

Kesher

THE NEWSLETTER



Come as you are. Discover who you are.

Summer Issue 2021 / 5781

Welcome
to Kesher

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

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WEDNESDAY, JUNE 16, 2021 • 7:00 PM

Celebrate The VT Spring Fundraising Gala

Join us for this joyful short Zoom event
to honor congregants who have been on the front lines
during the pandemic

This event will include short speeches, our Childrens' Choir singing an original song about their experience this past pandemic year, and what they appreciate. A signature drink, with recipe and "how-to-make" video will be coming shortly to your email inbox. Let's toast these workers together! [Find out more and donate here.](#)

[Please show your support for The VT and our honorees.](#)

[Donate to help us meet our goal!](#)

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.



A LETTER FROM RABBI FERSKO



What a year! I began my time here about a year ago and no one could have anticipated the ride we've shared together. School closings, quarantines, illness, loss, and real theological challenges have dogged our lives. One thing is clear to me—this community is unstoppable. Together, we've repurposed our Soup Kitchen, feeding hundreds of our hungry neighbors each *Shabbat*; transitioned our entire religious school into a robust online learning experience; and celebrated in person *B'nai Mitzvah* each week throughout the pandemic without ceding our ancient obligation to bear witness to *Torah* chanting.

“As a child, my rabbi always offered the same teaching just before summer began and I'd like to share it with you. He said: take one long walk, make one new friend, and read one good book.”

We've observed *Rosh Hashanah*, *Yom Kippur*, *Passover*, *Purim*, and *Shavuot* all within this new context of life. Now, with an eye towards a full reopening in the fall, we are looking forward to a year of much greater physical closeness, but with the same sense

of uplift and camaraderie that define The Village Temple. We hope you'll join us at our virtual gala on June 16th at 7:00PM so we can continue to strengthen our downtown synagogue.

I want to take a moment to pay special recognition to Cantor Nancy Bach as she moves on from The Village Temple. Through song, spirit, and relationship, Cantor Bach has been an outstanding leader in this community for 5 years. Her work is a credit to the Jewish people and for that, we are deeply grateful. We wish her only success and look forward to welcoming our student cantor, Emma Maier in the fall.

As a child, my rabbi always offered the same teaching just before summer began and I'd like to share it with you. He said: take one long walk, make one new friend, and read one good book. May your summer be one of health, brightness, and community!

Lshalom,
Rabbi Diana Fersko
rabbifersko@villagetemple.org

A Letter from Cantor Nancy Bach

To my VT Community,

How grateful I am to have spent these 5 and half years as your Cantor. What began as Village Temple's need for a fill-in tutor in the Fall of 2015 quickly changed into the opportunity to lead you and your families in both the happiest and some very trying times over these past years. I will always hold you dear to my heart for so many reasons. Because of you, my own experience of the power of sacred community has been forever strengthened. Throughout this

time of change, both in our country and at The Village Temple, the relationships I have forged with so many of you and your children have been a source of joy, strength and great comfort. My deep hope is that I have offered you exactly the same. You will always stay with me, and will continue to fill up my heart for many years to come.

I also want to say a special thank you to our incredible staff—Liotte, Anita, Alex, and Sandy—you are gems and have been the best colleagues. I am so thankful to have

Continued on page 7

A LETTER FROM THE CO-PRESIDENTS



Giving thanks—a primary tenet of Judaism, and what we as Co-Presidents wish to do for board members stepping down at the end of this year. We also want to give thanks to those who are joining.

We recognize that members who join the Village Temple board do so on top of their day jobs—parenting, caring for their parents, and volunteering in schools and other organizations. We know the time they sacrifice, and we can't thank them enough. They continue to 'show up' and help our special community through their thoughtfulness, experience, intellectual curiosity, and social activism.

We appreciate all they have given to the temple, all they will give to the temple – and please know, we couldn't do it without **you**.

