

# TBS-EV TIMES



2021

Nisan 5781 - Tamuz 5781 April 2021 - June 2021 (2nd Quarter)

Herschel 'Brodie' Aberson, Rabbi  
Dennis Aust, President

## Rabbi's Message

**B**y the time you are reading this, we will likely be in the midst of Sfirat Ha'Omer, the Counting of the Omer. This ritual is a relatively simple one- from the second day of Passover until Shavuot, we count 50 days (7 weeks, plus Shavuot itself).

This obligation is derived from two sources in Torah-

Leviticus 23:15-16

(15) And from the day on which you bring the sheaf of elevation offering—the day after the sabbath—you shall count off seven weeks. They must be complete: (16) you must count until the day after the seventh week—**fifty days**; then you shall bring an offering of new grain to the LORD.

Deuteronomy 16:9-10.

(9) **You shall count off seven weeks**; start to count the seven weeks when the sickle is first put to the standing grain. (10) Then you shall observe the Feast of Weeks for the LORD your God, offering your freewill contribution according as the LORD your God has blessed you.

A question arises from reading these two texts about whether we are commanded to count each and every day individually, 'Fifty days' (Leviticus), or if we are meant to count week by week (Deuteronomy) with heavy emphasis on the "weeks" that gives the holiday of Shavuot- literally "weeks"- its name.

Our rabbis consider the implications of both readings- if we count one by one, we must say a blessing on each and every day. But what if we miss a day? What if we forget which number we are on? If we count week by week, when do we count? How do we properly track the days? And in both cases, we must reconcile two different verses with the same authority on our actions during this period.

This period has also become something of a popular time to explore the more mystical aspects of our tradition. Each week, and each day in the week, are assigned one of the lower *sefirot* of the Kabbalistic tree of life- the aspects of the Divine that are the root of Creation. And so every day of the Omer is assigned a unique intersection of each of these sources of Divine emanation, an opportunity to focus on particular aspects of ourselves and our environment in a systematic and comprehensive way.

While this is not the space to explore the specifics- look to the red Siddur Lev Shalem for Shabbat, pages 63-70, for a full explanation- I do want to draw from this mystical approach to the Omer the idea that we reconcile the counting as both about each day, and about the weeks. Just as counting is an act of preparation and accountability for the Israelites in other circumstances, so too is it an opportunity for us to take account of our qualities and condition between Passover and Shavuot.

Passover is a holiday about the Creation of the Jewish people, from a slave population to free people serving God. Shavuot is a holiday about Revelation- receiving the Law, being given a path to live in service and dignity to a power worthy of our devotion. May this Sefirat HaOmer, this counting of the Omer, be an opportunity to reflect on who we are, where we stand, and what we need to move from liberation to righteous action.

With love and blessings,

*Rabbi Brodie*



Rabbi Brodie

### Core Values

**Welcoming:** Actively invite and engage the community (internal and greater)

**Inclusive:** Respectful of all individuals and their unique gifts

**Caring:** Ensuring for well-being of others in the community

**Learning:** Foster the journey for Lifelong Jewish Education. We provide an excellent religious education in a lifelong learning curriculum, from Pre-B'nai Mitzvah through Adult education.

**Persevering:** The Little Shul that Could (70 years +)

**Safety:** Congregate in peace

### Mission Statement

Temple Beth Sholom is an inclusive East Valley Conservative Congregation. We are egalitarian and enrich Jewish life by promoting growth spiritually, ritually, educationally, and socially while serving the greater community.

### Vision Statement

We strive to be deeply connected to each other and to the greater community through meaningful collaborations to both enrich and elevate Jewish life while serving others.

## President's Message

Spring is here and so we begin yet another season of new beginnings. A season we've all been waiting patiently for.

With the annual congregational meeting happening this month I can't help but reflect on the business of the synagogue. There has been so much good and hard work over this past year, despite the circumstances. Our community has really stepped up. I feel like our perseverance through adversity is second to none.

