

FROM RABBI ZEMEL

THE WEAPONS WE NEED NOW ARE JUSTICE, TRUTH AND PEACE

DEAR FRIENDS,

We anticipate 5781 with urgency and anxiety. This year our world rests on three pivotal things:

1. Racism
2. Pandemic
3. Election

As Hillel said, "All the rest is commentary." And, just as with Torah, there is so much commentary.

This moment in time seems to ask questions of us, relentlessly. Are we taking the proper precautions for our families and ourselves? Are we doing enough to help others? Are we living lives that meet the urgent demands of the moment? What should we be doing? What can we do?

I struggle to think about these questions through a Jewish framework. The most basic message of Torah is that our lives are precious, sacred and filled with potential. We are each, after all, created in the image of God. Our Sinai covenant offers a path to turn our inherent sacred potential into deep and abiding sacred meaning. The covenant is our path to lives of purpose. It is our moral imperative, our understanding of our place in the world.

Even with this sacred Sinai covenant, the human heart wrestles with the question of meaning. Ecclesiastes wonders aloud if all is futile. Job, in his innocence, cries out that things don't add up the way they should. The psalmist reminds us that our days are like grass that wither in the sun.

Meaning vs. Futility is our age-old struggle. It is the struggle we confront

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5 ►

Yom Kippur Speaker Is Preeminent Expert On James Baldwin

BY FRAN DAUTH

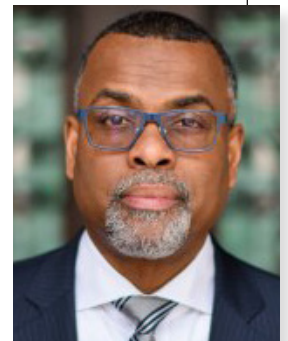
THE SCHOLAR Rabbi Zemel calls "the intellectual thought leader on matters of racism" in America, Eddie S. Glaude Jr., will address Temple Micah on Yom Kippur.

Glaude is the James S. McDonnell Distinguished University Professor of African American Studies at Princeton University where he also chairs the Department of African American Studies. Glaude, who will be joined by Temple Micah member Gayle Wald, will speak at 3 p.m.

Rabbi Zemel, who noted that Glaude is "the preeminent scholar on James Baldwin," said that for Temple Micah to have him on Yom Kippur to "discuss American atonement and racism underscores Micah's commitment to be a place where we strive to be both fully Jewish and fully American."

Glaude's most recent book is "Begin

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6 ►



Dr. Eddie S. Glaude Jr.

Planning High Holy Days Services For the Moment We Are Living In

BY FRAN DAUTH

PLANNING FOR THE High Holy Days this year began in early March with what would be the first of many, many difficult decisions: whether to move everything online.

In recalling that decision, Rabbi Zemel says above all else the leadership was following the advice of "our medical advisors," physicians Richard Katz and David Skorton and epidemiologist Manya Magnus. All are Micah congregants.

The advice, he said, was "the more singing, the more singers," the more danger. "We took their advice so seriously that we decided to not do any of the services live from the sanctuary

with even part of our worship team being there."

That decision meant a lot of work pre-recording parts of the service well in advance. All of which meant that planning for virtual High Holy Days services began in May "just so we would know what we were up against," Rabbi Zemel said.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7 ►

Got questions about BIPOC?
We've got answers on Page 7

"Every person shall sit under
his grapevine or fig tree with
no one to make him afraid."
MICAH, CHAPTER 4, VERSE 4

Vine

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MY GRANDFATHER PORT WOULD HAVE LOVED TEMPLE MICAH

By JOSHUA BERMAN

It was my grandfather's yahrzeit one Friday earlier last month. My mom's dad. "Port" everyone called him (his last name was Portnoy, but he never complained). On the Zoom Friday night Shabbat I squinted and found my mom and dad (screen 3 of 6) joining our services from California to observe his Yahrzeit with the Micah community.



I don't remember my grandfather to be a particularly religious man. For as long as I knew him, he never belonged to a temple and rarely stepped foot in a sanctuary, although I fondly remember him at my bar mitzvah.

But what he lacked in formal religious observance, he made up for in his spiritual core. He called himself a "Workmen Circle Jew," was educated in the Arbeiter Ring (Workmen's Circle) Schools, sent his four daughters to Kinder Ring Camp and together with my grandmother and their four daughters celebrated holidays, engaged in rituals, connected with everyday working folks and embraced their Jewish community. My mom and her sisters even learned Yiddish, about which I still have mixed feelings, because of course it was the "secret" language they used when they didn't want us children to understand.

So during our Micah Zoom Shabbat last month, I couldn't help but think about what my grandfather would make of our Temple Micah Jewish community and our rituals. Sure, he would probably shake his head in surprise at today's technology and the 165 or so mini screens with friends and family across the region and the world as he died in 2000, a month after bravely mustering up the strength to attend Amy's and my wedding. But regardless of format, I think he'd be in awe of our community.

A New York psychoanalyst, he deeply believed in people and our human relationships. He understood that each of us, in our own ways, need to search for our connections and thicken them. Book clubs and Torah study? If they bring people together, he'd give a thumbs up. "Ask the Rabbis?" He'd love the search for answers through

questions. A psychiatrist's dream, no? Our joining together to listen to distinguished panelists sorting out today's dilemmas? He'd be in attendance.

