

THE TEMPLE CHRONICLE

THE RABBI SPEAKS RABBI BARRY BLOCK



Dear Friends,

Confronted by a terrifying increase in violent antisemitism, much is out of our control. We cannot stop people from hating us. Even if we wished, we could not

control world events for which we are wrongly blamed. Jews do not control the world, as antisemitic conspiracy theorists charge. We must not imagine that reducing antisemitism is our responsibility or could be achieved by us if we wished. And no, Israel is not to blame. While contemptible actions of the Israeli government rightly bring opprobrium within and beyond Israel, blaming and attacking the Jewish people as some kind of payback is antisemitism, plain and simple.

If we can't stop antisemitism, what **can** we do about it?

- We can and we do take steps to secure our Temple, our programs, our services—and, above all, our people. Our Security Committee, vigorously chaired by Carol Parham, constantly reevaluates our security needs, implemented by Michael Roberts, Administrator, with a wide array of security-related vendors. We are blessed with the partnership of the Jewish Federation of Arkansas (JFAR), Secure Communities Network (SCN), and federal, state, and local law enforcement. We are currently enhancing

WORSHIP AT-A-GLANCE

FRIDAY NIGHT SERVICES IN APRIL

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

April 3

LAFTY Shabbat Service honoring Caroline Goldsholl and Mira Krain, led by LAFTY and Rabbi Block
Sermon: Mira Krain, LAFTY President 2023-24, 2025-26
Music: Jana Cohen accompanied by Kathy Cooper, whose participation is made possible by a generous grant from the Bauman Family Music Fund
Oneg Shabbat Host: Families of LAFTY

April 10

Shabbat Service led by Rabbi Block and E. Lee Ronnel Cantor Lisa Levine
Sermon: Student Rabbi Yossi Elmackias
Music: Perry Young
Oneg Shabbat Sponsor: Patty and Herb Monoson, in memory of Martha Rosenthal on her Birthday

April 17

Membership Shabbat Service led by Rabbi Block and New Members
Music: Jana Cohen, Teddy Ferguson, David Korenblat, & Perry Young
Oneg Shabbat Host: Bonnie Nickol in memory of Sam Nickol

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our physical security at our main entrance, only one phase in a project funded by government grants. SCN recently conducted its triennial security audit, and we received high praise. We are already implementing modest additional procedures as we await the written report. JFAR generously funds enhanced security presence when world events demand it.

- We can and we do maintain and strengthen our interfaith relationships. These relationships may seem unrelated to safety. We would undertake them even if they didn't make us safer, since they are valuable in their own right, as we work in partnership to combat hunger and homelessness and enhance education. Still, Jewish communities have never been safe when isolated from their neighbors. When people do not know Jews, or members of any marginalized or minority group, they may become suspicious. When they get to know us, though, we are flesh and blood, people to be cared for and protected. Congregation B'nai Israel has been blessed with strong interfaith relationships for more than a century, built and nurtured by those who came before us. Our job is to maintain and enhance them.
- We can and we do pursue Jewish joy. I am not the first to observe that, after Haman's plot to wipe out the Jewish people is foiled in the Book of Esther, Mordecai does not establish a solemn annual observance. Instead, he decrees that the day should be remembered with festivity, community building, and *תיקון עולם* (tikkun olam, repairing the world), with joyous celebration, *שלח מנות* (shalach manot, gifts to one another), and *מתנות לאביונים* (matanot la-avyonim, gifts to the poor). This month, as we celebrate Passover, let us rejoice in our freedom with Seder at home or with family and friends, and then together as a congregational community. Let us pledge ourselves to new acts of bringing freedom to those who do not have what we do.

We may not be able to stop antisemitism, but we can prevent it from defining or controlling us. Let us continue to frustrate antisemitism's ability to harm us, celebrate the interfaith friendships we share, and multiply our Jewish joy.

Faithfully,



April 24

Shabbat Service led by Eli Krupitsky and Rabbi Block

Sermon: "Society Built by Torah"

Music: Sunny Baker and Isabella Ifrah accompanied by Kathy Cooper, whose participation is made possible by a generous grant from the Bauman Family Music Fund
Oneg Shabbat Host: Galina & Michael Krupitsky in celebration of Eli becoming a Bar Mitzvah

Please Join Us in Celebrating the Bar Mitzvah of

Eli Davis Krupitsky

Shabbat Morning, April 25,
at 10:30am

Followed by a Kiddush Luncheon.

All are welcome.

Hosted by Darcy & Eugene Krupitsky

Saturday mornings in April:

Bar Mitzvah of Eli Krupitsky, Saturday, April 25, at **10:30am**, led by Eli, Rabbi Block, Jana Cohen and Russ Parish in the Sanctuary, with accompaniment by Kathy Cooper, whose participation is made possible by a generous grant from the Bauman Family Music Fund.

Shabbat Torah Study at 9:30am, led by Rabbi Block on April 4, 11, and 25, and by Student Rabbi Yossi Elmackias on April 18. Please note that Torah Study on April 25 will be abbreviated, concluding at 10:15am.

Shabbat Morning Worship at 11am in the Library, led by Rabbi Block on April 4, by Rabbis Block and Elmackias on April 11, by Emily Adams and Carmen Arick on April 18.



