

Summer 2024

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the Connection



A Stellar Centennial Year Ends, A New Era Begins
Join Us In Welcoming Rabbi Libby Fisher July 5-6



Rabbi Jason Fenster Cantor Daniel Mendelson

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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.

VOICES OF KOL AMI

Click here to watch video



Celebrating the Hearts of our Community

Our mission was to craft a historical video that celebrates the congregants who form the beating heart of Kol Ami, the very essence of our community. "The Voices of Kol Ami" is our tribute as we mark a century of cherished memories and enduring connections.

This video is a celebration of the vibrant spirit and unwavering dedication of our congregants, who have built this remarkable community over generations. Their stories, filled with joy, resilience, and wisdom, are the threads that weave together the quilt of Kol Ami's history.

We are filled with gratitude for the congregants who have dedicated their lives to building and nurturing this community. Their commitment and passion have shaped Kol Ami into a place of warmth, belonging, and shared purpose. A heartfelt thanks to Rabbi Shira Milgrom and Rabbi Tom Weiner for sharing their insights and leaving behind such meaningful legacies.

As we look ahead to the next 100 years, guided by the vision of Rabbi Jason Fenster, Rabbi Libby Fisher, and Cantor Daniel Mendelson, we carry forward the spirit of unity and resilience that defines us.

Erika Vujnovich, Jess Wagner and Zoe Fuentes

Reflecting on Year One, Anticipating Future Horizons Rabbi Jason Fenster

הַשְּׁנְה הַבְּאָה Hashanah sh'avrah, v'hashanah haba'ah. The year that was and the year that will be



It's hard to believe that we are closing in on one year since I arrived to Kol Ami. And, as you can imagine, it has not been what I expected. After what felt like a triumphant High Holy Days, Sukkot, and Simchat Torah.

the impact of October 7th became our all-consuming reality. We were focused on what was happening in Israel and simultaneously watching the American and media reactions to what was happening in Israel. We saw and felt the impact of rising antisemitism across the country and across the globe.

Quickly, we pivoted. We talked with college students, high school students, and their parents. We held reflective space for our congregation and hosted heart breaking and heart filling moments for the broader Westchester Jewish community. We sat in horror over untold demonstration, and we refused to allow it to steal our sense of dignity and humanity. We know the need to learn, reflect, and act together will be with us for quite some time.

We knew that while this was a watershed moment in the history of the Jewish people, and we knew it could not be the only thing we did this year. And so, as a community, we continued to do the work of synagogues. We held meaningful and personal b'nei mitzvah services. We celebrated Shabbat with power, music, depth, and joy. We held each other in our highest moments of celebration and in our deepest sorrows. We had a rockin' Purim celebration, a multigenerational Passover Seder, and the best pizza breakfast this side of 287. We studied Torah, midrash, Talmud, holidays, and learned more about ourselves and each other because we sat and learned together.

Know that as this programmatic year comes to a close, we are chomping at the bit as we get ready for our next year together. We cannot wait to welcome Rabbi Libby Fisher aboard. You will love her. And she will love you. She will bring more ideas, more compassion, and more passion to our bimah and to our congregation.

During her interview, Cantor Mendelson and I took her to lunch and told her that we were looking for a co-conspirator. Someone who wants to think and dream with us about who we are and who we can be. We are going to have fun.



Lo Vashamayim Hi -Judaism is Not in Heaven Rabbi Libby Fisher



As I write this note from afar, my excitement grows by the day as I inch closer to joining Kol Ami at the beginning of July. Even though I haven't started yet, I already know that this community is something

special. From the first moments of my interview in November to the Annual Meeting just a few weeks ago, I have been grateful for your warmth and your welcoming spirit, and I can't wait to officially become a part of the Kol Ami family.

If you were present for the Annual Meeting in May, you heard me speak about my favorite piece of Torah. It comes from Deuteronomy, from the portion Nitzavim. It just so happens to have been my Bat Mitzvah Torah portion, but we also read it each year on Yom Kippur Morning. As the Israelites stand on the precipice of entering the promised land, God reminds them of their duties and responsibilities as God's people. In what I find to be one of the most moving moments in all of Torah, God says, "אָא בַשְּׁמֵיִם הָאֵא" lo vashamayim hi - these instructions are not in heaven. Rather, we learn, God's teachings and God's spirit are close to us, in our mouths and in our hearts.

If these Hebrew words look or sound familiar, that may be because these are the words inscribed on the ark in Kol Ami's sanctuary. I was deeply moved upon walking into the sanctuary during my interview, because along with being beautiful, the ark is also a value statement. It says loudly and proudly that at Congregation Kol Ami, we know that our Judaism is not in the heavens - it is in our hearts, our mouths, and our hands. It is up to us to carry forward Jewish tradition. It is up to us to innovate and create and mold the Judaism of the next century. It is up to us to make our world a better place for us and our future generations. This particular vision of how we live our Judaism is exactly how I strive to live, as a rabbi and as a person, and I know that I will learn so much from each and every one of you as we live out these values together.

I know the beginning of my time at Kol Ami will be a joyous whirlwind. I'm looking forward to working with Rabbi Fenster, Cantor Mendelson, and the whole Kol Ami team to craft incredible moments of connection. These months are often seen as "downtime," but please know that there will be so many wonderful ways to connect throughout the summer. Whether it's in the sanctuary, at a coffee shop, at a local playground, or anywhere in between, I am looking forward to meeting you all very soon.



