



Congregation Emanu El

Bulletin

EDITOR'S NOTE:

As of the printing of this *Bulletin*, Congregation Emanu El remains in Phase 2 of our reopening plan and this publication is reflective of that information. More information on the current status of our reopening can be found at emanuelhouston.org or by calling 713.529.5771.

February 2, 2021 | 20 Shevat 5781

VOLUME 75 NUMBER 5

FROM RABBI HAYON



Several days ago, we observed Tu BiShevat, a minor holiday that falls on the fifteenth day of the Hebrew month of Shevat.

Many of us remember Tu BiShevat from our childhood education as the “new year for the trees,” a sort of Jewish Arbor Day, on which we reconnect with nature and reaffirm our commitment to caring for the natural environment in which we live.

None of us require the breathtaking spectacle of a burning bush or a show of celestial thunder or lightning to discover what is holy in our world: we can be reminded of the presence of God and the experience of wonder simply by spending time with the gifts of the world, and the delicious produce of nature that sustains us, body and soul.

In medieval Europe, rabbis steeped in the mystical tradition of kabbalah established a special observance for Tu BiShevat which mirrored another holiday observance: a seder designed to follow the same pattern as the festival meal on the first night of Passover. Like the Passover seder, the commemorative meal on Tu BiShevat is built around the consumption of four cups of wine and a number of symbolic foods to be eaten in a particular order to lead participants into contemplative introspection. The structure of the meal leads one on a spiritual journey between what the mystics referred to as the “upper and lower worlds”: the earthly, physical world in which we live our everyday lives and the pure intangible realm of the Divine.

As a symbol of the realm of *Assiyah* (action and physical reality), the rabbis instruct participants to eat foods

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Purim 2021: Shushan Night Live Thursday, February 25, 6:00 p.m.

Join us for a very special virtual Purim Spiel and megillah reading.

Hear the *Book of Esther* – told like never before – with hysterical videos, guest appearances from all your favorite Emanu El celebrities, and a musical performance by our adult and youth choirs.

This Purim event will be broadcast on our streaming video portal (select Barish Sanctuary), Facebook, YouTube, and Roku channels.

Miss the broadcast live? You can always catch it after the event at all the same places!

Congregation Emanu El to host Watch Party and Talkback featuring *EVER OPEN*, a short documentary film celebrating the congregation's 75th Anniversary in 2019

Sunday, February 7, 7:00 p.m.

The entire community is invited to join Congregation Emanu El for a special watch party of the short documentary film *EVER OPEN*, which was produced for the congregation's 75th anniversary in 2019.

The documentary was written and directed by congregant Steven Fenberg and produced by Carrithers Studio, with the participation of the synagogue's Senior Rabbi, Oren Hayon.

The film debuted during EE75 Ever Forward, a celebration held in November 2019 to commemorate the milestone anniversary. In addition to Rabbi Hayon, the film includes interviews with Rabbi Roy Walter,

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WORSHIP SERVICES

Locations are listed below for those seeking to use the streaming video portal on our website. Any changes will be shared via the regular synagogue communications.

Our services (with the exception of B'nei Mitzvah) are streamed to our website, Facebook page, Roku channel, and YouTube. Our Saturday morning B'nei Mitzvah services are available solely on our website.

Shabbat Yitro **Friday, February 5**

6:00 p.m., Kabbalat Shabbat, Barish Sanctuary

Saturday, February 6

10:30 a.m., Morning Service, Proler Chapel

7:00 p.m., Havdalah 4 All, Zoom

Shabbat Mishpatim **Friday, February 12**

6:00 p.m., Kabbalat Shabbat, Barish Sanctuary

Saturday, February 13

10:30 a.m., Morning Service, Proler Chapel

10:30 a.m., Morning Service, Barish Sanctuary

B'not Mitzvah of **Marin Pollock**, daughter of Sarah & Jarrod Pollock and **Emerson Weinberg**, daughter of Jamie & Jeffrey Weinberg

Shabbat T'rumah **Friday, February 19**

6:00 p.m., Kabbalat Shabbat, Barish Sanctuary

Saturday, February 20

10:30 a.m., Morning Service, Proler Chapel

10:30 a.m., Morning Service, Barish Sanctuary

B'nei Mitzvah of **Erin Bray**, daughter of Rachel & Collin Bray and **Ben Rosenthal**, husband of Marilyn Rosenthal

Shabbat T'rumah **Friday, February 20**

6:00 p.m., Kabbalat Shabbat, Barish Sanctuary

Saturday, February 21

10:30 a.m., Morning Service, Proler Chapel

10:30 a.m., Morning Service, Barish Sanctuary

B'nei Mitzvah of **Misha Marmo**, son of Sasha Vaikhman & Peter Marmo and **Noah Septimus**, son of Alison & Joshua Septimus

