



**Shofar**  
Monthly Newsletter

**SHEVAT-ADAR 5786**

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**A Publication of Congregation Sha'arey Israel**

A conservative congregation serving Macon and Middle Georgia

Affiliated with United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism

[www.uscj.org](http://www.uscj.org)

Rabbi Aaron Rubinstein



## Upcoming Services

**Thursday, February 5**  
7:00 Minyan

**Thursday, February 19**  
7:00 Minyan

**Friday, February 6**  
6:15 pm Service

**Friday, February 20**  
6:15 pm Service

**Saturday, February 7**  
9:30 am Service

**Saturday, February 21**  
9:30 am Service

**Thursday, February 12**  
7:00 Minyan

**Thursday, February 26**  
7:00 Minyan

**Friday, February 13**  
6:15 pm Service

**Friday, February 27**  
6:15 pm Service

**Saturday, February 14**  
9:30 am Service

**Saturday, February 28**  
9:30 am Service



## Zoom Davening

**All services can be viewed via Zoom.** You can access these either via computer, smart phone or call in and listen to services with any phone.

We are using one link for ALL services. All services dealing with praying/davening and Torah Study will use the link below.

<https://zoom.us/j/94484008047?pwd=NkN2eVNlOTIMc3kwakpwdFdJdVVPUT09>

**Passcode: 420674**

**By Phone: 1-929-436-2866**

**Meeting ID: 944 8400 8047   Password: 420674**

### Service Dates and Times:

**Wednesday Torah Study - February 4, 11, 18, 25 at 7 pm**

**Thursday Morning Minyan - February 5, 12, 19, 26 at 7 am**

**Friday Evening Kabbalat Shabbat - February 6, 13, 20, 27 at 6:15 pm**

**Saturday Morning Service - February 7, 14, 21, 28 at 9:30 am**



## **A Word From the Rabbi**

**מַתִּיר אָסּוּרִים** The One Who Frees the Captives

February is upon us, and I'll start off by quickly noting three wonderful happenings coming up soon. They are (1) Our annual Super Bowl Fundraiser, (2) our upcoming scholar-in-residence, and (3) Purim. I hope to see you at those special events.

As you know, not long ago, the remains of Ran Gvili, the last hostage in Gaza, were brought home to Israel. In some ways, an incredibly painful chapter was closed. I won't ever forget the moment each Shabbat morning in shul when Sabrina — before reading the Prayer for Israel — would intone his name, reminding us of our obligation to him and his family. In my Torah chanter's mind, Joseph makes his brothers take an oath that they won't leave his bones in Egypt.

Ambassador Huckabee spoke with heartfelt eloquence about his taking off the yellow ribbon pin and hoping never to need to see it again. Israeli soldiers sang Hatikvah and recited Kaddish in the presence of the coffin bearing Ran Gvili's remains, and that scene powerfully drives home the Hebrew term for a funeral — levaya (לְיַהְעַ), which means 'to accompany.' We leave no one behind. But another Israeli official (I can't currently recall his name) gave voice to a deeper level of complexity to this ancient and modern imperative of pidyon sh'vuyim (פִּידּוֹן שְׁבּוּעִים), redeeming the captives. He reminded us all (not that we could forget) that Hamas is very much remaining in the Gaza picture, and that they (and other terrorist groups) have taken home the lesson — hostages continue to fetch a high price; they make for excellent bargaining chips.

Terrorists in the Old World (call them pirates if you like) knew this as well, and our sages who crafted Jewish Law have been struggling over this for a very long time. That's why the (above-cited) Israeli spokesman told us that while he was relieved to take off the yellow ribbon pin, he would be sure to remember where he put it. We are grateful that the Gvili family can finally mourn properly. The yellow ribbon pin serves as shorthand for many intermixed, complex emotions. And so, we recite the blessing thanking God for redeeming the captives, and we cannot forget the Psalmist's words — Behold, the Guardian of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps.

Rabbi Aaron is meeting with congregants by appointment.  
You can call him at 478-250-5952 to schedule an appointment.

