

# the Connection



With Pride in Our Hearts, We Look Ahead to Summer Days!



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Cantor Daniel Mendelson  
Rabbi Libby Fisher

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## Our Story

A Jewish journey is about history. Where you are going, and where you have been. It is about times, and places, and people. It is about quiet moments with oneself and with God. It is about joyous moments spent with others.

Congregation Kol Ami's Jewish journey began in 1923 when the Jewish Community Center of White Plains was formed and land was purchased on Sterling Avenue in White Plains to build a religious school and a temple. As the temple and the school expanded, in 1944 seven and a half acres of land were purchased at Soundview Avenue.

In May 1995 the Jewish Community Center of White Plains changed its name to Congregation Kol Ami, meaning "The Voice of My People". From the start, and continuing today, our purpose has been to nurture the divine spark within, and to connect each of us to a meaningful Jewish journey.

Whatever your "Jewish" is, you'll find it at Kol Ami.

Here, our members-of every age and with diverse backgrounds and identities- are our heartbeat.

Here, we cultivate relationships with family, friends, staff, and clergy.

Here, we are rooted in our synagogue, in our community, in our country and in Israel.

Here, we celebrate Jewish traditions and culture, nourish our souls through music and arts, and explore relationships with God.

Here, we evolve and challenge ourselves.

Here, we worship, we learn, we celebrate, we engage.

Here, we practice Tikkun Olam.

"Kol Ami" means "the voice of my people".

Here, hear your voice.

# Building Connections That Sustain Us

## Rabbi Jason Fenster



Back on Rosh Hashanah (can you remember all the way back to Rosh Hashanah?), we spoke about the American endemic of loneliness. On the first day of 5785, we explored how loneliness is, quite literally,

bad for our health, and how loneliness is a self-fulfilling prophecy. And we discussed how the antidote to loneliness, the rabbi suggested, you just might find that at synagogue.

The past few months have brought new stressors and hardships for us as individuals, as Jews, and as members of our various communities and identities. The loneliness epidemic hasn't gone anywhere.

Perhaps you've noticed it or felt it in yourself or someone you care about. When he was Surgeon General, Dr. Vivek Murthy reported that one in two Americans have experienced loneliness. If you have, that is nothing to be ashamed of, but it is something we can and ought to seek to address together.

Let me offer again as I did back on the 1st of Tishrei: join... something. The business of synagogue is relationship, or, what loneliness researchers call "meaningful connection." Not just being near other people. We can be physically together but unconnected. The invitation of synagogue is the opportunity for connection rooted in vulnerability, honesty, and shared commitment to history, tradition, and purpose.

It's not always easy to forge those relationships. It takes time. You've likely experienced it before. You went to something once or twice, and you weren't sure who to talk to. But when you invested time and were willing to show up as yourself, you started to feel that connection. It takes some risk and some bravery, but it is, quite literally, good for your health.

As we wind down this programmatic year and begin preparing for all that will come in the months ahead, I hope you will seek out those opportunities to forge meaningful connection. Maybe it's with KASA or the choir, or lingering at bagels on a Sunday morning. Maybe you'll volunteer a few more hours at the food pantry or dip your toes in Torah or Talmud study. Maybe you'll come to a Sisterhood Challah bake or a gathering of the Men's Council. Maybe you'll join a Circle or create one of your own. Maybe you'll come to pray, or come to eat cookies and schmooze on a Friday night. Maybe you'll meet us at the synagogue, the bar, the coffeeshop, the ice cream store, or at a playground.

No matter your means of connection, we have so much good, joyful, important, and sacred work to do together. In the year to come, we will explore the depths of our tradition as we share our modern wisdom. We will do work that seeks to correct the injustices of the world, and we will fill the shelves in our food pantry. We will explore big questions about our lives and purpose, and care for each other's daily needs with hot soup, warm phone calls, and loving embraces. We will deepen and strengthen relationships and imagine the future we need to build.

This is our sacred work, and we are honored to do it with you.





# From Strength to Strength, With Every Step

## Cantor Daniel Mendelson



Looking back to my start at Kol Ami, it's been quite the rollercoaster—from arriving to an empty campus with a laptop in the middle of the sanctuary, to navigating a pandemic, to welcoming folks

back inside, and finally getting to know people face-to-face. I found my rhythm alongside two wonderfully different senior rabbis, only to say goodbye to both... and then welcome *just one*? One rabbi?! Oh—it's Jason Fenster? Alright then. Still a steep hill to climb but climb it we did.

We made it through that transitional year and brought in the smart, spirited, and talented Rabbi Libby Fisher. Now we're cooking. We've completed a full year together, a year of feeling out the vibe. Spoiler alert: it's good.

Rabbi Fenster has brought consistency and clarity of vision—what he says from the bima is echoed in our programming and energy. Rabbi Fisher brought boldness, introducing a series of *Death Over Dinner* conversations following her moving Yom Kippur sermon. We're still clarifying our roles and focus, but we're doing it thoughtfully, and as a team. The clergy engine is getting tuned, and it's running just as it should.

We're grateful to Jess Lorden for her executive leadership and to Alison Adler, whose multi-faceted support helps keep us on track. Thanks to Pam Pass and Merav Veetal for empowering our youth, and to Co-Presidents Judy Sarch and Andrew Levenson for their steady guidance. We now say goodbye to Judy with gratitude and welcome Gary Orentlicher to the plate.

Let's talk Shabbat music. When I arrived, we had piano, drums, and maybe a third instrument. Now? Instrumental quartets are the norm. Thanks to Alex Hopkins' musical leadership and our fantastic ensemble, we've raised the bar. Kol

Ami doesn't need quartets to function, but the sound and energy they bring are extraordinary. It's a careful balance between rocking out and contemplative davening—but we're always working to stay spiritually plugged in.

I'm grateful to Alex and to Itamar Gov Ari, who regularly leads music at B'nai Mitzvah services and is our ECP song leader. Every Friday, he visits classrooms, leading joyful Shabbat music sessions with Morah Gavi and our clergy. It's a highlight of the week—fun, learning, and ruach wrapped together.

Our Religious School kids continue to enjoy being Jewish together here—half the battle! With Melissa Cohen as our Director of Youth Engagement, and the ongoing efforts of Pam and Gina, we're creating meaningful moments in a limited weekly window. Getting them in the door is tough—but once they're here, they're in.

