

## OFFERINGS

### Sandusky church opens public art gallery for Lent

An exhibit titled "The Holy Face of Jesus in Sacred Art" featuring reproductions of Christian artworks will be open for the public to browse every Sunday in March at Holy Angels Catholic Church in Sandusky.

The church will be open from 2 to 4:45 p.m. on Sundays in March for viewing at 428 Tiffin Ave., Sandusky. For more information, call 419-625-7500.

### Luncheon tackles environmental design, city's future

ProMedica's Michael Szuberla will present *Ten Transformative Ideas for a Resilient 21st Century Toledo* at the First Thursday discussion series at Monroe Street United Methodist Church.

Szuberla is the founding director of Toledo GROWS and works in ProMedica's grants department. His expertise spans areas such as green infrastructure and urban agriculture.

A lunch is served at noon Thursday, followed by the talk and a Q&A session, at 3613 Monroe St., Toledo. The event is \$15, cash or check, at the door. Those who do not wish to purchase a lunch will pay only \$5 for the presentation.

The First Thursday series is hosted by an interfaith coalition of social justice advocates, and each month touches on a different issue.

### Religious sisters bring food drive to Maumee

In celebration of Catholic Sisters Week, observed annually March 8-14, the Sisters of Notre Dame are hosting their fourth annual Stuff the Truck food drive on Friday.

The sisters will be joined by the Ursuline Sisters of Toledo, Sisters of Mercy of Alma, Sylvania Franciscan Sisters, Tiffin Franciscan Sisters, and the Sisters of the Visitation, offering prayers and service with the event, which will support the SeaGate Food Bank.

The community is invited to drop off non-perishable items or monetary donations at Walt Churchill's Market, 3320 Briarfield Blvd., Maumee, between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. Friday. Churchill's will have prepared bags of needed items for purchase.

### Ladies' conference to emphasize offering love

Calvary Church is holding a "Make Yourself at Home" women's conference on March 15 and 16. Guest speaker Amy Hannon will encourage participants to open their hearts and homes to love others and share God's grace through their gifts.

The conference begins at 7 p.m. March 15 and will run from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. March 16. Cost to attend is \$50 for both days or \$25 for only one of either days. Go to [bit.ly/4a8M7qX](https://bit.ly/4a8M7qX) to register.

### Immersive music event welcomes diverse audience

Ken Medema, a native of Grand Rapids, Mich., headlines the spring installment of the Chidester Lecture Series at Sylvania United Church of Christ.

In "Sharing Stories & Songs of Inclusion," the singer will perform songs from his more than 40 original albums

See OFFERINGS, Page F4



COURTESY OF BEVERLY KARP

# KEEPING THE FLAME BURNING

## Sylvania synagogue guards centuries-old Torah scroll

By SARAH READDEAN  
BLADE STAFF WRITER

For 50 years, Sylvania's Temple Shomer Emunim, which translates to "Guardian of the Faith," has guarded a Holocaust survivor — a mid-19th century Torah scroll from Central Europe.

It's one of the 1,564 Czech Memorial Scrolls, which were stored in a synagogue near Prague during the Holocaust and were rescued from communist Czechoslovakia in 1964.

"There is no other collection like this," said Beverly Karp, an American volunteer researcher for the Memorial Scrolls Trust and historian of Scroll 186 at Temple Shomer Emunim.

"They are pretty much our

Holocaust survivors now. There are just a few people left," she continued. "They're not just an object that survived it like some other things [which] are important, but nothing else is like the scrolls."

The Torah is seen as just as valuable as a person, and Jews will risk their lives to save a scroll. The Torah contains the first five books of the Hebrew Bible and is always handwritten in Hebrew on animal-skin parchment by a trained sofer, or scribe.

Scroll 186 was the 186th scroll to be unwrapped on Feb. 7, 1964, when the collection arrived at Westminster Synagogue in London. The synagogue is home to the

See SCROLLS, Page F4



THE BLADE/REBECCA BENSON

Above, scrolls too damaged for restoration at the Memorial Scrolls Trust Museum at Westminster Synagogue in London.

