

The MCJC shul is located at 15071 Caspar Road, Caspar, CA.
Send mail to P.O. Box 291, Little River, CA 95456. website: <http://www.mcjc.org>

Call the MCJC at (707) 964-6146
email: sarah.nathe@gmail.com

RABBI'S NOTES



One of the unexpected delights of this past year for me has been studying the weekly Torah portion with four other rabbis. I adore each of my study-mates: love their minds, love their beings, love how they each open up Torah in their unique ways. Conversations with these Torah friends inspired me to have a weekly Torah conversation with our community, and those of you with whom I study here, whom I love every bit as much, have also delighted me this year.

These weekly Torah sessions have given me the opportunity to pay attention to Torah in a more flowing and sequential way than I usually do. Typically I skim the portion and, if I'm giving a *drash* that week, I dive down deep into a sentence or paragraph or single idea that catches my attention and swim around from there. Translation interlude here: *drash*, from "to explain," means a Torah teaching, a sermon; *davar Torah*, literally "a word of Torah," means the same thing; *parshah* (plural *parshiot*) means the weekly Torah portion.

The Torah is essentially divided into 52 consecutive *parshiot*. It's a little more complicated than that because there aren't always 52 weeks in a Jewish year and because different sections are spliced in on holidays. But more or less, on the Shabbat after Simchat Torah we start reading Torah with the creation of the world and we read it like a long, unfolding story until the Israelites are standing on the bank of the Jordan River and Moses dies.

The weekly study group with the rabbis began last year right about when we were entering the book of Exodus. With my friends I cringed at the cruelty of Pharaoh, celebrated the birth and unlikely adoption of Moses, suffered through the plagues, saw the Red Sea split and the slaves walk to freedom, entered the wilderness, stood at the foot of Mount Sinai to receive Torah (the book that tells the story of its own revelation), built the *mishkan* (the traveling tent sanctuary), put up the Golden Calf and saw its terrible aftermath.

Then came Leviticus, the book people love to not-love. But I do love Leviticus! It's the priestly book, detailing the rituals and offerings that were to happen in the *mishkan*, and later in the Temple. I started to cartoon Leviticus so I could sort out the various kinds of sacrifices (and amuse my study-mates). I hope to finish up my cartoon Leviticus one of these days.

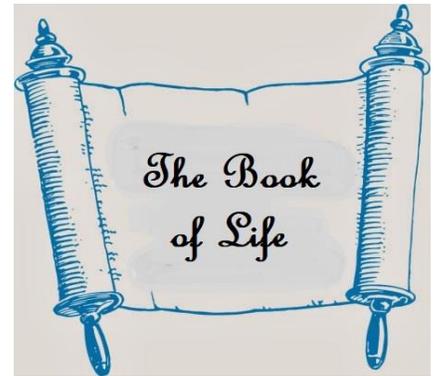
The book of Numbers—called in Hebrew, trenchantly, *Bamidbar*, "In the Wilderness"—is where we are now, sloggng through the desert, fighting, dealing with plagues, drought and the occasional swallowing-up by the earth, despairing, freaking out. *Bamidbar* seems like it takes a hundred weeks to get through, not ten (even fewer if there's a double portion or two). It's pretty much pure misery.

Deuteronomy, the last book of Torah, is the great desideratum of Moses. He is 120 years old, about to die, standing at the edge of the Jordan River after a 40-year journey. An entire generation, except for two companions, has died along the way, and children have grown up. The people are about to enter the land they were promised long before. Once "slow of speech," Moses now pours out his heart for 11 weeks in a row before ascending the mountain where his life will end. Finally, we will celebrate Simchat Torah, reading of Moses' death and then rolling the story right back to the creation of the world to start it again.

Because of my conversations, I am seeing the flow of Torah differently; I find myself overlaying the path of an individual life onto this great narrative: Genesis holds space for birth, childhood, parents, siblings, cousins, family love and struggle. Exodus is about becoming an adult, breaking free, finding your identity, establishing your home, your ways, your path. Leviticus is about meaning, values, vision, and connection with the Divine.

Numbers is the slog of life, the relentlessness of aging, loss, disintegration, limitation, opposition, failure and despair. Deuteronomy takes stock of it, ending on the mountaintop, our souls leaving our bodies and reconnecting with the infinite.

