



# Congregation Tikkun v'Or

Ithaca Reform Temple  
Spirit • Community • Justice

Issue 229

\* March - April 2022 \* Adar - Adar II - Nissan 5782

אדר - אדר II - ניסן

## ***Rabbi Shifrah Tobacman***

דברי הרבא

### UKRAINE, AND ALL OF US

Like many Ashkenazi Jews, Ukraine figures prominently in my family tree. I don't know anyone in Ukraine, but three of my four grandparents emigrated to the US from there in the early 1900's, and I assume that has a lot to do with why my feelings are so strong in regard to the current Russian invasion of that country, why I frequently find myself transfixed to news about it. It's certainly an existential threat for the people of Ukraine, which is more than enough to send my peace loving nervous system into empathetic overdrive. But this war, thousands of miles away, feels like it's an existential threat for me as well.

Sure, the continual barrage of news stories doesn't help, and the fact that this isn't any invasion is no solace either. It involves a major world power unilaterally deciding that a sizeable sovereign nation is its rightful territory. And while this isn't new in history, including in the US's colonialist and imperialist history, it's not been part of the European story since WWII. Still, it shouldn't be overlooked that there are many examples of war, illegal occupations of territory, and resultant suffering throughout the world today. All are tragic, and all are heart breaking. Plus we've seen in recent years that authoritarianism and anti-democratic forces can take hold anywhere if we don't counter them, including here in the US.

Still, I have to admit that when it comes down to it, knowing that my grandparents grew up in Ukraine, that two of my great grandparents perished in pogroms there, that I may have cousins there — these are things that send my heart and mind racing beyond my usual empathetic response to war.

March is the month of Purim. A month later is Passover — two celebrations of liberation from tyrants. On Purim, we recall the courage of Esther and her uncle Mordechai, who saved the Jews of ancient Persia by undermining Haman, the king's second in command, who plotted to have all the Jews killed. The people fast with her to give her the spiritual and emotional courage she needs to go to the king, reveal Haman's plot, and disclose that his plan would be her demise as well, since she is a Jew herself. The people are saved. On Passover, we tell the story of the Israelites' liberation from slavery, and the successful birthing of a people as they crossed the Reed Sea to freedom. Indeed, midwives play a prominent role in the beginning of that story, when they defy a decree by Pharaoh to kill the baby boys



on the birthing stool, enacting a kind of civil disobedience for the sake of life, telling Pharaoh that the women “are so lively, they give birth before we can get there.”

We can’t afford to imagine that what’s happening in Ukraine is that far from our own doorstep. Like Esther, we can’t afford to be silent in the face of tyranny anywhere. Like the midwives, we need to take compassionate action for the sake of justice, for the sake of peace, for the sake of life. And we can.

To support the people of Ukraine, Afghanistan, and other vulnerable regions around the world:

[Doctors Without Borders](#)

[UN Commission on Refugees](#)

There are many worthy organizations working to protect and expand voting rights in the US. Here are just a couple of them:

[Center for American Progress](#)

[America Votes](#)

## ***Adult Education with Rabbi Shifrah***

חינוך מבוגרים

### **Wednesday March 23, 7 pm Shmita, Part 2**

This is a shmita year on the Jewish calendar, the year of rest and release for the land and people that the Torah discusses should occur every seven years. Jews around the world are engaging in interesting projects of tikkun olam in recognition of this. Here are a few of them. Take a look, and see what you might want to join in on!

<https://hazon.org/shmita-project/shmita-stories/>

<https://www.jewishfarmernetwork.org/shmitaplots>

[https://ripmedicaldebt.org/campaign/shmita-debt-release-campaign/?](https://ripmedicaldebt.org/campaign/shmita-debt-release-campaign/)

<https://hazon.org/shmitaproject/stories/shmita-and-speaking-up/>

<https://www.jewishearhalliance.org/>

<https://dayenu.org/>

<https://www.interfaithpowerandlight.org/>

### **Wednesday April 13, 7 pm**

#### **Preparing for Pesach, and for the 49-Day Journey of Counting the Omer**

More information coming soon.

**OFFICE HOURS:** Rabbi Shifrah’s regular office hours are from 2-6 pm on Wednesday and Thursday, Congregants can also contact the rabbi directly if they’d like to schedule an appointment either during regular hours or at another time (such as weekday evenings or Sundays). Contact [rabbishifrah@tikkunvor.org](mailto:rabbishifrah@tikkunvor.org) or call/text 607-229-6747. R. Shifrah is generally not available on Monday and Tuesday, except in the case of an emergency.