A Tough Year and a Good Year Cantor Daniel Mendelson



This time last year, I worried how this year was going to go. Going from a 3-clergy team down to 2 for an entire year at a congregation that requires 3+clergy to properly function...The uncertainties...the

variables...the coverage...my head was spinning. And indeed, this year has been incredibly hard... but we're on our way to completing it relatively unscathed, and even ahead of where we expected to be...because I got paired with Rabbi Jason Fenster.

Our first major challenge in leading this congregation together was the High Holy Days. I can't bear to count the number of hours we spent in each other's offices trying to figure out how to honor the legacy of what came before, while injecting just the right dose of what was new. Honestly, I had just figured out Shira & Tom's blueprint before they retired from this pulpit. And just as Jason and I were starting to fathom that we'd pulled off a successful, energetic, spiritual High Holy Day season together along with our remarkable team of professional and lay leaders... we were faced with a new frontier to navigate. At the end of the day, it's an old story that became new for us again.

We know that historically, a mark of an unhealthy society is the systematic targeting of Jewish people and Jewish culture. Israel was attacked. Israel responded. We're still in this thing and it doesn't exactly look like it's ending any time soon. Figuring out how to present ourselves in this current reality has been our continued reality for 8 months. And somehow, we've done quite a lot of what we'd normally be doing as a healthy synagogue...just with that painful acknowledgment of where we are as a Jewish community.

Friday nights have been packed consistently since the events of the fall and they've continued full force into the spring. Our music has been as engaging as ever on and off the bimah from services to musical programs. Shabbat services have remained spirited and joyous. Newcomers continue to walk into our sanctuary and come out saying I didn't know shul could be like this! Our preschoolers get to sing and learn and dance with us each Friday morning, alongside our song-leader Itamar Gov Ari, who plays guitar with easy-going brilliance and teaches Israeli and Jewish music with sweetness and ruach, B'nai Mitzvah is in full swing through the end of June with our tutors tutoring and our students buzzing with nerves as they get closer to their liftoffs in our sanctuary. We teach and learn and sing and pray and we do this knowing how broken we feel. We carry on together.

Our professional staff led by Jess Lorden continues to thoughtfully plan and prepare for everything we offer on this campus around the clock. The format of warmth and creativity and Tikkun Olam that Jason and I inherited, continues while also growing and evolving.

Before we had a chance to do the necessary post-game evaluation of High Holy Day worship, we were thrusted into this new reality filled with unresolved tension and anger and fear. We knew we had little choice but to keep grinding it out with love and intention, especially in the darkest of times. That will continue to be the case. Starting in July, we will welcome Rabbi Libby Fisher, who will bring her own grounded presence and spirited intelligence to our team. There's no limit to what we can accomplish together as a clergy team and as a holy community, as we continue to expand.

CHAZAK CHAZAK VNIT'CHAZEIK -FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH, MAY WE BE STRENGTHENED. I continue to be strengthened by all of you. May we journey onward in-strength and love

Mans

Defining and Embracing Jewish Life Judy Sarch & Andrew Levenson



In the aftermath of October 7th, when we were all reeling with emotions and despair, experts advised us to "Keep living a Jewish life." You may ask yourself, what does that actually mean? Depending on your definition of Jewish life, it could mean leaning into ritual, prayer, synagogue life, learning, or social action. Looking back on this year at Kol Ami, it's easy to see that's exactly what we did. We gathered, we learned, we prayed, and we supported each other. We were here for ourselves and for one another.

Membership at Kol Ami is up, more people are attending Friday night services, and a record number of congregants are signing up for social events and fundraisers. We're embracing every aspect of Jewish life, and it feels good—good to be part of something bigger than ourselves, good to have others who understand the ache in our hearts right now, and good to still be able to find joy in life.

As you browse the pages of this edition of The Connection, you will see how we celebrated not just the 100th anniversary of Kol Ami, but also our commitment to being Jewish and to moving forward.

Speaking of moving forward, it's time to start planning for next year. We're honored to welcome Sara Akst, Jason Eisenberg, Ellen Litt, and Michael Welling to the Board of Trustees. We also bid farewell and extend our gratitude to Melanie Gluck, Michelle Kroin, Steve Mustacchi, and Gerri Sommers for their time serving on the Board.

Some of our upcoming plans include:

• Welcome events for Rabbi Fisher, to be

- announced very soon.New and engaging programming from our clergy and staff, with a particular focus on Israel
- Continued excellence in Jewish education from our school directors
- Ongoing partnerships with other local synagogues to build community.

and antisemitism education.

You too are invited to be part of the planning for next year. If there is something you would like to learn, an event you would like to attend, or a place you would like to visit, let's see if we can make it happen. Call us, call the clergy, or call the Temple Office. We are over 650 families strong, and surely, we can find enough common interest to bring new ideas to fruition. This will help us all continue living a Jewish life and building a stronger community not only within Kol Ami but outside our walls where we can make and strengthen Jewish connections.

L'Shalom,

Cherishing Our Past, Envisioning Our Future Jess Lorden, Executive Director



A century is not merely a marker of time; it encapsulates a rich tapestry of experiences, challenges, triumphs, and transformations. As we commemorate our 100th anniversary,

we are called to both reminisce on the past and envision the promise of our future.

Looking back, we honor the visionaries whose unwavering commitment laid the foundation upon which we stand today. Their sacrifices, courage and steadfastness paved the way for us to inherit a legacy of faith that binds us together across generations.

