



קול עמי

An Intimate and
Dynamic Community**THOUGHTS FROM RABBI BERKOWITZ****RABBI BERKOWITZ TO TEACH ABOUT CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF WOMEN IN THE RABBINATE**

On June 3, 1972, Sally Priesand was ordained as a rabbi. She was the first woman to be publicly ordained by a major seminary. Almost 36 years later, on May 4, 2008, I was ordained as a rabbi, something that was only possible because of Rabbi Priesand's vision and tenacity.

Both of us followed a somewhat straight path to the rabbinate. We began thinking about the possibility of becoming rabbis as teenagers, enrolled in undergraduate courses in Jewish Studies (me at Brandeis University, she as part of a joint program between the University of Cincinnati and Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion.) We were both passionate about working in congregations, and we both had the unconditional support of our families, which made it easier for us to imagine that such a career was possible.

I was surprised to learn that, even though she was ordained nearly four decades before me, Rabbi Priesand didn't think her choice was particularly radical. She writes:

"When I decided to study for the rabbinate, I never thought much about being a pioneer, nor was it my intention to champion the rights of women. I just wanted to be a rabbi."

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

Saturday, January 1 at 10:00 a.m.
(Zoom Only)

Shabbat service and Torah dialogue

Friday, January 7 at 7:30 p.m.
(Bornstein Auditorium)

"Simcha" First Friday erev Shabbat service

Saturday, January 8 at 10:00 a.m.
(Price Chapel)

Shabbat service and Torah dialogue

Friday, January 14 at 7:30 p.m.
(Bornstein Auditorium)

erev Shabbat service

Saturday, January 15 at 10:00 a.m.
(Zoom Only)

Shabbat service and Torah dialogue

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WORSHIP SERVICES

(continued)

**Friday, January 21 at
7:30 p.m. (Bornstein
Auditorium)**

*erev Shabbat service with
Student Choir*

**Saturday, January 22
at 10:00 a.m. (Price
Chapel)**

*Shabbat service and To-
rah dialogue*

**Friday, January 28 at
7:30 p.m. (Bornstein
Auditorium)**

erev Shabbat service

**Saturday, January 29
at 10:00 a.m. (Price
Chapel)**

*Shabbat service and To-
rah dialogue*

**Friday, February 4 at
7:30 p.m. (Bornstein
Auditorium)**

*“Simcha” First Friday er-
ev Shabbat service with
Adult Choir*

**Saturday, February 5
at 10:00 a.m. (Price
Chapel)**

*Shabbat service and To-
rah dialogue*

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THOUGHTS FROM RABBI BERKOWITZ *(continued)*

This is a sentiment I wholeheartedly share. When I started rabbinical school, I wouldn't have even called myself a feminist. But, like Rabbi Priesand, I found that ordination was only the beginning of the challenges that women face as Jewish professionals. This is one reason I am proud to work with the Women's Rabbinic Network, which provides support for women rabbis and advocates for safe and respectful workplaces, pay equity, and paid family leave.

As we prepare to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Rabbi Priesand's ordination, I am excited to offer a four-session course on the history of women rabbis. We'll have an opportunity to learn together about the many centuries of women's leadership prior to the 20th-century, the obstacles we have overcome, and the stained-glass ceilings we still need to shatter.

While we will discuss the lives and careers of many incredible women, I want to make sure everyone knows that THIS CLASS IS NOT ONLY FOR WOMEN! I hope that people of all gender identities and expressions will be a part of this conversation about how far we've come, and how far we still need to go.

Scouts, Trailblazers, Pathfinders, Explorers:

A History of Women Rabbis

Thursdays at 7 p.m. ET, starting February 10.

This course will be taught on Zoom.

Check your email for details.

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THOUGHTS FROM RABBI BERKOWITZ *(continued)*

2022 marks the 50th anniversary of the ordination of Sally J. Priesand, the first woman publicly ordained as a rabbi. Yet her groundbreaking ordination, which opened the door for subsequent generations of women, was preceded by the impactful lives of other, lesser-known female scholars and community leaders. In this four-session adult education series, we will spotlight a few of the significant women from the 1500's to the early modern period who held quasi-rabbinic status in their communities; compare and contrast the ordinations of Rabbis Sally Priesand and Regina Jonas (Who? Come find out!); explore the challenges faced by the first generation of women in the rabbinate; and reflect on how women's leadership has changed the rabbinate and the Jewish community as a whole.

