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The Two Hearts of Jews

By **RABBI PAUL F. COHEN**

Senior Rabbi

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Dear Friends,

Judaism as a religion is almost completely free of dogma. Quite remarkable though not surprising given the adage: “Two Jews, three opinions.” The closest we come to a dogmatic statement of faith are the words of the *Shema* taken from the book of Deuteronomy 6:4. “Hear O Israel, *Adonai* is our God, *Adonai* is One.” We declare to one another that we are in relationship with God and that God is One.

Though this is a statement of faith, it is not definitive. Each of us, as we read this ourselves and in community, understands these words in a unique and personal way. One of the most compelling aspects of this verse is actually what follows. The paragraph that we refer to as “*V’ahavta*,” its first word goes on to tell us how we may manifest the previous statement. Loving God with all of our “heart and soul and might” is how we bear witness to God’s presence and God’s Oneness.

The assumption that Torah makes for us is that once we acknowledge God, the next step is loving God. Now this is a love like no other. We are not talking about romantic love or the love we have for our families. We are talking about a love that is all encompassing as it is experienced in our following God’s instructions. This love is a result of full effort: heart, soul, and might.



I want to explore the aspect of “heart” love of God. The Hebrew word for heart is לב (*lev*). In our passage from Deuteronomy, it is written לבב (*l’vavcha*), meaning “your heart.” The Hebrew spelling has an extra letter, an extra ב (*vet*). This, of course, is not merely a typo. It is an invitation to explore. Why are there two of these letters when only one is necessary?

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“ This issue of The Covenant celebrates the big hearts, kind hearts, and beating hearts here at the temple. Inside, we’ve shared stories of our members giving back, helping others, and lifting one another up.

By **KATIE BICK**
Communications Coordinator
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When describing Temple Jeremiah to unaffiliated friends and family, I always find myself coming back to the word “heart.”

Sometimes, I’ll mention it when I’m noting how impressed I am with the generosity of our members; how time and time again I’m awed by the big hearts of our congregants who devote themselves to charity and community service.

Other times, the word comes up when I’m describing how tight-knit our community is, and how the kind hearts of members make

everyone involved with the temple feel valued and at home.

In short: one thing I’ve learned in the year that I’ve been a part of Temple Jeremiah is that it’s hard to talk about this community without talking about its heart.

This issue of The Covenant celebrates the big hearts, kind hearts, and beating hearts here at the temple. Inside, we’ve shared stories of our members giving back, helping others, and lifting one another up. I hope these communicate how special Temple Jeremiah’s community is, and how the heart of our temple is all of you. Your generosity, dedication, and compassion make Temple Jeremiah the space it is, and I can’t wait to share more stories about the wonderful work you all do.

A Medical Reflection on the Heart



By **DR. SCOTT LEVIN**
Temple President
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Hello, Temple Jeremiah family! Before I go on with my comments for this February’s Covenant, I want to again thank each and every one of you for your support of our community. Whether it is your time, talent, treasure, or often a combination of all three, our Temple Jeremiah community

is grateful to have you as a member. I am humbled to serve in my current role, and honored to have so many gifted and talented friends within this congregation, helping us find our way to tomorrow.

February is indeed a time to think about the heart, and the concept of heart. After all, Valentine’s Day does bisect the month. We can be reminded of, and be grateful for, those we hold dear. We can smile when we think of loved ones who have passed, for they each have played an irreplaceable role in making us who we are. When we spend time with these thoughts, the emotion can frequently be felt right in the chest, right in our hearts.

As a physician, thinking and learning about the history of the

heart, and of course its anatomy and function, is fascinating. For centuries, the heart was thought to be the locus for our emotions. There have been many books written on this subject. Over time, as our understanding of the brain evolved, that locus shifted north. Psychological and psychiatric treatments are commonly aimed at the chemistry of the brain, not the heart. However, we still remain attached to the heart as the beating pulse of our emotions. Can you imagine giving someone a chocolate brain, or a brain shaped pendant on Valentine’s Day? Somehow, it just does not have the same appeal.

Have you ever heard of takotsubo cardiomyopathy? It is more commonly known as “Broken Heart Syndrome.” Here, a stress or a loss can be so profound, particular hormones are released in a great surge and dangerously impact the function of the heart. This danger can even lead to death. So yes, one can die of a broken heart. This concretely illustrates a complex truth about our emotions and our bodies, and of course we know there has always been a mind-body connection.

This February, let us pay attention to our heart; whether that is taking care of it as an organ by eating healthy, managing weight, and staying as active as possible, or reflecting on our emotional state and what drives how we feel. Of course, and ideally, it is best that these occur together.

The Covenant wants to hear from you!

