



Bulletin

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FROM RABBI HAYON



This year, liberation and freedom taste even sweeter as we regather with friends and families around seder tables that for many of us have remained vacant for the past two years.

In her poem, *The Counting*, poet Yael Fischman reflects on a long-gone ritual practice that our Israelite ancestors used to practice at this time of year.

The “wave offering” is described in Leviticus 23:9-11 as a sacrificial custom in which the ancient priests would take a sheaf of wheat and raise it up high in front of the altar before presenting it as an offering to God. In the final stanza of her poem, the poet writes:

*Upward motion, we wave
our humble grain, saying
“See here! See here!”
Here we are again.*

For Fischman, the springtime wave offering was not only a way for the Israelites to express their gratitude to God for the richness of the harvest, but it was also a way to remind God – and each other – that they had returned once again to greet another April. “Here we are again,” they announce, welcoming the warmth of a new season and the promise of nature’s ever-renewing cycles of promise and growth.

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Annual Meeting (digital) Sunday, April 10, 4:00 p.m.

Please plan to join your congregational community virtually at the 2022 Annual Meeting. Your participation helps shape Emanu El’s future by voting on key items and being a part of the necessary quorum to conduct important synagogue business.

The agenda items include:

- Important updates about the congregation from the President and Senior Rabbi
- Approval of the operating budget for 2022-2023 (summary budget included in congregational mailing sent in March)
- Electing officers and trustees (Nominating Committee report and biographies included in the mailing)

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Cantor Josh Breitzer to Serve as Kahn Scholar-in-Residence

Friday, April 22 – Sunday, April 24

Cantor Josh Breitzer of Brooklyn’s Congregation Beth Elohim (CBE) and Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion’s (HUC-JIR) Debbie Friedman School of Sacred Music be serving as the Rabbi Robert & Rozelle Kahn Scholar-in-Residence during the weekend of **April 22** at Congregation Emanu El.



Cantor Josh Breitzer

The scholar-in-residence program is funded by the Rabbi Robert & Rozelle Kahn Lectureship Fund which has since its creation brought top Reform scholars to our community as guests.

A member of the CBE clergy team since receiving ordination from HUC-JIR in 2011, Cantor Breitzer leads the community through prayer and song, teaches chanting and ritual skills to people of all ages, and helps turn special moments into sacred occasions. During his decade of innovative cantorial stewardship, CBE has become a beacon of dynamic, pluralistic ritual

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WORSHIP SERVICES

Locations are listed below for those seeking to use the streaming video portal on our website or for those attending in-person. Any changes will be shared via the regular synagogue communications.

Our Friday night services are streamed to our website, Facebook page, Roku channel, and YouTube. Our Saturday morning B'nei Mitzvah services are available solely on our website and our Saturday services offered in the Proler Chapel are offered as an in-person experience.

Shabbat M'tzora **Friday, April 8**

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

Saturday, April 9

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

Shabbat Yom Rishol shel Pesach **Friday, April 15**

5:00 p.m., Kabbalat Shabbat, Proler Chapel

Saturday, April 16

10:30 a.m., Shabbat Morning Service, Proler Chapel
6:00 p.m., Second Night Seder, Feld Hall

Passover Yizkor **Friday, April 22**

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

Shabbat Acharei Mot I **Friday, April 22**

6:00 p.m., Kabbalat Shabbat, Barish Sanctuary
Heritage Shabbat featuring Kahn Scholar-in-Residence Cantor Josh Breitzer

Saturday, April 23

10:30 a.m., Shabbat Morning Service, Proler Chapel
10:30 a.m., Shabbat Morning Service, Barish Sanctuary
B'not Mitzvah of **Elizabeth Eisner**, daughter of Tamara Saront-Eisner & Pablo Eisner and **Natalie Herbst**, daughter of Gislene Hersbt and Ryan Herbst

Shabbat Acharei Mot II **Friday, April 29**

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

Saturday, April 30

10:30 a.m., Shabbat Morning Service, Proler Chapel
10:30 a.m., Shabbat Morning Service, Barish Sanctuary
B'nei Mitzvah of **Alex & Andrew Fiman**, sons of Marcia & Keith Fiman

Shabbat K'doshim **Friday, May 6**

5:45 p.m., Tot Shabbat Dinner, Sculpture Garden
6:00 p.m., Kabbalat Shabbat, Proler Chapel
6:15 p.m., Tot Shabbat, Sculpture Garden

Saturday, May 7

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

Shabbat Emor **Friday, May 13**

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

Saturday, May 14

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

REMINDER: All Friday night Shabbat services are video streamed on our website as well as our Emanu El Facebook page, YouTube channel and Roku channel. Our Saturday morning Proler Chapel service is not streamed. Saturday morning services featuring a B'nei Mitzvah are streamed on our website and Roku channel.