Left, Torah Scroll 186 at Temple Shomer Emunim in Sylvania.

Rabbi Lisa Delson points out the significance of the cover on the Torah Scroll 186, which was saved from communist Czechoslovakia 60 years ago.



THE BLADE/REBECCA BENSON

Historian Beverly Karp returns the Torah to the ark at Temple Shomer Emunim in Sylvania on Feb. 21.

# Israel-Hamas war reminds Argentine Jewish community of past bombing

ASSOCIATED PRESS

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina — On Oct. 7, when Hamas militants attacked numerous targets in Israel, killing hundreds and abducting others, Marina Degtiar felt she had traveled back in time, to July 18, 1994.

What happened in Buenos Aires 30 years ago broke her apart. A bomb-laden van exploded inside a Jewish community center where her 21-year-old brother Cristian worked.

It was the worst such attack in Argentina's history, killing 85 — Degtiar's brother among them — and injuring 300.

The destruction of the Argentine-Israelite Mutual Association, known by its Spanish initials AMIA, came two years after a 1992 bombing on the Israeli embassy in Argentina, which killed more than 20 people. The official court record in Argentina notes 22 fatalities; accounts from other countries, including Israel and the U.S., list 29 deaths.

Argentine prosecutors blamed Iranian officials for plotting the AMIA

attack and said Hezbollah operatives carried it out, but no one has been convicted. Iran has refused to turn over the former officials and ex-diplomats who face charges and denies any involvement.

For many who lost friends and family to the attack, time has not healed their pain. For some, it's been worsened by the lack of justice in the case and the outbreak of the Israel-Hamas war.

"If you ask me how I am, I'm emotional," Degtiar said. "I feel very sad because what's happening in Israel affects us as humankind, as Jews, and me personally."

Degtiar said she has lived two lives — one before the loss of Cristian and one after his death.

Decades ago, she used to feel that her family lived far away from the bombs they saw falling on TV.

"Thirty years ago, it was not natural, here in Argentina, to talk about terrorism," Degtiar said. "Bombs did not explode at home like they first exploded at the embassy, or in my case, in the

attack against the AMIA."

After months of deep grief, she decided that being paralyzed by her pain was a lack of respect to her brother's life, so she took action.

She spent years sharing her story among self-help groups and eventually became a psychologist. Currently specializing in grief counseling, Degtiar comforts those who mourn a loved one, as she has done.

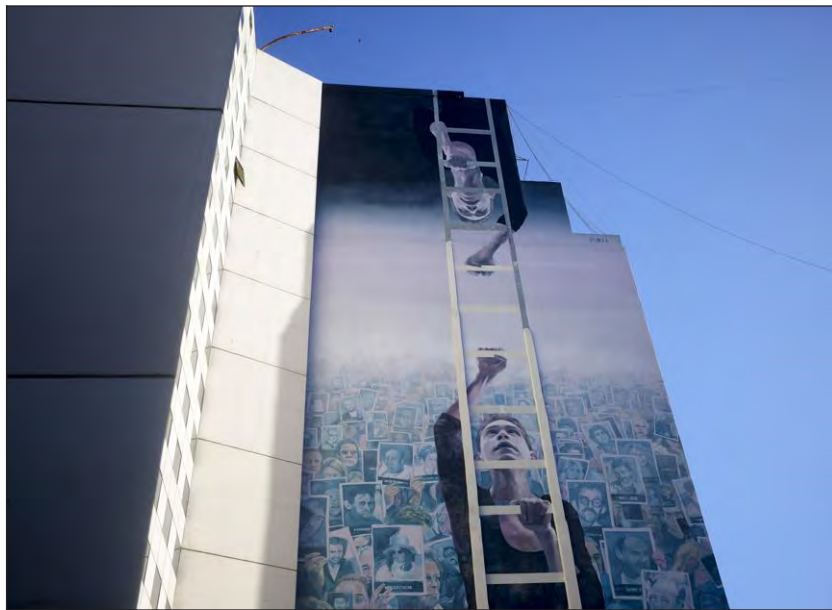
In her approach toward patients, she usually discloses that she lost someone too and thus can empathize with them.

