



Vassar Temple

Where You Belong

Congregation Brethren of Israel, Founded 1848—Bulletin Volume 172 No. 6 ~ January 2024

Tu B'Shevat Congregational Seder ~ Sunday, January 28 ~ 10am-noon



Celebrate nature, the environment, and the Birthday of the Trees, at Vassar Temple at a Tu B'Shevat Seder! Everyone mark your calendar for Sunday, January 28, from 10am to noon. This is a must-come event for folks of all generations—a “seder” featuring fruits of the trees that are symbolic of the holiday, music, and fun-filled Tu B'Shevat activities to appeal to all ages. Everyone is welcome—watch Temple publicity for further details. See you there!

(Snow date February 4)

Vassar Temple's 175th Anniversary Celebration Gala: Sunday, April 14, 2024, 5pm



December's Question was: In what year did Vassar Temple move to its new home on the corner of Vassar and Mill Streets and how was the purchase of the building paid for?

The answer is: Generous contributions from members helped to defray part of the cost. Matthew Vassar held the mortgage. In 1890 Guy Vassar, a relative of Matthew, left a \$500 legacy to the “Israelite synagogue.” The fair that helped to cancel the indebtedness on the Temple located on Vassar and Mill Street took place in 1906. It is said that then-Mayor Hines in a formal address, made reference to the exhibit and decorations, as the “finest ever displayed in the city and laid stress on the value of the Jew as a useful and patriotic citizen and member of every community.

The January Question: What were the occupations of the five founding fathers of Vassar Temple: Jacob Baker, Herman Heart, Isaac Hieman, Aaron Morris, and Solomon Scheldburgher?

The answer will be in the next bulletin.

From the Rabbi's Desk:



"This month we turn to the Book of *Shemot* (Exodus) which begins with the liberation of the ancient Israelites from slavery in Egypt. The foundation story of the Jewish people as a people is grounded in a history of having been slaves. We are called upon to keep that experience prominent in our lives: we recall it daily in our liturgy, whenever we sing "*Mi Chamocha*;" every year at Passover we relive that

experience through the rituals of the seder; and, we live out the admonition that appears in the Torah more times than any other (36 times) to remember and care for the stranger, having been strangers in the land of Egypt, in our on-going social justice work.

Perhaps it is some Divine intervention that the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday usually falls during the opening *parshiot* of Exodus. Perhaps it was predetermined that he would devote his life to Moses' call, "Let my people go!" While King spearheaded the civil rights movement in this country, his vision went well beyond freedom and equality for Blacks. His dream was for all people to live in harmony: "When we let freedom ring... we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the world of the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last, free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!"

As I think about King in the midst of this horrific war in Gaza, I wonder what he would say to us as both an advocate for justice and against violence. Surely, were he to write his "I have a dream" speech today he

would include Israelis and Palestinians, Jews and Muslims. No doubt, he would hold onto the hope for a two-state solution where two peoples could live side by side in peace and security, equality and freedom, justice and dignity. "True peace," he wrote, "is not merely the absence of tension; it is the presence of justice."

King was inspired by and often quoted the teachings of the prophets: "The Hebrew prophets are needed today because decent people must be imbued with the courage to speak the truth... The Hebrew prophets are needed today because we need their flaming courage... In the days to come, as the voices of sanity multiply, we will know that across thousands of years of time, the prophets' message of truth and decency, brotherhood and peace survives; that they are living in our time, to give hope to a tortured world that their promise of the Kingdom of God has not been lost to mankind."

When I've asked students—of all ages—to name someone in modern times whom they consider to be a prophet, most often the first name that comes up is that of Dr. King. He had the courage, vision and tenacity of the ancient prophets. How we need his voice today—to speak out against the antisemitism, the Islamophobia, the hate that plagues our world.

We will celebrate his life and teachings on Martin Luther King Shabbat, Friday, January 12 in a program with Souls United of the Hudson Valley, a multi-faith, multi-cultural gospel choir that will feature songs interspersed with teachings from Dr. King.

On January 24, I will begin at three-part adult

education series that will explore the lives and writings of some of the Hebrew prophets.

May the words of these prophets, ancient and modern, be the light that can guide us to drive out the darkness.

Rabbi Renni Altman





President's Message:

What difference a day makes. One day we are dancing and singing with Torahs in our arms in the safety of our Sanctuary and Social Hall and 24 hours later, we are grieving, in mourning for our Israeli brothers and sisters because of an unconscionable act of violence on our homeland and fearing for our own security where we once felt safe.

