5780 was a year of significant challenges as well as profound experiences. As is our way, Kehilla responded by supporting our friends and congregants, acting with care and integrity, and facing repression with courage and a deep belief in justice.

RESPONDING TO THE PANDEMIC
Although we had to close our building and have not been able to gather in person since March, we've kept our community open and thriving and found new ways to come together. We moved our programming online, leading to greater accessibility than ever before. We found innovative ways to be creative and respond to the evolving needs of our members, including those who celebrated joyous events or experienced illness or loss.

. . . AND TO OTHER CRISES
Kehilla's members have responded to racial injustice and white supremacy, economic inequality, homelessness, the climate emergency, attacks on immigrants, and other calls for justice in our country as well as in Israel/Palestine. Our Economic Justice Committee organized on behalf of both those who are incarcerated and the unhoused. Kehilla's Immigration Committee continued to support immigrants and refugees through accompaniment and advocacy and hosted an immigrant recently released from detention. Our Middle East Peace Committee spearheaded the release of a statement opposing the proposed Israeli annexation of the occupied West Bank.

SEEKING RACIAL JUSTICE
We expanded Kehilla's Belonging and Allyship Racial Justice Initiative, growing our affinity groups and hiring Ruthie Levin as our People of Color Organizer. As we all face a reckoning on racial justice, we continue to show up in the uprising against police violence, white supremacy, and systemic racism.

SUPPORTING OUR MISSION OF INCLUSION BY IMPROVING OUR PHYSICAL HOME
We constructed a beautiful guest suite with an accessible bathroom that enables us to provide sanctuary and serve as emergency housing for immigrants. We installed beautiful, more powerful lights and thoroughly cleaned the sanctuary (including the rafters!).

LEARNING AND CELEBRATION
Our growing community of young people in Kehilla School and our Bat/Bar Mitzvah program learned, played, and thrived together in new ways. We offered many adult learning and engagement options, including Rabbi Dev's Essentials of Judaism class, Hazzan Shulamit's Kehilla Sings, and 700 Benches: Queer Talmud for Everyone, with Rabbi Gray and Rabbi Dev. And our Community Klezmer Band led hundreds of people to dance passionately on Simchat Torah.

GENEROSITY
Over the past year, more Kehilla members than ever have generously given of their time, their wisdom, and their financial resources. We were able to respond quickly and effectively to the pandemic because of the efforts of the many volunteers who bought groceries to fellow congregants, delivered High Holy Day gift bags, did Zoom tech on our programs, and more. Hundreds of households and individuals contributed over $200,000 to assist congregants suffering economic hardship, provide scholarships for youth education, fund our immigrant accompaniment teams, and pay for building improvements. Your generosity sustains Kehilla – thank you!

We are glad to be navigating this unprecedented time together and can't wait to see what we're able to do together in the new year.

L'Shana Tova,
Lisa Korwin, Marjorie Cox, Julia Epstein, Susan Freundlich,
Stephanie Hochman, Rachael Reiley, and Michael Saxe-Taller
Your Generosity Team
Interview with Public Health Expert
Ori Tzvieli

Meet Ori Tzvieli, MD, a member of the Kehilla Board of Directors whose medical and public health expertise combine with his good nature and commitment to social justice to render him invaluable as our community’s in-house COVID-19 advisor. Ori has spent hours advising Kehilla’s leaders on how best to respond to rapidly changing circumstances. He continues to meet weekly with us as we navigate this ongoing public health crisis. Ori wears three hats at Contra Costa County’s Public Health Division: Medical Director, Deputy Health Officer, and COVID-19 Operations Chief.

Q: What brought you to Kehilla?
A. I lived in Israel until age 12, but in a secular family—I never entered a synagogue during my childhood there. When we moved to Baton Rouge, Louisiana, I attended a very southern Reform Jewish camp. Then we moved to New Jersey, and I followed my sister to Berkeley.

