As I prepare for the High Holidays, I find myself thinking about the synagogue’s schedule for the coming year. It is filled with religious holidays and other events in the Jewish calendar. My father was president of his congregation for several years – this is definitely one of those “like father, like son” moments – and I’ve been thinking about seeing him in action. Just the way he did, I feel that I have a new responsibility, as a member of the lay leadership of the synagogue, to try to attend as many big events as possible.

In the past few years I have started attending more Shabbat services on Saturday mornings; at first, it was because I thought I “should” do it, but as time went by I realized that I’ve become interested in exploring Shabbat and I enjoy services. In much the same way, Merry and I started consistently saying the full Kiddush on Friday nights, which began as something that I felt I SHOULD do, but has become something we both enjoy. As does our dog, who sits quietly waiting for his little piece of Challah.

So as Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and Sukkot approach, and as I begin to make note of the different events in the coming year that I would like to attend, I’m starting to realize that maybe it’s my new role that gives me the opportunity to explore my own personal Judaism in a different light. As with many things in life, finding multiple reasons to do something can help create inspiration.

I always thought of the idea of the Jewish holidays as encompassing only the Big 4: Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Hanukkah and Passover. As a child, I never learned that there were so many more, and only as I got older did I realize that the calendar is filled with Jewish holidays and festivals – if you’ve never done so, I encourage you to Google Jewish Holidays 2018 to see what comes up. And then, I encourage you to explore opportunities to attend services on other holidays that our community offers.

The Ethical Life
Rabbi Scheinberg will lead this new, exciting adult course at USH on Tuesday evenings for 15 weeks. Starts Oct. 24. Calendar it now!
As you know, Jews specialize in holidays. We are always either celebrating a holiday, or getting ready to celebrate a holiday, or recovering from having celebrated a holiday. And holidays inherently suggest that each year is a repeat of the previous year.

But it’s interesting that we react to this repetition differently at different points in the life cycle. Preschoolers at age 4 will sometimes - very rarely - have a strong memory of something that happened the previous year, and they might exclaim with pride, ‘we did this last year!’ and go on to talk about how remarkable it is that something that happened SO LONG AGO is happening again, but now of course it is being better understood and appreciated.

As kids get older, “we did this last year” has a different meaning: it reflects a feeling of stagnation. Why are we doing the same thing year after year? Blow the shofar. Shake the lulav. Dance with the torahs. Light candles. Shake the gragger. Eat matzah. Over and over again. As the book of Ecclesiastes says: ‘There’s nothing new under the sun.’

But at a certain point in life - and what that point is probably differs from person to person - the perspective changes entirely. After that point, if we say “we did this last year,” it’s not out of frustration but it’s out of a sense of comfort, in knowing that we are celebrating a holiday in the same way we did in a previous year, or the same way we may have done in our childhoods, or even in the same way that our grandparents did.

One of the themes of Rosh HaShanah is simply that it gives us an opportunity to mark and contemplate the passage of time. In fact this is a minor and underappreciated theme in the torah reading for the first day of Rosh HaShanah, in which we read that Sarah gave birth to a son la-moed asher diber oto elohim, at the same time of year that God had spoken to Abraham to promise him that he and Sarah would have a child.

The Torah reading for Rosh HaShanah describes a momentous event while also pointing backward to exactly one year prior, as Abraham and Sarah presumably contemplated all the ways their lives have changed, all the challenges they have endured, and all the blessings that are theirs, over the past year - just as we do.

On the first night of Rosh HaShanah I like to present a metaphor that I am using to think about the passage of time and the arrival of a new year. This year’s metaphor is both from the world of architecture and the world of education. I encourage you to think of this year as several steps on a spiral staircase.

You may know that a spiral staircase is often used as a metaphor in education to describe the kind of curriculum in which a student revisits the same theme many times over the course of one’s education, at increasing levels of complexity over time. That’s how I think Judaism envisions a human life - as a lifetime spiral curriculum. Each new year brings us back to where we started, only higher. It’s like the quotation attributed to Mark Twain: History doesn’t repeat itself, but it often rhymes. Each time we come back to autumn, and winter, the experience rhymes with the other autumns and winters of our lives. Each Rosh HaShanah rhymes with every other, just as the bar or bat mitzvah of a child, or a child departing for college, rhymes with those events from the previous generation.