I've long wondered why so much of Torah takes place in the wilderness, why it ends before the people reach their destination, why it involves so much struggle and loss. I was talking recently with an old friend, not Jewish, about the long ordeal of reading the book of Numbers, with all its defeat and despair. He asked me, "Why do you think it has to be that way?" And I found myself answering, "Because life takes place in the unknown. We are born and grow up there. We become ourselves, make family, community and nation. We encounter the Mystery in many guises, some uplifting, some devastating. We learn to care for ourselves and each other, to love, to grieve, to grow and transform, to bring forth the future and finally to lay it all down, both finished and unfinished. The wilderness is where it all happens.'



I'm writing this in my little makeshift guest room *shul*, with our *sefer Torah* in its homemade corner ark behind me. My mind wanders back to various times I've lain down on a roll of paper and had a friend trace my body, or when I've traced the outlines of someone else, and we've colored in our features. I remember with a smile the "*kavods*" a bunch of us made at 3 AM one Shavuot, tracing each other and collaging in the Divine glory (*kavod*) that fills us as it fills every being. I think of the holy scroll behind me with the story line of life inscribed in it. I think of how we take our Torah scroll out of her ark each week, open her up and bless and read a little part of the story, moving on the next week (relentlessly, I want to say) to the next *parshah*. I think of the sacred slogginess of life, the loss and failure as well as the joy and success. I think of how Torah, by being Torah, elevates and honors the texture of life, with all its bumps and divots, the ALL of it. I think of how life is holy in all its dimensions, its difficulty as well as its ease and pleasure, and I pray that we are able to honor the wilderness and our time on its sacred ground.

We ARE written in the Book of Life.

TISHA B'AV



Tisha B'Av falls this year on Sunday, July 18th, and we will observe the conclusion of this day of mourning at 6:00 PM with an outdoor ritual at the shul. This will be an in-person gathering. We will not share food, nor will we sing, and we will keep space between us. We ask anyone who is not fully vaccinated to please wear a mask. All others are welcome to wear masks if they prefer. We are still working out the safest protocols for coming together; we prefer to err on the side of caution.

Originally set aside for recalling the destruction of the First and Second Temples in Jerusalem, over the centuries it has become a day to recall many historical occasions of destruction. In our own time it has become the day in the cycle of the year to reflect on and grieve social catastrophes, wars and brutality. Late in the afternoon of Tisha B'Av, the mood turns from grief to something more resilient and hopeful. There is a legend that the messiah will be born on the afternoon of Tisha B'Av.

We are coming out of seclusion and, for those of us who escaped serious illness or bereavement this past year, there is a spirit of having survived but not necessarily completely returning to pre-pandemic life. At this tender time of late afternoon on Tisha B'Av, we will share words about past calamities and how they eventually ended. We will reflect together on the moment we are in right now.

In addition, a day-long community meditation retreat will be hosted on Zoom by Urban Adamah, led by Norman Fisher (Buddhist priest and poet) and Rabba Dorothy Richman. Called *Tisha B'Av: The Walls Come Down*, this retreat will conclude in time for you to come to the shul. More information is available at urbanadamah.org.

AND TU B'AV!

Tu B'Av, on the full moon of the month of Av, is the mirror image and companion of Tisha B'Av: it is a day of frolic, fun and pleasure, sometimes called the "Jewish Day of Love." In the Mishnah we are told that on this full moon, just a week after the destruction memorialized on Tisha B'Av, the daughters of Jerusalem would dress each other in white garments and dance in the vineyards and "Whoever did not have a wife would go there." The custom remains to this day, especially in Israel, of dressing in white and frolicking. May this be the beginning of a season of joy!



We will celebrate on Friday evening, July 23rd, at Caspar Beach with candle lighting for Shabbat and watching the full moon rise. Please consider bringing a fun garment, item of jewelry, or other gift to trade (one per person, please!). If it is wrapped up like a present, all the more delightful. Bring a picnic dinner if you like, along with your own utensils. We'll have candles, wine, juice and challah to share safely. We will not sing and we will keep space between us. We ask anyone who is not fully vaccinated to please wear a mask. All others are welcome to wear masks if they prefer.

