

## FROM RABBI ZEMEL

### PRAYER IN THIS ERA IS A RADICAL ACT

DEAR FRIENDS,

What is prayer in a secular age?

Our worship team — Rabbis Josh Beraha and Stephanie Crawley, Teddy Klaus, Debra Winter and I — recently met to engage in a wide-ranging conversation on just that question. Debra Winter, our still-new worship music artist, wanted a deeper understanding of our Temple Micah philosophy of prayer.



What informs our decisions? Why do we do what we do? To what extent are we bound by the prayer book? What are the limits to how we seek to incorporate change? It was a great two hours that pushed us all to do some deep thinking.

My personal starting point is to remind myself of what prayer, for me, is not. I do not believe that God is waiting to respond to my prayer. I do not believe that God is listening to my prayer in any conventional sense of the word “listening.” I do, however, believe in the powerful and transformative power of prayer, and I know that my life would be radically different and, I believe, spiritually and morally poorer, were I not a person who regularly prayed.

What, then, might prayer do for us?

A life that includes prayer can help define who we are: part of the Jewish people and, as such, keepers of a mythic story that dates to the dawn of human history. We can see ourselves as a link in a chain, holders of a glorious treasure bequeathed to us by our past.

For those who converted to Judaism, when we recite the Avot\Imahot (patriarch\matriarch) blessing, prayer links us as ones who freely chose to be part of

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## The Micah Storefront Project Explained

BY RABBIS DANIEL G. ZEMEL, JOSH BERAHA AND STEPHANIE CRAWLEY

IMAGINE A COLORFUL rug on an old wooden floor in an upstairs room of a neighborhood coffee shop. A neighborhood has no shortage of coffee shops, but a definite shortage of synagogues. Curious parents, some first-timers, some with a gaggle of children behind them, guide their children up the stairs, lattes and chai ice teas in hand. These parents and even grandparents who heard about this open, innovative, Jewish pop-up, through word of mouth or a local listserv, settle in comfortably in their yoga pants or jeans. They chat with neighbors, meet new friends, all while their boisterous young children or grandchildren play around them.

Or, it might be a Monday evening, at a local downtown bar. Curious Jews and Jewishly curious folks in their 20s and 30s examine an ancient text for its modern relevance. In a comfortable setting, they open up about difficult topics, like death and self-doubt.

The space is familiar, the comfort level high. When the singing and storytelling end, the participants stay to share their lives with each other. On the way out they express excitement and gratitude that such a space had been created for them, making it easy and comfortable to enter a Jewish space.

The storefront project is born of the

idea that synagogues matter, and should continue to matter. Some background. Sixty years ago, sociologist Marshall Sklare called the American synagogue an “ethnic church.” The synagogue as ethnic church was simply the place



where the first generations of American Jews lived out their European Jewish identity. With the passage of time, the ethnic church unknowingly became an ethnic fortress, a place that sought to protect Jewish ethnicity from the seductive influences of American culture.

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"Every person shall sit under  
his grapevine or fig tree with  
no one to make him afraid."  
MICAH, CHAPTER 4, VERSE 4

# Vine

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## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

# THERE IS A LOT TO TALK ABOUT AT TEMPLE MICAH

BY MARCIA FINE SILCOX

It's easy to stay home, warm in your flannels, watching *The Crown* and drinking some nice zinfandel. We all like that.

It's easy to avoid conversation because talk these days raises one's blood pressure and seems not to solve the big problems.

But as you know, Judaism and Temple Micah are built on conversations, and here's your invitation to join in.

There's a lot of talk going on at Micah, on a wide range of issues, ideas, and efforts. In November, a dozen



people came to the library one Sunday to hear an expert panel discuss legacy donations to the Temple. It wasn't a pitch, but it was a friendly conversation about how and why we can follow through on intentions to create a dynamic Micah for the future.

Our Roadmap visioning conversations started in the summer and continued to year's end. The discussions brought members together and also listened to unaffiliated community members, in talks about meaning and living Jewish lives. We will soon have a Roadmap to share with the congregation, a participant-driven plan to maintain, expand, and guide our congregation into the future.

One exciting aspect of the Roadmap program brought young rabbis who had served at Micah as Tisch Fellows during their training to have a frank conversation. Titled, "Big Questions About the American Jewish Future," the daylong discussion deeply probed for meaning and pathways to maintaining spiritual connections at a time when generations are rapidly shedding those ties. The prospect of these deep conversations was so appealing that the leaders of the Hebrew Union College attended as well. Our entire congregation was able to engage in the talks that evening.

Everyone, at any age can get involved in Micah talk. Education Director Sharon Tash notes that, "Kindergarten through sixth grade students have been talking about Torah stories. Using age-appropri-

ate approaches to the narrative, we've tackled issues such as the refugee crisis in the context of the story of Cain and Abel, questions about the extent of faith in the Akedah (binding of Isaac) narrative, the mitzvot of *hachnasat orchim* (hospitality) and *anavah* (humility), and lately, *hakarat ha-tov* (gratitude) in anticipation of Thanksgiving.

