Dear Friends,

I often wrestle with the challenge of being present in the moment and the need to plan ahead. Rabbi Shawn and I have a running joke that when he begins to talk about the High Holidays in May, I either glaze over, demand that he stop or redirect by suggesting we go out for ice cream. Sometimes I have a hard time seeing past now and knowing what should/could be in the times ahead. However, as I look forward now, I am excited about some special opportunities to gather together.

This January will be the 18th anniversary of us moving into our building. It was January 6, 2002, when we walked with our Torahs from Chestnut Hill United Methodist church to our new home on Freeland Ave., arriving just as the freezing rain began. **On Shabbat morning January 4, we will celebrate 18 years of life in the building sharing stories and memories, honoring what it took to arrive here and live here all these years. Whether you have been here 18 years or one year, please come and take part in the celebration.**

Under the full moon on **Sunday, February 9**, we will gather to celebrate Tu B'Shevat and our sacred relationship with earth and spirit. In the tradition of the mystics we will travel through four layers of consciousness, opening to the wisdom of the Mystery, meeting angels and spirits along the way. And in the tradition of the people of the Wisshickon we will honor our connection to the land and our responsibility to care for the earth and all creatures. Rabbinic student Brielle Rassler will join us and help lift our spirits through song.

After the full moon of **Tu B'Shevat, Purim** arrives and we will celebrate in style. **Purim** is a holiday of transformation. Tradition teaches a mighty spirit flows through **Purim**, shaking up what is and opening possibilities not yet imagined. This happens through play, laughter and the willingness to let go.

**Monday evening, March 9**, Gabby Mayer-Kaplan will be back, taking her place as the **Purim Queen** she is and along with the Mishkan players we will rock the house. If you have never taken part in **Purim**—here is your chance. Join the comic writers and performers, come in custom, come to laugh and play. **Purim** can turn everything around. Let’s open to this spirit together.

(continued on the next page)
Rabbi Yael’s Letter

As we go through the days, weeks and months ahead, let us take opportunities to connect with each other. It is such a gift to be part of a community. Let’s continue to create together a refuge of strength and inspiration from which blessing and healing goes forth.

Please feel free to contact me if you would like to set a time to talk, visit connect.

Much blessing to all.
Shalom, Rabbi Yael

(continued from the previous page)

Our Second Soup and Song Shabbat, December 13, 7:00 p.m
At the home of Nancy & Seth Kreimer

by Ellen Tichenor

This year we have a chance to make new traditions, or revive old ones, that bring us together as a community outside of more formal services and events in the building.

Many of us recall Friday night musical Shabbat evenings filled with warmth, spirit and laughter at the home of Nancy and Seth Kreimer. People brought instruments, soup or simple fare, and we used the peace and protest songbook Rise Up Singing as a foundation. We improvised, but all we really needed was a desire to lift our voices and sing.

We’re delighted that Nancy and Seth are reviving this wonderful tradition in honor of R. Shawn’s Sabbatical, offering three Soup and Song Shabbat evenings in the coming months. Please RSVP directly to Nancy - nancykreim@gmail.com. You are welcome to attend even if you don’t RSVP but it is very helpful.

If you have a copy of Rise Up Singing, bring it along. Or bring something new you want to share - if you have copies it will be helpful. You don’t have to be a musician to add your voice. Bring something savory or sweet.

Hebrew School and Human Rights Shabbat
Led by Rabbi Yael

Saturday, Dec. 7, 10:00 am

Shabbat services will focus on immigration and human rights. The adult service will host Lara and Laial Bitar, young women from Homs, Syria where they and their family’s lives were threatened because of their Christian faith.

Shabbat School will give our students an opportunity to learn about immigrants rights with representatives from the New Sanctuary Movement and Rabbi Michael Ramberg. Each class will also attend Shabbat services.
Letter from the President

by Steve Jones

Dear Mishkan Member:

I’m writing to encourage you to make a special end-of-year donation to our Mishkan@30: ReGeneration Campaign.

As you know, a key goal of the campaign is to create a more sustainable future for the coming generations of the Mishkan community. We are envisioning the future Mishkan that our young people will create, one in which more resources are free to support essential acts of loving-kindness, Jewish learning, and prayer, and fewer resources will be needed to pay for our day-to-day costs.

Over these five years, the Mishkan community has committed to raising $950,000. Thanks to members’ generosity and the energetic leadership of our Campaign chairs, we have already achieved 80% of that goal in pledges. This is an amazing accomplishment.

