

April 2026
Nisan - Iyyar 5786



APRIL RELIGIOUS SERVICES

THURSDAY, APRIL 2

10:00 a.m. Passover Festival
Morning Service

FRIDAY, APRIL 3, 7:30 p.m.

Shabbat Service

SATURDAY, APRIL 4

9:30 a.m. – Torah Study
10:30 a.m. – Shabbat Service
Torah Portion –
Chol HaMo-eid Pesach,
Exodus 33:12-34:26

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8, 10:00 a.m.

Ending Passover Festival Service
with *Yizkor* memorial prayers

FRIDAY, APRIL 10, 7:30 p.m.

Men's Club Shabbat Service

SATURDAY, APRIL 11

9:30 a.m. – Torah Study
10:30 a.m. – Shabbat Service
Torah Portion – *Sh'mini*,
Leviticus 9:1-11:47

FRIDAY, APRIL 17, 7:30 p.m.

Shabbat Service with Dan Nichols

SATURDAY, APRIL 18

9:30 a.m. – Torah Study
10:30 a.m. – Shabbat Service
with Dan Nichols
Torah Portion – *Tazria-M'tzora*,
Leviticus 12:1-15:33

FRIDAY, APRIL 24, 7:30 p.m.

Sisterhood Shabbat Service

SATURDAY, APRIL 25

9:30 a.m. – Torah Study
10:30 a.m. – Shabbat Service
Torah Portion –
Acharei Mot-K'doshim,
Leviticus 16:1-20:27

Friday, April 17: Shabbat Services @ 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, April 18:

Shabbat Services @ 10:30 a.m.

Evening Coffee House @ 7:30 p.m.

Adults only. Please bring a nut-free dessert to share.

Sunday, April 19:

Religious School Concert @ 11:00 a.m.



DAN NICHOLS

Thank you to Mark Sass & Jan Rosenbaum Sass and Family
whose donation helped to make Dan Nichol's visit possible.



From the Rabbi Sandford R. Kopnick

Most Passover seders end with the phrase, “next year in Jerusalem.” At our seder, immediately prior to the conclusion, we try to interpret this phrase in modern-day meaning—and everyone gets a chance to share their interpretation.

Most of Jewish history endured an exile from Jerusalem, and messianic dreams included a return to Jerusalem. Now, “next year in Jerusalem” is very much legal, available, and for some, a reality. So, what do we mean in 2026 when we say, “next year in Jerusalem?”

The horror of a truck ramming Temple Israel in West Bloomfield, Michigan only served to emphasize that we are experiencing antisemitism in this country at rates not seen in generations. Maybe “next year in Jerusalem” means the opportunity to breathe easier in the US without fear of anti-Jewish rhetoric or actions.

The war in Iran has made the whole region in the middle east far less safe. The Israelis seek to diminish the threat that Iran has held over our homeland for more than 40 years. Yet, the war is generating discontent in the US for our involvement and, in some cases, for partnering with Israel. Perhaps “next year in Jerusalem” means the freedom to actually go to a safer version of Jerusalem soon.

Some in our midst are dealing with very challenging health issues. Good health never should be taken for granted, and when someone is enduring illness, “next year in Jerusalem” can mean: being well enough to travel to Jerusalem, recovery that feels like a version of redemption intended by our seder’s final phrase, of other expressions of hope.

And then there’s the assault on those who need to be in the US seeking refuge and opportunity that drove them from their places of birth. These folks thought of the US as the hope our *Haggadah* intended us to understand when we say, “next year in Jerusalem.” Remembering the stranger is central to our *seder*, and so is an ending to our retelling of our story with words of hope. Maybe “next year in Jerusalem” can have a more universal appeal. Maybe that phrase can renew in each of us a commitment to helping those who seek a better life through acts of welcome, support, and assistance to be welcomed as law-abiding new neighbors.

Whether you relate to the *Haggadah*’s words literally or philosophically, I pray that the *seder* you attend inspires you to retell the story as if you experienced it. I pray that we will all find the strength to commit to our people’s values that have kept us moving forward for years and years. And I pray that we find ways to facilitate the idea of “next year in Jerusalem” for ourselves, those we love, and some folks we’ve never met. Have a joyous *Pesach!*

Sandford R. Kopnick, Rabbi

P.S. Please remember, my retirement begins in *July, 2027*. We still have lots of time



REMINDER



The Valley Temple’s Annual Meeting is

Friday, May 29th @ 7:00 p.m.



Your attendance is needed to ensure we have a quorum.
And you’ll hear all about the great things happening at Valley!

