



The Bulletin Riverdale Temple

מִמְזֶרַח שֶׁמֶשׁ עַד מְבֹאֵז מְהֻלָּל שֵׁם יי

*From the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof,
the name of the Eternal One is to be praised.*

Worship Services (see calendar on p. 2 for details)

Fridays

April 2	7:00 p.m.	Shabbat Evening Service
April 9	7:00 p.m.	Shabbat Evening Service
April 16	5:00 p.m.	Tot Shabbat
	7:00 p.m.	Ruach Shabbat Celebrating Israel
April 23	7:00 p.m.	Shabbat Evening Service
April 30	5:00 pm	Tot Shabbat
	7:00 p.m.	Shabbat Evening Service

Saturdays

April 3	10:30 a.m.	Shabbat Morning Service
April 10	10:30 a.m.	Shabbat Morning Service
April 17	10:30 a.m.	Shabbat Morning Service
April 24	10:30 a.m.	Shabbat Morning Service

Special

**Sunday, April 4, 10:00 a.m. Passover Morning
Festival Service**

All services and events at Riverdale Temple (see p. 2) are being offered remotely via Zoom. Please consult the e-blasts for the latest information on Zoom links. To subscribe to our e-blasts, email administrator@riverdaletemple.org.

Special Adult Ed Events for April (see p. 8)

**April 7: Holocaust Remembrance Day Talk
with Rabbi Bill Tepper**

**April 21: Earth Day Talk with Rabbi Haggai
Resnikoff**

Reminder:

**Outdoor Mitzvah Day (see p. 8)
April 25, 2021, 9:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.**

Vol. 74

April 2021 (5781)

No. 8

THE RABBI'S COLUMN

This bulletin should reach you in the middle of Passover, so I hope you are having a *Zissen Pesach*, a sweet Passover! I am not a big potato eater, except on Passover. Usually, when Passover begins, I wonder why I don't eat potatoes more often. By the end of Passover, I never want to see a potato again. I wonder how I will be feeling about potatoes by April 1.

Our Gregorian calendar is a solar calendar, while the Islamic calendar is a lunar one. Judaism uses a modified lunar calendar. Because the lunar year is shorter than the solar year, the Islamic holidays gradually get earlier and earlier in the solar year. Jewish holidays also get earlier and earlier, until we add an extra month, and they jump back. This is why we need published calendars to know when our holidays are.

We do this because our holidays are linked to the seasons. Without the extra month, the holidays would become detached from the seasons of nature. We need the lights of Chanukah when the nights are darkest. Tu B'Shvat should come in the late winter, when the almond trees are just beginning to bud in Israel. The High Holidays have to come in the autumn, when leaves are falling and we contemplate our own mortality. And Passover needs to come in the spring.

Both Passover and spring bring with them hope for the future. They are both times of optimism. It is hard not to feel hopeful when the trees are growing green, when the weather becomes warmer, when flowers bloom all around.

Passover also brings a message of hope. The reason we open our doors to Elijah the prophet in our Seder is that he may well be bringing us the news of the coming of the Messiah, the end of exile, the perfection of the world. While not every form of Judaism expects a physical Messiah to show up, we all hope for a time when we will see no more war, no more hunger, an end to disease, poverty, and hatred. This is what we mean when we say "Next year in Jerusalem," at the end of each Seder.

This year, we are more hopeful than ever, as we begin to get together, get vaccinated, and put our masks aside. It is hard not to feel good when we are in the midst of Passover, spring, and the light at the end of the COVID-19 tunnel. Yet, too much optimism is no better than too much pessimism. You may have heard about the pessimist and the optimist who went skydiving together. Just before the pessimist jumped, the other people in the plane pointed out that he had no parachute. "What's the point?" he shrugged.

