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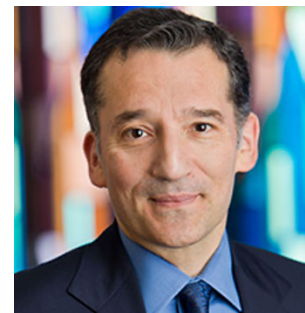
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A MESSAGE FROM RABBI DAVID WOLPE

Max Webb Senior Rabbi

Growing up, I lived down the street from Chaim Potok, author of “The Chosen,” “My Name is Asher Lev,” and many other books. He belonged to my father’s shul and I would occasionally speak with him about writing and books. He once told me that every novel has a central metaphor, sometimes obvious, sometimes hidden. For the chosen, it was the baseball game.



The metaphor for our year, I think, is the mask. Wearing it, not wearing it, different kinds of masks, the sense of being hidden, and the fear that it connotes. It appears that we are coming closer and closer to a time when we will be able to take off our masks.

It reminds us however, that we all wear different kinds of masks. That is part of the theme of Purim — that people are not always what they seem, and we do wear masks.

Judaism teaches us to come closer to who we really are and then also to seek to become truly better. Part of taking off the mask will be rejoining in community. This was a time when people had a powerful impulse to take care of themselves, but our tradition is also about taking care of the other. That is who we truly are as Jews. May this time of masks end and the time of reaching out to one another grow and flourish.

A MESSAGE FROM RABBI NICOLE GUZIK

How We're Collectively Addressing Mental Health

As the world faces the global pandemic of Covid-19, we are simultaneously facing a mental health disaster. Severe loneliness, anxiety, depression, worry about the present, and fear of the unknown. As a religious community, we have an obligation to see all facets of the soul. When our community members feel broken, as a synagogue, we have the opportunity to address each other's needs and become stronger in our reaching out. Throughout the next few months, Sinai Temple is officially launching our Sinai Temple Mental Health initiative: a thoughtful presentation of speakers, programs, resources, and community efforts to address mental health at Sinai Temple and beyond.

Enjoy our Hanukkah program: From Darkness to Light as we begin to address mental health in the greater community.

Click on the image below to watch.



A MESSAGE FROM RABBI EREZ SHERMAN

As each of us have faced some of the most challenging times of our lives, our Rabbis command us to continue to find sparks of light and joy. The clergy have officiated lifecycle events in ways unimaginable just months ago. With Zoom, YouTube and other technological tools, we have reunited families from coast to coast and even around the world. Grandparents and cousins have aliyot from the east coast and Israel, shiva brings mourners together as we pray and share memories of love, and the sheva brachot under the chupa are recited from around the world. May we continue that closeness, grieving, celebrating, praying, and creating sacred community.

Here are several notes we have received, acknowledging the sacredness that occurs, physically distance, spiritually close.

“In my heart, I knew that doing it behind a little screen will be just fine because I knew you would have our back. The entire ceremony went so smoothly, and we enjoyed it as much as if it was at the sanctuary. I know for the last eight months, everyone worked very hard to make this day smooth and easy for us.”

“Sinai Temple has gone a long way to reassuring us and other families in the same position that they will have a meaningful bat/bar mitzvah experience. We have heard from many family and friends, from all corners of the world, that it was a warm and meaningful service.”

“Thank you for the heart-felt services. Even though these are not normal times, everything felt as normal as could be today. We are so blessed to witness the cultivation of our children’s Jewish education at Sinai. It was truly the most special part of the day for me to watch my kids lead the service with such ease.”

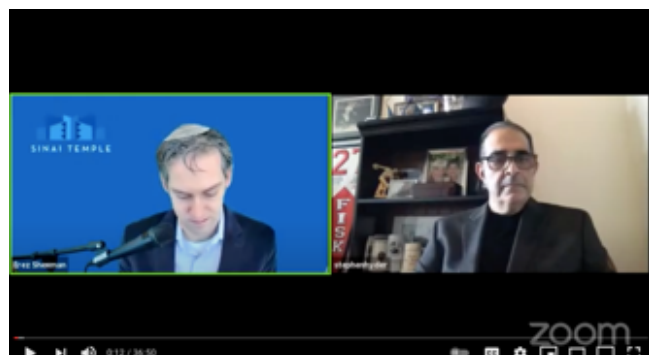


RABBI ON THE SIDELINES

Check out the latest episodes of Rabbi Sherman's new series below. New episodes are available every Thursday at 10:00 a.m. PST/1:00 p.m. EST on our [**YouTube Channel**](#).



