



**CELEBRATING  
375 YEARS OF  
JUDAISM IN  
CURAÇAO**

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# WEDNESDAY AUGUST 12

## Welcome and Registration

Join us as we open the celebrations marking 375 years of Jewish heritage in Curaçao, We will honor our shared history, celebrate enduring traditions, and welcome all who have come to be part of this remarkable milestone. Guests will be warmly received as they arrive, with an opportunity to connect with fellow attendees, community members, and distinguished visitors from around the world. During this time, participants will receive event materials and enjoy a drink and relaxed atmosphere ahead of the official program.

## Evening Show “Our Snoa: 375 Years in the Making” and Dinner

For 375 years, Jews have helped shape Curaçao’s story — in business and government, in music and art, in community life and public service. Their influence can be felt in the island’s social fabric, its cultural traditions, and its entrepreneurial spirit.

The open-air variety show, written and directed by **Paulette Smit**, brings that story to life. Through a lively mix of moving and humorous scenes, the audience will travel

across centuries of contribution, creativity, and character. Expect moments that make you reflect — and moments that make you laugh.

Enjoy live music, performances by our own local actors, dancers, and singers of all ages (yes, including the little stars!), and delicious grab-and-go bites. Come celebrate our shared history and cheer on the talent within our own community.

**Paulette Smit** is a Curaçao-born actress, playwright, and cultural leader with an extensive international career spanning over four decades. Trained at the Stella Adler Conservatory of Acting in New York, she established herself in the Netherlands as a leading theatre and television performer, working with prominent companies such as DNA Theatre and Cosmic Theatre under renowned directors.

Beyond her work on stage, Smit has played a significant role in shaping contemporary theatre as Artistic Director of the Hollandse Nieuwe Festival and later within MC Theatre in Amsterdam, where she championed emerging voices and bicultural narratives. Her artistic contributions extend to playwriting, as well as historically and socially engaged monologues on influential figures.

Smit has also been deeply involved in the cultural sector as an advisor and board member for major arts organizations. Since 2005, she has been part of the artistic leadership of Stichting Julius Leeft!, creating and performing works centered on Dutch and Caribbean history.

Her contributions have been widely recognized, including her appointment as Knight in the Order of Orange-Nassau and a Certificate of Merit from the Minister of Culture of Curaçao. In addition to her artistic practice, she is dedicated to education, teaching in the Writing for Performance program at the Utrecht University of the Arts (HKU).

# THURSDAY AUGUST 13

**Half Day of Learning on "Curaçao's Jewish Community in the Americas - Past, Present and Future" with Keynote Speaker Dr. Jonathan Sarna.**

**Dr. Jonathan D. Sarna** is widely recognized as one of the foremost historians of American Jewish life. A distinguished scholar and longtime professor at Brandeis University, his work has shaped the understanding of Jewish history in the United States and its connections to the broader Atlantic world.

Through landmark publications such as *American Judaism: A History*, Dr. Sarna has illuminated the evolution of Jewish communities across the Americas, tracing patterns of migration, adaptation, and continuity. His scholarship situates places like Curaçao within a larger narrative of

Sephardic and Ashkenazic life, highlighting the island's unique and enduring role in Jewish history.

As the keynote speaker for the 375th Celebration of Judaism in Curaçao, Dr. Sarna will present **“Curaçao’s Jewish Community in the Americas—Past, Present and Future,”** offering a sweeping perspective on the community’s historical significance, its place within Klal Yisrael, and its continued relevance in shaping Jewish life across the hemisphere.



**Susan Alvares Correa** brings a personal perspective to this moment in Curaçao’s Jewish history. A 13th-generation member of the Mikvé Israel-Emanuel congregation, she grew up deeply connected to the community and its traditions, not just as history, but as something living and meaningful.

During the pandemic, when the synagogue’s future came into question, Susan became more involved. She joined the strategic planning efforts and later founded the Jewish Caribbean Cultural Preservation Foundation (JCCPF), focused on helping communities like Curaçao stay connected to their descendants and the wider Jewish world. Her work is rooted in a simple idea: communities are strongest when people stay engaged, wherever they live.

