

CONGREGATION B'NAI ISRAEL

LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS

THE CHRONICLE

TEMPLE

MARCH 2021/VOLUME 21 - ISSUE 3

THE RABBI SPEAKS

RABBI BARRY BLOCK

Dear Friends:

The Hebrew language offers wisdom about our predicament over the last year: *Savlanut* (patience) and *lisbol* (to suffer) are based on the same root, *samech-bet/vet-lamed*. As my teacher, Alan Morinis, reminds us, the “English word ‘suffer’...means both to experience pain and to tolerate, or put up with.” For a year now, patient or not, we have been waiting for the pandemic to end. We have suffered under its weight. And we have found ways to tolerate this unprecedented time in our lives.



We would make a mistake if we denied either our suffering or the fact that we have found ways to tolerate it.

Some of us have not seen beloved family members and friends for a year now—at least not in person. If we have seen them, we might be in the awkward position of not being able to hug a parent or grandparent, child or grandchild. Many of us have been grateful to be able to “attend” a Bar or Bat Mitzvah, a *Brit Milah* or Baby Naming, or even a wedding, via Zoom. Better than nothing. Still, we know how much we are missing, because we remember being present at such occasions in the past—unmasked, sharing casual and often meaningful spontaneous conversation with friends and family before or after the religious ceremony.

Suffering for some, sadly, is more acute—having been ill, losing a loved one, and/or facing unemployment or tremendously diminished small business income. None of this suffering can be washed away or even diminished by extolling the “silver linings” of this unusual time. In short, those who are miserable have good reason to feel that way, and nothing is to be gained by blaming oneself or others for that sadness.

(The Rabbi Speaks continued on page 2)

WORSHIP AT-A-GLANCE

Shabbat worship continues: Friday nights at 6:15pm, Torah Study on Saturdays at 9:30am; and, Shabbat Morning Worship at 11:00am. If you do not receive Temple emails and would like to listen to the service on the telephone, please contact Keila for instructions, 501-225-9700.

FRIDAY NIGHT SERVICES IN MARCH

FRIDAY, MARCH 5

UPB-SINAI EDITION SERVICE
LED BY RABBI BARRY BLOCK
SERMON:

“The Meaning of a Sanctuary,
after a Year Away from Ours”
Music: David Bauman

FRIDAY, MARCH 12

ALL MUSIC, ALL DEBBIE FRIEDMAN
SHABBAT, LED BY RABBI BLOCK, THE
STARS OF DAVID BAND, AND THE
MAZELTONICS

FRIDAY, MARCH 19

MISHKAN T'FILAH SHABBAT SERVICE
LED BY RABBI BARRY BLOCK
Special Guest Speaker:
Rabbi Lauren Tuchman, “The Transformative
Revelatory Power of Inclusive Torah.”
Music: Jana Cohen

FRIDAY, MARCH 26

MISHKAN T'FILAH SHABBAT SERVICE
LED BY RABBI BARRY BLOCK
“Harassment, Bullying, and Jewish Institutions”
Music: Steve Bauman and Charlie Friedman

Shabbat morning worship in March
Rabbi Block plans to lead the services on
March 6, 13, 20, and 27. Music is to be led
by Ellyn Polsky on March 6 and 20,
by Annabelle Tuck on March 13, and
by Russ Parish on March 27.

(The Rabbi Speaks continued from front page)

Still, for those who have been able to tolerate this difficult time, resilience ought not to be taken for granted. If you have been able to get through this past year without being miserable (most of the time), you may possess coping mechanisms well worth noting.

Recently, on a family Zoom, one member of the family asked what our coping mechanisms are. Each person is different. I encourage each person to think about what has helped you to endure this difficult year. Those same characteristics and activities are likely to continue to bring you fulfillment and even joy when this time of suffering has passed.

And it will pass.

