

## HUC-JIR IN THE BERKSHIRES

Connect, learn, and create together

July 27 – 30, 2023

[huc.edu/berkshires](https://huc.edu/berkshires)

Join Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in the Berkshires for engaging programs with local Reform synagogues, community partners, and cultural institutions on and around Shabbat and Tisha B'Av.

**Questions?** Contact Ilana Goldberg, [events@huc.edu](mailto:events@huc.edu) or 212-824-2207.

### Program of Events

Join us for one or more of these programs; open to all. Note that program location, date and times are subject to change.

#### **THURSDAY, JULY 27, 2023**

##### **“I Created the World”: Humans and the Environment in the Bible and Contemporary Art**

**2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.**

On Tisha B'Av afternoon, come reflect on the environment and our place in it by studying the book of Job with HUC-JIR Bible professor Adriane Leveen, Ph.D., and touring the Humane Ecologies exhibit at The Clark Art Institute with curator Robert Wiesenberger, Ph.D. Following the program, guests are invited to enjoy self-guided hikes and tours on the grounds of The Clark. Advance registration encouraged.

##### Presenters:

**Adriane Leveen, Ph.D.,** is Senior Lecturer in Hebrew Bible at HUC-JIR, having previously taught at Stanford University. She is also the co-founder of Jewish Climate Action Network NYC, Bronx Jews for Climate Change, and facilitates JTREE USA.

**Robert Wiesenberger, Ph.D.** is Curator of Contemporary Projects at The Clark Art Institute and lecturer in the Williams Graduate Program in the History of Art. His interests span modern and contemporary art, design, and architecture. From 2013–18, he was critic at the Yale School of Art, and from 2014–16, he was Stefan Engelhorn Curatorial Fellow at the Harvard Art Museums. He holds a B.A. in history and German from the University of Chicago and a Ph.D. in art history from Columbia University.

##### Location:

The Clark Art Institute; event begins in the Auditorium of the Manton Research Center  
227 South Street, Williamstown, MA 01267

#### **FRIDAY, JULY 28, 2023**

## **Loaves of Torah: A Challah Shaping Workshop**

**9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.**

Be inspired in this 2-hour hands-on workshop by Rabbi Vanessa Harper '22, Instagram innovator ([@lechlechallah](https://www.instagram.com/lechlechallah)) and author of *Loaves of Torah* (CCAR Press, 2023). Rabbi Harper will show how challah dough can be shaped to interpret the week's Torah portion and, in conversation with HUC-JIR Bible professor, Daniel Fisher-Livne, Ph.D., she will share what drives her to create such meaningful and delicious culinary creations. Advance registration encouraged.

### Presenters:

**Rabbi Vanessa Harper '21** ("Lech L'Chala"), serves as Senior Director of Adult Learning at Temple Beth Elohim in Wellesley, MA and Reform-Rabbi-in-Residence at Gann Academy. Ordained by HUC-JIR NY in 2021, she has been recognized as a Wexner Graduate Fellow/Davidson Scholar, a Be Wise Jewish Entrepreneurial Fellow, a UJA-Federation Graduate Scholar, and as one of the New York Jewish Week's "36 Under 36." Vanessa is the creator behind [@lechlechallah](https://www.instagram.com/lechlechallah), an Instagram-based education project using challah as an artistic medium for interpreting and teaching Torah, which is soon to be published by the CCAR Press as *Loaves of Torah: Exploring the Jewish Year Through Challah*.

**Daniel Fisher-Livne, Ph.D.** is Creative Director of HUC-JIR in the Berkshires. He is Assistant Professor of Bible at the College-Institute and Research Affiliate at the National Humanities Alliance. He is currently writing a cultural biography of the Ark of the Covenant, exploring relationships among objects, places, and collective memory in the Hebrew Bible and ancient Jewish literature through 200 CE.

### Location:

Hevreh of Southern Berkshire  
270 State Road, Great Barrington, MA 01230

---

## **Kabbalat Shabbat Worship Service**

**6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.**

Join us for an uplifting and musical Friday night service with HUC-JIR alum Rabbi Neil Hirsch '10 and Rabbi Jodie Gordon '14, featuring HUC-JIR cantorial faculty, students, and alumni under the leadership of Cantor Jill Abramson, Director of the Debbie Friedman School of Sacred Music.

