TEMPLE SINAI MAY 2020

# CHAILEGHTS



**Rabbi's Reflections**By Rabbi Keren Gorban

For many of us, the last month or two have been extraordinarily challenging due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. We have been thrust into a space of unprecedented isolation and limitation as we try to protect ourselves and our community. We are worried and afraid

and sad and frustrated and tired and lonely, and all of that is compounded by feeling like we don't really control our own lives anymore and that we're surrounded by unknowns. We don't even know when life will return to some semblance of normalcy.

I also need to recognize those in our community whose jobs or health put them at greater risk of illness, who have lost jobs or sources of income, who have to manage childcare while continuing to work, and/or those whose physical or emotional situation is made even more complicated or difficult by stay-at-home orders. Those extra layers of challenge may make this time even more overwhelming than what I described above.

And yet Jewish tradition reminds us that, in times of trouble, we must do two things: retain hope, even if it's just a flicker, and find blessing where we can. We know from our history and narrative that what we are experiencing now will not last forever. Things will get better—not necessarily soon or without additional challenges, and things may never return to what we considered normal, but they will get better. Gam zeh yaavor, this too shall pass, our tradition teaches.

Even in the midst of this pandemic and the way it has impacted our lives and society, we can also find blessings—people changing their own behaviors to minimize the risk of spreading disease to others, people going shopping for

those whose health or financial abilities limit their access to basic necessities, businesses and factories adapting the tools they have to make healthcare supplies, and more. Similarly, things we normally take for granted now have special significance—having enough food, having a roof over our heads, having the technology to remain connected even when we are physically distant, etc.

Keeping our hope alive and recognizing our blessings doesn't mean ignoring or suppressing the grief and sadness over what we can't have right now. For myself, I'm dealing with the disappointment of not being able to have the people I wanted as part of my labor and delivery support. My dad will not get to meet his first grandchild in-person for who knows how long. I will not be surrounded by my family and friends and community when I (hopefully) welcome my first child into the covenant. None of it is what I planned for or what I wanted for this exciting time.

And while I acknowledge and honor that disappointment, I know that it's just a part of my story, one filled with ups and downs, struggles and successes, sorrow and joy. It's not fair to me or to my hopefully soon-to-be child to let the loss of my hopes and expectations overshadow the blessing and joy of this incredible moment in my life. I may not be able to do what I wanted when I'd planned, but I have what I need and can celebrate with what I have. And I know that there will be a time in the future when I will be able to bring family, friends, and extended community together in joy.

I know that each of you has the ability to find the hope and blessings that can carry you through until this pandemic passes. For some of you, it comes naturally; others of you will have to work at it. For all of you, I pray that you find enough hope to push through the worst moments and enough blessing to outshine the challenges and disappointments of this time. I look forward to celebrating with you all in the future!

# WE ARE HERE FOR YOU!

## WE ARE HERE FOR YOU!

In this time of uncertainty, isolation and even fear, the clergy, staff and volunteers of Temple Sinai are here for you. Even when our building is closed, we are here for you. Even when we cannot gather in our sanctuary for services, we are here for you. Even when your children can't run into the building on Sundays to partake in their religious education, we are here for you. Although we aren't cooking together, Temple Sinai is here for you. And, when your financial resources are being taxed and you need assistance, we are here for you.

For those who are experiencing illness or death in your family, we are here for you. When you miss coming to Rabbi Gibson's classes or Cantor Berman's Bereisheet, we are here for you. When young families wanted to be engaged in activities with their children, albeit through the technology at our fingertips, we were here for you. And, when young adults wanted to have a Netflix Watch Party, we were here for you. When self-quarantine forced us to cancel our family and friends gathering for Seder on Passover, we were here for you. If your pantry is low, our Caring Freezer is full. And when you need spiritual guidance, a soothing word or a Thursday afternoon 15 minute Jewish musical interlude, we are here for you.

