

the Connection



Festive, Fun, and Full of Joy—Purim Celebration March 13!

Rabbi Jason Fenster
Cantor Daniel Mendelson
Rabbi Libby Fisher

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Jess Lorden

DIRECTOR OF MEMBER
ENGAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS
Alison Adler

ECP DIRECTOR
Merav Veetal

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL DIRECTOR
Pam Pass

DIRECTOR OF
YOUTH ENGAGEMENT
Melissa Cohen

RABBIS EMERITI
Lawrence W. Schwartz*
Maurice Davis*
Mark L. Winer
Shira Milgrom
Tom Weiner

CANTOR EMERITUS
Raymond Smolover*
** of blessed memory*

OFFICERS

CO-PRESIDENTS
Judy Sarch
judysarch@nykolami.org
Andrew Levenson
andrewlevenson@nykolami.org

VICE PRESIDENTS
Charlene Bodner
cmbodner@hotmail.com
Gary Orentlicher
drgaryo@yahoo.com

Kevin Rosenzweig
kwrosenzweig@gmail.com

TREASURER
David Seif
dgseif@gmail.com

SECRETARY
Jared Stone
jaredstone@gmail.com

CHIEF LEGAL OFFICER
Michael Zweig
mzweig@loeb.com

CONGREGATION KOL AMI
252 Soundview Avenue
White Plains, New York
914.949.4717 • nykolami.org

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.

A Storytelling People

Rabbi Jason Fenster



We are a storytelling people, and we are entering a season of fantastic and important stories to tell and retell together:

A beautiful peasant who becomes queen just at the

moment when she can save her people.

A prince who flees his home only to learn his true identity. With fantastic signs and miracles, he returns to face the wicked king and set his people free.

A nation of slaves who become a kingdom of priests when called into sacred covenant.

These are great stories.

Between this *Connection* and the next we will tell the stories of Purim, Passover, and Shavuot. The telling and dramatization of these stories sit at the core of our celebrations and help inform who we are as a people. Of course, during this season we will also take time to study the texts and make space to intellectually and spiritually explore their themes. But it's the telling and the playing out of the stories, particularly Purim and Passover, that form the heart of the holiday experience.

With that, however, we run a risk. There is a risk that we can start to see these holidays as just for our children. Fairly, these *are* great holidays for kids! We tell fantastical stories about princes and queens, wicked villains, and miracles. We eat special foods, and gather with our community, and with the people we love. We have special rituals that invite play, costumes, songs, and the family customs that carry on through generations.

And! They are not *just* for our kids. Importantly, the rituals of storytelling remind us that joy and play are core, not ancillary, to the religious experience (see last year's *March Connection* article!). And on the other hand, held within these stories that we have told and retold for hundreds and thousands of years are the powerful questions, themes, and visions of the identity of our people.

The Passover Haggadah gives a little clue to this tension. We recite: *v'higadata l'vincha*—and you shall tell your child on that day what the Eternal did for me when I came out of Egypt. We tell the child the story so they can become a part of the chain of history and tradition. And *WE* tell the child the story. In doing so, we must recall, prepare, internalize, and personalize the story. We must connect it to lived experience, to see where we have come from as a people and to help imagine where we are going next.

The stories tap into our hearts and, when we do our work right, help direct us. Not just in the moment of the holiday, but to reorient for the *months and years ahead*. *Perhaps this year Purim will direct your heart to strengthen its confidence and resolve in Jewish identity. Maybe Passover will open your heart to empathy. Maybe Shavuot will inspire your heart with calling and purpose.*

Engaging with these stories with joy, depth, creativity, and curiosity enlivens us as a people and a community. It invites us to feel the story, not just engage with it as an old book on a dusty shelf. We tell and retell so that we can feel like authentic owners of our legacy, history and tradition.

I look forward to telling many stories with you in the weeks and months ahead.

Chagim s'meichim—happy holidays,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jason". The script is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'J'.

Finding Joy in Dark Times

Cantor Daniel Mendelson



Purim is nearly here, and soon our congregation will be filled with laughter, costumes, and the joy of community. Our carnival will bring delight to our children, and our Purim Spiel will be as entertaining as

ever. Yet, as we prepare to celebrate, our hearts remain heavy. The events of October 7th, and the continuing aftermath have darkened the motions of congregational Jewish life. In times like these, it is easy to feel isolated, and to wonder if there is indeed light at the end of the tunnel.

But we are not alone. We have each other. And we have the strength of our values. As a community, we remain loving, inclusive, daring and welcoming. These principles are not diminished by our sorrow; they are what sustains us.

As a reminder of how we found creative ways to celebrate even in challenging times, check out our 3-minute Purim Spiel below—recorded when we couldn't gather in person during the height of the pandemic. We had a blast putting together that little parody, but rest assured, *West Side Shpilkes* on Thursday, March 13, will be even more fun—live, in person, and full of energy!

When words fail, music carries us forward. Our Jewish tradition has always found resilience through song. Even in the darkest times, our sacred texts endure, and the melodies we weave around them cannot be silenced. We are a musically driven community, and through song, we both honor our pain and affirm our hope.

This Purim, we will celebrate. Not because our grief has disappeared, but because our joy is an act of defiance. Our music, our voices, our unity—they are eternal. As we sing joyous songs for Purim, hear the chanting of the Megillah, and get wrapped up in a funny, charming spiel honoring Broadway classics, we remind ourselves that the Jewish spirit endures.

Chag Purim sameach, everyone!

▶ [Click here to watch the 3-minute Spiel](#)



Slowing Down with Gratitude

Rabbi Libby Fisher



As the winter turns toward spring, I often feel myself getting a bit impatient. The weather starts to warm, and I dust off my lighter clothing, just to wake up one morning to another huge snowfall. Flowers and leaves

promise to bloom – soon, but not yet. Though our calendar tells us that the first day of spring is March 20, it doesn't seem like nature gets the memo. But the wait is always worth it, I have to remind myself.

When we gear up for spring, we also gear up for another batch of Jewish holidays, beginning with *Purim* and *Pesach*, and concluding with *Shavuot* (with plenty of other important days in between). But tucked in amongst these many celebrations and commemorations, there is a lesser-known, lesser-understood Jewish ritual: *S'firat HaOmer*, the Counting of the Omer.

In case you haven't asked the question yet, I'll ask it for you. What the heck is an *omer* and how do we count it? An *omer* is a measurement of grain, and in the Torah, our ancestors were commanded to count the days between *Pesach* and *Shavuot*, a total of seven weeks. At the end of this time period, they were supposed to offer a sacrifice of wheat. Clearly, there is a deep connection between this religious practice and the agricultural seasons in Israel, but most of us aren't farmers who collect our own *omers* of grain. So what can we learn from this ancient practice?

For me, the ritual of Counting the Omer is a reminder to slow down. Good things take time. Just as the wheat took time to grow, harvest, and sacrifice, so too do we each deserve time to grow, to more deeply understand ourselves, and to offer our gifts to our community. So many of us live glued to our calendars, rushing to every meeting, every dance rehearsal, every gathering. If we keep our noses in our calendars and hurry through the world with heads down, we're liable to look up and realize we've missed the beauty of this season, and the beauty of our own evolution. So this year, let's slow down. Let's smell the flowers. And let's count our days with gratitude.

L'shalom,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Libby'.

An Important Message from Our Co-Presidents Andrew Levenson and Judy Sarch



Making Your Voice Heard in the World Zionist Congress Election

Every five years Jews around the world have the right and responsibility to vote in the World Zionist Congress (WZC) election. This pivotal election decides key policies that impact the Jewish people in Israel and in the Diaspora. It also influences the allocation of a \$1 billion annual budget, affecting essential programs and initiatives.

