

the Connection



Cheers to 100 Years!

Our Year-Long Centennial Celebration Begins December 8



Rabbi Jason Fenster
Cantor Daniel Mendelson

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Jess Lorden

DIRECTOR OF MEMBER
ENGAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS
Alison Adler

ECP DIRECTOR
Merav Veetal

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL DIRECTOR
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YOUTH ENGAGEMENT
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** of blessed memory*

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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.

Centennial Voices:

Hear the echoes of a hundred years as our cherished congregants share their stories, spanning generations. Join us in honoring the enduring spirit and legacy that has shaped our vibrant synagogue community.



Stan and Barbara Selbst

Members for 55 years

"In the '70's Cantor Smolover had a choir and he created a folk-rock service. I sang in that choir and it was such fun working with him and the others involved. When we light the candles on Friday nights in our home today, I still sing *the end of May the Lord bless us with Sabbath joy* to the tune of that folk-rock melody."

▶ [Watch Stan and Barbara Selbst Video](#)

Jean Pollak and Georgia Pollak

Member for 73 years and 43 years respectively

"The friends I made at Kol Ami are my best memories."

"I have memories of my conversion with Shira and her dunking me in a lake - that was a fun memory. But there are so many...when you have kids in the nursery school and then religious school, the theater club and all the volunteer work you do...it's the friends you make along the way that are the most cherished memories."

▶ [Watch Jean Pollak and Georgia Pollak Video](#)



Jill Selbst Abraham

Member for 55 years

"I know I can always come here and feel comfortable and feel that this is my spiritual home. I had a very special, forever, lifetime spiritual connection with Rabbi Davis who was my rabbi growing up. He is deeply in my soul and in my heart and I think about all the things I learned from him all the time."

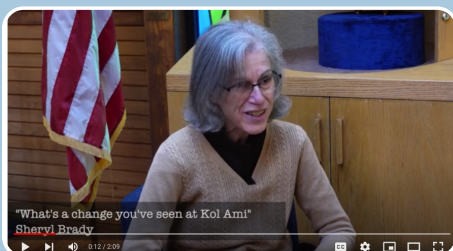
▶ [Watch Jill Selbst Abraham Video](#)

Lauren and Charlie Pollak

Members for 5 years

"I'm Charlie Pollak, I'm married to Lauren Pollak and I'm the proud grandson of Jean Pollak and son of Georgia and Bill Pollak. As I see it, I joined Kol Ami at 10 months old, in 1980. Having grown up at Kol Ami, it was particularly gratifying to see Shira connecting with my kids as she had with me."

▶ [Watch Lauren and Charlie Pollak Video](#)



Sheryl Brady

Member for 33 years

"I loved being here as a kid. I loved Religious School and going to Friday night services. I remember the entire congregation filling the County Center for High Holy Days and while our services are now more intimate, more accessible - I loved the grandeur of being at the County Center."

▶ [Watch Sheryl Brady Video](#)

Naming the Blessings Around Us

Rabbi Jason Fenster

ועתה ישראל מה יהוה אלהיך שאל מעמך

V'atah Yisrael, mah Adonai Elohecha sho-eil mei-imach?

And now, O Israel what (mah) is it that Adonai your God asks of you?

(Deuteronomy 10:12)



We are in the midst of an important and sacred moment for our congregational community. We are reflecting on a storied history and starting to dream about the future of our synagogue and modern, meaningful Jewish life.

With Deuteronomy, let's ask...what is demanded of us in this moment? Who are we? What are we? What do we want to be? What is the mission and purpose we will set for ourselves in this next moment? Which paths do we want to walk down? What commitments do we want to make? What stories do we want to share? What work do we want to do? What new memories and legacies do we want to create together? What is demanded of this community at this moment?

Deuteronomy's question is a good one for us as individuals too! To wonder about who and what we are and who and what we hope to be. (And it is our hope that you see the synagogue as a place to ask those questions and start working to find the answers and paths toward the meaning and purpose of your life!).

These past weeks since October 7th have brought these questions to the forefront for many of us. In the face of unbelievable tragedy, we wonder what is demanded of us. We show up in the sanctuary, the chapel, in classrooms, and around kitchen counters. We listen, learn, reflect, and share together. We cry and mourn. We stand in solidarity and conviction. We write letters, make donations, and give our time, energy, and voices to demand a world free from hatred and violence. And, still, we are never sure if we have done enough.

Surely, there is and will be more work to do. At the time of this writing, only a small percentage of the hostages are home. We continue to see vile, hate-filled rhetoric on campuses and on social media. We pray for lasting peace. Our work to build a world of wholeness, safety, and peace will continue for months and years to come.

And even, or perhaps especially, amid tragedy, our sages offer an important reflection on this verse.

Rabbi Meir lived during the 2nd century in the land of Israel. He said to read this verse differently. He enjoyed, as many rabbis do, a little grammatical wordplay. Do not read it as "mah," but rather read it as, "mei-ah." The verse, he said, does not ask "what (mah) does God ask of you;" rather, the verse demands: "One hundred (mei-ah) God asks of you." Each day, Rabbi Meir taught, God asks us to offer 100 blessings.

With Thanksgiving now in the rearview mirror, Hanukkah on the horizon, and our community continuing to reel from tragedy, Rabbi Meir encourages us to refocus on gratitude. And not just on a short list. A LOT of gratitude. Imagine what that might be like. To offer 100 blessings a day. Sure, if you offered the traditional structure of Jewish prayer you would get to 100. But what if we took the task differently? What if we set about our day on a fervent and desperate quest to see ourselves as surrounded by blessings?

