



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.



JDAIM
February 2026
Jewish Disability Awareness, Acceptance & Inclusion Month
See page 4

BLOOD DRIVE
Ohr Shalom Synagogue
Sunday, Feb 1, 9:00- 2:30pm
See page 3 for details



LOVE YOUR HEART  San Diego Blood Bank

Slow Read Book Club is Back!
Fridays, 12:00pm-1:00pm (on Zoom) Starts February 6
Eminent Jews: Bernstein, Brooks, Friedan, Mailer
by David Denby



Shabbat Kehillatit
Friday, February 13
Family-Friendly Service: 6:15pm
Community Dinner: 7:15pm
RSVP by Monday, February 9

Note New Date

MEN'S DISCUSSION GROUP
Thursday, February 19
7:00pm



DAVAR MEGILLAH

FEBRUARY 2026 • MONTHLY NEWSLETTER • SHEVAT/ADAR 5786

JDAIM Still Looking for the Stumbling Blocks



Rabbi Scott Meltzer

It is February at Ohr Shalom Synagogue, that means it is Jewish Disability Awareness Acceptance and Inclusion Month. Time every year when we do a communal audit of how we are doing as a community in making sure that we are not only accessible and welcoming to those with handicaps or challenges, but that we are working to increase the awareness of people with disabilities and their diverse needs here at shul, beyond in the larger community, and even as it relates to legislation and care from our government at every level.

One thing that already marks JDAIM 2026 as distinct from its predecessors, is that Congregation Beth Am has asked if they can participate in our observance of JDAIM. We are excited to invite other communities to participate with us, to partner with us, and ultimately to help increase Awareness, Acceptance and Inclusion in their shuls as well.

Over the years that we have worked really hard towards the goal of JDAIM – of making sure that people with disabilities are able to participate in, enjoy, and be welcomed to all of the wonderful events, services, classes and experiences that make us the inclusive, loving, sacred, spiritual community to strive to be. We have made lots of changes. We have ramps, accessible bathrooms, hearing-assist equipment, large print siddurim and much more. We have done many programs to educate and increase awareness about those with disabilities and how we can make sure that they are part-and-parcel of our communities, and not held back or discouraged, to make sure they find all that we do welcoming and accessible.

We have read many books and seen many movies. I hope that you will be with us on Sunday evening February 1 at the synagogue, to watch the wonderful documentary *Marlee Matlin: Not Alone Anymore*. I hope you have begun reading Riva Lehrer's *Golem Girl* and that you are planning on joining us on Tuesday evening, February 10 on Zoom for the book discussion and then on Sunday morning, February 15, when we are excited to welcome and engage in conversation the author and artist - Riva Lehrer. Not to mention drashot and Minyan Minutes throughout the month.

But we have lots more to do. The work of JDAIM is not limited to February, it is highlighted in February, to empower the work every day. But we need your help. We must acknowledge our own blindness about where we are failing, about the obstacles or challenges that are present but we don't see.

What more can we do? How else can we make certain that Ohr Shalom – the love we share for our tradition, the great care we build together for every person within our community, our commitment to each other and the larger community – is that for everybody, and not only those without barriers to involvement?

What ideas do you have? What have you experienced or witnessed that needs to be made better? Where are there still stumbling blocks before the blind, that we are commanded to remove? (Leviticus 19:14)

Together, we can truly continue to move in the direction of creating a community that is accepting and acceptable, and that is critical as we build towards holiness together.



WORDS FROM THE PRESIDENT

Marvin Yudkovitz
President

Celebrate Purim at Ohr Shalom with a Carnival, Spiel, Megillah Reading, Games, Music, and some Hamantashen

It all begins on **March 1st** with the Purim Carnival from **11:00am–2:00pm**. There will be games to play and food to eat and it's open to all of the congregation and your friends. And of course, come in costume! If you don't have costumes already, there are several websites where you can order some, and/or borrow some head covering masks which will be available (while supply lasts) at Ohr Shalom on March 1st or March 2nd.

On March 2nd, Ohr Shalom becomes the city of Shushan, 2500 years ago! How can this happen? What does this mean? Yes, it's Purim, a day of fun, celebration, education, and of course eating.

This year's Purim is sure to be memorable, with lots of music and playfulness, and food.

We are pleased to have a return of the much beloved Purim Spiel. I can't tell you what it will be, since that's a secret, but I can guarantee it will be great. Under the leadership of Rabbi Brianah Caplan, this year's play about the Book of Esther (mostly) will feature our congregation's children, ranging in all ages. Come and laugh, sing, and enjoy our children presenting the

story. There will also be some surprise musical presentations. And don't forget your costume.

Here's the schedule for March 2nd:

- 5:30pm – Family friendly dinner and activities
- 6:30pm – Purim Service including Ma'ariv, Spiel, Abridged Megillah Reading and Singing!
- 7:30pm – Dessert (with of course hamantashen)
- 8:00pm – Full Megillah reading, featuring congregants of all ages. Make noise, listen, learn, and have fun.

And what about Shalach Manot? First of all – what is this? Shalach manot are small bags of food which are given to family and friends. This enables everyone to participate in this festival, creates community unity (one of the aspects of the Book of Esther), and creates a happy and fun atmosphere. You can make Shalach Manot to give out using any food items you wish. And many people make their own treats for the bags they hand out. But another really nice option is to get some of our wonderful homemade

DAVAR February 2026 | ISSUE NO. 441 OHR SHALOM SYNAGOGUE



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DAVAR PUBLISHED MONTHLY

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Bulletin: Please e-mail all submissions to: davar@ohrshalom.org
Deadlines: Feb. 5 for March edition • March 5 for April edition



hamantashen, baked by our team of congregants led by Mark and Elaine Smith, for your gift bag(s).

You can order these hamantashen in advance from the synagogue office (by February 20), and pick them up on March 1st or 2nd. Or you can wait and purchase them on March 1 or 2 (while supplies last).

And speaking of purchasing – our homemade hamantashen are available for \$15 for a dozen, \$8 for ½ dozen, your choice of apricot, prune or chocolate. Order them before we are all sold out!

See you at Purim at the carnival on Sunday March 1, and the evening of March 2.

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OHR SHALOM'S SHABBAT SERVICE SCHEDULE

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

Friday	February 6	6:15pm	Kabbalat Shabbat Service "Ask the Rabbi"
Saturday	February 7	9:30am	Shabbat Morning Service
		12:30pm	JDAIM Lunch & Learn
Friday	February 13	6:15pm	Shabbat Kehillatit Service/Dinner
Saturday	February 14	9:30am	Shabbat Morning Service
		10:30am	Tot Shabbat with Jennifer Meltzer
Friday	February 20	6:15pm	Kabbalat Shabbat Service
Saturday	February 21	9:30am	Shabbat Morning Service
Friday	February 27	6:15pm	Kabbalat Shabbat Service with Choir
Saturday	February 28	9:30am	Shabbat Morning Service

Afternoon Bar Mitzvah: Greyson Cripps

NO Shabbat Morning Babysitting Available

PARSHIYOT & CANDLE LIGHTING February 2026



PARSHAT YITRO

20 Shevat - Candle Lighting: 5:08pm
Fri: February 6
Sat: February 7
Torah: Exodus 18:1-20:23
Haft: Isaiah 6:1-13; 7:1-6; 9:5-6

PARSHAT MISHPATIM

SHABBAT SHEKALIM
MEVARCHIM CHODESH
27 Shevat - Candle Lighting: 5:14pm
Fri: February 13
Sat: February 14
Torah: Exodus 21:1-24:18; 30:11-16
Haft: II Kings 12:1-17

PARSHAT TERUMAH

4 Adar - Candle Lighting: 5:20pm
Fri: February 20
Sat: February 21
Torah: Exodus 25:1-27:19
Haft: I Kings 5:26-6:13

PARSHAT TETZAVEH

SHABBAT ZACHOR
11 Adar - Candle Lighting: 5:26pm
Fri: February 27
Sat: February 28
Torah: Exodus 27:20-30:10;
Deuteronomy 25:17-19
Haft: I Samuel 15:1-34



Kabbalat Shabbat Service "Ask the Rabbi"

Friday, February 6 at 6:15pm

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

FAMILY TOT SHABBAT

with Jennifer Meltzer

Saturday, February 14, 10:30am

SHABBAT KEHILLATIT SERVICE AND COMMUNITY DINNER

Friday, February 13
Family-friendly service: 6:15pm
Community Dinner: 7:15pm

Note
New
Date



RSVP by February 9
Please contact office or scan QR Code.

