Rabbi's Letter

by Rabbi Shawn Zevit

As we enter fully into the Jewish months of Nisan and Iyar, we will have opportunities to dialogue, organize, learn and pray, celebrate and wrestle with ideas of oppression and liberation in our personal lives, in our nation, and in the larger world. As Moshe, Aaron, Miriam and our ancestors did in their time, we can take on economic dignity (April 4th I am Human Campaign), and injustice (Jewish Labor Council/MLK50-Labor-Justice Interfaith-Freedom Seder), hand in hand with our own individual and collective journey as we strive to live a life of meaning and purpose, serving Justice-Love-Values-Spirit-God.

There are many days that stand out for both their historic resonance, as in the last days of Passover, and days that have been added to the Jewish calendar by events that have transpired in the last century and even in some of our lifetimes.

We will be observing Yom Ha'Shoah V'HaGevurah (“Holocaust and Heroism Remembrance Day”) on Wednesday, April 11th at 6:30pm with our Hebrew School and will include some people who helped design, establish and sponsor both of our Shoah Memorials.

Also, as Gene Bishop describes in her article in this issue of Kol Shalom, we have begun gathering in ways to re-connect to Israel and Palestine. There are a variety of organizations and resources available that did not exist when we formed as a community under the leadership of Rabbi Brian Walt in 1988. I have compiled a list of these resources and those can also be found in this issue, along with Gene’s article. You are invited to join this re-engagement effort as well.

At the first meeting of members interested in re-engaging with the Israel-Palestine issue, it also became apparent to me that we have not done the best job of highlighting to the community what we have been doing the past few years. Rabbi Brian, our Rabbi Emeritus, told me when we spoke recently that his own daughter was very moved and called him when she visited Mishkan last fall and saw our exhibit on life in the West Bank. I am pleased to say that Rabbi Brian will be visiting us over the weekend of June 1-2, as part of our Mishkan@30: Regeneration Campaign and celebration.

In the past five years, we have addressed our connection to Israel and issues related to Israel-Palestine, at Shabbat services in response to events on the ground, in High Holiday sermons, on social media, in our school curriculum, and with guest speakers, programs, exhibits, lobbying and external programmatic co-sponsorships. We discuss Israel and Palestine

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as part of our overall Statement of Principles as part of a unit in the conversion classes I offer.

Our own movement, now re-named Reconstructing Judaism, has been built on some philosophical and theological approaches that many of us may not be familiar with. Exploring Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan’s ideas about “spiritual Zionism” and the many articles from “The Reconstructionist” magazine are vital for us to understand some of our own movement’s influences. Reconstructing Judaism is exploring a new Task Force on Israel, building on the prior 2004 Task Force which is still in process and included as some of its basic guiding principles:

• We will advocate for those in Israeli politics and society who know that it is untenable to continue to rule over a Palestinian population that has no right to vote and no control over their own collective future, however remote and unclear a solution to that dilemma might be.
• We will remind American Jews and all others that Israel operates in a wildly volatile and dangerous region, that anti-Semitism is a real and vicious threat, and we encourage our constituents to take thoughtful and well-informed positions.
• We will model respectful public discourse, despite the all-too-common human impulse to shout down and berate people with whom we disagree. Following our Reconstructionist principles, dissent will be welcome. We do not expect, let alone require, consensus.

More recently, our movement began offering learning networks on-line regarding “dual Israeli and Palestinian narratives.” These resources and processes can support our own communal discussions and actions towards a flourishing and democratic, a secure State of Israel and self-determination and independence for the Palestinian people.

My own way of engaging with Israel and Palestine is a commitment to building relationships with Israelis and Palestinians, not only ideas and concepts. It was the basis of Rabbi Simcha and my visit to the region and what I hope could be our own congregational trip in the future. I also am committed to dialogue and action that honors a key part of Jewish ethical speech and our own Statement of Principles, where we do not divide Gemilut Hasadim (Acts of Loving-kindness, i.e. how we treat each other) and Tikkun Olam (Repair and Justice in the World, i.e. the actions we take in the world for the sake of justice and our values).

I especially appreciate the work of Friends of the Earth Middle East as well as others who understand that environmental justice is key to the safety, security and future of the Middle East. No initiative will provide the peace desired without addressing sustainability of the region, the planet and water, soil, air, etc.

At the last meeting of our board, the Israel-Palestine conversation group, and Spiritual Life committee, I raised the issue of wanting to do some programming to mark Yom Ha’atzmaut which falls on a Hebrew school night, Wed Apr 18th, in the 6:30-8:00pm time frame. We are considering a combination of film, songs/poems/prayers and personal group discussion of the kind we have begun doing in a smaller group and now want to open to the whole community.

I look forward to sharing this month ahead with all of you, in prayer, discussion, celebration and commemoration, in learning and activism at Mishkan Shalom and in the streets and spaces of our larger community. Hazak Hazak v’nithazek - Let us be strong and strengthen each other!
Dear Friends,

As we begin the month of April and continue into spring we enter the time of the counting of the omer, the 49-day period that begins on the second night of Passover and culminates on Shavuot. The practice during the omer is to stand each night and count the coming day with the intention of clearing our minds, hearts and spirits so we can live in fuller and wiser relationship with each other and the Mysterious Unfolding of All Life. Every week and each day of the omer contain spiritual qualities that guide us in cultivating discernment, awareness, openness, wisdom and love.