Episode 2



Episode 1

A MESSAGE FROM CANTOR MARCUS FELDMAN

Over this past year, we have used the challenges of the pandemic to bring the blessings of music to our community in a way like we have never before. These last few months have been filled with the voices of our Sinai Temple Youth Choir, which meets virtually each week. Every month, a new video is released, as we both hear the gorgeous voices and see the beautiful faces of the next generation of Sinai Temple singers. Please see below our first three videos and tune in to Shabbat services as we continue to release more songs like these in the months ahead.



Oseh Shalom



Light One Candle



Mi Zeh Hidlik Virtual Duet

A MESSAGE FROM RABBI SAM ROTENBERG



Amidst all of the challenges brought about by Covid-19, I'll share the lights I see at the end of the tunnel. Our Atid community is struggling with Mental health: loneliness, job insecurity, dating trouble, and health concerns all making the issues facing our young adults uniquely troublesome. That being said, I have also seen our Atid community hungry to help, wanting to get more involved in social action as an answer to find meaning during this time. Our teens are also likewise missing the time spent in person with their friends. On the other hand, I have seen the full potential of our Sinai Temple teens come out in the creative virtual programs they have built from the ground up. There has been tremendous loss, and we have not been able to meet in person for lifecycle events for some weeks now. On the other hand, the vaccine rollout, while slow, offers new hope that we will be together (at least in some capacity) soon. I personally believe it will be some time before we get back to "normal." However, our longing for connection and shared struggle has opened hearts, and taught us the true value of being together. I hope that will remain unchanged when, in the coming months, we discover our NEW normal.

Tune into Rabbi Rotenberg's Weekly Hasidut Class every Saturday at 7:00 p.m. on our [YouTube channel!](#)

Little did I know, when I became Temple President, that my tenure would be consumed with how to address a pandemic. However, if anything, my respect and love for our community have only been enhanced by the work of our Kehillah and the dedicated clergy and professional staff who make our home so special.

At Sinai Temple, we are a family. And families make sacrifices for the betterment of the whole. Families adapt to their circumstances, and most importantly, families find ways to move forward regardless of the impediments put in front of them.

Our Sinai family is no different. We have been focused, creative, and productive while providing a safe and caring environment. We have continued on our core missions of Jewish learning, support for Israel and our commitment to improving ourselves and the world through a growing relationship with God.

The world changes. And we at Sinai Temple adapt. We are resilient.

Life is not easy these days. We face uncertainty, isolation, and frustration. We feel confined, restricted, and limited. It may seem impossible at times to get our footing, to find rhythm, to feel secure. None of us are alone in feeling this way.

Through all of this, we may feel a greater need for community, spirituality, and Jewish education than ever before. Your clergy and professional staff at Sinai Temple sense and know this. They have risen to the occasion, working day and night often without any breaks or vacation, to bring you the best of who we are, despite all the constraints the pandemic imposes upon us. If you have not already done so, I invite you to take an active role in our community. There is something for everyone. No matter your skill or interest, we need you and we all can benefit from your involvement.

Families, in good times and bad, have each other's backs. The Sinai family is no exception. Our missions will continue. Our future remains bright thanks to the combined light all of you shine on our community every single day.

Warmly,
Jamie Berman
President, Sinai Temple



Dear Friends,

As the craziness of this pandemic continues and the uncertainty of when the normalcy of our lives returns, I hope that you and your families remain healthy and safe. May 2021 bring all of us greater comfort that a vaccine is here and that over the next few months as it gets dispersed to all of us that we will soon be able to gather together again as a community.

For me, the hardest part of the past ten months has been the seclusion and not being able to interact with my family and friends in person. I miss Shabbat dinners and Shabbat services and being able to travel. The word 'savlanout' which in Hebrew means patience, is something we all must have as we see the light coming from the darkness and as we slowly regain the balance of our daily lives over this next year.

I wish you all a New Year filled with happiness, prosperity, and peace – but mostly a year of good health and safety for all.