Why Your Vote Matters

By voting for the Vote Reform slate, you stand up for Reform Jewish values, including:

- **Taking a stand for a secure and democratic Israel**
- **Protecting the rights of your children and future generations** to be recognized as Jewish in Israel
 - a right that our ultra-orthodox opponents in this election are trying to take away
- **Championing Reform values** such as ensuring women's full rights (including leadership roles) and equal recognition for all Jewish denominations

Who Can Vote

You are eligible to vote if you:

- **Self-identify as Jewish**
- **Will be at least 18 years old by June 30, 2025**
- **Live in the United States**

How to Vote

Voting is quick and easy! There is a \$5 fee to cover the cost of the election. You can vote:

- **Online at www.ZionistElection.org**
- **Using paper ballots available at Kol Ami**

Learn More About ARZA and Reform Judaism

The Union of Reform Judaism (URJ) has an Israel arm called the Association of Reform Zionists of America (ARZA) that helps to build a connection between the American Reform community and Israel and to strengthen the Reform Movement within Israel. For more information, please visit **www.vote4reform.org**

Your Voice. Your Values. Your Vote.

American Jews have a voice in Israel's future. Your vote helps shape policies that reflect our values and vision. Make your voice heard!

Vote Reform (option #3 on the ballot) in the 2025 World Zionist Congress Election
Voting opens on March 10 and lasts through May 4, 2025

A Message from Our Nominating Committee Co-Chairs Hank Rouda & Judy Sarch



Dear Congregants:

It is our great honor and pleasure to provide you with the Report of the Nominating Committee with the slate of Officers and Trustees to be presented for a congregational vote at the Annual Meeting on May 13, 2025.

The Report reflects the Nominating Committee's continued endorsement of a Co-Presidency structure that pairs an experienced Co-President with a newly elected or less experienced Co-President. We believe that this structure best serves the interests of continuity of leadership and seamless transitions for the Congregation.

The proposed slate of Officers also reflects the Committee's work to position the Executive Committee with qualified and dedicated Officers this coming year as well as for years to come.

The Committee is delighted to nominate as Co-Presidents, Andrew Levenson and Gary Orentlicher, one of our current Vice Presidents. We believe that with Andrew and Gary, the Board of Trustees will once again be led by two proven effective, dedicated leaders who will support our community with intelligence, strength, stability, and great care.

We are grateful for the thoughtful work of the members of the Nominating Committee and for all the input and insight provided by our community during the nominating process. We hope you will join us on May 13 to elect the slate of Officers and Trustees.

L'shalom,

Hank Rouda & Judy Sarch

Nominating Committee Co-Chairs

CONGREGATION KOL AMI
**NOMINATIONS FOR 2025-26
ANNUAL MEETING**

Tuesday, May 13, 2025

Officers to be Elected

(For a one-year term expiring in 2026)

Co-President Andrew Levenson

Co-President Gary Orentlicher

Secretary Jared Stone

Treasurer David Seif

Vice President

(For a three-year term expiring in 2028)

Elana Araj

Continuing Officers

Vice Presidents

(Term expiring in 2027)

Kevin Rosenzweig

(Term expiring in 2026)

Charlene Bodner

Chief Legal Officer (Appointed)

Michael Zweig

New Trustees to be Elected

(For a three-year term expiring in 2028)

Petra Boykoff ▪ Abraham Man ▪ Mara Pilavsky ▪ Fern Schwartz ▪ Jess Wagner

Trustees to be Elected for an Additional Term

(For a three-year term expiring in 2028)

Amy Goldstein (1) ▪ Gary Orentlicher (2) ▪ Kevin Rosenzweig (1) ▪ Jared Stone (1)

Continuing Trustees

(Term expiring in 2027)

Sarah Akst (1) ▪ Jason Eisenberg (1) ▪ Suzanne Lasser (2)

Ellen Litt (1) ▪ Lauren Pollak (1) ▪ David Seif (3) ▪ Michael Welling (1)

(Term expiring in 2026)

Elana Araj (1) ▪ Rachael Arenstein (2) ▪ Charlene Bodner (2) ▪ Michael Elkin (3)

Helene Ginsburg (1) ▪ Andrew Levenson (4) ▪ Judy Sarch (2)

Retiring from the Board

Steve Brady ▪ Erik Klein ▪ Liz Mayeri

Nominating Committee

Hank Rouda, *Co-Chair*

Judy Sarch, *Co-Chair*

Robin Cohen ▪ Susan Davis ▪ Michael Elkin ▪ Barry Kraver

Matthew Lee-Renert ▪ Liz Mayeri ▪ Betsy McCormack

Note: The number next to a Trustee's name indicates the term on the Board that the Trustee is currently serving

Embracing Change: Finding Home In Life's Transitions

Jess Lorden, Executive Director

Lately, I've been thinking a lot about transitions. Change, even when it brings new opportunities, often carries a deep sense of nostalgia. At Kol Ami, we are in a period of transition, first welcoming Rabbi Fenster and now Rabbi Fisher, following many years of leadership by Rabbi Shira and Rabbi Tom. A temple, like a beloved home, holds generations of memories—echoes of prayer, learning, and connection. The arrival of new leadership is a shift, much like selling a family home—the closing of one chapter and the beginning of another.

I am also experiencing a deeply personal transition. My childhood home, where not only my brothers and I grew up, but also my mother and her sisters, is being sold after more than 80 years in our family. It's more than just a house; it has been an anchor, a gathering place, a living scrapbook of family stories. Its walls hold echoes of laughter, its floors the footprints of generations, and its kitchen the scent of cherished recipes. Letting go isn't just about moving on—it's about redefining what "home" truly means.

For many, a family home represents stability, a place to return to no matter where life takes them. Selling it can feel like saying goodbye to a piece of family history, stirring up emotions of grief, nostalgia, and even guilt. Yet, as with any major transition, there is also opportunity. A home's spirit isn't confined to its walls; it lives on in the memories and traditions carried forward. New owners will create their own stories, and our family will find new ways to stay connected, ensuring that what made the house special continues to shape us.

Likewise, our temple's transition is not an erasure of the past but an evolution. The wisdom and traditions of past clergy remain a foundation, even



The Essexes in their family home. (Top, from L-R: Joseph, Jess, Phil and Bottom from L-R: Johanna, Harold)

as new leadership brings fresh perspectives and energy. Just as a home gains new life with each family who inhabits it, our temple will continue to grow and thrive under new voices. In both cases, while the physical space remains, it is the people—their love, their faith, their commitment—who truly make a house, a home and a temple, a sacred community.

As we embrace these transitions, we carry forward the love, traditions, and lessons of the past, knowing that the future holds new opportunities to build, to grow, and to create lasting memories in the places we call home.

L'Shalom,

Jess

Lessons in Resilience: Reflections from Israel

Merav Veetal, Early Childhood Director



I was honored to be selected, alongside Gavi Young, ECP Jewish Curriculum Coordinator, to travel to Israel and represent Congregation Kol Ami as part of Mishlachot Areyvut / Delegations of Responsibility: Israel Trips for Educators. This special program was organized by the Jewish Education Project in partnership with UJA-Federation of New York.

I bore witness to the devastation of October 7th and its rippling aftermath, and the resiliency of the people whose lives have forever been altered. To capture the fullness of this experience in a few short paragraphs feels impossible, but I will share one moment from my trip that feels significant to share with the Kol Ami community (and beyond).

On the stormiest day of our trip, as the wind howled and the sky wept, we stood at Har Herzl, Israel's national cemetery in Jerusalem. After visiting graves of fallen soldiers we met with Liat Fridman, the mother of Staff Sgt. Shachar Fridman, 21, a member of the Paratroopers' Brigade 101st Battalion, who was killed in Gaza on November 19th. Liat invited us into her grief and her pride by showing us clips of Shachar's life. She spoke of his writings he kept during his time in Gaza, where he had written an ethical will—a testament to the kind of world he dreamed of.

