

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).

*NOVEMBER 2017* 

#### A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Dear Beth El Community,

I want to thank the Men's Club for their continuing and tremendous efforts on behalf of Beth El. Their bi-annual Corned Beef Sandwich Sale was Friday. The Men's Club makes the corned beef from scratch- except for raising the cows- which takes days of soaking and brining. The work and coordination to sell and make hundreds of sandwiches is huge. And Ron Ornstein says the corned beef was especially tasty this time.

The Men's Club will be making corned beef sandwiches again for the Bazaar, on Sunday, April 29. Put it on your calendar now.

## **New Members**

Welcome to our newest members:

Sara & Michael Tranum with their three sons, Samuel, Jacob & Aiden, and

Carol Brook-Quintero and her three sons, Jericho, Daniel and Ociel.

## \$450 Raised for Improved Lighting for Parking Lot

Thanks to your generosity, as of last week, \$450 has been raised for improved lighting for Beth El's Parking lot. \$4900 is needed, so please keep the contributions coming.

If each member gives \$70 dollars, improved lighting for our parking lot and enhanced security will be paid for. Please put "Parking Lot Lighting" on your donation and send your contribution to:

Peter Kohn, Treasurer

Beth El Congregation

PO Box 845

Harrisonburg, VA 22803

You can also donate online. Just go to <a href="http://bethel-harrisonburg.org/support-beth-el">http://bethel-harrisonburg.org/support-beth-el</a> for a secure site where you can make a donation via credit card.

## Hanukkah

The Family Shabbat Hanukkah Dinner is Friday, December 15, at 6:15 p.m. It will be a pot luck. Bring your children, some food your children will eat ©, and your Menorah. After dinner, there will be a child friendly Hanukkah service led by Rabbi Joe and Dara.

The Sisterhood Hanukkah dinner is Sunday, December 17, at 5:30 p.m. The homemade potato latkes taste great and are abundant. Details will be forthcoming from Sisterhood.

Thank you.

Kim Gutterman, President

### FROM THE RABBI'S DESK

Cheshvan - Kislev 5778

Dear Beth El Congregants and Friends,

It was a joy and a pleasure to celebrate the High Holiday season with you.

As you know, the High Holy Day period is a time of introspection, of self examination, of looking back and seeing where we fell short or missed the mark or just didn't try hard enough, or at all.

Of course, there is room to improve – there always is, none of us is close to perfect, and we make no such claim.

But we need to not only take note of our failures and flaws. We need to catch our self (and our loved ones) doing good, being just, acting righteously, being godly. We each had those moments, too, and we need to remember them just as much as our failures.

When we do, we realize we have so many blessings to acknowledge, so many good memories to revisit, so many wonderful relationships in which to take pleasure, so many things to be grateful for, and so very many successes, large and small, that pepper and festoon our year.

Our job is not to be perfect, but to seek to make more successes (and thereby fewer failures) ourself, and to help our loved ones to do the same. Ultimately, to seek to change the balance, so there are more good than bad things to account for in our life.

In this way, the spirit and meaning of the High Holy Days and this season will extend through the year, and we will be on the path to being a better self.

#### THINGS OF NOTE AND TO COME

A significant event coming up as I write this is the Bar Mitzvah of Russell Kramer on the 20th and 21<sup>st</sup>. Be sure to join us then for services to celebrate with him and his family.

The return (or 'Son') of the Biblical Hebrew & Text class started in October, but with a slightly new format and approach. The class meets twice a month, once each in two locations: Staunton and Harrisonburg. Students are free to come to either or both locations. The days and times will be the same in each case – Sundays at 3:30 to 5 pm. The text studies will be something different in each session: in October we looked at contemporary poetry inspired by Biblical text and liturgy.

