



Congregation Emanu El

Bulletin

May 5, 2020 | 11 Iyar 5780

VOLUME 74 NUMBER 8

EDITOR'S NOTE ABOUT THIS BULLETIN

As of the print deadline for this edition of the *Bulletin*, all programs, services and meetings of the synagogue have been moved to electronic platforms, postponed or canceled through **Monday, May 4**. We wanted to provide a communication to our synagogue but have slimmed it down significantly to reflect how rapid things are changing around us. To clarify the status of events and gatherings at Emanu El, please visit our website at emanuelhouston.org, call the synagogue at 713.529.5771 or email Jason Plotkin at jasonp@emanuelhouston.org.

FROM RABBI HAYON



Counting from conception to birth,
wondering
will the harvest be brought?
This time will Abel's offering and Cain's be
judged the same
and what, exactly, will it be worth?

Excerpted from *The Counting*, a poem by Yael Fischman

*And this year,
unlike in the
stories of our
people's past,
we cannot be
certain about
when our wind-
ing path will
lead us out of
the wilderness
and toward the
brightness that
waits on the
other side.*

The seven weeks between Passover and Shavuot, known as the omer, constituted a seasonal transition in the world of antiquity, during which our ancestors counted off the days between the early-spring barley harvest and the late-spring wheat harvest. Today, the ancient custom of counting these 49 days still remains, but it has been reimagined by modern spiritual thinkers as a way for us to thoughtfully track the passage of time, numbering our days one by one as we mark the slow fade of spring giving way to the warmth of summer.

The progression of these seven weeks does not only track the passage of agricultural seasons; it is also designed to cultivate a certain sense of anticipation and eagerness. In the faraway world of our people's mythic past, these 49 days

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Congregation Emanu El Hosts Annual Meeting Online

Amundsen Elected President; Roth & Hayon Give Updates at Meeting Held on Zoom

Jeri Amundsen was elected President of Congregation Emanu El during the synagogue's annual meeting that was taken online on Sunday, April 19.

Nearly 200 members attended the first Zoom annual meeting in the congregation's history and one of the first of its kind held across the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ) during the current COVID-19 pandemic according to executive directors and temple administrators nationally.

Amundsen's election was one of several highlights of the annual meeting, which included updates from outgoing president Rodney Roth and Senior Rabbi Oren Hayon.

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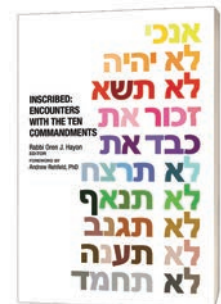
Launch & Learn to Celebrate Rabbi Hayon's New Book

Tuesday, May 5, 7:00 p.m.

Please join us online for a launch and learn to celebrate Rabbi Oren Hayon's new book, entitled *Inscribed: Encounters with the Ten Commandments*.

Rabbi Hayon's new book features a series of modern readings and commentaries on the Ten Commandments. Published by the CCAR Press, the primary publisher of the *Reform Movement*, the book also includes contributions by Rabbi Annie Belford of Temple Sinai and Rabbi Jonathan Siger of Congregation Jewish Community North.

Rabbis Belford and Siger represent two of a variety of Rabbis from various backgrounds, religious beliefs and professional specializations that submitted essays. Two or three essays along with a study guide accompany each of the Ten Commandments in the book. The study guide's role is to lead readers into deepening self-directed study.



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TENTATIVE WORSHIP SERVICES

Please note that while locations are listed for our worship offerings, should we have to remain apart – all worship services will continue to be made available on our website (Proler Chapel streaming page), Facebook and Roku. Additionally, archives are posted within 24 hours to our YouTube channel.

Shabbat Emor, Leviticus 21:1 – 24:23

Friday, May 8

6:00 p.m., Kabbalat Shabbat, Proler Chapel

Saturday, May 9

10:30 a.m., Morning Service, Proler Chapel

Shabbat B'har B'chukotai, Leviticus 25:1 – 27:34

Friday, May 15

6:00 p.m., Kabbalat Shabbat, Proler Chapel

Saturday, May 16

10:30 a.m., Morning Service, Proler Chapel

Shabbat B'midbar, Numbers 1:1-4:20

Friday, May 22

6:00 p.m., Kabbalat Shabbat, Proler Chapel

Saturday, May 23

10:30 a.m., Morning Service, Proler Chapel

Shavuot

Thursday, May 28

6:00 p.m., Erev Shavuot, Online

Friday, May 29

10:30 a.m., Shavuot Festival Service & Yizkor, Proler Chapel

Shabbat Naso I, Numbers 4:21 – 5:31

Friday, May 29

6:00 p.m., Kabbalat Shabbat, Proler Chapel

Saturday, May 30

10:30 a.m., Morning Service, Proler Chapel

Shabbat Naso II, Numbers 6:1 – 7:89

Friday, June 5

6:00 p.m., Kabbalat Shabbat, Proler Chapel

Saturday, June 6

10:30 a.m., Morning Service, Proler Chapel

REMINDER: All Friday night Shabbat services are video streamed on our website as well as our Emanu El Facebook page and Roku channel. Saturday morning services featuring a B'nai Mitzvah are streamed on our website and Roku channel.

FROM RABBI HAYON *continued from page 1*

represent the time it took from our people to move from their redemption from slavery to the fulfillment of their national potential when they received God's commandments at Mt. Sinai. Each time we reach this season of the Jewish year, therefore, the omer offers us a time of anticipation and contemplation. The interval between the liberation we celebrate on Passover and the revelation of Torah in which we rejoice at Shavuot becomes a time to consider the sacrifices life has demanded from us and to give thanks for the vindication and fulfillment that inevitably follow.

These days, we have all become well-acquainted with sacrifice. We have grown familiar with the painful effects that the pandemic's virulent and unpredictable progression has had on our community. And this year, unlike in the stories of our people's past, we cannot be certain about when our winding path will lead us out of the wilderness and toward the brightness that waits on the other side. We simply cannot know when our patience and preparedness will pay off, and when – if ever – our lives will return to the way they used to be.

Uncertainty and unpredictability is hard for everyone. These days are disorienting for all of us, and we are all finding it exceedingly difficult to plan for the future when we cannot make even the most basic assumptions about what our schedules, our finances, and the basic function of our communal and educational institutions will look like in the weeks and months ahead.

These days are also a time of unprecedented spiritual challenge. Many of our members are isolated and struggling with medical, financial and emotional vulnerability, and the difficult truth is that we don't yet know how we can assist them best. Absent the possibility for real, immediate presence, without the option for a reassuring touch or a hug, the work of spiritual care becomes much more difficult.

