

Adult Education & Spiritual Offerings

Fall & Winter 2026 | 5787



Rabbi Allison Poirier,
Rabbi Emeritus, Carl M. Perkins
Executive Director, Melissa Rudman
President, Laurie Rubin

Stay Tuned for Adult Education Updates at
<https://www.templealiyah.com/learning/adult-education/>

Kehillah Kedusha - Our Sacred Community

As we begin the year 5787, we look forward to offering a rich array of Adult Education programs. Educational opportunities, along with spiritual and social experiences, bring us together as a strong community. This year's booklet continues to highlight the energy, wisdom, and leadership that Rabbi Allison Poirier brings to our synagogue.

You will note that the format of this year's Adult Education booklet is different from previous years. While the program descriptions remain the same, they are more condensed for easier reference. Our booklet, distributed before the High Holidays, will highlight fall and early winter programs, while a second booklet will contain descriptions of winter and spring programs. This installment will be available both online and in physical copies at the synagogue.

Most of our educational offerings will be in person to optimize our sense of community; however, some will be on Zoom to take advantage of leaders and programs that are outside our immediate geographic area.

Many programs will continue, including Rabbi Poirier's fall and spring classes; Rabbi Perkins' weekly Daf Yomi sessions on Monday mornings; and Rabbi Leslie Gordon's Re-imagined Torah on Two Feet on Shabbat mornings, which will occur twice a month.

We will also continue to offer monthly Kiddush Conversations to hear from Temple members about their personal life experiences, talents, and challenges. These sessions will continue to be in person and livestreamed. In addition, speakers from outside the Temple community and Temple members will present a variety of stimulating topics, including current events in Israel and programs on antisemitism. Please consult the weekly [ComingUp@Aliyah](#) for any program updates, times, and venues.

Best wishes for a happy, healthy, and sweet 5787!

B'Shalom

Susan Glazer

Adult Education Committee Chair

High Holy Day Offerings

The Adult Education Committee welcomes you to deepen your High Holy Days experience with a range of engaging programs. Join us for in-person and virtual classes, discussions, and learning opportunities that inspire reflection, connection, and community throughout this sacred season.

Rosh Hashanah Meditation & Reflection

September 13

8:45 - 9:15 AM

Naomi Litrownik, LICSW, will lead a Meditation Service on the second day of Rosh Hashanah. Open to everyone, no experience required, and held in person. This service is a 45-minute exploration of the holiday's spirituality.

Yom Kippur Day Study Break

September 21

3:45 - 5:00 PM

David Bernat will present an insightful presentation on the purpose of Yom Kippur. The Yamim Noraim, or High Holidays, invite us to reflect on our commitment to Jewish practices and ethics over the past year and to strive for our best selves in the year ahead. We face dilemmas highlighted in Rabbinic writings, such as whether our observance should be based on fixed traditions (Kevah) or incorporate spontaneity and innovation (Kavannah). Additionally, we must consider whether our morality should be guided by obligation or by goodwill, and whether actions should be driven by obligation or by benevolence and goodwill.

Year-Round Learning

A Taste of Daf Yomi

September 28, October 5, 12, 19 & 26, November 2, 9, 16, 23 & 30, December 7, 12, 21, 28

8:00 - 9:00 AM

Join **Rabbi Emeritus Carl Perkins** to study and discuss highlights from one of the previous week's Talmud pages. Relevant reading materials will be provided, and no advanced preparation is required.

Mifgash Musikali Be'ivrit

Musical Gathering in Hebrew

October 17, December 12, January 9

7:30 - 9:00 PM

Join **Maya Abramson** for a global musical journey in Hebrew that brings to life the voices of kings, warriors, and pioneers. These texts will inspire relaxed, conversational Hebrew sessions and highlight themes, such as spiritual connection, longing for our homeland, songs influenced by unrequited love, the Beatles, and even a poem sent into space by an Israeli astronaut. No Hebrew experience needed.

Re-Imagined Torah on Two Feet

October 10 & 24; November 14 & 21; December 12 & 19

9:00 - 10:00 AM

Rabbi Leslie Gordon will explore the weekly Torah portion and enhance your Shabbat morning experience on two Shabbatot mornings each month. Come for any or all sessions.

Shabbat Meditation

October 3, October 31, December 5

9:15 - 10:00 AM

Naomi Litrownik will lead a monthly Shabbat morning gathering for meditation, chanting, and discussion, in person and on Zoom. Explore spirituality through Chasidic and Kabbalistic themes. Check ComingUp@Aliyah for the Zoom link.

