

CONNECTIONS

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2025 Tevet/Shevat 5785

www.kolaminj.org



THE RABBI TEACHES

By Rabbi Jennifer Frenkel

As I write this article, the Torah portion for the week just happens to be *Vayishlach*, the portion where Jacob prepares to meet his twin brother Esau after years of separation. Back when they were younger, Jacob had tricked Esau out of the family birthright and their father's dying blessing, and Jacob

left home right afterwards, when Esau threatened to kill him in a fit of anger.

In the years that have passed, both brothers have established lives for themselves. The night before the brothers are to meet again, Jacob sends his family ahead, and he is left alone. Torah tells us that during the night Jacob wrestles with an *ish*, an unnamed figure (possibly human, possibly divine), and at the end of their wrestling match, that mysterious figure blesses Jacob and changes his name to *Yisrael* (Israel), which means: "One who wrestles with God."

As *B'nai Yisrael* (the Children of Israel), we, ourselves, inherit that name. This is a sacred reminder that Judaism is not about easy answers or finding certainty, but about wrestling with our questions and our faith (at times), striving to understand what God wants (or requires) of us, seeking and searching to find meaning and holiness in our lives, wrestling with doubts, and striving to figure out how we can each bring more goodness and godliness into our world.

As *B'nai Yisrael* we are taught to appreciate complexity and nuance, and to never stop learning.

This winter, we will be hosting an important lecture series on **The History of the Modern State of Israel and The Arab-Israeli Conflict: From Its Origins to the Present**. This 5-session series will run on **Sunday mornings (January 12, January 26, February 9, February 23, March 2)**, from **9:30-11:00 am**, on **Zoom only**.

Our featured lecturer will be Dr. David Mendelsson, educator, historian, author, and senior lecturer in Israel Studies and Modern Jewish History at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Jerusalem and senior lecturer at Hebrew University's Rothberg International School. Dr. Mendelsson has also served as Scholar-in-Residence at universities throughout the United States.

(continued; see "Rabbi Teaches" on page 3)

KOL AMI Many Voices. One Community.

COMEDY Night

JANUARY 18, 2025
7:30 PM

\$55 GENERAL ADMISSION
Includes refreshments, and one drink ticket.

\$100 PATRON
Includes preferred seating, cocktail party (6:15 pm), and a meet & greet with the comedians.

COMEDIAN :
OPHIRA EISENBERG

COMEDIAN :
DAN NATURMAN

Scan or Click Here to RSVP

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FROM OUR LEADERSHIP

Steve Weichert, Executive Vice President

As we turn the page to yet another new year, it gives us all an opportunity to make new resolutions or revisit old ones. Personally, I resolved to return to

my gym having been absent since my bout with Covid ended months ago. Daily exercise, eating healthier, and visiting my parents in Florida more frequently are admirable resolutions. The new year also allows me time to pause and reflect on the gratitude I have for all of the good things happening my life. I am most thankful for my immediate family. I have a loving, caring wife, Michelle, three beautiful children, Jacob (28), Jessica (25), and Joseph (21), as well as two rescue dogs. Jacob is engaged and will be married next year, yet another reason to get back to the gym for all of the family wedding photos!

I am truly thankful for our clergy. Each one, in their own way, provides us with spiritual guidance and wisdom to help us navigate through the difficult world in which we live. I especially enjoy our Shabbat services. I am grateful for the teachings and insights gleaned from our rabbis' sermons and singing with our talented cantors, especially when joined by our amazing Koleinu choir. It goes without saying that I am also grateful for the chocolate chip cookies at the oneg!

Being a member of our Executive Committee and Board of Trustees, I have much to be thankful for. It is a privilege to work alongside some of the brightest, creative people who devote their time and effort to help ensure that Kol Ami continues to be a warm, inviting and financially stable place to be. I feel great personal satisfaction collaborating with fellow lay leaders, clergy, office professionals and our congregants to develop and shape our programming and create new policies to support our growing congregation. The future of Congregation Kol Ami is truly bright, and for this I have tremendous gratitude!

FROM THE EDITOR

Marlene Dworkin

What I am Grateful For

Every year the editor of *SJ Magazine* talks about the things she is grateful for and I enjoy reading that article. This is the sincerest form of flattery, since I am absolutely imitating Marianne Aleardi, that magazine's president and publisher. Here is my list of 18 things I am grateful for, in no particular order.



1. Four distinct seasons – There is nothing like the change of seasons; in summer I love the fall. In the winter, I can't wait for spring.
2. Chocolate – who isn't grateful for chocolate?
3. Migraine medication
4. Petite clothing – It's so much better than it used to be
5. My son Joel's sobriety – This is what woke me up to gratitude
6. Peanut M&M's – The best candy
7. My relationship with my sister
8. Musical theatre
9. Wonderful in-laws
10. My health
11. All I learned from my mother
12. Grandchildren – "The only thing in the world that is not underrated!" – according to my sister, and she is so right!
13. The gift that is my daughter, Casey
14. Air conditioning
15. Diet Coke – it's running through my veins
16. Indoor plumbing
17. Community
18. My amazing, funny, kind, understanding, patient, cute husband

My list is almost exactly divided in half between people and inanimate objects, which was not intentional. Obviously, if you don't have your health, it is hard to appreciate the little things in life. As I told my children, choose wisely for a partner and that I did! It yielded me the wonderful in-laws and incredible kids I am blessed with. I was also lucky to be born into my family of origin. Growing up life was hard financially, but it helped to shape me. My mother was an incredible role model, filled with so much common sense. She was an independent woman, a supportive partner, and loving, nurturing mother and grandmother.

I did not grow up with air conditioning (or a dish washer – life was hard financially, remember) but now that I have lived my entire married life (42 years) with it, when our air conditioner died this summer – doesn't it always die in the summer? – we had to find somewhere cool to stay until it could be fixed. I really also appreciate electricity!

Musical theatre brings me such joy! I love going to shows in NY, Philadelphia, and local South Jersey productions. My car radio is usually tuned to the Broadway channel, and I have amazing sing-alongs by myself!

I've written about community before but it bears repeating that I am grateful to be part of this wonderful, loving, accepting community we call Kol Ami.



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with Rabbi Milan Polisar

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about Jewish spirituality, values,
and community.

All are welcome, Jewish or not!

February 3
February 10
February 17
7:00-8:30 pm

For more information please contact Ruth Scott, Director of Community Engagement
at Congregation Kol Ami, 856-857-6380 or Ruth@kolaminj.org

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ReformJudaism.org
Jewish Life in Your Life

Supported by the National Center to Encourage Judaism,
which funds programs that welcome people new to Judaism.

