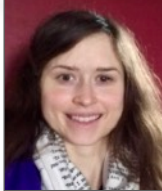




# THE ILLUMINATOR

Or Emet – The Minnesota Congregation for Humanistic Judaism

Spring/Summer 2022 issue  
Published in May 2022



## *Rituals That Ground and Inspire*

by Eva R. Cohen  
Ritual Leader and Rabbinic Student

Over the past two strange years, I've thought a lot about rituals at Or Emet — our Blessing for Children, Passover Seders, Shabbat and B Mitzvah services.

Whether we participate in person or online, these rituals bring our community together to reinforce our shared values through language, music, and movement. They celebrate our heritage and our transitions between days, seasons, and life stages. In the words of author Sasha Sagan, these rituals “facilitate empathy, gratitude, and awe” as they help us to process “the mysterious beauty and terror of being alive in our universe.”

Sagan argues that secular people need and deserve meaningful celebrations, community, and ritual. (Check out [Humanistic Judaism Magazine's fall 2019 interview with Sagan](#).) As a Humanistic rabbi-to-be, I'm biased to agree with her, but I think that secular people outside of organized humanism would concur, too. When we reject religion because of its incompatibility with our commitments to science, reason, and human dignity, we can wind up rootless without new, *compatible* communities and rituals to anchor us.

Some foundational social scientists frame ritual's importance. Arnold van Gennep highlights how rites of passage facilitate transitions across liminal stages like the teenage years. Émile Durkheim explores how ritual brings collective consciousness to life, getting participants to act out and internalize their culture's core beliefs.

Sociological analysis shows how ritual maintains community solidarity. Clifford Geertz describes how ritual synthesizes world view and ethos, bringing together our visions of the world as it is and how it ought to be.

Ritual does powerful psychological and sociocultural work. Secular people shouldn't miss out on this work's benefits when we reject rituals like Brit Milah or blessing an all-powerful God. Instead of throwing out the ritual baby with the religious bathwater, we need new or transformed rituals that encode and enact our positive beliefs.

I hope we can all find rituals that ground and inspire us. With the ongoing pandemic, inequality, inflation, climate crisis, and escalating war in Ukraine, times are tough. Through all this, ritual can replace our feelings of isolation with connection, of numbness with appreciation, of impotence with renewed commitment to act. For myself, having a family Shabbat ritual, as we wait for COVID-19 vaccines for our toddler, helps remind me that time is not standing still. Blessing the earth that nourishes “the fruit of the vine” along with people's hard work that “bring[s] forth bread from the earth” fills me with weekly gratitude. As the glow of the candles shines on my daughter's face, I feel connected to a long line of Jewish people who have survived hardship. Where is my light? My light is in knowing that the continuity of the Jewish people lives on in our ritual. “Am Yisrael chai” (The people of Israel live) — *humanistically*.



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## **President's Message**

by Allan Malkis



I am told that spring is arriving — although the signs are mixed. Hopefully, by the time you read this the weather will have warmed up and turned Minnesota into a garden of floral delights. I love spring because in the northern areas where I have lived (New York and Minnesota) there's such a burst of energy and beauty in contrast to the previous five months of winter. I suspect that people in more temperate climates don't get the same lift.

Or Emet has had a roller coaster winter — coping with COVID surges, improving our technical capacity, and returning to limited in-person activities. Our wonderful crew of technical experts, especially Sergei Rakhmanov and Dan Gladen, have enabled us to provide hybrid programming. Ritual leader Eva Cohen has capably handled the intricacies of hybrid presentations and consistently woven relevant, topical, and moving observations into the Shabbat services. Eva has contributed all this while completing coursework in the rabbinic program of the International Institute for Secular Humanistic Judaism. Her learnings have informed what she brings to Or Emet. We look forward to her future ordination when, as our rabbi, she can more fully represent Or Emet within the broader Jewish community.

The congregation has grown — adding new members and new students at the Jewish Cultural Sunday School. Our Executive Committee has worked so well together that we all hope to be reelected and return next year. A big shoutout to our new treasurer, Seth Binder, who has taken over for the indispensable Sharon Miller and helped us navigate that transition.

We had a successful new member brunch, celebrating several new members joining Or Emet. Leadership events focused on finances and volunteerism were fruitful and led to some great suggestions. Current and new members can expect to receive information about volunteer opportunities in the next month. New ideas for improving our finances will be proposed at the annual meeting on June 5<sup>th</sup>.

In April I attended the Society for Humanistic Judaism's (SHJ) annual conference and in-person board meeting in Illinois. You will find a brief report on the event on page 8. I hope to draw on the experiences and insights of leaders in the SHJ community as we grow Or Emet.

Finally, I want to note that I am trying to bring events and information from the larger Twin Cities Jewish community to our attention in my weekly emails. We are placing greater emphasis on being part of the broader Jewish community. Whether theistic or non-theistic, there are many ways in which we all share and want to promote Jewish history and culture. I am also working to increase awareness about Or Emet within the Jewish community.

