



חדשות Chadashot

Adar I/Adar II 5784
March 2024

News from The West Temple



Features

Rabbi's Desk ...1-3

President's Desk ...4-6

Educator's Desk ...7

Photos ...8

Hebrew School ...9

You're Invited ...10-13

Celebrations ...14

Yahrzeits ...15

Service Schedule ...16

Contributions ...17



Silence and the Power of Speech

A few weeks ago my family went out to dinner. Our server had a lovely speaking voice – she sounded like she might be a singer or actor. So we asked her: “You have such a lovely voice! Are you a singer or an actor?” Suddenly a huge smile appeared on her face. She said that she was actually a school counselor. She had finished her degree in December and was planning to work in a school in September. For now, she is waiting tables.

But that smile!

Words are so very powerful. By asking her that simple question, we made her night!

(continued Page 2)

A few weeks ago, I attended a professional development retreat for rabbis, hosted by the Institute for Jewish Spirituality. The theme of the retreat was “The Power of Speech.” Perhaps ironically, part of each day was spent in silence: We stopped speaking after our evening session and refrained from speaking until about 2 PM the following day.

I had plenty of time to think about the power of words.

Since October 7, I haven’t been able to get away from the war in Israel and Gaza. My mind has been consumed with worrying about the hostages that were kidnapped by Hamas, worrying about innocent Gazans being used as human shields for Hamas, the hundreds of thousands of people who have been displaced, and the people who are left behind after their loved ones were killed. As a result, I wasn’t sleeping. My body was covered in a rash. I felt anxious all the time.

On the retreat, we didn’t only meditate and study; we were asked to write. I found myself writing with a focus on death, genocide, hunger, devastation – horrible words. No wonder I was covered in a rash! On the final day of the retreat, listening to what my colleagues had written, I realized that *I* have the freedom to decide what words to focus on. I could focus on the peacemakers, the helpers, and the organizations that are trying to forge relationships between Israelis and Palestinians. I could focus on hope.

Rabbi Nachman of Bratzlav taught that even when it seems as if all is bleak and hopeless, it is important to find the one spark of Good in that place. Focus on that one spark, and it will grow and grow until there is room for nothing else. I’ve been thinking about this: what if *all of us* focused on the one spark of Good?

Words have great power. Chasidic teachings teach us that anything we can imagine already exists in the “upper world.” When we speak, we draw down what we are talking about from the upper world into our world, the “lower world.” If we speak of good and love and joy and blessings, we draw those things down from the upper world into our world. If we speak of negative situations and feelings, we draw those down into our world.

What would life be like if we could really focus on the positive – not to ignore the negative, but to drown it out, to make it so that there is no room for anything but Good?

Ever since my realization that I could *choose* which words, which news reports, and which broadcasts to focus on, my rash has gone away. I still read the newspaper and listen to the news. I still mourn for the people in this war who are suffering, and I still want to fight for their release from suffering. I want to advocate for the hostages to be released. But I'm also focusing on the positive – the organizations and individuals that are forging positive relationships between Palestinians and Israelis and the political activists in Israel and here, who are working to bring an end to this war, to free the hostages, and to facilitate an acceptable agreement between Israel and Gaza.

As you move through your days, may you have the wherewithal to focus on Good. May the Good grow and grow until there is room for nothing else. So that, as the poet Judy Chicago wrote in her "Merger Poem," the world will become Eden once again.

Rabbi Rachel Brown

From the President



I wanted to update the congregation on our process with onboarding Rabbi Rachel Brown, who is our new rabbi.

There are many changes during this transition - a new rabbi with a new approach and background, using some new prayers and melodies, changes in both style and substance.

What I have heard from the congregation is that they are delighted with Rabbi Brown's humor, intellect, and robust Jewish knowledge.

But of course, Rabbi Brown is following in some rightly large footprints - Rabbi Lader was our rabbi for 11 years, and she and her family have been members for 40 years. She has played literally almost every role during her time here, from leading the music during the High Holy Days to leading our Sunday school. That is a legacy. Rabbi Lader decided to become a rabbi and pursued her rabbinic studies as part of our congregation. She was home-grown, so to speak. And she has played an outsized role in our congregation, effectively acting as a full-time Rabbi, and also carrying many of the responsibilities that an Executive Director would play in a larger congregation.

