



OHR SHALOM SYNAGOGUE STANDS WITH ISRAEL

PARKING LOT: St. Paul's Community Care Center parking lot may **ONLY** be used **during services on Fridays and Saturdays** and at no other time. The entrance is on Third Ave. between Maple and Nutmeg Streets.



DAVAR MEGILLAH

JANUARY 2026 • MONTHLY NEWSLETTER • TEVET/SHEVAT 5786



Shabbat Kehillatit

Friday, January 16

Family-Friendly Service: **6:15pm**

Community Dinner: **7:15pm**

RSVP **by Monday, January 12**

MEN'S CLUB MEETING

Sunday, January 18

10:00am

at Ohr Shalom

Sisterhood

Ohr Shalom Synagogue



Rosh Chodesh Brunch

Sunday, January 18

11:00am

Private Home, must **RSVP** to Eti sisterhood@ohrshalom.org

BALBOA PARK

THE SAN DIEGO MUSEUM OF ART

Private Ohr Shalom tour of **Eduardo Chillida: Convergence**

Sunday, January 18, 3:30-5:00pm

See page 7 for details

Israeli Dancing

Sunday, Jan 25

4:00pm-5:30pm

RSVP to the office.



JDAIM

February 2026

Jewish Disability Awareness, Acceptance & Inclusion Month

See pages 4,5 & 6

Nosotros Vamos a Mexico



Rabbi Scott Meltzer

It has finally arrived ... after twenty-three years as the rabbi of Ohr Shalom ... my bags are packed for a synagogue trip. We have made multiple attempts to organize a synagogue trip to Israel, to no avail. We arranged a trip to Shreveport, Louisiana to visit a previous intern in her new congregation, and then the world closed down for the Pandemic.

Now, all systems are go.

First thank you to those who imagined it could be possible, to those who have signed up to go, and especially to Maria Laurens, the indefatigable coordinator for this trip. Thank you, Maria.

I have always thought that it makes wonderful sense for a congregation to travel together. We have thousands of years of wandering in our history, and travel is a great way literally, to visit our history.

And Mexico is a wonderful trip for us. As a congregation we share so many ties with the Jewish community immediately to our south. Roughly half of our founding members, twenty-seven years ago, are families who spent a few generations in Mexico. Not leaving Europe, North Africa, the Middle East early enough, they found it impossible to enter the United States, and made their homes in Mexico for a few generations before finally making it to the US.

Among them was my grandfather's first



cousin, Jaime Meltzer, who came to Mexico City and built a life for himself. I mention him because as an example of how small the Jewish world actually is, his grandson lives in San Diego and married the daughter of Rabbi Aaron Kopikis – the founding rabbi of Ohr Shalom Synagogue. So it has always felt like being the rabbi here was the family pulpit.

So visiting Mexico is visiting family. For some, close family, but for all of us, it is visiting our Jewish cousins, and learning the history of our cousins and neighbors to the south.

I wish everybody could come on the trip, that everybody could come with me. So I will be sending updates from the trip to keep people posted, and maybe we will even schedule an evening to show slides from the trip and maybe even eat fish tacos.

In the meantime, it is already time to start thinking about how we can travel together again. Where will our next trip go? What part of our history and family will we visit? And are you ready to help us put it together?



WORDS FROM THE PRESIDENT

Marvin Yudkovitz
President

Ohr Shalom: A Place of Belonging, Through Being Included, Involved, and Welcomed

Two important aspects of synagogue life are feeling a sense of belonging and relationship building. These can come from participation in various activities, feelings of inclusion, welcoming behaviors and activities, and developing relationships among members. And of course, many of these link and connect with each other and are often interdependent.

Hopefully, by listing lots of questions, and examples, it will stimulate ideas and plans for each of us to consider doing, at every opportunity possible to advance these goals.

Belonging: What have you experienced at Ohr Shalom that makes you feel a sense of belonging? When did you not feel that way, and did you identify why? Did you later speak to someone (program leader, Rabbi, board member) to discuss this? What part did you play in various situations to make yourself (and others) feel that you belonged?

Committees: Have you participated on a committee? If already on a committee, have you told others about your experience? And have you encouraged others to join? Have you identified a committee that we are lacking, and spoken to someone in leadership about whether it can/should be started? Hopefully every Ohr Shalom congregant knows that you are encouraged to contact any of our committee Chairs.

Sisterhood or Men's Club

Participation: Have you joined the Sisterhood or Men's Club? Do you know about programs and activities run by either now or in the past? Have you attended any? Made suggestions on new (or old) activities and programs worth doing? Contact Eti or Aaron.

Communication and Reaching out:

What have you done to communicate and reach out to other congregants? How about those that you know well? Or those with only a passing familiarity? All of us have a lot in common, and I'm sure you will find even more as you get to know other members. Meeting for a meal, or a coffee or drink, may be a nice way to do this. Or maybe a phone call? Our leadership program that we conducted three years ago, and are currently conducting again, features a program called "Guess Who's Coming to Shabbat?" This is where a member (or couple or family) invites other members for a Shabbat dinner. The staff in the office and I are happy to assist with identifying people to invite, prayers to read, and other logistics that would be helpful if you will give it a try. Another opportunity to do this is through the Chesed telephone calling program to housebound members. This becomes a meaningful activity for both the caller and individual being contacted.

Contact Aviva if interested.

Welcoming: One area in which, I believe, we do well is welcoming at Shabbat services, as well as during our daily Zoom minyanim. But of course, we can even improve here! Have you sat in front or behind, or alongside someone that you didn't know (or maybe couldn't recall their name)? Did you take a few seconds (that's all it takes, unless of course you end up in a long conversation) to introduce yourself and ask if you've met before. Almost every Friday night or Saturday morning we have visitors. Some live locally attending for the first time, some are out of town visitors, and some are members who do not attend very frequently, and you may not know their name. Feeling welcomed is an important step in people feeling connected (and we know members have opted to join Ohr Shalom because they felt welcomed). And speaking of not recalling someone's name – it's ok. It happens to all of us. Saying something like: "I know/think we've met before, my name is ----" is a wonderful and non-pressured way to do this. On most Shabbatot and minyanim, the number of attendees at a service is small enough for everyone to greet each other either before, during, or after the service. Even people who you see daily like to be greeted, acknowledged, and

Continued on page 11

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Bulletin: Please e-mail all submissions to: davar@ohrshalom.org

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OHR SHALOM'S SHABBAT SERVICE SCHEDULE

Services are in person and on [Zoom](#)

Friday	January 2	6:15pm	Kabbalat Shabbat Service "Ask the Rabbi"
Saturday	January 3	9:30am	Shabbat Morning Service
Friday	January 9	6:15pm	Kabbalat Shabbat Service
Saturday	January 10	9:30am	Shabbat Morning Service
		10:30am	Tot Shabbat with Jennifer Meltzer
		12:30pm	Lunch & Learn with Rabbi Meltzer
Friday	January 16	6:15pm	Shabbat Kehillatit Service/Dinner
Saturday	January 17	9:30am	Shabbat Morning Service
Friday	January 23	6:15pm	Kabbalat Shabbat Service with Choir
Saturday	January 24	9:30am	Shabbat Morning Service
		12:30pm	Lunch & Learn with Rabbi Meltzer
Friday	January 30	6:15pm	Kabbalat Shabbat Service
Saturday	January 31	9:30am	Shabbat Morning Service

NO Shabbat Morning Babysitting Available

PARSHIYOT & CANDLE LIGHTING January 2026



PARSHAT VAYECHI

13 Tevet - Candle Lighting: 4:36pm
Fri: January 2
Sat: January 3
Torah: Genesis 47:28-50:26
Haft: I Kings 2:1-12

PARSHAT SHEMOT

21 Tevet - Candle Lighting: 4:42pm
Fri: January 9
Sat: January 10
Torah: Exodus 1:1-6:1
Haft: Isaiah 27:6-28:13, 29:22-23

PARSHAT VAERA MEVARCHIM CHODESH

28 Tevet - Candle Lighting: 4:48pm
Fri: January 16
Sat: January 17
Torah: Exodus 6:2-9:35
Haft: Ezekiel 28:25-29:21

PARSHAT BO

6 Shevat - Candle Lighting: 4:55pm
Fri: January 23
Sat: January 24
Torah: Exodus 10:1-13:16
Haft: Jeremiah 46:13-28

PARSHAT BESHALACH SHABBAT SHIRAH

13 Shevat - Candle Lighting: 5:01pm
Fri: January 30
Sat: January 31
Torah: Exodus 13:17-17:16
Haft: Judges 4:4-5:31



Kabbalat Shabbat Service "Ask the Rabbi"

Friday, January 2 at 6:15pm

Your chance to ask the questions
you've always wanted to!

FAMILY TOT SHABBAT

Saturday,
January 10, 10:30am

with
Jennifer Meltzer



SHABBAT KEHILLATIT SERVICE AND COMMUNITY DINNER

Friday, January 16

Family-friendly service: 6:15pm
Community Dinner: 7:15pm

MEMBERS*

Adults: \$20

Children: \$12

(3-13 years old. Children under 2 FREE)

NON-MEMBERS*

Adults: \$30

Children: \$15



RSVP by January 12
Please contact office or scan QR Code.

Help those with food insecurity - Bring a nonperishable item
for the JFS Food Bank bins in the Ohr Shalom lobby!