Be Good People

Smile.

Strive to make every person you meet smile too.

Be open to criticism and always seek to better yourself.

Know that the greatest gift a person can offer is the ability to bring joy to another.

Listen deeply to the needs of others, and see their pain with open eyes.

Even when it is difficult, find reasons to smile.

Notice the small, unseen people—the ones who fade into the corners of our vision.

Appreciate the little wonders the world offers—especially nature and music.

And above all, be good people in your own way.

Do not let society define what goodness means; instead, strive with all your might.

And even when you fall, know that the road to greatness is paved with failure.

Love yourself, love the world.

When you radiate joy, you will slowly create a circle of light—one that has the power to make the world a better place.

(Translation courtesy of the family.)



Staff Sgt. Shachar Fridman with his parents

His words should serve as an inspiration to us all.

L'Shalom,

Merav

March Madness Meets Merriment: Scoring Big on Purim Fun!

Joele Levenson, Young Family Ambassador



March isn't just about brackets and basketball—it's about March Merriment at Kol Ami! This month is packed with joy, celebration, and plenty of hamantaschen as we come together for Purim and meaningful moments together.

We kicked off the month with a multigenerational hamantaschen bake led by Past President Susan Arovas, where families of all ages rolled, filled, and folded their way to delicious Purim treats. Some were classic, others wildly creative, and all made with love.

And the Purim fun is just getting started! On **March 13**, our **Purim Carnival** bursts to life with costumes, games, inflatables, crafts, magic, and—of course—more hamantaschen! No Purim celebration would be complete without the **West Side Shpilkes**, where the story of Esther takes center stage through music, skits, and plenty of laughter.

But Purim isn't just about celebration, it's also a time for giving back. Throughout the month, children from toddlers to teens will participate in meaningful mitzvah projects, baking sweet treats, making soup jars for the Kol Ami Food Pantry, and creating activity bags for children at the Ossining Children's Center.

We'll wrap up this festive month with a **Shabbat Sing-a-long** on **March 29** featuring our scholar-in-residence, Noah Aronson—one of the coolest and most exciting Jewish songwriters around! Noah's energy is contagious, and he'll lead us in a super fun morning of music, singing, and dancing. His hit song *Let There Be Love* will fill the room, as families come together to celebrate Shabbat in the most joyous way possible.

March at Kol Ami is brimming with opportunities to celebrate, connect, and give back. We can't wait to share these special moments with you!



Recent Religious School Happenings

Joy, Laughter, and Memorable Moments from Every Age and Stage!

Our littlest ones sharing smiles and special moments with Rabbi Fisher at our Kindergarten/1st Grade/ First Taste Shabbat



Teeing off for a good cause! Our Religious School kids enjoyed a hole-in-one experience at the indoor mini golf fundraiser, where the entire building became an 18-hole adventure.



Our 4th graders captivated us with their performance at *Havdallah Hispanica*, showcasing what they learned about Sephardic Jews and their traditions.

Recent Religious School Happenings

Learning, Leading, and Giving Back—Our 7th & 8th Graders in Action!



Lending a hand at Tot Shabbat on Saturday mornings, spreading joy and connection to our youngest participants.

An 8th grader immerses themselves in history, using VR headsets as part of our Holocaust curriculum to deepen understanding and bring the past to life.



Creating snowmen out of chocolate bars and gloves during our monthly Mitzvah Morning



Our 7th and 8th graders whipping up chicken soup and kneidlach (matzah balls) —learning the flavors of tradition!

Tzedek, Tzedek Tirdof: Justice, Justice, You Shall Pursue

Melissa Cohen, Director of Youth Engagement



Tzedek, tzedek tirdof—“Justice, justice, you shall pursue.” This call to action from Deuteronomy is at the heart of my Jewish identity, and it's been inspiring to see our Kol Ami teens embrace that same passion.

Over the past few months, they've taken meaningful steps to bring justice into their lives. In December, our high schoolers paired up with our older congregants to fry latkes and create holiday cards for patients at White Plains Hospital. In January, our teens packed sandwiches for Grassroots Grocery to help those in need. These intergenerational mitzvah projects remind us that justice is built through small, intentional acts of kindness.

Building on that momentum, our teens took their commitment to justice to Washington, D.C., for the L'Taken Social Justice Seminar, where they joined Reform Jewish teens from across the country for a weekend of learning and advocacy. The trip culminated in our students delivering impassioned presentations on

Capitol Hill to Senator Schumer's senior staff and Representative George Latimer. They spoke up for economic justice, a higher minimum wage, the release of hostages, and a cease-fire in the region. Their preparation and commitment were remarkable, and they later shared these powerful speeches at Shabbat services, bringing their activism back to our own community.

As we move into spring, our commitment to *tzedek* continues. Our junior youth group will prepare soup jar donations for the Kol Ami Food Pantry, and at the end of March, I will be joining Rabbi Fisher and our 9th graders on a journey to the South, where we will learn about the civil rights movement and the ongoing fight for racial justice in America.

Our tradition teaches that even in times of uncertainty, we are never powerless. I'm incredibly proud of our Kol Ami teens, who embody this lesson through their open hearts and determined spirits, showing us what it means to pursue justice through action.

L'shalom,

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



We Point To With Pride

Kol HaKavod to **Millie Schwartz** and **Zoe Kofman** on being named Kumi Foundation participants by Moving Traditions! Their selection for this highly competitive program is a testament to their passion, leadership, and commitment to fighting injustice. Through this experience, they will deepen their understanding of racism, antisemitism, and oppression while developing the skills to create meaningful change. We are so proud of Millie and Zoe for using their voices to make a difference, and we can't wait to see the impact they will have!



Sara Elkin's unwavering dedication and visionary leadership have transformed the Kol Ami Pantry into a vital lifeline for those facing food insecurity across Westchester. What began as a small initiative has flourished under her guidance, expanding to provide not only non-perishable food but also fresh produce, clothing, and essential home goods. With compassion and determination, Sara has forged partnerships, secured critical grants, and implemented sustainable growth strategies to ensure that the pantry meets the ever-growing needs of the community. Her tireless efforts have touched countless lives, embodying the very best of Kol Ami's values. It is with great pride that we celebrate Sara as she receives the Julian Y. Bernstein Distinguished Service Award from the Westchester Jewish Council on Tuesday, May 6, at Temple Israel Center.



A Labor of Love: Our Pantry Volunteers Working Hard To Make Difference

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."



Ruby Gershon, daughter of Jeff and Bena Gershon, will be called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah on March 1, 2025. Ruby is in 7th grade at the Hackley School. She enjoys playing soccer and basketball for her middle school teams. She has attended Camp Sabra for the past five years in the Ozarks of Missouri. Ruby is excited to celebrate her special day with family and friends.



Ella Kaplan, daughter of Shari and Jared Kaplan and sister of Addison Kaplan, will be called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah on March 8, 2025. A 7th grader at Edgemont Junior High School, Ella is an avid athlete who loves playing soccer, basketball, and lacrosse. She is also the ultimate camper and has spent the past four summers at her home away from home, Camp Chipinaw. For her mitzvah project, Ella is partnering with Game Changers New York to organize a sports equipment drive. Game Changers collects and distributes gently used sports equipment to children and organizations in need, helping to make athletics more accessible for all. Ella is excited to celebrate this special milestone with family and friends.