Here is a guide for focusing the attention for each of the seven weeks of the omer journey.

### Week 1 Hesed: Overflowing Love, Kindness, Generosity

We begin with love, and set an intention to cultivate a generous and expansive heart:

*May I see the world with eyes of grace, love and compassion.*

*May I trust that each of us is doing the best we can in each moment.*

*I PLACE HESED BEFORE MY EYES AND WALK IN THE TRUTHS THAT UNFOLD.*

--- PSALM 26:3

### Week 2 Gevurah: Strength, Judgment, Discernment

With awe we look toward the Mysterious Unfolding of Life:

*May I remember we are all complex, fragile and sacred beings.*

*With strength and humility I stand with all life before the One.*

*WE ARE CALLED TO ACT WITH RIGHTEOUSNESS, GROUNDED IN DEEP FAITH.*

--- PSALM 119:138

### Week 3 Tiferet: Beauty, Harmony, Balance, Truth

We breathe in the radiance that emanates from the heart of the world, and we pray for ourselves and each other:

*MAY OUR HEARTS KNOW HAPPINESS,*

*MAY OUR SOULS KNOW JOY,*

*MAY OUR WHOLE BEING DWELL IN TRUST.*

--- PSALM 16:9

### Week 4 Netzach: Vision, Eternity, Endurance

We call forth wide, expansive vision and invite our imaginations to flourish.

We lift our eyes to see beyond where we have been and what we have known.

*To You, Eternal Presence, I lift my soul.*

--- PSALM 25:1

### Week 5 Hod: Gratitude, Presence

We sit in the present moment and give thanks:

*I am grateful. I open my heart to whatever is.*

*I GIVE THANKS WITH ALL MY HEART.*

--- PSALM 138:1

### Week 6 Yesod: Foundation, Connection

We align ourselves in connection to each other and all the earth:

*MAY MY PRAYERS BE ROOTED,*

*MAY THEY RISE LIKE INCENSE,*

*MAY THE OFFERINGS OF MY HANDS BE RECEIVED AS A GIFT.*

--- PSALM 141:2

### Week 7 Malchut, Shechina: Majesty, Divine Presence

We open to the sacred that flows through us and all the world:

*I LIFT MY HANDS TO DO MITZVOT,*

*I LIFT MY HANDS TO LOVE.*

--- PSALM 119:48

May the season of the omer guide us with wisdom, inspiring the words of our mouths, the love of our hearts and the work of our hands to come together for healing, goodness, understanding, well-being and peace.

With love and blessing,

Rabbi Yael

For more on the 7 week -- 49 day mindfulness practice of counting the omer, including teachings and practices for each day, pleas visit **A Way In:** [www.awayin.org](http://www.awayin.org)
Dear All,

Every month seems to be full but as spring approaches, more activities happen. The month of April starts with Passover. We taught about the holiday in March. This year we had a theme as part of our commitment with Hazon to teach about Fair Trade. Our Passover Model Seder in March emphasized that slavery still existed in today’s world in the places where chocolate and coffee are harvested by children who make very little money for their work. The children often are taken from their homes to be part of this difficult labor. Our Model Seder was a Fair Trade Chocolate Seder. The Hagaddah with this theme was written beautifully and our oldest children led the program with their guidance of their teacher Chana Dickter. The school is closed for April 1 and April 4 for the holiday of Passover.

Along with our theme of learning about our immigrant past, we are heading to New York for a trip to the Tenement Museum. The Tenement Museum is a brownstone building in the Lower East Side of New York where rooms are set up the way that immigrants may have lived. They also do outside tours in the neighborhood to talk about lifestyles of the early immigrants to our country. We will spend the day and have hired a bus to take us there and back. That trip will be April 8 right after Passover. People have expressed interest in going. I will let everyone know whether there is room on the bus for synagogue members that are not school families.

April 11 is Holocaust Memorial Day. Since our Vav (6th grade) class learns about this period of history, they will make a special presentation that day and we will be having a ceremony at our Holocaust Memorial outside on the Hill. It is always a serious and special day for all of us.

We follow up Holocaust Memorial Day with a celebration of Israel. On April 18 there will be a program that will celebrate 70 years of Israel becoming a state.

April 22 does not just signify Earth Day but will be our Mishkanathon. We will be going to the Wissahickon to weed and plant. The Wissahickon Restoration Volunteers meets us there with tools. The children and grown ups that come spend the morning restoring the park. We ask the children to raise money to support their work. This money goes to special programming that we have done during the year. What a great thing to do on Earth day.

We continue to offer our twice a month Tot Group. Our theme for both groups will be kindness and doing for others. We will make Tzedakah boxes. Our Shabbat Tot group will be here on April 13. We will start with joining the community for a potluck dinner at 5:45 and then do our special program starting at 6:30. Our Sunday morning group will meet on April 22 at 9:45. We provide snacks for this group. If you know families with children 5 or younger, this program is free and all they need to do is write me.

