

oices
כולות ק.ק. עדת ישראל



Middletown, Connecticut
January 2024 tevet/shevat 5784



Dear Friends,

As I write this, Chanukah is about to happen. I wrote before about the changes that this holiday underwent as American Jewish history developed, particularly as a form of spiritual resistance in a majority Christian context. What is our identity, how do we maintain it, what are its limits – those are all questions that are connected to how Chanukah is celebrated in our homes.

The addition to the Amidah, the Standing Prayer, for Chanukah thanks God for “delivering the many into

(Rabbi Continued on page 5)

WE ARE HERE FOR YOU!

If you or anyone you know is ill or in need of support, please let our Bikur Cholim (Compassionate Care) Committee know!

Contact Michelle Grossman
at rickandmichelle360@gmail.com
or Joanna in the office.

Thank You

Adam Finkelstein
President



Dear Friends,

When I addressed the congregation over the High Holidays, I talked about coming together in times of loss and adversity to support one another. How I had been reminded that in hard times, that is when we – both as a Jewish people and more specifically at Adath Israel – are at our best. That’s when we show up to support and take care of one another.

I shared that I tell my kids ‘I know being Jewish can be hard, but that’s also what makes it so important.’

What I didn’t know at the time was that things were about to get a lot harder, for the Jewish people as a whole, and also specifically for me and my family.

So, I write this to you today, with a simple message on behalf of my entire family...thank you.

As many of you know, my dad passed away on November 4th. While he had battled various health issues over the last decade-plus, this was unexpected. He and my mom had even gone out to dinner, at their favorite restaurant nonetheless, with their best friends just hours before and had a wonderful time.

(President Continued on page 3)

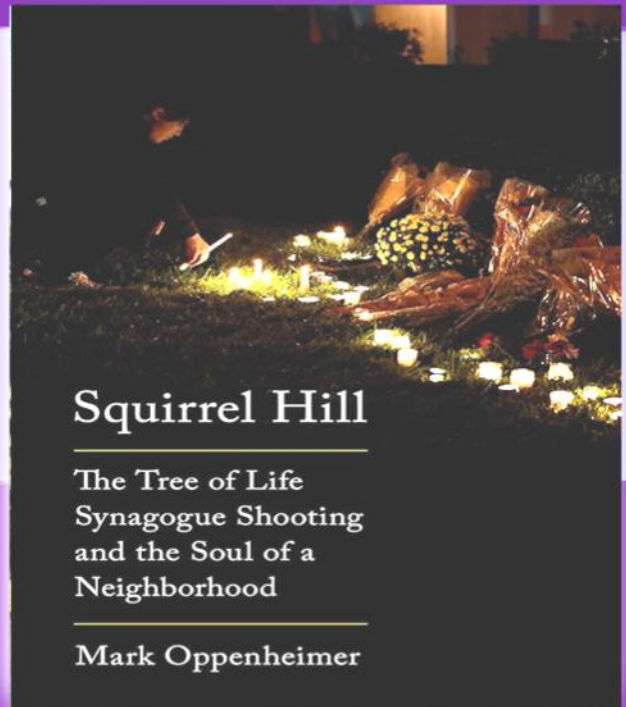


Book Club

January 2nd * 7:00pm **Zoom and In Person**

Squirrel Hill: The Tree of Life Synagogue Shooting and the Soul of a Neighborhood
by Mark Oppenheimer

Zoom Info
Meeting ID: 886 4652 0065
Passcode: 196174



Squirrel Hill

The Tree of Life
Synagogue Shooting
and the Soul of a
Neighborhood

Mark Oppenheimer



Adath Israel Book Club
is free and open to
anyone who desires
great discussions about
fascinating books
on Jewish topics

For more information, please contact
Roberta Glass: rjlevine610@gmail.com
302-593-7581

or Holly Simon: hfpsimon@icloud.com
860-395-8989

(President Continued from page 1)

I was out of town when it happened, as too was my brother. We both rushed to get home, to be with my mom, sister, and the rest of our family, and begin to handle all of the arrangements that needed to be made.

It's hard for me to overstate just how much support we received in the days that followed.

The Rabbi was patient, understanding, and able to offer valuable counsel. Joanna simplified things for me, made sure all of my family felt seen, and undoubtedly handled things that I'm still not even aware of. Anna, Carly, and the religious school were there for my wife and kids. Mike and the Chevra Kadisha gave me peace of mind and made sure my dad was buried in his own tallit. Jonathan and Sandra were there to support us and simultaneously take board business off my plate.

In the days and weeks since, numerous people have shared stories, sent touching notes, and shown up to make sure I could say Kaddish.

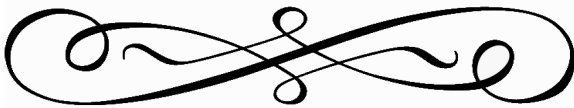
So many of you have done just that, shown up – both literally and figuratively – for us. I will be eternally grateful for that, as too would have been my dad.

Adath Israel was very important to him. He had spent his entire life here. His father, my Zeyde, was a past president. Collectively, they were also the biggest reason why I agreed to get more involved here in the first-place.

I'm very glad I did. My family and I have developed new friendships, been embraced by the community, and completely supported in these challenging times.

With my deepest thanks,

Adam Finkelstein



Kolot Due Dates

Kolot Issue	Article Due Date
February	1/8
March	2/5
April	3/4
May	4/8
June	5/6



From My Heart

By Sharon L Neuwirth

11/18/23

Good day. On this date, I attended the Bnei Mitzvah of Elliot and Nathaniel Altenburger. It was so lovely to be in the main sanctuary. I was so happy sitting in the pews seeing so many people fill the seats. There were many lovely, familiar faces. There were other faces that were new to me. It was nice to be in this space to celebrate Shabbos, Judaism, and the newly minted adult young people. I am not eloquent enough to convey how much the space and place filled my heart. It felt like the high holidays, except no assigned seats. (I felt a bit lost for a minute as 'my' regular spot was taken). Intermittently during the service, I would look at the ceiling; at the big Jewish star with those clouds. As the morning wore on, the sun showed in the southern windows. It was nice to hear the sound of many people singing. Today was living a dream, as I do wish that there were more Shabbos services that are in the main sanctuary and full of others sharing the religious and spiritual space.