Jill and Fred

Jill Wilkinson
Wilkinson9753@gmail.com
Fred Basch
fredbasch@nyc.rr.com

To those that are leaving the Board, we express our deepest gratitude



Bill Abrams



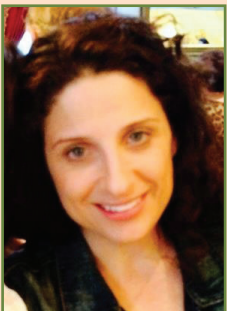
Barbara Gerolimos



Gabrielle Haskell



Lia Levenson



Dana Moriarty

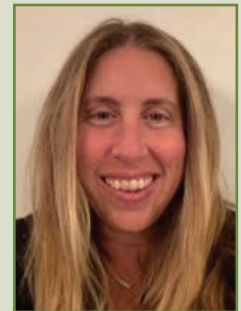


Karen Palevsky

And we look forward to welcoming those joining the Board. Thank you for your service!



Marilyn Francescon



Heather Gordon



Jeremy Kagan



Jared Nagley

Shalom! EDUCATION NEWS



Last Day of Religious School Celebration

On Sunday, May 16, Religious School students and their parents joined in person for a fun celebration to mark the end of our school year and to celebrate our shared accomplishments and milestones. Julia Duffy, Julia Levine, Ayden Mallory and Samantha Brooks—our faculty members—were very excited to be there and to connect with their students in person following a challenging year of remote instruction and programming.

As part of our celebration, Rabbi Fersko gathered the community under the *tallis* to mark this milestone and to recite a special send-off blessing for graduating seniors, Teacher Assistants and all students wishing them a wonderful summer full of amazing experiences.

Following an amazing magic show filled with awesome tricks by our friend, Magician Miles, everyone enjoyed an ice-cream party to mark *Erev Shavuot!*

This celebration was a true reminder of how wonderful it is to be at The Village Temple sharing a celebration with good friends and fellow members. I am very excited to continue our planning process in preparation for in-person instruction and programming this September and look forward to staying in touch with everyone over the summer!

L'shalom,
Alex Tansky
Director of Education
atansky@villagetemple.org



THANK YOU TO OUR RECENT VT DONORS as of May 20, 2021

SPRING GALA DONATIONS

Alizah & Lee Brozgold

Julie Salamon & Bill Abrams

Andrea & Michael Buman

Carol Swedlow & David Caceres

Ilsa Klinghoffer & Paul Dworin

Ellie Enger

Renee Feinberg

Rabbi Diana Fersko

Wendy & Ben Goldberg

Laura McCarty & Michael Goldsman

Josi Hausner

Ann Temkin & Wayne Hendrickson

Jerry Arbittier & Lisa Klinghoffer

Joel Frank & Larry Klurfeld

Judith Levy

Katherine Lipton & Alex Lipman

Anne Machinist

Margaret Moline

Sheila & Harvey Renert

Elyse Grusky & Bill Rosenblatt

Mordechai Rosenfeld

Arthur Rovine

Sari Scheer & Sam Kopel

Deborah Seidman

Steve & Sandy Shore

Louise Short

Stephanie Kanerek & David Smith

Judy Steinman

Nelly Szlachter

Jill & Andrew Wilkinson

Janet & John Winter

Harriet Zimmer

Other Donations

Ellen Banner

Greta Berenbaum

Charles Binder & Nancy Shor

Alan Brown & Barbara Gerolimatos

Rabbi Deborah Hirsch

Eileen & Fred Eichler

Dina Heiss & Family

Evan Oppenheimer & Lia Levenson

Arthur Rovine

Jamil Simon & Nancy Berliner

Natalie Schwartzberg

Nelly Szlachter

SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE

Despite the physical limitations caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, the Social Action Committee (SAC) is active and connected. The committee meets monthly to discuss issues, swap information about upcoming events and plan participation in community activities, such as the Park Cleanup.

