

A Message From the Rabbi

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and Jewish Values

The Supreme Court has just ruled on the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. This historic ruling and the details of the policies and procedures of the act will be long debated. Many look to this legislation, which has now been affirmed, as a way to get health insurance. Others are concerned that the costs are prohibitive and that the increased taxation on the wealthy could be spent otherwise or that such an increase in taxation is not good for the economy.



It is neither my intention nor purpose to enter into the nuts and bolts of what is involved in the Affordable Care Act. Regardless of the specifics, which are indeed controversial and which contributed to the rise of the Tea Party, from a religious perspective providing medical care for everyone fulfills a number of mitzvot and is consistent with the highest values of Judaism. The Torah, in Leviticus xix, teaches us not to put a stumbling block before the blind, as an early example of compassion for those who are disabled or ill, and that we must not stand idly by when our neighbor's blood is being spilled. A Jew is obligated to intervene and alleviate the suffering of all others. The same chapter teaches us to love our neighbors as ourselves. We should want all to be able to have the same medical care we would want for ourselves. Maimonides, the great medieval Jewish philosopher and legal authority, taught that health care is the primary communal service that a community must provide. *Rachmanut*, compassion, is the highest Jewish ideal.

While people of good will may disagree on mode of implementation, hopefully we can all agree that we must not stand idly by while members of our society, in this most prosperous country in the history of humanity, are forced to forego adequate medical care.

The polls show that many have been unhappy with this legislation. Regardless, as Jews and as human beings, I hope that we support the underlying values inherent in universal care.

Shalom,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David Oler".

Rabbi David Oler

Welcome New Member

Nicole Lyons, MD

Congratulations to the In-coming Board

The congregation thanks its out-going officers and Board of Directors for their service during the past year and offers congratulations and support to those who will be leading Kadima during the coming year:

Officers

President	Marc Dubey
Executive Vice President	Randy McCool
Vice President	Jack Henkin
Vice President	Howard Teitelbaum
Vice President	Yelena Kalugina
Treasurer	Michael Mondschain
Secretary	Linda Frankel

Board of Directors

Callie Dixon
Vicky Feingold
Al Levine
Howard Lipsky
Steve Simon
Brian Smart
Ron Tomaszewski

Many Thanks

to
Dean and Linda Frankel
and to
Mark Shapiro and Yelena Kalugina
for hosting Sabbath services in June.

Thanks also to
Shana Mallin and Sam Bassin
for hosting the recent evening
of food, friends and Israeli music.

Patrons and Sustaining Members

Patrons and Sustaining Members generously choose to pay special dues that make it possible for the congregation to assist members who find it difficult to pay full dues or school fees.

Please consider becoming a Patron or Sustaining Member.

Patron: \$6,120
Sustaining: \$4,488
Sustaining Single: \$3,060

Patrons:

Al & Bobbie Levine
Jack Henkin & Louise Pearson
Dr. Scott & Amy Taxman
Avers & Gloria Wexler

Sustaining Members:

Warren & Ellen Schoen
Scott Warren



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A Message from the President

Dear Congregants,

It's midsummer and, in addition to everyone cooking, things are starting to cook at Congregation Kadima. **Steven Gunn** and **Jesse Oler** had great Bar Mitzvah's. Additionally, we are making progress on fund raising but we also soon will be focusing on plans for this year's programming, social action activities and holiday events.

I'm also very grateful to have been re-elected board President and I intend to focus on making sure we remain on good financial footing during challenging economic times for the country. We've had some turnover on the board; some people who were on the board have taken on special projects giving us a chance to develop new leadership, which is both very generous of them and very important to a small congregation like ours. These board members have always seen the big picture and they are deeply appreciated. Our wheels only turn with your participation and they have been stellar examples of that. But growth is our goal for this year and as we grow we need some of our dedicated members to take on new, specialized challenges that tap their skill sets. We had a fantastic team last year and I believe we have a fantastic team this year. I would like to thank **Louise Pearson, Warren Shoen, Scott Taxman, Paula Krecun** and **Mark Shapiro** for their long and effective service to Kadima and also, for each of them, for remaining resources to Kadima and generously seeing the need to bring more people into leadership. Several of them have agreed to take on difficult special projects which I am certain they will find rewarding. We need more committee people, so please sign up for the committees that most interest you. Coming onto the board are **Yelena Kalugina, Jack Henkin, Howard Lipsky, Ron Tomaszewski** and **Callie Dixon**. All of these people have been active in the congregation and I am certain they will have much to offer our board even as they fill some big shoes.