And yet these experiences are different, year by year, generation by generation, because we keep on ascending the staircase. This is probably my favorite thing about growing older, so far at least. My eyesight is deteriorating, but I think my vision is getting better, because I am higher up on this spiral staircase. I can see further, I can be more attentive to matters that are further away from me. Some individual problems and challenges that seemed so important gradually look less of a concern. At the same time, as we ascend, we can catch a glimpse of the world’s ‘bigger picture’ - just as, if you want to see the curvature of the earth, you have to be very very far up from its surface.

May this High Holy Day season bring us back to where we started, but - in the words of the special version of the Kaddish for the High Holy Days - may we be le-eyla le-eyla -- always higher and higher.
In just a few weeks you can celebrate Sukkot, Sh’mini Atzeret and Simchat Torah (and if you’ve never danced outside the synagogue while holding a Torah aloft or watched Rabbi Scheinberg unroll the scroll and talk about the different sections, it’s a blast. Just be prepared to answer the following question: What’s the most common first letter of each column of text?)

And there’s more: In the early spring, did you know there’s the opportunity to celebrate another Seder for Tu BiShvat, the new year of the trees? And if you’ve never ever participated in a mass reading of the Megillah or ever wondered what a grogger is really used for, stop by Purim services.

In July, there’s Tish’a B’Av, a solemn ceremony recognizing the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem and just a week later you can celebrate Tu B’Av, a mini holiday of love.

There are so many more days of meaning, including three more fast days, on the calendar. Just knowing about some – or even just one – of these special days can enhance your Jewish practice. I would encourage you to choose a holiday that is unfamiliar, and come to services and see what it’s all about. Try it out!

There’s a quote from the Amidah that fits in with this theme, but I’ll save that for a couple of weeks. If you come to services on erev Rosh Hashanah, I’ll share it with you.

In closing let me share a line from the Paul Newman movie “The Verdict,” later borrowed by television’s “The West Wing.” “Act as if ye have faith and faith will be given to you. To put it another way, fake it till you make it.” Reach out and explore these holidays. You may start off by deciding you SHOULD go, but eventually you may find yourself WANTING to go. And that process is one that I’m thrilled that USH can offer us all.

THANK YOU
FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS:

General Fund
Jason and Cindy Altberger
Ceil Chait with get well wishes for Richard Rose
Adam and Rhonda Strosberg in memory of Glenda Abbott, sister of Myma Kasser
Steven and Tammy Weinfield in memory of Freida Brown

Sarah Condiotti Chessed Fund
Bob and Jeanne Becker in memory of Glenda Abbott
Norman and Myma Kasser in memory of Glenda Abbott
Jane Klueger in memory of Anna Klueger
Janice Springer

Philip and Claire Meistrich Speaker Series
Benn Meistrich and Shaw Condiotti

Scholar-in-Residence Fund
Vivian Greene in memory of Glenda Abbott and Tamara Riveria-Velez

Refugee Fund
Vivian Greene

Building Fund
Lou and Laura Forino in memory of Glenda Abbott

Rabbi’s Discretionary Fund
Judson Weaver and Carol Losos
Robert and Pamela Strell
Philip and Rita Levy
Harry and Sandy Starrett in honor of their grandson Jacob Landera’s bar mitzvah

Boy Scouts Cub Pack
Paula Kaplan in memory of Glenda Abbott

Learning Center Fund
Harry and Sandy Starrett in recognition of Grace Gurman-Chan

CONGRATULATIONS TO:
Noe and Becky Hamra on the birth and brit milah of their son, Benjamin David Hamra
Jon Green and Liz Thompson on their wedding
Michael Schreiber and Kim Huang on their son Jason’s bar mitzvah

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS
Justin Erber and Abby Williams
Michael Mandel and Jenna Corman Mandel
Charles Rubin and Lenore Silver

CONDOLENCES TO:
Alicia Weinstein on the loss of her mother, Frieda Brown and to Alicia’s husband, Jim and their children, Grace, Mimi and Evan
Rebecca Weitman is adored by the many children she has tutored for their bar and bat mitzvahs at USH and other synagogues. When I interviewed her I wanted to learn how, having been raised in NYU faculty accommodation in the heart of Greenwich Village where her father is a professor of statistics, she became so passionately, proudly, joyously and actively committed to Judaism and to a “mitzvah-filled” life.

