Shabbat Shalom

Vayera

October 31, 2026 |20 Cheshvan 5787
Havdalah 6:44pm

בית יעקב
BETH JACOB CONGREGATION

Senior Rabbi:
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RabbiTamar@Beth-Jacob.org

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Co-Presidents:
Michael Keller & Geoffrey Marshall
President@Beth-Jacob.org

Rabbi Emeritus:
Rabbi Morris Allen

Welcome to Beth Jacob Congregation, a Jewish community that comes together to nurture relationships with God and each other. We are a Conservative synagogue that values Torah (study), Avodah (reverential service) and Gemilut Hasadim (acts of loving-kindness). We believe every person has an equal opportunity to be part of our community regardless of age, race, ability, special needs, financial status, sexual orientation or gender identity. We're glad you've joined us this Shabbat!

D'var Torah
Rabbi Tamar Magill-Grimm

Davenners:
Emery Sher

Greeters & Security:
Robert Birnbaum, Robert Binder, Maxine Rosenthal Mitch Multer, Anne Cronmiller

Gabbaim:
Bernie Miller
Leonard Oppenheimer
Stuart Kaufman

Mashgiach: Mike Keller

Kitchen:
Martha & Geoffrey Black, Mitch Multer, Marilyn Kales, Lisa Hoff & Jon Bacal; Dan King, Rabbi Sharon Stiefel & Davida Alperin, Wendy Goldberg, Rayna & Robert Bullock

Our services depend on the participation of our community members. We welcome diverse voices and talents to lead our community in prayer and to read Torah.

Please use this QR code, or sign up at Beth-Jacob.org/DavenorTorah

Torah Reading

First / Rishon Aliyah	Genesis 18:1-18:14	p. 99	Rosanne Zaidenweber
Second / Sheni Aliyah	Genesis 18:15-18:33	p. 101	Ely Sheinfeld
Third / Shelishi Aliyah	Genesis 19:1-19:20	p. 104	Sara Lynn Newberger
Fourth / Revi'i Aliyah	Genesis 19:21-21:4	p. 107	Natan Paradise
Fifth / Chamishi Aliyah	Genesis 21:5-21:21	p. 113	Arielle Ehrlich
Sixth / Shishi Aliyah	Genesis 21:22-21:34	p. 116	Arielle Ehrlich
Seventh / Shevi'i Aliyah	Genesis 22:1-22:24	p. 117	Jonathan Ehrlich
Maftir	Genesis 22:20-22:24	p. 121	Jonathan Ehrlich
Haftarah	II Kings 4:1-23	p. 124	Rabbi Lynn Liberman

This week's kiddush is sponsored by Mindy Ratner.
Beth Jacob congratulates her on her retirement. Mazel Tov!

Blessings for All

We no longer need there to be unchosen children.

By Evan Wolkenstein

Evan Wolkenstein is the Director of Experiential Education and a Tanach teacher at the Jewish Community High School of the Bay in San Francisco.

The 5-year-old waved a red sports car under my nose and said, proudly, "This is my most favorite car." I nodded and watched him set the car on the coffee table next to a line of other favorite matchbox cars. The 3-year-old, seeing my enthusiastic expression, pointed at the same car. "That's my favorite car, too!" she squeaked. The 5-year-old shoved her away and, after some tussling, she retreated to the other end of the carpet, to the land of rejected cars. There she began carefully arranging her favorite cars. What amazed me, however, was that for the next 20 minutes, the 5-year-old turned his attention away from his own collection and became devoted to a new task–swiping the girl's cars and hiding them under the ottoman.

I was surprised. This was not a battle over a limited resource. There must have been 40,000 matchbox cars all over the living room. Rather, the issue was about the older child's perceptions. For him, something, if not the cars, was in short supply.

In Parashat Vayera, Sarah's handmaid Hagar and Hagar's son Ishmael are provisioned with a flask of water and sent away to the desert. It's a disturbing episode. The transgression that necessitates their banishment is unclear. According to the text, Sarah sees Ishmael "m'tzahek." This heinous crime, says Rashi, was either idolatry, attempted murder, or some sort of sexual violence. These readings, I feel, are a stretch.

The Hebrew root of the accusatory word, tzadi-het-kuf, means only "play." What is the ignominy of a mere game? Many translations connect this word with the very name of the son of Sarah–Yitzhak–which bears the same root. Ishmael, it seems, is doing something that drills at the core of his brother's being. Perhaps he is mocking? More interestingly, perhaps, he is "Yitzhaking." He's not behaving badly–he's behaving well! He's excelling. Like Abel, the first younger brother in history, he is guilty of doing better at that which his big brother Cain first attempted to do–and we know how that story ended.

Both sibling stories alert us to an ugly reality. On the one hand, people who are in positions of privilege tend to disregard, denigrate, or marginalize those who are less privileged. On the other hand, when less privileged people attempt not only to advocate for their rightful share of the resources, but actually to succeed, it often makes those in the original positions of power even more defensive.

