



Beth El

רפר Fall 2020 | 5781









A Home To All People

By Rabbi Alexander Davis, Rabbi Avi Olitzky and Cantor Audrey Abrams

In many ways, our High Holy Day prayers come to a climax in a little noticed verse at the end of the Amidah. Just after we sing "Hayom, Hayom, Hayom" we recite words of the prophet: "I shall bring you to my holy mountain and make you joyous in My house of prayer. For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the people."

These words were first uttered 2500 years ago by the prophet, Isaiah. Speaking to Israelites living in exile, Isaiah offered hope that they would one day return home. God would gather the dispersed, restore their nation and rebuild their central place of worship. That Temple, Isaiah promised, would be a House of Adonai for the entire people including "foreigners" who attached themselves to the Jewish people.

In this reading, Isaiah paints a vision directed specifically to the Jewish people. (Note, the Hebrew says, "My house shall be called a house of prayer for THE people.") He expresses the hope that one day we will be united as an extended family of faith. However, this verse is understood to have a broader, universal message. For example, our machzor translates, "My house shall be called a house of prayer for ALL people." That is a beautiful message. It imagines the Temple as a place of radical hospitality where all are welcome. It imagines a time of universal brotherhood in which all people worship together.

The holiday of Sukkot has a similar universal message. Our haftarah readings described the messianic era when there would be only day ("Hayom") and not night, a time when all people would ascend to the Temple beseeching God for life-giving rain.

How far we are from this vision! Not only are there deep divisions between people, nations and faiths, no one can even go to shul. Today, our building is sadly a house of prayer to no people.

But there is another, powerful way to read this verse. If we understand it and if we implement it, perhaps we can achieve the vision Isaiah sets out. Do not read "for" but "to"- "My house shall be called a house of prayer TO all people." That is to say: our homes are to be places of prayer. They are to be permeated with the sights, sounds, smells, traditions, values, and morals of the Jewish people. Our homes are our Temples.

One day soon, God willing, we will again be able to open our homes and our shul to others. For now, as we sit in our sukkahs, we are called upon to work toward this vision. When we participate virtually in services, classes, and gathering, we extend Beth El and make each of our residences a House of God. We transform our houses into sanctuaries and make our homes a light unto the nations for all people.

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My Most Favorite Thing...

By Alan Yousha, Beth El President

L'Shannah Tovah! Wishing you and your family a happy and healthy New Year! I must have wished that a thousand times last year...and the year before...and the year before that, as I greeted congregants at the doors of Beth El during the high holidays.

My most favorite thing to do as a volunteer at Beth El has always been greeting and welcoming our congregation and guests at the main entrance on Shabbat mornings and during holidays. The warm and welcoming smiles, the laughter which would carry through the entryway and fade as folks walked past the Learning Center doors, the many handshakes, high-fives, and fist bumps, and of course the conversations. I always loved when people would stop to talk. This year, well this year is different for all of us.

I am honored to be writing as the newly elected President of Beth El Synagogue and to be leading the Board in representing our congregation. I recall almost a year ago, thinking about what I would say at the annual meeting in the year 2020, accepting this honor. I had considered and liked the idea of correlating the year 2020 to a foundation on which to build a healthy vision of our future and aligning that vision to our mission and newly developed strategic plan.

As the year 2020 unfolded and our ability to see clearly into the future had become more and more unclear, I realized that the moment I had been considering was not going to happen the way I planned, and like many I began to ask what was going on in this world. Not why anything was happening specifically to me, but why the enormity of it all, and why now?

As the saying goes, hindsight is 20-20. I started thinking about how 2020 might not only be about looking forward, but about exposing what we have been blind to regarding our past. With that perspective I began to wonder about how aspects of our lives and communities would be different today had we been able to see more clearly what was often in plain sight - where we missed the mark.

The Board and the staff at Beth El have spent a lot of time looking back this past year. We spent time recognizing gaps and putting together plans to remediate areas where we too have missed the mark. We worked to listen to the congregation and to connect on a strategic plan for how we should best move forward. I believe the work we have done will light our way as we align the blessings of what we have been shown this past year, with our mission and vision for Beth El.

