

JANUARY 2026

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TU B'SHVAT

Co-Presidents:
Kathie Davis
Terry Joseph
Shelley Sherman

Rabbi: Jerry Blum

*Before the New Year of the Trees,
join us for our January social events.*

See details under Events and in the Calendar



Dear friends, we are again on the cusp of a new year and, as I have often said in years gone by, where has the time gone? Why does it feel like each new year comes upon us so much faster? I can barely keep track of all the changes in our lives, our political environment, and for our

worldwide Jewish community. This world does not feel like it's on stable footing and, with antisemitism on the rise, our personal sense of security feels at risk.

On Shabbat Hanukkah, I spoke about how the lights of the Hanukkah Menorah are very different from our Shabbat candles. The Shabbat candles are there to shed light so we can see, eat, read and have the warmth of the Shabbat throughout our homes. The lights on the Hannukiyah serve a different purpose. It is more about *Pirsum HaNeis*, about making famous the Miracle story of Hanukkah and shining light where the world has become darkened. The question was asked: how do we do that? I answered that the word Hanukkah is closely related to Hebrew word *Chinuch*, meaning education, meaning that we must show up and confront the challenges to our nation, people and Jewish community. It is our job to teach and retell the story of our people so we can all learn from history.

Our future depends on how we can work with our community and others to move forward. There are ways I believe we can do this, but it depends greatly on how we show up. We must have clear goals and a workable plan that will help us grow both spiritually and as a community of liberal-minded Jews in our area.

In our Torah study, we often come across a word that is meaningful both spiritually and practically. That word is *Hineni*, and it means I am here, yet a truer and more nuanced understanding of the word is, "I am present" and I am prepared to do what is needed at any given moment. It is a word that describes the state of mind of one who is ready to take on a task of great importance.

So important is the word *hineni*, that it is used over 17 times in the Jewish Bible in this form, and hundreds of times in other grammatical formations. Our Biblical leaders, like Avraham and Moshe, were often in that state of readiness, but I wonder what this would mean for us as moderns. We are not often called upon to lead our people out of slavery, nor asked to perform acts of prophecy, so how might it apply to our lives and our temple community?

Being in a state of "Hineni" can describe a state of spiritual openness during our services, or being present for someone in our community who is in need of companionship, or just a quick hello on the phone. It could also mean that one would be on call to help with our activities and events during the year. It's clear that I believe the most important way we can be in a "Hineni" state of mind is to become an active participant in our temple family. Come join a committee or show up for our learning sessions. You don't have to take on a leading role, but everyone can help make our temple successful. We need you to become our ambassadors to the outside world. Bring friends to our services or events, and of course, bring yourselves. This coming year, it is also important to join together with the other Reform congregations in the area for activities and events. We are looking forward to combining with Temple Tikvah on study sessions and some social events too, and as you can see from our calendar, we have a lot to participate in this coming Spring.

As we enter 2026 let us be grateful for all that was good during these past years, and to know how we have grown from the challenges of this past year as well. We pray that this new year will inspire us to be present and participate in the growth of our community. When we are called upon to help our temple family, may we always say "Hineni: I am here and ready" to be part of the way forward for our Kehillah Kedoshah, our holy community.

Wishing you and those you love, a very Happy New Year. May 2026 be a year of health, blessing, coming together in unity and peace.

A handwritten signature of "Rabbi Jerry" in blue ink.



You don't need me to tell you what a turbulent and frightening year 2025 was. Sadly, there is little to suggest that 2026 will be better. Yet each of us in our own small ways can participate in trying to improve our communities, our country and maybe even the world.

The Religious Action Committee of the Reform movement (RAC) has unveiled a new program called *Every Voice, Every Vote*, which encourages us to speak out against injustice and for human rights and of course to vote and encourage others to do so as well.

It will be leading a training on responding to ICE in our communities and congregations. Check your weeklies for the dates and details.

We don't all need to attend every march and rally to do our parts; we can all write letters to our

representatives and to the newspapers both to praise (God willing- there will be things to praise) and to oppose. Denise and Judy always have ideas for ways we can let our voices be heard and they welcome all of us to join them in the social action events.

It is easy to wallow in malaise and let cynicism rule us, but as Jews we have a responsibility to support our neighbors and to fight tyranny. We need to continue to stand against antisemitism and other forms of bigotry, defend the rights of the most vulnerable, and promote justice nationwide.

We also need to support our congregation- we are still offering "buddies" to check in with individuals and assure all is well. Let us know if you want help setting that up.

Finally, please read Mort Hans column in this bulletin and consider the intellectual and social benefits of joining a discussion group and then RSVP on the click in to express interest.

Your Temple Isaiah presidents wish you a happy and healthy new year with many reasons to celebrate.

Shelley, Terry, and Kathie

A 'NO EXCUSES' **SAVE THE DATE!**

THURSDAY, MAY 28TH, 2026

JOURNAL DINNER AT Leonard's Palazzo of Great Neck

Black Tie welcome, but optional

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR THE CELEBRATION!

