

JUNE HIGHLIGHTS

Rabbi Schultz shares some favorites to add to your summer reading list. Page 3

Rabbi Marion reminds us of the importance of community in combating loneliness. Page 5

Alexa Cohen shares a colleague's article on the difference between art and crafts and the role each one plays in children's growth. Page 6

Learn about B'nai Israel's pollinator garden. Page 16

Also Inside

Bulletin Boardpage 2

Shabbat Servicespage 4

Donationspages 8-9

June Eventspage 10-11

The bulletin
takes a break in
July but will be
back in August.

2023 TIKKUN OLAM SUMMER FILM FESTIVAL

Mark your calendars for the 2023 Tikkun Olam Summer Film Festival! Every other Thursday evening at 7:00 p.m., we will screen a film that informs, entertains, and advocates for social justice. Films will be shown at B'nai Israel with lively discussion and special guest speakers. Refreshments will be included!



June 29
Crip Camp
(2020, mental health & disability justice)



July 13
Free Renty
(2021, anti-racism)



July 27
Denial
(2016, antisemitism)



August 10
The Janes
(2022, reproductive justice)



Shabbat Pride Celebration: Learning from a Trans Jew's Journey Friday, June 2, 2023

A Shabbat Evening with Dubbs Weinblatt, founder and CEO of Thank You For Coming Out

6:00–7:15 p.m.: Kabbalat Shabbat Service, with remarks from Dubbs Weinblatt

7:15–8:00 p.m.: Congregational Shabbat Dinner (\$25 per person, please RSVP on Shulcloud or to Ilene Feuerberg, ifeuerberg@cbibpt.org)

8:00–9:00 p.m.: Post Dinner Discussion and Q&A with Dubbs

Dubbs Weinblatt (they/them) is the founder and CEO of Thank You For Coming Out, which inspires authenticity and belonging by uplifting, centering, and celebrating LGBTQIA+ stories and identities through DEI trainings and workshops, their podcast, improv show, and other forms of art and storytelling. Dubbs was most recently the associate director of education and training for Metro New York at Keshet, a national nonprofit working with Jewish institutions on LGBTQ equality. Dubbs' writing has been featured on Hey, Alma; they have an essay in the book *Welcome to Kweendom* and have contributed to the #1 Amazon book *Redoing Gender*. They are a recipient of the GCN Impact Awards, were named one of Logo's NewNowNext 6

Continued on page 4

WELCOME! WELCOME!

A warm welcome to our newest members. We look forward to their participation in our many programs and hope their affiliation will not only enrich their lives, but that of our congregation.

Keith & Alyssa Himmel and daughters Franki & Wren

Trumbull, CT

George & Jacqueline Sherrie Glass

Shelton, CT

Roger Mendes & Eliane Parangaba Mendes and family

Fairfield, CT

SHARING OUR JOY...

In celebration of:

Linda & Barry Diamond, on the birth of great-granddaughter, Rory Marie, daughter of Julia & Matt Diamond, granddaughter of Theresa & Robert Diamond

Linda & Barry Diamond, on the birth of great-grandson, David Andrew, son of Ryan & Nicole Lestrangle, granddaughter of Robin & Brian Diamond

Terri & Daniel Green, on the birth of their granddaughter, Hannah, to parents Zach & Michelle Green

**If you would like to list something in Sharing Our Joy, please email the office with any information you would like to share.*

SINCERE SYMPATHY

We extend our sympathy to the bereaved families of:

Robert Fiedler, father of Susan Sussman (Robert)

Ron Hazelton, husband of Lynn Drasin, father of Dani and Max
Margarita Veras, mother of Maggie (Marc) Walowitz, grandmother of Chloe (Zach) Weinberg, and great-grandmother of Henry and Charli Weinberg

Renee Ruben

Martin Waldman, husband of Judy Waldman

Ilse Levi

Patricia Stepanovic, mother of Thomas Stepanovic (Marisa Underberger)

Dr. Theodore Levy, husband of Sue Levy

BULLETIN BOARD

MITZVAH MORNING

June 11, 2023, 10:30 a.m.

For our June Mitzvah Morning Project, we will be working with Camp HOPE, a program managed by the Center for Family Justice (www.centerforfamilyjustice.org).

Camp HOPE is a summer camp specifically for children from Fairfield County who are victims of domestic abuse. The camp provides a clinically proven program designed to help these children overcome trauma in order to lead more hopeful and resilient lives. For two weeks during August, Camp HOPE campers will spend time at Camp Hi-Rock in the Berkshires enjoying activities in the outdoors while receiving critical counseling and therapeutic services.

On June 11 at 10:30 a.m., we will meet at B'nai Israel to help pack trunks for the campers. Many of the campers are lacking the essential items they will need for their time away, so we are looking for B'nai Israel volunteers to help provide them. Some supplies we are looking for include backpacks, batteries, flashlights, fleece blankets, water bottles, laundry bags, and pillowcases.

Volunteers can bring these items to Mitzvah Morning or are welcome to drop them off in the B'nai Israel lobby the week before the event. In addition, there is an Amazon Wishlist which will be published in our email communications. Any items purchased on the Amazon wishlist will be delivered directly to B'nai Israel. Gently used items are welcome as well.

At the Mitzvah Morning on April 30, volunteers made blankets for Tiny Miracles, to be used in local Neonatal Intensive Care Units.

