

The Covenant

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2026 • VOLUME 69 • ISSUE 1



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Editor's Note

MEREDITH LEVINSON

Communications Coordinator
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This issue of the *Covenant* is packed, and I'm so grateful to all those who were generous with their time, resources, and knowledge, for help in putting this together. It's fitting that generosity, or *nedivut*, is our theme for this issue. As Rabbi Cohen mentions in his article on page 4, "As the year unfolds, my prayer for all of us is simple. May we practice *nedivut* not only with our resources, but with our presence, our patience, our attention." I think that sums up this issue of the *Covenant* perfectly. Throughout the pages, you will see articles written by guest contributors, photos of our wonderful recent events, and a slew of upcoming programs to look forward to as a community.

We have special guests joining us throughout January and February, including Rabbi Steve Burnstein, musicians Fred Milder (all the way from Santa Fe!) and our own Fred Kagan, in addition to a weekend with comedian and advocate Pam Schuller! We also have our own congregants leading monthly "Tent Talks," an adult learning series that highlights the passions of fellow members.

Collaborating on this issue with others has given me a new perspective on what generosity truly means, and I will carry that with me into the new year. I hope you are able to gain something from this issue, as well. And, if you're interested in writing an article or submitting photos for a future issue, please reach out to me! I am always seeking fresh ideas and unique contributions from our members.

Meredith Levinson

TORAH PORTIONS



JANUARY

January 3rd	Va-y'chi	Genesis 47:28-50:26
January 10th	Sh'mot	Exodus 1:1-6:1
January 17th	Va-eira	Exodus 6:2-9:35
January 24th	Bo	Exodus 10:1-13:16
January 31st	B'shalach	Exodus 13:17-17:16

FEBRUARY

February 7th	Yitro	Exodus 18:1-20:23
February 14th	Mishpatim	Exodus 21:1-24:18
February 21st	T'rumah	Exodus 25:1-27:19
February 28th	T'tzaveh	Exodus 27:20-30:10

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EVENTS & PROGRAMS

Stitch & Schmooze (Evanston)

Fridays, January 2nd & 16th, and February 6th & 20th @ 10:00 a.m.

Challah Buddies (Baking for tots)

Friday, January 9th @ 5:00 p.m.

Coffee Connections

Sundays, January 11th and February 1st @ 9:15 a.m.

Mahjong

Sundays, January 18th and February 8th @ 9:15 a.m.

Volunteer with The Ark (at Temple Jeremiah)

Mondays, January 19th and February 16th @ 10:00 a.m.

Yoga

Sundays, January 25th and February 22nd @ 9:15 a.m.

Chat & Chew with Danny Glassman

Tuesdays, January 27th and February 24th @ 12:00 p.m.

Mussar and Tu B'shvat in the Garden with Rabbi Cohen

Monday, February 2nd @ 11:00 a.m.

Scott B. Crane Abilities Awareness Shabbat with Special Speaker Pam Schuller

Friday, February 6th @ 6:30 p.m.

Comedy Night with Pam Schuller

Saturday, February 7th @ 6:30 p.m.

Shabbat Dinner with Friends

Friday, February 20th @ 7:30 p.m.

More upcoming events are featured throughout this issue!

Dates and times are subject to change. Check our calendar for the most up-to-date information and to register: tinyurl.com/TJ-calendar

More upcoming events are featured throughout this issue.



"Tent Talks" Adult Learning Series

Learn about the passions of fellow members and maybe spark your own!



The name "Tent Talks" comes from the idea that Abraham had a tent open on all sides to invite everyone in to gather together. The series will be led by a different member each month, and attendees will gather together to learn about these members' careers before delving into what sparked their unique passion, how they developed and grew it outside of their work, and what it has added to their life. This is your opportunity to learn about the usually-secret-side of fellow members, and maybe even spark and discuss your own hidden passion!

Coming up:

Wednesday, January 14th @ 7:00 p.m.

Discussion Leader: Charles Gurian
Passion: City Architecture

Wednesday, February 11th @ 7:00 p.m.

Discussion Leader: Dr. Cory Franklin
Passion: Journalism

To register for individual sessions, visit our calendar tinyurl.com/TJ-calendar

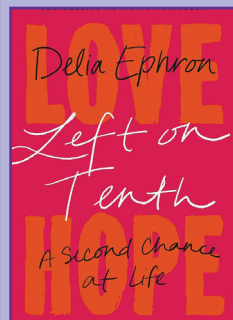
Purim is around the corner! Our annual Shushan Shuffle, carnival, and other Purim activities will be on Sunday, March 1st.

January

Left on Tenth

By Delia Ephron

Thursday, January 8th
10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.



Left on Tenth: A Second Chance at Life is a memoir by Delia Ephron about finding love again after her husband's death, only to be diagnosed with leukemia. The book chronicles her journey through a whirlwind romance with her second husband, Peter, and her subsequent battle with cancer, which she faced with honesty, humor, and the support of loved ones.

Sisterhood Book Club

Interested in joining Sisterhood Book Club?

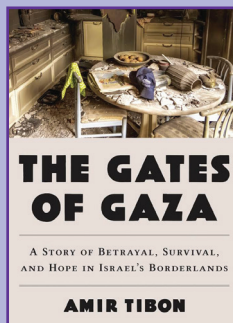
Contact Randi Gurian
(randi.gurian@gmail.com).

February

The Gates of Gaza

By Amir Tibon

Thursday, February 12th
10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.



The Gates of Gaza: A Story of Betrayal, Survival, and Hope in Israel's Borderlands tells the gripping true story of how leading Israeli journalist Amir Tibon, along with his wife and their two young children, were rescued on October 7th, 2023, by Tibon's father — an incredible tale of survival that also reveals the tensions and failures that led to Hamas's attacks that day.



Nedivut, and the Treasure We Carry Home

Beloved Friends,

As we begin the New Year of 2026 together, my heart keeps returning to the beautiful word our tradition offers us for generosity, *nedivut*. It is a word that carries softness and strength at the same time. It reminds us that real generosity is not simply about what we give, but how we give, and from what place inside ourselves that giving flows.