It's no secret that we're not a wealthy community and that being Jewish is expensive. Something the rabbi who welcomed me into the community, and presided over the conversion of my family warned me about up front. We

certainly had our own difficult times over the years and yet the community helped us through it. Maybe not exactly in the ways I thought that I needed or hoped for at the time, but nevertheless, there were those who had become more than acquaintances; they had become friends, and some had become family.

That being said, all is not sunshine and roses. The family needs your support; now as much as ever. We need help, morally, spiritually, and physically. We need people to hang out with and talk about movies and make decisions at meetings. To send in monthly dues, and a little extra too if you can spare it. While we are the little shul that could, and we do manage pretty well, we can use your financial support. If you don't have the funds, but you can help out in

some other way, please do. People often feel like they just need to be asked to do something.

Well, I'm asking. If you can't find the funds, please make the time to help out in some way. If you don't know how you can help, please send me an email and let's find a time to talk about it. As another wise person once told me, you can make more of an impact on the inside than you can from the outside.

If we want this community to continue to be vibrant and welcoming, we need to make that happen. Not just a select few, but everyone should do their part, some part, whatever that may be.

*Dennis Aust*

## Sisterhood Gift Shop

The Sisterhood Gift Shop, housed in the sanctuary lobby, is one of the on-going fund-raisers that help support both our Sisterhood and synagogue. Currently, there is merchandise from the Gift Shop for sale in the main office during business hours. The Gift Shop has not had regular weekly hours of operation during the Pandemic, but all items are still available for sale. Sandy Wechsler, the current Gift Shop

chairperson, will continue to work with members and the community to sell merchandise via appointment. The shop has ritual items as well as books and art/crafts with Jewish themes. There are also gifts of all kinds for life cycle events, and items that can beautify homes. Items are featured for both children and adults. The shop is committed to getting whatever the members of our synagogue community need to enrich their Jewish ritual and

cultural lives. The Gift Shop committee is also interested in hearing from members of the synagogue with suggestions on new merchandise they would like to see offered. The Shop is also always looking for volunteers to work in the shop or behind the scenes. Any questions or suggestions should be sent to Sandy. Please e-mail [judaicashop@tbsev.org](mailto:judaicashop@tbsev.org) for all of your shopping needs.

## Meet Jen Zak

I am a new member, and grateful for the very warm welcome that I received from this community. Some of you may know me from the religious school, where I teach the B'nei Miztvah class on Wednesdays and Sundays. I love working with the students and having the opportunity to talk about Judaism together. I have two daughters, Kaja and Zoe. Zoe is a student at the Desert Jewish Academy, so some of you might know Zoe already. In non-pandemic times, I love to travel, and I also play the flute (though not very well!). I grew up back east between Toronto and Buffalo, and I appreciate Arizona's sunny skies.



# Meet Matt & Yousef Hazimeh



Yousef on the left and Matt is on the right of the photo

**H**ello TBS family! We are the Hazimehs. Matt is on the right and Yousef on the left of the photo. We moved to Tempe last March. We had the pleasure of visiting the area before we moved. We did visit TBS-EV then and we both knew right away this was the synagogue for us. We moved here from Omaha, Nebraska. I (Matt) got a new job with the company for which I work. Yousef was able to transfer with his job. We have been together since 2014. We got married at our synagogue in Omaha in August 2017. We were the first same-sex couple to get married at that synagogue. We have two cats, Muriel and Yuri. I was graduated from university in 2012 with a degree in history and minor in religion. My hobbies include scary movies, calligraphy,