***Shabbat and Holidays***

שבת וחגים

Check your weekly TvO email for more details on all services. If there is a Zoom link in the email, the service is on Zoom. If there is a Zoom link *and* a sign up for in-person attendance, it is a hybrid program. Contact [info@tikkunvor.org](mailto:info@tikkunvor.org) to be added to the email list.

*As of March 11, Friday night services will begin again at 7:30 pm.*

Friday, March 4, 7 pm (note early time!) Kabbalat Shabbat (Welcoming Shabbat)

Led by Michael Margolin and Maren Golden

Saturday, March 5, 10 am Shabbat morning BAT MITZVAH: MAREN GOLDEN

Led by Rabbi Shifrah and Michael Margolin with Maren

Friday, March 11, 7:30 pm pm Kabbalat Shabbat (Welcoming Shabbat) *Leader TBA*

Friday, March 18, 7:30 pm pm Kabbalat Shabbat (Welcoming Shabbat)

Led by Mihal Ronen and Bruce McKee

Saturday, March 19, 10 am Shabbat morning service led by Rabbi Shifrah

Friday, March 25, 7:30 pm pm Kabbalat Shabbat (Welcoming Shabbat)

Led by Michael Margolin and Ozzie Sachs

Saturday, March 26, 10 am BAR MITZVAH: OZZIE SACHS

Led by Rabbi Shifrah and Michael Margolin with Ozzie

Friday, April 1, 7:30 pm pm Kabbalat Shabbat (Welcoming Shabbat)

Led by Annie Wexler and Tony Gaenslet

Friday, April 8, 7:30 pm pm Kabbalat Shabbat (Welcoming Shabbat) Led by Rabbi Shifrah

Friday, April 15 No services (first night of Passover)

Friday, April 22, 7:30 pm pm Kabbalat Shabbat (Welcoming Shabbat) *Leader TBA*

Friday, April 29, 7:30 pm pm Kabbalat Shabbat (Welcoming Shabbat) *Leader TBA*

Saturday, April 30, 10 am Shabbat morning led by Rabbi Shifrah

*Please join us to celebrate  
the Bat-Mitzvah of  
Maren Golden  
on Friday March, 4th  
at 7 pm  
and Saturday March 5th  
at 10 am  
Sherry and Ian Golden*

*Christine Evans and Aaron Sachs  
Invite you to join them As  
Ozzie Evans Sachs  
Is called to the Torah as a bar mitzvah  
Saturday, March 26, 2022  
10am*

**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, and Judy Saul. All are welcome!

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

## Jewish Learning Experiences

בית ספר תיקון ואור

Winter adventures at JLE included a few weeks of classes on Zoom, and then back to in person learning. Thanks to all the parents, students, and teachers for their patience and understanding as we try to keep everyone healthy and safe. Did you know that our 35 students, 8 madrichol, and five teachers attend 20 different schools, in three different counties? We are truly a community program with representative from many places!

On **March 6, Rabbi Shifrah** will be meeting with JLE parents from **9:30-11:30 at 54 Burdick Hill Road** (Robin's Nest PreSchool) for conversations and connections.

On **Sunday, March 13, from 1-2:30 pm**, we are co-hosting (with Temple Beth-El and IAUGC) Ithaca's first-ever **Purim CARNival, at the Ithaca High School parking lot** (*see next page for details!*)

We were happy to welcome two guest authors recently: Lisa Rose, author of [The Singer and the Scientist](#), asked students to think about what it means to be a good friend and to do the right things to help others. Liza Weimer, author of [The Assignment](#) led us to discussions of the challenges of antisemitism, Holocaust education, and learning more about the Jewish refugees brought to [Oswego](#) during World War II.

**Kitah bet/gimel** כיתה ב/ג (second and third grade) students recently enjoyed the Cinderella story of Erica Silverman's *Raisa's Riddle*, the song *hashkivenu*, and playing jumprope during class breaks!

**Kitah daled-hey** כיתה ד/ה (fourth and fifth grade) have are becoming experts on reciting and thinking about the *Shema* and *Va'ahvata*. They love to help lead tefillah (prayers) and share their interpretations of important prayers.

