

Saturday and Sunday Workshop Descriptions

Saturday May 5th

8:00 - 9:30am

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| Bird Watching | Led by Adam Rudt |
| Walk a portion of the Appalachian trail in search of local and migrating birds. Be on the lookout for bald eagles, hawks, herons, among many others! Bring binoculars, if you have! | |

9:00 - 9:45am

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| Yoga and Meditation | Led by Camilla Calamandrei & Edward Guttman |
| Wake up your mind, body, and spirit with some moderately vigorous yoga, and mindful meditation. No previous experience needed. <i>This workshop is for adults and children 11 years and older.</i> | |

1:30 - 2:30pm

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| Niggunim | Led by Debbie Rand |
| Join us for a mix of joyous and contemplative singing of niggunim after our Shabbat meal, as a mode of spiritual practice on our retreat. Words will be provided but mainly we will sing without words. All voices welcome! | |

2:45 - 3:30pm

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| A Brief Introduction to Bridge | Led by Anne Mittman and Albert Tom |
| In keeping with the theme of our retreat, Love Your Neighbor as Yourself, learn to play the card game you can play with your "neighbors" all over the world. And since bridge is a partnership game, getting along with your partner and opponents is an integral part of the game! | |
| We will touch upon the basics of bridge card play and bidding. For those of you who are more experienced, we will have a supervised play area where you can play and ask questions as they arise. | |
| No experience is necessary, come alone or with friends. All ages welcome. Taught by Anne Mittman and Albert Tom, bridge professionals in their previous life. | |

Saturday May 5th

There are two sets of workshops on Saturday afternoon. Please select one workshop to attend during each of the time slots.

Session A (3:30 - 4:45pm)

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| The Wisdom of Musar | Led by Rabbinic Intern David Eber & Shel Schiffman |
| <p>Although the Jewish tradition of Musar (moral instruction and discipline) has roots in the Bible, and in the course of Jewish history has been embodied in some classic books, it was not until the late 19th century that one could speak of a Musar movement, and then only within certain segments of the European Orthodox world. However, in recent years, interest in Musar has surged significantly among liberal Jews in the U.S. and Israel, many of whom are adapting and adopting Musar practices and learning from the Musar classics. Come to these two sessions to see if Musar could work for you and for our community.</p> <p>In this first session we will consider Musar’s place among the worlds’ ethical philosophies and gauge its alignment with secular approaches to moral education. Then we will learn some Musar texts and practices that can help us progress toward loving our neighbors and ourselves. The second session on Sunday morning will provide an opportunity to share and assess our experience with Musar over the weekend and to further extend our knowledge of Musar practices.</p> | |

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| Improv Basics: How to Shine by Being Generous to Others, and Make Your Partner Look Good | Led by Lynn Cohen & Sam Cohen |
| <p>What if the key to coming out on top is to turn the spotlight onto your partners, and to lift them up instead of seeking to lift yourself? Join us to find out why “Always Saying ‘Yes’” to the ideas of others, and “Making Your Partner Look Good,” WON’T steal your thunder, and WILL leave you smelling like a rose. We’ll share the fundamentals of what makes a good improv scene, song, or story, and practice those skills by playing a variety of fun improv games in an inclusive and supportive atmosphere. Often, your first idea is your best idea, but fear of judgment shuts you down. Come experience what it feels like when your partners have your back. It means you cannot fail. An atmosphere of kindness will be set up from the get-go. We offer you a promise that you will be taken care of and that anyone can learn these concepts in less than a minute. Perfection is neither expected nor encouraged.</p> <p><i>This workshop is for adults only. No prior experience necessary.</i></p> | |

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| Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan’s Ethics Of Social Justice | Led by Diane Cole |
| <p>Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan, founder of our synagogue and of the Reconstructionist approach to Judaism, wrote, “Why teach the Prophet’s denunciation of the social injustices of their day, if not to inspire us to remedy the glaring injustices of our own social order?” He spoke of “the sacredness of human rights,” and of the ideals and aspirations of freedom and equality embedded in the American constitution. In this informal conversation, we’ll begin by defining what Reconstructionism is, and go on to discuss Kaplan’s view that moral teachings derived from the Torah can help lead us “to remedy the glaring injustices of our own social order.”</p> | |

Saturday May 5th

Session B (5:00 – 6:15pm)

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| “We must learn how to be surprised”: Mindfulness Meditation Practice and Discussion | Led by Liz Emens |
| <p>Heschel famously said that “we must learn how to be surprised,” both by daily wonders and by evil acts, but <i>how</i> do we learn to be surprised? And how can we learn to be more present, for rituals and prayers, and also for ourselves, our loved ones, and our neighbors? In this workshop, we’ll consider what mindfulness meditation has to offer these aspirations. We will start with an explanation of what mindfulness is; then we’ll practice mindfulness meditation together; and then we’ll discuss our experience and its connection to our practice of Judaism and to possible pathways to loving our neighbors, near and far. The discussion will be tailored to people brand new to mindfulness, but experienced meditators are very much welcome to come practice in community and to share how meditation has intersected with your practice of Judaism and with your relationships. Liz Emens has received mindfulness teacher training through the University of Massachusetts Medical School Center for Mindfulness and the Mindful Schools program, and she is building a mindfulness program at Columbia Law School where she teaches.</p> <p><i>This workshop is for adults only.</i></p> | |

