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## The Rabbi's Column: A HANUKKAH MESSAGE FOR LIGHT IN DARK TIMES

by Rabbi Dr. Julie Hilton Danan

As we prepared for Hanukkah, I told our Hebrew School students at our prayer service the true story of Billings, Montana, in 1993, when white supremacists broke windows where Jewish families displayed their menorahs. In a sign of solidarity, thousands of non-Jewish families and businesses then put menorahs and pictures of menorahs in their own windows, to share the message, "What you do to us, you do to them."

That story exemplifies America at its finest. When there is prejudice against any race, religion or nationality, there is prejudice against all of us. One of our amazing Hebrew School sixth-grade students, David, declared that we can't judge all members of one group because of bad things that a minority in that group might do. Our kids get it; can we do any less?

In the week before Thanksgiving, I was so gratified to attend the annual Thanksgiving Diversity Breakfast, organized by the American Jewish Committee and Westchester Jewish Council (with many co-sponsors including PCS). About 375 people of all races and religions, including several PCS members, gathered to celebrate, engage in dialogue and honor people of different religions who have done much for others. A children's choir sang patriotic songs. I thought about how such gatherings were repeated across our country at this season, and gave thanks to *Hashem* that we are living in a society with freedom of religion and expression, where immigrants from many nations have maintained our cultural identities and also assimilated American values and ideals.

A few days later I participated at a much more intimate gathering, the annual Pleasantville Interfaith Thanksgiving service, at our local Presbyterian Church. A young man who goes to Pleasantville Junior High spoke about why his Muslim family had left a dangerous life in Pakistan to immigrate to the United States. The refugee and immigration crisis is an issue that our Tikkun Olam committee would like to help us explore and get involved with in the year ahead; please attend our December 3 meeting to help us plan.

Some of our prayer gatherings lately have been somber. David, the young man who spoke so thoughtfully at our Hebrew School service, had also asked his teacher to request that I lead a prayer and hold a moment

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of silence for victims of terrorism in Paris, which we did. We had also just offered many prayers and expressions of solidarity at our Shabbat services that weekend. (Yes, Shabbat prayers are a good place to be when you want to share your feelings with others about what is happening in our world.) We are living in difficult times. But haven't people always lived in challenging times, indeed in much worse situations than today? The Jewish tradition tells us to be realistic and clear-eyed but also to maintain our hope.

**Hanukkah is the festival of miracles, and it is also the festival of faith.** A clever person once asked why we celebrate Hanukkah for eight days and not seven; after all, the first day was not a miracle since the oil was expected to burn for one day anyway. One of the answers is that **the fact that our ancestors lit the first lamp in spite of everything was itself the first miracle, the miracle of faith.** The Hebrew view of faith, *Emunah*, means neither foolish naiveté nor a set creed, but rather an ***attitude of affirmation in the face of uncertainty.*** There is much to be uncertain about today, including the threats of terrorists like ISIS, the situation in Israel, and overshadowing all, the global environmental crisis that is being explored at the UN Climate Change Conference in Paris as I write this column. We have to act with faith and join with other people of faith to face these challenges that impact everyone on earth.

The people of many faiths who are doing good every day deserve so much more of our energy and attention than people who commit violence and bloodshed. Hanukkah teaches that sometimes we have to fight for what is right, to combat oppression and tyranny. Nations have to join together to combat the forces of evil in our world, but these battles must be fought with careful discernment and using economic and diplomatic tools even more than military ones, lest we create more problems than we solve.

Even more importantly, we have to join hands with the good people of our world for *Tikkun Olam*, repairing our world. For Hanukkah ultimately teaches that we can't drive out darkness with more darkness, but rather by having the faith and courage to spread the light. *Chag Urim Sameach*, Happy Festival of Lights.



# HEBREW SCHOOL HAPPENINGS



by Galit Sperling, Principal

As we finish our Thanksgiving leftovers, and look ahead at Hanukkah just around the corner, it is the perfect time to pause and be thankful. At the PCS Hebrew School, we are thankful for our wonderful students, supportive parents, Rabbi Julie and our teachers, and the fantastic community of this congregation.

Our students in Hebrew School learn about Jewish culture and history, the land of Israel, the Hebrew language, holidays, and how to be good Jews and people. Two important topics that our students explore are *mitzvot*, literally translated as commandments, and *tikkun olam*, repairing the world, how we can do good deeds in our community, and beyond. In November, our sixth graders raised enough *tzedakah* money to make and pack sandwiches for a local homeless shelter. In Rabbi Julie's class, our seventh grade b'nei mitzvah students learned how to make *tzitzit* and *lein tefillin*. Our third-grade Gimmel class helped create a vibrant Shabbaton service on November 20, leading the congregation in Kabbalat Shabbat songs and prayers. Our Daled (fourth grade) students studied what it means to be a *mensch*, how to be a moral citizen and spread kindness with their actions. The Hey (fifth grade) class composed thoughtful Hanukkah greetings for Jewish veterans who are presently in the VA Hospital in Montrose, NY. The Aleph/Bet (first/second grade) class brought joy to us all as they practiced celebrating Shabbat each week with the Gimmel class and their parents (see photos on following pages), and went deep with their questions for Rabbi Julie during their Ask the Rabbi session.

We ended November by surprising Morah Karen Stamatis with a birthday cake, as she celebrated a big birthday (30, of course)! Morah Karen is a model for generosity and compassion, and our students reciprocated their caring with heartfelt compliments and kind words.

We look forward to an educational and fun-filled December in Hebrew School!

