



Sinai Temple Bulletin

*Take Back Your Time:
Rediscover Shabbat*

May/June 2018
16 Iyar-17 Tammuz 5778

Valedictory

There is a saying appearing many times in our sacred literature. It reads, *acharon acharon chaviv*, meaning "The last, the last is [the most] precious."

All the same, I can't quite believe (and am a little sad that) I'm writing my final bulletin article as rabbi of Sinai Temple. It seems as but yesterday that my rabbinate here began. Have two years really passed?

I came here, of course, with an understanding that my so-called "interim" rabbinate would last only one year. But as I learned from my grandmother – may she rest in peace! – *a mentsch tracht und Gott lacht*, meaning, "Man proposes; God disposes," or, more literally, "A person plans, and God laughs."

When I first came here, some of you asked me, "What's it like coming into a new congregation and then leaving after but one year?" My answer then was, "Coming in is easy, but leaving is brutal." And at the end of June, that will be magnified manifold because I will have been here not one year but two. As a result of that, I'm not only going to be leaving people who are my congregants but, instead, people who have become as family.

My time here has been (and continues each day to be) exciting. And, as in every so-called "interim" congregation I have served, it has personally been for me a time of great growth. But more on that a little further down.

By definition and training, interim rabbis are transition specialists. Our roles are about change. We are supposed to help congregations look at themselves and begin to change from what they were (and did) – in this case under a very skilled and caring Rabbi Shapiro who led Sinai Temple for 28 years – to what they will be and become under a new rabbi.

Now my take on the rabbinate is that we rabbis are supposed, first and foremost, to be Torah teachers (And to be that we have to be serious life-long Torah students ourselves). To do that though, we have to have enough faith in our laities that we can let congregants be our full partners and take on many responsibilities themselves in running our synagogues. And that's what has happened these two years. Starting with Bruce Leshine last year and continuing with Laurie Weinberg and Buff Maniscalco this year (who have been and continue to be a blessing to my rabbinate and my life), and extending through our officers and board and, further, to our committee chairs and members and, further still, to all of our many volunteers, we have become one giant collaboration. I think that's more than good. It means that each of us now has the opportunity in the name of Judaism to do whatever it is that our individual talents are about. And that also means that all of us can be involved in the holy work that synagogue life is supposed to be about.

Of course, I've been blessed with incredibly competent partners. Sharing the bimah with Cantor Levson has provided a source of inspi-

Friday Evening Services in May

May 4 – 6:00 p.m.

May 11 – 7:30 p.m. – Shabbat recognizing Mothers' Day

May 18 – 6:00 p.m. – Shabbat honoring our Religious School Teachers (with dinner)

May 25 – 7:30 p.m.

Friday Evening Services in June

June 1 – 6:30 p.m. – Shabbat honoring Cantor Levson

June 8 – 7:30 p.m. – Blessing of summer campers

June 15 – 6:00 p.m. – Farewell to Rabbi Kosovske (with dinner)

June 22 – 7:30 p.m.

June 29 – 7:30 p.m. – Lay-led Shabbat service

Special Saturday Evening Services/Events

May 19 – 7:30 p.m. – Shavuot Evening Service with Confirmation and Reception

June 2 – 7:00 p.m. – Farewell/Celebration "Coffee House" for Cantor Levson

Shabbat Morning Services: 10:15 a.m.

May 12, 26

June 9, 16, 23, 30

Shabbat Morning Services and B'nai Mitzvahs: 10:30 a.m.

May 26 – Eli Vinci – Bar Mitzvah

May 19 – Parker DelGallo – Bar Mitzvah
Chloe Del Gallo – Bat Mitzvah

June 2 – Audrey Chasen – Bat Mitzvah

June 5 – Lucy Kochman-Sabbatino – Bat Mitzvah

Shavuot Morning Service with Yizkor (with dairy luncheon)

May 20 – 10:30 a.m. (Sunday)

Torah Study

Each Saturday morning from 9 - 10 a.m.