How these Temple walls look different to us a month later. The windows look different to us. People walking along the street look different to us. Phone calls and visits from non-members have us on guard. We are not afraid. We are just much more cautious and wary. We question the simple good wishes of others. Do they really mean what they say? Is there an ulterior motive? Are we missing something? How much security is enough to keep us safe? Can anything really keep us safe from someone who wants to cause harm?

I have attended more security webinars than I would like. I keep hoping that I will have an "Ah Ha" moment at the next one and feel like I learned that one thing that I didn't know before. Why do I feel that bad people might always be one step ahead of us, no matter what we do? I try not to be glued to the news and yet I must be informed. We also must live our lives, go to work, continue to move forward at Temple and at life.

Our community has come through in so many ways. We have seen random acts of kindness expressed toward and for us at Vassar Temple; gestures of kindness, phone calls, letters, flowers, even money slipped under the door for Israel. We have had our local law enforcement step up and help us in so many ways. We have had our local legislators take a strong stand on anti-Semitism. We have had leaders of local

congregations of many faiths stand with us and say, "We are with you and beside you and hate has no home here." We have tried to update and educate ourselves on history, so that we might understand how we got here and how we will navigate the future. We have had prayer vigils within our Jewish and extended religious community.

Within our own building and Religious School, we have had safety and security education, as well as fire drills and active aggressor drills. We have a working alarm system and typically keep our doors locked. We have purchased walkie-talkies, lockdown shades for the classrooms, and will be installing locks on all inside classroom doors. Since October 7, we have had armed security at the door for Religious School as well as at larger events and services at Temple. We have been employing off-duty police officers for this, which is not sustainable financially or with their work schedules, and we are investigating workable alternatives. We have a Security Committee that will be addressing research and grant writing, to help us acquire funds to offset some of the extensive costs involved in the above upgrades and services, and to perform a vulnerability assessment to truly see what kinds of larger upgrades we may need to our physical building, *i.e.* cameras and monitors for all doors (not just the front door), steel security doors, etc. We have instituted a waiting room for our Zoom links for services, as this is an added layer of cybersecurity. The one common thread that is stressed at all of these security webinars that we attend is that having layers of security is key. We welcome your input and participation in this process.

I honestly hate that we have to do any of this, but this isn't about what I like or don't like or what makes me uncomfortable. I, along with other Board members and leadership, have been told by many of you that if you don't feel safe, you won't come to Temple. This is not a viable option. We need to be able to safely physically gather together in prayer, study, and to socialize as a congregation and a community. We will continue to be vigilant and we will continue to move forward together, one day at a time, with hope for peace and safety in the Middle East and we will do everything in our power to ensure peace and safety at our home, Vassar Temple, as well.

Lisa-Sue Quackenbush

Bimah Flowers for our Services

Just as Shabbat Services help brighten our weeks, so do the Bimah flowers which brighten our Sanctuary. Please let the office know if you would like to sponsor a flower arrangement in honor of a special occasion or in memory of a loved one.

The donation to sponsor Bimah Flowers is now \$60 and checks should be made out to Vassar Temple Sisterhood with Bimah Flowers written on the memo line. Should there be more than one sponsor for a Shabbat a larger flower arrangement will be provided. Sponsored flowers are fresh floral arrangements.

January 2024 Bimah Flowers Sponsors:

- January 5: Donated by Martin Noble in memory of Greta Blaine
- January 12: Donated by Randi, Pam and Al Scope in memory of Charles Scope
- January 19: Vassar Temple Sisterhood Bimah Flowers Fund (silk flowers)
- January 26: Vassar Temple Sisterhood Bimah Flowers Fund (silk flowers)



December 2023 Update:

- December 22: Donated by Susan Avery in memory of Anita Warburg

Shabbat Y'lاديم (Children's Shabbat) ~ Saturday, January 20

All young children from tots to first grade are invited to join Rabbi Altman to celebrate the Sabbath and the holiday of Tu B'Shevat (the New Year of the Trees) on Saturday January 20 at 10:30am in Vassar Temple. Our stuffed bear friends *Kachol v'Lavan* will be there to take part in the singing, stories, and a brief, child-friendly service. Tell your friends and neighbors—this event is free and open to the whole community. Healthy snacks will be served. Vassar Temple is a welcoming, inclusive Reform congregation.

For more information and to RSVP, contact office@vassartemple.org or call the Temple 845-454-2570 link or to borrow our special prayer book if participating on Zoom.



New Paths ~ December

Everyone is invited to join us at Vassar Temple for a New Paths Sabbath morning service Saturdays, December 2 and 16 at 10:15am. The moving liturgy includes both traditional and contemporary writings, mostly in English, and participants may bring supplemental materials to share. "We take the time to let the service get through us, rather than getting through the service." Each New Paths service, whether lay-led or rabbi-led, provides a unique and thoughtful Shabbat morning experience. A brief informal kiddush follows. We meet "hybrid" (both inside the Temple and on Zoom).