This course is FREE. A copy of the text to be read will be provided. The preferred background is sufficient familiarity with the Hebrew Alefbet to decode and follow the text, but please don't be initimidated. Contact me by email to register for or ask any questions about the course – <a href="mailto:rabbijoeb@hotmail.com">rabbijoeb@hotmail.com</a>.

The Basic Introduction to Hebrew course (the Alefbet and Vowels, sponsored by the National Jewish Outreach Project's Read Hebrew America program) will be offered at Beth El in Harrisonburg starting November 30<sup>th</sup>, and ending December 28<sup>th</sup>. The five sessions will meet from 6 to 9 pm on Thursdays at Beth El. NO RSVPs needed, simply come to the first session. This course is Free and open to anyone who wishes to take it.

#### **CALENDAR**

Scheduled Rabbi-led Religious services for the upcoming period through December are: Friday, October 20<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, October 21<sup>st</sup>, Shabbat and Bar Mitzvah of Russell Kramer; Friday, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, Family Shabbat service, followed by a regular Shabbat service; Friday, November 17<sup>th</sup>, Shabbat service; Friday, December 15<sup>th</sup>, Family Shabbat service, followed by a regular Shabbat service; Friday, December 29<sup>th</sup>, Shabbat service.

#### IN THE CONGREGATION

[Based on what I have been told and/or permitted to share]

#### Refuah Shelemah/Mi Sheberach:

Chuck Slott, Marlene and Blaine Brumbaugh, Janet Daniel, Lynne Landsberg, Dennis Ward, Lenore Price, Dale Brothers, Eddie Ney, Estelle Robinson, Nicole (Sherri Alt's daughter), Elaine Schreiber, Joyce Helbraun, Irma Nemoytin, Alan Gould, and Elliot Golub.

#### Baruch Dayan Haemet:

May Kim Gutterman and her family be comforted from heaven on the recent loss of her grandmother.

#### Mazal tov:

The Kramers, and particularly Russell, on his Bar Mitzvah!

#### RABBI'S MESSAGE

Dining in the Hut, Sleeping in the Field: So Many Holidays

The last week and a half of September consisted of the Yamim Nora'im, the days of Awe, including the High Holy Days of Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year) and Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement); the most solemn days in the Jewish calendar, but also days of celebration of the rulership and kingdom of G-d, of G-d's compassion, mercy, justice, and love. On top of that, this year Yom Kippur fell on Saturday, the Sabbath, the very holiest day in the Jewish calendar, so it was elevated even further, to the status of the Sabbath of Sabbaths – making it all the more sacred, and increasing the sense of solemnity and holiness of the day.

And then, only five days later, on the evening of October 4th, we started a set of three(!) additional holidays, though they are often treated as one. Fortunately, this year November has no Jewish holidays falling in it other than Shabbat, the Sabbath – otherwise we would collapse from a surfeit of celebration!

First comes Sukkot, the Festival of Booths, and the harvest festival. This is a celebration of thanksgiving (in fact this is the holiday that was being celebrated late when the Temple in Jerusalem was restored by the Maccabees after it had been desecrated, and also the celebration on which the Pilgrims may have based their concept of Thanksgiving, which we have made a secular holiday on the 4th Thursday of November). Sukkot has two intertwined themes. First, it is a time of gratitude to G-d for creation of the world, and the bounty and beneficence that we enjoy in the world through the natural processes of the seasons, sun and rain, fertility of the land, the plants and trees that grow and fruit, and all that we harvest and that sustains and supports us, all of which we attribute to G-d's design and plan.

Second, Sukkot reminds us of several different points in our collective history. Earlier, the time we were wandering in the wilderness, when the world was a harsh place, and G-d was there to provide for and protect us, as a loving parent or a caring spouse (as we read about in the books of Leviticus and Numbers, with G-d leading us as a pillar of smoke and fire, and providing the manna to sustain us, and indicating to us when to camp and when to move on). Later, the time we were in the land, somewhat nomadic, and moving about in a cycle from place to place to plant and harvest the crops (as we read about in the story of Ruth in the fields of Boaz), when we would set up booths and dwell in the fields temporarily.