A Word from Eli Krupitsky:

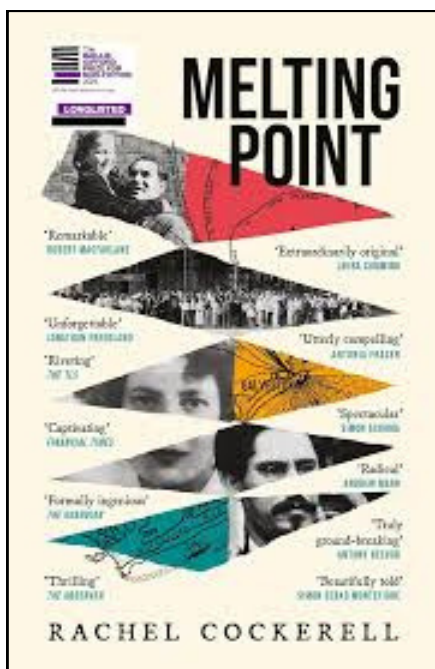
Every summer, the Arkansas Food Bank holds its annual Summer Cereal Drive. The drive raises boxes of breakfast foods to provide breakfast during the summer when kids are out of school. Currently, 1 in 4 kids in Arkansas will face food insecurity during the summer break, so these efforts go directly to helping offset this problem. In my Torah Portion, *K'doshim*, we are commanded that “When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap all the way to the edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. You shall not pick your vineyard bare or gather the fallen fruit of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger.” My Bar Mitzvah Project goes directly to this commandment. I have signed up the Congregation to participate in this endeavor and hope that all of you will help me in one of 2 ways:

1) By bringing boxes of cereal, granola bars, instant oatmeal, etc. to the Temple where you can drop them off in boxes in the foyer

2) Making a financial donation online at <https://arkansasfoodbank.donorsupport.co/-/NBQLLJBV?member=SUJJXMNE> or by following this QR code:



Although the Summer Cereal Drive officially kicks off on April 24th, the weekend of my Bar Mitzvah, donations can be accepted at any time before then and through June 26th. In addition to organizing this endeavor, I personally plan on donating 10% of the funds I receive as gifts to the above cause and will be volunteering at the Arkansas Food Bank from now until the beginning of Jacobs Camp this summer. I hope you will join me in supporting this important cause and help the Congregation as we strive to be one of the top religious organizations in the amount of total breakfast items donated in Little Rock.



Al Barron Book Club

Sunday, May 24, 3:00pm,
in the lobby

Melting Point:

Family, Memory, and the Search for a Promised Land
by Rachel Cockerell

In *Melting Point*, Cockerell tells the story of a Jewish migration to Texas. In this book she shares family stories and primary source documents that show the context of her great-grandfather's participation in a dream to create a Jewish state in Galveston.

Join us for Passover

5786 Passover Morning Worship Services 2026

Thursday, April 2, at 11:00am

Festival Morning Worship for the First Holy Day of Passover, led by Rabbi Block.

Both services will be held in the Library and will also be available via Zoom with the Meeting Owl.

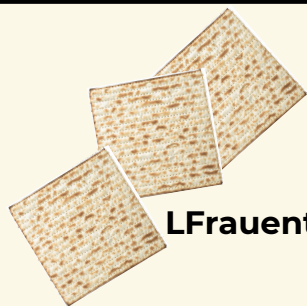
Temple offices will be closed on Thursday, April 2 and Wednesday, April 8.



Wednesday, April 8, at 11:00 am

Festival Morning Worship for the Last Holy Day of Passover, including *Yizkor*-Memorial Prayers, led by Rabbi Block and Student Rabbi Yossi Elmackias.

(Marc Chagall's *Le Cantique des cantiques*, 1975, depicts the lover and beloved of *Shir HaShirim*, the *Song of Songs*, traditionally sung during Passover.)



Vogel Passover Kiddush Luncheon, after Services Saturday, April 4

No Charge but RSVP to Luke at 501-413-0626,

LFrauenthal@bnai-israel.us Or use the QR Code to Reserve a spot

Caregivers are welcome.



Congregational Passover Seder Tuesday, April 7 at 6:00pm

This festive meal will be lovingly prepared by Temple volunteers and catered by 42 Bar and Table.

Please RSVP to Luke at 501-225-9700,
LFrauenthal@bnai-israel.us

or fill out the form using the QR Code.

You should RSVP before 5:00pm on Tuesday, March 31.

We cannot guarantee seating for those who do not make reservations by March 31.

Adult Members and Families of Judaism 101 Students- \$38;

Non-member - \$47;

Kids aged 10 to 18 - \$12;

Kids aged 9 and under eat free.

If the cost would prevent you from attending, please contact Rabbi Block at bblock@bnai-israel.us

Please let us know of any dietary needs.

**The Seder is generously supported by
the Charles, Freddie, and Sylvia Newfeld Fund**





Yom HaShoah

Holocaust Remembrance Day

Guest Speaker
Dr. Andras Lacko

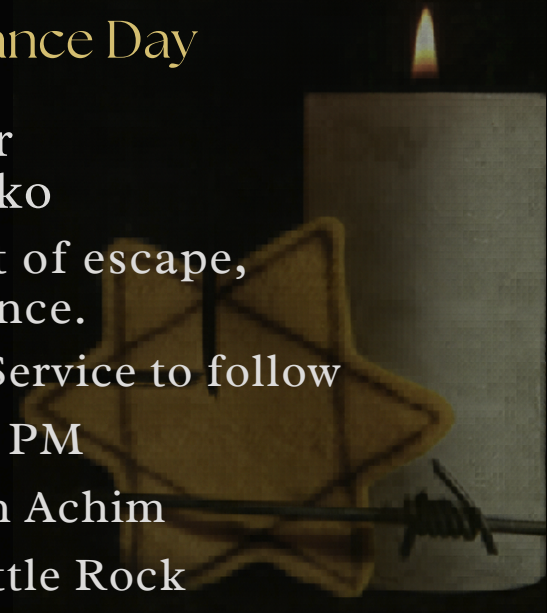
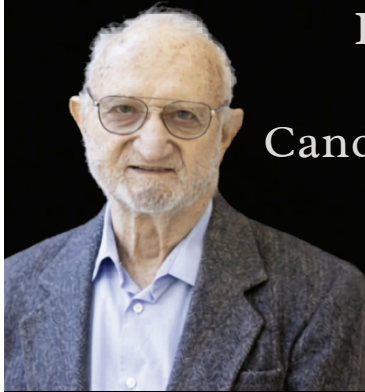
Hear a firsthand account of escape,
survival, & resilience.

