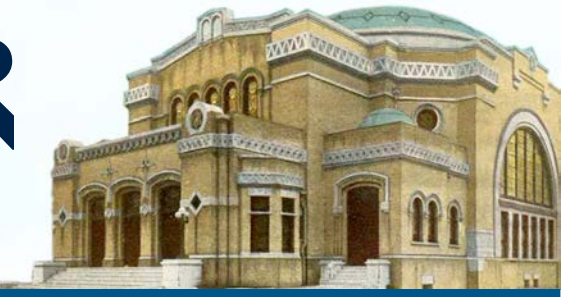
THE SHOFAR
TOURO SYNAGOGUE



WINTER 2026-2027

Save the Date!
Touro's Annual Fundraiser | January 24

A Sacred Pilgrimage
A Message from Rabbi Bauman

Friday, December 4

Chanukah Sameach!
Congregational Chanukah Celebration with Yamim Yafim Consecration & 6th Grade Chagigat Siddur

Hava Nagilah!
Mardi Gras at Touro
Volunteer Opportunities

An Evening of Light & Hope
Welcoming Special Guests
Spirit of the Galilee on December 6



CLERGY & STAFF

Rabbi Katie Bauman
Senior Rabbi

Rabbi Todd Silverman
Associate Rabbi

Rabbi Lily Kowalski
Associate Rabbi and Director of Education and Family Engagement

Rabbi David Goldstein
Rabbi Emeritus

Kurt Jostes
Executive Director

Sarah Tucker Lazarus
Director of Operations

Maya Shaar
Director of Uptown Hebrew

Anna Federline
Director of Communications

Beka Cole
Clergy Administrative Assistant

Donna Provetere
Finance

Aaron Rothko
Hebrew and Music Educator

Trey Pratt
Music Director

Dana Lieber
Events Coordinator

Chanel Wickem
Facilities

Cathy Joseph
Facilities

Nico Gigliotti
Facilities

Corey Roy
Security Coordinator

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Kevin Wilkins
President

Beth Lavin
Executive Vice President

Jeffrey Fingerman
Vice President

Lawrence Haber
Vice President

Kathy Shepard
Secretary

Kendall Scales Glade
Treasurer

Julie Koppman
Membership Secretary

Laura Levy
Immediate Past President

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Andy Adelman
Ellis Arjmand
Seth Bloom
Gabe Feldman
Sean Gaffney
Sara Gershen
Alex Glaser
Michelle Goehring
Elizabeth Gottfried
Elizabeth Herman
Ilana Horwitz
Ann Kaufman
Ellen Kempner
Anna Labadie
Allison Lestelle
Alix Paige Loomis
Chris Lorenzen
Deborah Marx
Taavi Reiss
Danielle Roof
Gary Sernovitz
Julie Silbert
Sam Winston
Megan Yellin
Erika Zucker

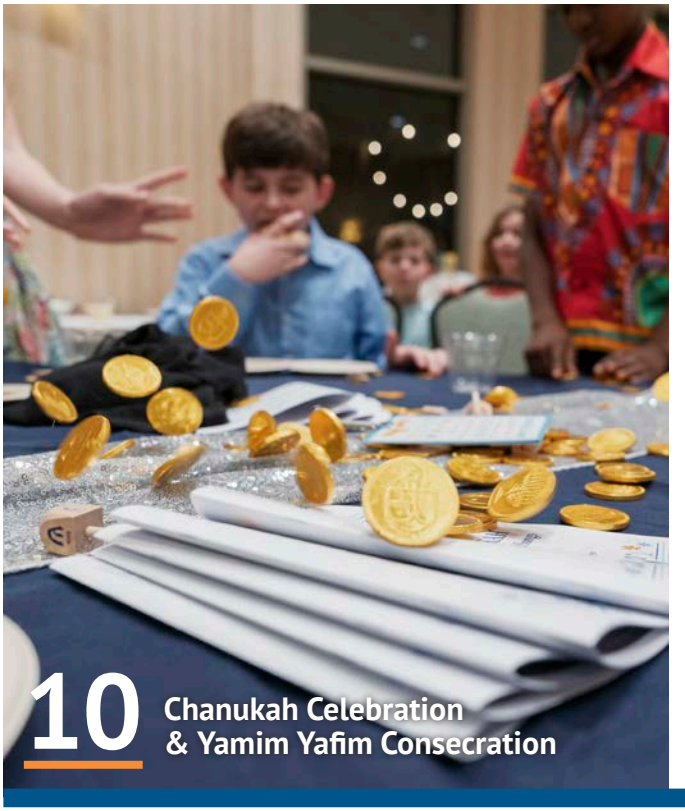
Contents



14 **Lifelong Learning**
Highlights for Winter 2026/2027



23 **We're Going to Israel!**
Multi-generational trip in June 2027



10 **Chanukah Celebration & Yamim Yafim Consecration**

04 ***Writing the Next Chapter, Together.***
A Message from Kevin Wilkins

12 ***A Sacred Pilgrimage***
A Message from Rabbi Bauman

22 ***Tikkun Olam:***
Updates from our Committee Co-Chairs

27 ***Planned Giving:***
Ensuring Touro Flourishes Into the Future

Youth & Teen Programming

16 **Emerging Jewish Leaders Fellowship Program Updates**

Seeds of Sacred Timelessness
A Message from Rabbi Silverman

Important Yamim Yafim Dates

& More!





The Shofar | Touro Synagogue
Editor & Designer: *Anna Federline* | Proofing Team: *Susan Good, Lisa Herman, Beth Lavin, Kathy Shepard, Kevin Wilkins, Touro Synagogue Staff* | Photography: *Scott Saltzman*

From Our President



Writing the Next Chapter, Together.

A Message from Kevin Wilkins

Touro Synagogue Family,

Shanah Tovah once more. I hope you are carrying the renewal of the High Holy Days into these early months of 5787. Since Yom Kippur, so many of you have reached out to tell me how meaningful this season was: the prayer, the sermons, the reflections, and the music. I share your gratitude. Thank you to our clergy and staff, to our congregational choir and musicians, and to Alix Paige Loomis and Trey Pratt, who filled our sanctuary with song with such grace and dedication. And through it all, Cantor Margolius was and remains close in our hearts and prayers.

What moved me most about the High Holy Days was seeing who was in the room. Lifelong Reform Jews and members who came to us from more traditional streams. Jews by Choice and interfaith families. Multi-generational families, new families, and individuals worshiping together in the sanctuary. And seeing the young children at our family services, their faces lighting up as they joined in our traditions, was inspiring. Different backgrounds, different phases of life, and different paths, praying, singing, and reflecting as one sacred community. From Sinai onward, Judaism has never imagined a person standing alone before God. We were built to be a *kehillah kedoshah*, a holy community, and the High Holy Days show us that every year.

And our community keeps growing. Touro is now **more than 750 households strong**, and every week new faces walk through our doors looking for that spiritual home where they are known, welcomed, and part of something larger than themselves. A place where they can continue to build their Jewish Identity. In fact, I am reminded that building Jewish Identity, individually and collectively, is at the core of what Touro does. Our welcome is wide because our roots are deep. Inclusion and identity are not in tension at Touro; knowing who we are is exactly what lets us open our doors to everyone who wants to walk through them.

This is a moment to be proud to be Jewish. At a time when the world feels fractured, and when many Jews feel uncertain or exposed, we answer not by shrinking but by showing up: in our sanctuary, in our classrooms, at our Shabbat tables, and in the streets of New Orleans doing the work of Tikkun Olam. Pride in who we are is not something we keep to ourselves. It is something we live, together and in public, with joy.

A large portion of our growth is coming from households with children. Today more than 250 children and teens are enrolled in our religious school and youth programs, and where we once celebrated eight b'nai mitzvah in a year, nearly thirty are already scheduled for 2027/28. Every one of those children is building their Jewish identity and learning that being Jewish is something to be proud of, something that belongs to them, and something they will one day carry forward. L'dor vador, from generation to generation.

But Jewish identity is not something we finish at thirteen. It is a lifelong journey, and the adults in our community are on it too. Whether you are learning the Hebrew alphabet for the first time, preparing for an adult b'nei mitzvah, exploring conversion, or returning to a text you have studied for decades, there is a place for you to keep growing at Touro. When adults learn, children see that Jewish life is not a stage to graduate from. It is a way to live.