FROM RABBI HAYON *continued from page 1*

And so it is for us, this year more than so many others. This month, when we celebrate Passover and reaffirm the gift of our freedom, we are not merely commemorating the exhilaration of our ancestors' deliverance many centuries ago. This year, liberation and freedom taste even sweeter as we regather with friends and families around seder tables that for many of us have remained vacant for the past two years.

Whether you'll be celebrating Passover this year at your own table or at our congregational Second Night Seder, I know that the spirit of redemption and joy will infuse your meal, your songs and your prayers. And I pray that for all of us, this season of freedom will bring us to a new and deepened appreciation of our community and our most precious relationships. This year, let us not fail to acknowledge and appreciate the richness of our

blessings as we look around the seder table at those most dear to us and feel the poet's words reverberating inside our hearts: *"See here! See here! Here we are again."*

SAVE THE DATE:

Celebrating the Plotkins **Friday, May 20, 6:00 p.m.**

Join us for Shabbat services and a special oneg to celebrate and appreciate Jason Plotkin and show Jason, Aliza and Isaac our love and good wishes as they prepare for the next step in their journey.

ANNUAL MEETING

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Our past two annual meetings saw a significant increase in member participation using a virtual format in comparison to previous in-person annual meetings; therefore, we have chosen to continue the Zoom Webinar format this year to encourage more member participation in our congregational business.


Because this Annual Meeting will be as a Zoom Webinar, all members must register online by visiting emanuelhouston.org or by calling 713.529.5771.

Emanu El Memorial Park Rates Increase – May 1, 2022

Put your mind at ease by finding your peaceful eternal resting spot in our beautiful Emanu El Memorial Park. We allow members of Emanu El, as well as non-members, and interfaith families to be interred.

Beginning **May 1, 2022**, our plot prices are increasing. The new prices will be \$4,100.00 for members and \$6,500.00 for non-members pre-need. At-need pricing is also increasing. Lock in our current plot pricing by purchasing your plot this month. Interest-free plot financing is available.

We have more than enough space for you and your loved ones. Call or email Christian Simmons, Cemetery Coordinator (713.529.5771; christians@emanuelhouston.org) for more information or to set up an appointment.



Congregation Emanu El

EMANU EL MEMORIAL PARK

8341 BISSONNET STREET

PRE-PLANNING WITH PEACE OF MIND

- PEACEFUL & CALMING ATMOSPHERE
- WELL-MAINTAINED LANDSCAPE
- BEAUTIFUL OUTDOOR CHAPEL
- PARK OPEN DAILY 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
- MEMBERS & NON-MEMBERS WELCOME
- INTEREST-FREE FINANCING

EMANUELHOUSTON.ORG/EEMP

LIFECYCLE EVENTS

IN THE COMMUNITY

Tara Nutik has been named one of Houston's 50 Most Influential Women of the Year for 2020-21 by *Houston Woman Magazine*. Nutik is currently serving as United Way of Greater Houston Women's Initiative Committee Co-Chair.

BIRTHS

Theodore Samuel Itzhak Bond, son of Sarah & Steve Bond; grandson of Tracy & Gary Branfman, Susan Monty Branfman & Jimmy Goldman; great-grandson of "Mommie Anee"

Zoey Margo Dodd, daughter of Amy & Andrew Dodd; granddaughter of Ellen Berkson Ecker, Bill Ecker and Maureen & Michael Dodd

Lucy Ellis Riesenfeld, daughter of Andi & Brett Riesenfeld; granddaughter of Cheryl & Haran Levy, Arlene & Gary Lassin, Laura Fontana & Jeff Riesenfeld; great-granddaughter of Carol & Barry Goodfriend, Paula Levy, Milton Nisson, Ernie Riesenfeld, Helene Glazier

Simon Leo Teigman, son of Mallory & Robert Teigman; grandson of Rona & Jason Schlau, Robyn & Michael Teigman; great-grandson of Bronick Kostas

WEDDINGS

Lillie Schechter & Brian Trachtenberg

DEATHS

Jacqueline Cutler, wife of Monroe Cutler; mother of Faith & Jack Sheffield, Wayne & Andrew Cutler

Marian Daum, mother OF Debbie & David Gersh, Ann & Chris Fisher, and Suzie & Steve Daum; grandmother to Julie & Jonathan Garfunkel, Leah and Sam Fisher, Josh and Jenni Daum; great-grandmother to Nora Leigh Garfunkel

Cary Parven, father of Nathan Parven; brother of Kathy & Stephen Parven

Ted Roggen, husband of Sydney Roggen; father of H. Roggen; grandfather of many

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.

Programming at Emanu El

As Congregation Emanu El gradually migrates back to a robust program calendar, we are currently able to offer three kinds of programs to our community: in-person, digital and hybrid. The definitions of these categories are as follows:

- **IN-PERSON.** Available for in-person attendance only. These offerings will not be livestreamed or broadcast for online audiences.
- **DIGITAL.** Designed for viewing and participation on Zoom or on one of our digital platforms (Facebook, YouTube, etc.) only. Please note that, for privacy reasons and contractual considerations, some of our digital programs will be available for live viewing only and will not be accessible for re-broadcast after the event takes place.
- **HYBRID.** These programs include opportunities for attendees to participate in person or digitally, via Zoom or one of our live-streaming platforms.