ADATH ISRAEL **ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIPS**

The Scholarship Committee of Adath Israel is pleased to announce that the Application Forms and Rules and Regulation Guidelines for the Annual Adath Israel Post Secondary School Scholarships will be available in *Kolot* or from the synagogue office beginning in February.

Students who are seniors in high school through graduate school, and whose family meets the membership requirements are encouraged to apply.

All questions concerning the application process should be directed to **Fred Zierler**, Committee Chair at (203) 631-9567 or via email, fzierler@gmail.com.

Completed applications should be returned to Congregation Adath Israel.

EARLY RISERS MINYAN



Adath Israel

Celebrate Jewish Life

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 3RD 7AM
KIDDUSH BREAKFAST FOLLOWING SERVICE

(Rabbi Continued from page 1) the hands of the few, the wicked into the hands of the righteous, in those days, in our times”.

The formula “in those days, in our times” has reverberated through the centuries. “In our times” impels us to search for what is miraculous – and frequently, just as the image of the angel of history brought by Walter Benjamin z”l, we can only see it as we look backwards.

For those watching what is happening in Israel, this “in our times” feels more like a request. Our eyes are not looking backward, but attached to the terrors of the present. As Israel is attacked by Hezbollah on the north and the Houthis on the south, as 138 prisoners are still somewhere in Gaza, as we grapple with stories of October 7th and with stories of the hostages that were released, as we see pictures of destruction and thousands of people fleeing their cities and homes, those words seem hard to say as an expression of thanks.

In this war of Israel against Hamas, there are clear moral distinctions – on October 7th we saw evil in forms that we thought belonged to the past, evil that we could not have dreamed, evil that not even angels can understand the depth of its depravity. Yes, war is absolutely necessary – Hamas cannot remain in power. And yet, not all positions that present themselves as Jewish are actually righteous, push the proverbial peoplehood to its limits and makes us revisit the limits and the question of Jewish identity.

I have not seen this broadcasted in American news, but the Israeli newscasts I follow – all six of them – were ablaze last week with two specific events that were not directly connected to the war. One was the execution, in broad daylight, of Yuval Doron Castelman. Another is announcement of a new March through Jerusalem, that is scheduled to happen on the first day of Chanukah, Thursday.

Castelman, a Jewish Israeli Ashkenazi citizen, responded to the terror attack in Jerusalem by shooting his own gun at the two terrorists. Two soldiers, who were in the scene, then killed Castelman even though he was on his knees, hands on the air, apparently holding his Israeli ID, his gun on the pavement and screaming in Hebrew “don’t shoot.” The soldiers were part of what is called Hilltop Youth movement. The shockwaves of this execution are big, in part because this was an Israeli, but also because he was in a position of clear surrender. But violence for

the sake of violence is part of the Hilltop Youth, and it is hard to put that genie back in the bottle even if they are in the Israeli Defense Forces.

The Hilltop Youth has been behind many attacks on Palestinians in the West Bank, and various other provocations throughout the years. Among those, there were attacks on Israeli peace leaders, the burning of the town of Huwara recently, and the building of a sukkah on Sukkot at that very place – which needed 2,000 soldiers to protect it. I do not have to remind you of how the IDF was late to respond to the attacks on October 7th; some Israeli commentators see this as one of the many reasons why Hamas was able to do what it did, for as long as it did.

That same movement, the Hilltop Youth, is responsible for another feature in Israeli politics: the marches on the Temple Mount and on the non-Jewish areas of Old Jerusalem. Those marches, that happen every year in May, are always feared by the Armenians, Arabs and Christians living in the walls of historic Jerusalem, as they spark clashes. The stated objective of current “Maccabee March” is to change the status quo and remove, apparently, the Muslim Authority over the Omar Mosque. By embracing a vision of a land of Israel without any non-Jews, the Hilltop Youth is quite extreme in its ideology – and its leaders have no qualms about morals or ethics in order to get to its goals.

This I know for sure: we are a people who chooses life. We are a people who does have a moral compass. We are a people who believe in the infinite worth of human life – not only ours, but everyone’s. While we defend ourselves, we do not embrace killing innocent or unarmed people, and certainly our tradition condemns killing people who do not offer immediate danger, even if they were armed beforehand. We have always been a people who love peace and long for it.

Now we have to remember that the event Chanukah commemorates ended up being inconsequential in Jewish history. True, the Maccabean victory staved off the Greeks, but the Hasmonean dynasty it ushered in was corrupt, carrying within the seeds of its own destruction, calling on Romans for help deciding their internal squabbles. A few generations later, the same Romans destroyed the Second Temple.

(Rabbi Continued on page 7)



— JEWS OF THE WORLD * SPEAKER SERIES * —

SUNDAYS 4 PM

**Adath Israel is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom Meeting
for an international journey exploring Judaism
around the world.**

**Discover how communities and individuals
deal with their own challenges and joys of being Jewish.**

1/07/24 – Argentina: Yael Silberstein



Yael Silberstein - from Argentina, she received her Bachelor's degree in Sociology from the University of Buenos Aires. She has completed graduate courses in fundraising at San Andrés University. Currently, she works as the Senior Fundraiser in Institutional Development for the Association Mutual Israelita Argentina (AMIA). In her free time, she plays soccer for Maccabi, a social and athletic Jewish club and volunteers at "leladeinu" – a youth organization

2/4/24 – Taiwan: Rabbi Cody Bahir

3/3/24 - Paraguay: Mijal Kohan

3/31/24 – Uganda: Jonathan Mwosuko

4/28/24 – Sweden: Rabbi Jeremy Gerber

**Join Zoom Meeting:
Meeting ID: 876 6553 5045
Passcode: 994884**

This may explain why the rabbis, when establishing Chanukah as a holiday, chose to emphasize the miracle of the lights and downplay the miracle of the war. In their view, Chanukah isn't primarily about Jewish victory – it's about something far deeper. As the angel of history looks back, it sees that that event was a transient victory – and that the messages that Chanukah brings to us are far more important. Chanukah speaks to hope in moments of tragedy and despair and to light in moments of darkness. Chanukah, according to Rabbi Jonathan Omer-Man z"l, is about the ability of the human spirit, even when feeling most depleted and unable to go on, to renew itself from a Source beyond itself. The real miracle, says Rabbi Wolpe, is that we are still celebrating that miracle.