In **kitah vav/zayin** כיתה ו/ז (sixth and seventh grade) studied the detailed instructions about the use of *choshen*, (jeweled breastplate for the priests and the Torah) and the building of the mishkan (altar). They made their own *chosen* to use for making decisions, and saw the work of architect Louis Kahn. They created their own *midrash* about Moshe receiving the Ten Commandments, and learned about geologist/historian Naomi Oreskes, one of the world's leading voices on the role of science and the reality of anthropogenic climate change. If you walked in to the class at just the right time, you may have gotten hit with a pillow; the students were determining the **Tablet Toss World Champion of the World**, pretending that the cushions were Tablets and they were each Moshe, throwing their Tablets across the room.

**Midweek Vav and Zayin** welcomed Libi Warmund as an assistant teacher.

**Family JLE** played a Shabbat adventure game at Tikkun v'Or. Children performed acts of kindness, feats of daring, and rituals of joy. They'll meet again on **March 12 and April 9**.

Four families joined in for **Family JAM** havdalah on zoom. They learned the ways we say goodbye to Shabbat and hello to a new week. *Shavua tov!*

Do you know that you can get **free Jewish books** every month? For ages birth-8, sign up for [PJ Library](#). For ages 9-12, sign up for [PJ Our Way](#). Thanks to IUAJC for being the local host of this program.

**Summer Camp?** Yes! Contact [naomi.wilensky@tikkunvor.org](mailto:naomi.wilensky@tikkunvor.org) to find out about Jewish overnight summer camps and funding available from [One Happy Camper](#) and [IAUGC](#).



# PURIM CARNIVAL!

SUNDAY, MARCH 13TH, 2022

1-2:30 PM

ITHACA HIGH SCHOOL PARKING LOT



**GAMES! COSTUMES!  
PERFORMANCES!  
AND MORE!**



Play iconic carnival games, do art projects, and enjoy the topsy-turvy silliness of Purim all from the safety and comfort of your car as you drive from station to station



- Come to the Ithaca High School parking lot any time between 1-2:15 pm
- Stay in your car and follow the marked route to play all of the games
- Costumes are encouraged for both the passengers and the car itself!
- Tune in to our special radio station for Purim songs and to hear our special Purim performance at 2:15
  - The CARnival is free, but we encourage you to bring shelf-stable foods (especially canned soup, beans, tuna, peanut butter, canned veggies) for donation and some coins for the tzedakah toss

Hosted by Tikkun v'Or, Temple Beth-El, and IAUJC

## Presidents' Words

דברי הנשיא

Dear TvO Community,

We hope that you've been able to stay warm and get out to enjoy the beautiful Central New York winter! We wanted to share with you some of the initiatives that have been moving forward since we last shared with you in January.

Most recently, members should have received an invitation to join the brand new **TvO members' listserv**. The listserv is a way for members to communicate directly with other people in our supportive congregational community, allowing us to share what is on our minds and in our hearts with everyone else in the *mishpacha* (family). Thank you to Bruce McKee, Mihal Ronen, Naomi Wilensky and Jonathon Plotkin (JP) with the assistance of Martin Berggren for getting the listserv up and running! We've also recently updated our Google Workspace to the most current non-profit version which will allow us to do more with shared drives and expand our capabilities.

The TvO board enthusiastically signed onto a resolution Urging the Department of Interior and Bureau of Indian Affairs to Heed Gayogohón' Removal of Clint Halftown from Representative Role. Try your hands at navigating the new listserv to the February 6th conversation: "Halftown Must Go Resolution to sign and share," posted by Michael Margolin.

We've been evaluating the way we communicate with our members. Obviously we now have the listserv, but after this current **newsletter** edition, you may notice a change to the frequency and format of the newsletter as well. Furthermore, the **weekly e-news** will be getting its own "refresh," so stay tuned. Thank you to Elly, Sue, Naomi and Faith for your work to enhance our overall communication efforts.

**Small Sparks** has officially launched. Thank you to Lara Estroff and Dalia Bosworth for starting us off last week with "A Single Step." We're excited to see this initiative grow several "small sparks" on the schedule including "What Gives," "Savoring Marge Piercy" and others; check out <https://tikkunvor.org/small-sparks/> for all of the "Juicy" details. Thank you to Jeff Bercuvitz and many others who have been instrumental in bringing this initiative to fruition.

Since the Congregation Beth Israel attack in Colleyville Texas, we have heard a request by congregants to host an **Active Attacker Training**. Recently, we shared with you a few opportunities we became aware of from the URJ, to participate in such a training. Based on positive feedback received from those who participated, we will be looking at bringing training to our local community in the near future. Furthermore, we continue discussions with the Tompkins County Sheriff's Department to hold an in person training at TvO; something that has been put on hold since Covid reared its head two years ago.