Co-President's Message

Dear Sinai friends,

The matzah is gone, the bagels are back, but one image of Passover remains with us this year, that of Nachshon, who tradition tells us took the first step into the Sea of Reeds, into our future as the Jewish People. Like Nachshon, we are poised to step out into our future when Rabbi Jeremy Master becomes our settled Rabbi on July 1, and a new music specialist steps in. We are well positioned for these steps into the future. We have had many successes this year. Our redesigned Religious School will soon wrap up a very successful first year with our new model of one weekly Sunday morning session for both religious and Hebrew instruction. The Safrai Art Show and gala was a great success both as a community event and as a fund raiser. Our Second Night Community Seder was full of spirit and bigger than the year before. Our Purim Spiel filled the auditorium with revelers of all ages. We learned with our scholar in residence Rabbi Amy Scheinerman, and danced with Nava Tehila and Afro-Semitic Experience. The list goes on.

We now face the painful task of saying good-bye to Cantor Martin Levson and his family. Cantor Levson has given us ten years of music which has touched our souls, he has shared our losses and illnesses, our joys and simchas. He has taught our children, prepared them for B'nai Mitzvah, brought us Shir Fun and the Adult choir, taught us to chant Torah, and he and Sheri have brought the excitement of musical productions to Sinai. Each of us has our own list of what we have experienced with Cantor Levson. Like many religious communities of our time, we have had to face the reality of reinventing ourselves on a smaller scale. Buff and I, and hopefully all of you, are excited and optimistic about our Nachshon step forward on July 1 but feelings about the loss of Cantor Levson will remain with us.

We will honor Cantor at his final Erev Shabbat service on June 1, an evening that he will share with Andrea Chasen and her family as she becomes a Bat Mitzvah the next morning. Saturday evening, June 2, we will share a musical coffee house farewell with Cantor and Sheri. Please join us for these two very special evenings. Cantor will then enjoy a well-deserved final month of sabbatical.

We have another farewell ahead as Rabbi Kosovske ends his interim rabbinate on June 30. Rabbi Kosovske's warmth, depth of learning, wisdom, love of Judaism and love of Sinai have been a vital bridge on our path to the future and he and Janet will be greatly missed. We will honor Rabbi Kosovske on Friday night, June 15, with a Sinai community Shabbat dinner and Erev Shabbat service.

Sinai Temple, like Judaism, is constantly evolving as the world around us evolves, and that is what brings us, like Nachshon, to step into our future. We look forward to the joys and hard work of sharing these steps into the future with all of you.

L'Shalom,
Buff and Laurie

NOTES FROM THE CANTOR

Please join us on Friday, May 18, for our annual Teacher Appreciation Shabbat service, when Sinai Temple will welcome the amazingly talented Jacob "Spike" Kraus to Springfield. "Spike" is a rising star in the Jewish music world, and he has served as the head songleader of URJ Eisner Camp in Great Barrington, MA for several years. "Shir Fun!" will be in the house to add to the festivities that evening. Trust me, this evening is going to ROCK!

During the month of June, I will be taking the final month of my sabbatical time, so my final Erev Shabbat service at Sinai Temple will be Friday, June 1. The following evening, Saturday, June 2, I will be hosting an informal coffee house evening in the Sinai Temple auditorium with the assistance of some of my musical friends. I will be singing some of my favorite songs, some Broadway show tunes, and some other things as well. You should have already received your invitation in the mail; please be sure to RSVP to the Temple office!

It has been an honor and a privilege to serve as the Cantor of Sinai Temple for the past ten years. In the immortal words of two late 20th century prophets, "And, in the end, the love you take, is equal to the love you make."

FRIDAY, JUNE 15, FAREWELL EVENING WITH RABBI KOVSKO

Please join us for Shabbat service at 6 p.m. followed by Shabbat dinner as the congregation says "shalom, and lehitraot", words that express not a final farewell but rather peace and staying connected. Rabbi Kosovske and Janet Kramer have become so much a part of Sinai, sharing our lives for two years and celebrating their marriage here. Rabbi will deliver his farewell to the congregation during the service.