In both instances, we were in the midst of G-d's creation, close to it, able to see it all around us, and to recognize how dependent we are upon it, and how much a part of it we are.

As an aside, I see this as a powerful argument that we are to love the earth as part of G-d's creation, and that our obligation is to care for it and not to waste (Bal tashchit), or to rapaciously destroy what we cannot bring into being. It does not belong to us – it is G-d's, and should be treated with respect and restraint. This is why I see the continued use of limited and scarce resources such as fossil fuels, when there are alternatives that do not have this effect already available and ready to apply, and the ongoing destruction of habitat for creatures that have existed for millennia and the creation of threats to human life such as the construction of pipelines to get to those resources, as violations of our obligation as humans to respect and care for and serve as caretakers for the earth and all the creatures in partnership with G-d. So we celebrate Sukkot with three things.

First, we return to the custom of building a hut or booth — a sukkah, plural sukkot, and we 'dwell' in it to remind ourselves of the time we were wandering with G-d in the wilderness: what you might think of as the 'honeymoon' of G-d and Israel, in the image of Israel as G-d's spouse. We sit, eat meals, and even sleep in the sukkah as possible, our temporary shelter, made with a roof and sides that are incomplete so we are open to both creation and G-d around us. To enhance the performance of this act, we 'beautify' it by decorating the Sukkah, and by making it as lovely and as welcoming as possible. We recite as many blessings as are appropriate as we undertake these various activities.

Second, we acknowledge creation and G-d through ritual. For this we use a set of four species of plants, known as the lulav and Etrog. The lulav is the combination of a palm branch, willow twigs, and myrtle twigs, held together in a woven reed basket handle. The Etrog is a fruit related to lemons, but much larger and more fragrant, and having almost no edible pulp. We hold the lulav and the Etrog together, and wave them in six directions – left, right, back, forward, down, and up - while reciting a blessing, acknowledging G-d is everywhere in the world, and all the world is G-d's. Some also see the lulav and Etrog as symbolically representing the four (typological number) kinds of people, levels of creation, understandings of the text, matriarchs, and so on.

Third, we invite others to join us in our Sukkah. This can be a lovely chance to visit with friends and relatives, but it is also a spiritual action. We are encouraged to invite the presence of our ancestors to join us and to celebrate with us. There is a custom to invite specific people from history or the Jewish past, to wish for the blessing of being able to be more like them in our own lives. These guests are called Ushpizin. Often we 'invite' one or more of them each evening, with the idea that through their presence their traits and characteristics will influence us and help us to be better people.

Sukkot is celebrated for eight days. The last two of these days have special features. The seventh day is known as Hoshanah Rabbah (the great hosanna, literally great supplication) in reference to the practice of marching in a series of circuits (hakafah, plural hakafot) while chanting prayers and psalms, and in this case, while beating the willow branches as we walk, until the leaves fall off. This is seen as a sign of faith; willows require a great deal of water, and this is the day on which we usually begin to ask for the blessing of rain in the season; beating the willows is a demonstration of our trust that G-d will answer our pleas and provide the rain.

The following day, the eighth, is still considered part of Sukkot, but it is of a rather different character. The first seven days of Sukkot are viewed as a universalistic celebration. The concept is that all peoples were welcome to come to the Temple and thank G-d, and sacrifices were offered on their behalf – making it an awfully large number of sacrifices in total. It is a busy, hectic time. On Shemini Atzeret, however, it is the Hebrews turn. This is a day for them to spend time 'alone' with G-d, a sort of quiet after-party, if you will, or a chance to catch up and chat after all the guests have gone home. Shemini Atzeret is usually translated as eighth [day] of

tarrying, or perhaps in a more modern vernacular, 'the eighth day to hang out and chill'. The feeling for Shemini Atzeret is much quieter, more contemplative, and includes the recitation of Yizkor, the memorial prayers for those who are no longer with us.