For Sarah and Isaac, there was a practical solution to Ishmael's threat of competition–they could send him and his mother away. Ishmael lived out his destiny in a distant land. For us, however, confronted with people in the developing world who demand a fair share of the world's resources, there is no far away land to which we can banish them.

The disempowered do not thrive "elsewhere," nor do they dwell apart in their own suffering. Rather, the entire human system becomes contaminated with enmity, distrust, and violence. We, the privileged, must realize that our destiny is bound to our brothers'. All the power, all the wealth in the coffers of the privileged, cannot purchase peace in the absence of justice and equity.

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Torah Commentary

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For the latter Hebrew prophets, peace came only through fidelity to God and through communal application of justice and righteousness to society. God is not the One who will compensate the underprivileged for their suffering, ensuring that they receive their rightful share of the blessing and bounty of the world. That job has become ours. The ethical imperative is upon us. We are, of course, bound not to perpetrate injustice against the marginalized. We are even expected to prevent violence against them. But even more so, we are bound by an imperative to share the blessing and bounty that benefit us.

Once we acknowledge this, we come a step closer to the root of Sarah's misdirected actions. Perhaps they are borne not out of ill will, but out of a fundamental misperception. She could not see that God's blessing is, itself, an unlimited resource. Like the children's matchbox cars, so numerous I couldn't walk across the room without stepping on one, God has enough blessing for both children.

In this economy of plenty, Ishmael should no longer need to compete with Yitzhak–to be m'tzahek–by imitating and threatening to beat his brother at his own game. Nor will Ishmael's success seem so threatening to Sarah that he and his mother must be banished. In a home, and a world, with One Chosen Child, there must be an unchosen child. In a world of plenty, there is enough space, enough love, for both children.

For me and my young friends, the morning's matchbox car altercation ended not with mutual destruction or with bitter tears, but rather with the discovery that the truly precious resource was not the cars, per se, but the feeling of having something precious. Fortunately, love is not a limited commodity. Learning this, we left the heap of cars forgotten on the floor. We sat together on the sofa reading a book, giggling and shouting at the silly amphibians, the best friends who couldn't get along.

Inclusivity and Accessibility During Services

We recognize the variety of needs within our community and strive to provide access to all through physical, emotional, and/or sensory accommodations. The majority of our prayers and scripture readings are conducted in Hebrew, so we invite those who do not read Hebrew to use a copy of the transliterated prayerbook (siddur) found on the table near the entrance to the sanctuary. We have large print books, braille prayerbooks, and listening devices available on the bookshelf in the lobby. There is also a sensory-friendly room just off the sanctuary with a speaker and window from which services can be experienced. Please ask the greeter near the sanctuary door if you need help locating any of these. Please reach out to our office if there are needs that aren't being met.

Children are Welcome in our Sanctuary!



We encourage children's participation in services and love having them in our sanctuary. Older children are encouraged to lead parts of the service and/or read Torah once able to do so. Younger children are invited to carry crowns during the Torah service and are also invited to the bimah for Adon Olam each week. At the end of services they can visit the rabbi's magic tallis bag to receive a lollipop or mini bubbles. Parents, please let Rabbi Tamar know if you do not want your child to receive one of these items.



Yahrzeit List for Week Beginning October 31, 2026 / 20 Cheshvan 5787

The seventh aliyah is reserved for those observing yahrzeits during the coming week. If you are observing a yahrzeit this week, please come forward at the seventh aliyah and give your full Hebrew name to the gabbai who will call you to the Torah. Your full Hebrew name includes your name and then ben/bat/mibeit and your parents' names or Avraham and Sarah. Please say your name loudly and clearly, so that the gabbai can hear it.

Masking is optional during the 7th aliyah on the bimah during the Torah service during our current pilot policy.

October 31
20 Cheshvan
Sherry Caplan
Michael Freedland
Abraham Levin
Jane Tomayo
William Grodin

November 1
21 Cheshvan
Sadie Farber
Mark Greenberg
Abigail Nadeau
Herman Snyder
Maurice Diamond
Sarah Grodin

November 2
22 Cheshvan
Grace Granzburg
Sarah Hinda Midlick
Lilian Sager
Elaine Schoenkin
Abraham Weiner
Anna Mark
Sarah Frisch Nilva
Harry Kuller
Larry Savett

November 3
23 Cheshvan
Louis Danovsky
Paul Desjardins
Hilda Posnansky
Zelda Katz
Rachel Davis
Esther Kaplan

November 4
24 Cheshvani
Rose Aronson
Elizabeth Eiger
Dr. Gerald Siegel
Mollie Spanier
Etta Abrahamson
Herman Adelman
Simon Londer

