Shaare Tefila Congregation

The Shofar השופר

Celebrating our 75th year | JANUARY 2026 - *TEVET - SH'VAT* 5786 | Vol. 75 #1

Warm Up Your Winter with a Night of Boogie-Woogie Swing & Soul, "A Benefit For Shaare Tefila"

Saturday, February 7, 2026 7:00-10:30 p.m.

"An Evening of Dining, Dancing, Entertainment & Friendship"

DINNER INCLUDES: A delicious served multi-course meal, beverages, & a cash bar (wine, beer, signature cocktail).

CONCERT: International Recording Artist Daryl Davis & his fabulous band! This is much more than a concert - it's a celebration with a purpose. Your financial donation directly supports program opportunities for the ST & greater community.

https://bit.ly/495pB4X

Tickets Cost:
$90 Members
$100 Public

Best Value
Table of 10 Discount:
$800 (until 1/19/26)

TAX DEDUCTIBLE SPONSORSHIPS:

$180 - Includes ONE Ticket
$360 - Includes TWO Tickets
$720 - Includes FOUR Tickets

* **PLUS for $36** Receive a Personalized Bottle of Red or White Wine

"Together We Can Make a Difference"

IF YOU NEED CONSIDERATION REGARDING THE COST OF YOUR TICKET PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CONTACT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR JERRY KIEWE, JKIEWE@SHAARETEFILA.ORG

FROM THE RABBI'S STUDY

A Meaningful Trip To Israel

Rabbi Jonah Layman | RJLayman@ShaareTefila.org

Last month I had the honor and privilege to lead a *shul* trip to Israel. I was supposed to lead a trip 2 years ago that 14 people had signed up for. Our departure date was Oct. 15, 2023, 8 days after the war with Hamas began. Once the ceasefire was reached several months ago, I knew we had to try again. Remarkably 27 people agreed and we really had the trip of a lifetime.

I wrote a couple of updates while in Israel and the *Washington Jewish Week* covered it as well. So I will just add these reflections. Though the war has technically ceased, it is still very actively present everywhere you look. Unlike other wars, family members of those killed have made bumper stickers of their loved one that includes a quote, a picture and a prayer. These stickers are found everywhere — on large bulletin boards dedicated to the fallen and on random public signs.

But, even though the wounds are still fresh, the people of Israel are strong and resilient. There is construction everywhere as both Tel Aviv and Jerusalem expand their light rail lines and apartment buildings and hotels are built. There is hope that tourism will rebound and our tour participants were happy to contribute to the Israeli economy!

It was a *mitzvah* to lead this trip, and I feel grateful for the opportunity to be in Israel.

Message from the President

Jeff Weiss, President | President@ShaareTefila.org

As we enter 2026, I extend warm greetings to our entire community. This past year has been filled with shared prayer, meaningful learning, lifecycle moments, and acts of chesed that reflect the strength and spirit of our wonderful community.

While our sacred calendar marks time through *Shabbat, chagim*, and the cycle of *Torah*, the beginning of a new calendar year offers another moment for reflection and renewed purpose. May the year ahead inspire us to deepen our commitment to Jewish learning, strengthen our engagement in *tefillah* and communal life, and continue living our values through *mitzvot* and *tikkun olam*. In the year ahead, I hope you'll join in the many ways our synagogue brings us together; learning in a class, volunteering for an event, helping through community service, or simply being present for *Shabbat*. Even the smallest moments of connection help make our community stronger.

Once again, our community stepped up this month, Shaare Tefila made another contribution to our greater community for the holiday season as we received enough contributions to deliver **48** more meals to needy families in December. Also, thanks to Debbie Finch for organizing and to all those who participated in the annual Men's Shelter Christmas Brunch to provide a very meaningful meal to the residents of the MCCH Men's Homeless Shelter.

If you haven't had a chance to attend or watch via livestream one of our Friday musical *Shabbat* services, led by Stacey Lynch, with Scott Kaplowitz on the piano and Stuart Zitomer on drum, you are missing out on a wonderfully fulfilling service in my opinion. I highly recommend that you look at the calendar of events for the upcoming musical *Shabbat* services.

I am deeply grateful for the dedication of our clergy, staff, Board, volunteers, and congregants. Your participation and support sustain our synagogue as a place of tradition, thoughtful growth, and meaningful connection across generations.

On a personal note: Fran and I were able to take a trip to Palm Springs California and finally make it to Joshua Tree National Park. There were other interesting spots to explore in the area including Marilyn Monroe and Lucille Ball statues, Ruddy's General Store Museum, hiking trails, and the Palm Springs Air Museum which we highly recommend.

May 2026 be a year of *shalom*, health, and blessing for you and your families. I look forward to continuing our journey together, guided by *Torah* and strengthened by community.

On My Mind - What's in a Name?

Jerry Kiewe, Executive Director | JKiewe@ShaareTefila.org

William Shakespeare, via the character of Juliet, asks this question, "What's in a name?" and proceeds to note: "That which we call a rose, by any other name would smell as sweet." He thereby suggests that names are somewhat arbitrary and inconsequential to the true essence or worth of a thing … or a person.