With all these special activities, we give our students many celebrations and programs to remember during this month and in the future.

Hurray for Spring,
Rivka
Click here for ticket and donation information or go to https://mishkan.org/store/donations/celebratingrivka

Tri-Shul Teen Youth Group!

Think all there is to do at the King of Prussia Mall is shop?

Oh, we've come up with something MUCH more fun! Join the teens of Germantown Jewish Centre, Jewish Children's Folkshul, and Mishkan Shalom for an awesome scavenger hunt throughout the mall. Guaranteed to include hijinks, shenanigans, and assorted silliness!

Our next Tri-Shul event will be Sunday afternoon, April 8th ...

LOCATION: King of Prussia Mall
Meeting inside the mall, in front of Sweetgreen (between Neiman Marcus and Macy's)

TIME: 3pm to 6pm
COST: $15 (please bring cash) and teens are encouraged to bring extra money for snacks.

CAR POOL AVAILABLE IF NEEDED
RSVP link: https://tinyurl.com/ydfeyjz7
On Shabbat morning December 9, Mishkan celebrated new members, celebrated Human Rights Day, and celebrated Founding members who began our congregation 30 years before. Earlier that week, President Trump had announced his intention to move the United States embassy in Israel to Jerusalem. On that Shabbat morning, as we honored human rights, not a word was mentioned about Israel/Palestine, despite the concerned response of many Jews of all political persuasions to Trump’s announcement.

I found myself not only deeply disturbed by Trump, but deeply disturbed about the striking current absence of any ongoing discussion about Israel/Palestine in our congregation. Recognition, 30 years ago, that Israel was far from beyond reproach, and that Palestinians were suffering, with numerous human rights violations, was in fact one of the primary reasons for creating Mishkan Shalom. Our Statement of Principles, says in part:

“Our need to secure Israel must not blind us to the sufferings of the Palestinians, who also have ties to the land. The perpetuation of this suffering violates the Jewish commitments to justice and compassion. Jews and Palestinians must recognize and support one another’s rights to national self-determination in the land they share and revere.”.

Following that Shabbat service, I reached out to Rabbi Shawn, and to several other congregation members whom I knew to share a concern for the Palestinians, and a concern for aspects of Israel’s foreign and domestic policies. A small group of us (see byline on this article) held a respectful and meaningful conversation. Each of us was much relieved to find that other Mishkan members had been feeling the need for our congregation to be a place to explore our concerns and opinions about Israel-Palestine.

We are mindful of the fact that the world has changed over the last 30 years, that the political situation in Israel/Palestine has changed, that previous solutions deemed viable for peace – e.g. the two-state solution no longer seem viable. We are mindful of the fact that over the years, attempts to discuss Israel/Palestine have led to meaningful collective action but also to members leaving, and great acrimony. Programming – in the past, and more recently, has often been met with lukewarm responses.

But all of us felt a moral imperative to have more learning, and more discussion. This year marks 50 years of the Occupation, and 70 years of Israeli independence and the Palestinian nakba, which translates as catastrophe. We at Mishkan cannot ignore these realities, if sometimes we would like to both personally, and communally.

So what has come of all this? At the moment, some Mishkan members who have felt compelled to discuss these issues within a Mishkan context have started a Google groups listserv for discussion, and to share ideas for programming and resources. We don’t all share the same perspective, and also realize that we don’t represent the range of perspectives within Mishkan’s current membership. We had to start somewhere, and we are reaching out to all other Mishkan members who are concerned about these complex issues to join our evolving discussion.

We need to think about next steps. Should we form a working group and what do we have the capacity for? What kind of programming do we want? What are Mishkan’s policies for determining what to support when other religious organizations, Jewish, Christian, or Muslim, have programming? How do we...

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Resources for Learning and Activism Regarding Israel and Palestine – compiled by Rabbi Shawn

This wide-ranging list, within the commitments of our Statement of Principles, will help us learn and engage with what is happening in North America and in the Middle East. It reflects a progressive perspective, without advocating for any particular organization. I began compiling this list as a communal resource and offer my thanks to a number of Mishkan Shalom members interested in re-energizing our Israel-Palestine engagement. With help from our members this list will grow over time. Please forward additional links to rabbishawn@mishkan.org To participate in our newly created Israel-Palestine discussion listserv please e-mail Seth Horwitz, reachseth@gmail.com.

We begin by appreciating the work of Friends of the Earth Middle East as well as Rabbi Yonatan Neril, The Interfaith Center for Sustainable Development and others who understand that environmental justice is key to the safety, security and future of the Middle East. No initiative will provide the peace desired without addressing the environmental degradation of water and soil and rising sea levels. The Arava Institute does amazing peace and conflict resolution work in the context of their academic programs on sustainability and ecology.

