

Pinchas: Fighting for Peace

Parshat Balak ends with crisis narrowly averted. The Israelites betray God (again) by lapsing into idolatry; God afflicts them with a devastating plague; Pinchas, grandson of Aaron the High Priest, takes divine retribution into his own hands, killing two idolaters in cold blood—and the plague stops. Not only that, but God rewards him with a brit shalom, a “covenant of peace.” It seems, in this case, that violence is the answer. But is it really what God wants? Is extremism the Jewish way?

The words of the text might say one thing, but the letters say something different. The yod as it appears here in the name Pinchas—the same letter that begins the holiest name of God—is diminutive, and the vav in shalom is broken. Perhaps Pinchas was justified to act as he did; maybe violence was the answer, as war, however ugly, sometimes is. But even defensible violence diminishes the holiness we pray there to be in the world, and even peace won through the most just war leaves our hearts broken.

I’ve thought a lot about war and peace over the past two weeks, as I’ve had the opportunity to speak with Palestinians about the reality of the conflict in the Middle East. I wish I could say I came away with more answers than questions, with more hope than doubt. At the very least, I’ve come to appreciate that any path forward starts from a place of humility. Like the small yod in Pinchas, a little openheartedness goes a long way toward godliness—and, God willing, toward peace.

Shabbat shalom.

- Rabbi Moe Howard



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Affiliated with the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism

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SINAI TEMPLE

23 TAMUZ 5785 | 19 JULY 2025



PARASHAT PINCHAS | פנחס

BLESSING THE NEW MONTH OF AV (Next Shabbat)

Torah reading begins: Numbers 28:16 (page 931)

Maftir: Numbers 29:35-30:1 (page 936)

Haftarah: Jeremiah 1:1-12 (page 968)

“Moses’ Final Lessons:” Sermon by Rabbi Nicole Guzik

SHABBAT SERVICE

in Ziegler Sanctuary at 9:00 a.m.

The Bat Mitzvah of Eve S. Yadegar

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

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.

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. starting Aug. 7th

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. 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. 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 or 310-481-3222.

SHABBAT KIDDUSH IS SPONSORED BY

Sam and Niloo Yadegar in honor of Eve S. Yadegar’s Bat Mitzvah

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 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 or 310-481-3246