

ADULT JEWISH LEARNING

2011-12/5772



CONGREGATION B'NAI ISRAEL

MAKE LEARNING A FIXED HABIT...

Shammai would say,
"Make the study of Torah a 'fixed habit'"

– Mishnah Avot 1:15

Hillel said:
"Do not separate yourself from the community...
Do not say: 'When I have time I will study'
because you may never have the time"

– Mishnah Avot 2:5

Hillel and Shammai were rabbis who lived in the first century B.C.E. Hillel is considered one of the most important and influential rabbis in Jewish history. He often tried to find ways to make Jewish law work to support the people's needs. Shammai was often his intellectual opponent, taking a generally stricter approach. The Talmud describes over 300 occasions when they or their schools disagreed. The decision was in Shammai's favor only six of those times.

Even though they were adversaries, they were thought to be friendly. And students from each school married the daughters of students from the other. When it came to Jewish learning, we know they agreed. And history tells us they were speaking to adults, not to children.

So don't separate yourself from our community. Join us. Leaf through the pages of this guide to Jewish learning. Find the classes that interest you and fit your schedule. Make your own Jewish learning a fixed habit - make the time to nurture your mind and your soul!

MONDAY MIDRASHA

The Monday Midrasha provides regular opportunities to pursue a variety of subjects with many different teachers.

New Age Spirituality: It's Not Your Grandfather's Judaism

Mondays, October 3, 10, 17, and 24 at 7:00 p.m.

Time was, you went to synagogue whether you liked it or not. Guilt was enough to keep you going. But it's not quite that way anymore. We want to feel connected. Are prayer and services enough, or do you want more? This course will review the teachings of Wayne Dyer, one of the premier new age leaders of our time. Based on principles of Eastern religions, psychology, and philosophy, new age spirituality doesn't replace Judaism—but it sure can enhance it. See life's map through a whole new prism with Ron and Shira Linden.



Responsa Literature: How Rabbis Make Sense of New Realities

November 7, 14, 21, 28 and December 5 at 7:00 p.m.

Responsa Literature is the meeting place between traditional Jewish Law and the practical world. We'll explore how not only Reform Judaism, but



Conservative and Orthodox Judaism as well have grappled with modern ethical and legal dilemmas that the sages of old could not have anticipated. Rabbi James Prosnit returns with more questions and responses that continue last year's popular series, including:

- Are tattooing and body-piercing, permitted in Jewish tradition?
- How much inheritance to leave the children?
- Requirements for medical treatment for end-of-life patients?
- Circumcision of a transgender female?

Apples and Oranges: A Brief Introduction to Comparative Religion

January 23, 30, February 6 and 13 at 7:00 p.m.

When we engage in comparative religion we may learn something about the 'other', we may help to build bridges between people of different faiths, but we almost always end up learning a great deal more about ourselves. Through the lens of Jewish-Christian, Jewish-Muslim, and Jewish-Buddhist comparative exercises we'll have the opportunity to experience these possibilities for ourselves. With Rabbi Rachel Gurevitz.



The Sensual Side of Being Jewish

March 5, 12, 19 at 7:00 p.m.

What does Judaism have to say about sensuality? A lot more than you might think. Jewish authorities throughout history have approached sensuality and beauty with a wide range of responses, from enthusiasm to disdain and suspicion. We will follow the evolution of Judaism and sensuality from biblical to contemporary times, looking at traditional sources and also examining the socio-historic contexts that influenced Jewish writers. In the last class, we will discuss if and how the Jewish tradition can act as a spiritual guide for us in the realm of sensuality. Some traditional texts are rated "PG-13" - adults only please. With Rabbi Nicole Wilson-Spiro.



Passover. Yeah, There's an App for That!

March 26, April 2 and 9 at 7:00 p.m.



More and more we see the world through two lenses, analog and digital. Analog is the physical world we all know well. Digital is the virtual world we connect to with computers, smart phones, tablets and handheld devices. We can use both lenses to grow Jewishly. Join Ira Wise for an exploration of digital Jewish world. We will see how the Passover Hagadah predicted the development of the digital world.