Taste of Talmud

November 5, 12, 26 & December 3, 10, 17, 24, 31

12:00 - 1:30 PM

Curious about the Talmud? Join **Rabbi Allison Poirier** for lunchtime classes exploring key passages from each of the six Sedarim (orders) of the Mishnah and Talmud. You will encounter stories, discussions on Jewish holidays and rituals, teachings on prayer, and timeless wisdom for living ethically and meaningfully. Class takes place on Zoom, so you can join us from home, the office, Florida, or wherever else you may be. No Talmud experience needed. Join the mailing list for up-to-date information.

Kiddush Conversations

Our congregation is filled with fascinating people with interesting stories to share. At Kiddush Conversations, Temple Aliyah members draw upon their areas of expertise, life experiences, or interests to lead a conversation. These conversations provide us with opportunities to learn from and about each other in a relaxed environment. Enhance your enjoyment of Shabbat by joining the Conversation.

Putting the Pieces Together

October 17

Ronni and Amos Eisenberg's life together has been a mosaic, made of places, family, chance discoveries, and the joy of creating side by side. After meeting in Rome 53 years ago, they built a textile business and a family. Later, buying a mosaic in LA launched their hobby. They have always worked together. They feel lucky for the life they have shared, but also for the many communities they have been part of; each one adding its own color, texture, and beauty to their mosaic.

Legislating as a Jewish Woman After October 7TH

November 21

Massachusetts State Senator Becca Rausch will share her experiences as a Jewish woman in public service within today's political climate. She will discuss how these experiences have evolved over her eight years in office. Although the Senator's political positions and party affiliation are relevant to the conversation, this will be a nonpartisan event.

Fall & Early Winter Programs

Washington D.C. Information Session

September 8

8:00 - 9:00 PM

Join us for an informational session to learn more about the Temple Aliyah Social Action Committee's upcoming trip and guided tour of Washington, DC, featuring expert insights, historic sites, and unique Jewish heritage experiences. The informational session with **Carolyn Muraskin**, our Washington, DC guide, will be held via Zoom. Zoom link will be sent via a separate email.

Judaism and Christianity in Dialogue

October 7, October 14, October 21

8:00 - 9:00 PM

In this three-part series, **Matthew Hass, PhD**, explores how Judaism and Christianity became distinct traditions while examining their shared roots. Topics include the historical Jesus and his Jewish context, the gradual separation between the two faiths, and the theological differences, such as Jewish monotheism versus Christian belief in the Trinity. Designed for an adult lay audience, the series provides historical and theological insights and encourages thoughtful conversation about the complex relationship between these traditions.

Role of the Jewish Community in the American Revolution

October 18

7:00 - 9:00 PM

Jonathan D. Sarna, Emeritus University Professor of American Jewish History at Brandeis University, will address the vital roles the Jewish community played in the fighting, supplying, and funding of the American Revolution, as well as how these activities, in turn, shaped the participation of Jews in the future United States of America. His talk and slides will be followed by a lively, open discussion with the audience.

Shared Power, Shared Future: Palestinian Citizens in an Election Year

October 25

10:00 - 11:30 AM

Join **Lydia Woolley**, Associate Director of The Abraham Initiatives' US office, for a conversation about building a shared society between Jewish and Palestinian citizens of Israel. The Abraham Initiatives is a Jewish-Arab group advancing social inclusion and equal rights for Israel's Palestinian citizens through public policy, opinion shaping, and practical models. We'll discuss their approach, wartime adaptations, and plans to promote civic engagement and partnership ahead of the next elections.

Temple-Wide Book Group

October 25

7:00 - 8:30 PM

Join a welcoming community of readers at the **Temple Aliyah Book Group** to explore books by Jewish and Israeli authors or centered on Jewish themes, selected by members. Chosen books will be announced before each meeting in the coming year (October, January, March, and May), and all who join will be invited to share their thoughts and connect with friends new and old. Our upcoming October meeting will feature “Heart of a Stranger” by Angela Buchdahl. No advance sign-up is required. Join any or all of the discussions. Contact Aliza Cooperman (aliza_cooperman@yahoo.com) or Joey Regen (joeyregen@gmail.com) for more information.

Making Jewish Food, or Making Food Jewish?

