



Congregation Dorshei Tzedek

An Affiliate of Reconstructing Judaism

60 Highland Street, West Newton, Massachusetts 02465
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Tevet/Shevat 5781

January 2021



Exodus Redux by Rabbi Toba Spitzer

Photo by Viv Shein



THIS MONTH BRINGS with it the beginning of our reading of the book of Exodus/*Shemot* in the weekly Torah cycle. The Exodus from Egypt is the “master narrative” of Judaism: the mythic story of liberation from slavery and the creation of a free, covenantal community.

Perusing earlier newsletter columns I’ve written, I found this from January 2016: “I am thinking about the Exodus as I reflect on our current historical moment, and what feels like a lot of challenging news from all around the globe—news of violence, intolerance and hate, environmental degradation, growing poverty and desperation. While there is of course good news as well...it is easy to feel like the general human trend these days is decidedly downwards.” Somewhat paradoxically, I find this less-than-rosy view of things from five years ago sort of heartening. It reminds me that however difficult this historical moment seems, we have collectively been here before.

Indeed, one reason I love our Jewish practice of re-reading the Torah each year is that it gives me a long-view perspective. The Exodus is a masterful account of the complexities of achieving freedom and human fulfillment. It is a story about the slow, complicated development of

all the players in that process—Moses, the Israelite people, even the Source of Life Itself.

Moses is a reluctant leader who refuses to go back and liberate his Israelite kin until God gets mad at him at the burning bush. After he succeeds in getting the erstwhile Hebrew slaves out of Egypt, Moses spends the rest of the Torah trying to figure out how to lead a recalcitrant, ever-complaining people. Moses also has to learn how to deal with a Godly Power of liberation that gets impatient at the slow pace of human transformation. Along the way, Moses makes mistakes, gets angry and frustrated and lashes out—while also teaching, resolving disputes, encouraging the community, developing an intimate relationship with God, and ultimately schlepping the people to their destination 40 years later.

The Israelites are just as complex—faithful and grateful one moment, complaining and rebellious the next. They resist being freed and refuse going into the promised land, yet also embrace the challenge of entering into covenantal relationship with the Ultimate and with one another. They represent the realities of trying to move beyond our limitations and past experiences, and embody the very real challenges in transforming ourselves both personally and politically.

continued on page 2

The Torah presents God in a similar vein—as complex and somewhat messy, a cosmic counterpart to the humans in the story. YHWH is the Power of Liberation that is impatient with those who resist being freed; the Power of Justice that demands more than human beings can deliver; and the Power of Compassion that sticks with Moses and the Israelites despite their many flaws and failures. The God of the Torah is not the Unmoved Mover of Aristotle or the Perfect Being of later philosophy; It is rather an unpredictable and often inscrutable Process of becoming. Yet, the Torah maintains, God is also Something that asks us to come into relationship with Godliness in the universe and in one another. Indeed, in this narrative, it is only in relationship with one another that can we make a home for the Divine in this world.

What I take from these Torah stories is an acknowledgment of the very real challenges of being human, as well as the possibility of

May we have compassion for ourselves when we feel lost in the wilderness, and take hope from each moment of liberation that we achieve.

making it through the wilderness to someplace better. We have teachings for transforming our economics, for overcoming our violent tendencies, for learning to live as neighbors with those who are like us and those are “strangers” to us. As we collectively face the challenges of the pandemic, as we work as a community to become actively anti-racist, as we strive to be more lovingly inclusive of the rainbow of human experience in our congregation, as we seek to make a difference in the world around us, I hope we can feel anchored in the ancient narrative of the Exodus. May we have compassion for ourselves when we feel lost in the wilderness, and take hope from each moment of liberation that we achieve. May we find in our reading of Exodus this year (beginning on

Shabbat morning, January 9) some clues to working together for the creation of a loving, just, sustainable human community. And may 2021 bring us all health and wellbeing, and the promise of moving towards the promised land, however far off it may feel.