Today, Kol Ami thrives as a vibrant hub of spirituality, learning, and community engagement. Throughout our centennial year, we've rejoiced in the diversity of the voices that fill our halls from the youngest children in our ECP, to older children in our Religious School, to the elders imparting their wisdom. Our community is united in its dedication to Jewish heritage and values, radiating warmth and joy.

Let's pause to celebrate the moments we've shared together this year:

- Over 450 Kol Ami friends gathered for a spirited Hanukkah celebration and a unique game of Family Feud, Kol Ami style.
- More than 100 members commemorated our roots with a special Havdalah concert and reception at our original home on Sterling Avenue.
- We captured our history through poster boards and an inspiring video featuring interviews with long-time and multi-generational Kol Ami families.

- Our Purim Carnival, Megillah reading, and Spiel drew a record-breaking crowd, and we devoured 80 pizzas and 1000 hamantaschen.
- 100 Kol Ami members contributed to a stunning quilt that now proudly hangs in our Atrium.
- More than 100 friends joined us for a Community Second Seder fostering connections across generations.
- A heartwarming, multi-generational group came together for a meaningful mitzvah day packaging essential toiletries for those in need.
- Almost 300 Kol Ami friends celebrated at our unforgettable gala, marking the culmination of our centennial festivities.

Yet, as we revel in our present, we must also look ahead to confront the challenges and opportunities that await us. In an era marked by rapid change and uncertainty, Kol Ami stands as a steadfast anchor, offering guidance and inspiration in a tumultuous world.

As we step forward into the next 100 years, we ponder the future with a mix of excitement and trepidation. What will the future hold for the Jewish community? For Kol Ami? What legacy will we leave for future generations to inherit? The answer lies in the choices we make today.

It falls upon us to ensure that Kol Ami remains a beacon of hope, embracing change while staying true to our core values, bridging the gap between generations, and championing justice, compassion, peace and tikkun olam.

With love and appreciation for our extraordinary Kol Ami community,

Jess

Tots Delight at Kol Ami's 100th Birthday Bash! Joele Levenson, Young Family Ambassador



The energy was electric on May 4th as Kol Ami's youngest members came out in droves to celebrate our Centennial Anniversary. Our Tot Party was a highlight in a year of celebration, creating a lively atmosphere filled with laughter, excitement, and a strong sense of community. Parents, grandparents, and kids danced and sang along with Jeff from Ramblin' Dan & his Freewheelin' Band, who kept everyone entertained with beloved songs and energetic performances. Our amazing teens added to the festivities by running a popular tattoo parlor and creating glowstick jewelry. Meanwhile, dedicated member volunteers and staff served delicious pizza, sparkling juice, and scrumptious cupcakes. The day was a perfect blend of fun, music, and togetherness, showing that Kol Ami truly knows how to rock a party!

Mark your calendars for our 2nd Annual Family Fun Day on September 8th. It'll be here before we know it! See you there.









Early Childhood Program Highlights

Once again, our ECP embarked on an incredible journey to Israel for Yom Ha'atzmaut, and it was a memorable experience for all! The children eagerly packed their bags, grabbed their passports, and boarded an El Al flight to Israel. With the enthusiastic participation of Kol Ami staff, congregants, and some 8th graders from the Leffell School, we crafted a wonderful and interactive travel adventure for our children.

During the trip, the ECP children explored various parts of the country and engaged in unique cultural activities. Here are some of our favorite moments from this amazing journey.









Religious School Highlights

Lively Learning...Joyous Judaism...

School-wide Pancake Breakfast – The entire school celebrated Rabbi Fenster's Installment with a Pancake Breakfast in their PJs. What a great way to start the school day!







High School Graduation – We are so proud of our seniors and send them off to great things with love.



Religious School Highlights

Meaningful Moments...Community Connection

Grade 6 Grassroots Grocery Mitzvah – Our sixth-grade families joined for a meaningful morning of service as a part of our B'nei Mitzvah Workshops.









Purim 2024 – Students, teachers, and madrichim got into the spirit of Purim for Religious School.







Pockets of Wisdom Zoë Shannon, Director of Youth Engagement



To Our High School Students and Those Who Are Graduating, At some point in the last two years you've learned about Reb Simcha Bunem, an 18th century Hasidic rebbe who in each of his pockets had

a note. One with an inscription from the Talmud: "Bishvili Nivra Ha-Olam", "for my sake the world was created." The other with the inscription of Abraham in the Torah: "V'anokhi Afar V'Efer," "I am but dust and ashes." One to be read when you need the reminder of your value to this world, the other when you need to be humbled.

Fast forward to today, the 21st century, not only men have pockets (although some people are still fighting for pockets that fit the ever-growing size of modern cell phones). And so, I want to offer you two more papers to hold in your back pockets (or write in your notes app).

In one, "I know everything that I need to know." Each of you are loved beyond measure. You are grounded in an ancient tradition that, if you want it to, can guide your everyday life and how to live it. You have access to amazing schools and resources. You can read and therefore ostensibly you each have a set of skills and knowledge that could get you through the rest of your life.

In the other pocket, 'I still have everything to learn.' Knowledge and wisdom are a continual process of inquiry. Of questioning everything that you have ever learned and engaging in conversation with people and perspectives you have never heard nor experienced. Of course, this learning should come with the hope of learning and not of convincing; from a place of love for the world and not fear of it. Many of us have grown up in a bubble that while it is never fun to have it burst, it should be your goal to expand it and flex it continually.