So often, we observe our Judaism and our community by coming together in our "bricks and mortar" beautiful building. This pandemic has shown us how to be there for each other without being physically together. Congregants are being called to let them know we are thinking about them and to ensure they will be given any support required. Rabbi Jamie, Rabbi Gorban, and Cantor Berman hold "virtual office hours," sing to and with us, teach and study with us, lead us in prayer and help us to joyfully welcome Shabbat. The silver streak in this dark pandemic cloud spotlights that Temple Sinai has been here for us. We are here for you.



# WRITING A TORAH TO HONOR RABBI JAMIE GIBSON

## COVID-19 DOES NOT KEEP A TORAH FROM BEING WRITTEN

Despite the need to cancel Soferet Linda Coppleson's visits in March and May, during which we would have shared in the joy of writing the letters in Torah with her, Linda continues her work on our new Torah. For the last couple of weeks, she has been writing from her weekend house in the magnificent Berkshires and steadily making process. She sent her regrets at not being with us in Pittsburgh, but she is already into Exodus, the Book of Shemot, and Moses is at the Burning Bush!

Linda will be coming back to Pittsburgh for more study and writing (at a date to be determined) and at that time, will bring finished pages for us to help her sew together. This will be one more positive event that we can look forward to.



Soferet Linda Coppleson showing Next DOR students how to write their names in Hebrew in February 2020.

## THE GIFT OF TORAH—TO GIVE IS ALSO DIVINE

More than 3,000 years ago, the Jewish People received the gift of Torah. During this year at Temple Sinai, each and every one of our family of families has the unique ability to also receive the gift of Torah by writing a letter in our new Torah scroll. This new scroll will be the legacy of Rabbi Gibson's gift of Torah to Temple Sinai for the past 32 years of his spiritual leadership and service to all of us.

Now, we have the opportunity to perpetuate the giving and the gift of Torah. Writing a new Torah has enabled us to part with one of our existing Torahs. On the Torah Project Committee's recommendation, the Board of Trustees has approved that Temple Sinai will donate a sefer Torah to a congregation that desperately needs this essential element of our lives as Jews! We turned to the World Union for Progressive Judaism who made a "shidach" with Congregation Lev Chadash in Milan, Italy to be the recipient of our gift.

The Temple Sinai committee that has been shepherding this project has been in touch with our Italian brothers and sisters

in Milan. We correspond by email and by Zoom and we all look forward to healthier and calmer days in our respective communities. The hope is that a delegation of Temple Sinai folks will deliver a Torah scroll to the members of Lev Chadash in person! Next Fall in Milan??



#### MESSAGES OF HEALING FROM OUR FRIENDS AT CONGREGATION LEV CHADASH IN MILAN

#### Dear friends,

In these hours preceding Pesach, I read with apprehension the news coming from the USA, I know that there will still be a few weeks to overcome. But when you are in the darkness even the faint light of a star is able to illuminate the path. In Italy things are slowly improving and at the University of Pittsburgh, Andrea Gambotto's team is carrying out research on a good candidate to be the vaccine able to stop the pandemic.

In Pesach we like to think that the sea opened and we were free, but the story does not end with the sea closing on the Egyptians. It was necessary to cross the desert before we were completely free. With patience and one step after another we will soon be able to gather.

Hag Pesach Sameach, Aldo Luperini (Board President)

#### Dear friends,

Another shabbat approaches and my heart is full of s adness when I read the American data on Covid's exponential phase. We hope and pray that you are all well and healthy. Be patient and look forward. According to Chinese and Korean data, in about a hundred days you'll permanently enter the residual phase of the disease.

A friend of mine wrote to me, "I spent these days with my family and found out that after all they are nice people."

A hundred days is not that long. In the '40s our parents spent years hiding in places that are unthinkable today and with a far more hateful and lethal enemy lurking outside the door. We are Jews and "le dor va dor" we know how to deal with it!

Have courage, we are close to you and think of you. Now is the time of the week to leave the worries outside the door and let in the warmth, peace and serenity of the Shalom.

