

DECEMBER 2025/JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2026

KISLEV – ADAR 5786

Happy Chanukah!
חג חנוכה שמח!



No Really, Why Is Chanukah 8 Days?

By Rabbi Alex Freedman



Every Jewish child knows why we celebrate Chanukah for eight days: because the oil in the Temple Menorah miraculously burned for eight days. But adults

should consider that question more deeply: really, why do we light candles for eight nights? After all, the oil was supposed to last for one day, so in truth the miracle was seven days, not eight. If the holiday is about recalling miracles, shouldn't we light for seven?

This astute question was asked and answered by the 16th century Rabbi Joseph Karo. In fact, it triggered such an avalanche of responses that it's known simply as "the Beit Yosef's question."

Here's his own response: on the first night, the entire flask of oil was emptied into the Menorah, which should have enabled the Menorah to be lit for a full day. The next morning, they discovered that none of the oil had actually burned up, and the Menorah was still full even as its flames burned. This same miracle occurred each day. So the first day presented its own miracle as well.

I share the author's desire to identify a miracle on the first day, though I challenge how he somehow knew about this untold part of the story.

I am more persuaded by the idea of the 17th century rabbi known as the Pri Hadash. He says that we celebrate the holiday to commemorate the two miracles together: that of the military victory (one night) and that of the long-lasting oil (seven nights), for a total of eight nights.

I value how this author makes room for the miracle of the few defeating the many. Whereas the miracle of the oil was entirely divine in nature, the Maccabees' victory had a real human element to it.

More recently, the contemporary Rabbi David Wolpe takes this further. He says: "Miracles don't just fall from the heavens; they grow from the human heart. Maybe the real hero of Chanukah was that unknown person who hid the oil somewhere in that destroyed Temple knowing that one day someone would come along and find it. He would kindle a light again that would — with a little help from G-d — turn into a miracle."

For Rabbi Wolpe, the act of lighting the flame expecting it to last only one night was itself a miracle. Remember the vast darkness and destruction in that moment. Something stirred a person to light the Menorah anyway, because maybe, just maybe, something good would follow. That courageous act of human faith despite the surrounding darkness is something we should remember on Chanukah as well, this year and always.

**FREE
CONCERT!**



North Suburban Synagogue
Beth El
בית כנסת בית אל

CHANUKAH CONCERT

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 16

Celebrate Chanukah at Beth El with Six13, the amazing Jewish a cappella group from New York City. This concert is perfect for all ages and is free for congregants and their families.



SCAN THE QR CODE TO REGISTER OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE

5:00 pm – Free Young Family Dinner (for children through 1st grade)
5:30 pm – Free Concert for Beth El members and their families
6:45 pm – Congregational Chanukah Dinner (registration required)

Dinner tickets: \$18 per person (ages 13+) and \$10 per child (ages 2–12)
Desserts sponsored by Sisterhood. **RSVP by December 8, 2025.**

Contact Hillary Wenk for more information at hwenk@nssbethel.org | www.nssbethel.org





Dedicated to You

By Larry Pachter, President of Beth El | president@nssbethel.org

Chanukah is our holiday associated with dedication — in fact, the translation of the Hebrew word “chanukah” (חֲנֻכָּה) is “dedication.” I want to refer to two very different meanings of the word “dedication” that are timely.

First, during the first few months of 2026, Beth El will be dedicating our new entry structure as the “Buddy and Bernice Cohen Pavilion,” in recognition of the generosity of the Cohen family, both for the construction of the pavilion and particularly in support of our Cohen Religious School. Watch our website and your emails for details of the Dedication ceremony and stop by to see this new welcoming space that will serve our community so well now and long into the future.

I also want to mention the dedication we see from our clergy and staff in the myriad ways that they serve the synagogue and our community. As I mentioned during the High Holidays, our clergy work together seamlessly to provide us with comfort and joy throughout the year, with daily services and Shabbat and holiday celebrations. Likewise, our staff, both veteran and those who have joined us in the past year, work diligently to keep the building well maintained and safe, and allow us to provide the classes, lectures, movies, concerts and other activities that our community so much enjoy.

Hag Urim Sameach — Happy Chanukah to you and your family!

Shabbat Shira – Shabbat of Song

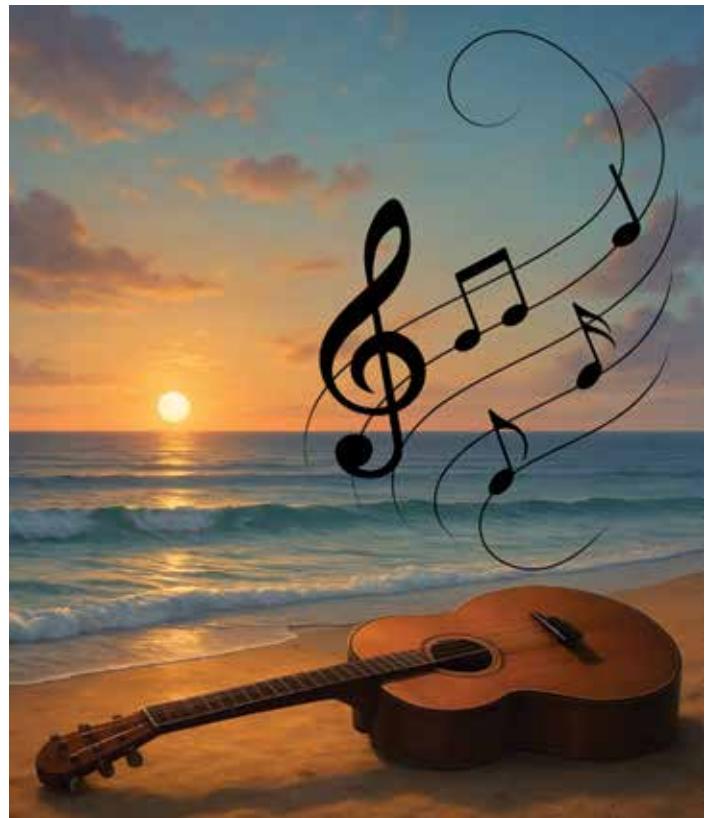
By Hazzan Jacob Sandler | jsandler@nssbethel.org



One of the musical highlights of the Torah reading cycle is Parashat Beshallach. It depicts the epic climax of the Exodus narrative and the crossing of the Sea of Reeds. With the newly freed Israelites on the other side, they break out into a song called *Shirat HaYam*, the Song of the Sea. The Haftarah contains the Song of Devorah and the whole Shabbat is dubbed Shabbat Shira — Shabbat of Song.

