



Congregation Dorshei Tzedek

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Elul/Tishrei 5780

September 2020



"Echo Bridge" Photo by Viv Shein

I Don't Know by Rabbi Toba Spitzer



It is always a challenge to write these newsletter columns two to three weeks before the newsletter is published. I'm never sure if what feels relevant in the early weeks of August will still be on point when folks are reading their newsletter in the middle of September. And if that is how I have felt in the past, how much more so now that we are in the midst of Covid reality, where it is hard to plan anything even a few days ahead!

As I write this, what schooling will look like from elementary school through university is still up in the air. It's hard to know if our postal service will be functional as the Jewish new year begins, or whether the positive gains we've made in Massachusetts to get the virus under control will continue. Everything is uncertain.

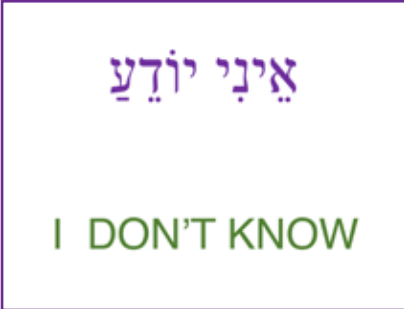
The truth is, of course, that life is always uncertain. The pandemic has simply made that truth much, much more obvious. I challenge anyone to have been able to predict, before 2016, the current state of affairs in our political life. I question if anyone could have foreseen the uprising that followed George Floyd's murder, and the significant shift in consciousness that that event seems to have inspired in a

large swath of white America. On the personal level, we are constantly navigating surprises, both positive and negative, even in times that feel far less tumultuous than these. Our illusions of control are just that.

There is a famous saying in the Talmud, "Teach your tongue to say 'I do not know'" (Brachot 4a). I have been thinking a lot about this teaching these days. Earlier in the summer, as I was trying to wrap my head around creating meaningful High Holydays services in our current situation, as I contemplated a new year of

programming given the reality of many more months of the pandemic, as I wrestled with what it means to become an actively anti-racist community, I found myself getting decidedly anxious. At some point I realized that I just didn't know. I can't know. I can't know what High Holydays will feel like. I can't know how to meet challenges that haven't even arisen yet. I just don't know.

With that realization, I felt like I'd been released from prison. My spirits lifted, and my energy returned. I printed up signs that said, in Hebrew and English, "I Don't Know" (in the Talmud, the phrase is *Aini Yode'a*) and put them up all over my home office. I began inviting everyone I interacted with to take on this practice. It has been truly liberating.



Taking on “I don’t know” as a spiritual practice does not mean that I have abandoned planning. I and the rest of the CDT staff and the Ritual Committee and many others are working hard to make sure we have as meaningful a High Holydays as possible. Earnest is guiding our teachers in shaping powerful Jewish learning experiences for our kids in the Zoomiverse. As for all of us, life goes on, and we are navigating our way through it. “I don’t know” is simply a way of acknowledging the reality that whatever plans we make, at any time, may go awry. “I don’t know” celebrates the possibility of new and exciting options opening up that we may never have been able to foresee. “I don’t know” is a release from the illusion of control, the illusion of certainty, that in the end just makes us miserable when things don’t go as we had hoped or expected.

So when I find my mind jumping ahead, as I feel the anxiety rising as I begin to try to figure out what I’m

going to do about this or that, I simply say to myself, “I don’t know.” With that, I return to the present moment. In the present moment, I can look around and see what I do know: that the sun is shining, or the rain is falling; that I have food in the fridge, and family and friends; that sometimes I am sad, and sometimes happy. The present moment is never all good or all bad. That I do know.



So in this month of teshuvah, of preparing for our turning into the New Year and contemplating what path we want to follow in 5781, I invite you all into “I don’t know.” Let us explore what not knowing feels like together, and in that explo-

ration, have faith that we can continue to nurture our hearts, minds and spirits for the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. May we all be “written” for a year of health and peace, *l’shanah tovah tikateivu*. And may the book of our life have printed on it somewhere on every page, “I don’t know.”

CDT

Dorshei Tzedek is a Reconstructionist Congregation dedicated to creating a caring and inclusive community, and to enhancing Jewish practice and learning in the lives of our members.

Staff & Board

Rabbi Toba Spitzer, t.spitzer@dorsheitzedek.org
Executive Director: Melissa Colten, m.colten@dorsheitzedek.org
Director of Congregational Learning: Earnest Vener, e.vener@dorsheitzedek.org
Inclusion Coordinator: Amira Shulman-Kumin, inclusion@dorsheitzedek.org
Interim Administrative Assistant: Liz Krushnic, officeassistant@dorsheitzedek.org

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Staff Notes

From Lidia Prunte:

It is with a mixture of sadness and excitement that I announce I will be leaving Dorshei Tzedek on September 1st. I’ve accepted a position as managing director at Kahal B’raira, Cambridge, and as I look forward to this next step in my journey, I have deep appreciation for all the opportunities for growth and connection I’ve had at Dorshei Tzedek. I wish the Dorshei community the best in the upcoming year, and hope to stay in touch!

We will be thanking and celebrating Lidia at Shabbat morning services on September 12, please join us!

Liz Krushnic, our wonderful Kitah Hey Co-Teacher at CDT’s Religious School, will be stepping in as our Interim Administrative Assistant as of September 1. She will be working 15 hours a week, and can be reached at officeassistant@dorsheitzedek.org. A heart-felt thank you and warm welcome to Liz!