We invite you to share your stories and stories from Temple Jeremiah's community with us. Please send your article ideas to katie@templejeremiah.org.

The Joy of Teaching and Karen Rohrbach's Big Heart

There's no question that Karen Rohrbach has a big heart. Between her work teaching Kindergarten and 7th grade J-Quest Sunday classes and her career teaching those with special needs at Keshet, Karen has devoted herself to training students, providing them direction and guiding them towards success.

Although Karen got her degree in early childhood development, she took a detour into various positions in business while raising her family. Already the Kindergarten teacher at Temple Jeremiah, "It all started when [fellow Temple Jeremiah member] Barb Kite suggested that I assist her at National Louis University," said Karen. The school was seeking help with its Path to Academics, Community and Employment (PACE) Program, a three-year, post-secondary certificate program designed to meet the transitional needs for young adults with multiple intellectual, learning, and developmental disabilities.

"With PACE, our goal was to help differently abled students gain independence," said Karen. Through the program, Karen would offer students vocational training to learn skills that could lead to competitive employment jobs as well as assisting in their personal job hunt. "We helped our students transition into adulthood—it's a path all twentysomethings, of all ability levels, take."

According to Karen, working with PACE helped her realize how rewarding helping those with special needs could be. During the early days of her work with the program, Karen was assisting a student. She noticed he needed help with the task of stripping off the covers from paperback books so the bookstore could receive a refund, and took the time to teach him how to successfully remove the covers himself. "When he realized he could complete the task on his own, he looked up at me and smiled," noted Karen; "that's how I knew I was doing something meaningful."

After leaving PACE, Karen began working with Keshet, a therapeutic day school dedicated to teaching children and adults with a range of disabilities. Her title at Keshet is Associate Director of Vocation Services, meaning Karen is teaching students skills needed to pursue employment and independence for Keshet students.

"Day to day, I provide students with personalized curricula based on their abilities and interests," said Karen. "I don't just try to determine what students can do well, but also, importantly, what they enjoy doing." Karen's individualized approach allows students to identify their interests, abilities, and possible career paths at their own pace, in the ways that work best for them.

"Sometimes, we get creative," said Karen. "Recently, Keshet encouraged the vocation team to 'build' a mock convenience store in our Vocation Training Center and coffee cart, complete with coffee orders and Keurig. We were pleased to see how some students would enjoy preparing and delivering coffee to patrons."

Overall, Karen is always ready to craft and try new approaches for

helping students find and hone their talents. "We plan for successes," said Karen. "Nevertheless, if we do encounter a failure, we learn from it and look at it as an opportunity for a new success."

When not teaching students at Keshet, Karen is teaching J-Quest Sunday students at Temple Jeremiah, working as a teacher for multiple grades. However, before Karen was a Temple Jeremiah teacher, she was a Jeremiah parent, and, according to Karen, these two roles are inexorably entwined.

"I began teaching at Temple Jeremiah's school because I was a parent of students in it," said Karen. On Sundays, when dropping her children off for classes, Karen would stick around the temple to ensure that her children were settled in before each session. "I was an involved parent," Karen laughed, "and that's how I got to know Dr. Lidsky."

One Sunday, a kindergarten teacher called in sick at the last minute and Sunday school was in immediate need of a substitute. "I had worked on a committee with Dr. Lidsky; when she saw me that morning, she asked if I could fill in," said Karen. "The rest is history."

Since that Sunday, and Sundays for over 20 years, Karen has been a member of Temple Jeremiah's teaching staff, working as both a kindergarten and 7th grade teacher. "Our teaching staff is outstanding, with leadership from Dr. Lidsky and senior staff, teaching at Jeremiah doesn't feel like work. Rather, it's a wonderful community we get to be with."

When asked, Karen said she couldn't pick a favorite grade to teach. "Working with kindergartners is so special," she noted. "But I also enjoy working with the 7th graders. I'm so impressed by their intelligence, interests, and youthful commentary on events of the times." For Karen, getting to teach Jeremiah Sunday school students is a treat every week. "We have a kind, insightful group of children and parents at Temple Jeremiah, and I'm honored to work with them."

While Karen's work is impressive, she hesitates to call herself anything more than a dedicated teacher. "I enjoy trying to make a difference every day," said Karen. "If I didn't feel that way, I wouldn't still be doing this. It's a joy to teach and listen to students; to make sure they know that they have grown-ups on their side."



Karen Rohrbach

Checking in with Spiritual Life

By **JOEL KAUFMANN**

Spiritual Life Committee Chair
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The Coronavirus Pandemic has had a profound effect on our Temple Jeremiah community — none more so than on our ability to worship together. Rabbi Cohen, the clergy, and the senior staff faced the challenge immediately when the Pandemic began in early March last year and creatively addressed the problem enabling us to continue Shabbat and B'nai Mitzvah services as well as other life cycle events.