Photo by Viv Shein



Rabbinic Liaison

Rabbinic Liaison: 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.

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

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Roksi Freeman, Technical Support Person

Executive Committee

President: Bob Warren

Past President: Lissy Medvedow

VP Finance: Ezra Hausman

Secretary: Ro Weichman

Vice Presidents

VP Membership: Debby Saltzman

VP Education: Diana Fisher Gomberg

VP Leadership: Sheree Galpert

VP Tikkun Olam: Stacey Chacker

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Ellie Axe, Linda Kramer, Carla Naumburg, Dan Rome,

Jonathan Rosenthal & Lisa Samelson

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Children's Education: Sarah Birkeland

Chesed: Gail Pressberg

Nediv Lev: Debbie Waber

Newsletter: John Holohan

Ritual: Marion Ross & Peter Katz

Rabbinic Liaison: Cindy Shulak-Rome

Executive Director Liaison: Linette Liebling

DCL Liaison: Lissy Medvedow

Space: Steve Siegel

Website: Dan Halbert

Welcoming: Debbie Saltzman (Acting)

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

ALL-AGES EREV SHABBAT SERVICE

Friday evenings, January 8, February 5 from 6:00pm - 6:45pm

All are welcome to join Rabbi Toba for this musical Kabbalat Shabbat service, friendly to kids but meaningful for all! Have your candles ready to light and a kiddush cup ready to bless. Zoom info is available on the CDT website.

SHABBAT MORNING SERVICES

All are welcome to join us every Saturday morning for prayer, song, and Torah, beginning at 10:00am. 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, January 2

Join Rabbi Toba for the morning service beginning at 10:00am, followed by reading from the Torah and Torah study beginning at 11:00am; we will close the service with blessings for healing and Mourners Kaddish, at approximately 11:45am. All are welcome to stay for Kiddush chat rooms after the service!

Shabbat Morning, January 9: Bat Mitzvah of Jenna Kate Schwartz

We invite the CDT community to celebrate with us as our daughter, **Jenna Kate Schwartz**, is called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah. Jenna is in the 8th grade at Brown Middle School. She is passionate about protecting our environment and has participated in climate marches and Newton's Students for a Greener World in an effort to educate others about protecting the earth. Jenna has had a lifelong desire to be a teacher and enjoys playing with and taking care of young children. She has recently become involved in the sport of rowing, and is looking forward to getting back on the water as soon as it is safe to do so. Jenna has developed strong friendships with her

classmates at CDT's religious school. The kids have supported each other as they have made their way through this unusual year of virtual B'nei Mitzvah. She is looking forward to seeing all of them, and all of you, on the screen during her Bat Mitzvah!

Shabbat Morning, January 16

We will celebrate Martin Luther King, Jr. weekend with a special musical morning service, beginning at 10:00am. At 11:00am we are thrilled to welcome back to CDT **Ali Abu Awwad**, the founder of Taghyeer ("Change"), a Palestinian nonviolence movement of grassroots communities and emerging leaders "practicing nonviolence as a unifying identity for the Palestinian people." Ali will be joined by **Siham Fayad**, a consultant to Taghyeer's Women's Leadership Program. Ali and Siham will share their vision of nonviolence as a path of liberation, and stories from their inspiring, peace-building work with Taghyeer.



Ali Abu Awwad (left) and Siham Fayad (right)

Shabbat Morning, January 23

All are welcome to celebrate Shabbat with members of CDT leading song, prayer, and Torah study, from 10:00-11:30am.

Shabbat Morning, January 30

This is Shabbat Shira, when we read in the Torah about the Israelites crossing the Reed Sea to freedom, and celebrating with the Song of the Sea. Our morning service will feature



new recordings from **CDT Sings**, and song and Torah learning with special guest **Arielle Korman** (pictured above), the co-founder and Executive Director of Amud: Jews of Color Torah Academy. Arielle is a Jewish educator and performs traditional and original Jewish music. She is passionate about accessible Jewish education and the creation of spaces for cultural sharing and deepening community. We are thrilled to sing and learn with Arielle for this special Shabbat Shira experience!!

