Although in-person services, activities, events, Simcha Preschool, and Temple School are dependent on the shelter-in-place status, TBE will continue offering a myriad of opportunities for connection, learning, prayer and inspiration with your wonderful Jewish community. We are offering this Special Edition Shofar to update you and we will keep you informed by email and on the TBE website.

We are an amazing community and are going to continue to bring you everything you love about TBE!

Avodah Sh’b’lev

In a Zoom session with a student and his mother yesterday, we were discussing what he might want to say about his Torah portion. He is working on the Rosh Chodesh (New Moon) section of the Torah, which is from the Book of Leviticus. It’s all about the sacrifices...animal body parts, fine flour, special oil. Not exactly the most dramatic part of the Torah. So I asked him what he thinks the sacrifices were all about and since they’re no longer offered, what can we do now to replace them. Without knowing what the rabbinic sages teach about this question, he said he thinks that now we pray instead. Smart kid.

This week we are entering into the book of Vayikra-Leviticus. It’s filled with details about the sacrifices, which in Hebrew are called Korbanot. The root of the word means, literally, “to draw near.” Our ancestors used these sacrifices as a means for drawing close to God.

Many of us are probably relieved that the days of animal sacrifice are clearly over. After the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, the rabbis replaced the ritual of the sacrifices, which was called avodah—work—because it took a lot of physical work to do the sacrifices, with avodah sh’b’lev—the work of the heart—prayer. Devastation led to a radical shift in Jewish practice two thousand years ago, but Judaism continued. So it is right now.

As I understand it, right now we are called upon to participate in avodah sh’b’lev in new ways. This frightening time will push us into new paths for prayer, social justice actions, doing acts of compassion for others (and allowing others to do them for us), staying connected to family and friends in new ways—all works of the heart, avodah sh’b’lev. Yet we will continue to stay connected with each other and make a difference in the world. Let’s keep our hearts open to new ways of serving each other and God.

—Rabbi Paula Marcus

Mitzvah Day

Mitzvah Day is April 19th. We anticipate that we still will not be able to gather together at that time, but please do a take the opportunity that day to do a mitzvah. Pick up trash at the beach, check on an elderly neighbor or relative, donate to a charity. Then please let us know what you did and send us a picture if you can!

Table of Contents

Spirituality • page 2
Synagogue News • page 3–5
Todah Rabah • page 5
Save the Date • page 5
Contributions • page 6–7
General News • page 8
Concert at a Future Date • Page 9
Community Pictures • Page 10
Spirituality

THOUGHTS FROM RABBI PAULA

In Each and Every Generation...

I loved helping my mother set the Seder table. My father would pick up the food, warm it up and wait for the holiday meal. My grandfather would read through the Haggadah in Hebrew and I’d watch my brothers kick each other under the table until one of them drank too much Manishevitz and wound up going up to his bed to “sleep it off.” When the New Union Haggadah came out in 1974, we were so excited to find meaningful English and beautiful artwork that brought the Passover story to life. Instead of listening to the traditional Hebrew for what felt like hours, we were finally able to feel the impact of this important story. The text was written in gender-inclusive contemporary language and all of us enjoyed being active participants in the Seder ritual.

This was the first time I truly understood the mitzvah of Passover. In each and every generation, a person is obligated to regard one’s self as though they actually left Egypt. As it says: “You shall tell your child on that day, ‘It is because of this that G-d took me out of Egypt.’” (Exodus 13:8). This Haggadah sparked conversation. Instead of an evening that was mostly focused on my grandmother’s delicious Passover food, the discussion about the true meaning of Passover sparked my imagination and my understanding of Jewish history. I can remember talking about how my grandmother and her family experienced their own exodus from Hungary. I remember asking my grandfather what he could recall about leaving Vilna.

These, and other personal stories of hope and liberation are what we are called to experience at the Seder table. There are at least a million different Haggadot that can help us personalize our home Seder. I know that many TBE members have put together their own. I encourage all of us to craft our own Passover Seder that will help us experience the Exodus as if we are personally leaving oppression behind.

Along with a variety of women’s Haggadot, The New American Haggadah, and a Haggadah edited by the Velveteen Rabbi, here are some new Haggadot I will be looking at this year:

The Passover Haggadah: An Ancient Story for Modern Times by Alana Newhouse—FROM REVIEWS: Both proudly traditional and blazingly modern, it is a perfect blueprint for remembering the past, living in our present, and imagining the future.