From Rabbi Fisher's joyful installation to an unforgettable Purim Carnival, and then an inspiring weekend with Noah Aronson—this place was vibrating. Noah didn't have to say a word. It was all on his face.

Kol Ami is a place of warmth and connection. Let's keep the momentum going and show the wider Jewish world who we are. Thanks to Zoe Fuentes for keeping us sounding and looking great—our livestream is our window to the world, and it deserves our care.

And thank you for keeping *me* strong since July 2020. *Chazak, chazak, v'nitchazek*—may we go from strength to strength.

Wishing you a summer full of laughter, light, and love.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daniel".



# Reflections on Belonging

## Rabbi Libby Fisher



As we enter the summer months, I'm taking some time to reflect on my first year with you at Kol Ami. There is no question that it has been a whirlwind, but only in the best of ways. What began as hundreds

of new faces has become community. What began as a new office and a new sanctuary and a new apartment has become home. What began as a new job and new responsibilities has become a deep sense of belonging.

Belonging is far more than paying membership dues and having a Kol Ami nametag. In May, I attended a retreat as a part of the 18Doors Rukin Rabbinic Fellowship, an 18-month program in which I'm exploring how to best serve and support interfaith couples and families, along with rabbinic colleagues across denominations. The topic of May's retreat was Constructing Communities of Belonging. What does it take for someone to truly feel a sense of belonging in a community? It requires warmth, opportunities for connection, and an investment of time from both the community and the individual. To truly feel

belonging, we each need not only to receive from the community, but also to give back to it, whether that's through volunteering, joining lay leadership, learning in adult education, or any of the many other avenues of participation we have here at Kol Ami.

By the time you're reading this, we will likely have just celebrated Shavuot, remembering the experience of standing at Mount Sinai to receive Torah. We are taught that everyone was present for this moment – people of all ages and all genders, and even the members of the "mixed multitude" who escaped Egypt alongside the Israelites. But the rabbis go even further, teaching that we all stood together at Sinai, the spirits of all members of the Jewish people past, present, and future. You were there, and so were you, and so was I. We have all belonged, and continue to belong, to the Jewish people, as far back as Sinai. What a beautiful and powerful message that we continue to live out, together.

I want to thank each of you who helped me develop my sense of belonging in such a short amount of time. May your summers be filled with ice cream, adventure, and the appropriate balance of summer sun and air conditioning!

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Libby". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping "L" and a stylized "y".



## Three Years, Countless Blessings

### Judy Sarch, Co-President

This month we're taking a break from our usual custom of writing our Co-Presidents' article together so that I can take the opportunity to say goodbye as my term comes to an end.

It's been a great 3 years, and I can't think of anything other than my family that has been more rewarding. In just 3 years I've worked with 2 Co-Presidents and 4 Rabbis! Talk about a time of transition. I've also grown so much. I no longer feel like I'm going to pass out every time I get up on the bima to speak and I've learned that I love doing the Friday night announcements. I've really enjoyed myself!

Being a synagogue Co-President is often a punch line, and I've had to endure teasing and bewilderment over why I'd want such a role. After a few months, I caught myself getting defensive because being a Co-President at Kol Ami was truly a great experience. People were kind, the work was rewarding, and we were succeeding. Finally, I learned to smile and say, "not at my place."

Being Co-President got me to services every Friday night, where I discovered how much I love the experience. The music, sermons, energy — it's all wonderful. Rabbi Fenster and Rabbi Fisher with their words, and Cantor Mendelson with his voice, make Shabbat special for me every week.

I've gotten to know congregants, clergy, and staff on a much deeper, personal level, which has been the most rewarding. People come together when working on projects, and there are so many ways to find common ground here at Kol Ami. Our staff is incredible, and I wouldn't have enjoyed this role without Jess, Alison, Merav, Tracey, Pam, Gina, Kay, Meredith, Ginny, Paul, and Ernestina.

Another benefit of being Co-President is getting to "look behind the curtain" and see how everything works. I'm often speechless watching how clergy and staff care for the congregation in times of need. All hands on deck is the norm during illness or loss. They are here for us in the best and worst of times — now you know why you might not get a call back as quickly as expected.

Part of the job is planning for the next Co-President, so it is with pride and joy that I watch Gary Orentlicher take over. I've worked with Gary for years, and his thoughtfulness and decisiveness will serve us well. With Andrew and Gary at the helm, Kol Ami will continue to thrive.

I love you all, especially the two guys I often spoke to more than my own husband — my first Co-President Hank Rouda and second Co-President Andrew Levenson. I am so honored to have learned from you and worked alongside you these past 3 years.

Finally, my deepest thanks go to my family. To my husband Danny, who encouraged me to take on this role and supported me every step of the way — always ready to listen, advise, and stand by me. And to my daughters, Carly and Rachel, who so graciously shared me with meetings, events, and late-night emails. Your patience, love, and belief in me have meant everything. I couldn't have done this without you.

*Judy*

# Bridging Generations: Jewish Values in the Sandwich Generation

Jess Lorden, Executive Director



Four generations celebrating Auggie's baby naming

This Passover, my family was deeply fortunate to celebrate with four generations around the table, surrounded by friends and loved ones. That moment, along with other recent experiences, has made me reflect on what it means to be part of the “sandwich generation”—a role I know many of us share.

Jewish tradition places a deep emphasis on family and the sacred connection between generations. We're taught to honor our parents and to respect the wisdom of our elders. These values remind us that caring for those who came before us is not just a duty, but a meaningful and active expression of love and continuity.

Living between growing children and aging parents can be overwhelming, but it can also be incredibly rich. It's a role filled with complexity—stretching us emotionally, physically, and spiritually. And yet, within the juggling, there are beautiful, grounding moments: a great grandparent reading a story, a grandparent witnessing graduations and weddings, a shared meal, or the simple passing on of family traditions.

In our world today, it's easy for older adults to feel overlooked. But Judaism teaches us that our elders are not only to be honored—they are to be included. Many want to stay active, to give back, to connect with younger generations. Making space for that engagement is itself a mitzvah—one that brings depth to our families and meaning to our lives.

Of course, walking this path also brings its share of heartache. Whether it's the slow loss of a parent's memory or the grief of losing a loved one altogether, these experiences shape us. Jewish mourning practices—*shiva*, *Kaddish*, *yahrzeit*—are designed to help us carry that loss with care, to remember while continuing to live and love, and to still find joy and hope along the way.