Faithfully,



Rabbi Barry H. Block

All Music

Debbie Friedman Shabbat

LED BY RABBI BLOCK, THE STARS OF DAVID BAND, AND THE MAZELTONICS
FRIDAY, MARCH 12, 6:15 PM



Join Rabbi Block and David Bauman for Passover Morning Festival Worship on March 28

Rabbi Block and David Bauman plan to will lead Festival services for the first Holy Day of Passover, Sunday, March 28, at 11:00am, via Zoom. Please join us for this festive service.



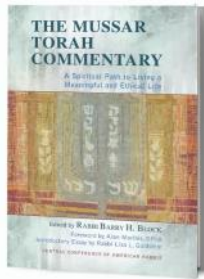
Pioneering Rabbi to Speak March 19

Rabbi Lauren Tuchman, the first blind woman to be ordained as a rabbi, has accepted Rabbi Block's invitation to speak at Congregation B'nai Israel during Shabbat services on Friday evening, March 19. Her sermon is to be entitled, "The Transformative Revelatory Power of Inclusive Torah."

Rabbi Tuchman is a sought-after speaker, spiritual leader, and educator. Ordained by The Jewish Theological Seminary in 2018, she has taught at numerous synagogues and other Jewish venues throughout North America. She was named to the Jewish Week's 36 under 36 for her innovative leadership concerning inclusion of Jews with disabilities in all aspects of Jewish life. In 2017, she delivered an ELI Talk entitled "We All Were at Sinai: The Transformative Power of Inclusive Torah." She has trained and continues to teach with Rabbi David Jaffe and the Inside Out Wisdom and Action Project, which provides a space for Jewish spiritual and contemplative practice for individuals involved in social change work. She is a participant in the Institute for Jewish Spirituality's Clergy Leadership Program. In 2020, she was honored by the Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance (JOFA).



THE MUSSAR TORAH COMMENTARY



Edited by
Rabbi Barry H. Block

National Jewish Book Award 2020 finalist!



Order the book:
MUSSAR.CCARPRESS.ORG

Resource combining Torah study and Jewish ethics honored in Contemporary Jewish Life and Practice category

New York, NY – CCAR Press, a division of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, is honored to announce that **The Mussar Torah Commentary: A Spiritual Path to Living a Meaningful and Ethical Life** has been named by Jewish Book Council as a 2020 finalist for the National Jewish Book Award in the Contemporary Jewish Life and Practice category.

Edited by Rabbi Barry H. Block, *The Mussar Torah Commentary* synthesizes Mussar, a Jewish school of ethics, with the 54 weekly *parashot* (Torah portions). The anthology’s essays, authored by a diverse group of

contributors, brings each *parashah* into juxtaposition with one of the Mussar *middot* (character traits), creating a thoughtful and practical guide to Jewish living grounded in Torah and tradition.

“I’m humbled that *The Mussar Torah Commentary* was selected among such a spectacular array of contributions to Jewish literature and wisdom. The honor belongs to the 54 contributors and their explorations of the weekly Torah portions through the lens of Mussar, elucidating pathways of Torah to *tikkun hanefesh*, repairing the soul,” said **Rabbi Block**. “The traditions of Mussar and study of the weekly Torah portion are not new. But everyone involved in creating this volume—including Alan Morinis, who authored the foreword, CCAR Press, which empowered me to bring diverse voices of today to ancient practices, and the contributors—has helped make Mussar relevant and accessible in the 21st century. I am particularly proud that this is the first Mussar book in history which was primarily written by women.”

“*The Mussar Torah Commentary* exemplifies the commitment of CCAR Press to publish books with the highest levels of integrity and scholarship that can enrich the daily lives of Jewish readers,” said **Rabbi Hara E. Person, CCAR’s chief executive**. “We are honored that the National Jewish Book Awards have recognized the work of Rabbi Block, the contributors, and the Press staff.”

The National Jewish Book Awards were established by Jewish Book Council in 1950 in order to recognize outstanding works of Jewish literature. It is the longest running awards program of its kind.