Being an accomplished pianist who loved music — a trait he passed down to my mom, and to me, and now my boys as some of you know from past Purim shpiels and high holiday chanting — he would applaud with gusto our singing and clapping, our guitar plucking and keyboard playing. I know he would look forward to hearing our choir, whether live in the sanctuary or via the wonders of the internet. And he would tell me it's ok to clap joyously during services or at least at the appropriate moments.

Which leads me to what he'd think about our relationship with social justice. That's an easy one. I can close my eyes and almost see him nodding approvingly and quietly, cheering on how Micah cares about the broader community. My grandfather left Ukraine when he was only one and never forgot the family memory of that persecution or the open arms of America when he came to Ellis Island. Twenty-five years later he joined the U.S. army and fought in World War II, protecting democracy from tyranny.

He would like the way our Micah family has woven our spirituality, our rituals, our religion and our community together to push back against oppression. He would have joined those at Micah who challenge the oppression of those who face discrimination because of the color of their skin or the God to whom they pray. He would support Sukkat Shalom and our efforts to stop the oppression of borders closed to those in need. He'd be proud of the Micah House effort to stop the oppression of women fighting abuse and addiction. And this fall, the man who served our country in combat would be especially proud of our collective efforts to protect the right to vote (whether it be by mail or in-person) and resist the oppression of leaders who try to suppress votes. He fought for freedom and justice. He'd love the way we "do."

I'm deeply honored to be part of Temple Micah — a community that my grandfather would have loved. I look forward to serving as your board president as we sing, pray and challenge injustice together.

The Feast

THE GRILLED CHICKEN WITH SPICY NOODLES EDITION

BY ALEXANDRA WISOTSKY

WHEN I TALKED to Betsy Broder months ago about sharing a favorite recipe for the Vine she commented that her family often cooks together as a way of “communicating, sharing love and experiences.”

That was before we began the pandemic lockdown. Can you believe little has changed since then? And now that we are still cooking at home Betsy’s comments are even more important. Don’t you agree?

Betsy feels the same way about Temple Micah, where she and her husband David Wentworth joined in the early 1990s. It is a place that “feels like home,” she said, adding that it’s a place where lots of its components include food.

“It is a place to show love, to share and to nourish each other” Betsy told me during our chat. This is what Betsy

especially loves about being a part of Micah Cooks. “We create sacred space around food.”

Betsy and David raised both of their daughters, Caroline and Ariel, at Micah from kindergarten through religious school and their bat mitzvahs to both serving on the MiTY Board. Betsy served on the Micah Board of Directors for six years, three as president. Her husband David Wentworth is a current board member.

The recipe that Betsy chose to share was published in 1986 in Gourmet magazine, as part of a then-recurring article featuring a recipe from a particular restaurant, in this case Café Sport in Seattle. (Café Sport closed in 1993.) Betsy finds the recipe all the more special because her late mother first introduced it to the family.

Betsy still has a well-worn copy



of the recipe cut out from the magazine 34 years ago. “It was the first recipe to come to mind because it has become a standard meal for the Broder-Wentworth family. Whenever we are all together, someone will say ‘Let’s just do sesame noodles Café Sport,’” she said.

GRILLED CHICKEN WITH SPICY NOODLES CAFÉ SPORT

(Adapted from May 1986 Gourmet Magazine)

Serves 6

INGREDIENTS:

For the Dressing:

- 3 tablespoons smooth peanut butter
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 3 tablespoons well stirred tahini
- 1-½ tablespoons sesame oil
- 1-½ tablespoons dry sherry
- 1-½ tablespoons rice vinegar
- 2 tablespoons honey
- ¾ teaspoon minced garlic
- ¾ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
- ¾ teaspoon peeled minced gingerroot

For the Marinade:

- ¼ cup honey
- ¼ cup soy oil (or other neutral oil like canola)
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- ½ teaspoon minced garlic
- 1-½ teaspoons soy sauce
- 3 whole skinless, boneless chicken breasts, each cut in half
- 8 oz Asian noodles (such as rice or thin egg noodles such as linguini)

STEPS:

1. Cook noodles according to package directions, drain and rinse under cold water, then place in a covered bowl to chill in the refrigerator.
2. Make the dressing by stirring together the peanut butter and 2 tablespoons water. Whisk in one at a time the soy sauce, tahini, sesame oil, sherry, rice vinegar, garlic, red pepper flakes and ginger. Whisk well after each addition. Cover and refrigerate to chill.
3. Make the marinade by whisking together the honey, oil, lemon juice, garlic and soy sauce until it is well combined.
4. Dip the chicken in the marinade and grill on a barbeque or a stovetop grill pan over medium-hot heat for 4 minutes. Turn and cook for 2 more minutes, or until chicken springs back when touched. Transfer the chicken to a plate and slice thinly.
5. In a bowl, toss the cooked noodles with the dressing. Transfer to a serving dish and arrange the chicken on top.

SPEAKING AT MICAH

LUNCH & LEARN

Wednesdays from noon to 1:30 pm

A monthly program sponsored by the Aging Together Team. Reserve online at templemicah.org. For details, contact Phyllis Posner or Nancy Raskin at lunchandlearn@templemicah.org or the temple office at 202-342-9175. The Zoom link for the Virtual Lunch & Learn programs will be sent after registration.