Ali Abu Awad TEDX Jerusalem—
Ali has visited Mishkan Shalom twice
Ameinu Center for Jewish Arab Education in Israel— Rabbi Shawn is on their rabbinic advisory council
Combatants for Peace
Combatants for Peace Film
Givat Haviva International School
Hagel (The Field): Jews and Arabs in Defense of Human Rights (Rabbi Arik Ascherman)
House of Hope
If Not Now Movement
Islamic Relief USA
JStreet
Jewish Voice for Peace
Just Vision

Neve Shalom/Wahat Al Salaam
New Israel Fund
Open Hillel
Palestinian Peace Coalition
Partners for Progressive Israel
Rabbis for Human Rights
Rabbi Shawn’s Travel Log from Dec 2014 Israel Trip
Roots/Shorashim – connected to Mishkan Shalom friend Al Abu Awad
Sulha Peace Project
Tikkun Magazine
The Parents’ Circle and American Friends of the Parent’s Circle and Combatants for Peace
Truah
Wikipedia Arab-Israeli Peace Projects

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meet the needs of members who are just beginning to explore the issue, members whose minds may be changing, and those who have followed it closely for years? Can we – all of us -rabbis, lay leaders, staff, members, guests- engage with one another with respect even when we disagree or hold different viewpoints?

What do our newer members, who may have joined at any point in our tumultuous, or relatively calm periods around this issue, think? Who else has been silently thinking, “I wish I had somewhere to talk about this without a fight!”

Each week, if not individually every day, we pray for peace. If we cannot peacefully talk about Israel/Palestine at Mishkan, for me this prayer rings hollow. As a Jewish community committed to human rights, we must begin to explore and examine what the world views as being done in our name. Mishkan has always been a Jewish tent in which it is possible to critically look at Israel. It must continue to be.

Would you like to join the Google groups listserv discussion? Please contact Seth Horowitz at reachseth@gmail.com to be added to the listserv.
In Honor of Yom Hashoah/Holocaust Memorial Day, April 12

This talk/D’var Torah – was given originally by Carol Towarnicky for our annual Shoah Torah Memorial Shabbat, March 3, 2018. Carol graciously shared it with us so the community can hear her words and in honor of Yom HaShoah/Holocaust Memorial Day April 12th 2018.

In October, on a visit with our daughter and son-in-law, I found myself in Wittenberg, Germany a couple weeks before the 500th anniversary of the day Martin Luther nailed 95 complaints against the Catholic Church to the door of a church in town and unwittingly began the Protestant Reformation.

High up on the wall of a different church in Wittenberg, one where Luther preached, is a bas relief sculpture dating back to 1305 called a “Judensau.” It is an image of Jews having what might euphemistically be called “obscene contact” with a pig, hence the name “Jews’ pig,” and also includes an insulting parody of the name of God. There were hundreds of such sculptures in medieval Europe and close to 30 remain in Germany with some in other parts of Europe as well. At the anniversary of Kristallnacht ten years ago, the city of Wittenberg added a Holocaust memorial to the sidewalk below the sculpture, with the admission that six million Jews were killed “under the sign of the cross.”

Seeing this 713-year-old image and reading about Luther’s savage sermons against the Jews was a sobering reminder that anti-Judaism is deeply-rooted in Western culture and in Christianity. What made it more disturbing was the recent memory of the tiki torchlight parade of white supremacists in Charlottesville a few months earlier, organized by “some very nice people,” according to our president.

On that Shabbat morning in Charlottesville, as the Reform Temple held its services, a crowd of neo-Nazis gathered across the street. Some had semi-automatic weapons and some chanted “Sieg Heil.” The service continued but at its end, the congregants left by a back door. A heartbreaking detail: Earlier, the congregants had felt the need to move their Torah scrolls out of the building for safe-keeping, an echo, if a faint one.

The Torah portion for Shabbat morning, March 3rd, was Ki Tisa, which tells the story of the Golden Calf. The verses chanted come near the end of the portion, after Moses has thrown down and shattered the Tablets of the Law, after the guilty idolators have been punished and after Moses convinces God to not abandon the Israelites. At that point, God tells Moses to carve from stone a second set of tablets and to come up the mountain again alone. There, God shares with Moses what have come to be known as the Thirteen Divine Attributes, the ones we repeat several times during Yamim Noraim, although the Torah trope here is a different melody.

Tradition says that, along with the new tablets that God inscribed, the Israelites also carried the pieces of the broken tablets in the Ark of the Covenant throughout their journey through the desert. Some ancient rabbis taught that the Israelites literally carried their guilt around forever. But many teachers chose to see it differently - as a reminder that we and the world are all broken in some way.

In our time, some artists and teachers have seen the broken tablets as a potent symbol of the Shoah. The artist Samuel Bak, himself a child survivor, has used this image frequently – I’ve printed out copies of a couple of his paintings and included them with our display.

“My paintings convey a sense of a world that was shattered,” Bak writes, “of a world that was broken,

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One Book Mishkan’s Panel Discussion Welcomes Stellar Panel of Scholars & Activists:

Reverend Hal Taussig, Dr. Elsie Stern & Kohenet Shoshana Bricklin

The Mishkan Community Reads the First Love Story
Sunday, May 6, 3:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Open to the Public. All Welcome. Reception to follow. Suggested donation $5.00.

