



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).

DECEMBER 2016

FROM THE RABBI'S DESK

Cheshvan –Kislev 5777

Dear Beth El Congregants and Friends,

As we enter December, it is always a busy time on our calendar. Less frenetic than the High Holy day period earlier on the Jewish calendar, but still a time of much activity, especially when we factor in such secular and non-Jewish events as Thanksgiving and the winter holidays. And even though it will arrive “late” this year, Chanukah is only a short time in front of us. I always look forward to this time of year, and I hope you appreciate it, too.

THINGS OF NOTE AND TO COME

Recent highlights for me included the **Death Café** held on November 2nd. We had a lovely group attend, with many returning participants, and the conversation was deep, meaningful, and rich.

The **Community Awareness Shabbat service** on November 11th was a happy event. We had an excellent turnout of guests, as always, it was a joy.

Elysha Netsarh, **the Kulanu speaker** from the Jewish community of Madagascar, visited on November 6th. She gave a wonderful, warm, and very personal presentation, telling her own story of returning to Judaism with many in her community. It was engaging, heartwarming, and uplifting. I am so pleased that our small community has been able to participate in bringing speakers like her to our area to expose our community members to Jews and Judaism in other parts of the world. Many thanks to all who made this possible – too many to list here, but I have tried to be in touch to thank you (for those I knew were involved).

The recent **Global Day of Jewish Learning** (November 20th), helmed for our community by the Religious school, was well planned, and proved again to be a fabulous day that offered learning at every level from pre-school all the way through adult. This is a great opportunity to share in communal learning with our own congregation and community, as well as Jews worldwide. Be sure to plan to attend next year!

Looking forward:

The next **Tot Shabbat** for this year will be at Beth El Congregation on December 2nd, with Morah Allison leading. As a note: it is suitable for pre-school through about 3rd or 4th grade, but older children can come and enjoy it too – and sometimes they are invited to help out. There are three more Tot Shabbat events on the schedule; mark your calendar and plan to attend! Upcoming dates are: 2/4, 3/24, and 4/21, all at Beth El. Contact Morah Allison for information at Allison.s.kaye@gmail.com.

The **Elementary Biblical Hebrew** course for Fall/Winter 2016 continues. The course will meet three more times as I write this. The upcoming dates will be: November 20th, December 4th, and December 11th. The meeting times are at 2:30-4 PM at THOI. We are studying the first chapter of Job.

The **Introduction to Hebrew** course to learn the Hebrew Alefbet (alphabet) and Vowels, along with a very basic and rudimentary vocabulary, is in progress. It is a five class course. There will be a course session on Sunday afternoons at THOI from 4-7 PM, remaining classes to occur on November 20th and December 4th and 11th. The same course will be offered in five sessions on Wednesday evenings at 6:30 – 9:30 PM at Beth El in Harrisonburg, with remaining sessions on November 30th and December 7th, 14th, and 21st.

The next **Death Café** event for this year will be: January 4th at Beth El Congregation in Harrisonburg from 7-9 pm, After that, we will meet on March 1st at THOI from 7-9 pm. All are Wednesday evenings. Free. Come talk about death. Break the Taboo. Join the conversation.

Shorty Youth group is running on high octane, doing great things! What a wonderful group of young people. I am very proud of them – and all of us should be.

Religious school is chugging along, approaching the winter holidays. Co-principals Morah Dara and Morah Rebekah are working hard, and causing miracles to occur in front of our eyes. All of the teachers and assistants are superb! We are seeing the fruits of all the hard work that has been invested into our children.

In **outreach and interfaith** work, I continue to visit (or have groups visit us) from the community, and to respond to many calls and emails. I was happy to be in contact with the new Imam at the IASV, as well as multiple pastors and ministers in the region. I have been asked to address the Rumi Forum (interfaith group, based in Islam) in January. I always enjoy all of these interactions, and see them as an important time to teach and build connections with others, serving as an ambassador for the congregation.

Coming on December 9th and 10th is the **Bat Mitzvah of Hannah Lovinger**. She has been working hard, and I hope you will come help her family celebrate.

The **Religious school Shabbat service and Consecration** is scheduled for December 16th – we invite all in our community to come and kvell at how much these students can do!

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

Friday, December 9th and Saturday December 10th (Hannah Lovinger's Bat Mitzvah); Friday December 16th is the Religious school Shabbat and Consecration service (look for information on a dinner for Religious school students, families, and teachers preceding that service). Shabbat evening services are at 7:30 pm, and Shabbat morning services are at 10 am, unless otherwise noted.

