

McHenry County Jewish Congregation

MCJC CONNECTIONS



March/April 2024

AdarI/AdarII/Nissan

Volume 5784

Rabbi's Column: Celebrating Spring



It sure feels like winter, and the calendar concurs, but now is the time to focus on Spring Holidays! Purim is just a lot of fun, and this year at MCJC will be no exception, with Paula Eskoz and crew concocting another brilliant, hilarious Purim shpiel. Purim is the prime example of the Jewish holiday paradigm: They (boo Haman) tried to kill us/we survived (with the help of Esther and Mordechai)/let's eat.

What's your favorite hamantaschen filling? Hopefully you'll find some you love after our Megillat Esther reading/Purim shpiel on Sunday morning, March 24th starting at 10 am, and followed by a Town Hall discussion when we will consider options on the future of our congregation and its building.

How will we observe the Purim mitzvah of providing food and drink to those in need? You can donate to: Mazon (Hebrew word for "food"), the organization that collects monetary donations from Jewish communities around the country to address food insecurities here and around the world for all peoples; or you can donate to your local food pantry.

Fast forward one month, to Passover. The paradigm is slightly different, more like: They (Pharaoh and the Egyptians) tried to keep us enslaved/we escaped (with the help of Moses, Miriam and Aaron)/let's EAT (with no leavening). In many ways Passover is the most important seasonal Holy Day of our calendar. The account of our people's journey from slavery to freedom is foundational on these levels:

Humility: Rather than trace our lineage to royalty, we acknowledge our roots as having been oppressed and enslaved.

Gratitude: In telling our story we are thankful for every step of the process. Dayenu spells this out—If God had brought us out of Egypt and not parted the Reed Sea for us, dayenu (it would have been enough). If God had split the Reed Sea for us and not given us manna to eat, dayenu. Etc.

Salvation/Redemption: Salvation according to Jewish teachings has already occurred for us. We were

redeemed from the oppression of slavery to Pharaoh in Egypt. Its corollary is:

Responsibility: Now that we have been redeemed, it is our responsibility to work to end the oppression of others.

Pass it on: We are told to relate the story of the exodus from Egypt to our children and to our children's children, L'dor Vador, from generation to generation a continuous chain of recounting our beginnings as a people.

Joy: At the Passover Seder we sing and laugh. The Haggadah tells us "Our story begins in degradation and ends in glory."

No wonder Passover is celebrated by more Jews than any other holiday! We pass on the values of humility, gratitude, responsibility, redemption, the generation-to-generation chain, and joy, in warm ceremony involving the best of Jewish food!

It's not too early to think about who you are going to invite to your seder or with whom you will celebrate. It's not too early to think about which Haggadah you will use, what new songs you will add, what new/old recipes you will use.

It is not too early to contribute to Maot Chitim, the local organization that provides Passover provisions to those who need assistance, or again, to Mazon, and/or volunteer to pack or deliver food for Passover on their website <https://maotchitim.org/>. When you clear out the chametz (leavened food stuffs) from your kitchen, unopened boxes of cereal, pasta, bread and baked goods can be taken to your local food pantry.

Stay tuned for details of how we will celebrate Passover at MCJC this year, with a second-night Seder, Tuesday, April 23rd. Will it be a potluck meal? A catered dinner? An appetizer Seder? However we eat, know that our Seder will include a retelling of our foundational story with much laughter, singing, reflection and joy.



MCJC Board Passes Resolution

At its February meeting, the MCJC board approved the following resolution: "MCJC will live on as a congregation serving the Jewish community of McHenry County." In other words, regardless of whether we sell the building, move, share space or programming with others, the Board is committed to preserving a Jewish presence in McHenry County as MCJC.

The Board is exploring several options and would like to share its findings thus far with the membership and solicit guidance. All members, past and current, are invited to attend a Town Hall on Sunday, March 24. The schedule for the morning is Purim Shpeil at 10 am followed by the Town Hall at 11.

MCJC Helps with Food Pantry

Members of the MCJC community helped out at the December 18th and the January 22nd Woodstock Drive-Thru Food Pantry food distribution days.

Muriel Pick, Linda & Jerry Trachsler, Charles Mages, Lizz & John Dewey, and Bruce Weiss helped out on December 18th. Muriel Pick, Linda & Jerry Trachsler, Charles Mages, Lizz & John Dewey, and Donny Kohnke helped out on January 22nd.

The MCJC mobile food pantry team members worked alongside volunteers from St. Ann's Episcopal Church, First Presbyterian Church, and Grace Lutheran Church on December 18th and they worked alongside volunteers from St. Ann's Episcopal Church, Resurrection Catholic Church, and the Woodstock High School Service Club on January 22nd. Two hundred fifty-one families received

boxes of food on December 18th, and two hundred forty-one families received boxes of food on January 22nd.