THE RABBI TEACHES

(continued from page 1)

This series is free for Kol Ami members (\$50 for non-members). Registration through our website (www.kolaminj.org) is required to receive the Zoom link.

First Session: Zionism: Ideology and Historical Context (January 12)

This class will examine the emergence of Zionism in the 19th century amidst an historical context of antisemitism, the crisis of Judaism in the modern period, and the historic relationship of Jews to the Land of Israel. The class will address the claims regarding Zionism as a form of colonialism.

Second Session: From Zionist Idea to Jewish Statehood (January 26)

This class will study the political developments concerning Palestine/Israel from the collapse of the Ottoman Empire at the end of the First World War until the United Nations General Assembly vote on the partition of Palestine in 1947. It will discuss the emergence of the Arab-Israel conflict and discuss the relationship of the Holocaust to the creation of the state.

Third Session: 1948-1973 (February 9)

In this class we will discuss Israel's War of Independence and the emergence of the Palestinian refugee problem. We will examine the causes and outcomes of the 1967 war that led to Israel's capture of East Jerusalem, the West Bank, the Golan Heights, the Gaza strip and the Sinai desert. We shall also discuss the major issues surrounding the Yom Kippur War and its aftermath.

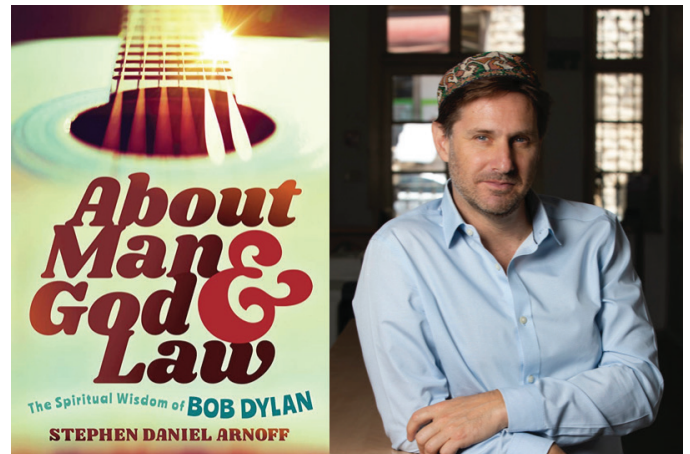
Fourth Session: Peace and War (February 23)

We will look at the Egypt-Israel peace treaty, discuss the first Lebanon War and explain the factors that led to further efforts at peace making, particularly the Oslo process. The ensuing Second Intifada will also be discussed.

Fifth Session: The Tunnel Vision of Military Campaigns and War (March 2)

The final class will look at Israel's confrontations with Hezbollah in the north and Hamas in the south. What is the wider context in which these confrontations take place? Is there any reason for optimism?

I hope you will join us for this series. As a student of Dr. Mendelsson's during my time studying in Israel, I look forward to the opportunity for all of us at Kol Ami to learn from him and engage in, and wrestle with, these complex issues and questions. Each session will leave time for a question and answer period with Dr. Mendelsson.



KNOCKIN' ON HEAVEN'S DOOR: BOB DYLAN'S SPIRITUAL VISION

An evening of Bob Dylan music and musings with Dr. Stephen Daniel Arnoff and Kol Ami's Unplugged Band led by Bob Bross
Sunday, February 23 at 6:30 pm

These are challenging times, and they truly are a-changin'. Come gather 'round people wherever you roam, for inspiration and connection through the music and spiritual wisdom of Nobel Prize-winning poet and Jewish-American singer-songwriter Bob Dylan.

Doors open at 6:30 pm for a tasting of Bob Dylan's signature "Heaven's Door" whiskey, bourbon, and rye. Lecture and performance: 7:00 pm. Book sales and signing to follow.

Dr. Stephen Daniel Arnoff has lectured and taught about religion and popular culture around the world. He currently serves as CEO of the Fuchsberg Jerusalem Center, and has been a creative thought leader at major Jewish communal institutions for the past 25 years. His book *About Man and Law: The Spiritual Wisdom of Bob Dylan* (2022) illuminates the intersection of rock and roll and religion, offering both the casual and the committed listener a new gospel of popular culture through the lens of Dylan's prophetic ideas and spiritual wisdom.

\$10 per person. Adults only (21+). Please register online at www.kolaminj.org.

This musical evening is sponsored by the Music Committee, Men's Club and Adult Education Committee of Congregation Kol Ami.

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Mazal Tov to...

Jacob Austin

on completing his journey of *Geirut*
(converting to Judaism)

Rebecca & William Davis

on the naming of their son,
Benjamin Archer Davis

Judy & Dick Kresloff

on the naming of their granddaughter,
Kaia Cygielman

Alexandra & Philip Langan

on the birth of their son, Levi

Rachel & Joseph Merlino

on the naming of their daughter,
Lexi Merlino

Rabbi Milan-Polisar & Jason Quint

on their wedding

Debbie & Don Mitchell

on the naming of their grandson,
Benjamin Archer Davis

Faith Chonofsky & Robert Powell

on the naming of their granddaughter,
Lexi Merlino

Renée & Howard Siegel

on the birth of their grandson,
Elliot Jacob Callahan

We Mourn...

Marc Bennett

brother of Larry (Melissa) Bennett

Alan Feldscher

brother of Barry (Sharla) Feldscher

Dr. Arthur Greene

Rebecca Kleidermacher

mother of Tracy (Harris) Goldberg
grandmother of Sam Goldberg

Marjorie Krell

mother of Sallie Brown (David Newman)

Marshall Kresman

husband of Jane Kresman

Myrna Levin

sister of Lynne (Edward) Cohen

Coleman Pont

husband of Arlene Pont

Dr. Morris Rossman

father of Jessica (Todd) Sautter

Cynthia (Tzippy) Rubin

mother of Robin Rubin
grandmother of Dillon Miller

Susan Singer

mother of Rachel (Michael) Hahn

Abe Werber

cousin of Norman (Lynne) Rednik

Philip Wolf

husband of Gail Wolf

Lists are inclusive from the last issue of Connections through December 13, 2024.


Spiritual Practices for 2025
Led by
Rabbi Milan-Polisar



Wednesdays
January 8, 15 & 22
10:30-11:45 am

KOL AMI Many Voices. One Community.
Free for members. \$10/session for non-members.
Register: www.kolaminj.org

LGBTQIA+
Torah Study



KOL AMI Many Voices. One Community.

