

CONNECTINGS

MARCH/APRIL 2026 Adar/Nisan/Iyar 5786

www.kolaminj.org



THE RABBI TEACHES The Sacredness of Traditions

By Rabbi Ariel Milan-Polisar

One of my favorite Talmudic strategies reminds us of the importance of tradition. Anytime there is not a conclusive answer to an argument after a lengthy discussion, one rabbi

will say to another, "What is the accepted *Halakha* here? Go out and see what the people are doing."

It's a striking way to end a lengthy legal conversation, but it relies on the assumption that whatever the majority of the people are doing must be the accepted tradition, and therefore that should be the law going forward. It is also a reminder that Jewish tradition and law shouldn't necessarily be decided by a small group of rabbis in a room, but rather what makes the most sense for a larger group of people.

There are many Jewish traditions or rituals that exist simply because communities started doing them, and they became commonplace. Oftentimes, our traditions become so entrenched in our lives that they feel like law, even if they're not. These traditions help to ground us—no matter what else is going on in our lives, we know that we can count on them.

Growing up my family had many traditions, some spoken and others unspoken, that became staples for us. Every Passover my dad would always make matzah brei. I remember learning that other people would make their matzah brei pancake-style as opposed to scrambled, or savory as opposed to sweet. To me, that wasn't matzah brei! This family tradition felt like law; if my family made matzah brei this way, that must be how everyone did it.

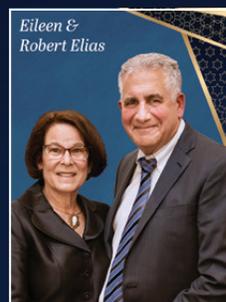
The sacredness of traditions, Jewish or not, is that they create lasting memories, and they instill values that entrench themselves in the family unit. As Jason and I are looking forward to the newest addition to our family in July, we've begun to think about the traditions that we're going to create for our family. It will be interesting to see what each of us will take from our families of origin that we will continue, and what new traditions we will create.

You are invited to the Congregation Kol Ami 2026

Tribute Dinner

honoring

Eileen & Robert Elias
Janine & Mark Sobel
Adam Roth



Celebrate their outstanding and tireless contributions
to Congregation Kol Ami and our community

Sunday, April 19 at 6:15 pm

Dinner & Dessert

Cocktail Party Attire

RSVP by March 30

Must be 18 years or older to attend.

Sponsorships, Tickets, Virtual Tribute Journal Ads &
Messages are available online: www.kolaminj.org

*Proceeds benefit the Warren & Doris Elias Special Needs Endowment Fund,
the Margie & Joe Sobel Family Assistance Fund, and the Thelma & Donald
Spivack Creative Artist-in-Residence Endowment Fund.*



1101 Springdale Road, Cherry Hill NJ 08003



FROM OUR LEADERSHIP

Lisa Weiser, Secretary

Many of us know the song “Tradition” from *Fiddler on the Roof*, where Tevye sings about the importance of tradition in Jewish life. As he reminds us, “we have traditions for everything.” Traditions truly are the foundation of our families and our Jewish identities.

My family is fortunate to have many traditions that have been passed down from generation to generation. I treasure these customs and have incorporated them into my own household and into the way we raised our children. Many are centered around Jewish holidays—what foods we prepare, how we conduct our Passover Seder, which dishes we use, and even what kind of noodle kugel appears on the break-the-fast table. These familiar rituals bond us together and, I hope, will be cherished and continued by future generations.

A very meaningful tradition to my family is our annual week in Ocean City, New Jersey. Since our children were infants, we have rented a large home that accommodates my immediate family along with the families of my three siblings. We’ve been doing this for more than three decades (we probably could have purchased a house by now!). Over the years, some of the eight cousins have married and now have children of their own. We’ve created countless memories—on the beach, boardwalk, and simply spending time together. By reliving old memories and creating new ones, we continue to strengthen this treasured family tradition.

There is also a strong tradition of synagogue involvement in my family. My grandmother served as Sisterhood President, and my parents were always actively engaged in synagogue life. I am proud to continue that legacy by being the past Sisterhood President and currently serving on the Executive Board of Congregation Kol Ami. Our synagogue community has become an extension of our family. Together, we’re creating new memories and traditions—through Shabbat services, programs, and holiday celebrations. I invite you to share the making of new family traditions at Kol Ami. Please join me at Shabbat services, social, and educational events.



FROM THE EDITOR

Marlene Dworkin

The thing about family traditions is sometimes they are so ingrained in your history that you don’t think anything of them; they are your family’s normal. Sometimes you know they are special, but they don’t take place very often. This is the case of my maternal grandmother’s wedding ring. All of the women in my family, for four generations, have worn my grandmother’s wedding band when they got married.