But in the real world, there may be more to it. In fact, maybe millions more. This is especially true in the entertainment world. Would "Marion Robert Morrison" or "Norma Jeane Mortenson" ever have become household names? Doubtful. But as "John Wayne" and "Marilyn Monroe." They became Hollywood icons.

As many of us know, there are Jews aplenty who changed their names to avoid antisemitism and who achieved great fame. Issur Danielovitch became "Kirk Douglas", Bernard Schwartz became "Tony Curtis," Lawrence Harvey Zeigler became "Larry King. Closer to today, Natalie Herschlag became "Natalie Portman." They all seemed to understand that names DO matter.

I recently had an interesting "name experience" at the Houston airport. I was heading back home to Baltimore via Southwest Airlines, picked up my boarding pass and proceeded to the security check-in. The TSA staff looked at my boarding pass – carrying my name: Jerry M. Kiewe, but then indicated that it didn't match the name on my ID, my Driver's License, which identifies me as Jerome M. Kiewe. I chuckled a bit and offered that, of course, "Jerry" is a standard nickname, thinking that this would be sufficient explanation. To my surprise, the TSA staff indicated that he'd never heard of this particular variant and didn't think it was valid. He wasn't being "mean" about it, stating it in a matter-of-fact manner … but he also wasn't kidding. He then called over a nearby supervisor. I expected that this would easily clear up the problem … but as you may have guessed, it didn't. To my utter surprise, the supervisor also affirmed that she'd never encountered this as a nick name for Jerome and wasn't familiar with it either. Again, there was no hint of animosity … and they then helpfully instructed me to go back to the Southwest desk and have them adjust my boarding pass. A little added hassle, and I kid you not, the TWO attendants at the Southwest desk ALSO expressed that they were unfamiliar with the variant. 'Jerry' (or 'Gerry') for "Gerald" – sure, but not for Jerome. I continued to laugh it all off and they cheerfully made the needed change … but it certainly gave me reason to ponder. Who am I really? I've proceeded through my entire lifetime interchangeably using both names, but evidently in the eyes of the TSA, I can only be one or the other?

Which leads me to another bit of name-related trivia that I've been telling for decades. Growing up, I had occasions to tell others my last name, pronounced as "Key-wee." In the late 60s/early 70s, it was then not at all uncommon for people to then ask if I/my family had any connection to "the shoe polish company." Because at that time, this was pretty much the public's only reference point for "kiwis." Some knew that it is a bird, and maybe others that it is also a reference to natives of New Zealand. But NO ONE at that time associated it with a fruit.

Why was that? Because … until the mid-70s, what the world now knows as a "kiwi fruit," was then still known mainly by its original name; as a "Chinese gooseberry." They weren't very common nor did they sell well. After all, its natural outer appearance is NOT all that appealing. It isn't bright and shiny, is "fuzzy", hard to peel and can't be easily consumed.

However, the fruit got "re-branded." Someone, somewhere, began to refer to it as a "kiwi fruit" and in the mid-70s, the newer, exotic-sounding name began to get traction. As a result, sales began to grow, then grew some more, and the trend continues. Currently, global sales of kiwi fruit are estimated at $8.4 billion!

ADDENDUM: After seeing a draft of this article, Jeff Weiss also informed me about another, similarly successful 1970s re-branding of the "Patagonian Toothfish" – now popularly listed on menus as "Chilean Sea Bass."

Programming and Education

Babette Cohn, Director of Education & Programming | BCohn@ShaareTefila.org

"A little bit of light dispels a lot of darkness."
– Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi

As I write this we are in the middle of the eight days of *Chanukah*. The holiday began with news of an antisemitic attack on the Sydney Jewish community holding a public celebration on Bondi Beach, which is one more incident in a year of well-publicized antisemitic attacks in America and the United Kingdom. Personally, I am reeling from what we are going through as a community. The wisdom of our sages, like Rabbi Zalman quoted above, does help me get through these times. I also believe that being together as a community is valuable in helping us navigate the environment we live in. Consider increasing your presence at services and events in the Shaare Tefila community during the new secular year. I promise you will not be sorry you did.

Children's Education

The children of *Chavaya* learned about the holiday of *Chanukah* in December. Classes will resume on January 25, with a special "Be a *Mensch*" *Mitzvah* Day scheduled for January 11. Details will be sent to families soon!

TIME TO BUY YOUR TICKETS FOR THE EVENT OF THE SEASON!!

Shaare Tefila's Annual FUNdraiser Event - February 7, 7-10:30PM

A Boogie-Woogie Benefit: Dinner & A Show!

Join us on the night of February 7 for what promises to be a great night of music, dancing and fun! We are privileged to have **International Recording Artist Daryl Davis & his magnificent band** to entertain us with an electrifying night of music featuring the timeless sounds of boogie-woogie, classic rock & roll, & soulful blues. **BUT this is much more than just a concert** - it's a celebration with a purpose. Every ticket & donation received will directly support educational program opportunities for all ages in our community.