MORNING EDITION

Morning Edition with Philip Eliasoph: Jewish Art + Culture + Ideas

Thursdays, October 27 – December 15 at 7:30 a.m.

"Identity labels have nothing to do with how one actually experiences life."

– Philip Roth on American Jewish Identity



For those with ongoing questions about the blurry intersection between American culture and Jewish thinking and those big questions – between Maimonides, Milton Berle's comedy, anti-semitism in TV's "Mad Men", or the latest perplexing exhibit at MoMA – this is an open forum.

Required reading: weekly issue of "The Jewish Forward" – offering rich insights and opinions into how Jews have been shaped by and continue to contribute to contemporary American culture. We meet in the Faculty Dining Commons of the Barone Campus Center, Fairfield University.

SHABBAT BY THE BOOK

A very special Friday night series in which we focus on authors connected to B'nai Israel with new books & powerful things to teach.

6:00 Kabbalat Shabbat

7:15 Shabbat Dinner (*Reservations and a fee are required for dinner only*)

8:15 Program

The Virginia Plan: William B. Thalhimer and a Rescue from Nazi Germany

Friday, November 18

Robert Gillette, our Director of Education emeritus, beloved English teacher at Fairfield High School and longtime friend of many, will discuss his most recent book of sacrifice, survival and hope on two continents.



Ben Behind His Voices: One Family's Journey from the Chaos of Schizophrenia to Hope

Friday, December 9

Randy Kaye is a devoted congregant, radio personality, voiceover coach and now author. Her account of a son's experiences through every stage of illness and treatment, provides unique insights into schizophrenia, as well as mental illness in general, and the way it affects individuals and families.



The Choosing: A Rabbi's Journey from Silent Nights to High Holy Days

Friday, January 20

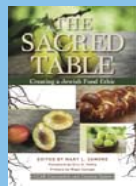
Rabbi Andrea Myers has served congregations from the Rocky Mountains to the Borscht Belt. She lives in New York City and is married to Rabbi Lisa Grushcow. Her recent memoir chronicles her life as a young Lutheran girl from Long Island, to coming out at Brandeis University, to her conversion to Judaism, the rabbinate, marriage and family life. This program is sponsored by Kulanu, the GLBT outreach group of Congregation B'nai Israel.



The Sacred Table: Creating a Jewish Food Ethic

Friday, March 2

Rabbi Mary Zamore is a former B'nai Israel rabbinic intern and is currently associate rabbi at Temple B'nai Or in Morristown, New Jersey. She is also the editor of a new anthology of essays which explores questions and challenges of navigating the personal and communal choices about eating.



LIFELONG LEARNING

Lifelong Learning courses are designed for anyone with time to learn in the afternoon!

Time Marches On: The Jewish Lens

Fridays, November 4, 11, 18, December 2 and 9 at Noon



Ira Wise has been leading an exploration of Jewish history for several years. This year we continue our journey as the Diaspora continues. We will examine how Jews functioned throughout the dying Roman Empire and during the rise of Christianity. We will attempt to shine a Jewish light on the beginning of the dark ages!

The Prophets:

Who were they and what is their message for us?

Fridays January 13, 20, 27, February 3, 10, 17 at 10:00 a.m.

At the Watermark, 3030 Park Avenue

Rabbi Rachel Gurevitz presents this six-part series at The Watermark, 3030 Park Ave, open to the whole community. We'll be introduced to several of the major and minor prophets of the Bible, learn about the times in which they lived, and uncover the meaning of their messages back in ancient times and for us today. Co-sponsored by Watermark University.



Responses to Suffering

Fridays, April 20, 27 and May 4, 11 and 18 at Noon

Through the long and at times tragic history of the Jewish people, prophets, sages and rabbis have sought to understand the nature of suffering. When burdens outweigh the blessings how have we tried to explain, cope and sustain ourselves and each other. Rabbi James



Prosnit will look at classic and contemporary Jewish texts and show how comfort and understanding has come from the wisdom of the ages.