Contact office@vassartemple.org or 845-454-2570 to be put on the New Paths email list, or if you need the link or to borrow our special prayer book if participating on Zoom.

Scriptural Readings ~January

January 6

Sh'mot

Exodus 1:1-6:1; Isaiah 27:6-28:13; 29:22-23

January 13

Va-eira

Exodus 6:2-9:35; Ezekiel 28:25-29:21

January 20

Bo

Exodus 10:1-13:16; Jeremiah 46:13-28

January 27

B-Shalach

Exodus 13:17-17:16; Judges 4:4-5:31

Study Groups at Vassar Temple

Torah Study with Rabbi Renni Altman, D.D. meets at 9am on Saturday mornings (hybrid). Come join our lively discussions. Contact office@vassartemple.org or 845-454-2570 for details and to be placed on the Torah Study email list.

Talmud Study with Senior Scholar Rabbi Paul Golomb meets from noon-1:30pm on Zoom select Mondays—this month January 8 and 29. For details, study sheets, and to be placed on the Talmud Study email list, contact him at pjgolomb@verizon.net.

All are Welcome
No prior knowledge necessary
No charge to attend

Religious School Update ~ January

In the time that the Holy One created the first human, God took him to all the trees of Eden and said to him, 'See my works, how lovely and praiseworthy they are. All that I created, I created for your sake. Put your mind [to this], that you don't ruin or destroy my world, for if you destroy it, there is no one who will repair after you.'

~ *Kohelet Rabbah on Ecclesiastes 7:13*

Kohelet Rabbah is a rabbinical commentary on the Biblical book of Kohelet (Ecclesiastes). Writing about fourteen centuries ago, the anonymous author connects the Kohelet verses with other sources, both Biblical and later, to bring us closer to the text and to add our own ideas and perspectives.

I selected this quotation because the minor festival of Tu B'Shevat (the 15th of the month of Shevat) occurs this year on the evening of January 24. The "holiday of the trees"—originally just a tax deadline—evolved into a Diaspora evocation of the land of Israel, and then into a day to heighten awareness of our responsibility to conserve our earthly home.



The religious school's Tu B'Shevat seder will take place on Sunday morning, January 28. If our earthly home decides to provide snow that day, the seder will be held the following week, February 4. All are welcome!

Rabbi Shoshana Hantman

Religious School Director

SAVE THE DATE

175th Anniversary Shabbat Service

Friday, April 19, 2024 at 7:30pm

Guest Speaker: Rabbi Rick Jacobs, President, Union for Reform Judaism



An important goal that has been accomplished this year is the consolidation of the investment of Vassar Temple funds in a way that will improve management, reduce expenses, and help achieve long term stability of our finances.

Previously, several accounts existed in different locations for the different types of investments. We have now closed those accounts and established three accounts at Fidelity Investment.

- The Investment account includes funds designated for Special Purposes and also funds that are not likely to be needed for temple operations in the next six months or so. *Although these funds are tracked individually*, consolidating in one account allows the money to be invested in accordance with a Board-approved allocation to broad market equities and bonds to achieve long term growth.
- A second account contains money donated to the Endowment fund. While a separate account, it is invested in a similar manner as the Investment account, for long term growth, in equity and bond funds.
- A third account has been established to isolated Cemetery funds, and these will be invested in short-term interest-bearing instruments. These funds will be dedicated to the support and management of VT cemeteries.

The amount in each fund will vary up or down in accordance with market trends, but we expect over time these accounts will generate earnings and establish a strong financial footing for the Temple's long-term planning. As of December 1, 2023, the amount in the Investment fund was \$540,000, in the Endowment fund, \$254,000, and in the Cemetery fund, \$99,000. These totals include transfers and new contributions since the beginning of the year when the funds were established, and market earnings.

Kudos to the finance and investment committees, our bookkeeper and office manager, who all contributed to the substantial progress achieved.

