



The Newsletter of Kol HaEmek (Voice of the Valley)

P.O. Box 416, Redwood Valley, CA 95470 Phone # 707-468-4536

Please note: all submissions sent by the 20th of each month to Carol Rosenberg (carolrosenberg@pacific.net)

Coming Events

CELEBRATION OF LIFE

FOR LAURIE SPENCE

Sunday, January 12, 2020 from 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM

Barra of Mendocino

7051 N State St, Redwood Valley, CA

Friday, January 17, 6:30 pm, round-the-table potluck Shabbat supper, followed by a discussion led by Jo-Ann Rosen and Carol Rosenberg on Jewish Ethics.

Sunday January 26, 11:00 a.m.-2 :00 pm. Members Brunch and Annual Meeting. We will introduce the new members of the congregation and see if we have interest in members learning how to lead a home Shabbat service.

Friday, January 31, 6:30 pm, Shabbat service and dairy/vegetarian potluck with Rabbi Chaya.

Saturday, February 1, 10 a.m., Torah Study with Rabbi Chaya

Sunday, February 9 at 2:00 pm, Tu b'Shevat Seder with Rayna Grace.

Friday, February 28, 6:30 pm, Shabbat Service followed by a potluck dairy/vegetarian supper, with visiting Rabbi Mordecai Miller, rabbi of Temple Beth Ami in Santa Rosa.

Saturday, February 29, 10:00 a.m., Torah service with Rabbi Miller. See a partial biography of Rabbi Miller on Page 2.

KHE Annual Members Brunch and Annual Meeting

Sunday, January 26, 11:00 a.m.-2 :00 pm

We are returning to our traditional practice of welcoming new members and participants in the Kol HaEmek community. This is an excellent opportunity to meet and greet each other and learn what important talents and skills we have close to home.

We will also discuss and plan for the congregation's future.

Everyone welcome and needed.



**Sunday, February 9, at 2:00 pm
Tu b'Shevat Seder with Rayna
Grace.**

Visiting Rabbi Mordecai Miller

Growing up as an “RK” (rabbi’s kid) in Durban, South Africa, wasn’t that easy, but after earning his BA in philosophy and Hebrew at the University of Natal, Mordecai Miller returned to the US and, with the encouragement of his father, enrolled in Hebrew Union College. Since his father, Rabbi Meyer Miller, was a Reform Rabbi, Mordecai gravitated toward that branch of Judaism. He wasn’t entirely certain of his path, since his other great loves were mathematics and music.



A leave of absence convinced him that he had left his true calling behind, and luckily the seminary took him back. This was fortuitous personally as well as career-wise because his future wife, Susan, was working at the school. They were introduced by mutual friends and have been together ever since.

A seminary professor required that the students become familiar with traditional liturgy as well as Reform, to understand the range of Jewish custom. Following his professor’s edict to daven the traditional prayers daily for a month, Mordecai fell in love with traditional liturgy. By the time he graduated with a BHL and MAHL and was ordained, he realized that his spiritual home was in Conservative Judaism. He was thrilled to secure a position as assistant Rabbi at a Conservative congregation in St. Paul, Minnesota, where he served happily for seven years. There followed ten years in Canton, Ohio, and twenty-one years in St. Louis, Missouri.

His excellent Hebrew came from an early childhood visit to his mother’s family in Israel. That foundation was cemented by the fact that his parents spoke to each other in Hebrew when they didn’t want him to understand. When they realized he understood every word, they switched to Yiddish, and now he knows Yiddish very well, too.

As a teen, he’d read the Bible on the long bus rides to school. Later, at HUC, he learned Talmud and Midrash, studies which he enjoys to this day.

While the duties of a rabbi are many and varied, Rabbi Miller feels his chief task is to bring comfort into people’s lives. Another very important aspect of the job is connecting people to the deeper meaning of life and to our divine Creator, and making tradition alive and relevant for people.

What was the first thing he loved about Beth Ami? The MiSheberach envelopes. It’s a custom here to place envelopes in back of the sanctuary, addressed to those who are ill in the congregation. Congregants pick up these envelopes after services, add a personal note, and mail them. This custom “made Beth Ami seem like such a caring congregation. And I haven’t been disappointed.”

Rabbi Miller finds something spiritual about the area, with its hills, ocean, and magnificent views. “It has a wildness to it.” He frequently finds himself saying the verse, “mah gadlu ma’asecha Adonai, koolam b’chochmah aseeta. How manifold are Your works, oh Adonai, with wisdom You created them all.”