When reviewing our program calendar, please make note of any registration requirements (RSVPs may be required), and whether the offering you wish to attend will be offered in-person, digitally, or in a hybrid format. Taking a few moments to confirm these details will help ensure the excellence of our programming and will help us to provide a positive experience for all participants.

If you have a suggestion for a program, or any questions about the details above, please contact Program Director Jason Plotkin at jasonp@emanuelhouston.org or 713.535.6414.

7th Annual Second Night Seder (in-person) Saturday, April 16, 6:00 p.m.

Following a two-year break, we are thrilled to invite the congregation and community to our seventh Annual Second Night Seder.

A Passover Seder led by our clergy, our seder features a fully catered meal that includes all the staples from matzoh ball soup to gefilte fish! The meal is catered by Houston Catering Concepts, the preferred caterer of Congregation Emanu El.

Registration is open and the deadline for registration is **Wednesday, April 6.**

The cost of attending the seder is \$40 for member adults and \$50 for non-member adults. The cost for children is \$20.

Those members of our congregation who are seeking financial assistance or are interested in making a donation to make seder accessible for members of our community are encouraged to reach out to Program Director Jason Plotkin at jasonp@emanuelhouston.org or 713.535.6414.

Second Night Seder is generously underwritten by the Susman Fund for Family Programming and the Rabbi Roy & Linda Walter Enrichment Fund.

Community-Wide Yom HaShoah Observance (hybrid)

**Sunday, April 24, 3:00 p.m., Beth Israel,
5600 N. Braeswood Blvd.**

Please join us in observance of Yom HaShoah, a day of remembrance for the 6,000,000 Jewish people who lost their lives during the Holocaust. During this annual commemoration, we will mourn the loss of all who perished, honor those who survived and come together as a community to remember and reflect. Coordinated by the Yom HaShoah steering committee and the Holocaust Museum Houston, this year's event will take place at Beth Israel. Funding for this service is generously provided by the Morgan Family Endowment Fund, the Morgan Family Center and the Morgan Family Foundation.

This event will be live streamed for those unable to join us in person. A live stream link will be provided closer to the event and in community-wide communications.

Tot Shabbat (in-person)

**Friday, May 6 (dinner 5:45 p.m.; service 6:15 p.m.)
Friday, June 3 (dinner 5:45 p.m.; service 6:15 p.m.)**

Families with young children will join Congregation Emanu El for this monthly event to share a special Shabbat led by a member of our clergy, geared toward families with little ones ages 0-6.

As of press time, we are planning to maintain our posture of holding Tot Shabbat outside as many of our youngest friends have not yet received access to COVID-19 vaccines. Due to this, please note that due to capacity considerations in our outside spaces, advance registration is required. Any additional updates will be shared ahead of time.

Our Tot Shabbat will begin with a picnic dinner outside in the Sculpture Garden at **5:45 p.m.** (or the Gaylor Parking Facility, if weather dictates).

Families are encouraged to bring picnic blankets or something comfortable to sit on.

An optional dinner will be provided by Houston Catering Concepts. In May, the dinner will feature "breakfast for dinner" with egg and cheese breakfast tacos with the June event featuring hamburger sliders. Vegetarian and gluten-free options will be available. The cost of the dinner is \$5 per person.

The deadline for the May Tot Shabbat is **Wednesday, May 4**, with the deadline the next month slated for

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Wednesday, June 1. These dates are subject to change based upon hitting our capacity number.

For more information on our Tot Shabbat programming, please contact Anna Shabtay at annas@emanuelhouston.org or 713.529.5771, ext. 261.

This program is generously underwritten by the Alex & Willie Mae Goldstein Children's Fund.

Shabbat Schmooze & Schmear (in-person) First Saturday of the Month following 10:30 a.m. Shabbat Morning services

Join us for our warm, participatory and Hamish Shabbat morning Proler Chapel service, then stay for a chance to schmooze and enjoy a schmear.

Mark your calendar and plan to attend an engaging and spiritual prayer service on the first Shabbat morning of the month at **10:30 a.m.** and stay after services for a nosh.

Try something new in 2022 with our Shabbat Schmooze & Schmears that will take place on the first Saturday of the month through May. The last date is **May 7.**

Leadership Shabbat (hybrid) Friday, May 13, 6:00 p.m.

Leadership Shabbat serves as the congregation's annual opportunity to install its Board of Trustees and the elected leadership of the temple's auxiliaries.

This service will take place in person during Shabbat services and be streamed online for those unable to join us at the synagogue.

Jews in 20th Century Iran: National Belonging, Education and Identity (digital) Thursday, June 9, 12:30 p.m.



