



## Electives 2026

This year, we introduced a class coding system to help you choose those you want to attend. While there is likely some overlap between categories and subject areas, the goal is to help make sure you're getting what you need from your Hava experience!

**Primary Subject Area:** Worship/Ritual · Early Childhood · School-Aged Children · Teens · Justice · Community Building · Israel/World Jewry

**Categories:** Skillbuilding · Repertoire · Lishmah (*for its own sake*) · Resources (specific tools to take home, and use in your own ways)

### Electives I - Monday - Faculty Led

#### **The Sound of One Voice: A Vocal Leadership Masterclass for T'filah**

***Facilitated by Cantor-Rabbi Shani Ben-Or***

**Primary Subject Area:** Worship/Ritual | **Category:** Skillbuilding

Put down your instrument and step fully into your voice. Discover the power, range, and depth of your own voice—and uncover abilities you didn't know you had. In this hands-on masterclass, Cantor-Rabbi Shani Ben-Or guides you in leading prayer through vocal presence alone. Participants will sing for the group and receive constructive, supportive feedback, along with practical tools for healthy, confident, and inspiring vocal leadership—so you can lead t'filah with clarity, connection, and confidence.

#### **High Holiday Repertoire (for “main” and “musical” services)**

***Facilitated by Eliana Light***

**Primary Subject Area:** Worship/Ritual | **Category:** Repertoire

From English anthems, to liturgical melodies, to more contemplative chants, come sing through a variety of music to energize, enhance, and elevate your Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur t'filah.

## **Leading from the Middle**

***Facilitated by Rabbi Noah Diamondstein***

**Primary Subject Area:** Worship/Ritual | **Category:** Skillbuilding, Resources

The image of the songleader in the average person's mind is probably a person with a microphone in the front of the room. That model, though, is not *always* the one that will best encourage broad participation from your group--its frontal nature can seem more like a performance than something they automatically feel invited to be a part of themselves. Come and learn some tools for breaking out of that frontal model, leading instead from the middle, both the why and the how. Learn some important songleading tips and tools for how to engage a group--even with your back to a sizable portion of them!

## **Engage Any Age: Encouraging Grownup Participation in Family Programming**

***Facilitated by Carla Friend***

**Primary Subject Area:** Early Childhood, Community Building | **Category:** Skillbuilding

Leading a children's program that engages and inspires kids is one thing, but including the grownups in your approach is another. How do we help adults participate, stay focused, and find a point of connection in these child-focused spaces? We'll explore skills from the Tkiya toolkit, troubleshoot common challenges, and discuss how we might be able to work in partnership with the adults in your programs towards a common goal.

## **Raise a Joyful Noise: Working with Instrumentalists in Worship**

***Facilitated by Elana Arian***

**Primary Subject Area:** Worship/Ritual, Community Building | **Category:** Skillbuilding, Resources

Explore best practices of incorporating instruments into worship, gaining helpful language and practical skills in leading both congregant and professional instrumentalists who accompany prayer. We will consider how to effectively communicate and lead other musicians to create a prayerful, meaningful whole.

## **Gems of Soulful Singing**

***Facilitated by Eric Hunker***

**Primary Subject Area:** Community Building | **Category:** Lishmah, Repertoire

For countless years (and still to this day) I come to Hava Nashira hoping to find a few songs that might change me. These gems are the melodies and words you leave thinking about. As I travel the world and scour the corners of the internet, I'm constantly searching for as many of these treasures as I can - so that I can gift them to you. Come sing songs that make you feel something. Come discover which treasures you might take with you. All that I ask is that you continue to give them away once you leave.

## **Circle Singing**

***Facilitated by Mayta Cohen***

**Primary Subject Area:** School-Aged Children, Teens, Community Building | **Category:** Skillbuilding, Repertoire

Welcome to Circle Singing; a game that looks completely different depending on who shows up to play. If you are looking to experiment with vocal harmony, practice leading in moments where you yourself may feel unsure, or listen and support others in doing this work, this elective is the place for you. Deeply rooted in Bobby McFerrin's world of vocal improvisation, we will explore how this vulnerable experience can be a valuable guide in our Jewish musical leadership. We'll talk about skills we can build by playing, and ways we can bring the magic of Circle Singing back home with us. How do you play? You'll have to join us to find out...

## **Electives II Monday - Participant Led**

### **Breathe - Sing - Exhale**

***Facilitated by Ben Romano***

**Primary Subject Area:** Community Building | **Category:** Lishmah

Looking for an experience to share with your community that combines meditation, song, and intentional group sharing? Breathe - Sing - Exhale is a new format inspired by the practice of counting the Omer that invites us into experiences of Breath-work, Circle-Singing, and Speaking from the heart. Developed by Aydin Mayers, Hazzan Jacob Milk Sandler and Ben Romano, this program is enlivening a growing community at the Marlene Meyerson JCC in Manhattan and has been taught at Limmud In London.

