



From the  
Beit Midrash of  
Rav Julius



### A Joint Message from Pastor Erica and Rav Julius

#### Introduction

This past Fall, I delivered a sermon about the ‘Middle East War’ -- at that time, the aftermath of the attack on Israel by Hamas in 2023, or the ‘October 7 War.’ The sermon was inspired by a book examining the modern day interpretations

of the Book of Joshua, and its application to modern international geopolitical conflicts.

Around the same time, our neighbors at Park Congregational Church, with whom we have engaged in a joint study project, began exploring a similar topic: Christian Nationalism in the modern era.

Upon discovering the close alignment of our respective paths, Pastor Erica of Park Congregational and I realized that our paths were stunningly close, and we determined that a collaborative study program would be mutually beneficial. **So, we are thrilled to formally announce that the two communities will engage in the study of these issues in May and June** [see box article on page 5.]

First Session: Rahab the Prostitute and the Spies

We have set aside three sessions to study the Book of Joshua. We open with Joshua standing at the threshold of the Promised Land, considering the repetition of Moses’ earlier strategy of sending spies ahead. Joshua’s decision is not merely tactical; it is a test of whether this new generation can approach the land with courage rather than anxiety.

The spies’ encounter with Rahab the prostitute, is the narrative’s turning point. Was this a place where strangers could blend in unnoticed? Or does the text deliberately highlight God’s ability to work through those whom society marginalizes?

Rahab’s actions are astonishing. She shelters the spies at great personal risk and aligns herself with a people she has never met. Her declaration—“Your God, He is God in the heavens above and on the earth below”—is nothing less than revolutionary.

In both Jewish and Christian traditions, she stands as a reminder that faith is revealed not by status but by courageous action and faith -- and that God’s purposes often unfold through unexpected people and connections.

Second Session: Fall of Jericho and Achan’s Sin

For our second session, we transition to the broader stories of

### President’s Box April 2026

#### A Spring Message to Our Community

As we cross the Vernal Equinox and step officially into spring, we find ourselves in that familiar Northeast moment of seasonal uncertainty. The calendar insists that winter is behind us, yet the weather still seems to be negotiating the terms. We’ve already had our April showers in March — so what should we wish for in April? Sunshine? Mild breezes? Or simply the good humor to enjoy whatever arrives?

This turning of the season also marks the beginning of the second half of our Jewish year. Passover arrives today, April 1, ushering us into the familiar pre-summer rhythm of celebrations, transitions, and milestones. Children of all ages will be graduating, advancing a grade, or finishing a sports season just as another begins. Weddings, family gatherings, and life-cycle events will fill our calendars, each one a reminder of how our community grows and evolves together.

Our synagogue will be just as lively. Pesach is upon us, and Shavuot in May will once again invite us to stand symbolically at Sinai, receiving the Torah anew as our ancestors did more than three millennia ago. This year, we are planning a refreshed and meaningful observance — one that honors tradition while embracing the needs and spirit of our congregation.

As the days lengthen and the first sparkles of greenery appear, coming together feels easier, lighter, and more joyful. Weekly on Shabbat, we will gather to thank Hashem for the lives we are able to lead in the “land of the free and the home of the brave.” At Kiddish we can connect and kibbitz with each other, sharing our Nachas and Mitzvot of the week.

The extra hours of daylight seem to open our hearts as well as our schedules. So we invite you: join us for Shabbat, our upcoming programs, celebrations, and holiday gatherings. Bring your energy, your curiosity, your presence — and feel free to initiate something new. This is a season of renewal, and our community shines brightest when we share it together.

conquest. When Israel crosses the Jordan into Jericho, the narrative shifts from individual courage to collective action, and the uncompromising demands of *herem*. These stories stand at the heart of the book's first half, where Joshua is portrayed as leading a swift and divinely guided conquest of the land, but sharply undermined by the reality of the land remaining largely unsettled.

Achan's taking items from Jericho designated for God alone -- results in communal guilt. The narrative raises tough questions about collective responsibility and the moral universe of the ancient world.

- Why should an entire people suffer for the wrongdoing of one individual?
- How do we understand a system in which holiness is so absolute that a single violation threatens the whole community?

Third Session: Farewell Addresses

After having taken a few weeks off, we will return with an examination of farewell speeches across the sweep of Scripture and history. Moses, Joshua, Jesus, and George Washington each present their final words revealing what they believe will sustain their communities once they are gone.

Moses frames his farewell as a covenantal crossroads, insisting that communal flourishing depends on fidelity, justice, and collective responsibility. Joshua, his successor, echoes these themes but with sharper urgency, acknowledging both the fragility of covenant loyalty and the necessity of choosing it anew in every generation.

Jesus' farewell shifts the register from national covenant to spiritual communion, emphasizing neither land nor law but presence. Where Moses and Joshua warn of idolatry and assimilation, Jesus prepares his followers for persecution and misunderstanding, grounding them in a love that transcends fear.

Washington's Farewell Address, though secular, belongs in this lineage, speaking of unity, moral responsibility, and the dangers that threaten the body politic relinquishing power to strengthen the community's future.

Fourth Session: Modern Applications of Biblical Teachings

Our final session turns to Rachel Havrelock's *The Joshua Generation*, a work that invites readers to reconsider how sacred texts shape modern political imagination, and that biblical texts enter history through the ways communities read them.

In the early decades of the State of Israel, David Ben-Gurion, convened military and political leaders to study Joshua for the purpose of generating a unifying national story for a diverse population returning to its land. This risked the shaping of a political imagination more by biblical archetypes than by the complex realities of modern life, ultimately inviting us to read Joshua not as a blueprint for action, but as a mirror that reflects the dangers of mythic nationalism.

We will include references to Amanda Tyler's *How to End Christian Nationalism*. Tyler carefully distinguishes Christian Nationalism from Christianity itself, arguing that resisting Christian Nationalism is an act of faithfulness to the Christian tradition. Solution: courageous conversations within congregations, affirming the separation of church and state, and interfaith partnerships.

Conclusion: Our Guidelines

As our two communities explore the Book of Joshua and its meanings, we are entering a shared space shaped by curiosity,

trust, and the excitement of learning alongside one another. To guide us, we're using principles inspired by Leonard Swidler's *Dialogue Decalogue*, a foundational approach for interfaith conversations.

We will establish ground rules for dialogue at the beginning of our time together: **our purpose is to learn together, not to convert each other**, with a deeper understanding of texts and each other's perspectives, knowing that true learning encourages personal growth. We meet as **equals**, respecting the dignity of each tradition, no matter the size or status of our communities.

Each person represents themselves and their own beliefs. Instead of telling someone what their faith "really" means, we listen to how they see themselves in our discussions. This requires us to be **honest, sincere, free from hidden motives**, and open to reflecting on and examining our own biases.

We try to compare **ideals with ideals** and **actions with actions**, avoiding unfair comparisons -- like judging one tradition by its best qualities and another by its flaws. We welcome the opportunity to find common ground, without merging our distinct traditions. True dialogue keeps differences intact while building relationships.

Lastly, we commit to a spirit of trust and respect. Together, we will honor Jewish and Christian interpretive traditions, avoid supersessionist, antisemitic, or any prejudiced interpretations, and appreciate the depth and variety of meanings within sacred texts. We will support each other in these efforts and forgive each other if we misspeak and give space to each other if we need to restate what we are trying to communicate.

We look forward to travelling on this journey with you, as we deepen our faith, understanding, and community connections with all the other seekers in our communities.

Pastor Erica and Rav Julius

**PRAYER SERVICE**

**Friday night**, 6:00 pm —Live + ZOOM

**Shabbat morning** prayer service, 10:00 am—Live + Zoom

**At the conclusion of services, we will have our enhanced, gourmet Kiddush and luncheon.**

.....

***SPONSOR A KIDDUSH....***

***Yahrzeit, Birthday, Anniversary or Special Occasion?***

***Would you consider sponsoring a kiddush for the event? Please contact the office by email (bethjacob@snet.net) for information.***

**Candle Light Times**

**April 2026**

<b>April 3</b>	<b>6:57 pm</b>
<b>April 10</b>	<b>7:05 pm</b>
<b>April 17</b>	<b>7:13 pm</b>
<b>April 24</b>	<b>7:20 pm</b>

**Ba-rukh atah A-do-nai, e-lo-hay-nu-me-lekh ha-olam, a-sher kid-sha-nu-bemitz-vo-tav ve-tzi-vanu Le-had-lik ner shel Shabbat.**

**Blessed are you, Lord our God, Sovereign of the Universe, who has sanctified us by Your commandments and has commanded us to kindle the Shabbat lights.**

# Happy Passover



## PASSOVER Schedule

### **Beth Jacob Seder, April 1**

Prayer service 5:45 pm

Seder begins 'about' 6:00 pm

Festive Meal: 7:15 pm

Resumption of Seder: 8:15 pm

Everyone goes home: 8:45 pm

-

### Prayer Service schedule:

#### **Wednesday, April 1, 7:00 am**

Passover -- Fast of the First Born

#### **Thursday, April 2, 10:00 am**

Passover, 1<sup>st</sup> Day with Kiddush

#### **Friday, April 3, 6:00 pm**

Shabbat Passover Evening

#### **Saturday, April 4, 10:00 am**

Shabbat Passover Morning with Kiddush

#### **Wednesday, April 8, 10:00 am**

Passover, 7<sup>th</sup> Day, with Yizkor with Kiddush

## **AUTHORIZATION FOR THE SALE OF CHAMETZ**

According to Jewish law, Jews are forbidden to use, own, or derive benefit from any chametz ("leavened products") during Passover. Because of the economic hardship involved in disposing of large quantities of chametz (such as liquor) and the utensils in which chametz is used or cooked, the sages instituted the practice of selling such items before Passover. Because of the legal intricacies involved, it is suggested to appoint the rabbi as your agent to sell your chametz and to repurchase it after the holiday. It is customary, though not mandatory, to make a donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund, or any other appropriate fund, for this service.

The following document accomplishes this appointment. In order for the contract to be valid, it must be signed and received in the synagogue office by **10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, April 1st**. Emailed contracts are acceptable as well.

I (WE)

\_\_\_\_\_

residing at: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

hereby authorize Rav Julius Rabinowitz of Beth Jacob Synagogue to dispose of all chametz that may be in my (our) possession wherever it may be, during the period of Passover 5786, and to repurchase it on my behalf after Passover. I understand that this is a valid sale according to Jewish law and the laws of the State of Connecticut.

Please return this form to:  
Beth Jacob Synagogue  
400 New London Turnpike  
Norwich, CT 06360  
Email: bethjacob@snet.net

**Form must be received in the office by 10:00 a.m.  
Wednesday, April 1, 2026.**



**Joint Exploration of Scripture  
and Modern Politics Introduction**

Beth Jacob Synagogue and Park Congregational Church are collaborating to present a unique initiative that focuses on the intersection of religious scripture and contemporary politics. This joint exploration aims to foster peaceful dialogue and thoughtful consideration of challenging issues that arise when religious teachings intersect with modern-day political realities.

**Focus of the Exploration**

The program centers on a review of the Book of Joshua, which was historically regarded by the Jewish people as the concluding book of their canon. However, over time, it became clear that an additional eighteen separate books were needed to complete the canon. This exploration will use the Book of Joshua as a starting point to discuss broader themes and concerns relevant to both religious and political spheres.

**Connecting Scripture to Modern Geopolitics**

In addition to examining ancient texts, participants will analyze portions of two recent books that address the widespread application of Biblical teachings — and, at times, entire religions — to international geopolitical decisions. This portion of the program aims to bring the discussion up to date, considering how scriptural interpretations can influence or reflect current global political dynamics.

Members of our respective congregations, as well as seekers from all faiths or of no faith, are welcome to join us (but if you are not a member joining us, can you let us know for planning purposes.) We will meet over the course of four sessions at our respective houses of worship on these dates and times:

- May 3 at Park Congregational
- May 9 at Beth Jacob
- June 6 at Beth Jacob
- June 14 at Park Congregational

**Service Schedules**

Park Congregational:

- 10:00: Prayer
- 11:00: Coffee hour
- 11:30: Study

Beth Jacob:

- 10:00 Prayer
- 11:00 Torah reading and study
- 12:00 Lunch, followed by Study



**Donations**

We gratefully acknowledge the following contributions to Beth Jacob Synagogue's Special Funds.

**Building Fund**

*In Memory of Fred Ruditzky and Stanley Ruditzky*

Al Ruditzky

*In Memory of Ronald Katzoff*

Stacy Gould  
Martin & Millie Shapiro  
Irene Schienberg

Michael & Vicki Seroussi

*In Memory of Herb Plotnick*

Stacy Gould  
Martin & Millie Shapiro  
Michael & Vicki Seroussi

*In Memory of Sylvia Glazer Shapiro*

Martin & Millie Shapiro

*Marking the Yahrzeit of Edward Lazaroff*

Stacy Gould

*In Memory of Rachel Cooper*

Irene Schienberg

*In Memory of Nathan Levine*

Irene Schienberg

*In Memory of Ida Mindel, Clara Mindel, Michael Mindel and Albert Mindel*

The Family of Saul & Clara Mindel

**Mishebeirach**

Berne Vasquez Kapili

Beth Camassar

Billy Maynard

Bonnie Curkin

Emma Fries

Shirley Christian

Seth Curkin

Rabbi Gary Atkins

Jenn Rockwell

Jeremy Federman

Marvin Levine

Michelle Nash

Pamela Magliano Cannata

Patricia Tilley

Tiffany Gravel

Tim Menard

Ahoova Hana bat Gila

Chaim ben Libba

Michal ben Sarah

Moshe Ben Rochel

Tzvi ben Basha

Yosefah Chaya bat Leah

**April Birthdays**

April 3 Harry Leiser

April 6 Robin Wolf

April 15 Lilliane Leiser

April 19 Larry Friedman

April 26 Kay Winakor

April 29 Glenn Gordon



ALL are WELCOME

# BETH JACOB SUPER SHABBAT



Daven at Beth Jacob



Sing aloud at Beth Jacob



Hang out with Friends at Beth Jacob



**Number  
ONE  
Kiddush  
Luncheon  
On the  
Planet**

**It's  
NOSH  
TIME**

Kashruth observed

**Shabbat Services: 10 AM 'til Noon**  
**NOSH Time: Noon until you're stuffed**  
**COME ANYTIME— LEAVE ANY TIME**

Beth Jacob Synagogue  
 400 New London Turnpike  
 Norwich, CT

A conservative Jewish  
 congregation  
 Julius Rabinowitz, Rabbi

Jewish Federation of Eastern Connecticut &  
 Hadassah's Henny Simon Remembrance present

## The Annual Community Yom HaShoah Program



*Righteous Gentiles:  
 Varian Fry and the  
 Connecticut Connection*



Monday, April 13, 2026 at 7 pm  
 Temple Emanu-El - 29 Dayton Road, Waterford, CT





## APRIL 2026 YAHRZEITS



**April 1**                    **14 Nisan**

Karl Meyers  
Jennie Simon  
Lieb Bronstein  
Gutman Bonstein  
Louis Mindel

**April 2**                    **15 Nisan**

Arnold Baker  
Abraham Glick  
David & Chaye Goldstein  
Nathan Beit  
Rivka Goldstein

**April 3**                    **16 Nisan**

Harry Fishbone  
Abraham Ableman  
Fanny Daniels

**April 4**                    **17 Nisan**

Rose Deutsch —  
*Mother of Paul Deutsch*  
Samuel Florman  
William Israelite

**April 6**                    **19 Nisan**

Herman Hopfer  
Ray Gawendo —  
*Mother of Evert Gawendo*

**April 7**                    **20 Nisan**

Augusta Livingston  
Sam Cooper —  
*Father of Irene Schienberg*

**April 8**                    **21 Nisan**

David Shereshevsky

**April 9**                    **22 Nisan**

Fannie Taffel  
Samuel Taylor  
Morris Soloveitzik  
Maurice Gould  
Augusta Steinman  
Sylvia Winakor —  
*Mother of Dr. Eugene Winakor*

**April 10**                  **23 Nisan**

Philip Levin  
Dorothy Hecht  
Chaim Pultorak

William Cooper  
Sarah Diamond  
Sigmund Dressler —  
*Father-in-Law of  
Arlene Dressler*

Hyman Burchman

**April 11**                  **24 Nisan**

Arthur Rosenthal  
Samuel Maiofes

**April 12**                  **25 Nisan**

Pauline Epstein  
Sally Shapiro-Ptackik —  
*Aunt of Martin Shapiro*

Barnet Feldman  
Eleanor Wenick —  
*Sister of Robert Labb*

Jay Breslow

**April 13**                  **26 Nisan**

Reuben Steinman  
William Pearson  
Mollie Welling

**April 14**                  **27 Nisan**

Ellsworth Cramer  
Anne Margolis

**April 15**                  **28 Nisan**

Jacob Rubenstein

**April 16**                  **29 Nisan**

Arthur Rutchik —  
*Brother of Martin Rutchik*

Dr. Kurt Oppenheimer

**April 18**                  **1 Iyar**

Saul Alofsin  
Esther Brauman —  
*Grandmother of Stacy Gould*  
Nathan Cooper —  
*Grandfather of Irene Schienberg*

David Keyes

Samuel Nelkin

**April 19**                  **2 Iyar**

Evelyn Hornstein  
Abraham Gold

**April 20**                  **3 Iyar**

Barney Berkman  
Max Fern  
Daniel Bason

**April 21**                  **4 Iyar**

Diana Cramer  
Samuel Mindel  
Charlotte Taylor  
Lena Lahn

**April 22**                  **5 Iyar**

Helene Bronerwine  
Barnet Maiofes

**April 23**                  **6 Iyar**

Samuel Block

**April 24**                  **7 Iyar**

Ernest Goodman  
Laurence Kenig  
Alyce Blinderman  
Ida Miller  
Bessie Adelman —  
*Mother of Seymour Adelman*

**April 25**                  **8 Iyar**

Louis Silver  
Abraham Orenstein

**April 26**                  **9 Iyar**

Abraham Kirstein  
Urian Weishaus

**April 27**                  **10 Iyar**

Aaron Furman  
Dorothy Rutchik  
Kurt Hopfer

Joseph Pearson  
Herman Bruckner  
Isadore Florman

**April 28**                  **11 Iyar**

Ethel Kivelewitz

**April 29**                  **12 Iyar**

Anna Segal  
Anita Jainchill  
Rose Sogolow  
Bessie Budnick

**April 30**                  **13 Iyar**

Isaac Gordon —  
*Father of Michael Gordon*  
Celia Caroline  
Barbara Rubenstein