

CONGREGATION
BETH ISRAEL

MARCH 2024 BULLETIN

Vol. 170 | No. 3



Congregation Beth Israel President, Richard Kaplan, with his grandchildren at the Kids' Meals 7,500 event. Photo by Kids' Meals, Inc.

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Senior Associate Rabbi.....Adrienne P. Scott, M.A.H.L.

Cantor.....Kenneth J. Feibush, M.S.M.

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Vice Presidents.....Susan Feigin Harris

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Treasurer.....Doug Aron

Secretary.....Ed Wolff

Immediate Past President.....Roslyn Fuchs Haikin

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!

Ariel & Steven Becker

Seth Brown

Elizabeth & Benjamin Cohen

Melissa & Tyler Hosea

Tiffany & Gabriel Katz

Dolores Klickstein

Eileen Krieger

Dietra Aronack-Loughran & John Loughran

Lucile Marshall

Julia & James Mentz

Sarah & Perry Oster

Gail Perer

Sharee & Aaron Plumb

Renee & Yuval Raizen

Megan & Jeremy Roberts

Nicole & Andres Splenser

Mandi Trumbull & Tim Cook

Wendy Waterman

Sarah & David Woods

Do you know someone interested in becoming 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.

LIVESTREAM

Watch Shabbat Services live at beth-israel.org

Watch Shabbat Services later at [YouTube.com/BethIsraelHouston](https://www.youtube.com/BethIsraelHouston)

PAYMENTS & DONATIONS

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

A Time of Hope and Promise



Spring is an important time of rebirth and renewal. We see the changes in nature, and we also experience them in our ritual calendar. In biblical times, the spring was the beginning of the new harvest and the hopeful reveal of a good yield of crops. Traditionally, the winter months were focused on preparing for the promise of abundant light and longer days. Our ancestors prepared their fields in physical ways, but their prayers were also focused on asking for rain. They didn't want too much, but just enough to help them provide for themselves and their communities.

Today, most of us are not farming and tilling our land like our people did generations ago. Rather, we still hope that spring will bring us greater sustenance, abundance, and strength. Soon, we will come together to observe Passover (Pesach). Torah teaches that, at this time, we should each feel personally redeemed from Egypt. Egypt (Mitzrayim) is defined as a narrow place. We are confronted with many narrow places in our lives today. Passover is an opportunity to retell the story of our ancestors as we share the words from our Haggadah. But it is more than recalling ancient history. It is also about finding the places where we can feel a release from all that weighs us down.

Sadly, since October 7, 2023, we have been in a state of unrest. Consistently, we've been on high alert. Reading the news from Israel and seeing an increase of antisemitic attacks around the globe is troubling and unsettling. But we've prevailed. We have joined together in solidarity for prayer, for action, and even for celebration. We are commanded to honor our sacred times, despite ongoing challenges and hardships. These coming months will help us continue to stay focused as we pray for greater security for our people in Israel, and throughout the world.

Often, during our Shabbat services, we share a section from our prayer book, Mishkan Tefillah, just before we sing Mi Chamocha. In part, we read, "wherever we go, it is eternally Egypt, there is a better place, a promised land; that [there] is a winding way to that promise." Egypt is an important part of our shared history. It represents the difficult and arduous hardships of our past. It also reminds us of all the narrow places that keep us constrained and confined. Challenge has been a part of our story from the beginning. Within these difficult phases, we have found outlets of hope and joy. In community we continue to seek opportunities where we can share our emotions and find the comfort that we crave. Especially at this time, we must continue to be present for ourselves and our extended family. While we may be concerned, we should never hide our true and authentic beings. This is the commitment we must honor and observe.

As we prepare for the spring season of renewal and rebirth, may we be hopeful of the promise that we will all come to know increased blessings, joy, and peace.

L'Shalom,

Rabbi Adrienne P. Scott

Rabbi Adrienne P. Scott, Senior Associate Rabbi

WELCOME RABBI SAM RHEINS TO
CONGREGATION BETH ISRAEL



Rabbi Sam Rheins

Sam Rheins will be ordained rabbi at HUC-JIR in Cincinnati on June 1, 2024. Shortly afterwards, Rabbi Sam Rheins will move to Houston to join us as Assistant Rabbi of Congregation Beth Israel. You'll quickly note that Sam enjoys being with people, preparing for his role as rabbi on the bimah, teaching Torah to all ages, engaging with children, and sharing his joy of Judaism.

Sam grew up in Denver, where both of his parents are Reform rabbis. He grew up in the Reform movement, attended Reform Jewish summer camp, and graduated from University of Colorado, Boulder, with a major in history and a minor in Jewish Studies in 2017. After college, he spent a year in Israel at Pardes Institute for Jewish Education before entering rabbinical school at HUC-JIR in Jerusalem and Cincinnati.

Rabbi Rheins explains, "I view myself as a rabbi who promotes Jewish unity and togetherness not only during hard times such as these, but all the time. As a rabbi, one of my goals is to strengthen Jewish community and connectedness based on our shared history, traditions, and values."

Rabbi Rheins begins on July 1, 2024. We look forward to welcoming him and enjoying his roles in the congregation. Please reach out to Rabbi Rheins when he arrives with a warm Congregation Beth Israel and Houston welcome.



