

Kesher

THE NEWSLETTER



Come as you are. Discover who you are.

November-December 2021 / 5782

FROM RABBI FERSKO

Welcome
to Kesher

Connection is the force that binds members and clergy to Judaism and to The Village Temple.

Gratitude is more than a word. Gratitude is a practice. And that practice has a name: *Hakarot Hatov*. *Hakarot Hatov* means noticing the good and it's one of the most special commandments in all of Judaism. I notice a lot of good lately. As we've re-opened the doors of our Religious School, I notice older students helping younger students get to the appropriate classroom space. I notice teachers gently guiding students as they learn our sacred prayers. I notice joy and I notice laughter. I notice our volunteers who seamlessly pivoted our soup kitchen so that we continue to serve the needy. I notice loving *B'nai Mitzvah* parents who have great compassion and love for their teenagers as they achieve that significant milestone. I notice so much good in us.

“Gratitude is practice.”

And I am grateful for so many things. Thank you so much to the over 50 donors who made our high holiday appeal the most successful in the history of our synagogue. Your generosity allows us to continue our sacred mission. Gratitude is more than a word. It's a behavior, a skill set. May we experience gratitude even, and especially, in times of challenge. It's not always easy, but it is always a *mitzvah*.

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L'shalom,

Diana

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The Newsletter of The Village Temple

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We invite all who wish to join us to enter our doors: Jews by birth, Jews by choice, interfaith families. Inside you will find a community of people who are on a quest to reshape Shabbat and holiday worship, reinvigorate Jewish learning, and renew our commitment to tikkun olam through social action and justice.



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GIVING AT THE VILLAGE TEMPLE

Amy Wolf has been a member of The Village Temple for 25 years and is one of the congregation's longstanding, generous donors. She is an art dealer, specializing in 20th century artists. Her husband John Hatfield—former executive director of Socrates Sculpture Park in Long Island City—is now teaching in New York University's Museum Studies program. Their son Otis became a *Bar Mitzvah* at The Village Temple 11 years ago.

Kesher recently talked to Amy about her connection to The Village Temple and to Judaism.

A powerful story about her son's *Bar Mitzvah*

When the Cantor asked if I had a date in mind for my son Otis' *Bar Mitzvah* I eagerly requested *Shabbat Ha Gadol*, March 27, 2010. My father had always told us that he had celebrated his *Bar Mitzvah* on the *Shabbat* before Passover, *Shabbat Ha Gadol* on the boat—the Orinoco, sailing from Hamburg to Havana, in March 1939. Since Otis has both my father's and his father's Hebrew names, *Zev Yitzchak*, it seemed fitting that he could honor their memories by reading the same portion that had been read on that boat escaping the horrors of Germany more than 80 years ago.

This connection between my father and Otis made the prospect of his *Bar Mitzvah* very meaningful for us. I felt that I had honored both my deceased parents in giving my son a strong sense of his Jewish identity despite my having married a non-Jew. My husband has always been very supportive of this effort even though he personally is skeptical of religion.



The Wolf family in America

My father and his parents ended up in Green Bay, Wisconsin, where my father attended college after serving in the U.S. Army. He met my mother in college. After they married, they moved to Worcester, MA and raised their family there.

My father went into my mother's family's business—the garment business. When I was in middle school, my mother went back to school and got her PhD in social gerontology; she was an expert in elder abuse. There's a prize in elder abuse named after her.

My parents were the kind of people who went to services every Friday night—my grandparents, too. Everybody went. Both my mother and father were presidents of their temple. The temple was a very important family place.

That synagogue tradition continues and has been passed to Amy and John's son Otis, who currently serves as an officer in the U.S. Army.

When our son went to Georgia for officer's training which was very hard, he said going to the synagogue totally saved him. There is a reform synagogue in Columbus, GA that's very old and he would go to *Shabbat* services and hang out with the old Jews there.

The choice to support The Village Temple year after year

For me, this is really about my parents and my continuing their work. They died young. My father died at 62 and my mom was 74. They've been gone a long time. That's why I felt their work was unfinished. While I don't go to temple very much, I do know it's there and I could go. I do feel it's vital.

I like the intimacy of The Village Temple. I feel my contribution to this temple means something to it. I feel it has impact. If I give to other organizations, I'm one of millions of people who do that. If I give to the Village Temple it means something bigger.

Kesher thanks Julie Salamon for interviewing Amy.

FROM THE CO-PRESIDENTS



Gratitude! The theme of this month's *Kesher*

We are grateful for YOU. We have so much to be grateful for starting with all of YOU, our temple congregants. You come together to support one another, support community causes, and to support our temple, as you showed us through your generous contributions following the *Yom Kippur* appeal. And for that we are grateful. Thank you for joining us each week for services and showing us what the temple means to you.