All those ideas are “in our times”. May we see days when all the hostages are back, when all terror and torture are gone from our land, as well. And may the angel of history, when it looks back, find hope and light in these unprecedented times – helped by our candles at this moment.

Warmly,

Rabbi Nelly Altenburger

<https://markoneinfour.medium.com/the-angel-of-history-walking-backwards-into-a-digital-mental-health-future-76ee8d28fcc5>

<https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article-776107>

<https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article-776878>

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/three-killed-6-injured-in-terror-shooting-at-jerusalem-entrance-bus-stop/>

<https://www.hartman.org.il/israel-at-war-an-enemy-within/>

<https://www.stateoftelaviv.com/p/teenage-wasteland-part-2-inside-israels-hilltop-youth>

<https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/rabbis-for-human-rights-former-president-assaulted-by-hilltop-youth-664459>

<https://www.cnn.com/2023/06/15/middleeast/huware-west-bank-settler-attack-cmd-intl/index.html>

<https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2023-10-06/ty-article/.premium/one-palestinian-killed-after-settlers-enter-west-bank-town-of-hawara-to-set-up-sukkah/0000018b-0200-df89-a7bb-9e691b0f0000?gift=8f3e22f51a1c40b081342bbbe7135f01>

<https://omny.fm/shows/unholy/red-flag-with-special-guest-michael-eisenberg>

<https://www.stateoftelaviv.com/p/teenage-wasteland-part-2-inside-israels-hilltop-youth>

Deut. 30:19 and other places

Genesis 1:27

Mishneh Torah, Laws of Theft 9:11

Pirkei Avot 1:12

<https://www.tabletmag.com/sections/history/articles/who-were-the-hasmoneans>



TIKKUN OLAM OPPORTUNITIES

Ways You Can Help

Mosaic United. This is a site where you can get informed on ways to combat antisemitism and anti-Zionism online and offline. <https://mosaicunited.org/>

Bonot Alternativa. The aforementioned group helping women directly impacted by the war. They have 100,000 volunteers to open ad hoc community-care centers for the displaced. <https://www.bonot.org/aid-israel>

Brothers and Sisters in Arms. All donations go toward procuring and distributing supplies to civilians and security personnel in the conflict zones. <https://www.ahimlaneshek.org/donate-2023>

UnXeatable. The pro-democracy protest group founded by Israeli expatriates in Silicon Valley is seeking volunteers to host Israelis who are stuck abroad, organizing Bring Them Home rallies for the

(Help Continued on page 9)



PRAY EAT SING

FRIDAY, JANUARY 12TH

6:00PM

RSVP: FRIDAY, JANUARY 5TH



Adath Israel

Celebrate Jewish Life

Free to Members

Others: \$10 per person or \$18/family

(Help Continued from page 7)

hostages and highlighting organizations seeking donations. unxepable.org/crisis

Magen David Adom. Donations support paramedics, EMTs, first responders and first-aid providers in Israel. afmda.org

United Hatzalah. This nonprofit, fully volunteer emergency medical service organization provides help throughout Israel free of charge. israelrescue.org

ERAN: Emotional First Aid. The group runs a 24-hour crisis hotline for mental health emergencies in Israel. en.eran.org.il

Israel Trauma Coalition. The organization and its member groups, especially ERAN and NATAL, have expanded their mental health crisis services due to the large number of requests for help. israeltraumacoalition.org/en

NATAL. Israel Trauma Center for Victims of Terror and War. This Israeli organization offers mental health treatment for PTSD and other trauma related to war and terror. natal.org.il/en

The Jewish Agency's Fund for the Victims of Terror. Your donation will directly help Israelis affected by terror attacks: <https://www.jewishagency.org/>

Friends of Israeli Defense Forces. Critical Needs that your gift to FIDF can go toward: temporary field hospitals, intensive care ambulances, hygiene kits, plasma kits: <https://www.fidf.org/>

IsraAid. Founded in 2001, IsraAid is the largest humanitarian aid organization based in Israel: <https://www.israaid.org/>



Compassionate Care A.K.A. Bikur Cholim Committee

A core value of our Congregation is to provide care to our community.

This care often includes pastoral visits but our scope is much broader.

We can provide visits, calls, cards, transportation, shopping and food assistance, and often more, when we know of the needs. We try to provide emotional support where helpful and connections for those who are isolated by whatever circumstances (alone at home, at a medical facility or nursing home). We do this confidentially and without cost or obligation.

We need your help to identify those who need assistance who we do not know about and the best way to contact them. Please reach out to us with as much information as you can share in confidence so that we can reach out and fulfill our desire to help those in need in our community.

Michelle Grossman is the contact person for Compassionate Care. She can be reached at 203-558-4937 or rickandmichelle360@gmail.com.

!! SAVE THE DATE !!
SATURDAY, MARCH 16, 2024 7:30 PM

Come meet comedian-author, Joel Chasnoff and join us for an evening of clean, clever stand-up comedy about the joys and oys of all things Jewish, from Passover seders (supposedly), English-speaking Israeli tour guides and mishegas of family life!

Refreshments and Book Signing Following the Program.

For ticket information, see our flyer or website, or call synagogue office.





Havdalah L'chol Adat

January 13th
5:15pm
All are welcome!

Havdalah Service for the whole community

www.adathisraelct.org



Volunteer Corner

The synagogue administrative office is always looking for volunteers. Sometimes there are specific tasks that need to be accomplished on a monthly basis and other times they are one and done tasks. The following is a list of some of those various tasks that you might find you are available to help accomplish. Your time and commitment are very much appreciated. Maybe you will even work with a member you've never met before and make a new friend.

If you find a task that you would be available to assist with, please contact me, Eileen Daling at edaling21@att.net and I will get back to you as soon as possible. Thank you in advance for your dedication to Adath Israel

Recurring Tasks:

Computer knowledge to layout our monthly newsletter – Kolot

Assemble monthly and/or other mailings.

Help to shop for/prepare food for our monthly Pray-Eat-Sing and other dinners and events.

