

EAST MIDWOOD JEWISH CENTER BULLETIN

*THEY SHALL BUILD ME A
SANCTUARY AND
I SHALL DWELL AMONG THEM*

Volume LXXIV, Issue 8

January/February 2015
Tevet /Shevat/Adar 5775

EMJC Celebrates 90 Years of Strength—1924-2014

Installation of Rabbi Matt Carl

RABBI MATT CARL, a rabbi, educator and environmentalist, was installed as the new Rabbi of the East Midwood Jewish Center (EMJC) on December 14, 2014, at 4 PM, during the Center's 90th Anniversary celebration, Chanukat HaBayit, the rededication of the temple. Rabbi Carl succeeds Rabbi Dr. Alvin Kass, who was the spiritual leader of EMJC for 36 years, and is now Rabbi Emeritus.

Rabbi Carl, who was installed by Rabbi Carrie Carter, spiritual leader of the Park Slope Jewish Center, previously served as the Rabbi of the Battery Park Synagogue in New York City. He was also Director of Community Development and Engagement at Hazon and served as Associate Rabbi of Congregation Mount Sinai. Rabbi Carl was born and raised in Long Beach, California, and graduated from Vassar College in 2000 with a BA with honors, majoring in religion. His minor was environmental geography and land use analysis. In 2008 he was awarded an MA and Rabbinic ordination from the Jewish Theological Seminary and Machon Schechter, where he specialized in Talmud and Rabbinics.

During the rededication and installation ceremonies in EMJC's 900 seat sanctuary EMJC co-president and historian Toby Sanchez told the story of how the congregation was organized and designed. She explained that EMJC was placed on the National Register of Historic Places because of the beauty and excellent condition of its Italian Renaissance Revival building and because of the important role that the congregation played in the development of urban Jewish ethnicity in the twentieth century. Raymond Clagnan and Dolores McGuire of the Clagnan Stained Glass Studios explained the design, symbolism and restoration of East Midwood's 12 stained glass windows and stained glass dome. Mr. Clagnan



did similar restoration work on the Eldridge Street Synagogue. EMJC's Cantor Sam Levine played recordings which demonstrated the styles of cantorial music used by the previous cantors and led the EMJC chorus in musical selections. Rabbi Alvin Kass spoke on the significance of EMJC's history and his 36 years as its rabbi.

East Midwood Jewish Center was incorporated in 1924 as a combination synagogue and community center and has stayed true to the vision of its founders. It has always been a house of worship, a place for Judaic discovery and a center for social justice activities. Its Sisterhood transcribed 4,000 books into braille, and since 1996 it has had an active interfaith program with Our Lady of Refuge Roman Catholic Church, the Church of the Nativity, a Muslim school and a mosque. EMJC still follows the conservative tradition, but is now fully egalitarian, in that women have an equal role in all religious ceremonies and in governance. EMJC has a twice daily egalitarian minyan for morning and evening prayers, which is available to mourners and others 365 days and evenings.

East Midwood Jewish Center, located in the heart of Brooklyn, is one of the borough's leading and oldest Conservative congregations. It is one of the last synagogues in New York with a functioning pool. Many congregations built with this amenity in 1920s, most were sold to churches or schools and the pool was then closed.

Thomas J. Kraner

SERVICES at EMJC

MORNING SERVICES

Sundays & Legal Holidays 8:00AM
 Mondays – Fridays 7:30AM
 Saturdays 7:30AM & 9:00AM

EVENING SERVICES

Sundays – Thursdays 7:30PM

Friday

Jan 2.....4:30PM
 Jan 9.....4:45PM
 Jan 16.....4:45PM
 Jan 23.....5:00PM
 Jan 30.....5:00PM
 Feb 6.....5:15PM
 Feb 13.....6:30PM
 Feb 20.....5:30PM
 Feb 27.....5:45PM

Saturday

Jan 3.....4:30PM
 Jan 10.....4:45PM
 Jan 17.....4:45PM
 Jan 24.....5:00PM
 Jan 31.....5:00PM
 Feb 7.....5:15PM
 Feb 14.....5:30PM
 Feb 21.....5:30PM
 Feb 28.....5:45PM

