Executively Speaking: The State of the Congregation
By Michael Saxe-Taller, Executive Director

Because of the broad nature of my responsibilities as Kehilla’s executive director, I have a unique perspective on the Kehilla community. I have prided myself on knowing just about everything that is happening in our large, growing and extremely active congregation. At this year’s Kehilla Leadership Retreat, I found out how wrong I was.

One of the goals of the retreat was to give an opportunity for folks to visually see the breadth of the Kehilla initiatives, committees and centers of activity in which people take leadership. Several of us had crafted an activity to do this in which we would call out Kehilla groups (ie. Board of Directors, Spiritual Leaders, Chesed Committee, Immigration Committee), Kehilla School parents and people would identify themselves if they were part of that group. We compiled a long and, what we thought was comprehensive, list. Once we completed our list, someone asked if others could share additional groups. People proceeded to call out more than a dozen more centers of activity at Kehilla that I hadn’t even thought about.

I was taken by the sheer number of things that make up the Kehilla community and I was not the only one. Numerous people said this activity was a highlight of the weekend. It was inspiring to them that there are so many different ways that people demonstrate their commitment to this community and that so many Kehilla members give of themselves to so many different aspects of communal life at Kehilla.

It is clearly important for us as a community to stop and notice what makes up this congregation we call Kehilla. This is one of the main purposes of our Annual Community Meeting, which this year is being held on Wednesday evening, May 16 in the sanctuary (full details below). Kehilla members from many of those different centers of activities come together to strengthen their connections with each other. I give my yearly State of the Congregation presentation, and this year we will also hear more detailed descriptions of some of our congregational initiatives, including our Racial Justice Initiative and our Sanctuary work.

Please join us on May 16 so you can see the broad picture of Kehilla and have the opportunity to be inspired for yourself.

Kehilla’s board, staff, spiritual leaders and committee chairs invite you to join us for:

Kehilla’s Annual Community Meeting
Wednesday, May 16, 2018 in Kehilla’s Sanctuary
6:45pm – Schmoozing and Snacks
7:00–9:15pm - Congregational Gathering

Learn about the state of the congregation and key Kehilla initiatives, share our successes, appreciate our congregational leadership and think about our vision and mission for Kehilla.

Any questions? Contact Michael Saxe-Taller at Michael@kehillasynagogue.org or 510-547-2424 x101.
We are moved and excited that Kehilla is ready to take our next step as part of the New Sanctuary Movement, preparing to offer sanctuary housing in our building to immigrants facing deportation. We look forward to the community conversations ahead, and to the learning and growth that this path will bring to us all, as we walk together on the path toward greater justice.

In November 2016, the Kehilla Board of Trustees adopted a policy committing our community to be part of the New Sanctuary Movement, including an exploration of offering physical sanctuary and emergency housing in our synagogue building. In March 2018, after months of research and careful consideration, the board voted to approve offering housing at Kehilla to immigrants in need of sanctuary. We enthusiastically and fully support the board’s action.

We know from our history, both ancient and modern, that laws and legal authorities can be unjust and cruel. And we know from our history, both ancient and modern, that resistance to injustice and alignment with our deepest values and aspirations sometimes requires us to take personal and legal risks. There are times when our position of relative freedom and our material resources allow us to employ these blessings for the benefit of others who face imminent threats to their life and well-being. And we recall with gratitude the many times when others have done this for us.

We are witnessing the rise of tyrannical power that targets poor people, people of color, immigrants, trans* people, people with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups. We see ICE specifically going after people of color, and retaliating against immigrants who speak out, using the power of the state to intimidate, harass, detain and threaten people who are simply seeking a decent life.

We see this moment as one where we possess the resources and the privilege and the connections that enable us to offer life-giving support to people among us whose lives and well-being are threatened by unjust laws and legal and social systems. We see this moment as one where we are called to align our actions with our values, to allow us to live into our mission as a Jewish community committed to justice for everyone.

We now have an opportunity to deploy our beloved community in a new way to fulfill our mission. We see this as an opportunity to build our connections with the wider Sanctuary movement, to build relationships with people who may be housed in our building, to learn and grow as we meet immigrant families and hear about their experiences, [continued on page 3]
Kehilla Spiritual Leaders' Statement on Sanctuary [continued from page 2]

and to act with integrity as we grow our capacity for spiritual audacity.

We support prioritizing this effort in particular because of the extraordinary investment our members are already making on behalf of immigrants. Kehilla is currently on Accompaniment Team # 12, with each Accompaniment team including 4 to 8 congregants. We have 12 member families who have housed, or are housing immigrants or refugees in their homes. The monthly Let Our People Go protests just marked their one-year anniversary, with the last protest drawing about 200 people of all ages. Our Immigration Committee continues to give talks and trainings to other congregations, and is a leader in the wider community.

