



**Confirmation/Graduation  
Friday, May 10, 7:30 p.m.**

**RELIGIOUS SERVICES**

**FRIDAY, MAY 3, 7:30 P.M.**  
Friday Night Live Shabbat Service

**SATURDAY, MAY 4**  
9:30 a.m. – Torah Study  
10:30 a.m. -- Shabbat Service  
Torah Portion – *Acharei Mot*,  
Leviticus 16:1-18:30

**FRIDAY, MAY 10, 7:30 P.M.**  
**SERVICE OF CONFIRMATION/  
GRADUATION**  
Shabbat Service  
Oneg Shabbat hosted  
by the families of the  
Confirmands/Graduates

**SATURDAY, MAY 11**  
9:30 a.m. – Torah Study  
10:30 a.m. -- Shabbat Service  
Torah Portion – *K'doshim*,  
Leviticus 19:1-20:27

**FRIDAY, MAY 17, 7:30 P.M.**  
Shabbat Service

**SATURDAY, MAY 18**  
9:30 a.m. - Torah Study  
10:30 a.m. - Shabbat Service  
Torah Portion – *Emor*,  
Leviticus 21:1-24:23

**FRIDAY, MAY 24, 7:30 P.M.**  
Shabbat Service

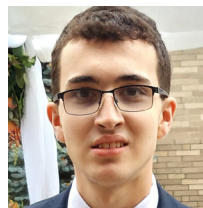
**SATURDAY, MAY 25**  
9:30 a.m. – Torah Study  
10:30 a.m. – Shabbat Service  
Torah Portion – *B'har*,  
Leviticus 25:1-26:2

**FRIDAY, MAY 31, 8:00 P.M.**  
Shabbat Service  
*\*Please note time change  
due to annual meeting at 7:00 p.m.*

**SATURDAY, JUNE 1**  
9:00 a.m. – Shabbat Service at Plum  
Street Temple with HUC Ordination  
*Please note: No Torah Study or  
Shabbat Services at Valley Temple*

**MAZAL TOV TO OUR GRADUATES/  
CONFIRMANDS AND THEIR FAMILIES**

**JOSEPH DEUTSCH**



Son of Steve and  
Nicole Deutsch

**ANDREW GELLER**



Son of Pam Geller and  
Dr. James Geller

**AARON G. FESTENSTEIN**



Son of Rachel Hodesh  
and Rob Festenstein

**AARON SCHNEIDER**



Son of Allison and  
Phil Schneider

**BIMAH  
BOOK CLUB**  
With  
**RABBI SANDFORD KOPNICK**

**Funny,  
You Don't  
Look  
Funny**  
Judaism and  
Humor from  
the Silent  
Generation  
to Millennials  
Jennifer  
Caplan

**Tuesday, May 7 at 7:30 p.m.**

In this comprehensive approach to Jewish humor focused on the relationship between humor and American Jewish practice, Jennifer Caplan calls us to adopt a more expansive view of what it means to “do Jewish,” revealing that American Jews have turned, and continue to turn, to humor as a cultural touchstone. Caplan frames the book around four generations of Jewish Americans from the Silent Generation to Millennials, highlighting a shift from the utilization of Jewish-specific markers to American-specific markers.



## From the Rabbi Sandford R. Kopnick

### SHAVUOT COMMETH...

We don't have many summer holidays. Yet, we are taught in Leviticus that 50 days after Pesach, we should celebrate the harvest of the first fruits. We learn to count those fifty days—called counting the Omer. Our tradition developed the idea that on Shavuot (literally meaning weeks), we celebrate receiving the Torah. This is why Reform Judaism embraced Shavuot as the holiday on which we used to hold Confirmation.

In the earliest days of Reform Judaism, b'nai mitzvah was no longer offered, and a group experience in eighth or ninth grade was created that was similar to Confirmation in other faiths. Yet, the Shavuot Confirmation acknowledged the end of the school year, and embraced the theme of receiving Torah.

