

Shavuot Day Sessions

11:40 am Sessions

Mussar for our Moment: Jewish Spiritual Teachings to Support Us in a Challenging Time

Rabbi Eric Gurvis

Wednesday, June 12, 11:40 am Main Sanctuary

We live in an extraordinarily challenging time. The Mussar tradition, which stretches back at least 1100 years, is a lesser known, but increasingly popular part of our rich Jewish Tradition. In this session, we will explore a few teachings from this part of our Jewish tradition which may help us find balance in this dark time.

Ordained at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Rabbi Eric Gurvis has served congregations in New York City; Jackson, MS; Teaneck, NJ; Newton, MA; and Ashland, MA. He is a Senior Rabbinic Fellow of the Shalom Hartman Institute in Jerusalem. Eric facilitates Mussar groups across Massachusetts, including at Temple Emanuel. He is also a faculty member for Hebrew College's Open Circle Jewish Learning program.

Torah Service Skills

Dan Nesson

Howard Breslau

Wednesday, June 12, 11:40 am Gann Chapel

Learn the skills needed to be a more active participant in the Torah service.

Ladders: A Metaphor to Guide Us - An exploration of the plight of the Hostages through art

Alisa Kotler Berkowitz

Wednesday, June 12, 11:40 am Benjamin Vestry

Wednesday, June 12, 1:20 pm Benjamin Vestry

Alisa has always created unique and personalized spaces that capture important moments and life passages. Alisa credits her late mother, Mozelle, for nurturing this gift of seeing and composing life stories, as an immigrant mother new to this country, living among strangers while her husband traveled for work. Alisa and her mother forged a deep connection as they alone and together explored a new life and new world. It was here that Alisa the newborn and Mozelle the immigrant began connecting life and memories from afar and before, with new moments and experiences in the now.

Her abstract paintings are colorful, exuberant pieces that feel soothing and celebratory all at once. Her layering mimics life and growth, in that what we choose to cover up and reveal tells the world a story about where we've come from and who we are at that moment. Alisa's happiest moments are when she sits with others, hears their stories, and is entrusted with the gift of capturing and preserving their memories of home in her composition.

Joint Sessions after Lunch

Pirke “Imahot” - How our mothers transmitted tradition

Roberta Gross-Torres

Wednesday, June 12, 12:35 pm – Benjamin Vestry

Pirke Avot, a portion of the oral law, begins saying: “Moses received Torah from G-d at Sinai. He transmitted it to Joshua, Joshua to the Elders, the Elders to the Prophets” and so on.

Rabbi Eve Posen wrote: Miriam received the tradition from G-d at Sinai. She transmitted it to Deborah, Deborah to her daughters. The chain of our tradition is passed from a mother to her children. Women, for centuries, were the links of tradition, passing on Jewish values and Jewish practices through home life.”

This session will urge you to think about transmitting that tradition we received at Sinai using teachings of Pirke Avot, and others, as a springboard.

Roberta Gross-Torres holds a BA in Religion from Boston University and an MJLS from Hebrew College. She has organized the weekly Shabbat afternoon study of Pirke Avot between Pesach and Shavout for about 10 years.

Three Psalms which discuss the Torah

Sid Kadish

Wednesday, June 12, 12:35 pm – Adelson Hall

There are only three psalms which mention Torah. These are Psalms 1, 19 and 119. We will read them together, and try to answer the question, “Why is Torah barely found in the Psalms? “. There will be time for discussion.

Sid is a retired radiation oncologist with a special interest in Psalms. He has a course about Psalms at the Harvard Institute for Learning in Retirement. His membership at Temple Emanuel has nourished his desire for Jewish learning.

Jewish Approaches to the Theater: Ancient and Modern

Noam Andelman

Wednesday, June 12, 1:20 pm – Adelson Hall

In this session we'll look at what the rabbis of the Talmud thought about Jews' attending theater and what actual practice may have been at that time. We'll then turn to some more contemporary sources and see what conclusions we arrive at.

Noam Andelman is an 8th grader at JCDS and regular Minyan Ma'or participant and service leader. He is excited to share some of the results of his capstone 8th grade halacha project about theater with the TE community.