



# TIKVAH TOPICS

TEVET

SHEVAT



Congregation Beth Tikvah • 6121 Olentangy River Road • Worthington, OH 43085  
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# December at Beth Tikvah



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# Words from Rabbi Rick Kellner

When the stillness of winter brings a snowy blanket that covers hard-packed soil, I find myself thinking of the trees. Though their skeletal branches pierce the cold air at this time of year, I always imagine that trees continue to grow even now. While deciduous trees enter a state of dormancy above ground during the winter months, their roots continue to grow beneath the surface. They absorb nutrients from the ground and store them for spring growth.

We, too, experience growth throughout our lives, at every stage and in every season. Much like a tree's roots soaking up nutrients, we take in experiences that nurture our souls. Every experience impacts us; we reflect on the moments that shape us into who we become. We are guided by memories, shaped by values, and formed by the people we encounter. Throughout life's stages, we plant seeds in the ground that help others grow.

As we reflect on growth, we are reminded of a famous story from the Talmud, Tractate Ta'anit. Honi, known as the Circle Maker, is walking along the road when he encounters a man planting a carob tree. He asks the man, "How long will it take for this tree to bear fruit?" The man replies, "Seventy years." "Will you live to see this tree bear fruit?" Honi wonders. With wisdom, the man responds, "Just as my ancestors planted for me, I plant for those who come after me." Honi then sits by the side of the road and falls asleep. When he awakens, he sees a man gathering fruit from the carob tree. Honi asks, "Are you the one who planted this tree?" The man answers, "It was my grandfather who planted this tree." In that moment, Honi realizes he has slept for seventy years.

The fruit that grows from the trees of our lives has far-reaching effects that nurture others. We leave legacies that shape the next generation. Our stories are more than stories; they are the seeds that sustain the legacies we create in the world.

With this in mind, we are excited to launch a new project at Congregation Beth Tikvah. We call it *The Carob Tree Project*. Congregation Beth Tikvah is built on the stories of our members. Through this project, Hannah Karr, our Director of Marketing and Community Engagement, and I look forward to meeting with members to learn more about their stories, the values that have guided their lives, and the experiences that have shaped who they are.

In this issue of *Tikvah Topics*, you will find **the first installment of The Carob Tree**. Last month, we met with longtime Beth Tikvah member Dawn Heyman. We spoke about joyful moments in her life, the challenges she faced, her connection to Judaism and Jewish life, and the lessons that have guided her. Her stories are both fruit and seeds that nurture *us* and help *us* grow. It is our hope that, as this project continues, we can be like Honi—reaping the fruits and seeds of the many members of our community who have incredible stories to share.



# Pause for Poetry ~ Rabbi Karen Martin

## “When Life Seems a To-Do List”

by Marjorie Saiser in *How to Love the World*, edited by James Crews

*When the squares of the week fill  
with musts and shoulds,  
when I swim in the heaviness of it,  
the headlines, the fear and hate,  
then with luck, something like a slice of moon  
will arrive clean as a bone  
and beside it on that dark slate  
a star will lodge near the cusp  
and with luck I will have you  
to see it with, the two of us,*

*fools stepping out the backdoor  
in our pajamas.  
Is that Venus?-I think so-Let's  
call it Venus, cuddling up to the moon  
and there are stars further away  
sending out rays that will not  
reach us in our lifetimes  
but we are choosing, before the chaos  
starts up again,  
to stand in this particular light.*

Much like a flower, I am solar-powered and not made to withstand the cold. In nicer weather, I can stay outside for hours, but in this season, being outdoors is something to be endured, head down, shoulders hunched against the wind.

January is a hard month. The joy of Hanukkah has passed, and although we have moved beyond the darkest nights of the year, we must still slog through long stretches of dreary gray cold before we get to feel the heat of the sun. With the holidays behind us, we scramble to catch up on missed work, plan for what's to come, and tend to all that must be done week in and week out.

In the winter, it's easy to give in to the temptation to curl into ourselves, protecting our warmth from the cutting cold. It is easier to stay indoors, weighed down by the pressure of what must get done, or what we should be doing. For me, that includes laundry and dishes, teaching and learning, the minutiae of parenting, and doing what I can to stand up for what I believe in. These things are necessary and urgent, demanding attention, but they are not everything.

This poem, “When Life Seems a To-Do List,” feels like a gentle reminder of the other things—the small moments that fill me up and carry me through this season and every other. In the poem, the speaker looks up at the early morning sky, perhaps on a morning like this one as Rosh Hodesh Tevet approaches, the moon only a sliver on the horizon, with Venus resting at the cusp of the moon's crescent. There is something both stark and warm in the language, in the image of the moon as a slice of white bone—as though it cuts through the noise and leaves the speaker picked clean. Yet it is not a painful cleansing; it is more like a mikvah, where one emerges pure from living water and takes the first breath after immersion, or like the way the world is blanketed and pristine after a heavy snowfall.

The warmth comes with these words, “and with luck I will have you / to see it with.” The speaker hopes to share this simple, poignant moment. There's a gentle, self-deprecating humor in the imagined interaction, both in their pajamas as they guess at the star or planet, no cell phones intruding to give them the answer. It's a moment of imagined connection; a pause made better because it is shared.

I am struck by the image the speaker paints of choosing. They choose to look up, to see the sky in the early hours, to bask not in the light of the sun, but in the quiet glow of the moon and stars. I find myself wondering what it would feel like to choose that particular light, to breathe into an intimate darkness and find companionship there before the chaos that comes with daylight.

The poem calls me to look up and around when I want to huddle into myself. It's a reminder of the simple wonder found in connection and stillness, and that they are not mutually exclusive, but rather they are richer for being shared. As we enter the cold slog of January, may we be blessed with wonder, rejuvenating pauses, and connection.



# SHABBAT AT BETH TIKVAH

JAN  
9

## ENOS WISNIEWSKI'S RETIREMENT CELEBRATION

Friday, Jan. 9 at 7:15 PM

For ten years, Enos Wisniewski has cared for both our building and the spirit of our community. This January, he will retire after a decade of devoted service as Beth Tikvah's beloved custodian. Please join us for Shabbat services on January 9 as we celebrate Enos and wish him well in retirement.

JAN  
17

## LIBRARY MINYAN

Saturday, Jan. 17 at 10:00 AM

Join us in the Beth Tikvah library for a warm, participatory Shabbat morning experience that blends prayer, learning, and community connection. Followed by a Jewish Humor lecture with Dr. Jarrod Tanny.

JAN  
23

## SHABBAT NESHAMA EVENING SERVICE

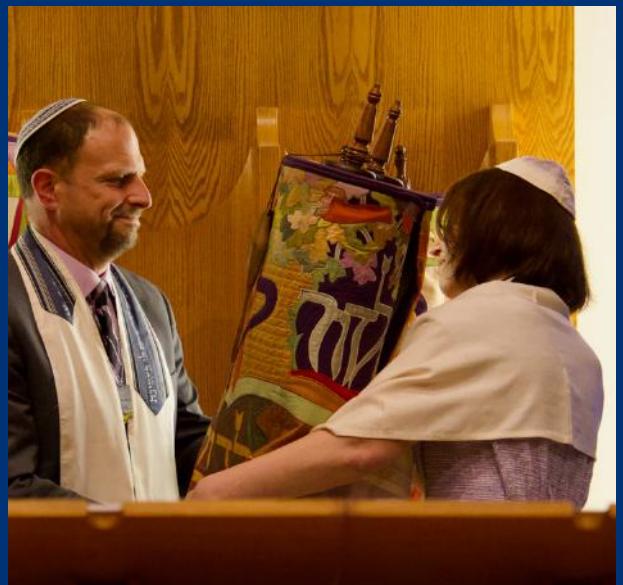
Friday, Jan. 23 at 7:15 PM

A contemporary Shabbat prayer experience with music to lift the soul. Shabbat Neshama will fill our sanctuary and our hearts with a contemporary musical sound offering opportunities to sing, listen, and feel joy. Our service features members of our congregation who all share a love of making music and a commitment to introducing a unique feel and sound.