Riley Meadow Rosenberg, daughter of Andrea and Jordan Rosenberg, will be called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah on March 8, 2025. A 7th grader at Highlands Middle School in White Plains, Riley, excels in all of her classes with a specific love for reading and writing. Music is Riley's true passion. She plays violin, sings in the select choir at her school, and is in her upcoming school production of Newsies Jr. Riley spends her summers at Pinemere Camp in the Poconos. Her summers there have provided her with meaningful experiences, amazing friends, and memories to last a lifetime. For Riley's mitzvah project, she chose to support the #PaulieStrong foundation. Not only did she hold multiple bake sales which raised a substantial amount of money for pediatric cancer research, but she also ran a Lego set collection drive. These Lego sets will be given to pediatric cancer patients at MSK to give them something fun to do while having treatments. Riley has worked very hard and is excited to celebrate this special moment with her family and friends. She knows this is only the start of a lifetime of Jewish connection and Chesed.

B'nai Mitzvah



Jeremy Lee, son of Trudy and Chris Lee, will be called to the Torah as a Bar Mitzvah on March 15, 2025. Jeremy loves playing sports, going to camp, and spending time with his family and friends. For Jeremy's mitzvah project he has been volunteering at Paws Crossed Animal Rescue working with cats and he would like to start assisting with the care for dogs as well. Jeremy is excited and looking forward to his upcoming Torah reading and celebration with his family and friends.



Laura Craig, daughter of Vicki Phillips and Andrew Craig, will become a Bat Mitzvah on Saturday March 29, 2025. Laura is an enthusiastic student with a love of learning. She plays field hockey, has played clarinet for years in the school band, and enjoys spending time with her friends and large family. Laura is an avid reader, and also enjoys outdoor play, time with her dog Rocky, and attending camp in Maine. Laura is a wonderful cook and is preparing and serving food for families of patients at the Ronald McDonald House as her mitzvah project. She has also helped make soup for the Kol Ami community, volunteered as a Madricha in Religious School classrooms, helped to move and repurpose furniture for families in need, and helped to distribute food to families in the Bronx. Her family is so proud of her and can't wait to celebrate with her on her big day.



Jack Cohen, son of Meredith and Victor Cohen, will become a Bar Mitzvah on April 5, 2025. He is also the proud younger brother of Hannah and Nathaniel. Jack is an avid athlete who loves playing sports and is a dedicated member of his Bulldogs baseball team and the Edgemont Hoops basketball team. He also enjoys the competition of playing tennis and lacrosse. Summers are especially meaningful to him, as he spends them at Camp Lenox and on Fire Island—his favorite place. For his mitzvah project, Jack took the lead in a Sunday mitzvah initiative with the Kol Ami community, creating 100 hamsas and cards for the Israeli Defense Forces while also raising awareness of ways to support Israel during this turbulent time. He is excited to celebrate his Bar Mitzvah and is deeply grateful to Pam Pass for helping him prepare and to his friends and family for their love and support.

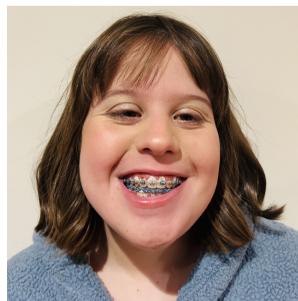
B'nai Mitzvah



Conor Dunn, son of Beth Blank and Jim Dunn, will be called to the Torah as a Bar Mitzvah on April 5, 2025. He is a 6th grader at Ardsley Middle School, where he is known for his smile and dedication to academics. Conor is an excellent swimmer, who enjoys playing basketball, baseball, and studying MMA. He is an avid fan of the Yankees, Knicks, Giants, and Rangers and loves attending games. For his mitzvah project, Conor helps his dad coach special needs basketball in the Challenger League, working with autistic children, which is personally meaningful to him as he is autistic himself. Despite his challenges, Conor has shown that a great attitude, hard work, and dedication can lead to overcoming most obstacles in life. He looks forward to celebrating his special day with friends and family.



Ariel Ende, daughter of Sara Elias and Kevin Ende, and sister to Chase and Cayla Ende, will be called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah on April 5, 2025. Ari is in 7th grade at Louis M. Klein Middle School in Harrison, NY. She enjoys playing softball with her travel team, the Bombers, as well as the Little League. Ari hopes to make the middle school softball team this spring. Ari loves sleepaway camp and has become very close friends with the girls in her bunk at Watitoh. Sleep away camp is even more special for Ari since she attends with both her brother and sister. For her mitzvah project, Ari created an Etsy store called Ari's Sports Bracelets, which has been highly successful in raising money for ovarian cancer research at Memorial Sloan Kettering. Ari is looking forward to becoming a Bat Mitzvah and celebrating with her friends and family.



Ellie Shifrin, daughter of Cori Shifrin and Peter Shifrin, will be called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah on April 26, 2025. Ellie is in 7th grade at the Highlands Middle School in White Plains. She enjoys horseback riding and swim lessons on the weekends, browsing at Target and Five Below, and spending quiet moments at home, playing on her iPad and phone. Ellie has spent her summers at various sleepaway camps but will hopefully find her new home at Round Lake at Cedar Lake Camp this summer. For her mitzvah project, Ellie has an interest in donating to NY Pet Rescue, in honor of our family dog, who we lost many years ago. We are still working on the finishing touches for her project. To learn more, or to donate in her honor, please visit NY Pet Rescue.

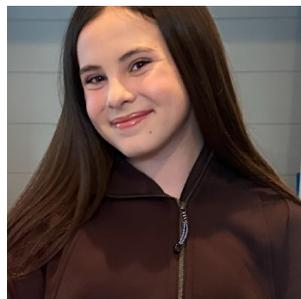
B'nai Mitzvah



Kaleb Bergman, son of Rebecca and Michael Bergman, grandchild of Joyce and Alan Goldman and Shirley Bergman, will be called to the Torah on May 3, 2025. Kaleb is in 7th grade at Highlands Middle School in White Plains. He is an avid baseball player and for his mitzvah project he will be sharing his love of the game by volunteering with the Miracle League of Westchester. He will help differently abled children play baseball. Over the past several summers Kaleb has furthered his Jewish identity and connection to the State of Israel by attending summer camp at Young Judea Sprout Lake Camp. This summer he will go to Washington D.C. with camp and lobby for the State of Israel. Kaleb looks forward to celebrating his Bar Mitzvah with friends and family at Kol Ami.



Spencer Boykoff, son of Petra and Lee Boykoff and brother to Kira Boykoff, will be called to the Torah as a Bar Mitzvah on May 3, 2025. Spencer is a 7th grader at Edgemont Junior/Senior High School. He loves playing soccer with his team, the Edgemont Dynamo, and enjoys music, playing the trumpet in both his school's band and jazz band. He also has a passion for theater, recently acting and singing as Shrek in a production of Shrek with Random Farms. During the summer, Spencer attends Camp Poyntelle in Pennsylvania, where he has made lasting memories. In his free time, he enjoys playing video games and biking around the neighborhood with his friends. For his mitzvah project, Spencer has combined his love of dogs with community service at Paws Crossed Animal Shelter, where he helps by walking and playing with dogs awaiting adoption. Spencer is excited to become a Bar Mitzvah and looks forward to celebrating with family and friends.



Isabelle Gudis, daughter of Charlotte and David Gudis and big sister of Ellie, will be called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah on May 10, 2025. Izzie is a 7th grader at the Hackley School in Tarrytown, and she brings joy and enthusiasm to everything in her life. She loves to dance, sing, hang out with her friends, and spend time with her family. For her mitzvah project, Izzie is supporting an organization called My Sisters' Place, which supports women and children who are victims of abuse. Izzie is looking forward to celebrating her special day with her family and friends.

