



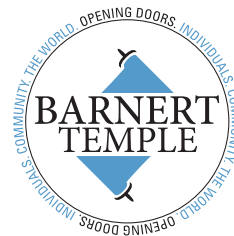
BARNERT

The Magazine

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Please recycle this magazine.



Vision and Mission Statement The Barnert Temple Congregation B'nai Jeshurun Franklin Lakes, NJ

Welcome to the Barnert Temple.
This is our Vision and Mission.
We present these ideals as a declaration of
our purpose, to guide our priorities
and decisions, and to measure
the progress of our work together.

Our Vision

We are a welcoming Reform Jewish community,
connected by the realization that we are
part of something larger than ourselves,
continually striving to excel at opening doors
for ethical and spiritual growth.

Our Mission

The mission of the Barnert Temple
is to be a sacred community, a *kehillah kedoshah*,
committed to offering Reform Jewish experiences
that are relevant, accessible and meaningful,
wherein people of all ages and backgrounds
are appreciated and valued, engaged and inspired.

Our Core Values

The people of the Barnert Temple are guided
by these core values:

- Mutual respect for one another, *Derech Eretz*
- A partnership of members, leaders, staff and clergy, *Brit Shleimut*
- Love of the Jewish people and the State of Israel, *Klal Yisrael*
- Repair of our world, *Tikkun Olam*
- Questioning and seeking insight, *Rodef Chochmah*

A Message From Rabbi Rachel Steiner

Where Does Torah Live?



In the early days of our pandemic closure in March 2020, we talked at length about our *Torah* scrolls, alone in the ark in our sanctuary at Barnert. How could we ensure their protection from vandalism in an empty building? Was the temperature in the sanctuary set correctly? Did we need to think about extra insurance coverage for these sacred scrolls? Would they be safer

in their ark/home or in our homes? We resolved quickly enough that our scrolls were safest where they were. And that is where they stayed.

Beyond the logistics, I felt a physical longing for them. Especially in the first weeks and months, I worried they were lonely. I later recognized that this was actually a transference of my own longing to be with each of you. Still, I couldn't shake all that I missed that was connected with these physical scrolls: the palpable connection with Jews of all places and times when we bring to life the words of the *Torah*, and hugging the scroll as I took it out and returned it to the ark. We who took turns checking on the building, also checked on the scrolls.

With very little advance planning, we began our *B'nai Mitzvah* celebrations remotely. Alone in their homes, many of our Jewish young adults bravely continued to choose Jewish adulthood, rooted in *Torah*, as they reached this significant milestone. Without the scroll in front of them, our young people still chanted and taught, using their study books in place of the physical *Torah* scroll, leading us forward in spite of all that was unknown. *Torah* lived in their commitment, confidence, and care for others.

When we returned to small, in person *B'nai Mitzvah* services over the summer, it was for a mix of both postponed and originally scheduled dates. This meant I spent more time than usual rolling the *Torah* scroll, sometimes backward and sometimes ahead, so that each of our *B'nai Mitzvah* would be reading from the correct spot for their assigned *Torah* portion. My soul felt uplifted to visit with our text in this way. It was good to be back together.

When the virus numbers climbed again and we had to move back to remote *B'nai Mitzvah* celebrations, from mid-November through February, we did one thing

differently: I brought a *Torah* scroll to the *B'nai Mitzvah* family's house on the Friday morning of their assigned *Shabbat*. I must admit, I was very nervous the first time I drove away from the scroll I had left for a sacred sleepover. I was always happy to pick the *Torah* up and return it to its place in the ark.

I was moved watching our young people and their parents gain the confidence they needed to manage and care for our sacred scrolls. With my detailed and illustrated (!) instructions, each family overcame the initial nervousness of undressing and dressing the *Torah* without me there to help. Each family found the right place in their home for the *Torah* to spend the night, covered, safe from pets or curious children. Each family proudly set up their sacred space for the service, with the scroll as an anchor, and successfully brought to life in their homes the ancient words of *Torah*. Each week I was profoundly moved to witness transformations: children to Jewish young

adults; adult observers to enthusiastic participants in using our precious ritual objects; *Torah* that lives on a scroll to *Torah* that lives in our homes, in our words, in our actions.

As I write this message, we are preparing to return to small, in-person *B'nai Mitzvah* services. It will be good to be back with some of you in our sacred spaces, to visit regularly again with our scrolls, to hear our young people chant and teach and enliven our *Torah*.

Let us take our cues from all of our young people who have become *B'nai Mitzvah* since March 2020, and from their families who have modeled courage, love, and perpetual positivity, and let us

all "opt in" to Jewish living.

At the end of the *Torah* service, each time we return the *Torah* to the ark, we recite these words: *Eitz Chayim hi lamachazikim bah, v'tom'cheha m'ushar*. It is a tree of life for those who embrace it with strength, and we, who support it, can find happiness.

We call the *Torah*, an *Eitz Chayim*, a Tree of Life. We think about the generations of Jews who have studied and embraced Jewish living that is rooted in *Torah*. We also imagine a tree's blossoms and branches, our connections to one another and the promise of beauty that we create. One of the blessings I am holding close, as we continue into the unknown and the not-yet-fully-reimagined way to live as post-pandemic Jews, is the reminder that *Torah* lives wherever we choose to bring *Torah* to life. We are proof that with love and attention, the *Eitz Chayim*, the *Torah*, can thrive wherever it is planted.



A Message From the President

Profound Extremes

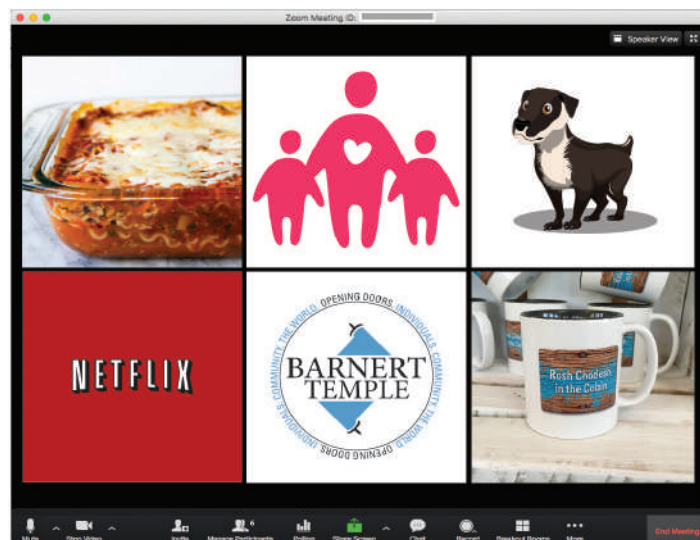


Dear friends,

As I write this, we are in a time of hope and new beginnings, even as we face our loss, sadness, and grief from this past year. I, like you, have suffered profound loss, yet I more than ever appreciate the numerous blessings in my life. And more than ever, I have leaned on and benefited so much from the warmth and resilience of

our Barnert community.

It still astounds me to see the number of participants at our Zoom *Shabbat* services (over 75 a week, and many more at our special *Shabbat* services, such as our recent *Shabbat Shira*). And we continue to revel in our new technology skills — though I, as many do, hope the days of saying “You’re muted,” will soon be over. We take comfort in the joy and renewed closeness we’ve been able to experience through our Zoom platform in such gatherings as our monthly *Rosh Chodesh* with Sara Losch



(though we sorely feel the loss of her “cabin”), a marriage in the backyard of two Barnert members with beautiful messages flowing from their handmade *chuppah*, and enjoying the music of not only our beloved Janet, Marina, and talented congregants, but also musical guests such as the Ben Wisch Trio and Nefesh Mountain. At the same time, Zoom is so often our platform where we poignantly feel sadness and offer support to each other, as in the extraordinary outpouring of love and kindness at Zoom *shivahs* and at our most recent moving session on loss and grief.

I’ve cooked in a way I never dreamed I could! (If anyone wants my recipe for Spaghetti Squash Lasagne,

just ask.) I sit down to dinners with my daughter almost every night — something I couldn’t have imagined, as she is over 30 (and I’m sure neither could she). And we’ve become even closer over these past months. Netflix movies. Fireside chats. An extended visit from my son — and his adorable and very large new puppy, Freddy — for weeks that would never have been so long had we not had to abide by all the Covid quarantine rules. And now that he is back in Austin, we have our daily walking date; what 27-year-old would “walk” with his mom every day?

As many have expressed, I, too, used to run around all the time. I am now more present (my eternal goal), have a modicum of more time to myself, and find strength in the deep relationships I’ve managed to maintain and intensify via digital platforms. I try to take a step back and be truly grateful for the extraordinary relationships I now have with my children, my close friends, my Zoom meetings with my beloved 91-year-old, sharp-as-a-whip Uncle Jack.

I have contemplated how this year has been one of profound extremes — profound joy and closeness, profound sorrow. And I cherish our Barnert family now more than ever, and rejoice in our faith, our community, and our gatherings, even though most are virtual, in a way that I can hardly express.

Here is to a new season of hope, of resilience, of new beginnings and, my dear Barnert friends, a time for healing and peace.

With love,
Elizabeth

Volunteer at Barnert!

We always welcome volunteers at Barnert — in whatever capacity that fits your talents and schedule. Take on a task, work on a team, or do something on your own. Please reach out to Donna Meyer, meymail121@gmail.com, for anything you’d like to sign up for.

Don’t know exactly, but want to help? We can give you some suggestions! Specifically, right now, we’d love help in these areas:

- Microsoft 365
- Excel proficiency
- Systems implementation and training
- Document organization and retention
- Accounting
- Social media expertise
- Graphic design

A Message From Sara Losch

Turning Our Lights On for Friends and Family



Welcome back to our magazine. I've missed it. Writing here gives me an opportunity to share, teach, and reach out and check in. Checking in on each other has been vital this past year, and Barnert has done so in many different and creative ways. Whether having drive-up opportunities to pick up gifts (and have Rabbi Steiner hug your car!), to Zoom *Shabbats*,

and our fun *Purim Shpiel*—where we estimate we had over 300 participants—we've let each other know that nobody is alone, even when it may feel that way.