Howard Lesner
Executive Director & COO

A MESSAGE FROM SINAI AKIBA ACADEMY



More than 550 members of the Sinai Akiba community came together on Zoom at the School's first virtual Annual Event, Sunday, January 24. It was truly a night to remember as we celebrated our exemplary faculty for their tremendous efforts during this challenging year, and Rabbi Andy Feig received a special award for his 13 years of dedicated service as our School's Rabbi. [Watch our heartfelt tribute videos](#) for this year's honorees.

There were many surprises throughout the evening and lots of laughs with comedian MODI who joined us live from New York. Our own SAA Alumni Band rocked the house with Crosby, Stills & Nash's song "Teach Your Children". If you missed it or want to enjoy it again, [click here](#).

Following the main program, guests had the opportunity to move on to different entertainment experiences including a cooking class with Nancy Silverton of Mozza, Puzzles & Games with David Kwong and a mixology class with LiquorLab.

Special thanks to our event sponsors for their generosity and for making this such a successful event, and to our Annual Event team for all their planning and recruitment efforts. It truly takes a village to put an event like this together and I am so grateful to have joined this amazing community.



Dr. Marc Lindner
Head of School, Sinai Akiba Academy



A MESSAGE FROM THE RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

We are busy at Sinai Temple Religious School! The pandemic has not stopped our energy and love of Jewish learning. Here are just two of our many highlights from our 6th and 3rd grade classes.

We held a socially distant Tefillin Workshop for our 6th graders and their parents. In the pictures below, Rabbi Rotenberg is wrapping Tefillin with Rosstin Markzar and Jonathan Hazany. We so enjoyed seeing parents and their children wrapped in Tallit and Tefillin and the awesome sounds of the blessings said together with 6th graders, their parents, and the Sinai Clergy.

Our 3rd graders had their annual Jerusalem Café virtually this year. The Religious School staff dropped off packages of ingredients at each students home, including an apron, which the students decorated to become a "Jerusalem Café waiter." They then had to ask their parents ALL in Hebrew what their parents wanted to eat for breakfast. The program culminated in a Jerusalem bingo game and finally, singing together songs like "L' shana Habah b yerushalim!" (next year we will be in Jerusalem). Amen!! We continue to look for ways to engage the students and their families during this very unusual year!



Danielle Kassin
Sinai Temple Religious School Director



SINAI TEMPLE SISTERHOOD

Dearest Sisters,

Finally, the year 2020 is behind us -- an unforgettable year, and anyone reading this has a lot to be thankful for. We are still alive, and we are hopeful that this nightmare will soon be behind us. The vaccine is here, and some of our indispensable and brave congregants in the medical field are already recipients of this miracle, created and distributed by so many bright and talented Jewish minds. In the meantime, we have a myriad of opportunities for us to connect with each other, electronically, in the month of January. After our Executive and Board meetings on the 5th, we are having a combined Rosh Hodesh and Cooking event with cooking coach Debbie Kornberg on Thursday the 14th at 4:30pm, and a Sisterhood Book Club at 12:30pm on Thursday the 21st. All events are free of charge, and we hope that you will join us for as many events as you are able. Wishing we will all be together, in person, soon!

We miss you all...Happy secular New Year!!!



Lina Pournazarian & Marcy Melton
Sisterhood Co-Presidents

UPCOMING EVENTS



Thursday, January 28, 2021
12:00 p.m.

Join women of all ages for a Torah study group via Zoom, led by Rabbi Nicole Guzik. Explore historical and contemporary commentaries, and how the Torah applies to our lives as women. Click [HERE](#) to register.



Thursday, January 28, 2021
6:30 p.m.

Join Rabbi Judith Hauptman, E. Billi Ivory Professor (emerita) of Talmud and Rabbinic Culture at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, for a discussion on the role of the Committee of Jewish Law and Standards and the issues surrounding technology and Shabbat. Click [HERE](#) to register.

A MESSAGE FROM ATID'S DIRECTOR

Throughout the pandemic, we have been in touch with many young adults through one-on-one outreach and online gatherings. We are enthusiastic about continuing to provide much needed support along with meaningful virtual opportunities for young professionals to connect, learn, and feel community. The Atid newsletter is a wonderful way to stay up to date on upcoming events and exciting new initiatives, including speakers, Shabbat experiences, holiday celebrations, volunteer and mentorship opportunities, learning sessions, fitness, and more. To subscribe, please email atid@sinaitemple.org.