But we are doing the best we can. Emanu El continues to offer a wide array of online resources for you to explore and share with your loved ones. Our entire clergy team remains on call at all times, to offer counsel, conversation and prayer. If you are having a hard day, please reach out and let us know what you're going through. One of the most meaningful experiences any of us can have during this pandemic comes from the fulfilling knowledge that we have helped make another person's burden a small bit lighter.

And so we remember that at this season of harvest, the ancient truths that nurtured and reassured our ancestors still remain true today: our primary religious task is to remain kind and compassionate, to be humble and gentle with each other, and to cultivate the practices of generosity and gratitude as we make our way through the wilderness together.

LIFECYCLE EVENTS

BIRTHS

Mila Rebecca Bubis, daughter of Natalia & Michael Bubis; granddaughter of Vicky Halfon, Hap May, Lenny Bubis, Alanna Silverstein; great-granddaughter of Rosa Halfon

Austin Busch, son of Erin & Jason Busch; grandson of Sandy Dula, Lynn & Jeff Busch; great-grandson of Betty Busch

Orion Cato Goonetilleke, son of Diana Murakhovskaya & Krishantha Goonetilleke; grandson of Zina Murakhovskaya & Steve Goldentrud, Maithri & Saro Goonetilleke

Jack Wolf Perin, son of Becca & Andrew Perin; grandson of Susan & Steven Perin, Denny & Gary Ticker

Willa Shoshana Scherer, daughter of Jessica & Matt Scherer; granddaughter of Joy & Benjamin Warren, Nancy Scherer

Esther Lurie Townsend, daughter of Elizabeth & Luke Townsend; granddaughter of Robert Lurie, Penney Lurie, Sonia Townsend

DEATHS

Nancy Carlson, wife of Robert Carlson, mother of Stefani & Stephen Carlson, Charlotte & Lee Carlson; grandmother of Mallory & Alex Carlson, Evan, Jordan, Jack and Charlotte Carlson; sister of Louis & John Husby

Denise De Jonge, mother of Harry De Jonge & Steven Fenberg and Walter De Jonge

Alan J. Garber, husband of Susan Garber; father of Cheryl & Jason Garber, Jennifer & Stuart Garber; grandfather of Madeline, Benjamin, Melanie, Charles & Jacob; brother-in-law of Bruce Lipton & Elaine Stern

Herman J. Lew, husband of Annette Lew; father of Ronnie Kurtin & Gary Lew, Abby Gross & Mark Lew, Laurie Zimmerman & Larry Lew; grandfather of Max Lew, Bethany Lew, Madeline Lew, Sophia Lew, Eric Lew, Sarah Lew; brother of Annette Kallenbach

Benjamin Mosier, husband of Doreen Zidel Mosier; father of Ellen & Marc Mosier, Nina & David Mosier, Linda & Gregg Spielberg, Amy & Adam Mosier; grandfather of nine

Burt Lloyd Roslyn, husband of Marian Roslyn; father of Amanda & Paul Roslyn, Marissa & Landon Clark, Stephanie & Adam Roslyn; grandfather of Jane Alig and Howard “Hank” Knight Roslyn, Aria Fay and Adelaide Royal Clark, Jacob William and Amelia Bess Roslyn; brother of Barbara & Jonathan Brenner

Gerry Schenberg, mother of Sandy & Michael Wexler

Rudi Scheidt Sr., grandfather of Kendall & George Vincent; great-grandfather of George III, Channing and Honey Gibbs

Matthew Sumrow, fiancée of Casey Stemmerman; son of Dolly & Steven Sumrow, Sr.; brother of Christina & Pete Hughes, Gloria Sumrow, Stacey & Steven Sumrow, Jr.

Linda Cohn Walter, wife of Rabbi Emeritus Roy Walter; mother of Kelly & Benjamin Walter, Michel Walter & Jason Hyde, Aaron Walter & Mikey Kinsley; grandmother of Ethan and Hannah Walter; sister of Marlene & Herb Goldblatt

Carol Newport Wasserstein, wife of Jerry Wasserstein; mother of Brent Wasserstein, Joy & Marc Nathan, Jill & Steven Newman; grandmother of Truman, Ryan, Becca, Naomi, Julia, Hannah, Emily, Hailey; sister of Lynn & Linda Newport, Tseela & Jeffrey Newport

Florence Kless Yellen, mother of Gay Yellen & Don Reiser, Joan & Marc Yellen; sister of Ruby Kless Sondock, Jackie & Malcolm Mazow

A Notice About Bereavement Communications

Bereavement notices for our Temple family are distributed with the permission of the deceased’s family, and the timing of these notices is dictated by the family’s request. Of course, each family grieves in its own way, and we are grateful for our congregation’s patience and understanding with different families’ preferences about how their loss is publicized.

LAUNCH & LEARN TO CELEBRATE RABBI HAYON’S NEW BOOK *continued from page 1*

As part of the digital launch and learn, Rabbis Belford and Siger will share insight into their essays. Additional contributors may be announced as we get closer to the launch and learn. Participants on Facebook will be able to submit questions for a question and answer portion of the program.

The book can be purchased online by visiting <http://inscribed.ccarpress.org/>. Those who order the book between now and **Friday, May 8** are entitled to a 20% discount by using the code “Inscribed20” when purchasing.

Report delivered by President Rodney Roth on the occasion of the Congregation's Annual Meeting held on Sunday, April 19 via Zoom. A video version of this presentation can be found on the synagogue's Facebook page, YouTube channel and in the video archives on the Emanu El website.



Rodney Roth

Dear friends,

As this administration and board start to wind down and we begin the transition process, I would like to reiterate how incredibly honored and privileged I feel to have served as the 40th president of this sacred institution. It has been an incredible two-year journey that I have thoroughly embraced

and enjoyed. I would like to share with you some of the personal and professional benefits that I have received. I have learned an incredible amount about running a nonprofit. I have sharpened my public speaking skills and now Zoom skills. I have learned a great deal by working side-by-side with so many talented, dedicated professionals, and the most rewarding part is the many friendships I have developed. Together we have made some enormous strides which I would like to reflect on.

As we began the fiscal year, we continued the celebration of our 75th diamond anniversary – a celebration that rejuvenated and reconnected this congregation. It was a milestone that featured engaging speakers, including Gloria Steinem and Reverend William Barber, and incredible events like our Founding Family Shabbat, 75 lights of Hanukkah and of course, our Ever Open Gala, that transformed this sacred space into an incredible celebration. The evening debuted a masterful 75th anniversary film produced by congregant Steven Fenberg on the rich history of Emanu El. I can't thank enough our chairs, Elyse Kalmans and Cheryl Levy, for their outstanding work. They will also be honored as the Ernest Krautkopf Congregants of the Year.