November 1

10:00 - 11:30 AM

Join **Rabbi Jonathan Brumberg-Kraus** for an enriching culinary experience that celebrates Jewish identity through food. In this interactive event, participants will delve into the concept of “gastronomic Judaism” and explore how our cooking and dining practices serve as creative expressions of our heritage. Everyone will prepare a traditional Iraqi Jewish dumpling soup, known as kubeh, while sharing stories that honor and preserve the memories of friends and family through the meals we create. Registration is required.

Jewish Tour of Washington DC

November 9 - 10

The **Temple Aliyah Social Action Committee** has organized a special guided tour of Washington, D.C., featuring expert insights, historic sites, and unique Jewish heritage experiences. Join this special tour of temple members to the nation's capital led by expert guide **Carolyn Muraskin** of DC Design. The group will explore iconic sites, such as the Capital Jewish Museum, the 7th Street Corridor, the historic Sixth & I Synagogue, and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The program includes meaningful visits to civic memorials and opportunities to savor local Jewish cuisine. Gain unique insights into Jewish American heritage and the community's enduring influence on our nation's capital. Perfect for lifelong learners seeking a deeper connection to Jewish history and culture.

Baking and Breaking Bread Across the Diaspora: A Global Jewish Cooking Class

CLASS 1 OF 3

December 13

10:00 - 11:30 AM

Sara M. Gardner, PhD candidate and culinary historian, returns to Temple Aliyah for a hands-on baking journey across the Jewish diaspora. In this 3-class series, we'll discover global Jewish baking traditions and techniques with each recipe—from phyllo-wrapped pastries and bulemas to Italian pizza ebraica and malawach. Get ready to bake and taste your way around the world. Classes 2 and 3 will take place on January 24 and February 28, 2027. Registration will be required for each class.

Reaching for the Stars - Space Torah

December 19

6:30 - 8:00 PM

In 1996, NASA astronaut Dr. Jeffrey Hoffman brought a small Torah scroll on Space Shuttle Columbia and read from Genesis during Shabbat, marking the first Torah reading in space. Join **Rachel Raz**, founder of the Space Torah Project and executive producer of "Space Torah," for a film screening and discussion. Discover Dr. Hoffman's inspiring journey and the connections between humanity, Jewish identity, and exploration.

Timely & Timeless: A Jewish Clock-Making Workshop Inspired by the Pomegranate and Seven Species

January 10, 2027

9:45 - 11:30 AM

Join **Shirah Rubin** for a hands-on journey into Jewish art and tradition. This workshop brings to life the symbolism of the pomegranate and Seven Species as we create a communal clock for our synagogue. Together we'll explore Jewish sources, reflect on the rhythms of sacred time, and shape ceramic "seeds" with our own fingerprints, each one representing a positive mitzvah and becoming part of a shared legacy. The project aims for 248 seeds among the pomegranate's symbolic 613, and thirty participants will also craft a unique Seven Species seder plate for Tu Bishvat. No prior ceramics experience needed. Registration required.

Mitzvah Day 2027

January 18, 2027

Work together at this all-ages event dedicated to community service and community building. Over the years, we've engaged in a variety of projects serving those in need throughout the wider community. Past projects include making meals for Family Promise Metrowest, dignity bags for Circle of Hope recipients, decorations for Wingate residents, packing meals for Project Outreach families, and grocery bags for JFS Metrowest families, baking banana bread for Temple Aliyah members in need, and making blankets for Project Linus. More details will be provided closer to this community event.

Glass Garden Making Workshop

January 16, 2027

7:00 - 9:00 PM

Check [ComingUp@Aliyah](#) for more information!

Mitzvah Day 2027

January 18, 2027

Work together at this all-ages event dedicated to community service and community building. Over the years, we've engaged in a variety of projects serving those in need throughout the wider community. Past projects include making meals for Family Promise Metrowest, dignity bags for Circle of Hope recipients, decorations for Wingate residents, packing meals for Project Outreach families, and grocery bags for JFS Metrowest families, baking banana bread for Temple Aliyah members in need, and making blankets for Project Linus. More details will be provided closer to this community event.

Baking and Breaking Bread Across the Diaspora: A Global Jewish Cooking Class

CLASS 2 OF 3

January 24

10:00 - 11:30 AM

Sara M. Gardner, PhD candidate and culinary historian, returns to Temple Aliyah for a hands-on baking journey across the Jewish diaspora. In this 3-class series, we'll discover global Jewish baking traditions and techniques with each recipe—from phyllo-wrapped pastries and bulemas to Italian pizza ebraica and malawach. Get ready to bake and taste your way around the world. Class 3 will take place on February 28, 2027. Registration will be required for each class.