"Our teens recently completed a course of three lessons with Operation Understanding DC, during which time they touched upon important issues found in the teen novel, "The Hate U Give." During these sessions we had excellent discussions about racism, police brutality and tolerance."

Adults may get in on the conversation in the spring, as Rabbi Zemel hopes to continue our examination of race and identity that began with a November book talk on Paul Beatty's "The Sellout."

Rabbi Beraha describes some of the ongoing conversations he's having with families. In a program that has come to be called Drink and Think, "congregants take turns hosting and includes topics like intermarriage, Israel and the stresses and joys of having young children." He adds that, "The parent group on Sunday morning recently had a well attended session on the rise of anti-Semitism. Parents voiced concerns over how to talk to their children about the increase in anti-Semitism while also maintaining and working to build a positive, forward-looking Judaism."

And what about those who are Jewish, but don't enter our doors... what do they talk about? Do they want to talk about Shabbat, death, holidays, and the role of Judaism in their lives? The Micah Storefront Project is taking these questions to coffee houses and cafes. Rabbis Crawley and Beraha are engaging young Jewish singles and families in song and conversation in their neighborhoods. The Storefront Project expands our ability to talk, not just amongst ourselves.

You already know that many important conversations take place at Micah. And you know that there is no end to what we need to talk about. So put down that remote and let's keep up the chatter.

## The Feast

# THE CARROT LOX AND CRUMB CRUST APPLE PIE EDITION

BY ALEXANDRA WISOTSKY

RABBI STEPHANIE CRAWLEY claims not to be the cook in her house. “I enjoy cooking, but it doesn’t relax me, although I do like to bake. When I cook, it is for something important, like a big event, or I want to do something special for my family or Jesse,” a reference to her husband, Rabbi Paikin, a staff member at Sixth and I.

So when I asked Rabbi Crawley for a recipe for this column, she thought of a favorite family recipe of her grandmother’s, Crumb Crust Apple Pie. The recipe was originally submitted by her

grandmother as a peach pie for a B’nai Brith cookbook, with a note that apples could be substituted. The “crumb” crust is also very forgiving, since it is patted together in the pie plate. “If it cracks it’s ok,” Rabbi Crawley said.

The pie “is American, but my mother’s parents were German Jews, and it feels like it has an apple strudel-ness to it. Like a blending of their cultures,” Rabbi Crawley said.

As we continued to talk, Rabbi Crawley mentioned that, as a gluten-free vegetarian, she was a little sad that most

traditional Ashkenazi food was off limits to her. She then offered a second recipe: the most intriguing recipe I have ever come across – carrot lox. It was Jesse who found some carrot lox in a vegan deli and then later found a recipe online.

“It is labor intensive, like if you cured your own gravlax, but watching it in the fridge for several days builds the anticipation,” Rabbi Crawley said.

To me, looking at the photo, if you didn’t know it wasn’t lox, could you tell?

*See page 5 for the crumb crust apple pie recipe.*

## CARROT LOX

Recipe is from OlivesForDinner.com

*Special equipment:* Large, oven-proof glass dish, such as Pyrex

*Time to prepare:* About 2 hours to prepare and roast carrots, plus two days of marinating in refrigerator

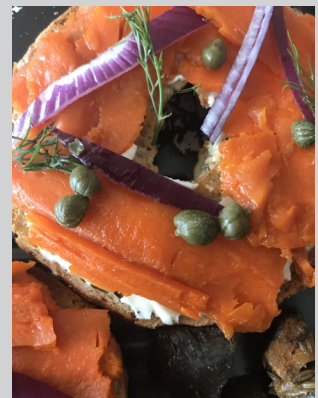
### Ingredients:

- 2 cups coarse sea salt, plus more if needed
- 3 large carrots (unpeeled)
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 teaspoons liquid smoke
- 1/2 teaspoon coconut vinegar

### Steps

1. Preheat oven to 375F.
2. To slow roast the carrots, place one cup of coarse sea salt into a glass dish, such as Pyrex, with enough room for the length and width of the whole carrots. Rinse the unpeeled carrots and place them wet into the salt, making sure that the carrots are nestled in the salt and do not make contact with the bottom of the dish. Pour about another whole cup of salt evenly on top of the carrots, adding a bit more as needed to ensure they are fully covered in salt.
3. Roast, uncovered, for an hour and a half.

4. Once done, turn the dish onto a baking sheet and allow the carrots to cool enough to handle. Brush off salt, and then pare away the carrot skin. Then, using a mandolin or sharp knife, slice the carrots lengthwise into jagged, thin strips. Place into a clean glass container.