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## **Important Upcoming Hebrew School Dates:**

**Sunday, December 6:** PCS Congregational Hanukkah Party from 5-7 pm

**Sunday, December 13:** Hebrew School Hanukkah Celebration, including Kitahs Aleph/Bet/Gimmel visiting the Atria Center in Briarcliff Manor

**Thursday, December 24 - Sunday, January 3:** No Hebrew School Classes (Winter Break)

**Thursday, January 7:** Hebrew School classes resume

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Kitah Aleph/Bet (first and second Grade) practicing Shabbat rituals with Kitah Gimmel (third grade) and parents...



and participating in "Ask the Rabbi" with Rabbi Julie

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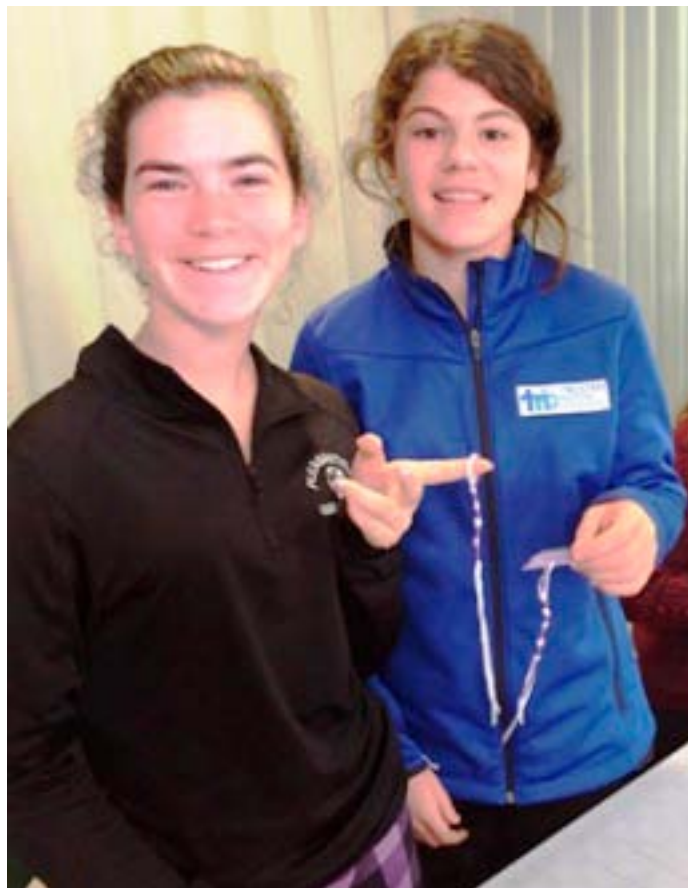
Kitah Gimmel students having fun  
working on their  
Tower of Babel project



Kitah Hey (fifth grade) and Kitah Vav (sixth grade)  
helping Morah Karen celebrate a special birthday

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Kitah Zayin (seventh grade)  
making tzitzit...



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and learning the meaning of,  
and how to put on, tefillin  
(girls, too!)



Oren Cohen and Richard Solomon  
(shown in the tefillin selfie above)  
were among those who came to help

# Sophía Rutman's Mitzvah Project



A *mitzvah* is a prayer in the form of a deed, imitating G-d's concern for the world. With the world seemingly growing more divided every day, I wanted to work with local children to help them see that the differences in their skin color, religion or culture were irrelevant—only as important as the differences in the color of their hair or eyes. I went back to my own Chappaqua preschool, Oak Lane, for several days after my own school day. I read three books on this topic to the four-year-old children. We looked for each others' families and cities on maps. The children came together to draw pictures of their houses, the Earth, or what their families do on the holidays. We spoke about how everyone is different somehow, and that it is no reason to tease or bully other children. I hope they learned that our differences are actually what bind humanity together.



# ASK THE RABBI:

## Topics on the minds of our first and second graders

*On November 15 Rabbi Julie paid a visit to our first and second grade class (Kitah Aleph/Bet) for a session of "Ask the Rabbi." Here are her impressions:*

If I was expecting "softball" questions during my first "Ask the Rabbi" session, think again! The first and second graders started by asking me who the first Rabbi was. I'm not sure, I told them, but we do call Moses, "Moshe Rabenu," Moses our Rabbi, because he was the first to teach us the Torah.

Our children of 6-7 years old have a lot of theological questions: What does God look like? Why did God create us? When was God born? Why did God let the snake in the garden (and people) do bad things?

I told them a saying that I heard often from my mentor at the University of Texas, Rabbi Professor Harold Leibowitz: "Your question is better than any answer I can give." I told them never to stop asking the big questions just because they grow up, but to keep on wondering and questioning. That's where true religion really starts, with the big questions of life.

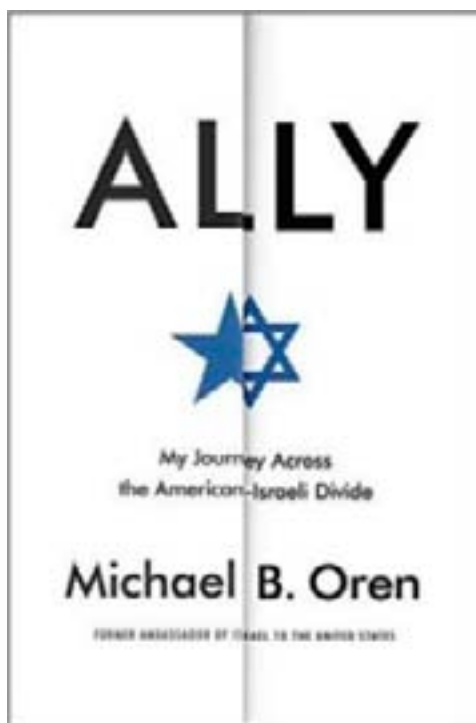
We discussed that there are a lot of ways to imagine and think about God. One of the students said that the burning bush was like a microphone for *Hashem* to speak to Moses.

Then we talked about how God created the world to have a relationship with God's creatures, and that we can be like "partners" with God in making our world better. We talked about free will and having choices. I told them a Midrash about how God made Adam from different colors of earth from around the world, so that we would know we are all brothers and sisters, which prompted Anna, one of the students, to say: "We are all a family under one sky."

Our PCS kids are so very special, pure-hearted and sincere. It is a joy to teach them and to pray with them. I encourage adults to come to events like the *Mishpachah* Shabbats just to hang out with our wonderful young people. It will lift your heart.

## ***Ally: My Journey Across the American-Israeli Divide***

by Michael B. Oren

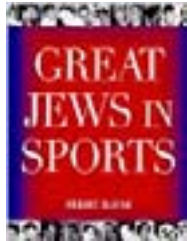


As Israel's ambassador to the United States from 2009-13, American-born Michael Oren had to grapple with the Palestinian peace process among many other thorny problems. Forged in the Truman administration, the alliance between the United States and Israel has been, and continues to be, subject to enormous strains. The relationship's very future has been questioned by leaders in both countries. *Ally* is the story of that alliance and its challenges. It is also a story of a young man who refused to relinquish a dream. *Ally* is both an American story and an Israeli tale. It is about assuming onerous responsibilities. It is a chronicle and a confession. This memoir is a testament to the struggles that face every American who cares deeply about Israel.

