

THE CONNECTION

Volume 68, No.3 • February 2016

DON'T MISS OUR NEXT SYNAPLEX!
Friday, February 26, 2016

Featuring the screening of “**Little White Lie**”, a personal documentary that explores issues of racial identity in America, when a “secret falls from the family tree, and a girl’s identity branches out.”

Filmmaker Lacey Schwartz grew up in a typical upper middle class Jewish household in Woodstock, NY, with loving parents and a strong sense of her identity, despite occasional remarks from those around her who wondered how a white girl could have such dark skin. As a child she believed her family’s explanation — that her appearance was inherited from her dark-skinned Sicilian grandfather — but when she reaches her adolescence, and her parents abruptly separate, her gut begins to tell her something else. At 18, Lacey finally confronts her mother and learns the truth about her biological father. As *Little White Lie* shows, both the bonds and the lies told between family members can run deep. Following the screening, there will be time for Q&A with Ms. Schwartz. See page 27 for details.

**SAVE
THE DATE
SPRING
BENEFIT
THURSDAY
MAY 12, 7PM
KOL
AMI's
GOT
TALENT!**



**HELP US
KICKSTART
THE SPRING
BENEFIT
WITH A
24-HR
ONLINE
FUNDRAISER!
KICK-IN
FOR
KOL AMI
DETAILS TO FOLLOW**



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Maurice Davis ∞

Mark L. Winer

CANTOR EMERITUS

Raymond Smolover ∞

∞ of blessed memory

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SHABBAT WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Friday Evening Services

Shabbat in the Woods for Families with Young Children

A service in story and song

5:30 - 6:00pm *in the Atrium*

Followed by Shabbat crafts, light supper & supervised childcare

6:15 - 7:15pm *in the Gallery*

Kabbalat Shabbat Services Including Shabbat Stories

6:15pm *in the Main Sanctuary*

Yad B Yad Family Shabbat

Shabbat of Inclusion for Everyone

Friday, February 5

6:15pm *in the Main Sanctuary*

Saturday Morning Services

Shabbat Morning Spiritual Lift

with Rabbi Shira Milgrom

Schulman Chapel

9:00am Coffee and Community

9:30 - 11:00am Study

11:00am Shabbat Service

SERVICES TAKE PLACE IN THE MAIN BUILDING UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

WEEKLY TORAH PORTIONS FOR FEBRUARY

Week ending February 6, 2016

Parashat Mishpatim Exodus 21:1-24:18 The word *mishpatim* means "case laws." This week's *parasha* continues the presentation of Divine legislation (the Torah) and includes many decrees - comprising civil, criminal, and cultic regulations. The *parasha* ends with a covenant ceremony on Mount Sinai.

Week ending February 13, 2016

Parashat Teruma Exodus 25:1-27:19 *Parashat Teruma* describes the construction of the Tabernacle. God gives meticulously detailed instructions regarding the elements and the design of the Tabernacle, particularly the Holy Ark. Each individual is asked to contribute towards the Tabernacle's building materials and furnishings as he or she is motivated.

Week ending February 20, 2016

Parashat T'tzaveh Exodus 27:20-30:10 *Parashat T'tzaveh* has the distinction of being the only *parasha* in the last four books of the Torah in which the name of Moses does not appear. The obligations of Aaron and his sons are enumerated, and the rituals surrounding the priests and sacrifice are described in this week's *parasha*.

Week ending February 27, 2016

Parashat Ki Tisa Exodus 30:11-34:35 Moses lingers on Mount Sinai for forty days. The people become agitated during Moses' long absence and persuade Aaron to fashion a golden calf in Moses' absence. Upon returning with the *Ten Commandments*, Moses sees the Israelites cavorting around the calf and smashes the tablets of God's law. Joined by the Levites, Moses executes a campaign to root out the offenders. Moses then pleads with God to secure divine mercy for the people. The *Parashat Ki Tisa* ends with a restoration of mutual faith and with Moses carving a second set of tablets inscribed with *Ten Commandments*.

We will be celebrating the following children becoming Bar or Bat Mitzvah this month! Mazal Tov!



Ryan Jacob Frydman, son of Stephanie and Paul Frydman and older brother to Jake, will be called to the Torah as a Bar Mitzvah on February 6, 2016. Ryan is in the 7th grade at Highlands Middle School. He likes playing soccer, skiing, and riding his bike. For

Ryan's Mitzvah project he collected used eyeglasses that will be donated to those less fortunate in other countries that otherwise would not have the means to see well.



Benjamin Aaron Thaler, son of Joy & Jared Thaler and brother to Sasha, will be called to the Torah on February 27, 2016. Ben is in 7th grade at Edgemont Jr. High School. Ben loves sports. He enjoys playing basketball, baseball, golf, football and pretty much anything else with a ball. Ben also

loves to cook and bake, especially desserts. He loves spending time with family and friends.



Shabbat in My Home – Come Say Shalom

Become a Shabbat Host and Continue the Cycle of Connection!!

Hosts are encouraged to invite congregants they know along with those they don't (yet) know well to share a Shabbat dinner. Our goal is to include as many people as possible in order to increase and deepen connections within our community. We are thrilled that guests of prior Shabbat in My Home dinners have been inspired to "pay it forward" by hosting their own Shabbat dinners. Dinners can be for families, couples or singles. Traditional or casual fare – the choice is yours! Include at least one congregant you would like to know better. There are two remaining dates scheduled this year: March 18 and April 15, 2016.

Interested in being a host or a guest?

Contact Susan or Lisa, co-chairs of the Membership Committee:

susanhopedavis@hotmail.com or lisahochman@mac.com

* Hosts receive a goody bag from the Membership Committee.*

** See photos of prior Shabbat in My Home dinners on the bulletin board outside room 20. **

Shabbat Across the World Pot Luck Dinner



at Kol Ami

Friday, March 4th, 2016

Following Shabbat Services

Sponsored by the Kol Ami Membership Committee

**Join us for a family friendly international pot luck dinner.
It promises to be a fun and flavorful evening for all!**

There are many ways to contribute – bring something that pays tribute to your family heritage or reflects your cultural sensibility. Just make sure there is plenty to share. Questions? Call Susan Davis at 948-4763 or at susanhopedavis@hotmail.com or Lisa Hochman at 834-1555 or lisahochman@mac.com. For those of you who would like to come and enjoy without bringing wine or a homemade dish – we ask for \$18 per adult (kids eat free).

CLIP & RETURN TO THE TEMPLE OFFICE NO LATER THAN FEB 26TH

Adult Name/s _____

Children's Names &

Age/s _____

Phone # _____ **Email Address** _____

I will bring one of the following (fully prepared, ready to serve & in a disposable container).

Main dish _____ **enough to serve 8 or more**

Side dish _____ **enough to serve 8 or more**

Dessert _____ **enough to serve 8 or more**

Wine (red or white) _____ **1 or 2 bottles**

Too busy to cook? Enclosed is my check for \$18 per adult. Kids eat for free

Total # Adults: _____ **Total # Kids:** _____ **Total Amt Enclosed: \$** _____

A Message From Our Rabbi

TOM WEINER



The Whole Truth and Nothing But the Truth?

In last week's Torah portion, Va'eirah (Exodus 6:2ff) God reintroduced God's self to Moses by saying (as I freely paraphrase) "Hey Moses, back in the day, a few centuries ago, I first appeared to

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah as El Shaddai – one of my local nick-names. But with you now, I share the whole truth of who I am in a way I did not fully reveal to them – I am Adonai!

As if God is saying, "Way back, when your people were just a new, small tribe, I didn't really let those first generations know the fullness of who I am. I kept it small and low key. Maybe I was afraid that back then they couldn't handle it.

"But with you Moses, centuries later, no longer a small tribe, but a big growing people on the verge of freedom and nationhood, to you I'm making the big reveal; it's Revelation time, I am Adonai, creator of the whole world, ruler of the whole shebang! And guess what, there aren't any other gods! And guess what, I'm very complicated! And this universe is very complicated! A lot exists in the gray. I, and this universe, can be very contradictory, nuanced had hard to fathom. You need to deal with that.

Some have suggested that maybe the Patriarchs and Matriarchs weren't ready for that complexity, that nuance, that power, and the responsibility of the whole truth. Maybe God thought that their spiritual heads just might explode.

"So instead, I'm your local, tribal God, the God of your clan. We can talk when you want. We can have an intimate personal relationship. Let's keep it simple." But that was a few centuries earlier.

This week's Torah portion is saying, " But guess what, you people aren't the cute, little, tribal thing anymore. You are a big, maturing nation. You aren't gonna get simple stories about Noah's Ark or The Garden of Eden, or Isaac and Rebecca falling in love, or Jacob fighting with his brother Esau.

"You're in the adult big leagues now. You're about to receive the Torah now!" It's time to deal with the reality and totality of who God is, and what the world is.

A bit before 12:00 last night I was sitting with some of our wonderful college students in a diner on Central Ave. There were five kids from five different colleges home on break.

One part of the conversation was about the different ways that Israel is perceived by students on their various campuses. What they described reminded me of the challenge of this portion. Many of the students they spoke of sounded tribal and small minded. (Not all but many.) People who would take one little story, regardless of the larger of context, and that little story becomes their inviolable, tribal truth.

My tribal story: Israelis have bulldozed Palestinian homes to take land and intimidate people. That's my truth, don't tell me anything else, Israelis bad, Palestinians good! Support Palestinians, and condemn Israelis!