Navigating this season of life is no small task. But guided by Jewish values like *kavod* (honor), *hesed* (loving-kindness), and *zikaron* (remembrance), we are reminded that this work is sacred. By showing up for each generation—with compassion, patience, and presence—we help weave a living legacy that binds us all together.

As we close one fiscal year and begin another, may we continue to support each other in this holy work. Through community, empathy, and shared purpose, we strengthen not only our families, but the future of our congregation and the values we hold dear. Wishing you a summer of family, connection, and joy.

L'Shalom,





# What's Hot This Summer?

## Kol Ami Young Family Events!

### Joele Levenson, Young Family Ambassador



April showers bring May flowers... but what do May flowers bring? For my inner child, the answer is clear: **SUMMER!** School's out, the pace slows down (at least a little), and whether your days are filled with camp drop-offs, road trips, playground hangouts, or poolside fun, Kol Ami's Young Family programming is here to keep your summer sprinkled with joy, connection, and community.

We'll kick things off on **June 23** with our **Tot Ice Cream Sundae Party**, featuring the always-energetic Matt the Music Man and his interactive musical fun. It's a sweet way to celebrate an amazing year together.

Then on **July 20**, we're heading to **Clover Stadium** to watch the **NY Boulders** face off against the NJ Jackals! We'll take in some baseball, and when the wiggles set in, there's mini-golf and a playground to keep the fun going.

Just a week later, on **July 26**, join us for a favorite summer tradition: **Havdalah and Ice Cream** on the Kol Ami Front Lawn! We'll gather for popsicles, watermelon, sprinklers, water slides, and the beauty of ending Shabbat surrounded by friends and laughter.

And finally, we'll wrap up the season with our **3rd Annual Family Fun Day** on **September 7** at **Ridge Road Park**—a relaxed afternoon BBQ with games, crafts, music, and more. It's everything summer should be, shared with the people who make it special.

Want to stay in the know? The Peek Young Family Newsletter is your best source for all upcoming events (plus a few surprise pop-ups we may have in store). Reach out to me if you'd like to be added!





# Early Childhood Program Highlights

Our ECP children had an absolute blast celebrating Yom Ha'atzmaut! The motor room was transformed into an exciting, immersive journey through Israel, where each "city" offered a fresh adventure filled with crafts, games, music, and so much more. As the children explored from one destination to the next, their laughter and curiosity filled the room, creating an atmosphere of pure joy.

The day was packed with connection, discovery, and celebration, bringing the spirit of Israel vividly to life. We are grateful to our devoted Clergy, dedicated Staff, and the wonderful 8th grade students from the Leffell School whose enthusiasm and support made this experience truly special. The children's excitement and wonder were the most powerful celebration of all.







## Religious School Highlights

What a wonderful way to wrap up  
another remarkable year!

### A Poem for the Teachers

Oh, the places you've taken our students this year—  
With kavod, with wisdom, with heart and with cheer!  
From Israel to holidays to *mitzvot* beautifully,  
You've helped them become who they're growing to be.  
With Torah and teamwork and patience you've shown,  
How to learn, how to lead, how to care and be known.  
*Todah rabbah* from the depths of our hearts,  
You've played, and still play,  
such vital parts!



# A Full Year of Joy and Learning

## Melissa Cohen, Director of Youth Engagement



As my first full year at Kol Ami comes to a close, I've been reflecting on all I've learned, the meaningful moments I've experienced, and the wonderful relationships I've built. It's been a joy to teach, travel, and grow alongside our teens, and I'm thrilled to continue this journey in the coming year.

I'm especially grateful to the Kol Ami staff for their support, and to our high school students, particularly the seniors—for their humor, dedication, and creativity. A special thank you goes to Zoe Moskowitz, our outgoing Va'ad President, who is completing her senior externship with me. Zoe brings warmth, insight, and passion to everything she does. It's been a true pleasure to work with her.

Below are Zoe's reflections on her time at Kol Ami:

### Looking Back, Looking Ahead

*By Zoe Moskowitz, Va'ad Co-President*

*As I prepare for college, I've been thinking about all the phases of my life—and how Kol Ami has been there through them all.*

*My earliest memories are from the ECP, running through the halls with my twin brother, lighting candles as Shabbat girl, and tasting apples and honey at Rosh Hashanah. I didn't realize then that I was building the foundation of my Jewish identity.*

*Religious School deepened that connection. We studied Torah, created ritual objects, staged our own Hasidic wedding, and prepared for our B'nai Mitzvah. It was fun and meaningful, and it sparked my curiosity to learn more.*

*For many, the journey ends after B'nai Mitzvah, but for a group of us, it was just the beginning. In high school, we explored how to live Jewish values—like justice, community, and compassion—in our daily lives. We became a tight-knit group, sharing laughter, learning, and plenty of fun: curling outings, Shabbat dinners, challah baking, and bonfires.*

*This year, our learning turned into action. We traveled to Washington, D.C. with the Religious Action Center, launched voter engagement efforts, and had powerful conversations about being young Jews in today's world.*

*As I move into a new chapter, I carry with me everything I've learned at Kol Ami—a strong Jewish identity and a deep sense of belonging. Kol Ami has been my constant, and it will always be my home.*

Zoe, thank you for your leadership and enthusiasm.  
You and all our graduating seniors will be deeply missed.

It's been a joy to walk alongside our teens through such a meaningful year.  
I can't wait to see what we'll build together in the next one.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Melissa".



**Zoe and Nate Moskowitz,  
crafting early memories in the ECP**

# B'nai Mitzvah

With love and tremendous pride, we look forward to having these B'nai Mitzvah students lead us in worship, carry our sacred scroll through the congregation, and chant from the Torah. We rejoice with them and their families as they share their intellectual gifts by teaching us from the weekly Torah portion and deliver their "D'var Torah."



**Simon Shuker**, son of Jenifer Johnson and Jason Shuker, and brother of Benjamin and Elliot, will be called to the Torah as a Bar Mitzvah on June 7, 2025. Simon is in 7th grade at Edgemont Junior High School. He plays soccer for the Edgemont Soccer club, is a talented skier and even dabbles in football. Simon spends his summers at Camp Chateaugay in the Adirondacks, his happy place. He loves spending time with his family and friends and looks forward to celebrating his Bar Mitzvah with them.