The past year has been nothing short of extraordinary. We welcomed over 105 new families to our congregation – the largest increase in several years. We have witnessed the harmonization of an all-star clergy team and staff that continue to provide exceptional programming, meaningful prayer and joyful music.

Continuity is a critical element in the success we have enjoyed, therefore, I am pleased to report the contract extensions of both Rabbi Fixler and Cantor Simmons. Rabbi Fixler will be joining Rabbi Silk as an associate rabbi and will continue to deliver his fresh, witty and highly energetic approach of connecting with all congregants, especially our youth. I am also elated that Cantor Simmons has made a long-term commitment to our congregation and community. Her incredible gift of music and joy will continue to bless this congregation for many more years to come. Mazel Tov to you both.

I am pleased to report that all committees are functioning at a very high level. The Sisterhood, co-chaired by Carol Sue Zions and Claire Brooks, continues

to provide engaging programs while keeping its focus on charity. The Brotherhood, under the leadership of Andrew Gass, has been rejuvenated through relevant programming including our annual garage sale, BBQ tasting tour and our first tailgate at the Temple. Engaging programming including a whiskey tasting social, Pop-Up Shabbats, Mahjong and Tot Shabbats have been highly successful and have increased in order to try to connect with the many generations of our Temple family. The opportunities to get involved through My Generation, Brotherhood, Sisterhood, Emanu Elders, The Classics, The Middle and Young Professionals remain vibrant thanks to the extraordinary leadership of our Program Director, Jason Plotkin.

This year we also had a comprehensive board retreat planned by honorary President Jeff Basen-Engquist. The board of directors along with clergy and staff put together a plan of what "great" looks like and a road map on how to achieve our goals. New committees, including a Congregant Care Outreach program, were launched to connect with our senior members, to provide additional support and care during these unsettling times. I would like to thank Jeri Amundsen, Senior Vice President, and the many volunteers that assisted with these endeavors. Our ultimate goal is to fill the needs and interests of every congregant.

During this past year, we concluded our extensive roof and HVAC projects to protect our most valuable asset, this architectural masterpiece. I would like to personally recognize the roofing task force consisting of Ben Miller, Bruce Lessey, Shel Vedlitz, Joe Pryzant, Becky Proler and Garey Marks.

The security of our congregation has also been a focal point. Our security task force lead by Judge Bob Schaffer meets regularly to ensure the safety of our congregants. All aspects of our security have been reviewed by HPD, ADL, Homeland Security and our security provider to ensure best practices are in place.

Our Helfman Religious School continues to blossom with more than 440 students thanks to our exceptional Director of Congregational Learning, Stefani Carlson. Thanks to Stefani, our Religious School creates a unified approach to learning across all ages and stages. This year, new innovative programs have been added including family Shabbat and Havdalah programs for our youngest students and their families, and new electives including Modern Israeli Dance, Hebrew enrichment and technology/coding for our older children. Our Helfman Religious School also boasts a very high retention to graduation rate thanks in part to the Shirley Barish Memorial Experience trip to Israel. This incredible, one-of-a-kind opportunity gives our children who attend Religious School through graduation a free trip to Israel.

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One of our proud establishments, the Becker School, has experienced some trying times resulting in meaningful changes for the future. We are very grateful to Barbara Loeser who agreed to step in as Interim Director. She has been hard at work with us to repair the Becker culture including new training procedures when classes resume on campus. In spite of this period of change, our incredible staff of educators continue to provide enriching, positive and supportive programming to Becker children and families during this chaotic time. We are very grateful for their hard work and dedication. Becker is a special place and will continue to thrive because of all of them.

Long-term, reliable financial support is key to any nonprofits success. Our endowment board lead by Jeri Amundsen subsidizes a substantial part of our programing budget. Thanks to the incredible job of our investment committee chaired by Mark Brookner, our endowment was up more than 21% or approximately \$3M for the 2019 fiscal year. Because of our conservative and sound investment approach, our endowment fund has declined only 6.9% YTD for 2020.

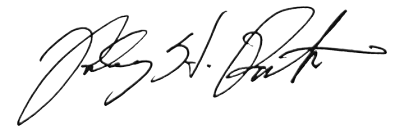
We are certainly mindful of the additional financial challenges placed on our community and congregation as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. Immediate, cost cutting measures have been implemented to stabilize the congregation in the short term. In addition, I am pleased to report that the Temple has secured additional financial assistance through the government PPP loan program which was funded this week.

I would like to personally thank David Lamden, our Executive Director, and Laura Kocian, our Controller, for their hard work and dedication during this process. I would also like to thank congregant Jody Proler and Origin Bank for their incredible care and service. Our finance committee is also hard at work preparing 3, 6 and 12-month pro-formas to prepare for the challenging times ahead. And while we all try to comprehend the impact of these difficult times, please know that we are here for you – which has always been the Emanu El way.

Finally, I'd like to thank our Executive Committee and Board of Trustees for their dedication and hard work throughout the year. With their leadership, and through the efforts of our outstanding clergy, staff and countless volunteers, we have had an eventful and productive year highlighted by meaningful worship, study, programming, community building and celebration. Although the last month has been very challenging, please rest assured that Emanu El was built with a very strong foundation and we will persevere.

A special thank you to my wife, Robin, and children, Gavin and Cameron, who have supported me during this spiritual journey, as well as my parents who have instilled in me the importance of philanthropic work and dedication to this sacred congregation.

Lastly, I would like to thank each of you for the honor and privilege of serving as your 40th president.



On April 21, our program director Jason Plotkin was published by the Union for Reform Judaism as he shared tips to leverage digital platforms during the pandemic. A full version of this article including break outs of the tips and tricks can be found on the URJ website at <https://bit.ly/2VFZNG9>.

4 Ways to Leverage Digital Platforms for Congregational Communications in a Pandemic

What I am about to share is not a surprise: Synagogues and houses of worship are in a difficult spot of keeping connected with their congregants and providing content to the community.

Like many synagogues, my congregation is no different.

My role as the program director of a 1,700-plus family synagogue, Congregation Emanu El in Houston, TX, has morphed into the role of an executive producer, more synonymous with television show and movie production.