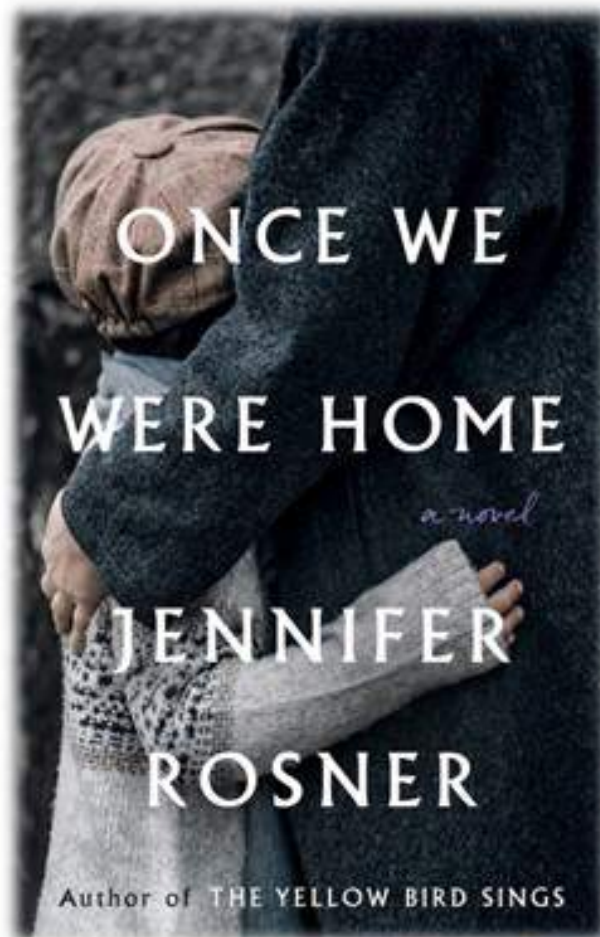
Maxine Finkelstein

Free Author Program

January 17, 2024 ~ 7:30 pm EST via Zoom



An evening with acclaimed
Jewish author, **Jennifer Rosner**
2020 National Jewish Book
Award finalist
Sponsored by Vassar Temple,
Adult Education Committee



Once We Were Home follows four hidden, displaced children during the Holocaust, and what happened to them after WWII's end when they were wrenched from what they considered their families. Little-known history and difficult questions of complicity and responsibility, belonging and identity, good intentions and unforeseen consequences confront the reader.

Pre-Registration is **REQUIRED**:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMpcuCoqzkoE9FQiiCTrjF3ZFu4jL-DbDGh>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.



Soup and Chili at Tisch Shabbat Friday, January 26

Friday, January 26, at 6pm in Vassar Temple, we will gather for a soup and chili dinner as part of a warm and wonderful in-person Tisch Shabbat. As we sit around tables in the social hall, Rabbi Altman and Cantor Goldmann will lead a service modeled on the "Rebbe's Tisch," using Visual Tefillah (slides of the prayers projected on a screen, instead of prayer books), and featuring lots of singing and stories. Sisterhood will provide a festive meal of homemade soups, vegetarian chili, challah, cornbread and salad to be enjoyed during the service.

Everyone is very welcome, and while reservations are not required, we would greatly appreciate having an idea of how much food to prepare. If possible, please let us know you are coming by January 23 at TischShabbat@vassartemple.org or call the temple at 845-454-2570. Donations for the dinner are appreciated and any checks should be made payable to Vassar Temple Sisterhood.

Anthony Parisi, District Attorney for Dutchess County at Vassar Temple Thursday, January 18



Anthony Parisi, District Attorney for Dutchess County will join us for a Town Hall meeting on Thursday, January 18, 2024 at 7pm. Our newly-elected District Attorney will speak with us about pressing issues, such as hate crimes, cyber fraud and crime in and around Dutchess County. The program format will allow ample time for questions and open discussion. This event is sponsored by the Vassar Temple Civic Engagement Committee.

In Honor of our 175th:

The Roots of Reform as Prophetic Judaism with Rabbi Altman

Wednesdays @ 7:30pm ~ January 24, 31 and February 7

Describing the ancient Israelite prophets, Abraham Joshua Heschel wrote: "Prophecy is the voice that God has lent to the silent agony, a voice to the plundered poor, to the profaned riches of the world. It is a form of living, a crossing point of God and man. God is raging in the prophet's words." The prophets raged against injustice and demanded ethical and righteous behavior. With its emphasis on social justice and a universal call to strive for the betterment of humanity, it is no wonder that when Reform Judaism began in America it was grounded in the teachings of the prophets and even referred to as "Prophetic Judaism." This three part-series will touch upon the teachings of some of the early prophets and the major literary prophets.

Jan 24 – The Early Prophets: We know Elijah from the Passover seder; in this session, we will explore some of the stories about Elijah in the Bible as well as other early prophets such as Nathan and Elisha.



Elijah



Nathan



Elisha

Jan 31 – Isaiah: Though there is one book called Isaiah, it is clearly a work reflecting multiple authors and spanning the time from the fall of the Northern Kingdom of Israel to the Assyrians through the destruction of the Temple and conquest by the Babylonians.



