



Life at Hevreh

March 1 – April 30, 2021



Sunday, March 21 at 9:30 am

Yachad Passover

Join Hevreh Religious School families for a morning of storytelling, crafting, and magic. We'll start the morning with a storytelling crafting program for pre-school through second grade families with The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art. Our third through seventh graders are invited to a Zoom Passover magic show with magician, Danny Dubin, and in between, learn how to make charoset two ways with the rabbis!

Sunday, March 28 at 6:00 pm

2nd Night Passover Zoom Seder

Passover is our celebration of freedom from Egypt. In Hebrew, we call Egypt *Mitzrayim*, meaning "the narrow place." This past year has been our own *Mitzrayim*. As we gather for our annual communal seder, we invite you to join us for a celebration of liberation from all that confines us. Fill your seder plate, grab a haggadah, and sit at the virtual Hevreh seder table for the second night of Passover.

Thursday, March 25 at 4:30 pm: Matzo Ball Soup

Tuesday, March 30 at 10:30 am: Matzo Brei

2nd Night Passover Zoom Seder

Passover Cooking Classes with Julie Gale

What is the secret to making delectable matzo balls: both sinkers and floaters? How can you make matzo brei that doesn't taste like cardboard? Join Julie Gale, owner of At the Kitchen Table Cooking School for a Zoom series exclusively for Hevreh members. Julie, a Hevreh member of the Board of Trustees, will be teaching two online classes for our members as a Passover special presentation. Learn to make Jewish Penicillin, chicken soup with matzo balls, on Thursday, March 25th at 4:30 pm. Matzo brei, the anytime of day or night favorite, will be taught on Tuesday, March 30th at 10:30 am. There will be no charge for these classes, but you must register early, so that you can receive the recipes and supply lists ahead of time. All secrets will be revealed!

I have long held that every marriage is a world unto itself,

feeling that each time I stand with a couple under a chuppah, the chuppah is a symbol of the couple's home. And so, when with a couple at their wedding, I imagine myself a guest walking through a front door.

It is extraordinary to get to be a guest, something we have not had the opportunity to do for some time.

As we have reached the one-year mark for our congregation's COVID-19 shut-down, I am more and more mindful of how each of our households and homes has become worlds unto themselves. We call a world in Hebrew an *Olam*, also sometimes translated as a universe. The thing about the word *Olam* is that its root has several connotations. The word also suggests concealment, that there are things hidden from sight. I find that poetry apt for this moment through which we are living. The longer the pandemic continues, the more our worlds are limited from one another's view. This saddens me.

At the time of writing, over 27 million Americans have been infected with COVID-19, and close to 500,000 people have died. And unless we have known someone who has passed away, these losses are hidden from our sight. What a tragedy. The cruelest part of this pandemic is the way that many of us have been denied the opportunity to publicly mourn our loved ones. To each of you who have lost someone you have loved, I am so sorry. I regret we have not had the opportunity to celebrate their lives as we typically would in our community and congregation.

Not only have we experienced death hidden away, but all the regular experiences of the lifecycle have had to be shuttered. We have experienced new babies and new marriages within our congregation, and we are getting ready for several young people to become b'not mitzvah. Welcoming in this new life, new relationships, and other milestones have typically been a public affair, which COVID has not allowed.

FROM THE RABBI

RABBI NEIL P.G. HIRSCH



As I look at our congregation, I am worried about what will happen when we release the restrictions and start to gather in person together. Will we remember the sacred meaning we have derived from these public lifecycle moments? I certainly hope so and do not fundamentally despair that it is otherwise.

Because I have seen how we have continued to support one another, I have every confidence that our muscle memory will kick in. And, because, we never actually shut down, connecting in person was translated—albeit imperfectly—online. The imperfection of virtual gathering is that it is so easy to hide things from one another. How often have you opted during a Zoom call for comfy pants with a business shirt? In looking at Hevreh, I am aware of how we are siloed from one another within our congregation. And so, with this bulletin, we want to reveal that which has otherwise been concealed. Throughout this bulletin, there are descriptions and photos of what's been going on, even from a distance.

With this bulletin, from a distance, we want to re-invite you into the world of Hevreh. When you come over to Hevreh on a weekday, one would most likely bump into a group of students at our fully-enrolled Early Childhood Center. They will proudly tell you with giant smiles evident through masks how they are a part of the Rainbow Room or the Sky Room. Tune in via Zoom on a Wednesday at lunchtime, and you'll be greeted by twelve other members of our community who are gathering to learn together with Lunch n' Learn. Sign on early on a Saturday morning with a group of Hevreh artists to explore the creative process's spiritual elements. Our book clubs continue to meet, new study groups are popping up, and our religious school has found its virtual stride.

None of this replaces the chance to be in-person with one another. But it does tell me that when we have the opportunity to be together again in 3D, we will all bring joy-filled energy to this sacred home.

As has been the case for the last year, one of the most significant enduring problems for our Hevreh has been how to draw one another close without physical proximity. How can we welcome one another into our virtual homes so that we are not strangers but neighbors? In the coming months, while we remain online, please join Rabbi Gordon and me, along with others from Hevreh, for one of the many gatherings we are putting together. In these next months, we will mark the one-year commemoration of the pandemic shut-down. We will celebrate Passover together. We continue to offer online Jewish learning and engagement opportunities for all ages. On Shabbat, we will welcome several special speakers as a way to not only celebrate Shabbat but to spend some time in impactful conversation. I hope to see you online soon enough.