Finally, not part of Sukkot, but directly abutting it, is the holiday of Simchat Torah, rejoicing in the law, or instruction. This is a celebration of the giving and receiving of the Torah at Sinai, symbolized by the Aseret Hadibrot, the ten sayings (often called in English the Ten Commandments, but that is not accurate because at least the first one - or two - are not commandments, but rather statements, not things we can 'do'). This is one of the three pilgrimage festivals, times when people would go to the Temple and bring their offerings. Torah is, of course, central to Judaism, so this is a big holiday in that respect, and we show our joy and pleasure by literally dancing with the Torah scrolls. This is also the moment in the Jewish calendar when we complete the cycle/circuit of Torah readings (54 parashiot through the year), reading the final section of Deuteronomy, and immediately turning back and starting the Torah again with the first section of Genesis. To celebrate this completion and new beginning, we march around in seven circuits (hakafot) while dancing with the Torah and singing. Many children remember this as a fond recollection; they are given flags and sometimes apples, and make up a parade!

In some congregations the custom is to unfurl the Torah, unscrolling it completely so that it can all be seen at once, and in some places an abbreviated version of the story is told while walking along and pointing to the place in the Torah scroll where the events are happening. This is a visually impressive and memorable moment, recalled fondly by those who have seen it (though it does tend to make many rabbis quite nervous). ;-)

As we circuit, phrases including the words 'Ho-shi-a-nah,' 'Hatz-li-cha-nah,' and 'Ah-ney-nu' – save us, sustain us, answer us - are repeated. The seven hakafot are also based on a typological number which implies completion and wholeness, and indicates the uninterrupted flow of G-d's power through the world we can see.

That concludes our brief look at the three-fold holiday season that falls so close after the High Holy days.

Next comes a time of relative quiet on the Jewish calendar, which means that there are no specific additional holidays (other than Rosh Chodesh for the new moon, and Shabbat weekly) from the end of Simchat Torah on October 13th until the evening of December 12th when we begin the holiday of Chanukah.

May this time of relative quiet on the holiday front be one of many blessings for you and your loved ones. May the secular holiday of Thanksgiving (or its equivalent in Canada and other locales) be filled with good things and happy memories. May we all bring the blessings of the High Holy Day season forward into this year, and may it be a good year for all of us.

#### Rabbi Joe Blair

#### 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

#### **CONTACTING THE RABBI**

Rabbi Joe may be reached by email at <a href="RabbiJoeB@hotmail.com">RabbiJoeB@hotmail.com</a>. 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.

Bridge Editor
Elliott Golub

Elgolubret@comcast.net

540-289-5336

## **YAHRZEITS**

01	Selma Miller		Member	
	Sadie Spiro			
	Fredrick Nessen			
	Samuel Freed	1954		
	Linda Renick	2011	Phil Renick's Mother	
02	Selina Ney	1945	Member	
	Bruno Freudenthal		Judy Freudenthal's Father	
	Lawrence Loewner	1955	Member Mayor of Harrisonburg	
	Jack Stein	2004	Gary Stein's Father	
	Ruth Clayman	2014	Member	
	Sylvia Lankin	2012	Phil Renick's Grandmother	
03	Louis Perlman		Milton Perlman's Brother	
04	Albert Lubman	1968	Member	
02	Gussie Myers		Joyce Helbraun's Mother	
	Sam Hirsch			
	Louis Wides	1962		
07	Eva Brooslin	1956	Ruth Clayman's Mother	
09	Annie Ney	1979	Member Bill Ney's & Leo	
			Zindler's Grandmother	
10	Nathan Ratner	1989	Laurie Schwalb's Father	
	Barbara Rotondo	1994		
12	Irene Nusbaum		Member	
	Frances M. Stewart	2014	Companion of Eddie Ney	
15	Minna Mintzer		Member	
	Ada Krim			
	Dr. Henry Helbraun		Erwin Helbraun's Brother	
17	Rose Hirsch	1913	Member	
	Charles Schweitzer		Thea Golub's Father	
19	Baby Ney	1920		
	Sybil Rose	2002	Member Bo Rose's Mother	
20	Caroline Ash	1965		
	Sophia Wuzburger	1943		
21	Ida Miller	1939	Member	
	Monroe Nussbaum	1986		
	Rhoda Paroly	2015	Mother of Elaine Schreiber	
22	Kattie Ney	1980		
	Saul Robinson	2011	Member	

