

# Kesher

THE NEWSLETTER



Come as you are. Discover who you are.

September-October 2023 / 5784

## Welcome to Kesher

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

### IN THIS ISSUE

From Rabbi Fersko.....	1
High Holy Days Schedule .....	2
Social Action Committee .....	3
Village Temple Birdwatching.....	3
Upcoming Events.....	4-5
Religious School News .....	6
Madrich: Teen Programs.....	7
Adult Social Events.....	8

## FROM RABBI FERSKO

You may have heard of *mitzvah* day — when a group of dedicated congregants come together and make the world better by feeding the hungry or visiting the sick. This year, we aren't having *mitzvah* day. Rather, we are launching a *mitzvah* year.

Last year, we organized our congregational energy around refugees. Our efforts, headed by the Social Action Committee, led to us bringing over a family from Ukraine and aiding in their housing, education, and acclimation to life in the US, among other refugee related projects. We will continue to stand by them and for that cause.

This year, we are organizing our energy around fulfilling all of the 613 *mitzvot* or commandments listed in Torah. The good news is we have a head start, as several hundred of the *mitzvot* are about the ancient Temple in Jerusalem and cannot be fulfilled. The better news is that the *mitzvot* remaining have the power to change our lives and the lives of those around us.

*Mitzvot* are the “unlock” in Judaism. They are the gateway to community, conversation, knowledge, and justice. They are the way in. We invite you to join us on this journey of discovery and do-gooding. Please look for our communications about this project as the year goes on.

As your spiritual leader, I want to take this opportunity to say thank you for being a part of this incredible community. I am humbled to serve here.

May you encounter a year of good health, prosperity, family, joy, and God's blessings.

*Shana tovah,*  
Rabbi Fersko

# KESHER

The Newsletter of  
The Village Temple

Congregation B'nai Israel  
of New York

SENIOR RABBI  
*Diana Fersko*  
[rabbifersko@villagetemple.org](mailto:rabbifersko@villagetemple.org)

CANTOR  
*Emma Maier*  
[emaier@villagetemple.org](mailto:emaier@villagetemple.org)

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
*Sandy Albert*  
[salbert@villagetemple.org](mailto:salbert@villagetemple.org)

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION  
*Alex Tansky, RJE*  
[atansky@villagetemple.org](mailto:atansky@villagetemple.org)

DIRECTOR, CHILDREN'S  
CHOIR  
*Anita Hollander*  
[anitahollander@hotmail.com](mailto:anitahollander@hotmail.com)

DIRECTOR OF  
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT  
*Liotte Greenbaum, RJE*  
[lgreenbaum@villagetemple.org](mailto:lgreenbaum@villagetemple.org)

CO-PRESIDENTS  
*Jill Wilkinson*  
[wilkinson9753@gmail.com](mailto:wilkinson9753@gmail.com)

*Katherine Lipton*  
[katherine.lipton@gmail.com](mailto:katherine.lipton@gmail.com)

EDITOR  
*Elyse Grusky*  
[egrusky@gmail.com](mailto:egrusky@gmail.com)

PHOTOGRAPHER  
*Susan Rosenberg Jones*

*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.*



## ימים נוראים HIGH HOLY DAYS SCHEDULE – 5784

<i>Erev Rosh Hashanah</i>	<b>Friday, September 15, 2023</b> 6:00 pm – Service held at <b>The Village Temple</b>
<i>Rosh Hashanah, Day 1</i>	<b>Saturday, September 16, 2023</b> 9:30 am - Morning Service at <b>City Winery</b> 1:00 pm - Children's Service at <b>City Winery</b> 2:00 pm- <i>Tashlich</i> Service outside <b>City Winery</b> (south of CW)
<i>Rosh Hashanah, Day 2</i>	<b>Sunday, September 17, 2023</b> Community Cooking with Refugee Family at <b>The Village Temple</b>
<i>Kol Nidre</i>	<b>Sunday, September 24, 2023</b> 6:00 pm – Service held at <b>The Village Temple</b> 8:15 pm – Service held at <b>The Village Temple</b>
<i>Yom Kippur</i>	<b>Monday, September 25, 2023</b> 9:30 am – Morning Service at <b>City Winery</b> (adding <b>Yizkor</b> ) 1:00 pm - Children's Service at <b>City Winery</b> 3:00 pm - Teen Experience at <b>The Village Temple</b> 4:30 pm – Rabbi Fersko teaches The Book of Jonah, <i>Ne'ilah</i> at <b>The Village Temple</b>

All Services will be available through Livestreaming  
R.S.V.P. required to attend all services  
*City Winery is located at 25 Eleventh Ave at 15th Street – Hudson River Park*





# SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE

New Year, new beginnings. A fresh start. A clean slate.

Kids adjust to new teachers, classmates and routines. Mourners reflect on the passage of time without loved ones. My family packs boxes and prepares for a physical move. While the promise of New Year is joyous, new beginnings can also be ... difficult.