Rabbinic Liaison

Rabbinic Liaisons: While congregants are always welcome and encouraged to discuss questions or concerns directly with **Rabbi Toba**, there are other avenues through which to bring concerns. The Rabbinic Liaison Committee exists to ensure the maintenance of a good working relationship between Rabbi Toba and the congregation. Issues raised by congregants are discussed confidentially and, when appropriate, are shared with the Rabbi in a constructive manner. To discuss a question or concern, contact **Cindy Shulak–Rome**, Rabbinic Liaison Chair at cbsrome@comcast.net.

NEWSLETTER

The CDT Newsletter is published monthly with a July-August summer issue. Email articles, events, and photos to dtnews@dorsheitzedek.org. Usually the deadline is the 10th of the month for the following month’s issue.

Volunteer Staff: John Holohan (chair), Josette Akresh-Gonzales, Liz Holohan, Barbara Pittel, Vivienne Shein (photographer), Amy Westebbe.

Shabbat, Holidays & Spiritual Practice

PLEASE NOTE

As Dorshei Tzedek takes precautions during the Covid-19 pandemic, all of our programs have been moved to a virtual format. Like the Israelites in the wilderness, challenged by the Power that liberated them from slavery to create a new kind of society, we too are on a journey to foster our community connections, spiritual practice, Jewish learning, and social justice work in new ways. Please read on for descriptions of our on-line programs; information for logging onto any specific program can be found on our website: dorsheitzedek.org.

ALL-AGES EREV SHABBAT SERVICE

Friday evenings, September 11, October 2, November 6, 6:00pm-6:45pm

All are welcome to join **Rabbi Toba & Earnest** at our September service, online at 6:00pm for candle lighting, a musical service, and a Shabbat story. Have your candles ready! The siddur/prayerbook for this service can be found on the CDT home page, dorsheitzedek.org, and Zoom information is there as well. This month's service is a wonderful opportunity to introduce new people to CDT, especially families with kids aged 4 to 10!

SHABBAT MORNING SERVICES

September 5, 12 & 26, 10am-11:45am

All are welcome to join Rabbi Toba for a morning of prayer, song, and Torah. Zoom info for each service can be found that week on the CDT website; just click on the calendar link on the right side of the homepage. Services are followed by virtual "Kiddush" chat rooms, for anyone who'd like to connect with CDT members and guests.

Shabbat morning, September 5 – For this Labor Day Shabbat, join Rabbi Toba for song and prayer from 10am-11am, followed by a Labor on the Bimah program in partnership with the New England Jewish Labor Committee. We will hear from CDT member and NEJLC Board member Ora Gladstone, and welcome frontline grocery workers, who will share their experiences and challenges of their work during the pandemic. We will close the service with prayers for healing and Mourners Kaddish. We will also remember CDT member Debbie Sher this morning, on the occasion of her 9th yahrzeit.

Shabbat morning, September 12 – As we enter in the week before Rosh Hashanah, all are welcome



to join Rabbi Toba for song, prayer and meditation from 10am-11am, followed by a Torah reading from parashat Nitzavim and study of the portion. We will close the service with prayers for healing and Mourners Kaddish. We will also honor departing Administrative Assistant Lidia Prunte.

SHABBAT SHUVAH, SEPTEMBER 26 – A VERY SPECIAL SHABBAT!



On this Shabbat between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, we will focus on themes of teshuvah, turning, in a contemplative service featuring chant and meditation. PLUS: SPECIAL GUEST, Rabbi Everett Gendler, will join us, to teach selections from his new book *A Passionate Pacifist: Essential Writings of Aaron Samuel Tamares*, an early 20th century Orthodox rabbi with a radically prescient philosophy of Jewish pacifism. We will engage in study around Rabbi Tamares' understanding of "Love-Motivated Turning" (*Teshuvah Me-Ahava*). Rabbi Gendler is known for his involvement in the civil rights movement, Jewish nonviolence, the havurah movement, and his trailblazing work as a Jewish environmentalist.

MINDFUL MORNINGS

Mondays and Thursday mornings, 8:30am-9:15am

This twice-weekly session of guided and silent meditation is open to all, regardless of level of meditation experience. Led by experienced CDT members and Rabbi Toba, Mindful Mornings is an opportunity to cultivate qualities of patience, equanimity, compassion, and resilience. Drop-ins are welcome! Zoom info is available on the CDT website (for non-members, please email office@dorsheitzedek.org for the Zoom info). During the month of Elul, in the weeks leading up to Rosh Hashanah, we will hear the blast of the shofar in addition to special guided meditation.

SELICHOT: BEGINNING TO TURN

Saturday, September 12, 8:30 PM - 9:45 PM

This contemplative Zoom program, led by Rabbis Barbara Penzner and Toba Spitzer, is an opportunity to engage our minds, hearts and spirits for the task of teshuvah, which we can understand as re-aligning ourselves with our deepest values and aspirations, even--or especially--in a time of difficulty and brokenness. The evening will combine text study, personal reflection, song, and meditation.