continued on p. 3

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				19th of Nisan 5781 Pesach V 4:00 pm Jewish Ethics with Rabbi Gardner (via Zoom) <i>1</i>	20th of Nisan 5781 Pesach VI 7:00 pm Shabbat Evening Service (via Zoom) <i>2</i>	21st of Nisan 5781 Pesach VII 10:30 am Shabbat Morning Service (via Zoom) <i>3</i>
22nd of Nisan 5781 Pesach VIII 10:00 am Passover Morning Festival Service with Yizkor Outdoors on plaza and on Zoom. In inclement weather, only vaccinated people will be admitted inside Sanctuary. <i>4</i>	23rd of Nisan 5781 Noon Lunch and Learn with Rabbi Gardner: The Psalms (via Zoom) <i>5</i>	24th of Nisan 5781 4:00–5:30 pm Simcha Learning Center (via Zoom) <i>6</i>	25th of Nisan 5781 4:00 pm Adult Ed Lecture: “Disabled in the Holocaust” (via Zoom) <i>7</i>	26th of Nisan 5781 Yom HaShoah 4:00 pm Jewish Ethics with Rabbi Gardner (via Zoom) <i>8</i> 7:30 pm Executive Committee Meeting (via Zoom)	27th of Nisan 5781 7:00 pm Shabbat Evening Service (via Zoom) <i>9</i>	28th of Nisan 5781 Parashat Shmini 10:30 am Shabbat Morning Service (via Zoom) <i>10</i>
29th of Nisan 5781 9:30–11:00 am Simcha Learning Center In- person classes 9:30–10:45 am Zoom classes <i>11</i>	30th of Nisan 5781 Noon Lunch and Learn with Rabbi Gardner: The Psalms (via Zoom) <i>12</i>	1st of Iyyar 5781 4:00–5:30 pm Simcha Learning Center (via Zoom) <i>13</i>	2nd of Iyyar 5781 7:30 pm WRJ Book Club (via Zoom) <i>14</i>	3rd of Iyyar 5781 4:00 pm Jewish Ethics with Rabbi Gardner (via Zoom) <i>15</i> 7:30 pm Board of Trustees Meeting (via Zoom)	4th of Iyyar 5781 Israel Independence Day 5:00 pm Tot Shabbat (hybrid) <i>16</i> 7:00 pm Ruach Shabbat Celebrating Israel (on Plaza and on Zoom)	5th of Iyyar 5781 Parashat Tazria-Metzora 10:30 am Shabbat Morning Service (via Zoom) <i>17</i> 1:00 pm Chavurah after services (via Zoom)
6th of Iyyar 5781 9:30–11:00 am Simcha Learning Center In- person classes 9:30–10:45 am Zoom classes <i>18</i>	7th of Iyyar 5781 9:30 am Collection for Mitzvah Day begins (through April 25) Noon Lunch and Learn with Rabbi Gardner: The Psalms (via Zoom) <i>19</i>	8th of Iyyar 5781 4:00–5:30 pm Simcha Learning Center (via Zoom) <i>20</i>	9th of Iyyar 5781 4:00 pm Adult Ed Lecture: “Jewish Law and Climate Change” (via Zoom) <i>21</i> 7:30 pm WRJ “Revitalize and Socialize” (via Zoom)	10th of Iyyar 5781 4:00 pm Jewish Ethics with Rabbi Gardner (via Zoom) <i>22</i>	11th of Iyyar 5781 7:00 pm Shabbat Evening Service (via Zoom) <i>23</i>	12th of Iyyar 5781 Parashat Achrei Mot- Kedoshim 10:30 am Shabbat Morning Service (via Zoom) <i>24</i>
13th of Iyyar 5781 9:00 am–2:00 pm Outdoor Mitzvah Day 9:30–11:00 am Simcha Learning Center In- person classes 9:30–10:45 am Zoom classes <i>25</i>	14th of Iyyar 5781 Noon Lunch and Learn with Rabbi Gardner: The Psalms (via Zoom) <i>26</i>	15th of Iyyar 5781 4:00–5:30 pm Simcha Learning Center (via Zoom) <i>27</i> 7:30 Adult Ed: “A Shmek of Yiddish” (via Zoom)	16th of Iyyar 5781 <i>28</i>	17th of Iyyar 5781 4:00 pm Jewish Ethics with Rabbi Gardner (via Zoom) <i>29</i>	18th of Iyyar 5781 5:00 pm Tot Shabbat (hybrid) <i>30</i> 7:00 pm Shabbat Evening Service (via Zoom)	

APRIL

Hybrid: in person on temple plaza and on Zoom

“Those things never work anyway.” When the optimist jumped, his friends warned him that he, too, was jumping without a parachute. “Don’t worry,” he told them, “I’ll borrow one on the way down.”

