



קול עמי

An Intimate and
Dynamic Community

THOUGHTS FROM RABBI BERKOWITZ

Pandemic Purim

Purim is a holiday that celebrates the world being turned upside-down. This year, especially, we can all relate. Last year's Purimshpiel was the last time we were all together in person as a community, and COVID-19 was already on our minds. There was hand sanitizer by the hamantaschen; a demonstration of hands-free greetings before the Purimshpiel. Some synagogues had already closed their doors, and almost a year later I remain grateful for two things 1) that no one got sick from our gathering and 2) that we had one last chance to be together and shake our sillies out before going into quarantine.

We never could have imagined that our lives would change so profoundly for an entire year, and then some. While we've risen to the occasion in so many ways, we've also had many moments of heaviness and feeling deflated. We're tired of being cooped up and we're getting antsy. But we have to wait inside just a little bit longer, in part because winter is not yet over, in part because it will still be a while before it is safe for us to return to our normal routines.

Purim always comes near the end of winter, as cabin fever turns into spring fever. It's no coincidence that many cultures have a boisterous festival around this time: Purim, Mardi Gras, and the pagan festivals both celebrations from which they likely took their cues. Rabbi Arthur Waskow sets the scene:

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WORSHIP SERVICES

All services and programs will take place virtually until further notice. Check your e-mail for login information or find us on Facebook and YouTube.

Friday, January 1 at 7:30 p.m.

erev Shabbat service

Saturday, January 2 at 10:00 a.m.

Shabbat service and Torah dialogue with Carol Nemeroff delivering the dvar Torah

Friday, January 8 at 7:30 p.m.

"Simcha" Second

Friday erev Shabbat service

Saturday, January 9 at 10:00 a.m.

Shabbat service and Torah dialogue

Friday, January 15 at 6:00 p.m.

Join four East Coast synagogues for *Kabbalat Shabbat* with The Afro-Semitic Experience

(There will be no 7:30 p.m. service)

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THOUGHTS FROM RABBI BERKOWITZ (continued from page 1)

Saturday, January 16 at 10:00 a.m.

Shabbat service and Torah dialogue,

Friday, January 22 at 7:30 p.m.

erev Shabbat “Learners” service: come learn more about prayers!

Saturday, January 23 at 10:00 a.m.

Shabbat service and Torah dialogue

Friday, January 29 at 7:30 p.m.

erev Shabbat service

Saturday, January 30 at 10:00 a.m.

Shabbat service and Torah dialogue

Friday, February 5 at 7:30 p.m.

“Simcha” First Friday erev Shabbat service with Cantor Leon Sher and Adult Choir

Saturday, February 6 at 10:00 a.m.

Shabbat service and Torah dialogue

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“It is early in the spring. The brown and sober trees of winter have put on gleaming costumes of bright green—not the darker, sedate green of later spring, but a sparkling, elfin green. People act a little crazy—shedding heavy clothes while there is still a chill in the air, laughing a little wildly when there is no reason. The tyrant winter is not quite overthrown, but he is smelling musty. Into this moment comes Purim, the Festival of Lotteries, the hilarious noisemaker among all the holy days, the day of merriment and buffoonery, parody, and satire, the loony day of full moon in the pre-spring month of Adar” (*Seasons of our Joy*, p. 115).

In this topsy-turvy year, we need Purim more than ever: a night of revelry and mayhem after months of being cooped up in our homes. Though our celebration this year will be virtual—the relaxing of rules we do on Purim does not apply to quarantine—we promise it will be just as ridiculous, and just as necessary. Wear a costume, get your noisemaker, and prepare to use all (or most) of that anxious energy!

We will celebrate Purim with a “Pandemic Purimshpiel” on Thursday, February 25 at 7:00 p.m. (stay tuned for links). See how the citizens of Shushan fare in a time of social distancing! If you’d like to sing, act, or read in this year’s Purimshpiel, please contact me at rabbi@kolamielkinspark.org by January 15.

Another exciting part of our celebration this year is the arrival of my newest book for children: *Queen Vashti’s Comfy Pants*, which will be released by Apples and Honey Press on February 1! This book is a rhyming tale explaining why Queen Vashti *really* didn’t want to come to the king’s party, and what she and her many friends decide to do instead.

