

1st Candle Dec. 14
See p. 7 for blessings!



the
valley
temple



December 2025 - January 2026
Kislev - Tevet - Sh'vat 5786

DECEMBER AND JANUARY RELIGIOUS SERVICES

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 5, 7:30 p.m.

Shabbat Service with
Friday Night Live

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6

9:30 a.m. – Torah Study
10:30 a.m. – Shabbat Service
Torah Portion – *Vayishlachi*,
Genesis 32:4-36:43

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 12, 7:30 p.m.

Shabbat Service with Consecration & pre-*Chanukah*
service
Oneg Shabbat hosted by the
families of our consecrants in honor of this special
occasion

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13

9:30 a.m. – Torah Study
10:30 a.m. – Shabbat Service
Torah Portion – *Vayeishev*,
Genesis 37:1-40:23

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 19, 7:30 p.m.

Shabbat Service

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 20

9:30 a.m. – Torah Study
10:30 a.m. – Shabbat Service
Torah Portion – *Mikeitz*,
Genesis 41:1-44:17

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 26, 7:30 p.m.

Shabbat Service

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 27

9:30 a.m. – Torah Study
10:30 a.m. – Shabbat Service
Torah Portion – *Vayigash*,
Genesis 44:18-47:27

FRIDAY, JANUARY 2, 7:30 p.m.

Shabbat Service

SATURDAY, JANUARY 3

9:30 a.m. – Torah Study
10:30 a.m. – Shabbat Service
Torah Portion – *Vayechi*,
Genesis 47:28-50:26

FRIDAY, JANUARY 9, 7:30 p.m.

Shabbat Family Service

SATURDAY, JANUARY 10

9:30 a.m. – Torah Study
10:30 a.m. – Shabbat Service
Torah Portion – *Sh'mot*,
Exodus 1:1-6:1

FRIDAY, JANUARY 16, 7:30 p.m.

Shabbat Service

SATURDAY, JANUARY 17

9:30 a.m. – Torah Study
10:30 a.m. – Shabbat Service
Torah Portion – *Va'eira*,
Exodus 6:2-9:35

FRIDAY, JANUARY 23, 7:30 p.m.

Shabbat Service with
Friday Night Live

SATURDAY, JANUARY 24

9:30 a.m. – Torah Study
9:45 a.m. – Tot Shabbat
10:30 a.m. – Shabbat Service
Torah Portion – *Bo*,
Exodus 10:1-13:16

FRIDAY, JANUARY 30, 7:30 p.m.

Shabbat Service

SATURDAY, JANUARY 31

9:30 a.m. – Torah Study
10:30 a.m. – Shabbat Service
Torah Portion – *B'shalach*,
Exodus 13:17-17:16



From the Rabbi Sandford R. Kopnick

WHAT? ME, RETIRE?

Shalom!

It is difficult to believe that 24 years have passed since I accepted the call to become the rabbi of our beloved Valley Temple. In that time, we have experienced so much together. We've raised kids together, shared many important events in your lives, and endured the difficult times of our People and some profoundly glorious moments. We have physically rebuilt the building together, put the congregation on far more solid financial ground, and learned about our sacred traditions and faith.

I am officially retiring on June 30, 2027. As of July 1, 2027, my friend and colleague, Rabbi Austin Zoot will become the rabbi. I'm so glad. He is a wonderful rabbi and "gets" this place. He's so joyful about Judaism and so protective of our Temple's culture. When I took over from Rabbi Greenberg, I worried about whether I could adequately protect the uniquely warm and welcoming culture he so nurtured. With Austin, however, I don't worry at all.

Depending on the way some rabbinic transitions go, many rabbis leave a congregation upon retirement—never to be seen again. That is not our plan here at Valley. While I will stop "managing" the Temple after my retirement, Rabbi Zoot and I will figure out ways that I can be helpful and ways that we can honor so many of the wonderful relationships you and I have cultivated.

Truth is, we still have a bunch of time left to learn together, to grow together, and to celebrate Judaism in this very special congregation. So, let's do just that. Please continue to invest in our congregation with your time and resources. Please continue to find us additional folks who will value the community we continue to build together. And please show up. Your presence has always supported, and will continue to support, our community in times of challenge and celebration. We need you and your participation.

So—there it is—it is official. There's an announced date. So what? Let's see each other often before and after that date as our beloved Valley Temple moves from strength to strength.

Have a great *Chanukah!*

Sandford R. Kopnick, Rabbi

The Z Word

JOIN SIX OF CINCINNATI'S
LEADING JEWISH VOICES FOR A
PROGRESSIVE EXPLORATION OF
ZIONISM & JEWISH PEOPLEHOOD

Building Bridges Out of Our Pain

December 3 at 6:30 p.m.
at The Valley Temple
with Rabbi Lauren Werber, of Beth Adam

THE VALLEY TEMPLE YOUTH GROUP GOES BOWLING!