*Musicians include Julie Sapper (piano), Cantorial Soloist Debbie Costa and Alyson Vigneron (vocals) Jacob Reed (percussion), Michael Kash (mandolin/fiddle), Dave Martinez (guitar), and Gary Wasserman (bass).*



# Rabbi Karen Martin's Installation





## Events

24  
JAN

Sign-Up

### TIKVAH TOTS SHABBAT

Designed for families with young children (ages 0-8), join our joyful and engaging Shabbat experience! Enjoy songs, stories, movement, and age-appropriate Jewish learning led by our dedicated clergy and educators.

25  
JAN

Sign-Up

### ANNUAL TEENS PINS PARTY

Calling all 8-12 graders! We will meet at PINS Mechanical Easton from 2:00 - 4:00 PM. This event is in partnership with Temple Beth Shalom and Temple Israel teens!

30  
JAN

Sign-Up

### FAMILY SHABBAT DINNER & SERVICE

Join us for Shabbat dinner at 6:15 PM catered by Olive Garden followed by Family Shabbat service featuring leadership by our 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Religious School class!

# THE 2026 ALLISON SENSER

## community

# PURIM FESTIVAL

March 1, 2026 from 1:30 pm - 4:30 pm

LOCATION DISCLOSED UPON REGISTRATION

CELEBRATE WITH THE ENTIRE FAMILY & COMMUNITY AT A FUN-FILLED AFTERNOON

- ★ CARNIVAL GAMES FOR ALL
- ★ GIANT SLIDE
- ★ DELECTABLE HAMANTASCHEN
- ★ PHOTO BOOTH MEMORIES
- ★ FACE PAINTING

- ★ KOSHER MIDWAY TREATS
- ★ SILENT DISCO
- ★ PRIZES
- ★ MUSIC & ISRAELI DANCING
- ★ SURPRISE ENTERTAINMENT

Tickets  
on sale  
soon!

An event for everyone! Join us in the Chill Zone for **sensory friendly** Purim activities

TICKET PRICES  
(INCLUDES PARKING)      **\$50 FAMILY - MAX OF 5**  
**\$10 PER CHILD**  
**\$5 PER ADULT**

**REGISTRATION REQUIRED FOR FREE PARKING**

SCAN THE QR CODE  
FOR MORE INFO



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SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE



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Chabad  
COLUMBUS

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COLUMBUS



# THE CAROB TREE PROJECT

*featuring*

## DAWN HEYMAN



**In the Talmud, the carob tree is planted for a future the planter may never see. Congregation Beth Tikvah's Carob Tree Project is about honoring those who have done just that. Dawn Heyman's story is one of seeds planted patiently in classrooms, in community, and in faith — and of fruit still being gathered today and into the future.**

Some of her earliest memories are rooted in the tenderness of her family. **"Aunt Betty was my favorite aunt. She used to make jello especially for me because I just loved the color of jello. Not only is it pretty, it tastes pretty! She lived in New Jersey, and we used to go out to the seashore. I'd go swimming in the ocean, which was fun and scary. One minute your feet are on the ground, the next minute you're ten feet up in the air. I'd stay in the water until I was blue."**

For Dawn, school began unevenly but would eventually become her calling. She loved learning, but her first classroom experience shook her sense of safety. It taught her something lasting about children, how vulnerable they are and how easily a single adult can shape their confidence. What steadied her was another teacher later on. **"Mrs. Thorpe is the reason I became a teacher. She was tough,"** says Dawn. **"She was my role model, and actually my friend as a grownup."** Mrs. Thorpe showed her that rigor and care can coexist, and that simply believing in students can alter the course of their lives.

That belief would guide Dawn through decades in the classroom.

# THE CAROB TREE PROJECT

*featuring* **DAWN HEYMAN**

As a Jewish child, Dawn often felt isolated. Being the only Jewish student meant living inside someone else's calendar and customs. **"I was sometimes the only Jewish kid in the classroom. You feel very lonely. It's always Christmas or Easter, and who you are doesn't seem to matter."**

Holidays passed without recognition. Identity went unseen. The loneliness was real, but so was her resolve. Over time, she learned to speak clearly and calmly about who she was. She did not aim to persuade, but to stand her ground. Judaism, for Dawn, was never a question; she felt it early and unmistakably. **"My soul just knew it was Jewish,"** she says.

That sense of belonging eventually led her to her second home: Beth Tikvah. **"Beth Tikvah was in a little house on the corner, and I just decided one Friday to go in and see what it was like."** The community, the shared responsibility, the openness...all of it resonated. She didn't just participate; she led. She taught. She stood at the bimah. She felt at home.

Teaching became the central thread of her life. As a teacher, Dawn loved the process of helping children learn and understand, especially those who struggled. She watched for the moment when comprehension arrived, and frustration softened into clarity. She made room for humor, creativity, and for current events turned into mock broadcasts and commercials. She believed learning should be engaging. It should feel alive.

Dawn was especially drawn to children others found difficult. The ones who tested boundaries; the ones who carried something heavier. Dawn noticed them. She remembered what it felt like to be different, and she made sure those students were seen.

The values that have shaped her came from home. **"My mother always said to be kind. Always be kind."** Her father brought humor and creativity into the house, filling it with music. He played the cello, loved classical pieces, and passed on an appreciation for beauty that has stayed with her long after her father's sound faded.

Even now, art remains a large part of Dawn's life. She writes poetry inspired by nature and animals. She draws. She notices. She talks to God honestly, and sometimes argumentatively, because for her, faith is about building an authentic relationship. **"I have a need to talk to God and I do. Judaism doesn't try to make God be anything. You have freedom to love God in your own way."**

Looking back, Dawn measures her life by the moments when kindness mattered. By noticing who was overlooked. By staying curious, creative, and willing to stand in her truth. She speaks plainly about who she is and how she lives. **"I'm alive and well. I still drive people crazy! You have to be a little naughty; have a little fun. That's important."**

In the story of the carob tree, one plants knowing they may never sit in its shade. Dawn has lived that story. Through teaching, through leadership, through faith practiced honestly, she has planted seeds she may never fully see. They live on in the students who felt understood, in the communities that felt like home, in the quiet confidence of being Jewish without apology, and in the simple, enduring command to always be kind.

**Her story is a carob tree: planted long ago, still bearing fruit.**



THE HOLOCAUST IN KRAKOW

# HISTORY & MEMORY

with Aaron Taylor

Through photographs and personal stories, this program explores how Jews in and around Krakow experienced the Holocaust and how their lives, losses, and resilience are remembered today.