Candle Lighting & Memorial Service to follow

April 14, 2026 6:30 PM

Congregation Agudath Achim

7901 W Capitol Ave, Little Rock



April 17: Membership Shabbat

5:45 Oneg Shabbat; 6:15 Service; Dinner to Follow

New members will be invited to participate in leading the service and will receive a welcoming gift bag at the Shabbat Dinner to follow.

Our New Members since our last
New Member Shabbat.
Children are listed in italics:

Carolyn Adams-Price

Lynn & Joe Berry,
Ezekiel, Veronica

Liz & Jason Blatt,
Jordan, Isabella

Jeremy Dicio

Katherine & Carlos Duarte,
Eleazar

A. G. Findley

Eli Goldman

Sarah Gerdes,
Natalie, Vivian

Elizabeth & David Korenblat,
Jackson

Michel Liedermann

Connor Rennels

Crystal & Kimontie Taller,
Adara, Akeem, Artemis, Aurelia



No charge for prospective and new members, who are our guests of honor. But please make a reservation by the Wednesday before the event, April 15, by emailing lfrauenthal@bnai-israel.us calling 501-225-9700, or using the QR code to access the form.

Dinner costs \$18.

Late reservations taken till noon Thursday for \$25, and the price without a reservation is \$30.

Please let us know of dietary needs and *RSVP today!*



FROM PRESIDENT LEWIS KRAIN

Right now, no one can dispute that antisemitism is on the rise. Temple should feel like a refuge from the stresses of the world, but that feeling is elusive when you're concerned about your safety at our very place of worship. I want to use this column to tell you all the ways we are constantly working to keep you safe when you come to pray, learn, or live at CBI.

Firstly, we are constantly reviewing our safety protocols and physical security measures to make sure they are operational, up-to-date, and ready to meet current threats. This includes alarms, door monitors, low-visibility windows, our new driveway gate, and a variety of other changes you may have noticed over the past few years. Please thank Carol Parham and Brian Rosenthal for their hard work and leadership on the Security Committee (Brian is no longer a co-chair, but still puts in a lot of hours). As many of you know, we transitioned event security from off-duty police to contracting with a professional security company, RS Defense Group. While we had great service from our LRPD officers, RS Defense gives us access to more available personnel, more reliability in staffing, and increased accountability from its officers. Multiple security agents at an event allows us to both staff the door and also patrol the perimeter of the building. Introduce yourself to our officers, but don't try to chat with them too much; they're instructed to stay focused on security rather than spending their time kibitzing with congregants.

We maintain a strong connection with law enforcement agencies at all levels, including LRPD, the state Attorney General's office, and the FBI. LRPD has increased routine patrols through our parking lot during off hours. The FBI recently gave a safety training at the Temple, and we are working with them to plan an active shooter exercise. We also partner with local and national Jewish organizations. JFAR grants have been an important source of funding for our security needs. Nationally, the Anti-Defamation League and Secure Community Network provide us with resources, advice, and collaboration.

Lastly, perhaps the most important deterrent to antisemitic violence in Little Rock is our strong interfaith relationships. CBI has a long history of building friendships among the non-Jewish religious communities in Little Rock. Jewish, Christian, and Muslim allies have stood by each other here over the past century to support and defend each other from discrimination, hate speech, and violence. Antisemitism flourishes when we can be easily dehumanized; it's harder to imagine harm against someone you have shared a meal with. We share regular events with these congregations, as well as with the Interfaith Center, and all these events are advertised on our calendar and in e-blasts. Now more than ever it's important for us to remain part of the larger community of faith in Little Rock. So please, keep coming to services and activities, be warm and welcoming to our visitors, and try to attend these interfaith events.

Thank you for continuing to be part of our congregation at a time when it can feel scary just to be Jewish in America. If you have any questions about these or other security measures, or you want to volunteer to be on any of our committees that work to keep us safe, please let us know.

- Lewis Krain

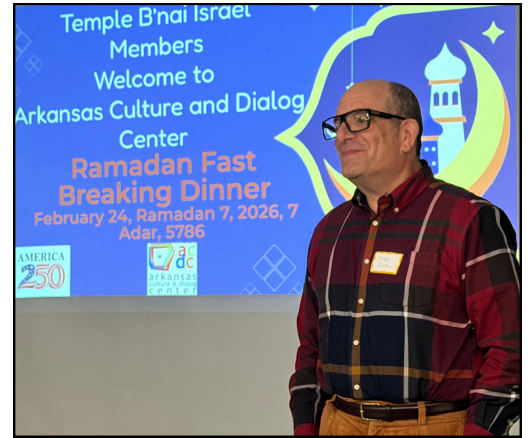


Congregation B'nai Israel Needs Your Help for
Peace Across Faiths: Stories of Compassion Event
Sunday, April 26th, late afternoon.

Volunteer jobs include: Greeters (indoor/ childcare), Name tag table, Ushers, Jewish Info Table, Art Activity Table, Food Servers, Drink Station, Food Replenishers, General Tidying, Clean up.

If interested in helping, contact either:

KatyBeth Coleman: kbcoleman2002@gmail.com
Karen Sherman : ksherman29@hotmail.com



THE INTERFAITH CENTER PRESENTS

PEACE ACROSS FAITHS

Stories of Compassion

Sunday, April 26 | 5:30-8:00 pm

Hosted at Westover Hills Presbyterian Church
6400 Kavanaugh Blvd., Little Rock

Join the Central Arkansas interfaith community for an evening of peace, compassion, and hope. We will pray, sing, share a vegetarian meal, make art, and hear perspectives on compassion — ancient and contemporary — from:

- Rabbi Barry Block, Congregation B'nai Israel
- Pastor Robert Lowry, Westover Hills Presbyterian Church
- Imam Mohammed Nawaz, Madina Institute
- Mehmet Ulupinar, Arkansas Culture & Dialog Center

This event is free and open to the public.
Childcare and event security will be provided.