As we approach the celebration of Kol Ami's 100th anniversary, I hope that we can set our personal and communal eye toward recognizing and naming the blessings around us.

L'Shalom,

Jason Fenster

Rabbi Jason Fenster

Embracing The Light

Cantor Daniel Mendelson



A blink and a half ago, Congregation Kol Ami wrapped up an outstanding, deeply satisfying High Holy Day experience.

We had finally reached the end of our season of repentance with Simchat Torah, one of the most intentionally joyous

(and vocally challenging) holidays of the year. I remember going to bed on October 6th feeling exhausted and grateful to have just one more service to go before closing the book on this year's cycle of renewal. By the time we woke up the next morning, the world around us had shifted.

Over the past many weeks, it feels as though the walls have been quietly, cruelly caving in on us as a worldwide Jewish community. And yet, sparks of fierce hope and light are all around us. We've stood together. We've cried together. We've prayed together. We've witnessed a remarkable congregational turnout for worship. We've continued to carry the chain of the Jewish tradition forward week in and week out in our Religious School and ECP, and for congregants of all ages. But night after night, as we follow the news in Israel, the news across college campuses here at home, as we see the continued, expanding, unrelenting anger and hatred toward the Jewish people and the Jewish state...It's hard to know if we're healing, or if we're just coping alongside each other.

Maybe we don't need to feel one way or the other. Maybe part of the reason that the Jewish people are still here so many thousands of years later, is that we've perfected the practice of moving forward as a people in the face of persecution. Maybe it's sufficient that between December 7th and 15th, no matter where we are or how we're feeling, Chanukah candles will be lit with pride, because that's simply what we do and who we are.

How lucky are we that we...have lights so that we can see? True, simple words from Steven Paige of the Barenaked Ladies. This holiday season, as we kick off our 100th anniversary celebration, let's continue to show up. Let's be together. Let's pray together. Let's bring more light into the world together. The light of the Jewish people will live on. Am Yisrael Chai.



▶ **Watch Hanukkah Bessings Video**

Reflecting on Our Journey

Judy Sarch & Andrew Levenson



As we write this article, on the cusp of our 100th year, we can't help but feel an overwhelming sense of pride and gratitude for the incredible journey our congregation has embarked upon together. We honor our past and embrace our future with boundless excitement envisioning how our synagogue will navigate the next century.

The prospect of innovation and the evolution of change fuels our spirits. One year ago, our hearts brimmed with a mixture of anticipation and nervousness. We had just welcomed Rabbi Fenster to be part of our close-knit family, uncertain about what lay ahead. The decision to postpone the hiring of an assistant rabbi was filled with its own set of anxieties. Yet here we are, and Rabbi Fenster has won over the hearts of our community. His warmth, wisdom, and dedication have truly enriched our congregation. Our assistant rabbi search is well underway and with the knowledge and experience we gained last year we feel confident we will find a rabbi that will complement our amazing clergy.

Recent events reavow our resolve to Never Forget, to Stand by Israel and to Denounce Hate. Our world was profoundly impacted by the devastating attack on October 7th. We saw our community respond by gathering donations to support Israel and specifically our cantorial soloist, Carmel's IDF unit. We gathered to

participate in demonstrations in New York and in the March for Israel Rally in DC to support the release of all hostages, and with the increase in antisemitism Kol Ami continues to prioritize security. Our existing plans, supplemented with additional measures, and open lines of communication with various law enforcement agencies, help ensure the safety and sanctity of our sacred space.

As we look forward in celebration of our 100-year Anniversary, we invite each of you to mark your calendars for our upcoming events: December's Hanukkah Celebration and Centennial Kick-Off, January's Havdalah, February's Mitzvah Day, March's Time Capsule, May's Tot Shabbat Gala, all culminating with our Spring Gala. We're thrilled to announce that all celebratory events, except the Spring Gala, will be free of charge. For more specifics, please visit our centennial home page at www.NYKolAmi.org/Centennial. (note: live link)

These events are opportunities for us to come together, celebrate our heritage, and build upon the strong foundations laid by those who preceded us. They are moments to create memories that will be cherished for generations to come.

Let us join hands, hearts, and spirits as we embark on this celebratory journey. Your presence, support, and enthusiasm are what make our synagogue the vibrant and nurturing community it is today.

Let us "kvell" about our accomplishments and eagerly anticipate the wonderful milestones that await us. Together, we will make our centennial year a testament to the strength of our congregation and the resilience of our faith.

