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**SERVICES, LECTURES,
and
SPECIAL EVENTS**

2020

- Feb. 21st Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.
- [Rabbi Jeffrey Falick asks: Can Israel Ever Manage to Elect a Government ... and What About This "Peace Plan"?](#) Yet another Israeli election is about to take place; the prime minister stands newly indicted; and now the Trump administration is releasing a "peace plan" with absolutely no participation by the Palestinians?
- [Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)
- Feb. 7th Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.
- ["Tu B'shvat Text Study: Judaism, Humanism, and the Environmental Crisis."](#) Rabbi Falick looks at texts from Jewish tradition as well as Humanistic writings about environmentalism.
- [Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)
- Jan. 31st Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.
- ["Update From the Border" with immigration attorney Melanie Goldberg.](#) Melanie describes what she experienced in her recent trip to aid immigrants at the southern border.
- [Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)
- Jan. 24th Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.
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[“Celebrating the Bicentennial of Oakland County”: a presentation by Mike McGuinness.](#) Mr. McGuinness, Executive Director of the Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society, explains something of the 200-year history of our county and details the upcoming special events to celebrate its history.

The Oakland County Pioneer and Historical society is the oldest society of its kind in Michigan, open to all with an interest in history. Founded in 1874 by the area’s pioneers, it is entrusted with remembering the lives, lessons, and legacies of those who came before us.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Jan. 17th

Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.

[Rabbi Falick reviews and discusses the book, "Civilized to Death: The Price of Progress" by Christopher Ryan.](#) Ryan, a New York Times bestselling author, explores the ways in which “progress” has twisted the way we live: how we eat, learn, feel, mate, parent, communicate, work, and die. “Civilized to Death” counters the idea that so-called progress is inherently good, arguing that the “progress” defining our age is analogous to an advancing disease.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

2019

Dec. 13th

Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.

[“The Origins of Chanukah.”](#) Rabbi Falick leads a textual study of the origins of Chanukah from pagan festival to celebration of zealotry to “Jewish Christmas.” Join us for this honest look at the Festival of (Not-So-Miraculous) Lights!

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[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Nov. 1st

Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick Remembering Victims of the Pittsburgh Massacre.

[“The Long Life of US Institutionalized White Supremacist Terror” with Prof. Fran Shor.](#) The present horrific acts of white supremacist terror may be seen as individual acts without the sanction of any state; yet state-sanctioned violence, through institutionalized white supremacist terror, was deeply rooted in the development of the United States.

From the war capitalism of the settler colonialist period in North America to the racial capitalism of that same time frame, extermination of Native Americans and enslavement of people of African descent became instruments of institutionalized white supremacist terror. From colonial to contemporary times, savage white supremacist war and white racial framing of policing reinforced institutionalized white supremacist terror. Nonetheless, resistance to and deconstructions of white supremacy contested and continue to contest those racial projects and that white racial frame.

Friday Night Service, Part 1.

October 25th

Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.

[“Islam vs. Muslim—Where Ideology & Identity Clash” with Dr. Ali Amjad Rizvi.](#) What does it mean to be Muslim today? 1300 years ago, it would've meant being a believer in Islamic ideology. Today, it is almost a birth identity, inherited the same way ethnicity and nationality are. An increasing number of Muslims today are defining themselves in terms of identity rather than belief. Some, like Muslim-American journalist Fareed Zakaria, are even divorcing the two. In this presentation, Dr. Rizvi, author of “The Atheist Muslim: A Journey from Religion to Reason,” explores the widening dichotomy between Islamic ideology and Muslim identity, along with its potential effects on the Muslim world in the future.

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Dr. Rizvi is a Pakistani-born, Canadian, ex-Muslim atheist and Secular Humanistic writer and podcaster who explores the challenges of Muslims who leave their faith. He is a widely published author and co-host of the podcast “Secular Jihadists for a Muslim Enlightenment.”

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

October 18th

[Sukkot Service led by Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.](#)

[Guest Speaker Richard Speck presents “The ACLU Smart Justice Campaign for Criminal Justice Reform.”](#) The need for criminal justice reform has energized politicians and activists from across the political spectrum. The ACLU has proposed a multiyear effort to reduce the U.S. jail and prison population by 50% and to combat racial disparities in the criminal justice system. Please listen in to learn about the ACLU's efforts to effect reform in sentencing, bail, prosecutorial, parole and release issues, and re-entry issues.

October 8th

[Erev Yom Kippur \(Kol Nidre\) with lecture by Rabbi Falick.](#)

[“Lesson 3 from the Jewish Experience: Arguing.”](#)

Jews love to argue. Our tradition has taught something about how.

October 9th

[Yom Kippur Morning Service with lecture by Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.](#)

[“Lesson 4 from the Jewish Experience: Forgiving.”](#)

It's sometimes the easiest thing to do and sometimes almost impossible.

October 4th

Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.

[“Staying Brave, Optimistic and Effective: Good Psychological Medicine for Self and Society” with Mike Whitty.](#) Mike invites us to reflect on our core values from the perspective of an optimistic futurist who believes that humanism is aligned with human evolution. Mike thinks that framing our lives and legacy in the positive and hopeful will not only aid future society but offer immediate, practical action steps toward becoming prophets in our own time. Dr. Whitty, a BT member and lecturer at the

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University of Michigan, is a member of the World Future Society, Peace Action and a long time social justice activist.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Sep. 29th

[Erev Rosh Hashanah Service with lecture by Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.](#)

[“Lesson 1 from the Jewish Experience—Celebrating.”](#)

What is the point of celebrating holidays and special occasions? Jewish history has some suggestions.

Sep. 30th

[Rosh Hashanah Morning Service with lecture by Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.](#)

[“Lesson 2 from the Jewish Experience—Remembering.”](#)

Jewish and personal identity is dependent upon collective and individual memory. But should identity come at the expense of remembering actual historical events?

Sep. 13th

Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.

[“The Origins of the High Holidays” with Rabbi Falick.](#)

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Sep. 6th

Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.

[“Forced to Grow Up – A Holocaust Story” with Berta Gardon.](#) Berta Gardon reads excerpts from her memoir, which she published at the age of 94! Don't miss this incredible opportunity to learn from the past and celebrate a wonderful woman and member of our temple.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Aug. 16th

Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.

[“The Rise of Fascism in Europe, Brazil, Israel, and the US,” a talk by activist and Holocaust survivor Rene Lichtman](#) who examines the

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common strands linking neo-fascist movements across Europe, Israel, and the US.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Aug. 9th

Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.

["What My Left Hand Was Doing: Lessons From A Grassroots Activist" with author and activist Joann Castle.](#) Against the incendiary backdrop of the 1967 Detroit riots and aftermath, Castle—a naive white working class Irish-Catholic mother of six young children—took a stand against racial inequality. Her poignant memoir presents an insider's view of what grassroots movement work is really like and includes an Activist's Survival Guide for future activists everywhere.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

July 26th

Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick including installation of the New Board.

["No More Kids in Cages: America's Moral Failure At Our Border."](#) Rabbi Falick talks about the American, and American Jewish, response to the crisis at our Southern border.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

July 19th

Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.

["May I Suggest?" A Special Guest Presentation by Humanist Leader and Minister Suzanne Paul.](#) Her talk is based on the song by the same name, written by Susan Werner, sung by The Chenille Sisters, and first performed at The Ark in Ann Arbor, Michigan in 2006.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

June 28th

Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.

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[“The Unholy Marriage: Trump and His Evangelical Base,” a presentation by Professor Ron Aronson.](#) After more than a generation of listening to apocalyptic, fearful sermons about America going to hell, Trump’s evangelical supporters have had plenty of training in thinking this way and few resources to confront their situation directly and honestly. Their churches have for years been preparing them to deny the present and to fear modern life as an existential threat.

These believers in God see themselves as under assault. They have been trained by their religions, and have trained themselves, to ignore key parts of science and to reject many of the society’s core values, even though they are people of today in every other respect. Why do they believe Jerry Falwell, Jr.’s incoherent insistence that he can’t imagine Trump doing anything that would undermine Trump’s support by evangelical leaders? Prof. Aronson addresses all this and more.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

June 21st

Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.

[“The Abortion Debate: Where Are We Headed?” A presentation by renowned abortion rights activist Renee Chelian and her daughter, attorney Lara Chelian.](#) As more and more states are now planning abortion bans, the debate over the right to choose is heating up throughout the nation. Renee Chelian explains what lies ahead in Michigan and the U.S.

Renee, a passionate advocate for advancing and protecting women’s choices regarding pregnancy and birth control, founded the Northland Family Planning Centers in 1976; it has since expanded to three locations. Renee has spoken before the United Nations, the U.S. Congress, and a variety of state legislatures to make the case for safe, legal abortion.

Lara, her daughter, is an attorney responsible for advocacy and policy work in Michigan and D.C. Lara started the first nonprofit fund for abortions for low-income women in Southeast Michigan.

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[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

June 14th

Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.

["What is 'Death with Dignity'?" A presentation by Judith Snyderman of the Final Exit Network.](#) The Network carries out legal efforts to support people's rights to 'self-deliverance', seeking to clarify existing laws that are ambiguous as to self-deliverance and working to extend them where appropriate.

Ms. Snyderman, who grew up in the Conservative movement, discusses the current status of death with dignity laws in the United State and the choices that are available to us to increase our chances of having a good death: pain free, peaceful, dignified, in a location of our choice and surrounded by those we love. She includes information on living wills and more.

The Final Exit Network mirrors the attitudes of Humanism, believing that no one should suffer a traumatic death. It does its best, within the limits of state laws, to educate people about their alternatives.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

June 7th

Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.

["Building Bridges in a World of Misconception"—a presentation by activist and Humanist Erica Mack in recognition of June as LGBTQ Pride Month.](#)

Erica shares her journey from conservative Christian youth minister to openly secular and openly transgender woman and activist. She hopes to provide a window into what it means to live a transgender life in a world of misconceptions.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

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- May 17th Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.
- [“Rebel Dogs Detroit, a ‘Pup-Up’ Program \(That Saves Abandoned and Stray Dogs\).”](#) Learn about the work that Rebel Dogs Detroit does in our community, what the program hopes to accomplish, what the pathway looks like moving forward, and how we can help. Did we mention there will be cute dogs?
- [Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)
- May 10th Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.
- [BT member Mark Lipson speaks about “Blue Note Records and the German Jewish Immigrants Who Founded It”](#) Blue Note Records is an American label that has recorded jazz artists since 1939. It was founded by the German Jewish immigrants Francis Wolf and Max Margulis.
- Mark is a recording artist with Detroit Music Factory Records and a drummer, composer, and music producer who has performed with three generations of jazz musicians in the Detroit area. He has studied ethnomusicology, music theory, and composition at the University of Michigan and the Wayne State University School of Music.
- [Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)
- May 3rd Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick on Yom Ha-Shoah / Holocaust Memorial Day.
- [Professor Guy Stern speaks about "The Ritchie Boys: German Jewish Refugees Who Fought for America in WWII."](#) Dr. Stern landed at Normandy just three days after D-Day with the ‘Ritchie Boys’, the US Army intelligence unit composed of German-speaking refugees most of whom were Jewish like him. Dr. Stern is currently the director of The Harry and Wanda Zekelman International Institute of the Righteous at the Holocaust Memorial Center in Farmington Hills, Michigan.
- [Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)
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- Apr. 12th Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.
- [“The Results of the Israeli Elections” with Rabbi Falick.](#) On April 9 Israeli citizens selected a new Knesset (parliament) and favorite for Prime Minister. Don't miss Rabbi Falick's analysis and predictions about the Israeli government!
- [Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)
- Mar. 22nd Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.
- [Rabbi Falick explains, “Why I DESPISE Daylight Saving Time.”](#) Everyone has an opinion about DST, but Rabbi Jeff Falick has been obsessed with abolishing it since he was a kid. You'll definitely want to hear about the history and mystery surrounding our twice-annual clock changing events and why Jeff believes it to be just too costly in both monetary terms and even lives! Even though it's not even close to being the most important topic facing our society, it affects every one of us.
- [Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)
- Mar. 8th Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.
- ["The Threat: How the FBI Protects America in the Age of Terror and Trump"—Rabbi Falick reviews the new book by former FBI Deputy Director Andrew McCabe.](#) In this controversial new book, McCabe offers a dramatic and candid account of his career, as well as an impassioned defense of the FBI's agents, and of the institution's integrity and independence in protecting America and upholding our Constitution. "The Threat" recounts in compelling detail the time between Donald Trump's November 2016 election and McCabe's firing, arguing that right now the greatest threat to the United States comes from within, as President Trump and his administration ignore the law, attack democratic institutions, degrade human rights, and undermine the U.S. Constitution that protects every citizen.