Shabbat T'rumah **Friday, February 27**

6:00 p.m., Kabbalat Shabbat, Barish Sanctuary

Saturday, February 28

10:30 a.m., Morning Service, Proler Chapel

Shabbat Ki Tisa **Friday, March 5**

6:00 p.m., Kabbalat Shabbat, Barish Sanctuary

Saturday, March 6

10:30 a.m., Morning Service, Proler Chapel

7:00 p.m., Havdalah 4 All, Zoom

FROM RABBI HAYON *continued from page 1*

with hard shells or rinds, like nuts, pomegranates, oranges and avocados. These foods remind us of the impenetrable trappings of the material world which seem to present a barrier to a purely spiritual experience. In contrast, symbolizing the realm of atzilut (pure spirituality), participants in the Tu BiShevat seder eat foods that are totally edible, with no inedible peels on the outside, such as grapes, figs, apples, or berries.

What is striking about the Tu BiShevat seder, though, is the mystics' insistence that the supernal realm is not a destination toward which one ought to travel single-mindedly, yearning to discard completely the realities of everyday life. Instead, they instruct us to commit ourselves to the daily work of finding spiritual potential in our normal, mundane existence. Discovering spiritual meaning and fulfillment on an otherwise unremarkable day produces an unexpected pang of delight, like the jolt of pleasure in peeling back the skin from a fragrant and juicy piece of fruit.

The Jewish mystics' great innovation lay in demonstrating how everyday people can find insight and comfort and inspiration in the regular lives we lead. The seder they created for the observance of Tu BiShevat provides a

physical enactment of the truth that enlightenment and inspiration are always at hand. None of us require the breathtaking spectacle of a burning bush or a show of celestial thunder or lightning to discover what is holy in our world: we can be reminded of the presence of God and the experience of wonder simply by spending time with the gifts of the world, and the delicious produce of nature that sustains us, body and soul.

CONGREGATION EMANU EL TO HOST WATCH PARTY AND TALKBACK FEATURING EVER OPEN

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Dolores Wilkenfeld, Susan Farb Morris, Dawn Blitz, Al Kahn, Amanda and Marc Eichenbaum, and Evyn Rudin.

Following the presentation of the documentary, Rabbi Hayon will moderate a conversation with Fenberg, and guests will have an opportunity to ask questions about the film, as well as Fenberg's observations and association with Emanu El as a lifelong member.

In order to access the Zoom event, please register online at emanuelhouston.org. The film will start shortly after **7:00 p.m.** so please make plans to join us for an on-time start.

For more information, please contact Jason Plotkin at jasonp@emanuelhouston.org or 713.535.6414.

LIFECYCLE EVENTS

BIRTHS

Ellery Paige Klupchak, daughter of Melissa & Max Klupchak; granddaughter of Joan & Steve Brown, Rick Klupchak, Amy Berne; great-granddaughter of Harvey Brown, Fanchon Kanter

Perry Benjamin Teigman, son of Mallory & Rob Teigman; grandson of Rona & Jason Schlau, Robyn & Michael Teigman; great-grandson of Bronick Kostas

Mason Sidney Walker, son of Marisa Engelhardt & Kelly Walker, grandson of Rita & Steven Engelhardt

Abigail Jane West, daughter of Rebecca Freedman & Ryan West; granddaughter of Rhonda & Seth Freedman; great-granddaughter of Helen Simkin

DEATHS

Cele Keeper, mother of Lauren Keeper

Eduard Pylnik, husband of Nina Pylnik; father of Elena & Vladimir Sukholutsky; grandfather of Victoria & Dennis Sukholutsky; great-grandfather of Miles and Amelia

Larry Riklin, brother of Janet & Skip Riklin, Laury Bonner; father of Shelley & Matt Riklin; grandfather of Eli Jaye

Hillary Rose, daughter of Vivian Rose; mother of Madelaine and Caleb Rose; sister of Michelle & Martin Heward and Debbie & Harris Rose.

Evelyn Snyder, mother of Richard Snyder, Judy Stein, Jeanie & Alan Rubin; grandmother of Jackie Stein, Randy Stein, Leanne & Jordan Rubin, Morgan Rubin & Brad Wilcox; great-grandmother of four

A Notice About Bereavement Communications

Bereavement notices for our Temple family are distributed with the permission of the deceased's family, and the timing of these notices is dictated by the family's request. Of course, each family grieves in its own way, and we are grateful for our congregation's patience and understanding with different families' preferences about how their loss is publicized.

Congregation Emanu El to Host Gail Rubin for *Before I Die* Weekend

Friday, March 19, 7:30 p.m. &
Sunday, March 21, 4:00 p.m.