5. Whisk together the olive oil, liquid smoke and coconut vinegar. (If you have a little more or little less than 1 1/2 cups carrots, just add a little more or less of the liquid components as needed.)
6. Drizzle the olive oil mixture over the warm carrots and toss well to coat. At this point, the flavor will not taste very much like lox. The carrots should be refrigerated for at least two days to allow the flavor to deepen and mellow, and for the carrots to get really soft and silky.
7. If the carrots start to look dry during marinating time, add an additional tablespoon of olive oil.
8. When ready to serve, remove carrots from the refrigerator and allow them to come to room temperature.

Serve with toasted bagels, capers, vegan cream cheese, red onion and fresh sprigs of dill as desired.



# SPEAKING AT MICAH

Micah features two monthly lecture series — on Sundays and Wednesdays. For more information, go to [templemicah.org](http://templemicah.org).

## SUNDAY SPEAKER SERIES

No events are scheduled until March.

## LUNCH & LEARN

*Wednesdays from noon to 2 pm*

A monthly program sponsored by the Aging Together Team. Reserve online at [templemicah.org](http://templemicah.org). For details, contact Robert Seasonwein at [lunchandlearn@templemicah.org](mailto:lunchandlearn@templemicah.org) or the temple office at 202-342-9175.



**Jan. 8 – Susan Subak on her book “The Five-Ton Life: Carbon, America, and the Culture That May Save Us.”**

Subak has been an international contract researcher with the EPA, European Commission (part of the European Union) and national environmental agencies in the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Sweden and the Netherlands. She will speak about the challenges of establishing a genuinely low-carbon culture in the United States to address climate change.



**Feb. 12 – Ari Roth on “The Drama of Creating Cutting-Edge Theater.”**

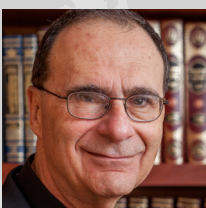
The artistic director and founder of the Mosaic Theater Company of DC, Roth was the artistic director of Theater J at the Washington, DCJCC from 1997 to 2014 where he produced more than 129 productions and created festivals including “Locally Grown: Community Supported Art,” “Voices from a Changing Middle East”, and Theater J’s acclaimed “Beyond The Stage” and “Artistic Director’s Roundtable” series.



**March 11 – Jacqueline Simon on “The Administration vs. the Civil Service.”**

Simon is the Policy Director of the American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO (AFGE), the largest federal employee union representing over 700,000 federal and DC employees. She represents AFGE on all policy matters affecting the union’s members including civil service protections, collective bargaining, privatization, pay, health insurance, retirement, and budget.

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR



**March 20 and 22 – Rabbi Lawrence A. Hoffman** will be the The Scholar in Residence this year. He will speak to the congregation on Friday, March 20 and Sunday, March 22 on “Exploring American Jewish Identity for Our Time.”

## CRUMB CRUST APPLE PIE

Makes one 9-inch pie

Time to prepare: 40 to 60 minutes

### Crust ingredients:

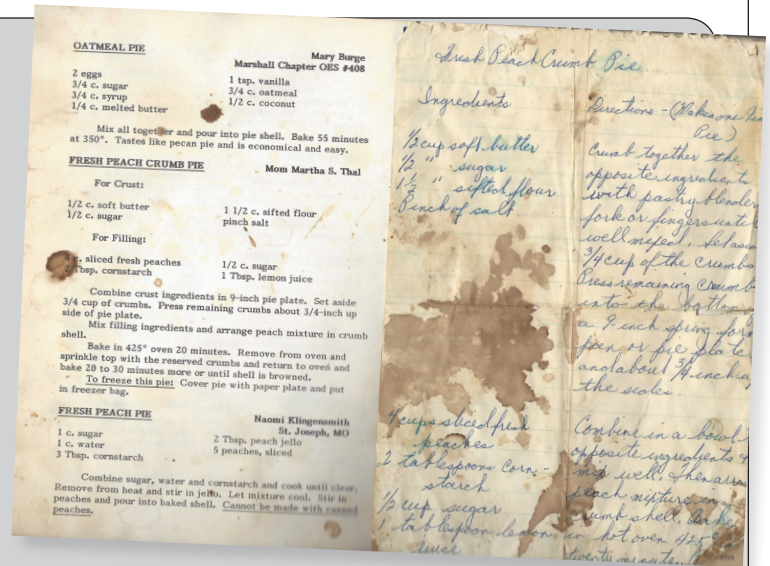
- ½ cup softened butter
- ½ cup sugar
- 1½ cups sifted flour
- pinch of salt

### Filling ingredients:

- 4 cups sliced Granny Smith apples
- 2 tablespoons Corn Starch
- ½ cup sugar (comprised of 6 tablespoons white sugar, 2 tablespoons brown sugar)
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 large pinch cinnamon
- 1 large pinch nutmeg
- A smaller pinch of allspice

### Steps:

1. Preheat oven to 425F
2. Gently combine crust ingredients. Reserve ¾ cup of crumb mix. Then press the remaining crumb mix into a 9-inch pie plate, as you would for a cookie-type crust.