The answer seems to be that her devoted and committed parents led her to attend and fully participate in outstanding Jewish schools and programs throughout her life. Rebecca’s parents are long-standing members of “T&V,” the Town & Village Synagogue in Greenwich Village. It is a Conservative shul with a strong focus on tradition, participation and egalitarianism.

**Rebecca attended the Ramaz School** continuously from kindergarten through 12th grade. She then attended college at SUNY Binghamton, where she obtained a B.A. in Jewish Studies with a minor in French.

**Rebecca developed** a great love for cantorial singing. She traces it to her grandfather “Papa Abe,” who had a magnificent voice, led the family’s Passover Seders, listened to recordings of the great cantors with Rebecca and studied Jewish texts with her. She also “grew up” with two fantastic cantors; Cantor Lorna Wallach taught her for her bat mitzvah, and then Cantor Shayna Postman taught her to daven. At Ramaz, Rebecca says, “I grew up singing.” She also sang with HaZamir, The International Jewish High School Choir, at old age homes and other venues, and for and with children from all kinds of backgrounds, and once even at Carnegie Hall.

**With HaZamir,** Rebecca spent an amazing summer in Israel, singing at venues throughout the country. And she later returned to Israel as a summer volunteer at an Israeli Army base, providing non-combative support (folding parachutes and “praying” that she did not make a mistake) but also going through the full basic training course (including six miles of running a day!).

**Her two summers in Israel** were very influential in her decision to become a cantor. On both trips she was thrilled to meet Jews from many different backgrounds. Rebecca led a Shabbat service at the Army base. She says that, “Whatever their background and language everyone got it, it was so powerful. So I came home and announced that I wanted to be a cantor.”

**And so Rebecca** then attended the Cantorial School at the Academy for Jewish Religion in Riverdale. One of her teachers was Rabbi Scheinberg, whom she greatly admired and respected (and who spoke of an unknown place called “Hoboken”). For seven years she sang at the high holidays in Long Island. She was also the assistant cantor at Brotherhood Synagogue in Greenwich Village, which was the first Jewish congregation in New York City to open a homeless shelter, and, of special relevance to Rebecca, its Hebrew School was a pioneer in accommodating children with special needs.

**To this day,** Rebecca sings at baby namings and at other life cycle events. She loves the fact that music and prayers can elevate people and uplift their spirituality. She explains that, “Being a cantor and a teacher is unbelievable. I can be with people at their highest times and their lowest of the lows. Rabbi Scheinberg influenced me to do Judaism and music.”

**Rebecca is also committed** to assisting learning disabled children to work to achieve their full potential and to help Jewish disabled children to participate fully as Jews and develop a passion for Judaism. She says that, “I grew up with some people with learning disabilities. I saw some Jewish institutions turn kids away because they had a learning disability.” She insists that, “Judaism is tangible. It should be open to everyone. It’s about your moral compass. It’s all about how you are as a person.”

Accordingly, she attended Teachers College where she obtained an M.A. in Learning Disabilities. She then taught in the Tikvah Program at the Brotherhood Synagogue, for students with learning disabilities. The program is designed “to instill in our students a reverence for God, a love of Torah, and a feeling of connection to the Jewish people.” She also worked as a teacher at the Churchill School, an independent K-12 school for students with language based learning disabilities. She then taught children with learning disabilities at Salanter Akiba Riverdale High School, a Modern Orthodox day school in Riverdale.
Rebecca married Aaron Weitman in 2010. They were married at Park Avenue Synagogue in Manhattan with Rabbi Scheinberg, and Cantor Wallach officiating at the wedding. Rebecca and Aaron now have three very young – and very gorgeous – children, Joshua age 4, Gabriel age 2 and Ariella, who is just 3 months old.

Despite the more-than-full-time demands of a growing family, Rebecca still somehow finds time to work as a tutor for bar and bat mitzvah students. She explains that, “My goal is to make everyone feel confident about themselves and enable everyone to have a passion and love for being Jewish. I want people to be comfortable and confident and have a connection to Judaism.”

