



# CoM newsletter

CONGREGATION OF MOSES • Kalamazoo, Michigan

July 2024

Volume 17 Issue 7  
25 Sivan - 25 Tammuz 5784

## Consider This

I love the summer with its long days, warm nights and lightning bugs. I spend the month of July reading, writing and thinking about the past year and my vision for the year ahead.

I think about the coming High Holy Days and fall Adult Education programs. This year I have been especially struck by the work of Masha Gessen. They are a queer, Jewish, gender non-conforming citizen of Russia and U.S. resident who has lived in and visited cities the world over. They use they/them pronouns and have profound insights into our current moment. Masha is a staff writer for *The New Yorker* and I first heard them on the radio program "This American Life."



*Rabbi Shelley Goldman*

I submit the following for your consideration. Please let me know what you think.  
Happy July!

"How a Palestinian/Jewish Village in Israel Changed After October 7th," *The New Yorker*; June 10, 2024

"When to Leave," *This American Life* (radio program), Episode 792: March 3, 2023

"In the Shadow of the Holocaust," *The New Yorker*; December 9, 2023

## Rabbi Goldman

**The Oversight Board**

always welcomes comments from CoM congregants and invites you to attend its regular meetings, held monthly.

**Oversight Board Members**

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**The CoM newsletter** is published monthly

by the Congregation of Moses for the benefit of its members. The deadline for submitting articles, photos and ads is the **18th of each month**, for publication the following month.

**Please send submissions to the editor, at [bulletin@congregationofmoses.org](mailto:bulletin@congregationofmoses.org).**

# New Basketball Hoop at CoM

Thanks to a generous grant from the Okun Foundation last fall, the Congregation of Moses now has a first-rate American-made portable basketball hoop.

The “OmniJam” hoop is easily adjustable from the standard 10’ height all the way down to 7’5”, and features a 54” acrylic backboard. The basketball hoop is the first item purchased with the grant funds that will enable CoM to outfit the “kikar” or courtyard behind the building. Stay tuned for details about future plans and programming for the kikar.

**Special thanks to the assembly crew of Linda and Mike Campbell, Robb Campbell, Rebecca Tregerman, Lee Klingman and Brad Kennedy who assembled the hoop.**



Basketballs are or will be available for use at the west entrance and the Sofen Room entrance.

# Shabbat and Events Calendar

Thursday, July 4

CoM Office closed

Friday, July 5

9:03 pm

Shabbat candle lighting time

Saturday, July 6

9:30 am

Shabbat Shacharit Services

Torah: Numbers 16:20-17:6

Maf: Numbers 28:9-15

Haftarah: Isaiah 66:17-23

Tuesday, July 9

7:00 pm

OvB meeting at CoM

Friday, July 12

6:00 pm

Friday Night Services at CoM

Friday, July 12

9:00 pm

Shabbat candle lighting time

Saturday, July 13

10:00 am

Shabbat Services/Torah Study at TBI

Friday, July 19

8:55 pm

Shabbat candle lighting time

Saturday, July 20

9:30 am

Shabbat Shacharit Services

Torah: Numbers 22:2-38

Haftarah: Micah 5:6-6:8

Thursday, July 25

7:00 pm

CoM and TBI Book Club

Friday, July 26

8:49 pm

Shabbat candle lighting time

Saturday, July 27

9:30 am

Shabbat Shacharit Services

Torah: Numbers 26-52-28:15

Haftarah: Jeremiah 1:1-2:3



## Bracha (blessing) for Shabbat candle lighting

(The candles are lit before the blessing is recited.)

*Ba-ruch a-tah A-do-nai Elo-hei-nu me-lech ha-o-lam a-sher kid-shan-u be-mits-vo-tav vi-tzi-va-nu l'had-lik-ner shel Shabbat.*

Blessed are you, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the Universe, who hallows us with mitzvot, commanding us to kindle the light of Shabbat.

## Mazel Tov!

Jenna and Richard Verne will host a kiddush luncheon following Shabbat services on Saturday, August 3rd to celebrate their daughter Naomi's marriage to Adam Dorstewitz on June 22nd.

Please join the community in wishing Naomi, Adam and the entire Verne family a Mazel Tov!



