

Rabbi Betcher

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SPEAKERS

Rabbi Betcher, Mary Wilson

M Mary Wilson 00:02
Hi, I'm Mary Wilson. This is Thursday, March 18, 2021. I tell you during the pandemic now, I have to think every day like, "What day is it?" We're in the year 2021 now and crossing that year mark of the pandemic. I am interviewing a friend and colleague and just wonderful person, Rabbi Marie Betcher. I'm so excited that you are able to do this today. Thank you for joining me and taking your time today.

R Rabbi Marie Betcher 00:33
You're welcome. It's an honor and a pleasure and I love seeing you.

M Mary Wilson 00:37
Likewise. The first question I've got to ask is, how did you first become a cantor? Because I know you're a world renowned cantor - cantor and a rabbi? What was that like?

R Rabbi Marie Betcher 00:53
[laughs] That's very sweet to say that. I had another life. In my former life, I sang opera. I got my degrees in vocal performance, sang in Carnegie Hall all around Europe - but I was always a very spiritual person. In 1988, John and I were in Temple Beth Israel in services - Rosh Hashanah services. I also speak many languages, Italian being my first one. I was

listening to this person sing, it wasn't a cantor, it was a soloist - and she was doing the best she could - and I looked at my husband and said, "This interests me. I really love this." So, I started looking into being a cantor, learning the liturgy. That was in September '88 and my dad died three months later. Once my father died, everything changed. You try to reevaluate your life and see what's important - and traveling and doing those kinds of things - I always loved opera, but I didn't want that to be my main focus. Rabbi Folberg told me about a program through Hebrew Union College (HUC) in New York and it was a five year program. I studied two years to get into it - because your Hebrew had to be at a certain level. The whole time I served Temple Beth Israel. I served as a cantor, not official.

R

Rabbi Marie Betcher 02:30

In 1999, I became an ordained a cantor from HUC in New York City. We traveled to other cities and I serve different congregations - reform and conservative. We ended up back in Austin. In 2004, I was asked to come out to Cedar Park to this teeny congregation to work with the education program. So I did that. Eventually, by 2008, I became their spiritual leader. I think you were at my - were you at my installation? i had the head of the reform movement come to my installation - cantorial arm of it - and just all wonderful people came, in 2008. I was their cantor - their spiritual leader. I did many, many hospital visits, and somebody had a heart attack at the hospital - Ceder Park Regional. This was before I become a police chaplain, so I didn't have the uniform. I went to the ER and I said, "Well I have to go see Marvin - I'm his cantor." And they looked at me like I was crazy. They didn't know that word there. In Judaism as a cantor, you do everything that a rabbi does [but] you just sing it, pretty much. That was 2009, by 2010, I enrolled in a two-year program. Distance learning, plus I made six trips to Florida and New York and I became ordained as a rabbi in 2010 in New York City - [by] five rabbis - three reform, two conservative - and that's how I came into it. It's always a learning process. We continue to study until the day we die.

M

Mary Wilson 03:31

Right. So, I'm going to back up. You said you speak several languages and Italian being the first language that you speak, I'm assuming after English. Italian is your first language and English is your second language?

R

Rabbi Marie Betcher 05:11

Yeah

M

Mary Wilson 05:12

Well I didn't know that. Tell me about that [laughs]

R

Rabbi Marie Betcher 05:17

My family - my mother's father's whole side - Jewish - Rossi, Northern Italy. He was the mayor of their small town. Actually the Rossi family had Salamone Rossi - a famous Jewish music composer - and so my mom had that in her background, but my mother married a nice Italian Catholic boy. My father was wonderful. So, I have Italian Jews - orthodox and Italian Catholics in my family - mi familia. My family is born in Italy, so was my sister. She was two when we moved to Brooklyn, and I was born about three and a half years later, in Brooklyn.

M

Rabbi Betcher 05:38

But in your home you spoke Italian? And so that was your first language?

