Funerals and Shivas Change Shape, But Not Meaning, During Covid-19

With the pandemic still upon us, many safety protocols that have changed the way we conduct our lives remain in place. Perhaps the most difficult has been the way social distancing has impacted those who have lost love ones during the past year.

There are physical and logistical limits on the ability of families to be by their loved one's bedside during their final days (Vidui), drastic modifications to funerals and the total impossibility of in-person shivas.

Rabbi Michael meets with the family prior to the funeral over Zoom instead of in person. At the cemetery, there is a 2-person limit and no one can escort the casket to the grave. All shivas are via Zoom.

And yet, the most important thing of all has not changed: how we care for the living. A graveside funeral is a full and proper burial. Family honors their loved ones and perform the mitzvah of burial. Shiva is different, but we're still doing it. Minyan for Kaddish still happens, just via Zoom, Rabbi Michael said.

Barry Turkanis, whose brother Michael passed away in January, watched the Maine funeral on Zoom with his wife, Ellen. "When it was over we shut the computer and said, 'Now what do we do?' We were alone and felt weird. Rabbi Michael had offered to do a private minyan that evening. All the family members logged in, including some of Michael's friends. That was wonderful. The Rabbi reached out to all in mourning personally, including mentioning Michael's four grandchildren, who were not present but not mentioned at the funeral. He asked all who wanted to share a memory. We laughed and cried. It felt warm and personal. For me, seeing my family and sharing stories gave me a little sense of closure," Barry said.

Sylvia Revman's daughters, Audrey Linsky and Donna Revman, also felt the impact of Covid-19 deeply. "My mother deserved a funeral where all those whose lives she touched could come together, to cry, to laugh, to hug, and to celebrate her life. With only six family members allowed at the gravesite, it was one of the loneliest days of my life," Audrey said. Although over 70 joined the funeral via Zoom, she and her sister missed the personal interaction with her mother's friends.

Donna, who lives in Charlotte, NC, regrets not having a Zoom Shiva minyan that night, although she has since become somewhat of a regular at evening minyan. (Sylvia was a regular morning minyan attendee). "I have had a few people make comments about my mother some evenings, and it is very comforting. But I know there were more stories out there and we will never hear them," she said. "Unfortunately, I feel I do not have closure." She hopes to come to Massachusetts for her mother's unveiling.

Rabbi Michael has found, overall, that family meetings go as well, if not better, over Zoom. "I find that folks over Zoom are more likely to share equally, rather than one person being the primary speaker. Perhaps most importantly, Zoom allows more family to participate because they can join from anywhere," he said.

Shiva too has been enhanced in some ways. "Most importantly, the family gets to hear everyone's stories and words of comfort. For example, in the home, children's friends would talk to the children and the parent wouldn't hear these words," he said. Over Zoom, everyone gets to hear each other.

Dealing with loss is always difficult, with the pandemic creating even greater uncertainty and anxiety over the process of burial, shiva, and mourning. "But the wisdom of Judaism, in Covid and always, holds the mourners with love, allows them to honor their loved one, and provides comfort through a prescribed set of mourning rites," Rabbi Michael shared.
Rabbi’s Corner

Redemption

Passover 2020 was the first Jewish holiday impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. We were in the midst of a lockdown. Family Seders were scaled back and community Seders were moved online.

Now, though we maintain similar safety precautions, we’re moving out of the pandemic, not into it. By Passover, many will be vaccinated against Covid-19. We’re beginning to dream again of visits with family and friends, vacations, restaurants, plays, Red Sox games, and more.

On Passover eve, March 27, we will celebrate the greatest story of liberation in human history, the Exodus from Egypt. The Hebrew word for Egypt, mitzrayim, is from a root that connotes narrowness. One aspect of our slavery in Egypt was narrowness, confinement. So too during the COVID pandemic. Within months of this year’s Seder, we will experience our own mini-Exodus from Egypt, overcoming the pandemic and moving from this year of narrowness to a life of openness.