"I built myself a life that justifies me talking about Cristian, my brother, every day," Degtiar said. "I name my brother every day of my life."

### Argentines among Hamas victims

Sandra Miasnik didn't find out what had happened on Oct. 7 through the news.

See ARGENTINA, Page F4



ASSOCIATED PRESS

A mural covers the AMIA Jewish center in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on Jan. 23. It was the worst bombing attack on civilians in Argentina's history, killing 85 and injuring 300. It came two years after a 1992 bombing on the Israeli embassy in Argentina, killing 29.



# Scrolls

Continued from Page F3

Memorial Scrolls Trust, which works to preserve the history of the Jewish communities that once used these scrolls. It also loans scrolls to synagogues and other institutions across the world. More than 1,000 are in North America, and Czech scrolls are on loan on every continent except Antarctica. More than 50 are located in Ohio and Michigan, Karp said.

Rabbi Lisa Delson of Temple Shomer Emunim said serving as guardian of a Czech scroll "is a way that we are guarding the past and transmitting our tradition to the future."

Karp added, "You literally are holding, you're protecting, you're being faithful not only in your current life but also to those past generations. You're now protecting, too, that Holocaust survivor."

## Scroll 186

Karp's 21 years of research on Czech scrolls at several synagogues has helped her learn about the communities and families where the Torahs were part of flourishing Jewish life in parts of Bohemia and Moravia.

Scroll 186 came from a Jewish community in Bucovice, a town in the Moravian region of what is now the Czech Republic, she said after returning from celebrations in London for the 60th anniversary of the scrolls arriving to Westminster Synagogue.

"I find it emotional when I touch this scroll," Karp said. "I react differently to that scroll than I do our other ones because it's carrying so much history and I know so much of the history connected to that and the surrounding towns."

The mantle, or cover, made specifically for this scroll, depicts six burning candles,



Rabbi Lisa Delson reads the Torah Scroll 186 at Temple Shomer Emunim in Sylvania.



Historian Beverly Karp points out the Memorial Scrolls Trust plaque on Scroll 186.

which represent the 6 million Jews who died in the Holocaust. Beneath it, Hebrew

letters spell "zachor," which means "remember." "We light six candles on Yom

Hashoah, Holocaust Memorial Day," Rabbi Delson explained. "We always light candles in memorial for people when it's the anniversary of their death."

Some damage to Scroll 186 leaves it no longer in regular use, but the congregation continues to house it in the ark where all its Torahs are kept. Rabbi Delson said the Torah is, however, used in bar and bat mitzvahs and the people of Bucovice are remembered in those services.

"We talk about the scroll, we talk about where it's from, we talk about the meaning, the fact that it's been passed down from generation to generation," Rabbi Delson said. "We are connected to the people of the past and we're starting our new story for a young person

who's becoming a Jewish adult."

Karp added that when a Czech scroll is passed to a child, they are stepping in for the generations who could no longer have those religious ceremonies. "You're doing it for all those who perished and you're holding centuries of a perished community that is continuing now through us," she said.

## Czech Memorial Scrolls Trust

Karp started researching the Czech scrolls when Shomer Emunim's then-leadership asked her to try to learn more about the origin of Scroll 186 — and she hasn't stopped since.

"When a door opens and you realize this is something you shouldn't turn around and drop, you need to keep going through this door," she said, wearing a Memorial Scroll Trust pin. "I wound up one of the key researchers in the United States and then ultimately with London, too."

She makes occasional visits to the Jewish Museum of Prague, the U.S. Embassy in Prague, and Jewish cemeteries in the towns she's researching. She's built relationships with organizations, other historians, and families in the United States and Europe. And she helps educate congregations about these scrolls and their histories.

Karp finds she's able to stitch stories together as new information emerges in archives or by descendants reaching out with anecdotes that were passed down. "It's electric; it's really emotional," she said.

