



Bethel-Harrisonburg.org

The purpose of this congregation shall be to worship God in accordance with the faith of Judaism; to cultivate a love and understanding of the Jewish heritage; to strengthen the ties within the Jewish community; to strengthen the bonds of loyalty with the Jewish people everywhere; to bring nearer the Dominion of God on earth through an emphasis on the principles of righteousness and harmony in society at large, and to engage in social action projects in pursuit of social justice and Tikkun Olam (repair of both the human and nonhuman components of the world).

JANUARY 2018

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Dear Beth El Community,

Open Doors

Open Doors is a moveable homeless shelter during the winter in Harrisonburg. Homeless individuals stay at one religious facility for a week, then go to another the next. Beth El and the Islamic Center hosted Open Doors for two weeks at the Islamic Center on Country Club Road. Beth El and the Islamic Center generally host for the week including Christmas to allow the churches to focus on celebrating Christmas. Beth El and the Islamic Center provided a warm place to sleep, dinner, and breakfast for the homeless for two weeks this year. Gale Clemons is in charge of Beth El's efforts and she, as usual, did a wonderful job.

A HUGE THANK YOU TO ALL WHO HELPED!!!

Les & Becky Mintzer

SHORTY

Sisterhood

The Men's Club

Judy Freudenthal

Margee & Eddie Ney

Andy Kohen

Phil Renick

Sara Trantum

Bill & Leslie Ney

Jayne Rynar

Ryan Van Horn

Carol Brook Quintero

Kevin Giovanetti

Kate and Alan Neckowitz

Anyone else who helped not named here, you know who you are and your efforts are appreciated!

Interfaith Dinner January 28 at 5:00 p.m.

Asbury United Methodist Church members will be sharing dinner with us on Sunday, January 28, at 5:00 p.m. Please contact Les Mintzer and let him know you will be coming. Thank you to Les Mintzer and the Men's Club and the Rabbi for coordinating this fun and meaningful event.

Resignation

Thank you for allowing me to serve as President of Beth El Congregation this past year. As I look at my work obligations this year, I do not have the time to continue as President of the Congregation. So I am resigning effective December 31, 2017. Thank you for allowing me to serve.

Wishing you a Happy & Healthy New Year!

Kim Gutterman

FROM THE RABBI'S DESK

Tevet - Shevat 5778

Dear Beth El Congregants and Friends,

Hard to believe that Chanukah has already come and gone, and we are already heading towards Tu Be'Shevat! I hope you are staying warm and healthy in this unpredictable weather.

THINGS OF NOTE AND TO COME

A significant event and a highlight in December was accompanying members of the community as they met with a Beit Din, and availed themselves of the Mikvah. This was a joyous lifecycle moment for them, for me, and for the community.

Also significant, but sad, was my role leading the memorial service for Alan Gould on December 15th. Alan was a long-time member, but had suffered from a number of serious health issues for some time, and had not been active in the congregation.

The Harrisonburg-Rockingham County Interfaith Association (IFA) would like to invite members of Beth El to participate in their activities. This is the group that brought the Open Doors (previously HARTS) program into existence, and gave rise to the Faith in Action group. They meet monthly, on the third Thursday at noon to 1:30, with a lunch available. Please contact me if you are interested.

January 13th, Shabbat morning there is a Saturday service which will be led by the Religious School, at which we will include Consecration of the six students new to our school this year. I hope you will come - this should be a fun service, and a chance to kvell at the progress the youngsters in our community have been making.

January 14th is the Sisterhood sponsored Hands Only CPR training, and explanation of the AED equipment (heart defibrillation device) they are trying to fund and install at Beth El. Be sure to block out the time and attend this one hour training that may well save someone's life. Anyone 13 or older is eligible, and encouraged to come – 1:30-2:30 pm.

January 28th, Sunday, the Men's club is again hosting the Interfaith Brotherhood event. They have invited Asbury United Methodist Church to join us this year. Be sure to sign up and attend this fabulous event as we get to know some of our neighbors in the larger community. \$10/person. Les is keeping the list of attendees so be in touch with him.

Looking a bit further ahead, February 9-10 is Shorty's ski weekend event. Shorty will lead services on the 9th, and it is always a lively and fun service to attend. Put it on your calendars now! And watch for information on a dinner and music event at Beth El on Valentine's Day evening (2/14). It should be fabulous.

CALENDAR

Scheduled Rabbi-led Religious services for the upcoming period are:

Friday, December 29th, Shabbat service; Saturday, January 13th, Religious School Shabbat & Consecration, as a Shabbat morning service; Friday, January 26th, Family Shabbat service (please RSVP to Dara), followed by a regular Shabbat service at 7:30; February 9th, Shorty Ski Weekend Shabbat service; and February 23rd, Family Shabbat service (please RSVP to Dara), followed by a regular Shabbat service at 7:30.