My tribal story: Knife wielding Palestinian wantonly murders bystanders at bus stop. That's my truth, don't tell me anything else. Palestinians bad, Israelis good! Support Israel and condemn Palestinians!

My truth: Palestinian child dies from bullet. Palestinians are the victims. Israelis bad guys. That's the whole truth. Don't confuse me with any other facts!

But the Torah implores of us to grow in our thinking; to grow beyond the tribal. As if God is saying, "Now I reveal myself as Adonai! The multifaceted, entire truth. I'm complicated, and near impossible to comprehend. Guess what, Israelis have bulldozed Palestinian homes; Palestinians have murderously wielded knives; Israeli children have died from bombs, and Palestinian children have died from bullets. But if you desire truth, if you want to know Me – not with a small tribal mind – but with the wise mature mind of a good and just people, you must strive to understand My world in all of its nuanced - sometimes contradictory, sometimes hard to fathom and sometimes hard to swallow - reality. That's how you find the truth.

Our country needs a good dose of this Torah portion as we enter the final year of this seemingly eternal presidential campaign.

So much of our country is still at the little, tribal, un-nuanced stage. We're permanently ensconced on this side or that side. We watch this network or that network. We're the good guys, they're the bad guys. I'm totally right and you're totally wrong. "I once revealed myself to you as the small time Tribal God; the God of MSNBC, the God of CNN and the God of FOX."

But guess what, perhaps it's time we listened to the whole reality, the reality we like and the reality we don't; the truth that we like that is comfortable and makes you feel good; and the truth that we don't like and that makes us angry and uncomfortable.

To solve problems, to make us safer, to find peace, to help fix our world, we must embrace and seek out the truth; not only the parts we like, but the whole truth, and nothing but.

Fondly,

Rabbi Tom

Rabbi Tom Connecting with our Community

Do you have a child in college or graduate school?

If you haven't already, please send in their contact information as soon as possible to genaeisenberg@nykolami.org. We don't want them to miss out on holiday greetings or contact with Rabbi Tom when he is making plans to get together with our students.

Please provide your child's/children's:

- * Name
- * Mailing address (include if there are any study abroad plans)
- * School name and expected date of graduation
- * School Name and Cell Phone #

A Message From Our Rabbi



SHIRA MILGROM

Alligators, Rainbows and Snow Shovels

Alligators. Rainbows. Snow shovels. Immokalee, Florida. It had just rained – and the sun had come out. Rainbows – check. Long irrigation ditches absorbing the overflow of swampy tomato fields. Alligators – check. But snow shovels? “You are from the north,” Lucas said to us. “You have snow shovels. You know how to use them. You need the snow shovel to do its job. The snow shovel doesn’t feel anything. Not weather. Not cold or wetness. Not fatigue. If it breaks, you throw it away and get another one.”

“That’s what we were,” Lucas said about the tens of thousands of tomato pickers. “We were like snow shovels.”

Lucas, one of the founders of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, the CIW, was talking to us, a group of rabbis from T’ruah, the Rabbinic Call for Human Rights. I want to do my best to translate this experience. I want you to know, first and foremost, that this is a story of hope.

The fresh fruits and vegetables we eat are harvested by migrant workers in Florida, North and South Carolina, Georgia, Virginia and New Jersey, of largely Mexican, Guatemalan and Haitian backgrounds. They live in sub-standard housing, are paid sub-poverty wages. They gather in huge parking lots in the pre-dawn hours, where they board old school busses and driven out to the fields. They sit in the busses, sometimes 3-4 hours,



unpaid, waiting for the dew to dry so that they can pick the tomatoes. Wage theft is common (you? I didn’t see you working for me today) – no shade provided, no water breaks – and sexual harassment a regular story. As one woman said, “To come home and put food on the table I have to leave my dignity in the fields.”

On our first day in Immokalee, we had the chance to visit the mobile Museum of Modern Day Slavery. It’s a truck, with chains inside (of course it brought to mind the cattle cars we have walked into – figures of our own museums of memory). Alongside the chains are exhibits of the ways that workers were lured into employment – which in fact was forced labor and the enslavement of countless people.

But I told you this was a story of hope. Twenty-two years ago, a small group of tomato pickers had had enough of the abuse, and somehow enough self-dignity to organize. Their story is the story of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers – a long steady struggle against the abuses of a massive system of food production, our food. In a brilliant analysis, they understood that the growers were not their targets; the growers were being pressed by the corporate buyers of tomatoes to produce cheaper tomatoes. The CIW understood that they need to go after the giant supermarket and fast food chains. Their first target was Taco Bell. The CIW organized marches,

strikes, boycotts, hunger strikes, protests. Didn't budge the beast. Then the workers partnered with the Student Farm Alliance – who pressured their high school, college and university campuses to get Taco Bell out of their food services and off their campuses. "Boot the Bell" succeeded on dozens of campuses. And Taco Bell agreed to meet with the CIW and the first Fair Food Agreement was signed.

Followed by Whole Foods, McDonald's, Walmart, Trader Joe's and as of last July, Ahold – the parent company of Stop and Shop. These corporations agree to buy tomatoes only from those growers who have signed on to the worker-created code of conduct. No longer do workers sit for unpaid hours in the bus. The moment they arrive at the fields, they punch a time clock. No more wage theft. Workers and members of an oversight team monitor the fields for compliance of safety standards, shade and water and protection from harassment. Workers cannot be fired for filing complaints. And the agreement includes the first pay increase in thirty years – a penny per pound more.

There is still great poverty in Immokalee. But now there is greater dignity and justice. 80% of the growers in Florida have signed with the CIW. A documentary of the story and the achievements of the CIW, are chronicled in a movie, "Food Chains", released last year, the same year the CIW received the Clinton Global Initiative award. Immokalee? Who had ever heard of Immokalee? Forty-five minutes from the Ft. Myers airport, endless miles of flat tropical swampland, in the middle of nowhere, a place of brutality and inhumanity and human trafficking – and now a story of hope – from what was once called "ground zero for modern day slavery" by a US attorney to the "best working environment in American agriculture" by the NY Times, "one of the great human rights success stories of our day" [the Washington Post]

This is also a Jewish story. The first two Florida

mega-growers to sign with the CIW were/are Jewish owned. A story of repentance and change. The person who worked with the CIW to create the monitoring mechanism to ensure compliance in the fields is a petite firebrand – a retired Jewish woman – a judge from the Bronx – Judge Laura Safer Espinoza. But these are not the main reasons that this is a Jewish story.

It's a Jewish story because we believe that every human being is created in God's image – b'tzelem Elohim. It's a Jewish story because we know the world isn't perfect, but we believe it is perfectible. We believe the world can be repaired; tikkun olam is our mandate.

This is a Jewish story because we believe in hope. What does it mean to hope against all odds – and prevail?

This is a Jewish story.

Please go online – ciw.org – and find out more. Talk to me. Join the campaign. Look for the Fair Food label coming out now. Connect yourself to the hands that harvest our food. Pursue justice. Hope.

Love,
Shira

A Message from our Cantor

DAVID ROSEN



Creating a Sound...

There are words found within our morning Liturgy as part of the Nishmat prayer that read: “Ilu Finu ma’lei shira kayam...” That even if our mouths were filled with song as the water fills the sea...we would still not be able to thank Adonai enough...

We know that, at Kol Ami, music and song are an integral part of our worship. From Shabbat in the Woods to B’nei Mitzvah celebrations to our High Holiday services, both vocal and instrumental music help us to create and nurture the divine spark within each of us in our effort to become closer to each other and to God.

If we think about how music has evolved throughout the decades, we know that there are many cultural and religious movements that have also influenced the way we pray. From the classical majestic sound of the pipe organ to the strum of an acoustic guitar, our entrances to sacred music come from a variety of different sounds and permutations. In recent years, Kol Ami has been blessed by a trio of musicians who have helped to create a sound that our community has come to cherish.

As our liturgy and worship continues to evolve, we now begin a new chapter of musical partnership and collaboration that I am confident will bring a new and dynamic dimension to our services. Our Musical Director Lenora Eve and I, along with our clergy team, are very excited about our vision and path for worship as we embark on this journey. We will be joined by a team of musicians and vocalists with tremendous experience and creativity in the area of worship and who are thrilled to become a part of our Kol Ami Family.

Please read about our new team below.

We look forward to seeing you!

Fondly,

David



Matt Turk—guitar, mandolin, singer/song-writer

Web music authority All Music Guide calls him “...an artist to be reckoned with.” A seasoned recording artist, multi-instrumentalist, eternal idealist and compassionate peace loving realist, Hastings-on-Hudson, New York based Matt Turk is a veteran performer who has engaged

audiences around the world, both as a rocking bandleader and an acoustic folk troubadour. He has shared the stage with Pete Seeger and opened for Judy Collins, The Doobie Brothers, Fiona Apple, The Grateful Dead’s Mickey Hart and more. He has performed throughout the U.S.A., Europe, Israel and the Caribbean, appearing at festivals and venues including Clearwater’s Great Hudson River Revival, the Gathering of the Vibes, Atlanta’s Music Midtown, Jazz at Lincoln Center, The Beacon Theatre and Brooklyn Bowl. Matt has been a good friend of Kol Ami for more than 20 years.

For several years, Matt coordinated and hosted the Circle of Song and Jam tents at Clearwater’s Great Hudson River Revival. Since 1997, Matt Turk has served as resident musician at Congregation B’nai Jeshurun in New York City, is an Arts Westchester Roster Artist and Musical Director at Tamid, the Downtown Synagogue. Matt served two terms (June 2010-June 2012) as president of the board of Tribes Hill, the Hudson Valley kindred folk music organization. Matt Turk lives in Hastings-on-Hudson, NY with his wife, Ilana Arazie, and son, Leo.