If you would be willing to assist with any one time tasks, provided you are available when contacted (i.e. Purim Carnival, Hanukkah Candle Lighting, Fundraising events, etc.) please also contact me and we will keep you in mind and/or contact you when



Jewish Camp/Israel Trip Scholarships

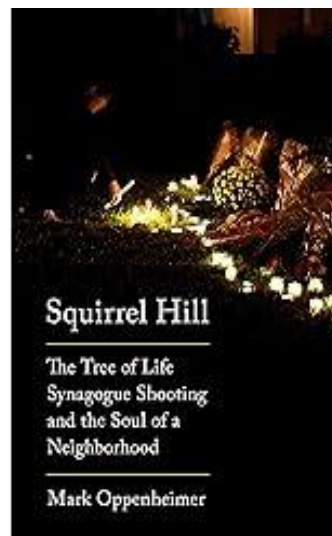
The Congregation is blessed with two scholarship funds which provide support for children of members in good standing wishing to send their children to Jewish summer camps or to experience Israel.

Applications for the Maxine Thumim Camp Scholarship and the Dr. Arthur & Gladys Weiss Scholarship will appear in next month's issue of *Kolot* and will be available from the Synagogue office.



Take a Look, It's in a Book

Happy 2024! Let's look ahead and continue to be excited about reading in the new year. Books can be comfort. Books can be resistance. Books can be home!



*The Book Club selected for its January 2nd meeting, Mark Oppenheimer's book **Squirrel Hill: The Tree of Life Synagogue Shooting and the Soul of a Neighborhood**. We are so fortunate to have Karen Swartz lead the discussion. Karen's family is originally from that part of Pennsylvania and she brings a unique perspective to the discussion. Many thanks, Karen.*

The Book Club meetings are held at The Nester Center at 7 p.m. as well as via Zoom. We are using a hybrid model so that more people can participate. Come join us!

Meeting ID: 886 4652 0065

Passcode: 196174

Stay tuned for future book selections! Happy Reading!

ROBERTA and HOLLY

Roberta Levine Glass, rjlevine610@gmail.com, 302-593-7581 (cell)

Holly Simon, hfpsimon@icloud.com, 860-395-8989



Adath Israel

Celebrate Jewish Life

**INTRODUCING A NEW PROGRAM
AFTER SERVICES ONCE A MONTH**

THE BREAKFAST BUNCH COMMUNITY WITH A SCHMEAR!

MONDAY, JANUARY 15TH

Following morning minyan join
us for breakfast at Perk on Main, Middletown
Please note: while the great conversation is
free, participants are responsible
for what they order.

**FUTURE DATE:
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 12TH**

WWW.ADATHISRAELCT.ORG



Daniel & Judith Merida
Tod & Melissa Olczak



Phinnaeus Dreyfus
Matthew Feldman
Josephine Dreyfus
Alan Firestone
Ethel Peltz 102!!!!
Sherry Aiudi
Gloria Sones
Rachelle Harris
Ella Evans
Marjorie Perry
Doris Goldstein
Sherry Young
Suzanne Goldberg
Rabbi Nelly Altenburger
Jim Lawrence
Jaime Bruno
Steven Weiss
Edward Schwartz
Judith Merida
Jack Weiss
Nona Horn
Saul Seigel
Susan Dickes
Jack Wilkins

Did we leave someone off the list?
Please call the office, and let us make it right.

5784 Annual Giving Campaign

We are incredibly grateful to our members and friends who have participated this year's Annual Giving Campaign. Their support promotes the vitality of Adath Israel, allowing us to improve our facilities and enhance our cultural, educational, and spiritual offerings.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Donna & Mark Finkelstein
Laurie & Rabbi Marshal Press
Linda Savitsky
Nedra Mirkin
Darcy & Fred Searle
Sara Paley
Gertrude Steele
Ines Gerstenblatt
Hachnosas Orchim Jewish Society of Meriden
Natalie & Leonard Cheerman
Paula & Rob Goldstein
Michelle & Rick Grossman
Arlene Pressman
E. Jack Shorr

CELEBRATE JEWISH LIFE **THROUGH PRAYER**

All services are in-person & via Zoom

Morning Minyan

Monday - Friday, 8:00 AM
1st Wednesday of the month, 7:00 AM
Sunday, 9:00 AM

Zoom Info

Meeting ID: 863 5646 9422 Passcode: 679552

Shabbat Services

Friday, 7:00 PM
Monthly Pray-Eat-Sing Services, 6:00 PM
Saturday, 9:30 AM

Zoom Info

Meeting ID: 815 6727 3870 Passcode: 474612

All prayer services at Adath Israel are public events, open to the community as a whole. Members, guests, and other religious seekers who desire the warmth of Jewish prayer and the fellowship of being together are always welcome.

EXPRESS MINYAN

EVERY WEDNESDAY 8:00AM*

**WHEN YOU WANT TO DAVEN
BUT ARE SHORT ON TIME
*EXCEPT WHEN A LONGER SERVICE
IS HALACHICALLY REQUIRED**



Bar Mitzvah D'var Torah

Elliott Altenburger

November 18, 2023

Shabbat Shalom.

Thank you all for being here. Seeing all these faces makes me happy.

As my brother said, this week's Parashah is Toldot, and it focuses on twin brothers, born from Rachel, one named Jacob and one named Esav. Esav is described as the older one, with more hair than Jacob.

And Jacob is described as the younger one, with less hair. As the story moves on, we are told that Esav spends most of his time outside, while Jacob spends most of his time inside.

All these descriptions of the brothers are very coincidental to us. Nathaniel was born first and has more hair, but he spends most of his time indoors. I am technically younger, and I have less hair, but I spend more time outside.

Here comes the important part of the story. One day, Esav is hunting, but he fails to catch anything. He comes back, starving, to see Jacob preparing some delicious lentil soup. He begs Jacob to give him some, but Jacob says that he would only trade it for his brother's birthright. Esav agrees, saying that he would die without the lentil soup.

Once it is time for the birthright to be given, Jacob successfully tricks Isaac with the help of Rivkah into believing that he is Esav, and he gets the birthright blessing. Esav comes back from his hunt, cooked food in hand, but he learns that his brother got the birthright. He then wishes to kill or cause great bodily harm to his brother.

