UPCOMING EVENTS AND INITIATIVES

Women’s Megillah Reading
Celebrate 25 years of women reading the Megillah on Purim morning at Shearith Israel. Contact Mrs. Lisa Rohde at lirohde-csi@yahoo.com to participate.

Sisterhood Purim Greeting Card Project
Send Purim notifications to friends! Go online at shearithisrael.org/sisterhoodmanot fill out the form and pay by credit card. Deadline: March 1. For more information, please contact Mrs. Lisa Rohde at lirohde-csi@yahoo.com or Mrs. Carla Schein at scheinc6@gmail.com.

Upcoming cooking classes

Mishloah Manot Deliveries
Help fulfill a beautiful mitzvah and bring joy into someone’s life. Help us deliver Mishloah Manot packages to the elderly and homebound after Megillah reading on Purim day, March 5. Volunteer by emailing Alana Shultz at ashultz@shearithisrael.org. Alana will then send you a link so that you can sign up to deliver to addresses that are convenient to you. See Alana to pick up the packages.

Learn to Read Hebrew Level 1: Sundays 10:00 am - 11:00 am Level 2/3: Thursdays 6:45 - 7:45 pm
To sign up: shearithisrael.org/hebrewclasses

Heretics and History: The Retrial of Spinoza
The grand finale to a 3-part-series with Rabbi Soloveichik
Sunday, March 8 | 4:30 pm
The excommunication of Baruch (Benedict) Spinoza by the Jews of Amsterdam is one of the most famous events in modern Jewish history. Who was Spinoza and what did he believe? Why were his views seen as so dangerous by Dutch Jews? Was the excommunication justified? In what way is the story of his excommunication relevant to us as Jews today? Join us in our majesty sancturary for a 21st century re-trial of Spinoza featuring a cast of esteemed rabbis, scholars and jurists, as well as an appearance by Spinoza himself.

Go to shearithisrael.org/spinoza to register. Sponsorship opportunities are available.

Friday Night Lights & Bites
Post-Purim Hilkhot of Cocktails | March 6
Join us for Kiddush, motzi, cocktails and light hors d’oeuvres. For registered guests. To Register: shearithisrael.org/bites

Indian cooking class with Fiona Amiel
Co-sponsored with the Shearith Israel league, JICNY and JDC Entwine
Wednesday, March 18 | 7:00 pm | Levy Auditorium
Love Indian food? Join Shearith Israel member, Fiona Amiel for an interactive cooking demo while learning about the Jewish communities in India. Take advantage of this great opportunity to learn and taste authentic Jewish Indian food and to take home amazing recipes. Cost $10. To register, go to shearithisrael.org/Indian-Cooking.

Shearith Israel Book Club
8:00pm | Wednesdays March 11, April 15, and May 13
Location in a private home | Esther Hidary
Join the Shearith Israel book club! RSVP to chidy@gmail.com and start reading! The first book is ‘The Betrayers’ by David Bezmozgis.

Our next public tour is:
Tuesday, March 10 at 11:00 am
Meet with our Parnas
Our Parnas would be delighted to meet with you. Please schedule a visit at parnas@shearithisrael.org.