MINDFUL MORNINGS

Tuesday 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! Those in mourning or observing a *yahrzeit* are invited to recite Kaddish at the end of each meditation session, at approximately 9am. Zoom info is available on the CDT website. For non-members, please email officeassistant@dorsheitzedek.org for Zoom info.

As Dorshei Tzedek takes precautions during the Covid-19 pandemic, all of our programs have been moved to a virtual format for the time being. 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 the CDT website, dorsheitzedek.org.

Community & Events

MAZEL TOV

Mazel tov to **Carolyn Gelfand** and her family, on becoming bat mitzvah!

Happy announcements from the Stanton family:

First, we are happy to announce the engagement of **Alec Stanton** and **Devyn Shea**. Second, after years of hard work, Alec Stanton is now a fully licensed electrician and will be available to do side-work when the current pandemic spike is over.

To **LilyFish Gomberg** on graduating from Brandeis!

To **Amy Westebbe** and **David Broad** on the announcement of their engagement.

To **Lisa Samelson** and **Paul Hattis**, on the recent marriage of their son (and CDT "graduate") Joey to Aanchal Tiwari. Joey and Aanchal were married in Durango, CO, where Aanchal works as a freelance political and security analyst and Joey works as a 7th grade math teacher.

Yahrzeit

This month we remember CDT member **Marty Bresnick**, whose 20th yahrzeit falls on January 1. We will remember Marty at Shabbat morning services on January 2, may his memory be for a blessing. We also remember CDT member **Mara Gibbs**, whose 4th yahrzeit falls on January 24, may her memory be for a blessing. We will be remembering Mara at Shabbat morning services on January 30.

Condolences

To **Ami Gordon**, on the death of her father, Robert Leon Stern (father-in-law of Gordon, grandmother of Max and Zachary). May his memory 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 : <https://www.dorsheitzedek.org/mourning>.

Avelut: Support for those in mourning

Tuesday, January 8, 7:30pm

A group of CDT members in various stages of the journey of mourning meets via Zoom

each month to support one another, to reflect on loss on the occasion of a yahrzeit, and to remember the legacies of the loved ones we carry with us. Any CDT member is welcome.

For more information, please contact: **Stacey Chacker, chacsjc@gmail.com**.

REFUAH SHLEYMAH

We send blessings of healing to **Jen Kaplan**, **Al Glazerman**, and **Rob Saper**.

TODAH RABAH

Todah rabah to our Virtual Interest Meet-Up (VIM) hosts! (See page 5 for more details!)

Todah rabah to all who helped with our week of Chanukah Activities: **Gail Pressberg** for hosting our teen gathering, **Tammy Vener** for a fantastic Latke making workshop, and **Judy Hersh** and **Amy Brodesky** for a great adult Chanukah party!

Please notify the Newsletter of life cycle events, significant accomplishments or other moments you would like to share with the community.

Allison Andrews—for facilitating the parents' members meeting in December.

CDT WELCOMING COMMITTEE

The Welcoming Committee has been delighted to welcome a number of new member families. In addition to welcoming members with a broad range of interests and across all ages, we have greatly expanded the CDT geographic footprint. One of the advantages that coronavirus has brought is our improved Zoom capabilities and access to services, classes, committee meetings, Torah study, mindful meditation, and many other CDT events through Zoom. If you have friends and family, either local or living far away, who are interested in CDT, invite them to join us to see what we're all about.

The Board has opened our membership to anyone living outside our geographic area. Three of our new member families join us from other areas of the country. This membership opportunity is permanent and we plan to continue Zoom participation.

Anyone interested in membership may contact **Debby Saltzman**, VP of Membership, for more information at outreach@dorsheitzedek.org.