We are grateful for our in-person High Holy Days services. How about those High Holy Days? We are grateful we could have them in person this year! We were so happy to see all of you; thank you for being with us and a huge thank you to Rabbi Fersko, Student Cantor Emma, Sandy, Alex, Liotte, Dan, and Santiago for making our services at City Winery and at The Village Temple so very special. We are grateful to all congregants who attended in person or online, and to those who volunteered and who participated on the *bimah* in the High Holy Days services. The space was fantastic, the music was beautiful, the services were spiritual, and the sermons were meaningful. We could not have asked for a more special time of awe.

We are grateful for our children and our amazing children's choir director, Anita. How beautiful and spirited were those services over the High Holy Days! We could not have asked for a

better turn out and were so excited to hear the sounds of little feet running about. And Anita again delivered music and song as eloquently as always.

We are grateful to our Board. We thank all of you who serve and give of your time and leadership. We know what a commitment each of you makes and we appreciate all you do to help us make decisions, lead programs, and help our clergy and staff.

And lastly, we are grateful for all you do for our community and all our congregants. We are grateful to those who volunteer their time in the soup kitchen, those who run and support our social action programs, and those who keep us connected through our *Kesher* newsletter. Thank you for keeping us going day in and day out.

Thank you all from the bottom of our hearts.

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THANK YOU TO ALL OUR YOM KIPPUR APPEAL DONORS

Mimi Abrams	Gabrielle & Steven Haskell	Geoffrey Rodkey & Dafna Sarnoff
Bill Abrams & Julie Salamon	Josi Hausner Abrams	Carole Sadler
Josi Hausner Abrams	Liz Horwitz & David Glovin	Sari Scheer & Samuel Kopel
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Paul Dworin & Ilsa Klinghoffer	Bill Rosenblatt & Elyse Grusky	Yasmina Zaidman & Marlowe Greenberg
Renee Feinberg	Aaron & Arian Rothman	<i>This list is still in formation</i>
Henrik Hallum & Michelle Kelner	Arthur Rovine	

We can't thank you enough!

How The VT Celebrated...

The High Holy Days



Sukkot



Simchat Torah



SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE

The Women's March: Rally for Reproductive Rights

Our Social Action Committee and members of The VT joined the National Women's March for Reproductive Rights on Saturday, October 2. Here they are in action, at right:



If you want to help refugees from Afghanistan:



The Village Temple is a member of The Synagogue Coalition on the Refugee and Immigration Crisis (SCRIC). Board members from [Women for Afghan](#) stated their urgent need for funds. Each refugee requesting Humanitarian Parole must pay a filing fee of \$590. SCRIC requested that each member synagogue support WAW now, as the need is great. If you want to donate, please visit their [website here](#).

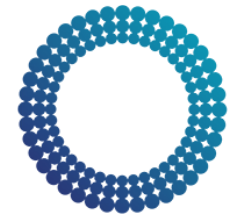
Volunteers are also needed: doctors, mental health providers, lawyers, translators. Email office@womenforafghanwomen.org or telephone: (929) 519-5994.

The Village Temple Dayenu Circle: A Jewish Call to Climate Action

Seeking to build community, engage and educate congregants and repair the earth, Village Temple is responding to the climate crisis by joining Dayenu, A Jewish Call to Climate Action (www.dayenu.org)—a nationwide network of Jews “taking action to advance bold solutions to the climate crisis.”

The Social Action Committee invites you to join our Village Temple Dayenu Circle. We encourage VT members of all generations to join us—from teens to nonagenarians—we can all contribute. We'll be meeting virtually for the moment, and eventually in person, to plan actions and activities.

Please write vtdayenucircle@gmail.com to get in touch.



DAYENU
A Jewish Call to Climate Action

If you are interested in joining the Social Action Committee, please email [\(glubefriedman@icloud.com\)](mailto:Rachel.Glube).

Shalom! EDUCATION NEWS



Shalom!

The Village Temple Religious School is off to a wonderful start! We are finally back to our classrooms in person and they are filled with laughter, excitement and great learning once again. We welcomed many new families this year and our new Religious School students made a great addition to our school. It feels really good to interact in person with teachers, learners and their parents and to continue our work of educating our youth and strengthening our community. Below is a selection

of photos from the first couple of days in Religious School and our Open House.

I look forward to a most wonderful year of Jewish learning and life at The Village Temple this year!

L'shalom,

*Alex
Director of Education
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save the date

NOVEMBER

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 21:

2:00 PM: Hanukkah Concert by The VT Children's Choir

.....
Check the weekly Eblasts for up to date information on all events

DECEMBER

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 3:

5:00 PM Family Service at The Village Temple

6:30 PM Shabbat Services
Vodka and Latkes celebration

Meet our B'nai Mitzvah:

November 13: **Eliza Weiss** – Parshat Vayetzel
December 4: **Jonah Owett** – Parshat Miketz