On a daily basis, I plot a schedule that looks into the

coming days and weeks in an effort to provide content that touches every person within our community. At the same time, I try to ensure that the content we make available is truly accessible to as many people as possible in our current, physically disconnected state.

Here are some tips and tricks I've found along the way.

1. Make worship available in multiple places.
2. Empower your lay leaders and staff to become content creators.
3. Create a one-stop shop for your video content.
4. "Technology Happens"

At the end of the day, these tips and tricks are just a starting point. Across the movement, our communities are dealing with similar issues, regardless of size, geographic location and/or staffing. As members of the URJ, we are very fortunate to have The Tent as a place to share resources and connect with other communities – so that none of us has to reinvent the wheel during these trying times.

PROGRAMMING UPDATES

In an effort to keep our congregants and the community up to date with our programs that have been either postponed or canceled, please find the list below. As information is constantly changing, we do strongly encourage you to take advantage of our Coronavirus Response page, which has the most up to date information. You can also call the synagogue at 713.529.5771 or contact program director, Jason Plotkin at jasonp@emanuelhouston.org and 713.535.6414. Even if the building is not open, members of our staff team are monitoring our phone lines and e-mails so we can remain in touch with you.

Below is a list of programs that have been postponed or cancelled.

POSTPONED PROGRAMMING

- Sisterhood's *Words Change the World* featuring Barbara Pierce Bush – **originally scheduled for Thursday, March 26 – now re-scheduled for Wednesday, August 19**
- *Before I Die Weekend* – **originally scheduled for Friday, March 27 - Sunday, March 29**
- *Kid Food* with author Bettina Elias Siegel – **originally scheduled for Tuesday, March 31**
- Artist-in-Residence Weekend with Ellen Allard – **originally scheduled for Friday, April 3 - Sunday, April 5 – re-scheduled for February 12-14, 2021**
- Sisterhood's Open Board Meeting – **originally scheduled for Thursday, April 16**
- Fire Truck Park Gathering – **originally scheduled for Sunday, April 26**
- The Classics: Houston Japanese Garden & Dinner – **originally scheduled for Sunday, April 26**
- Mental Health First Aid Training – **originally scheduled for Sunday, April 26 & Tuesday, April 28**
- Dad & Me at Dynamo Game – **originally scheduled for Sunday, May 5**
- Sisterhood's Closing Luncheon – **originally scheduled for Wednesday, May 6**
- Brotherhood Congregant of the Year – **originally scheduled for Wednesday, May 13**
- Book Review: *Save Me the Plumbs* – **originally scheduled for Thursday, May 14**
- Emanu El Young Professionals / YAD Shabbat Shalom Y'all – **originally scheduled for Friday, May 15**
- My Generation Heads to the Lone Star Flight Museum – **originally scheduled for Tuesday, May 19**

CANCELED PROGRAMMING

- Emanu Elders – **originally scheduled for Tuesday, April 7**
- Brotherhood's Real Men Make Chocolate Matzah – **originally scheduled for Tuesday, April 7**
- Second Night Sede – **originally scheduled for Thursday, April 9**
- Gathering Place – **originally scheduled for Monday, April 13**
- Becker Transportation Fair – **originally scheduled for Wednesday, April 22**
- Sisterhood's Art Safari – **originally scheduled for Thursday, April 23**
- Tot Shabbat – **originally scheduled for Friday, May 1**
- Emanu Elders – **originally scheduled for Tuesday, May 5**
- Gathering Place – **originally scheduled for Monday, May 11**
- Mah Jong – **originally scheduled for Thursday, May 14**
- Classics Shabbat Dinner – **originally scheduled for Friday, May 15**
(note: now replaced by a Classics Zoom Game Night at same date/time)



Jeri Amundsen, newly elected President of Congregation Emanu El.

Amundsen rises to the top spot amongst the lay leadership of the synagogue, which celebrated its 75th anniversary in 2019. The outgoing Senior Vice President, Amundsen takes the helm following two years of leadership by Roth, who will now transition to the role of Honorary President.

With the pandemic playing a role front and center in the annual meeting, Roth in his report highlighted that the congregation had been awarded a

loan through the Payroll Protection Plan (PPP) through the Small Business Administration. This loan will become 100% forgivable if Emanu El meets all necessary criteria.

Additionally, Roth shared that the congregation had put together over 100 videos in just over a month's time to keep the community connected. These videos included worship and music offerings, as well as book readings and learning opportunities from both the Helfman Religious School and Becker School.

During the pandemic, lay leaders have stepped up to engage with those members of the congregation that were most vulnerable during the pandemic according to Roth. The initial reach out included roughly 275 members of the congregation with that number increasing as more are reached out to.

Roth added in his remarks that the congregation had extended agreements with both Cantor Rollin Simmons and Rabbi Josh Fixler. Fixler's new agreement includes a

promotion to the role of Associate Rabbi.

During the congregation's elections, the members elected the following individuals to one year terms to join Amundsen on the executive committee: Stuart Gaylor, Senior Vice President; Dawn Blitz, Vice President of Committees & Volunteer Management; Ben Miller, Vice President of Committees & Volunteer Management; Melissa Carson, Vice President of Education; Ronnie Kurtin, Vice President of Personnel; Fredi Bleeker Franks, Treasurer; and Laura Mayer, Secretary

Elected to three-year terms on the board were Ralph Herring, Elyse Kalmans, Dora Klaff, Bruce Lessey, Alana Pulaski, Diane Puschett, and Annie Stein.

Nancy Parkans Ehrenkranz was elected to fill the remaining year of a three-year term that ends in 2021 while Tammy Feldstein, Matt Pasternak and Emily Schaffer were elected to one-year terms.

Remaining on the board are Hannah Brook, Michael Epstein, Ivy Frank, Stephanie Gabelnick, Gordon Goodman, Laurie Lee, Nicole Longnecker, Burton Manne, Greta Pliskin, Ben Proler, Brooke Reichel, Bob Schaffer and Philip Tenenbaum.

Terms that concluded with this annual meeting included Marvin Barish, Jeff Basen-Engquist, Helen Dreyfus, Barry Lichman, Carolyn Putterman, Todd Slobin and Michael Sprung.

The reports made by both Roth and Hayon are available on the synagogue's Facebook page and YouTube channel. Roth's remarks can also be found on page 4 of this edition of the *Bulletin*.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Welcome Our Newest Members

We are pleased to welcome the newest members to our congregational family. Please be sure to introduce yourself to our newcomers as they become a part of our community.