CDT EVENTS

Wisdom for the Season—Program for Elders (ages 60+)

Monday, January 11, 7-8:30PM

Finding ourselves in the season of winter, older age, and Covid, how do we identify the wisdom to help us not only get through this time, but to thrive? Join **Louise Enoch** and **Marion Ross** for an exploration of the Wisdom for the Season. Share and learn with your peers about what works to help sustain hope and light during these challenging times. Registration link can be found on the event listing of the CDT calendar!



Another feathered friend. What birds have you seen in your yard recently? Photo by Viv Shein

Todah rabah to **Tatjana Meschede** for Zoom hosting Shabbat morning services in November, and to the Children's Education Committee—**Emily Mathis**, **Rebecca Bact**, **David Rhodes**, **Becca Ó Murchadha**, **Rachel Pytel**, **Sarah Birkeland**, **Margo Michaels**,

continued on page 5

Community & Events (cont'd)

SUCCESSFUL FIRST ROUND OF VIMS

By Debby Saltzman

Over 120 members participated in fifteen member-led Virtual Interest Meet-ups (VIMs) in early December. The sessions brought old and new members together for sharing interests, learning, and laughing. Feedback from participants was uniformly enthusiastic. The Scattergories players shared laughs, the Backyard Birders shared photographs, the Play Reading group read the first half of a play, the Grateful Jews shared memories of Grateful Dead experiences, the Yiddish Immersion group learned songs, the What's for Dinner? group shared recipes, the What are you watching/reading? group recommended books and TV shows, and New Members schmoozed. Mahjong was played, photographs were taken, and Niggunim were sung. Discussions were had on Creativity, Jewish Genealogy, Documentary Filmmaking, Trans/GNC/NB Community-Building, and Parenting. Several groups made plans to meet again.

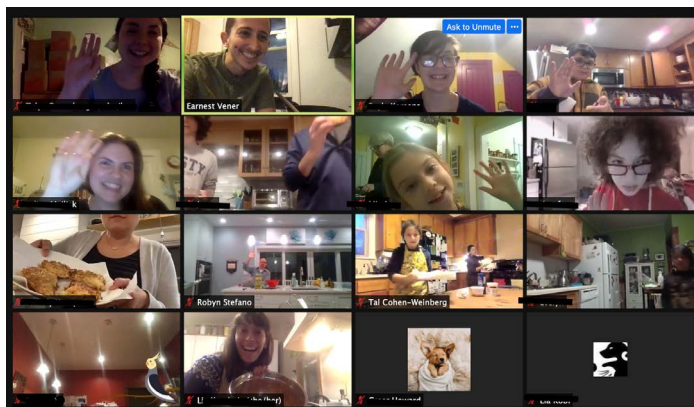
Participants gave their VIMs a big thumbs-up! Here's some feedback from participants on their fun, informative, and community-building experiences:

- **Stacy Chacker:** "We had a blast playing Scattergories! Thanks to Mel and Andy!"
- **Judy Hersch:** "Thea Breite's session on Learning to See was eye-opening! She was an amazing teacher. I'd love to meet up again."
- **Louise Enoch:** "Miriam Bronstein's VIM on niggunim reconnected me to a kind of music that speaks to my soul."

- **Rob Greenley:** "Rebecca Pomerantz generously gave us a slew of resources and tips for starting our genealogical journeys."
- **Valerie Graf:** "Loved chatting about food and getting lots of new meal ideas during the What's For Dinner session!"
- **Rachel Pytel:** "I attended the Mahjong VIM and Suzi and Amy were great teachers! We had a lot of fun and I hope we can do it again."
- **Alex SB:** "Scott's VIM on the Grateful Dead and the Jews was fantastic! Scott, 'thank you, for a real good time!' (That's a line from a Dead song...)"
- **Steffi Karp:** "In both sessions I attended I was reminded of my strong connections to the CDT community."
- **Roy Edelstein:** "Most of all, it was fun to see folks in small groups where we could actually connect over a shared interest."