MEMBERS*	NON-MEMBERS*
Adults: \$20	Adults: \$30
Children: \$12	Children: \$15
(3-13 years old. Children under 2 FREE)	

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



Ohr Shalom Choir Practice

Ohr Shalom Choir

Mondays, 6:45pm at
Ohr Shalom and ZOOM

February 2, 9, 23

Kabbalat Shabbat

with the Ohr Shalom Choir

Friday, February 27, 6:15pm



Ohr Shalom Choir

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



BLOOD DRIVE

Ohr Shalom Synagogue

Sunday, February 1, 9:00am-2:30pm

In front of synagogue

Also get your blood pressure checked





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

ASL Interpreter



Scan/Click QR Code to Register for Keynote Event & Lunch

RSVP By Tuesday, Feb. 10, 2026

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 <i>In loving memory of Esther bat Rahel z"l</i>	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	 Ohr Shalom Synagogue with ASL interpreter and ZOOM Scan/Click QR Code to Register for Dinner
Sunday, February 15	11:00am	JDAIM Keynote Event: Riva Lehrer in Conversation with Rabbi Scott Meltzer (see above) <i>Evette and Nathan Weiss</i>	 Ohr Shalom Synagogue with ASL interpreter and ZOOM Scan/Click QR Code to Register for Keynote Event & Lunch



FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Gillian Argoff-Treseder
Executive Director



Masking

Masking is the act of hiding signs of difference or neurodiversity in public settings. It's also a fitting topic for this month as we straddle Jewish Disability Awareness Acceptance and Inclusion Month (JDAIM) and Purim. Jews have been "masking" since Joseph and Esther hid their true identities from Pharaoh and King Achashverosh. While both of these characters masked their true selves purposefully, many people with invisible disabilities like ADHD or Autism mask their differences without knowing it. Both groups use masking as protection, but does it really benefit the masker in the long run?

The Jewish narratives of masking in the stories of Joseph and Esther offer a powerful lens through which to understand disability masking—the practice by which disabled people conceal or suppress aspects of their disability in order to navigate a world not built for them. While the contexts differ, the underlying reasons are remarkably similar. Both Joseph and Esther use masking to survive in a foreign world, just people with disabilities often use masking to survive in situations that are foreign to them through inaccessibility or inflexibility of

societal norms. Masking is a response to feeling vulnerable in an environment that does not try to understand and accept differences.

Masking can create a sense of belonging, security and power, just as it did for Joseph in Egypt with Pharaoh and Esther in Persia. Masking for a person with a disability may start as soon as the onset of their disability. A neurodivergent child learns to mask their differences to avoid getting singled out and thus creates their own security through that veiled personality.

So, what is the true cost of masking? Joseph weeps repeatedly; his inner self is under strain long before revelation. Esther fasts and risks her life before she can speak openly. Disabled masking is linked to exhaustion, anxiety, burnout, and identity fragmentation. Masking may preserve safety—but often at the expense of personal well-being and wholeness.

Unmasking feels risky, lonely and filled with the fear of trauma and stigma. And yet, when conditions allow, unmasking can be transformative: Joseph's truth enables him to reconcile with his brothers and bring about the

survival of the Jewish people, just as Esther's truth saves the Jewish people. Disabled unmasking can open paths to authenticity, community, and systemic change.

Agency and timing matter in these stories and for disabled people, it can't be forced. A safe environment in which to reveal oneself must be present. Joseph reveals himself *when he is ready*.

Esther speaks *when she has leverage and support*. Judaism does not demand constant revelation—and neither should society demand that disabled people disclose, explain, or perform their pain to be believed.

How can we provide a safe space in which people feel they can truly be themselves? First and foremost, don't shame survival instincts such as masking. Don't romanticize suffering. Finally, we should all work to build a world in which masking is not required to fit in or to feel worthy or respected. Everyone should feel safe to say, "This is who I am."

Let's create a world where masking is no longer necessary. This is what JDAIM is about.

Purim

Purim Celebration and Megillah Reading

Monday, March 2

- 5:30pm - Family friendly dinner and activities
- 6:30pm - Purim Service including Ma'ariv, Spiel, Abridged Megillah Reading and lots of Singing!
- 7:30pm - Dessert (with of course hamantashen)
- 8:00pm - Full Megillah reading, featuring congregants of all ages.

Make noise, listen, learn, and have fun.



PURIM 2026-5786

Please bring food donations that can double as Purim groggers!

All items will be donated to the JFS Food Bank.





MEMBERSHIP

Alex van Frank
Membership Chair



Accessibility: The Ultimate Usability Upgrade for Everyone

If you've ever dragged a 50-pound suitcase up a ramp instead of a staircase, or watched a movie on mute with captions while your partner slept, you've been "pirating" accessibility features. And honestly? I love that for you. The secret of the disability world is that making things accessible doesn't just help the person in the wheelchair; it makes life objectively better for everyone. This is called the Curb-Cut Effect. It's named after those sidewalk slopes built for wheelchairs that were immediately overrun by parents with strollers, kids on scooters and delivery trollies.

But here's the problem: we often treat accessibility like a "nice-to-have" or a legal chore. In reality, it's a design failure. If a website breaks the second a screen reader touches it, that's not just a "disability issue"—it's a "bad at your design job" issue.

Speaking of which, before you start scanning the room for a white cane to decide if a space is "accessible enough," remember: not all disabilities are visible. In fact, about 80% are invisible—think chronic pain, neurodivergence, or autoimmune disorders. You can't "see" someone's need for a quiet room or high-contrast text, but that doesn't make the barrier any less real.

For example, the font we read can be more accessible for people with dyslexia (invisible disability) by using sans-serif (the fancy curve letters have), clearer letter shapes, even spacing. Helvetica and Arial are some of my favorite dyslexia friendly fonts. There is no need to make reading a battlefield for your eyes. It's a massive win for the 1-in-5 people with dyslexia, but it's also a relief for anyone whose brain is just plain tired of staring at standard, "floaty" text.

When you advocate for accessibility, you aren't just helping the person in the obvious wheelchair; you're helping your coworker with MS, your cousin with ADHD, and the barista with Crohn's who just needs to know where the nearest bathroom is.

We are all just one bad slip (or one chronic diagnosis) away from needing these systems. Unless you plan on staying young and indestructible forever (spoiler: that's not likely), it's time to start caring.

How to Stop Being a Passive Bystander (Action Steps):

- 1. Be the "Actually" Person:** When you see a restaurant with no ramp or a website with no alt-text, don't just shrug. Mention it. Be the slightly annoying hero the world needs. You can also use the ADA.gov Complaint Portal.
- 2. Audit Your Stuff:** If you run a business or a blog, use the WAVE Web Accessibility Evaluation Tool or Section508.gov. It'll tell you exactly how many people you're accidentally locking out.
- 3. Support the Pros:** Follow groups like the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) or the National Council on Independent Living (NCIL). They're doing the heavy lifting; the least you can do is sign a petition or show up to a town hall when they're fighting for transit funding.

How to take advantage (or help others take advantage) of what Ohr Shalom has for programming and accessibility:

1. Ask Rabbi Meltzer for a listening device or large print siddur on Shabbat.
2. Use the lift up to the Bimah if needed or assist a friend who needs to use the lift.
3. Check out the new railing by the outside ramp.
4. Attend Shabbat Kehillatit on February 13th to observe the service with ASL interpreters.
5. Attend the JDAIM Keynote on Sunday, February 15th to learn from Disability activist and artist Riva Lehrer

Accessibility isn't charity; it's future-proofing your own life and that of those you love. Get on board, or get out of the way (preferably via an accessible exit).



SECURITY

Alain Avigdor
Security Committee Chair

Strengthening Our Shared Safety: New Policy on Backpacks and Large Bags

Ohr Shalom Synagogue remains committed to creating a welcoming, secure environment for every member and visitor who enters our campus. As part of our ongoing efforts to enhance safety and align with best practices across Jewish institutions nationwide, the Board has approved an updated policy regarding backpacks and large bags on synagogue premises.

Visitors may not bring backpacks or large bags past the gate. If they have one, please ask them to leave it in their car or place it in the designated area outside the gate. We're not responsible for items left there. Tallit bags are fully permitted.

Members may bring backpacks or large bags onto campus if they allow bags to be wanded/searched by Security and then locked in the office. *This policy does not apply to children attending Religious School or to diaper bags.*

This measure supports our broader security posture while ensuring that everyone can participate in services, programs, and community life with peace of mind. We appreciate the cooperation of all who help make Ohr Shalom a safe and sacred space.