Another warning about too much optimism can be found in the story in which we are told that Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakai said that if you are planting a tree and you hear that the Messiah has come, finish planting the tree, and only then go to greet the Messiah. In the 17th century, when Shabbtai Tzvi claimed to be the Messiah, many Jews sold their homes and businesses for pennies on the dollar, expecting to be miraculously transported to a reborn Land of Israel. They would have been better off planting their trees and proceeding with their lives.

The news that the pandemic will soon be over is as welcome as the news that the Messiah has come. But the Messiah is not here yet, and the pandemic is not over yet.

I hope everyone enjoyed Passover Seders with their families.

That does not mean we should stop being vigilant, wearing masks, avoiding crowded places, and washing our hands frequently.

Still, without optimism, Judaism would hardly exist. I think of the fictional rabbi being forced from his home in *Fiddler on the Roof* who, when asked if this would not be a good time for the Messiah to come, shrugged and said, “We’ll have to wait for him somewhere else.” I think of those who sang “Ani M’amin” on their way to the gas chambers, the twelfth of Maimonides’ Thirteen Principles of Judaism, “I believe with perfect faith in the coming of the Messiah, and, though he tarry, I await him every day.” I think of Jews in Spain, in Europe, in North Africa, in India, all over the world, who faced anti-Semitism, violence, discrimination, assimilation, ignorance, and apathy, but who still came together every year to sit down at a Passover Seder, and who ended the Seder with our most hopeful words “Next year in Jerusalem.”

—Rabbi Tom Gardner

THE CANTOR’S COLUMN

Shalom chaverim,

I am so happy that the weather is less cold and we can return to having our outdoor services. I am also looking forward to finally opening our sanctuary doors and having indoor services for vaccinated congregants only (please always follow up with our sign-up forms on our eblast). It is really wonderful to have our gatherings again during services!

I am so grateful for the gift of technical gear to accommodate our at-home congregants via Zoom—thank you to Fay Statsky and Scott Sirkin for their generous donation. It is always a blessing to hear, see, and feel the presence of our congregants, at home as in person.

This pandemic taught us an important lesson about what does it truly mean to be a congregation, a temple, to be Riverdale Temple. It taught us that we do not need a physical space to exist

as worshipers, as volunteers, as a team and friends. It taught us that all we really need is to be *present* and bring our gifts of love and generosity toward Judaism, Torah, and acts of lovingkindness. Yasher Koach to all of you who persevered and continued in helping to grow and sustain our temple.

On April 16 at 7:00 p.m. we will have a special outdoor service: Ruach Shabbat Celebrating Israel. Israel will be 73! I am happy to share that we have prepared a wonderful musical service with our full Ruach Shabbat band. We will also have built-in tents and lights at the plaza—so rain or shine, we will meet outside. I hope you will sign up online and join us for this special service! A sign-up form will be available for all on our eblasts closer to the date.

Wishing you all good health and much happiness!

With blessings and l’hitraot,

—Cantor Inbal Sharett-Singer



TOT SHABBAT

Tot Shabbat
Friday, April 16 and 30, 5:00 p.m.
In person on Temple Plaza and via Zoom

THE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

As I write this in mid-March, the outdoor temperature may not be as warm as I would like, but spring is definitely in the air. The days are longer and there is a quality in the atmosphere that feels springy. Also, it is time for Passover, for me more of a harbinger of spring than is the solstice.

Passover is the ur-holiday, the subject of a large swath of the Torah, and the defining moment when a ragtag group of slaves transformed themselves into a people. Passover is also the time when we switch from *Mashiv haruach umorid hagashem* to *morid hatal* (“You cause the wind to shift and rain to fall” to “You rain dew upon us.”). These lines in the G’vurot prayer are generally unnoticed and, in fact, were not included in prior Reform prayer books. The fact that *Mishkan T’filah* has chosen to include it speaks to the desire of its authors to bring the siddur into modernity while at the same time alluding to Judaism’s ancient roots. So, why are these phrases in there?

It helps to look at the conditions that the Israelites had to deal with at the time that monotheism was beginning to take hold. (Actually, the early Israelites were not, strictly speaking, monotheists. They were henotheists; that is, they accepted that there were other gods, but said that the Gd of the Israelites was the real one.) At this time, the great civilizations were riverine. Egypt and Mesopotamia/Babylonia were situated along the banks of great rivers: the Nile and the Tigris and Euphrates. These rivers provided a dependable source of water for agriculture, permitted irrigation, and allowed their populations to provide an abundance of food. This abundance, in turn, permitted parts of the populace to engage in activities that were not centered around food production, leading to artisans, priests, warriors, and scribes. Life was good.

