



# TULSA Jewish Review

Chešvan/Kislev 5785  
January 2025

# As One

*2025 Annual Campaign*



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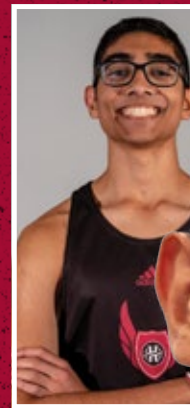
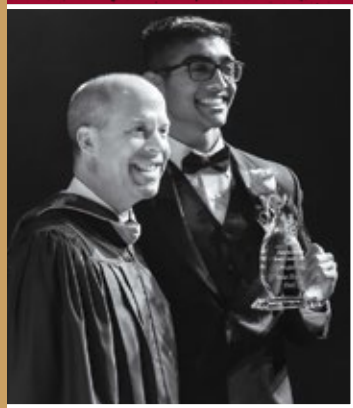
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**Note:** the December issue's article The Seven Dwarfs of Auschwitz was taken from an original publication written more than 11 years ago, a time when the term "dwarf" was widely used. Nowadays, the preferred terminology is "little people."



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— Asher Patel '24



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..... SAVE THE DATE .....



*L'Chaim Dinner*

Mark your calendar for this year's  
Annual Campaign dinner:  
Thursday, April 3, 2025



## STAFF

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

JOE ROBERTS  
joe@jewishtulsa.org

### EDITOR

SANDY SLOAN  
sandy@jewishtulsa.org

ADVERTISING  
MANAGER and COPY  
EDITOR

SARAH HOWMAN  
showman@jewishtulsa.org

### DESIGN

STEPHANIE KRAUTHEIM  
skrauthem@jewishtulsa.org

BOARD PRESIDENT,  
JEWISH FEDERATION  
OF TULSA  
JARED GOLDFARB

Front Cover



“As One”

Jewish Federation of Tulsa's  
2025 Annual Campaign

## JEWISH FEDERATION OF TULSA

### MISSION:

The mission of the Jewish Federation is to preserve and enhance Jewish life and well-being in Eastern Oklahoma, Israel, and the entire world. The mission is being addressed by pursuing charitable, humanitarian, cultural, educational, health, and social service needs of the Jewish community as well as by engaging in community relations, outreach, and providing a variety of services to the broader Tulsa community. The Jewish Federation supports the Charles Schusterman Jewish Community Center, The Sherwin Miller Museum of Jewish Art, and Mizel Jewish Community Day School.

### VALUES:

#### *Kehila – Community*

Fostering a connected and collaborative Jewish community, characterized by respect, empathy, and understanding.

#### *Tzedek – Justice*

Continuously improving the quality of life of all Tulsans, as well as our partners in Israel and abroad, through philanthropic giving of our resources and time.

#### *L’Dor V’Dor –*

#### *From Generation to Generation*

Sustaining the culture, traditions, and collective memory of the Jewish people, through innovative intergenerational programming that is meaningful, educational, and fun.



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## DIRECTOR’S CORNER

### A NEW YEAR, A RENEWED MISSION: BUILDING THE FUTURE OF JEWISH LIFE IN TULSA

by Joe Roberts, Executive Director

As we step into this new year, I find myself reflecting on the extraordinary strength, warmth, and purpose that define the Jewish community of Tulsa. We are more than a collection of individuals; we are a family bound together by shared history, shared values, and an unshakable sense of responsibility for one another. It is this bond that inspires me as we embark on the year ahead. Our vision is clear: to build the best Jewish community in North America, right here in Tulsa. A community that will not just sustain Jewish life, but will reimagine and renew it for generations to come.

Yet, as we reflect on the events of this past year, especially in the aftermath of October 7th, it is clear that the traditional approaches within the Jewish world have not met the challenges of the moment. Our systems, institutions, and assumptions about connection and resilience faltered when they were needed most. This hard truth compels us to act with courage and vision. Here in Tulsa, we are determined to lead the way in redefining the future of Jewish life, creating a new paradigm that strengthens our community and inspires others to reimagine what is possible.

This moment demands that we double down on our sense of shared responsibility and our commitment to one another. I think about the small yet profound moments that define who we are: the volunteer delivering a meal to someone recovering from illness, the child dropping coins into a tzedakah box at Mizel Jewish Community Day School, the elderly member of our community warmly welcomed at a Shabbat table. These acts, seemingly simple, are in truth extraordinary. They are the building blocks of a compassionate, resilient community.

At a time when so many Jewish communities face uncertainty, Tulsa is positioned to blaze a path for Jewish life. We are not burdened by size or politics. Instead, we are nimble, connected, and capable of great things. We are a community where no one is invisible, where every voice matters, and where everyone has a place.

This year, we must build on what makes us unique. Let us invest in our young people, creating opportunities for them to grow as leaders and find pride in their Jewish identity. Let us strengthen our connection to Israel, = through solidarity and a deeper engagement with its culture, challenges, and triumphs. Let us dream together what Jewish life in Tulsa could be — and let us take action to make that dream real. **As One**, we can reach these goals!

We are told in Pirkei Avot, “Lo Alecha Hamlacha Ligmor, V’lo Atah Ben Chorin L’hibatel Mimena” — “It is not upon you to complete the work, but neither are you free to desist from it.” The work of building Jewish life is eternal. It began long before us and it will continue long after. But this moment, this community, this year, belongs to us. What we build here in Tulsa will not only define our future but will serve as a model of what is possible when a community dreams and acts together.

As we enter this new year, I ask you: What role will you play? Whether it’s attending a program, volunteering your time, supporting our institutions, or simply reaching out to someone who feels disconnected, your contribution matters. Each small act of love, kindness and tzedakah has the power to strengthen the bonds that hold us together.

I believe in this community with all my heart. I believe in its people, its spirit, and its potential. Together, we will not just sustain Jewish life in Tulsa — we will grow together and transform it into something extraordinary.

In this new year, let us dream boldly, act with purpose, and care for one another as family. Let us take pride in what we are building together: a community filled with meaning, connection, and light.

Tulsa’s Jewish future is ours to shape. Let’s do it with open hands, open hearts, and the knowledge that we are building something extraordinary—**As One**. ■



# As One

We support...

We empower...

We respond...

We engage...



UPCOMING EVENTS



**PJ Library Dad's Night Out | Thursday, January 16 | 7 pm | River Spirit Casino**

Calling all PJ Library dads! Connect with other dads raising Jewish children in Tulsa and join us for a fun and casual night out. Whether you're a card shark, a foodie, or just looking to hang out, there's something for everyone! RSVP required to ensure we can plan for the group. For more information, contact Joe Roberts at [joe@jewishtulsa.org](mailto:joe@jewishtulsa.org)

RSVP: [JewishTulsa.org/dads](http://JewishTulsa.org/dads)



**Lunch Bunch | Wednesday, January 22 | 12 pm Jewish Federation**

Learn a bunch in just one lunch! Guest speaker Avi Melamed, a seasoned Middle East analyst and former Israeli intelligence official, will offer insights into the ongoing complexities of the Middle East. Gain a deeper understanding of the region's challenges and dynamics in this thought-provoking lunch and learn session. As always, there's an optional lunch for \$13.