While Rabbi Lader made herself a bit scarce during this transition, she and Harry remain members and we welcome them to participate in the life of our congregation. It is appropriate and, I have learned, an established best practice that a well-established and beloved rabbi absent herself somewhat while the congregation is getting to know her successor.

Rabbi Brown's employment terms with Beth Israel are different in many ways from what we have enjoyed in recent years (although I will remind you that we have had part-time rabbis, interim rabbis, and for two years - no rabbi - in the past).

Rabbi Brown is part-time, serving us according to a 10 month contract. She first led services for us in late August, so we have only experienced six months or so with her in this role for us as I write this. She has served other congregations, and is a professional. She came to us through a rigorous review and interview process, and rose to the top. As a part-time Rabbi she maintains a more boundaried schedule, and also, you may find that she is compensated differently for life-cycle events that occur outside of normally scheduled services. This is normal, but it is a change for us.

We initially extended a one-year initial contract for Rabbi Brown last July, and the board is currently working with her to review our work together so far, and to plan for the future. We hope to extend a new contract to her to begin in July 2024.

We are currently using materials developed by the Union for Reform Judaism for a 'formative' review. This is a review we use when we are in the initial phase of employment, a mutual review where the rabbi and the board engage in conversations together about our mission, audience, services, and Sunday school. I have also had conversations with congregants about their impressions of our current services and member services, and how we can continue to be relevant and appealing to long-standing members, new members, potential members, and guests. This is an ongoing process.

As Rabbi Brown has reminded me, the relationship between a Rabbi and a Congregation is more like a marriage than an employer/employee relationship. And a marriage takes time to mature. The first months are a time of the honeymoon, of discovering new things. But a mature relationship never stops evolving, although we are more comfortable with one another now that we know each other a bit. Both parties have to "do the work" of continual learning and growth.

(continued Page 6)

It is a challenging time to be a synagogue. It is a challenging time to be a Rabbi. It's a challenging time to be a Jew. Perhaps it always will be, as we are a tiny minority with an outsized cultural presence. We are currently thinking long and hard about how we best serve our community, and one another, during this time of transition.

As always, I am available for your questions, comments, or suggestions at:
president@thewesttemple.org.

L'shalom,

Walter

From the Educator



This month on the Hebrew calendar is *Adar*. There is something special about Adar that differentiates it from all other months. In Chapter 9:22 of the Book of Esther it says the month was transformed for the Jews from one of grief to one of joy. In Masechet Ta'anit 29a, the rabbis of the Talmud say that "When the month of Adar enters, we increase in joy." From these two sources we learn that the general theme of the month of Adar is happiness.

On Sunday, March 10th from 11:00 am-12:00 pm, we will welcome local storyteller, improv artist and comedian, Deena Nyer Mendlowitz to Beth Israel-The West Temple. She will lead our students, parents, and teachers in a comedic workshop, and help everyone experience the "joy" of Adar. All are welcome to attend this free program.

Sunday, March 24th from 10-12:30 pm, we will once again celebrate Purim as a community when our High School class will perform their annual Purim Spiel. This will be followed by a Costume Parade, Carnival and Queen Esther's Café-to-Go. The schedule will be a little longer to accommodate the special activities that morning.

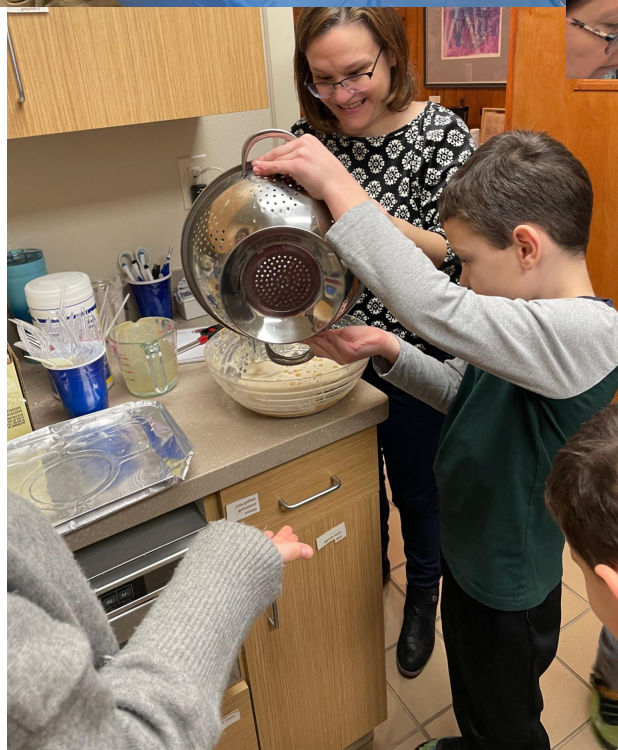
Wishing everyone a season of good health and happiness!

