

Vine

Becoming a Stronger Home

BY RIELLE MILLER GABRIEL

FROM RABBI ZEMEL

A DEMOCRACY IN NAME ONLY

DEAR FRIENDS,

I am writing this letter on March 2. In six days, I will be leaving for Israel to lead our second Micah trip there in this Jewish year (5783). In all my years of traveling to Israel, I never have experienced the level of anxiety I feel today.



I have no fears about my safety or that of the Micah members who will accompany me. My fear is for what Israel has become—an illiberal democracy, a democracy in

name only and one that is flirting with theocratic rule.

I am writing this because Jews have inflicted a pogrom on the Palestinian village of Huwara in the Israeli-occupied West Bank. To think that Jews committed murderous violence and then paused in order to daven Ma'ariv (the evening service) sickens my heart. It makes a mockery of prayer.

I am writing this because I am reminded of the question that the great Rabbi Harold Schulweis asked after Baruch Goldstein, a graduate of the Yeshiva of Flatbush, murdered 29 Muslims in a mosque in Hebron while they were at prayer. "Where was he in the yeshiva the day they taught 'Thou shalt not kill?'" (Exodus 20:13, Deuteronomy 5:17)

I am writing this because the Passover story is a universal story. Our master story is a story of slavery to freedom. It requires the commentary "in every generation, we must look at ourselves as if we, too, were newly freed slaves."

I am writing this because Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. knew our Jewish story when he taught his Torah with

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AS YOU WALK into Temple Micah this spring you will see a new addition to our lobby—a large poster showcasing our Roadmap Project's drivers of our future, five levers that help us become a stronger home. As

a quick refresher, the Roadmap is a living, forward-looking framework intended to guide Micah's future choices and decisions. Members, clergy, and staff developed it together through a series of facilitated conversations in 2019 and 2020. The poster is our first congregation-wide unveiling of the output of our collective effort.

I invite you to spend a few minutes reading a part of the poster each and every time you enter the lobby. My advice? Treat it like a piece of art. Take in the whole poster at first; let the Roadmap overwhelm you. Then approach it piece by piece. Focus on one lever—whichever one calls your attention—and really explore it from different angles. Ask yourself how you connect to that lever, how are you embracing that lever through your engagement at Temple Micah, or what drew that particular lever to your attention?

Step away and let the ideas ruminate in your brain. Talk it over with a friend, family member, perhaps even another congregant in the lobby.

Then come back and tackle another

lever, until you have explored and examined what each of them means to you and your experience of Temple Micah.

The next part is harder—well, maybe from here it *seems* harder than it will be in actuality. The next part is to integrate the Roadmap into our congregation, into our worship, into our clubs and groups, into our Board committees, and into how we run the temple itself. This work has already begun—that's

how we have a poster to begin with! This year, our clergy and staff started to incorporate a purposeful discussion of the Roadmap and how we are becoming a stronger home and how the work that each staff members does—yes, all of them, from our senior rabbi to our custodians—embraces one of the levers.

At its March meeting, the Temple Micah Board had a similar discussion of how we embrace the Roadmap through

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

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A NEW CLIMATE GROUP AT MICAH

By Geoffrey Barron, Barbara Diskin, and Jan W. Greenberg

Recently, a group of us met at Micah to talk about a tough subject: climate change. To examine climate change is to encounter forces that seem overwhelming: our whole society built on fossil fuels, the power and influence of the big oil companies, the weather itself running amuck. How do you go about changing the weather?

It's hard to think about or see anything we can do. But walking away? That's like seeing a slow-motion crash about to happen and turning one's back.



When something is hard to think about, it helps to talk it through in the company of like minds and good listeners, seeking insight and fresh ideas. So that's what we did at our initial meeting: we shared thoughts and information, listened to one another, and came away energized and more hopeful.

Slowing climate change is not an on/off switch. There is much to be done—and quickly. But a recent UN report suggests that *whatever* we can do will help lessen

the damage. There are myriad ways to contribute as individuals: concrete actions such as composting; asking a neighbor their thoughts about climate change and listening well so they have a chance to hear themselves think, helping to elect political candidates who take the issue seriously, and using our personal investments to encourage movement away from fossil fuels and toward renewable energy.

At the meeting, everyone got a chance to think about what they want to do next. We also brainstormed ways to make Micah itself a “greener” place – by using fewer resources and cutting down on waste, for example, by using dishes and utensils that can be washed in the efficient Temple Micah dishwasher instead of disposables, and by having the choir sing from iPads instead of printing music for each Shabbat service.

We want to explore how Micah's youth might be involved. Future meetings might also feature guest speakers, or deeper dialogue on how we might collaborate with national Jewish and other organizations in larger campaigns tackling climate change.

Climate change will be a part of our lives from now on. Its impact on our families, our finances, our communities, and our world will only grow. Let's take it on together. The next meeting of our climate action group will be Thursday, April 27th, 7 – 8:30 p.m., at Temple Micah and via Zoom. Come join us!