February 10: Scouts—Women in Proto-Rabbinic Roles from the 16th to the 19th Century

February 17 : Trailblazers—Two “Firsts”: Rabbi Regina Jonas and Rabbi Sally Priesand

February 24: Pathfinders—Meet the “Vatikot”: The First Generation of Women Rabbis

March 3: Explorers—What Challenges and Opportunities Do We Face Today?



With Rabbi Sally Priesand at my ordination, May 4, 2008, New York City.

WORSHIP SERVICES

(continued)

Friday, February 11 at 7:30 p.m. (Bornstein Auditorium)

erev Shabbat service

Saturday, February 12 at 10:00 a.m. (Price Chapel)

Shabbat service and Torah dialogue

Friday, February 18 at 7:30 p.m. (Bornstein Auditorium)

erev Shabbat service

Saturday, February 19 at 10:00 a.m. (Zoom Only)

Shabbat service and Torah dialogue

Friday, February 25 at 7:30 p.m. (Bornstein Auditorium)

erev Shabbat service

Saturday, February 26 at 10:00 a.m. (Price Chapel)

Shabbat service and Torah dialogue

WHAT'S DOING AT THE KOL AMI RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

Happy New Year! There is much to look forward in 2022 at Kol Ami Religious School. Since returning from parental leave in October, I have enjoyed being in person with your children once again. The casual conversations that I missed are back, and I am looking forward to some exciting programs over the next two months.

Though the bitter temperatures make it seem impossible, now is the time to begin thinking about Jewish summer camp! I encourage you to attend one of two Jewish Camping Virtual Information Sessions presented by the Jewish Federation of Philadelphia on Monday, January 3 at 7:00pm OR Thursday, January 13 at 12:00pm. Register at [Jewishphilly.org/oyr](https://jewishphilly.org/oyr). Please also consider applying for the One Happy Camper grant for first-time campers at <https://jewishphilly.org/resources/scholarships/camp-scholarships-2/one-happy-camper/>. Students can also apply for need-based financial assistance to attend Jewish camp on the Jewish Federation's website.

For now, check out what is happening at KARS and mark your calendars for these important dates:

- **Sunday, January 2: NO RELIGIOUS SCHOOL**
- **Wednesday, January 5, 6:30pm:** Confirmation Academy students will participate in a mosaic workshop with Danielle Brief of Hamsa Made Gifts. Please check your email for more information.
- **Friday, January 7 to Monday, January 10:** Post-Confirmation Students attend L'Taken- Students will travel to Washington, DC to learn about advocacy and its relationship with Judaism. Students will have the opportunity to lobby on Capitol Hill.
- **Wednesday, January 12, 4:30pm:** Religious School students in Third through Sixth Grade will participate in Israel Education programming with Habonim Dror.
- **Sunday, January 16: NO RELIGIOUS SCHOOL**
- **Wednesday, January 19:** Post-Confirmation meets; Neal Beatus will teach about Trauma and Healing in connection to the Israel-Palestine conflict and will speak about Combatants for Peace.
- **Friday, January 21, 7:30pm:** Erev Shabbat Service with the Student Choir.
- **Sunday, January 23, 10:00am:** Fifth-Grade Family Education Program AND Sixth-Grade Family B'nai Mitzvah Program- Sixth-Grade families will be introduced to the B'nai Mitzvah process with Rabbi Berkowitz.
- **Sunday, January 23, 12:30pm: Religious School Committee Meeting-** All voices are welcome as we look towards planning for Purim and other events.
- **Sunday, February 13: Sixth-Grade-Family B'nai Mitzvah Program**
- **Wednesday, February 16, 6:30pm: Post-Confirmation Meets**
- **Sunday, February 20: NO RELIGIOUS SCHOOL**
- **Wednesday, February 23, 6:30pm:** Confirmation Academy students will attend a workshop on anti-Semitism with the Anti-Defamation League.
- **Sunday, February 27, 12:30pm:** Religious School Committee meets