Among the things Rabbi Miller enjoys at Beth Ami are the spirited, participatory davening, the wonderful Shabbat potlucks and dinners—“they hold the community together”—and the many different types of people all working together. *(excerpts from an interview by Esther Baruch)*

Torah Readings

January 4 - Vayigash from Genesis
January 11 - Vayechi “ “
January 18 - Shemot from Exodus
January 25 - Va'eira
February 1 - Bo
February 8 - Beshalach
February 15 - Yitro
February 22 - Shekalim
February 29 - Terumah

Opportunities for Tzedakah

Kol HaEmek (the Voice of the Valley) is funded by your member dues as well as your generous contributions to a **number** of funds including

- 1) Building Fund
- 2) Religious School Fund
- 3) Scholarship Fund
- 4) General Fund
- 5) Honoring and Remembrance Board
- 6) Tzedekah Fund
- 7) Rabbi's Discretionary Fund
- 8) The Marion and Sanford Frank Fund for feeding the hungry in Ukiah and Willits
- 9) Mazon - A Jewish Answer to Hunger

Call: David Koppel, 485-8910
send checks to:

**Kol HaEmek, P.O. Box 416,
Redwood Valley, CA 95470**

We Remember

| | |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| Louis Fisher | January 1 |
| Raymond Glickman | January 1 |
| Harold G. Corwin | January 10, Tevet 15 |
| Lynn Teplitsky | January 15 |
| Joseph Brooks-Miller | January 15 |
| Jacob J. Borkan | January 16 |
| Ken Holden | January 16 |
| Tom Lowenstein | January 21 |
| Arnold M. Kerr | January 30 |
| Joshua Edelman | January 30 |
| Steven Perlman | February |
| Robert Kraus | February |
| Louis H. Klayman | February |
| Hattie Glickman | February 4 |
| Lola Sher | February 4 |
| Rachel Faigin Bleicher | February 12 |
| Lewis S. Rapport | February 15 |
| Jucie Stern | February 15 |
| Anita Koppel | February 17 |
| Esther Daniel | February 19 |
| Thomas Brooks-Miller | February 21 |
| Tom Shine Mapp | February 22 |
| Zena Marks | February 27 |
| Donald Brooks-Miller | February 28 |
| Jack Glickman | February 29 |
| Leon Horowitz | Tevet 3 |
| Ephraim Coren | Tevet 9 |
| Pearl Turovitz | Teveth 14 |
| Marion Margolis Frank | Tevet 20 |
| Paul Kowarsky | Tevet 26 |
| Dori Anderson | Tevet 26 |

For information on Jewish Life in Northern California !

Jewish Film Festival
the Hebrew Loan Society
Check out this website! And read the J on line.

<https://www.jweekly.com/contact-j/>

Condolences to the Spence-Harrison Family

Dr. Laurie Spence died on November 26, 2019 after a long battle with cancer. Dr. Spence has served the Ukiah community as an Ear Nose and Throat specialist and musician since 1992. We offer our condolences to her husband, Dale Harrison, and her children Herron Spence, Daniel Spence, Kendra Harrison and grandson Felix and Matthew Harrison, his wife Mackay O'Keefe and her grandson Eamon. The Spence-Harrison family will be having a memorial service January 12 from 1-4 pm at Barra Winery.

Please include the following in your prayers for healing:

**Pat Tysoe
Lee Wachs
Mia Zimman**

KHE Tree of Life

Hillel Posner is about to make more leaves for placement on the tree at our shul; these remember those we have lost or celebrate those to whom we're grateful. The cost is \$250 for a small leaf, \$500 for a large one.

Please send the text (wording on leaf) to Carol at: carolrosenberg@pacific.net.

Send your payment (donation) to Kol HaEmek, P.O.Box 416, Redwood Valley 95470

From Berei shit!

And it was evening and it was morning ,the third day. (Gen1:1) When the Holy Blessed One created the original Adam, God took Adam around to all the trees in the garden of Eden and said, "Observe how lovely and excellent my creations are, and everything that I created, I created for your sake: take heed not to damage or destroy my world, for if you do, there will be no one to repair it for you.

Major Changes Under Way on What Used to be Our Lunch Program!!

If you would like to help make and serve a meal at Plowshares, please call Cassie Gibson at 468-5351 or Dan Hibshman, 462-7471

Hi Everyone!

I hope you will join us on one or more of the dates below to help restore oaks to lands burned in the Redwood Valley Fire of October, 2017. All ages are welcome!

We will plant acorns and put protective cages around existing oak seedlings from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 pm each day.

During lunch, Kate Marianchild, author of *Secrets of the Oak Woodlands: Plants and Animals among California's Oaks*, will share fascinating lore about oaks and the animals and plants that live among them.

This event is free of charge; RSVP required, and space is limited! **Register now at**

www.oakgranary.org. Directions will be sent upon registration. (Moderate to heavy rain cancels).

Please contribute your valuable time and energy to this healing and wholesome work!