All of this comes to life in the everyday work of our clergy, staff and congregant volunteers. Here are some exciting highlights as we begin 5787.

Membership: With more than 750 households, making sure every member feels genuinely known matters more than ever. Our Ambassador Program continues to deepen bonds between new and longtime members. Stay tuned for more opportunities to gather and engage in the coming months. Thank you to everyone who ushered during the High Holy Days, and made member phone calls. Please also make your contact information public in the ShulCloud membership directory so we can all know and support one another; the office can help you get set up if needed. To become an Ambassador, contact Julie Koppman, Membership Secretary.

Security: The safety of our congregation remains our highest priority. Thanks to our professional staff and lay leadership, we achieved a safe and welcoming High Holy Days season. We had a great rollout of our new phone-wallet security passes, which we will continue to use year-round, in addition to continued acceptance of the ShulCloud Member App and Photo IDs for member identification at services. Our first AI security cameras are installed, and we will be continuing additional camera installs and upgrades through this year. To learn more or to join our security efforts, please reach out to Co-chairs Sara Gershen or Lawrence Haber.

Tikkun Olam: Repairing the world is a shared, sustained practice at Touro. It is in the oxygen for all that we do. From combatting hunger, to voter rights, to climate action, our congregation seeks to make a big impact on the New Orleans ecosystem and beyond. Please see the Tikkun Olam update on page 22 for more details. To get involved, contact Co-chairs Chris Lorenzen or Sara Gershen.

Caring and Mitzvah: Caring for one another is at the heart of who we are. Each meal delivered, note written, and visit made is a mitzvah that brings comfort and connection to a congregant who needs it. Examples include:

- Welcoming new member babies through the gift of a signature Touro Synagogue onesie

- Sharing love and support through meal trains for our members who are recovering from illness or surgery or who are bringing new babies home
- Providing assistance for funerals held at the synagogue

In addition, we participated in the JCC's *Turning Memory Into Mitzvah* Day on October 7. Touro Synagogue hosted a table that invited people to put together treat bags for the homeless dogs in our community through the LA/SPCA. We delivered close to 100 treat bags to the shelter to help put smiles on the faces of the dogs in their care. Their gratitude was so heartwarming. To join this sacred work, contact Co-chairs Ellen Kempner or Alix Loomis.

Youth Education and Lifelong Learning: Our educational programs are thriving. The community has **over 250 children and teens enrolled** across all youth education offerings.

- **Yamim Yafim (Sundays):** 175 students supported by 27 teachers and 19 madrichim in Pre-K through 5th grade learning Jewish values and living and loving Jewish life
- **Uptown Hebrew (Wednesdays):** 85 students supported by 19 teachers and 15 madrichim, learning to read and reading to learn Hebrew
- **Yamim Yafim (Wednesdays):** 42 6th and 7th graders preparing for B'nei Mitzvah and developing Jewish literacy skills
- **Post-B'nei Mitzvah Programs:** fostering and enhancing positive Jewish identity for 50 teens, including 12 in Confirmation and 11 in Junior/Senior Jewish Studies Seminar

Our **lifelong learning programs** offer something for everyone. The innovative framework for the curriculum includes: entry points like *Adult Hebrew* for beginners and *Shabbat Shiur* Sacred Text Study, in-depth examinations of Jewish topics, and ongoing dialogue through book clubs that sparks conversation and reflects topics of interest to our community. There are also goal-oriented classes in which you can work toward an Adult B'nei Mitzvah or a process of conversion. And please look for more congregant-driven learning opportunities including Jewish baking, mahjongg lessons, and knitting practice.

To learn more about our youth and adult programming, please reach out to Co-chairs Jeffrey Fingerman and Liz Gottfried.

Annual Fundraiser: Please join us on **January 24, 2027** for the *Seven Species Soiree: An Evening to Savor*. Step into Touro's lush interior lounge and, under a canopy, be enveloped by the tastes of all Seven Species. With a wink and a nod toward Tu B'Shvat, attendees will indulge in the fruits of the field, of the vine, and of the orchard. Treat yourself to this feast for the senses. This celebration is also our major fundraiser for 5787, and every ticket and sponsorship helps sustain Touro Synagogue's work.

Financial Sustainability: None of this growth happens without the financial strength to sustain it. Early results are very encouraging for our second year of Touro Annual Commitment (TAC). With 40% of the pledges in, 60% of pledging households increased their contribution. Our 3 year goal is for member generosity to fund 70% of our budget, in line with other healthy congregations of our size. We are currently approaching 60% and hope to exceed that significantly this year.

Please note that economic insecurity will never be a barrier to belonging at Touro. TAC is built on a philanthropic model: those with capacity give more, so that every family who wants to be here can be. For 2026/27, the cost per household is $2,950, or $245 a month. If you have not yet made your commitment, please make one that is meaningful and aspirational, and if you can give at or above the household level, please do so joyfully. TAC isn't a bill. It's your part of carrying the community.

This fall reminded me that our congregation is not a building or a calendar of services and programs. We are a thriving community where members are deeply connected to one another, showing up for each other every day. And as we look toward our Bicentennial, nearly two hundred years of memory guide us forward, and more than 750 households are writing the next chapter together.

May 5787 be a year in which each of us grows a little deeper in our Jewish lives, takes pride in who we are, and feels, without question, that we are exactly where we belong.

Warm regards,

Kevin Wilkins
President, Touro Synagogue



High Holy Days 5787

















Special Thanks

High Holy Days 5787

What a magnificent and unforgettable High Holy Day season! Thanks to all our community members who made this year truly special.

The Shepard Family
For sponsoring our Rosh Hashanah High Holy Day Pulpit Flowers in memory of Lois Seidenbach Shepard

Joyce And Sidney Pulitzer
For sponsoring our Yom Kippur High Holy Day Pulpit Flowers in memory of Sam and Sylvia Pulitzer and Ruth and Mitchell Samuelson

Ann And Steve Harris
For sponsoring our Yom Kippur High Holy Day Pulpit Flowers in memory of Lynn and Bernard Pories and Isabel and Seymour Harris

Sanctuary Musicians
Touro Synagogue Choir
Trey Pratt, *Cantorial Soloist & Music Director*
Alix Paige Loomis, *Cantorial Soloist*
Sofia Riggio, *Conductor*
Dena Borman, *Guest Singer*
Charlie Mukaida, *Guest Singer*
Sophia Lurcuto, *Guest Singer*
Brennan Shelby, *Guest Singer*
Byron Tauchi, *Violin*
Judith Fitzpatrick, *Violin*
Richard Woehrle, *Viola*
Jonathan Gerhardt, *Cello*
Jesse Reeks, *Piano*
Panorama Jazz Band, *Rosh Hashanah Morning and Simchat Torah*
Adam Matasar, *Piano*

Shofar
David Bernstein
Mo Eckstein

Rosh Hashanah Nisim B'chol Yom Leaders
Zella Mardon and Jack Klinger

Rosh Hashanah Aliyah Blessings
Members of the B'nei Mitzvah Class of 5786: Adam Landesman, Adeline Maldonado, Avivah Epstein, Curtis Glade, Dylan Geiger, Franklin Theis, Jack Klinger, Louis Levine, Mack Feldman, Major Smith, Sebastian Rodrigalvarez, Zella Mardon

Rosh Hashanah Torah Readers
Pehya Simon, Sullivan Bartkowiak, Amos Alpert, Dylan Hoffman

Yom Kippur Afternoon Session Leaders:
Charles Cannon, *Embracing Judaism*
Ann Kaufman, *Embracing Judaism*
Bill Procell, *Embracing Judaism*
LaDana Williams, *University Medical Center*
Lindsay Hendrix, *Second Harvest Food Bank*
Tamara Kreinin, *Philanthropic and Strategic Advisor*

Hope And Healing Service Participants
Mo Eckstein, Joe Gelini, Curtis Glade, Eve Kaufman, Alix Paige Loomis, Rick Perles, Abby Claire Pollack, Trey Pratt, Danielle Roof, Aaron Rothko, Rabbi Bauman

Kol Nidre Torah Holders
Confirmation Class of 5787: Max Braunig, Micah Eisner, Millie Eisner, Ezra Horwitz, Daniel Katz, Noah Kornman, Sadie Markowitz, Lilly Mintz, Ayden Reinlieb, Jonah White

