

Brookville Multifaith Campus

NEWS

RfA
Room for All
An Open and Affirming
Campus to the
LBGTQIA+ community.

*One house, many faiths, endless
opportunities for growth!*

January
2023

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In loving memory of
Rabbi Stuart Paris,
HaKohen



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Vision Statement

Through learning opportunities, essential partnerships, and occasional shared worship, our campus welcomes all who want to learn, question and grow, while making a positive and lasting impact in the community and world.

Mission

To build a multifaith community of people from different faiths who connect to one another by embracing similarities while celebrating differences.

Find a Place to Belong

We invite you to discover a spiritual community made up of different religious groups. Each group maintains its own religious identity but fosters an open environment for learning, celebrating and honoring each distinct religion.

Thoughts from campus leaders

The Pressure of a New Year

Rev. Vicky L. Eastland

When the calendar turns to a new year, we can feel pressure to change, to be a better person than we were the previous year. All of our new year resolutions can add undue stress even if they are made with the best of intentions.

On New Year's Day I started a book study with a friend. Katie lives in San Diego and because of technology we are able to FaceTime for our book discussions with each other. We had what I will call a "holy" moment together. Katie shared with me that her word for 2023 for herself was gentle.

Continued on page 3



Christine Mankes

It's The Most Wonderful Time of the Year!

The Interfaith Community of L.I. Celebrates Christmas and Hanukkah

What a fun day! Our 2nd annual Youth-Led Christmas Service and Pageant was a huge success! The kids from the Interfaith Community of Long Island and our Multifaith Campus were responsible for the entire service, from beginning to end. From as young as five years old, through to our older teenagers, the kids supported each other and worked together to create a beautiful and meaningful service! We are so grateful for the direction and guidance of Carol Goglia whose enthusiasm and energy knows no bounds!

Continued on page 6

Kaaba, the sacred mosque in Mecca

Dr. Syed Asad and Dr. Sultan Abdulhameed

The Kaaba, meaning cube in Arabic, is a square building, elegantly draped in a silk and cotton veil (called kiswah). Located in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, it is the holiest shrine in Islam.

Prophet Muhammad and his followers initially used to pray facing towards Jerusalem, but the direction of prayer (qibla) was changed to Mecca (where the Kaaba is) in a verse in the Quran. All the mosques in the world are built such the people praying face towards the Kaaba.

All Muslims aspire to undertake the Hajj, or the annual pilgrimage, to the Kaaba once in their life if they are able.

The history and form of the Kaaba

The Kaaba was a sanctuary in pre-Islamic times. Muslims believe that Abraham (known as Ibrahim in Arabic), and his son, Ismail, constructed the Kaaba. Tradition holds that it was originally a simple unroofed rectangular structure.

Continued on page 5

Tu B'Shevat

Rabbi Scott Matous

Tu B'Shevat, or the "New Year of the Trees," is Jewish Arbor Day. The holiday is observed on the 15th day (tu) of the Hebrew month of Shevat (this year corresponding to January 17th). Tu B'Shevat was an agricultural festival, marking the emergence of spring. The holiday has become a tree-planting festival in Israel, in which Israelis and Jews around the world plant trees in honor or in memory of loved ones and friends.

Tu B'Shevat is a holiday that brings us back to nature. After all, this is a time of year when we could easily lose sight of the beauty of nature. The sky is often gray. The days are often short. Tu B'Shevat reminds us that spring is going to happen after all, the blue sky will come back, and flowers will bloom again. It is a holiday that hinges on hope and possibility. The tree is a symbol of life; belief in the face of doubt; strength amidst uncertainty.

Continued on page 4

The Pressure of a New Year ...continued from page 2

Then I shared with her an email I had just written to someone saying that my goal in 2023 was to be more gentle with myself. I judge myself too harshly. It was a holy moment that out of all the words we could have chosen, we both picked the same word for ourselves.

I know we are all on our own individual journeys in life, but I also know that we have gone through a collective experience over the last several years with the pandemic. Whether we want to now term it an endemic, that Covid is something we just have to live with like the flu, it still is effecting our world.

The last several years have been rough. And for our multifaith campus 2022 ended with a profound sadness when our dear Rabbi Paris transitioned from this life to the next. This is another shared experience we recently suffered together. Rabbi Paris was a deeply spiritual leader, mentor and friend. His loss is real and profound for many of us.