CALENDAR

Jan 16 6:30-9PM Shabbat-A-Bimbom
 Jan 18 11:30-12:45 BLT, free for parents, grand-
 parent and children
 Feb 1 9AM-12N **World Wide Wrap:** Learn
 to put on teffilin day, Bet Ha
 midrash
 Feb 1 3PM Sisterhood movie
 Feb 1 5PM Kaddish and Mens' Club:
Super Bowl Sunday,
 Regency Room
Feb 4 Tu B'shevat
 Feb 7 11:15AM-12N Shabbat Katan
 Feb 8 4PM Sisterhood and Interfaith Dance
 Feb 12 Adult Education**
 Feb 13 6:30-9PM Shabbat in the Round
 Feb 19 Adult Education
 Feb 20 6:30-9PM Shabbat-A-Bimbom
 Feb 21 11:15AM-12N Shabbat Katan
 Feb 22 11:30-12:45 BLT
 Feb 26 Adult Education
 Feb 28 9AM-2PM **Hadassah** with EMJC
 Services and Luncheon
 Mar 1 1PM Purim Celebration
 Mar 4 7PM **PURIM MEGILLAH READING**
 Mar 5 7:30AM Megillah Reading
 Mar 8 4PM Music of Our Faith
 Mar 12 Adult Education
 Mar 13 6:30-9PM **Shabbat Across America**
 Mar 19 Adult Education
 Mar 22 11:30-12:45 BLT
 Mar 26 Adult Education
 Mar 27 6:30-9PM Shabbat-A-Bimbom

CANDLELIGHTING

Jan 30.....4:53PM
 Jan 2.....4:22PM
 Jan 9.....4:28PM
 Jan 16.....4:36PM
 Jan 23.....4:44PM
 Feb 6.....5:01PM
 Feb 13.....5:10PM
 Feb 20.....5:18PM
 Feb 27.....5:26PM

** See page 17 for more information about our
 new Adult Education classes

YOGA CLASSES

EVENING CLASSES

Wednesday 8PM to 9:15PM

Jan. 14, 21, 28
 Feb. 4, 11, 18, 25

Fees:

Per class: \$ 20 for members
 \$ 25 for non-members

Special price for entire series:

\$ 110 for EMJC members,
 \$ 140 for non-members

ALSO:

Thursday mornings,
 10:15AM to 11:30AM
 January 15, 22, 29
 February 5, 12, 19, 26



THOUGHTS FROM RABBI MATT CARL

DELIVERED ON DECEMBER 14, 2104

*East Midwood Jewish Center is Not Our Past.
It is Our House.*



Those of you who have belonged to wealthy synagogues in the suburbs may be familiar with the cycle of such *shuls* rebuilding, renovating and expanding their physical structure. We here in the city have a much more difficult time with this because of the obvious physical constraints our setting places upon us. These synagogues undoubtedly seek to enhance the role they play in their communities, in their congregants' lives... but they sometimes also seek to enhance their stature through their buildings, as if these buildings matter more than what goes on inside them. Some of us in the rabbi world deride such attitudes with the term *Edifice Complex*.

The building in which you are currently sitting, the property on which it stands, they are very different than the ones to which I just alluded. As you have already seen in photos, as you have heard in thought-provoking talks, and as you can see from simply looking around, the East Midwood Jewish Center has been built in more-or-less its current form for a very long time. In some ways, this building represents our past. On the other hand, we have features here that are very unusual in any building in Brooklyn, let alone a synagogue. These are resources we are uniquely and exclusively able to provide the community, our members and people who might wish to become members. In these ways, this building represents our future.

One of the legends of which East Midwood is proud is that our earliest members built this synagogue with a small mortgage. They endeavored to build this place in such a way that their children wouldn't have to worry about how to pay for it. It is *our* past but it was *their* future.

I have been speaking so far of the relationship of past to future but in reality, there is no future. I can't imagine any of us would make much better than a 50/50 fortune teller and, truthfully, why bother? The future is not the future at all. Rather, it is our hopes, our desires, our prayers... all rooted in *This Moment*.

At this moment...

As you know, the miracle of Hanukkah was that one day's worth of oil lasted instead for 8 days. The Talmud records a debate between the rabbis Shammai and Hillel on how to commemorate this event. Shammai contends, logically, that we should light 8 candles on the first night, 7 the second night, 6 the third, until we are finished. In this way, we represent the miracle accurately: each night a little less oil, a little less light, than the previous night. Of course, no one does this today. Instead Hillel's method, while less representative of the story, wins the rabbis' approval. We light one more candle each night, rather than one fewer, contends Hillel, because *ma'alin baKodesh v'ayn Moridin*, we increase in holiness, rather than decrease.

An unfortunate side effect of knowing that this building was built with financial stability, of knowing that our congregation once numbered well over a thousand families, of telling the stories of the greatness of East Midwood's past is that it is tempting to believe that our miraculous place was once great but has since permanently faded.

