

KOL קול עמי AMI

Upcoming Celebration and Learning opportunities at Congregation Kol Ami!

Jewish Center & Federation
of the Twin Tiers
Congregation Kol Ami

There are several new celebration, worship, and learning opportunities coming up as we head into winter at Congregation Kol Ami.

For Hanukkah, the **The Great Big Menorah (G.B.M.) Nightly Chanukah Lighting** will take place December 7 to 14 at 6 p.m. in person and on Zoom. The community will “light the candles,” sing our favorite Chanukah songs, and bring a bit of light into the world.

The **Weekly Bagels & Torah with Rabbi Tom** will continue on Sundays at 10 a.m., with sessions in person and on Zoom December 10 and 17, and January 14, 21, 28. December 31 and January 7 will be Zoom only sessions. The ancient Jewish sages describe the Torah as a love letter from God to humanity. Every year, we re-read, re-examine, and struggle with this letter on Shabbat. Join Rabbi Tom for a tour of the weekly Torah portion, Jewish history and philosophy, mining from our 5,000 year old tradition meaning and wisdom for the 21st Century. A light breakfast will be served.

For a new tradition, beginning in January, there will be a **Monthly Havdalah Dinner & Service Program** on the fourth Saturday afternoon of the month at 4:30 p.m. The scheduled dates are January 27, February 24, March 30. This activity will be available in person and on Zoom. Join the CKA community in marking the end of Shabbat with *Seuda’at Shelisheet*, the third and final meal (a light fare) on Shabbat, followed by welcoming in the new week with the Havdalah ceremony.

Finally, bringing back a beloved tradition, there will be a **Monthly Shopkeepers’ Shabbat Service & Breakfast** on the second Saturday morning of the month from 8 to 9 a.m. Scheduled dates include January 13, February 10, and March 9. There will be a short Shabbat morning service followed by breakfast and of course, Schmoozing.

All Zoom activities will be in the regular Zoom meeting room, <https://zoom.us/j/234349277> For more information on any of these events, please contact Rabbi Tom at the CKA office, office@kolamielmira.org or (607) 732-7410.

December 2023

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Kol Ami Calendar Updates

All information in the printed edition of the Kol Ami is accurate as of publishing but changes may occur, for up to date information please check our on line calendar or Facebook page.

Jazzy Junque and Classy Clutter

The big sale may be over, but there are still some special items for sale! Check out the selection of high-end pieces still available for purchase and contact the JCF office if you're interested in purchasing one at 607-734-8122 or at office@jewishelmira.org.



22"/14K Gold Chain with 14K Chai Pendant (1 1/4" x 1 1/2") - Spain, asking \$325



24" 14K Chain with 14K pendant (locket) asking \$600



14K Earrings with Pearls 4/8" x 5/8" asking \$110.



Steuben Glass Star of David paper weight \$150.



Steuben Glass Candlesticks \$200. each



Steuben Glass Egg \$125.

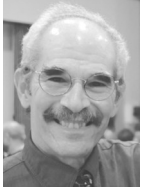
DON'T FORGET



Jewish Noshes pick up is Dec. 3 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at CKA! Remember to stop by and pick up your orders!

All information for the January issue of *Kol Ami* must be submitted to one of the organization offices by December 10. Please be sure that all dates are on the JCF calendar.

Jewish Center and Federation



from Past President Marcus Kantz

Shalom Everyone,

They call this time of year “Fall”, presumably because the leaves Fall at this time of year. Not bad. But now, as I type this and a couple of weeks before you read it, essentially all of the leaves have already fallen. And, in West Elmira, they’ve pretty much all been picked up and carted away to some landfill somewhere. Here we are in fall with the leaves all gone and quite a bit of gray. So, what are we to do with “Fall”? I suggest that what we do is stand up, get outside, and enjoy the relatively nice weather. After all,

it’s not snowing, it’s not sleeting, and there’s still plenty to do outside. We can go for walks. We can go for runs. We can go for drives. And we can go to shul, where it’s always warm – thermally, religiously, and socially. There’s always stuff going on there.