Stronger FROM PAGE 1 ►

our various engagements with and in the congregation. It was an eye-opening experience for me, and I walked away with two thoughts:

As a community, we are already doing so much to embrace the Roadmap. I hope you come to the same conclusion, because the Roadmap project was as much about Micah's current identity as it is about Micah's future. We should find it relatively easy to map a lever to an initiative or project or the maintenance of the building. The goal is to continue examining our activities through the lens of embracing the Roadmap, so our future activities will continue to support who we are as Temple Micah.

It was difficult to single out just one lever embraced by a particular activity I engage in at Micah. I expect that you, too, will run into this same issue as you go through this exercise. The levers overlap, intersect, and support each other. This seems obvious if you think about them as aspects of Temple Micah's identity. While they are distinct philosophically, in practice the levers of the Roadmap are enacted by similar behaviors and activities.

Over this calendar year, we as a community will meaningfully engage with the output from the Roadmap Project. We will work towards becoming a stronger home so that in another 60 years, Temple Micah can still be a thriving congregation.

The Roadmap: Becoming a Stronger Home

Double down on a new Jewish Narrative

Give people a greater sense of coherence, meaning, and possibility about where we've come from as Jews and the journey that we're on together.

Be explicit about the Human Project

What it means to be a good person, our relationships, our journey, our passion for truth, our shared humanity, and our responsibilities to each other and our community.

Support people in co-creating their Jewish lives

Enable people to have a greater sense of agency, ownership, and capability to shape their faith and lives.

Tackle the tough conversations before us

Provide the spaces and conditions that people need to sort out what they think and believe on difficult issues, especially regarding Israel.

Engage people beyond Micah

Engage with and learn from others about Micah's practice and understanding of Judaism.



Rabbi Zemel FROM PAGE 1 ►

such pearls as, “No one is free until we are all free” and “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”

In short, I am writing this because just as I am unable not to love Israel, I cannot *not write* this letter.

Maybe by the time you read this, Israel’s gruesome government will have fallen—or the massive demonstrations opposing this Jewish fascist regime will have prevailed. If so, my words are wonderfully unnecessary and for that we can celebrate our Passover with joyful songs and the singing of Hallel.

If the government led by Benjamin Netanyahu has fallen, you need read no further.

If not, we are in a dark period of Jewish history and we must oppose this government with all of our heart, soul and might.

The leaders of Israel today are like those who worshiped the Golden Calf as Moses was atop Mt. Sinai. They are idolaters of the worst kind. They have scorned the notion of devotion to an invisible God who hates theft and murder, covetousness and deceit. They worship the idol of blood and soil. They are happiest when they are praying in front of the Western Wall, while denying Jews of whom they do not approve, the right to pray as they freely choose.

Blood? They hate conversion to Judaism and don’t trust anyone’s Jewish status except their own.

Soil? They throw innocent Arab citizens from homes they have lived in for

generations, replacing them with Jewish thugs who care not one whit that people have been rendered homeless. They worship a delusion of a “Greater Israel,” taking as truth and prophecy the fantasy of a biblical metaphor.

The fantasists of Greater Israel do not understand the very essence of either biblical or rabbinic Judaism. They are true idol worshippers.

For our ancestors, the temple mount, where God’s house was built, was the foundation stone of the entire world. The Hebrew term is *Even Ha-Yasod*.

All of creation is said to have emanated from that rock. It was the place that linked heaven to Earth. It is where the Heavenly God had his earthly residence. It was the place of connection and security—the *foundation* of existence. (This is the genesis of our song *Al Shlosha Devarim/On Three Things*.)

The survivors of Jerusalem’s destruction—those who witnessed the burning of the ancient temple by the Romans in the year 70 CE—literally had the foundation of their existence torn from beneath them.

They questioned how they could live. How would the world go on? To what could they cling that would give them safety and stability? The destruction of the temple in Jerusalem was, for our ancestors, the end of the world. Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai, the greatest sage of this era, reminded the survivors of the great teaching of the earlier sage, Shimon Ha-tzaddik.

Shimon Ha-tzaddik, who lived four

hundred years earlier—in the time of Alexander the Great—had taught that God did not live in any house or temple. The temple was simply a symbol of divine presence.

Even Ha-Yasod, he explained, was a metaphor.

The world, Shimon Ha-Tzaddik taught, stands on three things: Torah, the book that holds our story; *avodah*, prayer, the search for a God that lives in each and every open human heart; and *gemilut hasadim*, acts of love and kindness that we do for others.

These are the essential lessons of Torah. This is what Moses received at Sinai.

The fascist government in Israel today is making a mockery of all that Judaism has ever been. Its leaders are ignorant of one of the central lessons of Judaism: the world stands on love and kindness to all others.

Instead, they have embraced a destructive idolatry and called it Judaism. In doing so, they are destroying the Israel that was given to them and making our world a dangerous place.