While I know that our Board and our staff are supporting best practices and safety and considering all aspects of what is possible in order for us to open, like many of you I miss our synagogue and I am enthusiastic and excited about that moment when we do open again and I can once again experience the warmth of greeting our community at the entrance to our shul.

Until then, what comforts me is knowing that we are a strong and vibrant community and that we are still able to engage as a community. To learn as a community. To virtually gather as a community. To connect as a community. To serve as a community.

I am confident about the future of Beth EI and optimistic that the clarity to which we are exposed in our world today carries us all towards a brighter and more kindhearted future. Chag Sameiach.



Embracing Uncertainty

By Matt Walzer, Managing Director

Like others, I have watched the people around me respond to the series of events that have unfolded during the year of 2020 as they have expressed disappointment and sadness for how things are not as they expected. I empathize – I miss so many of the things that brought people together physically that we have not been doing for what is now over seven months.

And, while I miss those things and empathize, I try to take moments in time to remind myself of the positive things occurring in my life as well.

For me, Beth El is no different – I miss all of you and our synagogue community. Though, I reflect and have seen us come together in ways we never would have expected, and have accomplished so much – even though there is a lot that people are unaware of because we aren't together in the same way.

Because of that, I thought I'd take a moment to share with you some of the important things that have taken place at Beth El over the last several months as we led up to 5781 and closed the door on our synagogue fiscal year of 2019-20:

- In March, we quickly pivoted and created our CyberShul within weeks, allowing us the opportunity to continue serving our congregants virtually. Simultaneously, our Beth El Caring Committee (BECC) reached out to *every single* Beth El household and developed further check-ins for our at-risk population.
- We immediately established a cohort of subject matter experts to help us make decisions moving forward – always helping to make sure we are aligning our mission & values with them.
- July 1, 2020 began a new fiscal year, and our 2019-20 year closed with in a positive cashflow result, highlighted by financial responsibility, added layers of controls, great program management, and additional charitable giving.
- Our clergy team worked innovatively to design, create, and implement a new High Holy Day experience under unprecedented conditions.
- Aleph Preschool worked diligently to reopen in early September in order to serve a portion of our congregation that was not able to be served by our CyberShul.
- We have prepared a plan to monitor and manage our finances through a continued pandemic with realistic optimism that we will get through this together with you.

With all of this, I have embraced the idea that there is no certainty. And, that uncertainty is incredibly uncomfortable. It would not be honest of me to say I know what's next. What I do know is we will continue to find ways to stay connected and maximize the programs and services we offer to you as congregants. We are committed to doing so – and to serving our mission while keeping people safe & healthy.

Everything we have been able to accomplish is *because of you*. You are the lifeblood of Beth El, and I appreciate your engagement, your support, your tzedakah, and your patience.

Thank you for being Beth El and for being on this journey with us together.



One of the many things that makes social distancing difficult is the inability to gather to sing. At a time when we need to rejoice with, and be lifted and comforted by song, our voices are silenced. Music videos and zoom solos are wonderful but they are not a substitute for a sanctuary filled with music.

Music fills our spirit and touches our soul. It connects us across generations and across lands. It's no wonder music plays such an important role in Jewish tradition and in the life of Beth El Synagogue. Under the direction and inspiration of amazing cantors, Beth El has grown into a singing congregation. Who has not been moved by Cantor Newman chanting Kol Nidre, or by Cantor Abrams holding us in song at the burial of a loved one? Who has not been moved by the soulful singing of Neilah, or expierenced the joy of watching our Aleph Preschoolers sing the Four Questions, the uplift of singing and dancing on Friday nights to a spirited niggun?

That is the power of music. And it is our responsibility to ensure the song continues. That is why the Beth El Foundation is excited to share with you plans to create an endowed chair to support the role of a cantor at Beth El. And who better to name if for than Beth El's most recent cantors who have led the congregation for the last 30 years. Named the Audrey Abrams & Neil Newman Cantorial Chair, these funds will be used solely to underwrite the salary for this critical clergy position.