On *Pesach*, we talk about the concept of *Mitzrayim*, which is Hebrew for Egypt, but also has another, deeper connotation. *Mitzrayim* also means a very narrow space. During our *seder*, when we consider the reality of the enslaved Israelites, we can imagine the feeling of isolation, lack of freedom, inability to move around or live freely. And we bemoan this state. How can one possibly feel good in a narrow, isolated space?

As so many of you have recently lost loved ones, I lost my mother-in-law (in Uruguay) and then my mother this past year. To mourn in Covid was terrible. To not be physically together for *shiva*, for *Shabbat*, was indescribably painful. I was in *Mitzrayim*, feeling so alone.

And yet.

Zoom allowed me to see and hear from family

members across the globe. Our Barnert students reached out to me via text, to tell me they love me and were sad for me. And, for some of the time, being alone gave me time to meditate and concentrate on myself, my changed status (motherless). I spent hours with photos and writings, just me and my mother's memory. Slowly, I saw that there was light, a loving path out of *Mitzrayim*. With time and space to mourn, to feel sad, I was being brought back to life by my Barnert community.

There are many who are stuck in a *Mitzrayim* that is unacceptable: those who are enslaved by poverty, racism, sexism and illness. By supporting and helping others, we are one light out for them. As the *Torah* guides us, "once you were slaves in Egypt." We turn on our lights. We must help.

We pray that the *Mitzrayim* caused by Covid begins to abate. We pray for normalcy, stability, health and HUGS. Let us, too, give gratitude for the moments, the hours, the days of newfound connections, of the ability to step back and reflect on our blessings.

There are many blessings. May we be able to help illuminate a path to brighter and happier times for friends and family during this Passover season.



Get ready for a new year of wonderful courses, engaged learning, and connecting with friends, all within our famous flexible schedule.

Children from kindergarten through 12th grade HS seniors find meaning and a feeling of belonging in their Jewish Journey experience.

New- and returning-student registration will open in April. If your child will be new to JPP, please contact Sara Losch at schooloffice@barnerttemple.org for more information and for the link to one of two **JJP Open Houses**

Wednesday, March 31 at 7:30 pm

Sunday, April 11 at 10 am

We are excited to welcome our students back to the Barnert building. Specific plans will come out shortly.

JEWISH *journey* PROJECT
BARNERT TEMPLE

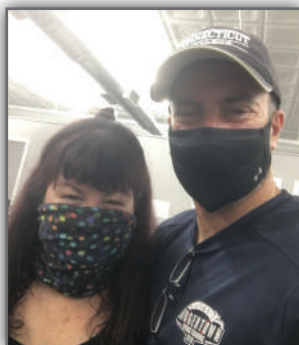
Social Action in the Time of Covid

As a community that responds so well to the needs of others, Barnert Temple seamlessly readjusted to the restrictions that Covid-19 forced upon us. Social Action had no choice but to realign how we support our own as well as those organizations with whom we have long partnered. Our priority has been and will continue to be keeping our members safe and socially connected while maintaining our focus on social action and social justice work. Thanks to our Social Action team members, our work has continued without much disruption. Our efforts have included:

Food and Shelter. Co-chairs: Amy Lynn and Brett Lowy

Despite the pandemic, our Barnert members have been overwhelmingly responsive to the needs of those within and outside our Temple community. Our congregation has been incredibly generous.

Organizations we continue to support are: CUMAC, Center for Hope and Safety, and Center for Food Action (CFA).



Since the fall, we have collected:

- Over \$1,700 in gift cards
- 181 new toys
- 213 winter coats
- 249 bags of food and clothing
- 52 turkeys (donated by a very generous member of the congregation)
- 207 cosmetic bags filled with toiletries
- 17 packs of diapers
- 182 hats
- 179 gloves and mittens
- 26 pieces of jewelry
- 72 tote bags

And we received this lovely letter from Mark Dinglasan, Executive Director of CUMAC:

Dear Marni, Amy, Brett, Lisa, and Rabbi Steiner,

Thank you for the generous support and the kind words. It's been a hard year for all of us, please know that you all and everyone at Barnert Temple are in our thoughts and prayers always.

I know I can speak for the entire team when I say that CUMAC is able to do what we do and push through the tough times because we've got great partners like you all. The care, concern, and joy that you've all shared with our team throughout this pandemic is appreciated and humbling.

Thanks for all that you all do. It's great to be in this fight with all of you! Onward and upward!

Have a great weekend and a happy Thanksgiving to you all and to your loved ones.

Sincerely,
Mark

Please continue your generosity in support of these ongoing drives:

- Food
- Gift Cards (purchase through Sisterhood)
- Toiletries of all sizes
- Reusable tote bags for food

St Paul's Men's Shelter. Chair: Judith Halle

The men's shelter meal has continued without interruption since the pandemic began, thanks to the dedication and generosity of the Barnert Temple community. Back in March, in order to avoid having contact among Barnert members, who normally deliver and heat the food, we decided to cater the meal from some local businesses, including the Parkwood Deli in Ridgewood and Blue Moon Cafe in Wyckoff. These establishments worked with us to create plentiful and delicious meals for the men at the shelter for a reasonable



price which included delivery to the shelter. In order to pay for the meals, a fund for food insecurity was established at Barnert, and members donated over \$2,500 to be used for the shelter meals and to assist others in the area who need food assistance. Starting in November, we resumed providing home-cooked meals and dropping the food off at a volunteer's home to transport to the shelter. Currently, we are alternating between home-cooked meals one month and the restaurant meals the next month in order to patronize local establishments impacted by the pandemic and also to take pleasure in cooking and providing the food ourselves. Thank you to the Barnert members who have been so committed to supporting the shelter meal!

Side note: we did research on Black-owned restaurants in the Paterson area that would be able to cook and possibly deliver but we did not get any responses to our requests as many are out of business.

Caring Community. Co-chairs: Patti Bieth and Aviva Sanders

Caring Community is available for those in need. Whether it is a death of a loved one, meals, a ride to the Temple or to doctors, our volunteers are here to help. If you know of anyone who needs our assistance, please contact the office. If you would like to be a volunteer, please let us know.

Advocacy and Action. Co-chairs: Sue Klein and Lisa Summers

Advocacy and Action is working closely with the newly formed RAC-NJ Chapter and HIAS as well as other organizations to build relationships and develop a plan to

(Continued on next page)

Social Action *(From previous page)*

educate our congregation on how to become advocates and community organizers, how to connect with our legislators, and more.

Together with the leaders of the Anti-Racism Campaign, we organized the Challah and Mitzvah Drive-Thru. We participated in a national Reclaim our Vote program distributing packets of postcards to Barnert families to send to marginalized communities in Georgia and Texas, asking them to check their voter-registration status and reminding them of the importance of their vote. In addition, along with other congregations, we hosted a virtual program on



"Safeguarding our Votes."

On March 12, we hosted the third annual Refugee Shabbat. This is a nationwide program co-sponsored by URJ and HIAS, an organization with a long history of welcoming the stranger and protecting refugees.

Anti-Racism Campaign (ARC). Chair: Lisa Dugal

Barnert's Anti-Racism Campaign launched last July as a way to begin thinking about racial equity:

- by learning
- by seeing things differently, and
- by doing

It is a first step in opening our eyes to the indecent realities around us. It is uncomfortable. And, it is important work tied to our Jewish values.

Thank you for beginning this journey with us. We are proud that over 200 people have been involved in some way. Whether you have taken our Pledge for Racial Equity, attended one or more of our 20 interactive sessions, wrote postcards to get out the vote, and/or are on the planning team, THANK YOU.

And, if you are still wondering what it's all about, go to our home on the website: www.barnerttemple.org/antiracismcampaign. You can find us under the Social Action tab. We want to see you. We want to hear from you.

We at Social Action are so grateful for the way the Barnert Community has responded to the increased needs of all of our neighbors. We could not do this work without your support.

With deep gratitude,
Marni Neuburger and Lisa Margolis, Co-chairs

Mount Nebo Cemetery

When you think of a cemetery, what comes to mind? Perhaps a well-manicured lawn with headstones as far as the eye can see? Or densely packed graves unceremoniously situated beside a noisy highway?

If those are the images that you conjure up, then chances are you've never been to Mount Nebo Cemetery.

Thanks to the extraordinary foresight and generosity of our founders, Mount Nebo has been Barnert Temple's very own cemetery since 1867. To call it our crown jewel is arguably an understatement. Located in nearby Totowa, Mount Nebo is named after the site of Moses' death. Its location on top of a hill enhances its remarkable serenity. A stream traverses the wooded property, creating a habitat that is a haven for diverse wildlife. Visitors are struck by the site's natural beauty, which unfolds along a scenic driveway that leads to the majestic burial grounds.

Mount Nebo is the final resting place of our namesakes, Nathan and Miriam Barnert, as well as clergy

and congregants spanning the many generations since our temple's founding. Current members of Barnert are

often struck by the number of familiar names of people buried in the cemetery, many of which are connected to our fellow worshippers and partners in lifelong learning classes, social action, and other activities that are so central to our Jewish lifestyle.

While the cemetery's primary purpose is to meet the needs of Barnert Temple members, Mount Nebo also welcomes Jewish non-members and their spouses, regardless of religious affiliation. On July 1, higher prices will go into effect to reflect the current market. That makes this an excellent buying opportunity for people looking to purchase plots for themselves and their family.

If you have any questions about Mount Nebo Cemetery or are considering purchasing a plot, please reach out to Pam or Jeff Himeles, co-chairs of the Cemetery Committee, for more information, at pamhimeles@gmail.com.



Renaissance Group

New Beginnings, Resilience, and Hope.

Some Thoughts from Members of the BT Renaissance Group

What sustained me in these horrible times were/are: my family, shared memories, opera, and reading. Halfway through the year I joined a website to track my reading. By the end of the year, I realized I've read 74 books!

Shared memories: In the summer of 2019, I traveled to Europe with my nephew's family. It was a first European trip for my grandnieces, and a first time I went back to Russia 45 years after I left as a refugee (but that's another story). So, during the lockdowns, remote schooling, and quarantines, we had wonderful memories of our trip, shared many photos we took, and talked about our many experiences. We all felt very fortunate indeed, to have that trip just before the pandemic hit the world.

