



















Ella Stern, Rachel Buchanan, and Claudia Hirsch volunteering at the Purim Carnival

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Beginning Again, Together

By **RABBI PAUL F. COHEN**

Senior Rabbi

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Beloved Friends,

New beginnings are almost always a challenge and even frightening. Yet, for me there is always great excitement and anticipation for the next new opportunity. The pandemic has cast a huge shadow on our world for the past year punctuated by illness, loss, and grief. I know that we are all anxious to welcome the new beginning that will come when there is an end to the pandemic.

Our ancestors waited nearly 430 years for redemption from Egyptian bondage and their new beginning as a free people in their own land. The challenge and the fear that enveloped them is beautifully articulated in one of my favorite *midrashim*. The Israelites, finally freed from Egypt, find themselves seemingly trapped with the Sea of Reeds in front of them and the Egyptian legions bearing down on them from behind. But *Nachshon*, the son of *Aminadav*, a true leader was willing to step forward and

literally take a leap of faith. He walked into the sea until the water washed over his head. It was only then that the sea parted, and the Israelites could journey forward safely to begin their new life.

The month of *Nisan* during which we celebrate Passover is actually the first month of the Hebrew calendar. It is one of four new years we celebrate. Imagine the great wisdom and creativity woven into our calendar. Every year we have at least four opportunities to begin anew. What great hope this inspires! We never have to be stuck in what may have become routine or even destructive.

Though we certainly do not have to wait, Passover reminds us that we are, each of us, on the journey to redemption, a new beginning.





“ There are always new opportunities that lie just beyond each minor setback. For every bunch of kale that doesn't develop the way you'd like, a new bulb is breaking through the soil in search of sun.

By KATIE BICK
Communications Coordinator
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This spring, I spent some time volunteering in one of Chicago's many, wonderful community gardens. Although I don't have much of a green thumb, after an isolating year largely cooped up indoors, I wanted to go outside and participate in something communal.

If there's anything I learned from my short time volunteering, it's that gardening is a lesson in resilience; with the unpredictable weather in the city, failure is inevitable, and crops won't grow as planned. However, there are always new opportunities that lie just beyond each minor setback. For every bunch of kale that doesn't develop the way you'd like, a new bulb is breaking through soil in search of sun. No matter what, something new will always find a way to bloom.

Over the past year, with the trials of the pandemic, I think we've

all grown tenfold more resilient. After a year of setbacks, with the end of the pandemic in sight, we're all ready to come together and celebrate the new beginning of a post-pandemic world.

This issue of The Covenant celebrates new beginnings. Rabbi Cohen's cover story discusses the story of Passover and the new beginning that it offered. Similarly, Danny Glassman's perspective piece, which envisions our new, post-pandemic world and the ways we can leverage tools from the pandemic to create something meaningful and new together.

This issue also shares some new beginnings for Temple Jeremiah itself. Not only does the April Covenant feature an article about Temple Jeremiah's new budget plans, but it also shares information about our new, COVID-19 operating procedures, which allow for us to share greater amounts of space together.

Overall, this issue is filled with hope for our new beginning as community. I invite you all to celebrate these new beginnings with us as we enter a new chapter together.

Pandemic Technology: Our Bridge Into the Post-COVID World



By DANNY GLASSMAN
Executive Director
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I am authoring this article on the eve of President Biden's address marking a year since the COVID-19 pandemic has shut down much of our nation. It's hard to believe that we have been living in this "alternative universe" that has completely upended our lives for a full year.

Now, when I walk down the aisle in a grocery store, I flash back to two hours lines with carts overloaded because we had no idea what was about to happen. When I drive down the street, I can't help but think about how eerie it was when the lockdown began, and how I felt I was a criminal for sneaking around outside. With the end of the pandemic in sight, it's impressive to see how far we've come since last spring.

I attribute much of this progress to our collective efforts to help each other during this trying year. I have been saying for months that the pandemic has forced us to make ourselves better.

However, as we begin what I hope is a steady transition from the lives we have been forced to live to something more like what

we used to have, I find that I cannot fully fathom what our post-COVID-19 world will look like.

There is a great deal of stuff I am excited to welcome back. I can't wait to go to live music venues, swim at the public pool, and walk into stores without wearing a mask. However, while I'm eager to move forward from the pandemic, there are several pandemic-era tools and innovations I think could be useful and helpful in our post-pandemic world.

Even before the pandemic, I was a frequent user of Zoom for my volunteer work with NATA (National Association for Temple Administration). Video conferencing allowed me to network with my colleagues throughout the country face to face, a welcome alternative to waiting to see them once a year at our conference.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, Zoom has become something new entirely. It is the lifeline for many people who want to protect themselves by staying physically distanced from others. At Temple Jeremiah, we have turned Zoom from an office communication tool to a virtual sanctuary and foyer where congregants gather and experience the joy of belonging.