Rivkah told to Jacob, and Jacob, learning this, runs away and spends many years with Lavan, his uncle. There he marries Leah and Rachel and has 13 children.

After twenty one years, as he is coming back with all his family to his father's house, Esav comes with a large army to try to hurt Jacob.

In the end, he doesn't kill Jacob, and he and Jacob make peace. I think that Esav shouldn't have tried to attack Jacob because as brothers, they should have worked together and should have each other's back.

Even though they did in the end, they shouldn't have even started to be aggressive to the other.

We know that another name for Esav is Edom, and that comes from the delicious soup, because it was made from red lentils. Adom in Hebrew is red, and so he is called Edom.

What we know about the people of Edom is that they lived near the people of Israel. In that sense, the Torah is reminding us that the two peoples are connected by brotherhood and by living near each other.

This Torah portion also applies to the present.

On October 7th, six weeks ago, Hamas attacked Israel.

This was a very unexpected and unwanted surprise. Israel has been responding with force.

I think that these two groups, being right next to each other geographically, should work together, and try to make this world a better place.

This also applies to the other countries surrounding Israel like Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Egypt. I think that together they can achieve many great accomplishments, and especially together I think that they could help stop or at least lessen the current global issues like global warming, pollution, poverty, and hunger. If we all, across the world, help each other, we will make the world much better than we found it.

Being a Bar Mitzvah means a lot to me. Now being able to be counted for a minyan makes me feel accepted or like a bigger part of this community.

Thank you to my dad for helping me and supporting me along the way, and for helping us plan this service. Thank you to my mom for helping me with my Torah readings and the haftarah.

Thank you to my sister Michaela for supporting me when I needed and giving me advice. Thank you, Ariella, for making me laugh and smile when I am sad and for sharing her birthday weekend with my bar mitzvah. Thank you, Nathaniel, for sharing this day with me.

Thank you to my friends for being there when I needed help. Thank you to my cousins for coming such a long way to be at this service with me. Thank you to my friends from CBI for coming here to see this service. Thank you to Sandra Beckman for helping me write and perfect this speech. And finally, thank you to everyone for being here, online and in person.

The background of the entire page is a close-up photograph of almond blossoms. A single, large, white almond blossom with a pink center and yellow stamens is the central focus. To its left, a dried, brown almond is attached to a branch. Other blossoms and branches are visible in the background, creating a soft, natural setting.

Tu B'shevat Seder & Dinner Discussion

Wednesday
January 24
5:15 p.m.

Free! RSVP by
Monday, Jan. 22

The logo for Adath Israel features a stylized tree with green leaves and small red flowers, positioned to the left of the text.

Adath Israel
Celebrate Jewish Life

Bar Mitzvah D'var Torah

Nathaniel Altenburger

November 18, 2023

Shabbat Shalom.

Welcome everyone to our bar mitzvah.

I am Nathaniel Altenburger. I am usually referred to as “one of the twins” or “the one with the long hair”. But I am more than that. Who I am is a question that I have always had. How do I make myself distinct and memorable? This Bar Mitzvah is the chance to do just that. So I am grasping that chance. But first, I want to introduce myself. I like to read, play video games, and study Judaism. I care about climate change, and many other important world subjects.

This week's Torah portion is Toldot. It follows the beginning of the story of Esav and Yaakov, the only pair of twins which has a prominent role in the Torah. When I began studying the portion for today, I thought the story was just that. But looking deeper into the text brought a whole new, deeper perspective to this otherwise pretty simple story.

This parshah shows warring twins, and parents playing favorites. This is of course not at all the situation in our family. What is interesting is the reasoning behind why these parents are liking certain children more, and why the twins are warring and against each other.

The beginning of this portion is fairly simple. The father and mother wed, but the mother is barren. The father prays to G for children, and G answers his prayers by making the mother have twins. One of these twins is called Esav, or “Esau” in English, and is a hairy child. The second twin is named Yaakov, since Ekev in Hebrew means heel, and he held onto his twin brother's heel at birth. He is a very short-haired child.

Yitzhak, the father of the twins, likes Esav better than Yaakov because Esav has a taste for meat, and is a hunter. The Torah literally describes him with “game was in his mouth”. Esav grows up to hunt animals and to be an “Ish Tzadeh,” or a “man of the fields”. Rebecca, the mother, likes Yaakov better. It is unclear why she likes him better than Esav, but we can assume it is because Rebecca is more calm than Yitzhak, and Yaakov is the calmer twin as well, being a “mild man, raising livestock.” In addition to this, Yaakov was more at home, so she would know him better than Esav.

The first interaction we see between these twins is a big one. This moment defines the portion and is the topic of many arguments.

One day Yaakov, the “mild man,” is brewing a stew. Esav comes from hunting, famished. He says to Yaakov, “give me some of that red stuff to gulp down, for I am famished.” Yaakov replies with: “First sell me your birthright.” Esav responds with: “I am at the point of death, so of what use is my birthright to me?”

This one phrase changes the whole scenario that was present. What is interesting about this verse is that when commenting on this parshah, it is glossed over a lot in favor of a more pro-Yaakov narrative. If what Esav is saying is true, then Yaakov is essentially making him give something to him to stay alive.

There are some people that believe that every parsha has a lesson, a moral, something to teach us. In the case of this parsha, Toldot, the lesson would be “how to have a bad family dynamic”. You have parents favoring certain children, brothers that are not honest and trick each other, and all sorts of bad things. As we saw, Yaakov didn't even seem to really care if Esav was still alive. This, of course, is not at all the situation in our home.

Some people may view Toldot as not having a thing to do with their daily life. But I believe this is a cautionary tale to everyone. I think that what this parsha is trying to teach is not to look at twins as two halves of one whole, as codependent, but rather to appreciate the differences between them. To embrace them for what they are. And to give them each their own “blessing”, whatever that may look like.

The system of birthrights no longer exists in our modern world, but we have something similar. A will. And this parsha highlights how we should not give everything to one twin or child, but rather split our possessions between them. This should not be the cause of fights. I hope that we can all be a little bit kinder to the people around us and to the world, not favoring or disliking any certain person.

I would like to say thank you to everyone who helped me get here today. My parents, for being the ones who have tolerated my antics all these years, Joanna, for being a wonderful planner, Sandra Beckman, for helping me write this very speech and taking me through the process, Elliott, for being an amazing brother, Michaela for being the best older sister I could ever have, and especially Ariella, who shared

(Nathaniel Continued on page 19)



Torah Study with Rabbi Nelly

via Zoom

Every Wednesday - 10:30 AM

Zoom ID 837 9879 1910, Passcode 963942

Every Thursday - 6:00 PM

Zoom ID 887 326 428, Password 827527

Zoom info:

Shabbat Services:

Friday at 7 p.m. and Saturday at 9:30 a.m.

— Meeting ID: 815 6727 3870

— Meeting Passcode: 474612

Daily Minyan:

Sunday at 9 a.m. and Monday-Friday at 8 a.m.

— Meeting ID: 863 5646 9422

— Meeting Passcode: 679552

her birthday weekend with this Bar Mitzvah. Thanks to all of you.

ADATH ISRAEL DEDICATED FUNDS

ADATH ISRAEL SCHOLARSHIP FUND

(SOPHIE & JULIUS BARKER, EVELYN & ABRAHAM GROSSMAN, SARAH ZIETZ PIERSON, RABBI ALBERT & ROSALYN TROY, SYLVIA GROSS WASSERMAN, MAX CHEIKIN, BERNIE SEIDON, AND JEAN STERN ARON SCHOLARSHIPS)

Provides scholarships to children of Adath Israel members attending an accredited college, university or school of higher learning

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Provides scholarships to children of Adath Israel members attending Jewish camp, Jewish content special programs, and trips to Israel
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Supports music in the ritual, educational, and cultural gatherings at Adath Israel

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Supports the general operation of Adath Israel
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Hyime Paley by Sandra & Paul Beckman
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Supports the beautification of our synagogue building and grounds and the Nester Center

IN HONOR OF

Dotty Kaplan in celebration of the wedding of her granddaughter Zoe Kaplan to Phil Case by Marge & Stan Sadinsky

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Supports the upgrade of our religious school
Jo-Ann & Michael Price



Come spend the Evening
with Comedian and Author
JOEL CHASNOFF

**Saturday, March 16, 2024
at 7:30 pm**

Advance reservation:
\$25 pp until March 1, 2024
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only at the door: \$35 pp

**JOEL
CHASNOFF
LIVE**

Call the synagogue office at (860) 346-4709 to make your advanced reservation.
Payment by check, credit card or drop off payment at the synagogue.

If mailing your payment send to: PO Box 337, Middletown, CT 06457

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Mark Finkelstein by Susan & Doug Miller
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Provides scholarships to children of Adath Israel members attending Jewish camp or travelling to Israel
MAZAL TOV

Barbara Axmacher on her new home by Eileen & Michael Daling

REFUA SH'LEIMA (SPEEDY RECOVERY)

Allen Caplan by Eileen & Michael Daling

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Hyime Paley by Susan & Doug Miller

MICHAEL FASSLER FUND

Supports early childhood education at Adath Israel

IN MEMORY OF

Frank Gill Jr by Marian Katz

MUSEUM FUND

Supports purchases and maintenance of Adath Israel's museum

NATHAN OLSHIN SCHOLAR-IN-RESIDENCE-FUND

Supports annual scholar-in-residence program

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Hyime Paley by Bobette Reed & Jeffrey S. Kahn

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Allows the rabbi to support individuals and causes in our community anonymously

Carol & Stephen Shapiro
Susan Tritter

IN HONOR OF

Elliott & Nathaniel Altenburger on being called to the Torah as B'nei Mitzvah by
Susan & Doug Miller
Linda & Steven Small

IN MEMORY OF

Marge Kirschheimer by Michael Sperling
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Supports the creation and building of community over Kiddush

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Jacob Firestone by Joy & Alan Firestone

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Supports the general operation of Adath Israel

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IT'S NEWS!!!



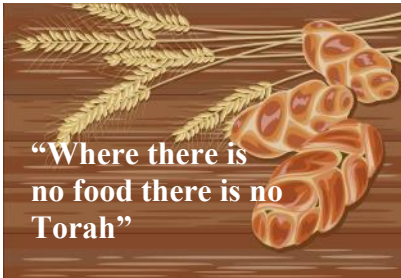
TODAH RABAH

Providing a new Sukkah so we can dwell in style next autumn: Jean & Marc Nemeth

Other Acts of Kindness

Meals & Shopping: Harriet, Marcey, and Aaron Thiela

Picking up food at the Crown: Fred Zierler
Proofreading Kolot: Naomi Kamins, Phil Saxe
Helping with mailings: Anita Hennessey and Eileen Daling, Ruth Sigal, and Roberta Glass
Taking care of our eNews and blasts: Eileen Daling
Washing towels from the kitchen: Joanna Schnurman
Returning bottles: Eileen & Mike Daling
Providing a new minyan doorbell: Phil Saxe



Sponsoring a Kiddush

Early Risers Minyan

Scott Levy
Andrew Becker
Stan Sadinsky

IN HONOR OF

The 49th anniversary of his bar mitzvah – Rob Goldstein

IN MEMORY OF

Morris Poliner, Michael Pashalinsky, and Jacob Poliner by Robert S. Poliner
David Glaz by Joseph Glaz
Dorothy & Elmer Seaman by Nancy Thornton

Supporting Pray-Eat-Sing

Harriet, Marcey, and Aaron Thiela
Kim Anderson
Naomi & Richard Kamins
Phil Saxe
Fred & Risa Zierler

Supporting Our Community Candle Lighting & Dinner

Roxanne & Ethan Warner-Crane, Ruth Borsuk, Fred Zierler, Adam Finkelstein, Carly Hoss, Richard Kamins, Sandra Beckman, Rebekah Doweiko, and Liora Hyman.

SPEEDY RECOVERY

We'd like to wish a "Refua Shleima" to the following:
Shana Adams, Jack Adler, Katrina Axelrod, Phyllis Frydenberg, Paula Goldstein, Rabbi Marshal Press, David Schwarz, Stephen Shapiro, and Anne Willis



MAY GOD GRANT COMFORT

IN MEMORIUM

Herbert Bichunsky who came to his eternal rest on November 19 (6 kislev)

Karen Schwarz who came to her eternal rest on November 22 (9 Kislev)

May the bereaved find comfort in our community's support.