New beginnings/resilience: On a suggestion from a friend, I started writing book summaries for the community magazine and newspaper (in New Jersey and Florida). Because I enjoyed the writing experience, I started writing a book about my family. I have never learned to ride a bicycle. One day I saw somebody ride an adult tricycle! So, I now have one! I have never anticipated how wonderfully exhilarating I would feel cruising around my neighborhood on my new bike! I learned that it's never too late!



Opera: I have been a seasonal Met subscriber for many years, but reluctantly dropped it after I retired. Even then I watched many performances at the "Met Live in HD." So, for the past year when the Met closed, my greatest enjoyment has been watching live streams of the virtual Met Gala and the great past Met productions on the web.

Hope: I hope that we eventually "beat" this nasty virus, get back to "normal" lives, hug our friends and family (not virtually), travel again, go to the theaters and movies, and dine out (not in the tents), and survive!

—Faina Menzul

This year has awakened many citizens to activism and action. Some of us have given more than a tithe of our time to causes to right injustice and could help to advance justice.

Since the 1960s, I have participated in actions that dealt with justice and injustice and supported our own Rabbi Martin Freedman during the Freedom Riders period as well as serving on the Fair Housing committee.

Currently, I serve on the "Welcoming Diversity and Inclusion" committee at Cedar Crest. We have developed a weekly film series, lectures, and round-table discussions which are all available on our TV station.

We have also installed a large display window of photographs and memorabilia for January's theme, "I Have A Dream Month" and February's "Black History Month" (see photo).

We hope to educate some of the 1,800 residents at Cedar Crest. It appears that all personal policies are also political policies.

—Cipora O. Schwartz



Dear Rabbi Steiner,

One of the most powerful things about Barnert is that we are still a community even when we don't see each other face-to-face like we did before. A pandemic does not stop us from being a community. Jews all over the globe over the many centuries have faced adversity and been separated from each other, but they still managed to come together as a community even after the worst imaginable things happened. Such is the Covid pandemic. It was one more opportunity for us to find our way and do what we do best, i.e., identify as Jews and continue to carry on our legacy. The strength of our Jewish community, particularly at Barnert, was tested and we succeeded, prevailed, brought all of our members along with us, and kept the Barnert flame burning. Maybe one of the miracles of 2020 *Chanukah* was how our congregation and clergy were tested against the worst odds but prevailed, and it made us even stronger.

For this, I thank you, the leadership and the congregants who joined together to make this *Chanukah* one of the most special in my life.

—Barnert Congregant

Sisterhood

Challah: a Link Connecting Generations

Challah. Mmmmm. Who doesn't love *challah*? Apologies to those who struggle with Celiac or gluten intolerance. I don't mean to be insensitive. Really. With that said, bread is a comfort food to many, and *challah* holds a special place in the hearts of many in the Jewish community.

When my kids were in our preschool, the weekly ritual of *challah*-shaping was one of my favorite traditions. I ordered *challah* dough through our preschool. My kids and I would shape those hunks of dough each Friday after school, decorate them with whatever made my kids smile that day — sprinkles, marshmallows, chocolate chips, you name it — and felt like we were sharing something as a family and connecting to something larger: Jewish tradition.

Fast-forward a decade or so. My kids aren't kids anymore. They are moody, grumpy, unpredictable teens. Life is far more complicated than it was when they were preschoolers. Oh, and that global pandemic thing I keep hearing so much about. I think it's called Covid-19? Yes, life today is far more complicated than it was when my kids and I sat at our kitchen table each Friday molding *challah* dough together.

I happen to love cooking. I know this isn't the case for everyone. For me, cooking is a therapeutic and a creative outlet. Certain dishes bring me back to memories of specific people or events. They are lifelines to my past and my memories. Food and Judaism seem to go hand in hand. Jewish foods and ritual meals are precious to many, even to those who don't consider themselves that observant. Even the secular Jew will wax poetically about Jewish foods.

Back to *challah*. Over the years, my attempts at making *challah* were pretty — well, pathetic. It irked me that I couldn't make a version of this iconic Jewish staple that I actually wanted to eat. When one of our Sisterhood members suggested bringing someone in to lead a *challah* bake, I was excited — and dubious.



I went to the first one and, surprisingly, the recipe and process weren't that difficult, and the *challah* wasn't bad. Suddenly, the elusive *challah* was within my reach. So, I started making *challah* at home. In typical Rebecca fashion, I was distracted one week and messed up my measurements. I used twice the amount of yeast and an extra egg. Much to my surprise, it wasn't a flop. It was AWESOME! Now, I wasn't only making good *challah*, I was making my own version of *challah*. I found a vegan *challah* recipe (one of my kids is vegan) that the entire family really liked. I watched YouTube videos and started braiding 4- and 6-strand *challahs*.



Making *challah* became a blend of tradition and creating something new for me and my family. I was now connecting myself to generations of tradition, Jews, and Jewish women making *challah*, yet I was doing it my own way. Each loaf I made was like a new link in a chain connecting individuals around the world and generations through the centuries. Like I said, food is about more than creation and consumption. It's a lifeline to the past and others as well.

When Covid forced us to stop gathering in person at Barnert, we moved our *challah* bakes online. Rita Kron and Sheryl Benjamin stepped up as our "Challah Mavens," testing recipes in their kitchens, looking up little known facts about *challah*-making, and leading our online gatherings. Unlike other groups doing online *challah* bakes, we ran ours as Zoom meetings, not webinars, so participants could see each other's faces and interact with one another. It was as much about connecting people as it was about making *challah*. Thankfully, it worked!

Since September, we have been offering a *challah* bake, open to men and women, every month. The number
(Continued on next page)

Leadership Council

"What Have You Done Over the Past 8 Months That Surprised You?"

At a recent LC meeting on Zoom (where else?), Donna Meyer threw this question out, before starting the official business. The chat responses flooded in! We thought we'd share some of them here.

Pam Himeles: Baked bread, enjoyed remote services.

Rabbi Rachel Steiner: Made PowerPoint slides. For use in services, no less!

Frank Piuck: Worked and made friends with people on other continents.

Elizabeth Levitt

Resnick: Cooked more complicated, aesthetically pleasing fare.

Sara Losch: Started exercising and eating salad. So much salad!

Bob Males: Cooked a wide variety of foods.

Kathy Hecht: Praised my son for his wonderful cooking.

Susan Esserman-Schack: Knitted a *chuppah*.

Donna Meyer: Learned how to sit still. (Sort of.)

Elizabeth Levitt Resnick to Donna Meyer: Donna, no you did not.

Joan Lipkowitz: Did Zoom tutoring in synch with students changing schedules.

Jenn Charles: Made friends/connections via Zoom.



Sara Losch: Had online grown-up playdates!

Kathy Hecht: Learned new Zoom and camera skills.

Joan Cowlan: Cooked more and finally started to get my zillion photos edited and in order.

Charlie Troyanovski: Didn't have to rush home from work.

Jennifer Sauer: Am I allowed to say "witnessed an insurrection of our country's Capitol?" I definitely never thought I would do that!

Donna Meyer: Attended *Torah Study* and became an (almost) regular at *Shabbat*.



Debbie

Ungerleider:

Left clinical medicine and have a new career in medical writing.

Lisa Dugal:

Studied *Kabbalah* "in Israel" and baked *challah*.

Sisterhood (From previous page)

of participants each month varies, and we have some regular attendees. I have come to look forward to these gatherings. Yes, it's fun to make *challah* together, especially during the dark, gray months of winter. However, it feels really good to see people, talk, smile, laugh and share stories. It helps me feel "normal." For those 90 minutes, the world isn't crazy, people aren't getting sick, we aren't "locked" in our homes. We are spending time together, creating something delicious, and not taking ourselves too seriously.



"But women making *challah* feels so cliché. Aren't you just reinforcing stereotypes of what Jewish women and Sisterhoods do?"

Poppycock.

One of the beautiful elements of Reform Judaism is the element of choice. This is reflected in Barnert's mission of "...offering... Jewish experiences that are relevant, accessible and meaningful..." I don't make *challah* because it's commanded or considered an obligation of women. I don't do it to be gender-conforming. I make *challah* because it's now accessible and it's meaningful (and totally delicious). I have learned how to make *challah* easily and quickly and fit it into my schedule. It helps me feel connected and normal, and in today's world, anything that makes me feel normal gives me hope.

Yes, I found hope in a hunk of bread. It's possible.

— Rebecca Rund

Adult Education

A Torah Study Participant:

I am a relatively new member of Barnert Temple. I have belonged to other Reform temples during my adult life, and only now have discovered Barnert, and it is indeed very special. There is a tangible sense of connection here between the leadership and the members that takes us beyond our reality-based world and reaches the deeper issues of what ties us together and why we are here. I have been attending both Torah Study and Talmud Study, and the learning has been informative and thought-provoking.

Case in point was a recent session of Torah Study on the subject of Beshallah, the parsha describing the crossing of the Red Sea. The discussion considered the nature of miracles, and the relationship between science and miracles. The discussion focused on God's role in the story — attributing the miracle's occurrence to God, when there may have been other causes that may have had that result. The existence of God is a hard question for many of us.

But maybe the right answer is, "Does it matter?" Perhaps we should accept that there are hard questions, and focus instead on our humanity and interconnectedness, which may not provide answers to hard questions but makes the world spiritually richer. Clearly, our connections to each other are driven by a force that is not easily defined, but that gives our lives a larger meaning.

This leads me back to my main message, which is that even though I sit in my home office and can't hug the people I have met, Barnert and its learning opportunities have created a wonderful and unique sense of community, while also feeding my soul, which makes me very grateful to be here.

Zooming Talmud

Last spring, when I was first asked by Sara Losch to continue our Talmud class on Zoom, I was very skeptical. Indeed, I was convinced that it would never succeed.

After all, the style of the learning was quite freewheeling, with comments, interruptions, and cross-conversations at the core of the enthusiastic and fruitful discussions. How could that possibly work with twenty or more people on separate screens, being "canceled" whenever they spoke at the same time?

Afterwards, I described our first meeting as one in which we "zoomed" with a little learning on the side. We were all a little nervous about the medium becoming the message and changing our usually dynamic format. The sharing was greatly reduced as everyone was cautious about being the "Speaker," with their picture filling the screen and our attention focused so totally on them. It had

become more of a lecture format.