But can you even imagine confronting any one of these challenges without a permanent shelter or surrounded by others who do not share your customs or speak your native tongue?

As our community joins together in celebration, consider how you can make a difference to families without a social network of support, like ours at The Village Temple.

**The Village Temple Social Action Committee and Dayenu Circle welcomes congregants of all ages to join us this year in learning and *Tikkun Olam*.**

## Here are just a few of the opportunities:

- Can you spare a few hours on *Shabbat* morning to lend a hand to chop, stir or bag at our Village Temple Soup Kitchen?
- Volunteer midweek as a personal shopper, clothing sorter or one who minds the young children at Little Shop of Kindness, a donation-based store for asylum seekers arriving in NYC?
- Perhaps you'd like to pick up the phone or laptop and contact elected officials, advocating for better care for our earth and more humane treatment for our new neighbors?
- Surely you can help reduce waste by donating clothing to families making their own new beginnings in a strange land, or participate in climate justice actions?



VT volunteers at The Little Shop of Kindness

The Village Temple Social Action Committee and Dayenu Circle welcomes congregants of all ages to join us this year in learning and *Tikkun Olam*. Our committee meets monthly, at lunchtime on Fridays. If that time doesn't work, reach out and we can brainstorm other ways to get involved. Everyone can help!

On behalf of The Village Temple Social Action Committee and Dayenu Circle, we extend best wishes to you and your family, for a sweet New Year.

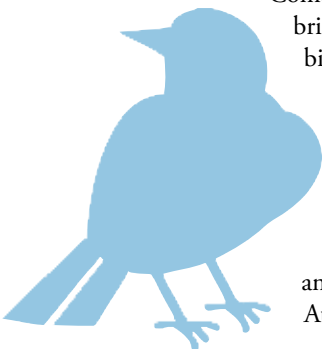
*Rachel Glube (glubefriedman@icloud.com)*  
*Melissa Hacker (vtdayenucircle@gmail.com)*

## Village Temple Birdwatching with The VT Dayenu Circle and Gabriel Willow

**Sunday, October 15 • 10am-12pm, meeting at CPW and 72nd St Central Park entrance**

Come learn about the many birds that fall migration brings to NYC's parks and other green spaces on a bird-watching walk with naturalist Gabriel Willow. Bring binoculars if you have them.

Gabriel Willow is a Naturalist, Educator, and Urban Ecologist with a particular passion for birds. He leads tours and teaches classes for NYC Audubon and Wave Hill, among others, and was the Senior Naturalist at the Prospect Park Audubon Center in Brooklyn for several years.



# upcoming events this year

## ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND EVENTS



### OCTOBER

OCTOBER 10 • 6:00 PM

#### Rabbi Fersko's Book Launch

Join us in celebration of Rabbi Fersko's book, *We Need to Talk About Antisemitism*, where she will be in conversation with Tablet magazine's editor in chief, Alana Newhouse.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 15 • 10:00 AM

Birdwatching with Dayenu Circle Circle



### DECEMBER

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 12 • 6:00 PM

Israel Trip Information Meeting

### JANUARY

FRIDAY, JANUARY 19 • 6:00 PM

Whiskey Tasting

### FEBRUARY

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 28 • 6:30 PM

Singo Bingo

### MARCH

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6, 13, & 20 • 6:00 PM

Adult Education with Rabbi Fersko

FRIDAY, MARCH 27 • 6:00 PM

Wine Tasting

### MAY

WEDNESDAY, MAY 15 • 6:30PM

Spring Gala



**DAYENU**  
A Jewish Call to Climate Action





## MUSICAL SHABBAT

### NOVEMBER

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 3 • 6:00 PM

Join us for this musical *Shabbat* program

### JANUARY

FRIDAY, JANUARY 26 • 6:00 PM

*Shabbat Shira*

### APRIL

FRIDAY, APRIL 12 • 6:00 PM

*Jazz Shabbat*

## RELIGIOUS SCHOOL EVENTS

### SEPTEMBER

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 10

Welcome Back Family Picnic at Union Square

### OCTOBER

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 1

Family *Sukkot* Party

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 27

Family *Shabbat* Dinner

### DECEMBER

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 5 • 6:00 PM

*B'nai Mitzvah* Orientation

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10

*Hanukkah* Carnival and Parent Social

### FEBRUARY

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 9

Family *Shabbat* Dinner

### APRIL

SUNDAY, APRIL 14

Pre-Passover Family Program and Parent Social

### MAY

*Mitzvah* Day Park Clean-Up



## COMMUNITY SHABBAT DINNERS

### NOVEMBER

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 17 • 6:30 PM

### MARCH

FRIDAY, MARCH 8 • 6:30 PM

### MAY

FRIDAY, MAY 3

*Shabbat* in the Home

## HOLIDAY PROGRAMS

### SEPTEMBER

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 29 • 6:00 PM

*Sukkot* Adult Decorating Party

### DECEMBER

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8 • 6:00 PM

Vodka and Latkes

### JANUARY

FRIDAY, JANUARY 12 • 6:00 PM

Martin Luther King Jr, *Shabbat*

### FEBRUARY

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 2 • 6:00 PM

Refugee *Shabbat*

### MARCH

SUNDAY, MARCH 24 • 12:00 PM

*Purim Spiel*

### APRIL

FRIDAY, APRIL 12 • 6:00 PM

Jazz *Shabbat*

FRIDAY, APRIL 19 • 6:00 PM

Passover Choir *Shabbat*

### MAY

TUESDAY, MAY 7 • 6:00 PM

*Yom HaShoah* Observation

### JUNE

FRIDAY, JUNE 7 • 6:00 PM

Pride *Shabbat*





# RELIGIOUS SCHOOL NEWS



*Bruchim HaBa'im!*

Shalom and welcome to the new 2023-2024/5784 school year at The Village Temple! I am so excited to welcome all new and returning students and their families following a fun and memorable summer break.

The entire Hebrew month of *Tishrei* that begins on *erev Rosh Hashanah* and lasts until mid-October is a very exciting time of the year for Jews everywhere around the world. It is a time for celebration and worship, a time for joy and reflection and a time for family gatherings and community building. And it is no different at The Village Temple Religious School. In addition to getting to know their teachers and each other, children will be learning about the customs, rituals, and core values of *Rosh Hashanah*, *Yom Kippur*, *Sukkot*, and *Simchat Torah*. Their journey will take them beyond the classroom with many special services and celebrations. This will be a High Holiday season to remember, and I can't wait to reconnect with everyone as we travel together through the Days of Awe and during the month of *Tishrei*.

As many of you know, our Religious School children's and family celebrations are open to all and I encourage our members to bring a friend or two to our High Holiday services, *Tashlich*, *Sukkot*, and *Simchat Torah* celebrations at The Village Temple, or to the Religious School Open House/*Sukkot* Family Social on October 1st at 10:00 AM. If you know anyone who is interested in learning more about our community and about our education programs, please share with them my phone number (212-674-2340 x308) or my email address ([atansky@villagetemple.org](mailto:atansky@villagetemple.org)) and I will be sure to follow up.

I am looking forward to seeing you and your children soon and to celebrating the High Holidays with you!

To the entire Village Temple community, I wish a *Shana Tova U'Metuka*—a good and sweet year, a year blessed with new friendships, awe, wonder, joyous learning, and meaningful and lasting connections to Judaism!

*L'shalom,*  
Alex Tansky  
Director of Education  
[atansky@villagetemple.org](mailto:atansky@villagetemple.org)



Welcoming new Religious School students at the Consecration ceremony.

# MADRICH: TEEN PROGRAMS



Welcome to another exciting year at The VT! Our teen program for post *b'nai mitzvah* students continues to grow and thrive.

Your child may have done their *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* already or is about to this year. Mazel Tov! Now what? Don't let all that hard work and Jewish identity slip away! We have tons of ways for teens to be involved at The Village Temple.

All teens are welcome to our Wednesday evening dinner and lounge nights from 6-7 pm (calendar of dates coming soon). We alternate between social evenings and programs about more serious topics, with a focus this year on mitzvot and social justice. The Rabbi will be joining us on several of these nights for teaching and discussions.

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We also encourage the teens to be Teaching Assistants (TAs) in the classrooms and to help with the younger kids. A great way to get those community service hours! Have your teen reach out to me via text if they want to help on Tuesday or Wednesday afternoons or Sunday mornings.



Above and top right: *B'nai Mitzvah* students celebrating Sukkot.

Right: VT teens lobbying on Capitol Hill with The Religious Action Center.



Of course, we have all the social outings—Broadway shows, sporting events, escape rooms, city scavenger hunts, food tours, bowling, indoor trampoline parks, pop ups like bumper cars on ice, and all the fun NYC has to offer.

There will be a welcome back night on Wednesday, September 13 at 6:00 pm, please encourage your teens to join us for dinner. Also, please make note of our teen program on *Yom Kippur* afternoon, Monday, September 25.

Looking forward to another great year of teen engagement at VT!

*Liotte Greenbaum, RJE*  
Director of Community Engagement  
[lgreenbaum@villagetemple.org](mailto:lgreenbaum@villagetemple.org)





# Adult Social Events

Broadway shows! Wine tasting! Trivia nights! Singo Bingo! Schmooze and Booze! Coffee Klatch! Museum exhibits! Community dinners! We have so many opportunities for our VT members to be social, both at the Temple and around NYC. Come hang out with friends old & new and enjoy fun programs as a community.

Make sure to check the eblast each week to see what exciting events are coming up!