How can our sacred story of liberation prepare us for this moment?

The Torah identifies four stages of redemption, which are reflected in the four cups of wine at the Seder.

Say, therefore, to the Israelite people: I am the LORD. I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. I will deliver you from their bondage. I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and through extraordinary chastisements. And I will take you to be My people, and I will be your God. And you shall know that I, the LORD, am your God who freed you from the labors of the Egyptians. (Exodus 6:6-7)

The Sforno (1470-1550, Italy), explains these four stages as follows:

1. I will bring you out from under the burdens – As soon as the plagues begin the bondage will subside.
2. I will deliver you – On the day you pass over the frontier at Raamses.
3. I will redeem you – When the Egyptians drown in the sea, as (the Torah) testifies, And the LORD saved Israel on that day (14:30), for after the demise of their oppressors they were no longer (in the category of) runaway slaves.
4. And I will take you to be My people – When you (will) stand at Mount Sinai.

This interpretation of the Exodus from Egypt adds layers of meaning and depth to our story. You may want to discuss this at your Passover Seder.

For me, these stages teach that we were freed from Egypt for a purpose. Mere freedom (stage 3) is not the end of the story. We were freed to “stand at Mount Sinai,” to receive the Torah and enter into a relationship with God. We were freed to realize the fullness of our humanity through our connection to God and Torah.

In this vein, merely being free of the pandemic is not sufficient. Our timeless story of liberation teaches us that freedom is for a purpose. This Passover, let us contemplate: what will we make our purpose, if blessed to survive this pandemic? How can we embody a deeper connection to God and Torah?

Hag kasher v’sameach—wishing you a kosher and joyous Passover.

—Rabbi Michael

Update from the Cantorial Assessment Committee

Ruth Estrich, Chair, shares the following update as of February 12:

After two months of reviewing and interviewing more than 20 applicants, we are scheduling full congregational “virtual visits” for several candidates. We worked with Rabbi Michael to tailor unique schedules to highlight each candidate’s capabilities and to provide many congregation-wide opportunities to interact and get to know one another. From meet-and-greets, to virtual tours; from Kabbalat Shabbat to mini-sings and minyan Torah-reading; from introductions to the North Shore to meetings with realtors, staff and board members, we are creating one-of-a-kind Zoom-based experiences that are both intimate and safe. We continue on-target to make recommendations to the board next month and look forward to everyone’s participation and input. We are excited to share these excellent candidates with our community and look forward to future possibilities.

For all Zoom links go to www.shirathayam.org and click blue Guide to Virtual Services at top of home page (or shirathayam.org/guide-to-virtual-services/)
Message from the President

CSH continues to plan for the future. We are having meetings about the best use of space when we reopen. I am hoping for a partial reopening in the summer. Our cantorial assessment committee, chaired by Ruth Estrich, is meeting regularly and looking at candidates and various options.

I urge everyone to be vaccinated. The benefits far outweigh the risks. I have received both doses with minor side effects with the second. We are working with the Town of Swampscott to host a vaccination clinic at CSH in the next several months.

—Dr. Mark Messenger

Tzedek LaKol, Justice for All

Barbara and Alan Sidman co-chair this newly formed committee to address racial and social injustice in our community which is working on an early April date for its first speaker in an exciting Speaker Series. Stay tuned for more details in the near future!

Cantor’s News

In Your Eyes

On my daily walks through Salem, I made a friend. There’s a gentleman (retired?) who parks his car at the same scenic spot-on Pickering Wharf almost every day. I pass his way while strolling along.

At first we acknowledged each other, but with each subsequent encounter, our relationship has deepened. Over time, our initial brief eye contact morphed from eye contact into a knowing head nod. Then, ultimately, to eye contact plus a head nod plus a wave of the hand. It is, of course, a Massachusetts hand wave—which I have learned involves a barely perceptible movement of the fingers - but in Massachusetts apparently, it’s the equivalent of a Hawaii hug.