I was ready to stop zooming and to wait until things returned to "normal" so we could learn together in person as before.

Then I spoke to my son Aaron who, thoughtful as ever, gently explained to me that I wasn't using any of the ways in which Zoom could accommodate our needs. There was the chat where responses could be placed simultaneously and then discussed. We could raise our hands to vote for one position or another. There could be breakout groups (not yet!). And, we could learn to listen a little better without jumping in quite so fast. Sara could mute or unmute us, even five at a time, so a smoother conversation could be had. She could even screen-share so everyone would be on the same page.

After the next time we met, I described it as a lot of learning with a little Zoom on the side. We have preserved our community feeling, we enjoy seeing everyone, and we are welcoming new participants from near and far. While it's not the same as face to face, screen to screen has become a good way to keep learning and being together. I, for one, am most grateful for it.

Hope to see you on our next Talmud Zoom.
—Rabbi Joel Soffin

BarTY

Hanging Out on Zoom

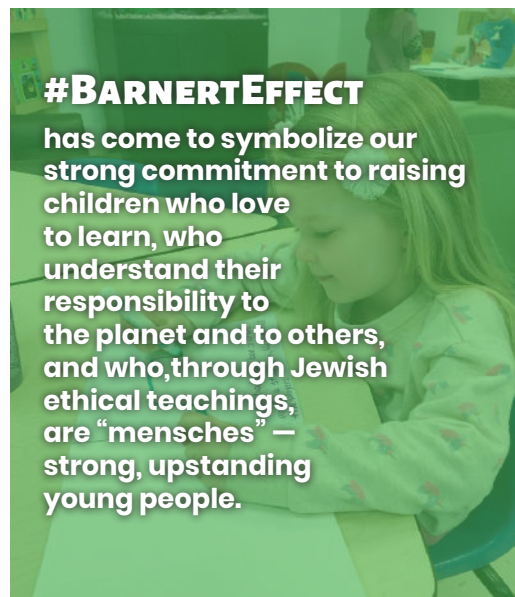
BarTY is a place where teens can get away to hang out with each other during all this craziness.

At first it seemed very daunting to have to bring people together in a virtual platform, but through the way we worked together and the people we had at our events, we've been able to create a sense of community in a virtual world.

BarTY has successfully installed our new 13-person board. BarTY has seen an increase of membership as well as an increase of attendance at NFTY events. We had three fall events, including a very successful Pictionary night, written and led entirely by the BarTY Board. We also had a self-care movie night event in which we safely delivered goodie bags of face masks, popcorn, and hot chocolate packets, and then watched a movie as a community.

— The BarTY Board





#BARNERTEFFECT

has come to symbolize our strong commitment to raising children who love to learn, who understand their responsibility to the planet and to others, and who, through Jewish ethical teachings, are “mensches” — strong, upstanding young people.

2021-22 AT BARNERT TEMPLE

PRESCHOOL

We Are Ready to Welcome Your Whole Family “Home to Barnert”!

**Preschool (ages 1.5-4) & Kindergarten/TK (ages 5-6)
Summer Camp (ages 1.5-4)**



To learn more about our programs, please call the school office to schedule a Zoom meeting.

Learn more!

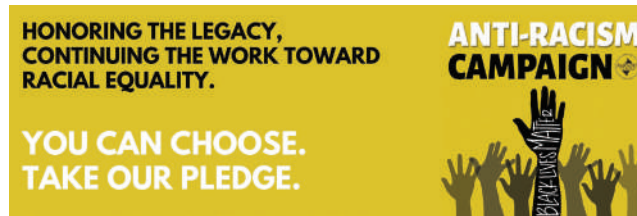
(201) 848-1027

schooloffice@barnerttemple.org

barnerttemple.org



As we enter our 32nd year of learning, we are more ready than ever to open our arms and welcome families. We continue to **SUPPORT, LOVE and ENGAGE** our youngest learners and their families. We are here and we are ready!



Racism. White Privilege. Racial Equity.

How Do These Words Make You FEEL?

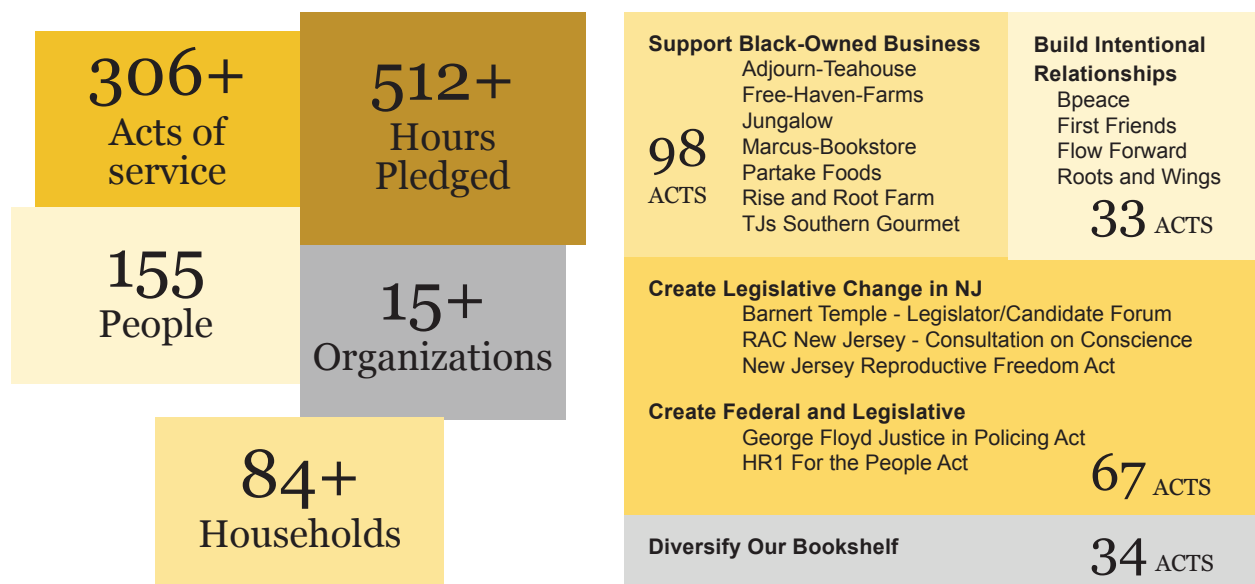
Think back a year ago, would you have felt the same way? Since last Pesach we have lived through the global pandemic, watched the murder of George Floyd, seen the amplification of the Black Lives Matter movement, voted in a polarized election, witnessed a riot in our Capitol, and seen democracy in action as we attended the change of our president.

BREATHE...

We came together as a sacred community to feel, to be uncomfortable, to open our eyes, to learn, and ultimately to do. And, we are. Through our ARC discussions and through our Pledge, we work toward Racial Equity even as we continue to open our eyes to realities we may not have seen before.

ACT.

Please join us and those who have already taken the pledge at <https://www.barnerttemple.org/arcpledgeforracialequity>.



Celebrating our Creativity

Barnert's got talent! Over the past year, many had a chance to learn new crafts, take up their knitting needles or paints, and — like so many during our months shut inside — try new recipes.

This past fall, Sisterhood wanted to recognize the creativity and talent within our community by collecting and highlighting some of the arts and crafts created by Barnert women.

(This is a good place to mention the Sisterhood's Knitting Circle — all crafters welcome!. They meet Tuesdays at 5 pm; the zoom link is in our Virtual Community calendar.)



"Arabian Nights,"
needlework by
Rebecca Holland.



Susan Esserman-Schack: hand-knit
chuppah she made for her son
Zach's wedding.



Faina Menzul: needlework.



Beth Valenti: Rhino Theater
production of "Annie."



Janet Millstein:
from her
Red Bellied
Woodpecker
Series.



Debra Shapiro:
"Prairie Storm"
painting.



Amy Lynn: Bryce Canyon Photo.



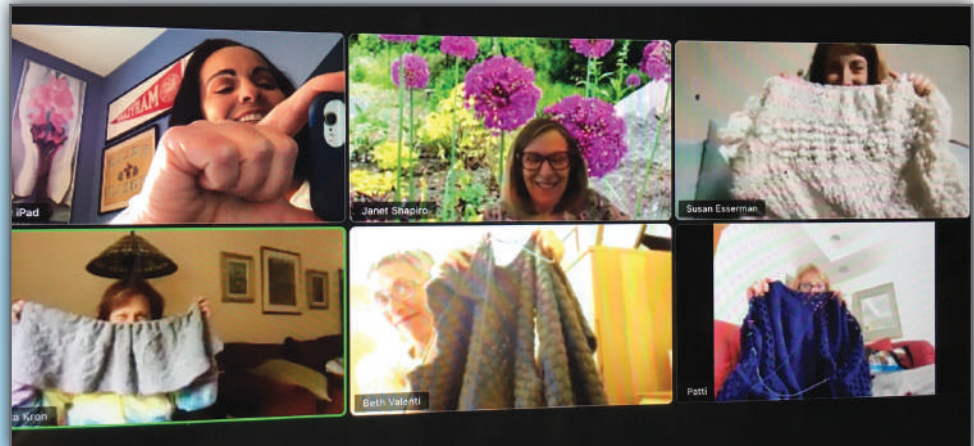
Sophia Schack: watercolor.



Beth La Forgia: her amazing cookies.
She made these for Rabbi Steiner's
40th birthday.

Celebrating our Creativity (From previous page)

Knitting Group



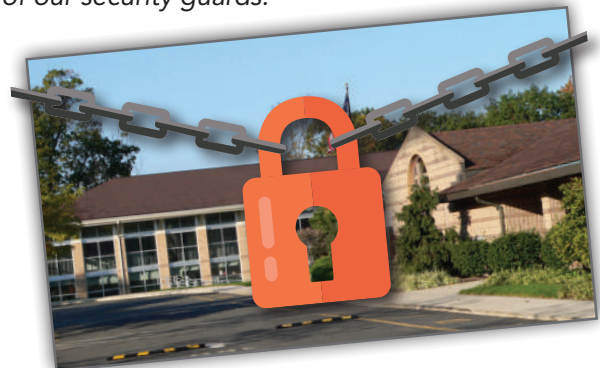
Security in a Pandemic

We thought we would check in with Mitch Hausman on our building security, since we are all eager to resume coming to our beloved building! Mitch tells us:

While we have not had the guards on a regular basis, we do have guards at the temple when children are at the playground (in our preschool program), and we try to have guards at most of the outdoor programs. I'm happy to report that our closed-circuit television system has now been repaired.