Join us as we host Gail Rubin, a certified thanatologist and The Doyenne of Death® for a pair of events online. This visit is presented by Waldman Funeral Care and Emanu El. To help us plan, we request RSVPs for both Friday night and Sunday afternoon programming.

Friday, March 19, 7:30 p.m.

Kicking the Bucket List: Downsizing and Organizing Things to Do Before You Die

Do you plan to live forever? Do you ever plan to move? Depending on where you're going, you can't take it with you. This talk focuses on practical ways to downsize excess goods without being overwhelmed by the job, what you need to know to organize your information for your executor, and how to plan for end-of-life issues.

Register online and join us on Zoom as Rubin will host a program entitled, *Kicking the Bucket List: Downsizing and Organizing Things to Do Before You Die*.



Sunday, March 21, 4:00 p.m.

Death Cafe Conversations

Come join the conversation at the *Death Cafe*! The goal is "to increase awareness of death with a view to helping people make the most of their (finite) lives." Grab a snack, some coffee or tea, and an interesting, unstructured conversation about mortality issues. Rubin is one of the U.S. pioneers of the worldwide *Death Cafe* movement.

To RSVP, visit emanuelhouston.org or call 713.529.5771.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS AT EMANU EL

Taste of Talmud

Thursdays, February 4 & March 4 at 12:30 p.m.

Did your plans for the new year include establishing a new study practice? Do you want all the benefits of a book discussion group without the need to commit to extensive reading ahead of time? Are you curious about what this “Daf Yomi” thing you’ve heard people mention is? Do you want to connect with both your Judaism and a fun group of people?

If your answer to any of these questions is yes, then join us for A Taste of Talmud, our monthly study of rabbinic texts, led by Director of Congregational Learning Stefani Carlson. No experience or Hebrew knowledge required: all texts are provided in translation. We are currently meeting on Zoom – all are welcome. We’d love to have you add your voice to our virtual beit midrash (house of study)!

Zoom information can be found on our website and for more information, contact Stefani Carlson at stefanic@emanuelhouston.org or 713.529.5771, ext. 251.

Havdalah for All

Saturday, February 6, 2021, 7:00 p.m. &
Saturday, March 6, 2021, 7:00 p.m.

Join Cantor Simmons and Barbara Loeser for a spirited singalong to mark the end of Shabbat. The rituals of Havdalah help us to engage all of our senses as we come together to savor the last sweet moments of Shabbat and prepare for the week ahead. All ages welcome!

This event will be held exclusively on Zoom and a song sheet will be made available on our website during the week leading heading up to the evening. To get the Zoom link, please register online at emanuelhouston.org.

For more information, contact Jason Plotkin at jasonp@emanuelhouston.org or 713.535.6414.

Reproductive Justice: The Conversation Continues

Friday, February 12, 6:00 p.m. &
Saturday, February 13, 9:15 a.m.

Please join us for our digital programming on Shabbat Mishpatim (the weekend of February 12-13) as we continue the conversation from last month’s highly successful program *Roe v. Wade: Jewish Faith, Jewish Action*.

Friday, February 12, 6:00 p.m.

Rabbi Fixler will offer a sermon during our Kabbalat Shabbat worship, entitled *Stricken from the Text: Mishpatim and Sacred Stories of Reproductive Justice*. This service will be available on the Emanu El website’s Barish Sanctuary streaming video page in addition to the congregation’s Facebook, YouTube and Roku platforms.

Saturday, February 13, 9:15 a.m.

The weekend continues during our weekly Gems of



Rabbi Josh Fixler was joined by National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) CEO Sheila Katz and Reverend Erika Forbes of the Texas Freedom Network for Roe v Wade: Jewish Faith, Jewish Action in January. The conversation continues during Shabbat Mishpatim in February.

Torah class as Rabbi Silk and Rabbi Fixler will provide an opportunity to explore and discuss the texts that provide the foundation for Jewish views on abortion and reproductive choice.

The appropriate links and information to connect with the Gems of Torah class can be found on our web calendar by visiting our website at emanuelhouston.org and in our weekly eLetter that is sent on Wednesday mornings.

For more information about either opportunity, please contact Jason Plotkin at jasonp@emanuelhouston.org or 713.535.6414.

Take Flight with The Classics – Pair of Programs to Pique Your Sense of Adventure

Friday, February 19, 7:30 p.m. &
Sunday, March 14, 3:00 p.m.

Leaving on a jet plane . . . at least virtually! Join the Classics for two upcoming programs to pique your sense of adventure. For each of these events, the Zoom link will be sent out the week of the event. If you have any questions or suggestions for future events, please reach out to emanuelclassics@gmail.com.

Friday, February 19, 7:30 p.m.

