



Beth El is proud to serve our local district as a polling station for elections. We gladly open our doors to the community to come vote. We are constantly called upon to choose. While not all choices are as significant as casting a vote, the choices we make reflect our values and often impact our lives and the lives of others. This edition of the Shofar focuses on choices. We are blessed to have them. May we choose wisely.

CHOOSING WITH LOVE

By Rabbi Alexander Davis



As Chanukah concludes, we pack away our chanukiyot, clean up the latke grease on our stoves and throw away wrapping paper. But for many, the joy of the holiday continues as they play with new toys, wear new clothes and enjoy the special gifts they received.

Mine is not a big gift giving family; we do not give one gift each night as some do. Indeed, for me the number, size or cost of a gift are all secondary. To be cliché, it's the thought that counts. When a person chooses a gift specifically for me, it is an expression of their love. For it shows that they considered me - my interests, my needs and my taste. They devoted time and effort to find just the right thing. I am honored by such a gift.

Choosing a gift is not just a chore in the busy shopping weeks leading up to a holiday or before a birthday. It is an act of love. We encounter this idea every morning in our daily Shacharit (morning) service. In the prayer just before the Shema that thanks God for the gift of Torah we say, "Blessed are You, God, who chooses the People Israel with love." This is one of many formulations that speak of the Jewish people as the Chosen People. And it is an idea that makes some uncomfortable. They say the election of Israel expresses chauvinism and superiority and violates the cardinal principle of the equality of all people. The new Reconstructionist siddur, for example, changed the formula from "who chose the People Israel with love" to "who lovingly cares for Your People Israel."

While I appreciate the concern, I do not find the idea of the Chosen People as formulated in this prayer inherently objectionable. Rabbi Elliot Dorff explains: "Whatever its pitfalls, the concept of the Chosen People is everywhere in our liturgy, but not intended as a statement of inherent superiority... The Chosen People concept expresses the preciousness of God's

gift of the Torah, a gift that the People Israel was lucky to inherit" (L. Hoffman's *My People's Siddur*).

In other words, according to this prayer, God expressed love for the Jewish people by choosing to give us a special gift - the teachings of Torah. Rather than grant us superior rights, the Torah imposes 613 additional responsibilities. Some gift! In my theology, God's gift of Torah for the Jewish people in no way denigrates other gifts God gave other people. God chooses just the right gift for each people.

When I was a kid, I loved getting toys as a gift. Generally, they lasted only a few weeks before I broke them or was bored with them. But the gifts that were given with true love- the watch my grandmother gave me, the sweater that my mom knitted, the apron my uncle embroidered with my initials- those I cherished and kept.

Torah is a precious gift chosen for us and given to us in love. Let us keep it and cherish it by studying it, living it and passing it on to a new generation.

In September, Beth El's Board of Directors voted to devote more attention to learning by establishing The Institute of Jewish Life and Learning. Look for updates on the Institute and for opportunities to learn by contacting Rabbi Davis at adavis@bethelsynagogue.org for more information.



Mezuzot in the Most Unexpected of Places...

By Rabbi Avi S. Olitzky



The choice was a difficult one to make. Which mezuzah from our very own beloved Beth El Women's League Gift Shop would adorn the owners' boxes at the new US Bank Stadium? We had to make sure the purple was just right, and we had to make sure it looked unassuming but also regal. There I was, late in the evening affixing the mezuzah with

a fellow Jewish New Jersey transplant who works for the Wilfs—and I couldn't help but marvel at the significance of the moment. We were sanctifying a place and a moment that the rabbis of the Talmud would have likely scorned—a modern day colosseum.

There are some who associate the mezuzah with amulets—whether it is about keeping evil out of our homes, or allaying God's anger should it come to our doorstep. Still others recognize this simply as fulfilling a biblical obligation. Indeed, there may be traditions today for which we might question the origin or the relevance. However, affixing a case to our doorposts with a parchment scroll containing various passages of the Shema is not only commanded of us in the Torah, it is also about

marking Jewish time and space. A simple gesture to remind us of the perpetual Divine presence in our lives.

There is no doubt that though the broader Jewish community may choose to consider their Judaism outside the walls of the synagogue, we still are readily aware of the desire to mark Jewish time and Jewish space. However, this becomes a daily choice we sometimes are too distracted to make or acknowledge. How can we make those seemingly not Jewish moments and places Jewish? Perhaps it's as simple as affixing a mezuzah. Or better, gathering together for Havdalah before going out on a Saturday night. Our USYers may be embarking on a youth retreat weekend (like YOW), debating over which DVD to watch on the bus, but the bus does not roll out until we mark the moment by offering the Travelers' Prayer. Even our children don't get tucked in at night without reciting the Shema.

Why is it compelling to actively choose to make these moments Jewish? It is not because of "God brownie points" or a reward and punishment system. It is compelling because for thousands of years our ancestors have given us a pair of lenses through which we are to view the world. And those lenses help add meaning to our lives. They help enrich our days and our relationships, and most importantly, give us pause to reflect on our presence and mission in life.