The big news is that we were awarded a nonprofit security grant by the New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness, in the amount of \$50,000! The grant has to be used for specific target-hardening equipment, and we have applied to replace our access system and we are looking to potentially upgrade

our key fob system. We are at the planning stages of getting estimates on different types of systems. When the building opens we will be working in conjunction with the Covid Task Force to determine the best use of our security guards.



We Are Runners. We Run.

A Running Tour of My Town During the Pandemic

By now, a year into the pandemic caused by Covid-19, there aren't many people on the planet whose lives have not been altered, in ways big or small, by its awful effects. From the realization that shopping for groceries without having to worry about following the one-way arrows indicated on the aisle of the store (one of the many things we will never take for granted anymore), to the hundreds of thousands of lives lost to the virus in the United States alone, we all have had to adjust our idea of what a normal life is. And more than anything, perhaps, to the certainty that what we all knew to be normal, will not ever be normal again.

In the midst of grief and isolation, a huge number of people turned to activities that would offer them a temporary sense of comfort and normalcy. Some turned into superheroes and quickly went into action to do grocery-shopping for others, becoming, without them knowing, as essential during the early months of the pandemic as medical personnel and first responders. (While my mother-in-law was living her last months with us in our home, we were also beneficiaries of this unlimited show of kindness by a couple of Barnert members, and our gratitude to them will never diminish.)

Some others found comfort in daily walks with their dogs, or Netflix, or baking. I turned to the one thing that always makes my world more stable when the entire foundation shakes: I ran.

There are great things about running. Besides the proven cardiovascular benefits of active movement, running doesn't require complex equipment, a specific field or stadium, or expensive outfits. The best thing about running is how inclusive it is: in which other sport can a regular athlete line up to compete with the best — yes, even if they will only get to see the back of their shirts for the two seconds it takes for the best to speed way ahead of the mortals?

I have been a runner for almost the four decades that I have lived in the United States. Before then, I played professional soccer in Uruguay and briefly in Israel, so sport has always been a part of who I am. (I was also a competitive chess player before *The Queen's Gambit* made chess popular, but that's a story better told by Sara...)

Running is *that* democratic. Some of us are good enough to have the confidence that, if we show up at a race, we will fight for the top spots. Some of us are there because we simply want to finish our first 5K. Some of us used to be good but our competitive flame still burns, and the only difference is that now we only compete with the version of ourselves that was.

Regardless of how fast or slow we are, we proudly call ourselves runners, and when the world is upside down and races have been cancelled everywhere, we do what we know well: we run.

One of the things I have had in my bucket running list (no worries, LBI 18-mile race, I promise I will be there soon...) is to run every street in Wyckoff, the town we have called home for 23 years. I normally train on some of its streets, but always in a couple of fixed routes that take me to Franklin Lakes and back. I surely sensed that much of the town was still unknown to me.

The pandemic, as horrible as it was, meant that I had a unique opportunity to finally accomplish that: the streets were practically empty (this was back in April, at the beginning of the restrictions), and the probabilities that I would endanger anybody were almost nil.

So I printed an oversize map of Wyckoff, and each day, with my Garmin's aid, I went out to cover a section. I knew that Wyckoff has about 92 miles of road, but since many are dead-end streets and I would need to cover them twice, I calculated that by the end, I would probably end up running 130 miles. The first day was April 1, and I ran about nine and a half miles; I finished 21 runs later, having covered about 132 miles. In between, I discovered a tiny section of town that seems transplanted from another world (behind Stone House Nursery), the only two streets that remain unpaved (Maple Drive and Smith Street), the rustic gate to a home that transported me back to the farmhouses in my hometown of Minas, the steepest street in town (Briarwood Drive), and a magnificent, serene beauty that was a much-needed reminder of why we chose Wyckoff as our home all those years ago.

— Jorge Losch



Map of Wyckoff. Each day of the run is indicated by a different color.

Our Home-Grown Music

by Janet Montroy

I'd love to talk about the music that has been happening over the last few months! There have been some really wonderful things that have happened. We've loved hosting outside performers and groups like Nefesh Mountain, Elana Arian and Ben Wisch. And I'm excited about Noah Aronson coming in a few weeks. But some of our home-grown music has been wonderful too. A few pieces come to mind:

- The quartet version of *Amen*, with our own Mia Lowy, Sage Placer, Zach Brookler and Chris Mason, that we did for the High Holy Days. Such a talented group, and a beautiful arrangement! Watch it here: <https://youtu.be/olIOY9ZlrBI>.



- Playing *Nocturne #2* by Ernest Bloch, with Laurie Hamilton and Lanny Paykin, again for the High Holy Days. It is always a delight to play music with these fantastic musicians.
- *Shalom Rav*, sung by Mia, Sage, Alice Bershtein, and Zach. Again, a great arrangement and fantastic performance.
- The "COVID Chanukah Songs," with Rabbi Steiner, our cantor soloist Marina Voronina, and Sara Losch. So silly and so much fun! Watch it here: <https://youtu.be/R80Z1Ck7gZM>.



- The "Shehecheyanu" video we did twice, once for the holidays and then retooled for *Chanukah*. It was great to have our volunteer choir together, even if it was on a video. Watch it here: <https://youtu.be/U9WWjFrDLlo>.



- Maoz Tsur, with the best team possible: Rabbi Steiner and Marina! I rarely get a chance to sing so it was a treat to do so. Watch it here: <https://youtu.be/VJPq2LsqJ2I>.



I'm realizing that I could mention about ten more things without batting an eye. But even more than the individual videos we have made, I am so grateful for the way so many people stepped out of their comfort zones, mastered new technologies, learned music on their own, acquired computer skills, and generally came together not just to make the best of a difficult situation but to transcend it. I'm proud of us all.

Nefesh Mountain on Shabbat Shira

This year, on *Shabbat Shira*, the Barnert congregation was treated to the amazing talent Nefesh Mountain, self-described as "the place where Bluegrass, Old-Time, and American Roots music meet with Jewish heritage and tradition." On this joyful *Shabbat*, it was a warm and moving experience to have husband-and-wife team Doni Zasloff and Eric Lindberg perform from their cozy home setting, and encourage us to sing along with them.

A most moving part of the service came when Doni told a personal story about the song she wrote called *Adonai Love Me*. Experiencing an internal struggle, she talked about going outside at 3 am, looking up to the sky and trying to find peace, and this song came to her. As they sang, they invited congregants to put in the Zoom chat other words beside "Love Me" into the song, and the responses flooded in: "Lift me," "Support me," "Guide me," "Use me." And as each phrase came through, they incorporated the words into their song. To say it was uplifting is an understatement.

Thank you, Nefesh Mountain, and please come visit us again!

A Pandemic. A Joyful Wedding. A Beautiful Chuppah.

A SIMCHA to Remember!

This beautiful *chuppah* was hand-knitted by Rikki Lowy, Susan Esserman-Schack, and Rebecca Rund. Sara Losch sent out a request for messages to tie to the *chuppah* (you can see them waving in the breeze). See this list below for all the beautiful tributes!

We learn so much from you. There is so much to celebrate about a couple who shows us what it means to be present, and to love and to take care of one another and others.
—Sue Klein

Congratulations on your wedding. I wish you a lifetime of happiness.
—Reggie Gross

Wishing you love and love and more love during all of your days together.
—Janet Shapiro

Wishing you much joy. May your life together be filled with love, light and laughter.
Mazal tov!
—Patti Bieth

So glad it was your door I knocked on a few years ago! Sending love and admiration and heartfelt best wishes to you both on this momentous occasion.
—Pam Himeles

Wishing you a marriage blessed with health, happiness, and dreams come true.
—Bari Hopkins

May your love continue to bind you together and support you in the years to come. May the love of your family continue to grow and hold you up. Know the love, support and appreciation of your Barnert community will always be here for you.
Mazal tov!
—Rebecca Rund

"Love recognizes no barriers. It jumps hurdles, leaps fences, penetrates walls to arrive at its destination full of hope."
—Dr. Maya Angelou
(via Rebecca Holland)

Here's to many years of love, happiness, health, respect, honesty, and trust. May you continue to enjoy a beautiful life together.
—Felicia Halpert & the Halpert Rodis family

You have been ready for so long to unite in your love. How beautiful that the timing is now to bring light into your lives among your most loved ones. May this day bring a lifetime renewed in laughter and health, purpose

and joy. Mazal tov!
With love,
—Lisa and Jeff

May the words you speak today symbolize the enduring happiness your loving hearts will always share.
Mazal tov to both of you! Love and best wishes,
—Ilene and Steven

Who knew??? I thought you were married for years and years and years! Extreme happiness and gratitude that you are very much a part of our Barnert tapestry. YOU are such special individuals and you are even stronger as a couple. Congrats on wedded bliss.
Love to you two and your family,
—Elizabeth xoxoxoxo

Mazal tov! Sending you both so much love on your wedding day. May you have a lifetime together filled with love, laughter, peace, and good health.
—Jill xoxo

May you be blessed with a long life of health, happiness, peace and fun!
All my best wishes,
—Janet Finke

So much about you is special; how beautiful that you share your story with others. Today, you stand together, two wonderful people in love. How perfect. May you continue to influence others, as you begin this special moment of life.
You are glorious.
With so much love,
—Sara Losch



Book Club

"It ain't your mother's book club any more!"

Our Barnert Book Club has been around so long that I hardly remember when it first started. At least in the mid-90s or so and just before Rabbi Frishman had arrived. I had found my dream job, being a travel advisor, as we became empty-nesters. But I had always missed the evenings way back in college, when we sat up late talking, sharing ideas, and making close friends, always talking about books and exchanging ideas. I also missed the intellectual challenges. Those were exciting years for me, and I longed for a great literary discussion.

