

Hello Temple Sinai!

Great job 2nd and 3rd graders on their service last Friday night. I'm not sure I've ever seen anything more heartwarming and adorable than those kids belting out V'Shamru, or signing the Shema. Thanks to everyone that came to support them!

At the end of this email, I am going to add a brief observation about Ilhan Omar and the recent controversy about her, so if you are interested, scroll to the end!

Meanwhile, here is the service-related information for this weekend. I hope to see you there, and bring a friend!

TOT SHABBAT SERVICE

Friday Night, March 15 ~ 5:30pm

Our Sinai "Tot Shabbat" is geared **to children 10 and under and their families** (not just 'tots'). The service will begin at 5:30pm, include some simple songs, a few prayers, a children's blessing, Israeli dancing and "S'Torah-telling" around the Torah. The service will end by 6:15pm. Please let your friends with younger children know!

Here's one song we'll be singing in case you want to let your little ones listen to it:

Click ➡ [Wherever You Go, There's Always Someone Jewish](#)

KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE

Friday Night, March 15 ~ 6:30pm

Singing together is universal in human culture; it touches something joyful and lovely in us. And though we sometimes don't realize it, few groups have a more vibrant singing culture than we Jews. Come to our prayerful, song-filled joyful service. It sometimes feels like a schlepp to get to services, but afterwards, you'll feel energized and connected—much needed in these times. Oneg to follow.

Here are two songs we'll be doing (we learned in the last weeks):

- Click ➡ [D'ror Yikra](#) (*Yemenite folk tune*)
- Click ➡- [Mi Chamocha](#) (*Rick Recht*)

SHABBAT ZACHOR MORNING SERVICES with TORAH READING

Saturday Morning, March 16 ~ 9:30am

(please note: Torah Study will be at 4:00pm in the afternoon)

This is **SHABBAT ZACHOR**, the Shabbat before Purim, where we read the story of Amalek, the ancestor of Haman in the Purim story. In it, we are commanded never to forget what Amalek did to us, but is it ever really good to hold onto to something long after it is done? How do we balance 'never again,' with the importance of forgiveness? And is it ever right to blame people for the actions of their ancestors?

If you have children heading toward B'nei Mitzvah, it is important to bring them to this service so they get used to the Saturday Morning service with Torah Reading before it is their turn.

TORAH STUDY with HAVDALAH

Saturday Afternoon, March 16 ~ 4:00pm

PARASHAT VAYIKRA, Leviticus 1:1 — 5:26

URJ- <https://reformjudaism.org/learning/torah-study/vayikra>

Sefaria - <https://www.sefaria.org/Leviticus.1.1-5.26?lang=bi&aliyot=0>

This week we begin the book of Leviticus, with its rather detailed description of the animal sacrifices at the sanctuary. The Reform Movement actually skipped Leviticus during the first decades of its existence, arguing that since we are against animal sacrifices and a priesthood, it makes no sense to read it. However, there is much of great interest in Leviticus. For example, the word for 'sacrifice' has the same root in Hebrew as to 'draw near,' and 'to offer', and in English, it shares meaning with the word 'sacred.' **How does sacrifice draw us closer to God and the sacred? What of value do we sacrifice today?**

Our Torah Study is inclusive and discussion-centered, where we endeavor to understand the Torah portion of the week, and relate it to the issues of the day and the issues in our lives as modern people. Join our vibrant group of people for an intellectual and spiritual reflection and exchange of ideas.

OTHER EVENTS THIS WEEKEND

PAINT THE PLAYROOM

SUNDAY, MARCH 17 ~ 11AM-3PM



The playroom is coming to life! Last weekend, we outlined one wall of the **AMAZING** mural that **David and Eliza Weissberger** have created. This weekend, we will start to fill in the colors, like paint by numbers, but on a wall and without numbers. If you have some leftover indoor lead-free house paint in bright fun colors, bring those and a brush or two, and we will get started on this. Wear paint clothes, and let's have fun and be creative with this.

A BRIEF REFLECTION ON ILHAN OMAR, ANTI-SEMITISM, AND CRITICISM OF ISRAEL

My Facebook feed has been overflowing with articles and posts for and against Ilhan Omar and her multiple tweets and comments about Jews and Israel. In the Jewish community, there have been letters signed by dozens of rabbis condemning her, and letters signed by dozens of rabbis supporting her. There is much arguing and finger-pointing about whether Omar is or is not an anti-Semite, or if she is legitimately criticizing Israel, Jewish loyalty to Israel, and the power of lobbying money in American politics.

I personally find several of her comments to be anti-Semitic; they traffic in dangerous anti-Semitic tropes that were similar to those used by Russian and Nazi anti-Semites. I don't believe they are accidental, but I am not at all sure she is fully aware of just how much her words reflect long-standing dangerous tropes of anti-Semite, as these tropes are widespread in many communities. I also know she has met repeatedly in the past with the Jewish community in her home area, and they have told her why these sorts of comments are offensive, so she is not completely unaware. She has apologized for one statement, but needs to apologize for others and learn *why* they are so upsetting and dangerous.

At the same time, it is clear that the level of attacks on her, the singling out of her, is a political tactic to rile up that portion of the American electorate for whom a Muslim Woman of Color who wears a hijab and who was a refugee is a 'posterchild' for everything they fear. Many Republican public figures have made comments that are equally if not more anti-Semitic, and those are often just ignored, while every word Omar says is attacked and turned into a viral meme on social media. Some of the politicians attacking her most have said heinous anti-Semitic things in the recent past. This is cynical hypocritical politics aimed to split the left and rile up the conservative base. It is, sadly, an effective tactic. It will continue.

I think the truth here is more complicated than 'pro or con'. Omar is a victim of outsized outrage and political attacks because she is a Muslim woman of color. At the same time, what she said is dangerously anti-Semitic. Underneath the anti-Semitism of her comments, there is also truth about the role lobbying money plays in American politics, but again, that has little if anything to do with Jews or Israel.

I, for one, feel it is great to see young women in elected office, and especially young women of color. I want their voices even when I strongly disagree with them, because women's voices have been so tragically underrepresented in the halls of power, and because democracy works best when we have a wide range of voices included. I can recognize that the attacks on these new young women, whether it is Omar or Ocasio-Cortez, are out of proportion to their words or their power. It is scapegoating. It is opportunism. It is silencing.

Yet, I also find it particularly sad when young people as smart and capable as they are are either oblivious to systemic anti-Semitism, or ok with using it to appeal to their own base. As Hillel said, "that which is hateful to you, do not do to others." As Jews, it is understandably unnerving when people in power can appeal to the base on both sides of our political divide by using anti-Semitic dog-whistles.

As humans, there is something deep within that seems to want a clear right and wrong, an 'us' and a 'them', a 'with us' or 'against us'. We like teams—we are by nature groupish—but as we know, the truth is usually more complex than teams allow. Our community, our nation and our world are better served by engaging the complexity of life and of truth than by dividing the world into "us" and "them." In so many ways, our future depends on it.