



kehillath shalom newsletter

קהילת שלום

February 2024
Shevat/Adar I 5784

 **RECONSTRUCTING
JUDAISM**
Deeply rooted. Boldly relevant.

Rabbi's Reflections

This Pregnant Year

BY RABBI LINA ZERBARINI



What will this year bring? The secular year is still new, and is just beginning to unfold. On the Hebrew calendar, we are already beginning the fifth month.

This Jewish year, 5784, is a leap year, which means that a month is added to the calendar. (The Gregorian year is also a leap year, so don't forget February 29! This alignment does not happen that often – the next simultaneous Jewish and Christian leap years will occur in 2052.) In leap years, the month of Adar is doubled, with the extra one being the first month. Purim and yahrzeits are marked in the second month.

The Jewish calendar is a lunar calendar with a solar adjustment. Each month follows the cycle of the moon: the first sighting of the new crescent marks the beginning of the month. But lunar months are 29 and 30 days, which yield 354 days of the year. If we only used the lunar calendar, the months and holidays would fall earlier each year by eleven days and would move around the seasons. The Muslim calendar is a purely lunar calendar, which is why Ramadan can be in July or in January. Or any other time.



Jewish holidays are tied to the agricultural cycle and the seasons. Passover falls in the “month of spring,” Shavuot is called “first fruits,” and Sukkot at the harvest time. It would not make sense for these holidays to occur at other times of the year. Thus, we have leap years, which insert a month seven times in our nineteen-year calendrical cycle.

The Hebrew months are traditionally paired with each of the twelve tribes, and this thirteenth month is known as Dinah's month, after Leah's child, the only daughter of Jacob. Although her story is not happy, Adar's motto is: “When Adar enters, joy increases.” Adar – both I and II – are seen as the most joyful months of the year. It is chosen to be the leap month because it is so full of joy that it is as if Adar were pregnant with happiness.

A leap year is known in Hebrew as a “*shannah me'uberet*,” a pregnant year. Pregnancy implies creation, the birthing of something new. This year is pregnant with possibility. While true of all years, and even of days and moments, a pregnant year is a particular op-

(Continued on page 2)

One link, One Meeting ID#, for MOST KSS meetings!

Meeting ID#: 882 6522 6225

Password: 046 425

By Phone: 1 646 558 8656

or click this link:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88265226225?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88265226225?pwd=MoZVcHRWEZjeElod1VNajJ6UlnzUT09)

[pwd=MoZVcHRWEZjeElod1VNajJ6UlnzUT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88265226225?pwd=MoZVcHRWEZjeElod1VNajJ6UlnzUT09)

FOR THE SAKE OF CHILDREN

BY JUDY DAVIS

Whatever you think of Israel's war with Hamas, whether you think Israel is committing genocide against the Palestinians or defending itself against genocide from them, this war is ultimately about children. There are stark differences in the way children are raised and educated by the two sides. In planning for "the day after," the end of war and rebuilding of Gaza, these differences will be of enormous consequence in determining the future of the two peoples.

Already, the world has half forgotten what happened to Israeli children on October 7. *The New York Times* December 29, 2023 article about the rape and sexual violence during that Hamas attack, omitted any mention of the atrocities visited upon children of the mothers who were being raped. We know Gazan terrorists murdered children before their parents' eyes and forced children to watch their parents being slaughtered.

We know other babies and children were dragged into Gaza and have been held hostage for more than 100 days. Liberated hostages report being held underground with little food or water and no medicine. However, upon their release, Israeli doctors have found evidence that Hamas used drugs, including dangerous ones like ketamine, to sedate the prisoners. Psychological torture is customary – a twelve-year-old boy was forced, under pain of death, to watch videos of murders and beheadings.

Racing to deliver medical help on October 7, an Israeli medic came upon a van in which every member of the family had been killed. The medic, a mother herself, reported that she saw in the back seat "...what I could only assume was a mother, bleeding and fallen over a car seat. Beneath that car seat, a baby shot dead in the head. The mother appeared to have died lying over her baby to protect him."

