

Hakol

The Voice of Congregation B'nai Jacob

Congregation B'nai Jacob of Phoenixville, PA

Nisan – Iyar 5784

May 2024

Our mission is to provide a place rooted in Jewish tradition where all people feel welcome, supported and enriched. We strive to foster connections to our past, to our future and to the divine in an intimate, accepting community.

Service Times

Friday Night-
(unless otherwise indicated) 7:30pm
Saturday Morning 9:30am

Candle Lighting

May 3 7:42pm
May 10 7:49pm
May 17 7:55pm
May 24 8:02pm
May 31 8:07pm

Events

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| Speaker Shabbat—Madelyn Anton— May 3 | See p. 11 |
| Community Shabbat— May 3 | See p. 12 |
| Food Distribution— May 5 | See p. 13 |
| Adult Education— May 5 | See p 14 |

Save the Date

**CBJ Annual Meeting
June 19**



CONGREGATION B'NAI JACOB
PLACE. COMMUNITY CONNECTION
מקום קהילה קשר

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Something Shabbat Every Friday

3rd Community Shabbat– Potluck Dinner with Family Friendly Service– 6:30pm
10th Birthday/Anniversary Shabbat with Ice Cream Sundae Oneg– 7:30pm
17th Celebrating Israel– 7:30pm
24th Memorial Day Weekend—7:30pm
31st Celebrating Jerusalem– 7:30pm



Dear *Chaveirim*/Friends:

A low buzzing sound. Then the room beginning to shake gently. The jostling steadily grew more insistent, louder. My mind worked through and dismissed a series of possible causes: clothes in the dryer clumping up out-of-balance; a large truck just outside the house; a low-flying jumbo jet. After no normal reasons fit the bill, then only one possibility remained: an earthquake! At that point, with the rumbling and the shaking still steadily increasing, I had one moment of fear, not knowing how much stronger it would get. And then it plateaued, gently easing off exactly as it had arrived, with a perfect and now beautiful-seeming symmetry. 10:23 AM on Friday, April 5.

I hadn't experienced an earthquake since I had been in California many, many years ago. Both times, the temblors produced the same feeling, literally shaking my view of the world. One moment the earth seems solid, unmovable, certain, then the next moment, it's not.

Then it dawned on me: what a rare gift, an uncommon opportunity (at least in Pennsylvania) to say the *b'racha*/blessing for an earthquake! So with no further ado, I said:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם עוֹשֶׂה מַעֲשֵׂה בְּרֵאשִׁית

Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, oseh ma'aseh v'reishit.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, Author of Creation.

According to the *Talmud*, that's the *b'racha* for seeing a comet, a shooting star, lightning (thunder gets its own blessing), strong winds, awesome mountains, valleys, oceans, rivers, deserts, and, yes, an earthquake.

Then I returned to the task at hand, preparing two different teachings for *Shabbat* on the total solar eclipse about to occur 3 days later.

I was exploring the question, "Should you say a *b'racha* over an eclipse?" The Rabbis of old were

mixed, though mostly leaning against it. Some said 'no' simply because the list cited above from the *Talmud* didn't include an eclipse in the natural phenomena deserving a blessing. More likely, the resistance was probably due to the fact that, up until recently, unexplained eclipses were viewed as frightening, as being omens of the impending arrival of something really bad. And the Rabbis said we shouldn't bless bad news.

As our scientific knowledge has increased, and eclipses now make sense to us, and we no longer see them as a portent of impending evil, rabbinic opinion is still mixed, but has shifted strongly toward 'yes', that we should make a *b'racha* over an eclipse. The primary reason for this is that anything that inspires in us a feeling of awe deserves to be marked and honored.

That was our learning at the Friday evening *Shabbat* service. For the morning learning, we looked at an 11th century teaching from the Spanish rabbi, Bachya ibn Pekuda. He said that when we see an unusual phenomenon (and he includes an eclipse in the list he then gives), we feel wonder and awe. Yet, the sights we regularly see – the normal rising and setting of the sun and moon, the stars in the night sky, the regular rains, winds, and all the creatures we see in the world – we ignore, we take for granted.

