

THE SHOFAR

SUMMER 2022 - Tammuz/Av/Elul 5782
Farmington Valley Jewish Congregation-Emek Shalom
Simsbury, Connecticut

*Our new
logo!*



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to visit the Synagogue calendar!**

A WORD FROM, Rabbi Bekah Goldman



Friends,

Just this past Sunday afternoon, as I sat around the dinner table absorbing the faces of the beautiful people who surrounded me, I thought about the beauty of slow summer days. There's something about summer that slows down our minds and bodies long enough to allow some semblance of rest and healing from the anxieties of life, even if only for a few hours.

Here in the north half of the world, the sun is at its greatest distance from the equator, and the northern hemisphere of the earth is tilted toward the sun's light. While we're being bathed in this spectacular light, the rabbis of the Talmud say, we have no shadow. It is almost a moment of merging completely with the sun's powerful rays. However, it is up to us to soak up the power of the sun in whatever way we can, spiritual or otherwise. How do we do that well?

It isn't too tough if we only relish the slowness that summer graces us with. By settling into the slowness, we can truly see ourselves in a light we weren't able to at other times during the year when the sun was not shining so brightly upon us. We are different people than we were six months ago. We are definitely different people than we were last High Holiday season. As the summer sun illuminates every aspect of our being, we notice change in ourselves. We discover that we need different things to meet our spiritual needs. Summertime is the perfect opportunity to rediscover what will nurture and fulfill our constantly changing spirituality. As we relax by a pool, bury our toes in the sand, or snuggle up with a good book, we have the space to reconnect with and deepen our relationship with ourselves and with the Divine. Sometimes the hubbub of the year can cause us to become distant and disconnected from some of our inner yearnings. Summer provides the unhurried time and growth to seek out and refresh that connection. Welcome the warmth, light, and pace of the summer, and come back to us in the fall, ready to continue our communal seeking together.

With Blessings, Rabbi Bekah

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE Loel Goldblatt



Dear Friends,

Summer is here, and although it's often thought of as a time for vacation and relaxation, it turns out that it's a very busy time of year for our synagogue planning.

Membership renewal booklets and statements have been sent out and I'm happy to share that as a growing and vibrant synagogue, we are able to maintain dues and fees at the same level as last year. Since it takes more than member dues to sustain our synagogue, we depend on donations from generous donors and our Visionary members throughout the year. For those of you who attended our member picnic in May, please know that it was completely paid for through a donation by a very thoughtful member who wanted to give back to our wonderful community.

Rabbi Gavi is currently very busy making improvements to our Religious School so that it is ready for a great start in the Fall. She's planning to fully engage our religious school students and families in an active, multisensory way along with a new robust curriculum and new technology in our classrooms. We have applied for a grant through the Jewish Community Foundation of Greater Hartford to develop a strong and cohesive approach to family learning. This approach will provide a more consistent curriculum for our Family Education, Art, and Mini Minyan programs and we hope to share good news in the near future about this funding. As Director of Lifelong learning, Rabbi Gavi is preparing to offer numerous adult education programs after the high holidays based on input she's already received from many of you.

Rabbi Bekah and our Ritual Committee are already busily planning for our High Holidays to ensure spiritual and meaningful services, with both in-person and virtual offerings, for all our members. Please let Rabbi Bekah or our Ritual Committee (ritual@fvjc.org) know if you're interested in participating or helping out in any way. Even a small commitment on your part can make a big difference!

Summer is also a good time to review the needs of our aging building and to make necessary repairs and upgrades using funds we've collected through our Capital Campaign. You may have noticed that our sanctuary was re-roofed earlier this year. We've also made necessary repairs to other parts of our roof to prevent leaks. We are going to be replacing all the windows around the sanctuary and social hall and administrative wing later this year. We recently applied to FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) for a grant to provide various security upgrades to our facility. And in thinking of the needs for all who use our building, we've converted one of our restrooms to a safe space for anyone to use as a Gender Neutral Bathroom.

So as you can see, we're building and strengthening our inclusive community in many ways for all our members. One of the best ways to feel that sense of community is by getting involved and volunteering. Be a part of the change and help chart our direction by attending events and volunteering your time. If you're interested it's also a wonderful way to share or build your leadership development skills. Please take advantage of our new volunteer sign-up system through our ShulCloud website portal. [Place Link Here.](#)

On behalf of the Officers and Board of Directors, I wish you a happy and healthy summer. With your continued support and participation, 2022-2023 will be another exciting year for FVJC-Emek Shalom.