It is simply not true. We are a place that maintains the values of those who came before us and also reflects the values of this moment: At this moment, we get a great crowd each Shabbat and we also provide space for a church to meet and engage in their worship because we value neighborliness and remember what it was like to be a community that can't yet afford a space of its own. At this moment, we are fully committed to gender equality and integration and also provide separate men's and women's swimming hours in our pool because we value diversity and believe that just because some of our neighbors have different religious views than us doesn't mean they shouldn't stay healthy and fit! At this moment, we are a home for English as a Second Language classes and for the Seniors League of Flatbush because we believe these are essential services for our city, our borough and our neighborhood. At this moment, we are a home for gymnastics, dancing, basketball, swimming... karate because we know that people in this community don't have many places that can accommodate such activities. At this moment, Room J and our other youth programs set new standards for Brooklyn and beyond. At this moment, our partnerships with EMHDS, ILJB and others expand our reach well beyond these walls. At this moment, our minyan meets morning and evening, every day of the year not only because we value prayer but also because we value being there for people who need to say *Kaddish*. As the only egalitarian daily minyan in Brooklyn, we also meet because if we don't provide a space where a woman can comfortably say *Kaddish*, no one else will.

Cont'd on page 4



Former EMJC President Noted by Florida Newspaper

“Dr. Bernie Metrick, of Boca Raton, was very much looking forward to celebrating his 75th "diamond" wedding anniversary with his wife, Irene, last Tuesday (Oct. 21) [but with sadness this did not come to fruition as Irene passed away on Thursday Oct 16, 2014]”

“Commented B'nai Torah Senior Rabbi David Steinhardt: ‘For over 25 years, Irene and Bernie Metrick came to B'nai Torah regularly for worship services and activities. And they came together, almost as one. They literally walked arm-in-arm and held each other up. Their love was palpable and served as an inspiration to every couple and every person in the congregation.’ ”

The SunSentinel states, “ As for what allowed the Metricks' marriage to be so successful for so long, perhaps it hearkened back to "love at first sight" when they first met 86 years ago in Williamsburg, Brooklyn.

When they first met, Irene was 10 and Bernie was 12. Bernie was working at the counter in the grocery store his mother owned and where Irene's parents were frequent customers. Irene was always happy to go to the store if it meant getting to see Bernie.

Those interested in learning more about the Metricks can purchase Bernie's autobiography, "The Dentist," at <http://www.blurb.com>. Those who would like to honor Irene Metrick's memory are encouraged to plant a tree in Israel through the Jewish National Fund at <http://www.jnf.org>.”

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Thoughts from our Rabbi cont'd from pg 3

Our forebears, who built this wonderful place, put these resources in this building, in our house, so that we could, at this moment, and at every moment, in every day, rededicate them with our actions, with our programs and with our values.

At this moment, we are preparing for Hanukkah, the festival of light, the time when we celebrate not the near-failing of the Jewish House of Worship but, instead, its rededication. At the very moment before we light our Hanukkah candles each night, we say a special blessing. In saying it, we bring past and present together: We refer to God as *sh'Asah Nisim Lavoteinu BaYamim HaHem baZman HaZeh* The One “who made miracles for our ancestors **in those days at this moment.**”

When we take the values, the institution, the building created by those who came before us... and make them real every day, and when we specifically rededicate them today, we emulate God. It must have seemed like a miracle to build a place like this, to create a congregation like this, 90 years ago. But each night of Hanukkah we are reminded that the miracles of our ancestors are re-lived and re-encountered *at this moment.*

East Midwood Jewish Center is not our past, it is Our House

The Tale of the Stained Glass Windows

“It was many and many a year ago in a kingdom by the sea...”

Or not so many years ago in the Synagogue on Ocean Avenue....

As in many Jewish interactions there are three opinions mine, yours, and theirs. Such was the situation in addressing the refurbishing of our beautiful stained glass windows. It was known that the window issue had to be addressed. Year after year, we all watched as the windows began to sag, the frames began to buckle, the dome and skylight began to leak, and the general condition of our building began to decay. Early in Zevie Schizer’s administration (2002-05), a piece of stone fell from the top of our building onto Ocean Avenue, which galvanized the fear that sooner or later someone might get hurt.

Michael Sucher was then appointed Chair of our House Committee, and we hired an architect to give our building a general condition survey. That document proved to be a good blueprint for the renovations we needed, though we knew we didn’t have the money to address all our problems at once. We were then told our stained glass needed “immediate attention” and in the world of stained glass, we were told, immediate meant within 10-15 years”!

The project of restoring our windows and dome was to take many years of dedicated attention. Much work needed to be done on other areas of our building before we could turn our attention to stained glass. In the early years, we focused on our facades. During Zevie’s administration, the House Committee oversaw the renovation of the Ocean Avenue facade and parapets. In Gail Hammerman’s administration (2005-09), the House Committee oversaw the restoration of the remaining three facades. The original idea for placement on the National and State Registers of Historic Places came from Joe Rothstein, who presented it to our Board. Toby Sanchez wrote the grant application and when that was accepted, the synagogue was then eligible to receive a grant from the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation for restoration of the dome and the stained glass windows. The grant was awarded in 2007 and the work had to be completed by 2012, without any time extensions. Although we had no matching money, the House Committee started working on possible design alternatives and began the process of selecting a project architect. Meanwhile our attention and resources had to be diverted to the courtyard. In those years, the Little Tent Room was closed and unusable. Water was seeping in from the yard above, and concrete had fallen from the ceiling. Room J was beginning to suffer from the same damp ceiling condition, and waterproofing the yard became an urgent priority.