My mother’s mother, Clara, was born in 1901 in Poland. She spoke many languages (Russian, Polish, German, Hungarian, Yiddish, and English) even though her formal education ended at the second grade when she started helping an older brother take care of his children. Clara married Ben in 1921 with a simple gold band. In 1949 when my parents were getting married, my mother chose a beautiful platinum wedding band with five diamond one-point stones. (One of my favorite pieces, I often wear it on a chain around my neck.) The Conservative rabbi officiating their wedding told my mom that she needed to use a solid, unadorned gold band, so she borrowed her mother’s wedding band for the ceremony. Crisis averted.

When the time came for her younger sister, my aunt, to get married, there were only 48 hours to plan the wedding. Her fiancé, my uncle, was about to be shipped overseas by the U.S. Army. They wanted to be married before this happened. With such a short time to find a rabbi, venue, dress, and invite family and friends, wedding rings were forgotten. Once again, my grandmother’s ring came to the rescue.

None of us *needed* to but having heard these stories from our mothers and grandmother, my sister, cousin, and I *wanted* to continue the tradition and use our grandmother’s wedding band in our ceremonies. Plus, we were all so lucky that she was present at our weddings.

The next generation followed suit; my two nieces incorporated the ring into their weddings. My oldest niece was married by a Chabad rabbi who told the groom he had to purchase the ring used in the ceremony so the family ring could not be used. My sister sewed the ring onto the bride’s bouquet so that it was present. My cousin’s daughter also wore “our” ring. My daughter is the last one in this generation yet to participate, but I will strongly encourage her to do so! (Casey is named after Clara.)

My grandmother was a tiny, strong, resilient, loving woman who always put her family first. She valued education and her Judaism. It is a true joy to honor her with this tradition and pay homage to this great lady.

Passover at Kol Ami

Food Drive
Collection March 8-22
Donations in support of the JFCS Betsy & Peter Fischer Food Pantry may be dropped off in the designated bins at Kol Ami.
Items needed: Matzo • Matzo Meal • Matzo Ball Soup Mix
Passover Cake Mixes • Cake Meal • Gefilte Fish
Borscht • Chicken Broth • Grape Juice • Canned Fish
Canned Fruits & Vegetables • Dried Fruits & Nuts

First Seder: Wednesday, April 1
Offices & Schools Close Early

Second Seder: Thursday, April 2
Join in our congregational seder! See details on the back cover.

Concluding Service: Wednesday, April 8
10:00 am Service – Yizkor is recited
Offices & Schools Closed

LET'S HAVE FUN! (In Small Groups)

Please join us as we officially launch the **Small Group Initiative**, a new approach to creating smaller cohorts that help each of us “find our people.” Meet those who want to participate in the same activities you do, on a regular basis, as a way to get to know your fellow congregants better.

At Kol Ami, we do our best to foster an inclusive environment and provide programming for all demographics. We also recognize that for many people, finding your place is about connecting more intimately with members who share similar interests. No matter what your interests might be, there is a place for everyone!

Come find *YOUR* small group!

When: Sunday, April 12, 9:30-11:00 am

Where: Kol Ami Social Hall

Contact Amy Stanley (Amy@kolaminj.org) with any questions and/or your RSVP.

IS THIS FOR ME? (In case you were wondering)

Kol Ami has so many activities, sponsored by all different groups, open to all. Have you ever wondered, is this for me? For those of us that like to take advantage of these programs and events, we might be unclear about whether a program caters to our age or stage of life.

Moving forward, we will begin including a helpful note on the calendar or registration page of each affinity group event. This description will guide us regarding the demographics of the hosting group—but that doesn't mean that anyone is not welcome to attend. For example, the Boomers Plus Social Group hosts a Book Club and they would be thrilled to have other Kol Ami members who don't see themselves within this demographic.

If you are ever in doubt that a program is meant for you, please check with the hosting group or Director of Engagement, Amy Stanley (Amy@kolaminj.org), in the synagogue office.



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Mazal Tov to...

Merle & Barry Friedman

on the birth of their
great-granddaughter, Sophia Carter

Jessica & Michael Hessler

on the naming of their daughter
Emma

Audrienne Levene

on the engagement of her grandson,
David Levene, to Jessica Goldberg

Michelle & Steve Weichert

on the engagement of their daughter,
Jessica, to Marc Seskin

We Mourn...

Judy Bentley

sister of Mark Brody

Harold Block

father of Lisa (Rick) Weiser

Mary “Mickey” DeFranco

grandmother of Sarah (Matthew
Berns) Laaff

Heidi Garrison

sister of Barbara Snyderman

Rhoda Goldberg

cousin of Ellen Shapiro

Norman Grolnick

husband of Myrna Grolnick

Jean Herman

mother of Roy (Dara) Herman

Arnold Sheldon Lincow

father of Caren (Robert) Goldberg

Beth Vassalotti

daughter of Marlene Boonin

Brigitte Wachs

mother of Douglas (Bari) Wachs
grandmother of Alyssa (Brian
Phillips) Wachs

*Life Cycle lists are inclusive from the last issue of
Connections through February 13, 2026.*

CKA
CABARET

Let us entertain you!
 A little bit funny, a little bit magical, and a whole lot of musical talent,
 performed by your Kol Ami friends!

