



[Bethel-Harrisonburg.org](http://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).*

**MAY 2018**

## ***A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT***

### My View of What's Happening at Beth El

Dear Members of Beth El and other Readers of the *Bridge*,

As I sit here composing my penultimate message to you as Beth El's President, I am happy to say that Spring has finally sprung in Harrisonburg. If you've had the pleasure of working outside in your garden or on your lawn as I have, or just enjoyed seeing all the flowers in bloom, you know what I mean. Pesach, Yom HaShoah, Yom Ha'Zikaron and Yom Ha'Atzmaut are behind us and we begin to look forward to Shavuot as counting of the Omer continues.

We've recently joyously celebrated the Bat Mitzvah of Leah Feldman, welcomed community participation at the Beth El Bazaar (thanks Amanda Friss), and enjoyed the Men's club's "homemade" corned beef sandwiches. We are preparing for the annual congregational meeting on May 6 at which we will elect the new members of the Board of Directors and hear about our year of accomplishments from many members of the leadership team.

Speaking of the Board, recent decisions that it made include contracting with HEC for installation of additional lighting of our parking lot area, acquisition of at least one new built-in dishwasher to replace the "portable" nonfunctioning one and receipt of a new (previously owned) copier machine (thanks Phil Renick). Our website has undergone some updating and improvement, so do look at it (<http://bethel-harrisonburg.org/>) and more changes are in the planning. Because the city of Harrisonburg has (temporarily?) abandoned single-stream trash collection, we will resume separating recyclables (plastics, metal, glass, and paper) and transport the items to the recycling center ourselves. Anyone wishing to assist in this project should let me know.

L'Shalom

Andy

## ***FROM THE RABBI'S DESK***

**Iyar - Sivan 5778**

Dear Beth El Congregants and Friends,

Following Passover we observed Yom HaSho'ah (Holocaust Remembrance & Heroes Day), Yom Hazikaron (Memorial day), and Yom Ha'Atzma'ut (Israel Independence Day), as well as Rosh Chodesh (New Month) of Iyar. Just for good measure, Earth Day fell late this month.

We are still in the period of the counting of the Omer (numbering the time between Pesach (Passover), which deals with Redemption – being rescued from captivity and slavery, and Shavuot (Feast of Weeks), which marks Revelation – the encounter and individual communication of ALL the Hebrews/Israelites with G-d.

In May we will continue the counting of the Omer, arriving on May 3rd at L'ag Be'Omer, the 33rd day of the count, which is often seen as a semi-holiday. For those who observe semi-mourning rituals during the period of the Omer count, this is seen as a day on which those practices are relaxed, and it is viewed as a minor holiday. Yom Yerushalayim (Jerusalem Reunification Day) is celebrated on May 13th, which is also mother's day. Shortly after, on May 15th, we will note Rosh Chodesh for Sivan, the start of that month. On the 6th and 7th of Sivan (Saturday evening, and Sunday and Monday May 19th, 20th and 21st) we will finally come to the pilgrimage festival of Shavuot, the fiftieth day following Passover – at the conclusion of Sefirat HaOmer (the counting of the Omer), the period of seven weeks of seven days marking our spiritual journey.

May we all find meaning, strength, and blessings for our life in the course of this journey, and may we move from captivity to liberation, from the narrow places to the wide expanses, from where G-d is not to the Place of G-d.

## **THINGS OF NOTE AND TO COME**

A milestone event was the Bat Mitzvah of Leah Feldman. It was the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of April. She rocked it!

A very lovely event on April 15<sup>th</sup> was the re-dedication of the restored sign on the building that housed Hobbie Robinson's store for so many years in Elkton. This sign was visible and a reminder of the Jewish presence in the community. It was a sign that emulated an Israeli street sign, displaying the name of the road in Hebrew, English, and Arabic. Bo and Sandi Rose spearheaded the effort, and included in the festivities were Sarah (Hobbie's daughter) who spoke about her father and the photos he took that were made into books that document the life of the town of Elkton; the mayor of Elkton, who spoke of his personal recollections of Hobbie; Dan Bly, who spoke of the history of the Robinson family in the valley; me, offering a prayer of dedication and celebration, and a few others who spoke spontaneously. Despite a very overcast aspect, there was a nice crowd, and it was truly a lovely event.