If every household is a universe unto itself, perhaps we continue to have the opportunity to invite one another into our families as guests and to find a home here at Hevreh. In doing so, we will open our hearts to one another, being present for one another in our most significant moments and the regular times in-between, too.

Please continue to be well, and don't be a stranger.

Rabbi Neil P.G. Hirsch

celebrating kate van olst's first year as our director of operations

In the synagogue world, we say that it takes a year to learn how things work. Especially in unprecedented times, what a way to learn a new congregation. Please join Rabbi Hirsch, Rabbi Gordon, the Board of Trustees, and our staff in congratulating Kate Van Olst, our Director of Operations, on a successful first year. We have not all had the opportunity to get to know each other as we normally would, so if you have not yet met Kate, reach out to her at kvanolst@hevreh.org. Kate has been a wonderful addition to our staff team and community!



Dear Hevreh,

This March marks two momentous occasions - the end of my first year as Director of Operations and one full year since we moved just about everything online due to COVID-19.

Back in early 2020, as I interviewed for this role, a global pandemic was the furthest thing from my mind. As we all know now, things changed so quickly. By the time I arrived for my orientation, I got a quick tour of the building and sat down in a meeting where it was announced that the board had decided to close the building. I took home a laptop and a printer and started my first day of work from home.

As weeks stretched into months and now into a year, we quickly adapted in a multitude of unforeseen ways. We learned Zoom, how to wear a mask, and how to create and share meaningful High Holiday services online. We have all gained new skills this year, but we have lost things too.

One thing that I looked forward to was getting to know the members of the congregation. I envisioned forming relationships with each of you, either in casual chat over one-g, or by helping you to plan both celebrations and somber occasions. What I took for granted—what we all did—was face to face human interaction.

So, allow me to introduce myself. I grew up on the east end of Long Island. I moved to the Berkshires twenty one years ago and graduated from Bard College at Simon's Rock in 2006. I live in Housatonic with my spouse, Ben, and our son, Orion. My role as Director of Operations brings together skills I honed over a varied career, from hospitality, restaurants, and events to non-profit management and bookkeeping.

Hevreh is both my workplace and my spiritual home. I grew up in a family that embraced our Jewish culture and heritage, but I didn't grow up in a synagogue. **When I walked in the doors at Hevreh for the first time, I felt at home.**

I hope that we can all be together soon. That we can chat over cookies, study and learn together, and create shared memories.

In the meantime, we will continue connecting by means old and new. I'd love to hear from you—please feel free to drop me a line and tell me a little more about yourself.

Kate Van Olst

RITUAL SPEAKS

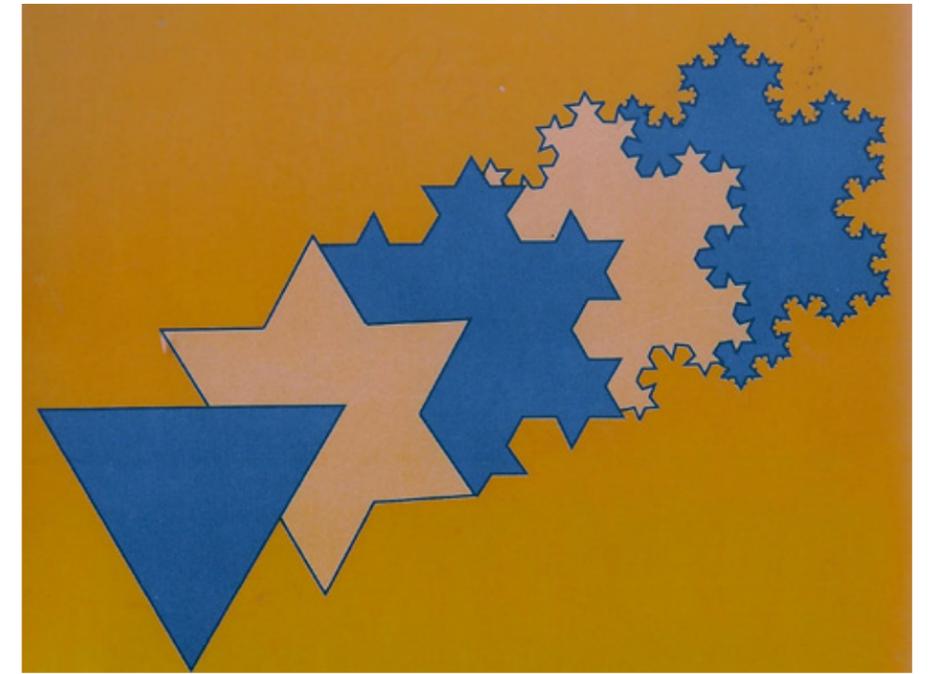
While we are weary of a full year of coming together in virtual space, our Hevreh can take pride in how we have grown our community bonds through our participation in Erev Shabbat services and Saturday morning Torah study and services, as well as Wednesday Lunch and Learn (studying 1 Samuel) and the Creative Beit Midrash. New connections have been made and long-term friendships have held fast as so many have come together in prayer, song, study, sorrow, and celebration.

Throughout March and April, guest speakers will be joining us to lend their voices on Friday nights, and the weekend of March 5 focusing on "COVID, Triumph, and Resilience." Plans are taking shape for an online second-night Seder. Details are provided elsewhere in this bulletin.

We will continue to monitor the safety issues along with the Re-Opening Task Force, looking forward to the time when we are able to join each other in shared space for prayer, song, and support. As we do so, even for outdoor, physically distanced, and masked small groups, all happenings will also continue to be offered virtually.