JUDAICA GIFT SHOP

Spring! And we are ready for all the occasions coming up: B'nai Mitzvah, we have lovely tallisim for everyone, engagements, weddings, graduations and all happy events! We have fine meaningful gifts for all.

We are open Tuesday afternoons 2 to 4:30 PM and most Sunday mornings. Call us.

Thais Fischel 786-9577

MESSAGE from Rabbi Jeremy Master

Alana and I were traveling around to various supermarkets in Greenville, South Carolina searching for Passover products. The whole time we were shopping, we kept talking about how excited we are that next year we'll be celebrating Passover in Springfield shopping at the Big Y for all our Passover products. Almost every day my five year old daughter Dara goes up to someone unprompted and says excitedly, "We're moving to Massachusetts!" My ten year old daughter Peri keeps telling me how Massachusetts is now her favorite state and she can't wait to move to Longmeadow.

While my family is looking forward to this transition, Alana and I were especially excited by the response we received at the Open House when we came to visit Sinai Temple in March. It was wonderful to see the excitement of the community for our impending arrival. The response to our arrival was heartwarming since I know very well that leadership transitions are powerful moments in the life of a community.

Recognizing the awesome nature of such transitions, our tradition contains many significant examples of meaningful transitions. In Numbers 27, we see the powerful transition of leadership from Moses to Joshua. Moses says to God, "appoint someone over the community who shall go out before the people and come in before them, and who shall take them out and bring them in, so that God's community may not be like sheep without a shepherd." Moses shows us that transitions are all about the community. Moses was an exceedingly humble person who, even when he knew he was dying, made the needs of others a central concern. As a result, he wanted to make certain that the people he cared for all these years would have another person who could care for them.

God answers Moses' wise request saying, "Single out Joshua son of Nun, a man in whom there is spirit, and lay your hand upon him...Invest him with some of your authority, so that the whole Israelite community may obey." Joshua's skills were different than Moses'. Moses was the only prophet whom God singled out face to face. Joshua wasn't even a prophet. Joshua was a military leader who guided the Israelites to victory in their conquest of Israel. Despite their different skill set Moses invests some of his authority in Joshua, continuing the chain of tradition passing the responsibility of Torah to the next generation.

As we continue the positive energy of this transition, I hope to heed the wisdom of our tradition striving to make the needs of the community a central concern and to use my skills to maintain the traditions of Sinai Temple. We are all excited about this impending change and I know that we will establish a long lasting and successful relationship with each other.

TRANSITIONS

Every season of the year brings changes. As the weather becomes warmer in the spring, the buds that were set from autumn begin to bloom. Just like the seasons' transition, Sinai Temple anticipates the transitions that will happen as we welcome Rabbi Jeremy Master as our new settled rabbi.

All transitions begin with an ending. In June we will say farewell to Rabbi Kosovske and Cantor Levson. There will be a farewell Service for Rabbi Kosovske and a separate farewell Service for Cantor Levson. Please look for details elsewhere in this bulletin.

Sinai's Leadership understands the importance of music and we will continue to have music during services. Rabbi Master sings and plays the guitar. In addition, a part time musical specialist will be in place for Friday Shabbat services, B'nai Mitzvahs, High Holy days and a few special events. Also, John Gerry-Karajanes will continue to play the piano at Services.

We held a Meet & Greet Open House for Rabbi Master in March. He focused on the importance of community. Everyone had an opportunity to greet him and his wife, Rabbi Alana Wasserman. Many thanks to all the volunteers participating in the event especially Mandy & Marcia Greene, Marla Shelasky, Steve Sussman, Jackie Neiman, Jodi Maniscalco, Melanie Courtemanche, Samantha Schragar, Sarah Shtrax and all the bakers from the Hospitality Circle including Beth Chafetz, Zel Lavin, Vivian Miller, Elaine Shusterman, Judy Seldow, Rachel Sampson, Marlene Gordon, Robin Dunn-McDonagh & Belle Rita Novak; also set up and clean up by Carol Tivoli, Leigh Cherkas, Arnie Shtrax and Donna & Angel.