R

Rabbi Marie Betcher 06:16

Yeah. I was raised going to a Catholic church back when it was Latin and my mother would light Shabbat candles [laughs] and do all the holidays. You know we had that - that's why I love doing interfaith - we had that 60 plus years ago - and there were many families that did this. Up until I was 16, I had both, but then when I left for college, I left the Catholic religion behind me - no offense - and I just concentrated on Judaism.

M

Mary Wilson 07:02

We've had conversations in the past, it's really hard to devote yourself to two at the same time. Although it's wonderful to have that growing up, where you see that both are respected and honored, when you have to choose for yourself and follow a path it's easier to -

R

Rabbi Marie Betcher 07:24

You know this - all the interfaith couples that I married, they say, "Well we're going to expose them to both and then let them choose," I said, "Listen you just can't do that. You can't bring them to Sunday School and say Jesus Christ is my savior, I have original sin on my soul, I have to believe to go to heaven" - and there's nothing wrong with that, but that's not what Jews believe. So, you're gonna get something very different in Hebrew school. So, I say, "expose them to both, but you've gotta sort of pick one. Because they're not going to go side by side and believe the doctrine in both."

M

Mary Wilson 07:44

I think that's fair. There are many things about many faith traditions that I appreciate, but the bottom line is, I am a Christian and that's my main path. I knew that your family from Italy, I did not know that you grew up speaking Italian first.

R

Rabbi Marie Betcher 08:40

Oh yeah. My father was a partisan - a partigiani - he and his brothers hid in the Alps when the German soldiers used to come over the hill from Austria - I saw the hill - that's where my family was, way north. My mother met my father because one day he got caught. She hid him with her father - he was a Jew - and some other men under the pasture, there was a little room under the cows, under the trapdoor. So, interesting stories growing up.

M

Mary Wilson 09:27

Wow. There is so much there. How did they come to Brooklyn?

R

Rabbi Marie Betcher 09:37

My father had some relatives that had already immigrated to America. My father eventually became a fashion designer on Fifth Avenue then he was taken to Las Vegas to design entertainers' clothes - Frank Sinatra, the Rat Pack - all those people. He designed and made their suits by hand. If I told you how much they ran back then - it was like \$5,000, back then. So, that's why he came and found a wonderful path for the family.

M

Mary Wilson 10:17

Wow. I take it you have been to Italy numerous times?

R

Rabbi Marie Betcher 10:22

Oh, yes.

M

Mary Wilson 10:25

Do you still have family in Italy?

R

Rabbi Marie Betcher 10:27

Yes. I made the mistake one time of going during Christmas time. It was also Hanukkah

time. So, the Catholics wanted me to go to midnight mass, and nothing against Christmas, I was like, "no," even though it would have been really interesting, it's all in Italian. It was so funny, because the Jewish were orthodox. So if I went, I couldn't sit with the males, number one. Number two, they never acknowledged me being clergy because I'm a female. So, I just tried to dance around those issues and eat a lot you know.

M

Mary Wilson 11:10

The food is good [laughs]. When you mentioned earlier that your family in Italy was orthodox that I was going to ask, how do they recognize you?

R

Rabbi Marie Betcher 11:25

They don't. We don't talk about it. They didn't say anything. I was on the board of the American Conference of Cantors. Remember, we had a discussion once about going to Poland and Germany for a trip. Well, now, the majority of reform cantors are female. It's like, "Why do we want to go somewhere where we are not treated as equals?" So, we didn't go.

M

Mary Wilson 12:02

We can talk about this at another time, in another setting - but the larger conflict of American Judaism is predominantly reform and conservative, as opposed to orthodox. In Israel and other places in Europe is orthodox - and the two conflict often, yes? And you see that firsthand and personally in your role as a cantor?

R

Rabbi Marie Betcher 12:33

The former head of World Progressive Judaism, was a friend of mine, Danny Frelander, who wrote some famous wonderful music for the reform movement. I remember telling him, "You ever want a rabbi or cantor to come to Italy, I'm fluent." He's no longer doing it, but they're trying to make inroads - bringing progressive Judaism and women, little by little - more so in Israel.