As we mark 375 years of Jewish life in Curaçao, Susan invites us to look ahead, to think about how we sustain not

just buildings and traditions, but a connected, living community shaped by all of us.

## **Optional Half Day Tours of Jewish Historic Sites**

Programming for both adults and children will be available.  
*Additional cost- details to come*

## **Evening Service Commemorating 375 Years of Judaism on the Island of Curaçao**

The pinnacle of our 375th celebration is the commemorative service, a profound evening of reflection and continuity where we gather amid the Snoa's iconic sand-covered floor and gleaming chandeliers. The service is led by Rabbi Martin Hirsch, accompanied by the beautiful voices of Snoa's choir under the direction of Erich Menig, and Chazzan Avery Tracht.

The service will begin with welcoming words from Rabbi Hirsch, followed by a moving rendition of Baruch Habah performed by the choir. Special prayers will be offered, including Shehecheyanu, Rosh Chodesh, and the Snoa's special prayer for the Royal Family, recited in the Portuguese of our ancestors.

We are very honored that we will be joined by Rabbi Sergio Bergman who is the President of the World Union for Progressive Judaism (WUPJ) which leads 1200 Progressive

Congregations worldwide and represents over 1.2 million Jews.

Three Torah scrolls will be taken out, accompanied by a heartfelt prayer of gratitude. The program will continue with an address by the President, followed by the returning of the Torah scrolls.

The service will conclude with inspiring choral pieces and the sacred Priestly Blessing, creating a moment of reflection, unity, and spiritual connection for all in attendance.

# FRIDAY AUGUST 14

## Half Day Workshop: "Get to Know your Roots"

An interactive morning of history, storytelling and genealogy.

**René F. van Wijngaarden**, born in Rotterdam, is a genealogical researcher whose work connects European and Caribbean Jewish histories through personal inquiry and sustained study. Educated in Business Economics at Erasmus University Rotterdam, he later worked as a teacher

of economics, bringing a disciplined and analytical approach to his research.

His interest in genealogy began in 1969 at the Jewish cemetery “Het Toepad” in Rotterdam, where he first encountered the possibility that the names Van Daelen and Delvalle might be linked. That question led him to trace his family’s roots to the Salom del Valle (alias Van Daelen) family, who arrived in Amsterdam in the 17th century as part of the Sephardic migrations from the Iberian Peninsula.

What began as curiosity became a lifelong pursuit, leading René to archives and cemeteries across Europe and the Americas, and to the publication of his family history, *Engraved in the Palm of My Hands* (2002). His work has also fostered meaningful connections across communities in Curaçao and beyond.

For the 375th Celebration of Judaism in Curaçao, René shares his journey into genealogy, highlighting the connections between the Van Daelen and Delvalle families, and reflecting on both the possibilities and the challenges of genealogical research in the digital age.



**Sandra de Marchena**, born and raised in Curaçao, is an independent genealogical researcher with a deep personal and scholarly connection to the island’s Jewish heritage. Her work focuses on the Sephardic Jewish diaspora of the Caribbean and the Atlantic world, tracing families who fled

the Iberian Peninsula, settled in Amsterdam, and later became part of the founding fabric of Jewish life in Curaçao.

Drawing on archival records, synagogue documents, notarial acts, and family histories, Sandra has devoted years to reconstructing lineages connected to Curaçao's early Jewish settlers, including the De Marchena, Delvalle, Henriquez, and related families. Her research bridges personal ancestry and communal history, revealing how genealogy preserves memory, identity, and continuity across generations.

For her endeavors, commitment and research, King Willem Alexander of the Netherlands appointed her as Knight in the Order of Oranje-Nassau in 2023.

For the 375th Celebration of Judaism in Curaçao, Sandra presents the genealogical perspective, illustrating how individual family stories collectively shape the legacy of the oldest continuously active Jewish community in the Americas.

