Temple Emanu-El Confirmation Class of 5781

Rabbi Magat, Cantor Edmondson & the rest of the Temple Emanu-El Congregation would like to wish a Mazel Tov to the Confirmation Class of 5781: Naomi Brown, Max Carr, Liana Bzostek and Jared Nussbaum. We are all very proud of the leaders you have become and the examples that you set both at Temple and in our Community.

We invite you to join these students for a special, meaningful, Erev Shavuot Confirmation Service on May 16, at 7:00 PM, followed by Tikun Leil Shavuot study sessions at 9:00 PM. These sessions continue the tradition of Shavuot evening Torah and Ritual studies. Check the website for more information about the study sessions.

Thank you to these Madrichim and Volunteers for helping to assemble and deliver the Passover bags


Passover Bag Packaging Team Leaders:
Phil Hankin  Alissa Meltzer
Sherri Wiesner

Teen Madrichim:
Dylan Solpon  Kadin Solpon  Joshua Tucker  Sarah Vogler  Rachel Weinberg  Samantha Wiesner  Noralee Zwick

Todah Robah
Brotherhood

Brotherhood continues to meet virtually every month and focus on providing safe, socially distanced activities for our membership until we can get back to supporting the Temple in person. As the weather improves, we have stepped up our outdoor activities. We hosted a fun bike ride on the Guadalupe River trail a few weeks back, and as I write this, we’re looking forward to a Brotherhood hike at Shoreline in late April. We’ll continue to add more events along these lines throughout the spring and early summer, so be on the lookout for events on our calendar.

We have also re-started a Brotherhood tradition: poker night. We’ll be meeting the first Thursday of every month for a casual online poker game and Zoom hangout. Look for reminders on the Temple calendar, and email brotherhood@templesanjose.org for more details.

Brotherhood continues to do its part to contribute to the community in Santa Clara Valley by volunteering at Second Harvest Food Bank food distribution events. While SHFB is still not allowing volunteer groups due to Covid-19, we are signing up as individuals for their events, and there is perhaps a greater need than there has ever been in our area, so consider joining us.

Anyone is welcome to join us for our monthly meetings (on Zoom). If you’d like to join us on May 9, or if you’d like to join us at SHFB or on poker night, please get in touch at brotherhood@templesanjose.org.

Shannon Brown
Brotherhood President 2020-2021

SAVE THE DATE FOR THE TEAMys!

Sunday, June 6 at 11:30 AM

The Temple Emanu-El Annual Meeting & Volunteer Recognition event is coming up & we want YOU to be there! Mark your calendars and stay tuned for more information! We will be sharing memories, recognizing outstanding volunteers, electing new Board Members and more!

Come join us for Part 2 of Shtisel: The Netflix Hit Series and an Inside Look at Ultra-Orthodox Life.

Wednesday, May 5 at 10:00 AM

In this lectures series we seek to promote knowledge on this group in Judaism, which strictly observes Jewish Halacha and isolates itself from the internet and any mainstream media. This is also a unique opportunity to get closer to the wonderful characters of “Shtisel” and the writer who created them, Jonathan Indursky - an ex-Ultra-Orthodox himself who left a prestigious Yeshiva for filmmaking. Register online at https://www.templesanjose.org/event/ShtiselPart2