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## A WORD FROM CSI CO-PRESIDENTS

Dear CSI Congregants,

February is here—and it is cold outside! The past few weeks have brought temperatures we're not quite used to in the South. Still, we have several exciting events coming up at CSI, and despite the chill, it will be well worth your while to come to shul.

First, our annual **Super Bowl Fundraiser** is just two weeks away, on **Sunday, February 8**. This has always been a wonderful opportunity for congregants and friends to gather, enjoy good food, spend time together, and support the shul while watching the biggest game of the year. Please see the attached flyer for details—we would love to have you join us!

A few weeks later, we will host our **Scholar in Residence** weekend from **February 20–22**. Rabbi Perry Rank of New York & New Jersey will be joining us in Macon for several events

throughout the weekend. Our Adult Education Committee, chaired by Rozy Simson, has worked hard to put together a meaningful and engaging program, so please plan to attend.

Hard as it is to believe, **Purim** is not far off. Rabbi Aaron is once again preparing a memorable **Purim Schpiel** for the evening of **Monday, March 2**. A great deal of effort goes into this event, and we encourage everyone to come to shul and support all those involved. I know Rabbi will make it a memorable one.

I also want to address something that has been on many of our minds—**the security of Jews in America**. Recent incidents, including one at a synagogue in Mississippi, serve as sobering reminders. As a Jewish community, it is vital that we continue to show up and remain committed to living our Jewish lives openly and proudly. Please know that security remains our top priority, and we will continue to have security in place for all events at the shul. My sincere thanks to Theresa Rosengart and the Security Committee for their ongoing coordination with the Bibb County Sheriff's Office.

Stay warm, everyone!

Shalom,

Jan and Michael

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*The parents of Lu Borgia will sponsor kiddush lunch Saturday, February 28th in her honor. For those who may not know, Lu is a Mercer student who attends shul.*

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### **Sponsor a Kiddush Lunch at**

### **Congregation Sha'arey Israel**

#### ***Honor a Loved One, Celebrate a Milestone, or Remember Someone Special***

Congregation Sha'arey Israel invites you to sponsor a Kiddush lunch, a meaningful way to mark important occasions while supporting our community.

#### **Why Sponsor a Kiddush Lunch?**

- Commemorate a special event
- Honor a friend or family member
- Remember a loved one
- Support our congregation

#### **Sponsorship Details:**

- Minimum sponsorship: \$36
- Your sponsorship helps defray the costs of our complimentary Kiddush Lunches

#### **Recognition:**

- Sponsorship announced in our weekly congregational email
- Acknowledged during Friday and Saturday announcements from the Bima

#### **How to Sponsor:**

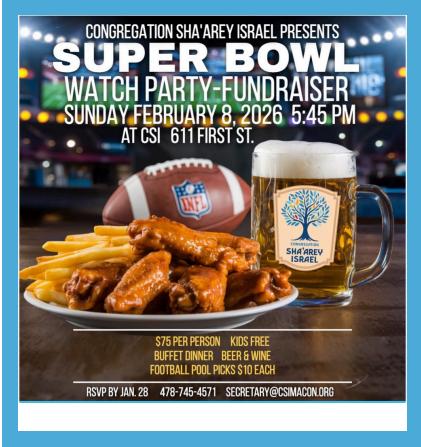
Contact our office to arrange your Kiddush lunch sponsorship today!

Phone: 478-745-4571

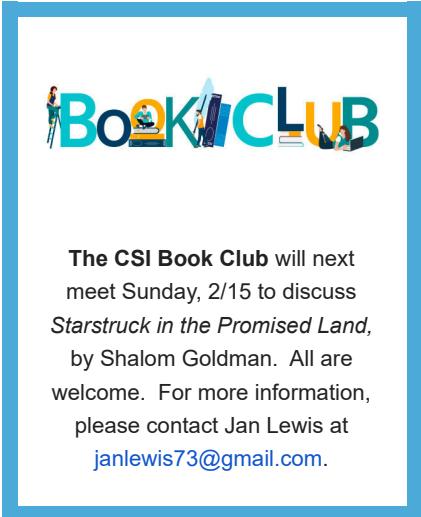
Email: [secretary@csimacon.org](mailto:secretary@csimacon.org)

Join us in this mitzvah and create lasting memories for our community!