**Paige Fery**, daughter of Jessica Yablow and Robert Fery, granddaughter of Debby Yablow, twin of Oren Fery and sister to Caleb Fery, will be called to the Torah as a B'nai Mitzvah on June 14, 2025. Paige is in 7th grade at Blind Brook-Rye Middle School. She plays soccer and runs track and also enjoys creating different art projects. For her mitzvah project she has been volunteering diligently every weekend at the Stamford Museum and Nature Center where she takes care of the different animals on the farm. Her experience has helped shape her future, as she hopes to pursue veterinary studies. Paige looks forward to celebrating her Bat Mitzvah with her close friends and family.



**Oren Fery**, son of Jessica Yablow and Robert Fery, grandson of Debby Yablow, twin of Paige Fery and brother to Caleb Fery, will be called to the Torah as a B'nai Mitzvah on June 14, 2025. Oren is in 7th grade at Blind Brook-Rye Middle School. He is President of a board game club and can solve many card tricks as well. He also enjoys 3-D printing and coding. For his mitzvah project Oren has volunteered with many organizations from food pantries to helping lead children in different activities. Oren looks forward to celebrating his B'nai Mitzvah with his close friends and family.



**Finn Roy**, son of Amy and David Roy and brother of Jake Roy will be called to the Torah as a Bar Mitzvah on June 14, 2025. Finn is in 7th grade at Edgemont Jr/Sr High School and will be attending the Masters School in the fall. He enjoys parkour, robotics, and playing the drums. He also loves to experiment with new recipes and to spend time with his friends and family, including his dog, Monty. Finn spends summers at Camp Lindenmere, his home away from home. For his mitzvah project, Finn organized a Mitzvah Meals Project which is being held at the gym at Kol Ami on June 8. In collaboration with Rise Against Hunger, Finn and his friends will be packing 10,000 meals for families in need around the world. Finn looks forward to celebrating his Bar Mitzvah with his close friends and family.

# B'nai Mitzvah



**Benjamin Harry Elkin** will be called to the Torah as a Bar Mitzvah on June 21, 2025. He will read from and teach about the Torah portion *Sh'lach L'cha* (Numbers 13:1–15:41). For his mitzvah project, Benjamin combined his passion for music with his commitment to helping others by launching “Caring Concerts.” He organized a series of performances featuring artists of all ages for the patients at Burke Rehabilitation Hospital in White Plains. From horn, flute, and saxophone to singing, dancing, and more, these monthly concerts have brought joy and comfort to many. Benjamin plans to continue this meaningful work, and if you’re interested in participating, he would love to hear from you. A seventh-grade student at White Plains Middle School, Benjamin enjoys reading, playing the French horn, horseback riding, swimming, and listening to music—especially Jimmy Buffett. His parents, Sara and Michael Elkin, and his siblings, Isaac and Naomi, are incredibly proud of him.

## Kol Ami Points to with Pride



Kol Ami proudly celebrates Dafna Arenstein and Brooke Goldstein for qualifying to compete at the 2025 U.S. Rowing Youth National Championships, June 12–15 in Sarasota, Florida. Representing the Pelham Community Rowing Association, these talented young athletes have demonstrated extraordinary commitment, strength, and perseverance. Their achievement reflects not only their individual dedication but also the spirit of determination and excellence we value as a community. Mazal tov to Dafna and Brooke—we’ll be cheering you on every stroke of the way!



## WEEKLY WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

### Friday Kabbalat Shabbat Service 6:15PM

Our weekly Kabbalat Shabbat service takes place in our Main Sanctuary with Rabbi Jason Fenster, Cantor Danny Mendelson and Rabbi Libby Fisher. Kabbalat Shabbat services are also streamed weekly on our website, FaceBook, and Youtube pages.

### Saturday Morning Torah Study and Shabbat Service 9:30AM

Bring your creativity and curiosity as we delve us into the depths of Torah and explore the relevancy of these timeless teachings to our lives today. Whether you're a seasoned Torah scholar or completely new to Torah study, there is always something new to discover.

Online: [Click here.](#)

Meeting ID: 964 7214 2409

Passcode: 709665

Dial In: (929) 436-2866

## Weekly Torah Portions

### JUNE 2025

#### Week ending June 7

##### *Parashat Naso*

##### *Numbers 4:21-7:89*

In the second parashah in the Book of Numbers, the census is completed with a counting of members of the Levitical families between the ages of thirty and fifty. The responsibilities in the portage of the Tabernacle and the Tent of Meeting are detailed, as well as the commitments of a Nazarite vow. The parashah's concluding section begins with the Priestly Blessing, which we often recite at the end of Kol Ami's Shabbat services on Friday nights.

#### Week ending June 14

##### *Parashat B'haalot'cha*

##### *Numbers 8:1-12:16*

In this parashah, God instructs Moses to appoint elders to share the burden of ruling the people and settling their many issues. A cloud by day and fire by night show God's Presence over the Tabernacle. When the cloud lifts from the Tabernacle, the people leave Sinai, setting out on their journey, tribe by tribe. The parashah concludes with Aaron and Miriam saying disparaging things about their younger brother Moses. As a result, Miriam is struck with a skin disease, manifested as white, itchy scales. Aaron appeals to Moses, who offers a prayer to God on his sister's behalf.

#### Week ending June 21

##### *Parashat Sh'lach L'cha*

##### *Numbers 13:1-15:41*

This week's parashah continues the story of the Israelites wandering through the desert. Moses sends twelve emissaries to scout out the Land of Israel. Only two, Joshua and Caleb, return with a message of hope. The other ten spies report that the land is filled with giants, and the people react to their terrifying account with fear and panic. As a result of this behavior, God

threatens to wipe out the Children of Israel, but relents when Moses intercedes on their behalf. Instead, God announces that the members of this generation will not be allowed to enter the Promised Land and will wander the desert for another 38 years.

#### Week ending June 28

##### *Parashat Korach*

##### *Numbers 16:1-18:32*

Three rebels hatch an ill-fated "coup-d'état" against the leadership of Aaron and Moses in this week's parashah. Korach, Datan, and Abiram challenge Moses' and Aaron's leadership in front of the whole Israelite community. Moses offers the people a choice - remain with Dathan, Abiram, and Korach or separate from them and stand by Moses and Aaron. Those who persist in rebelling face dire punishment. For Dathan, Abiram, and their group, the earth bursts asunder, swallowing them. For Korach and his followers, fire and plague bring death and havoc.