I hope with each of these notes you can hold your Jewishness as a foundation to engage with the world. Learning is a reciprocal process; as much as you can learn, you can teach. As much as you can teach, you can learn.

Parents, I can imagine it is scary to let your children leave home and, maybe even scarier, to welcome them home with new thoughts and different ones than they left with. I hope you engage in hard, Jewish New York conversations with constant interruptions and deep love. May all our kids feel welcome back here at Kol Ami and at our dinner tables. And may we all strive for a world of peace and continual learning.



Welcoming Melissa Cohen To Our Kol Ami Team



We are thrilled to announce that Melissa Cohen will be joining us as our new Director of Youth Engagement, effective July 16, 2024. Melissa recently graduated from the University of Rochester with a Bachelor of Science in Biological Sciences and a minor in

Clinical Psychology. Her deep-rooted connection to our community began at Kol Ami, where she attended religious school through 12th grade, served as a Madricha (assistant teacher), and actively participated in the musical aspects of Youth Shabbats and High Holy Day services.

Melissa's passion for Jewish life was further enriched by her eleven summers at URJ Crane Lake Camp, where she spent three summers on staff, most recently as Head Programming Specialist. Camp has been a cornerstone of Melissa's Jewish identity, inspiring her commitment to fostering a joyous and inquisitive Jewish experience for our youth.

Melissa is eager to hear from students and incorporate their feedback and ideas while adding her personal touch to enhance Youth Group programs. Her vision is to create a fun, inclusive, and enriching environment where every middle and high school student feels a sense of belonging within the Kol Ami family.

In her new role, you can expect Melissa to be a dedicated advocate for our students, working closely with the Va'ad (youth group) to plan exciting events and initiatives. We cannot wait to see the innovative directions Melissa will take our youth programming, and we are confident that her leadership will bring our community closer together.

Please join us in giving a warm welcome to Melissa as she embarks on this exciting journey with us.

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."



Reid Gabriel Banchek, son of Caryn and Brett Banchek and brother of Max, will be called to the Torah on June 1, 2024. A 7th grader at Louis M. Klein Middle School, Reid enjoys playing travel soccer for HYSC and LMK's modified team. basketball for Kol Ami's Jewish Basketball League where his team is the two-time reigning JBL champion. He also plays the trumpet and piano and loves listening to music. Reid spends his summers at Camp Wah-Nee in Torrington, CT. For his Bar Mitzvah project, Reid volunteered at Grassroots Grocery, packing and delivering produce to communities in need. Reid is excited to celebrate his Bar Mitzvah with family and friends and thanks his Kol Ami community for their support.



Morgan Campbell, daughter of Emily and Kevin Campbell and granddaughter of Magay and David Weber, will be called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah on June 15, 2024. Morgan is in 7th grade at the White Plains Middle School. She is a dedicated student and field hockey player. Morgan loves spending her summers "in the bubble" at Eisner Camp! For her mitzvah project Morgan is involved in learning about the breeding and raising of medical and psychiatric service dogs with Diggity Dogs, a non-profit in Massachusetts. Morgan is looking forward to celebrating all her hard work on this special day with her family and friends.



Gemma Kalt, daughter of Michele and Marc Kalt and sister of Jackson Kalt, will be called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah on June 15, 2024. Gemma is in 7th grade at Louis M. Klein Middle School in Harrison, NY. She is a dedicated dancer and an enthusiastic tik-toker. Gemma spends her summers at Camp IHC in Pennsylvania. For her mitzvah project, Gemma participated in the recent Lustgarten Foundation's Westchester Walk for Research, raising over \$20,000 for pancreatic cancer research. This cause is near and dear to Gemma's heart as she lost her Aunt Danielle to pancreatic cancer in 2019. Gemma is looking forward to celebrating her Bat Mitzvah with her family and friends.



Layla Weiss, daughter of Tara and Matthew Weiss and sister of Landon Weiss, will be called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah on June 8, 2024. Layla is in 7th grade at the Highlands Middle School. She plays soccer for New York Soccer Club and also enjoys playing basketball and spending time with her friends and family. Layla spends summers at Camp Echo. For her mitzvah project she volunteered with Backyard Sports running weekly games for special needs children. Layla looks forward to celebrating her Bat Mitzvah with her close 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

JUNE

Week ending June 1 Parashat B'chukotai Leviticus 26:3-27:34

The book of Leviticus is completed this week with B'chukotai. Another name for this week's Torah portion is Parashat HaToch'chah — the portion of reproach. It contains a list of curses so terrible that traditionally the Torah reader chants them quickly and in a hushed tone so as not to call attention to them. These curses come just after the promise of blessing - if we follow God's ways. The parashah begins "Rain in abundance, good crops, peace, victory, and fertility are all ours if, ... you walk in my statutes and guard my commandments and do them." (Leviticus 26:3) The parashah also includes a brief discussion of the payment of vows and gifts made to the sanctuary.

Week ending June 8 Parashat B'midbar Numbers 1:1- 4:20

This Shabbat we begin reading the book of *B'midbar*, (in the wilderness). The book is called "Numbers" in English because it begins with a census of all male Israelites in the camp who are eligible to bear arms, those over the age of 20, as well as those responsible for the duties in the Tabernacle. The parashah stipulates a census of first-born males and levies a special redemption tax on them. Each tribe is assigned a specific place in the camp surrounding the Tabernacle.