Feb 7 – Jeremiah and Ezekiel: Jeremiah prophesied through the Babylonian conquest, foretelling the destruction, yet promising ultimate redemption. Ezekiel is the prophet of the exile, mourning the destruction of the Temple and loss of Jerusalem with the exiles in Babylonia, yet inspiring the people's hope that God has not abandoned them and that they will return and rebuild.



Jeremiah



Ezekiel

The course will be offered in hybrid format. If you have a *Tanakh* (Bible) please bring it. You can access the text on line at www.sefaria.org. Please RSVP to aduldetd@vassartemple.org and indicate if you will attend in person or online.

Please Support the Wind Chill Fund

The agency Hudson River Housing shelters as many homeless area residents as possible in an environment that provides for social distancing by utilizing vacant PODs (trailers) once used to house overflow inmates at the County jail, not just overnight, but around the clock. The local homeless population, doubled in size since before the pandemic, remains there today while plans are being formulated for a permanent adequately sized facility. A safe, dry, warm place to stay, hot showers, access to food and water, and most important, supportive and referral services are being provided. As the harsh winter settles in, more folks always come to seek shelter, and expenses rise. Please help HRH maintain this truly life-enabling program for all who need it by sending a check made out to Vassar Temple, with "Wind Chill Fund" on the memo line, through the month of January. You can also donate on our website to the Community Tzedakah Fund, with "Wind Chill" in the comment section. Let's not have anyone be turned away out into the cold. Your donation will bring help and hope to someone in dire need, and is tax deductible to the extent of the law.

Hudson River Housing is about more than homeless shelters; Hudson River Housing is about building communities. They literally create affordable, decent housing through both rehabbing buildings and new construction. They promote housing equity through giving people the opportunity, knowledge and skills to achieve home ownership, to rise all the way from homelessness to transitional support, providing down payment saving incentives and classes on home ownership skills. They also operate two job training programs and assist small business startups. In regard to shelters, HRH provides emergency housing as well as daytime respite space and specialized supportive housing programs for teens, youth, adults, homeless families, veterans, those aging out of foster care, those with mental illness, and the disabled. They work with neighborhoods to develop community pride and solidarity. They have helped with emergency rental assistance and voucher programs, as well as emergency aid to landlords. The end goal is viable, vibrant, prosperous, self-empowered neighborhoods throughout the region. To find out more about this remarkable agency visit hudsonriverhousing.org, and to help provide meals for those in the overnight shelter contact socialaction@vassartemple.org. This remarkable agency truly deserves our support, especially now during the Wind Chill Fund campaign.

Climate Corner ~ news from our Dayenu Circle



Are you reading the Bulletin in a drafty house? Your home can be more comfortable in both winter and summer, AND cost less to heat and cool, as a result of increased energy efficiency. The best first step is a home energy audit, which will pinpoint areas of waste and provide recommendations to correct them. These can range from sealing and insulation to lighting, heating and cooling. New York State, through NYSEDA (NYS Energy Research and Development Authority), can provide assistance with assessments as well as improvements, often combining state and federal financial incentives. To find the state program that best suits your needs, visit www.nyserda.ny.gov/All-Programs/Home-Energy-Efficiency-Upgrades. Homeowners (and renters too) can contribute to our community's reductions in greenhouse gas emissions by upgrading individual residences.

DayenuDutchess@gmail.com

A Tale of Two Trees

"Eitz chayim hi lamachazikim bah...It is a tree of life for those who hold fast to it."

In late January we will celebrate Tu B'Shevat, the New Year for the trees. We express gratitude by recognizing their life-sustaining properties: bountiful harvests and the seeds of new life. We also reiterate our values of environmental stewardship.

Similarly, in this anniversary year, we celebrate the sustenance provided by our community and our commitment to its future health. We have two very different trees, which serve as tangible manifestations of these ideas, in need of additional leaves. We invite members to participate in adding to both!



Gracing our lobby is our exquisite Tree of Life, donated by Sisterhood to honor the living and commemorate joyous events. Half of proceeds go to our Endowment Fund and half support ongoing programs. Donations of any amount will be pooled, enabling us to add at least one new leaf in honor of the 175th anniversary. We will gladly receive even small amounts towards this goal, and all donors will be acknowledged in the Bulletin. Contributions can be made by check (please note "anniversary leaf"), cash, or credit card.

Simultaneously, we are going to complete this beautiful Tree of Life quilt, started by Laura Brundage years ago but never finished, and serendipitously re-discovered for our anniversary. We have a supply of fabric leaves at the office (please call if you need one mailed). Decorate it as desired to represent meaningful connections to Judaism and Vassar Temple. You can adorn your leaf in any way: Sharpies, fabric pens/ paint, embroidery, etc. Return it, and we'll add it to the quilt.