Valley Temple Youth Groupers Eli Pinsky, Sadie Munitz, Sarah Moeller, and Mollie Carmody are joined by Rabbi Kopnick and Youth Group Advisor Brian Meeron for an afternoon of bowling.

Men's Club CANDLEPIN BOWLING



SUNDAY,
JANUARY 25

Wyoming Civic Center
1 Worthington Ave.
10 am - Noon





Rabbi/Educator's Message Austin Zoot

This past month, our congregation has met three times to discuss our community book club selection, *Who Are the Jews – And Who Can We Become?* The masterful work was crafted by Rabbi Donniel Hartman, a modern-Orthodox Israeli-American Rabbi who uses the perfect blend of hard evidence and thoughtful questions to stimulate self-reflection and visioning for Jews from a variety of backgrounds. Mixing biblical interpretation, political ideologies, and social nuances, Hartman not only articulates a compelling answer for the value of Judaism in the 21st century, but also invites the reader to imagine how Judaism situates in their own life.

Central to his point is the difference between what he calls the Genesis Covenant and the Exodus Covenant. In the simplest form, the Genesis Covenant is represented by Abraham, who God chooses to be the first of his nation, thus rendering his descendants (us) to be the inheritors of the relationship without any required behavior. The Exodus Covenant, meanwhile, is codified by the laws given to us at Mt. Sinai, requiring that we live out the mandate of the terms of the deal in order to maintain the sacred relationship with God. Put differently, Genesis is the sense of family or tribe inherent in Judaism, while Exodus expresses the commandedness that is central to how one acts as a Jew.

As we discussed the book, I was struck by the ways this plays out in our religious school. Every year, on our registration forms, we ask why it is important to families that their child participates in the religious school. With almost no exception, the answer is always a reflection of the Genesis Covenant. Parents want their child to feel the sense of community that is Valley's calling card, or want their child to feel the sense of connection that comes with being the next link in the chain of tradition. At the same time, though, the content of Religious School far more often falls under the Exodus Covenant sensibility. We are teaching the content, whether aspects of tradition, ritual, or practice, that make up the substance of how one can act as a Jew.

This dichotomy is not a reflection of ships passing in the night, but a beautiful synthesis of the multiplicity of perspectives in Jewish tradition. Because by being in the same space, learning our collective Exodus practices, we are by our very nature indulging the Genesis Covenant. In the Talmud, we see a debate that feels very similar to this reality. We read that the question was asked: is it better to study or to act? In classic rabbinic tradition, one rabbi says one thing and another says the other. Meanwhile, the answer that is codified as most "correct" is from Rabbi Akiva, who points out that study is greater because through study are we spurred to action.

We are, as Rabbi Hartman so beautifully illustrates, the inheritors of two covenantal promises: we are the spiritual descendants of an ancestor blessed throughout the ages and we are the inheritors of a lifestyle of ritual and practice that bring us closer to God. Our Judaism rings most profoundly when we are able to create a harmony between these two powerful ideas, lifting up the eternal nature of God's partnership, as well as our collective accountability to hold up our end of the bargain.

May we study in order to take action. May we find comfort in our community in order to practice our faith. And may our sense of peoplehood ever give us the creative space we need to express our truest sense of our shared tradition.

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.

Upcoming Religious School Dates

Sundays at 9:45 a.m.
December 7 & 14; January 11 & 25

Hebrew School - Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m.
December 2 & 9; January 6, 13, 20 & 27

Family Education: December 7th!



President's Message Neil Berman

As the High Holy Days transition to the colder months of Fall, and Winter soon to come, we can all reflect on the power of community that carried us through this sacred season. The energy in our sanctuary reminds me just how special it is to belong to a congregation that truly shows up for one another. A congregant recently gave me the book *Morality* by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks. Rabbi Sacks passed away in 2020 shortly after this book was published. He was a prolific author, an Orthodox Rabbi from the UK, and was the Chief Rabbi of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth of Nations from 1991 to 2013. Rabbi Sacks believed in an inclusive Judaism, and did not seem to mind critiques from other members of the Jewish community. I have not finished the book yet, so this is not a book review (nor would I be qualified to write that anyway!) But the book (so far anyway) speaks to the focus of modern life on the individual and the lack of community in our fast paced world. On that point, I tend to agree. More people than ever live alone, a surprisingly amount of people have no close friends, and, as we all know, social media serves as an often inadequate substitute for true personal interaction.