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Shabbat, Holidays & Spiritual Practice *(continued)*

ROSH HASHANAH & YOM KIPPUR

CDT High Holydays services will be primarily held over Zoom this year. Please read on for more information! **A link to the details of times, program descriptions and registration information are available on the home page of the CDT website.**

EREV ROSH HASHANAH SERVICE

Friday evening, September 18, 6:00-7:00pm

We welcome the new year with song, reflection, and a teaching by Rabbi Toba. Have your holiday candles ready to light at home as we welcome Shabbat and the Rosh Hashanah holiday! After the service, we encourage CDT households to gather together – either socially distanced outdoors or via Zoom – to share a holiday meal together. If you'd like to do a Rosh Hashanah Seder, featuring special foods for the holidays, materials and recipes will be available on the CDT website!

ROSH HASHANAH DAY 1

Saturday morning, September 19, 9:45am-Noon

The morning service will include the signature liturgy of Rosh Hashanah and opportunities for singing, reflection, and connecting with others, as well as Torah reading and a talk by Rabbi Toba. No shofar because it's Shabbat – that's on Day Two!! There will also be family and teen programs for households with kids of all ages at a variety of times between 9am-10:45am, details on the website.

ROSH HASHANAH DAY 2

Sunday morning, September 20, 10:30am-11:30am

Various outdoor locations and on Zoom

Because it is traditional to refrain from both shofar blowing and Tashlich when the first day of Rosh Hashanah falls on Shabbat, we will be combining both of these practices this year in local Tashlich/Shofar sounding ceremonies across the greater Boston area! There will also be a Zoom option for those who prefer this format to the great outdoors. Registration is required for the outdoor ceremonies; locations and sign-ups are available on the CDT website.

KOL NIDRE

Sunday evening, September 27, 6:30pm-8:15pm

This evening service will feature the chanting of Kol Nidre, the traditional Yom Kippur liturgy, and opportunities for reflection and sharing the ways in which we've collectively "missed the mark" over the past year, and our hopes for repair in the year to come. Following the chanting of Kol Nidre, there will be a program for kids aged seven and up with Earnest.

YOM KIPPUR DAY

Monday, September 28

Morning services begin at 9:45am, and will include reading from the Torah and Rabbi Toba's talk (Yizkor will be held in the afternoon). The Musaf service will begin at noon until approximately 12:45pm.

There will be a variety of activities throughout the afternoon for all ages, including: nature walks, goat yoga, tai chi, text study, personal story sharing, and more! Please go to the CDT website for details (and to register for outdoor programs). The day will conclude with these Zoom programs:

4:30pm - **Yizkor service**, an opportunity to remember our loved ones

5:15pm - **Mincha** study and conversation with **Reverend Mariama White-Hammond**, with parallel programs for older kids and teens.

6:30pm - **Neilah** – the closing service of the day

7:00pm - **Blow your shofar!!** And have a nosh.



Community

MAZEL TOV

Mazel tov to **Nathan Feinfeld** and his family, on becoming bar mitzvah!

Mazel tov to **Chanda Prescod-Weinstein** whose book, *The Disordered Cosmos: A Journey into Dark Matter, Spacetime, and Dreams Deferred*, is being published by Bold Type Books! (available for pre-order now, and for sale on March 9 – go to www.boldtypebooks.com). From the blurb about the book: “In *The Disordered Cosmos*, Dr. Chanda Prescod-Weinstein shares her love for physics, from the Standard Model of Particle Physics and what lies beyond it, to the physics of melanin in skin, to the latest theories of dark matter — all with a new spin informed by history, politics, and the wisdom of Star Trek. Her vision of the cosmos is vibrant, buoyantly non-traditional, and grounded in Black feminist traditions. *The Disordered Cosmos* dreams into existence a world that allows everyone to tap into humanity’s wealth of knowledge about the wonders of the universe.”

YAHARZEIT

This month we remember **Debbie Sher**, whose 9th yahrzeit falls on September 3; we will be remembering Debbie at Shabbat morning services on September 5. This month we also remember **Zach Carson**, whose 13th yahrzeit falls on September 24; we will be remembering Zach at Shabbat Shuvah services on September 26. May each of their memories be for a blessing.

MOURNING AT CDT

As a reference, CDT members have created the brochure “Finding Comfort, Giving Support: A Guide to Mourning at Congregation Dorshei Tzedek,” available on the resource table in our sanctuary and on our website at <https://www.dorsheitzedek.org/mourning>.

CONDOLENCES

The CDT community mourns the death of **Susan Moser**, who passed away on August 6. Her gifts of song, of community-building, of love and friendship will be sorely missed. The CDT community wraps our arms around Thea, Li, Shalev and Shirel as they mourn the loss of their spouse and parent. CDT members can access a video of the memorial service and a beautiful video slideshow of photos of Susan in the Chesed section of the website. May her memory always be for a blessing.

To **Steffi Aronson Karp** and the entire Karp family on the death of Steffi’s father, Paul Aronson, father-in-law of Eric Karp, grandfather of Josh, Dan and Adam Karp. May his memory be for a blessing.

To **Josh Komeryov** and the entire Komeryov family, on the death of Josh’s mother, Roberta Myerov, mother-in-law of Melody, grandmother of Tairou, Tsering, and Noa. May her memory be for a blessing.

To **Meryl Epstein** on the death of her father, Shelly Epstein, father-in-law of Trish Nuzzola. May his memory be for a blessing.

To **Matt Fried** on the death of his mother, Judith Fried, mother-in-law of Jen Levine-Fried, and grandmother of Jonah and Ava. May her memory be for a blessing.