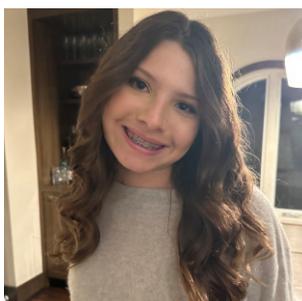
B'nai Mitzvah



Juliet and Anna Towle, daughters of Sarah Hochman and Edward Towle, will be called to the Torah as B'not Mitzvah on May 10, 2025. Anna and Juliet are in the 7th grade at Highlands Middle School in White Plains. Both girls love playing basketball with their school team, the Kol Ami team, and their travel team, the Atlantic Sharks. Juliet plays the trumpet and runs the 200 meters for the Westchester Wolves Track club. She enjoys the outdoors and is excited to return to Camp Eisner this summer. Anna plays percussion in the middle school band and is a great hiker, having climbed mountains over 14,000 feet in Colorado. Anna also loves spending time with friends from Eisner and from school.



Lilly Spitalnick, daughter of Carey and Jared Spitalnick will be called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah on May 17, 2025. Lilly is in 7th grade at Edgemont Junior/Senior High School. She enjoys playing lacrosse and field hockey on her school teams. She loves spending her summers at sleepaway camp at Camp Starlight in Pennsylvania where she has spent the last four summers. For her mitzvah project Lilly will be working on a fundraiser and food drive for a local food pantry addressing food insecurity in our community. She is looking forward to celebrating her Bat Mitzvah in May with her brother Teddy, her parents, extended family and friends.



Jordan Berg, daughter of Heather and Mike Berg, and sister to Zach and Ethan Berg, will be called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah on May 17, 2025. Jordan is in 7th grade at the Louis M. Klein Middle School in Harrison. She enjoys being a member of student council and is looking forward to joining the track team this spring. Jordan loves spending her summers at Camp Wayne in Preston Park, PA. For her mitzvah project, Jordan volunteered for Guiding Eyes for the Blind where she helped with the home socialization program of puppies training to be future guide dogs. She worked with two puppies, Barbie and Ana, to provide socialization and reinforce training.

Meet the New Faces of Our Kol Ami Family

We're thrilled to introduce the newest members who've joined our Kol Ami family this year. As our community grows, we invite you to dive in and get to know these wonderful new faces. Whether it's during worship, at a community event, or simply in a casual chat, there are so many opportunities to connect, share, and build lasting relationships. Take a moment to read their stories, get to know their families and together, may we continue to make Kol Ami a place where everyone feels at home.

Alison Boykoff

Hello everyone! I am Alison Boykoff, lucky mom and mother-in-law to Lee and Petra Boykoff and Pamela Boykoff and Jeff Ting. I am also the proud Grandma Ali to Spencer and Kira Boykoff and their new puppy Millie. I spent my childhood in Rockville Centre, Long Island and moved to Mt. Kisco in 1978. I am a retired art educator, and I am currently volunteering as an ESL tutor for a student in Ukraine. I enjoy art, music, theater, film, really anything creative. And I often read the last page of a new book before I begin! My grandkids are rapidly approaching their Bnai Mitzvahs, and I joined Kol Ami to feel more connected to their Jewish lives.



Sandy and Marc Belsky

We relocated from San Francisco to Rye Brook last May to be near our three sons, daughter-in-laws and our seven grandchildren. We are originally from suburban Detroit and lived briefly in Melbourne, Australia. Sandy is an experienced Mah Jongg player. Marc is an executive at a San Francisco based biotech company, currently working remotely. One of our granddaughters attends Kol Ami's Early Childhood program. We attended an outdoor Shabbat service last summer with her and her parents. We enjoyed the service and attended a few more afterwards. We were drawn to Kol Ami by the multitude of activities and friendliness of the congregation and look forward to being active members.

WEEKLY WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Friday Kabbalat Shabbat Service 6:15PM

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

Saturday Morning Torah Study and Shabbat Service 9:30AM

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

Online: [Click here.](#)

Meeting ID: 964 7214 2409

Passcode: 709665

Dial In: (929) 436-2866

Weekly Torah Portions

MARCH 2025

Week ending March 1

*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 they are motivated.

Week ending March 8

*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.

Week ending March 15

*Parashat Ki Tisa
Exodus 30:11–34:35*

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

Week ending March 22

*Parashat Vayak'heil
Exodus 35:1–38:20*

Moses reminds the people that God commanded them to keep Shabbat,

not to do work on the seventh day and to make the day holy. Parashat Vayak'heil continues with Moses asking the Israelites to donate materials for the building of the Mishkan (sanctuary).

Week ending March 29

*Parashat P'kudei
Exodus 38:21–40:38*

P'kudei is the last parashah in the book of Exodus. Moses describes the specifications for the building of the Mishkan (sanctuary) for God. Every article needed, every attribute of the structure, every manner of work, and every detail for the altar is specified. As the building of the sanctuary and its holy objects are completed, Moses blesses all of the people who took part in its creation.

APRIL 2025

Week ending April 5

*Parashat Vayikra
Leviticus 1:1–5:26*

We begin the third book of the Torah (Vayikra – Leviticus) with a description of five types of sacrifices offered in the Temple. They are: burnt offering, meal offering, sacrifice of well-being, sin offering, and guilt offering. While the burnt offering, meal offering, and sacrifice of well-being are voluntary, the sin offering and guilt offering are mandatory for guilty individuals. One remnant of these practices is the importance of our intentions when we enter into prayer.

Week ending April 12

*Parashat Tzav
Leviticus 6:1–8:36*

Tzav, the second parashah in the book of Leviticus, continues with the regulations for sacrifices and then outlines the ritual of priestly ordination for Aaron and his sons. Limitations on the consumption of meat are given, and the preparation of the Tabernacle as a holy place is given.

Weekly Torah Portions

Week ending April 19
Yom Sh'vi-i shel Pesach
(from Parashat B'shalach)
Exodus 14:30 – 15:21

On this seventh day of Pesach, we read, "Thus the Eternal delivered Israel that day from the Egyptians." Shirat haYam (the Song of the Sea) follows, an expression of faith and recognition of God as protector and warrior, just after the Israelites have crossed the Sea of Reeds. Miriam then leads the women in song and in dance.

Week ending April 26
Parashat Sh'mini
Leviticus 9:1–11:47

We return to the book of Leviticus. Sh'mini refers to the eighth (sh'mini) day of the ordination ritual. The priestly ordination of Aaron and his sons is described. Two of Aaron's sons, Nadav and Avihu, offer "alien fire" to God on their own initiative and are immediately consumed by fire. Moses, Aaron, and his surviving sons are forbidden to mourn their deaths. The parashah also stipulates the dietary laws concerning which animals are fit and which are unfit for consumption, and concludes with a rationale for being holy and distinguishing between the impure and the pure.

MAY 2025

Week ending May 3
Parashat Tazria - M'tzora
Leviticus 12:1-15:33

In this double parashah, Tazria begins with a discussion of defilement and purification following childbirth and continues with a discussion of tzara-at, which denotes a variety of skin rashes and blemishes. M'tzora continues the discussion of the laws pertaining to 'uncleaness' that was begun in Tazria. M'tzora contains

descriptions of forms of 'uncleaness' which are thought to refer to various molds or mildews that could discolor surfaces of fabric or stone, and the laws concerning the purification of clothing and houses.

Week ending May 10
Parashat Achearei Mot - K'doshim
Leviticus 16:1-20:27

In this double parashah, God speaks to Moses after the death of Aaron's two sons, who were killed for coming too close to the presence of God. This parashah also delineates the duties that the head kohein (priest) must perform on Yom Kippur, as well as the laws for fasting and atonement. The taboos for certain sexual practices are outlined in detail in this chapter. K'doshim (holiness) continues with the practical and interpersonal applications of holiness. God explains to Moses what it means to be a "holy" people and describes the many ethical and ritual laws aimed to help people live lives of holiness. The laws described include some of those recorded in the Ten Commandments, such as respecting one's parents, keeping the Sabbath, and not stealing.

