



# Congregation Tikkun v'Or

Ithaca Reform Temple  
Spirit • Community • Justice

Issue 226

\* September - October 2021 \* Elul - Tishrei - Chesvan 5781 אלול - תשרי - חשוון

## ***Meet Rabbi Shifrah Tobacman***

דברי הרבא

Rabbi Shifrah came to TvO in July 2021 from the San Francisco Bay Area. She describes herself as a rabbi, interfaith chaplain, and poet with a healer's spirit, a holistic bent, and a dedication to social, economic, and environmental justice.

Rabbi Shifrah comes to TvO with much experience, not only as a spiritual leader, but as a person who has taken on a variety of vocational and avocational endeavors over the years. After a ten-year career as a body worker, she worked for twenty years in the fields of health education and public health. This led her into the arenas of HIV/AIDS, disease prevention and management, patient empowerment, respiratory health, healthy housing, and health equity. She holds an MPA in health care and organizational change, and an MA in religious studies.

She cut her teeth as a progressive and social justice activist when she was a community organizer in Chicago in the late 1970s-1980s. As a long-time seeker, she found her spiritual home when she met creative progressive Jews interested in renewing Judaism to reflect their values while infusing it with spiritual meaning, and this has been her path ever since. Her spiritual and political travels also drew her to the deep activism of Compassionate Listening, which she sees as a necessary companion to compassionate action.

Rabbi Shifrah was ordained by the Aleph Alliance for Jewish Renewal in 2015. During her studies, she delighted in her work as a rabbinic intern for Congregation Ner Shalom in Cotati, CA. Since ordination, she worked for a number of years as chaplain for an organization that serves low-income seniors, particularly those living in underserved and marginalized communities. She has also served on and been the liturgical lead for a *chevra kadisha* in the Bay Area for many years, and has been an active leader and teacher in her Bay Area communities.

Rabbi Shifrah grew up in Cleveland, Ohio, and her wife Ruth grew up in Central Illinois. So in spite of Ithaca's cold winters, they're happy to be reacquainting themselves with the more dramatic seasons found here in New York.



## Co-Presidents' Words

דברי הנשיא

Dear friends,

Warm greetings in this bittersweet moment of the year when we watch summer slip away and turn our attention to September and all that is brand new.

As we consider the gifts that autumn brings, we see so much newness reflected here at TvO.

We are delighted to officially welcome Rabbi Shifrah Tobacman to the congregation! As you know, Rabbi Shifrah arrived in July. In the short time that she has been here, and after settling in beautifully here in Ithaca and at TvO, Rabbi Shifrah has already led several wonderful services and events, and is busily preparing for High Holidays (coming super early this year!), with the help of the High Holiday Committee, and Azameyra.

It has been such a gift to attend the six “meet and greet” events with Rabbi Shifrah and so many of you. Thank you to everyone who participated and to our six amazing hosts – we had over 80 people, including six of our young generation members (see photo), show up for one of these programs. It was wonderful to not only get to know Rabbi Shifrah face-to-face, rather than on Zoom, but also to deepen our understanding of one another through listening to the ways in which we each connect with TvO, and our visions of what we would like to see happen here. We want you all to know that we were listening to all



of it, and we are committed to following up on your suggestions and visions for TvO's future. It was also an incredible opportunity to get to know one another as we were sharing our own histories and heritage. What enriching moments!

We are very much looking forward to being able to see some of you in person and some of you on Zoom during our very first hybrid High Holiday services (COVID allowing ...). We recognize that we are not exactly where we had hoped to be by this time, but we hold out hope that this year will see a clearer end to the worst of the pandemic, and that we will be able to be fully together more and more.