It’s in these difficult times of forced and unnatural separation that we can most acutely sense what truly connects us.

Recently, I visited my wife’s place of work. As we were leaving, I absent-mindedly raised my hand towards the family’s adorable 3-year-old daughter, Victoria, inviting her to “high five” me. Instead of a high five, I was gently scolded—by 3-year-old Victoria! “We don’t high five because of Co-RO-na-Vi-rus.” As I sheepishly withdrew my hand, Victoria asked, “Would you like to know how we hug during Co-RO-na-Vi-rus?” I nodded yes. Victoria’s eyes bubbled with excitement as she wrapped both of her arms around her own body and tightly squeezed. I responded in kind—with a gleam in my eyes as I tightly wrapped my arms around my body. It was perhaps the most meaningful hug I’ve received in the past year.

B’Shalom,
Cantor Alty

High Holy Days Appeal

Goal by April 30, 2021: $70,000
Pledges as of Feb. 1, 2021: $42,270

FRIDAY, MARCH 12
6:00 pm Kabbalat Shabbat (see p. 2)

SATURDAY, MARCH 13
9:00 am Shabbat Services (see p. 2)

MONDAY, MARCH 15
7:30 pm Becky’s Book Club: This is How It Always Is by Laurie Frankel (go to shirathayam.org/book-club/)

TUESDAY, MARCH 16
7:30 pm JCCNS Torah Hub with Rabbi Meyer and Marty Schneer (go to JCCNS.org)*

FRIDAY, MARCH 19
6:00 pm Holy Happy Hour Minyan (see p. 2. Use regular Friday night Zoom link)

SATURDAY, MARCH 20
9:00 am Shabbat Services (see p. 2)

MONDAY, MARCH 22
7:00 pm JCCNS Jewish Book Month event in honor of Women’s History Month moderated by Shelley Sackett (go to JCCNS.org)*

TUESDAY, MARCH 23
12 pm Shir Chesed “Chicken Soup for the Soul during Covid” (RSVP jpkreitzer@mac.com)
7:30 pm JCCNS Torah Hub with Rabbi Ragozin (go to JCCNS.org)

FRIDAY, MARCH 26
7:30 am Fast of the First Born Service & Siyyum
6:00 pm Kabbalat Shabbat (see p. 2)

SATURDAY, MARCH 27
9:00 am Shabbat Services (see p. 2)
Erev Pesach (see email for seders to join)

SUNDAY, MARCH 28
9:00 am Passover, Day 1 Service (Zoom link TBA)
6:00 pm Second Seder with CSH (see p. 7)

MONDAY, MARCH 29
9:00 am Passover Day 2 (Temple Sinai Zoom)
7:30 pm Counting the Omer: A 7-week Journey with Mimi Nelson Oliver begins (go to shirathayam.org/limmud-adult-learning/).
Space is limited.

UPCOMING YIZKOR SERVICES

SATURDAY, APRIL 3
10:00 am Shabbat at CSH

SUNDAY, APRIL 4
9:00 am Service at Temple Sinai
10:00 am Yizkor at Temple Sinai
CJE NEWS

La-Bri’ut: Focusing on Personal Strength

Janis Knight, Center for Jewish Education Director, sends the following update:

“We have been making the most of our virtual education time at CJE. Much of the school has been working on the unit of “Gevurah” (Personal Strength) as part of our larger La-Bri’ut (To Health) Jewish resiliency curriculum. Our 6th and 7th graders and their parents took a museum trip to view the “Notorious RBG” exhibit in honor of the late Justice Ginsburg. They explored how RBG’s Jewish background and life experiences shaped her time as a lawyer, advocate, and Supreme Court Justice. Students in 3rd grade welcomed Shir Chesed member Bethany Roditi to help them translate the value of Chesed (“Kindness bumped up a level,” to quote their teacher) into everyday actions and how the committee embodies that value.