Kevin Hupp
Professional drummer,
Songwriter, Producer and
CEO of Kevco Publishing

As a drummer, Kevin has had the pleasure to record and tour with some of the best artists and musicians in the world. Starting in 1986 with the legendary Rick Derringer (with whom he worked for the

next 10 years), he has shared the stage and studio with, Edgar Winter, Johnny Winter, Eddie Van Halen, Hall and Oates, Freedy Johnston, Alana Davis, Blessid Union of Souls, Joan Osborne, Jeff Golub, Rufus Wainwright, Maceo Parker, John Oates, Danny Kortchmar, and most recently Iggy Pop (in his eclectic ensemble "The Preliminaire's"). As a session drummer in NYC, he has played on numerous recordings (two gold and one platinum) and many commercial jingles. As a songwriter he has had placement in TV and wrote the single for Derringer's "Tend the Fire" cd. He also just released his own cd, entitled "How Hard Can It Be".

Meg Okura-violin



All About Jazz called her the "queen of chamber jazz," composer and jazz violinist, Meg Okura, has performed with David Bowie, Lee Konitz, Tom Harrel, Steve Swallow, Helen Sung, John Zorn, Sam Newsome, Philip Glass, Jeremy Pelt, Dianne Reeves, Ziggy Marley, Heidi

Grand-Murphy, Jesse Harris, David Benoit, Terrence Howard, Kanye West, Cirque du Soleil, Pharaoh's Daughter and Emilio Solla Y La Inststable De Brooklyn, which received a Grammy nomination in 2015.

Hailed by the New York Times as "vibrant" and "sophisticated," Meg Okura and the Pan Asian Chamber Jazz Ensemble has performed nationally and internationally at festivals and in concerts, and has released three albums to date: the self-titled debut album ("Best Album" finalist in the 2006 IMA), Naima (2010), and Music of Ryuichi Sakamoto (2013). Her most recent composition, Ima, was performed by the BMI/NY Jazz Orchestra this past summer.

A native of Tokyo, Okura studied at Toho School, has toured all of Asia as a concertmaster and soloist with the Asian Youth Orchestra, and made her U.S. debut as a soloist with New York String Orchestra at Kennedy Center as a teen. She holds B.M. and M.M. degrees from the Juilliard School, and has appeared on over 50 albums and soundtracks, and composed for films, chamber ensembles, orchestras, and dance companies. She has received numerous grants including the Jerome Fund and New Music USA. In March and April this year, Meg Okura will have her residency at the Stone, performing 12 concerts with 12 projects.

Hadar Noiberg-flute and composition



The NY based trio led by flutist and composer Hadar Noiberg (ASCAP award winner) has enjoyed tremendous success at various festivals and performances globally. "From the Ground Up" is Hadar Noiberg's second CD as a band leader and is featuring her renowned trio. Noiberg fuses styles seamlessly between jazz and world music, and is distinguishing herself as both innovative and highly skilled in the jazz and world music scenes nationally and internationally.

Being a jazz musician with a vast Classical background and experience in playing Cuban, Brazilian and Middle Eastern styles, Hadar brings all that to the table both in her compositions and improvisation creating her own distinctive voice. Hadar has been a featured performer with acclaimed artists such as Yemen Blues, Dave Valentin, Anat Cohen, Omer Avital, and showcased in venues and festivals as Blue Note, WOMEX, Discover Jazz Festival, Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola, Babel Med Music, Roskilde Festival, "A" Trane, Central Park SummerStage, to name a few.

A Message From Our Religious School Director

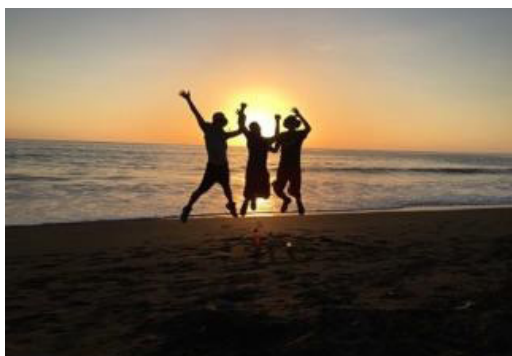
FELICE MILLER BARITZ



The dark days of February are upon us... and I must admit, I'm hoping for some snow! Here in the Religious School, things are full steam ahead as we begin another month full of programs, Family Shabbat celebrations, trips and learning.

Way back in December, I led a group of our High School students (along with Josh Rosenthal and Rabbi Weiner) on a service learning trip to Costa Rica. The purpose of our journey was becoming responsible Jewish Global Citizens – Expanding the Universe of Obligation. As we spent our time exploring, working, and having lots of fun, we also dedicated ourselves to learning. What is poverty? Who are the people to whom I am obligated? How does culture affect how I experience the world? How can I be a responsible actor in my own life and in the lives of those around me? So we worked on a “Nutrition/Community Center” in a very disadvantaged community outside the city of Liberia, Costa Rica. We planted trees as part of a reforestation project and we had the privilege of working in a small community in a Sea Turtle Sanctuary – and we got to see baby turtles hatch and make the arduous journey from nest to sea. It was all amazing. For me, perhaps the most rewarding and inspiring was getting to spend time and get to know this smart, thoughtful, hard working group of teens. Getting to watch them grow right before my eyes...

“One should see the world, and see himself as a scale with an equal balance of good and evil. When he does one good deed, the scale is tipped to the good – he and the world are saved. When he does one evil deed the scale is tipped to the bad he and the world are destroyed.” Rambam



A Message from Our ECP Director NAN BLANK



***Love is something
if you give it away,
Give it away,
give it away.
Love is something
if you give it away,
It comes right
back to you...***

And that's just what we're learning everyday in the ECP! February especially is filled with wonderful opportunities in the ECP to share our love.

Beginning on February 1st and extending throughout the entire month, our families will have the opportunity to donate new items for infants and toddlers including bottles, formula, baby food, shoes, and clothing. Our collection will be donated to the homeless shelters in Westchester at the end of the month. If you would like to partner with us, please drop off any of these much-needed items in the cradle outside the ECP office anytime during the month.

On Thursday evening February 4th the ECP is hosting a Winter Warmer evening for couples. The event's main focus is to raise funds to renovate the Sandy Playground in the parking lot so that the ECP and Kol Ami families can enjoy a new and exciting space. Thanks to the incredible efforts of our three amazing chairs, Liz Ilberg, Emily Campbell, and Danielle Gecht we can all look forward to a brand new playground coming very soon.

On Friday, February 5th we will be hosting our annual Caregiver's Shabbat. This is always a wonderful way to start our month of giving. All of our families' caregiver's are invited to join us for Shabbat to enjoy our songs and prayers with us and of course the delicious Challah that we bake!

Wednesday, February 10th the nursery school will be sponsoring our annual Share the Love Mitzvah Bake Sale. The Bake Sale

will take place in our Auditorium from 9:00-9:45 am and the entire Kol Ami community is invited and encouraged to join us for coffee and treats. The monies earned from this event are used for our Mitzvah Morning Project to be held at the end of May this year with the preschool children from The Center for Learning of New Rochelle. Last year we invited the Center's 3 and 4 year olds to come and play with us. Each of the children who came to visit received a new book, made a new friend, and enjoyed a delicious ice cream treat. We were also able to buy their school two new tricycles for their playground. It was a wonderful morning for everyone and we look forward to the children's visit again this year.

On Thursday, February 25th our 3's, 4's, and Pre-K's will participate in our ninth annual Book Swap. Each child brings in 2 books to share – they can pick one from the selection to keep and the rest of the books are donated to the shelters in our area.

February promises to be our month of sharing, caring, learning, and holiday fun!

***It's just like a magic penny,
Hold it close and you won't have any,
Lend it, spend it, give it away,
It comes right back to you...***

***Love,
Nan***

ECP February Reminders

**February 15th-19th
ECP closed for
President's Week**



CONGREGATION KOL AMI early childhood program

building a community of friends one family at a time

**Warm, Nurturing and Enriching
Registration for
2016-2017 is Now Open**

First Friends: A Toddler Program

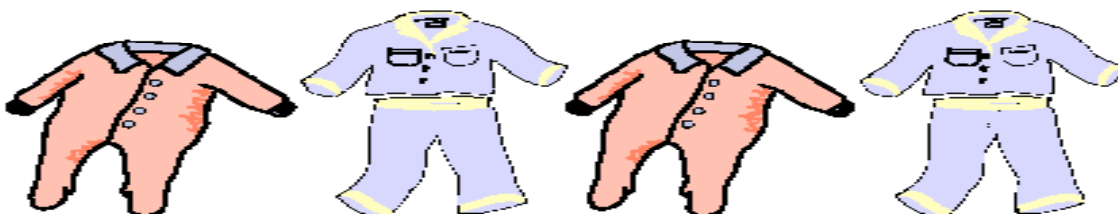
**2, 3, 4 and 5-Day 2's • 3,4,and 5 -Day 3's • Morning 4's
Full & Half-Day 4's • Extended Day Program for 3's & 4's
A Step Ahead! Our Pre- K program designed for children
turning 5 from September through December.**

**See for yourself – nothing takes
the place of a personal visit.**

**Call for an appointment today
Nan Blank, Director, at Ext. 107**



**The Early Childhood Program of
Congregation Kol Ami
Invites all families with young children to
A Havdalah and Sh'ma Pajama Party!**



**Join Nan Blank, Rabbi Tom Weiner
Saturday Afternoon
February 6, 2016**

4:30-5:30

**Enjoy the Sweetness of Havdalah with
Family and Friends!
Crafts, Family Learning, and a Sweet Snack**

Come in your Pajamas!