The Woodstock Mobile Food Pantry is a joint venture between the McHenry County Faith Leaders Food Collaborative and the Northern Illinois Food Bank. The pantry is located in the parking lot directly across the street from Woodstock High School at 501 W. South Street in Woodstock.

MCJC has been asked to provide volunteers for the

March 25th and April 22nd food distribution days. Volunteers need to report at 3:00 pm and generally work until 5:00 pm. If you would like to become a member of the MCJC "mobile food pantry team of volunteers", please contact MCJC social action community service chairperson Bruce Weiss by email at office@mcjconline.org or by phone at 815-455-1810.



John and Liz Dewey, Linda & Jerry Trachler, Donnie Kohnke, Muriel Pick and (not pictured), Charles Mages. Cold toes, warm hearts!

Religious School News

by Davina Kelly



During January, our main topic of study was Tu B'Shevat and Tikkun Olam (repairing our world). Students learned about the holiday and its connection to conservation and making our world better. A highlight was attending CKI's Tu B'Shevat seder. All had a good time catching up with friends and trying new foods!

Students continue working on their Hebrew, both in person during religious school, and over Zoom for individual tutoring. All students are studying prayers and Hebrew vocabulary, including root words.

Also, students continue to learn about Jewish artists. They really enjoy making their own art work in the style of the artist. We even branched out a little and learned about some Jewish pop music stars. This has been an exciting series so far!

We are looking forward to the months ahead with Purim and Passover learning. Our younger group will also continue exploring Jewish history in America. Our older group will continue working with Rabbi Gordon.



Rabbi Gordon to Offer Adult Ed Sessions

All are welcome to attend Adult Education sessions on Sundays from 11:15-12:45. We will alternate stand-alone Jewish topics and a Hebrew and prayer lab to help you brush up on your synagogue skills. Come to one, come to them all! No RSVP needed.

- March 3rd Jewish Ritual Surrounding Death and Grieving
How Jewish Tradition helps us in times of loss
- March 10th Hebrew & Liturgy Lab
Come brush up on your Hebrew or get help learning a particular prayer or blessing
- March 17th For Beginners and Those-in-the Know alike
Where did Anti-Semitism come from? How did it affect Jewish communities through history?
What does it look like today?
- March 24th Purim Megillah Reading, "Purim Wars" and Celebration
- March 31st What is the Messiah in Judaism?
- April 7th Hebrew & Liturgy Lab
Come brush up on your Hebrew or get help learning a particular prayer or blessing
For Beginners and Those-in-the Know alike
- April 14th The Ins and Outs of Passover, including your questions
- April 21st Passover Hebrew & Liturgy Lab
Brush up on Haggadah blessings and songs
- April 28th TBA



SATURDAY MARCH 16TH AT MCJC 5:30 PM-8:00 PM

A NIGHT OF FOOD, FUN, FELLOWSHIP, AND PRIZES

PIZZA DINNER JEWISH BINGO HAVDALAH SERVICE

BINGO WINNERS WIN \$25 GIFT CERTIFICATES

RSVP BY MARCH 9TH to:
 mcjconline.org or 815-455-1810
 (need to know how much pizza to order)



\$2.00 PER PERSON COVER CHARGE FOR THE PIZZA

BINGO CALLER EXTRAORDINAIRE: PAULA ESKOZ

MCJC DOCENT-LED TOUR OF THE ILLINOIS HOLOCAUST MUSEUM

Fellowship lunch gathering at the museum 11:30 a.m.
Tour 1:00 p.m.

MCJC is organizing a private 1.5-hour-docent-led walking tour of the Illinois Holocaust Museum in Skokie on Sunday, April 14. The cost per person is as follows: \$15 for adults (aged 23 to 64), \$12 for seniors (aged 65+), \$10 for youth (aged 12-22). Participants can bring a brown bag lunch. Deli lunches catered by "Once Upon A Deli" are also available for \$12 per person. Four choices of deli lunches are available:

- #1: deli mini sandwiches (includes: turkey, corned beef, egg salad)
- #2: vegetarian mini sandwiches (includes: egg salad, cheese, veggie cream cheese)
- # 3: gluten free deli salad (a scoop each of: egg salad, tuna salad, and chicken salad)
- #4: Vegan Garden Salad (green lettuce, tomato, cucumber, carrots with Balsamic dressing on the side)

All deli lunches include pickle, fresh fruit cup, cole slaw, bottled water, and a chocolate chip cookie.

The museum is located at 9603 Woods Drive, Skokie, IL. A rideshare program will be established in conjunction with this program. Once you sign up for this program, many more details pertaining to the rideshare program and the museum visit experience will be provided to you including museum rules and regulations.

