Would a Christian be welcome at a Jewish worship service? Are Jews and Christians allowed to worship together? For the third year in a row, Rabbi Alex Lazarus-Klein of Congregation Shir Shalom and I will be exchanging pulpits in November. This has been a wonderful experience for me. Before this I had not worshiped with a Jewish congregation outside of special community services. It’s such a joy to see how another tradition expresses its devotion and to join them in their prayers (which are in Hebrew and English) and witness the love they hold for Torah and community. It’s also fascinating to me to see how many elements of worship are similar to our own, even though they’re expressed in different forms. It’s hard to know where influences begin and end between Christians and Jews. Our relationship is a very close and sacred one, something we Christians have been guilty of dismissing for far too long.

“Our relationship is a very close and sacred one, something we Christians have been guilty of dismissing for far too long.”—Pastor Hennessy

It’s not a debate or an argument; it’s a mutual sharing of deeply held beliefs. Join Rabbi Alex Lazarus-Klein (left), Congregation Shir Shalom, and the Rev. William Hennessy, North Presbyterian Church, Williamsville, as they explore four topics that are central to both faith traditions, on Friday, Nov. 18, and Sunday, Nov. 20.
I suppose some feel that joining another faith tradition in worship is somehow inauthentic. Is it necessary to accept everything another tradition believes in order to stand with them in their worship? I’m not convinced everyone who comes to North for worship accepts every point of doctrine our tradition holds. Yet we’re able to gather as a community each Sunday and affirm faith together, even though there may be differences of interpretation among us. In my office I have a picture of a mandala depicting people surrounding a well that Mary Mohlke gave me a few years ago. She added a quote from John Philip Newell: “The well from which Jesus drew is living. It is deep within us.”

The divine presence lives within every one of us, and every sacred tradition draws from the same deep well of divinity. We don’t all draw out the same interpretations or expressions; there are real differences between us, but all our traditions point toward the same divine presence at the heart of creation. When we worship together we aren’t Christians pretending to be Jewish for an evening or Jews pretending to be Christian for a morning; rather, we are experiencing together how the sacred is expressed through each other’s tradition, learning from one another and encountering the divine presence in each other.

On Friday, November 18th at 7:30 p.m., I and members of our choir will join the people of Congregation Shir Shalom for worship. Then, on Sunday, November 20th at 10:45 a.m., Rabbi Alex and members of Congregation Shir Shalom will join us for worship. This year Rabbi Alex and I will hold a sermon dialogue at both places. We’ll be exploring three or four topics that are central to both our traditions to learn what’s similar and what’s different about our understanding. I hope you can join us for both services that weekend. A dialogue is dynamic, so we won’t be saying exactly the same thing at both places. This is not a debate or an argument; it’s a mutual sharing of our deeply held beliefs. I expect to be affirmed in some things and challenged to re-think my understanding of others. And maybe you will, too.

Peace,
Pastor Bill
What We Learned from Rabbi Jacob

Thanks to the sponsorship of the Adult Education committee, North Presbyterian Church engaged with Congregation Shir Shalom in a visit from Rabbi Glenn Jacob, executive director of New York Interfaith Power and Light (NYIPL), on October 18 and 19. On the evening of the 19th, Rabbi Jacob presented at North Church on the imperative of religious groups to lobby on the issue of climate justice. His advice on how to lobby effectively on this and other issues grew out of his experience in teaching teenagers from his congregations over 20 years. He emphasizes that this means developing a relationship with our representative and speaking out of our deeply held values. He nudged us to implement this by going in small groups to visit our legislators when they are at home in their district offices. Those of you who missed this presentation can get up to speed by studying similar advocacy material from the Presbyterian Washington Office.

The steps that North Church has taken in “greening” our building were presented as a case study on Tuesday evening at Shir Shalom. To open the program, Rabbi Jacob, who also serves as interfaith chaplain at Adelphi University, spoke of the shared commitment by all major religions to protect and preserve Creation. He also pointed out that the fiduciary responsibility of a church board requires them to consider values related to earth stewardship, not simply monetary values. Then, we showed slides of changes that the NPC Property Committee has made to upgrade our lighting, heating, and appliances in order to reduce our use of gas and electricity. These changes and our solar panels have the double advantage of saving money and shrinking our carbon footprint. Shir Shalom is at the early stages of considering upgrades of this kind and their leaders in this received helpful tips from a NYIPL board member with building systems expertise who did a quick tour of their building.

As an Earth Care Congregation of the PC(USA), North is recognized for the facilities improvements that were highlighted in the presentation. When our Session applied for Earth Care certification they also committed to stewardship of creation in worship, education, and outreach. Our meetings with the rabbi contributed in all these areas. Worship, you ask? We received a benediction for the Jewish holiday Sukkot, celebrated during this week. Sukkot is the Festival of Booths, in which Jewish congregations remember the years in the wilderness by building shelters entirely of natural materials. The cornstalk shelter built behind Shir Shalom was sadly inadequate for the steady rain that fell on it!