Kabbalat Shabbat

with the Ohr Shalom Choir

Friday, January 23, 6:15pm



Join us in welcoming Shabbat with the
Ohr Shalom Choir through beautiful, uplifting music.

BLOOD DRIVE

Ohr Shalom Synagogue

Sunday, February 1 (tentative)
9:00- 2:30pm

Stay tuned for details





SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Shoshanah Feher Sternlieb
JDAIM Committee Co-Chair



JDAIM February 2026

Jewish Disability Awareness, Acceptance & Inclusion Month

February is Jewish Disability Awareness, Acceptance & Inclusion Month

Each February, our community comes together to deepen our commitment to belonging, visibility, and inclusion for people with disabilities and their families. This year, our JDAIM programming takes on an especially meaningful dimension: our passion is expanding in San Diego.

For the first time, another synagogue in San Diego, **Congregation Beth Am**, will be joining us in our full slate of JDAIM programs. Their clergy and lay leadership have become engaged in this work and asked to partner with us this year; they hope to host the JDAIM programming next year. We are truly delighted to welcome them into this growing network of synagogues dedicated to disability inclusion. **Kol Ami**, our longtime co-sponsor, will also continue to join us on Zoom from Virginia, as they have for many years.

A major highlight of this year's programming is the visit of **Riva Lehrer**, the celebrated Chicago-based artist, writer, and disability activist. Riva is a dynamic presence—her artistry and her storytelling are equally captivating—and we are fortunate to host her **in conversation with Rabbi Meltzer on February 15**. We are deeply grateful to **Evette and Nathan Weiss** for underwriting this special opportunity. In addition, this month's **Readings with the Rabbi** will feature

Lehrer's award-winning memoir *Golem Girl*, offering our community a chance to explore her work more deeply. We are also re-running **Lynn Mendelsohn's JDAIM column from four years ago**, which captured the essence of *Golem Girl* so beautifully that it merits revisiting. (see following page)

Our programming continues with the excellent new documentary **Not Alone Anymore**, which traces Marlee Matlin's groundbreaking career and ongoing impact on Hollywood and beyond. Many of you will remember when we watched Matlin in *CODA* together as part of JDAIM a couple of years ago. This year's film underscores her extraordinary advocacy—including her pivotal role in bringing closed captioning to mainstream film and television, something many of us never realized we owed to her efforts.

Below you will find the **full schedule of JDAIM 2026 events**. Programs that include **ASL interpretation** are marked with a hand-symbol icon.

We look forward to celebrating a month of learning, connection, and vibrant inclusion with you. May our efforts continue to expand—not only in our synagogue, but throughout the San Diego Jewish community and beyond.

Date	Time	Event	Location
Sunday, February 1	7:00pm	Movie Night: Marlee Matlin: <i>Not Alone Anymore</i>	 Ohr Shalom Synagogue
Saturday, February 7	9:30am 12:30pm	Shabbat Morning Services JDAIM Drash JDAIM Shabbat Lunch & Learn	Ohr Shalom Synagogue and ZOOM
Tuesday, February 10	7:30pm	Readings with the Rabbi: <i>Golem Girl</i> By Riva Lehrer	ZOOM
Friday, February 13	6:15pm	Shabbat Kehillatit Service with ASL interpreters followed by Community Dinner 	 Scan/Click QR Code to Register for Dinner Ohr Shalom Synagogue with ASL interpreter and ZOOM
Sunday, February 15	11:00am	JDAIM Keynote Event: Riva Lehrer in Conversation with Rabbi Scott Meltzer (see above)  <i>Evette and Nathan Weiss</i> Keynote Speaker Underwriters	 Scan/Click QR Code to Register for Keynote Event & Lunch Ohr Shalom Synagogue with ASL interpreter and ZOOM



JDAIM February 2026

Jewish Disability Awareness, Acceptance & Inclusion Month

Community Partner Congregation Beth Am

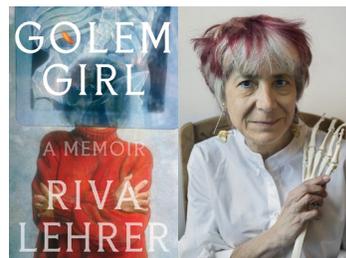


Featured Book and Speaker

Sunday, February 15, 11:00am

Riva Lehrer

In conversation with Rabbi Scott Meltzer



Riva Lehrer is an artist, writer, and curator who focuses on the socially challenged body. She is best known for representations of people whose physical embodiment, sexuality, or gender identity have long been stigmatized. Her work has been seen in venues including the National Portrait Gallery of the Smithsonian, Yale University, the United Nations, the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington, DC. Recently, her work was shown at the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego.

Her memoir, *Golem Girl*, won the 2020 Barbellion Prize for Literature and was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award.

Ms. Lehrer is on faculty at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and is an instructor in the Medical Humanities Departments of Northwestern University.

Evette and Nathan Weiss Keynote Speaker Underwriters



Lynn Mendelsohn

Imm. Past President/Special Projects

Golem Girl

Riva Lehrer is a portraitist, teacher, disabilities and LGBTQ activist, and writer. Her paintings have accumulated dozens of awards, and have been exhibited nationally. Her portrait of Alison Bechdel, author of the acclaimed graphic novel *Fun Home*, hangs in the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, DC. For decades, Lehrer has been an adjunct professor of painting at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and an instructor in medical humanities at Northwestern University.

Lehrer, who is Jewish, was born in Cincinnati in 1958. She has spina bifida myelomeningocele (SBMM), a congenital condition in which vertebrae fail to adhere, leaving the spinal cord exposed, and inhibiting the growth of nerves that branch to the body's organs. Lehrer's spinal column was separated from the waist down, resulting in pronounced scoliosis, a shortened left leg, and multiple organ malfunctions. Many SBMM babies die, but Riva's

mother Carole – a fierce, determined woman – hunted down progressive physicians who, via numerous surgeries, saved Riva and gave her a functioning body. “Rivka Brina Yocheved” she was named, following an Ashkenazi belief that the Angel of Death will be confused if a sick baby has multiple labels.

Lehrer's 2020 memoir *Golem Girl*, intimately, and with wry wit, describes a life lived within a challenged body. Her story cannot avoid episodes of illness and pain, and Lehrer's detailed descriptions of several major life-saving surgeries, with subsequently prolonged recovery periods, emphasize the sheer physicality of the obstacles she has confronted. Lehrer's larger motive in the book is to illustrate the manner in which notions of one's self-worth derive from interactions with others. The disabled, in particular, struggle to find value in themselves amid both outright cruelty and damaging disregard.



Riva Lehrer

From kindergarten to eighth grade, unless Riva was in the hospital, she attended Cincinnati's Randall J. Conden School for Handicapped Children, one of the first elementary schools in the country devoted to the disabled. While the children in the school embraced one another's differentness, the exterior world was hostile: Local kids enjoyed yelling “Reetaaaard!” at every Conden student they saw.

Lehrer feels that real damage is inflicted more subtly. She had a pretty face, enhanced by a rhinoplasty when she was 15 (so what's one more surgery?), but she grew barrel-chested as an adult. Her mother found it necessary to warn her: “Boys aren't interested in girls

Continued on next page



Tom O'Dowd and Buddy.
2002, Charcoal on paper, 36" x 24"

like you... If you're lucky, someday you'll meet a nice handicapped boy and the two of you can care for each other." Her mother was not upset when Riva underwent an emergency hysterectomy at age 16. Though her aunts teased her girl cousins about boyfriends, no one ever mentioned boys to her.

Riva met Will, her tall, handsome first boyfriend, while studying painting at the University of Cincinnati. Though they were together for seven years, few of their friends considered them a serious

couple. One Thanksgiving, while she sat beside Will at his parents' table, an uncle handed him a list of local girls, suggesting he might ask them out. Ultimately, Riva left Will to pursue relationships, some long-lasting, with other men and with women.

Moving to Chicago at age 23, Lehrer encountered the works of other artists, joined disabled interest groups, and strove to find her artistic footing. Lehrer's choice of portraiture resulted from her lifelong preoccupation with her own body, as well as her desire "to see a gallery filled with portraits of luminous crips." She was moved deeply by the disabled painter Frida Kahlo's self-portraits, which signaled melodrama and a "defiant wounded posture." In the mid-1990s, Lehrer found her style. Studying anatomy and dissecting cadavers, she mastered the portrayal of bone and muscle masses ("the meat-pulley system that makes the body move") and began to paint her fellow disabled artists, often naked and twisted, as they were.

The portraits in Lehrer's collected works emphasize the warmth, depth, intelligence, and humanity of her subjects while starkly

presenting their bodies. Rejecting notions of pity, her works are outright studies of non-normative humans. They insist that, outside of expectations, those bodies are beautiful.

For some years, Lehrer has taught "medical humanities" at Northwestern and also the University of Illinois, instructing medical students in anatomical drawing. Working in labs filled with cadavers or fetuses in jars, she emphasizes the great extent to which every body diverges from the standard. She describes a cadaver class:

I guided our students from table to table so that they'd see the 'normal' variations: the differing positions of the organs, the wayward veins and arteries and tendons, the unpredictable anastomoses [tissue connections], all the small – and large – anomalies that in no way matched the pages of our textbooks. None of it indicated disease; just variance.