Our clergy soon realized last summer that worship for the upcoming High Holy Days was going to be an even greater challenge for the Temple Jeremiah family. Rabbi Cohen had many ideas that he wanted to explore. He decided to consult the Spiritual Life Committee. At his request we reconvened the Committee, adding several new members, and proceeded to consider together all the problems and opportunities available to us.

There were so many options, with so many pros and cons that our Committee had several quite lengthy Zoom calls with Rabbi Cohen, Rabbi Heaps, and Cantor Friedman. The decision to pre-record the services turned out to be the most practical solution; but it put tremendous pressure on our clergy to get their parts recorded with enough time to edit the results into a cohesive service with continuity that was not choppy and unwatchable. One of the most enjoyable aspects of the services was the incorporation of previously recorded Choir performances seamlessly spliced among the new recordings.

A great many other stakeholders participated in making the High Holy Days as meaningful as they were to the entire congregation. It was truly an inspiring experience that all of us on the Spiritual Life Committee were so thrilled to be a small part of. We can't know today what the future holds for this year. Rosh Hashanah of 5782 begins at sunset on September 6, 2021. But we can be confident that Rabbi Cohen, Rabbi Heaps, Cantor Friedman, and the entire staff of Temple Jeremiah will be ready.

Look Forward to These Social Justice Events

Feed the Hungry

Temple Jeremiah is so grateful for all the volunteers making lunches for the monthly Feed the Hungry program! Right now, we are seeking delivery drivers and families to prepare lunches on the first Sunday of the month throughout 2021.

To get involved, visit: tinyurl.com/FeedTheHungry2020-2021. For questions, please contact Stephen Miller at stephenmiller2854@gmail.com.

Antiracism Programming

In response to the growing national conversation about racism and institutionalized inequality, Temple Jeremiah has designed a series of antiracism programming for the coming year. All events will take place at 4:00 p.m. on the second Sunday of every month. We invite you to attend the following programs:

How To Talk To Your Child About Race. Join us on Sunday, March 14th from 4:00 - 5:30 p.m. as we welcome educator and antiracism workshop facilitator Jena Doolas for a session on talking about race and racism with children.

Discussing "Detour-Spotting for White Antiracists" by Jona Olsson. As we continue to learn about how to practice antiracism, we will be discussing the article "Detour-Spotting, For White Antiracists" by Jona Olsson on Sunday, April 11th from 4:00 - 5:00 p.m. This article outlines the ways ingrained habits and thought patterns can divert white, antiracist allies from their intended goals. It also discusses how to avoid these detours and handle them when they're encountered.

To learn about our antiracism programming, visit: templejeremiah.org/antiracism-programming.

Weekly Torah Portions

We invite you to join us on Saturday mornings to discuss the Torah portion and how it might apply to our lives. We meet virtually at 9:30 a.m. every Saturday. To join us on Zoom, visit zoom.us/j/132889355.



February 6, 2021	Yitro	Exodus 18:1–20:23
February 13, 2021	Mishpatim	Exodus 21:1–24:18
February 20, 2021	T'rumah	Exodus 25:1–27:19
February 27, 2021	T'tzaveh	Exodus 27:20–30:10

Rabbi Cohen (continued from page 1)

For one answer we go back to the book of Genesis where we find another odd doubling of a Hebrew letter that references the creation of the first humans. The Hebrew word for create is the same root of the word that means inclination. From this, our sages of blessed memory taught, we learn that each human is created with two inclinations: the inclination for good and the inclination for evil. Both are divine in origin and both are necessary. These two inclinations, or forces within us, create a dynamic tension that leads to growth, renewal, and change.

Coming back to our strange spelling of heart, we now have a possible response. The doubling of the letter may in fact indicate that we have two hearts. One heart represents our higher self. The heart that moves and inspires us in all positive ways to follow God's instructions and to strive to live a life of blessing, a life of service. This is the selfless part of us, the heart that is open and feels the pain of others and is moved to compassion.

There is another heart that beats within each of us. This is the heart that can be lustful and materialistic. This is the heart that can beat with jealousy and avarice. This is the heart of which we

“These two inclinations, or forces within us, create a dynamic tension that leads to growth, renewal, and change.”

are not so proud. If we are honest with ourselves, at times it beats the strongest.

The two hearts are one within us. And it is with these two hearts that God seeks our love. Both are within us and they beat most powerfully when they beat as one. When we are able to take the raw passion of one heart and bring that to the compassionate beating of the other, we truly fulfill God's desire of full and whole-hearted love. May our hearts beat as one as we love God through love of our fellow humans and bring blessing into our world.