We are grateful to the Board of Trustees for its careful consideration of all the issues involved in offering physical sanctuary, and for its vision and clarity in voting to approve use of our building for sanctuary.

In light of the spiritual and moral imperatives, the opportunities for learning and growth, and the extensive involvement of so many of our members in immigration and sanctuary work, we, the Spiritual Leaders of Kehilla, fully support offering physical sanctuary and emergency housing in our building. We look forward to walking this path together, with love and openness.

Rabbi Dev, Hazzan Shulamit, Rabbi David, Rabbi Burt, Sharon Grodin, Howard Hamburger, Avi Rose

Celebrating Sanctuary at Kehilla During Affordable Housing Week
Saturday, May 12th

10am-12:15pm: Special Shabbat Service Focused on Sanctuary
Guest speakers: Pastor Jeff Johnson (from University Lutheran Chapel, a sanctuary congregation in Berkeley) and Kehilla members Leah Korican and Ralph Silber.

Lunch: Sponsored by the Kehilla Board of Trustees, the Kehilla Immigration Committee and the Kehilla Economic Justice Committee.

1-3:30pm: Community Conversation on Sanctuary
Guest speakers: Lourdes Barraza, Fernando Carillo and family (close friends of Kehilla). This family has been deeply impacted by detention and the threat of deportation.

Speaker from East Bay Housing Organizations | Information Session | Listening Circles | Q&A

Childcare will be available throughout the day, with special activities planned for the afternoon. Register for childcare by emailing maya@kehillasynagogue.org.

Additional Information Sessions for Kehilla School Families: May 10, 4-4:30pm and 5:30-6pm

April Book Discussion Group: Let It Be Morning by Sayed Kashua
Monday, May 14, 7-9pm

All Kehilla members are welcome to join us for our customary meetings on the second Monday of the month at 7pm in the Fireside Room.
Expanding Our Social Justice Work Through Sanctuary

Greetings Kehilla!

We are writing to update the community on a journey led by our Immigration Committee’s Sanctuary Task Force over the last two years. As you may remember, the theme of Kehilla’s 5777 High Holy Days (2016) focused on support for immigrants and refugees. Following the November 2016 election, this issue became even more pressing. In response, the Immigration Committee, spiritual leaders, executive director and Kehilla Board of Trustees began to collaboratively research and learn about the potential for Kehilla to offer physical sanctuary to immigrants facing final orders of deportation.

Many of these immigrants are people of color who live and work in our community and are being separated from their families and livelihoods. Kehilla leaders considered Jewish history and values, potential issues and our congregation’s mission, as they explored the potential to take immigrants into sanctuary as part of our spiritual practice.

We would like to share that process with you and to invite your questions and feedback through a process of community engagement with the following elements:

April, May and June- Articles on sanctuary in Kol Kehilla
May- Information on sanctuary on Kehilla’s website
May 10th - Information sessions for Kehilla School parents
May 12th - Shabbat service for all interested members of our community, followed by an afternoon of education, listening circles and Q&A
May 16th - Opportunity to ask questions or provide feedback to members of the Sanctuary Task Force and other Kehilla leaders at our Annual Community Meeting
Late May - Online member survey on sanctuary with option to submit questions
Ongoing - Individual and small group conversations with members of the Sanctuary Task Force and other Kehilla leaders

[continued on page 5]
**Background:** In the 1980s Kehilla Community Synagogue began actively working on immigration issues and declared itself a sanctuary congregation.

In the summer of 2015, in collaboration with the Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity, the first Kehilla accompaniment teams were paired with recently arrived families and individuals from Central America to welcome and accompany them through the process of settling into their lives in the East Bay. Most of these immigrants came seeking asylum due to extreme violence in their home countries. Kehilla teams also formed to support refugees from all over the world sponsored by Jewish Family and Community Service-East Bay, many of them LGBTQI individuals and couples fleeing persecution.

In November 2016, the Kehilla Board of Trustees reaffirmed our congregation’s longstanding commitment to being a sanctuary congregation and voted to explore using our space for physical sanctuary (available on the website). Between November 2016 and July 2017, members of Kehilla’s Immigration Committee researched the feasibility of creating a sanctuary space within the synagogue building and, in July 2017, presented a proposal to the Kehilla Board of Trustees. The board approved the creation of a Sanctuary Task Force composed of Immigration Committee and board members, and directed the Sanctuary Task Force to further research potential impacts on the congregation.

In the subsequent months, the Sanctuary Task Force took the following steps to research and resolve potential issues:

- Discussed reasons to provide physical sanctuary at Kehilla, despite challenges. Reasons included the following:
  - The moral imperative to care for the stranger, which is rooted in our religious tradition and is part of our mission.
  - The history of our own people and those whose lives were saved by others who took us in.
  - The clear commitment to helping immigrants demonstrated by the involvement in this work by more than 100 members of our community.
  - The opportunity for us to provide leadership by taking public action that could educate the community and change hearts and minds towards a more just immigration policy in our country.