Oct. 14 – Paul Goldberg on “Fiction and Nonfiction, as Written by Paul Goldberg, Author of Both.” He will be interviewed by his wife, Susan Coll, herself the author of several novels and president of the Pen/Faulkner Foundation. Goldberg is a science journalist and book author. His first foray into fiction, “The Yid,” a comedy presenting an alternative history of Stalin’s death, was named as a finalist for both the Sami Rohr Prize for Jewish Literature and the National Jewish Book Award for Debut Fiction. Goldberg’s nonfiction includes works on the U.S. healthcare system and the Soviet human rights movement.

Micah Members Were There Then and Are Still Going Strong Today

BY SHELLEY GROSSMAN

SEVEN OF THE 12 Temple Micah members who were born in 1940 led a Shabbat morning service this summer to celebrate and express gratitude for reaching the age of 80.

They also did it, they said, to demonstrate to the community and to themselves just how young 80-year-olds could be these days.

This was not the cohort’s first time to lead a summer service to emphasize their youthfulness. It was the third such celebration. Earlier the 1940 cohort marked their 70th and 75th birthday years, each emphasizing continued youthfulness. In 2010, for example, the theme was “70 is the new 45.”

The group’s emphasis on youthfulness is balanced by its awareness of all the history its members have witnessed over the past eight decades, providing fodder for memories, good and bad: World War II and its aftermath in the 1940s; the 1950s with polio, the Korean War and the McCarthy era; the wild ‘60s turned purposeful by civil rights activism and the anti-Vietnam War movement; the rise of the women’s movement and political controversy in the ‘70s, and so on for four more decades.

In preparing for the service, which took place July 25, some members of the 1940 cohort reminisced about the impact of those historical episodes on their lives then, and their full lives today.

In doing so, 1940 cohort member Andrea Brown cautioned that “remembering the past, but not living in the past” is vital to keeping her youthful outlook on life.

Geri Nielsen, one of the three coordinators of the July service, noted it is important to remember that while historical facts remain the same, our understanding of them changes over the years.

“It’s all so relative. Who would have thought we’d be able to walk a mile and do exercises when we got to be 80?” she said.

The pandemic isn’t the group’s first health scourge. “In the ‘50s, there was polio and all those kids were in iron lungs,” Genie Grohman recalled. Even the kids who escaped the disease felt an impact. “We couldn’t go to the swimming pool,” she said.

Helene Granof takes the long view of aging. “An advantage of having lived 80-plus years is perspective,” she said. “As a child I never imagined we would actually put men on the moon.” Nor,

she continued, “I surely didn’t think that in my lifetime we would see a Black president.”

That mindset also promotes a positive attitude, a major ingredient of continued youthfulness, according to members of the group.

For instance, Andrea Brown said, she stays young by focusing on “resilience and wanting to participate in life, living in the present and planning for the future.”

Cohort members were babies when the United States joined World War II in December 1941, but some early memories remain sharp. This reporter, one of the service coordinators, remembers seeing men in uniform frequently walk through her neighborhood in Chicago in the early ‘40s.

Peggy Banks, the third service coordinator, has a darker recollection: “My most vivid memories were being terrified by the newsreels of the war that were shown at the movies.”

Ed Rastatter’s war memory is much happier. “I remember walking down the street banging on a cook pot to celebrate the end of World War II.”

However, none of the cohort interviewed for this article brought up the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9 ►

A MESSAGE ON ENSURING TEMPLE MICAH'S FUTURE

By Sue Alpern-Fisch

How do we ensure that our unique and vibrant congregational home thrives for decades to come? How do we build upon the Temple Micah that was created for us in the past, sustain the Temple Micah that we have been strengthening in the present, and invest in all that Temple Micah has yet to become in the future?

Whether making a bequest in your will, naming Micah as a beneficiary of your retirement plans, pensions or life insurance, giving a gift of appreciated stock, or designating a charitable gift annuity, you can help provide a stable base of financial resources well into the future.

You may also choose to give to our permanently restricted Endowment Fund, or our quasi-endowment Legacy Fund, both of which will benefit Micah through appreciation and growth of the principal and generate a

consistent, stable flow of income for our long-range financial health.

Past generations of Micah families laid the foundation for our extraordinary congregation. It is up to us to assure that a robust and inspiring Temple Micah is here for generations to come.

For more information on the Planned Giving program, please contact Executive Director Rachel Gross, or Board Member Jim Hamos, by emailing them at Plannedgiving@templemicah.org.

Together, we can create a lasting legacy enriching the future of our remarkable temple.

Editor's note: Sue Alpern-Fisch is Temple Micah's development consultant

Rabbi's Message FROM PAGE 1 ►

every year on the Holy Days. It also is a struggle for this unique time in our lives, this historic period we find ourselves living in.

This extended period of self-isolation has sharpened my perspective on many matters and has intensified my awe for and commitment to Torah wisdom.

If our world teeters on the threefold challenges of pandemic, racism and the approaching election, my Jewish response is similar to that of Rabbi Shimon ben Gamaliel of antiquity who taught, "The world stands on three things: justice, truth and peace."