IN THE CONGREGATION

[Based on what I have been told and permitted to share. If you wish me to include a notice about someone here, please let me know; if they agree I will be glad to do so. Similarly, if you wish a name removed, please let me know.]

Refuah Shelemah/Mi Sheberach:

Chuck Slott, Marlene and Blaine Brumbaugh, Lynne Landsberg, Dennis Ward, Lenore Price, Dale Brothers, Estelle Robinson, Nicole Rotondi (Sherri Alt's daughter), Elaine Schreiber, Joyce Helbraun, Irma Nemoytin, Sam Dailey, Mary Handley, Shirley Gould, Joan Funston, and Elliot Golub.

Baruch Hashem:

Mona Wolfe on walking away from the highway accident without injuries to her (just the car).

Mazal tov:

Frances Flannery for being interviewed concerning Chanukah on WHSV.

RABBI'S MESSAGE

The Sap is Rising

Following Chanukah last month, the next holiday that appears on the Jewish calendar is Tu Be'Shevat (literally, the 15th of Shevat). This is a strange mix of a Jewish 'arbor day', 'earth day', and 'the arrival of spring'. It is the holiday known as the 'new year for the trees'. It occurs in early spring, roughly six or so weeks before the vernal (or spring) equinox.

I suggest 'arbor day' because it is an event dealing with trees. This holiday is understood to be the time when the trees that have been somewhat dormant during the colder period begin the process of preparing to bud and produce leaves. The sap begins to flow upward, carrying nutrients, sugar, and water to be used in the new growth the tree is forming. Of course, different trees vary in timing, and each species also varies in timing based on geographical considerations, but the date for Tu Be'Shevat was set by observation of the first tree to flower in Israel; that is the Almond tree, which flowers early, and was used as the marker to establish the holiday. This annual rising of the sap, and the subsequent flowering, was used as the marker for the 'age' of the trees. Age mattered to the Israelites because there was a mitzvah (commandment) regarding not harvesting the fruit of a tree before the tree had sufficient time to establish a viable

root system and adequate growth to sustain itself. This practice continues through today: orchardists and arboriculturalists do something similar.

To fulfill this obligation to allow the tree time to develop, one had to know how ‘old’ a tree was, and that is how Tu Be’Shevat came to be seen as the ‘birthday’ of the trees. It was the date on which each tree become one year older, as it were, so that one could determine when it was permissible to take the fruit for sale or other use.

Trees, as we know, provide produce in the form of fruits, nuts, leaves, and seeds, in addition to shade, land stabilization, erosion control, wind breaks, water management, carbon sequestration, oxygen, and wood. In this way, trees are seen as an essential aspect of nature, and a major feature of G-d’s creation.

This is the source of the connection to ‘earth day’, and the custom that has grown up to fund the planting of trees in Israel. For many years now, certainly since my youth, the Jewish National Fund (JNF) would run annual campaigns to encourage the planting of trees in Israel, and they had some success. Many groves were planted, and there were significant gains in specific regions in modifying and improving the conditions on the ground. Unfortunately, as the protests against Israel became more violent, these groves of trees were often a victim, with arson used to destroy them. Consequently, there has been some reforestation, and modest improvement in the land use and conditions, but nowhere near what it could have been if left undisturbed to grow.

Violence against nature of this sort is anathema to Judaism. We are taught in the Torah (five books of Moses) and Talmud (elucidation on the interpretation and implementation of Jewish law) that even when besieging a city, it is forbidden to uproot or burn trees, nor may we render the land unusable or non-arable – it is our duty to protect and preserve G-d’s creation.

This is why there is such a strong push in Jewish thought for development of renewable resources, rather than those that are depleted by use, or those that require significant destruction of the environment in order to access them. such as coal and oil for power, clear cut logging of wood, mountain top removal, dumping of chemical waste in waterways, pumping of poisonous chemicals into the groundwater table, destruction of habitat for many species, and so on.

The timing of Tu Be’Shevat leads naturally to the aspect of seeing it as a ‘spring’ holiday. It falls (usually) after the worst of the ‘winter’ or cold rainy season has occurred, when we are often profoundly ready for a change, and it serves as a harbinger of the coming spring season with new growth, more pleasant weather, longer days and more light – similar to the feelings to which the first robin of the season is associated by many. The concept of Tu Be’Shevat is that the season has ‘turned’ and is now beginning the ‘behind the scenes’ preparations that will lead shortly to the visible aspects we will enjoy, including the budding, first leaves, and flowers that will appear shortly. This is the re-invigoration and arousal of all around us, and – we hope – ourselves as well. So Tu Be’Shevat marks the start of the spring season, encouraging us to ‘hang on’ for a little while more when we will see and enjoy the re-growth and renewal that is the hallmark of spring.

