

APRIL HIGHLIGHTS

The mental health team invites us to a special Shabbat and dinner on May 9: Navigating the Anxieties of Parenting and Grandparenting.
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Rabbi Schultz shares some beautiful and inspirational words from Rachel Polin-Goldberg, mother of deceased hostage Hersh Polin-Goldberg.
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Rabbi Marion teaches us about five women from the Passover story who changed the course of history.
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ENJOY THE MUSIC OF THE JEWISH AMERICAN SONGBOOK



Congregation B'nai Israel
SATURDAY, APRIL 26, 2025
2:30 - 5:00 pm



Join us for a musical celebration of some of the greatest Jewish American composers. Members Anne Lampert and Sherrie and George Glass will entertain you with some of the most important and influential songs of the 20th century.

This was the era when the American songbook reached a new level of sophistication across the world and even helped paint a picture of our country's culture and customs. Consider the genius of Irving Berlin, George and Ira Gershwin, Rodgers & Hammerstein, and Jerome Kern to name a few. The music will span stage and screen and multiple decades.

The singers will be accompanied by Chris Coogan.

Anne is an accomplished jazz vocalist with a recording of American standards produced by Grammy nominee Pete McGuinness. She has studied with UCLA's Michele Weir and Connecticut-based Maggi Heilweil.

Sherrie Glass is a retired music educator who was assistant professor of instrumental music education and the orchestra director at Mississippi State University. She has also sung opera and attended summer opera workshops at the University of Indiana. She completed her Ph.D. at the University of Miami.



Admission is free

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS SHABBAT & DINNER: NAVIGATING THE ANXIETIES OF PARENTING & GRANDPARENTING FRIDAY, MAY 9, 2025



Join us for a special Shabbat Dinner on May 9, hosted by the B'nai Israel Mental Health Awareness Team. We are thrilled to celebrate Mental Health Awareness Month by welcoming two esteemed child psychologists, Dr. Barbara Ward Zimmerman and Dr. Elaine Ducharme, who will address your questions and concerns about children. Bring your questions, or send them in advance to Marj at marjorie.freeman.ms@gmail.com or Beth at ladybeth885@gmail.com.

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SINCERE SYMPATHY

We extend our sympathy to the bereaved family of:

Richard Sher, brother of Gail Weinstein

Dorothy Goldstein

Marilyn Walters Klein, grandmother of Jonathan Klein

Ina Underberger, mother of Dan Underberger

BULLETIN BOARD

MITZVAH MORNING

Sunday, May 4, 2025

10:00 a.m.

Congregation B'nai Israel

Special Mitzvah Morning Announcement:

Our Mitzvah Morning event originally scheduled for February, which was postponed due to inclement weather, will now be on May 4.

On May 4 we will be partnering with the JFS Schoke Mobile Food Truck team. We will meet at B'nai Israel at 10:00 a.m., where we will learn about the JFS Schoke program, and then perform a couple of important jobs.

The first job will be to fill and label spice bottles for individual and family use. Many of the families served by JFS Schoke do not have access to spices and seasonings, so these bottles are highly appreciated. We will have 200 spice jars on hand, to be filled with paprika, crushed red pepper, oregano, and pepper.

The second job involves the sorting of laundry bags. Laundry bags and detergent are scarce for the JFS Schoke clients. This makes simple tasks like cleaning clothes difficult for these families. Our volunteers will label these bags and pack detergent pods and dryer sheets into them, which will then be distributed to the families in need.

This is a great opportunity to provide much needed supplies to our community members who need them most, while building bonds with your fellow B'nai Israel members.

For more information, please contact judygblumenthal@gmail.com. And be on the lookout for a Sign Up Genius published in Hashavuah and on the CBI website.

We look forward to seeing you there.

AMERICAN RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE

Wednesday, May 7
Noon – 5:00 p.m.

Schedule your appointment by calling the Red Cross at 1-800-448-3543 or visiting www.redcrossblood.org.



WOMEN OF B'NAI ISRAEL "CRAFTY-EVE" GATHERING



Monday, April 21
7:00 – 8:30 p.m.

Women of B'nai Israel are hosting an evening of crafts, or Crafty-Eve, on April 21st. Come to knit, crochet, color, or macrame! Bring a current work in progress or pick up something new while you're here. It's an evening to kibbitz and be creative. Please RSVP to Ilene at ifeuerberg@cibipt.org.

JUDAICA BOUTIQUE

A shipment of new Passover tabletop items, children's toys, and tallitot has just arrived. We stock everything you need to make your holiday beautiful.

The shop will be open for a special Passover sales event on Sunday, April 6 from 9:30 a.m. to noon.





FROM THE RABBI'S DESK/RABBI EVAN SCHULTZ

VOICES FROM ISRAEL: RACHEL GOLDBERG-POLIN

(I read this article back in November and was so moved by it, I wanted to share it with all of you.)