This season invites us to take stock, to notice the blessings that surround us, and to name with honesty the ways we hope to grow. And in these early days of the year, I find myself overwhelmed with gratitude for one blessing in particular, the gift that you, our beloved congregation, have given me, a two month sabbatical. It is no small thing to offer your rabbi the gift of time, time to step back, to breathe, to reflect, to replenish. You have given this with such openness, such trust, such heart, and I receive it with profound appreciation.

Your generosity has touched me deeply. It has reminded me that *nedivut*, generosity, is woven into the very DNA of Temple Jeremiah. It lives in the way you show up for one another, in the way you lift each other through challenge and celebrate one another's joys, and in the way you hold this community with such care. And now, you have extended that same generous spirit to me, allowing me a chance to renew the well of my own spirit so I may return to you refreshed, grounded, and ready once again to serve with clarity and joy.

There is a Hasidic tale I often return to, and perhaps you know it. A man dreams that a treasure waits for him far from home, buried beneath a distant bridge. He travels a long way to reach it, only to be told by the guard there, "If I believed every dream I had, I would be digging under the stove in your own house." And when the man returns home, tired and a little wiser, he discovers the treasure had been there all along, hidden in the very place he started.

As I prepared for this sabbatical, that story has taken on new resonance. This time away is not a search for treasure scattered somewhere out in the world. It is a chance to rediscover what has been here all along. The renewal we seek so often waits for us close to home — in the familiar rhythms of prayer, in the blessings we sometimes overlook, and in the deeper quiet that allows the soul to speak. For me it will include returning to my work on the Mussar text: *Midrash Aseret HaDibrot*, a great text that uses the structure of the Ten Commandments to teach life lessons. I am translating and annotating this work with the hope of furthering our Mussar journey together.

Your generosity has created the space for rediscovery, growth, and renewal. And, like the man in the story, I know that what I ultimately find will only make me more grateful for the home to which I return, this holy community that has shaped my rabbinate and filled my life with meaning.

As the year unfolds, my prayer for all of us is simple. May we practice *nedivut* not only with our resources, but with our presence, our patience, our attention. May we look for treasure not only in the extraordinary moments, but in the familiar places we pass each day. And may we continue to build a community where generosity flows freely, nourishing each of us in ways both seen and unseen.

Thank you, from the depths of my heart, for the gift of this sabbatical. Thank you for your trust, your kindness, your ongoing partnership in shaping the spiritual life of Temple Jeremiah. I look forward to returning with a renewed spirit and a heart wide open, ready for whatever beautiful chapters await us next.

With abiding gratitude,

Scholar in Residence: Rabbi Steve Burnstein

<p>Friday, January 23rd at 6:30 p.m. Kabbalat Shabbat Guest Speaker <i>"The Centrality of Israel in Jewish Life"</i></p>	<p>Saturday, January 24th at 9:30 a.m. Torah Study Leader <i>"Progressive Judaism in Israel: Our Successes and Challenges"</i></p>	<p>Saturday, January 24th at 5:00 p.m. Learning and Havdallah Program <i>"October 7th and Beyond"</i></p>
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5 QUESTIONS FOR...

MARISSA SIMMONS

Temple Jeremiah Choir Conductor & Musical Director

1

Who is Marissa Simmons? Please tell us a little about yourself.

I'm a Chicago-area native. I grew up immersed in music and Judaism. I spent many summers at OSRUI in *Tzofim* and *Mosheva*. I actually decided I wanted to be an opera singer when I was eight years old, and I've been singing and playing instruments since the age of two. I started composing music as a young child as well. It's really always been music for me. I earned my Bachelor of Music in Opera, Music Theory, and Composition from the University of Miami Frost School of Music. Triple music major! (Who needs sleep?!) I then received my Master of Music in Opera from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. I met my husband, Ryan, on JDate while I was in grad school and he was in the Bay Area. I've been back in Chicago as my home base for about 9-10 years, though I've sung with opera companies across the country. I've been singing with the Lyric Opera of Chicago for 4 seasons as well as a number of other local companies. We currently reside in Lincoln Square with our 3 kitties: Watson, Jarvis, and Penny.

Fun Fact: Marissa and her husband love games, axe throwing, and running their custom dice shop called Dice Extractions. They make custom dice, dreidels, dice earrings, and baking extracts.

2

What do you do at Jeremiah?

I've been the Choir Conductor/Director at Jeremiah for about a year. I lead choir rehearsals, teach new music to the choir, help polish and finesse the music we sing, collaborate with Cantor Lianna for all things choir-related, and conduct the choir during any choral services. I sought out this position at Jeremiah because I had sung with the TJ Choir a number of times as a pro and loved the group. This position felt like a natural and pretty perfect fit—melding my love for music and Judaism with an ensemble full of passionate and committed choir members whom I already adored!



Fun Fact: Marissa was just 15 years old when she had her conducting debut leading a full orchestra playing one of her compositions in Austria.

3

What does the "Joy of Belonging" mean to you?

To me, the "Joy of Belonging" is feeling part of a community. I went through a pretty difficult period of losing my three remaining grandparents in one and a half years, and I really struggled to feel like I had someplace where I truly belonged for a while. My *Zayde* was such a massive influence in my Jewish identity, and I do feel like I floundered for a while after he passed. **Being at Temple Jeremiah with the choir has helped me feel that sense of Jewish community and belonging again** and I'm so grateful to all of you for welcoming me with open arms.

Fun Fact: Marissa's favorite Yiddish phrase is one her Zayde taught her: "a meichel in da beichel," or, a version of "a yummy in my tummy."

4

What's your favorite Jewish tradition?

It's hard to pick just one! I always loved learning and leading Jewish songs and prayers with my *Zayde*. I remember, with both fondness and exhaustion, being at *Zayde's* house for *Pesach*. The never-ending Seder—we were lucky if we got to eat dinner by 10:00 p.m. Even though we were all exhausted, I always loved learning to lead with *Zayde* and those are memories I cherish. Outside of my family, my favorite Jewish memories often happened at OSRUI. *Shabbat Shirah* was always such a thrill—the feeling of hundreds of voices united in song is just unbeatable. I particularly always loved when *Shabbat Shirah* would get quieter and we'd all sing Debbie Friedman's *Kumi Lach*. I can still feel that in my soul.

Fun Fact: Marissa walked down the aisle to her own string arrangement "She's Always a Woman" by Billy Joel. It talks about the challenges of being a woman in the music industry, and she identifies with the "humanity and realness in the song."