CO-PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE FROM BEN ADAMS

January 16-17 will mark the festival of Tu B'Shvat – a date in the Hebrew calendar (literally the 15th – or “Tu” – in the month of Shvat) with agrarian origins in the Mishnah, where it is referred to as the “New Year of the Trees” (Mishnah Rosh Hashanah 1:1). Observed until the destruction of the second temple in 70 CE, Tu B'Shvat was ritually revived by the Kabbalists of the 16TH century as a “seder” celebration – an “ordered” meal much like the Passover seder, revolving around plant-based food and drink awash with symbolism.

Today, Tu B'Shvat fulfills our need to tie our Jewish spirituality with our place in the environment. Just as we reflect at Rosh Hashanah on our relationship with G-d and each other, so this is a time to reflect on our relationship with the natural world and our role as its living, breathing, and *consuming* custodians. Has there ever been a more urgent time to do just that?

Here at Kol Ami, we have long taken this responsibility to heart. The dedicated volunteers of our Sustainability Committee have led us through many years of Tu B'Shvat seders – including one now being planned for the evening of January 19th (virtually, once again).

In 2007 we launched the region's first Jewish CSA (Community Supported Agriculture), created in concert with Hazon (the “Jewish Lab for Sustainability”) and a model for other Jewish CSAs locally and nationally. Ten years later, in 2017, we again partnered with Hazon to receive the Hazon Seal of Sustainability. The seal certifies that a Jewish organization has committed to meet a set of criteria making it a good world citizen regarding its food and environmental practices, treatment of animals, and impact on climate change.

And in just this last year, we joined the Brit Hazon initiative – with an increasing number of households in our congregation signing on to a commitment (“brit” or covenant) to take simple individual actions that together add up to a positive impact on our environment. I encourage everyone to take the opportunity of Tu B'Shvat to check out Brit Hazon (<https://hazon.org/commit-to-change/brithazon>) for inspiration, education, and guided steps to making a difference.

To get more involved in sustainability at Kol Ami, reach out to the members of the Sustainability Committee and its Chair, Mark Kaplan (sustainability@kolamielkinspark.org).

January, of course, also marks our passage into 2022 – perhaps surprisingly with more pandemic uncertainty than we had hoped for. Yet to our great delight we have successfully restarted regular in-person services, religious school, and choir practice in our new synagogue home. And our physical Kol Ami identity in this new space is continuing to take shape:

In January we expect that construction will start on the renovation of offices for our Rabbi and Executive Director in the administrative wing of the Beth Sholom campus.

Additional upgrades will allow for installation of our Yahrzeit memorial cabinet in the Bornstein room where our Friday night Shabbat services are now held, and our donor board in the adjacent hallway looking out onto the atrium.

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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

8231 Old York Road

Elkins Park, PA 19027

questions@kolamielkinspark.org

Website:

www.kolamielkinspark.org

Facebook:

[https://www.facebook.com/
kolamielkinspark](https://www.facebook.com/kolamielkinspark)

MESSAGE FROM BEN ADAMS *(continued)*

Improvements to sound, video streaming, lighting (including a Ner Tamid for our ark) and classroom hallway aesthetics are also all being actively worked in collaboration with our Beth Sholom hosts, along with important modifications for accessibility and inclusion.

Huge thanks to the members of the Operations Committee for their tireless hours volunteering in support of these initiatives despite the many pandemic-related challenges that continue to impact timing, availability, and cost.

Finally, as the physical attributes of our identity come together, so we can turn our attention to our identity as a community. Our financial sustainability will depend on our ability to both nourish the needs of our current members and grow by attracting new members.

We heard in our November member “zoom town hall” about the early success of our new membership model designed to create a welcoming framework for all – those already within our fold, those recently new to Kol Ami, and those considering Kol Ami for their spiritual and communal home. As we seek to build on and convey who we are, it is time to explore again the unique attributes that make us “so Kol Ami.”