Building on the committee's long standing partnership with organizations supporting immigrants (i.e. [New Sanctuary Coalition](#) and [HIAS](#)), energized by the success of the nationwide 'Get Out the Vote' postcard writing campaign (organized by the [Reform Action Center](#)), inspired by The VT Book Club readings (i.e. [Caste](#) and [Antisemitism: Here and Now](#)), and guided by direction of Jewish scholars and rabbis, our group has spawned two study groups.

One group is focused on antisemitism. In view of increased antisemitic attacks in the US, we have read and discussed the working definition of antisemitism as defined by [International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance \(IHRA\)](#) and the newer [Jerusalem Declaration](#). We have discussed antisemitism of white supremacist groups and antisemitism of the left (Israel and Zionism).

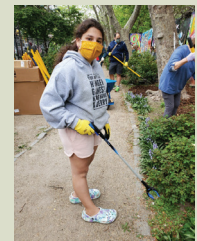
The other group is studying the intersections of race and Judaism. Podcasts such as [Jews Talk Racial Justice](#), [Julie Salamon's interview of Susan Rosenberg Jones](#) and [Rebecca Naomi Jones](#), and webinars

sponsored by the Antidefamation League and the JCC provide rich materials prompting deep reflection and learning.

Though the issues are serious, SAC members develop friendships and have fun! We invite fellow congregants to join us. For more information, please contact Nelly at nszlachter@gmail.com or Rachel at glubefriedman@me.com.



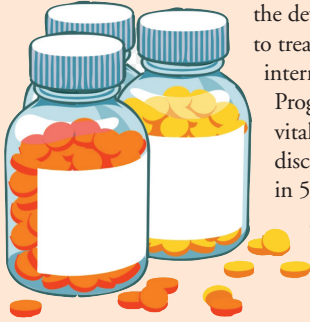
Park Cleanup



Tikkun Olam: AID FOR AIDS will recycle most of your unused meds

Have unused and unexpired medicine? AID FOR AIDS can recycle and redistribute it to people who can use them abroad and here at home in the US. And you can drop off yours right here in Manhattan.

Celebrating its 25th anniversary year, AID FOR AIDS (AFA) began its program to reach those with HIV in the developing world with no access to treatment. AFA—now the largest international HIV Medicine Recycling Program in the world—has distributed vital medications that would have been discarded to more than 20,000 people in 59 countries, with a strong presence in Colombia, Dominican Republic, France, Mexico, New York, Panama, Peru, and Venezuela.



AID FOR AIDS ACCEPTS:

- All unexpired antiretroviral medicines
- Unexpired antifungals, antimycotics, antibiotics
- Unexpired medications for respiratory conditions, diabetes, high blood pressure, hepatitis C, and other conditions
- Other unexpired prescription and over-the-counter products, such as aspirin, vitamins

NOT ACCEPTED:

- Narcotics or any controlled substances

HOW TO DONATE:

Bottles can be opened as long as contents are unexpired. PLEASE remove your name and address on the label to comply with privacy and confidentiality laws.

***IMPORTANT: LEAVE NAME OF PRESCRIPTION AND EXPIRATION DATE VISIBLE**

Place pill bottles in a sealable plastic bag and put in a padded envelope or cardboard box for donation. Print and fill out the DONOR CARD, place inside your package and send to:

AID FOR AIDS (AFA)
131 Varick Street
Suite 1006
New York, NY 10013

MANHATTAN DROP-OFF BOXES AND PICKUP ARE AVAILABLE TOO!