M

Mary Wilson 13:07

I've been there once and got to attend a couple of services, but they were reformed congregations in Israel. I visited with other folks who are orthodox, and then others who are not practicing at all -

R Rabbi Marie Betcher 13:30
The majority of Israel - secular.

M Mary Wilson 13:31
The majority of Israel are secular Jewish. So, the diversity within Judaism. Well, one just in Israel, I don't think many Americans understand and two, worldwide. I don't think that many Americans understand where there are conflicts with American Jews and elsewhere, - some of it is gender, a lot of it's gender.

R Rabbi Marie Betcher 14:01
So like, when they light a menorah, they never pick me - for the city thing - they'll pick the most Jewish looking male, wearing a kippah, which I do not wear 24/7 - or with the payos, little curls at front - but the majority of this country doesn't look like that as Jews. But it is what it is - they want that stereotypical [person].

M Mary Wilson 14:32
I have had similar experiences as female and gay clergy in Christian traditions as well - and within my family - some similar reactions or non reactions and acceptance or not acceptance. It's always a challenge when the people you love and love you, want to ignore something that's a very huge part of your identity.

R Rabbi Marie Betcher 14:36
If I had a penny for every time - because I traveled a lot, did scholar in residence, rabbi in residence, or concerts, where then I would do a teaching moment the next day - they say, "Well when did women start being rabbis?" I'm going, "36 years ago, where have you been?" The thing is, is that some people, as in the Christian faith - they're not at church all the time - they're not keeping up with things that are really big. Until you prove yourself and you get up there, they go, "Oh, she knows what she's doing," - then they're quiet, especially some of the older. When you're talking 50 up, but now as it goes on, less and less, you get that.

M Mary Wilson 16:04
Right. Well, good. I've been blessed to hear you sing and show your skills and it's just lovely. I wanted to ask one more thing first, before I switch to the pandemic. You

mentioned that you speak several languages, and we've hit on English and Italian. What else do you speak?

R

Rabbi Marie Betcher 16:33

I studied Latin for eight years, which was wonderful - it was so much like the language I knew. I studied French for four years, I lived I lived in Quebec, Canada every summer - French fluent. Okay, so I [covered] English, Italian, Latin, [and] French. For my master's in Vocal Performance I had to study German. I did it for three years, because you had to sing opera in German. Then, of course. Hebrew. Then because I knew Hebrew, and German - Yiddish is like almost a no-brainer because it's sort of a similar thing. I never studied it, but I can pick up baby books in Spanish, translate it fluently. By the time you have Latin, Italian, French, Spanish -

M

Mary Wilson 17:25

Yeah, there's nothing to it, right?

R

Rabbi Marie Betcher 17:27

Yeah.

M

Mary Wilson 17:28

I was in New York one time with a friend who spoke Spanish. There was somebody there at a hotel who spoke Italian and they needed some help and they could converse just enough to figure out what it was that they needed to tell the hotel folks. When I was doing my master's in math, my professor also taught at a school in Brazil in Portuguese.

Although the sound of Portuguese is not like Spanish, the written context of it is similar. So, I had to read something in Portuguese for my math masters - and in the context of math, it wasn't that difficult - and so because of that little bit of Spanish that I knew I could read that Portuguese and do the math.

R

Rabbi Marie Betcher 18:08

I had a dear friend from Brazil and if she spoke slowly, between the Spanish, Italian and French - I could understand half if she spoke slowly. I never tried to read it, though. It's always easier when you read it.

M

Mary Wilson 18:49

Yeah, I found that definitely the case for me. I want to move to the pandemic because I know you've had a lot going on during that. I know you moved from St. Louis to Austin, but you were in St. Louis for lots of reasons, but you had come from Austin before you went there. Tell me about that move and how disruptive the pandemic has been in life, as you move from one city to the next.

