

APRIL HIGHLIGHTS

Learning About Judaism

Rabbi Schultz offers suggestions for anyone interested in learning more about the basics of Judaism. Page 3.

Fans of Cantor Blum

They are known as “the Mahjong Ladies,” and they may well be Cantor Sheri Blum’s biggest fans. Page 4

Embracing Our Children

Rabbi Marion suggests ways to love our children for who they are, in a world that contains destructive messaging about gender and harmful notions about what boys “should” or shouldn’t do, and how girls “should” or shouldn’t behave. Page 5.

Seders for the Very Young

Alexa Cohen presents ideas for making the Seder more appealing for young children and encouraging them to ask questions. Page 6

Telling Stories

Ira Wise writes about “self-authorship,” in which learners claim their narrative and weave the educational experience they encounter into their lives. Page 7.

Also Inside

Sharing Our Joy P. 2
Bonim..... P. 6
Adult Learning..... P. 8
Donations P. 9
Shabbat Services..... P. 15

A MESSAGE FROM RABBI SCHULTZ

Dear B’nai Israel community. As I write this on Friday, March 13, I have no idea what the state of the world will be when this arrives on your doorsteps. I have been so impressed by how we have garnered strength together as a community. So many people have volunteered to help out others, and we have created sacred spaces over Facebook and Zoom.

Let’s hope that as you read this there is some light amidst the challenging news and realities of the day. I wanted to share some reflections that I wrote in March, as we were preparing to close our synagogue doors to in-person groups and gatherings, I hope they provide a bit of calm and peace. Praying you are all finding strength in this time from one another and from

the beautiful and comforting words of our tradition. With love and support, Rabbi Schultz.

Written on March 10

I’m often amazed how our ancient poets so poignantly spoke to the human condition. Running my overly Purell’ed hands today along the words of Ecclesiastes, “to everything there is a season... a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing...”

You never quite know when a text will suddenly jump out and make sense to you. In one sense I wanted to laugh, after all humor helps us through times of crisis. I too felt so sad; hugs and

Continued on P.15

FUNDS WITH A PURPOSE

B’nai Israel has a number of “special purpose funds” to which those in our synagogue community and non-congregants make regular donations. Starting in this issue of the Bulletin, we will highlight some of those funds so you will have a better idea how they are used.

Needless to say, you are encouraged to donate to all of the Temple’s special purpose funds, but particularly to those being spotlighted, as they could use a boost to fulfill their mission.

Many people use them to celebrate a special birthday, anniversary, engagement or birth, to honor a Bar or Bat Mitzvah, to congratulate someone on an accomplishment, to honor the memory of a loved one, to express gratitude, for a special blessing in your life, or just because it’s a nice thing to do. An acknowledgment is sent to the person that

you indicate on your donation form and is something that is always wonderful for someone to receive.

This month we are featuring two special purpose funds. The **Rabbi Arnold Sher Social Action Fund**

was established in 1990 to honor our Rabbi Emeritus Arnold Sher on his departure, after more than 20 years as our rabbi, to become director of placement for the Central Conference of American Rabbis.

The establishment of this particular fund reflected Rabbi Sher’s commitment to making social action a cornerstone of B’nai Israel’s mission. The fund has

Continued on P.16



Rabbi Arnold I. Sher

PASSOVER SERVICE SCHEDULE:

Thursday, April 9

10:00 a.m. Passover Morning Service

Wednesday, April 15

10:00 a.m. 7th Day of Passover. Yizkor Service

SHARING OUR JOY...

Jenny Goldstein, in celebration of being promoted to Chief Development Officer of Americares

SINCERE SYMPATHY

We extend our sympathy to the bereaved families of:

Arnold Shear, father of Perry Shear

Karin Newman

Joel Zabin

TORAH STUDY — SHABBAT MORNINGS

What binds together Jews across the millennia? Torah, questions, and food. Every Saturday morning at 9:30 we study Torah and ask questions, bringing into today and into our own lives the amazing adventures of the Jewish people. Won't you join us? No prior experience necessary. No knowledge of Hebrew needed. No weekly commitment required. We are studying Torah line-by-line and only now, seven months later, reaching Abraham after Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, and Noah and the pairs (or is it seven?) of every animal. Please join us for the plague-filled negotiations, commandments, and desert wanderings with your puzzling, insightful, and skeptical questions. To win the Jewish trifecta, come early for a bagel at the Brotherhood breakfast. There's always a chair for you.

BULLETIN BOARD

Shop for Your Passover Needs!



Passover will be here before you know it. The first Seder is on Wednesday evening, April 8th. Drop by the Gift Boutique

on Sunday, March 29 and April 5, to see the new selection of Seder plates from Michael Aram and Emanuel, matzoh dishes from Sheraleah, bags of plagues, squishy frogs and much, much more. Doors open at 9:30 a.m. Shop local and support your community!

April Mitzvah Morning



Please join us for the April Mitzvah Morning on Sunday, April 26th from 9:30 to noon. Once again, we'll be serving breakfast at Homes for the Brave. HFTB is a wonderful organization that provides housing, vocational and life-skills training to homeless veterans. They greatly appreciate our coming to make a hot meal, but even more so, they appreciate our active engagement with them and the opportunity we provide to tell their stories. This is a great mitzvah for families and kids. We'll meet at HFTB, 655 Park Avenue (private parking lot available), at 9:30 a.m. for coffee and bagels. Volunteers are limited to 15 (due to kitchen size), so please sign up through Hashavua or the temple website.