## **Jewish Heritage Open Visit Day**

For those returning to Curaçao as descendants, the Jewish Museum Curaçao is more than a museum, it is a homecoming. As we gather to celebrate 375 years of Jewish life on the island, a visit to the museum offers a powerful

opportunity to reconnect with the lives, traditions, and resilience of those who came before us.

Here, familiar names, objects, and stories echo with personal meaning, linking past to present in a deeply tangible way. As you walk through the museum during this milestone celebration, you are part of the story it tells.

Visit the newly opened WW2 wing of the Jewish Museum Curaçao. The museum is open during the day and free for all 375th Celebration members.

## **A Musical Prelude to Shabbat**

Dr. Joop Halman aims to promote the awareness and preservation of Curaçao's musical heritage. He will present how traditional Sephardic liturgical melodies were preserved, adapted, and enriched by both Jewish and non-Jewish composers in Curaçao. He will be accompanied by Hazzan Avery Tracht and organist Erich Menig.

## **Kabbalat Shabbat Service**

Together we will be celebrating the essence of L'dor V'dor, our enduring faith, heritage and community resilience as we mark the 375 years of vibrant Jewish life in Curaçao with Kabbalat Shabbat, Friday evening prayer, as our ancestors have done every shabbat in the same synagogue building for the past 294 years.

The sermon will be given by **Dr. Ruth Langer**, Professor of Jewish Studies in the Theology Department at Boston College and Associate Director of its Center for Christian-Jewish Learning. A native of Pittsburgh, she was ordained at Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion and received her Ph.D. in Jewish Liturgy in 1994. She is also a graduate of Bryn Mawr College.

A leading authority on Jewish liturgy, Dr. Langer's scholarship explores the development of Jewish prayer and ritual from antiquity to the present, as well as the complex history of Christian-Jewish relations. Her work, including *Cursing the Christians?: A History of the Birkat HaMinim*, examines how liturgical texts evolved over time and across communities, often shaped by broader social and religious dynamics.

For the 375th Celebration of Judaism in Curaçao, Dr. Langer will speak on the synagogue's liturgical traditions and their significance, offering insight into how prayer, custom, and continuity have sustained one of the oldest continuously active Jewish communities in the Americas.

## **Shabbat Dinner**

Shabbat is a beautiful reaffirmation of togetherness and shared heritage. Shabbat dinners are a living thread connecting generations and preserving our own identity. At the dinner table once traditional prayers are said over kiddush and challah we can look forward to interesting and

thought-provoking conversations between all ages. We look forward to celebrating this with all of you.

# **SATURDAY AUGUST 15**

## **Shabbat Morning Torah Service**

Join us for a traditional shabbat morning Torah service that keeps some of the ancient Curacao Sephardic traditions, including aliyahs in Portuguese.

## **Havdalah, BBQ Dinner and Farewell Party**

Join us on Saturday night for a special Havdalah gathering as we close out an inspiring week of events. Set at a meaningful Jewish historical site, the evening will bring everyone together for BBQ, music, and time to connect as Shabbat comes to an end. We will also share in the tradition of making and lighting Havdalah candles, marking the transition from the sacred day into the new week. It's a relaxed and meaningful way to reflect, celebrate community, and conclude the week together. We hope that new friendships will be made and other bonds strengthened. This is not the end but the beginning of a new relationship with all of you!

# REGISTRATION DETAILS

## Early-bird Pricing through May 31:

### Members of MIE/ST: Price:

XCG 375 for ages 13+

XCG 100 for ages 5-12

### Non-Member Price:

USD 375 for ages 13+

USD 100 for ages 5-12

## Registration Links

### Registration with payment in USD:

<https://form.jotform.com/375Snoa/375RegistrationUSD>

### Registration with payment in XCG (local bank accounts):

<https://form.jotform.com/375Snoa/375RegistrationXCG>

## For more information

Please reach out to [375snoa@gmail.com](mailto:375snoa@gmail.com)