L'Shalom, Loel

THOUGHTS FROM Rabbi Gavi Ruit



Shalom Friends,

It's been an exciting couple of months in terms of Jewish Education at FVJC Emek Shalom. I've been meeting with Religious School parents to discuss ways we can improve our school and with other members to hear where their Adult Education interests lie. The feedback has been very helpful!

Religious School: We have exciting things planned for the upcoming Religious School year! The Board recently approved the purchase of a new curriculum for our Religious School. ShalomLearning is a comprehensive, values-based curriculum with a strong Hebrew component that is both engaging for students and user-friendly for teachers. After months of research, it is, by far, the best religious school curriculum I've found. In addition to our new curriculum, our classrooms are also getting an upgrade. Each classroom will be outfitted with a flatscreen TV and supporting laptop. These capital improvements will support the multimedia elements of the ShalomLearning curriculum. I'm very excited about this curriculum and the strong grounding in Jewish values it provides, and I think our students will benefit immensely from this exciting new program..

Adult Education: Thanks to everyone who has given me feedback about topics you want to see in the Adult Education programming. Your input has been very helpful, and I am in the process of developing a calendar of programming that will, for the most part, start after the High Holidays. A schedule of programming will go out towards the end of summer, but I want to put one class on your radar:

Prepare to be Transformed – HHD Preparation

Our sages intended our High Holiday season to be a time of true transformation. It can be a time when we shed the spiritual baggage weighing us down so that we can embrace greater sh'lemut (wholeness) individually and as a community. But such transformation requires preparation – which is why our sages dedicated the month of Elul (the time preceding Rosh Hashanah) as a time of spiritual preparation. In this four-session class, I will guide us through texts that have traditionally been studied during Elul (Psalm 27 and The Palm Tree of Devorah) in order to access greater meaning during this high holiday season. See below for information regarding the specific schedule..

I'm looking forward to a year filled with opportunities to learn and grow! If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at rabbiruit@fvjc.org.

All the best,
Rabbi Gavi



ADULT EDUCATION

CLASS OFFERINGS

LED BY: RABBI GAVI RUIT

Prepare to be Transformed - High Holiday Prep, Thursdays, 7PM - September 1-22

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Back to the Basics - Thursdays, 1PM - November 3-December 29

Is your understanding of Jewish history, literature, or practice a little rusty? Are you not sure the difference between Nevi'im and Ketuvim (Prophets and Writings) in our Tanakh (Hebrew Bible)? Have you ever wondered the difference between Mishnah and Midrash, or why we're always citing Rashi? This may be the class for you. In this 8-week class, Rabbi Gavi will take us back to the basics. We will be looking at all those things you may have forgotten from Hebrew School: different types of Jewish literature, some Jewish history, and parts of our prayer service. (No class on Thanksgiving)

The Legacy of Lurianic Kabbalah - Thursdays, 7PM - February 23-March 30th

Prior to the 16th century, Kabbalah or Jewish Mysticism was an esoteric discipline understood and pursued only by the scholarly elite. That changed with the teachings of Rabbi Isaac ben Solomon Luria and his followers. Kabbalah, as Luria understood it, became more egalitarian and accessible. Lurianic Kabbalah is a powerfully spiritual theology that was born from the trauma of the Spanish expulsion. In this 6-session class we will look at the foundations of Lurianic Kabbalah and how it continues to influence Jewish spirituality today.

I Asked for Wonder: Spiritual Guidance from Abraham Joshua Heschel

Thursdays, 7PM - May 4-June 15

"Abraham Joshua Heschel was one of the great spiritual teachers of the 20th century. A theologian, poet, mystic, and historian, he captured the sense of mystical wonder in a way few writers can do." So reads the description on Heschel's book *I Asked for Wonder: A Spiritual Anthology*.

In this class we will mine Heschel's *Spiritual Anthology* for spiritual guidance from the master himself. Heschel takes on nine topics that he sees as central to living a life of wonder: God, Prayer, Sabbath, Religion, Man, Bible, Holy Deeds, The People, and The Land. In this six-session class we will examine how these topics effect our own lives through a close reading and discussion of *I Asked for Wonder*. (No class on Erev Shavuot)

Queer Quorner - Meets the 4th Wednesday of the Month beginning October 26th, 7PM

Are you part of the LGBTQ+ community and have wondered about the intersection of Jewish life and the Queer community? Then come join us at Queer Quorner! Queer Quorner is a monthly study and discussion group for LGBTQ+ folks led by Rabbi Gavi. Each month we will look at Jewish texts and topics that are relevant to the Queer community.