Pride in Torah – a monthly LGBTQIA+ discussion series.

Jan 5 9:30 am
Feb 14 5:30 pm
Mar 2 9:30 am
Apr 8 7:00 pm
May 13 7:00 pm

Free to Kol Ami members.
Suggested \$18 donation for non-members.
Register: www.kolaminj.org



The Rosh Chodesh Experience
A SERIES FOR WOMEN CELEBRATING
THE BEGINNING OF THE NEW JEWISH MONTH



7:00-9:00 PM
FEBRUARY 2
MARCH 3

KOL AMI Many Voices. One Community.
REGISTER TO ATTEND AT WWW.KOLAMINJ.ORG
*MUST BE 21+ AND A MEMBER OF KOL AMI TO ATTEND.

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Upcoming Events

To register, or for more information on these and other programs, visit:
www.kolaminj.org/events

JANUARY

Winter Break – Offices & Schools closed
December 24 through January 1.

Men's Club Lunches

Wednesdays, January 1 & 15, 12:30 pm
(Off-site; contact allanpep@yahoo.com.)

Yiddish Shmooze Group

Thursdays, January 2 & 16,
10:30 am (Zoom)

First Thursdays:

LGBTQIA+ Aging with PRIDE
Thursday, January 2, 7:30 pm (Hybrid)

First Friday

Friday, January 3, 6:15 pm
Enjoy pre-service refreshments.

Shabbat Evening Service

Friday, January 3, 7:00 pm
We celebrate January anniversaries.

Torah Study

Saturdays, January 4, 11, 18 & 25,
9:00 am (Zoom only)

Spice Up Your Judaism

Saturdays, January 4, 11, 18 & 25,
10:15 am (Zoom only)

Shabbat Morning Service

Saturday, January 4, 10:30 am
Bar Mitzvah of Jonah Goldberg

Kulanu: LGBTQIA+ Torah Study

Sunday, January 5, 9:30 am

Talmud Talks

Led by Rabbi Lewis John Eron, Ph.D.
Tuesdays, January 7, 14, 21 & 28,
11:30 am (Zoom)

Spiritual Practices for 2025

Three Wednesdays, January 8, 15 & 22,
10:30 am (Hybrid)

Tot Shabbat

Friday, January 10
5:15 pm Tot Family Dinner
6:00 pm Tot Shabbat Service

Shabbat Evening Service

Friday, January 10, 7:00 pm

Shabbat Morning Service

Saturday, January 11, 10:30 am
Bar Mitzvah of Lucas Hymerling

The History of the Modern State of Israel & the Arab-Israeli Conflict

Presented by Dr. David Mendelsson
Sunday, January 12, 9:30 am
Zionism: Ideology & Historical Context
Sunday, January 26, 9:30 am
From Zionist Idea to Jewish Statehood
(See details on page 1, "The Rabbi Teaches.")

Club K'ton: Snow Much Fun

Science (Grades K-2)
Sunday, January 12, 11:30 am

Monthly Mussar Moments

Led by Rabbi Ariel Milan-Polisar
Monday, January 13, 12:00 pm (Zoom)

Sisterhood Bunco

Monday, January 13, 7:00 pm

Board of Trustees Meeting

Wednesday, January 15, 7:30 pm

Shabbat Evening Service

Friday, January 17, 7:00 pm
Koleinu choir joins us to celebrate MLK.

Comedy Night

Saturday, January 18, 7:30 pm

MLK Mitzvah Day

Monday, January 20, 10:00 am
See details on page 7.

Shabbat Evening Service

Friday, January 24, 7:00 pm
We celebrate January birthdays.

Grade 5 Shabbaton

Saturday, January 25, 5:30 pm

Men's Club Brunch

Sunday, January 26, 9:30 am

Club Noar: Mad Science (Grades 3-5)

Sunday, January 26, 11:30 am

Meandering Through Midrash

Three Wednesday, January 29 and
February 5 & 12, 10:30 am (Zoom)

Boomers Lunch: Avenue Diner

Thursday, January 30, 12:30 pm (Off-site)

Shabbat Mishpacha (Family)

Service: Grade 3 Shabbat
Friday, January 31, 7:00 pm
We celebrate our third graders.

FEBRUARY

Torah Study

Saturdays, February 1, 8, 15 & 22,
9:00 am (Zoom only)

Spice Up Your Judaism

Saturdays, February 1, 15 & 22,
10:15 am (Zoom only)

Shabbat Morning Service

Saturday, February 1, 10:30 am
Bar Mitzvah of Eli Adelman

The Rosh Chodesh Experience

Led by Rabbi Ariel Milan-Polisar
Sunday, February 2, 2:00 pm

A Taste of Judaism

Led by Rabbi Ariel Milan-Polisar
Mondays, February 3, 10 & 17, 7:00 pm
All are welcome, Jewish or not!

Talmud Talks

Led by Rabbi Lewis John Eron, Ph.D.
Tuesdays, February 4, 11, 18 & 25,
11:30 am (Zoom)

Men's Club Lunches

Wednesdays, February 5 & 19, 12:30 pm
(Off-site; contact allanpep@yahoo.com.)

Yiddish Shmooze Group

Thursdays, February 6 & 20,
10:30 am (Zoom)

First Thursdays:

**Grandir Ailleurs
(Growing Up Elsewhere)**
Presented by Dr. Brien Brothman
Thursday, February 6, 7:30 pm (Hybrid)

First Friday

Friday, February 7, 6:15 pm
Enjoy pre-service refreshments.

Upcoming Events

To register, or for more information on these and other programs, visit:

www.kolaminj.org/events

Shabbat Evening Service

Friday, February 7, 7:00 pm

We celebrate February anniversaries.

Shabbat Machshava

Saturday, February 8, 10:15 am

KAFTY Sr. Event (Grades 9-12)

Saturday, February 8, 6:00 pm

The History of the Modern State of Israel & the Arab-Israeli Conflict

Presented by Dr. David Mendelsson

Sunday, February 9, 9:30 am

1948-1973

Sunday, February 23, 9:30 am

Peace and War

Sisterhood/Women & Spirituality: Happiness and Joy

Sunday, February 23, 10:00 am

Kol Kehillah:

Voice of the Community

Sunday, February 9, 11:00 am

Boomers Book Club:

A Gentleman in Moscow

Sunday, February 9, 7:00 pm

(tentative)

Monthly Mussar Moments

Led by Rabbi Ariel Milan-Polisar

Monday, February 10, 12:00 pm (Zoom)

A Journey into Jewish Food

Led by Rabbi Ariel Milan-Polisar

Three Wednesdays, February 12,

March 12 & April 9, 6:00 pm

Space is limited!