Please note that Shabbat Services will start at 8:00 p.m. ★ ★ ★ ★

Rabbi/Educator's Message Austin Zoot



In our *Gan Emek* (Parent + Me) classroom, we have a toy that involves a series of colored balls cascading down a ramp. We bought it for less than \$20 and we have learned that you get exactly what you pay for. Last week, I found it on my desk after it fell apart during class for the third time this semester.

The trick with this particular toy is that in order to build it, you have to slot the wooden posts in a zig-zagging order, ensuring that the bottom rungs don't fall out in the process of adding the higher ones. Inevitably, the process of inserting one causes a domino effect, usually resulting in all of the pieces coming apart, usually with a rabbi making PG-13 declarations in the privacy of his own office. After this third time of it coming apart, I was ready to declare it fire wood.

During a young adult event recently, though, a parent mentioned that the toy had broken and that their son was sad about it. She told me that it was her son's favorite toy and that he looked forward to it in the Gan room each week. That was all I needed to hear; the next morning I was back at it, reconstructing the ball ramp, but this time with a smile. Because while doing the task for its own sake was painstaking and infuriating, doing it for Henry was worth any trouble at all.

We are living at a time of instant access, constant distraction, immense to do lists. I find that it is far too easy for me (and I imagine you do too) to fall into the pattern of doing work in order to get it out of my inbox, rather than because it brings me genuine joy or because I get to celebrate the higher purpose. Yet, in almost every case, the tasks we undertake are rooted in a desire to do work worth doing, to make the lives of others and ourselves better. Rarely is it the "what" that we are doing that is the problem, but rather recontextualizing the "why" of it all that is the difference between delight and despair.

Of course, as I'm sure you could guess, Judaism has a way of calling us out on this mentality and welcoming us back into our more intentional, engaged selves. The idea of saying blessings for the wide variety of activities we undertake is a powerful way to insert holiness and awareness into our daily lives, calling forth the profound from the mundane. Judaism has traditional blessings for eating meals, for washing hands, for study, for seeing someone you haven't seen in a long time. There is even a blessing we say when we see someone who is "unconventional looking"! (for more on this, find Rabbi Zoot at the oneg...) Blessings are the way that we invoke God's name in the daily minutiae of our lives; we do it not because God needs to be thanked for everything (though that is nice), but rather because it helps us recenter our focus to make life more meaningful and fulfilling.

I am so lucky that, when it feels like my work is building the same God-forsaken toy over and over again, I get to be reminded of the children who find joy in what I put together, both literally and figuratively. And I hope that we are all able to find the ways in which the ways we interact with the world bring not only goodness and holiness to others, but to ourselves along the way.

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.

EXCITING NEWS FROM THE OFFICE

Valley Temple is updating to a new database!

The official launch of **Easyshul** will happen on July 1, 2026, but we are working on the setup now. In fact, you may have received a Seder reminder email (or three) from "**noreply@easyshul.com**."

Please send an email to **kelli@valleytemple.com** if you've updated your email or any other information so we keep you informed!





**President's Message
Neil Berman**

This has been a difficult and tragic week. Many of my past messages have been about focusing on local events and the many positive things happening at Valley Temple. All that continues to happen and I am grateful for it, but that is not the message I can write this month.

As I write this, the attack on Temple Israel in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan has just occurred. A synagogue in which our own Rabbi Kopnick grew up. In a March 14, 2026 article about the tragedy in the New York Times, Synagogue Attack Tests Bonds of Michigan Community, I read how children that fled that synagogue waited at the nearby country club, a gathering place for local Iraqi American Christians. The club hosted a Shabbat service for members of the synagogue. Maybe I am working too hard for something positive, a little humanity, in a heinous, antisemitic act of terrorism. But it is also true that the attack that could have been so much worse. There were no deaths and we can all be grateful. Buildings can be rebuilt.

The United States and Israel are at war with Iran, and Israel is attacking Hezbollah forces in Lebanon. The humanitarian issues in Gaza and the West Bank are still with us. Innocent people have died. The result of this seemingly expanding conflict is unknown, and anyone suggesting they know how this will turn out is fooling themselves.

We, of course, have no control over these world events. I suspect that our members would have more differing views than would have been true years ago. Regardless, anyone making individual Jews responsible for acts of the Israeli government is antisemitism – hard stop. And antisemitism is on the rise, and there is no arguing otherwise. Just today, I am reading about attacks in both Rotterdam and Amsterdam. Jewish college students have faced antisemitism on campus.