MARCH 21
7:30 pm
 Dessert immediately following.
 \$25 per person

Visit our website at www.kolaminj.org to register and for more information
 Sponsored by the Arts & Culture Committee



MEN'S CLUB

By Doug Cohen, Men's Club President

"And how do we keep our balance? That I can tell you in one word... Tradition!" These words leading into the opening song "Tradition" in *Fiddler on the Roof* seem to have tracked our family in many ways. When I was young, my dad worked late a fair amount, and he did not always want to deal with three boys after a long day. That meant my brothers and I ate dinner before my dad came home. When we were a little older, we would wait for him (whether he liked it or not!) so that we could all eat together. I remember how much I enjoyed those commonplace, everyday family meals.

When Nadine and I were raising our kids, we both thought that it was important to have dinner together as a family, as much as possible. We would talk about our days (some talked more than others) or about what was happening in the world. We had our regular seats at the table. On Friday nights, we would have candles, challah, and wine, even if we were not going to services. I had a little crystal piece (no idea where we got it) that had the Shabbat symbols carved into it, and I would put that on the table as well.

I always found that our family kept our balance, as Tevye said, because we were able to enjoy that family time, even in the midst of our otherwise busy lives. We knew we could not solve all the problems of the world, or even all the problems of our family, but we also knew that we could face any problems together, in large part due to that Tradition!

MONTHLY MUSSAR

April Special Guest:
 Dr. Alan Morinis



Mussar expert Dr. Alan Morinis is coming back to Kol Ami, this time on Zoom! Whether you are a part of our Monthly Mussar Moments class or not, all are invited to join Dr. Morinis on **Monday, April 13 at 12:00 pm on Zoom**. This session will be based on his new book that just came out this past fall, *The Shabbat Effect: Jewish Wisdom for Growth and Transformation*. Whether you're a Mussar expert, or have never heard of Mussar, this session is sure to be enlightening and inspiring for all.

This session, as are the others in our Monthly Mussar series facilitated by Rabbi Ariel Milan-Polisar, is offered at no cost to congregants and \$10 for non-members. Registration is required.

Congregation Kol Ami Presents
Scholar-in-Residence Weekend 2026



God



Science



Spirituality

Kabbalah for Today

Discovering Harmony Between Science and Spirituality

Join in a weekend of divine wisdom, growth, and discovery with Dr. Daniel Matt, whose award-winning works are hailed as major contributions to the history of Jewish thought.



Join Us!
 March
 6-8

Friday, March 6 7:00 pm

Shabbat Evening Services

Open to the community.

Saturday, March 7 9:00 am – 3:30 pm

Three Learning Sessions plus Breakfast and Lunch

Come to one or all of the sessions. Open to the community.

Sunday, March 8

Sponsors will enjoy a private brunch session.

Tickets & Sponsorships: www.kolaminj.org

Sponsorships (\$180 per person) support this weekend and include a signed copy of Dr. Matt's book, along with the Sunday brunch.

Early Bird Rate: \$18 member / \$36 non-member

After February 25: \$30 member / \$48 non-member

Supported by the Helen & Leon Weinberg Scholar-in-Residence Endowment Fund.

Donations of any amount are greatly appreciated and will go toward helping underwrite the weekend and to supporting future programming.



Upcoming Events

To register, or for more information on these and other programs, visit:

www.kolaminj.org/events

MARCH

Purim at Religious School

Sunday, March 1

9:15 am Shushan Perks Cafe

10:30 am Purim Shpiel: Shushan State of Mind (Music of Billy Joel)

Purim Carnival

Sunday, March 1, 11:30 am – 1:30 pm

Purim, Pizza & Pop

Monday, March 2

6:00 pm Family Pizza Dinner

7:00 pm Family Fun Purim Service

8:00 pm Purim Shpiel: Shushan State of Mind (Music of Billy Joel)

Men's Club Lunches

Wednesdays, March 4 & 18, 12:30 pm
(Off-site; contact allanpep@yahoo.com.)

Yiddish Shmooze Group

Facilitated by Norman Rednik

Thursdays, March 5 & 19,

10:30 am (Zoom)

First Thursdays: The Changing Structure of American Judaism with Rabbi Hara Person

Special Guest: Rabbi Hara Person,

Chief Executive of CCAR

Thursday, March 5, 7:30 pm (Zoom)

First Friday

Friday, March 6, 6:15 pm

Enjoy pre-service refreshments.

Shabbat Evening Service

Friday, March 6, 7:00 pm

We celebrate March anniversaries.

SCHOLAR-IN-RESIDENCE

WEEKEND with Dr. Daniel Matt

Kabbalah for Today: Discovering Harmony Between Science & Spirituality

Friday, March 6

6:15 pm First Friday

7:00 pm Shabbat Evening Service

Saturday, March 7

9:00 am – 3:30 pm Three Learning

Sessions plus breakfast and lunch

Sunday, March 8

10:00 am Sponsor Brunch

Daylight Saving Time Begins

Sunday, March 8, 2:00 am

Passover Food Drive

Collection: March 8-22

Monthly Mussar Moments

Led by Rabbi Ariel Milan-Polisar

Monday, March 9, 12:00 pm (Zoom)

A Journey into Jewish Food

Led by Rabbi Ariel Milan-Polisar

Monday, March 9, 5:30 pm *Sold Out!*

Talmud Talks

Led by Rabbi Lewis John Eron, Ph.D.

