



Note Please: If these events are in person, in our synagogue, they will start at 7:00 pm. If they are on Zoom, they will begin at 7:30 pm.



*West End Synagogue
Adult Education
2021-2022*

5782

Tourists on Habesot River Bridge, Tzeelim, Israel



A Reconstructionist Congregation
100 Amsterdam Avenue at 69th Street,
(212) 0579-0777
www.westendsynagogue.org

ONGOING WES PROGRAMS

“Spiritual Autobiography,” Judith Friedman, Mondays, 4 – 5:30 pm. Participants will write and share short pieces on childhood memories, spiritual awakenings, personal understandings of the Torah stories and more. WES members only. New members welcome. Contact Judith Friedman.

“Chug Ivri,” 2:00 – 3:00 PM, Led by David Goldfarb. Meetings are held in members’ homes. Last Shabbat of each month. (Starting in October). A chance to obtain fluency in Hebrew by reading and discussing stories, poetry and articles on current affairs.

“Shabbat Study Minyan,” 12:00 – 1:30 PM, led by Michael Graff. Close study of Jewish literature. Reading in advance of each session required.

“Middah on Mondays Study Group,” Monthly, third Monday of each month 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm. Led by Susan Schorr. All WES members are invited to join our study of West End’s Middah (ethical value/character trait) of the month. Discussions are shaped using texts from both our tradition and from modern authors, pop culture and more.

“Torah on Tuesdays” 7:30 pm – 9:30 pm, 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of each month, led by Susan Schorr. **Commemorating thirty years of study together! Watch for special announcements.** All are welcome to join our ongoing study of the Torah. We read the text (in English) and consider it from the perspectives of literature, sacred text, religious mythology, family lore, psychology, drama, history, pop culture and more. Drop in and join the conversation, or just listen and enjoy. No prior background or knowledge is required.

ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMS

October 14, 7:30 pm. Rukhl Shaechter, Editor of the Yiddish Forward, **“The Future of Yiddish.”**

October 25, 7:30 pm. Lisa Bordetsky-Williams, Author, **“Forget Russia,”** 7:30 PM. Discussion to be moderated by Jerry Saltzman whose family was one of the **Russian-born, American families who returned to Communist Russia** only to become disillusioned.

November 8, 22 & December 13, 7:30 pm. Carole Kessner, **“The Changing Myth of the Jew in British and American Literature.”** The aim of the study is to understand the ways that non-Jewish writers have depicted Jews in order to serve a specific psychological and socio-political purpose. We will track the persistence of a single mythic image/stereotype: the Jew as a projection of the communities needs, fears emotions, politics, and social structures. In other words, the Jew as archetype.

November 17, 7:30 pm. Carole Kessner, presented jointly with the WES book club. Complexity rules the Jewish world of Joshua Cohen’s new comic novel **“The Netanyahu’s”**. No, this is not a book about Bibi, though it is very much about his father Benzion. It is also about the Diaspora, assimilation, anti-Semitism, Zionism, the Bronx, Israel, academia, non-Jews in upstate New York, the Spanish Inquisition, German-American Jews, Eastern European American Jews, the Holocaust, history and historians, Harold Bloom. All this, and more in a work of fiction that defies most of the known rules of the genre. It is at once provocative, confrontational, supportive, and educational. Yes, a serious study of the extremes of American Jewish identity, all the while providing hilarious comic relief for the exhausted reader.

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December 6, 2021 7:30 pm. Sanford Lacks presents: ***“Mordecai Kaplan in His Own Words,”*** a taped interview (1965) in which Rabbi Dr. Mordecai Kaplan discusses Reconstructionism, the Idea of God and Mysticism, the state of Israel, the Diaspora and the preservation of the Jewish people. Group discussion at intervals.

December 9, 2021 7:30 pm. Join Tovah Klein, Director of the Barnard College Center for Toddler Development, as she discusses the concerns and silver linings of the pandemic and the development of toddlers and young children.

December 15, 2021, 7:30 pm. Natan Meir, Professor of Judaic Studies at Portland State University, will discuss his book on the Eastern European shtetl focusing on the lives of it’s “marginal people”.

December 22, 29, 2021 and January 10, 2022, 7:30 pm. Professor Emeritus Irwin Wall will explore, ***“The Jewish Community in England, France and Germany.”*** The Jews of France, England and Germany together constitute one million of the roughly 15 million Jews in the world: 500,000 in France – 300,000 in England, and 200,000 in Germany. Each, powerful and influential in their own lands, plays increasingly important roles in the

affairs of world Jewry, both Israel and the Diaspora, to the welfare of which they are all three committed.