Key Points of the New Policy

- Visitors will be encouraged to leave backpacks and large bags in their vehicles. If a visitor arrives with such items, they may be placed in the designated area outside the gate. A posted sign will note that Ohr Shalom is not responsible for any belongings left there.
- This policy does not apply to tallit bags. Tallitot and their cases remain fully permitted.
- Information about this policy will be added to our website. Callers who indicate they plan to visit the synagogue will also be informed of the guidelines in advance.

These steps reflect our shared responsibility for one another's safety and our commitment to maintaining a secure, welcoming environment for prayer, learning, and community connection.

Thank you for your understanding, partnership, and continued dedication to the well-being of our congregation. If you have questions about the policy or its implementation, please contact the office or the Security Committee.

The Supervisor Egrets, a Brief Reflection from Ohr Shalom's Mexico City Trip

Lynn Mendelsohn

Imm. Past President/Special Projects

Most of the time, a bunch of birds is just a bunch of birds, but the team of stately white Great Egrets we met at Xochimilco were up to something...

Ohr Shalom's tour of Mexico City (January 11 through 16) beautifully accomplished its main objectives: to acquaint us with that extraordinary metropolis, and to provide an intimate glimpse into the lives of the thousands of Jews who settled there in the early 20th Century. Though Mexico City probably has more trees per capita than any other major city, the experience of being there was, of course, urban.

The third day of our visit took us to a new and unexpected Mexico City. Our splendid leader, Maria Gomez-Laurens, required that we meet in the hotel lobby at 5 am, which we did. Our bus took us, in dense and chilly darkness under a waning crescent moon, to a sunrise rendezvous with Xochimilco, a freshwater lake at the city's southern end. We already had learned that the capital city of the Aztecs, Tenochtitlan, upon which Mexico City was built, occupied a man-made island – a chinampa – in the middle of a shallow lake. This is where Cortez found the Emperor Montezuma and his court when the Spaniards arrived in 1520.

On the morning of our 5 am assembly, a surprise of surprises awaited us: An ancient region of the *chinampas* islands of Mexico City still is there, occupying a 5,000-acre preserve that is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. In the Aztec language, Nahuatl, *chinampa* means "in the fence of reeds," and this describes how a *chinampa* comes to be. Following the Aztec method, the *chinampas* of Xochimilco were created by driving slim wood pylons deep into the lakebed, thereby entrapping layers



Sebastian Sotomayor

of mud, topsoil, and composted vegetation. A non-profit group called Arca Tierra ("Earth Ark") currently manages a network of more than 70 "peasant farms" that practice small-scale sustainable agriculture on the extremely fertile *chinampas*. Fortunately, Arca Tierra also offers tours.

As soon as we arrived at Xochimilco, a team from Arca Tierra handed each of us a steaming mug of sweet, milky cinnamon coffee or tea. Our group boarded two pontoon-like metal rafts, each steered and powered by gondoliers using substantial sticks. For an hour, as the horizon grew pink and then orange with morning light, and as twirling tufts of fog collected above the water, we enjoyed a float along the tree-lined canals between the *chinampas*. Our tour guide was Sebastian Herrera Figueroa, the handsome, charismatic 26-year-old Director of Operations at Arca Tierra. Pushing back his cowboy hat, Sebastian extolled the ancient, sustainable Aztec practices whereby Xochimilco's *chinampas* are farmed, such that most of the luscious vegetables and herbs served in Mexico City's fine restaurants come from there. We learned about experimentation to enhance soil fertility through crop mixing and purposeful composting. Also, we heard about Arca Tierra's vision of a future in which the world will grow wise enough to live responsibly and produce enough food for everyone.

We arrived at a farm and watched the sun as it finally rose. Then Arca Tierra served us an outdoor breakfast:

red banana bread, mushroom corn quesadillas, a salad of the day's harvest with kombucha dressing, corn masa cakes with cheese and tomatoes, huarches with cheese and beans, and traditional Mexican coffee and herbal tea.



By the time we boarded our boats for the return trip, the day had become sufficiently sunny for us to observe the birds – plentiful, busy, and varied. Coots, grackles, ducks, Great White Egrets and Blue Herons. The *chinampas* area is a bird sanctuary, its canals full of fish, its fields brimming with seeds, and its trees drooping with berries.

As our barges glided silently, we noticed that single Great White Egrets, tall and still, stood erect along the shore near the water's edge, spaced at approximately every hundred feet – an oddly unnatural sight. I counted 17 such egrets, having begun my tally well after we first took note of them. They didn't seem to be fishing, and only one of them moved at all – an egret who opened his spectacular wings and took flight just as we passed. Soon several of us were speculating as to what the egrets might be doing. We decided that they were supervisors, on duty on behalf of the animals and plants of the *chinampas*. They wanted to make certain that these intruders, clearly misfits, left the place as they had found it. And perhaps, as the egrets' behavior was so unusual, they intended to convey a message: "You, there in the boats, have witnessed an ancient place where life and beauty are protected and nourished, and where humans coexist with nature as friends. Do not forget this. Be inspired." And so, indeed, we are.



(Top) Our breakfast at Arca Tierra, (Center) the pontoon boats we rode in for the tour, (Right) our entire group.





MEN'S CLUB

Aaron Lipner
Men's Club President

Shalom from the Men's Club



I'm excited and full of energy from our kickoff last month. The Men's Club at Ohr Shalom is officially underway, and I am grateful for the energy, ideas, and encouragement already coming from our community.

Our goal is simple: to create a welcoming place where men can connect, build friendships, support one another, and enjoy being part of our synagogue community. Men's Club is meant to be fun, meaningful, and easy to be part of.

One of the best parts of restarting Men's Club has been hearing what people are interested in. We have familiar favorites like poker night and the men's discussion group. From there, new ideas are coming in, including social gatherings, outdoor activities, service projects, holiday events, and learning opportunities. Men's Club will grow based on the interests and energy of the men who participate.

Momentum started even before the kickoff, at the Hanukkah party, when several men volunteered to make latkes in the kitchen. It quickly turned into one of those moments that reminds you what community can look like. It was great to be cooking side by side with Mark, Morris, Samy, Brad, Jeremy, and Davin to help make the night happen. It's easy to imagine moments like that becoming part of Men's Club.

Looking ahead, we are beginning to explore activities connected to the upcoming holidays and the interests people are sharing. Tu B'Shvat reminds us of growth, renewal, and getting outside together. As we move toward Purim, we are talking about opportunities such as making hamantaschen, helping with the Purim Carnival, and finding ways to support our Torah School families. Nothing is set yet, and that is part of the excitement. These early conversations are mostly about listening. What do people want? What feels worth showing up for? That's where we're starting to build.

As we continue to get started, we will also be forming a small leadership team to help guide Men's Club forward. In February, we plan to begin nominating and voting on leadership roles. This is another way to get involved for anyone who is interested in helping shape what Men's Club becomes.

You can join anytime, so why not now? Men's Club is open to all adult men in our community, whether you are new to Ohr Shalom, have been here for years, are retired, raising kids, or just looking for another way to connect. There is no commitment required. Come to an event, make a friend, and see if it feels like a good fit.

If you would like to share ideas or stay informed about upcoming activities, the survey is still open: bit.ly/45dtf9W

Thank you to everyone who has already reached out, attended, and offered support. With your participation and ideas, we have the opportunity to build a Men's Club that reflects who we are and strengthens our community.

I look forward to seeing where this goes and hope to meet many more of you in the weeks ahead.

February 1st - 7 Bridges Hike. We'll meet at shul at 9:30am and leave by **9:45am**. No charge as we're just walking and talking. There is an optional lunch being planned at a nearby restaurant for afterwards, that anyone can join (self-pay), even if you missed the walk. Please let me know if you plan to attend so we can get a rough headcount.

February 8th - World Wide Wrap. **10:30am-12:00pm**. Looking for volunteers to come to Religious School to help with this annual event started by the FJMC (more on that later). Please bring tefillin if you have, or come by and teach the students how it's done. Even more important, please come if you've never worn tefillin and let Super Bowl Sunday be your first time.

I'll be creating a What'sApp group for Men's Club so please be sure to let me know your phone number. We'll have a few different ways to communicate to reach everyone.

As always, let me know if you have ideas for events or are interested in helping out and being more involved. Please let me know if you're interested in helping out with a leadership role on our own board.

P.S. - Purim and the Purim carnival is fast approaching in March and we're looking at some possible events.

MEN'S CLUB MEETING
7 Bridges Hike
Sunday February 1, 9:30am
 Meet at Ohr Shalom, optional lunch afterwards, details to follow.
 Email Mensclub@ohrshalom.org to RSVP.