Yom Kippur Nisim B'chol Yom Leaders
Louis Hill, Eli Lowenburg, Meier Krane

Yom Kippur Blessing Over Torah Reading
Ben Horwitz, Chris Lorenzen, Sara Gershen, Gary Sernovitz and all those who participated in Touro's Immigrant Support Efforts

Yom Kippur Morning Torah Readers
Audrey Buchtel, Netta Magnus, Gracie Eckstein

Yom Kippur Afternoon Torah Readers
Aaron Rothko, Bill Procell, Rabbi Kowalski

Yom Kippur Afternoon Haftarah Readers
Ezra Horwitz, Ellie Streiffer

High Holy Day Food Drive - Truck Helpers
Chris Lorenzen and the Arnold and Lieber families, including Sully, Eddy, Mizzy, David, and Meyer

Sukkah Builders
Hal Shepard
Nadav Herman
Scott Saltzman
Josh Bobo
Chip Mann

High Holiday Greeters
Adam Eckstein
Gabe Feldman
Jeffrey Fingerman
Sean Gaffney
Sara Gershen
Kendall Scales Glade
Michelle Goehring
Liz Gottfried
Liz Herman
Ilana Horwitz
Tatiana Jurzak
Ann Kaufman
Ellen Kempner
Julie Koppman
Anna Labadie
Beth Lavin
Brad Phillipson
Bill Procell
Taavi Reiss
Danielle Roof
Gary Sernovitz
Kathy Sherpard
Megan Yellin

Photography
Scott Saltzman
Anna Federline

Shabbat at Touro

A Monthly Shabbat Dinner and Learning Experience:

Roots & Roux

Learning Our Jewish Story Through Food and Flavor



Shabbat dinner at Touro Synagogue is one of the heartbeats of our congregation. On *Roots and Roux* Shabbat, we gather not only for worship, but for conversation, community, storytelling, laughter, and a delicious meal prepared by Chef Jessie Wightkin Gelini—a professional chef, culinary instructor at the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts, and lifelong Touro member.

The connection between Jewish food and culture is one and the same. During these special Shabbat dinners, we'll explore the stories of our heritage through the diverse cuisines of Jewish communities near and far. Together, we'll discover how food preserves tradition, builds community, and reflects the global journey of the Jewish people!

Coming Up:

Congregational Chanukah Celebration*
Chanukah Around the World!
Friday, December 4, 2026
Following 6:00pm Shabbat Service & Yamim Yafim Consecration
Registration Required* ***Learn more on page 10!*
Family Cooking Class: ***Sunday, December 6, 12:30pm***

Roots & Roux Shabbat: Egypt
Friday, January 8, 2027
Following 6:00pm Shabbat Service
Family Cooking Class: ***Sunday, January 10***

Roots & Roux Shabbat: Spain
Friday, February 26, 2027
Following 6:00pm Shabbat Service
Family Cooking Class: ***Sunday, February 21, 12:30pm***

Register for Family Cooking Classes Online at TouroSynagogue.com/Roots
These classes are designed for kids Pre-K and up with their grown-ups.

Meet Chef Jessie!

Jessie Wightkin Gelini *is a native New Orleanian and lifelong Touro Member. Chef Jessie's passion for food led her to study Culinary Anthropology at the University of Alabama, where she explored the cultural stories behind cuisine. Jessie spent four years at the prestigious Commander's Palace, and was also instrumental in the launching of the kitchen team at Bacchanal Wine, Company Burger, and Taceaux Loceaux food truck. Passing on the traditions of her culinary roots is what Chef Jessie is most passionate about, making the transition from the restaurant world to culinary education a natural move. Her culinary teaching career began at Edible Schoolyard and led her to NOCCA. Chef Jessie creates the dinners at Touro for Shabbat. A self-proclaimed Food Explorer, she is enthusiastic about traveling the world through food and telling the stories of people, places, and ingredients, one plate at a time.*







Special Upcoming Shabbatot

First Shabbat Mornings at Touro

9:00am | Shabbat Shiur*
*Sacred Text Study led by Touro clergy. *Held every week unless otherwise noted.*

9:30am | Shabbat Rocks
A Shabbat prayer and learning experience for tots and their grownups, led by Touro Synagogue Educators. This program is intended for children ages 0-4.

10:00am | Shabbat Shacharit
A kid-forward, musical, multi-denominational, lay-led minyan rooted in tradition led by Chavurat Or'Leans.

10:35am | Kehillah KIDoshah
A Shabbat prayer and learning experience for big KIDS, led by Touro Synagogue Educators. This program is intended for children ages 5-12.

11:30am | Communal Shabbat Lunch

Winter 2026/2027 Dates:

December 5 *with Shabbat Rocks: Chanukah Edition*
January 9 *No Shabbat Rocks*
January 23 *Shabbat Rocks Only: Tu B'Shvat Edition*

Shabbat Shirah with Nava Tehila

Hosted by Gates of Prayer

Shabbat in the Round

Friday, January 22, 6:15pm
Join Jerusalem-based musical community Nava Tehila for an immersive, musical, spiritual, and ruach-filled Kabbalat Shabbat service in the round!

Tu B'Shvat Tisch Concert

Saturday, January 23, 7:00pm
Enjoy wine, cheese, and the seven species as we end Shabbat with Havdalah and join Nava Tehila for a participatory concert and interactive Tu B'Shvat Seder!

Winter Union Shabbat Services

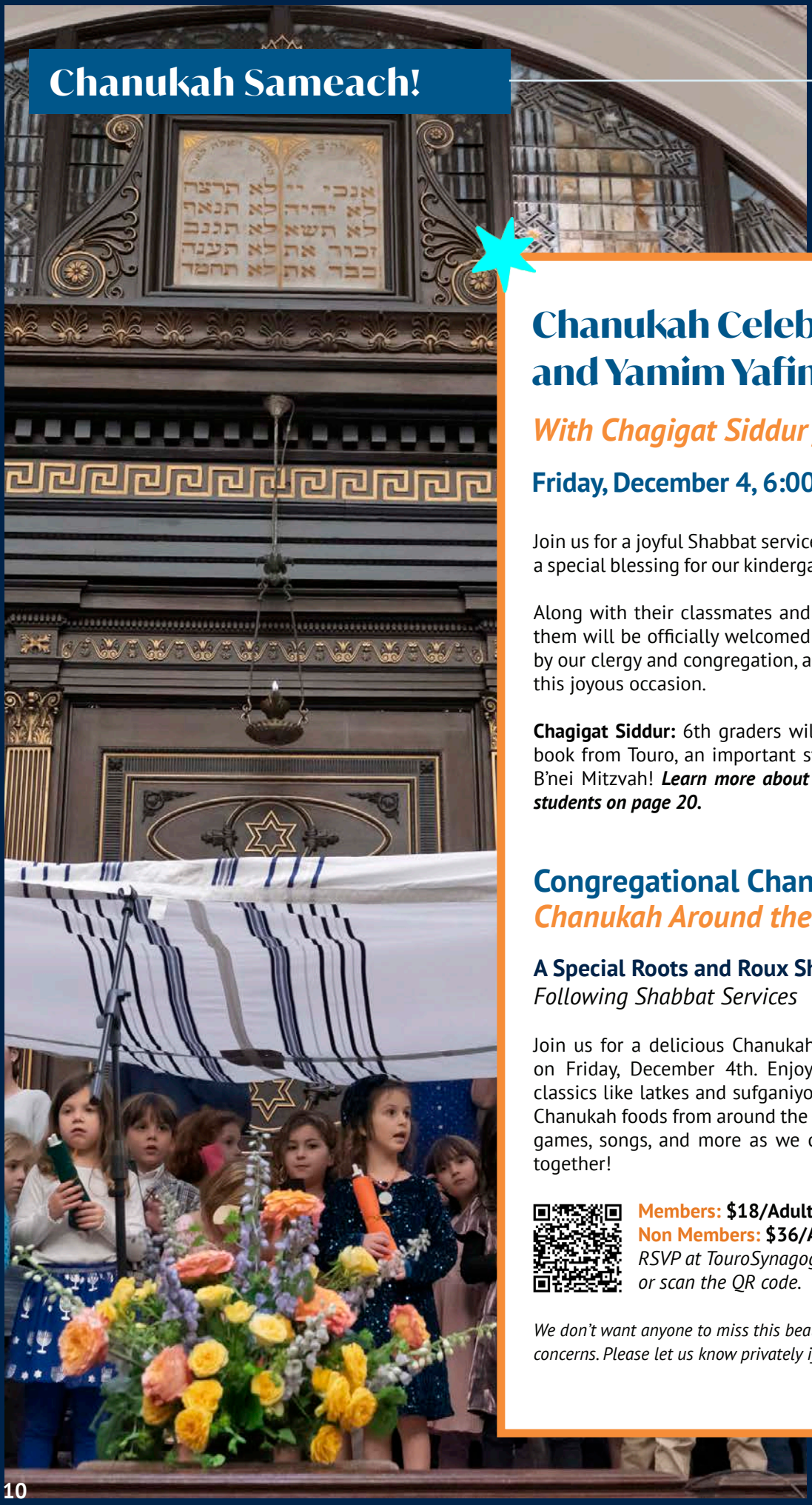
Friday, December 25 | *Shabbat Services to be held at Temple Sinai*
Friday, January 1 | *Shabbat Services to be held at Touro Synagogue*