I am asking for your help with a concrete goal we plan to achieve before the end of the secular year. While the pledges we have committed make us confident that we will get to our goal by the end of the Campaign, what we need right now is cash in hand. Our plan is to approach our mortgage holder with a large pre-payment that will reduce our overall interest costs. The more Campaign payments we have now, the more we can reduce these costs. The timing could not be better; a large pay-down now will position us to lock in current low rates into the future.

Many of us have expressed the importance of our Mishkan community in these challenging times. We value Mishkan as a place to re-charge our spiritual energy, to learn, and to focus our renewed energy toward doing good in the world. That value is reflected in the different types of growth we are creating all around us, in new members, in new religious school families, and in our programming.

The reason I am donating to the campaign is because I want that welcoming tent to be available to future generations of Mishkan-ites. I sense that you feel the same way, and I hope you will do what you can to help with the current Campaign objective.

Please consider making a generous end-of-calendar year contribution. We are in the process of discussing pledges with each of you. If we have not been able to speak to you yet, please know that we will do so in the coming year, and please feel free to contact me if you would like to hasten that conversation.

Steve Jones
Board President

Mishkan Member Carlos Nunes’ Solo Art Exhibit: Calles de Oro
In the Heschel-King Room, 2nd Floor, Mishkan Shalom

Calles de Oro (Streets of Gold) brings together a series of paintings reflecting the widely-held belief among immigrants that the streets of the U.S. are paved with gold, and provides a perspective on what immigrants go through to reach these so-called “streets of gold.” An immigrant from Ecuador raised in the U.S., Nunez’s paintings reflect on his past by using words that have echoed for him since childhood. Carlos will generously donate 20% of any sales to New Sanctuary Movement of Philadelphia.

Ongoing exhibit is open to the public by appt only. Please contact Maria in the Mishkan office: maria@mishkan.org
In English class at Germantown Friends School, Lyla and her classmates are making their way through George Orwell’s *Animal Farm*. But in *Moxie*, a book she’s reading on her own, the themes strike close to home.

The book’s protagonist attends a school in Texas where sexism abounds. “The football team treats girls as objects. Administrators are calling girls out for their skirts being too short. [The girl] puts posters around the school anonymously about feminism,” Lyla explains.

A lifelong commitment to equity—combined with her love of filmmaking and photography—inspired Lyla’s *tikkun olam* project: to make a short film in which girls and women of different ages talk about what feminism means to them.

“I was raised knowing that everybody should be treated equally,” Lyla says. “When I got older, I noticed how things are not fair in the world. I wanted to be part of trying to tell people who are younger that it’s not good when you see things like that happen.”

Her film will also highlight the work of Girls Inc., a national advocacy program that promotes girls’ empowerment. Lyla plans to donate some of her *bat mitzvah* money to the project.

When Lyla began Hebrew School in the Gani/Aleph class, Sundays and Wednesdays meant art projects, planting bulbs outdoors, eating snacks and seeing friends. It was last year when the reality of a *bat mitzvah* began to dawn. “I was kind of nervous. I was afraid of the *Torah* portion, of messing up. But recently, when I saw someone have their *bar mitzvah*, I thought: Oh, I can do this.”

Lyla has worked with tutor Rivka Jarosh to learn *trop*, practice prayers and talk about her *Torah* portion, *Vayishlach* (Gen. 32:4-36:43). “It’s the portion where he’s wrestling with the angel,” she says. In an earlier *parasha*, she explains, “Jacob seems like he’s not a good person. He ‘traded’ Esau’s birthright for soup and lied to his father to get his blessing. But I think he’s slowly becoming a better person.

“I’m making my *d’var Torah* about telling the truth and honesty,” an idea that strikes her as especially relevant at a time when people can easily falsify their identities online. “If you say you’re this person and not that person, it can get traced back to you. It can end up being a greater issue,” she says.

When not doing homework or practicing her *parasha*, Lyla loves to bake—brownies and cookie bars are among her favorites—and play basketball. She also makes short films: slide shows with music or videos featuring her friends.

Recently she did a walk-through of her *bat mitzvah* service. “I got super-excited: Oh, my God, this is actually happening. I’ve learned a lot more about the [Jacob] story. I’ve learned more prayers. After my *bat mitzvah*, I’ll be considered an actual person in the congregation—part of something bigger, not just a student in the school.

“When it’s done, I can look back and think, ‘Wow, I finished all of that.’ It will be a bigger accomplishment if it’s more of a struggle. If it was super-easy, it wouldn’t feel as rewarding.’”
Welcome These New Members...