Let’s get together on after services to visit and to talk about all things travel-related. What is your dream vacation? What travel destinations have you enjoyed the most? We’ll be joined by Brad Dennen of SpeedyFrog Travel to facilitate our discussion and talk about travel changes and trends for 2021. Who knows – you might win some prizes during our Travel Trivia contest!

Registration is limited to the first 20 screens by the deadline of Wednesday, February 17, so register online today or by calling 713.529.5771.

Sunday, March 14, 3:00 p.m.

Scratch your travel itch as we take a live virtual tour of Jewish Lisbon and Portugal. Our tour will be led by Gloria

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Ribeiro of Tours by Locals. Ms. Ribeiro lives in Sexial, Portugal and is passionate about her work, having worked as a licensed tour guide since 2004 after completing a university degree on Portugal Tourist guiding. "Visit" Lisbon's hidden 100-year-old synagogue, "walk" through the Jewish areas of Lisbon, learn about Jewish roots in the Portuguese culture . . . all without leaving your house!

Registration is limited to the first 20 screens and the cost is \$10 per screen, so register online at emanuelhouston.org or by calling 713.529.5771 and join us! Please note that the **deadline for registering for this event is Wednesday, March 10**. For each of these events, the Zoom link will be sent out the week of the event.

The Classics is Emanu El's social group for those in their 50's and 60's, singles and couples alike. Questions? If you have any questions or suggestions for future events, please reach out to emanuelclassics@gmail.com

Online Trivia Night

Sunday, February 21, 7:00 p.m.

We are back for another fun-filled night of online trivia hosted by Game Time Adventures!

Every month, our game host Mike presents new trivia games featuring everything from music and popular culture to sports and price-guessing games.

The custom-built game nights are fun and challenging adventures where players muse a variety of different skill sets and ways of thinking to win. It's an experience beyond your average game night.

Register by 4:00 p.m. on Sunday, February 21 by visiting our website to receive information about how to connect on the night of the event.

The information on how to connect will be sent roughly 60-90 minutes before the game. Individuals and teams are encouraged to join the trivia room at 5:30 p.m. for a pre-game schmooze and/or stay afterward. If this is your first time playing with Emanu El and Game Time Adventures, it is strongly encouraged that you show up no later than 6:45 p.m. to make sure your devices are working appropriately.

Previous winners include individuals or teams captained by the following individuals: Katherine Kardesch (November), Andrew Gass (October), Chip Ware (September), Fredi Bleeker Franks (August) and Jeff Silk (July).

For more information, contact Jason Plotkin at jasonp@emanuelhouston.org or 713.535.6414.

Cantor Simmons Participating in Purim Musical Event with ERJCC

Wednesday, February 24, 7:30 p.m.

The Evelyn Rubenstein Jewish Community Center (ERJCC) is hosting a Virtual Vashti Banquet, a three-day program leading up to Purim. Vashti's Virtual Banquet will re-

create the fabled harem of Vashti's banquet in the Purim story over the course of three nights, celebrating the power of strong women through learning, literature, food, and music.

On the third night of the program, Cantor Rollin Simmons will be joined by Beth Israel's Cantor Star Trompeter to kick off the evening with a live pre-show of Purim music followed by a concert with acclaimed Sephardic Ladino singer Nani.

Tickets to the event may include Middle Eastern fare as well as temporary tattoos, to invoke the henna tattoos traditionally worn on this festive occasion. Participants may register for one, two, or all three events during the series.

As of press time, the ERJCC was still finalizing details of this program. More details will be shared in synagogue communications closer to the event and registration will be done through the ERJCC at erjcc-houston.org.

Heritage Shabbat

Friday, March 19, 6:00 p.m.

Join us for Shabbat, featuring Cantor Simmons and our organist, Ann Frohbieter. We will share the treasured music of our heritage, featuring classical settings that convey the majesty, tranquility, and joy of Shabbat.

This service will be available on our streaming video page (select Barish Sanctuary), Facebook, YouTube, and Roku channel.

Conversations

Select Wednesdays, 12:00 p.m.

Join us for "Conversations" as Program Director Jason Plotkin sits down with a member of the congregation, community or from the sports world to discuss the current state of affairs while we are separated due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This series airs on select Wednesdays and will be shared on our website and in synagogue communications.

January guests included Rice Village's Senior General Manager A.J. Coffee and Pamela Valdes Velasco of the MD Anderson Blood Center.

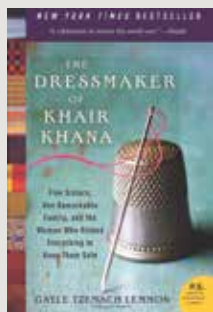
Previous guests have included Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo, Houston Symphony principal cellist Brinton Smith, Houston Independent School District (HISD) school board member Elizabeth Santos, and more.