The Tu Be’Shevat seder is an ordered ritual, similar to the Passover seder, at which we eat foods that are symbolic, largely the fruit of trees, and study texts and stories that relate to trees, including the image of the Torah as a tree of life, the connection between heaven and earth as the Sefirotic Tree, and trees as an image of the human being. If you are interested in learning more, consider attending a Tu Be’Shevat seder!

Chag Rosh Hashanah Le’ilanot Sameach [happy new year of the trees],

Rabbi Joe Blair

CONTACTING THE RABBI

Rabbi Joe may be reached by email at RabbiJoeB@hotmail.com. He reads email regularly, **except** on Jewish Holidays or Shabbat, when he does not use the computer at all.

His cell phone number is 925-272-8563 (925-2-RAVJOE). Please note this number. **PLEASE CALL** if you have any urgent messages or **in case of an emergency**.

Please let Rabbi Joe know if you or anyone you know is ill or would want a call or visit for any reason. You are also invited to contact Rabbi Joe to arrange an appointment to meet or speak. The rabbi will be happy to set a time to speak with you, so that he can offer you his full, undivided attention.

Telephone messages left at the Congregation number are not checked regularly. Please use the cell phone number noted – 925-272-8563.

Leadership

Rabbi: Joe Blair

President: Kim Gutterman

Vice President: Ruth Berger

Treasurer: Peter Kohn

Secretary: Phil Renick

Corresponding Secretary: Cindy Baron

Trustee: Lester Mintzer

Trustee: Andy Kohen

Trustee: Ron Ornstein

Past President: Eric Kramer

At large member: Amanda Friss

At large member: Gale Clemons

Sisterhood President: Sherri Alt + Rebekah Greenfield

Men's Club President: Lester Mintzer

Religious School Principals: Dara Hall + Liz Webb

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Elliott Golub
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YAHREZEITS

01	Bertha Hammer		Member	
	Margaret Stein			John Stewart's Mother
	Isadore Pfeffer			
	Dora Brill	1966		
	Sadye Goldberger	2007		Mike Goldberger's Mother
02	Bertha Wise	1887	Original Member	
	Samuel Clayman	1980		Harry Clayman's Father
	Eleanor Stoloff			Marjorie Huisinga's Mother
03	Samuel Ney	1902	Infant Child	
	Lester Kahn			Arnie Kahn's Father
	Karen Vanderhoof	2009		Dale Brothers' Sister
04	Mary Helbraun			Erwin Helbraun's Mother
05	Emma Hirsch Isaacs	1962	Member	
06	Leopold Wise	1885	Founding Member	
	Max Hirsch	1955	Made donation for new temple	
	Elsie K Cohn			
	Richard Banker			Roberta Stein's Father
08	Leonard Hirsch	1909		
	Rosa Isaacs			
	Lillian Hamburg			
09	Baby Spiro	1917		
	Helen Rotkin Levenson	1965		Judy Liss' Mother
	Shirley Baron			Cindy Baron's Mother
10	Paul Miller	1944	Member	
	Anna Weiss			
	Dee Goldstein	2007		Lisa Giovanetti's Mother
11	Pearl Loewner Gravely		Member	
	Isadore Iseman	1948		
	Verne Slater	1934	Member	
12	Baby Klingstein	1887		
13	Bruno Stein			
	Gerald Greenfield			Margee Greenfield's Father
14	Rose Levine	1992		Janet Kohen's Mother
15	Hulda Ney Iseman	1960		Member
	Sam Weiss			
16	Sadye Robinson	1941	Member	
17	Beatrice Winoker			
	Marjorie Lichtenstein			Joan Funston's Mother
19	Harry Weiss			
20	Sophia Wurtzberger	1943	Member	
23	Beulah (Bootie) Klingstein		Member	
24	Fannie Wise	1877	Member	
	Nathan Gelman			
25	Harry Clayman	2007	Member	
26	Leroy Loewner	1953	Member	

27	Henry Robinson	1978	Member	Josh Robinson's Father
28	Abe B Zindler Sr			Leo Zindler's Grandfather
	Jay Funston	1997	Member	Joan Funston's Husband
29	William Stein			John Stewart's Father
	Minnie Zindler Finger			Leo Zindler's Aunt
30	Vera Levine	1998		Joyce Helbraun's Sister
31	Lessie Hirsch Baum	1942		
	Shirley Goodman Saletan			Suzi Trubitz' Mother

DONATIONS

Beth El Congregation is grateful for the following generous donations:

To the Yahrzeit Memorial Fund:

Jayne & Eric Rynar in memory of Kate Schneider (Jayne's Mother).