In a last-minute extra event, Rabbi Dr. Jacob met with members of the North Church weekday brown-bag Bible study group to study his translation of Ecclesiastes. They were joined by Rabbi Alex Lazarus-Klein from Shir Shalom, who brought symbols of Sukkot. These events were the latest in a many-decades partnership between the two congregations that is best known for Thanksgiving Turkey Baskets for the less fortunate.
Your Generosity Matters

Thanks to the generosity of many families and individuals, donations to North’s operating budget exceeded $210,000 as of September 30, 2016, three-quarters (75%) through our fiscal year. That puts us two-thirds (66%) of the way to the budgeted donations amount of $316,400 for 2016. Please continue your generous contributions so we can reach the budgeted amount. These gifts support the various missions and ministries of the church.

If you would like to know the status of your giving, you can inquire by contacting Karen Thomas, church accountant/bookkeeper, at 716-632-1330, ext. 23 or bookkeeper@northchurchwilliamsville.org. Third-quarter statements will be sent only upon request. Thank you for your generosity!

A Message from the Planned Giving Committee

As leaves begin changing color and a decided chill is in the air the relaxing days of summer begin receding from our memory. It is time to begin doing those tasks you meant to do in the summer, but put aside to enjoy the outdoors. If one of those tasks was making or revising your will, please consider including the North Presbyterian Church in your estate plans. Whether or not you decide to include the Church, everyone should have a will for the protection of their family and to ensure their assets are disbursed how they want them to be.

Including North can lead to many positive outcomes, such as:

- providing a continuing level of support for the Church’s mission and ministries;
- enabling unexpected needs to be addressed;
- supplementing annual giving during tough economic times when there is a budget short-fall, and by
- avoiding the need for special appeals when important opportunities arise.

A pamphlet titled Remembering North with a Legacy Gift in the literature rack near the Church office provides more detail. Please pick up a copy and look it over. The members of the Planned Giving Committee listed below can answer general questions, but consult with your attorney or financial/tax advisor for specific details concerning your estate plans. Thank you.

Planned Giving Committee
Joe Alber
Roger Gross
Mary Beth Karr
Election Day Happenings
North Church is an official polling place on Tuesday, November 8, from 6:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m.
Sanctuary Open: Those who wish may pray or meditate silently in the sanctuary during polling hours.
Bake Sale: On Primary Day in April we held a very successful bake sale, which raised just over $450 to help offset our budget deficit! Since record voter attendance is predicted for the election on Nov. 8, we could do even better. We will need lots of volunteers and lots of goodies to repeat our success. Call Sue D'Angelo 689-5752 for more information.

Save the Date: Thanksgiving Potluck Dinner
Everyone is invited Sunday, November 13, at noon, to enjoy a traditional Thanksgiving meal in the fellowship hall. Bring a dish to pass of your favorite Thanksgiving side dish or dessert. Turkey will be provided by the 456 group and Sunday school students. We need other volunteers as well. Please contact Kimberly Will if you can help. Call or text 716-957-4607.

Check out the November calendar at www.northchurchwilliamsville.org

Church Office Hours/Holidays
The church office will be open on Wednesday, November 11, on Veterans Day. The office will be closed for the Thanksgiving holiday on Thursday, November 24, AND Friday, November 25.

Daylight Saving Time Ends
Turn clocks back one hour on Saturday night, Nov. 5.

Celebrate Baptism!
Charlie Grant McGuire, born to Patrick and Lindsay McGuire, on January 9, 2016, was baptized on October 16, 2016.

Book Groups (meet in library)
November 16, 10:00 a.m.: The End of White Christian America by Robert P. Jones
December 21, 10:00 a.m.: Fractured Lands: How the Arab World Came Apart by Scott Anderson
October 26, 1:00 p.m.: Crossing to Safety by Wallace Stegner

Save the (Dec.) Dates
Dec. 11 Service of Peace, Hope, and Light (4pm)
Dec. 18 Children’s Pageant (10:45am & 4pm)
Dec. 24 Christmas Eve Services (4 & 10pm)
Dec. 25 One worship service only (10:45am)
Dec. 26-30 LE3 for children

North Star Deadline
The North Star deadline is the 15th of every month. (Next deadline is November 15.) Please note: December and January is a combined issue.
Communion at Home
On the afternoon of the Sundays when communion is served at North Church, teams of Elders and Deacons take communion to parishioners who are unable to attend the regular church service. The elements for the Lord’s Supper will have been consecrated at the regular service. A reading of scripture and prayers accompany the distribution of the elements. Friends and family are welcome to participate.

