

2020-2021/5781
April - August



Temple Israel's
Joy of Jewish Learning
Adult Education Opportunities
resilience, comfort,
and connection

Temple Israel's

2020-2021/5781

Joys of Jewish Learning

Adult Education Opportunities

resilience, comfort, and connection

To Our Congregants and Friends of Temple Israel,

We are proud to share with you the next quarter of our Joys of Jewish Learning Programs for 5781, which will provide high quality and diverse programming for our congregants and greater community from **April – August 2021**.

We have loved learning with all of you in the virtual space over this past year. We look forward to our continued connections with our community over the coming months, and when safe, we can't wait to see you in person again.

Our congregational community is a very special one, and together, we reaffirm our commitment to lifelong learning and Jewish tradition, even during these unique times.

This year's Joys of Jewish Learning program focuses on the theme of Resilience, Comfort, and Connection. We will continue our exploration of these important concepts and take comfort in the wisdom of our Jewish tradition. Whether it be text study, virtual field trips, literature or film discussions, current events and community-interest programming, cooking, theater, or lectures, you are invited to join us for any or all of our JJJL programs.

If you are a long-time supporter of our Joys of Jewish Learning program, I thank you for your ongoing participation and commitment to learning. If you are new to our congregation, I welcome you and look forward to sharing this journey with you. All learners are an important part of our community at Temple Israel. Your presence and participation are truly valued.

May your Jewish learning engage your heart, mind, and soul. May your involvement in this community of learners bring you joy and a sense of comfort and connection.

In partnership,



Sharon Amster Brown, R.J.E.

Educator

THANK YOU TO OUR JOYS OF JEWISH LEARNING PATRONS

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resilience, comfort, and connection

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TORAH STUDY

Saturdays at 8:45 am

Facilitator: Rabbi Scott Fox

Each time we study Torah, we find something new in its verses...and in ourselves. Join Rabbi Fox in our engaging Torah study. Each week, an enthusiastic group examines the *parashat hashavuah* (weekly Torah portion) and discusses its meaning and relevance using traditional commentaries, personal reflection, and lively debate. This Torah study is for everyone - no previous background or knowledge of Hebrew is required! Come one time - or every week! Join us, as we discover and re-discover the timeless teachings in our Torah and see what the "Torah study buzz" is all about!

SOCIAL JUSTICE BOOK GROUP

Wednesdays at 11:00 am

Facilitator: Cantor Sara Hass

Join with Cantor Hass for this discussion group, inspired by the conversation with Bishop Kenneth Ulmer of Faithful Central Bible Church.

Chapters and themes of the book will be discussed each week.



MUSSAR STUDY GROUP

Every Other Wednesday at 9:45 am

April 14, 28, May 12, 26, June 9, 23, July 7, 21, August 4, 18

Facilitator: Trish Goldin

Mussar is a system of introspective practices that can help you identify and break through the obstacles to your inherent holiness, using methods that are easy to integrate into daily life. The program laid out in the book *Everyday Holiness: The Jewish Spiritual Path of Mussar* by Alan Morinis focuses on 26 traits (middot) - such as loving-kindness, strength, generosity, compassion, honor, and equanimity - each of which takes center stage for a week of contemplation and exercises, in order to develop and refine that quality in yourself. Our study group meets every other Wednesday morning to work on one or more Mussar soul traits. Come join us!



TANAKH STUDY GROUP

Thursdays at 10:15 am

Facilitator: Joan Leb

After spending many years studying Torah, Prophets, and Writings, our Tanakh study group has decided to explore the Christian Bible through a Jewish lens. Using the book, *The Jewish Annotated New Testament* by Marc Brettler and Amy-Jill Levine, we are expanding our horizons and gaining an interesting perspective on this central Christian text. Author Levine writes, "Jews need to know more about Christianity," and we agree. The only requirement for the class is curiosity and a willingness to learn. Participants are encouraged to purchase the book.



VIRTUAL TOUR OF THE LOS ANGELES MUSEUM OF THE HOLOCAUST

Wednesday, April 7 at 7:00 pm

This docent-led tour of the Museum galleries will include meaningful dialogue and in-depth learning around artifacts and themes of the Holocaust via Zoom.

Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87135428353?pwd=aC8xeEFEVE1jZWQ3NDNqNVBDYkhBdz09>

Zoom Pass: 564493



MOVIE DISCUSSION: DEFIANT REQUIEM

Thursday, April 8 at 7:00 pm

Facilitator: Cantor Marvin and Hannah Finnley

Defiant Requiem is about how a rare form of courage, hope, and survival sparked an entirely unique method of fighting Nazi oppression, enabling the prisoners to maintain their dignity and humanity while battling the worst of mankind. The Nazi legacy of brutality is well-established; however, the virtually-unknown Terezin legacy of hope is told dramatically in *Defiant Requiem*.