I heard there was a small book club at Barnert and so I decided to check it out. And there they were, such extraordinary women: professors and musicians, teachers, librarians, social workers, and so many well-read gals. And it seems, we did everything just right.

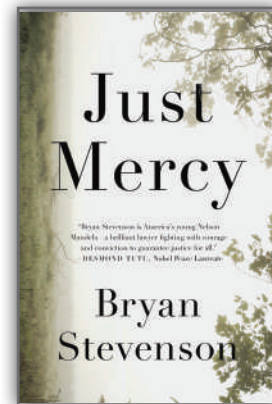
We have no leader. My mother's book club had to invite an expert to speak about their books. Most of them did not read the books, but, to be kind, they were not as lucky as my generation to have been well educated. Our small book club met in the evenings, 8–10 pm, taking turns at our homes. Some book clubs meet in restaurants, which encourages lots of socialization and small talk, and others have potluck dinners. We had no time for that. After ten minutes of coffee and dessert, preferably pie, we get right down to business. The ideal number for a spontaneous discussion is about 9 or 10. Anyone can say what they want to, or you don't have to say a word. After we have discussed every literary aspect, we have our host read a few criticisms, and then a biography of the author.

Then, time to choose our next book. We also car-pooled when possible. We were done by 10 pm.

Now, with the pandemic, it has all changed. Our meetings are all virtual and are from 3 to 5 pm (but could be flexible). The good thing is that if you winter in Florida or move to the city, or are out of town, you can attend the discussion. We have our professor who is in the city; Susan, who moved to California last year; and people from Florida and Cedar Crest. Even several gentlemen temple members have given it a try.

We always love the male point of view. Now we have a schedule and it's complete until August of 2021. We meet every six weeks or so. We always present a mix of fiction, nonfiction, classics, and best sellers. How I completed one of Lyndon Johnson's four enormous tomes I'll never understand. However, I'm so happy I did it.

It's good to try books you never would have thought of. So, we'd love to have some new faces. We are on the Temple's calendar and always welcome newcomers. Call me at 201-891-2509 and I will send you the link. Next meeting is February 22 with *Just Mercy*, by Bryan Stevenson. Then, April 12, *Apeirogon*, by Colum McCann. As for the pies, that will have to wait.
— Benita Herman



L'dor Vador Free Will Appeal Update

By Lauren Krauss and Joan Lipkowitz

In this past year filled with challenges, a bright spot has been your dedication to our community, as evidenced by your gifts to our 2020 L'dor Vador Free Will Appeal. This year's successful appeal — which raised \$229,210 — will enable Barnert to provide much that we have come to value.

As a small group of leaders debriefed this year's changes to our traditional Free Will process, we realized that we should better communicate the rationale for this annual "ask" and share what your Free Will donations support.

Our Jewish tradition teaches an imperative for charity and community support. The monies you contribute to Free Will are channeled to our general operating budget. This account supports Temple needs that cannot be fully met through Annual Commitment and school tuition.

Unlike donations to designated funds, your Free Will gifts may be used for a variety of purposes — all of

which contribute to the welfare, engagement, and appeal of our community. In addition to removing financial barriers to Temple membership, your 2020 Free Will donations have given Rabbi Steiner, Sara Losch, Marina Voronina, Janet Montroy, and our office staff, the ability to keep us all connected through re-imagining and creatively fashioning everything from worship, to learning, to office operations. Your Free Will contributions have supported musical recordings, now so integral to our Shabbat services. Your gifts have also supported the technology purchases necessary for pivoting to a digital platform. The opportunity to engage guest speakers like Rebecca Soffer or guest performers such as the Ben Wisch Trio have been made possible through your generosity. As you may now appreciate, our Free Will funds support much of what makes our community so special.

(Continued on page 21)

Barnert's New Menorah

Barnert has a new *menorah*! We hope you got a chance to drive by and see it in person, and if not, here is a picture. There is (of course) a story behind it! Here are some words from the team that created it.

First, from Project Manager, Len Diamond

Tell us why a new menorah, now?

The old one was built about 15 years ago, and it's so big, we can only set it up outdoors and it takes at least six guys to lift it. And the PVC pipe that it's made of is now brittle, and parts are starting to break off. We're literally holding it together with duct tape and silly putty. So, one day, Lou Lever was driving up, and I asked him to take a look and tell us what he thought. Lou, being a renaissance man, was just the person I needed. Lou's comment, when he looked at the current menorah was, *It looks like a plumbing stack that went wrong!* [Len laughs ruefully.]

When the rabbi approached you and asked you to either build, buy, or design a new menorah, what were your thoughts?

When we were thinking about the new *menorah*, I called to mind the time when Kathy and I went to visit our daughter Rebecca in Israel, and we visited glasswork factories, among other places, where they had very non-traditional *menorahs*. There seemed to be a lot more freedom among the artists to make their own kind of *menorahs*.

Designer Lou Lever, the "Renaissance Man"

How did you get involved in this project?

So, Len Diamond took me to look at the existing *menorah* (it gives the Men's Club agita every time they had to put it together or take it apart), and he said, *Boy, would it be great to have a new one!* So I started to think, *What could be functional? What could be done?* I went home and put some sketches together. When I showed them to the rabbi one night after *Shabbat* services, she said that they looked great, but can we add some women? She also wanted a more non-traditional look to the families.

I understand you have a background in robotics; how did that help with designing the menorah?

I was blessed with certain genes from my parents: my mother was a professional singer in England, and my father, while he passed away unfortunately before I was born, had an artistic sensibility. (In fact, I have pieces of his artwork in my home.) I've always had art as a hobby.

And I've always loved mechanical things; when I was a boy, I loved to take clocks apart. I became an engineer in a time when very few Jews went into engineering. I went into business and started an automation machinery business, which eventually became involved in the manufacturing of "end effectors," or robot hands. I loved the design and engineering side of the business. I guess that's how I got my title as the "renaissance man" — a love of both art and science.

And is that how you got into playing the drums?

Well, now that's a story. I used to have a paper route, and collection night (when we rode around to collect payments) was Thursday nights. One Thursday night, I was out collecting, when I happened to notice, while the homeowner was getting money to pay me, an extraordinary set of drums in the home owner's living room. It happened to be the home of Sonny Igoe, the famous jazz drummer! At my request, he started giving me drumming lessons, and I decided to learn to read music —

which most drummers cannot. My ability to read music, along with my height, and premature baldness which made me look older, allowed me to get work as a drummer in Manhattan nightclub venues. And music has always given me inspiration to draw — and make *menorahs*!

When this menorah is finished, what would you like people to see, feel, or think?

When I was designing this *menorah*, I was thinking about what all three rabbis have said about Barnert: that it's all about the Barnert family — *Come join the Barnert family, there's a family here waiting for you*, etcetera. And so that's why we have a family of men, women, and children holding up the lights of the *menorah*. (And I was also following the direction of Rabbi Steiner, who said she wasn't looking for a standard candelabra, but something different. Ah, different! I love it!) And so, to answer your question, I wanted people to react that way: A Barnert Family.

Woodworking expert, Liz Estersohn

What role have you played in building the menorah?

After almost ten years in advertising, about a year and a half ago, I started a small company doing custom woodworking. So I have a workshop in my garage, with a bunch of power tools. Len had recruited me for the

(Continued on next page)



Barnert's New Menorah (From previous page)

Building and Grounds Committee. Len told me a little bit about the project, and he had these 4' x 8' heavy pieces of plywood, and he needed a table saw to cut the wood, which I have. We worked together to cut the pieces for the base, which is in total 14 feet long. I was thrilled to be able to work on a project that was not only a symbol of an upcoming holiday, but that would also serve as a model for my kids as they watched us build it from the window.

What do your kids know about this project?

They knew we were building a *menorah* for Barnert, and they knew we were spraying the base at the Temple. While we were doing some JJP schooling at home, we were talking about building the *mishkan*, and how Moses said that everyone has to work on it together to feel ownership and attachment to it, and that if everyone works on it, everyone feels connected to it. And that's how I feel about the *menorah* — that I am lending my skills and expertise. And it is nice to know that if the *menorah* is still standing in ten or more years, that I had a part in it, in my early years here at Barnert.

Electrician, Alec Vandeweghe

As an electrician, how did you get involved in this project? We met Len back when my son was doing a project with model rockets at the school. One day, he came to me and said, *We're building a menorah, and we need to wire it.* And I said: *Okay!* I think it comes down to, someone asked for help, so I said, *Of course.*

For me it was a question of how to make the electric components of the *menorah* — the candles being held in the hands of the people of the *menorah* — how to hide them, or decorate around them. These parts are not pretty and not small, and we had to make them durable, while looking less like an industrial lightbulb and more like a candle.

Rabbi Steiner

What was the "why" behind the new menorah?

I've always loved the "homemade" look of our *menorah*. It really had personality! So when Len and others asked me for my thoughts about the new one, rather than purchase a pre-made *menorah*, I asked them to build something that really felt like us.

I loved the sketches that Lou first showed to me. The only suggestions I had was to ask if this new model could include family members that truly reflect the diversity of who we are at Barnert. I wanted everyone who sees it to say, *There's me, there's my family!*

I think it's important to note that we started working on this *menorah* when the pandemic first hit. So we all felt that it should reflect what we were all feeling at this time, that we were all holding each other up, that the "Barnert we" were the ones holding up the lights. And of course, post-pandemic, I wanted it to reflect that at Barnert, we are always continuing to grow and to try new things.

Please tell us about the text you chose to go on the menorah. Well, principally the *menorah* embraces *L'dor vador* and is a tribute to our many generations. (In fact, it was a multi-generational project — Lou, a true "Patersonian," working with Len, who has children in his twenties, and then Liz and Alec, who are raising kids at Barnert right now.) And to add to that idea, I chose this verse from the Book of Psalms, chapter 36, verse 10, which, when translated directly from the Hebrew, means: "By Your light do we see light." I love the idea that the light in the *menorah* represents not only God's light but the light that we create together. Especially in this year, when things can seem so dark and lonely, all we have to do is look to each other and see that we are all holding up light.

Our tradition tells us that if we can fulfill a *mitzvah*, and do it beautifully, then we should absolutely do it. And now, when we light our new *menorah*, we will feel the generations of Barnert continuing to bring light to our community.