Now the question we have all been tossing around at Temple Jeremiah is how to take what we have learned during the

continued on next page

pandemic, and use it to enhance what we do afterwards?

We are committed to figuring out how we make Temple Jeremiah as inclusive as possible, which includes making our in-person experiences available to those who cannot be here with us in the temple. We did this in the past by offering livestreamed services from the Schreiber Sanctuary and Golder Chapel. However, these past livestreams were still shots, offering the viewer a very passive worship experience.

We want to make the experience of those at home as close as possible to being here in person. In the coming weeks we will be experimenting with new tools that will allow us to run services in person to limited numbers of people while using Zoom to bring in others. We hope to be able to incorporate the images and videos that our congregation has so warmly embraced throughout the last year.

A digital tefillah session is not something new, but the ability to have people from all over the country, even the world, join in on the session is new. This is something we'd like to maintain in order to keep our members and friends engaged in temple life, no matter where they are.

Going forward, we also want to make sure that we provide a space for everyone to interact with each other, both in-person and online. I have been joking that I would love to be on Zoom and

using a 360-degree camera to see someone dozing off during a long sermon (which never happens at Temple Jeremiah!) These are all things that would make the worship experience more enriching for all.

We have much more to offer than just worship. Temple Jeremiah has wonderful opportunities to do hands on social justice work like Feed the Hungry and Backpack Blessings. How can we take the virtual pieces from the COVID-era and apply them to our Social Justice activities? What about allowing the congregation to send meals through a digital service? Maybe we could continue to use online marketplaces to provide warm clothing to those in need during the winter. Considering the success of our Amazon-based Sock in the Box drive in December 2020, there's no reason to not continue to employ digital methods to give back.

In short, the post-pandemic applications of the technology we've been using over the past year are endless. I can see a future in which pandemic-era technology can help us continue to serve our congregational mission: fostering a Jewish community of meaningful connection.

We want to use technology as a tool to achieve our goals but not as a means to an end. Our greatest success throughout COVID has been our continued strong connection to each other.

Temple Jeremiah continues to grow from strength to strength.



IAC Israel Fun Fact:

Did you know...

IDF's policies regarding LGBTQ+ soldiers are recognized as among the world's most accepting, ensuring that no soldiers are discriminated against based on their sexual orientation. In 2014, the IDF introduced new guidelines to ensure support for transgender soldiers.

Weekly Torah Portions

We invite you to join us on Saturday mornings to discuss the Torah portion and how it might apply to our lives. We meet virtually at 9:30 a.m. every Saturday. To join us on Zoom, visit zoom.us/j/132889355.



April 3, 2021

Pesach VII

Exodus 13:17 – 15:26

April 10, 2021

Shmini

Leviticus 9:1 – 11:47

April 17, 2021

Tazria-Metzora

Leviticus 12:1 – 15:33

April 24, 2021

Achrei Mot-Kedoshim

Leviticus 16:1 – 20:27

Hitting the Right Note: Ryder Tiplitsky's Musical Mitzvah Project



Ryder Tiplitsky

After picking up an acoustic guitar at age six, Ryder Tiplitsky discovered his passion for music. Now, at age thirteen, music plays an essential role in Ryder's life. Not only does he take music lessons at School of Rock Highwood, but he also plays in a band with his friends, performing at local venues in the greater Chicago area. "Music means a lot to me," said Ryder. "It's an important part of who I am."

Ryder's love of music guided him this winter when searching for his Mitzvah Project. "I was looking for different organizations that use music to help others," said Ryder. "Most of the ones I came across only donated music therapy or only donated instruments to those they helped out. When I found the Ukulele Kids Club and learned that they gave kids both music therapy and instruments, I knew they were special."

The Ukulele Kids Club is an international charity that has aided thousands of children around the world to overcome the stress, anxiety, and health challenges of serious health conditions. The organization provides hospitalized children with music therapy as well as ukuleles that they can use during their hospital stay. The Ukulele Kids Club prides itself on giving the lifelong gift of music to children—patients are encouraged to take their ukuleles home after their release so they can continue playing the instrument and finding joy in the music.

This goal resonated with Ryder. "I love music. It's not just fun, but also healing," said Ryder. "I think music can make everyone feel better. When I play my instruments—either by myself or in my band—I always feel better. I know that kids in the hospital will feel better when they have their own instruments to play and take home with them."