The Mussar Torah Commentary is available for purchase at mussar.ccarpress.org

Coffee, Cake, and Conversation

March 9, 11:30 AM via Zoom

**Spencer Jansen, Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts’
Director of Membership and Guest Experience**

“The Progress of the Campaign for our Cultural Future”

<https://zoom.us/j/93742716272>

Meeting ID: To listen only by phone, please call 929-205-6099
and enter the Meeting ID:
937 4271 6272

Coffee, Cake, and Conversation is sponsored
by Congregation B'nai Israel and Jewish Federation of Arkansas.



Al Barron Book Club

March 21

3:00 pm

“The Lost Shtetl,”

by Max Gross



FROM THE PRESIDENT, AMANDA O. FERGUSON

Dear Friends,

It is hard to believe it has been almost a year since life changed for everyone. It has been a year of ups and downs, of finding new ways to do things, of adjusting our lives, and changing our ways of doing things.

We have been fortunate to learn so much through this pandemic as well. We have learned that we CAN be successful at life in any situation. We have learned how adaptable we can all be.

Most importantly, we have learned that our community is stronger than a pandemic and that we will survive this. We have shown care and compassion for each other. We have shown strength and resilience. We have continued to learn and worship together. Our community continues to grow, our programs continue to run, and YOU keep coming. You keep supporting your Temple, you keep supporting each other, and you keep supporting your community.

My hope and prayer for the year going forward is that we are able to come together as a community again, in person, and begin to rebuild a new normal. I have no illusion that it will be fast and easy, or that it will look the same as it did before the pandemic. But we WILL be back together, we WILL be safe and healthy, and we WILL continue to move forward as a community.

We are fortunate to be guided by the COVID response committee, the Board of Trustees, the Ritual Committee, the House and Grounds committee, and so many more as we make decisions to move forward. I am so thankful for all of the people who give their time and expertise to help us through this.

In the meantime, we will continue to gather online, to worship, to learn, to grow together. One of the highlights of my week has become the few minutes at the end of Shabbat Services on Fridays, when we all turn our cameras and microphones on and wish each other a Shabbat Shalom. The cacophony of voices wishing each other well, the smiling faces in the squares on my screen, and the pure joy of everyone getting to see and speak to each other makes me smile every week.

Thank you to our entire community.

Shalom,
Amanda



PROGRESSIVE PASSOVER SEDER ~ B'nai Israel Style Sunday, March 28 6:00 pm

Passover is all about the experience of our ancestor's journey out of Egypt and how we retell the story each year at our Seder.

We all share the many traditions of Passover, but yet each family's is just a little different and special.

Share this Passover Seder with your B'nai Israel family via Zoom as we journey in and out of each other's home for each part of the Seder.

From blessings to the re-telling, from song to traditions, recline and enjoy a Seder led by all of US together.

Set your table, prepare your Seder plate and meal, pour plenty of wine, and recline at your table for a Progressive Passover Seder B'nai Israel style.

If you and your family would like to lead a part of the Seder, please let us know.

Reservations are not necessary,
but encouraged
by March 22 for planning purposes.

Zoom link:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82907998008>

JKids RADIO presents

All-Star Musical Passover Seder

NEFESH MOUNTAIN RICK RECHT ELLEN ALLARD RABBI JOSH WARSHAWSKY
 JOANIE LEEDS SHIRA KLINE ELANA JAGODA ELIANA LIGHT

B'nai Israel Religious School and Congregational:
 'THE GREAT PASSOVER COOKING SHOW!'
 Sunday, March 14 - for all grades, for everyone! See selected times.



Supply bags for religious school students will be available the week before with some of the ingredients needed— not all. Check your recipe to make sure you have the needed items. If participating all day, please make sure to purchase your needed supplies in advance.

Join our Religious School classes for cooking. One recipe or cook all day.

9:00 am ~ TEAM K/1: YUMMY CHAROSET WITH Amanda Ferguson
[Zoom link, recipe and supply list available in Eblast.](#)

10:00 am ~ Team 2/3: SOUP AND MATZAH BALLS with Elynn Polsky
[Zoom link, recipe and supply list available in Eblast.](#)

11:00 am ~ Team 4/5/6: PASSOVER BROWNIES WITH Tim Kessler
[Zoom link, recipe and supply list available in Eblast.](#)

5:00 pm ~ Team 7/8: SEDER SPICED EGGS AND CHOCOLATE TOFFEE MATZAH CRUNCH with Jill Flaxman and Eileen
[Zoom link, recipe, and supply list available in Eblast.](#)

FROM EILEEN HAMILTON, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

Dayenu – it's enough already!

