



Congregation Ahavath Sholom

The Creative Spirit Dwells Here

THE CAS NEWSLETTER

April 2026

Upcoming services and events

Thursday, April 2 at 5:00 PM: Passover Second Seder at Unitarian Universalist Meeting of South Berkshire **[Sold out]**

Wednesday, April 8 at 10:00 AM: Café Kehillah with Rabbi Jennifer Rudin via Zoom

Friday, April 10 at 5:00 PM: Kabbalat Shabbat at Unitarian Universalist Meeting of South Berkshire

Saturday, April 11 at 10:00 AM: Traditional Shabbat Service, celebrating Elaine Friedman's 95th birthday,
at Unitarian Universalist Meeting of South Berkshire

Monday, April 13 at 5:00 PM: April Board Meeting at Unitarian Universalist Meeting of South Berkshire

Wednesday, April 15 at 10:00 AM: Café Kehillah with Rabbi Jennifer Rudin via Zoom

Monday, April 20 at 12:00 PM: Memoir Workshop with Barbara Janoff via Zoom
at **7:00 PM:** Photography Workshop with Arthur Hillman via Zoom

Wednesday, April 22 at 10:00 AM: Café Kehillah with Rabbi Jennifer Rudin via Zoom

Friday, April 24 at 5:00 PM: Kabbalat Shabbat at Unitarian Universalist Meeting of South Berkshire

Saturday, April 25 at 10:00 AM: Shabbat Torah Study at Unitarian Universalist Meeting of South Berkshire

Wednesday, April 29 at 10:00 AM: Café Kehillah with Rabbi Jennifer Rudin via Zoom

The Unitarian Universalist Meeting of South Berkshire is located at 1089 Main Street, Housatonic, MA

This month's newsletter features:

Purim at CAS

Conference Reflections

CAS Service and Kiddush honoring Elaine Friedman on her 95th Birthday

Joey Weisenberg in Concert: a CAS Fundraiser

Notes from the March Board Meeting

From the CAS Photography Workshop

Yahrzeits

Donations

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Purim at CAS



Conference Reflections

From March 12th to March 15th, eight members of our community (Alison Adams-Weinberg, Joan and Dan Burkhard, Rabbi Jeffrey Eisenstat, Linda Geffin, Susan Hicks, Rabbi Rudin, and Molly Souede) joined hundreds of participants in Philadelphia for the Reconstructing Judaism conference. Rabbis, lay leaders, and congregants from across North America gathered to explore how we can build Jewish life that is both deeply rooted in tradition and responsive to the needs of our time.

The convention was organized around four thematic tracks—Deeply Rooted, Boldly Relevant, Thriving Communities, and Rekindling Light and Joy—each offering workshops, conversations, and shared experiences grounded in community.

Deeply Rooted

This track explored Judaism as the evolving civilization of the Jewish people, drawing on the legacy of Mordecai Kaplan. Linda G reflected on the importance of “deep learning—placing Jewish practice in its historical context while also asking what it means for us today.”

Susan Hicks highlighted a phrase that captured the spirit of the convention: “The past has a vote, but not a veto.” This balance between honoring tradition and embracing change resonated throughout.

Boldly Relevant

Sessions in this track focused on Judaism’s role in addressing today’s challenges. Joan shared, “The sessions opened our eyes to the ways Jewish groups are impacting the world.”

Dan reflected on evolving models of leadership and shared responsibility, shaped by a powerful question: Who has the power to open the ark? A proverb shared during the convention summed it up well: “If you want to travel fast, go alone. If you want to travel far, take others.”



Thriving Communities

Belonging was a central theme—how communities welcome and sustain diverse participants. Joan spoke about “belonging before belief” and the experience of living with “feet in both worlds”—both American and Jewish.

Participants also explored ideas from *Belonging: The Science of Creating Connection and Bridging Divides*, focusing on building stronger connections across differences. We were inspired by the diversity of attendees and by the growing trend of shared spaces, where congregations partner with others to create more collaborative community environments.

Rekindling Light and Joy

Even while engaging serious topics, the convention was filled with joy. As Susan H shared, “It was joyful to be in community.” Meeting colleagues from the Tikkun Olam Commission in person after years on Zoom was especially meaningful.

Music and prayer brought energy and connection. Alison noted of Rabbi Sean, “He had confidence and humor—you could tell he was having fun, and it made you want to join him.”

Rabbi Rudin introduced the idea of a Yizkor Circle, where participants share stories of remembrance—something she hopes to bring back to CAS.