**Admission: Please bring a new pair of Children's Pajamas
To be donated to the local family shelter**

**Reserve your place today by calling
Nan Blank at 949-4717 x 107
nanblank@nykolami.org**

See You There!

**Please Join The Early Childhood Program
At Our Annual Share the Love Mitzvah Bake Sale
Wednesday, February 10th**



9:00-9:45 a m

**All of the proceeds from our sale will be used towards our special School-wide Tzedakah Project
for the children and families from The Center for Learning in New Rochelle**

Please join us and show your support for this wonderful project!

Everyone is welcome and encouraged to join us!

A Message from Our President

HANK ROUDA



Years ago, I belonged to a temple in New Jersey. Shortly after joining, I made an appointment with the rabbi to get to know him and for him to get to know me. We talked about the temple and the things that interested me. I told him that I had been on the Board of my temple in Chicago and that I was

interested in volunteering. The silence was deafening. Not only the silence from him at that moment, but from the leadership as well, as no one ever reached out to me to try to get me involved. Within a couple of years, I had left New Jersey and (happily) that temple and never looked back.

I would love to tell you that something like that could never happen at Kol Ami. The truth is that we try very hard to involve people whenever they express an interest. But trying isn't always succeeding. Not everyone who wants to volunteer finds an opportunity to do so. In fact, not everyone realizes how to even go about trying to volunteer, nor how many opportunities there are to participate in the life of Kol Ami.

I talk often about there being so many different "entrances" to Kol Ami, so now, let me help you walk through those entrances. There are myriad ways to volunteer for our community. The most visible and common is to participate on a committee or task force. A few years ago, we revised our committee structure to make it more flexible and to focus on individual projects rather than on standing committees with regular meetings. This gives you even more opportunities to participate but to do it in on a short term, focused basis. Yet, we still have a variety of standing committees, such as Worship, Religious School, Retreat, Adult Education and Membership. The list of Committee Chairs is included in this edition of the Connection, so you can reach out to them to talk about how you can participate. You can also contact me, any of the officers, anyone on the Board, the clergy or Jess Lorden or Ilene Miller to let us know that you would like to volunteer. I promise that you will not hear the "deafening silence" that I heard.

There are always opportunities to volunteer at the temple itself. We have volunteers who work in the office and help the staff. We have people who help staff the Food Pantry. The traffic squad is an invaluable part of our Religious School drop-off and pick-up process. And we can always use more people to help reach out to other congregants by doing things such as driving someone

to services. Feel free to call the office to see how you can get involved at Kol Ami itself.

One of the strengths of Congregation Kol Ami is the vast array of programs that we offer. Most of these come from the committees, clergy, lay leadership and staff, but we also want everyone to be able to create and run a program that is meaningful to them. We welcome ideas from all of our congregants and will work with you to provide the support that you will need to run a successful program. Ideas such as a Craft Beer or a Couples Trip to New Orleans for JazzFest have come from congregants and we are working with them to see that they can become a reality. Have an idea? Reach out to anyone on the Board or the front office or the clergy to see how we can help.

Kol Ami means the "voice of my people" and it takes all of our voices to make it the warm, inclusive and open community that we all know. You can add your voice by finding a way to volunteer. There are so many opportunities that your entrance is just waiting for you to walk through.

L'shalom,
Hank

**REMEMBER CONGREGATION
KOL AMI
IN YOUR ESTATE PLANNING**

**A PLANNED GIFT TO
KOL AMI PERPETUATES
JEWISH EDUCATION.**

**FOR MORE
INFORMATION CALL
EVELYNE KLEIN: 761-7659**

A Message from Our Executive Director

JESS LORDEN



It seems that each year of my life passes more quickly than the one before. That concept certainly holds true for this past year. As this article is published, I will have completed my first full year as the Executive Director at Kol Ami; so I thought I would share my thoughts on the "State of our Union".

I am particularly proud of the myriad social action initiatives we undertook this year. With a team of more than 20 volunteers we became a member agency of the Westchester Food Bank and opened a Pantry here at Kol Ami. We are the first temple in Westchester County to do so. A special thanks to Pam Millian for her tireless efforts and all of the volunteers who so graciously welcome guests to our Pantry each week. (If you know of someone who could benefit from this service please contact me. All communications will be kept in strictest confidence.) We also created a Green team led by Bonnie Hagen with wonderful assistance from Daryl Moss, Pam Millian, David Seicol, Murray Shapiro and Abdul Tubman. This team is leading the way in obtaining a significant grant from Con Ed, investigating solar energy, enhancing our recycling activities, and bringing a "green oneg" to Kol Ami. Lastly, I continue to be awed by the generosity of our congregants with respect to the Coachmen Family Center. Together we provided a wonderful Memorial Day Bar-B-Q, a delicious Thanksgiving Feast and monthly birthday parties, donated coats, gift cards, baby supplies, games and books, and provided tutoring. Over 200 different volunteers have participated in these activities this year, but a special thanks goes to Chef Jay Hack and birthday party coordinator Alison Adler. We are committed to continuing these initiatives in the coming year. In addition, I hope to pursue initiatives with Habitat for Humanity and the Interfaith Leadership in White Plains.

Supporting worship and holidays has been particularly rewarding for me. I am thrilled that so many congregants are enjoying lighting Shabbat candles at Kol Ami during our Friday night Kabbalat Shabbat Service; and I particularly enjoyed working

with a dedicated Sisterhood team on our beautiful congregational Sukkah. I look forward to working with our clergy and our Worship Committee to bring new worship ideas to fruition.

We also created an incredible Security Task Force this year. This task force, which comprises Ellen Bittner, Michael Elkin and Andrew Levenson, has been working hard to enhance the security of every aspect of programming at Kol Ami and to create an Emergency Procedures Manual. The team also worked to develop a close working relationship with the White Plains Police Department, which is now reviewing our Security Manual. In the coming year we plan to focus on the safety preparedness of our congregation including the implementation of training drills.

Under the leadership of Assistant Executive Director Ilene Miller we have worked to enhance our communications. We took steps to make the style and tone of our congregational communications "friendlier" and have worked to thank congregants for their contributions on a more consistent basis. In addition, we wrote and have been awarded several grants with Judi Brown's advice and assistance. In the coming year we look forward to improving our website; and applying for additional grant money, particularly in the areas of security, social action and enhancing our facility.

Hilary Shae, along with the support of an incredible team including our clergy, education directors, past and present officers and trustees, and a young member, led the effort to create our new Vision Statement. We believe it more clearly exemplifies who we are and how we are different from other congregations. We are confident the new vision statement will guide and focus us for years to come.

We also created a new membership form with our Comptroller, Madiha Tubman's incredible leadership, and support from Judy Sarch, our office staff, and dedicated volunteers. I appreciate the time you took to complete this new form, and believe that the information you provided will enable us to better meet your needs and interests. This was the first step as we work to refine our membership process; and I'm sure you'll be happy to hear that you will not need to repeat the process this year.

Working with Paul Mauro and our incredible custodial staff, we have expended considerable effort towards further beautifying our facility. New signage was placed throughout the main building and we completed much overdue repairs to the Schulman Chapel in the Woods. In addition, Rabbi Shira and I worked to create a new seating pattern for the Chapel which we believe supports the spirit of community of our Saturday morning "Lift".

Along with our Treasurer, Jonathan Litt, and tremendous support from Madiha Tubman, we have instituted new financial reports designed to assist our efforts at proper fiscal management, and will continue to refine our approach towards responsible financial management.

We wouldn't be able to operate without our incredible staff and dedicated volunteers. We refined several personnel policies this year and were able to ensure the continuation of comprehensive medical benefits for our staff. With Steven Knecht's assistance we are finalizing an Employee Manual which we will be implement in the coming months.

Most importantly, I have tried to focus on the connection between Kol Ami and our members. We began making weekly yahrzeit calls designed to provide our clergy with the opportunity to chat with congregants about their deceased loved ones. With special thanks to Ginny Ruder and Betsy McCormack, we now offer assistance to congregants in setting up their home for the Shiva following the funeral service. Under Beatrice Pogal's leadership we implemented live streaming of our Friday night Kabbalat Service and High Holy Day services. The live streaming has enabled members and guests to participate in our services from home or the hospital when they could not be with us in person. Moreover, we installed the Hineynu Tracker software which we use to help us in our most important mission; staying attuned to the needs of our congregants.

A special thanks to our clergy – Rabbi Shira, Rabbi Tom, and Cantor David, the Executive Committee and our Senior Staff who make my job a pleasure. Thank you all for truly embracing me. Thanks also

to Ellen Bittner, Lisa Borowitz, Ronnie Cohn, and Patty Wohl who have provided support, guidance, and countless ideas – you all deserve much credit for what has been accomplished this year.

I have enjoyed getting to know our congregants and staff from my new perspective this year. As I expressed in my first Connection article last year, I encourage you to drop by my office to say "hi" and I welcome your ideas for strengthening and improving any aspect of congregational life at Kol Ami.

Wishing you all much love, happiness and peace in this secular new year.