R

Rabbi Marie Betcher 19:20

There's a good Yiddish word - beshert - it was meant to happen. Everything that happened was for a really good reason for us, we were very blessed. When we were in St. Louis - we lived in a condo - a beautiful building in downtown St. Louis, with 16 stories, we were on the 14th. They put out a little directory - once they found out there was a rabbi in the building - almost everyone put a mezuzah on their door [laughs]. There were fifteen or twenty families, five or six were lesbian and gay couples, there were interfaith couples - and those are our fast friends forever.

R

Rabbi Marie Betcher 19:22

The first Pesach was there, we did it virtual, we didn't get together. When we first moved, it was great. They said, "Are you going to start doing services in your condo?" It was like, "Oh my g-d, no." But it was wonderful. I had a real quick family all of a sudden. When the pandemic hit, we were enclosed in a really tight building. We had a lot of space, but you go in the hallways and the elevators. Other than walking the dogs, we didn't really leave. So, we didn't get together anymore, other than some of the older, the elderly couples that I knew, I would drop food off. There was a grocery store in the bottom floor of our building. I didn't even have to leave. So, I would drop groceries and bang on the door - because they didn't want to even get near me. That was when the pandemic had just started. So, you could do things like that or try to stay connected with people. It was very difficult because we had just moved. Other than the people in the - some of the bike patrol police that I had met - the Jewish community was wonderful, but they were far away from me. We weren't driving anywhere and they weren't doing anything. So, that was interesting. The whole move back, which we chose to do after some things that happened in St. Louis.

M

Mary Wilson 19:38

Let's just go ahead and name it: St. Louis has a lot of violence in the city.

R

Rabbi Marie Betcher 22:11

Downtown St. Louis, unfortunately. They've ruined it.

M

Mary Wilson 22:19

I grew up in North County of St. Louis and have worked downtown when I was a teenager across from some housing projects that were in existence then, they got torn down because they were just so shoddily built in the first place. But there's always been certain areas of the city that have been more violent. Now, the area where you were living has seen an increase in violence the past few years.

R

Rabbi Marie Betcher 22:54

It was very sad, after the protests, which I would have joined in - there were rioters - a lot of them not from St. Louis. They came through downtown, they ruined all the minority owned businesses. There were signs, they didn't care. They ruined it for everyone. There was a halfway house two blocks from us and I cried. I saw two people die on the street. I waited for the ambulance one time - 45 minutes. It's just sad, what's happening. We just knew it was gonna be a long time before it's fixed. So, we decided to come back.

M

Mary Wilson 23:39

Here's where, you know, my knowledge of the city and just a lifelong connection with it even though I haven't lived there since early 20s - I also know that not having the baseball team play in the stadium where fans could come also changed the dynamics of the city because there was a vacuum there, where there would have been people just out on the street feeling very safe. Without that, there's a vacuum. The same thing a little bit further down the market in the city where the Blues play - that communal area where people are just gathering and enjoying the team and what the city has to offer. What happens when the vacuum exists?

R

Rabbi Marie Betcher 24:43

You either make the decision to try to live through it, but it was not even safe to go downstairs, especially after dark. We never left after dark. Once, they closed down Busch Stadium, they closed down the Blues. They closed down - Washington Street was destroyed, all the restaurants were all boarded up. I couldn't go to the library next door - it was closed. All of the hotels were closed. It's like, who who ends up being out are people just waiting to do bad things.

M

Mary Wilson 25:29

Which is insane because that's such a vibrant, really lovely area.

R

Rabbi Marie Betcher 25:34

That's why we moved - we loved it there, The first five, six months - oh my god. But at our ages, we weren't going to wait four or five years for it to come back.

M

Mary Wilson 25:51

I completely understand. So, now you are back and you are not exactly retired, but kind of retired?

R

Rabbi Marie Betcher 26:04

I'm now choosing - I'm still doing life cycle - weddings, funerals. They've all been on Zoom, except for two weddings. Eventually I'll go back out. I will continue to do those but not as many. I'm a consulting Rabbi for the chaverah still. I was police chaplain for Cedar Park police and fire and Austin. Well Cedar Park is doing great, they love their police. Austin has got a problem. They're defunding them and there's issues. So, I talked to everybody involved and they all agree - I'm concentrating on the Austin police. My new commander, she happens to be the second female African American commander at APD. I'm excited. I don't know who's going to take over as chief of police. So, you know, we're doing that and they are in desperate need of chaplains. They need chaplains. We've lost some. I was asked to come back to all the organizations I was on the board for. I love Swan Songs, but I just couldn't do as many things as I wanted to. I want I also want to see my husband and have a life.

R

Rabbi Marie Betcher 27:36

I love iAct and I'll go when I can. I love to community work, whatever the Kavanah needs. I was a member of the chamber. That's the 80 hour a week, 100 hours a week. I love it, but there comes a time when I want to go play a game of golf, I want to go swimming, I want to see my husband. If I have to get called out, it'll be for APD and whatever the chaverah needs and I'm also on the board for Puppy Mill Awareness Day. So, we have a few events and that's wonderful, too. The COVID really reminds us if you've been overextended, pick your battles and pick the things that you love the most. I love music. I love religion, and I love dogs and police. There we go. I'm gonna concentrate on that. 65% of my officers are Black and Hispanic. So, I'm talking to them about how do they deal with what's happening. They need somebody to talk to and pray.

M Mary Wilson 29:12
What do you think the city needs? Because there has been a lot of hurt and distrust

R Rabbi Marie Betcher 29:21
I agree. I think there was no study or listening to other sides. There was just one push for one thing and that was wrong. A lot of people on both sides will say, now, that they're finding that it's wrong. We are so defunded with no cadets class coming. All the retirements that are happening.

M Mary Wilson 29:47
Yeah, I have read this week that there will be a new cadet class.

R Rabbi Marie Betcher 29:53
Yeah, but it won't be until 2022 and we are so understaffed and I can't talk any more about that. Without political leanings, I'm sort of middle of the road - really socially liberal, that's me. If they wanted to go, the mayor and city council, they should have listened to a lot of people on the other side. "How do we do this the best way?" Let me give you an example. One of the mounted patrol, I love her. I can't tell you hours she works. Well, when they defunded and they did, they took out their stable person. Guess what? The officers are doing all the cleaning on their own time. They don't need to be doing that. They had somebody paid. That's one of a billion things.

M Mary Wilson 31:01
The thing about that is that actually doesn't solve any issues by removing that person. I do have a lot of sympathy for recognizing we are asking our law enforcement to do far more than what they are trained to do. So, let's hire people that are trained in these variety of areas. However, it'd be really helpful to have somebody clean the stables. That's not the job we need to change. So, there's got to be a more nuanced intentionality to how this is implemented and thought about.

R Rabbi Marie Betcher 31:55
So, let me tell you, out of all the places that you want to do this kind of stuff, it shouldn't have been here. Austin, and I'm not their spokesperson - we had the most progressive, talking about inclusion and lessening different tactics. We have one of the best ones in the

country, but they didn't know that, they never went to see that. They just assumed that all cops are the same and they're not. Yes, if there's a bad cop, I'm going to tell you again, every cop is going to want them out, prosecuted, etc. - because it just ruins it for all of us. And anybody who will hide something - gone. My husband was a cop at APD. I have been with them for seven years. I got to truthfully tell you, I don't see this BS that I hear - I don't see it in Austin. We have guys with degrees, men and women with degrees. We have transgender, gay and lesbian, we have every color, every religion. Austin's not the place that they should have tried to take down. That's what kills me when I see it. You know what they got now? They can use their fists or the guns to protect themselves. If there's a riot, that's all they've got. They have no other means of protecting themselves. They're taken away everything. That's insanity because I've seen them get attacked. This is a whole study that should have been done. If they want to look at what our men and women are doing - we've got the only LGPOA in Texas - Lesbian and Gay Peace Officers Association. Does anybody know that on that board? I know, one of our men speaks out.

M

Mary Wilson 34:13

I think you've hit on something that's really important. I think there's a lot of not so much disinformation, but just lack of information. I've talked to someone else, Daryl Horton - and he serves on one of the committees - and we talked about the impact of the pandemic on that. We just can't get together, so that we are able to talk to one another. I think the pandemic has made any transformations that maybe need to happen much more difficult because the people who need to talk about what that's going to look like, can't do it. When you're 2D and you potentially have differences of opinions, you can't really read body language, you can't reach out across the table and shake hands. You can't even offer each other a cup of coffee. You and I both know, in relationality of clergy work, those kinds of little movements make a huge difference. Before, if I had somebody unhappy with me, I could say, "Okay well, let's go to dinner. Let's break bread together."

R

Rabbi Marie Betcher 35:42

I just said this yesterday.

M

Mary Wilson 35:44

That changes. That came up with my conversation with Daryl. The pandemic has hurt any initiatives -

R Rabbi Marie Betcher 35:56
Until they tamp down the rhetoric, I'm not gonna bring my officers in when another side say, "Fry 'em like bacon, you're all evil." You can't say that you're looking at people who are your color or they love you. We need to tamp down the rhetoric. Okay, first of all, on both sides, we have to be able to get together in the room.

M Mary Wilson 36:26
We really do.

R Rabbi Marie Betcher 36:28
Now, the policemen for the most part, they are fully vaccinated.

M Mary Wilson 36:38
Maybe that will be able to happen soon because more and more - I fall into one of the earlier categories of getting vaccinated, and I'm halfway through that process. But I also know plenty of people who are further down the list that are also starting to get vaccinated. It'll take a while to also get those all distributed too - by the time it's all available, we've got to be able to give them all and they've got to be able to take effect - so you start looking at that timeline. And then we have Fourth of July, which is a big celebratory day in the country anyway. So yeah, we've just got to be able to sit in some rooms together. And it's not just this, police policing and community area, it's just complications as well. People are tired of looking at each other. I mean, Zoom was great to the beginning where we could actually see one another. I know, for myself, I'm longing to be with other people and give hugs. Let me just give an example. I was thinking about this earlier, when we were talking about your condo in St. Louis, I was so blessed by the fact that you were there at a time when my father was in a really difficult place, and I got to go visit you one evening and get my own pastoral care that I much needed at that time. I was so grateful that you were there - a friend and colleague that I'd known for so long, at a difficult time. That's the sort of thing we need. We talked on the phone a little bit, but there was nothing that replaces that in person visit.

R Rabbi Marie Betcher 38:47
No. And I think back - I'm very isolated where we live. In St. Louis, as soon as I walked out on the street, I saw people of color and I talked to a veteran and I hugged little kids - it was easy because I saw everybody. Now, unless I go to my police station - and I hug them

- I hugged them when I came back. I wasn't vaccinated. G-d took care of me. And they're every race, religion, creed, color, sexuality - everybody. They're trying the best they can, but it's hard because they don't know who they're coming in contact with - and yet they do their jobs. They're trying the best they can. This thing about, "Do you have your mask on, do you have your gloves on?" You know, same thing with fire and EMS - oh my g-d.

M

Mary Wilson 40:00

My younger sister is a nurse and last year at this time, she was she was in St. Louis helping to take care of my dad and took a leave from work. Then I went up to help him in the last month of his life. She said from the time she was came to St. Louis, which was early March until mid-April, everything at her job had changed in terms of protocols and what they could do and what they couldn't do and that transition was just massive.