Office Hours

Monday: 7:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

Tuesday: 7:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

Wednesday: 9 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

Thursday: 7:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

Friday: 7:30 a.m.-Noon

The office is closed weekends, legal holidays, and Jewish holy days.

In the event of an emergency closing due to weather or public health the office will work remotely.

Wishing you good health.



Steering Committee

City of Middletown
 Community Health Center
 Fellowship Church
 Liberty Bank Foundation
 Middlesex Community College
 Middlesex Hospital
 Middlesex United Way
 Middletown Kiwanis Club
 Middletown Police Department
 Middletown Rotary Club
 Russell Library
 St. Vincent DePaul
 Middletown/Amazing Grace
 Food Pantry

November 30, 2023

Dear Congregation Adath Israel,

What a success! This year the Middletown Community Thanksgiving Project provided over **998 Thanksgiving baskets for Middletown families** in need. Your donation of **90 Cans of Cranberry Sauce** helped make this possible!

Tuesday, November 21st, was a busy day of bustling activity at Fellowship Church, where residents came to pick up their Thanksgiving baskets. After several successful years hosting the drive thru pick up, we did it again this year. While it was a little chilly, the volunteers had a great time greeting people and putting their Thanksgiving food in their cars. There were dozens of volunteers from different local organizations who helped make this event possible. In addition, members of the Middletown Rotary Club delivered 100 baskets to people who were disabled or otherwise unable to pick them up. The atmosphere was festive and joyous—a reflection of the spirit of community that infused the project from the very start.

On behalf of the entire Middletown Community Thanksgiving Project team, we'd like to extend a heart-felt "thank you" for helping to make Thanksgiving brighter for so many of our neighbors. Best wishes for a wonderful holiday season!

Sincerely,

Lara SantaMaria
 Project Coordinator
 Middletown Community
 Thanksgiving Project

Address:
 MCTP
 1002 Saybrook Road
 Middletown, CT 06457

*This letter serves as a receipt for your donation.
 Your gift was a charitable donation and no goods or services were provided in return for it.*

ADATH ISRAEL

EMERGENCY CANCELATION & CLOSING PROCEDURES

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL :

THE PRINCIPAL WILL CONTACT STAFF & STUDENTS' FAMILIES DIRECTLY.

**ALL OTHER CANCELATIONS & CLOSINGS:
CHECK TV CHANNEL WFSB (EYEWITNESS 3) OR WWW.WFSB.COM.**

SHARE THE JOY WITH A SPONSORED ONEG OR KIDDUSH

Share a family simcha, honor a friend or relative, or remember a loved one by sponsoring a Friday night Oneg Shabbat or a Shabbat Morning Kiddush. This is a delightful way to let others in our community celebrate a special occasion or share a memory with you. Our hope is that you would be present which will only add to the occasion.

The new Kiddush menus will be prepared and tastefully arranged by the Crown Supermarket in West Hartford. **Please call the synagogue office at 860-346-4709 at least a week in advance to make ordering and pick-up arrangements with the office administrator.**

The following is a breakdown of the new menus and costs for a Shabbat Morning Kiddush:

Traditional Kiddush (up to 15 people): \$150 (16-30 people): \$225

Bagels, Tuna salad, Egg salad, cuke, tomato, & onion platter, lox spread, plain & chive cream cheese, fruit salad, pastry, cold & hot drinks

Deluxe Kiddush (up to 15 people): \$225 (16-30 people): \$350

Bagels, tuna salad, egg salad, lox & sliced veggie platter, whitefish salad, plain & chive cream cheese, sesame noodles, kugel, fruit salad, pastry, cold & hot drinks

Friday Night Oneg Shabbat (15 people): \$54

Pretzels, fruit, M&M's, pastry, cold & hot drinks

Prices for both a Kiddush and/or an Oneg Shabbat will be adjusted if there is a larger group in attendance for special life cycle events (Bar/Bat Mitzvah, baby naming, or wedding, etc.).

Of course, you can always purchase the food, bring it to the synagogue and do the set up yourself while also following the synagogue's Kashrut guidelines. Some assistance may be available on the day of your Kiddush.