AARON TAYLOR

Beth Tikvah Religious School Chair

THURSDAY

January 22, 2026



START AT

7:15 PM in the Library



[SIGN-UP HERE](#)



The Worthington interfaith community is proud to host Faith250, a four-session learning series connected to a national, multifaith initiative inviting communities to reflect on shared civic values through historical texts. As the U.S. approaches its 250th anniversary, Faith250 creates space for conversations about belonging, responsibility, and the moral ideals that shape lives.

## THE NEW COLOSSUS

EMMA LAZARUS  
1883

Wednesday, January 28 | 7:00 PM

For our first session, we'll explore Emma Lazarus' poem *The New Colossus*, its message of hope & belonging, and what its words might mean for us today.

[SIGN-UP](#)

• Congregation Beth Tikvah

6121 Olentangy River Road

Scan the code to RSVP

# CREATIVE ENGAGEMENT WITH TEXT

JANUARY 7, 2026

7:00 - 8:30 PM

Join Rabbi Karen Martin for an evening of inspiration and creative expression rooted in the words of Torah. We will explore examples of creative work across different genres that draw on our sacred texts, and then, through guided writing exercises, bring our intellect and imagination together as we dive deeper into the text.

[SIGN-UP HERE](#)

# SUNDAY EVENING STUDY GROUP



“The Ashen Rainbow”  
by Ori Soltes

[LEARN MORE](#)



# A Weekend with Scholar **DR. JARROD TANNY**

**Friday, Jan. 16, 2026**  
at 7:15 PM

**Saturday, Jan. 17, 2026**  
at 11 AM



**16**  
JAN

**Antisemitism on  
Campus: The  
View from Inside  
Jewish Studies**

*Following Shabbat Services*

Dr. Tanny offers an insider's perspective on the rise of antisemitism in higher education, drawing on his work as a Jewish studies scholar and public intellectual navigating today's academic landscape.

**17**  
JAN

**From the Borscht  
Belt to the Bible  
Belt: Jewish Humor  
in Dixieland**

*Following Library Minyan*

Join Dr. Tanny on Saturday morning for a lively exploration of Jewish humor in the American South, tracing how comedy, identity, & cultural survival intersect.

**SIGN-UP FOR SATURDAY'S LUNCHEON**

## ABOUT DR. JARROD TANNY

*Dr. Jarrod Tanny is Professor of History and the Charles and Hannah Block Distinguished Scholar in Jewish History at the University of North Carolina Wilmington. A historian of Jewish life, culture, and humor, his work explores the intersections of identity, power, and tradition in modern Jewish history. He is the author of several books, including *City of Rogues and Schnorrers*, *The Seinfeld Talmud*, and *Tales of a Yid in Dixieland*. Dr. Tanny is also a frequent commentator on antisemitism and Jewish life in contemporary media.*

**Hosted by the Beth Tikvah Adult Learning Committee**

# WOMEN'S TORAH STUDY

Morissa Freiberg-Vance, RJE

Join us in-person or on Zoom on  
**Monday, January 5 at 12 PM**

[JOIN ON ZOOM HERE](#)



## ONLINE MEDITATION

**January 14, 2026 | 10:30 AM**

[JOIN ON ZOOM HERE](#)

Join Morissa R. Freiberg-Vance, RJE in a guided meditation to rejuvenate your soul and calm your mind. Beginners are welcome!

**This meditation session is on Zoom only.**

## WELCOMING SHVAT MEDITATION

**January 31, 2026 | 10:30 AM**

[SIGN-UP HERE](#)

Join Morissa R. Freiberg-Vance, RJE in a guided meditation as we welcome Shvat. Meditation will be located in the Beth Tikvah Library.

**Please note that this meditation session is in-person only.**

# ZIONISM



CONGREGATION  
**Beth Tikvah**

## BETWEEN CRISIS & ASPIRATION

**An Adult Learning series guided by the experts of the Hartman Institute and facilitated by Rabbi Rick Kellner.**

We will explore the core tensions, values, and aspirations of Zionism in a post-October 7 reality. Participants will engage questions of Jewish peoplehood, sovereignty, and moral responsibility in this challenging moment.

### **SERIES SESSIONS**

*Located at Beth Tikvah at 7:30 PM*

**March 4, 2026**

**April 15, 2026**

**March 11, 2026**

**April 29, 2026**

**March 25, 2026**

**May 7, 2026**

*This series will be offered in-person and on Zoom. Before each session, participants will be asked to listen to a 40-minute podcast, which will be sent in advance by Rabbi Rick Kellner.*

**DEADLINE: FEBRUARY 24, 2026**

**SIGN UP**



# POSTCARDS FROM THE ISRAEL 614 MISSION

16

To: Congregation Beth Tikvah

From: Wendy Grindstaff

Before leaving Columbus, I found photos from my grandfather's trip to Israel in 1969. He was active in the Columbus Jewish community and was likely on a mission trip. One photo showed him near the Western Wall at Masada. I brought it with me and was able to find the exact spot where he had stood. My friends took a photo of me there, and we placed the two images side by side. It was a deeply meaningful connection to my own story.

My grandfather, Sol Zell, helped my single mom raise my brother and me, and his influence shaped who I am today. When Jonathan spoke about his grandfather, Troy Feibel, at our closing dinner, I felt that same connection. Sol was an active member of Temple Israel & helped build Heritage House, likely alongside Troy Feibel. This trip was life-altering. I had waited my whole life to visit Israel, and it exceeded my expectations. The connections I made with new friends from the Columbus community have inspired me to be more involved going forward. Thank you to everyone who helped make this trip so meaningful.



To: Congregation Beth Tikvah

From: Debbie & Doug King

From the moment we left Rickenbacker Airport with almost 200 other Jews from central Ohio until our departure, we experienced a very different Israel than we did in 2006, when we last visited.

Our day-long journey into the western Negev was the most emotional, with the Nova Festival site (Re'im Park) and Kibbutz Be'eri being the most difficult. Seeing the life-changing work at the Dialogue for Life Farm and at Kibbutz Karmiya, beneficiaries of JewishColumbus funding, was uplifting. Dinner with more than 300 IDF soldiers was the perfect ending to the day. Exploring and learning about the history of Tel Aviv was new to us. Our open-air dinner and program with residents of Kfar Saba again showed how relationships have developed between JewishColumbus and Israelis. We hope to reconnect with some of them when they visit Columbus in early 2026. On Erev Shabbat morning, our bus stopped at Nevo Winery, a family-run vineyard in the Judean Hills—an area that has had vineyards for centuries—for a wonderful wine tasting. Our quick visit to Kol HaNeshema synagogue before the group Shabbat dinner at Aish HaTorah near the Western Wall made for a meaningful Erev Shabbat. The comments from our Palestinian guide during our bus tour of East Jerusalem, as well as conversations with former PA official Fayed Husseini and Feil Beit director Rimam Barakat, were enlightening. An amazing week.



To: Congregation Beth Tikvah

From: Iris Ailin-Pyzik



Nothing says it's your own country more than having your language splashed across almost anything.