Congregation Sha'arey Israel  
611 First Street  
Macon, Georgia 31210



RSVP for Super Bowl Party



### Hebrew Courses for Spring 2026

CSI is considering two Hebrew courses for Spring 2026, both offered via Zoom and taught by Zohar Rubinstein. Each will cost \$100 for ten sessions.

Introduction to Reading Hebrew  
This is a repeat of the course Zohar taught in Fall 2025. The purpose of the class is to enable adults to become familiar enough with Hebrew to be able to read from our prayer book without using transliteration.

Hebrew Reading Part II: Introduction to Shabbat Prayers  
The course will take participants through reading and speaking some of the most important of the Shabbat prayers. A beginning knowledge of Hebrew is necessary.

Anyone who took the Beginning Hebrew class in the fall and would like some review is welcome to retake the class.  
Please reply to Jan Lewis ([janlewis73@gmail.com](mailto:janlewis73@gmail.com)) if you would like to take either one by Friday, February 6.

**The Keenum family is organizing monthly care packages for Gabe Fresa, a military friend of CSI members. Please drop off non-perishable food items in the collection box in the hallway leading to the courtyard. The post**



## Hamantaschen

### Bake

Bake, laugh, & prepare for Purim!

Sunday, February 15

10 a.m. @ Sha'arey Israel

Interested?

Text Sabrina Wengier 305-283-7439

office has a long list of items that are prohibited. To keep it simple, Gabe has requested items like K-cups and caffeinated drink mixes and non-perishable Kosher items such as Oreos.

Thanks.

Need college money? [Start here.](#)

JELF provides interest-free loans for college, graduate and vocational programs to Jewish students with demonstrated financial need. Our gift is in the savings!

JANUARY - APRIL 30  
Full Academic Year  
AUGUST - SEPT 30  
Spring / Summer Only

Higher Ed is **expensive!**  
but 0% interest helps

LEARN MORE ABOUT JELF [jelf.org](#) [info@jelf.org](#) [@jelfloans](#)

Congregation Sha'arey Israel of Macon

**SCHOLAR-IN-RESIDENCE WEEKEND**

**CONGREGATION SHA'AREY ISRAEL FEBRUARY 20-22**

**RABBI PERRY RANK**

**FRI 2/20 6:15 PM**  
Shabbat Services & Dinner  
D'var Torah by Rabbi Rank  
Navigating the Bible with Honesty:  
How Can We Never Faith in a Text With So Many Fictions?

**SAT 2/21 9:30 AM**  
Shabbat Service  
Rabbi Rank: Are We Ready for Thinking or Singing?  
Rabbi Rank: A New Gathering from Gether for Prayer?  
Kiddush Lunch (12:15 pm)  
Rabbi Rank's New Book, Two Minute Torah - Ancient  
Wisdom & Modern Thought for Every Day & Every Night

**SAT 2/21 7:30 PM**  
Havdalah & Dessert  
Rabbi Rank: Are We Ready for Thinking or Singing?  
Roxy & Gary Simson's Home, 119 Oakcliff Rd.  
227 New Strategic Plan for the Next 120 Years  
A Discussion Led by Rabbi Rank

**SUN 2/22 10:30 AM**  
Rabbi Rank will meet with Sunday School  
Students and their families  
Topic: Jewish Identity in a Majority Christian  
Environment

There is no charge for the meals, but you must RSVP no later than Friday, February 6, so that the appropriate amount of food can be prepared.

RSVP Here for Scholar-In-Residence Events

**SAVE THESE DATES**

**EVENTS at CSI**

2/8/26	Super Bowl Party @ CSI
2/20/26	Scholar in Residence Shabbat Dinner
2/21/26	Scholar in Residence
3/2/26	Purim Shpiel
4/12/26	Yom HaShoah Program @ CSI
5/8/26	Family Shabbat



Please call Stephanie at the synagogue office 478-745-4571 or email her at [secretary@csimacon.org](mailto:secretary@csimacon.org) for donations to all funds except The Wall of Jerusalem.