But for the Canaanite tribes, not so much. Canaan, where the Israelites lived among many other tribes, has no rivers. Agriculture was dependent upon rainfall. And rain in that part of the world was iffy, as it is to this day. I have read estimates that there were droughts three out of every ten years. Food production was difficult and rainfall was very important.

The people of the Ancient Near East viewed nature as resulting from the interplay of divine forces and personages. Powers were shared among the gods and one god alone was usually not sufficient to make something happen. Rainfall and fertility depended upon conflict and its resolution in the realm of the gods. While gods changed and were renamed over time, one of the most important and long-lasting gods was Ba’al, the rain god, often called “Rider of the Clouds.” Though the Israelites were moving towards monotheism, it was hard for people to give up Ba’al, since his acts were so vital to the life of the community. The Bible is forever importuning the Israelites to renounce Ba’al worship, indicating how entrenched this practice was.

To move to monotheism, the Israelites had not only to give up other gods, they had to rethink their cosmology. The dynamic interactions among the polytheistic gods were transformed into the unity of the One Gd. Interaction became solo mastery. This one god had to take over all of the roles of the pantheon, including bringing the nourishing rains. Additionally, Judaism brought the relationship between man and Gd to the center of the religion. The rainfall, or lack thereof, was not a capricious event. It was Gd’s response to the behavior of the Israelites. When the people were righteous, Adonai was benevolent. When the people were sinful, the rains were withheld. So the prayer “You cause the wind to shift and the rain to fall” is an acknowledgement of the power of the One Gd who will bring sufficient rain during the planting and growing season, while raining only dew when the crops were being harvested.

Behind those two lines in the *G’vurot* lies a major shift in the development of Judaism. The people need not pray to Ba’al for agricultural abundance. Their own Gd could bring the rain and provide for their needs, if only they could behave themselves. Well, we know how that worked out.

—Dr. Ronna Weber, President

FROM THE PULPIT & RITUAL CHAIR

A little more than one year ago, on March 9, we celebrated Purim 2020 in our sanctuary. After that fun-filled evening, news of the COVID-19 pandemic compelled us to close our doors and put an end to in-person services. Thanks to our dedicated clergy, we immediately began offering virtual services. We could still “see” each other, but we could not experience our customs of friendly welcomes, shaking hands, perhaps a kiss on the cheek, and sitting side-by-side with our Riverdale Temple family members.

Fast forward one year. On February 28, 2021, we celebrated Purim again. It was a very joyous, loud, funny, friendly, warm, and multi-generational holiday celebration. It is hard to believe that the entire Purim festivities occurred virtually on Zoom! It was wonderful, and yet so sad in many ways. We still couldn’t be present in our sanctuary, nor could we sit next to each other or hug our friends as we would normally have done. In the midst of all of the laughs and screams and children’s voices shared on Zoom, reality still crept in, reminding us that the COVID-19 pandemic was still very much controlling our lives.

I am keenly aware that there is a glimmer of light at the end of the dark tunnel that we have been in for the last 12 months. I am truly feeling optimistic and a bit excited at the thought that we will come together again inside our sanctuary. That day will be coming! How can we prepare ourselves for that longed-for day?

I think about President Biden’s often repeated remarks about “the empty chair at the dinner table.” Whether you have personally suffered a tragic loss due to the pandemic or another illness, or know someone who has, or you sympathize and grieve with those individuals reported in the news every day, I believe this is something vitally important for us to acknowledge before we can truly kick the pandemic out of our homes and communities. By the time you read this, Passover will have already begun and the first and second Seder nights will have taken place. I want to say “I’m sorry” to you if you had an empty chair at your Seder table. I want to share your loneliness if you were unable to join your families and/or friends for a heartfelt Seder and delicious

continued on p. 6

BULLETIN BOARD

Temple activities will take place via Zoom or Facebook Live unless noted otherwise. Please consult the calendar on p. 2 and the temple website at <https://riverdaletemple.org>, and also check e-blasts for updates.



Go to <https://urj.org> for announcements, news and press releases, a calendar of virtual programs and events, and general information.