Leveraging resources from URJ and elsewhere, expect to hear soon about exciting initiatives designed to take the pulse of our congregation, hone in on our values, and build a picture of our identity that can guide both our programming and our marketing.

We celebrate the “New Year of the Trees” as we ourselves prepare to emerge from the grey days of a pandemic with roots firmly planted and the buds of our new space and new initiatives preparing to blossom. I encourage everyone to join in – where and how you are able. And whenever you can – bring a friend!



INTERFAITH RELATIONSHIP DIALOGUE GROUP TO MEET

The next meeting of the Interfaith Relationship Dialogue Group will take place via Zoom on Tuesday, January 4, 2022 at 7:30 pm. Additional information will be forthcoming before the meeting. Please contact Jane and Vince Pace with any questions.



Welcome Congregant Jackee Swartz

Kol Ami gives a warm, hearty welcome to new member Jackee Swartz, who joined during the summer. She learned about our congregation after getting to know our Rabbi's mother Amy Berkowitz when they took part in a bereavement group. (Jackee's husband passed away in 2019, and she recently commemorated his *yahrzeit*). Jackee says that Amy invited her to attend a Kol Ami service via Zoom and the experience made her feel that she would fit in well with our congregation.

Years ago Jackee was very active (and a board member) at Bustleton Somerton Synagogue, a small and close-knit congregation where her family felt "right at home." Life circumstances made it difficult for Jackee to continue her membership there, but now she has chosen to become part of our family at Kol Ami, and we intend to help her feel right at home here as well.

Jackee was born and raised in Philadelphia. She and her husband moved to New Brunswick, NJ while he completed his doctoral fellowship at Rutgers. Later, they returned to Philadelphia. Looking further back in time, Jackee's mother and father emigrated from Russia. Jackee's grandfather was an Orthodox Rabbi who presided over the first synagogue in Strawberry Mansion, and he was mentioned in the *Who's Who in the Philadelphia Rabbinate* from the early 1900's. He passed away prior to Jackee's birth, so regrettably she never met him, but she is named after him. Jackee notes that she visited her grandfather's synagogue building in Strawberry Mansion with her cousins, and found that it still had Hebrew writing on the facade.

In her career, Jackee was a Principal of an inner city school in Philadelphia. She was also very active at College Settlement Camp and was able to provide several of her Feltonville Horn School students with an opportunity to attend a two-week overnight experience at the camp. In return, she became active on the Board of Directors at the camp, which is geared towards families with very limited income. Generally speaking, Jackee identifies as someone who is very interested and involved in positive social action.

Jackee has two sons, one of whom lives with his family in New York. Her other son had been a "lone soldier" serving in the IDF, then he married a Sabra, and they are currently raising their three children in Israel. One of Jackee's grandsons is living in a Yeshiva in Israel, and they share a wonderful family ritual of talking every Friday morning to discuss the Torah portion for the week. She states that they examine how the words of the Torah relate to our life in today's world. Jackee's Israeli granddaughter will turn 12 years old in November and Jackee is hoping to share her Bat Mitzvah experience. Toward that goal, Jackee has been studying Hebrew and Torah with Na'Amat for the past year to become a Bat Mitzvah herself in December. Jackee emphasizes that she is naturally very interested in any issues regarding Israel, and that anything that affects her three Israeli grandchildren affects her deeply.

Jackee loves to travel, and hopefully she will be able to do more of that safely and happily as time passes, especially to see her grandchildren in Israel. Jackee states that she is glad to be part of the Kol Ami family, and we are equally happy to welcome her into our community.



We are in a global environmental crisis and Jewish tradition compels us to respond.

A growing community of people in our congregation is creating a more sustainable and equitable world for all through **Brit Hazon**, a simple six-week commitment program that mobilizes individuals to take action and make real change. After choosing their commitment, participants receive a tip sheet and a series of six weekly emails designed to provide the information, inspiration, and tools they need to be successful. After completing their six-week Brit Hazon commitment, participants are encouraged to stick to their new behavior and to sign up for a new commitment.