Week ending June 15 Parashat Naso Numbers 4:21–7:89

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

Week ending June 22 Parashat B'haalot'cha Numbers 8:1-12:16

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

Week ending June 29 Parashat Sh'lach L'cha Numbers 13:1–15:41

This week's parashah continues the story of the Israelites wandering through the desert. Moses sends twelve emissaries to scout out the Land of Israel. Only two, Joshua and Caleb, return with a message of hope. The other ten spies report that the land is filled with giants, and the people react to their terrifying account with fear and panic. As a result of this behavior, God threatens to wipe out the Children of Israel, but relents when Moses intercedes on their behalf. Instead, God announces that the members of this generation will not be allowed to enter the Promised Land and will wander the desert for another 38 vears.

Weekly Torah Portions

JULY 2024

Week ending July 6 Parashat Korach Numbers 16:1-18:32

Three rebels attempt a coup against Aaron and Moses in this week's parashah. Korach, Datan, and Abiram challenge their leadership publicly. Moses gives the people a choice - stay with the rebels or stand with him and Aaron. Those who continue rebelling face severe consequences, with the earth swallowing Datan, Abiram, and their group, while fire and plague strike Korach and his followers.

Week ending July 13 Parashat Chukat Numbers 19:1–22:1

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

Week ending July 20 Parashat Balak Numbers 22:2-25:9

In the parashah of Balak, the King of Moab seeks to curse the Israelites through the prophet Balaam. Instead, Balaam blesses them, prophesying their victory. The parashah concludes with a plague on the Israelites due to an illicit relationship between an Israelite and a Moabite woman. The plague ends when Pinchas kills them.

Week ending July 27 Parashat Pinchas Numbers 25:10-30:1

The parashah opens with God rewarding Pinchas for killing the Israelite and the Midianite woman who profaned God and continues with taking a second census. Moses assigns land based on tribe size. Zelophehad's daughters request inheritance rights, granted by God, prompting changes in inheritance laws. The parashah ends with festival sacrifice instructions.

AUGUST 2024

Week ending August 3 Parashat Matot – Mas'ei Numbers 30:2-36:13

In the first part of this double parashah, the laws for making vows are described. Moses agrees to allow the tribes of Gad and Reuben to stay in the land east of the Jordan as long as they lend their support in settling the Promised Land. Masei recounts the forty years of journeys that the Israelites have made since leaving Egypt. The Book of Numbers concludes with Moses providing instructions for conquering the Land of Israel, defining its borders, and dividing it among the tribes.

Week ending August 10 Parashat D'varim Deuteronomy 1:1-3:22

D'varim is the first parashah in the Book of Deuteronomy, which begins a series of speeches by Moses to the Israelites as they are preparing to enter the Land of Israel. In this parashah, Moses reminds this generation that they are about to take possession of the land that was promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Moses recounts the route of travel and the challenges,

chastisements, and triumphs that occurred along the way.

Week ending August 17 Parashat Va-et'chanan Deuteronomy 3:23-7:11

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

Week ending August 24, 2024 Parashat Eikev

Deuteronomy 7:12-11:25

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

Week ending August 31, 2024 Parashat R'eih

Deuteronomy 11:26-16:17
In this week's parashah, the people are instructed on how they are to enter and live in the Land of Israel, and on the behavior expected of them once they have settled there. Rules about sacrifices, tithes, and care for the Levites are discussed, along with regulations for slaughtering and eating meat.

CALENDAR

JULY

Jun 11 Confirmation/Shavuot Service 7:00pm in the Main Sanctuary

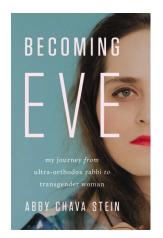
Join us for a joyful and spirited Shavuot service led by our 10th grade Confirmation Class. The service will showcase the many talents of our 10th graders and will be filled with music, poetry and prayer. Come share this memorable moment for our Confirmands and be part of a multigenerational, community-wide Shavuot service that will be moving and inspirational for all.

Jun 12 Shavuot Yizkor Service 10:00_{AM} in the Chapel in the Woods

Join Rabbi Fenster for our Shavuot Yizkor service, a meaningful opportunity to honor and remember loved ones who have passed. This special service, rich in tradition and reflection, invites the community to come together in remembrance and prayer. We welcome all to participate in this poignant moment of connection and spirituality.

Jun 19 Juneteenth

Temple Offices and Building Closed



Jun 21 Gay Pride Synaplex Shabbat featuring Guest Speaker Abby Stein 6:15pm Kabbalat Shabbat Service; 7:15PM Dinner; 8:00pm Guest Speaker Abby Stein

In honor of Gay Pride Shabbat, we are thrilled to welcome Abby Stein as our guest speaker. Abby is a rabbi and educator, award winning author, speaker, and activist. Raised in a Hasidic family in New York City, and a descendent of the Baal Shem Tov, founder of Hasidic Judaism. In that world, Abby attended Yeshiva and became a rabbi in 2011. She left the Hasidic world the following year and came out as a trans-woman in 2015. Since then, Abby has been working to raise support and awareness for trans rights and those leaving Ultra-Orthodoxy. Her memoir, Becoming Eve, will be available for purchase. Dinner will be provided by Abatino's. Click here to RSVP.

Jun 24-27 Israel Solidarity Mission Trip with Rabbi Jason Fenster

Rabbi Fenster is thrilled to be leading this 4-day congregational Solidarity Mission trip to Israel. It is sure to be an intense, powerful few days as we visit the Hostage Square in Tel Aviv, visit Sderot and the location of the Nova Music Festival. We will give blood and volunteer with a Reform community in Israel with whom we're building a sister-community partnership; and hear from journalists, first responders and rabbis who are continuing to support people in the aftermath of October 7 to strengthen Israel's communities and social structures. We will have a lot to share upon our return. Am Yisrael Chai!