### JULY 2025

#### Week ending July 5

##### *Parashat Chukat*

##### *Numbers 19:1-22:1*

Chukat begins with the death of Miriam, Moses' and Aaron's sister, at Kadesh. When the people complain that they have no water to drink, God instructs Moses to take his rod and order a rock to bring forth water. In his anger against the cantankerous people, instead of ordering the rock to produce water, Moses strikes the rock with his rod. As a result of this action, God tells Moses that he will not be allowed to lead the people into the Land of Israel. This responsibility will ultimately be given to Joshua. Moses' brother Aaron dies at Mount Hor and Aaron's son, Eleazer, becomes Aaron's successor.

# Weekly Torah Portions

**Week ending July 12**

***Parashat Balak***

***Numbers 22:2-25:9***

In the parashah of Balak, the King of Moab persuades the prophet Balaam to curse the Israelites so that he can defeat them and drive them out of the region. However, when Balaam speaks, the words that come out of his mouth instead bless the Children of Israel. He prophesies that Israel's enemies will be defeated, saying "Ma Tovv, ohalecha Ya-akov, mishk'notecha Yisrael – How lovely are your tents O Jacob, your dwelling places, O Israel." The parashah ends with God punishing the Israelites with a plague after an Israelite man consorts with a Moabite woman. The plague ends when Pinchas kills them.

**Week ending July 19**

***Parashat Pinchas***

***Numbers 25:10-30:1***

The parashah begins with God rewarding Pinchas for killing the Israelite and the Midianite woman who profaned God, with a covenant of peace for all time, and continues with the taking of a second census. Moses allocates the land to each tribe according to its size. The daughters of Zelophehad appeal to Moses to inherit their father's land since their father died leaving no sons. God confirms their claim and instructs Moses to change the laws of inheritance. The parashah concludes with a description of the sacrificial ritual for all festival occasions.

**Week ending July 26**

***Parashat Matot – Mas'ei***

***Numbers 30:2-36:13***

In the first part of this double parashah, the laws for making vows are described. Moses agrees to allow the tribes of Gad and Reuben to stay in the land

east of the Jordan rather than enter the Land of Israel, as long as they lend their support in settling the Promised Land. Masei recounts the forty years of journeys that the Israelites have made since leaving Egypt. The Book of Numbers concludes with Moses providing instructions for conquering the Land of Israel, defining its borders, and dividing it among the tribes.

## AUGUST 2025

**Week ending August 2**

***Parashat D'varim***

***Deuteronomy 1:1–3:22***

D'varim is the first parashah in the Book of Deuteronomy, which begins a series of speeches by Moses to the Israelites as they are preparing to enter the Land of Israel. In this parashah, Moses, who will not be allowed to enter the Land of Israel and will die in Moab, reminds this generation that they are about to take possession of the land that was promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Moses recounts the route of travel and the challenges, chastisements, and triumphs that occurred along the way.

**Week ending August 9**

***Parashat Va-et'chanan***

***Deuteronomy 3:23-7:11***

In this parashah, Moses' appeal to God to allow him to enter the Land of Israel is again denied. Moses continues his oration to the people, reminding them of the covenant at Sinai and the Ten Commandments, and exhorting them to follow the laws given by God. Specific areas of the land are set aside to serve as cities of refuge for those who commit unintentional homicide.

**Week ending August 16**

***Parashat Eikev***

***Deuteronomy 7:12-11:25***

Moses continues to tell the Israelites that, if they maintain their covenant with God by observing all the commandments, God will make them fruitful and victorious over their enemies. Moses reminds them of the times that the Israelites disobeyed God's commandments and the consequences that befell them. He continues by saying that the land will flow with milk and honey if the people obey God's commandments and teach them to their children.

**Week ending August 23**

***Parashat R'eih***

***Deuteronomy 11:26-16:17***

In this week's parashah, the people are instructed on how they are to enter and live in the Land of Israel, and on the behavior expected of them once they have settled there. Rules about sacrifices, tithes, and care for the Levites are discussed, along with regulations for slaughtering and eating meat.

**Week ending August 30**

***Parashat Shof'tim***

***Deuteronomy 16:18-21:9***

The Israelites remain on the plateau of Moab, across the Jordan River, while Moses communicates God's prescriptions and proscriptions for governance. The parashah opens with the command to appoint judges and the regulations for choosing a leader, including a warning that this leader should follow the laws of Torah faithfully. The Israelites are told that they should pursue justice in all of their dealings.

# CALENDAR

## JUNE

**Jun 10**  
**OCTOBER 8 Film Screening**  
**7:00PM**



Join us for a screening and panel discussion of the documentary film, OCTOBER 8. This film offers a look at the explosion of antisemitism on college campuses, social media and in the streets of America beginning the day after the October 7th attack on Israel by Hamas. We will be joined by Rachel Klein, Executive Director of Hillels of Westchester, who will share her perspectives and insights and facilitate discussion. [RSVP here.](#)

**Jun 11**  
**Practical Planning Panel Discussion**  
**7:00PM**

Join us for a candid and informative conversation about end-of-life planning, featuring Kol Ami Executive Director Jess Lorden, Matt Fiorello, Funeral Director of Ballard-Durand Funeral Home, and Kevin Cohen, Partner of Cohen, Soloway & Wooldridge, P.C. Learn practical steps to help you and your loved ones prepare with clarity, compassion, and peace of mind. [Register here.](#)



**Jun 13**  
**Kol Ami Cares/Volunteer Appreciation Shabbat**  
**6:15PM**

Join us for a very special evening as we celebrate the heart of our community—our volunteers. During our Kabbalat Shabbat service, our clergy will offer a blessing of gratitude and introduce Kol Ami Cares, our newly revitalized initiative that connects volunteers with fellow congregants in moments of need and joy. We're honored to welcome Rabbi Nancy Wiener, D.Min., a leading voice in pastoral care, who will speak from the bimah. After services, stay for a festive oneg and explore our Kol Ami Volunteer Fair, where you can learn about ways to get involved and make a meaningful impact.