# Who Are You? Why Are You Here?

**D'var Torah of Minaleah Koffron, Shavuot ~ June 12, 2024**

One evening Rabbi Akiva was walking home after studying the Hebrew scriptures. Deep in thought, he missed his turn and accidentally wandered to the front gate of a Roman military fortress. Before being able to turn around, a Roman guard questioned, "Who are you? Why are you here?" Startled, the Rabbi replied, "What?" The guard asked again, "Who are you? Why are you here?" Answering a question with another question in typical Jewish fashion, Rabbi Akiva asked, "How much are you paid to ask me these questions?" The guard replied: "Two drachma per week." And Rabbi Akiva answered, "I'll pay you twice that amount if you stand outside my home and ask me those questions every morning!"

Who are you and why are you here? Questions I had to ponder last Shavuot. You see, a year ago today I was in New York City immersing myself in Jewish culture instead of walking across my graduation stage. Instead of devaluing the religious practices I hold dear to my heart to engage in the life milestone, I chose to instead honor tradition and faith. And what I derived from that experience was the meaning that Judaism contributes to my life.

I visited old synagogues with beautiful architecture; ate delicious Jewish food; felt my heart glow as I sat among a room full of Jews laughing so hard to Jewish comedy; experienced the beauty of both Ashkenazi and Sephardic services, gaining appreciation for our shared traditions and cultural differences; and attended Reform, Conservative and Orthodox shuls, amazed at how many there were to choose from. It was rejuvenating for the spirit to dance on a rooftop surrounded by fellow Jews, seeing the city around me as people danced and laughed and probably had stomach troubles from all the cheesecake consumed. It was calming to be fully surrounded by our Jewish community, and heartwarming to feel safe in their presence, as no Jew feels like a stranger. As I reflected on how beautiful the whole experience was, I felt utterly overwhelmed with Jewish pride. The trip nourished my soul and reminded me of how inseparable Judaism is from my identity.

We live in yet another time where it isn't the easiest to identify as a Jew. Antisemitism is running rampant and modern progressives seem to have a deep loathing of Israel. However, toe to toe with Jewish hate has been Jewish pride. And there are many reasons for it, but one of my favorites is that it's simply because being Jewish is something to be proud of. We are part of a connected community whose expertise is resilience and finding joy, where every Jewish life is symbolic of triumph and a testament to our strength. In a world where critical thinking skills become increasingly lacking, Jews continue to emphasize curiosity, inquisitiveness, open discussion and debate. We are a purposeful people guided by social responsibility, consistently doing our part to heal the fragmented world in which we live. Jews are a passionate group, surrounded by humor, wisdom, tradition and hope... the list of reasons why our identity is something to take pride in is lengthier than any Torah portion.

In today's parashah, we heard the ten commandments; we were reminded of some of the foundational aspects of what it means to be a Jew. As Shavuot is a time to reaffirm our Jewish pride, I direct the Roman guard's question back to you: who are you and why are you here? Not existentially, but literally, why are you here in this sanctuary today? What about Judaism propels you to dutifully sit in this synagogue being enveloped by prayer and engaging with ancient tradition? Why are you ~still~ here? Chief Lord Rabbi Jonathan Sacks once said, "Judaism is bigger than any of us, yet it is made by all of us." As we put our Jewish pride on the forefront of our consciousness today, remembering alongside the gift of the Torah how much of a gift it is to live by it every day, let us continue being active participants in preserving the religion to which we belong. Chag Shavuot Sameach.

***Many thanks to Minaleah for this beautiful teaching!***

**Jews are a passionate group, surrounded by humor, wisdom, tradition and hope... the list of reasons why our identity is something to take pride in is lengthier than any Torah portion.**

# TBI AND COM BOOK CLUB

The TBI/CoM Book Club will meet again on **July 25** at 7:00 pm at TBI to discuss *An Island Called Home* by Ruth Behar.

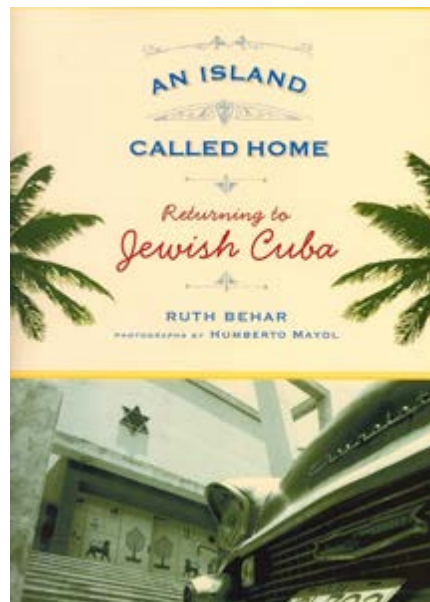
Ruth will be a guest speaker at CoM on **September 22**. Stay tuned for details about that event.