MEN'S DISCUSSION GROUP
Thursday, February 19, 7:15pm
 Pure Project
 2865 5th Ave. 
Topic: OPEN
 For more information contact:
 Robert McNeese (robertmcneese50@gmail.com)
 Robert Houston (bayfruitandherb@gmail.com)

FAMILY TOT SHABBAT with Jennifer Meltzer 

2025-2026 / 5785-5786 

FEBRUARY 14 **10:30AM START**
MARCH 14 **KID-FRIENDLY SERVICE**
APRIL 11 **STORYTIME**
MAY 9 **LUNCH PROVIDED** 

JUNE 20 **KIDS ARE WELCOME TO BRING**
AUGUST 8 **THEIR MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS**
(NON ELECTRIC)



SISTERHOOD

Eti Chall
Sisterhood Chair

“כי האדם עץ השדה” – For a Person Is Like a Tree of the Field

(Deuteronomy 20:19)

This verse is rich with meaning. Its metaphor is both poetic and practical, offering a powerful way to think about human life and community. Just as trees are shaped by the soil, water, and climate around them, people are nurtured by the relationships they tend, the values they pass down, and the consistency of showing up for one another.

Like trees, we set down roots—some shallow, some deep. And like trees, people thrive under different conditions. Some flourish in warmth and humidity, others need cold seasons to strengthen and sweeten their fruit. Growth is not uniform, and it is not meant to be. Diversity in environment, pace, and need is not a weakness of the natural world; it is what allows it to endure.

At Ohr Shalom we notice and honor diversity. It reminds us that life does not unfold according to a single model. Some trees bear fruit quickly, others slowly. Some require extra care, support, or protection. Yet all are part of the same forest.

This understanding has deep implications for how we build community. An inclusive and welcoming community is one that recognizes differing needs and adapts accordingly. When we acknowledge that not everyone thrives under the same conditions, we make room for people with disabilities, differing abilities, and varying life circumstances to be fully included. Inclusion is not about sameness—it is about thoughtful accommodation and shared responsibility.

In this sense, Tu B'Shevat is a communal holiday as much as a seasonal one. No tree grows in isolation. Trees thrive

because of the soil they are planted in, the water they receive, and the ecosystem that supports them. Community works the same way. Our collective strength comes from presence, care, and the willingness to adjust so that each person has what they need to grow.

As we celebrate Tu B'Shevat, we can reflect on the ways we nurture our community's roots. This month, as we celebrate JDAIM, we continue to cultivate a space where different kinds of people—like different kinds of trees—can take hold, grow strong, and bear fruit in their own time.

Happy Tu B'Shevat. 🌳

Sisterhood Happy Hour, February 18, 5:00-7:00pm.

Location: TBA



Sisterhood Rosh Chodesh Brunch



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:

2026 Building Centennial Celebration and Annual Gala

- 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!



CHESED

Aviva Rosenberg
Chesed Committee Chair

Frozen Soups Available for Members in Need

When illness or recovery makes cooking difficult, Ohr Shalom is here to help. Frozen soups are available for members who are sick or recuperating, offering an easy, nourishing meal when it's needed most.



Requests are handled with discretion, and arrangements for pickup or delivery can be made. If you or someone you know could benefit from this program, please don't hesitate to reach out.



This is one small way we care for one another and strengthen our community.



RABBINIC INTERN

Brianah Caplan
Rabbinic Intern

Who Is Wise? One Who Learns from Every Person.” (Pirkei Avot 4:1)

Over the past several months, as I have been in the midst of my rabbinic job search, I have found myself returning again and again to this teaching from Pirkei Avot. The process of interviewing has taken me into conversation with many different Jewish communities, each with its own character, history, and sense of what it hopes for in its rabbinic leadership. Every visit and conversation has been a reminder that there is no single way to be a Jewish community, and no single model of what it means to be a rabbi. Wisdom, I am learning, comes from listening carefully and learning generously wherever you find yourself.

The job search itself has been an education. It has asked me to articulate not only what skills I bring, but what values guide me, what kind of presence I hope to be in a community, and how I understand the role of a rabbi in people's lives. It has also given me the chance to see how communities imagine their futures, what they are proud of, and where they are still growing. Each encounter has shaped my understanding of the rabbinate as a deeply relational calling—one rooted not only in teaching and ritual, but in trust, humility, and shared responsibility.

Being in the midst of this process while serving as an intern at Ohr Shalom has been especially meaningful. Having a home community while exploring others has grounded

me. Ohr Shalom has been a place where I am constantly learning—not in abstract ways, but through lived experience. I have learned from how this community shows up for one another, how questions are welcomed, and how Jewish life is nurtured through care, thoughtfulness, and intention. These lessons have helped me better understand what kind of rabbi I hope to become.

At the same time, Ohr Shalom has not only been a place of learning, but of belonging. Even as I spend time visiting other communities, I am reminded that this is where I am rooted right now. Being embraced here as a rabbinic intern—trusted with teaching, invited into meaningful moments, and welcomed as part of the community—has made this season of exploration feel expansive rather than unsettling. That sense of support has made it possible for me to approach the job search with curiosity and openness, rather than fear.

I am grateful to be navigating this stage of my rabbinic journey alongside Ohr Shalom. This community continues to shape me, teach me, and hold me as I grow. Wherever the next step eventually leads, the learning and relationships I am building here right now are deeply formative—and I carry them with me each time I walk into a new conversation, listening for wisdom in every person I meet.

SAVE THE DATE

Pesach
April 1-April 9

Second Seder Community Dinner
Thursday, April 2, 6:00pm

SAVE THE DATE

OHR SHALOM
Weekend Retreat
April 24-26



Allyson Darroch
Davar Editor

Put Down That Rake!



Mr. S is not a great athlete, but he has a yard and he has neighbors. The leaves on the magnificent Liquid Amber in the front yard are falling. They are on the sidewalk; the driveway and the spikey round seed pods are a hazard to navigation for the casual walkers.

The neighbors' yards are well maintained with neat grass, (artificial turf maybe?) decorative rocks and an assortment of non-deciduous greenery. There are times when Mr. S thinks of getting rid of the old tree, but it shades the house from the summer heat, is home to countless birds and has a rope swing. No, can't be done, so with a sigh and a rake he starts to work.

The next day there is a whole new set of fallen leaves, but last night he happened on a very interesting article. According to Kristin Hostetter, the Head of Sustainability at Outside Interactive, Inc., raking and bagging or burning those leaves is not only bad for soil health. It also takes away habitat for important wildlife like bugs and birds, who are critical pollinators.

Maybe his neighbors think a yard with fallen leaves, long grass, and flowers gone to seed—is untidy, or even a threat to property values and health (by attracting bugs and animals).

But ecologists say we need to rethink our preconceived notions of beautiful, well-maintained yards. Lawns comprise 44 million acres in the U.S. alone, more than double the acreage of all our national parks combined. And as satisfying as a perfect green lawn may be, it's an ecological dead zone that doesn't support any of the essential functions—like pollination, carbon sequestration, and nutrient recycling—that sustain our ability to live on this planet.

Thankfully, natural landscaping is trending. According to *House Beautiful*, the practice—which includes native

perennials, wildflower and pollinator gardens, xeriscaping, and lawn reduction—was one of the top landscaping trends in 2024. That's good news for folks on a budget (and those who want to reclaim their fall weekends) because natural landscapes are less cost- and time-intensive to maintain. It's also good news for all the bugs, birds, and bees, which are so critical for biodiversity.

"Leaves are not litter," says Matthew Shepherd, the director of outreach and education at Xerces Society. Xerces is a nonprofit focused on protecting and conserving insects and other invertebrates. "They provide critical food and shelter for butterflies, beetles, bees, moths, and other invertebrates.

Insects are critical to humans because they transfer pollen from plant to plant, which helps plants and crops reproduce. "Without these pollinators, and ample habitat for them, our global food supply would be drastically diminished," says Shepherd. Insects are also a valuable food source for birds, reptiles, and other insects, and they help aerate soil and decompose organic matter.

Additionally, leaf debris helps build healthy soil that holds moisture. Leaves are nature's fertilizer: free, nutrient-dense organic matter that breaks down and feeds the soil. It's ironic that we sweep our yards clear of them and then run to the garden center to buy chemical fertilizers (which, according to The Freedonia Group, a market research firm, is a \$4 billion market).