Last, but certainly not least, as part of our enhanced communication efforts, we have brought a **TvO Liaison** idea to fruition. What does this mean? The liaison system is composed of small groups of members randomly assigned to members of the TvO board. TvO Liaisons will serve as a way to meet several needs, including: providing another way to get to know one another and keep us more connected, allowing for small group polling and sharing of key information, and offering a direct path for you, our TvO members, to share your thoughts and concerns with the leadership via your board liaison. Thanks to each and every board member for taking on this liaison role and being a conduit between the board and the congregants we aim to serve.

We look forward to meeting with you in the coming weeks as the membership decides how we'll be moving forward with our spiritual leadership. It's been a busy couple of months here at TvO and we hope that each of you is finding a meaningful way to connect and that some of the newest initiatives foster your ability to do just that!

In sacred community,

*Shawn Murphy and Nomi Talmi, Co-Presidents*

## ***Passover***

פסח

Passover is coming! The first night is April 15. We'll be doing a celebration at TvO at some point during the holiday, but are still working out the details. Stay tuned!

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

תינו ואור

Teens v'Or tackles big ideas: They met in February to discuss the possibilities and power of love and relationships, with the help of bell hooks' All About Love: New Visions. They also discussed issues of race, assimilation, and the American Jewish community while watching the documentary "Little White Lie" by Lacey Schwartz. Want to be part of these conversations? Want to know what's next? Contact [michael.j.margolin5@gmail.com](mailto:michael.j.margolin5@gmail.com).

## ***Condolences***

תנחומים

Tikkun v'Or sends our condolences to Denice Cassaro and her family on the recent loss of Denice's mother, Rita Cassaro.

## ***Welcoming Committee***

ועד החברות

We love to welcome and get to know our new members. For more information contact Lois Levitan, [loislevitan@gmail.com](mailto:loislevitan@gmail.com).

## ***Many Thanks***

רב תודה

Thanks to:

**Recent Shabbat leaders:** Peter Silberman, Anne Brous, Mihal Ronen, Barbara Reganspan, Carol Shama, Faith Rogow, Miranda Phillips, Bobby Kleinberg, and Julia and Will; students of kitah vav and zayin (6th grade: Eli, Adam, Josh, Zach L, Mona, Sammy) and Kitah Zayin (7th grade: Tsadia, Julia, Ozzie, Dalia, Maren) and their teachers Michael Margolin, Kenny Berkowitz, Jacob Hanai, Miranda Phillips, Sam Sachs, and Owen Thomas;

Thanks to Lauren Korfine and Marne Oshae for adding music to so many of our services;

**Recent Zoom angels:** Beth Cohen, Faith Rogow, Mara Sapon-Shevin, Rabbi Shifrah for leading us for Shabbat services and adult education and an important Listening Circle; Recording of programs can be found at [www.tikkunvor.org](http://www.tikkunvor.org)

Thanks to Will Fudeman for bringing us special guests speakers Jonathan Kuttav and Yehezkel Landau.

## ***Bereavement Support Group***

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Congregation Tikkun v'Or's Bereavement Support Group is pleased to announce it has created a revised Shiva booklet. We have added Hebrew prayers and more poems, songs, and readings. Thank you to Patti Jacobson and Elly Frankel, with big assists from Diana Levy and Rabbi Shifrah (and Claudia Brenner for handling the printing), for their work on this project.

We also have a slightly different process for contact when a loved one dies, which includes these options:

1. Email the Bereavement Support Group at: [BereavementSupport@tikkunvor.org](mailto:BereavementSupport@tikkunvor.org), which reaches everyone in the group, including Rabbi Shifrah and Naomi Wilensky. You can also email Rabbi Shifrah directly at: [rabbishifrah@tikkunvor.org](mailto:rabbishifrah@tikkunvor.org).

2. If you prefer to not use email, please call Rabbi Shifrah or a member of the group:

- Rabbi Shifrah cell: 607-229-6747; TVO office: 607-256-1471.

You can find phone numbers of other members of the Bereavement Support Group in the TvO directory. Current members include:

- Judy Saul, Chair
- Diana Levy
- Patti Jacobson
- Lois Levitan
- Martha Armstrong
- Elly Frankel
- Claudia Brenner
- Lauren Korfine
- Sherry Altman
- Corinne Stern

The Bereavement Support Group is available to help members with end of life resources and decisions, when a death is approaching or imminent, and to conduct Shiva services. Please also reach out to us with questions or conversations regarding Jewish traditions around death and mourning.