- Consulted with specialized lawyers regarding insurance coverage, federal legal liability and city legal liability.
- Engaged with other congregations in and outside the Bay Area that offer physical sanctuary to learn about their processes and experiences.
- Held discussions with Kehilla’s executive director and staff regarding the possible impacts of having a guest in the building.
- Met with Rabbi Gray, Kehilla School Director, regarding the possible impact on Kehilla School and plans to engage the school community in our immigrant justice activities.
- Updated and discussed findings with the Kehilla Board.

Since 2015 nearly 100 Kehilla members have been involved in supporting immigrants through accompaniment teams or providing housing. Additionally, Kehilla members have organized monthly Let Our People Go protests at the ICE detention center at the Richmond jail, with recent protests drawing more than 200 people. Through these protests, Kehilla members have shed light on conditions inside the facility, met families of detainees, connected them with vital resources and accompanied them to court hearings. Immigrant justice work clearly resonates with our Kehilla community and is deeply linked to our Jewish values. [continued on page 6]
Expanding Our Social Justice Work Through Sanctuary [continued from page 5]

At the February 2018 meeting of the Kehillla Board of Trustees, Rabbi Dev Noily voiced their support for providing physical sanctuary and read our Spiritual Leaders’ Statement of Support (page 2). Additionally, Michael Saxe-Taller, Kehilla Executive Director, shared his support and feedback from the staff.

**Findings**: Findings of the Sanctuary Task Force’s research included the following:

- **Kehilla’s current insurance coverage** is adequate to protect the congregation from liability.
- **Based on the few instances** in which legal action has been taken against a religious institution providing sanctuary, such an action would most likely target our spiritual leaders and possibly our executive director. Both parties are prepared and willing to assume this risk.
- **If any legal action were to be taken**, pro bono representation would likely be available.
- **Most costs** of preparing the physical space could be covered via donations.
- **It is possible** that neighbors and/or the City of Piedmont might object to Kehilla providing sanctuary and/or temporary shelter. Based on conversations with our attorneys, advisors familiar with the City of Piedmont, and other religious institutions providing sanctuary, it is unlikely that any drastic action would be taken. At any point in this process we have a choice as to whether to fight our case or to stop what we are doing.
- **Concerns for the safety** of our guests, staff and community members can be addressed by carefully developing policies and protocols and by training staff, volunteers and members. We will form a Guest Advisory Committee to write and implement these procedures. This committee will review and utilize materials used by other congregations and suggestions made by our attorneys. The Guest Advisory Committee will also vet potential guests, in consultation with the lawyers assisting them with their immigration cases.

**Milestone**: At its March 2018 meeting, the Board of Trustees passed a motion in support of providing physical sanctuary (available on the website).

**Next Steps**: There is still work to be done before we can welcome someone into our home! This includes preparation of the physical space, development of policies and protocols for housing guests in the building, and a plan for coordinating volunteers to help when we have guests. Work on these items is expected to be completed in the summer or early fall of 2018.

**Learn More**: Please join us in our process of community engagement to learn more, express your support, share any concerns and ask questions. We are proud and excited to join other congregations that have taken the step to protect those amongst us who face deportation and need a safe space while they fight to remain in the United States.

*Julie Litwin, Catherine Lyons, Rabbi Dev Noily, Penny Rosenwasser, Richard Speiglman, Tova Vance*
Sanctuary Task Force Members

*Karen Cohn, Barbara Petterson*
Board of Trustees Co-Chairs

Please help Tayla Husbands-Hankin support our homeless population by donating blankets, tarps, tents, warm jackets, pants and men’s socks to be distributed to homeless folks in the area. We have a box located right by the front door (near name badges). It continues to be a pressing need.
Hope in a Challenging Time
by Rabbi Burt Jacobson

I offered the following message about hope at this year’s community seder, and I wanted to share it with the entire community.

Having grown up during the Holocaust I tend to be pessimistic. Had I been one of the Israelite slaves in ancient Egypt, I probably would have despaired at ever getting out. I desperately needed some hope in my life and some forty years ago I discovered the Ba’al Shem Tov, the founder of the 18th century Jewish renewal movement known as Hasidism.

Now what the Ba’al Shem offered the Jews of Eastern Europe was a great deal of hope. He taught his people the values of healing, joy, love, and compassion. He proclaimed God’s presence even in difficulty and suffering. The Ba’al Shem’s presence in my life has provided me with balance for my own dark broodings.

Our world is filled with gloom, and it’s easy to despair over the injustice, hatred and violence. But the Ba’al Shem Tov continues to teach me to look at events more deeply and to find the sparks of hope that might lie beneath the surface.