IAC Israel Fun Fact:

Did you know...

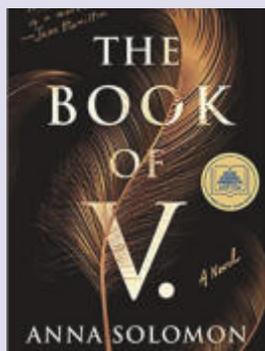
The airspace above Israel is a bird superhighway. At least 500 million birds in 200 different species fly through the area each spring and fall, headed to and from Asia, Africa, and Europe.

Sisterhood Book Club

NOTE: We will be meeting through Zoom! Join us online at zoom.us/j/3417454169.

Thursday, February 11, 2021 ~ 10:00 - 11:30 a.m.

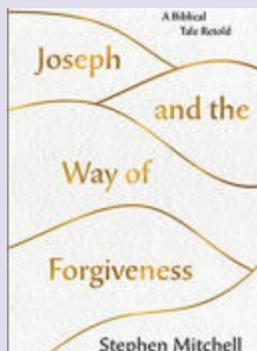
The Book of V., By Anna Solomon



Esther in Ancient Persia meets her counterpart in 2016, and again in Watergate-era in a “highly readable, darkly sexy... novel...a meditation on female power and powerlessness, the stories told about women and the ones we tell about and to ourselves.” —The New York Times Book Review

Thursday, March 11, 2021 ~ 10:00 - 11:30 a.m.

Joseph and the Way of Forgiveness, By Stephen Mitchell



"Evoking the ancient Jewish art of Midrash, Mitchell has now novelized this timeless story... Richly imagined and told in bite-size chapters, the story is compulsively readable and inspirational. It's a timeless tale retold in a timeless fashion." — Booklist

Contact Vicki Siegelman at vsieg@gralynn.org for more information or to join.

Communication and Adapting to the Realities of Today

By **MICHAEL SHMARAK**

Communications Committee Co-Chair
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Here's a little secret about how The Covenant works. The cooks who stir the Temple Jeremiah pot have a calendar that highlights when each committee head has an opportunity to contribute an article. Admittedly (and like many other committee heads), we knew that we had to contribute an article, but we didn't want to say the same things that others have said before us. After all, there is only so much that any of us can say about how COVID-19 has changed how we do things.

But no single function has changed more for Temple Jeremiah than how it communicates. COVID-19 had shook up how we communicate with congregants, with employees of the temple, and with the community. It's even changed how the communication channels that are available to us, both inside and outside of the temple's walls, are used.

What used to be taken for granted—old-fashioned, traditional communications such as handshakes, hugs, and in-person conversations—has now been relegated for private, family moments. I never thought that the day my twins became B'nai Mitzvah—March 14th, 2020—would be the last day of 2020 that Temple Jeremiah allowed a service where more than 25 people could sit in the Schreiber Sanctuary. Since then, so many families have Zoomed or live-streamed their families' milestones, and the human connections we all crave have become a rarity.

So I hope you will indulge me about how the Communications Committee is adapting to the realities of today, and how our collective experience could be shaped in the future.

For those who don't know what we do, think of the Communications Committee like Temple Jeremiah's marketing company. We exist to define and improve processes and tools used to optimize communication to, and between, temple stakeholders and the community at large, as well as helping bring the brand voice and story to life across all communication vehicles.

Before COVID-19 came into our vocabulary, the Communications Committee was tasked with addressing some very important questions:

- Does the temple send out too many communications?
- Do we mail or email things out too much?
- Are we doing enough to promote events for temple members?
- Are we using the best channels to communicate temple activity?

Call these the Communications Committee's version of The Four Questions, but these have been the challenges we have been asking ourselves, the temple's leadership, and its Board of Directors, and we slowly but surely are providing some answers.

Many congregants were kind enough to take part in a congregation-wide survey that helped shape the direction we are pursuing. We learned that while there is a slow but steady evolution for congregants using more digital means to connect and communicate, we still need to be mindful of communications that some may take for granted. Even during this pandemic, there is a section of the temple community that wants things in paper form. They won't read things on email, an electronic newsletter, or on a webpage. As a result, we are looking long and hard at how to address this section of the temple community.

Many of you have noticed that the Temple Jeremiah website has been updated, modernized and equipped with more information. Importantly, it also offers more ways for people to access information. The website is such a good resource for almost anything that matters and what is happening inside and outside of Temple Jeremiah.

We're looking at different ways we can share such things as The Covenant and other major announcements. We're discussing such ideas as creating a temple texting platform for J-Quest families and creating a Nextdoor-like community for Temple Jeremiah online, because we need to start thinking about how the pandemic has changed how we give and receive information.