*In addition to being a former ambassador, Michael Oren is an historian, author and politician who is currently a member of the Knesset for the Kulanu party. He has written widely on Middle Eastern history; in addition to Ally, he is the author of The New York Times' best-sellers, Power, Faith and Fantasy and Six Days of War: June 1967 and the Making of the Modern Middle East, which won The Los Angeles Times' History Book of the Year Award and the National Jewish Book Award. Oren has been a visiting professor at Harvard, Yale and Georgetown universities in the United States and at Tel Aviv and Hebrew universities in Israel. He was a Distinguished Fellow at the Shalem Center in Jerusalem and a contributing editor to The New Republic. The Forward named Oren one of the five most influential American Jews and The Jerusalem Post listed him as one of the world's 10 most influential Jews.*

Also from the PCS Bookworm, some literary gift suggestions for Hanukkah:

***Writing Our Way Home:  
Contemporary Stories  
by American Jewish Writers***  
edited by Ted Solotaroff  
and Nessa Rapoport



***Great Jews in Sports***  
by Robert Slater

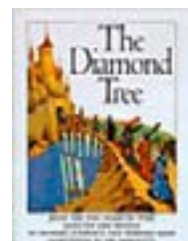
and with his wife...

***Great Jewish Women***  
by Elinor Slater and Robert Slater

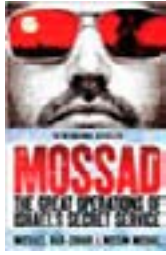


***The World Must Know the History of  
the Holocaust as Told in the United  
States Holocaust Memorial Museum***  
by Michael Berenbaum

***The Diamond Tree: Jewish Tales  
from Around the World***  
selected and retold  
by Howard Schwartz and Barbara Rush,  
illustrated by Uri Shulevitz



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***Mossad: The Great Operations of  
Israel's Secret Service***  
by Michael Bar-Zohar & Nissim Mishal

***The Jewish Spirit:  
A Celebration in Stories & Art***  
edited by Ellen Frankel



**And for our very young readers...**

***Classic Bible Stories for Jewish Children***  
retold by Alfred J. Kolatch,  
illustrated by Harry Araten  
(ages 8 and up)



***Hershel and the Hanukkah Goblins***  
by Eric Kimmel,  
illustrated by Trina Schart Hyman  
(ages 5 and up)



***The Mouse in the Matzah Factory***  
by Francine Medoff,  
illustrated by Nicole in den Bosch  
(ages 3-8)



**All of the recommended books may be ordered online  
from Amazon or Jewishsource.com.**

## Calling All Members for a PCS Directory!



Dear PCS Members,

Over the years, there have been many requests for a PCS directory. In our desire to build an even stronger and more committed community, we will be printing a directory to make available to all members in good standing.

The PCS directory will include members' names, mailing addresses, e-mail addresses, and home and cell phone numbers. **IF YOU DO NOT WANT ANY OR CERTAIN ELEMENTS OF YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION (SUCH AS YOUR MAILING ADDRESS OR PHONE NUMBER) INCLUDED IN THE DIRECTORY**, please contact the PCS office to let us know. **If we do not hear back from you by December 15, we will be very happy to include your contact info in the PCS Directory.**

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to be in touch.

L'shalom,

Amy Gutenplan  
President, Pleasantville Community Synagogue

Pleasantville Community Synagogue  
219 Bedford Road, Pleasantville, NY  
[www.shalompcs.com](http://www.shalompcs.com) ~ 914-769-2672 ~ [info@shalompcs.com](mailto:info@shalompcs.com)



**PCS is collecting toiletries to be donated to women's shelters and others in need. Please leave items in the marked box in the sanctuary and *please...give generously.***

**This Mitzvah Project will conclude at the PCS Hanukkah Party on Sunday, Dec. 6, 5 -7 pm. Our PCS children will help decorate bags for the toiletries to be donated. If you haven't done so already, please bring in the following items to the party.**

***Items most in need:***

**Toothbrushes, toothpaste, shampoo, soap, body wash, shaving items, deodorant, tissues, feminine hygiene products, ointments, powders, wipes and diapers of all sizes.**

***Thank you!***



# ADULT EDUCATION TWO-PART SERIES WITH RABBI JULIE KICKS OFF WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 2, 7:30 pm.

*Come to either class or come to both.  
All are welcome and no previous knowledge is necessary.*



## **The Greatest Book Ever Written**

**December 2, 7:30 pm**

The Hebrew Bible is the world's perennial best-seller, a book at the heart of Western Civilization. The Tanakh, its Hebrew name, is our foundational guide to religion and morality, but it's also **one of the world's greatest works of literature brimming with timeless accounts of human struggles, foibles, nobility, conflict and drama.** If your knowledge of the Bible is limited to a few Torah stories from Hebrew School, or if you want a refresher, this one evening class is for you. Rabbi Julie will treat us to an overview of the Bible, theories of its composition, and tools for learning. She will also share and lead discussion of some of her favorite passages from the Bible.

## **The Greatest Book Never Written**

**January 6, 7:30 pm**

The Babylonian Talmud is the foundational text of Rabbinic Judaism, the crown of Jewish study. Once the province of the learned elite, with modern translations, tools, and digital resources the Talmud is now more accessible than ever to everyone. With 63 tractates (volumes) and over 6,200 pages, **the Talmud covers every topic under the sun, not just what we think of as "religion."** What's even more interesting is that this book isn't really a book, and by law it was not written down for centuries. It's more like a conversation that never ends, and you can be part of it! Come for an overview of the Talmud and experience a bit of classic Talmudic learning in a language you can understand.

~ ~ ~

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During services and other events, parking spots at synagogue are for disabled only.***



In response to parent interest, Rabbi Julie is offering a monthly (or more often, if participants desire) adult class on "Exploring Judaism" during Hebrew school on Thursdays, from 5 - 6 pm.

The first session will be **Thursday, Dec. 3, at 5 pm**, on the topic of "Hanukkah for Grownups," and will cover the *real* history as well as the practical hands-on rituals of Hanukkah.

