

October 23, 2023 --- 8<sup>th</sup> of Chesvan, 5784



The Shema-elah of Kol Ha'Emek (Voice of the Valley)  
Physical address 8591 West Road - Mailing address PO Box 1274, Ukiah, 95482  
Phone: 707-468-4536

## SCHEDULE OF UPCOMING EVENTS

**Friday, October 27, 5:30 PM**, Home Shabbat at the Home of Rayna & Shai

**Friday, November 10, 5:30 PM**, Round Table Shabbat

**Saturday, November 18, 6:30 PM**, Movie Night at the Shul

**All Services will be streaming at the following Zoom link:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7196947312?pwd=dDZEYkV4bkVOeGR1aVpuWE9UMmlQQT09>

### **Round The Table Shabbat Gatherings**

Kol HaEmek has begun a series of Round-the-Table Shabbat gatherings. These are opportunities for families with children and other members of the inland Jewish community to enjoy a catered meal, to learn Shabbat blessings and songs, and to connect with the community. Each Round-the-Table Shabbat dinner can accommodate 40 guests, and both have reached full capacity of guests young, old, and in between.

**See Page 2 for more info about Rayna and Shai's Home Shabbat**

### **Movie Night**

Do you want more ways to connect with your community at Kol HaEmek? Kol HaEmek is pleased to be offering a movie screening the evening of November 18 at 6:30pm. The movie, TBA, will be followed by a discussion. Popcorn and beverages will be provided. You are welcome to bring other snacks to share. (If you are available to be the host, which entails opening/shutting the shul and starting the movie, please send an email to Rayna Grace at [mkolhaemekrv@gmail.com](mailto:mkolhaemekrv@gmail.com) )

### **Interim Shema & Shema-elah Editors:**

Bob Mandel & Nancy Bertsch\* If you have an article, news to share or a good idea, contact Nancy at [nancybeth615@sbcglobal.net](mailto:nancybeth615@sbcglobal.net)

Feeding the Hungry  
Sunday November 19, 2:00pm at Plowshares  
Call Dan Hibshman at 707-462-7471 or  
Cassie Gibson at 707-468-5351 to volunteer

## **The Return of Home Shabbats**

As some of you may recall, before we had our beloved Shul, our community would meet in each other's homes for either a Shabbat service and/or candle lighting, Kiddish, Motzi and of course: DINNER and SCHMOOZE. It was a wonderful and warm time for us to gather, make new friends and develop our existing friendships. Perhaps you also remember: when the time came to move into our Shul, the question came up: **"What about our Home Shabbats?"**

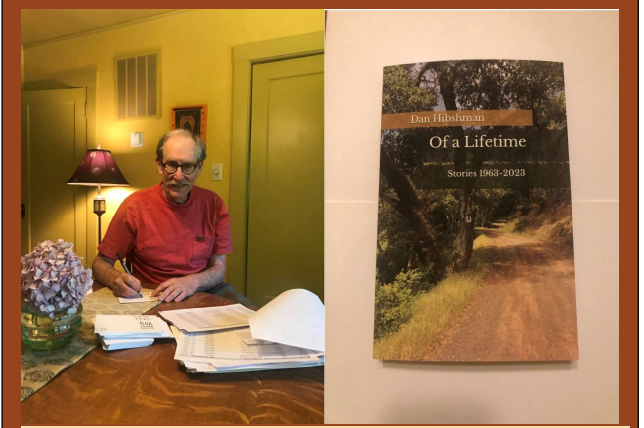
We realized that much of our charm was anchored in opening our homes to one another. Well, we decided to do both. For many years we alternated gathering in people's homes or the Shul. And you guessed it! Our Home Shabbat always had more attendance than Friday Night Shabbat at the Shul. Covid slowed us down. But we stand strong and are ready to start again. Make way for Home Shabbats. **Would you like to host one?**