During these winter months, there is a dearth of Jewish holidays and celebrations—but Tu B'Shevat is that oasis in time that allows us to mark yet another Jewish moment. Join us for what has become the most premier Minnesota Food and Wine Experience—our Tu B'Shevat Seder on February 9. Make your reservations before this evening sells out at www.bethelsynagogue.org/tbs.





Befriending the Yeitzer Hara

By Cantor Audrey Abrams

In Judaism, the concept of *yeitzer hara* refers to the inclination to do evil while the *yeitzer hatov* is the inclination to do good. We are born with both of these inclinations but have free will to make the ultimate choices in behaviors. I picture the two little people who suddenly appear on the shoulders of T.V. characters struggling to make a decision. The more “devilish” one is trying to persuade us to choose a wicked path, while the good “angel” is nudging toward more ethical and righteous behavior. This image suggests choose one way and you’re BAD – the other way and you’re GOOD.

But what if instead of this black and white paradigm we could see both of our inclinations as neutral- more like a fork in the road with choices? What if we were to acknowledge that often we learn and grow when we take the path of the yeitzer hara? What if we were to “befriend” our yeitzer hara and, even harder, befriend the yeitzer hara in others – so we could let go of the judgments and allow for a softer more compassionate heart that is the stimulus for change?

Every moment we have choice. Sometimes, we choose anger over understanding. Sometimes, we choose gossip over careful speech. Sometimes, we choose ignoring someone in need versus lending a hand. Sometimes, we choose being self-absorbed versus being self-aware. Many of these moments go by so quickly we don’t even notice them except in hindsight. Each of these moments, however, is an opportunity for self-examination. We strive to make future choices based on the learning. So we choose to be the best we can be, to make our lives more holy.

This is our lifetime work. It is difficult, sometimes painful, takes patience and a willingness to be open to change. The poem in the sidebar is one I think of often as I learn from the “less than desirable” choices I make over and over. But I do find comfort in knowing that I am not alone on this journey. As we say in our morning prayers, “Elohai n’shama shenatata bi t’hora hi – the soul you have given me is pure.” I know that every day God breathes life into me is a fresh day to make new choices. I am grateful for the opportunity to try again and hope to do so with the wisdom that comes from mistakes.

Autobiography in Five Short Chapters

BY PORTIA NELSON

I

I walk down the street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk
I fall in.
I am lost...I am helpless.
It isn’t my fault.
It takes me forever to find a way out.

II

I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I pretend I don’t see it.
I fall in again.
I can’t believe I am in the same place
but, it isn’t my fault.
It still takes a long time to get out.

III

I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I see it is there.
I still fall in...it’s a habit.
my eyes are open
I know where I am.
It is my fault.
I get out immediately.

IV

I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I walk around it.

V

I walk down another street.

Choose to come for good music, good friends and good food at one or all of the four concerts at Beth El in January and February. Please see Upcoming Events on page 22 for concert listings.



Choosing Our Home

By Linda Goldberg, Executive Director

Life presents us with many choices. Some seem easy, others more difficult. Chocolate or vanilla? (easy – chocolate, of course!) There are many easy choices in life that are a matter of personal taste and not particularly consequential. As we continue on our journeys, though, many of our choices have ramifications that are life altering. Decisions we make about whom we choose for friends, a career, a life companion, and what we choose to do to make a difference in the world affect not only us but those around us.

Twenty-two years ago, my husband Dennis and I made a decision that had significant impact on our lives. We were living in Portland, Maine, a beautiful city on the east coast, two hours north of Boston where we were both born. Dennis was working for a technology company based in New Hampshire and I was the Executive Director of Temple Beth El. Our oldest son, John was five years old and our youngest son Nicky had just been born.

Dennis came home on a Friday afternoon in June and, as we were getting ready to go to a Shabbat dinner at shul, he mentioned that his boss asked him to move to Minneapolis and open a sales office – the following Tuesday. It's important to know that Dennis and I process information differently. He was immediately excited about the opportunity and was raring to go. I immediately had a hundred thoughts and questions running through my mind. They want you to move to halfway across the country *in four days*? Are you kidding??? Are there other options? How about Boston – it's so much closer to family and friends. By the way, we have two little kids, and I work full-time.

Dennis said that the culture at the company was such that you only had one chance for advancement and if you didn't enthusiastically agree, there wouldn't be another opportunity. Did I mention that Dennis was excited about moving to Minneapolis? He also makes choices and decisions quickly. I, on the other hand, like to think things over, weigh the options, and consider alternatives.

You can guess what happened. Dennis moved to Minneapolis on Tuesday while our boys and I stayed in Portland for a year. During that year, Dennis came home weekends and mounted a sales campaign to convince me that Minneapolis was the place to be. Most sentences began with the words, "Honey, you'll love it here...there are at least six synagogues...it's very progressive – the mayor is a woman...the grocery store is beautiful (Byerly's), you should see how they arrange the meats."

My responses went like this: "Stay for three months – see how the job goes." "Give it another three months – who can make a decision in three months?" "It's winter, who moves to Minneapolis in the middle of winter?" By Pesach, I could see that Minneapolis was going to be our home.

While still in Maine, I had called several shuls during my Minneapolis Jewish community research phase. I had a very nice conversation with the volunteer at Beth El who answered the phone, Ruth Solom. Ruth called me back a few days later from her home and offered to show me around the community when I came to town. We instantly became close friends with Ruth and her family.

