

CONNECTIONS

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2024 Tishri/Cheshvan/Kislev 5785

www.kolaminj.org



THE RABBI TEACHES

By Rabbi Ariel Milan-Polisar

Ever since I can remember, Thanksgiving Day would start the same way. We would wake up, go downstairs in our pajamas, turn on the TV to the Thanksgiving Day Parade and watch all morning,

Black Friday advertisements on our laps. As soon as the parade was over at noon it was time to start cooking, and negotiating oven time... When did the turkey have to go in? What could be cooked before or after the turkey? What could go on the stovetop? This tradition was so cemented over time, it was a hard transition for all of us when Jason and I began to spend alternate Thanksgivings with his family and mine.

These holiday traditions give us a constant, something to look forward to in a chaotic and unpredictable world. No matter what happens, we will come together with family on a particular holiday and engage in the same traditions with the same food and the same people.

My pastoral care & counseling teacher in rabbinical school taught us that the reason that traditions are so important is the same reason why grieving the loss of a loved one or a relationship is so hard. We have these mental maps in our brains about how things are “supposed” to go; we play out scenarios and we picture future life events a certain way. When that mental map is forced to change, it’s very hard for our brains to make that shift. Family traditions are comforting (even if sometimes challenging due to family dynamics) because our mental maps are allowed to rest. Things go exactly the way we expect. Grieving a loss is so hard, not only because we miss a person who was important to us, but because of all the future events we pictured them being a part of that they won’t be.

As families grow, it means keeping some old traditions and creating new ones too. When I next see you around Kol Ami, I would love to hear about some traditions that are special to your family and/or some growing pains that you experienced as your family has grown and changed throughout the years.

RABBI JOSH WARSHAWSKY

2024 CONGREGATION KOL AMI ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE WEEKEND

JOIN US FOR AN INSPIRATIONAL WEEKEND WITH THIS GIFTED MUSICIAN, SONGLEADER, COMPOSER, AND EDUCATOR



DECEMBER 6-8

FRIDAY 6:15 pm Pre-neg for all ages

7:00 pm Spirited Shabbat Evening Service

SHABBAT 9:15 am Torah Study: Music as Midrash – Behind the Music of Prayer & Torah

10:30 am Musical Shabbat Morning Service

12:00 pm Lunch & Zemirot (Shabbat Singing)

7:00 pm Concert with Rabbi Josh & guest violinist

SUNDAY Religious School Shira U'tefillah with Rabbi Josh

No charge for events.

Sponsorships available. Donations appreciated.

For more information and registration, please visit: WWW.KOLAMINJ.ORG

Funded in part by Thelma & Donald Spivack Creative Arts and Artist-in-Residence Endowment Fund & an Anonymous Kol Ami Family





FROM OUR LEADERSHIP

**Ellen Feist,
Vice President**

As I write this, there is a chill in the air as the leaves are turning and pumpkin spice is everywhere. As much as I hate cold weather (and I'm a February baby!), I love this time of year because of

the traditions – decorating the house, hayrides, apple picking, and Thanksgiving with friends and family.

At Chanukah, I love taking traditions from my childhood and sharing them with my own family today. Every year, we'll bake and decorate Chanukah cookies, play dreidel, and share in lighting the chanukiah together as we sing the blessings.

Kol Ami has become part of our fall and winter seasons as well. Celebrating each passing season with our synagogue community feels like tradition. I remember buying Chanukah presents for family at my own synagogue growing up, and now I see how much my kids enjoy buying gifts at the Maccabee Mart (November 24). Not only is this a fun event the kids look forward to, but it is a great fundraiser for our religious school!

I love seeing my children participate in youth group events through the KAFTY program at Kol Ami, just as I did at my own NFTY-PAR chapter. I hope to see some of your children out at our Chanukah KAFTY events this December with something for all ages: Grades K-2 on 12/8, Grades 3-5 on 12/15 and KAFTY Jr. (Grades 6-8) and Sr. (Grades 9-12) on 12/14.

I hope you take the time this year to focus on those family traditions you've brought with you from childhood, as well as those new ones you've created along the way. Whatever those traditions may be, I wish you peace, happiness, and laughter as you celebrate them with your family and friends, and I hope you'll make Kol Ami part of your traditions this year.

FROM THE EDITOR

Marlene Dworkin



I love a good joke, a funny story. If you have a song parody, I'm your girl! My favorite movie of all time is White Christmas. It's a romantic comedy with *two* love stories, singing, dancing, and spoiler alert, it has a happy ending. This movie stands the test of time as I watch it at least once every year.

As I was contemplating which family tradition to include in this issue, I consulted my family. Without skipping a beat, my husband Gary said, the Groucho glasses, of course! Our daughter Casey nodded and I realized that this is truly our tradition.

Let me take you back 37 years ago. Gary and I were attending classes offered to about-to-be parents. The facilitator was discussing "What to pack for your hospital stay." We studiously took notes and made lists of the necessities. Interestingly enough, Gary's list included an item that I imagine has never before appeared on anyone's list. That item was Groucho glasses. You know what they are: thick black eyeglasses sans lens, with bushy eyebrows and a mustache. We needed three. The reason? In case anyone asked who our newborn looked like; we could say he looked like both of us!

Once Joel was born and he and I were both up for it, that photo took place. (I believe a tripod was also on Gary's list.) We took a similar picture on Joel's first birthday, and his second and third birthdays as well. When Casey was born, another set of Groucho glasses was purchased for her photo op.

We have taken the Groucho glasses with us on vacation to Hawaii, to San Francisco, and to relatives' simchas. We welcomed our daughter-in-law with a fifth pair of glasses when she and Joel got engaged. Joel bought his own set of three and took a picture when his son was born, so the tradition continues to the next generation.

If you don't already have a family tradition, start one. These very special photos that I mentioned have been printed on canvas, and now twelve of them are arranged and hanging on my bedroom wall. Every time I look over at them, I am filled with joy thinking of those moments in time.