A huge thank you to the hosts who volunteered to lead sessions in their areas of expertise and interest: **Thea Breite, Tal Shalom Kobi, Melissa Colten, Rebecca Pomerantz** (two sessions!), **Sheree Galpert, Miriam Bronstein, Jen Kaplan, Amy Brodesky, Earnest Vener, Mel Adler, Andy Cohen, Sharon Gorberg, Debby Saltzman, Suzi Dargon-Hart, Scott Tepper** and **Margo Michaels, Rebecca Cohen, and Sara Coen Dash**. Special thanks to **Melissa Colten** and the Welcoming Committee for pulling together this program.

A second round of VIMs is being planned for March 4-9, 2021. If you would like to host a VIM in March, please fill out a short online [sign-up form](#). If you have suggestions or questions about future VIMs, please contact **Debby Saltzman** (debbysaltzman@gmail.com) or **Amy Brodesky** (abrodesky@gmail.com).



CDT Members enjoy a virtual Latke making workshop hosted by Tammy Vener and part of the week of Chanukah Activities.

Chesed

CHESED: WHERE CIVILIZATION STARTS

January 2021

Ellie Goldberg

Our congregation 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. These gestures of practical comfort and caring are a way that we acknowledge each other's life transitions or stressful times to build the type of caring community we want to live in.

INSPIRATION

"Years ago, anthropologist Margaret Mead was asked by a student what she considered to be the first sign of civilization in a culture. The student expected Mead to talk about fish hooks or clay pots or grinding stones. But no. Mead said that the first sign of civilization in an ancient culture was a femur (thighbone) that had been broken and then healed. Mead explained that in the animal kingdom, if you break your leg, you die. You cannot run from danger, get to the river for a drink or hunt for food. You are meat for prowling beasts. No animal survives a broken leg long enough for the bone to heal. A broken femur that has healed is evidence that someone has taken time to stay with the one who fell, has bound up the wound, has carried the person to safety and has tended the person through recovery. Helping someone else through difficulty is where civilization starts, Mead said."

We are at our best when we serve others. Be civilized. -- Posted on Facebook by Ira Byock, M.D., a palliative care physician, author, and public advocate for improving care through the end of life.

The Chesed Committee is currently managing Chesed meals by ordering from a local restaurant such as Inna's Kitchen. When a Chesed need arises, a Chesed Coordinator will contact the member to inquire about allergies and food preferences, order the meal, and send out a request for a volunteer to pick up and deliver the meal. Rabbi Toba uses the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund to buy the meals.

The Chesed Coordinators for January are **Lisa Keshet** and **Ellie Goldberg**. If you have questions about Chesed, please contact them at chesed@dorsheitzedek.org.

Chesed Q&A: What Do the Shiva and Chesed Committees Do?
<https://tinyurl.com/Shiva-Chesed>

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



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

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!

RECONSTRUCTING JUDAISM DAY OF LEARNING

Sunday, January 24, 2021 | Online

Join Reconstructionists from around the world for a movement-wide virtual day of learning. Watch your e-mail and our social media for more information!

Tikkun Olam

GETTING IN GOOD TROUBLE

Sunday, January 17, 4-5:30PM

As part of our weekend of activities celebrating Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday weekend, all are welcome to join other CDTers to be inspired by the words and images of Dr. King and Congressman John Lewis. Share your own thoughts about how to get in "good trouble." What are you up to in furthering your own anti-racism understanding and actions? Discussion led and facilitated by members of CDT's Understanding Racism group.