Instead of raking, bagging, and dumping into the trash, now Mr. S blows them into the flower beds, or under the trees, creating wildlife habitat. Then he does a little bit of mowing, but he removes the bag creating a free compost application. There is one problem still, the leaf blower and its noise, but it's still more fun than raking.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

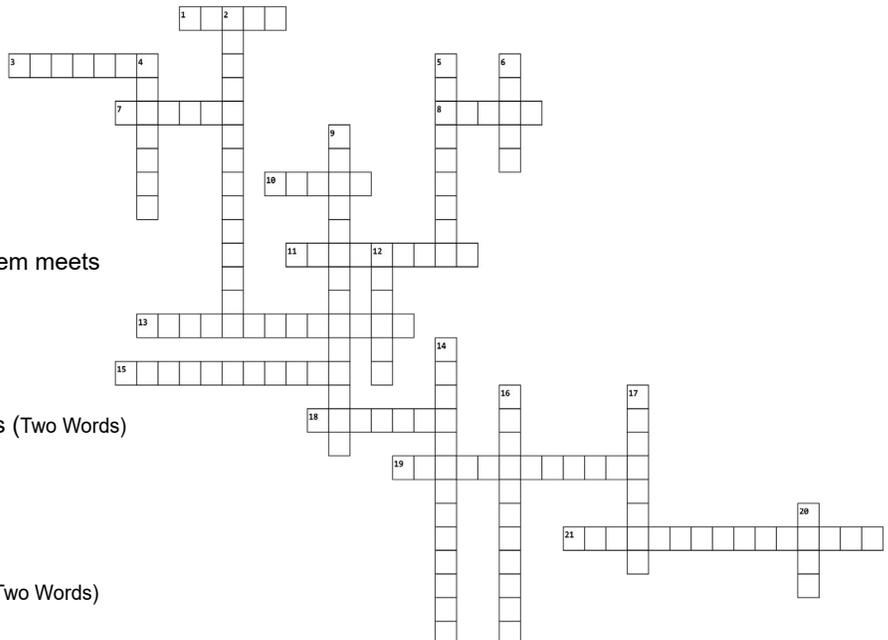
Leaves

ACROSS

- 1. Brings water up
- 3. Microscopic Holes on Underside of Leaf
- 7. Top of stamen
- 8. Plant with no stems or leaves
- 10. Seed with 2 leaves
- 11. Spongy Layer
- 13. Evaporation in a leaf
- 15. Reduces rate of water loss (Two Words)
- 18. Molecule that absorbs color
- 19. Conducts Photosynthesis
- 21. Cells that appear at the place where the leafstem meets the branch (Two Words)

Down

- 2. Contains stomata and guard cells (Two Words)
- 4. Plants that die in one year
- 5. Located in epidermis and forms stomatal pores (Two Words)
- 6. Where seeds are located
- 9. Process in which a plant makes sugar
- 12. Brings water down stem
- 14. Happens in cones and flowers
- 16. Part that makes leaves green
- 17. Gaps in the cell inside the spongy mesophyll (Two Words)
- 20. Embryo of a plant





SOCIAL ACTION & SUSTAINABILITY

Davin Widgerow
Social Action Chair

For Tu B'Shevat 2026, Let's Concentrate on Composting and Recommit to Recycling!

Tu B'Shevat is commonly described as the “new year for the trees,” but it has grown into a more expansive holiday that considers the health of our entire ecosystem including and beyond trees. The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism encourages synagogues to invest in sustainable, planet-friendly practices that honor the beautiful and complex planet God created. To that end, let's dedicate Tu B'Shvat 2026 to learning more about how to responsibly manage waste in our local region.

Regular attendees to Shabbat morning Kiddush know that we are striving to divert more organic waste to the compostable green bin and less waste to the trash black bin. Recycling is also a great way to divert waste from strained landfills. Here are tables describing *what waste goes where*:

GREEN BIN (ORGANIC WASTE)				
YES	Egg Shells	Coffee Grounds and Filters, Tea Leaves	Fruits and Vegetables	Grains
	Meat and Bones	Food Scraps in paper bags, newspapers, napkins or towels	Yard Waste: branches, sticks, untreated wood, leaves, grass, flowers, straw, and hay	Hair and Fur
NO	Plastic	Cardboard	Painted/Treated Wood	Metal
	Glass	Oils	Beverage Cartons	Diapers
	Kitty Litter	Pet Waste	Soiled Pizza Boxes	Magazines, Coated Paper
BLUE BIN (RECYCLABLE WASTE)				
YES	Paper	Boxes and Cardboard	Aluminum and Steel Bottles and Cans	Aluminum Foil, Trays
	Glass Bottles and Jars	Food and beverage paper containers	Plastic bottles, cups, containers, jugs, trays	Styrofoam
NO	Plastic bags	Plastic Wrap	Food or Liquid	Paper Napkin, Paper Towel
	Electronics	Batteries	Full Containers (any)	Diapers
wBLACK BIN (TRASH WASTE)				
YES	Hygiene Products	Diapers	Pet Waste	Dishes and Glassware
	Tissues, Wipes	Paper Plates and Cups; Takeout Containers	Plastic bags, wrap, film, straws, utensils	Items labeled "compostable" or "biodegradable"
NO	Food	Yard Waste	Recyclables	Electronics
	Chemicals	Batteries	Light Bulbs	Paints, Solvents

Link to the San Diego County Recycling guidelines: bit.ly/3ZpEau9

**Let's all commit to send less waste to the landfill this "holiday of the trees"!
Tu B'Shevat Sameach!**

We Are Official!

Thank you for your hard work last year adopting the site, Mission Bay – Playa Pacifica. Our impact is impressive, and we hope to continue to see our group clean up the County of San Diego. This is Ohr Shalom's certificate celebrating our work!



JFS Safe Parking Dinner

Thank you to Springsong, Daniel, Dalia and teacher Morah Wendy for providing dinner for the folks living in the JFS Safe Parking Lot. They served homemade lentil soup, Costco Mac 'n cheese, salad, bread and cookies. If you would like to volunteer to provide and serve a dinner, please contact Davin at socialaction@ohrshalom.org





ADULT EDUCATION

Evette Weiss
Adult Education

DR. JENNIFER TUTEUR
Sunday, March 22, 2026, 10:00am

Ohr Shalom's very own Dr. Jennifer Tuteur will be our guest speaker helping us to separate fact from fiction in the quickly changing world of science/health information. Dr. Tuteur will discuss vaccinations for young children, adults and our golden oldies. She will speak about how we can help maintain good health throughout our lives. Dr. Tuteur serves as the Chief Medical Officer for the County of San Diego's Health and Human Services Agency and was instrumental in keeping all of us safe and informed with the latest scientific information during the COVID epidemic. Mark your calendars now and plan on joining us for what should be an extremely informative lecture.



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

נפגשים פעם בשבוע בבית הכנסת
ביום שני אחרי המניין

The class meets once a week at Ohr Shalom Synagogue on
Mondays 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.



Ask Alex
about her Italy
Yoga Retreat!
Registration
open NOW!
Space very
limited.

- 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



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

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)

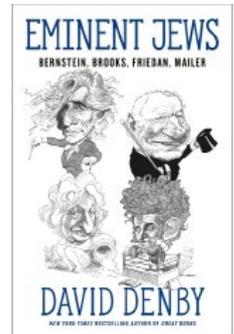
pp. 216-260

Mar 20: "Leonard Bernstein" (1st half)

pp. 261-305

Mar 27: "Leonard Bernstein" (2nd half)

and "Epilogue" pp. 305-351

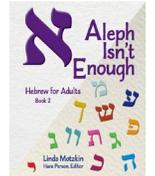


ADULT HEBREW LEARNING OPPORTUNITY ON ZOOM

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

The Adult Hebrew Program begins Book 2,
of "Aleph Isn't Enough," part 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.



RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

Maggy Dujowich
Religious School Principal



Tu B'Shevat

Tu B'Shevat, often called the **Birthdays of the Trees**, invites us to reflect on growth, roots, and potential. Even when trees appear still during winter, beneath the surface they are alive and preparing to grow. Judaism teaches us that people are very much the same — growth often happens quietly, and each individual develops in their own time and in their own way.

The Torah draws a powerful comparison between people and trees: *“Ki ha'adam etz hasadeh”* — *A person is like a tree of the field.*

Just as no two trees grow identically, no two people learn, communicate, or experience the world in the same way. Some trees need more sunlight, others more water, and some require extra care to thrive — yet every tree has inherent value and a place in the orchard.

February is also **Jewish Disability Awareness, Acceptance, and Inclusion Month (JDAIM)**, a time when Jewish communities are encouraged to deepen their commitment to compassion and inclusion. JDAIM reminds us that differences in ability are not shortcomings, but expressions of the beautiful diversity within humanity.