Adult B'nai Mitzvah - Meets the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays, 7PM

November 2, 2022-April 17, 2024

Did you miss out on having a Bar or Bat Mitzvah as a child? Or do you want to reexperience that trip to the bimah with the added level of meaning that only adulthood can bring? If so, we are starting an Adult B'nai Mitzvah class for anyone who wants to take that journey to the bimah - whether or not you did so as a child. I have found Adult B'nei Mitzvah to be both powerful and meaningful for all who participate. In this 18-month program we will delve deeply into our sacred texts, as well as Jewish history, liturgy and theology, and much more

*RSVP links are coming soon!
Save the dates!*

COMMITTEE NEWS

RITUAL COMMITTEE, RITUAL@FVJC.ORG

ROBIN BERGMAN & KEN WEINSTOCK

We are so proud to inform you of the new wimple that was donated to our synagogue by the families of our confirmands this year, Avi Cooperman and Gavin Leite. Gavin's sister, Sadie, engraved the beautiful tree that adorns our ark and is the symbol of our congregation's new logo, as well the year of the confirmation, on the clasp of the wimple. We are so grateful for this gorgeous and heartfelt contribution to the ritual items in our ark. Thank you to the Cooperman and Leite families, Todah Rabah to Sadie, and Mazel Tov to Avi & Gavin!



Summer services this year will be held at 6:30 pm every Friday in July and August. The last Shabbat of July (July 29) and the last Shabbat of August (August 26)

will be held outdoors in the circle by the big wooden doors. We are hoping that before services on these outdoor-service nights you will bring a picnic dinner for your family at 5:30, and we can all have Shabbat dinner together outside on the picnic tables before the service begins.

The Ritual Committee is hard at work planning for the High Holidays. The current plan is that the three largest services, First Day Rosh Hashanah, Kol Nidre, and Yom Kippur Morning, will all be held at the skating rink at Simsbury Farms as we have done for the last two years. All the other services will be held in our sanctuary. Of course, this may shift a bit if the COVID-19 virus begins to trend upward in early fall. Nearly all of our services will also be live-streamed so that our long-distance members as well as local congregants who cannot make it in person will all have the opportunity to pray with us during the Days of Awe.

We are hoping to enlist some of you to assist us in decorating the "bimah" area of the skating rink so it is more festive, feels more Jewish, and looks great for live-streaming. If you have any ideas, or would like to work with our committee in this holy task, please reach out to us ritual@fvjc.org.

We are also very excited about Rabbi Gavi's plans to guide us through the pre-High Holiday process of transformation. This will be a very meaningful ritual to prepare us to embrace the moments of forgiveness and renewal that we encounter during our Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur experiences. We hope that many of you will join us.

Have a wonderful summer! We look forward to seeing you at services.

Please note!

*Outdoor services
are weather permitting.
Remember to BYO seating!*

B'shalom Robin & Ken

**ALL Summer
Shabbat Services - 6:30PM**



JULY 2022

07.01 - Sanctuary
07.08 - Sanctuary
(Outdoor Oneg follows)
07.15 - Sanctuary
07.22 - Sanctuary
07.29 - Outdoor Service
(FVJCES Grounds - BYO Seating)



**ALL Summer
Shabbat Services
6:30PM**



AUGUST 2022

08.05 - Sanctuary
08.12 - Sanctuary
(Outdoor Oneg follows)
08.19 - Sanctuary
08.26 - Outdoor Service
(FVJCES Grounds - BYO Seating)

Outdoor dates
are weather permitting

**Join
US**



Tisha B'Av

August 6th

7:30PM

In-Person & Virtual

We observe Tisha B'Av each year to commemorate the destruction of the ancient Temples in Jerusalem and the subsequent persecution of Jewish communities throughout history. Join us as we bring to light and offer an opportunity to connect with the modern day destruction and persecution that still plagues our world



COMMITTEE NEWS

MEMBERSHIP & RETENTION COMMITTEE,

MARLO ZALL AND RUTH GOLDBLATT, CO-CHAIRS, membership@fvjc.org

We would like to welcome new members:
Samantha and Thomas Quigneaux & Family
Cassie and Zachary Budman & Family

welcome

As we enter our next membership year, we are excited to share that in 2021-2022 we welcomed close to 35 memberships, of various categories, to our FVJC Emek Shalom community. We love that our newest members continue to be diverse and have varying experiences, backgrounds, and skills. Our new memberships include 16 families with children (most are in our religious school) as well as empty nesters and seniors. We look forward to hearing the laughter and learning in our building for generations to come. We hungrily anticipate many new adult learning opportunities this coming year with Rabbi Gavi leading the charge.