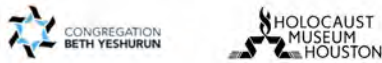
3:00 p.m.
Congregation Beth Yeshurun
4525 Beechnut St., Houston, Texas 77096

Please join us in observance of Yom HaShoah, a day of remembrance for the 6,000,000 Jewish people who lost their lives during the Holocaust. During this annual commemoration, we will mourn the loss of all who perished, honor those who survived and come together as a community to remember and reflect.

Coordinated by the Yom HaShoah Steering Committee and Holocaust Museum Houston

Funding for this service is generously provided by: The Morgan Family Endowment Fund, the Morgan Family Center and the Morgan Family Foundation

To live stream this event please visit:
<https://www.bethyeshurun.org/>



YOU'RE INVITED TO
Congregation Beth Israel's
ANNUAL MEETING
TUESDAY, JUNE 4
6 PM
WOLFF-TOOMIM HALL
Details to come



CONGREGATION BETH ISRAEL'S
2024 RICKY HAIKIN GOLF CLASSIC



Legend of Westwood
RICKY HAIKIN

Monday, April 1, 2024 • Westwood Golf Club

8888 Country Creek Street, Houston, TX 77036

10:30 AM Registration Opens
12:30 PM Tournament Begins

HONORABLE CHAIRS

Carl Schmulen
Brian Schmulen
Mark Schmulen
Rob Sweetland

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Roslyn Fuchs Haikin	Barry Margolis
Sam Boyar	Leslie Margolis
Sheila & Stanley Horn	Phyllis Selber
Al Kaplan	Jennifer & Ron Zach
Ellyn & Adam Josef	

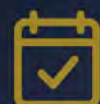
Register & Underwriter Opportunities at beth-israel.org

Questions? Contact Christian Losche, Director of Development, at closche@beth-israel.org



CONGREGATION
BETH ISRAEL

2024 LYON COHEN SYMPOSIUM THE ETHICS OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)



Thursday,
April 18, 2024



5600 North
Braeswood Blvd.



5:45 PM • Reception
6:30-8 PM • Program



Rabbi David Lyon
Senior Rabbi
Congregation Beth Israel



Professor Peter Stone
Truchard Foundation Chair
in Computer Science at
UT Austin & Executive
Director of Sony AI America



Dwight Silverman
Houston Chronicle Personal
Technology Columnist &
Freelance Writer

MODERATED BY



Elizabeth Cohen
Director, Technology
Strategy Innovation &
Planning, Invesco

TICKETS

\$10 Member Seat
\$18 Non-Member Seat
\$100 Table

REGISTRATION

beth-israel.shulcloud.com/calendar

QUESTIONS?

info@beth-israel.org
713-771-6221



CONGREGATION
BETH ISRAEL

You're invited to Congregation Beth Israel's **SECOND NIGHT SEDER**

Join Rabbi David Lyon, Rabbi Adrienne Scott, and
Cantor Kenneth Feibush as they lead us through the Passover
Haggadah to tell the story of our people's redemption with
familiar melodies, delicious food, and new and familiar friends.

TUESDAY, APRIL 23 • 6-8:30 PM
5600 N. BRAESWOOD BLVD.

TICKETS

\$40 Adult Member
\$50 Adult Non-Member
\$15 Child (12 and under)

REGISTER

beth-israel.shulcloud.com/calendar

QUESTIONS

Contact Marsha Gilbert at
mgilbert@beth-israel.org
or 713-771-6221



PASSOVER WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Passover Festival Service
Tuesday, April 23 • 10:30 AM-12 PM
Gordon Chapel & Livestream

Passover Yizkor Service
Monday, April 29 • 10:30 AM-12 PM
Gordon Chapel & Livestream



SCHOLAR-IN-RESIDENCE: RABBI KARYN KEDAR

Our next Scholar-in-Residence, Rabbi Karyn Kedar, will visit us on April 5-6, 2024, as we prepare for Passover and the counting of the Omer. The Omer is a period of 49 days between Passover and Shavuot, the next major holidays on the Jewish calendar. Rabbi Kedar, author of *Omer: A Counting*, will teach us how to measure our days and become more mindful of this sacred time in our year.

Register at beth-israel.shulcloud.com/calendar

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.

Mazel Tov to Gay Block, whose professional photography was honored at the 2024 Houston Center for Photography (HCP) Print Auction on February 15 at Hotel ZaZa.

Mazel Tov to Stanley Shniderson, this year's honoree of the Heart Full of Love Award, presented by Alexander Jewish Family Service's Music and Spirit Program.



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COMING SOON CONGREGATION BETH ISRAEL'S SECURITY ENHANCEMENT INITIATIVE

Congregation Beth Israel's Security Enhancement Initiative includes a perimeter fence around the entire campus, an access control system, surveillance equipment, and additional lighting. This will supplement our excellent security measures with a physical barrier to deter potential threats while enhancing the safety and peace-of-mind of members and guests who enter our community spaces.

We look forward to sharing additional information with you soon.

Can't wait to learn more? Contact Christian Losche, Director of Development, at closche@beth-israel.org.



RABBI DAVID A. LYON ON THE RADIO

Rabbi Lyon can be heard on Sunday mornings at 6:45 AM 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/radiorabbi, www.sunny99.com ("Blogs & Podcasts"), or download the iHeartRadio app.

EVENT SPOTLIGHT

KIDS' MEALS 7,500 DRAWS ENORMOUS SUPPORT FROM THE COMMUNITY

Congregation Beth Israel members know how to make a difference. On a beautiful Sunday morning in January, over 300 volunteers came together to pack 7,500 sack meals for Houston's hungriest preschool-aged children.