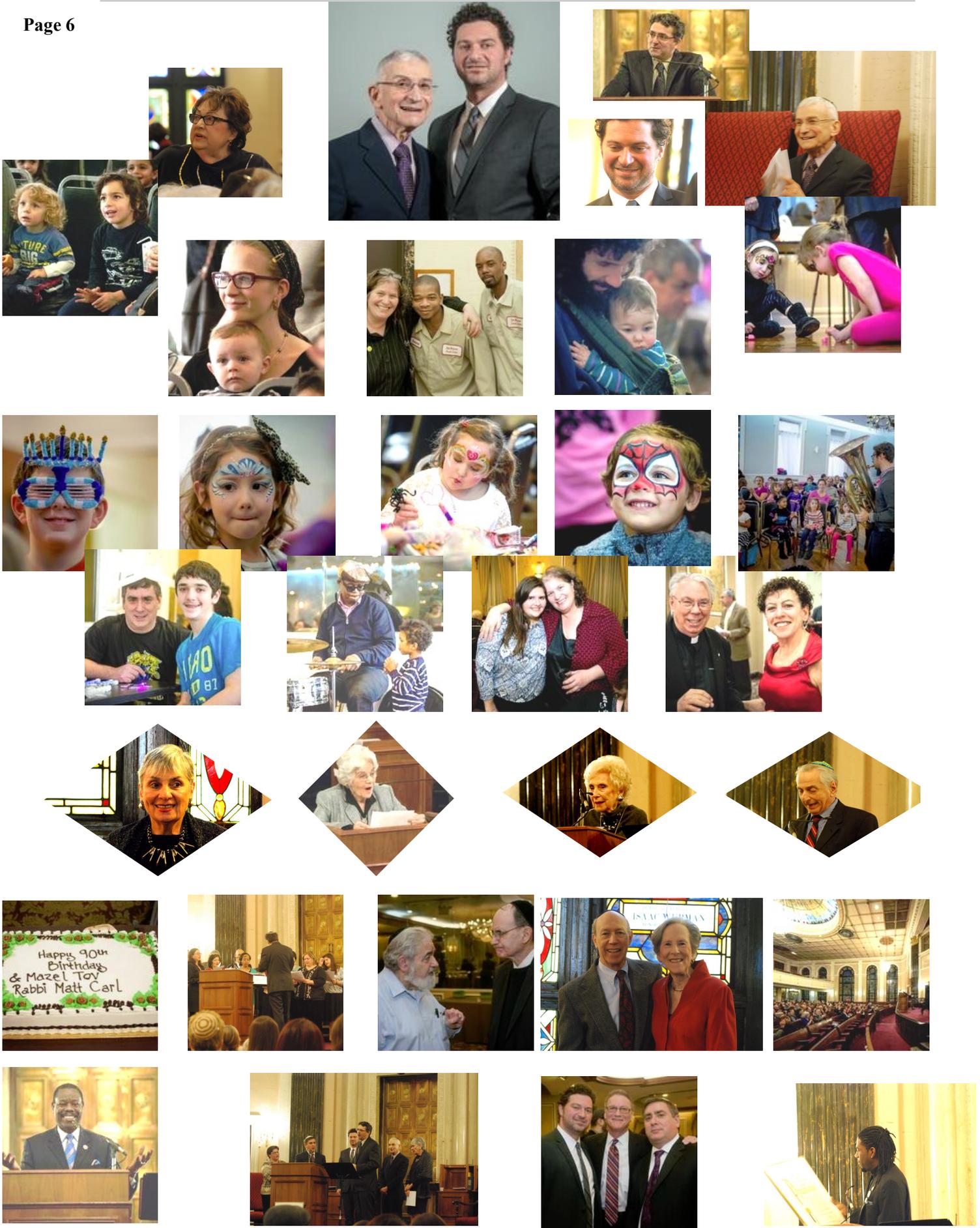
During the administration of Larry Isaacson and Michael Sucher (2009-13), the yard was waterproofed, allowing us to reclaim use of the Little Tent Room, and Room J, but without funding to properly complete the surface of the yard, it remains waterproof, but not readily usable after heavy rainfalls. Meanwhile time was running out on our Stained Glass grant. The cost to us would be about half a million dollars, but other needs in the building were pressing, and the debate raged about how to best use our scarce resources. Nerves frayed, and doomsday scenarios abounded. Finally, with the sound leadership and resolve from our then presidents, the Board approved hiring a project architect, Dan Allen, AIA, in April 2011, leaving the synagogue with just 18 months to approve designs, hire contractors, and find the money to complete the project.