Chazak and Shabbath Shalom, Aldo Luperini

#### **ANNUAL MEETING, TUESDAY, MAY 26, 7 PM**

Dear Fellow Congregant,

The Temple Sinai Annual Meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 26, 2020, at 7 pm at Temple Sinai and/or via Zoom video/audio conference. We will provide an update and video/audio conference details, if needed, approximately one week in advance of the meeting.

The agenda will include the election of Trustees, and Annual Reports by: the clergy; the President, on the status of the affairs of the Congregation; the Treasurer, on the Financial Standing of the Congregation; and each Center Chair and Auxiliary President. In these reports, we will have a review of the year and a look at things to come.

You are invited to attend to participate in the election and learn more about your Temple Sinai community and our plans for the future. As you know Rabbi Gibson will be retiring as our Senior Rabbi effective June 30, 2020. A portion of the Annual Meeting will be dedicated to honoring Rabbi Gibson as well as an update on our progress and plans during this time of transition.

Temple Sinai's Nominating Committee, chaired by Philip Lehman, and comprising of Megan Amster, Morgan Faeder, Nancy Gale, Bill Padnos, Samantha Skobel, Marcie Solomon, and Bill Taxay, will place in nomination the following names for election of Trustees, each for a term ending 2022. We appreciate their work during this challenging time.

Renewing Trustees Morgan Faeder\* Suzan Hauptman William Taxay\* Lynda Wrenn New Trustees Jeremy Burton Mike Gordon Rebecca Jacobson Auxiliary/Center Representative Trustees Susan Blackman (Women of Temple Sinai) Mike Collura (Neshama Center)

Nominations of trustees may also be made by petition of members. Such petitions must set forth the nominee's name and consent, must be signed by at least ten members of the congregation who are not on the Nominating Committee, and must be delivered to the chairperson of the Nominating Committee at least three weeks prior to the election, by May 5, 2020. Notice of such nomination will be sent to the congregation at least seven days prior to the annual meeting.

We hope that you will join us on Tuesday, May 26 at 7 pm for the Annual Meeting.

Sincerely, Saul Straussman, President

#### **UPDATE FROM THE RABBINIC TRANSITION RESEARCH COMMITTEE**

Thank you to everyone who joined us for our nine focus groups in March! We learned a lot, and we appreciate each of you sharing your perspectives about Temple Sinai's opportunities, strengths, and values.

We are now synthesizing all of the discussions, which will help shape our next step: a congregation-wide survey in May. Every congregant will have the opportunity to add their thoughts to this research by participating in the survey. Our goal is 100% congregation participation!

The committee—whose mission is to ensure the search process reflects our community's needs and values—

will deliver its findings to the Temple Sinai community in early summer. All the insights from your participation will be used to help write the job description for the senior rabbi, as well as inform the Settled Rabbi Search Committee's criteria for evaluating rabbinic candidates and the discussions during interviews. This is why it is important that your voice is heard!

When you receive the invitation to respond to the survey in mid-May, please take a few minutes to fill it out. We thank you in advance.

<sup>\*</sup>Recused during discussion of their own nominations

## **CONFIRMATION CLASS OF 2020**

We celebrate our young adults for affirming their Judaism at the Confirmation Service this month! It will be celebrated on Erev Shavuot, the holiday of the giving of the Torah, Thursday, May 28, at 7:30 PM. The class will lead the service using their own words and music.

Congratulations to the students who have dedicated themselves to their faith. We wish you happiness, peace, and prosperity as you continue your journey!

- Phillip David Braslawsce, son of Erik & Emily Braslawsce
- Molly Alina Brenner, daughter of Lori Brenner
- Abby Cohen, daughter of Nat & Diane Cohen
- Jacqueline M. DeWitt, daughter of Andrew & Sarah DeWitt
- Annelise Judith Hammer, daughter of Maxim & Robin Hammer
- Hadley Jane Anslow Kalson, daughter of Kristin & Richard Kalson
- Brett Kaufman, son of Marcy & Jared Kaufman
- Jonah Isaac Keller, son of Matthew & Kristen Keller
- Arielle Sonnenberg, daughter of Robert & Susanna Sonnenberg



#### **FALK LIBRARY NEWS**

Many years ago, we had Pinskers Judaica and Book Shop to view a multitude of Haggadot. Not as much of a possibility these days, but, Temple Sinai's library does have a number of books that discuss aspects of history and traditions at Passover. Also, a variety of haggadot exist on the shelves.