One might think I would add more melodies to the service. But here's the challenge: the Torah and Haftarah readings are long and, as I always say, “Tuna by 12:00 pm” is the Hazzan Sandler guarantee. So what can I do? Here are three things to look out for:

1. I'll be honored to deliver the sermon that morning. It may be musical, but it's sure to be a special moment regardless.
2. I'll add music to Friday night! I always schedule a *Rinat Shabbat* service for erev Shabbat Shira. With many catchy melodies, a davening team adding harmony and ruach, it's sure to be a Shabbat of Song from the very start.
3. I'll bring more singing throughout Shabbat. During/after Kiddush, we can gather and sing zemirot, and I'll be sure to do extra singing between mincha and ma'ariv.



Some years, I've brought in extra musicians to help add harmony and joy to our prayers without adding extra time as well. While I haven't planned that yet, I hope everyone will join us January 30-31, 2026, for Shabbat Shira!

Contents

Pray

Shabbat Shira pg.3

Shabbat Schedule pg.4

Level Up: Shabbat Edition pg.5

Learn

Lifelong Learning pg.13

Lunch & Learn pg.15

Community

Six13 Chanukah Concert pg.2

Chanukah Challahkiah Class pg.15

Events At A Glance pg.17

JTS Scholar Weekend pg.18

It's All in the Beth El Family pg.19

Social Action Committee

Upcoming Events pg.23

Sisterhood Gift Shop pg.24

Upcoming B'nai Mitzvah pg.26

Annual Event pg.28

Shabbat Schedule



All of the following Shabbat services meet in person and on livestream.

<https://livestream.nssbethel.org>

You can also find weekly Minyan times in the Thursday Kol Beth El email.

Clergy:

Rabbi Michael Schwab*
Rabbi Alex Freedman
Hazzan Jacob Sandler
Hazzan Jenna Greenberg
Rabbi Vernon H. Kurtz, Emeritus

Every Shabbat

10:30 am Junior Congregation

Services for students in 2nd – 6th grade (Sager Beit HaMidrash).

11:00 am Tot Shabbat

Year-round services for families with children 1st grade and younger (Horwitz-Hoffman Youth Lounge).

Please note:

For weekly Torah and Haftarah readings, clergy commentary, and Zoom links, please open your weekly Thursday Kol Beth El emails.

For classes, meetings and other scheduled events, please refer to our website calendar or call the synagogue office at 847-432-8900.

*Rabbi Schwab occupies the Vernon H. Kurtz Senior Rabbinic Chair

Scan the QR code below to view additional Service times and dates



December

Friday, December 5

4:01 pm Candle Lighting
6:00 pm Kabbalat Shabbat

Saturday, December 6

Parashat Vayishlach
9:00 am Shabbat Service
4:00 pm Mincha Service
5:05 pm Ma'ariv Service/Havdalah
5:06 pm Shabbat Ends

Friday, December 12

4:01 pm Candle Lighting
6:00 pm Kabbalat Shabbat

Saturday, December 13

Parashat Vayeishev
9:00 am Shabbat Service
4:00 pm Mincha Service
5:05 pm Ma'ariv Service/Havdalah
5:07 pm Shabbat Ends

Friday, December 19

4:03 pm Candle Lighting
6:00 pm Kabbalat Shabbat

Saturday, December 20

Parashat Miketz
9:00 am Shabbat Service
4:00 pm Mincha Service
5:05 pm Ma'ariv Service/Havdalah
5:09 pm Shabbat Ends

Friday, December 26

4:07 pm Candle Lighting
6:00 pm Kabbalat Shabbat

Saturday, December 27

Parashat Vayigash
9:00 am Shabbat Service
4:00 pm Mincha Service
5:10 pm Ma'ariv Service/Havdalah
5:13 pm Shabbat Ends

January

Friday, January 2

4:12 pm Candle Lighting
6:00 pm Kabbalat Shabbat

Saturday, January 3

Parashat Vayechi
9:00 am Shabbat Service
4:00 pm Mincha Service
5:15 pm Ma'ariv Service/Havdalah
5:19 pm Shabbat Ends

Friday, January 9

4:19 pm Candle Lighting
6:00 pm Kabbalat Shabbat

Saturday, January 10

Parashat Shemot
9:00 am Shabbat Service
4:15 pm Mincha Service
5:25 pm Ma'ariv Service/Havdalah
5:25 pm Shabbat Ends

Friday, January 16

4:27 pm Candle Lighting
6:00 pm Kabbalat Shabbat

Saturday, January 17

Parashat Vaeira
9:00 am Shabbat Service
4:15 pm Mincha Service
5:30 pm Ma'ariv Service/Havdalah
5:33 pm Shabbat Ends

Friday, January 23

4:36 pm Candle Lighting
6:00 pm Kabbalat Shabbat

Saturday, January 24

Parashat Bo
9:00 am Shabbat Service
4:30 pm Mincha Service
5:40 pm Ma'ariv Service/Havdalah
5:41 pm Shabbat Ends

Friday, January 30

4:45 pm Candle Lighting
6:00 pm Kabbalat Shabbat

Saturday, January 31

Shabbat Shira
Parashat Beshalach
9:00 am Shabbat Service
4:45 pm Mincha Service
5:45 pm Ma'ariv Service/Havdalah
5:49 pm Shabbat Ends

February

Friday, February 6

4:54 pm Candle Lighting
6:00 pm Kabbalat Shabbat

Saturday, February 7

Parashat Yitro
9:00 am Shabbat Service
4:45 pm Mincha Service
5:55 pm Ma'ariv Service/Havdalah
5:57 pm Shabbat Ends

Friday, February 13

5:03 pm Candle Lighting
6:00 pm Kabbalat Shabbat

Saturday, February 14

Shabbat Shekalim
Parashat Mishpatim
9:00 am Shabbat Service
5:00 pm Mincha Service
6:05 pm Ma'ariv Service/Havdalah
6:06 pm Shabbat Ends

Friday, February 20

5:12 pm Candle Lighting
6:00 pm Kabbalat Shabbat

Saturday, February 21

Parashat Trumah
9:00 am Shabbat Service
5:00 pm Mincha Service
6:10 pm Ma'ariv Service/Havdalah
6:14 pm Shabbat Ends

Friday, February 27

5:20 pm Candle Lighting
6:00 pm Kabbalat Shabbat

Saturday, February 28

Shabbat Zachor
Parashat Tetzaveh
9:00 am Shabbat Service
5:15 pm Mincha Service
6:20 pm Ma'ariv Service/Havdalah
6:22 pm Shabbat Ends

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“Level Up: Shabbat Edition”

By Hazzan Jenna Greenberg, Ritual Director | jgreenberg@nssbethel.org



We have a wonderful Shabbat program at Beth El, as many of you already know, where our kids can enhance their synagogue skills at Junior Congregation! At 10:30 am each Shabbat (and holiday) morning, please join us in the Sager Beit Midrash, as we celebrate this year's theme together each week: “Level Up: Shabbat Edition!”