We have offered outdoor learning family opportunities in our coldest weather, including a Tu Bishvat hike to celebrate the New Year of the Trees. The students also celebrated a Zoom Tu Bishvat seder to remind ourselves that Spring really is coming. Our Parent Committee and I are planning some great indoor and outdoor Spring activities to get us ready for Passover and look forward to Israel Independence Day and Lag B’Omer.

There aren’t enough words to praise our teaching staff nor our madrichim (teen aides). One example of awesome teen/teacher teamwork was when two of our madrichim stepped in to cover an online class for their teacher. They took the lesson plan, expanded on it and taught it beautifully (Madrichim Coordinator Jason Stark observed). The teens’ initiative and familiarity with their class members made the learning continuous, avoiding the drop in substantive learning that can happen with a substitute teacher.

Tu Bishvat Seder, CJE style

Judah Zoll enjoyed his CJE Zoom seder.

A CJE-wide Tu Bishvat seder took place on Zoom on January 30 during Shabbat classes. Tu Bishvat is the holiday that celebrates the New Year of the Trees and has become a way for Jews all over the world to connect with the Land of Israel and its natural cycle as well as the Jewish Ecology movement and a lovely spiritual component, as well.

CEE NEWS

Outdoor Play is Essential in Winter

Andrea Bernard, Center for Early Education Director, sends the following update:

“The Preschool children in the CEE are having a fabulous winter! Outdoor play is essential even in the cold winter months. Our children build their large motor skills by trudging through the snow, rolling giant snowballs, and by stacking the giant snowballs to make snow people! We kept our masks on outdoors to warm our faces in the chilly air. We hope for a snowy February so we can continue working on our snow family.

Tu Bishvat was celebrated by all. Our Toddler Group used their five senses to explore trees. We made visual observations and used our fingers to touch the bark. We discussed how the bark felt under our fingertips. Using words such as rough, bumpy, bark, trunk, and root, we increased our vocabulary. This also helps us to extend our conversations and supports social growth. We used fallen leaves and branches to create tree art. Reading Tu Bishvat stories and singing “Happy Birthday Trees” was our favorite way to celebrate. We are grateful for all of the wonders that the trees provide.

Building snow people also builds motor skills.

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Shir Chesed on the Move!

Chicken Soup for the Soul Lunch virtual lunches are a popular respite and any CSH member is invited to attend. Zooms continue in March from 12-1 pm. Email jpkreitzer@mac.com for a link. Topics will be: Reducing stress in the time of Covid and What CAN we do after getting a vaccine? (Tuesday, March 9); and Remembering and recognizing that our CSH closed 1 year ago today and How will we move positively forward? (Tuesday, March 23).

Sheila Rich and the knitting group invite you to make baby hats, blankets and prayer shawls to distribute to congregants when the need arises. Contact Sheila at sheilaknit@comcast.net if you would like to use some of the yarn that has been donated to us. Those who prefer to knit with a group now can virtually join the JCC group on Wednesday evenings at 7:00 PM.

We continue to send special milestone cards, and make “check-in” calls to members to see how they are faring during the Covid winter. A couple of our Shir Chesed members will be Ambassadors as we partner with the new Membership Committee. As usual, we continue to offer support to families who have lost loved ones, to people who have returned home from the hospital, and to members who are welcoming babies.

CEE toddlers celebrate Tu Bishvat by creating tree art.
Tu Bishvat Silver Lining from Julie Tapper

Our family (Julie, Stephen, Josh (11), and Sam (9) Tapper) had the opportunity to participate in the hike for Tu Bishvat at the Mass Audubon’s Ipswich River Wildlife Sanctuary with other families from CSH. Although the temperature was cold, the sun was brightly shining down on us. The ability to get out in and interact with nature, safely spend time with family and friends, take a break from technology, and bask in the sunlight was a welcomed joyful respite for us all. We look forward to participating in other events with CSH.