Brenda Abensur
Courtney & Marc Borden, son Louis
Emily & Noah Donnenfield, son Davis
Sandy & Louis Gordon
Christine & Max Gordon, children Amalia & Isaac
Larin & Kevin Green, daughters Kendrix & Phoenix
Kristy Gomez-Novy & Jared Novy,
children Egypt & Xavier
Alene Levy
Florinda Reyes
Arielle & Jonathan Rogg, son Asher
Regina Romano & Andrew Kaplan, son Mortimer
Carol & Jack Saidel
Lauren Stadler & Jonathan Fombonne,
children Ozzie & Freya
Carolyn Solar
Mallory & Rob Teigman, son Abe

New members will be shared in the *Bulletin* regularly. Know someone interested in becoming a part of our community? New to town or looking to find a way to connect with Emanu El? Contact Jason Plotkin at jasonp@emanuelhouston.org or 713.535.6414.

Under 25 Year Old Membership; Absolutely Free!

Have a recent college graduate moving back to Houston this summer? Know a young professional that is new to town or just venturing out on their own? Congregation Emanu El gifts free memberships to all those members of our Jewish community under the age of 25. For more information, connect with Jason Plotkin at jasonp@emanuelhouston.org or 713.535.6414

UPCOMING PROGRAMS AT EMANU EL

Conversations

Wednesdays, 12:00 p.m.

Join us on **Wednesdays at 12:00 p.m.** for “Conversations” as program director Jason Plotkin sits down with a member of the congregation, community or from the sports world to discuss the current state of affairs while we are separated due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The first guest was Pastor Michael Dunn, who serves as the Pastor at First Christian Church, our neighbors across the street. “Conversations” will be available on the Emanu El Facebook page and the Proler Chapel streaming video page.

A Night with Alex Navarro

Thursday, May 7, 6:30 p.m.



Join pianist, composer and arranger Alex Navarro on **Thursday, May 7, 6:30 p.m.** streamed on the Emanu El website (Proler Chapel streaming) and the Congregation Emanu El Facebook page.

A familiar face in accompanying our musicians for worship and other events, Alex has recording and performance credits with the likes of Rod Stewart, Queen Latifah, Art Garfunkel and more!

Alex will play some of his favorites from Shabbat evenings at Emanu El, some musical theater tunes and some originals.

Be on the lookout in synagogue communications for more musical opportunities as Emanu El looks to provide musical gatherings on Thursday nights. Fellow Emanu El accompanist Phillip Hall and ‘encore’ musical performances out of the archives have been part of the lineup as of press date.

Havdalah & Hope: Songs & Stories to Keep Us Going

Saturday, May 9, 8:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Join Cantor Simmons and Rabbi Fixler for an evening of musical inspiration and learning. We will turn to texts, both ancient and modern to help us keep the torch of justice burning in these dark and challenging times. The protest music of the last 60 years will lift our spirits and strengthen our resolve. Come ready to learn, pray, and sing along!

This gathering will be available on the Congregation Facebook page or by going to the Proler Chapel streaming video page.

Classics Zoom Game Night

Friday, May 15 following 6:00 p.m. Shabbat services

Just because we can't get together physically doesn't mean we can't get together virtually . . . the Classics in-person dinner for **Friday, May 15** has been cancelled but we hope you can join us for a virtual game night instead.

Grab the beverage of your choice and Zoom in to join other members in our community in their 50s and 60s for fun and games.

Please register by **Sunday, May 10** online at www.emanuelhouston.org. Registration is limited to the first 20 email addresses and the Zoom information will be sent a day or two prior to the event.

If you have any questions please contact Susan and Syd Waldman at sgwaldman@gmail.com or 713.299.3720. Hope to “see” you there!

Taste of Talmud: Lunch Time Text Study

Thursday, May 21, 12:30 p.m.

Bring your lunch and join Director of Congregational Learning Stefani Carlson for an introduction to rabbinic text study. We will study with translation alongside the original text. No previous experience necessary. This class is scheduled for the third Thursday of the month.

If we are unable to meet at Emanu El, our monthly gathering will be taken online to Zoom. Our Zoom information will be shared ahead of time in synagogue communications.

Shavuot & Shavuot Yizkor

Thursday, May 28, 6:00 p.m. & Friday, May 29, 10:30 a.m.

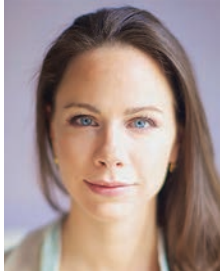
Helfman Religious School's 10th grade students will celebrate Confirmation during Erev Shavuot services on the evening of **Thursday, May 28 at 6:00 p.m.** This service is an opportunity for our Confirmation students to stand together and affirm their connection to Judaism. We hope you will make plans to join us online for this special time in the life of the congregation.

The next day, our Shavuot festival service which includes Yizkor will take place **Friday at 10:30 a.m.** in the Proler Chapel. Should we not be able to come together, this service just like our Passover festival and Yizkor gathering will move online. More information on both services will be shared in upcoming synagogue communications.

continued next page

Words Change the World – NEW DATE! Wednesday, August 19, 11:30 a.m.

The Sisterhood is excited to announce the new date for their annual donor event, “Words Change the World”.



Mark your calendars for **Wednesday, August 19**. As previously planned, Barbara Pierce Bush will be featured in a Q & A about her years at the daughter and granddaughter of two United States presidents, her family’s mission to fight illiteracy and her work through her Global Health Corps. We have received over 1,000 new children’s books to donate to the Harris County Public Library to be distributed to our area’s underserved children through our partnership with the Barbara Bush Literacy Foundation.

To get involved in the fight against illiteracy, please visit www.connect4literacy.org and support the Barbara Bush Literacy Foundation’s work by volunteering your time.

We urge all registered guests for the original date in March to re-confirm your reservation by contacting the Sisterhood office at 713.529.5771, ext. 233 or by emailing sishood@emanuelhouston.org. Please know that while the synagogue building is closed, the phones and emails are being checked!

You may also contact the Sisterhood office to inquire about additional ticket sales, patron seating or any other questions about the event.

Sixth Annual Night at the Ballpark Tuesday, September 1



Tickets on Sale to Members Only through May 30 or Upon Sellout

Congregation Emanu El is excited to announce its sixth annual Night at the Ballpark.

Join members of the Emanu El clergy and staff at Minute Maid Park as the Houston Astros welcome the Miami Marlins to town for a **7:10 p.m. first pitch**. The evening will feature \$1 hot dogs.

The cost of tickets to join Emanu El at the ballpark is just \$30. This year we will be sitting in the field box section and the cost of ticket is subsidized through the generosity of the Emanu El Brotherhood.