All NSS Beth El kids are invited (CRS and Day School students in grades 2 through 6):

- Attend 4 times: earn a clicker fidget
- Attend 8 times: earn a mini travel game
- Attend 12 times: earn a transformer or trucker hat
- Attend 18 times: THAT'S CHAI! Live it up on a Game Truck right here at Beth El on Sunday, May 3, 2026, 12:00–2:00pm (Lunch included! More details to come...)

You will have opportunities to lead parts of the service and even to read from the Torah...earning even our youngest readers a delicious Team Torah cookie!

If you have received your B'nai Mitzvah date and would like to read a little bit of your parsha in the years leading up to your simcha, you can practice it in Junior Congregation!

RITUAL

By Ben Channon, VP Ritual | b_channon@yahoo.com



conversations with other congregants to discuss any of these topics. Most certainly, this happens during the recent Tishrei holidays as well.

I encourage you, when your mind wanders, to consider another way to occupy your mind; almost every page of our Lev Shalem Siddur and Machzor includes a poem or reading that somehow correlates with the prayer on the page. In some cases, these readings outline the practices around this prayer. This is present on the pages with Aleinu, for example. On other pages, there are readings that might help you in your Jewish

Reading in the Margins

I am sure it happens to all of us, especially as we pray the same prayers week in-week out, in services whether it be Shabbat morning or weekday minyan. Our minds wander outside of the prayer printed on the page. We may think of our friends, families, weekday occupations, or maybe we engage in

If you are a day school student with a weekday portion you have been learning, please let me know if you are available to read the Shabbat following your reading at school!

If you are a CRS student who would like to take on a Torah reading, please reach out and I would be more than happy to prepare materials and work with you!

In November, we launched our 3rd year of “Junior Team Torah: Little League Edition,” a class where several of our 4th through 6th graders, CRS and Day School students alike, are learning how to chant Torah. What a great skill to bring to Junior Congregation, their B'nai Mitzvah, and beyond!

AND IF YOU HAVE A HIGH SCHOOLER who would like to join me as a Madrich/Madricha, their help allows parents to either join their children at Junior Congregation or drop their kids off and attend the sanctuary service or Tot Shabbat if there are younger siblings.

I look forward to welcoming you all to join me at Junior Congregation this year, as we bring Shabbat to a whole new “level”!

journey. I know that, for me, there are readings that justify my questions or confusion about observance. They really “get me.”

In the pages of Yizkor there is a reading about a parent who was hurtful; I read this every time we recite Yizkor. My relationship with my father was ok, but not without its issues. This reading helps me justify the mixed emotions that I have. This is just one example of a reading in the margin that I habitually read.

During Shabbat Mincha, I frequently read two that discuss Shabbat rest as more than a cessation of work and another about the Jewish journey that we are all on.

So please, as your mind wanders from time to time, review the margins in our Siddurim and Machzorim to find something that reconnects you with prayer.



CONGREGATIONAL LEARNING

By Aliza Drumm, Director of Congregational Learning | adrumm@nssbethel.org



Integrating Prayer Learning during the Tishrei Holidays

In our Children's High Holiday Services, we strive to engage students in active, meaningful learning during the holiday season—while also helping them gradually become comfortable and confident adult participants in religious life. This year, we expanded our efforts by introducing a new music and *tefillah* course, in addition to the services and activities we already provide at each grade level.

In consultation with Hazzan Sandler, we identified the core prayers that the congregation most frequently joins in during services and explored the best ways to integrate these into our curriculum. Clara Berman, a music teacher in District 46, collaborated with us to design and implement this new component, which supports and enhances the *tefillah* experiences already led by our classroom teachers.

Our *tefillah* education begins with our youngest learners in the Preschool Family Services, led by Ellie Goldsmith, Assistant Director of Young Family Programming. In age-appropriate ways, children and families are introduced to the basics of High Holiday *nusach*, special *tefillot*, and central themes—all woven into an engaging, joyful experience that involves the whole family.

This integration of prayer and holiday learning continues throughout the Tishrei season. In both the preschool and religious school, the themes of Sukkot and Simchat Torah are seamlessly woven into the broader curriculum. Students of all ages interact with both real and stuffed *lulavim* and *etrogim*, visit and decorate the sukkah, and explore themes of fragility, stability, and hospitality. Each grade also has the opportunity to encounter the Torah alongside teachers and clergy as they prepare to celebrate Simchat Torah. We offer a Young Family Simchat Torah program that eases families into the congregational *hakafot* with sweetness—quite literally—as children make their own candy Torahs to mark the joy of the holiday.

We continue to share that sweetness as we gather around the Torah itself, with a *pasul* (non-kosher) scroll that is fully unrolled on Simchat Torah. Together, our community is enveloped in its words while our rabbis guide us through some of the most special *parshiot* in the Torah.

In every song, story, and prayer, our students discover that tradition is not just remembered—it is lived.



Teaching Torah with Rabbi Freedman.



Students participating in a Sukkot celebration.



Snapshots from the classroom.



Learning and growing together at Beth El.



THE STEINBERG PRESCHOOL

By Leah Mindell and Allison Hellberg, Steinberg Preschool Parent Auxiliary Committee Co-Chairs



A Message from the Steinberg Preschool Parent Auxiliary Co-Chairs

Shalom, Beth El members! We're Leah Mindell and Allison Helberg, and for the past two years we've had the joy of serving as co-chairs of the Steinberg Preschool Parent Auxiliary Committee. Together, we've planned meaningful programs, organized volunteer opportunities, and led a variety of parent initiatives that strengthen our preschool community. We're excited to share some of the ways our Preschool gives back — both within our school and to the greater Jewish community.