## *Or Emet Annual Meeting*

At the Annual meeting on June 5, the Nominations Committee will present the recommended slate noted below for election to Or Emet's 2022-2023 Executive Committee. Members will have the opportunity to nominate other candidates from the floor in addition to voting for the recommended slate.

### **Slate of candidates**

President: Allan Malkis  
Vice-President: Jeff Pipes  
Treasurer: Seth Binder  
At-Large: Sarah Berman-Young  
At Large: Tammy Bloom



The offices of president, vice-president, and treasurer are elected annually. Two at-large members of the Executive Committee serve two-year terms and are usually elected in alternate years.

The 2021-2022 Executive Committee has worked so well together that they want to build on their experience by continuing to serve in the new program year. Or Emet is fortunate they are willing to serve our community and to attend to matters that support Or Emet's spiritual and intellectual life.

### **OR EMET ANNUAL MEETING OFFICIAL NOTICE**

Sunday, June 5, 2022 | 10:00 am – 12:00 noon

### **ANNUAL MEETING AND JEWISH CULTURAL SUNDAY SCHOOL**

### **AT ST. PAUL TALMUD TORAH**

Also available via Zoom

~ Final Jewish Cultural Sunday School session will occur concurrently with annual meeting ~  
Sorry, no snacks at the annual meeting

#### **Agenda includes:**

- President's and rabbinic candidate's remarks
- JCSS teacher recognition
- Overview of 2021-2022 accomplishments
- Financial report with 2022-2023 budget
- Volunteer recognition and recruitment
- Election of 2022-2023 officers and at-large executive committee members

### **FOLLOWING THE ANNUAL MEETING, JOIN US TO CONTINUE CELEBRATING THE DAY**

Potluck picnic outdoors at 12:00 noon — weather permitting  
Provide your own plates, dinnerware, and cups  
Signup will be online

- At the day's events, items will be collected for donation
- Listening House: bring empty pill bottles and personal care items
  - NorthPoint Health & Wellness Center's community food shelf: bring food, personal, and home care items (see pg 15)

## Jewish Cultural Sunday School Update

by Arty Dorman

Director of the Or Emet Jewish Cultural Sunday School



My fifth year as director of our Jewish Cultural Sunday School is nearing an end with just two sessions remaining this spring. Then, I will — with mixed feelings — pass the torch on to another director. I am confident she/he/they will continue to maintain and grow a robust program, that aims to:

- 1) imbed in our children a positive feeling about having a Jewish heritage,
- 2) instill knowledge and understanding of our shared history, culture, tradition, and values, as Jews and as humanists, and
- 3) make connections with other Jewish kids/families.

While serving as the JCSS director, it has been a joy to get to know the children who have attended JCSS and their parents as well. It is especially gratifying to observe their process of maturing over that time — and, for some, to see them take on the challenge and responsibility of completing a B Mitzvah, and then to see them go on to become wonderful young adults, pursuing interests and demonstrating values of which we can all be proud.

Though my successor has not yet been identified, that process is underway and hopefully a new director will be named before the annual meeting on June 5. I conducted surveys twice while in this position, and the feedback about the program has been valuable. One of the tools I hope to hand over to our new director is an updated parent survey. Results of that recent parent survey will be shared at the annual meeting.

Aside from seeing bright, good-hearted kids through the past five years of JCSS, I can think of several specific changes in the program over that time. One has been, for better or worse, learning how to conduct classes over Zoom when we cannot meet in person.

The majority of parents, students, and teachers prefer to meet in person. At the same time, if/when health conditions become dicey again, we know we can continue to function without losing too much ground. Also, we won't need to cancel because of snow!

In my first year as director we added the summer Havdalah event to our program. While not strictly speaking part of the school, it is a way for our kids to continue to be connected to the Or Emet community during the summer break. By the way, this event came about as the result of a parent survey — so your input really does matter. This year's Havdalah is on July 30.

Before I took the helm as director of JCSS there was an ad hoc curriculum team in place. I was a participant on that project, along with several teachers (including Eva) and parents. A cyclic framework was developed that offered different topics in each group over two or three years. Then, as students return to the same group for several years, they are not merely repeating everything from the year before. During my time as director that framework has been applied, though more heartily with the older groups than the younger. I recommend that it be revisited, perhaps this summer or next, and will be happy to work with the new director to provide continuity.

I am not going away and certainly plan to continue to have an active presence in Or Emet, so this in no way is a goodbye. I will miss knowing the students, and their parents, but am ready to give someone else the opportunity to have that privilege and pleasure. I extend a sincere thank you to the Or Emet community for entrusting me with that role these past five years.



For more information about Or Emet's Jewish Cultural Sunday School, visit the [School Blog](#) on the Or Emet website [oremnet.org](http://oremnet.org). Visitors are welcome to join JCSS classes. To arrange a visit, learn more about JCSS, the Youth Program, and/or for school-related questions and issues, email [school-1@oremnet.org](mailto:school-1@oremnet.org).