ליל מחיל אל חיל ; From strength to strength.

Heidi Katz & Carol Beyer
Ritual Speaks Co-chairs



Emergence, Harold Hastings

TREASURER'S REPORT

The end of winter and the beginning of spring signals it is budget season for the finance committee and all the synagogue's committees. Now is the time when we decide on funding for the next fiscal year. Our building is over 20 years old and we need to care for our building. We will also be creating a five-year capital budget so that we will know the funds needed to put aside for big repairs such as a roof or boiler. This year we are also ensuring that when we are open for in-person worship and study, that a remote choice is available for those that cannot get to Hevreh in person.

Last year at this time while putting together this year's budget, no one knew the impact that COVID would really have on our lives or how we would have to adapt our gatherings to be COVID compliant. We opened an ECC during this time and after being open for five months we are full and have a waiting list.

Our financials are not published and as a religious organization we are not required to file tax returns, but as a member if you have any questions or would like to see our financials please email or call me. I will be happy to go over our financial positions, our future strategy, and some of our 'would be nice to have' ideas.

Rebecca Wolin, rwolin320@gmail.com
Treasurer of Hevreh's Board of Trustees

get INVOLVED

SOCIAL JUSTICE IN ACTION

One of the silver linings of the COVID-19 pandemic has been the increase in new Hevreh members. Quite a few members have been in touch with us to ask how they could get involved. We thought it would be useful to provide this information as well as share our vision for the work we are committed to doing.

This Social Justice in Action committee evolved from the Social Action Committee, which has had a long history of social action within the local Berkshire community. The new name reflects a broader focus, encompassing pressing social justice issues. We envisioned being project oriented, an approach which would allow those Hevreh members who winter elsewhere to stay connected remotely and alleviate the challenge of in person meetings. Little did we know how important this was going to be with a pandemic keeping us from connecting in person.

A series of house meetings were held “pre-pandemic” (January and February 2020) to elicit input from Hevreh members on the compelling issues that “keep them up at night”. Three areas were identified: Immigration, Human Rights and Action Alert (alerting members to ways they could act on issues such as voting rights, gun violence, climate change, ensuring reproductive rights and death with dignity, etc.).

During the pandemic, Hevreh has continued hands-on involvement in the growing local food insecurity issue through the Peoples Pantry in Great Barrington, Berkshire Bounty and Breaking Bread Kitchen.

For more information on getting involved in these projects, please contact Susan Weinstein—Peoples Pantry (harperlsusan@gmail.com), Tom Sawyer—Breaking Bread Kitchen (sawyer141@gmail.com), Mark Lefenfeld (marklefenfeld@gmail.com) and Jay Weintraub (jweintraub48@gmail.com)—Berkshire Bounty).

The main social justice focus from June 2020-January 2021 was in getting out the vote. All Hevreh members were called, so that we could be part of the 100% congregations. The Religious Action Center (RAC) provided tools to Reform congregations nationwide for postcarding, phonebanking and texting low propensity voters on how to register to vote and options for voting. Hevreh members who participated in this can feel very proud to have helped get record turnouts in the November election and in the Georgia run-off election in January.

In 2021, Social Justice in Action will continue efforts to address ongoing food insecurity. We are also in the planning stages for discussion groups based on documentaries and/or books about the effects of social media, racial justice, immigration and restorative justice. The first discussion group will be held on Zoom on Tuesday, April 13 at 7:30 pm. It will be based on the book, *The Undocumented Americans*, by Karla Cornejo Villavicencio. We are also exploring a joint social justice program with Temple Anshe Amunim in Pittsfield. Stay tuned for details in emails, the bulletin and This Week at Hevreh. If any of the above ideas ignite your passion, please reach out to us!

Carol Noble (crnphd8352@gmail.com) and Michele Krieg Bauer (talktome8888@ymail.com)
Social Justice In Action Co-chairs

PASSOVER BOOK READ: THE UNDOCUMENTED AMERICANS

Tuesday, April 13 7:30 PM

Having just traveled through Passover together, the Social Justice in Action committee wants to focus on the experience of migration. Join together with others from Hevreh for a discussion about Karla Cornejo Villavicencio’s latest book, *The Undocumented Americans*. Finalist for the National Book Award, Cornejo Villavicencio reflects on the experiences of undocumented residents today, highlighting many of the universal themes around immigration and the particular experiences of those who come to the United States today. Rabbi Hirsch and Michele Krieg Bauer will facilitate the conversation. The discussion will take place on Zoom. Registration is forthcoming.



Lake Reflections, Larry Frankel

ROSH CHODESH NEWS

Annual Women’s Seder: Sunday, March 21 at 4 pm on Zoom

We would like to share a little about our Rosh Chodesh group with you, as we are thrilled to have so many new members at Hevreh and would love for you to join us. Rosh Chodesh is a group for women who are Hevreh members. It is an open group and all are welcome. Rosh Chodesh is a celebration of the new moon and we try to have our meetings around those dates, when possible. Except for last year, we have had an overnight retreat at Eisner Camp in the fall and hope to be able to do that again this year. The date has been reserved for two years! Needless to say, for the past year we have been meeting over Zoom, which has worked out quite well, and allows our members who winter elsewhere to join us.