#1 Scholastic Book Fair & Special Friends Shabbat

Each year, during the week of Special Friends Shabbat, we host our incredibly successful Scholastic Book Fair. It's always a joy to see our preschoolers eagerly browsing the shelves, their faces lighting up with excitement as they discover new stories to read.

This beloved event is organized entirely by our amazing Parent Auxiliary Committee, which helps raise nearly \$5,000 each year! We celebrate the end of a wonderful and rewarding Book Fair at our annual Special Friends Shabbat — a morning filled with warmth, love, and connection. Grandparents and special friends join their little ones to sing Shabbat songs, share snacks, and create Shabbat-themed crafts together. It's truly one of our most cherished preschool traditions.

#2 A Morning of Yoga & Giving Back

In December, the Parent Auxiliary hosted a special morning of yoga, coffee, and pastries, led by Robin Taxman. Last year, the funds raised from this community-centered event helped us purchase six new bikes for our preschool playground! We love partnering with Robin for this Parent Auxiliary-led fundraiser and look forward to hosting more yoga mornings in the future.

#3 Partnering with Chесed Chicago

As in years past, we're proud to continue our partnership with Chесed Chicago, an incredible organization based in Lincolnwood, IL, that provides families in need with home furnishings, clothing, groceries, and more. We deeply value this long-standing relationship and look forward to collaborating with them each year.

This year's Chanukah toy drive with Chесed Chicago was especially meaningful. Our preschool hallway was overflowing with donations — games, puzzles, imaginative play items, and more! Thanks to our generous families, Chесed's shelves will be filled with wonderful gifts for families to enjoy this Chanukah season.

Of course, Chanukah wouldn't be complete without our annual Parent Auxiliary volunteer morning at Chесed's Lincolnwood location. Our volunteers spent a meaningful morning sorting and organizing donations — a special opportunity to give back to our community and a tradition that always fills our hearts.

#4 Still to Come this Winter and Spring

The winter and early spring are always filled with exciting events and activities in the Steinberg Preschool! This winter, the Parent Auxiliary will be collecting costumes to donate to Chесed Chicago as part of a Purim community service project. The costume drive will be followed by a second opportunity for preschool parents to volunteer and spend a meaningful morning at Chесed to help organize and sort donations before Purim.

The Shema Pajama Party is always a fun time for all! With fun crafts, music and dinner, our preschool children love to come to the synagogue in their pajamas and enjoy a fun night with their teachers and friends. As a way to continue our mission of giving back, the Parent Auxiliary partners with Chесed Chicago by collecting pajamas and stuffed animals to donate to those in need.

#5 Tu B'Shevat Forest Comes to Life

Every year for Tu B'Shevat, the Parent Auxiliary partners with our preschool teachers to transform the Grossinger Brickman room into a magical forest! Throughout the past few years, the transformation has grown more and more creative — including ceiling to floor decorations! — and features art projects from every child. The preschool parent community comes together to make this week a special time for our children, fostering their imagination and connection to the holiday. If you are in the synagogue during Tu B'Shevat, we invite you to join us in the forest for story or snack time!

Thank you for reading our article and having an interest in our thriving preschool community. Whether you're attending events, contributing to our collection drives or simply staying informed — your interest makes a difference! Please reach out with any ideas or questions!



COHEN RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

By Anna Besser, Director of the Jack and Mildred Cohen Religious School | abesser@nssbethel.org



Raising Lamplighters

Chanukah reminds us that, even in times of darkness, we find ways to bring light through courage, kindness, and perseverance. We stand up for what's right and keep hope alive, even when the odds feel impossible.

Today, Israel continues to show us that even a small flame can make a big difference through innovation, community, and acts of compassion. Each generation has found ways to turn challenge into hope, echoing the message of Chanukah — faith and courage can transform even the darkest of times.

At CRS, we strive to help our students recognize their own light and discover how they can share it with others. We talk about what it means to bring light into the world. Here are some ways CRS students are lamplighters.

Showing Courage:

- CRS students stand up for someone who feels lonely or needs support.
- CRS students are learning about Jewish heroes who used bravery to make change.

Show Compassion:

- CRS students perform mitzvot that bring comfort: write cards for HAZAK, help food collections for the ARK and Moraine Township Thanksgiving meal baskets.
- CRS students support Israeli organizations that helps others, like *Save a Child's Heart*, *Leket Israel*, or *Shalva*.

Build Hope:

- CRS students sing *tefillot* for peace and Israel — *Oseh Shalom, Avinu She'bashamayim* — each week.

CRS students are lamplighters. Their actions matter. Their spark — words of kindness, moments of courage — add light to our community, to Israel, and to the world.

Beth El Event Showcase: CRS in the Sukkah





YOUTH COMMUNITY

By Stacy La Mell, Director of Youth Community | slamell@nssbethel.org



Youth Community Winter Update

As the year draws to a close, our BEANS teens and families have been busy bringing warmth and light to Beth El! November kicked off with our EAT. PLAY. BEANS. day-off adventure to Funtopia, followed by a cozy Teen Lounge Night filled with music, laughter, and plenty of hot cocoa. Mid-month, our teens joined CHUSY for the powerful NOVA Exhibit experience—an unforgettable opportunity for reflection and connection.

Looking ahead, December brings even more to celebrate. On Saturday, December 7, join us for our Challah Chanukiah Workshop and movie night—a hands-on, heart-warming evening for teens to bake, create, and relax together. Then on Wednesday, December 10, we'll light up the season with a special Chanukah Games Night in the Youth Lounge, featuring dreidel showdowns, prizes, snacks, and plenty of holiday spirit.

Save the date for Youth Shabbat on February 7, 2026, when our students will help lead the service and share their voices from the bimah. We can't wait to honor their leadership and celebrate the next generation of our community!

Stay tuned for registration links and updates in our weekly newsletters—there's always something brewing in BEANS!



Sushi in the Sukkah

YOUNG FAMILY PROGRAMMING

By Maxine Handelman, Director of Young Family Programming | mhandelman@nssbethel.org



Finding Friends at Beth El

Recently I watched a reel in which a mom was describing how easy it was for her son to make friends. He employed pick-up lines like, “Hey, do you like bubbles?” and “How you feel about chocolate milk?” For many of us adults, it’s a little harder to connect. The mom asked for pick-up lines adults

could use to make friends. Commenters suggested “What’s your favorite food to sneak into a movie theater?” and “So, hey, were Ross and Rachel on a break?”