HIGH HOLY DAY PLANNING...

...is still in process. There are many factors to consider regarding meeting in person that we haven't dealt with in years past. We are working to offer the most beautiful, nourishing, and inclusive High Holy Day services we possibly can. Rosh Hashanah begins at sundown on Monday, September 6th. Complete information will be sent out as soon as it is available.

SHABBAT MORNING SERVICES

A full Shabbat service is led by Rabbi Holub, with much singing, chanting and silence, Torah teaching and reading, blessings for healing and peace, and time for mourners to say Kaddish. You are welcome to join in on Zoom for any or all of the service from 10:30 AM until about 12:30 PM. The rabbi or members of the community give interpretations of the weekly Torah portion (see schedules below for July and August). Join Zoom meeting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9628821372> Meeting ID: 962 882 1372; Passcode: 820822.

07/03/21	<i>Pinchas</i>	Margaret Holub
07/10/21	<i>Matot-Masei</i>	Raven Deerwater
07/17/21	<i>Devarim</i>	Margaret Holub
07/24/21	<i>Vaetchanan</i>	Janet Sternburg
07/31/21	<i>Eikev</i>	Andrea Luna
08/07/21	<i>Re'eh</i>	Raven Deerwater
08/14/21	<i>Shoftim</i>	Bob Evans
08/21/21	<i>Ki Teitzei</i>	Margaret Holub
08/28/21	<i>Ki Tavo</i>	Margaret Holub

TORAH STUDY



Rabbi Holub is offering weekly Torah study on the *parshah* for that week, the section of Torah read and studied each week. Join her on Thursdays in July and August, from noon to 1:00 PM on Zoom. Each time she will introduce a section of the *parshah* for the following Shabbat and pose a couple of questions, and then we will discuss the portion together. In July we will complete Numbers and begin Deuteronomy, and August will take us farther into Deuteronomy.

Join Zoom meeting at address in item above. All are welcome. You don't have to know anything about Hebrew or Torah, and the text will be available.

ZOOMING ON



MCJC continues to hold most of its gatherings on Zoom. In addition to Shabbat morning services at 10:30 AM and Torah study on Thursdays at noon, there are a couple other weekly get-togethers. Zoom invitations to these gatherings are sent by email and posted on the MCJC web page. To get the invitations in your email, let Margaret know at mholub@mcn.org or 937-5673.

Cup of Coffee—every Wednesday from 10:30-11:30 AM, we pour ourselves a steaming cup and join together for a freewheeling conversation about whatever is on our minds. It continues to be surprising, inspiring, generative and fun. All are welcome.

Candle Lighting—every Friday evening the community is invited to Margaret and Mickey's virtual Shabbat table to light candles and make Kiddush together. We start at 6:30 PM with a bit of schmooze, share news of our weeks, and wish each other Good Shabbos. We light at about 6:45 PM. It's a sweet way to bring in Shabbat together.

ELDERS' CONVERSATION

The Elders meet every second and fourth Tuesday of the month, 3:00-4:30 PM on Zoom. We will meet July 13th and 27th, and August 10th and 24th. Each week we take up a theme we've selected at the prior meeting and explore it in a personal and honest way, sharing our life experiences and our present thoughts and feelings. People of all ages are most welcome.



Zoom invitations to these gatherings are sent by e-mail. If you don't get the emails, let Margaret know at mholub@mcn.org or 937-5673. If and when we decide that it is safe to gather in person at the shul, word will go out in plenty of time.

MCJC JUSTICE GROUP



The Justices meet on the second Thursday of each month. The next meetings are on Thursday, July 8th and Thursday, August 12th from 5:30 to 7:30 pm. If you would like to be on the Justice Group mailing list or attend meetings, please contact Margaret at mholub@mcn.org or 937-5673. *Everyone* is welcome to attend.