Kids' Meals, Inc., our partner organization for this event, delivers free, healthy meals directly to the homes of hungry children. Since its 2006 inception, Kids' Meals, Inc. has given more than 13.5 million free meals to food insecure children in Harris County and Montgomery County. The organization's ultimate goal? To end childhood hunger altogether.

Kids' Meals 7,500 earned enormous support from the community. Levit Hall was filled with students from the Miriam Browning Jewish Learning Center, their families, and volunteers from Congregation Beth Israel and beyond.

Cantor Kenneth Feibush kicked off the event with an entertaining video, showing how to (and how not to!) pack a Kids' Meals lunch. Rabbi Adrienne Scott followed with an opening prayer to set the tone for the morning and our meaningful work ahead.

We also heard from John Day, Chief Operations and Program Officer for Kids' Meals, Inc., who spoke passionately about the Kids' Meals mission and shared staggering statistics about childhood hunger in Houston. Did you know that 1 in 5 children in Houston are food insecure? That Harris County has the highest rate of childhood food insecurity in the nation for highly populated areas?

These statistics are the reason why we raised the number of lunches from 5,000 to 7,500 this year. The need is far too great, and we knew we could do more to make a difference.

In less than two hours, our volunteers worked together to make those 7,500 lunches and load them all onto Kids' Meals refrigerated trucks. At the same time, the younger MBJLC students, led by Kerri Zerlin, contributed in their own way by decorating brown bags for Kids' Meals.

We are so grateful to our Congregation Beth Israel members and friends for their support and hard work in making this event a huge success. Thank you!

Want to get involved?

Join us as we make 1,000 lunches together on the third Wednesday of every month at Congregation Beth Israel. Contact Marsha Gilbert at mgilbert@beth-israel.org for more information.



Ana-Sophia Richmond-Mendez (left) and her father, Ryan Richmond (right)



Left to right: Susan Smith, Marsha Gilbert, Jary Glazer & Lynn Glazer, John Day, Beth Harp, and Mitzvah Committee Co-Chairs, Bruce & Andrea Holzband • Photos by Kids' Meals, Inc.

EVENT SPOTLIGHT

MICHAEL FEINSTEIN “WOWS” AUDIENCE AT FLEISHMAN FAMILY EVENT

On Saturday, January 27, 2024, Congregation Beth Israel welcomed nearly 1,200 members and guests to the Sanctuary to enjoy the Fleishman Family Event, “A Night on Broadway,” featuring Michael Feinstein, Ambassador of the Great American Songbook. Feinstein is a multi-platinum, four-time Grammy-nominated artist, archivist, and is currently the Artistic Director of the Palladium Center for the Performing Arts and Principal Pops Conductor for the Pasadena Symphony.

Feinstein performed over 20 selections from the Great American Songbook in honor of the 100th anniversary of George Gershwin’s *Rhapsody in Blue*. He also shared personal stories and anecdotes about Ira Gershwin, whom Feinstein had known and had worked for early in his career.

The two-act production included a 17-piece big band orchestra, featuring musicians from the Houston Symphony and beyond. A large reception in Wolff-Toomim Hall followed the program, which allowed the entire community to come together and celebrate. In a year filled with war and conflict in Israel, the opportunity to come together with our Beth Israel community and others was very much needed and appreciated.

Special thanks to Carolyn Fleishman and the entire Fleishman Family for their continued support of Congregation Beth Israel. This event would not have been possible without their generosity.

For more information about upcoming Fleishman Family Events and other Temple programming, please see our Temple calendar at beth-israel.shulcloud.com/calendar.



EXPERIENCING ISRAEL

SPRING SERIES

Since October 7, 2023, our congregation has been heavily focused on Israel education and programming. With support from the Joan and Stanford Alexander Family Israel Programming Fund, and organized by our Israel Advocacy Committee, we have welcomed guests directly from Israel to understand their perspectives as we grapple with what continues to be an increasingly complex and volatile situation. Our hearts are turned toward the East as we seek to better understand and be more educated about Israel.

Our fall "Israel 101" series featured programs held online and led by Temple member Johnny Landa (December 3, 2023), our special Israel tour guide, Lyana Rotstein (December 17, 2023), and a fascinating briefing by Arab-Israeli journalist, Khaled Abu Toameh (January 7, 2024).

On January 19-20, we welcomed Provost of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR) Rabbi Andrea Weiss (pictured, left), who had just returned from Israel to share her perspective, and the perspectives of others from HUC-JIR, on the impact the war has had on the future of the Reform Movement.

On Saturday evening, February 3, our well-known Movie Night event took place, sponsored by the Israel Advocacy and Adult Education Committees. We enjoyed the film *Exodus*, starring Paul Newman, which focused on the history of the founding of the State of Israel. Everyone enjoyed movie concessions, popcorn, and a taco bar.

On February 9-11, we welcomed columnist and professor from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Dr. Gadi Taub (pictured, center), who shared his perspective and personal story about the impact of the war on his community and his family.

Finally, on Tuesday evening, February 20, Lyana Rotstein (pictured, right) arrived in person after being known by so many of us only online. She delivered a powerful presentation on the impact of the war on her community and others throughout the country. She provided action items and ways we can all be supportive of what is happening in Israel, while remaining committed to responding to antisemitism here at home.

Many of these lectures and programs were recorded and are available to you through our website and YouTube channel. Please email info@beth-israel.org if you need any help accessing them.