I am writing this because at Temple Micah, on Passover and Shavuot, we celebrate a Judaism that sings out, with pride, Shimon Ha-Tzaddik’s great lesson.

We must fight the idolaters in today’s Jerusalem now, and tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow. This government cannot stand. For the good of Israel. For the good of Judaism. For the good of the world.

Shalom,

Israel at 75: a conversation on American Zionism

with Rabbi Eric Yoffie & Aaron Taylor



This program is made possible by a generous grant from the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington celebrating Israel at 75. Please register in advance to attend.

Healy Slakman: Living with Curiosity, Boldness and a Sense of Awe

By Fran Dauth

The Micah committee named to search for Debra Winter's replacement as Director of Spiritual Arts was not looking to add another rabbi to the staff. But in the end, the committee did add a rabbi—and far more. Healy Slakman “was everything we were looking for—and more. Her voice is gorgeous, her guitar playing beautiful. She exudes warmth and enthusiasm when she's on the bima,” said Jodi Enda, the co-chair of the search committee.

“And while we did not start out looking for another rabbi, the fact that she soon will be ordained means that Healy will engage fully in the temple's intellectual and philosophical pursuits as well as in its musical endeavors, Enda said. She thought it was safe to say on behalf of all the search committee members that when Healy accepted the job offer, “we felt as if we'd struck gold.”

Below are the answers Healy Slakman, Micah's newly appointed Director of Spiritual Arts, gave to questions the Vine posed to her while she prepared her rabbinic dissertation at Hebrew Union College. You might say they prove Enda is right about striking gold.

Where did you grow up (oh, and how old are you)?

Born to a couple of restless wandering Jews, I grew up all over the place. Early childhood in San Francisco, youth in St. Louis, teenage years in Atlanta. I continued the restless legacy and moved to St. Petersburg, Florida; Jerusalem for a bit; and finally, Brooklyn. Amidst the moving and readjusting, a constant in my life was spending each summer in Ramla, Israel, where my dad's family lives. I am 28.

Is there a story behind your first name?

My name is Hebrew. Healy Shir (היא לי שיר) means she is my song / she is to me a song. Music and song obviously ended up being a huge part of my life and spirit... very lucky guess, if you ask me.

Where did you do your undergraduate studies? What was your major?

I went to college at a small liberal arts school in St Petersburg, Florida called Eckerd College. It's an interesting place. Elie Wiesel was secretly a professor there every winter term. And there was an environmental scuba diving club called “Scubi Jew.” I studied business administration with minors in finance and visual arts. I know it's an unusual combination.

When were you a rabbinic intern at Micah? What primarily did you do while at Micah and did any of it affect your studies?

I was a rabbinic intern at Micah during the summer of 2021. I

learned from and with the clergy team, learned about the Micah's history and community, led services and rituals, spent time with amazing people, worked on the Elul project, etc. I was inspired to be a part of a community curious about authenticity, learning, and building contemporary Jewish life together, and energized to discover that Micah people really believe that things matter. I was compelled by the energy paired with commitment, and by the seriousness paired with flexibility and openness. The time I

spent at Micah was a totally revitalizing and formative experience on my path to the rabbinate and I learned a lot about thinking deeply and engaging honestly.

Tell me a little bit about your family. I am intrigued by your description of a Sephardic-Ashkenazi-Israeli-American home.

My mom comes from a relatively assimilated, midwestern American, Russian / Romanian Jewish family. My dad comes from a relatively traditional, Tunisian Sephardic family that immigrated to a development town in Israel during the '50s and '60s. I strive to explore and embody both of these origin stories in my Jewish interests and practices. And my identity has been totally influenced by fusions, contradictions, and negotiations between multiple traditions, melodies, flavors, and sensibilities from different parts of the Jewish world.

When did you know you wanted to be a rabbi?

That's a hard question I am not sure how to answer. Thinking about, doing, learning, and exploring Judaism has always been an essential part of who I am. And I am so excited to continue in the context of intentional Jewish community.

Music is clearly an interest. Tell us why it is important to you spiritually.

Music is such an important thread in Judaism. From mourning to celebrating, music has the capacity to ground us in tradition and/or help us forge completely new paths. And I think that music can help us feel connected to something bigger while simultaneously feeling more grounded in ourselves. There are so many spiritual opportunities that can grow from being present in a musical moment—from listening, to meditating, to contributing, to thinking, to sharing.

When developing my conception of spirituality, and when I reflect upon experiences that have helped me feel connected to something bigger as well as myself, I think of dancing and singing in community. I think of cramped sweaty spaces, voices coming together, catching eyes, holding breath, silence after song, har-



Meet Kelly Whitehead, 2023 Summer Rabbinic Intern

By Steven R. Weisman

Kelly Whitehead, Temple Micah's rabbinical student intern for the summer of 2023, is no stranger to our community. She taught kindergarten through second grade at Machon Micah while an undergraduate studying history at American University, and some Temple Micah families became acquainted with her at Reform Judaism's Camp Harlam in the Poconos, where Whitehead worked with high schoolers and where a love and devotion for Judaism took off.