CKA always has something religious/spiritual going on, as the Jewish calendar prescribes. JCF also has events and activities in “The Fall”. And it seems that there’s always Something Cooking, smelling up the joint scrumpshuisly. (I don’t care if it’s not a real word. You know what it

means.) All you need to do is thumb through the pages of the Kol Ami that you are now holding in your hands to learn about all those things that are going on. In other words, let’s not fall into the doldrums of Fall. Instead, let’s take advantage of all that’s going on right here. Rabbi Tom and Ashley Gillan are scheming to help our Fall fly. So don’t fall for Fall being cold and boring

I’m looking forward to our Fall being warm and exciting.
Be well Everybody,
Marcus



from Executive Director Ashley Gillan

I didn’t run in the New York City marathon at the beginning of November, but man do I feel like I did. Not that I could have kept up with the men’s top runner (that guy finished in just over 2 hours!) but things have been so busy here at the JCF, we’ve been buzzing around like we’re in training for the big race.

The Jazzy Junque and Classy Clutter sale kept us on our toes, as donations came in and flooded the Braunstein Community Room, and the team began their annual frenzy of sorting, arranging, and pricing that not only makes our “rummage” sale the classiest and most renowned in the area, but brings in the big bucks. I know that I, personally, doled out quite a bit of my hard-earned money on some merchandise. But hey – I love a good deal!

I hope everyone realizes just how much work Anita and her crew put in

to the sale and how much we all benefit from their labor.

Also last month, the Jewish Noshes crew got to work cooking up the thousands of individual items needed to fill the orders put in by everyone who supported that fundraiser. It made the building smell FABULOUS throughout the month. And throughout it all, they were busy filling, folding, rolling, packing, labelling, and planning the big pick-up. Again, the work they did can’t be understated.

On top of all of that, Hanukkah is just around the corner, so we’re hard at work trying to organize everything coming down the pipe to make sure everyone has a great holiday coming up....well, way too soon for comfort. Can’t the Jewish calendar ever give us a break?!

On a more serious note, I know we’ve all been tense as this has been going on. It’s been the elephant in the

room; the “thing” we don’t want to acknowledge. But we can’t escape it. Cornell was targeted by a vicious anti-Semite. My father (and many JCF members’) alma mater, Bucknell University, a mere 15 minutes from where I grew up, was also hit. It’s like nowhere is safe.

But we have to pledge to make it safe. The JCF and CKA sent a letter to Cornell in solidarity, welcoming them to our community if they felt the need to visit a safe space for services or an event. We won’t slow down our flurry of activity and the celebrations of our Jewishness.

We’ll amp up security, work on our situational awareness, and continue on. Because all of these events bring us so much joy – even if we’re a little (ok, a lot) when they’re over. Because at their core, they bring us together as a community.

And together is a great place to be.

Office Hours

Congregation Kol Ami:

Monday–Friday,
10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Jewish Center and Federation:

Monday–Friday,
8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Congregation Kol Ami – כל עמי



from Rabbi Tom Samuels

Chanukah: Mitigating the Darkness

Rabbi Tom Samuels, CKA

In the Jewish mystical tradition of Kabbalah, there is a saying: "The greatest revelation of Godliness is the light that emerges from darkness." Our sages were teaching us that our task as human beings is to uncover, to reveal those sparks of light, of love and of kindness that reside in each and every human being.

Rabbi Ed Feinstein relays a beautiful story from the Talmud about Adam and Eve first witnessing the sun go down. They were panic-stricken, thinking that the setting of the sun was a consequence of their sin, and that this new, intense darkness would spell their death. They spent that entire first night weeping. And then dawn finally broke, they realized that this was simply the way of the world - day is followed by night, and night is followed by day.

Imagine that first night of creation

in metaphorical terms. Who among us has never had a foreboding akin to Adam's, asks Rabbi Feinstein? What if night never ends? What if meaningless and loneliness are simply all there is?

Judaism does not ask us to ignore this darkness. On the contrary, it asks us to face it squarely, and then, ultimately, to defy it.

