



FOUND TIME : Women's Spirituality Weekend

Sponsored by Temple B'nai Chaim Sisterhood

Georgetown CT

Friday 2/28 - Saturday 2/29

This in-synagogue women's retreat will avail of the "found time" of the extra day of the leap year as a gift of rest and restoration from Shabbat to Havdalah, focused on mindfulness gratitude and renewal, filled with music, meditation, yoga and song.

Friday Night:

7:00: Sisterhood Shabbat

8:30: Wine & dessert oneg

Social Action Project: Menstrual Supplies Drive

Saturday:

9:45—10:45: Mindful Yoga Therapy / led by Bonnie Heft
Please wear comfortable clothes and bring a blanket or mat.

11:00-12:15: Study Brunch - Writing Ourselves Into the Story / led by Rabbi Rachel Bearman

12:30-1:30: Jewish Guided Meditation / led by Rabbi Marci Bellows
No previous meditation experience required. Please wear comfortable clothes and bring a blanket or mat.

1:45-3:00: An Encounter with Modern Israeli Women Poets / led by Rabbi Marci Bellows

3:00-3:30: Chai Tea & Light Snacks

3:45-5:00: Spirit and Art Workshop / led by Valerie West-Rosenthal and Karin Beitel
Project honoring Miriam, accessible to all participants. All supplies will be provided.

5:15-6:30: Opening Your Heart with Psalm 27 / led by Rabbi Marci Bellows
Based on Rabbi Debra J. Robbins' Opening Your Heart with Psalm 27: A Spiritual Practice for the Jewish New Year (CCAR Press, 2019), a copy of which will be provided to all participants.

6:40: Havdalah: Honoring the Line between Sacred and Ordinary / led by Rabbi Marci Bellows

7:00: Sisterhood Supper

Participant Fee for Saturday 2/29:

\$54 for the full day for all women who are members of Temple B'nai Chaim
\$72 for all other guests, including women from other WRJ Sisterhoods

(fee includes brunch, supper, and a copy of Rabbi Debra Robbins' new book
Opening Your Heart with Psalm 27: A Spiritual Practice for the Jewish New Year)

Click [here](#) or contact Pam Klem at tdnpg@optonline.net to join us!

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Detailed Seminar Descriptions

Friday Night:

Sisterhood Shabbat: A joyous welcome to Shabbat, including all members of the TBC community and other retreat participants, featuring women-centered prayer and song.

Social Action Project - Menstrual Supplies Drive: The [Alliance for Period Supplies](#) reports that 1 in 5 low-income women have missed work or school because they lacked period supplies; and that federal and state regulations preclude safety net funds from being used to purchase such supplies. In conjunction with the Alliance, we will be collecting menstrual supplies for area shelters for women who have endured domestic violence, poverty or homelessness. We will also establish a display providing information to raise awareness of this social justice issue.

Please bring an unopened package of tampons, sanitary napkins or panty liners for this collection. Further information about the Alliance and about how this issue constrains the ability of some women to participate fully in societal opportunities will be available.

Saturday:

All Day: Journals of the Spirit

As several of the seminars include journaling exercises, and participants may wish to take notes throughout the day, we will provide small notebooks to all participants, and establish a table with materials and designs with which to personalize them. Participants are invited to take time during the intervals before and between seminars to decorate / decoupage / embellish their spirit journals.

9:45—10:45: Mindful Yoga Therapy / led by Bonnie Heft

We will begin with breathing practices, transition to gentle yoga poses and will conclude with a short meditation. Absolutely no prior yoga experience is required. You are invited to sit in a chair and breathe if that suits you. Wear comfortable clothing, bring a yoga mat and an extra if you have to share with someone who is without.