If you are interested in attending this MCJC Let's Have Fun Together Committee sponsored program, please contact Bruce Weiss by email at mcjconline.org or by phone at 815-455-1810 as soon as possible and no later than March 10th.

Habitat for Humanity

Here we are nearing spring. The winter has been an experience. Our builds on Hillside in McHenry should be almost complete. As of now they are lacking appliance installation, paint touchup and other finishing touches. The plan calls for partner family move-in in May.

We are approaching our next builds in Harvard. The foundations should be poured by the time you read this. We will be building two homes this year and two more next year.

Please go to the Habitat website to get details and join us in making McHenry County a welcoming place for our new neighbors.

Howard Frank





Some pizza and pasta lovers showed up for an MCJC fundraiser at Georgios in Crystal Lake. Thanks to the efforts of Gail Frank, 20% of all purchases made on behalf of MCJC at the restaurant on Feb. 5 benefitted the synagogue.

Todah Rabah to everyone who supported our fundraisers at Georgio's, Panera Bread and Portillo's and especially to Dara and Judy for publicizing these events.

Honorable Menschen

We are proud to announce that **Lauren Eskoz**, after completing a one-year general practice residency program through Evanston Hospital, and currently working as a general dentist in Rockford since this past July, has decided to return to school to become an Orthodontist! She will be attending a three-year program at University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, beginning this July.....class of 2027, whoa! Lauren is once again following in her father's footsteps to become a specialist, though not an Endodontist. She's excited to begin this new adventure, and although we'll definitely miss her not living so close, we're happy and excited for her!

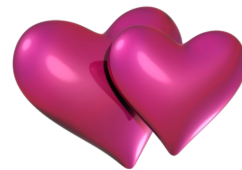


Paula and Norm Eskoz



Samuel Steinberg, son of **Elaine and Larry Steinberg**, happily wed Jennifer Gilliana daughter of Steve and Lisa Gilliana, on Sunday, February 4th. They are living in Elgin. Mazel tov!

Happy Anniversary!



MCJC Book Club Report

All are invited to join the MCJC Book Club when it meets on Thursday, April 4 at 7 pm on Zoom. We will be discussing *Leaving Eastern Parkway* by Matthew Daub. The novel tells the story of 15-year-old Zev Altshul, who is suddenly orphaned and desperate to escape Brooklyn’s Hasidic community. He sets course across the U.S. and finds himself in Urbana, IL, playing handball to support himself. The book features locations familiar to MCJC readers, including Chicago and Urbana/Champaign.

Thanks to the efforts of our facilitator, Rachel Kamin, the MCJC Book Club is also invited to meet the author, Matthew Daub, on Thursday, March 14 via Zoom. The Zoom link for the April 4 MCJC gathering will be available on the MCJC website and in the enouncements. The Book Club meets approximately every other month, and anyone (MCJC member or not) is invited to participate at any time. We are likely to have an in-person gathering in June, with the book and date TBD.



MCJC Gratefully Acknowledges the Following Donations

In memory of Herb Franks Gene and Sandy Lindow Lois Shartiag Lou and Barb Dolmon Iza Celewicz	In memory of Willa Wertheimer L.Y. Brune and James Smithson	General Fund Donalda Kohnke
	In support of those impacted by the current Hamas-Israel War Samuel and Peggy Lim	



Yahrzeits

Sylvia Tadelman	Adar 21	March 1	Carole Franks	Nissan 4	April 12
Jean Grossman	Adar 24	March 4	Maurice Berkelhamer	Nissan 6	April 14
Libby Oxenhirt	Adar 1 25	March 5	Geraldine Kaplan	Nissan 6	April 14
Margaret Weisz	Adar 26	March 6	Howard Welser	Nissan 9	April 17
Maria Sue Finger	Adar 1 26	March 6	Isaac Silverstein	Nissan 11	April 19
Fannie Greenfield	Adar 27	March 7	Thelma Beverly Perbohner	Nissan 13	April 21
Lorraine Danzig	Adar 27	March 7	Kenneth Simon	Nissan 13	April 21
Martin Russ	Adar 28	March 8	Roslyn Drizner	Nissan 15	April 23
Phyllis Crohn	Adar 1 30	March 10	Sam Mages	Nissan 15	April 23
Ken Bailenson	Adar 1 30	March 10	William James Cook	Nissan 15	April 23
Max Schwartz	Nissan 1	April 9	Morton Purvin	Nissan 17	April 25
Rebecca Fishman	Nissan 2	April 10	Sydney Engler	Nissan 22	April 30