Wondering how to reach more people with your marketing choices?

We have a brilliant idea!

Explore new advertising opportunities at Kol Ami.

Reach over 800 member families with each issue of *Connections*. Enjoy exciting new size and placement options. Our website, emails, and digital screens in the building provide endless additional views.

Start your ad run today! www.kolaminj.org/advertise

Your High Holy Day pledge...

Helps to sustain us all, from generation to generation, *I'dor vador*.

Enables us to continue on the sacred journey of *tikkun olam* and provide support wherever it is needed.

Contribute online: www.kolaminj.org/hhd2024

No donation is too small, and every contribution makes a significant impact. Thank you for your ongoing support and dedication to our Congregation Kol Ami family.

High Holy Day Appeal
5785/2024

CONGREGATION KOL AMI Men's Club
Adult BOWLING Night
 JOIN in the FUN!
SATURDAY NOVEMBER 16
 Laurel Lanes 7:00 pm
 TWO HOURS OF BOWLING \$30 per member / \$36 per guest
 Open to congregants, their guests, and prospective members. Ages 21+.
 Register by November 8: www.kolaminj.org

A WINNER DAY AT GOLF & PICKLEBALL CLASSIC

Kol Ami hosted our Second Annual Golf & Pickleball Classic on September 19 (photos on page 8). This year, we increased the appeal and attendance by adding both Mah Jongg and Canasta. Our golfers lucked out as the weather was gorgeous. Our game players had a beautiful environment with lots of candy to enjoy the afternoon. Enjoying the competition, our pickleball enthusiasts had a great time as well. At the end of the day, everyone came together at Little Mill Country Club in Marlton for a delicious buffet dinner where golf skill prizes were awarded and amazing raffle baskets were available. We had many congregants who joined us for dinner. Even if you didn't win a raffle or a skill prize, everyone was a winner; there was a terrific sense of camaraderie.

Thank you to our wonderful planning committee for taking a great event and making it even better than last year: Marlene Dworkin, Carol Hirsch, Donna Moshe, Ruth Scott, Amy Sonstein, Jennifer Stofman, Steve Weichert, Judy Weinberg, Rick Weiser, Mark Witte and Susan Witte.

Thank you, especially to our sponsors, whose generosity helped us exceed our fundraising goals!

- Alta Dermatology and Skin Care Center, LLC
- Linda & Steve Angstreich
- Bevco Service, Inc.
- Congregation Kol Ami Men's Club
- Congregation Kol Ami Sisterhood
- Gail & Richard Donner
- Emerald Business Supply
- The Hurwitz Family
- Holman
- Lexus of Cherry Hill
- Susan & David Olinsky
- Pickleball RX
- London & Ari Watson
- Weir Greenblatt Pierce, LLP



MITZVAH DAY

As we progress through a new year, we continue our work of *tikkun olam*. The Social Action Committee is thrilled to invite you to our upcoming Mitzvah Day in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on **Monday, January 20**. A day dedicated to living out the Jewish values of *tikkun olam* – repairing the world through acts of kindness, service, and justice.

This year, we are partnering with several wonderful local organizations, providing multiple ways for each of us to make a real difference in the lives of others.

- Custom journals for Samaritan House
- Bracelet making and candy collection for Israeli soldiers (save your leftover Halloween candy!)
- Cat toys and dog treats for AWA
- Food drive for JFCS
- Peanut butter & jelly sandwich making for Cathedral Kitchen
- Cookie making at First Presbyterian Church for Howie's House (Gift of Life)

Mitzvah Day is not just about volunteering – it's about embodying the Jewish principles of healing the world by extending a hand to those in need, caring for our environment, and fostering a stronger, more compassionate community. We hope you will join us on this meaningful day as we work together to uplift our community and strengthen the bonds of love and responsibility that unite us.

CONGREGATION KOL AMI **MLK 2025**
MITZVAH DAY
 JOIN US!
MONDAY JANUARY 20
 Explore service projects. Register to participate. www.kolaminj.org

FIRST THURSDAYS

Do you crave something completely different than the latest Netflix series or Hallmark Channel rom com? Kol Ami has the answer for you: A series of programs on the first Thursday of the month (from November to June) which will broaden your perspective on a variety of topics involving the role of Jews in the arts, history, and current events. Presented both by professionals and by fellow congregants, most programs will be hybrid, except when the speaker is not local (when it will be Zoom only). If you've never been to a First Thursday, give it a try and see what you've been missing. You can thank us later.

This year we begin on **November 7** at 7:30 pm with a presentation by congregant Ira Miller on **"How Jewish Music Became Mainstream."** Positioned between the Presidential Election on November 5 and the Inauguration on January 20, the **December 5** First Thursday, presented by historian and Rabbi Lance Sussman, will cover a **Post-Election Wrap-Up** – What does it mean for us as Jews? Look for information about upcoming offerings in future issues of *Connections*.

We look forward to you joining us for this year's First Thursday programs. There is no cost for congregants; \$15/person for non-members. Registration is required. Any questions? Contact Ira Miller, Gail Donner and Mark Pinzur at AdultEd@kolaminj.org.



KULANU

By Melissa Firstenberg

The theme of this issue of *Connections*, “family traditions,” can be a very challenging topic for many in the LGBTQ+ community whose families are not welcoming. For this reason, it is crucially important for our Kol Ami chosen family to help all of us create new family traditions.

We started this year strong with an impressive representation at the family-friendly South Jersey Pride Festival in September (pictured below). Our clergy, lay leadership, and Kulanu members showed up in numbers to make sure that our larger community knows that Congregation Kol Ami is a welcoming space.

Our LGBTQ+ and allies inclusivity group has started to plan an exciting slate of activities for our families as well as our chosen family this year and we cannot wait to see everyone. So, what’s coming in 5785? Well, we heard what everyone was asking for: more Torah study opportunities at different days of the week and times of the day. We are happy to show our community spirit with a pride mezuzah ceremony, and with a gender-affirming clothing swap next May. Social opportunities including a “Love is Love” Shabbat Dinner, movie nights, and family picnics, will play an important role for all of us. And don’t forget about Pride Shabbat in June!

