



Vassar Temple

Where You Belong

Congregation Brethren of Israel Founded 1848 - Bulletin Volume 167, No. 11 May 2020

A TASTE OF VASSAR TEMPLE

(formerly the Movable Feast)

June 13-14

July 11-12

Meals will range from intimate adult gatherings to casual get-togethers appropriate for families.

Watch for your invitation in early May and join us for this popular event!

A note to our readers:

Due to publishing deadlines, some of the information printed in this month's bulletin may be out of date.

Please refer to Temple emails or the website for up-to-date information on events.

Study Groups at Vassar Temple

"Torah Study", which examines passages from the week's torah portion or haftarah, will be led by the Temple's Rabbi Renni S. Altman, D.D., 9-10am every Saturday except May 23.

"The Talmud: Modern Ideas from an Ancient Text", a monthly class taught by Senior Scholar Rabbi Paul Golomb, will be held Thursday May 21 from noon to 1:30. Please call to confirm date.

A Taste of Vassar Temple Event Update

A Taste of Vassar Temple (originally scheduled for June 13-14 and July 11-12): the June date has been cancelled. We are keeping the July date on the calendar at this time and hope to add a second date in August if possible. Whenever it happens, a perfect opportunity to be together after a long hiatus!

*All are welcome to come and join in all the classes--no previous training required! No charge to attend. **Depending on the situation, classes may be conducted virtually.** Contact the temple for updated information at 845-454-2570 or office@vassartemple.org*

From the Rabbi's Desk



Under the best of circumstances, writing a bulletin column that will feel relevant when it is read a month later is a challenge. Writing on April 1, 2020 for the May 2020 bulletin is unusually challenging. Our world is changing so fast and there are so many unknowns, so I fear that anything I write will be irrelevant thirty days from now.

An article in today's (April 1) *New York Times* about the impact of the coronavirus in New York reminded me of just how dramatically life has changed since March 1:

--Thirty-one days after the region recorded its first case ... the number of confirmed cases of the virus will shoot past 100,000 when today's figures are released.

--Deaths attributable to the virus, which have been climbing by an average of 30 percent each day for the past week, stood at 1,866 in the region on Tuesday night ... and are set to pass 2,000 today.

The month began with cautions about large gatherings, then transitioned to New York State on "pause;" social distancing has entered our lexicon and we sign off on calls and emails with

"stay safe and healthy." CDC guidelines change continually as they learn more about COVID-19 each day; first we are told not to wear masks to save them for the sick and then the possibility emerges that everyone should wear masks because significant numbers of people with COVID-19 don't exhibit symptoms at all.

It is simply impossible to predict what our lives will be like when you read this bulletin. I would like to think that by May 1 we will have begun to take baby steps towards resuming normal lives, but I don't think we will be there yet. I do hope and pray that New York will have passed the apex, that the incidents of the virus and the deaths will have begun to diminish. Even as I pray for that, I know that other states will only be climbing towards that apex and that our country will be far from safe. I hope and pray that enough masks, ventilators and testing kits will have been manufactured and distributed under federal authority so that they will get to the places where they are most needed. I hope and pray that the checks from the relief package will have reached households that are so desperately in need of funds, that unemployment payments will be sent out and that Congress will have passed additional aid packages.

As I write this column, our beloved congregation has thus far been spared from this disease. I pray with all my heart that this continues and that our friends and loved ones

are also safe. Even as the numbers of cases of COVID-19 in Dutchess County have remained relatively low thus far, it is hard to imagine that we could escape unscathed either from the illness itself or from its aftermath. There will be tremendous economic challenges ahead for all of us.

The one thing I do know for certain is that we, Vassar Temple, will be there for another -- whether or not we can be in close physical proximity. We will support and comfort one another, we will find strength through prayer and our community, we will find ways to help those in need, and we will manage through this crisis and the difficult times ahead -- together.

I look out my windows and see the crocuses blooming, the daffodils about to burst forth. Spring is in the air; with spring, comes hope for a brighter tomorrow. May I not face the same dilemma writing for the June Bulletin. Stay safe and healthy.

Rabbi Renni Altman

President's Message: YouTube Shabbat and Zoom Meetings, a silver lining in the age of Covid 19.



The Corona virus, our unseen enemy, could not stop Vassar Temple from enjoying and sharing Shabbat services. The answer to social distancing, which put an abrupt stop to Shabbat Services, was livestreaming our services on

YouTube. With Rabbi Altman and a number of congregants, Cantor Goldmann, and the technical support of Brett Colbert and David Lampel, services proceeded smoothly.

With the double click of our beloved icon on YouTube under Vassar Temple, we were streaming out to our congre-

gants and others who enjoyed Shabbat services from the safety of their homes.

We're Jews, in-Jew-nuity is our thing (I should trade mark that!). Rabbi and the Livestream and Ritual committee made it happen. I applaud Rabbi Altman for her steady religious leadership as we moved into the livestream arena.

