

# Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey Journal

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## Rabbi's Message

Dear Friends,

George Floyd couldn't breathe. Eric Garner couldn't breathe. So many of our brothers and sisters of color haven't been able to breathe at one point or another over the past year, over the past decade, the past century, the past 400 years. How much longer can we continue to bear their suffocation?

Ever since the murder in Minneapolis last week, our country has been crying out for racial justice. It's been necessary, it's been overdue, it's been loud. And it's been messy – **so so** messy – which is good, because birth is always messy. Maybe, just maybe, we're actually witnessing the birth of a new reality, a reality in which **every** member of our society will feel equally protected and equally respected.

The cries for racial justice sound familiar, but so too is there something strangely different "this time." It's hard to pinpoint exactly what that difference is, but surely it does feel different. It's beautiful, it's life affirming, and it's nothing short of a miracle, but it **is** messy.

Not everyone has been on the same page when it comes to deciding on the next best step. Some want revolutionary change and some want incremental change, but everyone does want change. With different strategies being thrown out, it is hardly a neat and tidy process, but one thing is sure: No one, neither the protestors, nor the police, is prepared to accept the murder of George Floyd without objection. Everyone on every

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## Calendar of Events

### Friday, June 12

7:30pm: Shabbat Service on Zoom

### Saturday, June 13

8:15pm: Havdalah on Zoom

### Sunday, June 14

9:30am: Sunday School on Zoom

10:00am: Congregational Meeting on Zoom  
(call will open at 9:30)

### Friday, June 19

7:30pm: Shabbat Service on Zoom

### Saturday, June 20

8:15pm: Havdalah on Zoom

### Friday, June 26

7:30pm: Shabbat Service on Zoom

### Saturday, June 27

8:15pm: Havdalah on Zoom

Expect Friday night Shabbat Services and Saturday night Havdalah to continue virtually in July and August. Check your email for the invites to Zoom calls.

Please Note: Calendar events are subject to change, which will be announced by email.

## Rabbi's Message (continued)

side of the story – save the tiny percentage of those who occupy the far right and far left fringes – strives to live in a country where every citizen-police interaction unfolds with justice as its sole guide.

As we look to the future, let none of us conclude that our current turmoil is about George Floyd alone, or that his death was in any way ground breaking. Let none of us be seduced into thinking that successful prosecution of the former police officers responsible for his murder will be the end of racial injustice in America, because 400 years of lived experience cannot be wiped clean with the conviction of four people. The task before us is gargantuan. The pursuit of justice will not be complete overnight, but it must begin, and we must do what we can to usher it along its way. We pray this time of profound messiness will indeed prove itself to be the birth of a new reality of safety and dignity and equality and justice.

So what are we, the almost entirely white community of the Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey to do? How can we fulfil our prophetic obligation of *tikkun olam*, of helping to heal our world? There are a number of things we might do, of course, but when all is said and done, there is, in my mind, one non-negotiable first step. In order to have any chance of success, the first thing our mostly white community must do is listen to our brothers and sisters of color, because for the clear majority of us, neither we nor those closest to us have ever experienced what it feels like to live life in black skin. For most of us, we simply don't have the capacity to understand the extent of the challenge.

On that note, allow me to conclude not with my own words, but with a Facebook posting (with permission from the authors) that was put up a few days ago by a college classmate of mine and her teenage son. I cannot possibly share with you what it feels like to live under constant suspicion because of the color of my skin, but Emmett can. Please, I invite all of us to let his words roll over us and permit them to be the necessary catalyst that will equip us to engage in the process that will, finally, effect genuine *tikkun olam*:

*At summer camp last year, Emmett was invited to write something—anything— in response to a prompt. No other direction was offered. The prompt was “octopus.” He used it to go deep. What came out of him is beautiful and scary. He was only 15 years old, and THIS is what is on his mind. Please give him a moment. He needs you to know:*

### Octopus Government.

I know, what the hell, let me explain. Each tentacle of the octopus' body is a struggle that brings me and other black people down beneath the waters of society.

Tentacle One is the state PD.

“We got a code red, pistol in a bag”, “Let me see your ID”. “Is that THC in your PVC?”, “you ain't never gettin to no Ivy League, you just gonna sit on the couch”

I swear it just gets worse down south. If you say the wrong words, they'll shoot you in the mouth. Many kids shot outside their grandma's house. Cleopatra lost her son and Lauren London lost her spouse.

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## Rabbi's Message (continued)

Tentacle 2 is the street bias on me. You know, the look you get walking down the street with your shoes that cost 3 TVs blasting CDs, and everyone expecting the blessing of that last dollar you make is going to Merinos and cheap weed followed by casinos and VVs.

