THE TEMPLE CHRONICLE

THE RABBI SPEAKS RABBI BARRY BLOCK



Dear Friends,

Perhaps you have noticed that the Mourner's Kaddish in *Mishkan HaNefesh*, our High Holy Day prayer book, is not identical to the same prayer in *Mishkan T'filah*, our prayerbook for Shabbat and other

holidays.

Near Kaddish's end, in the עושה שלום (Oseh Shalom) section, we ask God to bring peace עלינו ועל כל ישראל (aleinu v'al kol Yisrael), "upon us and all the Jewish people." The editors of Mishkan HaNefesh, though, in keeping with increasingly prevalent Reform Movement custom, added prevalent Reform Movement custom, added (v'al kol yoshvei teivel), "And upon all who dwell on Earth" before ואמרו אמן (v'imru amein), "And we say: Amen."

The difference is not specific to the High Holy Days, despite its having first appeared to many in *Mishkan HaNefesh*. Instead, it reflects a long Reform Movement tradition of looking critically at our prayerbook to assure that our prayers reflect our values. We do pray for peace for ourselves, for the State of Israel, and for the Jewish people everywhere. And we also pray for peace for all humankind.

Perhaps a better question than "why make this change" is "why wasn't that language in there all along." At the time of the Kaddish's authorship, Jewish people were persecuted just about everywhere they lived. The notion that anybody other than Jews would pray for our welfare was beyond our rabbinic sages' fondest imagination. Now, though, we live in a world where many pray

continued on page 2

WORSHIP AT-A-GLANCE

FRIDAY NIGHT SERVICES
IN DECEMBER

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

December 5

Shabbat Service led by Rabbi Block Special Guest Speaker: Valerie Klein, Institute of Southern Jewish Life Music: Jana Cohen Oneg Shabbat Host: Tim Kessler & Josiah Wheeler, in celebration of Tim's Birthday Security Sponsor: Krysten & Mark Levin

December 12
Shabbat Service led by
E. Lee Ronnel Cantor Lisa Levine
Accompanist: Kathy Cooper
Oneg Shabbat Host: Janet &

Scott Korenblat

December 19

Shabbat Chanukah Service led by Religious School Second and Third Grade Class, Heather Tolliver, & Rabbi Block, followed by Shabbat Chanukah Dinner & Party

Music: Jana Cohen Oneg Shabbat Host: Families of the Second & Third Grade Religious School Class

December 26

Shabbat Service, led by Rabbi Block Sermon: "Rebuilding Trust in Fractured Families" Music: Josiah Wheeler & Perry Young Oneg Shabbat Host: Liz Lucker & Mary Machen continued from page 1

for our wellbeing. We also pray in a synagogue that eagerly welcomes worshipers of all faiths or none—be they present for education, because they're considering conversion, or as visitors for a lifecycle ceremony.

Prayerbook reform—in Hebrew, at least—comes relatively slowly, and yet it has been a constant throughout the history of Jewish worship and particularly since the advent of Reform Judaism. Many of us recall when the matriarchs were added to the אבות (Avot), making it the אבות ואימהות (Avot v'Imahot), "patriarchs and matriarchs," praising God as the God of all generations of our people, from Abraham and Sarah to today.

Early Reform rabbis removed reference to resurrection of the dead in the גבורות (G'vurot), but now that language is an option in Mishkan T'filah. Some worshipers chant מחיי הכל (M'chayeh hakol), praising God for giving life to all, the classical Reform version of the prayer. Others chant מחיי המתים (M'chayeh hametim), the ancient blessing praising God for giving life to the dead, which can be understood literally or poetically. Our Ritual Committee has endorsed freedom of the pulpit and pew in this regard, empowering each worshiper and worship leader to pray this blessing as we see fit.

I hope that, whatever language is most meaningful to you, worship at Congregation B'nai Israel uplifts and connects us to all that is holy.