## Social Justice/Social Action Committee Update

Howard Schneider and Gwyn Leder  
Social Justice/Social Action Co-Chairs



### Or Emet's Annual Refugee Shabbat Program

On Friday March 4, Or Emet held its annual Refugee Shabbat program attended by more than 30 members and friends (in-person and on Zoom). At that time, the Russian invasion of Ukraine had been only a week old.

Following our regular service, which included refugee-relevant material from ritual leader Eva Cohen, we heard from two guest speakers via Zoom. Nikki Salzman, Major Gifts Director for the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), discussed her agency's role in supporting Ukrainians fleeing their home country with hardly anything more than the clothes on their backs. Molly Henry, Global Team Leader for Alight (formerly the American Refugee Committee), discussed her agency's role in helping Afghan refugees settle into their new Twin Cities homes and also providing humanitarian support for Ukrainians.

Since February 24 over five million refugees have fled Ukraine. The Biden administration has promised that 100,000 will be settled in the US. For agency updates check out the following links. Donations are welcome and support the efforts noted in these links: [HIAS Responds to the Crisis in Ukraine](#) and [Alight Work in Ukraine](#).

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### Collections of Food, Personal, and Home Care Items

#### ***Passover Collection***

— Compared to previous efforts we collected only a small amount of items for the NorthPoint Health & Wellness Center in Minneapolis.

#### ***May Collection Opportunity for NorthPoint Health & Wellness Center***

— Risa Cohen, our lead collections volunteer, has organized additional donation opportunities on May 15, May 20, May 21, and at the annual meeting. More information is on page 15, in the president's email, and on [oremnet.org](#).

#### ***Ongoing collections for Listening House of St. Paul***

— At every Shabbat and Sunday program we continue to collect personal care products for homeless services offered at Listening House. Collectibles include small travel-sized items and empty prescription pill containers. Think of dental care packets that your dental clinic hands out — ask for a few extra to donate!

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### Moms Demand Action, Gun Violence Awareness Day, and Wear Orange Weekend

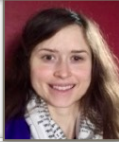


The April 10 Sunday adult program was presented by Moms Demand Action. They discussed MDA's organizing and legislative efforts to protect people from gun violence.

— June events will present opportunities to make our voices heard during Gun Violence Awareness Day on Friday, June 3 and Wear Orange Weekend. These events are to remember lives lost to gun violence and to raise awareness about this public health issue.

— Facts: In an average year, 462 people die and 680 people are wounded by guns in Minnesota. Gun violence costs Minnesota \$2.9 billion each year, with \$83.3 million paid by taxpayers. Firearms are the leading cause of death among children and teens in Minnesota. Nationally, gun suicides claim nearly 24,000 lives each year.

*Or Emet members are welcome to join the Social Justice/Social Action Committee and/or offer input on activities and issues. If you wish to be involved, contact Howard Schneider [hamptonmeadow@msn.com](mailto:hamptonmeadow@msn.com) or 651.278.2286*



## *My Journey to Becoming a Rabbi* *by Eva R. Cohen*

Continuing my journey in the [IISHJ rabbinic program](#) and as Or Emet's ritual leader, I feel grateful for progress while also frustrated by some setbacks.

**My progress toward ordination continues, but I now anticipate being ordained in November 2023, not this November as I originally hoped.** The last two years have been demanding. Adjusting to parenthood and pandemic challenges, working and going to school part-time, and sharing childcare responsibilities with my husband, Jack, a full-time nursing student, have all made finding time for paper-writing challenging. Despite these obstacles, I have written several new papers. My critical assessment of [Judaism Beyond God](#) met one of two final requirements for the Philosophy of Secular Humanistic Judaism course. I also completed an analysis of [an interesting Yiddish Book Center oral history](#), fulfilling my final requirements for the North American Jewish Culture course.

Besides papers, I took a six-session Israeli Culture Zoom class with Rabbi Sivan Maas, the dean of Tmura-IISHJ in Jerusalem. Rabbi Maas's insight on modern Israeli humanistic concerns was valuable. I aim to complete another paper before Or Emet's annual meeting, and to give a detailed report on my rabbinic program progress there. I remain committed to finishing my rabbinic training.

Part of that training involves guest leadership experience. In January, I led a Zoom Havdalah service and discussion for Arizona's [Or Adam Congregation for Humanistic Judaism](#). This event was part of the National Council of Jewish Women's [Repro Shabbat 2022](#), an event focused on abortion rights. I also participated in April's Secular Seder as a Haggadah contributor, reader, and discussion leader. This Zoom Seder was a collaboration between the [Secular Student Alliance](#) and the Society for Humanistic Judaism's [HuJews on Campus](#) initiative. In each of these online events, I appreciated connecting with members and

friends of our movement across wide geographic distance. The power of digital gatherings brings the international Humanistic Jewish community together without travel barriers, a pandemic lesson we should carry forward.