The Role of the Jewish Community in the Antebellum South and Civil War

January 31, 2027

Join **Richard Kreitner**, author and renowned historian, for an engaging discussion of his recent publication, “Fear No Pharaoh.” Kreitner will shed light on the complex lives of 19th-century American Jews and encourage us to reflect on the enduring connections among faith, ethics, and national identity. Registration is required for attendance.

BIOGRAPHIES OF PRESENTERS

FALL 2026 SPEAKERS

MAYA ABRAMSON is a committed educator who has taught second grade at Mercaz Aliyah since 2023 and has supported students in private and public schools throughout her career. She grew up on Kibbutz Urim in the Negev, where her parents settled after making aliyah in the early 1960s. Maya earned her undergraduate degree in education and art from Oranim College in Israel and is completing her Master's in Early Childhood Education at Lesley University. Maya lives in Brookline with her 16-year-old son, Gilad.

DAVID BERNAT has been a Temple Aliyah member since 2008 and served a term on the board as Adult Education chair. He has a PhD in Biblical Studies and Jewish Antiquity from Brandeis, with research and publications on ritual, violence, and religious zealotry. Bernat has held faculty positions at Wellesley College, Hebrew College Rabbinical School, and UMass Amherst. He is active and sought after as a lecturer in the region on a wide variety of topics, particularly in adult learning arenas, and regularly leads tours to Israel with a focus on history and archaeology.

RABBI JONATHAN BRUMBERG-KRAUS is a Professor of Religion at Wheaton College in Massachusetts. He is the author of “Gastronomic Judaism as Culinary Midrash” (2018) and has written numerous articles on food rituals and Jewish cuisine. He translated R. Bahya ben Asher’s 14th-century Hebrew mystical text on food, “Shulhan Shel Arba (Table of Four),” into English, which is available online on Sefaria. For over twenty years, he has taught a First-Year Seminar titled “The Rituals of Dinner” at Wheaton. Currently, he is collaborating with Max Brumberg-Kraus on a “Haggadah” for American Thanksgiving. He holds a PhD in New Testament studies from Vanderbilt University and is a Reconstructionist Rabbi. Jonathan lives in Providence, Rhode Island, where he enjoys cooking, eating, and gardening with his wife, Maia, a retired elementary school teacher.

RONNI AND AMOS EISENBERG have been creating mosaic art for 27 years, using upcycled dishes, tiles, and found objects to craft mirrors, home decor, and custom heirloom pieces. They regularly exhibit their work at local Open Studios and select retail stores on Cape Cod. Their pieces have been featured at The Center for the Arts in Natick, and they were also chosen to exhibit at the 290 Congress Street Gallery in the Seaport. Their studio is located at the Mother Brook Arts and Community Center in Dedham.

SARAH M. GARDNER is a PhD candidate in Spanish and Portuguese Studies at the University of Minnesota, focusing on medieval Sephardic Jewish culinary heritage and identity. She teaches Jewish cooking classes and has worked as the Collaborations Manager at the Jewish Arts Collaborative and the Associate Director for Young Adult Programs at Hebrew College. As a Fulbright Graduate Research Scholar (2016-2017), she studied Sephardic cuisine in Spain. Sara has presented at international conferences and lectured for the Jewish Women's Archive. She is also co-author of "The Rosh Hashanah Seder Cookbook" (2018) with the Reform Jewish Community of Madrid.

RABBI LESLIE GORDON has been an important part of the community since 1997, serving as Temple Aliyah's Interim Rabbi during rabbinic searches and sabbaticals, and teaching numerous classes and workshops. She holds a Rabbinic Ordination and Master of Arts from the Jewish Theological Seminary of America and has served as Senior Interim Rabbi at Temple Israel in Sharon, as well as in synagogues in Virginia and Massachusetts. She has received multiple awards and also teaches conversion classes for Jews by Choice in Boston.

MATTHEW HASS, PHD, is Assistant Professor of Rabbinics at Hebrew College Rabbinical School. He earned his PhD in Ancient Judaism from Harvard University in 2024, where his dissertation explored various interpretations of Abraham in Jewish antiquity. Matthew's academic interests span the Hebrew Bible, Second Temple Judaism, Early Christianity, and Rabbinic Literature. In all his work, he strives to illuminate the complex dialectic between textual interpretation and theological development.