We’ll have an online “Comfy Pants Book Party” during Religious School on Wednesday, February 17 at 5:00 p.m. Religious School families will each receive a signed copy. If someone else you know would like a signed copy, I’m happy to send you a signature sticker in the mail! Please support Open Book, Big Blue Marble, and our other local bookstores!

As we celebrate Purim, we rejoice that we are beginning to see a light at the end of this long tunnel. Let’s greet it singing, dancing, and telling our favorite stories!

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL REMAINS VIRTUAL THROUGH THE END OF THE ACADEMIC YEAR

In light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and after careful consideration, the Board of Trustees, the Rabbi and I have decided that Kol Ami Religious School will remain virtual through May 13, 2021, the end of the academic year. After exploring many options and consulting with Kol Ami's Reopening Task Force, we have ultimately come to the conclusion that opening while the virus is prevalent in our region and before we are able to guarantee a risk-free in-person program would be irresponsible.

Virtual learning will continue to take place on Sunday mornings and Wednesday afternoons or evenings on the same schedule that we used this Fall. We will continue to use both Google Classroom and Zoom, and students should continue to come to class with their books and any classroom materials that have been sent via email. If your child has not been able to join their Google Classroom, please contact me at eddir@kolami.info.

As we enter Spring, we will be exploring opportunities for outdoor, socially distant family programming or events that would follow CDC, PA and Montgomery County protocols for the pandemic. Our Reopening Task Force will provide guidance to ensure the safety of these programs.

In this season of gratitude, I would like to thank our teachers for meeting the challenge of creating community and providing dynamic learning opportunities in an online setting. I would also like to thank both the Religious School parents and teachers for your understanding and flexibility as we have made adjustments to our online program.

As always, please contact me with any questions or concerns about our online program.

I appreciate your patience as we have developed a plan that best serves our community and reflects our values. Thank you for your continued support during these uncertain times.

All the best,

Rachael Simon

Religious School Director

**Friday, February 12
at 7:30 p.m.**

erev Shabbat service –
Jewish Disability
Awareness

**Saturday, February
13 at 10:00 a.m.**

Shabbat service and
Torah dialogue

Friday, February 19

6:00 p.m. – *erev Shabbat* service with grades
K, 1 and 2

7:30 p.m. – *erev Shabbat* service

**Saturday, February
20**

10:00 a.m. - *Shabbat* service and *Torah* dialogue with Carol Nemeroff delivering the *dvar Torah*

6:30 p.m. – Healing and *Havdalah* service

**Thursday, February
25 at 7:00 p.m.**

erev Purim –
Purimshpiel and
Megillah Reading

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**Friday, February 26
at 7:30 p.m.**

*erev Shabbat service –
Purim*

**Saturday, February
27 at 10:00 a.m.**

*Shabbat service and
Torah dialogue*

CONDOLENCES

We extend our condolences in loving memory of:

Janice F. Schrum

*sister of Phyllis Harrison
aunt of Heather Pelletier*

*May her memory forever
be a blessing in the midst
of our people*

CORRECTION

The name of Martin and Jill Seidman's grandson was incorrect in the November-December bulletin. His name is **JETT MICHAEL SKINNER**.

Our apologies for this error.

BULLETIN

SUBMISSIONS

Please send articles by the fifth of the previous month to Janet Falon at

janetfalon@gmail.com.

Articles may be edited as needed.

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL CREATIVELY MOVES FORWARD IN 2021 USING ZOOM AND AT-HOME EXPERIENCES

As Religious School families are aware, our Religious School will continue to meet virtually through the end of the academic year. While we all miss the experiences unique to being physically together, I'm grateful for the commitment that our students, teachers, and Religious School families have shown to Jewish education.

During our first semester, students made incredible leaps in their Hebrew reading skills. Our congregation had the opportunity to enjoy beautiful choral music thanks to Rebecca Schwartz and our Student Choir. Students in second, third, and fourth grade shared their knowledge and entertained us at an erev Shabbat service. Most recently, many Religious School families participated in a Family Chanukah Program, which, though virtual, allowed us to all laugh, sing, and rejoice together once again. Despite our physical distance, our students have been able to learn, socialize, and have fun this year.