Bachya ibn Pekuda exhorts us to appreciate the feeling of awe inspired by such unusual occurrences as an eclipse and an earthquake, to regard them not as exceptions, but rather as reminders of the miracles that surround us constantly, in every single moment. When we feel awe in extraordinary moments, it should return us to awareness of the miracles that fill every ordinary moment as well.

Experiencing the shaking of the earth, and planning what to teach on *Shabbat*, provided me, first of all, with 2 competing earworms. I couldn't get two songs out of my head, Carole King's "I Feel the Earth Move Under My Feet" and Bonnie Tyler's "Total Eclipse of the Heart" (because of Bachya ibn Pekuda's connecting the physical

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RABBI'S MESSAGE (CONT)

Continued from Page 2

sight of the eclipse with the spiritual eclipse of our souls when they become inured to the daily miracles that surround us always).

And it also inspired two memories that I want to leave you with. First, my favorite reading in the (now) older version of the Reform movement's *Shabbat siddur*, The Gates of Prayer, in which appear these words of Rabbi Chaim Stern:

Days pass and the years vanish, and we walk sightless among miracles. God, fill our eyes with seeing and our minds with knowing; let there be moments when Your Presence, like lightning, illumines the darkness in which we walk.

Help us to see, wherever we gaze, that the bush burns unconsumed. And we, clay touched by God, will reach out for holiness, and exclaim in wonder: How filled with awe is this place, and we did not know it! Blessed is the Eternal One, the Holy God!

I can tell you without exaggeration that two particular phrases from these stanzas come into my mind on a nearly daily basis: "we walk sightless among miracles" and "we, clay touched by God."

The second memory is courtesy of Albert Einstein, who proved his brilliance not only by revolutionizing our understanding of the entire cosmos beyond us, but also by inspiring us to appreciate our experience of that cosmos within us as well. He could have been inspired by Bachya ibn Pekuda when he said, "There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle."

To which I can only add, *Amen*.

Rabbi Jeff Sultar

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



President's Message – Why is CBJ Important To You?

Hard to believe it is already May, which means we are approaching the end of our school year, program year and fiscal year.

Our school year will soon come to an end, and I want to extend a thank you to our Director, Andrea Zavod, for leading a fantastic school program again this year! Also thank you to our Students, Teaching staff and Parents for your participation, commitment, and support. Plus, thank you to Jennifer Ford-Bey for leading our Education Committee and for the Community support and engagement.

As we close out this fiscal year and look ahead to our **Annual Congregational Meeting June 19**, let's take a moment and think about **Why is CBJ - our Jewish Home - Important To You?**

Let's start with our Mission - *Our mission is to provide a place, rooted in Jewish tradition, where all people feel welcome, supported and enriched. We strive to foster connections to our past, to our future and to the divine in an intimate, accepting community.*

Finding Connections – Actively participating in our synagogue reminds us we are part of a wider community, where everyone feels welcome, and creates opportunity to unite with others.

Teaching Our Kids - What better way to show our kids we care about being Jewish and being part of our Jewish community than making a commitment to education.

Celebrating the Jewish Year - Committing to CBJ is a powerful way to connect with the rhythms of the Jewish year. Shabbat services shape our Jewish week. Holiday celebrations are a focal point to the Jewish year.

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Receiving our Weekly News and monthly *Hakol* or being part of a CBJ-sponsored group or supporting our programs and events strengthens our Jewish connections to our past and our future creating a sense of being part of the wider CBJ community.

Investing in CBJ's Future – CBJ exists because people step forward every day with acts of generosity. Some make monetary donations to assure the continuity and well-being of our community. Some contribute gifts of time—visiting the sick and the bereaved, welcoming newcomers, serving on congregational boards and committees, providing education, helping Valerie with routine and essential tasks, checking in with our Community Members, and so many more.

There are many reasons to contemplate **Why is CBJ - our Jewish Home - Important To You.** Perhaps you have fond memories of attending High Holy Day services with your family, or you appreciate the warmth and support of our community during times of joy and sorrow. Maybe you have seen firsthand the impact our religious education programs have on the lives of our young people.

Whatever your reasons - now is the time to come together as a Community and ensure CBJ's financial future so we can continue to make a real difference in the lives of those who rely on CBJ – our Jewish Home.

On **June 19th** together, we will conduct important business and look ahead to next year and beyond. So please join us at **CBJ's Annual Meeting at 7:00pm**, in the CBJ Social Hall.

