

Congregation Kehilat Shalom NEWS

A Welcoming Jewish Reconstructionist Community

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Newsletter of the Congregation Kehilat Shalom of Belle Mead, NJ

December 2016 Kislev — Tevet 5776

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Bulletin from the Board — Len Edelstein



We are now past the busy season of early fall with the start of school and consequent return of kids' activities, the High Holidays, and for my family, multiple birthdays. With late fall comes the changing of the clocks, early evenings, the beginning of winter and the onset of holidays such as Thanksgiving, Chanukah, and New Year's. While many people cherish their extra hour of sleep, I do not to look forward to the end of daylight savings which brings sunset at 4:30pm and a long dark commute home. However, I don't consider the end date of my endurance of the dark to be March 20, the first day of Spring, or March 12 the return of daylight savings. The day I look forward to is December 21st, the first day of winter. Yes, the temperature will continue to get colder after that date, but the days will get longer. And even though it will still be cold and dark, I am comforted by the fact that warmer, longer days are ahead, and each day will be better and brighter than the one before. Speaking of having an optimistic outlook, congratulations to all the volunteers who put in long hours of hard work on our Fall Rummage Sale fundraiser. The sale this year is netting about \$7,000! Special thanks go to Debbie Gartenberg, Ilene and Marty Millman, Barbara Berger and Tom Berger, Natalie London, and newly retired Gary Gartenberg. This event would not have been possible without them. Thanks also go to the many other volunteers who pitched in, including the students of Kehiloft, and to everyone who donated items. It was a true community effort.

I'd like to wish everyone a Happy Chanukah and happy holidays. Let's all look forward to brighter days ahead.

Len Edelstein- 2nd Vice President



Congregants met for a CKS Service Leaders workshop on Sunday, November 20. The series will continue in December.

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CKS Donations

CKS gratefully acknowledges the generosity of our members and friends.

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- ♥Marc & Harlene Rosenberg
In memory of Edward Scott
In memory of Seymour Shapiro
- ♥Debbie Lampf & Michael Kalison
In honor of Ethan Berli's Bar Mitzvah
- ♥Hinda Greenberg
- ♥Debbie Lampf & Michael Kalison
In memory of Robert Link
- ♥Lisa Roe
In memory of Rabbi Marcus Beymann

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- ♥Gregory & Suzanne Corsan
- ♥Jeanne, Laurel & Susan Schechter
In memory of Norman Schechter
- ♥Jeff & Jackie Barth
- ♥Brian & Laurence Cige
- ♥Barbara & Tom Berger
- ♥Sharon UnderbergDavis
- ♥Janis Barondess Todd & Alan Todd
In honor of Kate Fridkis Berring
In honor of Kol Ahava
In memory of Mary Barondess
In memory of Seymour Shapiro
In honor of Debbie Gartenber's hard work on the rummage sale
- ♥Lisa Roe
- ♥Hilary & Peter Crist
In honor of Emily Kayle Sobel, Resa Ellyn Posner and
Jared Posner
- ♥Barbara Lehman
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Rabbi 's Discretionary Fund

- ♥Janis Barondess Todd & Alan Todd
In honor of Rabbi Susan
- ♥Jane Shapiro & Bob Eckardt
In memory of Seymour Shapiro

Remember CKS when you donate:

Dues only cover a portion of the CKS operating budget. Consider making a donation in memory of a loved one, honoring an accomplishment, or recognizing a friend or colleague.

CKS Forms Social Action Group

Congregation Kehilat Shalom is forming a new Social Action group that will address local and national social justice issues. Those who are interested in more information on the group are requested to email Rabbi Susan. Thus far, the group is planning to attend the Women's March on Washington on January 21, 2016.

CKS Pre-Chanukah Celebration

Friday, December 16

Chanukah begins with the first candle lighting on December 24. Many of our congregants will be out of town, so we are starting the festivities early this year. We will be hosting our annual Chanukah celebration on Friday, December 16 at 6:15 p.m. Bring a potluck dish and get ready to celebrate the festival of lights. We will be hosting dinner and a short prayer service, and sing along to Chanukah songs - all together in the sanctuary. CKS will provide latkes, applesauce, and sour cream. Please bring a dairy or parve dish to share. You need not RSVP but if you need suggestions for what to bring, feel free to call the office.



