

CONGREGATION B'NAI ISRAEL

LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS

THE CHRONICLE

TEMPLE

JULY 2025 VOLUME 25 - ISSUE 7

THE RABBI SPEAKS

Dear Friends,

Throughout the last year, I have come to a new appreciation of Congregation B'nai Israel Religious School.



Our faculty creatively choose and tailor activities from the outstanding ISJL curriculum to plan stimulating lessons for their students. *Madrichim*, teenaged teaching assistants, are fully integrated into the faculty, imparting their own knowledge and wisdom, while also serving as role models for our students.

Our students show up on Sunday mornings eager to be with their Temple community. They all have friends at school and in their neighborhoods, but what they share with their Jewish friends at Temple is unique and meaningful. Being at Temple is comfortable and comforting, an oasis in the week when they don't have to explain themselves or be something they are not. Even at the most challenging ages, when the students reach middle school, with a variety of activities competing for their attention, these kids show up consistently on Sunday mornings. Parents come to see that the Religious School experience is vital for their children.

Most of our Religious School parents have chosen to extend that immersive Jewish experience by sending their children to

WORSHIP AT-A-GLANCE

FRIDAY NIGHT SERVICES IN JULY

Oneg Shabbat at 5:45 pm
Services at 6:15 pm

FRIDAY, JULY 4 **SHABBAT SERVICE**

Led by Russ Parish
Music: Russ Parish

Oneg Shabbat Hosts: Martha and Charles Alman in memory of the Alman, Eisenkramer, Hirsch, and Schlossberg Families

FRIDAY, JULY 11 **SHABBAT SERVICE**

Led by Lewis Krain and Doris Krain
Music: Jana Cohen and Teddy Ferguson
Oneg Shabbat Host: Annabelle Imber Tuck
In Celebration of her Birthday

FRIDAY, JULY 18 **SHABBAT SERVICE**

Led by Meg Goldenberg Marion
Music: Jana Cohen, Sunny Baker & Perry Young
Oneg Shabbat host: Marcy Paul, PhD,
with thanks to the B'nai Israel Family
before her departure from Arkansas

FRIDAY, JULY 25 **SHABBAT SERVICE**

Led by Rabbi Block
65th Wedding Anniversary Blessing of
Trudy and Jerry Jacobson
Music: Jana Cohen, Josiah Wheeler & Kathy Cooper
Sermon: "Israel 2025: Benefits of a Journey"
Oneg Shabbat Host: Trudy and Jerry Jacobson,
in celebration of their 65th Wedding Anniversary
Oneg Shabbat Donation: Thais Miller,
in Celebration of her Birthday

Continues on next page

(The Rabbi Speaks continued from front page)


Jacobs Camp for several weeks each summer. The financial commitment is significant, even for families who rely on generous scholarships from Jewish Children's Regional Service, Jacobs Camp, our congregation, and the Jewish Federation of Arkansas. Families plan their summer schedules and their budgets around being able to send their kids to camp, and for good reason: Research demonstrates very clearly that children who spend the summer at Jewish camps are much more likely to live active Jewish lives as adults.

Right about the time that you're reading this *Chronicle*, some twenty Temple young people will be returning from Henry S. Jacobs Camp in Mississippi, with more headed that way for second session on July 6.

Each summer, I'm blessed to spend a week on site as dean of the Jacobs Camp faculty. The "job" is to help the staff who lead Jewish education programs and worship, but the "real" role of faculty members is to interact with young people from our communities on a more informal basis than we do during the school year. With the majority of our Religious School students at Jacobs Camp during first session, the opportunity for relaxed, fun engagement with our young people is unmatched.

The only experience that comes close is the time I spend with our students on Sunday mornings. Thirty-four years after ordination, I find myself leading a religious school for the first time in my career, a role for which I long thought myself thoroughly incompetent. Now, though, I have embraced something new, even as we challenge our students to do the same on a regular basis. I am grateful for the support of our faculty, parents, volunteers, and community, for making that new responsibility a great joy.