I have been asked questions about Hersh, about the plight to free the remaining hostages and about hopes for the future of our people. From within a place of loss and confusion, I share with you a piece of myself:

My name is Rachel, and I am the mother of Hersh Goldberg-Polin, one of the six beautiful hostages murdered in Gaza at the end of August. We buried his battered and bruised body on September 2nd, 2024, in Jerusalem.

I am also a wife, daughter, friend, student, teacher, Jew, Israeli, American, human and mother to two dynamic and vivacious daughters. And now, I am trying to become a navigator.

Like Magellan, Columbus and Sir Frances Drake, I am embarking on an odyssey into the unknown. My journey, I'm being told, can take the rest of my life to walk through. I am hoping to have a long life. And so, I am starting my trek now.

"Now" can mean today, or this morning, or this hour. "Now" is whatever I have the mental, psychological and spiritual strength to bite into at the moment.

I am asked what it is like to go through such a deep and profound blow while being watched by many people. I find it incredibly difficult and curiously fascinating. I have always been a happily anonymous person. I am a high-functioning introvert — I can be comfortable in a crowd, but I always prefer to be home or alone. Maybe that was from being an only child growing up in Chicago. I never had a problem with it, ever. I had a lot of friends and could be with them when I wanted or be alone at home filling my time in creative ways. I performed epic puppet shows for my stuffed animals, who I would line up as my eager audience, just one of a myriad of examples.

After sharing Hersh with so many for 330 days in order to help save him, he and my family have become recognizable to some. I am deeply grateful that so many took Hersh to be theirs and have been with us during this dark chapter since October 7, 2023, the date our world turned upside-down. With that, now comes a lot of pressure, which I am trying to learn how to hold.

People reach out or stop me to share their pain. They describe how broken they are by the loss of Hersh and so many others. They go on to share personal losses they have had in their lives. They see my family as a vessel for the throbbing that they feel, for hits they have endured. It teaches me that there is an excess and surplus of suffering most people carry in their pockets. It changes over time, but it is always there, being transported around, just waiting for someone to show it to when the opportunity arises. And my presence often is that opportunity.

There is no measuring stick for aches of agony. Mine is no longer than his or hers. It's different, and maybe newer, but pain is pain. Jon and I discovered this since Hersh's death when thousands have come to us and shared their grief and their sorrow. And each day, when someone stops us to tell of their anguish it shows how unaddressed and still packed their satchels are, filled with tears, lumps and scars.

I feel like I have third-degree burns on my skin, so when people grab me or try to hug me, it is not helpful for me at this time. I think this is confusing for the person offering themselves to me. I know it is coming from a benevolent place in their heart. Years ago, a gifted teacher, Elana Friedman, taught me a piece, by the famous Reb Shlomo Volbe, about true chesed (kindness). This most complicated of disciplines requires looking at the person in front of us and saying to ourselves, "What does this person need?" not "What do I imagine I would need in

this person's situation?" It is the hardest of challenges, not to put ourselves into someone else's shoes, but to stay in our own shoes and look at this person who is not me. How do I allow them that room, that space, that air? How do we restrain ourselves from projecting what we need onto the person in front of us? Ouch. It is so very complicated to do successfully. We all fail at times. I know I certainly do.

When my girls and I are having a moment walking, breathing and smiling, and someone stops us and starts crying, they are robbing us of a moment of respite from the horror we are digesting. When I am walking alone, with a hat, sunglasses and my head down, it is me saying, "Please, oh please, let me breathe for a moment without having to also carry your pain. Your pain is as real as mine, but I have no strength at the moment to carry yours too. I love you and am endlessly grateful for you loving Hersh. I love you for loving the hostage families. I love you for trying to help. But please, if you want to help me, let me go on walking. When you see me and our eyes cross paths, please, oh please, just smile and wave. My knees are buckling from all the wounds people are sharing. I am just not formidable and powerful enough. Not yet. I am working on it. I wish to get there. Because I want us all to help lift each other, like the Amish do when they hoist up the frame for a new home they are all collectively building together. Let's do that. But I am not robust enough...not yet."

The Jewish people are at a juncture where we have so very much to figure out. The nugget of wisdom my mother taught me when I was young keeps nudging at my hip, with its hands raised, wanting to be picked up, asking for attention. Her friend Danny shared the idea that if we always treat the person next to us as if they are the Messiah, in disguise as a regular person, we will be careful with how we speak and what we do in their presence. And if they choose not to reveal themselves in

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SHABBAT SERVICE SCHEDULE

In person on Fridays at 6:00 p.m. and Saturdays at 8:00 a.m. where indicated.
All services at this time can also be viewed on Zoom. The link is sent out in our weekly email.

