



CONGREGATION BETH ISRAEL

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Houston, Texas 77096
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fax 713-771-5705
beth-israel.org

DECEMBER 2023 BULLETIN

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!

Yael & Haim Avnaim
Nicole Bensoussan & Jonathan Stevens
Marolyn Block
Jessica Bursten & Bradley Marine
Mehmet & Fusun Corapcioglu
Jordan & Robin Davis
Samuel Davis
David Devido
Marcy Powers & Rabbi Stuart Federow
Jordan Gross & Martha Villanueva
Liza & Garrick Hirsch
Jennifer & Scott Jacobson
Denise Kades
Harry Klein
Steven Kraus
Grace & Michael Marshall
Suzanne Platt
Arthur Pronin
Kathleen Chen & Alexander Ropper
Yael & Scott Ross
Adele Segel
Benjamin Sel
William Spier
Richard Taub
Rosetta & Mark Urbach
Jennifer & Carlos Valdez
Brett & David Waller
Jane & Stuart Weil
Lance Westendarp & Matthew Lawrence
Nicole & Charles Womble

Do you know someone interested in becoming a part of our community? Are you new to town or looking to find a way to connect with Beth Israel? Contact Stephanie Shargal at sshargal@beth-israel.org.

Light is Hope

On October 7th, just as the High Holy Day season ended, the world turned. In this context, it means that the world soured. The rise of antisemitism and blatant Jew-hatred has soured our daily life everywhere we go.

Ambassador Deborah Lipstadt, United States Special Envoy for Monitoring and Combating Anti-Semitism, once remarked that antisemitism is a “growth industry.” Though the Catholic Church’s Second Vatican Council (1965), and Nostra Aetate, which “repudiate[d] the centuries-old ‘deicide’ charge against all Jews, stresse[d] the bond shared by Jews and Catholics, [and] reaffirmed the eternal covenant between God and the People of Israel,”* we are still susceptible to those who lack knowledgeable about Jewish and world history, even such recent history. For those who don’t know better and for those who should, it’s become too easy to reach conclusions contrived by conspiracy theorists built on false premises and twisted facts about Jews and Judaism.

Thankfully, there are facts on which we can build a future.

Fact: Israel is a sovereign state that defends its borders to protect its people, who are indigenous to the land since God promised it to our ancestral fathers and mothers.

Fact: Palestinians can establish foundations for prosperity and peace-building with peace partners in the region, including Israel.

Fact: Hamas and Iran’s other proxies are not local to Gaza; they are fomenting hatred and violence around the world and in America.

Fact: Jews in America and Israel are undereducated about their own history and beliefs. All Jews, young and old, have a moral duty to learn about and model Jewish life at home and in the community.

Fact: A visit to Israel is transformative; everybody should visit Israel at least once in their lifetime.

In the darkest season of the year, we are urged to be hopeful as we illuminate the darkness, not only with Chanukah lights, but also with facts, understanding, knowledge, mitzvot, and faith. As we turn the calendar page to welcome 2024, Congregation Beth Israel will mark its 170th year, the oldest synagogue in Texas, organized in 1854. The longevity and endurance of our great and historic congregation reflects the hope and faith of our people to be at home in the world, a world where the future is better than the past, and where humanity finds its voice from sacred texts that have guided us for over 3500 years. From strength to strength.

L'Shalom,

Rabbi David Lyon, Senior Rabbi

*www.adl.org/resources/backgrounder/nostra-aetate

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CLERGY

Senior Rabbi.....	David A. Lyon, D.D.
Senior Associate Rabbi.....	Adrienne P. Scott, M.A.H.L.
Cantor.....	Kenneth J. Feibush, M.S.M.

STAFF

Executive Director.....	Pamela E. Kutner
Director of Lifelong Learning & Engagement....	David M. Scott, R.J.E.
Head of The Shlenker School.....	Dr. Michelle Barton
Controller.....	Wendy Airlie
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Cemetery Director.....	Kathy Parven
Director of Special Events & Catering.....	Marsha Gilbert
Director of Facilities and Security.....	Michael Reddick
Director of Young Jewish Life.....	Mike Mason
Director of Center for Spiritual Direction.....	Dr. Tom Cole
Director of Production.....	Mark Eggleston
Assistant Director of MBJLC.....	Kerri Zerlin
Membership & Engagement Manager.....	Stephanie Shargal
Librarian.....	Susan Whitman

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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	Marsha Stein
	Philip Wise
	Neil Wizel
Treasurer.....	Doug Aron
Secretary.....	Ed Wolff
Immediate Past President.....	Roslyn Fuchs Haikin



SPONSOR AN ONEG SHABBAT!

Oneg Shabbats at Congregation Beth Israel provide our community with an opportunity to have a social connection on Shabbat – a chance to renew friendships, welcome newcomers, and make new friends. Sponsoring an Oneg is a wonderful way to honor, remember, or celebrate a loved one, event, or milestone. Or, simply just because.

To learn more, contact
Marsha Gilbert at mgilbert@beth-israel.org.

LIVESTREAM

Watch Shabbat Services Live:
beth-israel.org

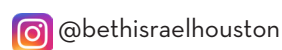
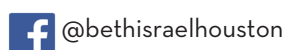
Watch Shabbat Services Later:
youtube.com/BethIsraelHouston

PAYMENTS & DONATIONS

Please send payments and donations to:
Congregation Beth Israel
DEPT.
P.O. Box 4851
Houston, TX 77210-4851

RABBI DAVID A. LYON ON THE RADIO

Rabbi Lyon can be heard on Sunday mornings, 6:45 A.M., on KODA, Sunny 99.1 FM radio. Each segment will be available as a podcast, "Heart to Heart with Rabbi David Lyon." Go to www.beth-israel.org/radorabbi, www.sunny99.com ("Blogs & Podcasts"), or download the iHeartRadio app.



\$5,000

LYON COHEN MERIT SCHOLARSHIP



Congregation
Beth Israel

ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR 2024 AWARD

Applications are now available for all College Undergraduates and Graduates online
www.beth-israel.org/lifelong-learning/Lyon-Cohen

The Lyon Cohen Merit Scholarship is awarded annually to a college undergraduate or graduate student. The scholarship is available to members and family members of

Congregation Beth Israel and is presented on a merit basis to an individual who exemplifies Lyon Cohen's optimism and devotion to Jewish ethics.