3. Mix filling ingredients and then arrange in the pie plate on top of the crumb crust.
4. Bake for 20 minutes.
5. Remove from oven and sprinkle the remaining crumb topping over the apple filling. Return to oven and bake an additional 20-30 minutes or until the top is browned.

Serve with ice cream or whipped cream.

### Rabbi's Message FROM PAGE 1 ►

the people Israel. Either way, prayer allows us to see our role in a covenant that has brought blessing to humankind.

Through prayer, we can see that we are members of a living community of people who gather regularly to simply embrace the joys and burdens, opportunities and responsibilities of being alive. This serves to remind us that the good life is a social life of both celebrations and commitment beyond the self. My prayer life helps me to understand that I am linked to the wider world of the Jewish people who, together, are the holders of a great story of justice and mercy. A prayer life can, therefore, remind us of our covenantal obligation to and connection with all humanity. We pray for "that day" when the world will be one.

In this way, prayer invites

me — even urges me — to be a better person than I am. My grandfather, Rabbi Solomon Goldman, wrote: "I come to the Synagogue to probe my weakness and my strength, and to fill the gap between my profession and my practice." This is the life of prayer. There is quiet. There is poetry. There is music. In prayer, we strive to create an ambiance that induces us to suspend our tendency to doubt, our need to be smart, our inclination for cynicism, and seek to create a finite province of a new reality. In the reality created by the ambiance of prayer, hope, aspiration, dignity and beauty are real. Our souls have a chance to refresh. We strive to connect to that better angel that lies within each of us.

This is what a life of prayer can be. We like to say that Micah is a place that enables people to "bring your whole self and be your best self."

Prayer is the act of reaching to the deepest part of our humanity and, once there, discovering the sacred.

In our era, the mere act of prayer is a radical one. In a world of market capitalism, one that increasingly and overwhelmingly defines us as consumers, prayer is a defiant response. In our own capital city, which relentlessly defines us as political actors and as voters, prayer is a much more intimate, internal call for us to explore our sacred personhood. Torah tells us we each are called upon to be God's partner in the ongoing, daily work of creation. Prayer is our daily or weekly reminder of this pure understanding.

There is no question that in our overtly secular world, prayer is a very real challenge. This is why our worship team needs to have these conversations regularly. There is much to explore. How do we create

the ambiance that leads to the prayer life we crave? What is the right balance between the old and the new? How much of our inherited, scripted liturgy do we include? How much of the tradition do we need to retain to make sure we "feel" Jewish? How do we incorporate new poetry and readings? What is the right balance between singing in unison and simply listening to the beautiful offering of one voice singing alone, two voices in duet or our choir's voices soaring in unison? When do we need to get up and move a la Liz Lerman?

We call the largest room in the synagogue our sanctuary for a reason. It is the place where we gather to bond, discover and grow. It is the place in which we can seek our inner, sacred selves that hunger to be nourished. It is there — always — for each one of us.

Shalom,  
Daniel G. Zemel

# Chasing the Future at Micah and Beyond

BY FRAN DAUTH

IT WAS BILLED as “Big Questions on the American Jewish Future,” and if the young rabbis on the panel one recent evening at Temple Micah were any indication, the future isn’t that far off.

Consider these two projects discussed that evening: A Jewish space on Instagram. A home-based Jewish community in Brooklyn that flourishes among young children and daily life, called Beloved by its founder.

The conversation among “America’s next generation of Jewish community leaders,” as Rabbi Zemel called the panelists, was part of a mini-conference that began earlier in the day. There the discussion was on rabbinical education. Notably nearly all the senior staff of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion was in attendance, including President Andrew Rehfeld.

The evening session was open to the entire Micah community and featured seven recently ordained rabbis and one rabbinical student, most of whom had been Tisch Rabbinic Fellows at Micah. For many in the audience it was a reunion and a chance to learn about the work of the former interns.

It was also a chance to hear what

the young rabbis learned from the their time at Micah and what concerns them now about their rabbinate and their synagogues. In introducing them, Rabbi Zemel noted that Micah is in the midst of its own “Roadmap Visioning Process,” also an effort to assess what might work best in the future.

Participants were Evan Schultz, senior rabbi at Congregation B’nai Israel Bridgeport, Conn.; Nicole Roberts, senior rabbi at North Shore Temple Emanuel in Sydney, Australia; Daniel Reiser, associate rabbi at Westchester (N.Y.) Reform Temple;

April Davis, a rabbi on the staff of the Center for Exploring Judaism at Central Synagogue in Manhattan; Joshua Fixler, an assistant rabbi at Congregation Emanu El in Houston, Texas;

Samantha Frank, who said she is involved in a “collage” of activities, including the Instagram account; Sara Luria, the rabbi who runs Beloved; and Thalia Halpert Rodis, who is a rabbinical student.

While Rabbi Luria was not a Micah intern, she was instrumental in sending interns to Temple Micah in her previous role as the program director HUC’s Tisch/Star Leadership Fellowship.