This year our focus is growing as a congregation. We are at a point where religious services and our Religious School have found their equilibriums and are working excellently. We will be planning to have more activities this year to further improve congregational life and cohesion but everything we do will be done to make it easy to invite interested guests.

Our congregation has a special and unique message: we more than anything else believe in moving forward with our Jewish values in a very open and diverse manner that welcomes people with a variety of points of view and interfaith families. But most importantly we encourage intellectual free thinking and spiritual endeavor without an over-reliance on either ritual or doctrine. Many people thirst for what we offer and yet they not only don't know we exist, many don't know we could exist. This is the year we need your help in getting our word out. Because we are the most liberal congregation in the area as well as the lowest cost congregation in the area, we are both very easy to try out and easy to affiliate with. As you all know, no one ever feels unwelcome at Congregation Kadima. So whether it's a family dinner, a Shabbat service or a bowling night--bring someone when you can.

I hope everyone is enjoying their summer!

Thank you,
Marc Dubey
President

A Message from the Principal

In May we celebrated our son's Bar Mitzvah. As other parents have found, it was a time of intense learning and personal development.

Performance-based learning spurs many kids to achieve new levels of mastery, and knowing that he would be reading before a large gathering of family and friends certainly motivated Jesse to master his portion. (I miss hearing him sing it in the shower as he did in the last weeks before his service.) He felt great pride when he was able to read in Hebrew flawlessly, knowing that it was a substantial achievement. We in turn felt *nachas* (Yiddish for pride and satisfaction) watching him read with poise and deliver a thoughtful *Dvar Torah* written from his thirteen-year-old perspective.

Thirteen is a wonderful age. While Jesse and his peers still retain much of the innocence and playfulness of childhood, they also exhibit a greater capacity for empathy and deep reflection. Their individual interests and strengths are emerging, and they are growing in their sense of unique identity. This development shows as students choose and undertake Mitzvah projects, write speeches about their Torah portions, projects and feelings about being Jewish, and even in their unique celebrations.

In this edition of Kol Kadima we are including excerpts from the speeches of **Jesse Oler**, one of the latest Kadima B'nai Mitzvah. Comments by **Steven Gunn**, also a Bar Mitzvah in May, will appear in the next issue. The speeches of two other recent B'nai Mitzvah, **Jonathan Dixon** and **Justin Lew**, appeared in earlier editions. Jonathan Dixon was called to the Torah in Israel, as he and his mother realized their dream of traveling there together. He was also called to the Torah in a local service of our congregation which his family hosted at a Botanical Garden. His trip to the Jewish homeland enriched his sense of Jewish identity with a new appreciation of Jewish history, culture and community. Justin Lew, who is an avid science student, chose to read the biblical account of creation and speak about how one can integrate scientific investigation of the origins of the universe with the religious quest to understand the meaning of human existence. For his Mitzvah project he raised money to support research of cancer treatments. Justin also shared his love of a most special place in his childhood: his service and celebration took place at his grandparents' wooded lakefront property and Justin, who is also an artist, created centerpieces using natural materials found in the woods and on the beach. Jesse Oler read the weekly portion which detailed laws governing the priesthood in ancient times and drew connections to his own experience and thoughts about what it means to function as a leader. For his Mitzvah project, Jesse participated in programs assisting disabled children and young adults to play sports, and his Bar Mitzvah address elucidated lessons learned about ability and humanity. Steven Gunn is a travel baseball player and enthusiastic fan. He helped disabled children and teens play the game through the Buddy Baseball program; he enjoyed the experience so much that he continues to volunteer. His grandmother and aunt honored his passion by creating incredibly detailed centerpieces representing his favorite teams.

As a congregation we look forward to the services of their classmates – **Mia Kellman**, **Nathan Garbuz**, **Maddie Thall**, **Sammie Taxman**, **Jenna Silverman** and **Eric Lew**, to be held in the coming year. Becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah is an important moment in the lifelong journey of becoming a person of integrity and compassion, inspired by one's Jewish heritage. As a congregation we welcome the fresh energy and insight these young people bring to revitalize our community.

Congregational Happenings

Our congregation will again observe the High Holidays with services at the Patty Turner Center in Deerfield.

Rosh Hashanah services will be held on **September 16th and 17th**
and
Yom Kippur will be observed on **September 25th and 26th**.



Religious School

Religious School will begin on Friday, **September 7** this fall. We look forward to welcoming our returning and new students then.