You can view Riva Lehrer's work at



CHANUKAH PAJAMAKA PARTY 2025!





MEN'S CLUB

Aaron Lipner
Men's Club President

חנה טובה! Happy New Year! Though we already had our Jewish New Year, January gives us another chance to celebrate. I hope everyone enjoyed the holiday and had a safe and wonderful time.

There's something about a new year that always brings new energy. A chance to try something new, meet new people, and grow the kind of community we want around us. With that in mind, I am excited that the Men's Club at Ohr Shalom is starting up again.

To help us get moving, please take a moment to fill out our short survey: bit.ly/45dtf9W. Your answers will help us plan a fun and meaningful year.

The purpose of the Men's Club is to help the men of our community connect, support each other, and enjoy time together. We want this to be fun, social, and easy to join. You choose how much you want to be involved, and you do not need to know anyone ahead of time. Just show up as you are.

Our kickoff meeting will be Sunday, January 18 at 10am in person at Ohr Shalom. The meeting will be one hour. It will be simple, friendly, and focused on shaping our goals together. No pressure and no long speeches. Come for the company, come for the food, or come because someone encouraged you. Everyone is welcome, whether you are

new, returning, retired, a dad, a grandfather, or someone who just comes for poker.

Here are a few early goals as we restart:

- Build a welcoming group where men can connect across ages and life stages
- Create a place for friendship, support, and learning
- Offer activities that are meaningful and enjoyable for everyone
- Make participation easy, friendly, and pressure-free

We will look at ways to connect with the two upcoming holidays. Tu B'Shevat in early February gives us a chance for an outdoor activity or, as I just learned, a small wine tasting tied to the holiday. Purim opens the door for baking hamantaschen and helping with the Purim Carnival.

If you want to help shape what this group becomes, please join us at the kickoff on January 18. If you cannot make it but want to stay involved, the survey is the best way to share your ideas: bit.ly/45dtf9W.

I am grateful for the chance to serve as President of the Men's Club, and I look forward to building this next chapter with all of you. Todah Rabbah, Aaron Lipner
See you on the 18th!

MEN'S DISCUSSION GROUP

Thursday, January 15, 7:00pm

Pure Project
2865 5th Ave.



Topic: "End of Life Thoughts"

For more information contact:

Robert McNeese (robertmcneese50@gmail.com)

Robert Houston (bayfruitandherb@gmail.com)

MEN'S CLUB MEETING

Sunday, January 18, 10:00am
at Ohr Shalom

All Ohr Shalom men are welcome to attend.
Hope to see you there!



Scan/Click QR Code to fill out our short survey: Your answers will help us plan a fun and meaningful year.



Private Ohr Shalom tour of **Eduardo Chillida: Convergence** **Sunday, January 18, 3:30-5:00pm**



Based on requests from congregants who couldn't attend in October, Marvin is conducting another San Diego Museum of Art private Ohr Shalom tour of "**Eduardo Chillida: Convergence.**"

Featured with over 100 works including the full range of the highly celebrated artist's practice, including early forged iron sculptures, massive structures made from oak, glowing sculptures cut from alabaster, solid clay forms, and works on paper. A highlight of the exhibition is an immersive virtual reality experience of *Comb of the Wind XV, 1977*, his site-specific installation at La Concha Bay, San Sebastián, Spain. Chillida's body of work is closely linked to the landscape and traditions of his Basque Country homeland in northern Spain. This is the most comprehensive survey of his work in North America in nearly half a century.

Please RSVP to Marvin Yudkovitz (president@ohrshalom.org) with number of attendees. I may have some museum passes available if anyone needs them. (Note – the exhibition will run until Feb 8, so this will be my final tour of this amazing exhibition.)



FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Gillian Argoff-Treseder
Executive Director



Nu? Try Something New!

Inspired by Marvin's column on ways to participate in Ohr Shalom's many activities, I thought I would let you know about some specific classes, services, activities and speakers in 2026 that deserve your attention and attendance. Perhaps you can try to move a little out of your comfort zone by logging into Minyan once a month, learning to lead a prayer during services, join a class or book club, volunteer to help make Kehillatit dinner or be part of our Purim Shpiel. The best part about trying new things here at Ohr Shalom is that you are among friends and you can bring friends with you to a class so you can do it together. There is no better way to increase your feeling of belonging and community than to actually participate.

Here is a list of a few services, activities, or actions that you can try in 2026:

January

- **Meditation with Alex van Frank** - Tuesday nights at 7:00pm on Zoom
- **Learn Hebrew with Sue Brown** - Intermediate Hebrew starts Jan.4 email shalomsue3@gmail.com
- **Israeli Dancing** - Sunday, January 25 from 4:00pm - 5:30pm at Ohr Shalom



February

- **Readings with the Rabbi** - *Golem Girl* by Riva Lehrer - Tuesday, February 10 at 7:30pm on Zoom
- **JDAIM Keynote Speaker and Book Signing** - Riva Lehrer in conversation with Rabbi Meltzer - Sunday, February 15 at 11:00am at Ohr Shalom



March

- **Purim Shpiel or Megillah Reading** - Try your hand at acting in our Purim Shpiel or staying for the Megillah Reading and volunteering to read (or just stay and stamp your feet



- and rock your grogger). Monday, March 2 Purim Celebration and Megillah Reading
- **Volunteer** with Social Action to serve a meal at JFS Safe Parking

April

- **Pesach** is the best time to try something new! Check out the recipes in the Ohr Shalom Annual Calendar and add a new dish to your Pesach repertoire.
- Come to the **Ohr Shalom Annual Retreat!** April 24-26



May

- Come to your first **GALA!** May 3rd we will celebrate 100 years of Jewish Life here at Third and Laurel. Support Ohr Shalom and our history as Jews in San Diego for a century!
- **Attend a Rabbinical Ordination** - Our Rabbinic Intern, Brianah Caplan, will graduate and be ordained as a Conservative Rabbi on Monday, May 18! We will celebrate her the entire



weekend before with Shabbat Kehillatit and Shabbat Kiddush in her honor. Then, we will travel up to LA to witness her ordination on Monday. (More info will be provided as we get closer.)

June

- Attend an **"Ask the Rabbi"** Kabbalat Shabbat and ask Rabbi Meltzer your burning questions about Judaism. Friday, June 5 at 6:15pm
- **Shabbat at the Bay** - grab a dairy picnic and celebrate Shabbat at Mission Bay with Ohr Shalom. June 19 at 6:45pm

July

- **Shabbat Morning Service** - Come visit on Shabbat morning, listen to a Drash, and stay for Kiddush lunch.

- Commemorate Jewish tradition and history by participating in the **Tisha B'Av service**. July 22 at 8:00pm

August

- Purchase a Leaf on the **Tree of Life** or a **Memorial Plaque** to honor and/or remember your loved ones and support Ohr Shalom.
- **Rosh Chodesh Elul** is August 13 - start the practice of reading Psalm 27 each day of Elul to prepare for High Holy Days.



September

- Attend **Selichot Services** on Saturday, September 5. Join Rabbi Meltzer and the Ohr Shalom Choir as we usher in a spirit of renewal and forgiveness one week before Rosh HaShanah.
- **Build a Sukkah** or visit friends in their Sukkah. Erev Sukkot is September 25.

October

- **Celebrate Simchat Torah** on October 3 - Sing and dance with the Torah with your Ohr Shalom family!
- Try a **Sisterhood** or **Men's Club** event.

November

- **Help Ohr Shalom give back** to our San Diego community by donating funds for turkeys for the families at Christie's Place.
- **Volunteer** to help cook Shabbat Kehillatit dinner.

December

- Send an **Ohr Shalom Chanukah bag** to a friend or family member.
- Make a year-end gift to Ohr Shalom or talk to the office about creating a **Jewish Legacy**.



Let's make 2026 a year of new and meaningful experiences with each other!



CHESED

Aviva Rosenberg
Chesed Committee Chair

Chesed Committee News — Welcoming 2026!

As we step into 2026, the Chesed Committee is filled with gratitude and excitement for the year ahead. Our mission remains the same: to support our synagogue community with acts of kindness, compassion, and connection. Whether it's reaching out to members in need, celebrating simchas, or organizing meals and visits, we look forward to strengthening the bonds that make our community so special.

We are delighted to welcome our new committee members, whose enthusiasm and dedication will help us continue—and expand—our meaningful work. Thank you for joining us in this sacred effort.

To begin planning for the year, we will be holding a **Zoom meeting in January**. This gathering will give us a chance to introduce ourselves, share ideas, and set our goals for the coming months. **Everyone is welcome**—whether you're a long-time volunteer or simply curious about how you can get involved in small or occasional ways.

Stay tuned for the exact date and Zoom link. We hope you'll join us as we launch another year of chesed together!



SECURITY

Alain Avigdor
Security Committee Chair

Continuing to Strengthen Security at Ohr Shalom

Ohr Shalom remains steadfast in its commitment to the safety and well-being of our congregation. This past year, our Security Committee partnered with the Secure Community Network (SCN), the official safety and security organization serving the Jewish community in North America, to conduct a comprehensive assessment of our synagogue's facilities.

The resulting Security Assessment Report provided valuable insights into areas where our current measures are strong, as well as recommendations for further enhancements. Guided by this professional review, the Security Committee has already implemented several improvements, and our work continues.