Let's Talk and Listen!

Some years ago, a member of our community launched a discussion group called The Ambivalence Group. It began as a welcoming space to explore questions about Jewish beliefs and practices, and soon broadened to include deeper life and existential topics. The group met monthly, with participants joining whenever they could and bringing whatever was on their minds.

We are now considering reviving a similar group—this time meeting virtually—so that transportation and scheduling are no longer obstacles. The proposal is for a one-hour, once-a-month online gathering, hosted by an alternating group member. Each session would begin with a brief five-minute update from the host, followed by a short ten-minute introduction to a chosen topic by another participant. An open and organic discussion would then follow.

Caring Committee

We hope that you had a wonderful Chanukkah with your family and friends and also with your Temple Isaiah family. We care deeply for you and are here for you when you need us.

Treasurer/Financial Secretary

Calling all Temple Members:

OK, so maybe you missed that last chance for a charitable donation for 2025, but it's 2026 and never too early to give to Temple Isaiah. You can pay by Zelle (you'll need to call the office for details the first time you use this) or send us a check!

Once again, if you are making RMDs (Required Minimum Distribution) from an IRA or an inherited IRA, you can contact your brokerage and have them send us a check

When exploring what topics tend to interest aging congregations in virtual settings, we found that conversations often include topics of local, national or international interest, personal and societal, etc.

In many communities, virtual gatherings have become a meaningful way to strengthen personal connections. Often, it is these social bonds themselves that form the heart of the experience.

If you are interested in participating—or if you have ideas for topics or how the group should run—we would love to hear from you. If we do not receive responses, we will assume there is not sufficient interest and will set the idea aside for now.

[CLICK HERE](#) to RSVP.

Mort Hans

Wishing you a happy New Year filled with good health, much laughter, and every happiness in the coming year.

Kathie Davis

as a QCD (Qualified Charitable Donation), and it is not taxable but still counts towards your RMD. It has to go directly from the broker to the Temple. Use it for your dues or recent items that perhaps were not already sent in, or even future items like the auction or gala dinner.

Bill Hersh

Social Action Committee

As we begin a new year and say good riddance to an extremely difficult 2025, we must all look for small ways to make a positive difference. To that end, volunteering seems like the way to go. In addition, of course, to Temple Isaiah, there are many other organizations that can use help.

If you are interested in making sure people have enough to eat, you can volunteer at a local food bank or food collection and distribution organization such as Island Harvest, The Inn, Food Rescue US, or Nosh Delivers. Additionally, our synagogue will be collecting food on an on-going basis, which will be distributed to Hatzilu or another similar organization.

If your interest lies with protecting immigrants, consider participating with groups who accompany those appearing in Immigration Court, or those groups who help alert others to the presence of ICE in their areas. Check out opportunities with the New York Immigration Committee and Make the Road New York. Also, consider boycotting retailers that cooperate with or fund ICE: Home Depot, Dell, BP, AT&T, Delloite, Motorola, Spotify, Thomson/Reuters and ARCO. These days, there may be no greater power than to protest with your pocketbook.

As always, we can call, write and email our elected representatives on whatever issues are of most concern. It is important that they hear from you! The contact information for our representatives is:

Sen. Charles Schumer	631-753-0978 (Melville) 518-431-4076 (Albany) 202-224-6542 (Washington D.C.) www.schumer.senate.gov
Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand	202-224-4451 (Washington) 212-688-6262 (Manhattan) www.gillibrand.senate.gov
Rep. Thomas Suozzi	202-225-3335 (Washington) 718-631-0040 (Douglaston) 516-861-1070 (Glen Cove) suoza.house.gov

Check with 5calls.org and choose whichever issues resonate with you. Use the scripts provided when you contact your representatives. It's easy and, hopefully, effective.

Keep resisting and persisting.

Judy Brook and Denise Miller



Temple Isaiah's Got Game Again Wednesday, January 14th, 2pm

Trivial Pursuit, Scrabble, Uno, cards and more! If you have a favorite game, bring it along. Enjoy snacks, and bring your friends. \$10.00 per person.

Please RSVP by [clicking here](#).



Origami Wednesday, January 21st, 2pm

Our own Rachel Greenwald, a longstanding Origami Society member, will lead us in an introduction to the ancient art of paper folding. All materials will be supplied and no prior experience is required. Everyone will leave with their finished piece(s). Of course, there will be snacks (need you ask?), \$10.00 per person.

Please RSVP by [clicking here](#).



Lunch with Rabbi Blum Monday, January 26th, 12:30pm

at Cho-Sen Village on Middle Neck Road in Great Neck.

Please RSVP by [clicking here](#).



Celebrate Tu B'Shevat Saturday, January 31st, Noon

Following Torah study, join us for a special seder.