Grateful acknowledgment to Rebecca Rund, for her interviews on which this article was based.

L'dor Vador (From page 19)

Our Free Will Appeal is designed with you in mind; it aims to be accessible to your broad-based participation. We have asked you to donate at whatever level is comfortable and to "stretch" a bit if you can. This results in the receipt of gifts ranging from \$18.00 to thousands of dollars. The goal is for all of us to be "in," and for Free Will to meet or exceed the amount of projected need identified by our Finance Committee. Thankfully, with your help, we exceeded our 2020 Free Will fundraising goal.

Should you have any suggestions or feedback regarding the 2020 online Free Will process, please contact Lauren Krauss (lauren.galluccio@gmail.com) or Joan Lipkowitz (joan.lipkowitz@gmail.com). We remain interested in making the Free Will Appeal as accessible, transparent and successful as possible!





Conversations about race are uncomfortable. Knowing what to do to see things differently and move our institutions toward Racial Equity can be overwhelming. Join us as we become comfortable in the uncomfortable, and explore what we can do as individuals, as a Barnert Temple community and together in our wider worlds. Sign up for one or many. Or, don't sign up at all; just show up!

Spring Discussion Series

**Why Is “All Lives Matter” Not Enough?
(Part A - Exploring the Scarcity Mentality)**
with Rick Greenberg, Rabbi Steiner and
Lisa Dugal; Sunday, April 11 at 7 pm.



If you want to shape our Anti-Racism efforts at Barnert, in any way, please join our ARC team.
Email us at ARC@barnerttemple.org.

The Pandemic: What Have You Lost, and What Have You Learned?

On Shabbat evening, February 26, Rabbi Steiner introduced this topic, and our friends below shared the following. We wanted to reproduce their remarks here.

RABBI STEINER: *This evening, we will create space for candid reflections from Barnert Temple members of all ages and stages of life, on what we have lost and what we learned since last Purim. Each person will speak briefly about loss in general during the pandemic — what we have missed (what we still miss!) in our daily lives like interactions with people, experiences, connections, in-person learning, and just being able to hug your friends.*

Complimenting this will be reflections on what we have learned — about ourselves, about our family; perhaps something we think we have learned as a community or country or world and how we have all worked together as a kehillah kedoshah, a holy community, to help those in need and to reimagine all that we do. In preparation for our service tonight, I invite you to reflect on these questions, as well.

JENN CHARLES:

Mostly I miss the simple things — the things we take for granted in everyday life. Being in the company of friends and family, dropping my kids off at Barnert, or watching our parents play with our kids. But also — I miss celebrating the milestones, such as today, our Meme turned 100 and we were unable to be in Florida with her to celebrate.

I know this pandemic has ruined so many lives, so I find it important to stay positive and look to the bright side. I've learned to be more present with my kids, to slow down and refocus my efforts on my family. I'm appreciative that my husband, Andrew, is no longer commuting to the city, which has afforded him time with our kids that he would never have had at this stage in his career. Our 2-1/2-year-old son doesn't even remember that daddy going to work means anything but in his home office.

When you have little kids, people like to tell you, "enjoy it, the days are long but the years are short." In this case, the days have been long, the year has been long, but WOW, has it been a blessing, to us as parents, to be able to experience and embrace every moment with our rapidly growing children. *Shabbat Shalom.*

JOAN LIPKOWITZ:

When I recall what I have missed during Covid, three things come to mind: a sense of personal safety and freedom, in-person connection, and travel.

Since mid-March 2020, my inclination to hop in the car, drive wherever, shop in myriad locations, enjoy entertainment venues, and tutor in students' homes has been non-existent.

Most of all, I've missed in-person contact with my small, close-knit family, which is spread across five states from NJ to CA. I've missed our intergenerational vacations and holiday celebrations, including our annual trip to Montreal to ring in the New Year with our son-in-law's family there. And so too, I've missed the friends who bring additional

comfort and purpose to my life, be it my Barnert buddies, my gym pals, or my opera gals. Phone contacts and Zoom meetings have not filled that space normally devoted to in-person, shared experience.

While grateful for the touch-points Barnert offers, I miss the camaraderie achieved in our sacred space at Onegs, Shabbat potluck dinners, and even, in the parking lot. I miss the embrace of Barnert's physical space, replete with artifacts and plaques bearing testament to its history and its builders. Also sorely missed are the cheerful voices of children at learning and play.

However, there are silver linings. I've learned much about myself and Barnert. I've recognized what an integral role it plays in my life, and how I am drawn to its resilience. I've recognized that no challenge is too daunting for Barnert — stressful times spark its creativity on every level — from worship to education, to social action to fundraising. I've learned to think more intentionally about the many blessings in my life. I definitely know how lucky I am to live on Old Woods Road in the company of wonderfully, caring Barnert neighbors. I know there is so much I am learning to be grateful for, and I thank you for listening to my musings! *Shabbat Shalom!*

RHYS CAMPBELL:

Hi! *Shabbat Shalom!* I'm Rhys Campbell.

First off, I would like to thank Rabbi Steiner and the Barnert community for inviting me to share my thoughts about loss and lessons learned from the global pandemic.

Last *Purim* seems like so long ago. Usually, I would say that it seems so long ago because of all the things that have happened, but maybe it's because of how little has happened. We have all missed out on SO much this year. For me, I especially miss celebrating holidays with my grandparents and extended family.

I was also really bummed out when I heard that camp was
(Continued on next page)

The Pandemic... (From previous page)

canceled. I go to a Jewish sleep-away camp in New Hampshire. Camp is so fun! I didn't even come close to having as much fun as I usually do!

It's not just big things like camp and holidays that we've all missed out on; it's the little things too. We used to go to restaurants a lot, and I have really missed out on that. My mom makes great French fries, but nothing beats fries from my favorite restaurants. Traveling is barely in my mindset now because of this terrible pandemic! Last year, before the pandemic, I got to go to Prague with my family.

There is one more thing that I have missed out on and that is baseball. I missed the entire rec season and half of the travel season last spring and summer! How unlucky am I?

I do believe that we have all learned a few things from Covid-19 too. I'm sure we have all learned our fair share of technology! I definitely have! In fact, you're watching a recording of this video on Zoom! I also definitely do a lot more on my own and have learned how to deal with so much boredom! Another thing that has been a little hard for me to adapt to is my glasses fogging up from the whole mask situation.

Sometimes I think about God and wonder if or how he let this happen. But I don't think God has control of whether or not people get sick or have illnesses. I think God helps us to learn how to handle the situation we are in. I think that God helps us control our emotions and learn how to deal with them better!

I'm going to say this again: it seems like so long since last *Purim*. When I get bummed out about it, I try to think of some of the good things that have happened this year! And even though most things are different, we can still make the most of the situation! My grandpa has an old saying for everything! One of his favorites is: when life hands you lemons, make lemonade! I never really got that until now!

Thank you and *Shabbat Shalom*!

GABE PINCUS:

It's crazy to think that last *Purim* we were all together sitting in the sanctuary as a community. I remember when the pandemic first hit, my school was preparing to become all-virtual for only two weeks. We were told to pack up our lockers, but the teachers said to only take a few things because we would be back soon (spoiler alert... we weren't). That day when school was over, everyone was so excited, because being at home all day was going to be awesome! It looked great from the outside, but no one could have prepared me or anyone else for what was going to happen next. Virtual school meant that my day had no structure to it. There were no teachers to help me

when I had a question, there was no bell telling me to go to my next period. There were no group projects, no one to motivate me to do my work. All things that I needed to help me succeed not only in school, but my day-to-day life. Weeks went by in the blink of an eye, and I felt like I hadn't learned anything. At one point I didn't even know what day of the week it was because it did not matter. When on Zoom calls, my teachers sounded like the teacher in "The Peanuts" — "wawawawa"; information in one ear, and out the other. During all of this, one of the worst things that happened is that I wasn't able to see my dad. My parents are divorced and in a normal year I would see my dad every Wednesday and every other weekend, but during the pandemic that was just not possible. At this point I had lost interest in school, and lost my connection to many friends and even family. Although all of this sounds terrible, there was some good that came from the pandemic life. I had time to bond with my mom and sister like I have never done before, time to learn how to cook meals for my family, time to use my imagination and creativity to make projects, and time to get to know myself better. Even though quarantine hasn't been the best, without it my family would have never adopted my best friend, Rufus, who is our 8-year-old bloodhound. There are some things I will never get back, like not going on my 8th grade Washington, D.C. trip; missing a year of camp; and transitioning into high school over Zoom, but over these crazy 11 months I have learned that these things don't matter. I have learned how being together is the main thing — even if it's over Zoom. I have learned how valuable a face-to-face conversation really is. I have learned that in order to succeed I need structure in my day. I have learned that it is okay to take some time for yourself, because we don't do that enough. And finally I have learned to carry hand sanitizer everywhere I go, because it's always useful to have.

DAN BROOKS:

Time with the grandkids

Early March we came home from our winter in San Diego, looking forward to our granddaughter's wedding in April. Due to the pandemic, it was postponed twice and is now scheduled for late March with a greatly reduced number of guests and a multiple list of safety precautions. It will be sad to watch her get married with masks on. At least a majority of the grandparents expect to attend the out-of-door ceremony with the thanks of the vaccine.

Visiting with our twelve grandkids has been quite limited for the past year and alternative means of maintaining contact has been necessary. For seven years our grandson Maxx from Orlando has spent the summers with us. He needed us, we needed him. This summer, a shortened visit occurred, including a week of virtual school and virtual

(Continued on next page)

The Pandemic... *(From previous page)*

Friday-night services. What an education that was. That is when you realize how limited your computer knowledge is.

For each of the last five years, another grandson has spent a week with us in San Diego. This year we didn't go to San Diego. Luckily for us Jacob lives locally so he buys the food we can't get through Instacart. The inability to see most of our grandkids in person has given way to sending them riddles to solve and articles to read that I think would be of interest to them. Sometimes I hear back from them, sometimes I strike out. But oh, when you stir an excited reply, you remember what you had before the pandemic.