JULY

Jul 4-5 Independence Day Observed

Temple Offices and Building Closed

CALENDAR

Jul 5 Kabbalat Shabbat Service Welcoming Rabbi Libby Fisher 6:15PM in the Main Sanctuary

Join us for a very special Shabbat as we rejoice with Rabbi Fenster, Cantor Mendelson, and welcome Rabbi Fisher to her new, spiritual home. We will come together in celebration, and in excitement as we move forward under newly expanded rabbinic leadership. It will be an incredibly memorable Shabbat filled with music, joy and love, and one that our current clergy and our new, incoming rabbi look forward to sharing with all of you.

July 6

Torah Study, Shabbat Morning Service and Luncheon to Welcome Rabbi Libby Fisher 9:30_{AM} Torah Study; 11:00_{AM} Shabbat Service; 12:00_{PM} Luncheon

Join Rabbi Fisher as she leads her first morning Shabbat service at Kol Ami alongside Rabbi Fenster. All are invited to stay for a luncheon following services to welcome and get further acquainted with our new Rabbi.

July 14 Kol Ami Cheers on the Mets 1:40pm at Citifield

Root, root, root for the home team as the NY Mets take on the Colorado Rockies. Cantor Mendelson will be belting out the National Anthem from home plate. An afternoon of community fun you don't want to miss.

Click here to purchase tickets.



July 20 Meet & Treat Havdalah for Young Families with Rabbi Libby Fisher 4:00PM on the Kol Ami Front Lawn

Chill with us! Come meet Rabbi Libby Fisher and join us for some outdoor summer fun. Pack up picnic blankets, lawn chairs and swimsuits for the little ones and join us for an afternoon of lawn games and water play, followed by Havdalah and ice cream.

July TBD Outdoor Concert Featuring Oren Neiman 7:00PM on the Kol Ami Front Lawn

Join Cantor Mendelson, Oren Neiman, and his talented band for a magical night of music under the stars! Bring your picnic blankets and lawn chairs and prepare to be delighted by an eclectic array of musical genres, from lively folk tunes to soulful melodies. The evening will culminate in a delightful dessert reception sponsored by our Member Relations Committee. More details to come!

AUG

Aug 7 Kol Ami/WRT Summer Stage Concert 7:00pm at Westchester Reform Temple

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

Aug 12 Tisha B'Av Service 8:30_{PM} in the Chapel

Join Rabbi Fenster for our Tisha B'Av service, a poignant time of reflection and remembrance for the destruction of the First and Second Temples. This deeply meaningful service calls our community to unite in prayer and contemplation. We invite everyone to join us in observing this significant day together.

LIFE CYCLES*

CONGRATULATIONS

To Randy Stein and Jack Berger on the birth of their grandson *Micah Benjamin Axelson*

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To Julie Katz and Etan Bednarsh on the birth of their son Jonah Ray Bednarsh

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To Debbie and Steven Young on the birth of their grandson Jonah Walter Orbach

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To Gavi Young, Rabbi Jason Fenster, Benjamin and Henry Fenster on the birth of their nephew and cousin Jonah Walter Orbach

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To Sara and Abraham Man on the birth of their grandson Max Murphy

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CONDOLENCES

To Carole Straus & family on the passing of Carole's husband Jim Straus

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To Karen Reynolds & family on the passing of Karen's uncle Max Lomont

巡

To Elana Araj & family on the passing of Elana's grandmother, Hermine Fisher

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To Janet Hershey & family on the passing of Janet's mother Roslyn Silverman Hahn

To Jared Stone & family on the passing of Jared's father David Stone

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To Liz Ilberg & family on the passing of Liz's uncle Richard Leibner

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To Emily Kandel & family on the passing of Emily's father Geo Carl Kaplan

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To Don Bashe on the passing of his friend *Philip Stern*

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To Charlie Blumberg on the passing of his friend *Philip Stern*

To Miriam (Mimi) Rogowsky & family on the passing of Mimi's husband Stanley (Stan) Rogowsky

IN MEMORIUM

Matthew (Matt) Gruber

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Ellen Bittner

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Stanley Rogowsky

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*As of May 31, 2024



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.

CLERGY'S DISCRETIONARY FUNDS

RABBI JASON FENSTER

In memory of Edith Lederman from Helene and Peter Ginsburg

> In memory of Terri Goodman Lerner from Hilary Lerner

In memory of Aileen Landes' sister, Aimee Rein from the Landes Family

In memory of
his daughter and
Aileen Landes' sister
Aimee Rein
from Michael Beckerman

In honor of Bert Wohl 90th birthday from Barbara Block

In honor of Bert Wohl's 90th birthday from Barbara and Stan Selbst

In memory of her husband, Jim Straus from Carole Straus

In memory of her dear friend, Jim Straus, from Linda Lucks

In memory of Hernine Fisher grandmother of Elana Araj from Helene and Peter Ginsburg

In appreciation from Lauri and David Carev

In memory of his wife, Elaine from Stephen Loewengart

In honor of Elaine Katz's 70th birthday from Barbara Ebenstein In appreciation for the Lunch and Learn program from Ellen and Jon Litt