Of course there is more on the way, including our Social Action efforts as we work together toward a more friendly world. Please get in touch with me (firstenberg@verizon.net) to get involved in planning for these events as well as sharing any additional ideas.

Wishing everyone a safe season of traditions – both old and new.



SAFETY FIRST

We are honored to have applied for and received a security grant in the amount of \$140,000 through the Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP) – a program administered through the Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA). This competitive grant program provides federal funding for physical security enhancements and other security-related activities for nonprofit organizations. Kol Ami is thrilled to utilize the grant to enhance two specific areas in and around our building – the video/security monitoring and building access control systems.

Our congregants’ comfort and safety while worshipping in our sacred space, and participating in our numerous programs, is our number one priority. By enhancing access control systems, we can better manage who enters the building, creating a more secure environment for all who come to worship and gather. Upgrades to our video and security camera monitoring systems will provide more modern, comprehensive surveillance capabilities inside and around the synagogue. This added layer of security ensures that our security partners can quickly detect and respond to any potential concerns, offering peace of mind to our congregants and visitors. As we continue to enhance the safety and security at Kol Ami, we reaffirm a commitment to our members to provide a safe and welcoming place for everyone to worship, socialize, and call our building “home.”

CONGREGATION

KOL AMI LIFE CYCLE

קול עמי

Mazal Tov to...

Rebekah & Daniel Kukainis
on the birth of their son,
Luka William Kukainis

Michele & Hal Hirsch
on the birth of their grandson,
Graham Brotz

Tammi & Maris Kukainis
on the birth of their grandson,
Luka William Kukainis

Nadine & Doug Cohen
on the engagement of their
daughter, Briya to Taylor
Santangelo

**Nancy Isaacs &
Steve Dowinsky**
on their engagement

Barbara Snyderman
on receiving her Hebrew name

Marlene & Gary Dworkin
on the birth of their grandson,
Amit Yitzchak Dworkin

Erica & Richard King
on the engagement of their
daughter, Zoe, to Jakob
Saidman

We Mourn...

Yossi Afek
husband of Irene Afek
father of Maya Afek

Elliot Goldstein
father of Staci (Justin) Latvenas

Belle Brody
mother of Mark Brody

Howard Greenberg
husband of Elizabeth
Greenberg

Marilyn Cohen
mother of Susan (David)
Olinsky

Rina Kalbacher
mother of Victoria Kalbacher

Hyman Lee Gladstein
father of Barry (Stacey)
Gladstein

Ruth McGuire
mother of Michele (Seth Berk)
McGuire-Berk

Harry Goldberg
father of Rob (Caren) Goldberg

**Hon. Bernard A. “Bernie”
Platt**

Lists are inclusive from the last issue of Connections through October 15, 2024.

Upcoming Events

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

www.kolaminj.org/events

NOVEMBER

First Friday

Friday, November 1, 6:15 pm
Enjoy pre-service refreshments.

Shabbat Evening Service

Friday, November 1, 7:00 pm
We celebrate November anniversaries.

Torah Study

Saturdays, 9:00 am
November 2, 9, 16 & 23 (Hybrid)
November 30 (Zoom only)

Spice Up Your Judaism

Saturdays, 10:15 am
November 2, 16 & 23 (Hybrid)
November 30 (Zoom only)

Shabbat Morning Service

Saturday, November 2, 10:30 am
Bar Mitzvah of Adam Sautter

At The Well:

Dr. Betsy Stone

Sunday, November 3, 10:00 am
See details on page 7.

Caring Caps Knitting Session

Sunday, November 3, 10:00 am

Club Noar: Tie-Dye Mania

Sunday, November 3, 11:30 am

Blessing of the Pets

Sunday, November 3, 11:30 am

Boomers Book Club: One Hundred Saturdays

Sunday, November 3, 7:00 pm (Zoom)

Monthly Mussar Moments

Led by Rabbi Ariel Milan-Polisar
Monday, November 4, 12:00 pm (Zoom)

The Rosh Chodesh Experience

Led by Rabbi Ariel Milan-Polisar
Monday, November 4, 7:00 pm

Talmud Talks

Led by Rabbi Lewis John Eron, Ph.D.
Tuesdays, November 5, 12, 19 & 26,
11:30 am (Zoom)

What Can They Teach Us?

Wednesdays, November 6, 13 & 20
10:30 am (Hybrid)

Men's Club Lunches

Wednesdays, November 6 & 20, 12:30 pm
(Off-site; contact allanpep@yahoo.com.)

Board of Trustees Meeting

Wednesday, November 6, 7:30 pm

Yiddish Shmooze Group

Thursdays, November 7 & 21,
10:30 am (Zoom)

First Thursdays: How Jewish Music Became Mainstream

Thursday, November 7, 7:00 pm (Hybrid)

Shabbat Evening Service

Friday, November 8, 7:00 pm

Shabbat Machshava

Saturday, November 9, 10:30 am
Cantor Schnitzer leads a contemplative,
musical and spiritual Shabbat experience.

Sisterhood Groovy Bingo

Wednesday, November 13, 6:30 pm

Networking Group Morning Meet

Thursday, November 14, 8:30 am

NEW MEMBER SHABBAT

Friday, November 15
5:30 pm Tot Shabbat Family Dinner
6:00 pm Tot Shabbat Service
7:00 pm Shabbat Evening Service
We celebrate our new members!

Shabbat Morning Service

Saturday, November 16, 10:30 am
Bar Mitzvah of Alexander Steitz

Bowling Night at Laurel Lanes

Saturday, November 16, 7:00 pm
See details on page 3.

Friendsgiving

Sunday, November 17, 5:00 pm
See details on page 8.