CO-SPONSORED BY:



Our Congregation was welcomed by the Arkansas Center for Culture and Dialogue for a lovely Turkish Iftar Dinner. Photo credit, Doris Krain.

Cantor Levine to teach Yoga Shalom at B'nai Israel



Shalom everyone! For those of you who don't yet know me, I am Cantor Lisa Levine and I'm serving Temple B'nai Israel as the E. Lee Ronnel Cantor for 2025/26. I have been teaching Yoga for more than 15 years, since before the publishing by UAH Press of my book *Yoga Shalom*, a groundbreaking book that melds Jewish prayer and yoga. People ask me what is Jewish Yoga? My answer is it is Yoga through a Jewish lens. I have extensively studied Hatha yoga and am a 500 hour certified yoga teacher and member of The Yoga Alliance. I offer "Yoga Shalom at Home" on zoom every week from my home studio and in person at the Riderwood Wellness Center, where I also serve as chaplain. The focus of my teaching is the embodiment of Hebrew prayer, Jewish holidays, the Hebrew calendar, Torah & many aspects of Kabbalah, with gentle yoga poses, pranayama breath practice and mindful meditation. These practices are unique because they include sacred chant and original music I composed specifically for my practices!

I would like to invite you to experience Yoga Shalom in a special series I am teaching at the Temple on the Hebrew calendar, the Torah & the many aspects of Kabbalah, with gentle yoga poses, pranayama breath practice and mindful meditation. These practices are unique because they include sacred chant and original music I composed specifically for my practices!

I would like to invite you to experience Yoga Shalom in a special series I am teaching at the Temple on **Saturday afternoon April 11th and again on Saturday afternoon May 2nd both at 2:00 p.m.- 3:00 p.m. followed by refreshments in the teen lounge.** The title is "Tree of Life Omer Awakening." In this two part series we will be exploring the Kabbalistic Tree of Life Sefirot and the intersections of their energy for the particular days of the Omer that we are counting! No prior yoga experience is necessary as this is a spiritual journey all backed by sacred chant and meditative music. Just wear comfortable clothes and bring a yoga mat.

I hope you can join me!
Cantor Lisa Levine

A flyer for an event at Congregation B'nai Israel. The top left features the congregation's logo, which includes a menorah and the text "CONGREGATION B'NAI ISRAEL LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS". The main text is in purple and white, announcing "Join Cantor Lisa Levine: Omer Yoga A Kabbalah Journey" on Saturday April 11th and Saturday May 2nd at 2:00 p.m. in the Teen Lounge, followed by light refreshments. The background is a sunset scene with a silhouette of a person in a yoga pose on the right and a lotus flower on the left. At the bottom, a white text box contains a bio of Cantor Levine as a certified 500-hour yoga instructor and author of "Yoga Shalom".

CONGREGATION
B'NAI ISRAEL
LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS

**Join Cantor Lisa Levine:
Omer Yoga
A Kabbalah Journey**
Saturday April 11th at 2:00 p.m.
Saturday May 2nd at 2:00 p.m.
In the Teen Lounge
followed by light refreshments

Cantor Levine is a certified 500 hour Yoga instructor and her book *Yoga Shalom* is known throughout the world. Even if you have no prior Yoga experience you will love this gentle chair practice. Bring a mat and open heart.

Introducing Kayla Gitlin, Our Next E. Lee Ronnel Student Cantor



Kayla Gitlin, currently a first-year cantorial student at Hebrew Union College (HUC) in Jerusalem, is slated to be our congregation's E. Lee Ronnel Student Cantor beginning in late August or early September. She will succeed Cantor Lisa Levine, who will continue with us through June. Cantor Gitlin will be at HUC in New York next year, and she will travel to join us for the weekend on a tri-weekly basis and on the High Holy Days.

A 2019 graduate of the University of Connecticut, Gitlin worked as a visitor services associate at the Museum of the Southern Jewish Experience in New Orleans in 2024-25. She previously served Westchester Reform Temple and URJ Crane Lake Camp as a Jewish educator and song leader. She has led services at Touro Synagogue in New Orleans, Congregation Gates of Prayer in Metairie, Louisiana, Temple Shalom in Norwalk, Connecticut, Temple Mount Sinai in El Paso, Texas, and Temple Sinai in Denver, Colorado.

The search committee was chaired by Jana Cohen, our Music Chair, and included Lewis Krain, Shelly Baron, Rabbi Block, and Michael Roberts. The committee was impressed by Cantor Gitlin's vocal quality and charmed by her personality.

Cantor Gitlin's service to our congregation is made possible by generous grants from the E. Lee Ronnel Memorial Fund for Cantorial Music.

Shabbat Under the Stars, Friday, May 8, 2026



Oneg Shabbat, 5:45;

Worship services led by our Religious School Class Grades 4-5-6; 6:15,
in the Mendel Ampitheater,

to be followed by a fried chicken dinner *al fresco* on the Mendel Ampitheater Patio.

This evening is hosted by the families of Religious School Students in Grades 4-5-6

Make your reservations by calling, 501.225.9700,

emailing LFrauenthal@bnai-israel.us or use the QR code to access the form.

There is no charge for children 9 years old or younger or for our guests of honor: Religious School Faculty.

All others:

\$10 per person for reservations made by the Wednesday, May 6;

\$15 without a reservation.

Please let us know of any dietary needs.



The Shpiel Production Team abundantly thanks everyone who helped bring *Queen...of Little Rock* to life—many say the best shpiel anyone’s ever seen.