Kulanu: LGBTQIA+ Torah Study & Shabbat Dinner

Friday, February 14, 5:30 pm

Shabbat Evening Service

Friday, February 14, 7:00 pm

Shabbat Morning Service

Saturday, February 15, 10:30 am

Bar Mitzvah of Eli Poulos

Shabbat Havdalah Service

Saturday, February 15, 5:45 pm

Bar Mitzvah of Max Riviello

Board of Trustees Meeting

Wednesday, February 19, 7:30 pm

Shabbat Evening Service

Friday, February 21, 7:00 pm

KAFTY Jr. Event (Grades 6-8)

Sunday, February 23, 7:00 pm

Knockin' on Heaven's Door: Bob Dylan's Spiritual Vision

with Dr. Stephen Daniel Arnoff

Sunday, February 23, 6:30 pm

See details on page 3.

Shabbat Mishpacha (Family) Service: Grade 6 Shabbat

Friday, February 28, 7:00 pm

We celebrate our sixth graders and

December birthdays.



BOOMERS SOCIAL GROUP

By Lynn Branfman & Judy Lubetkin, Co-chairs

Kol Ami is not only our spiritual home, but it is a great place for our social selves. That is something we are all so grateful for.

The Boomers Social Group has hosted many events already this year, and more are planned. We feel such gratitude when we plan events with the creative Boomers. It's wonderful to experience our unique activities, and to get to know additional friendly members of Kol Ami.

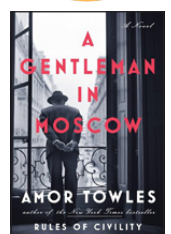
There are also terrific benefits of getting the chance to spread our wings even further by visiting new places, trying new activities, expanding our learning, and networking with different people. Join us in 2025 and spread your wings with us!

In January, Karen Ginsburg is planning another great lunch at the Avenue Diner in Berlin on **January 28**. Watch the Kol Ami calendar and your email for more details.

Our next book discussion group, tentatively scheduled for **February 9** at 7:00 pm (Zoom), will feature Amor Towles' *A Gentleman in Moscow*.

Save the date for our Boomers Social Group Shabbat on **April 2**.

Everyone is welcome regardless of the date on your birth certificate! Please join us, no matter when your birthday takes place.



CONGREGATION KOL AMI **MLK 2025**

JOIN US!

MITZVAH DAY

MONDAY **JANUARY 20** 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM



Honor the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. by giving back to our community during our Day of Service.

- **Cookie making** for Gift of Life off-site at Trinity Presbyterian Church in Cherry Hill. We will join efforts in support of this project.
- **Clean up** South Jersey community parks (transport by bus)
- **Make custom journals** for Samaritan House
- **Write cards & make bracelets** for Israeli soldiers
- **Decorate Tzedakah boxes** & collect coins to support nature in Israel
- **Food drive** for JFCS
- **Peanut butter & jelly sandwich making** for Cathedral Kitchen
- AND MORE!

Families & individuals of all ages are invited to join us as we partner with these wonderful local organizations to help those in need.

For more information and to participate: WWW.KOLAMINJ.ORG

SOCIAL ACTION

The Kol Ami Social Action Committee has much to report about our congregants' many (continuing) acts of *tikkun olam*...

Thank you to the Social Action Caring Community Committee for its successful collections and efforts. Thanks to David Korngruen who supervised the synagogue's High Holy Day Food Drive and collection of turkeys, food and other items for the JFCS Food Bank. Jane Bloom and Sarah Zalcmann have continued the tradition of the Caring Community's knitting of Caring Caps and Blankets of Hope as support for congregants experiencing health issues.

Kol Ami's refugee assistance efforts have included support for families from Haiti, Ukraine and Afghanistan. This support includes assisting with immigration fees, rent, finding jobs, purchasing cars, and other essential needs.

Special thanks to the many volunteers who have made substantial contributions to improve the lives of refugee families, including Jaimee Friedman, Michele Zeldner, David Olinsky, Alan Braslow, Dan Gottlieb, Joan Kaczmariski, Sheila Goodman and so many others. The Refugee Assistance Fund has received substantial financial support from Gail and Dick Donner and the Walker Family Fund, and the Diane and Arnold Ross Foundation. Special thanks also to David and Alison Snyder for their donation of a car and to Jane Bloom for her donation of furniture and other items (filling three box trucks) that helped a dozen families recently arrived from Ukraine.

Describing Kol Ami as "a steadfast and unwavering beacon of light and hope" in its support of refugees, **HIAS (the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society) bestowed its highest congregational honor, the Pathways Trailblazer Award, to Kol Ami**, one of only seventeen synagogues in the United States to receive this honor.

Mark your calendars to join us on **March 7**, as Kol Ami will participate in **HIAS Refugee Awareness Shabbat**, when we will hear from the refugee families supported by our congregation and a representative of HIAS who will report on the status of immigration and deportation of refugees.

FEBRUARY IS JDAIM

By Adam Roth, Inclusion Coordinator

הִנֵּה מַה טוֹב וְיָמָּה נְעִים לְשֶׁבֶת אַחִים גַּם יַחַד
Hinei ma tov u'ma na'im shevet achim gam yachad
"Behold how good and pleasant it is when all people live together as one" [Psalm 133]

During the month of February, we celebrate Jewish Disability Awareness, Acceptance, and Inclusion Month (JDAIM). JDAIM is a special time to reflect on the rich diversity within our Jewish community. It reminds us that everyone, regardless of their abilities, deserves to feel valued, respected, and connected to our shared heritage. By fostering an environment where individuals with disabilities can fully participate, we are living up to the highest ideals of Judaism.

I am grateful for the efforts of our clergy, staff, congregational leadership, and members who work tirelessly to make our congregation accessible and inclusive. Our congregation's commitment to creating a place where everyone feels at home is truly inspiring. Let us continue to strive for a world where all individuals with disabilities can thrive. May we always be mindful of the unique challenges faced by those with disabilities and work together to create a more just and compassionate society.