Rabbi Andrea Weiss



Dr. Gadi Taub



Lyana Rotstein

ADULT EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Provides adult education on Jewish topics to stimulate, invigorate, and enrich our Jewish experience and understanding



In early January and February, our Adult Education Committee presented a three-part series, taught by Rabbi David Lyon, focusing on Jewish philosophy. Based on the writings of Martin Buber, an early 20th century Jewish theologian, Rabbi Lyon introduced Buber’s work, “The Way of Humanity: According to Chasidic Teaching,” to a new audience. The book, published this year by CCAR Press, is the first new English translation in over half a century, and its translators and Rabbi Lyon brought Buber’s work to contemporary readers in a clear, accessible voice. According to the description, “The teachings within highlight the subversion and innovation of the early Chasidic masters of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, while providing meaningful spiritual guidance and insight for any seeker today.”

Each of the three sessions filled the Finger Board Room to capacity, where attendees enjoyed lunch together before and during the presentation. Dozens more were also able to participate online via Zoom. Rabbi Lyon focused on a different chapter of Buber’s work at each session, and he also provided an overview of Buber’s teaching of how our relationships with each other serve as the model for how we can understand our own relationships with God.

For access to the recorded sessions and handouts, see our Temple YouTube channel or contact David Scott, RJE, Director of Lifelong Learning and Engagement, at dscott@beth-israel.org. To purchase a copy of Buber’s book, visit www.ccarpress.org.

UPCOMING ADULT EDUCATION COMMITTEE EVENTS

APRIL 5-7 Shabbat Scholar-in-Residence, Rabbi Karyn Kedar	WEDNESDAY MAY 1 Movie Night: <i>A Bag of Marbles</i>	SUNDAY MAY 5 Yom Hashoah Program with Hank Roubicek	TUESDAY JUNE 11 Shavuot program (Online-only)
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SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

Organizes volunteer projects, food and clothing drives, and educational programs to give back to the community

Our Houston Gun Safety Campaign is celebrating its one-year anniversary this year with a BeSMART training and press conference (date to be announced), focusing its attention on gun safety issues. “Gun Safety Saves Lives” billboards are back up, and Houston’s rate of gun thefts from cars is starting to come down. Houstongunsafety.org provides resources for free gun locks and safes. Contact committee co-chairs Lisa Stone at lestone@aya.yale.edu or Dena Marks Sokolow at denasokolow@gmail.com to schedule a 30-minute gun safety training for your school, workplace, or other event.

On March 3, we sponsored “Fighting Books Bans and Building Bridges for LGBTQ+ Excellence,” an event that promoted understanding and support for our family, friends, and colleagues in the LGBTQ+ community. Guest speaker Cameron Samuels, a Brandeis University student, shared the challenges facing the LGBTQ+ community, and why fighting books bans is such an important form of advocacy for this community. Keshet’s Texas representative also joined the conversation and shared advocacy ideas.

We continue to support refugee families, thanks to Jennifer and Randy Claridge and their children, Addison and Logan. Our winter collection drive brought in enormous contributions of blankets, jackets, and more. In a few weeks, we’ll ask the congregation for donations of school supplies. Thank you in advance!

Our Temenos (“Sanctuary”) team, led by Beth Schneider, continues to visit and spend quality time with formerly homeless Houstonians on the second Wednesday of each month. Our volunteers registered with Food & Faith Collaborative helped staff their pop-up grocery stores, which provide quality food—that would otherwise be thrown away—to low income seniors and recent immigrants.

“Never believe that a few caring people can’t change the world. For, indeed, that’s all who ever have.”
- Margaret Mead

UPCOMING SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE EVENTS

Antisemitism on College Campuses Tuesday, March 26 at 7 PM What are Jewish students dealing with at our colleges and universities? How can we respond and help them respond? Join us as we talk to a panel of experts, including two Houston college students, Hillel Rabbi and Executive Director Kenny Weiss, and ADL’s Senior Director of Advocacy, Shira Goodman.	Volunteer Deputy Voter Registrar (VDVR) Training Social Justice Committee member, Warren Rich, will be hosting a training for members that are interested in becoming VDVRs. To be eligible to serve as a VDVR, you must be at least 18 years old, a citizen of the United States, and a resident of Texas. For more information, contact Warren Rich at nwr5462@icloud.com
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WOMEN OF BETH ISRAEL

Working with the common bond of friendship, the Women of Beth Israel offer programs that benefit the congregation and Greater Houston community.



Left to right: Bonnie Herst, Deb Baverman, Aubrey Baverman, Kat Blakeslee Stein, Felicia Lewin, Rachel Toole, Debra Butler, Mila Goldstein-Milo, and Karen Bookstaff

After a ten-year hiatus, the Women of Beth Israel are proud to bring hamantaschen back to Congregation Beth Israel! Our bakers have been busy as ever, creating over 250 dozen tasty treats from scratch to be enjoyed in time for Purim. Proceeds from this fundraiser will go towards restocking the kitchen with much-needed equipment. Thank you to the entire congregation and community for your support.

Unfortunately, it wasn't mood lighting that kicked off the Women of Beth Israel's annual Maj & More event on Sunday, March 25—it was an area-wide power outage. Nearly 100 attendees had to exit the building just as game play was getting started. While the beautifully-planned afternoon of sisterhood and small bites was cut short, a few lucky ladies walked away with door prizes. Special thanks to Pam Jarrett, Sherrie Kaplan, Babs Rosenfeld, Rabbi Adrienne Scott, Phyllis Selber, Marsha Stein, Phyllis Ullman, and Cheryl Zane, for generously supporting this event. To our event volunteers—Riki Weinstein, Anita Seline, Susan Bass, Barbara Hordern, Phyllis Ullman, Linda Caplan, Debra Butler, Jenifer Nech, Gail Levin, and Suzanne Platt—none of this would be possible without your time, creativity, and party-planning skills.