For donations to the Wall of Jerusalem Fund, please call Shelley Kruger at 478-474-0060.

For donations to the Noah's Ark Fund, please call the CSI secretary.

Yahrzeit donations should be mailed directly to synagogue.

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Please note that you can also make donations to the various CSI funds through our website:

[www.csimacon.org](http://www.csimacon.org)

It's easy and quick!  
You can designate which fund to  
honor your loved ones.



Introducing  
**Macon Rikud!**

(Rikud = Dance in Hebrew)

CSI is now offering a creative dance class with a Jewish flavor for children and adults age 3 and up, taught by Sharona Rubinstein!

The class will include:

- Basic dance technique
- Structured improvisation to explore the elements of dance
- Exercises that build strength and increase flexibility
- Israeli Line and Circle Dances
- Group and partner activities
- Performance opportunities
- Lots of fun for everyone!

The classes meet on the Sundays when Sunday school is in session, and will take place in the social hall from 1-2PM beginning Oct. 26th, except on Dec. 14 when it will be from 3-4 since Sunday school starts later at 4 to occur before the family night.

Fees per child (parents come for free) are as follows:

\$15 per class if you pay by the class

\$90 if you pay for the 5 classes of the Fall semester

\$144 for the 12 classes of the Winter/Spring semester.

Parents must fill out a liability waiver form for their child and themselves if they participate. Bring a light lunch if your child attends Sunday school so they can take a lunch break from 12:30-1:00. They should bring dance clothes or workout clothes and have hair pulled back. If you want more information, Call Sharona at 476-200-5566.



**SYNAGOGUE & MAZEL TOV**  
**FUND DONATIONS**

***In memory of Frances Paller***

Rabbi Aaron & Sharona  
Rubinstein

***In memory of***  
***Alan Goldman's sister, Paula***  
Alan & Fran Kirsh

***Happy birthday to Fran Kirsh***  
Alan & Hershene Goldman

**ANNUAL FUND DONATIONS**

David & Laura Ilan  
Rabbi Aaron & Sharona  
Rubinstein  
Gerald & Francie Marshall



**KRUGER TORAH FUND**  
**DONATIONS**

***Happy Birthday to***  
***Fran Kirsh***  
David & Terri Frolich

***Happy Birthday to***  
***Hershene Goldman***  
David & Terri Frolich



**February**  
**Birthdays**

- 1 - Jan Lewis
- 3 - Hershene Goldman
- 5 - Carol Bashuk
- 9 - Majida Al-Husaan
- 10 - Charles Brown
- 10 - Frank Jeffrey Cohen
- 11 - Morris Purcel
- 13 - Jonathan Carter
- 15 - Candace Geiger
- 17 - David Frolich
- 23 - Robert Rosengart



**February**  
**Anniversaries**

14 - Markus & Pamela Hill  
20 - Ethan & Trichelle Hutton  
23 - Allison & Brian Bloodworth



Congregation Sha'arey Israel is a partner with DAYBREAK, a daytime safe haven for members of our community who are either homeless or are in need of a place to spend a day with people, a place where they can shower, get a light snack, and feel part of a community. DAYBREAK needs volunteers. If interested, call (478) 216-9119 or visit <https://dePaulUSA.org/programs/macon/>. You can also drop off donated items at their Macon location at 174 Walnut Street. You can also ship directly from Amazon.

Daybreak's current needs are:

canned or fresh fruit	large sturdy back packs
applesauce	Bio freeze
breakfast bars (soft)	Claritin
sandwich cookie packs	daytime cold medicine-no alcohol
powered lemonade/tea	eye drops
coffee creamer	insect repellent
instant grits	hydrocortisone cream
sugar	reader glasses - 2.00/higher
brown paper snack bags	Benadryl
plastic spoons	ponchos
lawn bags - 33 gallon	disinfectant spray
vinegar	air freshner
bleach	hand/foot towels
men's T-shirts (white, size lg, XL, 2X)	\$10 gift cards
men & women's underwear	