Faithfully,



SATURDAY MORNINGS IN JULY

Shabbat Torah Study at 9:30am, led by Bruce Greenberg on July 5 and 19, Shawn Williams on July 12, and Rabbi Block on July 26.

Shabbat Morning Worship at 11am, led by Russ Parish on July 5, Emily Adams and Carmen Arick on July 12, Shawn Williams on July 19, and Rabbi Block on July 26.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS:

Pheobe Blum

phoebeelenablum@gmail.com

Jennifer and Lee Razer

jenniferrazer@gmail.com

lelandleslie@gmail.com

Kasey and Clay Saunders and Ruben

kaseysaunders1@gmail.com

clayton.saunders@outlook.com

Shelley Blanksteen, whose son, Benjamin Saul Casciano, was named a recipient of a National Merit Scholarship. Ben is also the son of Jonathan Casciano.

Mazel Tov to Elli Samuels and David Sheldon on their recent wedding.



FROM PRESIDENT LEWIS KRAIN:

Last month I sat on the Bimah for our Congregation's conversion ceremony, wherein seven conversion candidates stood before the Ark and affirmed their commitment to Judaism. This experience proved to be the most inspiring thing I have done yet as President. It was an emotional moment for me to watch these motivated individuals, who had worked so hard to learn and incorporate a heritage that I had been born into, enter into our community.



Mazal tov to (left to right): Roger Horn, Kasey Saunders, Lee Razer, Phoebe Blum, (Rabbi Block), Connor Rennels, Kelsey Utne, and Karl Rozyn.

One of the loveliest things about the service this particular evening was that there had been a wedding earlier in the weekend, and the couple had donated their Chupah to the Temple. We left it up, and the conversion candidates stood under it during the ceremony. The Chupah made a powerful symbol not only of the affirmation of these individuals to the Jewish way of life, but of a reciprocal affirmation that Judaism was making to them as well.

As the candidates stood underneath the Chupah, Rabbi Block asked them seven questions about their commitment to Judaism. It occurred to me that as a person born into Judaism, I had never asked myself these questions. Of course, I have been living by many of them by default, but I had never made a conscious decision to follow them. I went home thinking about the choice to be Jewish, and how that choice needed to be a bigger part of my life. Whether you are Jewish by birth or by conversion, every time you walk into the Temple, you have made a decision to be there. Here are the questions, and however you came to your Judaism, I invite you to consider how they factor into your own life:

Do you choose to enter the Eternal covenant between God and the people of Israel and to become a Jew of your own free will?

Do you commit yourself to the pursuit of Torah and Jewish knowledge?

Do you promise to establish a Jewish home and to participate actively in the life of the synagogue and the Jewish community?

If you should be blessed with (more) children do you promise to raise them as Jews?

Do you commit to building a meaningful relationship with the state of Israel and its people?

Do you accept Judaism to the exclusion of all other religious faiths and practices?

Do you pledge your loyalty to Judaism and to the Jewish people under all circumstances?

Congregation B'nai Israel at Jacobs Camp – Session I



Pictured, left to right, top row: Noah Cardona, Hannah Reagler, Rabbi Block; middle row: Mira Krain, Lily Gordon*, Raelynn Williams, Philip Levin, Eden Willis, Gabe Elson, Silas Curtis, Andrew Scallet, Nathan Cousins*, Vivian Rudofsky, Charlotte Rudofsky; bottom row: Julian Keith, Harper Bizell, Sam Levin, Parker Lowitz, Jaxon Horn, Max Perin, Ava Harris, Abigail Cousins*, Archer Dockter, Daisy Keith. Not pictured: Harriet Baker.

**Members of Northwest Arkansas families who learned about and/or started attending Jacobs Camp when they lived in Central Arkansas and were members of our congregation, and who still consider themselves part of our Temple's group!*

Social Outreach Committee

Sponsor a BACK-TO-SCHOOL BACKPACK to go to underserved children in the LRSD: \$36. Send a check to Temple and write "backpacks" in the memo line, or call the office at 501.225.9700. We will assemble the backpacks at Temple in August. You can sign up to deliver backpacks to schools.