Congratulations



Harriet Charles, on the birth of her great-grandson, **Max Charles**, on March 8, 2021 — he joins his big sister **Sophie Charles** (age 3).



Visit our website: <https://riverdaletemple.org>
Join Us on Facebook!

Did you know that Riverdale Temple has a Facebook page? Find us by searching for “Riverdale Temple Bronx, NY” on Facebook and join this page by clicking on “like.” This is a space where we can exchange ideas, blog, discuss events, share photos, etc., and strengthen our bonds as a community. Join and make our numbers grow.

To give a contribution to Riverdale Temple, send your donation to Riverdale Temple, 4545 Independence Avenue, Bronx, NY 10471. Please make your check payable to Riverdale Temple. Give the name/category/event to which your donation applies. We now accept payment by credit card; call the office (718-548-3800, ext. 0) or go to www.riverdaletemple.org. You can support Riverdale Temple by buying a mug with our logo for just \$10.

Copy for the next issue of *The Bulletin* is due by **April 15**. You can email it directly to administrator@riverdaletemple.org (put “Bulletin” in subject line).



Riverdale Temple	Rabbi	4	
Telephone Extensions (718-548-3800)	Cantor	5	
	Simcha Learning		
Temple Office	0 or 1	Center	6
Bookkeeper	2	Emergencies	7
Nursery School	3	General Information	8
		Other	9

Riverdale Temple House Committee

Our mission is to ensure that the building and grounds of our synagogue best respond to the spiritual, educational, cultural, and social needs and activities of our congregation. We are concerned about safety, cleanliness, comfort, and appearance and maximizing the functionality of our facilities. The committee works closely with the maintenance staff to ensure that the facilities are well managed and meet the needs of our community efficiently and economically. The committee benefits from members with varied experience in facilities management, engineering, construction, and related fields.

Please volunteer to serve on this committee by writing to: administrator@riverdaletemple.org or president@riverdaletemple.org

Registry of Holocaust Survivors

If you are a Holocaust survivor or a family member of a survivor, you can register to be included in the Benjamin and Vladka Meed Registry of Holocaust Survivors, at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. For more information and to download the Survivors’ Registry Form, go to ushmm.org/resourcecenter and click on Holocaust Survivors and Victims Resource Center to complete the form.

Contact information: Holocaust Survivors and Victims Resource Center, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 100 Raoul Wallenberg Place, SW, Washington, DC 20024–2126; tel: 202-488-6112; fax: 202-314-7820; email: resource-center@ushmm.org.

Riverdale Temple is now part of the organics/compost pilot program in the Bronx. We can now recycle our food scraps. Please observe the different signs on the garbage receptacles and put throwaways in the proper container. We are pioneers in a wonderful program—please join the effort in caring for our environment. Thank you!



The temple needs a volunteer accountant!

If you are a qualified accountant, please contact Joanne Heyman, treasurer of Riverdale Temple, at 718-548-3800.



Recapture the joy of reading through the JBI Library for visually impaired, blind, and reading-disabled individuals, all provided free of charge and delivered to your doorstep. Call toll free at 1-800-433-1531 or visit JBI’s website at www.jbilibrary.org

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FROM THE PULPIT & RITUAL CHAIR *(continued from p. 4)*

Passover meal. I'm sorry for all of the ways this past year may have cruelly changed all of our lives forever. I share in the pain of all that has transpired since this time last year. Passover is known for the get-togethers of our families and friends. I grieve for myself and with you for the traditions that we could not enjoy this year; for the empty chair staring at us; for the absence of hugs and kisses; and for the laughter and tears of youthful remembrances we didn't get to share around our table.

But spring is here, and we look forward to better days. We hope that the coming of the warmer weather will help to warm our hearts as well. Multitudes of people have already received their vaccinations and multitudes more will soon receive theirs. Little by little, our communities are opening up. Along with warmer weather, our outdoor services will be offered. Oh—and YES! Riverdale Temple will, as soon as possible, welcome congregants back into the sanctuary. No worries to those remaining at home,

for we will continue to offer hybrid services that include in-person as well as Zoom participants.