Please note that the initial allotment of tickets subsidized by the Brotherhood has sold out each year that it has been held at Minute Maid Park. Due to the space limitations, these \$30 seats are reserved for members of Emanu El (and their guests) on a **first-come, first-serve basis until Saturday, May 30 or upon sellout**.

Any available tickets on Sunday, May 31 will be open to the community.

Tickets are anticipated to arrive at the synagogue in early August, and participants will be communicated with about arranging to pick-up their tickets prior to the ball game.

To register, please visit emanuelhouston.org. For more information, contact Jason Plotkin at 713.535.6414 or jasonp@emanuelhouston.org.

Our clergy want to know . . .

If you or a loved one is sick or hospitalized please let us know.

Contact the synagogue at 713.529.5771, so that our rabbis can reach out and visit and be a source of strength and support.

Visiting the sick and praying for those who are ill are important and meaningful mitzvot.

Donations to the Sisterhood Flower Fund

For donations to the Sisterhood Flower Fund (for the Shabbat handout) please make checks payable to “Congregation Emanu El Sisterhood” and mail or drop off to Donna Fraley at the synagogue, 1500 Sunset Blvd, Houston, TX 77005. Donations can also be made online at www.emanuelhouston.org. Please make sure to specify which Shabbat service(s) you would like your Flower Fund donation listed. **In order to ensure the donations are listed, we ask that they be at the synagogue no later than the Wednesday before Shabbat.**

A Becker Birthday Surprise

Room parents for a threes class at Congregation Emanu El's Becker School surprised teacher Donna Mark on her birthday. A fleet of cars adorned with signs and containing very happy students drove right past Mark's home to share well wishes.

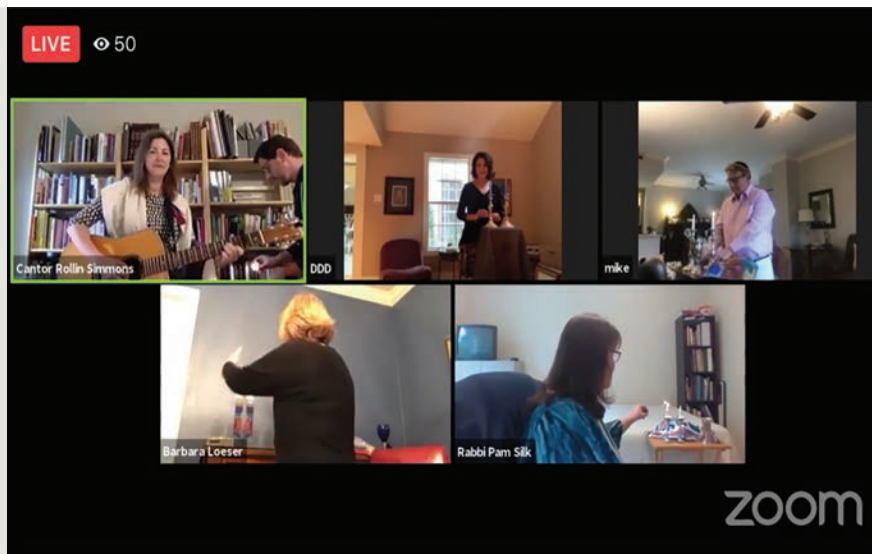


Emanu El Cub Scouts Take Bridging Ceremony Online

Our Emanu El Webelos officially crossed over to Boy Scouts via online video conference. Mazel Tov to Max Fertman, Jonathan Rosenblum and Elijah Guttman for crossing over to Troop 1190 and earning their Arrow of Light award, the highest rank possible in Cub Scouts. Thanks to our den leaders and scout master for making this milestone possible online.

Shabbatones Help Bring in the Light During our Online Shabbat Worship

During the third Friday of the month, though we were not at the building – Barbara Loeser, Mike Kahn and Dee Dee Dochen of the Shabbatones joined our worship gathering. Each led the congregation in a song and joined Cantor Rollin Simmons and Rabbi Pam Silk to bring in the light of Shabbat.



Endowment Board Approves Name Change to Walter Enrichment Fund

The Endowment Board is proud to announce the renaming of one of the endowment funds in memory of Linda Cohn Walter. The Rabbi Roy and Linda Walter Enrichment Fund will continue to support spiritual and cultural events, such as Sukkot on Sunset and Chanukah celebrations, that bring our congregation together. The Endowment Board could not imagine a more fitting legacy for Linda, who dedicated so much time and energy to enriching our Emanu El community.



The Walter family (from left to right – Mikey Kinsley, Aaron Walter, Jason Hyde, Michel Walter, Linda Walter, Rabbi Roy Walter, Kelly Walter, Benjamin Walter) during the 2011 Tribute weekend in honor of Rabbi Walter's retirement.



Emanu El Votes: Congregation Seeks Voter Registrars

Emanu El Votes Stay Tuned for Future Opportunities to Become A Voter Registrar

Our congregation's new civic engagement project, Emanu El Votes was originally slated to host a voter registrar training in late April with the National Council of Jewish Women [NCJW] and Hadassah.

At this time, this training is postponed and we look forward to sharing information about future opportunities similar to this one in upcoming synagogue communications.

In the meantime, Emanu El Votes is seeking members to assist us as we grow our civic engagement campaign in the months leading up to the November election. If you are interested in staying informed about future events including future volunteer opportunities, please e-mail us at EEVotes@emanuelhouston.org.

Cemetery Plot Increase on Hold Until September

The Cemetery Committee recently decided to put the planned cemetery plot increase off until **September 1** due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The plot prices that will now go into effect on September 1 are the following:

MEMBER

Pre-need: \$3,900.00 **At need:** \$4,300.00

NON-MEMBER

Pre-need: \$6,200.00 **At need:** \$6,700.00

For questions or plot purchases, please contact Alisha Klapholz (alishak@emanuelhouston.org, 713-529-5771).

Memorial Plaques

Deadline of Friday, June 5 to Ensure Placement Prior to High Holy Days

Many members of our congregation choose to memorialize their loved ones with a permanent plaque on the yahrzeit wall of the Barish Sanctuary, which also provides for the perpetual reading of their names as part of the Friday evening Mourner's Kaddish.

To ensure that your loved ones' plaques are placed on the wall in time for High Holy Days in early September, we encourage you to purchase plaques by the close of business on Friday, June 5. For more information, contact Alisha Klapholz at alishak@emanuelhouston.org or 713-529-5771, ext. 213.