The go-to image, appearing in countless American media outlets, is a live shot of the blue, battered body of a small Gazan child being pulled out of rubble and handed over to sobbing, screaming family members. Because Hamas has so deeply embedded its war machine within Gaza's civilian infrastructure, it has sacrificed countless numbers

of its own children. Instead of spending the billions of dollars it has received to build a better life for its citizens, Hamas has created an underground world of horror, dedicated to death and destruction.

The media must again be faulted for failing to report that on the day Hamas crossed the border to massacre Israelis, it brought along children as young as ten years old.

Multiple survivors of the rampages that occurred in southern Israel tell us they were shocked to see Gazan children accompanying Hamas terrorists. They – the children – were watching and laughing as Israeli

families were murdered, raped, burned, beheaded and kidnapped. They joined Gazan adults – women and elderly people – who were looting homes.

This is how Hamas is willing to use and abuse its children to fulfill its fundamental goal of de-

(Continued on page 3)

This war is ultimately about children.

This Pregnant Year

(Continued from page 1)

portunity to take notice.

At this time, Israel is still at war and, at the time of this writing, 132 hostages remain captive. Rockets are falling on northern and southern Israel daily. How will this end?

In the US, the presidential primaries are under way. The November elections will have great consequences, both domestic and international.

The years – both Jewish and Christian – have begun in sadness and uncertainty. This leap year is impregnated with joy – can we help nurture this *simchah* to fruition?

While we have limited control over the outcome of world events, our minds and hearts are our own. We can build love and connection into our lives, our families, and our communities. We can take what actions we can on the larger stages: advocating, donating, volunteering, and voting. We can create spheres of meaning and growth and love and even contentment.

Adar 1 begins on February 10. May it bring joy to us, to all Israel, and to all the world. ❖

FOR THE SAKE OF CHILDREN

(Continued from page 2)

stroying Israel through jihad (holy war), as openly proclaimed in its charter.

Ghazi Hamad, member of Hamas's "decision-making political bureau," declares, "...Operation al-Aqsa Flood (the October 7 massacre) is just the first time and there will be a second, a third, a fourth..." Furthermore, he added, "We are called a nation of martyrs and are proud to sacrifice martyrs...We are not ashamed to say this with full force. We must teach Israel a lesson and we will do this again and again."

Among the "martyrs," of course, are the Palestinian children whose entire childhoods have been hijacked. They are being inculcated with the idea that the highest value their lives can have is to kill a Jew and/or die trying. Perhaps it is more correct to say the only value their lives have is to be sacrificed for Islam. Isn't this the essence of child abuse?

Palestinian children are raised in a culture that glamorizes and glorifies death. Under "Pay for Slay" arrangements, every terrorist who died attacking Israel or killing Israelis is considered a martyr. Not only does martyrdom confer great status upon the martyr and their family, but the families will receive hefty monetary allowances – for life! Streets and public places are named for dead terrorists to reinforce that these are Palestine's greatest heroes.

IDF soldiers in Gaza have found caches of child-sized suicide vests, the kind used by Palestinian groups in previous intifadas. Amnesty In-

ternational has said of such groups, they "have repeatedly shown total disregard for the most fundamental human rights, notably the right to life, by deliberately targeting Israeli civilians and by using Palestinian children in armed attacks."

Those who are calling for a ceasefire or end to war, who accuse Israel of "radicalizing," creating another generation of terrorists, should face the fact that future generations of murderous jihadis already exist. They were created by Hamas, the Palestinian Authority, and UNRWA – the United Nations Relief and Works Agency. UNRWA funds Palestinian schools known for indoctrinating its students with antisemitic hatred and devotion to death.

If the IDF succeeds in freeing Gaza from Hamas, it will save the lives of future generations of both Palestinian and Israeli children.

If the IDF succeeds in ousting Hamas, it will present the international community with an opportunity to defund and dismantle UNRWA. As part of the new Gaza, educators and mental health professionals should be deployed to deprogram children and to create an educational system preparing them for a life with multiple possibilities, not one limited to suicide or homicide.

If the IDF succeeds in freeing Gaza from Hamas, it will save the lives of future generations of both Palestinian and Israeli children. Hamas will be prevented from making good on its promise to perpetually repeat the slaughters of October 7.

