

## PURIM: A Celebration of Determination

Purim is a biblical holiday that originates from *Megillat Esther*, or the Scroll of Esther. It commemorates the Jewish people of ancient Persia being saved from the murderous plot of a man named Haman. **Purim will be celebrated from sundown on Wednesday, March 16 until sundown on Thursday, March 17.**

### The Story of Purim

In 5th century Persia, King Achashverosh was seeking a beautiful woman to be his wife. His right-hand man, Haman, felt disrespected by a Jew named Mordecai when Mordecai refused to bow down to Haman, insisting that Jews bow only to God. As revenge, Haman draws random lots ("Purim" translates to "lots") determining a date to kill all the Jews in the kingdom,

randomly picking the 14th of the month Adar. Meanwhile, Mordecai's niece, Esther, goes undercover as a non-Jew and is chosen as the king's new wife. Through prayer and a 3-day fasting period, Esther gains the courage to reveal to the king that she is a Jew, leading the king to stop Haman from carrying out his plot against the Jewish people. Haman and his family are executed, and Mordecai assumes Haman's position as the king's second in command.

To commemorate Esther's fast, many people will fast on the day before Purim. The modern traditions of Purim celebrations are meant to reflect the joy and liberation felt by the Persian Jews after narrowly escaping extermination.

### How We Celebrate

Purim is often compared to Halloween or Mardi Gras due to its festive nature. When attending a reading of the *Megillah*, it's customary to wear a costume, distribute treats to friends and family, drink wine, and be celebratory.

### The 4 Commandments

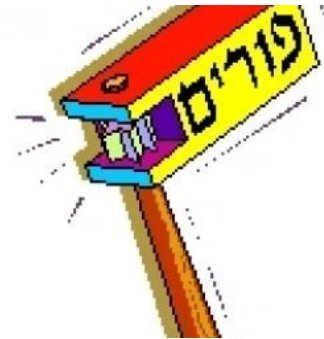
There are four main *Mitzvot* (commandments) of celebrating Purim: Reading the *Megillah*, giving gift baskets to friends, giving to charity, and eating a grand feast (See page 2).

### Purim Traditions

We dress in costumes on Purim to emulate Esther who disguised her true identity in order to save the Jewish people.

Some synagogues or community centers will put on an annual *Purim Spiel*, or a small play, often comedic and musical, that retells the Purim story.

Eating special cookies called *Hamentaschen* and crafting noise-makers called *groggers* (see image to the right) are other common Purim traditions.



Grogger

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## More on Mitzvot and How to Celebrate

The four commandments of Purim are an essential part of celebrating the holiday– and they're easy to do!

### MEGILLAH

Reading the *Megillah*, the biblical scroll that tells the Purim story, is an exciting feat that calls for lots of energy and audience participation. It is usually chanted in a special tune in the original Hebrew, its 10 chapters being split up within a congregation. Whenever the name of the wicked Haman is said in the *Megillah*, it's customary for the reader to pause while the listeners jeer, boo, and shake their *groggers* (noise makers) to drown out his name.

[Full English versions of the Megillah are available online](#) and can be printed out for residents to follow along!



A Megillah scroll

### MISHLOACH MANOT

Hand-crafted gift baskets called *Mishloach Manot* are handed out to friends and family on Purim. Anything can be in these baskets, and they can be decorated as simply or extravagantly as you like! For a fun Purim activity, buy some brown paper bags and various candies and treats and have your residents decorate their own *Mishloach Manot* to distribute to one another!



A Purim gift basket

### MATANOT L'EVYONIM

This translates to "gifts for the poor", or, giving charity. Having residents put a few coins in a piggy bank may help them feel that they're fulfilling this important commandment.

### PURIM FEAST

Like most Jewish holidays, food and drink are a huge part of the Purim celebration. On Purim especially, drinking wine is highly encouraged– but grape juice works great, too! The most common Purim food is a *Hamentaschen*, a small, triangular cookie usually filled with jam, poppy seeds, or chocolate. *Hamentaschen* can be found in many grocery stores with Kosher food sections or bakeries, but the real fun comes from filling and shaping them yourself! [There are many great and simple recipes online for ambitious bakers to try.](#)



Hamentaschen

## Bubbe's Corner

This section highlights different Jewish traditions from both local and world-wide Jewish communities. Here, you can learn about the cultural variations of Jews and connect with your residents' personal traditions on a deeper level. Every Jewish community and family has its own traditions unique to their lives and experiences. Be sure to ask your residents about any Purim memories they have!