We hope you’ll join us as we conclude our 13th annual One Book Mishkan program series, with a fine panel of Mishkan members and friends, steeped in scholarship, religious thought and activism in both religious and political spheres.

In The First Love Story: Adam, Eve, and Us, author Bruce Feiler argues that the story of Adam & Eve is as much about romantic love as about sin, offering supporting examples from art, literature, drama, religion and science. If one of the most well-known stories of all time is actually about introducing the idea of love into the world, what might this signify about the Bible or modern religious practice?

We’ve asked our panelists to discuss how each approaches the interpretation of biblical stories and, specifically, their view of the role the origin story in Genesis plays today. Do they see the characters in that story as representing us? Author Bruce Feiler emphasizes love, sensuality and family in his interpretation of this portion of Genesis; do our panelists agree with that emphasis? Have they found similar themes in other origin stories?

Our panelists will share their thoughts on Genesis 1-5, followed by Q & A and open discussion, continuing over refreshments at our closing reception. We look forward to seeing you there!

About Our Panelists

Reverend Hal Taussig is a post-modern theologian. A Professor of New Testament and Early Christianity, he has taught at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College since 1992, and recently retired from the United Methodist pastorate and the Union Theological Seminary in New York, where he was Professor of New Testament. He is Co-Chair of the Westar Institute’s national Christianity Seminar.

Among the most recent of his 14 published books are: A New New Testament: A Bible for the 21st Century Combining Traditional and Newly Discovered Texts and A New Spiritual Home: Progressive Christianity at the Grass Roots.

Dr. Elsie Stern, Vice-President for Academic Affairs at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, currently focuses her scholarship on the transmission and reception of biblical texts in early Jewish settings. In addition to her academic teaching and research, she has taught widely in both formal and informal settings in the U.S. and abroad. She is particularly interested in the ways in which the Torah that is transmitted by rabbis and teachers, and received by Jewish audiences, is, and always has been, far more expansive and variegated than the written texts themselves.

She is the author of From Rebuke to Consolation: Bible, Exegesis and Ritual in the Literature of the Tisha b’Av Season and is, among others, a contributor to the Jewish Study Bible and the Women’s Torah Commentary. Most recently, she served as co-editor for the Dictionary of the Bible and Ancient Media.

Kohenet (Hebrew Priestess) Shoshana Bricklin is a lawyer, “political priestess” and creator of new (continued on page 16)
Welcome Shabbat with Rabbi Shawn, greet old friends, gather companionably with fellow Mishkaners of every age and life-stage. No planning, no cooking, no cleaning (it’s camp!). Walk or talk? Pray or play? Stretch, swim, sing, crafts, puzzle, sports? Schmooze at Happy Hour, prep for Talent Show, glow in the lights of the campfire or Havdalah? Bike? Hike? Sleep? How ‘bout just hangin’ out…doing absolutely not much of anything at all? Bliss!

Well, it’s all only a couple of months and an easy car-ride away to Camp Havaya (Camp JRF’s new name). “Havaya” means “being” in Hebrew, and beckons us to “be as we are” in the luscious, green-as-far-as-the-eye-can-see, Pocono Mountains. We’ll convene with nature, and each other…come and savor the delights of early summer!

Open to all Ages and Stages, Mishkan Members and Friends: Old-timers, First-timers and the ‘Mishkan-Curious’ All Welcome!

Our Weekend in the Woods welcomes all members of Mishkan Shalom, their families and friends, with a special welcome to folks who’d like to get to know our community better.

Design Your Perfect Weekend
What shall it be…share a family cabin or have your own room in the lodge? Private or shared bath? (There’s plenty of hot water in all lodging.) Have a roommate preference? Come for the whole weekend or just for one overnight? Want to carpool?

You get to ask for what you want and we’ll do our level best to accommodate your preferences. Requests are filled on a first-come-first-served basis, so be sure to register ASAP! And remember, even if you pay online, your completed Registration Form is needed to secure your housing choice!

How Much/How Little to Do? You Choose!
Lovely Shabbat gatherings; sports and walks; relish the open air with crafts on the covered porch; swimming and boating in the heated pool and small lake (with canoes, kayaks and paddle boats). Nighttime sparkles with campfires, the excellent Night Hike and the wide-open sky for star-gazing…let alone Saturday night’s “Best (No) Talent Show in the Whole Poconos!” Enjoy any, all, little or none…your choice!

Reasonable and Flexible Pricing
Our great get-away is reasonably priced and family-friendly, with a price cap for a family of four for Mishkan members. Private rooms in the lodge (with choice of private or shared bath) are available for just a little more than the cost for cabins. Fees cover two nights comfy accommodations; six full meals (the food’s delish and the company’s welcoming; fresh fruit, healthy snacks, water and drinks are always on-hand), and a great range of programs and activities with all supplies provided.

We’ve also got a partial-weekend option: A one-night stay, including three meals, with prices for grown-ups and kids. However, if cost is an issue, please contact Karen Singer (see brochure): We want everyone to be able to participate.

And the littlest ones? Free, of course. Spending time with your fellow Mishkaners in the fresh mountain air? Well, you know…that’s priceless!