In support of the Solidarity Mission to Israel from Susan and Ken Gordon

In appreciation
for his teaching, his guidance,
and his support of our grandson,
Patrick Pressman, on the
occasion of his becoming
a Bar Mitzvah
from Mimi and Kurt Pressman

IN HONOR OF RABBI FENSTER'S INSTALLATION

Bonnie and Ray Nutkis Fern and Steve Schwartz Valerie Bogart and Jerry Wein Jane and Mark Cohen Mindy and Michael Kotzin Andrea and Mark Seiden Karen Reynolds Amy and Larry Jacobson Linda P. Epstein Marianne and Peter Ripin Gerri and Andy Sommers Vivien Orbach-Smith and Richard Smith Judy Abelman and Barry Goldfarb Marlene and Michael Ulman

Marlene and Michael Ulman Michele and Mark Montague

Sandra Albert Doris Dingott Jane Gordon

Micaela Hellman-Tincher Michelle and Frank Lichtenberg Jennifer and Richard Strassler Daniel Weiser

Debra and Anthony Zitrin

CANTOR DANNY MENDELSON

For Cantor Danny's music fund from Helene and Peter Ginsburg

In memory of her mother, Edith Lederman from Carrie and Nathan Barotz

In memory of
Aileen Landes' sister
Aimee Rein
from the Landes Family

In honor of Elizabeth Ward's birthday from Daryl Moss, Janet Hershey, and Andrea Seiden

To praise his fabulous music from Janet and Mark Hershey

In appreciation from Marilyn and Remy Fenster

In memory of his wife, Elaine from Stephen Loewengart

In appreciation from David Silver

In appreciation of
his glorious music,
his teaching, and his
support of our grandson,
Patrick Pressman,
on the occasion of his
becoming a Bar Mitzvah
from Mimi and Kurt Pressman

ANNUAL FUND

In honor of Elaine Katz's 70th birthday from Barbara & Bob Cohen

In appreciation of Jessica Lorden from Marilyn & Remy Fenster

KOL AMI FUND

In loving memory of his cherished wife Elaine Loewengart from Stephen Loewengart

In honor of Elaine Katz's 70th birthday from Adrienne Djilani

In honor of Elaine Katz's 70th birthday from Emily & Jeff Goodwin

In loving memory of Marilyn Kroin Beck mother of David Kroin from Joele & Andrew Levenson

In loving memory of Edith Lederman mother of Carrie Barotz from the Feldman family, the Florin family, the Persily family, & the White family

In loving memory of Edith Lederman from Susan Kohn & Greg Arovas

In loving memory of Sidney Prince from Sarah & Theodore Prince

In loving memory of Helen L Prince from Sarah & Theodore Prince

> In loving memory of Aimee Rein, sister of Aileen Landes from the Landes Family

In loving memory of Jim Straus, husband of Carole Srraus from Nora & Bob Groban

In loving memory of Jim Straus from Ellen Umansky

In loving memory of Jim Straus from Linda Ellis In honor of
Rabbi Jason Fenster,
our nephew and Kol Ami's
new Rabbi
from Jane & Mark Cohen

In loving memory of her mother, Fay Farber from Judy & Jeff Gelfand

In loving memory of Roslyn Silverman Hahn, mother of Janet Hershey from Karen & David Cole

In loving memory of Roslyn Silverman Hahn from Ethel & Murray Shapiro

In loving memory of Roslyn Silverman Hahn from Dr. Ellen Umansky

In loving memory of Roslyn Silverman Hahn from Evelyne & David Klein

In loving memory of Roslyn Silverman Hahn from Debra Goldman

In loving memory of Roslyn Silverman Hahn from Ilene & Glenn Miller

In loving memory of Roslyn Silverman Hahn from Bernice Gale

In loving memory of Roslyn Silverman Hahn from Judy & Steven Rieger

In loving memory of Roslyn Silverman Hahn from Nina & Philip Blumenfeld

> In loving memory of Roslyn Silverman Hahn from Michelle Gersen & Michael Zweig

> In loving memory of Roslyn Silverman Hahn from Mary Wall

In loving memory of Roslyn Silverman Hahn from Lauri & David Carey In loving memory of Roslyn Silverman Hahn from Myra Oltsik

In loving memory of Roslyn Silverman Hahn from Doris Dingott

In loving memory of Roslyn Silverman Hahn from Emily & Jeff Goodwin

In loving memory of Roslyn Silverman Hahn from Leni Glauber

In loving memory of Roslyn Silverman Hahn from Melanie & Adam Gluck and family

In loving memory of Roslyn Silverman Hahn from Betsy & Tom McCormack

> In loving memory of Roslyn Silverman Hahn from Deborah Strek

In loving memory of Ellen Bittner from Bernice Gale

In loving memory of her mother, Delores Harris, and in honor of her adored husband Marvin Cooper's birthday from Joan Cooper

In appreciation of Beth Kava's kindness & friendship from Nina & Phil Blumenfeld

In loving memory of his mother, Muriel Gluckson from Matthew & Judy Gluckson

> In loving memory of David Stone father of Jared Stone from Nancy Stone

In loving memory of his friend, Philip Stern, from Charles Blumberg

In loving memory of Milton Pushkin from Stacey & Robert Pushkin

In honor of Michael & Elana Araj from Frances & Gerry Ginsburg

In honor of Alison Adler from Janet & Mark Hershey

In loving memory of Peter Kaye from Morley & Mary Ellen Kaye

KOL AMI CARES FUND

In honor of Bert Wohl's 90th birthday from Elizabeth & Andrew Ward

ECP FUND

In loving memory of Edith Lederman from Cheryl Raff

In loving memory of Roslyn Silverman Hahn from Nan & Wesley Blank

In honor of the marriage of Jonathan Miller, son of Ilene & Glenn Miller to My Nguyen from Kay Osborne

