



March 20-21, 2026

ג ניסן תשפ"ו

Candle Lighting 6:54 PM

Parashat Vayikra - Leviticus 1:1-5:26 ויקרא

Stone - p 544 Hertz - p 410 Etz Hayim - p 585

Haftarah - Isaiah 43:21-44:23 ישעיה

Stone - p 1165 Hertz - p 424 Etz Hayim - p 607

Kiddush following services
is sponsored by the congregation

Shabbat ends 7:55PM

TRADITIONAL CONGREGATION

Rabbi Seth D Gordon - Rabbi.Gordon@yahoo.com
Marian S. Gordon, Executive Director - traditionalcong@gmail.com

WEEKDAY AND **SHABBAT** SERVICES

Tuesday - 6:30 PM
Shabbat - 9:30 AM

Board of Directors:

Governance Committee:
Florence Schachter, Chair
Marty Levy, Vice-Chair
Ken Bohm, Ellis Frohman, Ron Green,
Dina Rinder, Mindy Strauss

Ellis Frohman, Financial Vice President
Mark Weinstein, Ritual Vice President
Marty Levy/Mindy Strauss,
Education Co-Vice Presidents
Dina Rinder, Membership Vice President
Steven Puro, Administration Vice President
Chris Brown/Justin Zeid, Building & Grounds
Co-Vice Presidents
Ron Green, Fundraising Vice President
Barbara Levin, Treasurer
Mimi Levy, Secretary

Past Presidents:

Kenneth H. Bohm, Phil Brick

Members at Large:

Maureen Brodsky
Stanley Estrin
Bill Gold
Gary Golden z"l
Jack Heller
Sid Levin
Ari Levy
Carol Max
Florence Schachter

We welcome new members!

If you or someone you know would like to receive membership information,
please contact our office at 314-576-5230
or traditionalcong@gmail.com

On This Week's Parashah - Vayikra

In English, the book of Vayikra is known as Leviticus. This means "to do with the Levites" reflecting the fact that the Leviim in Judaism served as guardians of the sacred. The ancient rabbinic name was Torat Kohanim, "the law of the priests." This is also an appropriate title, since much of the book deals with sacrifices and rituals associated with the Mishkan and later the Beit HaMikdash in Jerusalem.

By contrast, the name Vayikra, "And He called," seems to be used simply because it is the first word of the book. Yet in fact there is a deep connection between this word and the message of the book as a whole. To understand this, we must notice something unusual about how the word appears in a Sefer Torah. Its last letter, an aleph, is written small – almost as if it barely existed. Without that letter, the word becomes vayikar, meaning "he encountered" or "it happened by chance." Unlike vayikra, which means a call or summons, vayikar suggests something accidental.

Vayikar is used when God appeared to the pagan prophet Bilaam, whereas here vayikra is used when God calls to Moshe. A Midrash explains that God speaks to the prophets of Israel with a full, loving call – vayikra. But with Bilaam, the Torah uses language that suggests a casual encounter – vayikar.

Rashi adds that the word vayikra expresses affection, like the way angels call to one another. The Baal HaTurim goes further. He explains that Moshe, because of his humility, wanted to write vayikar, as if God's appearance to him was only by chance, like a dream. God insisted on the word vayikra, but Moshe still wrote the aleph small, due to his humility.

Something very important is hinted at here. To understand it fully, we must look at the end of the book. In the section known as the tochachah (the rebuke), the Torah describes the terrible fate that will befall Israel if it abandons the brit with God. The passage describes fear, defeat, and exile. Yet it ends with God's promise that He will always remember His people, and never break His promise with them or reject them.

A key word appears several times in this passage: keri. It is often translated as "contrary," but Rambam instead connects it to the word mikreh, meaning "chance" from the same root as vayikar. Rambam says that when trouble strikes a community, they are commanded to cry out in prayer and examine their actions. This is a path to teshuvah. But if people say that their suffering is simply the way of the world, a matter of chance, they choose a dangerous path. By seeing events as random, they fail to learn from them, and the troubles continue.

According to Rambam, the Torah is teaching a profound idea. If people believe that history is guided by God, they will experience Divine Providence. But if they see history as random chance, they will be left to chance.

We can now understand the link between the beginning and the end of Vayikra. The difference between mikra (a call) and mikreh (chance) is almost invisible. The only difference is the small aleph. The Torah is hinting that God's presence in history will not always be obvious. Sometimes it is like the small aleph – almost silent, almost hidden. Those who look carefully will see it. Those who listen carefully will hear it. But if we refuse to see or hear, the call will disappear and history will seem like mere coincidence. Indeed, says God in the tochachah: if you believe that history is chance, then it will become so. But in truth it is not so. The very history of the Jewish people testifies to the presence of God in their midst. Only thus could such a small, vulnerable, relatively powerless people survive, and still say today – even after the Shoah – Am Yisrael Chai, the Jewish people lives. And just as Jewish history is not mere chance, so it is no mere coincidence that the first word of the central book of the Torah is Vayikra, "And He called".