For any additional questions, contact Nina Silberman at ninahv@aol.com or Mitch Weinstein at mitchellew@yahoo.com.

We look forward to seeing you.



Shabbat Celebration Welcoming Cantor Scott Harris!

Friday, June 30, immediately following Shabbat services, join us for Shabbat dinner and a sing-a-long around the fire pit.

Dinner will be provided. Please bring either a salad or dessert to share.

RSVP via Shulcloud or to Ilene at Ifeuerberg@cbibpt.org.

Meet & Greet with Cantor Scott Harris!

July 8 at 4:00 p.m.

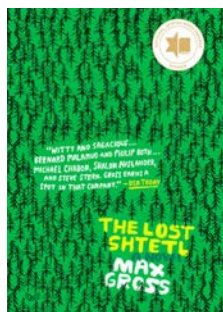
Space is Limited. RSVP via Shulcloud or to Ifeuerberg@cbibpt.org.



FROM THE RABBI'S DESK/RABBI EVAN SCHULTZ

2023 SUMMER READING RECOMMENDATIONS

Every June I like to share some of my favorite reads from the past twelve months, both as suggestions for summer reading and preparation for the High Holy Days in September. I focused this year on reading about Israel and Jewish understandings of truth, social justice, grief, and making the most of each day. Also a bit of a rarity for me is a fiction book, and this one, as you'll see, I really loved. I want to hear what you have been reading this year! Send me an email at eschultz@cbibpt.org with some of your favorite reads!



The Lost Shtetl
by Max Gross

I was drawn in immediately to this debut novel by author Max Gross. The book imagines a small shtetl deep in the woods of

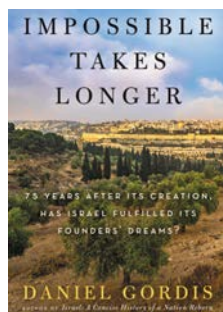
Poland that is somehow spared the atrocities of the Holocaust and Nazi Germany. The villagers of Kreskol live in isolation for decades before they are finally discovered and introduced to the modern world. This book was the winner of the National Jewish Book Award and the Jewish Fiction Award from the Association of Jewish Libraries.



These Truths We Hold: Judaism in an Age of Truthiness
by Dr. Wendy Zierler and Joshua Garroway

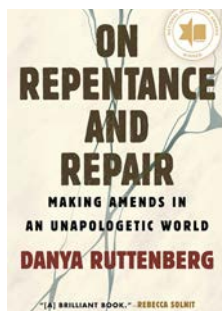
Some of you may remember when Dr.

Wendy Zierler visited B'nai Israel as our scholar-in-residence in February 2020. She is a brilliant professor and scholar, and in this book, she explores the ideas of truth and truthiness in Judaism. Is "truth" the most important pursuit and value in Judaism? It is a question highly relevant for all of us today.



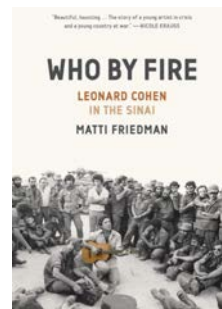
Impossible Takes Longer
by Daniel Gordis

In this book, Israeli author and journalist Daniel Gordis asks the question, "What would the founders of Israel think of the country now 75 years later?" Gordis looks at the Declaration of Independence and reflects on some of the key issues and questions on Israel's 75th birthday.



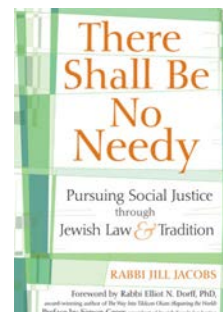
On Repentance and Repair: Making Amends in an Unapologetic World
by Rabbi Danya Rutenberg

Rabbi Danya Rutenberg has become one of the leading voices of American Jewry, especially around the issue of Reproductive Justice. In this book, she grounds her understanding of repentance in the teachings of Rabbi Moses Maimonides. If you are looking to spiritually prepare for the High Holy Days, I highly recommend this read.



Who by Fire: Leonard Cohen in the Sinai
by Matti Friedman

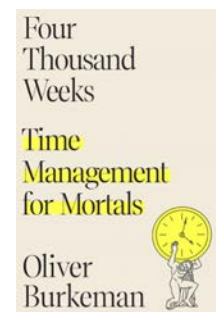
If you're a fan of Leonard Cohen or interested in Israeli history (or both), you'll love this book about Leonard Cohen traveling from troop to troop during the Yom Kippur War in 1973. It gives you a firsthand account of his intimate concerts with soldiers during a very turbulent time in Israeli history.



There Shall Be No Needy: Pursuing Social Justice Through Jewish Law and Tradition
by Rabbi Jill Jacobs

Rabbi Jill Jacobs is the CEO of T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call

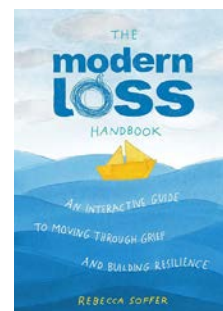
for Human Rights. Although she wrote this book back in 2010, its teachings are still quite relevant for anyone who wishes to more deeply understand the Jewish texts behind our *tikkun olam* work.



Four Thousand Weeks
by Oliver Burkeman

This book by Oliver Burkeman may have been one of the most impactful books I read all year. Its premise

is that on average, human beings live for about 4,000 weeks. It offers ways to think about how we spend our time and make room for the most important things every day. A great book to read before the High Holy Days.