Danielle Farah Image

Our bi-monthly "Lunch & Learn" series examining Israel and the Middle East will continue in June as our congregant Dr. Danielle Farah leads a presentation entitled, *Jews in Twentieth-Century Iran: National Belonging, Education, and Identity.*

Jews have lived in Iran for over 2,500 years, with a population of 100,000 at the community's height in 1945.

During the twentieth century, Iranian Jews experienced rapid upward mobility, participated in significant political and social movements, and integrated into several layers of Iranian society. This talk will explore the landscape of Jewish identity in Iran, with a special focus on Jewish-Muslim interactions, political

engagement, and the intersection of education and integration. As we analyze how Iranian Jews navigated between their Iranian and Jewish identities in an era of new nationalisms, we gain insight into what Jewish emancipation and assimilation looked like in a Muslim-majority country.

Dr. Farah is a 2021-2023 Samuel W. and Goldye Marian Spain Postdoctoral Fellow in Jewish Studies at Rice University. She received her PhD in Jewish History from Stanford University in 2021. Dr. Farah's scholarship, which lies at the intersection of Jewish history, Middle Eastern history, education history, and transnational studies, examines interreligious encounters, national belonging, and Jewish identity formation in modern Iran and Turkey. As an Iranian American Jewish woman, her work aims to give voice to Middle Eastern Jews' experiences.

To register for this Zoom event, visit our web calendar at emanuelhouston.org, or call 713.529.5771. A Zoom link will be sent prior to the presentation.



Baseball With Emanu El – Two Great Opportunities to Join the Congregation

Emanu El Day at Reckling Park (in-person) Sunday, May 1, 1:00 p.m.



Jack Ben-Shoshan with the Rice Owls.

Credit: Rice Owls Athletics

Join Congregation Emanu El at Reckling Park, as the Rice Owls host Western Kentucky with a **1:00 p.m. first pitch.**

The Emanu El Youth Choir under the direction of Cantor Simmons will sing the pre-game national anthem.

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This game will serve as an opportunity to cheer on Emanu El member Jack Ben-Shoshan, a freshman infielder on the Rice baseball team. The Owls are coached by alum and former major leaguer Jose Cruz, Jr. who is in his first year at the helm of the program.

Tickets to sit together as a congregation are \$10 and can be purchased online by visiting our web calendar at emanuelhouston.org or calling 713.529.5771 by **Sunday, April 24**. Emanu El will then supply a list to will call of all members of the community who had purchased tickets.

For more information, contact Jason Plotkin at jasonp@emanuelhouston.org or 713.535.6414.

7th Annual Night at the Ballpark (in-person) Tuesday, August 9, 7:10 p.m.

Congregation Emanu El is excited to announce its seventh annual Night at the Ballpark! Join your Emanu El family at Minute Maid Park as the Houston Astros

welcome the Texas Rangers to town.

Tickets are \$20 and are located in the Chevy Mezzanine section of Minute Maid Park (section 254 & 255). This game is a "Dollar Dog Night" at the ballpark. Due to limitations on the number of tickets available in the Emanu El section, this event is open to Emanu El members only and, based on prior year participation, is anticipated to sell out.

Tickets are expected to arrive at the synagogue in late July and participants will receive communication about planning to pick up their tickets or receive them via mail prior to the ball game.

For more information, contact Jason Plotkin at 713.535.6414 or jasonp@emanuelhouston.org.



Get Social With Us!

Did you know Congregation Emanu El is on Instagram? In addition to our active Facebook pages, be sure to follow us on Instagram to catch snap shots of happenings around the synagogue. From camel sightings to social action, a thriving youth group to clergy in action and more!

Find us on Instagram at [instagram.com/emanuelhouston](https://www.instagram.com/emanuelhouston) or if you are already a member, find us at [@emanuelhouston](https://www.instagram.com/@emanuelhouston). And yes, please feel free to "check-in" at Emanu El when you are here for events and happenings!

Community Organizing Core Team Seeks Help in Shaping Congregation's Social Justice Agenda

Emanu El's Community Organizing Core Team needs your help in shaping the congregation's social justice agenda. We are seeking congregants to participate in small House Meetings (10 people, max) this spring. These structured, facilitated 90-minute meetings are designed to help us learn about the issues that weigh heavily on our congregants' hearts and minds and will take place in lay leaders' homes. All you need to bring is the willingness to listen and share.

Please email Jessie Cassorla at jessiec@emanuelhouston.org, if you are interested in participating so that we can send you available dates. Because these meetings are intentionally small and composed of congregants who may not know each other, we appreciate your patience as we work to schedule them through April, May, and June.

Our clergy want to know . . .

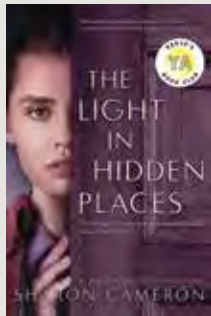
If you or a loved one is sick or hospitalized please let us know.

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.