Consider A Great Discounted Option - Put a Table of Ten Together for a Great Night of Entertainment - $10 Per Ticket Discount - $800 for a Table of 10! List Your Table Here! The special price is available for ST members and non-members.

OR - PURCHASE YOUR TICKETS NOW AT THIS LINK - THIS YEAR'S ALL INCLUSIVE TICKET PRICES ARE: $90 Members; $100 Public

TAX DEDUCTIBLE SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES:

$180 - Includes ONE Free Ticket

$360 - Includes TWO Free Tickets

$720 - Includes FOUR Free Tickets

* PLUS for $36 Receive a Personalized Bottle of Red or White Wine

Spiritual & Community Events in January

- **TGI Shabbat January Dinner, 1/9, 6 pm - Register Here by January 2 for early pricing -**
  - **6pm -** The evening begins with our regular service for all in the Sanctuary, co-led by Rabbi Layman & Stacey Lynch.
  - **7pm** - Join the community for a delicious dinner!
- **Shaare Tefila Cinema Presents: Amor, January 25, 2pm** - Join us for the next in our Israeli film series, "Amor". Refreshments are included in your admission! **Buy your tickets here! $10 per person or $18 for two.**

News from the Membership Committee

Stephanie Buckberg, VP Membership | pmjmine3@gmail.com

As I sit down to write this month's message, I can't help but of course reflect and be thankful for the Israel trip many of us just returned from with Rabbi Layman. Spending the days leading up to - and the beginning of - *Hanukkah* in Israel was extra special. It was a journey filled with light, reflection, and connection to those congregants I traveled with and to the people of Israel. Perry and I were lucky enough to spend an evening with our friends in Tel Aviv and another evening spent with my cousins who live outside of Jerusalem. Both were very meaningful.

Traveling through Israel during this season felt different this year. The candles we lit each night were reminders of resilience after the massacre of October 7, 2023, community, and the power for showing up for one another. Our tour guide led us on a neighborhood walking tour, and it was beautiful to see various hanukkiah lit and so many people joyously celebrating this holiday. Of course, the flavors of *sufganiyot* were endless!

Whether standing at the **Kotel**, walking through busy markets, or sharing *Shabbat* as a group, the same message, "we keep going by keeping each other close" came through.

I knew coming home would be an adjustment not only to the time difference but also wanting to remember the connections made, bringing me great warmth and strength. When one of us shines, we all shine a little brighter. I will remember this trip for a long time to come and will always find great joy in talking about each day filled with learning and meeting inspiring people who don't give up!

At *shul*, we can bring more light to one another by showing up to a program, welcoming a new family, or checking in on someone we haven't seen in a while. In Israel, it's natural for people to look out for one another whether they know them or not. I know in our congregation, we do the same and it's something I hope we continue to nurture in the months ahead.

As *Hanukkah* has come to a close and the New Year approaches, I hope that each one of you finds a small way to bring light into our community creating something bright and hopeful.

Wishing you and your loved ones a New Year filled with good health, peace, meaning, and joy! Let's hope we continue to illuminate one another.

Please mark your calendars for Saturday, January 31, which will be our "New Member *Shabbat* service!"

Harmony Hills Toy Drive

Dear Congregants,

I am so pleased to report that we have had our best year ever for the Harmony Hills Toy Drive. The toys were delivered to school on Thursday, December 4. When we began getting a lot more donations than expected, I reached out to them to see if they had any requests. They said that food insecurity was especially challenging for these families, and what they requested were some grocery card gift cards. We were able to provide 40 gift cards in addition to the toys!

Many thanks to all the people who supported this project- your generosity makes me so proud to be a part of our community! Special thanks to Sharon Kaye, Karyn Gross, Hy and Cilla Grosberg, and the Bender family. And thanks to ALL of the people who sent in donations and wrote lovely notes to go with their checks. Each and every one of you made this project successful!

Cathy Plotkin

Sisterhood

Shelley Rochester, Sisterhood President | shelleyrochester85@mail.com | 301-633-5515

Dear Sisters,

We finished off the year 2025 with quite a successful *Chanukah*-mas Eve. We didn't have a celebration last year because *Chanukah* and that other holiday collided coincided and there was the "threat" of families being away over the school holiday. So this year we boosted our efforts and tried it again. We offered multiple flavors of pizza and ice creams. Everyone was encouraged to wear pajamas and slippers and prizes were awarded to the 'Silliest' and 'Most Elegant.' Our 'Silliest' winners were the Zitomer "twins", Reny and Stuart, who wore purple and turquoise faux fur pajamas and carried matching giant stuffed Care Bears. Our 'Most Elegant' was Rita Frydman who adorned her jammies with diamond earrings and a rope of pearls. The movie was "The Frisco Kid" with Gene Wilder and Harrison Ford, about a *shmendrick* (but devout) rabbi from Poland whose task it was to deliver a *Torah* to a synagogue in San Francisco. Harrison Ford played a (very) *goyisheh* cowboy who reluctantly escorts him across the country. It was Jewish. It was funny. You shoulda been there! We nearly doubled the attendance from last time and hope to double attendance again next year.