When Dennis first came to Minneapolis, all we knew about Minnesota was that Rocky and Bullwinkle lived in Frostbite Falls. Being the research type, I decided to get more useful information. I learned from Rabbi Harry Sky, our Rabbi Emeritus, that the Twin Cities community had a tremendous reputation for being active and engaged. Three of the largest Conservative synagogues in the country are there. I was thrilled to learn there were actually day school choices – I had gone to day school as a child and was excited to be able to provide that experience to our boys. If we were going to move, how wonderful to be sent to a community that had such a vibrant Jewish life!

The boys and I joined Dennis in Minneapolis the following July (yes, thirteen months later!). We enrolled John in the Minneapolis Jewish Day School (now Heilicher) and visited a number of synagogues. All were very nice, but there was something special and haimish about the reception we received at Beth El. When I called to inquire about High Holy Day tickets, Marion Dorfman answered the phone and said, "Well, Honey, we don't sell them, but if you come over we'll give you a couple." I came in with 16-month-old Nick. Someone rushed over to play with him while someone else sat me down with what seemed like at least a dozen brightly colored holiday forms and flyers. I instantly knew after resisting the move for as long as possible that Beth El and Minneapolis were right for our family.

The rest is history. I started working at Beth El nine months later, enrolled Nicky in the Aleph Preschool, and we have made lifelong friends in a supportive, warm and welcoming Jewish environment. Life is full of choices. Sometimes we make conscious, well thought out decisions. Other times, the right choice seems to come our way. Often, it's a combination. Our family is very blessed to have chosen Minneapolis and the Beth El community. How fortunate we are that Minneapolis and Beth El chose us as well!

Listening While Hearing

By Dan Mosow, Beth El President



Over the past several years, I have struggled with hearing loss. Just like many people, I was in complete denial that I needed hearing aids. Last spring, during a meeting at Beth El, I realized that I missed half of the conversation, not because I wasn't paying attention but because I could not hear what was going on. It was very apparent that I had a choice to make: I could continue struggling to hear, or I could start wearing hearing aids. After wearing the hearing aids for a few weeks, I wondered why it took me so long to make the decision. It has dramatically improved my ability to hear.

Now that my hearing is much improved, I had another choice to make, which has had a more significant impact than just hearing what others have to say. I had to start listening. For me, this was a challenge. I have always asked a lot of questions but I did not necessarily listen to the answers. I spent more time convincing people of my opinion rather than listening to what they were telling me. I had a tendency to interrupt while the person was speaking and express my ideas rather than allowing them to complete their thoughts. I realized that I had to change my ways. The results have been amazing. I have learned to reach out to people that have expertise in areas that I have little knowledge and either ask them to work with me or educate me. I have started listening to the answers to my questions. I have tried to incorporate my new listening skills in both my personal and professional life.

I used these new listening skills to conclude that our congregants have a tremendous desire to learn ways that Judaism can be meaningful and relevant to them. They want to understand how and why to live a Jewish life. They seek spiritual experiences in both traditional modes and new alternatives.

With the approval of the synagogue's Board of Directors, we have set out to meet this need by establishing The Institute for Jewish Life and Learning. The Institute will not necessarily replace our current array of learning opportunities such as study groups or spiritual offerings such as Sacred Chanting. Rather, it will expand on and extend these by offering more diverse opportunities for engagement.

Rabbi Davis, along with Barbara Krupp and Audrey Goldfarb are designing the framework for the Institute. They too will be listening to our congregation to design an Institute that will meet the needs of our dynamic congregation. Over the next few months, we will be communicating with you the programming that will be offered by the Institute.

New Members

In the spirit of welcoming families to the congregation – so everyone can put names with faces – we are now offering new families the opportunity to place their photo in the Shofar. If you have joined Beth El in the past year, please email lgoldberg@bethelsynagogue.org with a family picture. It is our goal to feature as many photos of new families as possible.

PLEASE WELCOME

Marty Chester & Haley Schaffer
with Ella, Sophie and Rose

Sheldon & Lili Chester

Tom & Missy Barenbaum

Jeremie Kass & Sheri Rosen
with Corban and Dara

Rena Locke

John-David & Mirra Neiman

David & Amy Lui with Yoni

Simon & Gretchen Glaser
with Mabel and Dorothy

Amirav Davy & Naomi Goloff
with Avigail and Simon

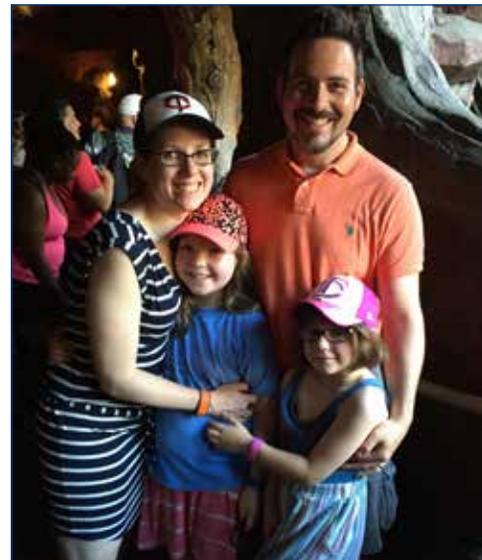
Bob Dignazio & Morgan May



Schaffer Chester Family



Tom & Missy Barenbaum



The Glaser Family

Making Choices

By Karen Burton, Director of Aleph Preschool



and Beth El community.

