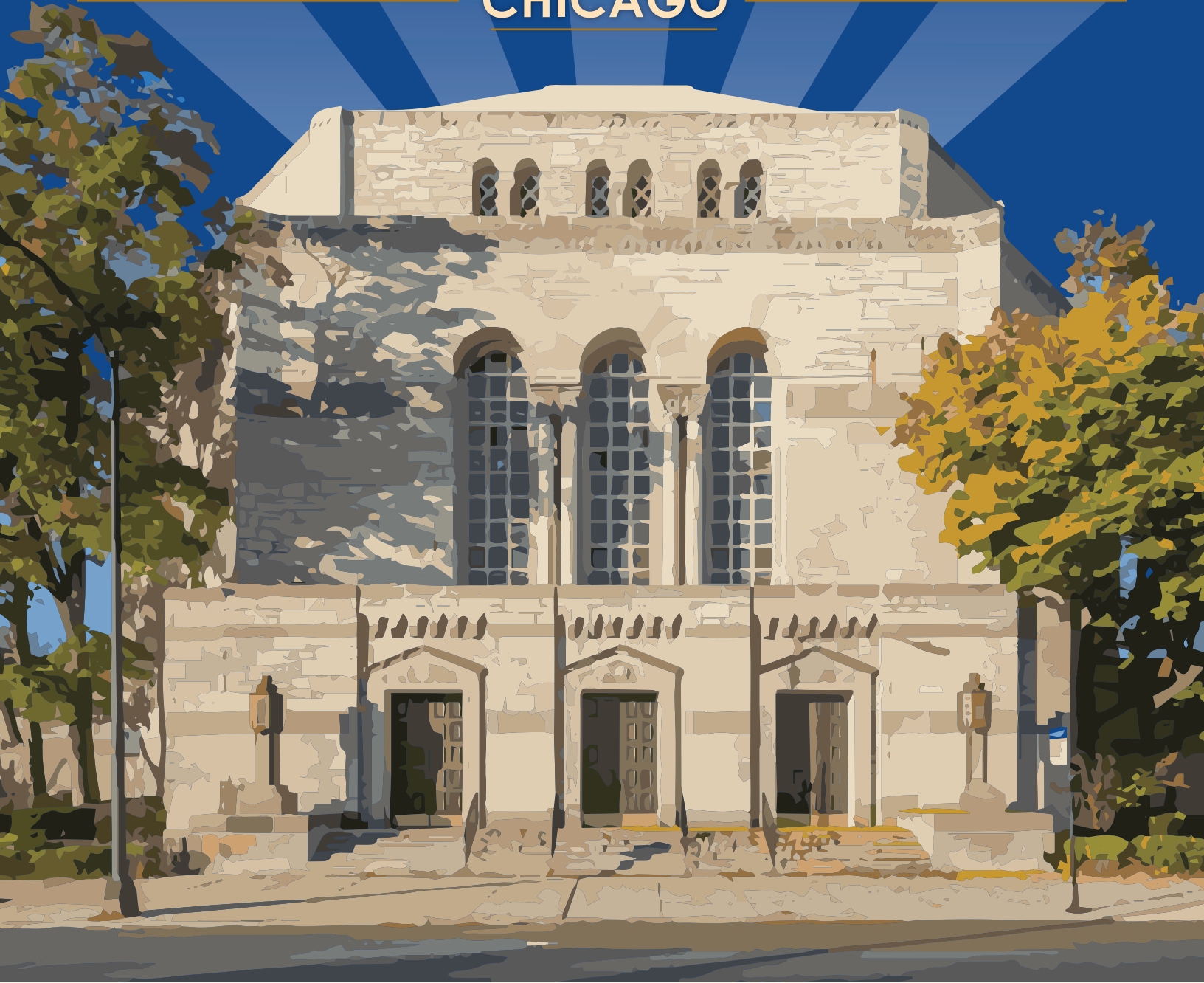


# SHOLOM

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# You've Got Answers, We've Got Questions



Authored by Rabbi Shoshanah Conover

Rabbi Conover is the 8<sup>th</sup> Senior Rabbi of Temple Sholom of Chicago in its 157-year history, and is a reflection of her passions: learning and teaching inspiring (and challenging) texts, leading dynamic and engaging spiritual experiences, serving as pastoral counselor, and finding ways to improve our world through the guidelines of our faith.

Nearly 15 years ago, Rabbis Peter Knobel z"l and Larry Hoffman (two luminaries of the Reform Movement) led about 25 Temple Sholom leaders in a visioning exercise. They asked us: What makes our congregation unique among other faith institutions? One person said that they could sum it up in one phrase that they thought should hang on a huge banner out front:

YOU'VE GOT ANSWERS, WE'VE GOT QUESTIONS

Pondering life's biggest questions with all of you and finding strength together have been the greatest moments of my career as a rabbi. Some people who inevitably ask many of my favorite questions are our high school seniors in Crown Family High School's Senior Seminar. We begin our Seminar by sharing our greatest questions about life:

**How can I get everything right?** (I love their optimism... Those of us who parent kids their age ask, "Can I get anything right?")

**How can I live my best life?**

**What is my purpose?**

**Why do we exist?**

**Is death the end?**

And, this year, one of the most astute questions that was asked:

**What is happening???**

We spend the rest of the Seminar looking at Jewish wisdom throughout the ages to consult as we discuss their own responses to these big questions. Laughter and surprise infuse each Wednesday night, and the friendships forged through those evenings last through their lives. Many go on to stay in touch with each other through college, stand up in each other's weddings, and many of those who

settle in Chicago find their chosen home again at Sholom.

I have a fondness for teaching this age through exploring their big questions because this is what I have always found compelling about Judaism. Even in my most rebellious stage of life, I found myself at home in Judaism in my questioning. My faith didn't ask me to set aside my theological questions. It didn't turn me away when I questioned whether the *Torah* was "true" or if Moses existed. Instead, it welcomed all of my questions. And, in response to my deepest questioning, it never offered pat or easy answers. Quite the contrary, Judaism and the Jewish people in my life always invited me into a deeper conversation based on my questions—one that has now lasted 50 years.

In just a few short weeks, we will celebrate Passover by sitting around Seder tables, asking questions. The *Haggadah*, our program for the Seder, provides the prescribed questions in the script. "*Mah nishtanah?*" How is this night different? These questions have become familiar to us. However, in early rabbinic times, children were encouraged to ask any questions that came to mind. The *Mishnah* paints a picture of the early seders as playful where adults would do silly things that would cause the youth to ask: Why? (*Mishnah Pesachim* 10:4.) In fact, the youngest attendees would often come to the seder ready with questions of their own even before the fun started. The *Talmud* demonstrates that questioning was not limited to children asking parents, but spouses asking partners and bosses asking employees (*BT Pesachim* 116a.) The evening is inspired by the insight of

Ben Zoma: "Who is Wise? One who learns from everyone" (*Pirkei Avot* 4:1.). The key to a successful seder is not only to ask the right questions, but to listen to the varied responses around the table.



*Judaism invites us to be ready to learn at every moment from everyone.*



Judaism invites us to be ready to learn at every moment from everyone. Our tradition, as typified by our Passover Seder, invites us to take a stance of curiosity about our world and our place in it. In this complex and difficult time, we all have a lot to learn. I can't help think about how much better this painful moment would be if, instead of shouting at each other, we asked more thoughtful questions.

The Hebrew month of Nissan, in which Passover takes place, is considered a New Year in the Jewish Tradition. Each New Year provides a new opportunity to ask more and better questions. Whether you are hosting a seder this year or joining us at Temple Sholom for our Second Night Seder, consider adding a 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup> question to the "original" four. Ask your questions at your seder this year and then listen for the wisdom at your table and ours...

*Chag Sameach*— Enjoy this season of questioning!

# A Witch, a Prince, and the Spell of Music: Finding Meaning in Sondheim's World



Authored by Cantor Sheera Ben-David

Cantor Ben-David has spent her life immersed in the Jewish community and congregations. She is also an award-winning cabaret singer!

Like so many of us, I have had many moments of feeling Imposter Syndrome. But being cast as the witch in my high school's 1994 production of *Into the Woods* was not one of those moments. I had no sense of being an imposter while playing a witch that keeps her precious Rapunzel in a tower. I felt deeply connected to my character and was probably more comfortable in my cloak and face wart costume than I was on an average day of just being me. I remember crouching over my scene partner and ominously singing these words to her:

*"Don't you know what's out there in the world*

*Someone has to shield you from the world*

*Stay with me*

*Princes wait there in the world, it's true*

*Princes, yes, but wolves and humans, too*

*Stay at home. I am home"*

It was so easy for me to embody this warning about the world. We could delve into the psychology of all the roles in this particular musical and why each of us are born to play certain ones, but I do have a word count here. The real kick for me was my high school putting on a Stephen Sondheim show. By fifteen years old, I had already been fully shaped and influenced by all Sondheim musicals. Lyrics swam around my head daily and the characters always clung to people I actually knew in my life. For example, I often thought my brother was like Bobby in *Company*, with everyone trying to set him up with someone. It seemed to me that Sondheim had a lyric, a song, a

character, and a story to represent every aspect of humanity and life experiences. So, I always looked to him. I searched for the lesson and the meaning of it all in works like *Sunday in the Park with George* and *Passion*.