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[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Mar. 1st Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.

[“The Controversies Surrounding BDS” with Rabbi Falick.](#) The BDS protest movement, which encourages the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanction of Israel and those doing business with it has become a tangled subject. Rabbi Falick examines the origins of BDS and questions of whether it is or is not to be characterized as anti-Semitic on its face. He also discusses the "Combating BDS Act" currently under consideration in both houses of Congress, and claims by its critics that it violates the First Amendment.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Feb. 22nd Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.

["What Are Zionism? \(Part 2\)"](#) And no, that's not a misprint! There are and have been a number of different approaches to Zionism since the movement's inception. Rabbi Falick continues to survey Zionism from the 19th Century until now, covering all its varieties—religious Zionism, secular Zionism, cultural Zionism—while untangling issues of anti-Zionism, non-Zionism, post-Zionism, and more.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Feb. 15th Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.

["What Are Zionism? \(Part 1\)"](#) And no, that's not a misprint! There are and have been a number of different approaches to Zionism since the movement's inception, and Rabbi Falick surveys its many varieties from the 19th Century until now—religious Zionism, secular Zionism, cultural Zionism—while untangling issues of anti-Zionism, non-Zionism, post-Zionism, and more.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

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- Feb. 8th Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.
- [“Secular Judaism—Not a Modern Concept!”](#) Natan Fuchs, our very own Jewish historian, speaks about secularism in Jewish culture and traces its roots all the way back to antiquity!
- [Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)
- Feb. 1st Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.
- [Rabbi Falick reviews novelist and peace activist Amos Oz’s final book, “Dear Zealots: Letters from a Divided Land.”](#) The book consists of three passionate lectures about the state of politics in Israel. Ruminating about the country he loves and whose policies make him ashamed, Oz sounds humorous, mournful, enraged, and uplifting. He maintains that there’s rarely been a better moment to make peace than now.
- [Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)
- Jan. 25th Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.
- [“Tree of Life: How Politics and Social Media Led to Tragedy at My Synagogue in Pittsburgh.”](#) In this BT Member Platform presentation, Dr. Michael Walker shares his personal reflections on the murders and aftermath of the Tree of Life Synagogue where he and his late wife were married in 1970. His talk also addresses the role of Facebook in our society, a challenge to Republicans to “wrest their party out of Trump’s clutches,” and his experiences working with Haley Stevens on her successful run for Congress in Michigan’s 11th Congressional District.
- [Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)
- Jan. 11th Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.
- [“Jewish Composers: The Well-Known, the Less-Well-Known, and the Unknown.”](#) Ezra Donner, our Music Director, brings us this fascinating look into the world of Jewish composers.
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[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Jan. 4 Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.

[“The 2018 Year In Review”](#): Rabbi Falick discuss the events of the past year with a special emphasis on trends in the Jewish world from Detroit to Israel.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

2018

Nov. 9 Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.

[Rabbi Falick discusses the just-issued "Statement on Sexual Ethics for the 21st Century" by the Association of Humanistic Rabbis.](#) The talk is a follow-up to his Oct. 26 presentation and is likewise suitable for viewers age 17 and older.

The radical and groundbreaking statement from the Association of Humanistic Rabbis is the first from any group of religious leaders that focuses on consent and respect for human dignity, not on prescriptions about people's personal preferences.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Nov. 2 [Solidarity Shabbat and Memorial Tribute to the Victims of the "Tree of Life" Massacre in Pittsburgh with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick, including Special Readings and Music.](#)

[Dr. Richard Logan, in town for the semi-annual meeting of the Board of the Society for Humanistic Judaism, speaks about its new effort, "Jews for a Secular Democracy."](#) He also incorporates remarks about the

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Pittsburgh assault in his presentation. Dr. Logan is President of the Society of Humanistic Judaism.

Oct. 26 Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.

[In a talk suitable for viewers at least 17 years old, Rabbi Falick discusses the book, "Sex at Dawn: How We Mate, Why We Stray, and What it Means for Modern Relationships."](#)

This thought-provoking, brilliant, and controversial book by Christopher Ryan and Cacilda Jetha debunks almost everything we “know” about sex. It weaves together convergent, frequently overlooked evidence from anthropology, archaeology, primatology, anatomy, and psychosexuality to address monogamy, polyamory, and more. The authors expose the ancient roots of human sexuality while pointing toward a more optimistic future illuminated by our innate capacities for love, cooperation, and generosity.

Since the book's publication, its findings have become more and more accepted, and inform many modern notions of sexuality.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Oct. 5th Friday Night Service led by Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick and Guest Speaker Paula Creed.

[“What is the Michigan ‘Promote the Vote’ Proposal?”](#) Temple congregant Paula Creed explains the proposal that is on the Michigan ballot this November. The ‘Promote the Vote’ Proposal advocates a constitutional amendment to regulate when absentee ballots are issued, authorize no-reason absentee voting, require a straight-party voting option on general election ballots, provide for automatic voter registration, require post-election audits, and make other voting changes.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

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Sep. 28th Shabbat/Sukkot Service led by Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick with guest speaker Dr. Sue Sisley.

[Dr. Sue Sisley of the University of Arizona presents “The Case for Legalizing Marijuana.”](#) One of the only researchers to receive federal funding and approval for marijuana studies, Dr. Sisley has conducted extensive research into the benefits of medical marijuana. She has come to Michigan to help make the case for complete legalization.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Sep. 19th [Yom Kippur Morning Service.](#)

[“What the World Needs Now Is Empathy,” a Talk by Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.](#) Could our thorniest international problems use a shot of empathy?

Sep. 18th [Erev Yom Kippur/Kol Nidre Service.](#)

[“Stop! In the Name of Empathy,” a Talk by Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.](#) American society is riven with division. Perhaps we could be better people if we extended more empathy.

Sep. 10th [Rosh Hashanah Morning Service.](#)

[“How Deep Is Your Empathy?” A Talk by Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.](#) What would our interpersonal and communal relationships look like if we began with empathy...and how can we teach it to our children?

Sep. 9th [Erev Rosh Hashanah Service.](#)

[“All You Need Is Empathy,” a Talk by Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick](#) who asks: Is it possible that the world's greatest resource is within each and every one of us?

Aug. 24th Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.

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[“The Gerrymandering Law: Where to from Here?”](#) Kathy Krauskopf, a leader of the group called Voters Not Politicians, delivers an update on Proposal 2 to end gerrymandering in Michigan, and provides background on the obstacles that were overcome along the way to getting this on the November ballot.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Aug. 3rd

Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.

[“The Crisis of Democracy in America,” presented by Fran Shor, Emeritus Professor of Wayne State University.](#) Although the crisis of democracy in the United States predates Trump, his Administration has doubled down on many of the main elements of that crisis, such as economic and political inequality, voter suppression, electoral manipulation, and racist and xenophobic appeals. Dr. Shor’s PowerPoint presentation explores the roots of these anti-democratic tendencies and offer some insights about what is being done or can be done to revitalize democracy in the United States.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

July 27th

Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.

[“Muslim Life in the United States,” a guest presentation by Rima Meroueh, Manager of Advocacy and Community Engagement for ACCESS.](#) Ms. Meroueh, a popular lecturer at SOAR and other venues, talks about what life is like for Muslims in the United States with particular emphasis on the challenges faced by Muslim women. She works in our community to bridge the gap between Muslims and non-Muslims and, more specifically, to increase understanding about who Muslims are and about the diversity of thought and belief present in the Muslim community.

Ms. Meroueh holds a Master’s Degree in Near Eastern Studies from Wayne State University.

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[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

July 20th Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.

[Rabbi Falick reviews Jonathan Weisman's book, *Being Jewish in the Age of Trump*](#). In the words of Jane Eisner of *The Washington Post*: "Defiance propels Weisman's urgent, timely narration of how a few fringe leaders galvanized a Twitter army that, despite its insignificant number, broke wide open an ugly strain of anti-Semitism whose tentacles have reached even into the White House."

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

July 13th Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.

["Walking on Eggshells: Talking about Israel & Palestine," a presentation by Prof. Ron Aronson](#) on the obstacles to dialogue inside the Jewish community when it comes to Israel and Palestine.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

June 8th Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick and Guest Presentation by Holocaust Survivor Rene Lichtman.

["Jews of France, Yesterday and Today: A Personal View" by Rene Lichtman](#). French Jews seem to be always in the news and it most often has to do with an attack on a Jew or Jews that involves a Muslim person. How can we better understand and interpret what is going on in France?

Rene Lichtman, a Holocaust survivor, was born in Paris, lived there until the age of 13, and has continued to return as recently as last year. He too has tried to understand "what is going on." Using his photographs from his own history with France, he shares his views.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

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May 25th ["Two Peoples, One Future: Realizing Self-Determination in Israel/Palestine,"](#) a presentation by Prof. Brad Roth with panel discussion led by Rabbi Jeffrey Falick. (For more information on the participants, read on.)

More and more Israelis and Palestinians—from across the ideological spectrum within each society—have come to question both the viability and the desirability of "the two-state solution." The declining prospects of the long-stalled Oslo process raise the question of alternative formulas for the realization of self-determination for both the Palestinian Arab and Israeli Jewish populations.

Dr. Roth is a Professor of Political Science and Law at Wayne State University, where he teaches courses at the undergraduate, graduate, and professional levels in international law, human rights, political theory, and legal studies.

The panel of respondents features Prof. Howard Lupovitch of Wayne State University's Cohn-Haddow Center for Judaic Studies, and Ms. Huwaida Arraf, Palestinian-American activist, lawyer, and co-founder of the International Solidarity Movement.

May 11th Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick and guest presentation by Temple member Mike Whitty.

["Aging into Saging: Becoming A Prophet in Your Own Time" with Prof. Mike Whitty.](#) Mike reflects on utilizing our life wisdom and humanistic values to empower ourselves to be a bright light on the path. Topics include inner peace and personal bravery as well as speaking up for interracial harmony, economic and social justice, peace among the nations, and human unity. Mike has been a pilgrim in the search for inner peace and outer peace, finding meaning and happiness in old age and in the dream of a humanistic future.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Apr. 20th Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.

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[“Are Water Rights a Human Right?”](#) Rabbi Falick speaks about the right of all people to water and why, throughout history, this has been an issue. Along the way he examines how the issue was addressed in ancient Torah tales, how water conflicts play out in the Middle East and elsewhere, and what has been happening right here in Michigan. Eleanor Gamalski of Detroit Jews for Justice also gives a short update on water issues in Detroit.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Mar. 23rd Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.

[“Tales from the Bible Belt.”](#) Herb Silverman, author of *An Atheist Stranger in a Strange Religious Land* and *Candidate Without a Prayer*, recounts his journey from Orthodox Judaism to apathetic atheism to accidental atheistic activism to candidacy for governor of South Carolina!

Presented in cooperation with The Center for Secular Humanism, CFI-Michigan, and Humanists of Southeast Michigan.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Mar. 16th Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.

[“#MeToo: Why Humanists Must Take Responsibility for Making Change.”](#) Rabbi Falick takes a look at the #MeToo phenomenon, the ongoing issues of inequality in our society, and how Humanists can help recreate American culture in a more egalitarian form.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Mar. 9 Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.

[“Why Sanctuary?”](#) It has been a year now since the congregation declared itself a "sanctuary." Rabbi Falick talks about the ongoing significance of this declaration and the history of sanctuary from the Torah to modern

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times. Our partners at Michigan United also present an update about a family in sanctuary here in Detroit and what we can do to help.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Feb. 23 Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.

["Antisemitism on the Left, Antisemitism on the Right"](#), a lecture by Rabbi Jeffrey Falick. As he shows, there's Jew-hatred on the Left and on the Right, but they manifest themselves in very, very different ways.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Feb. 16 Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick and lecture on "Old-Time Radio Jews: Jack Benny & Gertrude Berg."