Shabbat Mishpacha: Second Grade Shabbat

Friday, November 22, 7:00 pm
We honor our Second Graders and
celebrate November birthdays.

Shabbat Morning Service

Saturday, November 23, 10:30 am
Bar Mitzvah of Owen Zalcmann

KAFTY Sr. Event (Grades 9-12)

Saturday, November 23, 7:00 pm

Holiday Gift Bazaar

Sunday, November 24, 9:00 am – 2:00 pm
More than 40 vendors to shop unique.

Religious School Maccabee Mart

Sunday, November 24 (during classes)

Thanksgiving

Thursday, November 28
Friday, November 29 (Observed)
Offices & Schools closed.

Burkett/ELITE Shabbat Pizza Dinner

Friday, November 29, 6:00 pm

Shabbat Evening Service

Friday, November 29, 7:00 pm

DECEMBER

At The Well: Wise Aging

Led by Rabbi Jennifer Frenkel
Monday, December 2, 7:30 pm
See details on page 7.

Talmud Talks

Led by Rabbi Lewis John Eron, Ph.D.
Tuesdays, December 3, 10 & 17,
11:30 am (Zoom)

The Rosh Chodesh Experience

Led by Rabbi Ariel Milan-Polisar
Tuesday, December 3, 7:00 pm

Men's Club Lunches

Wednesdays, December 4 & 18, 12:30 pm
(Off-site; contact allanpep@yahoo.com.)

Yiddish Shmooze Group

Thursdays, December 5 & 19,
10:30 am (Zoom)

KAYA Shmooze & Brews at Zed's Beer

Wednesday, December 4, 5:30 pm (Off-site)

Red Cross Blood Drive

Thursday, December 5, 1:00-6:00 pm

Upcoming Events

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

BOOMERS GROUP

By Lynn Branfman and Judy Lubetkin,
Co-chairs

First Thursdays: Post-Election Wrap Up – What does it mean for us as Jews?

Thursday, December 5, 7:30 pm (Zoom)

ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE WEEKEND with Rabbi Josh Warshawsky

Friday, December 6

6:15 pm Pre-neg

7:00 pm Shabbat Evening Service

Saturday, December 7

9:15 am Torah Study

10:30 am Morning Service

12:00 pm Lunch & Zemiroth

7:00 pm Concert

Sunday, December 8

9:15 am Religious School

See full Weekend details on page 1.

Shabbat Morning Service

Saturday, December 7, 10:30 am

Bar Mitzvah of Ethan Sussman

Blankets of Hope

Sunday, December 8, 10:00 am

Club K'ton: Chanukah

Hullabaloo (Grades K-2)

Sunday, December 8, 11:30 am 

Monthly Mussar Moments

Led by Rabbi Ariel Milan-Polisar

Monday, December 9, 12:00 pm (Zoom)

At The Well:

Simchat Chochmah

Monday, December 9, 7:30 pm

See details on page 7.

Boomers Chanukah Lunch

Tuesday, December 10, 1:00 pm 

Sisterhood Chanukah Workshop

Wednesday, December 11, 6:30 pm 

Tot Shabbat

Friday, December 13

5:30 pm Tot Family Dinner

6:00 pm Tot Shabbat Service

Shabbat Evening Service

Friday, December 13, 7:00 pm

Koleinu Choir joins us.

Torah Study

Saturdays, 9:00 am

December 14 & 21 (Hybrid)

December 28 (Zoom only)

Spice Up Your Judaism

Saturdays, 10:15 am

December 14 & 21 (Hybrid)

December 28 (Zoom only)

Shabbat Morning Service

Saturday, December 14, 10:30 am

Bat Mitzvah of Annika Saponaro

Shabbat Havdalah Service

Saturday, December 14, 5:45 pm

Bat Mitzvah of Emmy Plevinsky

KAFTY Jr./Sr. Event (Grades 6-12)

Saturday, December 14, 7:00 pm

Kulanu Event

Sunday, December 15, 9:30 am

Club Noar: Chanukah Happenin'

Sunday, December 15, 11:15 am (Grades 3-5)

Boomers Book Club: The Women

Sunday, December 15, 7:00 pm

At The Well:

Simchat Chochmah, Cohort 1

Monday, December 16, 7:30 pm

Shabbat Evening Service

Friday, December 20, 7:00 pm

Chanukah: 1st Candle

Wednesday, December 25

Winter Break

Offices & Schools closed

Wednesday, December 25 through

Wednesday, January 1, 2025

The building will be closed daily, opening only for Friday's Shabbat Evening Service.

Shabbat Evening Service:

Chanukah Shabbat

Friday, December 27, 7:00 pm 

Wear your festive Chanukah attire and remember to Bring Your Own Chanukah candles for a communal lighting.

We also celebrate December birthdays.

 = Chanukah Programming

We come together in this wonderful congregation to make new memories and traditions. We share some family traditions that we have enjoyed in the past to keep that connection between then and now.

Lynn has many warm memories, especially of Chanukah:

When I was growing up, my grandparents would send us a big box at Chanukah, with traditional Jewish cookies baked by my grandmother. The box also included presents for my brother and me, for each night of Chanukah!

In Cherry Hill, with our kids, there are warm memories of sharing Chanukah with others. We invited friends to celebrate with us who were Jewish, Hindu, and Zoroastrian. Our family served a traditional Chanukah meal, including latkes. In lighting the menorah, we passed out song sheets to everyone, who joined in the blessings and songs. A warm evening was always enjoyed by all!

Judy's traditions include:

For the past 40-plus years, Steve and I have been celebrating holidays around the calendar with three special couples and their children. We are their aunts, uncles and cousins that are united by love, not blood. Our Erev Rosh Hashanah dinner at our house started with small children and as they have grown up, now we welcome their spouses, special partners, and grandchildren! It is a cacophonous gathering with blessings, good food and even the sounding of the shofar by our daughter, Sharon.

Let's continue to build memories of community and family. Everyone in Kol Ami and your extended families are invited to join the Boomers Social Group at our events listed in the Upcoming Events section, and events further in the winter and spring.