For the sake of these children, Israel must defeat Hamas and the United States and the international community must allow it to do so. ❖

Kehillath Shalom Synagogue

Rosh Chodesh

Welcoming the New Month of Adar I

February 4@10am

Isabel's Interviews: Judy Avidor

I'd like to introduce you to Judy Avidor. Some of us have known her for years; new members are just beginning to know her. No matter how long or short you've known her, I now hope you know her even better. We spent a wonderful afternoon conversing and sipping tea at my kitchen table as I typed away on my laptop.



two daughters, both around 40. One of my nieces lives in the Bronx, and the other lives in Centerport with her toddler who gives me much pleasure. My parents were very active members of the Tremont Temple. The temple was my second family. My dad was the president and my mother was the president of the sisterhood. I was very active in the temple's youth group.

ISABEL: How long have you been a member of KSS?

JUDY: I'm not sure. I joined when my children were four years old. So, I'm guessing I've been a member for about 15 to 17 years. We were part of the PACKS program—Parents and Children at Kehillath Shalom. It offered a monthly pre-school class taught by our beloved Dalia [Rosenthal] and Vicki [Wilson].

ISABEL: How many children do you have?

JUDY: Just the two. The twins, Hannah and Josh, are now in their early 20s. Both are in grad school earning their advanced degrees in education.

ISABEL: What are your fondest memories of KSS?

JUDY: The kids and I loved celebrating Tu B'Shevat. The class was given oranges to squeeze for the juice to drink. The peel was used as a pot to plant the seed. It was their first lesson regarding how to save the planet by recycling.

My husband passed while the twins were about two years old. Even though I was not yet a member, some of the wonderful women were at my house preparing it for Shiva.

While the kids were in Hebrew school classes, I especially loved schmoozing with another mom.

At that time, I was a School Committee member. Now I'm still very active as a Board Member.

ISABEL: Where did you grow up?

JUDY: I grew up in the Bronx. I have an older brother and an older sister. I'm the baby of the family. My sister, Beth, still lives in the Bronx and my brother, David, lives in New Mexico with his family: his wife, son, and grandson. My sister has

ISABEL: How did you meet your husband?

JUDY: David was a friend of someone who lived in our Co-op. He attended Lehman College, while I was still in high school. Not only did he visit his friend in my building, but I'd also see him on the nearby campus grounds.

ISABEL: I understand that you also were a resident of Colorado. When did you live out west?

JUDY: I dropped out of New Paltz. I used my very small inheritance from my grandmother to buy camping gear and left New York with my girlfriend who joined me for part of the trip. As a child, my family took a cross-country trip for a vacation and I fell in love with the mountains. As a college dropout, I ended up staying in Colorado for twelve years. I lived in the Boulder area, but travelled a bit too, finding myself in different living conditions. I knew that \$1,000 wouldn't last me, so I signed up with a temporary employment company. I was given a job with a computer company that designed discs. When that company went out of business, I found myself working for another computer company where I became a computer engineer. It was David who brought me back to New York, where I've lived for the past 35 years.

ISABEL: Is there anything else that you would like us to know about you?

JUDY: I love animals. I have four cats and a dog. The pet population in my house fluctuates depending upon who needs to be rescued.

ISABEL: What is your favorite sound?

JUDY: It's a tie between purring and laughter.

ISABEL: What is your least favorite sound?

JUDY: An animal in pain. ❖

Kehillath Shalom Synagogue **Soup Shabbat**

Songs, Soup, Friendship
2.2.24



A Movies & Munchies Special Event!

The Jewish Cardinal

Sunday, March 3 @ 1 pm

On the big screen at KSS

Popcorn! Munchies! Lively discussion!

Calling all Kehillath Shalom members!

Please join us for this first-time special event!

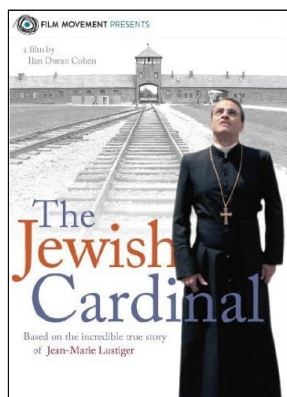
Instead of our usual format of watching a film separately and then gathering to discuss it, we will watch *The Jewish Cardinal* together on our big screen, with popcorn and other munchies provided, and then share our impressions in person and on Zoom.