["Old-Time Radio Jews: Jack Benny & Gertrude Berg."](#) Rabbi Falick shows how two of the most famous Jews in America dealt with Jewish identity in the 1940s and 1950s. Their lives reveal fascinating contrasts that say a lot about American Jewish history.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Feb. 2 Friday Night Service with Rabbi Miriam Jerris.

["The Fight for the Dreamers," a guest presentation by Samantha Magdaleno, director of One Michigan for the Global Majority.](#)

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

2017

Dec. 15th Chanukah Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.

[Rabbi Falick lectures on "The REALLY Real Story of Chanukah,"](#) presenting the story as you've never heard it before. He explains who the

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REAL Maccabees were, what their opponents were actually like, and what the victorious Maccabees did after their victory! It's a Chanukah story as bizarre as it is 100% true!

[Chanukah Service, Part 1.](#)

Dec. 8th

Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.

[Guest presentation by Temple member Michael Walker: "From the Big Bang to the Galaxies ... and Back, Part 1."](#) Mike speaks about his book *Quantum Fuzz—The Strange True Makeup of Everything Around Us*, which describes in lay terms the strange phenomena that exist at the quantum level. It is a world of tiny dimensions where nothing is absolutely predictable, where causality must be rethought, and where information seemingly travels faster than light. He conveys the excitement of discovery while expanding our appreciation for a science that explores the basis of everything we know.

In a book review written last spring, our late friend and Temple member John Gardon wrote: "To be highly educated one must be curious about what is important. In 1959 Lord Snow advocated acquaintance with two cultures: with the inherent beauty of the arts and with the challenge of understanding the adventure in scientific progress. The new book by Michael Walker, *Quantum Fuzz*, provides opportunity to enjoy both beauty on one hand and the adventure in science on the other...."

Mike has a B.S. in Metallurgy from MIT and a Ph.D. in Physics from Carnegie Mellon University, with 40 years in R&D as a scientist, engineer, inventor and project manager.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Nov. 17th

Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.

["Who is a Jew? The Historical Debate," a presentation by Rabbi Falick.](#) Islam and Christianity are both outgrowths of Judaism in one way or another. Yet while today there are billions of Muslims and Christians in

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the world, the worldwide population of Jews remains under 15 million! Even the Holocaust and other tragedies cannot account for more than .02 percent of the world population.

Clearly there is a woeful lack of growth in the Jewish population. But why? Rabbi Falick examines how Jewish communities—from ancient times to the present—have conferred "Jewishness" on people and how today's definitions are failing.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Nov. 10th [Graduation and Ordination of Rabbis of the International Institute of Secular Humanistic Judaism.](#)

Oct. 27th Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.

[Guest lecture by Prof. Ron Aronson on his new book, "WE: Reviving Social Hope."](#) Dr. Aronson discusses his book in the context of the heartbreaking story beneath today's crisis: a century of catastrophic violence and a bewildering ambiguity of progress, all of which have contributed to the evaporation of social hope. He shows how hope has become increasingly privatized, and individuals increasingly burdened with finding personal solutions to social problems.

Ron Aronson, a Birmingham Temple member, is Distinguished Professor Emeritus of the History of Ideas at Wayne State University.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Oct. 13th Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick and guest presentation by Anita Bell on reparations for the descendants of enslaved Americans.

["The Case for Reparations to the Descendants of Formerly Enslaved People," presented by Anita Belle.](#) An increasing number of individuals and organizations are advancing the argument that the US Government, US corporations, and individuals who benefited from slave labor ought to make reparations for the many injuries caused by slavery and its lasting

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effects upon Black people in America. Anita Belle presents the case for financially compensating the descendants of former slaves in the United States.

Belle is the President of the Reparations Labor Union, the co-chair of the Detroit Chapter of the National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America (NCOBRA), a member of NCOBRA's National Board of Directors, the Group Leader of the Detroit Chapter of the Green Party, a member of the Charles H. Wright Museum of African-American History, a member of the Isaac Agree Downtown Synagogue, a member of the Temple of Forbidden Knowledge (about the *Medu Neter*), and a member of the Urban Information Network. A native Detroiter, she graduated Henry Ford High School and Wayne State University, and holds a law degree from the University of Florida.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Oct. 6th

Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick and guest presentation by Dana Nessel on LGBTQ rights in Michigan.

["Defending and Securing Civil Rights for LGBTQ and Other Michiganders," a guest presentation by Dana Nessel](#), one of the premier litigators of LGBTQ issues in Michigan. In 2010, Ms. Nessel brought the matter of *Harmon v. Davis*, in which a Michigan court, for the first time, held that a non-biological parent in a same-sex couple could establish custodial rights to the couple's children. Ms. Nessel also successfully petitioned for the first second-parent adoptions for same-sex couples in Oakland and Wayne Counties. She has defended and acquired exonerations for scores of defendants wrongly targeted for prosecution based on sexual orientation, and has represented various clients terminated from employment based upon sexual orientation or gender identity.

In 2012, she spearheaded the precedent-setting case *DeBoer v. Snyder*, which challenged the bans on adoption and marriage for same-sex couples in Michigan. *DeBoer* was later consolidated with its affiliated Sixth Circuit cases into *Obergefell v. Hodges* in the United States

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Supreme Court. This landmark case legalized same-sex marriage nationwide. In 2014, Ms. Nessel, along with her co-counsel on DeBoer, was honored with the "Champion of Justice" award by the Michigan State Bar Association. In 2015, she was designated as "Woman of the Year" by Michigan Lawyers Weekly. Ms. Nessel is also an officer for Fair Michigan, an organization dedicated to the equal protection of women and LGBT residents under the Michigan Constitution.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Sep. 30th

[Yom Kippur Morning Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.](#)

[Lecture by Rabbi Falick on "Hard Truths about Standing Up for Others."](#)

[Yom Kippur: The Final Shofar Blast.](#)

A Humanistic celebration of the Jewish holidays is a very special experience! We come together as a community to mark the season of new beginnings and the human capacity for renewal and change. Our services provide a wonderful opportunity to think about serious and interesting topics such as: what it means to be Jewish, the possibilities for personal improvement, and the ways we conduct our lives as individuals.

Sep. 29th

[Erev Yom Kippur /Kol Nidre Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.](#)

[Lecture by Rabbi Falick on "Hard Truths about Humanity's Tribalism."](#)

Sep. 21st

[Rosh Hashanah Morning Service with Rabbi Jeffrey Falick.](#)

[Lecture by Rabbi Falick on "Hard Truths about Getting to the Truth."](#)

Sep. 20th

[Erev Rosh Hashanah Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.](#)

[Lecture by Rabbi Falick on "Hard Truths about Jewish Peoplehood."](#)

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Sep. 15th

[A Vigil for Refugees including Music, Readings, Short Talks, and Conversations.](#)

Temple members and friends join with people from diverse communities to honor past and present refugees and to get to know one another by listening to each other's stories.

In 1939, the S.S. Saint Louis carrying 937 Jewish refugees was turned away from the United States and sent back to Europe. Of those passengers, 254 died in the Holocaust. With this program we remember them as well as previous refugees who found no welcome here, and we honor all individuals who need refuge today, regardless of their country of origin.

In 2017 our country's gates are once again closing. We stand and struggle against this, and we say "NEVER AGAIN"! Tune in to hear the stories and to be informed, inspired, resolved.

Sep. 8th

Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick and special guest presentation on the problem of gerrymandering and the proposed "Voters not Politicians" initiative on this November's ballot to address it.

["The Challenge of Gerrymandering," presented by Michigan State Representatives Christine Greig and Jeremy Moss.](#) The problem of gerrymandering—that is, redistricting to favor one political party over another—is as old as the United States. It has always represented a significant challenge to our democracy.

As the United States Supreme Court prepares to rule on the constitutionality of the practice, Michigan voters will have the opportunity to take matters into their own hands if enough signatures are collected to place the "Voters Not Politicians" initiative on this November's ballots. Join us to learn more about the issue and how it affects Michigan voters.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

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Aug. 25th Friday Night Service led by Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.

["Politics and the Pulpit"](#): Rabbi Falick discusses the history of American political activism by religious groups with emphasis on synagogues past and present.

Throughout the history of the United States, religious organizations have always been involved in promoting political issues. The United States tax code prohibits religious groups from engaging in certain types of political activities, but not all. Today, as Congress weighs legislation to change the tax code, there is renewed debate about whether there should be any such restrictions. Meanwhile, rabbis and synagogues throughout the nation are entering the fray with strong opinions on both sides.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Aug. 18th Friday night service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick and panel discussion on the status of Muslim Americans today.

["Travel Bans and Assaults on Civil Rights: A View from the American Muslim Community,"](#) a panel discussion led by Muneeb Ahmad, civil rights attorney, and Hassan Sheikh, Executive Director of EMgage, a civic organization for Muslim Americans.

At this time of great divisiveness in our nation, it is time that we begin standing up for each other, supporting the values of our nation. Muslims, while not a minority on the world stage, certainly are a minority in the United States.

The panel discussion addresses many civil rights infractions against the Muslim American community including the travel ban, false arrests, excessive bail, cruel and unusual punishment, infringement on parental rights, and lack of due process.

Please join us for this important effort to understand the experiences of our Muslim American neighbors.

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[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Aug. 11th Friday night service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick and guest presentation by Professor Fran Shor on the refugee crisis in Greece and beyond.

["The Refugee Crisis in Greece and Beyond: Eyewitness Perspectives" by Prof. Fran Shore.](#) As world leaders in the EU and elsewhere struggle with each other over refugee policies, people from Syria and elsewhere arrive daily on Greek islands, creating an enormous humanitarian crisis.

Prof. Shor has just returned from Samos Island, off the coast of Greece, where he and his wife witnessed first-hand what is occurring there. Our congregation has committed to providing assistance to these refugees. Please join us for this important first-hand report.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

July 28 Friday night service with Rabbi Falick and presentation on the Jewishness of the comic book industry.

["It's a Bird! It's a Plane! It's Supermensch! How Jews Invented Superheroes & the Comic Book Industry."](#) Rabbi Falick actually has a secret identity—as a comic book geek! Join him for a fun and fascinating presentation about the Jewishness of Superman, Batman, Spiderman and their creators.

He also talks about Senate hearings on comic books in the 1950s, bans on comic book sales, and mass comic book burnings.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

July 21 Friday Night Service led by Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.

["In It but Not of It: the Detroit Explosion of 1967," a presentation by Harry T. Cook on the 50th anniversary of the uprising in Detroit's black community.](#) Harry Cook takes a personal approach to the events of that summer, providing an up-close recollection of the events that started just

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one block away from temple founder Rabbi Sherwin Wine's childhood home at 1961 Clairmount Avenue.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1, including the installation of the new Board of Trustees and a memorial tribute to Rabbi Sherwin Wine on the 10th anniversary of his passing.](#)

June 16 Friday Night Service with Rabbi Falick and guest speaker Mike Whitty, an expert in Humanism and Values-Based Education.

[Mike Whitty speaks on "The Southern Poverty Law Center: Educational Tools & Resources to Combat Intolerance and Bigotry."](#) He shares some tools developed by the SPLC, one of America's leading civil rights organizations, that we can use to fight hate, prejudice, and racism.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

June 9 Friday night service led by Natan Fuchs with a very personal presentation about a little known chapter in Jewish history: the failed attempt by the *Etzel* (the *Irgun*) to stage a military takeover of the fledgling Israeli government in 1948.

[Natan Fuchs speaks on the failed Israeli coup attempt of 1948.](#) This spring we celebrated Israel's independence. In 1948, the Jewish Agency of Palestine became the government of Israel, with its chairman David Ben-Gurion as prime minister and its underground army the *Haganah*, along with the other paramilitary organizations, uniting to form the Israel Defense Forces—the army of the new state.

What most American Jews don't know is that this event was not a universally accepted fact in Israel. The *Etzel* (the *Irgun*) actually attempted to overthrow the government.

Natan Fuchs' own family was split during this brief period, with his uncle on board the *Altalena*, the ship that brought armaments for the *Irgun*, while his father and other soldiers in the new IDF fired on the ship from

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the beach in Tel Aviv. Natan's talk involves personal memoirs—his own and his family's—of those events.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

June 2 Friday night service led by Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick with a distinctly Humanist take on Shavuot.

[Rabbi Falick speaks on the topic of Shavuot](#) - why and how Humanists should become “Humangelists,” proudly putting forward our values in all walks of life in a respectful, but confident manner.