On Sunday, January 4, a band of theatah-goers will meet at Olney Theater for their staging of "Hello Dolly." We fully expect to have a wonderful time and find our "culture" level raised by many points. Bess Teller, along with Val Kolmaister and Wendy Abraham, worked diligently for three months coordinating this event, which promises to be highly popular. So, Bess, what shall we see next year?

The Glass Fusion Class, originally scheduled for January 18, had to be canceled due to the exorbitant rates quoted by the instructor. For those interested in crafting sessions, there is the possibility of reserving sessions at The Clayground in Ellicott City. They instruct classes in pottery and glass fusion. I am encouraging those of you who are interested to contact me so I can make appropriate arrangements. I have been there numerous times and while my "artwork" will never make it to a public exhibition, I did have a rollicking good time. And you will too!

We continue to talk up the Sisterhood/Men's Club "It's Academic" event, scheduled for Sunday, April 19. We need women who successfully graduated the third grade and would like a little (very little) challenge in their lives. Mike Binder has assured us that all the questions will be in English, topics such as neurosurgery and astrophysics are barred, and there WILL be refreshments. If you don't think you're up to it, we are also looking for cheerleaders (no experience necessary.) All you'll need is a sweater, skirt, sneakers and socks. And the ability to read a 25 pt. font. It's all in good fun, no stress, and Mike has promised us all Jimmy Choo shoes when we win. Please contact me (or I will be obliged to contact you) or any of the Executive Committee Board Members for more information or encouragement.

Sisterhood is here for you and because of you, so if you have any questions, concerns, suggestions puh-leeze contact us. We'd love to hear from you, no matter what is on your mind.

As soon as the holidays have cleared away, I will be sending out a notice about organizing a Mah Jongg Club. I would like to hold a Zoom meeting so that we can all have some input into the finer details of getting this project off the ground. And, as you may well know, MAH JONGG IS THE NEW PICKLEBALL!

Not Haiku

The most expensive vehicle to operate,
by far,
is the Costco shopping cart.

Zie Gezunt!

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR YOU IN 2026!

Sign Up to Chant a *Haftarah*

If it is your 1st time … or your 18th time, join our group of 30+ congregants!

NOW scheduling Februay/March dates. The dates go quickly...

Contact Adriana regarding available dates (SandlerAA@gmail.com)

Join the Fun at Our Boogie Woogie Fundraiser

Cilla Grosberg, VP Programming | CGrosberg58@gmail.com

Babette Cohn and I hope everyone enjoyed a lovely *Hanukkah* with family, friends, and your Shaare Tefila community. As Jews, we are fortunate to be able to wish each other a Happy New Year two times a year, one at *Rosh Hashannah* and now at the secular New Year of January 1st. Wishing you and your loved ones a joyous, healthy, hopeful, and peaceful 2026!

We are just about 5 weeks out to our big annual fundraiser. Thank you to many of you who've already purchased tickets or have formed lovely tables of 10 to attend this year's "Boogie Woogie" benefit fundraiser for our synagogue community. Our goal is to have a sold-out event as in previous years with 200 plus attendees. Currently we have sold 50% of our tickets. Please join us on **Saturday, February 7** (erev Super Bowl) at **7:00 PM** for a night of dinner, music, dancing, friendship and fun! Invite your family, friends, and co-workers for a fabulous evening featuring International Recording Artist Daryl Davis and his fabulous band, offering the timeless sounds of boogie-woogie, classic rock & roll and soulful blues. Daryl has played with Chuck Berry, Jerry Lee Lewis, Muddy Waters, B.B. King, Bo Diddley and Elvis Presley's Jordanairs and the Platters, to name a few.

So don't be left out in the cold, BUY YOUR TICKETS FOR THE EVENT OF THE SEASON!!
Shaare Tefila's Annual FUNdraiser Event - February 7, 2026; 7:00 -10:30 PM

"A Boogie-Woogie Benefit: Dinner, Music, Dancing (in your chair or on your feet), and Fun!

PURCHASE YOUR TICKETS NOW AT THIS LINK:
https://shaaretefilacongregation.shulcloud.com/event/concert2026boogiewoogie
This year's all-inclusive ticket prices are: $90 for ST Members; $100 for Non-members (general public)

OR.....
Consider a great discount option; put together a table of 10 for a great night of entertainment, this provides a $10/ticket discount; i.e. $800 for a table of 10! (Please identify your table's attendees in the notes.)

Additional tax-deductible sponsorship opportunities:
$180 - Includes ONE Free Ticket
$360 - Includes TWO Free Tickets
$720 - Includes FOUR Free Tickets
* PLUS, for $36, (not tax deductible), receive a bottle of red or white wine.

Remember this wonderful evening is much more than a dinner and concert; it's a celebration with a purpose. Every ticket & donation received will directly support program opportunities for all ages in our and the greater community.