Application Deadline is February 22, 2024

Award will be presented at the Lyon Cohen Symposium,
"The Ethics of AI," on April 18, 2024

Questions? Contact David Scott at DScott@beth-israel.org or 713-771-6221 ext. 605

March for Israel - Washington, D.C.



David Scott, RJE & Renee Wizig-Barrios

The March for Israel on November 14 took place on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., and over 290,000 people attended in what was the largest gathering of the American Jewish community in the history of the United States or North America. The energy was electric, the speeches were powerful, and the chanting of “Am Yisrael Chai,” the People of Israel lives, began in the Metro subway as people made their way to the rally. Standing together, shoulder to shoulder, thousands of people were “praying with their feet” in the great words of Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, who marched with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. during the Civil Rights Movement.

Jews from every denomination and allies of the Jewish community across the country shared their voices, their vision, and their collective hope that our Birthright would remain protected – both physically and in the hearts and minds of others. It was an awesome and holy display of unity - of Am Yisrael - that should be remembered, as we continue to support Israel as best we can during these dark days in what has been referenced as “Israel’s Second War of Independence.”

May our love of Israel – Ahavat Yisrael – remain whole and complete. May we continue to become more educated on Israel and to inspire one another as we hold Israel closer in our hearts and thoughts – and pray for greater peace throughout the region and the rest of the world. Let us work together to do more, to say more, and to hope more for a better tomorrow.

Ken Yehi Ratzon and Am Yisrael Chai!



Lydia Osadchey, David Scott, RJE, & Cindy Soefer

Timely and Urgent Resources for Israel Education and Financial Support

WEBSITES

HONESTREPORTING.COM

Dedicated to fostering a well-informed democracy by promoting truth, integrity, and fairness in the media, particularly in relation to Israel. Their mission includes combating ideological prejudice, engaging the next generation, and educating the public on these principles

ALGEMEINER.COM

Established in 1972 as Der Algemeiner Journal, The Algemeiner is a global news outlet covering the Middle East, Israel, and global Jewish interests. Transitioning to Algemeiner.com in 2012, it has been led by Editor-in-Chief Dovid Efune since 2008. The name “Algemeiner” means “universal” in Yiddish/German.

TIMESOFISRAEL.COM

The Times of Israel, founded in 2012, is a Jerusalem-based online newspaper covering developments in Israel, the Middle East, and the global Jewish community. It maintains a nonpartisan stance, presenting news impartially while providing diverse analysis and opinions.

REFORM.ORG.IL

The Israel Movement for Reform and Progressive Judaism promotes Israel’s values as a Jewish and democratic state, enriching Jewish identity among a diverse Israeli public. It aims to influence religious, educational, and public discourse in Israel and the broader Jewish world.

FIDF.ORG

The purpose of the Friends of the IDF is to support and empower the IDF to protect Israel and its people. Their vision is to ensure Israel’s survival and provide a thriving homeland for Jews globally. Their mission is to transform IDF lives through education, finance, well-being, and cultural initiatives.

ISRAELRESCUE.ORG

United Hatzalah is a volunteer-driven emergency medical services organization with 7,000 selfless volunteers, including EMTs, paramedics, and doctors. This dedicated team ensures an immediate response to medical emergencies throughout Israel, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

AJC.ORG

The American Jewish Committee is a global advocacy organization for the Jewish people. They tackle challenges, pursue transformative opportunities, and engage with leaders worldwide to counter antisemitism, support Israel, and advance democratic values.

MYJEWISHLEARNING.COM/ARTICLE/MODERN-ISRAELI-HISTORY-A-TIMELINE

Launched in 2003, My Jewish Learning empowers Jewish discovery for all learners. It is now part of 70 Faces Media, the largest nonprofit Jewish media organization in North America.

DANIELGORDIS.SUBSTACK.COM

Israel from the Inside with Rabbi Daniel Gordis is for people who want to understand Israel with nuance, who believe that Israel is neither hopelessly flawed and illegitimate, nor beyond critique.

JTA.ORG

Since its founding in 1917, the Jewish Telegraphic Agency has earned a reputation for journalistic integrity, outstanding reporting, and insightful analysis. Subscribe to their Daily Briefing.

JCPA.ORG

Founded in 1976, the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs is a leading independent research institute, serving as Israel’s global embassy for national security and applied diplomacy. Subscribe to their Daily Alert.

BOOKS RECOMMENDED BY OUR CLERGY AND EDUCATORS

Impossible Takes Longer: 75 Years After its Creation Has Israel Fulfilled its Founders’ Dreams?

Rabbi Daniel Gordis (2023)

Israel: A Concise History of a Nation Reborn

Rabbi Daniel Gordis (2016)

Letters to my Palestinian Neighbor

Yossi Klein Halevi (2018)

The Israel-Arab Reader:

A Documentary History of the Middle East Conflict

Walter Laqueur and Dan Schueftan, ed. (2016)

Golda: Israel’s Matriarch

Deborah E. Lipstadt (2023)

The Genius of Israel: The Surprising Resilience of a Divided Nation in a Turbulent World

Dan Senor and Saul Singer (2023)

My Promised Land:

The Triumph and Tragedy of Israel

Ari Shavit (2013)

The People of Israel Need Your Support

On Saturday, October 7, 2023, the lives of Israelis changed forever.

Brothers and Sisters for Israel is currently the largest aid organization in Israel. They are a 100 percent civilian voluntary-based operation, so that every dollar donated goes directly and entirely to the actual goods and services that are needed.



Since the onset of this war, they have been running an unprecedented Civil Emergency Headquarters.

Their teams collect requirements both bottoms up as well as tops down, to make sure real needs are met. Accordingly, they mobilize critical resources, including food, water, clothing, medical equipment and aid, provide



accommodation for displaced families, evacuate those in war zones, locate missing individuals, procure vital equipment, and much more.

Donate at
brothersandsistersforisrael.org/donations



~~5,000~~
7,500

Sunday, January 21, 2024
9:30 A.M.

We invite you to come for the camaraderie, the enjoyment of making a difference and to help end childhood hunger in Houston. For the past seven years, Congregation Beth Israel's Mitzvah Committee has supported Kids' Meals once a month by preparing 1,000 healthy sack lunches for hungry preschool-aged children.



- In our beloved Houston, childhood food insecurity is a stark reality.
- Over 50, 000 preschool-age children in our city are hungry.
- That's more than enough to fill every seat in our Sanctuary 50 times.