Describing herself as "a queer Jew of color," Whitehead grew up in a Jewish household in Queens and Brooklyn, where she became bat mitzvah. Her interest in working for social justice has only increased in recent years, when it has often seemed like the rights of women, immigrants, people of color, and the LGBTQ community were under assault. Studying to become a rabbi became the path to fulfill that goal.

"After the 2016 election, I felt a passion to bring about change in the community," said Whitehead. "I appreciated that rabbis have a moral voice that politicians and others don't have. I want to follow a path with the support of my Jewish text and tradition to bring about social change."

A major priority is to work for that progress within the Jewish community itself. Whitehead has faced "micro-aggression, small acts of discrimination and occasional lack of respect" at Jewish conferences, events, and workplaces,

where she was sometimes mistaken for a custodial employee or another person of color. Some people found it hard to believe that as a person of color, Whitehead was born Jewish. These experiences made her determined to use her position as a rabbi, and to set an example and help campers, students, and other young people navigate similar challenges in "exclusively white or exclusively Jewish spaces." At Camp Harlam, she was also inspired by female Jewish role models, proving that people of marginalized identities can be strong in the face of bias.

While studying at Hebrew Union College in New York, Whitehead has served as director of youth engagement at Temple Sinai in Summit, NJ. She has been selected for the Reform movement's Jew v'Nation Jew of Color Fellowship and helped create and lead an anti-racial bias training for Jewish youth professionals. Whitehead has also worked with many organizations around the country and in Israel as a diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) facilitator.

"As a rabbinical school student, my Judaism is a key component to who I am," Whitehead wrote in an essay for the URJ website. "I live in a Jewish city, learn about Jewish practices, and constantly uncover how the basis of my tradition is connected to my spiritual identity. I use Jewish tradition as an avenue to reflect on my entire being. I love Judaism's tradition



Kelly Whitehead (she/they) will be with us from May to July.

of tikkun middot (repairing our character) and cheshbon hanefesh (accounting for the soul). Being able to reflect, every single day, on my intersecting identities, my values, and how I can improve as a person is very powerful."

Whitehead seeks to use "our rich, sacred Jewish toolbox" to ensure that the Jewish community is more inclusive, respectful of diversity, and welcoming to "members of marginalized groups." Having spent time already at Temple Micah, she is looking forward to joining what they call a "unique, compassionate, and exceptionally welcoming community."



NEW BOOK BY MICAH MEMBER

Don't Die: Poems 2013–2021 by Michael Blumenthal

Michael Blumenthal is a celebrated poet, essayist and novelist who spent a decade as the Briggs-Copland lecturer in poetry at Harvard University before becoming the director of their Creative Writing program. A Guggenheim Fellow and recipient of the Water Mark Poets of North America First Book Prize, Juniper Prize and Isabella Steward Gardner Prize, he lived in Budapest Hungary from 1992-1996 as senior Fulbright lecturer. Blumenthal's novel, *Weinstock Among the Dying* won the Ribalow Prize for Best Work of Jewish Fiction. .

"I've never met Mr. Blumenthal but we've become close friends through his poetry. He and Rexroth and Kumin and Swenson. Good company.

—GARRISON KELLOR

"The intellect of a scholar, the sensitivity of a poet, the objectivity of a professor of law: it hardly seems possible that so many virtues can be embodied in one."

—C.K. WILLIAMS, recipient of the Pulitzer Prize for poetry



Don't Die

Poems 2013-2021

MICHAEL
BLUMENTHAL

Healy FROM PREVIOUS PAGE ►

mony, joy and sadness all cultivated together. The power of witnessing, creating, and sharing energy in the context of song reminds me of God's unity on one hand, and my own capacity to both feel it and contribute to it on the other. Music helps me feel present and engaged in the truth and mystery moment.

One aside: I [Fran Dauth] am quite taken by your "Sex Workers and Farts" piece, published online last year by BE'CHOL LASHON, an organization that believes diversity is a crucial part of Judaism. What kind of reaction did it get?

I often find myself in conversations about how to make Judaism "accessible," "relevant," or "edgy." The more I learn about our rituals, texts, and stories, the more I realize we really don't need to make Judaism anything. It already is. Our traditions are fundamentally intriguing, deep, and expansive, and for me a big part of being a rabbi is exploring the riches of our tradition with others. We have certain quotes that are popular and widely circulated, and I am interested in bringing to the forefront the fact that there are so many other incredible passages. For example, I wrote the "Sex Workers and Farts" piece to draw attention to a lesser known but shocking, debatably funny, and totally powerful story in the Talmud (all in the context of exploring the high holiday themes of forgiveness and ego). I got all sorts of reactions. Mostly, people were surprised to learn that the Talmud contains fascinating, creative, and far-fetched stories. People were also excited to delve deeper into a story that doesn't shy away from topics that are often seen as taboo—potentially and a little extra thrilling and freeing.