We all know the tune. It's a Passover Seder favorite. Dayenu is a traditional Passover song during the Maggid (story telling) section of the Seder explaining God's kindnesses performed for the Israelites during and after the Exodus. All these things would have been enough, but there was more...the kindness didn't end. Just like when other things won't end, we are challenged to look for the silver lining to keep us optimistic and upbeat to make the journey, to complete the task, to cross the finish line.

If God had taken us out of Egypt and not made judgements on them; [it would have been] enough for us. Dayenu.

If God had given us the Shabbat and had not brought us close to Mount Sinai; [it would have been] enough for us. Dayenu

If God had given us the Torah and had not brought us into the land of Israel; [it would have been] enough for us. Dayenu.

HERE IS SOME FOOD FOR THOUGHT AND AN EXAMPLE –

If I **ONLY** had the time to see an unorthodox, 4-part series alone, but I was afforded the time to watch the whole 8 seasons of Game of Thrones and all of Fauda on Netflix. Dayenu.

The Dayenu challenge for 2021 – anyone can play.

Let's write our own *Dayenu* verses for this past year of COVID. Yes, we could focus on all the bad things that have happened and easily said Dayenu to all of them – they were certainly enough! Rather, we can look at the things that came out of this difficult time as 'positives' or 'opportunities' that would not have transpired without this lockdown and social distanced world.

Our goal will be to have at least 10 good verses of 'it would have been enough for us', COVID edition. Think about all the family things you have done, new traditions created in the home, and people with whom you have reunited with on Zoom. Think about the personal advances you have made technologically, and the projects now finished. Closets cleaned out, kitchens re-organized, new family calls, old friends, the right time to get a pet, the new recipes created, and the old puzzles re-assembled.

Let's put them into words of thankfulness and gratitude, and thank God for all these things that would have been enough for us but kept coming as our time in social distancing became extended.

Share what you can by sending in your verse and/or stanza.

Can't wait to hear what you have to share.

Happy Pesach.

MIDDLE LAFTY (Grades 6 – 8)

New FILM CLUB starting: HOT DOCS!

Join your friends for a documentary on an assortment of subjects and discuss over the hot drink of your choice: coffee, tea, hot chocolate...

Saturday, February 26: 7 – 8 pm

Film to be announced

Just Zoom in at 7:00 at:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88497401079>



Religious School dates: March 7 & 14

Confirmation date: March 10



FROM THE CBI COVID 19 RESPONSE COMMITTEE:

Almost one year ago, our Congregation joyously celebrated Purim together, in person.

We did not know then that our very next Shabbat would be celebrated exclusively over the internet due to a statewide emergency declaration and lockdown. Much less could we have dreamed that the Purim holiday of 2021 would also be an internet only event.

As the pandemic continues, our Committee meets at least monthly to discuss the current trends and to evaluate whether congregants may safely gather in person. From the beginning, we have been guided by three Jewish values: *Pikuach Nefesh* (saving a life); *Kol Yisrael Aravim Zeh Bazeh* (all Israel is responsible for one another); and *Chesed* (loving kindness).

January 2021 was a devastating month for Arkansas as cases of COVID 19 soared while hospitalizations and deaths reached new records. We are encouraged by the recent decline in reported cases. We hope this represents a trend rather than a momentary weather related pause. Of concern, even with this recent decline in cases, Pulaski County is still at the "Very High" risk level on the scale developed by Johns Hopkins School of Public Health. At this level of risk, indoor gatherings are discouraged.

The development and distribution of effective vaccines is cause for great hope. However, due to issues with supply, access, new variants, and concerns about length of immunity, we cannot yet depend on vaccination to allow us to worship in person safely.