Shop CKS for Chanukah Candles

Our own CKS gift shop has dreidels, Chanukah candles, menorahs and other Judaica items for purchase. These include Chanukah wrapping paper, serving trays and other supplies to get ready for the Festival of Lights. Don't see what you seek in the gift shop? Remember, CKS gets a percentage of all Amazon.com purchases made through our Amazon Smile link (on the website). The CKS gift shop is open during religious school from 11 am - noon.

TIKKUN OLAM COMMITTEE ANNOUNCES WINTER COAT DRIVE - AGAIN!

The Tikkun Olam Committee is launching another coat drive. This one started Sunday morning, November 13, and continues through Sunday afternoon, December 4. A labeled box is on the synagogue porch (and sometimes in the lobby) ready to receive your "gently used" or new sweaters, winter coats, hats, scarves, boots, and gloves or mittens for adults and children. We ask that you label new items as such. This year, donations go to the Rescue Mission of Trenton as well as Home Front, as appropriate.

Already our nights have been frosty, and it is unknown whether our winter will be a gentle or a brutal one. Please rummage through your closets and drawers to pull out the sweaters, coats, hats, scarves, boots, gloves and mittens you no longer wear, so that someone else can be warm this winter.

Any questions? Please email Richard Rosenberg at swellcourt@verizon.net or phone him at 908-253-7049. (No texts.) Thank you.

Message from the Rabbi

Today We Grieve, Tomorrow We Organize



The day after the election, I called for a gathering at CKS for those of us who might want to be together and talk. Nearly 40 of us showed up that evening (and I know that many more of you would have been there if you could). Patiently, one by one, we expressed our thoughts and fears, our shock and despair, our rage and our deep

sadness at the election of a candidate whose campaign was built on hate speech, scapegoating, insults, and bullying. While some of this animus was aimed at his rivals, these terrifying and degrading remarks all too frequently targeted those who are vulnerable in our society – minorities, women, immigrants. Journalists were also routinely threatened, presenting a great danger to the full functioning of our democracy.

That night I said to all of you: “Today we grieve, tomorrow we organize.” As I write this article, we are now in the process of collecting all of our ideas for what we can do, as individuals and as a community, to protect the Jewish and American values that we hold as sacrosanct: justice and compassion, inclusiveness and diversity, equality and love. These values must be our guide as we go forward to defend our rights and the rights of others. So please stay tuned for more information on this.

I hope and pray that both the tone and actions of the President-elect will be different by the time this article is published. But let us be clear: Steve Bannon, the CEO of Trump’s campaign, who was recently named as Chief Strategist and Senior Counselor for the new administration, has been a mouthpiece for the worst kind of racism, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, sexism, and homophobia we have seen in decades. In addition, the incoming administration’s stated goal of using “deportation forces” to round up millions of people is un-American and will likely involve actions that are unconstitutional. Promoting the idea that Muslims in this country should “register” is what Nazi Germany did to the Jewish people. These decisions must be reversed in order to send a clear signal that bigotry will not be tolerated under a Trump presidency. As the great Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel once said at another pivotal moment in history: “This is no time for neutrality. We... cannot remain aloof or indifferent.”

At the same time, my fellow congregants, for the sake of our children and our own sakes, our regularly-scheduled synagogue activities must also go forward – Religious school and Kehiloft, Shabbat

services and b’nei mitzvah, Mah Jongg and book club, meditation and adult education, fundraising and social events. Our Chanukah party will be held on Friday, December 16th as planned, and together we will celebrate the Festival of Lights. Committees and the Board will meet and the bills will get paid. We need all these activities to sustain and support us, to feed our bodies and nourish our souls.

One more thing: We are in that part of our Torah that is characterized by journeys, from the first call to Abraham to “Lech Lecha/Go Forth” to a new land, to the Ancient Israelites’ wanderings in the desert after their redemption from slavery in Egypt. Yet, none of these journeys would have lasted long if our ancestors never stopped to pitch their tents, never stopped along the way to look around, to rest, to regroup, and to scout out whatever might lie ahead.