So do your best to attend this year's Boogie Woogie fundraiser event on Saturday, February 7. Looking forward to seeing you there!

SISTERHOOD MOVIE & PIZZA EVENT

Chesed Matters!

Monthly column of the *Chesed* Committee

Adriana Sandler 240-593-5792 | SandlerAA@gmail.com

Thank you to all who made donations to the Andrea Z. Tilles Memorial *Chesed* Fund in 2025. Your donations enabled the *Chesed* Committee to reach out; assist; simplify and enrich many congregants lives in a variety of ways. *Todah Rabah*!

The *Chesed* Committee will launch a new service, starting February 1, 2026! Shaare Tefila, by means of the *Chesed* Committee, has just partnered with the JBI Library (Jewish Braille Institute Library). JBI Library is a nonprofit organization that provides free audio, large-print books, and books in Braille, as well as other resources, for people who have low vision, who are blind or are print-disabled.

What does it mean to partner with the JBI Library? By partnering with the JBI Library we can ensure that everyone in our congregation can be engaged in Jewish life, free of barriers.

We will have access to a catalog of non-fiction and fiction titles, either in large print, audio version or in Braille. (Audiobook players will be available). Some examples:

- *Inn at Lake Devine* by Elinor Lipman
- *The Weight of Ink* by Rachel Kadish,
- *Outwitting History: The Amazing Adventures of a Man Who Rescued a Million Yiddish Books* by Aaron Lansky
- Mysteries by Faye Kellerman and Cynthia Ozick.

We will also have access to audio, large print and Braille magazines such as:

- JBI Voices and the Jewish Braille Review (bimonthly), created by JBI Library librarians. It is an aggregation of recent Jewish-interest news about arts, culture, science, discoveries, history, community actions, Jewish lives, and more, plus a theme of the issue, rabbinic voice, and patrons' jokes and short submissions.
- *Haddasah Magazine* in audio (bimonthly). It is published by the Hadassah Women's Zionist Organization of America and covers Israel and the Jewish world.
- *Lilith Magazine* in audio (quarterly).

The *Chesed* Committee will be able to check out large print, and/or Braille *siddurim, machzorim*, and *chumashim*, for use during services at Shaare Tefila.

For more information, please contact Adriana at 240-593-5792 or SandlerAA@gmail.com.

MAZAL TOV MILESTONES

JANUARY

Anniversary Celebrations

1/3 Gary & Ilene Mizrachi
1/5 Aaron & Karen Becker
1/30 Mark & Shelley Levitt

Birthday Celebrations

1/1 Noah Becker
1/1 Michelle Elson
1/1 Cilla Grosberg
1/2 Isaac Asimov, *z'l*
1/2 Sam Krosnick
1/3 Doran Goldstein
1/3 Katish Mbony
1/4 Hal Epstein
1/4 Eli Grosberg
1/5 Howard Rumerman
1/6 Steven Franklin
1/7 Gilda Kuritzky
1/8 Amy Federman
1/8 Robert Freedman
1/9 Tyler Borreda
1/9 Jacob Marder
1/9 Helen Niederman
1/10 Rachel Schotz
1/11 Lisa Krussman
1/11 Lucy Mauldin
1/11 Lacy Rubloff
1/11 Tori Rubloff
1/11 Bradley Salzman
1/12 Howard Goldstein
1/14 Rachel Appel
1/14 Sarah Nachlas Cohen
1/16 Allison Schwartz
1/17 Craig Binder
1/17 Shari Lewis, *z'l*
1/17 William Mauldin
1/18 Rona Eisen
1/18 Jaclyn Vincent
1/18 Jacob Weiss
1/21 Ellen Reinach
1/21 Carole Sepulvado
1/21 Noah Sussman
1/22 Ira Levine
1/22 Laura Torchinsky
1/23 Stephen Freedman
1/23 Jeffrey Winkler
1/26 Rita Hagler

Editorial Note: "Celebrity Birthdays"

Jerry Kiewe, Executive Director | JKiewe@ShaareTefila.org

First, this article was born out of the need for a correction … stay tuned, but I then realized that it would also serve as opportunity to explain why these names are here at all. So …

Maybe no one has even noticed (?), and almost no one has commented on it, but FYI, beginning with the October 2025 issue, I exercised editorial liberty and began slipping into the Shofar's monthly listing the birthday of one "celebrity Jew."

I'm not actually sure what motivated me to do this. Minimally, it struck me that it would be harmless, add a small dose of "Jewish trivia" … and admittedly, be just a tad bit of fun. And so far, it HAS been … for ME if no one else. To which I say, *dayenu*! 😊

Each month I google search the Jews who were born in the month at hand. A LOT of options are available. I then convene a meeting of my committee of one (this makes scheduling convenient) to determine which of the many candidates will be chosen. There is often a heated internal debate … and I confess that "my committee" is still working out the criteria for this dubious award.

It seemed self-evident that it should be a person who is more universally known … but there was also a minority opinion that it might be more interesting and educational to choose someone more obscure?

