

A Community Prayer Project Offering from the Institute for Jewish Spirituality and Har Zion Temple

Liturgical Prayer: Discovering Our Own Authentic Service

Taught by Rabbi Jonathan Slater and facilitated by Hazzan Eliot Vogel

One of the greatest treasures of Jewish religious life is the *siddur*, the prayer-book. It reflects generations of spiritual struggle and exaltation, expressed in prayers of great poetic richness and nuanced theological reflection. While it is “one book,” it is made up of layers of texts, each one articulating its own way of expressing the deepest cares and yearnings of the Jewish heart. Yet for many Jews, this same book is an impediment to prayer. Forced to say someone else’s words of prayer, to live into someone else’s experience of God, to follow the flow of someone else’s heart, many people feel stymied, silenced.

In this module we will investigate our own modes of praying through body, heart and mind – and then discover which of the many prayers in the siddur might serve as a vehicle for our native expression. Over the course of the month, through our individual practice and collective investigation, we will begin a process of sketching out what might constitute our own *matbe’a*, our “fixed” structure of prayer, for the sake of nurturing our own deepest *kavvanah*, our true intention in prayer, and for the sake of connecting in truth with the Jewish tradition.

- **Starting Sunday, March 4:** Each of the four Sundays in March, we ask that you watch a brief teaching video, read the accompanying written lesson and review the provided resource files (this should take less than one hour) to prepare you for your 20-minute daily practice which you will begin on Monday.
- **Weekly Discussion Group:** Thursdays, March 8, 15, 22 and Monday April 9 from 7:30 - 8:30 PM at Har Zion Temple
- **This course is limited to 20 participants**
- **Registration Deadline: Monday, February 26 at noon.** At that time, a list of participants will be forwarded to the Institute for Jewish Spirituality, who will then contact you with instructions for streaming videos and downloading course content.
- **There will be no cost for participants.** This class is being underwritten by the HZT Department of Lifelong Learning and the Cantor’s Discretionary Fund.
- **Register by contacting Sharon Kenworthy at Har Zion Temple: 610-667-5000, ext 117 or skenworthy@harziontemple.org**
- **Contact Hazzan Vogel with any questions – 610-667-5000, ext 102 or cevogel@harziontemple.org.**

Rabbi Jonathan Slater serves as Senior Program Director at the Institute for Jewish Spirituality, directing the clergy programs and serving in a variety of roles in other programs. He is author of Mindful Jewish Living: Compassionate Practice and A Partner In Holiness: Deepening Mindfulness, Practicing Compassion and Enriching our Lives through the Wisdom of R. Levi Yitzhak of Berdichev’s Kedushat Levi.