CONGREGATION
BETH ISRAEL

ADULT EDUCATION MOVIE NIGHT

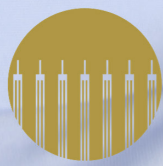
SATURDAY
FEBRUARY 3, 2024
5:00 P.M.

The Israel Advocacy Committee and the Adult Education Committee are co-sponsoring the screening of the film "Exodus." Filmed nearly a decade before the Six Day War, Exodus is an epic historical drama about the founding of the State of Israel.

Concessions and delicious food will be served, and a brief moderated discussion will take place after the movie concludes. Special thanks to the Joan and Stanford Alexander Family Israel Programming Fund for helping underwrite this wonderful event.



REGISTER AT
[BETH-ISRAEL.SHULCLOUD.COM/CALENDAR](https://beth-israel.shulcloud.com/calendar)



CONGREGATION
BETH ISRAEL

Dr. Gadi Taub

Scholar-in-Residence

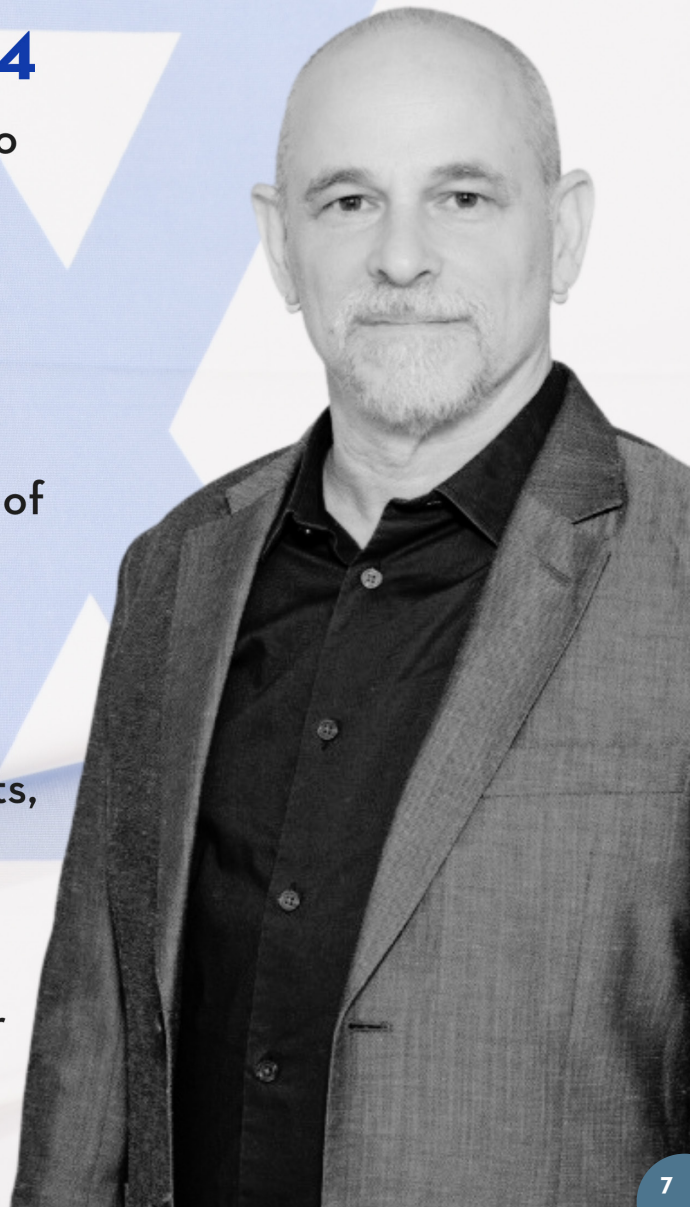
Dr. Gadi Taub is an Israeli historian, author, screenwriter, and political commentator. He holds the position of Senior Lecturer in the School of Public Policy and the Department of Communications at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Friday, February 9-10, 2024

Our Israel Advocacy Committee is thrilled to welcome Dr. Gadi Taub, one of Israel's compelling and gifted voices, to Congregation Beth Israel on February 9-10, 2024. Dr. Taub will be guiding engaging discussions on the contemporary landscape of Israel, and a nuanced perspective on Israel's current war against Hamas that you won't hear on the mainstream media. For those who've relished our past Israel-centric events, like Rabbi Daniel Gordis's visit, this special weekend with Dr. Taub is a must-not-miss!

Register at beth-israel.shulcloud.com/calendar

Special thanks to the Joan and Stanford Alexander Family Israel Programming Fund for helping underwrite this wonderful weekend.



SOCIAL JUSTICE MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Our families, schools, synagogue, city, larger communities, and our ancient and modern homeland, Israel, all rely on us. Your Social Justice Committee provides opportunities for contributing time and energy to address these crucial needs.

In November, we took action by writing 240 postcards to low-propensity voters in Ohio, championing the Jewish value of active participation in our government. A heartfelt thank you to Barbara Burgower Hordern, Mary Rich, Warren Rich, Miriam Friedman, Jen Overton, Dena Marks, Harry Selig, Cantor Kenneth Feibush, Jennifer Claridge, Ellen Leventhal, Steve Leventhal, and Lisa Stone for their dedication and contribution to this effort!

Many thanks to Randy & Jennifer Claridge for coordinating our fall collection drive for refugee families by Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston (IMGH). They identified an urgent need for cleaning and baby supplies so we collected a van full of new supplies as well as gently used baby equipment. Thank you to all who contributed!

Now, we are embarking on a new initiative to collect winter clothing and blankets for Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston's refugee families!

A special acknowledgment to Beth Schneider for

her ongoing coordination of our monthly visits to Temenos, providing companionship to formerly homeless Houstonians. Heartfelt appreciation goes to Ellen Leventhal, Steve Leventhal, Barbara Burgower Hordern, and Denise Estrin for their unwavering dedication as volunteers.

We extend our gratitude to Warren Rich for representing Beth Israel with The Metropolitan Organization of Houston (TMO), contributing to community advocacy in greater Houston.

A big thank you to Linda Davis for spearheading our involvement in the Food & Faith Collaborative, ensuring that healthy food, which might otherwise go to waste, reaches seniors and others in food deserts.

Beth Israel is proud to partner once again with ADL Southwest for Kulanu: Synagogues in Action Against Antisemitism. Don't forget to report any incident of antisemitism or other hate at adl.org/reportincident. Your vigilance is crucial in fostering a safer community.

Contact Social Justice Committee co-chairs, Lisa Stone at lestone@aya.yale.edu or Dena Sokolow at denasokolow@gmail.com for more information and to give your time and energy for a project!