5

What was your favorite musical experience that you were a part of?

I don't know how to pick just one so I have to give you a few! When I was a little kid, I sang in Gary Fry's children's choir in the *Welcome Yule* concert with the CSO. That was pretty special. In grad school, I sang the title role in *Carmen* which was pretty exhilarating. Most recently, I sang the role of La Zia Principessa in *Suor Angelica*. I always dreamt of singing that role but never thought I would be the appropriate voice type. Now that I'm a contralto, it fits like a glove and was so amazing to be able to perform the role for the first time!



Challenging Antisemitism: A Presentation by Dara Horn

SUSAN SCHINLEBER

On October 22nd, 2025, several members of Temple Jeremiah attended a presentation at North Shore Congregation Israel as part of the Davis Family Forum lecture series sponsored in conjunction with the American Jewish Congress. The featured speaker was Dara Horn, professor of literature at Harvard University and author of seven books, notably of *People Love Dead Jews (PLDJ)*, a finalist for the Kirkus Prize in nonfiction. *PLDJ* comprises a series of individual essays in which Horn argues provocatively that non-Jews are perennially fascinated by Jews after they die but seem indifferent or hostile to us while we are alive. Almost inevitably, the book veers into the rise of contemporary antisemitism and begs the question, “How do we confront it?” Notwithstanding that Horn is currently writing an answer to that question, the evening’s takeaways are worth considering even as we wait for her next book. What follows represent my understanding of Horn’s main points:

1. It is scary to speak up when everyone around you is spouting anti-Israel, anti-Jewish rhetoric.

As she reportedly told one young student, aligning with the crowd and staying silent seems sensible: after all, who wants to be doxed or isolated? But Horn reminds us that Jews have stood apart from mainstream culture for 3,000 years. The festival of Purim reminds us that we are called upon to defend our people and that we were never intended to blend into the majority. Being oppositional is who we are. And keeping silent in the face of discriminatory rhetoric does not feel good: it denies who we are inside.

2. Antisemites paint onto a blank canvas. They target us as enemies of everything they love.

This is why their arguments keep slipping. If they are nationalists, they call us rootless cosmopolitans. If they are capitalists, then we are communists. If they are socialists, they we are diehard nationalists. We are said to threaten everything they hold dear.

3. Outsiders struggle to define us. Is Judaism a race? A religion? A Nationalist movement?

Horn, who majored in Hebrew and Yiddish, tells us that Judaism predates all of these categories. This is why we cannot be contained between these modern constructs.

4. The Story of Chanukah warns us of the dangers of assimilating into majority culture.

The goal is to destroy the Jewish civilization. The Greek cultural enterprise sought to take over the ancient Jewish empire. Horn spoke at length about the Greek gymnasium and the Greek insistence that boys compete in the nude and uncircumcised.

#

**STAND UP
TO JEWISH
HATE**

5. People do not need to bow to tyrants.

She explained that in the ancient Middle East our resistance to idol worship and our belief in one God was originally a political act. She stressed that ours is a tradition based on liberation and the open and free debate of ideas; this made it very threatening to tyrants, all of whom hate dissent and anything that challenges their particular point of view.

6. The Big Lie

The Big Lie is that Jews are the obstacle to the thing they value most.

In the question and answer session that followed her remarks, Horn told us that in her experience traveling around the country, the majority of Americans are ignorant, not necessarily filled with hate for Jews/Israel, and she made some outstanding observations:

First, do not respond to statements such as “Israel Committed Genocide in Gaza” or “Israel is a settler/colonialist state.” If we start explaining why these statements are wrong, we enter into the game our enemies want us to play. Instead, we should ask people what they think about the fact that the U.S. invaded and occupied Iraq and Afghanistan, killed hundreds of thousands of people and were never once accused of genocide.

Second, tell them that never in the course of human history of war has any combatant state ever stopped to deliver food to the civilian population of the combatant they are fighting against. Never.

Third, always remember that we are all descendants of people who made unpopular choices. Remember that popularity is not the metric of what is true.

At a time when we are inundated with negative stories and when so many people seem to be against us, it was uplifting and inspiring to be told that ours is a proud, wonderful tradition of opposition, that we are people who do not succumb to majority opinion, that we are the people who steadfastly and stubbornly uphold our own amazing traditions.

Susan is a lifelong educator, storyteller, and public speaker whose career has been deeply rooted in helping others understand the lasting impact of the Holocaust and the importance of historical memory. Susan’s work is defined by her commitment to truth-telling, historical empathy, and fostering global awareness through storytelling, scholarship, and service.

The 1960s

Decades Luncheon

On Tuesday, November 11th, during our annual Decades Luncheon, we visited the 1960s! With special performances from Cantors Amy Zussman and Lianna Mendelson, Rabbi Paul Cohen, Matt Rissien, Fred Kagan, Marc Mayer, and David Lornson on piano, this decade was a hit!



CELEBRATE SHABBAT SHIRAH

Experience Shabbat Shirah, our annual Shabbat of Song!

Friday, January 30th

6:30 p.m.

**Kabbalat Shabbat featuring
our choir, Fred Kagan, &
Fred Milder**

7:30 p.m.

**Shabbat Dinner
With Friends**

Saturday, January 31st

4:30 p.m.

**Havdallah House
Concert With Fred
Kagan & Fred Milder**

**To register for individual events,
visit tinyurl.com/TJ-calendar**



HONORING RABBI COHEN



Honoring Rabbi Cohen Through the Lens of Mussar

LAURA BERNSTEIN
Temple Jeremiah Member Since 1985

As we enter the new year and turn our attention to this issue's *middah* of generosity (*Nedivut*), I've been thinking deeply about what it truly means to give of oneself—of time, of presence, of compassion. For me, the clearest example lives in a moment my family will never forget.

I have belonged to our synagogue for as long as I can remember. I grew up in these hallways beside my parents and brothers, celebrating holidays, learning, singing, and finding my place in our community. Now, as I raise my own children here, I understand even more profoundly what it means to have a spiritual home—one that grows with you, supports you, and surrounds you with care.

Two years ago, when my amazing mom suffered a sudden stroke, everything in my world stopped. Those first hours and days were filled with fear, uncertainty, and a sense of helplessness I had never known before. And in the middle of that storm stood Rabbi Cohen, unwavering in his presence.