On August 28, 2011, the need for action became urgent as Hurricane Irene came blowing into NY and into our windows. All of a sudden plywood covered our grand east window. Now we had to decide about how or even if the window project should proceed at all, how comprehensive the project could be (dome, no dome? six windows? ten windows? Plexiglas to cover damaged windows or repair?) and were we really prepared to accept losing a half million dollar matching grant? Nothing good happens without a struggle and our stained glass is no exception.

By 2012 the House Committee decided upon a contractor, and arranged enough flexibility into the contract to proceed with the window project. Scaffolding went up immediately after Yom Kippur 2012. The Center’s main sanctuary was to be closed for a year, until completion. New York State had graciously extended our grant deadline for one year - until November, 2013. (It pays to pray....)

Continued on page 7

Remembrances from Installation of Rabbi Matt Carl and Rededication Ceremony



EMJC AND OUR LADY OF REFUGE RC CHURCH SPONSOR 14TH ANNUAL INTERFAITH SERVICE

Our 14th annual Interfaith Thanksgiving Service at Our Lady of Refuge was especially beautiful this year. The opening song, *This Day the Lord Has Made*, was sung by the Youth Chorus of the Church of the Nativity in English. Then the EMJC Choir sang it in Hebrew and they then joined together singing it in English once again. This was a powerful and moving statement of why we love the Interfaith Program. Also performing were the Amity Choir from the Brooklyn Amity School, and the Kingsborough Musical Society. Members of the three congregations read prayers from many faiths in English, Hebrew, Spanish, Ladino and Creole. Father Michael Perry, Rabbi Matt Carl, Rev. Kimberly Auletta, Father Roni Mendes, and Cantor Sam Levine all participated.

Many bags of food were contributed to the OLR Food Pantry, which serves 350 people per week, many of whom line up at 6 a.m.

The Interfaith event was organized by: Sally Hipscher, Sister Celia Deutsch OLR, Cantor Sam Levine, Rabbi Matt Carl, Audrey Korelstein, Father Mike Perry OLR, Rev. Kimberlee Auletta, Church of the Nativity, and Ryan Dodge, accompanist from Church of the Nativity.



L TO R: Rabbi Matt Carl, Cantor Sam Levine, Rev Kimberly Auletta, Father Mike Perry

Special thanks to our thoughtful and generous interfaith sponsors: Norma & Sam Ainbinder, Madi & Steve Appell, Shelly & Tom Carl, June Cernitz, David & Rochelle Eckstein, Frances & Avrom Fischer, Reva Friedman, Sue & Arthur Geen, Lois Jackson & Michael Gerstein, Miriam & Sandy Goldhaber, Gail & David Hammerman, Sally & Mike Hipscher, Joanne & Howie Honigman, Michele & Larry Isaacson, Stephanie & Steve Kaner, Richard & Rena Klotz, Estelle & Ephraim Leibowitz, Steven Litwin & Julia Davis, Edith & George Maiman, Marilyn Pearce, Sharon & Bob Resen, Phyllis & Joe Rothstein, Shereen & Irwin Rosenthal Tawil.

Stained Glass Windows Cont'd from page 5

The challenge then was to find the matching funds.

Zvi Engel took over the position as Chair of the House Committee, and then presidents Michael Sucher and Larry Isaacson went into high gear fund-raising mode. Lois Jackson hired a videographer, and a fundraising video was made with Rabbi Kass. Traditional outreach to the community, alumni and members was made, and crowdsourcing site Indiegogo was used to leverage our efforts. Marjorie Sanua, Ben Lapidus and others contributed the music, Ellen Levitt contributed books, and Ray Clagnon, the stained glass artist contributed his time to create valuable and unique stained glass "Stars" from our windows as part of our Presidents' fund raising project idea. A few of these rare mementos of our original 1920's era stained glass are still available. Nearly 20 families agreed to loan the Center bridge money to complete this project, until the house owned by the synagogue at 1188 East 21 Street (former Rabbi's residence) could be sold. Aviva Sucher and Diane Abrams acted as brokers on that deal, and they did not charge the synagogue a commission for their services.

By May of 2013, when the presidency of the Center was handed over to Toby Sanchez and Randy Grossman, the stained glass project was virtually completed, on time and on budget. The High Holidays of 2013 were celebrated back in our sanctuary.