Reports from some of the Congregation Kol Ami Community Brit Group participants

Brit: Reduce Household Waste

"Learning about plastics pollution definitely heightened my awareness of the huge amount of plastic containers in grocery and other stores. The result is a much greater effort on my part to bypass products in containers that are plastic-based, to always bring a canvas bag with me to grocery stores to avoid plastic bag use. I've also become more aware of food waste resulting in more disciplined shopping, using leftovers" - Karen Gurmankin

Brit: Reduce Food Waste

"The campaign really heightened my awareness of how much food waste I can create. We are doing a better job of using all of the veggies, and a much better job of saving scraps for soup stock and for the compost pile. These have been easy new habits to create that can make a real difference, and that have me feeling better too about what I can do at home." - Jeff Cohen

"I've initiated a campaign with my friends and neighbors in my multiunit condo building to buy into a food waste collection service. The goal is to cut down on the amount of organic material we send from the building to the landfill (methane emissions from landfills are a leading cause of climate change), get back a little compost for household plants and balcony container gardens, and enrich the soil of urban farm partners. If we can decrease the cost of trash collection for the condo building, everybody wins!" - Mark Kaplan

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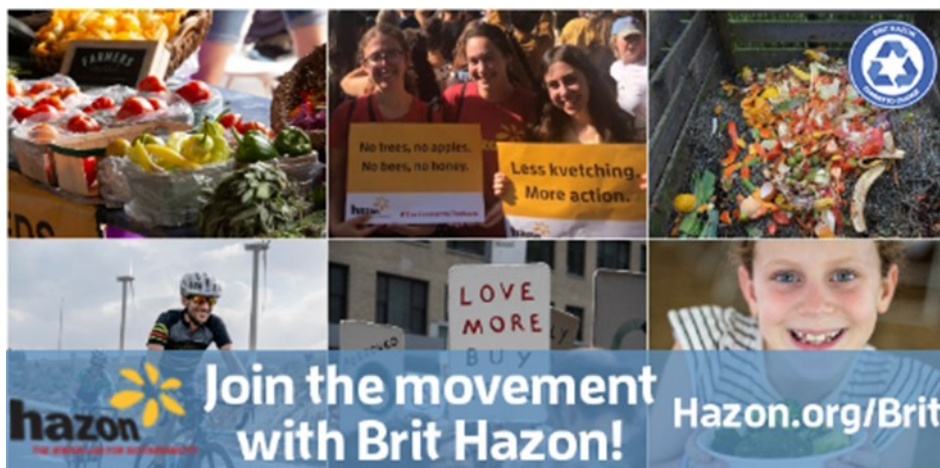
Brit: Transition to a Plant-Rich Diet

"I may have increased my plant-based meals a bit, but more importantly, I felt additional encouragement and support. Transitioning to "plant-rich diet" does make a difference in terms of the environmental impact and the way I feel. I appreciated the information and additional resources shared each week during the campaign. I used some tips at work!" - Shelley Chamberlain

Brit: Buy Less Stuff

"I love shopping but decided to to buy less, shop in consignment stores, and trade clothes with friends and family, rather than buying more new stuff that I just don't need." - Ronit Sugar

Join the movement at hazon.org/britaction and remember to choose the Congregation Kol Ami Community Group when you sign up and make your commitment!



CANTORIAL SOLOIST REBECCA SCHWARTZ ONCE AGAIN HONORED FOR A NEW SONG

A hearty *mazal tov* to our Cantorial Soloist Rebecca Schwartz, whose song *Elohai N'shamah* was selected from hundreds of submissions to be included in Transcontinental Music's *Shabbat Anthology Volume X!* The volume is scheduled to be published in late spring 2022.



Save The Date



Tu Bishvat Virtual Seder

Wednesday, January 19, 7:00-8:00pm

Hosted by Kol Ami Hazon Community Supported Agriculture Program,
Environmental Stewardship Committee, and Religious School

Our 15th Annual Tu Bishvat Seder is Open to All! Invite Friends!