We must do this too. We must forge ahead with the urgency of this moment, while we also attend to the daily activities and health of our beloved community. We must also pause and rest and pray and learn – and turn to each other for love and support.

Chazak, chazak, v’nitchazeyk. Let us go from strength to strength and be strengthened.

Rabbi Susan



Tree of Life
Purchase a leaf for \$54 to celebrate a *simchal*! Each leaf includes three lines of engraving.
Contact Shelley Nord
908-874-8464



Now in its 23rd full year, CKS’s non-sectarian pre-school for children 2½ to 5 years old, offers a unique atmosphere, giving children a chance to explore, create, and most importantly, learn to think and reason.
For more information, call 908-359-0420



The CKS Gift Shop
is open each Sunday
11 am - 12 noon
when Religious school is in session or by special request.
Questions?
Susan Waskow 609-333-1113
or Iris Rubinstein irubinstein@gmail.com
or the synagogue office for more information



CHANUKAH ACCORDING TO DR. SEUSS

What's the big deal with those Chanukah lights?
 Why do we burn 'em for all of those nights?
 And why for eight nights, why not for seven?
 A gift on each night? Why not for eleven?
 Why do we eat latkes and stuff cooked in oil?
 It's messy and spatters when it starts to boil.
 And the dreidel is gambling, I thought that was wrong.
 But it turns out that we have a real dreidel song.
 Let's take a moment, and think about this,
 'Cause for kids the world over, Chanukah's bliss.
 We light the lights to remind us of when
 Some nasty non-Jews tried to kill us again.
 The Greeks lost the battle. A Maccabee sweep,
 But the remains of the Temple lay at the Jews' feet.
 They lit some oil to give thanks to God,
 It burned for eight nights, a little bit odd.
 Some called it a miracle, the lights all aglow,
 And that's why we're lit up, eight nights in a row



The latkes and stuff, golden brown fried in oil,
 Are a way to remember the Maccabees toil.
 Why the dreidel, you ask? Well, here's the reason.
 The Greeks of the time said that Torah was treason.
 If they caught you at study, you would be beat,
 So Jews kept a dreidel under the sheets.
 If soldiers came near, they'd bust out the top
 And pretend to gamble, and so dodge the cops.
 There's a story for all that we do in this season,
 Tell all your friends that you now know the reason.
 Chanukah; it's a time to light lights for eight nights.
 A time to eat latkes 'til you can't eat one more bite.
 A time to spin dreidels and eat chocolate gelt.
 A time to lay back and loosen your belt.
 It's a gift-giving time. Here! Open a box.
 I hope I don't get some sox or more lox.

Chag Sameach and have a wonderful
 Chanukah holiday!
 From Ann and family

CHANUKAH IS COMING!!

SUPPORT OUR RELIGIOUS SCHOOL'S WALL OF FLAME



Put your name on a flame; put your handle on a candle. Look for the **Wall of Flame**, our Religious School menorah with your name in lights. For only a dollar each, you can buy paper flames for every member of your family. Or, for 18 big ones, you can buy a whole paper candle for your group. Any way you choose, you are warming up to a great cause—your Religious School. For more information, pick up a flyer at the School Office.

On behalf of the Religious School staff and children we thank you for your support.

We have planned many exciting programs for Chanukah. Please join us and help us celebrate Chanukah as a congregational family.

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL REMINDERS:

Friday, December 2:
 Sunday, December 4:

Sunday, December 11:

Friday, December 16:
 Sunday, December 18:

Sunday, December 25- Sunday, January 1:

Saturday, January 7:
 Sunday, January 8:

Shabbat Mishpachah Family services, 7:00pm
K-2 Family workshop: PACT program: *Shema Pajama Party*
COOKING
JEWISH BOOK MONTH BOOK FAIR
 Chanukah art with Kehiloft teens
 Chanukah celebration: Pot Luck Dinner and party
JEWISH BOOK FAIR continues
****Jewish Book Month author Jacqueline Jules visits**
 Adult Ed program
NO RELIGIOUS SCHOOL: Winter break
Religious school resumes on Sunday, January 8.
 Shabbat Mishpachah, Family services, 9:30 am
4th grade Family workshop: PACT program: *Saying Goodbye to Shabbat*
 Adult Ed program

THANKS FOR GIVING: Our school children collect tzedakah money every week. I am proud to report that we have collected a considerable sum of money since early September. It was a privilege, "z'chut" for us to donate a significant amount of money to Jewish Family Services. Our school is happy to support JFS in all their efforts in helping the sick, hungry, and poor of our community. Thank you again to our families who generously support our tzedakah program throughout the year.