In January 2026, the Committee will convene to address additional areas identified in the report. Among the priorities are:

• **Sanctuary Security Enhancements:**

SCN advised that in the event of an active threat, exiting the sanctuary may be difficult for older or disabled congregants. A shelter-in-place strategy is therefore more viable. To support this, the sanctuary's four access points must be secured.

- **Reducing Access Points:** The addition of a new doorway in the restroom hallway would reduce sanctuary access points from four to two, making it easier to secure the space during services.
- **Improved Access Control:** The main hallway entrance will be hardened with electronic locking mechanisms, and monitored by a Security Committee member to ensure safe return access for congregants.
- **Communication and Monitoring:** Security personnel will be equipped with panic devices to alert law enforcement, and procedures will be updated to ensure coordination

between committee members and the facility's guard. Camera monitoring at key locations will also be expanded.

- **Boardroom Hardening:** While considered as a potential safe haven, the boardroom's limited capacity makes it less suitable for large services. Sanctuary hardening remains the primary focus.

These measures, combined with ongoing training and vigilance, will help ensure that Ohr Shalom remains a welcoming and secure environment for worship, learning, and community gatherings.

We are grateful to SCN for their expertise and partnership, and to our dedicated volunteers whose vigilance and commitment make these efforts possible. Together, we are building a culture of preparedness and resilience—one that reflects our values of responsibility, care, and unity.

2026 Building
Centennial Celebration and Annual Gala



SAVE THE DATE

Sunday, May 3, 4:30pm

To mark the 100th birthday of our beautiful Synagogue building, Ohr Shalom will hold a Centennial Celebration that will include:

- A Rededication Ceremony in the Sanctuary, building upon the rites observed by Congregation Beth Israel at the building's formal opening on May 14, 1926. There will be music and remarks from invited dignitaries, clergy, and historians.
- A complimentary Cocktail Party for honored guests and other attendees.
- Ohr Shalom's Annual Dinner and Gala (aka "Lights"). Look for upcoming issues of the Davar, and Ohr Shalom's electronic news, for information about food, entertainment, and tickets.

Mark your calendar now.
Make yourself part of that momentous and spectacular day!



Allyson Darroch
Davar Editor

Hope is Not a Strategy

Mr. Slivowitz was worried. He overheard Tamar and her friends in her online chat group discussing the bleak prospects for the world. Climate change, mass extinctions, diseases once thought to be eradicated with vaccines were now reappearing, and to make matters worse, the price of a matcha latte with decaf espresso was skyrocketing.

With a heavy sigh he headed back to his armchair, respecting each other’s privacy was a cornerstone of the Slivovitz’s family rules. That included not eavesdropping, (unless of course it was something dangerous, then the rule can be overridden).

If he had listened further, he would not have been so heavy hearted. The girls were planning to volunteer at the San Diego Humane Society. One of Tamar’s friends

was very much a stay at home sort of person but she found that she could volunteer from home and become a Junior Petfluencer. (Another of her friends, a dog lover, whose family lived in a “no pets” apartment complex could volunteer as a dog walker.) Tamar was going to check in with Project Wildlife to see if there was something with which she could help.

They all agreed that even if the adults were just going to sit there and say that they hoped “Someone Would Do Something,” they weren’t. Hope, someone said, is not a strategy. Action is what is called for even if lattes are too expensive, compassionate action only requires time. Now is the time to start.

<https://sdhumane.org/support/volunteer/youth-service/>

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

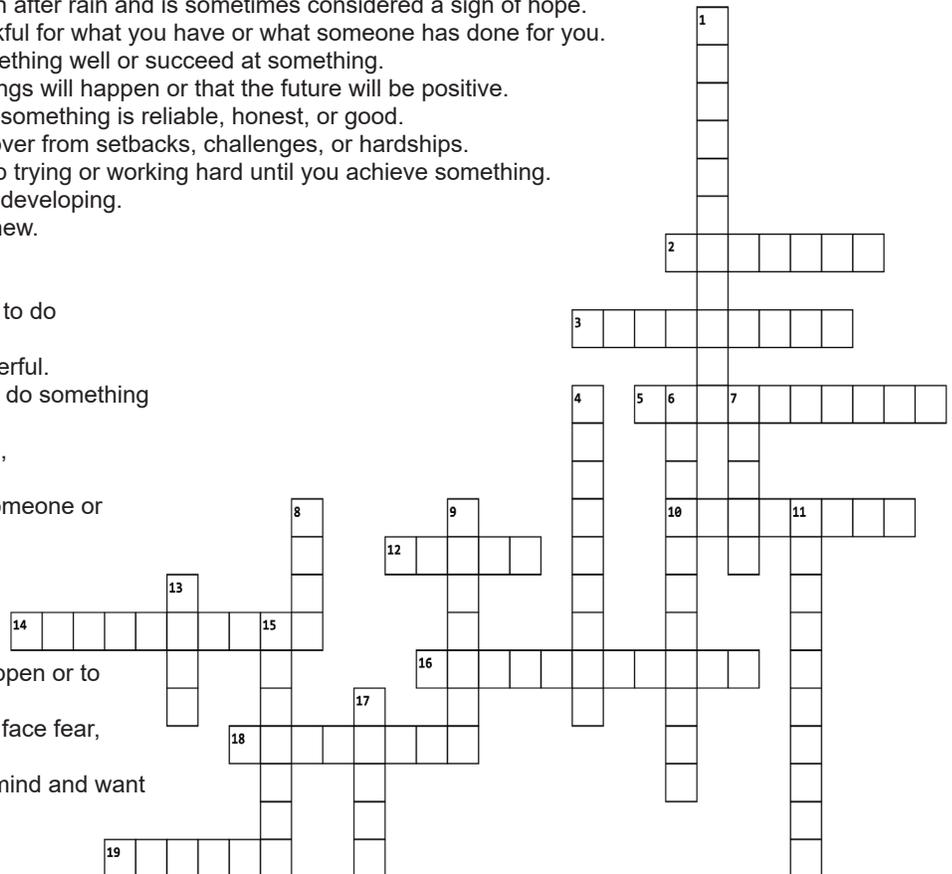
Hope is Not a Strategy

ACROSS

- 2. A colorful arc in the sky that is often seen after rain and is sometimes considered a sign of hope.
- 3. A feeling or an expression of being thankful for what you have or what someone has done for you.
- 5. A feeling or a belief that you can do something well or succeed at something.
- 10. A way of thinking or feeling that good things will happen or that the future will be positive.
- 12. A feeling or confidence that someone or something is reliable, honest, or good.
- 14. A quality or a skill that allows you to recover from setbacks, challenges, or hardships.
- 16. A quality or a skill that allows you to keep trying or working hard until you achieve something.
- 18. A state of moving forward, improving, or developing.
- 19. A state of becoming different, better, or new.

DOWN

- 1. A feeling or an idea that makes you want to do something creative or positive.
- 4. A state of being satisfied, content, or cheerful.
- 6. A chance or a situation that allows you to do something that you want to do.
- 7. A belief or trust in someone or something, especially in God or a higher power.
- 8. A feeling of strong affection or care for someone or something.
- 9. A state of achieving what you want or what you have worked for.
- 11. A force or a reason that drives you to do something or to achieve something.
- 13. A desire or a dream for something to happen or to have something.
- 15. A quality or a strength that allows you to face fear, danger, or difficulty.
- 17. A vision or a goal that you have in your mind and want to achieve.



Answers on page 12



CALENDAR STORIES 2025-26

Lynn Mendelsohn

Imm. Past President/Special Projects

The January page of the annual printed Ohr Shalom calendar presents three delicious recipes contributed by a single baker, **Maria Gomez-Laurens**. When the call went out for how-to instructions for making beloved desserts, Maria was quick to respond. Her recipes – for Very Berry Bars, Mexican Wedding Cookies and Tres Leches Cake – reflect treasured family traditions. Maria writes:

My earliest memories in the kitchen are with my two grandmothers, both of whom came from Spanish families. Soledad, my mother's mother, had roots in southern Spain, while the family of my father's mother, Bila (Maria Luisa), was from the north. Both of my grandmothers were remarkable cooks and extraordinary bakers. As the youngest grandchild of both, I was the light of their eyes, and they each claimed me as their little helper.



Perhaps due to the distance between their families' origins, my two grandmothers could not have been more different in style, and their culinary choices reflected those contrasts in the most delicious ways. My recipe for Mexican Wedding Cookies, for example, traces back to Moorish cookie traditions that evolved into what we now know as polvorones in Mexico. My maternal grandmother, Soledad, made them constantly, and not just for weddings.



Meanwhile, Bila, my paternal grandmother, reached back to her northern Spanish tradition to bring elegance and old-world charm to the table. She taught me to make soaked-cakes long before tres leches became popular in Mexico. I think that the tres leches recipe that she perfected and passed on to me is the best. My Grandmother Bila baked everything from tiramisu-style desserts to other European treats, each one richer than the last.



Some of my most vivid childhood memories are of standing on a small child's chair in each of their kitchens, taking turns baking with each of them. They were always respectful of each other's time with me, never overlapping, yet both lovingly gave me the credit for the creations we shared with the rest of the family. Those moments shaped not only my love of baking but also my understanding of tradition, memory, and the joy of cooking and sharing with friends and family.

FROM PRESIDENT (CONT.)

you ask a simple – “how are you,” it may lead to greater inclusion.

Attending small and large programs: Every week we hold various classes and programs at Ohr Shalom. Have you attended any recently? When were you welcomed (by leader and other participants) and asked to participate? Hopefully, you immediately felt that you were a valued and important member of the program or class. How about our large events? Every year we hold a Gala. This year, on **May 3, 2026**, it will be conducted along with our 100th building re-dedication. For those of you who have attended the Gala in the past, you know how enjoyable these are, enfolding and enveloping everyone in the Ohr Shalom family. This year's will be that and more. Plan to attend! And during the year there are others: 2nd night Passover Community Seder, Purim Megillah reading and party, and Chanukah Party. And how about this year attending our recently re-started (two years ago) Annual weekend retreat? This is one of the best ways to really get to know other congregants. Members of all ages, singles, couples, and families attend Camp Marston in Julian, for two nights of communal activities (as well as personal time). The dates for this year are April 24-26. Advertisement for signing up will be in next month's Davar.

I'm hoping that as you read this column, each of you identified a few ways to help make Ohr Shalom a place of belonging, through being included, involved, and welcomed. See you at our shul!

SAVE THE DATE

Purim
Purim Celebration and
Megillah Reading
Monday, March 2



RABBINIC INTERN

Brianah Caplan
Rabbinic Intern

The Gregorian New Year

The Gregorian New Year doesn't usually come with shofar blasts, apples and honey, or a prayer book full of confessions. For many of us, January 1 arrives quietly — maybe with a calendar flip, a vague resolution, or a moment of “wow, it's already a new year.”

But that quiet moment can actually be a powerful Jewish opportunity.

During the High Holidays, we talk a lot about **teshuva** — often translated as “repentance,” but more literally meaning *return*. Teshuva is not just about regret or guilt; it's about turning back toward who we want to be and how we want to live. Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur give us a focused, ritualized time to do that work, but Jewish tradition is clear that teshuva is not limited to those days alone.

The Rambam famously teaches: *“Even though teshuva and crying out to God are always appropriate, during the Ten Days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur they are especially accepted.”* The key word there is **always**. Teshuva is available year-round. The calendar changes, but the door never closes.

That's where the Gregorian New Year can come in. January 1 is already culturally framed as a time for reflection and reset. People ask: What do I want to change this year? What

do I want more of? Less of? Judaism doesn't need to reject that instinct — it can deepen it.

Unlike classic New Year's resolutions, which are often sweeping and brittle (“I'm going to completely reinvent myself”), teshuva invites something more realistic and compassionate. It asks us to notice patterns, not just failures. It encourages small, concrete shifts: one relationship we want to tend to more carefully, one habit we want to soften, one value we want to live a little more fully.

Teshuva also isn't only about what went wrong. It includes returning to things that nourish us — learning we've neglected, prayer that once grounded us, community that reminds us we're not alone. Sometimes the work isn't fixing what's broken, but remembering what matters.

So as this secular year begins, we might borrow its pause without borrowing its pressure. We can ask ourselves gentle questions rooted in Jewish wisdom: Where do I want to return? What would one step in that direction look like? Who can help me take it?

Rosh Hashanah teaches us that time itself can wake us up. January 1 offers another such moment — quieter, maybe, but still real. Teshuva doesn't require a holy day to begin. It only requires noticing that we are still becoming, and that turning is always possible.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

JEWISH POETS-JEWISH VOICES: THE MAGIC OF SPOKEN WORD

with the Ohr Shalom Choir
Lawrence Family JCC

Tuesday, January 13, 7:00pm

JEWISH POETS OF THE PAST

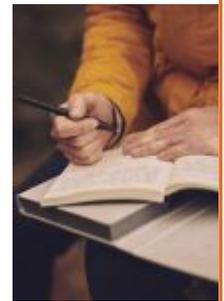
Celebrate the 18th season of
Jewish Poets-Jewish Voices!
Featuring Jewish Poets of the Past:
Itshe Slutsky, Russian-Yiddish Poet;
Naomi Shemer, Israeli poet/songwriter.

Ohr Shalom Choir and its
Director, Elisheva Edelson.
Readers, TBA. *Selections*
curated by
Janice Alper and Guri Stark.

*Readings in Yiddish and Hebrew
and translation to English*

Reception to follow

Price: Complimentary



SUMMER COURSES FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Great Jewish Books Summer Program



Dates: July 19-24, 2026
[Apply](#) by March 9

At the [Great Jewish Books Summer Program](#), participants read selections from important works of modern Jewish literature and consider how they speak to the opportunities and challenges we face today. Great Jewish Books is a lively program full of social, cultural, and recreational opportunities—and no grades—for students who read for the love of reading and who are eager to discover the treasures of the Jewish canon.

Great Jewish Books: Creative Writing

Dates: July 19-31, 2026 [Apply](#) by March 9

New for 2026, students can apply for a second add-on week focused on creative writing. At [Great Jewish Books: Creative Writing](#), motivated students will continue their study of Jewish literature through creative writing workshops, talks by visiting authors, and a weeklong seminar led by university-level writing faculty. Students will have the option to apply to the weeklong Great Jewish Books Summer Program or the two-week program. Read more and apply here by March 9, 2026.

Sophomores and juniors are eligible to apply. **Every admitted participant receives a scholarship for the full cost of tuition, room, board, books, and special events.** Learn more [here](#) or go to their website at <https://www.yiddishbookcenter.org/>





SOCIAL ACTION & SUSTAINABILITY

Davin Widgerow
Social Action Chair

Thank You...And Let's Push Further in 2026!

This column, the very first of the secular new year, is devoted to all those folks who made 2025 an amazing year for the Social Action and Sustainability Committee, and who performed amazing acts of *tikkun olam* in the process! Let's review a roundup of four highlights from 2025:

Safe Parking Dinners. Ohr Shalom hosted 12 JFS safe parking dinners this year—one for every month! Through those dinners, you provided folks with warm sustenance, an opportunity to recharge and connect with friends, and the right to be treated with dignity and kindness. Safe parking dinners require effort, and I wish to thank all the volunteers who showed up to cook, buy, and serve food, including Stu Weinshtanker, the Ohr Shalom Men's Club, Marvin Yudkowitz and Judy Gaines, Joel Davidson, Daniel Pick, Aviva Rosenberg, Maya Rich, Jessica and Rich Lemoine and the Sisterhood,

Ray Sachs, Miriam Plotkin, Bob Houston, and countless others.

Playa Pacifica/Tel Ohr Shalom Beach Cleanup. We did it! Thanks to your efforts throughout 2025, Ohr Shalom was notified in early December that we qualified to unofficially "adopt" our little hill at Playa Pacifica Beach in Mission Bay, a hill we affectionately call *Tel Ohr Shalom*. Your efforts were no small feat—in 2025, Ohr Shalom volunteers logged 14 hours of work cleaning up the area and collected 23 pounds of trash and 8 pounds of recyclable materials. The most common items were food wrappers, plastic bits, bottle caps, and cigarette butts. A very special thanks goes to Melanie Rubin for organizing all these beach cleanup events and coordinating with I Love A Clean San Diego—Melanie is a star! We hope to display our certificate in the next issue of the *Davar*. If this is not enough to inspire you to participate in our 2026

cleanups, take a cue from 9-year-old Dahlia Cooper, who exclaimed that "it makes my heart happy to do this!"

Thanksgiving Turkeys and Holiday Toy Drives. Ohr Shalom really stepped up for underserved folks this year, and it filled my heart with tremendous pride to see all the bags of food and toys donated by the congregation completely filling the shul's foyer with goodies—it took several back-and-forth trips to get all those supplies into cars for transport to JFS and the Kindness Initiative! Plus, thanks to your generosity, we provided 50 full Thanksgiving turkey meals to hungry households this Thanksgiving—a value of almost \$1,000 in turkeys!! Special thanks and appreciation to Brad and Christine Eisenberg, who have orchestrated this program for several years and always make it happen on time and with maximum impact!

Continued on page 17



SISTERHOOD

Eti Chall
Sisterhood Chair

Rethinking Resolutions

January is the season of resolutions. Each year, we feel an almost automatic pull toward improvement—toward becoming better, healthier, more organized, more intentional. Our attention shifts to what we have accomplished and what we still want to achieve. There is a sense that now is the moment to chart a path forward.

This impulse is not accidental. The period following the winter solstice, Chanukah, and the gradual return of light creates a psychological and spiritual opening. After weeks of darkness, the increasing daylight invites possibility. We begin to imagine forward motion again. Naturally, we reach for structure: goals, plans, expectations. We build scaffolding around which we hope to grow, to harness our energy and life force. The *kavanah* (intention) is sincere. Our willingness feels strong.

And then—often quietly, without drama—reality sets in. The routines slip. The resolutions soften or disappear altogether. We interpret this as failure, weakness, or lack of discipline. But

Jewish tradition invites us to ask a different question: *Is this actually the right moment to push?*

Judaism has never been a tradition that separates spiritual life from seasonal rhythms. Time is not neutral. The calendar teaches us when to gather, when to rest, when to plant, and when to wait. From this perspective, the struggle with January resolutions may not be a personal flaw—it may be a mismatch with the season itself.