Judaism does not ask us to make everyone the same. Instead, it challenges us to build communities that are wide enough to hold everyone. Our tradition teaches that each person is created **b'tzelem Elohim**, in the image of God, and that dignity and belonging are fundamental Jewish values.

Tu B'Shevat and JDAIM come together through the shared message that growth flourishes when there is care, patience, and understanding. Just as trees need the right environment to take root, people thrive when they are supported in the ways they uniquely need.

Through this lens, Tu B'Shevat becomes more than a celebration of nature — it becomes a reminder of our responsibility to one another. When we cultivate empathy and inclusion, we plant the seeds for a stronger, kinder community where every individual has the opportunity to grow.

As we celebrate Tu B'Shevat this month, may we be inspired to nurture not only the world around us, but also the relationships and values that allow every member of our community to take root and thrive.



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

A TASTE OF TORAH

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:
March 15
April 19

Cost: \$35:
Individual session





YOUTH GROUPS

Michelle Gurr-Barbour
USY Youth Director



From Movie Night to Teen Overnight: What's Coming Up

Our youth programs continue to be all about connection—between kids, teens, and parents—and we have some wonderful opportunities coming up to strengthen those bonds.

On Saturday, February 7, we're excited to host a **Movie Night** for kids paired with a **Parents Night Out**. Children will gather at the home of a gracious congregational member for a cozy movie night. While the kids settle in, parents will head out together to a nearby pub within walking distance of the home. This evening is intentionally designed to help parents relax, enjoy a night out, and—most importantly—get to know one another in a casual, social setting while knowing their kids are close by and well cared for.

For our teens, we're also looking ahead to Into the Night, taking place **February**

14-15 in San Diego and Orange County for 7th-12th graders. This overnight experience is a highlight of our teen calendar, offering meaningful Jewish programming, shared experiences, and plenty of fun. It's a chance for teens to deepen friendships, build confidence, and strengthen their connection to our Jewish community beyond the walls of the synagogue.

Lastly, we truly value your voice. A Parent Program Survey is out now, and we hope you'll take a few minutes to participate. Your feedback helps shape future programs and ensures we're meeting the needs and interests of our families at every stage.

Thank you for being such an engaged part of our community. I look forward to connecting with you—both at home and out on the town!

07

FEBRUARY

SATURDAY

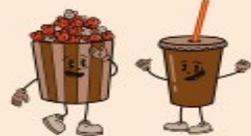
JOIN US FOR A COZY

MOVIE NIGHT!

7-10 PM

\$5 PER CHILD

HOSTED IN A PRIVATE HOME



BRING YOUR BLANKETS AND WEAR YOUR PJS FOR A COMFORTABLE VIEWING EXPERIENCE!

ADDRESS EMAILED THE FRIDAY MORNING BEFORE THE EVENT. KOSHER SNACKS INCLUDED!

RSVP BY THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 5TH

PARENTS JOIN FOR A NIGHT OUT WHILE CHILDREN ARE AT THE MOVIE!



\$5 PER KINDER THROUGH 7TH GRADE

TEENS WELCOME TO VOLUNTEER TO ASSIST



Susie Meltzer
Israel Desk

Jewish National Fund Today: The Vision Beyond Trees

This month we celebrate Tu B'Shevat. Since 1901, when Jewish National Fund was established, JNF has been synonymous with trees. In the past a hundred years, JNF has planted over 260 million trees throughout Israel. In addition, in 1926, JNF-USA was incorporated and became the largest contributor to the international JNF, supporting key areas beyond trees, like ecology and afforestation, water, community building, research and development, tourism, and education in Israel.



Here is a look at some of JNF-USA accomplishments in Israel:

Israel leads the world in water conservation, reusing over 90% of its water, the highest percentage across the globe. JNF has helped in treating, recycling, collecting runoff water, constructing reservoirs, and rehabilitating rivers.

JNF'S forestry program has helped sustain soil conservation, fire prevention and developing agricultural infrastructure. In the desert they have developed new technology for trees, solar power, and saltwater irrigation.

JNF helps give people with disabilities and special needs a place to thrive, providing state-of-the-art rehabilitative services, ensuring that recreational facilities from parks to nature trails are inclusive for visitors of all levels. JNF works with "Special in Uniform" to give youth with disabilities the unique opportunity to integrate into the IDF.

JNF is the largest provider of Israel engagement programs in the United States. From kindergarten through adulthood, from B'nai Mitzvah projects to Birthright trips, to Alexander Muss High School in Israel, they help students and the broader community to foster greater commitment and love for Israel.

Finally, through the vision of JNF-USA, Israel has attracted 800,000 new residents to the underserved north and south areas by improving re-settlement opportunities and leading rebuilding efforts in border communities devastated on October 7th.

Last December Ohr Shalom member Daniel Pick visited Israel with JNF-USA and recently shared with me some places that highlight the extraordinary innovations taking place in communities north and south with help from JNF-USA.

Here are a few JNF sites that Daniel visited:

In Beersheva Dan went to Adi Negev, a special needs residence facility using cyber technology for mobility devices used for rehabilitation of children, adults and wounded IDF soldiers. He saw the future location of JNF-USA's World Zionist Village that will teach Zionism to the world. His tour also stopped at the sight of the decimated Nova Music Festival site where he stood in a field of red paper poppies representing those killed there.

Nearby was Kibbutz Re'im, where he saw the October 7th destruction including the destroyed medical center, and learned Palestinians were no longer hired there because of loss of trust. Then north to Kiryat Shemona where only 60% of residents have returned since the October 7th war and where JNF is working to increase migration. They then drove to Rosh Pinna in the Upper Galilee, hiking with members of "Green Horizons", an Outward-Bound-type youth experience run with JNF support. Dan's trip ended at JNF's Alexander Muss High School for international students near Tel Aviv.

Dan's report of the work being done throughout Israel by JNF was inspiring. Celebrate Tu B'Shevat by planting a tree with JNF and sending tzedakah for Israel.



(Above) Posters hanging from the dorms of Tel Aviv University that say "Our heart is broken." These posters were hanging all over Israel while the hostages were in captivity.



(Right) Site of the Nova music festival main stage.

February Community Events

by Jane Zeer



Lawrence Family
Jewish Community Center
JACOBS FAMILY CAMPUS

36th Annual San Diego Jewish International Film Festival

Continues in-person thru
February 4; on-demand February 5-9
Garfield Theater, Lawrence Family JCC

The San Diego Jewish Film Festival presents a wide variety of feature films and documentaries. It is one of the largest and most prestigious film festivals of its kind in the country.

Keynote Speaker: Leonard Maltin Sunday, February 1, 7:00pm

Enjoy a fantastic evening with a true treasure of film journalism, Leonard Maltin! Premium tickets include a meet-and-greet reception, and general admission tickets are also available. Leonard Maltin is an American film critic, historian, and author, best known for his long-running Leonard Maltin's Movie Guide series and his 30-year tenure as a film critic on Entertainment Tonight. Known worldwide for his encyclopedic knowledge and engaging storytelling, Maltin presents on a wide range of film-related topics — from women in film to how “the Jews invented Hollywood.” He also speaks candidly about living and thriving with Parkinson's disease, offering insight both from his personal perspective and, when joined by Alice, from that of a life partner sharing the journey. (Prices vary)

The full schedule of films is available online at <https://36thsdjiffmid.eventive.org/welcome>. Tickets are available online at the same site, or by calling the JCC Box Office at (858) 362-1348.