Eight former rabbinical school interns took part in a mini conference at Temple Micah on what they have learned now that they are rabbis about the future of American synagogues. They spoke on two panels, moderated by Rabbis Beraha and Crawley. In the front row, from the left, are Rabbis Daniel Reiser, Nicole Roberts, April Davis, Sara Luria and Thalia Halpert Rodis. In the back row, from the left, are Rabbis Evan Schultz, Josh Beraha, Josh Fixler, Samantha Frank and Stephanie Crawley.

## GLIMPSES OF THE FUTURE

Rabbi Frank, who works on Temple Micah’s Haftorah project, created, along with rabbinical student Rena Singer, the Instagram account called “modern\_ritual” three years ago.

In describing what she learned from her time at Micah, Rabbi Frank recalled the time she submitted a sermon to Rabbi Zemel for review. “He said it was fine but that I hadn’t gone far enough,” she said, adding that what she learned was to “always be striving for the best.”

Instagram, a photo and video-sharing social-networking service, is particularly popular with young people, who comprise much of modern\_ritual’s audience. In an interview in Washington Jewish Week, Rabbi Frank said the Instagram account reaches more women than men and that the main demographic is 25 to 35-year-olds.

“It’s people who are really excited to be doing Shabbat for the first time and also people who grew up with the tradition but are looking for ways to make them more meaningful and fit with their egalitarian values or LGBTQ values,” she told Washington Jewish Week.

The night of the Micah panel discussion, Rabbi Frank noted the site often gets queries asking if there were a blessing for a particular event. She said “modern\_ritual” is a way for some “to live more Jewishly.”

A few days after the panel discussion, modern\_ritual featured a Shabbat photo that included the suggestion, “Glitter Is Always An Option.” The photo got 430 likes by the next morning.

While modern\_ritual is high tech, it is in many ways, Rabbi Frank said, a form of home-based Judaism.

Certainly that is true of Beloved. On her blog Rabbi Luria calls Beloved a “home-based experiment in Jewish life.” At Micah, she described a “combination Shabbat house, learning community, an experience of Jews living together.”

It began two-and-half years ago when she and her husband, and their

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE ►



# Make Reform Voices Count In The WZC Elections

By JONATHAN RISKIND

VOTING IN THE current World Zionist Congress elections is a way to make Temple Micah voices heard in Israel.

Every vote from the congregation is crucial to maintaining a strong Reform presence and a chance to combat the discrimination the Reform Movement faces in Israel. Together we can grow the Reform Movement and work towards making progress on the issues we care about: religious freedom, pluralism, equality, social justice, and more.

Voting is open from Jan. 21 until March 11. Your vote in this election is the only democratic opportunity you

have to influence Israeli society. Cast your ballot for this slate: Vote Reform: ARZA Representing the Reform Movement and Reconstructing Judaism.

ARZA — the Association of Reform Zionists of America — is the largest constituent of ARZENU, the umbrella organization of Reform and Progressive Religious Zionists in Israel and around the world. ARZENU has a proven record of advocating for an Israel that is Jewish, democratic and pluralistic, and for leading with our values.

It takes only a few minutes to register to vote and

cast your ballot. But a strong Vote for Reform will result in millions of dollars in WZC funds going to progressive causes and initiatives in Israel. Anyone who is 18 years of age or older by June 30, 2020 and self-identifies as a Jew is eligible to vote.

Look for more information about how to vote coming to you in a variety of ways: a display in the Temple Micah lobby with fliers about some of ARZA's key issues; emails from our rabbis; and remarks from the bimah during Friday night and Shabbat morning services. Volunteers periodically will be in the lobby helping people vote, and also calling

Temple Micah members during the voting period to encourage participation and walk people through the voting process.

Participating in the WZC elections is the only way North American Jews can weigh in democratically about issues in Israel. A strong election turnout among North America's Reform Jews and our supporters and allies will ensure that financial resources will continue to flow to our Israeli movement—including Reform congregations and institutions.

Read more about the WZC elections online at [ARZA.org](http://ARZA.org). ♦

## Chasing the Future FROM PREVIOUS PAGE ►

three children moved to a bigger house in Brooklyn.

At the time she asked herself, she said, “how could we build a home where parents could come for Shabbat with their children?” While the experiment began with Shabbat once a month, it has evolved into more than that.

Here is the explanation from the Beloved blog: “Through music, ritual, learning, creativity, sharing, and home-made food, we are building an open-hearted spiritual community for the 21st century.”

The name comes from the Song of Songs (I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine).

Beloved also offers space, support and training for clergy, activists, ritual leaders, artists, students and educators.

## ELSEWHERE IN THE POST-SEMINARY WORLD

Rabbi Fixler, who described himself as “summer Josh” as opposed to “year-round

Josh,” referring to Rabbi Josh Beraha, said he had been in “a culture of no” and but found a “culture of yes” at Temple Micah.