Rabbi Master will move to the area in June and he will begin his first official workday on July 1, 2018. He and his family are very excited to join us. The congregation is invited to celebrate his first Shabbat as we are planning special events for Friday, July 6th and Saturday, July 7th. Look for more details of the festivities in upcoming announcements.

As we are eager to begin, there will be ample opportunities for everyone to meet Rabbi Master during the summer and into autumn. In addition to the first Shabbat celebrations, there will be hosted Coffee Conversation events, Havdalah events and a Religious School welcome event. If you would like to host a Coffee Conversation, please contact Karen Mendelsohn at Karen2thdr@gmail.com. In the meantime you can email Rabbi Master at jmaster7@hotmail.com until July 1st or friend him on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/jeremy.master>.

Karen Mendelsohn

Rabbi message continued from page 1

ration for me personally and allowed me not just to lead services but more, as I read words from the siddur, to pray. And knowing that we have a consummate expert in the person of Dasha Baker insuring that our young people receive the best possible religious education...how could I not but rejoice in seeing the seeds of Judaism's future being sown here! And daily having the support and the ever-present heart of my assistant, Robin Blanchette-Gage...what a blessing she is and without her I simply couldn't function. And then knowing that the watchful and skillful eyes and hands of our bookkeeper, Elaine Rodrigues, are ever there...to this Judaism says it all: "If there is no flour (meaning money), there is no Torah. And about Donna Comstock and Angel Graulau (who has golden hands), both of them always have had the uncanny ability on their own to stay one step ahead of me. And more, how could I be anything but grateful that they really were as a backbone of Sinai, always on their own making sure that our place was prepared for things to happen?"

But the chief joy for me these years has rested in the people of Sinai, those to whom I taught Torah and from whom I also learned Torah; those with whom I prayed each Shabbat and on holidays and on the High Holy Days; those with whom I shared Jewish activities; those who in word and deed really were out on the line trying to do and make Sinai a place working at *tikkun olam*, real fixing of the world; those who let me be with them in their moments happy and sad.

But overriding it all is that never once did I hear that people were afraid of change. Though we disagreed over what that meant sometimes, our disagreements were always worked through in a very Jewish way, always carried out as disagreements *l'sheim shamayim*, meaning "in the name of Heaven," i. e., seeking what was Jewish truth. And that's

holy. And, too, it will be the lynchpin upon which Sinai's future will lie as our congregation, under the leadership of my successor, Rabbi Jeremy Master, will move into yet another future, one which too will tackle whatever that future holds.

At the start I talked about my own growth while you let me be your rabbi. The text says, *mikol m'lamdai hiskalti*, from all of my students I have learned. And you have all been teachers to me. I have faced very welcome challenges while being here, and each of them has let my own growth as a rabbi go on. For the fact is that even fifty-one years into the rabbinate, there are still things to learn, and you have let me continue to learn them.

Most important, you have truly been, the whole time we were here, totally welcoming to Janet and to me. You have let us share our lives and our *simchahs* with you, and you have let us be a part of you as individuals and as a congregation, each and every day. And for this, we shall always be grateful. Do know that the memories of these two years will remain with us as a warm inspiration and joy for the rest of our lives.

I'm a bit sad, as I said above, that the end of my rabbinate and our stay here is drawing near its end. But I will not say good-bye when it does. Rather, I will say to you what we say in Hebrew, *l'hitra'ot*, meaning, "to be seen by each other [again]." For I do hope that our paths will cross again in the future, not only soon, but often as well. And in that I wish you a future filled both with good things and continuing renewal, and that you, as individuals and as a congregation, go only from strength to strength.

L'shalom, and ever with fondness,
Howard A. Kosovske

Israel Bonds to honor Western MA Congregational Leaders

Development Corporation for Israel/Israel Bonds will honor Western Massachusetts congregation leaders at its annual dinner on Wednesday, June 6, 2018 at 6:00pm, at Chez Josef, 176 Shoemaker La, Agawam, MA. The cost of the event is \$65/person. This year's event will be a special celebration commemorating the 70th anniversary of the State of Israel.