MOURNING IN THE TIME OF COVID; OR AFTER SHIVA, NOW WHAT

Stacey Chacker

Avelut (a member-led support group for mourners) was founded in 2009 by Hilary Marcus and Andrew Sofer for those with recent losses, as well as those observing the *Yarzeit* of a loved one. The group helped many mourners to reflect on their losses.

A group of CDT members with recent losses have revived this group, and are currently meeting once a month the second Tuesday of the month via zoom to share, reflect, discuss feelings related to the loss, and remember the legacies of the loved ones we carry with us. Any CDT member is welcome. For more information, contact Stacey Chacker - chacsjc@gmail.com

NEW MEMBER WELCOME

A warm welcome to new member **Susan Dargon-Hart**.

A warm welcome back to long-distance member **Sivan Nasoff**, along with her daughter **Noa** and wife, **Valerie Bodet**.

TODAH RABAH

An ongoing and limitless Todah Rabah to **Mark Bronstein**, for making our Zoom services from the sanctuary possible, and keeping Rabbi Toba company on Shabbat mornings.

Reconstructionist News

SAVE THE DATE! RECONSTRUCTING JUDAISM CONVENTION, 2022

Please mark your calendars now and plan to join us on March 23-27, 2022 for the next Reconstructing Judaism Convention, outside of Washington, D.C., which will be held in partnership with the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association and Havaya Summer Programs.

Location & Accommodations:

Hilton McLean Tysons Corner
7920 Jones Branch Drive, McLean, VA 22102

Bookmark the Convention website, Revention2022.org, which will be updated regularly. Schedule and program details coming soon!

CONTRIBUTIONS

There are many ways to financially support Congregation Dorshei Tzedek, including contributions to the General Fund or to targeted funds. The Rabbi's Discretionary Fund is not part of the congregation's operating expenses. Monies in this fund are used for tzedakah in the greater community, for special needs of the congregation (e.g., to buy books or help pay for an adult education program) and, most important, to help out congregants in need. The Jill Volk Teacher Development Fund provides scholarships for teachers in the Dorshei Tzedek Religious School to receive professional development and training. Jill was one of the founders of our school and one of its first teachers; this fund allows her love of Jewish learning to continue to enrich our community.

WE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGE THE FOLLOWING CONTRIBUTIONS.

GENERAL FUND

Melanie Adler and Andy Cohen
Benis Bernstein and Hugh Fenimore
Avrom Charach—*In memory of Susan Moser z"l*
Shahar Colt and Darya Mattes
Nina Dudnik and Peter Killian
Meryl Epstein and Patricia Nuzzola—*With deep appreciation to Dan Rome for leading my father's Shiva service; with deep gratitude to Melissa Colten for administering my father's Shiva service*
Carolyn Fine and Jerry Friedman
Sheree Galpert—*In memory of Meryl Epstein's father, Shelly Epstein; in memory of Steffi Aronson Karp's father, Paul Aronson*
Zee and William Gamson—*In memory of my brother, Gerald Finkelstein. He struggled but kept his humor and his dance moves, loved his children, and then departed*
Ellie Goldberg—*In loving memory of her grandfather, Oscar Koenigsberg, her grandmother, Lola Koenigsberg, and her mother-in-law, Reva Goldberg*
Sharon Gorberg and John Holohan—*In memory of Paul Aronson father of Steffi Karp and in memory of Susan Moser*
Allison and Ezra Hausman—*In honor of Lissy Medvedow, a great leader and an inspiration to us all!*
Ellen Hemley and Mark Bronstein
Steffi and Eric Karp
Hilary Marcus and Jonathan Magaziner
Janet Penn
Rabbi Barbara Penzner
Lidia Prunte—*For the Diverse Picture Books Project*
Sharon Sevransky and Jeff Goldman

Cindy Shulak-Rome and Dan Rome—*In honor of the*

graduation of Nadia Diskin-Gaudette, the graduation of Hannah Steinberg, and Shahar Colt, with gratitude for her leadership over the past five years.

Laya Steinberg and Bruce Miller—*In honor of Rabbi Toba for her spiritual guidance during the passing of my parents; for Cindy Shulak-Rome and Dan Rome for leading the shiva minyan; and for Amy Mazur for Zoom-tech for shiva.*

ADULT ED FUND

Jen Kaplan and Susie Tanchel—*In honor of Lissy Medvedow's incredible 3 years of tireless effort as President of CDT. Todah Rabah, with much gratitude.*

RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

Benis Bernstein and Hugh Fenimore—*In thanks to Rabbi Toba's assistance at the time of my mother's passing*

Amy Brodesky and Rex Flynn—*For chesed meals*
Stacey Chacker—*In honor of and in appreciation of Rabbi Toba for her support after my mom's death*

Sheree Galpert—*In memory of my beloved dog, Giacomo; In memory of Susan Moser*

Renee Goutmann—*In memory of Susan Moser*

Michael and Ellen Krause-Grosman—*In memory of Susan Moser*

Daniela Yanai Mordekovitch—*In memory of Susan Moser*

Natan Meir—*In memory of Susan Moser*

Marion and Robert Ross—*In memory of Noah Marcus*
Sharon Schumack and Michael Luckens—*In honor of Marion Ross*

Cindy Shulak-Rome and Dan Rome—*In support of the CDT Voter Mobilization Project*