### **From the Byrds to the Beatles: How Music Illuminates Liturgy**

***Facilitated by Cantor Zoe Jacobs***

**Primary Subject Area:** Worship/Ritual | **Category:** Repertoire

The boundary between sacred and secular may be thinner than we think. Popular music is rich with spiritual language, longing, and metaphor - what happens when we bring it into our sacred spaces?

In this participatory session, we'll sing our way through selections of non-liturgical music, placing them in conversation with Jewish prayer. Together, we'll explore how the language, themes, and emotional landscapes of these songs can open fresh pathways into our traditional texts—and deepen the way we lead and experience prayer.

## **Singing Resistance: We Get There Together or We Never Get There at All**

***Facilitated by Wendy Goldberg***

**Primary Subject Area:** Justice, Community Building | **Category:** Lishmah, Repertoire

We'll be singing the songs of the Singing Resistance Movement, founded in Minneapolis in January 2026 after the ICE killing of Renee Nicole Good. Their goal is to provide "embodied resistance as a vehicle for grieving, feeling rage, and strengthening" in the face of political fear and increased ICE activities. We'll sing and hear about what it was like for 2000 people to sing peaceful songs such as, "It's Okay to Change Your Mind," as a way of approaching ICE agents, not with violence, but with a moral compass.

## **Effective Guitar Playing for Worship**

***Facilitated by Andy Dennen***

**Primary Subject Area:** Worship/Ritual | **Category:** Skillbuilding

We will explore how to unlock the almost limitless flexibility and sonic capability of the acoustic guitar and how and when to make the most of these capabilities to help your congregants experience a spiritual journey. Because of the various techniques being used, the class is recommended for intermediate guitar players and above.

## **An Exploration of Judeo-Spanish Folk Songs**

***Facilitated by Cantor David Fair***

**Primary Subject Area:** Worship/Ritual, School-Aged Children | **Category:** Repertoire

Join us as we learn and sing beloved ten folk songs in Judeo-Spanish (Ladino)—the language of Jews from the Iberian Peninsula. We'll also explore the rich history of the Ladino language—where it comes from, how it evolved, and what makes its musical repertoire so distinctive.

## **Intro to Guitar**

***Facilitated by Michelle Cohn Levy***

**Category:** Skillbuilding

If you've always wanted to play guitar but didn't know where to begin, this class is your perfect entry point! You'll learn how to read chord charts, master finger placement, build confidence with basic chords, and glide between them smoothly. Add in beginner-friendly strum patterns and how capo placement can be an essential tool, and you'll be playing a couple of simple songs before you know it!

#### **4 Musical Leaders from Around the Globe - World Union for Progressive Judaism Fellows**

***Facilitated by Tulla Eckhart, Hannah Kieve, Flaminia Ridolfi and Sarah Whitlau***

**Primary Subject Area:** Israel/World Jewry | **Category:** Lishmah, Repertoire

In a partnership between SUG and the WUPJ, 4 Fellows have begun to work in a year-long fellowship with us to strengthen their singing communities in Rome, South Africa, Amsterdam, and London. But they also have massive gifts to share; their music, their teaching, and amazing commitment to work in often very small communities, where “progressive/liberal/Reform” Judaism is foreign concept. These fellows will share stories and songs from their complicated and interesting communities around the world. This Fellowship is sponsored by Sandy and Tadd Schwab.

#### **Electives III Tuesday - Faculty Led**

##### **Leading from the Keys**

***Facilitated by Boaz Dorot***

**Primary Subject Area:** Worship/Ritual | **Category:** Skillbuilding

What are the techniques we can use to hold a space for prayer and song using a keyboard? In this “hands-on keyboard” session, we will discuss musical solutions for sensitive keyboard playing and song accompaniment, including dynamics, harmonic versus melodic playing, specific grooves and textures that work, and effective musical buildups into singing.

##### **The Art of Songleading in Worship**

***Facilitated by Cantor Natalie Young***

**Primary Subject Area:** Worship/ Ritual, Community Building | **Category:** Skillbuilding, Repertoire

This is a dynamic, one-hour elective on the art of songleading in worship. This session will explore how to introduce and teach new melodies in ways that feel accessible, engaging, and spiritually resonant. Through practical tools, live demonstration, and shared experience, participants will gain confidence in guiding a community’s voice—creating moments of connection, participation, and joy in prayer.

##### **Round Writing**

***Facilitated by Mayta Cohen***

**Primary Subject Area:** Community Building, also good for Teens | **Category:** Skillbuilding

Rounds are a hidden gem of Jewish music! In this workshop, we write our own round together, exploring how it can be a tool for connection, stalling, and creating communal harmony quickly. Great for anyone looking to bring this device to their community, learn some new harmony-filled repertoire, or take a break and be silly for an hour!

## **T'chilat HaDerech: Finding Your Place in a New Community**

***Facilitated by Deb Winter***

**Primary Subject Area:** Community Building | **Category:** Resources, Skillbuilding

Starting a new role or with a new community? This conversation will help you navigate the first steps of entering a new space with intention: what to listen for, what to ask, and how to build trust before (or while) making change. We'll explore how to honor what's already there while still bringing your own voice and vision, so you can lead with confidence and care. You'll leave with practical clarifying questions, relationship-building tools, and a clear approach to pacing change in a way that sticks.