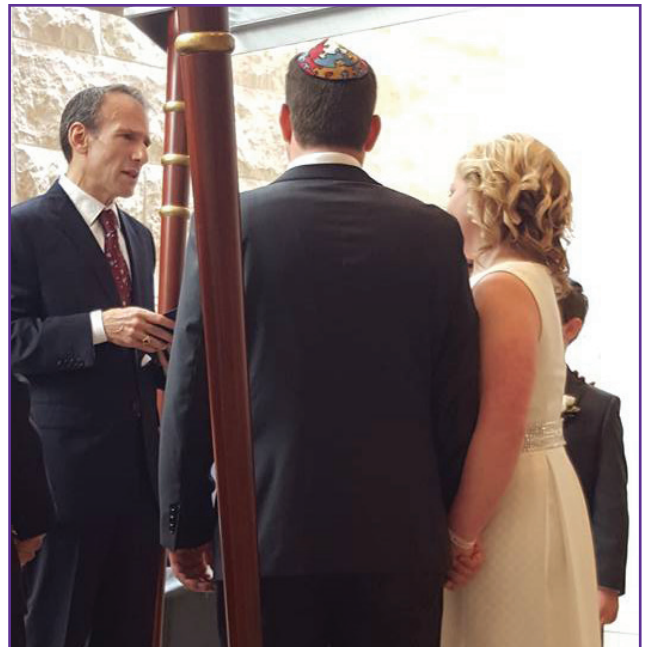
Before we had even found our footing, he was already there—at the hospital visiting my mom. He didn't arrive with grand speeches or rehearsed prayers. He came with something far more powerful: his full presence. His quiet words, gentle grounding, and calm strength helped steady our family when we were barely standing. We talked about his new granddaughters, which brought light into the room! We shared stories from over the years and laughed together.

As we spotlight the *middah* of generosity this month, I'm reminded that *Nedivut* isn't about the size of the gift, but the sincerity behind it. It's the willingness to show up, fully and wholeheartedly, even when it would be easier not to. Rabbi Cohen's example continues to inspire me to bring that same spirit into my own life—into my parenting, my relationships, and the way I show up for others in our community.

My family will forever be grateful for the generosity he and so many others from temple shared during one of our hardest chapters. And I am grateful to belong to a synagogue where such kindness is not an exception—it is the very heartbeat of who we are. ★

Throughout the last several months, our Covenant newsletter has paid tribute to Rabbi Paul Cohen and the profound impact he has had on our Temple Jeremiah community. In each issue, we will continue to spotlight different *middot*—Mussar traits—reflecting Rabbi Cohen's commitment to personal growth and ethical living.

Rabbi Cohen has introduced countless members to the wisdom of Mussar, and we are proud to honor his legacy through these teachings. Each of these reflections are from guest writers sharing personal stories and meaningful moments with Rabbi Cohen. Together, we celebrate a leader whose influence continues to shape our congregation with heart, purpose, and intention.



Rabbi Cohen officiating at Laura and Corey Bernstein's wedding in 2015 in the Golder Chapel.

**L'Chaim
on the Porch**

Look out for
more details in
the coming
months!

Please save the date for an evening of celebration
in honor of Rabbi Cohen

**Saturday,
May 30th, 2026
6:00 p.m.**

A Message From...



Temple Jeremiah's President

STEVE KLEIMAN
skleiman@zazove.com

Strengthening Our Future: Important Clergy and Membership Updates

Dear Friends,

I am writing to share two very exciting updates. First, as you know, Rabbi Cohen will be shifting his role to Rabbi Emeritus and Senior Scholar on July 1st, 2026. In his new position, we will continue to be blessed with Rabbi Cohen's presence, wisdom, and experience for many years to come as he focuses his energies largely on teaching, pastoral care, and philanthropy. And, we are truly blessed to have Rabbi Heaps ready to move us into a new phase of leadership as the fourth senior Rabbi in Temple Jeremiah's history. Rabbi Heaps brings a passion to build an engaged, inclusive, and vibrant Jewish community. I have no doubt that she is poised to lead us into a very bright future.

This transition creates an opportunity for us to strengthen our clergy team by adding an Assistant Rabbi to our professional staff. The most important responsibility of our new Assistant Rabbi will be to create deeper and even more meaningful connections within our Temple Jeremiah community through their work on programming, our J-Quest religious school, pastoral care, life cycle events, and worship. In addition to engaging broadly across our membership, our new Assistant Rabbi will have a particular focus on community building among our young families.

The search process will be run by our Clergy Search Committee, organized to represent a broad cross-section of our congregation. The committee includes long-time and newer members and has representatives from different age groups and life stages who bring a range of perspectives and experiences.

Along with myself and Rabbi Heaps, the committee includes Committee Chair Ross Wolfson, Executive Vice President Avi Greenfield, Ruthie Adler, Eric Chern, Mara Franken, Mandi Frost, Mari Greenberger, Marla Morgen, and Al Slutsky. I am confident that this committee will identify a candidate who can connect with and serve our entire Temple Jeremiah community. The Clergy Search Committee will be working diligently to identify and interview qualified candidates with the goal of adding a new Assistant Rabbi to our community starting July 1st, 2026.

Second, in addition to seeking an Assistant Rabbi, we are also creating a new Membership Liaison position. This new position will play a vital role in implementing our plan to recruit new members and grow our Temple Jeremiah community, as well as provide a warm and personable contact to ensure that our new families feel welcomed, connected, and engaged.

Our transition in leadership makes for a very exciting year to come at Temple Jeremiah.

With warmest regards,



OSRUI
A URJ CAMP

Scan the QR code for more information and to register:



CONGREGATIONAL FAMILY CAMP

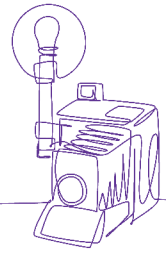
Join us this winter at OSRUI
for a multi-congregational family camp weekend.
Open to all families with religious school-aged children.

January 16th-18th, 2026



ICYMI...

(In Case You Missed It)



Club 36 Dave & Buster's

On October 25th, Club 36 (3rd-6th graders) enjoyed time at Dave & Buster's. Games were played, prizes were won, and laughs echoed throughout the night!