The Jewish Cardinal is based on the amazing true story of Jean-Marie Lustiger, the Paris-born son of Jewish immigrants from Poland. Lustiger was sent to live with a Catholic woman in Orléans during the German occupation of France in 1940. At the age of 14 he converted to Catholicism, and later joined the priesthood. *The Jewish Cardinal* portrays Lustiger's public ascent in the Church as well as his inner turmoil over the perception that he had denied his own people, earning him friends and enemies from both groups. Lustiger's emotional role as a man of dual identity asks the question: Can a man be two things at once, Jew and Christian?

[Click here](#) to watch the trailer.

As with most KSS events, you may join us on Zoom at the regular link.

RSVP to [Lois Hass](#) or [Dolores Weinberg](#).



CRJ News

For our MLK weekend observance on Sunday, January 14, we welcomed Denise Evans-Sheppard. She is the Executive Director of the Oyster Bay Historical Society which serves the community through cultural, historical, and educational programs and events (<https://www.oysterbayhistorical.org/>). Denise lives in Pine Hollow in the home built in 1865 by her great great-grandfather, David Carll. Her family's roots in Pine Hollow, one of the oldest African American communities in Oyster Bay, date from the 1800s. She related many stories of her family and community, a history she has lived and breathed, as we shared food and conversation.

This event dovetailed well with our "Indigenous Long Island" Lunch & Learn session that ended in January. We often forget – or perhaps never learned as I never did, even though I lived in Syosset – that Long Island history didn't begin with the Levitt housing development and included more than Gold-Coasters like Theodore Roosevelt. Robert Caro's magisterial biography of Robert Moses, *The Power Broker*, delves into some of this varied history describing the Black and Indian fishing communities living together on the scrawny ribbon of sand that ultimately became Jones Beach.

On Monday, January 15, about fifteen people came together to make Brazilian black bean soup, cheese sandwiches, and frosted cupcakes for the food program at Helping Hands Rescue Mission – our sixth annual Day of Service.

See you soon with details of our next event. ❖



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If you would like to know more about a particular committee – what it does, how much time it entails, or anything else – please contact the people above. Asking for more information does not commit you to anything! But it could lead to a rewarding experience, working with others to strengthen and grow our community. ❖



Lunch & Learn

Thursdays@12:30
 Begins 2/1/24@12:30
 by Zoom



Judaism is at a point of seismic change — and it's not the first time. The second fall of the Temple initiated a radical change in the landscape of Judaism, from priestly offerings at the temple to rabbi-led prayer in the synagogue. This more recent seismic shift has been in motion for centuries, beginning in the Enlightenment. The complications of modern life have put us in a world of rapid, near-constant change. Judaism needs to respond with new radical change to stay relevant.

Judaism Disrupted is about the future of Judaism — starting now. Do the time-honored traditions of rabbinic Judaism meet our spiritual needs? Do we feel spiritually sated after a Shabbat service? Is there another way to be a Jew? It's time for a new Judaism.

Kehillath Shalom Synagogue

Soulful Shabbat

Torah Study@10am
 Meditation Service@11:15

2.24.24



SHABBAT SERVICES

We will continue our Torah Study of Prophets, with 2 Samuel. How far we get each Shabbat depends entirely on how the discussion goes As January ended, we were learning about King David's reign.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 2

Soup Shabbat 6 pm

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 3

Torah Study 10 am

Shabbat Service 11:15 am

Torah Portion: *Yitro, Exodus 18:1-20:23*

Moses sets up a system for settling disputes, relieving himself of some of the burden of moral guardianship. The Israelites arrive at Sinai. God tells Moses and Aaron to ascend the mountain to receive the Ten Commandments.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 9

Candlelighting 6 pm

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10

Torah Study 10 am

Shabbat Service 11:15 am

Torah Portion: *Mishpatim, Exodus 21:1-24:18*

Moses ascends Sinai, spending forty days and nights there, and receiving the law. Many important laws are mentioned in this section and the holidays of Passover, Shavuot and Sukkot are established.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 16

Candlelighting 6 pm

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 17

Torah Study 10 am

Shabbat Service 11:15 am

Torah Portion: *Terumah, Exodus 25:1-27:19*

God orders the building of a temple to hold the Ten Commandments and gives detailed instructions for it.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 23

Candlelighting 6 pm

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24

Torah Study 10 am

Meditation Service 11:15 am

Torah Portion: *Tetzaveh, Exodus 27:20-30:10*

More instructions on building the sanctuary. Aaron and his sons are ordained as Kohanim. ❖

Update on the Israeli Ethiopian Community

With Naftali Aklum

Sunday, February 11 @ 10 am

At KSS with Brunch or on Zoom

For Brunch RSVP to JDavis4727@aol.com by February 9!



