

# Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey Journal

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January 2024

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## Rabbi's Message

Dear Friends,

The end of December ... a time of year when rabbis huddle together and pray for the strength to shepherd their communities through the "holiday" season, what feels like a very Christian season, without compromising on Jewish pride and identity. I understand the initial discomfort. I even share in the discomfort. Beyond the awkwardness, however, we may find great comfort and shared purpose in remaining open to the many humanitarian lessons of the Christmas season.

These are difficult times. Our people are held hostage, our homeland is at war. Political divisions continue to worsen. Gun violence is on the rise, virulent antisemitism is surging, and increasing numbers of Americans face food and shelter insecurity.

At any time – but particularly during such difficult days – we would be well advised to take comfort wherever we can find it, regardless of its origin.

To be sure, Christmas is not our holy day. All the same, that does not mean we can't dwell in the aura of peace, joy, and generosity it seems to usher in each year. Yes, Jewish tradition maintains an imperative for tzedakah – it is a core mitzvah after all – but we have Christmas to thank for bringing it to the forefront of American consciousness at this time of year.

(continued on next page)

## Calendar of Events

### **Sunday, January 7**

9:30am: Hebrew School

### **Monday, January 8**

7:00pm: Board of Trustees Meeting

### **Friday, January 12**

7:00pm: Shabbat Evening Service  
MLK week with Mt. Pisgah AME Church  
Sermon by Rev. Alston

### **Sunday, January 14**

9:30am: Hebrew School  
11:00am: Service at Mt. Pisgah  
Sermon by Rabbi Dubin

### **Saturday, January 20**

11:15am: Torah Study on Zoom (see Pg. 5)

### **Sunday, January 21**

9:30am: Community B'yachad

### **Saturday, January 27**

9:30am: Hebrew School  
10:30am: Shabbat Morning Service  
Kiddush/Lunch to follow

### **Sunday, January 28**

9:30am: Chaverim Party & Craft (see Pg. 7)

### **Sunday, February 4**

9:30am: Hebrew School & Chaverim

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

## Rabbi's Message (continued)

Gifting – figuratively and literally – is a funny thing. Though we can't legislate what other people give us, nor how they give it, we certainly can control what we give others, and the spirit in which we give. We may not be able to establish peace throughout the world, but we can strive for peace within our families, neighborhoods, and workplaces. We may not be able to feed the entire world, but we can find the compassion to chip away at hunger in our own communities. We may not be able to clothe the entire world, but we can find the humanity within to collect and distribute warm coats to many in our greater community who otherwise would go cold this winter.

I am deeply grateful for each and every reminder to live peacefully and lovingly, wherever they may originate. One need not be Christian to embrace the Christmas spirit, just like one need not be Jewish to pray for the increase of light in these dark times. Christians may have exclusive rights to their own messianic understanding of Christmas, but generosity and Tikkun Olam by any name will always be values that we, as Jews, ought to support.

*L'Shalom,*

*Rabbi Dubin*



## President's Message

Farewell to 2023 and welcome to 2024.

A new year brings new hope, new love, and new faith ( to paraphrase Bruce Springsteen and quoted at Ezra Tarlowe's Bar Mitzvah by Mike Weiner).

I have been a changed person in the last 12 months. A year ago, Iris asked to go to Costa Rica for her birthday. She picked out the tour to go on, which was a bird photography tour. We had a wonderful time. Unbeknownst to me, this trip has changed me dramatically. I have been bitten by bird photography fever. In addition to this "disease," I have done more in my wood shop and serious work in my gardens.

What I have discovered in the last 12 months is an artistic side of me that I did not know existed for my entire life. I have always been the analytical type, and the adjustment to appreciating and creating art has been a total transformation. I think that I have always seen the beauty of the world and I know I enjoyed travelling for my job as well as on vacations and my highly successful state capitol quest.

But the mindset to look for my art to share is very new to me. I am trying to look at the world a little differently, but I am going to try and portray the beauty of the world, especially the birds that I have become so fond of.

I need to thank my wife Iris for showing me the beauty of the animal kingdom for the last 40 plus years. I grew up with one pet dog that we kept for a year. Until I met Iris, that was the extent of my dealing with my own family pet. I have also been bitten by at least two dogs that I can remember in my youth, so I was quite concerned when getting involved with a woman who can not live without a pet in her life. She has shown me the beauty of having a pet, as well as the sorrow of losing pets.

My hope for all of you this year is the same as it is every year. I wish you good health. I hope you find happiness in your family, in your work, in your activities and in your life.

Lastly, I want to thank my family for giving me the best Chanukah present of all. All my children, their partners and the grandchildren were all together with Iris and me for Chanukah this year.

All my love to all of you,

Howie

# Updates & Events

## DONATIONS

In memory of Joyce Shubs and Sarah Fromer Zeiden  
- Helen Mattson

For the temple  
- Robin and Leon Hall  
- Iris Hirsch

Please consider making a donation to the temple for our current fundraising campaign. Board members will be reaching out to all congregants to explain our financial needs and answer questions. We are now able to accept secure donations at the JCNWJ website as well as by mail. All donations are greatly appreciated and we hope you are able to participate in this important effort.

## SPIELERS WANTED

Heads up for our Purim Spiel! Anyone interested in the crazy fun please let me know. I'm not sure what the theme will be yet but whatever it is we will have our usual blast!

Rehearsals will begin in January, usually after Sunday school but we will go with the flow with our fluid schedule.

The Spiel performance will be March 22nd.

I hope you will join in!