**August 29**, *Stranger in the Desert: A Family Story* by Jordan Salama

**September 26**, *When Angels Left the Old Country* by Sacha Lamb.

**October 31**, *Racism of People Who Love You* by Samira Mehta

Contact [Cary Mannaberg](#) or [Patty Conlon](#) with questions.



## New Policies For Donations at the Friends Free Store

The following is excerpted from a new security policy adopted by the Friends Free Store, developed to align with security policies at CoM.

"The Friends Free Store, housed at the Congregation of Moses, invites refugees new to Kalamazoo to shop in the free store (when accompanied by a caseworker) and donors from the greater Kalamazoo community to drop off merchandise, according to the following policies. Store volunteers have set store hours for shopping and donations: **9:00 am to 3:00 pm Monday through Thursday, except on Jewish, state or federal holidays or when the building is closed (such as when all staff are on vacation).**

**"Donation drop-off should also be arranged by appointment, so that volunteers are present to help with the unloading. Congregation of Moses staff are not obliged to accept donations when store volunteers are not present."**

**To sum up, donation drop-off should be arranged by appointment during a time period of 9:00 am to 3:00 pm, Monday through Thursday, except on holidays or when the building is closed. Drop-offs made without an appointment may not be accepted.** Please call or text one of the following volunteers to make your appointment:

Janet Nykaza, 269-861-1531

Colleen VanSlambrouck, 269-341-0573

Cheryl Quebbeman, 269-615-5373

The Okun School celebrated **Nora DeBruler**, the third student of the year to be called to the Torah on June 22nd. Nora did an amazing job chanting their Haftarah. Mazel Tov to Nora and family!



The Marvin and Rosalie Okun Kalamazoo Community Jewish School is leading Camp Keshet again this year with support from the Okun Foundation. The summer program just finished its first two weeks.

The first week of Camp Keshet was a blast. The kids participated in a mitzvah project for the Friends Free Store, went to Bricks & Minifigs for a Lego party, had ice cream at Schultz's Treat Street, made challah for Shabbat and played on two inflatable water slides at CoM.



The second week of Camp Keshet was a little more low-key. The campers played in the inflatable Gaga Pit at TBI, played more games and made some art. A big **thank you to Rebecca Tregerman and Gerry Tregerman** for making lunch for the campers every day!



The third week of Camp Keshet will be at Camp Tavor in Three Rivers in early July.



# July Celebrations

The Congregation of Moses wishes **mazel tov and yom huledet sameach** to our members who are celebrating anniversaries and birthdays this month. If you would like to be included in our monthly recognition of birthdays and anniversaries, please contact the office at 342-5463, or [comofficemgr@congregationofmoses.org](mailto:comofficemgr@congregationofmoses.org).

## July Birthdays

July 1	Howard Katz
July 3	Shira Haus
July 3	Gabriel Victor Weston
July 5	Laurel Scheidt
July 6	Jill Ruterbusch
July 7	Sallie Goodman - Special birthday!
July 7	Elisabeth Thall
July 10	Joel Bez
July 12	Andrea Johnson
July 12	Deborah Torres
July 13	Nomi Kluger-Nash
July 14	Joyce Camhi
July 15	Eliana Rubin - Special birthday!
July 17	Isabel Howard
July 18	Lev Koffron
July 18	Kim Rubin
July 19	Sara Kurlandsky - Special birthday!
July 20	David Green
July 22	Patricia Kirschner
July 22	Karen Libman
July 24	Jenifer Rubin-Behar
July 26	Jeffrey Haus - Special birthday!
July 26	Diane Minsley
July 27	Kurt Goldsmith
July 28	Harlon Campbell
July 30	Bonnie Goldsmith
July 30	Melvyn Hyman
July 30	Wilma Kahn
July 31	Karl Schook



## July Anniversaries

July 6	Richard & Patricia Kirschner
July 14	Charles & Laurel Ofstein
July 20	Neal & Maxine Berke



# Mishpacha

Donations have been made by the following individuals and families.