Debbie Chessin

Director of Education*

*This position is partially funded through the Fund for the Jewish Future of the Jewish Education Center of Cleveland.

In January and February we offered programming for learners of all ages. We enjoyed Winter U and Yom Israel- which included workshops including: RBG- A One Woman Show, Planting Terrariums for Tu B'Shevat, What's Cooking in Golda's Kitchen and a Hinoch Piven artist's workshop. Our youngest children learned about Shabbat and made their own kiddush cups and challah! Enjoy the pictures.



Bulletin published 11 times a year by:
 Beth Israel—The West Temple
 14308 Triskett Road, Cleveland OH 44111
 Phone (216) 941-8882
office@thewesttemple.org
www.thewesttemple.org
 Rabbi: Rabbi Rachel Brown
 President: Walter Wright
 Vice President: Karen McAleer
 Treasurer: Robin Kaufman
 Secretary: Emmie Hutchison

Congregational Educator: Debbie Chessin
 Ritual Committee: Luis Fernandez
 Buildings & Grounds Committee: Justin Morse
 Membership Committee: Jennifer Sedlak
 Finance Committee: Robin Kaufman
 Cemetery Committee: Rick Keller
 Public Relations Coordinator: Becky Watts
 Communications: Geralda Simko
 Bulletin Editors: Geralda Simko & Pat Outlaw

March Religious School Schedule:

Sunday, 3rd – 10-12:00 pm Religious School

- Yad B'Yad- 10-11 am with Rivienne Levin

Monday, 4th – Hebrew School-6:30 pm

Sunday, 10th – Religious School – 10-12 pm

Monday, 11th – Hebrew School- 6:30 pm

Sunday, 17th –Religious School – 10-12 pm

Monday, 18th – Hebrew School-6:30 pm

Sunday, 24th – Religious School – 10-12:30 pm

- 10-10:30 - Purim Spiel & Costume Parade
- 10:30-11 - Class Time
- 11-12:30 - Purim Carnival & Queen Esther's Café to Go

Monday, 25th – Hebrew School-6:30 pm

Sunday, March 31-Saturday, April 6- NO Religious or Hebrew school for Spring Break

BETH ISRAEL THE WEST TEMPLE
PURIM



Raffle
Baskets!

Parking
Shuttle!

Dancing!
8:00-11:00pm



Party

**A JOYFUL CELEBRATION OF THE
PURIM HOLIDAY FOR ADULTS**

**SATURDAY
MARCH 23RD 2024
(RSVP BY 3/16)**

**MEGILLAH READING
BY RABBI RACHEL BROWN
& FRIENDS
7:30-8:00 PM**

HOSTED AT BETH ISRAEL THE WEST TEMPLE
14308 TRISKETT ROAD-CLEVEAND, OH

DRESS IN COSTUME OR WITH MASQUERADE FLAIR

DJ*HEAVY APPETIZERS*DESSERT*OPEN BAR

RSVP link in News You Can Use

You must RSVP to attend. The link is in the News You Can Use emails.