I have some different suggestions that will help you leverage your connection to Beth El as you search for friends. And I’m guessing you might be looking for friends, as 77% of respondents to a Study of Jewish Families with Young Children in Chicago (Rosen, 2013) indicated that they were looking to develop new friendships. Ellie Goldsmith, our

Assistant Director of Young Family Programming, has been leading Tot Shabbat for years, but is now taking Tot Shabbat to a whole new level with a team of leaders—adults and teens—and exciting new ways to share stories and make new friends. Try the pick-up line “What are you doing next Saturday at 11am? Wanna join me at Tot Shabbat? I hear there are cookies.”

As the Director of Young Family Programming, I’m playing with old and new ways to find friends. Did you get to build with us at Jeans & Jammies last month? Even if you missed it, you can join us as we gather on Thursday, February 5. Choose your pick-up line: “What are you wearing to Jeans & Jammies?” or “What’s the vibe for a Thursday Jeans & Jammies?” or simply “Want to join me at Jeans & Jammies?”

In the meantime, here’s a timely pick-up line: “Do you have a good recipe for latkes? Wanna come over and make them together?”



DEVELOPMENT

By Jacob Markey, Director of Development | jmarkey@nssbethel.org



“Just as my ancestors planted for me, I too am planting for my descendants.”

(Talmud, Taanit 23a)

The Ner Tamid Society is Beth El's legacy giving society. By including Beth El in your will or estate plans, you strengthen the synagogue and ensure that your legacy remains for generations to come. Below, Mira and Darryl Temkin share why they joined Ner Tamid Society.

Why did you decide to join Ner Tamid Society and leave a legacy gift specifically to Beth El?

We've been members of Beth El for more than 40 years. Our children grew up here at preschool, Hebrew School and Hebrew High School. We celebrated their Bar/Bat Mitzvahs on this bimah. Darryl davens here every morning, supporting the minyan. We've been active members, volunteering in many capacities as leaders of this community. We attend Shabbat and Yom Tov services regularly and our grandson participates in Junior Congregation. He's the 9-year old with the wild hair who loves to lead Ein Keloheinu. Beth El is our second home. We wanted to ensure the future of Beth El by leaving this lasting legacy.

What have been the benefits to you for joining Ner Tamid Society?

It brings us a great sense of pride in knowing we're contributing to the future of Beth El for generations to come. As it says in Pirkei Avot, "You are not required to finish your work, yet neither are you permitted to desist from it."

Why is it important for congregants to join Ner Tamid Society?

It's critical for Beth El's continued success for members to demonstrate their financial commitment. You'll derive great satisfaction by knowing you're a part of Beth El's present and future. L'dor V'dor!

How easy was the process of joining Ner Tamid Society?

When we made the decision to become a part of the Ner Tamid Society, we updated our wills to include Beth El in our estate.

For more information about Ner Tamid Society or to join, please contact Jacob Markey, Beth El's Director of Development, at jmarkey@nssbethel.org.





DEVELOPMENT

By Jacob Markey, Director of Development | jmarkey@nssbethel.org



Buddy and Bernice Cohen: A Lifetime of Connection, A Legacy of Giving

Beth El is excited to announce a nearly \$1 million gift from siblings Bruce, Jack, and Michael Cohen, and Julie (Cohen) Podziba, to Beth El and The Jack and Mildred Cohen Religious School (CRS), in honor of their parents Benjamin "Buddy" and Bernice Cohen, (z"l). In recognition of this extraordinary gift, the new pavilion under construction will be named the Benjamin and Bernice Cohen Pavilion.

Buddy and Bernice joined Beth El in 1960 and remained active for over six decades, even after they moved full time to Palm Springs, California. The family celebrated holidays and many life cycle events at Beth El, and each of the kids attended the religious school and became a Bar or Bat Mitzvah at Beth El.

While Buddy and Bernice were active members of the community since they joined, their participation became transformative in December of 1986, when they made a generous gift to the religious school, subsequently named The Jack and Mildred Cohen Religious School, in honor of Buddy's parents. Buddy and Bernice additionally provided meaningful ongoing annual support through Buddy's passing in February of 2023.

"Religious education was always important to my parents. I had always hoped I would have the opportunity to do something similar," Buddy explained to our congregation in January 2000. According to Bruce, Buddy and Bernice met regularly with synagogue leadership, which was reflective of the depth of their engagement and their continued passion for the work being done.

This new commitment from Buddy and Bernice's children reflects their desire to maintain Buddy and Bernice's legacy of giving and commitment to Jewish education. This gift is nothing short of transformational. As part of the larger Mitzvah613 Project, it allows us to renovate our school building, create a new, secure entrance to the synagogue, school, and administrative areas, and provide funding to maintain and

strengthen CRS. Generations of Jewish children have been positively impacted due to the financial support of Buddy and Bernice. Generations more will continue to receive a positive and transformational experience that strengthens Jewish identity and transmits Jewish values and traditions *l'dor v'dor*, from generation to generation. This gift bolsters Beth El's ability to apply best practices in teaching and education and to provide scholarships for families in need, ensuring that every child receives a strong and meaningful Jewish education.

"Beth El is honored to accept this gift from the Cohen Family. Following in their parents' footsteps, their generosity will allow future generations to experience the benefits of the Cohen Religious School," stated Rabbi Michael Schwab. "Buddy and I would speak on a regular basis by phone after he moved to California. He always wanted to know about the Cohen Religious School and asked specific questions about enrollment, curriculum, and more on every call. He was a personal support to me and had a special place for Beth El in his heart."

"Our parents had great faith in the congregation's leadership, both staff and lay, and the depth and passion of its community, something we affirmed before making this commitment," said Bruce Cohen. "Beth El always served as our family's religious and spiritual home and a place of immense joy and comfort to our parents. The Jack and Mildred Cohen Religious School was a source of pride to our family, reflecting Buddy's desire to honor his parents and demonstrate their commitment to Jewish education. We are grateful for the opportunity to sustain our family's support for Beth El and the Cohen Religious School and to recognize our parents as Buddy and Bernice did for his."