Coming in February



SAVE THE DATE

FOR THE TEMPLE ISAIAH

R3V3RS3 RAFFL3 *

WITH "TALENT/NO TALENT" ENTERTAINMENT**

SUNDAY, February 8th, 4:00pm (not 5pm)

MANY PRIZES - WINE - CHEESE AND OTHER REFRESHMENTS

*THE LAST RAFFLE PICKED IS THE GRAND PRIZE WINNER

Up to a Grand Prize of \$1000, if 100 Raffles Tickets are sold
Or Grand Prize 1/5 of Raffle Ticket sales up to \$1000

**Sign up in advance to be part of the entertainment- everyone can do something even if not classically considered talented.

JOIN THE FUN with friends! SEND IN ALL YOUR RAFFLES ASAP
(4 Raffles will be sent to Temple members)

THOUGH IT'S MORE FUN WITH YOU THERE, YOU DON'T HAVE TO ATTEND TO WIN!

\$50 per raffle

Entrance fee \$36 per person

Entrance fee waived with the purchase of 2 raffle tickets – per person

RSVP by January 30th

PLEASE CONSIDER PAYMENT IN ADVANCE
TO KEEP OUR ADMINISTRATION COSTS LOW

NOTE: Did you receive a holiday gift you can't use? Remember it's the thought that counts - how about regifting it to the Temple for the auction?

January Celebrations & Rememberances



Victor DeFazio.....January 7



Linda & David Burghardt....January 13



YAHRZEITS

Bessie Berkowitz
Grandmother of Sheila DeFazio (1/1)

Sylvester DeFazio
Father of Father of Victor (1/1)

Ruth Mitler
Grandmother of Gail Gordon (1/1)

Lillian Scheiber
Founding member of Temple Isaiah (1/3)

William Smith
Father of Ruth Mandelbaum (1/3)

Esther Dibner
Sister of Bernard E. Rosenberg (1/4)

Enid Rubin
Mother of Harold Rubin (1/4)

Robert Ensler
Brother-in-law of Sheila & Victor DeFazio (1/6)

Fred Feuerberg
Father of Linda Burghardt (1/7)

Herbert Lerner
Stepfather of Rona Levy (1/8)

Abraham Haber
Father of Michael Haber (1/9)

Abe Auerbach
Father of Neil Auerbach (1/12)

Alfred Perell
Father of Lloyd Perell (1/12)

Max Shiller
Grandfather of Steve Fein (1/12)

Paul Eisenman
Father of Bella Bekker-Silver (1/13)

Bella Drucker
Mother of Susan Drucker (1/14)

David Malina
Father of Diana Kerievsky (1/14)

Mary Kamins
Mother of Linda Schneiderman (1/15)

Philip Silver
Father of Jonathan Silver (1/16)

Sadie Shiller
Grandmother of Steve Fein (1/17)

Ann Diamond
Mother-in-law of Shelley Sherman (1/19)

Charles Miller
Grandfather of Denise Miller (1/22)

Sadie Gralitzer
Mother of Ruth Beckerman (1/23)

Morris Kamins
Father of Linda Schneiderman (1/24)

Rose Greenberg
Grandmother of Mindy Israel (1/25)

Claire Roth
Sister of Frances Falon (1/25)

Marvin Brodsky
Great-uncle of Jonathan Wagner (1/26)

Hilda Feuerberg
Mother of Linda Burghardt (1/26)

Jacob Schwartz
Father of Louis Schwartz (1/26)

Philip Friedman
Son of Diane Haber (1/27)

Abraham Maller
Husband of Connie Maller (1/27)

Sophie Kristal
Mother of Evelyn Solow (1/31)



General Donations

Bruce and Sonia Funk in honor of 5786

Irwin Epstein and Mary Morella in
memory of Leon and Sara Epstein

The 360 Circle of Tzedakah

By contributing to the 360 Circle you assure that your best wishes will be shared with all congregants who are celebrating a simcha, healing, or sadly suffering a loss. A Temple card sent to a fellow member will wish a Mazal Tov on an important occasion, express a get well, or a condolence, and it will always include your name. You won't have to write a separate check each time you wish to share your support; one check will cover you for the whole year!

Simply send a payment of \$360 to Temple Isaiah, earmarked for the 360 Circle, and your name will be included on all cards sent out to commemorate the life events of your fellow congregants.



January 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
					Shabbat Services Zoom only 7pm	Torah Study Zoom only 9:30am
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
					Shabbat Services in Temple and via Zoom - 7pm	Torah Study Zoom only 9:30am
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
			Game Day 2pm		Shabbat Services in Temple and via Zoom - 7pm	No Torah Study
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Current Events with Helman & Judy Brook 3pm			Origami 7pm		Shabbat Services in Temple and via Zoom - 7pm	Torah Study Zoom only 9:30am
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
	Lunch & Learn 12:30pm Cho-Sen				Shabbat Shirah in Temple and via Zoom - 7pm	Torah Study In Temple and Zoom - 9:30am Tu B'Shevat Noon



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Temple Isaiah of Great Neck
1 Chelsea Place, Great Neck, NY 11021

Office Hours:

Wednesdays & Fridays 12 - 3 PM

Call 516-487-5373 or email office@templeisaiahgn.org for confirmation.

Deadline for bulletin submissions: 20th of the month