Our ambassador program has launched and we already have more than 20 ambassadors making connections and building community. Many thanks to our ambassador volunteers! We can always use more friendly faces as we share positive experiences with our newest members.

As we enjoy the warmth of the summer and think about our year ahead, remember this is our community to enjoy, share, and build. FVJC is our home in many ways. As you read in the president's message, we are investing in the physical building but it got us thinking about Ralph Waldo Emerson's observation that "A house is made with walls and beams: a home is built with love and dreams". Help us continue to build our FVJC Emek Shalom home.

Ruth and Marlo



Scan the barcode to access your portal!



Friends!

Member Picnic!



COMMITTEE NEWS

CORE COMMITTEE,

SUE LERNER, suelerner@sbcglobal.net

HMazel Tov to the High School Class of 2022!! We have several Seniors in the congregation this year and we hope that you will wish them and their families a hearty MAZEL TOV on their accomplishments through some very challenging high school years!

Sarah Boruchov, Avon High School '22, daughter of Adam and Donna, will be attending Bryn Mawr College in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, and is interested in Environmental Studies and History.

Hannah Rabinowitz, Simsbury High School '22, daughter of Stacie Shure, will be attending the University of Pittsburgh in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in the pre-Physician Assistant program.

Molly Rubin, Westminster School '22, daughter of Viviann and Jon, will be in The School of Nursing at The University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, Michigan (Go Blue!).

Matthew Schuman, Canton High School '22, daughter of Sandy and Mark, will be pursuing a business degree at Bryant University in Smithfield, Rhode Island.

Zakary Schwarz, Simsbury High School '22, son of Jill and Gavin, will be attending Marist College in Poughkeepsie, New York. Zakary is undecided about his major, but will be minoring in music. He also plans to continue rowing in college as he's done for the past four years at Simsbury High School.

Sydney Sutton, Simsbury High School '22, daughter of Cara and Stephen, will be attending the University of Arizona in Tucson, Arizona.

We wish these - and ALL - Seniors the best of luck as they begin this next chapter of their lives. We encourage them to check out their local Hillels and Chabad houses and we hope that they will all enroll in our College Outreach program!

*Congratulations
to our
High School
graduates!*

Hatzlachah Rabah!
Sue Lerner



COMMUNITY NEWS

MAH JONGG MAVENS

PAULA SCHWARTZ, paula@paulaschwartz.com

Our group has been together for over 10 years on Mondays from 1-3pm under the guidance of beloved member Nan Shafer and we are always looking to expand the ranks of those who enjoy Mah Jongg. Over 60 people have participated over the years, with many of them already Temple members, and others becoming members after joining our afternoon games. Mah Jongg is a terrific way to meet people, young and old, interested in the game.

We are an inclusive group, all are welcome to join us. We started with three women who knew the game and were willing to teach others.

In addition to our regular Monday games, we continue to invite folks to learn the game in a relaxed atmosphere with fellow new players. These sessions are taught by Gloria Lebetkin 860-651-3253 or glebetkin@comcast.net and Judi Cohen 860-658-1820 or jcreads@comcast.net. Lessons are usually in the evening, but depending on folks' availability we sometimes do it during the day. Look for future evening class dates in the upcoming Fall or Winter.

Experienced players can join us at the regular game on Monday afternoons from 1-3pm by registering with Paula Schwartz 860-539-0524 or paula@paulaschwartz.com. We set up tables ahead of time mixing up the table players each week to promote folks getting to meet new people and also to improve everyone's game abilities. It's a very social and welcoming group and we do not play for money. Once Covid precautions are fully lifted, we will also raise money for FVJC by hosting a Mah Jongg Tournament open to experienced players. We have celebrated birthdays and special holidays with luncheons and/or desserts prior to the game and we hope to reinstate these celebrations in the coming months. We play in the air-conditioned social hall. Come visit to watch if you're uncertain of whether you'd like the game. ALL are welcome!!!



Paula Schwartz



*Emek Shalom
Sisterhood*

BOOK GROUP



SAVE THE DATE:

Title: The Personal Librarian

Author: Marie Benedict and Victoria Christopher Murray

Thursday, September 8th at 2 pm at FVJCES

Want to join us?

**Please reach out to Judi Cohen,
jcreads49@gmail.com,
for more information**

OUR FVJC-EMEK SHALOM
SISTERHOOD BOOK CLUB
INVITES YOU TO:

MEET AUTHOR
CAROLINE GOLDBERG IGRA.