23	Albert Wise	1904	Member
	David Myerberg	1986	Member
	Dave Levy	1931	Member
	Doris Freed	1969	
25	Isaac Ney	1941	Member
26	Sam Fishman		
	Sophie Miller	2015	Mother of Mona Wolf
28	Sam Blatt	1965	Frank Blatt's Grandfather
	Zvi Hirsch Derechinsky		Max's Father
29	Edward Poster	1955	Alan Poster's Father
	Kate Schneider		Jayne Rynar's Mother
30	Sylvan Ney	1977	Member
	Miriam Banker	2014	

## **DONATIONS**

## To the Yahrzeit Memorial Fund

Keith Nash in memory of Page Nash (His Mother).

## High Holiday Visitor Donations

George Harris

Stephen A Fuhrman

Freida Tompakov

Douglas & Lori Moyer

Henry Kohn

Amiram & Diane Daniel

Phil & Pam Unger

Scott & Lori Kizner

# Donations made at the Beth El Yizkor Service

Bill & Leslie Ney

Arnie Kahn

Jayne & Eric Rynar

Leslie Harris

Esther Minskoff

Phil Renick

Lenore Price

Eddie & Margee Ney

Elliott & Thea Golub

Stuart & Judy Liss

Mona Wolf

**Cindy Baron** 

Judy Freudenthal

Michael & Nancy Clayman

Andy Kohen

Gale Clemons

Michael & Dara Hall

Alan & Kate Neckowitz

Tamarra Johnson-Yellin

Hal & Barbara Simonetto

Lester & Becky Mintzer

Joan Funston

Ron & Michelle Ornstein

### RELIGIOUS SCHOOL / SHORTY

We have had a lot of great opportunities for celebration this October!

Some preschool and religious school families joined together with congregants on Saturday, October 7th for a "Pizza in the Hut" celebration of Sukkot and a Havdalah service. Thank you Gale Clemons for the delicious pizza! We made some nice sukkah decorations on Saturday evening, and then the festivities continued during religious school on Sunday as we made more decorations to celebrate the "Feast of Tabernacles". It is so much fun to shake the lulay and etrog each year.

The following Sunday, on October 15th, our preschool and religious school families celebrated Simchat Torah during religious school. Everyone joined together for crafts and singing and dancing with the Torah. Thank you to the Sitrin, Friss, and Gutterman families for volunteering and facilitating the craft activities and providing the snack for this wonderful event. And thanks, as always, to Ron Ornstein for his wonderful music during the event.

Our preschool families have been learning all about Shabbat and have enjoyed fabulous songs and making amazing crafts. If you want more information about preschool don't hesitate to contact us! Our religious school students are starting to prepare for our Religious School service - please mark your calendars for Saturday, January 13th!

We were all so proud of Russell Kramer on October 20th and 21st. He did an amazing job during his bar mitzvah! SHORTY is excited to have a new member!

SHORTY joined with our Dalet students on October 22nd and helped "Rise Against Hunger" as we helped to pack meals at Asbury United Methodist Church "to make a global impact on hunger by building resilience, self-sufficiency and empowerment among the communities" - see http://www.riseagainsthunger.org/ for information. We had a great time measuring out and packaging rice, soy, and dried vegetables knowing that we could help make a difference. Then we enjoyed some Benny's pizza to reward ourselves for the good work we did.