In the past few months we have had a discussion of the Roe Act, following us watching WAM Theater’s production of *Roe*; our annual Chanukah latke potluck (virtually!); a discussion of the book *Apeirogon* by Colum McCann; and a sharing and discussion of poetry. Our next event will be our annual womens’ seder, led by Rabbi Gordon. We are all thrilled, as we really missed it last year. This will occur on Sunday, March 21 at 4 pm.

Also mark your calendars for a fun event on Sunday, May 21—our resident chef Julie Gale will do a cooking class over Zoom. While we will miss doing this in her teaching kitchen, this will be a treat. Details of those two events will follow.

If you would like to be added to the Rosh Chodesh email list, please let me know at talktome8888@ymail.com.

Michele Krieg Bauer
Rosh Chodesh Chair

WEENGAGE

As the pandemic drags on and each of us, to a greater or lesser extent, is feeling the physical isolation it brings, weEngage is looking for ways to reach out to all of our congregants. We need to let every member know that whatever level of engagement you have with Hevreh, and wherever you may be physically located, you are all part of our family and, as such, we care about each and every one of you.

By the time you are reading this you should have been called (or will very soon be called) by one of our volunteers just to check up on how you are doing. We know many of you would like to become more engaged with Hevreh, especially if it includes some non-contact activity. Therefore, if you would be willing to become part of our congregational calling team please let Debbie Harris know and she will add you to our list of callers. You can contact her by email at witchdeb@gmail.com. We will be organizing another round of congregational calls in the next several months and the more people we can get involved in this mitzvah the better. This is an easy way to feel part of our community from the comfort of your own home (wherever you may be physically located) and, who knows, you may even connect with someone you didn’t know and become friends. Please give it a try.

If anyone has any other ideas of how to contact and engage our members, or would like to help out in any way, please contact Jodie Friedman in the Hevreh office. Her email is jfriedman@hevreh.org.

We would also like to make sure you know about some of the upcoming events planned for the coming months. Along with the Ritual Committee we will be holding Havdalah services on Saturday evenings over the next several months. The first of these services will be Saturday evening, March 13. Watch your weekly emails for details. Also on the menu, plans for Passover are being made, so watch for information on this also. Please check other articles in this bulletin and in your weekly emails for more information on these and other events in the coming months.

Stay safe and be well.

Debbie Harris, Julie Gale, and Shelley Rolf
weEngage co-chairs

HEVREH HAPPENINGS



Dr. Betsy Stone

SCHOLAR IN RESIDENCE WEEKEND WITH DR. BETSY STONE

Friday, March 5 at 6 pm:
“What we Worship, What we Leave Behind”

Dr. Stone will join us for Kabbalat Shabbat, and deliver a D’var Torah on parashat Ki Tisa. It will be Rabbi Gordon’s first Shabbat back with our community after a short sabbatical, and we will be commemorating one year since the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown in America, moving forward together in strength.

Sunday, March 7 at 10 am: COVID: Trauma in your Brain and your Body

Brunch and Learn talk with Dr. Betsy Stone

This time is really hard. What’s happening to our brains as we endure this pandemic, with its losses and fears? Why do we react as we do—with sleep problems, weight gain, anxiety? Join Dr. Betsy Stone to think about what we’ve lost and what we’ve gained.

JUST ‘CAUSE HAVDALAH

Saturday, March 13 at 6 pm

Sometimes it is nice to gather with others from Hevreh just ‘cause. Join us for a nice online Havdalah service led by our clergy. We hope you’ll also consider making tzedakah and giving to a Just Cause on the occasion. We recommend the ongoing COVID-19 Relief Fund at the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires.

MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR THOSE WHO HAVE DIED DURING THE PANDEMIC

Sunday, March 14 at 6 pm

At the time of publication, over 500,000 Americans have died of COVID-19. Many of these souls are our family members and friends. Additionally, we have lost loved ones not because of COVID-19, but during the pandemic. Join with others for a special service of remembrance to honor those who crossed the threshold to Eternity during this pandemic.

For information please contact Rabbi Hirsch directly at nhirsch@hevreh.org.

TALMUD TROOP

Wednesdays at 7:45 pm

A newly formed group has been gathering to attempt to dive into the fascinating and occasionally confusing world of the Talmud. With Dave Halley as facilitator and with some education and background from Rabbi Hirsch and student Cantor Gabe Snyder, we are slowly and organically orienting ourselves to this new environment and beginning to dip toes into the water. Using a blend of resources: *The Talmud: A Biography* by Barry Scott Wimpfheimer, *The Talmud Of Relationships* by Rabbi Amy Scheinerman, and sefaria.org, our group has just begun a journey of discovery in Judaism’s Oral Law.

Anyone interested in joining the group should email info@hevreh.org to be connected to Dave Halley.

INTERFAITH SABBATH STUDY WITH HEVREH AND CHRIST TRINITY CHURCH

Tuesdays at 7 pm, March 2–April 6

Using the books “Sabbath as Resistance” by Walter Brueggemann as our primary study guide and “The Sabbath” by Abraham Joshua Heschel as a supplement, we hope to explore Sabbath beyond the ideas of simple legal prohibitions and discover together Sabbath’s potential to change the culture in which we live. How do we break our culture’s addiction with consumption and busyness? The Sabbath may just be the answer we’ve been looking for!

How will this work? First purchase the book “Sabbath as Resistance” from your favorite independent bookseller and read the first chapter. Each week, Rev. Erik Karas along with Rabbi Jodie Gordon and Rabbi Neil Hirsch will facilitate the discussion with congregants from Hevreh, Christ Trinity, Grace, and St. Pauls. We are excited to have the chance to be with one another before Passover and Easter!