Tuesdays, March 10, 17 & 24,
11:30 am (Zoom)

The History, Power, and Poetry of Our Shabbat Evening Service Liturgy

Led by Rabbi Jennifer Frenkel

Three Wednesdays,

March 11, 18 & 25, 10:30 am (Hybrid)

Drag Queen Bingo

Thursday, March 12, 7:00 pm

SHABBAT ACROSS AMERICA

Friday, March 13

5:30 pm The Rabbi's Table

Learn, sing & enjoy dinner with community for ages 12+.

7:00 pm Shabbat Evening Service with Koleinu

Torah Study

Saturdays, March 14, 21 & 28,

9:00 am (Hybrid)

Spice Up Your Judaism

Saturdays, March 14 & 21, 10:15 am

(Hybrid; Alternate offering March 28)

Shabbat Morning Service

Saturday, March 14, 10:30 am

Bat Mitzvah of Annabel Neuman

Men's Club Brunch

Sunday, March 15, 9:30 am

LGBTQIA+ Torah Study

Sunday, March 15, 9:30 am

Sisterhood Sunday Funday

Sunday, March 15, 2:00 pm

Board of Trustees Meeting

Wednesday, March 18, 7:30 pm

Tot Shabbat

Friday, March 20

5:15 pm Tot Family Dinner

6:00 pm Tot Shabbat Service

Shabbat Evening Service

Friday, March 20, 7:00 pm

Shabbat Morning Service

Saturday, March 21, 10:30 am

Bat Mitzvah of Sophie Cohen

CKA Cabaret

Saturday, March 21, 7:30 pm

Boomers Plus Book Club: Lilac Girls

Lilac Girls

Sunday, March 22, 7:00 pm (Zoom)

The Rosh Chodesh Experience

Wednesday, March 25, 7:00 pm

Shabbat Mishpacha (Family) Service: Grade 4 Shabbat

Friday, March 27, 7:00 pm

We celebrate March birthdays.

Shabbat Zimrah – A Sabbath of Praise

Led by Cantor Justin Callis

Saturday, March 28, 10:15 am

(In person & livestream)

Gameshow Palooza

Sponsored by Sisterhood, Men's Club,

Boomers Plus & Empty Nesters

Saturday, March 28, 7:00 pm

Club Noar Event (Grades 3-5)

Sunday, March 29, 11:30 am

Men's Club Seder

Monday, March 30, 7:00 pm

APRIL

Men's Club Lunches

Wednesdays, April 1 & 15, 12:30 pm

(Off-site; contact allanpep@yahoo.com.)

Upcoming Events

To register, or for more information on these and other programs, visit:

www.kolaminj.org/events

Passover: First Seder

Wednesday, April 1
Offices & School close early.

Congregational Second Seder

Thursday, April 2, 5:00 pm
See details on the back cover (page 16).

First Friday

Friday, April 3, 6:15 pm
Enjoy pre-service refreshments.

Shabbat Evening Service

Friday, April 3, 7:00 pm
We celebrate April anniversaries.

Torah Study

Saturdays, 9:00 am
April 4 (Zoom), 11, 18 & 25 (Hybrid)

Spice Up Your Judaism

Saturdays, 10:15 am
April 4 (Zoom), 11 & 18 (Hybrid)
(Alt. offering Apr. 25)

Passover (Last Day)

Wednesday, April 8
Offices & School closed.
10:00 am Passover Concluding Service
Yizkor is recited.

Empty Nesters Dinner

Thursday, April 9, 6:30 pm (Off-site)

SISTERHOOD RETREAT:

More Joy, Less Oy

Friday, April 10
5:15 pm Shabbat Dinner
7:00 pm Shabbat Evening Service
Saturday, April 11
9:00 am – 4:00 pm Retreat Day
See details on page 7.

Shabbat Evening Service: Shabbat Unplugged

Friday, April 10, 7:00 pm
Our house band joins us.

Shabbat Morning Service

Saturday, April 11, 10:30 am
Bat Mitzvah of CeCe Light

Small Groups Meet-Up

Sunday, April 12, 9:30 am
See details on page 3.

LGBTQIA+ Torah Study

Sunday, April 12, 9:30 am

Monthly Mussar Moments

Led by Rabbi Ariel Milan-Polisar
Monday, April 13, 12:00 pm (Zoom)
Special guest: Dr. Alan Morinis
See details on page 4.