CONGREGATION
BETH ISRAEL



WINTER CLOTHING & BLANKET COLLECTION



The Social Justice and Mitzvah Committees are collecting new and gently used winter clothing and blankets for Interfaith Ministries of Greater Houston's effort to provide refugees and anyone in Houston who needs winter gear this season.

Donations will be collected at Congregation Beth Israel

December 3, 2023-January 7, 2024 in boxes throughout the building.



We appreciate your donations. Questions? Please contact Jennifer.claridge@gmail.com

A NIGHT ON BROADWAY



CONGREGATION
BETH ISRAEL

**JANUARY 27, 2024
7:30 P.M.**

MICHAEL FEINSTEIN

The Ambassador of The Great American Songbook

**Multi-Platinum Recording, Four-Time Grammy Nominated Artist, Archivist,
Artistic Director of the Palladium Center for the Performing Arts,
Principal Pops Conductor for the Pasadena Symphony**

**PRESENTED BY
THE CAROLYN FLEISHMAN FUND**

In 1924, Congregation Beth Israel was in its final year on Crawford Street. President Calvin Coolidge defeated John W. Davis to serve a full term as president. Three medium-sized film companies merged to become Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, a dominant studio for decades. Chamonix, France, hosted the first Winter Olympics, and the United States only won four medals. The Roaring Twenties were in full swing, and jazz dominated the airwaves.

On February 12, Paul Whiteman and his Palais Royal Orchestra performed a concert called "An Experiment in Modern Music" at Aeolian Hall in New York City. The concert hall was packed with luminaries of the day like Igor Stravinsky and John Philip Sousa and included contemporary classical music like Edward Elgar's "Pomp and Circumstance." The hope was to show how to blend European and American classical styles.

Just before concluding, George Gershwin, a Jewish-American composer known for popular songs on the stage and radio, sat at the piano to play a new "jazz concerto," an entirely new idiom. Beginning with a clarinet glissando, the twenty-four musicians on stage debuted a new piece that changed classical music using jazz rhythms and harmonies with a full orchestra. It would be called "Rhapsody in Blue."

George Gershwin died in 1937 at the young age of 38, leaving a treasure of popular songs, many with lyrics from his brother, Ira. His music spans film, Broadway, opera, concert hall, and ballet. It is a cherished part of the Great American Songbook, music that permeates the American zeitgeist to this day. While he did not write music for the synagogue, he grew up attending regular Shabbat services in Brooklyn and Yiddish Theater productions.

To honor the Centennial of "Rhapsody in Blue" and celebrate the music of George Gershwin, Congregation Beth Israel will present "A Night On Broadway" starring Michael Feinstein.

As one of the major exponents of the Great American Songbook, Feinstein has built a career sharing his love of this music on stage, TV, and worldwide. He has five Grammy nominations for his albums and an Emmy nomination for his TV concerts. He started in 1977, archiving and cataloging Ira Gershwin's records and documents, leading to years of research in music preservation. Michael will sing and perform with a seventeen-piece band, and our own Cantor Kenneth Feibush will join for a duet with the multi-platinum-selling artist.

"A Night on Broadway" will be on Saturday, January 27, at 7:30 P.M. and is free to attend. You will tap your toes and hum your favorites all night. We are grateful to the Carolyn Fleishman Fund and the entire Fleishman Family for generously supporting this event for Beth Israel and the wider community.



George Gershwin



SCAN TO REGISTER

BINGE GROUPS CONTINUE TO THRIVE AT BETH ISRAEL

Our BINGE groups (Beth Israel New Group Engagements) are going strong! If you have an idea for a BINGE group, please let us know. And for the most current list of active BINGE groups, visit our website.

Matinees & Martinis recently went to see the play “Switzerland” and had dinner together afterward.

Cocktails & Conversations met at Ninfa’s on Navigation and enjoyed delicious food and drinks!

Our weekly BINGE groups also continue to meet:

Torah 101 is held Fridays at 11:30 A.M. with David Scott, RJE; **Jewish Meditation** with Jay Tarnow is on Saturday mornings at 11:15 A.M.; **Pickleball**, led by Linda Caplan, is on Sunday mornings starting at 9:00 A.M.; **Swimming in the Sea of Talmud** is on Wednesdays at 2:00 P.M. with David Scott, RJE; **Writers’ Circle** meets on the first and third Thursdays of each month at 1:00 P.M.

Our monthly BINGE groups also continue to meet: **Torah Study Book Club** on the second Thursday of each month at Noon, and **What Are You Watching?** on the first Monday of each month at 7:00 P.M. All are welcome to join us for any of these sessions, and no prior experience is necessary.

For any questions related to our BINGE groups, please contact Stephanie Shargal, Membership & Engagement Manager, at sshargal@beth-israel.org.



Cindy Streusand, Melanie Levy, Alyssa Tiras, Michael Abbott, Mitch Tiras, Stan Levy, Kevin Lewis, Gary Greenberg, Cindy Greenberg, Cynthia Goldblatt, Sabria Lewis, Jacqueline Haas



Alan Selzer, Laurie Selzer, Paul Katz, Becky Katz



Tom Fish, Shari Fish, Gary Greenberg



Henrietta Wolf, Laurie Tamber, Steve Tamber, Arthur Goldberg, Gloria Goldberg, Marilyn Sonnenberg, Michael Brown, Lisa Mendalovitz, Carolyn Baum

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Ninfa’s for their generous support in sponsoring our BINGE Cocktails & Conversations evening. It was a delightful gathering where nearly 70 members and friends came together to savor the joys of friendship, delectable cuisine, and a sense of community.

WOMEN OF BETH ISRAEL

Our Annual Membership drive is underway! If you haven't renewed your Women of Beth Israel membership for the 2023-2024 year, please visit beth-israel.shulcloud.com/form/sisterhood.html to ensure you don't miss out on the exciting events and opportunities planned for the upcoming year.

RECENT HIGHLIGHTS

On August 30, the Women of Beth Israel gathered for a special evening honoring Debbie Friedman, an American singer-songwriter of Jewish religious music. Author and congregant Ellen Leventhal shared her creative process in writing "Debbie's Song" and was joined by Cantor Feibush, who enhanced the evening with a few selections of Debbie's songs.