It's some people's tradition to drink so much wine on Purim that they can't remember who is the hero and who is the villain in the Purim story!



Purim is one of the few Biblical stories that has a female protagonist! She is considered a feminist icon in Judaism.

Before going undercover to marry the king, Esther was named Hadassah, which is now a popular Jewish name.

*Hamentaschen* are triangular to look like the hat Haman wore. Others believe they're meant to resemble his ears that were cut off at his execution.

Every 2-3 years, the Hebrew month of Adar is repeated to help the lunar calendar match up with the solar. This year, Purim takes place during the second Adar.

## Important Terms for Purim

Hebrew...	It is pronounced...	It means...
Chag Purim Sameach	Hahg poo-reem sah-mey-ach	Happy Purim!
Megillah	Meh-gi-lah	Biblical scroll
Mishloach Manot	Mee-shlo-ach Mah-note	Gift baskets for friends
Hamentaschen	Hoo-men-tosh-in	Triangular Purim cookies
Grogger	Grog-er	A noisemaker
Seudah	Seh-oo-dah	A Jewish dinner or feast

## Music and More!

Since Purim is such a festive holiday, having music really helps set the tone of the day. By playing some of the following songs for your residents, you can help them get into the spirit of the holiday. Musical traditions vary from community to community, so some residents may have favorites not listed below– ask them if they know any good Purim songs to play!

### CHAG PURIM

This song title literally translates to “The Holiday of Purim”; it’s the quintessential Purim song! Folksy and fun, [you can listen to the song here](#).

### MISHENICHNAS ADAR

This song celebrates Adar, the Hebrew month that

Purim takes place in. “When Adar begins, our joy increases!” [Click here to play this song and celebrate the month of Adar!](#)

### AL HANISSIM

“Al HaNissim” is a song all about miracles, celebrating the miracle of the Jewish people being saved on Purim. Fun fact– it’s also a popular Hanukkah song! [Check it out by clicking here](#).

### ACHASHVEROSH

This comedy song, a parody of “Rock Me Amadeus” tells the story of the king of the Purim story, Achashverosh. [Listen here for a fun musical time!](#)

## Making a Grogger

When reading the Purim *Megillah*, it’s tradition to drown out the name of Haman, the evil henchman, whenever it is mentioned in the text. To do so, we use a *grogger*, a small noisemaker. The word *grogger* is Yiddish, meaning “to rattle”. Some people also call them by their Hebrew name *Ra’ashan*. Traditionally, a *grogger* is made of wood or metal and spins on its handle, but they can be made from common household objects! Making a *grogger* is a fun and easy way to engage your residents with the holiday and provide a creative outlet for this festive time. Below are just a few ideas on how to DIY a grogger, but feel free to use whatever materials you have at your disposal.

### PAPER PLATE GROGGER

Gather these materials:

- 2 paper plates
- A popsicle stick
- Stapler
- Beads, dried beans or pasta, paper clips, or anything that can make noise

Lay one plate flat and lay the noise making objects on it. Lay the popsicle stick so it’s half on the plate, half hanging off. Place the other plate on top-down on the first, and staple all around the edges. It should look like a giant lollipop. Decorate and enjoy!

### PLASTIC CUP GROGGER

Gather these materials:

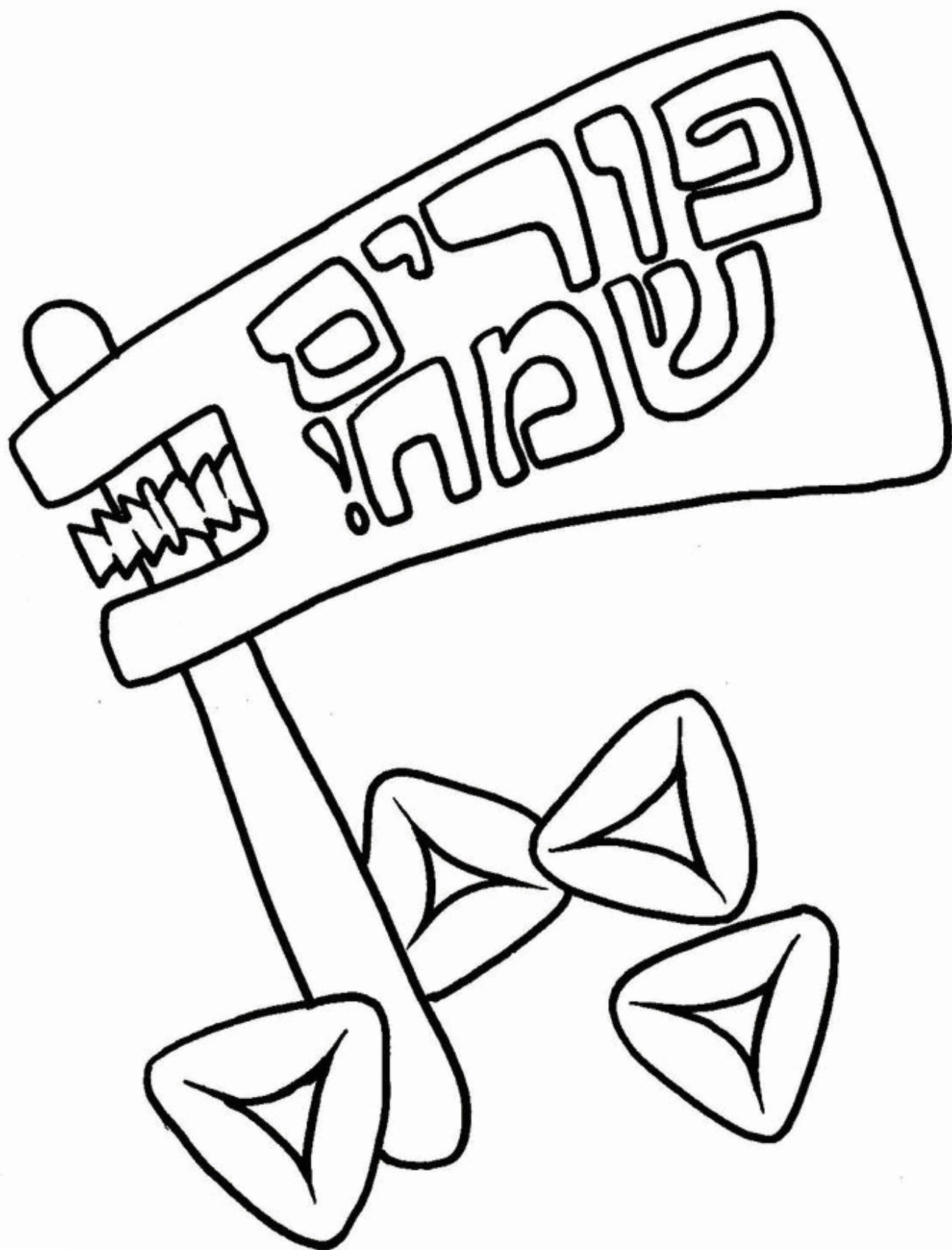
- 2 plastic/paper cups
- Masking tape
- Beads, dried beans or pasta, paper clips, or anything that can make noise