Warmest Regards,

The Power of Love, Hope and Community

Jess Lorden, Executive Director



Congregation Kol Ami was formally established on December 10, 1923. Since our inception, as a community we have faced countless challenging times including the Great Depression, World War II and

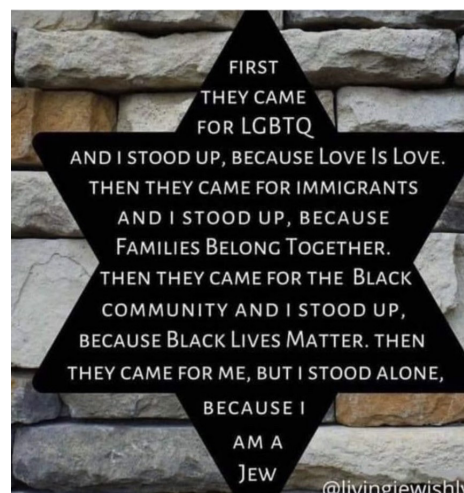
the Holocaust, the civil rights movement, the assassination of President Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the Vietnam War, the Cold War, the War in Israel in 1973, September 11, 2001, the shooting at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, and the Coronavirus pandemic, to name a few. I am confident that we faced all of these devastating events with the same emotions: fear, anger, worry, loss, helplessness, determination, strength, resilience, hope, and even moments of joy. I find myself longing for peace and safety and wondering if things will ever get better. As we face yet another war in Israel and rising antisemitism, I believe that I am not alone in feeling these same emotions now.

Recently on social media I saw the image replicated here: Many posted this image on their social media page. I couldn't bring myself to do so because for me to post that image was to give up faith and hope.

In November, Mitch Albom began his worldwide book tour for his new book, *The Little Liars*, at Kol Ami. In his unforgettable presentation, Mr. Albom spoke of hope and community. Two well-known Mitch Albom quotes are: "I am in love with hope," and "The way you get meaning in your life is to devote yourself to loving others, devote yourself to your community around you, and devote yourself to creating something that

gives you purpose and meaning." Although I only recently met Mr. Albom, I have been a fan since I first listened to him on the TV show *The Sports Reporters*. Two others of my role models since childhood include Eleanor Roosevelt and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Eleanor Roosevelt once said, "If you lose faith, you lose all." Dr. King famously said "Darkness cannot drive out darkness, only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that."

Hatikva, the national Anthem of Israel, is about hope. Hope is important because it can make the present moment less difficult to bear. If we believe that tomorrow will be better, we can bear hardships today. Finding joy amidst turmoil and war is not an easy task, but it is not impossible either. There are many ways to cope with the stress and uncertainty of living in a chaotic world and to find moments of happiness and peace in the midst of suffering and violence. For some, it is helpful to focus on the positive aspects of your life, such as your family, friends, hobbies, health, or achievements. For others, expressing gratitude for the good things in your life can help reduce the negative effects of stress and trauma.



For some, engaging in activities that bring joy such as reading, exercising, painting, or gardening can help you relax, distract you from your worries, and boost your mood and self-esteem. For me, participating in Kol Ami's communal life boosts my mood, provides purpose, and brings joy.

Kol Ami's 100th anniversary is upon us and the first of our many celebratory events is just days away. I hope you will join me at some, or at all of the incredible events planned for our 100th anniversary yearlong celebration starting with our Hanukkah Community Candle lighting, Dinner and the Kol Ami version of Family Feud on Friday, December 8th, and our Hanukkah family celebration on Sunday, December 10th. For more information about our 100th anniversary celebrations [click here](#).

I hope these words of perspective and hope can inspire you and give you comfort. Remember that you are not alone. Our incredible Kol Ami community is a source of strength and support for each of us. May we all find peace and strength.

L'shalom,

Jess

STITCHING TOGETHER A CENTURY OF MEMORIES

As we approach the 100-year celebration of Kol Ami, we are excited to embark on a special quilting project to encapsulate the history, community and warmth that define our synagogue. We will be hosting workshops and providing supply packets in the coming months for congregants interested in participating in the quilt making. For now, we're looking for additional volunteers who would like to be part of the planning committee. Whether you're a seasoned quilter/embroiderer/sewer or complete novice, additional hands will be invaluable as this project gets underway. For more information, please contact Petra Boykoff at petra.boykoff@gmail.com or [click here](#) to complete an expression of interest form.



Early Childhood Program Highlights

We had a wonderful time preparing for Thanksgiving in the ECP. We crafted decorations, made apple cider, cooked Thanksgiving Day inspired foods, and celebrated with a delicious Thanksgiving feast.

We are so thankful and grateful for our wonderful ECP community!





Tiny Tots and Family Fun:

Building Bonds and Memories Together!

Our young family gatherings this past fall were buzzing with energy as Kol Ami members, ECP families and local Westchester shul shoppers looked to make Jewish connections. Our community, our communal network of friends and acquaintances, our mishpacha, is growing and this is an exciting time to join us.

On Sunday, December 10, we will celebrate the joy of Hanukkah with live music, inflatables, crafts and scrumptious treats. All activities will be open exclusively to children ages 5 and under from 9:00-10:00am and then continue throughout the morning for big kids and little until noon. This event is free and open to all. Bring grandparents, friends and neighbors and come join us for a Hanukkah party like none other!

For more information on young family events and programs, follow our Instagram page: [#kolamifamilies](#) check out our website at nykolami.org/young-families or email joelelevenson@nykolami.org.



What Do We Want For Our Children?

Pam Pass, Religious School Director



To...Be responsible. Think creatively. Inspire others. Learn joyfully. Act ethically. Have curiosity. Find joy in being Jewish. Acquire leadership skills. Create meaning for themselves. Develop sound values. Cultivate new relationships. Form logical thought processes. Have adults in their lives who revel in them. Achieve a good sense of self. Explore. Question. Gain as much satisfaction from doing good as from doing well. Build a solid foundation upon which they can build a good life. Discover who they are—and can be.