On October 24, we had an informative session on the increased occurrence of breast and ovarian cancer, featuring insights from a geneticist from MD Anderson and Beth Israel member Dr. Jeff Friedman, Chief of Plastic Surgery at Houston Methodist Institute for Reconstructive Surgery. We were delighted to share this educational event with members of the Jewish community. Special thanks to Linda Davis for her planning and presentation at this event.

The Women of Beth Israel Bakers have been meeting monthly to prepare delightful treats enjoyed during oneg Shabbat. Our sincere appreciation goes to Rachel Toole for organizing these efforts.

In November, our Fall Mitzvah project benefited Undies for Everyone, contributing to a worthy cause.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Plan ahead and mark your calendars for these upcoming gatherings and Mitzvah opportunities. We look forward to your continued participation and support in the Women of Beth Israel community.

Mahj and More (Sunday, February 25)

Calling all game players! Join us for our annual afternoon of Mahjong, games and more.

Hamantaschen Fundraiser (Purim)

The Women of Beth Israel will be taking orders for our famous hamantaschen. Stay tuned for more details on how to indulge in these delectable treats during Purim.

Ladies Tea (Sunday, May 5)

Save the date for an enchanting afternoon tea.

THANK YOU!

Thanks to the sewing skills of Julia Long, Roy Locke, Debra Baverman, Deena Gordon, and Suzanne Shaw, the Temple Wimples have been restored. Next time the Rabbis unwrap the Torah, you may catch a glimpse of their incredible handiwork.



Ellen Leventhal



Cantor Kenneth Feibush



Roy Locke



Debra Butler & Barbra Haas



Roy Locke & Julia Long

MBJLC LAUNCHES NEW EXPERIENTIAL INITIATIVES

Our Miriam Browning Jewish Learning Center's religious school program continues to go from strength to strength. With our highest enrollment since the pandemic at currently 233 enrolled children, we have seen an increase in participation among both our pre-B'nei Mitzvah students and our Madrichim Teens. More teens are engaged post-B'nei Mitzvah in Kehillah High and Madrichim than we have seen in recent years, and the ongoing war in Israel has led to yet another innovation in how we provide meaningful content for our children. Letter writing campaigns and video messages to Israeli soldiers, increased interest in learning about Israel's history, and upcoming opportunities during Chanukah to rededicate our community to supporting Israel are all ways in which the MBJLC continues to flourish at Congregation Beth Israel.

Every year, our formal learning is paired with experiential learning opportunities for our children. These include our Morim Mishpacha (family learning programs), Tiyyulim (field trips), and new this year, our Mitzvah Mavens (mitzvah projects). Each grade level enjoys opportunities throughout the year to learn together with their parents, go on field trips to places all around our community, and innovative ways to engage in mitzvah projects. This year, our

third graders enjoyed a field trip to the Houston Zoo to learn the Hebrew names of the animals and where they are found in the books of Torah. Our third and fourth graders also went together to the Ronald McDonald House for a mitzvah project to



learn about the 70 families who reside at any given time at this facility, created care packages for the families, and helped sort food in their facility. Our fifth graders also traveled to Beth Israel Memorial Garden on Antoine Street to tour the Proler Chapel and beautiful cemetery grounds as they began their

unit on the Jewish Lifecycle. Future field trips and mitzvah projects include visiting Seven Acres, West Dallas Cemetery, our Holman Street Temple, and the Museum of Fine Arts Houston's new Judaics exhibit and collection.

Special thanks to the MBJLC Community Engagement Fund of Congregation Beth Israel, which has been established for the express purpose of supporting these experiential programs of the MBJLC.



For more information about the Miriam Browning Jewish Learning Center and to inquire about enrollment for your child or grandchild, e-mail mbjlc@beth-israel.org. Registration for our 2024-25 year will launch in April 2024, and you can register online through your ShulCloud account.



Women of Beth Israel

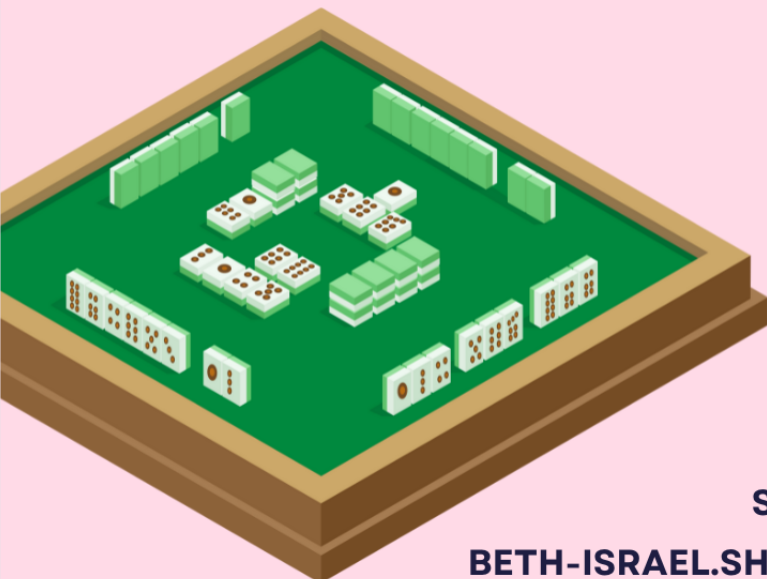
Mahj and More

*Game Day at
Beth Israel!*



Spend time with your friends, play a variety of games, enjoy light bites & delicious desserts and a chance to win fabulous raffle items!

**Sunday,
February 25, 2024
1:00 P.M.
Congregation Beth Israel**



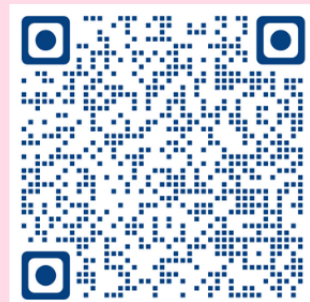
RESERVATIONS REQUIRED

\$40 WITH RSVP

\$50 AT THE DOOR

SCAN TO REGISTER OR VISIT

BETH-ISRAEL.SHULCLOUD.COM/CALENDAR



Exploring Jewish Philosophy with Rabbi David Lyon

Rabbi Lyon will lead a three-part series
focusing on the philosophy of Martin Buber and his work:

"The Way of Humanity, According to Chasidic Teaching"

Rabbi Lyon will bring this work to our world today,
by providing spiritual guidance and insight for any seeker.

12:00 P.M.-1:00 P.M. Lunch will be served.
Sessions will be available in-person in the
Finger Board Room and online via Zoom.