Not taking away from the service or Rabbi's inspiring sermons, it was the outpouring of comments on the right-hand side of the livestream on YouTube that impacted me greatly. The numerous numbers of chats that flowed with love filled my eyes as I felt the warmth from everyone. It became abundantly clear that all of us needed our community for support.

For a brief moment, I was there with all of you having the opportunity to experience prayer through the internet. The feedback was very positive, with some audio adjustment recom-

mendations, livestream became the silver lining when we all really needed it most.

We have also been doing meetings via Zoom. The format works great and we did learn a lot about the importance of making the meetings secure. We also learned that facilitating these meetings becomes much easier after everyone learns more about using it. The Temple does have its own account and all meetings will be conducted this way until we get past this terrible virus.

Someday we will get past this, and our world will slowly come back, though it will not be what it used to be, my hope is that we will be even more compassionate and understanding of the human condition.

Alan Kaflowitz

May Worship Service Schedule (tentative)

Depending on the situation, these events will continue virtually. To obtain the most up-to-date information regarding each service or Torah Study, please refer to the weekly emails.

1	7:30pm	Shabbat Service with Rabbi Altman
2	9:00am 10:15am	Torah Study New Paths Service
8	7:30pm	Teacher Appreciation Shabbat Service with Rabbi Altman & Cantor Goldmann
9	9:00am	Torah Study
15	7:30pm	Shabbat Service with Rabbi Altman
16	9:00am 10:15am	Torah Study New Paths Service
22	7:30pm	Shabbat Service with lay leader
23	9:00am	No Torah Study
28	8:30pm	Tikkun Leil Shavuot with Rabbi Altman (with Temple Beth El & Shir Chadash)
29	10:00am 7:30pm	Shavuot Yizkor Service with Rabbi Altman Shabbat Service with Rabbi Altman & Cantor Goldmann
30	9:00am	Torah Study

Tikkun Leil Shavuot May 28

Held on the eve before Shavuot, for Vassar Temple members, this has traditionally been an occasion to join with other local congregations, to study and spiritually prepare to receive the Torah the following day. Watch for plans for this year's Tikkun program, or contact David Hecht at vtritchair@gmail.com for more information.



Scriptural Readings

May

9	<i>Emor</i> Lev. 21:1-24:33; Ezekiel 44:15-31
16	<i>B'har/B'chukotai</i> Lev. 25:1-27:34; Jeremiah 16:19-17:14
23	<i>B'midbar</i> Num. 1:1-4:20; Hosea 2:1-22
30	<i>Naso I:</i> Num. 4:21-5:31; Judges 12:2-12

Shabbat Y'ladim (Children's Sabbath)

All children, from birth to first grade, are invited to bring their parents, siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles and/or friends to the Temple on Sat. May 16 from 10:30-11am, to join with Rabbi Altman and our music teacher, Olivia DiIorio, for a Shabbat celebration. Rabbi Altman's stuffed bear friends *Kachol v' Lavan* will be there to take part in the singing, stories and marching with the Torah. After this brief, child friendly Shabbat service, we will celebrate with yummy challah and juice! Tell your friends and neighbors--this event is free and open to the whole community. *If public health concerns preclude us from gathering at the temple on that date, we will try to celebrate Shabbat Y'ladim together on Zoom.* Watch for any updates! For questions about this program and to RSVP, please contact rabb@vassartemple.org.

Thank You Vassar Temple!

Thanks for your Purim pasta, which was dropped off at the Morse School food pantry right after the holiday. Thanks to all who donated food, hygiene items and cleaning supplies for local refugee families. Thanks to all who donated a record amount to our annual Wind Chill Fund drive to aid Hudson River Housing. The timing was serendipitous and helped the homeless to be able to "shelter in place," both safely and comfortably. Although we had to delay our Refugee Shabbat program and film showing, all items donated were delivered to the refugees, and additionally, all nonperishable food in the Can Jam Bin was delivered to a local family shelter prior to the Temple being "locked down."

Thanks to all who made financial donations to assist the most vulnerable, and those in economic jeopardy, during the pandemic. And finally, with great appreciation, thanks to our Vassar Temple members, along with our partners at the MHIA, for fulfilling our commitment to make sure our hungry neighbors are fed at Lunch Box throughout the public health crisis.

Help with Civic Engagement and Social Action!

The Vassar Temple Social Action Committee has a new name: the Vassar Temple Social Justice Committee. It is active on many fronts, and we can take on almost anything new--our only limit is people power--so please let us know your suggestions!