Finally, a word about security. The Valley Temple, as it must, evaluates security on a constant basis, not just in reaction to each event. We will continue to evaluate our security needs and take other steps that may be prudent. The safety of our members, the employees of Valley Temple, and visitors to our synagogue is always a top priority for the Board of Trustees.

Best,

Neil Berman,
President



UPCOMING MEETINGS & PROGRAMS

The 2025-2026 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
April	April 12th
May	May 3th (Religious School Picnic)

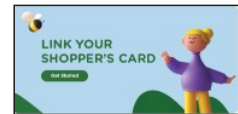
Some exciting things to look forward to:

- Sisterhood Shabbat – April 24
- Mah Jong Party – Spring/Summer
- Woman of Rockdale Sisterhood Seder – March 29
- Rummage Sale June 14. Look in the Bulletin for Drop off dates beginning May 31.
- We are Hosting a plant sale for everyone. Please go to the website and buy some of these beautiful flowers: <http://vtsisterhood.fpfundraising.com/>

Join Sisterhood Today!

To find out more, or pay your 2025-2026 Sisterhood dues, visit valleytemple.com/sisterhood/

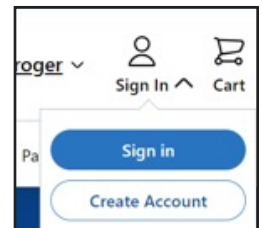
KROGER COMMUNITY REWARDS POINTS



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



*Thank you to
Andy Spohr for the
wonderful spring
groundskeeping!*





He [Rabbi Tarfon] used to say: It is not your responsibility to finish the work, but neither are you free to desist from it. Pirkei Avot, 2:16

APRIL

OUR APRIL AND MAY BLUE BIN PARTNER IS PROJECT CONNECT BRING DONATIONS TO THE BLUE BIN IN THE TEMPLE LOBBY



We are continuing our year-long focus on Project Connect, which provides advocacy, educational services and lifestyle enrichment opportunities for children in Cincinnati Public Schools who are experiencing homelessness. Because these needs extend beyond the school year, PC provides a summer camp for 80-100 children, ages 5-14, from June 8 - July 16. Children are in a classroom setting with a CPS teacher and paraprofessional, as well as volunteers from UC and XU. In addition to academic enrichment and reading support they get to enjoy all the typical camp experiences, including daily swimming/ swim lessons.

For the months of April and May, we will be collecting Beach Towels and Swim Goggles with the goal of collecting 100 of each!!! If unable to shop for these, you can contribute money to the Valley Temple Social Action Fund. We will be sending updates on how we're progressing toward reaching these goals.



Another huge part of our Social Action work is providing lunch four times a year, approximately 40-50 meals, to individuals and families at Queen City Kitchen in Walnut Hills. Food is provided by temple

members and money from our social action fund, and volunteers serve the meals. Upcoming dates are:

- May 3
June 28
August 23

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

SOCIAL JUSTICE ACTIVITIES

During Passover, we are reminded that we were slaves in Egypt, and therefore:

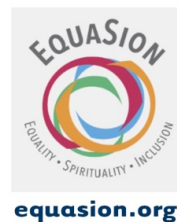
"You shall not wrong nor oppress the stranger, for you were strangers in the Land of Egypt" (Exodus 22:20).

"The strangers who reside with you shall be to you as your citizens ... for you were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Leviticus 19:34).

The commandment to care for the stranger is mentioned more times than any other commandment in the Torah — more even than the command to love God. Depending on which source in the Talmud, it is commanded 36 or 46 times.

So how do we observe this commandment? Immigrants throughout the country are experiencing fear, family separation, and threats of deportation. This is affecting our own neighbors in Cincinnati and Springfield, Ohio.

To provide support, you can contact one of these great agencies working in our area or in Springfield:



Springfield G92



tinyurl.com/3v2tzn45
(choose "Haitian Support Fund" from the menu)

St. Vincent dePaul



wesharegiving.org
(choose "Immigration services" from the menu)

Haitian Support Center



tinyurl.com/23pshhrx



Sustaining the Generations

We gratefully acknowledge the following contributions:

RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

In memory of Dick Kuhr; *from Andrea & David Knarr*
In honor of the baby naming of Lailah Koucky;
from Sue Bortz
In memory of Nathan Kaller; *from Lynn & Neil Kravitz*

ALLEN & SELMA WIENER BERKMAN SOCIAL ACTION FUND

In memory of Toby Ruben; *from Ellen & Mark Kovacic*
In memory of Ethel Glube Levy; *from Bernice Pollack*
To benefit Sweet Cheeks Diaper Bank;
from Sam & Laura Lobar
In memory of Toby Ruben; *from Linda & Jeff Lazar*
In memory of Toby Ruben; *from Bob & Jeannie Hiller*