Kol Ami's Religious School is one choice, one place that offers all of this and more. It is evidenced by our stated vision, which is even more relevant in today's busy life:

In the world of our children, Judaism can offer what is available to them in almost no other place in their lives—a sense of rootedness in an eternal tradition, a way to celebrate life's monumental and simple moments and the knowledge that they are needed, precious and irreplaceable in bringing the world to greater goodness.

The curriculum of the Kol Ami Religious School integrates the child's world with Jewish learning. Jewish wisdom and values, its music, dance and art, its lessons of history and courage are the building blocks of learning. A knowledge of Hebrew reading and comfort and joy in prayer are important elements of our school. Jewish history, from the Torah to the present, becomes a vehicle not only to hear the stories of our people, but also to learn that being Jewish gives us a framework of ethics and values to help us live a better life. Our curriculum teaches Jewish blessings (brachot) and prayer (tefillah) as ways to appreciate the wonder of this world and to give thanks for God's gift of life.

We are delighted that you are a part of our Religious School community. As we partner and journey together, we couldn't be more certain your children will acquire so many of these wonderful qualities we wish for them. To all our families, we are grateful that you share and believe in our vision.

Pam

If You Will It

Zöe Shannon, Director of Youth Engagement



Rabbi Maurice Davis z"l, in the 1983 brochure for the Jewish Community Center (prior to our name change to Congregation Kol Ami) wrote, *"This Temple stands for yours. Here — if you will it — your children*

will learn not only what they are, but why. Here — if you will it — they will learn not only where this Temple stands, but what it stands for. Here — if you will it — they will learn to comprehend the greatness of the heritage they receive, and their lives will be enriched because of it."

If you will it. I love this ominous repetition - and want to expand our idea of who you could be. My first, and probably most obvious thought: the parents. When you sign your child up for religious school, or one of our trips, or attend Shabbat services — *you will it*. What happens when we expand responsibility for our community's children? Our teachers, ensuring our students have access to breadth, depth, and perspective (stolen from Binghamton University's motto) — *you will it*. Our clergy who share beautiful melodies, prayers, and practice — *you will it*. Our staff, keeping families informed of events, run programs, and keep our facilities running — *you will it*. Our children themselves, who show up and continue to opt in to Kol Ami programming; some of whom run their own — *you will it*.

What does it mean to *will it*? Deconstructing barriers. Ensuring our students have access to learning. Through wonderful programs like Yad B'Yad with Jessica Yablow, Kol Ami removes a barrier for children with learning differences. Through DEI initiatives and outreach, Kol Ami continues to ensure our classrooms and sanctuary are places of belonging for all. When we remove limits to membership and belonging— *you will it*.

In 2023, 40 years after this writing, and 100 after the founding, our confirmation class students returned to Isabella Freedman retreat center. Returned, not because any of the individual students had ever been there, but because Kol Ami had been there for many years prior. A tradition. In this beautiful place, as years before, we discussed what they are, who they are, their relationship with God, Judaism, community, and themselves. Together, we will it — and, if I may, all of our lives are enriched because of it.

I leave you with Rabbi Davis's opening from the brochure:

"This Temple stands for Judaism. The dreams our fathers dreamed, the prayers their fathers prayed, the hopes and aspirations of three thousand years and more, these now are ours, and these now are here. Wherever we have worked, or walked, or wandered we have built our Temples as our way of saying something enormously important. Not as a beautiful irrelevance, nor monument to that which died, nor relic from our yesterdays, but as a quiet evidence that we still lived, as did our dreams, as did our offering. In every land, in every age, the Temple stood. And with it stood the dreams we dreamed."

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Z.S.' with a stylized flourish.

Fun Fall-ing with Kol Ami Youth

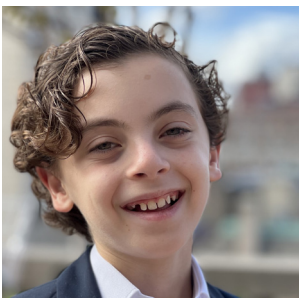


B'nai Mitzvah

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."

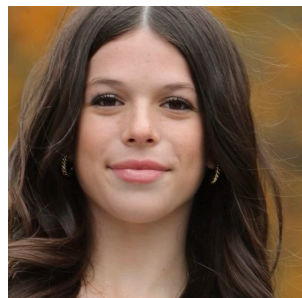


Nate Kofman, son of Kathleen Dunlop and Jason Kofman and brother of Sam and Zoe Kofman, will be called to the Torah as a Bar Mitzvah on December 2, 2023. Nate is in 8th grade at Scarsdale Middle School. He loves playing soccer, both in Scarsdale and in White Plains, and plays trumpet. Nate enjoys summers at Camp Lanakila in Fairlee, VT. For his mitzvah project Nate is involved in a number of hunger relief efforts in our community, volunteering with Second Chance Foods, Midnight Run and at the Kol Ami Food Pantry. Nate looks forward to celebrating his bar mitzvah with his extended family and with friends from school, soccer and camp.



Reed Zarkowsky, son of Brooke and Dan Zarkowsky and brother to Blake and Emma, will be called to the Torah as a Bar Mitzvah on December 2, 2024. Reed is very excited to celebrate with family and friends on his special day.

assistant on Sunday mornings at Kol Ami, and decorated journals for children in foster care programs for her mitzvah project. She is looking forward to celebrating her special day with family and friends.