Your dedicated Spiel Director,  
Debbie Apsel  
Debapsel@gmail.com

## Yahrzeits

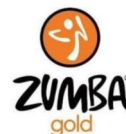
Sadie Schiller	Relative of Blanche Davidson
Isaac Nudelman	Grandfather of Tracey Bauer
Ellen Field	Mother of Alison Shelofsky
Joseph Berkowitz	Father of Jerry Berkowitz
Sid Goldstein	Father of Iris Hirsch
Naomi Davine	Cousin of Edythe Herson
Gussie Zaret	Grandmother of Lois Goldberg
Rose Margolin	Mother of Diane Margolin
Sol Rems	Father of Linda Margolis
Howard Schutzbank	Husband of Ruth Schutzbank
Arthur Marcovitch	Brother of Edythe Herson
Ellen Powell	Mother of Lynne Kowski
Maya Guberman	Granddaughter of Marcia Guberman
Elaine Hirsch	Mother of Howie Hirsch
Ellis Golub	Friend of Helen Mattson
Phyllis Loomis	Mother of Roy Loomis

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

Zumba Gold with  
Sandy



Mondays 10-10:45am



Where: WCHFH Community  
Center  
31 Belvidere Avenue,  
Washington, NJ 07882

# Updates & Events

## TORAH STUDY

The Torah study group is an informal discussion group, led by Rabbi Dubin and participants. We take turns reading and discuss the paragraphs/chapters as we go. We often touch on/get really into contemporary events, even though we are reading the first book of Samuel.

The next meeting is January 20 at 11:15am. We will continue reading in the Book of 1 Samuel, at chapter 11. This and subsequent chapters deal with the early kings of Israel (Saul, David), and stories with which you might be familiar, such as David and Goliath, and the friendship between King Saul's son Jonathan and the future king David. Torah study is open to all. The Zoom link is the one used for all synagogue events.

## FOOD DRIVE

We continue to be able to accept non-perishable food items at the temple. We are also holding a coat drive at this time to provide for those in need during the upcoming winter.

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

## 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.

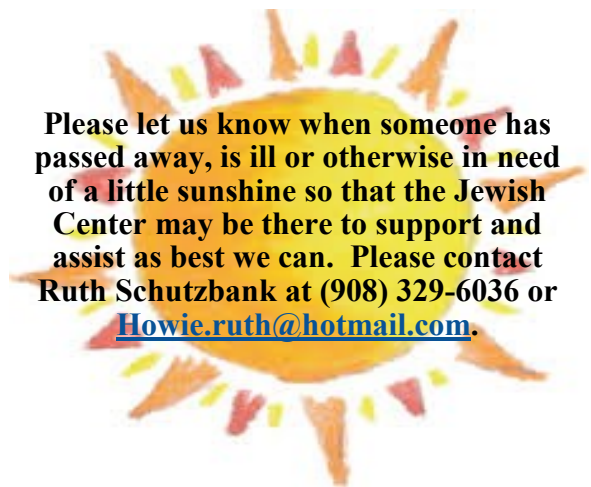
You can either call or email me at [irishirsch@comcast.net](mailto:irishirsch@comcast.net) or 908-850-1030.

Thank you.

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](mailto:Howie.ruth@hotmail.com).



# Chaverim

A reminder: Sisterhood is now Chaverim, which means “friends” in Hebrew. That means that EVERY adult is welcome. Dues are \$18.00/year and should be sent to Ruth Schutzbank. We use the dues to pay for temple activities throughout the year.

***For time being, and for everyone's safety - masks will be required for any indoor events requiring close proximity to each other***

**Jan 7** – *Fiddler on the Roof* at Paper Mill Playhouse. Meet & depart from temple. Sold out!

**Jan 28, 9:30 a.m.** – Sharon's & Risa's 80th birthdays AND "Craft with Teri" Japanese Knot bag. \$10 for pattern template and stabilizer backing. Cotton materials are available for sale along with some donations. Please RSVP and ask questions directly to Teri at 908.310.3026. Jeannie Berkowitz will send a note to sign up for what refreshments are needed.

**Feb 4, 9:30 a.m.** – Mishloach Manot and possible Passover Wine Fundraising meeting.

**March 22, 7 p.m.** – **Purim Spiel & Mishloach Manot Distribution [please plan to attend spiel & pick up].**

**March 24** – group trip to NYC to see *SIX* on Broadway. Drive in or take the train/subway together. Meet & depart from temple. Sold out!

**April 13, 7:30 p.m.** – Havdalah, followed by Judaica SWAP Fundraiser & Cocktail Party.

**May 19, 1 p.m.** – Annual Mother's Day Tea Party.

**June** – annual congregational meeting [no Chaverim meeting this month]

**Yoga** w/ Gina @ The Barn Belvidere, NJ - Spoonful of Om – Wednesday evenings - special monthly rate available.

**Zumba Gold** w/ Sandy Polsky @ H4H Community Center, Washington, NJ – Mondays 10am-\$5.00.

JOIN us on FB at “JCNWJ members only” page for updates and/or add “WhatsApp” to your smartphone to get current updates. We look forward to seeing you all at these events! Questions, please call Suzi 908.343.1135



# Chaverim Party & Craft



## Additional Details

Minimum cost to participate is \$10 (incl patten template & stabilizer backing). Remaining costs depend on which fabric you choose (some donated from Jeannie; some for sale from Teri). Teri Stanton can answer any questions you may have. If you have a sewing machine, please bring along with notions, seam ripper, scissor or rotary cutter, iron, ironing mat, cutting mats. Or any of those items you may have.

Jeannie Berkowitz will be sending a sign-up for refreshments, etc. where you can RSVP for the octogenarian celebration.



**\$10 for pattern, template and stabilizer.**

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*Serving All Families  
As Our Own*

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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](mailto:berk721@aol.com)) or Ruth Schutzbank ([Howie.ruth@hotmail.com](mailto: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.