Now, many synagogues do confirmation differently (including ours), and celebrate Shavuot in other ways. Our congregation holds this service on the festival day (this year the evening of June 11 and 12). We read the traditional reading (the Ten Commandments), we hold services (including Yizkor memorial services), and we study during the erev (evening) part of the day.

But, to me, the central theme of the holiday is receiving Torah. And while I am not a firm believer of the idea of Moses bringing down the original document that is now copied in our Ark, I do believe that God inspired Torah as a way for us to understand what God expects of us.

I believe that God expects us to use our brains to turn to all that is in Torah for the timeless teachings that have timely applications. I think it is important to connect with the idea of being in a covenant-relationship with God—even if we are the junior partners. I think it is important to study Torah in a way that helps give context to “the still small voice in our heads” with which we grapple over issues of morality and our place in God's world.

Shavuot is a time when those who chose Judaism to be their religion can reaffirm their covenant with God and the Jewish People. And, frankly, so can we all. Everyone in America has the freedom to choose their religion. We used to have high school kids confirm their faith at Shavuot—perhaps we can reimagine Shavuot as a way for all of us to confirm our commitment to our covenant with God and each other.

It is not about politics. It is not about Israel. It is not

about who wrote the Torah or whether God exists in a way that is depicted in our sacred texts. Rather, Shavuot reminds us that Torah has been our beacon through many difficult times—and has guided us to understand how to see our world through Jewish eyes. May we all embrace each other—Torah, and our sacred tradition as we move from strength to strength.

Sandford R. Kopnick, Rabbi

## PURIM 2024: MAMA MIA!





## Rabbi/Educator's Message Austin Zoot

This month, the Jewish community in Israel and around the world prepares to celebrate the back-to-back holidays of Yom HaZikaron and Yom HaAtzmaut, Israeli Memorial Day and Independence Day. The pair of commemorations create one of the most powerful and stark transitions that I have ever encountered; the nation takes a day to honor those who gave their lives in order to live out the Zionist ideal with solemnity and pride, before transforming into a celebration of our national identity within hours, even minutes. So often, we ask our Jewish tradition to help us express the complexities and depths of our emotions, and this juxtaposition is that idea at its finest.

This year, though, any celebration of Israel feels a little bit fraught. The war against Hamas has continued for six months, creating an existential threat to the right for Israel to defend itself at the same time that we confront the human rights catastrophe going on in Gaza for the Palestinian people. Most global observers demand that there be a "right side" and a "wrong side," which might be more satisfying but simply isn't the reality. As a Progressive American Jew, I know that many join me in the complex pain of loving a country that is hardly perfecting the geopolitical game. As the national holidays come into focus, I can't help but wonder how I can express my unflappable support for a Jewish homeland, even while that nation continually chafes against the realities of living out our religious values.

In fact, this is where the Israeli national holidays help us to express exactly what it means to embrace our complex feelings. Because we know that the Jewish national project has never been easy. We know that there are lives that have been lost in creating this ideal, and there are those who continue to suffer as we try to figure out how to exist in a global community that holds Jews accountable very differently than other peoples. There is no more scrutinized country in the world than Israel; but when we are instructed to be a "light unto the nations," we should anticipate that expectations should be high. This Independence Day, even more than in past years, we are asked to think about what it means to live out our values, to celebrate our national identity while also affirming our obligation to be the best version of ourselves. It is deeply human to celebrate an ideal, even while we grapple with how to make it a reality.

In the Israeli Declaration of Independence, the writers expressed the idea: "The State of Israel will be open for Jewish immigration and for the ingathering of the Exiles; it will foster the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants; it will be based on freedom, justice

and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel, it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race, or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education, and culture; it will safeguard the Holy Places of all religions; and it will be faithful to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations." Every single one of those ideas is a beautiful expression of what it means to be a Jewish state. And we haven't perfectly lived up to that call. I imagine no country does. But on Independence Day, we are invited to remember exactly what it is we stand for as a global Jewish community, and how we expect ourselves to conduct our nation-building. Perhaps this year, we need Independence Day more than ever before.