FOOD PANTRY

In honor of Bob Ziff's birthday from Maxine & Bruce Cohn

In honor of Elaine Katz's 70th birthday from Ann & Martin Lerner

In honor of Elaine Katz's 70th birthday from Jan K. Rosenberg

In appreciation of Abraham & Sara Man for a lovely movie watching afternoon from Donna Joseph

FUND FOR THE NEEDY

In appreciation from Ann & Martin Lerner

In honor of Liam Ginsberg's 4th Birthday from Henry Fenster and his parents, Rabbi Jason Fenster & Gavi Young

In honor of Bert Wohl's 90th birthday from Beth & Jeff Silverman

In loving memory of Roslyn Silverman Hahn from Paulette and David Kessler

In honor of Elaine Katz's 70th birthday from Helen Maccarino

In loving memory of Stanley Rogowsky, husband of Miriam (Mimi) Rogowsky from Sheila & Jerry Rothman

GOLF OUTING

In loving memory of David Stone from Shana & Max Greenwald

In loving memory of David Stone from Jessica & Barry Kraver

In loving memory of David Stone from Sara & Michael Elkin

In loving memory of
David Stone
from Jessica & Joshua Wagner

In loving memory of David Stone from Elana & Michael Araj

In loving memory of David Stone from Stefanie & Kevin Rosenzweig

MEMORIAL BOOK

In loving memory of Elaine Loewengart from Joyce Kent

MUSIC FUND

In honor of Alex Hopkins for his musical direction of the Purim Spiel from Debbie & Steven Young

In honor of
David Seicol for his outstanding
work as Assistant Director of this
year's Purim Spiel
from Debbie & Steven Young

In honor of
Jill Staffin for her extraordinary
work directing this year's
Purim Spiel
from Debbie & Steven Young

REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT FUND

In loving memory of her uncle, Max Lomont from Karen Reynolds

In honor of Sam Mermelstein's 4th birthday from Henry Fenster and his parents, Rabbi Jason Fenster & Gavi Young

RICK KRAVER COLLEGE YOUTH FUND

In loving memory of David Stone, from Harriet Kraver

In loving memory of Roslyn Silverman Hahn from Harriet Kraver

In loving memory of Ellen Bittner from Harriet Kraver

In loving memory of Stanley Rogowsky from Robin Cohen

*As of May 31, 2024

SHIRA MILGROM FUND FOR JEWISH LIFE

In loving memory of Elaine Loewengart from Leni Glauber

In loving memory of Elaine Loewengart from Myrna Barzelatto

In loving memory of Elaine Loewengart from Adrienne Djilani

In loving memory of Elaine Loewengart from Joyce & Bob Kent

In loving memory of Elaine Loewengart from Patricia & Paul Cioffari

> In loving memory of Elaine Loewengart from Marilyn Rader

> In loving memory of Ellen Bittner from Susan Rudnick & Neal Keller

In loving memory of Ellen Bittner from Karen & David Cole

In loving memory of Ellen Bittner from Carole Breckinridge

In loving memory of Ellen Bittner from Ethel & Murray Shapiro

> In loving memory of Ellen Bittner from Leni Glauber

> In loving memory of Ellen Bittner from Jeff Hantman

In loving memory of Ellen Bittner from Evelyne & David Klein

In loving memory Ellen Bittner from Dr. Ellen Umansky In loving memory of Ellen Bittner from Elaine Libman

In loving memory of Ellen Bittner from Judi Brown

In loving memory of Ellen Bittner from Jane Horan

In loving memory of Ellen Bittner from Beth & Gene Kava

In loving memory of Ellen Bittner from Lauri & David Carey

In loving memory of Roslyn Silverman Hahn from Ellen & Mark Wurzel

> In loving memory of Ellen Bittner from Donna Joseph

> In loving memory of Ellen Bittner from Myra Oltsik

In loving memory of
Ellen Bittner
from Ellen & Jonathan Litt

In loving memory of Ellen Bittner from Ellen Sarna

In loving memory of Ellen Bittner from Susanne & Ed Stotsky

In loving memory of Ellen Bittner from Rebecca Hantman

In loving memory of Ellen Bittner from Linda & Milt Persily

In loving memory of Ellen Bittner from Robin Cohen

In loving memory of Ellen Bittner from Patricia Sturniolo

In loving memory of Ellen Bittner from Melanie & Adam Gluck and family

> In loving memory of Ellen Bittner from Claudia Harari & Alan Barson

In loving memory of Ellen Bittner from Merrie Daitch

In loving memory of Ellen Bittner from Susan Kohn & Greg Arovas

> In loving memory of Ellen Bittner

from Emily Kadar & Dave Colonna

In loving memory of Ellen Bittner from Myrna Barzelatto

In loving memory of Stanley Rogowsky from Myrna Barzelatto

In appreciation for Roz Hahn's burial service from Janet & Mark Hershey

SOCIAL ACTION FUND

In honor of Rabbi Fenster's Installation from Merrilee Waldron

TOM WEINER FUND FOR YOUTH PROGRAMMING

In appreciation for Roz Hahn's shiva service from Janet & Mark Hershey















