

Balak: Turning Curse into Blessing

The first prayer we traditionally recite upon entering the sanctuary is taken, in part, from this week’s Torah portion:

Mah tovu ohalekha Ya’akov, mishkenotekha Yisrael

How fair are your tents, O Jacob, your dwellings, O Israel!

(Numbers 24:5)

The prayerbook doesn’t tell you that these very words were pronounced by a non-Israelite prophet summoned to curse the people of Israel. What was intended as a curse became a blessing that continues to inspire us with pride, awe, and faith.

I think about this prayer each morning as I walk the city streets of Jerusalem, admiring the many synagogues I pass by on my way. At the same time, I can’t help but reflect on the curses still launched against us—curses that felt frighteningly real in the bomb shelter—that, despite their intention, have once again blessed us with pride, awe, faith, and, God willing, peace soon at hand.

Yet the parsha ends with an even more prescient warning. While attempts to destroy the Israelites fail from outside, tragedy ensues as they are nearly rent apart by internal strife. So too, strife within the Jewish community today—both in Israel and the US—is potentially a greater threat to our people’s survival than any weapon in the hands of our enemies. Only we can curse ourselves; only by blessing each other can we be, as we are called upon to become, a blessing to the world.

Shabbat shalom.



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Affiliated with the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism

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MINCHA & KABBALAT SHABBAT

in Kohn Chapel  
Every Friday at 5:45  
Also available to watch on YouTube

DAILY MINYAN

in Kohn Chapel  
Monday–Friday at 7:30 a.m. and  
5:45 p.m. (in person)  
Saturday 9:00 p.m. (online only)  
Sunday (and National Holidays, when  
held in-person) 8:30 a.m.



SINAI TEMPLE

16 TAMUZ 5785 | 12 JULY 2025



PARASHAT BALAK | בלק

Torah reading begins: Numbers 22:39 (page 899)

Maftir: Numbers 25:7-9 (page 908)

Haftarah: Micah 5:6-6:8 (page 914)

“The Day Before.” Sermon by Rabbi Erez Sherman

SHABBAT SERVICE

in Ziegler Sanctuary at 9:00 a.m.

Also available to watch on YouTube

TORAH AT THE TABLE

in CC Library Classroom at 9:00 a.m.

Honor or remember someone special with a meaningful gift to Sinai Temple. Scan this QR code to make a contribution in their name and create a lasting tribute.



Find us on YouTube at www.youtube.com/@SinaiTemplePresents

# A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT MEHRZAD ROSHAN

Dear Sinai Temple Community,

We are excited to announce that Sinai Temple has officially launched a Strategic Planning process—a vital initiative to guide our synagogue’s future and ensure it remains a thriving, welcoming, and meaningful spiritual home for years to come.

This effort, which will take place from now through late fall, is being led by a dedicated Strategic Planning Committee chaired by Richard Weston. We are also partnering with Heather Gowdy and Sarah Raful Whinston from DRG Talent, an external consulting firm with extensive experience guiding synagogues and nonprofit organizations through thoughtful and inclusive strategic planning.

To truly reflect the needs, hopes, and dreams of our wider community, we will soon invite input through a short survey. We are eager to hear from everyone—current members, lapsed members, and prospective members alike. Your voice matters, and your perspective will help shape our future.

We look forward to sharing more in the weeks ahead and thank you in advance for participating in this important journey.

Member Survey



Prospective Members Survey



## TEMPLE EVENTS

An Inside Job with Daniel Silva

Sunday, July 20 from 4:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Join us at Sinai Temple for an exciting event featuring best-selling author Daniel Silva, hosted by the legendary Henry Winkler. Explore the world of espionage and thrillers while gaining exclusive insights into Silva’s latest novel, An Inside Job.

Meet Your Mensch Karsh Terrace Rooftop Movie Night

Tuesday, August 5, 7:00-10:00 p.m.

Join us at Sinai Temple for a relaxing rooftop evening as we screen A Real Pain under the stars. Enjoy popcorn, snacks, and plenty of space to stretch out—just bring a blanket, some pillows, and wear whatever makes you comfortable.

Weekly Parsha Class

Every Thursday at 8:30 a.m.

Join us as Sinai Temple’s rotating clergy lead an in-depth exploration of the weekly Parsha. This class is offered exclusively online.

Sinai Temple Women’s Mission to Israel October 2025 Led by Rabbi Nicole Guzik

October 27 – November 2, 2025

For more information, email Gary Fayman at [gfoyman@sinaitemple.org](mailto:gfoyman@sinaitemple.org). Deadline is 9/1.

Siddur Project

Share your personal prayers, art, or music for a new Sinai Temple Siddur created by and for our community. Submit your original works to inspire others and enrich our collective prayer experience. Submissions are sent to [siddurproject@sinaitemple.org](mailto:siddurproject@sinaitemple.org). Scan the QR below for more information.



## SISTERHOOD

Concerts on Cañon

Thursday, August 7 at 6:00- 8:00 p.m.

Join Sisterhood for an evening of music and fun at Concerts on Cañon on Thursday, August 7, from 6:00–8:00 PM at Beverly Cañon Gardens! Enjoy a performance by Rod Lightning and the Thunderbolts of Love, a classic rock tribute band, and connect with friends.

## SAVE THE DATE

Mark your calendars for Dor Chadash’s end-of-summer party on Thursday, August 31, at 10:30 AM! Join us for a fun and festive celebration to close out the summer season.

## SPONSOR AN ONEG SHABBAT



Honor a simcha or yahrzeit by sponsoring an oneg! Your sponsorship will be featured in the Shabbat bulletin and announced from the bimah on Shabbat.

To sponsor, contact Judy Begin at [jbegin@sinaitemple.org](mailto:jbegin@sinaitemple.org) or 310-481-3222.

## WANT TO PLAN AN EVENT AT SINAI TEMPLE?

Host your next event at Sinai Temple, where exquisite catering meets a stunning setting to create unforgettable experiences.

Let our expert caterers transform your special occasion into a celebration filled with flavor, elegance, and impeccable service.

For more information, please contact Judy Begin at [jbegin@sinaitemple.org](mailto:jbegin@sinaitemple.org) or 310-481-3222.



Scan the QR code to RSVP and to learn about more events.

For more information contact Amanda Harrison at [aharrison@sinaitemple.org](mailto:aharrison@sinaitemple.org) or 310-481-3246