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| Neighbor, Stranger, Other: Levinas’s spiritual ethics | Led by David Greenberg |
| <p>What obligation do we have to our neighbor? Emmanuel Levinas’s philosophy, Talmudic commentary, and reflections on Judaism explore the concept of alterity - the acknowledgement of radical difference between self and other. This session will explore Levinas’s views about a transcendent obligation to the other, and its implications for an ethical conception of Jewish spirituality.</p> | |

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| “Where then is my hope and my good—who can glimpse it?” (Job 17:15) Literary Responses to Difficult Times from The Book of Job, Tillie Olsen, Blume Lempel and Others | Led by Nancy Ludmerer |
| <p>We will begin by looking at excerpts from The Book of Job in Robert Alter’s beautiful translation. How does one respond to catastrophe? Then we will leap forward to 20th and 21st century writers, writing in Yiddish, German, and Arabic as well as English, many of whom explore similar themes and threads, with a focus on Tillie Olsen (1912-2007). Born on a tenant farm in Nebraska, one of six children of Russian Jewish immigrants, she grew up socialist, worked at menial jobs into her 40’s, and only then launched her writing career in earnest. We will come to know Olsen’s “Vision of Fear and Hope” and those of the other writers we will consider, concluding with Osama Alomar, born in Syria in 1968. All excerpts and other works will be provided in advance of the session -- dip in as you please (no need to read everything to participate).</p> <p>Please join us!</p> | |

Sunday May 6th

8:00am with staggered return time

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| Nature Walk | Led by Malcolm Spector |
| Malcolm Spector and his SAJ trail maintainers will lead a short walk on the hiking trail that the SAJ has been maintaining for the past six years. We will bring our tools and demonstrate our work. The trail is a five minute drive from Camp. Good gym shoes or boots recommended. We will walk at a compassionate pace. | |

8:00 - 8:45am

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| Starting and Evolving a Morning Blessings Practice | Led by Dan Woods |
| The morning blessings, an essential part of the prayers, blessings, liturgy, and body of historical practices of the Jewish people, guide us through important dimensions of our lives for which we can be grateful. To create and sustain a practice, it is important for each of us to understand why we would say such blessings. From a Kaplanian Reconstructionist perspective, we are encouraged to reach out to connect with the power that helps us grow. This session aims to provide a framework for using the morning blessings as a practice to sustain and increase gratitude and promote growth. Dan will explain his ideas about making the blessings your own by defining a clear motivation and creating personal backstories that connect the blessings to your lives and experience. | |

9:00 - 10:00am

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| Help SAJ Design Our New Website | Led by Edward Guttman |
| The best websites are strongly informed by the people who use them! We'll work together at this workshop, using a card sorting method to explore what information should be on the site and how it should be grouped and labeled. This will help us to do things like decide how to set up the navigation and what to put on the homepage. | |

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| Yes, you too can leyn Torah | Led by Cantor Lisa Arbisser |
| Join Cantor Lisa for a brief history and an overview of the learning process of this ancient system of chanting. We will look at the trope symbols, which predate modern musical notation, and see how they were created and used by the rabbis to convey what is in the Torah. | |

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| Musar Check-In | Led by Rabbinic Intern David Eber & Shel Schiffman |
| This second session will provide an opportunity to share and assess our experience with Musar over the weekend and to further extend our knowledge of Musar practices. | |

10:15 - 11:30am

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| V'ahavta L're'acha Kamocha — Love Your Neighbor as Yourself: Being a Good Person in a Hard World What it Meant to our Ancestors and What it Means to Us Today | Led by Rabbi Lauren Grabelle Herrmann |
| In this session, we will have the opportunity to go deeper in the study of our retreat weekend theme. Taking a Reconstructionist approach, we will look at classical and contemporary sources to unearth the implications for this passage for our ancestors and for us. No previous experience with Hebrew or text required; all are invited to participate. | |

Various Times

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| Tallit Workstation - Creating a Communal Tallit | Led by Rachel Bitterfield, Katherine Daniels, & Sylvia Ripps |
| As a commemoration of the 2018 retreat, we are asking each participant to design a fabric square representing our retreat theme. These squares will be joined together using quilting techniques and then made into a large sized tallit which will be used to cover our children during synagogue rituals when our children are blessed, or for large group aliyot. Materials will be provided. Please come to the work station during one of the open sessions to express your idea of <i>V'ahavta L're'acha Kamocha: Love your Neighbor as Yourself.</i> | |