Celebrate Shabbati Gras!

Friday, January 29 - Saturday, January 30
Friday, February 5 - Saturday, February 6

Learn more about Mardi Gras at Touro on pages 24-25.

Chanukah Sameach!



Chanukah Celebration and Yamim Yafim Consecration

With Chagigat Siddur for 6th Graders

Friday, December 4, 6:00pm

Join us for a joyful Shabbat service made even sweeter as we offer a special blessing for our kindergarten class and new first graders!

Along with their classmates and families on the bimah, each of them will be officially welcomed into our community of learners by our clergy and congregation, and receive a special gift to mark this joyous occasion.

Chagigat Siddur: 6th graders will receive their very own prayer book from Touro, an important step in the process of becoming B'nei Mitzvah! ***Learn more about our Consecration and 6th Grade students on page 20.***



Congregational Chanukah Celebration: *Chanukah Around the World!*

A Special Roots and Roux Shabbat Dinner
Following Shabbat Services

Join us for a delicious Chanukah celebration following services on Friday, December 4th. Enjoy everyone's favorite Chanukah classics like latkes and sufganiyot (donuts), alongside traditional Chanukah foods from around the world. We'll also have Chanukah games, songs, and more as we celebrate the Festival of Lights together!



Members: $18/Adults $10/Kids
Non Members: $36/Adults $18/Kids
RSVP at TouroSynagogue.com/Chanukah or scan the QR code.

We don't want anyone to miss this beautiful simcha because of financial concerns. Please let us know privately if assistance is needed.

Chanukah Candle Lighting Guide

Chanukah lasts for 8 nights, and on each night we light one more candle than the night before. Arrange the lights in your hanukkiyah (menorah) each night starting with the rightmost branches, and the shamash (helper) light in its place.

Place the hanukkiyah where many people can see it, ideally near a window or door.

On the Shabbat of Chanukah, kindle the Chanukah lights first and then the Shabbat candles.

Light the Shamash—the helper candle—first using it to kindle the rest of the Chanukah lights; say or sing the blessings below:





Blessing 1

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ
אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו
וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל חֲנֻכָּה.

Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tsivanu l'hadlik ner shel Chanukah.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of all, who hallows us with mitzvot, commanding us to kindle the Chanukah lights.

Blessing 2

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ
אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
שֶׁעָשָׂה נִסִּים לַאֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ
בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם בַּזְּמַן הַזֶּה.

Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam, she-asah nisim laavoteinu v'imoteinu bayamim hahaeim baz'man hazeh.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of all, who performed wonderous deeds for our ancestors in days of old at this season.

First Night Only

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהֶחֱיָנוּ
וְקִיְּמָנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לַזְּמַן הַזֶּה.

Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam, shehecheyanu v'kiy'manu v'higiyanu laz'man hazeh.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of all, who has kept us alive, sustained us, and brought us to this season.



December 5



December 6



December 7



December 8



December 9



December 10

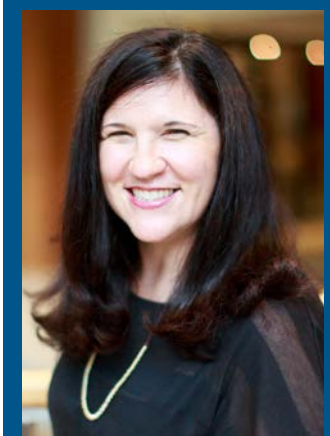


December 11



December 12

From Our Rabbi



Rabbi Katie Bauman
Senior Rabbi

A Sacred Pilgrimage

A Message from Rabbi Bauman

Dear Touro Synagogue Family,

I am writing this during the first few days of the Hebrew month of Cheshvan, the one month with no biblical Jewish holidays in it. You may not be surprised to know that within the community of rabbis, Cheshvan is a much beloved time, not because we don't love Jewish holidays but because it's a chance to reset and focus on the beautiful and difficult details of everyday life in a community. Our weekends are filled with B'nei Mitzvah, weddings and baby namings, the Hebrew and Sunday school schedules stabilize, and committees that decided to meet "after the holidays" are back in regular touch. We return to our humble and inspiring ways of eating, praying and mourning together, building the routines that have long sustained our people throughout the ages.

For us at Touro, that return includes a tender and careful shifting of staff and clergy responsibilities internally to be sure each household is cared for in the wake of our beloved Cantor Margolius' departure, and it includes planning for the time when we can honor his tenure and welcome him home to Touro as a congregant. We are looking forward to some exciting learning opportunities for youth and adults, including our wonderful Paper Midrash program and our Shabbat with Chef and Touro member Alon Shaya in November. We will of course begin to plan for Touro's Mardi Gras Mitzvah season, which begins this year in January. And we will be looking forward to the many opportunities we have as a congregation to welcome our many new member households and support each other day to day.

This season also holds a great deal of collective tension, with consequential elections both in Israel on October 28 and in the United States on November 3, only a week later. We will no doubt need to summon ourselves to respond to the realities these important days have created, and as a Touro family we will do that.. As a nearly 200 year old institution, we have seen this country and our Jewish people through many eras of tranquility and of upheaval, and that is what we will do now. Especially during times of polarization, I am grateful that our ties to one another do not rely upon ideological uniformity. Our shared Jewish history, culture, tradition, values, and aspirations form a much stronger and more abiding bond than any election season or political moment ever could.

Given my deep admiration for those who rise above differences to find common ground, I am particularly excited to highlight an event taking place on **December 6th**. On that evening, we will host an inspiring group of leaders from *Ruach HaGalil,* Spirit of the Galilee, a remarkable organization comprised of people from all backgrounds: Jewish, Arab, Muslim, Christian, and so many other distinct identities of individuals who reside in the North of Israel and who work together daily to build a better future and a shared society for themselves and their children. Here is their mission statement:

Spirit of the Galilee works towards the advancement of pluralism, mutual understanding and cooperation between various denominations, religions and cultures of our region, Arabs and Jews alike. We are invested in building a shared society here in the Galilee, as a model for the entire country, the region, and the world.

> ***"Investing in daily acts of holiness and community building is what gives us the strength to weather the storms and the resilience to lean into the joy, taking both as they come."***

Executive Director of Spirit of the Galilee is Rabbi Leora Ezrachi Vered, a Reform Rabbi and remarkable leader who has dedicated her life to building bridges. I am so honored that she and her colleagues Father (Abuna) Saba Haj, and Dr. Malik Hujeriat will be visiting New Orleans when they come to North America in December. At 5:00pm on Sunday, December 6, they will share music, poetry, and dialogue in a beautiful evening concert and experience of envisioning a better future. I strongly encourage you to save this date and seize the opportunity to be more proximate to some of the most important change makers of Israel.

We never know what a season will bring, and there is much uncertainty that infuses our lives as individuals and as a collective. That is why investing in daily acts of holiness and community building is so crucial. It's what gives us the strength to weather the storms and the resilience to lean into the joy, taking both as they come.