Sondheim did not wear his Judaism on his sleeve, and it's likely his culture and faith were not a big part of his life at all. But that didn't stop me from being thrilled with his background; just knowing he had a Jewish soul was enough for me. Judaism felt infused in every note [he wrote]. Sondheim was Jewish and raised in an atmosphere of artists and influencers who also came from Jewish descent. Throughout his life, he had mentorships and collaborations with people such as Oscar Hammerstein, Hal Prince, James Lapine, and Leonard Bernstein. The creations that came from these titans were so varied, secular, and not about their heritage or religion. But I was keenly aware that behind the music and magic were Jewish hearts and minds, and as a child, that meant a great deal to me. I grew up with great pride over being Jewish because I felt the beautiful mark of my people in every corner of the arts and my local diner.

Sondheim has left us a legacy that gives me strength & answers for eternity. I wonder what high school will do a Sondheim musical this year? Who will be the witch? Who will be the prince? I also wonder if Stephen Sondheim were here today, what would he think of the world? What story would he tell to teach us? I could use some of his human understanding today. I was thinking back on the last few moments of my own high school musical. As the witch, I sang these final words to the audience:

*"Careful the things you say, Children will listen*

*Careful the things you do, Children will see and learn*

*Children may not obey, But children will listen*

*Children will look to you, For which way to turn*

*To learn what to be*

*Careful before you say, listen to me*

*Children will listen*

*Careful the wish you make, Wishes are children*

*Careful the path they take, Wishes come true, not free*

*Careful the spell you cast, Not just on children*

*Sometimes the spell may last, Past what you can see*

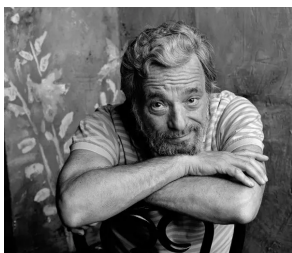
*And turn against you*

*Careful the tale you tell, That is the spell*

*Children will listen"*

I am reminded of something important by these words – that children and adults do listen. I thought the problem these days is that no one is listening to each other. Maybe we are listening to each other. Perhaps we are not being careful with our words and thoughts. Could it be that we are all casting spells and making wishes without thinking about those around us? Sondheim knew what being alive is all about. It's all a bit messy, and none of us just merrily roll along. But as an overture to each of our days, we can certainly be more full of care in what we say. We are all listening.

**I will be doing two Sondheim concerts with my dear friend, Cantor Jay O'Brien from Makom Solel Lakeside. The first concert will be at Temple Sholom on Thursday, May 16 & the second concert will be at Makom Solel in Highland Park on Sunday, May 19. Join us for Sondheim on a Thursday and Sunday.**



Stephen Sondheim was a revolutionary American composer and lyricist renowned for his immense contribution to musical theater, creating complex, sophisticated scores that transformed the landscape of Broadway.





## Envisioning the Future: Rabbi Hoffman's Inspiring *Shabbat* at Temple Sholom

During a memorable *Shabbat* service at Temple Sholom, Rabbi Lawrence A. Hoffman captivated attendees with a stirring discourse on the future of Judaism. Highlighting the need for passion and purpose, he traced the evolution of the synagogue from the arrival of diverse Jewish immigrants to the United States to the present day. Rabbi Hoffman then projected forward, contemplating the trends and aspirations that could shape our religious and communal landscape. The event, a blend of historical insight and forward-looking vision, was made accessible via Temple Sholom's Facebook page, extending its reach. Rabbi Hoffman's visit left an indelible mark, inspiring a unified path toward a thoughtful future. *Read more on pages 10-11.*

## Farewell and Gratitude: My Journey with Temple Sholom

My first few months at Temple Sholom were mostly spent in my apartment. It was the summer of 2020, and everything—from my onboarding, to the High Holidays, to meeting all of you—was happening from behind a computer screen.



**Authored by Rabbi Rena Singer**

**Rabbi Singer** joined Temple Sholom as an Assistant Rabbi in July 2020, shortly after becoming ordained by Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR).

Yet somehow, it didn't really matter. The magical warmth of this place and the loving embrace of this community were so abundant and so apparent that I immediately felt welcomed and at home. I have learned so much from everyone at Temple Sholom—from the congregation, the clergy, and the staff. Out of all the lessons, though, I keep coming back to the lesson of just showing up. Temple Sholom is a place where people know how to just show up. On my first day in Chicago, Rabbi Conover showed up at my apartment in the middle of a thunderstorm with a car full of groceries. Rabbi Gellman showed up whenever I needed practical guidance as a new rabbi. Cantor Ben-David taught me how to show up for each and every kid going through the *B'nai Mitzvah* process. I have seen all of you show up repeatedly—whether it's *Chesed* volunteers delivering a meal to someone's home, Sholom Justice leaders showing up passionately to improve our world, the Women of Temple Sholom showing up to support one another at fantastic events, and more. It has been awesome to see all the big and small ways that this community sees and supports one another. As I head to San Francisco this summer, I will take this and so many other lessons learned here with me. I keep telling everybody I see that if you are in San Francisco, I hope you will stop by Congregation Emanu-El and say hello—please don't be afraid to just show up. Thank you, Temple Sholom, for an extraordinary four years.

**As Rabbi Singer embarks on a new journey in San Francisco, Temple Sholom bids her a heartfelt farewell.**

Joining us in the unprecedented summer of 2020, Rabbi Singer quickly became a cherished member of our community, embodying the spirit of unity and compassion. Rabbi Singer's warmth and dedication will be profoundly missed. We thank her for the extraordinary four years of growth, friendship, and shared memories. May her future be filled with joy and new communities that welcome her with the same love and openness. Rabbi Singer, you will always have a home at Temple Sholom. Shalom and good luck on your new adventure!

**Join us in wishing Rabbi Singer luck in her next adventure during a special Shabbat service on Friday, May 31, at 6:15 PM.**

**SAVE  
THE DATE**



# Seeking Peace Amidst Turmoil: Rabbi Gellman's Reflection on Conflict and Compassion

There are just so many devastating images of the war with Hamas. We've seen the images of the bombardment of Gaza. We've heard the stories of the incredibly dire living situations of Palestinians living there. We've heard the stories and seen the devastation of the terrorism that rang through Israel on Oct 7<sup>th</sup>, the completely indiscriminate murder of Jews and others living in Israel. We know about the 132 hostages still assumedly living through unknown physical and emotional pain each day deep within Hamas tunnels. How can we square all of this? I don't think we truly can. We must cry for all of it while not being ashamed that we're crying about the loss of life on "the other side," whatever that might mean.



Nothing pains me more than the images of Kfir and Ariel Bibas.

Kfir was 9 months old, and Ariel was 4 years old when they were kidnapped along with their mother, Shiri, on Oct 7<sup>th</sup>. I cannot get over how much Kfir and Ariel look like my boys. It's not just the red hair, it's their faces, it's their ages. I see my boys in the Bibas boys. We still

do not know where they are.

So how do we get Kfir and Ariel back? I don't know.

What I can do is share what I believe. I believe that indiscriminate bombing will not bring them back. I believe that dehumanization of Gazans will not bring them back. And I believe that without pressure by Israel, Hamas has no reason to give up hostages. I believe strongly in a ceasefire as soon as possible. But that possibility cannot come until all Israelis are safe and home. I do believe that Israel should respond to terrorism, but how can that be done without the loss of life? I believe we should be mourning every innocent Palestinian life that's been extinguished just as much as each Israeli life that's been extinguished.

Yet all of this is so complicated. There must be nuance. Yet, it feels like nuance in times of war is shot down by missiles. Nuance is what leads us to constructive conversations. Nuance is what helps us keep and strengthen our partnerships. Nuance will not bring the Bibas boys back home, but nuance will help them have a stronger and safer home to come back to.

**Authored by Rabbi Scott Gellman**



**Rabbi Gellman** is the Associate Rabbi at Temple Sholom whose role includes providing pastoral care, engaging with students of all ages, and providing support to our Sholom Justice community group, *Or Chadash* (Temple Sholom's LGBTQ+ and Allies group), and every one of our members.

[SHOLOMCHICAGO.ORG/MICKEY-BERGMAN](https://sholomchicago.org/mickey-bergman)

SAVE  
THE DATE

## SPECIAL **GUEST SPEAKER** **Mickey Bergman**

TUESDAY | JUNE 18 | 7:00 PM

Join us for an unforgettable evening with Mickey Bergman, the renowned hostage negotiator pivotal in the high-profile release of individuals from the Oct. 7 attack. Bergman has been twice nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. His career, marked by daring negotiations and life-saving diplomacy, offers unparalleled insights into the complexities of international relations and human resilience. Hear firsthand from a man whose work has made headlines and profoundly impacted many lives. Discover the stories behind global conflict resolution and the power of persistence. Don't miss this opportunity to engage with a true hero of our times.



# Of Blessed Memory

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**DEC. 9**

**Ida Anger**

Wife of Thomas Anger

**DEC. 31**

**Bruce Levy**

Brother of Peter Levy (Jill LeBoyer)

**JAN. 11**

**Anne Zeiger Friedman**

Mother of Shari (Brad) Dorfman, grandmother of Olivia Dorfman

**JAN. 14**

**Edith Schumer**

Grandmother of Sam (Claudia) Schumer, great-grandmother of Sydney & Melody Schumer.