I know from my friend Google that you are an accomplished cook. How did that start? I sense an interest in Tunisian food, am I right?

I love cooking and learning about Jewish food. Over the past year I've become really interested in learning all sorts of Jewish cooking traditions. I'm especially interested in Jewish North African food because I am inspired by my grandmother (Savta Geisel) who (like many women) builds Jewish community and engages in tradition through cooking. I think many dishes can be understood as cultural artifacts that tell the story of communities through textures and flavors. Food stands at the juncture between past and present, absence and endurance, conjuring into existence people and events long gone, while simultaneously taking on sensibilities of the present moment. And Jewish foods uniquely tell a story of Judaism that's not only intellectual but embodied. For example, almost every family has a special recipe for chicken soup, reflecting diverse expressions of Jewish identity from region to region, but also, I suggest, the universal Jewish value of warmth, nurturing, and healing of body and soul. Also, while classical Jewish religious literature (law, commentary, mystical texts) is often produced by and attributed to men, Jewish recipes represent the work of women, community members who are always present but rarely canonized.

Music, food, writing are interests — are there others, like travel?

Music, food, writing, painting, running. And yes, I love to travel. I love being outside and having adventures. And I value learning about and connecting with people, places, cultures and stories. To me, being in relationship with God means being in relationship with life, and living my own with curiosity, boldness, and a sense of awe.

NEXT YEAR IN PEACE

By Hannah Ruth Wellons

Without a doubt, my favorite Jewish holiday is Pesach. I've found such joy in writing and adapting my own haggadah, in preparing a seder meal for my family and friends, and the annual rewatch of the iconic *Prince of Egypt*.

Until this past May, I had never been to Israel, and so the final words of the seder—*L'shanah haba'ah b'Yerushalayim*—never meant much to me. That's not to say that they weren't powerful, a signaling for a return to the ancestral homeland, but as I had never been to Israel before, I had nothing personal to tie these words to.

When I went to Israel on Birthright a few weeks after Passover, I was not prepared for what it would feel like to walk into the Bible stories of my childhood. I love history, and the most impactful part of the trip was Masada, despite the 4:30am hike up the Roman Ramp to watch the sunrise. Climbing amongst the ruins of buildings, peering down into the remnants of a mikvah, and staring out at the Dead Sea, I was in awe of the beauty and courage of the Jews who lived there thousands of years before.

I'm also a convert. Before my conversion, I did not understand the “big deal” about Israel. I had no ties to the country—I had no relatives or friends who lived there, and I am not ethnically Jewish and no natural bond to that region of the world. I knew very little about the country before I went, and therefore didn't really understand why it was so important that Jews have access to their ancestral home.

Although my Birthright trip didn't end the way I wanted it to—I got a really bad case of COVID and was stuck for five days longer than anticipated—I can't deny that being in Israel as someone who was newly Jewish was an incredible experience. Nowhere else in the world can a Jewish person go about their life and know that they are in the majority. I was struck by a sense of belonging that I had never felt before, even in a country I had never

been to, where I didn't speak the language.

Yet while on my trip, it was hard to ignore the fact that Israel, since its inception as a Jewish nation, has been embroiled in conflict. My attendance at a very liberal and politically active university had not equipped me to have a meaningful conversation about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that didn't simply devolve into a shouting match.

In fact, the tensions I felt about Israel meant that, leading up to my trip, I avoided talking about going on Birthright with folks who weren't Jewish. I feared what people might assume about my views on Israel and about Birthright.

Ultimately, I loved the trip. But, my conflicted views remain. Where, exactly, did I stand in regards to the Israeli-Palestinian struggle? I believe vehemently in all peoples' rights to their indigenous homeland, and I have serious concerns about depriving Palestinians of rights. I also know it is not as simple as declaring that Palestinians have every right to belong in their native home.