Nessa Spitzer—*In memory of Susan Moser*

Jamie Tessler—*In memory of Meryl Epstein's father*

COVID-19 EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE FUND

Carol Rosenstock and Dennis Doughty—*In memory of Susan Moser. I enjoyed and was inspired by working with Susan at Temple Israel. She brought tremendous dedication, commitment, and love to working with our kids. She had a great impact on so many lives. Her impact and memory will last for so many people.*

Ellen Pashall—*In honor of Susan Silverberg and her son Isaac who generously let my child Jules stay in Isaac's apartment to quarantine themselves when they moved from CA back to the east coast*

SCHOOL FUND DONATION

Jen Kaplan and Susie Tanchel—*In honor of Rabbi Shahar Colt's service to our CDT community*

JILL VOLK TEACHER DEVELOPMENT FUND

Ora Gladstone

VOTER MOBILIZATION PROJECT

Melanie Adler and Andy Cohen

Allison Andrews and Arthur Lent

Sarah Birkeland and Roy Edelstein

Elaine Bresnick

Miriam Bronstein

Tony Broh

Abby Cohen and Stuart Snyder—*In honor of and with thanks to Dianne Lior for her contributions to our daughter's new apartment*

Sarah and Ben Dash

Sheree Galpert

Ellie Goldberg

Tessa Goldsmith—*In honor of CDT Voter Mobilization Project Group. Abundant thanks for your leadership and your advocacy*

Diana Fisher Gomberg

Sharon Gorberg and John Holohan

Allison and Ezra Hausman

Annette Jacobs

Reva Kasman

Dianne Lior

Diana Perretta

Gail Pressberg

Liz Reisberg

Marion and Robert Ross

Tal Shalom-Kobi

Jo Ann Share and Ro Weichman

Barbara Shatkin

Jodie Siegel

Deborah Waber

Yahrzeit Donations

Benis Bernstein and Hugh Fenimore—*In memory of Harry S. Bernstein, beloved father*

C. Anthony Broh—*In memory of his father, Charles S. Broh*

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Buy your books, electronics, and whatever else, and support CDT at the same time! CDT is an Amazon Associate. When you click on the Amazon link on the bottom of the CDT homepage at www.dorsheitzedek.org, a portion of any purchase you make will be contributed to Dorshei Tzedek. It's an easy way to support the congregation while doing the online shopping you were planning to do anyway.

CDT VOTER MOBILIZATION PROJECT LAUNCHED

Rabbi Toba spoketh and it came to be. At a May Tikkun Olam meeting she said "I think we should have a congregation-wide voter mobilization project!" And Louise Enoch, who happened to have wandered into that Zoom room, said "Okay, I will organize a first meeting." The rest is history. Cindy Shulak Rome and Allison Daskal Hausman stepped up to the plate to lead the effort and, along with a "let's get things done" group of teammates, the CDT Voter Mobilization Project (VMP) was born. The group quickly identified two non-partisan groups that CDT members could work with: Reclaim Our Vote (ROV), whose mission is to reach 16 million people of color, living in states where voter suppression is a real threat and the Environmental Voter Project (EVP), whose phone banking project could potentially reach 15 million voters, voters who are considered unlikely to cast their ballots.

On June 21 our VMP launched its effort with a successful Zoom Kick-Off event, attended by over 100 members. The program included exciting guest appearances by Andrea Miller, the Founder and Executive Director of ROC, and Kate Heffernan, a local organizer for the EVP. The mood was upbeat as options for CDT member participation, beautifully designed postcards for ROV and phone banking for EVP, was explained and next steps outlined.

By early August both ROV and EVP efforts were up and running smoothly. Postcarding, phone banking, and eventually text messaging options are or will be available. Information about how to participate is readily accessible on the Voter Mobilization Project webpage on the CDT website, along with a visual thermometer keeping track of how close we are to reaching our goal of making at least 5000 voter contacts. Participants can now easily communicate about their voting activities via a new list serv set up just for us.

In the spirit of having this be a community wide and community building project, we have offered Zoom and outdoor postcarding sessions, as well as child and family related programming. A recent event for younger children on voting, led by an older teen, was very successful and future programming for older children is being developed, along with requests for video material from our younger members. We're doing this together!

As we ramp up for the election, our VMP will continue to offer CDT members of all ages a chance to get involved in the most important election of our

lives. There will be additional opportunities for phone banking and texting for both organizations. So check out our Voter Mobilization Project webpage and add your voter contacts to the 1000 that we have already recorded. Let's make it to 5000 and beyond!

The VMP Team

Laya Steinberg, Judy Hersh, Valerie Graf, Jeni Rhodes, Corinne Lofchie, Janet Penn, Allison Hausman, Alan Epstein, Cindy Shulak-Rome, Louise Enoch, Marla Cummins, Marjorie Feld, Ora Gladstone, Elana Cutler



Postcards and pleasantries in the backyard: Liz Reisinger, Marla Cummins, Sheree Galpert, and Louise Enoch (photographer).

GBIO REPORT

Louise Enoch and Tony Broh

The Greater Boston Interfaith Organization (GBIO) responded to two historic crises in the past five months: the COVID-19 pandemic and the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis by a white police officer. These events exposed massive disparities and inadequacies in public health and basic safety needs throughout the nation and the world.

The ongoing response has been swift and effective in several areas of legislative policy advocacy for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Long-time health-care priorities for lowering the cost of prescription drugs, ending out-of-network billing, and having mental health parity are now in Legislative Conference Committee – the House and the Senate having passed different versions. Elements of decarceration, certification for police officers, a commission on institutional racism, Civil Service reform, limits on excessive force by police, and qualified immunity reform are also in Conference Committee following numer-

ous advocacy struggles to keep the issues on the table for consideration. GBIO successfully lobbied for a moratorium on evictions and foreclosures that the Governor signed in April with additional extension through October.