### **Shabbat hosted by Rayna Grace and Shai Schnall at Mariposa Institute on Oct 27**

Shai Schnall and Rayna Grace invite you to their home, the beautiful Mariposa Institute, for a community gathering on Shabbat the evening of October 27. (Come a bit early if you want to spend some time walking around the land.) At 5:30, we will light candles and say kiddush and then share a potluck dinner. At 7pm, Shai and Rayna Grace will lead a Kabbalat Shabbat service which will be a space to gather in grief, share through presence and be held in collectively mourning so much life lost to war and genocide. We will use prayer as a call for a ceasefire in Gaza, and to affirm commitment to the preciousness of all life. You are welcome to come to both the potluck or service, or to either part.

Directions: the address is 3801 Low Gap Rd. GPS should get you there, but you will lose service before you arrive, so program it ahead of time. Drive up Low Gap Rd. Once the road becomes a dirt road, the Mariposa driveway is 1.5 miles on the left side. You will see a green address sign on the left that has many addresses, including 3801. Turn left here. (If you get to a fork in the road where Pine Ridge Rd and Low Gap Rd split, you've gone just a little too far.) After turning into the driveway, go down the hill and park by the barn, and then walk back up to the main buildings. (Unless you need more accessible parking, in which case you can park in the 10 minute zone by the house.) The potluck will be in the building on the left hand side right after you turn into the driveway, the service will be in the yurt on the left hand side as you head down to the barn.

**PLEASE NOTE: THERE IS NO CELLULAR SERVICE  
AS YOU DRIVE UP LOW GAP ROAD**



Dan Hibshman has published a new book called *Of a Lifetime: Stories 1963-2023*.

It's a collection of fiction and nonfiction, writing he began at various points in the past.

The stories are all drawn from the course of Dan's life, which began in northeastern Ohio.

Many of them are set in inland Mendocino County, where he has lived since 1969.

One involves the Redwood Valley wildfires that many Kol HaEmek members recall. Some people have heard, a few have read, about the time Dan, his wife Leslie, and their dog Sam responded to urgent news of fire. This story is included in the new book, titled "We Rescue the Torah."

*Of a Lifetime* is available for purchase at The Mendocino Book Company and on Amazon.

*Thank you to the generosity of Norm and Karen Rosen whose contribution makes the Round-the-Table Shabbat series possible.*

As we all grapple with the emerging situation in Israel, with all the emotions that come into play, we here at Kol HaEmek would like to share some inspirational messages from spiritual leaders around the globe who have chimed in with some thoughts and ideas about how to cope with our grief.

### Mi Sheberach for this moment by Rabbi Alissa Wise

שִׁים שְׁלוֹם טוֹבָה וּבְרָכָה הוּא נִחְסֵד וְנִתְמַמִּים

May the One who comforts hold all those grieving and traumatized and frightened for however long it takes

May the One who releases the captive release all those caught and bound

May the One who makes peace illuminate paths of peace for those seeing only paths of violence and vengeance

May the One who loves justice fortify us to reinforce our solidarities with all those who share our vision of justice and dignity for all people

May the One who knows hope instill in us the confidence to imagine wholeness, safety, and freedom for all people

May the One who we need be there for us as we waver and struggle, as we are confused and uncertain until we find solid ground once again

May the One who is slow to anger soften our hearts and our fists helping us to put down the sword even at the height of the arc of our rage

May the One of possibility remind us that a future of peace with justice is possible

May the One who is imperfect hold us in our pain and vindictiveness until we set those down for the sake of life

May the One who endures allow us to act for the sake of the coming generations

May the One who is without limit expand our senses of what is possible as we reach for justice, freedom and peace for us all.

May the One who knows life is precious help us to affirm life is precious

May the One who grants peace, goodness, blessing, grace, loving kindness, and mercy grant them now no matter how undeserving we are.