Kehiloft, the next step in your Jewish journey



Hi everyone and happy holidays! I'm Ethan Ries and I am part of Kehiloft. As this year has progressed, Kehiloft has been working hard recently in order to prepare for various upcoming events. One activity that we are planning for is leading a Shabbat service on December 2nd. This service will be entirely led by members of Kehiloft and will include a skit from that

night's Torah portion. We have been working diligently preparing for the service and the skit and are excited to lead. Along with the service, Kehiloft and other volunteers helped with the rummage sale by setting up before and after the sale on November 6th. We knew how crucial the rummage sale was for raising money for the synagogue and we felt that it was important to help.

Kehiloft has also been hard at work in the Loft. Each meeting, we get closer and closer to finalizing our annual project. For those who do not know, the annual project is our biggest contribution of the year. For our project, we hope to become more connected to the community with various fundraisers and activities. Past projects have included a Lag B'omer Field Day and constructing the Gaga pit.

Recently, we met with Rabbi Susan to discuss the election results and what kind of effect it has on the Jewish community. We also elaborated on what qualities would make a trustworthy and responsible leader. Our conversations were very insightful and filled with lots of emotion. We concluded the discussion by imagining what the upcoming four years would bring and how our country would be affected.

Overall, Kehiloft is active as ever. And with each meeting bringing much laughter and fun, we are maintaining our upbeat attitude. I wish all of you a happy holiday season and I hope it is filled with peace, love, and kindness.

Ethan Ries

Robert M. Fass

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DECEMBER

Friday, Dec 2 - 7:00 - 9:00 Kehiloft lead Shabbat service #1

Sunday, Dec 11 - Kehiloft leads Chanukah craft in RS

Friday, Dec 16 - CKS Pre-Chanukah dinner party celebration

Wednesday, Dec 21 - Rabbi Susan leads discussion #2

Friday, Dec 30 - 4:00 - 6:00 Chanukah program at Stonebridge, tentative date

JANUARY

Wednesday, Jan 11 - Shabbat prep

Friday, Jan 20 - 7:30 - 9:30 Kehiloft leads Shabbat service #2

Wednesday, Jan 25 - Rabbi Susan leads discussion #3

Saturday, Jan 27 - 7:00 - 9:00 Movie night with congregation (annual project!)

Please check meeting times. Wednesday meetings are from 6:00 - 8:00, with student board meeting 5:30 - 6:00. Friday Shabbat services begin at 7:00 for the first Friday of the month, 7:30 on all other Friday nights. The annual project time is tentatively set for 7:00 - 9:00.

Shalom,

Karen Fridkis, Principal of Kehiloft

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Adult Education

The Sabbath: Why We Need It Now More Than Ever

For centuries, the Sabbath has been the centerpiece of Jewish life. This class will be a multi-session book discussion of Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel's masterpiece, *The Sabbath*. As we read and question our way through sections of the book, together we will learn about the history and development of this remarkable concept, and its radical implications for human dignity and environmental justice. We will also explore how, in the daily-ness of our "journey in time", we can create more spiritual space to enrich our own personal relationship to the Sabbath. In our final session, we will meet for a Sabbath experience that we have designed together to reflect our new perspectives. Here is a quote from the opening of *The Sabbath*:



To gain control of the world of space is certainly one of our tasks. The danger begins when in gaining power in the realm of space we forfeit all aspirations in the realm of time. There is a realm of time where the goal is not to have but to be, not to own but to give, not to control but to share, not to subdue but to be in accord. Life goes wrong when the control of space, the acquisition of things of space, becomes our sole concern.

Complimentary book copies are available for the first three individuals to register through the CKS office.