Josh and Sam Tapper give a big thumbs up.

Donna Revman and Audrey Linsky Find a Silver Lining During a Sad Time

When their mother, iconic congregant and devoted morning minyannaire Sylvia Revman z”l, passed away last fall, her daughters Donna Revman and Audrey Linsky were able to find glimmers of silver linings despite the constraints caused by Covid-19.

“I have my sister in Salem, my brother in NYC and I am in Charlotte, NC, but due to Covid, we were able to all attend the 30-day minyan together on Zoom. I have continued to attend the Zoom minyan service for CSH and have gotten an understanding of what my mother got from attending the service,” Donna shared.

Audrey agreed. “I have said from the start that there certainly was a “Silver Lining” to all of this - being able to say Kaddish each night with my sister and brother on Zoom minyan. How happy my mother must be! If it had been pre-Covid, we would have all gone home after Shiva and would have said Kaddish separately. But having Zoom minyan allowed us to be “together.” There is strength in numbers!”

Becky’s Book Club

Join Becky’s Book Club facilitator and leader, Amy Cohn, for CSH monthly discussions. Named in memory of Becky Shepard z”l, who started the CSH congregational book club and passed away in 2014, the meetings take place on Zoom and are open to the community. The group will discuss This Is How It Always Is by Laurie Frankel on Monday, March 15 and The Giver of Stars by Jojo Moyes on April 12. All meetings start at 7:30 pm. after minyan. Live Zoom link is available at shirathayam.org/book-club/.

Community Call-to-Action Against Antisemitism

Shirat Hayam will host a book discussion on Anti-Semitism: Here and Now by Deborah Lipstadt on April 13 at 7:30 pm as part of the Community Call-to-Action. Register at shirathayam.org/limmud-adult-learning/ for your personal link. A limited number of complimentary copies of the book, donated by the Holocaust Legacy Foundation, are available to CSH members on a first-come, first-served basis. One copy per family. Email Cheryl@shirathayam.org to reserve yours. The program is free and open to all. For more information, email Barri@shirathayam.org. There will be a virtual presentation by the author on Thursday, May 6 at 7:30 PM.

Counting the Omer

Sefirat Ha’Omer, Counting the Omer, is an ancient Biblical tradition and mitzvah of counting the grain offerings of the Harvest. It is a 49-day, 7-week practice that begins the night of the 2nd Seder and ends at Shavuot (the Revelation at Mount Sinai).

Mimi Nelson Oliver will facilitate a Kabbalistic Soul journey approach to this tradition, exploring sacred levels of the Body, Mind, Heart and Spirit over 7 weekly, hour-long meetings beginning March 29 and ending May 10. Cost is $18 CSH members, $25 non-members and space is limited. Participants may wish to purchase the book Counting the Omer by Rabbi Min Kantrowitz. For more information, email miminelsonoliver@gmail.com. To sign up, go to shirathayam.org/limmud-adult-learning/.

Holy Happy Hour Minyan

Friday, March 19, 2021 • 6 pm

Grab your appetizers and refreshments and join Rabbi Michael and Cantor Alty and the Shirat Hayam community for a lively musical Shabbat. Music provided by Cantor Alty accompanied by David Sparr on keyboard.

Visit Shirathayam.org/holy-happy-hour/ for the Holy Happy Hour Zoom link (usual Friday night service link) and link to online song booklet.

A hard copy of the song booklet can be picked up from the bin outside the front doors beginning March 16.
Donations January 1 – 31, 2021

CONDOLENCES

Our deepest condolences to those who have passed away.