[Available on Amazon Prime](#)

Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83407988468>



WINE AND TEXT STUDY

Thursdays at 7:00 pm

April 15 and May 27

Facilitator: Cantor Sara Hass

Explore the Book of Psalms with us. Bring your favorite bottle of wine (or other beverage) and your thirst for knowledge, as we discover why these verses of comfort and consolation have aided the Jewish people for generations. We will meet once a month, and all are welcome!

Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82106608521>



Rabbi Julia Watts Belser (she/her) is a scholar, activist, and spiritual teacher. She is an associate professor of Jewish Studies at Georgetown University and core faculty in Georgetown's Disability Studies program, where she brings Jewish texts into conversation with queer, disability, and feminist ethics. She is the author of two scholarly books, *Rabbinic Tales of Destruction: Gender, Sex, and Disability in the Ruins of Jerusalem* (Oxford University Press, 2018) and *Power, Ethics, and Ecology in Jewish Late Antiquity: Rabbinic Responses to Drought and Disaster* (Cambridge University Press, 2015). A passionate advocate for disability and gender justice, she co-authored the Health Handbook for Women with Disabilities, developed in collaboration with disability activists from 42 countries, to help challenge the root causes of poverty, gender violence, and disability discrimination. She currently directs a project on disability, climate change, and environmental justice – and when she's not teaching or writing, she's a passionate wheelchair hiker.

Scholar in Residence **RABBI JULIA WATTS BELSER,** *Associate Professor of Jewish Studies in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at Georgetown University*

Friday, April 16 - Sunday, April 18

Friday at 4:00pm, Pre-Shabbat Program

Beyond Productivity: How Shabbat Values Underscore Disability Justice Principles

This session draws the voices of disability culture leaders into conversation with Jewish tradition to show how the practice of Shabbat can offer us an opportunity to counter the relentless pressures we face to measure our worth on the basis of our work. Together, we'll explore how tapping into Jewish wisdom can help us challenge ableism and embrace the spiritual and political insights of disability movements.

Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83656607843>

Saturday at 8:45am, Torah Study

Priestly Bodies and Blemishes in Torah and Talmud

In this interactive text-study, we'll examine Leviticus 21's prohibitions regarding disabled priests—and their interpretation and transformation in Jewish law and practice.

Zoom Link: <https://zoom.us/j/163280737>

Sunday at 2:00pm, An Afternoon of Learning

The Politics of Risk and Resistance: Gender, Disability, and State Violence in the Talmudic Tale of Shimon bar Yohai

After his insult incites the wrath of the Roman Empire, Rabbi Shimon bar Yohai eludes arrest by sheltering for thirteen years in an isolated cave—an experience that results in a profound transformation of his mind and body. In this session, we'll discuss the story with an eye toward power and privilege, gender and disability politics, the long reach of empire in the rabbinic imagination, and the insights this story offers for our own pandemic times.

Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85610179161>





COMFORT FOODS: CHALLAH

Thursday, May 13 at 7:00 pm

Teacher: Amy Lipeles

When you bake challah, you connect with tradition, fill your senses and “make your house smell Jewish.” Let’s learn to make challah together so that you can carry on this centuries old tradition in your own home!

Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87658803112>



TIKKUN LEIL SHAVUOT

Sunday, May 16 at 8:00 pm

The moment of receiving the Torah at Mount Sinai was a moment so powerful that its echo reverberated down the generations to the present day. To ritualize this moment the 16th century Kabbalists of Safed created an evening of all-night study (Tikkun Leil Shavuot), which concluded with a service at the break of dawn. Tikkun Leil Shavuot celebrates a moment of truth and wonder which remains eternally alluring. Join us, as we embrace this tradition of study, celebration, and wonder.

Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83654476138>



MOVIE DISCUSSION: EXTRA INNINGS

Thursday, May 20 at 7:00 pm

Facilitator: Steve Gordon

Set against the enchanting backdrop of 1960’s Brooklyn, *Extra Innings* tells the story of a young man who is caught between pursuing his dream and staying devoted to his Syrian Jewish family that is afflicted with mental illness.

[Available on Amazon Prime](#)

Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81571082139>



WE ARE WHAT WE WEAR

Tuesdays at 7:00 pm

May 25, June 1 and June 8

Teacher: Rabbi Michal Loving

How much does society dictate our dress, and how much does religion? Over the centuries wearing priestly garb, tzitzit, stars of David necklaces, and even certain hats have immediately influenced people's perceptions of us. Join us as we discuss Jewish clothing throughout history and explore how our clothes indicate who we are, both to others and to ourselves. No Hebrew required.

Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84630260625>

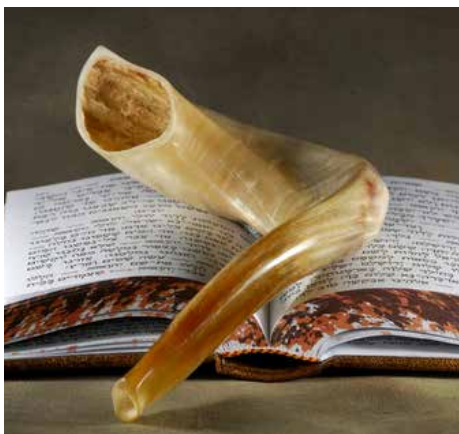


THE CURRENT LANDSCAPE OF ANTI-SEMITISM

Wednesday, June 2 at 7:00 pm

Recent years have found a resurgence of hate rhetoric in our country and around the world. Join Temple Israel and a panel of experts as we discuss the current state of Anti-Semitism in the United States and review techniques for confronting hate in all its forms.

Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83733403562>



EXPLORING THE MEANING OF THE HIGH HOLY DAYS

Wednesdays at 7:00 pm

August 4, 11, and 25

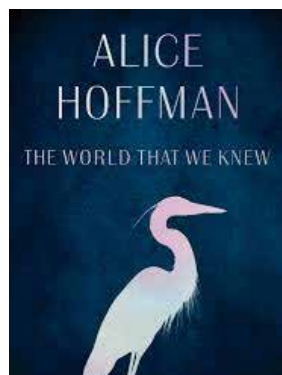
Teacher: Rabbi Fox

The Hebrew month of Elul is all about preparation. Join Rabbi Fox, as we discuss and learn the themes of the High Holy Days leading up to the holiday of Rosh Hashanah. We will engage in reflection of the season and prepare ourselves for the impact of the holidays, what they ask of us, and what we can learn from them.

WOMEN'S BOOK CLUB

Wednesdays at 7:00 pm

We have selected an exciting array of books for the 2020-2021 season. Read with us for a taste of many forms of Jewish literature whether you can attend one or all of our meetings. Temple Israel women and their guests are encouraged to join our spirited discussions, led by member facilitators. For more information, contact Donna Mitnick at (714) 287-4069 or donna.mitnick@gmail.com.

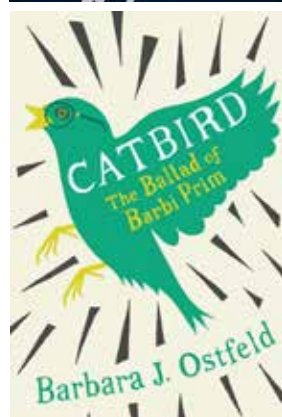


The World That We Knew

by Alice Hoffman

May 12

What does it mean to lose your mother? How much can one person sacrifice for love? In a world where evil can be found at every turn, we meet remarkable characters that take us on a stunning journey of loss and resistance, the fantastical and the mortal, in a place where all roads lead past the Angel of Death and love is never ending.



Catbird: The Ballad of Barbi Prim

by Barbara J. Ostfeld

July 14

In this autobiography, we meet an insightful, opinionated eight-year-old who's already taken a few steps toward becoming a pioneer—but also a shadow of her quirky self. Although she's corroded--sometimes literally--by a toxic but familiar social atmosphere, her love of singing propels her to become the first ordained woman cantor in 3,000 years of Jewish history.





BECOME A PATRON OF OUR JOYS OF JEWISH LEARNING PROGRAM

Temple Israel's Joys of Jewish Learning Program is self-sustaining, seeking to bring top quality teachers, speakers, and programs to Temple Israel. We therefore invite you to please consider becoming a Joys of Jewish Learning Patron of our ongoing tradition. With your generous support, we will be able to continue to offer our many unique programs and grow our adult education program for many years to come.

After reading through this Joys of Jewish Learning catalog, we hope you will see the value in supporting adult education at Temple Israel. Gifts and sponsorships for any particular event are also gladly accepted, as are contributions to our various adult education special funds.

Patrons will be recognized throughout the year.

We thank you, in advance, for your generosity and support. Please contact Temple Educator, Sharon Amster Brown for more information. In order to become a Joys of Jewish Learning Patron, please contact the Temple Israel Office (562) 434-0996 and/or watch your mail for information.



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*Thank you to Temple Israel's graphic designer, Michelle Techau,
for her beautiful work on this catalog.*

With special thanks to our Joys of Jewish Learning Committee

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Jay Alhadeff

Tila Carrol

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Karen Fried

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Judith Hardaker

David Leib

Barry Mitnick

Susan Philips

Heather Raphael

Natalie Swit

We are always looking for new ideas and creative perspectives on our Joys of Jewish Learning Program at Temple Israel. If you're interested in getting involved, please feel free to contact us at any point during the year.