JANUARY 11, 2024

JANUARY 25, 2024

FEBRUARY 8, 2024

REGISTER AT [BETH-ISRAEL.SHULCLOUD.COM/CALENDAR](https://beth-israel.shulcloud.com/calendar)

SCHOLAR-IN-RESIDENCE, RABBI ANDREA WEISS

Friday, January 19, 2024 | 6:30 P.M.

Register at beth-israel.shulcloud.com/calendar

Rabbi Andrea Weiss, Ph.D., holds the prestigious position of Jack, Joseph, and Morton Mandel Provost and Associate Professor of Bible at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. Join us at the Shabbat service to gain insights from Rabbi Weiss on the future of Jewish professionals. Engage in a thought-provoking discussion as she addresses the question, "Will we have anyone choosing to become a rabbi, cantor, or Jewish educator in the next 10-20 years?" Explore the future of Reform Judaism and discover the ways in which we can actively promote the growth of Jewish professionals.

On Saturday morning, January 20, immerse yourself in Torah Study with Rabbi Weiss, either in-person in the Finger Board Room or online via Zoom. It's an opportunity to delve into the richness of Jewish teachings and foster a deeper understanding of our shared heritage.



CONSECRATION CLASS 2023



- Row 1: Camille Lefkowitz, Adeline Antonoff, Liv Feldman, Dylan Kupor, Leo Ross, Alexander Giometti, Bowen Reinitz, Eve Danziger, Shoshana Schick, Susan Robertson
- Row 2: Eliana Antonoff, Sierra Little, Addison Roosth, Victoria Stevens, Aurora Espino, Daphna Olitzki, Aila Lidell, Maya Semble, Hannah Semble, Caleb Palans, Sonny Mandel, Harper Diamond
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- Row 5: Kaylyn Mlcak, Stacey Parke, Anne Diskin, Merav Sternthal, Cantor Kenneth Feibush, Rabbi David Lyon, Rabbi Adrienne Scott, Dr. Michelle Barton, Mike Mason, David Scott, RJE

BETTER TOGETHER SINGLES GROUP

Our Better Together Singles group had about 40 singles over the age of 50 attend the Party at the Pavilion in Bellaire, where they joyfully rocked the night away to the lively sounds of Molly and the Ringwalds. The atmosphere was filled with the spirit of camaraderie among like-minded friends and soon-to-be friends, creating a truly delightful experience.

After observing a poignant minute of silence in honor of the kidnapped and fallen, we proceeded with a heartfelt bruchah for lighting candles, followed by a resonant Kiddush led by our fluent Hebrew speakers. The evening continued with another bruchah for the challah, setting the stage for an unforgettable night.

If you are Jewish and single over 50, we invite you to join our email list for updates and future events. Simply write to bettertogether@beth-Israel.org to become part of this vibrant community. We look forward to welcoming you to our Better Together Singles group.



WELCOME TO THE SCHACHTEL LIBRARY AND ARCHIVE

VISIT OUR COLLECTION

The Schachtel Library is your resource for access to Jewish literature in Houston. Access the library 24 hours a day at beth-israel.org/lifelong-learning/library or contact Librarian Susan Whitman at 713-820-6410 or swhitman@beth-israel.org for assistance.

NEW BOOKS

At the Schachtel Library, we are committed to maintaining current, relevant resources on a variety of Jewish subjects to serve our Beth Israel community. We collect sacred texts and scholarly studies of Judaic subjects. We also collect books on issues affecting contemporary Jewish communities and Israel. Our books represent viewpoints that address the diversity of Jewish communities. We have acquired almost 30 new books since this summer. Check out our catalog, contact the librarian, and come and see what interests you.

BETH ISRAEL ARCHIVE

History is valued at Beth Israel, as you can see it displayed on the walls of our corridors. The Beth Israel Archive maintains the documents that represent more than 150 years of Beth Israel history. Some of the early documents are available on our website as well. Contact the librarian to research your past or discover the rich history of our Jewish community.

SAVE THE DATE

On February 21 at 7:00 P.M. in the BIFTY Lounge, we'll enjoy an evening of poetry with Leslie Contreras Schwartz, Poet Laureate and Beth Israel member. More details to come.

WRITERS' CIRCLE

The Schachtel Library Writers' Circle is a BINGE group created by Beth Israel congregant and author Miriam Friedman for writers of different genres to meet and share their work and get constructive feedback. This group was established last December and has continued to meet to share personal writings twice a month. Writers of all levels are welcome.

If you write poetry or fiction, short or long works, or even memoirs, this is the place for you. At every meeting, we review one literary work that the author has submitted, and which has been sent to the group for review. This is a supportive environment where people share their ideas and responses to each other's work. Discover your own creativity. In addition, Miriam shares her practical knowledge of manuscript preparation and interaction with potential publishers. Whether you are

just starting out or are an experienced writer, or even if you just want to listen, we welcome you. Come and join us!

Both groups welcome new members! Please share your ideas and creativity, meet friends new and old, and be part of the discussions. We hope to see you soon at the Schachtel Library. Come and see us and find your next great read! To be put on the mailing list to receive information and updates on meetings of either of these groups, please contact the librarian, Susan Whitman, at 713-820-6410, or swhitman@beth-israel.org.

SCHACHTEL LIBRARY READERS' GROUP

The library is a place to learn, to explore and share ideas. Our Schachtel Library Readers' Group has met for more than 20 years to discuss works of both fiction and nonfiction. The books we read center around themes of Jewish life and civil rights issues. Just recently, the Readers' Group participated in the Community Read at the Ann and Stephen Kaufman Jewish Book and Arts Festival at the JCC.

Members often lead literary discussions. We also invite great speakers to lend their wisdom to enhance the discussion. We will hear from Rabbi Lyon and Rabbi Scott this spring as well as other special guests. See below for details. All meetings occur at 1:00 P.M. on Wednesdays in the Finger Board Room at Beth Israel. We always welcome new members and hope to see you soon.

SPRING SCHEDULE

January 17:

Before a Canyon by Jeremy Tucker
Rabbi David Lyon will lead the discussion with Beth Israel congregants Jeffery and Margaret Tucker, who will speak about their son Jeremy's work with Teach for America and the special bond he forged with a young boy named Victor and his community.

February 21:

The Incandescent Threads by Richard Zimler

March 20:

Small Great Things by Jodi Picoult
Rabbi Adrienne Scott will lead the discussion.