Questions? Contact Susan Karnes Hecht through the office or at fundraising@vassartemple.org

CONTRIBUTIONS

SUSTAINING FUND

In Appreciation of the Temple Family:

In Memory of:

Linda Claire Cantor

Louis Rosen

Edward Wisniewski

Rita Carol London

Gerald Mamis

RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

COMMUNITY TZEDAKAH FUND

HINENI FUND

In Memory of Seth Erlebacher:

LILA MATLIN TECHNOLOGY FUND

LUNCH BOX FUND

MUSIC FUND

Piano Concert Donations:

In Memory of Dr. William & Mrs. Roberta Lawrence

We are also grateful for the many cash donations at the concert

HIGH HOLY DAY APPEAL

The Three Arts, Walter Effron

Anonymous

Susan & David Hecht

Reva & Michael Cowan

Marilyn & Ron Rosen

Kamil Wisniewski

Phyllis Birne & Ronald S. Miller

Sandra Mamis

Muriel Horowitz

Margery & Arthur Groten

Rabbi Altman & Richard Wender

Kimberly Harris

Marlene Straus

Muriel Horowitz

The Rubin Family

Irma Jacobs

The Quackenbush Family

Andrew and Phyllis Needleman

Muriel Horowitz

Michele Sinn

Madelyn D'Angelo

Marianne & Robert Abrams

Gwendolyn Tibbals

Ron Rosen

Arnold Serotsky

Sherri & Jeffrey Sasson

Gloria Turk

Daniel Stephen Fannon

Fern Lox & Jon Lieberman

thank
you

January 5

Clara Dorn
Leo Dorn
Donald DeWitt
Dotty Sternberg
Harris Harold Groten
Alma Barbash
Dr. Bertram Katz
Greta Blaine
Betty Israel
Dorothy Dlugacz
George Kanter

January 12

Samuel Grand
Carl Tobias
Morris Kahn
John Ciminello
Monte Tate Brown
Ethel Haber
Rae Lipman
Beatrice Salit Horn
Gabrielle Soroka
Dr. Charles Scope
Leon Krauss
Wendy Ellen Wolstencroft
Dorothy Vogel
George Meltzer
Gloria Menken
Evelyn Tanzman
Albert Burrows
Shirley Lipschutz
Judy Golub
Gerald Mamis
E. Pat Newman
Walter L. Mock, Jr
Anna Kofman
Stanley Israel
Eleanor Katz

January 19

Davida Krevolin
Anne Richmond
Sylvia Mednick
Abraham Ginsberg
Andrea Sue Rabin
Bella Albert
John Garlock
Stanley Markum
Hody I. Gellert
Louis Satz
Herbert L. Strauss
Thelma Fival
Herman D. Chertock
Geraldine Geller
Lois Grand
Dr. Donald L. Goldfarb
Betty Golomb
Stephen Glasser
Stephen Bokor
Morris S. Rosen
Alvin Turk
Joseph Solomon
Daniel Russotto
Sarah Sacharoff
Doris Preis Rubinow
Irving Jukofsky
Marian Lipschutz
Belle Baum Fein
Stanley Krell
Miriam Rosenberg Oppenheimer
Flora Silverman
Helen Wagner
Andrew H. Erdreich
Joseph Effron
Ruth Haber
William Haber
Sidney Friedman

January 26

Rabbi Marcus Kramer
Herman Yelsky
Bessie Lipschutz
Henry Walter Seligman
Judel Lampert
Henry Goldstein
Roy Lieberman
David Teich
Joseph Levinson
William Feinbloom, OD
Joseph Baskin
Ann J. Miller
Jennie Yanpolsky
Elizabeth Satz
Joan Golomb
Jesse Colodner
Joseph Marcus
Melvin Lesser
Shirley LaLone
Mark C. Schwartz
Naomi Goldberg
Joel Babas

January Yahrzeits



When making a donation consider giving to this fund: Youth Programming & Education Fund

Disbursements are used to enhance the education of our youth and children in a variety of ways, such as sponsoring supplementary educational experiences, purchasing Religious School materials, and supporting Youth Group events.

SISTERHOOD RECIPE OF THE MONTH:

Sweet and Sour Pot Roast:

This recipe is from Beatrice Horn, of blessed memory, who was a long-time member of Vassar Temple and the Vassar Temple Sisterhood. It is a favorite recipe of Amy Horn Oclatis, Beatrice's daughter, who is also a long-time member of Vassar Temple and Sisterhood. It serves 8-10 people.

