

OR SHALOM SYNAGOGUE  
**KEREN OR**

PASSOVER EDITION 5779/2019

## From the Rabbi

DEAR KEHILA KEDOSHA – Dear Holy Community,

Soon we'll sit down to Seder, opening with the invitation: "Let all who are hungry come and eat; let all who are in need come and join this *Pesach* celebration." Whereas the *Haggadah* was written in Hebrew, this section is always recited in the vernacular – Aramaic, originally;



German, for my grandparents; English or French, for us. Indeed, at our family Seder, Ross and I ask our guests to translate these lines into as many languages as we, collectively, speak. The *kavanah*, the intention, is to communicate as broadly as possible because we are inviting diversity, reaching out, past family and friends, gathering in other realities so that we hear about histories not our own, enslavements we had not imagined, and freedoms we take for granted.

We might ask: *Who* are we calling? *Who* is hungry? The answer is that we are all hungry. We are all so very hungry – for love, for answers, for peace, for soul-connectivity, and that is what attracts us to Or Shalom with her many portals of entry. The *mitzvah* of the Seder is to tell our sacred story of emancipation engagingly, capturing the attention of all who take part, all four archetypes of child or participant. And just as it is our charge to meet Seder guests where they are, so it must be in communal life at Or Shalom. We must elicit curiosity by way of our enactment of ritual, delight in the surprise of new forms, identification with the tradition through the relevance of the questions we address, and a sense of inclusion in the dialogues we prompt.

Or Shalom serves as chosen family to so many who have cultivated the intimacy of sharing meals and spiritual practice and caring for one another in times of joy and sorrow. Now, we have embraced new households who come to us bearing the gifts of their own experiences, their own values, their own talents and sensitivities. As we integrate, we are called upon to innovate, softening some historical customs, adopting others, experimenting creatively for the sake of serving everyone at the "table."

May no one go hungry, not in body, and not in spirit.

*Chag Sameach,*  
Rabbi Hannah

## From the Chair



STORIES ARE AN essential part of our existence. They tell us where we've come from, who we are, and where we are going. From individuals and families to communities and nations, stories serve as a vital resource for how to be human in a challenging world. As a people of the book, we look to our timeless stories for wisdom, solace, inspiration, and hope.

One story is so special that each Spring we hold a unique evening ritual in our homes to share it with family, friends, and strangers. A heroic saga of struggle and liberation thousands of years in the telling, the *Pesach* story is presented in a rich ceremony with food and wine and song where all may participate. And as is the way of our people, this ceremony evolves as we do, remaining relevant and central to who we are.

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...chair's message continued

As a community, Or Shalom's own stories sustain and guide us. These are the stories of our founding as an intimate *havurah*, our origin in diversity, and our historic love of ritual, both traditional and invented. They illustrate the vibrancy of our participatory *davening*, our love for collective Shabbat and festival feasts, and more.

Our beloved founders chose to create their own version of a synagogue by innovating creatively, even as they embraced tradition, and we can honour their legacy by doing the same. At this pivot point in our history, we must welcome changes to what have become our own traditions thereby continuing to evolve the story of Or Shalom.

Several years ago we began working towards re-building our education program for children and adults, we renewed our efforts to bring in younger generations, and we set out to engage more fully with other Jewish groups and our neighbours. Happily, in many ways we have met these aspirations. Shabbat Sheli, our program for 3-6 year olds and their families, has attracted new households as has Exploring Judaism, and Zusia, our new adult education program. Now, it is our task to truly serve our new constituencies and to deeply integrate new spiritual friends into the fabric of Or Shalom. This strengthening of our capacity to serve our diversifying community requires action on several fronts.

First, after much consideration, the board is moving forward to seek a part-time education administrator who will also teach and work with Rabbi Hannah on curriculum development. With this, we will begin to incrementally grow our spiritual education of children with the ultimate goal to serve children and youth ages 3 through Simchat Mitzvah, and beyond. Our first step will be to add a class for 6-8 year olds this fall.

Second, we are planning for new flexible and storable seating in the sanctuary so that we can accommodate a wider range of activities and qualities of experience in that space. We will be able to create intimate seating and different configurations suitable for concerts, talks, lectures, classes, and for a variety of modes of worship.

Third, our new Housing Task Force is now actively evaluating all our spatial needs, projecting into the future.

These initiatives require *all* our help. Volunteerism is vital at this exciting time. I encourage all to consider the rewards of committee work, as we cultivate new leadership at every level. And it is critical that we achieve 100% participation in our annual campaign, which now has an increased fundraising goal of 30% to support this work.

Our wonderful little Eastside Shul is blossoming as a unique and welcoming portal for Jewish seekers, and our ongoing success requires everyone's participation.

I'm sure you share my sentiment that these efforts are more than worth our while.

Happy *Pesach* to you and those you love,  
Martin Gotfrit,  
Board Chair

## COMING UP

SUNDAY, APRIL 14  
PASSOVER FOR KIDS & YOUTH  
A festive and educational afternoon of Passover activities for children, youth, and their families led by Harriet Frost and Cantor Shira Stanford-Asiyo.

SUNDAY, MAY 5  
INTERFAITH YOUTH DAY  
Youth from Or Shalom, the Shia Ismaili Muslim Community, and the United Church of Canada learn about acts of kindness and partake in a beach cleanup. To register, email [programs@orshalom.ca](mailto:programs@orshalom.ca).

TUESDAYS BEGINNING MAY 7  
FASTING, RAIN, AND THREE MAGICIANS: MAGIC IN THE TALMUD  
Explore the lives and magical abilities of three famous Talmudic magicians. Five-week course taught by Rabbi Susan Shamash.  
Register online: [orshalom.ca/zusia](http://orshalom.ca/zusia)

SATURDAY, JUNE 8  
THREE RABBIS, THREE COMMANDMENTS: STEALING, COVETING AND HONOURING  
For Shavuot, Rabbis Hannah Dresner, Jonathan Infeld (Beth Israel), and Dan Moskovitz (Temple Shalom) collaborate, each leading a teaching on one of the Ten Commandments.

## 2019 Annual Campaign

WITH PESACH COMES the Or Shalom annual campaign. Our wonderful rabbi, staff, and volunteers have used previous campaign contributions to create learning opportunities for children and adults and to provide support in times of joy and sorrow. To continue to enjoy our vibrant, lively community, we need two things from you: first, your ideas and feedback on what is happening and what you would like to see happen; and second, your financial support.

The campaign team will be calling all members and look forward to speaking to you. As we count the Omer, we hope that we can count on you.

Roslyn Kunin,  
Chair Strategic Finance and  
Planning Committee