Red Cross Blood Drive

There is always a need for blood donations. We will host a blood drive on May 11 from 1:00 to 6:00 p.m. Please call 1(800)REDCROSS or go to www.redcross.com to make your appointment.

What Happened at Mt. Sinai



In some circles, when two Jews meet for the first time and one suggests that they have met before, the response is often "We must have met at Mt. Sinai." We have some very powerful textual memories of what happened there some 3,400 years ago or so. Join Ira Wise for an exploration of what may well have – or not have happened at Mt. Sinai. We will also discuss what Moses gave us that day. There will be two opportunities to study this topic: **Monday Midrash** – **May 18, 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.**, and **Lifelong Learning** – **Friday, May 22, Noon – 1:30 p.m.**

Fraudulent Emails

Please continue to be aware of "fake" emails that appear to be coming from Rabbi Schultz. Thank you to those who have reported these suspicious emails. Note that the only official Congregation B'nai Israel email addresses are those that end in cbibpt.org. Rabbi Schultz's B'nai Israel email is: eschultz@cbibpt.org. Thank you for remaining vigilant and aware.



FROM THE RABBI'S DESK/RABBI EVAN SCHULTZ

LOOKING FOR 'INTRODUCTION TO JUDAISM' OPPORTUNITIES?

There is a reason that our ancient Rabbis likened Jewish knowledge and wisdom to an ocean or a sea. Just look around our library -- hundreds of books on Jewish history, law, practice, prayer, God, and more -- it can feel like an immensely overwhelming and deep ocean! I know that many in our community wish to deepen their knowledge of Judaism, especially the basics. But where to begin? It can feel like a vast sea -- where to swim first?

I want to offer a few suggestions if you're interested in learning more about some of the basics of Judaism. Some of these options are in person at our synagogue, and others are online or "virtual" communities.

The good news is that there are some great resources out there! And as always, if you have more questions, I am always available to listen and talk. My email is eschultz@cbibpt.org.

In person:

Sunday morning twenty minutes of Torah: About once a month Rabbi Marion and I offer a twenty minutes of Torah class on Sunday mornings from 9:40 to 10:00 a.m., where we focus on some basic Jewish terms and ideas. This year our focus is on female characters in the Bible: Miriam, Hagar, and Sarah, for example. Many of our participants hadn't heard of these characters or knew little

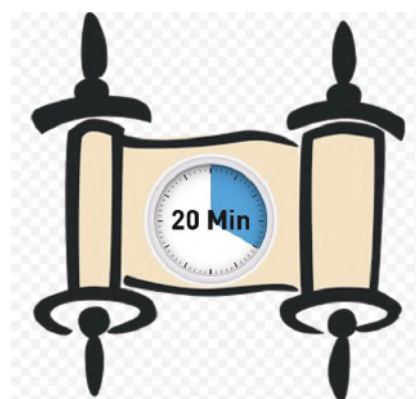
of their stories. We are starting to think about potential topics for next year, and would love any ideas you have!

B'nai Israel Adult Education courses: We are always trying to think of topics that will speak to our diverse set of learners at B'nai Israel. This month you'll see that Rabbi Marion, Ira and I will be teaching introductory courses on both the prayer book and Israel. These are great ways to focus on two important and specific topics. These classes are specifically for congregants interested in learning the basics of the Jewish worship service and introductory theories on Zionism and the state of Israel. If you have other areas of Jewish life that you're interested in learning about, please email me and we'll do our best to get those topics on the calendar.

Online:

My Jewish Learning: If you're interested in learning about basic Jewish topics on a regular basis, I recommend signing up for My Jewish Learning's weekly emails. I receive their emails and they are excellent. They cover all kinds of introductory topics, from learning about the Jewish life cycle to preparation for each upcoming Jewish holiday. Head to their website and sign up for their emails: <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/>

URJ Introduction to Judaism Online Course: The Union for Reform Judaism



offers a comprehensive introduction to Judaism class online. The 21-session course covers all topics related to Jewish life, from the holidays to life cycle, basic terms and concepts to ideas about God. We have had several congregants take the online class and found it to be a really positive learning experience. To learn more about the online class, check out: <https://reformjudaism.org/learning/judaism-classes/intro-judaism-0>

Stay tuned for other new and dynamic ways to learn. We are specifically thinking about more ways to use the Facebook Live platform and even text messages to create new and interesting courses and classes.

We hope that every congregant will find meaningful opportunities for learning here at the synagogue and in the virtual world. We hope to enable everyone to navigate the ocean of Jewish knowledge. See you at the study table!

HOLOCAUST COMMEMORATIONS

There will be two opportunities to commemorate the Holocaust in our area.

First, we invite you to join with area rabbis and cantors for a Yom Hashoah commemoration on April 20 at 7:00 p.m. at Temple Israel, 14 Coleytown Road, Westport. The evening will begin with a service in memory of the six million Jews who died in the Shoah, followed

by a program. Please check Hashavua for more details.

