

Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey Journal

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Rabbi's Message

Dear Friends,

As I sit here writing this message to you, I do so with a sore upper arm . . . and I couldn't be more grateful, because the soreness I feel tells me I'm doing what I can to protect myself and others. My soreness comes from the COVID booster shot that I received earlier today.

Over the past 8 months, every time I've needed to produce proof of vaccination to enter this public space or that, I've done what so many of us have been doing, which is to open my phone, scroll through picture after picture, until, finally, I've found the snapshot I took back in March. I'm sure there are easier ways to have been doing this, but, alas, that's how I've been doing it. And even if this isn't the most efficient way to find things on my phone, at least I knew well enough not to carry my original card with me at all times, because knowing me, having being shifted and nudged in my wallet over the months, it surely would have become a crumpled mess by now. Having kept it safely protected inside a small book in the "valuable papers" box that we keep at home, when I finally needed the original once again today for my booster appointment, it was as crisp and clear as the day I placed it aside for safe-keeping.

After checking in with the receptionist at the entrance to the vaccination site, I then took a seat at the nurses' station. While

(continued on next page)

Calendar of Events

Sunday: December 12

9:30am: Sunday School
11:00am: Adult Ed—Shabbat in Hebrew
2:00pm: Virtual Israel Tour with Uri

Friday, December 17

7:30pm: Shabbat Evening
Mental Health Healing Service

Saturday, December 18

10:30am: Torah Study (on Zoom)

Sunday, December 19

9:30am: Sunday School
11:00am: Adult Ed—Torah Cantillation
2:00pm: Virtual Israel Tour with Uri

Sunday, December 26

2:00pm: Virtual Israel Tour with Uri

Monday, January 3

7:00pm: Board of Trustees Meet

Sunday, January 9

9:30am: Sunday School
11:00am: Adult Ed—Shabbat in Hebrew

Saturday, January 15

10:30am: Torah Study (on Zoom)

Most events will also have a Zoom option, which will be sent out by email.

Rabbi's Message (continued)

I couldn't possibly explain how it happened that it wasn't until that very moment (when I reached into the tiny book that had been protecting my life-saving card all these months) that it wasn't just any old book – which is appropriate because this wasn't just any old card. This card, which proclaims to everyone who sees it that I am the beneficiary of one of the greatest blessings science (or, better yet, *scientists*) has bestowed upon the world in living memory, had been snuggling all these months safely inside a book of blessings!



In case you can't make out the faint title, it is called, **Grace and blessings For Various Occasions** (don't ask me why the *b* is lower case and the *F* upper case...). Truth be told, while I can't actually remember doing it, I'm sure I must have taken this particular book from my shelf back in March simply because it was the right size to protect the small paper card. In retrospect, however, I now know that I could not possibly have chosen a more appropriate title!

Over the months, a number of new blessings have been written by rabbis and others to show gratitude for the miracle of COVID-19 vaccinations. Some have emphasized God's healing power, some have emphasized God's gift of wisdom to our human scientists, and some have emphasized the power for good that is embodied in human intelligence. Some have emphasized our gratitude for God's comforting presence through the horrific events of COVID-19, and some have emphasized the blessing of being given the opportunity to resume a "normal" life, even while the pandemic persists. Truth be told, there are probably as many reasons to offer gratitude for the vaccines and boosters as there are people who have received them.

To me, though, were I to choose just one of the newly minted blessings, I gravitate towards the words of Rabbi Mason-Barkin and Jason Berkowitz, because in these few lines, I see recognition of the sacred teamwork that I believe is required between God, scientists, and the rest of us in order to overcome the dangers of COVID-19:

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Rabbi's Message (continued)

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha-olam,
shutaf la'yetzirah, asher notein l'ruach-b'nei-enosh
et habinah liv'chor bachayim, v'et nechishut
la'asot et mah shenir'eh bilti efshari,
v'et chochmah limtzo banu chosen
v'et tikvah l'taken et ha-olam.

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם
שותף ליצירה אשר נותן לרוח-בני-אנוש
את בינה לבחר בחיים ואת נחישות
לעשות את מה שנראה בלתי אפשרי
ואת חכמה למצא בנו חסן
ואת תקווה לתקן את העולם

Blessed are You, Adonai our God,
Supreme Power of the universe:
Creative Partner, who gifts the human mind
with intelligence to choose life,
perseverance to do the impossible,
wisdom to vaccinate,
and the hope that will heal the world.

Rabbi Sara Mason-Barkin and Jason Bronowitz

So far as I see it, God cannot protect us unless scientists harness their God-given intelligence to create the vaccines and therapeutics, scientists cannot protect us unless they have that God-given intelligence to begin with, and the rest of humanity can protect neither themselves nor us unless they actually roll up their sleeves to accept the vaccine and booster. None of us, not the scientists, not we, and not even God, is capable of lifting us to a place of full safety without the all three of us doing our parts. But when we all work in concert, each doing that which the others cannot, we can indeed effect *Tikun Olam*, a full healing of the world, which is to say that when actually work in concert and harmony, we have the capacity to bring on nothing less than the Messianic Era itself.

So, as my arm continues to feel the presence of that life-saving booster pulsating through my body, I sit here with gratitude – not only for God's bestowing our scientists with appropriate intelligence to develop the vaccines, not only for the scientists' creation of vaccines, and not only for the 3.33 Billion world-wide who have taken the vaccine, but for being given the opportunity myself to be part of the process of bringing on the Messianic Era, a time of ultimate peace and harmony. And if I have that opportunity, that means that every other person in this world who has access to a vaccination and is able to take it also has the same opportunity.