In Genesis, God takes Abram outside and says, "Look toward heaven, and count the stars." God then adds, "So shall your offspring be." (Genesis 15:5). On the surface, the meaning of God's promise is clear: the children of Abram will be so numerous as to be beyond counting. But the great Hasidic master R. Yehudah Leib Alter of Ger (1847-1905), the *Sefat Emet*, offers a very different and deeper interpretation of God's promise. God's promise, he writes, is not quantitative but qualitative. That to be a Jew is like a star bringing light into the vast monopoly of darkness. And

as with the very nature of stars, our mission is not to eliminate the darkness in this world, but rather mitigate it.

It is winter now. The days are getting shorter. The nights are getting longer. We are in one of the darkest periods of one of the darkest months of the year. All around us is darkness. And what do we do? We light a fire. Not a bonfire, but a small fire - now one, now another, and so forth for eight nights. We do not pretend to be the sun, but only stars. We do not bring an end to darkness, but merely soften its effects.

"The soul of man is the lamp of God," the Book of Proverbs tell us (20:27).

Ultimately, our task is not to light candles, but to be candles. We have the potential to be the bits of light that help bring hope and dreams back into a world gone dark.

B'Shalom,
Rabbi Tom, CKA



from President John Goldman

No ChatGPT for me!

The fall has been a busy place at CKA. It is great to see so many people in the building working on so many things related to CKA, JCF, and Sisterhood activities. Many people wear multiple hats, sometimes simultaneously, or very close to it. Sometimes it gets confusing which definitely makes life interesting.

We held another joint Board meeting

with the three Boards at the end of October. There was much discussion about how we can function more effectively as a community. The conversation will continue. Stay tuned.

I hope everyone will avail themselves of the great opportunities in the Jewish community in the coming weeks from regular Friday night and Saturday morning services, to adult education, to a fantastic Chanukah dinner

and lighting the outside menorah. Be sure to check the weekly announcements for the latest details. Many great opportunities for rewarding experiences and building strong relationships with others!

We welcome your feedback on what's going well and what we could improve.

L'Shalom,
John

The Community Chanukah Celebration

Friday December 8th

6 p.m. Menorah lighting, 6:30 p.m. Dinner & 7:30 p.m. Shabbat service

Join us in person or on zoom for Menorah lighting & Friday night services

Prepaid Dinner Reservations due by December 1st, contact the CKA office at 607-732-7410

A message from Suzanne Hesselson



Many of you know that Tom and I were in Israel when the war started. To awake on Shabbat morning to the news of this tragic attack was horrible. We were staying with Tom's sister and husband, Peggy, and David, so we were thankful to be with them. From their 4th floor apartment in Modiin, we watched the rockets being intercepted by the Iron Dome. During our stay, we paid our respects to a fallen soldier on the streets of Modiin, waving an Israeli flag and lit candles in memory of the victims of this horrific attack. It is very hard to put these feelings into words but since living in Israel with The Young Judea Year Course program, 1972-73, I have always felt a special love for this small country. It changed

my life in so many ways.

I am listing a couple of organizations that Peggy has shared with me. Brothers and Sisters in Arms and The IsraelGives Foundation- They raise funds for Associations, kibbutzim, soldiers and people. Through this foundation I donated to Merkaz Hashachar. Kibbutz Ketura established this as a registered non-profit organization funding educational, cultural, sustainable, and charitable activities in the Arava region and Israel. Ketura has opened their kibbutz to many evacuees and Young Judeaans from their Year Course program. This is the program I was on 50 years ago. Tom's sister Peggy and her husband are founding members of Kibbutz Ketura.

CKA Sisterhood



Calling all baked goods!

Sisterhood is providing homemade goodies for Oneg's and kiddush. We will hold periodic baking days in the CKA kitchen, but are always looking for additional sweets. If you find yourself with extra time at home and feel like baking your efforts will be appreciated. Please bring your yummy creations to the social hall and notify Cynthia at (607)857-0235 or Suzanne at (607) 481-0881. Gluten and gluten free needed.