Mark your calendars for April 25, 2025 – Boomers Shabbat. Please let us know if you want to be on the committee or have a speaking part (both English and Hebrew parts available).

SHALOM FROM SISTERHOOD

By Amy Bodofsky

As I reflect on traditions from my past such as attending services with family in Buffalo and hosting Sukkot gatherings with my husband and children, I realize that these traditions are very personal and memorable. Seeing a ray of light shine through the cornstalk roof of the sukkah makes me feel a connection to people and times past. Saying a prayer with the entire congregation reminds me that, although we address our personal needs and goals, it's important to be connected to our community and people, especially in times of unrest. Prayers written years ago are still relevant today. Congregation Kol Ami Sisterhood is a group that shares values, concerns and celebrations.

Another tradition...eating! Sisterhood will be selling The Food Book. The cost is \$10 for over 50 local food-related coupons.

New tradition... art cards! These blank cards feature the work of Kol Ami artists and can be used for any occasion or given as gifts! \$20 for 10 cards (set A or B) or \$36 for 20 cards (sets A & B). Contact Amy Bodofsky (elammash43@gmail.com) with questions or orders.

Thank you to the Sisterhood Board, volunteers and event attendees for keeping the tradition of Sisterhood thriving. Contact SisterhoodPresident@kolaminj.org for membership information.



AT THE WELL

At The Well are courses for adults that promote renewal, health, and wellbeing of mind, body, and spirit through a Jewish lens. Our programming continues on Mondays in December:

Wise Aging: Living with Joy, Resilience, & Spirit

Monday, December 2, 7:30-9:00 pm

Led by Rabbi Jennifer Frenkel

In their book *Wise Aging*, Rabbi Rachel Cowan and Dr. Linda Thal invite us to a new stage of life – active aging – and give us the tools we need to embrace it. Please reach out to Laura Maron (Laura@kolaminj.org) by November 4 to reserve your free copy.

What is Simchat Chochmah?

Monday, December 9, 7:30-9:00 pm

Led by Rabbi Richard Address and Rabbi Jennifer Frenkel

One of the most interesting new rituals to emerge in recent years is the *Simchat Chochmah*, a statement of gratitude and thanks for having reached a certain age. It is a personal statement of one's appreciation for having lived and learned and a wish and prayer that one's future will be one of continued growth and fulfillment. Kol Ami, as part our evolving At The Well program, invites you to be part of our first Simchat Chochmah cohort. If you are interested in becoming part of this project, or simply learning more about it, you are invited to this informational meeting.

This evening will also feature a discussion introducing the concept of "Wisdom Circles" as discussed in the book *Wise Aging* – groups of roughly 20 adults (geared to those 50+) committed to meeting monthly and discussing the joys and challenges of aging and sharing personal journeys with one another.

First Session of Simchat Chochmah Cohort I

Monday, December 16, 7:30-9:00 pm

Led by Rabbi Richard Address and Rabbi Jennifer Frenkel

At The Well is brought to you in partnership with our Adult Education Committee and is partially funded by a grant from the Jewish Community Foundation (JCF).

MEN'S CLUB *By Michael Feist*

As I write this article in early October during the High Holy Days and as we look ahead to the fall with Thanksgiving and Chanukah, it gets me thinking about the family traditions I knew growing up and the ones I'm now creating as a parent. Oddly enough, some of my fondest holiday memories revolve around holidays not germane to Judaism. Growing up, my family and I would drink hot chocolate out of my Nana's famous 'feet mug' collection and, after lighting the chanukiah and opening presents, we would drive around the neighborhood to look at the amazing Christmas light displays. Thanksgiving was also a time of togetherness as it served as an annual de facto family reunion planned by a different host family in their home city. I'm grateful that I'm now able to share in the family traditions that my wife has had since she was a child – most notably our annual trip to Macy's in Philadelphia for the light show and a walkthrough of Dickens' Village. There's something to be said for the repetition that family traditions provide. For us, it grounds us and brings us together as we focus on these traditions that we only get to do once per year. We do our best to shut out any noise that might be happening in our lives and around the world (of which there is plenty!) and focus on creating new memories each time we repeat those annual traditions. It's that dichotomy that, to me, really defines family traditions.

Speaking of traditions, Men's Club has a few traditions of our own, most notably our annual Scotch & Steak in the Sukkah which once again was a huge success (pictured). I look forward to seeing more friendly faces at our upcoming events as we look ahead to 2025. I hope everyone is able to take the time they need this season and spend it with the ones you love, creating and rekindling your own family traditions.





Golf & Pickleball Classic...

September's FUNdraiser – this year with Game Day – was an absolute delight. See article on page 3.

Photos by Ken Romm Photography



Ruach Rally...

September's kickoff engagement fair served up smiles and excitement for the year ahead.

Photos by Steve Lubetkin



Blankets of Hope...

In early October, our Caring Community hosted – and enjoyed! – their first blanket making session of the year.



NOTHING BUT THE SIDES FRIENDSGIVING

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 17
5:00 PM

Thankful

FOOD AND FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY!
Open to our congregational family.
Admission: Non-perishable foods donation and a side to share for 12-16 people.

CONGREGATION **KOL AMI** תולדות

REGISTRATION REQUIRED:
WWW.KOLAMINJ.ORG



Rosh Chodesh... The first event of our Rosh Chodesh series was a creative success. Female congregants are invited to join us in marking the start of each Hebrew month (according to schedule) with togetherness and a hands-on experience.



Days of Paw... As the High Holy Days served as a time for reflection, our canine family members received some "paw-storal" care alongside their humans at Croft Farm Dog Park.



Sukkah Time... Volunteers outdid themselves decorating the sukkah (top) so that our many cohorts, including the choir (middle) and our ECC students (bottom), could enjoy the harvest festival.