For his Mitzvah Project, Ryder decided to raise funds for The Ukulele Kids Club, specifically with the goal of providing ukuleles for pediatric patients at Evanston Hospital. "My brother, Casey, has

"I think music can make everyone feel better. When I play instruments—either by myself or in my band—I always feel better. I know that the kids in the hospital will feel better when they have their own instruments to play and take home with them."

a chronic disease called Eosinophilic Esophagitis—EoE, for short," said Ryder. "He spends a lot of time at Evanston Hospital, seeing doctors and getting tests. I knew that if I could give ukuleles and a little bit of music to the children's program at the hospital, I would be able to provide comfort, joy and healing to kids like my brother during rough times."

To help raise funds, Ryder put his musical skills to use and organized a digital benefit concert. "While I would have liked this concert to take place in-person, the current situation with COVID-19 didn't allow me to perform that way," said Ryder. "So, instead of selling tickets, I asked people to donate to the Ukulele Kids Club online. Every donation counted as a "ticket" to my virtual concert."

The concert, which featured performances of rock hits by Van Halen, Cheap Trick, and Coldplay, was recorded and shared with donors in early February. As a digital encore, Ryder performed an original song he had written about his Torah portion. "The song was all about saying and being sorry," said Ryder. "I wanted to share the idea that, just like music, apologizing and making amends can be healing."

Overall, Ryder wants to continue to help heal the world. "There are many ways to do *Tikkun Olam*. You can heal the world with music, with saying sorry, and by helping others," said Ryder. "It's meaningful to me to keep giving back."

To check out Ryder's Bar Mitzvah concert, visit: wevideo.com/view/2035466636



Ryder's Bar Mitzvah Concert



Ryder performing his original song

Persevering Through the Pandemic with Brotherhood

By RUSTY COLEMAN

Temple Jeremiah Brotherhood Member

warrencoleman@gmail.com

The pandemic has not slowed down Brotherhood. During the past year, we've held meetings (virtually, of course) and pursued many of our normal activities, those that could be safely held. Some of the more recent include:

- Packing and delivering food for Backpack Blessings
- Donating equipment for Backpack Blessings
- Raising funds for Bene Shalom Congregation for the Deaf
- Donating to Texans who were harmed by historically severe winter weather

Brotherhood also has renewed its program to award scholarships for Jewish overnight camp. Because of the pandemic, awards to last year's winners were rolled over to this summer's camping season. In addition, new scholarships will be granted this year.

If you have recently joined our congregation, you may be interested in our many and varied programs. In recent years,

Brotherhood has sponsored talks that focus on men's health issues, including heart health, bone and joint health, and dental health. Other events have included barbecues, bingo nights, Brotherhood Shabbat, basketball and baseball outings, jazz nights and wine tasting parties. We've also served as waiters at the Uptown Café as one of our many social action activities. Our Jeremiah service activities have included distributing Yom Hashoah candles, organizing our Hebrew School hot dog lunch for its Walk for Israel and ushering for High Holiday services. The Brotherhood's tzedakah fund donates money to worthy causes in our community, state, nation, and throughout the world.

Beyond all these outstanding activities, Brotherhood members have a chance to form close and enduring friendships – something many members say is a key benefit to joining our organization.

If all of this sounds interesting to you, we invite you to contact our president, Dan Bellows at dbellows60025@yahoo.com.

We also invite you to join our email group. By doing so, you'll be able to find out about our social and educational programs, as well as opportunities to volunteer or contribute to social causes.

Join Brotherhood's mailing list
by visiting <https://groups.io/g/tjbro>

RABBI COHEN (continued from page 1)

The *Haggadah* demands that we each feel as if we ourselves were a part of the Exodus and the birth of a new community of free people. For many today the vaccines are the Sea of Reeds in front of us and the coronavirus is the Egyptian army chasing from behind. Yet, the vaccine and the continuing use of masks and physical distancing as well as handwashing are the key to opening our world to that new beginning we so anxiously await and yearn for. There is hope, my friends, that this will come soon.

“A new beginning is about being better so that this community can be better. What was true for our ancestors is true for us as well.

Our ancestors' journey to freedom began with their safe passage through the sea and it did not end there. The journey was a process of building and growing. Their next step was Mt. Sinai where they would receive *Torah*, the instruction manual of how to be a human, a holy person, and how to build a sacred community.

Again, I call forward another cherished *midrash*. God would only give the *Torah* to the people if they could provide good guarantors, if they could prove worthy of this gift. After many

failed suggestions they offered their children. That is to say, they vowed to teach their children *Torah* as the guarantee that they would remain worthy of the gift.

You see, one of the key ingredients of beginning anew is not the focus on me alone. A new beginning is about being better so that this community can be better. What was true for our ancestors is true for us as well.