Friday, April 4

5:30 p.m. Oneg
6:00 p.m. Shabbat Service, –
in person & on Zoom
Torah Portion –
Leviticus 1:1–5:26
Haftarah –
Isaiah 43:21–44:23

Saturday, April 5

8:00 a.m. Shabbat Service –
in person & on Zoom
9:00 a.m. Brotherhood Breakfast
9:30 a.m. Torah Study –
in person & on Zoom
11:00 a.m. Bet Mitzvah (Chapel) of
Greyson Minton, son of
Roy Minton & Marisa Love

Friday, April 11

5:30 p.m. Oneg
6:00 p.m. CONECT Shabbat
Service & Dinner –
in person & on Zoom
Torah Portion –
Leviticus 6:1–8:36
Haftarah – Malachi 3:4–24

Saturday, April 12

8:00 a.m. Shabbat Service –
in person & on Zoom
9:00 a.m. Brotherhood Breakfast
9:30 a.m. Torah Study –
in person & on Zoom
11:00 a.m. Bet Mitzvah of Leo Kurtz,
son of Brian & Sofi Kurtz

Friday, April 18

5:30 p.m. Oneg
6:00 p.m. Shabbat Service –
in person & on Zoom
Torah Portion – Holidays
Exodus 14:30–15:21
Haftarah – II Samuel 22:1–51

Saturday, April 19

10:00 a.m. Yizkor Service (Chapel) –
in person and on Zoom

Friday, April 25

5:30 p.m. Oneg
6:00 p.m. Shabbat Service –
in person & on Zoom
Torah Portion –
Leviticus 9:1–11:47
Haftarah –
II Samuel 6:1–7:17

Saturday, April 26

8:00 a.m. Shabbat Service –
in person and on Zoom
9:00 a.m. Brotherhood Breakfast
9:30 a.m. Torah Study –
in person and on Zoom
11:00 a.m. Bet Mitzvah of Matthew
Spinner, son of Michael &
Robyn Spinner

Our synagogue Caring Committee is able to help provide rides to and from services to congregants
in need of assistance. If you are in need of a ride to temple for Shabbat or another synagogue event,
please reach out to Chris Rocha at crocha@cbibpt.org or call the temple office.

APRIL 12 - APRIL 20: PASSOVER

Saturday, April 19 - 10:00 am Yizkor Service

(There will be no 8:00 am Service, Brotherhood Breakfast or Torah Study on April 19)

MUSIC THERAPY PRESENTATION AND EXPERIENCE

SPONSORED BY THE MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS TEAM

Saturday, May 3, 2025

1:00 –3:00 p.m.

Southern CT State University

Heather J. Wagner, PhD, MT-BC, FAMI, a Board-Certified Music Therapist and assistant professor, who heads the Music Therapy Department at SCSU, is creating this program especially for us.

Heather earned her PhD in Music Therapy from Temple University. She is a past president of the New England Region of the American Music Therapy Association and a Fellow of the Association for Music and Imagery. She also holds a CT teacher certification in music and is a freelance musician playing with a

variety of ensembles on flute, piccolo, and bass. She also sings and plays guitar and piano.

People can benefit from one music therapy session or engage in a series of sessions, either in person or via virtual visits. Heather specializes in an integrative approach to health and wellness, using music to help people build inner resources to improve well-being. She believes anyone can benefit from music therapy. No musical experience or training is necessary, just a relationship with music. All kinds of music can be used, as well as all kinds of engagement with music (listening, improvising, songwriting, creating, learning, moving, singing, and/or playing instruments).

We will meet in the B'nai Israel parking lot at 10:45 a.m., right after Torah Study on Saturday, May 3, to carpool to SCSU. We will have a quick lunch together before our music therapy experience. We need to be on time, because Heather will be playing in an ensemble later that day and needs to leave promptly at 3:00 p.m.

Please let Marj Freeman know if you would like to come at marjorie.freeman.ms@gmail.com, and if it turns out later that you can't, please cancel so someone else can take your place. We are very excited about this field trip! Please join us!



THE FIVE WOMEN WHO CHANGED THE WORLD

BY RABBI MARION

Each year, Passover reminds us of five women who changed the course of history. It is true, of course, that our narrative changed as soon as Moses stepped foot, into it. But Moses would not have saved us, had it not been for five brave, bold, and courageous women who first saved him.

Moses saved us, because the midwives, Shifra and Pu'ah, defied Pharaoh's orders to murder every Hebrew boy that they delivered. Moses saved us, because his mother, Yocheved, made the heart-wrenching decision to place her baby in a basket and float him down the Nile River. Moses saved us, because Pharaoh's daughter made the dangerous decision to rescue a baby born to those her father was seeking to annihilate. Moses saved us, because Miriam watched from behind the reeds to ensure that her brother made his way into Pharaoh's daughter's arms. Moses saved us, because Miriam conjured a way for him to be nourished by his own mother throughout his palace upbringing.