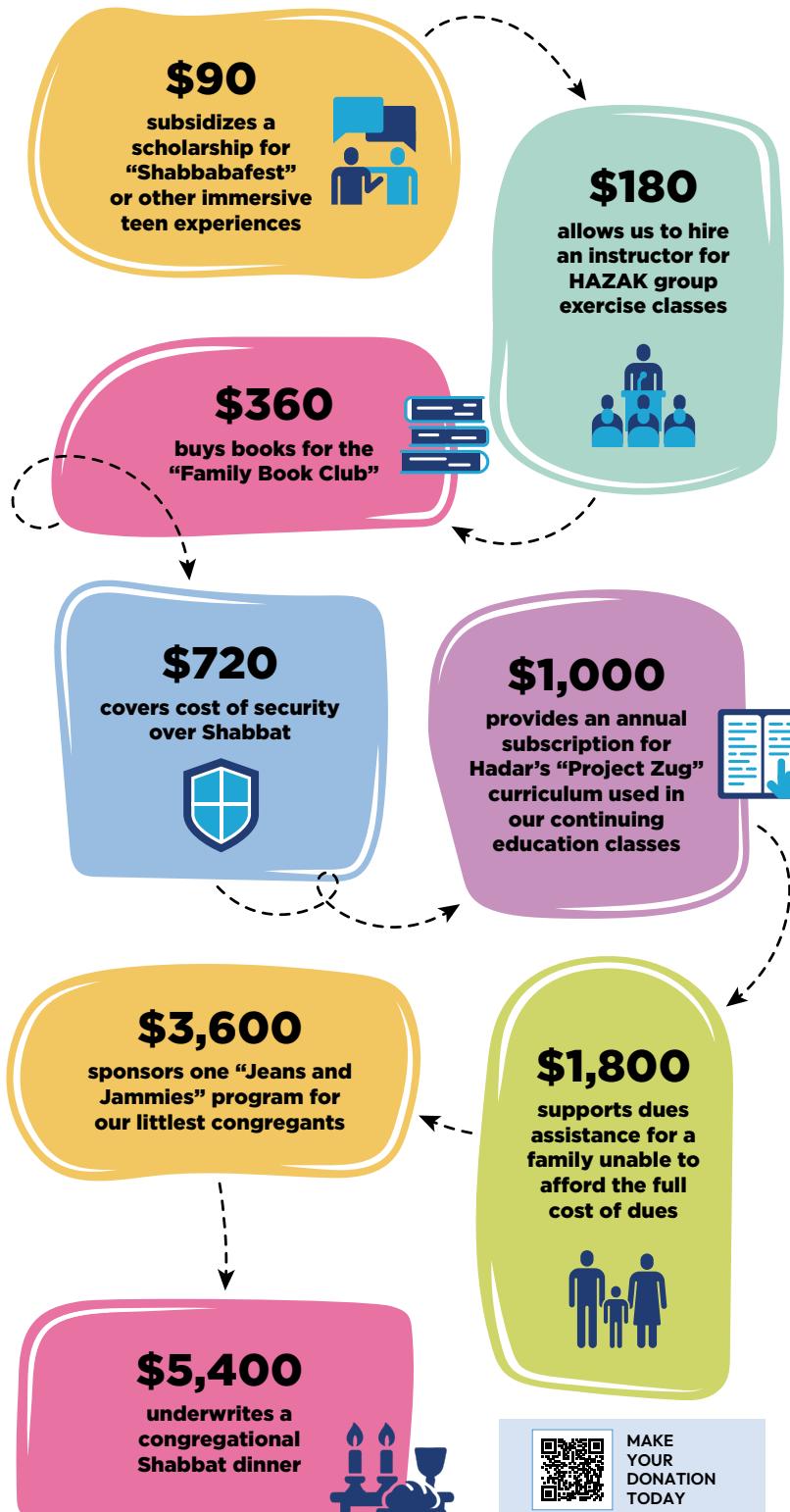
Beth El is eternally grateful to the Cohen Family for their generations of giving. We look forward to celebrating Buddy and Bernice, the entire Cohen Family, and the rest of the donors to the Mitzvah613 Project in the months to come, with the completion of the renovations to our building and the dedication of our updated space.



DEVELOPMENT

By Jacob Markey, Director of Development | jmarkey@nssbethel.org

Thank you to the 385+ Families who have made their Kol Nidre Appeal Pledge!



Bonim/Builders pledged over \$1,200,000 to support our operating budget for the 2025-26 year. Contact Jacob Markey if you are interested in becoming a Bonim benefactor. We are most grateful to the following congregants:

DOUBLE CHAI

(\$36,000+)
Cheryl & Carey Cooper
Penny & Jeffrey Heckelman
Karen & Mitchell Kopin
Dawn & Steven Lavin
Deborah & Ira Rosenberg
Kenneth Saffir
Lynn & Skip Schrayer
Karyn & William Silverstein
Tina & Joseph Wolf

Lori & Richard Rabinowitz
Karen & Richard Reisin
Lisa & Jeff Rosenkranz
Susan & Marc Sacks
Laura & James Schallman
Robin & Michael Shartag
Sara & Michael Sher
Karen & Hal Sider
Lori Stark & David Shapiro
Linda & Adrian Winick
Sheri & Sherwin Zuckerman
Anonymous

RABBI'S CIRCLE

(\$25,000-\$35,999)
Jan Gaines & Andy Kenoe

PRESIDENT'S CIRCLE
(\$18,000-\$24,999)
Lisa & Jeffrey Aronin
Gail & Andrew Brown
Sandra & Phillip Cooper
Barbara Field
Rochelle & Leonard Foxman
Ellen & Philip Glass
Melissa & Marc Spellman

SUSTAINERS

(\$6,500-\$9,999)
Deborah & Gabriel Aizenberg
Cheryl & Theodore Banks
Jacqueline & Harvey Barnett
Lenore Blum
Leah & Jori Brajer
Iris & Robert Center
Gila Bronner & Craig Deligdish
Lynn & Arthur Cohen
Gigi Cohen & Michael Levin
Carol & Gordon Derman
Ellen & Robert Doppelt
Julie Dann & Bradley Schneider
Francine & David Ephraim
Kim & Eric Ephraim
Linda & Steven Feinstein
Nancy & Maury Fertig
Elise & Ira Frost
Jodi & David Gimpel
Jamie Glass Pestine & Matthew Pestine
Susan & Steven Glover
Mindy & Jeffrey Gordon
Hilary & Allan Greenberg
Marlene & Seth Halperin
Melissa & Todd Halperin
Marla Hand & James Nyeste
Barbara Hoffman
Rebecca & Brian Jacobson
Marlene Kaplan
Leslie & Jonathan Kind
Beth & Jeffrey Kopin
Sari & Mitch Kovitz
Frances Krasnow & Seth Pines
Linda & Stuart Kupfer
Suzanne & Mark Lampert
Arielle & Victor Levitan
Francine & Mark Levy
Dawn Sidney & Gordon Schwartz
Margaret & Alan Silberman
Sandy Starkman & Larry Pachter
Mindy & Jay Sterns
Roberta & Leonard Tenner
Deborah & Adam Winick
Nadine & Richard Woldenberg
Anonymous