April 17:

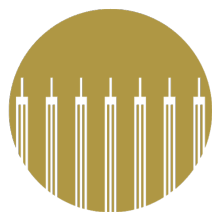
Impossible Takes Longer by Daniel Gordis

May 15:

The Happiest Man on Earth: The Beautiful Life of an Auschwitz Survivor by Eddie Jaku

June 26:

Lessons in Chemistry by Bonnie Garmus



Center for
Spiritual Direction
of Congregation Beth Israel

THE STILL SMALL VOICE

The Still, Small Voice is a quarterly column that will appear in each issue of the Temple Bulletin. Written by Dr. Tom Cole, Director of the Center for Spiritual Direction, it will address specific issues embedded in the spiritual life of Reform Judaism and of Congregation Beth Israel.

“WHAT DO WE DO WITH OUR SORROWS?”

Recently I came across “An Interrupted Life”, the diaries of Etty Hillesum, a young Dutch woman living in Nazi-occupied Amsterdam in 1941 and murdered in Auschwitz in 1943. Before she died, Hillesum gave her diaries to a friend who later published them. They have been translated into 18 languages.

I am deeply moved by Hillesum’s diaries. And I think they carry spiritual lessons for us all today, in the midst of the heartbreaking war between Israel and Hamas. Hillesum’s diaries describe a growing anxiety about her own fate and that of her fellow Jews. They describe deportations and evermore violent abuse against Jews. Yet paradoxically, they also reveal her own spiritual development and deepening faith in God.

Hillesum believed that God lives both outside and inside us. She repeatedly speaks of nurturing her inner life as God’s dwelling place. Hillesum was transported to Westerbork, where she lived under the most extreme conditions. There, she went through a spiritual awakening that opened her to the indestructible beauty of God’s world.

The sky is full of birds, the purple lupins stand up so regally and peacefully, two little old women have sat down for a chat, the sun is shining on my face – and right before our eyes, mass murder. . . . The whole thing is simply beyond comprehension.

Hillesum is not writing about beauty alone. She goes and instructs us all not to close down our tenderness, our open-hearted vulnerability.

And she has a lesson that is especially important today:

You must be able to bear your sorrow; even if it seems to crush you, you will be able to stand up again, for human beings are so strong, and your sorrow must become an integral part of yourself, part of your body and your soul. You mustn’t run away from it, but bear it like an adult. Do not relieve your feelings through hatred, do not seek vengeance. . . . If everyone bears his grief honestly and courageously, the sorrow that now fills the world will abate.

Then she warns:

. . . if you do not clear a decent shelter for your sorrow, and instead reserve most of the space inside you for hatred and thoughts of revenge . . . then sorrow will never cease in this world and will multiply. . . .

And finally, she writes with the paradoxical heart of a mystic:

If you have given sorrow that space its gentle origins demand, then you may truly say: life is beautiful and so rich. So beautiful and so rich that it makes you want to believe in God.

Not all of us have the paradoxical spiritual gift of being able to see God’s beauty amidst mass murder. But we can all feel sadness and sorrow. Sadness and sorrow are not signs of weakness, lack of will, or hope. They are essential elements of our humanity. When we allow ourselves to feel and share our sorrows with one another, we become stronger – and we are not in danger of becoming carbon copies of our enemies.



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55th Anniversary of
Barbara and Mark Paul
Marilyn Levitch Hassid

85th Birthday of Lynne
Tiras
Thomas & Lisa
Friedlander

IN MEMORY OF
Joan Kaplan
Marc & Jeri Shapiro

SECURITY FUND

IN MEMORY OF
Joyce Chesnick
Alan & Sherrie Eisenman
Sherrie & Richard Kaplan
James & Carol Frankel
Drs. Wesley & Jane
Stafford
Carol Desenberg
John Carl Landa
Lynette Rauch
John Landa Jr. &
Suzanne Landa
Leslie Beckman
Marsha Orloff
Rachel Voorhies
Bob & Susie Hale

SISTERHOOD - BERNE BLACK BIMAH FLOWER FUND

IN HONOR OF
Stephanie Simon
Jeanne & Mort Levy

IN MEMORY OF
Ida and Simon Kottwitz
Cy and Dorothy Kosberg
Robert Kottwitz Carolyn
"Cookie" and Raymond
Kaufman, Julian "Buddy"
Wilkenfeld
Saranne Kosberg
Marsha Orloff
Edward & Susan Septimus

SISTERHOOD DONATIONS/ROSE BRILLING SISTERHOOD FUND

IN MEMORY OF
Marsha Orloff
Laurie & Jeff Bricker
Charles & Lynda
Golenternek

FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION

BABY NAMINGS

Harper Reese Baron
Daughter of Erica and
Jonathan Baron
Carson Bo Scheps
Son of Lindsay and
Cameron Scheps
Jackson Benjamin Lidell
Son of April and Jarrett
Lidell
Lyle Rodrigo Wexler
Son of Jennifer and Logan
Wexler
Daniel Scott Rappaport
Son of Leigh and Scott
Rappaport

WEDDINGS

September 7, 2023
Stephanie Brain &
Daniel Faerman
September 9, 2023
Hayley Friedman &
Rohail Khan
September 30, 2023
Reid Patton &
Kevin Fleishman
October 21, 2023
Julia Shaffer &
James Mentz

DEATHS

Joel Androphy
Husband of Sheryl
Androphy; father of Daniel
& Angela Androphy, and
Robyn & Chris Campbell;
brother of Jay & Robin
Androphy
Sam Balloff
Father of Eleanor &
Richard Seline, and David
& Judy Balloff; brother of
Eve Margulies
Michael "Mickey" Bloome
Husband of Susan
Bloome; father of David &
Melissa Bloome, Jerrad &
Sara Bloome, Den Bloome
Bremont & Dominique
Bremont
Robert Ferris Bowman
Husband of Leisa Holland-
Nelson; father of Leigh
Bowman & Michael
Winetsky; stepfather of

Laura Max & Ben Rose;
brother of Ann Cornwell

Joyce Chesnick

Mother of Joan & Stevan
Dinerstein, Joe & Karen
Chesnick, and Robert &
Yvonne Chesnick

Melvin Abbe Dow

Husband of Frieda Dow;
father of David & Katya
Dow, Mark Dow, Steven
Dow, Stuart Dow, Leon
& Bruria Dow; brother of
Frances Friedman

