



Black Rabbi Speaking January 22 at Joint Breakfast of Men's Club and Sisterhood

Program Will Mark Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday

Rabbi Sholomo B. Levy faces more challenges than most modern rabbis. He leads a diverse congregation with varying degrees of Jewish observance, just like other rabbis. But his Orthodox congregation, Beth Elohim Hebrew Congregation in St. Albans, Queens, is African-American.

Rabbi Levy will be the featured speaker at a special congregational breakfast sponsored by the Men's Club and Sisterhood on Sunday, January 22, at 9 A.M. in the Crystal Ballroom. The program is free and open to the community.

Men's Club Past Presidents Van Frankel and Dr. Arden Smith suggested Rabbi Levy as a speaker at Temple Israel. Co-President Gary Sazer and his wife, Lois, along with Dr. Sharon Keller, recently attended *Shabbat* services at Beth Elohim and said they found it to be "a wonderful



Rabbi Sholomo Levy, the spiritual leader of Beth Elohim Hebrew Congregation, St. Albans, Queens, will speak at Temple Israel on January 22.

Hanukkah at Temple Israel



Temple Israel marked Hanukkah with the lighting of a menorah by President Alan Klinger at a congregational celebration last month. See additional pictures on page 4.

spiritual experience." Program Chair Marc Langsner,

along with Co-President Seth Moin, arranged the program as a part of Temple Israel's congregational observance of Martin Luther King's birthday.

"Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Jews" will be the topic of Rabbi Levy's presentation. He will explore the spiritual influences of Judaism on the theology of Dr. King and the political interactions of American and Israeli Jews with the visionary civil rights leader.

"Being Jewish is not a white thing," said Rabbi Levy. "There are many themes in Judaism about oppression and slavery that really resonate for us as African-Americans."

Rabbi Levy's congregants prefer to call themselves Hebrew Israelites, part of an association of black Americans with Judaic beliefs. Many follow the teachings of a rabbi named Wentworth Arthur Matthew, who founded a congregation in Harlem in 1919. He concluded that Judaism had been the original belief of many Africans due to similar dietary laws and holiday observances, as well as a shared history of slavery and being scattered throughout the world. Blacks who followed him would not be converting, he concluded, but simply coming back to the fold.

Over the years, followers branched out and there are now ten congregations in New York City and many more throughout the country. Rabbi Levy's congregation, located at 189-31 Linden Boulevard, is the only black Jewish congregation in Queens.

"Being born black and growing up Jewish, and then going to Israel," Rabbi Levy said, "I feel I'm in a privileged position to speak to both black issues and Jewish issues."

On My Father's Yahrzeit

By Arnold Eisen

EDITOR'S NOTE: Arnold Eisen, chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary, wrote this moving tribute to his father. How many children at Temple Israel will remember their father as "the *macher*" of their *shul*?

It's not difficult to recall numerous ways in which I have been shaped—as a person, a father, a Jew, a man, a friend, a husband, and much, much more—by my father, Alan Eisen (z"l), whose third *yahrzeit* I will observe in early January.

*He was a character,
my father, and a
man of great character.*

It is appropriate to write this particular recollection of him for the Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs (FJMC) with a plaque

FROM THE RABBI

Bring Back the Mystery

By Rabbi Howard A. Stecker

A classic scenario involves a small child watching a sunset. His eyes widen to embrace the visual symphony of color and shapes. He sits transfixed for several minutes as the scene intensifies. As soon as the sun slips beneath the horizon, he starts to clap and calls out, "Again!"

The child is too young to understand that he will have to wait a full day before the performance repeats itself and it will be years before he grasps the scientific underpinnings of what he witnessed.

But a small child intuitively understands that which scientific awareness sometimes dilutes, namely the inherent mystery of the natural world and of life itself.

I recommend a recent book by Karen Armstrong called "The Case for God." Written in part as a response to the writings of self-described atheists like Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens, it is less a defense of God than an historical overview of trends that characterize how God has been perceived.