Menu: tuna and egg salad sandwiches, fruit, and dessert

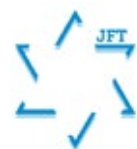
RSVP: [JewishTulsa.org/lb-jan22](http://JewishTulsa.org/lb-jan22)



**Avi Melamed: Inside the Middle East | Thursday, January 23 Dinner 6:30 pm | Program begins 7 pm | Jewish Federation**

The current war between Israel and Hamas is a defining moment in the Middle East. As the world grapples with the escalating conflict, understanding the core issues becomes vital. Are we fully aware of what fuels this war? What led us to this critical juncture? What does "the day after" look like? What implications does it hold for the region? What are the lessons for the West? In this program, we will unravel the complexities of this crucial chapter with clear, in-depth, contextualized, and holistic analysis. Speaker Avi Melamed will contextualize this moment in the histories of Israel, Palestinians, and the Middle East and guide us through the labyrinth of events and their potential aftermath. Avi Melamed is a former Israeli intelligence official and senior Arab affairs advisor. He is a trilingual educator, analyst, and author specializing in contemporary Middle East geopolitics.

RSVP: [jewishtulsa.org/israel-jan](http://jewishtulsa.org/israel-jan)



To RSVP for ALL Events visit: [JewishTulsa.org/event](http://JewishTulsa.org/event)



October H8te Film & Discussion

with guest speaker, Eyal Yakoby

OCTOBER H8TE

The Fight for the Soul of America



Sunday, February 2 at 1:00 pm  
at Circle Cinema

\$7/students \$10/adults

Tickets: [JewishTulsa.org/October-H8te](http://JewishTulsa.org/October-H8te)



Join us for a compelling and thought-provoking documentary on the aftermath of October 7 on college campuses, social media, and on the streets of America. The film highlights how America reached this critical moment, where some view Hamas as freedom fighters instead of terrorists, and how social justice movements have aligned themselves with a violent and reactionary cause. Featuring prominent voices including Debra Messing, Mosab Yosef (son of Hamas's co-founder), Sheryl Sandberg, US Rep. Ritchie Torres, Kristen Gillibrand, and more, the film paints a picture of the climate on American campuses, the threats to Jewish students, and raises urgent questions about the future of Western democracy.

Post-film we will hear from Eyal Yakoby, a former UPenn student featured in the film, and a prominent voice in radicalism and antisemitism in universities.





# AS ONE JEWISH FEDERATION OF TULSA'S 2025 ANNUAL CAMPAIGN

by Isabella Silberg, Director of Development and Programming

**A**s we grapple with war in Israel and the chilling rise of antisemitism, it's easy to feel isolated, overwhelmed, and powerless in the face of uncertainty. But within the Jewish community, a powerful message echoes through the ages: "As One."

We, the Jewish people, are not just a collection of individuals but a united force fueled by the strength of our rich history, culture, and traditions. Together, we uplift and empower communities worldwide, firmly believing that we can achieve far more collectively than we ever could alone — *As One*.

The Jewish Federation of Tulsa is dedicated to protecting and supporting Jewish life every day. Our community stands together to foster vibrant Jewish traditions, provide essential aid, and create opportunities for meaningful connections. Thanks to our collective efforts, we've built a powerful network of support for Jewish communities in Israel and over 70 countries.

Our work extends to addressing critical global issues. In response to the horrific attacks of October 7th, we stood in solidarity with Israel, providing life-saving emergency funds. In Ukraine, our collective action has offered hope and stability to those displaced by war.

Closer to home, we combat the rise in antisemitism by enhancing security measures and refocusing our advocacy efforts. The Community Relations Committee (CRC) refocused its efforts towards Israel advocacy, combating antisemitism, and promoting religious freedom. By building strategic partnerships with interfaith allies and like-minded organizations, CRC fosters positive perceptions of Israel and the Jewish community. Additionally, its flagship Student to Student program continues playing a vital role in combating antisemitism in local schools.

As we look toward 2025, we're excited to expand our impact with several ambitious goals:

- **L'Chaim Dinner:** Our annual campaign dinner will now be branded as the L'Chaim Dinner, a celebratory event embodying the vibrancy and ruach "spirit" of our community. **Mark your calendar for this year's dinner: Thursday, April 3, 2025.**

## • Young Jewish Professionals (YJP) Giving Societies:

✧ **Chai Society:** For ages 21-40 committing \$180, this group provides meaningful networking opportunities, recognition, and special programs and fun programs that help build strong community connections.

✧ **Ben Gurion Society:** For those ages 21-40 who commit \$1,000 to the Federation, this group offers exclusive benefits including special events, networking opportunities, invitation-only programs, recognition across Federation platforms, and an end-of-year mission.

- **Women's Philanthropy** inspires purposeful and thoughtful giving while honoring the Jewish values of repairing the world and sustaining future generations. We are focusing on Women's Philanthropy by uniting women who give from the heart across various giving levels. These groups recognize women dedicated to making a meaningful impact in our community. To celebrate women's leadership and generosity, we will host frequent social programming alongside social action initiatives. Women who contribute to the annual campaign in their own name will be honored at the following levels: Pearl Society (\$180-\$999), Pomegranate Society (\$1,000-\$4,999), and Lion of Judah (\$5,000+).

The theme "As One" represents our shared commitment to unity, resilience, and progress. Together, we champion a future where everyone thrives, and is welcomed into vibrant Jewish life here in Tulsa and across the globe.

**As One, Jewish Tulsa Builds a Brighter Tomorrow for Our Children, Friends, and Neighbors.**

**Thank you for standing with us. As One, we make a difference. ■**

**As One**  
2025 Annual Campaign

Mazel Tov to Josh and Katie Falk. They welcomed their first child on Monday, December 2, 2024. Stella Marie Falk was born at 6 lbs 13oz. The whole family is healthy, happy, and are thrilled to begin the next chapter in their lives!



Asher Frank Verduzco, son of Bethanie and Bhadri Verduzco, will become a bar mitzvah on Saturday, January 11, 2025, corresponding to the 1st day of Tevet, 5785, at Congregation B'nai Emunah. Asher is a seventh-grade



honor student at Carver Middle School. When he's not playing baseball for the Carver Wildcats, you might find him in the kitchen whipping up some delicious baked creation or in his room playing video games with his friends. When he grows up, he hopes to put his STEM skills to good use and become a radiologist. Asher has been preparing for his bar mitzvah under the tutoring and guidance of Morah Sara Levitt. Asher is the grandson of Kathi & Joe Jones and David & Susan Bryant of Tulsa, OK, and Sue Verduzco of Austin, TX. Asher is the younger brother of Noa Verduzco.

## CELEBRATE SIMCHAS!



Share your simchas with the entire community! Send us your b'nai mitzvah, wedding announcement, birth of a child, graduation, or other milestone for our "simchas" section each month.

**Send submissions for the Tulsa Jewish Review to Sandy Sloan, [sandy@jewishtulsa.org](mailto:sandy@jewishtulsa.org)**

**Open House ...**

**JCC Fitness**

**Wednesday | January 8, 2025**  
**9 am - 12 pm**

**Enter to Win**  
a free membership  
... for a year! \* ...

**Members ...**  
refer a friend - if they join at this event  
you receive a \$50 QT card!

- // Reimbursement from most medical insurance plans including medicare
- // Refreshments provided
- // JCC swag for all guests
- // Rates as low as \$15/mo

\*new members only



UPCOMING EVENTS



**Fitness Challenge – Try Something New Every Day**

Start the new year with a month of discovery and growth! This January, challenge yourself to step out of your comfort zone and embrace new experiences for your mind, body, and soul. Each day, try a different activity or habit to refresh your routine, boost your energy, and improve your well-being. We will have weekly plans available—to try something new—at the fitness desk.