Interested in joining the Women of Beth Israel? Membership is always open! Join or renew your 2023-2024 annual membership at beth-israel.shulcloud.com/form/sisterhood.html.

BINGE IS BACK & BIGGER THAN EVER

Our BINGE groups (Beth Israel New Group Engagements) continue to thrive! If you have an idea for a BINGE Group, let us know. We have new groups forming all the time! For the most up-to-date list of BINGE Groups, visit our website.

Matinees & Martinis, our BINGE Group for congregants in their mid-60's and older who enjoy weekend theater and dining, recently went to see "The Piano Lesson" at the Ensemble Theatre, and "Pictures from Home" at Alley Theatre.

Our weekly BINGE Groups continue to meet: Torah 101 on Fridays at 11:30 AM, Jewish Meditation on Saturdays at 11:15 AM, Pickleball on Sundays at 9:30 AM, Swimming in the Sea of Talmud on Wednesdays at 2 PM, and Sharing Support in Troubled Times on Thursdays at 7 PM. Our Writers' Circle meets on the first and third Thursdays of each month at 1 PM.

Our monthly BINGE Groups are also going strong: What Are You Watching? meets on the first Monday of the month at 7 PM, Hobbies on the first Sunday at 10 AM, and What's Happening Now? on alternating Sundays at 10 AM. All are welcome to these sessions. No prior experience necessary!

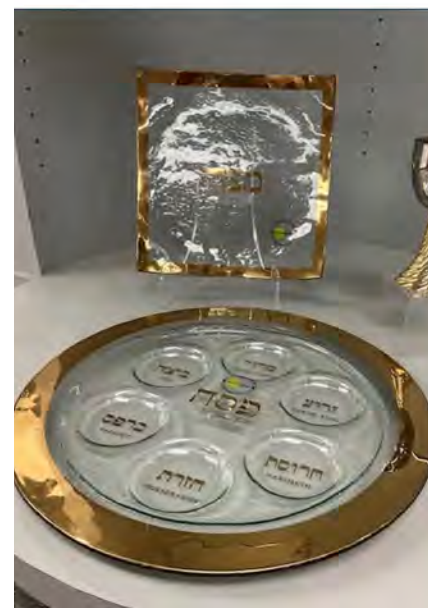
For any questions related to our BINGE Groups, contact Stephanie Shargal, Membership & Engagement Manager, at sshargal@beth-israel.org.

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As a father of three girls and eight grandchildren, I renewed my Judaism after many years when Rabbi Karff, of blessed memory, helped me realize how much Reform Judaism was for me. The congregational experience to Israel in 2012 with Rabbi Lyon, Cantor Mutlu, Rabbi Scott, and David Scott opened another world to me. We recently formed our Jewish Meditation BINGE Group, which explores how praying in Hebrew can be a form of chanting and meditation. David Scott helps us explore Jewish knowledge, music, and chants, and I add the brain physiology component and other techniques. Our group makes Jewish meditation accessible to everyone—no prior knowledge is needed, and nobody needs to know how to read or speak Hebrew—and this spiritual practice offers an immense opportunity to connect to God. We look forward to welcoming you.

- Jay Tarnow, Psychiatrist

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FIRST NIGHT OF PASSOVER IS MONDAY, APRIL 22

The Judaica Shop has everything you need for your Passover celebration!

Beautiful selection of seder and matzo plates, Hagaddot, and Passover-themed toys, books, and games for kids of all ages

Tuesday-Friday · 10 AM-4 PM



FAMILY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Providing family-focused programs for pre-school through high school students

KEHILLAH7 KICKS OFF ITS INAUGURAL YEAR



David Scott, RJE (center), and Mike Mason (left) lead a magic show at Magical Havdalah

It's been a busy winter for the Family Engagement Committee!

The season began with a Sunday afternoon Kids' Meals event, where families with children of all ages came together to make 1,000 sack lunches for Houston-area children. As soon as MBJLC's Sunday session ended, nearly 70 parents, teens, and children joined the assembly line to ensure all 1,000 lunches were packed to perfection. Even those who were too young to make lunches participated by decorating paper sacks with drawings and stickers.

Two Havdalah events brought joy and laughter to many children. On Saturday, December 2, more than 60 parents and children came to the Havdalah Pajama party, where we celebrated the end of Shabbat with songs, stories, and cookie decorating, led by Rabbi Adrienne Scott, Senior Associate Rabbi, Mike Mason, Director of Young Jewish Life, and Kerri Zerlin, Assistant Director of the MBJLC.

Then, on Saturday, February 24, families were mystified at a Magical Havdalah, where David Scott, Director of Lifelong Learning and Engagement, and resident magician, put on a magic show, and even taught a few tricks. Both nights included a pizza dinner and fun gifts for the younger attendees.

With spring quickly approaching, the committee is planning another Kids' Meals program, as well as a social event off campus to kick off the summer. For more information about any of our family events, contact Mike Mason at mmason@beth-israel.org or Kerri Zerlin at kzerlin@beth-israel.org.