A Shared Journey Forward

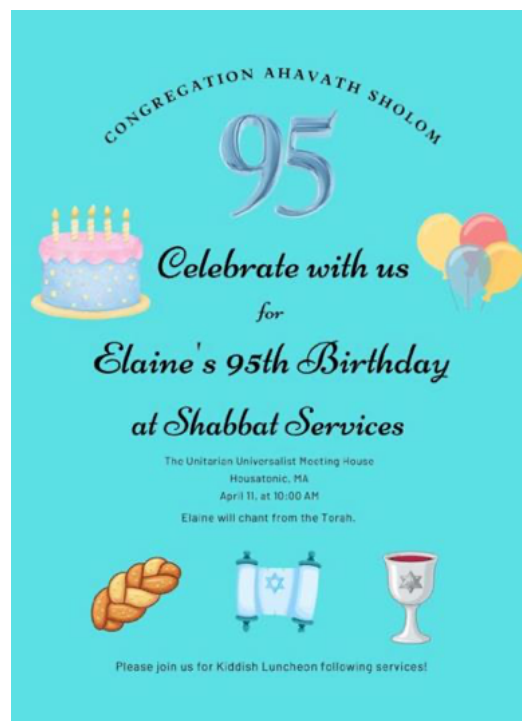
Across workshops, conversations, and services, one message stood out: Reconstructionist Judaism is shaped by the collective energy and creativity of its communities.

We return home energized—not only by new ideas, but by a deepened sense of connection. Building Jewish life for the future will take both deep roots and bold imagination—and, most importantly, people willing to walk that path together.

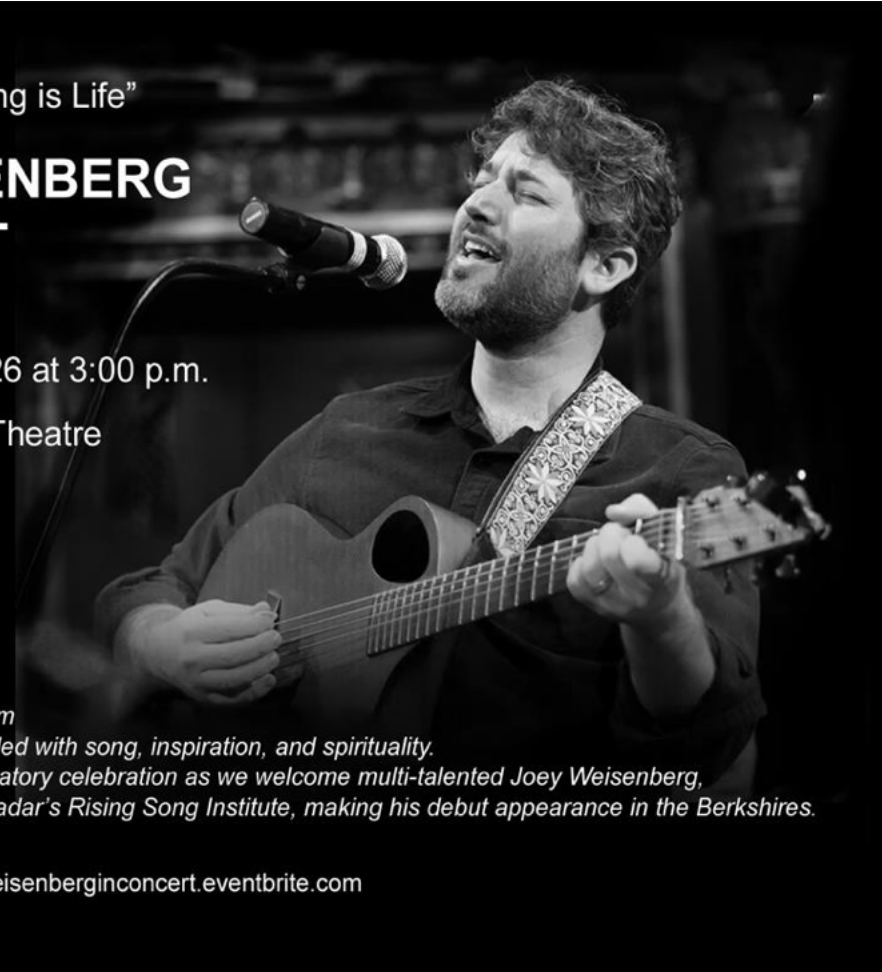
Rabbi Rudin

CAS Service and Extended Kiddush honoring Elaine Friedman

Elaine Friedman is inviting everyone to a shabbat service and kiddush to honor her birthday; she will be 95 on April 5th. Since the 5th is during Passover, she will be celebrating with the congregation on Saturday April 11th. Elaine will be reading from the Torah and giving a short talk on the Torah portion, "Shemini." All are invited to attend and help her celebrate; an extended kiddush lunch will be served. If you plan to attend, please RSVP to casoffice15@gmail.com so we know how much food to provide.



Joey Weisenberg in Concert, a CAS fundraiser



"Music is Breath, Song is Life"

JOEY WEISENBERG IN CONCERT

Sunday, May 17, 2026 at 3:00 p.m.