### Presenters:

**Neil P.G. Hirsch '10** serves as Rabbi at Hevreh of Southern Berkshire, in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, a role he has held since 2015. He earned his B.A. at Tufts University. He was ordained by HUC-JIR in 2010, and is currently a candidate for a Doctorate of Hebrew Literature from the College-Institute, researching the intersection between accountability and *t'shuvah*. His articles on that subject have appeared in the *CCAR Journal: the Reform Jewish Quarterly*. Neil holds leadership roles in the Berkshires and in the Reform Movement, having served on local non-profit boards and founded BASIC, a network of faith-based and human services organizations that ensures access to resources for the local immigrant community. He is currently the co-chair of the Religious Action Center of Massachusetts. He was a member of the Israel Policy Forum's Bronfman Conveners Cohort in 2021. He is married to Rabbi Liz P.G. Hirsch, and they live in Lenox, Massachusetts with their two children.

**Rabbi Jodie Gordon '14** gained invaluable community experience building, programming and teaching in a variety of Jewish communal institutions, including Hillel at the University of Wisconsin and The JCC in Manhattan, and Ma'yan: Listen for a Change. Rabbi Gordon was ordained at HUC-JIR in 2014. In recognition of her academic excellence and leadership potential, Rabbi Gordon was awarded the Bonnie

and Daniel Tisch Fellowship for Rabbinic Leadership during her time at HUC-JIR. Rabbi Gordon is passionate her work, helping individuals and families find meaningful ways to live Jewishly on Jewish time. She also serves locally on the board of the Berkshire Baby Box, an organization providing education and resources to new parents. Rabbi Gordon is married to Joshua Bloom, and they are thrilled to live in the Berkshires with their daughters Lola and Goldie.

Location:

Hevreh of Southern Berkshire  
270 State Road, Great Barrington, MA 01230

---

**Shabbat Dinner**

**7:30 p.m.**

Join us for a delicious and engaging community Shabbat dinner. The evening will include a discussion about Jewish leadership in a changing Jewish landscape, led by HUC-JIR academic leaders: Andrew Rehfeld, Ph.D. (President), Rabbi Andrea Weiss, Ph.D. (Provost), Rabbi Shirley Idelson Ph.D. (Director of the Zelikow School of Jewish Nonprofit Management), and Cantor Jill Abramson (Director of the Debbie Friedman School of Sacred Music). Advance registration encouraged.

Location:

Hevreh of Southern Berkshire  
270 State Road, Great Barrington, MA 01230

Cost: \$36 per person (please register and provide payment in advance)

Presenters:

[Andrew Rehfeld, Ph.D.](#), is the 10th President of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. Appointed in April of 2019, Rehfeld's career has bridged the academic and Jewish professional worlds as a tenured faculty member in Political Science at Washington University (2001-2019) and as President and CEO of the Jewish Federation of St. Louis (2012-2019). The author of *The Concept of Constituency* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), his academic research focuses on the intersection of democracy, human rights, justice and institutional design. Other areas of published research include the history of political thought, and the philosophy of the social sciences. Rehfeld earned a Ph.D. in Political Science (2000) and a Master of Public Policy (1994) from the University of Chicago, and a B.A., Phi Beta Kappa, in the Philosophy Honors Program at the University of Rochester (1989). He held the Fulbright Visiting Research Chair in the Study and Practice of Federalism, McGill University, and had visiting faculty appointments at the Harris School of Public Policy Studies at the University of Chicago, and Libera Università Internazionale Degli Studi Sociali (LUISS Guido Carli), Rome.

[Rabbi Andrea L. Weiss, Ph.D.](#), is Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Provost and Associate Professor of Bible at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. She is the founder of the American Values, Religious Voices campaign, co-editor of *American Values, Religious Voices: 100 Days, 100 Letters* (University of Cincinnati Press, 2019) and the recently published second volume, *American Values, Religious Voices: Letters of Hope from People of Faith*. She was associate editor of *The Torah: A Women's Commentary* (CCAR Press, 2008), which won the Jewish Book Council's 2009 Everett Family Foundation Jewish Book of the Year Award. Her other writings include *Figurative Language in Biblical Prose Narrative: Metaphor in the Book of Samuel* (Brill, 2006) and articles on metaphor, biblical poetry, and biblical conceptions of God.