From Prophets to Pulpits

Led by Rabbi Ariel Milan-Polisar
Three Wednesdays,
April 15, 22 & 29, 10:30 am (Hybrid)

Yiddish Shmooze Group

Facilitated by Norman Rednik
Thursday, April 16, 10:30 am (Zoom)

Tot Shabbat

Friday, April 17
5:15 pm Tot Family Dinner
6:00 pm Tot Shabbat Service

Shabbat Evening Service

Friday, April 17, 7:00 pm

Shabbat Morning Service

Saturday, April 18, 10:30 am
Bat Mitzvah of Emily Freedman

Tribute Dinner 2026

Sunday, April 19, 6:15 pm
We honor Eileen & Robert Elias,
Janine & Mark Sobel, and Adam Roth.
See details on front cover (page 1).

Board of Trustees Meeting

Wednesday, April 22, 7:30 pm

The Rosh Chodesh Experience

Friday, April 24, 5:30 pm

Shabbat Evening Service: Refugee Shabbat with Koleinu

Friday, April 24, 7:00 pm
We celebrate April birthdays.

Shabbat Zimrah – A Sabbath of Praise

Led by Cantor Justin Callis
Saturday, April 25, 10:15 am
(In person & livestream)

A Journey into Jewish Food

Led by Rabbi Ariel Milan-Polisar
Monday, April 27, 5:30 pm *Sold Out!*

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SHALOM FROM SISTERHOOD

By Bobbie Israelsky, Sisterhood Co-President

The season of spring refers to rebirth, regeneration, renewal and regrowth. We celebrate more daylight hours, beautiful flowers and trees, comfortable temperatures and outdoor activities. We read the Megillah at Purim and the Haggadah at our Passover Seders.

In my family, when our children were young, we would always go to synagogue dressed as Queen Esther, Queen Vashti, King Ahasuerus or Haman, as we listened to stories of bravery and freedom. Now that our children are all grown, with children of their own, these family traditions are being passed on to the next generation—yahoo for grandchildren!

Passover has always been a very special time for our family. We usually have 15-20 people at our Seders, including immediate family members, friends, and sometimes those who do not have anyone to share in the Passover traditions. Our amazing daughter, who went to Kellman Academy through eighth grade, is in charge of leading our Seders. Our son used to read the four questions with ease, and now our grandchildren do the honors. We will soon pass along this honor to my sister's grandchildren. We eat delicious Passover foods and everyone in the family contributes. This is a very special time of year for the Israelsky, Kukainis, and Lewanda families.

Sisterhood is growing by leaps and bounds and we invite all to attend some exciting events being planned by our Sisterhood Board. Here are just some of the events coming up:

- See the ads in this issue for details on these upcoming events:
- **Sunday Funday – Sunday, March 15 at 2:00 pm** (this page)
- **Game Show Palooza – Saturday, March 28 at 7:00 pm** (page 9)
- **Sisterhood Retreat: More Joy, Less Oy – Friday & Saturday, April 10 & 11** (this page)

Wishing you all a *Chag Sameach*—peace, joy, health and happiness.



LGBTQIA+
Torah Study

Pride in Torah —
Discuss the week's Torah portion from the LGBTQIA+ perspective

March 15 9:30 am
April 12 10:00 am

Register to attend: www.kolaminj.org



DRAG QUEEN BINGO

MARCH 12 @ 7:00 PM



Sisterhood Retreat
MORE JOY, LESS "OY"

Join us for a weekend of renewal, reflection, and connection as we make new friends and celebrate current friendships

FRIDAY, APRIL 10
AT 5:15 PM AT KOL AMI

SATURDAY, APRIL 11
AT 9:00 AM AT ALOFT HOTEL, MT. LAUREL, NJ

Cost: Attending Friday evening & Saturday: \$136/person
Just Friday evening: \$36/person, Just Saturday: \$118/person

RSVP by March 20 at www.kolaminj.org



Sunday Funday

An afternoon of games, mahjong, canasta and more, followed by happy hour, and a Spring fashion preview presented by Shop Finally!

Bring your game.
Join us by yourself or bring a friend.
We will match you with a group!
Raffle baskets & 50/50!!

apps & drinks

starts at 2:00 pm	March 15th	tickets \$54*
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*25/person to attend only happy hour and the fashion preview beginning at 5:00 pm.

Register
www.kolaminj.org



Harken Back to Chanukah...
Everything was awesome at December's congregational Chanukah Dinner. Lego menorah building and traditional chanukiah lighting were highlights of the night.



Rising to the Occasion... In January, visiting challah expert Rabbi Vanessa Harper helped us explore the art of uniquely shaping and braiding challah, even practicing "the roll" on Play-Doh first.

MLK Mitzvah Day...

During this day of service, Kol Ami congregants put our vision statement into action through *tikkun olam* and *g'milut chasadim* activities in our building and locations within the community.



Sing it Loud... The Flying Ivories landed at Kol Ami for a night of laughs and sing-along tunes, recalling memories and making new ones. Hokey Pokey anyone?!





Connecting with Our Roots...
 Inspired by tradition, Sisterhood's Tu B'Shevat Seder celebrated nature, renewal and connection to the world around us — plus food, music & wine!



Manna from Members... Some Kol Ami members volunteered at MANNA in Philadelphia preparing meals, packing containers, and delivering food to people in need.