Touching on major historical periods in the evolution of attitudes toward God, Armstrong makes the following points, among others. It's only relatively recently that a scientific approach to God has emerged and, paradoxically, this approach

and framed certificate nearby that testify to his "Man of the Year" awards from the Men's Club of Congregation Emanu-El in Philadelphia. I got my musical ability from my father (my mother, a source of great influence and inspiration as well, could not carry a tune, though she did play the piano). I suspect the fact that I do not tell jokes very often, but appreciate good puns, stems from the fact that Dad told jokes all the time, and was known for a repertoire of bad puns. It gave me great pleasure, too, when my son was born, to observe that he had inherited the double-jointed thumbs that seem to go with my father's genealogy and that of all Eisen males. The

has yielded a less nuanced understanding of God than existed previously.

The ancient Israelites and Greeks, for example, appreciated God less literally than many people do today. They understood God to be beyond measure or comprehension. They intuited the difference between *logos*, literal truth, and *mythos*, the stories we tell ourselves to make life more meaningful and livable. The early Christians, particularly in Byzantine

*...we seem to have
more questions
than ever...*

lands, did not take the idea of the Trinity literally. They meditated on one and three as a metaphor and as an inspiration to help them confront the ungraspable mystery of God. Centuries later, the Kabbalists used the concept of *Ein Sof* (without end) to express God's boundlessness.

In response to the rapid growth of scientific discovery, thinkers like Descartes and Newton proffered scientific explanations for the nature and function

—Continued on page 7

problem is not finding examples of my father's influence on me, but identifying areas where that influence is absent. Let me mention three zones of his impact that are particularly relevant to my current work.

First, my Dad was pious in a way I much admired and never scorned, even at the height of teenage rebellion. He had a love of life that ran deeper than deep. He would often lead *davening* of *birkhot hashahar* at morning services, and I knew as I watched that he did so with great *kavanah*. He would say "the Good Lord willing" and mean it. He was not a simple person, despite his protestations that he was part of a genuine humility that taught me to take the world seriously but not to take myself too seriously. He never did. I think that's why little kids loved him so: this man who would get down on the floor with them and pretend to pound down on his double-jointed thumbs until he bent them back in a way that left kids wide-eyed, or who—as the kids got older—would entertain them with math tricks and word games. He was a character, my father, and a man of great character. I could always count on him. So could my mother and God.

Second, my Dad loved music. He had been training to be a pianist when the Depression took away that dream and others, too. Throughout his career as a salesman, he would take time whenever he could—and wherever he traveled—to walk into schools and offer a free program called "Fun With Music." He wanted kids to appreciate Chopin, so he'd have them time him as he played the "Minute Waltz," or he'd conjure up the images of a parade and enthrall them with Beethoven's "Turkish March." (The kids at the assemblies generally wrote thank-you notes afterward and sent them to him; usually they consisted of elaborate drawings of him at the piano or the scenes they pictured from the music. I recently pruned the collection down from hundreds to dozens, unable to discard them entirely.) I've told rabbinical students at JTS that once, in his early 90s (he passed away at 97), my dad sat down at the grand piano in the lobby of an apartment building and began to play a Chopin nocturne, transforming himself (or perhaps just our image of him) from an elderly gentleman who had his share of physical ailments to a vessel of artistry that came, via his fingers, straight from the soul. "Everyone has a Chopin nocturne inside," I tell the students. "It's your job to elicit it and help it find expression in your community." This is what leadership is about.

Third, he loved being Jewish. This love was not the result of theory, or even of a conscious decision. He simply loved family, friends, and *shul* and so many other things that were Jewish through and through.

—Continued on page 7

IN MEMORIAM

Temple Israel extends condolences
to the families of:

ELAINE WEISER

wife of Melville Weiser
and esteemed member of Temple Israel

MURIEL MOIN

mother of Seth Moin

May their memories be for a blessing.

Holocaust Rescue Film At Temple Israel Jan. 29

A little known rescue during World War II will be the subject of a special program at Temple Israel on January 29.

During World War II, 25,000 - 30,000 Jews were saved thanks to the "El Salvador Action" and its officials, Consul General Jose Arturo Castellanos and his First Secretary, George Mandel-Mantello. Thousands of Salvadoran birth certificates were issued to Jews, mostly from Hungary, in one of the greatest humanitarian efforts of the Holocaust.