Do you have a suggestion or connection to a potential future guest? Let Jason know! Email him at jasonp@emanuelhouston.org or 713.535.6414.

"Conversations" is available on Emanu El's Facebook page and our streaming video page (select Proler Chapel). Archived editions are available on the Emanu El YouTube Channel.

Sisterhood News & Happenings

February – March 2021



BOOK REVIEW:

The Dressmaker of Khair Khana

by Gayle Tzemach Lemmon; reviewed by Judy Meyers

THURSDAY, MARCH 11, 7:00 PM

Sisterhood hosts bi-monthly book reviews throughout the year that are open to the public.

Please Note: This book review will be held by Zoom and the information to access will be emailed ahead of time to those who register.

A summary of our March book, *The Dressmaker of Khair Khana*, by Gayle Tzemach Lemmon:

Kamila Sidiqi's life changed overnight when the Taliban seized control of Afghanistan. After her father and brother were forced to flee, she became the sole financial support of her five siblings. Banned from school, confined to her home, and armed only with determination, she picked up a needle and thread to create a thriving business that saved their lives. This book encourages a reader to consider the role of women regarding self, family and community – under the most stressful and impossibly-aligned circumstances.

To help us plan and/or to receive communications about future book reviews, we ask that you kindly **RSVP by Wednesday, March 10**, either online or by contacting the Sisterhood at sishood@emanuelhouston.org or 713.529.5771, ext. 233.



Stefani Carlson

Finding Our Voices: Women in Jewish Texts Thursday, February 11, 7:00 p.m.

Our Jewish texts are full of stories about women: Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, Leah, and Miriam. Their names are as well-known to us as those of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses. They've even been added

to our liturgy in recent years, centering our female ancestors along with their male counterparts. Only rarely, though, do those texts let us hear from our matriarchs in their own words.

Join **Stefani Carlson**, Congregation Emanu El Director of Congregational Learning, for an evening of exploration through the Torah and other writings looking for the voices of our mothers. When are they allowed to speak for themselves? What do they have to say? Most importantly, what do their words tell us about both the worlds they lived in and the world we live in now? While we'll be listening for women's voices, all sources will be presented in English. No Hebrew knowledge or prior Torah study experience is necessary for this program. All are welcome!

There is no charge for this Zoom program. We ask that you RSVP online at emanuelhouston.org or to the Sisterhood office at 713.529.5771, ext. 233 or sishood@emanuelhouston.org. Zoom information will be sent prior to the program.

Judaism through the Arts Delves into Art Nouveau Thursday, March 18, 1:00 p.m.

Join Sisterhood for a virtual Judaism through the Arts program as we explore the Art Nouveau ornamental style that flourished between 1890 and 1910. The Museum of Fine Arts Houston's Helga Aurisch, curator of European art, and Christine Gervais, curator of decorative arts, will present the Art Nouveau aspects of a Gustav Klimt inspired painting by Hermen Camarasa, and stained glass windows by Louis Comfort Tiffany.

These pieces of art are among the wonderful paintings and sculptures, stunning silver art pieces and exquisitely decorated furniture in the newly installed Art Nouveau gallery in the MFAH Beck Building. Included in the presentation will be a discussion of Siegfried Bing, an extraordinary Jewish art dealer who became the driving force behind this innovative movement.



An Emile Galle vase.

There is no charge for this Zoom event, but please RSVP online by visiting our web calendar at emanuelhouston.org, or to the Sisterhood office at 713.529.5771, ext. 233, or sishood@emanuelhouston.org. Zoom information will be sent prior to the program.

ReelAbilities Houston Film and Arts Festival Returns Virtually in 2021

Emanu El Proud to Partner
Once More in Annual Festival
February 16-24



ReelAbilities Houston Film & Arts Festival, annually produced by the JFS Alexander Institute for Inclusion in collaboration with the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities, will return to Houston for its ninth year, using the arts as a vehicle to educate, celebrate and change perceptions about individuals with disabilities. Chair Benjy Hershorn and Co-Chairs Eve Lapin and Marcy Margolis will lead the Festival in its first ever all-virtual format.

With the mission of bringing disability awareness and systemic change to the culture of Houston's families, institutions, places of work and communities, the 10+ day ReelAbilities Houston Festival reaches thousands with its message of inclusion through numerous art forms. The 2021 Festival will feature 16 award-winning films, the ReelPeople: UP Abilities speakers event, ReelMusic Concert, and virtual art experiences featuring the work of Celebration Company artists and educational programs in schools and workplaces around Houston. All art, film and music events are free. Learn more about the Festival by visiting ReelAbilitiesHouston.org.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Welcome Our Newest Members

We are pleased to welcome the newest members to our congregational family. Please be sure to introduce yourself to our newcomers as they become a part of our community.