Saturday 1/18 9:30 - 3:30

Sunday. 1/19 9:30 - 3:30

Kate Marianchild

A project of The Oak Granary, Mendocino Resource Conservation District, and the Hopland Research and Extension Center.

Letters To Kol HaEmek

Dear Friends,

Members of the United Methodist Church wish to send their appreciation of your donations. Your generosity has met with gratitude,
Shalom,
Pastor Michele Robbins

Dear David,

Please convey on our behalf the gratitude we feel after being notified of a collection meant for us from the Kol Ha Emek community.... It is more blessed to give than to receive; but it is also blessed to receive. We feel that blessing, born of human kindness.
Bill Ray

Thank you.

For giving me a very nice Yom Kippur experience at the shul in Redwood Valley this year. Hope to do it again when visiting our daughter /family in Redwood Valley, Sandra Berman and Joshua Khankhanian and their family.
Sincerely,
Sidney Berman

Thank you for your hospitality at Kol Nidre,
Laura and John Samila

Donations to KHE

Thank you

Bruce Andich and Cassandra Andich
Lucy Bayer
Judith M. Corwin
Isa Davila
Harvey Frankle and Jackie Pelter Frankle
Dan Hibshman and Leslie Kirkpatrick
Jay Joseph and Jennifer Joseph
Nancy Bertsch
Carol Park and Steve Park
Vickie Patterson
Elizabeth Raybee
Karen Rifkin
Norm Rosen and Karen Rosen
Susan Sher
Helen J. Sizemore
Eva Strauss-Rosen and Stephen Sommerstein
Janae Krause Stephens and Gary Stephens
Amy Wachspress
Penny Walker
Richard Yusem and Rachel Arama Yusem
Elise Wilkins
Sam Goldberg and Pat Tysoe
Jo-Ann Rosen
Carol D. Rosenberg
Leon Springer and Nancy Marotta Springer
Darline Bergere and Josh Bergere
Steven Levin and Joan Levin
Jean Morawski and Mike Morawski
Shoshanah Devorah
Joel Goldberg and Cindi Barr-Goldberg
Andy Coren and Yvonne Coren
Julie Kanel

Kabbalah and Jewish Mysticism

קַבָּלָה

When non-Jews ask about Judaism, they commonly ask questions like: Do you believe in heaven and hell? In angels or the devil? What happens to the soul after death? What is the nature of [G-d](#) and the universe? The answers to questions like these define most religions; in fact, I have heard some people say that the purpose of religion is to answer these kinds of questions. Yet in Judaism, most of these cosmological issues are wide open to personal opinion. The areas of Jewish thought that most extensively discuss these issues, Kabbalah and Jewish mysticism, were traditionally not even taught to people until the age of 40, when they had completed their education in [Torah](#) and [Talmud](#).

Mysticism in Judaism

Mysticism and mystical experiences have been a part of Judaism since the earliest days. The Torah contains many stories of mystical experiences, from visitations by angels to prophetic dreams and visions. The Talmud considers the existence of the soul and when it becomes attached to the body. Jewish tradition tells that the souls of all Jews were in existence at the time of the Giving of the Torah and agreed to the Covenant. There are many stories of places similar to Christian heaven and purgatory, of wandering souls and reincarnation. The Talmud contains vague hints of a mystical school of thought that was taught only to the most advanced students and was not committed to writing. There are several references in ancient sources to ma'aseh bereishit (the work of creation) and ma'aseh merkavah (the work of the chariot [of Ezekiel's vision]), the two primary subjects of mystical thought at the time.

In the middle ages, many of these mystical teachings were committed to writing in books like the Zohar. Many of these writings were asserted to be secret ancient writings or compilations of secret ancient writings.

Like most subjects of Jewish [belief](#), the area of mysticism is wide open to personal interpretation. Some traditional Jews take mysticism very seriously. Mysticism is an integral part of [Chasidic Judaism](#), for example, and passages from kabbalistic sources are routinely included in traditional prayer books. Other traditional Jews take mysticism with a grain of salt. One prominent [Orthodox Jew](#), when introducing a speaker on the subject of Jewish mysticism, said basically, "it's nonsense, but it's Jewish nonsense, and the study of anything Jewish, even nonsense, is worthwhile."

The mystical school of thought came to be known as Kabbalah, from the Hebrew [root](#) Qof-Beit-Lamed, meaning "to receive, to accept." The word is usually translated as "tradition." In Hebrew, the word does not have any of the dark, sinister, evil connotations that it has developed in English. For example, the English word "cabal" (a secret group of conspirators) is derived from the Hebrew word Kabbalah, but neither the Hebrew word nor the mystical doctrines have any evil implications to Jews.

