

# COMMUNITY TORAH REPAIR



SUNDAY, MAY 1ST, 2022



עץ חיים  
**Etz Hayim**  
Congregation



## *about the* SOFERET

WE ARE HONORED TO  
HAVE SOFERET  
ALEXANDRA CASSER AT  
ETZ HAYIM TO REPAIR  
OUR SIFREI TORAH AND  
TEACH ABOUT THE  
JEWISH SCRIBAL ARTS.

Alexandra Casser has been a soferet (Jewish scribe) and educator since 2010. She specializes in the restoration of antique torah scrolls and is authorized by the Memorial Scrolls Trust. Alex studied under soferet Jen Taylor while attending Yeshivat Hadar in New York City, and quickly progressed to repairing tefillin and torah scrolls. She has provided scribal services to dozens of Jewish communities from California to New York, from Wisconsin to Louisiana. She organizes the Stam Scribes collective of progressive sofrim and sofrot. Alex lives in Fairfax, VA with her husband and two children.

You can learn more about her work at her website,  
[www.alexandracasser.com](http://www.alexandracasser.com)

## *a message from* THE PRESIDENT



As Conservative Jews, we regard the Torah as a living document. We learn how to apply its ethics and message in our daily lives and modern world, thousands of years removed from its writing. We are challenged to seek new meanings and insights every time it is read in the central part of our morning service on Shabbat, holidays, and Monday and Thursday mornings. As one of the regular readers, I find myself noticing new things in text I have been through several times already.

But the Torah is a living document in another way: it is a physical object created from organic materials. As such, it needs attention to keep it in good repair. Halacha has various rules defining what makes a Torah scroll kosher to read from in the service. The Jacobs family donated a beautiful new scroll just a few years ago to replace a scroll that had become so old that it was no longer cost-effective to repair. We once again have scrolls in need of repair. In the past, we have simply sent the scrolls out, or had a sofer (scribe) come in to do the work during the week, when most people were unavailable.

This is the first time since I became a member (over 30 years ago) that we have invited the community to be a part of this work, and to fulfill the mitzvah of writing a Torah scroll. I am happy to see the response from the community. I regret that due to a simcha in Seattle, I will not be able to be present myself, but I will be with my Etz Hayim community in spirit.

Mike Stein  
President

*thank you to our*  
**DONORS**

**PARSHA - WEEKLY PORTION**

In honor of Allen and Marilyn Stein

**ALIYAH - INDIVIDUAL READING**

In memory of our parents Min and Sol Zimmet

Kathryn and Ira Bartfield

Matt, Sue and Rachel Kane

Phil Rosenthal

The Cohen Family

The Kimelheim Family

**PASUK - VERSE**

Anonymous

In honor of Aaron Faust, Rachel Keen Alpert and Evan, Adam,  
Maya and Natalie Faust

In memory of Betty and Leon Chambers

In memory of Eugene, Blanche and Chuck Davidson

Marge and Barry Ginsberg and Sue and Jason Hamm

Rav Natan Freller

The Laura and Jerold Jacobs family in memory of Meyer Quain

The Lovinger Family

The Roisman Family

**MILAH - WORD**

Danielle and David Pasch

In honor of Jonah Rosman's  
Bar Mitzvah

In honor of Lydia and Bill  
Rosenberg

In honor of my father Tevya,  
my mother Sima and my son  
Aharon

In memory of Joseph and  
Rose Lazar, Joseph and Bessie  
Briskin and Lawrence and  
Mona Briskin

In memory of my husband, Al  
Sorkowitz and his parents,  
Isadore and Gussie Sorkowitz

Jack and Susan Pevenstein in  
honor of the  
PevenMehtaBerg family

Ray and Roslyn Samuelson  
Rita and Barry Altman

The Baltaxe-Nezer Family

The Chernigoff-Ragins Family

The Faust/Alpert Family

The Harris-Malovany Family

The Heidema Family

The Levin-Alcorn Family

The Norrbom Family

The Peskin Family

The Rosman Family

The VanBelleghem Family

The Waldstein Kagy Family

**OT - LETTER**

Andrew Wagner

Anonymous

In memory Chana Chava  
(Audrey) Weiss, Ari Tessler's  
grandmother

In memory of David Theodore  
Schwartz

In memory of Jack Goldwasser  
z"l and Yudit & Gavriel Rom z"l

In memory of our parents,  
Pearl and Roland Lichtenstein  
and Eleanor and Hy Cherlow