April 18<sup>th</sup> was the first session of five in the JMU Lifelong Learning Institute course that I am offering this semester. The dozen or so people who registered came, we spent two hours looking at the concept of 'creation' in Biblical and other texts, and the time simply flew by. The working title of the course is "They said WHAT?"

April 22<sup>nd</sup> was the second annual Beth El Bazaar. In addition to the Men's Club corned beef sandwiches, there were many other goodies to eat, vendors to shop with, activities to participate in, and people to spend time with. If you didn't make it this time, be sure to plan to be there next year!

As I write this, April 27<sup>th</sup> will be the next rabbi-led Shabbat service, and we have the joy and pleasure of incorporating into that service a Simchat Bat, including welcoming and a formal naming for the daughter of Joan Anderson and Rebecca Brannon. This will take place in the course of the regular service, as part of the Torah service ritual. It is always wonderful to be able to celebrate a simchah in the community; join us that evening!

May 4<sup>th</sup> is Sisterhood Shabbat – note it on your calendar now.

May 6<sup>th</sup> is the Congregational meeting, overlapping with Religious school. As I understand it, Religious school will be engaging in L'ag Be'Omer games, and students will be rejoining their families as the business part of the congregational meeting concludes. I think there may be a luncheon in the works for those present – but look for more details in the bulletin, emails, and in mailings concerning the congregational meeting.

Looking ahead to mid-May, we have the Bat Mitzvah of Leah Jenkins – the Greenfield/Jenkins/Robles/Ney clan would be happy to have you join them to celebrate this event on the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of May.

Friday, May 18<sup>th</sup> is the Shorty-led Confirmation service. This year, Matt Lovinger and Madeline Hall are graduating, and will be leaving us to go off on adventures! Come and celebrate with them, and us all, as we wish them godspeed and all good things,

Sunday May 20<sup>th</sup> is the last day of Religious school for the year. We will be having a Shavuot service, followed by a pot-luck luncheon (dairy or vegetarian/vegan only please – Shavuot is celebrated with dairy foods – because the Torah is likened to ‘milk and honey’, so traditionally Cheesecake, blintzes, ice cream, and did I mention Cheesecake? are served.). ☺

But don't eat TOO much at the pot-luck. Later that afternoon, at 5, there is an interfaith gathering. We have been invited to join Emmanuel Episcopal Church for a dinner and short program, along the lines of the Brotherhood Interfaith dinner that is held at Beth El. Emmanuel Episcopal is reciprocating by inviting us to their Church – they came to Beth El last year. I am sure this will be a lovely time for all attending. It was exactly that when they came to Beth El. Les Mintzer is in charge of this event; I suspect it is covered elsewhere in the Bridge.

I will be attending a conference during parts of the first and second weeks of June, and will not be in town. In an emergency, please email or call me (as listed elsewhere in this bulletin).

Don't look away! June is already chock full.

June 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Kylie Palmer will be celebrating her Bat Mitzvah.

Just two weeks later, on June 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>, Ben Harris will be celebrating his Bar Mitzvah.

Finally, please note that I will be continuing to serve the community as rabbi until June 30<sup>th</sup>. After that I will not be available to meet. I hope to make an opportunity available to speak with everyone who wishes to do so before that date.

## **CALENDAR**

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

Friday, March 27<sup>th</sup>, Shabbat service with Simchat Bat/Baby naming; Friday, May 11<sup>th</sup>, Shabbat service and Bat Mitzvah of Leah Jenkins; Saturday, May 12<sup>th</sup>, Bat Mitzvah of Leah Jenkins; and Friday, May 18<sup>th</sup>, Shabbat and Confirmation for graduating Shorty members (Madeline Hall and Matt Lovinger).

Friday, June 15<sup>th</sup>, Shabbat service and Bat Mitzvah of Kylie Palmer; Saturday, June 16<sup>th</sup>, Bat Mitzvah of Kylie Palmer; and Friday, June 29<sup>th</sup>, Shabbat service and Bar Mitzvah of Ben Harris; Saturday, June 30<sup>th</sup>, Bar Mitzvah of Ben Harris.

## 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.]

Baruch Dayan Haemet:  
Dennis Ward; .

Mazal Tov:  
Shelley and Tomer Feldman, on Leah's Bat Mitzvah! Good work, Leah! And many thanks to Erin, Savtah and Saba for working with Leah.  
Joan Anderson, Rebecca Brannon, and Seth on their Simchat Bat (4/27).