To be a Jew is to believe that what happens to us as a people is God's call to us – to become "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."

**Shabbat shalom,
Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks zt"l**

FAST OF THE FIRST-BORN ס'יום בְּכוֹרִים -- *Siyyum B'chorim*

In commemoration of God's sparing the Israelite first-born, first-born males fast on the day before Pesach. However, a widespread minhag developed to annul the fast through a *siyyum*, completing a *sefer* of Mishnah or *massechet* of Talmud and celebrating with a modest party. Therefore, many first-born males, fathers and sons, listen to a summary and the conclusion of the study session, and enjoy celebratory refreshments. This year's *siyyum b'chorim* will take place on ZOOM on **Wednesday, April 1 at 7:30 AM CDT.**

Here is the link to join: <https://bit.ly/47E6pcN>

Meeting ID: 840 4908 6894

Passcode: 179220

CHAG PESACH SAMEACH!

Wednesday, April 1, 2026

Latest time to eat chametz: 10:58 AM

Burn chametz: 12:02 PM

Candle lighting: 7:06 PM

First Seder



Thursday, April 2, 2026 - Pesach Day 1

Pesach Services, 9:30 AM

Candle lighting: 8:07 PM

Second Seder

Friday, April 3, 2026 - Pesach Day 2

Pesach Services, 9:30 AM

Candle Lighting: 7:08 PM

Shabbat, April 4, Pesach Day 3 Services, 9:30 AM

Tuesday, April 7 - Candle lighting 7:12 PM

Wednesday, April 8, 2026 - Pesach Day 7

Pesach Services, 9:30 AM

Candle lighting 8:13 PM

Thursday, April 9, 2026 - Pesach Day 8

Services, 9:30 AM including Yizkor Memorial Service

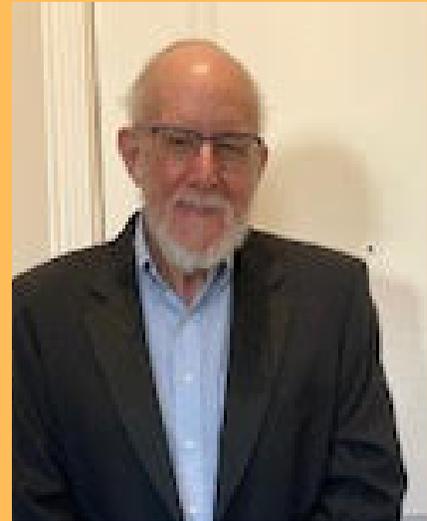
Chametz may be eaten after 9:10 PM

Save the Date!!

Rededication Shabbat

honoring

Steven Puro, Ph.D.



Shabbat, April 18, 2026

Services begin at 9:30 AM
Festive kiddush luncheon
to follow in Steve's honor

Please join us to honor Steve
for the many years of
devoted service he has given
to our congregation.

RSVP with names of all attending to:
traditionalcong@gmail.com



SUNDAY, APRIL 26, 2026



KOLOT

St. Louis Jewish Women's Choir

AT TRADITIONAL CONGREGATION



Light breakfast @ 10:00 AM,
followed by KOLOT.

KOLOT performs Jewish songs in Hebrew and English,
Broadway show tunes and other popular songs.

Advance RSVP is required:

traditionalcong@gmail.com or 314-576-5230
with names of all attending

No charge, but donations are gratefully accepted.

Please stay after the performance to help assemble
gift bags for the Florence Gaponoff Mother's Day
Tzedakah Project, which will be distributed to
women's shelters in the STL metropolitan area.

Traditional Congregation
12437 Ladue Road, STL MO 63141
314-576-5230
www.traditional-congregation.org



PRAYER

Eternal God, in whose service we are enlisted and
in whose name we have gathered,
lift our thoughts that we may renew our minds;
and lead us beside tranquil waters
so that we may restore our souls.

*We thank You, O God, for our hallowed memories
and for our abiding hopes.*

Help us to show that we are Your children
by giving ourselves faithfully to Your tasks.

Help us to convert our convictions into conduct and commitments.

Help us to narrow the gap between our principles and our practices,
between our aspirations and our actions.

*Keep us from blaming others for our own faults;
help us to heal the wounds we have thoughtlessly inflicted.*

Help us to face our defeats with courage
and to carry our successes with humility.

*Help us from the pride that blinds the mind
and from the anger that locks the heart.*

Make us loyal to our convictions in the face of falsehood;
but help us to speak the truth in love.

*On this Shabbat draw us closer to Your teachings;
closer to each other, and closer to You.*

Unknown

THOUGHT FOR THE MOMENT OF SILENCE

We call things we don't understand complex, but that means we haven't found a good way
of thinking about them yet.

Tsutomu Shimomura