Don't forget Tot Shabbat services at 5:30 on 12/2.

See the official calendar or elsewhere in the Bridge for the full list of services and times, including lay-led services and other events.

TORAH

The Torah Parashiot for the coming weeks (through January) are: Vayera, Chayei Sarah, Toledot, Vayetzei, Vayishlach, Vayeshev, Miketz, Vayigash, Vayechi, Shemot, Vaera, Bo, and Beshalach.

We are in year 1 of the triennial cycle (the first of the three divisions of the cycle of Torah readings).

CALENDAR

Rosh Chodesh for Cheshvan was on November 1st and 2nd. Rosh Chodesh for Kislev is December 1st. Rosh Chodesh for Tevet will be December 30th.

Erev Chanukah is on December 24th, and the eight days of Chanukah run from sundown December 24th to January 1st at sundown.

IN THE CONGREGATION

Refuah Shelemah:

Elaine Schreiber, Valerie Stephens, Chuck Slott, Alan Gould, Marlene and Blaine Brumbaugh, Eric Kramer, and Dennis Ward.

Mi Sheberach:

Prayers for healing and wholeness to: Jerry Minskoff, the Kramer family, and to Lester and Becky Mintzer's brother-in-law Paul.

RABBI'S MESSAGE

This winter period, although full of activities and joyous events for many, is also a time of distress, a sense of being overwhelmed, and a feeling of isolation for some, even many of our community. As the light grows shorter at this time of year, our world can feel darker and harsher. Many see change and uncertainty around them, and they feel fear or anxiety.

This would be the right time for us to be aware of each other, to be sensitive to the feelings of those around us, to reach deep within to find reserves that allow us to be kind to one another, and to keep our highest ideals and values foremost in mind, so that we act and speak in concert with them.

We are taught that one candle cannot extinguish darkness; but from that candle other candles may be lit, casting light in an ever widening circle. Alone, we can do little: together we can push back darkness, create spaces that are welcoming, safe, and comfortable for all of us. This, to me, is the meaning and purpose of community. May we truly be and live out the highest ideals of community for and with each other. May the light of our Chanukah menorot be not only physical and religious, but emotional and spiritual, as well.

Rabbi Joe Blair

CONTACTING THE RABBI

Please Note: Rabbi Joe may be reached by email at RabbiJoeB@hotmail.com (Other email addresses may not reach him in a timely fashion, or at all.) He reads email regularly, except on Jewish Holidays or Shabbat, when he does not use the computer.

His cell phone number is 925-272-8563 (925-2-RAVJOE). Please note this number.

Telephone messages left at the Congregation number are only checked sporadically.

PLEASE CALL if you have any urgent messages or in case of an emergency, and 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. Rabbi Joe will be happy to make an appointment to speak with you, so that he can offer you his full, undivided attention.

Leadership

Joe Blair	Rabbi
Eric Kramer	President
Kim Gutterman	Vice President
Phil Renick	Secretary
Bill Ney	Treasurer
Les Mintzer	Trustee
Andy Kohen	Trustee
Ron Ornstein	Trustee
Amanda Friss	Member at Large
Gail Clemons	Member at Large
Sherri Alt	Sisterhood Co-President
Rebekah Greenfield	Sisterhood Co-President
Les Mintzer	Men's Club President
Ron Ornstein	Immediate Past President
Dara Hall	Religious School Principal

Bridge Editor
Elliott Golub
Elgolubret@comcast.net
 540-289-5336

Yahrzeits

01	Sadye Spiro	1953	Member	
03	Alfred Ney	1954	Member	Bill Ney's & Leo Zindler's Grandfather
05	Anna Bloo	1932		
	Elizabeth Levey			
06	Sebastion Goldsmith	1929	Member	
	Albert Klingstein	1957		
08	Mollie Katzen	1986	Member	
09	Max Frankel	1980	Member	
	Elaine Trubitz	1983		Mark Trubitz' Mother
12	Rabbi Jacob Schvanenfeld			
	Barnett Nelson			
	Molly Feig			Betty Nemoytin's Mother
13	Bertha Schvanenfeld	1948		Rabbi's Wife
	Roselea Kohen	1998		Andy Kohen's Mother
	Shirley Merlin	2014		Member