JULY 19, 2022
7PM

IN-PERSON,
MASKS ARE REQUIRED.

PLEASE RSVP TO:
JUDI COHEN
JCREADS49@GMAIL.COM

AUTHOR BIO



Caroline Goldberg Igra is an author, an art historian, a competitive triathlete, and a mother. Her first novel, *Count to a Thousand*, was published in 2018. Her creative nonfiction has appeared in several literary journals, and she presently blogs for *The Times of Israel*. She has a doctorate in art history, has taught at the University of Haifa, has published numerous articles in international periodicals, and has curated several art exhibitions in Israel, following earlier projects in the United States. The monograph she wrote on Polish artist J. D. Kirszenbaum was chosen as one of *Slate Magazine's* Best Books of 2013. Caroline is a native Philadelphian but currently lives in Tel Aviv, where she occupies herself with the English language (teaching, editing, advising). A devoted mother to her three children, she frequently explores the challenges and joys of that role in her writing.



DONATIONS

COMMUNITY DONATIONS - MAY 15-JUNE 29 2022



CARING COMMUNITY FUND

In loving memory of Mollie and Yale Cohen by Judi and Mike Cohen and Family from Michael & Judith Cohen

CEMETERY FUND

Jacob Farber from Christine Farber

COHEN MEMORIAL GARDEN FUND

In Honor Of Member of the Year, Mark Orenstein
from Mark & Ellen Lescher
In Memory Of Nathan Lescher
from Mark & Ellen Lescher

COLLEGE OUTREACH FUND

In Memory of:
Herbert Abrams from Betty Abrams

DONATION In Honor Of

Christine and Shelley Hausman, with best wishes
on your retirement and move to Massachusetts!
from Eric & Iris Spungin
Sandy Bourke, for her special birthday!
from Eric & Iris Spungin
In Memory Of:
Jordan Perlroth from Karen Dee
Bernice Weinstock
from Kenneth Weinstock & Pamela Dutta
My father, Martin Goldstein from Linda Pisano
Bernard Weiss from Mitchell & Ronnie Weiss
Willena Theriault, my mother from Samantha Sherman
The Yahrzeit Of Isadore Meister
from Eric & Iris Spungin

DR. PETER LEBETKIN MEMORIAL FUND

In Honor of Judy Farber from Christine Farber

MUSIC FUND

In Appreciation Of Adrian Durlister from Charles & Barbara Wolfe

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL DISCRETIONARY FUND

The Yahrzeit Of
Louis Friedman from Allen & Fran Maltz

RABBI BEKAH'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

In Appreciation Of
Manuel Del Aguila - For his service and retirement
from Barbara and Jerry Hirsch
With thanks for Rabbi Bekah.
from Charles & Barbara Wolfe

In Honor Of
The milestone birthdays of our beloved
parents/grandparents
Arthur & Gloria Levin
The 5782 Confirmation Class
from Mark & Ellen Lescher

In Memory Of
Sidney Doroff - father of Suzanne Schloss
Esta Schloss - mother of John Schloss
from John & Suzanne Schloss

The Yahrzeit Of
Hermie Weiner
from The Kagel Family & Steven Kagel

RABBI GAVI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

In Honor Of
Rabbi Gavi, welcome to our Community. from
Charles & Barbara Wolfe
Rabbi Gavi Ruit
from Loel & Ruth Goldblatt

In Memory Of
Claire Doroff, stepmother of Suzanne Schloss from
John & Suzanne Schloss

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Emek Shalom
RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

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for Religious School!





CONTACT INFORMATION

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Rabbi Gavi Ruit: 860-651-4218, rabbiruit@fvjc.org

Synagogue President: Loel Goldblatt, 860-805-4102. president@fvjc.org

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE:

Chair's: Marlo Zall & Ruth Goldblatt, membership@fvjc.org

MEN'S CLUB:

President, Kevin Zall, k.zall2468@gmail.com

RITUAL COMMITTEE:

Chair's: Robin Bergman & Ken Weinstock, ritual@fvjc.org

SISTERHOOD:

President, Lisa Cooperman, lisa.cooperman@outlook.com

TREASURER:

Paul Honig, treasurer@fvjc.org

Member Portal: <https://fvjc.shulcloud.com/member>

General Synagogue information:

website: www.fvjc.org, calendar: www.fvjc.org/calendar/

fax number: 860-658-4273

55 Bushy Hill Road Simsbury, CT 06070

Administrator: Chrisi Bonchick, 860-658-1075, admin@fvjc.org

Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday & Friday 10AM- 2PM