May we each experience a season of peace, health and inspiration, and may we be reassured by the coming weeks and months, empty of monumental holidays but full of everyday life, that our daily actions are what bring the healing we most need. As our beloved poem says, "We see that victory lies not at some high place along the way but in having made the journey, stage by stage, a sacred pilgrimage."

L'shalom,

Rabbi Katie Bauman

SPIRIT OF THE GALILEE

An Evening of Light & Hope

Envisioning Jewish-Arab Shared Society through Music & Poetry

6:00 PM | Chanukah Candle Lighting & Refreshments

6:30 PM | Music & Poetry

Touro Synagogue

Sunday, December 6

6:00-8:00pm

RSVPs Required!

Please Register Online at TouroSynagogue.com/Dec6

JOINED BY



Rabbi Leora Ezrachi Vered

Director of Spirit of the Galilee

Born in Jerusalem to an Israeli born father and an American mother, Rabbi Leora Ezrachi-Vered grew up in the Israeli Reform Movement. She trained as an educator and was head of the Reform Youth Movement. In 2017 she was ordained by HUC-Jerusalem and served as the rabbi of Nigun Halev in the Jezreel Valley until 2024. Active in multiple interfaith and shared society initiatives, she is a board member of Tag Meir and active in Rabbis for Human Rights. She is now the Director of Spirit of the Galilee - a nonprofit dedicated to interfaith work and shared society.



Father (Abuna) Saba Haj

Ruach Glilit Leader

Born in the Galilean town of Iblin, Father Haj is the spiritual leader of the Greek Orthodox Church of Iblin. Trained as a lawyer and from a family of clergy and Interfaith activists, he brings music and leadership to everyone. He is the co-director of the interfaith leadership group.



Dr. Malik Hujeriat

Ruach Glilit Community Member

Born in the Bedouin village of Bir Al-Maksur in the Galilee, he is an educator, a poet and scholar of Islam. He is the principal of the middle school in Bir Al Maksur and has published several books of poetry, leads writing retreats and is an active member of Spirit of the Galilee.

With Acclaimed Musical Guests Neta Elkayam & Amit Hai Cohen



Winter Highlights

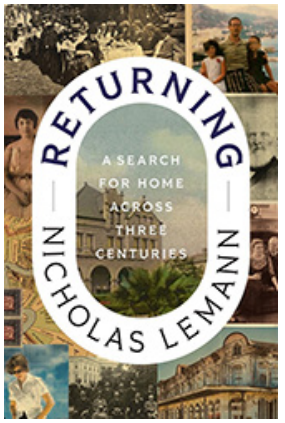
Roots and Roux Family Cooking Classes

Select Dates | ***RSVPs Required!***

Designed for Kids Pre-K and Up & Their Grown-Ups

Join Chef Jessie for a hands-on exploration of our Jewish roots! Together, we'll prepare foods from around the world and even enjoy a taste test together before the evening ends. ***Please RSVP for all sessions at TouroSynagogue.com/Roots.***

Sunday, December 6: Chanukah
Sunday, January 10: Egypt
Sunday, February 21: Spain



Touro Book Group: *First Meeting!*

Thursday, November 19
6:00-8:00pm at NOLA Spaces
1719 Toledano St (2nd Floor)

We are so excited to announce that our first meeting of the Touro Book Club will be held at NOLA Spaces on Thursday, November 19 at 6pm. *We will meet on the 2nd floor.*

We will be discussing *Returning: A Search for Home Across Three Centuries* by Nicholas Lemann. Please let us know if you can make it! RSVP at TouroSynagogue.com/Learning.

Register Online!

Scan the QR code to register for courses and meetings online or visit TouroSynagogue.com/Learning

Jewish Identity in a Challenging Time: Peoplehood and Zionism for Emerging Adults



A Lunch & Learn with Rabbi Katie Bauman & Special Guest Rabbi Ethan Linden of the Shalom Hartman Institute

Thursday, December 10
12:00pm at Touro Synagogue
Grant Meyer Garden Pavilion

This class will examine the current conversation about Zionism in the Jewish community, with a particular focus on how emerging adults are experiencing both the internal debate over our community's boundaries around Zionism and the discussion that is happening in the larger society.

Rabbi Ethan Linden is the Senior Vice President and the Edward Fein Director of Wellspring at Shalom Hartman Institute of North America, where he leads our work with youth, young adults, and the professionals who work with them. ***RSVP at Touro Synagogue.com/Learning. Lunch will be provided!***

SHALOM HARTMAN INSTITUTE מכון שלום הרטמן



Ongoing Series at Touro

Shabbat Shiur: Sacred Text Study

with Touro Synagogue Clergy
Weekly on Shabbat Mornings | 9:00am
Enjoy bagels and coffee, and engage in sacred text study with our clergy. We will engage with the Torah portion of the week, ideas that help us prepare for upcoming holidays, and foundational texts of our tradition.

Jewish Baking Class

with Touro Member Trish Luria
Select Sundays at Touro | 12:00pm-2:00pm
In the Touro Kitchen; **Space is Limited!**
Upcoming Dates: Feb 14, Mar 7, April 11
A hands-on class for anyone who would like to learn how to bake traditional Jewish treats in an approachable, uncomplicated way! RSVP at TouroSynagogue.com/Learning.

Mah Jongg Sundays: Lessons & Open Play

Select Sundays at Touro | 9:30am-12:00pm
During Yamim Yafim in the Goldring-Franco Family Library
Upcoming Dates: Feb 14, Mar 7, April 11
Drop in to any or all dates and please bring your own Mahj card if you have one! Cards will be available to beginners and those still learning. RSVP at TouroSynagogue.com/Learning.

Jewish Mysticism

with Touro Member Rabbi Gary Gerson
Monthly on Sundays | 7:00-8:30pm on Zoom
Upcoming Dates: Dec 6, Jan 10, Feb 7, Mar 7, April 4
Together, we will explore the central ideas, symbols, and spiritual practices of Kabbalah: the infinite nature of God (Ein Sof), the flowing structure of the sefirot, the mystery of creation, the presence of evil, and the possibility of transformation and repair. Along the way, Rabbi Gerson, beloved Touro member and Rabbi Emeritus of Oak Park Temple in the Chicago area, will introduce carefully selected passages from classic sources, allowing participants to hear the authentic voices of the tradition and deepen your connection to its poetic and symbolic language. No prior knowledge required! RSVP at TouroSynagogue.com/Learning.





Youth and Teens



Rabbi Lily Kowalski
Associate Rabbi and Director of Education & Family Engagement





Dani Eckhaus
New York City, NY
Tulane University | Freshman
Major: Business Management
I'm excited to work with such wonderful, bright kids! I remember being in their seats just yesterday, and I know this will be a meaningful and enlightening experience.

Emerging Jewish Leaders Fellowship

Cultivating the Next Generation of Jewish Leaders

Over the summer, Touro Synagogue's educational program expanded with the inaugural cohort of the Emerging Jewish Leaders Fellowship – a unique leadership pipeline opportunity that will support local college and graduate students in developing a meaningful understanding of Jewish communal life and involvement while supporting our Yamim Yafim classrooms as assistant teachers. Through hands-on classroom experience, mentorship, and ongoing professional learning with Touro Synagogue clergy and educators, Tulane faculty, and leading Jewish educators from across the country, we hope these Fellows will learn and grow into robust and engaged leaders, actively participating in any community they are a part of in the future!

This fellowship is lovingly supported in memory of Benjamin Lockman Townsend Mark by his parents.



Ashley Makula
Chicago, IL
Tulane University | Senior
Major: Political Science & Economics
I hope to meet new people and help provide a strong Jewish education for children in the community.

About the Benjamin Lockman Townsend Mark Leadership Fund



"The Benjamin Lockman Townsend Mark Leadership Fund supports the development of a new generation of Jewish educators and leaders at Touro Synagogue and beyond. Ben was a child of New Orleans and Touro Synagogue. He loved the music and food of New Orleans. He embraced the Jewish values, the commitment to *tikkun olam* and the traditions that he celebrated and learned about at home, and while attending Touro Synagogue and its educational programs. Ben became Bar Mitzvah and was confirmed at Touro in a post-Katrina New Orleans. After graduation from college, Ben moved to Philadelphia, where he became a union organizer, putting his commitment to *tikkun olam* into action. Ben had a short but full life. He was loved by all who walked with him, whether on a picket line or to the neighborhood bodega. With the Benjamin Lockman Townsend Mark Leadership fund, we hope to inspire future Jewish educators and leaders—just as Ben continues to inspire us."