CDT actively participated in several Zoom meetings with House members from their legislative districts to articulate the "will of the people" on all of these policy initiatives. While GBIO staff and volunteers were meeting privately with the Black and Latino Legislative Caucus and others to frame the legislative efforts, CDT members helped make strategic phone calls to the House leadership and record their support for specific bills and amendments. Overall, Dorshei Tzedek had 61 attendees to the "In-district meetings" and made 34 phone calls to legislative leaders.

The overall legislative activity has also given a boost to a two-year "Refounding" effort that will increase the number of GBIO member congregations from largely underserved populations. GBIO has expanded its staff in the past year to support this effort.

Please direct any questions to GBIO Liaisons **Louise Enoch** or **Tony Broh**, and let them know if you are interested in getting more involved with GBIO efforts

EXERCISE YOUR ADVOCACY MUSCLE WITH CDT ACTS!

Stacey Chacker

In order to work on policy issues together stemming from our official Tikkun Olam work, CDT will be starting CDT ACTS -- emails sent out via our Tikkun Olam email to ask members to call or email your legislators about specific policy items. This may be together, during a short zoom gathering -- in order to build accountability and community among ourselves -- or just an announcement. Again, the legislative actions will grow out of our current Tikkun Olam work -- so related to immigration justice, GBIO priorities, climate justice, Israel Palestine Peace, Voting Rights, etc. The subject line will read: CDT ACTS, and will be initiated by a CDT Tikkun Olam Steering Committee member. If you have questions about this, please contact **Stacey Chacker**, chacsjc@gmail.com. We look forward to continuing our work to seek justice together.

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Tikkun Olam (continued)

UNDOING RACISM

Linda Kramer

CDT has been busy this summer educating, organizing and planning efforts towards undoing racism.

When the Understanding Racism group was founded several years ago, **Alan Epstein** created a resource page for the congregation. **Lisa Schneier** and **Ora Gladstone** have been updating it (<https://www.dorsheitzedek.org/understanding-race.html>). "We are updating the resource page to include suggested articles, books, and audio/videos. We are also including links to other lists of resources that our members have found helpful. Right now on the page is a list that we would recommend as a starting point. These include classic pieces that are essential to an understanding of historic and institutionalized racism in the U.S., such as James Baldwin's "Letter to My Nephew," and also more contemporary authors. The list also includes resources that are particularly relevant to a Jewish community."

Earnest Vener has spearheaded efforts with religious school staff. Many staff members participated in an Antiracism for Educators training over the summer in an effort for our teaching team to develop shared language about race and racism. At the August staff training, Emilia Diamant led a session about applied antiracist practices for Jewish educators. We will explore accountability for interrupting racism in our classes and identify concrete ways for teachers to contextualize Jewish learning in a global, multiracial, and multicultural context. We are also using the virtual platform to bring in Jews of Color to teach and provide representation for our students of color.

Margo Michaels got inspired to lead a middle school group on racial justice. You can read about it in her article in this newsletter. The Understanding Racism group continues to meet as a community of practice. The group is open to new people.

Bob Warren, our new president, states "we plan to conduct trainings for the CDT Board of Directors on how Congregational leadership can address issues of

racism, diversity, equality and welcoming. After the upcoming Board retreats we will have a roadmap for these trainings."

Larger congregation efforts towards undoing racism are in the planning stages. As Rabbi Toba said in our congregation wide meeting to address racism, this is a marathon, not a sprint. We're in it for the long haul.

PRISON BOOK PROJECT

Anyone interested in supporting the PBP during their temporary closure due to COVID-19 can order books from the PBP's wish list on Amazon. Books ordered from this list are being sent to a PBP volunteer staffer, who is sending out individual, specially requested books to prisoners from her home. Other books that come off the wish list will be set aside until the PBP is reopened. The link for the PBP wishlist is: <http://a.co/1Yr7Tkv>.

Chesed

CHESED

Ellie Goldberg

The Dorshei Tzedek community values Chesed, acts of loving-kindness. When a member has a significant life event such as a birth or adoption, illness or death in the family, the Chesed Coordinators use the LotsaHelpingHands calendar to facilitate volunteer tasks and gestures of practical comfort and caring. It is one way that we acknowledge each other's life transitions or stressful times to build the type of caring community we want to live in.

During the summer, the Chesed Committee changed the way we manage Chesed needs to avoid concerns about meal safety that might make a member reluctant to accept a Chesed meal.

So, instead of volunteers preparing home cooked meals, they pick up and deliver meals from local restaurants (such as Inna's Kitchen). When a Chesed need arises, a Chesed Coordinator will contact the member to inquire about allergies and food preferences. She orders the meal and posts the request on

The Chesed Committee would like to thank everyone whose acts of kindness manifest the spirit of Chesed in our community.



Sasha Goldberg

the LotsaHelpingHands calendar. Rabbi Toba uses the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund to buy the meals.

The Chesed Coordinators for September are **Valerie Graf**, **Elaine Landes**, and **DB Reiff**. If you have questions about Chesed, as a recipient or as a volunteer, please contact them at chesed@dorsheitzedek.org.