The Modern Loss Handbook: An Interactive Guide to Moving Through Grief and Building Your Resilience
by Rebecca Soffer

Rebecca Soffer was also one of our

incredible guests at B'nai Israel back in January 2022. This is a follow-up to her first book, *Modern Loss*, a collection of essays about grief. This book is more interactive, giving those who are grieving a space to write and reflect on love and loss. Also, a beautiful book to buy before the High Holy Days.

SHABBAT SERVICE SCHEDULE

In person on Fridays at 6:00 p.m. and Saturdays at 8:00 a.m. where indicated.
All services at this time can also be viewed on Zoom. The link is sent out in our weekly email.

Friday, June 2

- 6:00 p.m. Shabbat Service with
Speaker Dubbs Weinblatt –
in person and on Zoom
Torah Portion – Nasso,
Num. 4:21-7:89
Haftarah – Judges 13:2-25
- 7:15 p.m. Shabbat Dinner
- 8:00 p.m. Post Dinner discussion and
Q&A with Dubbs

Saturday, June 3

- 8:00 a.m. Shabbat Service – in
person and on Zoom
- 9:00 a.m. Brotherhood Breakfast –
in person
- 9:30 a.m. Torah Study – in person
and on Zoom
- 11:00 a.m. B'nai Mitzvah of Charlotte
& Jonathan Klein, daughter
and son of Stephanie
Schacher

Friday, June 9

- 6:00 p.m. Shabbat Service – in person
and on Zoom
Torah Portion –
Beha'alotcha,
Num. 8:1-12:15
Haftarah – Zechariah
2:14-4:7

Saturday, June 10

- 8:00 a.m. Shabbat Service – in person
and on Zoom
- 9:00 a.m. Brotherhood Breakfast – in
person
- 9:30 a.m. Torah Study – in person
and on Zoom
- 11:00 a.m. Bar Mitzvah of Andrew
Acquaviva, son of Jennifer
& Anthony Acquaviva
- 6:00 p.m. 2023 Gala Honoring
Michael & Judy Green
Blumenthal and Jim &
Lisa Greenberg!

Friday, June 16

- 6:00 p.m. Shabbat Service – in person
and on Zoom
Torah Portion – Shelach,
Num. 13:1-15:41
Haftarah – Joshua 2:1-24

Saturday, June 17

- 8:00 a.m. Shabbat Service – in
person and on Zoom
- 9:00 a.m. Brotherhood Breakfast –
in person
- 9:30 a.m. Torah Study – in person
and on Zoom

Friday, June 23

- 6:00 p.m. Shabbat Service – in person

and on Zoom
Torah Portion – Korach,
Num. 16:1-18:32
Haftarah – 1 Samuel
11:14-12:22

Saturday, June 24

- 8:00 a.m. Shabbat Service – in
person and on Zoom
- 9:00 a.m. Brotherhood Breakfast –
in person
- 9:30 a.m. Torah Study – in person
and on Zoom
- 11:00 a.m. Bat Mitzvah of Joelle
Mantell, daughter of Jodi &
David Mantell

Friday, June 30

- 6:00 p.m. Shabbat Service – in person
and on Zoom
Torah Portion – Chukat-
Balak, Num. 19:1-25:9
Haftarah – Micah 5:6-6:8

Saturday, July 1

- 8:00 a.m. Shabbat Service – in
person and on Zoom
- 9:00 a.m. Brotherhood Breakfast –
in person
- 9:30 a.m. Torah Study – in person
and on Zoom

Congregation B'nai Israel 2023 Annual Meeting

Thursday, June 15

7:30 p.m.

In the sanctuary*

All congregants welcome

*A listen-only webinar Zoom link will be available for those unable to attend in person.
Virtual attendees are unable to vote or propose new business.

SHABBAT PRIDE CELEBRATION..... FROM P. 1

Inspiring LGBTQ Jewish Activists You Should Be Following and one of Jewish Week's 36 Under 36 and are part of the Schusterman ROI Community. Dubbs has spoken at the Hillels at Princeton,

Ohio State, Northwestern and on panels and at speaking engagements all over the country, and has worked with organizations and companies like SXM Media, KWT Global, The Ally Coalition,

Shake Shack, HOMAGE, Level Forward, The Foundation for Jewish Camp, The Jewish Education Project, and more.



FROM THE RABBI'S STUDY/RABBI SARAH R. MARION

OUR EPIDEMIC OF LONELINESS

(AN ABBREVIATED VERSION OF A SERMON THAT I DELIVERED LAST MONTH)

Last month, the U.S. Surgeon General issued an alarming new health advisory for our nation. There is something out there, he warned, that is just as deadly as Covid-19. Just as deadly as smoking 15 cigarettes a day. Just as deadly as living a sedentary lifestyle. Now up there with smoking, heart disease, gun violence, COVID, and all the other dangers to our health, the latest dangerous health epidemic that we are living through is loneliness.

"There is an epidemic of loneliness in the United States," U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy told us in an advisory entitled, "Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation." "Lacking connection," Murthy says, "can increase the risk for premature death to levels comparable to smoking 15 cigarettes a day. Poor connection leads to a 29% increased risk of heart disease, a 32% risk of stroke, and a 50% risk for developing dementia, for older adults."¹ The advisory states that even before the COVID-19 pandemic, about half of U.S. adults reported experiencing measurable levels of loneliness. According to the report, we are spending less time with each other in person than we were two decades ago — fueling pervasive, ongoing feelings of loneliness and isolation across all age groups and demographics. The advisory further notes that the ones spending the least amount of in-person time with friends are young people, ages 15-24. As Murthy told NPR's *All Things Considered*, "It's hard to put a price tag, if you will, on the amount of human suffering that people are experiencing right now."