- Extraordinary soloists: Jana Cohen, Isabella Ifrah, Philip Levin, Russ Parish, and Josiah Wheeler, with high note support from Cantor Lisa Levine. And Teddy Ferguson deserves extra credits for absolutely slaying numerous songs.
 - Tim Kessler’s hilarious King and Isabella Ifrah’s phenomenal debut as Esther.
 - Ridiculously good regular cast members: Glenn Block, Joanne Matson, & Marla Shivers-- buoyed by excellent newcomers: Susan Willis and Philip Levin, our every Eunuch and a seasoned pro at 15!
 - A fantastic, enthusiastic crowd—possibly fueled by Merrick Fagan’s legendary Queen Quenchers.
- The Show Must Go On: Forever hosts
- Always excellent Howard Bresnik & Jay Lazerowitz, aka Ghost Bob Newhart and Mel Brooks
 - Meg Marion’s AI obsession kept it current as robot PressureQueen9000.

BoHAMian Rhapsody — The Awesome Band

- Perry Young’s spectacular music direction.
- Newcomer David Korenblat’s guitar chops.
- Teddy Ferguson’s always superb bass playing and Scott Southern’s phenomenal drum stylings.

Crazy Little Thing Called Love — Bonus Gift

- Luke Frauenthal delighted us with his comedic stylings and lovely voice.

Somebody to Love — Those we missed mentioning

- We somehow failed to thank Howard Bresnik as part of the production team on Saturday night—a huge oversight given the many hours he spent honing the script with Meg. Howard, as always, thank you for your keen eye and sharp wit.
- Russ Parish should have been listed among the soloists in the program.

The Show Must Go On — Extra Credits

Truly Scrumptious Little Rock Grub

- Queen Hamantaschenistas: Rita Fagan, Carol Parham
- Kitchen Crewistas: Debbie Brady, Jo Sears Harkins, Bari Himelfarb, Mark Himelfarb, Doris Krain

Boos!

- Queen Quencher concocted by Merrick Fagan
- Brewskis courtesy of Keith Nigro
- Bartender Beth Diaz

Production and Crew

- Executive Producer Extraordinaire, Jana Cohen
- Production Team: Howard Bresnik, Jana Cohen, Meg Marion & Joanne Matson
- Editorista, John Chatman
- Behind the Scenista Artista, Marla Shivers
- Perfect Projector, Tim Kessler
- Cool Projected Content, Lauren Johnston
- Videographer, Michael Marion
- PowerPointer, Jonah Marion
- Soundperson, Elizabeth Cohen
- Delightful Decor, Arkansas Events
- Zoomista, Shawn Williams
- Welcomista, Michael Roberts
- Temple Crew: Luke Frauenthal, Michael Roberts, Milton Boyd, Rowena Feliciano

Thanks again!!!! The Shpiel Production Team:

Howard Bresnik, Jana Cohen, Meg Marion, Joanne Matson

Missed the show? You’re in luck.

Here’s an unlisted YouTube link you can watch—or share privately with friends (please don’t post it on social media).

Or if you’d prefer to read it, here’s the script.



LAFTY Purim Carnival 2026



Thank you to The Carnival Sponsors

Esther's Heros

Sylvia Amster & Lewis Krain, Rabbi Barry Block,
Rabbi Block's Discretionary Fund,
Gay Block & Billie Parker,
Miriam & Leonard Hasson, Mike Kaiser

Family Sponsorship

Jonathan & Lauren Appell Aronson,
Jan & Larry Alman, Jana Cohen, Doris Krain,
Fred Levin, Krysten & Mark Levin,
Joseph Margolick & Lauren Berkman Margolick,
Lori & Josh Shemper, Amanda & Shawn Williams

Individual Sponsorship

Rita Fagan, Jane Goff,
Donna Kirkwood & Barry Goldman,
Rebecca & Roger Horn, Joy Figarsky & Jay Lazerowitz,
Bonnie Nickol, Becca & Andrew Perin,
Ellyn Polsky, Elizabeth Michael & Daniel Roda, Karen
Sherman, Annabelle & Henry Tuck,
Regina & Perry Young

Mordechai's Carnival Friends

Lori Schneiders, Suzanne Klimberg & Sam Storthz,
Clayton & Deanna Ward





Israeli Rabbinical Student to Be in Residence This Month

Yossi Elmackias, a fifth-year rabbinical student at Hebrew Union College (HUC) in Jerusalem slated for ordination in October, is set to join Congregation B'nai Israel, April 6-18 and then join Rabbi Block at the Union for Reform Judaism North American Board Meeting in Denver, April 18-20, before heading back to Israel. He is slated to return to us for two weeks in September, including Yom Kippur and Sukkot.

Elmackias's residency with our congregation and Rabbi Block is made possible by HUC's Golden HaNasi Fellowship, which pairs Israeli rabbinical students with North American rabbis and congregations for mentoring and mutual exposure—enhancing the student's knowledge of North American Reform Judaism and our familiarity with our Israeli Reform Movement. While HUC bears the lion's share of the expenses for the residency through the Golden-HaNasi Fellowship, Yossi's lodging in Little Rock is made possible by a generous grant from our congregation's Lois G. Stern Library Fund.

Congregants will have multiple opportunities to get to know Student Rabbi Elmackias. For example, he will deliver the sermon at Shabbat services on April 10, lead the Shabbat morning service with Rabbi Block on April 11, lead the Congregational Seder and services for the last day of Passover with Rabbi Block, and lead Torah Study on April 18.

Yossi Elmackias was born in Jerusalem in 1965 and lives in the city with his wife. They have three children. Yossi holds a B.Ed. from David Yellin College of Education, and an M.Ed. from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

For over three decades, Yossi served in Israel's public education system as a teacher of Bible and Jewish culture. During these years he also held several leadership roles, including grade coordinator, deputy principal of a junior high school, and principal of an elementary school.

Yossi grew up in an Orthodox home as the son of a cantor in the Moroccan tradition, which he will share with our congregation. He is a member of the Ramot Zion community, a *Masorti* (Conservative) congregation in Jerusalem's French Hill neighborhood, and he is currently deepening his studies and leadership in progressive Judaism in Israel. He serves as Education Manager at Rabbis for Human Rights and works as a tour guide, engaging diverse audiences with the rich, complex human, historical, and ethical dimensions of Israeli society.