At home with Or Emet, I've been thinking about that lesson as we continue to offer hybrid services and programs. Leading in hybrid format is becoming more comfortable, and I want to keep designing our ritual activities for simultaneous in-person and online participation. Regardless of the COVID situation, I love how this approach allows for face-to-face ritual experience and connection while also facilitating full remote involvement for those with barriers to joining in person. When our Passover Seder moved inside, I was worried about being indoors with a larger group as no COVID vaccines are yet available for my two-year-old daughter's age group. I appreciated the pivot to a hybrid event, allowing me to lead remotely.

B Mitzvah Program activities have also benefitted from a hybrid approach. While a snowstorm unfortunately moved Or Emet's December Shabbat online, B Mitzvah students helped lead the Zoom service. In the middle of January's Omicron surge, we met over Zoom for a fun New York Jewish desserts-focused cooking class with [my chef sister, Julia Cohen](#). In February, we met in person again for a humanistic Torah commentary writing workshop, and in March, students volunteered in person with [MN350](#), writing letters to their school transportation coordinators to encourage applying for funding to purchase low-emission electric school buses. Flexibility around meeting in person or online let us keep our planned schedule in spite of disruptions.

This summer will bring *five* B Mitzvah services and a rabbinic class for me in Michigan. Deep breaths, and onward!

*Editor's note:* In addition to serving as Or Emet's ritual leader, Eva teaches the B Mitzvah prep class, coaches candidates, and officiates at the B Mitzvah services.

## *Upcoming 2022 B Mitzvahs*

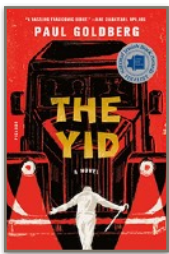
B Mitzvah candidate	B Mitzvah date	Project topic
Luc Cohen-LeMay	July 1	Golems in Jewish legend
Rei Dickson	July 9	Astronomy and traditional beliefs about planets and stars in Jewish and other cultures
Neva Finestack	June 11	Jewish feminism
Julian Young	August 6	Knishes in Jewish food culture and family history
Isaac Rinerson	August 20	When the same day is a day of celebration in one culture and a day of mourning in another culture — Jewish and cross-cultural examples



B Mitzvah program students volunteering with MN 350 - Isaac Rinerson 1st from left, Julian Young 3rd from left, and Eva Cohen on right

## *Or Emet Book Club*

### ***The Yid* by Paul Goldberg** — reviewed by Molly Phipps



The Or Emet Book club met over Zoom on April 19<sup>th</sup> to discuss Paul Goldberg's dark comedy *The Yid*. The story unfolds, with a liberal smattering of Russian, Yiddish, and Hebrew, over the final days of Stalin's regime as he plots to launch the pogrom to end all pogroms and sweep all the Jews from the USSR. As the empty cattle cars amass, the populace readies for a fight, and the secret police intensify nighttime disappearances, three Marxists begin plotting the unthinkable: to kill Stalin before he can enact his final plan. The Marxists — a Jewish comedian, a Jewish doctor, and an African American ex-pat, who have all fought for and defended the Soviet Union, decide that the only way to protect the Marxist ideal they fought for is to rise up and risk their lives to stop the anticipated pogrom. We noted the eerie similarities to current events where a

Jewish comedian is leading the resistance against a tyrannical 'tsar.' This absurdist historical fiction paints a clear picture of the fatalism of Russian Jews who can't help but find the hilarity in their dire circumstances.

*The Yid* takes place over two weeks as the cast of characters hatch their plot. In his debut novel, Paul Goldberg uses sparse language and a script-like play-within-a-play style bringing Shakespeare's *King Lear*, Russian and Soviet poetry, Yiddish theater, and actual historical figures into an immersive, but sometimes jarring, farce. In general we all enjoyed the book and its perspective on the lives of Marxist — mostly secular — Jews in the tumultuous first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Russia and the Soviet Union and the insidiousness of the blood libel against the Jews that keeps resurfacing in historical and current attempts to turn the populace against Jews.

The next book club meeting on July 31 (hopefully in person) will discuss Dara Horn's *People Love Dead Jews*. More information is on page 15.

## Update: The Society for Humanistic Judaism (SHJ) 2022 Board Meeting and Conference

by Allan Malkis, Or Emet President



In April, I attended the SHJ board meeting and conference of the International Institute for Secular Humanistic Judaism (IISHJ), interacting with SHJ leaders from around the country. Over meals, I chatted with SHJ Executive Director Paul Golin and several of the SHJ rabbis. We discussed the varieties of secularism, humanism, atheism and spirituality within SHJ. Paul posed questions about the need for and purpose of adult B Mitzvahs. The SHJ Board approved the fiscal year budget and confirmed the nomination of Harvey Milk as the 2022-2023 Humanistic Jewish role model. Paul reported that the Jews for a Secular Democracy project has received funding and is being included in coalitions and work to protect separation of church and state.