UNIQUE OPPORTUNITIES

David's List: A Conversation for Yom Kippur Afternoon Saturday, October 8 at 1:00 p.m.

When beloved teacher, friend and Merkaz founder David Goby died this summer, his daughter shared his list of five life lessons he hoped his children would pass on. This is part of a rich Jewish tradition of Ethical Wills. Join Ira Wise between the morning and afternoon service for a conversation about the values we want to pass on to our own descendants.



Shabbat Sukkot: Rebuilding in Alabama and Reaching out to the community of Cordova.

Friday, October 14, Kabbalat Shabbat, Dinner and Program

In August, twelve congregants of B'nai Israel traveled to Birmingham, Alabama, and spent a week helping with home rebuilding projects in the town of Cordova. During that week, they encountered individuals who were inspired by their dedication to renewing their community, in their commitment to each other, and the centrality of faith and hope in their lives.

Join us for services at 6:00 p.m. followed by a Sukkot Shabbat dinner and a presentation of stories, images, and experiences from Cordova. RSVP for Shabbat dinner (\$18.00) with Lynn in the

Temple office, 203-336-1858. Your payment is your reservation.

The Social Action Committee will be collecting gift cards for Home Depot and Wal-Mart during Sukkot to assist the people of Cordova with their ongoing rebuilding needs. Gift cards can be dropped off at the Temple office, during the Shabbat program, or donations to the Social Action Fund marked for Cordova will be spent on purchasing additional gift cards.



4th Annual Women's Spirituality Retreat

Saturday, November 19, 9:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Location TBA

This year Rabbi Andrea Cohen-Kiener and Spiritual Director Rayzl Feuer join Rabbis Rachel Gurevitz and Suri Krieger for our annual Women's one-day Spirituality Retreat. The parshah this Shabbat is Chayyei Sarah – the life of Sarah. Through the lens of the life of our first foremother, we will journey together through the significant episodes of our own lives.



We are inviting women from Andrea and Rayzl's communities, P'nai Or in Hartford and P'nai Shore of the CT shoreline, to join us for our joint program. The retreat is \$36.00 for members of our communities. Attendance will be opened to non-members in mid- October for \$50.00 (they can request to be added to a waiting list in the meantime). We will again be providing delicious food for one another for lunch. Space is limited. Reserve your place with Lynn in the office at 203-336-1858 or Lynn@congregationbnaiisrael.org

Peace, Politics, and Plutonium: An Insider's Look at the Quest for Security, Democracy and Peace in the Middle East

Sunday, November 20 at 4:00 p.m.



Gil Hoffman is the chief political correspondent and analyst for The Jerusalem Post. Well-connected to Israeli and Palestinian leaders, Hoffman has interviewed every major figure across the Israeli political spectrum, has been interviewed by top media on six continents and is a regular analyst on CNN, Al-Jazeera and other news outlets. Called "The most optimistic man in Israel" by Israel Television, Hoffman's writing and TV appearances

provide a behind the scenes look at the intrigue and humor in the Israeli political arena.

Tikkun Leil Shavuot

Saturday, May 26 at 8:00 p.m.

Our tradition says that in every generation we should view ourselves as if we personally had gone out from Egypt, stood at Mount Sinai and received the Torah. Join Rabbis James Prosnit and Rachel Gurevitz and Ira Wise for a Shavuot journey of learning.



ONGOING LEARNING

These programs are weekly or monthly sessions designed to create a sense of continuity. Be a regular or occasional participant and find a chevrah—a group of fellow learners.

Saturday Morning Torah Study:

The Book of Leviticus

Saturdays beginning October 15 at 9:30 a.m.

If Genesis is childhood and Exodus is coming of age, then Leviticus is the book that appears smack in the middle -- not only of the Torah but metaphorically, in the middle of our lives. It's about sacrifice, menstruation, food, sex and the petty little ways that we can be good and decent people. It's about bodies running down and bodies getting better. It's not poetry, but it is the messy business of life that really is. It will prove fascinating study.