~ Jeff Lockman, Mark Townsend and Rebecca Mark
Parents of Benjamin Lockman Townsend Mark



Carly Resnick
Scottsdale, AZ
Tulane University | Senior
Major: Cell Biology
I hope to bring enthusiasm, fresh perspectives, and a strong sense of community to Touro. I'm excited to build meaningful relationships, create a welcoming environment, and share Jewish traditions and values while helping strengthen Jewish identity and connection.

Please reach out to Rabbi Kowalski at lkowalski@tourosynagogue.com or visit TouroSynagogue.com/Fellowship to learn more about our Fellowship program.



Lilly Fox
Washington, DC
Tulane University | Senior
Major: Environmental & Jewish Studies; Pre-Law
I look forward to sharing my passion for Tikkun Olam, community service, authenticity, and kindness as Jewish values. My Jewish identity influences every decision I make, and I believe it should be joyful because our love is stronger than any force that seeks to harm us.



Tatum Lazarus
Deerfield, IL
Tulane University | Senior
Major: Marketing & Management
I hope to be a role model who empowers kids to become leaders in and outside the classroom. I want to build meaningful connections with faculty and students, create a positive learning environment, and be someone students can trust for advice and guidance.



Josie Leit
Rochester, NY
Tulane University | Senior
Major: Neuroscience
I hope to bring my Jewish ruach, or spirit, to Touro through enthusiastic teaching and a passion for Judaism. I want to inspire students to find joy and connection in their Jewish identity and look forward to watching them discover their own connections to Judaism as they grow into Jewish young adults.



Julia Lowenstein
Marin County, CA
Tulane University | Freshman
Major: Psychology
I hope to build community and help make Touro a welcoming place for everyone!



Sarah Merwin
Baltimore, MD
Tulane University | Senior
Major: Political Science & Philosophy
I hope to be an inclusive presence, build meaningful relationships, and help foster Jewish identity and community.



Ari Oshins
Atlanta, GA
Tulane University | Freshman
Major: Marketing
I hope to combine my experience working with children and my Jewish background to offer students new perspectives on Judaism.



Margaret Pollak
Washington, DC
Tulane University | Freshman
Major: History
I hope to share my Jewish joy and pride with the community!



Ashira Price
San Francisco, CA
Tulane University | Sophomore
Major: Economics & International Relations
I'm excited to bring 5 years of experience as an educator in Jewish spaces, from California to Tel Aviv, to Touro. I look forward to growing as a teacher, young Jewish adult, and lifelong learner.



Lincoln Seidman
Highland Park, IL
Tulane University | Sophomore
Major: Marketing & Digital Media Practices
I look forward to a fun learning experience and hope to make a difference!



Zachary Tiep
San Diego, CA
Tulane University | Freshman
Major: Business
I hope to be a great assistant teacher and have a wonderful time working with the kids on Sundays!



Rebecca Weissman
Westchester, NY
Tulane University | Junior
Major: Architecture
I'm excited to foster a love of Judaism and Jewish culture among my Yamim Yafim students and emerge as a stronger Jewish leader in every space I enter.



Sarah Wiesenfelder
Washington, DC
Tulane University | Freshman
Major: Political Science; Pre-Law
I hope to create an environment where kids are excited to learn and feel free to be their authentic selves.

Youth & Teens



Rabbi Todd Silverman
Associate Rabbi

Seeds of Sacred Timelessness

A Message from Rabbi Silverman and Touro Member Selma Hammer

If, by chance, you know any high school seniors but haven't seen or heard much from them lately, it's likely because of four words that become part of nearly all their vocabularies at this time of year: "college apps due soon." It's an answer that deserves plenty of grace and sympathy from those of us already past that stage of life, because finding the right school for yourself is no easy task!

Around Touro Synagogue, we notice the stresses of this time of year acutely, especially when even our most dedicated teens are around less frequently. But we know they'll come back when all the forms are completed and deadlines have been met – and when they do, it's impossible not to notice their new levels of self-awareness, understanding, and personal identity. After all, how could they not, after pouring out so much of themselves?

I'm constantly amazed by what some of them choose to write about in their personal essays regarding their time growing up here at Touro. The silly times spent with friends at religious school, lessons learned from teachers and mentors, and seeds of sacred timelessness sown during prayer – it all stays with these kids far longer than we may assume. Many jump at the opportunity to share those essential elements of themselves as proof of their individuality and potential for lifelong learning.

With all that said, I'm honored to share (with permission, of course!) one of those essays, written by our high school senior Selma Hammer. I hope her reflections on growing up as part of the Touro Synagogue family will serve as a reminder of just how special this congregation is – and what an impact it has on the lives of our kids and teens.



New Year, New Me

by Selma Hammer

It's my favorite time of year. I'm six years old and my dad and I are heading into the chapel for Rosh Hashanah children's services. We're walking across the streetcar tracks to the big cherrywood doors. I'm in a sparkly dress and he's in a dark blue suit. There couldn't possibly be anything wrong right now because I'm with my dad and I'm going to sing and dance in the New Year in the same stained glass adorned room where I spend every Sunday morning twirling around and singing along. Right now I see the people that I'm surrounded by as almost magical beings. They represent safety and love and that's it. To me my dad is just my dad, and my synagogue is just the place for singing and dancing. We'll go home and he'll spend the day cooking dinner while I spend the day watching and helping.

Fast forward 10 years and we're walking into the same synagogue and I'm in a floral dress and my dad is in a dark blue suit, but this time we're going into the big sanctuary. There's hundreds of people and we're all singing and praying to welcome in the New Year together. As I walk out, I see little kids playing together in their sparkly dresses and clip on ties. These are the kids that I've spent my Sundays teaching and I've gotten to see them grow up singing, dancing, and learning in the same way I did.

As I've grown I've come to realize that the people I once thought of as almost magical beings are just people. I still think of my dad as caring and safe, but I now know that he feels sadness and fear just like me. The place for singing and dancing is still a place where I feel happy, but now I also go there to discuss nuanced and sometimes hard parts of Judaism. Understanding more sides of people and places has led me to form deeper relationships and love people through the hard things, instead of only for the good things.

Learning that my synagogue is more than just a place for singing and dancing has been bittersweet. As I've grown I've learned that there is a reason we have guards outside and that the gate has to remain closed. I know that there is trauma and painful history and that the world is a dangerous place to be a Jew. I've also learned about many people who fought hard for me to be able to practice Judaism in the way I do. I've gotten to grow up feeling safe in a vibrant community where I am encouraged to continue the traditions most important to me. I've been able to learn about the joyful parts of Judaism as well as the parts that are challenging and sometimes even infuriating.

Now when I look at the kids I teach, I know that many of them will continue to grow in the ways that I have. They'll start with joyfully celebrating holidays and with time they'll learn to see the beauty in the pain, love, learning, and joy of the community they perpetuate. So now as I prepare for my favorite time of the year I keep in mind how much I've grown, how my community has shaped me, and the part I've gotten to have in shaping it. I'll get all dressed up to sing and pray in the New Year with my family and then I'll go home and make dinner while my dad watches and tries to help.

Ancient, Central, Profound:

A Means of Connection for All

Introducing Touro's B'nei Mitzvah Support Fund



We are delighted to announce Touro's B'nei Mitzvah Support Fund, ***lovingly established by Charlotte and Taavi Reiss and Family,*** which provides support to any Touro household for whom the B'nei Mitzvah process is financially challenging, ensuring these joyous events are accessible for all.

"No child should be denied the opportunity to become B'nei Mitzvah due to the costs involved. Touro is an inclusive community that allows all members access to the joys and responsibilities of Jewish life. To further this goal of an inclusive Jewish community, we established the congregational B'nei Mitzvah fund to reduce one barrier - the financial cost of becoming B'nei Mitzvah. We hope this congregational fund will make preparation easier and reduce the stress for families who may need help with the costs of the B'nei Mitzvah ceremony and preparation. We also hope that the opportunity to donate to this fund benefits our community by providing a means of connection for all of our congregation to this ancient, central, and profound aspect of Jewish life."