With gratitude to begin the New Year in community,  
*Nomi and Denice*

*From Denice* - As we begin a new year together, my role with you will be changing as I step down as one of your co-presidents. This month my partner and I learned she has cancer. We do not know where this journey will take us though we are hopeful. I want to express my deepest gratitude for the gift you have given me to serve this community that I love for the past year and to have shared co-presidency with my dear and very committed friend Nomi. Now more than ever, I will be leaning into the spiritual strength and love that is our beloved community. My soul is continually nourished and lifted by having TvO as my spiritual home. Thank you!



– Warmly ... *Denice*

***Shabbat and Holidays***

שבת וחגים

More details about the High Holiday services are available in the TVO High Holiday Guide on our website. All services will also be available to all via zoom, via just one link for the High Holidays; check your email for more details on all services, or contact [info@tikkunvor.org](mailto:info@tikkunvor.org).

*Friday, Sept 3 No services scheduled*

**Saturday, August 28, Selichot 7-9 pm** (online only) with Rabbi Shifrah

**Monday, September 6, 7 pm Rosh Hashanah evening** (at TvO and online)

**Tuesday September 7 Rosh Hashanah**

**9-11:30 am Morning service** (at TvO and online)

12-1 Picnic for families with young children at Stewart Park

1-2 pm Tashlich at Stewart Park

4-5:30 pm Youth-led service (at TvO and online)

**Friday, Sept 10, 7:30 pm Kabbalat Shabbat** (Welcoming Shabbat) TBA

**Wednesday September 15**

4-5:30 pm Youth-led service (at TvO and online)

**7 pm Kol Nidre** (at TvO and online)

**Thursday September 16 Yom Kippur**

**9-11:45 am Morning Service** (at TvO and online)

11:45-12:30 p.m. Break

12:30-1:15 p.m. Yoga (online only) with Jody (Jyoti) Kessler

1:30-2:15 pm Meditation (online only) with Ira Kamp

2:30-3:45 pm The Isaiah Challenge (online only) with Christa Núñez

4:30-5:00 pm Avodah Service (online only) with Michael Margolin

5:00-5:30 pm Discussion with Rabbi Shifra (online only)

5:30-6:15 pm Yizkor (at TvO and online)

6:15-7:15 pm Neilah/ Havdalah/Shofar (at TvO and online)

*Friday, Sept 17 No services scheduled*

Monday September 20 Sukkot begins

**Friday, Sept 24, 7:30 pm Kabbalat Shabbat** (Welcoming Shabbat) Leader TBA

Wednesday September 29 Simchat Torah

**Friday, Oct 1, 7:30 pm Kabbalat Shabbat** (Welcoming Shabbat) Led by Faith Rogow

**Friday, Oct 8, 7:30 pm Kabbalat Shabbat** (Welcoming Shabbat) Led by Barbara Regenspan

**Friday, Oct 15, 7:30 pm Kabbalat Shabbat** (Welcoming Shabbat) Led by Rabbi Shifrah

**Friday, Oct 22, 7:30 pm Kabbalat Shabbat** (Welcoming Shabbat) Led by Peter Silberman

**Friday, Oct 29, 7:30 pm Kabbalat Shabbat** (Welcoming Shabbat) Led by Faith Rogow

**Saturday, October 20, 10 am Shabbat morning** Led by Rabbi Shifrah

**Contemplative Morning Services: Tuesdays from 8:30-9:30 a.m.**

This weekly morning service, alive with music, poetry, prayer, quiet contemplation and a sense of community, has become a weekly anchor for many of us in these uncertain times.

Led by Lauren Korfine, Diana Levy, Judy Saul, and Dalya Tamir. All are welcome!

Check your TvO weekly email or contact [info@tikkunvor.org](mailto:info@tikkunvor.org) for the Zoom link.

