



May 21-23, 2026

ז'סיון תשפ"ו



**Erev Shavuot** - Thursday, May 21 - Candlelighting 7:53 PM

**Tikkun Leyl Shavuot - 7:00 PM - Join us!**

**1st Day Shavuot** - Friday, May 22

Exodus 19:1-20:23 - p 1146; Stone p 400; Hertz p 290; Etz Hayim p 436

Maftir: Numbers 28:26-31 - p 1149; Stone p 892; Hertz p 696; Etz Hayim p 932

Haftarah: Ezekiel 1:1-28, 3:12 - p 1149; Stone p 1228; Hertz p 1027; Etz Hayim p 1321

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

Friday, May 22 - Candlelighting 7:54 PM

**2nd Day Shavuot - Shabbat, May 23**

Chanting of **Megillat Ruth** - Stone p 1269

Deuteronomy 14:22-15:19 - p 1143; Stone p 1012; Hertz p 810; Etz Hayim p 1074

Maftir: Numbers 28:26-31 - p 1149; Stone p 892; Hertz p 696; Etz Hayim p 932

Haftarah: Habakuk - 2:20-3:19 - p 1151; Stone p 1229; Hertz p 1032; Etz Hayim p 1326

**Kiddush** luncheon following **Shabbat** services is sponsored by

Ophira & Jeffrey Melnick

in honor of the *aufbruch* and upcoming marriage of Noga Melnick & Jack Ross

**Shabbat/Yom Tov** ends 8:54 PM

## **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 Torah Portion - Shavuot

At Mount Sinai, the Israelites made a covenant with God. He would be their God and they would be His people. But at key moments in Tanach we find another phrase altogether: "At Mount Sinai, the Israelites made a covenant with God. He would be their God and they would be His people."

Moshe says in the Book of Devarim (7:9) "You shall know that the Lord your God is God, the faithful God, who keeps *habrit ve'hachessed*, (the covenant and the loving-kindness)"; When Shlomo Hamelech dedicates the Bet HaMikdash (I Kings 8:23), he utters the following prayer: "There is no one like You, God, in the heavens above or the earth below *shomer habrit ve'hachessed*, (keeping the covenant and the loving-kindness)"; And likewise, Nechemiah, when he renews the covenant as the people come back from Babylon (Nechemiah 9:32), says, "The great, mighty, and awesome God, *shomer habrit ve'hachessed*, (He who keeps the covenant and the loving-kindness)."

That's a really puzzling phrase, *shomer habrit ve'hachessed*, the covenant and the loving-kindness. Look, for instance, at the Jewish Publication Society translation, who just translate 'covenant'. Because the *chessed* is included in the covenant. If you look at the New International version (which is a very good non-Jewish translation), *habrit ve'hachessed* is translated as, "the covenant of love." But of course it doesn't mean that, it means "covenant and love." Everyone had a problem in understanding what God does for the Jewish people other than making a covenant with them on Shavuot, at Har Sinai. But if you think about it, the answer's really quite simple. A covenant is what sociologists and anthropologists call reciprocal altruism. You do this for me, I will do this for you. "You serve Me," says God, "and I will protect you." Covenant is always reciprocal and neutral. But that is terribly vulnerable, because what happens if we don't keep the covenant? The covenant is then rendered null and void.

Just as in Megillat Rut, tragedy and loneliness and isolation are healed by acts of loving-kindness, so have the isolation of so many of us been healed by acts of loving-kindness.

The covenant is not enough. And that is what Moshe was saying, that is what Shlomo Hamelech was saying, that is what Nechemiah was saying. God does not just make a covenant with us. He has a relationship of *chessed* with us. An unconditional love, which is translated into deeds of kindness to us. The covenant is conditional, but *chessed* is unconditional.

Maybe ultimately this is why we read the Book of Ruth on Shavuot. The Book of Ruth is the book of *chessed*. We received a covenant at Mount Sinai, but we also received something much more long-lasting and profound, which is God's unconditional love. And that's what the book is telling us, that God has love for us, the way Ruth had love for Naomi and Boaz had love for Ruth. Acts of loving-kindness all define our relationship with God. And as the Book of Ruth shows, they should be what define our relationship with one another.

This message resonates for us this year. Just as in Megillat Rut, tragedy and loneliness and isolation are healed by acts of loving-kindness, so have the isolation of so many of us been healed by acts of loving-kindness, acts of neighbourliness, people being in touch, helping us, getting things for us, phoning us up, connecting us by Zoom, showing that they care about us. Those acts of kindness have humanised and lightened our world. *Chessed* has a redemptive quality. It transforms tragedy into some form of celebration and despair into some powerful form of hope. Let what Ruth did for Naomi and Boaz did for Ruth be with us, as we try to reconnect with family and friends, and those who have been so terribly isolated during recent times. And may we remember that, as well as giving us a covenant at Har Sinai, God gave us a bond of love that is unbreakable. He will never abandon us, let us never abandon Him.

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



Traditional Congregation and Congregation B'nai Amoona  
invite you to join us for

# “Bites & Bite-Size Learning”

Thursday, May 21, 2026

7:00 PM

at Traditional, 12437 Ladue Rd, STL

Join us for Shavuot Services,  
Learning with our Rabbis,  
and Delicious Dairy Treats  
(yes, there will be cheesecake!)

Please register at:

<https://bit.ly/3QBK5uB>



*We look forward to seeing you!*

Questions or need help registering?

Contact Marian 314-576-5230 or

Liessa 314-576-9990 ext 116



Join us for a  
SHAVUOT DAIRY LUNCH  
at the home of  
Rabbi Seth & Marian Gordon  
Friday, May 22, 2026  
following Shavuot services  
Please RSVP to Marian:  
[traditionalcong@gmail.com](mailto:traditionalcong@gmail.com)  
or  
314-576-5230



Join us to celebrate

*the Aufruf  
of*

*Jack Ross & Noga Melnick*

**Shabbat May 23, 2026**

**TRADITIONAL CONGREGATION**

12437 Ladue Road, St Louis MO 63141

***Kiddush* luncheon following services**

**is sponsored by**

**Ophira & Jeffrey Melnick**

**RSVP TO**

**TRADITIONALCONG@GMAIL.COM**

*We can't wait to celebrate with you!*

## **PRAYER**

“Becoming Sinai”

Ignite the Torah flame within  
New pulse, progression  
Close your eyes  
Be lifted and float



A mystical shimmer  
Mature into rules, commands  
Envelop a new symmetry  
Gather sparks of creation

***Steven Puro***

## **THOUGHT FOR THE MOMENT OF SILENCE**

In every conceivable manner, the family is the link to our past, and the bridge to our future.

***Alex Haley***