

B* Mitzvah of Leo Block-Heintz



לִיאֹוֹ חַיִּים דָּוִד בֶּן צְבִי וְאָדָם

Rabbi Yael Werber

Cantor Sam Rosen

Rabbi Marisa Elana James, Director of Social Justice Programming

Joyce Rosenzweig, Music Director

Ivan Zimmerman, President

Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum, Senior Rabbi Emerita

Thank you from Adam & Josh

Thank you for being here to celebrate Leo's bar mitzvah! We feel incredibly lucky to be part of this special community. We are grateful to Rabbi Werber for her leadership and her warmth, to Miya for her dedication to Leo's Hebrew and Torah study, to Cantor Rosen for teaching and partnering with Leo on many aspects of today's service, and for all of Leo's teachers at Limmud for patiently and kindly teaching Leo and his peers about Jewish values and traditions.

We are proud to be part of a community that not only speaks about Jewish values, but also carries them out through programs like The Ark, which provides essential legal representation to LGBTQ asylum seekers. We hope that these Jewish values—to pursue justice, to welcome the stranger, and to bring us closer to tikkun olam—will serve as a North Star for Leo as he grows into adulthood, and throughout his life.

We give special thanks to Leo's grandparents, Richard and Beverly, who flew from the West Coast, and Sondra and Stewart, who have given Leo the beautiful tallis he is wearing today. Leo is blessed to have all four of you as a loving foundation in his life and as role models for the future.

We are grateful to Leo's cousins, and aunts and uncles, who also traveled to be here. We also remember Leo's great-grandparents, Helen Block and Dave Harans, who gave Leo his Hebrew names, and Herb Block and Naomi Harans, whom Leo was lucky to know while they were still alive. We miss them all, and we know they would be bursting with pride seeing Leo today becoming a b-mitzvah.

We recognize Leo's wonderful brother, Abe. You are one of the most important people in Leo's life, and he is so lucky to have you. We are thankful for our many dear friends who are here today, and who have been in Leo's life in so many ways throughout the years. You have brought us joy, laughter, and support throughout our own journey as parents. Each of you has also had a role in Leo's journey, through the lives you lead, your kindness to him, and as models for the friendships that we hope he is lucky enough to have throughout his own life.

We also want to thank Leo for his dedication to this journey. What he does here today takes dedication, study, courage, community, questioning, and curiosity. We hope that he remembers these attributes, and carries them with him always.

Thank you from Leo

Thank you to everyone for coming and celebrating this special day with me. I would never have been able to come close to the needed Hebrew skills without my amazing Hebrew teacher, Miya, who helped me read my parsha and understand it. I also want to thank Rabbi Yael Werber for helping me dive deep into my parsha and be able to connect it to my life and others. When I was stuck, I knew I could always ask these two for help and learn from them. Thank you, Cantor Rosen, for getting me ready to help lead the service, and thank you to all my teachers at Limmud I also want to make sure I am giving a huge amount of thanks to my parents, to the people who never left my side and helped whether it was with my d'var torah or just helping me when I needed it.

During my Limmud classes throughout the past three years, even though I had a different teacher each year, I was still with the same classmates more or less. One thing that surprised me was that even though I barely knew any of my classmates or my teachers when I started, they were always supportive and made the classroom an environment where we can learn but also have a little fun.

And finally I want to thank all of the people who came here to celebrate with me. I feel very lucky to be able to share my thoughts and connect with everyone in this space. Thank you for coming to my Bar Mitzvah.



Thank you for refraining from applause, usage of phone and other electronics, and photography during the service and while in the sanctuary. It is traditional to pass out candy during the service to shower the Leo with sweetness, so we ask you don't eat it immediately.