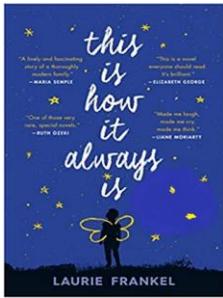
Citizenship Scholarship Project Model

Members of the MCJC Justice Group are hoping that faith-based organizations and nonprofits across the country will create initiatives similar to the Citizen Scholarship Project. To that end, members will contact other organizations, introduce the Citizenship Scholarship Project, recount its terrific successes here, and offer to help them establish their own. The JG has developed procedures for providing scholarships, an application form for students, a letter explaining the project to potential donors, suggestions for fund raising, and thank you letters to donors. The materials are free for use or adaptation. If you know of an organization that might be interested in this project, please email Nancy Harris, the Justice Group Treasurer, at nancyh@mcn.org and she will send you a full description that you can share.

25 Million Stitches: One Stitch, One Refugee

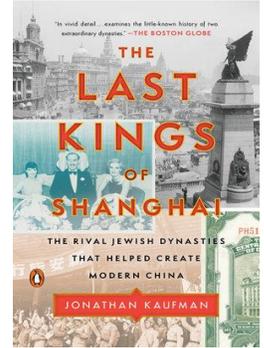
Created by artist Jennifer Kim Sohn, 25 Million Stitches is a community art installation of embroidered fabric panels stitched by hundreds of volunteers from all over the world, including members of the Justice Group. By amassing 25 million stitches, this project brings awareness of the 25 million people across the globe who have been forced to flee their homelands as a consequence of genocide, war, poverty, natural disasters, targeted violence, and other grave threats. The fabric panels will be on display from June 12th-August 22nd at the Verge Center for the Arts in Sacramento. Hours are Thursday-Saturday 11-5:00 PM and Sunday 12:00-5:00 PM. For more information, visit <https://www.vergeart.com/exhibitions/25-million-stitches/>

BOOK GROUP



This Is How It Always Is, by Laurie Frankel, will be the topic on Monday, July 26th at 2:00 PM, both on Zoom and outside in person in Mendocino. Claude is five years old, the youngest of five brothers, and loves peanut butter sandwiches. He also loves wearing a dress and dreams of being a princess. When he grows up, he wants to be a girl. His parents, Rosie and Penn, want Claude to be whoever Claude wants to be, but they're not sure they're ready to share that with the world. Soon, the entire family is keeping Claude's secret, until the day it is accidentally revealed. The novel was inspired by Frankel's experiences with her own transgender child.

In August, the readers will meet on the 16th at 2:00 PM on Zoom to discuss *The Last Kings of Shanghai: The Rival Jewish Dynasties That Helped Create Modern China* by Jonathan Kaufman. It tells the multigenerational story of two rival dynasties, the Sassoons and the Kadoories, who flourished in Shanghai and Hong Kong as twentieth century China moved into the modern era. These two Jewish families, both originally from Baghdad, stood astride Chinese business and politics for more than 175 years. They participated in an economic boom that opened China to the world, but they remained blind to the country's deep inequality and the political turmoil at their doorsteps. In World War II, they joined together to rescue and protect 18,000 Jewish refugees fleeing Nazism, but Maoism and personal dissipation destroyed much of the families' wealth.



Order copies of the books from Gallery Bookshop and request a 10% discount as a book club member. Please contact Fran at franbschwartz@gmail.com for Zoom invitations and/or directions to the meetings.

MCJC BOARD MEETING

The MCJC board meets monthly at 5:30 PM, these days on ZOOM. The July meeting will take place on Thursday, the 22nd, at 3:00 PM. The August meeting has not been scheduled. If you wish to attend part of the meetings, please contact board member Susan Tubbesing at 962-0565, or susan.tubbesing@gmail.com, and efforts will be made to patch you in.

NEWSLETTER THANK YOU

Rhoda Teplow and her daughter, Darlinda Just Darlinda, prepared the June *Megillah* for mailing. If you volunteer for a future folding, stamping, and mailing project, you can do it at your kitchen table, or another spot of your choosing, in about two hours. This *mitzvah* imparts such a sense of accomplishment that you'll wonder why you haven't done it before. Please contact Sarah at 962-0565 or sarah.nathe@gmail.com

MEGILLAH SUBSCRIPTIONS

The Mendocino *Megillah* is published in three formats: hardcopy, emailed PDF, and online. You can subscribe to the hardcopy version and have it mailed to you or receive it by email. The online *Megillah* is posted on the newsletter page of the MCJC website: www.mcjc.org/newsletter. Any information on changes in mailing address, changes in email address, and changes in email notifications should be sent to Sarah Nathe at sarah.nathe@gmail.com. If you choose not to be a contributing member of MCJC, we request a \$25 annual fee for the *Megillah* hardcopy or email.