Al Barron Book Club

Sunday January 4 3:00pm, in the lobby

Heart of a Stranger: An Unlikely Rabbi's Story of Faith, Identity, and Belonging

by Angela Buchdahl

The book club's next selection is the moving autobiography of the child of an interfaith family in South Korea who became an instrumental part of the current success of Central Synagogue, Manhattan.



Saturday Mornings in December

Shabbat Torah Study at 9:30am, led by Valerie Klein on December 6, by Bruce Greenberg on December 13, and by Rabbi Block on December 20 & 27.

Shabbat Morning Worship at 11am in the Library, led by Rabbi Block on December 6, 20, & 27, and by Cantor Levine on December 13.



November Gratitude

Oneg Shabbat Hosts & Sponsors

Maggie Head Kirsta & Keith Nigro Abbey Shoemaker & Glenn Block The Jacobson Family

Security Sponsors

Rebecca & Roger Horn Lauren & Joseph Margolick Julie Polsky Trudy & Jerry Jacobson Alison & Austin Vann

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Trudy Jacobson Jennifer Jacobs Fred Levin Bonnie Nickol Karen Sherman

Service Streaming, & Sound Volunteers

Teddy Ferguson Lee Razer Abbey Shoemaker Tim Kesler & Josiah Wheeler

FROM PRESIDENT LEWIS KRAIN

Confession: Torah Study has always felt a bit too much like a college Comparative Literature class for my comfort. Although I love the stories, lessons, and wisdom in the Torah, whenever we pick out an individual word or phrase and break down it's specific meaning or translation, I feel transported to a dusty classroom, and I break out in cold sweats in anticipation of the 500-word essay I'll inevitably have to write. If you ask me, I'll say I prefer to take the Torah at its face-value, big picture message.

So, when I showed up on November 8, for our congregation's feedback session for CCAR's work-in-progress New Reform Torah Commentary, I was a bit skeptical. This was no doubt a great opportunity, arranged by Rabbi Block, for our congregation to have impact on the Reform movement's interpretation of the Torah for decades to come. But I admit I cringed a little when the rabbi announced we were going to focus on one word in the section, "laugh." Parshat Vayeira depicts the elderly Abraham and Sarah being visited by angels, who tell Abraham that Sarah will bear him a son. Given their advanced age, Sarah laughs, and we're off to the races about what that means, why the particular word for "laugh" is chosen, what that means for their relationship to each other and to God, and how it connects this section to several others in the Torah. However, despite my misgivings, when we got to that level of discussion, I couldn't help but think about the greater context. In my big-picture reading of these verses, it had never occurred to me that Isaac also means, "to laugh," highlighting the connection between this section and the later passages dealing with his birth. This and several other new epiphanies left me with a new feeling of connectedness to the Torah.

So, I admit it: putting my college-day PTSD aside, I walked out of that session with a much deeper understanding of the portion, the history it detailed, and my own relationship with the text. After 50 years of annual perusal of this section (in which it honestly hadn't made much impression on me), I had learned some things I had never known and the section spoke to me on a much more personal level.

We meet every Saturday morning at 9:30 to study the words of the Torah in this depth. Even if, like me, such close analysis is not your thing, stop in every once in a while, and see how these discussions go. I can guarantee you'll come away with something, small or large, that you didn't walk in with. No 500-word college essays will be required (though I did need to send feedback to the CCAR on the new interpretation presented that day).



December Food Drive

food insecurity is the most severe in the winter

Drop items in **the box in the foyer** & they will be delivered on Monday, January 5 to Potluck Food Rescue. Clean your pantry and donate any non-perishable items, such as:

Peanut Butter
Rice
Beans
Soups
Canned meats
Oatmeal, healthy cereals
Canned Vegetables
Canned fruits
Pasta/Pasta Sauce
Nuts, dried fruit
No chips, cookies, or sweets please.

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL NEWS

Our Religious School at CBI doesn't have an official motto, but if we were ever to choose one, I think "Learning Never Ends" might be a top contender. Our faculty isn't just trying to teach students about Jewish life and tradition, they're trying to instill a love for Jewish learning that will carry on long after our kids have aged out of school and moved into leadership positions in the wider Jewish community.