Then, on April 29, the Town of Fairfield will hold its Holocaust Commemoration at 7:30 p.m. at the First Church Congregational at 148 Beach Road.

The feature speaker will be Dr. Leon Chameides, Emeritus Director of

Pediatric Cardiology at Connecticut Children's Medical Center.

He was born in Poland in 1935 and was hidden from 1942 to 1944 in a Greek-Catholic Ukrainian monastery. He came to the United States in 1949. Since coming to Hartford, in 1967, he has been active in its Jewish community and has delivered lectures on Jewish history, the Shoah, and a variety of Biblical topics.

THE CANTOR'S BIGGEST FANS



The "Mahjong Ladies," from left, back row, Alicia Brown, Wendy Ruben, and Lisa Hurlbert. Front row, Jessica Sutton, Heidi Gassel and Angela Capinera.

Cantor Sheri Blum has ardent admirers throughout the B'nai Israel community, but her biggest fans may well be the women she refers to as the "Mahjong Ladies."

These women, who often gather in the synagogue lobby to chat or play mahjong while their children are in classes at Merkaz, have known the cantor for many years as she mentored their sons and daughters.

"All the kids adore her," one of the women, Wendy Ruben, said. The others include Alicia Brown, Heidi Gassel, Angela Capinera, Lisa Hurlbert and Jessica Sutton.

Cantor Blum has guided both children and parents through the often hectic times of bar and bat mitzvah, not to mention Confirmation and Junior Choir. And she has taken them on her annual trips to New York to see a Broadway show.

All the women praised Cantor Blum for her calm approach to her work and the confidence she instilled in their children.

"She's so relaxed," Jessica said. "Even if you're stressed out, she convinces you that it's all going to be OK."

"She always pushes you to do your best, and says you can do it," Angela said.

"I've been in the temple 24 years," Lisa added, "and I don't think I've ever seen her mad."

The women also spoke of how organized Cantor Blum is, and her attention to detail.

"She explains everything for the bar and bat mitzvah experience," Wendy said.

Jessica agreed, saying "You're really prepared."

Several of the women said Cantor Blum warned the children that on the day of their bar or bat mitzvah, relatives would come up to them offering big hugs and to accept them graciously.

Heidi said she was persuaded to join B'nai Israel after seeing videos on YouTube of musical programs at the synagogue, including "High Shul Musical."

"We knew it was a good community for us," she said.

All the women echoed Alicia Brown who said, "If she asks me to do something, I'm there – no questions asked."

"You can't say no to her," Wendy added.

PLANNING THE CANTOR'S FAREWELL

When Sheri Blum decided to retire as our cantor after 26 years, she knew exactly what she wanted for her farewell celebration. Instead of the traditional gala, she asked for a potluck supper that everyone could attend free of charge.

Three volunteers stepped in to make it happen: Allison Spitzer, Jackie Madwed and Bev Goodkind.

The event, on June 12, will begin with a music-filled Friday night service at 6 p.m., followed by dinner. Allison said the committee is planning for several hundred people to attend.

"Sheri wants the community to come together and share food," Allison said. "It's never been done before on this scale."



Cantor Sheri E. Blum

"We need volunteers to work that night," Bev said, "to set up the dessert table, make coffee, replenish things."

"Success depends on everyone participating," she added.

Jackie is coordinating the fund-raising

aspect of the event, a songbook that will be kept in the pews in the sanctuary. It will not be a traditional ad journal, although congregants will be asked to donate and their names will be listed.

Invitations have been sent in the mail, and members are asked to sign up by the end of April through the B'nai Israel website. Those planning to attend will be asked to list how many family members are coming, how many of them are children and what menu items they will be bringing.

"We want this to be casual, relaxed and happy," Allison said.

"This is what Sheri wants. It's her vision -- something down-to-earth and inclusive," Allison said, "like an indoor tailgate picnic."



FROM THE RABBI'S STUDY/RABBI SARAH R. MARION

THE FOUR CHILDREN

Every Passover Haggadah describes “The Four Children” (or, in more traditional Haggadot, “The Four Sons”). There are four moments in the Torah in which we are instructed to recount the story of the Exodus to our children. In our Passover Haggadot, the “Four Children” are meant to remind us of these four passages.

I’ve always loved the way that the “Four Children” represent the real-life diversity among all the children that we know and love. The wise child, the simple child, the child who does not yet know how to ask, and, yes, even the wicked child – all of these personas represent the wide range of normal childhood development and behavior. And most importantly, by including and embracing the “Four Children” within our Passover Seders, we have the opportunity to convey to *all* of our children that no matter your struggles and no matter your questions, you are included and you are valued and you are loved, both within our family and within our broader Jewish community. I think that it is so important for our children to hear this message from us not only on Passover, but, also, on every other day of the year.

A few months ago, I gave an Erev Shabbat sermon on the topic of loving and caring for our children for who they are, in a world that contains so much destructive messaging about gender and so many harmful notions about what boys “should” or shouldn’t do, and how girls “should” or shouldn’t behave. Below is an excerpt:

For thousands of years, gathered around their Shabbat dinner tables, huddled together by the glow of the Sabbath lights, Jewish parents have blessed their sons with the words,

Yisemcha elohim k’Ephraim v’Menasseh –

May you live to be like Ephraim and Menasseh.