Bat Mitzvah

Ryen Bzostek, daughter of Andy and Julie Bzostek, will be called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah on Saturday, May 22, 2021. Ryen is a seventh grader at Willow Glen Middle School. She enjoys drawing, plants, and gaming. She hasn’t done much recently because of Covid, but still spends her time texting friends and is enjoying the peacefulness of not having many responsibilities. She’s sad that she can’t see her relatives in person, but is still glad that they can join her in her Bat Mitzvah.
As Spring is in full swing, and with the arrival of May, we must say goodbye to another religious school year. I stated last year that the year was unlike any year I or any of us have experienced. And then we entered this year. We attempted to have as “normal” of a year as possible. We mimicked our in-person schedule, but tailored it to fit the on-line reality. We learned from last summer’s “Zoomin’ with Newman” on-line summer camp structure and applied it to Temple Emanu-El’s Religious School program. I am eternally grateful to the TEE community, especially the Clergy, Senior Staff, A-Team, Custodial staff, Parents/Grandparents, the Teaching Staff, Mira Karp (our intrepid RS Committee chairperson) and the RS Committee, and Sherri Wiesner, our VP of Education, for supporting the education of the students all year. We were able to construct an educational environment via Zoom and other on-line platforms that felt familiar yet different. We were able to meet on Sunday mornings (Mifkad Boker with the entire family, regular class meetings by grade, and Chuggim) and weekday afternoons (individual Hebrew sessions), providing our students the ability to see our faces, hear our voices, “gather” together with the other students, and support each other during this continued at-home time. All-in-all – a success.

As we now turn our attention to Summer and the school year 5782, what are we expecting? What questions do we have? Will we be able to have in-person gatherings each Sunday morning beginning on Sunday September 12 as planned? If we still need to institute remote learning, what will that look like and how long will it last?

The simple response is I do not have exact answers. The answers are reliant on outside factors. What I do know is that all contingencies will be planned for and we will provide the best Jewish educational experience for the students as we can create. We have learned much over the last 14 months of Zoom classes and the teachers will continue to rely on their experience when constructing lessons. One of the greatest attributes of our dedicated teaching staff is flexibility, creativity, and love of Jewish Education and TEE. I will be working with the teachers during the Summer to best prepare for all possibilities. What I ask of you is to continue to trust and support us no matter what the structure of school will bring.

In the meantime, please give virtual hugs to your teachers and tell them how much they mean to you and your children. We are especially grateful to 4 individuals who will be leaving us at the end of the school year: Cantor Edmondson, Maia Leventhal, Sela Josephs, and Deanne Ball. Each of them have brought their unique gifts and passion to TEE and we are all better for them. Thank you again to the following teaching staff members for another great year:

- Sherri Wiesner – Bonim and Madrichim Coordinator
- Maia Leventhal – Chalutzim
- Maggie Newman – Giborim and Torah School
- Dani Pattiz – Mechina and Beit No’ar
- Kristina Fernandez – Shoshanim and Torah School
- Lynn Offenhartz – Shomrim
- Randy Levinson – Beit No’ar
- Deborah Jacobstein – Art
- Sela Josephs – Torah School and Wednesdays Are EESY
- Cheriel Magat – Chuggim and Torah School
- Greg Turetzky – Torah School
- Rabbi Magat – Confirmation and B’nai Mitzvah
- Cantor Edmondson – Confirmation and B’nai Mitzvah
- Alissa Meltzer – Madrichim Training Coordinator
- Deanne Ball – RS Administrative Assistant

Mazel Tov

Congratulations to Kate & Eric on the birth of their son, Louis Alexander Kitnick.

Leo Howard Hendrickson
Born 2/24/21
Born to the parents Megan & Adam Hendrickson, and proud big brother Teddy.

Rhys Alexander Vaughan
Born 3/19/2021
Parents: Ryan Vaughan and Kendall Younger
Big brother: Remy Vaughan

Phil Hankin, MAJE, Director of Education
Temple Emanu-El

Green Team

What have you done to reduce your environmental footprint? Our Temple’s Green Team is making a difference by hosting educational events and collaborating with other organizations. Over the past few months we have hosted several educational events and one volunteer event. Two of the educational events focused on the climate crisis. The other one on growing your own food. One of the events was co-hosted by Temple Emanu-El and Congregation Shir Hadash. The other co-hosted by Temple Emanu-El and Peninsula Interfaith Climate Action (PICA). The Green Team has also called upon its members to lobby for the passage of environmental legislation. If you would like to be added to the Green Team’s distribution list, please contact me at robertlouislevy@msn.com.