*The Valley Temple*



Rabbi Austin Zoot  
Rabbi/Educator



*We are grateful to the Jewish Federation of Cincinnati's S.E.E.D. Program, The Jewish Foundation of Cincinnati and an anonymous donor for their support in funding this position.*



**Religious School**  
*End of Year Picnic*

**Sunday, May 5**  
*following Religious School*

**The hot dogs, chips and soda will be provided. Bring a side dish to share.**



**President's Message**  
**Jody Finley**

I wanted to provide an update on this year's congregationally-led fundraiser, a stay-at-home "luau" non-event. This change-of-pace activity invited Valley Temple members and community supporters to enjoy a stay-at-home opportunity while generously donating what they would have spent on an evening out.

The response has been amazing. Congregants and supporters have pledged over \$15,000 to support the important work of The Valley Temple. Many thanks go to those who have open-heartedly participated. If you haven't donated, there's still time.

Just for fun, send a picture of your stay-at-home luau to Wendy at [wendy@valleytemple.com](mailto:wendy@valleytemple.com). We'll share some of them in an upcoming bulletin.

Check out the picture below of The Valley Temple Board, ready for a luau!

Aloha,

*Jody*

Jody Finley



**YOUTH GROUP MESSAGE**

On behalf of VOTY (the Valley Organization of Temple Youth), thank you to everybody who played a part in making this year's Purim Carnival awesome! From the parents and caregivers, to the teenage and adult volunteers, and especially to the kids who came to play, everyone helped to create a memorable evening. Because of your generosity, we are able to continue providing fun, educational, and meaningful experiences for our high school youth group. Thank you again, and we look forward to next year's Purim Carnival!

**A DIFFERENT SUMMER...**

We learn in the Torah that the land is entitled to a sabbatical year. Every seven years, there is a break given to the land for rejuvenation. In the world of academics, professorial types are granted a sabbatical around every seven years for a semester, allowing for academic growth outside the classroom. And even in the clergy world, it is very common to grant a sabbatical to rabbis, cantors, ministers, and the like--to allow for some growth as well. The next two summers, the board has granted Rabbi Sanford Kopnick a sabbatical from June 1- September 3. He will still be serving on faculty of GUCI in June. In June 2025, he will be both on faculty at GUCI and then leading the Valley participants of the city-wide trip to Israel.

While Rabbi Kopnick is away this summer, the congregation will be in the capable hands of Rabbi Austin Zoot and our rabbinic intern, Rocki Schy. Rabbi Kopnick will likely not be in the Cincinnati area for most of the summer. Rabbi Zoot will be covering all life-cycle events as they arise during the summer. We are also using the month of May to do much of the planning for the fall, so that we are ready for Rabbi Kopnick to hit the ground running upon his return in September. Should you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call Rabbi Kopnick at the Temple until June 1.

**STAY-AT-HOME "LUAU" NON-EVENT**  
**SEND IN MORE OF YOUR PHOTOS TO**  
**WENDY@VALLEYTEMPLE.COM**





## BLUE BIN DONATIONS

*“When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall do him no wrong. The stranger who sojourns with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.” Leviticus 19:33*

Mauritania is a West African nation battling discrimination and slavery in their country. Hundreds have escaped by flying to Brazil and walking 4,200 miles to the US/Mexican border to seek asylum, joining the thousands already living here. Cincinnati and Columbus have the largest Mauritanian population in the U.S., and many are being served at the Valley Interfaith Food and Clothing Center. Most of the people coming in for clothing are young men in their early 20's. To contribute to the Mauritians and others at the center please donate the following:

- Socks
- Small or medium shirts of any kind
- Sandals or flip-flops

For these and other donations throughout the year, if delivering to the temple is not convenient, you can send a check to the Valley Temple Social Action fund and we will make sure it goes to the designated agency, or order items through Amazon and have it delivered to the temple.

Our Tikkun Olam committee has ideas for the other months of the year, including climate change actions, LGBTQ+ rights, and others, but we'd love to have more people join us, and bring your ideas and passions!

## SOCIAL JUSTICE ACTIVITIES

We work closely with the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism (RAC) throughout the year, to coordinate advocacy activities, such as letter-writing, calling on legislators, and education related to public policies that have been identified by the Union of Reform Judaism (URJ) and local congregations.