Special thanks to Religious School Classes K-1 and 4-5 for a wonderful Shabbat Service on March 13 and dinner hosted by Jonathan & Lauren Appell Aronson, Elizabeth & Alex Daniel, Eoin Dockter, Rita Fagan, Ricky & Lee Harris, Becca & Andrew Perin. Photo credit, Doris Krain.

Religious School News

It takes a lot to keep a synagogue running. Of course there are the human elements: our teachers, *madrichim*, board members, volunteers, custodial and sound technicians, and my colleagues here in the office. But there are also the odds and ends that crop up that need to be ordered. On a typical day, I might place orders for paper goods for the kitchen, cleaning supplies for the bathrooms, and high-tech sensor equipment for our alarm systems. But of all the things I've purchased for use at the Temple lately, none has been more fun than a request from Grade 2-3 teacher Heather Tolliver: a dozen or so Squishmallows.

For those of you unfamiliar with them, Squishmallows are incredibly soft, very "squishy" plush toys, and Heather wanted them for her class for an ongoing life-cycle event project. Students would "adopt" a plushie and then take it through all the events of a Jewish life. If you've never heard the phrase "Squishmallow *bet mitzvah*," rest assured that it's something our Grade 2-3 students are familiar with.

I love these sorts of creative projects. It would be very easy for us to just teach life cycle events through lectures, handouts, and worksheets, but by giving each of our students a unique stuffed animal that becomes their own representation, the lessons become so much more fun – and fun lessons are the ones that tend to stick with us. And I can't wait to see what a Squishmallow wedding looks like!

Our educators are always on the lookout for fun projects like this; and one way we get ideas is through our partnership with the Institute for Southern Jewish Life (ISJL). Last year, three of our teachers and I attended our very first ISJL education conference in Jackson, MS – ISJL Southern and Jewish. And thanks to some excellent planning on the part of Rabbi Block and our treasurer, Darcy Krupitsky, that same group is now registered to attend Southern and Jewish 2026, this year in Charlotte, NC.

This conference is packed with educational opportunities for our teachers. Last year we attended sessions on using music in classrooms, talking about antisemitism with kids, writing modern midrash, using items from our archives to teach local Jewish history, and so much more. But beyond the excellent workshops provided, we also connected with educators from across the South, some from large communities, but many from communities even smaller than ours at CBI. Learning from other folks about how they "do Jewish" was so enlightening for all of us, and the excitement we brought back from Jackson last year has kept us going strong throughout this entire school year.

We'll be driving a bit further to make it this year, but there was no hesitation from anyone about attending again. I can't wait to see what ISJL has in store for us – and I can't wait to share it with all of you. And maybe I'll end up with a Squishmallow of my own.

With Gratitude,
Michael Roberts



Gifts of the Heart and Hand 2026: Coming to your Mailbox!

Spring break has now come to an end, and a new season is beginning. The days are growing warmer, the sun is shining, and the flowers are in bloom. It is a time of renewal, energy, and anticipation. There is something special about stepping into a fresh season—feeling a sense of possibility and community all around us.

Our Temple is entering a new season as well. We have just begun the final quarter of our fiscal year, with only two months remaining. We are proud of our strong track record of income, supported by both pledges and donations. Our members continue to demonstrate remarkable commitment—not only through their financial contributions but also through their outstanding volunteer service.

In the coming weeks, you will receive your new Gift of the Heart form in the mail, inviting you once again to generously support our Temple. As we know, giving—*tzedakah*—is a core value, and it takes many meaningful forms. Financial contributions are essential to sustaining our operations, just as the gift of time through volunteering is vital to the life of our community. Together, these forms of giving create a vibrant and thriving congregation.

When you receive your form, please take a moment to consider how you can support B'nai Israel. However you participate through your presence, your time, your talents, or your financial generosity, each contribution plays an important role. A thoughtful balance of these efforts from all our members helps ensure a strong and successful Temple community.

There are many ways to give—and each one matters.

Michael Roberts, Temple Administrator

Congregation B'nai Israel is a lively place, because of the participation of our many volunteers. Whether you have just learned to broadcast a service on Zoom or you have been making matzah balls for our Seder for decades, you are making a difference! You are making a deeper connection to your congregation! This survey will describe the many ways you can connect by volunteering. You can fill it out right away, or you can think about it and fill it out when you see it in the eblast. If you prefer a paper copy, you will get a Gift of the Hand form along with your Gift of the Heart form.

Luke Frauenthal, Member Services Manager

March Gratitude

Oneg Shabbat Hosts & Sponsors

Morris Estep
Crystal Taller
Carmen Arick & Emily Adams
Miriam & Leonard Hasson

Security & Flowers Sponsors

Miriam & Leonard Hasson

Security Sponsors

Harvey Miller and Beth Miller

Service Streaming & Sound Volunteers

Carolyn Adams-Price
Alex Daniel
Eli Goldman
Tim Kessler
Josiah Wheeler
Shawn Williams



Helping host a Shabbat Dinner is another lovely way to engage with the Congregation!



Join JWV Post #436 – Strengthening Our Community and Supporting Our Veterans

Dear Members of the Congregation,

After receiving the Torah, our ancestors constructed the Mishkan and journeyed through the wilderness in a distinctly ordered military manner. Our tradition teaches that the community functioned in unity: some dedicated primarily to the study of Torah and others to the sacred responsibilities of service and protection. The Torah and the Mishkan represent a profound mutuality: one cannot flourish without the other.

This holds true in our own time. Our community enjoys the freedom to study Torah and live openly as Jews because of the willingness of others to serve in defense of our Nation, to protect civil liberties, and to stand as guardians of justice. Many within our congregation have answered that call—serving in the United States Armed Forces and in Tzahal, the Israel Defense Forces.

Our congregation is proud to be part of a broader network of Jewish military veterans, active-duty service members, and military spouses of Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Oklahoma through the **Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America**. Specifically, we are honored to have **JWV Post #436** as part of this national organization.