And, eventually, a blessing for daughters was added – with the words,

Yisemcha elohim k’sarah, rivka, Rachel v’leah

May you live to be like Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah.

But male or female, son or daughter, *all* of these individuals, I think, are worthy of emulation: Ephraim and Menasseh for their legacy of peace and faith; Sarah for her strength and perseverance; Rebecca for her external and internal beauty; Rachel and Leah for their ability to nurture their young.

And so perhaps the best blessing of all that we can give to our children, is the blessing that it’s OK to be both, *just as God is both*. In fact, it’s more than OK. You don’t have to choose one or the other, nor should you.

You can be like Ephraim *and* you can be like Sarah. You can be like Menasseh *and* you can be like Rebecca. You can be beautiful *and* you can be brave. You can be strong *and* you can be nurturing. And whatever, or however, you choose to be, we will love you no matter what.

Ultimately, our most important job as parents, grandparents, teachers and friends, is to create an environment in which our children feel loved for who they are; an environment in which they

feel valued regardless of their gender expression. Our job is to love them simply because they are our children, simply because they are alive.

And so I want to propose an amendment to the age-old Jewish blessings that we say to our children on Friday nights. I want to propose, that when we bless our children, we take all of them together, into one embrace, and say, to *all* of them:

May you be like Ephraim and Menasseh, *and* may you be like Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah. May you be beautiful *and* may you be brave. May you be strong *and* may you be nurturing. May you be smart *and* may you be kind.

But, most important of all – may you be you.

May you grow into the best version of Michaela,

May you grow into the best version of Levi.

May you be who you are – and may you be *blessed* in all that you are.

Kein y’hi ratzon – may this be God’s will.

This closing prayer is based on an excerpt from Marcia Falk, The Book of Blessings: New Jewish Prayers for Daily Life, the Sabbath and the New Moon Festival.



BONIM BUZZ/ALEXA COHEN, EARLY CHILDHOOD DIRECTOR

PASSOVER SEDER FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

The Four Questions, which so many of us now sing as part of our Passover Seder, were once simply a list of things done differently on the first night of the holiday.

The goal was to encourage children to ask their own questions.

Actually, if participants ask questions of their own during the Seder, no singing of *Mah Nishtanah* is required – and knowing this original story gives you the freedom to reimagine ways to enhance your Seder. It doesn't even require a special, child-friendly Haggadah -- though there are many to choose from. All you need is to do some thinking in advance about who will be present at your Seder. According to your child's understanding of how things are usually done at mealtime, plan to do things differently enough to spark their curiosity and prompt every parent's favorite question: "Why?"

Before the Seder

1. **Practice.** Help your 4- or 5-year-old learn or brush up on *Mah Nishtanah*.
2. **Let kids help clean.** Are you already giving your child chores around the house? This is a great time to involve them in Passover prep, including dusting, sweeping, and other general cleaning. As you clear out *chametz* (leaven) from your cabinets, kids can bag up packages of cereal, crackers, and pasta for storage or donation. They can also handle dusters and Swiffers – or feathers and wooden spoons, if you'd like to do Passover cleaning the traditional way.
3. **Enjoy some quiet time.** If you kids are done with naps, consider

some enforced quiet time during the day to ensure that they arrive to the Seder refreshed. (This is a good strategy for many adults, as well.)

4. **Create a cozy space.** Is your kid a fort-builder? Ask for their help turning your living room or dining room into a "desert tent," as in Israel, or creating a reading tent complete with pillows, blankets, and age-appropriate holiday picture books.
5. **Set up for the Seder.** Consider your child's growing capabilities and, if appropriate, invite their help setting the Seder table.
6. **Consider kids-only seating.** Take the tradition of the "kids' table" seriously by moving in a child-sized picnic table or craft table. Instead of a tablecloth, tape down a sheet of butcher paper, and set out some fat crayons or washable markers.

During the Seder

7. **Encourage questions – creatively.** Find new ways to elicit questions. Perhaps keep a bowl of kosher-for-Passover marshmallows ready, tossing one to any attendee who asks or answers a question during the Seder.
8. **Get comfy.** Many people recline at the Seder to celebrate being free. With kids, try this: Instead of putting a pillow on each chair, consider sitting on sofas or on the floor until the meal is served.
9. **Offer snacks.** It's tough to get through the first 10 steps of the Seder and onto the meal if kids are hangry, crabby, or sleepy – so offer lots of veggies and berries

to dip after the *karpas* (parsley blessing). Anything that comes from a perennial plant or shrub will do.

10. **Use props.** Use hats or costumes and invite children to act out the action of the Exodus story; haul out the Lego bricks to make kids' creations part of your storytelling; bring out a bucket of egg shakers, maracas, and tambourines when it comes time to sing and dance.
11. **Prizes, please!** Choose small, age-appropriate gifts for afikomen-hunters that kids can enjoy after dinner.

After the Seder

12. **Be compassionate.** Don't be surprised if kids don't eat anything more than matzah ball soup... and cue up a Passover video or movie for them to watch while the meal continues. If you can still find it, "The Rugrats Passover" is hilarious (for adults too).