SISTERHOOD NEWS & HAPPENINGS

April – May 2022



BOOK REVIEW:

The Light In Hidden Places

by Sharon Cameron

THURSDAY, MAY 12, 7:00 PM (digital)

Sisterhood hosts bi-monthly book reviews throughout the year that are open to the public. May's book review will be led by our congregant, Shelly Cyprus.

A summary of our May book selection can be found below:

It is 1943 and for four years, 16-year-old Stefania was working for the Diamant family in their grocery store in Przemysl, Poland, weaving her way into their lives and hearts. She even made a promise of betrothal to one of their sons, Izio, which had to be kept secret since Stefania is Catholic and the Diamants are Jewish.

Everything changes when the German army invades Przemysl, the Diamants are forced into the ghetto leaving Stefania alone in an occupied city, the only person to care for Helena, her six-year-old sister. And then comes the knock at the door. Izio's brother Max has jumped from a train headed to a concentration camp. Stefania and Helena make the extraordinary decision to hide Max and, eventually, 12 more Jews, as well. Then they must wait, every day, for the next knock at the door, the one that will mean death. When the knock finally comes, it is two SS officers, requisitioning Stefania's house for the German army. With two Nazis living below, 13 Jews hidden above, and a little sister by her side, Stefania has one more excruciating choice to make.

Sharon Cameron brings her extraordinary storytelling prowess to this depiction of real-life Righteous Gentiles Stefania and Helena Podgorska. This gripping page-turner explores the momentous decisions people make in the most desperate of circumstances and how one person truly can change the world.

We ask that you kindly **RSVP by Wednesday, May 11**, by completing the online registration form located on our web calendar at emanuelhouston.org or by contacting the Sisterhood at sishood@emanuelhouston.org or 713.529.5771, ext. 233.



Michelle O'Michael pictured with her piece **Moon River** at the San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts in San Angelo, Texas.

Meet Artist Michelle O'Michael at the Foundry (in-person) Wednesday, April 27, 1:00 p.m.

Calling all art aficionados! Join Sisterhood for a unique opportunity to visit with internationally known steel sculptor, Michelle O'Michael, and tour her three-story high sculpture studio!

Michelle is a proud Texan and amazing creator of large pieces of public art commissioned by private collectors, cities, and municipalities. Her work is collected across the U.S. from New York City to Hollywood, and internationally in Mexico, the United Arab Emirates, Germany and the United Kingdom. She has been the president and owner of The Foundry for 36 years. We are privileged to be hosted by this amazing artist, one of the few women in the field, and see firsthand what it takes to make a sculpture three stories high, piece by piece. Glimpses of her artwork can be found at omichael.com.

Transportation to The Foundry, located at 1414 Hardy St. in Houston, will be via bus from Congregation Emanu El. The bus will pick up participants at **12:15 p.m.** and return to the temple at approximately **3:30 p.m.** Because the event is limited to 35 guests, Sisterhood members will be given priority.

Get ready for an afternoon of camaraderie and to be in awe of Michelle's creativity, imagination, and craftsmanship.

The cost of the tour is \$20. Payment must be received by the Sisterhood office by **Monday, April 25**. You may mail a check or register online by visiting our web calendar at emanuelhouston.org. For more information, please contact the Sisterhood office at 713.529.5771, ext. 233 or sishood@emanuelhouston.org.

Gratitude for our Leaders

Every April, since its founding, Congregation Emanu El elects a new slate of lay leaders to infuse its board with new ideas, skills and support. The Board of Trustees is driven by Bylaws which provides guidance for its operation and governance from year-to-year. This is the formal system by which we have grown and evolved and what has helped Emanu El thrive as it does today. Less formally, but equally important, the mission, personality and spirit of our sacred community are defined by the strong partnership between the Board and our clergy, staff, officers and auxiliary leaders.

“The partnership between the lay and rabbinic leadership has been a hallmark throughout Emanu El’s existence,” shares Rabbi Emeritus Roy Walter. “Beginning with the temple’s founders and Rabbi Robert I. Kahn, through my years as Senior Rabbi, that partnership was the major reason we thrived. The success of our rabbinic-lay partnership was so well recognized nationally, that we shared the value of the partnership and the steps we took to create it with rabbinic students at Hebrew Union College when Dolores Wilkenfeld was Board President. For me, it’s exciting to see that during Rabbi Hayon’s tenure, the strength of this partnership remains strong and continues to serve as the backbone of how we function today.”

“Leadership at Emanu El is not an elite club; rather, it reflects both long-time family leaders who have continued to step up from one generation to the next and new leaders, who bring fresh ideas and energy to our community, keeping it current, dynamic and relatable.”

Oren Hayon, Senior Rabbi

This Endowment Fund Series has focused on the many Funds that enable the congregation to sustain itself, its leaders and its members through the years. The families who established these Funds have used incredible foresight, empathy, generosity and gratitude to help build and sustain our spiritual community. By creating these invaluable funds, they continue to demonstrate their confidence in the congregation and its leaders now and for years to come.

There are two key funds that support the growth of leadership at Emanu El. We highlight them below.