So, if you are heading into 2023 like me, with a heavy heart, just know this... you are not alone and the better option between harsh new year's resolutions and being gentle with yourself, I encourage you to take the later approach. And let's be gentle with one another too because the world needs more kindness.

In gentle love,

Rev. Vicky

Our February issue will be dedicated to Rabbi Stuart Paris. If you would like to contribute a few words in memory of Rabbi Paris as well as some pictures, we'd love to include them.

Please send them to:
brookvillemfc@gmail.com

If you could send your submission by January 20th we would appreciate it.

Brookville Church

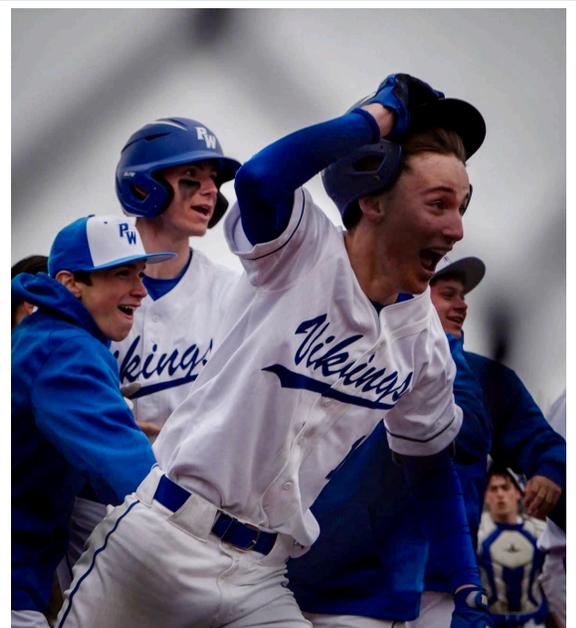
Hybrid Worship Celebrations
Sundays, 10 AM

Online Bible Study resumes in
February

Support Brookville Church when
you shop with [Smile.Amazon.com](https://www.smile.amazon.com)

BRAG BOX

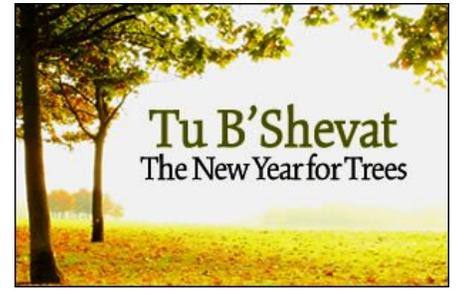
Congratulations to Ryan Gawley on his acceptance to Hamilton College Baseball. We knew you could do it and wish you all the best!



Tu B'Shevat ...continued from page 2

Life is a process of growth; you really stop only when you're dead. As we adapt to circumstances, as we vault hurdles and overcome obstacles, we constantly change and grow. Every new experience we encounter, every new acquaintance we make, leaves a remnant in our soul, and transforms us into the people we are.

The Torah compares the human being to a tree: "Man is a tree of the field." (Deuteronomy 20:19) Tu B'Shevat, allows us to see just how similar to a tree we are. Perhaps the Torah is referencing this ability to constantly develop and grow. A tree might look rooted and static, yet in truth it is an ever-changing, dynamic living being. The tree's surface becomes pitted and scarred by the impact of weather and environment, yet a tree constantly grows. It's a nonstop process of change and adaptation. Every moment renders the tree microscopically larger; every year brings a new ring.



"Every blade of grass has its Angel that bends over it and whispers, 'Grow, grow.'" ~The Talmud

SYNAGOGUE OF THE MONTH
VIRTUAL SHABBAT SERVICE 5783

The New Synagogue of Long Island
The Synagogue for Spiritual Judaism

Rabbi Scott Matous
Cantor Irene Failenbogen

Synagogue of the Month Virtual
Shabbat Service at **7:00 PM**

Please join us on
Friday, January 6, 2023

We have no membership dues or fees.

All are welcome.

We rely on your support and commitment!

Please support The New Synagogue of Long Island as generously as you can.