November 5
25 Cheshvan
Florence Gale
Charles Ruzicka
Louis Sawetsky
Andrea Stein
Esther Tuttelman
Benjamin Wolfson
Oscar Weitzman

November 6
26 Cheshvan
Miriam Barenbaum
Fradel Flauman
Rose Frank
Scott Nichols
Leo Pevsner

TODAY at Beth Jacob

Limudim: Our Learning Community

Limudim starts at 9:30am

For the Jew in the Pew
With Rabbi Lynn Liberman 9:15-10:00am in the Chapel

Join together in the ongoing study of the Book of Psalms as we continue to explore these ancient, provocative and beautiful words. Having covered most of the psalms as found in the Siddur, our journey continues through the remaining treasure trove of liturgical poetry and music! No prior experience necessary. All texts provided in Hebrew and English.

Upcoming at Beth Jacob - October 31, 2026

FOR OUR KIDS



Pre-Shul Playgroup–Every Friday at 10:30 am
Join our open play time for young children and their caregivers. Meet in the nursery every Friday morning from 10:30am until naptime.



Tot Shabbat--Third Shabbat of the Month, 10:00 in the Nursery
Join us in the nursery for Tot Shabbat, led by Talia Vital. We will have a song-filled Shabbat Morning Service for BJC's littlest ones (0-3 years old). We will then have an oneg and playtime for parents to schmooze and kids to play.

ADULT EDUCATION



Judith And The Maccabees, with Dr. Shayna Sheinfeld
Tuesdays, 5:30-6:30pm
October 6, 13, 27, November 3, 10, 17, December 1, 8
Judith and the Maccabees: Illuminate your Hanukah experiences by diving into the book of Judith, a text from the Apocrypha that is strongly associated with the holiday of Hanukah (though different from the traditional Hanukah story). If time allows, we may also look at the book of 2 Maccabees. Register at Beth-Jacob.org/AdultEd



Morning Mishnah, with Rabbi Tamar Magill-Grimm
TUESDAYS at around 8:00 am (after minyan)
in the Saide Chapel and online
Join on Zoom at Beth-Jacob.org/Minyan

Tanach, with David Rischall
Sundays 7:30-8:30 on Zoom: https://us06web.zoom.us/j/79546614386
Questions? Call David at 651-230-3911

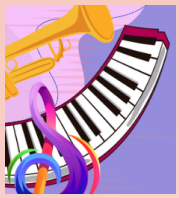
What is Jewish History and Why Does It Matter?
Dr. Noam Sienna
November 16, 4:00pm, UofM
Attend Dr. Noam Sienna's inaugural lecture as the Deinard Chair, co-sponsored by the Department of History and the Center for Jewish Studies, at 412 Pillsbury Hall (310 Pillsbury Dr SE)





Shabbatluck Next Week
Friday, November 6: Services at 5:30, Dinner at 6:15
Come to Beth Jacob on the first Friday of the month for Ma'ariv and Kabbalat Shabbat, stay for a delicious pot luck dinner. Let us know what you are bringing at Beth-Jacob.org/Shabbatluck

Upcoming at Beth Jacob - October 31, 2026



Beth Jacob's Classical Musicale TOMORROW
Sunday, November 1, 2:00-4:00 pm

Musicians and singers at all levels of skill and experience will perform classical music for you, their friendly and supportive audience! Don't miss this!
Regiser at Beth-Jacob.org/Musicale

Make a plan to vote NOW before Election Day on Tuesday!



Election Day is **TUESDAY**. Visit Minnesota Secretary Of State - Voting locations before election day to find your voting location. Register at your voting location; bring proof of residence. Want more information? Go to mnvotes.org.
Wear your "I Voted" sticker to Shul! And encourage everyone you know who is eligible to vote NOW!



Veterans Day Shabbat
November 7

Come honor our veterans with a special aliyah and blessing.

Federation Shabbat
November 14



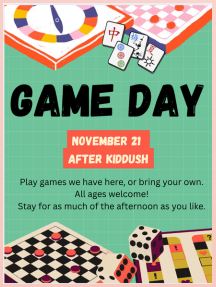
Hear from David Kaplan, CEO of the St. Paul Jewish Federation, about the remarkable work that Federation does in our community and around the world. Kiddush sponsored by the Federation.



Praying Body Workshop
A Post-Kiddush Learning - Shabbat, November 7
Using theater practices and physical movement, this workshop teaches prayer from the inside out. We focus on Kavod (reverence/presence) and Hitpa'alut (wonder/awakened awareness). Led by Cantor Tamar Havilio.

Braille Megilla Workshop
Sunday, November 8, 5-7pm
Help create the world's first kosher, blind-accessible scroll of Esther . Beth Jacob will sew the panels together making the megillah kosher for reading this upcoming Purim! Beth-Jacob.org/Braille





Game Day
November 21, after kiddush

Game Day is open to everyone! Bring a game, or play one we have here. All ages, all abilities, all fun!