Her “business” grows through word of mouth. “I love connecting with all the different kids. One girl was so shy and scared and her bat mitzvah was so great. I love seeing kids blossom, to see their confidence grow, and to see them learning about Judaism. I love to work with kids who don’t like Hebrew. It’s never the same. All kids are different.”

She finds it amazing that her students stay in touch with her over the years. “I go to their weddings and other celebrations. It makes me feel so proud that they stay connected to Judaism. It’s so rewarding,” she says.

So hats off not only to Rebecca, but also to her parents, Marian and Aaron Tenenbein, to Papa Abe, to their loving family, and to all of the brilliant institutions that provided the environment for Rebecca to develop such a strong love of Jewish life and learning and such an intense devotion to joyfully serving others.

For a kid who was raised in Greenwich Village, it might very well have turned out completely differently! ☺

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Refugee Support Committee

**Upcoming Events**

The USH Refugee Support Committee has invited Jill Singleton, Director of The Lighthouse, and Sally Pillay, Director of First Friends of NJ & NY, to speak about their organizations during Shabbat services on Friday evening, October 6th, at 7:00 p.m. Jill and Sally will discuss how their organizations assist detained immigrants and asylum seekers and will provide information on how members of our community may offer support. Light refreshments will be served in the sukkah following services. Please join us for this special event.

The Lighthouse is a partnership between Church of the Incarnation and First Friends of NY and NJ, whose mission is to “uphold the inherent dignity and humanity of detained immigrants and asylum seekers [by providing] compassion and hope through volunteer visitation, resettlement assistance and advocacy.” The Lighthouse is located in the Parish House at The Episcopal Church of the Incarnation, 68 Storms Avenue, Jersey City, NJ.

The Rev. Jill Singleton is a vocational deacon, who serves at Church of the Incarnation and St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Jersey City. After visiting detainees at the Hudson County Correctional Facility as a volunteer with First Friends, Deacon Jill envisioned a way to provide temporary housing to asylees coming out of immigrant detention and spearheaded the effort to open The Lighthouse for Asylees.

Sally Pillay, a native of South Africa, is an anti-apartheid and progressive activist for immigrant rights. Sally serves as the director of First Friends of NJ & NY, an organization that helps immigrants resettle in the U.S. As a First Friends intern in 2008, she bore witness to the impact that prolonged isolation has on the psyche of immigrants in detention. The experience instilled in her a commitment to end the incarceration of immigrants and asylum seekers.

Our next dinner catered by Fadila Maamo, a Syrian refugee, will be on Sukkot. The food is delicious, often featuring roasted vegetables, homemade baba ganoush, and stuffed grape leaves. The funds raised go to support Fadila and her family. We aim to have an option in the USH Sukkah Hop. Please keep your eyes out for more information!

Facebook Group Please join the USH Refugee Support Committee Facebook group, which is designed to serve members of USH and the broader Hudson County Jewish community, who are interested in raising awareness of, and addressing the needs of, locally resettled refugees. On this group site, we share general information about the refugee crisis, local requests for contributing goods and services, opportunities to engage in advocacy, etc. Our Facebook group is growing, so information is still being added and shared. If you would like to join, then please search for the “USH Refugee Support Committee” on Facebook, or click https://m.facebook.com/groups/230922364082703, and then click “Join group.”

ESL Update Currently, two USH members are tutoring refugees in ESL. Two more members have expressed interest in participating. Contact Razel Solow, razelsolow@gmail.com, if you would like to tutor refugees in English. Thank you.
MITZVAH DAY
PROVIDES A GREAT OPPORTUNITY FOR THE USH COMMUNITY - ADULTS AND CHILDREN OF ALL AGES - TO COME TOGETHER TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN OUR COMMUNITY.

START THE NEW YEAR BY LEARNING ABOUT VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES THAT YOU MAY BE INTERESTED IN DOING REGULARLY.

LOOK OVER THE LIST OF ACTIVITIES; CHOOSE A FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD CHOICE. MOST PROJECTS TAKE PLACE FROM 11AM TO 2PM.