Each year, Passover reminds us of Shifra and Pu'ah, and Yocheved and Pharaoh's daughter and Miriam. Though they each saved Moses in their own unique ways, their methods were incredibly alike.

Notably, Shifra, Pu'ah, Yocheved, Miriam, and Pharaoh's daughter did not undertake their critical, lifesaving work in loud, public, or ostentatious ways. They were not the loudest voices in the room, nor were they the rowdiest resisters within the public square. Rather, these women, and their lifesaving actions, were *subtly* and *quietly* revolutionary. All of their redemptive missions took place secretly and unobtrusively, behind the scenes, behind closed doors, out of the public eye, when no one else was looking...when no one else would know. Their crucial undertakings were so quiet, in fact, that they might have even gone unnoticed, had it not been for the far-reaching impacts of their valiant and heroic choices.

Every year, during the retelling of this story around our Passover tables, our Haggadah declares the formidable events that led to our redemption:

"And the Eternal took us out of Egypt by a mighty hand, an outstretched arm, by fearing power, and wondrous signs and portents in the land of Egypt." (Deuteronomy 26:8)

Rabbi Ayalah Ronen Samuels sees Shifra, Pu'ah, Yocheved, Pharaoh's daughter, and Miriam between the lines of these words. In her interpretation of this verse, she writes:

The Eternal only took us out from Egypt through the merit of the wise-hearted women. By a mighty hand: this refers to Moses' mother, who strengthened her hand to send her son into the water, as it is stated, "So she got a wicker basket for him and caulked it with bitumen and pitch, and she put the child into it and placed it among the reeds by the bank of the Nile" (Exodus 2:3). By an outstretched arm: this refers to Pharaoh's daughter who spied the basket among the reeds and sent out her arm to fetch it. By fearing power: this refers to Shifra and Pu'ah, as it is stated, "The midwives, fearing God, did not do as the king of Egypt had told them; they let the boys live" (Exodus 1:17). By wondrous signs and portents: this refers to Miriam, since all of the years that the Israelites wandered in the desert, there was a wondrous well that was given to them on her account, which was with the Israelite people until she died.

Rabbi Samuels reframes the driving force behind our liberation. Rather than the result of a divine hand reaching down from the heavens, she understands our freedom as the result of a series of small human acts which, combined together, became big enough to change the world. This lesson could not be more important, or more relevant, to this moment in time.

As Rabbi Jordie Gerson writes,

Rather than the strong hand of God reaching down from the heavens being the cause and the reason for our redemption, we were liberated because of a series of smaller, quieter actions and events, performed by a group of women who are so often overlooked. And so a redemption story that was originally about brute force and the fireworks and drama of the plagues, is, in the retelling, a story of so many small, cumulative acts of rebellion and bravery. Acts that were done by one or two individuals, quietly, riskily, sometimes in secret, without great fanfare or publicity. But the collective force of all these small acts, by, ostensibly, some of the least powerful people in the kingdom, are ultimately what saved an entire people. And so in times of oppression or persecution, when tyrants rule the day, redemption and revolution do not need to be loud, public, sweeping acts. Rather, they can be quiet, individual acts of bravery. They can help a single family, a single child, or save just one person. They needn't fix a broken system or a corrupt government all at once. And so when we feel most powerless and despairing about the world — whether it is the threats we face from climate change, or mass deportation of asylum seekers or the dreamers, or Israel's security, or the loss of women's rights or LGBTQ rights — we need only remember that it is often small, quiet acts of tzedakah and bravery that have the potential to change the entire course of history. Taken together, they may even save the world, or at least an entire group of people. It may not happen immediately, or in big, visible ways, and we may never be recognized or rewarded for what we do. But to those

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ALEXA COHEN/DIRECTOR OF THE EDUCATION CENTER RECENT HAPPENINGS IN KEHILAH



**2nd grader Ethan tries a tasty
Tu B'Shevat treat**



**Miss Renee and the 7th grade busy in the kitchen
making shepherd's pie for Square Up for Others**



**Tu B'Shevat Trivia with
Hunter and Noah**



**The 6th graders enjoy making
homemade hummus with Israeli
Emissary Amit during Kehilah**



Beautiful Shabbat creations



**Jonah & his dad show off their
kiddush cup, challah cover, and
candlesticks at the Gan Family
Shabbat Workshop**

SATURDAY, APRIL 26TH 7:30PM

BONIM PRESCHOOL'S SPRING FUNDRAISER

"A PICNIC UNDER THE STARS"

FOOD TRUCK, WINE, BEER, SMORES &
INCREDIBLE RAFFLE ITEMS

BUY YOUR TICKETS NOW!