The Green Team is actively trying to extend its reach by collaborating with Jewish Silicon Valley, Congregation Shir Hadash, and Congregation Beth David to create a Dayenu Circle. Dayenu Circles are the Jewish communities answer to the Climate Crisis. We are in the early formulative stages and will keep you up to date on our progress. To learn more about Dayenu Circles go to Dayenu.org.

So, what are you doing to reduce your environmental footprint? Summer is quickly approaching so here are a couple of ideas that are in synch with the season.

- Improve your diet. Eat less meat. Eat fresh food. Purchase local products. Please do not buy water from Fiji, or rice from Thailand or India. There are plenty of both in California.
- Cool your house down naturally. Open your windows when it is cool and close them (and your blinds) during the heat of the day. Only use your air conditioning when necessary.
- Unplug devices when they are not in use. Vampire appliances will suck the energy out of your house when you are not looking.
- Plant a vegetable garden. There is nothing better than home grown tomatoes.
- Plant a tree (or two). Do you know when the best time is to plant a tree? (answer at the end of the article)
- Go electric. Replace your gas-powered tools (cars included) with electric ones.
- Spread the word. Our species and all species are in serious trouble. Let everyone you know that we all need to do our part to slow the climate crisis and the 6th Great Extinction.
- Join the Green Team.

Preschool

I love Springtime in the preschool!! By this time in the year the kids are so confident and ready to take on different adventures. They have built strong friendships and one of my favorite times of the day is when they see each other arrive outside in the morning and start yelling hi or waving. Spring is also Passover and boy did our kids get into it this year!!! Our youngest friends had at least 2 of the 4 Questions down and others had them all. Chants of “no no no we will not let them go” could be heard both inside and out as the children played out the story of Passover and of course every room had a classful of jumping frogs as the kids were over the top with excitement. The sun is out, the wind is blowing and everything feels so fresh. Bubbles, sidewalk chalk, shorts and crocs have all returned in great numbers and we are enjoying being together. We are just about full for the 2021-2022 school year so please contact me if you would like enrollment information. Also for more pictures and videos please consider following us on Facebook! www.facebook.com/templeemanuelpreschool

Barbara Smead, MA.Ed
Director, Early Childhood Education, Temple Emanu-El Preschool

Temple Emanu-El would like to recognize all of our amazing teachers and staff:

Kari Medina
Kira Umeki
Connie Chung
Soheila Samanti
Raychel Mattman
Denise Martinez
Veronica Villegas
Karina Gonzales
Christina Rangel
Francesca Merilleno
Evelyn Toledo
Sarah Salazar
The week of April 10, 2021, we read the portion of the Torah called “Sh’mi” which begins with Moses instructing Aaron to sacrifice several herd animals in a burnt offering. They do this seeking God’s forgiveness, but the term “burnt offering” has taken on a darker meaning in the 20th century, especially in its Greek translation—“Holocaust”.

I make this connection because Sh’mi this year coincides with Yom HaShoah, the Holocaust Remembrance Day. This is the older of the two major Holocaust memorial days. The other one happens on the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz concentration camp—January 27—and was created by a UN resolution only in 2005. But the Jewish tradition of setting aside a day specifically to memorialize the Holocaust has its origins much earlier, and is surprisingly contentious.

Even before Israel was a country—even while the Nazis were still in power—Jews living in the Palestinian Mandate were mourning their European siblings. And still then, with the wounds fresh, there was debate among the rabbis of Jerusalem on the “correct” way to mourn.

In mid-summer, on the ninth day of the month of Av—Tisha B’Av—Jewish tradition establishes a commemoration of the destruction of both the First and Second Temples in Jerusalem. Generations of Medieval Rabbis observed this day of mourning with an increasing strictness, growing the list of prohibited activities and shows of piety.

