

Congregation Anshe Emeth



E-Newsletter March 2026

Services, Led by our *Shaliach Tzibur*, Jese Shell

Friday, March 13

- Shabbat Across America!
- Kabbalat Shabbat Services at 6:00, followed by a light supper provided by Congregation Anshe Emeth.
- Please RSVP for planning purposes—email ansheemeth@gmail.com with Shabbat Across America in the subject line.
- Bring yourself, bring a friend—it is never too late to RSVP!
- No book club discussion at services this month.

Friday, April 17 @ 7:30 pm

- Shabbat Services

Upcoming Opportunity to Spread Love

Faith communities in Springfield are collecting non-perishable goods for Haitian community members, and are asking for large quantities of one or two things. We can help by collecting toothpaste. Please bring tubes of toothpaste to Temple for our March service. Judy Feinstein will collect our donations and share them with the Springfield Haitian community through her choir. Thank you!



Zichrono Livracha

Neal Schmidt, husband of Lauren, father of Jason and Dustin, grandfather of Aubrey and Dahlia, passed away on February 7. Z”L

Yahrtzeits for March . . . Of Blessed Memory

Bernie Cohen
Edith Kastner Benjamin
Gert Liss
Harry Schutz
Israel Shuchat
Lois Snyder

Mi Shebeirach . . . Prayers for Healing

Mitzi Seaman
Joey Ferrell
Rosanne Youngstein
Holly Stephenson
Leonard Wyrobnik
Ruthie Wyrobnik-Davis
Shelly Seigel-Weiss
Galta Giltala bat Cillia
Chaya Vidal
Zeke Levi
Itzca Zohar

Shabbat Across America–March 13!

Get ready to join with other congregations in the US and Canada to celebrate **Shabbat Across America on Friday, March 13**. Sponsored by NJOP–National Jewish Outreach Project–it is a time for all Jewish congregations (Reform, Orthodox, Conservative, Reconstructionist, etc.) and unaffiliated Jews to come together and celebrate Shabbat. **Thank you to Jese for promoting this event and encouraging us to get involved!**

We will gather at 6:00 (note the early time) on Friday, March 13 to light candles and welcome Shabbat with prayer and song. After services there will be a soup and salad dinner provided.

Please RSVP by emailing ansheemeth@gmail.com with “Shabbat Across American” in the subject line, and providing your name, your congregation (if not Anshe Emeth) and the number of people in your party. NJOP likes to keep track of numbers, and the information will also be useful for dinner planning.



JOIN IN PERSON OR ZOOM

To Join Zoom Service:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/7643723318?pwd=STJIR1drNXFoL29XRGw0L1AzMThxQT09>

Or go to your Zoom App and put in this information:

Meeting ID: 764 372 3318 Passcode: 0092

Or simply dial by your location:

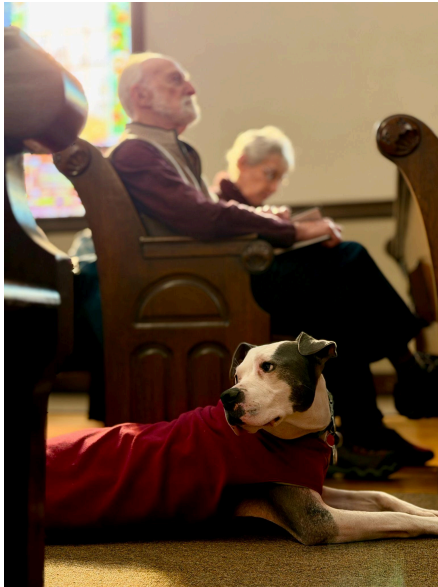
646 876 9923 US (New York)

When prompted, put in for the Meeting ID: 764 372 3318 and push #

Passcode: 0092 and push #

Tu B'Shevat Seder

On February 7 we celebrated Shabbat and Tu B'shevat with our newest Temple member, Grover! Probably our first 4-legged congregant, he behaved like a true mensch. He was attentive during the service, stayed out from underfoot during the Torah procession, and refrained from begging at the table during the Tu B'shevat seder. Thank you, Eileen, for bringing Grover along!



The Tu B'shevat seder was a great opportunity to contemplate life and look forward to spring on a cold day in February. Thanks to Jese for leading a meaningful seder and bringing friends (the two-legged kind) to join us, and thanks to all who brought food and drink for the seder, set the tables beautifully, and washed the dishes afterwards! Using our beautiful *green* dishes helped set the mood for this eco-friendly event!



Parashat Vayakhel-Pekudei: A Mishkan of Our Own

Jese Shell- Congregation Anshe Emeth

As we arrive at Parashat Vayakhel–Pekudei, the closing chapters of the Book of Exodus, we stand at a moment of completion, reflection, and sacred possibility. These final parshiyot (Exodus 35–40) describe the actual building of the Mishkan, the portable sanctuary the Israelites will carry through the wilderness. If earlier portions detailed the instructions, here we witness the community rolling up its sleeves and bringing those holy blueprints to life.