Seventh graders participate in an ice-breaker game during Kehillah7

The Miriam Browning Jewish Learning Center's seventh grade class embarked on a new adventure this year, teaming up with the seventh graders at Congregation Beth Yeshurun and Brith Shalom for the inaugural year of Kehillah7. Underwritten through a grant from the Jewish Federation's Local Impact Fund, Kehillah7 is a program that fosters community and connection amongst seventh graders, while preparing them for their post-B'nei Mitzvah experience at Kehillah High.

Kehillah7 meets three times a year. The first session, hosted by Congregation Beth Israel in December, was led by Kerri Zerlin, Assistant Director of the MBJLC, and Mike Mason, Director of Young Jewish Life. The session focused on team-building and teamwork, as the children completed a ropes course and other interactive activities. The students also engaged in getting-to-know-you ice breakers, and enjoyed a pizza lunch from Saba's.

The second session, hosted by Congregation Brith Shalom in February, focused on "Tzedakah and Service." The children, accompanied by Cantor Kenneth Feibush and Kerri Zerlin, assembled and decorated duffle bag panels for Foster Love, an organization that provides suitcases to foster children. The activity was followed by games and lunch.

The third session, which will be held in April at Congregation Beth Yeshurun, is open to the entire Houston Jewish community, in addition to Kehillah7 students. This session will allow students to network with each other and learn more about Kehillah High from its Founding Director, Danielle Alexander.

Registration for the 2024-2025 year at the MBJLC and Kehillah High opens May 5. Contact Kerri Zerlin at kzerlin@beth-israel.org for more information about the MBJLC, Kehillah7, or Kehillah High.

WELCOME TO THE SCHACHTEL LIBRARY & ARCHIVE

VISIT OUR COLLECTION

The Schachtel Library is your resource for Jewish literature in Houston. Access the library any time, anywhere, at beth-israel.org/lifelong-learning/library, or contact Librarian Susan Whitman at 713-820-6410 or swhitman@beth-israel.org.

We continue to acquire new books on Jewish topics of interest, from the latest fiction, to current events in the global Jewish community, to discourse by Jewish scholars commenting on sacred texts. We have new books on the State of Israel, biographies of individuals who have influenced social and political change, and texts on historical subjects and contemporary issues that impact Jewish communities in America and abroad. All are welcome to explore our growing collection in person or online on the Temple website.

BETH ISRAEL ARCHIVE

The Beth Israel Archive tells the story of our Temple's history. The physical archive contains documents by former and present rabbis, early papers of the Brotherhood and Sisterhood, and records from our administration's past. Online you can access many of our earliest documents, search for confirmation pictures, and listen to audio stories of past congregants. Contact Susan Whitman for assistance with your research.

WINTER EVENT SPOTLIGHT

On Wednesday, February 21, The Schachtel Library and Social Justice Committee filled the BIFTY Lounge with a poetry reading by Jewish multi-genre writer and Houston native, Leslie Contreras Schwartz, and fellow poet Joshua Gottlieb-Miller.

SCHACHTEL LIBRARY WRITERS' CIRCLE

The Writers' Circle is a BINGE group created by Beth Israel congregant and author, Miriam Friedman. The group meets twice a month to discuss creative writing, share personal work, and receive constructive feedback. Writers of all levels are welcome. To receive updates about this BINGE group, contact Membership and Engagement Manager, Stephanie Shargal, at 713-771-6221 or sshargal@beth-israel.org.

Upcoming Meeting Dates: March 28 · April 11, 25 · May 9, 23 · June 6

SCHACHTEL LIBRARY READERS' GROUP

Our Readers' Group meets once a month, in person and online via Zoom, to discuss works of both fiction and nonfiction. Last month, we were honored to host Jeffrey and Margaret Tucker, along with Rabbi David Lyon, to discuss *Before a Canyon*, by their late son Jeremy Tucker.

April 17	<i>The Golem of Brooklyn</i> · Adam Mansbach
May 15	<i>The Happiest Man on Earth: The Beautiful Life of an Auschwitz Survivor</i> · Eddie Jaku
June 26	<i>Lessons in Chemistry</i> · Bonnie Garmus

SHARE THE LOAD **THANK YOU**

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who contributed to our annual campaign. Your unwavering support and generosity have played a pivotal role in sustaining and enhancing the vibrancy of our Temple. Your commitment to our shared values and the spirit of unity strengthens the foundation of our community, allowing us to continue fostering a welcoming and inclusive space for worship, learning, and fellowship. Your contributions have a lasting impact, enabling us to uphold our traditions, support important community initiatives, and maintain the sacred spaces that bind us together. Thank you for being an integral part of our Beth Israel family and helping us build a brighter future together.

With great appreciation, we recognize those who have contributed:

Judith & Richard Abrams	Gloria & Arthur Goldberg	Jani & Eric Lestin	Robin & Jonathan Saikin
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Center for
Spiritual Direction
of Congregation Beth Israel

NER TAMID, THE ETERNAL FLAME

by Tom Cole, Director of Center for Spiritual Direction

The next time you walk into the Sanctuary or the Gordon Chapel, look up at the light that hangs above the Holy Ark. This light is not a mere decoration. It is known as the Ner Tamid or “Eternal Light.” The Ner Tamid hangs in every synagogue, everywhere on earth. It never goes out. After the work day is done and Sabbath Services are over, we turn off all lights in the synagogue—except for the Ner Tamid.

Why? What is the Ner Tamid? Why does it matter? Why should it matter to you?