Find Everything You Need on our Weekend in the Woods Webpage
For complete details – including options for completing and submitting your Registration Form and payment -- see our Weekend in the Woods Brochure and Registration Form on our webpage. Also, you can read comments from past ‘retreatniks,’ see last year’s program schedule and watch for updates at: https://mishkan.org/committee/weekend-in-the-woods-friday-june-8-sunday-june-10-2018

Just remember, even if you pay online, your housing requests can’t be filled until your Registration Form is received!

Questions? Write co-chairs Lisagail Zeitlin and Lisa Moss at: mishkanweekendinthewoods@gmail.com.
Loving the Outdoors, the Conversations & the Kids at our Weekend in the Woods

by Lisagail Zeitlin

I have no kids. I love the Weekend in the Woods. Here’s why:

The Weekend in the Woods is one of my favorite Mishkan events.

First of all, I love being in the woods! When I step out of my car, I take a breath of new, clean spring air: Instant relaxation. I walk through the grass and I feel summer is coming. On Saturday morning, I sit in the sun. It’s too early for bugs. I walk in the evening and hear the leaves on the trees. Just the peaceful setting is my first reason.

Secondly, I get to talk to people that I might have only greeted in passing at Mishkan. We eat at tables of six or eight. We sit outside, or by the pool or lake, and chat. I value that time of casual conversation.

My third reason is about the kids of Mishkan. The families. I watch families interact in ways that aren’t like time at home. A kid comes in from playing, and tells a parent all about it. Another parent and child are looking at tadpoles in the pond by the dining hall. Or sitting together, talking. Or playing basketball. Or lighting candles for Shabbat. They’re not my kids, but I love that family, because they are raising the next generation of Mishkan Shalom. They could be on any vacation, and they came to the Weekend in the Woods with their synagogue. They combined that vacation time with a little Judaism. I love that, too.

As co-chair of the Weekend in the Woods, I know we try to create a nourishing atmosphere for every kind of person. I hope you’ll join us this year, June 8-10, 2018. Registration’s now open. See you there!

June 8-9-10, 2018. See you in the Poconos!
of a world that exists again through an enormous effort to put everything together when it is absolutely impossible to put it together because the broken things can never become whole again.”

The Modern Orthodox teacher Yitzhak Greenberg also connects the broken tablets with the Holocaust, saying that the murder of the six million was no less than “the breaking of the covenant,” but this time by God.

Yet a second set of Tablets was made. “Could it be,” Greenberg writes, “that the covenant was broken, but the Jewish people . . . chose voluntarily to take it on again.”?

So what is this renewed covenant? To Greenberg, it is a partnership between humans and God in the repairing the world. Writing in 1988, he pointed out that the renewed covenant would require taking power and using it justly.

That dedication to using our power and privilege for justice and tikun olam was central to the founding of Mishkan Shalom and one reason why it was so important to us to have this scroll. As we wrote in our Statement of Principles, also in 1988, “As a people who suffered so much as a result of the indifference and passivity of others, we must actively oppose injustice and oppression wherever it occurs.”

In the Torah portion, the first set of tablets is God’s work alone; for the second, Moses is tasked with carving the stones that God will inscribe. They must work together; they are partners.

Looking around today, we can see many things that this covenant, this partnership with God, needs us to address:

- As I was preparing this talk yesterday, looking out the window at the crazy storm, I thought I heard the earth itself crying out for help in the wind and sirens.
- While the U.S. Supreme Court has spared the DACA kids from deportations that were supposed to start Monday, these 700,000 young people will continue to live in fear and uncertainty. Meantime, the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency – ICE – ramps up arrests of the undocumented with a cruelty that is nothing less than government-sanctioned terrorism.
- Speaking of terrorism, according to the FBI, hate crimes have increased in the past two years, and hate crimes targeting Muslims have doubled. Experts say that the actual number of incidents is many times the number that are reported, estimating the total at 250,000. Think of that.
- The #MeToo movement has reminded us that sexual assault, harassment and domestic violence impacts the lives of nearly every woman and girl. And we are called to be allies to peoples of color and to work for equal justice. We are needed to stand stronger against the scourge of guns.
- And to me, the second covenant and the founding principles of this community, call us to look clear-eyed at the situation in Israel/Palestine, and to speak up for justice for Palestinians and for African immigrants facing deportation . . . even if our voices shake.

Finally, I’d like to offer that perhaps the weight of the broken pieces of the covenant (that is, the Shoah) that we have been carrying for 75 years may be out of balance with the weight of the second ones. The most recent Pew poll on religion found that memory of the Holocaust continues to be at the top of things most important to Jewish identity in the United States. Should it be?