**Open House | Wednesday, January 8 | 9 am – 12 pm**

Now is the time to jump-start your health and fitness goals! All are invited to attend the JCC Open House and tour our clean, welcoming, and affordable fitness center. **Refer your friends, family, and colleagues! If your referral joins at the Open House, you will receive a \$50 QT gift card.** Tours of the facility, squash, pickleball, class demos, snacks, JCC swag, and more! All new guests will have a chance to win a free membership for a year! Please spread the word about Tulsa’s best-kept secret fitness center. Senior memberships as low as \$15/month and may be covered by insurance plans, including Medicare.



**Social: Line Dancing with Hannah | Wednesday, January 15 | 10:40 am | Gym**

Join fitness instructor Hannah Bakewell for a fun line dancing activity! Learn traditional Israeli dances including the Hora and modern-day line dancing. Snacks and drinks will be provided after the activity, so please sign up in advance. All levels and ages are welcome.

RSVP: [csjcc.org/social-jan](http://csjcc.org/social-jan)



**Wellness Series | Wednesday, January 22 | 10:15 am | Dan Room**

Join Dr. James Webb of Pain Management Tulsa to learn about osteoporosis, common back issues, and pain management. Dr. Webb specializes in pain management and pain treatment in Tulsa. Please feel free to bring any questions you might have. All Wellness Series are free and open to the public. Bring a friend....or two!

RSVP: [csjcc.org/wellness-Jan22](http://csjcc.org/wellness-Jan22)

*New class!*

**Tai Chi  
Mondays | 6 pm**

Tai Chi is a gentle exercise that involves a series of slow, flowing movements, controlled breathing, and a meditative state of mind. With regular practice, Tai Chi will help release stress, create habits of relaxation, and promote longevity and peace of mind. The gentle twisting enhances flexibility and improves circulation. Overall, Tai Chi promotes good health, both physically and mentally.

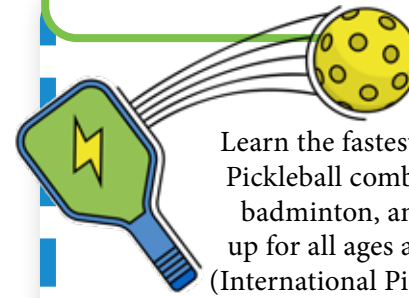


**CARDIO DRUMMING  
Tuesdays & Thursdays  
11:30 am**

Due to popular demand, we have added a second Cardio Drumming class on Thursdays. Cardio drumming is a fast-paced, fun, full-body exercise using exercise balls, buckets, and drum sticks. Paired with great music this is a fun way to boost your heart rate and burn calories.



**Pickleball Lessons:**



Learn the fastest-growing sport in America! Pickleball combines elements of ping-pong, badminton, and tennis and is easy to pick up for all ages and abilities. Certified IPRPA (International Pickleball Teaching Professional Association) instructor, Todd Winkle has been teaching and coaching for over 2 years.

**LESSONS ARE  
\$15 MEMBERS/\$25 NON-MEMBERS.**

**BEGINNER: FRIDAYS at 2PM  
INTERMEDIATE/ADVANCED: FRIDAYS at 1PM**

**SIGN UP AT:  
[csjcc.org/events](http://csjcc.org/events) or by calling  
FITNESS DESK at 918-935-3681**

– Private Lessons Available –



**January Hours**

Wednesday, January 1 — Open 12 - 5 pm  
Monday, January 20 — Open 12 - 5 pm





## COOKING UP NEW BEGINNINGS COMBINED SISTERHOOD SOCIAL ACTION PROJECT

by Isabella Silberg, Director of Development and Programming

On Sunday, December 15th, nearly 60 women from the sisterhoods of Congregation B'nai Emunah, Temple Israel, and the Jewish Federation of Tulsa gathered for our annual social action project. This year, we partnered with Women in Recovery, an inspiring program that empowers women on their journey to rebuild their lives and transform their futures. The goal of this project was to collect much-needed kitchen supplies for the women in the program.

The morning began with a warm welcome from Mimi Tarrasch, Chief Program Officer at Women in Recovery, who shared the incredible strides the organization has made in Tulsa over the years. Mimi's heartfelt remarks highlighted how the program helps women regain stability and independence. Chef Trey followed with an engaging presentation on the program's culinary training initiative, showcasing the valuable skills participants gain to prepare for brighter futures.

A highlight of the event was hearing from a program graduate whose story of resilience and transformation deeply moved everyone in attendance (there wasn't a

dry eye in the room)! Her testimony was a powerful reminder of Women in Recovery's profound impact on individuals and their families.

In the spirit of giving, attendees packed 33 thoughtfully curated baskets for women's apartments in the program. Each basket, filled with generously donated items from our community, contained essential kitchen utensils to nourish their bodies and provide tools to care for their families. These baskets symbolized more than practicality—they represented hope, independence, and community support.

This meaningful program underscored the power of generosity, connection, and shared purpose. It was a beautiful reminder of the impact we can achieve when we unite for the greater good. We are excited to continue building on this partnership with our sisterhoods and Women in Recovery, working together to uplift women in our community.

Thank you to everyone who participated and helped make this event such a success! Together, we are making a lasting difference! ■



Over 60 women volunteered for the Annual Sisterhood Social Action Project at Women in Recovery.

## INTRODUCING THE SHERWIN MILLER MUSEUM OF JEWISH ART'S 2025 THEME... JEWISH JOY!

WHEN DECIDING ON WHICH EXHIBITIONS TO BRING TO OUR MUSEUM, THE CHOICES ARE QUITE ENDLESS. AS PLANS BEGAN TO TAKE SHAPE FOR 2025, I BEGAN TO THINK ABOUT WHAT OUR COMMUNITY NEEDS AND HOW OUR MUSEUM COULD FILL THIS NEED.

DESPITE DARK TIMES, OUR COMMUNITY HAS A LOT TO CELEBRATE. THE THEME OF JEWISH JOY SEEMS ONLY NATURAL. DRAWING LARGELY FROM OUR COLLECTION, EACH OF THIS YEAR'S EXHIBITIONS IS UPLIFTING AND JOYFUL

- ◆ We start the year off with Hungarian painter **Theodore Fried: Art in Hiding**. This exhibition is a celebration of the survival of art in dark times with Theodore Fried's work that was hidden in Europe during the Holocaust. We are honored and privileged to hold the largest collection of Fried's work.

**Opens January 10 | Katharine Penson Miller Gallery**

Plenty of joy can be found in the nostalgic art of Carmelita Avery in **Temple Israel Songbook Illustrations**. Created in 1945, these pieces capture the playful spirit of the era.

**Opens January 23 | Sanditen Gallery**

- ◆ Our 18th Annual **Purim Mask Invitational** features hand-made, wearable masks created by local K-12 grade students. Joy is using the power of art to educate young minds.

**March 6 – 27 | Sharna Newman Frank Education Gallery and Jewish Federation Lobby**

- ◆ We will get romantic with Bashert: **The Art of Jewish Love** featuring “love”-ly items from our permanent collection.

**Opens April 10 | Mezzanine Gallery**

- ◆ Joyful art continues with **Sunrise Sunset: The History and Legacy of Fiddler on the Roof**. This exhibition has a little bit of everything—history, Judaica, art, and even set pieces and costumes from the Tulsa Performing Arts Center's most recent production of *Fiddler on the Roof*.