Our ancestors first observed Shavuot as an agricultural feast and later as the day of the revelation of Torah. Today the "revelation" of truth through scriptures continues to be privileged, even determining public policy here, in Israel, and across the world. It sometimes seems like reason is going out of fashion. Yet millions of Americans are also turning away from unsubstantiated beliefs, seeking more rational and evidence-based ways to determine how to navigate the world. Humanists do not seek converts, but we do seek to advance our approach to knowledge.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

May 12 Friday night service led by Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick with guest lecture by Wissam Charafeddine of the Muslimish Support Network.

["My Journey from Islamic Extremism to Free Thought and Cultural Islam" by Wissam Charafeddine.](#) The Muslimish Support Network, co-founded by Charafeddine in 2012, seeks to create an environment for support and dialogue among ex-Muslims and questioning Muslims and to fight for freedom of expression and against blasphemy laws in Islamic countries.

Mr. Charafeddine also is co-founder of the Institute for Religious Studies, Humanities, and Dialogue, an organization that seeks free coexistence between human beings and a better life centered on the well being of

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humanity. He is founder and CEO of W Distributions and First Wireless X.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Apr. 28 Friday night service led by Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick with guest lecture by Richard Carrier, Ph.D., author of *Sense and Goodness without God*.

[Dr. Richard Carrier lectures on "How and Why We All Should Be Good Philosophers."](#) Honing our philosophical skills is important. We need them for building a coherent, evidence-based worldview to guide and center us, and that we can allow to change as we learn or realize new things. What skills do we need? How can we develop them? What should we do with them? Dr. Carrier outlines the basics with entertaining examples. He is an historian, atheist activist, author, public speaker, and blogger.

Dr. Carrier's presentation is made possible by the generous co-sponsorship of Michigan Atheists and the Humanists of Southeast Michigan.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Apr. 21 Friday night service led by Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick with guest lecture by Susan Jacoby, NY Times bestselling author and winner of notable book awards from both the Times and the Washington Post.

[Prof. Susan Jacoby speaks on the topic of "Citizenship in the New Age of Unreason: Why We Can't Just Blame Trump!"](#) Dr. Jacoby is one of the leading historians of secularism and Humanism and the author of over a dozen top-selling books. She joined us in the midst of preparing a completely updated edition of her critically lauded book, *The Age of American Unreason*, a cultural history examining the forces that have created a perfect storm of American anti-rationalism.

These forces include the upsurge of religious fundamentalism, with more political power today than ever before; the failure of public education to

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create an informed citizenry; and the triumph of video over print culture. Sparing neither the right nor the left, Jacoby asserts that Americans today have embraced a universe of "junk thought" that makes almost no effort to separate fact from opinion.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Mar. 31st

Friday Night Service led by Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick with guest speaker Fred Edwards, past Executive Director of the American Humanist Association.

[Fred Edwards speaks on "The Promise of Humanism."](#) Every religion has a promise it offers to adherents, but what is the promise of humanism? What is its attraction?

Emerging in the early Twentieth Century, humanism struck a chord because it answered a need. It offered an outlook that many found refreshing. There was something striking about its this-worldly forthrightness and down-to-earth honesty that cleared the air and liberated the mind. And this humanist experience continues today to uplift and inspire growing numbers of Americans. Fred Edwards helps us to immerse ourselves in that experience and to enjoy the inspiration it can bring.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Mar. 24th

Special Shabbat on Jewish Liberation led by Madrich Natan Fuchs.

[Natan Fuchs presents "Jewish Liberation: A History," a topic celebrated in the spring holidays of Purim and Passover throughout the course of Jewish history.](#) He traces Jewish liberation from Hellenistic and ancient Rabbinic Judaism to present day Secular Humanistic Judaism.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Feb. 24th

Friday Night Service led by Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick and guest lecture by prolific author and prominent atheist thinker Greta Christina.

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[Greta Christina speaks about her latest book, *The Way of the Heathen: Practicing Atheism in Everyday Life*.](#) How we deal with life is dramatically different when we don't believe in gods, souls, and afterlives. Greta Christina provides a refreshing and empowering outlook on how we deal with love and sex, pleasure and death, reality and making stuff up.

At the Birmingham Temple we have been confronting these ideas for many years. Ms. Christina provides a fresh and fascinating approach to them.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Jan. 27th

Friday Night Service led by Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick and guest lecture by Heidi Budaj of Michigan's Anti-Defamation League.

[Lecture by Heidi Budaj of The Anti-Defamation League in Michigan.](#) Ms. Budaj discusses the upsurge in anti-semitic and other hate crimes and the response of the ADL nationwide and here in Michigan. The Anti-Defamation League was founded in 1913 "to stop the defamation of the Jewish people and to secure justice and fair treatment to all."

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Jan. 20th

Friday Night Service with Rabbi Falick and lecture on the three major waves of Jewish immigration to the United States.

[Rabbi Falick speaks on Jewish immigration to the US from the colonial period to the early 19th Century.](#) How were Jews greeted by other Americans? How did they assimilate to American culture? What lessons can American Jews bring from the experiences of their forebears to the current immigration debate?

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

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Jan. 13th Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick and guest lecture by Kary L. Moss.

[Kary L. Moss, Executive Director of the Michigan ACLU, lectures on "The Constitution: Our Sword and Our Shield."](#) Ms. Moss has served as executive director since 1998, spearheading many high-impact, important civil rights cases. These have included the country's first challenge to the government's effort to close immigration court hearings to the public; warrantless wiretapping by the National Security Administration; and the first-of-its-kind "right to read" lawsuit holding Michigan accountable for dismal literacy scores in a Detroit-area school district. She has served as the Chair of the ACLU's Executive Director Council, representing all state directors in the ACLU, and is a member of the Detroit News Editorial Page Advisory Board.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Jan. 6th Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick and guest lecture by immigration attorney Melanie Goldberg.

[Immigration expert Melanie Goldberg discusses the impending immigration crisis expected under the Trump administration.](#) Congressional action is more pertinent than presidential action. How will Congress react to the wishes of President Trump? As Ms. Goldberg says, "This is going to be where things get really interesting."

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

2016

Dec. 16th [Chanukah service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick featuring our littlest Sunday School children.](#)

Dec. 2nd Shabbat Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick and guest speaker Steve Spreitzer.

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[Presentation by Steve Spreitzer, President & CEO of the Michigan Roundtable for Diversity & Inclusion.](#) The Michigan Roundtable for Diversity and Inclusion, under various previous names, is one of the oldest human rights organizations in Detroit, going back to before the 1943 race riot. Over the years it expanded from being an organization largely confined to building bridges between Catholics, Protestants, and Jews to one embracing more diverse and inclusive interests. To its great credit, the Roundtable has adjusted to the rapid social changes and difficult challenges of the region by developing effective programs geared not only to combating all types of discrimination but to building and sustaining a diverse and inclusive community. It has been both a leader and a cheerleader in this noble effort for over six decades.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Nov. 18th Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick with presentation and discussion about the 2016 presidential election.

["The 2016 Election: What Happened? Why? And Where Do We Go from Here?"](#) In discussing discusses the results of the recent election, Rabbi Falick asks: How should Humanists react to a president who has said so many things that are incompatible with our values? What is our responsibility in this new political reality?

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Nov. 11th Special Shabbat Service conducted by Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick (2 videos).

[Shabbat Service, Part 1, welcoming the boards of both the Society for Humanistic Judaism \(SHJ\) and the International Institute for Secular Humanistic Judaism \(IISHJ\) and presenting the first two of three special events:](#)

1. Special Presentation of the SHJ's Rabbi Sherwin T. Wine Lifetime Achievement Award to Dana and Rick Naimark. Dana, who was raised in our community, is the daughter of Paula and Stanley Wolfe. In 1987 she and her husband Rick founded Or Adam in Phoenix where

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they served in a wide variety of leadership and educational roles. These included chairing key committees, mentoring b'nei mitzvah, running the congregation's school, and presiding at ceremonies. Their leadership also included their separate terms as presidents of the SHJ board, and of course many BT members will fondly remember how Dana stepped in to conduct Yom Kippur services in 2012.

2. Special Memorial Tribute to Ben Pivnick of Blessed Memory. Together with his wife Lorraine (sister of Rabbi Wine), Ben was instrumental in founding and building our congregation and our entire movement. Their contributions helped to establish and shape every significant institution and organization of Humanistic Judaism including the Pivnick Center of our temple that bears their name. Several members of the Pivnick Family join the many members of our community who are counted as their dearest friends.
3. [Shabbat Service, Part 2, presenting the third special event: a lecture by Paul Golin, newly appointed SHJ Executive Director, on the topic, "The Future, The Future of Judaism, and Where We Fit In."](#)

In a future of radical choice -- be anyone! do anything! -- will people still choose to be Jewish? What if we're already living in that future? How might Judaism still provide meaning and relevance, and how might Secular Humanistic Judaism in particular best be positioned to serve future interests and needs twenty years from now (or at least until our robot overlords take over)?

Nov. 4th

Friday night service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick and guest presentation by Dr. Andrew Franks.

["Death with Dignity legislation—lobbying for Comprehensive End-of-Life Choice," with Prof. Andrew Franks of Lake Superior State University.](#) Dr. Franks discusses the importance of urging state lawmakers to move forward with House Bill 5802, Michigan's Death with Dignity Act, before the end of the current legislative session.

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Dr. Franks is the co-chair for the Secular Coalition for Michigan and has published research examining the political ramifications of atheism and secular moral values. He also has also published on issues pertaining to the social psychology of the criminal justice system. He is a punk rock musician, sky diver, and former amateur mixed martial arts fighter.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Oct. 28th

Friday night service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.

[Rabbi Falick leads a discussion of the latest *BT Reads* book, Milton Steinberg's novel *As a Driven Leaf*, available at many libraries and at this \[Amazon link\]\(#\).](#)

Against a background of repression and rebellion in Roman-occupied Palestine, *As a Driven Leaf* presents the story of Elisha ben Abuyah, a leading Jewish scholar of the first century C.E., who abandoned his belief in God and became one of the most famous apostates in Jewish history.

Declared a heretic and excommunicated from the Jewish community, he journeyed to Antioch in nearby Syria to begin a quest through Greek and Roman culture for some fundamental irrefutable truth and was ultimately forced to choose between loyalty to his people and loyalty to his own quest for truth.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Oct. 21st

Shabbat and Sukkot Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick and guest speaker Fran Shor, Professor at Wayne State University.

["Ralph Nader and the 2000 Presidential Election in Historical Perspective," a lecture by Prof. Fran Shor.](#) Ralph Nader's run in the 2000 Presidential race has become for many liberals and progressives the quintessential representation of the third party "spoiler." By examining the political context that led to his candidacy and the complexities that accompanied it, especially the vote in Florida, we can better understand

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the myths around his role as "spoiler" and the larger concerns about third party candidates in the 2016 election.

[Shabbat and Sukkot Service, Part 1.](#)

Oct. 12th [Yom Kippur Morning Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.](#)

Rabbi Falick speaks on the topic, "The Things We Dread: How Fear Takes Control of Our Lives."

Oct. 11th [Erev Yom Kippur / Kol Nidrei Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.](#)

Rabbi Falick speaks on the topic, "The Regrets We Amass: Learning from the Road Not Taken."

Oct. 7th Friday night service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick and guest presentation by Harry T. Cook.

[Harry T. Cook lectures on "Contingency and the Sukkah."](#) The concept of "contingency" references the work of the late pragmatist Richard Rorty, one of the premiere American philosophers of the late 20th century. Rorty wrote of "contingency" in part as the making rather than the finding of truth. Context and participation negotiate truth from observation, though contexts and participants change as do the observations themselves, which depend upon the observers and the experiences they bring to what they think they see, hear, or feel.

Thinking like Rorty is like living permanently in a sukkah. It's especially good for secular humanists who by nature avoid unbending ideology. This program anticipates the coming holiday!

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Oct. 3rd [Rosh Hashanah Morning Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.](#)

Rabbi Falick speaks on the topic, "The Words We Say: The Competing Values of Free Speech and Ethical Speech."