Briana Benaron



SINAI TEMPLE TEEN CENTER

Message from Talia David

Continuing an active and eventful year virtually, the Sinai Temple Teen Leadership group has kept up their work through educating, connecting, and helping out those in the Jewish community. To spread awareness and knowledge regarding the topic of Antisemitism, the Israel Chair, Leah Khorsandi, held an Antisemitism Awareness Week (11/1-11/8) on the Sinai Temple Teen Center Instagram account (@sinaitempleteencenter). Informative infographics, interviews with Rabbi Rotenberg and other students, as well as an Instagram live with the Social Media Chair, Talia Davood, were all elements of the event.

As a culminating activity, StandWithUs representatives Jaden Penhaskashi and Aaron Benyamini worked with Leah to host a Zoom lecture on Antisemitism vs. Legitimate Criticism of Israel. Following this event, the Social Action Chair, Ayla Kattler, also hosted a heartfelt letter writing night to prepare cards for elderly members of the Jewish community for Hanukkah. This beautiful Hanukkah card initiative enabled just 17 teens to write over 200 personalized cards to all of Sinai's members 80 years old and up. Next, Shira Berukhim, a 9th Grade Representative, held a debate night sparking interesting conversations among participants. Fun questions comparing the first and last night of Hanukkah were among the multitude of engaging topics that kept the kids excited and interested. Recently, on December 13, the Community Engagement Co-Chairs, Eva Khorsandi and Davina Yashar, hosted a lighthearted Jeopardy night around topics of Hanukkah. It was an engaging way for kids to work as a team and learn about the holiday. If interested in meeting the rest of the Executive Council, take a look at the introductions Talia Davood put together on @sinaitempleteencenter (Instagram). All the teens are enthusiastic about next semester's endeavors and are thrilled to be making a positive impact during these trying times.



ABNER & ROZ GOLDSTINE SCHOLAR IN RESIDENCE PROGRAM

Sinai Temple was once again honored to host the Abner and Roz Goldstine Scholar in Residence. This year, we moved from a Shabbat to a series of live evening lectures and conversation with Dahlia Lithwick, Expert of the United States Supreme Court. The conversations were led by Rabbi Wolpe and Laurie Levenson, giving us an eye into how religion and the Supreme Court work together. If you missed the lectures, please see the recorded programs below.



CAMP RAMAH'S EZRA PROGRAM

Sinai Temple has an amazing relationship with Camp Ramah. If you have ever been to Camp Ramah in Ojai, you would be privy to see the Jewish future. Children studying Torah, playing basketball, praying, and learning together, creating lifelong relationships.

You would also witness the miracle of the Ezra program, which trains young professionals with special needs in vocational training. Over the past two years, the Ezra program has expanded to Ezra Ba'ir, matching Ezra campers with Jewish institutions in Los Angeles for job placement.

Zachary said down for a Zoom interview to share his experiences as Sinai Temple.

Zach's favorite part of Sinai are the times with his co-workers performing different tasks. You often could find Zach in the middle of a social gathering in the Sinai Temple hallways.

Zachary started at Sinai Temple in January 2019, where he has helped in the religious school, delivering challahs to Sinai Akiba classrooms, making High Holy Day and Hannukah kits for our members, helping return books in the library, administrative tasks, and more.

During the summers, he assists with Sinai Temple's Basketball Camp and has also worked at the Union for Reform Judaism Sports camp.

Outside of Sinai Temple, Zach is still very connected to the Ramah community, participating in job training through Camp Ramah twice a month. While you can find Zach around West Los Angeles, you can also find him travelling the world, to Israel for his Bar Mitzvah and Birthright, Barcelona for a soccer game, Venice, and Panama. While not at work, Zach can also be found listening to his favorite Jewish artists, Rick Recht and Josh Warshawsky.

As Zach said about Sinai Temple, "I like everybody, and I like doing everything!"



ISRAAID

Hannah Asher and her cousin Talia always shared a mutual love of baking. Every Friday night during their weekly family Shabbat dinner, you could find the two teens huddled in a corner bonding over their mutual love of baking healthy treats. They soon realized that if they joined forces and combined their passion for baking with helping people in need, they could have a big impact. They quickly came up with the concept of “Baking for Change,” planning a menu of delicious treats to sell to family and friends and then donating the proceeds to a charity of choice. The only thing they needed to do now was to decide on which cause to support!