There's an Israeli (made Aliyah from the US, he's a US Naval Academy grad) who posts a picture of these mosaics whenever he returns to Israel. [Click here to read the story of the Mosaics](#)

To: Congregation Beth Tikvah

From: Rabbi Rick Kellner

For me, Israel is both the power of the place and the power of the people. There is nothing like being in Israel, where Jewish culture flourishes like the many trees and plants that bloom from its soil. Walking through the streets of Tel Aviv or Jerusalem—seeing and hearing Hebrew—is the feeling of our sacred texts come to life. And when you travel in Israel with friends and family, the power of Jewish peoplehood comes alive.

Spending time with my Columbus rabbinic colleagues offered an opportunity to reflect

on how Israel impacts our community at home. Reconnecting with Haim and Yonatan, the two cyclists who joined us this summer on our bimah, demonstrated the power of connection and Jewish peoplehood. As Jews, we have friends all over the world, and we are deeply connected to one another. Israel is resilient; it is joyful; it is magical.



POSTCARDS FROM THE  
ISRAEL 614 MISSION

# 2026 Souper Bowl Cookoff

One of Central Ohio's favorite winter traditions is back! **The 18th Annual Columbus Souper Bowl Cook-Off** will take place on **Saturday, February 7, 2026, from 5:00-7:00 PM at**

**Congregation Beth Tikvah.** This lively, family-friendly evening brings the community together to sample delicious soups, vote for the People's Choice Best Soup in Columbus, and enjoy a festive atmosphere—all while supporting a meaningful cause.

More than just a fun night out, the Souper Bowl raises funds for the Beth Tikvah Jewish Camp Fund, helping children attend Jewish summer camp and build lifelong friendships and Jewish identity. Over the past 17 years, this Brotherhood-sponsored event has raised more than **\$143,000** and helped **send 265 children to camp.**

**Tickets are now on sale,** and the public is invited to attend, taste, and vote. Soup submissions are still open for amateur cooks and local restaurants, and sponsorships and silent auction donations are also welcome.

For entry details, sponsor opportunities, or auction donations, fill out the forms below or reach out to Jeff Wasserstrom at [jeffwass@yahoo.com](mailto:jeffwass@yahoo.com).

**BUY TICKETS TO ATTEND!**

[Amateur Entry](#)

[Restaurant Entry](#)

[Sponsor Form](#)

 **wasserstrom**  **BRADY WARE & COMPANY**

 **BLUE LINE**

**MILL RUN VISION CENTER**

 **Nothing Bundt Cakes**

**Herb & Judy Weisberg**

**The Kellner Family**

 **Bany**  
**BAGELS**  
since 1972

AGES 60+

# SHISHIM JAN. PROGRAM

## JANUARY 8, 2026

### 11 AM - Falls: Preventable, Not Inevitable

**Emily Yang**, Senior Consultant Injury Prevention Therapist at OhioHealth, will discuss fall-prevention strategies, how to respond if a fall occurs, and the risks and injuries commonly associated with falls.

### 12 PM - Lunch

We will be catering Chinese food including a variety of entrees and dessert. \$15 for Beth Tikvah members, \$18 for non-members. *Indicate your dietary needs in the “Notes” section of the ShulCloud form.*

### 1 PM - Breaking the Age Code

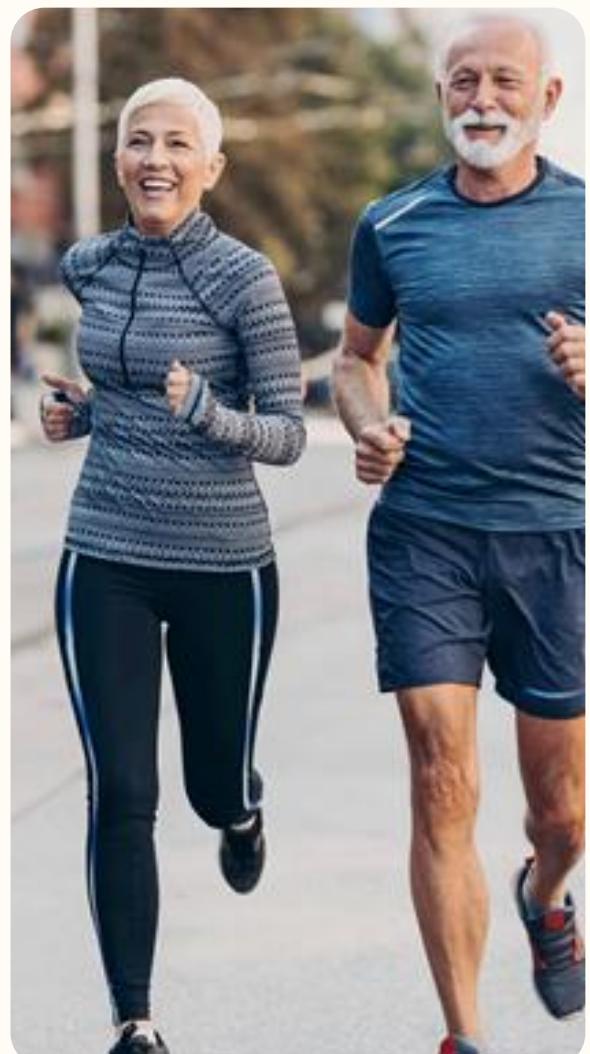
Your beliefs about aging can shape both how long—and how well—you live. **Suzanne Kunkel** and **Robert Applebaum**, social scientists at the Scripps Gerontology Center at Miami University, will share research on how negative perceptions of aging affect life expectancy and offer strategies to combat ageism. Their work has been pioneering in understanding ageism’s impact across generations.

**This program is available in-person and on Zoom.**

*The Zoom link can be found in the Shishim program message. If you do not receive the Shishim program message, send a message to David at [dbinkovitz2@aol.com](mailto:dbinkovitz2@aol.com)*



**ORDER LUNCH**



# BROTHERHOOD NEWSLETTER

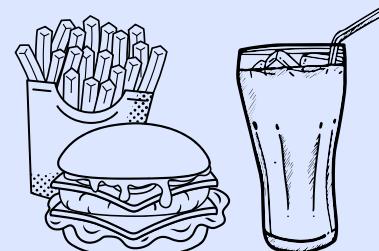


## JANUARY LUNCH

January 14 | 11:30 AM

Located at *Bravo off Hayden Run*

Contact **Jeff Albert** to RSVP



Last month's **"Escaping Kabul"** program was a powerful reminder of what community can do. Earlier this year, Beth Tikvah began supporting Obaidullah, an Afghan refugee seeking safety in the U.S. from the Taliban. Obaidullah joined us to share his journey—from the challenges of leaving Afghanistan to the realities of building a new life in Columbus while his family remains abroad. His honesty, strength, and resilience deeply moved us.

A heartfelt thank-you to Obaidullah for sharing his story, and to David Sapper for thoughtfully facilitating the evening. Thank you to our committee for helping every step of the way and to our congregants for supporting Obaidullah and continuing to stand with him on his journey. We



# BETH TIKVAH BROTHERHOOD PERFORMS COMMUNITY MITZVAH DURING THE HOLIDAYS

On December 28, twenty-one brotherhood members from Congregation Beth Tikvah began their morning delivering Meals on Wheels for LifeCare Alliance. This was the twenty-second year brotherhood members performed this service to the community.

"Our mitzvah allows the regular Meals on Wheels volunteers to take some time off so they can spend the holidays with their families," said David Binkovitz, who coordinates this effort for Beth Tikvah's brotherhood.