Refuah Shelemah/Mi Sheberach:  
Chuck Slott, Marlene and Blaine Brumbaugh, Lenore Price, Estelle Robinson, Carol Schepp and family, and Louis Robinson and family, Nicole Rotondi (Sherri Alt's daughter), Joyce Helbraun, Irma Nemoytin, Sam Dailey, and Elliot Golub.

## RABBI'S MESSAGE

*Zman Natan HaTorah*

Shavuot is the holiday that celebrates Revelation – the awesome and world-changing encounter with the living G-d at Mount Sinai. Out of that meeting came the Covenant between G-d and the Hebrews (“you shall be my people, and I shall be your god”, to which the people would respond “we shall do [the commandments] and we shall understand/listen”), the Aseret HaDibrot (the ten sayings, often mis-named the ten commandments), the Written Torah (specifically the Torah, but generally the Tanakh – the complete three part Bible of the Jews), and the Oral Torah (which serves as the basis for the further codification (Mishnah) and elucidation (Gemara) of the Torah, that together with additional commentaries makes up the Talmud). Revelation is usually considered to mean not only the encounter with God, but to encompass all of this material, and perhaps more.

Shavuot falls during the summer, in our region. It comes seven weeks after Passover. That means we rarely have an opportunity to celebrate it as a community (because the schedule of planned services generally does not include it), or to include it in the regular sequence of events during Religious school. This year we will intercalate (add a leap month at the end of the Jewish calendar year), so until we come to Adar, all of the calendar events fall “early”. That allowed us the benefit of including Shavuot in the cycle of planned events this year.

Confirmation marks the end of involvement in the youth group of the oldest members, the high school seniors who are about to graduate, and usually head off to school or travel or work. Because confirmation is seen as both a culmination of years of study through religious school and the youth group, as well as a new phase that is beginning in the lives of these young adults, it is seen as a liminal moment, a time of change and a journeying forth. The journey of the Hebrews through the wilderness to Mount Sinai, and the unfolding of the Torah there is seen as a similar event, so Confirmation is typically tied to Shavuot. This year the Shorty Confirmation service will fall on Friday evening, May 18th, just ahead of the holiday of Shavuot. Additionally we will celebrate Shavuot the last day of Religious School on May 20th, noting the end of the school year, and looking forward to a new year in the fall.

Shavuot is a powerful symbol because it invokes both revelation of G-d, and the granting of G-d's greatest gift to humanity, Torah. Torah is widely understood broadly as the entire body of instruction, law, teaching, guidance, examples, exhortation, and encouragement that we have available to us, including both the religious teachings, and the secular knowledge that has been developed through the centuries.

Whether or not you believe that G-d gave all of this as a form of commandment, and regardless of whether or not you perceive it as having any binding status on our behavior, morally, ethically, or religiously, it is nonetheless impossible not to regard it as a masterful and compelling work, comprising stories that plumb the depths and scale the heights of human experience. There are many other great pieces of literature, some other narratives of similar scale and scope and complexity, a few that strive to touch on the human condition in a similar fashion, but none I know of has so far had the same impact, inspiring literally millions of people across millennia in a myriad of ways.

For this reason, I feel, it is no longer an issue whether the text is 'true' or 'provable'. On its own, it stands and speaks to untold numbers of people, and influences them. It could be described as a shared meta-myth – a story that is commonly shared and known, and used to shape and influence multiple cultures, religions, nations, peoples, and populations. 'Truth' and 'belief' are not required – we all know the stories, and that shared knowledge gives us a language and a shorthand for communicating deep and meaningful understandings. We in the Western world, at least, are all shaped and influenced by this text, no matter what faith or belief we may hold and follow.

For this reason alone it is well worth your while to engage with this material. It has much to offer, many lessons to teach. As the rabbis said in Pirke Avot (Ethics of the Fathers), "Turn it, and turn it, for all is within it." When we focus on the material, engage the text, wrestle with the stories, it becomes an ever-inspiring wellspring. It is not that we read it once, and know what is in it; although we do know the outline of the narrative, it is eternally new and fresh. This is so not because the text changes, but because we each change, and we come to the text as a different person than the one who read it previously. We have changed, and we bring different things, which means that we take different insights, understandings and meanings from the text each time we re-engage with it. Torah is truly our eternal tree of life.

Which reminds me that I want to urge you to consider a donation to the Torah maintenance and repair fund that has been established. Keeping the sifrei Torah (scrolls of the Torah) in good repair requires and ongoing and regular effort.

