

CONGREGATION B'NAI ISRAEL - EMERSON, NJ

PRESS RELEASE

RABBI ANDRE UNGAR TO SPEAK IN EMERSON

EMERSON – Congregation B'nai Israel, a Conservative egalitarian synagogue located at 53 Palisade Avenue, will welcome Rabbi Andre Ungar as a guest speaker at Erev Shabbat services on Friday, June 11. Services will commence at 8:00PM. Rabbi Ungar will reflect on his recent visit to South Africa, his first time back since that country expelled him for opposing apartheid over fifty years ago.

In the mid-1950s, at the age of twenty-five, Ungar secured his first pulpit as a rabbi at Temple Israel in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. This was quite an adventurous undertaking for a newly ordained rabbi who was raised in Hungary and schooled in England. Rabbi Ungar was a critic of apartheid whose views would often be published in the local press. This drew negative attention to Ungar and caused concern and fear among his congregants, some who suggested he keep his opinions to himself. But the brave, young rabbi continued to speak out and even befriend black South Africans that, at the time, was a risky thing to do. To nobody's surprise, his views on apartheid proved unpopular with the South African government and eventually resulted in an order of expulsion.

Rabbi Ungar is now retired and Rabbi Emeritus at Temple Emanuel of the Pascack Valley, a congregation he served for over four decades. He has many friends at Congregation B'nai Israel where he periodically finds a comfortable pew to participate in prayer during a Shabbat service. All who know Rabbi Ungar consider him a fascinating storyteller, adept at making intricate biblical stories and Jewish concepts easily understandable to laypeople. However, when reflecting upon his own personal life's experiences, his storytelling is passionate and mesmerizing.

All members of the community at large are invited to attend Shabbat services and hear Rabbi Ungar speak. For directions to Congregation B'nai Israel visit www.bisrael.com or call 201-265-2272