When we are young, our families make those choices for us, with the very best of intentions to raise a healthy and happy family. My family made the choice to emigrate to America from England when I was a teenager. Arriving in San Francisco at the young age of 16 with my parents and siblings was a huge culture shock. The language may have been the same, but the lifestyle was so very different, and it took many months to acclimate and feel at home and part of a community. My younger brother quickly became "American," choosing to easily slip into an American accent. For me, that was difficult, and I chose to keep my English accent. I also chose to keep my Jewish identity strong. It was not as easy to be Jewish in the U.S. as it was growing up in England. I took it seriously and realized how I had taken this for granted when I was younger.

Fast forward 16 years in San Francisco, 11 years in Florida and 11 years in Minneapolis, married to my husband Andy, (just celebrated our 25th wedding anniversary). We have four healthy adult children

(of whom we are so proud). And our life has been filled with making many choices, some difficult and some easy, all without regrets along the way. We have been blessed in so many ways and appreciate where we are today.

Each day I observe the many choices our Aleph Preschool children make, from who they will sit next to during circle time to what item they will bring from home for "Show and Tell." One can almost hear their minds thinking out loud as they navigate the paths to come to a decision. One little girl would like to bring her whole bedroom of toys to school with her each morning, making the choice of selecting one toy from her car during morning carpool difficult, and yet fulfilling when she walks in proudly with her chosen toy.

How wonderful to be part of a preschool where our dedicated teachers guide our children to make their own choices, to learn and understand themselves and their sense of belonging to the local and global community, through immersion in Jewish spirituality, language, culture and heritage, where Jewish ethics embody universal human values. Most importantly, we hope to foster a sense of awe and wonderment in our children as they explore their natural surroundings.

As always, we invite you to take a tour of Aleph Preschool, to see our children and teachers in action. We know you will come away with a smile on your face and a warm place in your heart for our preschoolers.

"We hope to foster a sense of awe and wonderment in our children as they explore their natural surroundings."



THE CHOICES WE MAKE

By Amanda Awend, Director of Shorashim
and Young Families Engagement

Our daily lives are filled with choices. Cream or sugar? Highway 169 or Highway 100? Paw Patrol or Mickey Mouse? Sometimes however, the choices become a little more difficult. Synagogue or soccer? Friday night dinner or football? As an active part of our vibrant and diverse community at Beth El Synagogue, I realize that the question is not Judaism or extracurriculars, but rather how do I manage a life with both Judaism AND extracurriculars? Some families are miraculously able to juggle soccer, hockey, karate, t-ball, chess and also attend synagogue every week. Maybe as you read this, you think “that’s my family!” Or maybe you hear about all those activities and it leaves you exhausted just thinking about it. Perhaps then we need to ask ourselves, what is “important” to us and how do we make it work for our family?

No two families are the same. And through our Shabbat morning Shorashim program (K-1 religious school), I have come across much diversity. These families come from different neighborhoods, different backgrounds and different points of view. But they all have Beth El in common. They have chosen to find community here on Saturday mornings and made the decision that Jewish education is important to

their family. To me, that is what counts. It’s about the choice. It’s not important from where they are coming or where they are going – whether a family came from hockey practice, or leave to go to a soccer game – they are choosing to involve their family in the synagogue and synagogue life in their family. And that is no small thing.

To be clear, it does not have to be a question of spiritual life versus secular life. If choosing both works for your family, then embrace it and do so with pride! Tell your children why you make these decisions and why these things are important to you. My family chose to live in Plymouth. We love our lakeside home surrounded by nature, but we knew that our choice to live here would make our drive to synagogue somewhat longer. We may be the only one on the street that will light a Chanukah menorah in our window, but we do it, and we do so proudly. And that is further supported by our Chanukah celebrations at the synagogue.

Our community is thriving because of all the choices that you make. Every time your family chooses to participate – no matter what way – you help us build a stronger community, one of which we can all be proud.

“Whether a family came from hockey practice, or leave to go to a soccer game – they are choosing to involve their family in the synagogue and synagogue life in their family.”



BAR/BAT MITZVAH: The Age of Choices

By Mary Baumgarten, Education Director

Freedom to choose is one of the central themes of Judaism. In fact, the Torah is predicated upon a human being's freedom of choice. Choice is also one of the defining features of adulthood. As we mature, we have more and more decisions to make. And with the guidance of family and community, we pray that we make wise choices as we grow.

Given that bar/bat mitzvah marks the entrance into adulthood, it is no surprise that choice is a central component of our learning. We speak to students about making healthy choices in their teenage years and thoughtful choices about how to live their adult Jewish lives. And we give them practice expressing their growing independence by offering choices over the bar/bat mitzvah itself.