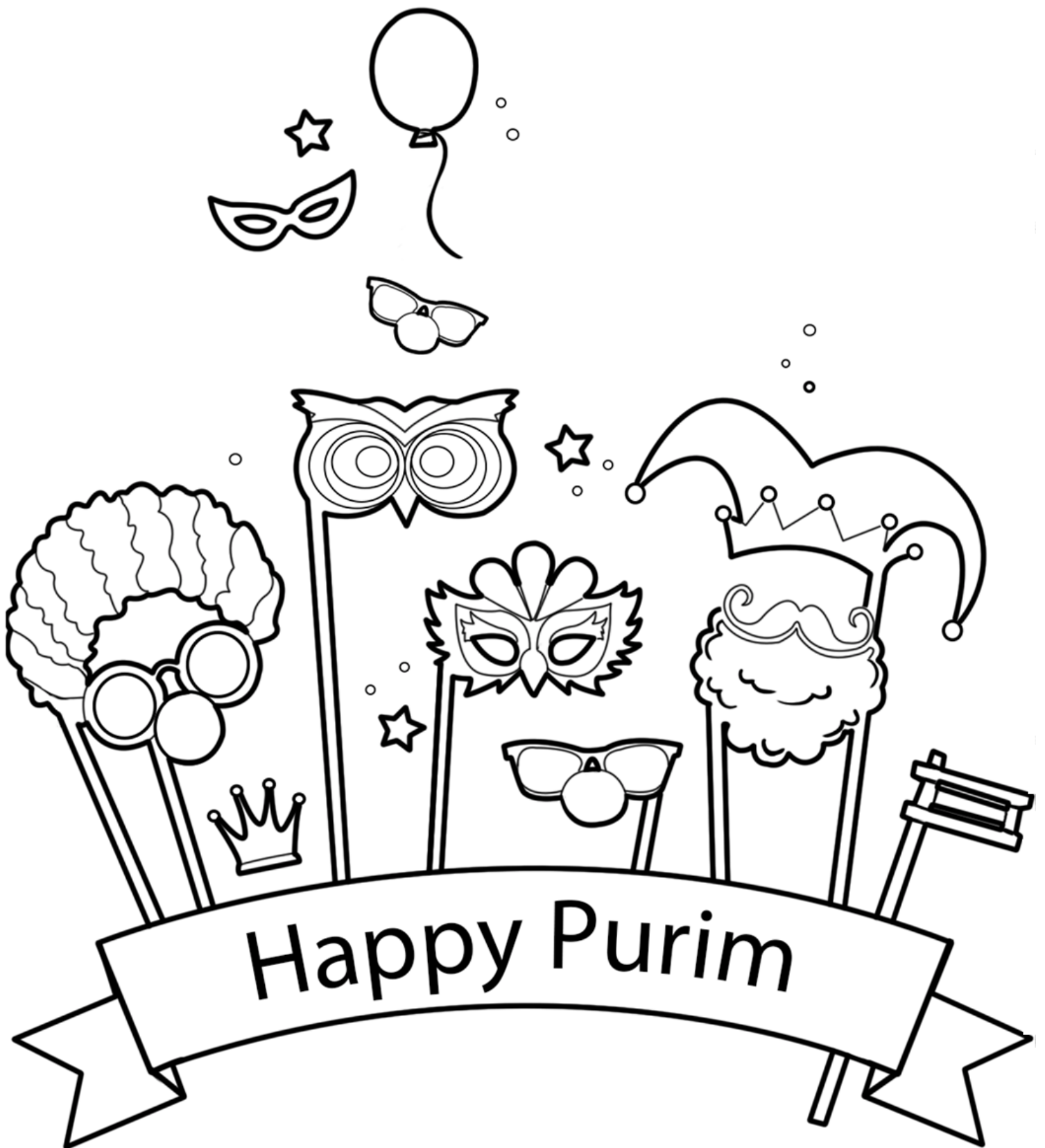
Fill one cup with the noisemaking objects. Place the other cup top-down on the first, like a cocktail mixer, and tape all around the mouths of the cups until they’re securely together. Decorate and enjoy!



Groggers







## Jewish Holidays Calendar 2022

HOLIDAY	DATE
Purim (1 day)	Wednesday, Mar. 16* – Thursday, Mar. 17, 2022
Passover (8 days)	Friday, Apr. 15* – Saturday, Apr. 23, 2022
Shavuot (2 days)	Saturday, June 4* – Monday, June 6, 2022
Rosh Hashanah (2 days)	Sunday, Sept. 25* – Tuesday Sept. 27, 2022
Yom Kippur (1 day)	Tuesday, Oct. 4* – Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022
Sukkot (7 days)	Sunday, Oct. 9* – Sunday, Oct. 16, 2022
Shmini Atzeret (1 day) & Simchat Torah (1 day)	Sunday, Oct. 16* – Tuesday, Oct. 28, 2022
Hannukah (8 days)	Sunday, Dec. 18* - Monday, Dec. 26, 2022
Tu B'Shevat (1 day)	Sunday, Feb. 5* – Monday, Feb. 6, 2023

**\* All holidays begin at sundown**

### About JFS

JFS has continuously provided a range of support, services and resources for individuals and families of all ages and backgrounds since 1854.

Our mission is to enrich the lives of individuals, families, and the community by providing compassionate, collaborative human services, guided by Jewish values.

#### Our staff have expertise in:

- Helping older adults maintain their safety and independence.
- Providing resources and guidance to older adults and their families.
- Spiritual support and guidance
- Counseling and case management.

### Support Our Chaplaincy Program

JFS created the Dr. Rela Mintz Geffen Jewish Community Chaplaincy Fund to enable us to provide spiritual connection and support for Jewish residents in long-term and elder care in the Capital Region.

The fund is in honor of Dr. Mintz Geffen's sons Uri Zvi Monson and Rabbi Ami Monson — our community chaplain.

If you would like to help expand the role and reach of this vital program for older adults, please make a contribution to the fund at [jfsnny.org/donations](http://jfsnny.org/donations) or contact Rabbi Ami at 518-516-1116.

**Thank you!**



#### Connect with Us!



*Chaplaincy Services are a service of Jewish Family Services through a grant from Jewish Federation of NENY in cooperation B'nai B'rith Gideon Foundation, Daughters of Sarah Community for Seniors and Temple Israel.*