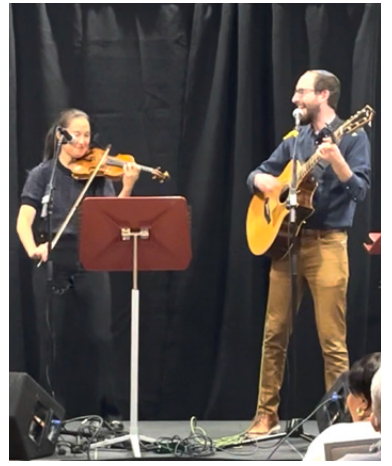
Please join us on Sunday, February 9 for a celebration of Judaism with Kol Kehillah at 11:00 am in the Social Hall. If you're interested in joining the Kol Ami Inclusion Committee, please contact AdamRoth@kolaminj.org.



Kol Kehillah Voice of the Community
Join us for
A Celebration of Judaism
February 9, 11:00 am
Our Shabbat programs are open to the community and inclusive of all.

CONGREGATION **KOL AMI** Many Voices, One Community. **JDAIM** FEBRUARY Jewish Disability Awareness, Acceptance & Inclusion Month

Sponsored by the Warren & Doris Elias Special Needs Endowment Fund at Congregation Kol Ami. For information, please visit www.kolaminj.org



Artist-in-Residence... Rabbi Josh Warshawsky joined us December 6-8 for a delightful weekend filled with music and togetherness.



Holiday Gift Bazaar... Sisterhood hosted another booming shopping day in November, as our social hall showroom saw many new & familiar vendors.

Blessing of the Pets...
Our furry family members were honored with a blessing in early November. The program coincided with the Torah portion highlighting Noah's Ark.



Giving Thanks... Congregants generously prepared for the Thanksgiving holiday by packing meals with collected frozen turkey and food donations.





Bowling Night... In their "spare" time, congregants enjoyed a fun-filled November night at Laurel Lanes.



Chanukah, Oh Chanukah... Our ECC and Religious School held celebrations to welcome the Festival of Light.



"Hay" There!... It was a fabulous family night at Indian Acres Tree Farm for October's annual hayride.

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January/February B'NAI MITZVAH



Jonah Goldberg

January 4

*Son of Rajita & David Goldberg
Sister: Bela*

My name is Jonah Goldberg, and I'm a 7th grader at Henry C. Beck Middle School. I love coding, playing guitar, and spending time with my friends through video games and soccer. Math is one of my hobbies, and

even though it's a subject at school, I enjoy learning it on my own. I love learning French both at school and on my own. I'm also really passionate about chess – so much so that a friend and I created the Chess Club at our school! My family means a lot to me; my parents are David and Rajita Goldberg, and I have a sister named Bela. For my Bar Mitzvah project, I volunteered with Dorot GENUINE Connections, where I played games and discussed myths with the elderly. Becoming a Bar Mitzvah is meaningful to me because it represents taking on more responsibility and showing maturity as I grow.



Lucas Hymerling

January 11

*Son of Danielle & Mark Hymerling
Siblings: Leah & Logan*

My name is Lucas Hymerling and I am a 7th grader at Carusi Middle School. I love playing the trumpet and video games. For my Bar Mitzvah project, I raised money to purchase a pediatric beach wheelchair for

Sea Isle City. This allows children with disabilities to enjoy the beach and the ocean. Becoming a Bar Mitzvah means that I have taken another step in becoming an adult, embracing traditions and vowing to carry them forward through my life.



Eli Adelman

February 1

*Son of Briana Greenberg & Craig Adelman
Brother: Micah*

My name is Eli Matan Adelman and I am a 7th grader at Voorhees Middle School. I enjoy boxing, krav maga, reading, playing video games, going to the gym and hanging out with friends. For my Bar Mitzvah

project, I'm writing about my great-grandparents who survived the Holocaust. I think becoming a Bar Mitzvah is a commitment to Judaism and learning about and honoring my Jewish background.



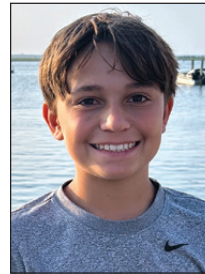
Eli Poulos

February 15

*Son of Jennifer Beebe Poulos & Daniel Poulos
Sister: Sophia*

My name is Eli Poulos and I am a 7th grader at Collingswood Middle School. I enjoy wheelie and mountain biking with friends, content creating on YouTube, playing football, playing piano, drums, guitar,

listening to music, and building computers. For my Mitzvah project, I am volunteering with students at an inner city Philadelphia Public School and organizing an intergenerational kindness program. I feel it's important to connect young and old, and making cards and messages of kindness to send nursing home residents is one of the ways I chose to spread kindness! Becoming a Bar Mitzvah to me means becoming an adult and confirming my belief in God and Judaism. I look forward to taking on new challenges and embracing my Judaism as I embark on life's journey!



Max Riviello

February 15

*Son of Stephanie & John Riviello
Sister: Sadie*

My name is Max Riviello and I am a 7th grader at Voorhees Middle School. I love playing sports and rooting for my favorite Philly sports teams. Soccer is my favorite sport, but I also play basketball, baseball,

flag football, and chess. After school, you can find me playing sports outside with my neighbors. During my Bar Mitzvah year, I volunteered to help children with special needs play baseball. I also raised money for the Israel ParaSport Center, a sports center in Israel for children and adults with disabilities. Ever since the war in Israel started, I wanted to do something to help people in Israel. The money I raised and donated to the Israel ParaSport Center will help the organization to purchase special equipment, provide transportation, purchase uniforms, and help to rebuild Israel. Becoming a Bar Mitzvah means that I am becoming more mature and that I will feel more connected to Judaism.

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

The youth groups are having a wonderful time! Club K'ton and Club Noar enjoyed playing dreidel and eating latkes at their Chanukah events. It was wonderful seeing the kids having so much fun playing all the games and activities! Kafty Jr. & Sr. had an excellent time at Dave & Buster's. They were able to play video games with each other, in person! The teens also just enjoyed spending time with each other.



Looking forward to our next events: **January 12:** Club K'ton (Grades K-2) Snow Much Fun Science **February 8:** Kafty Sr. (Grades 9-12)
January 26: Club Noar (Grades 3-5) Mad Science **February 28:** Kafty Jr. (Grades 6-8)

For more information, please contact: Youth@kolaminj.org (Club K'ton & Club Noar) or Teens@kolaminj.org (KAFTY Jr. & Sr.).



RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

Sheri Greenblatt

Director of Education

This past November, we headed back to the movie theaters to see Part 1 of *Wicked*. Although the movie touches on so many important social issues, the main characters in the movie provide a blueprint for friendship and gratitude for each other that we should think

about in the new year. The women sing to each other that people “come into our lives for a reason...to help us grow” and that we “are changed for good” by letting others teach us and helping us write our stories.