To join CDT's Chesed Caring Community (Updated) please go to <https://my.lotsahelpinghands.com/community/cdt-chesed-caring-community-updated>.

For more information about Chesed see the articles and resources on the CDT web page: Chesed (Caring Community) <https://dorsheitzedek.org/chesed-caring-community>.

CHESED Q&A: WHAT DO THE SHIVA AND CHESED COMMITTEES DO?

<https://tinyurl.com/Shiva-Chesed>

Rabbi Toba is available to talk about any spiritual, religious, or personal issues that you might want to discuss. To schedule an appointment, please contact Rabbi Toba (confidentially) at t.spitzer@dorsheitzedek.org. Rabbi Toba does not check email on Shabbat (Friday evening through Saturday evening) or on Mondays (her day off). For congregants experiencing financial difficulties, help is available through the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund. This fund is completely confidential.

Learning

PREPARING OURSELVES FOR THE HIGH HOLYDAYS

Tuesday evening, September 1,
and Wednesday evening, Sept. 9,
7:30pm-9:00pm

with Rabbi Toba Spitzer

How can we make the Yamim Noraim, the Days of Awe, most meaningful in these challenging times? All are welcome to join Rabbi Toba for an exploration of teachings about teshuvah, "turning/returning" onto the desired path of our lives, as well as key prayers of the High Holydays liturgy, as we prepare for the Jewish new year. It is fine to come to one or both of the sessions. Have something available to do a bit of writing. Zoom registration info is available at <https://www.dorsheitzedek.org/adult-education>.

WRITE YOUR WAY INTO THE JEWISH NEW YEAR

Tuesday evening, September 8,
8:00-9:00pm

With Jordan Namerow

As you prepare for Rosh Hashanah, join CDT member Jordan Namerow for a writing workshop on Zoom to engage with the fullness of your life and to reflect on what you love, what you fear, and what you want to move toward. Together, we'll do some timed writing exercises and practice giving voice to the pain, loss, longings, and possibilities for transformation that are alive in each of us.

UNCOVERING SPIRITUAL MEMORIES

Three independent sessions: September 14,
21, or 23. There are reservation deadlines.

Come join CDT folks to explore the essence of this holy-day season in a relaxed virtual gathering to reminisce and discover meaningful stories.

Our lives have shaped the ways we come to the High Holydays, each year and this year. To this season of renewal, to this Jewish community, we bring lifetimes filled with all kinds of experiences, some of which we might call "spiritual." In this session we will find our memories of what led us here, using objects and prompts and allowing our own reminiscences to be sparked by the stories we hear in the group.

If you can, bring or describe an object that carries for you a special memory. Or bring a memory, with

or without an object. We'll spend up to 90 minutes exchanging and exploring stories and ideas.

CDT will offer three independent sessions, each limited to 8 people. Each will run approximately 90 minutes, depending on group size and momentum, and will be facilitated by either **Cindy Rivka Marshall**, **Lisa Hirsh**, or **Jo Radner**. To reserve a place, please go to the CDT calendar event listing for the registration link.

Meeting times and reservation deadlines:

Monday, Sept. 14, 2:00-3:30 pm
(sign up by Sept. 10)

Monday, Sept. 21, 7:00-8:30pm
(sign up by Sept. 18)

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 7:00-8:30 pm
(sign up by Sept. 20)

Our Technology Crew Needs You: Learn to Zoom-Host!

We truly appreciate all those who have been helping with the technology necessary to maintain connection within the Dorshei community in these isolating times. As we all now know, attending and holding Zoom meetings has become increasingly important, and we need more Zoom hosts to help with Shabbat services, programming, and meetings.

Please consider attending a single session of Zoom 101: everything you need to know to be a

Shabbat and meeting Zoom-host. Learn how to schedule, create, and run Zoom meetings. Effortlessly share documents and videos, run breakout sessions, message meeting registrants, and download Zoom recordings. Maximum 15 per session.

Thursday, September 3, 7-8:30pm

Thursday, September 10, 9:30-11am

Wednesday, September 16, 5-6:30pm

Friday, September 25, 11:30am-1pm

Registration links can be found on the CDT calendar events listing pages.

CDT Events

SOCIAL JUSTICE SUMMER STUDY SESSIONS FOR 6TH GRADERS: A CHALLENGING, INVIGORATING EXPERIENCE

Margo Michaels

Over the last year, I have been the leader of a group studying racism and how we benefit from living in a society that values white people over people of color. This Spring of course brought all these issues to light in ways we haven't seen since the late 60's. I thought it would be important to share some learning with my kid about these important issues that I doubted they would learn in school or in other formal settings. So in June, I took a chance by inviting other families from *Kitah Dalet* if they wanted to join me and Liam on a study journey to learn about social justice, racial injustice, and racism. Luckily, eight families said "Yes!" Since early July, I have been developing a curriculum and hosting a one hour discussion with these students on these very difficult and challenging topics. Our participatory sessions have included:

- What are protests in response to?
- How are protests related to what some call "riots?"
- What is race?
- Who are "white"? Is it part of my identity?
- What is racism?
- How does implicit bias work?
- Who are the changemakers?
- What is the "idea" of America?
- What can we do about racism as Jewish kids who care about Tikun Olam?

This has been a really life-changing experience for me, sharing these issues with our kids as well as learning from them. We have had consistent participation each week, and we will finish the class before school starts. I want to thank **Tal Shalom-Kobi** and **Jen Kaplan** for helping facilitate, and **Karen Engels** for lending me helpful ideas as we got started. Thanks especially to CDT 6th graders for stepping up to learn about these topics.