Ingredients

- 4 pounds bottom round roast beef
- 2 large onions, sliced
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- ½ cup vegetable stock
- 2 bay leaves
- 6 potatoes, quartered
- 2 tablespoons vinegar or juice of 1 lemon
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 3 tablespoons ketchup
- ½ cup raisins
- Salt to taste



Directions

1. Brown meat on all sides in hot fat in heavy kettle
2. Add and brown onions
3. Add vegetable stock and bay leaves
4. Cover and simmer 1 hour
5. Add more hot stock if necessary to prevent burning
6. Add potatoes, vinegar, and brown sugar
7. Cover and simmer another hour
8. Add salt, ketchup, and raisins

Variation: omit potatoes and serve with noodles or brown rice

Sisterhood Suggestions:

1. When holding an event with food please remember a few gluten-free options. There are many tasty choices now!
2. Please refrain from baking or bringing items with nuts in them; peanuts are especially problematic and aren't allowed at Temple.
3. Whether the food provided is for a large or small event at Temple, don't forget to enjoy and schmooze!!

Sisterhood Chai Noon Luncheon ~ Thursday, January 18



Vassar Temple Sisterhood's Chai Noon Luncheon, which meets on the 18th of the month (when the date does not conflict with holidays or weekends) will be meeting on Thursday, January 18. Specific details about the January restaurant will be mailed to you in Vassar Temple's weekly newsletter a few days prior to the meeting. Members are asked to RSVP to the link in the newsletter so we can let the restaurant know approximately how many guests to expect. As always, guests get separate checks, and the restaurant is wheelchair accessible.

“Giving Tuesday” and the Endowment Fund

I don't know about you, but my reaction to the day **after** “Giving Tuesday” was “pew... no more solicitations from all of these groups to which I have ever donated.” Having a day dedicated to giving is an ingenious marketing device, but in practice, it is exhausting. In many ways, I feel that Giving Tuesday, places a wrong emphasis on the concept of charitable giving, since it encourages us to give in a semi game-like atmosphere: “give, and we'll match your gift or even triple it.”

Vassar Temple's Endowment Fund does not offer donors a matching gift. Rather, it asks that you consider what the Temple means to you and to show your commitment to its long-term future by a pledge which is payable over five years. There are all kinds of worthy causes to which we can donate. Few have the long-term impact of preserving the values of Reform Judaism for us, our children and grandchildren, in a world of maximum challenge.

The Endowment fund—which is less than a year old—has received \$250,000 cash in hand. With an additional \$25,000 to \$50,000, we could begin distributing interest income for Temple operations. We have already reached \$375,000 in pledges toward our \$500,000 five-year goal.

We owe it to ourselves to make the Endowment Fund a **priority for us** in 2024, so as to secure the Temple's financial future and renew the commitment of our founders. Many have already contributed and said “Here I am.” If you have not yet done so, join your name to theirs and make 2024 the year that the Endowment becomes a reality. Vassar Temple is 175 years old. Let's build on this venerable foundation so that we and our descendants may thrive at Vassar Temple.

Martin Charwat and Lou Lewis,

Co-Chairs, Vassar Temple Endowment Fund

WELCOME TO RECENT NEW MEMBERS!

Seth Lederer & Jodi Reifer

Micah & Misun Modell

Susan Lydiard

Bena Silber

Jewish War Veterans

JWV Herman Siegal Post 625 will hold its next meeting on Sunday, January 14 at Shomre Israel. The meeting format will follow that which we used before the pandemic. Future meetings will be February 11, March 17, April 14, May 19 and June 9. All are Sundays.

The meeting will begin at 9:30am and there will be a half hour schmooze at 9am. Shomre Israel is strictly kosher. The Post will supply nosh stuff and coffee. The use of masks is optional. We look forward to seeing you.



Jewish War Veterans
of the United States of America

Ralph Schwartz
Senior Vice Commander

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Souls United Interfaith Gospel Choir at Martin Luther King Shabbat Service, Friday, January 12 at 7:30pm

We will pay tribute to the legacy and life of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. during our Shabbat evening service Friday, January 12, at 7:30pm. The service will include specially selected liturgy as well as a presentation by Souls United of the Hudson Valley, who will intersperse their songs with quotes from Dr. King. Souls United of the Hudson Valley has served since 2010 as the area's only standing Interfaith Gospel Choir. Their repertoire consists of music from the Christian and Baha'i faiths as well as the music of other faith traditions as reflected by the choir's membership. Originally styled "The Nightingales," they chose the name "Souls United" to reflect their aspirations as a choir. Their first public appearance as Souls United was at a Dutchess County Interfaith Music Festival, and they recently performed at the DCIC gala "Love Forward."