The Promise of the Land: A Passover Haggadah by Ellen Bernstein—FROM REVIEWS: This Passover, celebrate both our freedom and the role of nature in the Seder and in our lives. This Haggadah seeks to reveal the Seder’s ecological dimensions and awaken its environmental meaning.

Human Rights Haggadah by Shlomo Levin—FROM REVIEWS: The Human Rights Haggadah helps you use the Seder to discuss and learn about human rights. The Haggadah contains: • From the Rabbis boxes, which illustrate how human rights ideas are discussed by the rabbis. • From the Universal Declaration of Human Rights boxes, which explain what human rights laws are today. • Dialogue boxes, which outline the reasoning behind these various viewpoints for you to explore at the Seder. This Haggadah makes Passover relevant to the most pressing political and religious dilemmas we face today.

This year, due to precautions concerning COVID-19, many will gather around the Seder table in our own homes. Rabbi Shifra and I are making plans with Rabbi Eli and Rabbi Debbie to invite all of you to a virtual community table for an innovative Passover Seder, so stay tuned.

—Rabbi Paula Marcus

Clarification

Dear Friends,

I’m writing to thank you for all of your generous support. I know that our community will be enriched by the addition of Cantor Alisa Fineman to our clergy team. She will begin working full time at Temple Beth El on July 1.

I want to clarify that this year, I am not planning on taking a leave of absence. I am grateful to have the ability to participate in the life of our congregation as I am able to, given Aryeh’s health. Aryeh is still in treatment and I am still working. I feel incredibly blessed to be part of this caring and supportive community.

With gratitude, Rabbi Paula

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With gratitude, Rabbi Paula

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With gratitude, Rabbi Paula

Clarification
I hope that you are physically and emotionally well despite these anxiety-promoting times. I want to remind you that you can still reach me by phone or e-mail, even though I am working from home, and I encourage you, as always, to contact me if I can be of assistance to you.

**TEMPLE SCHOOL**

In keeping with the national effort to flatten the curve of the coronavirus pandemic, Temple School has moved to distance learning. Although I am sad that our classes will not be gathering in person, this gives us an opportunity to engage some outstanding online Jewish educational tools. I am so grateful to our fabulous Congregational Learning Coordinator Sarah Clarkson for making such great lemonade out of these lemons by facilitating a wonderful partnership between Temple School and Shalom Learning. Shalom Learning is at the cutting edge of online learning experiences to supplement classroom learning. Our students will participate in a self-paced interactive Hebrew program, and will attend Judaica classes with experienced distance teachers via Zoom calls. I encourage you to look up Shalom Learning to learn more. In addition, I am personally excited to be offering Zoom classes for our seventh grade and Hebrew High School students.

**ADULT LEARNING**

All adults are invited to my “Judaism As A Spiritual Journey” class which will be moving to distance learning until mid-April. We will be discussing an excellent lecture at Harvard by my teacher, Rabbi Dr. Arthur Green. If you would like to join in the discussion, please read the book of Genesis and then, please watch the first 45 minutes of this video: [https://bit.ly/38YlmW3](https://bit.ly/38YlmW3). Pausimg it periodically to take notes. I would even encourage you to watch it twice. Please write down your questions, list any places where Rabbi Green may have lost you, and send them to me.

**ROCK SHABBAT**

We hope that you joined us on Friday March 20, for an online re-broadcast of a very special Rock Shabbat featuring our newest member, Cantor Alisa Feinman along with the entire Rock Shabbat Band. Rabbi Paula and I have pre-recorded a new d’var torah addressing the COVID 19. As usual, this Shabbat service included inspiring Jewish music and a Friday night service including the Mourner’s Kaddish. In addition, Rabbi Paula provided an opportunity for people to come together with her via Zoom to recite Kaddish.

As many journeys do, Jewish life in Santa Cruz has taken a turn to an unexpected path. We are hoping that there will be some silver linings to all of this, including many ways to stay connected, help, and inspire each other; and find comfort and inspiration from Judaism. Please stay healthy and wash your hands.

—Blessings, Rabbi Shifra

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**Simcha Preschool**

While Simcha Preschool is closed through April 10, or beyond, due to the virus, we’re creating heartfelt story and song-time videos for Simcha families and posting them to our private Simcha 2019/2020 Facebook group. So far, Teacher Caitlin, along with Director Lisa, have shared stories, smiles, and songs with families to help uplift spirits and foster a sense of connection via email, the Remind app, and our FB group. We’ve been sharing updates, support, and resources for fun activities that can be done at home; as well as online learning websites. We’ve let our families know that we’re able to support them remotely and are here for emotional support, as needed.