**Seth Caplan & Nicole Soussan Caplan,
Daughter Clare**
Alexa & Ryan Levey, Son Ari
**Daniel & Natalie Wasserberg,
Daughter Madeleine**

New members will be shared in the *Bulletin* regularly. Know someone interested in becoming a part of our community? New to town or looking to find a way to connect with Emanu El? Contact Elizabeth Townsend at elizabethth@emanuel-houston.org or 713.529.5771, ext. 222.

Our clergy want to know . . .

If you or a loved one is sick or hospitalized please let us know.

Contact the synagogue at 713.529.5771, so that our rabbis can reach out and visit and be a source of strength and support.

Visiting the sick and praying for those who are ill are important and meaningful mitzvot.



Get Social With Us!

Did you know Congregation Emanu El is on Instagram? In addition to our active Facebook pages, be sure to follow us on Instagram to catch snap shots of happenings around the synagogue. From camel sightings to social action, a thriving youth group to clergy in action and more!

Find us on Instagram at [instagram.com/emanuelhouston](https://www.instagram.com/emanuelhouston) or if you are already a member, find us at @emanuelhouston. And yes, please feel free to "check-in" at Emanu El when you are here for events and happenings!



Find Us On YouTube!

Looking for a one-stop shop to catch the latest worship services, musical selections, Chanukah highlights, videos from our schools and more?

Over 500 videos of new content created since the pandemic have been shared to Emanu El's YouTube page with dozens and dozens more from the archives also shared. YouTube also serves as a way to watch live services and other events.

Find us on YouTube by searching "Emanu El Houston Video" and subscribe today!

Due to the pandemic, Congregation Emanu El will once again be taking its Passover experience online. As was the case last year, we will be creating a Passover resource page on our website which will feature content and resources to help you prepare for the holiday. You will also be able to find online haggadot, tips for doing a virtual seder, content put forth by our schools and more.

Gleanings from the New Reform Haggadah: A Pre-Passover Study Opportunity with Rabbi Oren Hayon

Tuesday, March 2, 7:00 p.m.



Please make plans to join Rabbi Oren Hayon as he provides an introduction to the Reform Movement's new Passover haggadah, *Mishkan HaSeder*. This one-hour session will provide participants with some wonderful new resources to be used at your Passover seder this year.

This new haggadah uses the beloved format of our Shabbat prayer book *Mishkan T'filah* and

the High Holy Day machzor *Mishkan HaNefesh*. Rabbi Hayon was a contributing editor of the book's commentary, which draws out the historic background of the seder rituals, builds on the social justice issues of our day, and offers contemporary connections to Passover.

We strongly encourage participants to purchase a copy of the haggadah in advance of this session. *Mishkan HaSeder: A Passover Haggadah* is available through the CCAR Press (ccarpres.org) for \$21.95. Please note that the promotional code MHS30 may be used for a 30% discount; **this offer will be valid through February 12.**

Registration for this program is available at emanuelhouston.org or by calling 713.529.5771. A Zoom link will be made available upon registering.

Let My People Go: Personal Reflections on Freedom and Injustice

Tuesday, March 23, 5:00 p.m.

Congregation Emanu El is partnering with Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institution of Religion (HUC-JIR), our Reform Movement's seminary to partner in a new program entitled "HUC Connect." This program includes adult educational opportunities with members of the HUC faculty and visiting scholars.

We will kick off our involvement with this program as Chester Holman III, Alan J. Tauber and Rabbi Andrea Weiss lead a session entitled, *Let My People Go: Personal Reflections on Freedom and Injustice*.

Holman was featured in the Netflix docuseries, *The Innocence Files*, chronicling his release from prison after



Charles Holman III, who was wrongly convicted for a 1991 murder and featured in the Netflix docuseries *The Innocence Files* will speak as part of a program held in-conjunction with Hebrew Union College.

being convicted for a 1991 murder he did not commit. Tauber is the first assistant defender at the Defender Association of Philadelphia; Weiss may be a familiar name to our congregants, having visited Houston as the Rozelle & Rabbi Robert I. Kahn Scholar-in-Residence in 2019. Rabbi Weiss is the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Provost at HUC.

More information about this program and other opportunities surrounding this educational session will be shared in forthcoming synagogue communications.

Virtual Seder

Saturday, March 27

Emanu El will offer a virtual Seder for the first night of Passover across multiple platforms led by our clergy – including our website, Facebook, YouTube, Proler Chapel streaming video page and more.

The video will be available during the day ahead of the first night of Passover on Saturday, March 27 and remain available for members of our community to utilize as they see fit throughout the holidays. Additional information on this offering will be shared in communications closer to the holiday.