As a Cal freshman in 1991, I was among a group of Hillel students Kehilla invited to a seder when the shul was at Northbrae Community Church. When Laurie and I were looking for someone to marry us, we found Rabbi David Cooper, who officiated at our wedding and at namings for our daughters Hannah and Ruby. When the girls entered Kehilla School, we became more attracted by Kehilla’s commitment to tikkun olam, the values our daughters learned, and the openness to embracing our family’s Buddhist-tinged and god-optional approaches to spirituality.

Q: What path led you to medicine and public health as a career?
A. I thought I’d go into computer science like my parents, but I majored in religion at Cal while also taking pre-med courses. I chose family medicine, an interdisciplinary cradle-to-grave practice that enables a wide range of practice, from delivering babies to caring for the elderly. I loved building nourishing relationships with my patients and families. Three years ago, I gave up primary care after 20 years to move into public health. While I miss my patients and the highs of direct care, public health suits my big appetite.

Q: How do you see the pandemic unfolding, and its longer term impacts on Kehilla?
A. I suspect that we’ll have some sort of vaccine by the spring of 2021, although the issue will be how effective it is and how long it lasts. It’s going to be awhile before we can gather indoors for congregant practice together. So we are rightly focusing on building community outdoors and online with programs such as Mishpacha Groups and mutual aid and children’s activities. We need our interactions now to have greater intentionality. And when we are finally able to reunite, we will have a greater appreciation of touch and of singing.

Q: Is there anything else you’d like to discuss?
A. Ask me about my mother! She was born in Poland in 1948 to Holocaust survivors, moved to Israel at age 8 and to the U.S. in her 30s, and now divides her time between Berkeley and Israel. In Israel, she’s one of the very few teachers of Tibetan Buddhism, which my father also practices and whose vision of the world I share. Both Judaism and Buddhism are traditions that promote questioning, neither hems you in, and they both combine religion and philosophy.
Hineinu Campaign

The way forward isn’t always clear. We can’t always know what’s coming next. These truths resound with special force now. What remains solid and real is our own presence, here and now, in this moment that calls us to support one another. The Kehilla community treasures all who enter, practices love and pursues justice, and reaches deeply into Jewish traditions to guide us toward liberation and wholeness.

Like a Havdalah candle, we are braided together. Now more than ever, we need to build our resilience. Please consider joining our Hineinu Campaign with a sustaining gift to Kehilla. Your contributions make it possible for us to house immigrants, support those who are struggling, care for our building, and sustain Kehilla’s people.

Please click here to make a donation to our Hineinu Campaign. Together, we can and will transform challenges into strengths.

Contributors

Kehillans are generous, and we thank the hundreds of congregants and friends who made contributions. We can’t do what we do without your support. Your donations went to our Annual Fund, Rabbis’ Discretionary Fund, Rabbi Emeritus Fund, Youth Education Fund, Immigration Accompaniment Fund, Member Hardship Fund, and Terumah Building Fund.

Please click on this link for a list of those who made gifts from July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020.

Legacy Donors

What Will Your Legacy Be?

There are many ways to make a difference to the Kehilla community. A legacy gift sustains Kehilla for the generations to come. Since 2009, over 80 Kehilla members have committed to making gifts from their estates.

Please consider joining the Legacy Society.

Click here for a list of Kehilla Legacy Society donors and to learn how to join.
Founded in 1984, Kehilla Community Synagogue provides a home for politically progressive people who want to connect their spirituality with working for social justice.

This core of our community derives from Judaism’s spiritual mandate to heal and repair the world by exhibiting loving kindness to all, promoting justice and equity, caring for our planet, and renouncing all forms of violence and aggression.

Kehilla’s members come from all races, ethnicities, genders, sexual orientations, walks of life, and religious persuasions and backgrounds. We invite you to join us!

The Kehilla Development Program raises funds in these areas:

- Hineinu Campaign
- General Operating Fund
- Youth Scholarship Fund
- Rabbis’ Discretionary Fund
- Immigration Accompaniment
- Other Special Projects

http://kehillasynagogue.org/donate/