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Tu B'Shevat is an appropriate time to appreciate the greatness of creation, and to honor it. Tu B'Shevat is the day when the sap begins to rise through the tree; we can't see the fruit yet, but we are celebrating the process of growth itself. It's the day when the trees are no longer nourished by last year's waters and begin to be nourished by the "new" year's waters. It is a time that is in between the winter and the spring, not quite day or night. When we look at the trees, we are meant to think of ourselves in that same place, between our past and our future. Let's open ourselves up to more opportunities for growth as the sap rises and the new water flows. The 15th of Shevat marks a turning point, a time when under all that cold and snow the sap of the trees is rising, readying for spring.

Just like a small seed can turn into a tall tree, so too the human being has infinite potential to grow, develop and change. We have the ability to produce a strong productive personality which, like fruit, will have a positive impact and be of benefit to others around us. We may sometimes feel like a small seed, but there is nothing stopping us from becoming a tall fruit-bearing tree. We all go through our own personal winter. Even if you find yourself in the most bitter of places, stand tall, stick to your values and share some sweetness for others to enjoy! No one's looking for tough times, but when they come along, don't lose hope. We never know what light might emerge.

There is no better day to begin planting your own personal tree of growth than this year on Tu B'Shevat, to mark the occasion of Rabbi Stuart Paris' (z"l) 80th Birthday on January 17th. Happy planting!

"As my ancestors planted for me, so too I plant for my children and my children's children."
~The Talmud

Blessings,
~ *Rabbi Scott Matous*

Kaaba, the sacred mosque in Mecca

...continued from page 2

Tradition holds that it was originally a simple unroofed rectangular structure. The Quraysh tribe, who ruled Mecca, rebuilt the pre-Islamic Kaaba in c. 608 C.E. with alternating courses of masonry and wood. A door was raised above ground level to protect the shrine from flood waters.

Prophet Muhammad was driven out of Mecca in 620 C.E. to Yathrib, which is now known as Medina. The pre-Islamic Kaaba housed the statues of pagan gods. Prophet Muhammad removed the idols upon his victorious return to Mecca, restoring the shrine to the monotheism of Prophet Ibrahim. A Black Stone is installed in one of the corners of the Kaaba. It is believed to have been given to Prophet Ibrahim by the angel Gabriel and is revered by Muslims. Prophet Muhammad made a final pilgrimage in 632 C.E., the year of his passing, and thereby established the rites of pilgrimage.

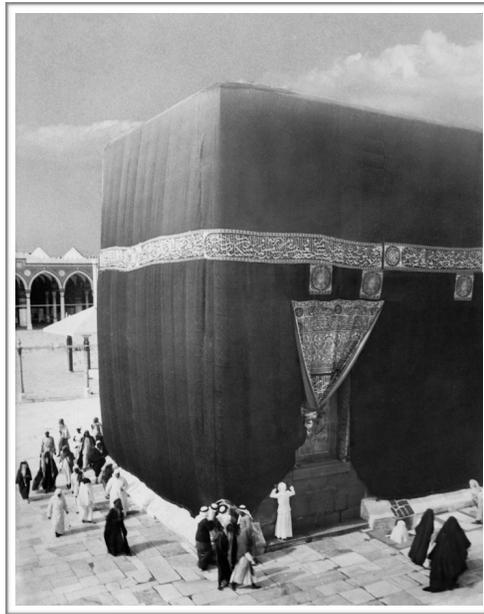
Modifications

The Kaaba has been modified extensively throughout its history. The area around the Kaaba was expanded to accommodate the growing number of pilgrims by the second caliph, Umar (ruled 634–44). The caliph Uthman (ruled 644–56) built the colonnades around the open plaza where the Kaaba stands.

During the civil war between the caliph Abd al-Malik and Ibn Zubayr who controlled Mecca, the Kaaba was set on fire in 683 C.E. He rebuilt the Kaaba in wood and stone, following the original dimensions and paved the space around the Kaaba.

From 1269–1517, the Mamluks of Egypt controlled the Hijaz, the highlands in western Arabia where Mecca is located. Sultan Qaitbay (ruled 1468–96) built a madrasa (a religious school) against one

side of the mosque. Under the Ottoman sultans, Süleyman I (ruled 1520–1566) and Selim II (ruled 1566–74), the complex was heavily renovated. In 1631, the Kaaba and the surrounding mosque were entirely rebuilt after floods had demolished them in the previous year. This mosque, which is what exists today, is composed of a large open space with colonnades on four sides and with seven minarets. At the center of this large plaza sits the Kaaba, as well as many other holy buildings and monuments.