**Opens June 18 | Brodksy Gallery**

- ◆ In Sacred Land, legendary American photographer Ralph Gibson and producer Martin Cohen, have created a unique photographic exhibition and publication that captures the soul of Israel, both ancient and contemporary. At a time when the war and suffering in Israel and Gaza overwhelm us, Gibson's images offer a compelling and hopeful outlook for the future.

**Opens October 10 | Mezzanine Gallery** ■

# Jewish Joy

by Sofia Thornblad, Chief Curator





# HOLOCAUST VICTIMS' REMAINS LAID TO REST

by Sofia Thornblad, Chief Curator

On November 14, 2024, The Sherwin Miller of Jewish Art alongside local rabbis held a funeral for human remains of victims of the Holocaust found in our collection.

These remains were donated to the museum prior to the year 2000 and were deaccessioned (removed formally) from the collection as is the standard museum practice when it comes to human remains in many cases.

A memorial stone will be placed at the site of burial in the near future.

*The following is an excerpt from my eulogy which was read at the funeral:*

March 20, 2023 was my first day working at the Sherwin Miller Museum of Jewish Art. I was so excited and honored to be starting my dream job and to get to know the collection I would now be responsible for.

I went into the job with the understanding that my primary responsibilities would be to curate exhibits focusing on Jewish art and history and maintain our collection. I never could have imagined that my responsibilities would involve caring for human remains from the Holocaust, and planning a funeral for them.

The journey to get to this moment has been incredibly challenging, it has also been a complete honor. When I discovered human remains in our collection, I immediately began to contact the experts. Rabbis were consulted, museum professionals were spoken with, and an archeologist was brought into the process to give us more information about what we had in our collection. Who we had in our collection.

I remember sitting in my car in Freddy's Frozen Custard parking lot sometime in the spring of 2023, trying to process, I wrote:

*I'm sitting in my car eating frozen custard.*

*I could be thinking about any number of things. But what I am thinking about is what I should say at the funeral I am going to lead for the human remains I found at work.*

*I'm thinking about how I want to get my conversion over with so I can bury some of the 6 million as a Jew. So I don't need to look at the box they are in every time I am at work.*

*I never thought I would confront the Holocaust like this. This was the job of liberators. I can now relate to an ounce of the horror they must have felt.*

*The horror of a charred bone.*

That bone, it turns out. Belonged to a 12-year-old. Perhaps a little older, perhaps a little younger. Dr. Miriam Belmaker of the University of Tulsa was able to verify that yes it belonged to a child, and yes, that child was a victim of the crematoria at Auschwitz.

She was also able to verify that at least five people are represented in the 47 teeth from Dachau. And that some of them belonged to children.

For a long time, I carried the weight of these remains alone. I felt deeply responsible for their safety and dignity. Dr. Belmaker has shared in carrying the weight.

It wasn't until late in this process that I found out most other Holocaust museums have had funerals like the one we are having today. At one point it was common for remains to be a part of museum collections. Museums tend to talk about their collection items that are problematic in hushed voices. Yet we all have them,

*"Today Tulsa cries out in mourning for you. We are a city bound to remember and to actively work to combat hatred due to our own history."*

and as museums, especially small museums review their collections, it is important to talk about them, to normalize these discussions as part of what it means to be a museum that deals with difficult history and wants to operate with dignity.

I have spent all of my adult life striving to bear witness to the Holocaust and educate others so that we may identify warning signs of fascism and make never again a reality. As a Holocaust educator, I often feel as though I am screaming into a void as never again happens again and again and again.

But today we have a rare opportunity to come together as a community and grieve. We have the great honor of laying to rest actual victims of the Shoah.

(Continued)

(Continued)

Today we physically lay to rest the anonymous. We lay to rest portions of the 6 million.

We know nothing about them. We will never know anything about who they were before, and what they witnessed during the Shoah.

Most Shoah victims were scattered to the wind. Today I think of those we know who perished. I think of Czech composer Pavel Haas. I think of Elie Wiesel's sister Tzipora. I think of the families of those of you here today who carry with you memories of the horror.

Today Tulsa cries out in mourning for you. We are a city bound to remember and to actively work to combat hatred due to our own history.

Today we do not promise never again, but we hope for it. We vow to work toward it. Today we grieve. Today we have the highest honor of bestowing some level of peace to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob. To Ruth, Rachel, and Sarah. To Moses. To Tzipora. To 6 million.

May their memories be a blessing. ■



Israel Emissary, Shahaf Feinkuchen, speaking at the funeral



Chief Curator, Sofia Thornblad (center)

*May their memories be a blessing.*



# MIZEL JEWISH COMMUNITY DAY SCHOOL INSPIRING GROWTH THROUGH HANDS-ON LEARNING

by Amanda Anderson, Executive Director

**M**s Mizel Jewish Community Day School approaches its 50th anniversary this May, the school celebrates a legacy of growth, academic excellence, and student engagement. With 61 students currently enrolled, including a thriving 5th-grade program, Mizel continues to deliver a dynamic, hands-on learning experience that excites and inspires.

## Active Learning for Thriving Students

At Mizel, learning goes beyond textbooks. Students engage in STE(A)M projects, prepare meals in culinary classes, and express creativity through music and art. These interactive lessons spark curiosity and ensure concepts are deeply understood.

“When students are engaged, they learn more,” said a Mizel teacher. “Hands-on activities empower students to explore, ask questions, and truly connect with the material.”

Parents see the impact each day, sharing how their children eagerly discuss their creations and discoveries. This active learning approach is central to Mizel’s mission to nurture lifelong learners.

## Growing Demand, Thriving Community

With enrollment at its highest in recent years, Mizel is at capacity in several grade levels and has started waitlists for others. This growth reflects the school’s reputation for blending academic rigor with Jewish values in a warm and supportive environment.

## Exciting Programs Ahead

The second semester promises more opportunities for student engagement. Mizel students will participate in a Share Fair, showcasing their creativity, projects, and achievements with the community. Art and music collaborations will give students a platform to express their talents, connect with peers, and celebrate their Jewish heritage. These events highlight Mizel’s dedication to fostering well-rounded, confident learners.

## Welcoming New Talent

This year, Mizel is excited to welcome Jodi Pass as its new 1st-grade teacher. A dedicated educator and member of the Jewish community, Jodi brings fresh energy and a passion for hands-on, student-centered learning.

## Looking Ahead to 50 Years

Our 2025 50th Anniversary theme “Mizel JCDS is Solid Gold!”, reflects on the school’s incredible journey from its founding as Heritage Academy in 1975 to its current status as a growing and innovative institution.

With engaged students, talented educators, and strong community support, Mizel JCDS is more than a school—it’s a place where curiosity grows, connections flourish, and every child is empowered to shine. ■



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## Community Wide Tu B'Shevat Festival

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Kids Activities

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# DISCOVERING TULSA

## TULSA TOMORROW'S RECRUITMENT WEEKEND

by Rebekah Kantor Wunch, Executive Director, Tulsa Tomorrow

**T**ulsa Tomorrow recognizes that the future of our community depends on a thriving, young, Jewish population. To spark this growth, twice a year we curate experiences and opportunities for people looking at Tulsa as a place to move, grow, and connect with a Jewish community. Here's a recap of our most recent weekend:

### WARM WELCOME

The weekend kicked off with a warm welcome to (13) Jewish visitors from Tulsa's incredible Jewish clergy. Each leader shared how their institution contributes to the vibrant fabric of our Jewish community, creating a sense of connection and belonging for everyone involved. Together, they are the heart of Jewish life in Tulsa, and their warmth and passion were evident.