Houston Catering Providing Seder Options

Emanu El's preferred caterer Houston Catering Concepts will be offering *Passover To-Go* once more this year.



A full menu of options including options of an "individual box" and "family box" can be found on the HCC website at houstoncatering.com.

HCC is accepting pre-orders through Friday, March 19. Curbside pickup will take place from **11:00 a.m - 3:00 p.m. on Saturday, March 27** with delivery also available during the same time frame for \$25 additional.

For more information or assistance with ordering, visit houstoncatering.com or call 713.257.9898.



Helfman Religious School

Celebrate Purim at Our Drive-Through Event! Sunday, February 21, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

The entire congregation is invited to join Helfman Religious School for our drive through Purim celebration! This year's drive-through is the annual fundraising event for the Helfman Religious School Committee (HRSC). Proceeds from this event will support HRSC programs including student scholarships for Helfman Religious School and Greene Family Camp, as well as professional development for teachers.

Visit four stations, one for each of the Purim *mitzvot*:

1. Giving gifts to friends (*Mishloach Manot*): On Purim, we send gifts to our friends and neighbors to ensure everyone can celebrate the holiday. At this station you will pick up *Mishloach Manot* baskets filled with cookies and treats. Preorder for your friends and family, and don't forget yourself, too!
2. Reading the Megilah: We are commanded to listen to the story of Esther on Purim each year. At this station, you'll pick up crafts to take home relating to the Purim story. Be sure to have them ready for our Purim Spiel and Megilah reading on **Thursday, February 25!**
3. Giving to those in need (*Matanot L'evyonim*): Giving to others is always important in Judaism, but especially on Purim. Giving tzedakah ensures that everyone can have a good holiday and honors the legacy of Esther and Mordechai. Bring your coins for tzedakah!
4. Having a special celebration and eating a special meal (*Mishteh*): Having a big celebration with lots of food and yummy treats is one of the central ideas of Purim! You will be able to preorder yummy Hamentaschen and confetti eggs to help you celebrate and pick them up at this station.

While there is no cost to attend the event or for the craft projects, all *Mishloach Manot* baskets, Hamentaschen and Confetti Eggs must be pre-ordered online at emanuelhouston.org. The deadline to order is **Friday, February 12**.

We can't wait to see you at our Purim celebration!

BECKER SCHOOL SCHOOL NEWS



Becker School

Becker PTO Throws Appreciation Luncheon for School Faculty & Staff

The second week of January featured a Becker faculty and staff appreciation luncheon put on by the Becker School Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO). Ms. Janet from Arts Alive is pictured after receiving her lunch treat.





Yom Limmud

Sunday, February 14, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Congregation Emanu El is excited to once again be a part of Yom Limmud, Houston's largest day of Jewish learning.

Put together by the Greater Houston Jewish Federation, this year's event will be entirely virtual this year. This offers our community the incredible opportunity to hear from presenters from around the world! Each presenter will either currently live or have lived in the country they discuss. We will host 20 sessions including a PJ Library program, a family program for middle school ages and up, as well as a teacher's track.

Highlights include:

- Rebbetzin and actress Michelle Azar, creator of Netflix's, *From Baghdad to Brooklyn*, will offer an exciting presentation.
- Learn about Jewish history, values, and culture through chocolate and bread as Rabbi Deborah Prinz discusses *The Chocolate Trail* and *The Chocolate Babka Project*.
- Cantor Robyn Helzner will present on *Kreplach & Dim Sum: Yes, There are Jews in China*.

More information and registration instructions will follow in the coming weeks. For questions, please contact Marna Meyer at mmeyer@houstonjewish.org.

Yom Limmud is underwritten by the Chair King Backyard Store and the Barish Family.

16 Markers Installed at Emanu El Memorial Park

Markers Placed at Unmarked Graves by Hebrew Order of David Lodge Galil

As part of its Gravestone Project, members of Hebrew Order of David Lodge Galil, along with HOD Lodge Tikvah, unveiled 16 markers at Emanu El Memorial Park cemetery on Sunday, January 10. The mitzvah was conducted during rain, shine and even the prediction of snow, while adhering to CDC guidelines.

The 16 markers installed in January continue a project of Lodge Galil which identified approximately 160 Jewish unmarked graves in Houston.

While Lodge Galil paid for many of the first markers, community support has allowed for the project to grow rapidly. In addition to Lodge Galil, Gaitz Memorials and Ramirez Cemetery Services have partnered in the project with their services. For more information, email houstongravestone@gmail.com.



Zak Katzenellenbogen, Ray Sass, Bradley Olitzki, Steve Meyer, Jeff Klein, Ivor Segall, Alan Lipman, Lawrence Barris, and Rabbi Josh Fixler take part in the installation of markers for unmarked graves at Emanu El Memorial Park.

continued next page

Rabbi Oren Hayon Shares Remarks During the Houston Ceremony of the 2021 National COVID Memorial Tribute

The below remarks were shared by Rabbi Hayon during the ceremony from City Hall.