Neil Yerman has been a sofer for 40 years in New York and is approved to repair the Czech scrolls through the trust. He evaluated Scroll 186 two decades ago and advised that Shomer Emunim cease regular use of the scroll.

Yerman explained that many of the Memorial Scrolls have injuries from centuries of age as well as having "lived through terrible times [and] perhaps even mishandled." While some parts may be able to be restored or reinforced, sometimes the damage is too great that they are no longer in use.

Yet even those scrolls, he said, "still remind us of all of the bright lights which existed: the people who loved, the people who danced, the people who taught."

"That scroll is there to be loved ... and cherished and guarded," he added, so as to keep alive and celebrate those who first used these Torahs.

# Argentina

Continued from Page F3

The horror intruded into her home in Buenos Aires through a WhatsApp group: A screenshot showed her cousin Shiri Bibas hugging her two red-headed children above a message. "They took them away."

"I remember that moment very well," Miasnik said. "I said: 'No, that's not her.' Check out the psychological defense mechanism of not seeing what you are seeing."

She walked around her house without knowing what to do, waiting for information. Then she learned that her uncle Jose Luis Silberman, who migrated from Argentina to Israel in the '70s to seek a life away from the dictatorship, was killed by Hamas.

After the Hamas attack, Argentina's Foreign Affairs Ministry revealed that seven Argentine nationals were killed, while 15 more were snatched from their homes. Among them was Miasnik's cousin and her 9-month-old baby, Kfir Bibas, the youngest Israeli dragged into Gaza.

President Javier Milei — who has shown a public interest in Judaism — traveled to Israel in late January and called for release of the 11 Argentines who remained in captivity.

Miasnik said the Hamas attack, though occurring far from Argentina, unleashed grief and fear that felt familiar within Latin America's largest Jewish community.

"What Argentine can say that terrorism is (only) in the



Marina Degtiar poses for a photo at her home in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on Feb. 23. A bomb-laden van exploded inside the AMIA Jewish community center where her 21-year-old brother Cristian used to work, killing 85 — Degtiar's brother among them.

Middle East?" Miasnik said. "It's not thousands of miles away. It's right here, with us."

Personnel from the AMIA community center rushed to offer support to the Argentine relatives of Hamas victims. Miasnik didn't accept immediately.

"I thought I had stability, and suddenly I learned that I had never experienced a situation like this," she said.

She met Degtiar after the symbolic celebration of her nephew's birthday, and later went to her for counseling. Others approached Miasnik to share comforting words, making her feel that she was not alone.

"I have nothing to do with the religious side of Judaism, but I reconnected with my identity," Miasnik said. "This did not just happen to my

family. It happened to the community."

## Remembering the 1994 bombing

Year after year, relatives of victims of the 1994 attack return to the headquarters of the community center, where a new building was erected.

It was a symbolic gesture, said Amos Linetzky, AMIA's

president. "Not because of a religious issue, but because they wanted to destroy us and they couldn't do it. They made us stronger and we are still here, in the same place."

Founded 130 years ago, the center currently oversees cemeteries, educational institutions, promotes cultural activities, and provides guidance for people in search of a job.

It is also invested in preserving history for young generations, Linetzky said. The center hosts yearly campaigns to remember the attack and pay tribute to the deceased.

"The passing of time cannot be a reason for oblivion," Linetzky said.

Outside the building, trees were planted in remembrance of the victims. Patricia Strier, who lost her sister Mirta to the bombing, visits as often as she can.

"I give it a kiss, I touch it, I talk to Mirta," Strier said. "Her tree is beautiful. It's full of leaves."

Mirta's death was not confirmed immediately. Strier spent a week requesting information in hospitals, morgues, and police stations. She says she understands the sorrow and uncertainty of those waiting for news about their loved ones amid the Israel-Hamas war.

"At first I only thought about how this would impact my family and friends there (in Israel), but then my pain increased because I saw myself reflected on the terrorist attack in which my sister died," Strier said. "We were victims as well."

Her pain has not diminished, but — like Degtiar — she seeks to keep her sister close by.