In Vayakhel, Moses gathers the people, “Vayakhel Moshe et kol adat b’nei Yisrael” reminding us that sacred work begins with community. He reiterates the importance of Shabbat before describing the construction efforts, grounding creativity and productivity in spiritual rhythm. The Israelites respond with extraordinary generosity, donating materials and offering their skills. Torah tells us that those who were “wise of heart” (חכמי-לב) came forward to craft, weave, carve, and build. Their giving was so abundant that Moses eventually had to ask them to stop.

In Pekudei, the work is completed and carefully accounted for. There is transparency, responsibility, and joy. When the Mishkan is finally assembled, a cloud of Divine Presence fills it—“Vayechas he’anan et Ohel Moed”—and God dwells among the people. The journey from slavery to sacred space culminates not in individual triumph, but in collective achievement. For a congregation like ours, this message resonates deeply. We know what it means to depend on each other. Every kiddush or oneg prepared, every Torah read, every class taught, every light turned on for services—these acts are our Mishkan-building. We may not have acacia wood or gold clasps, but we have commitment, creativity, and heart. Like our ancestors, we build holiness together here in the Miami Valley.

This year, Vayakhel–Pekudei coincides with NJOP’s annual Shabbat Across America and Canada, a program that invites Jews of all backgrounds to experience the beauty of Shabbat in community, something we will be celebrating here at Anshe Emeth with friends from around the community. The very name “Vayakhel”—“and he gathered”—echoes the spirit of Shabbat Across America. It is a reminder that gathering itself is sacred. Whether someone walks into our sanctuary for the first time or the hundredth, each presence expands our communal Mishkan. Shabbat Across America emphasizes accessibility, warmth, and shared ritual. It says: come as you are. Learn together. Pray together. Eat together. In a rural setting, where Jewish life

can sometimes feel geographically scattered, gathering intentionally for Shabbat becomes even more powerful. Just as the Israelites each brought what they could, each of us bring to our Mishkan something irreplaceable—our voices, our questions, our stories.

Adding another layer of meaning, this Shabbat is also Shabbat HaChodesh, the Shabbat that announces the arrival of the month of Nisan and anticipates Passover. We read the special maftir from Exodus 12: “HaChodesh hazeh lachem rosh chodashim”—“This month shall be for you the beginning of months.” The first commandment given to the Israelites as a free people is not about ritual sacrifice or sanctuary construction. It is about time. Freedom begins with the sanctification of time and the ability to mark new beginnings. Shabbat HaChodesh invites us to ask: What is the new beginning we are ready to embrace? What sacred project calls us now? If Vayakhel–Pekudei celebrates finishing the Mishkan, Shabbat HaChodesh reminds us that endings flow into beginnings. Completion is not stagnation; rather it is preparation for the next sacred chapter.

And perhaps unexpectedly, this spirit of collective building and courageous new beginnings is beautifully captured in a film. You know how I love Judaism and movies, so I couldn’t help but draw parallels to a favorite of mine; the film *A League of Their Own*. Set during World War II, the movie tells the story of women who form a professional baseball league when the men are away at war. What begins as an experiment becomes a powerful testament to teamwork, perseverance, and the breaking of barriers. These women step into roles previously denied to them and build something lasting together. Like the builders of the Mishkan, the players in *A League of Their Own* discover that greatness is not solitary. It is communal. Each woman brings her unique talent, whether it is pitching, catching, leadership, humor, grit or more, together they create a league that transforms the game. The famous line, “There’s no crying in baseball,” by Tom Hanks’s famous character, Jimmy Dugan, may be played for humor, but beneath it lies a deeper truth: building something meaningful requires resilience, trust, and shared purpose.

Our synagogue community may not be constructing a desert sanctuary or founding a baseball league, but we too are shaping sacred space in our time and place. We show up for minyan even when the weather is difficult (thank you to Mike, Judy, and our many volunteers for clearing snow, heating the shul, and so much more)!. We host community and collegiate educational programs that are often met with “I had no idea there are Jews here?” or “Would it be alright if I joined you for a service?”. We welcome neighbors during these interfaith gatherings. We stretch

limited resources with creativity and love. That is our league. That is our Mishkan. Vayakhel teaches that everyone's contribution matters. Pekudei teaches that accountability and integrity matter. Shabbat HaChodesh teaches that renewal matters. And Shabbat Across America reminds us that gathering and praying together matters.

As we prepare for Nisan and the journey toward Passover, may we see ourselves as active builders of Jewish life and not just passersby watching life go without action. May we continue to gather with generosity of spirit and continue to serve G-d and one another with it in full force. May our small but mighty community feel the Divine Presence in the spaces we create together. And may we embrace the new month with courage: ready to build, ready to renew, ready to step up to the plate. Just as the cloud filled the Mishkan when the work was complete, may a sense of holiness fill our sanctuary when we gather. And just as those pioneering women built a league of their own, may we continue building a sacred community of our own—right here, in Piqua, Ohio together.

Thank you for your support . . .

Mike, for replacing the leaky flapper valve in the women's restroom

Luke, for putting a tarp over our leaky chimney and replacing the rusted furnace flue!