## **Singing with Shechinah: Preparing us for Revelation**

***Facilitated by Batya Levine***

**Primary Subject Area:** Worship/Ritual | **Category:** Lishmah

The *Omer* (the period between *Pesach* and *Shavuot*) is traditionally a time of self-reflection and preparation, marking the journey from liberation to revelation. In this session, we will explore singing with the *Kabbalistic* energy for this final week of the *Omer*, often associated with *Shechinah* (the Divine Immanent Presence). Through song, discussion, and self-reflection, we will utilize this time to sing with *Shechinah*, and prepare to receive revelation this *Shavuot*.

## **Slump Busterz: Religious School**

***Facilitated by Jacob Spike Kraus***

**Primary Subject Area:** Early Childhood, School-Aged Children | **Category:** Repertoire, Resources

Is your community getting bored of singing the same 3-5 songs for every Jewish Holiday year after year? Join Spike for an hour of new and engaging repertoire spanning a variety of different composers, themes, age groups, and more. We'll also leave time to crowdsource with each other on the best places to find new material. Resources will be shared.

## **Electives IV Tuesday - Faculty Led**

### **How To Stand In Front of a Group: Level 100**

***Facilitated by Jason Mesches***

**Primary Subject Area:** Early Childhood, School-Aged Children | **Category:** Skillbuilding

This is it. This is the whole thing. Confidently managing a space filled with parents and kids. How can we command attention immediately without people noticing that we are doing it? Tips and tricks for: quieting down a room, changing your entire set in the moment, what happens if your gear breaks down, no guitar? no problem. We are going back to basics, and learning how to stand in front of a group.

### **Tiny Tunes, Big Impact**

***Facilitated by Jacob Spike Kraus***

**Primary Subject Area:** Early Childhood, School-Aged Children, Worship/Ritual | **Category:** Skillbuilding, Repertoire

The songs we use in our communities come in all shapes and sizes. We don't always have the time in our routines for a full 3-4 minute song, or sometimes our rituals are so specific that a song doesn't already exist that fits our needs. A song for a specific community tradition? A song to teach the "Word of the Day"? A programmatic theme song? Any time you or someone in your community says "I wish I had a song for that", you're looking for what essentially amounts to a "Jewish Jingle". There's a unique set of considerations, priorities and techniques that go into crafting a catchy song that lasts 60 seconds or less. Join Spike to learn the best strategies for writing "Tiny Tunes" that fit your needs. This workshop is great for non-songwriters looking to start off with smaller scale projects, or experienced songwriters looking to challenge themselves with niche prompts and limited musical real estate.

### **Piyyutim to Take Home**

***Facilitated by Boaz Dorot***

**Primary Subject Area:** Worship/Ritual, Israel/World Jewry | **Category:** Repertoire, Lishmah

Explore the art of the *Piyyut*—the magic of sacred Hebrew poems and their unique musical traditions. In this session, we will learn vibrant Mizrahi melodies for familiar texts like *Adon Olam* and *Lecha Dodi*, while also introducing new, accessible poems and tunes to spice up and energize your community. We'll also discuss ways to teach *piyyutim* musically and textually, focusing on strategies to integrate them into your community's regular practice so they become lasting spiritual tools.

### **Building Relationships with Kids & Teens**

***Facilitated by Deb Winter***

**Primary Subject Area:** Teens, School-Aged Children | **Category:** Skillbuilding

How do we get kids and teens involved in our programs? It starts by creating spaces they'll want to show up in, and building relationships they'll want to show up for. In this session, we'll explore how to genuinely connect with the young people in your community-- learning what makes them tick, earning their trust, and creating spaces where they feel comfortable showing up as themselves. From small interactions that build rapport to bigger-picture approaches that foster belonging and engagement, you'll leave with tools to deepen and expand your connections with this age group-- making programs more enjoyable both for them and for you.

### **Teaching and Leading Music within Worship**

***Facilitated by Cantor Rosalie Will***

**Primary Subject Area:** Worship/Ritual | **Category:** Skillbuilding, Resources

The purpose of music in worship is to enhance prayer, elevate texts, and open new doorways to sacred moments. How one selects melodies, teaches new settings, and uses repertoire within worship directly affects the way communities experience the sacred. How can one teach new repertoire within the worship itself, and in a way that enhances rather than interrupts the prayer moment? Through a demo of repertoire, creating meaningful *iyunim* (prayer introduction) to contextualize repertoire and sharing of best principles, we will explore immediately applicable techniques and tools to contextualize the “teach”!

**Masterclass on Songwriting: A Safe Place for Feedback**

***Facilitated by Elana Arian***

**Category:** Skillbuilding, Resources

As a follow-up to Elana’s songwriting intensive, this elective is open to folks who were in the intensive and are looking for more directed feedback/reflection on specific pieces they are working on. While the intensive will have a broader focus on writing techniques, inspiration, and big-picture musical creativity, this elective will give participants an opportunity to get real-time feedback from Elana and the class on an original work in progress.