Ray Clagnon

On December 14, 2014, the rededication of our house and installation of our new Rabbi, Matt Carl was held. At this time a PowerPoint presentation was made by Raymond Clagnon and Dolores McGuire from Clagnon Stained Glass Studio, the people responsible for the actual glass-work restoration. They explained how important it was to have had the windows replaced as they were virtually on their last "strut". The lead that holds stained glass together actually deteriorates after about 100 years! It really seems that we did this repair just in time. Now, hopefully, they will last another hundred years. We can be very proud of all of our efforts. In the spirit of our founders, we all worked together to ensure that our beautiful dome and

windows will be enjoyed for generations to come.

Unfortunately by accident, Michael Sucher and Larry Isaacson were not given public credit on December 14 for their leadership of the stained glass restoration. Our apologies to them and to the other past presidents of EMJC who were present on December 14th. Our apologies for this omission to Dr. Howard Honigman, Gail Hammerman, Larry Isaacson and Michael Sucher. We also thank those past presidents who were not in attendance including Marsha Schlefstein, Dr. Gary Kippel, Dr. Bernard Metrick, and Morris Wertheim.

THANK YOU TO OUR 90TH ANNIVERSARY GEMS

WHO HELPED MAKE OUR 90TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION POSSIBLE

Jack Almanor	Bernard Jenkins	Roz Pomerantz
Pearl Berkowsky	Stephanie Kaner	Luna Poplausky
Richard & Judith Breyer	Audrey Korelstein	Toby Sanchez
Rabbi Matt Carl	Tom Kraner	Daniel Shapiro
Steve Fleischer	Cantor Sam Levine	Jordan Schechtman
Randy Grossman	Marina Lukina	Tommy Stevens
Sally Hipscher	Stephanie Luxenberg	Anderson Waithe
Dr. Lois Jackson	Edith Maiman	Courtney Walsh
Beth Jacobs	Amy Nitzky	

East Midwood Jewish Center Congregation,

It's a difficult experience to lose your first parent and perhaps even more difficult to lose the second. While we had each other to console and our families for support, it meant a great deal to us to see and meet so many of Dad's EMJC friends at his funeral. Knowing as well, that the members who could attend represented the affection and respect that the larger congregation felt for Frank.

Frank enjoyed his service and the hours he spent at the EMJC. For him it was not a reluctant labor of service, but a gift he very much enjoyed giving. He spoke often of his friends and experiences at the EMJC. For this his family wishes to express our deepest and everlasting gratitude to the EMJC congregation. You gave Frank his last circle of close friends, a warm and welcoming environment outside of his family, important duties to perform that gave him reasons to live, and a respect we are sure he treasured as much as that resulting from his captaincy in the NYPD.

With Heartfelt Thanks,

*Fred Rosenblum, Sheila Mirczak, and Maxine Moses
children of Frank and Esther Rosenblum
and their families*

THANK YOU TO OUR EMJC SPONSORS

January 31- the Klein Family sponsors a
Congregational luncheon in honor of the yahrzeit of
Sylvia Klein

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

JANUARY

Estelle Schaffer	Frances Fischer
Toby Sanchez	Renee Abada
Andrea Clough	Dr. Joseph Benezra
Dr. Edward Ezrick	Rebecca Wilchins
Morris Berman	Richard Klotz
Marsha Solomon	Clair Bloch
Abraham Schmutter	Murray Lantner
Dr. Gerald Brooks	Alba Mosery
Debbie Schechtman	Eleanor Lorch
Joseph Pariente	
Blossom Shelton	
Dan Migden	

FEBRUARY

Stanley Hopard	Judge Michael Gerstein
Dr. Leonard Berkowitz	Dr. Herbert Paley
Jay Underberg	Michael Braff
Michele Isaacson	Jacob Brandler
Carol Dachs	Susan Broklawski
Gloria Hochberg	Sharon Resen
Dr. Howard Honigman	Estelle Leibowitz
Dr. Philip Klein	Muriel Minsk
Teresita Lapidus	Michael Paris
Marty Markowitz	Dr. Lisa Rothman
Bryan Swirsky	Aviva Sucher
Marcia Gerber	
Edward Guterman	
Florence Lampert	

ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

JANUARY

Arthur & Ellen Susnow
Norman & Phyllis Lubin

FEBRUARY

Alexander Trakhtman & Galina Zbarskaya
Michael & Roni Schwartz



SISTERHOOD

Greetings from Sisterhood

Sisterhood looks back on several successful fall events. Our book and author dinner in November was well attended and enjoyed by all. Our featured author, Sonia Taitz, spoke about her writing process. She read from her memoir, *The Watchmaker's Daughter* as well as her new novel, *Down Under*. Sonia was a delightful speaker!

Our Hanukkah party in December featured an Arts and Crafts exhibit and sale. Our presenters included: Esther Daiell, Joanne Honigman, Marlene Lempert, Sharon Lieberman, Debbie Schechtman, and Aviva Sucher. Their beautiful artwork and jewelry was the highlight of our Hanukkah celebration. It was wonderful to be able to showcase our talented Sisterhood artists and at the same time, support their work. We were also treated to lively renditions of popular Hanukkah songs by Cantor Sam Levine. Rabbi Matt Carl enlightened us on the topic of early Hanukkah customs and practices.