The cold winter months without the holiday excitement we felt in December have the potential to feel even gloomier this year. Fortunately, Judaism has the perfect remedy for winter blues! On January 27, the holiday of Tu B'shvat begins! The "birthday of the trees" is the perfect time to find beauty in the winter season. Though our Tu B'shvat celebrations will look a little different this year, consider bringing the celebration home with these suggestions:

1. Visit a local nature center or arboretum to take time to appreciate trees! Morris Arboretum is a great place to learn more about trees and to appreciate their aesthetic in the winter months. While their programming is limited this year, the grounds are still open to explore, and your local library may have passes available. For a free alternative, check out Churchville Nature Center.
2. If you didn't on Rosh Hashanah, now is a perfect time to try a new fruit! Many Jews celebrate Tu B'Shvat by eating fruit that grows on trees. Now may be a great time to try some carobs, date, or figs - all fruit that grows in Israel.

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FROM THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

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3. Together with your child, advocate for the trees and our planet by writing to your representative to support legislation aimed at mitigating climate change. Visit <https://rac.org/issues/environment-and-climate-change> for a quick and easy way for you and your child to make an impact.

As you look forward to a fresh new year, please keep the following dates on your calendars:

January 10, 12:15 p.m.: Religious School Committee Meeting

January 17: NO RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

January 24, 10:00 a.m.: Fourth Grade Family Education Program

February 7, 11:00 a.m.: Fifth Grade Family Education Program

February 7, 10:00 a.m.: Sixth Grade Family B'nai Mitzvah Program

February 14: NO RELIGIOUS SCHOOL



“STUDY AT THE SHUL” FOR ADULTS

WHAT A BIDEN PRESIDENCY WILL MEAN FOR EDUCATION, NATIONAL SECURITY, HEALTH CARE AND OTHER TOPICS

Tuesdays, January 26 and February 2 and 9 at 7:00 p.m.

Congregant Ira Cooperman will be leading a Kol Ami Adult Study session to discuss the future plans of the Biden Administration. The class will be held on Zoom.

By now we know who will be in President Biden's Cabinet. Let's discuss what they hope to accomplish. Please contact Elaine Stevens to obtain the Zoom link for the class.



SYNAGOGUE LEADERSHIP

Main Office

215-635-3110

Rabbi Leah R. Berkowitz

215-635-4182

Rabbi Elliot Holin

Founding Rabbi

215-882-0017

Ruben Honik, President

Barbara Fink, Vice President

Lorie B. Slass, Vice President

Gary Turetsky, Secretary

Ben Long, Treasurer

PROFESSIONAL STAFF

**IN RESPECT OF SHABBAT,
THE OFFICE CLOSSES AT
3:00 P.M. ON FRIDAYS.**

Elaine Stevens

Executive Director

215-635-3110

Rachael Simon

Director of Education

215-635-7106

Rebecca Schwartz

Cantorial Soloist

215-572-6094

Please send correspondence to:

Congregation Kol Ami

8201 High School Road

Elkins Park, PA 19027

questions@kolamielkinspark.org

Website:

www.kolamielkinspark.org

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/kolamielkinspark>

COMMITTEE MEETINGS:

**Caring Congregants
Committee**

Thursday, February 18 at
6:30 p.m.

Chairs: Natalie Dyen, 215-

657-4124 and Elaine

Gershenson, 215-887-3994

**Interfaith Relationship
Dialogue**

Thursday, January 14 at 7:30
p.m.

Hosted by Gary and Cheryl
Turetsky, 215-570-3395

**Religious School
Committee**

12:15 p.m.

Sunday, January 10

Sunday, February 7

Chairs: Tamara Sniad, 215-
782-3848 and Emily Stein,
215-375-4807

**Worship Enhancement
Committee**

Thursday, February 4 at 7:30
p.m.

Chairs: Mindy Levy, 215-570-
4304 and William Shapiro,
215-517-8666

WELCOME BACK CANTOR LEON SHER

Erev Shabbat will occur on Friday, February 5, at 7:30 p.m. when we welcome back one of our favorite artists-in-residence, Cantor Leon Sher (rescheduled from December).