Annual Meeting Agenda

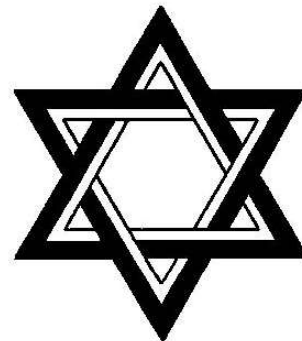
Meeting Blessing
Welcome and Opening Remarks
Year In Review
Thriving Congregation Assessment Review
2023-24 YTD Financial Review
Proposed 2024-25 Operating Budget Presentation and Vote
Proposed Bylaws Changes and Vote
Nominating Committee Report – Vote on Executive Officers and Trustees Slate
Free Gift Basket Raffle and Closing Remarks

The CBJ of yesterday, today and tomorrow is still reliant on people and relationships. Let's all do our part to ensure CBJ's future by becoming more active in many of the ways available to you.

Let's double down on our commitment to our CBJ Community and build a better tomorrow!

L'Shalom,

Mark J. Snow
President



I Look Forward to Talking with You!

I look forward to meeting with you to talk about, well, just about anything that might be on your mind.

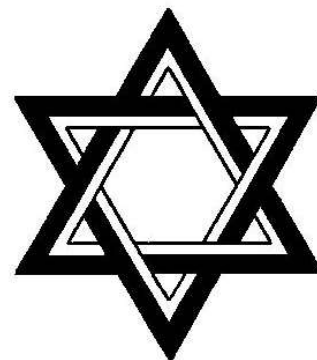
While you can always leave this to chance by just dropping by CBJ, it's best to call or e-mail to set a time for us to meet. While it's wonderful when people just stop by, sometimes people are frustrated that I'm not available when they do so. The problem is that much of the time I'm at CBJ is already scheduled with meetings; also, I frequently have meetings and Pastoral requirements that take me out of the building; and finally, I usually spend one day a week (typically Thursday) working at home.

For these reasons, never hesitate during "normal" hours to call my cell phone, and please also call the cell number at *any* time for a life-cycle emergency or for any other truly pressing matter. I typically check e-mail at least a few times during the day, but please also know that I have a "dumb" phone and do *not* get e-mails instantly when away from the computer. I get texts just fine.

While I always prefer talking in person, one of e-mails' best features is that it's good for finding mutually-good times to meet.

So be in touch, and let's figure out a good time to talk!

L'Shalom,
Rabbi Jeff Sultar
E-mail: rabbi@congbj.org
Cell Phone: (732) 606-5381



SISTERHOOD



We're winding down, but we're far from finished!

June 9 Karen Real Torah Fund Luncheon to be held at Karen Real's tranquil and beautiful backyard.

Shelley Szwalbenest, Mid-Atlantic Region Torah Fund Vice-President, will speak about Arevut-Responsibility for our community and the future.



CEMETERY



CEMETERY SPRUCE UP DAY

SUNDAY, MAY 5 TH, 8:00 AM - 9:30 AM

B'NAI JACOB CEMETERY, LOVERS LANE, MONT CLARE

Volunteers Welcome!

Please bring work gloves, eye protection, water, bug spray, sunscreen, tools for clipping/trimming small branches.

Light duty, no heavy lifting.

SAVE THE DATE:

COMMUNITY BOOK BURIAL

SUNDAY MAY 19, 2024 at 9:00 AM

Rain or Shine



B'NAI JACOB CEMETERY

(set your GPS to 207 Lovers Lane, Mont Clare)

YOU ARE INVITED TO A COMMUNITY-WIDE *MITZVAH*, AS WE JOIN TOGETHER IN THE MEANINGFUL AND EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE OF A JEWISH BOOK BURIAL. WE HAVE CARTONS OF BOOKS READY FOR BURIAL. BRING YOUR OWN OLD AND DAMAGED BOOKS TOO!

LIVESTREAM

Livestream All Services

We are excited to announce CBJ Livestream! Just follow these steps:

1. Go to www.congbj.org from your PC, Laptop, Tablet or Phone
2. Scroll down and click the button under Services – WATCH LIVESTREAM
3. Complete the very brief form and click SUBMIT
4. You will be taken to the CBJ Livestream page (BOXCAST) for the service

Purim 2024



Have something to celebrate?

