

**From the *Topeka Capital Journal*, April 2, 2005  
Rabbi Larry Karol unveils latest CD on Sunday night**



**By Phil Anderson  
*The Capital-Journal***

In recent years, Rabbi Larry Karol, of Topeka's Temple Beth Sholom, has become a prolific songwriter and performer of

contemporary Jewish music.

The fruit of his latest efforts will be presented during a reception Sunday evening at Temple Beth Sholom, 4200 S.W. Munson, where Karol will unveil his latest recording, "A New Beginning."

The reception will follow a 5:30 p.m. concert by Scott Leader and Robbi Sherwin, two of the leading performers in contemporary Jewish rock and folk music. Both Leader and Sherwin contributed musically to Karol's new project. Leader also produced the album.

Additionally, Lisa Baydush and Angela Gold, both of whom are nationally known Jewish musicians, will perform at Sunday night's event, as will Adam Karol and members of the Temple choir.

Rabbi Larry Karol and his son Adam, 19, have collaborated on Rabbi Karol's second album, "A New Beginning," in which the songs are based on passages from Jewish worship and the book of Psalms.

"I'm really honored they will all be here," Rabbi Karol said. "It's something that would be possible in most cases only at a convention."

Karol's newest CD, recorded this past October and November in Phoenix, has 12 original songs and lasts 42 minutes. It incorporates a variety of musical styles, ranging from folk to pop to rock, in both Hebrew and English.

Rabbi Karol met musicians who contributed to his album at both the annual Conference on Alternatives in Jewish Education and Hava Nashira events over the past few years. Each conference promotes contemporary musical interpretations of Scripture and worship in the context of Reform Judaism.

Karol's newest album includes songs -- including "God's Name" and "Mah Asheev" -- inspired by the Book of Psalms and also by the life of his late mother, Ruth Karol, who died last year.

It is to his parents, Karol said, that he owes his early, and ongoing, interest in music. He added that he was especially grateful his mother was able to hear him perform for the first time at a national Reform Jewish conference in 2003.

On "A New Beginning," Karol stretches his musical boundaries, both lyrically and artistically.

"Let Me Sing My Way Into Your Night," one of the songs on "A New Beginning," was written by Karol in 1977, when he was a student at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati, Ohio.

The song describes his desire to connect both with his audience and with friends in a social setting. "In 1977," he said, "I would never have imagined I would be putting it on a professionally produced CD. It's a dream come true."

As he did on his previous album, Karol received help on his latest recording from his son Adam, a 19-year-old Topeka High School graduate who plans to attend the Berklee College of Music in Boston this fall.

Adam Karol, who now lives in Brooklyn, N.Y., and is an intern at EMI-Blue Note Records, said Leader proved to be an effective producer on "A New Beginning," as he took some songs in a different direction than had been planned.

"You always want the second album to be better than the first one, and this one is," Adam Karol said. "My dad has progressed with his songwriting and is more comfortable with himself as a singer and a performer."

#### **IN CONCERT**

Rabbi Larry Karol will debut his new CD, "A New Beginning," following the 5:30 p.m. Sunday concert with Scott Leader and Robbi Sherwin at Temple Beth Sholom, 4200 S.W. Munson. Joining Karol in his presentation will be Lisa Baydush, Angela Gold, Adam Karol and the Temple Singers. Copies of the CD will be available. Admission is free.

#### **From [www.soundwrite.com](http://www.soundwrite.com)**

##### **A NEW BEGINNING by Larry Karol**



**Larry Karol**, talented songwriter and performer, rabbi at Temple Beth Sholom in Topeka, Kansas, and passionate supporter of Jewish music, shares with us 12 original English and Hebrew songs based on Psalms and other Jewish texts.

His lyrical ballads express positive wonder at the unimagined possibilities that life has to offer. Larry's soothing voice is joined in song by fellow singers **Lisa Baydush, Angela Gold, Adam Karol, Scott Leader** (album producer, engineer, and musician), and **Robbi Sherwin**, whose harmonies and musical sensitivities add a pleasing dimension to this recording. Selections include *Let Me Sing My Way Into Your Night, God's Name, Wedding Blessing, Mah Asheev, At Daybreak, Gomeil, Kol Haumim, V'hanchileinu, Zeh Hayom, Shiviti, For Your Gifts*, and *Circle Once More*. These songs of worship and faith invite the listener to make life's inevitable endings flow into rich new beginnings.