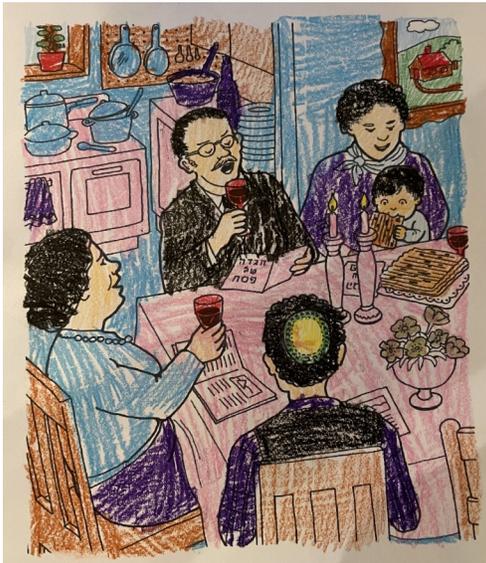
and being an Anglophile (lover of English culture). Yousef is a student at ASU majoring in International Business. Yousef enjoys Disney movies, video games, and trying new restaurants. Yousef and I have enjoyed being members at TBS-EV. When we moved to Tempe, we didn't know many people. TBS-EV has been an amazing support system and has given us the chance to get to know some amazing people. I think it's safe to say we plan on being members at TBS-EV for life. Also, I started a walking group at TBS-EV (we meet at 10:00 a.m. on Sundays in the parking lot). I thought this would be a great way to get in shape and meet some new people in a safe socially distanced way. If you're available you should join us.



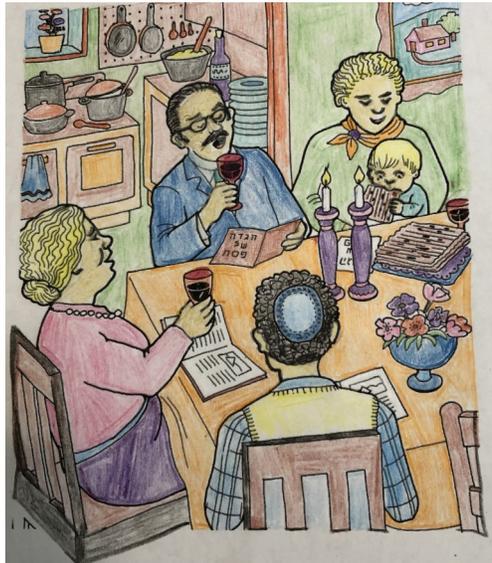
**C**ongratulations to our Purim / Passover coloring contest winners. (DRUM ROLL PLEASE!!!!!!)

**Shaia Yardeni, Jack Rosenberg, Maggie Diamond**

Each colored in a Purim and Passover Entry and it was a unanimous 3 way tie! Each participant will be receiving a \$10 gift card for Sweeties Candy of Arizona. See the Photos below containing the Passover entries and on the following page are the Purim entries.



**Shaia Yardeni**



**Jack Rosenberg**



**Maggie Diamond**

## Meet Al and Carol Abrams

This is a history of my time as a member of TBS-EV. I've also included a bio of my personal life.

Al and I joined TBS-EV in 1977. At that time, the congregation was unaffiliated and located on the corner of First Street and McDonald in Mesa. We had put Rina in the religious school the previous year and decided it was only fair to become full members if we wanted to continue using the school.

The congregation had a Cantor who provided Friday night services, but there were no Shabbat services. When we joined, the members were wanting to affiliate, hire a rabbi, and become a full service synagogue, but there was a significant divide between those who wanted Reform affiliation and those who wished to be Conservative. It culminated in a contentious Board of Directors election at which there were two opposing slates. When those who wished to affiliate with the Conservative movement won the election, the others left to form Temple Emmanuel.

Shortly thereafter, we remainers hired Rabbi Joe Schoenwald and began holding Kabbalat Shabbat and Saturday morning services as well as observing all the other holidays. After our building was condemned, we became wandering Jews, holding services in a variety of locations. Throughout this time, I was always on the Board, first as Education Chair and later as Recording Secretary.

Al and I often invited the entire synagogue to our home for celebrations: Sukkot or Birchat Hachama (birthday of the Sun), and to our "ranch" in northern Arizona for a weekend of camping.

