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

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The Village Temple represented at the NYC 2019 Women’s March

Come as you are. Discover who you are.

Don’t Miss
70th Anniversary
FUNdraising Gala
Wednesday, March 6, 2019, 6:00 pm
Manhattan Penthouse,
80 Fifth Avenue
@ 14th Street

Welcome to Kesher

The Annual Village Temple Purim Shpiel...

ShushAnnie

Featuring the VT Children’s Choir and Village Temple Staff
Wednesday, March 20, 2019
Purim Service begins at 6pm, followed by Megillah Reading and Shpiel

The Village Temple
33 East 12th Street
www.villagetemple.org

March-April 2019 / 5779
V’shinantam L’vanecha

I know the months of March and April include two beloved Jewish holidays: Purim and Pesach—holidays that mark Jewish freedom—from slavery, prejudice and death. We will celebrate Purim at the temple with song, groggers, choir magic and the ancient story. On Passover, many of us will gather with family and friends to recall the Exodus experience. Both holidays remind us of Jewish vulnerability throughout the centuries. Surely, the last 100 years have borne witness to human persecution. Therefore, I would like to dedicate this column to upcoming events, on the very first two days of May, commemorating human persecution.

On Wednesday, May 1, religious school children and adult members of the congregation will join together to observe Yom Hashoah v’Hagevurah—Remembrance of the Holocaust and the Heroism. This year we will be honored to have as guest speaker, our member, Josef Eisenger, PhD, who, at age 15 fled Vienna. In addition to being Professor Emeritus of Pharmacological Sciences at Mount Sinai, Josef is an author who has written about his experiences during and after the Shoah. His wife, Styra Avins, a professional cellist, will also participate in the commemoration service.

The following evening, 36 members of our temple community will fly to Atlanta for the Etgar 36 Adult Civil Rights Trip through Alabama. We will walk through and touch history of the Civil Rights Movement. We will also examine Jewish involvement in this critical period of American history. The Shoah underscores humanity’s darkest hour and the consequences of human indifference and hatred. The Civil Rights Movement teaches us about how positive change happens when people step forward to defend the rights of those who are persecuted.

This year, at our Yom HaShoah v’Hagevurah commemoration, participants will be given a “Yellow Candle.” The Yellow Candle™ was created in 1981 by FJMC (Federation of Jewish Men’s Clubs). The candle’s yellow wax serves to remind us of the yellow arm band that Jews were forced to wear during the Nazi regime. A photo on the candle container shows young people visiting Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp. This reflects the importance of teaching our youth the lessons of the Holocaust and of remembering the Six Million. The program logo is a yellow Magen David (Star of David) outlined with barbed wire, with the word “Jude” in the middle. This preserves the memory of the armband or cloth patch that Jews were forced to wear in the ghettos of Eastern Europe (https://www.fjmc.org/content/yellow-candles-home). We will ask participants—especially children, to help kindle the candles and place them near a window in their homes. At a time when white nationalism is fanning the flames of antisemitism, we must be bearers of light—reminding ourselves, our children and others of the darkness that engulfed our world, and our commitment to be torchbearers of hope to those who are still oppressed.

L’shalom,
Rabbi Deborah A. Hirsch
Rabbi2@villagetemple.org
A LETTER FROM THE CO-PRESIDENTS

Dear Village Temple community,

Our temple has been abuzz with activities, celebrations, and crowded Shabbat services like our beloved Martin Luther King Jr family Shabbat with the VT Children’s Choir in January, and our unique Jazz Shabbat and inspiring Disability Awareness Shabbat in February. Congregants and guests braved sometimes punishing cold temperatures to rejoice and pray together. This is the true spirit of our community!

70th Anniversary FUNdraiser Gala

We are most excited about our 70th anniversary FUNdraiser gala on Wednesday, March 6th at 6 pm at the Manhattan Penthouse. The theme is: “Honoring the past. Celebrating the Present. Creating the Future.”

It will be a wonderful event—a way for our community to come together, raise much needed funds for our Temple, and honor two very special people: Harriet Zimmer, our synagogue’s member of longest standing and an inspiration and delight to our community; and Alex Tansky, our most wonderful Director of Education. If you are unable to attend, we hope you will consider sponsoring tickets for a teacher or staff member and making a special donation in honor of our congregation’s milestone and as an investment in its future.