From a historical perspective there is a haggadah that allows us to view Five Centuries of Haggadah and History, by Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, a gift from Aya Betensky and Robert Kraut.

Another notable one, for reference only, is unique in its artistry. It is *The Haggadah*, executed by Arthur Szyk. The silver-like metal cover itself is a work of art. It shows on one side a Temple Menorah and the twelve tribes of Israel hand-tooled on both sides. Inside, much in the genre of an illuminated manuscript, the haggadic text has been





# **FALK LIBRARY**

enriched with illustrations by Arthur Szyk. Some of these illustrations are full-page, others miniature, with elaborate borders and special letter treatments.

An interesting illustration is a diagram of a seder plate as a star of David, or the goblet of wine beginning the Hallel service on one page with an explanation of the service shaped in words as a goblet of wine on the facing page. Find this gem in the reference section. It was a gift of Ruth and Harry Davidson. The library welcomes you to browse the shelves and enjoy a respite in a comforting environment.



# MAYATTE

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY

Please refer to our weekly emails for meeting links and/or rescheduled or cancelled events. Thank you for bearing with us as we navigate this challenging time.

3	4	5	6	
9:15 AM Hartman Learning (via Zoom)	9 AM The Rational Bible: Genesis with Rabbi Danny Schiff (via Zoom)	7:30 PM Rosh Chodesh Group— lyar (via Zoom—contact Lynn Magid Lazar at lynn.magid.lazar@ gmail.com for the link and materials.)	9:30 AM Planning to Canning Class with Rachel Kudrick (via Zoom) 4:30 PM Hebrew School (via Zoom) 6:30 PM Planning to Canning Class with Rachel Kudrick (via Zoom)	
10 Mother's Day	11	12	13	
	9 AM The Rational Bible: Genesis with Rabbi Danny Schiff (via Zoom)		9:30 AM Planning to Canning Class with Rachel Kudrick (via Zoom) 4:30 PM Last Day of Hebrew School (via Zoom) 6:30 PM Planning to Canning Class with Rachel Kudrick (via Zoom)	
17	18	19	20	
9:15 AM Hartman Learning (via Zoom) 9:30 AM Men's Discussion Group (via Zoom) 10 AM WoTS Annual Meeting & Brunch (via Zoom)	9 AM The Rational Bible: Genesis with Rabbi Danny Schiff (via Zoom)		9 AM Planning to Canning Class with Rachel Kudrick (via Zoom) 6;30 PM Planning to Canning Class with Rachel Kudrick (via Zoom)	
24/31	25 Memorial Day	26	27	
May 31 7 PM Nefesh Mountain Concert Tickets are on sale now at: www.TempleSinaiPGH.org/ events/NefeshMtn.html	Offices & building closed	7 PM Temple Sinai Annual Meeting of the Congregation (via Zoom) 7:30 PM Rosh Chodesh Group— Sivan (offsite)	9 AM Planning to Canning Class with Rachel Kudrick (morning session) 6 PM Evening Meditation 6:30 PM Planning to Canning Class with Rachel Kudrick (evening session) 7:15 PM Choir Rehearsal	