The next Sisterhood event is on Sunday, February 1, 2015, when we will have a screening of the movie *Ida* at 3:00 PM. Set in Poland in 1962 and composed of austere and gorgeous black and white images, *Ida* was very well received last year by critics and at festivals around the world. It is about a young novice about to take her vows who is encouraged to meet her only living relative. They take a journey to explore their former family home and piece together their mutual history. Further details will follow.

Stay tuned for announcements of our spring events!

We wish everyone good health and happiness in 2015.

Presidium: **Rochelle Eckstein**
Amy Nitzky
Shereen Rosenthal

KADDISH AND MENS' CLUB

January: winter break

February 1, 5 PM, Sun., Regency Room: Watch the Super Bowl with Rabbi Matt Carl



A PRAYER FOR

EAST MIDWOOD JEWISH CENTER

by Roz Pomerantz

(Sung, if one wishes, to the tune "Bless this House"/original by Helen Taylor)

Bless this House, dear G-d, we pray
Keep it safe by night and day.
Ninety years, standing firm and tall
Keeping watch over one and all.

Times of joy and times of sad
What an impact this shul has had!
If walls could talk, they'd surely say
Keep faith & always pray.

Bless the leaders for the devotion rare.
Bless the members whose hearts are here.
Bless the children their souls so pure.
Bless this building, that it may endure.

Hear our prayers as we turn to you.
Fill our hearts with love anew.
Fill this house with love and peace.
May hatred and bigotry truly cease.

AND may East Midwood always be
A haven for this community.

This beautiful prayer was written by Roz Pomerantz in honor of the installation of Rabbi Matt Carl and rededication of our Synagogue on December 14, 2104.

THE EMJC POOL SCHEDULE FOR JANUARY

SUBJECT TO CHANGE

For EMJC members & community

SUNDAY

3:00 pm – 5:00 pm – Family swim
5:00 pm – 7:00 pm - Women only swim
7:00 pm – 10:00 pm – Men only swim

MONDAY

11:00 am – 1:00 pm – Co-ed swim
1:00 pm – 3:00 pm – Women only swim
6:00 pm -8:00 pm – Family swim
8:10pm – 10:10 pm- Women only swim

TUESDAY

11:00 am – 1:00 pm –Women only swim
1:00 pm – 3:00 pm – Co-ed swim
6:00 pm- 8:00 pm – Family swim

WEDNESDAY

11:00 am – 1:00 pm – Co-ed swim
8:10 pm - 10:10 pm – Women only swim

THURSDAY

1:30 pm – 3:30 pm – Co-ed swim
6:00 pm – 8:00 pm – Family swim
8:10 pm -10:10 pm – Men only swim

FRIDAY

12:00 noon - 2:00 pm Co-ed swim

Pool usage is free for EMJC members and \$10.00 per session for non-members.

Monthly Passes:

Family - \$75/month Single Person - \$50/month

**PRIVATE PARTIES, PRIVATE INSTRUCTIONS,
AND POOL RENTAL AVAILABLE**

For more information: swim@emjc.org

All changes to pool schedule will be communicated via email.



- pool memberships
- classes for adults
- classes for children
- family swimming
- co-ed swimming
- separate swimming

contact swim@emjc.org

COAT DRIVE A SUCCESS



Thanks to all of the EMJC congregants and friends who contributed clean winter coats and jackets and helped support our **4TH ANNUAL 2014 NYCARES COAT DRIVE**. We collected 52 coats and jackets and these were brought to the Brooklyn dropoff center for distribution to needy New Yorkers this winter season. Thanks to so many of you for your generous contributions for our interfaith holiday gift drives. We delivered 41 new toiletry bags to women in a battered women's shelter in Flatbush. Also, through many of your generous contributions, we were able to send donations to Ohel Childrens' Home and Masbia Soup Kitchen Flatbush.

Coming soon in February- the Interfaith Committee of EMJC, OLR, and Church of the Nativity will be hosting a Dance Party. More info to follow.

BOOK REVIEW: AMERICAN JUDAISM by Jonathan Sarna

“A wonderful irony emerges from the reception of this erudite narrative of American Jewish history. "American Judaism" by Jonathan M. Sarna has recently won the National Jewish Book Award from the American Jewish Historical Society. Yet Sarna, the Joseph H. and Belle R. Braun Professor of American Jewish History at Brandeis, relates in his introduction that thirty years ago, when he first suggested working in American Jewish history, a noted sage dismissed the idea: "American Jewish history," he growled, "I'll tell you all that you need to know about American Jewish history: the Jews came to America, they abandoned their faith, they began to live like [Gentiles], and after a generation or two they intermarried and disappeared." "That," he said, "is American Jewish history; all the rest is commentary. Don't waste your time. Go and study Talmud" (p. xiii). ...