**Jun 18**  
**KASA Second Anniversary Celebration**  
**6:00PM**

Join us for an evening of celebration, connection, and community as Kol Ami Staying Active (KASA) turns two! Whether you're a regular or new to KASA, come enjoy pizza, hear about upcoming programs, and help shape the future of joyful, purposeful aging at Kol Ami. [RSVP here.](#)

**Jun 21**  
**Tot Party with Matt the Music Man**  
**3:30PM**

Celebrate the first day of summer with Matt the Music Man's high-energy Tot party! Sing, drum, dance, and then treat yourself to our Ice Cream Bar with all the toppings—followed by a sweet Havdalah send-off. Bring your friends, your kiddos (newborns to Pre-K), older siblings, and all the grown-ups—everyone's invited to join in the fun! [RSVP here.](#)





# CALENDAR

**Jun 25**

**Bold Stories, Bold Voices:  
Janet Zuckerman Discusses  
Nasty Women**

**7:00PM**



Join Kol Ami congregant and author Janet Zuckerman for a powerful discussion of her

book exploring the complex relationship between women and aggression. Through personal stories, clinical insights, and interviews with influential women, the book challenges patriarchal norms and invites women to reclaim their voices, ambition, and inner strength.  
*RSVP here.*



**Jun 26**

**Kol Ami Goes to The Movies:  
Sabbath Queen**

**7:00PM**

**at The Jacob Burns  
Film Center**

Celebrate Pride with your Kol Ami community at a special screening of Sabbath Queen, a powerful documentary following Rabbi Amichai Lau-Lavie's journey to reinvent Jewish tradition through courage, creativity, and radical inclusion. This inspiring film invites us to reflect on faith, identity, and justice together. Tickets are \$15 each and include a Q&A with Director Sandi DuBowski following the screening.  
*Purchase tickets here.*

**Jun 27**

**Synaplex Shabbat  
Featuring  
Rabbi Mike Moskowitz  
6:15PM Kabbalat Shabbat  
7:15PM Dinner, 8:00PM  
Guest Speaker**



Join Rabbi Mike Moskowitz for *Classic Sources and New Understandings: LGBTQ+ Texts*, a thought-provoking, text-based discussion exploring how verses historically used to marginalize LGBTQ+ individuals can be reexamined through rabbinic sources and modern perspectives. Discover the spiritual expansiveness of Shabbat and how allyship itself can become a sacred practice.  
*RSVP here.*

## JULY

**Jul 4**

**Independence Day, Temple  
Offices and Building Closed**

**Jul 17**

**Songs of the Valley  
Summer Concert**

**7:00PM**

Experience a vibrant musical journey with *Songs of the Valley*, a collaboration between Israeli-born musicians Gilad Ephrat and Oren Neiman. Blending rich cultural roots with global sounds, they're joined by percussionist Nadav Snir-Zelniker and virtuoso violinist Joyce Hammann for a night of rhythm, soul, and exceptional artistry.  
*RSVP here.*

**Jul 20**

**Kol Ami Goes to  
NY Boulders Game  
4:00PM  
at Clover Stadium in  
Rockland County**

Come root for the home team with your Kol Ami friends from private seating on the Short Porch! Enjoy a full buffet with hot dogs, hamburgers, drinks, and dessert, plus mini golf and playground fun just steps away. Tickets are \$40 each; kids 3 and under are free.  
*Purchase tickets here.*

**Jul 24**

**Baking Babka with  
Past President  
Susan Arovas  
7:00PM**

Step into the kitchen with Past President Susan Arovas for a joyful, hands-on babka baking experience. This sweet gathering is a chance for all ages to connect, create, and share stories while filling the room with the scent of tradition and cinnamon or chocolate. Bring your family, your friends, and your appetite for community!  
*RSVP here.*

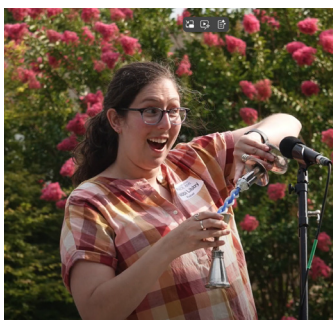


# CALENDAR

**Jul 26**

**Young Family  
Ice Cream & Havdalah  
3:00PM**

Make a splash on Kol Ami's front lawn with water fun, cool off with delicious ice cream treats, and gather for Havdalah led by our clergy. This joyful afternoon is open to the community—bring friends, neighbors, and grandparents for summer memories your family won't forget.  
*RSVP [here](#).*



**Jul 29**

**Kol Ami Goes to Broadway:  
*Just in Time*  
7:00PM**

Kol Ami is heading to Broadway for *Just in Time*, starring the captivating Tony Award® winner Jonathan Groff as the iconic Bobby Darin! Get ready for an intimate nightclub experience, a live band, and classic hits like Splish Splash and Dream Lover. Though tickets are now sold out, we're beyond excited to have a group of 90 congregants joining us for a night filled with powerful music, vibrant energy, and community connection.

**AUGUST**

**Aug 2**

**Tish B'Av Service  
8:00PM**

Join us for a reflective Tisha B'Av service as we honor this sacred day of mourning in the Jewish calendar. Through poetry, prayer, and song, we'll remember the destruction of the Temples and other moments of collective loss, while making space for personal reflection and hope.

**Aug 6**

**Kol Ami/WRT Summer  
Stage Concert  
7:30PM**

Kol Ami joins forces with Westchester Reform Temple for another outdoor, summer stage concert. We will enjoy the voices and talents of both communities as we settle in for another incredible evening of music under the stars.

**WRT and Kol Ami clergy and congregants return to the Kol Ami stage**



# LIFE CYCLES\*

## CONGRATULATIONS

To Bonnie and Eric Eilen  
on the birth of  
their great-grandson  
Colton Jude Lee



To Bonnie and Eric Eilen  
on the marriage  
of their daughter  
Rebecca to William Jamieson



To Sharon and Sam Ofsevit  
on the birth of their grandson  
Liam Jacob Ofsevit  
and granddaughter  
Josie Victoria Ofsevit



To Christina, Charles,  
George and Maya Schiller  
on the birth  
of their son and brother  
Jacob Abraham Schiller



To Lori Abrams  
on the birth of her grandson  
Jack Moris Behmoaras



To Deardre Nadel  
on the birth of her grandson  
Henry Leo Nadel



To Betsy Bach  
on the marriage of her son  
Steven to Sara St Fleur



To Jill and Zef Abraham  
on the birth of their  
granddaughter  
Reese Harper Navon



To Stan Selbst  
on the birth of  
his great-granddaughter  
Reese Harper Navon



To Barbara Kaminsky  
on the marriage of her son  
Michael to Celeste Lopez



To Marisa and Roni Rozenblat  
and family  
on the birth of their son  
Leo Rozenblat