Health advisories, as I understand, are reserved for issues that pose significant threat to our health and well-being — and so this loneliness advisory certainly warrants our attention and concern. And when I think about all the terrible

problems plaguing our lives and our world these days, I can't help but wonder if loneliness is the root cause of so many of them.

Loneliness, in fact, is the very first thing that Torah identifies as "not good." You might recall the series of things that God called "good" over the course of the seven days of creation: God said "Let there be light," and there was light, and God saw that the light was good. And God brought forth vegetation and seed-bearing plants upon the earth, and God saw that this was good. And God made two great lights in the sky, the sun and the moon, and God saw that this was good.

Over and over again, as God created the world, everything was good...until God saw that humanity, that Adam, was alone. But this, God said, was "lo tov." This was not good. God knew, from the very beginning, that if there was loneliness, then there would be much else that would also be "lo tov" — not good.

And then, centuries upon centuries later, there was King David, arguably the most popular, and, yet, at the same time, the loneliest King in our history. According to tradition, it was King David who authored the 150 poetic outpourings of the heart that now comprise the Biblical Book of Psalms. There is perhaps no other writing that so beautifully, so poignantly, so tragically articulates the human experience of loneliness. In Psalm 25, for instance, he wrote: "Oh God, turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am all alone..."

Despite his power, his wealth, his royalty, his influence, there was one thing — the most important thing — that King David felt he didn't have. Connection. And so, if even King David could feel lonely — the great King David, who was constantly surrounded by courtiers and ministers

and servants and constituents constantly vying for his attention — if even King David could feel lonely, then surely, too, can we. King David's story reminds us that we can be in most crowded of places and spaces and still feel so incredibly alone. But here is what I think was rather courageous and rather remarkable about King David's experience. He stated his loneliness out loud. He was unafraid to admit just how lonely he was.

It isn't easy, I think, to admit when we are lonely. It isn't easy to admit this to ourselves — let alone, to others. Because when we say, "I'm lonely," or "I feel lonely," it can feel as though we are saying: I'm not likeable. I'm not worthy. I did something to deserve this. I must not be an appealing, desirable, or attractive person. I'm not outgoing enough. Others must not want to be around me...

And so perhaps what makes loneliness so pervasive, and perhaps what makes it so harmful, and so chronic, is the way that it often manifests and festers in silence. Feeling lonely makes me feel embarrassed. And ashamed. What's wrong with me? Why can't I establish meaningful relationships? And so, isn't it easier not to acknowledge or admit to it at all...?

But then when we find out, as we did this past week, that half of U.S. adults have reported experiencing measurable levels of loneliness, this helps us come to realize that loneliness is a common, and almost universal, human condition.

And so, maybe it might do us all good to take a line out of King David's playbook. Maybe the first step towards addressing our loneliness is to find the courage and the strength to just say it out loud in the first place. I feel lonely. And I am just as worthy of human connection as anybody else.

¹ "America has a loneliness epidemic. Here are 6 steps to address it." by Juana Summers, Vincent Acovino, Christopher Intagliata, Patrick Wood; from NPR.org, May 2, 2023. Heard on *All Things Considered*.

Continued on page 7



ALEXA COHEN/DIRECTOR OF THE EDUCATION CENTER

ARTICLE BY MARYANN F. KOHL, A COLLEAGUE FROM EARLY
CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS OF REFORM JUDAISM, (ECE-RJ).



Art vs. Crafts:

What We Should Know About Kids Creating Art and Doing Crafts

The terms art and craft are often used to describe the same activities for children, but they actually have important differences and learning implications. Most adults use the word “crafts” to describe anything a child makes or creates: craft time at the library, crafts at camp, crafts class in school, crafts at church or synagogue, or the craft corner at daycare. But it is art that is the truly important creative activity for children. How do we know the difference?

Art and Crafts: What’s the difference?

Because art and crafts are so different, it’s good to know what makes them special and call them by their proper names. When children create art, they are exploring, discovering, and thinking. Art encourages a child’s originality and unique expression with an unknown outcome. Crafts, on the other hand, involve the child reproducing an adult’s idea while following directions to make a specific “thing” — a known outcome,

a pre-planned product. Making crafts is about imitating what an adult has made and requires no original thinking. Crafts are meant to be useful or practical or to reinforce a fact or learning theme. Craft activities have value in this way, but it is art that is the unique form of creativity that inspires each individual child to be original and inventive and to think for themselves.

Comparison Chart: Art vs. Crafts

Value both art and crafts experiences for exactly what they are. Be clear when doing activities with kids and use the word “crafts” and “art” correctly.