**FEB. 1**

**Clinton Krislov**

Husband of Dale Krislov, father of Nicholas Krislov

**FEB. 5**

**Andrea Deutch**

Beloved Gan Shalom Teacher

**FEB. 7**

**Ann Goldsmith**

Mother of Richard (Pam) Goldsmith, grandmother of Jack & Ella Goldsmith

**FEB. 4**

**Harvey Beim**

Father of Renee (Mark) Silverstein

**FEB. 15**

**Sol Gantz**

Grandfather of Rachel (Jay) Rapoport

**FEB. 23**

**Richard Sack**

Father of Scott (Julie) Sack, grandfather of Emma, Noah & Ethan Sack

**FEB. 27**

**Marvin H. Silberman**

Father of Joe Silberman

**MAR. 7**

**Alex Hart**

Loved one of Emily Fishman and Rebecca Unger & Zack Fishman

**MAR. 10**

**Emily Karelitz**

Jon (Sarah) Karelitz, granddaughter of Mia & Danielle Karelitz

**MAR. 12**

**Ruth Ann Kerns**

Ruth Ann Kerns  
Cousin of Joe (Kathy) Morris

**MAR. 13**

**Eleanor H. Samuels**

Mother of Howard (Elizabeth) Samuels

# Mazal Tov

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**DEC. 19**

**Ali & Cameron Craig**

Ali & Cameron Craig on the birth of their son, Archer Elliot Craig. Big sister is Evelyn.

**MAR. 15**

**Patricia McMillen**

On publishing her first full-length poetry collection, Running Wild.

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If you have experienced a life-cycle event recently (marriage, birth of a child, etc.) we would like to know about it! Please email **Lori Curtis** at [lori@sholomchicago.org](mailto:lori@sholomchicago.org) to share the news with us. Thank you!

# New Members

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Membership is how our sacred community grows! Know somebody who is interested in membership? Connect them with **Jude Kamler** at [jude@sholomchicago.org](mailto:jude@sholomchicago.org).

**SEPT. 7**

**Noel Steere & Jaime Angio**

Oliver

**NOV. 27**

**Sarah Margulis**

**DEC. 6**

**Steven Kipnis & Rachel Ablin**

Caleb

**DEC. 12**

**Jeffrey Wurtzel**

Mollie, Benjamin

**DEC. 13**

**Richard & Jaclyn Day**

**DEC. 18**

**Brittany Zelch & Joshua Weisbrot**

**DEC. 19**

**Brandon & Morgan Hoffman**

Bo, Jett

**JAN. 2**

**Paulette Whitt**

**JAN. 4**

**Brad Blumenthal**

**JAN. 9**

**Ben Roberts & Carrie Sandler**

Moses, Lou

**JAN. 9**

**Tal Rosen & Anna Levin Rosen**

Joshua, Eliezza, Amiel, Ezekiel

**JAN. 11**

**Jarrett Gross & Lance Pulido**

**JAN. 14**

**Mark & Edyta Grazman**

Stella, Levi

**JAN. 22**

**Matthew & Casey Lesser**

Nora

**JAN. 23**

**Beth Besson**

**JAN. 25**

**Melanie Vaisberg & Evan Schneider**

# B'nai Mitzvah

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**FEB. 15**

**Charles Schopin**

**MAR. 2**

**Zachary Zwick**

**MAR. 9**

**Ian Asher**

**MAR. 16**

**Dylan Attanasio**

**MAR. 16**

**Carter Sacco**

**MAR. 23**

**Griffin Florsheim**

**MAR. 23**

**Stella Grazman**

**MAR. 30**

**Charlie Olt**

**MAR. 30**

**Max Hesser**

**APR. 6**

**Asher Parke**

**APR. 6**

**Serena Shankman**

**APR. 13**

**Grady Grossman**

**APR. 13**

**Benjamin Farkas**

**APR. 20**

**Jake Goldstein**

**APR. 20**

**Charlie Rosenband**

**APR. 20**

**Pearl Rosenband**

**APR. 25**

**Liam Gremmels**

**APR. 25**

**Anna Gremmels**

**APR. 27**

**Elise Frisch**

**APR. 27**

**Jakob Stone**

**MAY 4**

**Nathan Altschuler**

**MAY 4**

**Ryder Minc**

**MAY 11**

**Rocky Price**

**MAY 11**

**Saray Franklin**

**MAY 18**

**Evan Weinberg**

**MAY 18**

**Sloane Simon**

**JUN. 1**

**Noah Samis**

**JUN. 1**

**Chloe Meadows**

**JUN. 6**

**Zoe Lobatto**

**JUN. 8**

**Vera Cyrenne**

**JUN. 15**

**Emily Annes**

**Stay Connected with Us!**

Hey there, wonderful community! We've got exciting updates, stories, and insights we can't wait to share. But did you know there's a way to catch all the action quicker than our magazine? Dive into our regular postings and be a part of the conversation on our social media platforms!

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**Temple Shalom of Chicago**

or follow us on Instagram!  
**@sholomchicago**

To dive deeper into the information found in this magazine, visit our website:

**[sholomchicago.org](http://sholomchicago.org)**

**We offer a wide array of events that will help you connect with, and become inspired by, the community.**

Visit our upcoming events page **[sholomchicago.org/upcoming-events](http://sholomchicago.org/upcoming-events)** for events listed by department or visit our monthly calendar for an overview **[sholomchicago.org/calendar](http://sholomchicago.org/calendar)**

**Chag Sameach!**

**REGISTRATION:**  
 Adult - \$55  
 Child (age 2-12) - \$25  
 Child (under 2) - Free

**2nd Night Seder**

**TUESDAY | APR. 23 | 6:00 PM**

Embrace the warmth and tradition of Passover with us at our 2nd Night Seder, a celebration steeped in cherished rituals and the comforting tastes of the holiday. Gather with friends and family for an evening that promises to be as meaningful as it is delightful. This Seder is not just a celebration of Passover; it's a wonderful opportunity to connect with your community and make new friends, enriching your holiday experience with the warmth of shared traditions and newfound companionship. Don't forget to RSVP and let us know you're joining us for this special occasion, where memories are made and the spirit of community shines brightest.

**Visit [sholomchicago.org](http://sholomchicago.org) to learn more and register!**



# A Very Brief History of Jewish Philanthropy



Authored by Tal Rosen

Tal is the **Director of Development** at Temple Sholom, where he facilitates transformative opportunities to sustain and grow the congregational community. **Get in touch with Tal - [tal@sholomchicago.org](mailto:tal@sholomchicago.org)**

Since the dawning of Jewish written text over 2,500 years ago, a significant portion of our writings have been devoted to the concept of providing for those less fortunate. While these texts vary in scope and focus, the message is clear: Judaism places significant value on the process of giving philanthropy.

In the *Torah*, we are informed that we have an obligation to care for marginalized groups in our community.

"For the Eternal your God is God supreme and Lord supreme, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who shows no favor and takes no bribe, but upholds the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the stranger, providing food and clothing — you too must love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt."

(Deuteronomy 10:17-18)

The rabbinic commentators of the *Talmud* (compiled in the 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> centuries) ascribe an ethical component to how one gives.

There are four types of charity givers:

He who wishes to give, but that others should not give: his eye is evil to that which belongs to others; He who wishes that others should give, but that he himself should not give: his eye is evil towards that which is his own; He who desires that he himself should give, and that others should give: he is a pious man; He who desires that he himself should not give and that others too should not give: he is a wicked man. (*Pirkei Avot* 5:13)

The liturgical poem *Unetanneh Tokef* (written between the 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries), that we recite during the High Holy Days, indicates that the act of giving has theological ramifications as it can negate some of the giver's misdeeds from the previous year.

But repentance, prayer, and charity (*Tzedakah*) temper judgment's severe degree.

(*Unetanneh Tokef*, Gates of Repentance Translation)

The 12<sup>th</sup> century scholar

Maimonides again ascribes ethical significance both to the way in which one gives, but also to the degree to which philanthropy can lead the recipient to financial independence.

There are eight levels in charity, each level surpassing the other. The highest level beyond which there is none is a person who supports a Jew who has fallen into poverty [by] giving him a present or a loan, entering into partnership with him, or finding him work so that his hand will be fortified so that he will not have to ask others [for alms]. Concerning this [*Leviticus* 25:35] states: "You shall support him, the stranger, the resident, and he shall live among you." Implied is that you should support him before he falls and becomes needy. (*Maimonides, Mishneh Torah* 10:7)

Fast forward to the Hassidic tales of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and we find numerable stories about the anonymous donor. One of my favorites is the story about Yossele the Holy Miser. Yossele is the richest man in Krakow, who everyone with every conceivable need in the community comes to with a request for *tzedakah*. He flatly rejects each request and ultimately is forced to live apart from the community. It is only after his death, when everyone in the community stops receiving a mysterious envelope with funds in it each week, that it is discovered that he has secretly supported the community his entire life.

Finally, the current model of Jewish philanthropy can be traced to Chicago's own, Julius Rosenwald, who transformed the model of Jewish philanthropy in the 20<sup>th</sup> century from one that was primarily internal to the community, to a model that had a dual focus on both Jewish causes and impacting change within the broader society. His focus on education and social justice provided opportunities for countless individuals, and in turn had a profound impact on society and the way in which the Jewish community interacts with those around us.

So what does a 2,500 year written history of philanthropy mean today?

The focus of Jewish philanthropic thinking has changed over the course of history as our people have transformed from a semi-nomadic group of exiles to an accepted community in many western democracies. While we are still concerned with the biblical injunction to provide for the orphan, stranger, and widow, our contemporary Jewish institutions are also focused on how we shape society to be the world we wish to live in. At Temple Sholom, we work to achieve these objectives through our commitment to prayer, education, and social justice as a means to understand how to build a community and a world based on shared Jewish values.