Questions:
Kirsta Nigro
kirstanigro1@gmail.com

B'nai Israel Religious School Resumes Sunday August 24 Religious School Registration is Now Open!



Register no later than
August 1st for the 2025/2026
5786 School year.

If you are requesting a scholarship, there's
a place to indicate this during registration.

Snack donations are
accepted any time.





This past June was a full month for Congregation B'nai Israel. We ended May with a lovely Shabbat Kiddush Luncheon hosted by Ruthe Kaplan, Bonnie Nickol, Dale Ronnel, and Nan Selz in celebration of the time we had with Cantor Alexandra Dubov, pictured left with accompanist Kathy Cooper and Director of Life Long Learning *Emerita* Ellyn Polsky.

The first of June was the eve of Shavuot and the Confirmation of Samir Dhall, Sadie Elson, and Andrew Casciano, pictured with Rabbi Block. Some of the other Shavuot events included the Jewish Foods Around the Word Cooking Club, led by Bruce and Lynn Greenberg, and the Tikkun Layl Shavuot led by Rabbi Block and Cantor Alexandra Dubov.

June also saw our annual meeting, pictured on page 8, and Pride Shabbat with special guest Rabbi Nikki DeBlosi, pictured on page 7. She preached during the evening services and spoke during the Shabbat Kiddush Luncheon.



June Appreciation

Oneg Shabbat Hosts

Abbey Shoemaker

Anonymous

LGBTQ+A Chavurah

Gus Block

Security Sponsor

Pat and Barry Solomon



Classes Begin Monday July 7

DONATIONS

Yahrzeit Fund

In memory of Michael Mack

David Mack

In memory of Irene Pareira

Sanders

Keith Maddison

In memory of Jacob Selz Brown
and Miriam Anne Brown

Nan Selz

In memory of Leatrice Block
Rosen

Nicki and Ron Rosen

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Pat & Barry Solomon

In memory of Chris Barrier

Nan Selz

In memory of Fred Selz

Nan Selz

In memory of Miriam Selz

Nan Selz

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In memory of E. Charles
Eichenbaum

Peggy and L.R. Jalenak

In memory of Belle Spiegelman

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Sustaining Fund

In memory of Jo Lawton

Bonnie Nickol

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

In appreciation of Rabbi Barry Block

Robyn Zinser and Jim
Pfeifer

In appreciation of Rabbi Barry Block

Anonymous

In honor of their wedding

Ellie Samuels and David
Sheldon

In memory of Philip Kaplan

Ruthe Kaplan

In memory of Phyllis Storthz

Storthz Family

In memory of Alan D. Westheimer

Gus Block

In celebration of Rabbi Block's
Birthday

Bonnie Nickol

Levy Camp

Scholarship Fund

In honor of Roxy Sonnier's high
school graduation with award.

Bobbye and Rabbi Gene Levy

In honor of Sadie Elson's
Confirmation,

Bobbye and Rabbi Gene Levy

In celebration of Mickey Simon's
Birthday and recovery

Bobbye and Rabbi Gene Levy

In celebration of Rabbi Levy's 80th
Birthday

Bobbye and Rabbi Gene Levy

In celebration of Karen Sherman's
Birthday

Bobbye and Rabbi Gene Levy

In celebration of Trudy and Jerry

Jacobson's 65th wedding anniversary

Bobbye and Rabbi Gene Levy

In celebration of Ann and Dick

Willians 70th wedding anniversary

Bobbye and Rabbi Gene Levy

Levy Camp

Scholarship Fund (cont.)

In honor of the first grandchild of Beth
Miller and Harvey Miller's first great
grandchild.