With love and appreciation,
Jess

The Open Meeting of the Nominating Committee

will be held on
Tuesday, March 1, 2016 at 7:00pm
in the Chapel

Chairs:
Ronnie Cohn and Mark Seiden
Immediate Past Presidents

Board Members:
Jennifer Labovitz Elizabeth Ward

Non-Board Members
Adam Gluck Judy McEvoy
Michael Welling Adrienne Pollak
David Seicol

"Jewish Journeys"

A journey implies traveling from one place to another, from Point A to Point B. A Jewish journey adds a greater dimension which may involve more introspection and evaluation of one's goals. The aim of "Jewish Journeys" is to be a "partner" with various congregants as they relate their experiences of discovery at Kol Ami.

In this edition of The Connection, David Gravitz will be our "guide" as he describes his religious passages at Kol Ami.

We hope that this column will enhance our readers' connection to Kol Ami.

MY JEWISH JOURNEY

David Gravitz

My Jewish journey has taken me from one extreme to the other and many places in between. Both my parents were born into large, Orthodox families whose main language spoken at home was Yiddish. After they married and I was born, I was brought up as a 100% American boy. Only English was spoken at our home in the Bronx. My parents were not synagogue goers and the only Jewish connections I knew as a child were Chanukah and its attendant presents for me, and Pesach (Passover), which was celebrated at my paternal grandmother's house in Brooklyn with my father's siblings and their children. I only had the one grandmother. My mother's parents died before I was born and my father's father died when I was 2 years old. My grandmother spoke Yiddish to all her children and grandchildren and I, of course, could not understand her and needed an adult to translate.

When I was 11, I went to Hebrew school at Young Israel of the Concourse (now a Hispanic church). We went for 1-1/2 hours daily from Monday through Thursday, services on Shabbat morning, and class again on Sunday morning. The other boys and I (no girls) learned to read Hebrew, went to our own Shabbat services and prepared to become Bar Mitzvah. Since my Bar Mitzvah ceremony was in September, and there was no Hebrew school during July and August, I was given a 7-inch 78rpm record with my portion on it. I memorized it and read from the Torah on the appointed day. It was the first time I ever saw an open Torah. I could not follow the service (too fast for me) and, in general, alternated between being bored and being nervous. After this I dropped out of Hebrew school, as did my friends. Playing with them after school was much more fun. We lived in a very Jewish neighborhood off the Grand Concourse in walking distance from Yankee Stadium. My friends (just about all Jewish) became Bar Mitzvah either at an Orthodox shul like I did

or at a nearby Conservative shul. I did not know there was such a thing as Reform Judaism and did not find out until I went to college in Cincinnati, where the original Hebrew Union College is located.

My life was very secular and assimilated after that through high school and college although I joined Pi Lambda Phi, a non-sectarian fraternity, which at my college was about 98% Jewish. After college I started working at an actuarial consulting firm, took the actuarial exams and in due course became an actuary. I married a non-Jew in a civil ceremony and we had two children together. After 9 years of marriage, my wife passed away. My son Randy was 4 years old and my daughter Lisa (Lee) was 7 months old.

In 1976 I married Ruth Freitag at Temple Israel of Northern Westchester, a reform temple in Croton-on-Hudson, where she was a member. She had 3 children, two of whom were already grown and living on their own. My children and I moved into her home in Yorktown Heights and we joined Temple Israel. This was my first experience with a reform temple and I took to it like a duck to water. I found it very vibrant and exciting. The rabbi, Michael Robinson (z"l), was a "60s rabbi" who had been a very active demonstrator for civil rights in the South. He was one of a group of rabbis and ministers along with Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King (including Rabbi Eugene Borowitz, whom many of us at Kol Ami know.) who were arrested in Birmingham, Alabama in 1963 and spent a night in jail and wrote a famous "letter from jail" calling for civil rights. Rabbi Robinson was very personable and Ruth and I became very active at that temple. We were members of a Havurah with 8 other couples who met monthly for dinner, sang Jewish/Israeli songs, and discussed topics of Jewish interest. Some of these songs, e.g. "Yedid Nefesh," we still sing at Kol Ami with the same melody I learned almost 40 years ago. My thirst for Jewish knowledge was stimulated by my experience at Temple Israel and, decades later, is still growing.

We moved to White Plains in 1979. My commute to the Penn Station area of Manhattan from Yorktown was almost 2 hours each way and our move allowed me to reduce my daily commuting time by an hour. At first we maintained our membership in Temple Israel as our 3 youngest children continued to attend religious school there. In 1981, after our daughter Lisa became confirmed, we decided to switch because the drive was about 30 minutes each way and there was no one with whom we could car pool. The temple was near the top of Mount Airy Road and, if anyone knows the area, you know what the drive in winter was like.

It took us three tries to get it right. First we joined Westchester Reform because we liked Rabbi Jack Stern. We found it difficult to make friends there and our children, going to school in White Plains, did not have any friends from WRT. The final straw was when, as part of a fund-raising project, we were asked to act in a way that we found unethical and not Jewish. We resigned from WRT and after visiting other synagogues, including Kol Ami (then JCC of White Plains), we joined Bet Am Shalom. We liked the religious leader Rob (this was before Rabbi Bronstein became Bet Am's rabbi) and our daughter Lee had a number of friends there from school. Lee became Bat Mitzvah there in 1983.

On Sunday, June 1 1988 (Ruth's birthday), Ruth and I went to Kol Ami (still JCC) to hear Anatoly (Natan) Sharansky speak. It was the first time we had seen or heard Rabbi Mark Winer, who introduced Sharansky, who had been one of the USSR's best known refuseniks. We were very impressed with both Sharansky and Rabbi Winer. All our children were now past Bar and Bat Mitzvah age and we were considering changing synagogues again. Ruth, who at the time could not read or understand Hebrew, was becoming bored with the length of the Shabbat morning service. I could read Hebrew but I much preferred the shorter services we had become used to in Croton. The Friday night after the Sharansky talk, we decided to go to services at Kol Ami. We liked the service and at the on introduce themselves. We ended up being invited to a congregant's home who lived nearby for more coffee and dessert..

We decided to go back to services at JCC the following Friday night. We were very surprised when Kol Ami's new president, John Laemle (z"l), whom we had met the previous week, saw us in the congregation, introduced us from the bima during "announcements"

(he remembered both our first names and our last name), asked us to stand, and asked congregants to come up to greet us during the oneg. I cannot overemphasize how much that gesture meant to us. I was blown away! To all intents and purposes we were sold on Kol Ami at that moment.

That night, or maybe a week or two later, one of the congregants (possibly Dick Julius (z"l)) told about this new group they have going on Saturday morning. We have study, then a short service, then Bible study with the assistant rabbi. We went the next morning, met Rabbi Milgrom, and about a dozen congregants. We studied with our chairs in a circle in the back room of the chapel and had our service in the Chapel's sanctuary. By July we had become fully paid up members of JCC.

Women of Reform Judaism

As I write this, the parashah is B'Shalach which recounts the Israelite's crossing of the Sea of Reeds as they leave Egypt. The story of freedom begins with women and water in Exodus, Chapter 2 (Moses placed in a basket in the Nile by his mother, watched over by his sister Miriam, and rescued by Pharaoh's daughter) and reaches a climax here, with Miriam and the women – all the women - celebrating with song and dance at the far side of the sea. "Then Miriam the prophet, Aaron's sister, picked up a hand-drum, and all the women went out after her in dance with hand-drums. And Miriam chanted for them: Sing to Adonai, for Adonai has triumphed gloriously; Horse and driver Adonai has hurled into the sea." (Exodus 15:21)

Please join all the women of Kol Ami for our celebration as we enjoy Ladies Night Out on February 2 (and who knows, we may do a little dancing and singing of our own!). And the joy - and learning - continue at Wine and Wisdom, which will be held on March 5 as we learn with our own Rabbi Shira, with accompanying refreshments, of course!

And for those of you who are new to Kol Ami's Women of Reform Judaism, we offer you this excerpt from the poem, "The Song of Miriam", by Rabbi Ruth Sohn (which can be found on page 66B of our Kol Ami prayer book),

"To take the first step –
To sing a new song –
Is to close one's eyes
and dive
into unknown waters.
For a moment knowing nothing risking all –
But then to discover
The waters are friendly
The ground is firm."

Please take that first step and participate in these events and more to follow, and experience the warmth and camaraderie that our Sisterhood has to offer you!

Sheryl Brady Rachel Eckhaus Stacey Matusow

This article was written by Maggy Weber. Ritual Riches is a monthly column written by members of the Worship Committee. We hope you find these articles interesting and informative.

**For the most up-to-date information,
please visit us at www.NYKolAmi.org**



WOMEN OF REFORM JUDAISM
Kol Ami Sisterhood

Invites you to

Ladies Night Out

March Madness

The tradition continues . . .
(ahead of schedule)

February 2nd, 7pm – 9:00pm

Elements

161 Mamaroneck Avenue, White Plains

\$25 members/\$30 non-members

Dinner and Soft Drinks

Cash bar for Adult beverages

R.S.V.P. and receipt of payment by January 27th

We regret that we can NOT accommodate late registrations or walk-ins

R.S.V.P. and pay online at www.NYKolAmi.org/Sisterhood

or drop off a check in the main office.

If you are sending a check, please write Ladies Night in the Memo

WE POINT WITH PRIDE...

CONGREGATION KOL AMI in WHITE PLAINS Receives North American Award for Outstanding Inclusion of People with Disabilities

[December 2015, White Plains, New York – Congregation Kol Ami is one of twenty-seven Reform Jewish congregations from all across North America recognized by the Union for Reform Judaism as an Exemplar Congregation for having made great strides in inclusion of people with disabilities in all facets of congregational life. Exemplar Congregations were honored with a certificate of merit in inclusion at the URJ Biennial 2015 in Orlando, Florida.

