

Kesher

THE NEWSLETTER

SPECIAL EDITION



THE VILLAGE TEMPLE
Congregation B'nai Israel of New York



Come as you are. Discover who you are.

March 2023 / 5783

Welcome to Kesher

*Connection is the force
that binds members and
clergy to Judaism and
to The Village Temple.*

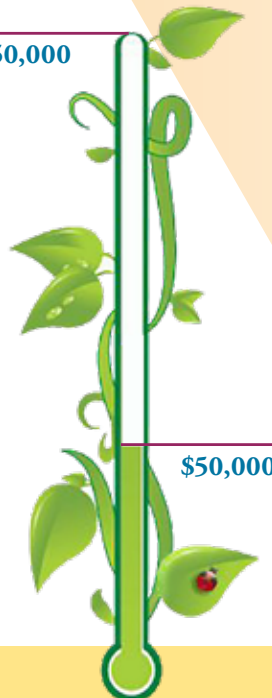
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FROM RABBI FERSKO

Friends, we've come so far. In the three years since the devastation of the pandemic, we have all but rebuilt our special community. Our congregational membership is on the rise and our religious school enrollment has grown by leaps and bounds. New leaders have stepped forward and longtime leaders have deepened their commitment to us. We've fed hundreds of hungry people in our neighborhood, and we've welcomed a family of Ukrainian refugees into our community. In the midst of it all, we've transformed our building—our sanctuary is new—from the chairs to the *Torah* covers to the carpet, and our social hall is refreshed and re-floored. This year, as we launch our **Above and Beyond Campaign**, we are asking you to help us finish what we started.

\$150,000



\$50,000

With great humility we write to ask that you'll consider joining our Above and Beyond annual campaign. **This year, we are asking you to look back at what you generously donated to us last year, and to go above and beyond that amount, if you can.** With your donations, we will be able to complete necessary work on our building, such as upgrading the second-floor classroom space to enhance learning for our students, making improvements to our roof, and continuing to invest in our necessary security needs.

We are hoping to raise \$150,000 above and beyond what we have raised in past years. That is an ambitious number for us. And so, with great joy I am pleased to share that **a leadership group from the synagogue has come forward and given a \$50,000 match** to help us get started. Wow! Together, I know we can do this and bring The Village Temple above and beyond where it has ever been.

Warmly,
Rabbi Diana Fersko

The Newsletter of The Village Temple

Congregation B'nai Israel of New York

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We invite all who wish to join us to enter our doors: Jews by birth, Jews by choice, interfaith families. Inside you will find a community of people who are on a quest to reshape Shabbat and holiday worship, reinvigorate Jewish learning, and renew our commitment to tikkun olam through social action and justice.



What The Village Temple Means to Me and Why I Support It

“Not just a synagogue to me.”



The Village Temple is more than just a synagogue to me. It's people, a place, an institution that I care deeply about and love being a part of. It's small enough

that I've gotten to know a lot of congregants, especially those with children around my son's age, and I can always talk with the rabbi and religious school teachers. Despite its size, the opportunities for children are

huge, and my son loves singing in the choir, performing in the Purimspiel, and seeing shows with the teens. The events for adults are amazing too, especially our vodka and latkes and trivia nights. Our High Holiday services at City Winery are second to none. I contribute to The Village Temple above my dues because I want to help fund the programs and events that make The Village Temple special so that we can all enjoy them.

— Laura McCarty

“For all the days of our lives.”



In the old days, there were many aspects of temple life that were very different from today's Village Temple.

First, our clergy were men, and it took a long time before we had a woman president. For many years, the building at 33 East 12th Street served most of our needs. All of our services took place there, as well as the Religious School, Board meetings, the Soup Kitchen, rummage sales, bazaars, and street fairs. And, believe it or not, in order to accommodate the entire congregation, we had double services for the High Holy Days. As you can imagine, there was occasionally some consternation about who got early services, and who got late ones. As Chairman of the High Holy Day committee for several years, I had the fun of placating members who were unhappy about their assignments.

“The Village Temple is my spiritual home, a place to worship, a place to celebrate, a place to mourn, a place to learn, a place to remember. It is our sanctuary, for all the days of our lives.”