KITAH BET WITH RABBI GORDON

Thursdays at 10 am, March 11–May 27

March 11, 18, 25, April 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, May 6, 13, 20, 27

\$72 registration and materials fee (includes textbook)

Register by March 1 to receive your textbook in time for the first class

This weekly Hebrew class with Rabbi Gordon is a continuation for students who completed “Aleph isn’t Enough” (book 2) over the course of the past year. Our textbook is “Bet is for B’reishit” (book 3) and we will meet each week on Zoom for an hour of *ivrit b’yachad!*

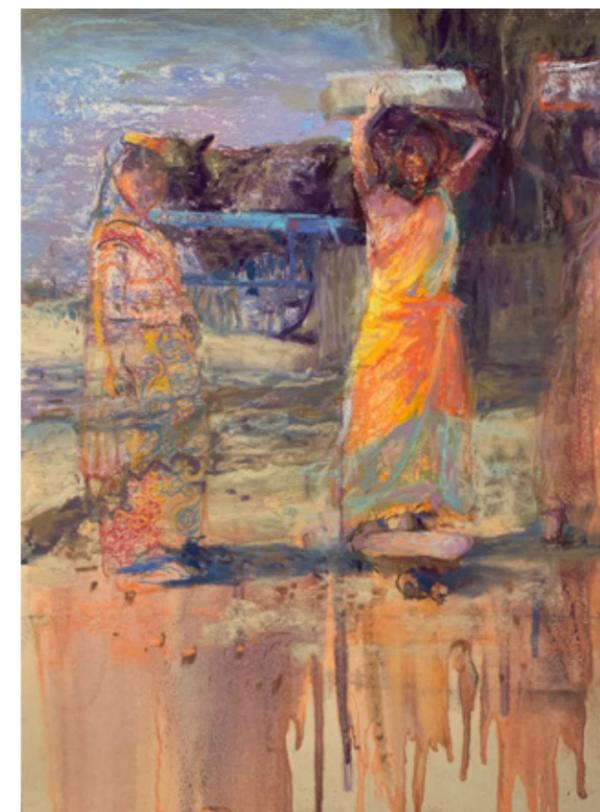
Visit hevreh.org/community to register.

COCKTAILS FOR ONE

Thursday, March 18 at 5 pm

Thursday, April 22 at 5 pm

You may be a widow or widower. You may be divorced or single. You may be an empty nester. If you are living alone, the pandemic winter that we are facing has its own set of challenges. The social options that existed before the pandemic have vanished and we want to avoid feeling isolated. To that end we have decided to gather together on Zoom (what else) and have virtual cocktail parties. This monthly event is fun as we hoist our cocktails and schmooze. We talk about whatever comes up, no agenda. It’s an easy, friendly group. Please consider joining us for our March and April meetings. Contact Susan Weinstein at harperlsusan@gmail.com.



Carriers, Sally Lebowhl

RABBINIC STAFF

Neil P.G. Hirsch
Rabbi

Jodie Gordon
Rabbi and Education Director

Deborah Zecher
Rabbi Emerita

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Kate Van Olst
Director of Operations

Ellen Marcus
Early Childhood Center Director

Rebecca Wagner
Office Manager

Jodie Friedman
Communications and Engagement Manager

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SHABBAT speakers

DR. LEN SAXE

Director, Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies
Director, Steinhardt Social Research Institute

MARCH 19 AT 6 PM

Leonard Saxe is Klutznick Professor of Contemporary Jewish Studies and directs the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies and the Steinhardt Social Research Institute at Brandeis University. He is the recipient of the 2012 Marshall Sklare Award.

Professor Saxe is a social psychologist, as well as a methodologist, and is concerned with the application of social science to social policy issues. His present focus is on religious and ethnic identity and specifically addresses issues relevant to the Jewish community.

Professor Saxe is an author and/or editor of nearly 250 publications. He has been a Science Fellow for the United States Congress and was a Fulbright Professor at Haifa University, Israel. In 1989, he was awarded the American Psychological Association's prize for Distinguished Contributions to Psychology in the Public Interest, Early Career.

He teaches in the Hornstein Program for Jewish Professional Leadership and at the Heller School for Social Policy and Management.



JANE RALPH, Executive Director of Construct, Inc.

MARCH 26 AT 6 PM

Jane comes to Construct from north central Vermont. She served as Executive Director of the Clarina Howard Nichols Center serving those affected by domestic and sexual violence—an organization similar to the Elizabeth Freeman Center. As affordable housing was a primary obstacle to safety, under Jane's leadership Clarina expanded their response to that need. Jane has worked with housing and homelessness in Washington DC and Kansas City as well as Vermont. Jane's educational background is in Music Education with a Bachelor's degree from University of Wisconsin-River Falls and pastoral with a Master of Divinity from Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. Primary interests include building compassionate community through intersectional approaches to racial equity and social change. Jane and her partner, Ellen Maxon, are both originally from Wisconsin and, as such, are avid Green Bay Packer fans. They have four children and five grandchildren. They enjoy theater, music, books, good food and many seasonal New England/Berkshire outdoor activities.



new member spotlight

MOLLY, CHRIS, THEO, AND BENNY MEADOR

Usually when we talk about beshert, or destiny, we are talking about true love, finding our soulmate. But for our family, Chris and I, Theo (3rd grade), Benny (Pre-K) and Roni, my mom, it meant leaving Brooklyn and landing, here, in the Berkshires. We could not have predicted it, we could not have even planned it—who could have planned anything about 2020? But clearly, it is where we are meant to be.