In the midst of these trends, our synagogue life continues to thrive and provide community. Sunday School and adult education continues, committees are meeting, and Shabbat evenings and mornings offer a chance to pause and reconnect. I encourage everyone—longtime members and newcomers alike—to find a way to be involved. Join a class, volunteer, come to a service, or become involved in Tikkun Olam. As Rabbi Kopnick discussed in his High Holidays sermon, we will be supporting a year-long project this year, Project Connect, an organization that assists homeless students in the Cincinnati Public Schools. Every small act of participation strengthens us, but maybe as least as important, each member that participates.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I want to thank our Rabbis, staff, and volunteers for the effort they put into making our community feel like home. Together, we're building something meaningful, season by season.

Best,

Neil Berman,
President



valley temple
SISTERHOOD

UPCOMING MEETINGS & PROGRAMS

The 25-26 year for sisterhood is shaping up to be a great year. Mark your calendar so that you do not miss any of our outstanding meetings/programs.

We hope you can join us in person (we typically have food), but if you cannot all meetings are streamed live at bit.ly/GeneralMeetingsVTS

MONTH	MEETING DATE
December	December 7th (Chanukah Exchange & Project Connect Activities)
January	January 11th
February	February 1st
March	March 1st
April	April 12th
May	May 3th (Religious School Picnic)

Some exciting things to look forward to:

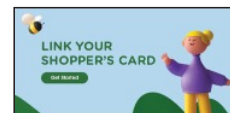
- Sisterhood Shabbat
- Mah Jong Party
- Women of Rockdale Seder - March 29
- Other events throughout the year, including fundraising activities

Our annual Dues mailing have already been mailed out. Dues can either be mailed in, or can be sent to: <https://valleytemple.com/sisterhood/> via Paypal

Join Sisterhood Today!

To find out more, or pay your 2025-26 Sisterhood dues, visit valleytemple.com/sisterhood/

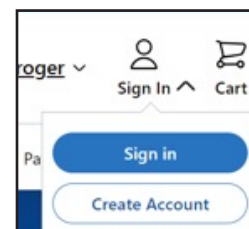
KROGER COMMUNITY REWARDS POINTS



PLEASE ALLOCATE your Kroger community rewards to Valley Temple Sisterhood (you still get all of your same personal rewards – they just allocate a donation to us based on your spending).

How do you do that?
Simply follow this link
<https://www.kroger.com/i/community/community-rewards>

If you have an account – sign in;
if not, create an account





BLUE BIN DONATIONS

Our Tikkun Olam committee is working on our "Blue Bin" calendar for the rest of the year, to support residents in our community who have become marginalized. The current situation is leaving more people in that category, and we must weigh which non-profits to support each month. We will continue to be involved with Project Connect throughout the year, along with other agencies that we have a strong connection with.

December 2025 - The Heldman Family Food Pantry. Per their website: "No one should go hungry. While SNAP benefits are delayed or only partial, we will help, one neighbor at a time. At the start of November SNAP benefits (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or food stamps) were threatened and delayed. As of November 1, more than 46,000 children in our service area live in households that receive SNAP benefits. Nationally, one in three Holocaust survivors relies on SNAP benefits."

Their needs are extensive, but this year they've asked us to focus on items that can provide meals: (Items can be kosher or non-kosher): canned tuna, sardines or salmon; Chunky soups, stews and chili; peanut, almond or sunflower butter & jelly; granola bars; cereal.

January 2026 - HER Cincinnati. The loss of SNAP benefits has affected all of their agencies. Even if they are reinstated, HER Cincy has requested these items that can't be purchased with SNAP:

Personal Care Items

- Period products (pads, tampons, panty liners)
- Shampoo & conditioner (especially for textured hair)
- Deodorant
- Body wash or soap
- Toothpaste & toothbrushes
- Lotion
- Hairbrushes & combs

Cleaning Supplies

- Dish soap
- Laundry detergent
- Clorox wipes
- Toilet bowl cleaner
- Sponges & scrub brushes
- Paper towels

For any donations throughout the year, if delivering to the temple is not convenient, you can email or send a check to the Valley Temple Social Action fund, and we will make sure it goes to the designated agency; or order items and have them delivered to the temple. We are also planning to have a QR Code on the Blue Bin for sending donations.

SOCIAL JUSTICE ACTIVITIES

We work closely throughout the year with the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism (RAC). RAC is the Social Action arm of the Union of Reform Judaism (URJ) and the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR). RAC works to educate, inspire, and mobilize around federal, state, provincial, and local legislation on more than 70 pressing socioeconomic issues, including gun violence prevention, immigration, reproductive rights, criminal justice reform, LGBTQ rights, and climate change. Ohio is one of 7 states, plus Washington DC, to have a RAC affiliate. For RAC-OH, the key issues we've mobilized around for the past year were reproductive rights and fair elections.