Jackie Maister, daughter of Jeanette Leeds and Dominic Maister and sister to Will, will be called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah on December 16, 2023. Jackie is in seventh grade at Edgemont Junior / Senior High School. She loves spending her summers at Camp IHC, her home away from home, and spending time with her friends and dog Rex. A natural athlete, Jackie plays club lacrosse with R2 Lacrosse Club. She's also on Edgemont High School's soccer and lacrosse teams, along with Edgemont Soccer Club's travel team. For her mitzvah project, she is focusing on supporting Israel. Jackie is looking forward to celebrating her Bat Mitzvah with family and friends.



Rachel Craig, daughter of Vicki Phillips and Andrew Craig, and sister to Laura Craig, will be called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah on Saturday, December 9, 2023. Rachel is in 8th grade at Scarsdale Middle School. She is a girl scout and participates in the school musical, the cheer team and vocal music club at school. Rachel also helps Candice as an art teacher's

B'nai Mitzvah

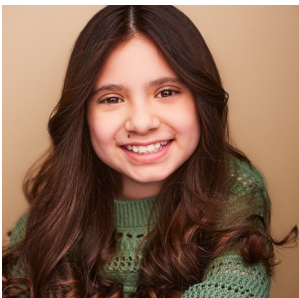


Will Kaufman, son of Nicole Israel and Josh Kaufman and brother to Louisa and Max Kaufman, will be called to the Torah as a Bar Mitzvah on January 20, 2024. Will is in the 7th grade at Edgemont Junior/Senior High School. He loves playing basketball and baseball and is a loyal Mets and Michigan fan. Will's mitzvah project included several shifts at Meals on Wheels and the Sharing Shelf, where he delivered meals and made meal packages for those in need. He is looking forward to celebrating his special day with family and friends.



Jordan Henry, daughter of Iris and Judd Henry, and sister to Silas, will be called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah on January 27, 2024. Jordan is in 7th grade at Irvington Middle School. She enjoys playing softball and basketball, reading mystery and fantasy novels, and spending

time with her friends. Jordan is working with Paws Crossed for her Mitzvah project where she helps care for rescued animals. She can't wait to celebrate her Bat Mitzvah with her family and friends!



Mackenzie Mercer, daughter of Bret Mercer and Shelly LeWinter and sister to Sophie, will be called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah on January 27, 2024. Mackenzie is in 7th grade at Highlands Middle School. She loves singing, acting, baking and drawing. For her mitzvah project, Mackenzie ran a bake sale and earned \$500 for Paws Crossed NY, a local animal shelter where she adopted her dog and cat. Mackenzie has also participated in numerous cabarets this year, earning money for both mental health and brain cancer. She is looking forward to celebrating her special day with family and friends.



Clara Sabine Dichter, daughter of Julie Mosow and Sasha Dichter and sister to Jonah and Zoe, will be called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah on February 3, 2024. Clara is in the 7th grade at Scarsdale Middle School. She loves Taylor Swift, Eisner Camp, playing the guitar and squash, and crushing her dad and sister in Catan. Clara is working with Paws Crossed animal shelter for her mitzvah project, where she walks dogs and helps around the shelter. She is looking forward to celebrating the day with friends and family.

WEEKLY WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

6:15pm

Friday Kabbalat Shabbat Service:

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

9:30am

Saturday Morning Torah Study and Shabbat Service:

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

DECEMBER 2023

Week ending December 2

Parashat Vayishlach

Genesis 32:4-36:43

Jacob is now ready to return home after fleeing twenty years earlier, and realizes he will have to reconcile with his brother Esau. On the way, Jacob once again has a dream and encounters a divine messenger. After the dream, Jacob is renamed Israel, meaning "struggles with God." Our narrative leaps forward in time to the moment when Jacob's children are now adults and his daughter, Dina is raped. Two of Jacob's sons Simeon and Levi avenge the crime.

Week ending December 9

Parashat Vayeishev

Genesis 37:1-40:23

Vayeishev begins the final extended narrative of Genesis, the Joseph story. The Joseph story serves as a bridge between *B'reishit* (Genesis) and *Sh'mot* (Exodus) in that Joseph, his brothers, and eventually his father start out in Canaan but end up in Egypt. The *parashah* weaves together the themes of family and betrayal, so evident in the early stories of Genesis, with the larger national themes of suffering and redemption that form the backbone of Exodus.

Week ending December 16

Parashat Mikeitz

Genesis 41:1-44:17

This week's parashah continues the story of Joseph at the end (mikeitz) of his prison term. Joseph, who has been Pharaoh's prisoner for two years, is released from jail in order to interpret Pharaoh's perplexing dreams. Joseph is placed in charge of food collection and distribution after his interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams reveals that seven years of prosperity will be followed by seven years of famine.

Week ending December 23

Parashat Vayigash

Genesis 44:18-47:27

Joseph's brothers are in Egypt to get food to bring back to famine-ridden Canaan. This parashah begins with the brothers unknowingly standing before their brother Joseph, who has become the vizier of Egypt, and Judah asking to be imprisoned in place of his youngest brother Benjamin (whom Joseph framed). Judah, who once convinced his brothers to sell Joseph into slavery rather than kill him, argues for Benjamin (Rachel's only other child) because he fears that any harm to Benjamin would break his father's heart.

Week ending December 30

Parashat Va-y'chi

Genesis 47:28-50:26

This final parashah in the book of B'reishit brings the first book of the Torah full circle. The family stories of patriarchs and matriarchs culminate in the blessings of Jacob to his sons and grandsons. The centerpiece of this portion is a sequence of twelve blessings delivered by Jacob to each of his sons. Jacob brings his entire family together to hear his words.