A special part of the trip was the involvement of Tulsa Tomorrow alumni who came together to share their experiences about moving to Tulsa. These were not prepared speeches, but real, candid conversations about the joys and challenges of building a life here. For the group, hearing directly from people who had been in their shoes made the weekend even more impactful.

### SHABBATLUCK: A TASTE OF TULSA'S YOUNG ADULT COMMUNITY

Shabbat is always a highlight for Tulsa's young adult community, and our Shabbatluck tradition was the perfect way to show visitors what makes this gathering so special. Hosted by the Aussenbergs, the evening was filled with new faces, regular attendees, and plenty of delicious

homemade dishes.

This monthly potluck-style Shabbat is at the heart of our community, offering a true taste of the connections that define life in Tulsa. Sharing Brae Riley's famous challah and chatting with friends new and old, the evening was filled with the warmth and joy that make Shabbat and the community here so unique.

### ROOFTOP HAVDALAH AT THE BRUT HOTEL

We ended Shabbat with a beautiful rooftop Havdalah at the Brut Hotel, where the setting and Tulsa's skyline provided the perfect backdrop. Despite the windy evening, the warmth of the gathering filled the space.

Adam Weingarten's soulful music added a special touch, setting an intimate atmosphere that allowed for meaningful conversations. The evening captured the essence of purpose and connection, both with the city and each other.

### TOURING TULSA

The weekend was more than all of this, though. We also wanted to show off what makes Tulsa such a special place to live. Our downtown walking tour, led by Jeffrey Tanenhaus, highlighted Tulsa's growth, architecture, and history. Jeffrey's personal perspective on the city provided a great introduction, and the group appreciated hearing his thoughts on what it's like to explore and build a life in Tulsa.

Next up was the Gathering Place, a local gem and a must-see for anyone visiting the city. The park is more than just green space; it's a beautiful blend of nature, art, and community spaces that's regularly ranked as one of the best in the country. The tour gave participants a great sense of what life here can be like—from family outings to casual meetups with friends or finding a quiet spot to plug in and work remotely.

For art lovers, the Philbrook Museum was nothing short of magical. Between the gardens and galleries, the museum serves as a reminder of the cultural richness Tulsa has to offer. The visit gave participants a real feel for how places like Philbrook have become part of local life, with many Tulsans making regular visits a part of their weekends or even attending events hosted by the museum.

We also took a difficult, but important look at

(Continued)

Tulsa's past with a visit to Greenwood Rising. Confronting the city's complex history is not always easy, but it is essential to understanding its present and future. The visit was a powerful reminder of the city's journey toward growth, healing, and a more inclusive future.

Music lovers were drawn to the Woody Guthrie Center and Bob Dylan Archives, where they explored Tulsa's rich musical heritage while getting a glimpse into the creative energy that pulses through the city. Tulsa's music scene—from live venues to festivals—was on full display throughout the weekend.

The weekend wrapped up with a driving tour led by Grant Bumgarner, who shared his extensive knowledge of Tulsa's neighborhoods and landmarks, including Temple Israel, Congregation B'nai Emunah, and the Zarrow Campus. His engaging storytelling brought the city's unique character to life, leaving participants with a deeper appreciation for the spaces that define Tulsa.

This weekend was about more than just seeing Tulsa—it was about truly feeling it. Through open conversations, vibrant gatherings, and meaningful tours, participants got a genuine sense of what it's like to live in this city. Whether it was over challah at Shabbat, walking through the Gathering Place, or sharing stories on the rooftop, our guests learned what it means to call Tulsa home. ■



Tulsa Tomorrow recruits visiting in October

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# THE JEWISH HARLEM GLOBETROTTER®

by Phil Goldfarb

**A**braham Michael Saperstein was the founder, owner and first coach of the Harlem Globetrotters. Saperstein was a leading figure in black basketball and baseball from the 1920s through the 1950s, primarily before those sports were racially integrated as a pioneering entrepreneur in America's Negro Baseball League and was a key figure in opening the way for African Americans into professional sports.

Saperstein was born in Whitechapel, London, England on July 4, 1902, the oldest of nine children to Jewish immigrants Louis (1879-1950) and Annie Kaplan Saperstein (1879-1961) originally from Łomża, Poland. His family moved from London to Chicago in 1907 settling just north of the city's Jewish area, often called the "Poor Jews' quarter." The family were naturalized as U.S. citizens in 1919.

At age 10, Abe discovered a lifelong love of sports, playing basketball at the Wilson Avenue YMCA and second base for a parochial school team. At Lake View High School, he played nine different sports, including baseball, basketball, football, boxing, and track. Saperstein attended the University of Illinois, but dropped out after one year to help support his family.

Saperstein eventually landed a position working for the Chicago Park District as a playground supervisor at Welles Park where he saw gifted African American athletes for the first time. There, after hours of watching kids play basketball, he decided to create his own team, the Chicago Reds. The Chicago Reds were a

semi-pro lightweight (135 lb. limit) basketball team, and Saperstein played point guard.

In 1926 Saperstein met the members of a semipro team called the Savoy Big Five, a group of black basketball players whom the Savoy Hotel management had hired to play as a means of attracting young people to dance in the hotel's ballroom. Saperstein became the team's manager and had his father design uniforms for them.

He called the team the New York Harlem Globetrotters actually sewing their red, white and blue uniforms. Although Saperstein's team had nothing to do with Harlem, he chose the name to indicate that the players were black, as Harlem was the epicenter of African American culture and believed that it would be easier to book them for games if people thought they had come all the way from Manhattan to play. Many of the towns where the Globetrotters played in their first few years were all white, and Saperstein did not want other teams or spectators to be surprised that his team was black.

On January 7, 1927, the Harlem Globetrotters basketball team traveled 48 miles west from Chicago to play their first game in Hinckley, Illinois. The team netted a grand total of \$8, which was split evenly among the six members of the team. Over the next several years, Saperstein served as the team's coach, driver, booking agent, PR director, and occasional substitute player.

Saperstein revolutionized the game of basketball and took the Globetrotters from an unknown team touring small farm towns in the Midwestern United States during the height of the Great Depression to a powerhouse that went on to beat the best team in the all-white National Basketball Association. The Globetrotters blended basketball with showmanship and ball-handling wizardry.

The early Trotters were a serious basketball five, sporting a 101-6 record the first year, 145-13 in 1928, and 151-13 in 1929. Finding difficulty locating willing opponents, Saperstein conceived the idea of fancy, comedic, razzle-dazzle type of play, and soon the team became a must-see attraction on the professional basketball barnstorming circuit. The crowds loved it, and Saperstein told his team to keep up the clowning around, but only when they had achieved a solid lead.

Saperstein was relentless in booking games; in the team's first seven years, the Globetrotters played more than 1,000 games, with Saperstein driving the players to tiny towns throughout the Midwest in his unheated



Harlem Globetrotters 1927

(Continued)

Ford Model T. In the Jim Crow South, where "separate but equal" ruled the day, he had to find places for his players to eat and sleep; while some places had facilities for black people, not all did, and not just in the South. In one Nebraska town, for example, the players were forced to sleep in a jail.