Weeknights at 7:00 p.m. at CKS
January 11, February 15, March 15, April 5
Final session: 9:30 am, Saturday, May 13

Leading Services:

From Lighting Candles to Adon Olam

This four-session workshop is designed to prepare participants to become service leaders at CKS – but is open to anyone who just wants to understand Shabbat services and prayer more deeply.

Session 2: Making it Meaningful: Joy and Mourning
Sunday, December 18, 2016, 9:00 am

Session 3: Leading a Torah Discussion
Friday, March 17, 2017, 6:00 pm dinner; 7:30 services

Session 4: Putting it All Together
Friday, April 28, 2017, 6:00 pm dinner; 7:30 services

For further details on these or other adult education sessions, check our website, www.ksnj.org.

Israel: Bridging the Gap / Guest Speaker: Rabbi Marisa James

Rabbi Marisa James is currently the Senior Organizer for T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights. During her five years living in Jerusalem, Rabbi James worked for Encounter Programs, facilitating respectful dialogue regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

among rabbinic and cantorial students and Jewish leaders during trips to the West Bank. With Israel so often in the news, many of us wonder if there will ever be peace. If you have questions about what you hear or read in the media, if you worry about Israel's future, if you wonder if a two-state solution is still possible – or even what that means – then, this class is for you. Together we will learn about the roots of the conflict and its possible solutions, with ample time for questions and discussion. December 4, 2016, 10:00 am

Meditation and Chanting

Led By: Rabbi Susan Falk

December 13, February 7, March 7, April 4

Time: 7:15 pm

Is "mindfulness" Jewish? Is there such a thing as "Jewish meditation"? Absolutely! Through sitting, walking, and chant, learn how to practice mindfulness meditation and discover Judaism's rich history with this ancient practice.

On One Foot: Basic Judaism, Part 2

Don't know your Torah from your Talmud? Do you find yourself searching for an answer when someone asks you a question about a Jewish custom? Whether you've had a Jewish education or not, or just feel like you want to "brush up", this class will provide a basic overview of Jewish history, holidays, and sacred texts. A follow-up to Session 1, this class will focus on Judaism's sacred texts and the historical periods that inspired them, concluding with modern and contemporary trends and the development of the various denominations.

February 5th, 2017, 9:15 am

Wrestling with God: What Do Jews Believe?

From our Biblical forebears to the Medieval philosophers to modern-day Jewish feminists, Jews have been struggling to understand God's nature and how that understanding can provide meaning in our lives. In this class, we will learn about Jewish perspectives on God through history. We will discuss questions including: What is God? Is God all-knowing or all-powerful? Does God hear our prayers? If I don't believe in God, am I still Jewish?

March 5th, 2017, 9:15 am

The Sabbath: Why We Need it Now More Than Ever

For centuries, the Sabbath has been the centerpiece of Jewish life. This class will be a multi-session book discussion of Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel's masterpiece, *The Sabbath*. As we read and discuss sections of the book, together we will learn about the history and development of this remarkable concept, and discuss the value of rest and the sacredness of time in our lives. In our final session, we will incorporate our new perspectives into a Sabbath experience on May 13th, 2017. Weeknights, TBA, 7:15 pm. Final session, Saturday May 13, 2017

DECEMBER 2016



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1	2 Shabbat Services led by Kehiloft	3
4 Religious School Israel: Bridging the Gap / Speaker: Rabbi Marisa James	5 Mah Jongg	6	7 Ritual Committee	8 Board Meeting	9 Shabbat Services	10
11 Religious School	12 Mah Jongg	13 Meditation and Chanting	14	15	16 Pot Luck Pre- Chanukah Dinner	17
18 Leading Services 2: Making It Meaningful Religious School	19 Mah Jongg	20	21 Kehiloft	22	23	24
25 Hanukkah I (Holiday of lights)	26 Hanukkah II	27 Hanukkah III	28 Hanukkah IV	29 Hanukkah V	30 Hanukkah VI/Rosh Chodesh Tevet	31 Hanukkah VII

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Fulfilling the religious, educational and social needs of our Jewish community since 1982.

December 2016

Deadline for next newsletter:
December 15th

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