The minicourse will examine these communities in three aspects: first, how they have internally, all three, been transformed since the Second World War. French Jewry has doubled in size and is today largely Sephardic; British Jewry was plunged from its almost charmed and idyllic past into the vortex of Zionism and the Center of the politics of Israel’s creation, and the German community, once the most prestigious community of the Diaspora, having been dispersed and virtually destroyed, has been reconstituted from a tiny postwar almost invisible remnant into an entirely different version of its former self.

Second, what is the quality of Jewish life in all three? How has their traditional Orthodoxy been challenged by the growing appeal of Liberal or Reform Judaism on the one hand and the rise of Hassidim and Haredim on the other. And how are they buffeted by the powerful winds of secularization and assimilationism which seem to threaten the prospects of their long-term viability? Finally, all three, which have integrated the new reality of Israel into their own existence and identity, find themselves in the throes of an existential struggle against the new anti-Semitism.

January 13, 2022, 7:30 pm. Michael German, former FBI agent, now a fellow at the NYU, Brenner Center for Justice, returns to WES to speak about, ***“Domestic Extremism,”*** the alarming activities of domestic extremists who operate above ground under the guise of “patriots.” An example of this is the January 6th event at the Capital Building.

January 19, 2022, 7:30 pm. Rabbi Donna Cephas, former Rabbinic Intern at WES, presents an interactive workshop, ***“The Voices of Jerusalem,”*** in which Jewish, Muslim and Christian women speak of their lived experiences. Sponsored jointly with the Israeli Connections Committee.

January 26, 2022, 7:30 pm. Daniel Van Doren presents, ***“A Dramatic Reading Aloud of Jewish Short, Short Stories.”***

February 10, 2022, 7:30 pm, Aryeh Gold, David Prager and Moshe Sayer, along with an Israeli representative of the current Kibbutz movement, will analyze, ***“The Kibbutz, As it Was and As it Is Today.”*** Sponsored jointly with the Israeli Connections Committee.

February 7, 14, 28, 2022 7:30 pm. Robert Pollack, Professor of Biology at Columbia, facilitates, ***“Jewish Journeys,”*** three evenings dedicated to elaboration of the ways in which a Jewish identity emerges through one’s lived experiences, rather than through one’s genetic ancestry.

March 10, 24 and 31, 2022 7:30 pm. Susan Schorr will explore ***“Voice of a Woman.”*** Women have been writing prayers for centuries, even though their voices are not heard in the siddur. We’ll read and discuss woman-written prayers, on familiar and unusual topics.

March 23, 2022, 7:30 pm. David Webber, Professor of Law at Boston University, author of, *“The Rise of the Working Class Shareholder,”* will speak on , ***“Mixing Politics and Investments: Kosher or Treyf?”*** Webber presents the challenge of putting your money where your values are.

March 30, 2022, 7:30 pm. Bonnie Rabin, Amy Saltzman, Irit Tau-Webber, each a Family Law lawyer, with Fran Hoffinger as Moderator, will discuss, ***“Evolving Family Law,”*** a topic relevant to both gay and traditional families.

April 11, 2022, 7:30 pm. Jerry Posman, Vice President for Administration and Finance, at the City University, will discuss, ***“The City University: As it Was Then, As it Is Now.”***

April 27, 2022, 7:30 pm. Tris Farnsworth, ***“Stalin, Anti-Semitism and the Jewish Bolsheviks.”*** Among the seven major figures, makers of Russia’s Bolshevik Revolution in October 1917, four were Jewish. What drew them to Bolshevism? Was their history unique in Stalin’s Soviet Union?

May 2, May 9, 2022, 7:30 pm. Art Spar, ***“Shirat ha Yam, “Song of the Sea.”*** A poem from Exodus; a grim description of the death of the Egyptians at the Red Sea. God is a brutal and victorious warrior. ***What happened to the God of Peace and Justice?*** Let’s unpack and explore this puzzling warlike description of God.

May 12, May 26, June 9, 2022, 7:30 pm. Susan Schorr will examine ***“The Metaphor for Our Lives.”*** The metaphors we use are not just figures of speech; they help to define how we experience our lives. We’ll look at how the metaphors we use dictate our interactions and, sometimes, how they limit us.

June 18, June 25, 2022, 1:30 pm after Kiddush. Connie Goldfarb, ***“Art as Midrash.”*** A study of Medieval Art as anti-Semitic Midrash; as well as three biblical and talmudic scenes as Midrash.