Our first “welcome to the congregation” phone call with Rabbi Gordon quickly turned into a 90 minute Facetime call. Not only did we have many friends in common, children the same age, and similar qualifications for a good Chinese restaurant, it turns out we also used to live on the same block in Brooklyn.

Our informational conversations with Ellen Marcus about the ECC addressed and surpassed all of our concerns and questions about play based creative learning, Pre-K curriculum, and COVID-safety. And then we realized that my mother was Director of Special Education in the same school district where Ellen's children had gone to school.

In this past year, when up has felt like down and even the simplest errands come with unimagined risk, finding peace and comfort, finding a place to call home has been more important than ever. We are eagerly looking forward to the day when we can gather in person, attend Shabbat services and Yachad classes, participate in food drives and apple picking and all that this wonderful congregation has to offer. Hevreh has given us the greatest gift we could ask for—a sense of community, belonging, and that where we are at this moment, is where we are meant to be.

—Molly Meador





Meet Hevreh's Early Childhood Center Teachers!



Sarah Daunt – Rainbow Room

Teacher Sarah taught dance and worked as a childcare provider before coming to Hevreh, and is a certified preschool and infant lead teacher. Sarah uses her certification as a yoga instructor and jaketi dance instructor to practice movement with her students. She lives in Lenox and in her free time likes to go hiking, and dances as a member of Dancers of the Berkshires.



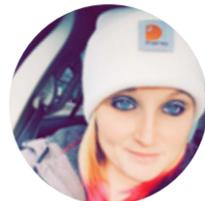
Lori Koperek – Sunshine Room

Teacher Lori has worked as a special needs paraprofessional in schools, as a lead teacher in a large daycare, and as a school nurse. When she joined the team at Hevreh, she started as a substitute teacher and came on full-time shortly after. Lori has a bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education and an associates degree in Nursing. Lori has lived in Lee her whole life and when she's not working, she spends time with her Siberian Husky and loves to crochet.



Alex Koza – Sunshine Room

Teacher Alex went to Berkshire Community College and Baypath College to receive a bachelor's degree in early childhood development. He has worked with all age groups starting with infants and toddlers. Before joining the team at Hevreh, Alex worked in a head start program for four years. Alex currently resides in Pittsfield. He loves science and art, and his favorite food is Pad Thai.



Brittany Phair – Rainbow Room

Teacher Brittany got her start in high school teaching infants, and continued to work full time as an infant teacher after graduating. She received an associates degree from Berkshire Community College in Early Education and went on to receive a bachelor's degree in Early Education from Elms College. Brittany worked as a director for four of the six years that she worked at an early childhood center in Lee. Brittany is also a volunteer firefighter and EMT for the Otis Fire Department and Rescue Squad. Brittany grew up in Otis and now lives in Lenoxdale, and she likes hiking, hunting and archery.



Shanekia Richmond – Sky Room

Teacher Shanekia is a full time mom and teacher. Her son, Milo, is 3 and is a student in the Rainbow Room. She is a certified teacher and is working toward her lead teacher certification. Shanekia lives in Stockbridge, and she has found a passion for baking allergen-free food for Milo.



Kimberly Wells – Sky Room

Teacher Kimmy has worked in daycare pre-school settings for six years and has worked as a nanny for private families as well. She is currently working toward her lead teacher certification. She lives in Colebrook, CT with her boyfriend and they're currently renovating their house. Kimmy grew up in the area and loves kayaking, camping, and being outdoors.



ECC Update

Our early childhood program is filled with children growing, learning, thriving, and connecting. The sounds of laughter, play, and imaginations in action are all heard in the hallway; it is a joyous place. We have become an ECC family. Together we celebrate the milestones of our littlest ones learning to crawl and walk, as well as the "I can do it" of our older toddlers and preschoolers. But there is so much more - friendships, conversations, and discoveries are built and shared.

Our curriculum evolves as we observe how the children engage with the materials. Our recent Purim celebration highlighted how one exploration can lead to another. Teachers narrated an age-appropriate version of the Purim story and after multiple retellings, many of the children began to tell the story themselves. Using poster board costumes with each of the main characters designated by type of hat, the story entered into the realm of dramatic play. An exploration of sounds built upon the noises made by the Purim grogger, a shape study emerged from the triangular shape of the hamantaschen, and a discussion of courage was inspired by Queen Esther's bravery.

Our center is growing and thriving along with the children. The Sunshine, Rainbow, and Sky Rooms are fully enrolled for this school year and plans are underway to offer another class for older preschoolers. Our full-day, year-round program still follows the rhythm of a school year so our July and August programming will look a bit different with lots of outdoor activities and water play. Then the rhythm continues with more growth and laughter in the new year.

Ellen Marcus, ECC Director



March/April Calendar At A Glance

March 2 & 3: Hebrew Skills
March 6: Yachad Shabbat (10 am)
March 7: No Religious School
March 9 & 10: Hebrew Skills
March 14: Tiny Talmidim and Religious School Unit Time (9:30 am)
March 16 & 17: Hebrew Skills
March 21: Yachad Passover
March 23 & 24: Hebrew Skills
March 28: No Religious School
March 30 & 31: Hebrew Skills

April 3: Yachad Shabbat
April 4: No Religious School
April 6 & 7: Hebrew Skills
April 11: Yachad Yom Ha'Atzmaut
April 13 & 14: Hebrew Skills
April 18: No Religious School
April 20 & 21: No Hebrew Skills
April 25: Tiny Talmidim and Religious School Unit Time (9:30 am)
April 27 & 28: Hebrew Skills

Yachad Passover Sunday, March 21

9:30 am: Inspired By Picture Books: Passover Stories

An Exploration of Passover with The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art

Tiny Talmidim and K'tanim families are invited to a morning of storytelling with a craft as we look into freedom and what it means to open the door for Elijah.