TU B'SHVAT CELEBRATION & CLIMATE JUSTICE ORGANIZING

Thursday, January 28th 7:30-9:00pm

Tu B'Shvat is the "new year of the trees," a time to celebrate the natural world and the diversity and abundance of the earth's resources. Come celebrate the fruits of our Tikkun Olam labor this year at CDT, including the Voter Mobilization Project and GBIO!! And come learn how CDT may leverage our power with Dayenu: A Jewish Call to Climate Action. Vicki Kaplan, Dayenu's Director of Organizing will be with us to share about possibilities for climate action through Dayenu. There will be music, celebratory toasting (bring your red and white wine (or grape juice)), and learning. Bring your own

figs, dates, olives, pomegranates, grapes, wine, joy and passion for justice.

PRISON BOOK PROGRAM-ACTIVE AGAIN!

The Prison Book Program In Quincy has resumed regular volunteer hours, but volunteers must now sign up in advance (no drop-ins) and only seven volunteers per session are permitted. Volunteer slots go very quickly. For the foreseeable future, CDT will not be volunteering as a group. If anyone wants to volunteer individually, the signup site is: <https://signup.com/go/ZeaXPfL>.

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/iYr7TkV>.

Books can also be donated directly to the PBP by dropping them off during regular volunteer hours at the door to the PBP (back door of church), Tuesday and Thursday, 6:30- 9 pm and alternate Saturdays 1-4 pm.

'THE ISRAEL CONVERSATION' ON CAMPUS: AN INSIDE LOOK WITH J STREET U STUDENTS:

An event co-sponsored by CDT's Israel-Palestine Peace Group and J Street Boston

Thursday, January 21, 7:30pm (Zoom)

by Elaine Landes

Please join us for a lively discussion on the opportunities and challenges of organizing around issues related to Israel on college campuses. J Street U student leaders will share their personal stories, what motivates them, how they organize on campus, and how they think our communities can best prepare the next generation for handling these tough topics after high school.

This is an important opportunity to have an intergenerational discussion in our community. We are especially inviting CDT's 11th and 12th grade high schoolers and their families, as well as current college kids and their families. And of course, all interested CDTers are welcome!

Registration/Zoom info will be sent out in January.

Learning

TORAH STUDY WITH EARNEST VENER

Wednesday mornings, 8:00-9:00am

Start your Wednesday mornings with Torah Study! Join Earnest for a weekly 45-minute study session, focusing on the weekly Torah portion. You are welcome to drop-in or come every week. All are welcome and no prior knowledge is required. See the CDT website for Zoom information, and email Earnest at e.vener@dorsheitzedek.org with any questions.

NEW CLASS!

Telling Our Stories: A Spiritual Autobiography Workshop with Rabbi Toba Spitzer

Tuesday evenings, January 12, 19 & 26, 7:30-9:00pm, in the Zoomiverse (Open to Dorshei Tzedek members only)

Where have we been, and where are we going? This class is an opportunity to reflect on our personal spiritual journeys, and to inquire into the development of our

beliefs, values, and commitments. These three sessions will focus on exercises to help participants begin the writing process, and then participants will have an opportunity to both write and record their own story, to be shared with other class participants. No particular writing expertise or experience necessary! Pre-registration is required; please go to the Adult Education page of the CDT website for information.

Children and Family Programs

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL UPDATE

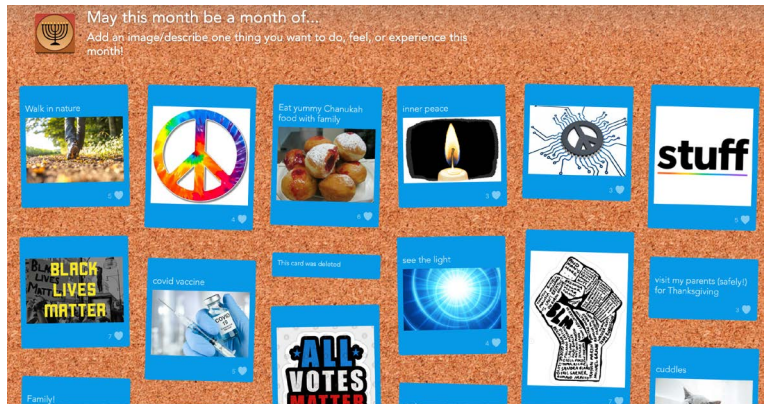
Earnest Vener, Director of Congregational Learning

A Window into our Virtual Religious School

This school year has been a creative challenge. How do we take our curricula, created for in-person learning, and adapt them for the virtual environment? Our teaching team rose to the occasion by seeing our virtual context as an opportunity, not an obstacle. I want to share with you all some ways our teachers have used technology to enhance the learning experience of our students.