The main idea is to inspire joy, capitalize on curiosity, and tell the story of the Exodus from Egypt – and frankly, you just can't be successful in doing so if you're hanging onto unrealistic expectations of young children. With a little effort and creativity on your part, nobody will even think to ask, "When do we eat?"

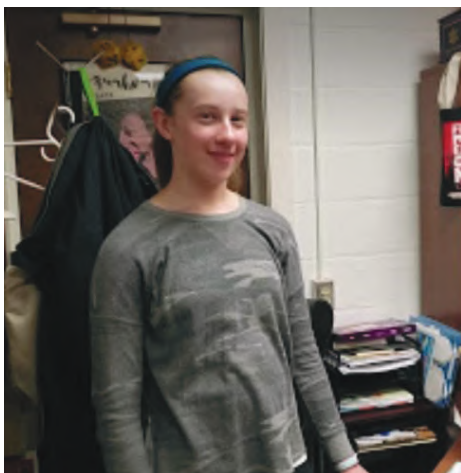


FROM THE EDUCATION CENTER/IRA J. WISE

WHO TELLS YOUR STORY?

As part of my learning with the Institute for Experiential Jewish Education we have spent a lot of time discussing “self-authorship.” They define it as the process by which learners claim their narrative and weave the educational experience they encounter into their lives. The process can tie together past, present and future, and provide individuals with a sense of internal unity and purpose.

How might this play out? In Kitah Zayin (7th grade) this semester, our students have two classes. During one period, Scott Verchin is introducing them to the heroes, fighters and rescuers of the Holocaust. They learn about Jews who fought back and non-Jews who risked their own lives and those of their families to protect those the Nazis wanted to liquidate. They discuss the horrible choices that were faced. In the course of their conversations, our teens find themselves sharing stories of the intolerance they or their friends may have encountered, directed at them or others.



Lindsay Oberhand telling her Family Story using an exhibit she created.

‘We are rooted in our stories – both communal AND individual stories...We need to invite and listen to the story of each family and each individual, and find ways to celebrate those stories.’

During the other period, Scott Smith is teaching the My Family Story curriculum provided by Beit Hatfutsot – the Museum of the Jewish People in Tel Aviv. Here each learner is tasked with interviewing family members, exploring as many generations as they can that led to them sitting in B’nai Israel on a Tuesday evening. They are learning the stories of their family and making them their own. In the course of the semester they will create an exhibit that will allow them to share what they have learned and embraced.

In both cases, we invite the learner to bring a real part of themselves to the content of our learning and, in so doing, they bring the content deeper into themselves.

Just two weeks before I studied self-authorship at the institute, the *Kehilah* (Community)¹ Curriculum Working Group met in February with Rabbi Schultz. The idea was to make sure that the curriculum we are revising and developing is aligned with his vision for our congregation. He shared several ideas that were very exciting.

One of the central ideas he discussed that evening was mirrored by the teachers at the institute. He said “We are rooted

in our stories – both communal AND individual stories...We need to invite and listen to the story of each family and each individual, and find ways to celebrate those stories. We need LOTS of listening... and a few more stories from people sharing themselves... Our other job here is to help people connect their own stories to Jewish values

What I am learning at the Institute for Experiential Jewish Education is at the heart of how we are changing teaching and learning in our Kehilah. I am so excited that it is so in line with Rabbi Schultz’s vision. To quote McLean and Pasupathi², “It is an individual’s story which has the power to tie together past, present and future in his or her life. It is a story which is able to provide unity and purpose.” I add that by connecting the learner’s own story to the story and values of the Jewish people, we can help them develop a Jewish identity and life skills that will sustain them throughout their lifetime.

L’shalom,

Ira J. Wise, D.J.R.E.
Director of Educator

¹ Kehilah (Community) is the new name of our Religious School, reflecting the new experiences of our learners.

² Kate C. McLean & Monisha Pasupathi (2012) Process of Identity Development in Identity : An International Journal of Theory and Research, 12:1



ADULT JEWISH LEARNING AT CONGREGATION B'NAI ISRAEL



Adult Round Table

Thursdays, April 2 and May 7 at 12:30 p.m.

Ilene Goby facilitates a discussion about current events for anyone who wants to go beyond the headlines. Join us the first Thursday of every month, and bring a sandwich, your opinion and an open mind.

Introduction to Kabbalat

Shabbat Friday Evening Service

Lifelong Learning: April 3, Noon – 1:00 p.m.

Join Rabbi Schultz for a look at the Kabbalat Shabbat Friday evening service. How is it structured? Why do we welcome a bride? Who are the ministering angels? We'll learn and sing a few melodies as well!

Fearless Females in the Bible! Twenty Minutes of Torah

Sunday, April 5 at 9:35 – 9:55 a.m. in the Natt Family Library

Rabbi Marion is leading this month's bite-sized Torah with a brief but meaty Jewish conversation! Come join her in the Natt Family Library to learn about two heroes of the Exodus story you may not have met – Shifra and Puah!

Introduction to Shabbat Morning Service

Lifelong Learning: April 10, Noon – 1:00 p.m.