The brotherhood members—as well as their sons and grandsons—gather together for breakfast at First Watch in German Village before heading to Meals on Wheels. "The camaraderie at breakfast is something I look forward to each year. It is a great way for the guys at Beth Tikvah to get to know one another better," said Reid Romer.



Caleb, Jordan and Micah Fliegel, grandsons of Mike Fliegel, of blessed memory, and Mike's son Jared, joined Beth Tikvah brotherhood members for breakfast period to delivering Meals on Wheels.



*Beth Tikvah brotherhood members gathered together before going out to deliver Meals on Wheels so the regular volunteers could spend time with their families during the holidays.*

This program has also been a good way for fathers to teach their sons and grandsons by example. Mike Fliegel, of blessed memory, began this tradition by inviting his son Jared Fliegel to attend the first year in 2003 when brotherhood started gathering for breakfast and delivering meals. Shortly thereafter, Mike Fliegel grandsons, Micah, Jordan, and Caleb Fliegel also joined their grandfather. All of them attended this year even though Mike Fliegel passed away in 2024.

"I look forward to participating each December as a way of honoring my grandfather. I also enjoy the friendship of the brotherhood members while I perform a service for the community." said Micah Fliegel.

Going out in groups of two, brotherhood members delivered over 100 meals that morning.

"With this 22-year tradition, our Brotherhood members, as well as their sons and grandsons, have been delivering Meals on Wheels—spreading kindness and care throughout the community," Binkovitz said.

**Click Here for  
Full WBT  
Newsletter**



### GIFT SHOP TREASURES

If you need something for Jewish holidays or celebrations, Jewish jewelry, or a lovely piece of Judaica, the WBT Gift Shop has you covered! Rhonda is available to make sales during the week or call Jackie Kon at 614-832-8815.

### BOOK CLUB

**January 13, 2026 | 12:30 PM**

Join us to discuss the novel, *The Frozen River* by Ariel Lawhon. A gripping historical mystery inspired by an 18<sup>th</sup> century midwife who defied the legal system and became part of American history.

### WRJ HEARTLAND CONVENTION

Mark your calendars for the “Under One Tent” Women of Reform Judaism Heartland Convention on **March 13-15, 2026**.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

### WRJ DAY OF ACTION

**April 12, 2026**

Choose a project of interest to you or your group, or in alignment with WRJ’s high priority issues, and take action in your own community.

[SIGN-UP HERE](#)

### WOMEN OF BETH TIKVAH MAH JONGG

**Jan. 20 & Feb. 4 at 1:30 PM | Located at Beth Tikvah**

Women of Beth Tikvah is now collecting money for the 2026 Mah Jongg Cards. The price remains the same as last year: **Standard is \$14 and Large is \$15.**

[CLICK FOR ORDER FORM](#)

[SIGN-UP FOR MAHJ](#)

**There are 2 ways to order the Mahj form:**

1. At Beth Tikvah, drop off your information sheet with Rhonda Simon at the front desk with cash or a check.
2. Mail your information sheet and check no later than 01/20/26 to Lynne Allen (807 Crestway Dr Columbus, OH 43235)



# January Dinner Out



[SIGN-UP FOR DINNER](#)

**JANUARY 13 at 6:30 PM**  
*Located at Marcella's in Polaris*



# Central Ohio WRJ Tzedakah Collective

**The Central Ohio Women of Reform Judaism Tzedakah Collective is in its 12<sup>th</sup> year working toward social justice in Central Ohio. By pooling funds, members make a difference through grantmaking. All Jewish women in Central Ohio are encouraged to join.**

The Hebrew word “Tzedakah” means righteousness and justice. The Tzedakah Collective seeks to lift all people up by learning about the needs in our community and supporting the non-profits that address those needs in the populations they serve. The Tzedakah Collective focus is to help restore human dignity in underserved populations.

## Summary of Grants Awarded in 2025:

**Since 2014 our members have granted a total of \$39,033 to 39 non-profit organizations.**

The Tzedakah Collective has helped to...

- **Sanctuary Night** - Serve vulnerable women by providing a safe place to rest, eat, shower and connect with resources and counselling to transition to a productive life off the streets.
- **Worth the Wait** - Give hope and empower young cancer survivors through education and resources to start a family by preserving their fertility, utilizing fertility treatments, surrogacy, or adoption.
- **Magical Moments Foundation** - Provide meaningful experiences that create comfort, inspiration, self-confidence and encouragement to children who have facial differences through birth, genetics or trauma.
- **Hospets** - Provide peace of mind and companionship to low-income senior citizens and hospice patients by assisting with their beloved pet's vet and food needs and pet boarding and rehoming when necessary.
- **Jewish Family Services** - Provide monetary assistance to low-income individuals who are receiving JFS services and are eligible for Basic Needs Support, without restrictions as to race, nationality or religion.

*Meetings are held six times a year, mostly by zoom. You do not have to be a member to attend the meetings to hear the presentations. Everyone is welcome to benefit from this education about our community. An annual tax- exempt donation of just \$60 (or more if one wishes) brings membership and the right to vote to allocate grants. Tzedakah Collective Steering Committee members: Jan Alloy, Pamela Feldman-Hill, Bobbie Garber, Stacy Levin, Lori Sachs, Laurel Zulliger, and Coordinator, Marsha Pond ([marshapond@msn.com](mailto:marshapond@msn.com)). All inquiries are welcome!*

# Hanukkah at Beth Tikvah



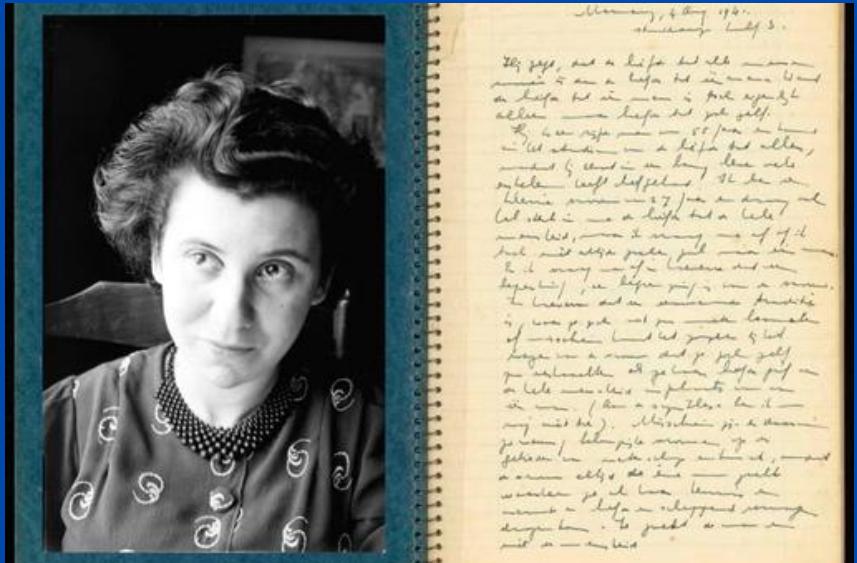
# Torah Trailblazers: Celebrating Remarkable Jewish Women

## ETTY HILLESUM

When the world feels dark, we look for voices that refuse to let that darkness have the final word. **Etty Hillesum** was one of these voices. A Dutch Jewish woman who lived under Nazi occupation, she kept a diary between 1941 and 1943 that continues to challenge, comfort, and move readers decades after her death at Auschwitz at age 29. Her writings don't simply document suffering, they reveal a person wrestling honestly with her fear and identity during one of history's ugliest times.