It is important to be grateful to those around us: friends, family members, teachers, neighbors, and co-workers. Saying thank you is one of the simplest things to do in any situation. It can easily be overlooked, however, in the rush of life; put down on the bottom of the “to-do” list and then forgotten about, lost amid family, business, and other commitments.

You can never say thank you to someone too many times. We all appreciate the fact that people go out of their way to make us feel important and recognized. Sometimes we forget to appreciate those closest to us. We forget to say that we value others offering us support, friendship, and love.

Here in the Religious School, we are so grateful for the first half of our year that was filled with energy and passion. We are thankful for the parents and students who come through our doors to learn, play, and discover with us. We are looking forward to the second half of the year when we will continue with engaging programs like Mitzvah Day in January and Jewish Disability and Awareness Month in February. Being grateful as we move forward into the new year reminds us that everyone we meet can become a “handprint on our heart.” May your new year be filled with love, gratitude, and appreciation of what we have and what we can give to others.



EARLY CHILDHOOD

Laura Hoffman

Director of Early Childhood Education

“When the world is so complicated, the simple gift of friendship is within all of our hands.” — *Maria Shriver*

We are, as a school, extremely grateful for our community. The Kol Ami community, which includes the Early Childhood Center, Religious School, and Congregation, is our home away from home. For our children and staff, the ECC is a safe place: a place of friendship, of singing and laughter, of learning and fun. We are grateful to the families who entrust their precious children to our care each day. It is a huge responsibility that we do not take lightly.

The children of the ECC show us how grateful they are every day. When we hear laughter, see smiling faces, get hugs (even with sticky fingers), we know how much they love being here. Just spend some time in the playgrounds or in classrooms and anyone can see how much learning is happening, how much joy is expressed, and how loved our teachers and children are.

A picture is worth a thousand words. Enjoy the beautiful faces of gratitude that is Kol Ami ECC.



ECC Dates to Remember:

- January 2** – Return to school following Winter Break
- 6** – **Priority Registration for Kol Ami Members**
- 8** – June in January Beach Party
- 13** – **Registration for Currently Enrolled ECC Families**
- 20** – MLK Day (No School)
- 21** – **General Registration open to the public**
- 21-24** – Parent Teacher Conferences (School in Session)
- February 3** – **Registration for Camp Sunshine begins**
- 5** – Jumpin’ Gymanee
- 13** – Tu B’Shevat
- 17** – Presidents’ Day (No School)
- 21** – Art Show Premier Night



GRATITUDE: BRANFMAN CHILDREN'S LIBRARY-STYLE

By Lynn Branfman and Karen Marinoff

As Thanksgiving ushered in the holiday season in America, there was lots of talk of being thankful for family, friends, food for feasts, health and happiness.

As co-chairs of the Children's Library, we have had other kinds of gratitude during the first half of this Religious School year. We are very grateful to hear children report that mom or dad read the books they borrowed aloud to them. In this age of tablets and whiteboards, parents need to flip pages and peruse illustrations and text with young children.

We also have gratitude for the volunteers who staff the library for scheduled story times during Sunday school for classes through Grade 2. These same women have recommended books now in use for a new focus on "kindness," a trait we can all cultivate. Heartfelt thank you's to Pam Austin, Christine Blazar, Amy Bodofsky, Sharon Halperin, Renée Siegel, and Ellen Feist.

Finally, we are eternally grateful when the children remember to return the library books stamped "Branfman Children's Library" to their classroom teachers who make sure the books get to the proper place. We are grateful when our shelves remain full!

SHALOM FROM SISTERHOOD

By Amy Bodofsky

As the new year approaches, we take time to reflect on what we are most grateful for. We acknowledge the people that make Kol Ami Sisterhood the special group that it is. We've had wonderful events and lucrative fundraisers. We appreciate everyone who helped to make them a success. My Sisterhood Co-Presidents, Tracy Goldberg and Lisa Weiser, and I believe that it takes a village (a *shtetl*) to keep our Sisterhood growing strong, so with gratitude, we thank you!



Thank you, Beth Kern and Debbie Thomson, for leading our Groovy Bingo event. Thank you to all who set up, helped, donated prizes, and hosted tables. Jennifer Stofman, Caryn Lieberman, Laura Maron and Debbie Jeffreys called numbers and provided fun trivia questions to enhance our groovy theme. Rick Weiser ran software to project the numbers on screen.

Thank you, Lisa Weiser and Susan Witte, for leading the Holiday Gift Bazaar and securing vendors. Thank you to all the volunteers who set up, floated, worked at the café, and cleaned up. Thank you, Jason Richek and crew, for set up and making our event space functional.

Thank you, Amy Bodofsky, for leading the Sisterhood Art Cards fundraiser. Thank you to all members who donated art work, Jessica Manelis for formatting layouts and sending them to the printer, Elliot Bodofsky for technical and editing skills, Rosie Hymerling, Bobbie Israelsky, and Rachelle Lampert for packaging and sales. We sold out!

Thank you, Jaimee Friedman and Sandy Fingerman, for leading our Sukkot celebration and membership appreciation dinner, Merle Friedman for leading our Women's Seder, which we look forward to attending again, Karen Ginsburg for leading the American Red Cross Blood Drive, and Sheila Stern for selling Mah Jongg cards. Many thanks to Michelle Speier for programming as well as catering help, Andrea Finkel for sharing her experience as Past President, Megan Cronce, Marlene Dworkin, Judy Feldman, Melissa Firstenberg, Sara Honovich, Marcy Lawrence, Liz Levine, Linda Levitsky, Donna Moshe, Sheri Turner, Lauren Waite, Jaina Wald, Marissa Wood-Roletter, Stacy Yulsman, Katie Zaifert, Michele Zeldner, and Ruth Scott for adding support and ideas to so many programs. We so appreciate our clergy who continually inspire us. It really does take a village and we are grateful to all!

We are *WELL-INFORMED.*



Lions Gate Men's Chew & Chat Club



LIONS GATE
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The presentations for the Men's Chew & Chat Club are great. They keep everyone talking, reflecting, and learning. At Lions Gate, an open mind and a good sandwich really can change your thinking!

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WE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS

In times of happiness or sadness, Congregation Kol Ami offers a variety of ways to share your wishes and thoughts with others. Contributions may be sent to the synagogue office as well as completed online. For a complete list of funds and tzedakah opportunities, visit www.kolaminj.org.