Excerpts from "Glass House," a documentary covering this untold rescue story, will be shown. The film includes interviews with children of the Castellanos and Mandel-Mantello as well as survivors.

The program features a stellar panel of speakers who will discuss the film and the rescue including Beth Lilach, senior director of education and community affairs, Holocaust Memorial and Tolerance Center of Nassau County; Dagoberto A. Torres Pena, consul general of El Salvador; and Ina Soep Polak, a Dutch survivor rescued through Salvadoran efforts. Moderating will be David Newman, executive director, Jewish Community Relations Council of Long Island.

The program is being presented by the consul general of El Salvador, the Holocaust Memorial and Tolerance Center of Nassau County, Jewish Community Relations Council of Long Island and Temple Israel. It begins at 11:30 A.M., with a light lunch to follow.

Those interested in attending are urged to RSVP by January 23 to 516-677-1867 or e-mail <jrccli@jrccli.org>. The presentation is free and open to the public.

DAILY MINYAN TIMES

Mon. & Thur.	6:45 A.M.	8:00 P.M.
Tues. & Wed.	7:00 A.M.	8:00 P.M.
Friday	7:00 A.M.	4:45 P.M.
Sat., Jan. 14	8:45 A.M.	4:10 P.M.
Sat., Jan. 21	8:45 A.M.	4:20 P.M.
Sunday	8:15 A.M.	8:00 P.M.

CANDLE LIGHTING TIMES

Friday, January 13.....	4:31 P.M.
Friday, January 20.....	4:39 P.M.

UPCOMING EVENTS AT TEMPLE ISRAEL

Jan.	15	Community Interfaith Martin Luther King, Jr. Service at St. Paul A.M.E. Church	3:30 P.M.
	19	Board of Trustees Meeting	8:15 P.M.
	20	Waxman High School and Youth House Dinner	7:30 P.M.
	22	Men's Club and Sisterhood Joint Breakfast	9:00 A.M.
	23	Sisterhood Board Meeting	10:00 A.M.
	26	Men's Club Meeting	7:30 P.M.
	29	Viewing and Discussion of the film "Glass House"	11:30 A.M.
Feb.	2	Beth HaGan Science Fair	5:00 P.M.
	3	Congregational Tu B'Shevat Seder	7:30 P.M.
	4	<i>Shabbat Shirah</i>	
	5	Men's Club World-Wide Wrap	9:00 A.M.
	7	Sisterhood Lunch and Read Club	Noon
	8	Tu B'Shevat	

Temple Israel Presents

A Celebration of Shabbat Shirah and Tu B' Shevat, The New Year for the Trees

Friday Evening, February 3

A musically enhanced N'Ranenah Service begins at 6:30 P.M. followed by a Tu B'Shevat Seder* & a traditional Shabbat Dinner

Cost for dinner provided by Lederman Caterers:

\$27 for Adults; \$16 for Children 12 & under

(Children 2 & under are free)

Saturday Morning, February 4

8:45 A.M. in the Sanctuary

Celebration of *Shabbat Shirah* - "The Shabbat of Songs"

Cantor Raphael Frieder will be joined

by a quartet of Jewish Theological Seminary cantorial students

RSVP is a MUST by Wednesday, February 1

Call Marion at 482-7800 ext. 1106

**In keeping with Tu B'Shevat tradition, certain tree nuts will be served.*

IN QUOTES

EDITOR'S NOTE: "In Quotes" calls attention to passages from Jewish prayers and writings frequently overlooked or said by rote, but profoundly written. This issue's quote is from Psalm 30 v 6. It was suggested by Past President George Abrahams. What's your favorite quote? Send it to the Temple Israel office, c/o The Voice.

“For His anger is but for a moment,
His favor is for a lifetime;
Weeping may tarry for the night,
But joy cometh in the morning.”

A Busy Time at Beth HaGan

By Rachel Mathless



Michelle Lalehzar

Michelle Lalehzar celebrated her *Bat Mitzvah* on January 7. She is the daughter of Fariba and David Lalehzar and has two sisters, Deborah, 14, and Jessica, 11. Michelle is a seventh grade student at Great Neck North Middle School and plays the viola in the school orchestra. Michelle is currently attending the Waxman High School and Youth House and plans to visit Israel in the near future.