Sarna has chosen to frame this messy and inchoate picture through the lens of institutions and their leaders rather than focusing on familial and economic struggles. The small penurious peddler moving to the frontier is illustrative not only of a demographic shift but also one that is geographic and religious. How does this peddler keep kosher and celebrate Yom Kippur in Montana in 1870? Sarna tells of communities developing among peddlers and their families that resolve the individual plight into a group experience. The institutional framework provides a brilliant solution that enables the personal and local struggles to fall into place in the greater puzzle of how multiple communities of people confronted huge cultural and social displacement and harmonized their common alienation in a world of foreign ideas, behaviors and practices. It tells about successful adaptation under circumstances of extreme stress and tension. It is a Jewish story but it is also the story of many American immigrant groups...

The story begins 350 years ago as an origins story that is not really about origins. In 1654, a group of twenty-three Jewish refugees from Pernambuco in northwest Brazil arrived in New Netherlands. The immigrants had fled the Inquisition that followed the Portuguese takeover of their Dutch colony, and they sought refuge in Stuyvesant's New Amsterdam. Stuyvesant, for political and religious reasons, did not welcome these outsiders but was forced to accept them because of Jewish investors of the Dutch West India Company. They stayed for a few years and then apparently left. The reason that this origins story is misleading, as Sarna points out, is that Jews had already come to the English and Dutch colonies, some as early as Columbus, merchants and adventurers who traded and resided primarily in the West Indies, but also some few on the mainland. Thus it began; the first Jews came, a ragtag lot that marked the "push" and the "pull" components of future Jewish immigration to America.”¹

Having read this book I can attest that it is well worth the time even for those of you who only read fiction. For isn't truth stranger than fiction? Not only was it fascinating to see how the Jews in America made their way but it was also extremely interesting to see who led them and where these (mostly) men got their starts. Sarna weaves this tale of truth so that it is easy and interesting to follow.

By Lisa Rothman

(1)Internet link:

Hnet-Humanitarian and Social Services

[Http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=10163](http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=10163)

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Tu B'shevat



Tu B'Shevat, the 15th of Shevat on the Jewish calendar—celebrated this year on Wednesday, February 4, 2015—is the day that marks the beginning of a “new year” for trees. This is the season in which the earliest-blooming trees in the Land of Israel emerge from their winter sleep and begin a new fruit-bearing cycle.

Legally, the “new year” for trees relates to the various tithes that are separated from produce grown in the Holy Land. These tithes differ from year to year in the seven-year *shemittah* cycle; the point at which a budding fruit is considered to belong to the next year of the cycle is the 15th of Shevat.

We mark the day of Tu B'Shevat by eating fruit, particularly from the kinds that are singled out by the Torah in its praise of the bounty of the Holy Land: grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives and dates. On this day we remember that “man is a tree of the field” ([Deuteronomy 20:19](#)), and reflect on the lessons we can derive from our botanical ana-

**East Midwood mourns the passing
of our esteemed members**

Perez Rosenthal

Daniel Liker

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HANUKKAH PARADE

I found some Hanukkah gelt
that was made out of felt.
My present
was a pet pheasant.
My candle
burned down my door handle.
My chocolate gelt
fell on my belt.
The present
was very pleasant.
I love the latkes
which I use as maracas.
When I lit the menorah
it started to dance the hora.
Hanukkah is the Festival of Lights.
Yeehaw! It is eight nights!

Thalia June Katz Swirsky
December 2014



ADULT EDUCATION CLASSES RETURN TO EMJC

In February, March, April and May, East Midwood Jewish Center's new ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAM will be offering courses and events on THURSDAY NIGHTS. This is an exciting new program that will provide a variety of learning opportunities, in and out of the classroom environment.

February's offering (Feb 12, 19, 26) will be a three week class titled "**Purim: Sex, Drugs, and Rock & Roll.**", presented by Rabbi Matt Carl.

In March, (March 12, 19, 26) Rabbi Matt Carl will offer a three week class titled "**Pesach: What You Don't Know About the Holiday**". Concurrently Cantor Sam Levine will teach a three week class on the Siddur titled "**Our Service Continues on Page 148: Towards Understanding the Siddur**".

Watch for information on the entire curriculum of our new **Adult Education Program**. There will be more classes taught by Rabbi Carl, Cantor Levine and other guest faculty; workshops on social justice themes; parties and other special events, making Thursday night the time of your life(!) and the place to be is at East Midwood Jewish Center.

*Sally and Mike Hipscher enjoying their vacation
south of the border: WAY SOUTH!*



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