

Congregations Kol Emeth, Beth Am, Etz Chayim, and Keddem, together with Gideon Hausner Jewish Day School, Kehillah Jewish High School, Jewish LearningWorks and the OFJCC invite you to celebrate Shavuot with Torah and community.



Shavuot 5780/2020

Kickoff: Wednesday night, May 27

Tikkun Leil Shavuot: Thursday night, May 28

Join us for 2 nights of virtual learning and celebration.

Wednesday, May 27 - Pre-Shavuot Kickoff!

Celebrate the 49th night of the Omer with cooking, learning and song.

6:30pm - Young Adult Cheesecake Cook-Along

7:00pm - Sarah Miller - Blintz Souffle Cook-Along!

Let's have fun and get ready for Shavuot! All ages are welcome to join.

7:30pm - Rabbi Shelly Lewis - Descent To Ascent: The Possibility of Renewal From Egypt/Mount Sinai to the Pandemic

Rabbi Nachman of Breslav knew intimately times of steep personal descent due to illness, failure, or great loss. Yet he taught eloquently of new, unimaginable growth that becomes possible only in a dark period of descent, the precursor to a new and higher ascent. We will study his remarkable teaching and ask how his insight can help us in this hour of our crisis.

7:30pm - Zoe Jick - Why do we read Ruth on Shavuot?

We will learn the story of Ruth and Naomi, on one foot, and investigate the hidden connections between this narrative and the holiday of Shavuot. This class is the culminating session in the OFJCC/BINA six part series, "The Writings." You do not need to have participated in "The Writings" to attend.

8:30pm - Rick Dinitz: Mussar Blues in COVID Time

Songs to carry us through, reduce family friction, and experience joy. Develop your soul by movin' to the groove.

Thursday, May 28 - Tikkun Leil Shavuot Program

Kids Programming

5:30pm - 6:00pm - Shavuot for Young Families with Kara Sanchez and Tyler Dean!

Stories, Songs, and Activities to celebrate the Torah and the 10 Commandments. Geared for ages 0-2nd Grade

7:00pm - Panel Discussion: "Torah for this Time"

Panelists: Rabbi Janet Marder, Rabbi David Booth, Rabbi Chaim Koritzinsky, and David Zimand. Moderated by David Waksberg.

8:20pm - 8:50pm - Shavuot Evening Services

Contemplative Service - Join us for a gentle, reflective service in which we will step into the chag and, with chant and silence, prepare ourselves to receive Torah - Led by Rabbi Amy Eilberg

Yoga/Stretching - Enter Shavuot by connecting breath and movement, heart and body, with Torah wisdom. Enjoy a taste of Makom Yoga with Rabbi Matzkin! - Led by Rabbi Laurie Matzkin

Musical - Approaching Sinai in Song - join us for a chant/song filled service welcoming in Shavuot with joy. Led by Cantor Jaime Shpall

Traditional Service - Enter into Shavuot with traditional words and melodies for the holiday. Led by Rabbi Sarah Graff

9:00pm – 9:50pm

Torah in a Sentence

Aviv Matzkin

The five books of Moses describe a long, detailed saga, from the creation of the world to the creation of a nation. It would be extremely challenging to summarize the entire story in a paragraph. But what if someone asked you to summarize the entire Torah in one sentence? Could you do it? After we study together you'll be ready to try. Having some milky ice-cream close by as we learn will definitely assist you in our efforts. For kids and adults of all ages.

The Future of Judaism in a Socially Distant World: Educators' Perspectives

Sarah Miller, David Waksberg, David Zimand, and Rabbi Sarah Graff

The Jewish community has shifted to Zoom for everything from learning and socializing to holiday celebrations and life cycle events. There is definitely a new "normal" that is emerging for all ages. Join these educators in conversation, as we think about the Judaism of 2025 and beyond.

Since when is Shavuot about the Torah? Shavuot as a Case Study of Innovative Judaism

Tova Birnbaum

The biblical holiday of Shavuot is all about nature, agriculture and the temple. Sinai is not part of it and neither is the Torah. Why and how was the holiday completely transformed and what does it teach us about Judaism, creativity and bold leadership?

Job and His "Friends": How Do We (and Don't We) Respond to Challenging Times?

Rabbi Heath Watenmaker

The Book of Job poses a number of theological and philosophical questions about how we respond when bad things happen to good people. Throughout the book, the responses of Job's "friends," though intended to offer consolation, often reflect the wrong way to comfort someone going through something difficult. We'll look at these responses and discuss the book's larger lessons about how to respond to tragedy and uncertainty.

Uncovering Gratitude at a Time of Plague

Rabbi David Booth

Shavuot began as a gratitude holiday and for this reason Ruth becomes the story for this holiday. Ruth begins in a time of plague and famine; it starts in bitterness and ends in wholeness. We too at this time of plague need a pathway to wholeness. Let us look at the gifts of Ruth to find our own way.

The Ten Utterances

Rabbi Darren Kleinberg

A slow read through the ten utterances.

When Heschel met Basho-A Haiku Encounter

Abra Greenspan

Something deep and profound is happening even in what seem to be ordinary events and ordinary things. Abraham Joshua Heschel and the Japanese haiku poet Basho invite us to place ourselves directly in contact with that awareness. We will explore what it feels like to pay attention and capture that sense of wonder, awe, and radical amazement in only a few syllables. We will take inspiration from Heschel and Basho and create individual and group poems. No previous poetry writing experience required.

10:00pm – 10:50pm

Milk and Honey and Beer!

Rabbi Jon Prosnit

Join us for a textual study of some of the best foods related to this sacred holiday!

Singing and Instruments and COVID – Oh, my!

Elaine Moise

We will look at some texts about music (both vocal and instrumental) and Jewish worship, and play a little with the impact of Zoom services on the music of our services these days. The session will include singing. There will also be a musical surprise at the end.

Psalms for a Tumultuous Time

Rabbi Sarah Weissman

Together, we will study several psalms that might offer us strength and comfort during this challenging moment.

The Pandemic as a Teacher about Hesed/Lovingkindness

Rabbi Amy Eilberg

We will explore ways in which the pandemic can be a source of spiritual wisdom for us, highlighting core existential themes and middot/qualities of soul. In particular, this time illustrates the world-changing impact that “simple” kindness can have. And we will have a taste of “lovingkindness” meditation, a practice that has been profoundly important to me for many years.

What is a “Minimum Shabbat?”

Rabbi Ari Cartun

The Talmud, in Tractate Shabbat, page 69, speculates on a situation where somebody traveling in a camel caravan or alone in the desert loses track of the days and forgets when Shabbat is. This is not unlike our staying at home time during the pandemic, where all the days can blend together. The sages suggest ways for that person to set a date and make it a personal Shabbat. Then they ask, “How will that day be recognizable as a Shabbat?” We’ll explore their answer, and see how it might apply to Jews today on any Shabbat.

What the Torah teaches us about Astrophysics: A Deep Dive into our Two Creation Stories

David Meir-Levi

11:00pm – 11:30pm

Closing Event - Receiving Torah Together

Rabbi Sarah Graff and Elaine Moise

Gather again as a community to hear the Ten Commandments Torah reading and celebrate with song.

****We are excited to celebrate Shavuot together as a large and diverse community. Tonight each presenter will follow their own understanding of holiday/yom tov observance.****