Between Chanukah and Tu B'Shevat, we are still in winter. The light has returned, yes—but the ground is not yet ready for planting. In nature, this is not a time of outward growth. It is a time of consolidation, of strengthening roots beneath the surface. Trees are not failing because they are not producing fruit in January. They are preparing.

Jewishly speaking, this suggests a radical reframing. Instead of forcing momentum, what if we allowed ourselves a pause? What if January were not about achievement, but about



Sisterhood
Rosh Chodesh
Brunch
Sunday, January 18, 11:00am
Private Home, must [RSVP](#) to
Eti sisterhood@ohrshalom.org

orientation? A time to take stock of what we have already carried, built, endured, and completed.

This pause is not passive. It is active in a quieter way. It is a time to cultivate *emunah*—trust that life is not working against us, but with us. A time to notice where resilience already exists. A time to soften the inner voice that equates worth with productivity.

Tu B'Shevat, the New Year of the Trees, arrives later for a reason. It marks the moment when sap begins to rise again, when potential starts to move upward. Growth follows rest.

Perhaps the most meaningful resolution we can make in January is not to do more—but to be kinder to ourselves. To allow ourselves to thrive without self-criticism. To trust timing. To recognize that honoring the season is itself an act of wisdom.

Sometimes the greatest change comes not from pushing harder, but from learning when to wait—and when to let the light return gradually.



ADULT EDUCATION

Evette Weiss
Adult Education

CLASSES WITH RABBI MELTZER ON ZOOM

Daf Yomi

Wednesdays, 9:30am This weekly class discusses the pages of Talmud most recently covered.

Slow Read Book Club

Fridays, 12:00pm-1:00pm Resumes in February 2026
Eminent Jews: Bernstein, Brooks, Friedan, Mailer by David Denby

Feb 6: "Prologue" and "Mel Brooks" (1st half) pp. 1-45

Feb 13: "Mel Brooks" (2nd half) pp. 46-88

Feb 20: "Betty Friedan" (1st half) pp. 89-127

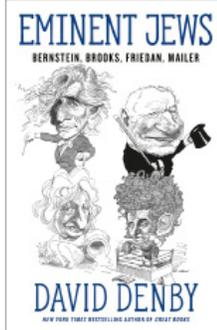
Feb 27: "Betty Friedan" (2nd half) pp. 128-168

Mar 6: "Norman Mailer" (1st half) pp. 169-216

Mar 13: "Norman Mailer" (2nd half) pp. 216-260

Mar 20: "Leonard Bernstein" (1st half) pp. 261-305

Mar 27: "Leonard Bernstein" (2nd half) and "Epilogue" pp. 305-351

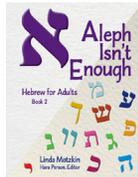


ADULT HEBREW LEARNING OPPORTUNITY ON ZOOM

Have you ever wanted to follow a synagogue service or Torah reading with more understanding? Seeking adult learners who can decode Hebrew but wish they knew more.

Sunday afternoons, from 2:45-4:00pm on zoom

Starting the first Sunday of 2026, January 4, the Adult Hebrew Program begins Book 2, of using "Aleph isn't Enough," of a four-book adult Biblical Hebrew program. Twenty weeks in length [about 5 months], the program emphasizes the following:



- Reading common Hebrew texts from the prayer book and Bible
- Studying key vocabulary and 3 letter roots
- Studying basic grammar to help with comprehension and translation
- Discussing enrichment materials provided

This is an exciting program with weekly classes and assignments, where regular attendance is key. [Class recordings are also provided.] However, the rewards are profound in terms of increased understanding and ability to more fully participate in the liturgical life of the synagogue.

**So what are you waiting for?
This is a perfect New Year's Resolution.**

Please contact **Sue Brown**, instructor, at 619 993-4154 or email shalomsue3@gmail.com if you have any questions and/or are interested in the program.

עברית דרך המקורות עם המורה רותי לוי

DEEPENING OUR MASTERY OF HEBREW LANGUAGE AND TEXTS

Lomdim BeYachad

Currently thru March 2026
\$250

"לומדים ביחד": קבוצה שלומדת באנגלית על ואת השפה העברית בעזרת מקורות: תנ"ך, סידור, משנה ועוד מעוניינים להצטרף?

Interested? If you can check at least four items, talk with Ruti ruth77@gmail.com or call 619-647-6096 about joining the class

- I want to be part of a group that works in Hebrew and English flexing and stretching "mental muscles" every time we meet
- I understand the Hebrew text in Etz Hayim
- I can read Siddur Hebrew and make sense of it
- I understand Hebrew conversation
- I can carry on a conversation in Hebrew
- I am curious about the layers of Hebrew
- I know what שרש means
- I know about the seven בניינים in Hebrew
- I want to understand Hebrew grammar
- I know the number, the names, and the order of the books in TaNaKh
- I want to better understand TaNaKh

נפגשים פעם בשבוע בבית הכנסת

ביום ראשון בבוקר

או ביום שני אחרי המניין

The class meets once a week at Ohr Shalom Synagogue on Sunday morning or Monday after minyan

OHR SHALOM WELLNESS

Meditation

with Alex van Frank

Tuesday Evenings, 7:00-7:30pm

Alex van Frank, C-IAYT, is holding a post-minyan meditation group.



- Lower blood pressure • Less anxiety
- Lower stress levels • Deeper relaxation
- More feelings of well-being



Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82805583843>

Meeting ID: 828 0558 3843



RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

Maggy Dujowich
Religious School Principal



Small Steps, Big Growth



January is often a time for resolutions—but in Judaism, growth doesn't have to be big or overwhelming. Our tradition teaches that **small, consistent actions** are what truly shape us. As Pirkei Avot reminds us: *"You are not required to finish the work, but you are not free to stop trying."*

This year, instead of one big resolution, we invite our students and families to **try one small Jewish action each week**—learning a new Hebrew word, asking a question about a prayer or holiday, doing a simple mitzvah, or discovering something new about Israel or Jewish life.

Family Challenge:

Write down one small Jewish goal for each week and check in together at the end of the week. What did you enjoy? What felt meaningful?

May this January be the beginning of a year filled with curiosity, kindness, and joyful Jewish learning.



Religious School students singing Chanukah songs to the residents at St. Paul's Manor.

LAUREL STREET BEAT

Springsong Weiner Cooper
Religious School Committee Chair

Q: If you could ask the Maccabees a question, what would it be:

Dalia (Kitah Gimel): What was it like living in your time period: What kind of food did you eat, did you have enough food to go around or were you hungry?



Gabriel (Kitah Gan): How did the war go? Did the Romans break the temple?



YOUTH GROUPS

Michelle Gurr-Barbour
USY Youth Director



Looking Ahead: Opportunities for Parents and Youth

The start of the new year brings several exciting opportunities for connection, collaboration, and community within our youth and family programming. We look forward to welcoming parents and youth to a series of upcoming events designed to strengthen relationships and continue building a vibrant synagogue community.

PARENT MEETING Parents are warmly invited to attend our Parent Committee Meeting on **Sunday, January 11th, which will be held on Zoom at 4:00pm.** This virtual gathering is an opportunity to hear updates on our youth programs, share ideas, and help shape future offerings. Whether you've been involved before or are joining for the first time, your voice is important. Our strongest programs grow from partnership, and this meeting is a great way to be part of that process from the comfort of home.

On **Saturday, February 7th**, we are excited to offer a special **Parents Night Out**, generously hosted at the home of Springsong Cooper. Parents will have the opportunity to head out for an

evening together while kids stay behind for a fun and cozy movie night. This event is designed to support both our parents and our youth—giving adults time to connect while kids enjoy a relaxed night with friends in a safe, familiar setting. We are incredibly grateful to Springsong for opening her home and helping make this meaningful evening possible.

Looking ahead, our middle schoolers are invited to take part in a **San Diego Kadima Day Carnival on February 8th from 12:00–2:00pm at Congregation Beth Am.** This regional event will bring together Kadima youth from across San Diego for games, connection, and Jewish community-building. It's a wonderful opportunity for our youth to meet new friends, strengthen their Jewish identity, and experience the power of being part of a larger Jewish community.

Thank you for your continued support of our youth programming. We look forward to seeing you—on Zoom and in person—at these upcoming events as we continue building community together.



A TASTE OF TORAH

Program for 4-year-olds at Ohr Shalom
Monthly until April 2026
with Jennifer Meltzer



Sessions will include: music, movement, holiday preparation, art, stories, t'fillah and LOTS OF FUN!

This program is geared for the children, it is not a parent participatory program, although parental attendance is optional (**children must be potty-trained**)

Contact office or use QR code to register

Sundays
9:30-10:30am:
January 25 @ Coastal Roots Farm
March 15
April 19

Cost:
\$35:
Individual session



Susie Meltzer
Israel Desk

Israel's New Iron Beam: A Game-Changer

Israel's Iron Beam paradigm-shattering laser defense system is now operational, with cutting-edge air defense capabilities. The Iron Beam can be used to defend against a wide array of threats at a longer range, capable of shooting down not only slow-moving drones, but also high-speed missiles, rockets and mortars.

In addition, according to the Ministry of Defense, the IDF expects Iron Beam to immediately start reducing the cost of shooting down aerial threats, an issue that has been out of control for Israel during this war, in which tens of thousands of airborne weapons have been launched at Israel on six fronts. Firing one of its predecessor Arrows cost 2-4 million dollars and a single Iron Dome interceptor had a cost of 40-100 thousand dollars. In contrast, firing the Iron Beam is as cheap as turning on a light.

Security officials said that Iron Beam also has the capacity to take on barrages of simultaneous aerial threats and is not limited to shooting down one or two at a time. A recent IDF spokesperson in air defense told *The Jerusalem Post* in an exclusive interview that his time on the laser team protecting the country with this game-changing system has been incredible. He reported that he and everyone else had to learn how to best operate the laser in real time in the field since it is essentially something that no one has ever done before.

Defense sources also revealed that the new family of lasers fire much faster than any interceptor in Israel's current arsenal and it would potentially destroy the aerial enemy threat shortly after launching and still within enemy territory. This is a major advantage of the lasers Iron Beam, Iron Beam M, and Lite Beam. They can shoot down enemy rockets and drones much earlier in the threat process. This means that most of the time, no siren warnings or bomb shelters would be necessary.

The Lite Beam is the smallest and most local short-range system of Israel's three laser systems. It can be placed on individual ground force vehicles and fire a 10-kilowatt beam. The Iron Beam M fires a 50-kilowatt beam and can be mounted on large trucks for mobility and can even be fired while moving. The full-size Iron Beam fires a 100-kilowatt beam and is designed to remain stationary for periods of time. However, even though it cannot be fired

while moving, Iron Beam can, with planning, be moved around as well.

Although Raytheon in the US, as well as the UK, Russia, China, Germany, and Japan, are all at various stages of developing laser defense systems, the Iron Beam is the only one that has moved beyond test firings to actual use in the field. According to the Defense Ministry, the Iron Beam will lay the foundation that will change battle zones worldwide. The change has already begun in Israel.



The IDF's Iron Beam laser defense system has already shot down dozens of aerial threats during the war.



Light energy of the laser travels much faster than any interceptor in Israel's current arsenal.

SOCIAL ACTION & SUSTAINABILITY (CONT.)

More Sustainable Shabbat Kiddush. This year, the Shabbat morning minyan took big leaps forward to more sustainable kiddush lunches. Thanks to everyone's diligence and efforts, we finally abandoned plastic utensils and non-compostable plates and cups this year at kiddush, and thereby significantly reduced our contributions to local landfills. The congregation is learning about recyclable and compostable materials, and we are diverting more waste to recycling and composting streams than ever before. Many thanks to Renè,

Allyson Darroch, and Gillian for all their help with the sticky logistics around waste management.

What a list! From the bottom of my heart, thank you all for volunteering, cooking, hauling, bending, collecting, pushing, lifting, begging, cajoling, and most of all, *having fun*, while doing such righteous and important work in 2025. Let's commit to exceeding these achievements in 2026 and bringing even more light to an unfinished world.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS IN DECEMBER

SYNAGOGUE FUND

Geoffrey and Shoshanah Sternlieb
Stuart Weinshtanker

In memory of Boris Zyman
Ray and Marcia Sachs

In memory of Arlene Linsk
Andrea Luck

In memory of Hyman Wolpoff
In memory of Jacqueline Horstein
In memory of David Wolpoff
Sheldon and Harriet Wolpoff

In memory of Marissa Artenstein
Sara Artenstein

In memory of Klara Finkel
Tito and Stella Salzmann

In memory of H. George Millstone
Rachel Millstone

Thank you to the Lemoine Family
Rebecca Iden

Thank you to the Chall Family
Gail Chall

**Mazal Tov to Jeanne Peters on
New Home**
Judi Gottschalk

RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

**In honor of the Bris of
David Yahalom**
Stuart Rubenstein

**TURKEYS FOR
CHRISTIE'S PLACE**
Nurith & Kwilanzo Amitai-Crawford
Allyson Darroch
Jane Zeer

JDAIM

Geoffrey and Shoshanah Sternlieb

KIDDUSH SPONSORS

Gillian Argoff-Treseder
Beth Flowers
Barbara Haislip
The Mandel Family
Bill and Amy Morris
Nanette Sable and Lou Green

Todah Rabah to our December Shabbat Service Leaders, Torah and Haftarah Readers, D'rashot, Daily Minyan Minute and Minyan Leaders

LeAnne Adams	Rachel Millstone
Jeanne Argoff	Amy Morris
Ilan Averbuch	Rocky Reid
Eti Chall	Nanette Sable
Elisheva Edelson	Al Shelden
Mendy Fink	Brain Stannard
Lou Green	Jonah Weinberg
Morris Lazard	Springsong
Jessica Lemoine	Cooper Weiner
Rachel Lipowsky	Rabbi Cantor
Nevo Magnezi	Cheri Weiss
Jennifer Meltzer	Davin Widgerow
Eli Meltzer	Margalit Wollner
Susie Meltzer	Rebecca Wollner
Ivan Mendelsohn	Marvin Yudkovitz
Lynn Mendelsohn	Jane Zeer

Todah Rabah To:

Amos Davidowitz for sharing his time and talent and **Ruth Levy** for sharing her friends with Ohr Shalom.

Thank You To Our Volunteer Help in December

Jim Lewis, Debbie Suissa,
Ezra Shachar, office volunteering.

Mazal Tov To:

Nanette Sable and **Lou Green** on the birth of their granddaughter, **Leah**.

Condolences To:

Zach (Eva) Chayet, on the passing of his beloved son, **Victor Chayet Z"L**, brother of **Nicole Chayet Singer (Evan)**, **Marcó Chayet & Lance Chayet**.

Amy (Bill) Morris on the passing of her beloved aunt, **Arlene Linsk Z"L**.

Pepe Zyman on the passing of his beloved brother **Boris Zyman Z"L**.

Todah Rabah To Our Chanukah Helpers:

Mark & Elaine Smith - **Latke Supplies**

Men's Club Latkes:

Mark Smith, Brad Eisenberg,
Morris Lazard, Aaron Lipner,
Jeremy van Frank Samy Zands,

Chanukah Party Volunteers:

Jack Cohen, Jim Lewis, Tomas Marquez,
Aviva Rosenberg, Shoshanah Sternlieb,
Elaine Smith, Sylvie Sternlieb,
Geoffrey Sternlieb, Debbie Suissa,
Ariella van Frank, Davin Widgerow,
Sarita Zands

We apologize for any omissions.

TEVET/SHEVAT YAHRZEITS AT OHR SHALOM



*Harry Cohen	Eddy Cohen's Brother	1-Jan/12 Tevet
*Alberto Hecht	Ruth Fastag's Father	1-Jan/12 Tevet
Sheila Schwartz	Elizabeth Schwartz's Mother	1-Jan/12 Tevet
*Ilan Cohen	Trudy Cohen's Husband, Eddy Cohen's Brother	2-Jan/13 Tevet
Marie Lyons	Lynn Mendelsohn's Mother.....	2-Jan/13 Tevet
Honey Mark	Remembered by Ohr Shalom.....	2-Jan/13 Tevet
Mollie B. Ward	Joshua Goldman's Grandmother.....	2-Jan/13 Tevet
*Matilde Galicot	Jose Galicot's Mother, Remembered by Sylvia Galicot.....	3-Jan/14 Tevet
Thomas Levin	Alice Broudy Cupples' Grandfather	3-Jan/14 Tevet
Rick Reid	Rocky Reid's Son	3-Jan/14 Tevet
Geraldine Sorin	Sue Brown's Cousin	3-Jan/14 Tevet
Anna Burgman Kuttner	Susie Meltzer's Grandmother.....	4-Jan/15 Tevet
David Wolpoff	Sheldon Wolpoff's Nephew.....	4-Jan/15 Tevet