B'YACHAD

(\$10,000-\$17,999)
Wendy & Steven Abrams
Leslie & Greg Aptor
Eve & Richard Biller
Joan & William Brodsky
Brenda & Ramona Choos
Donna & Mark Chudacoff
Lois & Donald Chudacoff
Maryl & Medwin Dayan
Kristen & Oron Daihes
Judy & Ari Golson
Marla & Terry Grossberg
Nina & Arnold Harris
Cynthia & Joel Hirsch
Marilyn Hirsch & Gary Gordon
Laurie & Andrew Hochberg
Barbara & Stuart Hochwert
Ann Dee & Edward Holland
Irene & Jamie Jacobsohn
Wendy & Daniel Kahn
Audra Kaplan & Alan Spellberg
Cynthia & Joseph Kaplan
Karen & Michael Kesner
Julie & Colman Kraff
Robert & Jeffrey Kwall
Barbara & David Lasing
Janice & David Lasky
Andrea & Benjamin Leshem
Terri & Michael Lipsitz
Lois Lourie & Michael Gurtman
Jacqueline & Michael Melinger
Amanda & Golan Mor
Lisa Newman & David Gross
Nikki & Dan Newman
Deena & Keith Pascal
Marcie & Brad Pickard
Maria Ponsillo & Arthur Rabinowitz



MEMBERSHIP & ENGAGEMENT

By Hillary Wenk, Director of Engagement | hwenk@nssbethel.org



Illuminating Connection: Chanukah at the Heart of our Community

Chanukah is more than a celebration of light; it is an opportunity to kindle connection and conversation. Each night of the festival reminds us that even a small flame can dispel great darkness and the right words can be meaningful to those looking for kinship. In the same way, every act of community, whether lighting the menorah together, sharing latkes, or singing blessings, strengthens the bonds that hold us as part of Beth El's mishpacha.

Chanukah invites us to reflect on resilience and renewal, which have been tested, again and again, throughout our history and certainly, more recently. The story of the Maccabees is one of courage and faith, and today we honor that legacy by creating spaces where every member feels seen, valued, and inspired.

Whether it is Young Family Jean & Jammies, congregational Challa-kiah making or a multigenerational Six18 concert and dinners, our programming is created to bring people together in meaningful ways.

During this time when it is cold and gets dark early, we are not just commemorating miracles—we are cultivating them. Consider joining one of our board committees, taking a continuing education class or helping organize a congregational dinner. Be involved in the miracle and joy of belonging to Beth El.

May the lights of Chanukah shine brightly in our homes and hearts, and may they guide us toward deeper engagement and a vibrant Jewish future. Chag Sameach!



Community Commemorates Two Years Since October 7th Attack

On October 5, Beth El partnered with The Shamash to host a powerful community-wide vigil marking two years since the October 7, 2023, attack on Israel. Hundreds from the North Shore gathered to honor over 1,200 victims and demand the release of remaining hostages.

Speakers included U.S. Congressman Brad Schneider, Highland Park Mayor Nancy Rotering, and State Representative Bob Morgan. Clergy from Beth El and neighboring congregations united on the bimah to sing Matisyahu's "One Day," symbolizing hope and unity.

Jen Deutch, a long-time Beth El member, shared, "As a Jewish people, we've suffered deeply. Antisemitism is a growing reality, and the world has been silent. This gathering was a moment of grief, solidarity, and hope."

Jorie Sigesmund, founding member of The Shamash, reflected, "This event echoed our first vigil held 30 days after the attack. It showed the enduring strength and love of Jews in the diaspora, who will never again take our connection to Israel for granted."

Just days later, the remaining living hostages were released. An impromptu celebration took place in downtown Highland Park, where the daily hostage count was replaced with the word "HOME." Participants sang *Hatikvah*, danced, recited *Shehechiyanu*, and prayed for the return of those still missing.





By Rachel Kamin, Director of Lifelong Learning | rkamin@nssbethel.org



A Decade of Reading Together: The Beth El Family Book Club Turns 10!

Ten years ago, synagogue leadership challenged departments that rarely collaborate to create a joint program. The Gray Cultural & Learning Center partnered with the Youth Community

and the Beth El Family Book Club was born! Since 2016, religious school and day school families have joined members of the Sisterhood Torah Fund Book Club to read and discuss a middle grade novel together. Most years, we've even had the privilege of meeting the author in person or via Zoom, adding a special dimension to this beloved multi-generational program.

As one participant shared, "It was special to meet the author and talk to her. I was so impressed by the Beth El students - the questions they asked and their attentive behavior." A parent added that the Family Book Club has been "a highlight of our Beth El experience."



Our 10th annual Family Book Club will be held on **Sunday, January 25 at 12:00 pm**, immediately following Religious School. After lunch, we'll discuss ***Don't Feed the Lion* by Bianna Golodryga and Yonit Levi**, a new novel about three Chicago middle schoolers who confront bullying and bigotry after a swastika appears on a locker and a professional athlete posts an anti-Semitic message online.

Whether or not you have children or grandchildren, I encourage you to read at least one children's book each year. It will be a guaranteed shot of happiness and optimism! For the Family Book Club, children must attend with an adult but adults do not need to be accompanied by a child! Every 3rd-6th grade family that RSVPs will receive a free copy of *Don't Feed the Lion* (while supplies last). Contact rkamin@nssbethel.org to reserve yours.

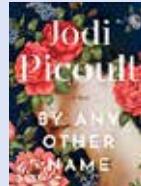
**GERTRUDE LEDERMAN FAMILY
CONTINUING EDUCATION**

TAKE A CLASS THIS WINTER!

The Gertrude Lederman Family Continuing Education courses at North Suburban Synagogue Beth El offer a wonderful chance to deepen your understanding of Jewish thought, culture, and identity. New winter classes will start in January. Visit the Continuing Education page on the Beth El website for more information about all of our offerings. Questions? Contact Marcie Eskin at meskin@nssbethel.org or 847-926-7903.