May this period of the counting of the Omer on our march towards Shavuot, and our engagement with the Torah now and in the future, bring to each of us many blessings and much joy.

## **Rabbi Joe Blair**

### **CONTACTING THE RABBI**

Rabbi Joe may be reached by email at [RabbiJoeB@hotmail.com](mailto: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: Andy Kohen

Vice President: Ruth Berger

Treasurer: Peter Kohn

Secretary: Phil Renick

Corresponding Secretary: Cindy Baron

Trustee: Lester Mintzer

Trustee: Andy Kohen

Trustee: Ron Ornstein

**Bridge Editor**  
**Elliott Golub**  
[Elgolubret@comcast.net](mailto:Elgolubret@comcast.net)  
**540-289-5336**

Past President: Kim Gutterman

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

## ***YAHREZEITS***

03 Max M Joseph	1924	Member	
04 Bruno Hirsch	1888		
05 Ella P Blatt		1979	
06 Rose Gelman			
07 Julia S Ney		1944	
Maurice Scheuer	1935		
08 Theresa Hirsch	1903	Member	
09 Henry Myerberg			Dave Myerberg's Father
Lillian Tassle			
Greg H. Kahn	2013		Arnie Kahn's Son
10 Bob Nemoytin	1984	Member	
11 Janet Kohen	2008	Member	
12 Lillian Coxe			
13 Paula Kaiser	1997	Member	
14 Edna Ash	1979	Member	Eddie Ney's Grandmother
Violet Handley			Mary Handley's Mother
16 Sophie Blatt	1969	Member	Frank Blatt's Grandmother
Lynn Miller	2001	Member	
Louis Scheuer	1927		
Sylvia Minskoff	2006		Jerry Minskoff's Sister-in-law
19 Minnie Wender	1962		Simon Wender's Mother
20 David Frankel	1988	Member	
Augusta Loewner	1893		
21 Arnold Abriss	1984		Gale Clemons' Father
23 Rabbi Sledon ben Zvi Fleming			Grandfather of JMU Hillel's President Frank Fleming
26 Heinz Wallach	1937	Member	
Mildred Greenfield			Margee Greenfield's Mother
27 Charles A Hammer	1938	Member	
Abe M Loewner	1932	Member	
28 Ludwig Hirsch	1929	Member	
David Kohen			Florine Ney's Father
Richard Kohn			Peter Kohn's Brother
29 Robert Minskoff	2016		Jerry & Esther Minskoff's Son

30 Jay Nusbaum  
Molly Huffman  
31 Erwin Helbraun                      2010 Member

## ***DONATIONS***

### [To the Religious School](#)

Ellen & Les Cohen (Miles & Quincy Friss' Grandparents)

In honor of Edyth Greengold's 100 Birthday

### [To the Yahrzeit Memorial Fund](#)

Judy Freudenthal in memory of Roslyn Freudenthal (Her Mother)

Jayne & Eric Rynar in memory of Sam Schneider (Jayne's Father)

Bill & Leslie Ney in memory of Joseph Ney (Bill's Great-grandfather)

In memory of Patricia Sager

Elliott & Thea Golub

Eddie & Margee Greenfield-Ney

In gratitude of the unveiling of Joshua Robinson's headstone

Estelle Robinson

In memory of Lynne Landsburg

Andy Kohen

In memory of Herb Rodbel

Eddie & Margee Greenfield-Ney

In memory of Joshua Robinson and thanks to Rabbi Joe

Eliot Robinson & Liane Schleifer

### [To the General Fund](#)

Penny Williams

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **Men's Club Book Donation: 2018**



*photo by Alan Neckowitz*

Mary Sonifrank (l), Librarian at J. Frank Hillyard Middle School in Broadway, receives this year's donation of books from Andrew Neckowitz (r), representing the Beth El Men's Club.

The books will be used to pass on awareness of the Holocaust to a new generation, introducing the middle school students to the immediate effects and after-effects of the Holocaust.

The 14 books include 6 by Morris Gleitzman, *Once, Then, Now, After, Soon, and Maybe*; 3 copies of the trilogy by Elie Wiesel, *Night, Dawn, and Day*; Lois Lowrey, *Number the Stars*; Susan Bartoletti, *The Boy Who Dared*; Jane Yolen, *The Devil's Arithmetic*; Doreen Rappaport, *The Untold Story Jewish Resistance During the Holocaust*; and the *Diary of Anne Frank*.