Preparing and celebrating a bar/bat mitzvah is a personal journey. So I have always believed that families need options. One size does not fit all. Indeed, families are increasingly asking for options, and we are providing choices. For example, some of our Fiterman B'nai Mitzvah families are choosing to celebrate in Israel, others are choosing to celebrate on a Friday night or weekday morning. Some prefer to study about a haftarah rather than chant it, while others are learning advanced prayers.

Making the ceremony and the celebration personal with these and other choices deepens our students' love of Judaism. For ultimately, b'nai mitzvah is not just an age of choice but the act of choosing to embrace Judaism.

WHY CHOOSE TALMUD TORAH?



By Dan Weiss, Talmud Torah President



The number of after-school enrichment options for elementary and middle school students is staggering. The Minnetonka School District alone offers dozens of programs for my kids in sports and recreation, art, STEM activities, performing arts, music, cooking, and more. It's often hard for parents to decide which programs are worthy of their valuable time. The choices are harder, and the challenges are greater, for Jewish parents who also want to provide their children with a quality after-school Jewish education.

So why choose Talmud Torah? What benefits do Talmud Torah students and their parents receive from our program that they won't get in other enrichment programs? During our recent strategic planning process, we developed this "Statement of Distinction" to answer these questions:

Talmud Torah offers a rigorous education that builds knowledge of Judaism and its traditional practices based on the teachings and egalitarian, pluralistic principles of the Conservative movement. As a school co-led by two distinct Conservative congregations, Talmud Torah offers students a place to make deep connections with other young people from different Jewish backgrounds who come together for profoundly valuable educational and social experiences that build pride and self-confidence in being Jewish.

Although this Statement is relatively new, Talmud Torah has been providing these educational and social benefits for generations. Today, our staff is dedicated to delivering on this value proposition, so that Talmud Torah's benefits are clear and the choice for Jewish parents in our community is easy.

If you want to discuss Talmud Torah's value proposition, feel free to contact me at weiss042102@msn.com.



Choosing Rishon

By Andrew Freeman, Youth Director

On the first day of Rosh Hashanah, the teens had an interesting program in which they had to prove that one of five biblical characters was the first-ever Jew. An argument could be made for each of the five. The five choices were: Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Mordekhai and Ruth.

- > Abraham was the first to accept the covenant with God.
- > Jacob became Israel, the namesake of our people.
- > Moses was the first to accept the Torah and the Mitzvot for which we are still held accountable today.
- > Mordekhai is the first in the Tanakh (Hebrew Bible) to be referred to as a Yehudi (Jew).

The one choice of the five that might have been perceived as a stretch was Ruth. She was not born Jewish and came into the fold because she married into the community. However, she is the first protagonist in the Tanakh who explains how and why she CHOSE to become Jewish and actively chose to be part of the community. As she said, "For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God." Ruth came into the community and stayed because of her relationship to her new family. When Beth El hired me to be the next Youth Director, I did not know what to expect from our wonderful community. I had relationships with some of the teens from my time as a counselor at

Camp Ramah in Wisconsin, as well as from interactions when I staffed International Convention in Baltimore last year. But what I immediately discovered when walking off the bus in the Wisconsin Dells for Beth El's annual Youth Outreach Weekend is that, like Ruth, though I was entering into a new community, from the first day they treated me like family.

Unlike Ruth, it would seem that most of us do not have the choice whether or not we are Jewish. Often it is simply the way we are born. Ruth may be the symbol of a Jew-by-choice, but her big entry into the faith is her desire to STAY a part of a community, and keeping the faith, keeping to her family that she had kept so close to her heart.

Here at BERUSY (Beth El Rishon USY), there are teens who time and again make an appearance. And we value that participation. But an appearance isn't enough to get the true experience of what our chapter and our synagogue has to offer.

Our chapter offers a community and a family who care about each other and welcome new people with open arms. "Where you go we will go, where you lodge, we will lodge." Just as Ruth models the way a Jewish person and a person committed to the Jewish community should act, Beth El Rishon USY models how a chapter should act and how a community should grow. And it is in this community that I have chosen. I am excited to learn with, grow with, and welcome others for "your people shall be my people."

"Our chapter offers a community and a family who care about each other and welcome new people with open arms."

B'nai Mitzvah



January 21, 2017 / 23 Tevet 5777
Shemot

SARAH ABIGAIL MASHAAL

שרה בת דוד וסהר

AIDEN ANTHONY MASHAAL

אידן בן דוד וסהר

Daughter and Son of Cynthia &
David Mashaal

Sarah and Aiden began their Jewish education in Singapore and we are pleased to see them continuing their journey at Beth El in the tradition of their family.



January 28, 2017 / 1 Sh'vat 5777

Vaera / Rosh Chodesh

NOA MEIR BUSLOVICH

נועה מאיר בת לב וחיה מלכה

Daughter of Dina & Lev Buslovich

Noa is the 5th person in our family to join the Beth El family as a bat mitzvah. She completes our circle, as she often does.



February 4, 2017 / 8 Sh'vat 5777

Bo

ISABEL NATHAN

אהבה יוספה בת דוד מנדל

Daughter of Lynne & David Nathan

Isabel and Zachary have worked together to make this milestone special and joyful. We look forward to watching them both enter Jewish adulthood.