Clowning aside, the Trotters won the World Basketball Championship in 1940--providing substance to Saperstein's long-ignored claim that, given the opportunity, they were among basketball's best. In 1943-44, the Abe's Five captured basketball's International Cup. They are undoubtedly the most famous sports organization in the world, with Saperstein labeled the "Barnum of Basketball" and his Trotters known as "America's Number One Goodwill Ambassadors."

An even bigger achievement came in the 1948 Globetrotters-Lakers game, when the Globetrotters defeated the Minneapolis Lakers, the best team in the all-white NBA, a league that had been formed two years earlier.

In 1950 the NBA integrated. Chuck Cooper, who had been a Globetrotter briefly, became the first black player to sign a contract with the NBA. Also in 1950, the Globetrotters played their first game in Madison Square Garden, marking the first time the venue sold out for a basketball game. Following these successes, interest in the Globetrotters grew and Saperstein created two more teams in the United States, as well as an international squad.

Saperstein started the American Basketball League (ABL) in 1961 and served as its commissioner, as well as owner of the league's Chicago Majors team. To differentiate the ABL from the NBA – and to promote the new league – Saperstein introduced several innovations that have endured as features of modern basketball. He widened the free throw lane to 18 feet (from 12) and created the three-point shot.

In the years following World War II, the Globetrotters embarked on a "goodwill tour." Among the more memorable of those games took place in Berlin's Olympic Stadium and featured Jesse Owens, who was traveling with the team. Owens returned to the stadium where he had won four gold medals 15 years earlier, after which Hitler famously refused to shake his hand and were greeted by 75,000 cheering fans. The mayor of Berlin greeted Owens and famously said, "In 1936, Hitler refused to shake your hand. Today, I give you both of mine."

The Globetrotters developed into an international entertainment attraction, playing in more than 123 countries on five continents, as well as on television and in motion pictures. They are undoubtedly the

most famous sports organization in the world, with Abe labeled the "Barnum Of Basketball", and his Trotters known as "America's Number One Goodwill Ambassadors".

Saperstein was a tireless worker, taking off just one day a year, Yom Kippur. He continued to work right up until his death from a heart attack on March 15, 1966 and is buried at Westlawn Cemetery in Norridge, Illinois.

He was elected to the Basketball Hall of Fame in 1971 and, at 5 ft 3 in, is its shortest male member. In 1979, he was inducted into the International Jewish Sports Hall of Fame and 2005 was inducted into the National Jewish Sports Hall of Fame. ■

Phil Goldfarb is the president of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Tulsa and can be e-mailed at: phil.goldfarb@cox.net.



David Dopp



Levi Olsen





2025 KNIPPA INTERFAITH/ECUMENICAL LECTURE SERIES  
 SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 4 PM  
 AT GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH, TULSA

Guest lecturer **Dr. Jonathan Lee Walton, Ph.D.** will present “What Do We Owe One Another in an Age of Self-help & Personal Spirituality?” Over the last 40 years, the idea that social well-being is best advanced by promoting individual entrepreneurship and privatization has come to dominate the public approach to education, healthcare, environmental protection and so many other areas of our living together. What is the impact of such market-based morality on communities of faith? How can/should religious institutions still teach about “the Common Good” in a marketplace focused on individual spirituality?

Dr. Walton is a social ethicist, religious educator, and influential scholar known for engaging American evangelical traditions. On January 1, 2023, he became the 8th president of Princeton Theological Seminary. He is the author of two critically acclaimed books, *Watch This! The Ethics and Aesthetics of Black Televangelism* (NYU Press) and *A Lens of Love: Reading the Bible in Its World for Our World* (Westminster John Knox Press). Dr. Walton has also contributed to over a dozen journal articles, chapters, and essays in prestigious academic publications.

Dr. Walton’s insights have been featured in national and international media outlets, including the New York Times, CNN, Time Magazine, and the BBC. Before his appointment at Princeton Seminary, he served as the Plummer Professor of Christian Morals and Pusey Minister in the Memorial Church of Harvard University. Additionally, he was Dean of the School of Divinity and held the Presidential Chair in Religion & Society at Wake Forest University.

Dr. Walton earned his Ph.D. and Master of Divinity from Princeton Theological Seminary and his BA from Morehouse College, where he was honored with the distinguished Benjamin Elijah Mays Alumni Award in 2016. He also received an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from Wake Forest University in 2015.

Dr. Walton’s life and work continue to inspire academic and public dialogues on ethics, religion, and societal challenges, reflecting his dedication to scholarship and moral leadership.

The annual Interfaith/Ecumenical lecture series promotes unity and understanding among peoples of diverse religious faiths. The lecture series advances the pioneering interfaith work of Dr. Clarence Knippa, longtime pastor at Grace Lutheran Church Tulsa who served for over 50 years.

More info: <https://www.facebook.com/KnippaLecture> ■



Dr. Jonathan Lee Walton, Ph.D.

*Save the Date!*

*Yom HaShoah*

Thursday, April 24, 7 pm  
 at Temple Israel

ANNOUNCING THE NEW ELSON ISRAEL FELLOWSHIP

by Joe Roberts, Executive Director

The Jewish Federation of Tulsa is proud to unveil a bold new initiative that cements our place as a global leader in shaping the future of Israel, Zionism, and the Jewish people: the **Elson Israel Fellowship**.

This transformative program is made possible by a generous gift from Bill Elson, z”l, whose vision and legacy inspire this initiative. Bill Elson believed deeply in fostering a strong connection to Israel and preserving the Zionist vision of a free, democratic, and Jewish state. His enduring commitment to these ideals continues to guide our community today.

**WHY TULSA? WHY NOW?**

Because we believe that **Tulsa matters**.

Because we know that leadership isn’t about size—it’s **about vision**.

Because in a world where antisemitism is rising, Israel faces growing challenges, and the Jewish people are yearning for unity, **we are ready to lead**.

Tulsa is no longer just a participant in the Jewish story. **We are a force shaping its future**. The Elson Israel Fellowship is our answer to the challenges of today and our promise for tomorrow.

**WHAT IS THE ELSON ISRAEL FELLOWSHIP?**

This groundbreaking fellowship brings Israel’s most innovative thinkers—scholars, visionaries, and advocates—to **Tulsa**. These fellows will not only engage directly with our community through lectures and discussions but will also contribute original thought and research to the global conversation on Israel and Zionism. Their work will amplify Tulsa’s voice on the world stage and help shape the narrative for the Jewish future.

During their residency, fellows will host public events, lead impactful discussions, and collaborate with leaders to make Tulsa a hub of innovation, education, and advocacy for Israel and the Jewish people.

**WHAT WILL THIS FELLOWSHIP ACHIEVE?**

- **Defend Israel’s Place in the World:** Fellows will confront delegitimization and antisemitism with clarity, courage, and strategic thought, equipping our community to lead with confidence.
- **Strengthen Jewish Unity:** By building bridges between Israel and the diaspora, the fellowship will deepen understanding and foster collaboration across borders.

- **Drive the Global Narrative:** Fellows will contribute original thought pieces and ideas, ensuring the Jewish people’s story is told with strength and integrity.
- **Showcase Tulsa’s Power:** This initiative positions Tulsa as a beacon of innovation, leadership, and pride, proving that even a small community can have a transformative impact.

**THIS IS TULSA’S MOMENT**

The Elson Israel Fellowship is more than just another program. It’s a declaration of who we are and what we believe: a community united in pride, driven by purpose, and committed to leading the global conversation on the issues that matter most to the Jewish people.

By honoring Bill Elson’s legacy, we are ensuring that his vision for a free, democratic, and Jewish state remains a guiding light for generations to come.

**TOGETHER, WE ARE PROVING THAT TULSA IS NOT JUST PART OF THE CONVERSATION—WE ARE DRIVING IT.**

Stay tuned for updates on our inaugural fellows, their original thought pieces, upcoming events, and how you can help ensure the success of this transformative initiative.

**ALL OF THIS IS MADE POSSIBLE THROUGH THE GENEROUS SUPPORT OF OUR COMMUNITY.**

Please consider making a contribution to advancing the work of the Elson Israel Fellows and our vision to build a **Center for Israel Policy** at the Jewish Federation of Tulsa. Together, we can amplify Tulsa’s impact on the Jewish world. ■







**Chanukah Party at WeStreet Ice Center**

**Wednesday, January 1 | 6:00 p.m.**  
Celebrate the Festival of Lights with your friends and family as we glide across the ice, enjoy delicious treats, and spin the dreidel together at WeStreet Ice Center. Whether you're a seasoned skater, a beginner, or just a spectator from the sidelines, all are welcome to join in the fun and festivities. It will be an evening filled with music, laughter, and the warmth of community. Please let us know if you are planning on attending by registering at [tulsagogue.com/events](http://tulsagogue.com/events).

**Blatt + Blue**  
**Thursday, January 9 | 7:00 p.m.**

Visit [www.tulsagogue.com/events](http://www.tulsagogue.com/events) for more information regarding the movie selection and viewing options. Join us for our conversation at 7:00 p.m. on Zoom (918 583 7121). Newcomers are welcome to join the dialogue.

**Bibi-Dibi**  
**Friday, January 10 | 5:30 p.m.**

Join us for a Shabbat gathering crafted for babies and their families. Revel in the joy of singing songs, playing games, and savoring a delightful Shabbat dinner. It's an excellent opportunity to establish and embrace your own family traditions. While no reservation is required for the celebration, we ask you to secure your spot for the meal by calling or visiting [tulsagogue.com/events](http://tulsagogue.com/events).

**46th Annual Tulsa MLK Parade**  
**Monday, January 20 | 10:00 a.m.**

The Synagogue is proud to continue its ongoing sponsorship of the Tulsa MLK Parade. We're delighted that this event is one of the largest such parades in the country and encourage all to march, attend, or tune in on TV from home. The parade route begins at 11:00 a.m., but we'll be gathering for hot drinks, a bite to eat, and distribution of Congregation B'nai Emunah merch starting at 10:00 a.m. From our preschool families to those involved in the Altamont Bakery and refugee resettlement, we're excited to march as one organization representing The Synagogue. For more details including the parade map and participant registration please visit [tulsagogue.com/events](http://tulsagogue.com/events).

**Shabbat Shalom: Musical Circle, Dinner and Shabbat Talks**

**Friday, January 24 | 5:30 p.m.**  
Experience a musical Shabbat evening with songs and storytelling starting at 5:30 p.m. This inclusive and accessible event is an ideal introduction to Shabbat traditions, welcoming participants of all ages and backgrounds. Following services, we'll enjoy a beautiful Shabbat dinner together starting at 6:15 p.m. The evening will conclude with a special Shabbat Talks speaker at 7:00 p.m. to discuss a relevant topic of interest to our community. Reserve your spot at the Shabbat table by registering at [tulsagogue.com/events](http://tulsagogue.com/events).

**Sisterhood Shabbat**  
**Saturday, January 25 | 9:30 a.m.**

A morning of celebration and community, Sisterhood Shabbat brings together women of the congregation in an annual service led by members of Congregation B'nai Emunah's Sisterhood. All are welcome to participate. Join us in this week's special service as our community gathers to sing the tradition's liturgy, study the weekly Torah portion, and spend time amongst family and friends. This year's Sisterhood Shabbat is being chaired by Carol Mandlebaum.

**Family Jewish Cooking Club**  
**Sunday, January 26 | 12:00 p.m.**

Join the club and embark on a flavorful, family adventure. The club will meet for dinner, schmoozing, and a hands-on kitchen session as we explore the origins and diversity of kugel recipes. Each family will leave with their prepared dish in hand, along with a recipe and instructions to recreate the experience at home. For more information and to register, please visit [tulsagogue.com/events](http://tulsagogue.com/events).

**Seventeenth Street Deli**  
**Sunday, January 26 | 5:30 p.m.**

Indulge in the delectable offerings of the Seventeenth Street Deli, where our kitchen crafts dishes with a perfect blend of slow cures, a touch of pepper, and heaps of love. Our much-loved pop-up restaurant invites you to enjoy both dine-in and take-out dinner services. Ensure your place in this culinary experience by pre-registering at [www.tulsadeli.org](http://www.tulsadeli.org) and choose from our delightful pastrami, corned beef, or deli egg salad options.

**Afternoon/Evening Services**

Join us on Wednesdays and Fridays at 5:30 p.m. in the Davis-Goodall Chapel for traditional prayer and community Mourner's Kaddish. Both in-person and Zoom participation are available. Please register for in-person attendance on our website.

**Shabbat Morning Services**

Every Saturday at 9:30 a.m., we celebrate Shabbat through song, Torah study, and fellowship. These services, available both in-person and via Zoom, offer a chance to mark anniversaries, celebrate milestones, and engage in our congregation's ritual life. ■

**THE SEASON AHEAD**

by Rabbi Daniel S. Kaiman

The year before I entered rabbinical school, the Conservative Movement, the denomination with which I've closely identified the entirety of my life, was embroiled in a bitter debate. The question was whether to lift the ban against ordaining openly lesbian and gay rabbis and cantors. That was just over 18 years ago. There was real pain, suffering, and fear.

Too many people were excluded from Jewish life because of this ban. I remember the celebration, relief, and joy expressed by those of us who had long advocated for this step toward inclusion. Just over two decades earlier, a similar moment occurred with the decision to ordain women as rabbis and cantors.

Sometimes, the facts of Jewish inclusion, as we have come to know them in my part of the Jewish world, are overlooked as if these decisions have been in place since Moses and Mount Sinai. But it is essential to remind ourselves that this isn't the case.

While we now proudly speak of ourselves as 'open and affirming congregations,' we lived in a different reality only a few decades ago. Within our communities, too many people were marginalized, shamed, and sent messages of exclusion. In particular, the privileges of Jewish ritual leadership excluded people who felt outside the very narrow definition of what was then considered permissible.

In the long arc of Jewish history, the period allowing full inclusion has barely begun. I share all of this to underscore explicitly the need to foreground efforts to democratize Jewish life and make accessible religious rituals and leadership.

I am incredibly proud to be part of a congregation with a strong and vibrant Sisterhood. One of the signature efforts of our Sisterhood will take place this month. It's Sisterhood Shabbat—a service entirely led by women of the congregation.

This isn't just a symbolic gesture. It is a serious educational effort that allows individuals to challenge themselves to participate in ritual Jewish life in new ways. From reading Torah to leading parts of the service, it's a remarkable Shabbat morning. I hope you will join in one way or another. Sisterhood Shabbat will occur on Saturday, January 25, at 9:30 a.m. In doing so, we will continue the intentional effort necessary to build an inclusive Jewish world where all people grow up knowing they have access to all aspects of Jewish life. I'm grateful to live in such a world, and I know it will take continual effort to keep building our world for the better. Learning from those who have forged this path, including the decades-long history of women leading our Sisterhood, is one good way to make this a reality. ■

**For The Love of Zion**

Tune in weekly as Joe Roberts and Shahaf Feinkuchen welcome guests to talk about Israel, Zionism, and more!