### From Reb Irwin in Cotati:

I wanted to share with you an email that our Educator, Reb Mia Zimman, and I sent to the families of our Nitzanim program this morning. Our hope was to hold them, feel their suffering, and nurture hope. Our goal was also to make space for complexity – that we not let our grief and horror make us vulnerable to some of the sloganeering we're seeing in our in-boxes and on social media.

In the email we share resources for talking to children about Israel and Palestine. We also shared some Jewish values to help us in our thinking and conversations. As I looked at all of that I realized how useful they are for all of us. And so I'm including those here as well.

It is hard holding complexity in moments when we are grieving or afraid; in moments when loved ones are in danger, or have been injured, or worse. How do we hold our horror at these atrocities alongside an awareness of the predictability that Gaza would one day rise up?

The solution is not bombing Gaza into submission – at least not the real, lasting solution. I was moved today by an email I received from The Parents' Circle – a remarkable organization of Israelis and Palestinians who have lost children to this decades-old conflict. Their lead:

It is an undeniable truth that the time has come to change the situation. This region has endured too much pain, too much bloodshed, and too many tears.

It is a moment for all parties involved to reflect on the senselessness of this continued conflict and to recognize the shared humanity that binds us all.

This is my prayer as well. That while we mourn the dead and tend the living, we also open the doors to reflection and not fall into anyone's predicted rhetoric. **(See next page for the email he refers to above.)**

Dear Nitzanim Community,

We are devastated by the escalating violence that is happening in Israel/Palestine. Our hearts are heavy as we watch this terrifying war unfold thousands of miles away and feel it painfully resonating here in our local community. **We grieve the terrible loss of life among Israelis and Palestinians.** We stand horrified at the abduction of Israelis by Hamas combatants. We fear for the lives of civilians on both sides as the situation continues to spiral.

Many of us have family and loved ones in the region; some of us have family members who have been killed or injured. **We pray that all who are at risk and are living in fear for their safety be sheltered and protected from harm.**

While the situation in Israel is complex and multi-layered and members of our community hold a range of views about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, we can all agree that violence has never been and will never be the answer. And so we watch closely, filled with sadness and dread, as casualties mount in Israel, Gaza, and beyond.

We at Nitzanim believe that all lives are precious and valuable. **It is hard not to despair reading the polarizing discourse filling social media right now.** But our Jewish tradition trains us up in holding conflicting truths simultaneously. The murder and kidnapping of civilians are atrocious acts of terror and unacceptable. We also are aware that people who are oppressed will rise up and resist. While right now we are focused on what is happening today and demanding an immediate end to the violence, in the months ahead we will be obligated to look at context. A lasting peace must necessarily involve healing and change.

Jewish values and teachings can provide guidance for how we might hold conflict in respectful and holy ways. **By raising children who are committed to justice and equity, and who are able to resolve conflicts peacefully, we believe there is hope for the future.** Grappling with these principles is a way to honor the Jewish tradition of wrestling with difficult questions, supporting our children in critical thinking and self-reflection, and preparing them to become engaged and caring members of their communities.

- **Ahavat Yisrael** (“love of Israel”) is a value that reflects a deep commitment to the Jewish people. We must care about our own people.
- **Kvod Ha’adam** (“respecting humanity”) is a value that expresses the importance of human dignity. We must care not only about our own people, but about all people.
- **Areivut** (“interconnectedness”) is the recognition that we are all inextricably intertwined, and that this must guide our relationships.
- **Eylu v’Eylu** (“both these and these”) – is the teaching that opposing viewpoints can each represent something important and Divinely rooted, and we are called to see the possibility of that in each other’s words.

As Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said: **“We are tied together in a single garment of destiny, caught in an inescapable network of mutuality. And whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly.”**

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Here are some resources on how you might talk to your kids about what is happening.