Currently, Bruce Greenberg, Shawn Williams, and I are members of the Arkansas JWV. We are reaching out to congregants who are military veterans, Tzahal veterans, and military spouses to join us in furthering two vital objectives:

1. Advocating for improved benefits and services that all veterans deserve, and
2. Combating antisemitism wherever and whenever it may arise.

JWV participates in meaningful initiatives including sending care packages to service members, organizing welcome-home events, supporting educational efforts, volunteering at Veterans Administration hospitals and outpatient clinics, and participating in recognition ceremonies for Memorial Day, Veterans Day, and Holocaust Remembrance.

Our goal for JWV Post #436 is to establish an enduring and vibrant presence within our congregation. We are planning a welcoming event at the end of April to introduce new members and begin our monthly meetings.

If you are a veteran, currently serving, or a military spouse—or if you would simply like to learn more—please feel free to reach out to me at mkestep300@msn.com

Together, we can strengthen our community, honor those who serve, and uphold the values that sustain both Torah and service.

With gratitude and respect

*Morris K. Estep, JD
LTC, US Army (Retired)*



MAY BIRTHDAYS

1st Judith Coffey	9th Luke Kramer	20th Miriam Hasson
2nd Phillip Young	Charlene Prousnitzer	Jaxon Horn
Justin Young	11th Zane Chrisman	21st Ellie Daniel
3rd Daisy Keith	12th Camille Dante	Magnolia Ada Teeter
Amanda Williams	Larry Nafe	22nd Raelynn Marie Williams
4th Charles Newfeld	13th Rebecca Horn	23rd Van Gates
Rickie Oliva	Emily Lewis	Vaughn Gates
5th Eowyn Davidson	Mickey Loeb	24th Gabriel Elson
David Lowitz	Jeffrey Nodelman	25th Alex Daniel
Betty Rosen	14th Ellen Moore	Harvey Miller
6th Mark Strauss	Nancy Phillips	Hannah Singer
Tracye Townley	Lori Shemper	26th Natalie Faye Gerdes
7th Deanna Arrants	15th Gary Weisbly	Jackson Korenblat
Julian Keith	17th Philip Axelroth	Lucy Towbin
8th David Pear	Mikhail Ivanovsky	27th Bettina Brownstein
Alexa Shemper	18th David Mack	Katherine Hulett
		28th Mark Levin
		Julie Polsky
		29th Layla Bell
		Lane Boyd
		Michael Krupitsky
		Eden Willis
		31st Isaac Matthew Aronson
		Shannon Davidson

MAY WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

1st Joan Early Strauss & Noel Strauss	27th
2nd Nancy & Tad Phillips	19th
5th Eoin Dockter & Jessie Curtis	17th
6h Susan & Philip Axelroth	26th
7th Kathryn Tull & Samuel Kauffman	10th
9th Amanda & Shawn Williams	15th
10th Debbie & Brad Diner	28th
11th Jamie & Thomas McGarry	30th
12th Susan & David Lowitz	13th
13th Sandie & Aaron Lubin	37th
17th Libby & Lee Thalheimer	46th
19th Kathy & Jack Grundfest	36th
19th Kelsey Utne & Karl Rozyn	14th
22nd Sandi & Barry Uretsky	21st
23rd Deborah & Bernie Bevill	45th
24th Charlene & Chuck Prousnitzer	45th
24th Maureece Levin & Aaron Rabirotff	11th
24th Susan & Samuel Willis	16th
25th Elli Samuels & David Sheldon	1st
25th Lisa Coffey Hulett & Cidney Hulett	18th
25th Denny & Gary Ticker	46th
26th Galina & Michael Krupitsky	47th
27th Lauren Appell Aronson & Jonathan Aronson	8th
28th Tracy Grinstead-Everly & Rob Everly	31st
28th Cori & Timothy McGrath	26th
29th Maggie Hogan & Don Pfeifer	10th
29th Susan Kantrow Rosenthal & Brian Kantrow	27th
31st Betsy & Arnie Mayersohn	45th
31st Corbin & John Levin	23rd



Dick Williams, on the birth of his granddaughter, Bowen Ann Barnett, born to Annie and Wyatt Barnett. The happy grandmother is Jill Williams Ricciardone.

Eugene Krupitsky, who was elected to the Little Rock School District Board.

Liz and Jason Blatt on the birth of their son Jordan Robert Blatt.

APRIL YAHRZEITS

April 3 /4

Robert R Besser
 Billy Eisenkramer
 Charles H. Elias Sr.
 Adele B. Heiman Ellmann
 Leonard Frankenstein
 Adolph Hamburger
 Rose Chozick Jacobson
 Eleanor Kokes
 Augusta Lasker
 Henry Lasker
 Gertrude Mossovitz Levin
 Edith Pfeifer Loeb
 Sue Maddison
 Otto Olson
 Janice Myers O'Shea
 Philip C. Prousnitzer, Jr.
 Sara Reich
 Norman Riemer
 Florence Rubenstein
 Daniel Sanders
 Abraham Alan Shindler
 Dorothy Singer
 Ruby Thalheimer Smith
 Susan Stroock
 Judy Taliaferro
 Abe Weinberg
 Rose Claire Weintraub
 Vera Wolchansky

April 10 / 11

Barbara Grundfest Bauman
 Emma Cohen
 Morris Cooper
 Deborah Geller
 Menashe Geller
 Joshua Allen Gill
 Paul Greenberg
 Joe Bernard Hirsch
 Jesse Kaiser
 Marjorie Kempner Levy
 Celia Lifshitz
 Herman Loeb

April 10 / 11 continued

Michael Mack
 Lillian Muchnick
 Chaye Mireh Palnick
 Leverta Beatrice Redwood
 Dr. Ellis Rivkin
 Rabbi Ira E. Sanders
 Joseph B. Selz
 David S. Sherman
 Tommy Wuntch