11:00-12:15: Study Brunch - Writing Ourselves Into the Story: Creating Modern Midrash / led by Rabbi Rachel Bearman

Generations of Jewish people have created midrash (stories about biblical figures, events, or ideas) that allowed them to see their reflections within the biblical narratives. Making midrash is a transformative and powerful experience that can unlock hidden potential within our text and within ourselves. During this study brunch, Rabbi Bearman will introduce participants to the world of modern midrash and then lead them through the process of creating original midrashim. By the end of this session, all participants, regardless of biblical knowledge or writing experience, will have the beginnings of her own midrashic story.

- 12:30-1:45:** **Jewish Guided Meditation** / led by Rabbi Marci Bellows
Many of us believe that we have to turn to other cultures or religions in order to develop a meaningful meditation practice. However, Judaism provides centuries of wisdom related to meditation, mindfulness, and connection with the Divine. Our session will include a discussion of the history and terminology of Jewish meditation, as well as a guided meditation session, utilizing the symbols of Shabbat as inspiration for prayers and intentions. No previous experience required. Please wear comfortable clothes and bring a blanket or mat.
- 2:00-3:00:** **An Encounter with Modern Israeli Women Poets** / led by Rabbi Marci Bellows
The experience of building and living in modern Israel can be difficult to capture, yet women poets have been doing so since Israel was still just a dream. Through their words, we can feel their devotion to both the Land of Israel, their Jewish heritage, as well as the very idea of a Jewish homeland. We will learn specifically about, and enjoy the poetry of, Rachel (1890-1931), Zelda (1914-1984), and Yocheved bat-Miriam (1901-1980), three of the most influential 20th century poets. We will share our own memories and impressions of Israel while also exploring the lens of each woman's own experiences.
- 3:00-3:30:** **Chai Tea & Light Snacks**
- 3:45-5:00:** **Spirit and Art Workshop** / led by Valerie West-Rosenthal and Karin Beitel
With this project, we will honor the legend of Miriam, the woman prophet who according to Jewish tradition brought life-giving water to the Israelites as they fled from slavery and crossed the desert. Many families today include a Miriam's Cup on the Passover Table; workshop participants will be invited to design a glass goblet to bring home with them. All materials will be provided. We will close the workshop with a discussion of several ritual ways to incorporate the story of Miriam into a traditional seder sequence.
- 5:15-6:30:** **Opening Your Heart with Psalm 27** / led by Rabbi Marci Bellows
Rabbi Debra J. Robbins' [recently published book](#), *Opening Your Heart with Psalm 27: A Spiritual Practice for the Jewish New Year* (CCAR Press, 2019), has already been celebrated for its inspiring and soulful insights into how we can make each day better and each relationship more authentic. We will study the psalm, explore our own interpretations, and then dive more deeply into a few of the verses through the reflections and meditations offered by Rabbi Robbins.
- All retreat participants will be provided with their own copy of this simultaneously inspirational, and practical, book.
- 6:40:** **Havdalah: Honoring the Line between Sacred and Ordinary** / led by Rabbi Marci Bellows
Havdalah, meaning "separation," traditionally marks the end of the sacred time of Shabbat and the beginning of a new week. The Havdalah ritual entails a beautifully braided candle, sweet-smelling spices, and wine. The Havdalah moment entails lingering, perhaps a bit wistfully, that the peace and restoration of Shabbat, and our women's retreat, has drawn to a close, even as we welcome the week ahead of us. (sunset = 6:44p)
- 7:00:** **Light supper**

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Seminar Presenter Bios

Rabbi Marci Bellows – Guest Leader:



Rabbi Marci N. Bellows is proud to serve Congregation Beth Shalom Rodfe Zedek, in Chester, CT. A native of Skokie, Illinois, she earned a B.A. in Psychology from Brandeis University. While at the New York campus of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Rabbi Bellows earned a Masters in Hebrew Literature in 2003, and, due to her interest in those who convert to Judaism, she wrote her rabbinical thesis on the topic, “Yisrael by Choice: Contemporary Understandings of the Psychosocial Aspects of Adopting a Jewish Identity.” Rabbi Bellows was ordained in 2004.