The call to end racism is a call to justice. The path to justice will not be easy. For America, it will be a call to atonement, a "moral reckoning" to use the language of the Rev. William Barber. In Jewish life, we call this teshuvah, or repentance. Repentance is an arduous process. True repentance requires thorough self-examination: admitting wrong, acknowledging pain, making restitution and then resetting the table to ensure the wrong

is not repeated.

These are just some of the steps this nation must take to address the systemic racism that we have created and that continues to this day. Creating a just society will require both national and local efforts not only to educate our populace and reform our laws, but to adapt our rituals as well. We need to forge a new, more inclusive and honest narrative, the story we tell ourselves about who we are. We will then need to address how we celebrate this narrative ritually in our American calendar year such that a new American narrative becomes embedded in the identity of future generations.

Ending systemic racism also requires a personal reckoning. As we each search out our own litany of individual sins in this past year, we are also each called to search out the ways we have contributed to our national sin.

To help us in our search, our Micah community will welcome Prof. Eddie S. Glaude Jr., a professor of African-American studies at Princeton University, to speak to us on Yom Kippur afternoon. Professor Glaude's writing speaks poignantly and

powerfully to our American challenge to confront racism. I highly recommend both "Democracy in Black" as well as his newest work, "Begin Again: James Baldwin's America and its Urgent Lessons for Our Own".

Our community has always sought to engage the searing questions of our day in a serious way. If we yearn for Micah to be a place where we can be both fully Jewish and fully American, how can we not consider our nation's greatest sin on our own Day of Atonement?

The fight against the pandemic also is a struggle for truth, the second pillar taught by Rabbi Shimon. We live in an era in which the European Enlightenment is under siege. I believe that we must be unyielding in our fight to preserve the principles of the Enlightenment for our future and ourselves. The Enlightenment gave us our modern Judaism, freeing it from prejudice and superstition. Our Judaism welcomes truth from all quarters, not just Torah but equally from the world of science and the arts. The Talmud valued the physics, astronomy and mathematics of its time; medieval rabbis

became physicians, philosophers and poets. Truths may be eternal, but our knowledge of them is not: as we grow in knowledge, we see truths more clearly. It will be the truths learned from modern medical science that will rescue the world from this pandemic. If our national leadership had paid heed to modern medical science, thousands of lives would have been saved. This is a national sin, and we will mourn the unnecessary loss of life during our Holy Days.

Finally, Rabbi Shimon teaches us that the world stands on peace. Never has our nation approached an Election Day with a greater sense of unease than this year. We all watch in horror as our national leadership turns our cities into militarized combat zones, destabilizes the Western Alliance, and supports autocratic dictator strongmen around the globe. Our national leader even strives to create turmoil regarding the very essence of democracy — voting. The peaceful transfer of power has been a hallmark of American democracy since our nation's

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11 ►

HOW THE MICAH WEBSITE GOT A LOT MORE LIVELY

BY FRAN DAUTH

THE UPDATED TEMPLE Micah website, which will debut in October, was designed to better reflect “our personality,” to “show how cool Micah is” and to brighten what has increasingly become the synagogue’s front door.

It will likely surprise none of us who grew up without computers, that the leader of the team in charge of redesigning Temple Micah’s website was about 6 when her family first got one.

Nor should anyone be surprised in the age of pandemic that Amy Lokoff did most of the work from her bedroom.

Lokoff, who joined the Temple Micah staff as administrative associate/communications in February, is yes, 30 years old. Her arrival neatly coincided with Micah’s plunge into a digital world as nearly every aspect of temple life went online.

While the website redesign was in the works before the pandemic, COVID-19 underscored the need to update the Micah home page.

The goal, Lokoff says, was “to look modern.” For viewers – members and visitors – “to see us as a fresh and active congregation.”

Lokoff, along with Executive

Director Rachel Gross, Micah Board Member Martha Adler and former staff member Maya Sungold who comprised the project team, sought to make the website more concise and make it easier to find information as quickly as possible. And they wanted it to be more attractive by using different colors, different type fonts, and new terminology such as Milestones instead of Life Cycle as topic headings. Or as Lokoff puts it, “a little more fun and relaxed” to show “our personality.”

Part of the process was finding a web designer. Lokoff says she quickly learned that there were firms that specialize in doing the work for synagogues.

Micah hired Addicott Web that describes itself as “a Raleigh-based website company with a passion for working with synagogues and Jewish non-profits.”

Working with Addicott Web, Lokoff says, made her “think intentionally” because the folks there asked questions that were “eye-opening” in thinking about the website.

The biggest change, planned to come after the initial rollout, will be the introduction of a member login

function that will allow access to the membership directory and provide Zoom codes and passwords for services or programs.

Lokoff is not a graphic designer but much in her resume made her an ideal candidate for her Micah job.

She graduated from American University where she concentrated on studio art and education, preparation, she says, to be an art teacher.

Instead, she became an art curator, event organizer and an arts administrator. She held posts at the Anacostia Arts Center and various art galleries in the District.

A curious aside: In one of those positions she ran an auction, something that it seemed she might work on at Micah in what are now the Before Times.

