



קול עמי

An Intimate and
Dynamic Community**THOUGHTS FROM RABBI BERKOWITZ****In The Belly of the Whale**

As rabbis all over the world start our preparations for the High Holy Days, we were all collectively amazed by the same [news story](#):

On June 11th, Cape Cod lobster diver Michael Packard was swallowed whole, and then almost immediately spit back out, by a humpback whale. Packard sustained some soft-tissue injuries but no broken bones. But for brief moment, probably less than a minute, he thought that his life might be over.

What struck me, and my rabbinical colleagues, about this story is that there is actually a human being alive in our time that knows what the prophet Jonah experienced when he was in the belly of the whale.

Every Yom Kippur we read (or act out) the story of Jonah, the reluctant prophet who tried to flee from God's call. In an attempt to avoid sharing God's message with the wicked people of Nineveh, Jonah buys a ticket on a ship sailing in the opposite direction. Once aboard, a storm threatens to sink the boat. Jonah, knowing that the storm is a divine punishment meant only for him, tells the crew to throw him overboard.

*(continued page 2)***WORSHIP**
SERVICES

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

**Friday, July 2, 9,
16, 23 and 30 at**

7:30 p.m.—*erev*
Shabbat service

**Saturday, July 10
and 24 at 10:00**
a.m.—*Shabbat* ser-
vice and Torah study

**Friday, August 6,
13, 20 and 27 at**
7:30 p.m.—*erev*
Shabbat service

**Saturday, August
7 at 10:00 a.m.—**
Shabbat service and
Torah study

While this action calms the stormy seas and saves the sailors' lives, Jonah's adventure is only beginning. A "big fish"—possibly a whale—swallows him whole, and he lives for three days in the darkness of its belly. This experience gives Jonah the opportunity to reflect on his actions and call out to God for help. When the fish ultimately spits him out on dry land, Jonah is ready to fulfill his mission and do what God has asked him to do. He ends up being the most efficient prophet in all of the Hebrew Bible: speaking one short sentence that inspires an entire country to change their wicked ways.

We tell this story on Yom Kippur afternoon, in part to keep ourselves awake in those languid late hours of our fasting. But this story also perfectly illustrates the arc of *teshuva*: making the wrong choice, facing unforeseen consequences, reflecting on our actions, and resolving to do better next time.

We may not have had the literal experience of being in the belly of a whale, as Jonah and now Michael Packard have done. But who hasn't had this experience in a figurative sense? How many of us have found ourselves in a dark place as a consequence of the choices we have made, the actions we took or didn't take, or just because life took an unexpected turn? How many of us have cried out for forgiveness, or prayed for another chance to do the right thing?

For this year's "Jonah Experience" on Yom Kippur afternoon, we are hosting a "story slam." We would like to share a few brief stories on the theme of "In the Belly of the Whale." If you are interested in sharing a personal story with our congregation about getting through a dark time, or realizing you needed to make a change in your life, please be in touch with me at rabbi@kolamielkinspark.org. I'll be happy to walk you through what this would look like and help you develop your story.

Our entire community has spent some time in the belly of the whale this year, as we responded to the COVID-19 pandemic and addressed some tough questions about the future of Kol Ami. When we gather this year to observe the High Holy Days, may we all know the joy of saying, as Jonah once said, "You brought my life up from the pit, O Eternal my God" (Jonah 2:7).

COLLEGE BOUND.....

Jenna Margasak—University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Hope Falon-Mazer—George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia



JOIN THE CARING CONGREGANT COMMITTEE TO SUPPORT OTHERS

The next meeting Caring Congregants is Wednesday, August 11th at 6:30. Location to be announced.

The Committee is here to help Kol Ami members. If you need them, please contact either Elaine Gershenson at gershlaw@comcast or 215-887-3994, or Natalie Dyen at nat.dyen@gmail.com or 215-657-4124.

Healthy happy summer!



Mazal tov to Jane Tausig and Abby Binder on the birth of their granddaughter, Olivia Juniper on March 19th to Karen and Jacob Schwartz.



Jewish Relief Agency (JRA) is seeking volunteers to assist with packing and delivering boxes of food and critical household goods to families in need in our community. Prior to the pandemic, JRA saw an average of 1,000 energetic and enthusiastic volunteers each month, to help them in their mission of relieving hunger for over 6,400 low-income families in the region. With social distancing guidelines and capacity limits set last year, JRA re-engineered its program model for safety limiting the number of individuals in their warehouse. Now, as more and more volunteers get vaccinated and the numbers of COVID cases in the region are declining, JRA is excited and eager to welcome back volunteers for its monthly Food Distributions. Volunteers and their families can sign-up to pack boxes of food, deliver them to families in need, create artwork to include in the boxes, and much more. To see a list of upcoming volunteer opportunities, visit the JRA calendar of events at <https://jewishrelief.org/calendar>



Congregation Kol Ami celebrated as an environmental leader in the Jewish community

Congregation Kol Ami was recently awarded the Hazon Seal of Sustainability for 2020, the fourth consecutive year of our participation in the program. We are proud of our commitment to sustainability, to building a stronger, healthier community, and to renewing this process for coming years. With a network of more than 50 other U.S. sites, we will continue to promote new sustainability projects that will have a significant and long lasting impact, both environmentally and on our community life. Interested in helping our efforts? Email sustainability@kolamielkinspark.org.