What a wonderful celebration we had at Beth HaGan to usher in the holiday of Hanukkah. The halls and classrooms were decorated so festively – the twinkling Hanukkah lights lifted everyone's spirits. The array of creative *hanukkiot* was astounding! Each child brought home a uniquely beautiful, one-of-a-kind, hand crafted workable menorah.

We baked Hanukkah cookies in the shape of Maccabees, and dreidels and menorahs. We fried *latkes* and ate chocolate coins and prepared cakes and snacks for our Hanukkah programs. There were wonderful smells emanating from Beth HaGan for two weeks before Hanukkah. Parents enjoyed dramatic presentations and musical enactments of the Hanukkah story.

We are working excitedly and assiduously for our Torah Science Fair which will take place on Thursday, February 2. The children will display their knowledge and expertise through a wide array of media which includes murals, show boards, paper mache', graphing and three-dimensional projects. Classes are collaborating to create three different aspects of *Parashat Toldot*. A scribe will be here to show us how a Torah is written and constructed. Each exhibit is unique and offers a hands-on experience for everyone. The fair is open to all friends and families of Beth HaGan.

Children at Beth HaGan are learning about Tu B'Shevat. We are studying life cycles of plants and are beginning to watch seeds germinate into plants. We hope to grow parsley to use for our Passover table. Each class will prepare a tray of exotic fruits, specifically the *shivat haminim*, the seven kinds of fruit with which the land of Israel was blessed, and we will hold a traditional Tu B'Shevat *seder*. In conjunction with Tu B'Shevat, the Bears class will present a display at the Torah Science Fair about planting, irrigation and desalinization of water in Israel.

Our *tzedakah* projects continue. We are still working on our "Pajama Project," where we will be collecting money to buy pajamas through our sister congregation, Temple Kehellat Netzaech Yisroel for the children in the Barzilli Hospital in Ashkelon, Israel.

Registration is continuing, on a rolling basis, for Beth HaGan for the 2012-13 school year. Please call the office for a registration form or to schedule a visit.

Hanukkah at Temple Israel



Hanukkah party photos by Dr. Robert Lopatkin

TEMPLE ISRAEL MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Jon Kaiman

EDITOR'S NOTE: Temple Israel has many members who hold elective offices, including Town supervisor, a member of the Town Board, a number of mayors and members of village boards, members of the School and Library Boards, judges, as well as a newly elected member of the Great Neck Park District. During the coming months, the Member Spotlight will focus on the congregation's elected officials. This issue features Temple Israel's highest elected office holder, North Hempstead Town Supervisor Jon Kaiman.

By Marc Katz, Editor

"When I walk into a room," said North Hempstead Town Supervisor Jon Kaiman, "I don't walk in anonymously. People see me as the head of the Town, but they also see me from various different perspectives. Some see me through a political prism, such as a Democrat and some through a religious or geographic prism, such as a Jew from Great Neck. People know who I am and where I'm from, even if I don't know them."

Because of that, the five-term incumbent said last week that he often works into his presentations the fact that he is Jewish "so people know where I'm coming from. Being Jewish is always with me; it is part of who I am. A sense of Jewishness never leaves you. It is really quite interesting, when you stop to think about it."

Supervisor Kaiman joined Temple Israel in 1991, before he ran for public office and a year before he married his wife, Kim. The couple now has two sons, Shaun and Jared, and a daughter, Iyana.

Before they got married, the couple struck up a warm friendship with the late Rabbi Mordecai Waxman, who was the spiritual leader of the congregation for more than 55 years. Following *Shabbat* services the Rabbi regularly held an open house, and the Kaimans would on occasion attend and participate in the free-wheeling conversation that ensued. He said he regularly conferred with Rabbi Waxman after taking office.

"Now, I meet with Rabbi Stecker over a cup of coffee once in a while to discuss the parallels in the work that we do, both dealing with the challenges that those within our community are

*Wherever I go,
my Jewishness is with me.*

facing and the expectations that people have of us."