THE RAC WEBSITE REMINDS US: "As Jews, we believe that all people are made in the image of God, and each of us is holy and sacred. As Reform Jews, we believe that caring for the most marginalized members of our communities is part of tikkun olam, repairing the world." Current campaigns include "Advocating for Immigration Justice" and "Advocating for LGBTQ+ Rights". You'll also find Reform movement statements on Gaza and the West Bank in Israel.

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>

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

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

Linda Lazar
lazarjl1@fuse.net
(513) 260-1026

Helen Waits
bindywaits@gmail.com
(513) 310-7633



Sustaining the Generations

We gratefully acknowledge the following contributions:

RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

In appreciation of Rabbi Kopnick; *from Emily & Ari Fox*

ALLEN & SELMA WIENER BERKMAN SOCIAL ACTION FUND

In memory of Patricia Hassell; *from Linda & Jeff Lazar*
In memory of Morton Spitz; *from Kathie & Ivan Tamarkin*

CAMP SCHOLARSHIP FUND

In memory of Harvey Price; *from Sue Price & Family*
In memory of Hilda Price; *from Sue Price & Family*

BRYNA SCHWARTZ MEMORIAL ONEG & HOSPITALITY FUND

In memory of Nathan Mitman; *from Ken & Diane Mitman*

FRANCIE BROWN MEMORIAL OFFICE FUND

In memory of Wendy Walsh; *from Emily & Ari Fox*

STARK YOUTH ACTIVITIES FUND

In memory of Ernie Waits Sr.; *from Ernie & Helen Waits*



NOW GIVING IS EVEN EASIER



Go to ValleyTemple.com & click on "Giving"

Thank you to Steve & Nicole Deutsch for sponsoring a recent Oneg Shabbat in honor of their son, David becoming a Bar Mitzvah.

Thank you to Ilene Witt for sponsoring a recent Oneg Shabbat in memory of her husband, Daniel Witt.

MISHEIBERACH

Bernice Blatt
Michael Gelfand
Ron Kull
Pam Levinson
Jan Rosenbaum Sass
Ken Mitman
Jenny Broh
Laura Beasley

OUR DECEMBER BLUE BIN PARTNER IS HELDMAN FAMILY FOOD PANTRY

The pantry serves the Greater Cincinnati Jewish community and others in the surrounding Clifton area experiencing food insecurity.

WE ARE COLLECTING BOTH KOSHER & NON-KOSHER ITEMS THAT CAN PROVIDE MEALS:



- CANNED TUNA, SALMON, & SARDINES
- CHUNKY SOUPS, STEWS & CHILI
- PEANUT, ALMOND & SUNFLOWER BUTTER
- GRANOLA BARS & CEREAL



OR MAKE A DONATION TO THE SOCIAL ACTION FUND TO PURCHASE FOOD*

*IF YOU ARE DONATING ONLINE, PLEASE COVER THE SERVICE FEES TO MAKE SURE YOUR FULL DONATION GOES TO PROJECT CONNECT

Happy Chanukah

5786/2025



First Candle: Sunday, December 14th

★ Candles are added to the *Chanukiyah* (menorah) from right to left, and are kindled left to right. The newest candle is lit first.

★ On the *Shabbat* of *Chanukah*, kindle the *Chanukah* lights first, and then the *Shabbat* candles.

Light the shamash (helper candle) first, using it to kindle the rest of the Chanukah lights. As you do, say or sing:

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, אשר קדשנו
במצותיו, וצונו להדליק נר של חנוכה.

Baruch Atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tsivanu l'hadlik nehr shel Chanukah.

Blessed are you, Adonai our God, Sovereign of all, who hallows us with mitzvot, commanding us to kindle the Chanukah lights.

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, שעשה נסים לאבותינו
ואמותינו בימים ההם בזמן הזה.

Baruch Atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam, she-asah nisim laavoteinu v'imoteinu bayamim hahaeim ba-zman hazeh.

Blessed are you, Adonai our God, Sovereign of all, who performed wonderful deeds for our ancestors in days of old at this season.

On the first night only

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, שהחיינו וקיימנו
והגיענו לזמן הזה.

Baruch Atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam, shehecheyanu v'kiy'manu v'higianu laz'man hazeh.

Blessed are you, Adonai our God, Sovereign of all, for giving us life, for sustaining us, and for enabling us to reach this season.



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Steve Deutsch & Scott Steinberg,
Co-Presidents, Men's Club
Wendy Walsh, 1950 - 2025

513-761-3555

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E-MAIL: kelli@valleytemple.com

JOIN US FOR A



Chanukah

& CONSECRATION
CELEBRATION!



FRIDAY, DECEMBER 12

6:30 p.m. Chanukah Dinner

7:30 p.m. Shabbat Service & Consecration



Scan the QR code
or call the office to
RSVP for dinner by 12/5/25!