## CONDOLENCES

To Matthew and  
Patty Lee-Renert  
on the passing of  
Matthew's father  
Harvey Renert



To David and Deborah Garelick  
on the passing of David's father,  
Myron (Michael)  
Lawrence Garelick



To Jack Handelsman  
on the passing of his brother  
Neil Handelsman



To Mark Klion and Jennifer Rozin  
on the passing of Mark's father  
Franklin Meyer Klion



To Bernice Gale  
on the passing of her brother  
Sidney Kogan



To Jordan and  
Andrea Rosenberg  
on the passing of  
Jordan's father  
Steven Mark Rosenberg



To Frank Kaiman  
and Laura Dann Kaiman  
on the passing  
of Frank's brother  
Paul Kaiman



To Stan Selbst  
on the passing of his wife  
Barbara Selbst



To Jill and Zef Abraham  
on the passing of Jill's mother  
Barbara Selbst



To Eric Tirschwell  
and Carmel Lowenthal  
on the passing of Eric's father  
Perry Tirschwell

To David Geiger  
and Marni Nachman  
on the passing of David's mother  
Norma Geiger



To Jean and Hank Rouda  
on the passing of  
Jean's brother-in-law  
Bruce Tucker



To Fern and Steve Schwartz  
on the passing of  
Fern's uncle  
Sol Laperdon



To Scott and Judith Schiamburg  
on the passing of Scott's father  
Lawrence Schiamburg



To Michael and Elana Araj  
on the passing of  
Michael's uncle  
Fouzi Marzouq



To Emily and Craig Meisner  
on the passing of  
Emily's father  
James Margolis



To Kevin Ende and Sara Elias  
on the passing of Kevin's mother  
Ella Janet Ende



To Fern and Steve Schwartz  
on the passing of  
Fern's mother  
Gertrude Kaplan



To David and Evelyne Klein  
on the passing of David's brother  
Stephen Klein



To Kevin and  
Stefanie Rosenzweig  
on the passing of Kevin's father  
Charles P. Rosenzweig

## IN MEMORIUM

Barbara Selbst

*\*As of May 23, 2025*

# DONATIONS\*

## CLERGY'S DISCRETIONARY FUNDS

### RABBI JASON FENSTER

In memory of  
Sylvia's mother, Anita Fassler  
*Sylvia and Howard Wallach*

In appreciation  
*from Margaret and John Falk*

In appreciation  
and in memory of  
Jill's mother, Barbara Selbst  
*from Jill and Zev Abraham*

In honor of  
her grandson, Jack Behmoras  
*from Lori Abrams*

In honor of  
the baby naming of  
granddaughters Maddy and Evie  
*from Magda Reyes, Steve Wolfe  
and the Quill Family.*

In memory of  
Dr. Franklin Meyer Klion  
*from Mark Klion*

In appreciation  
*from Larry and Nancy Marcus*

In appreciation  
for blessing their new home  
*from Juliana and Jared Stone*

### RABBI LIBBY FISHER

In appreciation  
*from Andrea Seiden*

In honor of  
their son Jack's Bar Mitzvah  
*from Meredith and Victor Cohen*

In appreciation  
*from Larry and Nancy Marcus*

In honor of  
Rabbi Fisher's installation  
*from Cantors Fredda  
and Jack Mendelson*

In honor of  
Rabbi Fisher's installation  
*from Marilyn and Remy Fenster*

In honor of  
Rabbi Fisher's installation  
*from Debra and Anthony Zitrin*

In honor of  
Rabbi Fisher's installation  
*from Norma and Nathan Litman*

In honor of  
Rabbi Fisher's installation  
*from Susan Kohn  
and Greg Arovas*

In honor of  
Rabbi Fisher's installation  
*from Barbara Morgen  
and Eric Hemel*

In honor of  
Rabbi Fisher's installation  
*from Marianne and Peter Ripin*

In honor of  
Rabbi Fisher's installation  
*from Judy and Danny Sarch*

In honor of  
Rabbi Fisher's installation  
*from Amanda and Zachary Mazin*

In honor of  
Rabbi Fisher's installation  
*from Elana and Michael Araj*

In honor of  
Rabbi Fisher's installation  
*from Andrea and  
Jordan Rosenberg*

In honor of  
Rabbi Fisher's installation  
*from Ellen Umansky*

In honor of  
Rabbi Fisher's installation  
*from Michel and Mark Montague*

In honor of  
Rabbi Fisher's installation  
*from Ronnie Cohn*

In honor of  
Rabbi Fisher's installation  
*from Sara and Abraham Man*

In honor of  
Rabbi Fisher's installation  
*from Doris Dingott*

In honor of  
Rabbi Fisher's installation  
*from Marni Nachman  
and David Geiger*

In honor of  
Rabbi Fisher's installation  
*from Vania Sitruk and Peter Lazar*

In honor of  
Rabbi Fisher's installation  
*from Barbara Schwarz*

In honor of  
Rabbi Fisher's installation  
*from Rachel and Jeffrey Leider*

In honor of  
Rabbi Fisher's installation  
*from Lynne Dolle*

In honor of  
Rabbi Fisher's installation  
*from Judy Gottlieb*

In honor of  
Rabbi Fisher's installation  
*from Barbara Kaminsky*

In honor of  
Rabbi Fisher's installation  
*from Debbie and Steve Young*

In honor of  
Rabbi Fisher's installation  
*from Randy Stein  
and Jack Berger*

In honor of  
Rabbi Fisher's installation  
*from Myra Oltsik*

In honor of  
Rabbi Fisher's installation  
*from Evelyne and David Klein*

In honor of  
Rabbi Fisher's installation  
*from Lisa Borowitz*

In honor of  
Rabbi Fisher's installation  
*from Linda and Milt Persily*

\*As of May 23, 2025



# DONATIONS\*

## CANTOR DANNY MENDELSON

In memory of  
Wendy's mother  
Sarita K. Zimmermann  
*from Wendy Zimmermann  
and Steve Cutler*

In memory of  
Dana's mother  
Dorothy Sherman  
*from Dana Sherman  
and Richard Novitch*

In memory of  
Dorothy Sherman  
*from Gladys and Edward Novitch*

In appreciation  
and in memory of  
Jill's mother, Barbara Selbst  
*from Jill and Zev Abraham*