I hope that you will join me on this journey. This year as we count the days between Passover and Shavuot, the festival that celebrates the giving of *Torah*, we will use a *Mussar* lens. For the seven weeks of what is the Counting of the *Omer*, we will study the *middot* that will help us build better versions of ourselves so that we can build a better community and a better world.

Let's take hold of this new beginning together.

Shalom,



COVID-19 Operating Procedures Update

By TEMPLE JEREMIAH'S COVID-19 TASK FORCE

Dear Fellow Congregants,

Pikuach Nefesh, the preservation and protection of life, is one command that supersedes almost every other command in our Jewish tradition. Keeping this value front and center, the COVID-19 Advisory Task Force has reviewed our current operating procedures and made the following updates, which will go into effect immediately.

How, and when, will we reopen?

As mentioned in our previous updates, as tempting as it is to identify a specific date for when we will go back to “normal,” the nature of COVID-19 and its spread makes this virtually impossible. Drawing upon guidelines established by other faith communities and the recommendations of the CDC, we have initiated a phased reopening as outlined below. The COVID-19 Advisory Task Force will evaluate our procedures every six weeks to determine the best course of action moving forward. The following procedures will be applicable to all synagogue gatherings (both onsite and offsite), usage of the facility by synagogue partners, and all who enter into a rental agreement with Temple Jeremiah.

CURRENT SPECIFICS (AS OF MARCH 3RD, 2021):

We will follow all guidelines as indicated by Cook County, the State of Illinois, and the CDC, yet reserve the right to further enhance our procedures to fulfill our number one goal: the health and safety of our community.

- In-person lifecycle events and worship are permitted with no more than 50 participants. This number will continue to be evaluated on a regular basis.
- Everyone wears a mask for the entire event.
- Only one rabbi will be in the service at a time. The cantor may participate in lifecycle events/worship in the Schreibman Sanctuary only with the use of a designated area for singing and chanting.
- Services will be modified to maintain physical distancing.
- Guests need to bring their own tallit and kippah. Prayer books will be available to use and safely stored after use.

- All who touch the Torah should sanitize their hands prior to handling.

The building will follow stringent entrance and safety procedures which include:

- Pre-registration for anyone entering the building which includes completing a waiver form three days in advance.
- There will be designated entrances and exits to help maintain physical distance.
- Temperature and health screening questions will be asked of each person upon entering.
- If you have any symptoms (cough, cold, sneezing, fever, etc.) you will not be permitted in the building.
- Physical distancing will be observed at all times.

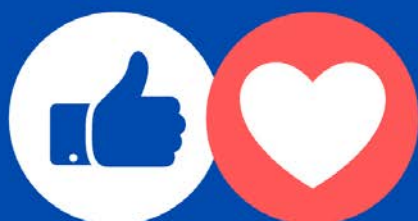
Select programs may take place inside of the physical building. For these programs, all the above stated policies will be enforced. Similarly, select programs may take place outside of the building. These programs will require all to wear face masks and practice in physical distancing.

Food service will not take place within the temple. Events occurring outside of our physical space may offer food provided it is individually wrapped.

Also, all worship and programming being held within the physical building will continue in our current digital format as well.

When entering Temple Jeremiah you assume risk and acknowledge that while Temple Jeremiah regularly cleans and sanitizes our building, we cannot guarantee that you will be protected from the spread of COVID-19.

We will also follow the above guidelines if the clergy is officiating at a lifecycle event at a different location, such as a funeral or wedding. The above guidelines will stay in effect until such time as new information has been released by the Governor and the CDC, or health officials. To say that these are very trying times seems so inadequate. We join you in the prayer and the hope that we will see a re-opening of our world soon. Until that time, know that we are doing everything we can to keep our community safe and connected.



Follow Us on Facebook!

Search Temple Jeremiah and click the "Like" button. So easy!

- ♥ Upcoming Events
- ♥ Event Photos
- ♥ Announcements
- ♥ COVID-19 Updates
- ♥ Holiday Messages
- ♥ And much more!

A Report From the Treasurer

By **SUE WEITZMAN**

Temple Jeremiah Treasurer

I thought it would be a good time to report briefly on Temple Jeremiah's current fiscal year budget, discuss the Budget Committee's thoughts on our next budget, and also give you an update on Temple Jeremiah's Investment Portfolio.

FISCAL YEAR 2020-2021

It was just a year ago that our worlds were turned upside down by the COVID-19 pandemic. Clergy, senior leadership, temple staff and our amazing community has shown that with hard work, compassion, imagination, and a belief that we are 'all in this together' we can come through this year stronger and more determined to make Temple Jeremiah a very special place for not only each and every one of us but for those that may need our help as well.