And we do more than just talk about it! On November 9, our regular Religious School classes were held alongside one of the best adult learning events our community holds: the Global Day of Jewish Learning. Folks from CBI, Agudath Achim and Chabad all gathered at the Temple to learn – and they were joined by Jews all around the world who were holding their own Global Day events! Special thanks to the Jewish Federation of Arkansas for their planning and support, as well as CBI member Emily Adams, who chaired the Global Day committee. It's good for our students to see adults coming to the Temple to study – and good for members of our community to see the learning that goes on here every week!

With the weather turning colder, we're all looking forward to Chanukah. We've got some very special plans this year! First, on the weekend of December 5-7, Valerie Klein, the Community Manager of the Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life (ISJL) will be joining us for Shabbat and conducting our own CBI Maccabiah during Religious School on December 7th. ISJL has been a steadfast partner in terms of curriculum, teacher in-service, good advice – and now coming to Little Rock to get us all in the Chanukah spirit!

The fun doesn't stop there, either. On Shabbat Chanukah, December 19th, our students in grades 2 and 3 will be leading us all in Shabbat services on Friday night. They're eager to show off all they've learned from teacher Heather Tolliver and madrichot Caroline Goldsholl and Rylee Krupitsky. We'll also be having some delicious food both at our usual Oneg and at dinner afterward, so come light a candle with us and enjoy the holiday with our Religious School students!

With gratitude,

Michael Roberts, Operations Manager



LAFTY Lock-In

The night of December 13th

Open to anyone in High School. Register for the lock-in before the end of business Thursday December 10 by calling 501.225.9700 or emailing lfrauenthal@bnai-israel.us.

Arrive as early as 6:30, Doors soft locked at 7pm. Pizza will be served. Games will be played!

SUFGANIYOT!

Lock-in participants will prepare *sufganiyot*.



These jelly donuts were introduced by Polish Jews and are now Israel's favorite Chanukah treat.

Pre-order yours today using the QR Code or by calling 501.225.9700: \$18 for a dozen, \$10 for a half dozen, or \$2 apiece the day of!

Complimentary coffee will be offered with the purchase of sufganiyot!

Come support LAFTY

8:30AM Sunday, December 14!

Shabbat Chanukah Service, Dinner, and Party

Planned and Led by Our Religious School Grades 2/3

Friday, December: 19 Oneg Shabbat – 5:45pm: Service – 6:15pm
Dinner and Party following Services.

Brisket and Latkes by Rita Fagan and crew.
Oneg Shabbat, decorations and
dinner sides and dessert by Grades 2 and 3 Families.
Games and Activities led by LAFTY.

Dinner reservations are a must.

Please be sure to indicate special dietary needs when you make your reservation.

Follow the QR Code below or contact the office at 501-225-9700 or Ifrauenthal@bnai-israel.us

Dinner cost: \$18 for adults and children age 10+, \$10 for children under 10, children under 2 are free.

for reservations received by close of business Wednesday, December 17.

Later reservations: \$20 for adults and children age 10+, \$12 for children under 10.

At the door: \$25 for adults and children 10+, \$15 for children under 10.

If the cost of the dinner would make your attendance difficult, please contact Rabbi Block, bblock@bnai-israel.us

no later than close of business on Wednesday, December 17, for a price that fits your budget.



RSVP
for Shabbat Chanukah
Dinner and or
Luncheon
with the QR Code
or by contacting
the office
501.225.9700

If rauenthal @bnai-israel.us

Shabbat Chanukah
Vogel Kiddush Luncheon
Following Services Saturday, December 20

There is no charge,
but luncheon reservations are a must.
Please be sure to indicate special dietary
needs when you make your reservation.
Follow the QR Code or contact the office
at 501-225-9700 or Ifrauenthal@bnai-israel.us





Sunday, December 21 Chanukah Menu

Lumpia & Bucci (Phillipines) Couscous (Morocco) Cheesecake (Italy)

Cheesecake prep 2pm Cooking other dishes 3pm Candle lighting will be 5pm with dinner to follow.