- [How to Talk to Kids About What's Happening in Israel Right Now – Kveller](#)
- Sivan Zakai, [“How to Talk to Your Kids about the Violence in Israel and Gaza” forward.org](#) (From 2015 but still relevant)
- UNICEF, [“How to Talk to Your Kids about Conflict and War” unicef.org](#)
- Dr. Becky Kennedy, [“Guide for When Bad Things Happen” Instagram](#)
- [We Hold All of these Truths | Union for Reform Judaism](#)
- [My Israel/Palestine Learning Curve Is a Zigzag](#)

We know these words will land differently for each of us. There is room for all of our different reactions to this extremely difficult situation. We are with you in the struggle to make sense of everything we feel, hear and read. You have a place here, full stop.

We send prayers for peace and prayers for comfort to all who are suffering.

In community,

Rabbi Irwin and Reb Mia

From Rabbi Jennifer in Punta Gorda, Florida

I was on the phone last night with another Rabbi, and she suddenly asked me, “have you heard from any non-Jewish people?”

I hadn't. I have received so much support from the local Jewish community, from Jewish friends around the country, from other Jewish clergy everywhere. But almost nothing from people who aren't Jewish.

So late last night I posted the question on a listserv for Jewish clergy. Answers came pouring in. Some had indeed received a great deal of support from neighbors, friends, and non-Jewish clergy. Some only a little, and many not as much as they would have hoped or expected.

It taught me something important. The next time there is an elementary school shooting seven states away, I'm calling a local mom of a fourth grader. Because she is freaking out.

The next time a black man or woman is shot, whether 20 or 2000 miles away, I'm calling a local black friend. Because he is experiencing an existential crisis.

The next time an LGBTQ person is persecuted, wherever it may be, I'm calling a friend. Because their heart is breaking.

To me, every tale of horror, death, murder, rape, and assault that has come from Israel these past few days is personal. It doesn't matter if I knew the person or not. It matters because Jewish people matter to me. They are my family. All of them.

To the person who said to me, “it's so terrible. And all those poor Palestinian people losing their homes!” I apologize. I apologize for replying, “yes, and all those poor Jewish babies who were decapitated!” I know you didn't mean to make a moral equivalency. But you did. And one day, hopefully soon, I will feel bad for the Palestinian people, too. But right now my heart is breaking for the Jews.

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I am trying to distinguish between the helpless Palestinian people and the barbarian and murderous Hamas terrorists. Please excuse me if today it's difficult for me to do.

This weekend, Jews will begin reading the Torah from the beginning, just as we do every year. You can walk into any synagogue anywhere in the world and they will be reading the same passages.

The Bible begins with God creating the world and seeing that it was *tohu v'vohu*, formless and chaotic. So God created light, and separated the light from the darkness.

Separation can be good. And things that are separated are often complimentary. Darkness and light go hand in hand. There always will be opposites in our lives, differences that divide us, yet also help us recognize the presence and importance of the Other.

Last night, I told my Rabbi friend about the one phone call I have received. It was from my veterinarian's office. They called just to say that they cared, they were thinking about me, and they knew that I was in pain. It was remarkable. It was healing. It brought tears to my eyes.

And then I received a text from a long lost friend. Our kids were best friends growing up. But Matt's mom and I went our separate ways, live in completely different parts of the US, and are rarely in contact. Until this morning.

She wrote: "We are praying for Israel. I'm thinking of you and how you're feeling and hope that you are holding up. Prayers for your friends there. I don't know if you have family there too but we all pray for peace and the people of Israel."

It was the second time I cried. Thank you Laurie and Karla. You made a difference. You helped heal the hole in my heart.

Pray for Israel. And call a Jewish friend, just to say "I'm thinking about you." They need you. We need each other.



And from Jared Huffman via Reb Shoshanah

I condemn Hamas' terrorist attack and fully support Israel's right to defend itself. Those who would equivocate about who is at fault here, or conflate Hamas' savagery with more nuanced questions about the Israel-Palestinian conflict, are misguided. This is about Hamas, a group of violent religious extremists who have sworn to kill all Jews in Israel and beyond.