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- Oct. 2nd [Erev Rosh Hashanah Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.](#)
- Rabbi Falick speaks on the topic, “The Stories We Tell: Transmitting Our National and Personal Narratives.”
- Sep. 23rd Friday night service with Rabbi Jeffrey Falick and guest presentation by Dan Varner, executive director of Excellent Schools Detroit.
- [Dan Varner speaks about Excellent Schools Detroit](#), a coalition of Detroit's education, government, community and philanthropic leaders that promotes bold steps to ensure that every Detroit child is in an excellent school by the year 2020.
- Mr. Varner addresses the ways in which his organization works to assure a high quality education for all Detroit children - the key to future opportunity. He discusses how Excellent Schools Detroit involves the Detroit community with partners from all walks of life and all types of organizations in order to achieve these goals.
- [Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)
- Fri., Sep. 9th Friday night service with Rabbi Jeffrey Falick and guest presentation on civil rights by Temple Member Rileigh Neilson.
- [“My Civil Rights Excursion” by Temple Member Rileigh Neilson.](#) Rileigh talks about her experiences on a Freedom Tour civil rights excursion through the South with a group of other high school students specially selected from around the country. Come hear reflections on yesterday's and today's civil rights movements through the lens of a great leader of tomorrow!
- [Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)
- Fri., Aug. 26th Friday night service with Rabbi Jeffrey Falick followed by a roundtable discussion of Muslim life in America.

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["What It's Like to Be Muslim in America Today," a roundtable discussion with Prof. Adnan Salhi of Henry Ford College.](#)

The panel includes both religious and secular Americans of Muslim heritage representing the wide variety of Americans who are identified with or have grown up in the American Muslim community.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Fri., Aug. 19th Friday night service with Rabbi Jeffrey Falick and guest lecture by Jack Lessenberry.

[Journalist Jack Lessenberry, inimitable and always entertaining, lectures on this tumultuous election year.](#) A Detroit native, Jack has accumulated nearly forty years of journalistic experience in every medium from newspapers to the internet. He has worked as a foreign correspondent and executive national editor of The Detroit News, and written for many national and regional publications, including Vanity Fair, Esquire, The New York Times, The Washington Post, and The Boston Globe.

Currently, in addition to his work at Michigan Radio, he is head of journalism at Wayne State University and a contributing editor and columnist for The Metro Times, Dome Magazine, The Traverse-City Record Eagle, and The Toledo Blade, where he also serves as ombudsman and hosts the weekly public affairs program Deadline Now on WGTE-TV in Toledo.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Fri., Aug. 12th Friday night service with Rabbi Jeffrey Falick and guest lecture by Temple member Mike Whitty.

[Lecture on "Positive Psychology: Less Suffering, More Healing" by our very own Prof. Mike Whitty.](#) Mike presents a reflection on releasing negativity and increasing positive acceptance and self-forgiveness, guiding viewers on a journey to say goodbye to guilt, fear, and anger and

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to reaffirm trust in self and trust in life in the face of pressure, worry, and confusion.

Here's a chance to see more clearly the light on the path and the brotherhood/sisterhood of humanity.

1. [Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Fri., Aug 5th

Friday night service with Rabbi Jeffrey Falick and presentation by Special Guest Frank Joyce.

[Guest lecture by Frank Joyce, editor of the book, *The People Make the Peace: Lessons from the Vietnam Antiwar Movement*.](#) A lifelong activist whose work began with the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s, Frank is a founder of People Against Racism and has been involved in many labor, anti-racist, human rights, and anti-war campaigns ever since.

Currently he is a communications consultant to labor and community organizations, active in the New Work/New Culture movement in Detroit and elsewhere, and president of The Working Group, a nonprofit production company supporting anti-hate movements. He is also involved in many other human rights efforts.

Frank also is an award-winning journalist and essayist who writes frequently for AlterNet (alternet.org).

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Sun., July 31st

[“The Evolution of God,” the third and final part of a special series with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.](#)

Did you know that Yahweh has a biography and it's not what you think it is? He even had a wife! Learn the REAL story of the development of Israelite people, religion, and texts in this special 3-part series.

Fri., July 29th

Friday night service with Rabbi Jeffrey Falick and lecture on what Creationists believe.

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[Rabbi Falick lectures on the topic, "What Do Creationists Believe?](#) Many Humanists and other science-oriented people believe that Creationists are not very bright, but it takes an enormous amount of intelligence, talent, and skill to build a one hundred million dollar "replica" of Noah's Ark and get the government to help pay for it!

What's behind so-called "Creation Science?" If we are to make an argument for real science, it's important to know what the other side actually says. Rabbi Falick reviews the funny, weird, and dangerous beliefs of "Creation Science."

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Sun., July 24th

["The Evolution of God," Part 2 of a special series with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.](#)

Did you know that Yahweh has a biography and it's not what you think it is? He even had a wife! Learn the REAL story of the development of Israelite people, religion, and texts in this special 3-part series.

Fri., July 22nd

Friday night service with Rabbi Jeffrey Falick and review of Ta-Nehisi Coates' book, *Between the World and Me*.

[Rabbi Falick reviews the book *Between the World and Me*](#), a profound work by Ta-Nehisi Coates that pivots from the biggest questions about American history and ideals to the most intimate concerns of a father for his son.

Coates offers a powerful new framework for understanding our nation's history and current crisis. Americans have built an empire on the idea of "race," a falsehood that damages us all but falls most heavily on black women and men—exploited through slavery and segregation and, today, threatened, locked up, and murdered out of all proportion. What is it like to inhabit a black body and find a way to live within it? And how can we all honestly reckon with this fraught history and free ourselves from its burden?

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[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Sun., July 17th ["The Evolution of God," Part 1 of a special series with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.](#)

Did you know that Yahweh has a biography and it's not what you think it is? He even had a wife! Learn the REAL story of the development of Israelite people, religion, and texts in this special 3-part series.

Fri., June 24th Friday night service with Rabbi Jeffrey Falick and his report on two major events he recently attended.

[Rabbi Falick reports on the annual conference of the American Humanist Association as well as Washington D.C.'s Reason Rally](#), the largest gathering of nontheists in world history!

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Fri., June 17th Friday night service with Rabbi Jeffrey Falick and Guest Speaker Rabbi Sivan Maas, Dean of *Tmura*, The International Institute of Secular Humanistic Judaism in Israel.

["What's Israeli About 'Israeli Judaism'?" A lecture by Rabbi Sivan Maas.](#)

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Fri, May 20th Friday night service with Rabbi Jeffrey Falick and lecture on Robert Ingersoll.

[Rabbi Falick lectures on "Robert Ingersoll: The Great Agnostic."](#) Ingersoll was the greatest orator of his generation and a "prophet" and champion of secularism and nontheism. He drew crowds of thousands and thousands wherever he went, yet few people today have heard of "Col. Robert G. Ingersoll." Learn more about this amazing—and amazingly prescient—man.

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[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Fri., May 13th Friday night service with Rabbi Jeffrey Falick and guest lecture by Michael Hodges on Albert Kahn.

[“The Legacy of Albert Kahn.”](#) Michael Hodges, arts reporter for the *Detroit Free Press*, is an expert on the architecture of Albert Kahn, an icon of Detroit history as well as Jewish history.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Wed., May 4th [SOAR Seminar with Rabbi Jeffrey Falick: “The Evolution of God: How Ancient Near Eastern Deities Became the Monotheistic God.”](#)

Fri., Apr. 29th Friday night service with Rabbi Jeffrey Falick.

[Rabbi Falick lectures on “Changing Understandings of Jewish Peoplehood: Implications for American Jewry and Secular Humanistic Judaism.”](#)

With more and more Jews identifying themselves in ways that exclude religion, more and more experts are asking questions about Jewish collectivity. Is "peoplehood" the answer? What does it mean and who invented the concept? You might be surprised to learn that its roots are in the American Jewish community even as it has been embraced to provide an answer to the knotty questions of Jewish identity. Finally, where does Secular Humanistic Judaism fit into all of this? The congregation is joined by members of the board of the Society for Humanistic Judaism.

[Maria Cimarelli performs Mandy Patinkin’s Yiddish version of “Take Me Out to the Ballgame.”](#)

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Fri., Apr. 8th Friday night service with Rabbi Jeffrey Falick.

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[“Religious Liberty or Religious Coercion? The Modern Debate.”](#) In this lecture Rabbi Falick asks: Since when does religious freedom give people the right to tell others what to do? He explores the considerable shift in issues of governmental entanglement with religion over the last few decades.

The religious right has created a brand new definition of religious liberty that now includes the rights of corporations to withhold birth control in insurance plans or to discriminate against same-sex couples. And this is just the tip of an iceberg of demands that also includes the degradation of science education, the "war" on Christmas, prayer in school and much more.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Fri., Apr. 1st

Friday night service with Rabbi Jeffrey Falick and guest speaker Amy Good, the CEO of Alternatives for Girls.

[Temple Member Amy Good speaks on Alternatives for Girls.](#) Amy discusses the ways in which Alternatives for Girls (AFG) helps homeless and high-risk girls and young women avoid violence, teen pregnancy, and exploitation, and helps them to explore and access the support, resources, and opportunities necessary to be safe, to grow strong and to make positive choices in their lives.

Amy Good, MSW, has served as director of AFG 1988 and has 32 years of experience managing and directing human services programs serving Detroit children and families. Under her leadership, AFG has grown from a volunteer-led project to a full-service agency that provides street outreach, an emergency shelter, transition to independent living and prevention services.

The history and accomplishments of AFG are presented in light of adverse social forces including poverty, institutional misogyny, gang violence and sex trafficking.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

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Sun., Mar. 20th [“Dual-Narrative Tourism in the Middle East” with Abu Aziz Sarah, founder of MEJDI Tours.](#)

Aziz Abu Sarah launched a unique study-abroad program at George Mason University’s Center for World Religions, Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution. He brings his students to the Middle East to encounter firsthand a multi-narrative presentation of ideas—Israeli and Palestinian; Jewish, Christian and Muslim; secular, left-wing and right-wing; historical, cultural and environmental—essential to seeing how very different people work together toward peace.

Based on that experience—along with Rabbi Marc Gopin, and a group of Jewish, Christian and Muslim colleagues—Aziz founded the rapidly growing company Mejdi Tours (<http://www.mejditours.com/>).

MEJDI is an acronym for “Middle East Justice and Development Initiatives.” Aziz has shared his pioneering work in creating tours in regions of conflict—what he now calls “Dual-Narrative Tourism”—with people from around the world in his TED talks and as a Cultural Educator for National Geographic.

Fri., Mar 18th Friday night service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick and guest lecture by BT member Joy Weiss, a writer, professor, communication strategist and coach.

[Joyce Weiss speaks about her book, *Take the Ride of Your Life! Shift Gears for More Balance, Growth, and Joy*.](#) She uses bike lesson memories to show how we can energize ourselves no matter what the terrain. Why a bike? Because that's where most of us learn our first lessons about taking off into the new and unknown and having the courage to do it. Joyce discusses her journey in writing the book, including the interviews she conducted with many people about the lessons they learned from riding their first two-wheel bike.

Joyce is a Communication Strategist and Coach who works with clients to build the leadership and communication skills that make them top

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performers in their industry. In addition to *Take the Ride of Your Life*, Joyce has authored two other books, *Communicate with Impact* and *Full Speed Ahead*. With a Master's Degree in Guidance and Counseling from Oakland University, Joyce is an Adjunct Professor at OU and principal at Joyce Weiss Training and Development, a certified "Best Practices Company."

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Fri., Mar. 4th

[Introduction to the film, *A Better Life: An Exploration of Joy and Meaning in a World Without God*, followed by remarks and discussion.](#)

Christopher Johnson, creator of the film and book of the same name, gave a special presentation and screening of his documentary on Friday, Mar. 4, 2016 at the Birmingham Temple in Farmington Hills, Michigan. More information about his film may be found at *TheAtheistBook.com*.

Fri., Feb. 26th

Friday night service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick and guest presentation about Recovery International.

[Guest presentation by Temple member Mark Lipson and others about Recovery International](#), an evidence-based, cognitive-behavioral, peer-to-peer, self-help training system developed in 1937 by Abraham Low, M.D.

Participants in the program use the R.I. method to better manage symptoms of depression, anxiety, and daily stress, thereby leading more peaceful and productive lives. A history and overview of the program are presented, as well as a panel re-enactment of a Recovery International meeting.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Fri., Feb. 5th

Friday night service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick and guest lecture by Christina Soliz of the Planned Parenthood Advocates of Michigan.