The Ner Tamid stands for the unbroken flow of divine light that first came into being when God declared, “Let there be light” (Genesis 1). It reminds us of God’s continuous presence and our unbroken responsibility to keep God’s commandments, to love God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our might (Deuteronomy 6:4).

Our responsibility to keep God’s light before us originates in Torah, in a passage in Leviticus 6:5, where God commands the Temple priests to kindle a perpetual fire on the altar. “It shall not go out,” the Torah says. “The priest shall burn logs on it . . . A continual fire shall be lit on the altar; it shall not go out.”

With the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem in 70 CE and the rise of rabbinic Judaism, keeping a Ner Tamid over the Holy Ark replaced the original commandment to keep an eternal fire on the altar.

Almost 2,000 years later, obeying this commandment led to a miraculous moment at Beth Israel, which was recounted beautifully by Temple member, Betty Zollars: It was September 29, 1967. The congregation was moving from our old building on Holman Street to our current home on North Braeswood. The Torahs had been removed from the Holman Street Ark, placed in Beth Israel’s Holy Ark, and blessed by Rabbi Schachtel. Now it was time to transfer the Eternal Light.

When the president tried to turn off the Ner Tamid in the old building, the light kept right on burning. And the new Ner Tamid suddenly glowed before the rekindling ceremony could begin. These miraculous moments are an everlasting reminder that the Eternal Light of God’s Covenant with Israel can never be extinguished.

You may ask yourself: “What does this have to do with me?” Here is Rabbi Yehudah Leib’s answer: “In the soul of every Jew there lies a hidden point that is aflame with the love of God, a fire that cannot be put out.”

For many of us, the idea of our soul aflame with the love of God may seem impossible or irrelevant. But even so, try to imagine that the fire in your soul is always there, hidden maybe, but always there. Then the questions become: How do you find and tend to that sacred fire in your own life? What are your offerings to God, to life, to society, to the earth? Let us answer these questions together in our Temple, where the Eternal Light will always burn brightly.

SPIRITUAL NOURISHMENT: PREPARING FOR SABBATH WORSHIP

Dr. Tom Cole will lead pre-Sabbath group conversations to help participants settle in and prepare themselves spiritually for the Sabbath Services. Conversations will range from the meaning of certain prayers, to the importance of the Ner Tamid that hangs above the Holy Ark, to the week’s parshah, and more. Light bites will be served. All are welcome.

April 5 & May 3 • 5:30 PM
Ladin Dining Room

Register at beth-israel.shulcloud.com/calendar



THE SHLENKER SCHOOL
Congregation Beth Israel

Contact Tara Gassett, Director of Admissions and Development at tgassett@shlenker.org or 713.270.6127 for more information.

Ignite the spark that will last a lifetime

The Shlenker School
5600 N. Braeswood Blvd. Houston, TX 77096
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THE SHLENKER SCHOOL
IS EXCITED TO ANNOUNCE
THE 2024 SPARK AWARD RECIPIENTS...

Leah and Seth Abrams

Leah and Seth will be honored at The Shlenker School’s 2024 POP Gala on April 6 for their long-standing dedication, passion, and commitment to the school community.

For more information, please visit the event website at <https://shlenkerpopgala.givesmart.com> or The Shlenker School’s website at www.theshlenkerschool.org.

CONTRIBUTIONS

The Congregation gratefully acknowledges the following contributions through February 16, 2024
For a full list of our funds, please visit our website: www.beth-israel.org/giving/tribute-donations

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The Bat Mitzvah of Hannah Smooke

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The Bat Mitzvah of Payton Fishman
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Jacquelyn Ford's Bat Mitzvah
Diane Gordon
Raya Astrich's Bat Mitzvah
Craig & Laura Astrich
Simon Golenternek's Bar Mitzvah
Anne & Scott Golenternek
The B'not Mitzvah of Ella & Nancy Bostic
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Michael & Linda Eisemann
Virginia Battelstein Segall, Ben Battelstein, Alex Segall & Roslyn Frohman Battelstein
Stephen & Nancy Bostic

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Adam & Jacqueline Smooke
The Bat Mitzvah of Payton Fishman
Bradley & Jamie Fishman
The Bar Mitzvah of Billy Dinerstein
Brian & Liz Dinerstein

Jacquelyn Ford's Bat Mitzvah
Diane Gordon
Simon Golenternek's Bar Mitzvah
Anne & Scott Golenternek
Raya Astrich's Bat Mitzvah
Craig & Laura Astrich
The 65th Birthday of Scott Silverman
Paula Friedlander
The B'not Mitzvah of Ella & Nancy Bostic
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Rabbi Scott for Kenny Goldstein Unveiling
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Stephen & Nancy Bostic

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Adam & Jacqueline Smooke
The Bat Mitzvah of Payton Fishman
Bradley & Jamie Fishman

B'not Mitzvah of Jacquelyn Ford & Hannah Smooke
Diane Gordon
B'not Mitzvah of Ella & Nancy Bostic
Stephen & Nancy Bostic
Simon Golenternek's Bar Mitzvah
Anne & Scott Golenternek
Raya Astrich's Bat Mitzvah
Craig & Laura Astrich
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The 75th Birthday of Connie Pollon
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Edward & Susan Septimus
The Birth of Isaac Nathan Stein
Richard & Eleanor Seline
Sue Sue & Don Aron
Marjorie Rosenthal
Connie Pollon
Marsha Gilbert
Kathy Knott
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Susan Smith
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IN HONOR OF
Marsha Gilbert for her Dedication to the Kids' Meals Program
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Richard & Eleanor Seline
Sue Sue & Don Aron
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IN MEMORY OF
Marsha Orloff
Diane Kaplan