Just six years prior, as a sixth grader at Sinai Akiba Academy, Hannah first learned about IsraAID, Israel's leading non-governmental humanitarian aid agency, during a class presentation and a corresponding photo exhibit displayed in the Merage Art Gallery. Walking through the Sinai Temple hallways every day, she recalled being moved by the glossy images of IsraAID's global field staff responding to disasters and humanitarian crises around the world, efforts that have helped support millions of beneficiaries in more than 50 countries since its inception in 2001. Hannah remembered feeling inspired by the photographs that demonstrated the power of human connection and human care, how simple acts of kindness can have such a profound impact to make change in our world and all done through an Israeli lens. So, when researching various organizations to possibly support through the bake sale, Hannah recalled these impactful memories of IsraAID's work, and the rest was history! The two teens started out with only a handful of orders to close family members, but once word got out, their orders took off! In just a few short months, the teens had raised more than \$3,000 by selling their delicious homemade treats, items like flourless almond butter cookies, fresh chia-berry jam, and fan-favorites artisan rosemary challah. “We didn't quite know what to expect... but we couldn't have foreseen the amount of support and dedication that [everyone] showed us,” Hannah shared. “We were inspired that so many had joined our path for change, championed our cause, and made our vision a possibility.”

Now sixteen, Hannah credits her family and her memories growing up at Sinai Temple as the inspiration to embark on “Baking for Change” and committing to making a positive impact in the world through IsraAID's global projects. As the daughter Negin & David Ascher and granddaughter of Dora Levi Mossanen and Nader Mossanen, all long-time Sinai Temple members, Hannah has always felt the most herself - seen, supported and loved - when in the presence of the congregation. “Sinai Temple is not just a place, it is a feeling - one of togetherness, peace, and unconditional love.” Her favorite memory is of singing L'Dor V'Dor in the Main Sanctuary, sandwiched between her entire family on the left and a complete stranger on the right. Being embraced by both her family and her community, both literally and figuratively, Sinai Temple has always felt like home and further deepened Hannah's connection to Judaism and commitment to creating good in the world. “My mom taught me that it's not enough to be grateful; you also have to project your gratitude back into the world through action.” And that's just what Hannah is continuing to do.

Since launching the baking fundraiser, Hannah has continued to work with IsraAID as a Teen Ambassador. She just launched The Brentwood International Disaster Club at her high school, completing her first virtual IsraAID event with 60 students attending and has plans for additional programming in the coming year. She is also about to embark on a new social impact adventure, launching a new raffle fundraiser at her high school, where she hopes to break the bake sale record for dollars raised! Hannah is bright, motivated, a born leader and deeply committed to making a difference in this world – the kind of passionate and caring individual that we are proud to count as a member of our Sinai Temple Family. If you wish to learn more about IsraAID, please check out www.israaid.org.

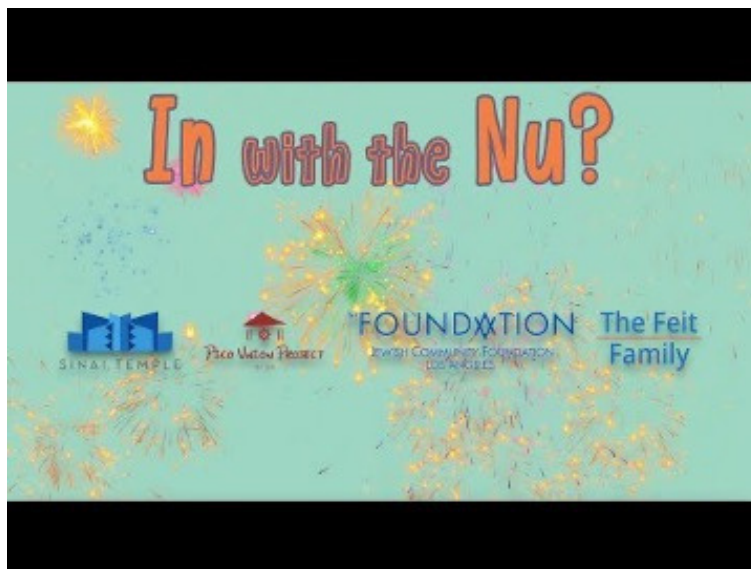
NOVEMBER & DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES VIDEOS



Happy Anniversary to our Sinai Temple members!
Watch November anniversaries [HERE](#) and December anniversaries [HERE](#).