Prior to joining Rodfe Zedek, served as a rabbinic intern in Brandon, FL; Edison, NJ; at the Union for Reform Judaism’s Commission on Social Action; and for the Women of Reform Judaism. She also worked as both Adult Program Director and as Assistant Rabbi at Temple Shaaray Tefila in NY, and, most recently, she served as the spiritual leader at Temple B’nai Torah in Wantagh, NY from 2009-2016.

She wrote the popular feature column, “Reform, Really,” on The Jewish Week’s website, was a recurring guest on The Jewish Channel’s “Rabbis Roundtable” television program, and was named one of the top “[Jews on Twitter](#)” by The Huffington Post, as well as one of the “[15 Rabbis You Should Follow on Twitter Who Will Change the Way You Think about Rabbis](#).” She has taught a variety of topics in a number of settings, including WRJ Assemblies, URJ Biennials, URJ Regional Biennials, and the URJ Adult Learning Retreat. She had led workshops on Guided Jewish Meditation, Israeli Women Poets, Midrash, and Using Social Media in Synagogue Life. She has also studied voice and theatre for many years, and is graduate of the People’s Improvisation Theater program in New York City.

Rabbi Bellows lives in Chester with her husband, Seth Lindenman, her son, Spencer, and their three cats. She will lead three retreat seminars – one on [Jewish Guided Meditation](#), another inviting us to [An Encounter with Modern Israeli Women Poets](#); and a third helping us to [Open our Hearts with Psalm 27](#). She will also lead us into Havdalah at our retreat’s end.

We are very grateful to have her join us for our first in-synagogue Women’s Spirituality Retreat.

Rabbi Rachel Bearman – Temple B’nai Chaim



Rabbi Rachel Bearman has been the spiritual leader of Temple B'nai Chaim (Georgetown, CT) since 2014. She grew up in Memphis, Tennessee, where seven generations of her family have been part of a thriving Reform Jewish community, and has known that she wanted to be a rabbi since she was 16 years old.

Rabbi Bearman was ordained by the Cincinnati campus of the Hebrew Union College- Jewish Institute of Religion. During her rabbinical studies, she served congregations in Muncie, Indiana, Dayton, Ohio, and Springfield, Ohio. As a fifth year student, Rabbi Bearman received the Rabbi Morris H. Youngerman Memorial Prize for her sermon entitled “Finding and Honoring Women’s Voices” and the Stephen N. Levinson Memorial Prize for her service to HUC-JIR and

its student body.

In 2016, Rabbi Bearman was chosen to serve on the Advisory Group of Mishkan HaNefesh for Youth, the Central Conference of American Rabbi's newest Machzor (High Holy Day prayer book). She contributed multiple, original prayers to the final product while also working with the other members of the Advisory Group to craft and edit this beautiful new prayer book.

In 2018, Rabbi Bearman, along with her writing partner Rabbi Paul Kipnes, created the website [Midrashic Monologues](http://MidrashicMonologues.com) where they regularly publish original midrashim (stories about biblical figures). Their purpose with this project is to restore the voices of biblical figures who have been ignored or silenced by history or tradition.

Visit www.MidrashicMonologues.com and Rabbi Bearman's website (www.RabbiRachelBearman.com) to read her prayers, midrashim, and sermons!

TBC Sisterhood is grateful for Rabbi Bearman’s encouragement to have our first in-shul Spirituality Retreat, for her assistance and guidance throughout the planning process, and for her participation throughout.

Karin Beitel – Temple B'nai Chaim Director of Lifelong Learning

Karin Beitel joined TBC in January 2018. She was raised in Merrick, NY, and holds a B.A. in Religious Studies from the University of Rochester and a Master's degree in Hebrew Letters from Hebrew Union College.

Karin's experiences living and studying in Israel strongly influenced her career choice. Those experiences included a half-year kibbutz work-study program on Kibbutz Mishmar HaSharon, junior year abroad at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, a year of study at Hebrew Union College in Jerusalem and several summer study programs and conferences.