Chocolate Tasting & Meditation

Katrina Markoff, owner of Violet Flame Chocolate, brought her craft and mindfulness to TJ on Wednesday, October 29th for a one-of-a-kind chocolate tasting – inspiring attendees' palates and souls with ingredients, stories, and meditations from around the world.

New Member Breakfast

On Sunday, November 2nd, new TJ members joined other congregants for a welcoming breakfast, complete with an omelette station led by Chef Rabbi Rachel and Chef Danny!



Sunday Morning Mahjong

On select Sundays, adults are welcome to play Mahjong in our community space! American Mahjong is a challenging tile-based game that keeps your cognitive skills crisp, reduces stress, and improves memory for all ages. Most importantly, it is fun! Your next chance to play is Sunday, January 18th at 9:15 a.m.

Shir Joy

Shir Joy, our youth choir, performed for the residents at Gidwitz Place in Deerfield on Sunday, November 9th, and everyone had a great time! Shir Joy is an opportunity for children to have fun with their friends, learn some songs, and sing them the same day. Shir Joy will meet and perform next on Sunday, January 11th at 1:00 p.m. Contact Cantor Lianna (cantormendelson@templejeremiah.org) to join!



Afro-Semetic Experience Concert

The Afro-Semetic Experience, a genre-defying ensemble that blends the rich musical traditions of the Jewish and African diasporas into a soul-stirring celebration of unity and community, treated J-Quest students to a private concert on Sunday, November 16th. Even our teachers were up and dancing! The band then had a meet-and-greet and put on another show for adults in the afternoon. This event was generously funded by the Stanley C. Golder Interfaith Initiative Fund.

Adoption Awareness Month Shabbat

On Friday, November 14th, those who have been touched by adoption in any way were invited to join us for a pizza gathering celebrating community, connection, and shared stories, followed by a special Kabbalat Shabbat worship. Director of Congregational Learning Matt Rissien planned this wonderful evening and spoke during the service about his own family's journey adopting their son, Henry.



Meet Us at The Bar (Method)

All experience levels were welcome to try a barre class at The Bar Method in Northfield on Wednesday, December 3rd! Organized by congregant Dana Garbarski, the private class was taught by Catherine James, the owner and master instructor who brought The Bar Method to Chicago almost 20 years ago. Thank you to all who participated!

COMMITTEE SPOTLIGHTS

Development Committee



Spotlight on Philanthropy: Leading with Heart — Meet Ally Marks Greenfield, Development Committee Chair

LESLIE LANDMAN

Director of Philanthropy
leslie@templejeremiah.org

As Director of Philanthropy, I am fortunate to partner with our dedicated Development Committee to create meaningful pathways for supporting Temple Jeremiah.

Meet the rest of our 2025-2026 Development Committee:

Ellie Forman | Karen Gitles |
Fern Kamen | Marla Morgen |
Jessica Wayne | Josh Winer

Stay tuned for future spotlights featuring these dedicated members.

I am delighted to introduce **Ally Marks Greenfield, Chair of our Development Committee**. Ally brings extensive fundraising experience — from her years of work at the CJE SeniorLife to her current role as Executive Director of the Israel Cancer Research Fund. For the Greenfields, Temple Jeremiah is

a true family value: Ally's husband, Avi, has served on our Board of Directors since 2015 and will become the next temple president, and their daughters, Sloan and Zoe, attended our religious school (now J-Quest) and were confirmed at Temple Jeremiah.



We invited Ally to share what inspires her leadership and love for this community:

Finding Home at Temple Jeremiah

"We moved to Glenview in 2008 and shortly after joined the temple," Ally recalls. "After meeting **Ken Lorch** through my work at CJE, his enthusiasm and warm introductions made it feel like the perfect community for us."

Like Ken, you are the best ambassadors for Temple Jeremiah. Invite your friends to visit so they can see firsthand what makes Temple Jeremiah so special!

Ken Lorch is a longtime member. He is an attorney and a dedicated lay leader in the Jewish community, having served as temple president in 2013-2015 and as co-chair of our vital *Building Tomorrow Together* campaign, as well as holding various leadership positions at the Jewish Federation and currently serving as Board Chair of CJE SeniorLife.

Why Philanthropy Matters

"Being in fundraising, I understand how much it takes to sustain the meaningful programs and experiences that make Temple Jeremiah so special," Ally says. "I am passionate about ensuring that Temple Jeremiah thrives for many generations, and I know that financial support is essential to make that happen."

A Vision for the Development Committee

Every donation, large or small, helps sustain the community you value!

Ally hopes the committee will raise awareness and create opportunities for all temple members to participate.

"Temple Jeremiah has so many amazing avenues for engagement," she explains. "With the support of our community, we can continue funding and providing these experiences for everyone."

The Development Committee nurtures a culture of giving, deepens relationships, and helps every member see the meaningful impact of their support—both individually and collectively.

Join Us in Supporting Temple Jeremiah

Philanthropy is more than donations—it is the lifeblood of our community. This year, 10.1% of our annual operating budget relies on contributions beyond our members' annual community commitments.

Philanthropy dollars account for approximately 10% of our annual budget.

Your support ensures that Temple Jeremiah continues to be a vibrant center for Reform Jewish life—for worship, music, education, social justice, and community programs. It sustains our talented clergy and staff, maintains our beautiful building, and enables meaningful experiences for every member, today and for generations to come.

A strong endowment ensures that the temple can respond to unexpected needs and plan for the long term.

With your participation, we can continue to grow our programs, deepen connections, and create moments of joy that bring our community together. Every gift, big or small, makes a real difference. **For more information about ways to support Temple Jeremiah, please contact Leslie at leslie@templejeremiah.org**. Please see our webpage for more details about our budget and feel free to contact Danny Glassman at daniel@templejeremiah.org with any questions.

Inclusion Committee

The Temple Jeremiah Inclusion Committee had a busy, successful year hosting holidays, events, and community volunteer programs. Here's a taste of what happened in 2025:

- February: Jewish Disabilities Awareness and Inclusion Month (JDAAIM) and Scott B. Crane Abilities Awareness Shabbat** - Jordan Dann from the Shirley Ryan AbilityLab spoke on rehabilitation in alignment with Jewish history and values.
- April: Passover Seder** - This event featured the Selah Choir and was for individuals with different abilities and their families and friends.
- June: Garden Party** - Participants, along with committee members and Cantor Lianna, prepared the beautiful Inclusion Garden planter boxes that grace the temple entrance, followed by a Havdallah service.