RAC-Ohio has signed on to Citizens Not Politicians, (CNP) Ohio's Initiative to End Gerrymandering.

This nonpartisan solution seeks to stop Ohio's track record of being one of the most gerrymandered states in the nation. We are joining a broad coalition of faith and citizens groups like the Ohio Organizing Collaborative (OOC), Greater Cleveland Congregations (GCC), League of Women Voters, and others, to pass a new, transparent process for drawing our districts. So many of the issues that our community cares about, like gun violence, LGBTQ rights, and reproductive freedom, are rooted in the infinite value of every human being. This will impact all those issues.

Nationally, RAC will again be working on voting rights, through the "Every Voice, Every Vote" campaign, which was so successful last year in promoting reproductive rights.

Please check out the websites of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism or the Union for Reform Judaism for more information on these campaigns.

RAC | Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism - <https://rac.org>

URJ | Union for Reform Judaism - <https://urj.org>

For information about any and all Tikkun Olam projects, please call or email:

Linda Lazar - [lazarjl1@fuse.net](mailto:lazarjl1@fuse.net) / (513) 260-1026

Helen Waits - [bindywaits@gmail.com](mailto:bindywaits@gmail.com) / (513) 310-7633

ברוך אתה יהוה אלהינו מלך העולם  
אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו לרדוף צדק

Blessed are You, *Adonai*, our God, Ruler of the universe,  
who sanctifies us with *mitzvot* and commands us to pursue *tzedek*.

## MAY ANNIVERSARIES

Jennifer & Keith Pennix	05/01/2000
Jay & Cherie Brandt	05/06/1999
Tim & Robyn McCarrick	05/08/1993
Dr. Paul & Dr. Anne Lucky	05/19/1972
Buz & Barbara Stewart	05/22/1982
Randy & Judge Heather Russell	05/26/1985
Rick & Laura Beasley	05/28/1990
Judge Bradley & Pam Greenberg	05/28/1994
Jim & Cindy Cronin	05/28/1995
Susan Marmo & Neil Berman	05/28/2006
Stuart & Ricki Hodesh	05/29/1969
Fred Gartenlaub & Dr. Andrea Beck	05/29/2005
Jackie & Dan Yeazell	05/29/2005
Rachael & Myron Katz	05/29/2011
Martin Schragar & Kathy Klein	05/30/1998
Sarah and Tony Capurro	05/30/2015

## MAZAL TOV

Mark Sass and Jan Rosenbaum Sass on the birth of their granddaughter, Sylvie Quinn Sass

Charlene and Jeff Gubitz on the birth of their grandson, Ori

## MISHEIBERACH

Bernice Blatt	Pam Levinson
Michael Gelfand	Jean Amber
Ron Kull	Jan Rosenbaum Sass
Peggy Barrett	Davine Levy

## OUR SYMPATHY

Jeannie Hiller on the death of her nephew, Andrew Fischer

## MAY BIRTHDAYS

Kathie Tamarkin	05/01
Dr. Gila Naveh	05/01
Dave Katz	05/02
Sharlene Stempler	05/02
Davine Levy	05/03
Arlene Herman	05/03
Ricklie Vordenberge	05/04
Jim Levinson	05/04
Jan Goldstein	05/05
Ellye Steinberg	05/06
Kevin Spieler	05/06
Graham Russell	05/07
Drew Barzman	05/07
Sam Pennix	05/07
Andrea Knarr	05/07
Miles Spieler	05/08
Kara Schneider	05/08
Kim Codd	05/08
Ethan Barzman	05/09
Lily Barzman	05/09
Cindi Naveh	05/10
Dr. Paul Lucky	05/11
Allison Schneider	05/11
Dr. Charles Myer III	05/12
Talia Schwartz	05/13
Carol Magnus	05/13
Chrissy Knarr	05/14
Tyler Sefferino	05/14
Naomi Capurro	05/15
Louis Rauh	05/15
Julia Niemeier	05/15
Ben Rosenfield	05/16
Peter Hecht	05/16
Dahlia Barzman	05/16
Eli Rosenfield	05/18
David Clark	05/18
Dorian Naveh	05/20
Deena Abernathy	05/21
Philip Schneider	05/22
Dan Yeazell	05/23
Ernest Waxman	05/24
Judge Heather Stein Russell	05/26
Jason Knarr	05/27
Oz Knarr	05/28
Selma Harris	05/30
Laura Beasley	05/31
Aron Schneider	05/31
Paula Rappaport	05/31