Karen McAleer veep@thewesttemple.org

Volunteer

at the Cleveland
Food Bank



DONE-IN-A-DAY SERVICE PROJECT AT THE GREATER CLEVELAND FOOD BANK

Tuesday, March 5

Be a hunger hero and help community members in need get food assistance at the [Community Resource Center](#)'s Market. Volunteers will help stock shelves and assist clients with their grocery shopping and checkout. Sign up for one or both sessions. *Space is limited.*

Please RSVP to Geralda Simko at comm@thewesttemple.org



Exploring Jewish Thought

sponsored by Agudath B'nai Israel Congregation

The Sessions will be at
 Agudath B'nai Israel Synagogue and on Zoom
 1715 Meister Road Lorain, Ohio 44053

February 27, 2024 – April 9, 2024 from 7-8:00 PM

All sessions are free and open to the public.

Refreshments will be served.

Contact the ABI Synagogue office 440-282-3307
 to reserve a place at any of the sessions and the Zoom link.

Topics are designed for the general community

Date	Topic	Presenter
February 27	Jewish Fairy Tales	Mark Jaffee, Agudath B'nai Israel
March 5	Mussar on Humility	Rabbi Michael Ungar, Beth El – The Heights Synagogue
March 12	Jacob's Divine Travel Partner(s).	Rabbi Enid Lader, Beth Israel-The West Temple (Emeritus)
March 19	TBD	Rabbi Mendel Jacobs, Westside Chabad
March 26	Torah of the Jewish Food Movement	Rabba Amalia Haas, Oberlin College Hillel
Wednesday April 3	Jewish Poetry (Exclusively on Zoom)	Rabbi Shena Jaffee, Temple B'nai Israel
April 9	Is Remembering the Holocaust Controversial?: A Historical Analysis of Yom Hashoah	Rabbi Shlomo Elkan, Oberlin College Chabad

Zoom link is shared in Newsletter emails

YOU'RE INVITED:

"Power, Purpose & Love: Becoming Change-makers in Our Communities" March 3

You are invited to the upcoming seminar, "Power, Purpose & Love: Becoming Change-makers in Our Communities", on **Sunday March 3, 4-7:30pm**. The seminar presenter is Rev. Joy Fenton-Jones, Authorized Minister in the United Church of Christ serving two churches (DOC/UCC) in Cuyahoga Falls.

Each one of us desires to make positive change. Whether in our personal lives, in our churches, or in the wider community, we want to leave circumstances better than we have found them. The biblical witness affirms this story: ordinary people, called by God, are catalysts for realizing God's Kin-dom right in their own neighborhoods. Using the tools of grassroots organizing, this seminar will make the case that with God's help and the partnership of our neighbors, we can participate in the transformation of our churches, our neighborhoods, and the broader community. We will discover and practice the art of relational meetings; we will unearth the power of community listening; and we will develop a toolkit for breaking down seemingly intractable problems into manageable tasks. This seminar draws on the work of Robert Linthicum's book, *Transforming Power: Biblical Strategies for Making a Difference in Your Community*.

Staff members of Greater Cleveland Congregations will lead a concise training on relational meetings (a key organizing strategy) and give attenders opportunities to practice with our neighbors. These distinguished guests include Ms. Keisha Krumm, Executive Director and Lead Organizer; Mr. Nathan Self, Associate Organizer; and Mr. Tyeson Douglas, Organizer Fellow.

Greater Cleveland Congregations (GCC) includes members of over 30 dues-paying congregations and organizations from across Cuyahoga County. They are Christian, Jewish, Muslim and secular. GCC connects individuals and organizations to multiply power and mobilizes members by the thousands to make their voices heard in order to build a better community for all residents. In other words, GCC teaches ordinary citizens how to build and wield power.

The evening also includes an Interfaith Panel discussion with members of the community who are active in the work of community organizing. Panelists: *Rev. Joanna D'Agostino (UCC; Ms. Keisha Krumm (interfaith organizer; Rabbi Enid Lader; Mr. Isam Zaiem.*

Attenders will participate in relational training, relational meeting and facilitated discussion group, either in person or by zoom breakout. There are two ways to attend:

- in person, meal provided, at RRUMC, 19414 Detroit Rd, Rocky River Ohio, 44116
- on zoom, with breakout discussion and break.

Register online by Feb. 26 at <https://www.rrumc.org/cavicchi-seminar-sign-up>. No cost to attend.

Questions: contact: cavicchichristianed@gmail.com. This program is the 11th annual Mary Anne & Richard Cavicchi Christian Education Seminar at Rocky River United Methodist Church.