ALL FUNDRAISING
EFFORTS WILL GO
TOWARDS A NEW CHILDREN'S
OUTDOOR PICNIC AND GARDEN AREA

UPCOMING EVENTS

Lunch & Learn at B'nai Israel



**Friday, April 4
12:30–2:30 p.m.**

There is no charge but registration is required. Bagels and fruit will be served.

See Hashavua for link to register by 4/2/25; or email Chris at chris@cbibpt.org if you will be attending.

Join visiting professor, Joseph Angel, as he discusses the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls and how they have shaped our understanding of biblical studies.

The spectacular discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in the middle of the 20th century brought to light dozens of the oldest biblical manuscripts in the world. In conversation with an assortment of specific textual examples, this talk will examine how these discoveries have revolutionized our understanding of a number of key areas in biblical studies, including the transmission history of the scriptural text, the development of individual books, and the formation of the scriptural canon as we know it.

Joseph Angel is Professor of Bible and Jewish History at Yeshiva University, where he has taught courses related to ancient Judaism and biblical studies since 2008. His research focuses on Jewish literature and history in the Greco-Roman world, with a special interest in the religious milieu and themes of the Dead Sea Scrolls. He is the author of a number of publications exploring topics related to ancient Judaism, including prayer, messianism, demonology and magic, the Second Temple of Jerusalem, and the Jewish context of nascent Christianity. His most recent book, *The Songs of the Sage (4Q510-511)* (Brill, 2023), provides a material reconstruction, critical edition, and commentary on two ancient Hebrew prayer manuscripts discovered at Qumran. He has held research fellowships at the University of Göttingen, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and, most recently, the University of Michigan and currently serves on the editorial boards of the *Journal*

for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha and Brill's Online Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls.



CONNECT
Congregations Organized for a New Connecticut
Congregaciones Organizadas para un Nuevo Connecticut

CONNECT Shabbat & Dinner

**Friday, April 11
6:00–9:00 p.m.**

Join us for a CONECT Shabbat Service followed by dinner. We will host visitors from different faith traditions and talk together about our common goals to work for social justice. Dinner cost is \$25 per person.

See link in Hashavua to RSVP or email Chris at chris@cbibpt.org. For information on CONECT, contact Laura Stern at lauraastern@gmail.com or Jeff Schwartz at jeff.schwartz2991@gmail.com.



Women of B'nai Israel

Introducing: Women of B'nai Israel's Mah Jongg League

Mah Jongg Mondays

Looking for a game? Want to play more? Join other Women of B'nai Israel for our new monthly Mah Jongg Mondays!

Next session is Monday, April 28, at 7:00 p.m. in the temple pavilion — bring your 2024 card and a set to share.* Please look for the link in Hashavua to sign up or reach out to Ilene at ifeuerberg@cbibpt.org by April 17th to pre-register. Experienced players only.

**Some sets will be available*

Teaching Thursdays

Are you new to Mah Jongg? Have you always wanted to learn to play?

Join other Women of B'nai Israel for 6 weeks of Mah Jongg instruction. Our Game Night hosts will teach you all you need to

know in this **6-week course**, meeting **every Thursday at 7:00 p.m. in the CBI pavilion, beginning on April 24.**

Please look for the link in Hashavua to sign up or reach out to Ilene at ifeuerberg@cbibpt.org by April 17 to pre-register.

You must be able to **commit to 5 out of the 6 weeks**. Mah Jongg cards will be available for use.

Questions?

Please reach out to Amy Morin at amoorin@optonline.net or Carol Lubin at cllubz@gmail.com with questions about either program.

Banned Book Meetings

Join us for our Banned and Challenged Book Group Discussions this Year!

This year, two of our Banned and Challenged Book Group discussions will be hosted and facilitated by two of our tikkun olam committees, who have chosen banned and challenged books that reflect the important work of their committees. All are welcome to join these discussions; you do not need to be a member of these committees in order to participate in the book discussions. Participants are encouraged to read each book in advance of the meeting. Save the dates and happy reading!

Sold by Patricia McCormick



***#10 on the ALA's 2023 Most Banned and Challenged Book List**

**Monday, April 28
7:00–8:30 p.m.**

Facilitated by Susan Walden

Thirteen-year-old Lakshmi leaves her poor mountain home in Nepal thinking that she is to work in the city as a maid only to find that she has been sold into the sex slave trade in India and that there is no hope of escape. Written in spare and evocative vignettes, this powerful novel renders a world that is as unimaginable as it is real, and a girl who not only survives, but triumphs.

APRIL DONATIONS

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

Rabbi Schultz Discretionary Fund

Richard & Susan Walden, with gratitude to Rabbi Evan Schultz.

Rabbi Marion Discretionary Fund

Mark & Barbara Edinberg, in celebration of the bat mitzvah of Mary-Megan Marshall.

Zachary & Kathleen Juviler, in honor of Addie's baby naming.

Gregory & Amy Marshall, in celebration of our daughter Mary-Megan Marshall's bat mitzvah.