Born in Middelburg in 1914, Etty grew up intellectually curious and searched for spiritual connection. She studied law and languages in Amsterdam, but as the Nazi grip tightened on the Netherlands, her inner life became the center of her record. Beginning in March 1941, she wrote daily in her diary about her thoughts, her relationships, her struggles with depression, and her growing determination to face reality clearly and honestly. Etty's entries show someone trying to find grounding and meaning amid chaos. Even as she witnessed violence and fear around her, she refused to let hatred define her or her people.

What makes Hillesum's diary so striking is that it holds both grief and grace. She didn't pretend that life was easy, but she refused to let fear or bitterness become her sole legacy. When she volunteered to accompany Jewish prisoners at



the Westerbork transit camp, despite being presented opportunities for her to hide, that choice came from deep conviction, not despair.

At Beth Tikvah, we often talk about *chesed* (kindness), *tzedek* (justice), and *zikaron* (memory). Etty Hillesum's life speaks quietly but powerfully into all of these. Her diary teaches that even in the most constricted circumstances, we still have choices: how we speak, how we care for others, and how we hold onto our humanity.

As we move forward in the year, Etty's voice invites us to slow down and pay attention to our inner lives, to one another, and to the responsibility we carry to remember our Jewish story. In lifting up her story, we honor the power of bearing witness and the enduring importance of choosing humanity, even when the world makes that choice difficult.

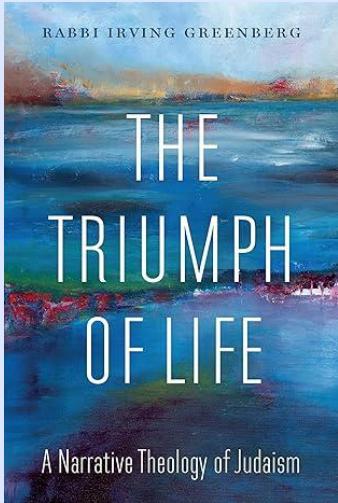
### Sources

- [Jewish Women's Archive. "Etty Hillesum"](#)
- [My Jewish Learning. "The Wisdom of Etty Hillesum"](#)
- [JewAge. "Etty Hillesum - Biography"](#)
- [EBSCO. "Etty Hillesum"](#)

# Rabbi Rick Kellner's

# BOOK

## RECOMMENDATIONS



In a world filled with such darkness, we often wonder where God's presence can be found. Rabbi Greenberg leads readers through some of Judaism's most profound questions. As a post-Holocaust theologian, he—like many—wrestles with where God was during the Holocaust. In exploring this question, we are reminded of the many miracles God performed throughout Jewish history, raising the question of how God's presence appears today. Greenberg teaches that we are now living in a third era of God's presence, reminding us that the covenant has two parts: God's promise through divine teaching and our fulfillment of mitzvot. Through the performance of mitzvot, he explains, we take on the responsibility of bringing God's presence to life on earth. In a post-Holocaust world, it is the light of mitzvot that helps us encounter God's light.

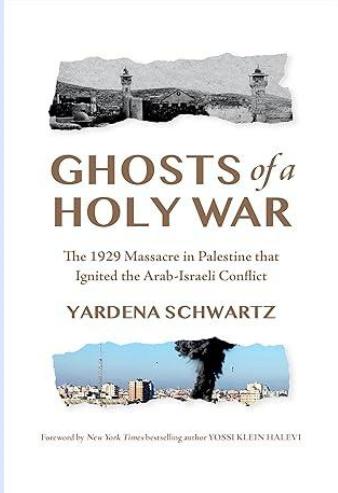


### THE GATES OF GAZA

A STORY OF BETRAYAL, SURVIVAL, AND HOPE IN ISRAEL'S BORDERLANDS

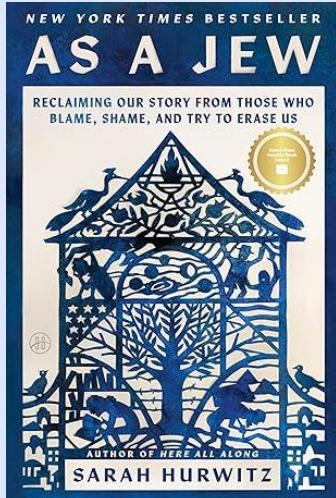
AMIR TIBON

Amir Tibon lived on Kibbutz Nir Oz with his family. As a journalist, he and his wife wanted to give their young daughters a quieter life, far from the noise and chaos of Tel Aviv. Tibon tells the harrowing story of his family's survival on October 7. Through the power of the pen, he weaves the events of that day together with the history of the kibbutz and the Gaza Envelope region. His writing carries readers through the battle and the tragedy that unfolded. We also learn about Noam Tibon, Amir's father and a retired IDF general, who drove down from Tel Aviv with his handgun to rescue his son, daughter-in-law, and granddaughters. Throughout the ordeal, Noam kept telling his young grandchildren, "Saba will come." Somehow, those words helped keep them quiet through a day filled with terror.

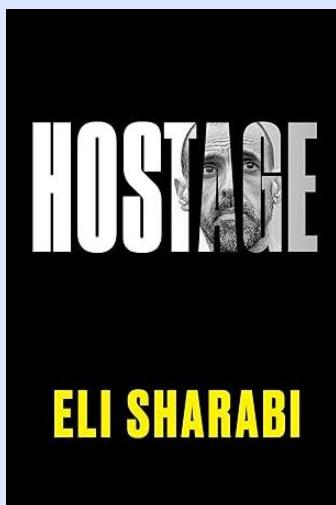


An August day in 2025 was a highlight for our Beth Tikvah community as we welcomed author Yardena Schwartz to our congregation to teach us about her newest book. Inspired by the letters of a young man who was murdered in the Hebron Massacre of 1929, Schwartz traces the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict back to that pivotal moment in Hebron. Through her years of in-depth research and compelling storytelling, she follows the conflict from the Hebron Massacre through October 7. Her work is informed by on-the-ground interviews, as well as thorough research into Israeli history. Anyone seeking to better understand the roots and complexity of the conflict should read this book.

