

## TEMPLE BETH SHOLOM



PHOTO BY CARL LOVE

Rabbi Sandy Rosenstein is seen at Temple Beth Shalom in Temecula, where she recently hosted a public service after the shootings in a Pittsburgh synagogue.

## Temecula Jewish community finds support after Pittsburgh shooting

As a kid, Al Fishman was picked on because of his Jewish heritage.

Now grown up, he has seen such expressions of animosity toward his faith fade.



**Carl Love**  
Contributing Columnist

But Fishman now senses them returning as our country becomes more divided.

"Now that lull is screaming again," he said to a crowd of about 60 worshippers at a recent Shabbat

service at Temple Beth Shalom in Temecula.

Rabbi Sandy Rosenstein invited the public as part of a national event in response to the shootings in a synagogue in Pittsburgh that left 11 people dead.

Typically, about a dozen people attend the Friday evening service at the synagogue next to the Temecula Valley Chamber of Commerce and where the sign outside reads, "A conservative congregation with a modern twist."

As so many people kept filing in, Rosenstein could be overheard telling someone: "I'm actually nervous. We've never had this many people before."

The crowd included Temecula Mayor Matt Rahn.

"It is important we show support and solidarity, share ideas and voice

collective concerns," he said after the service.

The message was one of inclusion, a welcome change from the past. When it comes to the change that has inundated southwest Riverside County in the nearly 30 years I've lived here, the obvious stuff comes to mind first: the crowds, the traffic, the loss of open space.

More subtle is the religious diversity that has emerged, bringing with it a growing tolerance for other faiths. When I moved here at the end of 1988, the area was dominated by conservative Christian churches, including some people who weren't always thrilled at the arrival of others. There was a reason some outsiders called us the "Bible Belt of Southern California."

I haven't heard that label in some time. There are still plenty of conservative Christian churches here, but there's a growing sense others are welcome as well to enjoy our bountiful harvest of affordable housing, safe neighborhoods and good schools.

Rosenstein every week hosts a second Shabbat service on Saturday mornings. When she arrived on the Saturday after the Pittsburgh shooting, she was greeted by a large crowd from the Islamic Center of Temecula holding artwork made by kids, all to support their Jewish friends.

Imagine that: Muslims and Jews in unison when one is reeling from a great tragedy. Perhaps not the Middle East of the headlines, but as for the southwest Riverside County of today, yes. "It was stunningly moving," Rosenstein said.

At the Friday service, she briefly told the story of each of the 11 who died in the Pittsburgh shooting, how they were always there for their synagogue and the kind of reliability all communities of faith must have.

Yes, there were concerns expressed by Jews during a sharing time: that manners aren't what they were, that discrimination is on the rise.

Yet amid the negative of the outside world is the hope provided when so many from so many faiths gather to offer support in a time of need.

Worshippers were handed a page of words to sing at the end. It was the perfect reminder for what we continue to strive for — no matter how horrific things may seem — when not even a house of worship is safe from our country's demons.

In unison, Jews and Christians, Muslims and Bhai's gathered on a Friday night after another busy week to gloriously sing "God Bless America."

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