Bill & Leslie Ney in memory of Alfred Ney (Bill's Grandfather).

Bill & Leslie Ney in memory of Annie Ney (Bill's Grandmother).

In Memory of Alan Gould

Bill & Leslie Ney

Ed & Zizi Sipe

Eddie & Margee-Greenfield Ney

Judy Freudenthal

To the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund:

Barry Gould Thanking Rabbi Joe for the Memorial Service for his brother, Alan.

To the General Fund:

Penny

For Open Doors :

Lisa & Kevin Giovanetti

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL / SHORTY

Happy New Year! Wishing you peace, good health, and much happiness in 2018!

In December we celebrated Hanukkah together and sang joyful songs with Moreh Ron and enjoyed delicious latkes and donuts to remember the miracle of the oil. We made wonderful crafts for decorating our homes and especially loved our edible dreidels! Thanks so much to our grand/parent volunteers- Shelley Feldman, Gale Clemons, and special guest - Liz Webb's mom!

We return to Religious School on January 7th, 2018 and will be preparing for our big event... please mark your calendars for Saturday, January 13th at 10:00am and join us for a Religious School Shabbat! The kids are excited to lead services! You will kvell!

L'shalom, Dara & Liz

SHORTY had a great December! We celebrated Hanukkah Harry at Sakura and then went to see the movie, Wonder. It was a great night!!

We had four Beth El 7th and 8th graders go to NFTY-MAR's MAJYK in Maryland for 3 days during Hanukkah. Thanks so much to our great SHORTY co-advisor, Becky, for accompanying them!! Everyone had a blast!!

Happy NewYear!



On Thursday, December 21st, our SHORTY group baked cookies and muffins for Open Doors. We had a great time!

SISTERHOOD

Hope everyone had a wonderful Hanukkah! Thank you to everyone who helped make our Hanukkah dinner a success. It was a wonderful dinner and a great time to see everyone. I love when all of our families are together lighting the Hanukkah candles . It's beautiful to see all the different menorahs that are special to each family!

Please mark your calendars for Sunday, January 14 at 1:30 at the Temple. Sisterhood is sponsoring a "hands only CPR" course for ages 13 and over. We would love for congregants and families, friends to take advantage of this, it could be you that saved a life.

Thank you so very much to the Mens Club who have just donated half of the cost for us to purchase an AED for the Temple. We are still taking donations and hopefully soon will be able to purchase one.

Next meeting will be Monday January 8, more information will be coming as to time and place.

Happy New Year!

Sherri Alt, Rebekah Greenfield

Co - Presidents

Sad News

We are saddened to learn this week of the death of one of our temple's most valuable members, SOMEONE ELSE. Someone's passing created a vacancy that will be difficult to fill. Else has been with us for many years. Someone did far more than a normal person's share of work. Whenever leadership was mentioned, this wonderful person was looked to for inspiration as well as results. "Someone Else can work with that group." Whenever there was a job to do, a class to teach, or a meeting to attend, one name was on everyone's lips ---"Let Someone Else do it." It was common knowledge that Someone Else was among the largest contributors in the temple. Whenever there was a financial need, everyone just assumed Someone Else would make up the difference. Someone Else was a wonderful person—sometimes appearing superhuman, but a person can only do so much. Were the truth known, everybody expected too much of Someone Else. Now, Someone Else is gone! We wonder what we are going to do. Someone Else left a wonderful example to follow, but who is going to follow it? Who is going to do the things Someone Else did? When you have a chance to participate in our temple, remember—we can't depend on Someone Else anymore!

Open Doors

A HUGE THANK YOU to everyone who volunteered this year at the Islamic Center with Open Doors by cooking, serving, helping to setup & pack up the shelter, donated items, and gave monetary donations.

JANUARY 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
New Year's Eve	New Year's Day				7:30pmLAY SERVICE	
NO RELIGIOUS SCHOOL						
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
9:30amRELIGIOUS SCHOOL (15)	Sisterhood Meeting				7:30pmLAY SERVICE	10amRELIGIOUS SCHOOL SHABBAT with Rabbi (16)
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
NO RELIGIOUS SCHOOL	Martin Luther King Jr. Day 7pmBoard Meeting				7:30pmLAY SERVICE	
1:30pmCPR Class (Sisterhood Sponsored)						
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
9:30amRELIGIOUS SCHOOL (17)		Lions Club Dinner			6:30pmFAMILY SHABBAT (child service)	
12:30pmSHORTY MEETING					7:30pmRABBI SERVICE	
28	29	30	31	1	2	3
9:30amRELIGIOUS SCHOOL and Tu B'Shevat Seder (18)					7:30pmLAY SERVICE	
5:30pmInterfaith Dinner						