14	Simon Wender	1976	Member
16	Agnes Moore		Cleda Frankel's Mother
	William A Loewner	1980	Member (Austin)
	Simon Oestreicher	1918	Member
17	Carl Ney	1967	Member
18	Louis Hamburg		
	Rhoda Mintzer		
21	Esther Derechinsky		Max's Mother
22	Sarah Rabinowitz		Josh Robinson's Grandmother
	Gladys Ney	1984	Member
	Rabbi Burton Padoll	2004	Life Member Sheila Padoll's Husband
23	Albert H Ash	1946	Eddie Ney's Grandfather
24	Nace Cohen		
25	Theresa Hirsch	1952	Member
26	Amelia L Figgatt	1980	Member (Mimi)
	Mal Mintzer		
	Joshua Rader Stein		Roberta Stein's Son
27	Anna Robinson	1949	Member Josh Robinson's Aunt
28	Josephine Merzger	1928	Member
29	Pearl Rachel Katzen		
30	Eddie Ney	1940	Member Eddie Ney's Grandfather
	Doris Kalman		Brian Kalman's Mother
	Sarah Miller		
	Bertha Hammer	1957	Member
31	Lenora Myerberg	1997	Member
	Sarah Miller	1989	Member

DONATIONS

Beth El Beth El Congregation is grateful for the following generous donations:

To the Yahrzeit Memorial Fund

Michael & Nancy Clayman in memory of Eva Brooslin (Mike's Grandmother).
Michael & Nancy Clayman in memory of Ruth Clayman (Mike's Mother).
Eddie Ney & Margee Greenfield-Ney in memory of Francis Stewart.
Eddie Ney & Margee Greenfield-Ney in memory of Albert Ash (Eddie's Grandfather).
Bill & Leslie Ney in memory of Alfred Ney (Bill's Grandfather).
Allan Poster in memory of Edward Poster (Allan's Brother).
Steve & Laurie Schwalb in memory of Nathan Ratner (Laurie's Father).

In Memory of Neil Kramer
Mona Wolf
Allen & Denise Berniker
Bill & Leslie Ney
Eddie Ney & Margee Greenfield-Ney
Judy & Aaron Mitrani
Gale Clemons

High Holiday Visitors
Amiram & Diane Daniel
Fran Etner
Linda Carvasal

In Honor of the birth of their grandson
Mike & Nancy Clayman

Donations in honor of Rabbi Joe's 13th Birthday at Beth El:

Lynn Landsberg
Phil Renick
Bill & Leslie Ney
Bo & Sandi Rose
Mike & Maureen Goldberger
Judy Freudenthal
Ron & Michelle Ornstein
Cindy Baron
Mitch & Valerie Lovinger
Patti & Leonard Huffman
Les & Becky Mintzer
Arnie Kahn & Elly Swecker
Elliott & Thea Golub
Eric & Jayne Rynar
Leslie & Bill Harris
Gale & Charlie Clemons
Dara & Michael Hall
Sherri & Bruce Alt
Mikael Glako
Valerie Stephens
Chuck Slott

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

We hope everyone enjoyed a wonderful Thanksgiving!
We are so thankful for our magnificent teachers and religious school families.
We do so many wonderful things together!

On November 19th, we came together for dinner and celebrated Rabbi Joe and his 13 years as part of the Beth El community. It was a joy to watch the kids sing to Rabbi Joe as a way to let him know how much he means to our community.

On November 20th, we celebrated a Global Day of Jewish Learning along with about 500 other Jewish communities world-wide.
We learned about the Importance of Conserving and Protecting Nature with concepts such as Bal Tashchit (do not destroy) and humanity's relationship with nature as a ruler and/or steward. There were many excellent points of discussion as we contemplated what we can do as Jewish people to help protect nature and make the world more beautiful.
Thank you to Leslie Harris and Valerie Kramer for helping out with this event!
We enjoyed many crafts with clay and paint and recycled or repurposed materials and baked our own individual challahs.
These activities were well aligned with some of the Midrash we explored:

“When the world was created,
God made everything a little bit incomplete.
Rather than making bread grow out of the earth,
God made wheat grow so that we might bake it into bread.
Rather than making the earth of bricks,
God made it of clay
So that we might bake the clay into bricks.

Why?

So that we might become partners
In completing the work of creation.”

December is another exciting month for Religious School.
We will be preparing for our Religious School Shabbat Service.
I hope EVERYONE will join us in support of our religious school children and come to Beth El on Friday, December 16th as our children lead our service.

L'shalom,

Dara (co-Principal)

SHORTY

Our youth group, SHORTY, had a lot of fun on October 27th getting together and carving pumpkins and eating some dessert!