Jewish Community Symphony Sunday, February 15, 3:00pm

Garfield Theatre, Lawrence Family JCC

Experience the Jewish Community Symphony in Cinematic & Classical, a thrilling journey from Vaughan Williams' lively Overture to The Wasps to Tchaikovsky's enchanting Sleeping Beauty Suite. Clarinetist Robert Zelickman dazzles in Weber's Concertino, followed by John Williams' heartfelt Viktor's Tale and Khachaturian's exhilarating Gayane Dances. (Prices vary)



Mandelbaum Family Lecture Series: The Catskills Come to Your Living Room: The Entertaining Life of Gertrude Berg, Jewish Media Mogul Dr. Samantha Goldstein, Speaker

Wednesday, February 18, 10:30am

Coronado Public Library | Winn Room, 640 Orange Avenue, Coronado
Gertrude Berg is a unique figure in Catskills history, perhaps the only woman to help manage a Catskills family resort and then steer that experience into a national multimedia entertainment career. This talk with Dr. Samantha Goldstein will explore how Berg's adolescence in hospitality led to one of the most popular early television series, The Goldbergs, and why her legacy is so infrequently mentioned today. (Event free)

Treasures of the Jewish Music Archives: Great Jewish Conductors

Special guests: David Amos, Music Director, TICO;
Robert Gilson, Music Director, San Diego Civic Youth Orchestra
Thursday, February 19, 2:00pm - 3:30pm
Astor Judaica Library, Lawrence Family JCC

Step into the rich tapestry of Jewish musical heritage with Eileen Wingard and a community of music aficionados as they showcase and appreciate iconic musical gems from the library's Jewish music collection. (Recorded music curated and hosted by Eileen Wingard, retired San Diego Symphony violinist.) (Event free)

Various locations.
Tickets or RSVP for the events below:
https://www.lfjcc.org/cjcl/arts_and_ideas.aspx



North County Lecture Series:

Democracy & Decency, Debate & Diversity

Monday, February 23, 10:30am

Rabbi Ron Shulman, Speaker
Carlsbad City Library, Auditorium
1775 Dove Lane, Carlsbad

Join Rabbi Ron Shulman of Congregation Beth El for a thoughtful reflection on Jewish sources that address the intersection of democratic values and social responsibility in a pluralistic society. Can we respect those with whom we disagree and disagree with those whom we love? (Event free)

East County Lecture Series:

The Rabbi, The Reverend & Jerusalem: Can Fiction and Friendship Heal What Politics Can't?

Tuesday, February 24, 10:30am

Tifereth Israel Synagogue, 6660 Cowles Mountain Blvd

Jerusalem is the spiritual heart of three great religions as well as a place of enduring discord. It's also the inspiration for new novels by two San Diego authors: *Here There Is No Why* by Phil Graubart, former senior rabbi at Congregation Beth El in La Jolla, and *A Rooftop in Jerusalem* by Michael Kinnamon, former general secretary of the National Council of Churches. Their unique presentation will touch on the power of fiction to bridge social divisions, the importance of interfaith understanding at a time when politics seem so fractured, and the city of Jerusalem as a symbol of religious longing and conflict. (Event free)



San Diego Jewish Men's Choir Concert

Wednesday, February 4, 12:00-12:50pm

Encinitas Public Library
Community Room
540 Cornish Dr., Encinitas

The San Diego Jewish Men's Choir (SDJMC), made up of singers from various walks of life, backgrounds, and ages, share a common goal - the preservation, performance, and promotion of Jewish choral music. They perform under the musical direction of Ruth Weber. Come hear them before they leave for their East Coast tour and their debut concert in New York at CARNEGIE HALL on February 14! (Event free)



Remember Us The Holocaust (RUTH)

Bonnie Harris, Speaker

Tuesday, February 10, 6:00pm

Jacobs Annex, La Jolla/Riford Library
7555 Draper Avenue, La Jolla

Author Bonnie Harris discusses her book *Philippine Sanctuary: A Holocaust Odyssey about How Jews were Saved and Hidden by Filipinos*.

The RUTH exhibit highlights the stories of Holocaust survivors who are currently living in San Diego County, as well as showcasing important Holocaust artifacts and World War II memorabilia. On exhibit now through June 28, 2026. A RUTH team member will be at the exhibit each Tuesday from 12-2:30pm to answer questions and provide guided tours. More information: <https://sandiego.librarymarket.com/event/remember-us-holocaust-ruth-exhibit-430330>. (Event free)

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS IN JANUARY

SYNAGOGUE FUND

Allan Goldman
Teresita Guzman Herrera

In memory of Ralph Golden

Eileen Wingard

In memory of Minnie Witz

Evelyn Sevel

In honor of Ruben Rosental's Birthday

Samy and Sarita Zands

In loving memory of Gary Krout

In loving memory of Minnie Linsk

In loving memory of Leola Cutler

Amy and Bill Morris

In memory of Sam "Matty" Madwatkins

Al and Carol Madwatkins

In honor of birth of granddaughter, Yael Sarah

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We apologize for any omissions.

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

LeAnne Adams	Ivan Mendelsohn
Jeanne Argoff	Lynn Mendelsohn
Ilan Awerbuch	Rachel Millstone
Sue Brown	Amy Morris
Eti Chall	Rocky Reid
Allyson Darroch	Nanette Sable
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Natan Lemoine	Rabbi Cantor
Ruth Levy	Cheri Weiss
Rachel Lipowsky	Dan Weiss
Nevo Magnezi	Davin Widgerow
Jennifer Meltzer	Margalit Wollner
Eli Meltzer	Rebecca Wollner
Susie Meltzer	Marvin Yudkovitz
	Jane Zeer

Thank You To Our Volunteer Help in January

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

Marci Prag and Matthew Razinsky for
preparing our Shabbat Kehillatit dinners

Mazal Tov To:

Phil Miller and
Julia Gleichman Miller
on the birth of **Isaac Gregory Miller**.

Nevo Magnezi and
Leah Schaperow
on the birth of their
daughter, **Yael Sarah**

Condolences To:

Susan Kaplan on the passing of her
beloved husband, **George Kaplan
Z"L**, father to **Paula (Paul) Lefko,
Beth (Ben) Abramovitz, Julie
(Michael) Waterstone and Alan
(Erica) Kaplan**, grandfather to
**Zachary Abramovitz, Sophie
Abramovitz, Ava Waterstone,
Jack Waterstone, Liam Lefko,
Tali Lefko, Sam Waterstone,
Saul Kaplan, Sylvie Kaplan
and Noa Kaplan**.

Aaron and Paul Wapner on the
passing of their beloved mother,
Frida (Sidney Z"L) Wapner Z"L.

Nevo (Leah Schaperow) Magnezi
on the passing of their beloved
grandfather, Itshak Magnezi Z"L,
great-grandfather to **Yael**.

SHEVAT/ADAR Yahrzeits at OHR SHALOM



*Jaya Czarna Bielaz	Freddy Bielaz's Mother, Wolf Bielas, Simon Bielaz, Mina Cohen's Grandmother ...	1-Feb/14 Shevat
Stella Krampf Mostel	Linda Mostel's Mother	1-Feb/14 Shevat
Bill Tall	Rebecca Tall Brown's Father	1-Feb/14 Shevat
Sarah Tiano	Remembered by Jennifer Tuteur	1-Feb/14 Shevat
Philip Weinstein	Sheldon Wolpoff's Stepfather	1-Feb/14 Shevat
Michael Wolpoff	Sheldon Wolpoff's Brother	1-Feb/14 Shevat
Isidoro Lombrozo	Suzie Wolff's Father	2-Feb/15 Shevat
Esther Cohen	Nili Feuerstein's Mother	3-Feb/16 Shevat
Alice Wachterman	Susan Hagler's Mother	3-Feb/16 Shevat
Anne Burke	Beth Vann's Step-Mother	4-Feb/17 Shevat
Mary Langsam	Evie Sevel's Niece	4-Feb/17 Shevat
Helen Mendelsohn	Ivan Mendelsohn's Stepmother	4-Feb/17 Shevat
*Marian Schultz	Marcia Sachs' Mother	4-Feb/17 Shevat
Calvin Green	Elizabeth Green's Uncle	5-Feb/18 Shevat
*Lillian B. Kaplan	Remembered by Susan Kaplan	5-Feb/18 Shevat