There was a consensus that it would be prudent to avoid any Jewish individual who might be "controversial" or worse, "tainted." I hesitate to offer any actual examples, precisely because I'm trying to avoid giving them any additional notoriety and because I am admittedly embarrassed that our community produces its fair share of criminals and cretins. So, I'll offer a non-Jewish example; think "Ted Kaczynski." (No, NOT Jewish.) A famous name, for sure, but not a person to be celebrated. And, just as an added precaution, so far, I'm sticking with people who are already deceased, thereby avoiding the possibility that, while currently well-regarded, they may yet "screw up."

To date, my choices have been as follows:
October (16)– David Ben Gurion
November (13) – Louis Brandeis
December (2) Isaac Asimov

And it is this last choice that prompted this article. I admittedly am not certain of what source I relied upon for offering Isaac Asimov's birthdate as December 2. But when looking up the January birthdays, I discovered that it seems to actually be designated as JANUARY 2. Oops! In my defense, at least one website (The Humanist.com) helpfully indicated that: "[Isaac] Asimov was born in Petrovichi, Russia, sometime between October 4, 1919, and January 2, 1920. Not knowing the exact date, but knowing it was no later than January 2, this was the day he designated and celebrated as his birthday." So, I have a valid excuse.

On a semi-related note, when I was young, maybe 10 or 11?, I recall noticing that the various sources I had on hand – no doubt the "Junior Encyclopedia", a 'Guide to the U.S. Presidents" or some such, offered two different dates for the birthdate of George Washington!! This was also the case for one of my boyhood heroes, Daniel Boone. How this could be was a big mystery for young me. After all, these books were "authoritative sources." How could one or the other possibly be wrong about such a thing? Now you can easily just "google" that and clear up the mystery, but back then, how to reconcile this blatant discrepancy was a challenge.

I also confess that the explanation; a change from the Julian calendar to the Gregorian calendar, which "added 11 days" to the year, caused an existential crisis for me … and still does. If the entire calendar that your entire life is based upon can just, willy-nilly be changed overnight, along with your birthdate (!!!), then how can we be certain of anything?

OK … one last point. I have already registered a complaint to myself that, thus far, my choices for "Celebrity Jewish Birthday" of the month suggest a "gender-bias." Point taken and my "committee" has decided that, going forward, rather than try to compensate and/or achieve balance one month at a time, it would be much better addressed by choosing TWO such celebrities going forward, one male and one female. I already concede that this may not satisfy all … but we'll have to table that discussion to a future meeting.

Celebrate the New Year & Come In From the Cold at Shaare Tefila!

Join Us for a Delicious Winter Shabbat Dinner - January 9, 6 p.m.
Register by January 5

Sign Up by Friday, 1/2 for Adult Cost $22; Children, Ages 5-14, Cost $14; Under Age 5, Free
Family Maximum Cost, $75

- Beef Stew
- Vegetarian Entree
- Salad
- Bread
- Dessert
- Birthday Cake!
- Chicken Nuggets for Kids

75
1951 Shaare Tefila 2026

T.G.I. SHABBAT

Register at:

https://shaaretefilacongregation.shulcloud.com/event/january2026dinner

MONTHLY DISCUSSION GROUP

Shaare Tefila offers a monthly opportunity for members to discuss topics of interest, ranging from politics, Israel, education, legal issues and many more. Sessions are open to all willing to engage in respectful dialogue and invites YOU to join in and share your own point of view.

The group meets monthly, via Zoom, on the 2nd Wednesday (except Holidays).

Shaare Tefila Monthly Discussion Group Dates:

Every month on the Second Wed, until June, per below;

Jan. 14 at 10:00 AM	Feb. 11 at 10:00 AM*
Mar. 11 at 10:00 AM	Apr. 15 at 10:00 AM (delayed to 3rd Wed. due to Passover)
May 13 at 10:00 AM	June 10 at 10:00 AM

Join Zoom Meeting via the link below:
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85180032226?pwd=RGwyMmhQd3QvcS85SE16emJMZ2lDUT09

One tap mobile access; +13017158592,,85180032226#,,,,*923253726#
Dial-in ONLY access; +1 301 715 8592
Meeting ID: 851 8003 2226 Passcode: 923253726

*** On Feb. 11 we are trying something different, this session will IN-PERSON (only) at Sister's Sandwiches.**

If you have any questions, please contact; Jack Teller: JackTeller@verizon.net.

CHUG IVRIT

INVITES YOU TO JOIN US AND LEARN A LITTLE HEBREW!

Do you have basic Hebrew reading and writing skills?

The *Chug Ivrit* at Shaare Tefila might be just right for you!

We are a small group of people who like to learn Modern Hebrew, in a pleasant no pressure class.

We are speaking, reading, writing and learning under the guidance of fellow congregants Ami Frydman and Ofer Zajicek. They not only teach us conversational Hebrew but also bring a wealth of knowledge and background information about Israel, to each and every session.

We are reading fantastic short, but up-to-date news, science, and human-interest articles..

***Chug Ivrit meets* Sunday mornings via Zoom, 10:30 AM – 12 noon**

Contact Adriana at SandlerAA@gmail.com if you are interested in attending a class.