Anniversaries

Jerome & Natalie Steinmetz
Andrey Zaborsky & Marietta Babayev-Zaborsky

Birthdays

Anita Adelsberg
Sharon Birdsall
Isabelle Braunstein
Olivia Braunstein
Teri Doerksen
Sarah Greenberg
Steven Greenberg
Harrison Blake Hirshman
Charlotte Kantz
Jordan Kosow
JoAnn Lax
Felicia Poes
Alex Rabinowitz
Steven Salsburg
Amanda Sharp
Blake Solow
Paul Solyn
Gabriel Sporn

The Judaica Shop



The Sisterhood Judaica shop is well stocked for Hanukkah, full of gifts and supplies for the Festival of Lights! They have menorahs for children and adults, crafts for children to enjoy, plastic dreidels and decorations, ceramic Hanukkah serving dishes, candles, both blue and multi-color, and more! Plus, don't forget about the Hanukkah sock sale, going on now! The gift shop will be open any time the CKA office is open. If you have special Judaica needs, please contact Susan Seltzer.

CKA Book Club

December 13

The Hare with Amber Eyes:
A Family's Century of Art and Loss
by Edmund De Waal

Jan. 17

The Thread Collectors by Shaunna Edwards and Alyson Richman

All meetings are at noon, at
<https://tinyurl.com/CKABOOKCLUB>.

Books are available online, at the public library, & in the Jerome & Etkind Library at CKA.



FOR SISTERHOOD TRIVIA NIGHT!
JANUARY 20TH, 2024!
DETAILS TO FOLLOW VIA EMAIL!



CKA Donations

General fund

- ✧ In Memory of Louis Weisser by Michael Weisser
- ✧ In Memory of Myra's Grandmother, Lena Allenstein by Jerry & Myra Stemerman
- ✧ In gratitude for all the help received during Marilyn's Recovery by Alex & Marilyn Rabinowitz
- ✧ In Memory of Harold Berman by Dr. & Mrs. Terence Lenhardt and Family

- ✧ In Memory of Henry Lenhardt by Dr. & Mrs. Terence Lenhardt and Family

Prayer Book Donation

- ✧ In Memory of Norma R. Earle by Michael & Sheila Earel Madden and Family

Technology Donation

- ✧ In Memory of Sister Audrey by Carole Hoffman

- ✧ In Memory of Father-in-Law Ed Hoffman by Carole Hoffman

Building Fund

- ✧ By Marcia Kesten & Alice Moyer

Kate Stein Music Fund

- ✧ In Memory of Rachel Kesten by Marcia Kesten & Alice Moyer

JCF Donations

JFNA Campaign Donations

Donor

- ✧ Anonymous
- ✧ Rabbi Arnold & Nancy Androphy
- ✧ Benzakina Babayev
- ✧ Lisa Goldberg
- ✧ Josephine E. Graubard

Friend

- ✧ Jonathan & Debra Kravitz
- ✧ Nancy Nicastro
- ✧ Hilde Robbins

Sponsor

- ✧ Linda & Harvey Chernosky
- ✧ Ann Darcangelo
- ✧ Maddy & Larry Dolkart
- ✧ Roslyn & Richard Dubois
- ✧ Charlotte & Marcus Kantz
- ✧ Lee S. Kosow
- ✧ Dr. Alice B. Moyer
- ✧ Judy Prentice
- ✧ Alex & Marilyn Rabinowitz

Supporter

- ✧ Susan & Michael German
- ✧ Marc Hample

- ✧ Dr. Marcia S. Kesten
- ✧ Harriet & Gil Sweet

Benefactor

- ✧ Michelle & Herman Berliss
- ✧ Tracey & Marc Stemerman
- ✧ Myra & Jerry Stemerman

JCF Membership

Member

- ✧ Benzakina Babayev
- ✧ Gail & Richard Gerard
- ✧ Dian Gerstel
- ✧ Susan King
- ✧ Herman Leibson
- ✧ Martha Pierce
- ✧ Carol & Donald Rubin
- ✧ Karey Solomon