# Rabbi Rick Kellner's BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS

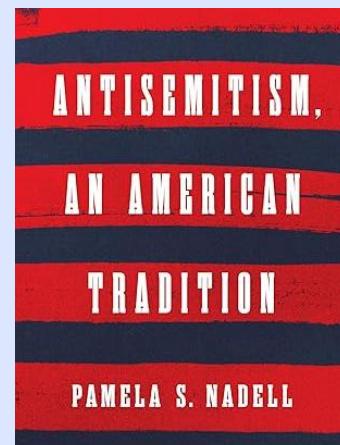
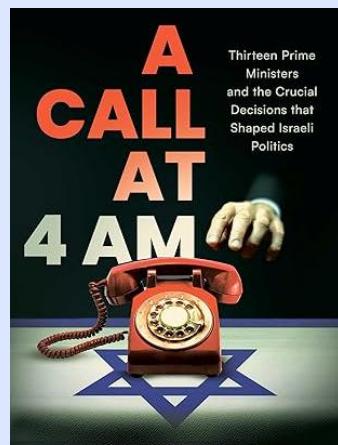
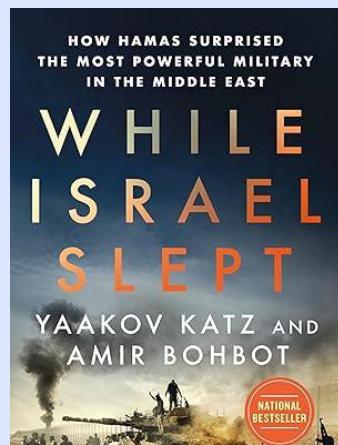
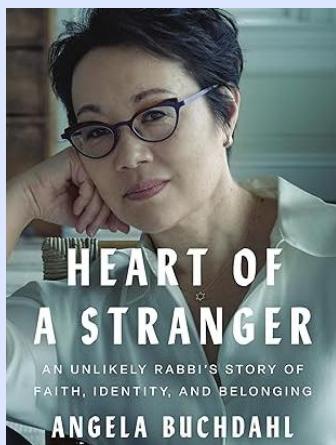


Having read Sarah Hurwitz's first book Here All Along earlier this year (this book gets an honorable mention!), I became very excited when I learned a second book was on its way. Hurwitz helps readers navigate the ways external forces have shaped who we are as Jews. Her book invites us to reclaim our story and our identity. As we continue to face darkness, Hurwitz teaches that pride in our story is possible and that there is no need to hide within the shadows. Throughout Jewish history—whether during the Inquisition, the Enlightenment, or the Holocaust—Jews were often forced to conceal their Judaism. In some instances, depraved forces not only demanded silence, but also took lives. Hurwitz helps us rediscover Jewish pride and Jewish joy.



Eli Sharabi was taken hostage on October 7. While in captivity, he held on to the hope that he would see his family again. What he did not know was that his wife and daughters were murdered on October 7, and that his brother was also murdered while in captivity. Sharabi's story is one of hope and resilience. When reflecting on the Jewish story, it is often said that in every generation a new enemy rises up to destroy us. While that is certainly part of our history, we are also reminded that we are the never-dying people. Despite everything, we have survived. Sharabi's harrowing account of his time in captivity reminds us that it is possible to find something to be grateful for each day, even in the darkness of the tunnels of Gaza. He also reminds us of our extraordinary resilience. Sharabi's story is our Jewish story.

## Next on the list...



# How-To with Beth Tikvah

## SHABBAT IN REFORM JUDAISM

Shabbat is Judaism's weekly invitation to pause and reset. It arrives every Friday evening, not asking us to finish everything on our to-do lists, but asking us to stop, to notice, to breathe, and to reconnect. In a world that prizes productivity and constant motion, Shabbat offers something quietly radical: time that is intentionally set apart for rest, reflection, joy, and community.

In Reform Judaism, Shabbat is both deeply rooted in tradition and beautifully adaptable. There is no single "right" way to observe Shabbat. This month's How-To with Beth Tikvah explores how we welcome Shabbat, celebrate it, and carry its spirit with us into the week ahead. Whether Shabbat is already a familiar rhythm in your life or something you're curious to try for the first time, this guide offers simple entry points and practical resources.

### Table Blessings

A classic Shabbat table ritual begins with lighting candles, blessing wine or grape juice (Kiddush), and blessing challah (HaMotzi). You can do all three or choose just one or two. Shabbat grows through consistency, not complexity. Click on the links below to explore more Shabbat prayers.

[Candle Lighting](#)

[Kiddush \(wine\)](#)

[HaMotzi \(challah\)](#)

[URJ Shabbat Blessing Hub](#)



### Buying Challah in Columbus

Challah is a symbol of abundance, blessing, and sacred time. Eating challah on Shabbat connects our tables to centuries of Jewish ritual and meaning, turning an ordinary meal into something holy. Here are a few local go-tos: Trader Joe's, Whole Foods, Beehive Bread, Great Harvest, Matt's Bakery, and JCC Catering. (Pro tip: slice and freeze —Shabbat future—you will be grateful.)

### Havdalah

**Havdalah**, which means "separation," is the ritual that gently ushers Shabbat to a close on Saturday evening. Rather than ending Shabbat abruptly, Havdalah creates a moment of transition—helping us acknowledge the holiness of the time we are leaving while preparing to re-enter the rhythms of the week ahead.

In Reform Judaism, Havdalah is understood as an invitation rather than an obligation. Some families mark it every week; others observe it on special occasions or at communal gatherings. Many Reform communities **incorporate music**, poetry, or contemporary readings, transforming Havdalah into a moment of reflection, gratitude, and hope.

# How-To with Beth Tikvah

## SHABBAT IN REFORM JUDAISM

### Jewish Joy & Connection

In Reform Judaism, Shabbat is understood as time intentionally set aside for joy, rest, and connection. Rather than focusing on strict rules, **Reform practice** emphasizes creating moments that feel distinct from the rest of the week and nourish our relationships with one another and with ourselves. For some, that may mean lighting candles and sharing a home-cooked meal. For others, it may look like attending services, taking a walk, unplugging from email, or simply sitting quietly with gratitude.

### Traditional & Reform Choices

In traditional Judaism, Shabbat includes prohibitions on activities such as driving, turning on lights, or using technology. Reform Judaism approaches these practices differently. Rather than treating them as binding restrictions, Reform Jews are encouraged to make informed, intentional choices about how to observe Shabbat in ways that feel meaningful and realistic in contemporary life. The guiding question becomes not “What am I not allowed to do?” but “What helps Shabbat feel different from the rest of the week?”

### Music, Books, Stories, & Media

Music has long been a gateway into Shabbat, helping us mark the transition from weekday to sacred time. Singing familiar melodies—whether around the table or in the sanctuary—creates emotional memory and a sense of shared tradition. For families with children, **PJ Library** books introduce Shabbat rituals in gentle, joyful ways, often becoming a ritual of their own. For adults, essays, poetry, or short reflections can offer fresh perspectives on rest, gratitude, and sacred time—without needing to be lengthy to be meaningful.

While Shabbat is traditionally associated with unplugging, many Reform Jews thoughtfully use media to enhance their experience, whether through music, streamed services, or reflections, helping create access and connection, especially for those who cannot attend in person or are exploring Shabbat for the first time.