Irene Bleiweiss

Jason and Laura Sapia

Larry, Jennifer, Cory and  
Matthew Pearl

Michael and Carmen Harris

Nancy Bondy

Sylvia Gordon

The Bash Family

The Burka Family

The Gold Family

The LeVine Family

The Naide Family

The Rafky/McSweeney Family

The Sherk Family



*a message from*  
**RAV NATAN**

Right before we say the Shema at night, we read in the Siddur: “Venismach bedivrei Toratecha” – Rejoicing in the words of Your Torah. Torah is a source of profound joy in our tradition.

Our tradition commands us to read Torah on Shabbat, Mondays, Thursdays, and holidays. Our sages teach that we don’t go more than three days without reading Torah because Torah sustains us spiritually. Just as water sustains our bodies — and one cannot be for more than three days without water — we as Jews cannot be more than three days without Torah. I invite you to take this moment of joy to reconnect with the most profound wisdom of our people, a gift that has been given to us and it is our legacy to carry on.

We turn to Torah multiple times in our lives. It works like a mirror. We see in its wisdom a reflection of who we are, as individuals and as a People. As we read a different portion every week, while reading the same book every year, we encounter ourselves in the biblical narrative. We see ourselves in the characters. We face similar challenges as our ancestors did. The Torah is the same, but we are never the same. Year after year, we pay attention to new details, to new perspectives within the same narrative, and rediscover familiar texts to be bright and full of light again.

While our spiritual wellbeing is taken care by the wisdom of God’s Torah, we have the responsibility to keep its physical form in great shape, waiting for a new reader to come and be amazed by its beauty and splendor. Whether the joy will come from the dance and the music of Simchat Torah, from the experience of reading the Ten Commandments on Shavuot, or from holding the Torah scrolls before our community on Kol Nidrei, we commit ourselves to taking good care of it, physically and spiritually, so it can be transmitted to and lived by the next generation.

Thank you to everyone who helped performed this mitzvah of repairing and writing a Sefer Torah. In the words of Rav Nachman, you have fulfilled another mitzvah as well: “Mitzvah gedolah lihiyot besimcha tamid” — It’s a great mitzvah to rejoice, always!

Rav Natan Freller  
Rosh Chodesh Iyar, 5782 / May 1st, 2022



# UPCOMING PROGRAMS

## **TENEMENT MUSEUM VIRTUAL TOUR – Online**

Monday, May 9th, 2022 · 6:30 – 7:30 PM

Step back in time with a tour of the Tenement Museum on New York's Lower East Side. Learn the story of the Rogarshevsky family, a Lithuanian Jewish family who lived in the Museum's building in the early 1910s. This is the final event in this year's Book Club, which focused on the Jewish immigrant experience in New York City's Lower East Side.

## **THE JEWS OF TIN PAN ALLEY – In-person**

Saturday, May 14th, 2022 · 7:00 – 9:00 PM

An exploration of the lives and music of celebrated Jewish songwriters, whose achievements would come to dominate that body of work known as the "Great American Songbook." We'll discuss the lives, careers, and music of such luminaries as the Brothers Gershwin, Jerome Kern, Irving Berlin, Harold Arlen, and more. Live performances from Seth Kibel will make this program as exciting as the music itself.

## **SHABBAT SIYUM FOR KITOT HEY AND VAV In-person and Online**

Saturday, May 21st, 2022 · 10:00 AM

Kitot Hey and Vav (5th and 6th Grade) Religious School class invites the congregation to its siyum. The class has been learning to chant Torah with Rav Natan. They will celebrate it with a siyum (completion ceremony) by reading Torah during Shabbat morning services.

## **TIKKUN LEIL SHAVUOT – SAVE THE DATE – In-person**

Saturday, June 4th, 2022 · 8:00 PM – Midnight

One of the most famous traditions of Shavuot is to dedicate a night of study to prepare ourselves to receive Torah again. This is called a Tikkun, an enhancement, an upgrade on our spiritual software to be better partners with God in creating a better world. Amazing speakers, teachers, musicians, and food! Stay tuned for more information about it soon.

To view our calendar, go to [www.etzhayim.net/calendar](http://www.etzhayim.net/calendar) and keep an eye out for upcoming emails.