He said there are several rabbis in his family and a cousin who was president of the Anti Defamation League Southern Region. His family belonged to a Conservative congregation in New Jersey until his father had an argument with the rabbi and brought his family to the community's only other temple, a Reform congregation where he became a *Bar Mitzvah*.

At Temple Israel he soon became involved with congregational life, becoming a vice president of the Men's Club, serving on the Temple Board of Trustees, and becoming a regular lead in productions by the Temple Israel Players. In addition, he served on the Search Committee that brought Rabbi Stecker to the congregation. "When people say that Temple Israel is not warm and welcoming, I just don't understand it. That certainly has not been my experience."



Kim and Jon Kaiman, on stage in a recent Temple Israel Players production.

Photo by Mickey Putterman

Supervisor Kaiman received a Juris Doctorate from Hofstra University Law School and a Bachelor of Arts from Hofstra University. He was first elected in 1999 to the Nassau County District Court, where for two consecutive years he received the highest rating possible from the Nassau County Bar Association's Judicial Screening Committee. He left the judiciary in 2003 to run for supervisor. "I feel that, in some way, Rabbi Waxman helped guide my way."

He said he likes to read a lot, especially history. He just completed "No god but God: The Origins, Evolution, and Future of Islam" by Iranian-American Shiite Muslim scholar Reza Aslan. "It is one of the most incredible books I have ever read," he said. "It explains that Mohammed thought of Jews as friends and drew heavily from Judaism."

The leader of the seventh largest town in New York State, he said he spends several weekends a month attending services held by North Hempstead's various religious groups. To date, he said, he has worshipped not only with the Town's Conservative Jews, but also with Reform, Orthodox, Mashaadi, Teherani, Hasidic, Persian, and Iraqi Jews. He has also attended services with Hindu, Islamic, Buddhist, Greek Orthodox, Protestant, and Catholic congregations. This past week, he said, he attended services at Temple Israel of Great Neck and a Catholic mass at St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church in Garden City.

"Wherever I go, though, my Jewishness is with me. Whether it is in my intonation or my analogies, my points of reference are always Jewish. I am symbolic, but in a sense we are all ambassadors of the Jewish community. You are always responsible to your community. Even if you don't see it that way, others do."

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From Generation to Generation



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Their son, Jacob, becoming
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In memory of:

Jean Rothbaum
Dr. Hal Rothbaum
Adele Fishman
Marilyn Schneider
Lyuba, mother of Malvina
Kirshner
Audrey and Eric
Itzkowitz

From the Rabbi: Bring Back the Mystery

—Continued from page 2

of God. In describing God as orchestrating the cosmos, they sought to elevate God. The effect, albeit unintentional, was to limit God to that which could be comprehended and explained.

In the 20th century, humanity's faith in science rose and plunged as we witnessed both the humane and the depraved uses of scientific advancement. At the beginning of the current century, we seem to have more questions than ever about the nature of the

On My Father's Yahrzeit

—Continued from page 2

Men's Club was his community inside a community. Taking his only child to *tallit* and *tefillin* on Sunday mornings, followed by breakfasts of bagels and lox, was a source of immense pleasure and pride, every bit as much as the duets we would do at the piano. I got that. I, too, was proud.

He was at home in *shul* as almost nowhere else. I am at home in synagogues, I think, because I started out running up and down every hallway at Emanu-El—exploring every back staircase, checking out the boiler room, and investigating the choir loft—knowing that this was my parents' home turf—and especially my father's—because he was the major *macher* in the family. The synagogue—and especially its Men's Club—enabled him to be the father he wanted to be. His son was grateful then, and will always remain so.

universe and our place within it.

It's becoming increasingly clear to us that as much as scientific understanding continues to grow by leaps and bounds, it is forever limited. As many contemporary scientists have articulated, the more we know, the more we realize how little we know.

Curiously, attitudes toward God appear to be moving in three distinct directions. The fundamentalist impulse seems to be encouraging attitudes of increasing certainty when it comes to God. The atheist impulse rejects God for a whole host of reasons.

But I detect, as Armstrong describes, a third inclination. I'll call it the "mysteryist" impulse. At the beginning of this new millennium, many are increasingly prepared to embrace the mystery of God as it seems to mirror and inform the mystery of life. Of course it's hard to do this, since part of us craves certainty.