Come celebrate with your CBJ family by sponsoring an Oneg on Friday nights and/or a Kiddush snack on Saturdays after services. We make it easy - contact Adrienne at 484-318-3385 (cell) or burnsao@gmail.com for details.

Seeking all CBJ foodies!

Come schmooze, nosh and help out with Synagogue functions! I need helping hands to set up Onegs and kiddushes, as well as other occasions, throughout the year. If you can give a little time, contact Adrienne at 484-318-3385 (cell) or burnsao@gmail.com for details.

Use CBJ's Social Media (Facebook, CBJ website) to announce your events, special occasions etc.

Contact Seth Loux - seth@louxfamily.com
and Jerry Weiss - mijmweiss7@gmail.com
for the website and/or
Lorraine Schur - LSCHUR116@gmail.com
and Jerry Weiss - mijmweiss7@gmail.com
for Facebook.

Parents Of Our School Children:

Did you know CBJ offers a wonderful scholarship opportunity to our religious school families?

The **Louis and Sadie Liss Scholarship Fund** provides scholarships for the children of our members to enjoy enriching Jewish events including Jewish camps, USY on Wheels, USY Israel Pilgrimage, Maccabi Games, Passport to Israel Program and other wonderful experiences.

For more information or to apply for a scholarship, please contact Valerie in the office.

Support CBJ with our New Easy to Use CBJ RaiseRight Scrip Program

Support the new CBJ RaiseRight (formerly Shopwithscrip) by purchasing gift cards to your favorite stores and restaurants!

You purchase cards at face value and CBJ receives 2-20% on every purchase. Enjoy the convenience of having access to over 750 top brands from the comfort of your home or the ease of your phone!

ACME, Giant, Amazon, Target, Walmart, Home Depot, GrubHub and many more! Birthdays, Mother's Day, Father's Day, graduations, donate to people in need...

Instructions are below but you may always contact Lisa Anton, Scrip Coordinator, at lanton109@yahoo.com help you through the process.

Easy Enrollment on either your computer or phone:

1. Go to www.raiseright.com
2. Click "Join a Program" (desktop) or "Register" (cell)
3. Enter enrollment code: **97999E3432453**
4. Follow the prompts to create your account and start shopping!
5. Your cart will show your total cost and CBJ's profit.
6. Pay directly from your bank account (with a \$.15 ACH fee) or use a credit card.

If you participated in our previous scrip program, shopwithscrip.com:

1. Go to raiseright.com on your computer, tablet or download the mobile app on your phone.
2. Use your shopwithscrip.com sign in information to login.
3. Your gift cards and payment information will be automatically transferred to your RaiseRight account.
4. Buy your gift cards and support CBJ!

E-GIFT cards can be sent directly (and, in most cases, instantly) to your computer or phone or to a loved one. For a processing fee, you can also purchase **PHYSICAL gift cards** and have them shipped directly to your home, friends or family. **In this new program, we will not keep gift cards in the office for purchase.**

Pay directly from your bank account or with a credit card. For any questions or if you would like to pay with a check, please contact Lisa Anton, Scrip Coordinator, at lanton109@yahoo.com

MEET OUR MEMBERS

As an initiative of Team Engage, we are sharing interviews with CBJ members to promote engagement within the congregation.

Meet Ken Kulick

Ken grew up in Brooklyn, NY. He shared that his family belonged to the conservative synagogue near his home, and he was the first bar mitzvah boy to do the musaf service there – something he did on occasion for CBJ in the past. After attending a yeshiva-based junior high school and Stuyvesant High School, he matriculated at the Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn (now part NYU) for his bachelor's degree. This was followed by a master of science degree in civil engineering at the University of Illinois.

Ken said he knew from a very young age that he wanted to be a civil engineer one day, and he successfully achieved that goal. His career applying his skills in the railroad industry took him to jobs in many different cities. His last job before retirement brought him to the Philadelphia area in 1991. He decided to stay local when he retired in 2008, feeling established in the area and because his family is scattered across the country.

When he moved here, Ken settled in Chesterbrook. He chose it for the good school district and convenient access to the Paoli train, from which he commuted to his job. Not knowing the local towns, he opted to join Or Shalom. His son (now an administration for Louisiana State University in New Orleans) attended their religious school, but they were not pleased with the school. He looked around for other choices and discovered Phoenixville and CBJ. He found the religious school to be much more to their liking and the people very friendly, low key, and welcoming, so it was a good move! This was approximately 1994, and Ken has been an active member ever since.