☆ Celebrations ☆

March Birthdays – 2024 – Youth

Lana Sweet	March 8 10 th
Ava Watts	March 12 17 th
Avital Shmois	March 15 18 th
Stella Melott	March 21 12 th
Sam Friedman	March 24 16 th
Isabella Brashear	March 26 18 th
Vivian Griffith	March 26 10 th
Caroline Sumner	March 28 11 th
Alex Watts	March 30 15 th

March Birthdays – 2024 - Adults

Zach Robock	March 4
Irma Laszlo	March 6
Lawrence Goodman	March 9
Dr. Robert Dreshfield	March 15
Richard Keller	March 16
Bette Goodman	March 21
Ryan Lercher	March 21
David Maynard	March 22
Rosalind Roberts	March 24
Sidney Donahoe-Goldberg	March 29
Patricia Lehrer	March 29
Jan Rutenberg Morse	March 30
Dr. Melissa Morse	March 30



PERPETUAL YAHRZEITS

MARCH 2024

WEEK ENDING

MARCH 2

Bina Levin
Charles K. Seldin
Lona Gruber
Daniel Barnes
Tino Fernandez
Rodgers Gerhardt
Sonia Keller

WEEK ENDING

MARCH 9

Morris Krissoff
Ida M. Wissman
Steven Hill
Frank L. Seitz, Jr.
Pepi Weiner
Pauline Miller
James D. Kahn
Frank Hutchko



WEEK ENDING

MARCH 16

Carol Schwartz
Benjamin Gruber
Dr. Barry Friedman
Florence R. Stern
Kenneth Lawrence Dunn
Zelda Greenfield
Estelle Edman Grey
Louis Schwartzenfeld

WEEK ENDING

MARCH 23

Estelle Scheinman Keen
Marvin M. Goldberg
Seymour Himmel
Anthony DiBaggio
Vivian Tamarkin

WEEK ENDING

MARCH 30

Lee Lazar
S. Hubert Gruber
Howard Sackett
Otto Eckstein
Leon Altfeld
Aron Altchouler
Clara Altchouler
Harold Paul Conrady
Debbie Thornton

WEEK ENDING

APRIL 6

Paula Williams
Boris Bruckman
Joshua Fernandez
Shirley Krissof
Mary C. Friedman

May their memory be a blessing

Service Schedule March

Friday Evenings

All Friday services on ZOOM,
unless otherwise noted.

March 1

7:30pm Kabbalat Shabbat
On ZOOM
David and Holly Neumann

March 8

7:30pm Kabbalat Shabbat
ON ZOOM
Rabbi Brown

March 15

7:30pm Kabbalat Shabbat
ON ZOOM
TBA

March 22

7:30pm Kabbalat Shabbat
ON ZOOM
TBA

March 29

7:30pm Kabbalat Shabbat
ON ZOOM
TBA

Saturday Mornings

All Saturday services in person,
unless otherwise noted.

March 2

9:30am Torah Study
11:00am Shabbat Service
TBA

March 9

9:30am Torah Study
11:00am Shabbat Service
Rabbi Brown

March 16

9:30am Torah Study
11:00am Shabbat Service
TBA

March 23

9:30am Torah Study
11:00 am Shabbat Service
Rabbi Brown

March 30

9:30am Torah Study
11:00 am Shabbat Service
TBA

CONTRIBUTIONS

February 2024

General Fund

Kyle Simko

In Memory of
Janice Eilberg
-Nancy Eilberg
Dr. Herb Caron
-Dr. Myron B. Stern
Blanche Caron
-Dr. Myron B. Stern
Jean Lettovsky
-Dr. Myron B. Stern

Tree of Life Fund

In Memory of
Marvin M. Goldberg
-Beryl & Michael Palnik

Rabbi Brown's Discretionary Fund

Geralda Simko

In Memory of
Ruth Erlick Lisbon
-Margie & Sid Ordog

Religious School Fund

In Memory of
Ida M. Wissman
-Marilyn W. Morgenstern
Lona Gruber
-Mitchell A. Gruber

Security Fund

In Memory of
Morris Roberts
-Rosalind Roberts



Thank you!