Week ending May 17
Parashat Emor
Leviticus 21:1-24:23

Emor provides details about the lives of the priests and their families. The Israelites are commanded to bring clear olive oil for lighting the sanctuary menorah, and the ingredients and placement of the displayed loaves of sanctuary bread are explained to them. This parashah also includes the most comprehensive holiday calendar in the Torah.

Week ending May 24
Parashat B'har - B'chukotai
Leviticus 25:1-27:34

In this double parashah, B'har presents a vision of a society guided by God-given principles of freedom, dignity, and concern for the vulnerable. It includes laws regulating the sabbatical year (every seventh year), giving the earth rest, and the jubilee year (every 50 years), when land and vineyards must not be worked. It also grants liberty to all Israelites enslaved during the previous forty-nine years.

Leviticus concludes with B'chukotai (also called Parashat HaToch'chah—the portion of reproach), which lists curses so severe that they are traditionally chanted quickly and in a hushed tone. These curses follow 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) It also briefly discusses payment of vows and gifts made to the sanctuary.

Week ending May 31
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.



Installation of
RABBI LIBBY FISHER
as Associate Rabbi
of
Congregation Kol Ami
March 7-9, 2025 (8-9 Adar 5785)

With great joy and anticipation, we invite you to celebrate
Rabbi Libby Fisher's installation as our Associate Rabbi
and a weekend filled with community, connection, and celebration.

Friday, March 7th
6:15pm
**Kabbalat Shabbat
and Installation Service**
We will be joined
by special guest,
Rabbi Andy Koren
from Temple Emanuel
in Greensboro,
North Carolina
Festive oneg to follow

Saturday, March 8th
9:30am
**Morning Torah Study
and Shabbat Service**
Torah study will be
led by special guest,
Rabbi Karen Thomashow
from Temple Isaiah in
Lexington, Massachusetts
Shabbat luncheon to follow

Sunday, March 9th
8:15am
**Celebratory
Pancake Breakfast
with Religious School
and ECP Families**



CALENDAR

MARCH

Mar 7

Kabbalat Shabbat & Installation Service for Rabbi Libby Fisher

6:15PM

Join us for a heartfelt and joyful Kabbalat Shabbat service as we celebrate the installation of our new Associate Rabbi, Libby Fisher. This special evening is filled with music, prayer, and community spirit. Afterward, let's keep the celebration going with a lively, expansive oneg—an opportunity to connect, share, and revel in the beginning of an exciting new chapter for Kol Ami.

Mar 8

Shabbat Morning Service & Luncheon in Honor of Rabbi Fisher

9:30AM-1:30PM

The festivities continue with a meaningful morning of Torah study and Shabbat worship, led by Rabbi Karen Thomashow, a beloved colleague and mentor to Rabbi Libby Fisher. Afterward, enjoy a festive luncheon and continue the celebration of Rabbi Fisher's installation with good food and great company.

Mar 9

Religious School & ECP Pancake Breakfast

8:15AM

Rise and shine with us for a delicious pancake breakfast before Religious School! We're celebrating Rabbi Libby Fisher's installation with a sweet start to the day, complete with all your favorite toppings. Our clergy will lead a special school-wide tefila, keeping the joy of this wonderful weekend alive. With daylight savings giving us an extra reason to spring forward, wear your PJs and join us for a fun, spirited, and scrumptious morning together.

Mar 12

NYC Lunch & Learn

12:00PM

Join Rabbi Fenster for a meaningful midday break filled with food, friendship, and lively conversation. Hosted by congregant Elana Araj in her Manhattan office, this catered lunch offers a chance to explore meaningful texts that resonate with our daily lives. No prior Jewish learning required—just bring your curiosity and appetite for connection.

RSVP here.

Mar 13

Purim Carnival

4:00PM

Get ready for an afternoon full of fun and excitement at our Purim Carnival! Come in your best costumes and enjoy a day packed with carnival games, crafts, inflatables, a magic show, and plenty of pizza and hamantaschen to keep you fueled. The fun doesn't stop

there—stick around for the hilarious *West Side Shpilkes* Purim Spiel afterward, where the story of Esther comes to life through music, skits and laughter. Come for the carnival, stay for the Spiel!

RSVP here.

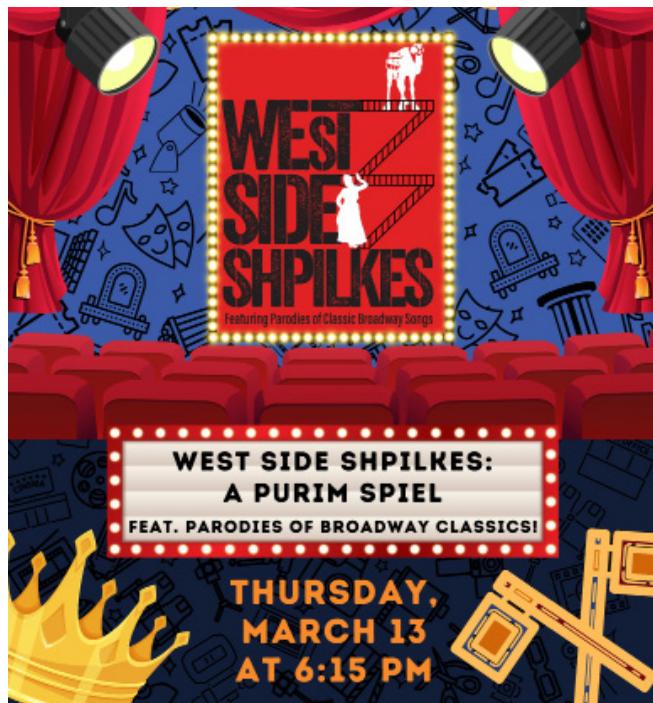
Mar 13

West Side Shpilkes Purim Spiel

6:15PM

Join us for the *West Side Shpilkes* Purim Spiel—a hilariously creative take on the story of Esther, featuring parodies of classic Broadway hits. It's a night of laughter, music, and fun, so come in your best costume and be part of the action. Don't forget to bring a box of pasta to use as a grogger during the show and donate it to our food pantry afterward. This is one Purim celebration you won't want to miss!

RSVP here for planning purposes.



CALENDAR

Mar 14 **Purim Luncheon** **12:00PM**

Join us for a festive Purim Luncheon filled with delicious food, great conversation, and the warmth of your Kol Ami family and friends. It's the perfect way to cap off our Purim festivities and keep the joy of the holiday flowing. Don't miss this wonderful opportunity to connect, laugh, and celebrate together!

RSVP here.

Mar 14 **Kabbalat Shabbat** **with Special Guest** **Rabbi Josh Weinberg** **6:15PM**

Join us for a special Kabbalat Shabbat Service with guest speaker Rabbi Josh Weinberg of ARZA. Rabbi Weinberg will share his insights during the service and be available for further conversation during our oneg.

Mar 18 **Women's Oasis: A Learning** **and Gathering Series** **7:00PM**

Join us for the first session of Women's Oasis, a three-part series led by Rabbi Fisher, where we'll explore life's deepest questions through the lens of Jewish wisdom. Using Lights in the Forest, an anthology of thought-provoking essays, we'll reflect on purpose, commitment, and the Jewish perspective on God, humanity, and our people. Come learn, share, and connect in a warm and welcoming space designed for meaningful conversation and community.

Register here.

Mar 27 **Men's Council** **Whiskey Tasting** **7:30PM**

Join us for an exquisite whiskey tasting experience! Delight your senses with a curated selection of 5 single malt and Israeli whiskies expertly guided by a professional. Savor each sip while enjoying sandwiches and take home a souvenir glass to commemorate the evening. Don't miss this opportunity to make new friends and elevate your whiskey appreciation. Cheers to a memorable night ahead!