We are thrilled to welcome back so many students in person, and to meet new students joining us this year! While we all learned a lot on zoom last year, I'm looking forward to returning to learning in the same space. This year's learning will include:

- \* **Judaic Studies** - history, holidays, mitzvot, and Torah
- \* **Hebrew** (*Ivrit*) עברית learning to decode the letters and vowels and read Hebrew for participation and leadership in prayer services, with an understanding of the meanings of the words.
- \* **Ruach** (spirit) רוח and **Tefillah** (prayer) תפילה: Songs and short prayer services to practice what we are learning, with plenty of ruach (spirit and singing). Praying together as a community is an important way for children to practice what they are learning in class, build on their knowledge of Hebrew, and experience some aspects of Jewish spirituality. We will meet as a full group about once a month for tefillah, and as separate classes on the other weeks.
- \* **Hafsakah** (break / snack) הפסקה Playing and eating together is also important! This year the madrichim will be the only ones serving snack, and we will use single-serving items when appropriate, but also keeping in mind our commitment to reducing waste.
- \* **Chugim** (electives / not "ch" as in "change" but "CH" as in "CHallah.") Special projects including art, drama, dance, music, and mitzvot, to work on as a whole school or for holiday celebrations.
- \* **Ha'asharah** (enrichment from special guests) העשרה We will let you know when special guests will be joining us so that parents can come learn with us too! **Rabbi Shifrah** will be our special guest several times this year.

**Jewish Learning Experiences (JLE)** for students in grades 2-7 will begin on **Sunday, September 19 at 9 am at TVO**. Classes will be every Sunday after that through December 19 (except November 28).

**Miranda Phillips** will be teaching ביתה בג' / ד' / ה kitah bet-daled-gimel-hey -- the second, third, fourth, and fifth graders -- as a still-to-be-named cohort. (We can't keep calling them bet-daled-gimel-hey!) They will have additional guidance from several experienced madrichim, and will often separate into smaller groups for discussions and Hebrew study.

**Kenny Berkowitz** will be joined by Ithaca College student **Jacob Hanai** in teaching ביתה וז' / ז' kitah vav/zayin (sixth and seventh grade) on Sundays. Michael Margolin and Jacob will lead them in exploring Judasism on Wednesdays.

**Midweek class** for kitah vav and zayin (6th and 7th grade) starts on Wednesday, September 29 and continues through December 15 (except for November 24).

This year, due to enrollment and the need for cautious distancing, students in gan (kindergarten) and kitah alef (first grade) will meet monthly on Saturdays as our new **Family JLE** program.

Rabbi Tziona Szajman will lead students and their parents/caregivers in learning and play about Shabbat, holidays, and Torah. Their first program will be on **Saturday, September 11 at 10 am at Littletree Orchards**.

The complete schedule for the year will be posted on the TvO website and sent to all registered families.

## ***Teens v'Or***

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A note from Michael Margolin:

*I am so excited to be joining the Teens v'Or team this year!!!! I can't wait to meet some people for the first time and reconnect with others I have met. I would so love to see everyone who is interested in Teens v'Or come to all of our events. We are going to start with some outdoor experiences while the weather is warm enough and explore what it means to be a Jew on Gayogohóno land. I am hoping this year will create opportunities for us to have Jewish Learning Experiences together that will support us in getting to know each other better, our Jewish rituals and ideas and how we want to relate to them. This is a chance to bring ourselves, our ideas and beliefs to our Jewish practices and bring Jewish practices to us. We will meet somewhere in between. Hope to see you soon!*

More information on these and other events will be sent to all TvO teens:

### **Saturday September 11, Apples and Havdalah**

Come kick off the new year at TvO with some apple sauce making, hot cider and a Havdalah fire. This will be a great chance to get reconnected with ourselves, each other and the new year.

### **Saturday Sept 25, Sukkot**

Please join us in the Sukkah at TvO to celebrate and give thanks for the agricultural harvests and explore the personal harvests or accomplishments that we each are bringing in. We will share in the Sukkot ritual of welcoming our ancestors and spend some time getting to know each other around the fire and ending with Havdalah.