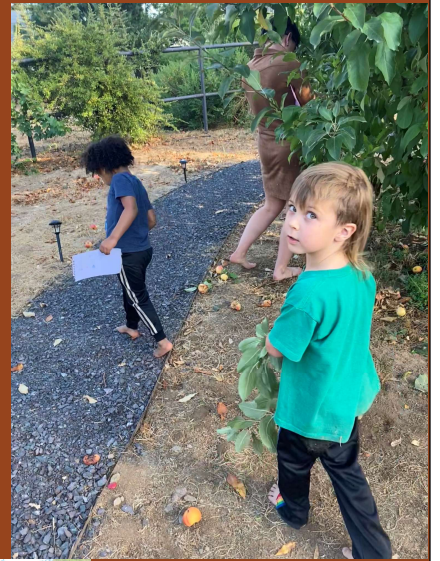
One of the communities attacked yesterday is Kfar Aza, a kibbutz on the Gaza border that I visited last year. The Israelis I met were not rightwing settlers or zealots; they were thoughtful, compassionate people. Despite living under constant threat of Hamas rocket attacks, some of these folks worked for NGO's doing humanitarian work in Gaza. Today's media reports describe piles of bodies in Kfar Aza. The victims of Hamas' indiscriminate slaughter presumably include some of the wonderful, peace-loving people I met with.

On the other side of the Gaza border, hundreds if not thousands of innocent Palestinians lives will be lost as Israel strikes back at Hamas. While I urge Israel to do everything possible to avoid and minimize the loss of innocent Palestinian lives, there will surely be collateral damage. Hamas has blood on its hands for these deaths too.

I have profound disagreements with the Netanyahu government – from its authoritarianism, to its undermining of the two-state solution, expansion of settlements and mistreatment of Palestinians in Jerusalem and the West Bank. I consider the occupation of the West Bank untenable and unjust. I support the rights and aspirations of the Palestinian people and will continue to push our ally Israel on these issues.

But right now, Israel is under a brutal attack from terrorists who have never supported a two-state solution or any other resolution in which Israel continues to exist; their sworn objective is to kill Jews and wipe Israel off the map. I stand with Israel against that threat.

**ON A HAPPIER NOTE, I'D LIKE TO LEAVE YOU WITH SOME PICTURES TAKEN AT THIS YEAR'S SUKKOT CELEBRATION!**



Kol HaEmek MCJC-Inland  
P.O. 1274  
Ukiah 95482 CA



Our purpose is to create an environment in which Jewish culture, religion and spiritual life can flourish, to perpetuate and renew our Jewish connections with ourselves and our homes, within our community and the world.

- To provide space for religious study and prayer and sponsor Jewish education for all ages
- To be inclusive of all partnerships and family configurations
- To include interfaith families and Jews-by-choice
- To network with other Jewish communities
- To educate and share our culture with other Mendocino County residents
- To be a foundation for Tikkun Olam as a community through socially just actions and by Mitzvot

Kol HaEmek Information and Resources - Main Phone Number: (707) 468-4536

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**If you or someone you know would like to serve on the Board, please contact Sherrie Ebyam**

Community Services:

**Brit Mila** - in doctor's office or in your home  
**Robert Gitlin D.O. - 707-465-7406**  
**Chevra Kadisha** - Jewish Burial  
**Helen Sizemore - 707-367-0250**  
**Community Support**  
**Willits, Divora Stern - 707-459-9052**  
**Ukiah, Margo Frank - 707-463-1834**  
**Outreach Coordinator: Rayna Grace**  
**(707) 703-9189 [rayna.grace.matthews@gmail.com](mailto:rayna.grace.matthews@gmail.com)**  
**Interfaith Council**  
**Cassie Gibson - 707-468-5351)**  
**Rabbinical Services** - Special Ceremonies are available  
Send your e-mail request to Sherrie Ebyam