In 1984 we left to spend a year in Jerusalem with our children. Upon our return, the congregation had moved to the building at LeSueur and Broadway and hired Rabbi Manuel Armon. He was soon replaced by Bonnie Koppell, who saw us through the move to our present building. She was our Rabbi for 20 years and when she left, we cycled through a few leaders until now. While still at the LeSueur building, Rory Gilbert, Lee Shalek, and I chaired the committee for the TBS' 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration.

Once we located in our present building, I became Library Chair and worked with a committee of great helpers (Walter & Leslie Berkey and Dr. Frank Priser to put the many boxes of books and papers into some order. I continued that work until Leslie was asked to help in the kitchen. I, plus Marilyn Sodomsky, Cynthia Benjamin, and many other helpers joined Leslie and became the "kitchen Ladies. We stayed in that role for many years until the Covid crisis hit. In the future I wish to reclaim the Library position.

I was born in 1941 to a family in Manitou Springs, Colorado. My father was born on a sheep homestead in Wyoming and my mother spent her childhood in Kansas City Missouri. Daddy was a plumber and Mama played accordion for various events. They met and married in Manitou. My older sister, Charlene, became dangerously ill with rheumatic fever and the Doctors feared she could not survive another winter in Colorado.

So, in September of 1944 we packed all our belongings in a homemade trailer and took off for San Diego, where my Dad hoped to get work in the shipyards. Our trailer, however, was up to the task, so we spent that winter in a trailer court in Phoenix. I remember clearly the day President Roosevelt died. People were sad, crying and fearful. All of us in that trailer court were poor and feared for the future without Roosevelt.

My Dad soon got work in Mesa and we moved there in 1945. As there was no housing available, we moved into a garage apartment. I spent my fourth birthday there but by the time I turned five, we were in a house my Dad had built near County Club and Main St. I lived there until I got married in 1964. My Dad had prospered by then and owned a large plumbing company.

All my school years were spent in Mesa. I graduated from High School in 1959 and spent that summer at a work camp in Massachusetts for the American Friends Service Committee (Quakers). That experience totally changed my whole life. Although it was a Quaker Camp, most of the 18 kids were Jews and I soon became fast friends with a few of them. They were more interesting than any of the kids in Mesa and I wanted to be like them.



In the fall of 1959, I started school at ASU, which had become a university only a year earlier. In the fall of 1960, I met Al. He was in the Army, home for the holidays, and I was planning a Junior Year Abroad in Sweden, so we dated only a few times until 1962 when we were both home again. We married in 1964, after my conversion to Judaism. My family was not religious and my Grandmother and her sons were all outspoken atheists, so my conversion was not an issue.

