



### TRADITIONAL CONGREGATION

12437 Ladue Rd, St Louis MO 63141

[www.traditional-congregation.org](http://www.traditional-congregation.org)

314-576-5230 traditionalcong@gmail.com

Affiliated with the Union for Traditional Judaism

Rabbi Seth D Gordon



January 2-3, 2026

יד טבת תשפ"ו

Candle Lighting 4:33 PM

### **Parashat Vayechi** ויחי

Genesis 47:28 - 50:26

Stone - p 268

Hertz - p 180

Etz Hayim - p 293

### **חזק חזק ונתחזק!**

### **Chazak chazak v-nit'cha'zek!**

May we be strong and  
strengthen each other!

### **Haftarah**

First Kings 2:1-12 מלכים א'

Stone - p 1145

Hertz - p 191

Etz Hayim - p 313

Special presentation by  
Mimi & Marty Levy about  
their recent trip to Israel

**Kiddush** following services  
is sponsored by the congregation

**Shabbat** ends 5:34 PM

### TRADITIONAL CONGREGATION

Rabbi Seth D Gordon - [Rabbi.Gordon@yahoo.com](mailto:Rabbi.Gordon@yahoo.com)

Marian S. Gordon, Executive Director -

[traditionalcong@gmail.com](mailto: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

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](mailto:traditionalcong@gmail.com)

## On This Week's Parashah - Vayechi

Throughout Bereishit we have read of the drama of younger and older brothers. It now reaches a strange climax. As Yaakov is nearing the end of his life, Yosef brings his two sons, Menashe and Ephraim, to visit him at his bedside. It is the only scene of grandfather and grandchildren in the book. Yaakov asks Yosef to bring them close so that he can bless them. Yosef carefully places Menashe at Yaakov's right hand, and Ephraim at his left. But Yaakov crosses his arms and puts his right hand on Ephraim's head, even though he is younger. Yosef tries to move his father's hand over, pointing out that Menashe is the firstborn. But Yaakov holds firm, saying that although Menashe will become great, "his younger brother will be greater than he." So when he blesses them, he puts Ephraim ahead of Menashe.

It is not difficult to understand Yosef's concern. Every time Yaakov ever set the younger before the elder in the past, it resulted in tragedy. He tried to take Eisav's blessing. He favoured Rachel over her older sister Leah. And he favoured the youngest of his children, Yosef and Binyamin, over the elder brothers. The consequences were catastrophic: estrangement from Eisav, tension between the sisters, and hostility among the brothers. Yosef himself bore the scars. Had Yaakov not learned? Why repeat the pattern – especially when he had never met these two grandsons before? What possible reason could justify favouring the younger over the elder?

Yaakov, however, knew two things. First, he knew that their time in Egypt would not be short. Before leaving home, God had told him: "Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you into a great nation there. I will go down to Egypt with you, and I will surely bring you back again." This was the beginning of the long exile God had told Avraham about long ago.

The second thing Yaakov knew was the names of Yosef's children. When Yosef rose to greatness in Egypt, he married and had two sons. The Torah notes that Yosef named his firstborn Menashe, "because God has made me forget all my trouble and all my father's household." He chose the name Ephraim for his second son, "because God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction."

This reveals Yosef's inner experience of exile. At first he felt relief. The years of slavery and imprisonment were over. He had risen to power. No one reminded him of his background. Menashe meant "forgetting." But over time, Yosef's feelings changed. Yes, he had arrived, but this people was not his; nor was its culture. His family were shepherds, but they had been spoken to by God, Creator of heaven and earth. By the time Ephraim was born, Yosef had undergone a profound change of heart. He had success, but he was still in Egypt, in exile.

Hansen's Law states: "The second generation seeks to remember what the first generation sought to forget." Yosef went through this transformation quickly. By naming Ephraim, he was remembering what earlier, when Menashe was born, he had tried to forget: who he was, where he came from, where he belonged.

Yaakov's blessing had nothing to do with age and everything to do with their names. Knowing these were the first children born in exile, he signalled to all future generations the tension between the desire to forget and the promptings of memory. The child of forgetting (Menashe) may have blessings. But greater are the blessings of a child (Ephraim) who remembers the past and future of which he is a part.

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

## PRAYER

Reverence for God is the root of the wisdom,  
And the branches of wisdom are long life.

*Flee from sin as from a serpent,  
For it will bite you when you come near it.*

As water will quench a blazing fire,  
So kindness will atone for sin.

*My child, do not defend the poor of their living;  
Do not make the eyes of the needy wait long.*

Do not pain a hungry heart;  
Do not anger a person in distress.

*Listen to what a poor person has to say,  
And return a peaceful and gentle answer.*

Do not be known as a whisperer;  
Do not set an ambush with your tongue.

*Do not indulge in too much luxury,  
And do not be tied to its expense.*

Do not put off turning to God;  
Do not postpone it from day to day.

*Forgive others their wrong doings,  
Then your sins will be forgiven when you pray.*

**From the Wisdom of Ben Sira**

## THOUGHT FOR THE MOMENT OF SILENCE

*Life is not lost by dying; life is lost minute by minute, day by dragging day, in all the thousand small uncaring ways.*

**Stephen Vincent Benet**

**Shabbat**, January 17:  
**Kiddush** luncheon is  
sponsored by  
Barbara & Sid Levin  
in honor of  
Sid's birthday



**Shabbat**, January 24:  
**Kiddush** luncheon is  
sponsored by  
Steven Puro  
in honor of the  
70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his  
**Bar Mitzvah**