להית … perhaps?

January *Kiddush* Kitchen Volunteer Schedule

DATE JANUARY 3

Kiddush sponsored by Margie & Steve Eiserike in honor of their 50th anniversary.

Kitchen Captain	**Shelley Rochester**
Volunteers	Rita & Jay Hagler
	Susan & Jeff Hysen
	Ethel & Ira Levine
	Roni & Barry Polisar
	Holly & Steve Schotz
	Zella Shabasson & Julian Rosenberg
	Debbie & Jesse Stiller
	Bess & Jack Teller

DATE JANUARY 10

Kiddush sponsored by Josh & Jennifer Solomon in honor of the Baby Naming of their daughter, Leah Penina.

Kitchen Captain	**Val Kolmaister**
Volunteers	Betsy Colbert
	Mike & Amanda Eckstein
	Margie & Steve Eiserike
	Sharon Bender & Andrew Feldmann
	Larry & Carolyn Goldstein
	Arnie & Shoshana Greenland
	Susan & Dan Marder
	David Mendick & Naomi Yadin-Mendick

DATE JANUARY 17

MLK Weekend

Kitchen Captain	**Ann Hamlin**
Volunteers	Ben & Ashley Doyle
	Melissa & Eric Druxman
	Carol Fendler
	Lois & Bob Freedman
	Monica Friedman
	Michael Gross
	Mark & Karen Kaufman
	Diane & Gershon Kieval

DATE JANUARY 24

Kitchen Captain	**Stacey Lynch**
Volunteers	Vivienne & Michael Auerbach
	Stephanie & Perry Buckberg
	Mike & Bobbie Goldman
	Lita & Bert Katz
	Cathy & Lanny Plotkin
	Howard & Amy Schwartz
	Laura & David Torchinsky
	Stacey & Jeffrey Winkler

DATE JANUARY 31

Junior Congregation

Kitchen Captain	**Sheryl Tilles**
Volunteers	Janene & Steven Ellis
	Shira Gorin
	Karla & David Jones
	Dara & Jonny Kotra
	Elaine Salter
	Jennifer & Joshua Solomon
	Bev & Alan Weinstein
	Ben & Elissa Wolf

An Amazing *Havdalah-Hanukkah* Community Program

A Look at Some December Learning Experiences

Contributions

Thank you to our many donors

(*From Nov. 27-Dec. 29, 2025, 2025 but may not include recent contributions sent via regular mail*)

ANDREA Z. TILLES MEMORIAL *CHESED* FUND

Contributions In Honor Of:

The Shaare Tefila *Chesed* Committee, with thanks for all of its support, by Joseph Kraut & Rhea Siers

Sheryl & Paul Tilles; congratulations on the baby naming of your granddaughter, Leah Penina, by Gary & Stacy Levine

Steve & Margie Eiserike, on the occasion of their upcoming 50th anniversary! By Gary & Stacy Levine

Steve & Margie Eiserike, on the occasion of their upcoming 50th anniversary! By Ethel & Ira Levine

Contributions In Memory Of:

Joan Gould, by Ellie Alpert

Sarah Kieval, by Gershon & Diane Kieval

BRICK PAVER DEDICATIONS:

In Memory Of Marvin Levy 2025, by Amy Gross

FRIDAY NIGHT ONEGS

Contributions

Bobbi & Mike Goldman

GENERAL FUND

Contributions In Honor Of:

Anita Froleich, on the occasion of her 70th birthday! By Janice Blum

Laurie Dubrow; Wishing you a Happy *Chanukah*! By Charlene Disler

Florence Polinsky, my beloved wife, in celebration of our 60 years of marriage! By David Polinsky

Sandy & Joel Friedman; *Mazel tov* on Joel's *bar mitzvah* anniversary. And thank you for the swell *kiddush*! By Bess & Jack Teller

The Yedlin family; *Mazel tov* on Josephine's naming and on your 40th anniversary! And thank you for the swell *kiddush*! By Bess & Jack Teller

Jason Wolf; *Mazel tov* on your *bar mitzvah*! By Bess & Jack Teller

GENERAL FUND

Contributions In Memory Of:

Max Goldberg, grandfather of Nancy Goldberg-Benesch, by Nancy Goldberg & Bryan Benesch

David Levin, father of Susan Binder, by Susan & Michael Binder

Sylvia Coffee, mother of Louis Coffee, by Louis Coffee

Samuel Wilen, grandfather of Pamela Samit Foti, by Pamela Samit Foti

Edith Foti, mother-in-law of Pamela Samit Foti, by Pamela Samit Foti

Bela Foti, father-in-law of Pamela Samit Foti, by Pamela Samit Foti

Thomas Foti, husband of Pamela Samit Foti, by Pamela Samit Foti

Leonard Samit, father of Pamela Samit Foti, by Pamela Samit Foti

Audrey Samit, mother of Pamela Samit Foti, by Pamela Samit Foti

Pauline Slotnick, mother of Judy Goldberg, by Judy & Michael Goldberg

Sam Slotnick, father of Judy Goldberg, by Judy & Michael Goldberg

Joseph Haber, father-in-law of Audrey Mellner Haber, by Audrey Mellner Haber

Dr. Marvin Schneider. husband of Diane Schneider, by Martin & Jeanne Sandberg

Dr. Marvin Schneider, husband of Diane Gastfreund Schneider, by Jim & Lesley Patkin