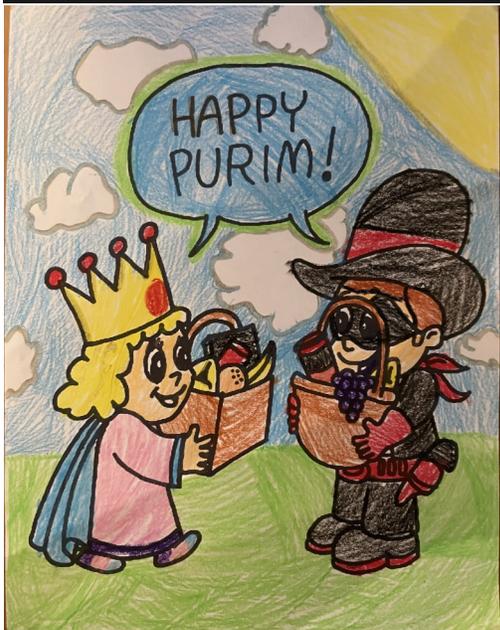
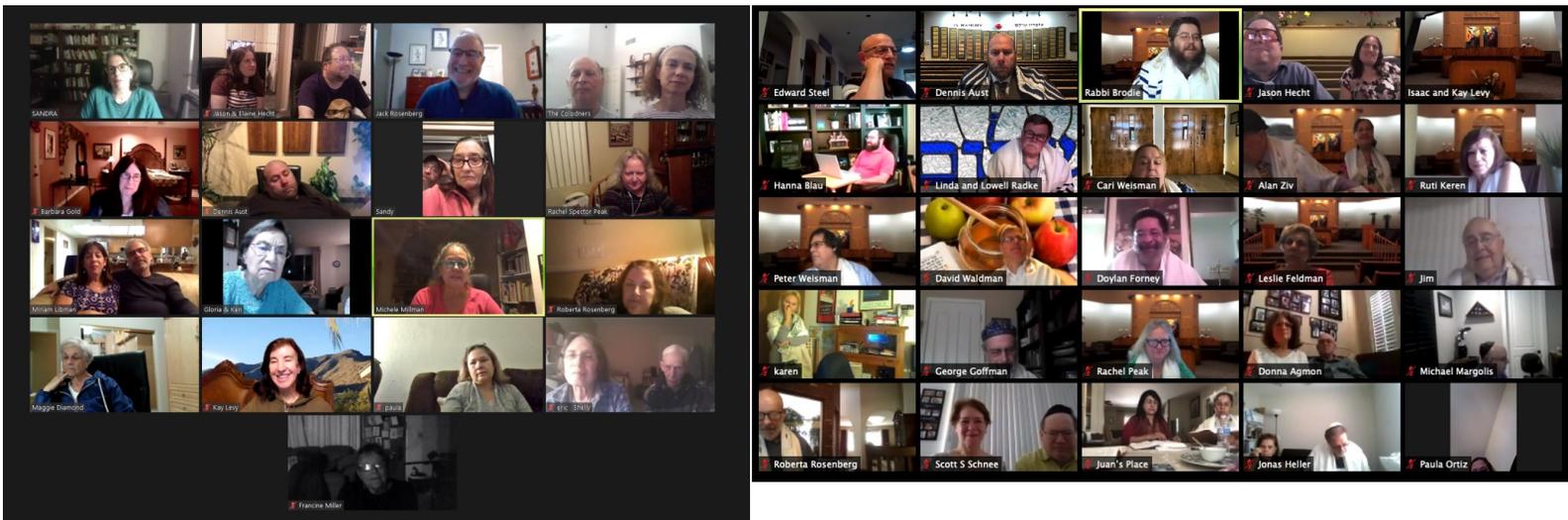
In 1966, we left home for a year of travel by camper in Europe and North Africa. When the Six-Day War broke out, we determined to go to Israel for a brief stay. We ended up staying five months at Kibbutz Ha'On, where we became good friends with some of the members.

The United States in 1968 was in turmoil and our friends at Ha'On were under constant rocket attack by the Syrians, so we decided to return to do what we could to help.

Al got a commission from National Geographic to do a story about "Life On A Border Kibbutz" so we stayed for a year doing the story.

We came home to Phoenix and were at loose ends for a couple of years. Finally, we settled down, got jobs, and began to make plans for our future. Our daughter, Rina, was born in 1971. We moved to Mesa in 1973. Our son Micah was born in 1975.

In 1984, we took our children to live in Jerusalem for a year. We returned in 1985 and have lived a middle class life in a middle class suburb ever since.



Shaia Yardeni



Jack Rosenberg



Maggie Diamond



Interior view of Bimah at Temple Beth Sholom of the East Valley in Mesa.



Exterior view of the synagogue at Temple Beth Sholom of the East Valley in Mesa.



Gabbai (Torah Reader) Reuben Paper at Temple Beth Sholom of the East Valley in Mesa.



1988



Alan Sapakie (left), Mayor Al Brooks (center), and Rabbi Manuel Armon (right) stand in front of Temple Beth Sholom synagogue in Mesa. The temple moved to this location (316 S. LeSueur Street) in 1986 to accommodate the growth of its congregation. Previously the temple was located at First and McDonald Street in downtown Mesa.