Florence & Ben Blum Leadership Fund

Originally created as a parenting support fund, the fund was redesigned to underwrite staff and congregant attendance at URJ Biennial meetings. “One of the many benefits of these Endowed Funds is their ability to morph; they aren’t set in stone,” explains Myra Lipper, daughter of Florence and Ben Blum, and former Emanu El Program Director. “Families can work with congregational leadership to re-imagine the purpose of their funds as need arise.”

Bill & Joan Spitz Presidential Leadership Fund

Upon their father’s passing, the four Spitz brothers thought deeply about the type of fund that would honor their parents’ memory in a way they would have appreciated. Bill Spitz was a past president of the congregation and Brotherhood, and the temple and its rabbis had long turned to him as a trusted advisor and mentor. “He loved the temple, and was a leader here as well as every organization he joined,” shares his eldest son, Clay Spitz. “It’s fitting that this fund be used for the good of the congregation and be available at the Rabbi’s discretion. My father was a valued resource for the temple, and loved every minute of volunteer time he gave it.”

Guidance from our past, growth for our future



Incoming president Stuart Gaylor pictured with Jacquelyn Barish and Rabbi Oren Hayon at a recent reception honoring endowment fund families.

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This is the final installment of our series on the Endowment Funds of Congregation Emanu El. Our theme is gratitude – for everyone who has made Emanu El the strong, vital and invaluable spiritual home it is today.

Thank you to our founding families.

Thank you to our clergy.

Thank you to our professional staff.

Thank you to our building staff.

Thank you to our past presidents.

Thank you to current and past members of the Board.

Thank you to our countless volunteers.

Thank you to our members. Without you, there would be no sacred community.

And a big “**THANK YOU**” to all the families and individuals who established the many named Funds we have highlighted during the last 12 months. One of the most impactful ways leaders can lead is ensuring the future of Emanu El’s Endowment.

Members of the Endowment Fund Marketing Committee who helped make this series possible include: Scott Bormaster, Chair; Nancy Parkans Ehrenkranz, Carolyn Putterman, Myra Lipper, Laurie Pickei, Jason Plotkin, Stephanie Falkenhagen, Anna Shabtay, Rabbi Roy Walter, and Rabbi Oren Hayon.



Be a Part of It

On any financial level, we all have the capacity to make a difference. For additional information on contributing to the Temple’s Endowment through planned giving and legacy gifts, please contact Anna Shabtay at annas@emanuelhouston.org, or scan the QR code with your cell phone camera.

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Rabbi Robert I. Kahn with then-Brotherhood president Bill Spitz in 1965. Spitz would eventually serve as president of the congregation. Recently, the Bill & Joan Spitz Presidential Leadership Fund was established in honor of Bill and his wife, Joan. Credit: Kaye Marvins

“The relationship between our lay leaders and clergy is intertwined. We have a mutual trust and respect for each other which allows us to stay aligned on what is best for Emanu El. This strong partnership has and continues to set the foundation for leading our congregation.”

Stuart Gaylor, Incoming President, Emanu El Board of Trustees

Emanu El Administrative Update

The below correspondence was emailed to the congregation on Thursday, March 10.

Dear friends,

It is with mixed emotion that we share the bittersweet news that our tireless Program Director Jason Plotkin has accepted a remarkable professional opportunity in West Bloomfield, Michigan. Jason's tenure at Congregation Emanu El will come to a close in a few months when he and his family relocate to Michigan. We know that you share our pride in Jason for having been selected for this important leadership role in one of the most significant congregations in the Reform movement. At the same time, we also know that you share in our sadness as Jason, Aliza and Isaac will be leaving us after his long and impressive tenure at Emanu El and throughout Houston's Jewish community.

Jason has served Congregation Emanu El since 2013, and during that time he has overseen countless events, services, lectures, and celebrations in our spiritual home. We have been especially grateful for his warmth, creativity and innovation. His time with us has helped Emanu El to live up to its highest aspirations. We wish him every success in his new role, and we are eager to watch his career as a Jewish communal professional continue to flourish.

Jason has composed these thoughts, which we are pleased to convey on his behalf:

Friends,

We have had quite the run for the last eight-plus years since I returned 'home' in 2013. You have been alongside me as I learned what it meant to fill the shoes of the program director position and provided ample rope as we tried new things together. During my tenure, we all played a role in making Emanu El a visible and consequential institution in not only the greater Houston metropolitan area, but within the Reform Movement.

This platform that we created together has given me many opportunities including the gift that comes in the form of becoming the executive director of Temple Israel in West Bloomfield, Michigan. The largest synagogue in North America with over 3,000 families, Temple Israel will provide a new set of challenges for which I will lean into the experiences that I was afforded here at my Emanu El.

Aliza, Isaac and I have cherished our time here at Emanu El and look forward to being with you these next few months as we prepare to make the move to Michigan this summer.