## ***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 those who made lunches these past few months:

December: Nina Cummings, Doug Stayman, Sue Merkel, and Joe Yavitt

January: Harriet & Howard London and Paul & Dorothy Debbie

February: Ozzie Sachs and Christine Evans

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.





Ithaca Area United  
Jewish Community

Honoring Our Past, Shaping Our Future



### News from IAUJC...

- \* The PJ Library Tu b'Shevat event on January 26th was a grand success. About 70 folks attended to learn about trees, enjoy two storywalks of PJ books and get to know each other.
- \* Our Ethiopian Olim Campaign continues. If you would like to contribute to aid new Ethiopian immigrants settle in Israel, please go to <https://iaujc.org/causes-we-support>.
- \* IAUJC is supporting the upcoming Purim CARNIVAL on March 13th. Thank you Naomi Wilensky and Rabbi Brody of TBE for organizing this community event!
- \* **SAVE THE DATE:** The IAUJC Annual Holocaust Commemoration will be held virtually on April 27th. To register email [Sherrie@versatilewriting.com](mailto:Sherrie@versatilewriting.com).

## Donors

צדקה

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

#### *General Fund*

Vilasini Mills, in honor of Paul and Hlelen Mills  
Carol Bushberg, in honor of Cantor Abbe Lyons  
Bridget Meeds  
Thomas Sperry & Lisa Tsetse

#### *Nediv Lev*

Nancy Goody

*In support of the Landau/Kuttaab Dialogue  
St John's Church  
Najeeb & Manazza Rehman*

Thanks to the [IAUJC](https://iaujc.org) (Ithaca Area United Jewish Community) for grants benefitting education, especially the scholarship fund.

## ***Small Sparks***

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Small Sparks is a creative programming effort aimed at inspiring a broad range of people in the TvO community to hatch and participate in informal, easy-to-organize programs that build on a pleasure, passion or interest to bring people together. Small Sparks can be launched by anyone in our congregation, no matter what involvement they have had with TvO, or how Jewishly knowledgeable they are (or are not). These may be one-time events or ongoing activities. We hope you will always find them to be some combination of stimulating, engaging, uplifting, creative, and fun.

Yes, we need careful physical distancing at this time but we do NOT want social distancing. On the contrary, we want to build community as much as possible and help avoid isolation, even as we remain careful about safety.

More information about Small Sparks programs will be sent to TVO members as they are scheduled. Email questions to Jeff Bercuvitz at [jeff@thesparkscenter.org](mailto:jeff@thesparkscenter.org)

Here's what's coming up in March:

***What Gives? with Miranda Phillips*** **Saturday, March 12, 2:15-3:30 pm at TvO**

It's a Purim tradition to give -- to friends and family, and to people in need. It reminds us how many ways there are to give. We'll reflect: How do you like to give? What's meaningful to you about the ways you give? Can you think of any Jewish giving practices? Are there simple ways you could tie your giving to your Jewish life to make one or the other even more meaningful? We'll also explore resources and challenges around giving.

Followed by: **Singing (in person at TvO) from 3:30-5:30 pm**

Join us for two more Purim traditions: we'll start with some brief "Purim davvenen" (silly versions of familiar prayers), then sing just for the joy of it!

Come for either or both of the above (discussion and/or singing). Just please bring your mask. And RSVP: [phillipsville@gmail.com](mailto:phillipsville@gmail.com). We'd love to have you with us!

***Savoring Marge Piercy with Martha Armstrong*** **Saturday, March 19, 2-4 pm**

People will each bring a couple of their favorite Marge Piercy poems and we will read them and talk about why they are moving. Then we will write some poems inspired by these themes.

***Kosher Pixels with Chris Xenakis*** **Saturdays, March 26, April 23, & May 21, 5 pm on Zoom**

Chris is inviting interested TvO members and friends to take a picture (or take several pictures; even cell phone snapshots are fine!) and share them with one another on Zoom. What do your favorite photo(s) mean to you, and/or how do your special photos connect with a meaningful part of your life that you want to share? For the month of March, Chris is inviting people to share one or more favorite photographs, along the loose theme of "Just In Spring...." (or feel free to share any photograph that is meaningful to you.)