The Budget Committee's goal is to deliver a fiscally responsible and balanced budget to the membership at the May Annual Meeting. It took a lot of work and countless meetings to reach that goal for the 2020-2021 fiscal year, but I am happy to report that we are on course to be on budget for our current fiscal year that ends this June 30th.

FISCAL YEAR 2021-2022

The Budget Committee has been meeting for the past several weeks in an effort to analyze projected expenses and income for our next fiscal year. This is quite a challenge since we do not know what type of year may be on the horizon. In particular, under current circumstances it is difficult to project income that can be

generated from the use of the building by members and outside organizations. However, the good news is that we have received approval for a second loan under the Payroll Protection Program under the COVID-19 Relief package that will go a long ways towards helping us bridge the gap back to normal operations.

Despite the uncertainty that surrounds us everyday I am confident that this talented and seasoned Budget Committee will be able to deliver to the membership a balanced budget that will serve our Community as it has for so many decades.

TEMPLE JEREMIAH'S INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO

Temple Jeremiah's Investment Committee is responsible for managing the Temple's Investment Portfolio and any other funds to be assigned to be managed by the Board of Directors. The Investment portfolio has guidelines pertaining to target bands for their equity and fixed income allocations. In addition, a portion of the funds are allocated consistent with a 'mission-based' overlay that include investments which benefit the State of Israel, and are socially and environmentally responsible as well.

Despite the incredible market volatility and economic hardship of 2020, I am so pleased to report that the Investment portfolio returned an impressive 19% for the year ended December 31st, 2020. The committee will be hard at work navigating the portfolio for this current year as well.

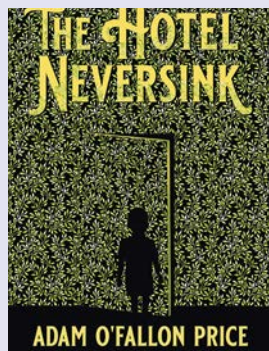
While we are hopeful to all being back together soon and encouraged by the science and vaccine rollout, rest assured that we all will continue to deliver the programming and services that make Temple Jeremiah the incredible community it truly is.

Sisterhood Book Club

NOTE: We will be meeting through Zoom! Join us online at zoom.us/j/83947774073, Password: BookClub

Thursday, April 8, 2021 ~ 10:00 - 11:30 a.m.

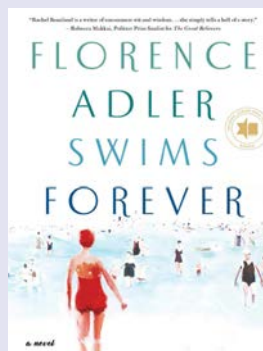
The Hotel Neversink, By Adam O'Fallon Price



Thirty-one years after workers first broke ground, the magnificent Hotel Neversink in the Catskills finally opens to the public. Then a young boy disappears. This mysterious vanishing—and the ones that follow—will brand the lives of three generations.

Thursday, May 13, 2021 ~ 10:00 - 11:30 a.m.

Florence Adler Swims Forever, By Rachel Beanland



"Beanland is particularly good at conjuring... the historical moment... as American Jews try to save relatives in an increasingly untenable Nazi Germany. The [America] dream is not without costs, and the dreamers are not immune to tragedy." — New York Times Book Review

Contact Vicki Siegelman at vsieg@gralynn.org for more information or to join.

Looking Back on Our Out of This World Purim Carnival



By SHIRA BRANDHANDLER
Youth Engagement Director
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Purim has always been one of my favorite Jewish holidays. I love dressing up, eating hamantaschen, and joyously celebrating as a community.

As we approached Purim this year, I was so excited knowing that even though the events would look different, all of my favorite

elements of celebrating the holiday would remain intact.

Our Purim planning began back in December as we started to put together an all-star team of teen volunteers to plan the annual Purim Carnival. The Purim Carnival Committee met several times leading up to Purim, working hard to create our first ever digital Purim Carnival. This committee was instrumental in planning everything from our carnival theme, creating the flyer, and planning games and prizes.

We had so much fun brainstorming and planning together and I was blown away by the creativity and enthusiasm the teens showed for putting on a wonderful event for the Temple Jeremiah community at each of these meetings. Many remarked that the Purim carnival was their favorite event at Temple Jeremiah when they were younger and they were excited to get the opportunity to create those same memories for others, especially in a year where

many of these exciting moments look very different. On the day of the Purim Carnival the weather was very dreary, but as soon everyone began to arrive the smiles on the kids' faces brightened the whole day! It was so wonderful to see everyone that braved the weather and came out to show off their costumes, cheer on those running the Shushan Shuffle 5K, pick up some carnival prizes, and play a few of our classic carnival games in person!