Regina Gross	Elaine Gottesman's Grandmother	5-Jan/16 Tevet
Jacqueline Horstein	Harriet Wolpoff's Mother	5-Jan/16 Tevet
Isaac Penhas	Sally Maizel's Father	5-Jan/16 Tevet
*Evelyn Shelden	Al Shelden's Mother	5-Jan/16 Tevet
Leah Solomon	Jared Solomon's Grandmother.....	5-Jan/16 Tevet
*Ema Halia	Vida Sportes, Miryam Slovatzki, and Reyna Forman's Mother	6-Jan/17 Tevet
Bonnie Tabak	Jennifer Tabak Levy's Mother	6-Jan/17 Tevet
Gary Krout	Bill Morris' Brother	7-Jan/18 Tevet
Arthur Weiss	Nathan Weiss' Father	7-Jan/18 Tevet
Kalman (Carlos) Tishman	Rosa Ratniewski, Lilian Deicas' and Elisheva Edelson's Grandfather	8-Jan/19 Tevet
Benjamin Brener	Jaime Brener's Father	9-Jan/20 Tevet
Thomas Levin	Alice Broudy Cupples' Grandfather	10-Jan/21 Tevet
Richard Pick	Daniel Pick's Father.....	10-Jan/21 Tevet
Ruth Goldschmiedova Sax	Remembered by Ohr Shalom.....	10-Jan/21 Tevet
Fernando Waisbord	Daniel Waisbord's Grandfather.....	10-Jan/21 Tevet
Allan Wolf	Remembered by Ohr Shalom.....	10-Jan/21 Tevet
*Miriam Feshali	Mark Smith's Sister.....	11-Jan/22 Tevet
Cindy Lewis Funderburg	Jim Lewis' Sister.....	11-Jan/22 Tevet
Julianna Silbermann	Elizabeth Green's Great Grandmother	11-Jan/22 Tevet
Amy Hagler	Remembered by Susan Hagler	12-Jan/23 Tevet
Minnie Linsk	Amy Morris' Mother	12-Jan/23 Tevet
Devora Piha	Naomi Ruth Eisman's Daughter	12-Jan/23 Tevet
Henry Bookspan	Remembered by Ohr Shalom.....	13-Jan/24 Tevet
*Abraham Gorinstein	Alan Gorinstein's Father	13-Jan/24 Tevet
Sidney Levitan	Marilyn Levitan's Grandfather.....	14-Jan/25 Tevet
Enrique Shteremberg	David Shteremberg's Brother, Remembered by Jose Zyman	14-Jan/25 Tevet
*Irving Greenberg	Laurie Slade's Uncle.....	15-Jan/26 Tevet
*Diane Rubin	Joe Rubin's Wife.....	15-Jan/26 Tevet
Raquel Bakcht	Remembered by Sara and Jaime Fainstein	16-Jan/27 Tevet
Leola Cutler	Amy Morris' Aunt	17-Jan/28 Tevet
Jack May	Sue Brown's Uncle	17-Jan/28 Tevet
Ellen Berman Lawson	Remembered by Roz Berman	18-Jan/29 Tevet
*Ida Greenberg	Laurie Slade's Grandmother.....	18-Jan/29 Tevet
Phyllis Weissman	Rebecca Wollner's Grandmother	19-Jan/1 Shevat
Thomas Zipp	Janice Zipp Cannizzaro' and Elaine Smith's Grandfather	20-Jan/2 Shevat
Sam Krampf	Linda Mostel's Grandfather	21-Jan/3 Shevat
Ethel Spitz	Elaine Gottesman's Great Aunt	21-Jan/3 Shevat
Marks Tenen	Remembered by Joe Rubin.....	21-Jan/3 Shevat
*Dora Saltz	Renee Schor's Grandmother.....	22-Jan/4 Shevat
Leon Singer	Ricardo Singer's Father.....	22-Jan/4 Shevat
Rivka Tishman	Rosa Ratniewski, Lilian Deicas, and Elisheva Edelson's Grandmother	22-Jan/4 Shevat
*Edith Weiss	Nathan Weiss' Mother	22-Jan/4 Shevat
Fernanda Distel	Fanny Rosental's Mother.....	23-Jan/5 Shevat
Charles Sportes	Remembered by Vida Sportes	23-Jan/5 Shevat
Audrey Cupples	Remembered by Alice Broudy Cupples.....	24-Jan/6 Shevat
*Moshe Domb	Eti Chall's Father	24-Jan/6 Shevat
Ezequiel Fridman	Enrique Fridman's Father	24-Jan/6 Shevat
Ronnie Morales	Alex and Alan Morales' Mother	25-Jan/7 Shevat
Mark Glassman	Ruth Shapiro's Father.....	26-Jan/8 Shevat
Aida Slovatzki	Miguel Slovatzki's Mother	26-Jan/8 Shevat
Regina Becker Awerbuch	Ilan Awerbuch's Grandmother	27-Jan/9 Shevat
Samuel Grossman	Sherry Berlin's Grandfather	28-Jan/10 Shevat
Sam Madwatkins	Al Madwatkins' Father	28-Jan/10 Shevat
Helen Willis	Valerie Razinsky's Mother, Matthew Razinsky's Grandmother.....	28-Jan/10 Shevat
Lena Broudy	Alice Broudy Cupples' Great Grandmother	29-Jan/11 Shevat
Robert Stopnik	Roz Berman's Father.....	31-Jan/13 Shevat

* Denotes a memorial plaque was purchased in memory of a loved one. Contact office@ohrshalom.org to order a memorial plaque.



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2026 / TEVET-SHEVAT 5786

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p><i>Private Ohr Shalom tour of</i> Eduardo Chillida: Convergence Sunday, January 18, 3:30-5:00pm</p> <p>See page 7 for details</p> <p>BALBOA PARK THE SAN DIEGO MUSEUM OF ART</p>	<p>Israeli Dancing Sunday, Jan 25, 4:00pm-5:30pm</p> <p>See page 12 for details RSVP to the office.</p>		<p>1 12 Tevet New Year's Day Office Closed No Religious School No Minyan</p>	<p>2 13 Tevet 2:00pm - Office Closes 6:15pm - Kabbalat Shabbat Service "Ask the Rabbi"</p> <p>4:36pm</p>	<p>3 14 Tevet Parshat Vayechi 9:30am - Shabbat Service</p> <p>5:37pm</p>	
<p>4 15 Tevet No Religious School 6:15pm - Minyan</p>	<p>5 16 Tevet 6:15pm - Minyan 6:45pm - Choir Practice 7:00pm - Lomdim BeYachad</p>	<p>6 17 Tevet 6:15pm - Minyan 7:00pm - Meditation w/ Alex van Frank</p>	<p>7 18 Tevet 9:30am - Daf Yomi 6:15pm - Minyan</p>	<p>8 19 Tevet 4:30pm - Religious School 6:15pm - Minyan</p>	<p>9 20 Tevet 2:00pm - Office Closes 6:15pm - Kabbalat Shabbat Service</p> <p>4:42pm</p>	<p>10 21 Tevet Parshat Shemot 9:30am - Shabbat Service 10:30am - Tot Shabbat 12:30pm - Lunch & Learn</p> <p>5:43pm</p>
<p>11 22 Tevet 9:30am - Religious School 10:00am - Lomdim BeYachad 4:00pm - Parent Committee Meeting 6:15pm - Minyan</p>	<p>12 23 Tevet 6:15pm - Minyan 6:45pm - Choir Practice</p>	<p>13 24 Tevet 6:15pm - Minyan 7:00pm - Meditation w/ Alex van Frank</p>	<p>14 25 Tevet 9:30am - Daf Yomi 6:15pm - Minyan</p>	<p>15 26 Tevet 4:30pm - Religious School 6:15pm - Minyan 7:00pm - Men's Discussion Group</p>	<p>16 27 Tevet 2:00pm - Office Closes 6:15pm - Shabbat Kehillatit Service & Community Dinner</p> <p>4:48pm</p>	<p>17 28 Tevet Parshat Vaera Mevarchim Chodesh 9:30am - Shabbat Service</p> <p>5:49pm</p>
<p>18 29 Tevet No Religious School 10:00am - Men's Club Kick-off Meeting 11:00am - Sisterhood Brunch 3:30pm - Museum Tour 6:15pm - Minyan</p>	<p>19 1 Shevat Rosh Chodesh Shevat MLK Day Office Closed No Minyan</p>	<p>20 2 Shevat 6:15pm - Minyan 7:00pm - Meditation w/ Alex van Frank</p>	<p>21 3 Shevat 9:30am - Daf Yomi 6:15pm - Minyan</p>	<p>22 4 Shevat 4:30pm - Religious School 6:15pm - Minyan</p>	<p>23 5 Shevat 2:00pm - Office Closes 6:15pm - Shabbat Kabbalat with the Choir</p> <p>4:55pm</p>	<p>24 6 Shevat Parshat Bo 9:30am - Shabbat Service 12:30pm - Lunch & Learn</p> <p>5:56pm</p>
<p>25 7 Shevat 9:30am - Religious School at Coastal Roots 9:30am - Ta'am Torah at Coastal Roots 9:30am - L.D.I. #3 4:00pm - Israeli Dancing 6:15pm - Minyan</p>	<p>26 8 Shevat 6:15pm - Minyan 6:45pm - Choir Practice 7:00pm - Lomdim BeYachad</p>	<p>27 9 Shevat 6:15pm - Minyan 7:00pm - Meditation w/ Alex van Frank</p>	<p>28 10 Shevat 9:30am - Daf Yomi 6:15pm - Minyan</p>	<p>29 11 Shevat 4:30pm - Religious School 6:15pm - Minyan</p>	<p>30 12 Shevat 2:00pm - Office Closes 6:15pm - Kabbalat Shabbat Service</p> <p>5:01pm</p>	<p>31 13 Shevat Parshat Beshalach Shabbat Shirah 9:30am - Shabbat Service</p> <p>6:03pm</p>
<p>1 14 Shevat 9:30am - Blood Drive 9:30am - Religious School 10:00am - Lomdim BeYachad 6:15pm - Minyan 7:00pm - JDAIM Movie Night</p>	<p>2 15 Shevat Tu B'Shevat 6:15pm - Minyan 6:45pm - Choir Practice</p>	<p>3 16 Shevat 6:15pm - Minyan 7:00pm - Meditation w/ Alex van Frank</p>	<p>4 17 Shevat 9:30am - Daf Yomi 6:15pm - Minyan</p>	<p>5 18 Shevat 4:30pm - Religious School 6:15pm - Minyan</p>	<p>6 19 Shevat 2:00pm - Office Closes 6:15pm - Kabbalat Shabbat Service "Ask the Rabbi"</p> <p>5:08pm</p>	<p>7 20 Shevat Parshat Yitro 9:30am - Shabbat Service 12:30pm - JDAIM Lunch & Learn</p> <p>6:09pm</p>