Lokoff’s LinkedIn description of her when she was a self-employed independent curator probably is the best way to understand why she and Micah were a match: “Amy is a curator, event organizer, and arts administrator based in DC. She uses her work to explore inclusive community building, using the arts as a tool for social change, the value of resource sharing and financial sustainability for creatives.” ♦

Yom Kippur Speaker FROM PAGE 1 ►

Again: James Baldwin’s America and its Urgent Lessons for Our Own.”

In a review in July, the New York Times commented, “Glaude is more explicit about looking to Baldwin not just for perspective and inspiration but for instruction and guidance.

“Combining elements of biography, criticism and memoir, ‘Begin Again’ aims to think with Baldwin and to interrogate how an insidious view of race, in the form of Trumpism, continues to frustrate any effort ‘to achieve our country.’”

Four and a half years ago, a few days before President Trump’s inauguration, Glaude said in an interview for

a Princeton publication that he was “hopeful that we are at a moment to really reach for a genuine democratic society – not just for African Americans but for the country in general.”

He continued, in what now seems to be prophetic, to declare:

“The contradictions are such now that if we don’t, all hell will break loose. I can’t have any other faith other than in us. We will have to save the country.”

More recently, on Aug. 27th of this year, Glaude wrote on Twitter:

“James Baldwin provocatively argued that when it comes to policing in this country black people are still living under ‘slave codes.’”

Glaude earned a Ph.D. in religion

from Princeton, a master’s degree in African American studies from Temple University and a bachelor’s degree in political science from Morehouse College. He was born in Moss Point, Mississippi.

In the Princeton interview he said “I’m challenging my students to think about how fragile the American democratic project is, to understand the complexities of this fragile experiment from the vantage point of African Americans and to see that the complexity says something about who we are as Americans generally.

“African American culture and life offer an extraordinary lens for them to see, to understand and to imagine differently what this country can be.” ♦

If You Have Questions About BIPOC at Micah, Here Are Some Answers

You may have seen that a BIPOC affinity group is forming at Temple Micah. And you may have questions, starting with what does the acronym BIPOC mean? The answer to that one is Black, Indigenous, People of Color.

Micah member Yolanda Savage-Narva is leading the effort. She is the executive director of Operation Understanding DC, a nonprofit organization that promotes understanding, cooperation and respect while fighting to eradicate racism, anti-Semitism and all forms of discrimination.

Savage-Narva recently agreed to answer several questions about the need for a BIPOC affinity group at Temple Micah.

Q. What led you to think of creating a BIPOC affinity group at Micah? And what is an affinity group?

A: Affinity groups are not uncommon. They are designed to give a group of people who self-identify in a specific way the opportunity to have a space to share, reflect and learn from people who also self-identify in the same way.

Q: What happens when affinity groups meet?

A. In these affinity groups, people can talk freely and honestly about experiences, feelings, observations they have about life in general. Specifically, for BIPOC it means people who are not members of the dominant white culture can have a safe and brave space where they can interpret, comprehend and cope with the world around them.

Q. Why start a BIPOC affinity group at Temple Micah?

A. While Micah is a welcoming and friendly place, for BIPOC who identify as Jewish or who are “Jewish adjacent” (spouses or others who support someone who is Jewish) – there is a need to have a place at Micah or any other space that is predominantly white where they can discuss issues unique to them.

Q. Why can't anyone interested join the affinity group?

A. The BIPOC affinity group is not designed to exclude people, but to provide a space for processing and sharing with people who share a specific identity group in common. The BIPOC affinity group will be able to share ideas and thoughts with the broader Micah community about best ways to address issues that directly impact BIPOC and the best way to engage this community.

Q. Was there a reason to launch the affinity group now?

A. I think the urgency has been upon us (BIPOC) for a very long time, but the past few months with the disproportionate rates of death of BIPOC from COVID-19, the killings of Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd and Breonna Taylor and numerous other examples of the disparities and inequities that BIPOC face on a daily basis has called for real, sustainable action from multiple entry points. Such a group is overdue, but we have to start somewhere.

Q. Can any Micah member supportive of the objectives join this group?

A. Any Micah member who self-identifies as a BIPOC is welcome to join this group. For those who don't self-identify as a BIPOC, please also reach out to me. If there is enough interest, there is a possibility of forming a second group called “friends of BIPOC” who are interested in learning about BIPOC issues as friends/allies and are interested in supporting the BIPOC affinity group. There is a role for all Micah members to play in dismantling systems of racism and oppression, both internally and externally.

Q. Have you had previous experience with such groups?

A. Yes, I've had quite a bit of experience with affinity groups. As someone who leads workshops to address racism, anti-Semitism, Unconscious Bias, with synagogues, community organizations and other groups, I've led affinity groups as a part of these workshops. Additionally, we hold these groups with the young people who are part of Operation Understanding DC as a part of their experiential learning and their training to lead workshops.

Q. What are your hopes for the group?

A. My hope for the BIPOC affinity group and possibly a Friends of BIPOC group is to start a conversation. I would like to provide a space for transparent sharing and processing of the world around us and give those involved opportunities to just be. For now, this is my hope!

Planning High Holy Days FROM PAGE 1 ►

Marcia Silcox, board president when the deliberations were being made, said, “When we saw how well our virtual b'nai mitzvah worked, and that Shabbat participation was unprecedented, we fully turned our attention to a new vision for the holidays.”