The Israel and Jewish Affairs Committee is introducing ordinary Israelis. It seems these are the people neglected by our media. Yet Israel is undergoing one of its most difficult times in its history as a modern state. We are arranging programs to learn how Israelis are struggling to cope and rebuild their lives since October 7.

On Sunday, February 11, we will hear from an old friend, Naftali Aklum, who Zoomed with us during the pandemic. Naftali is founder and Director of Yerus, an organization that educates visitors about the Ethiopian community. He writes, "My objective is to enable the Ethiopian community in the Negev and in Israel in general to share its unique narrative and cultural treasures with others, to empower the community and to contribute to a pluralistic Israeli society that views its communal diversity as a source of strength. The story of Ethiopian Jewry in Israel is a unique tale of suffering, perseverance, and fulfillment."

In addition, he will bring us up to date on how current events are affecting the Ethiopian Israeli people.

Our program will be in person BY RSVP and on Zoom. If you plan to attend in person, you **MUST** RSVP to JDavis4727@aol.com by Friday, February 9 so we can be sure to have enough food!

Shabbat Dinner@the Rabbi's House
March 1@6



Dinner at the Diner!

Monday, March 11 @ 6 pm

At the Golden Dolphin



Thanking them for their support of Israel
So much fun, we're doing it again!
Save the date and watch for details

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Seven Leap Years Every Nineteen Years???

Whose Idea Was This Anyway?

I wondered.

So I Googled. And discovered that tradition says it was Rabbi Hillel, in the fourth century CE, who realized the necessity for anchoring the calendar so that the agricultural holidays, as Rabbi Lina discussed in her column, would fall in the proper seasons.

Hillel and the Sanhedrin, without the aid of calculators, figured that a 19-year cycle would be required to keep the 11-day difference between the lunar (354 days) and solar (365 days) years from throwing the holidays out of whack.

The 3rd, 6th, 8th, 11th, 14th, 17th, and 19th years of every cycle are leap years. To find out if it's a leap year, divide the Hebrew year by 19 (using old-fashioned long division, not a calculator, which will give you a decimal quotient). If the remainder is 3, 6, 8, 11, 14, 17, or 0, it's a leap year. So the current year, $5784/19=304\text{ R}8$, is a leap year; last year, $5783/19=304\text{ R}7$ was not. ❖

bagels & books

Our January discussion of *The Prime Ministers: Menachem Begin*, sponsored jointly with the Israel Affairs Committee, and expertly led by Nissim Yehekel, was, as usual for these special sessions, enlightening. In view of current events in Israel, the conversation was quite different than we had anticipated when we scheduled it last summer, but was all the more valuable for that.

On February 18 we will be talking about *The Thread Collectors*, by Shaunna J. Edwards and Alyson Richman. Stella, a Black woman in New Orleans, and Lily, a Jewish woman in New York, are both fighting for the cause of freedom and Union victory through their needlework during the Civil War. Unlike simple Civil War narratives, this novel, loosely inspired by the authors' family histories, spotlights historical realities, including the abysmal treatment of Black Union soldiers, Southern antisemitism, and Northern racism.



For the rest of the year, we will be reading:

March 17 — *Catskill Culture*, by Phil Brown

April 14 — *The Living and the Lost*, by Ellen Feldman

May 19 — *The American Way*, by Bonnie Siegler and Helene Stapinski

June 23 — *Signal Fires*, by Dani Shapiro

Note: Zoom for this month will be on Lois Hass' account (the one we use for Movies & Munchies), not Barbara Kremen's.