R

Rabbi Marie Betcher 40:42

The West Austin news did an article about me - I'm still waiting to get my copy - about surviving COVID. How do you survive COVID? For some people it's a no-brainer - trying new things, studying, playing the piano, cooking some new things, taking walks, taking drives. Pets can't get COVID, so doing a lot of stuff with puppies. Doing Zooms - but it's hard for people who are not tech savvy. So, I do as much with the elderly as I can. In my neighborhood, maybe a quarter are elderly and I know where they are. We'll meet, I'll stand in the street and I'll talk to them at their front doors. But you know it takes a lot of being proactive on your part because if you don't do that you let that thing just take over you and depression sets in with a lot of people. And you've seen a lot of people not handle this well.

M

Mary Wilson 41:53

Yeah, it's been a challenge, things none of us ever planned on. So, adaptability and perseverance and resilience are all put to the test right now

R

Rabbi Marie Betcher 42:19

You try to keep it as normal as you can.

M

Mary Wilson 42:23

As normal as you can - that's that's a good way to put it. My spouse works from home, is in another room and she'll go in there, shut the door, and I may not see her all day. But she also was able to work from home prior to the pandemic from time to time. Now, we have a room basically that's just her room to work. She's got the chair and the monitors and everything. She works works in tech. So, I mean her setup at home is very much like what it

would have been in her cube at work. The only difference is being at home is just more comfortable. So, it hasn't impacted her work as much as me in that sense. I retired from pastoral ministry and I had some ideas of what I was gonna do and none of that really can pan out at the moment because it all involved people and meeting people and going to things. I've had to adjust, but now I get to do these interviews and talk to other ministers on clergy and it's just been wonderful. You and I could probably talk all day, so I should try to wrap this up. Let me ask if there's anything else that you would like to share about this past year in your life or in the communities you serve? What it has been like for them and for you - anything that we've glossed over that you think is really important to share?

Rabbi Marie Betcher 44:03

R

I think our job as clergy is to keep the tie with people together and suggesting to them things that they can do, finding ways to keep them connected - that's been the biggest thing. I'll say, "Let's go ahead and meet out in this park," and you have to keep pushing people, especially the ones that you know are really hurting. So, I find that I do that a lot. I am blessed to have a husband that is my tsur, my rock. So, I have somebody to talk to and be with - when we don't get on each other's nerves. The other thing about this whole pandemic is that it's either taught you what's important in life or beaten you down - you know what I mean? It's almost like there's a little bit of a middle ground, but for many people that I've spoken with they go, "You know, I never used to go sit on my back patio and now I go out there and look at this like." And I go, "Yeah well, isn't that a nice thing? You didn't have to wait until you were near death to stop and slow [down.]. So for many people that has happened. I feel like my job other than to keep in contact with as many people as I can through all of our technological means, is to keep them uplifted and buoyant. That keeps me better.

M

Mary Wilson 45:49

Yeah, it reminds me of one of the clergy I talked to in the fall said, "I want to give people hope."

R

Rabbi Marie Betcher 45:55

Yes, there's an end date to this.

M

Mary Wilson 46:05

Neil and I commiserate that the roaring 20s were known as that, following the pandemic. So we're both very interested to see what the world will look like - how communities and countries will respond when this veil is lifted.

- R** Rabbi Marie Betcher 46:24
Yeah. I don't think it's going to be an immediate like wall that rises because people are going to be afraid for a long time. Even like traveling to Europe, John and I said, "Let's wait a year." I think that little by little, the younger and the ones that throw all caution to the wind, whatever age, they're going to be out there the day after. I've talked to so many people who are going to be afraid for a while, but we'll get back there.
- M** Mary Wilson 47:00
Eventually. It'll be something different than it was before. Because as we noted, the 1920s were different than the 1910s. So, we'll see what that looks like for this turn of pandemic and moving out of it.
- R** Rabbi Marie Betcher 47:21
Especially for our children.
- M** Mary Wilson 47:23
Well, Rabbi Marie, I love visiting - I'm sure we could talk all day, but I'll cut off our recording piece and we can chat and close it down.
- R** Rabbi Marie Betcher 47:37
Thank you.