Elayne P. Bernstein Theatre
at SHAKESPEARE
& COMPANY
70 Kemble Street, Lenox, MA

*We invite you to join
Congregation Ahavath Sholom
for a memorable afternoon filled with song, inspiration, and spirituality.
Experience a vibrant, participatory celebration as we welcome multi-talented Joey Weisenberg,
the founder and director of Hadar's Rising Song Institute, making his debut appearance in the Berkshires.*

Order tickets at <https://joeyweisenberginconcert.eventbrite.com>

Tickets for the Joey Weisenberg concert at Shakespeare and Company on Sunday, May 17th, and for the brunch beforehand, are available and can be purchased at this website: <https://joeyweisenberginconcert.eventbrite.com>

Notes from the March Board Meeting

March 9, 2026

- A recent donation of \$1000 from the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires will go toward the purchase of new prayer books and Torah commentaries. We are also receiving a donation of books from a congregation in Baltimore that is closing.
- Members of the Executive Committee had a productive meeting with two people from the Jewish Community Legacy Project, an organization that provides advice and support to small Jewish congregations. They have noted the congregation's current needs and will seek to identify any possible donors.
- The *ad hoc* committees for Building Maintenance and Building Planning are continuing their work, respectively, to protect our North Street synagogue from further deterioration, and to investigate possible renovations, as well as other alternatives.
- The Board and the Religious and Spiritual Life Committee are looking into the inclusion of more instrumental music in Shabbat services. Comments from members of the congregation are welcome.

From the CAS Photography Workshop



Photograph by Michele Waldman from the February CAS Photography Workshop



Photograph by Judy Seaman from the February CAS Photography Workshop

April Yahrzeits

Much of our experience of divine goodness, grace and love has come to us through those whose lives have touched our own.

	Hebrew Date	Gregorian Date	This Years Date
Raye Steiner Pozefsky	Nisan 4 5734	3/27/74	4/1
John Gellert	Nisan 06 5726	3/27/1966	4/4
John P. Hammond	Nisan 06 5763	4/8/2003	4/4
Muriel Budnick	Nisan 07 5773	3/18/2013	4/5
Irving Nathaniel Barth	Nisan 8 5743	3/22/1983	4/6
Edward Alec Weiner	Nisan 12 5766	4/10/2006	4/10
Edith Rosenberger	Nisan 12 5756	4/2/1996	4/10
Lotte Kunstler	Nisan 13 5772	4/5/2012	4/11
Harry Mullen	Nisan 14 5753	4/5/1993	4/12
Jean Kessman	Nisan 15 5759	4/1/1999	4/13
Mal Guralnick	Nisan 21 5779	4/26/2019	4/19
Irma Waller	Nisan 23 5761	4/16/2001	4/21
Irving Gross		4/24	4/24
Jack Osterweil	Nisan 30 5750	4/25/1990	4/28
Rose Clarin	Nisan 30 5741	5/4/1981	4/28
Julius Greenstein	Iyyar 2 5762	4/14/2002	4/30

Donations

In memory of Elizabeth Norman

Irene Goldman-Price
Arthur & Louise Hillman
Debbie Slater
Susan Weinstein

In Honor of Elaine Friedman's 95th birthday

Susan & Tom Hicks
Arthur & Louise Hillman

In memory of Ed Weiner

Keren Weiner

In memory of Elaine Adams

Alison Adams-Weinberg

In memory of Barbara Barron

Debbie Slater

Mazel Tov to the entire Bornstein Family on the birth of Ava Gu Bornstein

Debbie Slater

General Contributions

Anonymous
Marion Jansen and Tom Murphy
Marie Rudden

In support of the Creative Arts Workshops

Ross Bettinger
Bruce Frishkoff
Linda Geffin
Arthur Hillman
Barbara Janoff
Carol Killian
Marie Rudden
Judith Seaman
Jeff Zimmerman

Prayer Books

Jeffrey Bornstein
Carol & Gerry Clarin
Elaine Friedman
Irene Goldman-Price
Susan & Tom Hicks

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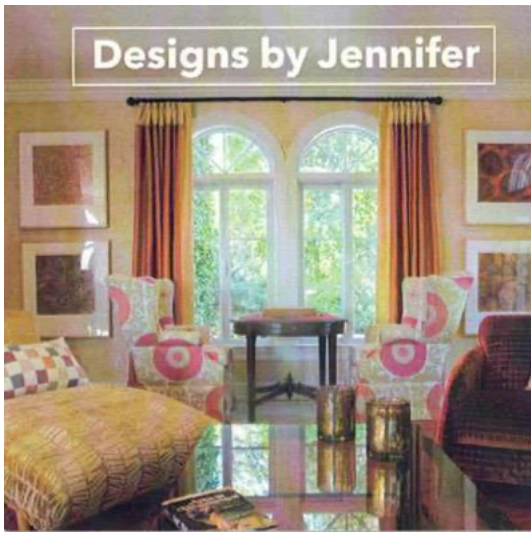
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