



Note Please: If these events are in person, in our synagogue, they will start at 7:00 pm. In a few cases the programs on Zoom may start at 7:30.



West End Synagogue
Adult Education • 2022 – 2023



The Grotto of the God Pan 3rd Century BCE filled with water, Hermon Stream Nature reserve and Archaeological Park, Banias, Golan Heights Israel.

ONGOING WES PROGRAMS

“Spiritual Autobiography,” Judith Friedman, alternate 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,” 12:30 – 2:00 pm, led by Michael Graff. Close study of Jewish writings. Reading in advance of each session required.

“Middah on Mondays Study Group,” Monthly, third Monday of each month 7:00 – 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 text-based using materials from both ours and other spiritual traditions, as well as insights from modern authors, pop culture and more.

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

ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMS

October 18, 2022. 7:00 pm. Parenting During Covid-19. Tovah Klein, Director of the Barnard College Toddler Center, professor of Psychology and author of “How Toddlers Thrive” will discuss lessons learned on the frontline regarding stressors and adaptations, work-family blurring, toddler development and what children need going forward.

October 26, 2022. 7:00 pm. The World Was Ours: The Jewish Legacy of Vilna. Executive producer: Mira Jedwabnik Van Doren. A one-hour documentary film that chronicles the rich vibrant history of the Jewish community of Vilna, Poland before its destruction in WWII. Narrated by Mandy Patinkin.

November 1, 2022. 7:00 pm. Henry Saltzman and Maureen Goldfarb, a former long-time principal of New Utrecht High School in Brooklyn, will discuss **“The Invisible Schools”** a collection of relevant talks on the education of disadvantaged children encountered during his years working at the Ford Foundation.

November 10, 2022. 7:00 pm. Ethical Issues In a Socialist Kibbutz, David Prager, Aryeh and Stella Gold, Moshe Sayer and Michele Becker will discuss fascinating questions about communal society on a kibbutz. For example: How does a kibbutz decide whether a member can take time off from work to “create art”? Does it matter if the artwork doesn’t get reviewed well or get positive reviews? Or, when a member decides to leave permanently, what “share” of the communal “wealth” accumulated over the members’ tenure are they are entitled to? How does a Kibbutz communal society decide which members can reduce their workload to attend higher education on a full or part-time basis? Who decides on courses and who pays?

West End Synagogue

A Reconstructionist Congregation
100 Amsterdam Avenue at 69th Street,
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November 13, 2022. 7:00 pm. (Inside WES).

Eetta Prince-Gibson, an American-Canadian- Israeli who served in the Israeli army at age 19. She is Israel's editor for *Moment* magazine, contributing editor for *Hadassah* magazine and a BBC commentator. Eetta Prince-Gibson will speak on: *"Israel's Fifth Election in Four Years: Will the Fifth One be The Charm?"* Prince-Gibson will provide a thought-provoking description of the political situation following the November 1 elections.

November 15, 2022. 7:00 pm. Jack Romberg

discusses *Three Jewish Morals and Richard Stern*.

My great uncle is the central subject of my book, "A Doorway to Heroism". In the first World War, he was a decorated hero in the German army. On April 1, 1933, the day of the Nazi boycott of Jewish businesses, he was the only Jew in Cologne to protest the Nazis. In World War II he became a hero in the U.S. army winning a Silver Star.

November 21, 2022. 7:00 pm. Dan Van Doren.

Jewish Short Stories You'll be Dying to Hear Read Aloud. Stay tuned to learn the titles of the exciting stories and the talented readers for this very popular event.

December 6, 2022. 7:00 pm. Jerry Saltzman.

Supply Chains – Unshackled and Explained. Why are routine household items suddenly out of stock? Is online ordering the end of the traditional retail store? What is the Bull Whip Effect and why is psychology one of the greatest supply chain disruptors? These topics and more will be part of our discussion.

December 12 and 15, 2022. 7:00 pm. Professor Emeritus Irwin Wall. *France, Its Politics and Its Jews: The difficulties of living Jewishly in France.*

- Will France always have a Jewish Diaspora?
- The historical and cultural contribution of French Jews to Jewish and world civilization and culture. Can France be France without its Jews?

December 20, 2022. 7:00 pm. Alan Gotthelf.

Religion and Family Law. Religious issues as they impact Jewish Divorces. Discussants: Two judges and one lawyer. Moderator Alan Gotthelf.

January 12, 2023. 7:00 pm. Jeffrey Heller.

American Immigration Policy: One Law for All?... In Your DREAMS!

For some, U.S. immigration law is a Disney fairy tale. For others, it is the uncensored Brothers Grimm. It's clash of rules and philosophies yields a jumbled nightmare. Jeffrey Heller, former asylum lawyer, law school adjunct clinician emeritus and Human Rights First Ambassador, offers an insiders' perspective.

February 2, 2023. 7:00 pm. (Inside WES).

American journalist and author, **Joe Berger**, was a staff reporter and editor for the New York Times, from 1984-2014 and is the author of 4 books. His latest, coming out in February, 2023 as part of the Yale University Press' Jewish Lives series is the first full-length biography of Elie Wiesel: *Confronting the Silence*. (Nobel Laureate, Elie Wiesel, is author of 47 works including *Night*, a 1960 memoir based on his Holocaust experiences with his father.)

March 9, 2023. 7:00 pm. Amanda Beckenstein Mbuvi. *Reimagining Diversity and Jewish Belonging: A Journey Through Genesis*.

Serving as Academic Dean of the RRC, Doctor Mbuvi oversees "a larger goal of the new RRC curriculum to train a rabbinate that reflects the expansive diversity of Jewish communities". This fits in with one of Reconstructing Judaism's central goals; to join in the Jewish efforts to dismantle systemic racism, and to advance racial diversity in the movement and the Jewish world.

March 13 & 22, 2023. 7:00 pm. Art Spar. *Jewish Meditation*.

I have developed a personal daily meditation of morning prayers. The centerpiece is the contemplation of "Yud Hey Vav Hey", the unpronounceable name of God. The meditation includes components I've learned from Rabbis and other meditation teachers. I will demonstrate my practice as an example of what is possible, while leaving each person to design their own practice.

April 13 and 27, May 4. Three Thursdays. 7:00 pm.

Susan Schorr. *Understanding the Values of the Prayer Book*. What values do the Shabbat, daily, festival and High Holy Day prayer books teach? How are those values different in Reconstructionist prayerbooks compared to other prayerbooks? How have Reconstructionist values in the prayerbook changed since 1945? This class will look at the rhetoric of the prayerbook and how it expresses and teaches a range of values.

April 24, 2023. 7:00 pm. Jerry Posman. *A Debate Over Admissions Standards at Selective NYC High Schools: Academic Excellence vs. Diversity*.

Jerry will mediate a debate presenting all sides of the question. Discussants will be members of the congregation and graduates of the elite high schools.

May 8, 2023. 7:00 pm. Jack Romberg. *An Exploration of Fun Talmudic Stories (Aggadot)*.

We will explore two aggadot (two stories), one about what happened to a new rabbi as he was traveling to a place that would be his home and one about a marriage. What is the meaning of the stories?

May 16, 2023. 7:00 pm. Dan Van Doren. *Jewish Short Stories, Round II*.

Stay tuned to learn the titles of these stories and the talented readers.

May 30, 2023. 7:00 pm. Carole Kessner. *The Great Sephardic Israeli Author, A.B. Yehoshuah, an all syn-*

agogue read and discussion of his great novel "Mr. Mani". Recently deceased, Yehoshuah is considered one of the greatest of modern writers of Israeli literature. A lifelong "israelist" (his own word) he was one of the literary triad consisting of Amos Oz, David Grossman and himself. All three were political leftist activists for peace between Jews and Arabs. We will be doing a synagogue read of his great novel, "Mr. Mani" as a memorial tribute to his contribution to Hebrew literature and to the Jewish people.

June 3, 2023. 1:45 pm. Connie Goldfarb. *Art as Midrash*.

Biblical Midrash is the textual exegesis of the Bible to explore hidden meaning. This presentation using artistic portrayal of a biblical scene will discuss an artist's interpretation of it. Saturday after Kiddush.

June 20, 2023. 7:00 pm. Marcia Weller & Rabbi Emily Cohen. *Becoming Eve: My Journey From Ultra-Orthodox Rabbi to Transgender Woman*.

Abby Stein's important book tells the story of the eldest son of a Hasidic Family in Brooklyn who, instead of becoming a rabbinic leader, becomes a woman. Told sensitively and honestly the book poses the question among others "how far must one go to be the person one was meant to be"?

Dates TBD 7:00 pm. Listening to Sondheim.

Join aficionados of his work, **David Prager** and **Sarah Wright** in exploring the music and lyrics of Broadway's greatest modern master, Steven Sondheim.

Dates TBD 7:00 pm. Mayris Webber. *Health Effects of Work at the World Trade Center Disaster Site. What Do We Know After 20 Years?*

Mayris Webber a Professor in the Department of Epidemiology and Population Health at Albert Einstein College of Medicine will touch on outcomes that have been linked to WTC exposures including cancer, autoimmune diseases and PTSD and examine the available evidence.

Dates TBD. Four sessions. 7:00 pm. Susan Schorr. *The Evolving God*.

The God of Genesis is not the God of the Psalms. Through the centuries, Jews' understanding of God has changed and evolved as the Jewish people have changed and evolved. This class will examine differing understandings of God in Biblical, Talmudic, medieval, modern and contemporary times.