Abraham & Sylvia Angstreich Beautification Fund*

Linda & Steve Angstreich

*in honor of the wedding of Rabbi Ariel Milan-Polisar &
Jason Quint*

in memory of Susan Singer

Ahavat Limud

Lois Lawrynkiewicz *in memory of Rebecca Kleidermacher*

Sheila & Fred Stern

in memory of Marjorie Krell

in memory of Rebecca Kleidermacher

Debra & Robert Thomson *in memory of Rebecca Kleidermacher*

Marla & Gary Vecchio *in memory of Rebecca Kleidermacher*

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Marlene & Bill Maderer *in honor of Marsha Seader's 75th birthday*

Arlene & Norman Silvers

in honor of the marriage of Drs. Susan & Chuck Winkleman

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Elise Miller *in memory of Elaine & Martin Friedman*

Deborah & Donald Mitchell *in honor of the naming of Benjamin*

Archer Davis

Leonard Pons *in memory of Marjorie Krell*

Cantor Anita F. Hochman Choir Fund

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Marylee & Stuart Alperin *in memory of Susan Singer*

Steven Axelrod *in appreciation of the livestream of Kol Ami Services*

Geraldine & John Carroll *in memory of Joseph Fischer*

Robin & Gary Kushner *in memory of Lee Romm*

Shonnie Lebovitz & Maurits Taytelbaum

in memory of Howie Greenberg

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in memory of Cynthia (Tzippy) Rubin

in memory of Susan Singer

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Pam & Tom Austin *in memory of Marilyn Cohen*

Michele Figures & Ira Miller

*in honor of the wedding of Rabbi Ariel Milan-Polisar &
Jason Quint*

Laurie & Robert Hohwald *in memory of Marjorie Krell*

Deborah Kahn *in memory of Yossi Afek*

Liz Levine

in memory of Marjorie Krell

in memory of Ruth Edinberg

Linda & Ross Levitsky

in memory of Marjorie Krell

in memory of Rebecca Kleidermacher

Judy & Steve Lubetkin *in memory of Marjorie Krell*

Marlene Spector & Amy Lipson *in memory of Jean M. Spector*

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James Sell *in memory of Elizabeth Sell*

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Jason Quint*

in memory of Marjorie Krell

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Erica & Richard King *in honor of the engagement of Melissa &*

Bruce Saidman's two sons

High Holy Day Prayerbook Book Plates

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Honorable Steven P. Burkett Graduate Fund

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Rolane & Stephen Sunshine *in memory of Marilyn Cohen*

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in honor of Joe Silman's special birthday

Jeremy Kane Gift of Israel Fund

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Kleiman/Gottlieb Special Needs Fund

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Kim & Scott Coffina

in honor of Harry & Jenna's wedding

in honor of Owen Zalcmann's Bar Mitzvah

in memory of Howard Greenberg

Benjamin Folkman *in memory of Marjorie Krell*

Lisa & David Lanter *in memory of Jeanette Schwartz*

Rebecca Levy *in memory of Cynthia (Tzippy) Rubin*

Karen & Steven Marinoff *in memory of Anne Flanzer*

Lynne Rednik Early Childhood Center Fund

Debbie & Scott Jeffreys *in memory of Abe Werber*

Lynne & Norman Rednik

in honor of Owen Zalcmann's Bar Mitzvah

in memory of Marilyn Cohen

in memory of Susan Singer

in memory of Yossi Afek

Lonnie & Stan Smoller *in memory of Abe Werber*

WE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS

Carol & Paul Weller *in memory of Abe Werber*

Margie & Joe Sobel Family Assistance Fund

Janine & Mark Sobel

in honor of Alana Friedenthal's Bat Mitzvah

in honor of Rabbi Ariel Milan Polisar

in memory of Cynthia (Tzippy) Rubin

Merle Steinberg Religious School Scholarship Fund

Jaime Friedman *in memory of Ruth McGuire*

Merle & Barry Friedman

in honor of Kol Ami

*in honor of the wedding of Rabbi Ariel Milan-Polisar &
Jason Quint*

in memory of Marilyn Cohen

in memory of Susan Singer

in memory of Thelma Spivack

in memory of Yossi Afek

Past & Future Travellers to Israel *in memory of Yossi Afek*

Religious School Teachers *in memory of Yossi Afek*

Bruce Matez *in memory of Marilyn Cohen*

Judi & David Weinberg

in memory of Susan Singer

speedy recovery to Rachel Hahn

Rabbi David Education Fund

Nan & Jerome Steinhoff *in memory of Nettie Rocklin*

Rabbi David Good Works Fund

Debra Berger *in memory of Cynthia (Tzippy) Rubin*

Betsy & Gordon Bocher

in memory of Cynthia (Tzippy) Rubin

in memory of Marjorie Krell

Sallie Brown & David Newman *in honor of Rabbi David &*

Rabbi Frenkel

Honey & Ronald Etkin *in memory of Grace Baran*

Debra & Sanford Gips *in memory of Alvin Jeffer*

Tracy & Harris Goldberg *in appreciation of Kol Ami's Clergy & Staff*

Mindy Hough *in memory of Cynthia (Tzippy) Rubin*

Debbie & Scott Jeffreys *in memory of Cynthia (Tzippy) Rubin*

Lois & Robert Levine *in memory of Bill Toffel*

Paula & Martin Levine

in memory of Marjorie Krell

in memory of Rebecca Kleidermacher

Jessica & Aleksandr Manelis *in memory of Rebecca Kleidermacher*

Danielle Mayer *in memory of Cynthia (Tzippy) Rubin*

Sherry Middleberg *in memory of Cynthia (Tzippy) Rubin*

Nadia Mykysey *in memory of Ludmyla Mischtschuk*

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Bobbi & David Smith *in memory of Cynthia (Tzippy) Rubin*