RICHARD KREITNER is an author, journalist, and podcast host. He wrote "Fear No Pharaoh: American Jews, the Civil War, and the Fight to End Slavery" (2025), "Break It Up" (2020), and "Booked: A Traveler's Guide to Literary Locations Around the World" (2019). His writing has appeared in The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Boston Globe, The Nation, and other notable publications. As a contributing writer to The Nation and Hudson Valley magazines, Richard explores politics, culture, and history. He also hosts the podcast Think Back, which delves into American history. Born in Queens and raised in New Jersey, Richard attended McGill University in Montreal.

NAOMI MAEL LITROWNIK, MSW, is a psychotherapist and behavioral health consultant with over five decades of experience. She is trained as a lay leader at the Institute of Jewish Spirituality (IJS) and is a certified meditation teacher through the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction program. For over 20 years, she has studied Kabbalah and Chasidic texts at IJS and has participated in weekly Torah and Talmud classes taught by Hebrew College professors for 25 years.

RABBI PERKINS is Rabbi Emeritus of Temple Aliyah, where he served for 31 years. He was ordained and earned a master's degree in Talmud and Rabbinics from The Jewish Theological Seminary. Before becoming a rabbi, he practiced law in Boston. He teaches and lectures widely and is an adjunct instructor at the Hebrew College Rabbinical School. Rabbi Perkins is the author of the revised edition of "Embracing Judaism" and has published numerous articles, sermons, and responsa.

RABBI ALLISON POIRIER holds a magna cum laude Bachelor of Arts in Religion from Barnard College and a cum laude Bachelor of Arts in Talmud from the Jewish Theological Seminary. Ordained by Hebrew College in 2019, she also earned a master's in Jewish education. Her studies include a semester at the Conservative Yeshiva in Jerusalem and Clinical Pastoral Education at Brigham and Women's Hospital. Passionate about lifelong Jewish learning, she participated in the Talmud Pedagogy Fellows program and is currently a Rukin Rabbinic Fellow with 18Doors, aiming to enhance outreach to interfaith families at Temple Aliyah.

SENATOR BECCA RAUSCH is the only mother of younger children in the Mass. Senate and the first woman and Jewish person representing communities in the Senate's Norfolk, Worcester, and Middlesex District. She chairs the Joint Committees on Environment and Natural Resources and Municipalities and Regional Government, in addition to serving as the Vice Chair of the Senate Committee on the Census, an at-large board member for the MA Caucus of Women Legislators, co-chair of the MA Commission on Recruitment, Hiring, and Retention of Municipal Public Safety Officers, member of the MA Hate Crimes Task Force, and a leadership council member for the National Association of Jewish Legislators. She earned her B.A. from Brandeis, her J.D. from Northeastern, and her LL.M. from Berkeley.

RACHEL RAZ, founder of the Space Torah Project, is Moishe House's East Coast Regional Jewish educator and a mentor to students at the American Jewish University's Jewish Education and Leadership program. For over a decade, Rachel led the Early Childhood Institute at Hebrew College, the graduate school of Jewish Education. She has authored two children's books and published multiple articles on early childhood education, education more broadly, and the Jewish ecosystem. She earned her BA from Bar-Ilan University and MJED from Hebrew College.

SHIRAH RUBIN is a Boston-based multidisciplinary artist and educator whose sculptural ceramics and public installations explore memory, containment, and intergenerational wisdom. As a Harvard Ceramics resident and former MFA Boston Community Artist, she brings a thoughtful, community-centered approach to her creative practice. Through her company, Co-Imagine Arts, Shirah facilitates customized creative workshops for organizations, drawing on her passion for collaborative artmaking. Her major public artworks invite deep listening, community reflection, and interactive dialogue. To learn more about her work, visit her website: www.shirahrubin.com.

JONATHAN D. SARNA, Emeritus University Professor and Joseph H. & Belle R. Braun Professor of American Jewish History, Brandeis University, is an internationally recognized expert on the Jewish American experience from colonial times to the present. He is also the Chief Historian of the Weitzman National Museum of American Jewish History, the Chair of the Academic Advisory & Editorial Board of the American Jewish Archives, and the past President of the Association for Jewish Studies.

LYDIA WOOLEY organizes programs and builds partnerships for The Abraham Initiatives across North America. Prior to working at TAI, she was an investigator of police misconduct at the NYC Civilian Complaint Review Board. She holds a BA in English and Political Science from Tulane University, specializing in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and a minor in Arabic Language. She is from the Chicagoland area and is currently based in Brooklyn.



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