And there also were financial implications in the decisions. Silcox recalls “many hours were spent discussing how we might be impacted by the loss of non-member ticket sales, but there

would be savings from child care, security and other expenses.”

Yet, says Rachel Gross, Micah executive director, producing a virtual High Holy Days comes with its own set of expenses. “While we won't be moving to the church (the Metropolitan Memorial United Methodist Church where services have been held in recent years), we have hired tech people to produce the services.

“Having people behind the scenes dedicated to making all of the video,

audio and transitions work smoothly and well allows our clergy to be in the moment and focus on the liturgy and worship experience,” she said.

Silcox said she was sure “Micah will provide the soaring and inspiring worship program that we have come to expect ...maybe it will be even more special as we are together apart.”

Rabbi Zemel, admitting that he was worried about “all of this,” declared, “This year, more than ever, the holy days have to speak to the mood of the moment we are living in.” ♦

TZEDAKAH

AUCTION APPEAL

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THE LIFE OF TEMPLE MICAH

HERE I AM WITH MY COMMUNITY

BY RABBI STEPHANIE CRAWLEY

Dear Micah Family,

I am writing to you while sitting on my balcony, above 9th Street, I can see into the windows of our local Ethiopian restaurant, where the owners bustle around their storefront, swiftly packaging food and handing it off to someone else who drives it off for delivery. Next door, I see home health care workers, in their scrubs and masks, dropping off forms at their office. My view out my window has made up so much of my world these past months. I've found myself looking out the windows much more frequently, as I desire my world to be much larger than what is happening inside my apartment.

During our Micah services, meetings, and gatherings, I've loved the glimpses into kitchens, living rooms, and offices. On Friday nights, as we are lighting Shabbat candles, I no longer close my eyes to remember the feeling of us all lighting candles together in our crowded lobby.

Here I am.

*I am standing, or sitting –
or I can't sit still.*

Here is my coffee, fresh today or left over from yesterday.

I am here –

*even in my pajamas,
unbrushed hair,
but I have turned on the screen.*

*I am here on behalf of my community,
and behalf of myself.*

May I open my heart and be surprised at the space I find within.

Instead, I imagine the light that is now emanating from each window on Zoom. I try to feel the warmth of every candle and every smile that joins us. Truly, that image in my mind has refilled my cup every week. I also found myself wondering, "What is outside your window?" "What is the world that you are seeing?"

I wonder if we might use this image of the windows to power our High Holy Days this year. We will not be able to share the views of the beautiful stained glass of the church, the faces of our friends, the joy of our choir and musicians and clergy as we join together in prayer. But we will each have our own view, our own little piece of the world.

I've been thinking in particular about one medieval piece of liturgy, a prayer chanted by the prayer leader before the congregation. It is called "Hin'ni," meaning "Here I am." The prayer leader begins by asking for worthiness, self-awareness



and humility. There is something about the first-person singular language that particularly speaks to me in this moment. Although we will be joining together in what we hope to be beautiful, moving, and creative prayer services on these High Holy Days, each of us will be leading ourselves in prayer. Each of us will be looking out our own windows, into slightly different worlds. This year, perhaps each of us needs to say, Hin'ni- here I am. In my home, in my space, ready to look within and look outside. Ready to begin to begin again, ready to reach for better. And so, I'd like to offer my own version of this prayer, a Hin'ni for us all.

Here I am,

alone, or with a few,

*I will not hear the chorus of voices,
listing the ways we have missed the mark
So I must hold myself accountable.*

And remember that I, too, am worthy of forgiveness and renewal.

Here I am,

*together with my community,
each person has a window,
each person has a world,
May I hear the echos of their prayers,
and may they hear the echos of mine.*

Micah Members FROM PAGE 4 ►

Holocaust in conjunction with the 1940s. When asked why, they replied that the adults didn't discuss it — at least not with their children.

"Generally they did not talk about their life in Europe or anyone in the family who stayed there," recalled Claire Rubin.

"I didn't know until the early 1950s that there had been a Holocaust and that most of my father's family

had perished," Grohman said.

In the '50s, this reporter attended high school with Holocaust survivors who shared stories of life in the camps. One was smuggled out in a coffin; another was chosen to present a bouquet to then General Eisenhower when the camp was liberated. But I remember none of their parents would talk about it, wouldn't even let the subject come up.

In the 1960s, most of the cohort would finish college

and enter the job market where many of the women confronted discrimination. In 1961, Nielsen, with a BA in mathematics, obtained a job as a computer programmer making \$500 a month. "The man sitting next to me with a BA in business administration and no computer experience earned \$650," she said.

To Banks, however, "The big thing in the '70s was Watergate." She added sardonically with a shake of her

head, "And the way things are going today, I sometimes get nostalgic for 'the good old days' of Richard Nixon."

"For now, I enjoy life" Banks said. "I get tired easily and I forget things, but mostly I just keep going. I certainly don't feel decrepit."

Editor's note: Author Shelley Grossman, a former editor of The Vine, was a staff correspondent of the National Journal for 23 years.