One of my favorite Carnival activities was guessing the number of Jelly Beans in the jar and this year the correct answer was 3,247 Jelly Beans! We also got to see some amazing costumes. We saw everything from superheroes, princesses, minions, and dinosaurs!

Our community also participated in social justice and fulfilled one of the *Mitzvot* of Purim by packing and donating lunches for Feed the Hungry and items to create blessings bags for people experiencing homelessness.

The next part of our celebration took place online as our amazing teen Purim Carnival Committee and wonderful J-Quest teachers led many different break-out room games. We had a Purim dance party, Out of This World Space trivia, an emoji game, and more! It was wonderful to see all of the teen's hard work come to life and so much fun to come together once again and see the smiles and giggles across all of our screens.

Thank you to everyone who came to celebrate at the Purim Carnival with us, I know I am already getting excited for next year and I hope you are too!

Celebrating Purim with the Mamma Mia Megillah

This year's Purim Shpiel, the *Mamma Mia Megillah: Pandemic Edition*, was a blast! To tell the the fateful tale of Esther, Mordechai, Haman, and Achashverosh, the Shpiel used the iconic music of ABBA, including classic hits like "Mamma Mia," "Dancing Queen," and "Take a Chance On Me."

"Doing the Purim Shpiel at any time helps get my creative juices flowing," noted Purim Shpiel performer Vicki Weisenberg "That goes whether the music is from ABBA, Queen, or something out of the minds of local talent."

According to Vicki, what really makes the Purim Shpiel a joy isn't the music, but rather the homespun fun of the event. "My favorite part of the tradition is watching the blending of the silliness and seriousness almost come together," said Vicki. "It is a wonder the Cantor can keep control and produce something special."

Marc Mayer echoed this sentiment. "While the music is great, my favorite part of all the Shpiels at Temple Jeremiah is that I can completely ignore the script and ad lib whenever I want—goofiness is encouraged."

Notably, the *Mamma Mia Megillah: Pandemic Edition* held its rehearsals in-person at the temple, making it one of the first

events to convene in the building under our new, COVID-19 safety guidelines. Our Purim Shpiel participants noted that ability to rehearse together felt particularly special amid this long period of physical distancing.

"The Shpiel rehearsals were my first time seeing people post-vaccination," noted Randi Gurian. "Even though we were distanced, masked, and hardly all together, it was great to be in a room with others!"

Vicki had a similar reaction to the in-person rehearsals. "At this point," Vicki said, "being able to get together with people whom I've recently only seen on my computer screen is pure delight."

When asked what wisdom could be gleaned from the story of Purim during the uncertain time of the pandemic, all of the participants mentioned hope and perseverance.

"If there is wisdom to be gained from this story," noted Vicki, "it's to never give up."

"Like Esther, Mordechai, and the Jewish people back then, we will survive," said Randi. "And, like we do during the Shpiel, we'll find the light and laughter along the way."

Staff Spotlight: Jill Nutkis

Each month, Temple Jeremiah wants to highlight one of our wonderful staff members with a profile in *The Covenant*. This month's Staff Spotlight is Jill Nutkis. We invite you to learn more about her by reading the interview below:

TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF

My name is Jill Nutkis. I'm 35 years old, and I live in Skokie with my husband Avi, our son Zev (19 months), and our dog Rocco. I was born and raised in Chicago, West Rogers Park to be exact, and went to Jewish Day school my entire life; that is, until I went to DePaul University. I graduated from DePaul in 2008 with a degree in Political Science. I intended to go to law school shortly after graduating, but that did not happen. Instead, I went in 2011. Towards the end of that year, I decided to take a leave of absence to figure out if I wanted to continue, and I went to Israel to be with my then boyfriend (now husband) who was in the Israeli Defense Forces at the time. After almost a year there, I came back in June of 2012, decided law school wasn't for me and left, and shortly after, got a job at Temple Jeremiah. In September 2014, I married my husband, in July 2015 we bought a house and became first-time homeowners (though we are currently in the process of moving to a bigger house) and adopted a dog, and in 2019 we welcomed our son, after a long battle with infertility.

My greatest joy in life is spending time with my son, watching him grow, learn, and experience the world. In the 19 months he's been here, I have seen the world through his eyes, and it is like seeing it again for the first time for myself. Everything is new and amazing ("Oooohhhh" as Zev likes to say). I also love spending time with my husband, watching our favorite shows that we are perpetually behind on, and spending time with family. Some other things I love are reading, catching up with friends, baking, and Pilates (a newly discovered love). In my spare time (what is that?), I love to travel, though sadly, there hasn't been much of that this year, but I'm looking forward to doing so again.