Pictures courtesy of: <https://azmemory.azlibrary.gov/>

And

<https://www.azjhs.org/>

## How Temple Beth Sholom was formed (a big thank you to Carol Abrams):

The idea of a Jewish Congregation for residents of the East Valley germinated in the minds of two people who met in a Mesa jewelry store sometime in 1945. Jonas Schleifer had gone to the store to buy a piece of jewelry, but upon entering, he recognized the saleswoman, Blanche Marks, as a “lansman” and greeted her with “shalom Alechem.” Their conversation led to a number of informal gatherings of Jewish families. Then, in March of 1949, following a very successful community seder, the group decided to organize formally. At the April 22, 1949 meeting the following motion was unanimously approved:

Whereas there are in Mesa and vicinity a number of Jewish families who desire to form a group to further their mutual social activities, and to add to the development of the community; an organization shall be formed to be known as: The Jewish Community Group of Mesa.

Dues were set at \$3.00 per adult member per year. By June of that year, the Group had assets of \$12.25.

Within a year, the pioneer members had obtained a charter for a congregation under the name Temple Beth Sholom.

In the 50 years since that meeting we’ve met at a variety of locations, owned two buildings, and had a number of part-time and full-time rabbis. Our growth and progress can be seen in the following timeline.

**1949-1955** Regular Friday evening services held in private homes

**1955-1956** Services held at the Rendevous Park Greenhouse

**1956-1957** Services held in the Chapel of Gibbons Mortuary

**1958** The Congregation of Temple Beth Sholom acquires the First Christian Church at the north west corner of First Avenue and McDonald Street in downtown Mesa.

**1959** Cantor Nat Schecter is engaged to conduct regular Friday Evening Services for the congregation.

**1963** Temple Beth Sholom begins offering a Sunday School .

**1973** Rabbi Morris N. Kertzer is engaged to conduct services on a periodic basis.

**1980** Rabbi Joseph Schoenwald is engaged to be our full-time Rabbi. We also affiliate with United Synagogue and begin regular Shabbat morning services.

**1982** The McDonald Street building is condemned by City engineers and must be abandoned. Services and Religious School are held in a number of locations until:

**1985** Our present building is acquired. At the same time Rabbi Manuel Armon is hired to be our Rabbi.

**1986** After extensive renovation to the sanctuary, our new building is dedicated.

**1988** Rabbi Bonnie Koppell becomes our Rabbi.

**1988-1999** Membership continues to grow and we are able to expand services.





TOGETHER WE STAND



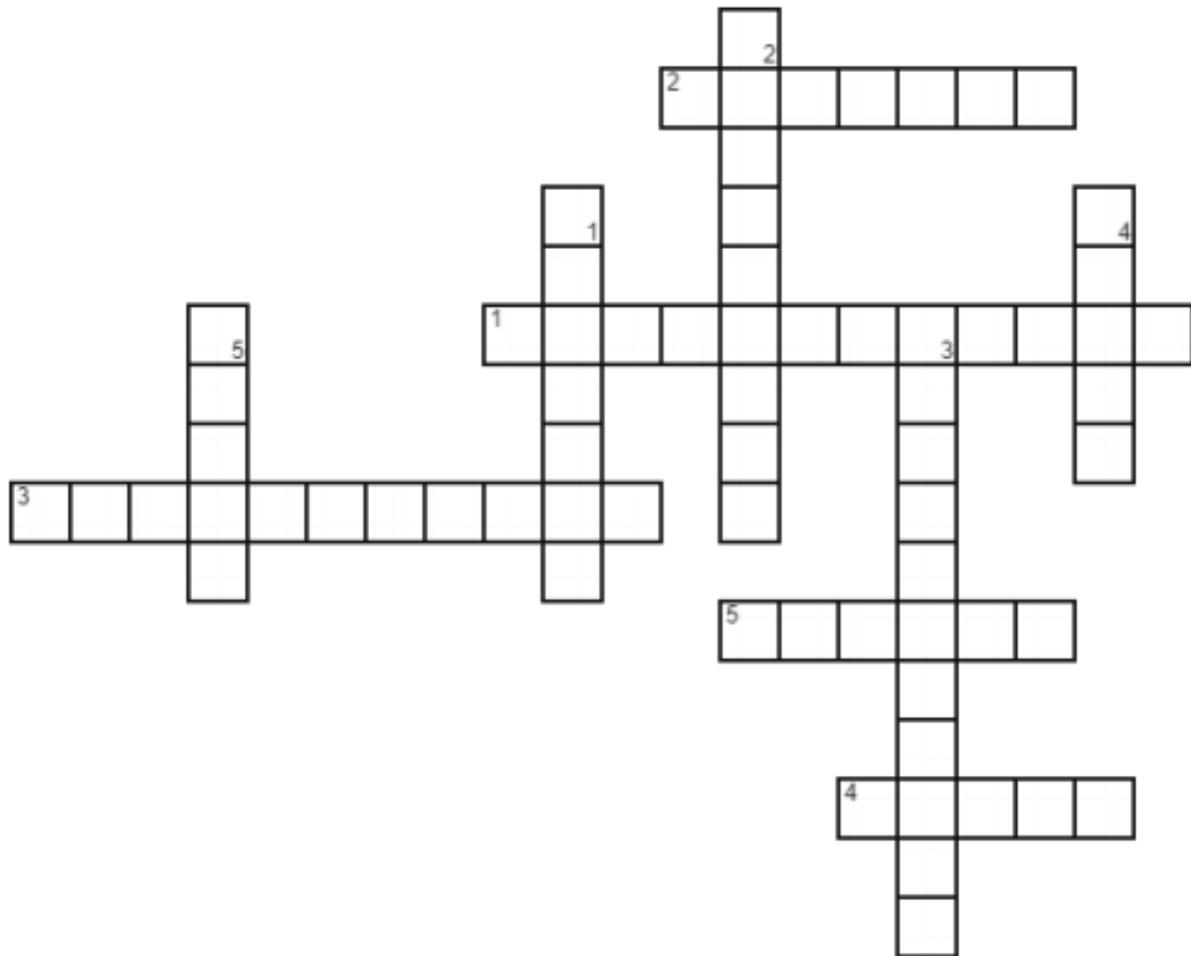
# Israel Maze



Name:

Date:

# Israel



## Across

1. Colors of the flag of Israel
2. You can here float and not sink
3. Symbol on the flag of Israel
4. Animal with humps
5. Language spoken in Israel

## Down

1. city in Israel with great beaches
2. where the Holy Temple was built
3. last standing part of the Holy Temple
4. Hebrew name for part of the Holy Temple
5. Person born in Israel

For the Answer Key Please send an e-mail to:  
[jason.hecht@tbsev.org](mailto:jason.hecht@tbsev.org).



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Produced & Edited by:  
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# Raising Our Spirits with Jewish Artists

Sunday, April 25  
2 p.m.



A free live virtual piano recital featuring Dr. Elias-Axel Pettersson

Registration required:  
[tbsev.org/2021-piano-recital](http://tbsev.org/2021-piano-recital)



East Valley JCC



## “Thank You” to the Helping Committee

The people in the Temple Beth Sholom community are best and most caring!  
Thank you to the following people who have provided meals in the last 3 months to members in need:

- Carol Abrams
- Ilana Kenville
- Dawn Yardeni
- Isaac & Kay Levy
- Paula Ortiz
- Jennifer Fletcher
- Alan Sapakie and Suzanne Parelman
- Pete and Cari Weisman
- David and Dawn Waldman

Michele Millman  
Lorre Levy

If you are interested in joining the fun and providing meals to people in need of them, please contact Barbara Gold  
At [barbara.gold@tbsev.org](mailto:barbara.gold@tbsev.org)

**Barbara Gold**  
Community Aid Committee chair

We are always looking for fresh content for the TBS-EV Times. If you have something you would like to submit and share in our newsletter please feel free reach out to us at [info@tbsev.org](mailto:info@tbsev.org) (Or use our contact forms on website).