

Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey Journal

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Rabbi's Message

Dear Friends,

It was at the height of our societal fear, confusion, and anxiety over COVID-19 in October of 2020, that 950 Americans answered questions for a Harvard University sponsored survey (<https://mcc.gse.harvard.edu/reports/loneliness-in-america>) on the subject of loneliness, the results of which revealed that an alarming “36% of all Americans—including 61% of young adults and 51% of mothers with young children—[were feeling] ‘serious loneliness.’” Fortunately, the 2023 Gallup National Health and Well-Being Index (<https://news.gallup.com/poll/473057/loneliness-subsides-pandemic-high.aspx>) reveals that today, almost three-and-a-half years later, such outrageous rates of loneliness have diminished by more than 50%.

Under normal circumstances, improvement by more than 50% would be cause for wild celebration, and I suppose it is, but still, how satisfied can we really be when 17% of us remain captive by the scourge of loneliness? Surely we can do better. Surely we can nurture more connectedness, more belonging, and more support. Surely we can make it so that fewer than one out of six of us (17%) will feel left out, invisible, or unwanted.

There is, of course, no single answer to the question of why so many feel lonely. For some it is lack of family nearby.

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Calendar of Events

Friday, May 12

7:00pm: Shabbat Evening Service

Saturday, May 13

11:30am: Torah Study (Zoom only)

Sunday, May 21

9:30am: Religious School

1:00pm: Sisterhood - Mother's Day
Tea Party & Swap (see Pg. 6)

Friday, May 26

7:00pm: Shabbat Evening Service
Shavuot Observance

Sunday, June 4

9:30am: Religious School

Monday, June 5

7:00pm: Board of Trustees Mtg.

Saturday, June 10

10:30am: Torah Study (Zoom only)

Yoga: Wednesdays at 5:00pm (details have changed - see Pg. 6)

Note: Most in-person events will also be available virtually on Zoom.

Rabbi's Message (continued)

For others it is the repercussions of a social media reality that is anything but real. For some it is the pressure of too much work being demanded from us at our jobs, and for others it is because as we get older, we've been losing the friends and loved ones who had always kept us going. There are so many different reasons that it's impossible to list the all. But one thing we can say with confidence is that when we lack the time or ability to create meaningful personal connections, the resulting isolation most often leads us into a state of painful loneliness.

So what we can do about this, if, that is, we can do anything at all? There are many things, I imagine, but perhaps it would be most helpful to begin with the Talmudic dictum that כל ישראל (כל ישראל) *Kol Yisrael arevim zeh bazeh*), that "Every Jew is responsible for each other". (Shevuot 39a). To be clear, I am not suggesting we should take from this that we have no responsibility to those who are not Jewish, because we certainly do, but rather that when it comes to our own family, our own community of Jews, the responsibility runs even deeper, and the benefits become even clearer. Fortunately, as heirs to three millennia of Jewish wisdom – not to mention 75 years of developing our own love for each other at the JCNWJ – we at 115 Youmans Avenue already understand and appreciate the value and responsibility that come with community. We know the benefits that result from "loving our neighbors as we love ourselves." (Leviticus 19:18) We are entirely reluctant to "forsake our friend or the friend of our father," (Proverbs 27:10) because we realize that when we prioritize our relationships, we build support systems that enable us to navigate difficult times and keep from loneliness. We get why Shimon the Righteous equate acts of loving-kindness with the holiness of Torah and prayer (Pirkei Avot 1:2), because we have all seen members of our own JCNWJ family reach out to others with kindness and compassion when others have been in need. For that matter, so too have many of us have been grateful to receive help when circumstances have been particularly difficult for us.

In short, we at the JCNWJ know that when we take responsibility for the wellbeing of others, we develop relationships. And when we are in relationship, we connect, and we become connected. We support, and we become supported. Ultimately, by making conscious choices to engage with others, we create a more connected, vibrant, and inviting reality for everyone involved.

Times are hard. We get it. COVID threw us out of whack. Growing antisemitism has forced us to look over our shoulders all too often. Rising costs of living make us think twice before going out to social gatherings. The loss of loved ones leaves us feeling more alone than we want to be. And the list goes on. If we feel lonely, it certainly makes sense.

Let us help. Even if you are unable to attend in person, even if Zoom is the only way it will work for you, please join us for some (or all) of what we do at JCNWJ. Whether it be Shabbat, Sunday School, Sisterhood, Torah Study, or anything else we do, please join us. I promise that if you take

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Rabbi's Message (continued)

advantage of what we have to offer, if you choose to be with us for worship, for study, for works of tikkun olam (repairing the world), for purely social events, or for anything else, I promise that you will indeed feel a sense of connectedness, and that any loneliness you may be feeling will be lessened. Even better, I promise that you will wind up helping others who might be experiencing loneliness themselves to feel more connected and more valued.

And so I conclude with an invitation: If the difficulties of loneliness, whether it be your own or someone else's, is of concern to you, please join us for our next Shabbat service (Friday, May 12), when my sermon will address the topic of what Jewish wisdom can do to help us conquer the challenges of loneliness.

L'Shalom,

Rabbi Dubin



President's Message

As a person who loves to travel, I am excited to continue my new quest, which is to visit all 63 National Parks. My plan for this month is to visit 4 parks in southeast New Mexico and west Texas. They are, in order of when we are going, *White Sands National Park*, *Guadalupe Mountains National Park*, *Carlsbad Caverns National Park* and *Big Bend National Park* (Texas). I will be traveling with my long-time friend, whom I met in high school, Jay Grossman. Jay and I traveled to the Dakotas two years ago and are excited to have another trip. In addition, when I return, I will be attending my 50th high school reunion.

