

Vayigash: To Be a Guarantee

The reconciliation of Joseph with his brothers is the happy ending to a family’s story of strife, loss, and grief. At the same time, it’s the resolution to a history of sibling rivalry—and intergenerational trauma—going all the way back to the very beginning. Cain’s infamous question after murdering Abel, “Am I my brother’s keeper?”, is answered in the affirmative by Judah on behalf of Benjamin:

“For your servant has pledged himself (*arav*) for the boy to my father, saying, ‘If I do not bring him back to you, I shall stand guilty before my father forever.’” (Genesis 44:32)

The word *arav* literally means “guarantee.” Judah, in pleading with Joseph to exchange his own servitude for Benjamin’s freedom, acts as his younger brother’s guarantor. The Lubavitcher rebbe, Menachem Mendel Schneerson, identifies this as the origin of the maxim *kol Yisrael arevim zeh bazeh* “all Jews are guarantors for one another.” It is from Judah that we get our name and our most important value as a people: mutual responsibility.

But there is more to the word *arav*. It also means “mixture,” as in the “mixed multitude (*erev rav*)” that went up with the Israelites out of Egypt. The Jewish people is a diverse assortment of personalities, practices, and politics. Yet we are a unity within this diversity. We share something much deeper in common than the surface features on which we differ.

This deeper something is the source of the third sense of *arav*: “sweetness.” It is the care and concern we have for each other that sweetens what would otherwise be a bitter tale of exile, persecution, and discrimination.

May we, like Judah before us, be guided by an ethic of *arevut*: taking responsibility for our brothers (and sisters), appreciating their uniqueness, and sweetening our own lives in loving them.

Shabbat Shalom.
Rabbi Moe Howard

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Special thanks to the staff and lay leaders who make Shabbat services exceptional:

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MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Celebrating 120 Years of Music at

Sinai Temple

Sunday, January 25, 2026

MINCHA & KABBALAT SHABBAT

in Kohn Chapel

Every Friday at 5:45 PM

Also available to watch on [YouTube](#)

DAILY MINYAN

in Kohn Chapel

Monday–Friday at 7:30 a.m.

Sunday morning at 8:30 am

Sunday-Friday evenings at 5:45 pm

Saturday evenings 9:00 p.m. (online only)

Please consult the website for holiday locations and times.



SINAI TEMPLE

7 TEVET 5786 | 27 DECEMBER 2025



PARASHAT VAYIGASH | ויגש

Torah reading begins: Genesis 44:18 (page 274)

Maftir: Genesis 45:25-27 (page 279)

Haftarah: Ezekiel 37:15-28 (page 291)

“Pivoting to the Present” - Sermon by Rabbi Nicole Guzik

SHABBAT SERVICE

in Ziegler Sanctuary at 9:00 a.m.

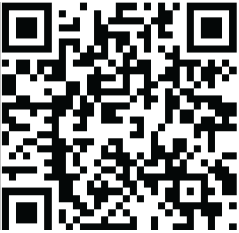
Also available to watch on [YouTube](#)

TORAH AT THE TABLE

in Blumenthal 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

RABBI DAVID WOLPE IN CONVERSATION

Discover a New Class Series with Rabbi David Wolpe at Sinai Temple.

Join one of today’s most compelling Jewish thinkers for a dynamic new class series exploring the ideas, texts, and conversations shaping Jewish life today.

Throughout the year, Rabbi Wolpe will lead multiple sessions featuring timely discussions of American Jewry, in-depth studies of the greatest Jewish books, and meaningful explorations of Jewish spirituality—from classical sources to modern voices.

Whether engaging with leading community figures or guiding learners through essential texts and spiritual traditions, this series provides insight, depth, and inspiration for anyone seeking meaning, context, and connection in Jewish life.

Open to everyone.
Free for Sinai Temple members | \$10 per session for non-members.

In person at Sinai Temple
Learn, reflect, and engage—one extraordinary series, many transformative conversations.

WE WANT YOU!
Apply for the Board of Directors
Sinai Temple is seeking qualified candidates to serve on our Board of Directors for the fiscal year starting July 1, 2026.

To qualify, candidates must have been a member of the Temple in good standing for at least two (2) years and should be serving on at least two (2) of the standing committees of the Board of Directors.

If you meet the above conditions and would like to apply, please contact Jessica Green at 310-481-3219 or jgreen@sinaitemple.org.

The deadline to apply is January 15, 2026.

Sinai Temple Sisterhood

Sinai Temple Sisterhood enriches members’ lives through programs, classes, and volunteer opportunities. We run the Gift Shop and cater luncheons, with proceeds supporting Sinai Temple, its schools, partial Jewish camp scholarships for members’ families, and the wider community. Classes include Mah Jongg, Arts & Crafts, Balance, Calligraphy, and Needlepoint.

For more information, contact Marilyn Stern at marilystern1@yahoo.com or visit sinaitemple.org/sisterhood. To receive our monthly newsletter, email Natalia Rojas at nrojas@sinaitemple.org.



TEMPLE EVENTS

Wine & Wisdom
Wednesday, January 7, 2026 | 7:30–8:30 PM

Come join Rabbi Avi Taff’s learning circle and explore the depths of Torah over a glass of wine. An evening of thoughtful conversation, connection, and inspiration. This is designed for ages 35-65.

Meet Your Mensch: Singles Mixer
Thursday, January 8, 2026 | 6:30 PM
Join us for a fun singles mixer with drinks, light bites, and live DJ Shawn Berookhim. This event is designed for ages 35–65. Tickets: \$40

Rabbi David Wolpe in Conversation with ADL CEO, Jonathan Greenblatt
Saturday, January 10, 2026 | 12:00 PM | Immediately following services
Join Rabbi Wolpe in conversation with Jonathan Greenblatt, CEO of the Anti-Defamation League, as they discuss the golden age of American Jewry—how we got here and whether it’s coming to an end.

Flesh Family Unity Shabbat Dinner & Service
Friday, January 16, 2026 | 6:30 PM
Join us for the Flesh Family Unity Shabbat Dinner & Service, a heartwarming and festive evening as we embrace the spirit of unity, joy, and community, continuing the Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King and Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel.

Join Sinai Temple at Faithful Central Bible Church!
Sunday, January 18, 2026 | 9:00 AM
Join Rabbis Taff and Kornsgold as Sinai Temple is hosted by Faithful Central Bible Church.

Men’s Club Mixer
Thursday, January 22, 2026 | 4:30 PM
Join fellow Men’s Club members for an evening of camaraderie, conversation with Rabbi Erez Sherman, and a relaxed viewing of Thursday Night Football. Don’t miss this chance to connect and unwind in a social setting!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!
Celebrating 120 Years of Music at Sinai Temple
Sunday, January 25, 2026 | 7:00 PM
Join us for a SPECIAL CONCERT celebrating 120 years of music at Sinai Temple, featuring Cantor Marcus Feldman and an extraordinary lineup of past and present musical leaders.

You can secure your spot by visiting www.sinaitemple.org.

Siddur Project
Share your personal prayers, art, or music for a new Sinai Temple Siddur created by and for our community. Enrich our collective prayer experience. Submit your original works to siddurproject@sinaitemple.org.

WANT TO PLAN AN EVENT?

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.

**SPONSOR AN
ONEG SHABBAT**
Honor a simcha or yahrzeit by sponsoring an oneg! Your sponsorship will be featured in the Shabbat bulletin and announced



To sponsor, 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