The Shabbat service on Friday included ordination of two Humanistic rabbis and the graduation of three Life-Cycle Officiants for our movement. The service was presented by several of the IISHJ rabbis in attendance, including Sivan Maas, daughter of Yaakov Malkin and the first Israeli rabbi in our movement. A highlight was the wonderful choir from Rabbi Adam Chalom's Congregation Kol Hadash.

Saturday featured a Torah portion discussion by Rabbis Chalom and Maas, along with panel discussions, including a discussion of the place of SHJ within the larger Jewish tradition (and vice versa). Videos of the panels will be available soon through the IISHJ YouTube channel.

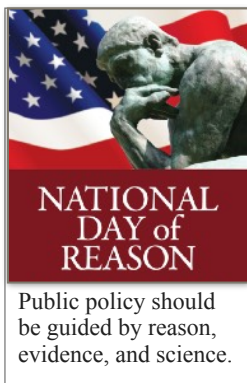
We later toured the Holocaust Museum in Skokie, Illinois, with a guided tour of the traveling LGBTQ exhibit that explains the modern history of discrimination in the US against that class of people. We also toured the rest of the museum, including a photo exhibit about European Jews who ended up in Shanghai to escape the Holocaust, many of whom later came to the Chicago area.

It was good to spend time with other movement leaders and have opportunities to acquaint them with what we are doing at Or Emet. I heard high praise for Rabbinic candidate, Eva Cohen, from all those with whom I spoke. We are surely lucky to have her.

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### Minnesota National Day of Reason Observance on May 5

*Or Emet joined with Humanists of Minnesota and First Unitarian Society to co-sponsor the National Day of Reason event at the Minnesota State Capitol.*



This yearly gathering is in response to the statutory observance of the National Day of Prayer, also on May 5th. Recently, representatives Jamie Raskin and Jared Huffman introduced a resolution recognizing a National Day of Reason each year on May 4th.

Keynote speaker Sarah Levin, who has worked with Jews for a Secular Democracy, spoke with legislators about promoting secular values. There were presentations by six legislators. One legislator said she wasn't sure she "belonged with humanists because she was Jewish." In response, Allan Malkis shared links to Or Emet and SHJ with her.

Several Or Emet members were in attendance. President Allan Malkis spoke on behalf of Or Emet and emphasized the importance of maintaining separation of church and state.



L to R: Jeff Pipes, Sarah Levin, Arty Dorman, Allan Malkis, Howard Schneider, Molly Wilbur-Cohen, Gary Ash



## *Hooray for Arty Dorman!*



### ***Who Put the Extra “S” in JCSS — Jewish Cultural Sunday School?***

by Dr. Sarah Berman-Young

| Song Leader, JCSS Hebrew and Music Teacher, Wedding Officiant, Parent, Community Member

You may have heard or seen in writing lately that the Jewish Cultural School (JCS) is now the JCSS. The extra “S” stands for Sunday. A small change, suggested by Arty Dorman, as a way to increase the visibility of Or Emet in online searches. But it is small changes like this over time that add up to the huge impact that Arty Dorman has had as the director of our Jewish Cultural Sunday School for the past five years.

As both a parent and a teacher for the JCSS, I have seen firsthand all of the work that Arty has done to create a warm and welcoming experience for everyone. Under his leadership, Or Emet has built a Sunday school program that supports students and families in strengthening their knowledge of Jewish culture and Humanistic Jewish values while creating a sense of community. Arty has brought his wealth of experience in the world of education as well as his passion for social justice and community organizing to his role.

As School Director, Arty has managed diverse responsibilities with great care. He has overseen the recruiting and retaining of amazing teachers and incorporated a new Blessing for Children (written by our congregation’s very own Natalie Rosinsky) into the morning routine. He has carefully planned the school schedule around school breaks and holidays, and orchestrated Sukkot celebrations, Tu B’Shevat Seders, and Purim carnivals. Through all this he has built relationships with an ever-changing list of families and kept track of students’ ages, food allergies, and other personal details.

Arty has truly transformed our fairly informal Jewish Cultural School into a Jewish Cultural Sunday School program that I am proud to be a part of, and where I am thankful to be able to send my children. Thank you, Arty, for all of your hard work and leadership over the past five years. We wish you the best of luck in your future endeavors.



## *Simchas and Tsuris (Joys and Concerns)*

CONGRATULATIONS!



**Gwen Pipes**, daughter of Jeff Pipes and Florence Wong, received a Master of Science in Natural Resources from Cornell University in May. Beginning June 1st, Gwen will start a PhD program at UW Madison researching the biogeochemistry of the soil carbon cycle.



**Ben Drucker** will graduate from Swarthmore College on May 22 with a degree in mathematics and computer science. He has accepted a position as a biological data scientist with the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory.