## ***Welcoming Committee***

## **ועד החברות**

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Welcome to our newest members:

- \* Mitch Grossman;
  - \* Amy & George Kallendar and their children Mona and Sabrina;
  - \* Jacob Brenner and Rebecca Morgenstern Brenner and their children Jake, Zach, and Sally;
- For more information about membership at TvO, contact Lois Levitan [loislevitan@gmail.com](mailto:loislevitan@gmail.com)

## ***Bereavement Support Group***

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The Bereavement Support Group of Congregation Tikkun v'Or assists members and others when they are anticipating the death of a loved one or following a death. Our kavana (intention) is to honor the spirit and traditions of Judaism, but also suggest ways to adapt traditional practices for modern times and for our multicultural community.

More information can be found on the Tikkun v'Or website under the "end of life" tab. Email us at: [BereavementSupport@tikkunvor.org](mailto:BereavementSupport@tikkunvor.org).

### ***Mazel tov!***

**מזל טוב**

Mazel tov to Yordana Wilensky, Menzie Berkowitz, and Lilliana Kress on becoming bnai mitzvah this summer.

## Condolences

## תנחומים

Congregation Tikkun v'Or sends our condolences to Elly Frankel and family. Phyllis Frankel, mother of Elly Frankel, passed away peacefully. *Phyllis was an elementary school teacher, at home parent, and a speech pathologist, along with serving as a volunteer for the League of Women Voters, UJA/Federation campaigns, Temple Beth Shalom, and on her local Board of Ethics.*

Congregation Tikkun v'Or sends our condolences to Mihal Ronen and family on the death of her father, Dov Ronen, on July 30. Mihal wrote: *Aba had a sense of humor, could be quite charming, and was a good teacher of political science and history. He was a Holocaust survivor whose trauma was always a part of him. He adored our mother and was also a force to be reckoned with.*

Congregation Tikkun v'Or send our condolences to Mark Milstein, Monica Tousevard, Badyn, and Eva on the death of Mark's father, Herb Milstein. *Herb was an avid reader and could always strike up a conversation with anyone about something he was reading. Family was a priority for him and was always happy to join a family gathering or event.*

We also send out condolences to Chris White, Marcy Little, Nikki and Alex White, and their whole family on the death of Lianna Shalek White, who died on August 8 at the age of 29.

*“Lianna had a way of endearing herself to those she met in her own special way. She was well known and loved wherever she went. She knew so many in town, her dad was sure one day she would become the mayor of Ithaca. She had an inside joke and a different way of talking with all the important people in her life. Her family is deeply grateful to the vast community of individuals who enriched Lianna's life by dedicating their time, energy, patience, love, and support to helping her experience joy, learn, grow, volunteer, and become more independent.*

*She lived her life in Ithaca, NY where she started school at Racker, then went to Caroline, Belle Sherman, Northeast Elementary, Stone Circle, and received a GED diploma from TST BOCES at age 21. After graduation Lianna worked at Challenge where she interned in the Ithaca College dishroom and at Waffle Frolic. Lianna participated in multiple programs for many years at the Ithaca Youth Bureau, CSMA, Best Buddies and many more. She also volunteered at the public library, Greenstar, BJM Elementary School, the Nature Center, the Sciencenter, the SPCA and Loaves and Fishes. She was a longtime member and volunteer at the Ithaca Reform Temple...*

*She loved animals, both real and stuffed. Lianna was not overly beholden to material things; she was a believer in practicing extreme generosity. After years of collecting dozens of Webkinz stuffed animals, Lianna decided one day she didn't want them anymore and gave them all away, only to begin collecting Webkinz again a year or two later. She did the same with mountains of math workbooks.*

*Her loss was sudden and devastating. We take comfort knowing that she is wrapped up in the arms of her dear, departed mother Susan, her beloved uncle Rob, and others that we've lost too soon.”*

There will be a celebration of Lianna's life when we can all safely gather in a large group. In lieu of flowers her family welcomes you to make a donation to Racker, an organization dedicated to supporting individuals with disabilities and their families in the Ithaca area, which had a big impact on the life of Lianna and her family.