Each Exemplar Congregation has excelled in one or more areas of inclusion, focusing on important initiatives such as architectural and physical accommodations, transportation, religious school, b'nai mitzvah, worship, and beyond. Exemplar Congregations have agreed to serve as mentors to other Reform congregational professionals pursuing specific areas of inclusion.

All of the Exemplar Congregations are featured on the Disabilities Inclusion Learning Center site, launched in partnership with the Ruderman Family Foundation as part of the URJ Ruderman Disabilities Inclusion Initiative. An online portal designed to better enable congregations to become more inclusive, the site is a vital component of the Reform Movement's ongoing work to ensure the inclusion of people of all abilities in congregational life. The site, which features skill-building webinars, videos, and print resources, also provides a platform to connect staff members, lay leaders, and congregants from Reform congregations across North America. These connections offer congregations opportunities to learn from and educate one another on issues of inclusion.

Congregation Kol Ami is an inclusive congregation in every way, valuing members with appreciation for their individual differences. On our website, www.nykolami.org, you may read about initiatives by our Early Childhood Program and our Religious School.

Kol Ami has an active Inclusion Committee, chaired by Marci Frankenthaler and Beth Tomkiewicz, which is comprised of congregants with specific areas of expertise who proactively address the different issues of inclusion. We have dozens of members being supported by myriad accommodations designed to ensure their full engagement in all worship services, programs and activities. Just this year at the urging of our Inclusion Committee our seating was re-arranged in our main sanctuary and smaller chapel to better enable someone in a wheelchair to more comfortably sit among the rest of the congregation and for someone using a walker to more easily walk to a seat. Further, we provide hearing devices to ensure that adults with hearing difficulties are able to fully participate in our worship. It is also important to note then when our sanctuary was redesigned in 2012 the full inclusion of congregants with physical disabilities was of paramount importance in our planning. For example, a beautiful ramp affords someone in a wheelchair or using a walker easy access to the Bima. Further, our ark opens wide, again enabling someone in a wheelchair to wheel himself/herself into the ark as easily as another

congregant might walk into it.

We are also sensitive to, and fully supportive of, congregants challenged by mental illness. Through a partnership with Westchester Jewish Community Services (WJCS) we offer courses and provide free counseling services. Also through WJCS Shelanu, young Jewish adults ages 18–35 with Autism regularly worship with us and work with us in our Food Pantry. The work in our food pantry provides these young adults many skills needed in an office environment and supports the development of social skills.

Moreover, we have a robust Adult Education Committee, which brings innovative programming to Kol Ami. Through a partnership with Westchester Adult Jewish Education (WAJE) we offer a variety of courses covering issues of mental health and wellness designed to keep adults with mental illness involved in temple life in a positive way. Similarly, we are proud to be the home to an active AA group and new Al-Anon group enabling Jews to seek support within a temple as opposed to a church or community center.

In addition, we ensure our staff and our High Holy Day ushers are appropriately trained in proper etiquette when addressing someone with a disability. For example, we train our ushers to speak with the person in the wheelchair and not the person pushing the wheelchair. Similarly, we ask someone with a disability if he/she would like assistance, instead of assuming assistance is required.

Most recently, a LGBTQ committee was formed and a LGBTQ Bulletin Board was installed in our main hallway. For years, we have proudly hosted an annual LGBTQ Pride Shabbat. We have hosted several transgender speakers and have revisited the language we use in our programs to ensure all feel welcome to participate. We look forward to new offerings in this area.

"At Congregation Kol Ami, we have always worked hard to provide for all facets of our community, so it is very gratifying to have been recognized as a URJ Exemplar Congregation. Our focus is on all of our congregants' needs, and we are proud of what we have accomplished to ensure that every member, regardless of their age, race, religion, sexual preference or identity, physical abilities or intellectual or social capabilities, feels embraced at Kol Ami. This recognition is just one more step in our continuing growth, as we look for other ways, physically, emotionally and spiritually, to open up our community to anyone and everyone who wishes to join us," said Congregation Kol Ami President Hank Rouda.

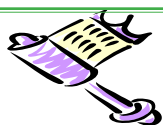
"These Exemplar Congregations are advancing what must be our highest priority—helping more people feel at home in Jewish experiences. The URJ calls this work Audacious Hospitality, which encompasses the core Jewish values around having an open tent (ohel patuach), loving kindness (chesed), and respect (kavod). We applaud these creative approaches toward helping the entire Reform Movement create an inclusive and open Judaism that brings more people closer to the core of Jewish life," said URJ President Rabbi Rick Jacobs.

Ritual Riches

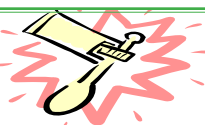
ROSH CHODESH

Rosh Chodesh is the Jewish holiday celebrating the beginning of the new month. It literally means “head of the month” or “first of the month” and started when the people were commanded by God to mark the months of the year in Exodus 12:1-2. It was an important festival announced by the blowing of the shofar and celebrated with special sacrifices and joyous festivities. In ancient times, the first sliver of new moon (by observation of two different people) was reported to the Sanhedrin (great or supreme court made up of 70 men) who then announced it to the people. It was important for the time to be marked precisely because without the noting of the new moon there would be no way to know when the festivals/holidays would occur. Because the Jewish calendar is lunar, and 12 lunar months do not add up to one solar year, additional “leap months” are added in seven of the years in the nineteen year calendar cycle. In 358 CE observational

reporting was replaced by astronomical calculations and months alternated between 29 and 30 days long. For centuries the holiday was a special day when women were exempt from work with no spinning, weaving or sewing on those days. There are a number of reasons given for the association of women with Rosh Chodesh and the lunar cycle, the most obvious being the female menstrual cycle. Additionally, in a midrash from Pirke DeRabbi Eliezer chapter 45, it is said that women were given this special holiday because they refused to give up their gold to the men for the making of the Golden Calf (Exodus 32). In more recent times, the observance of Rosh Chodesh has been revived by Jewish women with special study and spirituality groups. In our synagogue services, the observance of Rosh chodesh is noted in slight changes in the liturgy and the addition of part of Hallel.



Celebrate Purim by sending a Purim greeting to friends AND family



Proceeds support the Kol Ami Religious School
and charities supported by the Kol Ami
Women of Reform Judaism.

Sending Purim greetings and contributing to tzedakah at the same time is a great way to celebrate Purim and let friends, family and teachers know that you are thinking of them.

An email was sent to you with your user name and password

*Order by February 14th and baskets will
be delivered the week before Purim.*



Sample Purim basket. Actual basket may vary.

Need help or have questions?
Contact Judy Sarch at 565-2128 or email judysarch@gmail.com

Kol Ami Cares

Opportunities for Volunteering

Providing endless opportunities for connection and caring in times of joy and in times of sorrow.

We call bereaved families, help, lead or participate in shiva services for families in mourning, visit the sick and connect with the homebound. We also work to support the larger Westchester and world communities by knitting for our troops, preparing food for the hungry and through many other activities of mitzvot.

Several of our congregants no longer drive or have difficulty getting to services and special events. Kol Ami Cares maintains a database of members willing and able to provide transportation as needed. Offering a ride even once in a while is hugely appreciated.

Also, within our Kol Ami community are older congregants who would welcome a visit in their homes. Many do not have family living nearby and would appreciate the company. Please join our growing list of members who spend time with our housebound congregants. (B'nai mitzvah students may choose this activity as a Mitzvah Project.) In addition, Kol Ami Cares delivers meals to our members recovering from illness or surgery. We welcome anyone who can provide a meal for those unable to shop or cook for themselves or their families.

If you or anyone you know can benefit from our assistance, please contact us immediately. Thank you so much to our wonderful volunteers.

Ginny Ruder (ginnyruder@gmail.com) and
Betsy McCormack (betsyrmc@aol.com)

Social Action

Cooking for the Homeless

In the Kol Ami kitchen

Sundays at 11:15 am:

Feb 7, Mar 20, Apr 17, May 22
and

Mondays at 12:00 pm:

Feb 1, Mar 7, Apr 4, May 2, June 6

The Cabin Group - Alcoholics Anonymous

Weekly (closed) Tuesday meetings at 5:45 pm in the
Schulman Chapel in the Woods

AL-ANON

Weekly (closed) Thursday meetings at 7:30 pm in the
Schulman Chapel in the Woods

Mitzvah Knitz

Together we'll knit afghans, caps for
Israeli soldiers and more.

Meets the 1st Tuesday of the month.
Feb 2 at 10:30 am

The Kol Ami Singers

Accompanied by Paul Schwarz, we sing at
local nursing homes and assisted living
facilities. Join us as we bring a little
sunshine to the residents and make a
difference in their lives. For information, call

Murray Shapiro 914-946-7789

Wed Feb. 10th @ 2:30 pm

The Osborn
Theall Road, Rye NY

Kol Ami Food Pantry Hours

Kol Ami Food Pantry is open to serve our congregants, staff and guests of both.

The Pantry is located in the entrance of our
gymnasium and is open Sundays 9:30am - 10:30am, Tuesdays
9:30am-11:00am and Thursdays 6:00pm - 7:30pm. Gift
cards, private ordering and delivery is also
available. For information, gift cards, private ordering/deliv-
ery contact Jess Lorden, 914-949-4717 ext. 101.