On November 19th, we joined the congregation in celebrating Rabbi Joe's "13th".

We presented Rabbi Joe with a short skit called "Rabbi Google" to let him know how brilliant we think he is. He always knows the answers to our tough questions – or at least he does a great job of getting us thinking deeply about many important questions!

There is lots more fun to come with SHORTY in December. Want to join us?

Contact Becky Mintzer at rem82398@gmail.com for more information!

SISTERHOOD

Sisterhood news!

Hope everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving with family and friends!

I can hardly believe we will soon be into December.

Some past news: 5 of our women traveled to Baltimore last month for the WRJ Sisterhood Convention

It was a wonderful weekend of celebrating Shabbat together with women from Delaware down to North Carolina.

We had great learnshops and guest speakers, as well as installing the new District President

I am proud to say Margee Greenfield was also installed with the district to continue as an

Area Director working with other sisterhoods close to our area.

We always bring home great ideas and new thoughts and we have spent special time together.

We helped celebrate with the Rabbi Joe and the congregation on his being with us for 13 years.

It was a great "Bar Mitzvah" celebration with so many in attendance.

Sisterhood presented Rabbi Joe with an engraved Cross pen as well as a certificate for his dedication .

Congratulations Rabbi Joe!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS: Save the date for December 18th--this will be our annual Hanukkah dinner, although it is really a pre-Hanukkah Hanukkah dinner! We will have our usual soup , brisket and home made latkes followed by jelly doughnuts. Our gift shop will be open and a grand time will be had by all.

Flyers with more information will be coming to your door very soon.

Next Sisterhood meeting is planned for Monday, December 5 with more information coming as to place, time will be 6pm. Looking forward to seeing everyone.

PLEASE if you have not already sent your Sisterhood dues, send a check to BethEl Sisterhood, \$ 36.00 to the Temple or Leslie Ney, our treasurer.

Our dues help pay our district dues as well as helping with our projects such as Open Doors, First Step etc.

Thank you so much, please consider even if you are not able to attend meetings..

Sherri Alt, Bekah Greenfield

ANNOUNCEMENTS

A new congregation list is being readied.

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 the 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.

I would like to thank everyone who helped and attended the Fundraising Event that we held to honor the 13 years of Rabbi Joe at Beth El. Special thanks to the Religious School Students, SHORTY, Sisterhood, and Men's Club for their presentations. Special thanks to my wife, Leslie for creating the special memory book for Rabbi Joe. Also thank you to Sherri & Margee for helping with the room setup, decorations and food preparation. As of now we have raised \$649.75 from this project and am looking forward to more donations to be coming through in the next few days.

Bill

DECEMBER LAY SERVICE SCHEDULE

Friday, 12/23 @ 7:30 pm

Friday, 12/30 @ 7:30 pm - Moreh Mike & Amanda Friss



RABBI JOE'S 13TH BIRTHDAY AT BETH EL



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
27	28	29	30	1	2	3
9:30amNO RELIGIOUS SCHOOL					5:30pmTot Shabbat- POTLUCK DINNER	
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
9:30amRELIGIOUS SCHOOL					Hannah Lovinger Bat Mitzvah 7:30pmHannah Lovinger Bat Mitzvah	Hannah Lovinger Bat Mitzvah 10amHannah Lovinger Bat Mitzvah
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
9:30amRELIGIOUS SCHOOL					6pm6:15 pm RELIGIOUS SCHOOL DINNER, SHABBAT & CONSECRATION- Rabbi Joe	
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
9:30amNO RELIGIOUS SCHOOL	6:30amOPEN DOORS	5amHANUKKAH	6:30amOPEN DOORS	6:30amOPEN DOORS	OPEN DOORS	Christmas Eve
6pmHanukkah Dinner- Sisterhood	7pmBoard Meeting	6:30amOPEN DOORS			7:30pmLay Service	OPEN DOORS
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Christmas Day	Christmas Day observed	Hanukkah III	Hanukkah IV	Hanukkah V	Hanukkah VI/Rosh Chodesh Tevet	Hanukkah VII
Hanukkah I (Holiday of lights)	Hanukkah II	5amHANUKKAH		5amHANUKKAH	5amHANUKKAH	New Year's Eve
5amHANUKKAH	5amHANUKKAH				7:30pmAmanda Friss & Moreh Mike- Lay Services	5amHANUKKAH
6amOPEN DOORS	6:30amOPEN DOORS					

Beth El Congregation
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TO: