Welcome to Kesher

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

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HIGH HOLIDAY SCHEDULE – 5778

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<th>Event</th>
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<td>Erev Rosh Hashanah</td>
<td>Wednesday, September 20, 2017</td>
<td>8:00 pm – Service held at The Cooper Union</td>
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<td>Rosh Hashanah, Day 1</td>
<td>Thursday, September 21, 2017</td>
<td>10:00 am – Morning Service at The Cooper Union</td>
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<td>*2:00 pm – Children’s Service at The Cooper Union</td>
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<td>*4:00 pm – Tashlich Service at Hudson River &amp; 10th St.</td>
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<td>Rosh Hashanah,</td>
<td>Friday, September 22, 2017</td>
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<td>Kol Nidre</td>
<td>Friday, September 29, 2017</td>
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<td>Yom Kippur</td>
<td>Saturday, September 30, 2017</td>
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<td>*3:45 pm – Yizkor Service at The Cooper Union</td>
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<td>*4:30 pm – Afternoon and N’eilah Service at The Cooper Union</td>
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*Services marked with an asterisk (*) are open to all with no tickets required

Services led by Rabbi Deborah A. Hirsch and Cantor Nancy Bach

Children’s Choir led by Anita Hollander

The Cooper Union is located at 7 East 7th Street at 3rd Ave.

The Village Temple is located at 33 East 12th Street
Dear Friends,

As I write this Kesher message, we are cognizant that summer is more than half-over, and signs of fall are everywhere: Clothing stores have shifted their merchandise, ads for school supplies abound, summer camps will hold their final sessions this week, college students are packing and in the mountains of Massachusetts, there are, spotty, faint signs of trees beginning to turn colors. In Atlanta, students started their school year on August 1st and summer camp is for them, a fading memory.

This is not just a time of changing our daily routine — it is one of altering our most inner selves. As we approach the High Holy Days — The Noraim — the awe-filled days spanning between Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur — we attempt to perform Cheshbon Nefesh — an accounting of our souls. Like delicate surgery, we peer into the deepest recesses of our being and pinpoint those moments, those words, those actions that caused pain to and disconnect from others. The Noraim enable us to excise those parts of ourselves that caused pain. They are our opportunity to place ourselves on a more grounded and connected track for the year ahead. We must remember, though, that we cannot only acknowledge our misdeeds to ourselves, we must seek forgiveness from those whom we have wronged — those relationships that are fractured and yearn to be healed.

I believe at this juncture in time we need connection and grounding more than ever. The politics of this past year — in America and abroad — has left many of us reeling. This message will have gone to print at the height of the growing North Korean threats. There is a lack of civility blanketing our society, impacting adults and children alike. Human rights in our country are under attack. Israel remains a pressure cooker whose lid keeps popping. Suffice it to say we need one another during these times of angst and distress. We need sacred community to provide the roadmap for strength, healing and action. This year The Village Temple will focus on strengthening the connections within our congregation. Informal gatherings and programs are vehicles for connectivity. Formal study will intersect with informal building of relationships. This year temple leadership and staff plan to be deliberate in fostering these connections within our congregation. (More on all these issues during The High Holy Days.)

As the days count down to Rosh HaShanah, may we use our time wisely. May we reflect upon the past year and recalibrate our path for the year to come. May 5778 be a year filled with goodness, kindness, health and may we join together as rodfei shalom — pursuers of wholeness and peace for ourselves and our world.

Carole joins me in wishing you a sweet and good New Year.

Shanah Tovah,
Rabbi Deborah A. Hirsch
rabbidhirsch@villagetemple.org

This year The Village Temple will focus on strengthening the connections within our congregation. Informal gatherings and programs are vehicles for connectivity. Formal study will intersect with informal building of relationships.
Dear Village Temple Community,

Our congregation is approaching its 70th anniversary, a milestone worthy of celebration and reflection. The Village Temple came into existence in 1948 — the year the state of Israel was founded and in the wake of a devastating World War. At that time, the synagogue wasn’t a building but a state of mind. People seeking connection through Judaism and shared progressive values met in one another’s homes and at a neighborhood hotel, then rented space in a nearby church. It wasn’t until 1957 when 33 East 12th Street became our spiritual home. A half-century later, our country and our neighborhood have undergone vast changes. Yet The Village Temple remains a sanctuary from a tumultuous world, a place for liberal Jews to explore links between past and present and to honor tradition while exploring change.

As we begin a new year, we feel grateful to have a spiritual leader like Rabbi Deborah Hirsch, whose personal experience, warmth, and intellectual openness has brought fresh thinking and reawakened enthusiasm in our congregation. She will be sharing the bimah at the High Holy Days services and throughout the year with Cantor Nancy Bach, who has become a delightful addition to The Village Temple family. Our music program, always a highlight of Village Temple services, continues to draw on the gifts of Anita Hollander, director of our wonderful children’s choir. She will also help lead our annual children’s High Holy Days services at The Cooper Union.

We are also lucky to have a top-notch staff as well, in Alex Tansky our religious school Director; Sandy Albert, our Executive Director; and Liotte Greenbaum, religious school teacher and our Director of Engagement.

However, from the beginning, The Village Temple has succeeded because of the dedication of our members who have supported its mission as volunteers and as donors. As a small institution operating without an endowment, your generosity has allowed us to keep our doors open to all, regardless of ability to pay, year in and year out. That generosity is never taken for granted and can never be acknowledged too often. In this issue of Kesher, we are pleased to list all Village Temple members who provided essential donations beyond dues and school tuition during the past year.

For your help in ensuring our continued existence, we thank you!

Wishing all of you a sweet and good New Year.

Fred Basch and Julie Salamon, Co-Presidents
fredbasch@nyc.rr.com; jms118@att.net

A LETTER FROM THE CO-PRESIDENTS

What’s New in 5778 at The Village Temple?

High Holy Days
• Cantor Bach joining Rabbi Hirsch on the bimah
• Visual Tefila at our Children’s/Family Services.
• More congregants (adults and teens) chanting Torah and blowing shofar

During 5778
• Informal congregant gatherings to build relationships
• Inspirational speakers
• Israel-Jordan Trip with Rabbi Hirsch
• Special weekend honoring Dean Chavooshian and his years of service to the VT Soup Kitchen
• High Holy Day Torah chanting class
• Welcome back Sunday Religious School Open House & breakfast on 12th Street – 9/17
  o Prospective members invited
• One day-a-week 5th Grade Religious School pilot program
• Introduction of Mitkadem, a self-paced Hebrew prayer and ritual learning program designed to empower every child to learn Hebrew.

• B’nai Mitzvah families volunteering in the Soup Kitchen
• Class Shabbat dinners
• Village Tots – A weekly program for tots ages 6 months to 2 years
• Confirmation Class
• Adult B’nai Mitzvah Class (year 1)
• Special Shabbat HaGadol pre-Pesach Service (March 23) with guest speaker Isabel Dunst, Chair of the Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism
• Teen Trip to the Religious Action Center in Washington, DC
With the new Religious School year upon us, teenagers at the Village Temple have many exciting opportunities to stay involved in our community. 8th- and 9th-graders will continue with Madrich a couple of times a month for dinner and discussions on Jewish values, ethics, current events, and developing leadership skills. Our 10th- to 12th-graders will participate in Confirmation class with Rabbi Hirsch. All 8th- to 12th-graders are invited to our upcoming Youth Group events, and our VTYG board has already planned our first event: Indoor Trampoline Park and Laser Tag, followed by a BBQ and Havdallah led by Rabbi Hirsch. In February 2018, we will be going to the Religious Action Center (RAC), which is the hub of Jewish social justice and legislative activity in Washington, D.C. The RAC educates and mobilizes the Reform Jewish community on legislative and social concerns, advocating on more than 70 different issues, including economic justice, civil rights, religious liberty, and Israel.

As we head into 5778, I asked many of our teens to reflect and comment on why they like to stay involved with The Village Temple. I also asked some parents to share their thoughts on why it is important for their teens to participate in the VT teen community. Here is what they said:

Rachel H (9th-grader): “I’ve been a member of the temple community for as long as I can remember. In my over a decade of being here, I’ve found friendships and experiences I’ll be able to take with me for my entire life and wouldn’t trade for the world. My time at Religious School, services, and now as a Teacher’s Assistant have helped me grow into the person I am today. Being in a place full of friends where you feel completely comfortable to be yourself is an amazing experience. I always come to help out in any way I can, and cannot wait to start the new year together with the temple.”

Molly J (12th-grader): “Staying a part of the Village Temple community beyond Hebrew school has given me a sense of community and shaped me into a confident, caring, and strong friend, leader, and person. I’ve grown so much and I am forever grateful to the youth group for this.”

Marilyn Francescon (parent): “I am so happy, and proud, that my daughter, Olivia, works as a TA at the Village Temple, and that she is an active member of its youth group. Her weekly work with Hebrew School students and teachers gives Olivia a place to develop a sense of leadership and responsibility, while the meetings and outside activities with fellow teens in Madrich reinforce an all-important sense of connection, shared values and being part of a community.”

Isabel L (college freshman): “I love being a TA because it allows me to be a part of such a special tight-knit community. Almost everyone in my Hebrew school class came back to work here and we all love it. We all have the same hardworking nature and awesome passion that brings us together as great friends and establishes comfortable relationships with the students. Being a TA is rewarding in many ways, and I’m so glad that I can still be a part of this special group.”

Elly S ( college freshman): “After my Bat Mitzvah, I didn’t think I’d ever want to come back to The Village Temple. But once I was in high school, I decided to return because I had been going to religious school for so long, it was strange to not have that as my usual Sunday morning routine. I really learned a lot about responsibility and it was so much fun teaching. I also became even closer with some of my friends who stayed to be TAs, and even met other teens who became some of my best friends.”

Amy Adelman (parent): “We were thrilled that our daughter, Sarah, wanted to continue to be involved at VT after her Bat Mitzvah. She continued be part of the Village Temple community by working as a TA at the Hebrew school and being involved in the youth group. Her involvement provided her with leadership skills and taught her commitment and responsibility. Being involved at VT gave Sarah and our family a sense of community, and it has been such a wonderful place for our daughter to grow up and build her Jewish identity.”

Emily G (college sophomore): “I think the biggest thing I learned from being part of the Village Temple for so long (10 or 11 years) was that it taught me why it mattered to both identify values for yourself, and challenge yourself to stick to them. When you go to college and are thrown into such a large setting with so many people, it can be difficult not to be influenced by everyone new you meet. The Village Temple helped instill within me so many strong values, not only regarding religion but also in the way I go about communicating with others/conducting myself in daily life.”

Marina Levin (parent): “People have joked for years that every Jewish parent dreams of their children growing up to be lawyers, doctors or accountants. My goal is simpler. I want to ensure that my kids are mensches. I think that a large part of this is modeling derekh eretz to younger kids — kindness, good manners, courtesy,
Bruchim HaBa’im! Shalom and welcome to the new, 2017-2018 / 5778 school year at The Village Temple!

It is a pleasure to see all of the children and family members returning to the Temple following a refreshing and memorable summer holiday. It is also an absolute delight to welcome our new students and their parents. I hope that the roots you plant here at the Village Temple this season will offer your family a deep and meaningful connection to this vibrant Jewish community for many years to come. Please remember that our Clergy, staff, and fellow families are here to welcome and help you navigate your journey as you become active in our many innovative programs and services.

**New Religious School Offerings for 5778**
This year in Religious School, we are planning on launching many new and exciting offerings inspired by our own experience as educators and by your feedback during the previous school year and over the summer. Below are some of the most notable changes we have in store for the next school year:

- **Religious School Kick-Off Party:** We welcome all Religious School families to join us on Sunday, September 17. Our block will be closed to traffic and we will have an amazing time reconnecting after the summer break. Please invite your friends to join!
- **New Once-A-Week 5th Grade Learning Program:** In addition to two hours of Religious School learning in the classroom on Wednesdays, our 5th graders will receive a 30-minute additional online session with their private instructor. These virtual sessions are designed to supplement our in-house learning to help our students meet their Hebrew education requirements.
- **Mitkadem:** For grades 4-7, this is a self-paced Hebrew prayer and ritual learning program designed to empower every child to learn Hebrew.
- **Chuggim** (club-like electives): On Sundays we will offer new electives designed to help our students explore Jewish identity through dance, art, music, and dramatics.
- **Village Tots on Tuesdays:** In addition to MusiKef, our Hebrew-centered music and movement program on Thursdays, this new weekly class on Tuesday mornings will feature age-appropriate activities, music, movement and play space for caregivers and their tots, ages 6-24 months. Open to non-members as well.
- **Class Shabbat dinners:** Our beloved Class Shabbat dinners are coming back! These will coincide with Family Shabbat services and give us the opportunity to rejoice as a community following services.

Lastly, I would like to remind you about a special membership promotion available to new members enrolling their children in grades 1 or 2 for the first time. They will receive a free introductory membership in our Temple family for one year! Spread the good word among your friends and neighbors and help them learn more about our outstanding education program and warm and welcoming community.

To the entire Village Temple community, I wish a Shanah Tovah U’Metuka — a good and sweet year — a year blessed with new friendships, awe, wonder, joyous learning, meaningful connections and a love of Judaism!

L’shalom,
Alex Tanisky
Director of Education
atansky@villagetemple.org

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**Teens at The Village Temple, continued**

common sense, compassion and thoughtfulness. Participating in the TA program combines all of these attributes and ties them into everything that Marc learned during his years at VT Hebrew School. I sincerely believe that being a TA is an integral part of Marc becoming a *mensch.*

If your teen is interested in being involved in any way, or if you would like more information about our teen programs, please contact me.

Liotte Greenbaum
Director of Community Engagement
lgreenbaum@villagetemple.org
don’t miss

SEPTEMBER
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 8th: Shabbat Services & Welcome Back Dinner, 6:45 PM
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 15th: Bim Bam Shabbat, 5:30-6:15 PM
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 16th: Selichot Study and Services, 7:30-9:30 PM
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 17th: Religious School Starts, 9:00 AM
Social Action Committee Meeting, 10:00 AM

OCTOBER
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 6th: Pot Luck Dinner, 6:00 PM
Sukkot Shabbat Services, 6:45 PM
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 11th: Simchat Torah Celebration, 6:00 PM
Watch Eblast for details.
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 20th: Shabbat Family Service with Choir, 6:45 PM
1st and 2nd grade Class Dinner, 6:45 PM

WITH GRATITUDE

This time of year provides time for reflection and assessment, what could have gone better and what makes us grateful. This seems like the perfect moment to thank those of you who donated to The Village Temple in the past year.

Every year we make an appeal for contributions at the High Holy Days services. Every year we explain that membership fees and religious school tuition cover about two-thirds of the synagogue’s operating costs. The rest is made up in donations.

What we can never do often enough is to thank all of you for your commitment to The Village Temple. Your willingness to contribute through membership dues is the most meaningful support and very much appreciated. As a practical matter, the synagogue also needs additional funds to meet our operating costs, which so many of you provide, year in and year out. We want to thank everyone who gives that extra amount, no matter the size of the gift, understanding that some people have more resources than other.

In the past we have celebrated those who volunteer at the synagogue. Now we would like to publicly acknowledge those who make the extra contributions that help to maintain the quality of excellence we value to serve our members, and to ensure that no one will be turned away because they can’t afford dues or tuition.

With gratitude,
Fred Basch and Julie Salamon
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Meet our October Bat Mitzvah:

Brett Moriarty, daughter of Dana and Patrick Moriarty, will become a **Bat Mitzvah** on Saturday, October 7
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**THE VILLAGE TEMPLE**  
Congregation B’nai Israel of New York  
33 East 12th Street  
New York, NY 10003