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 exploration, 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.”

From Lidia Pruente:
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 office-assistant@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.
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 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 Pruente.

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.

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.

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.

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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.
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.”

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.

YAHREZT

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.

MOURING 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.

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 Yarzheit 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, Reconvention2022.org, which will be updated regularly. Schedule and program details coming soon!
CONTRIBUTIONS
There are many ways to financially support Congregation Dorshoi 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 Dorshoi 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’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 for her support after my mom’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, Gia como; In memory of Susan Moser
Renee Goutmann—In memory of Susan Moser
Michael and Ellen Krause-Grosman—In memory of Susan Moser
Daniela Yanai Mordekovich—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 himself 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

YAHHRZEIT 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

SUPPORT CDT THROUGH AMAZON.COM
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.dorshetitedek.org, a portion of any purchase you make will be contributed to Dorshoi 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 Hefferman, 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 Reisberg, 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 healthcare 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 numerous 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 Palestinian 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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UNDONE RACISM

Linda Kramer

CDT has been busy this summer educating, organizing and planning efforts towards undoing racism. When the Understanding Racism group was founded many 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

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 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.lotahelpinghands.com/community/ cdttchesed-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 tspitzer@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.
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 kids 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 Tikkun 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.
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<td>Staff Training - Tues Teachers 3:00p - 6:00p</td>
<td>Preparing Ourselves for the High Holydays 7:30p - 9:00p</td>
<td>Mindful Mornings 8:30a - 9:15a</td>
<td>Zoom host training 7:00p - 8:30p</td>
<td>Shabbat Morning Service 10:00a - 12:00p</td>
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<td>Renewing Our Communities and Ourselves: An Elul Workshop Series 2:00p - 3:15p</td>
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<td>Write Your Way Into the Jewish New Year 8:00p - 9:00p</td>
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<td>Religious School Nitzanim/Gan - Gr. 7 10:00a - 11:30a</td>
<td>Renewing Our Communities and Ourselves: An Elul Workshop Series 2:00p - 3:15p</td>
<td>Religious School Gr. 3 - Gr. 6 3:30p</td>
<td>Zoom host training 5:00p - 6:30p</td>
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<td>Rosh Hashana Tashlich Rosh Hashanah - Day 2 (5781) 10:30a - 11:30a</td>
<td>Mindful Mornings 8:30a - 9:15a</td>
<td>Religious School Gr. 3 - Gr. 6 3:30p</td>
<td>Uncovering Spiritual Memories, with Cindy Rivka Marshall 7:00p - 8:30p</td>
<td>Mindful Mornings 8:30a - 9:15a</td>
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<td>Erev Yom Kippur Kol Nidre/Erev Yom Kippur 6:30p - 8:15p</td>
<td>Yom Kippur Yizkor Yom Kippur: The Day of Repentance 9:45a</td>
<td>Religious School Gr. 3 - Gr. 6 3:30p</td>
<td>October 1</td>
<td>Sukkah Setup &amp; Erev Sukkot 3:00p</td>
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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
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.