## Rabbi Lawrence Karol set to release second CD

By Jen Stone, Staff Writer

*Kansas City Jewish Chronicle*, March 18, 2005



**TOPEKA, Kan. - Rabbi Lawrence Karol of Temple Beth Sholom here says that music is an expression of the soul; of ideas. With his second CD release, "A New Beginning," out later this month, he continues to share the music that touches his soul.**

"Sometimes I'll get a text in my head," said Rabbi Karol, "and the process through which I can express and understand that text is through music and lyrics."

Many of the songs on Rabbi Karol's latest album are based on Psalms. The accompaniment could be described as mellow classic rock or folk music. "The music might be lively," he said, "but there's still a sense of being mellow and dignified."

Some people have even asked Rabbi Karol if he was influenced by Cat Stevens. "Popular music has definitely made an impact on my creations," he said. "The way I see it, I'm being influenced by these other genres, but I'm still creating something new."

Occasionally, Rabbi Karol uses the songs he composes to help his Reform congregation understand the liturgy. His guitar comes with him to the office, and he has been known to wield it on the bema. In fact, he wrote the song "Mikolot," based on Psalm 93, as a companion piece to the Tzadik Katamar blessing.

"All the songs have different themes," he said. "You have to get that sense that every song has a purpose behind it." For instance, the track "Zeh Hayom" (Hebrew for "This is the day"), was based on Psalm 118:24: "This is the day that God has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it."

Rabbi Karol had his songwriting interest piqued while attending a summer workshop for song leaders called Hava Nashira, which takes place at Olin-Sang-Ruby Union Institute in Oconomowoc, Wis. He has gone each year since 1999. At one point, he found himself studying music composition with well-known Jewish musicians Debbie Friedman, Craig Taubman and Jeff Klepper.

"Debbie asked us to write about something, and, knowing that my mother had recently passed, she suggested I write about that." Rabbi Karol made a list of things that his mother, Ruth Karol, had done with her life, including being president of the Sisterhood at The Temple, Congregation B'nai Jehudah. He wrote a chorus

for the song, and when the time came to present what he had written to the group, he read the list and sang the chorus. "Six weeks later, I finished the song by writing out the verses in Hebrew," he said.

One track on the news CD is titled "God's Name," and Rabbi Karol said it was inspired by the March 2002 Kansas Prayer Breakfast, which is sponsored by a Christian businessmen's Bible-study group and which he attended.

The speakers, who included then-Gov. Bill Graves and "Touched by an Angel" TV show producer Martha Williamson, gave very inclusive messages, the rabbi said.

"My reaction was to try and point out in song that whether or not it's in Hebrew or English, whether we worship on Saturday or Sunday, the words are very much the same. There are many names for one God that we share."

Rabbi Karol's first CD, "Two are Better Than One," was mostly based on Jewish liturgy and his understanding of the text.

Collaborating on this latest CD with Rabbi Karol were several of his friends and family members, including his son, Adam Karol, on vocals and keyboard, producer Scott Leader, who also did backing guitar and vocals, in Scottsdale, Ariz., and vocalists Lisay Baydush (Potomac, Md.), Robbi Sherwin (Austin, Texas) and Angela Gold of Denver.

Karol plays a 12-string acoustic guitar, and said that he doesn't really write secular music. "Sometimes the process for even writing one song can take years," he said, "and I just don't have time to focus on that kind of music."

At 5:30 p.m. Sunday, April 3, there will be a performance by Scott Leader and Robbi Sherwin, followed by a CD release party at Beth Sholom (4200 SW Munson Ave.) that will feature performances from Rabbi Karol and everyone with whom he has collaborated. "I'm expecting everyone who's on the CD to be there," he said.

For more information on how to order Rabbi Karol's CD's or on the CD release party, call Temple Beth Sholom, (785) 272-6040.