**Rabbi Shirley Idelson, Ph.D. R.** '91, is the new Director of HUC-JIR's Zelikow School of Jewish Nonprofit Management (Zschool). Dean of the New York campus from 2007–2016, she returns to HUC-

JIR after serving as Leon A. Jick Director of the Hornstein Jewish Professional Leadership Program at Brandeis University. Her past experience includes serving as Senior Advisor at the Harold Grinspoon Foundation and Visiting Rabbi at Dartmouth College; producer and newscaster for Minnesota Public Radio; Director of Arts and Religion in the Twin Cities; Associate Chaplain at Carleton College; and Director of Religious Activities and Chaplaincy Services at Vassar College. She earned her B.A. in History at Dartmouth College, her rabbinical ordination from HUC-JIR, her M.S. in Journalism from Columbia University, and her Ph.D. in History from the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. She has contributed to numerous books and publications and was recently appointed to the board of the Central Conference of American Rabbis.

**Cantor Jill Abramson '02** is the new Director of the Debbie Friedman School of Sacred Music, having acted as Interim Director since July 1, 2022. Cantor Abramson previously served as the senior cantor at Westchester Reform Temple in Scarsdale, NY, cantor and director of education at Congregation Sukkat Shalom in suburban Chicago, IL, and sole clergy leader at Congregation Shir Ami in Greenwich, CT. She holds a B.A. in Anthropology from Grinnell College and a Master of Sacred Music and was ordained a cantor by HUC-JIR. Cantor Abramson has a strong commitment to international social justice work, having lived in Cameroon, West Africa, taught English in Indonesia, and conceived an Israeli and Arab teenage choir as part of the international peace program, Building Bridges for Peace.

## **SATURDAY, JULY 29, 2023**

### **Trails and Torah**

**9:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.**

Join us for a restorative and thought-provoking Shabbat morning experience, choosing between two options at the beautiful Mass Audubon. Advance registration encouraged.

1. A torah study and gentle hike, led by HUC-JIR faculty members Rabbi Andrea Weiss, Ph.D. (Provost) and Daniel Fisher-Livne, Ph.D. (Assistant Professor)
2. A meditative exploration of nature and Jewish thought, led by Rabbi David Adelson (Dean of the HUC-JIR NY Campus)

### Location:

Pleasant Valley Wildlife Sanctuary  
472 West Mountain Road, Lenox, MA 01240

### Presenters:

**Rabbi Andrea L. Weiss, Ph.D.**, is Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Provost and Associate Professor of Bible at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. She is the founder of the American Values, Religious Voices campaign, co-editor of *American Values, Religious Voices: 100 Days, 100 Letters* (University of Cincinnati Press, 2019) and the recently published second volume, *American Values, Religious Voices: Letters of Hope from People of Faith*. She was associate editor of *The Torah: A Women's Commentary* (CCAR Press, 2008), which won the Jewish Book Council's 2009 Everett Family Foundation Jewish Book of the Year Award. Her other writings include *Figurative Language in Biblical Prose Narrative: Metaphor in the Book of Samuel* (Brill, 2006) and articles on metaphor, biblical poetry, and biblical conceptions of God.

**Rabbi David Adelson '99** and '16 is Dean of the New York Campus of HUC-JIR. Before coming to HUC-JIR, he served as rabbi of East End Temple in Manhattan for sixteen years. He serves as a spiritual director and is a leader in the Reform Movement's justice organizing work. He was ordained in 1999 and

earned a D.Min. degree in 2016. Rabbi Adelson lives in Brooklyn with his wife, Lynn Harris, and children, Bee and Sam.

**[Daniel Fisher-Livne, Ph.D.](#)**, is Assistant Professor of Bible at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion and Research Affiliate at the National Humanities Alliance. He is currently writing a cultural biography of the Ark of the Covenant, exploring relationships among objects, places, and collective memory in the Hebrew Bible and ancient Jewish literature through 200 CE.

---

### **Israel at 75: Why Reform Judaism in Israel Matters Now More Than Ever**

**4:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.**

Join us for a conversation with HUC-JIR President Andrew Rehfeld, Ph.D. about the influential, transformative work of the students, faculty, and alumni of HUC-JIR's Israeli programs who are committed to creating dynamic, inclusive communities and inspiring Israelis to embrace their Judaism, while working hard to promote justice and democracy in Israel.