Dr. Norman Alpher, husband of Deanna Alpher, by Richard & Nancy Alpher

Jeanne Weisberg, mother of Florence Polinsky, by Florence & David Polinsky

Leon Bomberg, father of Lydia Sansanowicz, by Lydia & Zisel Sansanowicz

David Shein, father-in-law of Linda Shein, by Linda Shein

Elizabeth Stein, mother-in-law of Elaine Stein, by Elaine Stein

Marvin Levy, husband of Sylvia Levy, and our good friend, by Bess & Jack Teller

Abraham Levin, grandfather of Abbe Levin, by The Charles and Margaret Levin Family Foundation

Denise Marzouk, mother of Debbie Yedlin, by Debbie & Sam Yedlin

GENERAL FUND

Contributions – Wishing a Speedy Recovery To:

Amy Federman, by Bess & Jack Teller

Sheryl Tilles, by Bess & Jack Teller

Ron Miller, by Bess & Jack Teller

Barbara Harkaway, by Bess & Jack Teller

Contributions – With Thanks To/For:

Jerry Kiewe for his assistance, by Sara Alpert Tarlow

Contributions – No Dedication:

By Margaret "Peg" Bachrach

By Anne & Ofer Zajicek

KOL NIDREI APPEAL:

Contributions (Additional in December)

Judith Peritt

Elaine Schenberg

RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

Contributions In Honor Of:

Rabbi Jonah Layman, by Joseph Kraut & Rhea Siers

Contributions – With Thanks/In Appreciation For:

Rabbi Layman, for organizing the recent Shaare Tefila trip to Israel, by Bob & Helene Braun

D. JOSEPH WILLIAMOWSKY SCHOLAR-IN-RESIDENCE FUND

Contributions In Memory Of:

Diane Miller, by Laurie, Mindy, and Stacey (Smith)

William Edward Kaplowitz, by Stacey & Vincent Lynch

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2026

Join the JCRC of Greater Washington, the Baltimore Jewish Council, the Jewish Federation of Howard County and the newly formed Jewish Federation of Annapolis & The Chesapeake as we convene in Annapolis for **2026 Maryland Jewish Advocacy Day**.

Meet with your lawmakers to discuss the legislative priorities of the statewide Jewish community, followed by a buffet reception with elected officials and other government leaders (kosher dietary laws observed).

Registration begins at 4:15 PM, meetings with lawmakers to discuss the priorities of the statewide Jewish community will be held between 5:00 - 6:00 PM, and the evening will conclude at The Graduate by Hilton Annapolis with a buffet reception for elected officials and attendees (kosher dietary laws observed).

Travel on your own or sign up to take a bus from Rockville or Silver Spring.
$65 covers food, transportation and program. Registration is $36 if you prefer to drive and meet us in Annapolis.

Contact Deborah Miller, Director of Maryland Government and Community Relations, at DMiller@JCouncil.org, with questions or requests for accommodations.

Register at: https://www.jcouncil.org/events/2026-maryland-jewish-advocacy-day

Co-Sponsors

Baltimore Jewish Council · The Associated · JCRC · Jewish Federation of Greater Washington · JCRC · Jewish Federation of Howard County · Jewish Federation of Annapolis & the Chesapeake

Lifelong Learning

TAUGHT BY RABBI JONAH LAYMAN

SUNDAYS – 9:30 AM – *TALMUD*

This 1500-year-old text serves as the foundation for Jewish practice today. Join us as we study the section that deals with civil laws that deal with property ownership. No prior study of *Talmud* is required.

MONDAYS – 7:45 PM – JEWS & THE NEWS

Join us for a discussion of current events from a Jewish perspective after the evening *minyan*. This class will be recorded.

WEDNESDAYS – 11 AM – TORAH STUDY

We discuss the major topics and issues in the weekly Torah portion. This class will be recorded.

FRIDAYS – 9:30 AM – BIBLE CLASS

This class has been meeting for 26 years and was reading the Torah in English with the traditional medieval rabbinic commentaries. The class is now reading the *Books of Samuel*.

ALL CLASSES MEET ON ZOOM

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3026500395?pwd=QktRaUlqYzdqUDhJdVlkZG9BdDZMQT09

WEEKDAY SERVICES

Weekday morning *minyan* services are conducted both in-person AND via Zoom on SUNDAY, MONDAY and THURSDAY at 8:45 AM.

Weekday evening *minyan* services are conducted ONLY via Zoom on MONDAY and WEDNESDAY evenings at 7:30 PM.

All Shaare Tefila events, week day services and programs are now available at this Zoom link unless otherwise indicated.

zoom

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