Tzedakah FROM PAGE 8 ►**RABBI BERAHA'S
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In appreciation of the rabbis and their superb response to the challenges of Covid-19, by Elka and Sid Booth

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Freddie Traum, by Martha and David Adler

This list reflects donations received May 7–August 4, 2020. Every effort has been made to ensure its accuracy, but if there are any errors or omissions please accept our apologies. For corrections or clarifications, please contact Rhiannon Walsh in the temple office. Thank you.

CONDOLENCES

The Temple Micah community extends its deepest condolences to:

DOUG BARRY AND ELIZABETH EDER, on the passing of their brother-in-law, Walter Lesnick

JANET BOWEN, on the passing of her brother-in-law, Martin C. Sloan

RANDI AND DAVID BRAVERMAN, on the passing of their friend, Joshua Harari

DEAN BRENNER, on the passing of his cousin, Edward Schultz

THOMAS BRUNNER, on the passing of his wife, Rochelle "Shelly" Brunner

ANN COHEN, on the passing of her loved one, Avi Dorot

JEANNELLE D'ISA, on the passing of her grandparents, John and Sarah A. Ferreira

SHELLEY FIDLER, on the passing of her uncle, Roy Fidler

PETER, ADAM, AND CAROLYN GLUCK, on the passing of their sister and aunt, Roberta Spector

BRENDA LEVENSON, on the passing of her sister, Annie Lass

DEBBIE ROUMELL, on the passing of her aunt, Eileen Laxer

DEBRA WINTER, on the passing of her uncle, Jonathan Winter

SADIE AND HANNAH WYATT, on the passing of their grandmother, Carolyn Wyatt

May their memories be for a blessing.

MAZAL TOV

Iris and Philip Barnett, on the birth of their grandson, Joshua Sylvan Barnett

Anne, Jacob, and Rebekah Karabell, on the birth of their son and brother, Leo Mason Karabell

Brenda Levenson, on the birth of her great-grandchild, Matthew Thomas Simmons

Rachael Jackson and Ben Moss, on the birth of their son, Jay Henry Moss

WHAT THE SHOFAR MEANS TO ME IN 5781

BY RABBI JOSH BERAHA

Each of us knows the stillness and contemplation elicited by the sound of the shofar, blasting us to attention. I imagine we attach our own meaning to those blows, and that the meaning changes throughout our lifetimes.

For our children, the blowing of the shofar — no common instrument — is among the most alluring of all Jewish rituals. Their interest and wonder piqued by the explanation that it is indeed the horn of a ram producing those loud blasts.

For those who have reached an age of maturity, the shofar is likely associated with the call to wake up, an alarm to turn our attention inward, and then outward. What do we want for ourselves? What are our hopes and dreams for the world in which we live?

Our sages of old were never at a loss for interpretations on the meaning of shofar, and hence a tour of rabbinical literature on the topic will produce countless analyses of everything from musings on the instrument itself to questions like is it valid if you hear only an echo of a shofar and not the shofar itself? Some sages argued that the shofar sounds are meant to be reminiscent of different types of crying. Others said it is a call to truth, to God.

Indeed, the wails of the shofar open up a void, an emptiness ready to be filled by anyone who chooses to listen. A blank canvas.

This year, I am drawn to two interpretations of shofar in particular.

The first comes from the Babylonian Talmud (Rosh Hashanah 16b) and explains that we blow the shofar “to confuse Satan.” I read these words as poetry, of course, and not to mean an actual devil is listening to the shofar’s siren. Satan, here, is simply a stand in for evil. All year evil knocks at our door, ready to pounce on us like a wild beast. Its intentions are clear — to lure us

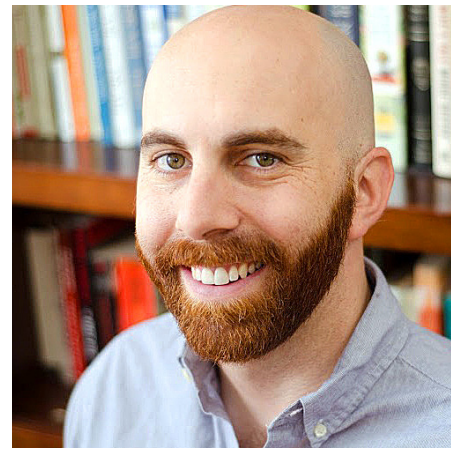
away from the good, toward deceit and hardened hearts. Try though we may, evil is always present, always a path we can choose to take, or not. As we learn in Torah (Deut. 30:16), “See, I set before you this day life and prosperity, death and adversity.”

But evil is more than a force beyond us, more than a bad choice we should all avoid; it is, rather, an aspect of our world that is tangled up in all we do. A feature, not a bug. Human history teaches as much, as does this past year. When the curtain drops on 5780, the image of a police officer with his knee on George Floyd’s neck will not leave us. Nor will the scores of pictures of immigrants and refugees, in camps or at sea, from Syria to Venezuela. Same with the stories of Uighur labor camps in China, the continued suffering of the landless Rohingyas in Myanmar.

Evidently, evil is well organized and groomed, clear in its intentions and sound in its execution of bringing darkness to our world. Might we even consider Covid-19 and the current political debates that surround it, also to be a force of evil? What about the willful ignoring of basic facts? The obstruction of truth?