NEW YEAR'S PROGRAM

Over the past few months, Sinai Temple has been honored to present special programming led by Rabbi Wolpe and Craig Taubman, including the return of the Feit Family Shabbat Live and a special New Year's Eve Program. If you missed it, make sure you click below to enjoy!



WEEKLY MINYAN TIMES

Shabbat Morning Services

Join us via YouTube:

www.youtube.com/SinaiTemplePresents

Ziegler Sanctuary: 9:00 a.m.

Daily Minyan

Join us via YouTube:

www.youtube.com/SinaiTemplePresents

Mornings: 7:30 a.m. Monday - Friday |

8:30 a.m. Sunday & National Holidays

Afternoons: 5:45 p.m. Sunday - Thursday



SINAI TEMPLE

Even from afar, Sinai Temple is still dedicated to providing a welcoming and caring community.

Now, more than ever, #WeAreSinai and we need you.



JANUARY – FEBRUARY 2021 PROGRAMMING CALENDAR



Wine Tasting with Cantor Keith Miller

Tuesday, January 26 at 7:00 p.m.

Join us for an evening of wine tasting with Sinai Temple's own "d-Cantor" Keith Miller. We will be tasting two wines: '19 Twin Suns Sauvignon Blanc and '19 Dalton Canaan Red.



Interactive Tu B'Shvat Seder

Wednesday, January 27 at 12:00 p.m.

Join Rabbi Sherman for a fun, interactive family friendly seder to celebrate **Tu B'Shvat**, the "**New Year of Trees!**" Upon registration, we will send you a list of supplies to have for this experience.



A Woman's Perspective with Rabbi Guzik

Thursday, January 28 at 12:00 p.m.

Join women of all ages for a Torah study group via Zoom, led by Rabbi Nicole Guzik. Explore historical and contemporary commentaries, and how the Torah applies to our lives as women.



Technology and Shabbat: A Conversation with Rabbi Judith Hauptman

Thursday, January 28 at 6:30 p.m.

Presented by Sinai Temple's Ritual Committee

Join Rabbi Judith Hauptman, E. Billi Ivory Professor (emerita) of Talmud and Rabbinic Culture at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, for a discussion on the role of the Committee of Jewish Law and Standards and the issues surrounding technology and Shabbat.



Tour of the Tel Aviv Museum of Art

Wednesday, February 3 at 10:00 a.m.

Join us for a live, virtual tour of the permanent Israeli Art Collection situated in the Herta and Paul Amir Building of the Tel Aviv Museum of Art. A museum guide will take us through the exhibition and answer questions from our community.



Metabolic Health and Wellness in the time of COVID with Dr. Charlene Lichtash

Wednesday, February 3 at 7:00 p.m.

Join Dr. Charlene Lichtash for an engaging discussion on how to optimize our metabolic fitness during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Foreign Policy: The Global Fight Against Anti-Semitism

Thursday, February 4 at 7:00 p.m.

A conversation between Rabbi David Wolpe and Sharon Nazarian, Senior Vice President in International Affairs, ADL.



Sinai Temple Presents *Who Knows One?*

Thursday, February 11 at 7:00 p.m.

A fun and engaging "Jewish Geography" game show! Tune in on Sinai Temple's Facebook and YouTube channels to join in on the fun!



Understanding the Knesset in 2021...and Beyond

Tuesday, February 16 at 7:30 p.m.

Presented by Sinai Temple's Israel Center

A conversation with Rabbi Nicole Guzik and Tomer Persico, Shalom Hartman Bay Area Scholar in Residence and the Koret Visiting Assistant Professor of Jewish and Israel Studies, UC Berkeley.



Watch and Kibbitz: *Disobedience*

Wednesday, February 17 at 7:00pm

Join Rachel Polansky, Sinai Temple's Program Manager, for an interactive discussion on the 2017 film *Disobedience*. Please try to watch the film in advance.



Comedy Night!

Thursday, February 18 at 7:00pm

Join your Sinai Temple community for an evening of comedy with comedian Mark Schiff and Wendy Liebman!



Emotional Well Being and Healthy Coping during the COVID-19 Pandemic with Dr. Sharon Arbel

Sunday, February 21 at 2:00 p.m.

A program focusing on taking care of one's mental health during this pandemic.