This is the 13<sup>th</sup> consecutive year the Beth El Men's Club has donated Jewish-themed books to university, high school and middle school libraries in Harrisonburg and Rockingham County.

#### Personal and hygiene items for Residents (adult women and children of all ages)

- shampoo/conditioner (full size)
- body wash/lotion (full size)
- diapers/pull ups (size 3,4,5,6)
- diaper rash cream/baby wipes
- shaving cream
- baby shampoo/oil/lotion/bath soap
- night clothes (all sizes)
- first aid supplies kits
- tweezers
- brushes/combs
- rubber mattress covers
- children's coloring books
- winter or rain boots (all sizes)
- handmade blankets/quilts
- winter hats/gloves (adults)
- eye masks
- deodorant
- bras (all sizes)
- manicure sets
- antibiotic ointment, alcohol, peroxide)
- flip flop/slippers (all sizes)
- maxi pads/tampons
- underwear (all sizes)
- sunglasses (children and adults)
- sunscreen
- adult coloring books
- journals
- 2016 calendars
- alarm clocks
- umbrellas

## First Step

2016

## Wish List



#### Shelter Supplies

- 13 Gallon and 30 gallon trash Bags
- bleach/no chlorine bleach
- dish detergent
- liquid hand soap
- towels/bath rugs
- shower curtains/liners
- twin size quilts, comforters and sheet sets
- sponges/Mr. Clean Erasers
- fabric softener
- wheeled storage bins with drawers
- bathroom/toilet cleaners
- disposable gloves
- coffee makers
- Clorox or Lysol wipes
- hand sanitizer
- laundry stain remover
- under bed plastic storage containers
- laundry detergent (HE) sensitive skin
- toilet paper/paper towels
- new bed pillows
- wet and dry swiffers
- laundry baskets/bags

Continued on back

#### Food

- shelf stable milk
- cereal
- crackers
- mayonnaise
- jelly
- canned fruit
- sugar/artificial sweetener
- canned chicken/tuna/other meats
- cookies/graham crackers/granola bars
- spaghetti sauce
- juice (bottles, packets, and boxes)
- raisins/dried fruits
- cool aide/crystal light drink packets
- boxed meals (i.e. hamburger helper)
- coffee (ground)
- bottles of water/Gatorade
- flour and spices
- baking powder/baking soda
- powdered creamer
- coffee filters (cylinder)
- hot chocolate mix
- Fresh fruit (oranges/apples)
- cooking oil
- canned soup/canned pasta
- tea bags
- cake/brownie mixes, icing
- pudding and Jello-cups
- packaged snack crackers

#### Gift Cards

At times First Step residents need things that First Step does not have (examples: perishable food, specific clothing and shoes for a job, gas to get to work or appointments, etc.). Gift cards are used when there are no other community resources to provide the items.

- Dollar General
- Food Lion
- Roses
- Wal-Mart
- Ross
- Gas Stations
- Hair Salons
- Shoe Stores

#### House Warming Items

Small household items for residents moving into new apartments/homes.

- Electric pump air mattresses
- sheets and towels
- measuring cups/spoons
- dishes/cups/mugs/utensils
- can openers/spatulas
- pots/pans/bowls
- small appliances
- shower curtains/rings
- strollers/pack-in-plays

#### Office Supplies

- batteries (AAA,AA,C and D)
- lined pads of paper/journals/ notepads/notebooks
- business envelopes/stamps
- permanent markers



#### First Step

129 Franklin Street, Harrisonburg, VA 22801  
(540) 434-0295

# MAY 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
29	30	1	2	3	4	5
9:30amRELIGIOUS SCHOOL (29)					7:30pmSISTERHOOD SHABBAT	Cinco de Mayo
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
9:30amRELIGIOUS SCHOOL - Field Day (30)					7:30pmLeah Jenkins Bat Mitzvah	10amLeah Jenkins Bat Mitzvah
11:30amCONGREGATION MEETING AND LUNCH						
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Mother's Day					7:30pmRABBI SERVICE and Confirmation	Erev Shavuot
NO RELIGIOUS SCHOOL						
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
Shavuot (Pentecost)	7pmBoard Meeting				7:30pmLAY SERVICE	
9:30amRELIGIOUS SCHOOL - Last Day (31)						
12:30pmSHORTY MEETING						
5pmInterfaith Dinner at Emmanuel Episcopal						
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
	Memorial Day				7:30pmLAY SERVICE	