Upcoming Judaic Education

Wednesday, March 15
Parashat Hashabua | Esther Hidary | 10:00 am (Special Purim class this week!)
The Fast of Esther, the First Converse
Rabbi Richard Hidary
This coming Wednesday, we will refrain from eating in commemoration of the three day fast that Esther and Jews took upon themselves twenty-four centuries ago. The requirement to reenact her fast is surprising not only because she fasted on Passover in Nisan, not on Adar 13 before Purim. Second, unlike other rabbinic fasts that memorialize past tragedy, the threat of Haman never materialized and in fact ended with joy. Third, this fast is not mentioned in the Megillah or anywhere in the Talmud and first crops up as a requirement in ninth century Babylonia. Why, then, did this custom catch on and become a halakhic requirement?
Perhaps Jews in the centuries after the Second Temple’s destruction identified their plight more with Esther’s distress than with her celebration. Living in exile under foreign rule in hostile cultures, trying to use whatever political connections they could to save their lot, they felt as unsure about their futures as Esther did before meeting Ahashverosh to plead for her people. Of course, Jewish celebration of Purim and Passover too because they had deep faith that God would save them again. (That’s why we wouldn’t fast in Nisan as Esther did.) Nevertheless, they also wanted to commemorate the process of bringing redemption through fasting, prayer, and repentance.
This theory is only a conjecture for the Geonic period, but it is a fact for the later Conversos. The story of Purim resonated strongly with crypto-Jews who, like Esther, could not reveal their religion and had to practice halakha only in private. For this reason, the fast of Esther became perhaps the most important day on the Converso calendar. The guidelines of the Spanish Inquisition reveal that observing the fast of Esther was a greater indicator of Judaizing activity than was celebrating Purim itself.
Fascinatingly, the Conversos knew Megillat Esther not from the Hebrew version but rather from the Catholic Bible, which includes six additional chapters that date back to the Septuagint translation. These text were so popular that they could be recited by heart by Mariana Nunez, a Judaizer in 16th century Mexico. One of these additions is a prayer recited by Esther who declares:
You know the conscience of the heart and you know that I hate the splendor of the wicked and abhor the bed of the uncircumcised and of any alien. You know my necessity that I abhor the sign of my proud position... And your servant has not eaten at Haman’s table, and I have not honored the king’s feast or drunk the wine of the libations. Your servant has had no joy since the day that I was brought here until now, except in You, O Lord God of Abraham, O God, whose might is over all, hear the voice of the despairing, and save us from the hands of evildoers. And save me from my fear!** Esther pledges to God and to herself that although she receives all the material benefits of a Persian queen, she does not enjoy her position and her true allegiance is with her God and her people. Let us use the fast of Esther and the feast of Purim to celebrate our own freedom to practice our Judaism publicly and with pride.

Matanot L’evyonim
One of the central mitzvot of Purim is charity, matanot la-eyyonim. Please contribute to the Rabbi’s Discretionary Fund indicating the purpose “Purim” before Purim, so that Rabbi Soloveichik can distribute funds to the poor on Purim morning on your behalf, and facilitate your fulfillment of this mitzvah.

Hazakah U’berukha to Janet Kirschheimer whose project, in collaboration with Aliza Augustine, “How to Spot One of Us,” an exhibit detailing the experiences of Holocaust survivors through poetry and film, is on display until May 18 at the Human Rights Institute Gallery at Kean University in Union County, NJ.

We mourn the passing of our members:
Jeanine Franco Deutsch. We express condolences to her children Allan Deutsch and Colette Ebert.
Sarita Haddad. We express condolences to her daughters, Marcie Sillam, Donna Haddad, and, Lisa Haddad Hoke.

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Candle Lighting: 5:27 pm
Minhah: 5:30 pm
Friday Night Lights: following services | Rabbi Soloveichik gives a talk on: “The Joy of Lammentation: The Shabbat Sermons of Rabbi Norman Lamm”

2014-2015 season sponsored by the Juli family
Young Members + Friends Shabbat Dinner | following Friday Night Lights | Elias Room | For registered guests
Shaharit (Nishmat): 9:00 am | Rabbi Soloveichik delivers a sermon entitled: “The Talmud of Westminster Abbey”

Meaning and Melody | Rabbi Morris gives a talk on the topic of “Sing It Like You Mean It: Az Yachir and the Lesson of Jewish Unity!” 10:00 am | Little Synagogue
Tots Shabbat | Ages 0-4 | 10:00 am | Elias Room | Featuring Rabbi Morris at 11:00 am
Youth Groups | Ages 5-12 | 10:00 am | Children’s library
Assigned Jr. Congregation | Ages 5-12 | 10:30 am | Little Synagogue | Next Assigned Jr. Congregation is March 28
Kiddush Luncheon | Levy auditorium | Sponsored by Melissa Pearlman & Bruce Cohen in honor of their forthcoming wedding and the Hebra Hased Va’Amot
Parashat Hashabuah: The Parts They Skip In School
Rabbi Hidary | 4:20 pm | For high school students | Held at the Hidary’s home, 1 W 85th St Apartment 6A

Seudah Shelishit & Pirkei Abot Shur
Rabbi Soloveichik | 4:20 pm | Spring Semester Sponsored by Lewis Lipsey
Minhah/Arbit: 5:20 pm
Keter Shem Toh: | Rabbi Hidary | Main Sanctuary
Habdalal | 6:15 pm
Musical Habdalal: 7:00 pm

Shabbat Tetsavveh-Zakhor
February 27-28, 2015

The Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue
CONGREGATION SHEARIT ISRAEL
Shabat Tetsavveh-Zakhor
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