~ Charlotte and Taavi Reiss & Family

5th Grade Family Education & B'nei Mitzvah Meeting

Sunday, December 13, 11:00am
Goldring Franco Family Library
5th Grade Families - Please RSVP!

An exciting milestone in your child's Jewish journey is just around the corner! 5th grade students and their parents are invited to join us for an informative session about looking ahead to becoming Bar and Bat Mitzvah.

Together, we'll explore:
- Hebrew names and Jewish traditions
- The process of selecting a B'nei Mitzvah date
- What to expect as your family begins this meaningful journey

Bring your questions as we look ahead to this special chapter in your child's Jewish life! ***Please scan the QR code to RSVP or visit TouroSynagogue.com/bnei-mitzvah-planning-meeting.***

Upcoming B'nei Mitzvah

Molly Elizabeth Rosenbloom
November 7, 2026
Skylar and Brittany Rosenbloom

Meier Abraham Krane
November 14, 2026
Mari Ann and Spencer Krane

Abigail Jean "Abby Jean" Fingerman
November 21, 2026
Jeffrey Fingerman and Katie Coburn

Asher Samuel Kofsky
November 28, 2026
Niki and Edward Kofsky

Tatum Anne Alltmont
December 5, 2026
Ava and Michael Alltmont

Yakir Zeev Adelman
December 12, 2026
Aleeza and Andy Adelman

Louis Irving Hill
December 19, 2026
Amanda and Graham Hill

Benjamin "Benjy" Leidner Good
January 9, 2027
Caroline and Jeff Good

Eli Capone Lowenburg
January 16, 2027
Benjamin and Megan Lowenburg

Addison Ruth Cibley
January 23, 2027
Jared and Amanda Cibley

Samuel Mason Marks
February 20, 2027
Carrie and Austin Marks

Emily Harper Mintz
February 27, 2027
Jen Kitner and Mark Mintz



Yamim Yafim Consecration

A Special Blessing for Our Kindergarten Class and New First Graders

Friday, December 4, 2026 | 25 Kislev 5787
6:00pm in the Main Sanctuary

Followed by Congregational Chanukah Celebration
See Page 10 for more information!

Madison Abbrecht
Netta Brown
Benjamin Chorazy
Edie Duncan
Margot Fischman
Asantewaa Forcier
William Friedmann
Karen Gelini
Samuel Gold

Grayson Johnson
Lia Kaminstein
Levi Kanter
Everett Klutts
Diana Kulick
Julian Kullman
Sophia Lee
Celia Lipsman
Ayla Nemitoff

Hommage Oliver-Landau-Beispiel
Sloan Plost
Margot Rose
Theodore Schwartz
Ruth Shaya
Vesta Soroken
Alina Tebeleff
Ada Wohlstadter

Chagigat Siddur Students

Solomon Arnold
Hudson Bartkowiak
Michael Berg
Rose Bizer
Berk Davidson
Sawyer Denson
Willa Eriksen
Brody Geiger
Max Geiger
Alice Glade

Suzanne Halstead
Evie Hoffman
Adi Klinger
Ida-Rose Kulick
Jack Kullman
Matthew Kupperman
Sienna Lestelle
Abraham Levine
David Lotterman
Piper Magnus

Ada Marks
Remi Pollack
Annie Reiss
Victoria Rodrigalvarez
Ryder Rosenblatt
William Rudman
Soleil Solms-Pignataro
Lila Theis
Lennon Winston
Meyer Zapletal

Please let us know if you notice any Yamim Yafim families
missing from the list above so that we can ensure everyone is included.





Maya Shaar
Director of Uptown Hebrew

Youth & Teen Programming

Upcoming Special Events

Dec 4

Yamim Yafim Consecration and 6th Grade Chagigat Siddur | 6:00pm
- During Shabbat Services

Dec 9

6th-9th Grade Chanukah Celebrations | 6:00pm

10th-12th Grade Special Programming | 6:00pm
- Joined by Special Guest, Rabbi Ethan Linden of Shalom Hartman Institute

Dec 13

Yamim Yafim Celebrates Chanukah! | 9:30am-11:00am
- Early Dismissal at 11:00am!

5th Grade B'nei Mitzvah Planning Meeting | 11:00am
- More details on page 19

Jan 10

PreK-5th Grade Yamim Yafim | 9:30am-11:00am
- **Welcome Back from Winter Break!** Special schedule and dismissal at 11:00am





Important Reminders

Please note there will be NO Yamim Yafim or Uptown Hebrew on the following dates:

- **November 22, 25, 29 | Fall Break**
- **December 20, 23, 27, 30; January 3, 6 | Winter Break**
- **January 17 | Martin Luther KIng Jr. Day**
- **January 31; February 3, 7, 10 | Mardi Gras Break**

Repairing the World

Tikkun Olam

An Update from Committee Chairs

We kicked off the year 5787 with great Tikkun Olam work!

Voting Rights Initiative: Under the leadership of Joy Braun and Jill Israel, we relaunched our Voting Rights Initiative for the 2026 midterm elections. With the help of 50+ volunteers and funds donated by the community we sent 3,550 postcards to BIPOC (*Black, Indigenous, and People of Color*) voters in southern states and young Jewish voters all over the country to encourage them to register and vote in their upcoming elections!

Combating Hunger: We held our annual High Holy Day Food Drive and collected over 1 ton of food to be donated to Second Harvest! We plan to continue this drive until we collect another ton. Please continue to bring non-perishable items any time you are at Touro, with a special focus on proteins, to help combat hunger in our community. Be on the lookout for upcoming Thanksgiving food drives as well! There will also be future food packing and sandwich making days over the next few months and we always welcome volunteers to help pack and donate our leftover food from all events.

Climate Action: Our Climate Action Taskforce continues to do great work to help make Touro and our surrounding community more sustainable. Please check our Touro website for a dedicated page on Climate Action with information and links to resources developed by our Taskforce members. The Taskforce will be submitting a new climate action plan in January and welcomes new members to the committee at any time. Please reach out to Dan Weiner or Monique de la Cour for more information.

Tikkun Olam remains a main pillar of what we do at Touro Synagogue. This was shown on Yom Kippur by our well attended afternoon panel with representatives from Second Harvest Food Bank, University Medical Center, and Planned Parenthood. Our congregation is engaged and is always looking for more ways to help our community.

We are also exploring further expanding and growing our Tikkun Olam footprint. We launched a **Tikkun Olam Strategic Planning Committee** that meets regularly to explore Touro Synagogue's next phase of Tikkun Olam framed by our own unique position in Jewish leadership within Greater New Orleans, addressing social justice through services, education, and advocacy.

If you are interested in joining any of our Tikkun Olam committees, want to participate in ongoing projects, or have thoughts for new ideas and initiatives, please reach out to Committee Co-Chairs, Sara Gershen and Chris Lorenzen.









A Journey to Israel

Alive, Evolving, and Deeply Human



June 2-13, 2027

Jerusalem > Upper Galilee > Tel Aviv

Multi-Generational

In June 2027, we will travel to Israel on a multi-generational trip that will include those who have been to the Holy Land before and those for whom it will be the first time. This multi-track experience will include spiritual and educational moments in our most significant historical and cultural sites, as well as deep and pressing conversations with the leaders and changemakers who are shaping a better future for all who dwell in the land. This trip will include two beautiful and very different Shabbat experiences, one in Jerusalem and one in Tel Aviv, as well as the celebration of our Festival of Shavuot!

Please scan the QR code or visit TouroSynagogue.com/Travel to learn more and register. We are looking forward to sharing this experience together and bringing back our learnings to Touro.

Support is Available for Travel Expenses!

The Ann & Paul Mendelsohn Memorial Fund has been established to help offset the costs for Touro Synagogue members who are first-time travelers to Israel. A very generous anonymous donor has established this new fund, which may be used for Touro Synagogue's Congregational trip to Israel in 2027 or for other future missions and trips.

The annual gift amount is $10,000, which may be allocated into multiple stipends to reimburse first-time visitors for qualifying travel costs. This is a need-based program where the donor seeks to assist those who are otherwise unable to cover the entire costs of such a trip. **Touro Synagogue members who are interested in applying for a grant must complete the application no later than December 31, 2026.** Scan the QR code or visit TouroSynagogue.com/Travel to learn more and apply.