God full of compassion, eternal Spirit of the universe, grant perfect rest in Your sheltering presence to those whose lives have been cut short by this devastating pandemic and who have now entered eternity.

Each of them was made in Your image, and we remember them all: people of wisdom and talent, whose lives were marked by joy and sorrow, by triumph and disappointment. It is now our task to steward their memories with tenderness and love, even as we pray for them to find peace in the world to come.

May their deaths awaken us to the truth that we are all connected in a single bond of destiny which creates in us an obligation of mutual care and concern.

O Source of Mercy, hold them close to You forever, that they may find refuge in the shadow of your wings. As their souls are bound up in everlasting life, let their memory remain as a living blessing among us.

O God, they now are Yours. May they rest in peace.

Together we say: Amen.



Rabbi Oren Hayon represented the Houston Jewish community on Tuesday, January 19 as the city of Houston and Mayor Sylvester Turner hosted a ceremony as part of the 2021 National COVID Memorial Tribute.

Emanu El Program Director Tabbed to Pair of Leadership Roles Plotkin to Serve as Vice President of PEPRJ, Treasurer of University Place Association

The beginning of 2021 brought with it a pair of new leadership roles for Emanu El Program Director Jason Plotkin, who was named Vice President of the Program &

Engagement Professionals of Reform Judaism (PEPRJ) and Treasurer of the University Place Association (UPA) Super Neighborhood board. PEPRJ is an affiliate organization of the Union for Reform Judaism and includes nearly 100 synagogue professionals in the areas of membership, programming, engagement, marketing and communications from across the Reform Movement.

In his new role, Plotkin will oversee the execution of the PEPRJ annual conference and continued growth of the organization. In 2019 and 2020, Plotkin served in a membership capacity – more than doubling the membership of the organization in two years of service while enhancing its notoriety across the Reform Movement.

Plotkin is joined on the executive board of PEPRJ in 2021 by Bryan Bierman, president (Temple Israel, Westport, CT); Cori Neidenberg, treasurer (United Hebrew Congregation, St. Louis); and Abby Habush Schroeder, secretary (Congregation Shalom, Milwaukee).

In 2020, PEPRJ held a virtual conference in November attended by an organization-record 60-plus participants. The organization intends to host an in-person conference at Temple Sinai in the Atlanta metro area this coming November.

In addition to the conference, PEPRJ members gather on Zoom for weekly check-ins, area of emphasis specific gatherings and monthly educational programming with outside speakers. Plotkin's wife Aliza presented to the PEPRJ organization in January about engaging young families during COVID.

The UPA appointment is the first executive board position for Plotkin, who has served on the UPA board representing Congregation Emanu El since 2015.

UPA was formed in 1992 and was amongst the first three approved super neighborhood councils recognized by the city of Houston. Its official boundaries are US-59 to the north, Kirby Drive to the west, Brays Bayou to the south and Main Street to the east. The civic organizations and institutions making up UPA include Boulevard Oaks, Southampton, Southgate, the Rice Village, Rice University, Old Braeswood, the Museum Area Municipal Association, Morningside Place and others.



Emanu El Program Director Jason Plotkin (right) pictured with current National Association of Temple Administration president Jack Feldman (left) in February 2020. Plotkin was recently tabbed Vice President of the Program & Engagement Professionals of Reform Judaism and the Treasurer of the University Place Association Super Neighborhood board.



We appreciate the thoughtfulness of those who remember and honor their friends and loved ones through their generous contributions through January 14, 2021.

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continued next page

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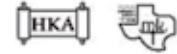
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**SHUSHAN
NIGHT**

LIVE

PURIM 2021
February 25
6:00 p.m.

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Congregation Emanu El

Oren J. Hayon, Senior Rabbi
Pamela B. Silk, Associate Rabbi
Joshua R.S. Fixler, Associate Rabbi
Roy A. Walter, Rabbi Emeritus
Rollin Simmons, Cantor
David Lamden, Executive Director
Jason Plotkin, Program Director
Sarah Williams, Interim Early Childhood
Director
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Andrew Gass, Brotherhood President
Claire Brooks & Carol Sue Zions,
Sisterhood Presidents

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SAVE THE DATE:

Emanu El Annual Meeting
Sunday, April 18, 4:00 p.m.

Please mark your calendars for **Sunday, April 18 at 4:00 p.m.** as Congregation Emanu El hosts its annual meeting. This year's annual meeting will once again be held on Zoom and information about the meeting including the coming year's budget, nominating slate, an opportunity to register and more will be shared in March.



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