**Molly Wilbur-Cohen and Barry Cohen** are happy to announce that their younger daughter Julia Cohen will marry Hector Revilla this summer in North Carolina. Eva Cohen, Julia's sister and Or Emet's Ritual leader and Rabbi-in-training, will be officiating the marriage ceremony.

**Erica Fishman and Paul Rem** recently sold their home and moved to Becketwood Cooperative. They're beyond ready to relinquish home ownership responsibilities and reap the benefits of living in a co-op community.

Each winter **Mike Persellin and Eleanor** enjoy a couple months bicycling in the Santa Cruz, CA, area. This year, **Howard Schneider** biked with them for a week. At the time, Mike had just completed chemotherapy for prostate cancer.

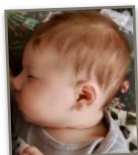


**Steven Nydick and Lian Hortensius**, along with daughter Rebekah, will be relocating to Pittsburgh in July. Steve has accepted a new position that Lian describes as "custom made for him."



**Paul Petzschke and Janet Mayer** welcomed a grandson and a great-grandson two days apart.

Isaac James born January 18, 2022. Janet's daughter, Liz Brisson, and husband, Chris Garrett, are his parents. Isaac joins his two-year-old brother, Noah.



Alejandro III was born January 20, 2022. He is Aerial Waters and Alex Garcia's first child. Aerial is Paul's granddaughter, which makes baby Alex his first great-grandson.

Babies, brother, parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents are all doing well.

**Jeff Pipes'** daughter Rebecca and her husband, Daniel, welcomed their son, Vincent Carl Hicks-Quintero, on May 7th.



## *Simchas and Tsuris (Joys and Concerns) – continued*

### Health and Healing

**Barbara Cohen** continues to be plagued by health problems that have necessitated several hospitalizations and emergency department visits. In addition to coping with health issues, Barbara's van and motorized wheelchair have been problematic for prolonged periods while she awaits parts delayed by supply snags. Don, her partner, is now a resident at a Suite Living care facility.



**David Fox** is at home and making steady progress after sustaining serious neck and leg injuries from an auto accident three months ago. David and Margo are optimistic that he is emerging from the most difficult challenges. While considerable recovery still needs to happen before David's well-being and energy are back, his mood is positive. They are exceedingly grateful for the outpouring of support from Or Emet's caring community.

**Gwyn Leder** is upbeat despite ongoing post-COVID issues. Use of supplementary oxygen and BiPAP have helped her to remain out of hospitals and emergency departments for an extended period of time. Gwyn is especially happy to be out and about and able to drive herself.

**Mike Persellin** discovered this wall plaque in his chemotherapy treatment room at North Memorial Health. The plaque says: *Treatment Room made possible through the generosity of Harold Londer, MD and Janette Withers, MD.* Thanks to Harold and Jan for extending their abundant kindness and giving spirit in ways that continue to make a difference in people's lives.



## *Member News*

### Scott Chazdon and Michal Moskow

After reading two Golem-related books in the Or Emet book club and working together on a Sunday program about the Golem myth, Scott and Michal decided to try another collaboration.

They conducted an interview project on visitor experiences at "dark tourism" sites — places where traumatic events are memorialized. They interviewed 16 people about visits to Holocaust sites in Germany and Eastern Europe, George Floyd Square, and the site of the Mankato 38 lynchings in Mankato.

On May 7-8, Chazdon and Moskow presented a well-received paper at *Visiting the Shadows*, a global interdisciplinary conference held in Prague, Czech Republic. Scott and Michal got to visit the Jewish Quarter and see the sites they had talked about in their presentation.



### Shabbat dinner club



**Jeff Pipes'** proposed casual bi-monthly Friday dinner has been on a COVID-related hold. When it is safe to gather, Jeff and Florence will host an initial dinner. The kick-off dinner would then be followed by alternating location and cooking every other month so that each member cooks only once a year. Stay tuned for updates. [jeff.pipes@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jeff.pipes@sbcglobal.net).



## Caring Circle

**We're here for you when you need a little extra support**  
by Janet Mayer and Faith Oremland



Caring Circle sends out cards to members in times of illness, loss, and crisis. We are also continuing with our expanded services to include checking in with various members who may need a little more connection during these difficult times. We're staying in touch with those who have been ill, experienced a significant loss or crisis, or cannot get out and would appreciate a phone call to say "Hello. We care about you."

Our Meal Train is available for Or Emet members who cannot obtain food any other way when recovering from an illness or experiencing a challenge that makes shopping or meal preparation problematic. Or Emet wants to meet those challenges and provide assistance to members when possible. Strict safety guidelines will be followed during meal preparation and delivery.

Remember to contact Faith ([faitho711@aol.com](mailto:faitho711@aol.com)) to send out cards for illness, loss, or other crises and [CaringCircle@oremet.org](mailto:CaringCircle@oremet.org) if you know of a member who could use practical, short-term assistance.

Many thanks to Caring Circle member Lian Hortensius who will be moving to Pittsburgh.