When Ken joined CBJ, the shul was holding daily minyans on weekdays. Since it was easy for him to be there, he went often to help make the minyan. It was during that time that he was approached by Dr. Gil Liss, z"l, who was serving as CBJ's financial secretary. Dr. Liss talked Ken into taking over the job. As Ken was used to doing budgets, reviewing invoices, and the like, the financial secretary's tasks were not totally alien to him. He went on to serve two terms as president of CBJ in the late 1990s and then later returned to the financial secretary's position, from which is retiring (again) in June.

Among his other contributions to CBJ, Ken handles the layout process for Hakol, has contributed his engineering skills when needed for reviewing plans (e.g., as when the building was expanded for the school wing), and does a lot of "house" stuff as a volunteer. Ken feels dedicated to shul and cares that it continues to survive and thrive. He also noted that he appreciates Rabbi Sultar's good interface with adults AND children, which Ken considers vital for a congregational rabbi.

Ken considers himself a good cook, but not a baker! He likes hosting dinner parties and prefers to make everything from scratch, doing all the prep work as part of the process. He enjoys many cuisines. When it comes to Jewish food, he likes a good roast or rotisserie chicken. He makes his own matzah ball soup (both the soup and the matzah balls) FROM SCRATCH, and makes great potato latkes.

Ken liked what he did when he was working. Things were constantly changing so he was never bored. He has carried that forward into retirement, keeping busy and engaged by doing many things. For instance, given the good train access to New York City, he makes a point to try to get there at least once a month. Travel, in general, is one of his passions, and he travels frequently, usually taking his bicycle with him on road trips. Also, after he retired, he opted to drive a school bus for a few years, something he enjoyed very much. He has lately taken up curling, belonging to a club in Pennsauken, NJ, where he goes about once a week. He finds curling to be a finesse sport where one doesn't have to be strong or fast, and the club is not high pressure, just fun. The other thing that keeps him busy is his cat, Wily, whom Ken takes on walks.

Purim Megillah Reading at CBJ

At 7 pm, on March 23, 2024, a pug and a turtle walk into a shul where they are joined by hamentashen, an afikoman, 2 Marios, several sports figures, a few cats, and about 30 others, many in various costumes. It was time for reading the Megillah of Esther and celebrating Purim at CBJ! Bracketed, by “King” Steve Corbman’s traditional chanting of the first and last chapters, congregants heard the story of Purim as presented by our readers – including an amazing musical rendition of Chapter 6 by Deb Marotta. The readings were interspersed by Rabbi’s Sultar’s punny-puggy humor and lots of noise whenever the villain’s name was mentioned. Mishloach Manot were exchanged; tzedakah was collected; and everyone then adjourned to the social hall for sweet treats conversation.



Congregation B'nai Jacob University Presents:

Giving Back: Here and Abroad

Friday, May 3, 2024 6:30 PM
Community Shabbat
Speaker Shabbat

Madelyn Anton, a graduate of the Congregation B'nai Jacob Religious School and a lifetime member of CBJ, will share the story of her work in the field of Social Action and Social Justice. Her journey began with a book collection drive for her Bat Mitzvah. Since then, she has been involved in two service trips abroad to Costa Rica and to Rwanda. She has volunteered for Ann's Heart, Citizen Advocacy and the Jewish Relief Agency. And now, she works for Phoenixville Health Care Access. In addition to sharing her information about her own experiences, Madelyn will discuss ways that individuals, families and organizations can work together for change.



Phoenixville Health Care Access connects uninsured and underinsured residents of the Greater Phoenixville area with specialized health care services. Clients receive treatment from a network of providers for dental and vision care, mammograms, and help with prescription medications. Donations of new toothbrushes, toothpaste floss, and mouthwash are always appreciated. Look for the PHCA Donation box in the lobby.

Congregation B'nai Jacob
Starr and Manavon Streets
Phoenixville, PA



Our goal is to offer rich lifelong learning experiences to all within CBJ and the greater community through programs informed by Jewish values and presented in an atmosphere of fairness, balance, and respect.