All through this past year, I have greatly missed being your Riverdale Temple greeter. Although I have greeted many of you virtually, I so very much look forward to the day that I can once again stand in the back of the sanctuary and greet you as you enter. I'll be ready to hand you the Shabbat folder and, if you arrive a bit late, I will tell you what page of our prayer book we are on. There will be no greater joy for me than to "bump elbows" with you, and I hope you will feel the same way. In the meantime, please join us for all of our beautiful and musical services, as well as our adult education classes and other events, all available on Zoom. Please make it a habit to read the eblasts that are emailed each week. If you haven't attended our services and/or our classes, you just don't know what you are missing! Join us, won't you?

Chag Pesach Sameach! I wish you all a sweet Pesach—a Zissen Pesach. And may we truly see each other very soon.

—Dr. Shelley Ast, Chair

SIMCHA LEARNING CENTER

The Simcha Learning Center quickly transitioned from the celebration and learning about Purim to Passover. Remote and in-person students enjoyed reading stories about the exodus from Egypt, with an emphasis on reevaluating and appreciating the concept of slavery to freedom. The older grades enhanced their learning of these concepts by exploring the different ideas of how one can feel enslaved emotionally as well as physically.

An important part of our observance is opening the door for Elijah as he visits each Seder to represent that good days are coming.

Most of the grades created beautiful stained-glass Elijah cups that they will hopefully use at their Seders. The younger grades made lovely Seder plates to enhance their Seders. The day before vacation, instead of doing a model Seder, this year's children rotated through the 15 steps of the Seder, with interactive games and activities to explore each one of its concepts. In addition, our students remotely and in school interacted with Cantor Sharett-Singer with all the fun songs for Passover, as well as classic songs, including "Ma Nishtana" and "Dayainu."

We look forward to Mitzvah Day on April 25 and celebrating Israel Day on April 16.

—Judy Weinberg, Education and Engagement Specialist



NURSERY SCHOOL NEWS

When you walk through the doors at Riverdale Temple Nursery School, you can feel the warmth in each classroom. It is truly a loving, caring community of children, families, and teachers. We believe that there is no question too small when it is about your child!

This past month the Twos and Threes learned about Passover. Walking through the halls, you could hear the children singing Passover songs as they prepared for their Seders. Each child worked on their own Seder plates, matzah covers, and Haggadahs, which they took home before the break.

Following is a sample of the work that our Four-Year-Olds are doing:

The children in Ms. Gabby and Ms. Anna's class are studying the planets. They have created a giant rocketship that takes them into space. They know all the planets and their position in the solar system. The children in Ms. Sandi and Ms. Nicole's class are studying Kandinsky and how technology is made. They are busy taking apart computers, clocks, and phones and putting them back together as a collage.

continued on next page

The children in Ms. Maria and Ms. Virginia's class have been studying space, too. They have been learning about the planets and constellations. The children created their own constellations out of toothpicks and mini-marshmallows.

Tours

Tours continue for the 2021–2022 school year. If you have friends who are interested, please tell them to call the school at 718-796-0335 or email me at nsdirector.rtms@gmail.com. We have only a few spaces left for our Three-Year-Old classes.

Camp

We are very excited about our fourth year of summer camp. It is for five weeks for Two- through Five-Year-Olds. It is open

to families who attend Riverdale Temple Nursery School and outside families. It will begin June 28 and run through July 30. The Two- and Three-Year-Olds will go from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., and the Four- and Five-Year-Olds from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. There will be lots of projects, water, and planting, and pizza and ice cream every Friday!

There will also be farm animals, the Greenburgh Nature Center, a fun bus ride, and the Balloon Rebbe. We will have soccer, music, and movement every week.

We think it will be great fun!

If you are interested, please contact Alexandra Abikzer at nsdirector.rtms@gmail.com.

The school is closed from March 25 to April 5 for Spring Break.

— Alexandra Abikzer, Director

WOMEN OF REFORM JUDAISM (SISTERHOOD)

Welcome spring!

I believe spring is my favorite season. Snow is melting, trees are budding, crocuses are blooming, and tulips and daffodils are starting to push out of the ground...you know the drill! Winter is over! Of course, we aren't out of the woods yet—but there is light at the end of the tunnel.

Also with spring, there is "spring cleaning." With that in mind, WRJ will be holding a "Revitalize and Socialize" Zoom call on Wednesday, April 21, at 7:30 p.m. We will talk about various projects that are in the mix and the direction of WRJ. Please mark your calendar. A Zoom invite will be coming shortly.