Weekly Torah Portions

JANUARY 2024

Week ending January 6

Parashat Sh'mot

Exodus 1:1–6:1

This week's parashah begins the book of Exodus. In Hebrew, the name of the book and its first parashah is Sh'mot, meaning "names," referring to the names of the Israelites who come to Egypt with Jacob. A new Pharaoh who does not have direct experience with Joseph and his role in Pharaoh's court has taken control of Egypt. The Israelites are enslaved. Moses is born and in turn "gives birth" to the people of Israel.

Week ending January 13

Parashat Va-eira

Exodus 6:2–9:35

In Va-eira, this week's parashah, God speaks to Moses, confirming the covenant that God made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The pleas of the enslaved Israelites have been heard by the Eternal, and God instructs Moses to promise the Israelites redemption. God also commands Moses to speak to Pharaoh and demand that he liberate the people of Israel. Pharaoh refuses to release the slaves, and God causes plagues on the Egyptians in order to change Pharaoh's mind.

Week ending January 20

Parashat Bo

Exodus 10:1–13:16

This parashah begins with a reiteration of God's challenge to Pharaoh to change his behavior, while at the same time making it more difficult for him to do so. The parashah concludes with the freeing of the Israelites from bondage. God tells Moses and Aaron that the people must remember how God freed them from bondage.

Week ending January 27

Parashat B'shalach

Exodus 13:17–17:16

Pharaoh finally releases the Israelites from Egypt, only to change his mind again and chase after them with a force of 600 chariots. God parts the waters at the Sea of Reeds, and the Israelites are freed from slavery once and for all. The Egyptians who are pursuing them are drowned as the Sea of Reeds closes again. The liberated Israelite slaves celebrate once they are safe on the other side, and are led by Moses' sister Miriam in singing and dancing Mi Chamocha.

FEBRUARY 2024

Week ending February 3

Parashat Yitro

Exodus 18:1–20:23

Yitro, also known as Jethro, is Moses' father-in-law. He observes the toll that Moses' leadership of the Hebrews is taking and advises Moses to delegate some of the responsibility and authority. In this parashah, the people find themselves at the base of Mount Sinai after several weeks of wandering. This is the site where God presents Moses with the Ten Commandments.

Week ending February 10

Parashat Mishpatim

Exodus 21:1–24:18

The word mishpatim means "case laws". This week's parashah continues the presentation of Divine legislation (the Torah) and includes many decrees - comprising civil, criminal, and cultic regulations. The parashah ends with a covenant ceremony on Mount Sinai.

Week ending February 17

Parashat T'rumah

Exodus 25:1–27:19

Parashat T'rumah describes the construction of the Tabernacle. God gives meticulously detailed instructions regarding the elements and design of the Tabernacle, particularly the Holy Ark. Each individual is asked to contribute towards its building materials and furnishings as he or she is motivated.

Week ending February 24

Parashat T'tzaveh

Exodus 27:20–30:10

The rituals surrounding the priests and sacrifices are described, and the obligations of Aaron and his sons are enumerated in Parashat T'tzaveh. This parashah has the distinction of being the only parashah in the last four books of the Torah in which the name of Moses does not appear.



- DECEMBER 8 **100 YEARS STRONG: CENTENNIAL KICKOFF & HANUKKAH CELEBRATION**
Community candle lighting, special centennial service, dinner, cake and Family Feud – Kol Ami Edition!
- DECEMBER 10 **COMMUNITY HANUKKAH CELEBRATION**
Inflatables, food, crafts and fun
- JANUARY 27 **ROOTED IN TRADITION: HAVDALAH HOMECOMING**
Havdalah service, stories, songs and reception at the original site of the Jewish Community Center
- FEBRUARY 11 **100 MITZVOT**
A unique mitzvah project
- MARCH 3 **TIME CAPSULE PROJECT**
Contribute to our time capsule
- MAY 4 **TOT SHABBAT GALA**
A memorable morning for our youngest members
- MAY 16 **100TH ANNIVERSARY GALA CELEBRATION**
Dance the night away to the best music of each decade



WWW.NYKOLAMI.ORG/CENTENNIAL

CALENDAR

DECEMBER

Dec 5

Sisterhood Donut Tasting Hanukkah Party 8:00PM

at Westchester Reform Temple
Join us for a delectable celebration of Hanukkah as we bring our Kol Ami and WRT Sisterhoods together for a delightful donut tasting. Sample mouthwatering creations from local bakeries, vote for your favorite flavor and variety, and revel in the joyous spirit of Hanukkah. It's an evening of socializing, sweetness, and shared festivities you won't want to miss!

[Click Here to RSVP.](#)

Dec 8

Centennial Kick Off and Hanukkah Celebration 5:15PM

Join us for latkes, sufganiyot and community candle lighting, followed by a special centennial Shabbat service, dinner, a 100th anniversary cake and Family Feud – The Kol Ami Edition! Registration required.
[Click Here to RSVP.](#)

Dec 10

Family Hanukkah Celebration 9:00AM-12:00PM

Our Hanukkah celebrations continue with live music, inflatables, crafts, and scrumptious treats. All activities will be open exclusively to children ages 5 and under from 9-10am and then continue throughout the morning for big kids and little until noon. This event is free and open to the broader Westchester community. Grandparents, friends, and neighbors are all welcome to join us for a Hanukkah party like none other!