MEMBERS:

Stephen Simmons 1/29/2021 Husband of Judi Simmons Father of Jill Simmons-Wetmore

NON-MEMBERS:

Harold Mack 1/5/2021 Brother-in-law of Bette and Dan Shoreman Husband of Harriet Mack z”l Cousin of Donald Fine

Michael Turkanis 1/17/2021 Son of Ruth Turkanis Brother of Barry Turkanis

Arleen Pearl 1/23/2021 Grandmother of Ariana Selby

Faye Neiberg 1/24/2021 Cousin of Alan Sidman and Marilyn Epstein

DONATIONS

BRODY MINYAN FUND
In honor of Marsha Gerber’s new home From Natalie White
In memory of Harold Mack From Carol and Sam Denbo
In memory of Michael Turkanis From Natalie White

In memory of
Grandmother, Sylvia Kramer From Deborah McBride
Husband, George Linsky From Audrey Linsky
Father, Abraham Goodman
Grandmother, Anna Perlman From Murray Goodman
Mother, Roberta Kline
Grandmother, Ida Razin From Susan Kline
Grandfather, Harry Berman From Natalie White
Mother, Celia Simon From Sandra Spector

BURT AND BECKY SHEPARD SCHOLARSHIP FUND
In memory of Harold Cohen From Helene and David Fink

CENTER FOR EARLY EDUCATION FUND
In memory of Arleen Pearl From Lori and Larry Groipen

CENTER FOR JEWISH EDUCATION FUND
In memory of Harriet Abel From Carol and Sam Denbo
In memory of Henry Atlas, husband of Lisa Glaskin In memory of Joan Garfield In memory of Peter Frank Feldman, son of Doris and Saul Feldman From Beverly Kahn

EMPLOYEE RELIEF FUND
In memory of Harold Mack In memory of Harriet Abel From Gloria Sax

GENERAL FUND
In memory of Harold Mack From Alice and Charles Leidner

In appreciation of the dedication of the congregation’s leadership during this difficult time From Edye Baker
In honor of our parents, Barry and Caryn Cohen From Lauren and Samuel Andler
In memory of Michael Turkanis From Phyllis and Howard Kaplan; Marjorie and Randall Patkin; Dorothy and Richard Tachman
In memory of Harriet Abel From Alice and Charles Leidner; Toby Sloane; Millicent and Arthur Oslen; Cheryl and Arthur Schwartz
In memory of Chuck Sagan, on the anniversary of his yahrzeit From Hope and Larry Zabar

In memory of
Mother, Elsa Cohen Father, Harold Cohen From Ellen Turkanis
Parents, Chana and Beno Dodyk and all my family From Elizabeth Dodyk
Mother-in-law, Ruth White From Judy White
Mother, Anna Lillian Mother-in-law, Dora Beletz From Melvin Lillian
Sister, Miriam Lehman Father, William Cohen From Bunny Gorfinke
Mother, Mollie Goldberg From Howard Goldberg
Grandmother, Sadie Stockman From Phyllis Kaplan

KIDDUSH FUND
In memory of Michael Turkanis From Phyllis Sagan

In memory of
Son, Alan Cashman From Marvin Cashman
Mother, Wilma Alexander From Susan and David Willis
Mother-in-law, Wilma Alexander From Elizabeth Stevenson
Mother, Wilma Alexander Father, Theodor Teimer From Ellen and Richard Alexander
Father, Sam Schnelwar From Alan Schnelwar
Mother, Rose Bornstein From Norma Rooks
Husband, Ralph Dunn From Linda Dunn
Father, Fred Gerber From Sally Hooker
Mother, Francis Dillon From Nonnie Rubin
Mother, Freida Ross From Libby Ellin
Grandfather, Harry Osattin From Marion Garfinkel
Father, Gerald Kasten From Jeffrey Kasten

LEV FUND
In memory of Harold Mack From Marla and Philip Gay

RABBI’S DISCRETIONARY FUND
In appreciation of Rabbi Michael’s kindness and prayers during a difficult time From Cheryll and Skip DiPesa
In honor of Jake Dubow becoming a Bar Mitzvah From Marjorie and Randall Patkin
In honor of Rabbi Michael’s awards From Gloria Sax
In memory of Harriet Abel From Gila and Al Namias; Ellen Bubrick and Joshua Namias