Join Ira Wise for a look at the Shabbat Morning service. We begin with Psalms of praise and the miracles of daily living. We move on to God's greatest hits and then rise to celebrate Shabbat. And then we have a parade and Torah reading! What's it all mean? Let's figure it out together and you can decide what it might mean for you!

Rosh Chodesh

Thursday, April 16, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Join with women from across the B'nai Israel community each month for conversation, laughter and learning as we celebrate the start of the new moon and soak in the wisdom of our female ancestors. Women of all ages are welcome. Our gatherings will be held at Congregation B'nai Israel from 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. unless otherwise announced. Questions? Contact Rabbi Sarah Marion at smarion@cbibpt.org. Future meetings will be 5/14 and 6/25.

Introduction to Havdalah

Lifelong Learning: April 10, Noon – 1:00 p.m.



Together we will explore the beautiful Havdalah ritual that closes out Shabbat, taking a deep dive into the service and the meaning behind each of the ritual items. Join Rabbi Marion to explore why the Havdalah candle is braided, why we inhale the smell of spices, where and why the Havdalah service originated, and more!

Late 19th-Early 20th Century Visions for the Land of Israel

Lifelong Learning: April 24, Noon – 1:00 p.m.

Join with Rabbi Schultz to look at some of the late 19th- early 20th century visions for the land of Israel. Who succeeded? Whose vision fell short of the country we see today? How do those early visions impact our own notions of Zionism today?

Israel and America: A Special Relationship?

Lifelong Learning: May 1, Noon – 1:30 p.m.

We will look at the history and discuss the current state of relations between these two nations. We will also explore the relationship between Americans (both Jewish and non-Jewish) and the Jewish state and how that impacts on Jewish identity in America and on political considerations. Join Ira Wise for a conversation that is only the beginning!

The Poetry of Yehuda Amichai

Lifelong Learning: May 8, Noon – 1:00 p.m.

Widely beloved as Israel's greatest contemporary poet, Yehuda Amichai touches the soul through his evocative yet universally resonant musings that drift from the sacred to the mundane and everywhere in between. From war to love, from his parents to his children, from loving the Jews and despairing for the Jews, from shopping for groceries in Jerusalem to the politics of Jerusalem, from sex to God and then back again – Amichai's poetry will take you on a journey that is as distant as it is personal. Join Rabbi Marion as we take a deep dive into the English translations of a selection of Amichai's greatest writings - discovering, as we go, our own stories and our own journeys carefully positioned between the lines.

Who Decides What the Torah Means?

Two opportunities to study this topic:
Monday Midrash - May 11, 7:00 – 8:30 p.m. or

Lifelong Learning – Friday, May 15, Noon – 1:30 p.m.

All Jews read the same version of the Torah, yet we all interpret its meaning differently. Join with Rabbi Schultz for this course on the various ways Jews interpret the Torah, and its impact on us and our community in the 21st century.

APRIL DONATIONS

(We greatly appreciate all donations to our special purpose funds.)

Rabbi Schultz Discretionary Fund

Elaine and Juda Chetrit, in memory of Shirley Goldstein, grandmother of Jenny Goldstein.

Rhea Farbman, with thanks to Rabbi Schultz for celebrating Tu B'shvat with the Keshet Project.

Sheila and Marshall Greenspan, in honor of Melanie Dreizen's Bat Mitzvah; in appreciation of Rabbi Schultz.

Aleksey and Raisa Ledvich, in memory of aunt, Sheila Sotnik; in memory of grandmother, Sarah Ledvich; in memory of grandfather, Menashe Goldenfarb.

Larry Levine and Alison Bonds, in appreciation of Rabbi Schultz.

Alice Madwed, in memory of husband, Albert Madwed.

Carol and Rick Offenbach, in memory of Vivienne Z. Goldstein; in memory of Sidney Loewith Goldstein; in memory of Helene Cohn Offenbach.

Serena and Arnie Sher, in memory of Shirley Goldstein, grandmother of Jenny Goldstein.

Claire and Allan Shumofsky, in appreciation of Rabbi Schultz standing by us in good times and bad, and in anticipation of continued support for our fellow congregants.

Bonnie Slyn and David Ball, in memory of Harvey Levine, husband of Geraldine Levine, father of Larry Levine.

Rabbi Marion Discretionary Fund

Paula and Bob Herzlinger, in memory of Bernard Gladstein, father of Geoffrey Gladstein.

Larry Levine and Alison Bonds, in appreciation of Rabbi Marion.

Karin Newman, in memory of Ruth Aaron, mother of Mollie Keller.

Rabbi James Prosnit Legacy Fund

Donations made in memory of Harvey Levine, husband of Geraldine Levine, father of Larry Levine, were made by:

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Larry Levine and Alison Bonds, in appreciation of Susan and Rich Walden; in appreciation of Ilene Feldman and Harvey Bluestein.

Serena and Arnie Sher, in honor of Joanne and Richard Krantz, on the birth of grandson, Cameron Gillies.

Claire and Allan Shumofsky, in appreciation of Rabbi Prosnit standing by us in good times and bad, and in anticipation of continued support for our fellow congregants.

Music Fund

Donations made in honor of Mark Edinberg and his musical contributions to B'nai Israel were made by:

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Jim and Lisa Greenberg

Serena and Arnie Sher

Eric Stein and Dyann Ross

Sheila and Marshall Greenspan, in honor of Melanie Dreizen's Bat Mitzvah; in appreciation to Cantor Blum.

Larry Levine and Alison Bonds, in appreciation to Cantor Blum and Barbara Rowe.

George and Chris Markley, in loving memory of Martha Markley.

Judy Rankell, in memory of beloved husband, Al Rankell.

Claire and Allan Shumofsky, in appreciation of Cantor Blum standing by us in good times and bad, and in anticipation of continued support for our fellow congregants.

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Liz and Mark Nigrosh, in honor of Mark Edinberg; in memory of Harvey Levine, husband of Geraldine Levine, father of Larry Levine.

Serena and Arnie Sher, in honor of Mindy and Jeff Siegel, on daughter Rebecca's engagement to Alex Bacon.

Sylvia Prosnit Adult Education Fund

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Ruth and Eric Gross, a donation.

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Nursery School Scholarship Fund

Serena and Arnie Sher, in honor of Shari and Brian Nerreau, on the engagement of son Brad, to Samantha Russell; in honor of Sheryl and George Santiago, on daughter Arielle's engagement to Lindsay Albright.

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Mazon

Myrna Kaufman, in memory of mother, Florence Newman.

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Alyssa and Frederik Israel, a donation.
Carol Krim, Best wishes for Hank and Laurel Greenberg.

Larry Levine and Alison Bonds, in appreciation of Audrey and Ira Wise.

Religious School Enrichment Fund

Sarah Rocco, in honor of the marriage of Mr. and Mrs. Breiner's son.

APRIL DONATIONS

(We greatly appreciate all donations to our special purpose funds.)

Audrey and Ira Wise, in honor of Julia Plager's Bat Mitzvah.

Rabbi Arnold Sher Social Action Fund

Donations in honor of Mark Edinberg and his musical contributions to B'nai Israel were made by:

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Janet Rosen and George Sanders

Sheryl, George and Arielle Santiago

Carol Barsky, in memory of mother, Virginia Quint, mother-in-law, Jennie Barsky, and brother-in-law, Paul Barsky.

Bobby Bresler, in loving memory of grandson, Nathaniel.

Elaine and Juda Chetrit, Mazel Tov to Marge and Paul Krubiner on the birth of grandson, Rafi; Mazel Tov to Wendy and Ralph Michel, on the birth of grandson, Vaughn.

Dale and Jerry Demner, in memory of Bertha Greenfield, mother of Dale Demner; in memory of Lillian Slive, aunt of Dale Demner; in memory of Phyllis Goldstein, special friend of Dale and Jerry Demner.

Bari Dworken, in memory of Harvey Levine, husband of Geraldine Levine, father of Larry Levine.

Mark and Barbara Edinberg, in honor of Cantor Blum, the Adult Choir, Radio Klez, Anne Kirsch, Liz Nigrosh and the Temple Musicians who participated in Shabbat Shirah.

Beth Lazar, applauding B'nai Israel

Musicians, Klez Band, Adult Choir, Cantor Sheri Blum and Mark Edinberg on the 2020 Shabbat Shira Service; in loving memory of uncle, Robert Lazar.

George and Chris Markley, in gratitude to Claire and Allan Shumofsky for their many years of devotion to Congregation B'nai Israel.

Jerry Saunders and Elaine Appellof, in memory of Ileen Parker.

Serena and Arnie Sher, in honor of Liz and Mark Nigrosh, on the marriage of son, Seth, to Robin MacFadden; in memory of beloved mother, Isabelle Fishman.

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High Holy Day Appeal

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SCHULTZ

FROM P. 1

handshakes traded out for elbow bumps and namastes. Gatherings canceled, a mere sneeze prompts us to move farther away. Friends and strangers losing work and jobs, months of hard work planning upcoming events canceled in a painful matter of moments.

I looked at the line again, and it occurred to me: we are not alone. That one short line sings to us from the past, reassuring us in a small way that these times are part of the mysterious and sometimes painful scope and cycle of human history.

I know many of us are afraid right now, or at least a little anxious, confused or maybe think this is nothing at all. Surely we'll find out. But as I learned once from Ruth Messinger, it's ok to be afraid, but let's not despair.

It's painful right now to step back, to refrain from the embracing. Let's pray that we all get through it together, and support those who are most vulnerable at this time. And when we do get through, we'll once again embrace. And perhaps even appreciate the embrace that much more, holding on just a little bit longer.

Written on March 12

Tonight after putting the kids to bed I decided to go out for a short night run. Today felt immensely hard for so many of us, shutting down schools and synagogues, churches and senior centers. Even Disneyland closed.

There was a calmness in the air and I made my way down familiar streets, lit by the windows of neighborhood homes that seemed to be engaged in their regular evening activities.

As I turned off my headphones, I took a moment to recite the Hashkiveinu prayer. Hashkiveinu Adonai Eloheinu l'shalom, vhaamideinu shomreinu l'chayim. Grant, O God, that we lie down in peace, and raise us up, our Guardian, to life renewed. Shield us and shelter us beneath the shadow of Your wings. Defend us against illness and sorrow. Guard our going and coming, to life and peace, evermore.

For a moment I felt as though I truly prayed to God, as the droplets of rain and the cool March air briefly calmed my soul. Tonight and in the days to come, may we all find shelter and love, strength and comfort from one another and from our Creator as we weather and prepare for life's impending storm.

SHABBAT AND FESTIVAL SERVICE SCHEDULE

(Fridays at 6:00 p.m. where indicated, preceded by an Oneg Shabbat at 5:30 p.m.)

Friday, April 3

6:00 p.m. Service
Torah Portion – Tzav,
Lev. 1:1-5:26
Haftarah – Isaiah 43:21-44:23

Saturday, April 4

8:00 a.m. Service
9:00 a.m. Brotherhood Breakfast
9:30 a.m. Torah Study
10:00 a.m. Havurah for Families with Young Children
11:00 a.m. Bar Mitzvah of Evan Appel, son of Seth and Bonnie Appel

*Thursday, April 9

10:00 a.m. First Day of Passover Worship Service

Friday, April 10

6:00 p.m. Service
Torah Portion – Ha Hamoed Pesah, Lev. 6:1-8:36
Haftarah – Jeremiah 7:21-8:3; 9:22-23

Saturday, April 11

8:00 a.m. Service
9:00 a.m. Brotherhood Matzo Brei Breakfast
9:30 a.m. Torah Study

Wednesday, April 15

10:00 a.m. Passover Yizkor Service

Friday, April 17

6:00 p.m. Service
Torah Portion – Shemini, Lev. 9:1-11:47
Haftarah – 11 Samuel 6:1-7:17

Saturday, April 18

8:00 a.m. Service
9:00 a.m. Brotherhood Breakfast
9:30 a.m. Torah Study
11:00 a.m. Bar Mitzvah of Jacob Cohen, son of James and Danielle Cohen

Friday, April 24

6:00 p.m. Service lead by Noah Aronson and with the Junior Choir
Torah Portion – Tazria/

Metzora, Lev. 12:1-15:33
Haftarah – 11 Kings 7:3-20 or Isaiah 66:1-13, 23

Saturday, April 25

8:00 a.m. Service lead by Noah Aronson
9:00 a.m. Brotherhood Breakfast
9:30 a.m. Torah Study
10:00 a.m. Havurah for Families with Young Children led by Noah Aronson (Tot Shabbat)
11:00 a.m. Bat Mitzvah of Olivia Kahn, daughter of Bruce Kahn and Shari Greenblatt
7:00 p.m. Adult Outdoor Lawn-Chair Concert on our Patio (Tanglewood Style), with Noah Aronson and his band



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FUNDS FROM P. 1

been used for many of the Temple's social justice initiatives. For example, for over 20 years we have prepared and served dinners every month at St. John's Episcopal Church in Bridgeport and have provided meals for Operation Hope in Fairfield. The supplies to prepare these meals come from the Rabbi Arnold Sher Social Action Fund. The Fund also pays for any of the expenses of our monthly Mitzvah Mornings as well as the Temple's participation in various community efforts, including support of holiday dinners for "nOURish Bridgeport (Formerly NPUOI)," the Bridgeport Child Advocacy Coalition, and others.

Most recently, the Fund has contributed to a portion of the dues obligation for our membership in CONECT (Congregations Organized for a New Connecticut). CONECT is an interfaith coalition of over 30 churches, synagogues, and mosques whose mission is to effect social change on a number of fronts. Two of its current initiatives are

the Don't Stand Idly By campaign, aimed at reducing gun violence by encouraging the development of safe gun technology, and the Clean Slate campaign, whose purpose is to get meaningful legislation passed that will expunge criminal records for non-violent crimes after a reasonable number of years so as to eliminate barriers to a successful re-entry into society and to meaningful employment. Anyone wishing to assist with the effort to support our commitment to this work, should indicate that the donation to the Rabbi Sher Social Action Fund is directed to CONECT.

The **BIFTY Greenwald Scholarship Fund** was originally two funds – the BIFTY Fund and the Jack Greenwald Fund – which were consolidated approximately 10 years ago. The Jack Greenwald Fund was established in memory of a young member of the Congregation who died in 1972. Jack was the son of long-time members Sherman and Marcia Greenwald, both of whom have since passed away. The fund was created with the assistance of our Cantor Emeritus, Ramon Gilbert, who

served as a mentor to Jack and was close to the Greenwald family. Its purpose was to support the activities of the youth of the Congregation. Today the BIFTY Greenwald Scholarship Fund is used to provide funds to make certain that all our B'nai Israel youth are able to participate in Israel programs, summer camps, and activities of NFTY, the National Federation of Temple Youth.

Both the Rabbi Arnold Sher Social Action Fund and the BIFTY Greenwald Scholarship Fund serve critical needs and help fulfill the mission of Congregation B'nai Israel. Other special purpose funds will be featured in future Bulletins.

Donations to any of the Synagogues' funds are always appreciated and can be made on-line by going to our website (www.cbibpt.org) and clicking on the "Donate" button. Then click the "Online Donation Page." That will lead you to a list of all of the special purpose funds, which easily link you to the on-line donation page.