# MPLE SINAI

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	
	1	2	
	7 PM Shabbat Evening Service (live stream only)	8:30 AM Torah Study (via Zoom) 9:15 AM Informal Shabbat Morning Service (live stream & Zoom) 10:30 AM Bat Mitzvah of Ana Rosenthal and Shabbat Morning Service (live stream only)	WORSHIP SERVICE SCHEDULE  FRIDAYS  MAY 1  7 PM SHABBAT EVENING SERVICE (LIVE STREAM)
7	8	9	MAY 8
6:30 PM Executive Committee Meeting (via Zoom) 7 PM Introduction to Judaism (via Zoom)	Noon Downtown Lunch with Rabbi Jamie Gibson (via Zoom) 7 PM Shabbat Evening Service (live stream only)	8:30 AM Torah Study (via Zoom) 9:15 AM Informal Shabbat Morning Service (live stream & Zoom) 6:30 AM Young Adult Game Night (online)	7 PM SHABBAT EVENING SERVICE (LIVE STREAM) MAY 15 5:30 PM TOT SHABBAT SERVICE (LIVE STREAM)
14	15	16	7 PM SHABBAT EVENING
7 PM Introduction to Judaism (via Zoom)	5:30 PM Tot Shabbat Service (live stream only) 7 PM Shabbat Evening Service with Birthday Blessings (live stream only)	8:30 AM Torah Study (via Zoom) 9:15 AM Informal Shabbat Morning Service (live stream & Zoom)	SERVICE WITH BIRTHDAY BLESSINGS (LIVE STREAM)  MAY 22  7 PM SHABBAT EVENING SERVICE (LIVE STREAM)  SATURDAYS
21	22	23	8:30 AM TORAH STUDY
7 PM Introduction to Judaism (via Zoom) 7 PM Board of Trustees Meeting with Minyan (via Zoom)	7 PM Shabbat Evening Service (live stream only)	8:30 AM Torah Study (via Zoom) 9:15 AM Informal Shabbat Morning Service (live stream & Zoom) 10:30 AM Bar Mitzvah of Jordan Snyder and Shabbat Morning Service (live stream only)	9:15 AM INFORMAL SHABBAT MORNING SERVICE (LIVE STREAM)  MAY 2 BAT MITZVAH OF ANA ROSENTHAL & SHABBAT
28	29 Erev Shavuot	30 Shavuot	MORNING SERVICE (LIVE
7:30 PM Shavuot Confirmation Service	10 AM Shavuot Yizkor Morning Service at Temple Sinai 7 PM WoTS Shabbat Evening Service, followed by an oneg, sponsored by WoTS	8:30 AM Torah Study 9:15 AM Informal Shabbat Morning Service	STREAM)  MAY 23  BAR MITZVAH OF JORDAN  SNYDER & SHABBAT  MORNING SERVICE (LIVE  STREAM)

# **DONORS MARCH & APRIL 2020**

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In Memory of Gillian Meieran Gloria Bodek Special Birthday of Rosalyn Escovitz Gloria Bodek

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Yahrzeit of Dr. Donald M Hersh

Davrian Hersh

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#### Rabbi Gibson's Discretionary

Special Birthday of Rosalyn Escovitz Esther Greenwald

#### Rabbi Gorban's Discretionary

In Appreciation of Rabbi Gorban Edward Solomon

In Appreciation of Rabbi Keren Gorban Debi & Michael Bronston-Culp

#### Ryave Children's Library Fund

In Honor of 90th Birthday Ram & Hanita Kossowsky In Honor of Very Special Birthday Rosalyn Escovitz In Memory of Howard Love & Anna Gomberg Ruth Love

#### **WoTS Donations**

In Memory of Caroline Cohen Rebekah Siegel In Memory of Margaret Kaplan Rebekah Siegel

We apologize in advance for any omissions that may occur.