For the time being, I'll try to tap into the enthusiasm of the small child with whom I began and who resides at the core of each of us, no matter our age. Not just to life's beautiful sunsets, but also to the ancient willingness to acknowledge mystery, I'll clap my hands and shout, "Again!" Perhaps you will consider joining me.

MAZAL TOV TO . . .

- Wendy and Jeffrey Maurer on the engagement of their son, Craig, to Shari Neufeld.
- Elaine Paris Dunckley and William Dunckley on the engagement of her son, Michael Paris, to Caroline Goldberg.
- Nancy and Manny Alani on the birth of their granddaughter, Delilah Rose Alani.
- Susan and Dr. Cyrus Kahn on the *Bar Mitzvah* of their grandson, David Robert Katzman.
- Sylvia Rieders on the *Bar Mitzvah* of her great-grandson, David Robert Katzman.

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Contact Doris Delman at 482-5430 for further information or to order cards.

Congratulations, Graduates!

Under this heading, the next issue of The Voice will publish the names of the daughters and sons of Temple Israel families who received college or postgraduate degrees in December. To be listed, send the name of the graduate, degree earned, school attended and awards and recognitions received to the Temple Israel office.

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D'VAR TORAH

By Rabbi Marim D. Charry

Shemot

Saturday, January 14

The book of Exodus begins in this portion and moves from the account of the history of a clan to the history of the Hebrew nation. A new king, who does not know Joseph, ascends the throne of Egypt and enslaves the Israelites. Moses is born to Israelite parents, but owing to a set of strange circumstances, he grows up in Pharaoh's palace as an Egyptian prince. He goes out to observe the Israelites at work and kills an Egyptian taskmaster for beating a slave. He is then forced to flee for his life to Midian, where he marries and becomes a shepherd for his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian. While tending his flock at Mt. Horeb (Sinai), Moses encounters God in a burning bush and is commissioned to return to Egypt and free his people. Accompanied by his brother, Aaron, he makes an appeal to Pharaoh, which is totally rejected. Events are thus set in motion, which will lead to the Exodus and Moses' life-long task of bringing his people back to their land.

Vaera

Saturday, January 21

In this portion, God reiterates His pledge to redeem His people from slavery and promises severe punishment for the Egyptian people. A contest then ensues testing the will of Pharaoh. Moses and Aaron make another appeal to Pharaoh and in the process humiliate his magicians. The appeal, however, is again rejected. There follows the first seven of the ten plagues, which God must inflict on the Egyptians in order to achieve the release of the Israelites. The plagues of blood, frogs, lice, swarms of insects, pestilence, boils and hail (as well as locusts, darkness and the slaying of the first-born, which are related in the next portion) demonstrate God's ability to manipulate nature and to protect His people. Since a number of the plagues was directed against Egyptian divinities, also present here is the beginning of the war by the Israelites on polytheism.

SABBATH SERVICES

Friday, January 13

Evening Service 4:45 P.M.

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Saturday, January 14

Morning Service 8:45 A.M.

Weekly Portion: *Shemot*

Exodus 1:1 – 6:1

Haftarah: Isaiah 27:6 – 28:13; 29:22-23

Sabbath Service Officers:

Rebecca Friedman-Charry and Brian Zeitlin

Havurah Service 10:00 A.M.

Junior Congregation 10:30 A.M.

Toddler Service 11:15 A.M.

Minhah and *Ma'ariv* 4:10 P.M.

Havdalah 5:36 P.M.

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Friday, January 20

N'Ranenah / Evening Service 6:30 P.M.

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Saturday, January 21

Morning Service 8:45 A.M.

Weekly Portion: *Vaera*

Exodus 6:2 – 9:35

Haftarah: Ezekiel 28:25 – 29:21

Sabbath Service Officers:

Gary Sazer and Joanna Eshaghoff

Junior Congregation 10:30 A.M.

Toddler Service 11:15 A.M.

Shabbat Ha-Mishpachah 4:00 P.M.

Minhah and *Ma'ariv* 4:20 P.M.

Havdalah 5:43 P.M.