Similarly, we have dipped our toes in the social media pool. We have a robust Facebook presence (shameless plug to "Like" us on Facebook, please?) and our Youth Groups have become increasingly active on Instagram. And, I am sure that many who are reading this article saw how temple leadership utilized YouTube to deliver its High Holy Day services. Expect to see more ways that the temple uses video in the months ahead.

To that end, video has become a key cog in how Temple Jeremiah holds its events and family milestones. It goes without saying that our use of YouTube, streaming video, and other forms of video conferencing have greatly increased. While we want to have as many in-person communications as possible, the technology that is available to all of us allows us to still stay connected while being safe at the same time.

Lastly, we're actively involved in helping temple leadership shape an improved process for scheduling, hosting, and promoting events. While many of our Committees want to have great events—and to promote them in as many places and channels as possible—the temple is limited with its resources. If you're part of a Committee (shameless plug #2, join a committee, even ours!), we encourage you to connect with your Committee leader soon, as we hope to roll out some improvements to make temple events easier to plan and implement.

If you have ideas on how the temple can communicate better with you, our committee is all ears. Feel free to reach out to Katie Bick at katie@templejeremiah.org and we'll get right back to you.

Let's Talk about Teen Depression

By **JULIE WEINBERG**
Vice President and Secretary of CATCH
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Our community is in mourning. Last month, we lost one of our own teenagers to suicide. Dylan Buckner was a senior at Glenbrook North High School, and as his parents openly shared during his funeral, he battled depression. Dylan was not alone.

The Facts

- In 2017, an estimated 3.2 million adolescents aged 12 to 17 in the United States had at least one major depressive episode.
- Suicide is the second-leading cause of death for young people ages 10-24.
- The rate of death by suicide in people aged 10-24 increased nearly 60% in the United States from 2007 to 2018.

The numbers are shocking, and when depression and suicide hit close to home, it's devastating for many people. In the days following Dylan's death, phone calls and messages came pouring in to CATCH, a volunteer group of parents based in Northbrook who are working to empower families to raise resilient children with a focus on mental health and emotional wellness. Many parents reached out in pain, worried and confused. How do we process what happened? How do we discuss this with our kids? *Should* we discuss it with our kids?

"Some people have the idea that if we talk about suicide, it increases the chances of it happening. Studies show over and over again that is absolutely not the case," said Erica Leibrandt, LCPC, RYT, Sound Mind Counseling, Glenview.

It's not an easy conversation, but Leibrandt says talking about suicide normalizes the conversation. She offers these words for parents to use with their child:

No one talks about suicide. I wonder how you feel about that. I remember being your age and having some suicidal thoughts, and I think that's pretty normal. What do you think about that?

For parents worried about their own child's mental health, Leibrandt suggests this three-part icebreaker:

1. Keep it light and ask, "Hey, can I bug you?" If they roll their eyes, you can say, "It's nothing bad. I just want to touch base."
2. Make a statement. "I notice you seem a bit more withdrawn, I get with online school that's normal, but I feel like there's more."
3. Ask the question. "Is there something going on?"

Don't get upset when your teen doesn't reply. "The important thing to remember is that even if they remain silent you've opened the door. They know that you're paying attention. They know you're thinking about it. And that makes the chances of them reaching out to you and communicating a lot greater," she said.

Depression is a monster and unfortunately, there's not an easy way to successfully deal with mental illness. But we can do our best to support our community and our children by opening up the conversation.

If you or someone you know is struggling, please seek help. Reach out to CATCH to find information about mental illness and supportive resources. If you are a parent of a child with mental illness, you are not alone. CATCH is here for you too. Connecting with a community of people who understand your experience can provide tremendous comfort. To contact CATCH or to learn more, visit catchiscommunity.org.

This article was written on behalf of CATCH: Community Action for Children's Health.

Symptoms of Teen Depression

- ✓ A hopeless outlook
- ✓ Loss of interest
- ✓ Increased fatigue or sleep problems
- ✓ Anxiety
- ✓ Irritability
- ✓ Changes in appetite or weight
- ✓ Uncontrollable emotions
- ✓ Suicidal ideation

If you witness some of these symptoms in your child for two weeks or more, don't hesitate to find help.



Stay Up to Date on Events with our Calendar

Looking to learn more about upcoming events at Temple Jeremiah?

For up-to-date programming and our full calendar, visit tinyurl.com/tj-calendar.

Seriously Funny: A Q&A With Pamela Schuller



Comedian and Speaker Pamela Schuller

Pamela Schuller is relentlessly funny. Her observations on disability, mental illness, dating, family, and past misadventures have led to brutally honest confessions about what it's like being 4 foot 6 (and a half) and having a whole lot of Tourette Syndrome.