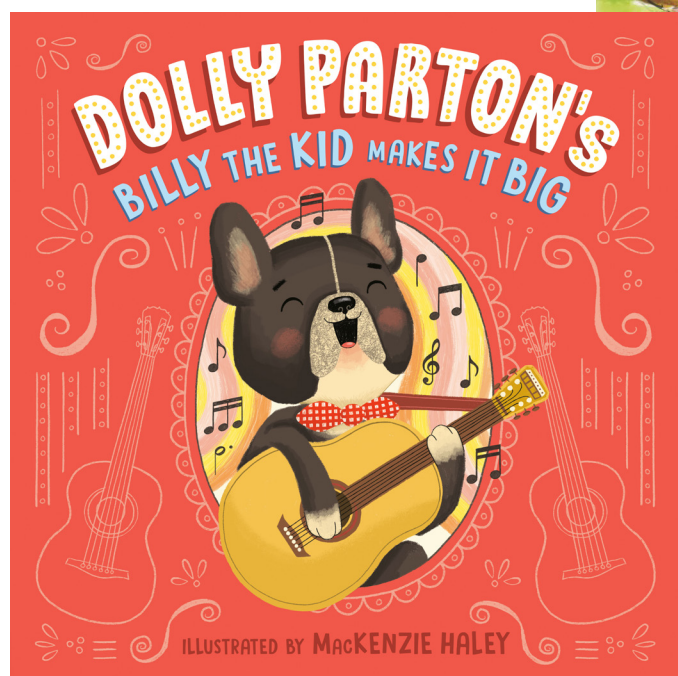
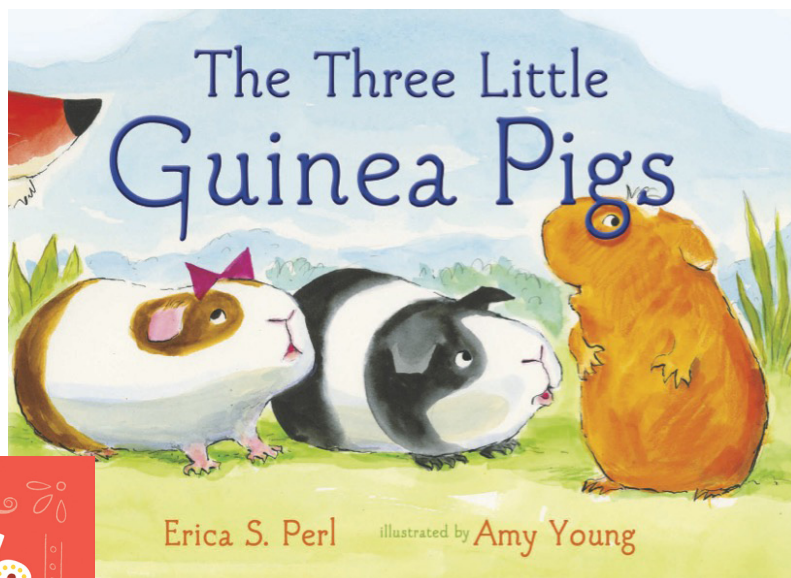
I also know that I am not alone in feeling conflicted. Temple Micah is a place where we tackle the hard conversation. For example, on April 23, in celebration of Israel's 75th birthday and Yom Ha'atzmaut, we are hosting a conversation about what the future holds for the relationship between American Jews and Israel. It will feature two distinctive perspectives on Israel—and I, for one, look forward to hearing the different views and continuing to struggle with the tension.

Passover feels different this year. In this season of rising antisemitism worldwide, heightened violence in Israel and Palestine, and virulent political extremism in both the US and the Middle East, it feels more important than ever to rejoice in our longevity and tenacity as a religion and people. For Passover this year, when we arrive at the end of our seder, I will be adding an addendum to “Next year in Jerusalem.” *L'shanah haba'ah b'shalom*—next year in peace.

RECENTLY PUBLISHED: ERICA S. PERL

***The Three Little Guinea Pigs* by Erica S. Perl, illustrated by Amy Young**

This porcine-free version of the familiar story features three plucky guinea pig sisters who set off to make their way in the world and build their homes. But when hungry fox arrives on the scene, the sisters need to find a way to courageously collaborate and outwit their predator.



***Billy the Kid Makes it Big* by Dolly Parton with Erica S. Perl, illustrated by MacKenzie Haley**
French bulldog Billy the Kid is a pup who was born with an ear for music... so he heads to Nashville to chase his dreams. But after a brush with some bullies, Billy is tempted to turn tail and run back home. Will Billy find what he needs to stand tall and sing his heart out?

***White Bird: A Novel* by R.J. Palacio with Erica S. Perl**

Sara Blum lives an idyllic life with her adoring parents in Vichy France. But her world comes crashing down when the Nazi occupation separates the family and forces the young Jewish girl into hiding. Her classmate Julien and his family will risk everything to ensure her survival, and, together, Sara and Julien manage to find beauty in a secret world of their creation. First published as a graphic novel (and now a major motion picture starring Helen Mirren and Gillian Anderson), this unforgettable story demonstrates the power of kindness to change hearts, build bridges, and even save lives in the darkest of times.



TZEDAKAH

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IN HONOR OF

Rabbi Frank for her educational Haftarah Project
and Rabbi Schmelkin for the joy she brings
to our services, by Norman Blumenfeld

IN MEMORY OF

Robert Effros, by Sally Kitchen

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Rachel Claire Hellman on her becoming
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Rabbi Lederman for the beautiful and meaningful
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IN HONOR OF

Sarah Carleton's graduation from the University
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IN MEMORY OF

Chelo Fournier, Ralph Goren, by
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Ellen Passel, by Jeffrey Passel

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Debra Winter for her uplifting
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in memory of

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Esther Spiegel, by Stuart and Frances Schwartz

John C. Ward, by Alice Greenwald

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Rabbi Beraha's thoughtful, timely
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IN MEMORY OF