Emanu El Responds to COVID-19

During these difficult times for our community, Congregation Emanu El continues to post updates, additional resources and the ways our congregation is connecting with one another on our website (www.emanuelhouston.org), via email and Facebook. If you are not receiving emails from the synagogue, please contact Christian Simmons at christians@emanuelhouston.org or contact the synagogue at 713-529-5771.





Becker School

Becker School Graduates for 2020



Iman Archer-Yearwood, daughter of Isha Archer & Mario Yearwood

Albert Asker, son of Jorunn Asker & Fredrik Eriksson

Elijah Astrich, son of Suzanna Astrich & Jordan Astrich

Tahlia Blumberg, daughter of Camila & Adam Blumberg

Noah Christianson, son of Samita & Neil Christianson

Conrad Collette, son of Yini Sheng and Herman Collette

Elijah Collins, son of Michelle Weisman & Kenneth Collins

Anna Dodig, daughter of Neda & Marko Dodig

Arden Ferris, daughter of Sarah Ferris

Justin Fishman, son of Heather and Doug Fishman

Stella Friedman, daughter of Joanna Kornfeld & Paul Friedman

Rosemary Frey, daughter of Abigail & Eric Frey

Geoffrey Gomez, son of Alissa & Gregory Gomez

Owen Gottlieb-Miller, son of Lauren & Joshua Gottlieb-Miller

Emma Hagegard, daughter of Jennie & Marcus Hagegard

Anna Hergenroeder, daughter of Jennifer & Leo Hergenroeder

Phoebe Horan, daughter of Jessica Horan & Thomas Welch-Horan

Konstantinos Hritcko, son of Maria Papapavlou & George Hritcko

Natalia Injac, daughter of Sarah & Alexander Injac

Philip Injac, son of Sarah & Alexander Injac

Alia Itkin, daughter of Kisha & Jason Itkin

Olivia Kades, daughter of Rachel Kades

Noor Khan, daughter of Saba Javed & Owais Khan

Caia Kottler, daughter of Meredith & Cary Kottler

Eli Lee, son of Cody Crane & Kevin Lee

Ariana Manal, daughter of Huma & Nabeel Manal

Zayd Manal, son of Huma & Nabeel Manal

Caio Maricevich, son of Renata & Marco Maricevich

Aizah Nasser, daughter of Fatima & Faiz Nasser

Ava Nicolayevsky, daughter of Jessica Zachary & Marco Nicolayevsky

Stella Nieminen, daughter of Riikka & Kimmo Nieminen

Sophia Ninan, daughter of Elizabeth & George Ninan

Ahrin Ramineni, son of Shubhra & Naveen Ramineni

Maxwell Ropper, son of Kathleen Chen & Alexander Ropper

Mila Sanghani, daughter of Ashumi Shah & Parag Sanghani

Bea Segal, daughter of Rollin Simmons & David Segal

Valeria Shaitelman, daughter of Simona & Kenneth Shaitelman

Maya Sivan, daughter of Danna & Avishai Sivan

Saul Soroka, son of Rima & Ryan Soroka

Ellie Storch, daughter of Jill & Eric Storch

Andrew Szucs, son of Emily & Adam Szucs

Ellie Williams, granddaughter of Angela Pidutti & John Williams

Sierra Wilson, daughter of Anthanette & Chad Wilson

Claire Zehnpfennig, daughter of Sara & Michael Zehnpfennig



Helfman Religious School

Helfman 2020 Graduation Class



During Shabbat worship on Friday, April 24, our congregants had a special opportunity to hear from our 2020 Helfman Religious School graduating class. Mazel Tov to these seniors and their families!

The video from this Shabbat worship can be found on the Emanu El Facebook page, YouTube and in the Proler Chapel archived broadcasts.

Helfman Enrollment is Open - Early Enrollment Still Underway

Enrollment for the 2020-21 Helfman Religious School year takes place online using Emanu El's online portal. At this point, early enrollment has been extended until further notice and more information will be shared when this changes.

Click the link below and log on to your account. (https://www.emmanuelhouston.org/school_enrollment.php)

Fill out all of the required information.

Payment of the \$100 per child, non-refundable, registration fee is necessary to confirm your enrollment. Payment must be made online.

We will confirm enrollment(s) once the forms are complete and the registration fee is paid. The balance of the tuition will then be added to your account and is **due by 8/31/20**.

If you have any questions, please contact Gail Shapiro at gails@emanuelhouston.org or 713.535.6400.

Weekly T'filah with Helfman Religious School

Wednesdays at 4:30 p.m. & Sundays at 9:00 a.m.

Helfman Religious School has taken its weekly **Wednesday** and **Sunday** T'filah services onto Zoom and our Facebook page! (Note: parents of students will receive the Zoom link via the Helfman Herald).

Join us for lively, engaging services led by our clergy and other musical friends. Each T'filah service is followed by a program led by a special guest or one of Helfman's talented specialists.

Also, be sure to check out our "Helfman@Home" series of videos created by our talented faculty and staff – a new one posts to Facebook and YouTube every weekday at 2:00 p.m. throughout the pandemic.



We appreciate the thoughtfulness of those who remember and honor their friends and loved ones through their generous contributions through April 15, 2020.

ACCESS FOR ALL FUND

To ensure Emanu El is a welcoming, accessible & inclusive community

In Memory of
Linda Cohn Walter
Hayley & Adam Wilk

ALAN GAYLOR TEACHER ASSISTANT FUND

To support Helfman Religious School teacher assistants

In Memory of
Linda Cohn Walter
Anita & Stuart Gaylor
Melinda & Steven Gordon
Joni & Gary Lewis & Family, & Lillian Gaylor
Cynthia & Marvin Pleason

AUBREY & SYLVIA FARB COMMUNITY SERVICE FUND

To support small & emerging organizations that improve life for underserved Houstonians

In Memory of
Aubrey Farb
Irene Weingarten
Linda Cohn Walter
Marilynne & Alford Bleeker
Shelly Cyprus
Laurie & Jeff Bricker

BARBARA & MARK BROOKNER CAMPSHIP FUND

To provide scholarships to send Helfman Religious School students to URJ Greene Family Camp

In Honor of
Sylvia Solomon
Micheale & Michael Brown

BECKER EARLY CHILDHOOD FUND

To enhance our Becker Early Childhood Center

In Memory of
Carol Newport Wasserstein
Ann Roosth Melamed & Richard Melamed & Family