Of course, the role of the cantor goes far beyond music. As a full member of the clergy team, the cantor teaches, builds community, offers pastoral care, and much more- all infused with music, Torah and their own special spirit. In short, this endowed chair is critical to the future of the synagogue and why projecting ahead, the Beth El Foundation has made this a priority.

We look forward to sharing additional details on this exciting work with the Beth El community in the coming year. We thank the Audrey Abrams & Neil Newman Cantorial Chair Committee for their dedicated work on this important project. Todah!

AUDREY ABRAMS & NEIL NEWMAN CANTORIAL CHAIR COMMITTEE

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B'nai Mitzvah



10/17/2020 / 29 Tishrei 5781 Beresheet

DAHLIA MIA COHEN

נצנה מיחל בת יעקב ואריאלה Daughter of James & Lisa Cohen

Dahlia has a true zest for life. She shares this energy with every person she comes into contact. We are so proud of the incredible individual she is now, and who she is becoming.



10/24/2020 / 6 Cheshvan 5781 Noach

SIG ISAAC RABINOVITZ

שמואל יצחק בן יוסף ויוספה

Son of Jeff & Jill Rabinovitz

Sig is kind, determined and has a strong commitment to learning. We are so proud of him and look forward to celebrating his bar mitzvah.



10/31/2020 / 13 Cheshvan 5781 Lech Lecha

NATHAN JONAH LEWIS נתן בן אוריאל וגאלדא

Son of Uriel & Jill Lewis

Nathan took on the responsibility of his bar mitzvah wholeheartedly and has made us very proud. He always brings a strong work ethic to his studies.



11/7/2020 / 20 Cheshvan 5781

MAX NATHAN GOTTSTEIN

נתן בן דוד יוסף ולאה רחל

Son of Jeff & Lisa Gottstein

Max is charismatic and lights up a room. His passions run deep including his Jewish life, as we continue our traditions and life cycles at Beth El.



11/12/2020 / 25 Cheshvan 5781 Chayei Sarah

MILA ELIZABETH SCHLISSEL מילה בת דן ושושנה

Daughter of Dan & Suzanne Schlissel

Mila is a caring and loving soul. Her Jewishness is of central importance to her. We look forward to her continued journey.



11/21/2020 5 Kislev 5781 Toldot

DESMOND AUGUST RUBENSTEIN

דורון בן ראובן ואדינה

Son of Richard & Tricia Rubenstein

Desmond has approached his bar mitzvah studies with dedication and has adapted admirably to recent digital study formats. We are so proud of him and look forward to celebrating with family, friends, and the community.



11/26/2020 / 10 Kislev 5781 Vayetzei

LEAH GABRIELLE SMITH לאה בת אורי ושרה

Daughter of Wendy & Colin Smith

Leah has approached her bat mitzvah with excitement and hard work. We are very proud of her accomplishments. She is looking forward to celebrating her simcha on Thanksgiving day.



12/5/2020 / 19 Kislev 5781 Vavishlach

RYAN AARON OLEISKY אפרם בן אפרים ואביאלה

Son of Andrea & Robert Oleisky

Ryan's journey to his bar mitzvah has been a valuable learning experience for him. He has grown to understand the importance of what it means to be Jewish.



12/12/2020 26 / Kislev 5781 Vayeshev

ANI SOPHIA FLAM

שרה בת אפרים צבי ורחל

Daughter of Ian and Jane Flam

Ani is beautiful, intelligent, artistic and loving. We look forward to watching her enter Jewish adulthood and continue to grow.