COACHMAN CORNER

We are thrilled to be working closely with friends at the Coachman Family Center in White Plains. Our relationship began in the summer of 2014 and has flourished since that time. The projects include:

- Providing school supplies throughout the year
- Providing sports equipment
- Providing baby toys and equipment
- Providing books
- Tutoring support
- Monthly Birthday Parties for children up to 14
- Separate teenage birthday outings
- Thanksgiving Feast at Kol Ami
- Memorial Day Bar-B-Q at Kol Ami
- Knitting blankets for the Coachman children

We welcome all Kol Ami members to join us on these initiatives!

COACHMAN BIRTHDAY PARTIES

If you've ever had a birthday party, you know how special it feels to be celebrated by family and friends. Our Kol Ami community comes together each month to remind the children at the Coachman Family Center that every birthday is reason to celebrate and comes with all the elements of a traditional party and the warm wishes of an extended family.

Joelle & Andrew Levenson, Michelle & David Kroin, and their children hosted our December birthday party at The Coachman. The sponsor families were also joined by Cantor David, Jessica Lorden and Lori Abrams, who helped serve pizza and cupcakes, and led the children in various holiday themed art projects. The kids were eager to decorate cupcakes and glass jars that became memorable keepsakes. The entertainment was topped off by the Great Charlini, who kept his audience of parents and kids alike, squealing with delight and reminded that we all share magical dreams and the power of belief in us should forever remain strong.

More recently, on Sunday, January 10th, Sandy & Scott Gaffner, Jennifer Zola and their children hosted our January birthday party at The Coachman. The sponsor families were joined by Pam Pass, our Religious School Assistant Director, Lisa Hochman and her son, Simon Worth, and Brett Goldstein. Entertainment was graciously donated by Dr. Debbie Mumford of The Nature of Things, who led an engaging, instructional program about some of the local wildlife that she brought to share with the kids. The children were fascinated by the toad, turtles, snakes, bunny, rooster and chinchilla, all of whom made guest appearances at their party. Kol Ami children sat side-by-side with the Coachman

children as they were given the opportunity to handle some of these creatures.

It was particularly heartwarming to watch Kol Ami families supporting the Coachman children as they shared a new experience and eventually came around to touching the animals.

If you are interested in sponsoring a birthday party at the Coachman or would like to contribute to the Coachman Birthday Party initiative in other ways, please contact: Alison Adler (aadler3@verizon.net). We are in need of sponsors for the latter half of 2016. We would also welcome donations of the following items as we prepare for future parties:

- New gifts for children aged 3 -15
- \$25 gift cards for teen gifts
- Birthday themed gift wrap

There are designated Coachman Birthday Bins in the lobby at the entrance to the Religious School and any monetary gift cards can be left with Jess Lorden in the main office. YOU can make a difference!



FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2016

Friday evening schedule :

5:00 pm Explorations in Jewish Music with Cantor David Rosen and special guest

5:30 pm

Shabbat -in-the -Woods for families with young children; followed by supervised childcare, light supper & Shabbat crafts

6:00 pm

Unwind with hors d'oeuvres

6:15 pm

Shabbat Services

7:15 pm

Shabbat Dinner (RESERVATIONS MUST BE MADE IN ADVANCE)

7:30 pm

Tzedakah sandwich making and arts and crafts

8:00 pm

THE MAIN EVENT

9:15 pm

Relax at the end of a long day and week with dessert and coffee

ALL EVENTS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE COMMUNITY WITH THE EXCEPTION OF DINNER

Screening of "Little White Lie", a personal documentary that explores issues of racial identity in America, when a " secret falls from the family tree, and a girl's identity branches out".

Filmmaker Lacey Schwartz grew up in a typical upper middle class Jewish household in Woodstock, NY, with loving parents and a strong sense of her identity, despite occasional remarks from those around her who wondered how a white girl could have such dark skin. As a child she believed her family's explanation — that her appearance was inherited from her dark-skinned Sicilian grandfather — but when she reaches her adolescence, and her parents abruptly separate, her gut begins to tell her something else. At 18, Lacey finally confronts her mother and learns the truth about her biological father. As *Little White Lie* shows, both the bonds and the lies told between family members can run deep.

Following the screening, there will be time for Q&A with Ms. Schwartz.

This film has been designated as a New York Times Critics' Pick.

ASL Interpretation provided upon request.

For further information, please contact Ilene Miller at 914.949.4717x115/ ilenemiller@nykolami.org or visit our website at www.nykolami.org

SAVE THE DATES FOR UPCOMING SYNAPLEX EVENTS...

April 8th & May 13

CLIP & RETURN DINNER RESERVATION FORM NO LATER THAN FEB 24TH TO CONGREGATION KOL AMI: 252 SOUNDVIEW AVE, WHITE PLAINS, NY 10606

"Quiet Conversation Dinner" Adults Only

Adults _____ X \$25 = \$ _____

"Community & Family Dinner"

#Adults _____ X \$25 = \$ _____

#Children/teens _____ X \$15 = \$ _____

#Children 5 and under _____ = N/C

TOTAL ENCLOSED = \$ _____

Adult Name/s _____

Children's Name/s & Ages _____

Phone # _____

Email address _____

PLEASE NOTE THAT THERE WILL BE OPEN SEATING FOR DINNER THIS MONTH

ENGAGE AND LEARN

Gender and Judaism - Male and Female - What does it Mean to Be a Jewish Human Being?

Sundays, 9:00 - 11:00am

with Rabbi Shira Milgrom, Dr. Ellen Umansky and
Dr. Jennifer Lemberg

Session V: February 7

Celebrating Gender Identity

Session VI: Feb 28

Relationships: Man and Man, Woman and Woman

Wisdom of the Sages at Kol Ami

Thursdays, 11:00 – 12:00 pm

Lively discussions of the world and our lives based on some of the most provocative and fascinating texts of Jewish learning. All are welcome. With Rabbi Tom Weiner

Coffee, Clergy and Conversations – Five ECP mornings with Sara Elkin & Rabbi Shira Milgrom

Thursdays, 9:15-10:30am

Session IV: March 10

Purim: Joy and Joy - the Place of Silliness and Fantasy

Current Events with Beth & Gene Kava

Mondays, 11:00 am - 12:30 pm

Feb 8, 22, Mar 7, 21, Apr 4, 18, May 2, 16, June 6

Each session will provide participants an opportunity for in-depth examination of a current issue of the day.

Participants will examine issues, through various perspectives, using readings, video, or a guest speaker.

Women's Roundtable Breakfast

Join Kol Ami's remarkable, multigenerational women for learning and friendship.

With Rabbi Shira Milgrom

Wednesdays, 7:45 – 9:00 am

Feb 3

Kol Ami Book Club

Wednesdays, at 9:15 am in Room 20,

Feb 3

"Dead Wake" by Eric Larsen

Come whether you've read the book or not; the discussion is always lively.

For more information contact Doris Dingott at 289-0869 or
DLDingott@gmail.com

Prophets Seminar

Mondays 7:30 pm

By studying the book of Jeremiah, we will be examining the history surrounding the Babylonian exile as well as the prophet Jeremiah himself. Jeremiah reveals the psychology of the prophet. He lays bare his sorrow. The primary text will be Jeremiah, part of the Soncino Books of the Bible series, interpretations by Heschel, Buber and others will be examined. Prerequisite- curiosity.

Lunch - Learn -Connect

Saturday, February 13th at 12:30pm

Shabbat Lunch

RSVP TO ILENEMILLER@NYKOLAMI.ORG by February 5th!

Back by popular demand: Readings from Jewish Writers: the Many Voices of our People" (continued) with congregant George Shapiro, who will lead us through a reading of engaging Jewish literature, followed by discussion.

ALL ARE WELCOME!

Hebrew Classes for Adults

Beginners Hebrew with Emily Fields*

Sundays at 9:00 am

NEW CLASS! Learn the Service in Hebrew with Emily Fields*

Sundays at 10:00 am

(For Advanced Beginners who can slowly read Hebrew)

Master the melodies and the Hebrew prayers.

Intermediate Hebrew with Emily Fields*

Sundays at 11:15 am

\$150 per semester/10 classes for above classes

**Please contact Emily at efgraph@optonline.net to register or if you require additional information.*

+++++

Intermediate/Advanced Hebrew

with Alice Seidman

Sundays at 10:00am

Conversational Hebrew, grammar, vocabulary, reading, and translating current Israeli publications. An informal learning environment. (Contact Alice Seidman at 953-8455 for further information). Free of charge.

The Arts

Winter Jewish Film Festival

~Screening of Israeli films and films with Jewish content~

Selected Monday evenings at 7:30 pm

Feb 8 & Mar 14

The February 8th film will be Seymour: An Introduction
Moderated by Roger Seti

Congregational Choir

Thursdays 7:45 - 9:30 pm

For High School Students and Adults

Cantor David Rosen and Lenora Eve, Accompanist

Or Chadash (A New Light)

Children in kindergarten through 6th Grade

Sundays at 11:00am (when Religious school is in session)

Cantor David Rosen and

Lenora Eve, Accompanist

Mah Jongg

Wednesdays at 10:30 am

Email Betsy McCormack (Betsymc@aol.com)

for information

If you are a mah jongg player, please consider purchasing your 2016 mah jongg card through Kol Ami. The National Mah Jongg League donates to Kol Ami \$2 for each card sold, plus a \$15 bonus. This year we received a check for \$163! Mah jongg cards cost \$8 for standard size, \$9 for large print, no matter where you purchase your card.

Please contact Betsy McCormack at betsymc@gmail.com for details.



**Mark your calendar
for our annual Purim
festivities
Wednesday March
24th, 2016**

- **Adult Drama Club Musical Purim Spiel:
"The Megillah According to Rodgers
& Hammerstein"**
- **Star Wars Theme Carnival**

We hope you will join us as Kol Ami celebrates Purim with a Megillah reading, Purim Shpiel, carnival, dinner, and activities for the entire family. Costume attire encouraged!