In honor of Jewish Disability Awareness and Inclusion Month (JDAIM) in February the Inclusion Committee has invited Pamela to

join Temple Jeremiah for a weekend of comedy and storytelling. We're honored to have Pamela at the temple with us. To help us all learn a little more about her, Pamela answered some questions about her life and comedy for The Covenant. Check it out below!

What drew you to comedy?

Originally, I was not drawn to comedy at all. I was a depressed, snarky, angry teen who was deeply creative, but didn't know that yet. At first, anger was my outlet; I spent so much time in detention while at boarding school that I now hold the school record for the most detention ever earned.

Maybe it was because of all of these detentions that my boarding school realized I needed something creative to channel my energy into. They signed me up for a comedy class and it was love at first laugh.

How have your experiences with Tourette's informed your comedy?

Life is funny. As a human who barks, I had to make a choice: either I become a hermit and hide away or I embrace the heck out of it. I chose the latter.

Being a teenager is not easy for anyone. Being a teenager who makes uncontrollable animal noises was an adventure, to put it nicely. In my show, I talk about my journey from hating myself and hating my Tourettes to realizing that Tourettes is a part of my brain. My brain is quick and witty, and it also happens to have Tourettes.

However, at some point I decided not to just love pieces of my brain. It wasn't just the parts of myself without Tourettes that could be admired, but rather, all of me was worthy. Once I committed to loving what makes me me, I started finding these moments from Tourettes that I could laugh about.

Comedy gives me an outlet to take awkward or funny moments and find the humor in them. This, in turn, helps me find the positive in these moments. In short: taking moments of discomfort and putting them into my comedy and storytelling has become not only the way I make a living, but an incredible coping mechanism for me.

What do you hope people take away from your show?

On stage, I tell my story of growing up with a severe neurological disorder and learning to love it, embrace it, and even find the funny in it.

I hope people enjoy my show, but I hope what people take away from it has nothing to do with me. What I'd like is for folks to hear my story and to think about how they treat others who are different from them. Ideally, I can teach people that they can love the parts of themselves that are hard, frustrating, embarrassing, or even painful.

Overall, I hope this show shifts the way we think about inclusion and truly valuing differences.

How has your Jewish identity informed your work as a comic and storyteller?

For years I was doing stand-up, speaking at conferences about disabilities, and getting my Masters in Advocacy. However, I was not combining any of these things, but rather holding them apart as separate aspects of my life. It was the Jewish world that invited me in to start thinking about comedy, public speaking, and advocacy together.

About 7 years ago I started doing comedy and storytelling shows with an inclusion message, mainly in Jewish communities. While now I speak at everything from corporate events to colleges, during those first few years I had such a powerful journey performing in Jewish spaces. It was during this period that I really started finding these messages of inclusion and moments of comedy in Jewish texts and prayers.

What do you think the Jewish community can do to destigmatize disability and foster more supportive spaces?

I think we can do one better and celebrate disability. Disability is part of the human experience. So often, we get stuck focusing on the challenges of inclusion and accessibility that we forget to celebrate the disability in our communities. Isn't it cool to be a part of a community with folks who are all different?

One of my favorite sayings is "Nothing for Us Without Us," and I think that message is something to keep in mind. People with disabilities know what they want and what they need, and they should be a part of our conversations about inclusion. If you offer seats at the table to those with disabilities and differences, there's a much greater chance that your space will truly feel truly inclusive.

continued on next page

Do you have any messages or takeaways you'd like to share with Temple Jeremiah?

I am so excited to join Temple Jeremiah for a few days. On a personal note, my sister and her family belong to your temple! While my sister and I are complete opposites, we are also incredibly close. My heart is so happy knowing that she and her family joined a congregation that cares deeply about inclusion. I am thrilled to be virtually joining you all for a weekend and hope that one day (hopefully sometime soon) we can meet in person!

Friday, Feb. 12, 6:30 p.m.
Abilities Awareness Shabbat with Pamela

Saturday, Feb. 13, 7:30 p.m.
Zoom Comedy Performance and Q&A

Sunday, Feb. 14, 2:00 p.m.
Teen Performance and Q&A

Visit our calendar for more information and to sign up.

Mental Health: Checking in on Ourselves & Each Other

By DAWN LEVIN

JCFS Synagogue Community Partnership Liaison
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The pandemic itself has asked more of us as humans than other challenges we have faced in recent times. Above and beyond the typical stressors in life, we are also grappling with grief and loss, civil unrest, and an invisible medical threat that is keeping so many of us home and disconnected from loved ones.