Benefactor

- ✧ Hilde Robbins
- ✧ Phyllis & Douglas Holtgrewe
- ✧ Janet & Robert Rochlin
- ✧ Geoffrey Rubin
- ✧ Miriam Biatch
- ✧ Harriet & Gil Sweet

Silver Magen David

- ✧ Michelle & Herman Berliss

Gold Magen David

- ✧ Kristine & James Perle
- ✧ Rose & Edwin Berman

Adult Education

Open to the entire community
All at <https://zoom.us/j/234349277>

Bagels & Torah

10:00 a.m.
Dec. 10, 17, 31
(Dec. 31 is Zoom only)
With Rabbi Tom Samuels

Prophets Class

7:30 p.m.
Dec. 4, 11, 18
With Maggid Paul Solyn
In person or on zoom at
<https://zoom.us/j/234349277>

Service Schedule

Shabbat and festival services are both in-person, and online at <https://zoom.us/j/234349277>.

Shabbat Evening Service
7:30 PM

Shabbat Morning Service
9:30 AM

Weekly Torah/Haftarah Portions & Candle Lighting

December 1-2	December 8-9	December 15-16	December 22-23	December 29-30
4:19 p.m. <i>Vayishlah</i>	4:18 p.m. <i>Vayeshev</i>	4:18 p.m. <i>Miketz</i>	4:21 p.m. <i>Vayiggash</i>	4:26 p.m. <i>Vayehi</i>
Genesis 32:4-36:43 Obadiah 1:1-21	Genesis 37:1-40:23 Numbers 7:18-23	Genesis 41:1-44:17 I Kings 3:15-4:1	Genesis 44:18-47:27 Ezekiel 37:15-28	Genesis 47:28-50:26 I Kings 2:1-12

Jewish Community Calendar

December 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
3 Jewish Noshes Pick Up 11a.m. - 2 p.m.	4 CKA 7:30 p.m. Prophets Class with Paul Solyn	5 JCF 7:30 p.m. Exec. Board Meeting	6 CKA 7:00 p.m. Executive Board Meeting	7 Community Kitchen CKA 6:00 p.m. Menorah Lighting 1st candle	8 CKA 6:00 p.m. Menorah Lighting 6:30 p.m. Dinner 7:30 pm Shabbat Service 2nd candle	9 CKA 9:30 a.m. Shabbat Morning Service Kiddish & Discussion 5:22 p.m. Havdalah & Menorah Lighting 3rd candle
10 CKA 10:00 am Bagels & Torah with Rabbi Tom CKA 6:00 p.m. Menorah Lighting 4th candle	11 CKA 6:00 p.m. Menorah Lighting CKA 7:30 p.m. Prophets Class with Paul Solyn JCF 7:30 pm Board Meeting 5th candle	12 CKA 6:00 p.m. Menorah Lighting 6th candle	13 CKA 12:00 pm Book Club CKA 6:00 p.m. Menorah Lighting CKA 7:00 p.m. Board Meeting 7th candle	14 CKA 6:00 p.m. Menorah Lighting 8th candle	15 CKA 7:30 p.m. Shabbat Evening Service	16 CKA 9:30 a.m. Shabbat Morning Service Kiddish & Discussion 5:23 p.m. Havdalah
17 CKA 10:00 am Bagels & Torah with Rabbi Tom	18 CKA 7:30 p.m. Prophets Class with Paul Solyn	19 Hanukkah	20	21	22 CKA 7:30 p.m. Shabbat Evening Service 10th of Tevet	23 CKA 9:30 a.m. Shabbat Morning Service Kiddish & Discussion 5:26 p.m. Havdalah
24	25 Offices Closed	26	27	28	29 CKA 7:30 p.m. Shabbat Evening Service (Zoom Only)	30 CKA 9:30 a.m. Shabbat Morning Service (Zoom Only) 5:31 p.m. Havdalah
31 CKA 10:00 am Bagels & Torah with Rabbi Tom (Zoom only)						

Jewish Center and Federation
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