New Lunch and Learn at the VT

On another note, and in addition to our havurah groups such as our book club and weekly Mah Jongg, Rabbi Hirsch has started a new monthly “Lunch and Learn” at the Village Temple to discuss current events through the lens of Jewish texts and values. If you are free on those Thursdays, do not miss these instructive and engaging conversations! (Bring your own lunch; beverages will be provided.)

Purim

Approximately 30 new families have joined our temple this year; the energy is palpable, particularly in the religious school. We are looking forward to celebrating Purim with great joy. Our temple will host its annual Carnival on Sunday March 17th from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm. Parents will socialize upstairs while kids have fun and play games in the Social Hall. And on Wednesday, March 20th at 6 pm, after services and Megillah reading, Anita Hollander and our VT Children’s Choir and staff will regale us with this year’s Purim Shpiel ShushAnnie! Come early to get a good seat!

And more…

On April 5th, our Family Shabbat service will be led by our 3rd- and 4th-grade students, accompanied by the VT Children’s Choir, in preparation for the Pesach holiday. For our families with younger children, we will be having a Family Shabbat dinner at 5:45pm before services, which start at 6:45pm. If you have little ones at home, this Shabbat is for you! Bring the whole family.

Approximately 30 new families have joined our temple this year; the energy is palpable, particularly in the religious school.

On April 10th we will host our annual Religious School Parent Social. Parents schmooze over wine, cocktails, and finger food at the Temple, while 1st-7th-graders have their own great time with our school teachers and teens. This is how we build kesher – connection in our congregation.

It is hard to believe, but these are only a few of the events coming up at the Village Temple. So make sure to always read our weekly email blast or check out our website (https://villagetemple.org/) for more information. And more importantly, join us!

Sarah King
Co-President
sarahking123@gmail.com
Part of becoming a bar or bat mitzvah is accepting social responsibility to be a good Jew and help out in the community in order to make the world a better place. This value of tikkun olam is exemplified by our teenagers at The Village Temple.

In February, our Youth Group Board led a program for the 5th-7th-graders and the 8th-12th-graders on disability awareness, acceptance, and inclusion. While we work hard to make everyone feel welcome in our Village Temple home, there is always more we can do to educate ourselves on challenges that others face. Genuine acceptance is rooted in the inherent value that we are all created in God’s image. Acceptance is based on two key concepts. First, each one of us has something to contribute to our communities and our world, and second, our communities are not whole until all of us belong. We can only go so far if we focus only on awareness and inclusion.

Our teenagers led younger students and their peers in activities about visual and hearing impairment, physical limitations, mental illness, and learning disabilities. Students were able to experience various challenges, discuss their experiences with being “disabled,” and talk about people they know who work to overcome obstacles relating to disabilities. The group also discussed stigmas and labels, and changing the way they perceive others who are considered “different.” The program was a valuable lesson for all!

Coming up this spring, the Youth Group has lots of exciting events. Purim hamantashen baking on Wednesday, March 14th- Pi Day with pie filling; a visit to the Tenement Museum on the Lower East Side on Sunday, April 7th; Be More Chill on Broadway on Saturday, April 13th at 8pm; Star Wars Lounge Night on Saturday, May 4th; and our trip to Philadelphia on Saturday, May 18th. Stay tuned for more awesome news from the VTYG!

Liotte Greenbaum
Director of Community Engagement
lgreenbaum@villagetemple.org
Shalom!

EDUCATION NEWS

Shalom,

First, I would like to thank Wendy Goldberg and Stephanie Kanarek, the Chairs of the 70th Anniversary Gala, Sarah King and Fred Basch, Temple Co-Presidents, and all lay leaders of this wonderful congregation for selecting me as an honoree alongside Harriet Zimmer on such a festive occasion for the entire Village Temple community. I am extending a huge "todah rabah," thank you to Rabbi Deborah Hirsch, Cantor Nancy Bach, Sandy Albert, and Liotte Greenbaum—our Village Temple professional team—for their support and amazing teamwork! Also, I want to thank everyone who is planning to come to celebrate this milestone on March 6th at the Manhattan Penthouse, and those of you who cannot join in person and are sending contributions instead.