The Ba’al Shem thought of it this way: The Spirit can be found everywhere, giving life to everything. So the Spirit is in evil as well as good. And this evil actually has the power to bring forth goodness. The Ba’al Shem taught that because the Spirit can be found in evil, dismal situations can be transformed into encouraging situations. Sometimes the transformations happen by themselves, but they are certainly more likely to happen when forward-looking people, heroic people, catalyze the transformations through their actions. The Besht taught that every human being has the power to affect the future of the world, because each one of us contains a spark of the messiah.

Is there any evidence in the present world that the Ba’al Shem was right? Well first off, the Trump presidency has inspired the greatest movement of political resistance that we’ve seen since the 1960s. And the Bay Area and our own Kehilla Community Synagogue are staunch participants in this resistance.

Let’s look at some more evidence: Last weekend we saw young millennials staging protests against the gun lobby all over the country. And during this past year the #MeToo movement has been empowering women in remarkable ways. Did you know that the She Should Run organization reports that it’s been contacted by more than 15,000 potential women candidates from every part of America.

In 2017 coalitions of local progressive activists knocked on doors, elected scores of populist mayors, council members, legislators and other officials. [continued on page 8]
And eight of the candidates who won local and state offices last year were transgender. And there were many millennial and immigrant candidates who won as well.

And there were local progressive groups all over the country that affiliated with Our Revolution, Working Families Party, Black Lives Matter, Democratic Socialists of America, Peoples’ Action, DREAMers, Progressive Democrats of America, the Movement Voter project and Democrats for America.

And in the South a movement of young African-American populists is emerging called “Reclaim the South.” Chokwa Antar Lamumba, a black 34-year old lawyer is now the mayor of Jackson, Mississippi. He won by 93% of the vote! And Randall Woodfin, an African-America attorney became mayor of Birmingham, Alabama, with a progressive agenda.

All of this is heartening, and gives us hope that a conservative America is not inevitable. But we cannot know the future. A progressive America is also not inevitable. And with a mad pharaoh at the helm of our country there’s plenty to be frightened about.

Here’s my thinking: We dare not adjust to the status quo. We must not consider Trump the new normal. And since cutthroat capitalism has become the norm, we must struggle to topple its oppressive sovereignty for however long it takes. We dare not stop our resistance. As Wendell Phillips said, “Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty.”

We need to struggle for an America that will work for every one of its citizens and for those who seek to become citizens. Remember Abraham Joshua Heschel’s words: “The outcome of that summit meeting between Moses and Pharaoh has not come to an end. Pharaoh is not ready to capitulate. The exodus began, but it is far from having been completed.”
Purchase Graves in Mt. View Cemetery in Oakland

The view of the cemetery, the city, the bay and the Golden Gate from Kehilla’s intended burial site in Mountain View Cemetery is spectacular. It will be a peaceful and beautiful site to remember our loved ones, and for our loved ones to remember us.

Kehilla’s cemetery committee has spent two years exploring different sites and, more recently, negotiating for good prices. Kehilla now needs to line up purchases of at least 30 of 49 plots available at the Mountain View site.

If we do, the 49 plot area would be consecrated a Jewish burial ground. Mountain View, unlike the green Jewish site Kehilla helped to establish in Marin County, is conventional burial. Consider visiting the Mt. View Cemetery at the far end of Piedmont Avenue, and seeing for yourself. Leaving Kehilla, take a right on Grand Avenue, and another right on Piedmont Avenue, which ends at the cemetery, just a few minutes away. Go to the cemetery’s office, and take a map, which can help you find Plot 70 where Kehilla’s graves would be. (Even with a map, finding it can be difficult, so it’s best to go with someone who has been there.)

To follow through on the fine work done by the cemetery committee, Kehilla needs to line up at least 30 burial plot purchases by the end of June. So far, Kehilla has 22 commitments. Individual plots vary by price and position. Jane and Cathy are keeping track of requests, which will be honored on a first-come first-served basis.

So, for your own good and for that of our community, please don’t tarry. If you are interested, take a look now!

For more information, please contact Jane Hoberman (home: 510-843-6047; cell: 510-333-1848; hoberman@pacbell.net ) or Cathy Steirn (510-289-2363; ketzilah@sbcglobal.net ) or Jay Koch (510-268-0616; jaykoch8@gmail.com).