MARCH 2024

1723Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 <u>6:30 p.m.</u> Kabbalat Shabbat <i>Sylvia Tadelman</i>	2
3 <u>11:15-12:45 p.m.</u> Adult Ed	4 <i>Jean Grossman</i>	5 <i>Libby Oxenhirt</i>	6 <i>Margaret Weisz Maria Sue Finger</i>	7 <i>Fannie Greenfield Lorraine Danzig</i>	8 <i>Martin Russ</i>	9 <u>9:30 a.m.</u> Shabbat Morning Service
10 <u>11:15-12:45 p.m.</u> Hebrew & Liturgy Lab <i>Phyllis Crohn Ken Bailenson</i>	11	12	13	14	15 <u>6:30 p.m.</u> Kabbalat Shabbat	16 <u>5:30 p.m.</u> Pizza/Bingo Night
17 <u>11:15-12:45 p.m.</u> Adult Ed	18	19	20	21	22	23 <u>9:30 a.m.</u> Shabbat Morning Service
24 <u>10:00 a.m.</u> Purim Megillah Reading & Celebration <u>11:00 a.m.</u> Open House Meeting	25 <u>3:00 p.m.</u> Woodstock Drive-thru Food Pantry	26	27	28	29 <u>6:30 p.m.</u> Shabbat Dinner at Rabbi Gordon's home	30
31 <u>11:15-12:45 p.m.</u> Adult Ed						

*Names at the bottom of the dates denote Yahrzeits

APRIL 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4 <u>7:00 p.m.</u> Book Club	5 <u>6:30 p.m.</u> Kabbalat Shabbat	6
7 <u>11:15-12:45 p.m.</u> Hebrew & Liturgy Lab	8	9 <i>Max Schwartz</i>	10 <i>Rebecca Fishman</i>	11	12 <i>Carole Franks</i>	13 <u>9:30 a.m.</u> Shabbat Morning Service
14 <u>11:15-12:45 p.m.</u> Adult Ed <u>11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.</u> Holocaust Museum Tour <i>Maurice Berkelhamer</i> <i>Geraldine Kaplan</i>	15	16	17 <i>Howard Welsler</i>	18	19 <u>6:30 p.m.</u> Kabbalat Shabbat <i>Isaac Silverstein</i>	20
21 <u>11:15-12:45 p.m.</u> Passover Hebrew & Liturgy Lab	22 1st night Passover <u>3:00 p.m.</u> Woodstock Drive-thru Food Pantry <i>Thelma Perhohner</i> <i>Kenneth Simon</i>	23 2nd night Passover MCJC Second Seder Details to come <i>Roslyn Drizner</i> <i>Sam Mages</i> <i>William Cook</i>	24	25 <i>Morton</i> <i>Purvin</i>	26	27 <u>9:30 a.m.</u> Shabbat Morning Service
28 <u>11:15-12:45 p.m.</u> Adult Ed	29	30 <i>Sydney Engler</i>				

*Names at the bottom of the dates denote Yahrzeits

To place a yearly ad
 please contact MCJC
 at office@mcjconline.org.
 The cost for one year is
 \$125.



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Connections...to our heritage, to each other, to the future

McHenry County Jewish Congregation

Visit our website: www.mcjconline.org

MCJC Connections...

...is a bi-monthly publication of the McHenry County Jewish Congregation (MCJC) which was established in February 1979. MCJC is a community synagogue that serves Jews of all backgrounds. MCJC is located at 8617 Ridgefield Road, Crystal Lake, IL 60012; phone 815-455-1810, email: office@mcjconline.org. If you have any story ideas you would like to see mentioned in the newsletter, please phone MCJC or e-mail Judy Lewis at office@mcjconline.org.

All copy must be received by the 1st of the month prior to publication for consideration in the next newsletter.

Thanks to All Those Who Serve MCJC		
Rabbi Maralee Gordon <i>Rabbi</i> Dara Turnball <i>Enouncements/Website</i> <u>Officers</u> Jonah Markowitz <i>President</i> Linda Trachsler <i>Vice-president</i> Iza Celewicz <i>Treasurer</i> Dale Morton <i>Secretary</i>	<u>Members-at-Large</u> Howard Frank Scott Schwartz Bruce Weiss <u>Committee Chairs</u> Dale Morton <i>Building & Grounds</i> Bruce Weiss <i>Social Action</i>	<u>Subcommittee Chairs</u> Ellen Morton <i>Communications</i> Paula Eskoz <i>Education</i> Iza Celewicz <i>Finance</i> Steve Boress <i>Operations</i>
<div style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; padding: 5px;"> MCJC Email Addresses: office@mcjconline.org rabbi@mcjconline.org </div>		



Candle Lighting Times	
March 1	5:25 p.m.
March 8	5:34 p.m.
March 15	6:42 p.m.
March 22	6:50 p.m.
March 29	6:58 p.m.
April 5	7:06 p.m.
April 12	7:14 p.m.
April 19	7:21 p.m.
April 26	7:29 p.m.