February 4, 2017 / 8 Sh'vat 5777

Bo

ZACHARY NATHAN

זכריה חיים בן דוד מנדל

Son of Lynne & David Nathan

Zachary and Isabel have worked together to make this milestone special and joyful. We look forward to watching them both enter Jewish adulthood.



February 11, 2017 / 15 Sh'vat 5777

Beshalach / Tu B'Sh'vat

SHIRA CAROLINE HANOVICH

שירה חיה בת שמואל פרץ ומלכה

Daughter of Melissa Mark &
Steven Hanovich

Shira's bat mitzvah study was well supported by her keen wit, unique insights and love for learning. We are so very proud of her accomplishments!



February 18, 2017 / 22 Sh'vat 5777

Yitro

PEYTON LAUREN ERICKSON

לאה ראחל בת רוחמה בת שבע

Daughter of Rachel & Bret Erickson

Peyton lives life with wisdom and kindness. She takes her studies to heart and we're so excited for her bat mitzvah.

B'nai Mitzvah



February 25, 2017 / 29 Sh'vat 5777

Mishpatim / Shabbat Shekalim

**ANYA MICHELLE
SCHWARTZBERG**

חנה מרים בת עברי טוביה ובתיה גיט

Daughter of Brenda & Todd Schwartzberg

We're so proud of and inspired by Anya. She's spent much time preparing for her bat mitzvah; we look forward to her continued growth.



March 4, 2017 / 6 Adar 5777

Terumah

AVIVA ZAHAVA WADRO

אביבה זחבה בת יצחק אלחנן ושירה רבקה

Daughter of Shira & Leon Wadro

Aviva is a lively, creative, intelligent and kind young lady. We are looking forward to seeing the dynamic Aysbet Chayil she will become.



March 4, 2017 / 6 Adar 5777

Terumah

GAVRIEL ELIYAHU WADRO

גבריאל אליהו בן יצחק אלחנן ושירה רבקה

Son of Shira & Leon Wadro

Gavriel's creativity and intelligence will drive him to great things. He loves learning about Judaism and studying the weekly parsha.



March 18, 2017 / 20 Adar 5777

Ki Tisa / Shabbat Parah

HAYA SHIFRA FINE

חיה שפרה בת דוד פינחס ליב וטליה

Daughter of Aga Fine and David Fine

Since Haya was born, we have been blessing her to be like our foremothers, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel & Leah, "Yi'simech Elohim k'Sarah, Rivka, Rachel, v'Leah." We could not be more pleased with Haya's character development toward this ideal.



March 25, 2017 / 27 Adar 5777

Vayakhel-Pekudei / Shabbat HaChodesh

DELANEY SARI FOGEL

דבורה בת דוד זוקר דוב ורבקה לאה

Daughter of Randi & David Fogel

Delaney's heart is filled with love for music, dance, family and friends. We are proud to see Delaney reach the milestone of a bat mitzvah.

Parents and kids from the Sunday Torah Plus class helping to raise the sukkah.



On December 1st, Mike Williams, accompanied by Bill Lunn from KSTP, shared his true tales of the Deepwater Horizon tragedy, from dealing with survivor's guilt, to how one summons bravery in the face of terror and chaos to live to see another day. Proceeds from this Heroes Among Us evening helped assist our military support initiative, directly benefiting the 2nd Battalion, 135th Infantry Regiment, currently deployed on a nine-month peacekeeping mission in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula.



Thank you to all those who helped unload the 8000+ pounds of food at STEP from the Yom Kippur Food Drive. Choosing to donate does not end in the fall.

Look for additional opportunities for donating, specifically the Minnesota FoodShare, which is March 1-31, 2017.



Pause Before You Choose

By Jan Hamilton, Congregational Nurse

It wasn't until I reached maturity that I gave the idea of choice any thoughts. It was only then that I reflected on my decision making process. That is to be expected. In early childhood, we learn what is accepted and what isn't, how to keep the love and support we need, and how to defend ourselves. We're grateful for this learning that serves us well. But most of us have some relearning to do as we age. Such relearning happens with maturity. It happens when we learn to examine our reactions and responses to the people, situations and events in our lives.

It can be tempting to think we have little or no choice. Often, our responses feel like reflexes, happening automatically. But the truth is, we do have choice. That's where awareness comes in. With greater awareness we can teach ourselves to pause before responding. We can choose how we respond. And in that pause, we can consider the parameters of our choice; we can consider the values that underlie our decision making process:

- What do I really want in this situation?
- What is my motivation when making this decision?
- Am I coming from a place of love or fear?

As we age, the choices we make are no less important. In fact, they can seem daunting! What I encounter frequently in my role here at Beth El as I meet with members and their families are questions like these:

- Where do I want to spend my remaining years? At home? In a senior residence? Closer to my family if they are distant geographically?
- Where will I get the help I need when I need it?
- What can I live without, and where am I willing to compromise to get more of what I want?
- Do I have the information I need to make thoughtful decisions about the medical care I need that reflects my values and my wishes? Do I have an advocate, or have I designated a health care agent to speak for me if I cannot speak for myself?