In the 11th century, as Christian Crusaders toured through European cities en route to Jerusalem, Jews living in their path were persecuted and killed. Those deaths were tragic and horrific, and the rabbis at the time, such as Rashi, considered them as worthy of being mourned as was the destruction of the Temple, and so Tisha B’Av’s meaning grew to include “lamentations for those slain in the persecutions that occurred in our times.” (source: Rashi’s commentary on II Chronicles)

And so, in 1940s Palestinian Mandate, a debate raged: should we follow Rashi’s precedent and mourn the victims of the Nazis on Tisha B’Av, or, as a new generation of Jews argued, was this something new? Did the Holocaust warrant its own day of mourning? When the war in Europe ended, most future-Israelis were preoccupied with creating the State of Israel, but the Rabbis were locked in this argument.

There were many proposals. But ultimately, Tisha B’Av, and all other pre-existing days, were decided to be not appropriate; the argument for a new day of mourning prevailed. In the words of Emil Fackenheim, Jewish Philosopher, Reform Rabbi, and Holocaust survivor, “to lump the Holocaust with all the others would be to act as if nothing new had happened in the history of horror when the attempt was made to ‘exterminate’ the Jewish people, that is to murder saints as well as sinners, new born babies as well as adults... and the attempt was successful beyond the wildest nightmares of anyone.”

Due to the debates among the rabbis, it wasn’t until 1959 that the Israeli Knesset was able to fully create Yom HaShoah. Even once it was decided to create a new day, picking that date was contentious. Secular Israelis, still fighting to create and defend their new country, wanted Yom HaShoah to fall on the anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising—the single largest Jewish revolt against the Nazis. However, the uprising had occurred the day before Passover, so orthodox rabbis objected on religious grounds.

After two years of debate, a compromise date was reached: after Passover’s end, not on a Shabbat, and still within the time span of the Uprising.

The memories of the Jewish victims of the Holocaust must live on, but there are still today orthodox Jews debating against the existence of Yom HaShoah. While their argument is not likely to prove successful, it does give us an illuminating view into the conflicting ways to interpret our ancient traditions.

Branden Frederick for the Ritual Committee

Bar Mitzvah

Adam Fox, son of Polly and Eric, will be called to the Torah as a Bar Mitzvah on May 15, 2021. Adam is in 8th grade at Fisher Middle School in Los Gatos. Adam has waited patiently and practiced persistently for his bar mitzvah since Covid disrupted his original plans last spring. Adam is a big fan of the entertainment of the Star Wars and Marvel Comics universe. He is also a big Lego builder and enthusiastic bicyclist. But more than any hobby, Adam’s favorite activity is engaging with people of all ages - kids and adults. He is an outgoing and friendly young man who goes out of his way to extend warmth and kindness to others. His mitzvah project, Adam’s Sox, provided a local homeless charity with more than 700 warm and waterproof socks - the number one need of the homeless population in San Jose. Adam is excited to celebrate his mitzvah with his family and friends. His parents, brother Ben, and grandmothers Barbara and Jeanne send an enthusiastic Mazel Tov to Adam in recognition of his hard work, great attitude and perseverance!
Sisterhood members and guests enjoyed a special Passover Women’s Seder on Thursday, April 1, 2021. Although we shared together, read from a Women’s Haggadah, and enjoyed singing while on zoom, we look forward to being together soon.

A special sisterhood campership opportunity was provided to Sisterhood members for their children to attend a Jewish summer camp. Also, Sisterhood donated $2,000 to the general campership fund at Temple Emanu-El.

Please join us for our Virtual Volunteer Celebration on Sunday, May 23, 2021 at 10:00 AM on zoom. Look for your Evite coming out soon. Please join us as we honor our volunteers and share photos of our amazing women who have volunteered over the years. Our Woman of Valor and Lee Axelrad Malach award recipient will also be recognized along with a special Sisterhood member who will receive our Lifetime Service Award.

If you would like to learn more about Sisterhood and/or volunteer at events when we are in person again, please contact Co-Presidents Judy Levy at 408-834-9051 or Beverly Mendel at 408-239-6416.