Kabbalah: The Misunderstood Doctrine

Kabbalah is one of the most grossly misunderstood parts of Judaism. I have received several messages from non-Jews describing Kabbalah as "the dark side of Judaism," describing it as evil or black magic. On the other end of the spectrum, I receive many messages wanting to learn more about the trendy doctrine popularized by various Jewish and non-Jewish celebrities.

These misunderstandings stem largely from the fact that the teachings of Kabbalah have been so badly distorted by mystics and occultists. Kabbalah was popular among Christian intellectuals during the Renaissance and Enlightenment periods, who reinterpreted its doctrines to fit into their Christian dogma.

In more recent times, many have wrenched kabbalistic symbolism out of context for use in tarot card readings and other forms of divination and magic that were never a part of the original Jewish teachings. Today, many well-known celebrities have popularized a new age pop-psychology distortion of kabbalah (I have heard it derisively referred to as "crap-balah"). It borrows the language of kabbalah and the forms of Jewish folk superstitions, but at its heart it has more in common with the writings of Deepak Chopra than with any authentic Jewish source.

I do not mean to suggest that magic is not a part of Kabbalah. There are certainly many traditional Jewish stories that involve the use of hidden knowledge to affect the world in ways that could be described as magic. The [Talmud](#) and other sources ascribe supernatural activities to many great [rabbis](#). Some rabbis pronounced a name of [G-d](#) and ascended into heaven to consult with the G-d and the angels on issues of great public concern. One scholar is said to have created an artificial man by reciting various names of G-d. Much later stories tell of a rabbi who created a man out of clay (a golem) and brought it to life by putting in its mouth a piece of paper with a name of G-d on it. However, this area of Kabbalah (if indeed it is more than mere legend) is not something that is practiced by the average Jew, or even the average rabbi. There are a number of stories that discourage the pursuit of such knowledge and power as dangerous and irresponsible. If you see any books on the subject of "practical kabbalah," you can safely dismiss them as not authentic Jewish tradition because, as these stories demonstrate, this kind of knowledge was traditionally thought to be far too dangerous to be distributed blindly to the masses.

It is important to note that all of these magical effects were achieved through the power of G-d, generally by calling upon the name of G-d. These practices are no more "evil" than the miracles of the prophets, or the miracles that Christians ascribe to Jesus. In fact, according to some of my mystically-inclined friends, Jesus performed his miracles using kabbalistic techniques learned from the [Essenes](#), a Jewish sect of that time that was involved in mysticism.

Ein Sof and the Ten Sefirot

To give you an idea of the nature of Kabbalah, I will briefly discuss one of the better known, fundamental concepts of kabbalistic thought: the concept of [G-d](#) as Ein Sof, the Ten Sefirot, and the kabbalistic tree of life. This explanation is, at best, a gross oversimplification. I do not pretend to fully understand these ideas. According to Kabbalah, the true essence of G-d is so transcendent that it cannot be described, except with reference to what it is not. This true essence of G-d is known as Ein Sof, which literally means "without end," which encompasses the idea of His lack of boundaries in both time and space. In this truest form, the Ein Sof is so transcendent that It cannot have any direct interaction with the universe. The Ein Sof interacts with the universe through ten emanations from this essence, known as the Ten Sefirot.

From Judaism101. For the remainder of the article see their website <http://www.jewfaq.org/kabbalah.htm>

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Kol HaEmek MCJC-Inland
P.O. Box 416,
Redwood Valley, CA 95470

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.
- To share life cycle events through meaningful Jewish traditions
- and sponsor Jewish education for all ageTo be inclusive of all partnerships and family configurationsTo 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* (healing the world) as a community through socially just actions and and by Mitzvot)
- To offer to our membership in exchange for financial and other contributions and allow all to participate
- regardless of the ability to pay
- 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
-

Kol HaEmek Information & Resources

Board Members

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Sherrie Ebyam - President | 530-414-1104 < ebyam@sbcglobal.net > |
| David Koppel - Treasurer | 485-8910 < davekoppel@yahoo.com > |
| Carol Rosenberg - Secretary | 463-8526 < carolrosenberg@pacific.net > |
| Nancy Merling | 456-0639 < nancymerling@att.net > |
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| Sara Esserman-Melville | 463-2247 < sarmelville@pacific.net > |
| Darline Bergere | 462-7534 < thejeplady@pacific.net > |

Brit Mila: A doctor to call for to a referral to a Mohel - Robert Gitlin D.O. (465-7406),

Chevra Kadisha (Jewish Burial)) Helen Sizemore (367-0250)

Community support: Willits, Divora Stern (459-9052), Ukiah, Margo Frank (463-1834)

Interfaith Council: Cassie Gibson (468-5351)

Rabbinical Services/Special Ceremonies are available; send your e-mail request to Sherrie Ebyam