lafayette Temple Isaiah Turns Sixty

*Cathy Dausman*

Sixty years ago a Lafayette restaurant stood where Temple Isaiah stands today. What once was Planters Dock has since become a place to nourish the Jewish soul and provide interfaith outreach. Those who joined decades ago are still active members.

In the early 1950s, a small Jewish community held its weekly Sunday school meetings in Lafayette Town Hall and in private homes. Then 47 families pledged nearly \$8,000 to get something going, purchased Planters Dock and its surrounding 14 acres, and Temple Isaiah was born.

The congregants built a new sanctuary in the 1960s and dedicated Oakmont Jewish Cemetery then. The 1970s saw the establishment of a family school, a temple gift shop and annual inter-faith teas. By the 1990s Talmud Torah Center, an education building, was completed. The temple built a new sanctuary and renovated its social hall in the last 10 years.

Over time, the temple created Lamorinda Interfaith Ministerial Association, and hosted its first community-wide Thanksgiving service. The temple held an all-night interfaith vigil on 9/11. It hosts Alcoholics Anonymous meetings, and supports a community agriculture program. Its members volunteer for Loaves and Fishes and partner with the county-wide Winter Nights program, and the temple recently earned a Lafayette Chamber of Commerce Green Business designation for installing solar panels, composting and reducing printing.

Communications director Deb Phillips said the congregation has celebrated throughout the year, but it will hold a special Shabbat worship service April 27, during which they will honor temple members of 50 years or more. The event is open to the public and begins at 7 p.m. There is also a fundraiser gala at Blackhawk Car Museum April 28. For details about the Blackhawk event, call Melissa Gianotti, (925) 283-8575.

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