James Fish

Husband of Beverly Fish;
father of Tom & Shari Fish,
and Richard & Marie Fish

Dorit Galor

Mother of Daniel & Helen
Galor, Orit & Gideon
Yefet, and Aviva Aloush

Gary Greenfield

Husband of Joyce
Greenfield; father of
Melissa & Felix Castro,
David Greenfield, and
Ryan & Christine
Greenfield; brother of
Joyce & Ben Bruk

Elaine Kuper

Mother of Thomas
Kuper, and Laurie &
Jeff Bricker

Paul Levy

Floriene Kay Lieberman

Mother of Craig & Beth
Lieberman, Marti & Tony
Oppenheimer, and Amy &
Hall Pollack

Theodore “Ted” Mack

Father of Katherine Mack
& David Friefeld, Elizabeth
Mack & David Allen,
Alexandra Mack & Kurt
Zeppetello

Marsha Orloff

Wife of Gary Orloff;
mother of Julie Orloff
& Adam Moreland, and
Denise Orloff Starr; sister
of Pat Nelkin

Sandy Rabinowitz

Partner of Ray Glantz;
sister of Denise & Steve
Estrin, Linda Taylor, Marcia
& David Solomon, Robin
Rabinowitz, Howard
Rabinowitz, and Melissa &
Todd Machen

Lynette Rauch

Mother of Bradley &
Sharon Rauch, Polly &

David Roth, and Jonathan
Rauch

Robert Sasso

Father of Lynette & Tyler
Twedt, Sandra Kyle, and
Carol Cox; brother of Irma
& Wesley Major

Zinaida Shiforenko

Wife of Yakov Shiforenko;
father of Michael
Shiforenko and Yelena
Shiforenko; brother of
Raisa & Boris Mogilevsky

Ruth-Ann Rest-Sivers

Wife of Neil Sivers; mother
of Sarah Sivers-McGee &
Justin McGee; sister of
Barbara & Ted Rouse

Gerald Sher

Husband of Susan Sher;
father of Andrew & Ivonne
Sher, Jaime & Elise Sher,
Michael Sher, and Carryl
Sher

Barbara Simon

Mother of Rachel Simon,
and Jeff Simon & Dana
Hart

Ricardo Weitz

Husband of Martine Weitz;
father of Paul Weitz, and
Nicole Weitz-Kittler &
Andrew Kittler; brother
of Jacqueline Weitz and
Doris Weitz

Judy Weycer

Wife of Albert Weycer;
mother of Mark & Aileen
Weycer, Joni & Randy
Levy, and Karen & David
Birnbrey

Harold L. Wolin

Father of Carol Wolin &
Samuel Sheff, Robert &
Holly Wolin, and Jonathan
& Linda Wolin; brother of
Phyllis Carr

B'NEI MITZVAH

JANUARY 5-6, 2024

Micah Rubinstein

Son of Allie Falender &
Leon Rubinstein; grandson
of Sue & Tom Falender
and Marina Kuno^{z'l} & Isaak
Rubinstein^{z'l}

JANUARY 12-13, 2024

Payton Fishman

Daughter of Jamie & Brad
Fishman; granddaughter
of Ricki & David Komiss,
Barbara Hurst & Richard

Schatz, and Cindy & Ron
Moore

JANUARY 19-20, 2024

Simon Golenternek

Son of Anne & Scott
Golenternek; grandson
of Charles & Lynda
Golenternek, Cindy &
David Senior, and Sherry
“Cookie” Senior^{z'l}

Jack Isgur

Son of Amy & Aaron Isgur;
grandson of Janis & Jake
Isgur, Jane Lozano, Cindy
& David Senior, and Sherry
“Cookie” Senior^{z'l}

JANUARY 26-27, 2024

Jacquelyn Ford

Daughter of Jessica
Gordon-Ford & Ryan Ford;
granddaughter of Diane
& John^{z'l} Gordon and
Darlene & Rich McQueen;
great-granddaughter
of Tanya^{z'l} & Hyman^{z'l}
Gordon

Hannah Smooke

Daughter of Jacqueline
& Adam Smooke;
granddaughter of Sharon
& Richard Maloney, Joan &
David Lebow, and Kerry &
Joel Smooke, Pittsburgh,
PA

FEBRUARY 2-3, 2024

Ella Bostic

Daughter of Nancy
& Stephen Bostic;
granddaughter of Sandra
& Lance Berry, Galveston,
and Linda & Barry,
Battelstein, Jerusalem

Nancy Bostic

Daughter of Linda & Barry
Battelstein, Jerusalem,
and Roslyn Battelstein^{z'l};
granddaughter of
Virginia^{z'l} & Ben^{z'l}
Battelstein and Bess^{z'l} &
Arthur^{z'l} Frohman

FEBRUARY 16-17, 2024

Logan Claridge

Son of Jennifer & Randy
Claridge; grandson of
Eileen & Gary Muslin and
Debbie & John Claridge,
Austin, TX

FEBRUARY 23-24, 2024

Harper Birkelbach

Daughter of Andrea
& Morgan Birkelbach;
granddaughter of Sharon
& Stuart Keller and

Rebecca & Roy Birkelbach

MARCH 1-2, 2024

Eli Roth

Gabby Roth
Children of Jennifer
& Michael Roth;
grandchildren of Doris &
Bernie Roth, Plainview,
NY, and Renet & Michael
Lobban, Miami, FL

MARCH 22-23, 2024

Meira Holyn Taibel

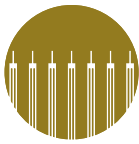
Daughter of Karyn
Ullman & Jonathan Taibel;
granddaughter of Phyllis &
Richard Ullman and Linda
& Morris^{z'l} Taibel

MARCH 29-30, 2024

Isaac Behar

Son of Liliana & Israel
Behar; grandson of
Cecilia^{z'l} & Victor^{z'l} Behar
and Rebeca de Beaujon^{z'l}
& William Beaujon^{z'l}

**Please Note: The
abbreviation, z”l, stands
for the Hebrew words,
zichrono/a livracha,
may his or her memory be
for a blessing.**



CONGREGATION
BETH ISRAEL

5600 North Braeswood Blvd.
Houston, Texas 77096
713-771-6221

beth-israel.org

relevant. modern. joyful.

Save the Date

A NIGHT OF FUN AND EXCITEMENT AT
THE ADULT PURIM CASINO NIGHT!



Saturday, March 23, 2024
7:00 P.M. - 10:00 P.M.



Sunday, March 24, 2024
9:30 A.M.
Shpiel and Megillah Reading

Details to come. Registration opens in February.