WRJ is very happy to report that our Annual Lay-Led Service will be Saturday, May 1. We are so excited to be able to hold this special event. With the help of Rabbi Gardner, Cantor Sharett-Singer, and Shelley Ast, we know it will be a wonderful service. If you are interested in participating, please contact Shelley at 917-453-0445 or at doctorshelley18@gmail.com. Please remember to leave your name and phone number for her.

We hope everyone's Passover was full of joy, and we look forward to seeing everyone soon!

—Joanne Heyman, President

Dear Friends,

I was saddened to learn of the passing of our Book Club member Barbara Silber Weinstock. She was keen to join our discussions right up to the end of her life. I first met Barbara on the tennis court ten years ago, where she was a canny and enthusiastic doubles player, even after knee replacement surgery. Like many of you, I will miss her. May her memory be forever a blessing.

On March 10, we had a lively discussion of *The Third Daughter*, and I thank those who attended and contributed to our conversation about "white slavery," slavery in general, and women's historic, societal value.

Our next meeting will take place on Wednesday, April 14, at 7:30 p.m. We will be discussing *Mike Nichols: A Life*, by Mark Harris. Nichols, an actor, director, and comedian, was born Igor Peschkowsky to a Jewish couple in Berlin in 1931 and was sent to America in 1939. Among the enthusiastic reviews:

"Hugely entertaining...Harris is a talented storyteller." —Louis Menand, *The New Yorker*

"It's the rare large-scale biography without boring bits." —James Wolcott, *The New York Times Book Review*

I hope we'll all enjoy the biography. See you soon. Hope you are having a happy Passover.

—Ronni Stolzenberg



MEN OF REFORM JUDAISM (MEN'S CLUB)

Best wishes for Passover,

—Steven Rosenfeld, President

SOCIAL ACTION

Well, it's now April and spring! Hope you are enjoying the beautiful Passover holiday period!

Birds are offering their bird songs, crocuses are starting to bloom, and more people are getting vaccinated!

OUTDOOR MITZVAH DAY April 25 (9:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.)

Ways to help and prepare for the Outdoor Mitzvah Day:

1. Sort through closets and drawers and select clean, good-quality clothing to donate to Big Brothers Big Sisters. Please give only items that you yourself would want to receive.

Note: Please bag, seal, and label each donation bag with *Women*, *Men*, or *Children*.

2. Please purchase and donate the following items:

a. Diapers and wipes for The Women's Shelter on the Grand Concourse.

b. White socks for homeless men for The Midnight Run; also travel or regular-size soap, toothpaste, deodorant for men, toothbrushes, combs, etc.

c. Shelf-stable groceries (only current dates) for Hearts and Homes Refugees—fish, beans, pasta, vegetables, fruit, soups,

rice, evaporated milk, baby food, tomato sauce, oatmeal and healthful cereals, tea, coffee. People can donate new, reusable grocery bags received from charities or bought in stores.

Note: Please do not give leftover Passover items.

IMPORTANT: If you don't/can't go to a store to shop, please purchase items through Amazon (please remember Riverdale Temple with Amazon Smile) or other stores and have deliveries sent to the attention of **Cristin Messinger** no later than **April 22**.

Starting April 19, you can bring donations to the temple Mondays through Thursdays from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and Fridays from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Looking forward to Mitzvah Day itself, we can use a few volunteers to help out with receiving items on Sunday, April 25, and to assist students who will be making the flower cups. The Religious School students will also have an additional activity.

The Riverdale Y Greenmarket will also be at the temple at the same time.

After this long winter and continued pandemic, I am looking forward to saying hello to you at the Outdoor Mitzvah Day!

—Frances Segan, Ph.D., Chair, Social Action Committee

Riverdale Temple Cares

Are you lonely or feeling isolated during the pandemic? Are you or a family member ill? Riverdale Temple is here to help.

The temple's Caring Committee offers support during difficult times by calling members and their families to talk—about your concerns or just to have a friendly chat. Good news, such as a milestone birthday or a birth in the family or other simcha? We'd like to share in your joy!

If you or someone you know would welcome a caring call, please reach out to Muriel (917-353-6843) or Beth (bethfertig@gmail.com). If you prefer, you may contact Rabbi Gardner (718-548-3800).

ADULT EDUCATION



At Adult Education, we continue to plan online events, and in that regard we have mapped out the various events that are on our schedule to June 2021. We urge you to save the dates in your planning calendars. All events are online via Zoom.