Dec 11

White Plains Unity Hanukkah Celebration 5:30PM Temple Israel of White Plains Courtyard

Join us as we gather with the five synagogues of White Plains to celebrate the joys of Hanukkah with candle lighting, donuts, and the warmth of Jewish unity.

[Click Here to RSVP.](#)

Dec 16

Tot Shabbat 9:00AM

Get ready to sing, dance and celebrate Shabbat! Join Rabbi Fenster for a lively, interactive Shabbat service geared to our youngest members. Challah, juice, and snacks provided. After a nosh, we will welcome Sam Tananbaum, PJ Library Parent Connector, for a special activity and of course a selection of wonderful PJ Library books for browsing. Open to the community. All are welcome!

JANUARY

Jan 13

Tot Shabbat 9:00AM

Get ready to sing, dance and celebrate Shabbat! Join Rabbi Fenster for a lively, interactive Shabbat service geared to our youngest members. Challah, juice, and snacks provided. After a nosh, continue onto Shabbat themed crafts and games led by ECP and Religious School teacher, Debra Zitrin. Open to the community. All are welcome!

Jan 26

Shabbat Shira Synaplex 6:15PM Kabbalat Shabbat Service, 7:15PM Dinner, 8:00PM Featured Program

Be prepared to elevate your Shabbat experience to a whole new level! Join Cantor Mendelson and our talented Kol Ami musicians in celebrating the joy of Shabbat like never before, as the spirit of harmony envelops our hearts and souls. Save the date for an extraordinary musical celebration! More details to follow.

Jan 27

Rooted in Tradition: A Havdalah Homecoming 7:00PM 16 Sterling Avenue, White Plains

Journey back to where it all began at the original site of the JCC of White Plains. The beautiful 100-year-old building on Sterling Avenue is now the site of the Salvation Army. We will gather there for a musically rich and uplifting Havdalah service, shared memories, songs, and reception. Limited space is available, and registration required.

[Click Here to RSVP starting January 1.](#)

CALENDAR

FEBRUARY

Feb 3

Tot Shabbat

9:00AM

Get ready to sing, dance and celebrate Shabbat! Join Rabbi Fenster for a lively, interactive Shabbat service geared to our youngest members. Challah, juice and snacks provided. After a nosh, continue onto Shabbat themed crafts led by ECP and Religious School teacher, Debra Zitrin. Open to the community. All are welcome!

Feb 9

Synaplex Shabbat

6:15PM Service

7:15PM Dinner

8:00PM Featured Program

Our Synaplex season continues with another exciting program. Details to follow!

Feb 10

Tot Shabbat

9:00AM

Get ready to sing, dance and celebrate Shabbat! Join Rabbi Fenster for a lively, interactive Shabbat service geared to our youngest members. Challah, juice, and snacks provided. After a nosh, we will have the opportunity to engage in a special activity with our senior congregants, spreading joy and strengthening the connections between generations. Open to the community. All are welcome!

Feb 11

100 Mitzvot

Time TBD

Join us for an incredibly special 100th anniversary edition of our monthly Mitzvah mornings. Stay tuned for more information to come!

LIFE CYCLES*

CONGRATULATIONS

Mazel Tov to Diane Shelan Fox and family on the marriage of Diane's son Jason to Kayla Van Scoy

Mazel Tov To Sandy Carol and Ed Dresher on the marriage of their son Clayton to Liza Ng

To Shelley Mayer and Lee Smith on the marriage of their son Arthur to Ashlee Thomas

To Marjorie Bruckman and family on the marriage of Marjorie's granddaughter, Ilana Jessica Bruckman to Neil Alexander Orans

To Ilene and Glenn Miller on the marriage of their son Jason Miller to Trisha Pabby

To Elana and David Straus on the birth of their son, Samuel Max Straus

CONDOLENCES

To Richard Siegler and family on the passing of Richard's wife, Brenda Siegler

To Deborah Linder and family on the passing of Deborah's mother, Joanne Lieboff

To Michael DiValentino and family on the passing of Michael's mother, Patricia Ann Felice DiValentino-Lynch

To Barbara Ebenstein and family on the passing of Barbara's brother, Dan Ebenstein

To Meredith Einziger and family on the passing of Meredith's father, Steven Fell

To Gerri Friedman on the passing of her extended family member, Miguela Gonzalez

To Peter Roth and family on the passing of Peter's father, Morton Roth

To Sharon Ofsevit and family on the passing of Sharon's father, Leonard Pfeffer

To Susan Davis and family on the passing of Susan's husband, Paul Davis

To Eric Lubochinski and family on the passing of Eric's father, Charles Lubochinski

To Jodi Breitbart and family on the passing of Jodi's father, Eliot Gesner

To Bena Gershon and family on the passing of Bena's father, Gerson Goldman

IN MEMORIAM

Brenda Siegler

Lore Kalb

Elizabeth Bergstein

Paul Davis



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.