Every Saturday morning we learn Torah together – some attend 8:00 a.m. services while others arrive in time for the study group. Some participate every week and others drop in when they can. Some have solid biblical backgrounds and others are novices to the study. Some know Hebrew and most do not. Bottom line – everyone is welcome! Join us for an enriching, enjoyable and engaging hour of weekly learning of our most sacred text.

Understanding Judaism:

A Guide for Enquiring Minds

Sundays, 9:45am-11:30am

This series addresses questions and trends in Judaism and is appropriate for all levels of adult learner, Jewish and non-Jewish, whether you are an experienced student, someone looking for a way in to learn more about Judaism for the first time, or somewhere in-between. Topics are listed by date below. You are welcome to attend the entire series or pick and choose.



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| October 30 | What's So Cool About Kabbalah? |
| December 11 | 'Behind the Bima', Part 1: The Whats and Wheres of B'nai Israel |
| January 29 | 'Behind the Bima', Part 2: Navigating the Prayer Book |
| March 11 | 'Behind the Bima', Part 3:
Sit, Stand, Bow – the choreography of a service |
| April 29 | When Values Collide: The Case of the Now Famous Yale 5 |
| May 6 | The Three 'Foot' Festivals
– How Jews Do Pilgrimage and Celebrate the Seasons. |

Parent Learning Circle

Sundays at 10:30 a.m.

October 23, November 20, December 18,
January 22, February 12, March 4, April 1

The Parent Learning Circle (PLC) provides community, friendship, and is a wonderful way to accompany your Gan – Kitah Gimel (K-3) child on their journey into Jewish learning and living. We will be following the curriculum in parallel with your children. PLC will help you to feel better prepared to answer your children's questions about Judaism, God, birth, death, and much more. Also gain confidence in helping your child celebrate Shabbat and the holidays.



New this year! For the first 20 minutes of each meeting we will learn letters of the Hebrew alef-bet together, just like our children do on Sunday mornings. Join us for the whole session, or drop in at 10:50 to participate just in the Jewish living conversations.

With Rabbi Rachel Gurevitz.

Rosh Hodesh Group

Thursdays at 7:30 p.m.

October 13 (Interfaith Sukkot), November 10, December 22,
January 26, March 8, March 29 (Women's Seder), April 26, May 17.



Join Rabbi Rachel Gurevitz for a new series of Rosh Hodesh monthly women's gatherings that weave the stories and personalities of the Women of the Bible with insights from our own lives and experiences. Rabbi Suri Krieger will be a guest leader for several sessions this year. Rabbi Krieger blends music, art, text study and discussion that promises to be lively and enriching. **Theme for 5772: Biblical Women Role Models – for better or for worse.**

Hebrew for Beginners

We assure you 20/20 Hebrew vision following a 10 session proven and successful Hebrew course. \$100.00 for 10 sessions. Class times and dates to be mutually agreed (minimum of five students needed for class). Contact echetrit@congregationbnaiisrael for more details and to register.



Kulanu: Social Gatherings and Study Group

KULANU – GLBTQ outreach at Congregation B'nai Israel.
Open to all gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning.
<http://www.congregationbnaiisrael.org/kulanu.html>

Kulanu welcomes all GLBTQ to our community. We meet for social gatherings, Shabbat dinners, study and discussion afternoons, cultural trips, and also organize educational opportunities for the wider community. Please contact Rabbi Gurevitz for location and further information about Kulanu activities in the coming year.



ON-LINE LEARNING

The Union for Reform Judaism offers a variety of adult Jewish learning opportunities via e-mail and web sites. A few are listed below. A complete listing may be found at <http://urj.org/learning/my/>.