It means so much for me to be recognized on this special day for my accomplishments as an educational leader at The Village Temple. It has been a privilege to serve the VT community for 14 years, to meet so many wonderful families here, and to be able to implement my vision of a Religious School program that is educational, engaging, consequential, and fun for learners of all ages—from preschoolers to teens. I am looking forward to continue creating meaningful connections, to keep designing innovative entry points for new learners, and to continue paving the road for them to make their life-long commitment to Judaism relevant, inspiring and spiritual.

March and April will be busy months in the Religious School in preparation for Purim and Pesach. We will have great community building events ranging from class family Shabbat dinners and services to a Parents Social with children's programming. Please check the calendar and stay tuned for my email reminders and RSVP requests.

Pesach Traditions of a Different Order

In preparation for Pesach, I would like to share a few different traditions from around the world. Here are some that you may want to try out at your seder.

• Use a boiled potato for the karpas or green vegetable on the seder plate. Most families use parsley and dip it in salt water. Boiled potatoes were used in times past by Eastern European Jews who did not have any green vegetables, but many root crops. The green shoots of the potato symbolized greenness on the whole plant.

• Not hiding the afikomen. The afikomen—that half of the middle matzah that is put aside for dessert, then hidden for children to find—is treated differently at non-Ashkenazic seders. One option is to place the afikomen on someone's shoulder and walk around with it in memory of ancestors who left Egypt.

• A roasted beet—use as a shankbone for vegetarians. The shankbone (zero'a in Hebrew) on the seder plate represents the sacrifice made by ancient Jews in the Temple. An acceptable substitute, according to the Talmud, is a roasted beet.

• Charoset with apricots, coconut, figs and bananas. While Ashkenazic-style charoset (which represents mortar) is a mixture of apples, nuts, wine and spices, the Sephardim (Jews from Spain) use a variety of other fruits and condiments to create a fuller, richer mixture.

• Displaying the matzoh. In the seder service, there is a place in the service for the reader to hold up the matzoh. A custom in some Sephardic families is to pass the seder plate over the heads of all the guests, thus getting everyone involved.

• Rice and corn on Pesach? Rice and corn are among the food items prohibited during Passover in Ashkenazic tradition. Sephardic tradition, however, disallows only five grains (unless they are made into matzah): wheat, barley, rye, oats and spelt.

• Each family has its own Exodus Story. Tell this story to your guests and family members at the seder.

Feel free to contact me at atansky@villagetemple.org or 212-674-2340 x 4 for more ideas, games, websites, recipes, and for suggestions for places to hide the afikomen.

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

My wife Alla, and daughters Victoria and Daniella, join me in wishing you a happy, sweet and peaceful Pesach!

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

March-April 2019 / 5779 • Kesher
save the date

MARCH

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6:  The Village Temple 70th Anniversary FUNdraiser Gala
SUNDAY, MARCH 17:  Annual Purim Carnival
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20:  Megillah reading and Purim shpiel performance

The Annual Village Temple Purim Shpiel...

ShushAnnie

Featuring the VT Children's Choir and Village Temple Staff

Wednesday, March 20, 2019
Purim Service begins at 6pm, followed by Megillah Reading and Shpiel

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APRIL

FRIDAY, APRIL 5:  Family Shabbat service featuring the children's choir and the 3rd & 4th grade dinner

Brooklyn Museum Docent-led Tour
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Meet our B’nai Mitzvah:

- **Bat Mitzvah of Emily Friedman**, March 2, Parashat Vayakhel
- **Bar Mitzvah of Isaac Cohen**, March 23, Parashat Tzav
- **Bar Mitzvah of Max Copitch**, March 30, Parashat Shmini
- **Bar Mitzvah of Fletcher Steinberg**, April 6, Parashat Tazria
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RS = Religious School
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B = Board Meeting

Congregation B’nai Israel of New York
33 East 12th Street
New York, NY 10003