Since his ordination, however, he has discovered “we are not great at imagining lives of people who are different.” He said he often encounters confusion when he tries to introduce something radically different.

Among the challenges he faces is the need sometimes to give up some of the things that are working, to make room for new ideas.

Rabbi Reiser took up that theme, as well. “Bigger is not always better, he said. At another point in the conversation Rabbi Reiser suggested synagogues need “to do less,” but “do them better.” We “need to figure out what we are uniquely qualified to do and spend 80 percent of the time” doing that, he said.

Rabbi Roberts said her Reform congregation in Australia faces many of the same issues as congregations in America, although the dominant Orthodox there considers the Reform movement secular.

“The synagogue,” she said, is

“peripheral to people's lives. It is a place where they come once a week, at best.”

Rabbi Roberts said she wants “it to be a place that matters to people,” a place of substance where you “encounter new ideas.”

Rabbi Schultz echoed her concern: “A lot of people think of synagogue like a gym membership. It is not.”

Rabbi Davis, who conducts classes at the Center for Exploring Judaism at Central Synagogue in Manhattan, said her time at Micah taught her to keep “asking the big questions.”

The rabbinical student, Thalia Halpert Rodis, said what she found at Temple Micah was “a clergy with a real passion to learn from the congregation.”

The second thing she learned, she said, is “Danny Zemel is truly kind. He cares about people.”

Rabbi Schultz also came away from Micah similarly impressed. Once he accompanied Rabbi Zemel while he visited a woman who was dying. There was little to say, Rabbi Schultz said, so Rabbi Zemel sang to her. ♦

**Micah Storefront FROM PAGE 1 ►**

Thirty years ago, Rabbi Lawrence Hoffman declared that the challenge facing the American synagogue would be to transform itself from an “ethnic fortress to a spiritual center.” The ethnic fortress sought to protect what was inside. Hoffman envisioned a spiritual center, which by definition, would be in conversation with the outside world.

Through the past 60 years, many Jews instinctively joined synagogues out of this strong sense of ethnic loyalty and belonging. The passage of time has brought generational change and with it a harder to define post-ethnic Jewish identity. It is not clear that future generations will automatically commit to synagogue membership or any sort of Jewish institutional affiliation.

From the 2013 Pew study — *A Portrait of Jewish Americans* — we know that although young Jews are proudly Jewish, they join synagogues at a much lower rate than their parents and grandparents before them. Young Jews also marry later, have children later, and devote primary energy to securing their own futures before establishing a family. Many who do join synagogues often see them as transactional—a place for baby-namings, religious school, *b’nai mitzvah* and High Holiday worship. In other words, even synagogue members continue to visit their Judaism, in a way,



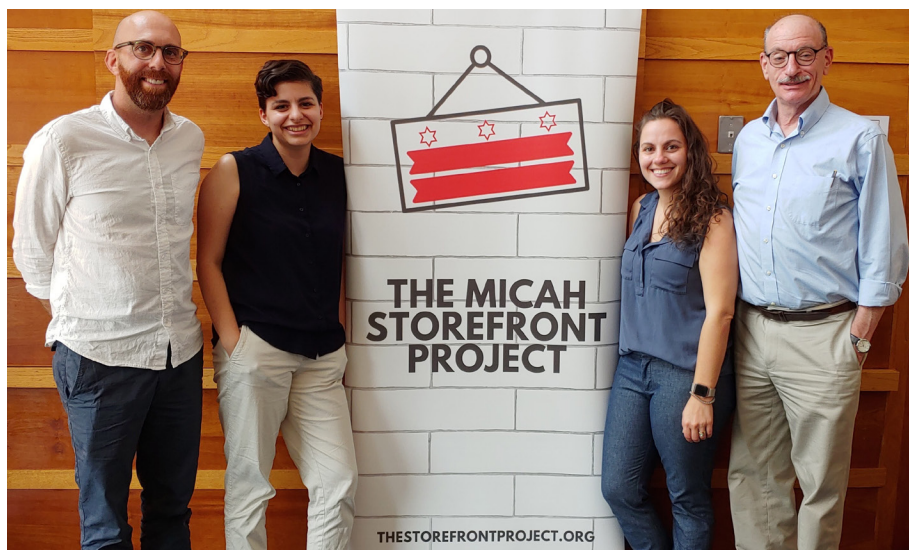
Rabbi Beraha’s guitar is as popular at the storefront project as it is at Temple Micah.

and so maintain the separateness of their Jewish lives.

In regard to synagogue participation, the 2017 Greater Washington, DC Jewish Community Demographic Study confirmed Pew’s 2013 findings for the DMV region. Amazingly, despite an increase in the Jewish population of greater Washington since 2003, only *one-quarter* of Jewish households are synagogue members. Among intermarried families, a mere 14 percent decide to affiliate.