The Art of Creativity

ART

- creative, unique, original
- comes from within the child
- open-ended, end results unknown
- process is valued; finished product, less so
- empowers child
- pleases child
- self-expression

CRAFTS

- directed from the adult
- closed, follows directions, end results known
- similar or identical to other children’s
- finished product is valued; process, less so
- copying and imitating
- empowers adult
- pleases adult

Why Art? Process, Not Product

Adults often prefer to give kids cute crafts because the results are nearly cookie-cutter perfect, which seem to reflect on the adult’s success; if the child’s work looks good, then doesn’t this mean the adult is doing a good job teaching? The

truth is actually the opposite: If a child is exploring and discovering while creating art, the child is learning far more than by creating crafts that copy an adult’s idea with a planned outcome. Creating through open-ended art values the process over the final product. The process involves discovering, exploration, and learning to trust one’s own choices. The product is only the outcome of the exploration and discovery, a reflection of deeper learning. Children’s art should be about process more than product, feeling free to create, and visually sharing their own thoughts and feelings. As children create art, there will be repetition and remaking and tweaking and manipulating materials



to various outcomes and experiences, all unique to that child. Art pleases the child and honors unique individuality and diversity. Art is creative and free with only some very basic techniques to guide the experience; the process is heavily valued, and the finished product is not the main goal — the creative process holds the most value. For young children, exploration and discovery are foremost and the finished product may not even

Continued on page 7

exist! Sometimes children will value the finished artwork as a by-product to their creative explorations, and sometimes it is a way of conveying what they experienced. Other times they set it aside and start something new because it was the doing that mattered, not the outcome.

Art: Learning Skills

Children learn through creating art. Art impacts a child's learning and development in the following ways:

- Thinking and reasoning skills
- Problem solving
- Trial and error
- Planning, organizing
- Estimating and measurement
- Matching, patterning, sequencing
- Spatial relationships
- Language skills
- Communication
- Symbolic representation of ideas
- Vocabulary
- Memory

- Physical skills
- Hand-eye coordination
- Fine motor and large motor skills
- Emotional skills
- Self-expression
- Purposefulness
- Self-worth

Aren't Crafts Important Too?

Crafts often have practical uses or are meant to reinforce a specific learning theme in the classroom like safety, pets, or transportation. Crafts may go along with math, science, or other academic areas. When making crafts, children are often forming useful items or following directions to make projects or things that other kids are making too, even if they don't look exactly identical when complete; there will be uniformity and an expected outcome for all participants. Crafts have a purpose of pleasing adults as well as offering the child specific facts to learn or reinforcing the act of

following directions. It's not that crafts are "bad"; it's just that crafts are not art.

Use the word art when children create art and crafts when they do crafts. This way, everyone learns to know the difference and respect the activity for what it truly is. Crafts are fun and cute and a supplement to a child's learning and doing, but art should be the larger portion of a child's creative time.

It's a great feeling to relax and trust that your child is learning from art. Feel good that you allow the children you care about to create from their own explorations and ideas. Remember that more than anything it is the creative process that is most important for a child's learning through art. The final product is the delightful by-product of these precious early experiences with creativity — like a road-map of the learning that just took place.

OUR EPIDEMIC OF LONELINESS..... FROM P. 5

And, in fact, from an evolutionary perspective, feeling lonely may actually be a good thing. We can think of the feeling of loneliness as a biological signal, telling us that we need to take the necessary steps to reach out and build relationships with others so that we are able to survive and thrive.

The next lesson on loneliness, I think, points to the role of the community. Last month, we read a Torah portion called Tazria-Metzora, which deals with the process of healing from a skin condition similar to leprosy. But the health condition in this portion, I think, is less important than the way that the person who was afflicted with the condition was welcomed back once he was cured. After spending time outside of the camp to heal and recover, the person with the condition, who was called a metzora, remained outside the boundaries of the camp until the High Priest arrived to welcome and escort the "metzora" back in. We can only imagine just how lonely, embarrassed, and ashamed the metzora probably felt after his ordeal — and we can only imagine just how intimidated he must have felt at the prospect of rejoining

the community. Recognizing that the metzora might need some help finding his way back in, the High Priest himself made his way out to the metzora, and escorted him back to the camp — back into the community's warm and loving embrace.

Today, with no temple and no High Priest, the responsibility is on each and every one of us to reach out to those who may be on the outside of our community to help them find their way in. Because if loneliness is the latest to plague our health and well-being, then social connection is the medicine that is hiding in plain sight. And if social connection is the medicine that is hiding in plain sight, then let's work together to make our B'nai Israel community into Bridgeport's premier rehab center for loneliness.

It starts with how we greet one another on a Friday night. Or what we do when we walk past someone who we do not know. Or how we approach an individual, a couple, or a family sitting alone at a Shabbat service, or a Shabbat dinner, or a pre-Shabbat oneg. Because we know that it's not just merely belonging to a

synagogue that brings us value — but it's the relationships that we form while we are here that are truly lifesaving. Of all the reasons that people decide to join a synagogue, the most important one, I think, is that people come here to be seen. To be known. To be less alone.

There are so many life experiences that can cause us to feel so incredibly alone. Like caring for a new baby. Or moving to a new town. Or caring for a loved one with a physical or a mental illness. Or navigating a physical or mental health crisis of our own. Or losing a loved one and finding ourselves in the harrowing, isolating abyss of grief.

All of these, and so many more, can be such lonely experiences. But it doesn't have to be that way. It doesn't have to feel that way. Through our own personal determination to lift ourselves from the depths of loneliness...and through the loving hands that reach out and pull us back into community...may all of us soon be able to say: I am not the only one. And I do not have to go through this alone.

JUNE DONATIONS

(We greatly appreciate all donations to our special purpose funds.)