Bobbye and Rabbi Gene Levy

In memory of Jo Lawton

Bobbye and Rabbi Gene Levy

Leibs Memorial

Scholarship Fund

In honor of Raida Snyderman's 103rd
Birthday

Jackie and Jerry Bendorf

LGBTQ+A Chavurah

In honor of Pride Shabbat

Carol Fields

Storthz Education Fund

In honor of the Confirmation of
Andrew Casciano

Roberta Gordenstein

In celebration of Raida Sniderman's
103rd Birthday

Carol and Chester Storthz

In memory of Phyllis Storthz

Hope Lipnick

Richard Estelita &

Charley Penix

Susan Lesser

Linda & Gene Pfeifer

Tracye & Larry Townley

Ruthe Kaplan

Walt Selakovich, Sean

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Rasco Winter Thomas Group

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Miriam and Leonard Hasson

Jackie & Jerry Bendorf

DONATIONS

Storthez Education Fund (cont.)

In memory of Phyllis Storthez (cont.)

Carole and Gary Weisbly
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 Bonnie Nickol
 Charles and Martha Alman
 Bobbye and Rabbi Gene Levy
 Raida Snyderman
 Sheri and Micky Simon
 Barbara and Bruce Thalheimer
 Jim Pfeifer and Robynn Zinzer

Vogel Caring and Sharing

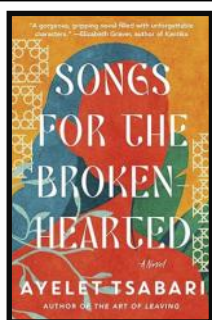
In memory of Jo Lawton

Sheri and Micky Simon

E. Lee Ronnel Cantorial Fund

In appreciation of Ruthe Kaplan, Bonnie Nickol, Dale Ronnel & Nan Selz for hosting the Cantor Dubov's farewell Kiddush

Van Gates



AL BARRON BOOK CLUB

Sunday, July 20 at
 3pm, in the lobby

Songs for the Brokenhearted

by Ayelet Tsabari

This debut novel won the Jewish Book Award's JJ Greenberg Memorial Award. *Songs for the Brokenhearted* imagines the drama in the life of a Yemini immigrant from New York to Israel in the 1950s.



Welcome our new board members sworn in at the 128th Congregational Annual Meeting. Pictured L to R : Jay Lazero-witz, Shawn Williams, Jane Goff

AUGUST WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

August 1	Barry Goldman & Donna Kirkwood	11 years
August 6	Matthew Lopas & Susan Clark	25 years
August 8	Marina & Mikhail Ivanovsky	33 years
August 11	Linda & Eugene Pfeifer III	30 years
August 11	Tracie & Phillip Spivey	23 years
August 17	Sheri & Micky Simon	45 years
August 24	Silvana & Ariel Berlinski	34 years
August 26	Sheila & Richard Bronfman	36 years
August 28	Peggy & LR Jalenak	70 years
August 30	Betsy & James Aronson	28 years
August 31	Jane & Scott Levine	39 years

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

1st	Nathan Bernstein Melanie Nodelman
2nd	Robynn Zinser
3rd	Merrick Fagan Serena Wolf
4th	Meg Marion
5th	Carol Mendel
9th	Galina Krupitsky David Shindler
10th	Arduse Sonnier
11th	Laura Bogoslavsky
12th	Rebecca Ivanovsky
13th	Douglas Meyer
14th	Rochelle Goldsholl Toos Pfeifer
16th	Beth Levi
17th	Karin Waugh
18th	Joanne Matson Patricia Monoson Cori McGrath Alan Thalheimer
19th	Chris Strauss
20th	Teddy Ferguson
21st	Alyce Zottoli
22nd	Stephen Jacobs Morris Levy
24th	Destiny Adams
25th	Sam House Henry Kramer Nancy Rosen
26th	Carmen Arick
27th	Kathey Ehrenberg Hannah Lopas
28th	Parker Lowitz
29th	Bruce Thalheimer
30th	Saoirse Davidson Jane Goff Sylvia Ehrman Green Joy Liaw Noel Strauss
31st	Justin Axelroth Hannah Reagler Mimi Reagler