The most fulfilling change has been editing the college papers of my grandson and thus creating a bond over his intense interest in politics and going for lengthy walks, which never would have happened if he were away at college.

CLARA HART:

I was planning on spending this high school semester abroad in Israel at Kibbutz Tzuba, but because of Covid I'm still here in New Jersey. I first went to Israel in 2016 to visit my brother on this same program called Heller High. I spent this visit with him swimming in the Dead Sea, visiting holy sites in Jerusalem, and eating true Israeli food. Since then, I knew I wanted to go back and do the program myself. I had it all planned and was completely ready to go this spring. I quarantined for two weeks in preparation for the flight, and then another two weeks after the first flight was delayed. I Zoomed with the other students going and ordered all of the things I would need for the trip, including 500 disposable masks and loads of hand sanitizer. Even still, the emails we received over the months and week leading up to our original departure date made it clear that the chances of us leaving by March were slim, but they were hopeful that we would. Finally, my family and I decided it was best to wait until next year.

This was a hard decision to make but I am glad I did. Despite all of the mental and physical preparation to spend this semester abroad, I know that the experience next year will be just as good, if not better. Hopefully Israel will be more open and we will not have to spend the trip worrying about who we are seeing, and staying socially distanced from the Israeli citizens. As disappointing as this was, I know that I could have had to deal with a much bigger loss. I am so grateful my family and I stayed healthy throughout this whole experience, and it taught me the importance of surrounding yourself with people who will support you.

REESE FISHMAN:

This year has been a crazy and different year. I wasn't able to do things like go to school and see my friends. I couldn't be with other family members for the holidays or travel with family throughout the year. My *Bat Mitzvah* is coming up in a few weeks and it is not going to be

the experience I had always pictured. I pictured being surrounded by family and friends as I read from the *Torah*. While this year has been rough, I am keeping a positive attitude and thinking about the many things I got to do that I probably wouldn't have been able to do in a "normal" year. I was able to be with my family a lot more and spend a lot of time with them. I am happy we get to have family dinners every night because now my dad works from home. This time makes me feel grateful for the small things I was able to do before the pandemic. Even the simplest thing like going to school is now exciting. I have learned to appreciate the little things in my life and feel grateful for all the things I have.

JEFF HIMELES:

First, the losses. I have lost time, precious time with some people I love. I think first about my 90-year-old mother in Baltimore, for whom time is a scarce commodity. I also think about my adult children, who live nearby but are not in my pod and therefore not safe to see in person, at least not indoors.

Beyond these meaningful personal connections in my life, I have lost something else unrelated to the pandemic. I have lost faith in my country. Having witnessed the jaw-dropping rise in violent right-wing extremism with its rampant racism and anti-Semitism, I no longer believe in American exceptionalism. And with that, I have a diminished sense of security.

On a brighter note, what have I learned? Quite a bit, actually. I have learned that a simple life has its rewards. Not fighting the traffic to get into New York City, not eating in restaurants, not shopping, not ever needing to go to the dry cleaners isn't so terrible. It certainly saves a lot of money.

I have learned that spending more time outdoors, even during the winter, feels good, especially when I'm playing paddle tennis. And knowing that I'll be home on a Saturday night, just like every other night, agrees with me far more than I would have ever thought.

Finally, back to racism, I have learned through Barnert's Anti-Racism Campaign a lot about the history and present reality of racism in our country along with some constructive tools to address this intractable societal problem. My wife, Pam, and I have signed a Pledge Toward Racial Equality. In our case, that means we are committing a few hours to devote toward supporting black-owned businesses, including TJ's Southern Gourmet in Englewood, which has the best barbecued chicken anywhere. We've also pledged to diversify our bookshelves, engage in legislative advocacy, and attend a Zoom conference called the New Jersey Consultation on Conscience. We've just started to fulfill our pledge and are already finding it rewarding. *Shabbat Shalom.*

(Continued on next page)

The Pandemic... (From previous page)

CATHY COURTNEY FINTZY:

Like many others in our congregation, our son's *Bar Mitzvah* was affected by the pandemic. Originally scheduled for May 9, we were in the home stretch of Noah's *Bar Mitzvah* when we had to reschedule to December 5. We were sad, but we clung to our dreams of a *Bar Mitzvah* on the *bima*, with our families, the big celebration after. But a hopeful summer led to a dread-filled fall. We were a few weeks away from celebrating with immediate family at Barnert when we got the call from Rabbi Steiner that the Temple had to close for safety reasons and an in-person ceremony wouldn't be possible. And we experienced all that disappointment and sadness again. But you know what they say happens when one door closes...

In our case, it gave us the opportunity to have a different, but no less powerful or meaningful experience. We were always going to be so proud of Noah. But our pride was heightened by seeing his determination to continue to practice and prepare for an additional seven months. It was always going to be a rite of passage. But it became an opportunity for Noah to gain a mature understanding of how to deal with disappointment and rise above circumstances outside of his control.

We were always going to celebrate a day of love and meaning. But it became a chance to bring together loved ones that hadn't been together for so long, albeit virtually. And to celebrate *L'dor Vador* in a unique way, when Rabbi Steiner allowed my father, a retired Presbyterian minister, to share some words of blessing for Noah.

That day, thanks to Rabbi Steiner and to Noah, no seat was too far. No voice too soft. And everyone could connect with the service and the moment in a different but still special way.

BOB MALES:

The slowdown in life from the quarantine gave me time to reflect on something I hadn't recognized in the mile-a-minute life that preceded it.

Although I see my elderly mother very briefly several times a week to bring her groceries, I hadn't been good about spending quality time with her before the pandemic shut down so much of normal life. Now, with mom approaching her 100th birthday two weeks from today, I'm recognizing the poignancy of what I've lost in missed time with her, something that can't be recovered.

I'm going to share with her some really eye-opening newspaper articles and ask her to write her memories. One article is about her wedding. It gets right down to what she wore and the color of her mother's dress. Others are about her volunteer work with (the Jewish volunteer organization) ORT. I'm sure it will be good for her to

exercise her long-term memory, and it will be a treasure for us to have her written recollections and great for Jacob to be able to hand them down to the next generation some day.

It doesn't make up for lost time, but it's a way to move forward.

REBECCA MCKINNON:

It feels impossible that a YEAR has passed since we were all able to be together, in person, without hesitation. Without fear.

Each of us has experienced deep loss throughout this period in our history. I, like many of us, have lost dear friends to this terrible disease. But I am also deeply aware that my sense of loss goes much deeper... I'm grieving the loss of simple freedoms like going out to eat at a favorite restaurant, visiting my friends and family, going to a museum, fitness class, concert, or a movie. I even miss commuting, believe it or not. I took for granted the gift of everyday movement and routine. The joy in seeing familiar faces at the train station. Saying good morning to the lovely coffee lady who always knew my order; who always greeted me with a beautiful smile and wished me a wonderful day.

In this new world of remote working, I'm very challenged by my inability to draw boundaries around work and self-care. I miss being able to break up my days with a variety of experiences.

I'm also acutely aware, due to personal circumstance (my 94-year-old aunt Joyce is currently in a rehab facility completely isolated from everything familiar), just how painful physical isolation has been for those who live alone or have fragile health conditions. Those who live with others may take the comfort of another's physical presence for granted.

I miss hugs, I think, most of all.

I recognize today, just how deeply I need meaningful connection and community. My go-to default is isolation when I'm sad or scared. But doing that during this time of total isolation from others sent me on a deep spiral early on. I'm so grateful for this community and my closest girlfriends who have been there (and continue) to help me when I feel most vulnerable.

This pandemic has shown me that despite the brutal physical isolation we've been experiencing, that deep and meaningful connection can still be had. It comes in a very different form – a virtual, electronic, physically distanced form that has, even for all its challenges, blessed me with a lifeline of love, support and connected community. *Shabbat Shalom.*

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In Honor of

Kathy's birthday, their
 friendship, and her
 generous mask-making
(Continued on next page)

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The wonderful educators
that have given our kids
so much this year

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Ruth Greenberg

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June 2020–February 2021 Donations (From previous page)

In Memory of Ellen Rappaport

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In Honor of

Sadie Schmalz's *Bat Mitzvah*
Rabbi Rachel Steiner
Thanks so much for
including me in the
recent *Shabbat* service
with Nefesh Mountain

All who helped to create
this year's beautiful,
meaningful services

Rabbi Steiner
Celebrate Rabbi Steiner
and the wonderful job
she is doing

Rabbi Steiner
Thank You, Rabbi Steiner
Logan's *Bar Mitzvah*

Rabbi Rachel Steiner's
meaningful leadership
during the High Holy
Days

Theodore Charles Wohl's
birth

Liv Landau's baby-naming
Rabbi Steiner, for being
amazing

Florette's 85th birthday
Samantha's *Bat Mitzvah*
Barnert Temple
Volunteer Choir

Choir and Worship Band
Rabbi Steiner's 40th
birthday, and for
making the High Holy
Days so meaningful

Thank you for letting me
celebrate *Shabbat* with
your Congregation...
a wonderful service

Rabbi Steiner
Their wedding
In appreciation,
celebrating the High
Holy Days and *Shabbat*
with Barnert Temple

Rabbi Steiner and

Elizabeth Levitt Resnick,
and all they do to make
Barnert Temple
meaningful for all

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Florence Rosenthal, George Rosenthal, Larry Rosenthal
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Susan Cohen, in memory of Pearl Mangold, mother of
Karen Miller

In Memory of

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Harry Mandel
Irwin Lauber
Karen Kiel Goodenough
Gary Louizides
Harold Perlin
Mae Perlin

In Memory of

Ida Weinstein Schotz
Sadie Kates
Lee Gordon
Beatrice Howard
Judith Zeiger
Harry Blindman
Carol Konowitz
Joseph Dorfman
Gilbert Dorfman
Stephen Rappaport
Joseph Shapiro

In Honor of

Our clergy, Congregation
leaders, musicians,
volunteers, and office
staff for their work
to keep us active and
together as a strong
congregation in this
unusual year
Jonathan Dugal

(Continued on next page)

June 2020–February 2021 Donations *(From previous page)*

Joan Cowlan, in memory of Louis Cohen
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Tree of Life

Amy Rattner

In Honor of

Tessa Rattner's birth

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