Hebrew School parents *and interested others* are welcome in this friendly, relaxed mini-course, which is designed for:

- \* **Parents who want to know more about their Jewish heritage**
- \* **Non-Jewish parents of Jewish children who want to learn along with their kids**
- \* **Individuals considering conversion to Judaism**
- \* ***And anyone who wants to learn!***

No prior knowledge is needed, and there will be plenty of time for questions and discussion. If you have any questions or to RSVP, please contact Rabbi Julie at [rabbi@shalompcs.com](mailto:rabbi@shalompcs.com).

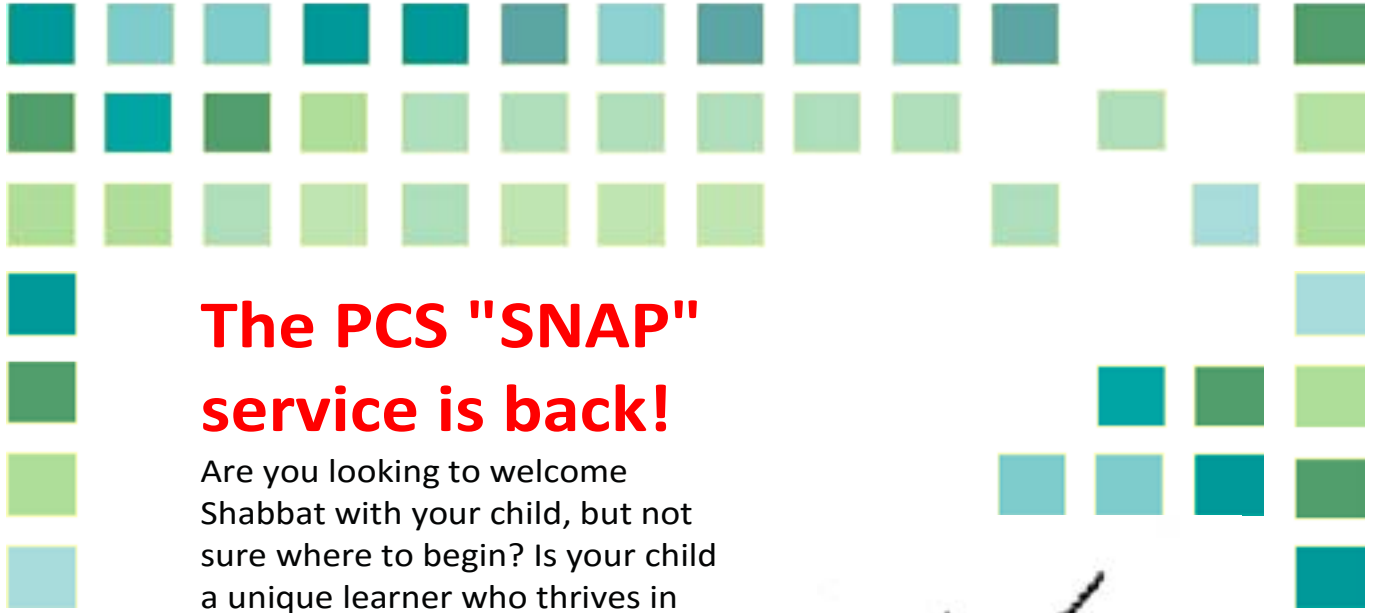
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## The PCS "SNAP" service is back!

Are you looking to welcome Shabbat with your child, but not sure where to begin? Is your child a unique learner who thrives in more intimate, personalized environments?

Join us **Friday night, December 4 for a joyful "SNAP" service at PCS!** Doors open at 6:30 pm for celebratory candle-lighting, juice and challah, followed by the "SNAP" service - featuring music and movement - at 7 pm.

**Everyone is welcome:** All ages, levels of ability and literacy, anyone and everyone looking for a very welcoming, joyful and inclusive Shabbat experience.

For more information or to RSVP, contact the PCS office, 769-2672, [info@shalompcs.com](mailto:info@shalompcs.com), or email Vivian Chang Freiheit, [vivianpiano@yahoo.com](mailto:vivianpiano@yahoo.com).

We hope to see you!  
*Rabbi Julie*



**WESTCHESTER BOARD OF RABBIS AND THE WESTCHESTER JEWISH COUNCIL**

WITH SUPPORT FROM UJA-FEDERATION OF NEW YORK/WESTCHESTER

**Night of Jewish Learning and Celebration**

**Saturday, December 5th @ 6:45 P.M.**



**Enjoy Two Sessions of Classes with more than 30 Westchester Rabbis  
Followed by a delicious Kosher dairy dessert reception  
With music by Rabbi Andrew Bossov**

**BETH EL SYNAGOGUE CENTER**

1324 North Avenue, New Rochelle, NY

**\$20 PER PERSON BY NOV. 25th • \$25 PER PERSON AT DOOR**

Register online at [www.wjcouncil.org](http://www.wjcouncil.org) or payable by check to Westchester Jewish Council

For more information contact: Donna Bartell at [donna@wjcouncil.org](mailto:donna@wjcouncil.org)

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WESTCHESTER  
BOARD OF RABBIS

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**RABBI JAYMEE ALPERT**  
CONGREGATION SHESS TEREK DEAN



**RABBI MORRIS BARZILAI**  
BETH EL SYNAGOGUE



**RABBI JEFFREY BEER**  
WESTCHESTER HEBREW HIGH SCHOOL



**RABBI JONATHAN BLAKE**  
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CONGREGATION SULAM WAKOV



**RABBI ANDREW BOSSOV**  
WESTCHESTER JEWISH COMMUNITY SERVICES



**RABBI LESTER BRONSTEIN**  
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**RABBI JOSH DORSCH**  
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**RABBI MOSHE EDELMAN**