JULY YAHRZEITS**JULY 4/5**

Sadye Backal
 Chris Barrier
 Barbara Behnke
 Eli Bennett
 Raymond E. Block Sr.
 Doris Meyer Cohen
 June Freeman
 Avrome David Goldberg
 Clare L. Goodman
 Monte Barry Goodman
 Dave Grundfest Jr.
 Daniel H. Jacobi
 Lee A. Kretchmar
 Emmanuel Krupitsky
 Howard David Levine
 Sarah Marcus
 Eugene M. Pfeifer Sr.
 Jamie Cohn Reutlinger
 Dora Paley Ronnel
 Moe Louis Sachs
 Dr. John M. Samuel
 Lou M. Samuel
 Jessie Sanders
 Joseph Scholem
 Joe Sloofman
 Rose Froug Smulian
 Lt. Harold Tenenbaum
 Joe I. Wagner
 Florence Wald

JULY 11/12

William B Adams
 Flora Fay Barrier
 Isabel R. Blass
 Rose Braunfeld
 Bertha Sanders Cohen
 Mannie Ehrenberg
 Esther Lasker Ehrman
 Albert Harrison-Wilkinson
 Frankie Hawthorne
 Malcohn Katzenstein
 Meyer Kaufman
 Judy Lanksy
 Dr. Richard H. Lewis
 Michael S. Loeb
 Madolyn Levy Marks
 Allan Mendel
 Lazarus Isar Palnick
 Susan Rodell
 Isaac Rosen
 William "Bill" Sachs
 Louis A. Snyderman
 Bobette Thalheimer

JULY 18/19

Annette Baim
 Beatrice G. Block
 Jacob L. Cohen
 Carrie Doolittle
 Sonya Fertel Dumont
 Martin Ferguson
 Gus M. Gans
 Rita Gartenberg
 David Knopping
 Raphael Levy
 David Lockwood
 Shirley Gallos Lockwood
 Juliet Kronberg Lyons
 Bruce Moore
 Cusie Pfeifer
 Bertram W. Roberts
 Fred Selz
 Debbie Sharp
 Michael Vogler
 Lynn Zoldessy

JULY 25/26

Noland Blass Jr.
 M R Carb Sr.
 Lewis Bertrand Fram
 Joan Komiss Fried
 Joseph Gurdin
 Ida Gurinsky
 Rosa K. Heiman
 Ruth Itzkowitz
 Leon Israel Jacobson
 Max Maughan, Sr.
 Jack May
 Barry Meyers
 Florence Navra
 Vera Nelson
 Travis Roberts
 Martha Rosenthal
 Dorothy Schwander
 Miriam Julia Selz
 Henry Silbernagel
 Janet Stern
 Max Gerald Ticker
 J. H. Dooley Weil
 Eugene Weinstein
 Eddy S. Weintraub
 Virginia Zinser

**WE RECORD WITH SORROW THE DEATH
 OF OUR MEMBERS**

*Phillis Ann Storthz
 Jo Lawton*



DONATIONS: THANK YOU FOR YOUR ONGOING GENEROSITY TO YOUR TEMPLE

Your donations support so many of B'nai Israel's programs in so many areas.

All donations to B'nai Israel are appreciated!

To reduce our administrative costs, donations of \$10.00 and less will not be acknowledged to the donor or recipient separately by mail or email but will continue to be gratefully acknowledged in the monthly Chronicle.

ENCLOSED IS MY GIFT OF DONATION IN THE AMOUNT OF \$ _____

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In honor of: _____

In memory of: _____

In appreciation of: _____

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Sustaining Fund
Salinger Landscape Fund
Ottenheimer Fund

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E. Lee Ronnel Fund for Cantorial Music
Bauman Family Music Fund
Mulkey Sacred Music Fund
Memorial Prayerbook Fund

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Pfeifer Community Outreach Fund
Sisterhood Legacy Endowment Fund
Newfeld Fund for Community Relations
Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

Education, Youth, Camp and Scholarships

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Meir Chayim Camp Scholarship Fund
Levy Fund for Camp Scholarships
Diner Memorial Fund for Jewish Education
Jordan Memorial Fund for Jewish Education
Mayersohn Leadership Development Fund
Grundfest Israel Scholarship Fund
Rosa Pfeifer Isaacson Scholarship Fund
Leibs Memorial Scholarship Fund
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