### **PURIM CARNIVAL & SHPIEL PHOTOS**



Louise Feinberg











Page 10 • Chailights May 2020 • Temple Sinai

# **OUR SACRED COMMUNITY**

#### OF BLESSED MEMORY (FEB-MAR 2020)

Princess Monique Robinson, daughter of Aaron Robinson, Temple Sinai Staff Member

Winifred Kobus, mother of Jodi (Arlen) Singer

Kevin McCoy

Margaret Yvonne Kaplan, mother of Carol (John) Woolford, grandmother of Michelle and Josh Woolford

Yair Murad, brother of Sarah Honig

Gillian Meieran

Paul S. Caplan, uncle & great uncle of David & Debra Caplan Levenson, Jessica, Evan, and Emerson Durst and Joshua Levenson

Jean Collura, grandmother of Mike (Elizabeth) Collura

Caroline Cohen, mother of William (Susan) Cohen

David Dinkin

Elmer Judd, husband of Edna Judd

Frances Denmark, mother of Susan Denmark

#### **B'NEI MITZVAH ~ MAZAL TOV!**



Saturday, April 25
Bat Mitzvah of Mollie Kaplan
Daughter of Laura & Stuart Kaplan



Saturday, May 2
Bat Mitzvah of Ana Rosenthal
Daughter of Benjamin & Rachel Rosenthal



Saturday, May 23 Bar Mitzvah of Jordan Snyder Son of Jaime & Daniel Snyder

#### **SIMCHAH**

A big **THANK YOU** to an anonymous donor for making possible our live streaming of services so we can stay connected during this challenging time.

A big **THANK YOU** to anonymous donors for allowing us to provide grants to congregants in need.

**Mazal Tov** to Frank and Carolyn Schwarz on the birth of their granddaughter, Charlotte Hazel Knight Schwarz, on March 2.

**Mazal Tov** to Kellee Van Aken on her promotion to Dean of Visual and Performing Arts at Seton Hill University.

A big **THANK YOU** to our superb "Fiddler as a Spoof" Purim shpiel cast and crew including Anne Alter, Steffi Biersdorff, Harvey Block, Rachel and Elizabeth Collura, Barbara Gibson, Rachel and Nathan Goldblatt, Rebecca Jacobson, Bill Jones, Ellen Keeney, Thom MacIntyre, Esther Nathanson, Rabbi Sara Perman, and Joan Stein.

Mazal Tov to Susan and Rick Tabor on the birth of their second grandson. Luca Carmine Perla was born on January 5. He weighed 8 lb, 7 oz and was 21 1/2 inches long. Parents are Morgan and Nick Perla and his big brother is Valentino Perla. Paternal grandparents are Pam and Rich Perla and paternal great-grandmother is Peggy Perla.

#### **WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!**

Jon Richter & Molly Weiss

### **Send your GOOD NEWS**

(marriages, births, B'nei Mitzvah, awards, engagements, graduations, etc.)

to Tami Prine, Marketing & Communications Director, at Tami@TempleSinaiPGH.org.



# TEMPLE SINA 5505 FORBES AVENUE PITTSBURGH, PA 15217

# NEFESH MOUNTAIN CONCERT Sunday, May 31, 7 PM

Nefesh Mountain is the place where Bluegrass, Old-Time, and American Roots music meet with Jewish heritage and tradition.

TICKETS NOW ON SALE AT: www.TempleSinaiPGH.org/event/NefeshMtn.html

#### **SAVE THE DATE!**

Friday, June 19, Rabbi Gibson's Last Shabbat at Temple Sinai (Details coming soon!)

Rabbi James A. Gibson, MAHL, DD Senior Rabbi

Rabbi Keren Gorban, RJE

Associate Rabbi

Cantor Laura Berman, MBA, MSM, MJE, Diploma of Hazzan Cantor

Drew Barkley, FTA

**Executive Director** 

#### **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Saul Straussman, President
Alison Yazer, 1st Vice President
Stephen Jurman, 2nd Vice President
Elizabeth Collura, 3rd Vice President
Jerry Katz, Treasurer

Mara Kaplan, Assistant Treasurer Lynn Rubenson, Secretary Josh Lederer, Financial Secretary Philip L. Lehman, PhD, Past President Nancy Gale, Past President

Temple Sinai is an inclusive community that embraces, supports, and values all people, regardless of ability or needs, to participate in every aspect of our Reform Jewish synagogue life. For more information or to request an accommodation, contact Judy Rulin Mahan at (412) 421-9715 ext. 110 or Judy@TempleSinaiPGH.org.