The Kaaba with kiswah, c. 1910

Major modifications were carried out in the 1950s by the government of Saudi Arabia to accommodate the increasingly large number of pilgrims who come on the hajj. Today the mosque covers almost forty acres.

The Kaaba today

Today, the Kaaba is fifteen meters tall and ten and a half meters on each side; its corners roughly align with the cardinal directions. The door of the Kaaba is now made of solid gold; it was added in 1982. The kiswah, a large cloth that covers the Kaaba, which used to be sent from Egypt with the hajj caravan, today is made in Saudi Arabia. With the ease and affordability of air travel, the

Kaaba is surrounded by throngs of worshippers year-round, the crowd swells to more than two million at the time of hajj.

~ Dr. Syed Asad and Dr. Sultan Abdulhameed

Muslim Reform Movement Organization

In Person Prayers, Fridays 1 PM
Khutba at 1:10, English, Prayer at 1:30

Online Quran Study Sundays, 2:30 - 4 PM

[CLICK FOR ZOOM LINK](#)



It's The Most Wonderful Time of the Year!

The Interfaith Community of L.I. Celebrates Christmas and Hanukkah

...continued from page 2

After the service, we all headed over to Fellowship Hall for our interfaith holiday celebration! Kids enjoyed making Hanukkah crafts, playing dreidel, decorating Christmas-themed sugar cookies and completing holiday-themed word searches and crossword puzzles. The kids had a ton of fun playing with our newest edition this year: the reindeer antler ring toss! During the party, we all feasted on potato latkes, jelly donuts, bagels, Christmas cookies and other yummy treats.

We are truly blessed to be a part of such a special group of people. The friendships that have been created, among both adults and children, share the common bond of an interfaith tradition that is grounded in love, cooperation and kindness. We wish all of our multifaith campus members a blessed and Happy New Year!

~Christine Mankes



How can I stay informed?

EMAIL

Please check your email for updates. If you would like to be added to our email distribution list, please email allison@interfaithli.org.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ifcli>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/interfaithcommunityli/>

Please check our website at <https://www.interfaithli.org/home> for a full calendar of exciting events that have been planned for your family this year!

Save the Date!

The IFC students invite you to join in their MLK Day Social Justice Outreach Project on Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. Day in January.



Interfaith Community Christmas Pageant & Party 2023



Christmas Eve 2023 at Brookville Church

We were blessed with a choir that included many of our college students who were home on Christmas break and people from Florida, Missouri, California, Oregon, New Jersey, New York, and Tokyo who joined us via Zoom.



With deep gratitude, we wish to thank all those who contributed to the holiday bonuses for the Brookville staff. Your generosity is amazing! Thank you so very much!!

love,

Rev. Vicky, Carol Goglia, Linda Hees and Rigo & Esperanza Melara



Game of Dreidel inspired by the teaching of Rabbi Paris:

Rabbi Paris - City of Lights S - A - F - E
Transformation Dreidl - Honoring the
Rabbi whose ability to play and pray
made us feel safe

Rules of the game: (You can play the
game all year round)

1. Transform the dreidl by placing the
letters S-A-F-E on the sides of the
dreidl.

2. Spin the dreidl with the Rabbi Stuart
storytelling spin.

3. If the dreidl lands on S, it stands for
Simplicity of Light -- Tell the Adonai Li
story about how Rabbi Paris simply
said "Adonai li v'lo ira" G-d is with us.
There is no need to be afraid.

End the storytelling with the words: "It
is safe to trust in G-d."

4. If the dreidl lands on A, it stands for
Audacity of Light -- tell the Aliya story about how Rabbi Paris had the audacity to invite the whole
congregation to make aliyas up to the front regardless of age or income.

End the storytelling with the words: "It is safe for everyone to be up front."

5. If the dreidl lands on an F, it stands for Felicity of Light -- tell the La La Luia story about how Rabbi
Paris told us that G-d understands "La, la, la" -- he instructed us to sing "La, la, la" if we don't know the
exact word.

End the storytelling with the words: "It is safe to sing with joy."

6. If the dreidl lands on E , it stands for Electricity of Light -- tell the Ahavah story about how Rabbi
Paris, an electrifying teacher, had Noah the Ark Builder build an ark for the Torah - The Teaching -- and
attach to the wood the Hebrew word V' ahav'ta, meaning "And you shall love" for all the people to see.

End the storytelling with these words: "It is safe to love the teaching."