Rabbi Schultz Discretionary Fund

Marcus & Betsy Aldredge, in appreciation to Rabbi Schultz in his support of Rebecca Aldredge as she became a Bat Mitzvah.

Carol Barsky, in appreciation to Rabbi Schultz for his kindness and caring during this difficult time.

Lori Berger, in memory of my mother, Cecelia Davis.

Barry & Linda Diamond, in celebration of welcoming the 2 new additions to our family. Rory Marie Diamond born April 6th and David Andrew Lestrangle born April 23rd.

Randy Dorfman and Richard Post, in honor of the birth of Rory Diamond, great-granddaughter of Linda and Barry Diamond.

Dennis & Andrea Feinberg, in loving memory of Gloria Sheiman.

Dennis & Andrea Feinberg, Mazel Tov to the Oberman/Winston Family on the birth of Daniel.

George & Alice Kelly, in memory of Annette Kelly, mother of George Kelly.

George & Alice Kelly, in memory of father, Sol Zimroth.

Larry & Norci Kochman, with thanks to Rabbi Evan Schultz.

Jeff & Nancy Oberman, in celebration of the birth of Daniel Martin.

Jerry & Jane Pressman, in memory of Susan Sussman's father, Robert Fiedler.

Brian & Annie Ringelheim, in appreciation to Rabbi Schultz for his guidance and support during Paige's Bat Mitzvah.

Jonathan & Cleo Sonneborn, in appreciation to Beth Lazar's educational efforts at B'nai Israel and beyond.

Gilbert & Barbara Saltman, in memory of my brother Ernest Schleifer.

Marcie Slepian, in memory of my beloved father, Zellie Freedman.

Judith Stern, in memory of Herbert Edelson's Yahrzeit in May.

Robert & Susan Sussman, in loving memory of grandmother, Adele Mathog Bibro.

Marilyn Weinstein, in memory of my mother, Sarah R. Strogoff.

Iris Wittstein, in honor of the Bat

Mitzvah of Paige Ringelheim, daughter of Annie and Brian Ringelheim and granddaughter of June and Jay Ringelheim.

Rabbi Marion Discretionary Fund

Marcus & Betsy Aldredge, in appreciation to Rabbi Marion and with thanks for her support as Rebecca Aldredge became a Bat Mitzvah.

Carol Barsky, in appreciation to Rabbi Marion for her caring and concern during this difficult time.

Rachel Cramer, in appreciation to Rabbi Marion for her caring and support to the Cramer and Sheiman families during this difficult time.

Barry & Linda Diamond, in celebration of welcoming the 2 new additions to our family. Rory Marie Diamond born April 6th and David Andrew Lestrangle born April 23rd.

Brian & Annie Ringelheim, in appreciation to Rabbi Marion for her participation in Paige's Bat Mitzvah, and all of the amazing things she does.

Martin & Elaine Schwartz, in celebration on the birth of Hannah, granddaughter of Terri & Dan Green.

Jonathan & Cleo Sonneborn, in appreciation to Beth Lazar's educational efforts at B'nai Israel and beyond.

Jeff & Nancy Oberman, in appreciation to Rabbi Sarah Marion's beautiful naming ceremony of Daniel Martin.

Ben Winston & Melanie Oberman, in celebration of the birth of our son, Daniel Martin and in appreciation of Rabbi Sarah Marion's warmth and care for our family during this joyous time.

Rabbi James Prosnit Legacy Fund

Martin & Elaine Schwartz, Mazel Tov to Sylvia & Alan Neigher on the birth of their granddaughter, Marni.

Rabbi James Prosnit

Discretionary Fund

William Smith, in memory of Solomon Rubak, a wonderful man and father-in-law.

Music Fund

Barry & Linda Diamond, in celebration of the wedding of Harriet Polansky and Sandy Dakofsky and the beautiful ceremony led by the wonderful Cantor Scott Harris.

The Feinberg Family, in memory of our dear cousins Dr. Robert Sheiman and Stuart Sheiman.

Benjamin Rottman & Robin Isaacson, in celebration of the birth of Hanna Juliet Green to grandparents Daniel and Terri Green.

Enhancement Fund

Adrienne Baumrind, with thanks.

Barbara Berkowitz, in memory of My father, Irving Toss, whose Yahrzeit fell on April 16, 2023.

Michael & Joni Greenspan, in memory of my mother, Anna Levowich.

Bonim Preschool Enrichment Fund

Michael, Judy, Jacob & Molly

Blumenthal, in appreciation to our favorite NSS Librarian Adele Josovitz. Thank you for sharing your many talents with Bonim.

Mark & Anne Kirsch, in memory of Margarita Veras.

Geoffrey & Melanie Kooris, congratulations to Adele Josovitz.

Chris Markley, in loving memory of Aram Nahabedian and Ludwig Markley.

Jeff & Nancy Oberman, in celebration of the birth of Daniel Martin.

Robert & Twody Schless, in memory of Twody's mom Joy Stile.

Rabbi Arnold & Serena Sher, in honor of Mindy & Jeff Siegel on the birth of their granddaughter Jade Mae.

Rabbi Arnold & Serena Sher, in honor of Sam & Patti Rosenberg on the marriage of their daughter Sarah to Elliot Kaufman.

Melissa Weinberg, in memory of Maggie Walowitz's mother, Margarita Veras.