Caring Circle Committee: Eva Rose Cohen, Lian Hortensius, Janet Mayer, Faith Oremland

## Donations

*Thank  
You!*

**To celebrate Gwen Pipes on receiving an MS degree and her acceptance to a PhD program —**  
Janet Mayer and Paul Petschke

**To celebrate Ben Drucker's graduation from Swarthmore and his professional employment —**  
Janet Mayer and Paul Petschke, Joan and David Barnett, Carol and Richard Logan

**Mazel Tov to Molly Wilbur-Cohen and Barry Cohen on the marriage of their daughter, Julia —**  
Janet Mayer and Paul Petschke, Carol and Richard Logan

**To celebrate the births of Janet Mayer and Paul Petschke's grandson, great-grandson and Jeff Pipes' grandson**  
Joan and David Barnett, Carol and Richard Logan

**To celebrate the birth of Jeff Pipes' grandson, Vincent Carl Hicks-Quintero —**  
Janet Mayer and Paul Petschke

**Wishing David Fox continued healing —**  
Joan and David Barnett, Carol and Richard Logan

**For use where most needed —**  
Michal Moskow, Barbara Weisman, David Zukor,  
Edna Bernstein - in appreciation of Faith Oremland  
and Or Emet's Caring Circle

**To Dr. Harold Londer Rabbi Fund —**  
In honor of Janet Mayer  
Carol and Richard Logan

**To recognize Arty Dorman's five years of JCSS leadership —**  
Joan and David Barnett, Janet Mayer and Paul Petschke, Carol and Richard Logan

**For St. Stephen's fire recovery —**  
Seth Binder, Karen Cohen, Carrie Dickson, Arty Dorman, Gwyn Leder, Janet Mayer, Jeff Pipes,  
Sonny Taylor, Barbara Weisman

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\* Donations may be made through Or Emet's website [oremet.org](http://oremet.org)  
or by sending a check to Seth Binder, 3820 Lyndale Ave. S., Mpls 55409

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## Member Article

*Yesterday and Today*  
by Alan Miller

My paternal grandparents were from Kiev (Kyiv), then a part of Russian Empire. My grandfather was a blacksmith, and shod horses for the Cossacks. His was a pretty secure position, but as a Jew, he decided not to take chances, and when the pogroms were taking place in the late 1800s, he packed up with my grandmother and fled to...Brooklyn. I guess a lot of Russian horses went shoeless after that.

The Russian name was (and we're not certain about that because he'd always change the subject) Milefski, or something similar. When he got off the boat at Ellis Island (or so the story goes) the immigration intake personnel told him that "Miller" would work better in the United States. So Miller it was, and Miller I am. Based on his background, it could have been Shoemaker, I suppose, but I'm happier with Miller.

Grandpa Miller had incredible hands, and he could create almost anything. My greatest treasure was a large iron battleship which was capable of holding all my toy soldiers. If I had been Noah, it had room for all the animals as well. Then, World War II broke out, and we needed metal for the "war effort" so my father took my most precious toy, my battleship, and broke it up to contribute to the war effort. My only consolation was his assurance that it would be made into bullets and fired at the Nazis. I didn't really buy that story and I never forgave my father.

Trying to trace the family after the war was fruitless, and as an only child I never did learn what became of my grandparents' brothers and sisters, and the great cousins whom I never had a chance to meet. I suspect that, like so many Russian Jews, they didn't survive the war, or perhaps had a sad end at Babi Yar, or in one of the "camps" (extermination centers). Efforts to find any trace of family have been fruitless. Which brings us to today, when the megalomaniac of the moment is a Russian, not a Nazi, but no less brutal, with a distorted sense of self and soulless. The people in the area of my ancestry, which is now Ukraine, have been through so much in their history that it boggles the mind.

To think that thousands of lives are being lost and cities are being wiped off the map is beyond my comprehension. And for what? Territorial expansion? History is littered with stories like that of the Ukrainians, who sought and are seeking no more than their place in a civilized society, a democracy; that is the sad tale of many other areas of the globe. It's really depressing to think that with all we have learned as humans, we have learned nothing.



Alan Miller

## More Member News



### Sandwich board alerts the neighborhood to Or Emet's presence!

The Or Emet sandwich board sign (donated by **Muriel Sterne**) graces the street entrance to Talmud Torah of St. Paul whenever the Jewish Cultural Sunday School is in session. — Recently the sign caught the eye of neighbors **Martha Grant** and family who then became members. Martha subsequently mentioned JCSS to their neighbors **Dan Lupton** and **Claire Wahmanholm**, who have enrolled their child in Or Emet's Sunday school.