#### Sources & Further Reading:

[Union for Reform Judaism. "All Things Challah"](#)

[Union for Reform Judaism. "Food & Recipes"](#)

[Union for Reform Judaism. "Havdalah Blessings"](#)

[Union for Reform Judaism. "Shabbat Blessings"](#)

[Union for Reform Judaism. "Musical Settings: Havdalah"](#)

[Union for Reform Judaism. "Reform Sanctuary Customs"](#)

[Union for Reform Judaism. "Upon Lighting the Candles"](#)

[PJ Library. "Shabbat Books for Babies and Toddlers"](#)

[PJ Library. "Shabbat"](#)

# LEGACY CIRCLE

## Endowments

**At Beth Tikvah, our Legacy endowments are established by our congregants and serve as permanent sources of funding that support our synagogue's programs, education, and community initiatives for generations to come. Each one reflects the generosity and vision of congregants who want to ensure a vibrant Jewish future. You have the ability to contribute to any of these funds at any point in time to help strengthen the foundation of Congregation Beth Tikvah. Reach out to Executive Director, Debbie Vinocur or Life & Legacy co-chairs Carol Folkerth and Andy Shafran for more information.**

Beth Tikvah General Endowment

Ruth & Herbert Abrams Endowment

Michael Alexander & Jane Mitchell Endowment for the Education of all Jewish Children

Davidoff Family Camp Scholarship Fund

Arthur W. Davidson Endowment

Daniel Engler Memorial Legacy Fund

Flamm Family Endowment for Adult Learning

Flesch Family Fund for Security at Beth Tikvah

Forman Pay-It-Foward Fund

Karen & Steven Heiser Teen Allies for Justice Endowment

Dr. Gail E. Herman Endowment in Celebration of the Life of her son, Drew P. Mendelbaum

Rabbi Gary A. Huber Endowment for Education

Linda Kellner Camp Scholarship Fund for Beth Tikvah

Kon Family Fund for Holocaust Education

Alan & Risa Lazaroff Endowment for Repairing, Maintaining, and Improving the Building & Grounds

Stacy & Howard Levin Educator Professional Development Fund

Manfred & Rose Luttinger Endowment for Adult Learning and Social Action

Mandell Family Fund

Barbara A. Mindel Fund

Martin & Marian Rosenthal Legacy Fund for Holocaust Education

Patti & Sid Price Beth Tikvah Religious School Endowment in Memory of Lee Kimchee McGrath

Louis & Susan Pomerantz Endowment for the Beth Tikvah Senior (60+) Adult Community

Jewish Women's Spiritual & Educational Studies Endowment

Tara & Brad Rozen Beth Tikvah Mitzvah Community Outreach Fund

Bob & Beverly Shafran Endowment

Marjorie & Martin Seltzer Endowment

B. Myer Simon Building Maintenance Fund

Beth Tikvah Slabodnick Operating Endowment

Beth Tikvah Slabodnick Building Endowment

Taxier Family Fund for Youth Engagement Through Tikkun Olam

Weisberg Endowment for Music at Beth Tikvah

Stu & Rochelle Zweben Endowment for Technology

# THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING CONTRIBUTORS...

## Adult Learning

- Lisa Kalson & Jonathan Beck in memory of James Fons, beloved father of Ted Fons

## Bima Flowers & Oneg

- Darla Abraham in memory of her husband, Lee Abraham

## Brotherhood Donations

- Miriam Twersky in honor of the Brotherhood and the Mike Fliegel Latkefest

## Development Fund Dedicated

- Paul Feder & Marjorie Gaffin in memory of James fons, father of Ted Fons

## Exec. Director Discretionary Fund

- Louis & Susan Pomerantz in honor of Debbie Vinocur

## General Endowment Donation

- Maria & Steven Rosenthal in memory of James Fons, father of Ted Fons

## Jewish Camping Dedicated

- Darla Abraham in memory of Caleb Mittelman, grandson of Blanche & Rico Mittelman

## Jewish Youth Scholarships

- Erica Twersky in appreciation of Barb Mindel for her support of my son, Elias Twersky, in preparation for his Bar Mitzvah
- Jeffrey & Barbara Robbins in honor of Judah Wachter's Bar Mitzvah

## Library Dedicated

- Darla Abraham in memory of June Ondo, mother of Ellen Leidner

## Meditation Dedicated

- Maria & Steven Rosenthal in celebration of the wedding of Morissa Freiberg & George Vance
- Bruce Chapman & Lois Winnick-Chapman in loving memory of Bernard Vance
- Bruce Chapman & Lois Winnick-Chapman in loving memory of Michelle Raby
- Bruce Chapman & Lois Winnick-Chapman in loving memory of Mary Hill

## Michael Alexander & Jane Mitchell Endowment for the Education of all Jewish Children

- Douglas & Debbie King in memory of Caleb Mittelman

## Mitzvah Community Outreach Endowment

- Mitch & Jackie Kon in memory of James Fons, father of Ted Fons

## Music Fund Dedicated

- Eric & Marlowe Lichtenfeld in memory of Edwin Lichtenfeld
- Paul Feder & Marjorie Gaffin in honor of Sarah Cohen's engagement to Benjamin Levinson. All the best for a happy future.

## Rabbi Kellner Discretionary Fund

- Lisa & Bruce Leibow in memory of Shirley Taussig's Yahrzeit
- Elaine Selekman in loving memory of Caleb Mittelman, son of Sean & Cassie Mittelman, grandson of Blanche & Rico Mittelman
- Arlene & Steven West in thanks for allowing them to worship with Beth Tikvah
- Donald & Anne Sylvan in memory of James Fons
- Erica Twersky in honor of Elias' Bar Mitzvah
- Beth Lenoble & Maury Walsh in loving memory of Beth's parents, Barbara & Bert Lenoble
- Brenda & Sam Linnick in thanks for sharing High Holy Day services with their daughter Janie Weisman and her family. Wishing happiness for the future.
- Carly Robbins-Monson & Erik Monson in honor of Sam Monson's Bar Mitzvah
- Debbie Shub in memory of Norman Shub

## Rabbi Martin Discretionary Fund

- Dora & Ed Sterling in memory of Ted Fon's father
- Erica Twersky in honor of Elias' Bar Mitzvah
- Evie & Harvey Freeman in honor of Rabbi Karen Martin
- Stuart & Rochelle Zweben in honor of Rabbi Karen Martin's Installation

## Religious School Dedicated

- Lisa Kalson & Jonathan Beck in honor of the marriage of Morissa Freiberg & George Vance
- Mitch & Jackie Kon in honor of the marriage of Morissa Freiberg & George Vance

## Shishim Donations

- Evie & Harvey Freeman in honor of the Bar Mitzvah of Wes Sylvan, grandson of Anne & Don Sylvan
- Donald Goldberg in honor of Shishim and being able to attend the great lunches and events.
- Robert & Karen Rosenberg

## Social Action Dedicated

- Robert & Amanda Greenbaum in loving memory of Harry Greenbaum
- Marci & Lawrence Delson in heartfelt sympathy for the loss of Ted Fons' father, James Fons. May his memory be for a blessing.

## Stacy & Howard Levin Educator Professional Development Fund

- Stacy & Howard Levin in memory of Ellen & Rich's beloved mom, June Ondo

## The Forman Pay-It-Forward Fund

- Marcey & Richard Forman in loving memory of Caleb Mittelman
- Marcey & Richard Forman in loving memory of James Fons

## Women of Beth Tikvah Donations

- Mitch & Jackie Kon in memory of Caleb Mittelman

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# TIKVAH TOPICS

## Editor's Note:

It is my privilege to design, write, and publish Tikvah Topics each month. This newsletter is a reflection of the heart and spirit of our community.

If you have content ideas, information to share, or suggestions for upcoming editions, please feel free to reach out to me at [comms@bethtikvahcolumbus.org](mailto:comms@bethtikvahcolumbus.org). Your input helps ensure Tikvah Topics continues to represent and celebrate our vibrant congregation.

**Hannah Karr**

Director of Marketing & Community Engagement  
[comms@bethtikvahcolumbus.org](mailto:comms@bethtikvahcolumbus.org)



Scan QR Code OR [Click Here](#) for the Calendar.

*If you do not have the passcode to the calendar, reach out to Hannah Karr*



Our mission at Congregation Beth Tikvah is to empower individuals to live and learn Jewishly, and to make the world a better place.