Callen-Lorde Community Health Center 356 West 18th Street 212 271-7200	Housing Works East 743-749 East 9th Street, 2nd Fl 212 677-7999	LBGT Community Center 208 West 13th Street, 2nd Fl 212 620-7310
GMHC 307 West 38th Street Lobby, 4th and 5th Floors 212 3678-1000	Housing Works Thrift Shop 157 East 23rd Street 212 529-5955	Matanzas Health Center 280 Henry Street 212 227-8401
Call for Aid for AIDS pickup: 212-337-8043		

Thank you,
Ede Rothaus
212 337-8043

save the date

JUNE

FRIDAY, JUNE 11:

6:30 PM: Outdoor Musical *Shabbat* Services



Cantor Nancy Bach ends her 5-year tenure with us on June 30. This will be her last service, so please come to wish her luck in her future endeavors and to thank her for supporting our *B'nai Mitzvah* families with kindness and compassion, for reaching out to those in need with sincerity and concern, and for leading our worship with energy, joy, spirit, and song. The event will take place indoors if there is rain that evening.



Meet our *B'nai Mitzvah*:

June 12: **Zachary Buman** – *Parashat Korach*

June 19: **Ben Goldberg** – *Parashat Chukat*

Cantor Nancy Bach *continued from page 2*

led, collaborated, and learned alongside two incredible Rabbis. You are in the best hands with Rabbi Fersko as the Temple community continues to move from strength to strength. One very special last thank you to both Hila Kulik and Dimitri Landrain—you have both been my heartbeat each and every week, and I look forward to many more collaborations as we all continue on. I'm reminded of the words that Rabbi Hirsch and I invoked at that first Annual Meeting that we both attended in 2016—*Yitchazek v'yashuv livnot et atzmo*—Be strengthened and return by rebuilding yourself (*N'tivot Shalom "Sh'mini"*). I wish you all many years of reflecting, returning,

and rebuilding, both on a personal level and for The Village Temple community. Thank you all for your trust, your warmth, your friendship, and your kindness to both Caleb and me. We are only a stone's throw away on the Upper West Side, and I fully expect to stay in touch. We look forward to visiting with you again as time goes on. Now, let's get back to the music and a wonderful summer ahead.

*With love,
Cantor Nancy Bach*

What I'm reading now: *Suggestions from all ages in our congregation*

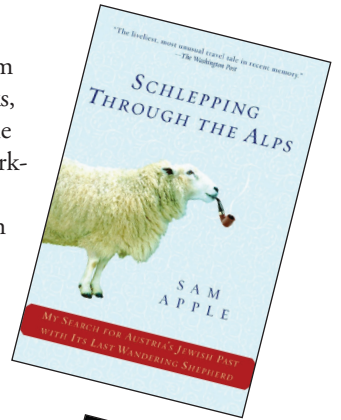
From Renee Feinberg

I have hardcopy editions of *New York, New York, New York* by Tom Dyja (2021) and Heather McGhee's *Sum of Us* (2021) floating around. But I'd rather read *The New York Times*, print edition, and journals like the *Jewish Review of Books*.

For me, being bubble-wrapped in a privileged life, I have the patience to read short pieces of journalism that either present a cogent argument which supports and clarifies one of my own, or an argument that makes mincemeat out of one of my dearly held opinions.

From Styra Avins

Schlepping Through the Alps by Sam Apple, (New York: Ballantine Books, 2005). An unlikely and very likeable memoir by a young Jewish New York-based writer who joined up with a Jewish shepherd who walks through the Austrian Alps tending his flock of sheep and singing Jewish folk songs to them. Not always funny: it's a clear-eyed look at the state of Austrian anti-Semitism in the early 21st century.



From Julie Satow

I'm reading a bunch of stuff for work, specifically for a book proposal that I'm working on, so I'm not sure how exciting it will be.

My current read is *When Ladies Go A-Thieving: Middle-Class Shoplifters in the Victorian Department Store*. I think it is fascinating. It's about the shoplifting craze that erupted among a group of largely wealthy women in the 1800s.

Source Readings in Music History by Oliver Strunk (New York, Norton Press, 1950) a classic collection of writings by people from Plato, Aristotle, Galillei (the father of the astronomer), Schumann, Liszt, Wagner, and lots of people most of us have never heard of, who influenced and helped evolve music as it developed in the West. Music didn't just fall from heaven; over the centuries the creation of music was guided by many forces, which are evident in this collection.