In April:

***Jew-bilation with Jeff Bercuvitz*** **Saturday, April 2, 3-5 pm**  
***Torah Tuesday with Carol Shama*** **Tuesday, April 5, 7-8 pm**  
***Apple Spirits & Awakened Hearts with Tony Gaenslen & Fran Markover*** **Sunday, April 24**  
***Stories That Zoom with Bruce McKee and Jonathan (JP) Plotkin***  
***Write On! with Annie Wexler***  
***Pollinator Picnic with Stacy Smith***

**Congregational Leadership**

מנהיגות

Rabbi	Shifrah Tobacman		<a href="mailto:rabbishifrah@tikkunvor.org">rabbishifrah@tikkunvor.org</a>
Administrative Coordinator & JLE Director	Naomi Wilensky	256-1471	<a href="mailto:naomi.wilensky@tikkunvor.org">naomi.wilensky@tikkunvor.org</a>
Bookkeeper	Sally Ezra	257-7017	<a href="mailto:sally.ezra@tikkunvor.org">sally.ezra@tikkunvor.org</a>
President	Nomi Talmi	273-1309	<a href="mailto:presidents_20@tikkunvor.org">presidents_20@tikkunvor.org</a>
	Shawn Murphy	351-7898	
Vice-President	Laurie Willick	319-4235	<a href="mailto:lbwillick@hotmail.com">lbwillick@hotmail.com</a>
	Sue Merkel		<a href="mailto:smyavitt@gmail.com">smyavitt@gmail.com</a>
Past-Presidents	Lauren Korfine	256-0132	<a href="mailto:lk79@cornell.edu">lk79@cornell.edu</a>
	Shira Reisman	339-6830	<a href="mailto:shishi923@gmail.com">shishi923@gmail.com</a>
Scribe	Miranda Phillips	277-1241	<a href="mailto:phillipsville@gmail.com">phillipsville@gmail.com</a>
Treasurer	Carol Shama	315 480-6365	<a href="mailto:csshama462@gmail.com">csshama462@gmail.com</a>
At-Large Board Members	Robin Dubovi		<a href="mailto:robin.dubovi@gmail.com">robin.dubovi@gmail.com</a>
	Interim: Melissa Enns		
Avodah Committee	Anne Brous	229-2592	<a href="mailto:Anne@ithacabakery.com">Anne@ithacabakery.com</a>
	Peter Silberman		<a href="mailto:silbermanp@gmail.com">silbermanp@gmail.com</a>
Building Committee	Anne Brous	272-5535	<a href="mailto:Anne@ithacabakery.com">Anne@ithacabakery.com</a>
	Shawn Murphy		<a href="mailto:smurphesf@gmail.com">smurphesf@gmail.com</a>
Caring Committee	Carol Shama	315-480-6365	<a href="mailto:csshama462@gmail.com">csshama462@gmail.com</a>
Finance Committee	Ira Brous	272-5535	<a href="mailto:ira@ithacabakery.com">ira@ithacabakery.com</a>
	Doug Stayman	280-8975	<a href="mailto:dms43@cornell.edu">dms43@cornell.edu</a>
Jewish Education Committee	Alita Howard		<a href="mailto:alitahoward@gmail.com">alitahoward@gmail.com</a>
Israel/Palestine Committee	Lois Levitan		<a href="mailto:loislevitan@gmail.com">loislevitan@gmail.com</a>
JCWS /Racial Justice Committee	Michael Margolin		<a href="mailto:michael.j.margolin5@gmail.com">michael.j.margolin5@gmail.com</a>
Program Committee	<i>open</i>		
Action Against Hunger Committee	Dorothy Debbie		<a href="mailto:dorothynotwork@gmail.com">dorothynotwork@gmail.com</a>
Welcoming Committee	Lois Levitan		<a href="mailto:loislevitan@gmail.com">loislevitan@gmail.com</a>
Bereavement Support Committee	Judy Saul		<a href="mailto:BereavementSupport@tikkunvor.org">BereavementSupport@tikkunvor.org</a>
Teens v'Or	Michael Margolin		<a href="mailto:michael.j.margolin5@gmail.com">michael.j.margolin5@gmail.com</a>

For updated calendar information,  
 call 607-256-1471  
 or check <[www.tikkunvor.org](http://www.tikkunvor.org)>  
**LIKE us on Facebook!**

Congregation Tikkun v'Or  
PO Box 3981  
Ithaca NY 14852



**Tikkun v'Or Welcomes  
Interfaith Families!**

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(607) 256-1471 [info@tikkunvor.org](mailto:info@tikkunvor.org) <[www.tikkunvor.org](http://www.tikkunvor.org)>

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