J2 adventures.

Hava Nagilah!

It's Mardi Gras Mitzvah Time at Touro

We Can't Do It Without You!

Touro Synagogue is blessed to have, quite literally, a front row seat to the biggest, most colorful, most creative party in the world, and that gives us both responsibilities and opportunities to increase the joy.

Under the leadership of Juan Gershanik, Hal and Kathy Shepard, and other devoted volunteers, we are expanding a strong team of congregants who are committed to creating this experience for the congregation and our Krewe of VIPs. **Even if you've never been involved before, please consider starting a new tradition this year. Mardi Gras at Touro is a gift we give each other!**

Below are the ways to do a Mardi Gras Mitzvah!

1 | The Grandstand Building Team

We are seeking volunteers to help assemble the wheelchair-accessible stands outside the sanctuary on Monday, January 25 and to disassemble them on Wednesday, February 10.

2 | The Security and Hospitality Team

Parade viewing with a purpose! We are seeking volunteers to welcome members at the gate of Touro to ensure that everyone who comes in receives a wristband and is checked in on our list, for security reasons. This includes receiving payments from non-member guests who have not paid in advance.

3 | Krewe of VIPs Host Team

It is our honor each year to host the Krewe of VIPs, and we are seeking volunteers who can welcome and chaperone the group, making sure they and their families have everything they need to enjoy the parades.

Scan the QR Code or email Sarah Tucker at stucker@tourosynagogue.com to sign up!

Touro Parade Schedule 2026

Below you will find a schedule of when the synagogue will be open for members who would like to join the revelry of Carnival in New Orleans. Please note, the parades roll in light rain. The officials will only postpone if the weather is predicted to be severe. The local TV and radio news stations (such as WWL Radio) broadcast the hour-by-hour updates. You can also use the Parade Tracker App to track the parades. Touro will still celebrate Shabbat even if the parades are cancelled due to inclement weather. **Feel free to bring your coolers and snacks! Remember, no pork, shellfish, or glass (except that which you are bringing for recycling) allowed.**

Friday, January 29
4:00PM Gates open for parade watching
5:00PM Shabbat prayers and candle lighting followed by Krewes of Oshun and Cleopatra

Saturday, January 30
9:00AM Shabbat Shiur
10:00AM Gates open for parade watching:
Krewes of Pontchartrain, Mars, & Choctaw
Stands are reserved for Krewe of VIPs;
Touro will close at 4:00pm

Thursday, February 4
4:30PM Gates open for parade watching
Krewes of Babylon, Chaos, and Muses
Stands are reserved for Krewe of VIPs

Friday, February 5
4:00PM Gates open for parade watching
5:00PM Shabbat prayers and candle lighting followed by Krewes of Hermes, d'Etat, and Morpheus

Saturday, February 6
9:00AM Shabbat Shiur
10:00AM Gates open for parade watching
Krewes of Iris and Tucks
Stands are reserved for Krewe of VIPs;
Touro will close at 4:00pm

Touro's facility will be closed for all other Uptown parades that are not listed on this schedule.

Our Mardi Gras Rules

- Non-members must be accompanied by a member at all times. Each non-member will be charged $20 at the door; $10 for non-member guests under 5 years old.
- Members must remain on site as long as their guests are present.
- Parents are responsible for their children at all times
- Access will be limited to the areas behind the fence, the Bowsky Garden, Shushan Assembly, and chapel bathrooms.
- Coolers are permitted. Coolers must be kept outdoors.
- No pork, shellfish, or glass allowed.
- No smoking.
- The building and property grounds must be respected by all members and guests, and all trash must be disposed of properly.
- No playing under the stands.



Store Your Ladder!

With a donation of $50, your ladder will be made available on all the open days listed above. Please call the Touro office to arrange a drop-off beginning Tuesday, January 26. We kindly ask that all ladders are picked up by Friday, February 12.

Together We Thrive

Supporting Our Mission Through Membership

Your Annual Commitment directly supports Touro's mission: ***to lovingly nurture a warm, diverse home for Jewish living, while boldly shaping a community of purpose and connection.*** We have always asked our members to give generously and at a level that is meaningful to them. And we continue to do so, offering an incredible range of opportunities for involvement at all stages of life. Membership contributions enable Touro to thrive 365 days a year. **We are a community built on shared responsibility,** and our collective generosity ensures that everyone can find their home at Touro, regardless of their financial circumstance.

Every act of worship, learning, and care at Touro is funded by generosity:



- **Pastoral Care from Our Dynamic Clergy Team**
- **Jewish Education for 240+ Children**
- **Weekly Worship, Shabbat Dinners, and Holiday Celebrations**
- **Lifelong Learning and Engagement Opportunities**
- **Dynamic Programming Supported by Our Staff**
- **Upkeep of Our Historic and Majestic Buildings**
- **Tikkun Olam Initiatives**
- **Top-notch Security for the Safety of Our Community**

And so much more!

750
Member Households
rely on Touro as their Jewish home

365
Days *of worship, learning, and community made possible by member generosity*

250+
Children and Teens
enrolled in Religious School and Youth Group

2026-2027 Touro Annual Commitment Renewals

A Reminder to Submit Your Pledge by December 31, 2026!

Honor, Celebrate, & Remember

Sponsorship and Dedication Opportunities

Sponsorship Opportunities

Touro Synagogue offers many sponsorship opportunities for you to consider in memory or in honor of someone you love or in celebration of a simcha.

Shabbat Livestream | $100
Shabbat Pulpit Flowers | $100
Shabbat Childcare | $180
Shabbat Dinner | $540
Shabbat Security | $720
Prayerbooks *(includes printed bookplate)* **| $180**
High Holy Day Livestream | $360
High Holy Day Pulpit Flowers | $540
Jazz Fest Shabbat Livestream | $360
Jazz Fest Shabbat Pulpit Flowers | $540

Sanctuary Plaques

Create a lasting tribute by dedicating a plaque in memory or in honor of someone you love, or in celebration of a simcha. Your plaque will be installed in our Main Sanctuary in perpetuity. Please call the Touro office to make arrangements.

Sanctuary Seat Plaque | $540
Joy Tablet Plaque | $1800
Memorial Plaque | $1800

Planned Giving Opportunities

Ensuring Touro Synagogue Flourishes into the Future

Planned giving and designated legacy gifts are meaningful ways to affirm your love for and commitment to Touro Synagogue. These gifts support Touro Synagogue's future without impacting your current giving practices.

Tzedakah Society

By designating a legacy gift, you will become a member of Touro Synagogue's Tzedakah Society established to recognize and honor members who, through their planned gifts, have pledged to help sustain Touro beyond their lifetime. A planned gift could be a simple bequest in your will, or the designation of Touro Synagogue as a beneficiary of a life insurance policy, retirement fund or trust. You can make arrangements for a future gift at any time, without an outlay of funds during your lifetime. To be included in the Tzedakah Society, all you need to do is communicate to us that you have, or intend to include the Synagogue in your estate plan. You are not required to disclose anything about the nature of your gift. All such gifts are welcome and appreciated regardless of size. For more information or to let us know you have already included Touro in your plans, please scan the QR code or visit tourosynagogue.com/tzedakah-society. Additionally, Touro Synagogue recommends that you consult with your attorney, accountant, or financial advisor about legacy giving.

The Rabbi David Goldstein Society

Anyone giving cumulative, non-restricted donations totaling $100,000 or more to the Touro Synagogue Foundation will become a member of the Rabbi David Goldstein Society. Members are honored with a beautiful plaque in our main foyer. The Touro Synagogue Foundation was established as a non-profit organization to develop and manage an endowment fund that provides monies for Touro Synagogue's current and long term needs. For more information, or to learn about how your gifts will strengthen our Foundation, please contact Executive Director Kurt Jostes.

"We have been members of Touro for about five years. Touro has given us a place to worship, friendships, Shabbat Shiur, Lunch and Learns, JazzFest Shabbat, Choir, Friday night services, Shabbat dinners, and a myriad of other gifts. We feel it is time to give back, and through our gifts, we feel we are truly part of the family."

~ Touro Members Trish and Jeffry Luria

Touro Synagogue
4238 St. Charles Avenue | New Orleans, LA 70115
504-895-4843
www.TouroSynagogue.com