“For me, the "Joy of Belonging" means being a part of a community that not only cares about its congregants (and shows it), but cares about the community and world around it (and shows that, too).”

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE JEWISH TRADITION?

There are many - gathering with family to eat meals during the holidays; lighting Shabbat candles with my mom and now, my mother-in-law and son; and celebrating Purim are some of my favorites. These days though, I love lighting Chanukah candles with my son, Zev. He's almost 19 months old, and this past year when we lit Chanukah candles, I loved watching the wonder in his eyes and on his face and hearing him say "Dada" (his word for "candles" at the moment), and sing Chanukah songs with him, songs that my husband, Avi, and I grew up singing. There's something truly

amazing about being able to sing traditional Jewish songs that you grew up singing with your own child.



Jill, Avi, and Zev Nutkis with Rocco

WHAT DO YOU DO AT JEREMIAH?

When I worked full time at Jeremiah before having my son, I was the Administrative Assistant. I handled donations, yahrzeit letters, memorial wall plaques and Wall of Life leaves, assistant to Rabbi Rachel Heaps, Cantor Susie Lewis Friedman, and Danny Glassman, as well as many, many other things, including High Holy Days forms, tickets, and the Memorial Book. These days, I'm working part-time, but I still handle donations and yahrzeits, and I also assist Leslie Landman, the Director of Philanthropy.

WHAT BROUGHT YOU TO TEMPLE JEREMIAH?

I needed a job after leaving law school and coming back in 2012 from almost a year in Israel. I signed up with a temp agency, and about a week after doing so, I got a call in the morning that a temple needed some help with a project and could I be there in an hour or so. I jumped at the chance, and the rest is history.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE TEMPLE JEREMIAH MEMORY?

Oh, there's so many... But if I had to choose one, it would have to be my first Adult Purim Party. I can't wait for that to come back. I had fun at all the ones I attended, but that one stands out for me. It was such a fun night, playing games, schmoozing with people I knew and meeting people I didn't, and just an all-around good time.

WHAT DOES THE "JOY OF BELONGING" MEAN TO YOU?

I had a lot of time to think about this over the past year. For me, the "Joy of Belonging" means being a part of a community that not only cares about its congregants (and shows it), but cares about the community and world around it (and shows that, too). It means working with people I love and get along well with, people who make me feel a part of the team. It means a part of something that is bigger than me and my little world and knowing that I play a small part in what the temple is doing to make our community and the world around us better.

Celebrate Dr. Anne Lidsky with Temple Jeremiah



By AMY J. ZUSSMAN

Cantor Emerita

amy@templejeremiah.org

Dear Friends,

It is hard to believe Dr. Anne Lidsky is retiring after 40 years at Temple Jeremiah.

Her nurturing spirit, boundless energy and love for Judaism has touched and inspired all of us, our children, and our grandchildren, in countless ways over the years. Anne has put Temple Jeremiah's school on the map as a model for excellence and a place of inclusion, warmth and kindness.

The Celebrating Anne committee has been hard at work planning for her retirement celebration. (We will be following the Covid-19 guidelines set by the Temple Jeremiah Covid-19 Advisory Task Force)

Three wonderful events are scheduled for the congregation:

SUNDAY, MAY 16TH

This is the last day of religious school and the perfect opportunity to come to Temple and wish Anne well. It will be an outdoor event and open to the whole congregation. Some fun surprises are being planned including a car parade, BYO picnic lunch, music, a visit from the ice cream truck, and more.

FRIDAY, JUNE 11TH

Friday, June 11. The congregation is invited to a virtual 6:30 p.m. Kabbalat Shabbat service where Anne will be honored for her extraordinary 40 year career as our beloved educator. The week leading up to the service an "Oneg- Shabbat- In- A- Bag" will be available for congregants to pick up and take home.

SATURDAY, JUNE 12TH

Saturday, June 12. The congregation is invited to an elegant dessert reception to honor Anne. Again, lots of wonderful surprises are being planned for the evening.

Details will follow soon for all of these events. We look forward to seeing you at 1, 2 or all 3 of these wonderful ways to celebrate Anne and all the ways she has helped us grow!



Stay Up to Date with Our Calendar

To learn about upcoming events, visit:
tinyurl.com/TJ-Calendar

Look Forward to These Social Justice Events

Feed the Hungry

Temple Jeremiah has been providing lunches for the hungry on the first Sunday of the month for years, and the need is greater than ever. We need volunteers to drive the lunches downtown as well as families to make the lunches at home and drop them off at Temple Jeremiah.