*As of November 27, 2023

DONATIONS*

CLERGY'S DISCRETIONARY FUNDS

RABBI JASON FENSTER:

In memory of
Leonard Young
from Ethel and Murray Shapiro

In memory of
Leonard Young
*from Fran Pantaleo
and Robert Freedman*

In memory of Leonard Young
*from Laura Dann and Frank
Kaiman*

In memory of
Leonard Young
from Linda and Milt Persily

In memory of
Leonard Young and in
appreciation
from Gail Young and Ken Jurist

In memory of
Shirley and Leonard Young
from Lauri Carey

In memory of
her grandmother, Elsie
Dubrowsky Mallis
from Jennifer Schultz

In appreciation
*from Susan Kohn and
Greg Arovas*

In appreciation
*from Laurie and Larry Krupp,
BJBG*

In memory of
Lore Kalb
from Roberta Samay

In memory of
Rabbi Morley T. Feinstein
from Ari Feinstein

In memory of
Paul Davis
from Margie and Jim Arsham

In memory of
Paul Davis and in gratitude
from Susan Davis

In appreciation of
from Rachel and Michael Kay

In appreciation
for High Holy Days services
from Laurie Tema-Lyn

CANTOR DANNY MENDELSON:

In memory of
Shirley and Leonard Young
*from Michelle Gersen
and Michael Zweig*

In appreciation of
Rosh Hashanah services
from Pat Grossman

ANNUAL FUND

In honor of
Alison Adler
from Martha Dubinsky Witkowski

In loving memory of
Lore Kalb
from Patty Silverberg

In loving memory of
her father, Milton Arner
from Judi Brown

In loving memory of
her sister, Carol Abramowitz
from Lynne Dolle

In loving memory of
her parents, Alexander N. Levine
& Jean S. Levine
from Marian Steinberg

KOL AMI FUND

In loving memory of
Leonard Young,
father of Gail Young
from Vivian Sager

In honor of
Jean Pollak's birthday
from Ruth Stern

In loving memory of
her father, Leon Kornfeld
from Judy Gluckson

In loving memory of
Lore Kalb
from Doris Hettmansberger

In loving memory of
Lore Kalb
from Nancy and Evan Berman

In loving memory of
Lore Kalb
from Valerie Mirels

In loving memory of
Lore Kalb
from Judith and Stephen Ross

In appreciation of
the honor given us at Rosh
Hashanah services
from Regina and Kenny Berthold

In honor of
Cindy and Scott Musoff
from Keri McCormack

In appreciation of
Nina and Philip Blumenfeld
from Paula Lerer

In appreciation of
Rabbi Tom Weiner for the
beautiful funeral service he
performed for our cousin,
Sandra Greenwald,
from the Ziff family

In appreciation of
Rabbi Tom Weiner
from Martin Brown

*As of November 27, 2023

DONATIONS*

In honor of
Elizabeth and Andrew Ward's
commitment to a vibrant
congregational community
from Scott and Carla Howard

In appreciation of
Rabbi Shira Milgrom and the
support she extended to all
of us during this difficult time
from Linda Kalb and family

In loving memory of
Lore Kalb
from Ellen Donat

In loving memory of
Paul Davis
from Marian Steinberg

KOL AMI CARES FUND

In loving memory of
Lore Kalb
from Robyn and Murat Dogus

In honor of
Lauren and the Pollak family
from Yarmon Kennedy

In loving memory of
Paul Davis, husband
of Susan Davis
from Jaye and Bob Greenfest

In loving memory of
Luca Miller, beloved member
of the Miller family
from Kay Osborne

ECP FUND

To Ilene, Glenn, Jon, and
Jordan Miller on the marriage
of their son and brother,
Jason to Trisha Pabby
from Kay Osborne

FOOD PANTRY

In loving memory of
Aron Rozin, father of Joseph
Rozin and father-in-law of
Susan Rozin
from Susan Rozin

In loving memory of
Celia Gold, beloved mother
of Sue Gold
from Myrna Barzelatto

In loving memory of
Steve Swirsky, beloved
husband of Joan Swirsky
from Myrna Barzelatto

FUND FOR THE NEEDY

In loving memory of
Lore Kalb
from Joanne and Don Siegel

In appreciation of
from Uriel Cohen

In honor of
Zoe Sobol, daughter of
Emily and Michael Sobol
and granddaughter of Nancy
Simon, becoming a Bat Mitzvah
from Judy and Steven Lempel

In honor of
Asher Williams' 6th birthday
*from Benjamin Fenster
and family*

In loving memory of
Albie Levine
from Ethel and Murray Shapiro

In appreciation of
Alison Adler
from Jess and Dave Lorden

In appreciation of
Rabbi Fenster, Jess Lorden,
and the Kol Ami staff for all
the support and guidance in
arranging the funeral for my
father Charles Lubochinski
from Eric Lubochinski

In loving memory of
Aron Rozin
from Susan & Joseph Rozin

In loving memory of
Roger Seti
from Patti McTeague

MUSIC FUND

In loving memory of
Shirley and Leonard Young,
Gail Young's parents
from Abby and Jeffrey Weiss

RABBI SHIRA MILGROM FUND FOR JEWISH LIFE

In loving memory of
Alfred H. Adele and Ray
Greenberg
from Danielle Greenberg

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL FUND

In appreciation of
Joyce Hoffman
and Harold Selden
from Kay Osborne

RICK KRAVER COLLEGE YOUTH FUND

In honor of
the marriages of Sheree Geller
to Russ Bratman and Douglas
Geller to Alexa Spieler, children
of Marsha and Paul Geller
from Harriet Kraver

In loving memory of
Cynthia Schwartz, mother of
Steven Schwartz
from Harriet Kraver

*As of November 27, 2023