Please God, watch over your Creation, give us the courage and wisdom necessary to protect ourselves and others, and continue providing us with the will to persevere through the danger that remains.

L'Shalom,

Rabbi Dubin

President's Message

Happy Chanukah to everyone.

I hope that you have had the opportunity to listen to Uri Feinberg over the past weeks. He is the tour guide who led us on our Israel trip in 2018 and has been giving our temple a wonderful view of Israel. The sessions are highly educational as well as a lot of fun. We have been meeting in the sanctuary to watch these tours on Sundays at 2 PM, as well as on our Zoom links.

The first two tours are on YouTube. The videos are posted as "unlisted," which means they can only be accessed with a direct link, not by search. I have sent out emails with the links to the congregation and friends, so you have the ability to watch these tours at your leisure. There are three more scheduled, one for each Sunday in December, and I hope you can take advantage of this opportunity.

Student Cantor Shayna Burack has been working with a small group of people to create a choir to lead prayers for Shabbat services. We hope to share our voices with you in the near future. Student Cantor Burack has also been teaching a class on interpreting the trope markings so that we are learning to chant Torah without listening to a recording. This has been wonderful.

Rabbi has been leading a class on decoding the Hebrew alphabet and will be moving into reading and understanding the prayers that we read and chant on Friday nights.

We were honored to be able to participate in Washington Borough's annual Christmas Tree and Chanukah Menorah lighting last Friday before services. On Saturday, Deb Apsel led us in singing Chanukah songs at the Chesapeake Tavern in Long Valley.

With all this going on, I hope you realize how much time and effort the leadership of this temple puts into finding ways to keep you engaged. We need EVERYONE to do a little to keep this temple flourishing, and I hope that we can count on you to do your part.

Happy Chanukah to all,
With much love,
Howie

Updates & Events

JCNWJ ADULT EDUCATION HEBREW READING & TORAH CANTILLATION

READING HEBREW

TAUGHT BY RABBI DUBIN

STUDENTS WILL LEARN TO READ THE HEBREW ALEPH-BET.
NO PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE IS REQUIRED.

OCTOBER 10, 17*, 24, 31

SHABBAT IN HEBREW

TAUGHT BY RABBI DUBIN

STUDENTS WILL LEARN THE FRIDAY NIGHT SERVICE IN HEBREW.
ABILITY TO READ HEBREW LETTERS IS A PREREQUISITE.

NOVEMBER 14*, 28; DEC 12, JAN 9, 23, 30; FEB 6, 20

Sunday Mornings

11:00-11:55

*(10/17 & 11/14 will be after
Sisterhood, from 12:05 - 1:00)

Every session will include a Zoom option.



zoom

CHOOSE 1, 2, OR ALL 3 CLASSES!



Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey

TORAH CANTILLATION

TAUGHT BY STUDENT CANTOR SHAYNA BURACK

STUDENTS WILL LEARN THE ART OF CHANTING TORAH.

ABILITY TO READ HEBREW LETTERS IS A PREREQUISITE.

NOV 7, 21; DEC 5, 19; JAN 30; FEB 13, 27; MAR 20

JCNWJ ISRAEL SEMINAR SERIES

AN "ON-SITE" VIRTUAL TOUR IN SIX SUNDAYS

2:00 pm -- 3:15 pm

Nov 21



The Early Zionists

Nov 28



The Golan Heights: Hikers, Fighters, Farmers, and a 3rd Century Frontier.

Dec 12



Memorials and Memory in the State of Israel

Join Tour Guide Extraordinaire,
Uri Feinberg
as he shepherds us
through the history of Israel.



Dec 5

Chanukah in Modlin:
Where it all Started.
Then and Now



Dec 19

The Second Temple:
Pilgrims and Sects



Dec 26

Some hidden gems
off the beaten path



Uri will address us from Israel via Zoom, but we will gather at 115 Youmans Ave, Washington (the JCNWJ) to experience the tours live on a ten-foot screen.

The link will be provided for those who prefer to participate from home.



A Program of the Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey with generous support from The Jewish Federation of Somerset, Hunterdon, & Warren Counties



Updates & Events

FOOD DRIVE

Although we are not collecting food at the Temple right now, we encourage all members to give to charities helping those in need.

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

DONATIONS

In memory of Maxwell Gross and Klaire Katz
- Marsha Gross

In memory of William Robins
- Bernie Robins

In memory of Marvin Koral
- Rita Koral

In memory of Max Weil
- Ruth Schutzbank

In memory of Jessica Hirsch
- Howie and Iris Hirsch

In memory of Barbara Simons
- Jerry Simons

TORAH STUDY

Torah Study—Book of Joshua

We will continue our exploration of Joshua on Zoom, on Saturday, December 18 and Saturday, January 15. At recent meetings, we discussed the context and themes of the book as a whole, and then we started reading and analyzing the text in greater detail.

Anyone is welcome to join, and it is not necessary to read the text ahead of time. It is helpful to have a copy of the Tanakh (Bible) so that you can follow along. We appreciate Rabbi Dubin's continued participation and insights.

Please watch your email for the Zoom links, which will be emailed out the week before each meeting.



Updates & Events

SISTERHOOD

Sisterhood Schedule

1/23 - Meeting with zoom - 10am

3/13 - Paint 'n Sip Fundraising Party at Washington Borough Fire Hall - 1pm

Week of 3/14 - Evening Meeting with zoom followed by Mishloach Manot assembly ~ specific date TBD

4/9 - Anything You Can Carry Fundraising Swap Party - 7pm

5/22 Mother's Day Tea at Suzi's - 1pm

June - Skip

July - Pool Party at Beth's / date TBD

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.

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