CDT Calendar

September 2020

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 Staff Training - Tues Teachers 3:00p - 6:00p Preparing Ourselves for the High Holydays 7:30p - 9:00p	2	3 Mindful Mornings 8:30a - 9:15a Zoom host training 7:00p - 8:30p	4	5 Shabbat Morning Service 10:00a - 12:00p
6 Renewing Our Communities and Ourselves: An Elul Workshop Series 2:00p - 3:15p	7 Mindful Mornings 8:30a - 9:15a	8 Write Your Way Into the Jewish New Year 8:00p - 9:00p	9 Preparing Ourselves for the High Holydays 7:30p - 9:00p	10 Mindful Mornings 8:30a - 9:15a Zoom host training 9:30a - 11:00a	11 All-Ages Erev Shabbat Service & Open House 6:00p - 6:45p	12 Shabbat Morning Service 10:00a - 12:00p Selichot: Beginning to Turn 8:30p - 9:45p
13 Religious School Nitzanim/Gan - Gr. 7 10:00a - 11:30a Renewing Our Communities and Ourselves: An Elul Workshop Series 2:00p - 3:15p	14 Mindful Mornings 8:30a - 9:15a Uncovering Spiritual Memories, with Lisa Hirsh 2:00p - 3:30p	15 Religious School Gr. 3 - Gr. 6 3:30p	16 Zoom host training 5:00p - 6:30p	17 Mindful Mornings 8:30a - 9:15a	18 Erev Rosh Hashana Erev Rosh Hashanah: Welcoming the New Year 5781 6:00p - 6:45p	19 Rosh Hashana Rosh Hashanah - Day 1 (5781) 9:45a - 12:00p
20 Rosh Hashana Tashlich Rosh Hashanah - Day 2 (5781) 10:30a - 11:30a	21 Mindful Mornings 8:30a - 9:15a Uncovering Spiritual Memories, with Cindy Rivka Marshall 7:00p - 8:30p	22 Religious School Gr. 3 - Gr. 6 3:30p	23 Uncovering Spiritual Memories, with Jo Radner 7:00p - 8:30p	24 Mindful Mornings 8:30a - 9:15a	25 Zoom host training 11:30a - 1:00p	26 Shabbat Shuvah Service 10:00a - 12:00p
27 Erev Yom Kippur Kol Nidre/Erev Yom Kippur 6:30p - 8:15p	28 Yom Kippur Yizkor Yom Kippur: The Day of Repentance 9:45a	29 Religious School Gr. 3 - Gr. 6 3:30p	30	October 1	2 Sukkah Setup & Erev Sukkot 3:00p	3 Sukkot Sukkot Morning Service 10:00a - 12:00p

Children & Family Programs

BACK-TO-SCHOOL PLAN -- FALL 2020

Earnest Vener,

Director of Congregational Learning

I am so excited to share our plans for the CDT Religious School fall semester with you. Based on the data from our school registration, discussions with CDT teachers and parents, conversations with religious school directors nationally and locally, and the news that JCDS will not be renting their space to outside organizations, I have concluded that the best way to keep everyone safe, meet our learning goals, and respond to the needs of our community is to remain virtual for the fall semester.

In preparing for the school year I keep returning to bell hooks' Teaching to Transgress, and to this quote in particular, "There is an aspect of our vocation that is sacred ... our work is not merely to share information but to share in the intellectual and spiritual growth of our students. To teach in a manner that respects and cares for the souls of our students is essential if we are to provide the necessary conditions where learning can most deeply and intimately begin." More than ever, our religious school teachers are offering our students vital spaces of belonging, learning, and comfort. In our summer training, our school team is focusing on creating virtual classrooms that provide deep learning and deep relationships for our students.

Our program will continue to meet on Sundays and Tuesdays. On Tuesdays our older students will either have small group Hebrew class or one-to-one Tefillah tutoring. On Sundays we will have all school gatherings and grade level Jewish studies classes. It is my hope that in these challenging and uncertain times, the CDT Religious School will provide our community's children with grounding consistency and connection with peers, their teachers, and our tradition. For more details please visit the CDT Religious School page on the Dorshei website.

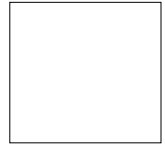
Help us spread the word! We especially want to recruit families with younger kids, grades Nitzanim (pre-K) through Gimel (3rd).

CDT Artist Highlight

This month we highlight CDT artist **Sharon Gorberg**. Sharon taught art for over 35 years and has done her own artwork in many media. Starting as a potter, she has painted silk and has recently been working in watercolor. These paintings of whimsical creatures were developed out of a desire to see what could be created "with a minimum of brush strokes." "After the paint was dry I turned the image around until a form emerged. I then added pen and ink and.... Voila!"

Clockwise from top right: Rabbit Run, Pelekinesis, Off to See the Wizard





Address correction requested



Shofar Journey



This year we need lots of people ready to sound shofar on Rosh Hashanah for our social distance outdoor shofar services. Earlier in August, CDT members and kids participated in a workshop, led by DCL Earnest Vener, to learn how to transform a raw ram's horn into a beautiful shofar.



Workshop participants Mark Schafer and Marie-Carmel Schafer and Roy and Abby Edelstein, create their own shofarot.