After considering all of the available information and in light of our guiding values, the Committee has decided that, for now, our Congregation should continue to worship via internet (with phone access available). We look forward to the day when we can meet in person again. Until that day, please continue to wear a good quality mask when outside your household, maintain social distance, and practice hand hygiene.

Carmen Arick, JD, MD, Co-Chair
Elizabeth Cohen, MHA, Co-Chair

The purpose of the Congregation B'nai Israel Legacy Society is to secure the future of our Reform Jewish congregation. Legacy gifts are deferred gifts that will benefit Temple B'nai Israel by sustaining our congregation for future generations. No gift is too small and every gift is a testament to your Jewish heritage.

Legacy gifts might include:

- A bequest in your will
- A portion or all of an existing life insurance policy
- A portion or all of an IRA or 401k
- A portion or all of an annuity
- A portion or all of a charitable trust
- Or some other deferred commitment



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CONGREGATION B'NAI ISRAEL

Legacy donors become members of the Congregation B'nai Israel Legacy Society. If you would like more information on making a legacy gift, please leave your name with the Temple office (225-9700) and a volunteer will contact you.

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Judy Lansky

In memory of Mabel and Sam Grundfest

Loris and Jay Fullerton

In memory of Barbara Stern

Stacey Stern Ronnel

In memory of Rhoda Lowenberg Gilbert and Norman Shepherd Gilbert

Michael Gilbert

In memory of Evelyn Feit Lowenberg

Michael Gilbert

In memory of Freda Granoff Thomas

Marilyn Robison



APRIL BIRTHDAYS

1 st	Richard Bronfman	17 th	Hallie McGarry Barbara Spitzberg
3 rd	Karla Back Glenn Block Anna Moses	19 th	Susan Strauss
4 th	Susan Lesser Joy Williams	20 th	Leon Marks
8 th	Paul Spitzberg	21 st	Darcy Krupitsky
9 th	Kathy Bauman Sandi Uretsky	24 th	Charlie Friedman Len Johnson
10 th	Gary Ticker	26 th	Jamie McGarry Hollis G. Pruitt Marilyn Robison Phyllis Storthz
12 th	Jay Lazerowitz	27 th	Ann Storthz
14 th	Spencer Nodelman Alaia Smouni Robert Vogel Judith Zinser	29 th	Josiah Wheeler
15 th	Bettye Korenblat	30 th	Carol Fields Dorian Stuber
16 th	Lee Harris Brock Jacobs Larry Jacobs		



APRIL ANNIVERSARIES

10 th	Karin and Ron Bara - 2011
13 th	Melanie and Bill Siegel - 1986
14 th	Stacey and Michael Ronnel - 2002
23 rd	Regina and Perry Young - 2005
25 th	Circy and Michael Gastman - 1998
25 th	Ellen Korenblat and Luke Kramer - 1998



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Yahrzeits MARCH 2021

MARCH 5

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MARCH 12

Nathan Borrok
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MARCH 19

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Hyman Ticker
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Pete Yoder

*May God comfort you among the
other mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.*

MARCH 26

Lena Koff Bresler
Shirley Weinstein Cohen
Sophie Cohn
Nathan H. Ehrlich
Theodore R. Fox
Maurice J. Friedman
Miriam Graber
Dave Grundfest, Sr.
Sophie Kempner
Daniel B. Kohn
Roland Joseph Lanoue
Rosa H. Lasker
Fay Marcus Lewis

Steven J. Lewis
Mervin L. Leibs
Aida R. Levi
Fay Marcus Lewis
Steven J. Lewis
Albert Hughes McCann
Peter Phillips
Leon Pinkus
Sara Reich
Alma Jacobs Scott
Lilyan Stern
Fanny Thalheimer

Yizkor Elohim

WE RECORD WITH SORROW
THE DEATH OF
CATHERINE TOWBIN,
MOTHER OF
TEMPLE MEMBER AND JFAR
SOCIAL WORKER,
LUCY TOWBIN

MAX KNOFF,
FATHER OF HOWIE KNOFF
(AND JULIANNA FAWCETT)

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