While remembering is a sacred duty, to me the renewed covenant calls out to us to fashion a Judaism of joy and celebration, of awareness and awe and wonder, a Judaism that is rooted in community, one that helps us find meaning in life and teaches us to treasure each day. May it be so!
Donations

As of March 15, 2018

Celebrating Rivka
Jean Brody and Louis Schwartz
Jessie and Scott Diamond
Janet Fishman
Erin Hirsh
Bob Kaufman and Jane Shure
Andrea Konow and Janet Garretson and Family
Sara and Fabian Lima and Family
Maria Paranzino
Patricia Quigley and Sharon Weinman
Daniel and Leslie Rogers and Family
Shawn and Simcha Zevit

General Donations
Jim Feldman and Sharon Sigal
Abby Ruder and Ellen Tichenor – IHO Sam Koslore
Alan and Lisa Tuttle –
   IHO Akiva Nathaniel Conviser’s Baby Naming
West Laurel Hill Management Company

Night of Many Dinners
David Acker and Bob Prischak
Claudia Apfelbaum and Jay Tarler
Tsurah and Yosai August
Jacob Bender and Katharina Feil
Ellen Berkowitz
Phyllis Berman and Arthur Waskow
Adam and Maralin Blistein
Marcy Boroff and Maria Veneziano
Carole Boughter and Barry Dornfeld
Jean Brody and Louis Schwartz
Ilene Burak and Alexis Lieberman
William Burdick and Linsey Will
Jennifer Coburn
Galeet Cohen and Erica Catlin
Wendy Epstein and Jim Steiker

Jim Feldman and Sharon Sigal
Benjamin Fields and Stephanie Nova
Gary Fishbein and Betsy Fernbach
Terry Fowler
Albert Freedman
Jeff Gelles and Sharon Gornstein
Joyce Hanna and Arnie Kohen
Seth Horwitz and Marie Scearce
Andrew and Ginger Hunter
Lynne Iser and Mordechai Liebling
Marc Jacobs
Sarah Katz and David Love
David Kaufman and Nicole Kahn
Judy Kleppel
Andrea Konow and Janet Garretson
Elise Luce Kraemer and Ned Luce
Robin Leidner
Keely and Steve Newman
David Piver and Julie Meyers
Abby Ruder and Ellen Tichenor
Deborah and Mitch Schwartzman
Gilda Sedge
Lillian Sigal
Karen Singer and Peter Handler
Rosalind Spigel and Chris Ramsey
Ellen Steiker and Warren Selinger
Ariel Tarash
Alan and Lisa Tuttle
Janet Weiner
Lisa Weinreb Mervis and Steve Mervis
Ariel Weiss
Lisa Gail Zeitlin
Shawn and Simcha Zevit

Rabbis Discretionary Fund
Adam and Maralin Blistein
   – IHO Rabbi Yael, Rabbi Shawn and
   Rabbi Tsurah August
Condolences
We mourn the loss of our beloved congregant Libby Harman and send condolences to her wife Sharon and daughter Grace. We also send condolences to Steve Elwell on the death of his sister Martha Poulter. May Sharon, Grace and the Mishkan community along with Steve and his family be comforted among all who mourn, and may the memories of Libby and Martha be for a blessing.

Love and Support
This month we send our ongoing love, support, and prayers for healing to Mishkan members Eileen Levinson, Ray Kaplan, Teya Sepinuck, Erica Eisenberg, Jane Lipton, Adam Tuttle, Claire Needleman, Robin Berenholz, Bernice Bricklin, Mark Goodman, Jane Hinkle, Denise Kulp, Robin Leidner, Nathan Horwitz, and Natalie Gorvine.

We also send ongoing love, support, and prayers for healing to all those Mishkan members in need of healing but who seek to remain private.

We are keeping Carol Dombroski (mother of Brian Dombroski), Natalie Caplin (mother of Wendy Caplin), Eleazar Shimon Hakohen ben Shoshana v’Ahron Yoaisf (father of Rabbi Shawn Zevit), Sarah Rivka bat Elizabeth (mother of Rabbi Shawn Zevit), Sarah Bradley (mother of David Bradley), Debra Singer (sister of Karen Singer), Patrick Windle (brother of Susan Windle), Sal Berenholz (father of Robin Berenholz), Jackie Berman-Gorvine (daughter-in-law of Natalie & Harold Gorvine), Lorna Michaelson (mother-in-law of Joe Brenman), Edgar Galson (father of Wendy Galson and father-in-law of Susan Windle), and Julie Post and Joseph Post (sister and father of Nancy Post) in our thoughts and in our prayers as well. May they all experience a refuah sheleimah (full healing).

Please notify us if you want a name added to, or removed from, our “Ongoing love, support, and prayers of healing…” list.

Are you receiving Acts of Caring via email?
Acts of Caring goes out to all Mishkan members. It is our communication central for sharing life cycle events and community needs for help. If you are not receiving Acts of Caring, please check your spam, or if you have gmail, your solicitations folder (Acts of Caring is distributed by Constant Contact). If you unsubscribe from Ma Hadash, intentionally or accidentally, you will also be unsubscribed from Acts of Caring. Please contact the office for clarification.

Acts of Caring
Acts of Caring lets the Mishkan Shalom community learn about significant events in the lives of our members. In this way, we can reach out to one another in times of grief, illness, and joy. To reach us simply email: actsofcaring@mishkan.org.