The Jigsaw Strategy

Jigsaw is a cooperative learning strategy that enables smaller groups of students within a class to specialize in one aspect of a topic and then return and teach the rest of the class. Many of our teachers are using this strategy to create opportunities for students to master material and teach one another. For example, after our *Kitah Vav* (6th grade) students learn a Biblical story, they do a jigsaw character study. In groups they analyze different characters, find textual evidence, and create visual representations. They do all this work on Google slides and then come back and present to the class. *Kitah Zayin* (7th grade) students similarly used the jigsaw strategy to “send” students off to different countries to learn about Sephardic and Mizrahi history and culture.



Creativity Online

Our virtual setting has allowed us to use technology for creative projects. *Kitah Hey* (5th grade) created a video advertising fair trade Chanukah gelt, making connections between the injustices in the chocolate industry and the Exodus story. *Kitah Gimel* uses an online platform that allows students to record videos and do creative drawing assignments. The students are learning about *B'tzelem Elohim*, the idea that all humans are created in the image of the divine. The students created virtual self-portraits and recorded audio sharing about how they are made in the divine image.

work off the screen. Each week *Kitah Aleph* (1st grade) creates a craft connected to a Jewish holiday. *Kitah Bet* (2nd grade) students all have percussion instruments they use in class to create rhythmic poetry connected to the Jewish values they are learning. And, our older students have engaged in journaling practices and creative projects off screen to allow for personal reflection and exploration. I have immense gratitude for all the work our teaching staff is doing to try new things and to use technology to make our ancient tradition relevant and exciting for our students. I am excited for another semester of creativity, learning, exploration, and community.

Screenshots provided by Earnest Vener capture moments of the virtual religious school experience at CDT.



January 2021

| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|--|--|---|---------------------------------|--|---|--|
| 27 DEC | 28 DEC | 29 DEC | 30 DEC | 31 | 1 New Year's Day | 2 10:00am Shabbat Morning Service |
| 3 1:30p Adult Hebrew Class | 4 | 5 8:30am Mindful Mornings 3:30pm Religious School Gr. 3- 6 | 6 8:00am Torah Study | 7 8:30am Mindful Mornings | 8 2:00pm VIM: What's for dinner? 6:00pm All Ages Erev Shabbat Service | 9 10:00am Shabbat Morning Service & Bat Mitzvah of Jenna Kate Schwartz |
| 10 10:00am Religious School Gr. 1 - 7 1:30p Adult Hebrew Class | 11 7:00pm Widsom for the Season - A Program for Elders (60+) | 12 8:30am Mindful Mornings 3:30pm Religious School Gr. 3- 6 7:30pm Telling Our Stories: A Spiritual Autobiography Workshop with Rabbi Toba | 13 8:00am Torah Study | 14 Rosh Chodesh Shevat 8:30am Mindful Mornings | 15 6:00pm MLK Tot Shabbat | 16 10:00am Shabbat Morning Service |
| 17 4:00pm Getting into Good Trouble | 18 MLK Jr Day | 19 8:30am Mindful Mornings 4:00pm Religious School Gr. 3- 6: Rosh Chodesh Shevat & Ma'ariv Program 7:30pm Telling Our Stories: A Spiritual Autobiography Workshop with Rabbi Toba | 20 8:00am Torah Study | 21 8:30am Mindful Mornings 7:30pm 'The Israel Conversation' on Campus: An Inside Look with J Street U Students | 22 | 23 10:00am Shabbat Morning Service |
| 24 9:00am Nitzanim/Gan 10:00am Religious School Gr. 1 - 7 | 25 | 26 8:30am Mindful Mornings 3:30pm Religious School Gr. 3- 6 7:30pm Telling Our Stories: A Spiritual Autobiography Workshop with Rabbi Toba | 27 8:00am Torah Study | 28 Tu B'Shvat 8:30am Mindful Mornings 7:30pm Tu B'Shvat Seder & Celebration | 29 | 30 10:00am Shabbat Morning Service |
| 31 10:00am Religious School: Kita Zayin Family Ed with Rabbi Toba 10:00am Religious School Gr. 1 - 7 | 1 | 2 3:30pm Religious School Gr. 3- 6 | 3 8:00am Torah Study | 4 | 5 6:00pm All Ages Erev Shabbat Service | 6 |