Please plan to come to lay services on November 10th when members of SHORTY lead us in prayer.

We also hope to see EVERYONE at Beth El on November 12th at 10:00am as we come together for another Global Day of Jewish Learning - this year's topic is "Beauty and Ugliness." We will look at the Garden of Eden and try to relate Good and Evil to beauty and figure out what Adam and Eve have to do with it. We hope to see you there!!

L'shalom.

Dara, co-principal Beth El Religious School and co-advisor for SHORTY mddmhall@verizon.net

#### **SISTERHOOD**

Thank you to everyone who helped with our chili cook off this year. We had wonderful chilis made and entered as well as cornbreads and desserts. It was all yummy.

Congratulations to Jennie Greenfield on being the chili queen this year, it is the first chili she ever made! Thank you to Lester for bringing a nice tv for the game, and what a game it was. We bit our nails to the very last second and yeah Washington for winning!

Our next meeting will be Monday November 6 at 6:00 pm, more information will be coming.

Look forward to seeing you ladies! Sherri Alt and Rebekah Greenfield, Co Presidents

# ANNOUNCEMENTS/PHOTOS



Annual Mens' Club Baseball Outing Washington Nationals vs. Los Angeles Dodgers Sunday September 17, 2017

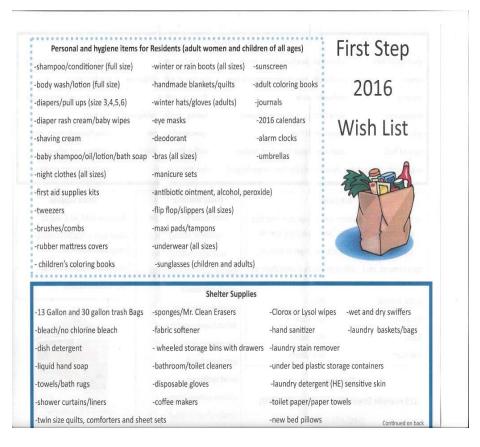




2017 Chile Cookoff – October 15, 2017

## **New Congregation List**

A new congregation list will be readied soon. Is your address on last year's list accurate? Let me know if you have a new email address. We also list cell phone numbers. All this information is only used for temple communication. If you have a college age student, I can send them the temple newsletter via email or snail mail. We can also list the email address of young people. To keep expenses down, if you have been receiving the newsletter by mail but can now receive it via email, please let me know. Judy Freudenthal, 867-5648 or jfreudy@aol.com. Thank you.





# November 2017

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
30	31	1	2	3	4
	Halloween			<b>10am</b> Corned Beef Sandwich Delivery	
				6:30pmFAMILY SHABBAT (child service)	
				7:30pmRABBI SERVICE	
6	7	8	9	10	11
				Veterans Day observed	Veterans Day
Sisterhood Meeting 6 pm				7:30pmLAY SERVICE-SHORTY	
13	14	15	16	17	18
				7:30nmRABBI SERVICE	
20	21	22	23	24	25
<b>7pm</b> Board Meeting	Lions Club Dinner		Thanksgiving Day	7:30pmLAY SERVICE	
27	28	29	30	1	2
				7:30pmLAY SERVICE	
	6 Sisterhood Meeting 6 pm  13  20 7pmBoard Meeting	30 31 Halloween  6 7 Sisterhood Meeting 6 pm  13 14  20 21 7pmBoard Lions Club Dinner	30 31 1 Halloween  6 7 8 Sisterhood Meeting 6 pm  13 14 15  20 21 22 7pmBoard Lions Club Dinner	30 31 1 2  Halloween  6 7 8 9  Sisterhood Meeting 6 pm  13 14 15 16  20 21 22 23  7pmBoard Lions Club Dinner  Day	10