CONGREGATION  
ANNUAL MEETING

FRIDAY, MAY 31  
7:00 P.M.

SHABBAT SERVICES  
FOLLOW AT 8 P.M.  
\*NOTE TIME CHANGE



## THANK YOU TO THOSE WHO DONATED TO THE VALLEY TEMPLE NON-EVENT 2024

In the event your name was inadvertently left off this list,  
please contact the Temple office so we can correct our error.  
Please note that recent contributions to the Fundraiser as well as  
monthly contributions to our funds will appear in next month's bulletin.

### BENEFACTOR

John & Greer Schneider

Neil Bortz

Mark Sass & Jan Rosenbaum Sass

Les & Carol Appel

Friends of Valley Temple

### PATRON

Chad Munitz & Michelle Lightfoot

### PROMOTER

Phyllis Bossin & Dr. Robert Straus

Sue & Mike Mantel

Beth Schwartz & Gene Smiley

Jody & Kent Finley

Joe Wolke with Edward Jones Investments

Craig & Debby Hoffheimer

Jan Goldstein & Chuck Frank

Jenny Broh

Allison & Philip Schneider

Norman & Wendy Wasserman

### SPONSOR

Rabbi Sandford & Dr. Nancy Magnus Kopnick

Elliot & Helen Spieler

Josiah Dapper

Sam & Laura Lobar

Carol Magnus

Amanda Stein & Tom Enneking

Amy Paul & Jerry Newfarmer

Stephen & Nicole Deutsch

Sue Price

Andy & Sue Spohr

Ivan & Kathy Tamarkin

Nancy & Dolph Berman

Ken & Diane Mitman

Sharon Ran

Friends of Valley Temple

Friends of Valley Temple

### DONOR

Aaron & Emma Bernay

Sharon & David Feldstein

Rabbi Sol & Sue Greenberg

Jon & Susan Hoffheimer

Bob & Jeannie Hiller

Selma Harris

Marnie & Steve Hayutin

Donna Goodman

Jim & Pam Levinson

Robyn & Tim McCarrick

Kandice Wainer

Jeff & Laurie Marks

Toby Ruben

Eli Shupe

Alan Schwartz

Buz & Barb Stewart

Rabbi Gerry & Carenjean Walter

Elizabeth Woosley

Mark & Ellen Kovacic

Barbara DelMauro

Erin & Ben Pinsky

### FRIEND

Ann Shulman

Gail Lewin

Ricki & Stuart Hodesh

Sharon Kollasch

Leticia Baltes



145 springfield pike  
wyoming, oh 45215

Sandford R. Kopnick, Rabbi  
Austin Zoot, Rabbi/Educator  
Wendy Walsh, Temple Administrator  
Solomon T. Greenberg, Rabbi Emeritus  
Jody Finley, President  
Robyn McCarrick & Sue Mantel, Co-Presidents,  
Women of Reform Judaism  
Steve Deutsch & Dan Perlmutter,  
Co-Presidents, Men's Club

513-761-3555

WEBSITE: [www.valleytemple.com](http://www.valleytemple.com)

E-MAIL: [wendy@valleytemple.com](mailto:wendy@valleytemple.com)

NON PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
CINCINNATI, OHIO  
PERMIT NO. 2333

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

# Sisterhood Mah jongg Luncheon Party



SAVE THE DATE

**SUNDAY,  
MAY 19**

Sisterhood Annual Mah jongg  
Fundraiser:

Check your mail for the registration  
form and get your foursome together!

Questions? Call or Text  
Amy Levy 513-317-5955