Religious School Enrichment Fund

Joseph & Louise Bobrow, in honor of my 7th Grade Kehilah students.

JUNE DONATIONS

(CONTINUED)

Joseph & Louise Bobrow, in honor of my 6th grade Kehilah students at B'nai Israel!

Brian & Annie Ringelheim, in appreciation to Claire Baker for helping Paige prepare for her Bat Mitzvah.

Brian & Annie Ringelheim, in appreciation to Sylvia Neigher for helping Paige prepare for her Bat Mitzvah.

Bonim Preschool Scholarship Fund
James & Lisa Greenberg, in celebration of Adele Josovitz' special Bonim honor.

Slepian Floral Fund

Susan Rosenblitt, in memory of my beloved mother, Sylvia Weintraub; we will miss you forever, and love you through eternity!

Rabbi Martin Library Fund

Carol Barsky, in memory of my husband Nathan Barsky.

Rabbi Arnold Sher Social Action Fund

Samuel & Cheryl Green, in memory of Robert Fiedler.

Dennis & Janet Magid, in memory of the Yahrzeits of Sophie Siegel, mother of Dennis Magid and Marc Berkman, father of Janet Magid.

Jerry and Jane Pressman, in memory of a dear friend, Gloria Sheiman.

Rabbi Arnold & Serena Sher, in memory of Robert Fiedler, father of Susan Sussman.

Rabbi Arnold & Serena Sher, in honor of the birth of Sylvia & Alan Neigher's granddaughter Marni Charlotte Kaplan.

Rabbi Arnold & Serena Sher, in memory of Gloria Sheiman.

Robert & Susan Sussman, in loving memory of grandparents Louis & Gussie Sussman.

Keshet Project

Carol Barsky, in memory of my sister, Nancy Quint Owens.

Etz Chaim Living Torah Fund

Carol Barsky, in memory of my sister-in-law Mildred Greenberg.

Gillette Judaic Enrichment Fund

Alan & Joan Newman, in memory of our dear friend Gloria Sheiman.

Alan & Joan Newman, in memory of Gabriel Steinbach, loving father, grandfather & great-grandfather.



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The Bulletin of Congregation B'nai Israel is published every month except July.

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Congregation B'nai Israel, founded in 1858, seeks to be a vibrant Reform synagogue dedicated to the perpetuation of Jewish life and values within the framework of contemporary American Judaism. We are a gateway to Judaism for all. The Congregation B'nai Israel Bulletin publishes monthly 11 times a year (except July). To submit an article, announcement or ad to the Bulletin, please contact Co-Editors, Amy Pressman at apressman@cbibpt.org or Lauren Tropp at ltropp@cbibpt.org. Submissions are due by the first day of the month preceding the publication month. We reserve the right to edit all submissions for length or style.

Vision Loan Reduction Fund

James & Lisa Greenberg, in celebration of the birth of Marni Kaplan, granddaughter of Sylvie and Alan Neigher.

Yakhani Caring Fund

Janet Jurow, in celebration of the birth of Marni Charlotte to grandparents Sylvia and Alan Neigher.

Carol Barsky, in memory of my father-in-law Rubin Barsky.

JUNE EVENTS



**ISRAEL @ 75
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B'nai Israel Pet Blessing and Celebration **Sunday, June 11, 9:30–10:00 a.m.** **B'nai Israel Parking Lot**

Whether you recently adopted a new puppy or have been a proud pet parent for quite some time, we invite you, and your beloved pet(s), to join us for a celebration of all the ways that our animals bring us comfort and joy. This is an animal-inclusive event — dogs, cats, lizards, and hamsters are all invited. All animals must be leashed and/or in appropriate cages at all times, and all animal attendees will receive a special treat to commemorate the occasion. Watch your email for a sign-up link to RSVP.



Bagels and Burning Questions:

What Exactly is Judaism?

RESCHEDULED to Sunday, June 4th

9:15 - 10:30 a.m.

People often ask the question — what exactly is Judaism? A religion? A people? An ethnicity? A culture? Something entirely different? Join with Rabbi Schultz for an engaging talk around this important question. Bagels and coffee will be served.

AARP Driving Class

with Ernie Malecki

Please join our congregant Ernest “Ernie” Malecki on **Wednesday, June 7 from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.** for this one-day class designed by AARP for senior drivers. Please pre-register by calling the temple office or emailing Ernie directly at enmalecki113@gmail.com. The cost is \$20 for AARP members and \$25 for non-members (checks payable to AARP). Passing this course can save you money on your car insurance.

Rosh Chodesh June/Tamuz Gathering: Summer Potluck Dinner Under the Stars **Thursday, June 22, 6:30-8:15 p.m.** **on the Prosnit Patio at B'nai Israel**

Join us as we celebrate the new Hebrew month of Tamuz and reconnect with our Rosh Chodesh community over a casual, relaxing potluck dinner together outside on the back patio. Watch your email for a sign-up link to RSVP and to indicate what you will be bringing. *If you would like to join us for dinner but are unable to bring something, not a problem at all — just please send an email to Rabbi Sarah at smarion@cbibpt.org to let us know that you will be joining.* Over dinner, we'll engage in some learning and conversation on the famous, fearless, and feisty Biblical women featured in our Torah readings this month (*in the event of rain, our gathering will move inside*).