Eileen & Richard Westerman

BECKER EARLY CHILDHOOD SCHOLARSHIP FUND

To provide Becker Early Childhood Center scholarships

In Memory of
Linda Cohn Walter
Sandi & Bob Greenstone

CERSONSKY CEMETERY BEAUTIFICATION FUND

To maintain & enhance Emanu El Memorial Park

In Memory of
Linda Cohn Walter
Marsha & Marty Block
Kelly & James Cersonsky

CLERGY'S GOOD WORKS FUND

To provide Emanu El's clergy with funds to help individuals in need and to support organizations that benefit the community

A Donation for COVID-19 Relief
Barbara Glave

In Honor of
Rabbi Josh Fixler's new family additions

Maureen & Ellison Wittels
Rabbi Oren Hayon
Ronnie Kurtin & Gary Lew & Family
Alice B. & Herbert S. Marchand

Jason Plotkin
Barbara Glave
Rabbi Pamela Silk
Ronnie Kurtin & Gary Lew & Family
Suzanne & Maurice Leibman

Cantor Rollin Simmons
Suzanne & Maurice Leibman

In Memory of
Herman J. Lew
Ronnie Kurtin & Gary Lew & Family

Cyndy Sax
Nancy Peskin

Linda Cohn Walter

Michael Epstein & Janice Poplack
Perri & Aaron H. Fink
Susan & Ed Kahn
Alana & Alan Pulaski & Family
Gail Shinbaum & Bill Soffar
Keith Solomon

EDWARD WAYNE HUNGER FUND

To feed the hungry of Houston

In Memory of
Linda Cohn Walter
Noel Foreman
Lindsey & Sharam Honari
Linda & Paul Lynn

ELEANOR & PAUL LENSKY SCHOLARSHIP FUND

To provide need-based scholarships for those attending Helfman Religious School, summer camp & trips to Israel

In Memory of
Linda Cohn Walter
Robin Kosberg & Mark Washofsky

ELLEN HURWITZ PENNER RELIGIOUS SCHOOL FUND

To promote the spiritual growth of Helfman Religious School students

In Memory of
Linda Cohn Walter
Karen & Murry Penner

FLORENCE & BEN BLUM LEADERSHIP FUND

To send Emanu El leadership to URJ Biennials & underwrite leadership programs & speakers

In Memory of
Linda Cohn Walter
Brenda & Chuck Weiser & Sean & Harold Weiser

FREDELL LACK EICHHORN CANTOR'S MUSIC FUND

To enhance musical programming

In Memory of
Linda Cohn Walter
Roberta Frankfort Harris

GENERAL ENDOWMENT FUND

To provide for the general needs of Emanu El & its facilities

In Memory of
Linda Cohn Walter
Kerry & Steve Buxbaum

GREENE FAMILY CAMP FUND

To support Greene Family Camp

In Memory of
Linda Cohn Walter
Congregation Emanu El – Sisterhood
Debbie & Marc Shabot

RABBI ROY & LINDA WALTER ENRICHMENT FUND

To support spiritual & cultural enrichment

In Honor of
Beadie Lewis
Tootie & Steve Fradkin
Rabbi Roy Walter
The Finegold Family

In Memory of
Nelly Levy Berg
Sara Astrich & Lorraine Wulfe & Families

Aubrey Farb
Melvin Feldman
Henry Bercutt
Sarah Breier Klein
Sara Astrich & Lorraine Wulfe & Families

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& Stephen Shepard
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Lynn Segal
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Claire & Dick Brooks

**RICKY SCHNURR
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*To provide Greene Family
Camp scholarships*
In Memory of
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**Sarah Fay Pinkenson
Freedman**
Lindy & Bobby Levit
Gerry Schenberg
Linda Cohn Walter
Cindy & David Senior

**RIVA BURSTEN CARING
CONGREGATION FUND**

*To support programs
that assist people in the
community*
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Marlene & Larry Bursten

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*To enhance preschool
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Elaine & Alan Priesman
Ben Mosier
Sandy & Richard
Brochstein
Linda Cohn Walter
Sandy & Richard
Brochstein
Elaine & Alan Priesman
Carol Sue & Michael
Zionts

**ROSE GOODFRIEND
ISRAEL PILGRIMAGE**

*To help send Confirmation
students to Israel*
In Honor of
**L.A. Train’s Birthday &
Anniversary of heart
transplant**
Armand & Lynn Shapiro

**SHIRLEY BARISH
MEMORIAL ISRAEL
EXPERIENCE FUND**

*To send Helfman Religious
School students to Israel*
In Memory of
Linda Cohn Walter
David Barish

SISTERHOOD FUND

*To support & enhance
Sisterhood programming*
In Memory of
**Carol Newport
Wasserstein**
Barbara & Allen Pauly

**SUSMAN FUND FOR
FAMILY PROGRAMMING**

*To support programs for
families*
In Honor of
Linda Susman’s Birthday
Diana Brackman

TEMPLE FUND

*To support the needs of
the Temple & to fulfill the
mission of Congregation
Emanu El*
A Donation
Janis Peter
Dennis Postel

In Memory of
Pauline Applebaum

Marcia Forbes
Nell Black

Celeste Black
Melvin Feldman

Barbara Hardberg

Gerry Schenberg
Vicki & Roger Greenberg

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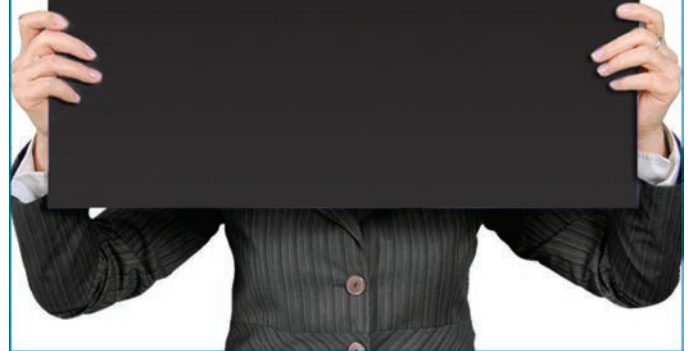
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grat·i·tude

/gradə,t(y)ōd/ noun

Definition: the quality of being thankful; readiness to
show appreciation for and to return kindness.

I want to thank everyone for the honor and privilege
of serving families within the community. It is most
humbling to be given your trust and the great
responsibility of taking care of your loved ones.

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Joshua R.S. Fixler, Associate Rabbi
Roy A. Walter, Rabbi Emeritus
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In just a few weeks, over 100 videos of new content created since the pandemic have been posted to Emanu El's YouTube page with dozens and dozens more from the archives also shared.

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