New Energies at April’s Let Our People Go Protest

by Sam Davis

At last month’s Let Our People Go protest at the Richmond jail (also known as the West County Detention Facility), the 150 people gathered were so moved to see the family of Fernando Carrillo reunited. His wife, Lourdes, has spoken at many of our protests, and has done an amazing job organizing community support which led to Fernando’s release on April 2nd, after six long months of detention at the jail. It was beautiful to see his youngest daughter playing happily at the event. When her dad was in jail, she had always been shy and tearful. Unfortunately, after the protest, the Department of Homeland Security opted to appeal the judge’s decision to release Fernando, and although we believe Fernando will remain free during this process, the family's travails are far from over. But they continue to fight, both for Fernando and others too: at Let Our People Go, Fernando and Lourdes invited everyone to show up at other detainees’ court hearings, and invited another family to the mic to speak about their case. [continued on page 10]
This month, the Let Our People Go organizing umbrella welcomed the energy of student activists from Holy Names College, who helped to MC the event and read an original spoken word piece. Attendees also heard from Rabbi Dev about the meaning of Let Our People Go in the Passover season, from poet/organizer Pennie Opal Plant about how this issue is experienced by Native people, and from Oakland Community Organizations organizer Dhoryan Rizo about Contra Costa County’s new Stand Together Contra Costa rapid response immigrant rights hotline, which is staffed by several organizations including OCO. By passing the hat, we raised over $600 to support Stand Together Contra Costa. At a table, new Let Our People Go organizers from Congregation Beth El had folks write letters to individual ICE detainees.

Join the growing momentum and stand with your community against the inhuman treatment of prisoners of all kinds—come to the next Let Our People Go protest. On Mother's Day (May 13th), we will focus on the special situation confronted by mothers in jail and ask everyone to bring flowers for imprisoned moms.

Let Our People Go is led by Kehilla's Immigration Committee at the Richmond jail where at any moment, 200 immigrants are being held by ICE, and those in the general population who can't make bail pre-trial are experiencing the same destructive loss of loved ones, jobs, and freedom. Protests are held monthly every second Sunday from 11 to noon at West County Detention Facility, 5555 Giant Hwy, Richmond, CA 94806. The next actions fall on May 13th (Mother's Day!) and June 10th. More info: facebook.com/letourpeoplego

“Memory” – A Photography Exhibit by Alex Madonik

Opening Reception, Sunday, June 10, 2-5pm.

Join us for the opening reception of “Memory,” a photography exhibit by Kehilla member Alex Madonik. Come meet the artist, shmooze, and enjoy refreshments. In the Fireside Room.

Alex writes:

I take photos to help me remember. Every moment, every place, every person is somehow unique and transitory, so we construct memories that we can hold onto. Our minds are full of images and “frames” to put them in, and we are good at constructing memories, most of which are false. We imagine we heard and saw things that we never heard or saw, because we think they are “true.”

We like to say, “the camera doesn’t lie,” and that was at least somewhat true before the age of Photoshop. All I can say is that the images you will see in my Kehilla exhibit are “true” because they correspond to original images or negatives. But, they were selected because they are significant to me. Perhaps their significance will ring true for you, perhaps not. At any rate, you will be able to see the world through my eyes (and mind). I hope to see you June 10th!

Get Your Grand Bakery Challah at Kehilla This Summer!

We are extremely excited to announce that we have partnered with Grand Bakery to give the Kehilla Community an opportunity to buy challah through us! A huge THANK YOU to Kehilla School parent, Hillary Brooks, for creating an opportunity for the Kehilla community to sign up to receive fresh challah every week!

Here's how it works:

- Everyone has until May 18 to sign up to receive challah for 8 weeks. Go to the homepage under Announcements to enroll.
- Challahs will be available for pick up each Thursday from 4-6:15pm in the main office.
- Everyone must pay for all 8 weeks worth of challah upon signing up and for the time being, we only accept online payments via credit card. NO cash/check.
- It's a "all or nothing" system, meaning that you are committing to your challah order every week for 8 weeks.
When Abraham Joshua Heschel arrived in the U.S. in 1940 from war-torn Europe, he was determined to write a book on the Ba’al Shem Tov. My teacher had lost most of his family in Poland and during that bleak time he deeply needed to connect with the hopeful spirit of the founder of Hasidism. He had other books he wanted to write, however, and he decided that the volume about the Besht would have to wait. In 1954, Heschel received a Guggenheim Fellowship to write a biography of the Ba’al Shem Tov. He engaged in research for the book for over ten years.

And then in 1965-66, during my senior year in rabbinical school, there were two serious arson attempts on the Jewish Theological Seminary. I was living on the sixth floor of the rabbinical school dormitory, and both times I had to escape by climbing through my dormitory window onto a narrow parapet and then crawling several hundred feet to safety. The first fire did little real damage, but the second, which took place in April of 1966, destroyed seventy thousand books and damaged many others. My friend and fellow student, Arthur Green, was standing in front of the Seminary next to Rabbi Heschel while the fire was raging. He told us that Heschel was weeping. “There goes my book on the Besht,” he told Green. Heschel had left his entire collection of notes and insights on the Ba’al Shem with the volumes he was studying in the rare books collection, and they were going up in flames.

The last book in English that Heschel wrote before his death was a work on the Hasidic rebbe, Menachem Mendel of Kotzk. The book was published in 1973. I read it during the period of time that I was still feeling alienated from Judaism. I didn’t know that Heschel had died just before A Passion for Truth came out in print. In the first 80 pages of the book Heschel offered a comparison between the Ba’al Shem and the Kotzker rebbe. He wrote that the Besht focused his teachings on love and joy, while the Kotzker taught about the necessity for uncovering the lies that people use to hide from the truth.