We cannot do this without your partnership. An investment in Temple Sholom is an investment in continuity of the Jewish people and the belief that Jewish values will have a positive impact on society; it is an investment in building the world as we believe it should be.

To those of you who have made a meaningful gift to this year's Annual Campaign, THANK YOU! We could not do this work without your support. Our fiscal year runs until June 30. I invite each of you to consider making a meaningful gift to the synagogue this year so that our community can fully live up to our mission to embrace, inspire, and matter. To give, please visit [sholomchicago.org/donate](http://sholomchicago.org/donate).



# Thank You to Our Temple Sholom Donors!

In Memory of Mercedes Abrams	<b>Barry &amp; Sandi Hartstein</b>	In Memory of Ryan Kelly	<b>Sarah Kelly</b>
In Memory of Rebecca M. Adelman	<b>Howard &amp; Patricia Adelman</b>	In Memory of Ida Lessman	<b>Sylvia Lessman</b>
In Memory of Martin Alderman	<b>Flora Alderman</b>	In Memory of Julius Lessman	<b>Sylvia Lessman</b>
	<b>Ruth &amp; Mark Schlossberg</b>	In Honor of Sylvia Lessman	<b>Sara and John Carter</b>
In Honor of Sari Barack	<b>Deborah &amp; Max Barack</b>	In Memory of Lara Levitan	<b>Denise Levitan &amp; Mebea Aklilu</b>
In Honor of Marla Baratz and Jonathan Karmel	<b>Lon Baratz</b>	In Memory of Bruce Levy	<b>Peter Levy &amp; Jill LeBoyer</b>
In Memory of Sydelle Beckil Shifrin	<b>Sandra Shifrin</b>	In Memory of Jean London	<b>Judith Newton</b>
In Honor of Cantor Sheera Ben-David	<b>Allyn &amp; Andrea Okun</b>	In Memory of Israel Samy Ofer	<b>Avi &amp; Tali Ofer</b>
	<b>Brett &amp; Maryn Robinson</b>	In Memory of Grant Pick	<b>Clifford &amp; Nancy Scott-Rudnick</b>
In Memory of Pam Blumenthal	<b>Brad Blumenthal</b>	In Memory of Lynne Rice	<b>Roger &amp; Teri Rudich</b>
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In Honor of Mitchell Brown	<b>Mary Ann Marks</b>	In Memory of Adele Rosenberg	<b>Michael &amp; Nancy Herman</b>
In Honor of Marla Burrugh	<b>Sara Aron</b>	In Memory of Irving Rosenberg	<b>Michael &amp; Nancy Herman</b>
In Honor of <i>Chanukah</i>	<b>Sai Mukkamala</b>	In Memory of Leonard Rubenstein	<b>Jane Rubinstein</b>
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In Memory of Dustin Jopling	<b>Barbara &amp; Maxine Durst</b>		
In Memory of Bruce D. Kaplan	<b>Sandra Shifrin</b>		
In Memory of Maya June Kaufman	<b>Jay &amp; Michelle Kaufman</b>		

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Rabbi Larry Hoffman, Ph.D.

## A Vision for the Future of Judaism

**In March 2024, we hosted Lawrence A. Hoffman, Rabbi, Ph.D., where we discussed the future of Judaism. This feature contains excerpts from his time with us:**

"I'm just so excited to be here... And one of the reasons I am here is that I've been so impressed by the leadership of the synagogue and, of course, the rabbis and the cantor. I think about great synagogues and where they will go - this is one of them, believe me. So, I am here to help you begin to think through:

'What is the synagogue of the future?'

'What's it going to look like?'

Once upon a time, when I was in in religious school, I got taught that there were these great people called the Rabbis. And the Rabbis invented a thing called the Synagogue, and ever since then the synagogue has been the central institution for the Jewish people.

The last half is right. It has been the central institution for the Jewish people. But actually, synagogues were not started by the Rabbis; they were started by regular people who wanted to have community. The purpose of the synagogue was to gather together. Somewhere in the first century or so this got started; the Rabbis came along later. Synagogues grew in huge numbers only after Christianity took over the world.

When that happened, Christians began planting churches and Jews said, 'Oh, that's a good idea. We'll do that, too.' It wasn't until the 6<sup>th</sup> century when prayer became central to the synagogue. Synagogues had many functions. Prayer, of course, was one of them, but a late comer. Mostly, it was a place for community to gather.

In the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, German Jews came to America and founded places like this. Let's understand why they built a place like this. The answer is Napoleon. Napoleon swept through Western Europe and freed Jews from the ghettos. But in order to make them part of society, Napoleon put it to Jews. He said: 'Look, who are you? I mean, if you're your own nationality or something, there's no room for you here. But if you're willing to be a religion like Protestants and Catholics... then there's a place for you.'

The only problem was, they didn't know exactly what a religion was. There was no word for it in Hebrew, yet they knew they were *Am Yisrael*, a people.

But now, having had to say they were a religion to stay there, they had to figure out what religion was. They looked around and they saw these grand churches throughout Germany and France. 'Oh, I guess we'll do that.'

The center of religion for Protestants and for Catholics was worship. So, they built places like this, generally, with no place to gather, but a place where you could walk in and feel a sense of awe.

Now that kind of synagogue worked very well in Germany, so when they came to America they built that kind of synagogue. These Jews who came wanted to prove three things: they wanted to prove that they could be Jews by religion, Americans by citizenship, and still German by culture.

So, they did a variety of things. First of all, they built places where the gentlemen of the time could go, like the Standard Club (Chicago). And they developed great music. The worship service had a choir hidden somewhere where you wouldn't see them. And they sang in the key of 'Angel,' which means you can't sing along with them.

The only thing they didn't succeed in doing was keeping German culture going; the Great War broke out in 1914, and unaccountably Germany was on the wrong side. That's when they gave up the German part.

Meanwhile, a whole new group of people started arising - these were people from Eastern Europe. In 1881, huge numbers of people came in what is called 'The Great Migration.' The Jews who came from Eastern

Europe were not so welcome to the Germans.

The Germans looked down on them. They didn't know their culture, which is to say they didn't speak German. And they seemed to be kind of mystical. They had these Hasidic things. They sang this stuff called *nigun*, you know - La, La, La! That is not what Germans do... yet they wanted to sing together.

So, the Germans had a problem. They wanted to welcome their co-religionists; they wanted to give them a place to go to synagogue, just 'not in my backyard.'

The German crowd decided to develop synagogues for the Eastern Europeans. They found a little seminary up on the Upper West Side of New York. They bought it. They constituted the board. They called it the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. Out of that there emerged a new movement called the Conservative Movement.

But here's the interesting thing. The Jews that came from Eastern Europe probably would never have founded synagogues on their own. Mostly they had given up religion when they came here. Where they came from there was no religious reform like Germany. You know why? Because Napoleon never got that far to tell them they were a religion. So, when they entered modernity, they thought they were like the Poles, like the Ukrainians. They were a national group. The only thing they didn't have was a home. And that's where Zionism came in.

Jews of Western Europe, the Reform Jews changed religion and built synagogues like this (Temple Sholom). Jews of Eastern Europe joined the Zionist movement and helped found Israel. Those who didn't do that, were in America in huge numbers, many more than the Germans. They probably wouldn't have bothered with synagogues at all except for one very interesting thing: America was a religious country. You were expected to have a place to go to worship. So, as soon as they could afford it, using rabbis from the new seminary, and sometimes with Reform money, they built their own synagogues...

They were really interested in traditional Judaism. Kids had to learn the traditions of Eastern Europe. Sometimes they built a regular religious school, and then they added a



sanctuary later, because, after all, that's what you do in America.

By the time we get to 1950, there are these two types of synagogues.

Now you see how modern Judaism gets formed. We have awesome worship. We believe in social justice and having a better society. And we believe in education for our children and for us. Out of that amalgam became Judaism in America.

Now I fast forward. I could call this A Tale of Four Synagogues. The first one is the German one, the second one is from Eastern Europe. and the third one comes after World War II. Cars were a big thing. Do you remember what Dina Shore sang? 'See the U.S.A. in your Chevrolet.' What was she selling? Chevrolet's? No, she was actually selling the Eisenhower Interstate highway system. That meant that people could drive and they could move to the suburbs. And so, the big thing about the 1950's was suburbanization. Now, you did not have to move to the suburbs to be suburbanized; suburbanization is a state of mind.

They were having baby boom children who were loud. They grew up in the really exciting times, like the 60's and the 70's. Their parents put everything into them. They had the money - they had the desire that their children would get ahead. It's the first generation that the parents didn't just say 'Go play in traffic.'

Synagogues of the 1950's and 60's were for the baby boomer children. Their parents built a new kind of synagogue never seen before. In suburbia, there was a great big school wing separate from the sanctuary. That's where parents dropped off their kids. The sanctuary was tiny, because nobody was going. But usually there was a wall that you could open up for *Rosh Hashanah*, because that's when people came. In that period of time, you have to understand how pediatric this Judaism was.

For the first time, they were building a system where they had a synagogue training children for something their parents didn't do...

We have a long way to go, then, in building the new kind of synagogue—a synagogue that will not be pediatric; a synagogue that will have worship that talks to people, speaks to people, engages people. You've made a huge head start here. This

should not be taken for granted. [We need to build] A synagogue where we integrate helping people, being part of the community, and where people grow up in the synagogue and grow old in the synagogue—we're young and old. This may be the only place where many generations can meet.