We are delighted to announce that Samantha Schrage has been selected as Sinai Temple's honoree. Samantha is the chair of the Sinai Temple Religious School Committee and a member of our Board of Trustees. She was born and raised in Longmeadow, is a lifelong member of Sinai Temple, taught Hebrew School and celebrated her consecration, Bat mitzvah, confirmation and wedding at Sinai. She and her husband Shawn moved back to Longmeadow in 2012 and immediately became involved in Sinai activities and education opportunities, such as tot Shabbat and the

musical production of *Children of Eden*. She has been a middle school English teacher for twenty years and currently teaches at Suffield Middle School in Suffield, CT. She and Shawn have two daughters, Delaney and Camryn. Both are members of Sinai's Religious School and Delaney sings with Shir fun!, the temple's junior choir.

Samantha will receive the Star of David Award at the event. The award is given to those, who in the spirit of King David, have demonstrated a devotion to the Land and People of Israel through exceptional leadership and dedication.

Please mark your calendars now to honor Samantha and share in her special night!

Invitations will be mailed to all members of the Temple. For more information, please call Barbara Starr, registered representative for Israel Bonds for Western MA, at 860-656-2110 or email Barbara.starr@israelbonds.com.

Message from Dasha Baker

Religious School Director

I cannot believe we have come to the end of the school year. *Sukkah* decorating, *Tu BiShevat seder*, *Passover Seder*, *Pajama Day*, *Israel Day*... gathering with the students, teachers, and families has been enriching and fulfilling. When I visit classes, the energy of the students and teachers is amazing. To give just a few highlights:

- **Kindergarten/first grade practice Chanukiah lighting:** The students knew the direction to put the candles in and to light them. More importantly, they gathered around witnessing and participating in an important, holy event. (Helene Shapiro)
- **Second grade discussion about God:** Pictures were posted around the room and students went to the picture that was the closest representation of their idea of God. The discussion that followed was insightful, thoughtful, and respectful; students shared their thoughts and their questions, and were encouraged to explore their own beliefs and feelings. (Debra Cohen)
- **Second grade Hebrew review:** Watching students create letters and vowels out of Lego blocks was fun. Watching students create letters and vowels from what they had learned that day and what they had learned in previous classes was wonderful. (Shaina Haber)
- **Third grade Hakafah** (carrying the Torah around the congregation): While there was not an actual scroll, students took turns carrying around a book of *Torah* around the class as their classmates pretended to use a talit to touch the *Torah* as it went by. They stood while the "*Torah*" was carried, and sat when it was put down. During this rather long process, the students remained attentive and respectful for each *hakafa*. In addition to the logistics, these students demonstrated reverence for our holy text. (Norma Garde)
- **Fourth grade Prophets lesson:** I was not expecting students to be studying texts while sitting on the floor, but there they were. Dolls and small props, students reading the lines of different people, interspersed with questions and discussions were all a part of bringing students into the world of the Prophets. Multi-layered understandings of names, places, motivations and historical context were all reinforced in one activity. (Phyllis Katz)
- **Fifth/sixth grade retreat:** They were solving a puzzle, and one student said, "No, we have to work together and all do this!" Everyone gathered and, step by step, slowly, they solved the puzzle. For context: I have seen 5th and 6th graders work in groups to solve this puzzle and take between 20 and 45 minutes to find a solution. This group? Ten minutes. Additionally, they sprinkled their conversations with Hebrew throughout the weekend. (Minna Weisberger)
- **Seventh grade Shoah** (Holocaust) discussion: Students talked about their personal experiences with anti-Semitism, and related them to what they have learned. They don't just know facts, they know the relevance of history and the importance of being sure it is not forgotten. The trust needed for this conversation is immense. (Marcia Greene)

The teachers have been diligent, creative, and caring. Families have been supportive, both at home and during events. Rabbi Kosovske and Cantor Levson have given time, energy and learning. The Religious School Committee has given me information and advice. When I began as your Religious School Director, my goal was to bring joy back to Jewish learning. The joy is blooming, and we are only at the beginning. In the coming year, we will fine-tune the Hebrew program, give families more opportunities to participate, and work with our incoming clergy to form stronger connections between the Religious School and the entire Sinai Temple community.