May their memories be a blessing.

## ***Feeding the Hungry: Machil Re'avim***

מאכיל רעבים

Tikkun v'Or helps St. John's Community Services provide meals to those who need, by making 60 lunches for the 4th Thursday of each month.

Thanks to the Debbie family for making lunches for St. John's Community Services in June, and to Nina Cummings & Doug Stayman and Sue Merkel & Joe Yavitt for making lunches in July. If you would like to help please contact Dorothy Debbie at [dorothynotwork@gmail.com](mailto:dorothynotwork@gmail.com) or 272-3893. For those of you who would like to help out but can't make the lunches, you can still contribute financially by donating to the **TvO Feeding the Hungry Fund** to used to reimburse the person who buys the supplies.

## ***Many Thanks***

רב תודה

Thanks to:

- Recent service leaders and zoom hosts: Michael Margolin, Carol and Sam Shama;
- Lauren Korfine and Marne Oshae for providing music for bnai mitzvah services;
- Lauren Korfine, Diana Levy, Judy Saul, and Dalya Tamir for leading the weekly Contemplative Morning Service;
- Meet and Greet hosts: Annie Wexler and Tony Gaenslen, Judy Saul and Regi Teasley, Lara Estroff, Anne and Ira Brous, Robin and Ed Dubovi, Carol and Sam Shama;
- Annie Wexler, Lois Levitan, Jen Kagan, and Sharon Zeigler organizing Shabbat in the Park.
- Ruby Turner for spending many hours getting land ready at TvO for a new tree, and to the Tuesday morning service group who donated the tree, especially Carol Chernikoff and Annie Wexler for organizing the effort.



## ***Tribute Cards***

Tributes cards have been sent

From Julie Gozan and Tom Keck, to the Dream Team of Michael Margolin, Miranda Phillips, Lauren Korfine and Naomi Wilensky, in appreciation for helping Ruby and our family prepare for her b'mitzvah;

From Beth Cohen, in honor of Rabbi Shifrah and Ruth moving to Ithaca;

From Ann Wexler and Tony Gaenslen, to Mark Milstein and family in memory of Mark's mother, and in memory of Mark's father;

From Ann Wexler and Tony Gaenslen, to the Wilensky family in honor of Yordi's bat mitzvah;

*Tribute cards are an easy way to acknowledge lifecycle events (simchas, yahrzeits, memorials, expressions of appreciation and thanks), while reinforcing our community connections, and supporting our financial needs. Each card sent is a donation to our synagogue. For more information, contact Sherry Burford at <[sherry@tikkunvor.org](mailto:sherry@tikkunvor.org)> or at (607) 319-4982.*

## Donors

צדקה

### *Many thanks to our recent donors:*

#### *General Fund*

Nancy Goody  
Bridget Meeds  
Naomi & Joe Wilensky, with thanks to Michael and Marne for the for their teaching and singing for Yordi's bat mitzvah

#### *Nediv Lev*

Eleanor Frankel & Thomas Frank  
Lois Levitan & Martha Armstrong  
Robyn Bem  
Grace Horowitz  
Seth & Margaret Soulstein

#### *Yeladim Fund*

Honey & Henry Pine, with thanks to Michael Margolin and Marne Oshae for enhancing the services for Yordana Wilensky's bat mitzvah, and in gratefulness for the Wilensky family and Yordi becoming a bat mitzvah.

#### *For a tree in honor of our Tuesday morning services leaders:*

Shelly Marino  
Robyn Bem  
Mihal Ronen  
Sally Ezra  
Carol Chernikoff  
Sherry Altman  
Lois Levitan & Martha Armstrong

L' Shanah Tovah  
Have a sweet year!