## February 2026 Yahrzeits

Evening of  
February 6th/7th-February 13th  
Jack Bresler

Evening of  
February 20th/21st-February 27th  
Rita Govern

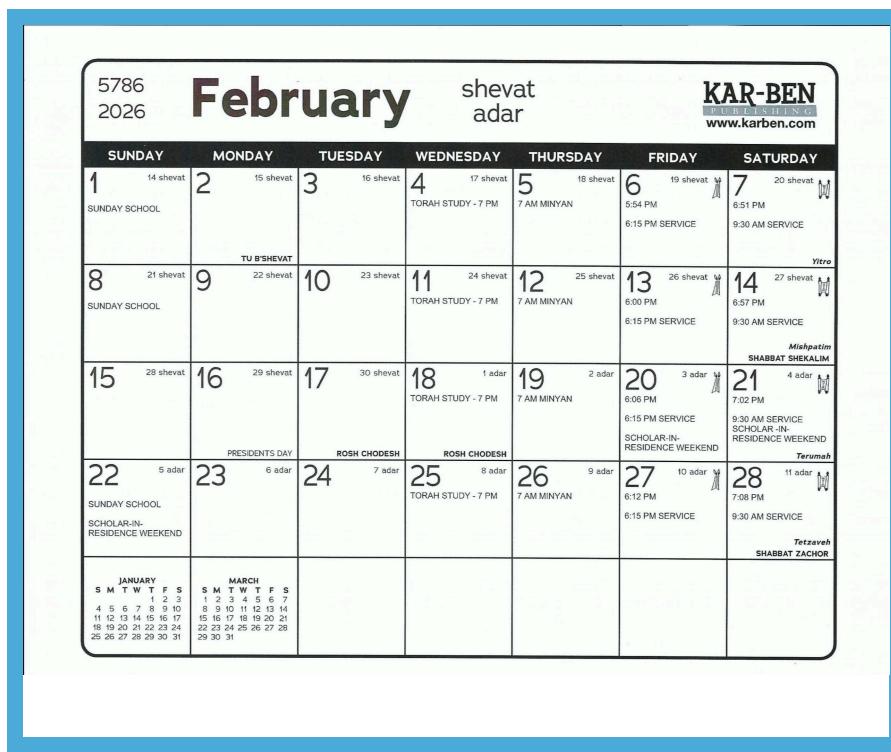
Louis Avrunin\*  
David Thaler  
Lauren Bullington

**Evening of**  
**February 13th/14th-February 20th**

Lillian Rudnick  
Victor Hyman Dayan  
Hyman Marshall\*  
Charles R. Sussman\*  
Rodolph Richards  
Abraham Davidson\*  
Barbara Jelks Crider

Carol Besser  
Canton Joseph Schwartzman  
Pearl Brooks  
Marcia K. Singer\*  
Eric Lipson  
Norma Potosky

\* Indicates names listed on a plaque in the main sanctuary.



**2025-2026**  
**Executive Committee**

Co-Presidents - Jan Lewis, Michael Kruger  
Vice President - Lara Geller  
Treasurer - Evan Koplin  
Recording Secretary - Pamela Hill  
Corresponding Secretary - Allison Bloodworth  
Ex-Officio - Shelley Davidson  
Rabbi - Aaron Rubinstein

**2025-2026**  
**Committee Chairs**

Adult Education - Rosalind Simson  
Board Of Education - Jennifer Bernstein, Shalom Keenum  
Cemetery - Marty Koplin  
Gifts and Memorials - TBA  
House - Jonathan Atzman, Markus Hill  
Kitchen - Shelley Davidson  
Long-Range Planning - Sabrina Wengier  
Marketing/Communications - Chip Koplin  
Membership - Pamela Webster  
Ritual - Jeff Lehman  
Security/Parliamentarian - Theresa Rosengart

Social Action - Bonnie Cornelius  
Special Projects - Gary Simson

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**Secretary - Stephanie Johnson**

**Office Hours**

8 am - 4 pm Monday, Wednesday & Thursday

8 am - 12 pm Friday

Lunch 1:00pm - 2:00pm

**Our mailing address is:**

611 First Street Macon, Georgia 31201

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