Seth Kahn, by Charles Kahn III and JoAnn Willis

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Rabbi Zemel's birthday, by Mary Beth
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RABBI ZEMEL'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

Robert Effros (z"l)

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IN HONOR OF

The naming of Jonah Glen Harlow Blum,
by Jared Blum and Kate Kiggins

MAZAL TOV

Joel Aronson and Roberta Aronson on the marriage of their daughter, Rabbi Emily Aronson, to Levi Kravetz

Rita and Gary Carleton, on the marriage of their daughter, Lena, to Prasad Bagwe and the engagement of their son, Benjamin, to Michelle Wasserman

Stephanie Kaufman, on the birth of her grandchild, Blaze Leo Kaufman

Ariel and Sam Voorhees, on the naming of their child, Louisa Voorhees

CONDOLENCES

THE TEMPLE MICAH COMMUNITY extends its deepest condolences to:

LESLIE BROWN, on the death of her uncle, Michael Adams

JONATHAN CHAMBERS AND JUDAH AND ELIJAH CHAMBERS, on the death of their wife and mother, Dana Hyde

CHERYL HARRIS, on the death of her aunt, Ethel Hansan

MARGARET HENOCK, on the death of her mother, Ruth Henoch

WHITNEY HOWELL, on the death of her grandmother, Rosalyn Rena Factor

FRED JACOB, on the death of his father, Mark Jacob

REBECCA LIVENGOD, on the death of her father, Ford Livengood

ARNOLD LUTZKER, on the death of his mother, Pearl Lutzker

May their memories be for a blessing.

Tzedakah FROM PREVIOUS PAGE ►

Rabbi Zemel's leadership over troubled waters, by Norman Blumenfeld

IN MEMORY OF
Vic Springer, by Jessica Springer Bloomfield
Storefront
Sara Aviel
Elka and Sidney Booth
Josh and Rebecca Flyer

SUKKAT SHALOM

Martha and David Adler
Roberta Aronson and Paul Goldberg
Larry Bachorik and Gail Povar
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Isadora Yoffie

IN HONOR OF
Martha Adler's remarks on her mother's yahrzeit and Stuart Brown's remarks on his wife's yahrzeit, by Bobbie and Ed Wendel
The marriage of Lena Carleton and Prasad Bagwe, by Gary and Rita Carleton

Kate Kiggins and Jared Blum, by Larry Bachorik and Gail Povar
Anna Weinberg, on the occasion of her bat mitzvah, by Sophia Coudenhove-Kalergi
Ellis and Graham Wilder, by Robert Early

IN MEMORY OF
Chelo Fournier, by Bobbie and Ed Wendel
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Jay Kaufman, by Elka and Sidney Booth
Sidney Reiff, by Isabel Reiff and Lee Pasarew
Tzedek (Social Justice) Fund
Barry and Carolyn Graubard
Alyn and Leon Hadar
Stephen Rockower and Ann Sablosky

IN HONOR OF
The engagement of Benjamin Carleton and Michelle Wasserman, by Gary and Rita Carleton
My friends, Jacque Simon and Doug Meyer, by Linda Cook
David Umansky, by Cathy and Robert Sinsheimer
Beth Werlin, Rhiannon Walsh, and the entire staff for keeping the ship afloat, by Norman Blumenfeld

IN MEMORY OF
Chelo Fournier, by Debra Knopman, Jessica and Harry Silver
Ralph Goren, by Barbara and Skip Halpern, Jessica and Harry Silver, Cecelia and Mark Weinheimer
Jay Kaufman, by Larry Bachorik and Gail Povar, Peter Basch, Alan and Jannet Carpien, Sharon Grosfeld, Debra Knopman, Stephen Rockower and Ann Sablosky, Marsha Semmel, Michelle Sender, Gloria Nilsen, Gwen and Marc Pearl, Amanda Root
Sumner Victor, by Marcy and Scott Porter

This list reflects donations received December 1, 2022–February 28, 2023. 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 Hannah Ruth Wellons in the temple office or at Wellons@TempleMicah.org. Thank you.

Waiting for Elijah

I've set the table
each glass at each plate
And yours - more goblet than glass

That's for you, I whisper to an empty chair

Don't worry -
I won't give up your seat

I was hoping to see you next month
as you made the rounds
welcoming new
babies into the world

Still, it would be great to have you visit now
Really - anytime.
Sure, it doesn't have to be tonight.
And please - no gifts.
Showing up is enough.
but we could really use some of that peace
the protection you carry in your pocket

Ok - so you couldn't make it last year-
was there no news to share?
did something come up?

Things always seem to be coming up with you
Always a maybe

Nevermind -
It really isn't such a big deal to set an extra place
anyway
and maybe you'll be here in time for singing

Is that you at the door, just now?



Behind the Poem

Dear Friends,

Elijah's role in tradition is to be the herald of the messiah. At Havdalah, when we link the Garden of Eden of creation to the Eden of Eternity, the liturgy asks for him to come soon.