April 17 / 18

David Axler
 Leah Gans Blass
 Rene Bollag
 Margot Strauss Garon
 Valrus Gates
 Sandra F. Goldberg
 Linda Gordon
 Terry Hope, Sr.
 Irene Klikna
 Margo Leidermann
 Betty Levy
 Helen Silverman Levy
 Sarah Ehrenberg Loeb
 Samuel Lyons, Sr.
 Sol F Meyer
 Annie N. Miller
 Sam Nickol
 Roberto Oliva, Jr.
 John L. Pfeifer
 Kenneth Irving Rapp
 Steven Rosen
 Albert Snyderman
 Louis Volmer
 Max Zeno
 Shirley Fredman Zeffren

April 24 / 25

Flora C. Bennett
 Jack Stiel Dante
 Lucille K. Falk
 Siesel A. Franklin

April 24 / 25 continued

Tillie Greenberg
 Ruth Grimes
 Phyllis Kaplan
 Rachael Deroy Kempner
 Jordan Harold Kiel
 Ola Leibs
 Steven J. Lewis
 Mildred Frank Rephan
 Marion A. Safferstone
 Sidney Leo Shlenker
 Anne Ehrenberg Steppach
 Lucette White
 Rose Sonnenschein Yout
 Aaron Zeno

Yizkor Elohim

*We record with sorrow the
 death of our member:*

Ellen Dreyfuss

*And of our members'
 relatives:*

Barbara Helene Kagan

mother of

Debbie Brady

Paul Schumann

brother of

Marla Shivers

Jerome Bruce Giniger

father of

Joy Figarsky

Philip Figarsky

father of

Edward Figarsky

DONATIONS

Yahrzeit Fund

In memory of Laura Reifer
Judy & Ken Reifer

In memory of Lewis Alexander Storthz
Larry Storthz & Rosetta Storthz Urbach

In memory of Barbara Stern
Jerry Stern

In memory of Daniel Disabato, Charles Rodell,
Ruth Rodell, Susan Rodell, & Anna Stachmus.
Luci & Dan Rodell

In memory of Barbara Phillips
Bev Whittenberg

In memory of Peter Phillips
Bev Whittenberg

In memory of Arthur O. Sanders
Keith Maddison

In memory of Elizabeth Levinson Levin
Fred Levin

In memory of Joseph Arnold Miller
Anne & Larry Miller

In memory of Beatrice Miller
Anne & Larry Miller

In memory of Audrey Miller Poritzky
Anne & Larry Miller

In memory of Dr. Arthur D. Rosenthal
Susan Rosenthal Kantrow
& Byron Kantrow

In memory of Irving Balto
Karen Sherman & Family

In memory of Jerome Bruce Giniger
Anne & Larry Miller

In memory of Ola & Mervin Leibs
Jackie & Jerry Bendorf

In memory of Joyce Arick
Dr. Carmen Arick & Emily Adams

In memory of Shara Adams
Dr. Carmen Arick & Emily Adams

In memory of Max Leidermann
Michel Leidermann

Diner Memorial Fund for Jewish Education

In memory of Barbara Helene Kagan
Tracie & Phillip Spivey

Oakland Jewish Cemetery Fund

In memory of Valrus Gates
Van Gates

Levy Fund for Camp Scholarships

In honor of the birth of Quinn Berman Simon,
grandson of Sheri & Micky Simon & son of
Rachel Berman & Eric Simon
Bobbye & Rabbi Gene Levy

In memory of Barbara Helene Kagan
Bobbye & Rabbi Gene Levy

In memory of Paul Schumann
Bobbye & Rabbi Gene Levy

In memory of Jerome Bruce Giniger
Bobbye & Rabbi Gene Levy

In gratitude for the loan of haggadot
Bobbye & Rabbi Gene Levy

Bauman Family Music Fund

In memory of Barbara Helene Kagan
Kathy Bauman

In memory of Paul Schumann
Kathy Bauman

In memory of Barbara Helene Kagan
Trudy & Jerry Jacobson

In celebration of Kathy Bauman's 75th Birthday
Anne & Larry Miller

In celebration of Kathy Bauman's 75th Birthday
Becky & Jay Marks

Vogel Family Caring & Sharing Fund

In honor of Janet Korenblat
Debbie & Larry Brady

In memory of Barbara Helene Kagan
Doris Krain

In memory of Paul Schumann
Doris Krain

In memory of Jerome Bruce Giniger
Doris Krain

In memory of Barbara Helene Kagan
Janet Aronson

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

Anonymous

In appreciation of Rabbi Block & in memory of
Janice Thurow
The Thurow Families

In memory of Barbara Helene Kagan
Debbie & Larry Brady

In memory of Barbara Helene Kagan
Gus Block

In memory of Jay Oakes
Judith Zinser

LIST OF NAMED FUNDS



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.

Supporting the Temple

- Endowment Fund
- Sustaining Fund
- Salinger Landscape Fund
- Ottenheimer Fund

Worship and Music

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

Service to the Wider Community

- Pfeifer Community Outreach Fund
- Newfeld Fund for Community Relations
- Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

Education, Youth, Camp and Scholarships

- Storthz Religious School Enhancement Fund
- 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
- Memorial Fund for Education and Youth

Supporting Congregational Programs

- Hallie Cohen Miller Archive Fund
- Sisterhood Legacy Endowment Fund
- Stern Library Fund
- Knoff Family Fund

Lifecycle Support

- Vogel Family Caring and Sharing Fund
- Oakland Jewish Cemetery Fund



A Fond Farewell to Beth Miller and Harvey Miller



In March, we welcomed Dr. Alan Morinis and had a weekend of learning about Mussar, on the occasion of the publishing of his new book, *The Shabbat Effect*. Photo credit, Doris Krain

When you sponsor security for Shabbat worship, you provide:

Sponsor Shabbat evening or morning worship for \$150.00.

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

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



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bar and table

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