Yet as much as things have changed, there has been a constancy about our synagogue. Even with new clergy, lay leadership, new prayer books, expansion to a second building, and substantial changes to the format of our services, the welcoming spirit of our synagogue, our “jewel of a shul” has remained and grown. Our services are joyous celebrations of Shabbat and the holidays. And as always, we welcome all who would join us.

For me, The Village Temple is my spiritual home, a place to worship, a place to celebrate, a place to mourn, a place to learn, a place to remember. It is our sanctuary, for all the days of our lives.

— Judy Steinman

save the date

MAY 10, 2023

SPRING GALA

hosted by VT members Julie Satow and Stuart Elliot at their home

“The Village Temple gives us so much.”



We give to The Village Temple because The Village Temple gives us so much. We have been members since before our kids were born and joined because of our own desire to explore our respective Jewish identities. We've celebrated every major milestone since—our wedding, our son's *bris* and *bar mitzvah*, our daughter's naming ceremony, and now her

upcoming *bat mitzvah*. The Temple has been a place to grieve and feel connected to the struggles and joys of others.

Marlowe's dad moved to Long Island after his service in WWII to a community that didn't have a synagogue. He and a few Jewish friends started one that is still standing today. We support The Village Temple because we don't ever want to take for granted what a privilege it is to have a community that has welcomed us, that shares our values, and that encourages us and our kids at every step as we continue to explore what it means to be Jewish.

— Yasmina Zaidman and Marlowe Greenberg

Recent Physical Changes to The VT

“The Village Temple Has Never Looked So Good”



PHYSICAL IMPROVEMENTS

In the last five years, the temple has undertaken a series of improvements that dramatically enhanced the experience of those who use the building for work, worship, and education. None of it could have happened without the generosity of Carol Swedlow and Jamil Simon, two of our long-time members.

We have upgraded the flooring and painted the second-floor classrooms. The Rabbi and staff offices are far more welcoming, with new carpet, new paint, new lighting, and new desks. This summer we will finish the renovation of the second floor, through the addition of an acoustic partition for classroom support, a new ceiling and lighting.

Just as our community is going through renewal, our sanctuary has been beautifully refurbished with new carpeting, flexible seating, and fresh paint. The lighting will be brighter soon; we are in the process of removing and replacing the sconces.

We have improved our ability to get maximum use out of limited space. In the social hall, which doubles as classrooms, we installed a movable acoustic partition that has greatly helped contain noise during class hours. We also installed a maple hardwood floor in the social hall that should wear well for a long time and replaced the flooring in the kitchen on the first floor.

SECURITY IMPROVEMENTS

Our synagogue is also becoming more secure. Following a security assessment as part of a grant obtained through the hard work of Barbara Gerolimatos, we will be installing comprehensive upgrades, including attack-resistant doors and glazing, door frames and locks. Many of these changes may not be noticeable, but they will significantly increase our ability to protect our guests and staff. We will also be replacing the fire and security alarms.

Come take a look for yourselves!

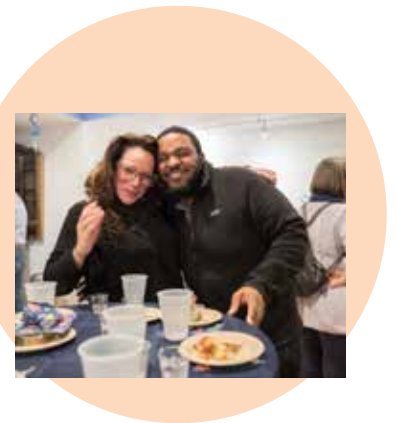
— Fred Basch

New Sanctuary Dedication

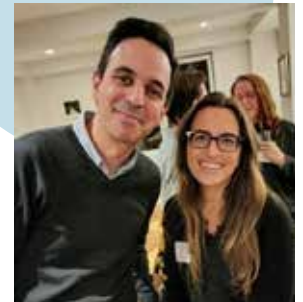


WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO

Vodka & Latkes



New Members' Welcome Hosted by Janet & John Winter



Ukrainian Refugees Shabbat