We can't always be sure we're making the right choice, but we can search our hearts for what's important to us. We can have open and honest conversations with our family and can avail ourselves of information and resources available to us. Peace of mind is then possible, knowing we did what we could to make the best decision possible at the time. In that vein, know you can always count on me as a resource.

Sending you blessings and wisdom in your decision making.



During the High Holy Days, Rabbi Davis and Cantor Abrams gathered Beth El congregants who reside in the Sholom Home to share stories, songs and teachings. The next Beth El get-together will be during Pesach.

Pictured with Rita Cook, longtime Beth El member.

MAZAL TOV TO MEMBERS WITH UPCOMING MILESTONE ANNIVERSARIES

NAME	DATE	YEARS
Martin & Sue Ring	January 6	50
Ryan Shapin & Deborah Friedman	January 13	10
Daniel & Mindy Chiat	January 15	5
Francis Radel & Judy Mogelson Radel	February 7	10
Mark Satz & Gail Bender Satz	February 10	15
Jon Wolpert & Rhona Shwaid	February 11	5
Simon & Leah Temkin	February 11	25
Ira & Malka Mandelbaum	February 12	45
Merle & Sheila Lazerine	February 13	35
Rick & Helen Averbach	February 27	40
Boris & Falina Avrutin	March 5	60
Sandy & Debbie Selnick	March 12	40
Jason Rein & Jodi Livon Rein	March 16	20
Harley & Ellen Greenberg	March 19	50
Alfred & Myrna Feldman	March 23	65
Rick & Nancy Grobovsky	March 26	40

If you would like to ensure your (or your loved one's) simchah is acknowledged in future publications, please contact the Beth El Office at 952.873.7300 or info@bethelsynagogue.org.

Mazal Tov to...

Sarah & David Scott on the birth of their daughter, Abigail Rose Scott, born on June 30, 2016

Elizabeth Kuller & Benjamin Gerber on the birth of their son, Julius Bear Gerber, born on July 26, 2016.

Elyssa & Matthew Danahy on the birth of their son, Mason William Danahy, born on September 19, 2016.

Elana & Neil Goldsmith on the birth of their daughter, Eden Tobey Goldsmith, born on September 26, 2016.

Melissa & Jason Kanuit on the birth of their son, Leo Benjamin Kanuit, born on October 2, 2016

Kristen & Adam Levitt on the birth of their daughter, Isabel Ida Levitt, born on October 4, 2016.

Condolences to...

Harvey (Donna) Leviton on the loss of his sister, **Lynn Leviton Parsons**

Naomi (Amirov Davy) Goloff on the loss of her mother, Donna Goloff

Friends and family on the loss of our member, **Sarah Shapiro**

David (Lisa) Wolfe on the loss of his father, Joseph Wolfe

Ione Stiegler and Beth (Scott) Puchtel on the loss of their husband and father, **Alan Stiegler**

Yonatan (Kindy) Rouache on the loss of his mother, Orit Rouache

Judy Meisel and Michael (Soni) Cohen on the loss of their husband and father, **Fred Meisel**

Melvin (Marlene) Lebewitz on the loss of his brother, Sherwin Lebewitz

Mark (Gay) Herzberg on the loss of his mother, Elsie Herzberg

Lillian (Allen) Griffel on the loss of her mother, Paula Meister

Friends and family on the loss of our member, **Samuel Kvasnik**

Friends and family on the loss of our member, **Phyllis Sperling**

Shirley Yarosh on the loss of her husband, **Samuel Yarosh**

Liz Grossman on the loss of her father, Norman Freeberg

Tyler (Kathy) Rendleman on the loss of his father, Terrence Rendleman

Henry Goldstein, Michael Goldstein and Barbara (Barry) Rosenzweig on the loss of their wife and mother, **Gertrude Goldstein**

Lorita Jacobson and Peggy (Joel) Mandel on the loss of their husband and father, **Jay Jacobson**

With heavy hearts we mourn the loss of these loved ones within our community. This reflects the losses in our community through October 19, 2016.

Beth El Synagogue Foundation

Ensuring the vitality of our congregation now and in the future



Our Children as our Teachers

By Matt Walzer, Director of Charitable Giving

As parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, we lead by example and teach our children and the next generation about tzedakah & chesed, two of our most important values. We study the teaching, we talk the talk of charity and we donate our dollars, our time and teach about our responsibility and commitment to our community, locally and overseas.

At Beth El, an interesting phenomenon is happening. Our children in the Aleph Preschool are teaching us and leading by example. We can all look, hear and experience that our Aleph Preschool is thriving – flourishing in its spirit and actions of tzedakah & chesed, and this year they are both elements of the overall curriculum. Each month, students work within a theme, and tzedakah & chesed is a portion of their learning and activities. This school year, they have already covered the following themes and their coinciding focus:

- June**Creation (created cards for National Guard)
- July**Land of Milk & Honey (community garden items for STEP)
- August**Stewardship of the earth (community garden items for STEP continued)
- September**Building our community (tzedakah project in partnership with JNF)
- October**How we fit into the world (decorated the sukkah)
- November**Being grateful (Chanukah gifts for JFCS)
- December**Festivals of light (made cards and gifts for Sholom Home residents)
- January's theme is diversity:** Same and different and we have partnered with JNF again to plant trees in Israel.