JUNE EVENTS



Senior Noon Lunch Talks (Chat & Chew)

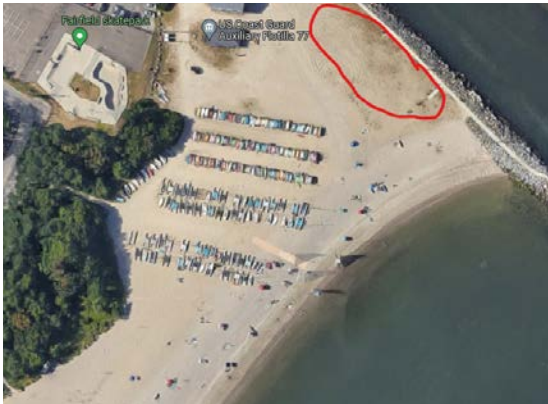
Tuesday, June 13 at noon

Was Michelangelo a Kabbalist?

Michelangelo's frescoes of Genesis on the Sistine Chapel ceiling, including *The Creation of Adam*, are probably the most famous paintings in the Western World. The ceiling also contains seven Old Testament prophets and all the Jewish "ancestors of Christ." Surprisingly, several scholars believe his works were influenced by exposure to Kabbalah, either in the circle of Lorenzo de Medici as a young man or later on in

humanistic circles of papal Rome. Come hear an illustrated lunchtime talk on Tuesday, June 13 at noon by congregation member Marcie Slepian, who has been teaching Renaissance art for the last forty years and just found out about this.

Marcie holds an A.B. in Art from Brown University and a Ph.D. in the History of Art from Yale University. She frequently teaches art history at the Bigelow Center.



Summer Shabbat Dates — this year at Jennings Beach Marina!

We're switching it up a bit this year and will hold three outdoor Shabbat services at Jennings Beach Marina. The services will be on **June 16, July 21, and August 11** from 6–7 p.m. Please access through the marina lot (see photo). Tell the guard that you are attending religious services, and they will give you a pass for your dashboard. We will meet just past the boats near the marina. Please note that musical instruments will not be amplified but we will have a portable microphone. Please bring your own chairs, blankets, and Shabbat dinners. We're excited to enjoy Shabbat on Long Island Sound this year!

JOIN OUR ISRAEL TEAM

We are convening a new committee to increase awareness and synagogue programming around Israel. Please let us know if you are interested in joining! You can email Abby Leviss (aleviss@cbibpt.org) or Rabbi Schultz (eschultz@cbibpt.org) to let us know you'd like to join. First meeting date TBA. All are welcome to attend!

CEMETERY PLOTS AVAILABLE

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As of April 1, there was a price increase. We are raising plot and care fees which will keep our pricing in line with other cemeteries in the area.

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CONGREGATION B'NAI ISRAEL

CORE PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

At B'nai Israel we...

- ...TREAT each person in our community as created b'tzelem Elohim, in the image of the divine,
- ...DEVELOP, foster and nurture vibrant and meaningful Jewish lives in accordance with the values of our Torah and sacred texts,
- ...BUILD and deepen sacred relationships both within the synagogue community and the broader Greater Bridgeport community,
- ...ACT justly with a sacred obligation to tikkun olam (repair the world),
- ...FOSTER and deepen a love, commitment and connection to the land and people of Israel.

SAVE THE DATE!: MENTAL HEALTH GROUP SUPPORTS TIKKUN OLAM FILM SERIES

Thursday, June 29, 7 p.m.

Film: CRIP CAMP, a documentary about the colorful origins of the Disability Rights Movement. The movement originated in a summer camp for disabled teens run by beatniks, through the takeover of Federal Buildings, to the victory of passage of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Tikkun Olam, which means "repairing the world" is an important Reform Judaism value. B'nai Israel's Mental Health Group has joined with other B'nai Israel Groups to organize & sponsor a *Tikkun Olam Film Series*, films about social justice

and fighting discrimination. The Mental Health Group is sponsoring the first film in the series, *Crip Camp*. We are working on getting a person from the Commission on Human Rights & Opportunity to speak after the film about how to utilize the ADA as a tool to fight discrimination against people with mental illnesses or other disabilities.

The Mental Health Group feels that living in a society where justice, equality, and peace prevail is important for maintaining good mental health.

The Mental Health Group feels that living in a society where justice, equality, and peace prevail is important for maintaining good mental health. We'd like to thank Jeff Schwartz and Nina Silberman for spearheading the *Tikkun Olam* Film Series. Looking forward to seeing you Thursday, June 29, 7 p.m., for the *Crip Camp* film at B'nai Israel.

by
B'nai Israel Mental Health Group Chair
Beth Lazar

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GREEN TEAM

B'nai Israel Welcomes Pollinators!



This summer, the empty plot of land behind the synagogue will be frequented by butterflies, native bees, and other native insects and birds. These vital pollinators will be nourished by the pollinator garden that was planted during the Mitzvah Morning sponsored by the Green Team in May. Due to the loss of native plant habitats, many pollinators are in decline, which endangers the health of the entire ecosystem. B'nai Israel's new pollinator garden includes native plants and shrubs that specifically attract and nourish pollinators. You can help expand the habitat for pollinators in your own yard: even just a small area helps! To learn more about pollinator gardens, visit www.pollinator-pathway.org.

If you would like to learn more about the B'nai Israel Green team, contact Michelle Serlin at mserlin@mac.com.

The Pollinator Garden was made possible by a generous
donation from Oliver Nurseries and Design Associates