Meaningful Visit...
 Our February bus trip to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC, proved a very powerful, shared experience.

**THERE WERE NOT SIX MILLION JEWS MURDERED
 THERE WAS ONE MURDER, SIX MILLION TIMES.**

HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR ABEL MERZBERG

SATURDAY, MARCH 28
 7:00-9:00 PM

\$40
 FOR KOL AMI MEMBERS

\$45
 FOR NON-MEMBERS

Interactive Trivia Game Show Experience
 LIGHT DINNER & DESSERT WILL BE SERVED
 WINE AND BEER INCLUDED

Teams will consist of 8 people max. Feel free to form your own team! This event is co-sponsored by Sisterhood, Men's Club, Boomers + and Empty Nesters.

RSVP by March 20 at www.kolaminj.org

KOL AMI Many Voices, One Community.



Icing on the (Cup)cake...
 A delicious time was had by our Cocktails and Cupcakes attendees who learned some tips and tricks for decorating cupcakes and muddling cocktails.

March/April B'NAI MITZVAH



Annabel Neuman

March 14

*Daughter of Lauren Lipani & Mark Neuman
Sister: Ainsley*

My name is Annabel Neuman. I am in 7th grade. My hobbies include softball, running, swimming, diving and basketball. For my Bat Mitzvah project, I raised money for

The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp, a camp in Connecticut for seriously ill children. It has been a meaningful experience becoming a Bat Mitzvah, and I look forward to carrying on our family's traditions during the Jewish holidays.



CeCe Light

April 11

*Daughter of Emily & Peter Light
Brother: Jeremy*

I am a 7th grade student at Haddonfield Middle School. I enjoy playing soccer and basketball, reading a good book or finding a new TV series to stream. I also love to travel and going on ski trips with my family,

in addition to spending my summers at sleepaway camp in the Poconos. For my Bat Mitzvah project I will be doing a bake sale to raise money for the Animal Welfare Association in Voorhees. I am also planning on volunteering at the shelter and working on getting my parents to agree to begin fostering dogs in need of finding their forever homes. Becoming a Bat Mitzvah is very important to me because it not only allows me to connect further with my identity and heritage, but also helps remind me of the responsibilities that lie ahead as I begin my journey into adulthood.



Sophie Cohen

March 21

*Daughter of Jaime & Brett Cohen
Brother: Sam*

My name is Sophie Cohen. I'm a 7th grade student at Voorhees Middle School. I love spending time with my family and friends, playing tennis, assisting students with special abilities in dance and sports, and

doing anything creative. For my Bat Mitzvah project, I raised money for the Holocaust Survivors Service Group at JFCSSNJ. With the money I raised, I was able to make and provide 100 Purim baskets for the clients and sponsor a luncheon for the group. It was really meaningful to be able to give back to this special community. Becoming a Bat Mitzvah is something that I've been looking forward to since my brother's Bar Mitzvah. It means so much to have this opportunity and share this important religious milestone with my family and friends. I'm excited to take this next step in my Jewish journey.



Emily Freedman

April 18

*Daughter of Melanie & Brian Freedman
Brother: Brody*

I am a 7th grade student at Voorhees Middle School. I enjoy playing field hockey, baking, reading books, and hanging with my dog Gracie. I love all animals, so for my Bat Mitzvah project, I volunteered at the Animal

Welfare Association. I helped with the laundry, walked dogs, and prepared adoption folders. To me, becoming a Bat Mitzvah means taking responsibility for yourself and carrying on the Jewish traditions to the next generation.

CLUB K'TON K-2

SWEET CREATIONS

COME JOIN YOUR FRIENDS FOR THE LAST EVENT OF THE YEAR! WE ARE GOING TO CREATE SWEETS AND TREATS AND HAVE A GREAT TIME WITH YOUR FRIENDS :)

Sunday: March 15th
11:30-1:00 in Social Hall

Youth Group Members \$10
Non-Youth Group Members \$12

KOL AMI Religious School

Save the Date for...

Tot Shabbat!

Fridays at 5:15pm
March 20
April 17
May 15

Pizza dinner, child-friendly Shabbat service & Oneg

Open to the community!
Kol Ami is an accessible environment

\$18 per family
Registration Required: kolaminj.org

KOL AMI Religious School

CLUB NOAR 3RD-5TH

KOL AMI Religious School

JOIN YOUR FRIENDS AT THE LAST EVENT OF THE YEAR. WE WILL BE PLAYING GAMES, RELAYS AND EVEN MINUTE TO WIN IT GAMES.

SUNDAY, MARCH 22
FROM 11:30-1
IN THE SOCIAL HALL.

YOUTH GROUP MEMBERS \$10
NON-YOUTH GROUP MEMBERS \$12



RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

Sheri Greenblatt

Director of Education

Growing up in Cherry Hill, my family life revolved around holidays, celebrations, and simply being together. These traditions were never something I stopped to analyze—they were just *how things were*. I showed up,

took part, and assumed that this was what family looked like.