**RABBI DAVID GREENBERG**  
TEMPLE SHARAFTELA OF WESTCHESTER



**RABBI ARI ISENBERG-GRZEDA**  
TEMPLE ISRAEL CENTER OF WHITE PLAINS



**RABBI JENNIFER JAECH**  
TEMPLE ISRAEL OF NORTHERN WESTCHESTER



**RABBI STEVEN KANE**  
CONGREGATION SOFIM OF ISRAEL



**RABBI MOLLY KARP**



**RABBI MAURA H. LINZER**  
TEMPLE BETH EL OF NORTHERN WESTCHESTER



**RABBI JOSH LOOKSTEIN**  
WESTCHESTER DAVY SCHOOL



**RABBI CHAIM MARDER**  
HEBREW INSTITUTE OF WHITE PLAINS



**RABBI SHIRA MILGROM**  
CONGREGATION KOOL ANI



**RABBI JONATHAN MORGENSTERN**  
YOUNG ISRAEL OF SCARSDALE



**RABBI JASON NEVAREZ**  
TEMPLE SHARAF TEMPLE OF WESTCHESTER



**RABBI HARRY PELL**  
SCHEDER WESTCHESTER



**RABBI DAVID SCHUCK**  
BETH EL SYNAGOGUE CENTER



**RABBI JEFFREY SEGELMAN**  
WESTCHESTER JEWISH CENTER



**RABBI DINA SHARGEL**  
TEMPLE ISRAEL CENTER OF WHITE PLAINS



**RABBI JEFFREY SIRKMAN**  
LABYRINTH TEMPLE



**RABBI JONATHAN SLATER**  
INSTITUTE FOR JEWISH SPIRITUALITY



**RABBI JAY STEIN**  
GREENBURGH HEBREW CENTER



**RABBI SETH STERNSTEIN**  
YORKTOWN JEWISH CENTER



**RABBI SCOTT B. WEINER**  
TEMPLE ISRAEL OF NEW ROCHELLE

## Night of Jewish Learning and Celebration

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5th @ 6:45 P.M.

BETH EL SYNAGOGUE CENTER

1324 North Avenue, New Rochelle, NY



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# **Celebrate Hanukkah with your community at PCS!**

## **SUNDAY, DEC. 6, 5-7 pm**

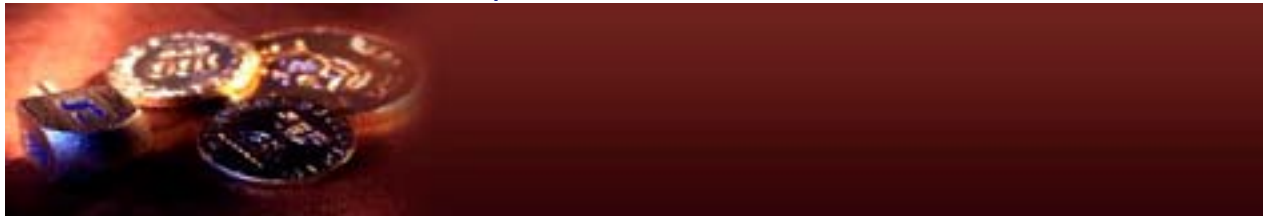
***All are welcome for fun and games (and food and drinks), music  
and laughter (and food and drinks). A COMMUNITY COMING  
TOGETHER IN CELEBRATION! (with food and drinks...)***

*Suggested donation:*

*\$18 per family; \$9 per person.*

*Everyone and all donations are welcome!*

Drop-ins are OK but RSVPs are MUCH BETTER. To RSVP, for more  
information or questions, contact the PCS office.



**\*\*\*A Mitzvah Project will be part of the party. Please bring in the following  
toiletries to be donated to women's shelters and others in need:**

**Toothbrushes, toothpaste, shampoo, soap, body wash, shaving items,  
deodorant, tissues, feminine hygiene products, ointments, powders, wipes  
and diapers of all sizes.\*\*\***

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*Join us at PCS for a joyful*  
**Prime-Time Shabbat Dinner!**

*Shabbat of Hanukkah*

**Friday, December 11**

**Service at 6:30 pm; Shabbat /Hanukkah Dinner at 7:30 pm\***

*With special guest, Rabbi David Evan Markus*



We are honored to have Rabbi David Evan Markus  
join Rabbi Julie in leading our Shabbat service.

Rabbi David is co-chair of the ALEPH Alliance for Jewish Renewal,  
an accomplished vocalist, pianist, composer, and director as well as a poet.  
He will bring his music and spirit to our service and teach a Hassidic text  
on the theme of light during our Shabbat dinner.

Click [here](#) for more information about Rabbi David.

**\*Reservations for dinner required; call or e-mail;  
Suggested donation: \$18 per adult; kids are free**



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Come to PCS to celebrate

# **ROSH CHODESH!\***

## **December 16, 7:30 pm**

at Pleasantville Community Synagogue  
featuring

### **Israeli folk dancing, music, food, and wine!**

*A good time with good people. All are welcome.*



**To RSVP or for more information  
call Marcy Gray at PCS at 769-2672 or  
e-mail Robin Berman at [awake.robin@gmail.com](mailto:awake.robin@gmail.com).**

*\* Why do we celebrate the new moon every month?  
The Jewish nation is often compared to the moon.  
Throughout history our light has waxed and waned but even in the darkest times  
it has never been extinguished. This is one reason why,  
when the head of the new moon - the Rosh Chodesh - appears for the first time  
in the night sky, we celebrate.  
Come join us!*

~ ~ ~

**Pleasantville Community Synagogue** ~ 219 Bedford Road, Pleasantville, NY  
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**For parking info, please visit [www.shalompcs.com/directions-and-parking](http://www.shalompcs.com/directions-and-parking).  
During services and other events, parking spots at synagogue are for disabled only.**

*What are YOU doing Friday night, December 25?*



Join Rabbi Julie and her husband, Avraham (and any other Danan family members who might be in town!) for an old/new tradition:

## **Chinese Dinner with the Rabbi!**

### **Friday night, December 25, 2015**

A veritable (and Glatt Kosher) feast will be ordered from Eden Wok,  
and all are welcome!

**RSVPs are a must** and we are asking for a contribution of  
\$18 per adult, \$9 per child to help cover the cost.

To RSVP and for more information, contact Marcy Gray in the PCS  
office, 769-2672, [mgray@shalompcs.com](mailto:mgray@shalompcs.com).

*Please note:*

**Services will not be held at PCS that night, Friday, Dec. 25.**  
So come to Rabbi Julie's home and celebrate an old/new tradition  
with old and new friends!