Getting Dirty

Our Kol Ami crew helped out in May at Share Food Programs' Nice Roots Farm. We planted summer crops, harvested berries, weeded



and watered. Nice Roots is Share's urban farm that grows seasonal produce for distribution to people in need, as well as to farmers' markets in the Allegheny West neighborhood. The proceeds from those sales support farm operations.

There are many ways you can volunteer to help at [Share](#). Just a few hours of your time can make a huge difference to neighbors in need.

Look for more Kol Ami Social Action / *Shomrei Adamah* Environmental Stewardship group volunteer opportunities at Share and [High School Park](#) in the fall.



SYNAGOGUE LEADERSHIP

Main Office

215-635-3110

Rabbi Leah R. Berkowitz

215-635-4182

Rabbi Elliot Holin

Founding Rabbi

215-882-0017

Ben Adams, Co-President

Gary Turetsky, Co-President

Jeffrey Margasak, Vice

President

Ben Long, Treasurer

Morgan Selkirk, Secretary

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

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Elkins Park, PA 19027

questions@kolamielkinspark.org

Website:

www.kolamielkinspark.org

Facebook:

https://www.facebook.com/
kolamielkinspark

Free Online Jewish Leadership Training for Jews with Disabilities

Want to Advance Justice, Equality and Equity? You're Invited to Free Virtual Jewish Disability Inclusion Trainings!

Are you a Jew with a disability who wants to get a job or key volunteer role where you can help strengthen the Jewish community? Join Congregation Kol Ami and a coalition of more than 20 Jewish organizations for free virtual "Leaders of the Future" trainings:

Tuesday, June 22 – [Effective Social Media Posts: A Primer](#)

Thursday, June 24 – [How Nonprofits Work](#)

Tuesday, June 29 – [Development: Individual Prospects](#)

Thursday, July 8 – [Development: Foundations](#)

Tuesday, July 13 – [Leading at the Next Level: Working in the Jewish World](#)

Thursday, July 15 – [Effective Disability Advocacy from the Inside](#)

Tuesday, July 20 – [Accessible Events: Both In-Person and Online](#)

Connect, upskill, be welcomed and learn how to welcome others with disabilities!

All sessions include American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters, captions and will be screen reader accessible. Additional accommodations required to participate may be requested by emailing



COMMITTEE MEETING

Caring Congregants

Wednesday, August 11 at 6:30 p.m.

Co-Chairs: Natalie Dyen, 215-657-4124 and Elaine Gershenson, 215-887-3994

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, 8231 Old York Road, Elkins Park, PA 19027 and indicate to which fund it should be applied, or visit our website at <https://www.kolamielkinspark.org/donate/>

ADULT EDUCATION FUND

In Memory Of:

Helen Adelman
Stanton and Merle Salkin

Robert Cooperman
Gary and Cheryl Turetsky

Samuel Reiter
Joel Fishbein and Rachel Ezekiel-Fishbein

Isaac Soren
Stanton and Merle Salkin

Ellen Norman Stern
Merle Salkin
Harry and Lila Schultz

ARTS & CULTURE FUND

In Memory Of:

Samuel Reiter
Michael Matz and Ellen Horowitz Matz

Ellen Norman Stern
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Florence Stedd

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Michael Matz and Ellen Horowitz Matz

LIBRARY FUND

In Memory Of:

Ellen Norman Stern
Bruce Black

RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

In Honor Of:

Rabbi Leah Berkowitz
Jack and Debbie Van Ryn

Russell Cooke and Nancy Kirsh for their kindness
Alan and Elaine Gershenson

In Memory Of:

Lois Bender
Alan and Elaine Gershenson

Robert Cooperman
Michael Chernoff and Rhea Applebaum
Daniel and Linda George
Alan and Elaine Gershenson
Alvin Turetsky

Ellen Norman Stern
David Caplan
Stephen and Jean Ettinger

RABBI'S EMPOWERMENT & VISION FUND

In Honor Of:

Jeffrey Cohen and Ellen Friedman for your tireless support of streaming major events
Rabbi Leah Berkowitz

William Hyman and Janine Pratt for your enthusiastic assistance in helping me pack my study
Rabbi Leah Berkowitz

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL FUND

In Memory Of:

Michele Fields
William Hyman and Janine Pratt

SYNAGOGUE FUND

In Honor Of:

The birth of the newest granddaughter of Jane Tausig and Abby Binder
Russell Cooke and Nancy Kirsh

In Memory Of:

Lois Bender
Elaine Stevens

Robert Cooperman
Elaine Stevens

Bennett Fishbein
David Baker and Irene Levy Baker

Abe Levin
Alvin Turetsky

Samuel Reiter
William Hyman and Janine Pratt
Gary Sender

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Gary Sender
Elaine Stevens
Marc and Gail Weingarten
Lynn White

YOUTH FUND

In Memory Of:

Ellen Norman Stern
Ron and Helene Rosen