As I've gotten older, I've come to realize that traditions aren't as fixed as they once seemed. Some from my childhood still feel familiar and comforting: cooking holiday meals, using recipes passed down through generations, and gathering around the table as a family. Those moments are about more than food. They connect me to where I come from and help keep me grounded in the present.

Adulthood has also given me a deeper appreciation for what it actually takes to make those moments happen. I now see the planning, effort, and intention behind them. At the same time, I've learned that traditions have to evolve in order to stay meaningful. New family members, shifting dynamics, and changing priorities naturally influence how we celebrate. Honoring the past doesn't mean holding it perfectly still.

That same way of thinking shows up in my work as a Religious School Director. In fact, my one consistent "tradition" in that role is doing things differently every year. I don't repeat elective cycles or programs exactly the same way twice. While some ideas carry over, the curriculum is always refreshed—lessons are reworked, activities reimaged, and themes adjusted—so what we're doing feels engaging and relevant for the students in front of us.

For me, flexibility is the common thread. Both at home and at work, consistency doesn't come from repeating the same routines year after year, but from staying present, intentional, and responsive to what's needed. There's no pressure to recreate past moments. Each trip, each school year, and each shared experience is allowed to stand on its own.



During January's Grade 5 Shabbaton, our students shared in havdalah, dinner, a scavenger hunt, a roundtable discussion with clergy, and time with friends.

EARLY CHILDHOOD

Laura Hoffman

Director of Early Childhood Education

"Family traditions are the glue that holds us together." —Creative Healthy Family

The definition of a tradition is a practice or ritual that is passed down through the generations. There are many families in our school, and many ways to be a family. Each family has special traditions, often around special holidays.

At Kol Ami ECC we are also a family. We have our own traditions that may be a little different from those at home. Some are just once a year, some are once a month, and we even have weekly traditions.

Here are our wonderful traditions (*pictured below):

- | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Visiting the Sukkah | Jumpin' Gymanee | Carton Day* |
| Art Show | June in January | Purim Parade |
| Tu B'Shevat | ECC Prom | Inflatable Day* |
| Teddy Bear Party | Friendship Soup | Clap Out |
| SHABBAT!* | | |

Do children benefit from traditions? We sometimes think that children might not understand all the activities and events around family traditions. It's quite the opposite. As they grow, children become involved in the events, enjoy the activities, and look forward to them each year. Building family memories is the best tradition of all!



ECC Dates to Remember:

- March 3** Purim Celebration
- 20** Tot Shabbat
- 25 & 26** Picture Days
- 29** The Seder at the End of the Rainbow
- 31** Passover Celebration
- April 1-8** Passover Break – *No School*
- 9** Return to School
- 17** Tot Shabbat
- 22** Yom Ha'Atzma'ut – Israel's Birthday

SHABBAT ZIMRAH



During the usual **10:15 am** Spice Up Your Judaism slot on **March 28** and **April 25**, Cantor Callis will lead us in an all-new Shabbat service experience, **Shabbat Zimrah – A Sabbath of Praise**. We will explore the liturgy of Shabbat morning through music and song, incorporating beloved melodies and newer favorites. Within the intimate circle of our newly rededicated chapel, our worship will include a Torah service, and a deeper dive into the liturgy of *P'sukei d'Zimrah*, the psalms of praise that open our morning service. Come prepared to sing and to experience the beauty of this poetic tradition. This will be the perfect start to your Saturday morning!

No registration necessary. For those unable to join us in person, both sessions will be available via livestream.

BOOMERS PLUS SOCIAL GROUP

By Karen Ginsburg, Co-Chair

According to Rabbi Rick Jacobs, President of the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ), “Jewish family traditions are about building strong bonds and fostering a sense of belonging.” Springtime is a great time to foster both new and old relationships amongst our Kol Ami Boomers Plus Social Group. Social connections protect our life as well as diet and exercise, so come out and enjoy our well-planned activities.

Who are the Boomers Plus Social Group? We are a group of members who were born between the years of 1946-1964 plus any other members who would like to participate in our activities. Our events are sponsored by the Boomers Plus Social Group but ALL are welcome!

Our activities consist of:

1. A book discussion every other month, mostly on Zoom
2. A hiking group
3. A lunch group that meets at local restaurants or at Kol Ami
4. Other opportunities that come our way

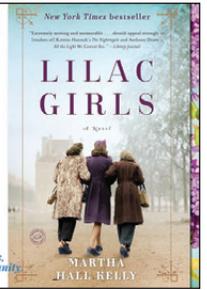
We also have monthly planning meetings on Zoom so if you would like to get involved, contact me at kareng1@verizon.net or Judy Lubetkin at morahjudyl@aol.com.

BOOMERS PLUS SOCIAL GROUP

Book Club: *Lilac Girls* March 22 at 7:00 pm on Zoom

Register: www.kolaminj.org

Sponsored by Boomers Plus. All are welcome.