In Jewish lore, Elijah is thought to be a protector of children and a peacemaker. Tradition again includes the figure of Elijah in the Bris ritual—with a chair left open for him. And, perhaps most well-known, Elijah is invited into every home for Passover, with a symbolic chair and a glass of wine, in case he should arrive. The Seder includes a moment where we walk to the door and check to see if he is outside.

Elijah is a placeholder for hope. The hope of a promise of a new week, of a new child, and of a new year, where freedom is possible. My intention in writing was that this poem would sit in a dynamic tension that is ever present in Jewish existence—the constant yearning for a better future, even as its arrival seems to be continually postponed.

— Rabbi Stephanie Crawley

Climate Change & Us

April 27 | 7 PM
Temple Micah + On Zoom



TO RISE ABOVE OUR IMMEDIATE SURROUNDINGS: THE MEANING OF PASSOVER

BY RABBI JOSH BERAHA

In Spring 2020, we set our seder tables with all the typical accoutrements of the Passover holiday, but that year many of us added something new: a laptop computer opened to Zoom. If the addition of an orange on the seder table stood for women's liberation, the addition of a computer represented our collective confinement. Three years later we're still trying to understand what's often referred to as "our new reality," and answer the question—what comes next? Having lived through a world-altering pandemic, how should we approach the future?

A possible answer comes from the story of the Exodus.

Imagine the feeling of the Israelite community after the ninth plague. God continues to demonstrate tremendous power, and yet Pharaoh remains obstinate. The Israelites have no reason to believe that freedom is near, and no reason to believe that the newest in a line of plagues will actually change their fate.

In preparation for what we know will be the tenth and final plague, God instructs the Israelites regarding the sacrifice of a lamb and tells them to put blood on the doorposts of their homes.

After this already baffling directive, what God says next must have rankled an already frustrated populace. "This day shall be to you," God says, "one of remembrance: you shall celebrate it as a festival to me throughout the ages; you shall celebrate it as an institution for all time." (Exodus 12:14)

Celebrate? For all time? If the Israelites still had a slave mentality when they left Egypt and would carry it for years to come, these ideas would have felt as far removed from reality as the Promised Land did to Abraham when God first told him about it generations ago.

Of course, the reader knows that God will split the sea, that the Egyptian army

will drown in its waters when they close, and that eventually the Israelites will see the other side of bondage, but for now—how could they possibly comprehend the notion of a celebration, not to mention a celebration *for all time*?

As if dangling a far-fetched holiday in front of them wasn't enough, God then asks them to imagine their descendants. "And when your children ask you, 'What do you mean by this rite?' you shall say, 'It is the passover sacrifice to YHVH, who passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt when smiting the Egyptians, but saved our houses.'"

But how could the enslaved Hebrews respond to this future-talk with anything other than collective sighs of frustration and despondent skepticism?

As a Jewish community, one of our tasks is to become better people by imitating God. Whether or not *we believe* in God—that is not the question. As Jack Miles wrote in *God: A Biography*, "That God created mankind, male and female, in his own image is a matter of faith. That our forebears strove for centuries to perfect themselves in the image of their God is a matter of historical fact."

Miles is certainly correct. When we read God's words, "See, I give you every seed-bearing plant that is upon all the earth, and every tree that has seed-bearing fruit," (Genesis 1:29) we pursue an answer to the question—what does it mean to be stewards of this planet? When we read God's words, "be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy," (Leviticus 19:2) we pursue an answer to the question—what does it mean to be holy?

So, too, when we read God's words, "This day shall be to you one of remembrance," even when they are said within the context of seemingly never-ending despair, we pursue an answer to the question: how can we lift our eyes toward a time of future joy and release?



More specifically, this year we might pursue an answer to the question—how can we already begin to ritualize the massive changes wrought by the pandemic? How can we prepare ourselves for what our children's children might ask us one day?

The lesson is clear. Even before we reach the Promised Land, and even before we ever start down the road to get there, we're meant to ask ourselves about the implications of our actions.

Oliver Sacks said it well. "To live on a day-to-day basis is insufficient for human beings; we need to transcend, transport, escape; we need meaning, understanding, and explanation; we need to see over-all patterns in our lives. We need hope, the sense of a future. And we need freedom (or, at least, the illusion of freedom) to get beyond ourselves, whether with telescopes and microscopes and our ever-burgeoning technology, or in states of mind that allow us to travel to other worlds, to rise above our immediate surroundings." (*New Yorker*, Aug 2012)

To rise above our immediate surroundings—this is the meaning of the Passover holiday. To see farther, *today*. To imagine an entirely different reality, *today*. "The future," said Howard Zinn, "is an infinite succession of presents," and so we should "live now as we think human beings *should live*, in defiance of all that is bad around us." Chag sameach, friends, and may your seder tables be full of life, and most importantly, hope for a better tomorrow.