10:15-10:45 am: Charoset 2 Ways with the Rabbis

Chag Pesach Sameach!

Join us between the two opportunities of the day for a chance to say hello, sing with student Cantor Gabe, and make charoset one of two ways with Rabbi Hirsch or Rabbi Gordon.

11 am: The Magic of Danny Dubin

Hevreh's Bonim and Tzofim students are invited to a Zoom show full of wonder and sleight of hand—this 30 minute show is full of audience participation, comedy, and fancy camera work. Passover-themed magic is sprinkled throughout the show as we travel through the Passover story and parts of the seder plate magically appear!

Tot Shabbat

Monthly on Saturdays, 9am

MARCH 13, APRIL 10

All are welcome to sing and dance their way into Shabbat with your friends from Hevreh! Our online Shabbat morning experience is a terrific way to center your family for a day of rest and special time together. Join the rabbis, and student cantor Gabe Snyder for a lively Shabbat experience each month, and as always—all are welcome.

Saturdays at 9:30 am

MARCH 6, APRIL 3

YACHAD SHABBAT

Join Rabbi Hirsch and Gabe Snyder for a Shabbat morning service full of prayer, song, and connection. Our fast-moving service is set up for our Religious School students and their families to take a breath and enjoy Shabbat morning together.

Looking to change things up from the Maxwell House Haggadah this Passover? The following are several wonderful Haggadot that are widely available. For further suggestions, please don't hesitate to be in touch with Rabbi Hirsch or Rabbi Gordon. While we are not selling Haggadot directly, we know that these options can be easily found online:

A Different Night, The Family Participation Haggadah, Noam Zion

This wonderful Haggadah gives all sorts of creative ways to engage your family at the seder table. From table games to thoughtful conversation starters, this book will keep your seder active and fresh for years to come.

A Night to Remember: The Haggadah of Contemporary Voices, Noam Zion

This is the Haggadah we have used at Hevreh for the past several years. In full color, with engaging material beyond the seder itself, this book brings in contemporary Israeli and Diaspora voices that enrich the seder experience.

New American Haggadah, Jonathan Safran Foer and Nathan Englander

While it would be difficult to lead a seder from this book, it is a tremendous resource with creative readings and fresh perspectives on the experiences of the Israelites during the Exodus from Egypt.

Mishkan HaSeder: a Passover Haggadah, Rabbi Hara Person, editor.

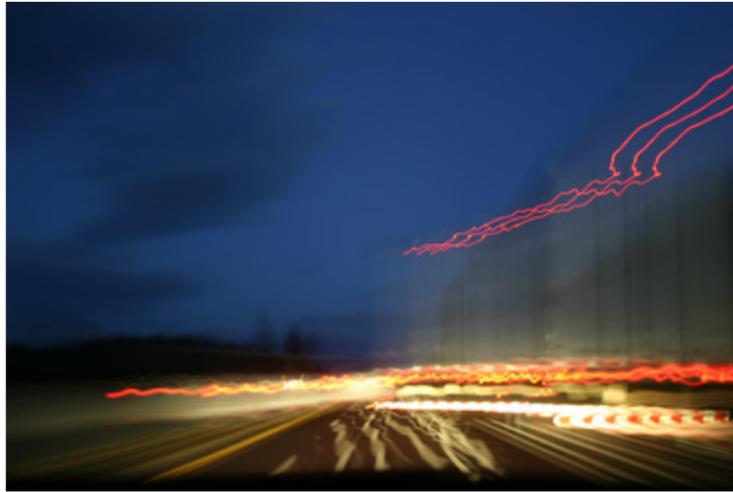
The latest Haggadah from the Reform Movement combines new translations, poetry, and wonderful art to create a new way of approaching the seder. Available from the CCAR Press.

The New Union Haggadah

First published by the Reform movement in 1923, this beautiful Haggadah balances reform traditions with the story of the Exodus, updated for the 21st Century family. Also available from the CCAR Press.



Untitled, Rebekah Jordan



Streaks in Sky, Alyson Skutsky

VACCINATION IS A SACRED ACT

The following reprint is Rabbi Hirsch's most recent column in the Berkshire Eagle, published January 29, 2021.

I will never forget how I felt the first time I noticed everyone wearing masks in the grocery store. It was foreign and awkward. I was waiting in the check-out line, fearing that anyone who walked past me could get me sick. What a sad way we have had to go about living. Nevertheless, we know in the face of COVID-19, mask-wearing is one key way to keep one another safe and healthy.

How could I best address these new feelings of uncertainty? The answer lay in prayer. "Eternal God, my refuge and my stronghold, my God in whom I trust, that God will save (me)... from the destructive plague" (Psalm 91:2-3). Prayer became the way I could give voice to both my fears and my hopes. I "need not fear the terror by night... the plague that stalks in the darkness... Because (I) took the Eternal—my refuge, the Most High—as (my) haven" (91:9). Prayer enabled me to focus away from myself and toward God, which provided perspective through the pandemic's fog.