Jeff Schwartz, in celebration of Mary-Megan Marshall's bat mitzvah.

Richard & Susan Walden, in appreciation of Rabbi Sarah Marion.

Cantor Scott Harris Discretionary Fund

Richard & Susan Walden, with gratitude to Cantor Scott Harris.

Rabbi James Prosnit Discretionary Fund

Susan Bauchner, in memory of my mother, Bobby Kaplan.

Enhancement Fund

Jeffrey & Wendy Bender, in memory of Fred Bender.

Jerry & Dale Demner, in memory of Bertha Greenfield, mother of Dale; Lilian Slive, aunt of Dale; Phyllis Goldstein, friend of Dale & Jerry; and Irving Jacob Demner, father of Jerry.

Dennis & Jan Magid, in memory of the yahrzeits of Marc J. Berkman, father of Janet; and Sophie Siegel, mother of Dennis.

Rosalyn Pomeranec, in memory of Jim Grutzmacher, husband of Sara Laden.

Bonim Preschool Enrichment Fund

Esta Berman-Price, in memory of Richard Sher, brother of Gail Weinstein and Karen Bass.

Herb & Paula Greenberg, in memory of Richard Sher, brother of Gail Weinstein.

Jane Pressman, in memory of Richard Sher, brother of Gail Weinstein.

Randy & Beth Reich, in memory of Richard Sher, brother of Gail Weinstein and Karen Bass.

Glenn & Michelle Reisman, in memory of Richard Sher, brother of Gail Weinstein and Karen Bass.

Doreen Testa, in loving memory of Richard Sher, brother of Gail Weinstein.

Bonim Preschool Scholarship Fund

Kenneth Colman, in memory of Richard Sher, brother of Gail Weinstein.

Carol Wolfson, in loving memory of Richard Sher, brother of Gail Weinstein.

Rabbi Martin Library Fund

Barbara Rifkin, in memory of my brother Daniel Postol; my parents Eunice & Sidney Postol; my grandparents Jeanette & Nathan Schine; and my great grandmother Tiba Terry.

Rabbi Arnold Sher Social Action Fund

David Abbey & Deborah Goodman, in memory of Ruth Goodman.

Susan Bauchner, in memory of my husband, Burt Bauchner.

Bari Dworken, in honor of the bat mitzvah of Mary-Megan Marshall.

Mark & Barbara Edinberg, in celebration of the birth of Noa, daughter of Jonathan & Annie, granddaughter of David Abbey & Debbie Goodman.

Michael & Joni Greenspan, in remembrance of yahrzeit of Sidney Greenspan.

Milt Jacoby, in memory of my parents, Franklin & Jeanette Jacoby.

Serena Sher, in honor of the birth of Noa, granddaughter of David Abbey & Debbie Goodman.

Kesher Project

Schriffert family: Gail, Tamara, Dustin, Maris & Ariel, in memory of Ed Schriffert, on his yahrzeit.

The George Markley Chesed Fund

David Abbey & Deborah Goodman, in memory of Irving Abbey.

Daniel Smith Cemetery Fund

Samuel Miller & family, in memory of Jennie Kot.



Congregation
B'nai Israel
קהילה בני ישראל

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The Bulletin of Congregation B'nai Israel is published every month except July.

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Congregation B'nai Israel, founded in 1858, seeks to be a vibrant Reform synagogue dedicated to the perpetuation of Jewish life and values within the framework of contemporary American Judaism. We are a gateway to Judaism for all. The Congregation B'nai Israel Bulletin publishes monthly 11 times a year (except July). To submit an article, announcement or ad to the Bulletin, please contact Co-Editors, Amy Pressman at apressman@cbibpt.org or Lauren Tropp at ltropp@cbibpt.org. Submissions are due by the first day of the month preceding the publication month. We reserve the right to edit all submissions for length or style.

WORKING TO CHANGE SHIVA TRADITIONS IN OUR COMMUNITY

BY RACHEL YURDIN, CHAIR OF THE B'NAI ISRAEL CARING COMMITTEE

Have you noticed that there has been a change in the content of the condolence emails we receive? Until January 2024 (by my observation), shiva information was listed as follows: “Shiva will be observed at the home of (insert information of family member, address, date, time).” Now there are a few additional sentences explaining what shiva is and that “all members of our B’nai Israel community” are encouraged to attend. The final line of this new section is what I find most important, “...even if they do not know the grieving person or family personally.” This is part of an effort to change our community’s customs around shiva.

Judaism has laid out very specific and gradual mourning rituals to assist us with healing.

The first is called shiva and is intended to help mourners move through the first days of intense grief. The practice of shiva comes directly from the Torah with the earliest references being in Genesis. Shiva is observed by the immediate family and begins directly after burial. Traditionally shiva is observed for a full week, but in the reform movement, many choose to observe for a shorter period. Shiva is not observed on Shabbat and there are several specific physical changes people may make in their homes, including covering mirrors and mourners sitting on boxes or low stools instead of chairs.