Though the 21st century thus far seems to be defined by fracture, disruption, instability and fear, human beings nevertheless continue to endeavor to build lives that matter, lives that are filled with meaning. It follows, then, that our spiritual centers should not simply be concerned with life cycle, but also must address questions about what it means to be human, to live lives of dignity and honor. Our spiritual centers should help people contemplate rich sources of happiness, fulfillment and significance. And more—given the vast array of resources in Jewish America combined with our commanded desire to care for others—our spiritual centers should work to ensure a more just, tolerant, and peaceful world for our children. But most of all, our spiritual centers should be rooted in the lived experience of the liberal, modern, American Jew.

The core question then — for a people rooted in a narrative that certainly could provide the proper language and wisdom to answer questions about how best to live — is whether our central place of meeting, the synagogue, will be a place that provides for serious, deep introspection, and offer a way forward in this age of fracture. Will American



Rabbi Beraha, Alexina Haefner, Micah’s community coordinator, Rabbi Crawley and Rabbi Zemel with the Storefront banner.



## SUKKAT SHALOM FINDS RENEWED FOCUS ON REFUGEES, ASYLUM SEEKERS

By Dorian Friedman

Sukkat Shalom began with the decision that Temple Micah would support a refugee family that had immigrated to the United States. After two years, with “Micah’s” Afghan family well settled in America, Sukkat Shalom began looking for its next challenge.

Sukkat Shalom found it on the Mexican-US border last fall when eight members spent several days meeting with human rights organizations, immigration lawyers, visiting shelters and observing refugees in shelters.

Now Sukkat Shalom members say bearing witness to conditions at the U.S. border was the first step to discovering new ways to honor their mission – providing a “shelter of peace” for immigrants and refugees.

For example, having seen that many detained asylum seekers lack the bare necessities of daily life, Sukkat Shalom committed to collecting and shipping basic toiletries to the border. The week of Thanksgiving, a dozen temple members gathered in Washington to assemble 200 “Dignity Kits”—totes filled with soap, shampoo, toothbrushes, toothpaste, feminine hygiene supplies—to be shipped to Micah’s partners at HIAS, which will distribute them to families awaiting court dates in Juarez.

Many of the items sent to the border were obtained because of the generosity of many Micah members including dentists Adam Goldstein and Stan Shulman.

In addition, the Sukkat Shalom team continues to advocate more humane immigration policies—and to protest immoral ones. On a rainy December evening, members gathered in front of U.S. Customs and Border Protection headquarters for an interfaith vigil

to honor the memories of eight children known to have died in U.S. custody or detention—including several who succumbed to the common flu. Joining other faith leaders, Rabbi Crawley delivered moving remarks about the Jewish imperative of welcoming the stranger.

Sukkat Shalom is exploring ways to address the greatest need the group learned about on the border tour: More and better legal representation for desperate asylum seekers.

“We saw so many people trapped in an inexplicable legal process,” said Aurie Hall, who helped organize the Micah trip to the border.

We saw, she said, “People who didn’t understand what they needed to do to make a claim for asylum; who were experiencing endless barriers to filing a claim and were getting lots of conflicting and inaccurate information from border officials and other immigrants.”

The consequence was that “people were waiting and living on the streets for months and months without knowing whether their claim could be successful.”

Currently, the leadership team is consulting legal experts and immigration advocates to identify the best partners for action.

Possible avenues include funding or underwriting an immigration lawyer or legal fellow, perhaps through HIAS’s expanding legal representation initiative at the Mexican border or in a few cities.

Sukkat Shalom invites all interested congregants to join its efforts and attend its regular meetings. The committee may be contacted at [sukkatshalom@templemicah.org](mailto:sukkatshalom@templemicah.org).

### Micah Storefront FROM PREVIOUS PAGE ►

Jews merely look with nostalgia upon a romanticized Jewish past while simultaneously and actively finding alternative communities through which to navigate this age of uncertainty and unrest?

We argue that the well-worn, blazed trail of how best to create a life of value,

established by our ancestors, and passed down through the generations, needs to be re-charted, or better, a new tributary must be forged, connected to the synagogue, but flowing outward, toward the people and the lives they live.

The Temple Micah Storefront Project expands the definition of the American synagogue by creating Jewish

encounters that cohere with the lived experiences of real people, Jewish and beyond. We move the Jewish conversation from inside the walls of the synagogue into the public square, and remove physical, social, and psychological barriers to participation. We proclaim that this, too, is Jewish. This, too, is synagogue. ♦

# TZEDAKAH

## BUILDING IMPROVEMENT FUND

IN MEMORY OF  
Henry Paul Oseran, by  
Johanna and David Forman

## ENDOWMENT FUND

Arthur Freeman

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and Martha Adler  
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## MUSIC AND WORSHIP FUND

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Dr. Stanley Foster, by Jeanette Foster

IN MEMORY OF  
Tovey Barron, by David and  
Barbara Diskin, Lora Ferguson,  
Ed and Shelley Grossman  
George Lehker, Nancy  
Schwartz, Mark Snyderman,  
and Elliott Stonehill, by  
Roberta and Mort Goren  
Donald Lehmann, by Rich Lehmann  
Jane Morningstar, by Sara  
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## RABBI BERAHA'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