After graduating from college, she served the Reform movement as Director of the Long Island and Westchester/Fairfield regions of the North American Federation of Temple Youth (NFTY). She began teaching and developing curricula during her graduate school years while serving as an intern for Temple Israel of Jamaica in Holliswood, NY, where she also coordinated the programs for their three youth groups and developed courses for adult studies. She eventually was named Director of Education of TIJ.

Prior to joining Temple B'nai Chaim, Karin first served Temple Israel of New Rochelle, NY as Director of Education, where she ran a monthly Junior Congregation service, advised and taught the Sisterhood Rosh Chodesh study group; and developed and taught adult studies courses, including a Jewish book club. Thereafter, Karin served Temple Israel of Westport, CT as Director of Education from 2003-2016. Curriculum development, family programming, student aide training, and social action programming were focal points of her work with the religious school. Additionally, Karin taught and prepared adults for b'nai mitzvah, ran a Jewish book club, taught adult text study classes, and served as a co-leader of two family trips to Israel.

Karin resides in Fairfield.

Suzanne Hamstra – Temple B'nai Chaim Student Cantor

Student Cantor Suzanne Hamstra is in her third year of her cantorial studies at the Debbie Friedman School of Sacred Music at HUC-JIR and her second year serving as Student Cantor at Temple B'nai Chaim. She grew up in a very musical household in Santa Cruz, California and has a background in opera and classical voice, with degrees from The Boston Conservatory and San Francisco Conservatory of Music. She has served as a cantorial soloist at Congregation Sherith Israel in San Francisco, California and cantorial intern at Kehilat YOZMA in Modi'in, Israel and currently tutors b'nai mitzvah and teaches Hebrew at Central Synagogue in New York City. She has been lucky enough to participate in a few TBC Sisterhood events over the past year and a half and is excited to be a part of this retreat.

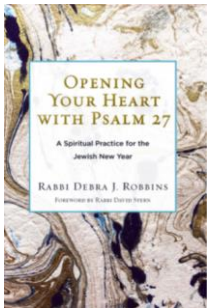
Bonnie Heft – Temple B’nai Chaim

Bonnie Heft is a certified 200 hour Yoga Alliance instructor. She has an additional 100 hour certification to teach Mindful Yoga Therapy, a practice proven helpful to those who have experienced trauma such as Veterans. Bonnie is a Retired LTC, US Army Nurse and is also retired from the VA CT Healthcare System. She holds a BSN from the University of MD and Masters in Adult Education from Fordham University. In addition to her Army and civilian nursing practice and hospice work, Bonnie has been a teacher of Hebrew and Jewish Studies for all grade levels and B’nai Mitzvah Coach at TBC for over 15 years. She is a longtime member of both Temple B’nai Chaim and of the Sisterhood Board of Directors, as well as a prior Sisterhood President.

Valerie West-Rosenthal – Temple B’nai Chaim

After completing a career as an Executive Administrative assistant, Valerie West-Rosenthal turned to new ventures and is now a student at Western Connecticut State University, about to graduate in May 2020 with a Bachelors in Fine Arts and a minor in Psychology. She will be continuing her studies for a Masters in Art Therapy. She is a member of Temple B’nai Chaim and of the Board of TBC Sisterhood. She also recently embarked on a year-long study of Hebrew and liturgy, and reports that “The highlight of my life was to become an adult Bat Mitzvah in June of 2019.”

Opening Your Heart with Psalm 27: A Spiritual Practice for the Jewish New Year – Rabbi Debra J. Robbins



This [new publication](#) of CCAR is a compelling invitation to meditate on the deeper meaning of the fourteen verses of Psalm 27. Opening Your Heart with Psalm 27 provides gentle guidance through a journey of reflection, offering heartfelt insight, profound translation, and an invaluable framework for meaningfully participating in this annual spiritual practice. While the volume is structured around the traditional in-depth study of Psalm 27 during the month of Elul, we will dip into the method and practices it offers during our precious day of Found Time.

All retreat participants will receive a copy of this beautiful and inspiring book.