John and Wanda Beilenson

by David Calloway

Like many of us at Mishkan Shalom, John and Wanda Beilenson (pronounced “Bee-lenson”) followed an unusual, even convoluted, path to where they are today. They live in Chestnut Hill with their son Jacob, a recent graduate of Wesleyan University. John leads SCP, Strategic Communications & Planning, a socially responsible consulting firm and Certified B Corp in Wayne. And Wanda, a retired marketing consultant, pursues a range of valuable volunteer activities.

John’s focus of late has been bringing his expertise and knowledge to helping the country and communities deal with opportunities presented by growing numbers of older people. “We’re helping people get wiser about getting older,” he says. John serves as a board member and former chair of Surrey Services for Seniors in Devon, PA, and recently became a trustee of Green Tree Community Health Foundation in Chestnut Hill.

As a “communications and branding person,” John appreciates Mishkan’s “very accurate” match between “what you see on the outside and what you get on the inside.” He adds, “The progressive values, the intellectual approach to Reconstructionist Judaism... I couldn’t be happier. The rabbis and volunteers in the congregation are very committed to this approach to Jewish life.”

John enjoys connecting with other Mishkan members in general, but especially those working on “issues of aging and life stages, creating meaning and purpose at any age.” He wrote an interactive journal for people considering retirement and other transitions in later life, called The Future Me: Authoring the Second Half of Your Life.

Having grown up in White Plains, New York, John founded his company in New York City. How, I asked, did he end up in Philly? “It was true love,” he said. He met Wanda while pursuing a Masters degree in Communications Studies in North Carolina. When Wanda’s job moved to Philadelphia in 1994, he moved here with Wanda, and with Wanda’s daughter Carly. Marrying in 1995, the family moved to Wayne and soon welcomed the birth of son Jacob.

When Jacob was ready for Hebrew School, the family joined a nearby Reform synagogue, though an RRC graduate rabbi prepared Jacob for his Bar Mitzvah. That event was celebrated at Masada in Israel, with his family and grandparents in attendance. When Wanda and John moved to Chestnut Hill as empty nesters in 2016, they joined Mishkan, which John says has “been a real joy and blessing ever since.”

In Mishkan’s racial, cultural, and gender diversity, John sees “such a welcoming place, a beloved community” that “could be a model for the rest of our communities and nation to emulate.” From his first service, he says, he’s “loved the services—the intellectual challenge, the progressive messages from (both) the bimah and the congregation. And the informality of it—it’s less buttoned-down than the reform congregations I grew up in.” Mishkan’s commitment to social justice also resonates for John, and inspires his work helping organizations and associations “communicate toward social good... Part of communicating (effectively),” he points out, “is to ground our values in political and practical ways.”

Most recently, John has been “energized by Mindfulness, Rabbi Yael’s A Way In writing and services,” which he looks forward to exploring more deeply.

Jacob and John often attend Mishkan services together. Jacob, now 22, taught religious school at a synagogue in Connecticut before graduating from Wesleyan. He is now pursuing Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) certification locally.

Wanda shares Mishkan’s progressive social values. She teaches English as a Second Language at the Nationalities Service Center in Philadelphia. And, as a volunteer pharmacist at Community Volunteers in Medicine in West Chester, she “provides health care to folks, including many immigrants, who are working but don’t qualify for or can’t afford health care,” John reports. Wanda’s daughter Carly, 36, is a graphic designer who recently also moved to Philadelphia, from Raleigh, NC.

“It’s a blessing to have the family close by,” he says. “Along with Mishkan, it really creates a powerful connection to this place, to our community.”
**Immigrant and Refugee Rights Committee**

by Gail Bober

**Our Mission:** The Immigrant and Refugee Rights Committee seeks to engage Mishkan as an institution and our individual members in the struggle for immigrant justice and refugee protection. We do this through:

- Coordinating and building upon existing efforts as a member congregation of New Sanctuary Movement, supporter of HIAS PA/HIAS International, participant in the Northwest Philadelphia Immigrant Action and Mobilization and interfaith initiatives that assist refugees, asylum seekers and those facing deportation.
- Acting as a clearinghouse and resource to provide information throughout the congregation on hands-on support activities, advocacy and direct action and protest.
- Educating ourselves and members of our congregation on immigrant and refugee rights, connecting our experiences as Jews who fled persecution and oppression to the experience of today’s immigrants and refugees.

Contact Seth Horowitz (reachseth@gmail.com) to be on the committee’s list-serve.