GREAT THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING DONORS



Myra Beals; dooby sommer; Bonnie Lawlor; Susan Hofberg; Maynard Kaminsky; Kath Disney Nilson; Clare Bercot Zwerling; Laura Goldman & Dennak Murphy; Tracy Salkowitz & Rick Edwards; Leslie Gates; Mina Cohn & Dr Jeff Berenson; Lynne Spillinger.

Jonathan & Annette Lehan in memory of Bill Garrett.

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Everyone who lives on the Mendocino Coast, and desires to be one, is a member of MCJC. The MCJC Board of Directors has a goal of having every household become CONTRIBUTING members in 2021. We have contributing memberships at four levels: Regular, Limited Income, Fair Share, and Family. For more information, see the annual letter on the MCJC website at <https://www.mcjc.org/membership-and-donations>. Please mail your donations to MCJC, Box 291, Little River, CA 95456, or use PayPal on the MCJC website. When you make a donation in memory or honor of someone, an acknowledgment card will be sent to the individual or family. Please include the name and mailing address. Contact Donna Montag at montag@mcn.org

EDITORIAL POLICY

The *Mendocino Megillah* is published monthly. The deadline for article submission is the 15th of the month before publication. The editor will include all appropriate material, space permitting, with the exception of copyrighted material lacking the permission of the author. Divergent opinions are welcome. Material printed in the *Megillah* does not necessarily represent the policy or opinions of the MCJC Board of Directors.



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Email: highpt@mcn.org Tel: 707 937-3163.

Frankie's Pizza and Ice Cream Parlor: Homemade pizzas, Cowlick's ice cream, and other yummy things to nosh on. Beer and wine available. Open every day but Monday from 1:00 pm - 7:00 pm at 44951 Ukiah Street, Mendocino, 937-2436. www.frankiesmendocino.com

Out of this World: Telescopes, binoculars, & science toys. 45100 Main Street, Box 1010, Mendocino. 937-3335. www.OutofThisWorldShop.com. Serving all your interplanetary needs since 1988.

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Raven Deerwater, EA, PhD: Tax practitioner. Specializing in families, home-based & small businesses, & non-profit organizations. 45121 Ukiah Street, Box 1786, Mendocino. 937-1099. Email: raven@taxpractitioner.com Website: www.taxpractitioner.com

Rhoda Teplow Designs: Original jewelry created with beads from around the world, specializing in brass from Ghana, silver from Israel, and lapis, turquoise and coral from Tibet/Nepal. Box 453, Mendocino CA 95460. 964-2787. Email: rteplow@mcn.org

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Outreach (new to the community), Finance Committee, <i>Chai</i> on Coast	Susan Tubbesing*	962-0565	susan.tubbesing@gmail.com
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Treasurer (finance and donations)	Donna Montag*	877-3243	montag@mcn.org
Kabbalat Shabbat coordinator	Mina Cohen	937-1319	mcohen@mcn.org
Volunteer Coordinator	Susan Levenson-Palmer	882-1750	slevensonpalmer@gmail.com
Building Maintenance	Marnie Press*	937-1905	marniepress@gmail.com
Secretary	Raven Deerwater*	964-8333	raven@taxpractitioner.com
Justice Group Treasurer/Liaison, Finance Committee	Nancy Harris*	964-4824	nancyh@mcn.org
Landscaping	Lew Mermelstein*	650-387-3581	lewmer@gmail.com
Librarian	Nina Ravitz	357-6462	ninabo@mcn.org
Book Group/Bikkur Cholim	Fran Schwartz	937-1352	franbschwartz@gmail.com
<i>Megillah</i> Editor	Sarah Nathe	962-0565	sarah.nathe@gmail.com
Name & Address, Subscription Changes	Sarah Nathe	962-0565	sarah.nathe@gmail.com
MCJC Website	Sarah Nathe	962-0565	sarah.nathe@gmail.com
Online <i>Megillah</i>	Bob Evans	357-2817	bobevans@boborama.net
Rabbi	Margaret Holub	937-5673	mholub@mcn.org