**Welcome New Members!**

Karen Cohen  
Molly Phipps and Ralph Busby  
Sam Wegner

Megan Narvey  
Martha Grant and Sam Cooper

## Passover Seder In Review

by Jeff Pipes



On April 16th, Or Emet celebrated our first in-person Passover Seder in over two years. Modern plagues aside, it was a success! It was great to see everyone and to see all masked and as social distanced as possible, respectful of the continuing COVID-19 situation. We had planned to hold the event outside near Minnehaha Park but, of course, Minnesota's Mother Nature had other ideas. So, at the last minute, Eva and the committee (Allan, Rich, Sarah, Anne, Arty and Jeff) scrambled to move it indoors to the St. Paul Talmud Torah. About 80 members attended in-person with another 15 or so on Zoom. Eva rose (pun intended!) to the occasion to lead the services via Zoom. We all agree that we are looking forward to having everyone, including little Freyja back in-person soon.

While we weren't able to have a full meal, the committee put together boxes with each of the symbolic and ritual foods to go with our Humanistic Haggadah. Anne and Arty made the charoset, Rich brought macaroons, and Anne went above and beyond by adding the chocolate covered Matzah (jokingly referred to as crack). Sarah was able to round up some table decorations. Then, just before we were starting the service, a bunch of young folks jumped in and helped schlep the food boxes to the table settings and get everything finalized. Whew!



We had numerous Haggadah readers that Eva set up, also including families and younger children. All did a fantastic job. The search for the *afikoman* was raucous and energetic, with two winners plus prizes for all. Thanks, Arty!

I want to thank the committee members who made this all happen. Everyone jumped in and did whatever needed to be done with no complaints or hesitation.

So, maybe we didn't say it at the end of the Seder, but, "next year in-person!"



**Programs are currently planned to be on-site and via Zoom.**

*Updated program information is posted on the [oremet.org](http://oremet.org) calendar and shared with Or Emet's listserv.*

### **SHABBAT PROGRAMS**

Shabbat programs (usually) meet at the Sabes Jewish Community Center, 4330 South Cedar Lake Rd, St. Louis Park. They include a brief Humanistic Shabbat service.

**Friday, May 20 | 7:30 pm**

**Program:** *Fresh Energy's Work Toward Carbon Reduction and Clean Energy Solutions*

**Presenter:** J. Drake Hamilton, senior director of science policy at Fresh Energy in Minnesota.

### **SUNDAY PROGRAMS**

Sunday programs are (usually) at the Talmud Torah of St. Paul, 768 Hamline Ave. S., St. Paul.

Adult programs meet concurrently with Jewish Cultural Sunday School classes.

**Sunday, May 15 | 10:00 am - 12:30 pm**

**Program:** *Post-Arbor Day Tribute to Trees*

**Presenters:** Johanna Lester and Allan Malkis, Or Emet members.

*Reminder!* We continue to collect empty pill bottles and personal care items for clients at Listening House, a St. Paul drop-in center. Donations are gratefully accepted at all Friday and Sunday programs.

## *Upcoming Events / June - September 2022*

### **Collection of food, personal, and home care items**

— Collected items will be donated to NorthPoint Health & Wellness Center's community food shelf

Sunday | May 15 at JCSS/Sunday Adult Program | Talmud Torah of St. Paul

Friday | May 20 at Shabbat Program | Sabes Jewish Community Center

Saturday | May 21 | 10:00 am - 2:00 pm drop-off at five member homes

Sunday | June 5 | at Talmud Torah of St. Paul | during Annual Meeting and picnic

Additional details are in president's email and on [oremet.org](http://oremet.org)

### **Or Emet's Annual Meeting, Picnic, and JCSS session | Sunday | June 5 | Talmud Torah of St. Paul**

- Annual Meeting with election of officers 10:00 am - 12:00 noon
- Potluck Picnic 12:00 noon - 2:00 pm
- Final JCSS session will be held concurrently with the annual meeting

### **Saturday | July 30 | Havdalah and picnic**

At Crosby Farm Regional Park | 2595 Crosby Farm Rd. | Saint Paul, MN 55116

4:00 Gather and socialize | 5:00 picnic | 6:00 service led by Eva Cohen followed by campfire and s'mores

### **Or Emet Book Club | Sunday | July 31 | 10:30 - 12:00 noon | location to be announced**

*People Love Dead Jews* by Dara Horn

If interested in participating, contact Scott Chazdon [schazdon@umn.edu](mailto:schazdon@umn.edu).

### OR EMET 2022 HIGH HOLIDAY EVENTS

High Holiday Services (except Tashlich) will be at the Sabes Jewish Community Center  
4330 South Cedar Lake Rd., St. Louis Park  
~ if COVID-19 situation allows ~

#### **Rosh Hashanah Service**

Sunday | September 25 | 7:00 pm  
Oneg following the service

#### **Rosh Hashanah Tashlich Service and Potluck**

Monday | September 26 | 10:30 am | location TBA

#### **Kol Nidre Service**

Tuesday | October 4 | 7:00 pm

#### **Yom Kippur Service**

Wednesday | October 5 | 4:00 pm

#### **Break-the-Fast Potluck**

At conclusion of the Yom Kippur service