Students in the News

Chase Frankel, who has just graduated from the eighth grade, was awarded the American Legion School Award. “The Award Medal represents the educational symbolism of the School Award Medal Program and associates it with the American Legion and its purposes. Its objectives are to: place emphasis on the development of the qualities of courage, honor, leadership, patriotism, scholarship and service; develop those ideals of Americanism among young people which will make them citizens of the highest type; give recognition through the award of American Legion Award Medals to the boy and to the girl who are deemed most worthy of the high qualities of citizenship and of true Americanism.”



*The New Reform Congregation Kadima feels great pride when those within our family become Bar or Bat Mitzvah. **Jesse Oler** celebrated that happy occasion earlier this year and made the following comments during the course of the services:*

The portion of the Torah from which I am reading today is called Emor; it describes the laws governing the Kohanim, the Israelite priests, and the High Priest. They had to be ritually pure in order to handle food offerings and other sacrifices in the temple, so the High Priest was restricted from having sex with women who were not virgins, and the priests could not cut the corners of their beards or get tattoos, and they could not come close to a dead body unless it was a close relative.

When I first read these laws I felt alarmed, because I have personally broken every one of them – or thought about it. My siblings laughed when they learned that I had this portion, and I worried, “How could I talk about it without offending all of the women in the audience?”

It might have been nice to have one of the more familiar and inspiring portions of the Torah, but I began to feel happy that the Jewish calendar doomed me to read Emor. It was interesting to learn more about the lives of my ancestors.

I was surprised to learn that in ancient times the priests were not allowed to leave the sanctuary; the high priest could not leave the temple grounds even to take part in his parents’ funeral processions. This made me think of the line from our liturgy, “I am a Jew because my faith demands all the devotion of my heart.” Even to this day, Kohanim give up all kinds of personal prerogatives. We can rightly question whether their particular sacrifices were the best way to express holiness, but still admire their devotion.

Despite many restrictions, some of which extended even to the priests’ family members, the law also made some allowances for the priest to have a family life. As a rabbi’s son, I’ve learned that holidays are relaxing for other families, while my family is under extra pressure. My sister and I come before services to help, and we often stay late while our parents talk to everyone. I like it when people appreciate that the rabbi has a family life too.

I think this passage can inspire all of us to strive to be worthy of the trust people place in each of us. We are all human and make mistakes, and we cannot expect perfection from ourselves. What we strive for, I think, is to really love the people we serve and put their interests first and to be sincere in devoting our lives to purposes greater than ourselves. People will always respond to this kind of devotion.



When I was asked by my dad, “What does it mean to you to become a bar mitzvah?” the first thing I thought about was you, my family and friends. When I read from the Torah today, I thought of my grandpa who used his spare time over many years to write this scroll for generations of our family. When my parents put this talis on my shoulders, I thought of how they were passing the tradition down to me. When I saw my siblings and cousins today, I thought about how they’d been b’nai mitzvah too, using the same torah. I love being a Jew because it strengthens a bond between me and my family that can never be broken.

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Being Jewish is about family for me because Judaism is such a large part of my family life. My dad and grandpa were rabbis. When I go to services and religious school, I also get to hang out with my mom and dad, and I think that's really special. I have tried to distinguish myself as a typical rabbi's child both by trying to answer all the questions Dad asked the children at family services and by breaking a synagogue window with a dodge ball on Yom Kippur.

I hope I have absorbed the values of Judaism. I try to be fair and honest in my interactions with other people and to stand up for what is right and for people who are being bullied or treated unfairly. I try to be kind and forgiving. Becoming a bar mitzvah means especially that I am trying to be responsible for my own decisions, my words and my actions.

I look forward to continuing to be a part of my congregation and the Jewish community. I especially enjoy helping with service events; my favorite activity over the years has been our congregation's Youth Service Camp. For my mitzvah project I helped with sports programs for people with disabilities. I volunteered for Buddy Baseball, in which I was paired with kids with physical and mental disabilities and helped them play one of my favorite sports. It was really rewarding to see them have fun on the field and with team photos and ice cream parties after the games. I also helped with Special Olympics at the Center for Enriched Living in Riverwoods. I have learned many things: that a kid who needs assistance running the bases may be able to hit the ball out of the park; that no matter how humble, everyone enjoys achieving a personal best; and that, regardless of ability, in life everyone really just wants to be in the game.

In keeping with my mitzvah project, the theme for my celebration is the Oler Olympics, and we will be donating decorations to Special Olympics Illinois.

I look forward to continuing to do mitzvot like these and to living as a Jew.

I want to thank each of you for coming to witness my becoming a bar mitzvah. Having you here means a lot to me.