GO TO BIT.LY/USH_MITZVAH_DAY_2017 TO SIGN UP!

SIGN UP NOW TO MAXIMIZE YOUR CHANCES.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency Name</th>
<th>Description of Mitzvah</th>
<th>Details: When, Where, Who, How many</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sandwich Making for Hoboken Shelter Shifts A,B,C</td>
<td>How many sandwiches can we make this year? Last year we made more than 300! Sandwiches are carefully prepared, wrapped and boxed for shelter guests. We will then deliver them to the Shelter.</td>
<td>Shift A: 11am-12pm (especially for children age 7-12 and their families); Shift B: 12:15pm-1:15pm; Shift C: 1:30-2:30pm At USH, 115 Park Ave. Ages 7 and up 15 per shift (When you sign up, indicate your shift preference)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting Seniors (Jewish Family Service)</td>
<td>Make an impact and engage in an age-old Jewish tradition: visit a Jewish homebound senior in Bayonne/JC/Hoboken, brighten their day and bring a Rosh Hashanah gift from USH.</td>
<td>11am-1pm Meet at USH All ages 12-15 people (having a car is helpful but not essential)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mitzvah Story Time &amp; Sukkah decorations (for kids &lt;4 &amp; families)</td>
<td>Mitzvahs are for kids of all ages! Hear stories and make decorations for the USH Sukkah!</td>
<td>10-11:30am Meet at USH Kids under 4 along with their families Unlimited # participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coupons for Troops</td>
<td>Our soldiers on military bases need our help! Collect and sort coupons that will be donated to American soldiers and their families for use at PX stores.</td>
<td>11am-2pm Meet at USH ALL ages (who can use scissors) Unlimited # participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scouts Food Drive</td>
<td>Help feed the Hoboken Food Pantry's clients! Cheerfully encourage shoppers to donate food to Hoboken Food Pantry outside of ShopRite.</td>
<td>9am-1pm Meet at Hoboken Shoprite (9th/Madison) [Age 7+ (must be accompanied by adult) 15+ people needed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Toiletries Drive for Hoboken Shelter</td>
<td>More than 1,000 guests shower weekly at the Hoboken Shelter. Sort and pack travel-sized toiletries into mini-kits for guests of the Shelter.</td>
<td>1-2:30 pm Meet at USH Age 7+ 6 people needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cemetery Clean-up</td>
<td>Perform an act of chesed shel emet - an ultimate act of loving-kindness for the deceased who are unable to repay the kindness. Rake leaves and clear growth and other debris in USH section at Riverside Cemetery. Your help will ensure all graves are respectfully maintained.</td>
<td>11am-2pm Riverside Cemetery, Saddle Brook NJ Adults 6-8 people needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiffing up the sanctuary</td>
<td>Help prepare our sanctuary for the High Holidays. Cleaning and polishing the torah crowns and breast-plates, brass railing, plaques, and other decorations.</td>
<td>1pm—2:30pm Meet at USH Age 15+ 5 people needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lighthouse</td>
<td>Cleaning, painting, gardening at a home for refugees and asylum seekers in Jersey City.</td>
<td>Timing TBA Age 15+ 6-8 people 68 Storms Ave, Jersey City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cookies in a Jar (Middle School activity)</td>
<td>Create “cookies in a jar” that will be donated to clients of the Hoboken Food Pantry.</td>
<td>12pm-2pm prep, plus 2-2:30pm delivery Meet at USH; group will walk over to Our Lady of Grace Church, 411 Clinton St between 2-2:30pm 6th-8th graders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serving lunch at the Shelter (teen activity)</td>
<td>Prepare and serve meal for the guests at the Hoboken Shelter.</td>
<td>11am-2:30pm Hoboken Shelter, 300 Bloomfield St 9th-12th graders</td>
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<tr>
<td>Food Pantry (Shift A and B)</td>
<td>Shift A: Sort clothing and food that has been donated to the Hoboken Emergency Food Pantry; Shift B: distribute items to the clients of the Food Pantry.</td>
<td>Shift A: 11:30am-1:30pm; sorting Shift B: 2pm-3:30pm; distribution Our Lady of Grace Church, 411 Clinton St. Age 10+ 4-6 participants</td>
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