Looking for something fun to do during February vacation?

Come join the

MUSICAL MAYHEM OF BOBBY DOOWAH

Tuesday, February 16th

10:15 AM

Congregation Kol Ami

(252 Soundview Avenue, White Plains)

\$15 per Family at the Door

(Cash or check)



Songs and movement for ages 0-6.

All are welcome!

Questions? Contact Sara – saraelkin10@gmail.com

Mussar Classes

Mondays, 12:30 - 2:00 pm

Feb 1, March 14, April 11, May 9, June 6

This workshop will introduce Mussar practice through tikkun middot ("repairing ourselves from the inside out"), so that we can act with greater compassion, kindness, and love in our homes, friendships and work. Facilitated by Rabbi Pamela Wax, Spiritual Care Coordinator, WJCS. Please contact Rabbi Wax at pwax@wjcs.com or 914-761-0600 x149 to register.

Women in Transition

Meets the 2nd Tuesday of the month,

Feb 9, 11:30 am - 1:00 pm

Are you attempting an adjustment to a major life change? Please join us in an interactive discussion group. Topics to be discussed include but not limited to: retirement, widowhood, aging, changing relationships with adult children, and other life transitions. If you are interested in joining the group please contact Sheila Sturmer at sturmshsheila@gmail.com or 914-391-1227

Jewish Mindfulness Meditation

Now in its 5th year - Newcomers Always Welcome!

Thursdays 9:30 - 10:45 am

Join us in learning mindfulness meditation, a practice of training the mind and the heart so that we can live with greater clarity, acceptance and connection. No meditation experience necessary. Led by Ruth Rosenblum, LCSW, and certified meditation teacher.

PARENTING GROUPS AT KOL AMI!

First Friends, an ECP program for Toddlers 13 - 22 months

(Accompanied by a parent or caregiver)

If you have a toddler and you're looking to make some new friends, what are you waiting for? Maybe the time is right to think about joining us! January 26 - April 5 and provides a wonderful segue to our Early Childhood Program and to our Kol Ami community.

For more information and membership details please call Nan Blank, ECP Director at 949-4717x107

Sunday Parenting Group

Raising resilient, self-reliant children. A morning discussion group for parents focusing on a variety of parenting Issues and stresses.

Meets the 1st Sunday of the month

Feb 7 at 9:15am

Susan Davis, LCSW

Parenting Teens Workshops

Discussion of a range of parenting issues related to adolescence, including physical and emotional development, trust and control issues, and staying connected in the midst of the turmoil.

Meets the 1st Thursday of the month

Feb 4 at 12:00pm

Susan Davis, LCSW

Grandparenting Workshops

Exploring intergenerational experience and Jewish wisdom as we share the challenges and opportunities of grandparenting.

Meets the 1st Monday of the month

Feb 1 at 9:15am

Susan Davis, LCSW

Contributions



Congregation Kol Ami is grateful for the many donations that you give both in honor of joyous occasions and in memory of beloved family and friends.

To make the logistics easier and the gifting choices

clearer, a donor form is printed on the back of each monthly newsletter. Donor forms are also available in the Main Office and on our website (www.nykolami.org). We thank you for the generosity that goes into each of these donations!

Your name(s) as you would like it to appear in our newsletter:

Donors' Address: _____

Occasion: ☐ In Memory of: ☐ In honor of: Name as you would like it to appear in our newsletter: _____

Send donation acknowledgement to: _____

(Please remember, acknowledgements are sent for contributions of \$18 or more. A listing will be posted as you would like it to appear in the newsletter for any donated amount.)

Amount Enclosed: _____

Please indicate your choice below and mail this form and a check to Congregation Kol Ami, 252 Soundview Avenue, White Plains, NY 10606. If you are interested in planned giving opportunities, please call the temple office at 914-949-4717.

Funds

<input type="checkbox"/> Adult Education Fund	<input type="checkbox"/> Kol Ami Cares Fund (supports activities of the Caring Community Program)	<input type="checkbox"/> WRJ Sisterhood Fund
<input type="checkbox"/> Audrey Greenberg Scholarship Fund (provides ECP tuition assistance for families in need)	<input type="checkbox"/> Men's Council Fund	<input type="checkbox"/> Youth Activities Fund (supports youth-related programs, scholarships and trips)
<input type="checkbox"/> Barbara Gruber Scholarship Fund (provides scholarships for high school graduates).	<input type="checkbox"/> Rabbi Shira Milgram's Discretionary Fund	<input type="checkbox"/> Youth Leadership Fund (supports scholarships to young people to develop leadership)
<input type="checkbox"/> Cantor David Rosen's Discretionary Fund	<input type="checkbox"/> Rabbi Tom Weiner's Discretionary Fund	Plaques and Remembrances
<input type="checkbox"/> College Youth Fund (supports special programs for our college students)	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious School Fund (supports special projects as determined by the Religious School Committee)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yahrzeit Plaques \$750
<input type="checkbox"/> Early Childhood Program Fund (supports teacher education and student scholarships)	<input type="checkbox"/> Retreat Fund	<input type="checkbox"/> Tree of Life Leaf \$180 (Available in Gold, Silver and Copper)
<input type="checkbox"/> Flowers and Landscaping Fund	<input type="checkbox"/> Scholarship Fund for the Confirmands (10th graders)	Giving Opportunities
<input type="checkbox"/> Fund for the Needy (provides assistance to those in need)	<input type="checkbox"/> Social Action Fund	<input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor a Shabbat Kiddush or <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor a Friday Night Shabbat Oneg
<input type="checkbox"/> Kol Ami Fund (our general fund)	<input type="checkbox"/> Synaplex Circle Fund	<input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor a Religious School Sunday Morning Bagel Breakfast

FEBRUARY 2016 Calendar

Mon Feb 1

9:15am Grandparenting
12:00pm Cooking for the Homeless
7:30pm Prophets Seminar

Tue Feb 2

10:30am Mitzvah Knits
7:30pm WRJ/Sisterhood
Executive Committee Meeting

Wed Feb 3

7:30am Women's Roundtable Breakfast
9:00am Kol Ami Reads Book Club
10:30am Mah Jongg

Thu Feb 4

9:30am Jewish Meditation
11:00am Wisdom of the Sages
12:00pm Parenting Teens
6:00pm Purim Spiel Rehearsal
7:00pm Adult Choir Rehearsal
7:30pm Executive Board Meeting

Fri Feb 5

5:30pm Shabbat In The Woods
6:15pm Evening Shabbat Service/
Yad b' Yad Shabbat of Inclusion

Sat Feb 6

Shabbat Lift
9:00am Coffee & Community
9:30am Study
11:00am Service
5:30pm Shabbat Evening Service:
Bar Mitzvah of Ryan Frydman

Sun Feb 7

9:00am K-6th Grade Religious School
9:00am Male & Female:
Gender & Judaism
9:15am Parenting
11:00am Or Chadash Choir
11:15am Cooking for the Homeless
7:30pm Prophets Seminar

Mon Feb 8

11:00am Current Events
7:00pm Kol Ami Movie Nite

Tue Feb 9

11:30am Women in Transition
7:30pm Prophets Seminar

Wed Feb 10

10:30am Mah Jongg
4:00pm 4th-6th Religious School
6:30pm 7th-12th Grade Religious School

Thu Feb 11

9:30am Jewish Meditation
11:00am Wisdom of the Sages
6:00pm Purim Spiel Rehearsal
7:00pm Adult Choir Rehearsal

Fri Feb 12

10:00am Torah Study: Portion of the Week
5:30pm Shabbat In The Woods
6:15pm Evening Shabbat Service

Sat Feb 13

Shabbat Lift
9:00am Coffee & Community
9:30am Study
11:00am Service
12:30pm Luncheon Speaker
Series - Speaker George Guidall

Sun Feb 14

NO RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

Mon Feb 15

TEMPLE OFFICES CLOSED
FOR PRESIDENT'S DAY

Tues Feb 16

7:30pm Prophets Seminar

Wed Feb 17

NO RELIGIOUS SCHOOL
10:30am Mah Jongg

Thu Feb 18

9:30am Jewish Meditation
11:00am Wisdom of the Sages
6:00pm Purim Spiel Rehearsal
8:00pm Board Meeting

Fri Feb 19

5:30pm Shabbat In The Woods
6:15pm Evening Shabbat Service

Sat Feb 20

Shabbat Lift
9:00am Coffee & Community
9:30am Study
11:00am Service

Sun Feb 21

NO RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

Mon Feb 22

11:00am Current Events
11:30am Prophets Seminar

Tue Feb 23

Wed Feb 24

10:30am Mah Jongg

Thu Feb 25

9:30am Jewish Meditation
11:00am Wisdom of the Sages
6:00pm Purim Spiel Rehearsal
7:00pm Adult Choir Rehearsal

Fri Feb 26

5:30pm Shabbat In The Woods
6:15pm Evening Shabbat Service

Sat Feb 27

Shabbat Lift
9:00am Coffee & Community
9:30am Study
11:00am Service
5:30pm Shabbat Evening Service:
Bar Mitzvah of Benjamin Thaler

Sun Feb 28

9:00am K-6th Grade Religious School
9:00am Male & Female: Gender
& Judaism
11:00am Or Chadash Choir

Mon Feb 29

7:30pm Prophets Seminar

*"The one name to remember...
When it's time to remember."*



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