## **Condolences to Rae Lee Howard and the Howard family on the loss of her granddaughter, Jenna**

*Gary Adelman, Michelle & Alan Angel, Pnina & Judah Ari-Gur, Cindy & Larry Beer, Maxine & Neal Berke, Judy Davis & Al Rosenthal, Valerie Eisenberg, The Fischell Family, Diane & Harvey Fogel, Emily Freed & Brad Hershbein, Sallie & Ken Goodman, Rabbi Shelley Goldman & Kieran Kiley, Beth & Stephen Grode, Wilma Kahn & Phil Horwich, Diane & Bruce Minsley, The Ruterbusch Family, Judy & Lowell Seyburn, Joanne Simon, Shirley Wise*

## **Condolences**

Condolences to Rae Lee Howard on the loss of her granddaughter, Jenna, *Nan Goldenthal*

Condolences to Rae Lee Howard and her family on the loss of her granddaughter, Jenna, *Carolyn & Brad Kennedy*

Condolences to Rae Lee Howard on the loss of her granddaughter, Jenna, *Aharon & Lisa Koss*

## **In Memory**

In loving memory of my mother, Marian Fischell, *Tim Fischell*

In loving memory of my father, Jack Levene, *Lori Putman*

In loving memory of my grandmother, Ida Levene, *Rae Lee Howard*

In loving memory of my father, Jack Levene, *Rae Lee Howard*

In loving memory of my granddaughter, Jenna Howard, *Rae Lee Howard*

## **In Honor**

Mazel Tov to CoM's high school graduates: Olivia Scheinker, Nathan Strauss and Miriam Verne, *Carolyn & Brad Kennedy*

Mazel Tov to the Verne family on the marriage of Naomi to Adam Dorstewitz, *Carolyn & Brad Kennedy*

With gratitude to Carrie Richman for her volunteer efforts with the CoM lobby monitor, *Carolyn & Brad Kennedy*

## **All donations go to one of our special funds:**

General Fund • Building Fund • Herman & Rose Fisher Library Fund • Rabbi's Discretionary Fund  
Joyce & Morton Fisher Kitchen/Oneg/Kiddush Fund • Honor & Memorial Fund • Levene Cantor Fund  
Marvin & Rosalie Okun Fund • Harry B. Sofen Learning Center Fund

# Thank you ~ Todah Rabah

A sincere thank you to everyone who made a contribution to CoM in memory of my granddaughter, Jenna.  
~ *Rae Lee and the Howard Family*



# Yahrzeits

## July 6-12 (Sivan 30-Tammuz 6)

Ruthe Bernard*	Evelyn "Sunny" Hershbein*	Sidney Seyburn*
Izidor Freiwald*	Elaine Hoffman Lamm	Gloria Stein
Bernice Friedman*	Thelma Lipsitt	Paula Strauss*
Dorotha I. Goldstein*	Miriam Roodin*	

## July 13-19 (Tammuz 7-13)

Marsha Abrams	Helen Bayla Perse	Ruth Sofen*
Siegfried Baum*	Sadye Rosenbaum*	Edith Stenesh
Allison Katherine Ginsberg	Betty Ruden	Siegfried Strauss*
Bernard Kurlan*	Leah Schensul*	Aron Thall
Pauline Kushner*	Dorothy B. Slavin*	

## July 20-26 (Tammuz 14-20)

David Block	Marshall Jelaso	Sophie Miller*
Norman Brickman*	Harry C. Kaufman*	Edward Okun*
Eugene Colef*	Betty Krohngold	Sara Rose*
Pearl Heytow	Meyer H. Lebowitz*	Irving Schensul*
Tierney Kaufman Hutchins	Louis Loeser*	Elmer Steinberg*
Israel Israelson*	Charles Marks*	

## July 27-August 2 (Tammuz 21-28)

Samuel Gottlieb*	Bernice Kirsch*	Helen Tenenbaum*
Esidore H. Graff*	Louis E. Koss*	Mollie Wolfe*
Norman Graff*	Herman Benjamin Lando*	Milton Wruble*
Robert Grekin*	Yetta Marcus*	

*\*Denotes a memorial plaque in the synagogue*

## Yahrzeits Now Online

Now you can find all yahrzeits listed on the CoM website for the current week, as well as the entire year. The list is also searchable by name. Find your yahrzeit name and date anytime by visiting this page: [congregationofmoses.org/yahrzeits](http://congregationofmoses.org/yahrzeits)