L'Shalom/with peace and wholeness, Dasha

ANNUAL MEETING THURSDAY MAY 31

Please join us at 6 p.m. for barbeque as we honor all our volunteers, the backbone of Sinai, elect new Board members and vote on the FY 19 budget. It's a busy week, leave the cooking to us!

SINAI READERS

"**Final Stop, Algiers**" by Mishka Ben-David, contemporary Israeli novelist and former Mossad agent is our May read.

"**All Who Go Do Not Return**", a memoir by Shulem Deen about his journey from the highly insular Skverer Hasidim into the secular world, is our June selection.

Dates and times TBA



**The Caring Community
of Sinai Temple
invites all Sinai members
to a yom tov dairy luncheon
at the Temple
Sunday, May 20, at 12:00 noon
(following our SHAVUOT/YIZKOR
Morning Service)**

Although the Chesed Fund (formerly called "Caring Community Fund") will underwrite a portion of this luncheon, a donation of \$10 per person is requested in advance. Unfortunately, we cannot accommodate walk-ins.

*RSVP to the Temple office, 736-3619,
no later than Tuesday, May 15*

SPFTY

Starting on April 15, SPFTY will be offering a weekly "Open Lounge." Every Sunday evening from 7-8, the Youth Lounge at Sinai will be open for 8-12 graders to play video games, do homework, connect with and meet new friends, and enjoy being together. Come once or come every week, we'd love to have you! If you want to confirm that it is happening, you can text or call 413-244-9794.

Thanks,
Elizabeth and Jonathan Dubinsky

Sinai Art Show and Sale

By Beth and Mel Chafetz, Art Show co-chairs

From March 22 to 25, Sinai Temple and Safrai Gallery of Jerusalem displayed over 1500 pieces of Israeli art for sale. If you missed this year's Israeli Art Show at Sinai Temple, you missed a fun and enjoyable opportunity to shmooze with fellow congregants and community members at the opening art Gala and during the following three sale days.

Our thanks go out to our hardworking art committee members Suze Goldman, Pam Kalman and Alan Brown. Suze, Pam and Alan, along with help from Bonnie Engelman, Donna and Angel, organized and set up our Gala event, which included delicious food and many wine choices. Their work on the Gala helped kick off a great weekend of community.

Thanks go out to our many sponsors who supported this year's Sinai's fundraising effort. We had 39 sponsors at various monetary levels who helped us meet our fundraising goal.

And last, thanks to the over 20 volunteers who helped with cashiering and who worked as docents during the four sale days. A special thanks to Robin Dunn, our temple treasurer, and Elaine Rodrigues, our temple bookkeeper, who put in extra time keeping the financials straight.

Our goal was to raise \$5,000. We raised almost \$9,000. Our success shows the support Sinai has for its community. Thank you.

With great joy the Sinai Temple family
requests your presence
in our sanctuary
at 7:30 pm on
Saturday, May 19th, for our

Shavuot evening service

During this service, our confirmands
will affirm their faith in God, Israel,
Torah, and Humankind

A reception will follow the service

Our confirmands:

Emily Sarah Cooper
Alisa Michelle Goldberg
Max Reuven Levheim
Annabella Mae Whalen

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5th/6th GRADE RETREAT, 2018

Students traveled to Camp Jewell YMCA in the Berkshires for the annual retreat. Pictured here are Catie Johnson, Ella Halpern, Jenny Whalen, Dan Bouchard and Alex Weiswasser.

PURIM 2018: THE FINAL FRONTIER!

Cast members, **BACK ROW:** Dawn Metcalf, Dasha Baker, Cantor Martin Levson, Shira Simon, Phil Lesser, Sarah Cohn, Max Levheim, Chris Scanlon, Maggy Cohn; **FRONT ROW:** Yoda (Jon Metcalf), Avi Metcalf, Rabbi Mark Shapiro, Sarah Metcalf, Lisa Levheim.