“I was taught about inexhaustible mines of meaning by the Baal Shem; from the Kotzker I learned to detect immense mountains of absurdity standing in the way.

[continued on page 12]
The one taught me song, the other—silence. The one reminded me that there could be a Heaven on earth, the other shocked me into discovering Hell in the alleged Heavenly places in our world.”

Let us look more closely at what my teacher had to say about the Ba’al Shem Tov. Heschel emphasizes the master’s buoyant teachings on goodness, on love, on cherishing the physical world, on joy and ecstasy and on erotic love. But when I first read Heschel’s description of the Besht I was most taken with the Besht’s view of human potential, because at the time I was plagued by my own sense of low self-esteem.

For the Besht, Heschel wrote, the greatest sin is forgetting that as children of God, we are royal beings and we have royal power, power to mend the world:

“All worlds are in need of exaltation, and everyone is charged to lift what is low, to advance what is left behind.”

How do we engage in this sacred work? The Besht taught that every one of us has his or her individual destiny, spiritual goals, and special forms of service that can lift what is low. He taught the daring notion of spiritual redemption for the individual—that each one of us has the ability to find liberation for our souls. And he stressed inwardness, the workings of the heart which lent importance to the personal situation of an individual.

The Ba’al Shem maintained that human beings are capable of such great spiritual achievements because of the divinity that dwells within us. He taught that every Jew could be a sanctuary. The ancient Temple in Jerusalem could be rebuilt by each Jew within his own soul.

How do we find God? Heschel writes that the Ba’al Shem taught that

“You will know God, who is above, from within, out of yourself. Man has a soul which is itself a divine portion of Divinity and through it he can intuit something of the Divinity of God who is above.”

It is not the Torah, not the tradition that takes us to God. Rather, it is the spiritual potential within each of us, our souls. If I could learn to connect with my soul, the Besht taught, I could find redemption. It is this teaching more than any other that persuaded me to return to Judaism and to take the Ba’al Shem Tov as my primary spiritual teacher.
Heads up for High Holy Days art exhibit!

As we look toward to this year’s High Holy Days, Kehilla's Art Gallery Committee invites members of the congregation to begin thinking about this year’s HHD theme on "Truth." Do you feel inspired to create a piece on Truth for our annual High Holy Days art show running from September - November? Do you perhaps already have a piece that captures this theme well? We do not have more information about the theme at this time but encourage folks to begin spinning those creative wheels. We will share more information in future newsletters. Stay tuned...

The Middle East Peace Committee Film Night: The Wanted 18, Sat. May 12, 7-9pm
The Kehilla Middle East Peace Committee is pleased to sponsor the film, The Wanted 18. It is an animated documentary: a small Palestinian village bought 18 cows and stopped buying Israeli milk.

This film will be shown at Kehilla Community Synagogue, 1300 Grand Avenue, Piedmont.

See the trailer at: http://www.imdb.com/title/tt3946020/
Donation: $10-20 (no one turned away) to benefit The Center for Jewish Nonviolence.

Thank You for Your Generosity

Annual Fund
Ellen Goldblatt in honor of Rabbi David for Burke Rainey
Dolores Taller in honor of Stephen Lee Taller
Lenore Weiss
Harriet Finkelstein
Julie Patrusky
Nicky Silver
Laura Finkler and Larry Walter in honor of Dvora Gordon
Lisa Korwin and Kip Walsh

General Fund
Michael-David Sasson
Harry and Leatrice Abrams
Julie and Michael Saxe-Taller
Linda Blackstone in honor of Paul Castleman and the Kehilla Community
Janie Lara and Victoria Alcoset

General Fund (continued)
Jonathan Frank and Elizabeth Salsburg in memory of Robert Frank
Claire Eustace and Amit Shoham
Shoshana and David Finacom

Rabbis’ Discretionary Fund
Stefan Lynch in honor of Rabbi Dev's birthday and loving support of my family

Terumah Building Fund
Julie Patrusky in honor of Jane Hoberman
The Jewish Community Foundation

The Immigrants Project Fund
Gail Grassi
Guy Grass
Thank You for Your Time

Lisa Korwin and Nancy Feinstein, for the beautification of our lobby.

Michael Butler, for his continued support in beautification and maintenance of our building.

Hillary Brooks, for the Challah Project and everything else.

Sam Davis, Rachel Kotak, Laura Weide Vyda and Hillary Brooks, for a year of let our people go protests.

Debbie Fier and Dvora Gordon, for facilitating the working class and low income discussions, and making it happen.

Many Missing Thank Yous

Keeping track of all the people who make Kehilla amazing is a difficult task! We invite you to submit names of folks who you would like to give a shout out to in the Kol Kehilla through the online submission form (homepage < Calendars & Communications > Kol Kehilla Submission Form).