The search to identify and select a capable candidate to serve as our next Program Director will begin very soon. In the meantime, Jason will continue his duties at Emanu El over the next few months, and we hope to share details with you about an opportunity to celebrate with him and thank him for his service to our congregation.

All of us are grateful to have been the beneficiaries of Jason's hard work and his love for the Jewish community. We wish him and his family great success and fulfillment in their new home.

Jeri Amundsen, President
Rabbi Oren J. Hayon, Senior Rabbi



Program Director Jason Plotkin has accepted the position of Executive Director at Temple Israel in West Bloomfield, Michigan. He will remain on the Emanu El staff into May.

CANTOR JOSH BREITZER TO SERVE AS KAHN SCHOLAR-IN-RESIDENCE

continued from page 1

activity, attracting international attention and growing to over 1000 member units.

Named by *The Forward* in its “Soundtrack of Our Spirit” series as one of the best new Jewish music voices, Cantor Breitzer has sung at concert halls and synagogues across the country. He appears throughout the PBS documentary *The Four Sons and All Their Sons: A Passover Tale* and helped create the New York Festival of Song’s acclaimed cabaret *A Goyishe Christmas to You* in which he has performed every year since 2010. Among his most influential mentors were Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Yehudi Wyner, Cantor Lawrence Avery, and Dr. Jack Gottlieb, whose artistic legacy Cantor Breitzer continues to preserve and promote.

In addition to his congregational cantor duties, Cantor Breitzer is a dedicated instructor at the Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR) Debbie Friedman School of Sacred Music where he advises and coaches students and teaches courses on integrative repertoire for Shabbat and Yom Kippur. An alumnus of the Clergy Leadership Program of the Institute for Jewish Spirituality, he strives to model in all his work how one might weave traditional and contemporary liturgical settings into a holistic, compelling prayer experience. His former cantorial interns have gone on to serve prominent communities throughout the progressive Jewish world.

Beyond his work at CBE and with our Reform Movement’s seminary, Cantor Breitzer is also active in the American Conference of Cantors (ACC). Originally elected to the ACC board in 2015 and to the officer team in 2016, Cantor Breitzer served from 2016-2019 as Vice President for Professional Development, External Policy and Placement and since 2019, as Vice President for Membership and External Partnerships.

A listing of events during the weekend in residency with Cantor Breitzer can be found below.

Passover Yizkor (hybrid) **Friday, April 22, 10:30 a.m.**

We are honored to have Cantor Breitzer begin his weekend-in-residence with us by lending his voice and spirit to our Passover Yizkor service. Join Cantor Breitzer, Cantor Simmons and Rabbi Hayon as they lead us in beautiful reflective prayer as we remember our loved ones and commemorate the end of our Passover observance. This service will be streamed on our website, Facebook, YouTube, and Roku. Please call the synagogue or reference future synagogue communications for location.

Heritage Shabbat (hybrid) **Friday, April 22, 6:00 p.m.**

Our Heritage Shabbat will be enhanced by Cantor Breitzer’s leadership. Cantors Breitzer and Simmons

will join their voices with organist Ann Frohbieter and our professional choir to lift our prayers to new heights. We will hear cherished melodies as well as some less familiar settings and learn from Cantor Breitzer as he presents a sermon in song. This service will be streamed on our website through the Barish Sanctuary streaming video page, Facebook, YouTube, and Roku.

Saturday Morning Study: “The Song of Redemption and the Song of Confession” (in-person)

Saturday, April 23, 8:30 a.m. (breakfast), 9:00 a.m. (study)

During the last days of Passover, we recount the Exodus from Egypt and the ancient tune sung by the Israelites on the shores the sea. Throughout Yom Kippur, our Day of Atonement, we count our shortcomings by tapping our hearts in time to a version of that same tune. How can this be? Come and learn more about the musical connection between two starkly contrasting sacred occasions.

This study will be held in the Oshman Multi-Purpose Room and include an optional pre-study breakfast. To help us plan accordingly, we ask that you RSVP on the emanuelhouston.org web calendar or by calling 713-529-5771.

Sunday Morning Learning Session: “Synagogue Music and the Great American Songbook” (in-person)

Sunday, April 24, 10:00 a.m. (breakfast), 10:30 a.m. (study)

While the melodies of URJ summer camps started making their way into URJ sanctuaries, one composer steeped in the standards of Frank Sinatra, Bing Crosby and their contemporaries was writing liturgical settings inspired by their popular stylings. That composer was also an authority on and associate of the incomparable Leonard Bernstein and followed his lead in pushing the limits of what tonal music could be. Join us for a fascinating exploration of a little-known but hugely impactful artistic legacy!

This study will be held in the Oshman Multi-Purpose Room and include an optional pre-study breakfast. To help us plan accordingly, we ask that you RSVP on the emanuelhouston.org web calendar or by calling 713-529-5771.

For questions on any of the program offerings during the weekend, please contact Jason Plotkin at jason@emanuelhouston.org or 713-535-6414.