And so, I started to say a prayer every time I put on my mask. Each morning, when holding my mask for the first time, I say, "Here I am, O God, ready to perform the sacred obligation of keeping my neighbors and myself healthy. I am fulfilling Your commandment to 'love your neighbor as yourself.'" With each day, the blessing gave me calm, comfort, and clarity about what I had to do to survive this pandemic and what I could do to keep my neighbors safe and healthy.

Still, I do not believe that God plays a direct role in keeping you or me from getting sick. Good handwashing, social distancing, and wearing my mask does that. Praying calls on God to be my Rock during this tumultuous time. As Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel put it, "prayer can water an arid soul, mend a broken heart, and rebuild a weakened will." In this unusual and scary time, prayer continues to do what prayer should do anytime we use it—it transforms every-day experiences into sacred moments.

I have been so good about making mask-wearing sacred; yet, when my turn came around for the COVID-19 vaccination, I forgot to mark the moment. I was blessed to receive my first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, and I forgot to pray before the nurse administered the shot. The whole experience happened so quickly—a non-event. The workers took my name, I sat down at a table with a nurse, and then—one-two-three—she gave me the shot, and that was it. I walked over to the waiting area, where I sat for fifteen minutes, ensuring I did not have an adverse reaction. It was fortunately and unfortunately a mundane experience.

As we enter Phase 2 of the vaccine roll out across Massachusetts in the coming week, more and more of us will receive our vaccines. As we do, I hope we each take a moment to mark it as what it is: a gift protecting the sanctity of life. May we each know healthy, safety, and comfort in the days ahead:

A Prayer Upon Receiving the COVID-19 Vaccine

"Out of the depths I call to you, O God," (Psalm 130:1) to hear this prayer:

I give thanks for this moment as I prepare to receive a vaccine. You bestowed wisdom, compassion, and love upon the scientists, nurses, doctors, public health workers, communal leaders, front-line workers, and volunteers who have acted courageously and kindly during the pandemic. "The soul of humanity is God's light" (Proverbs 20:27) we say. I give thanks and praise for all those souls whose light brings protection and healing.

As I now prepare myself to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, I praise All that is Sacred in my life. I pray that this may be a new beginning. I ask You to send comfort to all who hurt because of loss and hardship. Birth and death, growth and decay, is the sacred cycle of which I am a part. O God, bless me to rise up to life renewed, and to help others do the same.

Amen.

SIMCHOT AND SORROWS, ONEG THANK YOUS

S'MACHOT

A huge Mazel Tov goes out to...

Amy Lindner-Lesser on the birth of her granddaughter, Camilla Zoe Connell

Elena and Vitaly Nazarov on the birth of their grandson

Anne Schnessel on the birth of her great-grandchild

Julie and Peter Gale on their son's engagement

Shelley and Marty Rolf on the birth of their grandchild Matan Emanuel Rolf

SORROWS

Our heartfelt Condolences go out to...

Toby Morganstein on the passing of Alan Morganstein

The family of Peter Stolzar

The Wax family on the passing of Pearl Sulner

Gabe Snyder on the passing of Carol Kur

The Elitzer family on the passing of Maggie Elitzer

Natalie Hanna on the passing of David Hanna

Lisa Sloane and Sally Nason on the passing of Bob Nason

Sybil Pollet on the passing of Michael Pollet

Chris Fader and Michele Krieg Bauer on the passing of Tony Fader

Lynn Meyers on the passing of Ron Meyers

Sara Koffman on the passing of Debra Koffman

Florence Wallach on the passing of Phillip Wallach

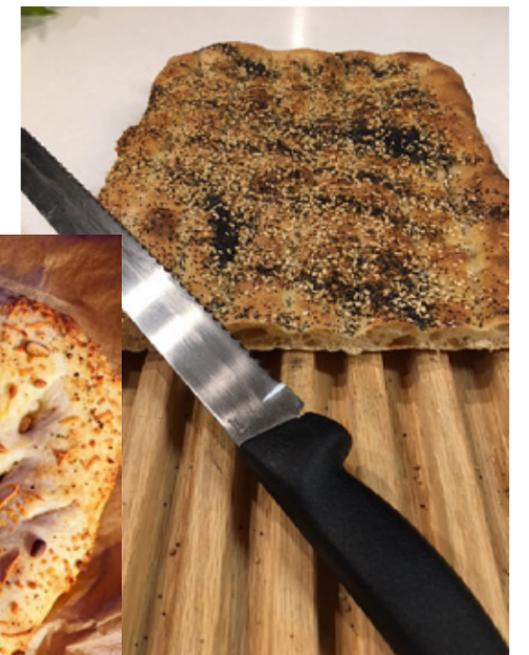
Farrah, Ben, Makayla, and Effie Wax on the passing of Ilisa Sulner



Elisa Hirsch barbari



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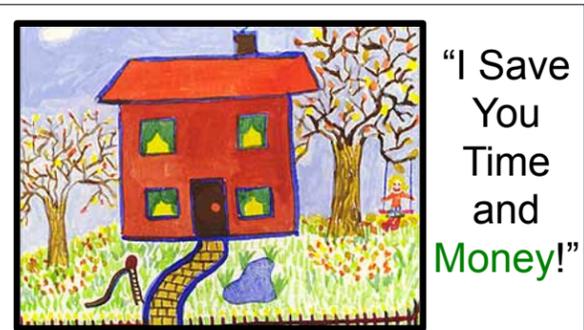
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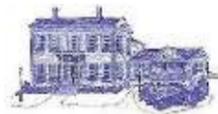
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