In memory of
Mother, Ruth Rotman From Leonard Rotman
Mother, Janet Aronson Weiss From Marjorie Patkin
Wife, Sandra Holmes From Richard Holmes
Brother, Alan Gerber Grandfather, Louis Strome Aunt, Arlene Burtman From Marsha Gerber
Mother, Marion Feldman From Judith Feldman

RITUAL FUND
In memory of Michael Turkanis From Nancy and Andrew Leader-Cramer

In memory of
Grandfather, Israel Babbitt From Ann Pendexter
Mother, Nadya Babbitt From Aron Mirmelshteyn
Husband, Robert Garfinkel Sister-in-law, Barbara Freedman From Marion Garfinkel and Family
Brother, Murray Weinstein From Reva Surette
Grandfather, Joseph Feffer From Lawrence Feffer
Grandfather, Harry Goldstein From, Marsha Feffer
Mother, Irma Kahn From Eric Kahn

SHIR CHESED FUND
In memory of Frances Babbitt In memory of Abraham Babbitt From Carol and Kenneth Schulman
In memory of Harold Mack From Diana Caplan; Phyllis and Jack Karas; Faith Kramer; Shari and Ronald Pressman
In memory of Paul Feinstein, father of Rebecca Sontz From Phyllis and Jack Karas

TORAH FUND
In memory of Harold Mack From Charlotte and Donald Fine

In memory of
Mother, Anne Bornstein Uncle, Saul Bornstein From Ruth Kahn

TREES PLANTED IN ISRAEL
In memory of Kenneth Fritz, brother of Harvey Fritz From Donna and Philip Lapatin

How to Make a Donation

To make a donation, please visit shirathayam.org/

Donate or mail your donation with a check made out to CSH or Congregation Shirat Hayam. Please specify the fund to which your donation should be allocated.
Passover 2nd Night Seder

Sunday, March 28 at 6:00 pm*

Have your candles, seder plate and Passover table prepared. A link to the Haggadah will be provided but hard copies will be available to pick up beginning March 19.

Go to https://shirathayam.org/passover/ to register for your link.

*Following the first part of the seder, enjoy dinner with your family and/or others and rejoin us for the closing part of the seder.

Open to all and for all ages.

***SALE OF HAMETZ and MA’OT HITTIM

This year Passover begins on Saturday evening, March 27th. One of the Passover rituals is to remove hametz (leaven) from our homes in accordance with the verse, “No leaven shall be found in your houses for seven days” (Exodus 12:19). Products considered hametz include: leavened bread, spaghetti, crackers, cereal, wheat, barley, oats, spelt, rye, and all liquids containing ingredients or flavors made from grain alcohol. Ideally these products should be discarded prior to the start of Passover. Nonetheless, Judaism also recognizes that one should not incur undue financial loss in observance of the mitzvot. Therefore, if after thoroughly cleaning for Passover you still have hametz products to store during the holiday, you may perform the ritual of “selling your hametz.” To sell your hametz through Rabbi Michael, fill out the form with your signature and

***SALE OF HAMETZ DEADLINE: Thursday, March 25, 5:00 PM sharp***

There can be no extensions.

Ma’ot Hittim — a tzedekah mitzvah

Before Passover, it is customary to give Ma’ot Hittim, charity for the Passover needs of the poor. For your convenience, you can send in donations at the time that you authorize Rabbi Michael to sell your hametz. Rabbi Michael is collecting money for JF&CS Family Table. Checks should be made payable to JF&CS with “Family Table: NS Passover” in the memo.