Barbara Regenspan  
Nomi Talmi  
Jonathan Plotkin  
Margaret Page  
Andy Mager  
Mara Sapon-Shevin  
Samuel & Carol Shama  
Fran Markover  
Rachael & Elan Shapiro  
Sue Merkel  
Ann Wexler & Tony Gaenslen  
Ann Hoffman  
Nancy Young & William George  
Sharon Ziegler

Thanks to Dorian Fine for donating a wooden desk for use in the rabbi's office.

Thanks to the IAUJC (Ithaca Area United Jewish Community) for grants benefitting education, especially the scholarship fund.

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# ROSH HASHANAH

SEPTEMBER 6-7

..... DINNER SPECIAL .....

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## Ithaca Area United Jewish Community

*Honoring Our Past, Shaping Our Future*

Dear Community Members,

Since 2008, the IAUJC has administered and supported the PJ Library Jewish storybook subscription program in the Ithaca area. A program of the Harold Grinspoon Foundation, PJ Library is made possible through partnerships with philanthropists and local Jewish organizations, such as IAUJC. Families raising kids from birth through 9 years old with Judaism as part of their lives, are welcome to sign up. PJ Library welcomes all Jewish families, whatever their background, knowledge, or family make-up, or observance may be. PJ Library delivers more than 200,000 free Jewish children's books throughout the United States and Canada each month, including the 140 current subscribers in and around Ithaca. Each subscriber receives a title carefully selected for high-quality content and age-level appropriateness. Our subscriber base includes families from as far away as Corning. We also enjoy the participation of Israeli families who come to Cornell for periods of time.

We are proud to say that, since inception we have served a total of 467 children from 308 families with monthly books. In addition, we have sponsored many live events that help families get to know one another and celebrate holidays. We brought performer, Rick Recht to Ithaca to help prepare for Purim in March of 2020. During the pandemic, when gatherings were not possible, we offered monthly gift bags to interested families.

Shira Reisman, a PJ parent stated, "Over the course of the pandemic, PJ Library has helped us feel connected to the greater Ithaca Jewish Community. The monthly holiday bags were integral in making each holiday feel special as well as helping us teach our kids about Jewish traditions."

On August 29<sup>th</sup>, we held our first in-person event in close to two years. It was a celebration of the holiday season. For such events, IAUJC partners with Tikkun v'Or, Temple Beth El and the Chabad Center at Cornell. The planning included fun activities for the children such as braiding challah dough to bake at home, decorating and wearing crowns, and making greeting cards. There was also an instrument-making activity and then a drumming circle led by Sam Fishman, a professional musician. We celebrated the "Birthday of the World" by making a joyful noise! We heard the shofar and enjoyed each others' company.

The PJ Library has shown itself to be a vital project for IAUJC, touching the lives of so many! You may support this work by making a gift at

<https://iaujc.org/causes-we-support>.

Sincerely,  
Marjorie Hoffman  
Program Chair



The Jewish Federations  
OF NORTH AMERICA | The Network  
of Independent  
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**Congregational Leadership****מנהיגות**

Rabbi	Shifrah Tobacman		rabbishifrah@tikkunvor.org
Administrative Coordinator & JLE Director	Naomi Wilensky	256-1471	naomi.wilensky@tikkunvor.org
Bookkeeper	Sally Ezra	257-7017	sally.ezra@tikkunvor.org
President	Nomi Talmi	273-1309	presidents_20@tikkunvor.org
Vice-President	Laurie Willick	319-4235	lbwillick@hotmail.com
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Building Committee	Anne Brous	272-5535	Anne@ithacabakery.com
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**Tikkun v'Or Welcomes  
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## Contents תוכן

Meet Rabbi Shifrah.....	1
From the Co-Presidents.....	2
Shabbat and Holidays.....	3
Jewish Learning Experiences (JLE).....	4
Teens v'Or.....	5
Mazel tov.....	5
Welcoming.....	5
Bereavement Support Group.....	5
Condolences.....	6
Feeding the Hungry.....	7
Many Thanks.....	7
Donors.....	8
Community Ads.....	9
IAUJC.....	10
Congregational Leadership .....	11