SISTERHOOD DONATIONS/SHERYL ROSE FUND

IN MEMORY OF
Lynette Rauch
Valerie Wallace

FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION

BABY NAMINGS

Daphne Norman Stieber
Daughter of Lauren Alyse Lepow & Joshua Michael Stieber
Blake Daniel Eisemann
Son of Bradley Scott Eisemann & Erin Kronberg Eisemann

Lucy Golding
Daughter of Kyle & Samantha Golding
Annabelle Kaye Weiner
Daughter of Eric Weiner & Madeline Kaye
Hannah Louise Oster
Daughter of Sarah & Perry Oster
Asher Marshall
Son of Grace & Michael Marshall

WEDDINGS

October 26, 2023
Jessica Bursten & Bradley Marine
November 12, 2023
Susan Bass & Al Kaplan
December 9, 2023
Tami Amsel & David Blank
December 16, 2023
Rachel Gossett & Stephen Davis
January 27, 2024
Jordann Tiras & Tom Savage

DEATHS

Barry Gomel
Father of Brandon Gomel and Andrew Gomel; son of Bob Gomel & wife Sandra Gomel; brother of Corey & Cynthia Gomel
Sarah Grossman
Mother of Joel & Jamie Grossman and Edie & David Amran
Doris Haber
Mother of Scott & Susan Haber, Jodie & Adam Skorecki, and Tom & Penny Haber
Celine Kaplan
Mother of Jay & Carolyn Kaplan, Lee Kaplan & Dana Hudson, David & Barbara Kaplan, Nanette & Barry Putterman
Nora Laufman
Mother of Carolyn Weycer, Alan & Gabrielle Laufman, Gary Laufman & Lisa Brenner, and David & Judy Laufman
William “Cass” Platter
Husband of Bonnie Bloom Platter; step-father of Suzanne & David Slavin and Stephanie & Trey Weiss

Arvey Rogers
Husband of Joan Rogers; father of Scott & Pam Rogers, Stacey & Rob, and Shana & Mary
Stewart Shapiro
Husband of Glenda “Gigi” Shapiro; father of Tena Stewart
Bertram Jerome Spiwak
Husband of Audrey Spiwak; father of Alana Spiwak & Sam Stolbun, Deborah Spiwak, Susie Spiwak & George Merijohn, Aaron & Lynne Spiwak, Mimi & Wade Harris
Lew Todes, Jr.
Husband of Jo Todes; father of Jeffrey & Francine Todes and Brad & Lea Todes
Sandra Weiner
Mother of Andy Weiner & Meredith Mouer, Bayle & Richard Drubel, Rachel & Robert Davis, and Renee & Michael Lafair

B’NEI MITZVAH

APRIL 12-13, 2024
Ruth Frankfort
Daughter of Dana Frankfort; granddaughter of Ricki & Milton Frankfort
APRIL 19-20, 2024
Aubrey Renee Baverman
Daughter of Debra Baverman; granddaughter of Emily Fleischaker Baverman^{z”l} & Gerald Baverman^{z”l}
Ari Matthew Carlson
Son of Danielle Rinkoff and Michael Carlson; grandson of Feiga & Mark^{z”l} Rinkoff and Rachel & Kenneth Carlson, Porto, Portugal

MAY 3-4, 2024
Millie Feldman
Daughter of Allison & Freddy Feldman; granddaughter of Freda & Gary Friedlander and Barbara & Steve Feldman, Delray Beach, Florida; great-granddaughter of Ruth & Larry^{z”l} Steinfeld, Paula & Alfred^{z”l} Friedlander, Esther^{z”l} & Frank^{z”l} Feldman, and Mildred^{z”l} & Jess^{z”l} Spirer Weiss

Emma Rylee Goldstein
Daughter of Robyn & Brian Goldstein; granddaughter of Judy & Alan Rosen, Michelle & Michael Svayg, Miami, Florida, and Carol^{z”l} & Ronald Goldstein, Sandusky, Ohio; great-granddaughter of Sylvia Goldstein; Madeline & Myron^{z”l} Goldstein, Cleveland, Ohio, Robert^{z”l} Goldstein, Janice^{z”l} & Dave^{z”l} Bloom, Cleveland, Ohio, and Helen^{z”l} & Max^{z”l} Rosen
MAY 10-11, 2024
Anna Cation Sherman
Daughter of Candace & Marc Sherman; granddaughter of Ruth & Jerome^{z”l} Sherman and May & Peter Gee; great-granddaughter of Jeanne^{z”l} & Milton^{z”l} Goldberger and Anna^{z”l} & Abraham^{z”l} Sherman
MAY 17-18, 2024
Justin Hirsh
Son of Dorothy & Steve Hirsh; grandson of Roslyn & Jack Hirsh, Montreal, Canada, and Christine^{z”l} & Antoni Grynczuk, Montreal, Canada

MAY 31-JUNE 1, 2024
Ezra Jacob Scott
Son of Rabbi Adrienne & David Scott; grandson of Charlotte & Robert Pollock and Judi & Paul Scott
JUNE 7-8, 2024
Ava Breston & Ila Breston
Daughters of Donné & David Breston; granddaughters of Jo & Selwyn Cohen and Eva & Michael^{z”l} Breston

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

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170 years



Save *the* Date

**Congregation Beth Israel's
170th Anniversary Celebration
FRIDAY, MAY 10 • 7:30 PM**