CDT Artist Spotlight: Weaver Phyllis Kanter

This month we put the CDT artist spotlight on weaver, **Phyllis Kantor**. Here's a description of her journey and her work. Phyllis writes:

"I began weaving in 1972, when I had two small boys. Weaving was something I could start and quickly stop fairly easily. Around 1977, inspired by seminal Judaic fiber artist Mae Rockland Tupa, I began to focus mainly on Judaic weaving, which I started selling in 1980. A cross-country visit to Mae Rockland Tupa connected me to the Kolbo Gallery, which carried my work for years and may still have some inventory (When we moved east and we joined CDT, I was happy to see several CDT members wearing my *tallitot*).

In the mid 1980s I began to be commissioned for major synagogue work: Torah Mantles, *Chuppot*, *Parochot*, tapestries, etc. Most of my



major woven pieces have incorporated quilting, embroidery, and beads. In 2010, I moved to Brookline after 39 years in Eugene, Oregon, where I had a large studio with very large, complex looms. Since then I've woven on a smaller loom, but have devoted more of my time to beading, quilting, and knitting, including some Judaica.

I consider my work to be '*Hiddur Mitzvah*', inspired by the opening paragraphs of Abram Kanof's **Jewish Ceremonial Art and Religious Observance**:"

'Religious experience is more commonly absorbed through the senses than through the intellect. Leaders of all creeds have recognized a visual aspect in religious experience, and accordingly have employed art...to create an environment of reverence. It is no coincidence that, for most of human history, religion has given the impetus to much artistic endeavor.'

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

Ellie and Judah Axe—*In honor of Rabbi Toba and Earnest. This difficult year was made brighter and more full because of your leadership, your support, and your ability to create community and meaning in the Zoomiverse. In particular, Toba, thank you so much for your support as we mourned Harold this year. We look forward to making it through this year and being together in the not too far future.*

Helaine and John Carroll—*In honor of the Bar Mitzvah of our grandson, Jonah Carroll*

Rabbi Toba Spitzer—*With gratitude to the staff and leadership of CDT*

RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

Zelda and William Gamson—*In memory of Zee Gamson's brother, Gerald Finkelstein*

Sue Lanser and Jo Radner—*In honor of Judy and Chayim Herzig-Marx*

Dianne Lior—*With gratitude for Rabbi Toba and the congregation for their support*

Ruth Seidman

COVID-19 FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FUND

Carole Slipowitz and Dan Halbert—*In honor of Melissa Colten, with thanks for all her help to our family after Dan's accident*

Hilary Marcus & Jonathan Magaziner—*In honor of Phyllis Kantor, our trusty Mask Maker*

YAHREZEIT DONATIONS

Elaine Bresnick—*In memory of David Adler, my father, and In memory of Martin Bresnick, Anna's father and my ex-husband*

Ruth Paris and Rob Saper—*In memory of her father, Isaac, mother, Dorothy, and brother, Steven Paris*

David Reider—*in memory of his father, Raphael B. Reider*

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Photo by Viv Shein



Address correction requested



Latke-Making Workshop