[Guest lecture by Christina Soliz on Planned Parenthood.](#)

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[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Fri., Jan. 15th Friday night service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick and lecture on Carl Sagan's *The Demon-Haunted World*.

[Rabbi Falick discusses Carl Sagan's book, *The Demon-Haunted World: Science as a Candle in the Dark*.](#) Carl Sagan is the Humanistic Jewish role model of the year for the Society for Humanistic Judaism, and this book is the Fall-Winter selection for the Birmingham Temple Reading Circle.

In *The Demon-Haunted World*, Sagan aims to explain the scientific method to laypeople and to encourage people to learn critical and skeptical thinking. He explains methods to help distinguish between ideas that are considered valid science and those that can be considered pseudoscience. Sagan states that when new ideas are offered for consideration, they should be tested by means of skeptical thinking and should stand up to rigorous questioning.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Fri., Jan. 8th Friday night service with guest leader Natan Fuchs.

[Lecture by Natan Fuchs on "Tu B'Shvat from Asherah to Shechinah."](#) In honor of the Jewish "Arbor Day" (Tu B'Shvat), which this year falls in late January, Natan Fuchs explores biblical references to demonstrate that the holiday was originally an agricultural dedication to Asherah, the Hebrew goddess of fertility.

Natan also looks at the Yahwist priesthood's war on that form of worship, the removal of the feminine from the Temple rites, and its eventual return in Rabbinic and mystical Judaism in the form of Shechinah, the "feminine presence of God."

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

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Fri., Dec. 18th Friday night service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick and guest presentation by Temple member John Gardon: "German History from Early Roman Times to the Present."

[John Gardon's presentation on German History from Early Roman Times to the Present.](#)

[Maria Cimorelli sings a Yiddish *nigun*.](#)

Fri., Dec. 4th [Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)
Friday night service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick and presentation of *The Homeless Monologues* in conjunction with the Souper Supper for Charity event benefiting the N.O.A.H. soup kitchen, Gleaners and Yad Ezra.

[The Homeless Monologues](#)—a series of short dramatic readings highlighting the difficulties of homelessness for so many people.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Fri., Nov. 20th Friday night service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick and lecture on "Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind," by Yuval Noah Harari.

[Rabbi Falick lectures on "Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind," the New York Times and international bestselling book by Israeli academic Yuval Noah Harari.](#) One hundred thousand years ago, at least six different species of humans inhabited Earth. Yet today there is only one: *-homo sapiens*. What happened to the others? And what may happen to us?

This book breaks the mold of histories of humanity by beginning 70,000 years ago with the appearance of modern cognition. From examining the role evolving humans have played in the global ecosystem to charting the

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rise of empires, "Sapiens" integrates history and science to reconsider accepted narratives, connect past developments with contemporary concerns, and examine specific events within the context of larger ideas.

Dr. Harari also contends that as humans have begun to bend laws of natural selection that governed life for the past four billion years, we are acquiring the ability to design not only the world around us, but also ourselves. He asks: Where is this leading us, and what do we want to become?

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Fri., Nov. 13th Friday night service with Rabbi Miriam Jerris, Rabbi of the Society for Humanistic Judaism, and guest lecture on "Joining the Jewish People—A Secular Humanistic Perspective" by Rabbi Sivan Maas, Dean of T'Mura, the International Institute for Secular Humanistic Judaism.

[Rabbi Maas lectures on "Joining the Jewish People—A Secular Humanistic Perspective."](#) Asking the question, "Who is a Jew," she discusses the history of joining the Jewish people from biblical days to the present. When did the first "conversions" take place? Did Jews ever practice "forced conversion"? What can we say about "conversion" and other ways of joining the Jewish people in an age of multiple identities? Listen to Rabbi Maas explore these questions and more.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Fri., Nov. 6th Friday night service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick and guest lecture by Shulem Deen.

[Guest Lecture by Shulem Deen, Author of "All Who Go Do Not Return: A Memoir. One Man's Struggle with Faith, Family and Community."](#)

Shulem Deen was raised to believe that questions are dangerous. As a member of the Skverers, one of the most insular Hasidic sects in the US, he knew little about the outside world - only that it must be shunned. His marriage at eighteen was arranged and several children soon followed. Deen's first transgression—turning on the radio—was small, but his

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curiosity led him to the library and later to the Internet. Soon he began a feverish inquiry into the tenets of his religious beliefs until, several years later, his faith unraveled completely. As a heretic, he feared discovery and ostracism from the only world he knew. Hear Shulem share the story of how he entered into a life of deception and a long struggle to hold on to those he loves most: his five children.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Fri., Oct. 30th Friday night service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick and guest lecture by Debra Luria, Ph. D. on "Facing Life with Confidence: Tapping into your Resilience as a Humanistic Jew."

["Facing Life with Confidence: Tapping into your Resilience as a Humanistic Jew," a lecture by Debra Luria, Ph. D.](#) A member of the Birmingham Temple, Dr. Luria focuses on how we can be resilient in the face of various life challenges by utilizing the basic tenets of Humanistic Judaism: one's light, hope, and strength in themselves and others. We find out how strong we really can be through connecting with our own inner self and relationships with others.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1](#)

Fri., Oct. 23rd Friday night service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick welcoming board members of the Society for Humanistic Judaism, with guest lecture by scholar and author Eric Berkowitz on "The Boundaries of Desire: The Intersection of Sex and Law."

[Lecture on "The Boundaries of Desire: The Intersection of Sex and Law" by Eric Berkowitz.](#) The act of reproduction hasn't changed much over time, but our ideas about the meaning and consequences of sex are in constant flux. At any given point in time, some forms of sex have been encouraged, while others have been punished mercilessly.

San Francisco-based human rights lawyer and journalist Eric Berkowitz has written two critically acclaimed books tracing laws about sexuality from the earliest times to the present day: *Sex and Punishment: 4,000*

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Years of Judging Desire and The Boundaries of Desire: A Century of Bad Laws, Good Sex, and Changing Identity.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Fri., Oct. 16th Spooky Sabbath with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick. (2 videos.)

[Spooky Judaism!](#) Rabbi Falick lectures on the spookier side of Jewish tradition.

Halloween may not be related to anything in Jewish culture, but that doesn't mean there are no monsters, demons, ghosts or goblins in Judaism. In fact, there are plenty of them! Rabbi Falick will introduce you to the spookier side of Jewish tradition. Join us...if you dare!

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Fri., Oct. 2nd [Friday night service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick](#) and guest lecture by Dr. Saeed Ahmed Khan.

[Lecture on Islam and the West by Dr. Saeed Ahmed Khan](#), Lecturer in Near Eastern Studies at Wayne State University. The relationship between Islam and the West spans 14 centuries. Dr. Khan explores this coexistent, contentious, seemingly contradictory and always complex relationship in its historical, political and, perhaps most importantly, cultural aspects.

Fri., Sep. 25th [Shabbat and Sukkot Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick](#) and guest lecture by Michael Werner, Past President of the American Humanist Association.

[Lecture by Michael Werner, past president of the American Humanist Association.](#) Mr. Werner discusses his book *Regaining Balance*, a scathing critique of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). Despite its key role in establishing American Humanism, the UUA has developed a disdain for the Humanist values it once championed. What

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happened to the Unitarians has significant implications and lessons for Humanistic Judaism. You won't want to miss this provocative presentation!

Wed., Sep. 23rd [Yom Kippur Morning Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.](#)

[Rabbi Falick lectures on the topic, "We Look for the Right Thing to Do: Humanism and Morality."](#)

Tues., Sep. 22nd [Yom Kippur Evening Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick and Performance of the Bruck *Kol Nidre* by Glenn Mellow.](#)

[Lecture by Rabbi Falick on "Arguments and Debates: A Humanistic Guide."](#)

Mon., Sep. 14th [Rosh Hashanah Morning Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.](#)

[Lecture by Rabbi Falick, "Is Happiness the Meaning and Purpose of Life?"](#)

Sun., Sep. 13th [Rosh Hashanah Evening Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.](#)

[Lecture by Rabbi Falick on "Rabbi Wine's Five Questions Every Jewish Movement Must Ask."](#)

Fri., Aug. 22nd Friday night service led by Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick with lecture on the topic, "Did Jesus Actually Exist?"

["Did Jesus Actually Exist?"](#) Rabbi Falick explores the myths and facts behind the world's largest religion. Though most scholars - even the most critical - have rarely questioned the historical existence of Jesus even when they might challenge every other claim about him, a new crop of scholars has suggested that he did not even exist at all! What is behind the new (and old) controversies about Jesus and why do they matter?

[Maria Cimarelli sings "King Herod's Song" from *Jesus Christ Superstar*.](#)

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[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Fri., Aug. 7th Friday night service led by Natan Fuchs—adapted from Rabbi Wine’s own “Zionism” service—with lecture and discussion of the roots of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and viewing of the PBS movie, “1913: Seeds of Conflict.” (2 videos)

[Lecture and discussion led by Natan Fuchs of the roots of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and viewing of the PBS movie, “1913: Seeds of Conflict.”](#)

[Friday Night Service based on Rabbi Wine's own "Zionism" service, Part 1.](#)

Fri., Jul 31st Friday night service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick and lecture on the bad science behind 12-Step programs. (2 videos)

[The Sober Truth about 12-Step Programs.](#) Rabbi Falick discusses the bad science behind 12-Step rehab programs like Alcoholics Anonymous. Not only do these not work well for secular humanists, but recent studies—particularly those conducted by Lance Dodes, MD—demonstrate that they're not working well for many people at all. How did they become the "gold standard" in treatment? What are the alternatives?

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Sun., Jul 26th [Who Wrote the Bible? Part 6.](#) Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick continues to explore this question in the sixth seminar of the series, which will conclude with a video presentation on Sunday, Aug. 2nd at 10:30 a.m.

Humanistic Jews accept that the Bible is human literature. But who were the humans who produced this literature? What were their concerns and interests? How did the final version come about?

Sun., Jul 19th [Who Wrote the Bible? Part 5.](#) Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick continues to explore this question in the fifth seminar of the series, which will continue on Sunday, July 26th at 10:30 a.m.

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Fri., Jul 17th Friday night service led by Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick and guest lecture by Prof. Michael D. Whitty on treating marijuana as we would wine, following the Humanistic tradition of the Netherlands.

[Prof. Mike Whitty addresses these questions regarding marijuana](#): Is marijuana safer than wine? Might it help elders' pains? Would it save any grandkids a rap sheet if it were legal? Could it help save corrections costs providing road funding? "Tax pot for potholes"?

Prof. Whitty teaches a course entitled Responsible Drug Policy Reform in the Public Health Policy program at the University of Michigan-Dearborn. UMD will be hosting a major conference this fall dealing with public health alternatives to the criminal justice model when it comes to cannabis. He is a member of the ACLU, Drug Policy Alliance and Michigan NORML.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Sun., Jul 12th [Who Wrote the Bible? Part 4.](#) Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick continues to explore this question in the fourth seminar of the series.

Fri., Jul 10th Friday Night Service and Lecture by Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick on the Bestselling Book, *The Swerve: How the World Became Modern*, by Stephen Greenblatt. (2 videos.)

[Rabbi Falick discusses Stephen Greenblatt's bestselling book, *The Swerve: How the World Became Modern*](#), which won the Pulitzer-Prize. *The Swerve* looks at Renaissance humanism through the story of Poggio Bracciolini's discovery the ancient Roman philosophical epic, *On the Nature of Things* by Lucretius. Based upon the thinking of Democritus and Epicurus, Lucretius' epic is a beautiful poem about the most dangerous ideas: that the universe functioned without the aid of gods, that religious fear was damaging to human life, and that matter was made up of very small particles in eternal motion.

[Friday Night Service Part 1.](#)

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Sun., Jun 28th [Who Wrote the Bible? Part 3.](#) Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick continues to explore this question in the third seminar of the series.

Sun., Jun 21st [Who Wrote the Bible? Part 2.](#) Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick explores this question in the second seminar of the series.

Sun., Jun. 14th [Who Wrote the Bible? First lecture in a summer series with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.](#)

Humanistic Jews accept that the Bible is human literature. But who were the humans who produced this literature? What were their concerns and interests? How did the final version come about?