10 Minutes of Torah

Sign up to receive a one-page e-mail each day on a topic of Jewish interest. It only takes 10 minutes a day to get started on a lifelong journey. Spend 10 minutes a day – and before you know it you'll have completed 100 hours of Torah study! <http://urj.org/learning/torah/ten/>

Eilu V'Eilu

Eilu V'eilu (These & Those - meaning both sides of the argument are the words of God) is a weekly communication that involves a dialogue between two scholars and provide you the opportunity for active participation. <http://urj.org/learning/torah/ten/eilu/>

Significant Jewish Books

The URJ regularly identifies works of both fiction and non-fiction that are significant in some way. This web page tells you about the books and allows you to download discussion guides for your own learning or for your book group. <http://urj.org/learning/my/books/>

Parenting

Parents are their children's most powerful Jewish teachers. When you learn with your children, you are a model for lifelong Jewish learning. The resources here are designed to help you learn as adults and as a family. <http://urj.org/learning/forparents/>

SPECTOR FAMILY SCHOLAR-IN-RESIDENCE

**Shabbat Tazria/Metzora:
A Focus on Ability and Disability
Rabbi Lynne F. Landsberg
Access to a Spiritual Life**

Date changed to May 4! at 8:15 p.m. following services and dinner

"Before my injury, I belonged to one minority that was cohesive, strong and articulate—the American Jewish community. Now I belong to a second minority that is often unseen and unheard—persons with disabilities. I am excited to be working to strengthen the role of the Jewish community in the fight for the rights of people with disabilities and to help the Jewish community to be more physically and emotionally accessible to people with disabilities."

Rabbi Lynne F. Landsberg is Senior Advisor on Disability Issues for the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism. Rabbi Landsberg is co-founder and co-chair of the Jewish Disability Network — a coalition of national Jewish religious movements and organizations advocating for the civil and human rights of people with disabilities.

In the middle of a remarkable career as a congregational rabbi and then on the staff of the Union for Reform Judaism, Rabbi Landsberg suffered a severe brain injury on Washington's streets. She was close to death, and with great courage and support from family, friends and colleagues, she has returned back to herself (mostly). Rabbi Landsberg has become an outspoken advocate for the disabled and a powerful voice for inclusion in our religious life.



Please join us for Kabbalat Shabbat at 6:00 p.m., followed by Shabbat Dinner at 7:15. Reservations and a charge are required for dinner only. Rabbi Landsberg will speak after dinner. Contact Lynn at 203.336.1858 or Lynn@congregationbnaiisrael.org.

CALENDAR

The dates below indicate the first day in the case of a series. While not every course requires a reservation, it is helpful to know you are coming!
Please call Lynn at 203.336.1858
or e-mail her at Lynn@congregationbnaiisrael.org!

October

- 3 Monday Midrasha — New Age Spirituality (4 weeks)
- 8 Yom Kippur Afternoon — David's List
- 14 Shabbat Sukkot — Rebuilding Alabama
- 27 Morning Edition with Philip Eliasoph (through 12/15)

November

- 4 Lifelong Learning — Time Marches On (5 weeks)
- 7 Monday Midrasha — Responsa Literature (5 weeks)
- 18 Shabbat by the Book — Bob Gillette
- 19 Women's Spirituality Retreat
- 20 Peace, Politics and Plutonium — Gil Hoffman

December

- 9 Shabbat by the Book — Randye Kaye

January

- 13 Lifelong Learning — The Prophets (6 weeks at the Watermark)
- 20 Shabbat by the Book — Andrea Myers
- 23 Monday Midrasha — Apples and Oranges (4 weeks)

March

- 2 Shabbat by the Book — Mary Zamore
- 5 Monday Midrasha — Sensual Side of Being Jewish (3 weeks)
- 26 Monday Midrasha — Passover. Yeah, There's an App For That! (3 weeks)

April

- 20 Lifelong Learning — Responses to Suffering (5 weeks)
- 27 Access to a Spiritual Life — Spector Family Scholar-In-Residence

May

- 26 Tikkun Leil Shavuot

Monthly or Semi-Monthly

- Thursdays Rosh Chodesh
Adult Round Table
- Sundays Parent Learning Circle
Understanding Judaism

Weekly

- Saturdays Torah Study
- TBA Hebrew

Additional courses will be announced in the Temple Bulletin, at www.congregationbnaiisrael.org and in Happenings, our weekly e-mail announcements. If you do not currently receive Happenings, please contact

Lynn@congregationbnaiisrael.org.



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at CONGREGATION
B'NAI ISRAEL

2011-12/5772



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GENERATIONS