Food Drive... Thank you for making our High Holy Day Food Drive a great success again this year. Our volunteers proudly delivered the haul to the Betsy & Peter Fischer Food Pantry. Next up: our Thanksgiving Turkey Drive!

THANKSGIVING TURKEY DRIVE
 Sunday, November 17 at Friendsgiving
 Sunday, November 24 during Religious School
 Drop off your kosher or non-kosher frozen turkeys.
 Do you qualify for a free turkey from your market? Donate it to our drive!

Kol Kehillah Voice of the Community
 Save the Date! Join us for
A Celebration of Judaism
February 9, 11:00 am
 Our Shabbat programs are open
 to the community and inclusive of all.
 Sponsored by the Warren & Doris Elias Special Needs Endowment Fund
 at Congregation Kol Ami. For information, please visit www.kolaminj.org

KOL AMI Many voices. One community. **YOUNG ADULT**
SHMOOZE & BREWS HAPPY HOUR
ZED'S BEER IN MARLTON
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 4
5:30-7:00 PM
 THIS GROUP OF 20 & 30 SOMETHINGS IS TAKING OFF WITH FLIGHTS OF BEER OR WHATEVER SPIRITS YOU PREFER! MUST BE 21+ TO ATTEND.
 RSV BY 12/3/24 AT WWW.KOLAMINJ.ORG
1101 Springdale Road Cherry Hill, NJ 08003 | 856.489.0029 | www.kolaminj.org

November/December B'NAI MITZVAH



Adam Sautter

November 2

Son of Jessica & Todd Sautter

Brother: Ben

My name is Adam Sautter and I'm a 7th grader at Beck Middle School. My parents are Todd and Jessica, and I have an older brother, Ben. I love playing soccer, watching football, hanging out with my friends, and

collecting sports cards. For my Bar Mitzvah project, I volunteered at the Animal Welfare Association. I walked and socialized with dogs, as well as helped at AWA special events like fundraisers and a 5K race. I chose to work at the AWA because I enjoy helping animals and seeing them happy with their new families. Becoming a Bar Mitzvah means taking on more responsibility and becoming a young adult in the Jewish community. I plan to continue Jewish studies by attending Hebrew High School at Kol Ami.



Alexander Steitz

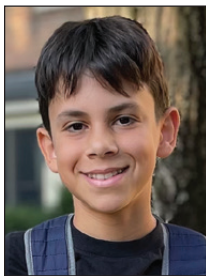
November 16

Son of Kerry & Mark Steitz

Brother: William

I am an 8th grader at Neeta school in Medford Lakes. I love fishing, playing dek hockey and martial arts. For my Bar Mitzvah project, I volunteered at the Animal Welfare Association for about six months.

I plan to volunteer there more after my Bar Mitzvah. I helped to walk and take care of dogs like my own. My favorite part about the experience was walking all types of dogs, both big and small. What becoming a Bar Mitzvah means to me is following Jewish values and learning about the religion. I am excited for my Bar Mitzvah fishing trip to the Florida Keys!



Owen Zalcmann

November 23

Son of Sarah & David Zalcmann

Siblings: Joey & Cayla

My name is Owen Zalcmann and I am a 7th grader at Voorhees Middle School. My hobbies consist of playing outside, playing sports, and playing video games. I love hanging out with friends and family too. My

favorite sport to play is soccer and my favorite sport to watch is football (E-A-G-L-E-S Eagles!). For my Bar Mitzvah, I helped the Bloom family create Ravi's Mensches and we focus on doing good deeds in our community. I have been involved in several causes that are important to me, including supporting Special Olympics NJ, Open Hearts/Open Doors at the JCC Camps at Medford, service with seniors at Lions Gate, and supporting the Ravi Bloom Memorial Endowment Fund here at Kol Ami. Becoming a Bar Mitzvah has given me a sense of pride in being Jewish. It also means I'm becoming a Jewish adult and I am looking forward to continuing to explore my Jewish faith.



Ethan Sussman

December 7

Son of Amy & Andy Sussman

Sister: Leah

My name is Ethan Sussman. My parents are Amy and Andy Sussman. I have a little sister Leah. In my free time I like playing Dungeons and Dragons, hanging with my friends and playing video games. I play the drums and

enjoy being part of the Orff Ensemble at Rosa Middle School. For my Bar Mitzvah project, I am raising money for lymphoma research to help one day find a cure. Becoming a Bar Mitzvah means that I am becoming a responsible adult and need to take ownership over my behavior and actions.



Annika Saponaro

December 14

Daughter of Daniella Gordon &

George Saponaro

Brother: Charlie

My name is Annika Saponaro, and I am in 8th grade at the William Allen Middle School in Moorestown. My mom is Daniella Gordon, my dad is George Saponaro, and my older

brother, Charlie, is a freshman in high school. My hobbies include ice skating, playing the harp, and hanging out with my friends. My Bar Mitzvah project is helping at events at the local animal shelter to help the animals find homes. Becoming a Bar Mitzvah means a lot to me because it's confirming my religion and what I believe in. It helps me to learn more about Judaism and some of the lessons that it teaches, and it helps me get closer to God. I want to be informed on my religion and my Bar Mitzvah helps me do that.



Emily Plevinsky

December 14

Daughter of Jennifer & Marc Plevinsky

Siblings: Aly & Jake

My name is Emily Plevinsky but I usually go by Emmy. I live in Cherry Hill with my parents Marc and Jen and my two siblings Aly & Jake. I love playing all types of sports but soccer is my favorite. I've played soccer

since I was three years old and continue to play everyday. I am in seventh grade at Beck Middle School where I play on both the soccer and basketball teams. For my mitzvah project, I am collecting and donating used soccer equipment to the Kensington Soccer Club in Philadelphia. Many of their players can't afford to purchase their own equipment, so the club provides it for them so all kids can have a chance to play. To me, becoming a Bar Mitzvah means that I am becoming a Jewish adult and can take more opportunities to volunteer in my community.

Mazal Tov to all!



RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

Sheri Greenblatt

Director of Education

As we embark on another month together, we want to focus on the importance of family connections within our vibrant Jewish community. These connections not only enrich our children's educational experiences but also deepen our collective identity and support network.

At Kol Ami Religious School we offer many programs that bring our students and their families together in worship, discussion, and community activities. We have had several Family Education Days where our teachers presented lessons on topics that correspond with the holidays or the monthly Jewish values of our school. Our students are celebrated each month at a Shabbat Mishpacha when we share a traditional Shabbat dinner, we recite the blessings, and celebrate our families. Then, we honor our children on the *bimah* with prayer and song.

When we celebrate these special occasions, we cherish the moments spent with loved ones. Whether it is a holiday, vacation, or family activity at the synagogue, these traditions remind us of what truly matters: family, love, and connection.

Family is central to Jewish life, and we encourage you to share traditions and stories that reflect your unique heritage. This month, consider engaging in activities that bring your family closer together. Whether it's cooking traditional recipes, celebrating Shabbat, or sharing stories of your ancestors, these moments create lasting memories.

One family tradition that my family has that I cherish takes place during the Jewish holidays. My three daughters and I work together in my kitchen to cook Grandmom's favorite holiday dishes. After a lot of bites, licks, and tastes, they always end up so proud of the finished dish, sharing it with the entire family and waiting to get Grandmom's approval.

In a fast-paced world, taking the time to honor and maintain these traditions ensures that the spirit of togetherness endures, creating a legacy of love for future generations. We encourage you to embrace your family traditions and celebrate the beautiful moments that make us who we are.



EARLY CHILDHOOD

Laura Hoffman

Director of Early Childhood Education

"Family gives you the roots to stand tall and strong."



Our family traditions are what keeps us in tune with the year: Dinner at Bubby's house for Rosh Hashanah, Friendsgiving with our school buddies and their families, and many Chanukah parties! Lighting candles is a tradition that is very common among most families.

At Kol Ami Early Childhood Center, we have our own "family" traditions. We do these because we ARE family – a family of learners, of dreamers, of playtime buddies.

For Thanksgiving we make friendship soup. What is friendship soup? Everyone brings in a can of vegetables or beans. Morah Laura goes from class to class with her big soup pot and everyone has a chance to empty their veggies into the pot. She then adds lots of love and a little magic, and out comes a delicious soup for everyone to share!



ECC Dates to Remember:

November 7 & 8 – No School, NJEA Convention

11-14 – Scholastic Book Fair

27 – 11:45 am Dismissal for all

28 & 29 – Thanksgiving Weekend

December 18 – Chanukah Program – Parents invited

20 – 11:45 am Dismissal for all

23-31 – No School, Winter Break

25 – First night of Chanukah

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

The Youth Groups are having a blast!

KAFTY Jr. and KAFTY Sr. had a great time at their Kick-Off event getting to know each other while playing various Minute To Win It-type games (pictured below). Everyone was working together to complete the games in a minute and had fun while doing it.



Club K'ton (Grades K-2) became chefs while creating different pizzas along with making their own chef hat. I think the dessert pizza was their favorite!

Club Noar (Grades 3-5) were able to tie-dye different items and had so much fun creating their pieces with lots of different colors.

Coming Up:

November 23, 7:00 pm

KAFTY Sr. event (Grades 9-12)

December 8, 11:15 am

Club K'ton (Grades K-2) Chanukah Hullabaloo

December 15, 11:15 am

Club Noar (Grades 3-5) Chanukah Happenin'

BRANFMAN CHILDREN'S LIBRARY

Lynn Branfman and Karen Marinoff, Co-chairs

Karen Marinoff: We adults have years of Jewish traditions that we share with the children who visit the library. During Religious School, our Branfman Children's Library volunteers read to the youngest classes, introducing children ages 4-7 to many holidays. We explain the background of the Jewish stories and celebrations. For example, most of the children have fond recollections of Chanukah, and of all the gifts they have received, but they may not know or remember the history of our Jewish stories and traditions.

Lynn Branfman: The library includes books on ways that children celebrate Chanukah around the world. Our volunteers read holiday stories to the children in Sunday school and also design the library's lobby window for the Jewish holidays. At this time of year, various Chanukah books are displayed in the window, which is sometimes decorated with the children's help. The display may include the children's holiday-related artwork, and the games and traditions associated with the holiday.

The co-chairs of Branfman Children's Library Committee are thrilled to be working with Pam Austin, Christine Blazar, Amy Bodofsky, Sharon Halperin, Renee Siegel, and our Kol Ami advisor, Ellen Feist. To join our Library Committee, please email Lynn Branfman at tensb@aol.com.

Thank you to our members who donated High Holy Day Prayerbooks this year.

In Honor of

Jake Angstreich
& Ellie Angstreich

Recognized by

Amy & Scott Brandt

In Memory of

David, Evelyn
& Lynda Appell

Remembered by

Roslyn Appell

Alma Schwack Staloff

Carol & Thomas Brightman

Robert L. Donner

Gail, Dick, Rachel, Joshua, Hallie,
Nathan & Solomon Donner

Doris & Warren Elias
Thelma & Donald Spivack

Eileen & Robert Elias and Family

Martin S. Figures
Lillian Figures

Ira Miller & Shelley Figures

Francine Fisher
William & Claire Fisher

Mark Fisher, MD

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The Molotsky Family

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Thelma Spivack

Herman Cohen
Chaim Swerdlin

The Swerdlin Family

Stacy Waring

Laurie & Russ Waring

Bruce Jonathan Weller

Carol Sekeres Weller & Paul Weller
and Marshall Weller

MANNA

By Estherose Heyman

On September 26, eight congregants, friends, and family spent a fulfilling three hours volunteering at MANNA (Metropolitan Area Neighborhood Nutrition Alliance) in Philadelphia. Our volunteers were very busy packaging chicken tetrazzini with pasta and stewed tomatoes for dinners, labeling and bagging vegan wrap sandwiches and chicken hoagies, and labeling and stacking empty soup containers. While working hard, we had an opportunity to get to know each other better and meet other volunteers. We all agreed it was fulfilling to know we performed a mitzvah for our neighbors in need.