Our children are our future. And, while our goal is to inspire them, it is apparent with what they are learning that they are in turn inspiring us. This cyclical affect will only prove to benefit our Beth El community.

If you are wondering how you can help transform your acts of tzedakah & chesed – building off these lessons – the following are a few options you may want to consider:

- > Jewish Education; including Aleph Preschool tuition assistance, the Ben & Bernice Fiterman Bar/Bat Mitzvah Training Program, USY, and camp scholarships
- > Clergy Support
- > Congregational Nurse
- > Building Beautification

If you are inspired and want to talk about the impact you can make, contact Matt Walzer, Director of Charitable Giving at 952.873.7309 or mwalzer@bethelsynagogue.org.

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TZEDAKAH

Tribute donations to Beth El funds honor friends and family, commemoration of significant events, memorialize loved ones and provide essential support to the congregation. Endowment funds provide permanent funding where needed most or for a specific purpose. Endowment funds are held in the Beth El Foundation. Funds for immediate use are used to support specific programs or projects, are for general use and are spent in their entirety. To make a donation, or to establish a new fund through our Foundation, please contact Gary Krupp or Steve Sanderson at 952.873.7309 or at foundation@bethelsynagogue.org.

TODAH RABBAH (THANK YOU)

Beth El gratefully acknowledges the following contributions:

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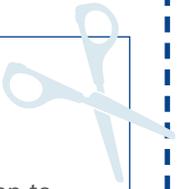
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This list reflects donations made from July 20, 2016 - October 17, 2016.

YAHREZIT TZEDAKAH CONTRIBUTIONS

We honor our loved ones through donations that support their values and continue their lives.

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Debra Gottesman	Nathan Gottesman	Lois Perwien	Florence Brodsky	Lisa Wolfe	Gerald Davidson
Phil Greenberg	Sam Greenberg	Aaron Pinkus	Diana Pinkus	Sara Zuk	Mina Freier



UPCOMING AT BETH EL

Below is a sampling of only some of the upcoming events at the synagogue. Please mark your calendar and plan to attend. Look for more details in future *Hakol* and *Kesher* publications, and as always, feel free to call the Welcome Desk at 952.873.7300 for additional information.

JANUARY	
1	Beth El Serves Brunch at Ronald McDonald House
14	Aleph Preschool Family Fun Night: Havdalah
22	"MinneApple to the Big Apple" Gala Concert benefitting Minneapolis/St. Paul Chapter of HaZamir, the International Jewish High School Choir – http://bit.ly/hazamirgala
FEBRUARY	
4	BEMA Coffeehouse Concert Series presents "Bat ella sings Debbie Friedman" with Israeli singer, Bat ella Birnbaum – http://besyn.org/coffeehouse
5	Beth El Serves Brunch at Ronald McDonald House
5	National Guard Packing
9	Tu B'Shevat Seder
11	Tu B'Shevat
23	Sephardic Diaspora Concert at Beth El – Part of the 2017 International Spanish Music Festival – www.ismfestival.org
26	Twin Cities Jewish Chorale Concert at Beth El
MARCH	
5	Beth El Serves Brunch at Ronald McDonald House
5	National Guard Packing
5	Aleph Preschool Family Fun Night: Pasta Party
11	Purim Extravaganza
12	Purim Carnival
12	Purim Family Fun Day

SPRING LOOKING AHEAD

APRIL	
12	Pesach 2nd Night Community Seder
23	Yom Hashoah Remembrance Service
MAY	
21	Trucksploration
30	Shavu'ot

ONGOING SERVICES

EREV SHABBAT

(Friday evening)

Kabbalat Shabbat ...5:45 pm

YOM SHABBAT

(Saturday)

Shacharit9:00 am

Minchah4:30 pm

SUNDAY

Shacharit9:00 am

(Chevrah Breakfast)

Maariv.....5:45 pm

DAILY MINYAN

Shacharit7:00 am

Maariv.....5:45 pm



Beth El
SYNAGOGUE

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BETH EL MUSIC AND ARTS (BEMA) PRESENTS

Coffeehouse Concert

With Israeli Artist, Bat ella Birnbaum

February 4, 2017

Beth El Synagogue
8 p.m. (doors open at 7:30)

"BAT ELLA SINGS DEBBIE FRIEDMAN"

Israeli singer-songwriter, Bat ella Birnbaum, befriended the iconic American Jewish songwriter and concert artist, Debbie Friedman, z"l, in the mid-1990's and witnessed the tremendous impact her music had on Jewish culture and spirituality throughout America. Upon returning to Israel, Bat ella became committed to popularizing Debbie's songs in the Jewish State. A charismatic singer, performer and teacher, Bat ella will fill our hearts with a fusion of the Jewish culture of Israel and an American cultural legacy through this latest project.

Bat ella will be accompanied by a band of renowned musicians.

Purchase tickets at <http://besyn.org/coffeehouse>

"Angel" with Premiere Table Seating \$50

Reserved Table Seating \$25 in advance / \$30 at the door if available

General Seating \$20 in advance / \$25 at the door