Feel free to email Sisterhood at sisterhood@templesanjose.org

Virtual Volunteer Recognition – Sunday, May 23, 2021 at 10:00 AM

Woman of Valor: Deborah Zimmer

Lee Axelrad Malach Award: Arlene Williams

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Bat Mitzvah

Malaka Osias, daughter of Joel & Fatmata Osias, will be called the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah on Saturday, May 8, at 10:30 AM on Zoom. Please register on our website to attend.

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Great ZIGZAG Events in May!

Are you itching to go traveling again? Are you wondering how to get refunds on those vacations you booked for 2020? Or do you just like to hear about savvy ways to travel? If so, be sure to register for “Smart Traveling with Christopher Elliott,” an informative Question and Answer session which will be held on Zoom at noon on Thursday, May 6.

Christopher Elliott is a nationally syndicated consumer advocate and travel trouble shooter who has also authored several books. If you’ve read his Travel Trouble Shooter column in the Sunday Mercury News, you know he is extremely knowledgeable and savvy. He’s also entertaining and personable, and you can have him Zooming into your home!

Christopher will be focusing on smart ways to navigate the travel industry. Register by going to the Calendar on the TEE website, and don’t forget to include your travel questions.

Also, in May, the highly successful parenting group, “Grown and Flown,” will meet at 7:00 PM on Wednesday, May 19. Led by Debbie Michels, this discussion group focuses on maturing young adults (high school, college and just beyond). Get great ideas for supporting your grown children as they embark on their individual paths. This is a challenging time for parents, especially when we see our young people make choices we don’t necessarily think are good. Fortunately, we can learn from other parents’ experiences as we navigate these unsettled waters.

Register for this wonderful discussion, and bring your experiences to share and questions to ask.

Thursday, May 6
Noon

Wednesday, May 19
7:00 PM
We Remember


Thank You for Your Generous Contributions

20/20 Project
Larry & Audrey Fox, in memory of Manny Mgdoll
Joan Green, in memory of Manny Mgdoll
Carol Thailer, in memory of Henry J Thailer

Adult Education Donations
Robert Berg, in honor of Shirley Lee and her Lwowsk Series
Judith and Allan Bernstein, in honor of Shirley Lee for her four wonderful and informative lectures on the Jews of Lithuania
Elinn & Ken Bloomfield, in honor of Shirley Lee’s excellent presentation on the Jews of Lithuania. What a delight
Stephanie Davis Don, in appreciation of Shirley Lee’s wonderful Lithuania series
Pauline Dror, in honor of Shirley Lee for her wonderful presentation of Lithuanian Jews
Merryl Kravitz, with a great thank you to Shirley Lee for her outstanding series on Jews of Lithuania!
Yvonne Nemec, in appreciation of Shirley Lee for her presentation of “Jews of Lithuania”
Donna Padmos
Judy Sack, in honor of her presentation of Shirley Lee’s Lithuania classes
Sybil Sommer, in honor of Shirley Lee’s wonderful presentations
Carol Thailer, in honor of Shirley Lee for her incredible lectures

Campership Fund
Manfred & Virginia Siegler, in memory of Rose & Abe Lifite
Temple Emanu-El Sisterhood

Cantor’s Discretionary Fund
Adam and Megan Hendrickson, in honor of the birth of Leo
Howard Hendrickson

Endowment Fund
Jacob & Pauline Braunstein, in honor of Shirley Lee
Joan Fox, in honor of the special birthday of Ruth Fox

General Fund
Steve & Rhea Carter, in memory of Harry Hagler
Stephen & Arlene Greenberg, in memory of Ben Weiss
Stephen & Arlene Greenberg, in memory of Malvin Weiss
Stephen & Arlene Greenberg, in memory of Alexander Kanicruz
Steve & Annette Ladowitz, in memory of Herman Ladowitz
Bob Levine, in memory of Harry Levine
Bob Levine, in memory of Philip Ruby
Bob Levine, in memory of David Reiser
Margaret & Robert Newman, in memory of John Newman
Anthony Saenz
Carol Thailer, in memory of Henry J Thailer
Henry & Debra Watkins