Now that you have brushed up on some facts about shiva, let me tell you about one part I find fascinating — **there is a historical obligation to visit the mourners during the shiva period.** Judaism recognizes that

we are not to mourn alone and prioritizes the importance of community.

For a multitude of reasons, Shiva within the B’nai Israel community has largely been attended by family and friends of the deceased person and/or the grieving family. Our B’nai Israel rabbis have expressed a hope for this to change and for our observance of Shiva to become more “open,” more inclusive, and thus more supportive to all of our grieving members, no matter the size of their family/friend group nor their level of involvement in the temple. In attempts to work towards this change, a new arm of the Caring Committee was created.

There is now a list of people on the Caring Committee who have volunteered to go to shivas, whether they know the grieving family to any degree or have never met. The new goal is to have at least one person from the Caring Committee at each night of every shiva. It is hoped that several things will come out of this — the first being that members of our larger community feel supported by B’nai Israel as a whole, not just those already in their lives. As well, by stating why the “representative” is there, it is hoped that people will realize it is okay and **encouraged** to go to shiva whether we know the family or not. I am hopeful that this will be appreciated both by those grieving directly and their loved ones in attendance so that gradually we can change how we at B’nai Israel support each other during grief.

I am proud to say there are now over a dozen of us signed up to take turns attending each and every night of shiva. Since beginning

this initiative, I think we have had a representative at the vast majority of them. I encourage you all to consider joining in these efforts, either by officially signing up for this branch of the Caring Committee — there won’t be meetings for you to attend (I promise!) — you will only get an email when someone is needed to go. Or, when you see a condolence email come through for someone you don’t know, decide to go. I can confidently assure you that the person mourning will be appreciative when you introduce yourself and say something such as, “I don’t believe we’ve met, I’m from your B’nai Israel community and wanted to come be supportive.” If you are uncertain about your comfort with going, imagine how you may feel if, during a time of grief, someone says this to you.

If you go, you will be contributing to a positive change for our community. You will be performing a great mitzvah and fulfilling a historical obligation. I feel confident promising that you will leave feeling good — both that you did something outside your comfort zone and because you showed support for someone who didn’t expect it from you.

Shiva facts from <https://reformjudaism.org/beliefs-practices/lifecycle-rituals/death-mourning/everything-you-need-know-about-jewish-custom-shiva>.

CEMETERY PLOTS AVAILABLE

B’nai Israel Cemetery
472 Moose Hill Road
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Plots are available in the Congregation B’nai Israel cemetery in Monroe. Please note there will be a price increase effective May 1, 2025. For more information, please contact the temple office.

THE FIVE WOMEN.....CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

we help or save or stand up for, our quiet acts of justice and courage just might mean everything.

In Jewish tradition, we learn that to save just one life is to save an entire world. By saving baby Moses, Shifra, Pu’ah, Yocheved, Miriam, and Pharoah’s daughter saved more than they could ever begin to

imagine. From generation to generation, redemption relies on our small but mighty acts of courage, defiance, goodness, and compassion. These five women who changed the world are begging us to remember: our lives matter, our actions matter, what we do matters. May we take their lessons to heart, this Passover season, and beyond.

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS SHABBAT.....CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

About Our Speakers:

Dr. Barbara Ward Zimmerman is a child and adolescent psychologist specializing in the prevention, early detection of and early intervention for behavioral health disorders. She serves on many statewide and national boards, promoting healthy child and family development. Dr. Zimmerman has also trained pediatric providers across the state on conducting universal developmental, behavioral health, and maternal depression screenings.

Dr. Elaine Ducharme is a board-certified licensed clinical psychologist with over 35 years of experience. She specializes in treating trauma, abuse, and interpersonal violence.

Dr. Ducharme is frequently called upon to provide expert testimony in court on issues of domestic violence, custody, and abuse. She has lectured locally and nationally

on various topics, including parenting, communication, trauma, cybersex, anxiety disorders, and domestic violence.

Event Schedule:

5:30 p.m. Oneg— Enjoy light refreshments and explore our literature table with mental health resources.

6:00 p.m. Shabbat Service — Our speakers will provide a brief description of tonight's topics during the service.

7:15 p.m. Dinner (approximate time)— \$25.00 per person, RSVP required.

Speakers' Presentation, Q & A (following dinner) — Engage with our experts and get your questions answered.

Disclaimer: The content discussed during this program is for educational purposes and should not be considered professional medical advice.

See Hashavua for link to register for dinner by 5/6/25; or email Ilene at ifeuerberg@cibpt.org or call the office at 203-336-1858

Request for Questions for the Upcoming Speakers

What children's and grandchildren's conditions or situations do you most want to learn about?