Sarah Goldfarb

IN HONOR OF  
A baby naming, by David  
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Our wedding, by Stephanie  
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Laurence Frank  
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IN HONOR OF  
Steve Rockower, for his tour of  
the Smithsonian, and Ivan Sindell  
and Alan Kraut, for the New  
York trip, by Shellie Bressler  
Rabbi Zemel, by Roberta and Peter  
Gluck, Jill and Doug Sherman

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## THE STOREFRONT PROJECT

IN MEMORY OF  
Joshua Justin, by Meryl  
and Michael Chertoff

## SUKKAT SHALOM

Margaret Henoch

## THE RABBI DANIEL GOLDMAN ZEMEL FUND FOR ISRAEL

Bea Birman  
Mary Beth Schiffman

IN HONOR OF  
Sophie Gluck becoming bat  
mitzvah, by Ronna Foster  
Rabbi Daniel Zemel, by Muriel Wolf

IN MEMORY OF  
Ruth Jonas Bardin, by  
David and Livia Bardin  
Jerome Brawer, by Scott Brawer  
Robert Kamin, by Harriet Weiner

*This list reflects donations  
received October 23–December  
13, 2019. Every effort has been  
made to ensure its accuracy,  
but if there are any errors or  
omissions please accept our  
apologies. For corrections or  
clarifications, please contact  
Rhiannon Walsh in the  
temple office. Thank you.*



Temple Micah member Aaron Kaufman was recently installed on the Union for Reform Judaism National Board. Pictured here at the recent UJR Biennial are Louise Zemel, Aaron Kaufman (seated), his father Josh Kaufman, a longtime member, and Rabbi Zemel.

## B'NAI MITZVAH



**AARON RAFAEL ZEVIN-LOPEZ**

**JANUARY 11 / 14 TEVET**

**PARENTS:** Sarah Zevin and Alfonso Lopez

**TORAH PORTION:** Vayechi



**IDA STEINBERG**

**JANUARY 18 / 21 TEVET**

**PARENTS:** Annys Shin; Dan and Mimi Steinberg

**TORAH PORTION:** Shemot

Photo  
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**OLIVIA HEINEMANN**

**JANUARY 25 / 28 TEVET**

**PARENTS:** Jennifer Budoff and Thomas Heinemann

**TORAH PORTION:** Vaera

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**ALMA CLAUDE BIELENBERG**

**FEBRUARY 1 / 6 SHEVAT**

**PARENTS:** Aaron Bielenberg and Karen Young

**TORAH PORTION:** Bo



**GABRIEL SAAD**

**FEBRUARY 15 / 20 SHEVAT**

**PARENTS:** Sarah Gordon and Martin Saad

**TORAH PORTION:** Yitro



**CHARLES SOVEN**

**FEBRUARY 22 / 27 SHEVAT**

**PARENTS:** Renata Hesse and Joshua Soven

**TORAH PORTION:** Mishpatim

## MAZAL TOV!

**Lindsey Bailet, Rachel Shepherd, and Lena Bailet-Shepherd, on the birth of their son and brother, Ori Bailet-Shepherd**

**Lou, Rebecca, and Holden Kolodner, on the birth of their son and brother, Oaklee Kolodner**

**Evan Sills and Jessica Jones, on the birth of their daughters, Elie Ruth and Rose Emma**

**Harry and Jessica Silver, on the naming of their granddaughter, Eliana Juliette Silver**

**Ronit Zemel and Ethan Porter, on their marriage, and to Ronit's parents, Louise and Danny Zemel**

## CONDOLENCES

The Temple Micah community extends its deepest condolences to:

**GEOFFREY BARRON**, on the passing of his brother, Tovey Barron

**DAN BEHAR**, on the passing of his father, Joseph Behar

**GREG CAPLAN**, on the passing of his father, Benson Caplan

**EMILY CLOYD**, on the passing of her grandfather, William Cloyd

**LYNN COFFMAN**, on the passing of her father, Charles Koppelman

**ROBERTA GLUCK**, on the passing of her brother, Donald Spector

**LOU KOLODNER**, on the passing of his grandmother, Margaret Lichtenstein

**SUSAN LAHNE**, on the passing of her brother, Donald Greenberg

**SYLVIA MARGOLIN**, on the passing of her husband, Victor Margolin

**DOUG SOFFER**, on the passing of his mother, Marilyn Soffer

**PETER VAN PRAAGH**, on the passing of his father, David Van Praagh

**JANE YAMAYKIN**, on the passing of her grandfather, Valentin Yamaykin

May their memories be for a blessing.





▲ Last December, Sukkat Shalom members gathered outside the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol headquarters in Washington, D.C. to protest.

Earlier, members also put together packages to be sent to the Mexican border for asylum seekers. ►

*See full story on page 9.*



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