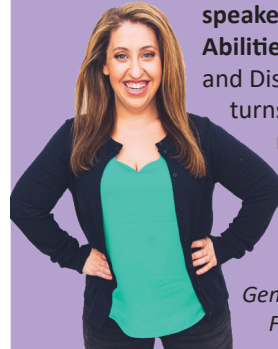
- July: Feed the Hungry** - Committee members partnered with TotalLink to Community to pack lunches for Feed the Hungry.
- September: Rosh HaShanah** - There was a special service for individuals with different abilities and their families and friends. Guests from both the family service and the Inclusion service decorated the new temple banners with Rosh HaShanah greetings that were used in the Sukkah.
- December: Chanukah Celebration** - Music, pizza, dancing, activities, the Selah Choir, and a DJ got the party going. Chanukah treats and a menorah lighting were enjoyed by all. Donations for The Ark were collected to help those in need.
- Ongoing partnership with Misericordia volunteers** who arrive on Monday mornings to serve as temple greeters, Inclusion Garden tenders, pencil sharpeners, marker/pen testers, and all-around helpful hands as needed and appropriate.

There's more to come in 2026! If you have a family member with special needs or if you're looking for an opportunity to volunteer, come join us. The Inclusion Committee always has something going on and welcomes new members and ideas. Meetings are on the third Tuesday of the month at 10:00 a.m. at temple in the Multipurpose Room.

For more information, contact: Caren Brown (ceb994@gmail.com) or Barb Kite (bkite1002@gmail.com).

Coming Up:

Celebrate Jewish Disability Awareness, Advocacy, and Inclusion Month at Temple Jeremiah! JDAAIM is a time when we come together to recognize and lift up the voices, experiences, and legacies of individuals with disabilities. On Friday, **February 6th**, we will welcome **Comedian, Speaker, and Advocate Pamela Schuller** as our featured speaker during our annual **Scott B. Crane Abilities Awareness Shabbat**.

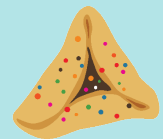


Comedian and Disability Advocate Pamela Schuller turns neurological chaos into powerful messages of inclusion. She doesn't just talk inclusion — she lives it, teaches it, and makes it hilariously unforgettable.

Generously funded by the Goldberg Family Fund for Special Needs Programming

& More:

Purim Hamantaschen Baking and Havdallah
Saturday, February 28th



Backpack Blessings with J-Quest Students
Sunday, April 19th

Garden Party and Havdallah
Saturday, June 6th



Social Justice & Advocacy

Thank you for supporting A Safe Place!

Dear friends,

I wanted to take a moment to thank you for your generous donations and help with sorting, loading, and delivery to create Thanksgiving baskets for 50 clients of A Safe Place. We were able to provide several Thanksgiving meals to individuals and families affected by intimate partner violence served by this organization.

Our ability to use not just our financial resources but our time and physical resources to help this organization is so appreciated—when we do the shopping and collecting, it gives the organization more time to focus on their clients.

We are generous with our financial resources, AND we are a community of doers. And that makes all the differences in so many ways. Thank you for taking the time to shop and drop off your items. Collectively we have been able to provide holiday meals for the clients who need some respite, and we took the burden off those who serve the clients to focus on the work they need to do.

Thank you for being part of this important work.

All the best,
Dana Garbarski
Social Justice Co-Chair



Feed the Hungry Packing Parties

Want to do some good with other Temple members? Please join us for a Feed the Hungry Packing Party! We will have everything we need to make lunches, you just need to show up (and bring some friends)! Can't make it? Please consider donating to support our packing parties (on your Temple Jeremiah account, click donate, choose Social Justice, and write "Feed the Hungry" in the notes). As always, we are grateful for any lunches you drop off. **The next Packing Parties will be Fridays, January 2nd and February 27th at 5:45 p.m.**

Feed the Hungry

Feed the Hungry (FTH) *Drop Off Only* will take place next on **Sunday, January 4th**. Please drop off your lunches by **9:00 a.m.** FTH, which will take place in its regular format on **Sunday, February 1st**, is a wonderful opportunity to make lunches together as a family on a Saturday night and bring them to the temple on the first Sunday of every month. Questions? Please contact Mindy Kurtz (cupermom@aol.com). To sign up, visit tinyurl.com/FTH2526.

Backpack Blessings

Backpack Blessings, a program that helps children stay nourished outside of the walls of a school building, returns on **Sunday, January 25th at 9:00 a.m.** Backpack Blessings is dependent on volunteers who give their time once a month to pack and deliver food. Members and guests are welcome. To sign up to help pack and deliver the bags, visit tinyurl.com/TJBPB2526.

Help Us Help Others

Temple Jeremiah's Social Justice Committee is here to help you get involved in giving back! If you have any ideas for additional social action programs and advocacy platforms, please contact Dana Garbarski (dana.garbarski@gmail.com).

Receive Advocacy Alerts

If you are interested in receiving Advocacy Updates via text messages, please scan the QR code. If you have questions about our social advocacy platforms, contact Nancy Eisenberg, Barb Miller, or Jill Patano.



On Celebrating a Milestone Birthday

- Suzie Turover; January 1st
- Lizzie Grant; January 3rd
- Mary Vihon; January 4th
- Gary Frank; January 9th
- Norberto Kogan; January 12th
- Josh Babcock; January 12th
- Jamie Feld; January 13th
- Oliver Kramer; January 13th
- Ariel Silver; January 13th
- Debra Magad; January 14th
- John Maeglin; January 16th
 - Aaron Winkler; January 16th
 - Lori Wolff; January 18th
 - Sara Liebman; January 23rd
 - Evan Zimble; January 26th
 - Joel Schatz; January 30th
- Corinne Granof; February 4th
- Shirley Craven; February 5th
- Mark Weinberg; February 9th
- Anne Malmed; February 9th
- Jen Rubin; February 12th
- Jerry Bockenek; February 13th
- Bobbie Murokh; February 15th
- Erika Wilson; February 15th
- Mindy Kurtz; February 17th
- Kory Blumer; February 17th
- Jesse Gray; February 18th
- Randie Bricker; February 19th
- Susan Klieger; February 21st
- Stephen Eisen; February 23rd
- Liz Adelstein; February 24th
- Darcy Babcock; February 25th
- Scott Stephenson; February 28th



On Celebrating a Milestone Anniversary

- Gary and Ceil Rothbart; 50 years
- Scott and Holly Rubin; 40 years



On Becoming a B'nai Mitzvah

- Aven Shai Kaplan; January 17th. Aven's parents are Amy Rizman and Danny Kaplan.
- Blake Madeline Lazarus; January 24th. Blake's parents are Jason and Renee Lazarus.
- Ava Jordan Siedband; January 24th. Ava's parents are Brian and Julie Siedband.
- Robert Gerald Pfeifer; January 31st. Robby's parents are Marissa and Matthew Pfeifer.
- Aiden Jarrett Gers; February 21st. Aiden's parents are Alison and Brett Gers.
- Zack Murokh; February 21st. Zack's parents are Caroline and Dmitry Murokh.
- Mia Delphine Kramer; February 28th. Mia's parents are Oliver Kramer and Sarita Schueller-Kramer.



Acknowledgements

IN SUPPORT OF

A Safe Place Thanksgiving

-Emily and Howard Green
-Lori and Gary Kash
-Lauren Krupp
-Debra Magad
-Roberta Mallon and Lewis Robert
-Vicki and Jay Stoller
-Jessica and David Wayne

Temple Jeremiah

-Bobbie and Norman Bloch
-Bonnie and Edward Tefka

IN APPRECIATION OF

High Holy Days

-Jane Ander
-Betty and Sherwin Baker
-Irene Barkin
-Lisa and Miles Cohen
-Jamey Eklund
-Carol Iseo
-Judith Portman
-David Robert
-Jennifer and Noah Schnepfer
-Linda Silver
-Laurie Skinner
-Alice Solovy
-Tiffany Kovin-Timmeney and Craig Timmeney
-Debra and Rick Winer

Makers Market

-Karen and David Krosnick
-Robin and Jon Lavin

Cantor Amy Zussman

-Elan Adler and Bill Johnson
-Ellen and Alan Toban

IN HONOR OF

Julia Aronson

Daughter of Lisa and Tom Aronson, on the occasion of her marriage to Ari Perlmutter
-Lisa and Tom Aronson

Rabbi Paul Cohen

-Wendy and Richard Baum
-Ellen and Alan Toban

Nancy Eisenberg

On the occasion of her special birthday
-Dana Garbarski and Daniel Weisman

Aaron, Melissa, and Della Friedman

-Andrea Roberts

Rabbi Rachel Heaps

-Ellen and Alan Toban

Nora and Greta Herbstman

Daughters of Annie and Ben Herbstman
-Annie and Ben Herbstman

Howard Hirschfield

Brother-in-law of Nancy Hirschfield, uncle of Carol Hirschfield and Jill Meltzer
-Nancy Hirschfield

Lois Hirschfield

Sister-in-law of Nancy Hirschfield, aunt of Carol Hirschfield and Jill Meltzer
-Nancy Hirschfield

Lisa Holzman

Daughter of Debbie and Gary Holzman, on the occasion of her marriage to Daniel Pesin
-Debbie and Gary Holzman

Shirley Karasik

Mother of Nancy Hirschfield, grandmother of Carol Hirschfield and Jill Meltzer
-Nancy Hirschfield

Madeline Lefteroff Korey

Daughter of Lindsay Lefteroff, on the occasion of her becoming a Bat Mitzvah
-Lindsay Lefteroff

Julie and Joel Levin

On the occasion of their 70th wedding anniversary
-Sandra Rich

Chris and David Loundy

-Jay Dembsky and Diane Morgenthaler

The Lubetsky Family

-Michelle and Martin Lubetsky

The Marouni Family

For welcoming their guests on Rosh HaShanah
-Linda and Herzl Marouni

Cantor Lianna Mendelson

-Ellen and Alan Toban

Mia Milton

Daughter of Jennifer Wicks and Jason Milton, granddaughter of Maralee and Ed Wicks, on the occasion of her Hebrew naming
-Maralee and Ed Wicks

Rabbi Robert Schreiber

On the occasion of his 90th birthday
-Nancy and Arnee Eisenberg
-Joan Golder
-Linda and Michael Goorvich
-Geri and Michael Greenberg
-Roberta Mallon and Lewis Robert
-Liz Trager-Mendel and Scott Mendel
-Carol Mitchel
-Emmy Rothschild
-Ellie and Fred Schwimmer
-Patty and Marc Turim
-Mary and Jerry Weinberg
-Jean and Bob Young

Eunice and Jerry Shapiro

On the occasion of their 50th wedding anniversary
-Eunice and Jerry Shapiro

Shelly Trilling

-Marilyn and Leonard Asimow

IN MEMORY OF

Bernard Baum

Father of Richard Baum
-Lori and David Ruskin

Carol Cohen

Mother of Jay Gitles, mother-in-law of Karen Gitles
-Karen Gitles and Mike Jablo
-Geri and Michael Greenberg

Terri and Robert Cohn

Parents of Jamie Kost
-Jamie and Jeff Kost

Wally Christenholz

Brother-in-law of Michael Mitzen
-Phyllis and Michael Mitzen

Byron Denenberg

Husband of Judy Denenberg; father of Gail Belian and Andrew Denenberg
-Gail and Terry Belian

Danna Dudnick

-Randi and Charles Gurian

Norman Feit

Father of Jessica Schar
-Jessica and Stephen Schar

Jeffrey Felsenthal

Father of Benita Logiudice
-Benita and Mathew Logiudice

Herb Horn

Husband of Bonnie Horn
-Elan Adler and Bill Johnson
-Jeanne and Gabe Angres
-Carol and Joe Atkin
-JoAnn Baumann
-Trudy Bers
-Caren Brown
-Wendie Dalberg
-Elizabeth Blodgett and Jonathan Don
-Susie and Roger Fein
-Joan Golder
-Linda and Michael Goorvich
-Kay and Bart Gordon
-Geri and Michael Greenberg
-Randi and Charles Gurian
-Jamie and Bruce Hague
-Susan and Sheldon Isenberg
-Susan and Jules Joffe
-Lori and Gary Kash
-Diana Kaufmann
-Zorina and Edward Pelant
-Barb Kite
-Lisa and Steve Kleiman
-Leslie Landman
-Mara Lane
-Amy and Scott Levin
-Sara and Martin Liebman
-Susan and Ken Lorch
-Roberta Mallon and Lewis Robert
-Liz Trager-Mendel and Scott Mendel
-Nadine and Bob Robin
-Emmy Rothschild
-Dianne and Joel Rovner
-Babette Sanders
-Alice and Steve Schultz
-Stacey and Mike Shudak
-Rachel and Marvin Siegel
-Vicki and Jay Stoller
-Mary and Jerry Weinberg
-Vicki Weisenberg
-Ros Wolfe
-Fern Bloom
-Laura and Bruce Zimmerman
-Amy Zussman and David Fell

Billy Johnson

Son of Bill Johnson
-Caren Brown
-Elan Adler and Bill Johnson
-Hershy Pappadis
-Susan and Allen Slutsky

Sidney Kaplan

Father of Bob Kaplan
-Anne and Bob Kaplan

Marshall Kayman

Father of Brian Kayman
-Linda Kayman

Stuart Kessler

-Kathy and Marc Mayer

Sarah Keston

Aunt of Sara Liebman
-Sara and Marty Liebman

Zelda and David Kost

Parents of Jeff Kost
-Jamie and Jeff Kost

Marshall Kotz

Father of Mark Kotz
-Mark Kotz

Jerry Lidsky

Husband of Anne Lidsky
-Joan Golder
-Debra and Gary Holzman
-Susan and Howard Rosenberg

Clara Lieberman

Mother of Carol Fishbain
-Carol and Arnie Fishbain

Robert Margolis

Husband of Sherry Margolis
-Caren Brown

Beverly Miloshy

-Betty and Sherwin Baker

Florence 'Chevy' Mitzen

Mother of Michael Mitzen
-Phyllis and Michael Mitzen

Ruth Kost Pollakov

Sister of Jeff Kost
-Jamie and Jeff Kost

Marian Rabin

Mother of Arlene Drucker,
grandmother of Laura Bernstein
-Arlene and Steve Drucker

Bernard Rosenberg

Father of Howard Rosenberg
-Susan and Howard Rosenberg

Howard Rosenblum

Uncle of Jan Wolf
-Jan and Jerry Wolf

Donald Saltzman

Father of Amy Saltzman
-Amy Saltzman and Hal Unterberger

Jeffrey Sanders

Husband of Babette Sanders
-Elan Adler and Bill Johnson
-Marla Baratz and Jon Karmel
-Caren Brown
-Judy and Rick Capullo
-Barbara and Allen Cohen
-Elizabeth Blodgett and Jonathan Don
-Ronda and Dan Franks
-Karen Gitles and Michael Jablo
-IPTA- Illinois Delegation
-Randi and Charles Gurian
-Bonnie Horn
-Michelle Hustead
-Lori and Gary Kash
-Barb Kite
-Lisa and Steve Kleiman
-Leslie Landman
-Amy and Scott Levin
-Nancy London
-Susan and Ken Lorch
-Liz Trager-Mendel and Scott Mendel
-Hershy Pappadis
-Michael Riley, Sr. and Mike Riley, Jr.
-Emmy Rothschild
-Holly and Scott Rubin
-NUPTHMS Family
-Babette Sanders and Family
-Robyn Serrano
-Susan and Allen Slutsky
-Susan Suria
-Judy and Jerry Tatar
-Sandra Wall
-Vicki Weisenberg
-Dana Garbarski and Daniel Weisman
-Ros Wolfe
-Amy Zussman and David Fell

Nathan Schwartz

Brother-in-law of Howard Brenner
-Howard Brenner

Herman Simon

Father of Jeff Kost
-Jamie and Jeff Kost

Ruth and Jerome Wise

In-laws of Susan Wise, grandparents
of Robin Sheperd
-Susan Wise

Bennett Zaiken

Brother of Phyllis Klapman
-Phyllis and Jim Klapman

Joseph Zaiken

Father of Phyllis Klapman
-Phyllis and Jim Klapman

Thank You!

*Donations received and processed after October 31st that are not listed above, will appear in the next issue of the *Covenant*.

Donate

Making a donation to Temple Jeremiah is a wonderful way to honor a friend or family member on their happy occasion or to memorialize a loved one. There are specific funds you can make a donation to that support and enhance education programs for youth, adults, and our congregation as a whole. You can make a donation in two easy ways:

- Click on "Make a Donation" at templejeremiah.org or visit the Member Login section and click on "Donate" to donate online via credit card or ACH/eCheck.
- Mail a check to Temple Jeremiah, 937 Happ Road, Northfield, IL 60093. Be sure to include a note as to what the donation is for and which fund you prefer.

For questions about Hall of Remembrance plaques or Wall of Life leaves, please contact Leslie Landman (leslie@templejeremiah.org).

Because the Joy of Belonging Matters Today, Tomorrow, and Always

We are grateful to our **Covenant Society members** whose generosity ensures Temple Jeremiah thrives for generations. By including the Temple in your plans, you help nurture **connection, community, and Jewish life** for years to come.

Learn more about Legacy Giving: Leslie@TempleJeremiah.org

Thank you to all who have already shared their plans to make a lasting impact! A full list of Covenant Society members can be found by scanning the QR code below.



Joy, connection, and care are at the heart of everything we do. Gifts to our Annual Fund help ensure that we can continue to create meaningful moments every day through our programs, worship, and education. Please consider a new or additional gift to our Annual Fund. Together, we make a difference.



Support our Annual Fund



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Visit us at templejeremiah.org



Temple Jeremiah is committed to being accessible and inclusive for all of its members and for the community. We welcome people of all ages, races, genders, sexual orientations, and abilities. Temple Jeremiah welcomes you as you are.

COMEDY NIGHT
WITH PAM SCHULLER
Taco Bar Dinner, BYOB, & A Comedy Show for Adults!

*Featuring Bubbie Merriam,
America's Favorite Drag
Bubbie, as EmCee!*

**Saturday,
February 7th
6:30 p.m.**

Register: 

Generously funded by the Bill and Norma Brown Fund for Lifelong Learning