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Visit our Temple Israel website [www.templetulsa.com](http://www.templetulsa.com) and our events page for details about all we offer!

**Repairing Our People: Israel and the Crisis of Liberal Judaism with Rabbi Weinstein on Zoom • Thurs., Jan. 16 & 23 • 2:00 p.m.**  
Contemporary Judaism is facing unprecedented challenges. Today's Jews have the opportunity—and the obligation—to reclaim a Jewish vocabulary of sanctity, activism, and the desire to stand apart from today's world. This course explores the ever-changing landscape of modern Jewish life through the lens of one of American Judaism's most prolific voices. The message: the role of faith is to challenge us as individuals and to challenge society.

**Shabbat Service in person, on Zoom & Facebook Live • Fri., Jan. 3 • 6:00 p.m.**  
Join us as we welcome in Shabbat. Come at 5:30 p.m. for a pre-oney and time with friends.

**Family Shabbat in person • Fri., Jan. 10 • 6:00 p.m.**  
During Family Shabbat Rabbi Jasper creates a sacred space for our young families with songs and prayers. Stay for the complimentary dinner. RSVP by Thurs., Jan. 9. Contact Rabbi Jasper at [rabbitzvia@templetulsa.com](mailto:rabbitzvia@templetulsa.com) for more information.

**Birthday Shabbat Service with Torah in person, on Zoom & Facebook Live • Fri., Jan. 10 • 7:30 p.m.**  
Join us as we welcome in Shabbat with the chanting of Torah.

We will also celebrate January birthdays. Stay afterwards for a sweet oneg.

**Zamru L'Shabbat in person, on Zoom & Facebook Live • Fri., Jan. 17 • 6:00 p.m.**  
Join us as we celebrate Shabbat with Elijah's Minor Prophets. Come at 5:30 p.m. for a savory pre-oney with friends.

**Jukebox Classics Dance – A Brotherhood/Sisterhood Event • Sat., Jan. 18 • 6:45 p.m.**  
Havdalah begins at 6:45 p.m., then put on your dancing shoes for dance music from the late 50's through the early 80's. We'll have a DJ playing all the hits, a photo booth, hors d'oeuvres provided by Phenomenal Flavors, wine and assorted beverages. Cost is \$25 per person.

**Anniversary Shabbat Service with Torah in person, on Zoom & Facebook Live • Fri., Jan. 24 • 6:00 p.m.**  
Join us as we welcome in Shabbat

with the chanting of Torah. We will also celebrate January anniversaries. Come at 5:30 p.m. for a savory pre-oney with friends.

**Zarrow Pointe Shabbat Service • Fri., Jan. 24 • 6:30 p.m.**  
We cordially invite all those who wish to join us for this meaningful Friday evening service with music, held in the Burnstein Auditorium at Zarrow Pointe. We welcome not only Temple members and Zarrow Pointe residents, but all other friends in our community who would appreciate being together on Shabbat.

**Shabbat Service in person, on Zoom & Facebook Live • Fri., Jan. 31 • 6:00 p.m.**  
Join us as we welcome in Shabbat. Stay afterwards for our Congregational Dinner. Rsvp on our website. ■

## FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT

by Rabbi Tzvia Jasper

**H**ave you noticed how dark our nights have become? By four o'clock in the evening, our neighborhoods are shrouded by darkness, only illuminated by the moon who often hides behind voluptuous clouds. With the darkness comes exhaustion or perhaps the inevitable battle with seasonal depression. In the simplest terms, this time of year is difficult.

In *The Legends of the Jews* by Louis Ginzberg, Volume 1:3:4, we learn that after Adam ate from the Tree of Knowledge, one of his many punishments was having his world be cast into darkness. Psalm 139:11 comments on this moment, with Adam exclaiming, "Is darkness to conceal me permanently?"

For our ancestors, the darkness represented uncertainty and danger. For Adam, he feared that the descent of the sun and the rise of darkness was forevermore. During his first experience with the 'evening,' he paused to reflect on his actions, and as *Beresheet Rabbah* 12:6 suggests, he concluded that the darkness was a manifestation of his own sins. Yet, this commentary continues, explaining, "At sunrise, Adam realized it was the way of the world, and that he would have to cope with it and confront the darkness."

Many cultures have had to learn to cope with the intensity of the winter months, and the darkness that comes with them. It is no surprise that we have several holidays that are devoted to the celebration of light during this time of year. To name a few, we have the Winter Solstice, Yule, Christmas, Kwanzaa, and of course, Hanukkah. Or is it Chanukah?

However we spell it, our ancient sages saw the need for light during this dark time of our calendar. Yes, this holiday has roots in our exegesis text, the Book of Maccabees, but what is more interesting is the conversation between the famous schools of Hillel and Shammai regarding the light of the Hanukkah. For the

House of Shammai, we decrease the number of candles from eight to one. This is in opposition to the House of Hillel who says that we should begin with one and increase it to eight. After all, we should increase the sanctity of the holiday, rather than decrease it.

To this day, we follow the wisdom of Hillel, increasing the light as the days of Hanukkah extend. For us, this is a metaphor we can all learn a lesson from. Hanukkah is an opportunity for us to bring light into our darkened lives. We build something beautiful, and with it, we increase in joy. Rabbi Adina Allen once wrote, "Don't be afraid of the dark, that's where creation begins."

Now that we have entered a new secular year, we begin to see our days lengthening and our joy increasing. We have put away our menorahs, and instead, we gather in the Sanctuary to watch the Shabbat candles radiate light. Together as a community, we join in on the hope that a new year brings. And when the night feels all-encompassing, let us remember that after every evening, comes a sunrise, and after every Winter, comes Spring. ■

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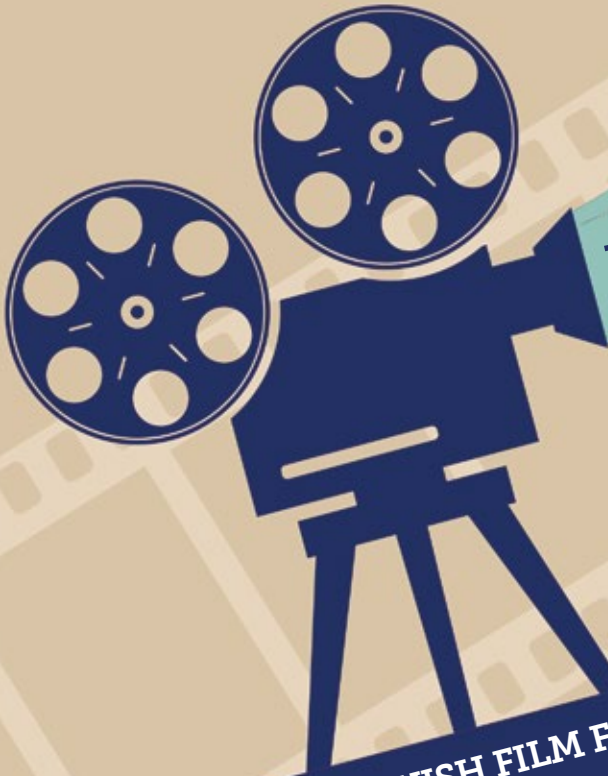
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