RSVP here.

Mar 28 **Noah Aronson** **Synaplex Shabbat** **6:15PM Kabbalat Shabbat;** **7:15PM Dinner; 8:00PM** **Guest Concert Performance**

Join us for a spectacular Synaplex Shabbat! Our evening begins with a musically rich Kabbalat Shabbat service that will uplift your spirit and set the tone for a truly special night. Following services, join us for Shabbat dinner, where connections are made and joy is shared. Then, be swept away by a special performance from Noah Aronson, one of the most talented and acclaimed Jewish singer-songwriters today. This will be an evening of powerful music, meaningful connections, and a celebration of community you won't want to miss!

RSVP here.

Mar 29 **Young Family Shabbat** **Sing-a-long with** **Noah Aronson** **9:00AM**

Join us for a fun-filled Shabbat Sing-a-long with the incredible Noah Aronson! With Kol Ami favorites like Let There Be Love, Noah's dynamic energy will have kids of all ages, singing, clapping, and dancing from start to finish, creating an atmosphere brimming with Shabbat joy and celebration.

RSVP here.

Mar 29 **Shir Ami Havdalah with** **Noah Aronson** **7:30PM**

Join us for a truly special evening as Noah Aronson wraps up his weekend as Scholar in Residence at Kol Ami with a Shir Ami sing-a-long and beautiful Havdalah service. Noah's dynamic energy and musical talent will be on full display as he brings our community together in song, celebration, and joy. We'll close the evening with Havdalah, transitioning from Shabbat to the week ahead with reflection, light, and warmth of community. A dessert oneg reception will follow.

APRIL

Apr 2 **Rosh Chodesh Breakfast** **9:00AM**

Rosh Chodesh is a time for renewal, reflection, and connection—perfect for embracing new possibilities and deepening our spiritual ties. Enjoy a delicious breakfast while sharing meaningful insights, strengthening community bonds, and finding inspiration for the month ahead.

RSVP here.

CALENDAR

Apr 8 **Women's Oasis: A Learning and Gathering Series** **7:00PM**

Join us for the second session of Women's Oasis, a three-part series led by Rabbi Fisher, where we'll explore life's deepest questions through the lens of Jewish wisdom. Using Lights in the Forest, an anthology of thought-provoking essays, we'll reflect on purpose, commitment, and the Jewish perspective on God, humanity, and our people. Come learn, share, and connect in a warm and welcoming space designed for meaningful conversation and community.

Apr 9 **Sisterhood Passover Macaroon Bake** **7:00PM**

Start your Passover preparations with joy and creativity at our multigenerational Macaroon Bake led by Past President Susan Arovas. Whether you're a seasoned baker or new to the kitchen, Susan will guide us through making delicious, melt-in-your-mouth macaroons that will be the highlight of your Seder. Bring your whole family and share in the sweetness of tradition, laughter, and community.

Register here.

Apr 10 **NYC Lunch & Learn** **12:00PM**

Join Rabbi Fisher for a meaningful midday break filled with food, friendship, and lively conversation. Hosted by congregant Michael Zweig in his Manhattan office, this catered lunch offers a chance to explore meaningful texts that

resonate with our daily lives. No prior Jewish learning required—just bring your curiosity and appetite for connection.

RSVP here.

Apr 12 **Passover First Seder Night**

Apr 13

Community Second Seder
5:00pm

Join us as we gather for an uplifting, multigenerational Community Second Seder, open to both our beloved congregants and the broader Westchester community. This is more than just a meal—it's a joyful celebration of freedom, tradition, and the power of community. Guided by Rabbi Fenster, we will reflect on the story of Passover, enjoy a festive and delicious meal, and create meaningful connections with new friends and old.

RSVP here.

Apr 14-18 **Temple Offices and Buildings Closed in Observance of Passover**

Apr 19 **Passover Yizkor Service and Pizza Oneg**

6:15PM

Join us for a heartfelt Passover Yizkor Service, a meaningful moment to remember and honor our loved ones. After the service, stick around for a fun and delicious Pizza Oneg. After a week of matzah, it's time to enjoy some chewy, doughy pizza. For those who are not quite ready to "breakfast," matzah pizza will be available too!

RSVP here for planning purposes.

May 2 **Sisterhood Challah Bake** **12:00PM**

Join us for another chance to bake with Past President Susan Arovas, this time in her home. Gather with friends, old and new, as we mix, braid, and bake delicious challah together. Whether you're a seasoned baker or trying your hand at challah for the first time, this is a wonderful opportunity to learn, share stories, and connect in a warm and intimate space. Come for the baking, stay for the connections, and leave with freshly baked challah and a full heart.

RSVP here.

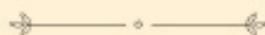
May 8 **Comedy À La Modi: A Gala Evening of Laughter with Modi Rosenfeld** **7:00PM**

Get ready for a night of laughter, community, and celebration at Comedy À La Modi! The evening kicks off with savory bites and signature drinks by Caperberry Events, setting the perfect tone for a fantastic night. Then, Raise Your Paddle, Raise the Bar as we come together to support Kol Ami's vibrant programs and spaces. The laughter begins with our very own Scott Musoff, warming up the mic before the legendary Modi Rosenfeld takes the stage, delivering his signature wit and side-splitting comedy. We'll end on a sweet note with delicious ice cream treats—because great company and great comedy deserve a cherry on top!

RSVP here to lock in your ticket before prices go up on April 24.



Community Passover Seder



Sharing our histories,
traditions, and
community on the
second night of
Passover,
Sunday,
April 13, 2025
5 PM

RSVP BY
MARCH 24!

CONGREGATION KOL AMI

presents

COMEDY À LA MODI

A Gala Evening of Laughter
with Modi Rosenfeld

May 8, 2025
7:00 pm



[CLICK HERE TO PURCHASE TICKETS
& SPONSORSHIPS](#)

CALENDAR

May 13
Congregational Annual Meeting
7:00PM

Be a part of this important moment for our Kol Ami community as we gather for our Annual Meeting. Together, we will vote in new trustees and leadership, express our gratitude to those retiring from the Board, and reflect on the past year's accomplishments.

May 20
Kol Ami Golf & Mah Jongg Outing at Westchester Hills Golf Club

Swing, shuffle, and support Kol Ami at our 4th Annual Golf & Mahjong Fundraiser! Hit the

greens for a competitive round of golf or test your skills in a lively Mah Jongg showdown. Enjoy a fun-filled day of play, friendly competition, and a delicious grill lunch with drinks. Don't miss this chance to connect, compete, and give back! Registration information to follow.

May 29
Women's Oasis: A Learning and Gathering Series
7:00PM

Join us for the final session of Women's Oasis, a three-part series led by Rabbi Fisher, where we'll explore life's deepest questions through the lens of Jewish wisdom.

Using Lights in the Forest, an anthology of thought-provoking essays, we'll reflect on purpose, commitment, and the Jewish perspective on God, humanity, and our people. Come learn, share, and connect in a warm and welcoming space designed for meaningful conversation and community.

Take a moment to send our 2025 Confirmands a greeting and extend your blessings for reaching this milestone in their Jewish journeys. [Click here](#) to send a digital greeting and join us for our Shavuot service on June 1, at 7:00PM.