The need is constant.
The gratification is instant.
Give blood.
December 5, 1:00-6:00 pm

 American Red Cross
Walk in or
make an
appointment:
www.kolaminj.org

*Kindness is
in your blood*


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 memory of Ronnie Levine

in memory of Yossi Afek

Gerri & John Carroll *in appreciation to Linda & Steve Angstreich*

Rolane & Stephen Sunshine

in appreciation to Linda & Steve Angstreich

Sally & Andrew Zeiberg *in memory of Bernard Epstein*

Ahavat Limud

Gerri & John Carrol *in memory of Yossi Afek*

Amy Silvers Israel Trip Scholarship Endowment Fund*

Tula Kurtz *in memory of Sara Schnorbus*

James Sell *in honor of our clergy*

Branfman Children's Library Fund

Sharon Halperin

in honor of Maddie Swerdlin becoming a Bat Mitzvah

in memory of Stacy Gena Waring

Sharon Siegel & Les Cohen *in memory of Marilyn Cohen*

Cantor Anita F. Hochman Choir Fund

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Marylee & Stuart Alperin

in memory of Howie Greenberg

in memory of Marilyn Cohen

in memory of Yossi Afek

Toby & Len Berman *in memory of Howie Greenberg*

Koleinu (Choir) *in memory of Howie Greenberg*

Harriet Cohen *in honor of Marlene & Gary Dworkin's new grandson*

Marlene & Gary Dworkin *in memory of Howie Greenberg*

Sharla & Barry Feldscher *in memory of Howie Greenberg*

Michele Figures & Ira Miller *in memory of Simon Jack Miller*

Jo Anne & Phillip Glass *in memory of Howie Greenberg*

Ruth & Neal Goldman

in memory of Eli Goldman

in memory of Toba Zahn

Dina Hershman *in memory of Howie Greenberg*

Susan & Joel Kaber *in memory of Howie Greenberg*

Robin & Gary Kushner *in memory of Marilyn Cohen*

Bruce Matez *in memory of Howie Greenberg*

Jackie & Robert Mintz *in memory of Howie Greenberg*

Deborah & Donald Mitchell *in memory of Howie Greenberg*

Teri & Neal Nover

in honor of Marlene & Gary Dworkin's new grandson

in memory of Dora Ettinger

in memory of Francine Brewer

in memory of Howie Greenberg

in memory of Phyllis Ettinger

Maxine & Mark Pinzur *in memory of Howie Greenberg*

Alison & Alan Schorr *in memory of Yossi Afek*

Raleigh & Barry Seliger *speedy recovery to Sara Weinger*

Adrienne Seligman

in memory of Howie Greenberg

in memory of Michael Varbalow

Ellen Shapiro *in memory of Howie Greenberg*

Ellen & Roger Sheinkin *in memory of Howie Greenberg*

Lonnie & Stanley Smoller *in memory of Howie Greenberg*

Ellen Specter & Harrison Melstein *in memory of Howie Greenberg*

Rolane & Stephen Sunshine *in memory of Howie Greenberg*

Linda & Barry Ungar *in memory of Howie Greenberg*

Sara Weinger *in memory of Ralph Weinger*

Sherry & Mark Wolkoff *in memory of Howie Greenberg*

Carmella & Albert Zalcmann *in memory of Howie Greenberg*

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Sharon Singer's grandson Max

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Lynne Rednik Early Childhood Center Fund

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Margie & Joe Sobel Family Assistance Fund

Janine & Mark Sobel *in appreciation to Laura Maron*

WE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS

Janine & Mark Sobel

in honor of Ellie Snyder's Bat Mitzvah

in memory of Bernie Platt

in memory of Hazel McGinniss

in memory of Lori Ann Webb

Merle Steinberg Religious School Scholarship Fund

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Lonnie & Stanley Smoller

in honor of the engagement of Nancy Isaacs & Steve Dowinsky

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Michelle & Stephen Weichert *in memory of Howie Greenberg*

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in memory of Marilyn Cohen

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Carol Sekeres Weller & Paul Weller

in appreciation to Rabbi Frenkel

in memory of Ann Ida Weller

in memory of Bruce Jonathan Weller

in memory of Bruce Matez's parents

in memory of Howie Greenberg

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Stephanie & Andy Zinn

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

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Randi & Alan Salkowitz *in memory of Howie Greenberg*

Marci Small *in honor of Ravi Bloom's 21st birthday*

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in honor of Art Tapia-Minchez publishing his poetry book

Marla & Gary Vecchio

in memory of Howie Greenberg

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Sarah & David Zalcmann

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in memory of Yossi Afek

speedy recovery to Maya Afek Fair

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in memory of Gloria Gordon

in memory of Lawrence Flayton

in memory of Sandra Ehrlich

Rolane & Stephen Sunsine *in memory of Sarah & Sam Lichtenfeld*

Contributions listed are inclusive from the last issue of Connections through October 6, 2024. We apologize for any errors or omissions.

Today rabah – thank you – to Steve Levin for making a beautiful, new Kol Ami table for our Chapel.

BUSINESS DIRECTORY

Kol Ami Professional Networking Group

November 14
8:30-10:00 am

December 5
5:30-7:00 pm

A monthly opportunity to connect with other professionals within our Kol Ami community.

 Many Voices. One Community.

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Save the date!
COMEDY
night

JANUARY 18, 2025
7:00 PM



COMEDIAN :
DAN NATURMAN

COMEDIAN :
OPHIRA EISENBERG

Save the Date

Kol Ami presents...

CURTAINS UP!

SOUNDS OF STAGE & SCREEN
Sunday, April 6, 2025
Honoring Cantor Neil Schnitzer

Be sure to like, follow, and tag us
on social media! 👍@#

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