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<th>Happenings At Mishkan Shalom</th>
<th>Mishkan and the Community</th>
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| **Human Rights Shabbat, December 7,** when the religious school and Shabbat service will host programs on immigrant and refugee rights. | **New Sanctuary Movement Accompaniment Volunteer Training**

These are the two dates NSM will have:

Friday, December 13, 1:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Sunday December 15, 2:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Location TBD

As a reminder: This is a required training if you are participating in Accompaniment. The training will go over the basics of attending court, your role at court, and also go deeper into what it means to be an ally in this space. It is a great refresher for experienced volunteers, an excellent chance to build up skills for newer volunteers, and a chance for all of us to build community. Even if you’ve been an active volunteer for a while, we would like you to come to learn about updates in the process, share your wisdom and have a common training so that everyone is on the same page. If you have any questions please contact Grace Cooper via email at grace@sanctuaryphiladelphia.org.

| **New Sanctuary Movement Community Liaisons/ Promotora de Justicia,** Lauren Derstine and one of her fellow Promotoras, will meet with the religious school students at 9:30 a.m.. The adult service will host Lara and Laial Bitar, young women from Homs, Syria, where they and their family’s lives were threatened because of their Christian faith. The girls were particularly at risk of being attacked. At one point, their Muslim neighbors took them in and hid them in their basement to protect them from fundamentalists who were killing Christians like themselves. After fleeing to the mountains, they learned their lifetime home was destroyed. Lara and Laial managed to get to the U.S. to study. After they came here, more violence occurred, including the shooting of a cousin. Because of the danger and the war, they could not return to Syria and applied for asylum which was granted after more than two years of waiting. Today they work in a hospital doing administrative work and Arab interpretation. They will share their experiences in Syria and their hopes for the future in the U.S. |

| **Nationalities Service Center (NSC):** NSC provides comprehensive services to immigrants and refugees, including legal protections, community integration, access to health and wellness services, and opportunities to achieve English language proficiency. Volunteers are needed for the following: |

| **Groceries & Hot Meals:** Seeking volunteers who are able to donate groceries and/or make a hot meal |
| **Donation Assistance (at NSC):** 1-2 hours per week or as needed to help sort and distribute donations |
| **Welcome Kits:** Donate items for welcome kits (see website). |
| **Home Setup Sponsor & Volunteer:** Help set up new homes for refugees or sponsor an entire household |

For more information about any of these volunteer opportunities contact: Jocelyne Rico | Community Support Specialist: Phone: 215.893-8400 ext. 1562; www.nscphila.org

Gail Bober, gbober52@gmail.com
Equal Exchange Fairly Traded Products Fundraiser!

• Benefits Mishkan Shalom School
• Supports small family farms & carefully sourced ingredients

Wonderful Hanukkah Gifts!

CLICK HERE TO VIEW THE CATLOGUE!

Thank you Keely Newman and Kristen Block for helping us run this very quick – and tasty – fundraiser!

You will find catalogues in our lobby offering coffees, olive oils, teas, cocoas, and CHOCOLATES! (Our fundraising items DO NOT include everything on their website, order catalogue items only.) Take a look, complete the order form and get it back to Keely, hard copy or scanned, NO LATER THAN 12/4! (Email to: keelymccarthy1@gmail.com)

Mishkan will receive a full 40% of the sales. It is especially gratifying to know that the products support small family farms and that all ingredients are carefully sourced.

• Important Dates: 12/4 – Submit Order Sheets to Keely, hard copy or scanned, Payment should be made by check to Mishkan Shalom (email to Keely - keelymccarthy1@gmail.com
• 12/5 – Keely places the order
• 12/18 – Pick up order at Mishkan!
Visit the Library After Services

Would you like to know what’s in Mishkan’s Library? We’d like to show it off. On December 7, Library Committee members will be in the Library for about an hour right after morning services. Stop by and let us show you the wonderful resources we have, and how you can take advantage of them.

SAVE THE DATE:
Mishkan Movie Night

**On Saturday, January 25, 7:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.** we’ll show a movie - title to be announced - that will complement our One Book Mishkan. Please come and enjoy the movie and the discussion that will follow, along with plenty of food and drinks that are always a part of our events!

Everyone is welcome to join the discussion afterwards, led by a member of the book committee, and to enjoy **Come even if you haven’t read the book.** While it is a memoir of one family’s struggles, the issues it raises - immigration, refugees, assimilation, family dynamics, the central place of food in those dynamics, differences between Jewish communities, differences between Jewish and gentile communities, health care systems - are ones we live with every day, especially in these times.

Join the Committee

One of the three areas in Mishkan’s Statement of Principles is Torah/Study. Would you like to help the Mishkan Library Committee to support the Congregation’s work in that area by taking care of the Library space, selecting a book for the Congregation to read each year, and then organizing programs around that book? This involves four or five meetings each year and pitching in at Committee events. We’re always looking for new members. Send an e-mail to Committee Chair Adam Blistein (blistein@comcast.net).
Mazel Tov
We offer a hearty mazel tov to Lyla Conley and her family as she becomes bat mitzvah.