In honor of  
their son, Jack's, Bar Mitzvah  
*from Meredith and Victor Cohen*

In appreciation  
for bringing Noah Aronson  
to Kol Ami  
*from Beth and Gene Kava*

In appreciation  
for blessing their new home  
*from Juliana and Jared Stone*

In memory of  
Gertrude Kaplan  
mother of Fern Schwartz  
*from Bonnie and Eric Eilen*

In memory of  
Gertrude Kaplan  
mother of Fern Schwartz  
*from Susie and Michael Welling*

## ANNUAL FUND

In loving memory of  
Franklin Mayor Klion  
father of Mark Klion  
*from Stephanie and Andrew Falk*

In appreciation of  
the Men's Council Golf Outing  
*from Laura Dann Kaiman and  
Frank Kaiman*

## ECP FUND

In loving memory of  
Barbara Selbst  
*from Ellen Umansky*

In loving memory of  
Barbara Selbst  
*from Bonnie and Eric Eilen*

In loving memory of  
Barbara Selbst  
*from Doris Dingott*

In loving memory of  
Barbara Selbst  
*from Lauri and David Carey*

In loving memory of  
Barbara Selbst  
*from Alice Seidman*

In loving memory of  
Barbara Selbst  
*from Cindee Howard  
and Jonathan Cohen*

In loving memory of  
Barbara Selbst  
*from Elizabeth Hirsch Ward*

In loving memory of  
Barbara Selbst  
*from Susan Kohn  
and Greg Arovas*

## FOOD PANTRY

In honor of  
Sara Elkin's distinguished service  
award and the recognition  
given to her by  
Westchester Jewish Council  
*from all the Congregation  
Kol Ami Food Pantry Volunteers*

In honor of  
Rabbi Jason Fenster  
and Gavi Young on their  
13th wedding anniversary  
*from Bonnie and Ray Nutkis*

In honor of  
Sam Mermelstein's 5th birthday  
*from Henry Fenster  
and his family*

In honor of  
Judy and Steve Rieger  
*from Robin Cohen*

In appreciation  
*from Martin Kahn*

In gratitude  
for the Purim baskets received  
*from Alan and Rena Steinfeld*

In appreciation  
*from Valeriya and Asaf Greene*

In appreciation  
*from Michelle Gersen  
and Michael Zweig*

In appreciation  
*from Meredith McClintock*

In honor of  
Liam Ginsberg's 5th birthday  
*from Henry Fenster  
and his family*

In appreciation  
*from Sue Lobel*

In appreciation  
*from Rebecca Fromer  
and Kevin Olson*

In appreciation  
*from Stacey  
and Matthew Balaban*

In appreciation  
*from Laura Dann  
and Franklin Kaiman*

In appreciation  
*from Katherine and Jesse Bass*

In honor of  
Sara and Abraham Man  
for hosting the  
KASA movie night  
*from Robin Cohen*

In honor of  
Stephanie Levine  
*from Robin Cohen*

In honor of  
Judy and Steve Rieger  
*from Robin Cohen*

In loving memory of  
Barbara Selbst  
*from Robin Cohen*

\*As of May 23, 2025

# DONATIONS\*

In appreciation  
from Donna Joseph

In appreciation  
from Michele and David Slifka

In appreciation of  
from Barbara Shore

In honor of  
Josh Chay's 5th birthday  
from Henry Fenster  
and his family

In loving memory  
of Harvey Renert  
from Patty and  
Matthew Lee-Renert

To Susan Kohn Arovas  
for graciously hosting  
the challah bakes  
from Michele  
and Mark Montague

In honor of  
the Food Pantry volunteers  
and committee chairs  
from Janet and Mark Hershey

## FUND FOR THE NEEDY

In loving memory  
of Larry Malman  
from Randy and Harris Jacobs

## KOL AMI FUND

In loving memory of  
Robert's father, Milton Pushkin  
from Robert, Stacey, Max  
and Leo Pushkin

In loving memory of  
Franklin Mayor Klion  
from Ellen and Jon Litt

In loving memory of  
my mother, Fay Farber  
from Judith and Jeffrey Gelfand

In loving memory of  
Peter B Kaye  
from Mary Ellen and Morley Kaye

In loving memory of  
Steven Rosenberg,  
father-in-law of  
Andrea Rosenberg  
from Karen and David Cole

## MUSIC FUND

In loving memory  
of Arthur Comisar  
father of Jonathan Comisar  
from the Kol Echad Adult Choir

In support of  
Friday Kabbalat Shabbat music  
from Michelle Gersen and  
Michael Zweig

## REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT FUND

In support of  
refugee resettlement efforts  
from Amanda and Zachary Mazin

In support of  
refugee resettlement efforts  
from Laura and Joshua Goldman

In support of  
refugee resettlement efforts  
from Mimi and Kurt Pressman

In support of  
refugee resettlement efforts  
from Joyce Hoffman  
and Harold Selden

In support of  
refugee resettlement efforts  
from Frances Pantaleo  
and Robert Freedman

In support of  
refugee resettlement efforts  
from Betsy and Tom McCormack

In honor of  
Susan Davis and in loving  
memory of Paul Davis  
from Joan Pachner  
and Richard Newman

In support of  
refugee resettlement efforts  
from Barbara Shore

In honor of  
Genna Farley-Fleming  
and Matt Fleming on the birth  
of their daughter  
Laina Tess Fleming  
from Randy and Harris Jacobs

## TOM WEINER FUND FOR YOUTH PROGRAMMING

In honor of  
Susan Woog Wagner  
and Stephen Wagner's birthdays  
from Ellen and Howard Lazarus

\*As of May 23, 2025

## We want to hear from you...

Kol Ami is about the ways we can care for each other in community through major life events. We can all sing and dance, share the joy of bride and groom, or celebrate the birth of a child. When we sing the prayer for healing in the synagogue, we learn who needs a visit or some other source of support. We see the mourners rise for Kaddish and know whom we must comfort. Our passage through life gains much meaning through our connections with other people when we share our most significant transitions.





# A Year at a Glance

This past year at Kol Ami was overflowing with heart, spirit, and connection. We joyfully welcomed Rabbi Libby Fisher, celebrated holidays with record-breaking multigenerational crowds, and filled our sanctuary with music, laughter, and learning. From baking together to asking life's big questions, our programs reflected the depth and warmth of our community. Whether marching in the Israel Day Parade or celebrating at Westchester Pride, we showed up—joyfully, thoughtfully, and together.