MAZAL TOV TO MEMBERS WITH UPCOMING MILESTONE ANNIVERSARIES

NAME	DATE	YRS
Bonnie & Marvin Zeff	8/15/2020	55
Randy Victor & Andy Steinfeldt.	8/24/2020	35
Michelle & Steven Waller	9/1/2020	35
Cynthia & Leonard Fields	9/1/2020	35
Elizabeth & David Grossman		
Debra & Stuart Shapiro	9/3/2020	25
Esther Goldberg Davis		
& Rabbi Alexander Davis	9/3/2020	25
Rochelle & Robert Diamond	9/4/2020	60
Ruth & Jonathan Paradise	9/5/2020	60
Amy & Marc Blehert	9/6/2020	10
Elissa & Igor Furman	9/6/2020	50
Linda & Paul Benenson	9/7/2020	40
Rachel & Michael Klein	9/8/2020	35
Sheila & Stewart Derechin	9/9/2020	30
Ruth & Harold Kaiser	9/10/2020	60
Pam & Ronald Kaufman	9/13/2020	50
Linda & Ronald Mash	9/17/2020	20
Shana & Michel Melendez	9/18/2020	15
Robyn & Benjamin Schein	9/18/2020	15
Marilyn & Morton Percansky	9/18/2020	60
Carol & Stanley Dobrin	9/19/2020	55
Anna & Alex Shagalov	9/20/2020	45
Sandra Scherling & Louie Inks	9/21/2020	10
Gail & Michael Milchman	9/21/2020	55
Shari & Loren Levinsohn		
Sharilyn & Ken Goldfarb	10/10/2020	10

NAMEDATEYR	S
Alex & Chad Locke10/10/202010	
Frances & Joseph Moses 10/16/202065	
Judy & William Sigal 10/20/202035	
Helen & Arnold Seltzer10/21/202025	
Cindy & James Katz 10/22/202025	
Zohara & Shmuel Cohen-Lissek 10/24/202010	
Diana & Gary Rosen 11/2/2020 45	
Debra & Mark Gittleman 11/4/202025	
Susan & Bruce Cantor	
Andrea & Michael Ruby 11/6/202010	
Muriel & Felix Zwiebel 11/7/202050	
Shirley & Louis Jurisz11/12/202020	
Sandra & Arthur Lavintman 11/16/202035	
Amy & Michael Stern 11/17/202035	
Maureen & Leo Fine 11/21/202065	
Livia & Peter Fahndrich11/30/202045	
Jacalyn & William Broze 12/1/202035	
Nina & Bryan Badzin	
Viktoria & Michael Resig 12/10/2020	
Susan & Gabriel Kaufman 12/12/2020	
Bonnie & Leonard Zeff 12/19/202050	
Maria & Daniel Rose 12/20/20205	
Loreen & Perry Silverman 12/26/202055	
Judith & Marvin Liszt 12/28/202045	
Revital & Michael Furman 12/29/2020	
Zina & Yury Trofimov 12/29/202060	

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...

Rebecca Nahum & David Walters on the birth of their daughter, Esther Jean on April 16, 2020. Mazal Tov to proud grandparents Jean Holloway & Avi Nahum.

Kate & Matt Erickson on the birth of their son Natan born on May 25, 2020

Mindy & Daniel Chiat on the birth of their son, Perry born June 18, 2020. Mazal Tov to proud grandparents Elayne & Larry Chiat.

Sharon Feinstein Rosenblum & Mark Rosenblum on the birth of their daughter born on July 20, 2020.

Sarah & Daniel Kaye on the birth of their daughter, Miriam born on July 24, 2020.

Alison Fink & Danny Solarz on their wedding on August 2, 2020. Naomi Konikoff & Craig Byer on their wedding on August 2, 2020 Erin Butler & Ben Cohen on their wedding on August 16, 2020. Lara Frankle & Brad Benenson on their wedding on August 16,

Sandra Katz and Barry Nash on their wedding on August 25, 2020. Laura Tilsner & Brad Liszt on their wedding on September 6, 2020 Dr. Jonathan Paradise on receiving the Vivian Mann Jewish Educator of the Year Award.

Noah Marell on receiving the Tychman Family Award for Jewish Community Leadership Development.

This list reflects births through August 31, 2020.

Condolences to...