Learn, be inspired, sing, prepare your Seder plate to enjoy symbolic fruits
and nuts, and drink four cups of wine as we celebrate the New Year of the
Trees



CONDOLENCES

We extend our condolences in loving memory of:

Dr. Aaron T. Beck
father of Alice Dubow

Mimi Shulamit Feron
cousin of Orly Maravankin

Franz Streitwieser
father of Erik Streitwieser

May their memories forever be a blessing in the midst of our people.

MAZAL TOV

- ◇ to Guy and Karol Appel on the engagement of their daughter Taylor to Patrick McCullagh
- ◇ to David and Shelley Chamberlain on the birth of their grandson Cole Beckett on November 8 to Brian and Marissa Chamberlain and big sister Alice.
- ◇ to Jeffrey Cohen and Ellen Friedman on the engagement of their daughter Leah to Derek Pender.
- ◇ to Stephen and Debra Harris on the marriage of their son Michael Isaac to Jamie Sarah Feldstein on November 13.
- ◇ to Marshall and Ilene Schafer on the engagement of their son Matthew to Sarah Amos.
- ◇ To Joel and Rebecca Schwartz on the engagement of their son Jeffrey to Leila Naitove.
- ◇ to Robert Schiowitz and Ronit Sugar on the engagement of their son Adam to Colleen Gallagher.
- ◇ to Gary and Cheryl Turetsky on the birth of their grandson Oliver Leroy on December 11 to Aimee and Daniel DeGroff



COMMITTEE MEETING

Interfaith Relationship Dialogue

Tuesday, January 4 at 7:30 p.m.

Co-Chairs: Vincent and Jane Pace

Religious School Committee

Sunday, January 23 and February 27 at 12:30 p.m.

Co-Chairs: Rachael Simon and Tamara Sniad

*"INSTEAD OF APATHY AND RESIGNATION, I HAVE CHOSEN
ACTION AND HOPE."*

-GALIA GOLAN, CFPEACE ACTIVIST

**LIVE ON ZOOM WITH KOL AMI: STORIES OF HOPE
FEATURING COMBATANTS FOR PEACE ACTIVISTS**



ENGAGE IN THE CONVERSATION

**Together we will meet Combatants for Peace activists, hear their stories
and discover why there really is a reason for hope in the Holy Land.**

Sunday, February 13th, at 1pm

Join Us.

Listen to the stories of two Combatants for Peace activists: an Israeli former Combat soldier and a Palestinian former prisoner. They will share their personal stories of transformation and the work they are doing to end the occupation and bring peace, equality and freedom to all Palestinians and Israelis. You will have the opportunity to ask questions and engage with the activists. We highly recommend watching the film, [Disturbing the Peace](#), prior to the event.

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/>

ARTS & CULTURE FUND

Joel Edelstein and Betsy McKinstry

In Memory Of:

Mary Gartenberg

Gary and Cheryl Turetsky

Ethel Hutkin

Robert and Susan Seltzer

RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

Joel Edelstein and Betsy McKinstry

Susan Popkin

Jonathan Shandell and Robin Shane

In Honor Of:

The marriage of Jonah Adams and Danielle Brief

Ben Adams and Gail Korostoff

Rabbi Berkowitz in appreciation of officiating at our wedding

Michael Harris and Jamie Feldstein

Rabbi Berkowitz officiating at the marriage of our son Michael to Jamie Feldstein

Stephen and Debra Harris

In Memory Of:

Mimi Shulamit Feron

Gabriel and Orly Maravankin

RABBI'S EMOWERMENT & VISION FUND

In Honor Of:

40th birthday of Rabbi Berkowitz

Andrew August and Barbara Fink

SYNAGOGUE FUND

In Honor Of:

Birth of our grandson, Oliver DeGroff

Gary and Cheryl Turetsky

William Hyman

Julie Cohen

Carol Laskin and birth of grandson #4

Alan and Elaine Gershenson

In Memory Of:

Terri Abrams

Jeffrey Abrams and Margaret Barry

Alvin Applebaum

Rhea Applebaum

Dr. Aaron Beck

William Hyman and Janine Pratt

Joseph Gartenberg

Gary and Cheryl Turetsky

Flora Harrison

David and Phyllis Harrison

Donna Fay Kirsch

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