Subsequent lectures will be held every Sunday through August 2nd, with the exception of July 5th (Independence Day weekend).

Fri., Jun. 12th Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick and Lecture by Rabbi Miriam Jerris. (2 videos)

[Rabbi Jerris speaks to the question of "Intellectual Integrity and Emotional Connection: Can Humanistic Judaism Provide Both?"](#)

She explores the long-time critique of Humanistic Judaism that it “appeals only to the head and not to the heart” and suggests ways for us to integrate emotional connection into our communities.

Rabbi Jerris has served as the rabbi of the Society for Humanistic Judaism for more than a decade and as its Community Development Director and Executive Director before that. Her familiarity with many of the SHJ affiliated communities in North America and their concerns about this issue has compelled her to explore the issue in some depth.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Fri., Jun. 5th Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick and Guest Lecture on Marriage Equality by Attorney Ken Mogill. (2 videos)

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[Attorney Ken Mogill shares his “Reflections on the Struggle for Marriage Equality.”](#) He discusses the legal battle for gay marriage and his own experiences as co-counsel for April DeBoer and Jayne Rowse in *DeBoer v. Snyder*, one of the four cases to be consolidated for the Supreme Court's hearing. Mr. Mogill is co-recipient of the "Ally of the Year" Award presented by Affirmations, the LGBT Community Center in Ferndale.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Fri., May 29th Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick and Guest Lecture by Writer and Scholar Phil Zuckerman. (2 Videos)

[Prof. Zuckerman speaks about his recent book, *Living the Secular Life: New Answers to Old Questions*.](#) Dr. Zuckerman specializes in the study of secularism and secular society at Pitzer College, Claremont, California.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Mon., May 18th [“Changing Attitudes Toward Israel: US Jews and the Current Debate,”](#) a Panel Discussion moderated by Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick and presented by The Huntington Woods Peace, Citizenship and Education Project and The Birmingham Temple.

More Americans and American Jews are voicing concern about Israel's conduct in its conflict with the Palestinians. Can this become an open discussion without harming the Jewish community and Israel? What effect might debate have on the wider community and on US policy toward Israel?

Participants included Ron Aronson, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus of Wayne State University and Member of the Huntington Woods Peace Group; Sam Molnar, U of M graduate student, member of the Jewish Voice for Peace and founder of U-M Open Hillel; Tova Perlmutter, member of the Jewish Voice for Peace; Prof. Howard Lupovitch, Ph.D., Director of of

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the Cohn Haddow Center for Judaic Studies at Wayne State University; and Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick, Secular Humanistic Rabbi of The Birmingham Temple.

Fri., Apr. 24th [Rabbi Jeffrey Falick leads the Israel Independence Day Service, and welcomes the Board for the Society for Humanistic Judaism.](#)

As part of the service, Rabbi Falick lectures on the topic, “Israel, the Land I Love: Then and Now.” What does the Israelis’ striking move to the political right mean for Israel as a democracy? Has contemporary Zionism rejected it as a foundation for the Jewish state?

Mon, Mar. 30th [Rabbi Jeffrey Falick lectures on Samuel Hirsch and the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* movement.](#) Hirsch was a member of the first generation of modern European rabbis who combined traditional Jewish learning with university training to create the or Science of Judaism movement.

Fri., Mar. 27th Friday night service with Rabbi Jeffrey Falick and guest lecture by noted environmental authority Henry N. Pollack on “Ice, Water and Climate.” (Two videos)

[Lecture by Prof. Henry N. Pollock on climate change.](#) Dr. Pollack is Emeritus Professor of Geophysics and Environmental Sciences at U of M, advisor to the National Science Foundation, and a member of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which shared the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize with Al Gore. In 2010 Dr. Pollack wrote the book *A World Without Ice*.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1](#)

Mon., Mar. 23rd [Rabbi Jeffrey Falick continues to examine the intriguing reformation of Jewish religious practices and liturgy in Germany in the post-Moses-Mendelssohn era.](#)

Fri., Mar. 20th Friday night service with Rabbi Jeffrey Falick including the family travelogue: “Finding Grandpa’s Forest: Three Generations Revisit Kolbuszowa.” (3 videos)

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[Fascinating travelogue of the Polish town of Kolbuszowa presented by Ronald, Phyllis, and Pamela Aronson and Hannah Aronson-Paxton.](#)

[Performance of the Hassidic Song, “Shalom Sol Sein,” by Maria Cimarelli](#)

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Mon. Mar. 16th [Rabbi Jeffrey Falick continues to lecture on the encounter of Moses Mendelssohn’s Jewish religiosity with science \(*Wissenschaft*\), and the emerging patterns of religious adjustment.](#) (Part of the Monday night class series on “Beliefs of the Jews.”)

Fri, Mar. 13th Friday night service with Rabbi Jeffrey Falick including a presentation on the Israeli elections. (2 Videos)

[Presentation by Rabbi Falick entitled "A Look at the Israeli Elections."](#) Tuesday, March 17th is Election Day in Israel. Rabbi Falick delivers analysis and predicts the results, along with what they may mean for Israel's future.

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Mon., Feb. 23rd [Rabbi Jeffrey Falick lectures on the encounter of Moses Mendelssohn’s Jewish religiosity with science \(*Wissenschaft*\).](#) (Part of the Monday night class series on “Beliefs of the Jews.”)

Fri., Feb. 27th Friday night service led by Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick with lecture by Kary L. Moss, Executive Director of the ACLU of Michigan. (3 Videos)

[Kary L. Moss lectures on “Good News, Bad News” in pending and current state and federal legislation related to issues of the separation of religion and government.](#)

[Maria Cimarelli sings “Imagine,” the John Lennon classic.](#)

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[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Mon., Feb. 23rd [Rabbi Jeffrey Falick continues to lecture on the Western European emancipation of the Jews, focusing on Moses Mendelssohn and “rational religion.”](#) (Part of the Monday night class series on “Beliefs of the Jews.”)

Mon., Feb. 16th [Rabbi Jeffrey Falick lectures on the Western European emancipation of the Jews.](#) (Part of the Monday night class series on “Beliefs of the Jews.”)

Mon., Feb. 9th [Rabbi Jeffrey Falick delves further into the European Enlightenment as it relates to Jews.](#) He traces its influence, through Moses Mendelssohn and others, on the concepts of Jewish identity and Jewish emancipation. (Part of the Monday night class series on “Beliefs of the Jews.”)

Fri., Feb. 6th Friday night service led by Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick (3 videos).

[Natan Fuchs lectures on “Judaism in the Early 20th Century: Why Zionism?”](#)

[Maria Cimarelli sings “Zum Gali Gali,” Tzena, Tzena, Tzena,” and “Zema Lach,” songs that reflect the great heritage of the pioneers of Zionism.](#)

[Friday night service, Part 1.](#)

Mon, Jan. 26th [Rabbi Jeffrey Falick Lectures on Mendelssohn, Lessing, and the Enlightenment Principles of Tolerance, Free Inquiry and Rational Religion.](#) (Part of the Monday night class series on “Beliefs of the Jews.”)

Fri., Jan. 23rd Friday Night Service with Talk by Rabbi Jeffrey Falick on “Sex, God and the Bible.” (3 Videos)

[Rabbi Falick speaks on “Sex, God, and the Bible,”](#) examining what the Jewish and Christian scriptures have to say about sexual relationships and sexual morality. Discover the very different codes of conduct in biblical society and what they say about sexual exclusivity, the role of women,

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homosexuality, prostitution, masturbation and more. (This is the first in an occasional series that will examine human sexuality from historical, modern, moral and ethical perspectives.)

[Maria Cimarelli performs Little Red Riding Hood's song, "I Know Things Now," from the Stephen Sondheim film *Into the Woods*.](#)

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Mon., Jan. 19th [Rabbi Jeffrey Falick Expands His Search for "Life after Death" and Examines the Messianic "Departure" of Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson.](#) (Part of the weekly series on "Messianism and the Afterlife.")

Fri., Jan. 16th Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick on the Theme of Freedom, with Talk by Jack Lessenberry (3 Videos).

[Jack Lessenberry Lectures on Current Events.](#) Mr. Lessenberry is political affairs commentator for Michigan Public Radio and contributing editor and columnist for The Metro Times, The Traverse City Record-Eagle, and the Toledo Blade. A professor of journalism at Wayne State University, he has worked as a foreign correspondent and executive national editor of The Detroit News, and has written for publications including Vanity Fair, Esquire, The New York Times, The Washington Post and The Boston Globe.

[Maria Cimarelli Performs an English Version of the Yiddish Classic, "Vi Ahin Zol Ich Geyn?" or "Oy Veh? Where Should I Go?" \(Lyrics: Igor S. Korntheuer. Music: Oscar Stroch\).](#)

[Friday Night Service, Part 1.](#)

Mon., Jan. 12th [Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick Continues His Intriguing Search for "Life after Death" in Tanach.](#) (Part of the Monday night class series on "Messianism and the Afterlife.")

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Fri., Jan. 9th [Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.](#)

Talk by Rabbi Falick on “The Ten Commandments: The Real Story.” Did you know that there are three sets of “The Ten Commandments” in the Torah? Did you know that one of them looks absolutely nothing like the others? Rabbi Falick explores the history of these ancient texts, their varying interpretation by Jews and Christians, the reason for their special status in our society, and why granting them special status is a mistake. Which ideas in these laws remain valid and which ones do not?

Jan. 5th [Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick Conducts an Intriguing Search for “Life after Death” in Tanakh.](#) (Part of the Monday night class series, “Beliefs of the Jews.”)

2014

Dec. 5th Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick (3 Videos)

[Talk by Rabbi Falick on the Pitfalls of False Reasoning.](#) As Humanists we say we rely upon reason to a great extent in order to determine what is true about our existence. Engaging reason, however, requires us to be able to distinguish between a bad argument and a good one. Rabbi Falick discusses the nineteen most common errors in reasoning that we hear almost every day, featuring clever illustrations by Alejandro Giraldo from "An Illustrated Book of Bad Arguments" by Ali Almowassi. We hope you will enjoy this entertaining and enlightening look at the pitfalls of bad reasoning and how to spot them.

[Maria Cimarelli sings Gershwin's Let's Call the Whole Thing Off.](#)

[Friday Night Service, Part I.](#)

Nov. 21st [Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick.](#)

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[Talk by Rabbi Falick on *Jews and Words*, by Amos Oz and Fania Oz-Salzberger](#), a book that looks at Jewish history through the prism of Jewish literature. The authors tell the tales of Jewish civilization's most enduring literary gems, arguing that it is really Jewish literature that binds the Jewish people together. Their point of view is strengthened by their nontheistic, secular humanistic world views. It is an extraordinary tour of Jewish culture by two of the Jewish world's most honored intellectuals.

Nov. 14th

[Friday Night Service Welcoming the IISHJ Governing Board and Faculty Members at the Start of Colloquium 2014, with a Lecture by IISHJ Dean Adam Chalom.](#)

Rabbi Falick begins the Shabbat celebration by welcoming the IISHJ Governing Board, faculty members and Deans Adam Chalom and Sivan Malkin Maas.

Rabbi Adam Chalom's talk—"Why Bother Being Anything?"—explores the theme of Colloquium 2014: What will Jewish community look like in the next generation? Will it be an evolution or a revolution?

Oct. 24th

[Friday Night Service Welcoming the SHJ Board, with Talk by Marti Keller and Presentation of the Sherwin T. Wine Lifetime Achievement Award to Ruth Duskin Feldman.](#) Some highlights of the service:

Marti Keller, an SHJ Board member and Unitarian Universalist minister, speaks on "Jewish Voices in Unitarian Universalism."

Rabbi Miriam Jerris and Bonnie Cousens, Executive Director of the Society for Humanistic Judaism, present the Sherwin T. Wine Lifetime Achievement Award to Ruth Duskin Feldman.

Oct. 4th

[Yom Kippur Morning Service with Rabbi Jeffrey Falick.](#)

Rabbi Falick introduces the concept of the "Mattering Map." It's an interesting way of thinking about what really matters to each of us in life.