Bring your Chanukiah!

To RSVP, pleae call or email Bruce Greenberg, 501.766.2475, sbrucegreenberg2gmail.com



The Jewish Federation of Arkansas is conducting an anonymous survey to better understand Jewish life in Arkansas. Please fill it out for your household and share with other Jewish people you know. Volunteers are also needed for focus groups. email Erin@jewisharkansas.org for details. To access the survey, please use the QR code below or this link: https://tinyurl.com/JFAR-Survey

Jews of Arkansas Survey

Conducted by the Jewish Federation of Arkansas

We're creating a snapshot of Jewish life across the state — and we need your voice!

- The survey is anonymous One per household
- Share with Jewish friends, family, and neighbors in Arkansas!

Take the Survey Today





Special Group Offerings

Building A Bridge of Healing As We Travel the Path of Grief Weds, 12:00-1:30; Dec 3, Dec 10. Open. Synagogue Agudath Achim Library; Facilitated by Rickie Lockwood, LCSW; Diane Harper, LCSW

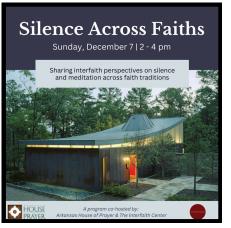
Are You Caring for a Loved One? "Caregiver Support Group" Monthly, Weds, 12:00-1:30; Dec 10, Jan 14, 2026, Feb 11, Mar 11, April 29, May 13, June 10. Open.

Synagogue Agudath Achim Library; Featuring Guest Speakers including Sandy Lubin, APN and others; Facilitated by Diane Harper, LCSW.

"Friends Network" **Volunteer Quarterly Gathering** Weds, 6:00 - 7:30 pm; Feb 18, May 20.

Temple B'nai Israel Social Hall Update on the Friends Network progress and challenges, sharing and caring.

Interested? Come on or contact Diane at 501-408-4232 or diane@jewisharkansas.org



This time of year, as the days shorten, we often seem inclined toward silence and contemplation. Join The Interfaith Center and Arkansas House of Prayer for a panel discussion with the Hon. Annabelle Imber Tuck (Congregation B'nai Israel), Marcus Lowe (Madina Institute), The Rev. Susan Sims Smith (Episcopal Diocese of Arkansas), and Mike Mueller (Ecumenical Buddhist Society) on the importance of silence and meditation across faith traditions, then spend time in quiet contemplation together in the Arkansas House of Prayer, 28215 Chenal Valley Dr. Little Rock, AR 72223, Sunday December 7, 2 - 4pm.

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS 2nd Valeria Faber Jill Flaxman 5th Robert Block Thomas McGarry Robert Oliva Rebekah Scallet Patricia Solomon 7th Shelley Ballew Sandie Lubin Clover Wagner 8th Lauren Berkman Margolick 10th Val Habrock John Austin Levin **Roxy Sonnier** 11th Karen Pear 12th Silvana Berlinski 13th Corbin Levin Alexia Webb 14th Sheila Bronfman Ron Lanoue Susan Rosenthal Kantrow 16th Jamie Axelroth **Brent James** 17th Raymond Abramson 18th Benjamin Flaxman 19th Danette Devlin 20th Tina Bernstein Elli Samuels 21st Cici Singer 23rd Morris Estep Don Pfeifer Maci Schlesinger 24th Milton Baer Doris Krain

