



Congregation Kol Ami  
Religious School  
**CHAI TIMES**

December 12, 2010

*Chai Family Time*

Today, we met for the last time in 2010. We had a great turn out this morning. It is always great to see other congregants at Chai School. Doug Alpert, Scholar-in-Residence, joined us this morning as featured speaker at Chai Family Time. Doug led us in prayer and discussion. He stated that Jews have always been a questioning people so with that, he entertained many questions from the group. After Chai Family Time Doug facilitated Adult Education and made classroom visits. Thank you, Doug for spending the morning with us.

We also celebrated Matthew's birthday and upcoming Bar Mitzvah. Matthew spoke a little about his Bar Mitzvah and then extended an open invitation to come to services and celebrate with him. And in perfect Jewish spirit, he told us that we better have a good excuse for not coming. OOH that Jewish guilt is in our blood!

The Kol Ami Harvester Mitzvah Project continues and we need your help to help others. The new theme is PASTA MEALS. This can be the things to put together for a pasta meal like noodles and sauce. Boxed meals and canned dinners are welcomed..."Neat little noodles you can eat with a spoon,UH OH Spaghetti Os" Make it a goal to bring at least one contribution every time you visit the Temple.



**REMEMBER** we do not have Chai School again until January 9. On behalf of all of the Chai School staff, we want to wish you all a very happy, healthy, and wealthy NEW YEAR!

Today, we also said farewell to Ron Scrogam. Ron has been a wonderful Chai School teacher and a valued staff member over the last several years. Ron is a high school teacher out there in that world beyond Kol Ami. This year, he has had to take on additional responsibilities. Ron is a true professional and feels if he cannot give 100% to his work than he is not doing right by his students at either location. Therefore, Ron has had to resign his teaching position at Kol Ami's Chai School. Ron will be missed by the staff and students. Ron is not resigning from Temple life so he remains very much a part of our Kol Ami Family. Ron's students, Julia and Emery will join the Sackins' class when we return in January.

Julia and Emery saying their thank yous and farewells to Ron.



### *K-1 with Stan Strauss*

Class began by reviewing the story and reason for celebrating Chanukah. This was followed, of course, by sharing how we celebrated at home and telling about one of the gifts we received. Then, we moved on to our Torah study. We started the story of Joseph. We got as far as Joseph being sold into slavery by his brothers. Some interesting discussions came up from my young thinkers during the story. We wondered how can a parent favor one child over another. We talked about how Jacob created this problem among his own sons. They brought up how Joseph was pretty much a spoiled brat and a tattletale. We also talked about "jealousy" and "revenge" and how neither can lead to much good. WOW, what great thinkers! However, we also talked about how God had a plan and that we'll learn how God will make good things can come from bad. Would you believe that our Kindergarten and First grade students could be such deep thinkers? They are definitely following their Jewish path. We ended by making our own designer "coats of many colors." We will model them when we return from winter break. Happy holiday and Happy New Year!



2-3 with Annette Carlson

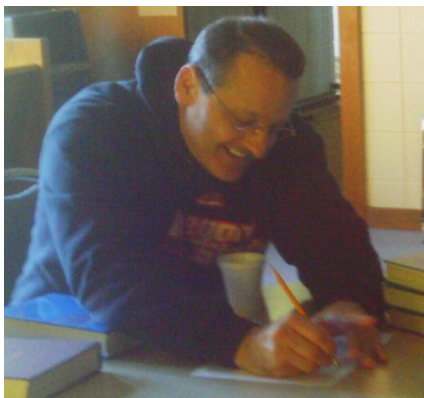


4-5 with Ron Scrogam

For the last Fourth and Fifth grade class of this year and the last for me as it's teacher, we spoke at length about being a Jew in the midst of the Christmas festivities. Our discussion explored the paradoxes of the Jewishness of Jesus, including the fact that as a devout Jew, he would have prayed the schema—a fact that certainly complicates the Christian understanding of the trinity. Our discussion then moved to Genesis and the establishment of the covenant with Abraham, its sign in the flesh through the rite of circumcision, and the often neglected observation that Abraham laughed first at the announcement that he would have a child Sarah, whereas, she often receives more criticism for her reasonable, womanly skepticism. We concluded class and my tenure as teacher with the negotiations between God and Abraham for the sparing of Sodom and Gomorrah. I shared with the students that this is the passage that most attracted me to Judaism—that we as human may hold God accountable to be God: “Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?” (Genesis 18:25). I challenged the students to be an Abraham and to stand in the gap between the Creator and the creatures. It has been a privilege and blessing to be a teacher in Religious School. I have learned much more than I have taught.

Shalom,  
Ron

Thank you, Ron. You have been a great Chai School teacher! Shalom



### **6-7 with Steve and Linda Sackin**

We began class reviewing subject matter from this semester. What is time? Why and how do we measure it? How was the Jewish calendar derived? What is the object of the mosaic project? Why create an orchard? We provided each student with a synopsis of the Jewish month they will be representing on the mosaic. It gave background on holidays, historical, seasonal, and mystical references to their month. After studying it, they began sketching ideas for the image that they believe evokes something characteristic of the month.

Next, we briefly considered the students sense of nature and wilderness. I asked why it might be important that they are creating a place for nature to thrive right in the middle of the city. One student responded with this:

#### The Garden

Cars go by, light speeding rabbits.  
The air is filled with smoke.  
The streets have ruined the Earth.  
Our machine minds have utterly wiped out nature.  
But, in the midst of all this chaos,  
there stands a little patch of paradise.  
An oasis in a desert of machines.  
A garden! A place where anyone  
can have some sanctuary  
from our machine thinking.

Class concluded with a preview of the curriculum for next semester. As we considered time primarily as a way to measure duration, next semester we will consider how Jews use their time. Particularly, we will focus on making time sacred. Lastly, we went outside to inaugurate yet another compost bin that Owen donated to the garden.

### **Music with Patrick Buckley**

#### **Hebrew with Patrick Buckley**



*Confirmation with Cantor Silbersher*

Confirmation students were invited to engage with Doug Alpert and did not officially meet as a class.

*Adult Education with Barry Speert*

Today, Adult Education was facilitated by guest Scholar-in-Residence, Doug Alpert. There is no summary. You just had to be there.



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