**Interested in being part of a PCS Book Group?  
All ideas welcome!**

**Contact Robin at [awake.robin@gmail.com](mailto:awake.robin@gmail.com).**



**Pleasantville Community Synagogue ~ 219 Bedford Road, Pleasantville, NY  
(914) 769-2672 ~ [info@shalomPCS.com](mailto:info@shalomPCS.com) ~ [www.shalompcs.com](http://www.shalompcs.com)**



# SAVE THE DATE!

PCSP Progressive Dinner  
Saturday - January 30 at 6:15pm

*Delicious Hors D'oeuvres  
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Volunteer as a Host

or

Come as a Guest

(couvert for guests - \$20)

Plan to have an exciting evening progressing from one home to the next. Meet new people, have fun and enjoy great food in a relaxed, warm atmosphere.

We all start together at the same home for appetizers. We then draw names for dinner assignments and proceed to our host homes for the entrée. At the end of the evening we gather together once again for dessert at another member's home.

## Look for invitation coming in the mail

Want to host or have questions? Call or e-mail:

Marlo 914-213-7337

pcspprogressivedinner15@gmail.com

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## **ON THE HORIZON AT PLEASANTVILLE COMMUNITY SYNAGOGUE...**

On **Thursday, December 3, at 7 pm**, the **Tikkun Olam Committee** will be meeting to plan its goals for the year. A focus we are considering is refugees and immigration. Come and help us shape our Social Action program.

**December B'not Mitzvah:**      **Sophia Rutman, December 4-5    Maia Mayers, December 18-19**

**Friday nights will now be an integral part of the B'nei Mitzvah**, and we encourage all congregants to come out and support our students and families as they help to lead our services.

On **Sunday, December 6**, there will be a **Community Hanukkah Party at PCS from 5-7 pm**. For more information, please see page 20 of this issue.

On **Friday, December 11**, services and a **Shabbat/Hanukkah Dinner with a special guest** will begin at **6:30 pm**. For more information, please see page 21 of this issue.

On **Saturday, December 12, the Shabbat of Hanukkah**, there will be a **special Hanukkah meditation** at 9:15 am, followed by services at 10 am.

On **Friday evening, December 25**, there will be **no formal Shabbat service at PCS**, but please **join us for Chinese food** (kosher, of course) **at the home of Rabbi Julie and Avraham Danan**. For more details, please see page 23 of this issue.

On **Saturday, December 26**, there will be **regular Shabbat morning services at 10 am**, but no meditation prior to the service.

On **Friday, January 1, and Saturday, January 2**, Shabbat services will be **led by Cantor Isabel**.

For Rosh Chodesh Sh'vat in January, the **Rosh Chodesh Group** will meet on **Wednesday, January 13, from 7:30 pm to 9 pm**, to celebrate Tu B'Sh'vat, the Jewish New Year for the environment in general and trees in particular. And of course there will be chatting and noshing. For more information, please contact Committee Chair Robin Berman at [awake.robin@gmail.com](mailto:awake.robin@gmail.com).

In our January issue, **the PCS Bookworm**, Eileen Jagoda, will review ***This Is My God* by Herman Wouk**.

The **PCS Newsletter** would love to publish **photos taken in Israel** that include you and your family, from either past or current travels. Please send as an attachment via email to:

Roberta Korus - [robertakorus@gmail.com](mailto:robertakorus@gmail.com)

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## CONTRIBUTIONS

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**We appreciate the thoughtfulness of those who support  
the Pleasantville Community Synagogue by remembering and honoring  
their friends and loved ones through their generous contributions.**

---

### **General Fund/Fair Share**

Hedi Sperling, in memory of her beloved parents, Blima and Dov Weiss, on the occasion of their yahrzeits

Jonathan Goodman, in memory of his beloved father, Irving Goodman

Peter Volgyes

### **Kiddush Fund**

Rhea Wolfthal, in commemoration of the fifth yahrzeit of her beloved husband, Phil Wolfthal

April Lasher Sanders

Beth and Brian Mandell

Deb Spanierman

### **Rabbi's Discretionary Fund**

Rabbi Ralph and Brenda Kingsley

Rhea Wolfthal, in memory of her beloved father, Max Gitelson, her beloved grandmother, Jennie Etkin, and her beloved uncle, Samuel Tessler

### **Wish List**

Hebrew School supplies: Beth and David Shea

---



# DECEMBER YAHRZEITS

|                                              |             |
|----------------------------------------------|-------------|
| Eugene Brody, father of Rachel Brody         | December 2  |
| Rose Marie Marra, mother of Rob Marra        | December 4  |
| Walter Wehrle, father of Douglas Wehrle      | December 9  |
| David Grekin, grandfather of Peter Grekin    | December 11 |
| Louis Israelow, father of Marvin Israelow    | December 12 |
| Victor Chiarizia, father of Maria Levine     | December 12 |
| Margaret Sperling, mother of Edward Sperling | December 13 |
| Jay Polansky, father of Debra Schor          | December 17 |
| Max Gitelson, father of Rhea Wolfthal        | December 22 |
| Michael Fineman, nephew of Roberta Berman    | December 22 |
| Joyce Goldman, mother of Dorian Goldman      | December 24 |
| Nathan Blackman, father of Jonathan Blackman | December 25 |
| Frederick Berman, father of Roberta Berman   | December 25 |
| Fanny Goldman, grandmother of Dorian Goldman | December 26 |
| Julius Strauss, father of Fredric Strauss    | December 27 |
| Samuel Weiner, father of Shelley Weiner      | December 28 |
| Alexander Gordon, father of Bernard Gordon   | December 29 |
| Marvin Levine, father of Richard Levine      | December 30 |

**To All PCS Members:**

**If you or another member suffer personal tragedy or loss or are otherwise in need of help, please immediately call Rabbi Julie at (914) 769-2672, or email her at [rabbi@ShalomPCS.com](mailto:rabbi@ShalomPCS.com).**





Pleasantville Community Synagogue

## Yahrzeit Memorial Board

The PCS Yahrzeit Memorial Board is a beautiful and symbolic place to honor your loved ones while helping to support your synagogue. The anniversary of their passing will be commemorated with a light by their nameplate.

Please provide the following information and payment (\$360) for each plate. If you need assistance with the Hebrew date, you can find date conversions at [www.hebcal.com](http://www.hebcal.com), or contact Marcy Gray at 769-2672, [mgray@shalompcs.com](mailto:mgray@shalompcs.com). If there is no Hebrew name, the name in English will be centered at the top. Delivery of nameplates will take 4-6 weeks. *Please print very neatly.*

Name in English: \_\_\_\_\_ Name in Hebrew: \_\_\_\_\_

English date of passing: \_\_\_\_\_ Hebrew date of passing: \_\_\_\_\_

Requested by: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to person being honored: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number/E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Check enclosed payable to *Pleasantville Community Synagogue*

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Credit Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Circle One:        VISA        MasterCard

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Your Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Amount to charge: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail checks to:** PCS, P.O. Box 148, Pleasantville, NY 10570.