january 2024
tevet/shevat

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
*Candle Lighting Times for Middletown, CT	1 Office closed 8 a.m. Minyan New Year's Day 20 tevet	2 8 a.m. Minyan 11 a.m. Mah Jongg 12:30 p.m. Mah Jongg 7 p.m. Book Club 7 p.m. Al Anon/Alateen 21 tevet	3 7 a.m. Early Risers Minyan 10:30 a.m. Torah Study w/ Rabbi Nelly, Zoom 4 p.m. Religious School 22 tevet	4 8 a.m. Minyan 6 p.m. Torah Study w/ Rabbi Nelly, Zoom 23 tevet	5 RSVP Deadline for Pray-Eat-Sing 8 a.m. Minyan 7 p.m. Shabbat Evening Services *4:16 p.m. 24 tevet	6 9:30 a.m. Shabbat Morning Services <i>Shemot</i> 25 tevet
7 9 a.m. Minyan 9 a.m. Religious School 10:30 a.m. Mazel Tots 26 tevet	8 8 a.m. Minyan 7 Bd of Directors Mtg 27 tevet	9 8 a.m. Minyan 11 a.m. Mah Jongg 12:30 p.m. Mah Jongg 7 p.m. Al Anon/Alateen 28 tevet	10 8 a.m. Express Minyan 10:30 a.m. Torah Study w/ Rabbi Nelly, Zoom 4 p.m. Religious School 29 tevet	11 8 a.m. Minyan 6 p.m. Torah Study w/ Rabbi Nelly, Zoom <i>Rosh Chodesh</i> 1 shevat	12 8 a.m. Minyan 6 p.m. Pray-Eat-Sing Shabbat Evening Services & Dinner *4:23 p.m. 2 shevat	13 9:30 a.m. Shabbat Morning Services 5:30 p.m. Havdalah L'chol Adat <i>Va'era</i> 3 shevat
14 No Religious School or Mazel Tots 9 a.m. Minyan 4 shevat	15 Office closed 8 a.m. Minyan Breakfast Bunch following services Martin Luther King Day 5 shevat	16 8 a.m. Minyan 11 a.m. Mah Jongg 12:30 p.m. Mah Jongg 7 p.m. Al Anon/Alateen 6 shevat	17 8 a.m. Express Minyan 10:30 a.m. Torah Study w/ Rabbi Nelly, Zoom 4 p.m. Religious School 7 shevat	18 8 a.m. Minyan 6 p.m. Torah Study w/ Rabbi Nelly, Zoom 8 shevat	19 8 a.m. Minyan 7 p.m. Shabbat Evening Services *4:31 p.m. 9 shevat	20 9:30 a.m. Shabbat Morning Services <i>Bo</i> 10 shevat
21 9 a.m. Minyan 9 a.m. Religious School 10:30 a.m. Mazel Tots 11 shevat	22 8 a.m. Minyan 12 shevat	23 8 a.m. Minyan 11 a.m. Mah Jongg 12:30 p.m. Mah Jongg 7 p.m. Al Anon/Alateen 13 shevat	24 8 a.m. Express Minyan 10:30 a.m. Torah Study w/ Rabbi Nelly, Zoom 4 p.m. Religious School 5:15 p.m. Tu B'shevat Dinner 14 shevat	25 8 a.m. Minyan 6 p.m. Torah Study w/ Rabbi Nelly, Zoom <i>Tu B'shevat</i> 15 shevat	26 8 a.m. Minyan 7 p.m. Shabbat Evening Services *4:40 p.m. 16 shevat	27 9:30 a.m. Shabbat Morning Services <i>Shabbat Shirah Beshalach</i> 17 shevat
28 9 a.m. Minyan 9 a.m. Religious School 9:30 a.m. JWV Brunch 10:30 a.m. Mazel Tots 18 shevat	29 8 a.m. Minyan 19 shevat	30 8 a.m. Minyan 11 a.m. Mah Jongg 12:30 p.m. Mah Jongg 7 p.m. Al Anon/Alateen 20 shevat	31 8 a.m. Express Minyan 10:30 a.m. Torah Study w/ Rabbi Nelly, Zoom 4 p.m. Religious School 21 shevat			



february 2024

shevat/adar I

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
			*Candle Lighting Times for Middletown, CT	1 8 a.m. Minyan 6 p.m. Torah Study w/ Rabbi Nelly, Zoom 22 shevat	2 RSVP Deadline for Pray-Eat-Sing 8 a.m. Minyan 7 p.m. Shabbat Evening Services *4:49 p.m. 23 shevat	3 9:30 a.m. Shabbat Morning Services <i>Yitro</i> 24 shevat
4 9 a.m. Minyan 9 a.m. Religious School 10:30 a.m. Mazel Tots 25 shevat	5 8 a.m. Minyan 26 shevat	6 8 a.m. Minyan 11 a.m. Mah Jongg 12:30 p.m. Mah Jongg 7 p.m. Book Club 7 p.m. Al Anon/Alateen 27 shevat	7 7 a.m. Early Risers Minyan 10:30 a.m. Torah Study w/ Rabbi Nelly, Zoom 4 p.m. Religious School 28 shevat	8 8 a.m. Minyan 6 p.m. Torah Study w/ Rabbi Nelly, Zoom 29 shevat	9 8 a.m. Minyan 6 p.m. Pray-Eat-Sing Evening Services & Dinner *4:58 p.m. Rosh Chodesh 30 shevat	10 9:30 a.m. Shabbat L'chol Adat Morning Services 11:30 a.m. Tot Shabbat Rosh Chodesh Mishpatim 1 adar I
11 9 a.m. Minyan 9 a.m. Religious School 10:30 a.m. Mazel Tots 2 adar I	12 8 a.m. Minyan Breakfast Bunch following Services 7 p.m. Bd of Directors Mtg 3 adar I	13 8 a.m. Minyan 11 a.m. Mah Jongg 12:30 p.m. Mah Jongg 7 p.m. Al Anon/Alateen 4 adar I	14 8 a.m. Express Minyan 10:30 a.m. Torah Study w/ Rabbi Nelly, Zoom 4 pm.. Religious School 5 adar I	15 8 a.m. Minyan 6 p.m. Torah Study w/ Rabbi Nelly, Zoom 6 adar I	16 8 a.m. Minyan 7 p.m. Shabbat Evening Services *5:06 p.m. 7 adar I	17 9:30 a.m. Shabbat Morning Services <i>Terumah</i> 8 adar I
18 No Religious School or Mazel Tots 9 a.m. Minyan 9 adar I	19 Office closed 8 a.m. Minyan Presidents Day 10 adar I	20 8 a.m. Minyan 11 a.m. Mah Jongg 12:30 p.m. Mah Jongg 7 p.m. Al Anon/Alateen 11 adar I	21 No Religious School 8 a.m. Express Minyan 10:30 a.m. Torah Study w/ Rabbi Nelly, Zoom 12 adar I	22 8 a.m. Minyan 6 p.m. Torah Study w/ Rabbi Nelly, Zoom 13 adar I	23 8 a.m. Minyan 7 p.m. Shabbat Evening Services *5:15 p.m. Purim Katan 14 adar I	24 9:30 a.m. Shabbat Morning Services Shushan Purim Katan Tetzaveh 15 adar I
25 9 a.m. Minyan 9 am Religious School 9:30 a.m. JWV Brunch 10:30 am Mazel Tots 16 adar I	26 8 a.m. Minyan 17 adar I	27 8 a.m. Minyan 11 a.m. Mah Jongg 12:30 p.m. Mah Jongg 7 p.m. Al Anon/Alateen 18 adar I	28 8 a.m. Express Minyan 10:30 a.m. Torah Study w/ Rabbi Nelly, Zoom 4 pm Religious School 19 adar I	29 8 a.m. Minyan 6 p.m. Torah Study w/ Rabbi Nelly, Zoom 20 adar I		



Contact information

Phone: 860-346-4709

Email: office@adathisraelct.org

Website: www.adathisraelct.org