To get involved, visit: tinyurl.com/FeedTheHungry2020-2021. For questions or to learn more, please contact Stephen Miller at stephenmiller2854@gmail.com.

Backpack Blessings

Now more than ever, families are in need of food and support. Backpack Blessings is here to help! Each month, we need volunteers to help us pack backpacks and move prepared bags and boxes. Please note: packing sessions will follow physically distanced procedures with separate tables for each family or COVID-19 pod group.

To get involved or to learn more about our packing schedules, please contact Dana Garbarski at dana.garbarski@gmail.com.





Purim Carnival 2.28.2021

Send Us Your Home Photos!

While the physical building is not filled with everyone's smiling faces, we know the warmth and connections amongst our congregation still exist.

We'd love to share pictures of what's going on at your home as you stay in touch with Temple Jeremiah! Grandparents, share photos of your grandchildren. Families, share photos of you celebrating Shabbat, your kids interacting online with youth events, or your Passover celebrations.

All photos are welcome!

Email your photos to:
katie@templejeremiah.org



Shushan Shuffle 2.28.2021

A Conversation with Antiracism Educator Jena Doolas

This March, Temple Jeremiah had the opportunity to host educator Jena Doolas at our congregation for How to Talk To Your Child About Race, a workshop about race and racism with school-aged children. The seminar combined stories, exercises, and frank discussions to normalize conversations about race and privilege while exploring how race impacts various aspects of our lived experiences.

Jena Doolas is an educator, social worker and racial equity facilitator. She has been working in public education for about 25 years as both a middle school Language Arts and Social Studies teacher, and a School Social Worker. She currently is in her 18th year as a school social worker at East Prairie School in Skokie, IL.

"White parents in 2021, by and large, lack experience in talking about race," said Jena. "We grew up learning we needed to be colorblind and told that recognizing race and racial difference is in and of itself racist. This kind of thinking makes it difficult to move forward. How do you open a conversation about racism and privilege when the lens of racial awareness itself is thought to be an obstacle?"

One of the major takeaways from Jena's program is that these conversations can be imperfect. "It's all about learning together," said Jena. "Many white parents don't know where to begin when talking to their children about race. They want to have all the

answers for their children or they're inclined to share their lived experiences as universal. A big step is realizing we might not have all the answers and learning together about the forces of racism and systemic inequality with our children."

According to Jena, an entry point into talking to your children about race could be examining the ramifications of race in your physical context. "Many of us live in the suburbs," said Jena. "Many of the Chicago suburbs are predominantly white. With your children, you can ask why that is. You can explore the history of redlining, the building of freeways in Chicago, and white flight as a family."

Overall, Jena wanted to share the importance of looking at antiracism as a habit or lifestyle rather than a task. "Antiracism is a journey with no end," said Jena. "There is no one book you can read or tasklist you can check off to devote yourself to racial awareness and equity. We're always growing and always learning, and that's a good thing! Every day, we need to question our own biases and understand how racism can inform our lives and actions."

To learn more about antiracism, we invite all Temple Jeremiah members to attend our monthly antiracism programs discuss how to better understand and combat institutionalized inequality. To learn more, visit: templejeremiah.org/antiracism-programming.

Donate to Temple Jeremiah

Making a donation to Temple Jeremiah is a wonderful way to honor a friend or family member on their happy occasion or to memorialize a loved one. You can make a donation in two easy ways:

1. Click on "Make a Donation" at templejeremiah.org or visit the Member Login section and click on "Donate" to donate online via credit card or ACH/eCheck.
2. Mail a check to Temple Jeremiah, 937 Happ Road, Northfield, IL, 60093. Be sure to include a note as to what the donation is for and which fund you prefer.

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Phyllis Burg

For adding Allen Hirschfield to the Mi Shebeirach list

-Nancy Hirschfield

Julian Chin

-Eileen Brottman

Rabbi Paul F. Cohen

-Eileen Brottman

Cantor Susie Lewis Friedman

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For hosting Pamela Schuller

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IN HONOR OF

Rabbi Paul F. Cohen

On the occasion of him becoming a National Book Award 2020 finalist

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-Deborah and Michael Cogan

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For the beautiful anniversary blessing

-Sue Pinsky-Gardner and Phil Gardner

Josh Cogan

Son of Deborah and Michael Cogan

On the occasion of his engagement to Jill Forrest

-Randi and Charles Gurian

Rabbi Rachel Heaps

For your wisdom and support

-Sue Pinsky-Gardner

Dr. Anne Lidsky

On the occasion of her new title as Director of Congregational Learning, and for ARJE's reaccreditation of J-Quest

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