Concert Marks Dedication of Historic Piano






Vassar Temple celebrated the dedication of its 1923 Mason & Hamlin Grand Piano at a special event featuring a piano concert with Temple musician Joseph Bertolozzi and guest soloists Ruthanne Schempf, James F. Fitzwilliam, and Sylvia Buccelli.

Left to Right Soloists: Joseph Bertolozzi & Ruthanne Schempf,
Donor: Barbara Lemberger **Soloists:** James M. Fitzwilliam & Sylvia Buccelli

This historic piano was donated to the Temple by the Lemberger family, and restored with funds raised by the Music Committee. The original owner, May Engelman (Barbara Lemberger's grandmother), was born in 1893 on a ship bringing her to the USA from Europe. May grew up to become a concert pianist and teacher. When May became very ill and moved into the home of her daughter, Hope Mann (Barbara Lemberger's mother), the piano moved with her. When the Manns relocated to Florida, the piano was moved again, this time to the Lemberger home. Barbara, her mother, sisters and daughter all played on this piano, asking May to "tickle the keys" whenever they wanted to hear her play. And now, through the generous donation of the Lemberger family, this marvelous 100-year-old instrument has found a new home and a new life in the sanctuary of Vassar Temple, bringing the gift of its music to all who gather here to worship.

Calendar of Events—January 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 Office Closed New Year's Day	2	3 No Hebrew School	4 7pm Ritual CMTE	5 7:30pm Shabbat Service	6 9am Torah Study 10:15am New Paths
7 9am Religious School 10:30am Lunch Box 	8 12pm Talmud Study 7pm Vassar Temple Sisterhood Meeting	9	10 4:30pm Hebrew School 7:30pm JCTF Meeting	11 7:30pm Cemetery CMTE	12 7:30pm MLK Shabbat Service with Souls United of the Hudson Valley	13 9am Torah Study 10:15am Shabbat Morning Service
14 No Religious School	15 MLK Day— Office Closed	16	17 4:30pm Hebrew School 7pm Finance CMTE 7:30pm An Evening with Jennifer Rosner via Zoom	18 12pm Chai Noon Sisterhood 7pm Anthony Parisi, Dutchess County District Attorney visits Vassar Temple	19 6pm Simchat Shabbat Service	20 9am Torah Study 10:15am New Paths 10:30am Shabbat Yeladim
21 9am Religious School	22	23	24 Tu B'Shevat Eve 4:30pm Hebrew School 7:30pm Adult Ed Series— Part 1, The Early Prophets	25 Tu B'Shevat 6:30pm Shelter Meal 7pm VT Board 	26 6pm Tisch Service/ Soup & Chili 	27 9am Torah Study 10:15am Shabbat Morning Service
28 9am Religious School 10am Tu B'Shevat Congregational Seder	29 12pm Talmud Study	30	31 4:30pm Hebrew School 7:30pm Adult Ed Series— Part 2, Isaiah			

Please see weekly emails for the most up-to-date information regarding changes to in-person events

Vassar Temple Bulletin
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Rabbi: Rabbi Renni S. Altman, DD

Religious School Dir: Rabbi Shoshana Hantman

Cantor: Elizabeth Goldmann

Rabbi Emeritus: Rabbi Stephen A. Arnold

Senior Scholar: Rabbi Paul Golomb

Temple Musician: Joseph Bertolozzi

President: Lisa-Sue Quackenbush

1st Vice President: Roni Stein

2nd Vice President: Banna Rubinow

Secretary: Marcia Tanzman

Treasurer: Maxine Finkelstein

Sisterhood President: Polly Lewis

Brotherhood President: Glenn Tanzman

Immediate Past President: Susan Karnes Hecht

Bulletin Editor: Jo Schaffel



Vassar Temple Bulletin is published monthly. Articles for the March Bulletin must be

submitted by February 1 sent via email to publicity@vassartemple.org. The editors reserve the right to edit articles for style, accuracy and length.

Vassar Temple Trims A Thanksgiving

Vassar Temple members donated funds, turkeys and trimmings. Religious School students made cards & lovingly decorated gift baskets. Temple Youth Group teens filled the baskets, and Hudson River Housing delivered them to families in need.



We made Hudson River Housing 13 baskets, provided turkeys and baking pans, and also brought Thanksgiving to four families at Dutchess Outreach. And, as a special fall treat, there were bags of crisp, juicy apples for all, courtesy of the Albinders. Planning and schlepping, as always, fearlessly carried out by the Social Committee. With us all working together, we did it! Thank you, Vassar Temple!