Lynn (Mark) Schwartz on the loss of her father, Victor Schulze

Bruce (Jeanne) Kaufman on the loss of his mother, **Esther Kaufman**

Friends and Family on the loss of, Myrna Feldman

David (Amy) Lui on the loss of his mother, Barbara

Lui Saul Mashaal, Gilah Mashaal, and David (Cynthia) Mashaal on the loss of their wife, and mother, Diane Mashaal

Vicki Bogdon and Jeffrey Bogdon on the loss of their husband and father, Eugene Bogdon

Kristie Wayne on the loss of her husband, Emil "Robie" Wayne

Jennifer Berman on the loss of her brother, Jeremy Freeman

Harvey (Arlene) Kase on the loss of his sister, Sonia Berke

Mark Vertelney on the loss of his sister, Paula Edelstein

Patti (Ari) Kaplan, Tony Moldo and Steve Moldo on the loss of their brother, Rabbi Larry Moldo

With heavy hearts we mourn the loss of these loved ones within our community. This reflects the losses in our community through August 31, 2020.

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 Matt Walzer at 952.873.7309 or at foundation@bethelsynagogue.org.

TODAH RABBAH (THANK YOU)

Beth El gratefully acknowledges the following contributions:

APS General Support Contributions

In Memory of Darlene Schwartz Stewart & Sheila Derechin

BEMA Support

In Honor of Wendy & Marty Shragg's Granddaughter Cantor Neil & Saranee Newman

Cantor Iven & Saranee Ivewinan

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Mazel Tov Marvin Eisenstein & Freada Golden

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In Honor of Cantor Audrey Abrams Howard & Wendy Bach

Happy Anniversary Howie & Wendy Bach Marshall & Paula Lehman

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Mazel Tov Granddaughter Sophia Deborah Deutsch

Mazel Tov Micah Schoenberger Deborah Deutsch

In Appreciation of Liz Pomish

In Appreciation of Rabbi Alexander Davis

In Memory of Lou Ann Bongard
Rachel Frailich & Timothy Bechtel

For Speedy Recovery of Marcy Pearlman Miriam Freidson

For Speedy Recovery of Sam Pearlman Miriam Freidson

In Honor of Naomi & Craig Konikoff Susan & Bruce Hammer

In Honor of Barbara & Philip Herman Dana & Cory Herman

For Speedy Recovery of Bill Broze H. Irving & Karen Katz

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In Memory of Emanuel Galili Avivit Kecman & David Tobeck Mazel Tov Freada Golden & Marvin Eisenstein Joellyn Laurie

In Honor of Noah Rudoy Carri & Michael Lazarus

In Memory of Judith Dworsky
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In Memory of Samuel Malcom Pearson
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In Appreciation of Beth El Synagogue Ruben Preiss

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In Memory of Mildred Ingber Phyllis & Howard Harris

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In Memory of Myrna Feldman Janet Feldman

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In Memory of Myrna Feldman Mona Feldman

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Kaye Goldberg In Memory of Myrna Feldman

Sharon Goldschmidt

In Memory of Myrna Feldman Sara & Peter Hewitt

In Memory of Myrna Feldman Thomas & Amy Lieberman In Memory of Myrna Feldman

In Memory of Myrna Feldman Leslie Sell

In Memory of Myrna Feldman Neil Sell & Katherine Wilson In Memory of Myrna Feldman Ron & Karen Sigal

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Happy Birthday Malka Rice (Mom) Gloria Rice

Mark Rice

Steven Rice z"I

Edward Rice

Ronald Rice & Family

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In Memory of Rose Rice In Memory of Abe Armel

Malka Rice

Sunday Morning Chevra

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In Memory of Esther Kaufman

Bill & Sharon Torodor
In Memory of Sam Nilva

Bill & Sharon Torodor

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In Memory of Lowell Herman Leslie & Elaine Spiegel

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In Memory of Esther Weiss Kaufman Gary & Barbara Krupp

Zola & Marion Fineman Book Fund

Mazel Tov Freada & Marvin Eisenstein Ronna Bartness

This list reflects donations made as of 8/9/20.

YAHRZEIT TZEDAKAH CONTRIBUTIONS

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

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A weekend of celebration honoring Cantor Audrey Abrams
JUNE 17 – 19, 2021

Festivities kick off Thursday evening with a concert featuring special guest, world renowned Cantor Azi Schwartz from Park Avenue Synagogue and Cantor Audrey Abrams.

The celebration continues through Shabbat honoring Cantor Abrams as she officially retires as Beth El's Cantor.