L'CHAYIM CONGREGATIONAL CARE FUND

In memory of Toby Ruben;
from Jan Goldstein & Charles Frank
In memory of Toby Ruben; *from Laura & Sam Lobar*

LOUISE MARKS RELIGIOUS SCHOOL FUND

In memory of Toby Ruben; *from Helen & Ernie Waits*

SASS FAMILY MUSIC FUND

In memory of Toby Ruben; *from Jenny Broh*

CAMP SCHOLARSHIP FUND

In memory of Toby Ruben; *from Ken & Diane Mitman*
In memory of Sophie Feldman; *from Helen & Elliot Spieler*

VALLEY TEMPLE GENERAL FUND

In appreciation of The Valley Temple;
from Thomas & Nancy Sarosi
In memory of Toby Ruben;
from Genevieve & David Bakanowski

ROBERT & CHARLOTTE LANZIT ADULT EDUCATION FUND

In appreciation of Adult Hebrew on Sundays;
from Thomas Hensley
In appreciation of The Valley Temple; *from Tom Steger*

VIDEO STREAMING FUND

In memory of Toby Ruben; *from Sue & Andy Spohr*

Thank you to Laura & Sam Lobar for sponsoring a recent Oneg Shabbat in honor of Sam's birthday



NOW GIVING IS EVEN EASIER



Go to ValleyTemple.com & click on "Giving"

MISHEIBERACH

We pray for healing for:
Bernice Blatt
Dr. Michael Gelfand
Pam Levinson
Robert Pollack
Sharlene Stempler
Lizzie Spicehandler



valley temple

SISTERHOOD RUMMAGE SALE



DROP OFF DATES

MONDAY, JUNE 1ST	10 AM - NOON
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 3RD	5 - 7 PM
FRIDAY, JUNE 5TH	10 AM - NOON
SUNDAY, JUNE 7TH	10 AM - 2 PM
TUESDAY, JUNE 9TH	10 AM - NOON
THURSDAY, JUNE 11TH	5 PM - 7 PM
FRIDAY, JUNE 12TH	10AM - 1 PM

RUMMAGE SALE DATE

SUNDAY, JUNE 14TH 9 AM - 2 PM



BAKE OFF

(Your Desserts Based on Jewish Holidays)



KRISPIES KONSTRUCTION

(Join forces with your friends!)



DINNER



TRIVIA



SILENT AUCTION



SPLIT-THE-POT

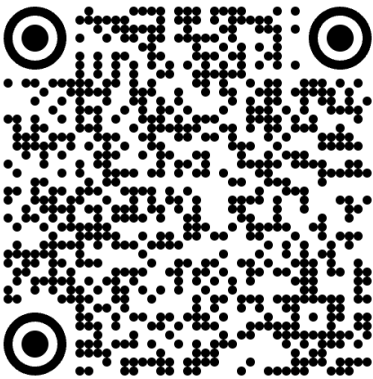
RSVP BY APRIL 20

THE VALLEY TEMPLE ANNUAL FUNDRAISER

MAY 2 @ 6 P.M.



BAKE OFF REGISTRATION



SHAVUOT

Dairy-based desserts like cheesecake, blintzes, or other creamy treats.

PASSOVER

Flourless desserts that follow Passover guidelines.

ROSH HASHANAH

Sweet treats featuring honey and/or apples.

PURIM

Hamantaschen, filled cookies, or desserts with a surprise inside.

HANUKKAH

Fried desserts like donuts, fritters, or anything oil-based.

SHABBAT

Anything else—your catch-all for Jewish-inspired baked goods.

<https://tinyurl.com/bddh45tt>



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wyoming, oh 45215

Sandford R. Kopnick, Rabbi
Austin Zoot, Rabbi/Educator
Solomon T. Greenberg, Rabbi Emeritus
Kelli Gleiner, Administrator
Neil Berman, President
Linda Lazar & Elizabeth Woosley,
Co-Presidents, Women of Reform Judaism
Steve Deutsch & Scott Steinberg,
Co-Presidents, Men's Club
Wendy Walsh, 1950 - 2025

513-761-3555

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UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS

Tuesday, April 21 @ 12:30 p.m.

WHAT DOES JUDAISM SAY ABOUT...

PULLING THE PLUG AND OTHER MEDICAL ETHICS

Tuesday, April 28 @ 12:30 p.m.

With Rabbi Sandford Kopnick at the Temple