—Lisa Mendez, Director

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**Financial Assistance from Hebrew Free Loan**

If you and your family could benefit from financial assistance in the form of a no interest loan, please go to [https://bit.ly/2U5z4IS](https://bit.ly/2U5z4IS).
Dear Congregants,

I am constantly awed by our community and the support we have for TBE. When we decided as a board to bring on a cantor so that Rabbi Paula could have more time to spend with her beloved this year, we were able to raise the money we needed in one week! We have a congregation of open and generous hearts, which makes my job as President of the Board so rewarding. It is also challenging because, as in life, there are so many joys and sorrows, and we experience them all in our community together—which is comforting.

Today, March 18, I am writing in response to the coronavirus. The TBE Leadership is working hard with the URJ and our Senior Management team to set up the temple so we can continue to be in touch with our community through Zoom and other video conferencing services. Many of our classes will be online, our services will be streamed, and we will be able to say Kaddish together. As I said in the paragraph above, we are a congregation with generous hearts, and we know that this is a very hard time. But we as Jews see the light and believe that we need to stay connected with each other throughout the course of this pandemic.

As my two years of leadership begins to wind down, I think back to the members I have been able to get to know—I so enjoy hearing about you and your families. If you are reading this note, and have not introduced yourself to me, please do. Part of the rewards of being on the board of TBE is being able to connect with more wonderful people. I would love to make time to get to know you, so please send me a note.

Although many of our group gatherings are postponed or cancelled, we will stay in touch with all of you through our virtual world. Please know that we will be posting at least weekly, or twice a week, with current updates as we hear about them.

Thanks again for all of your support in the past two years of my presidency and of our beloved congregation.

With Gratitude and Shalom
—Amy Harrington

Have you ever heard of a Kohenet Hebrew Priestess? Now you have, and you are about to meet one as well in this month’s Get to Know—our student rabbinc intern, Sarah Tziporah Moser!

Originally from Falls Church, Virginia, Sarah Tziporah grew up in a Reform synagogue. After graduating from Bryn Mawr College she worked with Jewish nonprofit organizations: Urban Adamah and Wilderness Torah. It was her love of practicing joyful earth-based Judaism that led her to spend the next four years at the Kohenet Institute studying Jewish leadership where she was ordained as a Kohenet Hebrew Priestess in the summer of 2018. Two years ago, she enrolled in the Rabbinical program at AJRCA, the Academy for Jewish Religion in Los Angeles that Rabbi Paula attended. She is currently in year two of a five-year program. “Now I get to read Torah, lead ritual, and find G-d in the wilderness regularly!” explains Sarah.

Recently transplanted to Santa Cruz from Sonoma County, Sarah laughs; “We are fresh off the 101,” and she and her partner Travis, a geologist, and 10-year old cat Rilo, are loving calling Santa Cruz their new home. So far, her favorite places include our many forests and Mt. Madonna. And when not teaching Temple School, Confirmation classes, adult classes, helping to lead some services and tutoring, you can find her hiking, camping, backpacking or mushroom foraging. She is also passionate about ancient nature, and female-based religious practices and how they contributed to Judaism.

Being at TBE “feels like coming home!” A feeling, she says, she has not felt since her own Confirmation back in her childhood synagogue. “I’m looking forward to connecting even more with our TBE community this coming summer and fall.” We are happy to meet you Sarah, and so glad you are here!

Heartfelt thanks to so many of you in our congregation who contributed to the recent Cantorial Fund drive. Over a hundred generous temple families contributed to the fund, and, in just a few weeks, we raised over $135,000 to enrich our congregation’s musical offerings and provide needed support to our beloved clergy. Todah rabah! And let the music begin!

—Margaret Gordon, Chair, TBE Fund Development Committee

MAY THEIR MEMORIES BE FOR A BLESSING

Karen Weill, sister-in-law of Julie Lorraine, Barry Marks and Estalee Weill, and aunt of Ellison and Laurel

Sarah Tziporah Moser

Sisterhood Gift Shop

We were ready to bring style to your Seder this year with an array of fabulous items but due to the need to shelter-in-place, the Gift Shop is closed. We will open as soon as it is safe to do so. In the meantime, we wish good health to you and yours.