2025 Confirmands:

[Dafna Arenstein](#) • [Lucy Eisenberg](#)

[Jonah Glazman](#) • [Natalie Goldban](#)

[Samantha Goldban](#) • [Teddy Kroin](#)

[Miles Levenson](#) • [Charlotte Papir](#)

[Max Towle](#)

LIFE CYCLES*

CONGRATULATIONS

To Jill and Zef Abraham
on the engagement
of their daughter
*Danielle Abraham,
to Ben Halperin*



To Barbara and Stan Selbst
on the engagement
of their granddaughter
*Danielle Abraham
to Ben Halperin*



To Alyssa and Aldous Advincula
on the birth of their son
Arthur Bennett Advicula



To Michael
and Rebecca Bergman
on the passing of
Michael's grandmother
Rose Kirszenzweig



To Pam Millian
and Gary Orentlicher
on the birth of
Gary's great-nephew
Aviv Ochoa



To Myrna Barzelatto
on the engagement of her
granddaughter
*Marisa Barzelatto
to Tyler Natelli*



To Lisa and Mathias Bostrom
on the engagement of
their daughter
Lauren Bostrom to Jack Hogerty



To Susanna Waksberg
on the birth of her daughter
Florence Kine Diagne



To Lauren Binder and Adir Yolcut
on the birth of their daughter
Nili Irene Yolcut

To Jaclyn Steinbach
and Rob Chay
on the birth of their twin boys,
Brody and Jacob Chay



To Genna Farley Fleming
and Matt Fleming
on the birth of their daughter
Laina Tess Fleming



To Ronnie Cohn
on the birth of
her granddaughter
Laina Tess Fleming



To Rich Farley
on the birth of
his granddaughter
Laina Tess Fleming

CONDOLENCES

To Greg Leeds
on the passing of his wife
Pegi Goodman



To Hank and Jean Rouda
on the passing of Hank's cousin
Rob Menschel



To Michael, Rebecca
and Kaleb Bergman
on the passing of
Michael's grandmother
and Kaleb's great-grandmother
Rose Kirszenzweig



To Noreen Linn and Nick Nesi
on the passing of
Noreen's mother,
Frances Linn



To Michael and Aimee Florin
on the passing of
Michael's father
Alan Florin

To Bill Fischer
on the passing of his mother
Sadelle Fischer



To Carmel Mena
our Israeli Shinshinim emissary
on the passing of her father
Moshe Mena



To Jonathan Comisar
our Kol Echad
Adult Choir Director
on the passing of his father
Arthur Comisar



To Stephanie and Andrew Falk
on the passing of
Stephanie's mother
Phyllis Sherman



To Wendy Zimmermann
and Stephen Cutler
on the passing of
Wendy's mother
Sarita Kogan Zimmermann



To Dana Sherman
and Richard Novitch
on the passing of
Dana's mother
Dorothy Sherman



To Mitch and Virla Ginsberg
on the passing of
Mitch's father
Carl Ginsberg

IN MEMORIAM

Pegi Goodman

Elaine Libman

Marjorie Bruckman

Shirley Schechter

Faith Saunders

Anita Fassler

Richard Siegler

*As of February 24, 2025

DONATIONS*

CLERGY'S DISCRETIONARY FUNDS

RABBI JASON FENSTER

In appreciation
from Scott and Judith
Schiemberg

In memory of
her partner, Harold Rose
from Ellen Sarna

In honor of
our son Max's Bar Mitzvah
from Liz and Todd Ilberg

In appreciation
from Lisa Borowitz

In memory of
Laurie's father, Arthur Offenber
from Laurie and Ron Cole

In appreciation
for delivering the 23rd Psalm
at his wife, Judy's, funeral
from Harvey Wacht

In appreciation
from Myra Oltsik

In appreciation
from Lauren Pollak

In memory of
Mike's father, Alan Florin
from Mike and Aimee Florin

In memory of
his mother, Faith Saunders
from Robert and Deborah Barrer

In honor of
their grandson Auggie's
baby naming
from Jess and Dave Lorden

In memory of
his wife, Phyllis Sherman
from Elliott Sherman

In appreciation of
the Lunch and Learn
from Jeff Gelfand

In appreciation of
the Lunch and Learn
from Laurie and Howell Wechsler

In memory of
Stephanie's mom, Phyllis
Sherman
from Stephanie and Andrew Falk

RABBI LIBBY FISHER:

In memory of
her husband, Alan Lerner
from Beth Green

In honor of
their son Andrew's Bar Mitzvah
from Danielle and Adam Gecht

In appreciation
from Susan Rudnick

In appreciation
from Myra Oltsik

In appreciation
from Lisa Borowitz

In appreciation
from Ellen Sarna

In honor of
Rabbi Fisher's installation
from Rabbi Tom Weiner

In honor of
Rabbi Fisher's installation
from Heather and Paul Benson

In honor of
Rabbi Fisher's installation
from Tammie Geier

In honor of
Rabbi Fisher's installation
from Nadia and Bob Bernstein

In honor of
Rabbi Fisher's installation
from Andrea and Mark Seiden

CANTOR DANNY MENDELSON

In memory of
her husband, Alan Lerner
from Beth Green

In honor of
our son Max's Bar Mitzvah
from Liz and Todd Ilberg

In appreciation
from Scott and
Judith Schiemberg

In honor of
our son Andrew's Bar Mitzvah
from Danielle and Adam Gecht

In appreciation
from Lisa Borowitz

In memory of
Laurie's father, Arthur Offenber
from Laurie and Ron Cole

In appreciation
from Harvey Wacht

In appreciation
from Myra Oltsik

In memory of
Anita Fassler
from Harriet Bemjamin

In appreciation
from Xan Weiser

ANNUAL FUND

In appreciation of
Lisa Borowitz and Andrew
Sommers for the shiva service
they led for Harold Rose
from Ellen Sarna

In appreciation of
Alison Adler and the warmth of
the Kol Ami community
from Rabbi Neeva Brenner

In honor of
our son Cole Sisitsky becoming
a Bar Mitzvah
from Aviva and Peter Sisitsky

In loving memory of
Sarita Hart
from Bill Hart

In loving memory of
our son, David Ross
from Betsy & Tom McCormack

In loving memory of
Marilyn Kroin
from Michelle & David Kroin

*As of February 24, 2025

DONATIONS*

ECP FUND

In honor of
the birth of Auggie Carey,
grandson of
Lauri and David Carey
from Janet & Mark Hershey
and family

FOOD PANTRY

In honor of
Benjamin Fenster's 7th Birthday
from Juliana, Jared & Ezra Stone

In appreciation
from Barbara Shore

In honor of
Ellie Stern's 5th birthday
from Rabbi Jason Fenster,
Gavi Young & Henry Fenster

In appreciation
from Jacqueline Seaberg
& Benjamin Abrams

KOL AMI FUND

In honor of
Elana Araj's 40th birthday
from Dana Russo

In appreciation of
Jess Lorden
from Robin Cohen

In honor of
Cori Mazin's Bat Mitzvah
from the Welling family

In loving memory
of Elaine Libman
from Linda Ellis

In loving memory
of Elaine Libman
from Karen & David Cole

In loving memory of
Elaine Libman
from Ellen & Jon Litt

In loving memory of
Elaine Libman
from Susan Fuirst

In loving memory of
Shirley Greenblatt
from the Altman, Gottfried
& Rozin families

In loving memory of
Elaine Libman
from Sharon & Irving Picard

In loving memory of
Rosalyn Kornfeld
from Judy and Mat Gluckson

In loving memory of
Phyllis Sherman
mother of Stephanie Falk
from Ellen & Jon Litt

In loving memory
of Phyllis Sherman
from Dorothy Litt

KOL AMI CARES FUND

In loving memory of
Harry Pressman
from Mimi & Kurt Pressman

In loving memory of
Phyllis Sherman
from Alan & Judy Zucker

SHIRA MILGROM FUND FOR JEWISH LIFE

In loving memory of
Shimmy Greenblatt
from the Altman, Gottfried,
& Rozin families

SOCIAL ACTION FUND

In loving memory of
Harold Rose
partner of Ellen Sarna
from Marian Steinberg



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 February 24, 2025