HINENI--HERE I AM
If you could use a little help because of illness, or joy (new baby!) or you know of a Mishkan member too shy to ask, please email actsofcaring@mishkan.org and we will reach out. Hineni offers concrete support to members in need of short term help, including meals, visits, transportation, etc. If you would like some help, but do not wish a public solicitation, please contact the rabbis, or actsofcaring@mishkan.org and we will speak with you privately and seek to arrange help. Our Hineni coordinators are Lisa Mervis and Chris Taranta.

Got Nachas? Sharing your good news is a marvelous way to connect our community! Please don’t be shy - send all lifecycle events you would like to be posted to our email address: actsofcaring@mishkan.org.
Yahrzeits

Chana Ronen Henkin-4/1-Nissan 16
Mother of Doron Henkin

Rebecca Goldsmith-4/14-Nissan 29
Billy & Rachel Linstead Goldsmith

Sylvia Goldstein-4/2-Nissan 17
Mother of Bea Leopold

Helen Lopata-4/15-Nissan 30
Grandmother of Robert Lopata

Edith Levin-4/3-Nissan 18
Grandmother of Barrie Levin

Nat Nisson-4/15-Nissan 30
Uncle of Natalie Gorvine

Hannah Osnowitz Waskow-4/3-Nissan 18
Mother of Arthur Waskow

Mary Towarnicky-4/16-Iyar 2
Mother of Carol Towarnicky

Ronnie Colcher-4/4-Nissan 19
Mother of Amy Colcher

Dennis Berliner-4/19-Iyar 4
Father of Roberta Rossman

Regina Solomon-4/4-Nissan 19
Grandmother of Jim Feldman

Claire Goldman Bornstein-4/19-Iyar 4
Mother of Susan Amsterdam

Stan Hochman-4/5-Nissan 20
Father of Anndee Hochman

Bradd Levine-4/19-Iyar 4
David Acker & Bob Prischak

Abraham Morris Honeyman-4/5-Nissan 20
Grandfather of Charles Honeyman

Norman Lazin-4/20-Iyar 5
Father of Brenda Lazin

Virginia Wilkinson-4/5-Nissan 20
Mother of Beth Wilkinson

Samuel Goldstein-4/21-Iyar 6
Father of Bea Leopold

Maishe Shure-4/7-Nissan 22
Father of Jane Shure

Reuben Wallach-4/22-Iyar 7
Father of Lawrence Wallach

Devorah Bartnoff-4/8-Nissan 23
Wife of Mordechai Liebling

Ralph Halstuch-4/23-Iyar 8
Father of Helene Halstuch

Devorah Bartnoff-4/8-Nissan 23
Mother of Lior Liebling

Eve Bober-Bakely-4/25-Iyar 10
Daughter of Jeff Bakely & Gail Bober

Israel Sussman-4/8-Nissan 23
Linda Beckman

Edgar Read-4/26-Iyar 11
Father of Art Read

Clara Hirsch-4/9-Nissan 24
Grandmother of Hope Honeyman

M. Judy-4/27-Iyar 12
Mother of Elissa Goldberg

Florence Saul-4/9-Nissan 24
Grandmother of Roberta Rossman

Helene Strasser-4/27-Iyar 12
Great Grandmother of Wendy Galson

Betsy Fernbach-4/10-Nissan 25
Gary Fishbein & Betsy Fernbach

Mildred Stone-4/28-Iyar 13
Mother of Andrew Stone

Sidney Myers-4/11-Nissan 26
Father of Phyllis Myers

Sidney Shore-4/30-Iyar 15
Father of Neal Shore

Ray Bradley-4/13-Nissan 28
Father of David Bradley
T’filot

Please join us for Torah Study every Saturday from 9:00 a.m. – 9:55 a.m.

Saturday, April 7, 10:00 a.m. – Passover Day 8/Shabbat Service and Yizkor, with Rabbi Shawn and Claire

Friday, April 13, 7:30 p.m. – Kabbalat Shabbat Service, with Rabbi Shawn and Ami Yares. Vegetarian potluck at 5:45 pm.

Saturday, April 14, 10:00 a.m. – A Way In Mindfulness Service, with Rabbi Yael

Sunday, April 15, 7:00 p.m. – Rosh Hodesh Iyar Celebration

Friday, April 20, 7:30 p.m. – Kabbalat Shabbat Service, with Rabbi Shawn

Saturday, April 21, 10:00 a.m. – Shabbat Service, with Rabbi Shawn, Claire and Dalet, Hey and Vav classes

Saturday, April 28, 10:00 a.m. - A Way In Mindfulness Service, with Rabbi Yael

Library

(continued from page 9)

Haftarah portions integrating Hebrew and English texts – from sources as diverse as Ezekiel, Shaul Tchernokovsky and Starhawk – with traditional chant, including the creation of original blessings for the Haftarah.

Dr. Adam Blistein, Facilitator has degrees in classics from Haverford College and Yale University. Recently retired from a 35-year career in nonprofit academic organizations, he serves as Chair of Mishkan’s Library Committee.

Learn more about our panelists, our One Book, author Bruce Feiler and our Library: Visit our Library page at: https://mishkan.org/committee/library-committee.

Have questions? Suggestions? We’d love to hear from you! Be in touch at: library@mishkan.org. See you in the Library!