BRANFMAN CHILDREN'S LIBRARY

By Karen Marinoff, Co-Chair

When one becomes a cheerleader for a children's library, it comes with the assumption that reading is important. Current school practices have young children learning well-loved stories from a “white board,” where hands turn pages in a video and a voice reads to the audience seated on a carpet with eyes glued to yet another “screen.”

No one stops to ask questions to keep the interest in the author's words or point out rich illustrations or styles of the artist/illustrator. Our Branfman Children's Library volunteers use the “old fashioned way” to share stories with an actual book.

Our readers can introduce authors, show illustration styles, and have young listeners draw inferences or share instances in their own family life that the story may bring to mind. Children can see illustrations that show actual photos of events and share personal experiences.

A tradition that I have been a part of as an early childhood educator is called Read Across America, which coincides with Dr. Seuss' birthday on March 2. I, myself, generally don my Cat in the Hat PJs and head off for the day. Whether you care for the stories of Dr. Seuss or not, the message is loud and clear: READ BOOKS! REAL BOOKS! All ages in a family can share a family tradition daily where you “Drop Everything and Read,” if only for ten minutes (adults included!).

Our library and its volunteers are doing our part to keep reading from being a lost art. Please help us (and **remember to return all borrowed library books** to the Religious School teachers). Thank you.

NORA AND HER BODY

WRITTEN BY
JESSICA SOPHIE CHANG HOROSCHAK, DO
SUSAN I. KAUFMAN, DO, FACOG

ILLUSTRATED BY
HALEY MCDEVITT

Amazon
book size:
8.25 x 6

Lulu
Bookstore
book size:
11 x 8.5

This book equips parents with a helpful tool to introduce puberty and periods to their daughters. Nora, who is on the autism spectrum, shares her journey offering a positive perspective. Plus, a section for parents, a parent statement & resources.

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WE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS

In times of happiness or sadness, Congregation Kol Ami offers a variety of ways to share your wishes and thoughts with others. Contributions may be sent to the synagogue office as well as completed online. For a complete list of funds and tzedakah opportunities, visit www.kolaminj.org.

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in memory of Harold Block

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Maxine & Mark Pinzur's grandson, Benjamin
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Goodman Family *in memory of Allen Goodman*
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in memory of Lynne Cohen
Koleinu Choir *in memory of Wayne Bryant*

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in memory of Wayne Bryant
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in honor of the first birthday of Maxine & Mark Pinzur's
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in memory of Helen Wolk

Edward Cohen *in memory of Lynne Cohen*
Estelle Freedman *in memory of Marshall Fineman*
Samuel Halperin *in appreciation of Kol Ami*
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Susan & Joel Kaber *in memory of Bob Mintz*
Irene Kauffman *in memory of Philip Nassau*
Deborah Lisker & Edward Chernoff
*in honor of the Bat Mitzvah of Joanne Rosen's granddaughter,
Marlowe*
*in honor of the birth of Rabbi Lewis Eron's granddaughter
in memory of Fannie Chernoff*
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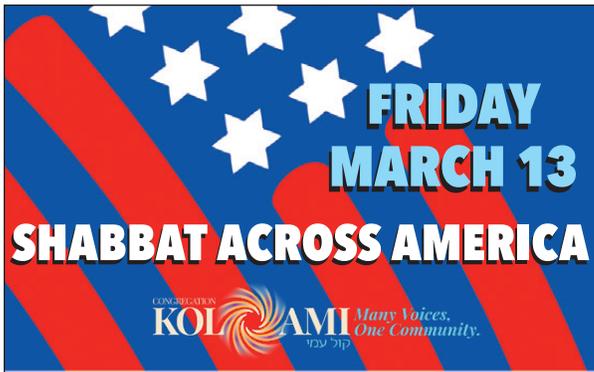
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Judi & David Weinberg *in memory of Rowena Weinberg*
Gail Wolf *in memory of Philip Wolf*

Funds noted by an asterisk () are restricted funds—that is, contributions are used solely for the fund's stated purpose. Contributions listed are inclusive from the last issue of Connections through January 30, 2026. We apologize for any errors or omissions.*



The Rabbi's Table

5:30 pm

This Shabbat Dinner will feature a participatory learning and music session geared for those B'nai Mitzvah age and older. An opportunity to learn, sing, and enjoy dinner as a community. Let's welcome Shabbat together.

\$18/ person

Registration required for dinner: www.kolaminj.org

Shabbat Evening Service

7:00 pm

Koleinu, our adult choir, joins us in song for this unifying Shabbat. Open to all.

Congregational
Second Seder

Enjoy a second night of Passover Seder with your family & Kol Ami friends.

Thursday, April 2
5:00 pm

Starts promptly at 5:15 pm

Family-friendly adult seder with Haggadah, readings and songs.

There will be opportunities for participation by adults & children.

Buffet dinner & dessert to follow.

All ritual seder items along with a bottle of Passover wine and grape juice will be provided on every table. You may also bring your own Kosher for Passover wine.

Register by March 20:
www.kolaminj.org

\$65 per person, ages 11+

\$25 per child, ages 3-10

No charge under 3

Open to congregants & their guests.