When this year’s blasts of the shofar are sounded, my prayer will be that its untamed cries thwart the evil in our world. My prayer will be that evil finds itself scrambled, unsure of where to strike next. And herein lies the power of human freedom—it is within our capacity to make this happen! Though evil is undeniably enmeshed as part of our existence, we can disorient its direction. We can confuse Satan.

The second interpretation of shofar that calls to me this year comes from Maimonides (though just one part from his lengthy exegesis). He says the shofar is meant to speak to those who “forget the truth because of the vanities of the



times.” In speaking of truth, Maimonides uses the direct article, the, (in Hebrew, *ha*), rendering it, in English — the Truth, with a capital T. In other words, what he wants to express is that the ultimate Truth of being — maybe God, maybe plain existence — is shrouded in the vanities of the times.

The sounding of the shofar, then, is like realignment with righteous living. There is no need for me to list all of the “vanities of the times,” for surely you can list as many as I can. We inhabit a world in which idols call out to us daily, in numerous forms and disguises. And frankly it’s hard to resist the enchantment of these shiny vanities. Their power is too strong.

And so, when the blasts of the shofar are sounded, my prayer will also be that its untamed cries awaken us to the Truth, and lead us away from the vanities of our time. My prayer will be that complacency and ego, smugness and self-righteousness, will shatter like a window that cracks at the sound of a high pitch.

I fear the power of the shofar may be diminished this year, as many of us will only hear its call through the speakers of our computer. But let not the power of the message of shofar be placed aside or diminished in any way. Satan needs to be confused, and so too, the Truth of existence revealed.

Rabbi’s Message FROM PAGE 5 ►

founding. Honoring the result of the vote count is sacred to democracy. The fact that in the year 2020 I am writing these words is frightening. What might we be called to do this year?

Never have I thought more

about the great, perhaps mythical exchange said to have taken place when Ralph Waldo Emerson visited Henry David Thoreau in jail. Thoreau, you will recall, had refused to pay taxes to support the war with Mexico. “How can you be here?” asked Emerson. To which Thoreau replied, “How

can you not be?”

We enter this season with a very full plate. I treasure Rabbi Shimon and his wisdom. Rabbi Shimon lived in the first century under the tyranny of Roman rule, one of the most tumultuous and tragic times in Jewish history. Roman authorities executed

him for his refusal to abandon Torah but his words live to this day to guide us still. They give me courage, purpose, strength and hope. Rabbi Shimon knew that Jews don’t despair. We all remain his disciples.

Shalom,
Rabbi Daniel G. Zemel

MICAH ELECTS NEW MEMBERS FOR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

BY FRAN DAUTH

A PEDIATRICIAN, a lawyer and a political pollster walked into — wait for it — a meeting of the Temple Micah Board of Directors. Also the trio didn't walk in. They were on Zoom.

The three were elected to the board at Micah's annual meeting in June, also a virtual gathering. In addition, two incumbent members were returned for encore terms.

The new board members are Jennifer Kaplan, the pediatrician, Leesa Klepper, the lawyer, and Mark Blumenthal, the pollster. They replace Shellie Bressler, Jeff Davis and Marcia Silcox.

One of the re-elected board members, Joshua Berman, was named board president in the subsequent board meeting, also online. At the same session, Rielle Miller Gabriel was elected vice president; David Wentworth took on the job of treasurer, and Harriet Tritell was retained as secretary. The other incumbent board member who returned for another term is Sonia White.

Kaplan is part of a downtown academic practice affiliated with Children's National Hospital where she is the

physician leader and trains primary care residents and medical students.

She and her family joined Micah in 2013. Her daughter Sophia had her Zoom bat mitzvah in May 2020, which Kaplan says made her feel even more a part of the Micah community. Never mind that she has participated in the Micah House walk each year, the Micah Annual Auction, assisted with oneqs and attended many Micah lectures. Her son will have his bar mitzvah in two years.

Klepper and her family joined Temple Micah in 2016. "For me, joining Micah was a bit of a return — as I frequented Micah's Shabbat services as a 20-something seeking a spiritual break from life as a busy Capitol Hill lawyer.

"Since joining, Micah has become a home to my family, a refuge from the turbulence of life, and a place for each of us to learn and to grow.

"My older daughter had her bat mitzvah in 2019; and my younger daughter will be called to the Torah for her bat mitzvah in January."

Klepper has been part of the Sukkat

Shalom Leadership Team as co-chair of the food and clothing committee. For the past year, she has also been part of Temple Micah's Roadmap team, which is developing a document to guide Micah's future.

Mark Blumenthal and his wife Helen Burstin joined Temple Micah in 2008.

He and Burstin twice co-chaired the annual Underwear Drive during the b'nai mitzvah years of their children, Deena and Sam.

The couple also created a multimedia presentation for Micah's Yom Hashoah service that told the holocaust survival story of Helen's father with his poems, photographs and video testimony.

Blumenthal's career has included stints as a survey researcher, a pollster, a political consultant, a blogger and a journalist. He previously headed polling at Survey Monkey, was senior polling editor at The Huffington Post and co-founder of Pollster.com. He is currently the principal at MysteryPollster where he advises clients how to adapt to newer online survey technologies. ♦



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