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- Oct. 3rd [Erev Yom Kippur Service with Rabbi Jeffrey Falick.](#)
- Rabbi Falick asks the question, “Are people really as open-minded as we think?” The answer might surprise us.
- Sep. 25th [Rosh Hashanah Morning Service with Rabbi Jeffrey Falick.](#)
- Rabbi Falick talks about *tzedakah*, charitable giving. Are there certain things that humanists might want to think about before we write a check?
- Sep. 24th [Erev Rosh Hashanah Service with Rabbi Jeffrey Falick.](#)
- Rabbi Falick discusses the balancing act that our movement and congregation perform in our attempt to be part of both the greater humanistic and Jewish communities. What compromises do we make and how successful are we?
- Sep. 12th [Friday Night Service with Rabbi Falick and Lecture Exploring the Question, “What Happened to Conservative Judaism?”](#)
- Once the largest denomination of American Jews, over the past several decades Conservative Judaism has seen its membership collapse. What social forces led to its decline? How much does ideology contribute to its fall? What does it even mean to be a “Conservative Jew” in 2014? Are there lessons for the rest of American Jewry?
- Sep. 11th [Greta Christina Speaks on Her Newest Book—Coming Out Atheist: How to Do It, How to Help Each Other, and Why.](#)
- Greta Christina has been writing professionally since 1989 on topics including atheism, sexuality and sex-positivity, LGBT issues, politics, culture, and whatever crosses her mind. She lives in San Francisco with her wife Ingrid. She tweets at @GretaChristina, and has been writing about atheism since 2005 on [Greta Christina’s blog](#).

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Aug. 22nd Friday Night Service on the Theme of Peace with Rabbi Sivan Maas, conducted by Rev. Suzanne Paul, Past President of the American Humanist Association and Minister of New Hope Unitarian Universalist Congregation in New Hudson, MI (Three Videos):

[Rabbi Sivan Maas discusses the quest for peace in Israel in connection with \(1\) the need for pluralism, \(2\) Tmura's success in adding five new rabbis to the Israeli association of 23, \(3\) a \\$3M educational allotment for secular activity, and much more.](#)

[Maria Cimarelli leads the congregation in singing several versions of "Hineh Ma Tov."](#)

[Complete Friday night service.](#)

June 20th Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey Falick (Three Videos):

[Maria Cimarelli sings "The New Colossus" \(The Emma Lazarus poem set to music by Irving Berlin\).](#)

[Rabbi Falick reports on this year's American Humanist Association convention. For him, the highlight was the discussion of Rebecca Newberger Goldstein.](#)

[Complete Friday night service.](#)

June 6th Friday Night Service with Natan Fuchs (Three Videos):

[Maria Cimarelli sings "Shalom to You".](#)

[Natan Fuchs lectures on Peace, D-Day and Yitzhak Rabin's quest for peace.](#)

[Complete Friday night service.](#)

May 30th Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey Falick (Three Videos):

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[1. Guest Speaker Leah Vincent speaks about her Ultra-Orthodox upbringing. She is the author of *Cut Me Loose: Sin and Salvation after My Ultra-Orthodox Girlhood*.](#)

[2. Maria Cimarelli leads the congregation in singing the Gershwin classic, "Summertime."](#)

[3. Complete Friday night service celebrating Shavuot.](#)

May 23rd

Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey Falick (Three Videos):

[1. Maria Cimarelli leads the congregation in singing Pete Seeger's "Last Night I Had the Strangest Dream."](#)

[2. Rabbi Falick lectures on "Moral Relativism." \(See overview below.\)](#)

Humanists are frequently challenged to justify our assertion that we can be good without God. This should not surprise us. Though our philosophy is gaining traction, our convictions still deviate from the reigning ethos.

We were reminded of that by a Pew study released just this week. Americans were asked to choose which traits would most strongly dissuade them from supporting a presidential candidate. Of sixteen choices, atheism took first place.

Now part of this is related to the word itself. While Humanism communicates a positive outlook, the A-word connotes only godlessness. For most people, that's a synonym for immorality. But it's not just the sound of the word.

The plain fact is that most Americans continue to believe that God (specifically the Judeo-Christian version) is indispensable for distinguishing between right and wrong. Otherwise, we risk tumbling into a black hole of moral relativism where anything goes.

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We know they're wrong so we usually refuse to engage in such debates. But ignoring them will not suffice. Theistic moral absolutists have produced some quite sophisticated-sounding arguments. We have an obligation to evaluate - and challenge - their claims.

During Shabbat services Rabbi Falick addresses some of these arguments. The next time someone asserts that morality is dependent on God, you will be better supplied with an answer.

[3. Complete Friday Night Service, May 23, 2014](#)

May 16th

[Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey Falick and His Lecture on “The Garden of Epicurus: Atheism, Judaism, and the Pursuit of Happiness”](#)

(29:23) Maria Cimarelli sings “If I Ruled the World,” from the 1963 musical *Pickwick*.

(32:50) Rabbi Falick lectures on a brand new book by Prof. Yaakov Malkin, *The Garden of Epicurus: Atheism, Judaism, and The Pursuit of Happiness*. This book—which has not yet appeared in English—presents the thought of Greek philosopher Epicurus and his influence on Jews for over 2,000 years. Judaism is the only culture that turned Epicurus' name into a concept and even coined a word for it. "Apikorsus" is the underground Jewish movement (usually called a "heresy") built on the idea that people can live their lives free from religious laws or dogma. It emphasizes the importance of minimizing suffering and the value of pursuing one's own meaning and happiness. Prof. Malkin is a significant Humanistic Jewish thinker and the father of Rabbi Sivan Malkin-Maas who serves as the leader of Israeli Humanistic Judaism.

May 9th

[Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey Falick and Lecture in Recognition of Israel's Independence Day on “Jewish and Democratic: How Can Israel Be Both?”](#)

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- (42:00) Maria Cimarelli leads the congregation in singing the Israeli folk song, “Shalom Chaverim”
- (44:41) Rabbi Falick lectures on the topic, “Jewish and Democratic: How Can Israel Be Both?” Israelis have always aspired to be a Jewish and democratic state. On both the far left and far right, there are those who claim that these are antithetical values. Yet the majority feel that it is possible for Israel to be both. What would need to change to truly achieve a Jewish and democratic Israel?

May 2nd

[Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey Falick and Guest Speaker Mark Cousens](#)

- (34:25) Maria Cimarelli sings “The Way We Were” by Marvin Hamlisch
- (39:29) Mark Cousens delivers an amazing Shabbat talk on “The Birmingham Temple and the Creation of Humanistic Judaism”—a talk that provides an introduction to his book, to be published this summer by the SHJ and given to every SHJ Member, courtesy of a grant provided by SHJ Past President Bert Steinberg. (The service and presentation will be available at LibrarySHJ.com.)

Mar. 28th

[Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey Falick and Lecture on “Ultra, Haredi, Hasidische, Yeshivish, Modern or Open: Varieties of Orthodox Judaism”](#)

Mar. 14th

[Purim Service with Rabbi Jeffrey Falick](#)

- (17:20) Digression from Purim: Woody Allen on Rabbi Zwi ... (From “Hassidic Tales” in *Getting Even*, 1971)
- (1:27)/(32:00) “Hassidic” Rabbi Falick makes a Purim appearance
- (39:56) Purim Spiel (unrehearsed)

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- Jan. 31st [Friday Night Service with Lecture by Rabbi Jeffrey Falick In Honor of Darwin Day on the Subject of “Adam, Eve and Evolution: Ethical Lessons from Science and Jewish Literature”](#)
- (31:13) Maria Cimarelli leads the Congregation in Singing "Hinei Mah Tov."
- (34:42) Rabbi Falick, in honor of Darwin Day, speaks on "Adam, Eve and Evolution: Ethical Lessons from Science and Jewish Literature"
- Jan. 24th [Friday Night Service with Lecture by Rabbi Jeffrey Falick on “Superstition: Not-So-Standard Tales of Jewish Belief”](#)
- (36:50) Maria Cimarelli sings “It Ain’t Necessarily So” from *Porgy and Bess*
- (39:51) Rabbi Falick speaks on “Superstition: Not-So-Standard Tales of Jewish Belief”
- Jan. 17th [Friday Night Service with Lecture by Rabbi Jeffrey Falick on "Awe"](#)
- (33:04) Maria Cimarelli’s rendition of “What a Wonderful World”
- (35:38) Rabbi Falick’s lecture on “Awe”
- Jan. 10th [Friday Night Service with Lecture by Rabbi Jeffrey Falick on “My Promised Land: The Triumph and Tragedy of Israel,” by Ari Schavit](#)
- (35:11) Solo: *Shalom Rav*
- (37:20) Lecture by Rabbi Falick on *My Promised Land: The Triumph and Tragedy of Israel*, by Ari Schavit

2013

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- Dec. 20th [Friday Night Service including Maria Cimarelli's Rendition of Jesus Christ Superstar and Rabbi Jeffrey Falick's Lecture on The Jewish Understanding of Jesus](#)
(33:30) Maria Cimarelli sings *Jesus Christ Superstar*
(37:46) Rabbi Falick speaks on "The Jewish Understanding of Jesus"
- Nov. 16th [50th Anniversary Gala Celebration of Birmingham Temple](#)
- Nov. 15th [Friday Night Service with Installation of Rabbi Jeffrey Falick, Part 1](#)
(25:44) Installation of Rabbi Falick
[Friday Night Service with Installation of Rabbi Jeffrey Falick, Part 2](#)
(00:28) Rabbi Falick introduces Rabbi Adam Chalom
(01:12) Talk by Rabbi Chalom
(24:12) Rabbi Falick introduces Rabbi Sivan Maas
(25:18) Talk by Rabbi Maas
- Oct. 25th [Friday Night Service with the Following Lecture and Presentation:](#)
(26:01) Presentation of the 2013 Sherwin Wine Lifetime Achievement Award to Esther and Ron Milan.
(53:50) Lecture on Remnants of the First Temple dating to Hezekiah's Reign (approx. 700 BCE), known as the Broad Wall and discovered in the 1970s.
- Sep. 20th [Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey Falick](#)
Guest Speaker: Jerry DeWitt, Author of *Hope After Faith*
- Sep. 13th-14th [Yom Kippur Service 1 \(Kol Nidra\) with Rabbi Jeffrey Falick](#)
[Yom Kippur Service 2](#)
- Aug. 23rd [Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey Falick](#)
[Lecture on Sherwin Wine](#)
-

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- Aug. 16th [Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey Falick](#)
 Lecture on Mordecai Kaplan
- Aug. 9th [Friday Night Service with Rabbi Jeffrey Falick](#)
 Lecture on Spinoza
- May 19th [Service to Honor Shavuot Led by Rabbi Jeffrey Falick](#)

2012

- Sep. 16-17th Rosh Hashana Services conducted by Rabbi Miriam Jerris,
Rabbi of the Society for Humanistic Judaism:

[Rosh Hashana Evening 5773](#)
[Rosh Hashana Morning 5773, Part 1](#)
- June 16th [Adult Bar/Bat Mitzvah Celebration](#)
- June 9th [Book Release Celebration for Rabbi Sherwin Wine's A Provocative
People: A Secular History of the Jews, edited with an Introduction and
Afterword by Rabbi Adam Chalom](#)

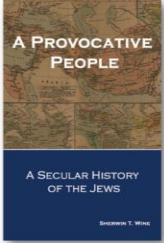
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June 8th

[Shabbat Celebration with Rabbi Tamara Kolton congratulating Natan Fuchs & celebrating Ettie Handelman](#)

"Congratulating Natan and Honoring Ettie"
Shabbat Celebration, June 8, 2012 with Rabbi Kolton



Natan Fuchs **Ettie Handelman**

We invite you to join in congratulating **Natan Fuchs** on his recent achievement of becoming a **Madrich**: a certified leader in Humanistic Judaism. Temple members who know and love Natan made the presentation, "This Is Your Life Natan." We also invite you to share in honoring **Ettie Handelman**, a lifelong member of The Birmingham Temple, a leader and teacher of Humanistic Judaism, and a role model for us all. Members of the temple and Ettie's family were on hand to make the presentation, "Celebrating Ettie: How We Love You!" A festive Oneg Shabbat followed the service in Natan and Ettie's honor.

Jan. 6th

[Anatomy of Israel's Survival—Hirsch Goodman](#)

2010

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Nov. 12th

[Service with Sivan Maas and Natan Fuchs](#)

April 23rd

[2010 HMD Shabbat Service with Reading from *Address Unknown*](#)