Israel Scholarship Fund
Louise Chen, in memory of Pearl Schneideman

JoAnne Salmon-Tehrani
Homeless Fund
Laurie Pruden, in appreciation of Shirley Lee’s excellent program, Jews of Lithuania

Judith Jurman Omens Cemetery
Beautification Fund
Ethel Ress, in memory of Harry Simon
Ethel Ress, in memory of Albert Simon

Rabbi’s Discretionary Fund
Manfred Ascher & Gloria Melmon Ascher, in honor of Dan & Shirley Lee and Shirley’s wonderful Jews of Lithuania Presentation
Adam and Megan Hendrickson, in honor of the birth of Leo
Howard Hendrickson
Gloria Loventhal, in memory of Viola Loventhal
Lori Rush, in memory of Harry & Yetta Stivelman
Lori Rush, in memory of Gertrude Stivelman
Bernice & Ben Vitcov, in memory of Edith Nissman
Bernice & Ben Vitcov

Scholar in Residence Fund
Robert and Maggie Cant, in memory of Dora Kaisel
Robert and Maggie Cant, in memory of Anna Becker and Stanley Kaisel

If you would like to make a contribution, visit www.templesanjose.org
The 2021 Festival will be streamed 100% online.

You will be able to enjoy the very best films of Jewish and Israeli content from the comfort and safety of your home. All sponsors will receive access to the full slate of Festival films. In addition, each sponsorship level includes exclusive, sharable links for all-Festival viewing.

So that we can recognize you as a valuable donor, please sign up by March 30, 2021.

BECOME A 2021 PATRON NOW AT: SVJFF.ORG

Your generosity will go a long way towards helping SVJFF to hold on during this challenging time.

The Silicon Valley Jewish Film Festival is an approved 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and a portion of your donation may be tax deductible.
The Marvelous Matzah Experiment
Jewish deli comfort food, delivered right to your door!

Offering a variety of classic favorites, made with family recipes.

Matzah ball soup, brisket, ruebens, pastrami, pickles & more!

Order today delivery or pick-up

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If you would like to advertise in Temple Emanu-El’s Connections contact Oliver Housman at oliver@templesanjose.org.
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<td>10:00 AM – Shirei: The Netflix Hit Series and an Inside Look at Ultra-Orthodox Life - Part 2</td>
<td>12:00 PM – ZIG ZAG Smart Traveling with Christopher Elliott</td>
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Clergy

Dana Magat | Senior Rabbi – rabbimagat@templesanjose.org
Amanda Edmondson | Cantor – cantoramanda@templesanjose.org
Joseph Gitin, D.D. ("z") | Rabbi Emeritus

Committee Chairs

Len Schreibstein | Adult Education Chair – lifelonglearning@templesanjose.org
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Branden Frederick | Ritual – ritual@templesanjose.org
Sharon Genkin | Tikvun Olam – to@templesanjose.org
Kim Jackman | Membership – membership@templesanjose.org
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Jessica Blitchok | Endowment Committee – endowment@templesanjose.org
Rebecca Frederick | Preschool Committee – pscommittee@templesanjose.org

Staff

Stephanie Pollock | Executive Director – stephanie@templesanjose.org | 408-292-0939 ext. 233
Barbara Smead | Director, Early Childhood Education – barbara@templesanjose.org | 408-293-8660 | #434404443
Phil Hankin | Director of Education – phil@templesanjose.org | 408-292-3223
Shantra Smith | Bookkeeper – shantra@templesanjose.org | 408-292-0939 x235
Iris Bendahan | Administrative Assistant & Clergy Support – iris@templesanjose.org | 408-292-0939 x 231
Oliver Housman | Marketing & Communications Coordinator – oliver@templesanjose.org | 408-292-0939 x234
Cherie Ravel | Cemetery Administrator – cherie@templesanjose.org | 408-674-5867

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