If you can tell all four stories - Adonai Li, Aliya, A La La Luia and Ahavah, then you have become an A+
storyteller in the spirit of Rabbi Paris.

By Rev. Bill Mc Bride



The Next Chapter



Branch Worsham

Most of the desserts that I enjoy are baked and require a couple of dollops of ice cream to make them complete. I have been astonished by how different ice cream makers could make the same four ingredients -- whipping cream, heavy cream, sugar and vanilla, similarly prepared-- taste wonderful or terrible. In between are

versions called natural with plain milk, unfamiliar chemicals and prices from very high down through a reasonable price range and then dropping off with cheap stuff you shouldn't buy under any condition. Nowadays there is science behind the flavor and the texture and the stored temperatures -- all of which can enhance or diminish what is liked by some or accepted by others because of the aforementioned ingredients, marketing and what the stores are providing. For me the choices are constantly creeping up in price and down in container size. Good ice cream now needs careful selection - discernment and experience included, but worth the trouble.

Since Thanksgiving the bird feeders on the back deck have been set up, filled up, and waiting. There were no birds of any size around. We all know about the call of nature that gets birds to flock together and fly thousands of miles for better weather. This weekend I saw that with a new understanding. The sparrows arrived from somewhere in huge flocks of dark spots in the sky swooping up, down and around, then alighting in a large area of bare trees or on power and phone lines. They returned to my feeders today. And I misstated something just now... what I knew as a boy and young man barely exists anymore -- telephone lines. They have been disappearing for several years as technology makes them unnecessary and the copper wire is too expensive.

The other day I was speaking to BJ and addressed him as "Son" then was struck by what that meant to me. My father always called me Son - perhaps because we both used Branch as our name with everyone else; I can still call up my memory of times when Dad would say, "Son" to me. I realize now that I must have the same affection for BJ that Dad had for me. In our family we got a bit confused about the name Junior. I was named Branch Junior and all of the Aunts and Uncles referred to me that way to not get confused. When BJ was born my Dad was still alive so there was a discussion I barely remember. Today BJ told me that his mother, Nancy, told him that he could not be called Branch Jr (that was my larger family name) and B3 is a vitamin (Niacin) so BJ became his nick name. However it is common for two initials to make a nickname and there is another BJ

Worsham on my brother's side of the family in Connecticut. That BJ is the next generation after our BJ. Our BJ has made connections with the other BJ, specifically taking him as a guest to motorcycle races in New Hampshire; guys don't have any trouble enjoying the races and the cycles and the crowd. That other BJ was part of his family cruise last July when we really got to know him.

From September to December I always include a note at the end of this column writing Beat Navy. I have watched or attended every Army-Navy game since I entered the Academy as a Plebe in 1954. For 68 years my classmates join all of the other graduates hoping to Beat Navy. This year we all got to see history happen; the first time in 123 years there was a most exciting game made more so by Army tying the score at the end causing an overtime and then a second overtime. Army won the game this year. The next day, at the Naval Academy, their coach was fired. That was a surprise to many people, but not those with military experience. Upon reflection I realized it was a familiar solution to a military problem. When an Army battle is lost and the OIC (Officer in Charge) is at fault; or the commander of a Navy ship fails in leadership somehow they are removed from command and may even be sacked. In war and in peacetime military leaders are removed for whatever extreme error they make. This sets the standard that all the troops understand and are expected to follow.

Now this column gives me an opportunity to share a vignette that is related to it and dear to me. Probably in early 2020 after some multifaith event we were gathered in the Fellowship Hall. I had just announced that I was not going to write the REFLECTIONS column anymore because we were going to move to New Jersey. Rabbi Paris said "You cannot do that." He added, "It would be a loss to our community. Call it the next chapter and keep writing." Thanks to his impetus I did continue writing with the new column name (on the masthead above) that he gave me and have enjoyed doing what I thought wouldn't matter. His passing is our community's real loss. I am one of the many who have been touched by his wisdom and friendship. We had a different kind of bond that was made when we realized we were both former Army and Navy officers. Two years ago Stuart told me about his morning prayer called Modeh Ani which goes like this, "Thank you God for restoring my soul to my body and giving me another day of life." Since then I have made that prayer every morning and always say or think, "Thank you, Stuart" never anticipating this sad time would come, but I have his gift as a remembrance every day.

~ Branch Worsham