He'll be joined by Rabbi Berkowitz, Rebecca, and our wonderful Adult Choir for an evening of soulful prayer and song.



MAZAL TOV:

Dr. Eric Gonzalez and Rosalind Holtzman on the wedding of their daughter, Marina to Steven Shenkman on October 17.

Rabbi Elliot and Susan Holin on the engagement of their son David to Emily Chappel on December 12.

Dr. Ellen Rubesin and her husband, Stephen, on the wedding of their daughter, Hillary, to Eric Shapiro on November 8.

Marshall and Ilene Schafer on the wedding of their daughter, Alyssa to Stephen Wastle on October 18.



**UPCOMING MEETING OF KOL AMI'S INTERFAITH
RELATIONSHIP DIALOGUE (IRD) TO DISCUSS
GRANDPARENTING**

An IRD Zoom Meeting will be hosted by Cheryl and Gary Turetsky on Thursday, January 14, 2021 at 7:30 pm. The topic will be “Grandparenting mixed faith and/or multiracial grandchildren.” Please RSVP to 215-570-3395 or gsturet@gmail.com. The zoom link will be sent to those who have responded one week before the meeting.

And save March 2 for the next IRD meeting, at 7:30 p.m. on Zoom. Questions about the March meeting can be directed to Jane or Vincent Pace at 215-699-9497 or by email to vincent.pace@verizon.net.

Kol Ami's Interfaith Relationship Dialogue group has for many years provided an inclusive and open environment in meetings with the rabbi to discuss challenges unique to interfaith relationships. The group's mission is to provide support to all members, whether in interfaith relationships or not, who may nevertheless find that interfaith relationships within their families generate questions for which it would be good to have the opportunity to seek answers while sharing experiences and resources.

If you are a parent of a child in an interfaith relationship, have grandchildren being raised in an interfaith family or in a different religion, are adoptive parents of a child born into a different religion, or if you are simply anticipating being in one of those categories at some point, and have questions or concerns, IRD is hoping you will consider joining our group discussions.



Kol Ami Contributions

We thank the following individuals for their generous donations to Kol Ami Funds. To make a donation, send it to Congregation Kol Ami, 8201 High School Road, Elkins Park, PA 19027 and indicate to which fund it should be applied, or visit our website at <https://www.kolamielkinspark.org/donate/>

RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

In Honor Of:

Barak's birth

Marni Synder

Birthday of Rabbi Leah Berkowitz

Ira Cooperman

Rabbi Leah Berkowitz for performing the wedding ceremony of Hillary Rubesin and Eric Shapiro

Ellen Rubesin

Rabbi Leah Berkowitz officiating at our beautiful wedding

Eric Shapiro

Wedding anniversary of Duane and Lisa Kolar

Ira Cooperman

Birthday of Lisa Kolar

Ira Cooperman

In Memory Of:

Janet Felgoise

Marc and Judy Felgoise

Ethel Hutkin

Robert and Susan Seltzer

RABBI'S EMPOWERMENT & VISION FUND

In Memory Of:

Joseph Gartenberg

Gary and Cheryl Turetsky

Frances Turetsky

Gary and Cheryl Turetsky

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL FUND

In Honor Of:

8th birthday of our daughter, Lucy

Duane and Lisa Kolar

SYNAGOGUE FUND

Jane Finkle

In Honor Of:

Rabbi Leah Berkowitz for her guidance, passion and inspiration during these challenging times

Rhea Applebaum

William Hyman

Sarah Schulman

Rebecca Schwartz for bringing such beauty to our services with her fantastic singing

Rhea Applebaum

SYNAGOGUE FUND (CONTINUED)

Birth of my great granddaughter, Abigail Lynne Spina

Rhea Applebaum

In Memory Of:

Alvin Applebaum

Rhea Applebaum

Janet Felgoise

Marc and Judy Felgoise

Donna Fay Kirsh

Rhea Applebaum

Frances Turetsky

Alvin Turetsky

Minnie Turetsky

Alvin Turetsky