25th Mira Krain 26th Marc Williams 27th Aaron Rabiroff David Ronnel

29th Regina Young 30th Stanley Goldberg

31st Ella-Sofia Horn Liam Wagner

Samuel Hoffman

Sloane Jenae Williams

JANUARY WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

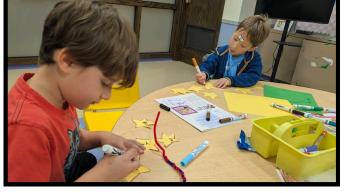
Michelle Lemaire & Mickey Loeb	1-Jan	15th
Nancy & Stephen Rousseau	1-Jan	48th
Anna & James Moses	3-Jan	45th
Susan Rosenthal Kantrow & Brian Kantrow	3-Jan	39th
Flavia & Stephen Jacobs	7-Jan	16th
Julie & David Shindler	10-Jan	44th
Sheree & Douglas Meyer	12-Jan	36th
Kelli & Scott Schlesinger	12-Jan	18th
Elizabeth Cohen & Lauren Johnston	15-Jan	4th
Elsa & Avi Helton	17-Jan	21st
Suzanne Klimberg & Sam Storthz, III	17-Jan	33rd
Patricia & Barry Solomon	18-Jan	62nd
Joy Figarsky & Jay Lazerowitz	18-Jan	2nd
Rebecca & Roger Horn	20-Jan	21st
Patricia & Herbert Monoson	24-Jan	61st



Lisa Coffey-Hulett & Cidney Hulett,

whose son **Scotty** was named 4A All-State in golf, a remarkable achievement for a high school freshman. Congratulations also to Scotty's grandmother, **Judi Coffey**.

"Our Religious School at CBI doesn't have an official motto, but if we were ever to choose one, I think "Learning Never Ends" might be a top contender." - Michael Roberts







DECEMBER YAHRZEITS

December 5 / 6

Jeff Bell

Alice Blass

Phyllis Block Brotman

Bernard Cohen

Professor Louis Cohen

Sarah R. Cohen

Harry L. Ehrenberg

Sheila Fine

Flora S. Franklin

Maurine Frauenthal Grundfest

Sarah Leah Harberg

Yosyp Himelfarb

Gus L. Kahn

Ike Kempner

Harry Koppel

Hattie Kronberg

Susan Porter Levy

Morris Marcus

Florence Morris

Bill Parish

Emma Jo Parish

Mae Lyons Pfeifer

Paul Roda

S. William Ross

Barbara Schlesinger

Jerome Sherman

Herbert L. Storthz

Gege Thalheimer

Sidney Jacob White

Mike Yout

December 12 / 13

Ted Baer

Sqt. Sherrill Bernstein

Raymond V. Biondo M.D.

Leslie R. Nunes Carvalho

Alice Blass Cohen

Jennie Ottenheimer Falk

Barbara "Bobbi" R. Goldman

Don Gordon

Eleanor Gross

Irving Harris

Harvey "Ray" Jordan

Phyllis Lieberman Kauffman

Justin Komiss

Louis Krain

Esfir Lyublinskaya

December 12 / 13 continued

Bertie Mack

Rose Bloom Malvin

Captain Charles S. Narkinsky

Elsie K. Pfeifer

Blanche Roubein

Nanette Altschul Samuel

Florence Schuman

Marguerite Selz

Carol Silverstrom

Jacob Eli Smulian

Naomi D. Tanenbaum

Julius Tenenbaum

Sol Thalheimer Sr.

Sandra Waxman

Richard Yoder

Rose Skalmer Young

December 19 / 20

Mark Adler

Sophie Goldstein Back

Larry Bentley

Fannie Kauffman Cline

Robert Avington Cortese

Irma "Chickie" Dollinger

Margo Douglas

Caleen Estelita

Linda "JJ" Factor

Stanley Falk

Niman Freddie Friedman

Julia Goldman Levy

Salene Marks Lyons

David Louis Menkus Jr.

Catherine Nachmann

Joseph Pfeifer

Martin Reinsch

Gloria Sack

M. J. Siesel

Joseph Stern

Alvin W. Strauss Jr.

Alvin Weil Strauss Sr.

Sam Strauss Sr.

Seymour S. Summerfield

Herbert Wolf Sr.

December 26 / 27

Henry Altman

Louis Henry Altman

Elsie Axler

David Behnke

Leo P. Bott Sr.