Our committee has two arms to help manage all the projects. The Civic Engagement arm is led by Howard Susser, and deals with advocating for social justice issues and legislation on the local, state and national levels. One area of civic engagement we're currently involved in is refugee and immigrants' rights, and activities relating to this issue are overseen by Perla Kaufman. The second arm of the committee is led by Marian Schwartz, and is mostly engaged in meeting the social and economic justice needs of the local community. Under this arm, we have special projects, in addition to these on-going ones: service to the homeless coordinated by Judy Harkavy, monthly participation at Lunch Box (our local "soup kitchen") coordinated by Paul Ciminello, and Can Jam (our ongoing food collection for area pantries) coordinated by Joel Kelson & family. We also collect funds for many worthwhile causes in the Temple *tzedakah* boxes. Suggestions for recipients always welcome!

In addition to our Temple committee work, we are affiliated with the Jewish Social Action Coalition, a network of local synagogues and Jewish clubs. Ron Rosen and Perla are our representatives to the Coalition (more are welcome!), and one of the primary beneficiaries of the Coalition's good works is Morse Elementary School, where there is always a need for tutors and library aides. If you are interested in helping with any of these projects, or if you'd like to suggest new ones, please contact socialaction@vassartemple.org. We'd love to hear from you!

Lunch Box Program Update

Vassar Temple and the Mid-Hudson Islamic Association continue to provide assistance to the Lunch Box through these trying times, but our approach has changed. VT/MHIA is no longer cooking the meal at the Lunch Box, opting instead to purchase food from a local restaurant. In addition, the Lunch Box no longer serves the meal inside; meals are distributed from tables outside of the building. Contributions of fruit for May are appreciated and can be brought to my house prior to Sunday, May 3. Please call my cellphone (914-475-4208) or email me (Paul@ecopkny.com) for details and directions.

Paul Ciminello



Bimah Flowers Donations

Anyone who wishes to honor the memory of a loved one or to commemorate a special occasion can do so by sponsoring the sanctuary flowers with a donation to the Vassar Temple Sisterhood Bimah Flower Fund. The donation to the Fund is \$55. Just call the Vassar Temple Office at 845-454-2570.

Condolences

To:
Shira Teich and family on the loss of
Rabbi Robert Rozenberg, Shira's father

The family of our cherished member,
Lila Matlin, mother of Barbara Aronson,
Elizabeth Schwartz and Susan Piccone

Linda Cantor and family on the loss of
Gertrude Silverman, Linda's mother

Religious School Update

As soon as the public schools closed, so, too, did the Seth A. Erlebacher Religious School. The Judaica teachers sent home packets with workbooks for the students to keep up and Hebrew teachers have been meeting with the older kids online. We already had the digital version of the Hebrew program that we use so it was easy to switch over. We had a Zoom virtual pre-Passover program for all religious school families with Morah Olivia, our music teacher, and me. It was great to see everyone! We will figure out the rest of the year as we are notified if and when we can resume school in person.

Rabbi Renni Altman

GOT SCRIP?

Vassar Temple Bulletin

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Articles for the **June 2020 Bulletin** must be submitted by **May 1** sent via email to publicity@vassartemple.org. The editors reserve the right to edit articles for style, accuracy and length.

YAHREZEITS

MAY 1

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MAY 22

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MAY 29

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Jean Ciminello	Jonah Ritter
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Gertrude Silverman	Susan Fink

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Lila Matlin	Susan Weinstein-Winter
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	Linda Cantor

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In honor of:

Rabbi Altman	The Ciminello Family
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TREES IN ISRAEL:

In memory of:

Mary Zammello	James Robinowitz
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Keyboards:	Joseph Bertolozzi
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**DATED MAIL
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5780 May 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 7:30pm Teacher Appreciation Shabbat	2 9am Torah Study 10:15am New Paths
3 Mitzvah Day No Religious School 10:30 Lunchbox No Post B'nei Mitzvah Program	4	5 10am Senior Exercise Program (SEP) 6pm Sisterhood Donor Dinner	6 4:30pm Hebrew School	7 10am SEP	8 6pm Happy Hour 7:30pm Shabbat Service	9 No Torah Study
10 Mother's Day No Religious School No Post B'nei Mitzvah Program	11	12 10am SEP	13 430pm Last day of Hebrew School	14 10am SEP	15 7:30pm Shabbat Service	16 9am Torah Study 10:15am New Paths 10:30am Shabbat Y'Ladm
17 9am Last day of Religious School 12pm Last day of Post B'nei Mitzvah Pgm	18 12 noon Chai Noon	19 10am SEP	20 7pm VT Finance Cmte meeting	21 10am SEP 12pm Talmud Study w/ Rabbi Golomb 7pm VT Board Mtg	22 7:30pm Shabbat Service	23 No Torah Study
24	25 Memorial Day Office Closed	26 10am SEP	27 6pm Calendar Meeting	28 10am SEP	29 Shavuot, Office closed 10am Shavuot Yizkor Service 7:30pm Shabbat Service	30 9am Torah Study
31						