

BY JIM MERRITT
Special to Newsday

Spring, which began March 20, is a season of spiritual awakening for many of the world's faiths. This week's clergy discuss why spring is a time of celebration, renewal and reconnection with the natural world and our fellow humans.

Rabbi Barry J. Chesler

High School Jewish studies coordinator and faculty member, Schechter School of Long Island, Williston Park

In the Jewish tradition, spring is closely associated with freedom. Spring is the time of the festival of Passover, commemorating the Exodus from Egypt.

Although the months of the Jewish calendar are based on the lunar cycle, the appearance of the new moon marking the beginning of each Hebrew month, seven months are added every 19 years so that the lunar and solar calendars are never too far apart and guaranteeing the occurrence of Passover at springtime. At the Seder, the ritualized meal the first two nights of Passover, on March 27 and 28 this year, greens will be dipped in saltwater, partly to evoke springtime, with the greens emblematic of the greening earth at this time of year.

There is a tradition to recite the biblical book Song of Songs in the synagogue during Passover. While the rabbis understood Song of Songs to be emblematic of the profound love between God and Israel, many cultures associate love and romance with the springtime, when all seems possible with the earth unfolding its majesty.



Barry J. Chesler



Saeed Boor Boor



Natalie Fenimore

UUJ CONGREGATION AT SHELTER ROCK

forgo its differences and, with the exotic colors of spring's diversity, blossom together in the garden of unity.

The Rev. Natalie Fenimore

Minister of Lifespan Religious Education, Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock, Manhasset

Spring, a much anticipated season, symbolizes for Unitarian Universalists the same spirit of rebirth and renewal as it does in most other faiths. It is the resurrection season although not all our membership celebrates it as Easter.

Resurrection and rebirth can be seen, of course, in nature itself — with the growth of flowers from deep in the earth or from dried seeds; with the budding of leaves on what looked like the dead, dry branches of trees; and with the advent of sunny days, which warm our bodies and our hearts. These miracles of nature give rise to an appreciation of our environment and demand our attention to care for this, our only planet home.

Spring is also the time to unbundle ourselves — not just from heavy clothes but from heavy burdens. We see new life, and with it, new possibilities. We reach out to one another. And especially now, as we reach out to the light at the end of the tunnel in this pandemic, spring symbolizes our ability to get back to life, to imagine a new and better, more just, more connected world. Spring reminds us that we can be reborn again and again and again — in interconnection with the earth and with each other.

DO YOU HAVE QUESTIONS you'd like Newsday to ask the clergy? Email them to LILife@newsday.com. Find more LI Life stories at newsday.com/LILife.

ASKING THE CLERGY

What does spring symbolize in your faith?

The Jewish insight is that history ultimately transcends agriculture; while agriculture is circular, history is linear. Thus spring is a new beginning promising, with God's grace, freedom to all who are oppressed.

Saeed Boor Boor

Secretary, Spiritual Assembly, Baha'is of Brookhaven Town

The spiritual significance of spring can be seen in the writings of Baha'u'llah, the founder of the Baha'i faith, who was born in the 19th century in Persia. He wrote of spring: "It behooves you to refresh and revive your souls through the gracious favors which

in this divine, this soul-stirring springtime are being showered upon you."

On the first day of spring, Baha'is around the world celebrate Naw-Rúz (Persian for "new-day"), which marks the end of the last month of the Baha'i calendar. Baha'is fast from sunrise to sunset and strive for spiritual excellence. We welcome the first day of the new Baha'i year by gathering with friends and family to say prayers for the well-being of everyone on Long Island, and to socialize, feast, sing and dance.

Similar to last year, we will be celebrating virtually to stem the spread of COVID-19. Just as spring marks the end of cold and dark days, Baha'is believe that now is the time for humanity to

calendarwatch

SUNDAY

SERVICES

Mount Sinai: Weekly in-person services. 10-11:30 a.m. Sunday, Heritage Community Center, 633 Mount Sinai Coram Rd., free, CrossoverChristianChurch.com, 631-734-0204.

East Northport: Worship service in the great hall. Masks required. 11:15 a.m. Sundays, Christ Lutheran Church of East Northport, 189 Burr Rd., free, welcometoclc.org, 631-499-4655.

Riverhead: Weekly Living Water Church in-person services held 7 p.m. Saturdays and 10 a.m. Sundays. Also watch online. Living Water Full Gospel Church, 24 Shade Tree Lane, free, LivingWater.online, 631-722-4969.

Lynbrook: To join via Zoom, visit us02web.zoom.us/j/5165990778 or call 646-558-8656.

SUBMIT NOTICES ONLINE three weeks in advance at newsday.com/submitevents. Look for "faith" in the "community" folder. When registered users of newsday.com submit an event online, it goes into our database with top priority. Upload photos and videos, too.

Meeting ID: 516 599 0778#. 9:30 a.m. Sundays, St. John's Lutheran Church, 13 Blake Ave., free, stjohnincarnation.org, 516-599-0778.

East Meadow: Masks required and seating is first-come, first-served. Services streamed on facebook.com/htocem. To register for the parish distribution list or for inquiries, email htocem@gmail.com. Additional information on website. 9:30 a.m. Sundays, Holy Trinity Orthodox Church, East Meadow, 369 Green Ave., free, htocem.org, 516-547-2480.

East Northport: Drive-in worship service with Holy Communion. Tune radio to 97.3 FM. 9:30 a.m. Sundays, Christ Lutheran Church of East Northport, 189 Burr Rd., free, welcometoclc.org, 631-499-4655.

Port Jefferson Station: Facebook Live services streamed from church service. Participants can watch online or attend service. Seating limited, masks required. 9:30 a.m. Sundays, St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church — Port Jefferson, 309 Patchogue Rd, free, stpaulslcps.org, 631-473-2236.

East Northport: Sunday online worship services are prerecorded and always available on website. 8:15 a.m. Sundays, Christ Lutheran Church of East Northport, 189 Burr Rd., free, welcometoclc.org/sermons, 631-499-4655.

TUESDAY

INTERFAITH MORNING PRAYER SERVICE

Stony Brook: Morning prayer service, all faiths and traditions welcome, canned foods accepted. 8 a.m. Tuesdays, All Souls' Episcopal Church, 61 Main St., free, allsouls-stonybrook.org, 631-655-7798.

WEDNESDAY

INTERDENOMINATIONAL ROSARY

Stony Brook: In the chapel, a group recitation of the rosary includes prayers drawn from Roman Catholic, Anglican, Episcopal and Orthodox traditions and Bible readings related to the four mysteries of the Marian rosary. Wednesdays 12-12:30 p.m. All Souls' Episcopal Church, 61 Main St., free, allsouls-stonybrook.org, 631-751-0034.

LENTEN WORSHIP

East Northport: Online midweek Lenten services available Wednesday evenings during Lent. 4 p.m. Christ Lutheran Church of East Northport, 189 Burr Rd., free, welcometoclc.org/sermons, 631-499-4655.

THURSDAY

DRUMMING MEDITATION

Stony Brook: Native American drumming meditation led by elder drummer Ric Statler. Masks required, social distancing maintained. 7-8:45 p.m. All Souls Episcopal Church Rectory, 5 Mill Pond Rd., 631-655-7798, allsouls-stonybrook.org.

SATURDAY

EGG TRUNK HUNT

Amityville: Egg trunk hunt for children ages 4 and older. Masks, social distancing. 10 a.m.-noon Saturday, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Amityville NY, 147 Park Avenue, free, stpaulsamityville.com, 631-264-0763.

VIRTUAL SERVICE

East Setauket: Summerland Church of Light services held via Zoom. Email summerlandchurchoflight@gmail.com for schedule and link. noon Saturdays, Summerland Church of Light, NSAC, 380 Nicolls Rd., summerlandchurchoflight.org, 631-316-1588.

Compiled by Ann Smukler with LaToya Rodriguez, Keri Wall Treudler and Daniel Variano