For those of you who think I am still a kid (as do I), it is a reminder that time marches on, and it is a good thing to live your life to the best of your abilities and passions. It is too easy to say, I will get to that later. Later never seems to come about unless you make plans for things to occur. One thing I still remember from my high school days was this lesson taught to me by my mom. If you want something, do not wait for it to come to you. Go out and make it happen. Don't wait by the phone hoping it will ring, pick the phone up and call people. If you don't make the effort, don't expect that others will flock to you because of your radiant personality or any other reason. Be pro-active and make calls to your family and friends. Don't let the time go by when you're not speaking with friends or family simply because you are tired. The only day you are promised is today (and even that is not a sure thing). Don't be complacent, do something!

Towards the end of May, we will be planting our community garden, and I would really love for this to be a community event, where we are involved from rototilling the garden, to planting the crops, to tending for the plants and then disbursing the fruits (vegetables) of our combined labors. Last year we set up an automatic watering system, so that we don't need to show up daily to water, but we do need YOUR HELP to make this garden grow.

With much love,
Howie

Special Message

Temple is truly a family giving support & strength. Rabbi Dubin's eulogy captured the essence of Hannie's life.

All the cards, hugs, prepared foods and caring words are so appreciated.

Hannie is gone, but will be remembered by many and that gives me comfort.

Ruth Schutzbark
&
Family

(Please include this in the monthly newsletter.)

Thanks - ♥

Sisterhood



Weekly Yoga with Gina Cerbone - Starting in April, the Sisterhood yoga class is moving to Gina Cerbone's new space, 'Yoga at the Barn' located at:
117 Hope Crossing Rd.
Belvidere, NJ 07823

Here's the link to sign up with a monthly commitment to get our rate:
<https://www.spoonfulofom.com/service-page/yoga-the-barn-for-jcnw-1>

Any questions or suggestions, can be directed to Suzi Marr and/or Beth Lappin.
Shalom!

Updates & Events

DONATIONS

Bernie and Nancy Robins

In memory of Saul Schutzbank
- Ruth Schutzbank

In memory of Howie Schutzbank
- Helen and John Mattson

In memory of David B. Pinn
- Helen and John Mattson

In memory of Max Spinner
- Helen and John Mattson

In memory of Carol Fleckles White
- Sharon Herson and Daniel Fleckles

BUILDING UPDATE

If you notice that something is running low and needs to be replaced (either in the bathrooms or kitchen), please let me know.

You can either call or email me at
irishirsch@comcast.net or 908-850-1030.

Thank you.

Iris

MAY YAHRZEITS

Rebecca Sachat
Irwin Finkelstein

Gershon Kaplan
Celia Levine

Saul Schutzbank
Lou Scholar

Dora Merein
Julius Schiller

Arthur Hertzmark
Robert Joseph Heller

David B. Pinn
Michael S. Lewis

Lewis
Sam Yaffe

Carol Fleckles White
Mary Davis

Keith Ehrenreich
Gerald Klein

Susan Waxman
Joseph Posner

Reuben Marcovitch
Jonas Lofkovitz

Louis Klein

Larry Bauer
Samuel Linsenbaum
Solos Blum

Barbara's grandmother
Father of Shelley Finkelstein

Father in law of Ruth Schutzbank

Grandmother of Lois Goldberg

Father of Nancy Robins
Cousin of Rabbi Ellen Jay Lewis
Father of Helen Mattson
Grandfather of Rabbi Ellen Jay

Sister of Daniel Fleckles

Cousin of Edythe Herson
Uncle of Gerri Klein
Mother of Debbie Kahan
Grandfather of Tracey Bauer
Father of Edythe Herson
Holocaust survivor

Brother of Mo Bauer

Note: If any Yahrzeit information is missing or incorrect, please notify the Temple.

Updates & Events

TORAH STUDY

Torah Study is nearing the completion of the Book of Judges, and our next meeting is scheduled for May 13 at 11:30am.

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 link.

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.

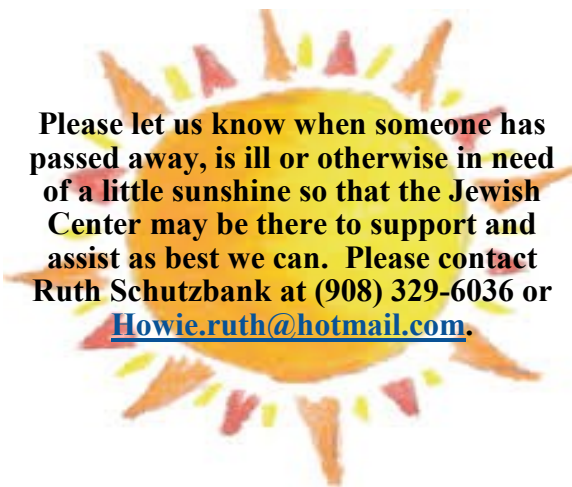
The food pantries are in dire need of supplies to fill their shelves as more and more people are in need and your generosity will help fill that need.

Thank you for your continued support!

-Iris

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.





COMMUNITY B'YACHAD

SELECT SUNDAYS

- Coffee with friends
- Adult arts and crafts
- Music & songs
- Jewish & Hebrew learning
- Feel good schmoozing!

9:30-12:00

RUN BY:
SHIRA, DEBBIE A., RABBI DUBIN, &
STUDENT CANTOR SHAYNA



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Kindly take note of the ads at the end of our Journal and whenever possible, support these establishments with your patronage. It's also a good idea to mention that you saw their Temple ad. If there are any businesses that you use regularly that might be interested in taking an ad in the Journal, please contact Rita Berkowitz (berk721@aol.com) or Ruth Schutzbank (Howie.ruth@hotmail.com). You can also go to our homepage, print out an advertising form and give it directly to them to mail in.