Seven days after the bombing, she dreamed of a younger, beaming Mirta. "Why are you laughing if we are all desperate to find you?" Strier asked in her dream. "I'm fine," her smiling sister replied.

The phone rang after she woke up and the call confirmed Mirta's death.

On a modest altar where she lights a Shabbat candle every Friday, Strier keeps a few photos of her parents and Mirta. Her sister rarely laughed, Strier said, and her mother stopped doing so when the bombing killed her daughter. Strier chose to remember them smiling.

"That's how I visualize them all," Strier said. "The light comes from above, from my loved ones, from my angels, and I have them all located, each one in its place, so as not to forget any of them."

# Offerings

Continued from Page F3

and improvise songs based on audience members' life experiences. The program begins at 4 p.m. Saturday at the church, 7240 Erie St., Sylvania. It's open to the public and costs \$15, cash or check only at the door. CDs of Medema's music will also be available for purchase.

On March 10, Medema will participate in the 10 a.m. worship service as the "musical keynote," and will afterward speak during the church's Adult Education Series beginning at 11:30 a.m. There is no cost to attend the March 10 morning programs.

The Chidester Lecture Series began in 2013 in memory of the late Rev. William Chidester, who pastored Sylvania UCC for 25 years before his death in 2011. The series brings in speakers who help the community explore modern faith questions and how to live out their beliefs in society.

The church usually presents two faith-related talks each year, and will host the Rev. Adam Russell Taylor, president of the social justice-focused Christian magazine *Sojourners*, to speak about faith and politics on Oct. 12. For more information, go to [sylvaniaucc.org](http://sylvaniaucc.org).

## UMC conference welcomes activist

The final event in this year's series of Bishop Gregory Palmer's Leadership Clinics for the West Ohio Conference of the United Methodist Church is slated for March 11.

Author, lawyer, and human rights activist Bryan Stevenson will join Bishop Palmer in a virtual discussion from 10 a.m. to noon. The first 200 to register will receive a copy of Stevenson's *Just Mercy*, a memoir of the young lawyer's work defending the most desperate and his coming to understand mercy and justice.

Cost to attend is \$40. More details and registration are at [westohioumc.org/clinics](http://westohioumc.org/clinics). There is an option to view the clinic at a later time.

—Sarah Readean, The Blade

# Faith

## Directory of Worship

<p style="text-align: center; background-color: #eee; margin: 0;"><b>LUTHERAN</b></p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em; margin: 0;">TRINITY L.C.M.S. 4560 Glendale Ave. 419-385-2651              Traditional Worship: 8 &amp; 10:30am Contemporary Worship 10:45am              Sunday School and Bible Study: 9:15am Wednesday Traditional Worship: 7:00pm              CHRISTIAN DAY SCHOOL Pre K-3 - 8th Grade <a href="http://www.trinitylutheran.org">www.trinitylutheran.org</a></p>	<p style="text-align: center; background-color: #eee; margin: 0;"><b>POLISH NATIONAL CATHOLIC</b></p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em; margin: 0;">RESURRECTION PN CATHOLIC CHURCH              1835 W Temperance (734) 847-5052  <b>Mass Schedule: Sat 4:30 PM Sun 12:30 PM</b>  <a href="http://www.resurrectionpncc.org">www.resurrectionpncc.org</a> All are Welcome!</p>
<p style="text-align: center; background-color: #eee; margin: 0;"><b>NON-DENOMINATIONAL</b></p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em; margin: 0;"><b>GLASS CITY CHURCH of CHRIST</b>              901 Hoag, Toledo, OH 43607 419-242-2828 Dr. Robert G. Birt Jr. Minister              Blessings from Glass City Church of Christ - You can worship with us on Facebook Live.  <b>Blessed!</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center; background-color: #eee; margin: 0;"><b>SPIRITUALIST</b></p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em; margin: 0;"><b>Good Will Spiritualist Church</b>              "Home of Love, Light, &amp; Healing" 300 East Breckman, Walbridge, OH 43465              Rev. Mary Ann Miller (419) 833-5503  <b>Sunday 10AM Thursday 7:30PM</b></p>