



Tyche Smith

Like a lot of people who found their way to Vancouver, I've done a bit of wandering. I was born in the Caribbean on the capital island of the Bahamas in a context very different from the life I live now.

At 19, I felt the call of adventure and my first big adventure took me to Europe, where I lived in Besancon, France, for 8 months teaching English to French teenagers in a high school and middle school. It was my first time away from home for an extended period and in many ways was a coming of age experience.

In 2010, feeling the travel bug again, and an urging for more adventure, I moved to the Vancouver area in 2010 to attend SFU. The original plan was to get my degree and move right back to the Bahamas. By 2012 when I finished my degree, I had decided that I wasn't ready to go back, and here I am, ten years since my arrival.

A lot has changed since then. In 2019, I became a Canadian Citizen and made Canada my official home. Another change was finding my spiritual home in Or Shalom.

Finding myself at Or Shalom in a synagogue for the first time on my first Shabbat, just a few months after a milestone birthday in fall 2016 was a miraculous experience. Harriett Lemer and Ron Einblau invited me to Or Shalom on that first Shabbat during a time when I was seeking a spiritual tradition that fit.

There was a palpable warmth in the earthy space of the sanctuary and I found myself surrounded by the togetherness of voices chanting in words my mind did not understand; yet my heart and all other parts of my being understood. I was bathed in tingles, and chills from the resonance in this place. I was surrounded by that warmth and found myself being lifted, my own voice rising up and joining in; taking me up with it. And I never looked back.

In November 2019, I converted to Judaism and am so happy to have been welcomed with open arms into the vibrant Spiritual Community that is Or Shalom. In Judaism I have found a way of life that honours many values that I cherish. I've grown so much spiritually since that first Shabbat and I look forward to a lifetime of learning, growth, and the turning of Torah over and over and over again.

Ask me about: wildlife in the Bahamas, snorkelling adventures, zumba and how I ended up in Canada.