**If paying by credit card**, please mail this form to PCS, email to [Accounts@shalomPCS.com](mailto:Accounts@shalomPCS.com), fax it to (914) 769-1795, or call Barbara Doctor at (914) 747-3017 to provide your credit card information.

**Please make your donation by check if at all possible.**



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Introducing to Briarcliff the new owner of Zokkoz Salon, Jillian Sherman. Ever since she discovered Aveda a few years ago, she has tried to live by their mission. The combination of her love for hair and making people's true beauty come out with Aveda's products has proven to give her the ability to deliver healthy, sexy hair that is safe for her guests as well as the environment. Her next quest is to share her knowledge and passion with her staff at Zokkoz. Briarcliff has been so friendly and has made her feel so welcomed. She would like to pass that feeling on to you. Please come in and mention this ad and save 40% off your first appointment and we guarantee you'll love the results!!!



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# Pleasantville Community Synagogue Mission Statement

*Pleasantville Community Synagogue is a welcoming Jewish community connecting people of diverse traditions and backgrounds who want to share a joyous spiritual and cultural home.*

## PLEASANTVILLE COMMUNITY SYNAGOGUE OFFICERS AND TRUSTEES

### Officers

President: Amy Gutenplan  
Secretary: Laurie Hirsch Schulz  
Treasurer: Mark Freiheit  
Vice President: Kiersten Zweibaum  
Vice President: Richard Solomon

### Board of Trustees

Cristina Altieri-Martinez  
[cmartinez@ShalomPCS.com](mailto:cmartinez@ShalomPCS.com)

Mark Freiheit  
[info@ShalomPCS.com](mailto:info@ShalomPCS.com)

Gary Greenwald  
[ggreenwald@ShalomPCS.com](mailto:ggreenwald@ShalomPCS.com)

Jonathan Goodman  
[jgoodman@ShalomPCS.com](mailto:jgoodman@ShalomPCS.com)

Amy Gutenplan  
[agutenplan@ShalomPCS.com](mailto:agutenplan@ShalomPCS.com)

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Richard Solomon  
[info@shalomPCS.com](mailto:info@shalomPCS.com)

Kiersten Zweibaum  
[kzweibaum@shalomPCS.com](mailto:kzweibaum@shalomPCS.com)

Rabbi Julie Danan  
[rabbi@ShalomPCS.com](mailto:rabbi@ShalomPCS.com)

## PCS COMMITTEE CHAIRS

All the committees of the Pleasantville Community Synagogue are eager for your participation and suggestions. If you'd like to get more involved in the life of the PCS community, this is the way to begin! Below are the names of the committees, their chairs, and contact information.

### Adult Education

Barbara Doctor  
[bdoctor670@gmail.com](mailto:bdoctor670@gmail.com)

### B'nei Mitzvah

Ed Sperling  
[edsperling@gmail.com](mailto:edsperling@gmail.com)

### Building

Richard Levine  
[rlevine@shalomPCS.com](mailto:rlevine@shalomPCS.com)

### Jewish Education

Kiersten Zweibaum  
[info@shalomPCS.com](mailto:info@shalomPCS.com)

### Communications

Cristina Altieri-Martinez  
[cmartinez@shalomPCS.com](mailto:cmartinez@shalomPCS.com)

### Religious Practices

Eric Klein  
[info@shalomPCS.com](mailto:info@shalomPCS.com)

### Finance

Mark Freiheit  
[info@shalomPCS.com](mailto:info@shalomPCS.com)

### Fundraising

Kenneth Fuiirst  
[kfuiirst@shalomPCS.com](mailto:kfuiirst@shalomPCS.com)

### High Holidays

Richard Solomon  
[info@shalomPCS.com](mailto:info@shalomPCS.com)

### Human Resources

Karen Neuburger  
[info@shalomPCS.com](mailto:info@shalomPCS.com)

### Membership Engagement

Laurie Hirsch Schulz  
[lhirschschulz@shalomPCS.com](mailto:lhirschschulz@shalomPCS.com)

### Membership Outreach

Leyla Nakisbendi  
[leyla@shalomPCS.com](mailto:leyla@shalomPCS.com)

### Israel Action

[Vacant]

### Rosh Chodesh

Robin Berman  
[info@shalomPCS.com](mailto:info@shalomPCS.com)

### Tikkun Olam

Michael Gold  
[mgold@shalomPCS.com](mailto:mgold@shalomPCS.com)

### Youth

Laurie Hirsch Schulz  
[info@shalomPCS.com](mailto:info@shalomPCS.com)

To contact PCS: Phone (914) 769-2672; Fax (914) 769-1795; Website: [www.ShalomPCS.com](http://www.ShalomPCS.com)

Marcy Gray, Synagogue Administrator: (914) 769-2672; [mgray@ShalomPCS.com](mailto:mgray@ShalomPCS.com)

Galit Sperling, Religious School: (914) 773-0043; [principal@ShalomPCS.com](mailto:principal@ShalomPCS.com)

Barbara Doctor, Member Accounts: (914) 747-3017; [Accounts@ShalomPCS.com](mailto:Accounts@ShalomPCS.com)

## **THE PCS NEWSLETTER ACCEPTS ADS!**

The PCS newsletter is published monthly, online, from September through June, and it is emailed to every member family as well as to prospective members and some Jewish organizations.

If you provide professional or business services in the area, the PCS newsletter might provide some extra, valuable visibility. To arrange for your ad to appear in the newsletter, here's what you need to know:

### **\* Deadlines:**

Ads should be submitted by the 15th of the month by emailing them to [mgray@shalompcs.com](mailto:mgray@shalompcs.com).

### **\* Ad Specifications:**

Ads will be published in one size only: one-quarter page, which is approximately 3½ x 4¾ inches. The entire ad (both text and artwork) should be provided by the advertiser in GIF, JPEG, PDF or TIFF format ONLY. Please proofread your ad before sending.