Elias Cohen

Sylvia Fredman

Henry Joseph Friedman

Gertrude Gans

Herbert J. Garon

Sheldon Goldsholl

Jesse Heiman

Sam T. Heuer

Alan Kagan

Abe J. Kempner

Enid R. Kempner

Harry S. Lasker Jr.

Arnold Joseph Leff

Phil Levy

Rita Levy

Gus Loewenberg

Irene Manning Mathis

Saundra Neloms

Charlotte Netter Ottenheimer

Lena A. Pinkus

Robert D. Remet

Charlotta Ringelhaupt

Bob Rosen

Francis B. Stern

Ann Simon Storthz

Hannah Wagner

Amelia Levy Weiss

Annette Norma Yahn



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In memory of Dolores Greenberg

Lynn & Bruce Greenberg

In memory of Geri Axler

Lynn & Bruce Greenberg

In memory of Ariel Barak Imber Annabelle Imber Tuck

In memory of Jerry & Hildegard Sherman Karen Sherman

In memory of Gege Thalheimer Joan & Larry Nafe

Cemetery Fund

In memory of Dr. Bertram W. "Bert" Roberts
Jane & Bob Goff

In memory of Flora S. Franklin Jane & Bob Goff

Jordan Memorial Fund for Jewish Education

In honor of Michael Roberts &

Luke Frauenthal for their dedicated service to the Temple

Lynn & Bruce Greenberg

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

Anonymous

In memory of Eddie Ceitlin Bonnie Nickol

Vogel Family Caring & Sharing Fund

Esther Gordon



Congregation B'nai Israel is committed to the safety of our Temple.

Will you help us keep our sacred Temple safe for worship? Your donation is greatly needed and appreciated more than ever.

Contact Luke at LFrauenthal@bnai-israel.us or 501.225.9700 to select a date.

Sponsor Shabbat evening or morning worship for \$180.00.

Thanksgiving Baskets!

Thanks to all the donors who made it possible to supply extra food to needy families this holiday season. Special thanks to Kirsta Nigro, who organized volunteers to fill and deliver the baskets. We celebrated the project with a fabulous Thanksgiving themed Oneg Shabbat hosted by Kirsta & Keith Nigro!

Carolyn Adams-Price Jan & Larry Alman Emily Adams & Carmen Arick Shelley Ballew Kathy Bauman Glenn Block Gus Block Rabbi Barry Block Jana Cohen Neil Deininger Richard Estelita & Charley Penix Audrey & Donald Evans Carol Fields Luke Frauenthal Eli Goldman Trudy & Jerry Jacobson Doris Krain Michel Leidermann Bobbye & Rabbi Eugene Levy Candy Levy Elizabeth Lucker & Mary Machen Jay & Becky Marks Pat Highley & Arnold Nachmann Ellvn Polskv Jennifer & Lee Razer Michael Roberts

Ellyn Polsky
Jennifer & Lee Razer
Michael Roberts
Kasey & Clay Saunders
Abbey Shoemaker
Annabelle Imber Tuck
Amanda & Shawn Williams

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Ifrauenthal@bnai-israel.us, 501-225-9700.

and













LIST OF NAMED FUNDS

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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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Rosa Pfeifer Isaacson Scholarship Fund
Leibs Memorial Scholarship Fund
Memorial Fund for Education and Youth

Supporting Congregational Programs

Hallie Cohen Miller Archive Fund Stern Library Fund Knoff Family Fund

Lifecycle Support

Vogel Family Caring and Sharing Fund Oakland Jewish Cemetery Fund



Donate to any of our named funds by mailing a check or online. If you like, specify that you are making a donation in memory of a loved one or in honor of a specific celebration.















LAFTY members attended two NFTY events this month, the NFTY-So Fall Conclave in Pensacola, FL and the North American level Collab at URJ Greene Family Camp in Texas. They had a great time learning leadership skills, participating in a wide range of social action activities, and building relationships with NFTY teens from other states and regions. - Mira Krain