As a community, we are experiencing grief in different ways. Grieving over lives lost, and access to the rituals that Jewish tradition provides for us after losing a loved one. Everyone experiences grief and loss in different ways, and nobody needs to go through it alone. You may be someone experiencing secondary grief as well. Job loss, loss of routine, having children in school and out of the house, missing in-person contact with friends and family, gathering for scheduled events, and coming together for milestone celebrations.

What we do know, is that we are resilient, as a community, and as individuals. For some people, natural coping skills may be implemented automatically. For others, it may take a little more intentionality to access what human nature teaches us. We are meant to thrive, to move forward, and sometimes need to access support and tools to do so. There are many opportunities for various groups and individuals to receive support through Temple Jeremiah and the Synagogue Community Partnership with JCFS Chicago.

Our mental health during this time is fragile, and it is important to make time to tend to our own needs. This can be done in a variety of ways. While making the time and commitment to self-care can seem arduous, so too is the process of recovering if we ignore our own care, or let ourselves run out of steam. Finding a couple of small moments to do something that makes us feel good each day can have cumulative benefits. It can boost our immune system, help us to manage high levels of stress, and it creates endorphins which are part of the natural reward circuit in our brains.

What you do to nurture yourself is intensely personal. For some, it may be something like setting a timer to get up and do a few stretches after sitting in a desk chair each hour. For others, it might involve getting outside into the (crisp!) air, even if it's just walking out the door, going to the corner, and coming back

in, waving "hello" to neighbors or others also out in the street. Calling a friend or family member on the phone or on FaceTime or Zoom. For those who have a full house, connection can be cultivated by sending text messages or funny memes to friends, family or co-workers throughout the day. Even retreating to the car or out the back door for a few minutes for some privacy during a social phone call can lift us up. Taking care of plants or pets during these darker months can also connect us to nature and be good for our spirits.

Remember, we are in a constant state of change. What you enjoy doing today may not be something you still enjoy next week. Committing to self-care is intended to be selfish. It's about YOU. Starting small can allow you to realize that there are things you used to do that just fell out of habit or didn't feel like a priority anymore. Engaging your senses is a way of reconnecting with your inner self.

Please continue to check in on each other as well. A phone call from a community member, friend or relative may be just what someone needs to help them get through a difficult day. Asking questions about what someone has read, watched on TV, or listened to lately may be a way to open a conversation if you sense someone is struggling and you're not sure where to start.

If you find that you or a loved one is struggling with overwhelming sadness, intense emotions, chronic sleeplessness, or other signs of depression or anxiety, it may be time to consider if you would benefit from the help of a therapist or a counselor. Sometimes the inability to find joy in any aspect of our day is a signal that we may need a little help from an outside professional.

As your Synagogue Community Partnership Liaison via JCFS Chicago, I am available to meet virtually or by phone with individuals one-on-one, to provide support and recommendations to resources in the community. I can be reached at dawnlevin@jcfs.org / 847.745.5450. Remember, we are all in this together, and the Jeremiah community is here for you!

If you are in crisis, and need immediate support, please use one of these 24/7 crisis lines below:

Crisis Text Line: text "HOME" to 741741

Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255

Making Music with Composer Stacy Garrop

On Monday, January 11th Temple Jeremiah welcomed composer Stacy Garrop for a musical Adult Learning session over Zoom. During the hour we spent with Stacy, she shared stories about her music and performed with Cantor Susie Lewis Friedman.

Graciously, Stacy sat down with The Covenant for an interview about her life, Jewish story, and work as a composer. According to Stacy, music has always been a part of her life. “The first instrument I learned was the piano at age 5, I started singing in the choir during the third grade,” said Stacy. “I even played the saxophone in my high school marching band.”

While Stacy naturally gravitated towards playing music, it took her longer to discover her passion for composing. It wasn’t until her teens that Stacy wrote her first piece of music. “I liked music,” said Stacy, “but I thought all the classical music that could be written had already been written.” This changed when she took a music theory class at her high school in Danville, California. The instructor, her school’s jazz and marching band director, tasked each member of the class to write a piece of music.

“Without that homework assignment, I would never have begun composing,” said Stacy. “It’s shocking how such a small thing, a high school assignment, could have such a huge impact on the direction of my life. It’s something for which I’m grateful.”

Now, Stacy is a full-time, freelance composer living in the Chicago area. She held a 3-year Composer-in-Residence position with the Champaign-Urbana Symphony Orchestra. Her catalog covers a wide range, with works for orchestra, opera, oratorio, wind ensemble, choir, art song, various sized chamber ensembles, and works for solo instruments.

Despite much of Stacy’s work touching on Jewish themes, religion was not always a big part of her life. “I grew up attending a Conservative synagogue,” said Stacy. “I even had a Bat Mitzvah. I look back on Judaism as grounding my childhood in many ways.” However, like many of us, when Stacy began college, religion took a back seat to other priorities in her life.

As her career as a composer began, Stacy found herself again drawn to Judaism, finding inspiration in Jewish music and tradition. “Whenever I would walk into a synagogue, for a wedding, for a Bar or Bat Mitzvah, I would find myself appreciating Jewish music, and how our music was such a rich part of the religion.”

During Temple Jeremiah’s Adult Learning session with Stacy, she and Cantor Susie Lewis Friedman performed two of her songs: “My Dearest Ruth” and “Dawn.”

Powerfully poignant and equally tender, “My Dearest Ruth” is a musical setting of the final love letter from Martin Ginsburg to his wife, the opera-loving Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, only days before Martin’s passing.



Stacy Garrop Zooming with Temple Jeremiah

“The Ginsburg family commissioned me to set the letter to music in honor of Justice Ginsburg’s 80th birthday,” said Stacy. “It was then performed for her in the Supreme Court. The request was an honor.”

Since the passing of Justice Ginsburg, “My Dearest Ruth” became a highlight of the Cedille Records CD “Notorious RBG in Song.” “People have taken up the song as a tribute to the late Justice,” said Stacy “I’m honored that my work could take on a new life and speak to people in new ways.”

“Dawn,” the other song performed, is the musical setting of a poem by Paul Laurence Dunbar, the first African-American poet and novelist to gain national and international recognition. Born in Dayton, Ohio in 1872, his mother was a former slave and his father had escaped from slavery prior to serving in both infantry and cavalry divisions in the Civil War.

During his life, Dunbar penned twelve volumes of poetry, four books of short stories, five novels, and a play. Dunbar’s life was ultimately cut short when he contracted tuberculosis and died at the age of 33 in 1906. Written in 1895, “Dawn” is one of Dunbar’s most prominent works and depicts the moment that dawn breaks on the horizon.

“I’m thrilled Temple Jeremiah is performing this song,” said Stacy. “Not only does it share the beautiful feeling of watching the sunrise, but it also seems particularly resonant in our political moment.”

Overall, Stacy is thankful for music. “If there is one thing I’d love to impart on Temple Jeremiah, it’s that I’m glad you’re embracing music in a COVID-19 world. There is always music to be heard and always local artists to be supported.”

To learn more about Stacy Garrop and her music, please visit her website at www.garrop.com or her all-things-composition blog at www.composerinklings.com.



Temple Jeremiah Choir performing L'cha Dodi 1.1.2021



Amanda Gordon and her family packing lunches for Feed the Hungry

Send Us Your Home Photos!



TYPICALLY we showcase activities and events happening lately around Temple Jeremiah on a full page. While the physical building is not filled with everyone's smiling faces, we know the warmth and connections amongst our congregation still exist. How about taking a photo of what's going on at home as you stay in touch with Temple Jeremiah? We'd love to see you celebrating Shabbat, your kids interacting online with youth events, or the challah that you baked. Please send your pictures our way so we can continue filling these pages with the images that remind us all what a wonderful, vibrant, and caring community we have created.

Email your photos to:
covenant@templejeremiah.org



Maggie Bernstein, daughter of Laura Bernstein, decorating cookies



Stuart Green Singing with the Choir during Shabbat 1.15.2021

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For all his dedicated work to the Temple Jeremiah community

-Dianne and Joel Rovner

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For all your hard work for our community

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-Raymond Elvey

-Dianne and Brian Heaps

Cantor Susie Lewis Friedman

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For being the much deserved "Monthly Mensch"

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Jim Klapman

On the occasion of his 88th birthday

-Phyllis and Jim Klapman

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Son of Ellen and Jeff Krupp, on the occasion of his engagement to Madeline Alder

-Krystal and Danny Glassman

Cole Hunter Mombach

Grandson of Vicki and Jay Stoller, on the occasion of his birth

-Lori and Gary Kash

Ron Sandler

On the occasion of his 80th birthday

-Peggy and Brian Adams, and Ross, Mitchell, and Meredith

-Vicki, Bruce, and Matthew Adams

-Samantha and Daniel Becker

Rabbi Robert Schreiber

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Correction: In the last issue of the Covenant, we incorrectly referred to Herbert Seligmann as Sybil Stern's father rather than Babette Seligmann Sanders' father.

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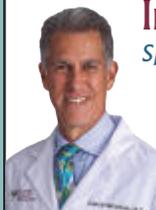
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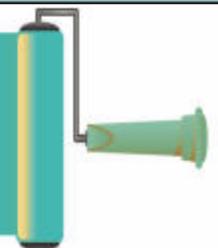
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