### **\* Advertising Rates:**

The cost per ad (for 10 issues - no bulletin is published in July and August) is \$125 for ¼ page. **Note:** Checks preferred; please mail checks to Pleasantville Community Synagogue, PO Box 148, Pleasantville, NY 10570 with "newsletter ad" in the memo section. To pay by credit card, please call the synagogue office at (914) 769-2672.



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## ABOUT THE NEWSLETTER

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The PCS Newsletter is published monthly, online, from September through June. Articles and photos should be submitted by the 24th of the month. They can be e-mailed to Roberta Korus, Editor, at [robertakorus@gmail.com](mailto:robertakorus@gmail.com), or dropped off at the newsletter box in the synagogue office.

Pleasantville Community Synagogue \* 219 Bedford Road \* Pleasantville, NY 10570  
phone (914) 769 - 2672                      fax (914) 769 - 1795



**Pleasantville Community Synagogue**

**FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR YOUR SUPPORT**

**Building Fund**

To preserve the beauty and functionality of our physical plant, and to build reserves for future expansion.

**General Fund/Fair Share**

Helps to finance any need of the synagogue considered necessary by the Board of Trustees. All unspecified gifts are credited to the General Fund.

**Rabbi's Discretionary Fund**

Supports various individuals, organizations, and/or programs at the discretion of the rabbi.

**Hebrew School Scholarship Fund**

Provides scholarships to children who would like to attend our Hebrew School and may not currently have the financial resources to do so.

**Yahrzeit Memorial Board Nameplate (\$360)**

A nameplate with the name and date of departed loved ones will be lit in their honor on the anniversary of their passing. Please contact the office for appropriate form.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Name and fund selected:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Donation in honor/memory of (please specify which):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Donor contact information (if not a PCS member):** \_\_\_\_\_

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| _____                                             |                         |

**PLEASE NOTE: Checks preferred.** To help our bookkeeper, please issue separate checks for dues or other special events. Checks should be made payable to "Pleasantville Community Synagogue." Please indicate the fund to which you are donating in the memo section of your check and **mail your check to** PCS, PO Box 148, Pleasantville, NY 10570.

**If paying by credit card,** please email this form to [Accounts@ShalomPCS.com](mailto:Accounts@ShalomPCS.com), fax it to (914) 769-1795, or call Barbara Doctor at (914) 747-3017, or PCS, (914) 769-2672 to provide your credit card information.

# KISLEV - TEVET 5776

## December 2015 - PCS Calendar

| Sunday                                                                                                                                                                           | Monday                                           | Tuesday                                                         | Wednesday                                                                       | Thursday                                                                   | Friday                                                                                                                        | Saturday                                                                                                                                                                     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 29<br>No Hebrew School                                                                                                                                                           | 30<br>7:15pm Yoga at PCS                         | 1<br>7:30pm Religious Practices Committee meeting               | 2<br>7:30pm "The Greatest Book Ever Written" Adult Ed kick-off with Rabbi Julie | 3<br>7:00pm Kick off meeting of Tikkun Olam committee<br><br>Hebrew School | 4<br>4:09pm - Candle lighting<br>7:30pm Services<br>SNAP (Special Needs at Pleasantville) Service, 7 pm                       | 5<br>9:15am Morning Meditation; Shabbat Service including Bat Mitzvah of Sophia Rutman, 9:30 am<br>5:39pm - Havdalah<br>6:45pm Night of Jewish Learning<br>Parashat Vayeshev |
| 6<br>5:00pm PCS Community Hanukah Party!<br>★ First Night of Chanukah: 1 Candle - The Jewish Festival of Rededication; also known as the Festival of Lights<br><br>Hebrew School | 7<br>7:15pm Yoga at PCS<br>★ Chanukah: 2 Candles | 8<br>★ Chanukah: 3 Candles                                      | 9<br>1:00pm High Holiday recap<br>★ Chanukah: 4 Candles                         | 10<br>★ Chanukah: 5 Candles<br><br>Hebrew School                           | 11<br>4:08pm - Candle lighting<br>6:30pm Services<br>Chanukah/Shabbat Dinner<br><br>★ Chanukah: 6 Candles                     | 12<br>9:15am Morning meditation, Shabbat morning service, 10<br>5:39pm - Havdalah<br>Parashat Miketz<br>★ Chanukah: 7 Candles<br>★ Rosh Chodesh Tevet - The new Hebrew month |
| 13<br>7:30pm Executive Committee Meeting<br>Hebrew School<br>Chanukah Party!<br>Rosh Chodesh Tevet<br>★ Chanukah: 8 Candles<br><br>Hebrew School                                 | 14<br>7:15pm Yoga at PCS<br>Chanukah: 8th Day    | 15<br>7:30pm Board Meeting                                      | 16<br>7:30pm Rosh Chodesh event                                                 | 17<br>Ask the Rabbi with Kita Gimmel<br><br>Hebrew School                  | 18<br>4:10pm - Candle lighting<br>7:30pm Services, including Children's Service                                               | 19<br>9:15am Morning Meditation; Shabbat Service including Bat Mitzvah of Maia Mayers, 9:30 am<br>5:40pm - Havdalah<br>Parashat Vayigash                                     |
| 20<br><br>Hebrew School                                                                                                                                                          | 21<br>7:15pm Yoga at PCS                         | 22<br>Asara B'Tevet - Fast commemorating the siege of Jerusalem | 23                                                                              | 24<br>No Hebrew School                                                     | 25<br>4:13pm - Candle lighting<br>Chinese dinner at the rabbi's home<br>Friday night services will not be held tonight at PCS | 26<br>9:15am Morning meditation, Shabbat morning service, 10<br>5:44pm - Havdalah<br>Parashat Vayeichi                                                                       |
| 27<br>No Hebrew School                                                                                                                                                           | 28<br>7:15pm Yoga at PCS                         | 29                                                              | 30                                                                              | 31<br>No Hebrew School                                                     | 1<br>4:19pm - Candle lighting<br>7:30pm Services                                                                              | 2<br>9:15am Morning meditation, Shabbat morning service, 10 am<br>5:50pm - Havdalah<br>Parashat Shemot                                                                       |

**Note:** Times and dates of events may change after the Newsletter has come out. To get the latest information on any possible changes, please check the calendar on our website: [www.ShalomPCS.com](http://www.ShalomPCS.com). Calendars for future months are also on the website.