Location:

Ventfort Hall  
104 Walker St, Lenox, MA 01240

Presenter:

**[Andrew Rehfeld, Ph.D.](#)**, is the 10th President of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. Appointed in April of 2019, Rehfeld's career has bridged the academic and Jewish professional worlds as a tenured faculty member in Political Science at Washington University (2001-2019) and as President and CEO of the Jewish Federation of St. Louis (2012-2019). The author of *The Concept of Constituency* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), his academic research focuses on the intersection of democracy, human rights, justice and institutional design. Other areas of published research include the history of political thought, and the philosophy of the social sciences. Rehfeld earned a Ph.D. in Political Science (2000) and a Master of Public Policy (1994) from the University of Chicago, and a B.A., Phi Beta Kappa, in the Philosophy Honors Program at the University of Rochester (1989). He held the Fulbright Visiting Research Chair in the Study and Practice of Federalism, McGill University, and had visiting faculty appointments at the Harris School of Public Policy Studies at the University of Chicago, and Libera Università Internazionale Degli Studi Sociali (LUISS Guido Carli), Rome.

---

### **Havdalah and Concert**

**6:00 p.m., concert begins at 8:00 p.m.**

Bring a picnic and the whole family to Tanglewood for an evening of contemporary music, beginning with Havdalah led by Cantor Jill Abramson (Director of the Debbie Friedman School of Sacred Music). During the Prelude, find the HUC-JIR area for craft packages and activities for children, in collaboration with PJ Library.

**Note: Guests will need to purchase their own entrance tickets to Tanglewood to see the Boston Symphony Orchestra's performance by [visiting this site](#).**

Location:

Tanglewood Music Center  
297 West Street, Lenox, MA

Presenters:

**Cantor Jill Abramson '02** is the new Director of the Debbie Friedman School of Sacred Music, having acted as Interim Director since July 1, 2022. Cantor Abramson previously served as the senior cantor at Westchester Reform Temple in Scarsdale, NY, cantor and director of education at Congregation Sukkat Shalom in suburban Chicago, IL, and sole clergy leader at Congregation Shir Ami in Greenwich, CT. She holds a B.A. in Anthropology from Grinnell College and a Master of Sacred Music and was ordained a cantor by HUC-JIR. Cantor Abramson has a strong commitment to international social justice work, having lived in Cameroon, West Africa, taught English in Indonesia, and conceived an Israeli and Arab teenage choir as part of the international peace program, Building Bridges for Peace.

## **SUNDAY, JULY 30, 2023**

### **Justice Shall You Pursue: A Dialogue on Making Change, Followed by Tour of Tzedek Boxes Pop-Up Exhibition**

**10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.**

Come be the change you want to see in the world. Join Rabbi Shirley Idelson, Ph.D. R. '91 and recent alum Rabbi Andrew Kaplan Mandel, Ed.D. R. '23 for a conversation about the future of the clergy and Jewish leadership, followed by a pop-up exhibition of Tzedek Boxes currently on display at the Bernard Heller Museum at HUC-JIR's New York campus. Light lunch will be provided. Advance registration encouraged.

#### Location:

Hevreh of Southern Berkshire  
270 State Road, Great Barrington, MA 01230

#### Presenters:

**Rabbi Dr. Andrew Kaplan Mandel Ed.D. R. '23** (he/him) has spent his career supporting leaders of social change. Andrew graduated magna cum laude from Harvard College, earned his masters in educational technology from the Harvard Graduate School of Education and received his doctorate from Columbia's Teachers College in adult learning and leadership. Before entering rabbinical school at HUC-JIR, he spent 18 years at Teach For America, starting as a seventh grade English teacher on the Texas-Mexico border and ultimately designing the organization's national leadership development program. Andrew is the inaugural spiritual leader of the Neighborhood, Central Synagogue's global online community, and the founder of Tzedek Box, a new reflective ritual responding to the Jewish call for justice.

**Rabbi Shirley Idelson, Ph.D. R. '91**, is the new Director of HUC-JIR's Zelikow School of Jewish Nonprofit Management (Zschool). Dean of the New York campus from 2007–2016, she returns to HUC-JIR after serving as Leon A. Jick Director of the Hornstein Jewish Professional Leadership Program at Brandeis University. Her past experience includes serving as Senior Advisor at the Harold Grinspoon Foundation and Visiting Rabbi at Dartmouth College; producer and newscaster for Minnesota Public Radio; Director of Arts and Religion in the Twin Cities; Associate Chaplain at Carleton College; and Director of Religious Activities and Chaplaincy Services at Vassar College. She earned her B.A. in History at Dartmouth College, her rabbinical ordination from HUC-JIR, her M.S. in Journalism from Columbia University, and her Ph.D. in History from the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. She has contributed to numerous books and publications and was recently appointed to the board of the Central Conference of American Rabbis.