May 2018 Event Listing

Please remember that all events are fragrance-free

Tues., May 1, 7:30pm. Middle East Peace Committee Meeting. Fireside Room.

Wed., May 2, 7:50am. Morning Meditation Sit with Rabbi Dev, Fireside Room. Doors open at 7:50am, short teaching at 7:55am, silent sit from 8:00-8:30am, mourner’s kaddish and announcements at 8:30am. Please enter through the patio off Fairview Avenue.

Thurs., May 3, 2-3:15pm Decoding Hebrew Continued. Four sessions taught by Bracha Stone.

Fri., May 4, 6:30-9:30pm. CHAI Kabbalat Shabbat-Legacy Shabbat. Join us for a delicious potluck shabbat dinner and a song-filled and soulful evening of spirited and contemplative Shabbat prayer led by Hazzan Shulamit, Debbie Fier, and Julie Nesnansky, with Ketzev Kehilla, too! We will honor folks who have become Legacy Donors in the past year and count the Omer together- the practice of counting the days between Passover and Shavuot, each with a special spiritual focus for tikun/healing. Please bring something veggie to share with 8-10 people for our shabbat dinner, or if you’re joining us later for the service, something to share at the kiddush afterwards. Everyone’s welcome! Kiddush provided by Jasper’s parents, Rachel Vyda Venning & Laura Weide Vyda

Saturday, May 5, 10:30am-12pm. Tot Shabbat with Jen Miriam and Alon Altman, Back Classroom/Main floor. Join in the musical fun with Jen Miriam, Alon and their puppet friends. Our morning tot shabbat service is geared especially for children up to 3 years old, and siblings and friends are welcome. Kiddush afterwards-- Bring a vegetarian snack to share if you’d like.

Sunday, May 6, 10-11:30am. Joyfully Jewish. For kindergartners and their parents who are looking for welcoming, creative, and (of course!) joyful Jewish experiences. In the back classroom.

Sunday, May 6, 10:30am-12pm. Diving into the Siddur: the Decoding Adventure Continues. Four sessions taught by Bracha Stone.

Sunday, May 6, 3-5pm. Class Discussion for Working Class/Low Income People in Our Community. In the Back Classroom. (learn more on page 7)

Monday, May 7, 7-9pm. 700 Benches: Teshuvah at Chochmat HaLev.

Wed., May 9, 7:50am. Morning Meditation Sit with Rabbi Dev, Fireside Room. Doors open at 7:50am, short teaching at 7:55am, silent sit from 8:00-8:30am, mourner’s kaddish and announcements at 8:30am.
Please enter through the patio off Fairview Avenue.

Thurs., May 10, 2-3:15pm Decoding Hebrew Continued. Four sessions taught by Bracha Stone.

Thurs., May 10, 6:30-9pm Economic Justice Committee Meeting. In the Fireside Room.

Fri., May 11, 6:30-8pm. Friday Night Peace Walk with OCO. Join Rabbi David in this walk for peace in our own community led by Oakland Community Organizations’ Ceasefire campaign. Location: Meet inside First Mt. Sinai Church, 1970 86th Ave.

Fri., May 11, 117-8:30pm. Traditional-style Kabbalat Shabbat with Rabbinic Intern SAM Luckey, Talya Husbands-Hankin, & Wren Ganin-Pinto. Fireside Room. A more traditional davenning style of Kabbalat Shabbat and Ma’ariv, the Shabbat evening service, songful and in Hebrew, following the full liturgy. Kiddush and light oneg after the service. Sponsored by Kehilla and Glitter Kehilla.

Sat., May 12, 10am-3:30pm. Sanctuary Shabbat: Morning Service Followed by Lunch and Community Conversation. (learn more on page 3)

Sat., May 12, 7-9pm. Middle East Peace Committee Film Night: The Wanted 18. (learn more on page 13)

Sun., May 13, 10:30am-12pm. Diving into the Siddur: the Decoding Adventure Continues. Four sessions taught by Bracha Stone.

Sun., May 13, 11am-noon. Protest at the Richmond Immigration Detention Center. Join Kehilla Immigration Committee and Our Family Coalition, FOR JUST ONE HOUR (11am-Noon). This is a multi-faith, accessible-for-all-ages action to call for an end to the detention/deportation and mass incarceration of our communities and neighbors. Bring signs and noisemakers to let those being interned—and forced to work—know we have not forgotten them. Location: the West County Detention, 5555 Giant Hwy, Richmond.

Mon., May 14, 7pm. Book Discussion Group. All Kehilla members are welcome. This month’s book: Let It Be Morning by Sayed Kashua. In the Fireside Room.

Monday, May 14, 7-9pm. 700 Benches: Teshuvah at Chochmat HaLev.