SHEVAT/ADAR YAHRZEITS AT OHR SHALOM



*Sam Casuto	Remembered by Doreen Casuto, Loren Casuto's Grandfather	6-Feb/19 Shevat
Minnie Levin	Alice Broudy Cupples' Grandmother	6-Feb/19 Shevat
*Anita Schonbrun	Remembered by Susan Kaplan.....	6-Feb/19 Shevat
Zelma Gardenberg de Klein	Iliana Bielaz's Mother	7-Feb/20 Shevat
*Maria Lachow	Lillian Lachow's Mother	8-Feb/21 Shevat
Karen Rund	Rabbi Scott Meltzer and Brett Meltzer's Mother, Susie Meltzer's Sister	8-Feb/21 Shevat
Tom Slovis	Lisa Slovis Mandel's Father.....	8-Feb/21 Shevat
*Margaret Meltzer	Eli Meltzer's Mother	9-Feb/22 Shevat
Louise Joy Schiff	Eileen Wingard's Sister	9-Feb/22 Shevat
Millard Sindler	Rita Cohen's Father.....	9-Feb/22 Shevat
*Florence Stillman	Sharon Polichar's Mother	10-Feb/23 Shevat
Rosa Zands	Samy Zands' Mother	10-Feb/23 Shevat
Daniel Abramovic	Faye Levy's Father	11-Feb/24 Shevat
*Gladys Sevel	Remembered by Evie Sevel.....	11-Feb/24 Shevat
*Vanina Bunton	Jeremiah, Noah, Shoshannah and Nechama Bunton's Mother	12-Feb/25 Shevat
*Henry Sachs	Ray Sachs' Father	12-Feb/25 Shevat
Ada van Vloten	Alex van Frank's Sister.....	13-Feb/26 Shevat
Joseph Hassin	Luna Levy-Keller's Brother	14-Feb/27 Shevat
*Bernard Stillman	Sharon Polichar's Father.....	14-Feb/27 Shevat
Dorothy Zipp	Janice Zipp Cannizzaro and Elaine Smith's Aunt	14-Feb/27 Shevat
Bernice Green	Elizabeth Green's Grandmother	15-Feb/28 Shevat
*Adi Salzman	Tito Salzman's Father.....	16-Feb/29 Shevat
*Rose Schiff	Eileen Wingard's Mother	16-Feb/29 Shevat
*Howard Schultz	Marcia Sachs' Father.....	16-Feb/29 Shevat
Jacobo Berditchevsky	Remembered by Jaime and Sara Fainstein	17-Feb/30 Shevat
Max Burgman	Susie Meltzer's Grandfather	17-Feb/30 Shevat
Hadassah Gottesman	Remembered by Elaine Gottesman	17-Feb/30 Shevat
Abbie Kantorovich	Samy Zands' Nephew	17-Feb/30 Shevat
Faye Rose	Janice Zipp Cannizzaro and Elaine Smith's Aunt	17-Feb/30 Shevat
Bea Burke	Beth Vann's Grandmother	18-Feb/1 Adar
Salomon Levy	Alberto Levy and Beatriz Levy-Israel's Father.....	18-Feb/1 Adar
Robert J. Lyons	Lynn Mendelsohn's Father	18-Feb/1 Adar
Joe Miller	Julie Miller's Brother	18-Feb/1 Adar
Mel Tabak	Jennifer Tabak-Levy's Father	18-Feb/1 Adar
*George Roadburg	Harlene Rottenberg's Father, Stephanie Wells' Grandfather.....	19-Feb/2 Adar
Sonia Rosenblum	Naomi Ruth Eisman's Mother	19-Feb/2 Adar
Harry Kanter	Miriam Plotkin's Father	20-Feb/3 Adar
Chaya Levine	Ana Galicot's Mother	20-Feb/3 Adar
Robert Avigdor	Alain Avigdor's Father.....	21-Feb/4 Adar
Naum Gitler	Sarah Fainstein's Uncle.....	21-Feb/4 Adar
Judith 'Lela' Lindenfeld Gorsd	Vivien Ressler's Mother.....	21-Feb/4 Adar
*Dora Rubin	Fanny Hanono's Mother	21-Feb/4 Adar
John Cannizzaro	Remembered by Janice Zipp Cannizzaro	22-Feb/5 Adar
*Betty Markin	Eileen Wingard's Aunt	23-Feb/6 Adar
Esther Siprut	Mark Siprut's Mother	23-Feb/6 Adar
Rudolph Tuteur	Jennifer Tuteur's Grandfather.....	23-Feb/6 Adar
Gregorio Bogan	Ana Galicot's Uncle	24-Feb/7 Adar
*Sylvia Cysner	Remembered by Ohr Shalom.....	24-Feb/7 Adar
Jenne Meltzer	Rabbi Scott Meltzer and Brett Meltzer's Grandmother.....	25-Feb/8 Adar
*Gerry Forman	Reyna Forman's Husband.....	26-Feb/9 Adar
*Jacob Meltzer	Eli Meltzer's Father.....	26-Feb/9 Adar
John Bunton	Jeremiah, Noah, Shoshannah and Nechama Bunton's Father	27-Feb/10 Adar
*Jorge Rosental	Ruben and Fanny Rosental's Son.....	27-Feb/10 Adar
*Morris Casuto	Doreen Casuto's Husband, Loren Casuto's Father.....	28-Feb/11 Adar
Ernest Green	Elizabeth Green's Grandfather	28-Feb/11 Adar

* 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 FEBRUARY-MARCH 2026 / SHEVAT-ADAR 5786

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 14 Shevat 9:00am - Blood Drive 9:30am - Religious School 9:30am - Men's Club Hike 6:15pm - Minyan 7:00pm - Movie Night  Marlee Matlin: Not Alone Anymore	2 15 Shevat Tu B'Shevat 6:15pm - Minyan 6:45pm - Choir Practice 7:00pm - Lomdim BeYachad	3 16 Shevat 6:15pm - Minyan 7:00pm - Meditation w/ Alex van Frank	4 17 Shevat 9:30am - Daf Yomi 6:15pm - Minyan	5 18 Shevat 4:30pm - Religious School 6:15pm - Minyan	6 19 Shevat 2:00pm - Office Closes 6:15pm - Kabbalat Shabbat Service "Ask the Rabbi"  5:08pm	7 20 Shevat Parshat Yitro 9:30am - Shabbat Service 12:30pm - JDAIM Lunch & Learn  7:00pm - USY Movie Night & Parent's Night Out  6:09pm
8 21 Shevat 9:30am - Religious School 6:15pm - Minyan	9 22 Shevat 6:15pm - Minyan 6:45pm - Choir Practice 7:00pm - Lomdim BeYachad	10 23 Shevat 6:15pm - Minyan 7:00pm - Meditation w/ Alex van Frank 7:30pm - Readings with the Rabbi: Golem Girl By Riva Lehrer 	11 24 Shevat 9:30am - Daf Yomi 6:15pm - Minyan	12 25 Shevat 4:30pm - Religious School 6:15pm - Minyan	13 26 Shevat 2:00pm - Office Closes 6:15pm - Shabbat Kehillatit Service & Community Dinner Service  5:14pm	14 27 Shevat Parshat Mishpatim Shabbat Shemot Mevarchim Chodesh 9:30am - Shabbat Service 10:30am - Tot Shabbat 7:00pm - USY Into the Night Event  6:16pm
15 28 Shevat No Religious School 11:00am - JDAIM Keynote Event: Riva Lehrer in Conversation with Rabbi Scott Meltzer  6:15pm - Minyan	16 29 Shevat Presidents Day Office Closed No Minyan No Choir Practice	17 30 Shevat Rosh Chodesh Adar 6:15pm - Minyan 7:00pm - Meditation w/ Alex van Frank	18 1 Adar Rosh Chodesh Adar 9:30am - Daf Yomi 6:15pm - Minyan	19 2 Adar 4:30pm - Religious School 6:15pm - Minyan 7:00pm - Men's Discussion Group	20 3 Adar 2:00pm - Office Closes 6:15pm - Kabbalat Shabbat Service  5:20pm	21 4 Adar Parshat Terumah 9:30am - Shabbat Service  6:22pm
22 5 Adar 9:30am - Religious School 9:30am - L.D.I. #4 6:15pm - Minyan	23 6 Adar 6:15pm - Minyan 6:45pm - Choir Practice 7:00pm - Lomdim BeYachad	24 7 Adar 6:15pm - Minyan 7:00pm - Meditation w/ Alex van Frank	25 8 Adar 9:30am - Daf Yomi 5:00pm - Sisterhood Rosh Chodesh Happy Hour 6:15pm - Minyan	26 9 Adar 4:30pm - Religious School 6:15pm - Minyan	27 10 Adar 2:00pm - Office Closes 6:15pm - Kabbalat Shabbat Service with the Choir  5:26pm	28 11 Adar Parshat Tetzaveh Shabbat Zachor 9:30am - Shabbat Service Afternoon Bar Mitzvah: Greyson Cripps  6:27pm
1 12 Adar 9:30am - Religious School 11:00am - Purim Carnival 6:15pm - Minyan	2 13 Adar Fast of Esther Erev Purim 5:30pm - Dinner 6:30pm - Services 8:00pm - Full Megillah Reading	3 14 Adar Purim 6:15pm - Minyan 7:00pm - Meditation w/ Alex van Frank	4 15 Adar Sushan Purim 9:30am - Daf Yomi 6:15pm - Minyan	5 16 Adar 4:30pm - Religious School 6:15pm - Minyan	6 17 Adar 2:00pm - Office Closes 6:15pm - Kabbalat Shabbat Service  5:32pm	7 18 Adar Parshat Ki Tisa Shabbat Parah 9:30am - Shabbat Service  6:33pm