The two child psychologists who will speak at the Mental Health Shabbat on May 9 would like to know your concerns and what you would like to know.

A schedule will be posted in next month's bulletin. Please send questions or topics for them to Marj Freeman at marjorie.freeman.ms@gmail.com.

Thanks for your help in ensuring their talk will be relevant to B'nai Israel congregants.

VOICES FROM ISRAEL.....CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

our lifetime, it will not matter, because we will have behaved respectfully and carefully to that regular person next to us. This is the most decent thing we can do in this complex and loud world piled with confusion and brokenness. Let us work on the lost art of respectfulness.

Hersh and I spoke about this idea often. We talked about how wearing a kippah is a way to show we believe there is something above us, watching us. I asked him just a couple of years ago what person he would imagine was watching him, from a window above, who would cause him

to behave in an improved way. Even after all these long years, he said, Mrs. Carlton, his beloved first-grade teacher from Virginia. We talked about that feeling of having someone or something we respect above us, how we behave differently. We behave better.

We seem to have lost this ability as a people. There is so much internal disagreement and strife in our Jewish world, and it has not served us well. I think our challenge as we limp forward toward the light, as we rise from the ashes that are still smoldering (and our cherished 101 hostages in Gaza,

still languishing there as of this writing) is relearning how to listen. We have to master how to give space and oxygen, allow the person with whom we disagree to share their ideas, and try to understand them. And then they too should allow me to do that. Is it possible? Yes. Will it happen? As I have said since October 7, 2023, hope is still mandatory. And so of course I hope and pray we use all of our creative and godly resources to succeed. We must.

May we all know better days, and may we find true and restorative comfort. Imminently.

AARP DRIVING CLASS

Wednesday, May 14

9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

With Ernie Malecki

Please join our congregant, Ernest "Ernie" Malecki, for this one-day class designed by AARP for senior drivers. Please pre-register by calling the Temple office at 203-336-1858 or emailing Ernie directly at enmalecki113@gmail.com. The cost is \$20 for AARP members and \$25 for non-members (checks payable to AARP). Passing this course can save you money on your car insurance. A course will also be offered on June 11.

KESHER CORNER

Do you know how a special needs person sees the world? How does she speak or see words on a page? How does she try to calm a trembling hand so she can hold a crayon and draw? Do you realize that flashing lights or loud sounds in a movie theatre can create a severe reaction in her body, even a seizure? What would happen if she has pain in her body and doesn't know how to describe it so she can be helped?

This happened to one of our longtime Keshet friends. He couldn't describe the beginning of pain in his abdomen. Over several months it became excruciating and no one understood what he was trying to say. Sadly, our dear friend faded away in pain.

Taking the time to understand with compassion requires us to slow down. We live in a whirlwind society with so

many overlapping projects, activities and special events, doctor's appointments, and caregiver responsibilities that make it difficult to be still in mind and body, even for a few minutes.

The Keshet Project creates this safe place to slow down and leave our thoughts behind. We offer achievable challenges with activities that were never experienced before.

For example, one of our young ladies is very hard of hearing. She wears hearing aids that are not helping her. Last year she would not perform in our show. She was self-conscious about her hearing and was afraid to make a mistake, so she sat in the audience. She saw how much fun we had performing and last month asked to be in our new show. Of course I said yes and told her I would help her.

Please take time to see and hear the person in front of you. It is *tikkun olam*. We have the opportunity to make the world a better place every day. Let's do it!

Check out our newest video.

<https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1AZmrBrw8b/?mibextid=wwXlfr>

rheasmusic@icloud.com

keshetdramaclub@gmail.com



CONGREGATION B'NAI ISRAEL CORE PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

At B'nai Israel we...

- ...TREAT each person in our community as created b'tzelem Elohim, in the image of the divine,
- ...DEVELOP, foster and nurture vibrant and meaningful Jewish lives in accordance with the values of our Torah and sacred texts,
- ...BUILD and deepen sacred relationships both within the synagogue community and the broader Greater Bridgeport community,
- ...ACT justly with a sacred obligation to *tikkun olam* (repair the world),
- ...FOSTER and deepen a love, commitment and connection to the land and people of Israel.

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PASSOVER COOKIE RECIPE

INGREDIENTS

2 cups matzah meal
2 cups farfel
1 1/2 cups sugar
1/2 tsp. salt
1 tsp. cinnamon
2/3 cup oil
4 eggs beaten
1 cup chocolate chips
1/2 cup raisins



INSTRUCTIONS

- *Mix matzah meal, farfel, sugar, salt and cinnamon.
- *Mix in raisins and chocolate chips.
- *Mix in eggs and oil.
- *Drop by teaspoonfuls onto a parchment paper lined baking sheet.
- *Bake at 325 for 25 minutes.





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