Love and Support
This month we send our ongoing love, support, and prayers for healing to Mishkan members Michael Drake, Ray Kaplan, Joyce Hanna, Gene Bishop, Gena Lopata, Robin Berenholz, Bernice Bricklin, Robin Leidner and Natalie Gorvine.

We also send ongoing love, support, and prayers for healing to all those Mishkan members in need of healing but who seek to remain private.

We are keeping Eleazar Shimon Hakohen ben Shoshana v’Ahron Yosaif (father of Rabbi Shawn Zevit), Sarah Rivka bat Elizabeth (mother of Rabbi Shawn Zevit), Lynn, Shifra Leah bat Gershon v’Minoocha (mother of Gabby Kaplan-Meyer), Alvin Saltzman (father of Alyse Saltzman Flowers), Shoshana bat Akiba v’Chaya (mother of Homer Robinson), Carol Dombroski (mother of Brian Dombroski), Natalie Caplin (mother of Wendy Caplin), Sarah Bradley (mother of David Bradley), Debra Singer(sister of Karen Singer), Patrick Windle (brother of Susan Windle), Sal Berenholz (father of Robin Berenholz), Jackie Berman-Gorvine (daughter-in-law of Natalie & Harold Gorvine), Edgar Galson (father of Wendy Galson and father-in-law of Susan Windle), Don Levinson, brother of Eilen Levinson, and Julie Post and Joseph Post (sister and father of Nancy Post) and in our prayers as well. May they all experience a refuah sheleimah (full healing).

A reminder: Snail mail cards are always welcomed by all those who are healing, and mourning. If you think of it, do it!

Are you receiving Acts of Caring via email?
Acts of Caring now goes out to all Mishkan members. It is our communication central for sharing life cycle events and community needs for help. If you are not receiving Acts of Caring, please check your spam, or if you have gmail, your solicitations folder (Acts of Caring is distributed by Constant Contact). If you unsubscribe from Ma Ha'dash, intentionally or accidentally, you will also be unsubscribed from Acts of Caring. Please contact the office for clarification.

Acts of Caring
Acts of Caring lets the Mishkan Shalom community learn about significant events in the lives of our members. In this way, we can reach out to one another in times of grief, illness, and joy. To reach us simply email: actsofcaring@mishkan.org.

HINENI--HERE I AM
If you could use a little help because of illness, or joy (new baby!) or you know of a Mishkan member too shy to ask, please email actsofcaring@mishkan.org and we will reach out. Hineni offers concrete support to members in need of short term help, including meals, visits, transportation, etc. If you would like some help, but do not wish a public solicitation, please contact the rabbis, or actsofcaring@mishkan.org and we will speak with you privately and seek to arrange help. Our Hineni coordinators are Lisa Mervis and Chris Taranta.

Got Nachas? Sharing your good news is a marvelous way to connect our community! Please don’t be shy - send all lifecycle events you would like to be posted to our email address: actsofcaring@mishkan.org.
Yahrzeits
Please join us for TorWah Study every Saturday from 9:00 a.m. – 9:55 a.m.

Friday, December 6, 7:30 p.m. – Kabbalat Shabbat Service, with Rabbi Yael

Saturday, December 7, 10:00 a.m. – Human Rights Shabbat Service, with Rabbi Yael

Friday, December 13, 6:30 p.m. – Shabbat, Soup and Song at the home of Nancy Fuchs Kreimer and Seth Kreimer

Saturday, December 14, 10:00 a.m. – Shabbat Service, with Rabbi Yael. Lyla Conley will be called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah.

Saturday, December 21, 10:00 a.m. – A Way In Mindfulness Service, with Rabbi Yael

Friday, December 27, 7:30 p.m. – Rosh Hodesh Kabbalat Shabbat Service

Saturday, December 28, 10:00 a.m. – Shabbat Service with Rabbi Tsurah August, Yosaif August and the Mishkan Choir

SAVE THESE DATES

January 18
MLK Weekend and New Member Shabbat

January 25
Library Movie Night

Saturday + Sunday - February 1 + 2
Night of Many Dinners + Day of Many Brunches Weekend

Saturday, February 8
Jewish Disability and Inclusion Awareness Month Shabbat Service

Sunday, Feb. 9, 7:00 pm
Tu B'Shevat Seder
Members-$18
Non-members-$25

On three things the world rests:
Study, Prayer, and Acts of Caring

Mishkan Shalom is part of Jewish Reconstruction Communities, in Association with the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College.