This is crazy but when I grow up, I want to be an actor. But is it a factor that my skin is blacker than half of the actors? And just cause I look up to rappers they think I'm a slacker. So now I'm a gangster, cause I don't rap for kids like parappa the rapper? I call it art, thoughts on a page the ingredients together like sriracha and sage, pens open the cage a mind surrounded by a world of rage this stage is now fine and calm, the palms curve while you observe my word. Deep into the water. Into the water I'm swimming with fishes I keep lyrics clean like I'm doing the dishes the rhyming is vicious.

You don't understand cookouts where food is delicious

the mashed potatoes so damn fluffy

emmett why's your hair so freaking scruffy?

It's only a part of my culture, the culture you steal like a vulture. wait I just built up a thought like a sculpture.

L'Shalom,

*Rabbi Dubin*

## President's Message

Ain't no cure for the summertime blues.

As we head into summer, I am reminded of the old Eddie Cochran song, *Summertime Blues*. In an interview with Pete Townsend of The Who, I once read, regarding this song, that there ain't no cure for the summertime blues because you are not supposed to be sad in the summertime.

When we had our mental health day a few months ago, we were reminded that people can and have the right to be sad or depressed, and that we do not get to dictate to anyone how they should be feeling. With that being said, my hope is that we will be able to get out of our houses and possibly enjoy each other's company sometime this summer.

The temple board has created a subcommittee to discuss how we will have activities again. There are a number of ideas floating around, and I will keep you abreast as we meet and come up with ideas about how to best (1) keep the congregation safe and (2) begin to have some SAFE social interaction.

For now, keep on tuning into the Zoom Shabbat and Havdalah services that Rabbi Dubin, Student Cantor Noa Dubin and Cantor Nancy Dubin have been leading each week.

Personally, I want to thank all of you who have been inquiring about Iris and how she is holding up during her treatments. I really appreciate the care and concern that you have shown to Iris and me.

Love Howie

# Updates & Events

## ANNUAL MEETING

Shalom Congregation,

The annual meeting of the Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey will be on June 14th at 10 AM. We will be voting on dues as well as discussing our successes and trials over the past year.

We will also be taking input from you in terms of what you need from the congregation during the coming year.

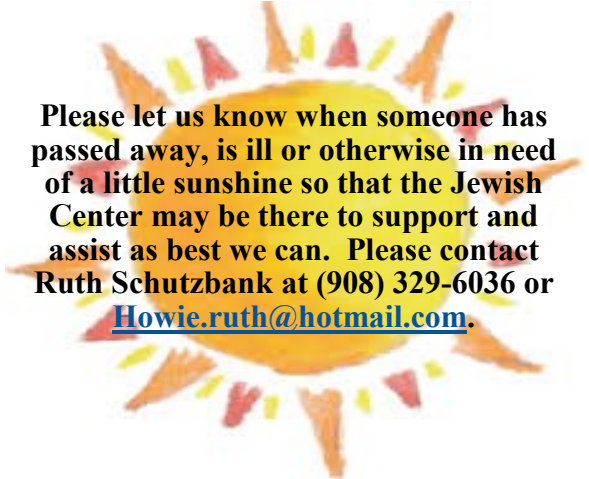
The meeting will be on Zoom, so please check your email for the link to join. I will start the call at 9:30 for anyone who wants to kibbitz and just say or see their fellow congregants that they have not seen in a while.

-Howie

## SUNDAY SCHOOL

The final Sunday School of the year will meet on Zoom on June 14.

## A Reminder from the Sunshine Committee



Please let us know when someone has passed away, is ill or otherwise in need of a little sunshine so that the Jewish Center may be there to support and assist as best we can. Please contact Ruth Schutzbank at (908) 329-6036 or [Howie.ruth@hotmail.com](mailto:Howie.ruth@hotmail.com).

## FOOD DRIVE

During this time when our building is closed, we encourage members to donate to relief organizations and food pantries online. We will resume collecting food at the JCNWJ after we reopen.

The food pantries are in dire need of supplies to fill their shelves as more and more people are in need and your generosity will help fill that need.

Thank you for your continued support!

Iris

# Updates & Events

## TORAH STUDY

Torah Study Participants:

Please finish reading Deuteronomy. When it is safe to do so, we will get together in person to discuss the remaining chapters. This may require several sessions. We will also need to decide what we will study next.

Stay safe. Miss you all.

-Sharon

## DONATIONS

On the Yahrzeit of David Pinn  
– Helen and John Mattson

On the Yahrzeit of Saul Schutzbank  
– Ruth and Howard Schutzbank

In loving memory of my Father and Sabrina's  
Grandfather  
– Gerri Klein

In Memory of Al Klein  
– Helen and John Mattson

## WEBSITE

Members Only!

The JCNWJ website has a section for temple members only. Here you'll find the latest membership list and other documents not for public consumption.

To access, go to [www.jcnwj.org/members/](http://www.jcnwj.org/members/) and enter the user name jcnwjmember and password. Forgot the password? E-mail [website@jcnwj.org](mailto:website@jcnwj.org).

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