---

### **Connect and Create: WRJ and Lilith Salon and Writing Workshop**

**12:00 p.m - 1:30 p.m.**



Get your creative writing juices flowing with HUC-JIR alum and Executive Director of Women of Reform Judaism Rabbi Liz Hirsch '15 and Sarah Seltzer, Executive Editor at Lilith Magazine, for a salon conversation (30 min) and writing workshop (60 min). We will write together based on prompts, share our experience, and leave inspired and ready to put our pens to paper this summer! The conversation will jump off from Sarah Seltzer's story "Ironing" in Lilith's brand new fiction anthology, but ABSOLUTELY NO PREPARATION is required. Just bring your willingness to write! Advance registration encouraged.

Location:

Hevreh of Southern Berkshire  
270 State Road, Great Barrington, MA 01230

Presenters:

**Rabbi Liz P.G. Hirsch '15** is Executive Director of Women of Reform Judaism (WRJ), a role she has held since 2023. WRJ is the women's empowerment affiliate of the Union for Reform Judaism. Previously, Hirsch was the rabbi of Temple Anshe Amunim in Pittsfield, MA. Hirsch writes frequently on social justice, spiritual practice, and trends in Jewish life, with recent chapters included in *The Social Justice Torah Commentary* (CCAR Press, 2021) and *Prophetic Voices: Renewing and Reimagining Haftarah* (CCAR Press, 2023). She was ordained at HUC-JIR in New York. In recognition of her academic and leadership achievements, she was honored as a Wexner Graduate Fellow, a Tisch Fellow, and a WRJ Scholar during rabbinical school. She completed her undergraduate education at Brown University with a degree in Environmental Studies. Rabbi Hirsch lives in Western Massachusetts with her husband, Rabbi Neil P.G. Hirsch, and their two children.

**Sarah Seltzer** is the Editor for Lilith's magazine and blog and works with Lilith's writing cohorts. The former editor of Kveller and Deputy Editor of Flavorwire, she is a widely published journalist, essayist, and book critic. Her debut novel, *The Singer Sisters*, will be published by Flatiron.

---

**American Values, Religious Voices: Speaking Religious Truth to Political Power**

**3:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.**

For the first 100 days of the Biden administration, a multi-faith group of religious studies scholars sent a letter a day to our elected officials in Washington, DC, just as they did in 2017 at the start of the Trump presidency. The project's creator, Rabbi Andrea Weiss, Ph.D., will facilitate a conversation with some local letter writers who contributed to the recent publication of *American Values, Religious Voices: Letters of Hope from People of Faith* (University of Cincinnati Press, 2023). Advance registration encouraged.

Location:

Norman Rockwell Museum  
9 Glendale Rd / Rte 183, Stockbridge, MA

Presenters:

**Rabbi Andrea L. Weiss, Ph.D.**, is Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Provost and Associate Professor of Bible at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. She is the founder of the American Values, Religious Voices campaign, co-editor of *American Values, Religious Voices: 100 Days, 100 Letters* (University of Cincinnati Press, 2019) and the recently published second volume, *American Values, Religious Voices: Letters of Hope from People of Faith*. She was associate editor of *The Torah: A Women's Commentary* (CCAR Press, 2008), which won the Jewish Book Council's 2009 Everett Family Foundation Jewish Book of the Year Award. Her other writings include *Figurative Language in Biblical Prose Narrative: Metaphor in the Book of Samuel* (Brill, 2006) and articles on metaphor, biblical poetry, and biblical conceptions of God.

**Casey Bohlen, Ph.D.**, is the Mellon Visiting Assistant Professor in History and Public Discourse at Smith College. He is a historian specializing in the history of religion and public life in the modern United States, and the director of the Faith and Social Action Oral History Project. He received his Ph.D. in History from Harvard University in 2016.

**Marc Z. Brettler, Ph.D.**, is Bernice and Morton Lerner Distinguished Professor in Judaic Studies at Duke University and conducts research focused on the Hebrew Bible and its interpretation. He co-edited *The Jewish Annotated New Testament*, *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, and *The Jewish Study Bible*; he co-authored *The Bible and the Believer* (2012) and most recently, with Amy-Jill Levine, *The Bible With and Without Jesus: How Jews and Christians Read the Same Stories Differently*. His other works include *How to Read the Jewish Bible* (Oxford, 2007), as well as op-eds on the place of the Bible in American public life.