There are two major through lines of trends at the moment. One trend is a trend towards greater individualism. We might say, 'But wait a second. You have to help others,' and so on. But the young people who are individualistic are actually the generation most anxious to help the world in a long time - but they want to do it in their own way.

A second thing that's happening is this breakthrough in technology. I don't have to tell you about that. But I want to remind you that the Jews have always accepted technology. How do I know this? Because of that prayer that you said earlier. 'You shall write them on the doorposts of your house,' right in the *V'ahavta*. Writing was a new technology. And technology changes social competence. Where we are now in America is that technological competence is impacting social competence, opening up the world. The world is now small. We can talk to someone all over the world. We can talk to hundreds and thousands of people if we want to.

Judaism is no longer just for Jews. Think about that for a minute. First of all, 60% of Jewish marriages are now not between one Jew and another.

That means that most of the children who come to our synagogue will be people who are not raised necessarily by two Jewish parents, maybe with none. Our synagogues will be filled with people who look differently, and this is one of the greatest blessings we can have. We who lost six million, now have the opportunity of speaking to six million more people who are seeking something or other, and think we might have it. In their individualism, they're looking for all sorts of things. And the question is, do we have something for a new age? And the answer is, of course we do.

I know at the moment there's antisemitism but I do not believe that the world still hates us. I believe with hope that, in fact, vast numbers of people of goodwill will come together. We need to be a community of purpose, a reason to be that people come here and they know why they're alive and why they should enjoy life.



*We need a community of profundity, ideas that touch people's lives. And we need a community of passion - something to fight for, and passion about the joy of life itself...*

*The future is bright. I want you to remember as we go there, why Judaism matters.*



We need a community of profundity, ideas that touch people's lives. And we need a community of passion - something to fight for, and passion about the joy of life itself for adults, not just for children. The future is bright. I want you to remember as we go there, why, Judaism matters.

Why will Jews manage to do this? Because we don't just speak to ethnic Jews. We speak to everybody the way it was back in the Greek period when synagogue just started. Because we like science, remember that, because Judaism is not dogmatic. Even the belief in God is optional because Judaism believes in freedom and justice. Because we are a religion of joy. '*L'chaim!*' We say, 'To life!' And yet we are deep. We do talk about God, we do talk about what life is like and what might happen after life and what it's all about, and why we are alive all together. And because we are part of something bigger.

The future is bright.

You have a great synagogue.

I welcome you to the future."

# Spotlight on Change

## Maya Henschel and Emma Lookatch, JUF's Springboard 18 Under 18 Honorees

**Jude Kamler (J):** So, Maya and Emma, thank you for speaking with me today! First tell me a little bit about yourselves.

**Maya Henschel (M):** Well, alright! My name is Maya Henschel, I use she/her pronouns, and I am 18 years old. I'm a senior at Jones College Prep. As for affiliations, I'm part of Crown Family High School at Temple Sholom. At my school I do Quiz Bowl, the Philosophy Club, and I'm an editor for the Literary Magazine. I also work for the Jewish Youth Climate Movement (JCYM) as part of their National Leadership Board on their Communications Working Group, which means I help handle their social media strategy, and I help write and edit their newsletters. I've also written some poetry for the newsletter.

**Emma Lookatch (E):** I am 19 years old and a senior at Keshet Day School at Ida Crown Jewish Academy. I'm a proud member of the Keshet Inclusive Choir and we belong to Temple Sholom of Chicago. Through Keshet, I spend much of my time volunteering at places like Bernie's Book Bank, Park Plaza Retirement Center and the Niles Senior Center, bringing sunshine and inspiration to the people I work with each and every day.

**J:** You've both been named as an honoree for JUF's Springboard 18 Under 18 list. Tell us a little bit about 18 Under 18 and the purpose of the list.

**M:** Springboard's a really cool organization. It's meant to provide programs for Jewish teens to help us connect with each other. The 18 Under 18 list is supposed to recognize

people who've chosen to be change makers and leaders in their community. The best part of being nominated is they give us support to complete our goals. We make a plan of our goal as an honoree, and we get Springboard's help, connections, and support [to achieve it], which is really brilliant. It's like they recognize what we do, and they're giving us resources to keep doing it.

**E:** The program provides a platform for teens like me to give back and perform *tikkun olam* in their community. As a person with disabilities and a past Keshet camper at JCC Apachi Day Camp, I experienced first-hand how important inclusion is and how having confidence in myself helps me work hard to keep up with my peers. As an honoree, I have the opportunity to help Keshet campers attending the inclusive camp program at JCC Apachi Day Camp, to learn and grow and better their camp experience.

**J:** That's awesome. What goals do each of you want to achieve with Springboard's help?

**M:** Well, I'm very proud of working for JYCM, but it doesn't have a lot of presence in the Midwest at all; it's heavily concentrated on the East and West Coast. So, I wanted to do an outreach event for JYCM for the Chicagoland area so congregations can learn about JYCM and its work. The second part of my goal is to start a *kvutzot* (local chapter) of JYCM at Crown Family before I go off to college.

**E:** For my impact project, I want to help build confidence in current Keshet campers by creating a program which rewards them for taking risks and building their confidence while trying new things at camp. The Confident Camper Goody Bag

will incentivize Keshet campers to be their best self at camp and truly feel included in every activity.

**J:** Tell us a little bit about the nomination process.

**M:** I was nominated by someone who worked with me at JYCM. When she nominated me, she told me about a *D'var Torah* I gave at a JYCM retreat. She told me that it actually inspired other people to want to write theirs, which kind of struck me. I don't always consider myself a leader, but it was really flattering to hear that she considered me one.

**E:** Being an 18 Under 18 honoree was not something I expected, but I was very honored to be chosen. Upon





the announcement, it was so great to hear from and receive messages of congratulations from my family, friends and community.

**J:** That's wonderful! I would love to hear what it means to you to have received this honor.

**M:** It means a lot. It's really validating to know that the work I've been doing through high school matters, to know that someone looked at the things I do, and decided that they want to support me and help me do more of it, because they think it's worthwhile. And my goals are really about helping Jewish teens find community, helping them find a platform for activism, like I've found with JYCM. So, it means a lot that people consider that important.

**E:** This year, 18 Under 18 has performed the greatest act of inclusion by including a person with disabilities as one of its honorees. My passion is helping others see how important it is to give opportunities to people with disabilities and help them build their confidence to achieve their dreams.

**J:** Those are both incredibly important! I'd love to know what's next for you both.

**M:** Well, I have gotten accepted to Tufts University; I'll be starting there in the fall.

**J:** *Mazal Tov!*

**M:** Thank you. I discovered JYCM as a senior, which made me a little sad because I thought I'd only have one year to be part of it until I aged out. But JYCM's parent organization, *Adamah*, is starting up *Adamah On Campus*, which is a college version of JYCM. I think I'd like to bring that to Tufts if it doesn't already have a chapter, because I'd really like to stay involved in JYCM. Beyond this, I've been looking into education as a career path – I have discovered through the *Madrachim* program and through working as a teacher's assistant at my school that I truly love teaching. So that's one of my current career ideas, but I have so many. I love writing poetry, so no matter what I'll keep writing.

**E:** My future goals are to be a *Madricha* someday and work at a Temple or Jewish organization, planning activities to bring smiles to people in my community.

**J:** These are wonderful goals. It has been such a pleasure to hear from both of you. *Mazal Tov* on this incredible achievement!

## SPRINGBOARD



Maya Henschel - front row, fourth from the left  
Emma Lookatch - front row, third from the left



**Authored by Jude Kamler**

**Jude** serves as the **Manager of Strategic Engagement**. Jude joined Temple Sholom as a congregant in 2021, where they found meaningful connection through the *Or Chadash* and *Makom* community groups. Now, they are grateful to have the opportunity to support the engagement of current and prospective members and help facilitate meaningful experiences for the beautiful and vibrant Temple Sholom community. **Get in touch with Jude - [jude@sholomchicago.org](mailto:jude@sholomchicago.org).**



## Spotlight on Membership: Nia's Journey Finding Community and Purpose

I have attended Temple Shalom since I moved here in 2021 from Texas to attend law school. The first thing I looked for when I knew I was moving was a synagogue. Clergy at my temple back home connected me with Temple Shalom, and I attended my first services by tuning in over Facebook Live. I remember being wowed by the cantor's voice and amazed (and a little jealous)! at how excited everyone was to come together on *Shabbat* evenings.

I later applied for an open position for a 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade Religious School teacher, which I accepted, a little hesitantly, since I had just left an 8<sup>th</sup> grade teaching job in Houston and was eager to become a fancy attorney like on TV. I taught my first Sunday school class before I went to my first law school class, so the entire time I have been in law school I have been coming to Temple Shalom multiple times each week to teach, pray, make friends, and most importantly to me (a true nerd!)—learn.

Over the years I have joined the temple *Klezmer* band, learned to blow shofar, worked on my Hebrew, and served on multiple committees. My Temple Shalom life has expanded alongside my life as a future attorney. Law school is an intense and sometimes demoralizing process, and I am far away from my family, with whom I am very close. I have worked to build relationships at temple that help me maintain a healthy perspective about myself and others. Temple Shalom has been a space to bring my deep questions about justice, race, fairness, actionable change, rest, beauty, and love, and I am inspired by staff, students, clergy, and other congregants to be reflective and growing each day!

As a Black Jew, I feel so lucky to be in a community with people who care about unraveling the sometimes painful histories of Chicago's race and class barriers — issues that I was surprised to learn about coming from the South. I have also been empowered to expand my Jewish community to include groups like the Jewish Council of Urban Affairs (JCUA), *Kol Or* Jews of Color Caucus, and the Base Hillel system. While I really miss my family back in Texas, I am hoping to stay in Chicago after graduation (and hopefully move them up here!), largely because of the centrality of Temple Shalom in my life. I hope that my temple world continues to expand alongside me for many years to come!

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**Authored by Nia Crossley (pictured to the right)**

**Nia** is a valued Religious School teacher and member at Temple Shalom, where she has made her mark since 2021. Blending her passion for Jewish education with her law studies, Nia embodies commitment to both learning and community engagement.

*Mazal tov* to Nia on her amazing *Torah* chanting in honor of her birthday!

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# Journey to Jewish Education

I was in third grade, standing at the front of the classroom, holding my Bubbie's patinaed *chanukiah* with two strong lions in profile underneath the candleholders, the wax still on it from years of use. I love this *chanukiah* - the weight of it, the green bronze - all of it.

I was the only Jew in my class that year, and I was so proud when my teacher asked me to present about *Chanukah*. I answered questions about *Chanukah* and my family's traditions.

Looking back, this could be the moment I became a Jewish educator.

I wanted to be prepared, to be able to tell my classmates about the Maccabees and Hasmoneans. Explain not just how, but why we light the *chanukiah* to publicize the miracles of *Chanukah*.

I love Jewish tradition and was lucky to have a childhood and lifetime full of positive Jewish experiences and memories. Growing up, my family built a *sukkah* every year and had neighbors and guests over to shake the *lulav*. We decorated it with paper chains, strings of popcorn, cards from *Rosh Hashanah*, and stalks of corn. Some years it was freezing out and we bundled up to have our meals in there, other years it was still hot, and the bees would fly above us. I still build a *sukkah* each year and have watched my own children (now teenagers) take on different roles building it, decorating it, schlepping the tables and chairs outside. These moments create memories throughout families and across the generations.

I have found that living a Jewish life makes life more meaningful.

In truth, I don't know any other way. I have always been part of a Jewish community, a regular at *Shabbat* services,

and moved through life on the Jewish calendar.

Recently, I have been thinking a lot about Jewish pride. How is it taught? When is it felt? How do we cultivate it in our communities?

For me, it is intrinsic. It is family, holidays, friends, food, and love.

I want to help any kids who I have the privilege of teaching feel proud about being Jewish.

Some of this can be done through being explicit and modeling what our community, tradition, and *Torah* have to offer us and the world. Some of this is about finding something interesting or challenging in our tradition and confronting it. But I strongly believe that at the root of pride is knowledge. If you don't know about our holidays or traditions, it's difficult to understand their amazing lessons, connections, and potential to create a life full of meaning.

My hope is that all Jews, if asked to stand up and share their Jewishness, could feel the sense of pride I felt in third grade in front of my classroom. I hope that joyful Jewish learning, being in community, and sharing the weight of the moment will help create a solid foundation for the next generation, and possibly even create some new Jewish educators.



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**Authored by Lori Kramer**

**Lori began her role as Director of Education at Temple Shalom in 2023. She loves teaching all ages in a variety of settings and is passionate about Judaism and Jewish Education.**

**Get in touch with Lori -  
lorikramer@sholomchicago.org**

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# Empowering Families with Wisdom and Mindfulness

**This winter, Temple Shalom collaborated with Orot: Center for New Jewish Learning to introduce the inaugural cohort of The Peaceful Parent Project®.** This groundbreaking program merges Jewish teachings, mindfulness, and effective parenting strategies to equip parents with essential tools for handling the complexities of contemporary family life while fostering a supportive community.

The curriculum of The Peaceful Parent Project® is a unique blend of timeless Jewish wisdom, modern parenting literature, and mindfulness techniques, offering a transformative journey for its participants. Parents engage with Jewish teachings that emphasize harmony, compassion, and resilience within the family, presented through interactive sessions.

A distinctive feature of this program is the integration of mindfulness into parenting. Parents are taught to develop presence, patience, and emotional regulation—key components for maintaining healthy relationships with their children.

Led by Rebecca Minkus Lieberman, Executive Director of Orot and Educational Director of The Peaceful Parent Project® at Temple Shalom, the program benefits from her vast expertise and empathetic leadership. Her commitment to deep listening and compassionate guidance ensures a nurturing environment for parents to discuss their challenges and goals.

A participant remarked, "Peaceful Parenting has provided the blend of Jewish wisdom and mindfulness I've been seeking. Rebecca's empathetic facilitation creates a

safe space for discussion, blending ancient teachings with insights that resonate deeply. The sessions are invaluable, and I find myself wishing for more."

Conveniently scheduled on Sunday mornings to coincide with the religious school, the program allows parents to engage in Jewish learning while their children attend classes, enriching the whole family's experience.

With the launch of The Peaceful Parent Project® at Temple Shalom, we look forward to the positive impact on our community. This initiative not only aims to cultivate informed, mindful parents but also to strengthen the fabric of our Jewish community by nurturing resilient families rooted in Jewish values and compassionate practices.





**Gan Shalom**  
Early Childhood  
Education Center

Gan Shalom's little ones engage in the purest forms of discovery—be it through the vibrant swirls of finger paint, the tender moments of friendship, or the simple delights of play. Join us in celebrating these precious moments at Gan Shalom, where every child shines!



Looking for more information about Gan Shalom? Visit [ganshalom.org](http://ganshalom.org) or get in touch with **Heidi Cooper**, Director of Early Childhood Education, at **773-435-1546** or [heidi@sholomchicago.org](mailto:heidi@sholomchicago.org).





# VOICES OF TOMORROW



Authored by Noa Appelsies

Noa began her role as the **Family and Youth Engagement Associate** at Temple Sholom in 2023. Noa is very excited to help provide a fun, safe, and meaningful Jewish space for everyone! **Get in touch with Noa - [noa@sholomchicago.org](mailto:noa@sholomchicago.org)**

Noa Appelsies, who helps with family and youth activities at Temple Sholom, had a fun adventure talking to kids in the Religious School. She asked them cool questions like, "**What does being Jewish mean to you?**", "**What do you love about being Jewish?**" and "**What's your favorite Jewish food?**" Through these chats, Noa discovered how much kids of all ages enjoy and care about being Jewish, from the traditions to the yummy foods. The kids' happy answers showed how special and fun Judaism is to them!



**Mira Rose-Elsworth, 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade**

I get to celebrate with my family and sometimes friends, and I like the food. My favorite holiday is *Chanukah*, and I like latkes.



**Dylan Olts, 4<sup>th</sup> Grade**

I go to Sabra (Jewish summer camp in Missouri) and I'm with my friends. My friends are from around the U.S.; I am the only one of my friends that comes from Chicago. I like having Jewish friends from everywhere.



**Maya Henschel, 12<sup>th</sup> Grade**

I suppose for me, believing in God kind of takes a back seat to a legacy of traditions. When I am lighting the candles on *Shabbat* or saying the prayers with my mother, I know that generations of my family have done the same thing before. That is what is most important to me.



**Evan Wienberg, 7<sup>th</sup> Grade**

All the holidays we get to have unlike any other religion. Every week we have a *Shabbat* holiday and it's really fun.



**Mia Karalitz, 5<sup>th</sup> Grade**

Judaism is important to me because they really connect to God, and my favorite Jewish food is latkes with applesauce.



**Grant Kohlberg, 1<sup>st</sup> Grade**

You get to learn stuff about things that happened a long time ago.



**Jack Goldfine, 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade**

That I get lots of presents on *Chanukah*, but if you are Christian then you probably only get like 3 or 4 on Christmas, and we get 8.



**Max Silberg, 11<sup>th</sup> Grade**

My favorite part about being Jewish is meeting a lot of Jewish friends and having a community that can back me at any time.



**Volunteer at Temple Sholom and Fight for Social Justice!** *Tikkun Olam*, meaning "repairing the world," is a cornerstone of Reform Judaism. An integral part of the on-going activities at Temple Sholom, our Sholom Justice projects are constantly expanding, and working on these *mitzvot* is a wonderful way to meet other Temple members. New participants are always welcome!

Questions about Sholom Justice? Contact **Miriam Berne**, our **Sholom Justice Project Coordinator** at [miriamb@sholomchicago.org](mailto:miriamb@sholomchicago.org) or visit [sholomchicago.org/social-justice](http://sholomchicago.org/social-justice) for more information about what we do, how to get involved, and how to be added to our newsletter. Please watch for additional events as they get added to our Sholom Justice calendar.



**Hunger & Direct Service** - Temple Sholom serves more than 5,600 meals annually and supports our community through food drives, blood drives, prison pen pal program, and other direct service.



**Migrants & Refugees** - Temple Sholom works with a variety of partners to meet the growing needs of refugees & asylum seekers in Chicago, and is expanding this programming every day.



**Restorative Justice** - Aligned with its long-time focus on violence prevention, Temple Sholom works with partners across Chicago to build momentum for Restorative Justice.



**Reproductive Justice** - Following 2022's Dobbs v Jackson Women's Health ruling, Temple Sholom is fighting for continued access to abortion and reproductive health care across the Midwest.



**Climate** - Temple Sholom's volunteers focus on greening our sacred space and addressing the causes & community impacts of a changing climate.



**Advocacy** - Sholom Justice's Advocacy Committee is working hard on multiple campaigns to address the structural issues at the root of our issue areas.

### Legal Aid Clinics

Temple Sholom & Anshe Emet have teamed up to host legal aid clinics to support newly arrived migrants file for temporary protective status (TPS) and work permits.

**If you are a lawyer, immigration case worker, someone familiar with the immigration system, or are unafraid of paperwork, we want your help!** Spanish is helpful but not required, and training will be provided.

### Prison Pen Pals Needed

Requests for Sholom Justice pen pals continue to come our way, and we are in need of correspondents for these individuals. Sholom Justice's Pen Pal program connects congregants with a pen pal who is serving time in the Illinois prison system.

**If you are interested in participating, please contact Beth Sanchez at [bethsanchez612@gmail.com](mailto:bethsanchez612@gmail.com)**

### Join Feed the Hungry

Through Feed the Hungry (FTH), Temple Sholom volunteers pack 200+ meals twice a month and bring them to Another Chance Assembly for distribution. Monthly FTH sponsors shop for supplies, assemble sandwiches, and deliver them to partners in Austin.

**To sponsor a meal or to sign up to help assemble and deliver, please contact Miriam at [miriamb@sholomchicago.org](mailto:miriamb@sholomchicago.org)**

### Reproductive Justice Fundraising between Repro Shabbat and Women's Seder

In partnership with Women of Temple Sholom (WTS), Temple Sholom volunteers raised money throughout February and March in support of two local organizations - Chicago Abortion Fund and Reproductive Transparency Now - focused on helping women access critical healthcare including abortion.

### Tutoring Refugees

Forging Opportunities in America needs volunteer tutors! FORA offers tutoring for Chicago refugee children, serving ~100 students grades K-12 with 1:1 tutoring in reading and math. Tutors typically serve for 2 in-person or 5 virtual weekly sessions which run M-F 4:30 PM - 6:30 PM and 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM.

**To get started, interested volunteers can email FORA at [onboarding@refugeefora.org](mailto:onboarding@refugeefora.org)**

### Blood Drive Coordinators Needed!

Temple Sholom hosts four on-site blood drives a year through partner Vitalent, supporting critical health needs in our community.

**We need your help - if you're interested in helping coordinate these quarterly events, please contact Miriam at [miriamb@sholomchicago.org](mailto:miriamb@sholomchicago.org)**



Monday Meal volunteers gather in Temple Sholom's kitchen to prepare a meal in February 2024.



# Nourishing Bodies and Souls

## The Impact of Temple Sholom's Monday Meal

Monday Meal, one of Temple Sholom's flagship social justice programs, feeds over 2,500 meals annually. Volunteers prepare, set-up and serve a warm 4-course meal to guests in need every Monday afternoon, providing neighbors in need with a restaurant-style meal and regular community. Register for an upcoming Monday Meal on our website or reach out to Miriam Berne (see top of page 18) for sponsorship opportunities.

**Suzanne Kaplan (SK)** is one of Temple Sholom's Monday Meal coordinators and works to plan and execute each week's meal. Sholom Justice Co-Chairs **Maddie Sulkin (MS)** and **Gabe Lerner (GL)** spoke with her to learn more about what she does, why she does it, and why it matters.

**MS:** For those in our community who aren't familiar, what is Monday Meal (MM)? What are your roles?

**SK:** MM is a long-standing Temple Sholom and Sholom Justice program. Volunteers prepare and serve a warm meal to those in need. We have two sets of volunteers for the project; one set of volunteers prepares the meal in the kitchen and the other set serves and cleans up after the meal. This is a great opportunity for anyone 12 years of age or older who is looking for a meaningful volunteer experience.

**MS:** That sounds like really great work. How did you get involved?

**SK:** I got involved in MM because my friends and their children were involved and thought it would be a great way for my daughter to earn service hours for her Bat Mitzvah.

**GL:** Why do you stay involved? What keeps you coming back?

**SK:** I stayed involved because I enjoyed feeding the less fortunate in our community and the volunteers that were leading the project. I also love to cook and felt that my experience in the kitchen was greatly needed and appreciated by our guests and leadership. It is a soul-cleansing project for me and a way to give back to our community.

**GL:** I'd love if you could share a memory from a past Monday meal that feels particularly meaningful.

**SK:** I have many special memories from volunteering at MM, but the one that really stuck with me was that my 12-year-old daughter really embraced her role as a runner at the meal, running back and forth from the kitchen to the dining hall during the meal to help with last minute needs. My daughter also made special friendships with other volunteers during her time that she still keeps in touch with now that she is in college.

**MS:** What are some of the biggest challenges you see facing our Monday Meal clients?

**SK:** Being able to get food and shelter on a consistent basis - to me that's the biggest challenge. Also, getting the word out in our community about MM so that we can serve as many people as possible.

**GL:** What advice would you give someone who wants to get more involved with volunteering at Temple Sholom?

**SK:** Get online and sign up! We are happy to have anyone, and there is no previous experience needed. The magic of giving back in person is something that feeds the soul.



# Community Groups

Wherever you are in your life or whatever your interests, we have opportunities to suit your passion! Visit [sholomchicago.org/community-groups](http://sholomchicago.org/community-groups) to learn more!



## Minnie Solomon z"l BOOK CLUB

A literary group that meets monthly to have a lively discussion about popular and meaningful books. This group promotes enrichment, expression and interaction over literature.

## KLEZMER House Band

A talented group of musicians who meet, rehearse and perform at events and holidays to enhance programs and experiences. The group is led by professional musician Alex Koffman of the famed Maxwell Street Klezmer Band.

## BROTHERHOOD

A growing community of Temple Sholom men supporting the mission and values of our congregation by creating opportunity for those of all ages to connect, socialize and create meaningful relationships.

## THE JULIANA SCHAFFER Z"l CHESED CIRCLE

Building Community Through Kindness

A group of volunteers dedicated to providing support to fellow congregants who need a little *chesed* (loving kindness) through Meal Trains, check-ins, and more.

## GAME DAY

A lively and social group that meets weekly for some friendly competition. Join the group each Thursday to play Mah Jongg, Canasta, and other various games.

## IT'S OUR TURN

An active group for those 50(ish) and older that brings the community together through social and educational events across Chicago, celebrating holidays together, and sponsoring a congregational monthly morning *Minyan*.



## Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America

Post 710 comes together to provide community service and support veterans through informational sessions covering Veterans benefits, and a variety of services and programs. No need to be a veteran to attend regular meetings

## makom 20s/30s

A group for those in their 20s and 30s to find community and connection to each other, explore spirituality and meaning, and discover a context for doing good in the world.

## Mindful Jewish Aging

A dedicated group that meets monthly and explores the spiritual gift of life after 50 through ancient and modern texts, poetry, art and music.

## mishpacha

family | community | friends

A network for pre-B'nai Mitzvah families to meet, connect and grow together through their Jewish journeys, including *Shabbat* and holidays.

## OrChadash

LGBTQ+ Members & Allies

Members and allies of the LGBTQ+ community join together and focus on social causes, host a monthly "late" *Shabbat* service, and host engaging events throughout Chicago.

## 40s/50s

This group is designed for those ages 35-55(ish) as a place for congregants of similar ages to come together and enjoy a variety of fun and social events by creating opportunities to form meaningful connections.

## Women OF TEMPLE SHOLOM

Women of Temple Sholom (WTS) is a dynamic community of women of all ages and stages of life. They support major women's causes locally and globally to strengthen the influence of progressive Reform Judaism

## SHALEM שְׁלֵמָה

EMBRACING RACIAL  
& ETHNIC DIVERSITY

Promotes an inclusive environment where a cross-section of racial and ethnic identities can thrive in this Jewish community. *Shalem* means wholeness in Hebrew, as we seek to welcome our community's whole selves—the intersection of racial, ethnic, and religious identities that help create a whole person.

# Westlawn Cemetery and Lakeshore Jewish Funerals: A Testament to Jewish Heritage and Community in Chicago



Nestled at 7801 West Montrose Avenue, Westlawn Cemetery and Lakeshore Jewish Funerals embody more than just a final resting place; they serve as a beacon of heritage and memory for Chicago's Jewish community. Westlawn Memorial Park, as it was originally known, emerged from a vision to create a space that wholly embraces Jewish traditions, offering a dignified and respectful tribute to the departed. The inception of this hallowed site marked a pivotal chapter in the city's Jewish history, spearheaded by the visionary leadership of S. H. Harris, Jr. Under his guidance, the park was designed to reflect the community's values, boasting wide roads for two-way traffic and an imposing white marble entrance that greets visitors with solemn grace.

The establishment of Westlawn Memorial Park was driven by a mission to provide a 100% Jewish cemetery, ensuring that every grave receives perpetual care. This commitment resonated deeply with the principle of *kevod hamet*, honoring the deceased, a cornerstone of Jewish faith that was seamlessly woven into the park's ethos. Harris's leadership saw the park develop rapidly, with all underground improvements completed and paid for in full within the first year, setting a foundation free of any encumbrances. This swift and thoughtful development highlighted the community's unwavering dedication to honoring their ancestors and loved ones in a manner befitting their legacy.

Beyond their roles as a cemetery and funeral service, Westlawn Cemetery and Lakeshore Jewish Funerals represent profound commitment to preserving and celebrating Jewish heritage. They stand as a testament to the strength and unity of Chicago's Jewish community, a place where generations come together to remember, mourn, and celebrate life according to Jewish customs and traditions.

The acquisition of Westlawn Cemetery by Temple Sholom of Chicago in 1956 further cemented its significance within the Jewish community. This partnership between one of the city's most storied Jewish institutions and the cemetery has been instrumental in fostering a deeper connection to Jewish values and traditions.

In response to the evolving needs of the community, Westlawn Cemetery and Lakeshore Jewish Funerals have expanded their services to include a mausoleum, built in two phases in 1998 and 2004, offering a serene and dignified option for above-ground interment. Recognizing the diverse choices of individuals and families, they also provide cremation options for those who have made this choice, ensuring that all members of the Jewish community have access to respectful and meaningful end-of-life services. Furthermore, Westlawn Cemetery embraces the inclusivity of all families, including same-gender couples. This dedication to accommodating the preferences and beliefs of each individual and family underlines Westlawn Cemetery and Lakeshore Jewish Funerals' role as a compassionate and inclusive sanctuary, where every Jewish life is celebrated and remembered.

Today, Westlawn Cemetery has beautifully maintained grounds, and coupled with the solemn beauty of its structures, it offers solace and peace to visitors, reminding them of the enduring legacy of those who have passed. In every stone, tree, and pathway, the cemetery encapsulates the collective memory of a community bound by faith, history, and the shared experience of generations.

As Westlawn Cemetery and Lakeshore Jewish Funerals look to the future, they remain pivotal institutions in Chicago, embodying the Jewish community's dedication to honor, remember, and celebrate life in accordance with their rich traditions and beliefs. It is more than just a cemetery; it is a sanctuary of heritage, a place where the past is cherished, and the legacy of Jewish Chicagoans is preserved for future generations.

If you want to get in touch with someone at Westlawn Cemetery, contact **Vickie Pulido** at **773-625-8600**.

For Lakeshore Jewish Funerals contact

**Dan Schubring** at **773-625-8621**.

For all other inquiries, email us at **info@westlawncemetery.org**

Westlawn Administration Building, 1938





# SNAPSHOTS IN HISTORY



1867

Amid America's Reconstruction, 32 German immigrants from an Orthodox background founded Chicago's North Side's first Jewish synagogue, North Chicago Hebrew Congregation, at Wells and Superior Streets, inaugurated by Rabbi Adolph Ollendorf.

1870

The congregation, committed to practicing their traditional faith in a new country, embraced the Jewish Reform movement under Rabbi Aaron Norden's leadership, adopting modern values of pluralism and tolerance, and expanded the movement over the next 150 years.

1881

By 1881, the North Chicago Hebrew Congregation was officially incorporated by Illinois, securing its rights as a religious entity. By 1883, the congregation, having grown to 100 families, moved to a larger facility at Rush Street and Walton Place, dedicated in 1884 by Rabbi Norden. This new space accommodated 150 seats and classrooms for 100 children. The congregation actively engaged with the broader Jewish community and established the Chicago Rabbinical Association. Membership options ranged from \$32 for full benefits including voting and burial plots, to \$16 for unmarried and non-voting members.

Temple Sholom of Chicago has always been a sacred place that lives simultaneously in the past, present and future. Since 1867, we have witnessed war and peace, triumph and despair. We have had two different names. We have inhabited five different locations. We have enjoyed the guidance of eight senior rabbis. Through it all, our mission has remained consistent: to make Jews feel at home in Chicago.

Our survival is based not only on reverence of our Jewish forebearers, but on daily living for the values of Reform Judaism: resilience, tolerance, social justice, and *tikkun olam*. From the flames of tragedy and injustice throughout our history, we continue our journey of reaching out to welcome the stranger and bearing light to our beloved city, across our nation and beyond — to all corners of the world.

And our doors shall remain open, welcoming one and all to this sacred place.



Impress your friends at Temple Sholom with some of these incredible historical tidbits!



In 1893, the growing congregation relocated to a new, grand building at LaSalle and Goethe Streets, designed by S.S. Beman, with a 400-seat sanctuary, classrooms for 400 children, and a 350-seat assembly hall.

1893

By 1909, to accommodate growth, the congregation decided to sell its building to St. Paul's Lutheran Church and purchased land at Grace Street and Pine Grove Avenue for a new synagogue, designed by Alfred Alschuler. The Ladies Auxiliary's push for a new name culminated in renaming the synagogue Temple Sholom at the Annual Meeting, symbolizing peace and the congregation's Reform Judaism ideals.

1909

During the four years of World War I, 150 congregants of Temple Sholom serve their country as members of the U.S. Armed Services. Rabbi Hirschberg takes a leave of absence to serve as a chaplain.

1914

On Oct. 11, Temple Sholom hosts a High Holy Day service at the Medinah Temple—the largest attendance of Jewish worshipers ever gathered under one roof in the U.S. Of the 4,600 attendees, approximately 3,500 are Temple Sholom members. Services are broadcast on the radio. Temple Sholom continues to hold High Holy Day services at Medinah Temple for seven years.

1921





2021

The Bruce Tranen z"l Distinguished Speaker Series is established thanks to Bruce z'l and Jan Tranen, and Temple Shalom hosted Georges C. Benjamin and Ezekiel Emanuel to talk about Reframing Helathcare. In 2022 this series would invite Dr. Jane Goodall who would go on to speak to a full crowd in the Temple Shalom sanctuary!

2016

Temple Shalom's merger with Congregation Or Chadash—a 41-year old congregation serving the LGBTQ community—adds 30 new members to the congregation.

2001

On April 4, Elie Weisel speaks at Temple Shalom. He returns to speak again on October 27, 2002.

On June 23, the first same-sex wedding is performed at Temple Shalom.

1980

Gan Shalom is founded to provide quality Jewish preschool education and develop a strong and affirmative Jewish identity.



1975

Beth Am Congregation on Chicago's South side amalgamates with Temple Shalom, adding 175 members. The *parochet* (ark curtain) from Congregation Beth Am is displayed in Bettie Port Hall.

1964

On October 21, the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. is welcomed by an overflow crowd to deliver a speech, "The Future of Integration."

1959

Temple Shalom purchases Westlawn Jewish Cemetery.

1948

In honor of its 80th anniversary, Temple Shalom celebrates full ownership of its building by burning the mortgage on the *bimah*.

1937

On Nov. 7, Eleanor Roosevelt speaks to a capacity crowd. Over several years, membership plummets. Financial crisis ensues. In spite of these challenges, many newly-arrived German Jews fleeing Nazi persecution are welcomed and assisted by Temple Shalom's congregation.

1930

Temple Shalom's new synagogue at 3480 N. Lake Shore Drive is dedicated on April 4. The sanctuary is octagonal in the Byzantine style; its dome is 100 feet high.

1925

Responding to the need for more space, Temple Shalom sells its building to Anshe Emet Synagogue, and secures land for a larger synagogue at Stratford Street and Lake Shore Drive. Lake View Pres-byterian Church serves as temporary quarters for the congregation during planning and construction.





## Where Did This Come From? The New Antisemitism, Its Origins, and What to Do Now.

**SUNDAY | MAY 19 | 3:00 PM**

Mark Oppenheimer is a distinguished writer, podcaster, and academic, currently serving as the Director of Open Learning at American Jewish University since June 2023. His multifaceted career includes writing the "Beliefs" column for *The New York Times* from 2010 to 2016 and authoring several books, including *Squirrel Hill: The Tree of Life Synagogue Shooting & the Soul of a Neighborhood*, a profound exploration of the Pittsburgh community after the 2018 synagogue massacre. This work, alongside his other publications on American religion, Jewish rites of passage, and personal memoirs, highlights his deep engagement with religious and cultural studies. Oppenheimer holds a Ph.D. in religious studies from Yale, emphasizing his academic expertise, though he humbly refrains from using the title "Doctor."

His contributions to radio and podcasting, particularly through creating and hosting *Unorthodox*, the most popular English-language podcast on Jewish life and culture, and *Gatecrashers: The Hidden History of Jews in the Ivy League*, further showcase his ability to engage diverse audiences in meaningful discussions about Jewish identity and culture. Residing in New Haven, Connecticut, with his family, Oppenheimer is deeply committed to community life and values personal interactions over social media presence.

Inviting Mark Oppenheimer to Temple Sholom's Distinguished Speaker Series offers a unique opportunity for our community to engage with an influential figure in contemporary Jewish thought and media. His insights into religion, culture, and the dynamics of Jewish life in America, combined with his storytelling prowess and thoughtful perspectives on societal issues, make him a compelling and significant speaker for our congregation.



Experience an evening of deep connection and discovery with Mark Oppenheimer, renowned for his exploration of Jewish culture and community resilience, bringing invaluable perspectives that resonate with the heart of our congregation at Temple Sholom.

**TEMPLE  
SHOLOM**

3480 N. Lake Shore Dr.  
Chicago, IL 60657

## The Bruce Tranen z"l Distinguished Speakers Series

The Bruce Tranen z"l Distinguished Speakers Series at Temple Sholom of Chicago, established in 2021 by Bruce z"l and Jan Tranen, has created a legacy to continue our long-standing tradition of hosting thought leaders and visionaries who inspire action on the most pressing issues of our time. Over the years, our congregation has been graced by the presence of luminaries such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Jane Goodall, Eleanor Roosevelt, Elie Wiesel, and so many more whose messages of hope, resilience, and moral courage have profoundly impacted our community. Join us as we uphold this legacy, offering these enlightening lectures free to the public and fostering a community of informed, inspired action.

Learn more and register for this event at [sholomchicago.org/dss](https://sholomchicago.org/dss)