SALE OF HAMETZ FORM — PASSOVER 5781/2021

I hereby authorize Rabbi Michael Ragozin to act as my agent to sell in my name and on my behalf all hametz owned and possessed by me, knowingly or unknowingly, wherever it may be — at home, place of business, or elsewhere; and any such products that I may yet acquire between now and 11:46 AM on Saturday, March 27, 2021, except for hametz I designate to be consumed by my family before 10:44 AM on March 27, 2021, and all kinds of live animals that have been eating hametz or mixtures thereof, and to lease all places wherein the hametz owned by me may be found, especially located in the premise as listed below — all in accordance with the requirements and provisions of Jewish law.

Address

Location of hametz (e.g. Leftmost kitchen cupboard or anticipated location)

Print Name

Signature __________________________ Date __________________________

JF&CS Family Table

Rabbi Michael Ragozin

Congregation Shirat Hayam

55 Atlantic Avenue

Swampscott, MA 01907

(781) 599-8005

www.shirathayam.org
The Interview

Congregational Spotlight

Meet Mimi Nelson Oliver

Every issue, The New Wave spotlights a congregant as a way to help us get to know each other by putting a face with a name. This month, Mimi Nelson Oliver shares her thoughts on Shirat Hayam and its special, personal meaning for her.

What role has Judaism played in your life?

As a child, we were members of Congregation Beth El, a Conservative Shul now in Yardley, Pa. I spent years going to Hebrew School, Sunday school, pre-and-post Bat Mitzvah and Confirmation classes. We attended Kabbalat Shabbat and High Holy Day services. Later, at Dickinson College, my major was Judaic Studies and Religion (Hillel and the Israeli Dance Troupe my friend and I started were a lifeline for me) and I attended Yeshiva University, Wurzweiler School of Social Work for my MSW. So, Judaism has always been a major source of healing, community and spirituality for me. I love to study and embody world religions, but it’s Judaism that is in my cells, especially my heart.

What brought you to CSH? What keeps you there?

My now ex-husband and I got married in the garden of Temple Israel in 1981, having just moved to Marblehead. I was a member there for a year and then became a ‘wandering Jew’, going to every Temple within a 30-mile radius. I found my way to the Renewal community in Boston. I met my dear Soul Sister Devorah Feinbloom in about 2006, who told me I could just go down the street to CSH for Renewal. I did, and have never left, even when I watched virtually from California 2015 – 2019. Renewal was like ‘coming home.’ It had been hard for me to resonate with traditional services until I experienced our beloved Cantor Emil’s, z’l, services. Some Shabbats are like a Spiritual candy store, with Renewal, Traditional Torah service, Torah Yoga and Nosh & Drash—it’s hard to choose! My beautiful Soul Sisters are my re-sources, and embody what sacred community is all about. We are not meant to do this life alone—I am so grateful to have them, and CSH, in my life.

What are your areas of involvement at CSH?

I love to chant Torah; being part of the B’not Mitzvah sisters was a highlight, and I want to keep this spark alive. I also joined the new Racial Justice committee. I am only understanding just how difficult life here and in the world has been for my 29-year-old Black bodied son, who we adopted at 5 days old. I am part of the Cantorial Assessment, Shir Chesed (Lovingkindness) and Shir Lanu (Inclusion) committees, and am actively working with Michele Tamaren to develop programs as part of our Shir Nefesh Mental Health Initiative. I also plan to offer a 7-week, Embodied Counting of the Omer class, using the Tree of Life, a Kabbalistic practice for the 49 days, starting from the 2nd night Seder to the 50th day which is Shavuot. (See page 5 for more info)

Anything else you’d like to share?

I often get asked by congregants, ‘Why do you move/sign/while praying?’ Like Miriam with her timbrel, I believe that prayers are meant to come alive within us and we can dance our stories, our freedom, our praise. I love it when I see others in our sanctuary feeling, moving and being with the prayers—bending (Bar’khu), standing (Amidah), listening (Shema). We move together at Ruach Rally and it feels so good to be in community in this way. American Sign Language (ASL) is such an embodied language and a portal into the real meaning and feeling of the words and prayers. The essence of Shema (hearing) comes alive for me in its true meaning of One-ness.