Homebound parishioners known to the pastor will be contacted by telephone to see if the communion service is desired and to arrange for a time. If anyone wishes to receive communion at home, or if anyone knows of another person who wishes such to be provided, please call the church office at 716-632-1330, or speak to Pastor Bill or a Deacon. If you have been ordained as an elder or deacon in the Presbyterian Church USA (even if you are not now actively serving) and would like to participate as a server in this ministry, please let Pastor Bill or a Deacon know.

Pastoral Care
We all belong to a church called North. We want you to come forth and join our Pastoral Care committee. We try to visit and bring joy, concern and caring to those who need it. The committee is small but you will feel tall when you visit, telephone and bring sunshine into people’s lives. Talk to a member; we will give you the information on how to make someone’s day a sensation. Committee members are Louise Cooper, chairperson; Marcia Villano, Sally Haywood, Karen Roesser, Carol Meyers, Heather Randall, Karen McKee, Karen Hopkins, Margaret Clark, and Mary Kasbohm

Friends of Night People: Message from Organizer
I would like someone else to take over the responsibility for Friends of Night People (FONP). It involves organizing the volunteers for the 4th Tuesday of every month, taking the clothes that have been donated by the North Church family down to Friends at 394 Hudson St., Buffalo, as well as keeping things organized while we are serving.

I have been volunteering at FONP for 20 years and organizing the volunteers for more than five years. I can help my replacement by sharing my email list and advising where needed. (Nov. 22nd is the remaining day for this year.) We typically do not cook or serve in December as there are many other donations brought into FONP during the holiday season. Please let me know if you are interested in this very rewarding mission.

Thank you, Jane Arnold 716-479-6340

Ayler, Hutton Receive Lifetime Membership Awards
On Sunday, October 16, the two circles of Presbyterian Women of North Church honored two special individuals with Lifetime Memberships in Presbyterian Women.

(continued on next page)
Martha Circle selected Wendy Ayler (right) to receive its award. Sarah Circle chose Debbie Hutton.

Presbyterian Women began the tradition in 1912 of awarding these lifetime memberships as a way of honoring church members for their commitment to Christ and the mission of the church, as well as the purposes of Presbyterian Women, which are: to nurture faith through prayer and Bible study, to support the mission of the church worldwide, to work for justice and peace, and to build an inclusive, caring community of women that strengthens the PC(USA) and witnesses to the promise of God’s Kingdom.

Spooky Halloween Party “Scares Up” Fun

Children who attend Sunday school enjoyed a scary good time on Sunday, October 23, when two good witches came to town for a Halloween party!

Reminder: Alternative Christmas Marketplace

In just a few days we will be holding our annual Alternative Christmas Marketplace. This is an opportunity to give a seriously meaningful gift this holiday season. Come learn about 17 local, national and international non-profit organizations dedicated to helping those in need. Make a donation in the name of a friend or family member, and spread the word with an enclosure card describing your gift. Make this your first holiday party of the season.

Sunday, November 6
Westminster Hall
9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Reminder: Thanksgiving Baskets

On Sunday, November 20, we will be helping to feed families at Thanksgiving. We need your support as well. You can sign up to provide fixings for a meal or donate money. If you are unable to get to the church but you are reading this article and want to help, you can call the church at 716-632-1330 or you can send your check, made out to North Presbyterian Church, 300 N. Forest Rd., Williamsville, NY 14221 and note “Turkey Baskets” on the memo line. If you need any additional information about this project, call Anne McIlroy at 716-688-4781.

You may also make a secure donation online at https://northchurchwilliamsville.org/donations/
A Litany of Prayers
(That Probably Won't Be Answered
Anytime Soon)

Lord, hear my prayer,

May passing time slow to a crawl
when folks will hardly speed at all
restful sleep prevails 'til morning
awaking to a world reforming.

Lord, hear my prayer,

Politicians late elected
do something wonderfully
unexpected
steers are moved from feedlot to
farm
petroleum products cease to harm.

Lord, hear my prayer,

Murderers will fail to kill
and alcoholics’ habits stilled
all wars end with earnest peace
and inter-racial strife shall cease.

Lord, hear my prayer,

Glaciers once more start to grow
and sea level rise begins to slow
the thrush returns here in Spring
today I learn just one new thing.

Lord, hear my prayer,

Salmon-damming rivers scour
tall and shortgrass prairies reflower
rainforests recover former might
all Christian denominations unite.

Lord, hear my prayer,

Definitive cause of cancers found
workers fare well the world around
child abuse forever sever
and not one soul goes hungry, ever.

Lord, hear my prayer

Amen

By J. R. Quimby