Reality Bites the Megillah: A 90's Purim Spiel

The cast of the "Reality Bites the Megillah: A 90's Purim Spiel," which took place on Sunday, March 6. The Spiel and each of the standalone song clips can be viewed on the congregation's YouTube channel.



Purim Pie in The Face

Emanu El & Helfman Religious School staffer Charles Colona was a good sport during the Purim Carnival, taking pies in the face from multiple carnival goers.

Emanu El Welcomes Batya Ungar-Sargon as Endowment Speaker

Dr. Batya Ungar-Sargon visited Emanu El in late February for a presentation entitled, *How (and Why) Journalism Gets it Wrong*. Ungar-Sargon is *Newsweek's* Deputy Opinion Editor and author of the recently released book, *Bad News: How Woke Media Is Undermining Democracy*, which explores the recent ideological shifts in mainstream media and their effects across the broader landscape of American democracy.





We appreciate the thoughtfulness of those who remember and honor their friends and loved ones through their generous contributions through March 14, 2022.

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Bitsy Proler

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To strengthen the vision of Congregation Emanu El's leaders

In Memory of
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Ellen Brodsky Gaber

CAPLOVITZ LIFELONG ADULT JEWISH EDUCATION FUND

To present programs on contemporary moral issues
In Honor of

Ed Septimus- Recipient of the HUC-JUR President's Medal in recognition of his extraordinary work to keep HUC safe and informed through the COVID-19 pandemic
Marilyn K Nathan

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

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To enhance Emanu El's communications with congregants
In Honor of
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June & Julian Silverblatt

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To provide programs for Emanu Elders
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Marcia Weinstein

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Jeff & Karen Basen-Engquist

Cary Parven
Jeff & Karen Basen-Engquist
Marilynne & Alford Bleeker

GENERAL ENDOWMENT FUND

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

In Honor of
The Anniversary of Elyse & Lewis Kalmans
Andrea & Walter Kalmans and Family

In Memory of
Pauline Applebaum
Marcia Forbes
Ted Roggen
Anonymous

continued next page

GREENE FAMILY CAMP FUND

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Marian Daum

The Helfman Religious School Faculty & Staff
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Sadie Goldstein
Perry Radoff
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Ruby Sondock

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Ralph G. Howard

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To provide programs about religion
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Steven, Matthew & Lindsay Kronowitz

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Judy & Steve Loeb
Marsha & Shelly Kaplan
Rabbi Roy Walter
Harry, Bruce, Keith, Felice, their spouses, children & grandchildren

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Carol & Barry Goodfriend
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Barbara & Martin Meyer
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To provide Greene Family Camp scholarships
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Gladys Schnurr

In Memory of
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Morris Taibel
Gladys Schnurr

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To support programs that assist people in the community
In Honor of
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Isabelle & Eric Mayer

In Memory of
Sarah Rabin
Cheryl & Haran Levy

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To send congregants to the Consultation on Conscience at the Religious Action Center
In Honor of
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Fayann & Mel Weiss

RONALD BROCHSTEIN EARLY CHILDHOOD FUND

To enhance preschool education
In Memory of
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Carol Sue & Michael Zions

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Harlan Priesman
Marilyn & Rob Corn

SHIRLEY & MARVIN BARISH TEACHER ENRICHMENT FUND

To provide training programs for Emanu El teachers
In Honor of
The Bat Mitzvah of Ava Silk
Kathy & Stephen Parven

SISTERHOOD FLOWER FUND

To provide flowers for our worship spaces
In Honor of
Rabbis, Cantor, Teachers & Religious School Staff
The B'nei Mitzvah of Logan Mendelovitz & Joshua Taylor
The Mendelovitz Family
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Monica & Michael Weber
The Marriage of Carolyn Cohen & Adam Weingarten
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Phyllis & Aron Frank

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To provide for and enhance Sisterhood programming
In Memory of
Cary Parven
Barbara & Allen Pauly

SUSMAN FUND FOR FAMILY PROGRAMMING

To support programs for families
In Honor of
The Birthday of Linda Susman
Diana Brackman
Pamela & Andrew Susman

In Memory of
Richard Susman
Patricia & Mark Rauch

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To support the needs of the Temple and to fulfill the mission of Congregation Emanu El
In Honor of
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The Naming of Erica Danielle Shapiro & Zachary Joel Shapiro
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Marcia & Bruce Friedman
The Birthday of Amy Kapiloff
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Syd Roggen
Rita Blumenfeld
The Marriage of Jillian & Dan Fulop
Madgelyn & Richard Pesin
The Speedy Recovery of Michael Wilk
Judy & Michael Baylin

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SAVE THE DATE:

Community Shabbat Dinners (in-person)
Fridays, June 24 & July 22 following Shabbat
services

Our popular Community Shabbat dinners return this
summer.

Join us for a \$5 meal following Shabbat worship
on **Friday, June 24** and **Friday, July 22** as we come
together as a community.

More info to be shared in next month's edition of the
Bulletin!



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