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in memory of Yossi Afek

Lois Elkis *in honor of Dr. David Laskin*

Michele Figures & Ira Miller

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in memory of Susan Singer

Jaimee & Steven Friedman

in honor of Jane Bloom's special birthday

in memory of Rebecca Kleidermacher

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Lynne & Norman Rednik

in honor of Jane Bloom's special birthday

Mitzi & Michael Sacks *in memory of Cynthia (Tzippy) Rubin*

Marlene Spector & Amy Lipson *in memory of Louise E. Weiner*

Mara & Scott Steele *in memory of Stanley Dublet*

Karen Wallenobrien & Donald O'Brien

in memory of Howard Greenberg

Stephanie & Andrew Zinn

in honor of Marsha Seader's 75 birthday

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in appreciation of Rabbi Frenkel

in appreciation of Rabbi Milan-Polisar

Amy & Scott Brandt

in honor of the wedding of Jessica Honovich and Anya Richkind

Lynn Branfman

in honor of Max Volodarsky's Bar Mitzvah

in memory of Cynthia (Tzippy) Rubin

in memory of Marjorie Krell

in memory of Rebecca Kleidermacher

in memory of Susan Singer

Diane & Jon Brillman *in honor of Rolane & Steve Sunshine*

Koleinu (Choir) *in honor of the wedding of Rabbi Ariel*

Milan-Polisar and Jason Quint

Nadine & Douglas Cohen *in appreciation of Rabbi Frenkel*

Leslie & Adam Greenspan *in memory of Harry Goldberg*

Shonnie Lebovitz & Maurits Taytelbaum

in memory of Marilyn Cohen

Sheila Lever

in memory of Geoffrey P. Lever

in memory of Irving Giniger

Jessica & Aleksandr Manelis

*in honor of the wedding of Rabbi Ariel Milan-Polisar &
Jason Quint*

in memory of Marjorie Krell

Deborah & Donald Mitchell *in appreciation of Rabbi Frenkel*

Teri & Neal Nover *in honor of the wedding of Rabbi Ariel*

Milan-Polisar and Jason Quint

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Sharon & Ely Swerdlin *in memory of Chaim Swerdlin*

Sheri & Jason Turner

in appreciation of Navy Chaplain Rabbi Elias Chajet

Judi & David Weinberg

in honor of Brandon Baron's Bar Mitzvah

*in honor of the wedding of Rabbi Ariel Milan-Polisar &
Jason Quint*

in memory of Hyman Gladstein

WE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS

Carol Sekeres Weller & Paul Weller

in memory of Janet Entrikin Weller

in memory of Norbert Weller

Carmella & Albert Zalcmann *in memory of Marilyn Cohen*

Michele Zeldner & Ian Wachstein

in honor of Brandon Baron's Bar Mitzvah

Rabbi Newburge Tzedakah Collective Social Action Fund

Michele Figures & Ira Miller *in memory of Cynthia (Tzippy) Rubin*

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Ravi Bloom Memorial Endowment Fund*

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Jayne & Craig Bloom *in memory of Morris Rossman*

Geraldine & John Carroll

in honor of Owen Zalcmann's Bar Mitzvah

Bernice Comerchero *in memory of Marc Bennett*

Cecilia & Nick Connon *in honor of Owen Zalcmann's Bar Mitzvah*

Allison Burkett-Cooke & Kevin Cooke

in honor of Owen Zalcmann's Bar Mitzvah

Gail & Richard Donner *in honor of Owen Zalcmann's Bar Mitzvah*

Eileen & Robert Elias *in honor of Owen Zalcmann's Bar Mitzvah*

Caryn & Richard Friedman *in memory of Marc Bennett*

Linda & Steven Gilbert *in memory of Pamela Gilbert*

Sharon Halperin *in honor of Owen Zalcmann's Bar Mitzvah*

Shelby & David Kleiman *in honor of Owen Zalcmann's Bar Mitzvah*

Sheila Kreitzman *in memory of Marc Bennett*

Sarah & Jeremy Kukafka *in memory of Marc Bennett*

Teri & Neal Nover *in memory of Marilyn Cohen*

Nancy & Manny Pearl *in memory of Marc Bennett*

Sara & Michael Phillips *in honor of Owen Zalcmann's Bar Mitzvah*

Caryn & Evan Polin *in memory of Marc Bennett*

Stephanie & John Riviello

in appreciation of Congregation Kol Ami for our

High Holy Day Honor

in honor of Owen Zalcmann's Bar Mitzvah

in memory of Morris Rossman

in memory of Susan Singer

Mitzi & Michael Sacks *in memory of Marc Bennett*

Amy & Jason Sonstein *in honor of Owen Zalcmann's Bar Mitzvah*

Annmarie Tournour *in memory of Marc Bennett*

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Susan & Marc Witte

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Joan Yesner *in memory of Marc Bennett*

Sarah & David Zalcmann

in honor of Brandon Baron's Bar Mitzvah

in honor of the wedding of Rabbi Milan-Polisar & Jason Quint

Sarah & David Zalcmann

in memory of Marc Bennett

in memory of Morris Rossman

in memory of Oscar Brimmer

Stephanie & Andrew Zinn

in honor of Owen Zalcmann's Bar Mitzvah

Refugee Assistance Fund*

Deborah Baratz *in memory of Cynthia (Tzippy) Rubin*

Gail & Richard Donner *in honor of refugees around the world*

Beth & John Gamel *in honor of the wedding of*

Rabbi Ariel Milan-Polisar & Jason Quint

Beth & John Gamel *in memory of Joe Lichtman*

Nancy & David Oberlander *in memory of Alice Browdy*

Michele Zeldner & Ian Wachstein

in honor of refugees around the world

in honor of the wedding of Rabbi Ariel Milan-Polisar &

Jason Quint

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in honor of Zachary Forman's Bar Mitzvah

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Sharon & Mark Sobel *speedy recovery to Robert Elias*

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in memory of Herbert Breggar

in memory of Midge Breggar

Deborah Kahn *in memory of Marjorie Krell*

Irene Kauffman *in memory of Susan Nassau*

Nathaniel Konin *in memory of Susan Singer*

Elise Miller

in memory of Dr. Sidney Rosenblatt

in memory of Ruth Fuhrman

Karen & Neal Slutsky *in memory of Abraham Slutsky*

Marlyn & Harry Starkman *in memory of the mother of Jill Nuddle*

Judi & David Weinberg

in memory of Frederic Weinberg

in memory of Rowena Weinberg

Contributions listed are inclusive from the last issue of Connections through December 3, 2024. We apologize for any errors or omissions.



Save the Date

Kol Ami presents...

CURTAINS UP!

SOUNDS OF STAGE & SCREEN

Sunday, April 6, 2025

With Emcee Glen Macnow

Honoring Cantor Neil Schnitzer



Congregation Kol Ami
Purim Shpiel 2025

The sun will come out...
in Sushan!

Estie

Performances:

Sunday morning, March 9
during Religious School

Thursday evening, March 13
Join our clergy for a lighthearted
7:00 pm Erev Purim Megillah Reading
followed by an encore presentation of our
Religious School students' Annie-themed shpiel