Cantorial Fund Drive a Success

In The Temple Family

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TBE to Arizona to Register Voters

This past February 13, twelve TBE members traveled to Phoenix, Arizona to support Arizona Jews for Justice’s campaign to register voters. Nine traveled in the TBE vanz for two days, getting to know each other, laughing, and finding amazing vegan restaurants—thanks to Howie Schneider. In Arizona, we were grateful for the hospitality of the hosts who housed us. On Saturday, despite some hiccups, we went to three different farmers markets and talked with many people. We registered some voters, encouraged many people to vote, and received thanks for the work we were doing. On Sunday, local organizer Eddie Chavez Calderon, arranged for us to meet Debbie Inez, a Navajo running for State Legislature. If elected, she will be first Native American to serve as an Arizona legislator. She shared her personal story and told us about Navaho culture. Inspired, we went out to knock on doors. Late Sunday afternoon we said goodbye and began our journey home.

On the trip were Howie Schneider, Dianne Brayman, Deb Roisman, Sara Benevento, Spencer Schatz, Wilma Gold, Gus Gold, Marcia Stein, Jenny Kaupp, Ray Kaupp, Judi Sherman, and Steve Guiney.

Thank You to Our Purim Sponsors and Volunteers

We could not have done it without you! The Temple School kids had a great time and the teens were so wonderful with the youngsters—it was delightful to watch! And $2,424 was collected for our SRFY youth group. Thanks again for all of your time and generosity. We were so glad to get our community together for this joyous occasion before restrictions were put in place.

A special thank you to our Purim sponsors and volunteers!

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Host an Amazing Lifelong Learning Program in Your Home

TBE’s Lifelong Learning Committee brings amazing programs right to your neighborhood. This latest season had Salons on Understanding Online Antisemitism, and Esther’s Story: Facing Hate with Courage.

While some programs are held at TBE, in order to be welcoming to people from a wider geographic area, the Lifelong Learning Committee seeks members who are willing to host a Salon. Your home would need to be accessible, have ample parking, and be able to accommodate 25 plus seated guests. Programs are typically two hours long. Committee members can help with the set up and clean up if needed! Find out more by contacting Melissa at msunberg@tbeaptos.org or (831) 479-3444.

The Lifelong Learning Committee is also interested in knowing what types of programs would be of interest to members. Please be on the lookout for an upcoming survey of interest areas. Of course, the committee would also like to know if you have something you’d like to share at a Salon, such as an area of expertise, an amazing travel story, etc. We would love to have you join the committee!

TBE to Co-Sponsor County Gun Buyback

The TBE Gun Violence Prevention Subcommittee of the Social Action Committee is embarking on fundraising for a voluntary gun buyback to be conducted by the Santa Cruz County Sheriff’s Department. The last gun buyback in Santa Cruz County was on March 24, 2018, at the Fire Department in Watsonville and the Sheriff’s Office in Soquel. It was a “no questions asked, no identification needed” event. They spent $40,000 and had to turn people away. 618 weapons were collected including: 15 assault rifles, hundreds of rifles, shotguns, and pistols, and some antique firearms. All were smelted down (no reference was made to plowshares). Firearms are difficult to get rid of legally. Each year over 380,000 guns are stolen from private gun owners. For more facts, please read the Fact Sheet which is linked to one of the sliders on the TBE website homepage. The Sheriff’s Office has asked us to raise between $25,000 and $40,000 in order to fund the buy back. The subcommittee is now investigating fundraising strategies and hopes to include the larger Santa Cruz community, including other faith communities. More details about how you can contribute or help in this fundraising effort will follow in the months to come. If you are interested in assisting in the effort in any way, please email gvp@tbeaptos.org.
A benefit concert for Temple Beth El

Ivan Rosenblum

Anya Ismail, Elizabeth Neff, Tatyana Rekow

Women’s Lives: Snapshots in Music for Singers, Saxophones & Piano

Although this performance has been postponed, we look forward to a wonderful afternoon concert with Ivan and friends and will let you know the new date as soon as possible!

This program explores childhood, adolescence, falling in and out of love, and the hard road to independence. Featuring musically varied pieces drawn from classical, popular and Jewish styles. Join us for this unique Temple Beth El benefit.

Suggested donation: $20

Your donation includes a wine and chocolate reception following the concert.

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We look forward to being together again in-person soon!