Watch TWAKS and your email for location and Zoom info, and please join us for any and all books that interest you (Coming just once is fine!), as well as for bagels, lox, coffee, and other goodies, as well as stimulating discussion on a Sunday morning. ❖



The views expressed in by-lined Newsletter articles represent the views of the writers and may not reflect those of the entire Kehillath Shalom Synagogue community.

We welcome the free expression of ideas from different perspectives and will consider all submissions for publication.

The Israel and Jewish Affairs Committee Presents
A Series of Forums and Discussions
THE MIDDLE EAST AND THE STATE OF ISRAEL



Update and Report from Israel and the Middle East

Saturday, October 21, Services at 10 am, Forum at 11:15 am

Reasons for Founding the Modern State of Israel

Saturday, December 2, Services at 10 am, Forum at 11:15 am

The Prime Ministers, by Yehuda Avner, pp. 345-695 (M. Begin)

Sunday, January 21, 10 am, Joint Session with **bagels & books**

What would Menachem Begin say about today's Israel and the Likud Party?

Israel and the Middle East: What American Media Don't Tell You

Saturday, April 6, Services at 10 am, Forum at 11:15 am

Significant Events Before May 14, 1948 and the Brilliant Israeli Declaration of Independence

Saturday, May 18, Services at 10 am, Forum at 11:15 am

Moderated by Kehillath Shalom member Nissim Yeheskel, Israeli native and frequent visitor.

Let's Light Candles Together



Friday evenings, 6:00

(When nothing else is scheduled)

We'll share, sing, and bring Shabbat peace.

Join Zoom Meeting by computer: <https://zoom.us/j/88265226225>

Or Phone: +1 646 558 8656
Meeting ID: 882 6522 6225,
Password 046 425

We will learn, study, share, pray.
As usual, come for Torah Study or Service or Both!

Join Zoom Meeting by computer: <https://zoom.us/j/88265226225>

Or phone: +1 646 558 8656
Meeting ID: 882 6522 6225,
Password 046 425

Kehillath Shalom Synagogue



**Shabbat Morning
Torah Study 10 am
Service 11:15 am**

Morning Gathering Stillness, Meditation, Blessings



Morning Gathering: Tuesday & Friday Mornings at 8 am
Establish a strong, centered, calm foundation for the day.
Join Zoom Meeting by computer <https://zoom.us/j/788752335>
or by phone: 1 646 558 8656 US (New York)
Meeting ID: 882 6522 6225, Password 046 425

February 2024

Shevat/Adar 1 5784



Sun

Mon

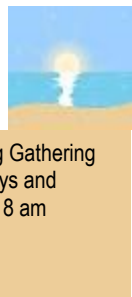
Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat



Morning Gathering
Tuesdays and
Fridays 8 am

4



5

Rosh Chodesh Group
10 am

11



12

Israel Committee
Zoom and Brunch
with Naftali Aklum
10 am

18



19



Presidents' Day

Bagels & Books
*The Thread Collec-
tors* 10 am

25

26

27

28

3



4

Movies & Munchies
The Jewish Cardinal
1 pm

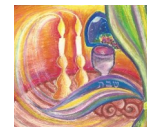
5

No Morning
Gathering

6

7

8



9

Candlelighting 6 pm

Torah Study
Followed by
Luncheon 10 am

1



Lunch & Learn
Judaism Disrupted
12:30—2 pm

8



Lunch & Learn
Judaism Disrupted
12:30—2 pm

15



Lunch & Learn
Judaism Disrupted
12:30—2 pm

22



Lunch & Learn
Judaism Disrupted
12:30—2 pm

29



Lunch & Learn
Judaism Disrupted
12:30—2 pm

2



Soup Shabbat
6 pm

9



Candlelighting 6 pm
Rosh Chodesh Adar I

16



Candlelighting 6 pm

23



Candlelighting 6 pm

1



Shabbat Dinner
@ Rabbi Lina's 6 pm

3



Torah Study 10 am
Shabbat Service
11:15 am

10



Torah Study 10 am
Shabbat Service
11:15 am

17



Torah Study 10 am
Shabbat Service
11:15 am

24



Torah Study 10 am
Meditation Service
11:15 am

2



Torah Study 10 am
Shabbat Service
11:15 am

4:53

5:02

5:11

5:19

5:27

5:35