The Zoom link to the online talks will be in the weekly eblasts reminding you about the events.

Save the Dates

Wednesday, April 7, at 4:00 p.m.

Holocaust Remembrance Day, Yom HaShoah (April 8)

The Ordeal of the Deaf and Disabled in the Holocaust

Speaker: Rabbi Bill S. Tepper

By way of historic documents, visual materials, and the narratives of survivors, Rabbi Tepper examines and discusses with attendees the nature of the human catastrophe.

Wednesday, April 21, at 4:00 p.m.

Earth Day (April 22)

Danger! Climate Catastrophe Ahead

Speaker: Rabbi Haggai Resnikoff

Climate-related disasters worldwide have paraded across our news feeds for the past year and more. What does Jewish law have to say about this crisis?

April 27 and May 4, 7:30–8:30 p.m. A Shmek of Yiddish (a taste of Yiddish) by Mikhl Yashinsky: A two-part Introduction to Yiddish class. Mikhl teaches several Yiddish classes at the YIVO, and we need your input to decide whether there might be enough interest for us to offer a Yiddish class (tuition based) in the next study year.

May 12, 7:30–8:30 p.m. YIVO Jewish Culture Series—Three Jewish Composers: Mahler, Schoenberg, and Bernstein, a talk by Alex Weiser

Alex is the director of public programs at the YIVO and a talented composer (he was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in Music). He will be examining each composer's work through the lens of their Jewish identities.

June events will be announced in the near future.

continued on next page

Study with Rabbi Gardner

Mondays, noon–1:00 p.m.: **The Psalms**

Thursdays, 4:00–5:00 p.m.: **Jewish Ethics**

Watch for eblasts with more information about each of the events!

—Dr. Yvette Marrin, Chair, Adult Education Committee

The **Chavurah** will meet on **April 17** at 1:00 p.m. While the Torah portion traditionally read on that day is *Tazria-Metsora*, we will be reading and discussing *Pirke Avot*. *Pirke Avot*, usually translated as “Ethics of our Fathers,” is one of the best-known and most-cited texts in the Mishna. It consists of short statements, or aphorisms, often attributed to the rabbis who lived around the first century CE. If you don’t have a copy of this book, you can find it on Sefaria.org.

—Dr. Ronna Weber

CONTRIBUTIONS

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Andy Friendly	Fred Friendly, beloved father		

Kol Nidre donations/pledges are listed on p. 11.

Condolences

To

Sindy and Andrew Cutler, Wendy and Neal Korval;
Brooke and Alexa Cutler, Justin and Maxi Korval, Meirah
and Josh Kriegman; Noah and Asher Korval, Oakley and
Hazel Kriegman

Arline Davis; Cathy Davis, Justin, Erica, Dov;
Michael, Jason, Eleanor, and families

Drs. Andrea Silber Dickey and Philip Dickey, Jeffrey Silber
and Pamela Bleiwas, Laura Silber and Dr. Dusan Knezevic,
Michael Silber; Jack Dickey, Olivia Dickey, Aaron Silber,
Mila Knezevic, Iva Knezevic, Ana Knezevic

On the Loss of

Barbara Fleit, beloved mother, mother-in-law,
grandmother, great-grandmother

Stuart Davis, beloved brother, husband, father,
father-in-law

Barbara Silber Weinstock, beloved mother, mother-in-law;
grandmother



The Departed Whom We Now Remember: April Yahrzeit Observances

1 Chas. A. Becker	9 Helen A. Saxe	15 Meyer Propper	23 Irene Bodenchuck
1 Dr. Herman R. Cohn	9 Hilda Weiler	15 Roslyn Socolof	23 Bernard A. Guenzig
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Inside This Issue

1 *Worship Services*

1 *The Rabbi's Column*

2 *Monthly Calendar*

3 *The Cantor's Column*

4 *The President's Column*

4 *From the Pulpit & Ritual
Chair*

5 *Bulletin Board*

5 *Congratulations*

6 *Simcha Learning Center*

6 *Nursery School News*

7 *Women of Reform Judaism*

7 *Men of Reform Judaism*

8 *Social Action*

8 *The Caring Committee*

8 *Adult Education*

9 *Contributions*

10 *Condolences*

10 *Yahrzeit Observances*

11 *Kol Nidre Donations/Pledges 2020*