Wed., May 16, 7:50am. Morning Meditation Sit with Rabbi Dev, Fireside Room. Doors open at 7:50am, short teaching at 7:55am, silent sit from 8:00-8:30am, mourner’s kaddish and announcements at 8:30am. Please enter through the patio off Fairview Avenue.

Wed., May 16, 6:45pm. Kehilla’s Annual Community Meeting. Learn about the state of the congregation, share our successes, appreciate our congregational leadership and think about our hopes and goals for the coming year. And toss in some fun, music and food as well! (learn more on page 1)

Thurs., May 17, 2-3:15pm Decoding Hebrew Continued. Four sessions taught by Bracha Stone

Thurs., May 17, 6:30pm. Greening Committee Meeting. In the Back Classroom.

Thurs., May 17, 7:30pm. ‘Welcome to the Cancer Café’. This one woman show about Judith C experiences with Myeloma, an incurable blood cancer, is inspiring, moving, funny, and very educational. (learn more on page 8)

Fri., May 18, 7:30pm. Kabbalat Shabbat with Hazzan Shulamit, Julie Nesnansky, & Jen Miriam Altman. Join us to light Shabbat candles and for a song-filled and soulful evening of spirited and contemplative prayer. Kiddush follows the service. Please bring something veggie to share.

Sat., May 19, 10:30am. Shabbat Service with Rabbinic Intern SAM Luckey and Beth Dickinson. Join us as we look as we begin the book of Numbers and with a special drash by Kehilla member Rachel Bloch. Kiddush follows the service-- Please bring a veggie dish to share.

Sat., May 19, 6:00pm- Sunrise. TikkuŶ Lŷeyl Šhavuot at the East Bay JCC: 1414 Walnut St. Berkeley. Celebrate Shavuot with an exciting night of learning from teachers across the spectrum of our diverse East Bay Jewish community! Childcare available with pre-registration. More information available here: http://www.jcceastbay.org/shavuot

Sun., May 20, 10-11:30am. Joyfully Jewish. For kindergartners and their parents who are looking for welcoming, creative, and (of course!) joyful Jewish experiences. In the back classroom.
Sun., May 20, 10:30am-12pm. **Diving into the Siddur: the Decoding Adventure Continues.** Four sessions taught by Bracha Stone.

Mon., May 21: **Kehilla Administrative Offices Closed for Shavuot.**

Mon., May 21, 6:30pm. **Food Symbols Revelation — Torah Medicinals, Part I.** A class on ancestral healing foods in the Torah, and much more. In the Fireside Room. (Learn more on page 8).

Tues., May 22, 6:15pm. **Board of Trustees Meeting.** Dinners start at 6:15pm. All members are welcome. In the Back Classroom – Main Floor.

Fri., May 25, 6:30 pm. **Tot Shabbat** with Jen Miriam Kantor & Alon Altman, Social Hall. For children up to 5 years old (or older if they enjoy it) and their grown-ups. Join Jen, Alon and Jen’s puppet friends. Please bring a vegetarian potluck dish to share.

Sat., May 26, 10:30 am. **Shabbat Morning Service** with Rabbi David and Julie Nesnansky, Fireside Room. We are in parashat Naso where the most famous piece of biblical liturgy appears, the Levitical (Priestly) Blessing which begins “May YHVH bless you and protect you...” The words of that liturgy present us not only with a blessing, but a hint at a map of the spiritual path. Hmm? Our aliyot will be Leviticus 6:23-27, Lev. 7:1-3, and 4-6. If you want to leyn, contact Rabbi David. Please bring a vegetarian dish to share for the Kiddush after services.

Mon., May 28: **Kehilla Administrative Offices Closed for American Memorial Day.**

Wed., May 30, 7:50am. **Morning Meditation Sit with Rabbi Dev,** Fireside Room. Doors open at 7:50am, short teaching at 7:55am, silent sit from 8:00-8:30am, mourner’s kaddish and announcements at 8:30am. Please enter through the patio off Fairview Avenue.

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<th>Kehilla Community Synagogue</th>
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<tr>
<td>1300 Grand Avenue, Piedmont, CA 94610</td>
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<td>Please use the following number for all staff: (510) 547-2424</td>
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<tr>
<th>Senior Rabbi, Dev Noily</th>
<th><a href="mailto:RabbiDev@kehillasynagogue.org">RabbiDev@kehillasynagogue.org</a></th>
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<th>Active Emeritus Rabbi, David J. Cooper</th>
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<th>Music Director, Hazan Shulamit Wise Fairman</th>
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<tr>
<th>Founding Rabbi, Burt Jacobson</th>
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<td><a href="mailto:RabBurt@earthlink.net">RabBurt@earthlink.net</a></td>
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<th>Program and Communication Manager, Maya Joshua</th>
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<th>Bar/Bat Mitzvah Program Director, Sandra Razieli</th>
<th><a href="mailto:Sandra@kehillasynagogue.org">Sandra@kehillasynagogue.org</a></th>
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