Sisterhood Torah Fund Book Club

Join Rachel Kamin, Director of Lifelong Learning, for lively book discussions and author events. New participants are always welcome!



***By Any Other Name* by Jodi Picoult**

Saturday, December 6, 12:30 pm

Across centuries two women - one a modern playwright and the other her Elizabethan ancestor - each fight societal expectations to have their voices heard on the stage in a world that silences female playwrights.



***My Childhood in Pieces: A Stand-Up Comedy, A Skokie Elegy* by Edward Hirsch**

Saturday, February 7, 12:30 pm

A darkly comic and sharp-edged portrait of a poet's coming-of-age in a tough, witty, middle-class Jewish family, told through punchy microchapters that capture the humor, struggles and lessons shaping his journey from childhood to independence.

Participants are encouraged to make a minimum donation of \$54 to the Torah Fund Campaign. The Book Club will continue in May. Contact Rachel at rkamin@nssbethel.org for more details.

NSS Beth El Annual Used Book Sale

Wednesday, January 21 – Tuesday, January 27

Drop off like-new and gently used hardcovers or paperbacks — secular and Judaic, adult and children's fiction and non-fiction — in a clearly marked, sturdy box or bag between **Sunday, December 14 and Tuesday, January 20**.

Please refrain from donating textbooks, "how-to" & technology guides (unless they are brand new!), old travel guides, calendars, dated reference books, and test preparation resources. Dirty, moldy, and damaged books belong in the recycle bin or trash can! Do not waste our volunteers' time and our maintenance crew's efforts by donating these unsellable books.

If you have old, worn out *siddurim*, *chumashim*, or other holy books, please place them in our Genizah box right inside the office doors. Questions about what needs to go in the Genizah? Contact Hazzan Jenna Greenberg at jgreenberg@nssbethel.org.

Volunteers are needed to help set up the sale and close down the sale on **Tuesday, January 20 and January 27 between 4:00-7:30 pm** as well as during the book sale. Bar/Bat Mitzvah and high school student volunteers are welcome! Contact Marcie Eskin at meskin@nssbethel.org or at 847-926-7903 for the volunteer sign-up.



Chanukah Challahkiah Class with Anya Viner

Sunday,
December 7

12:15 PM

What's a Challahkiah?

Come find out as expert challah braider Anya Viner from Tigertail Bakery shows us how to turn a ball of challah dough into a Chanukiah that you can eat.

Fun for all ages and a special treat for your Chanukah celebration!

Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Solo adults and teens are welcome!

We'll provide the kosher dough, tools, and supplies so you can take your creation home to bake.



\$18/challah



Scan the QR code
to register



More information: contact
Rachel
rkamin@nssbethel.org

Upcoming Classes & Events



Lunch & Learn: The Power of Words

with Rabbi Michael Schwab

Thursday, December 4

12:00 pm

Using Hadar's Project Zug curriculum, we'll take a Talmudic deep dive into the ethics of speech. If you have been curious about studying Talmud, this is a wonderful entry into the world of rabbinic thought and narrative. And if you're a seasoned learner, this session will also offer new ways of thinking about these texts. A complimentary lunch will be served at Beth El. Reservations are required.



Chanukah Afternoon @ the Movies

Thursday, December 18

11:15 am-1:00 pm

Join the Grey Cultural & Learning Center and HAZAK for a fun, festive film and a complimentary holiday lunch.



Grief Support Group

Thursdays, January 15 & 29;

February 5 & 19; and March 5 & 26

1:00 pm

Combining the comfort of human connection with the spiritual support of Jewish tradition, this in-person group, facilitated by a professional from JCFS, is for adults who have experienced the death of a loved one within the past two years. The Beth El clergy will also participate in some sessions.

Beth El Event Showcase: Meet the Author – Allison Epstein



From the Archives: Beth El's Senior Rabbis By Morton Steinberg

This is the fifth in a series of mini-biographies of the individuals who have served as senior rabbi at North Suburban Synagogue Beth El.



Vernon H. Kurtz (1988-2019)

Vernon Howard Kurtz was born in 1951 in Toronto, Canada. Raised in an observant family in the Bathurst Manor neighborhood of the city, he attended Jewish day schools through high school. During his college years at York University, he spent three summers as a counselor at Camp Ramah in Canada and served as the

youth director at Beth Tikvah Synagogue, a Conservative congregation. He graduated college with a B.A. degree in 1971 and applied to and was accepted at the law school of Western University in London, Ontario. But with a strong Zionist inclination, he first spent a year studying at the Hebrew University and the Schechter school in Jerusalem, an experience which convinced him to forego law and enroll in the rabbinical school of the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York. He was awarded a masters degree in 1973, the same year that he married Bryna Wise. Rabbinical ordination followed in 1976 and for the next twelve years Kurtz served as a rabbi at Congregation Rodfei Zedek in Chicago's Hyde Park neighborhood. While there he studied at the Chicago Theological Seminary, earning the degree of Doctor of Ministry in 1981. Twenty years later he was awarded the degree of Doctor of Divinity (Honoris Causa) by The Jewish Theological Seminary.

Soon after the departure of Rabbi William Lebeau from Beth El in 1987, the synagogue's Rabbinic Search Committee unanimously recommended calling Kurtz to serve as the synagogue's fifth senior rabbi. He and Bryna and their two daughters, Hadassa and Shira, moved to Highland Park in the summer of 1988. They would become United States citizens in 1995. Soon after arriving at Beth El Kurtz shared a "State of the Synagogue Report" with the congregation, setting forth his concept of the "three basic ideals" uniting all congregants: a caring community, shared communal values, and shared institutional goals. These would shape his personal goal of maintaining and strengthening the synagogue "as a Bet El, a House of God." And Kurtz pursued this goal throughout his tenure at Beth El, enhancing youth and family programming, adult educational programs, and establishing the synagogue's own Hebrew high school program. He was a regular at the daily *minyanim* and, after much studying with the Ritual Committee, he expanded the role of women in the synagogue's ritual and introduced *Birkat Kohanim* to the High Holiday and Festival services. And he encouraged and participated in the very successful *Guaranteeing Our Future* capital campaign.

Kurtz excelled as a teacher, not only within the congregation but also as an assistant professor of Rabbinic Literature at the Spertus Institute in Chicago. He wrote extensively on religious topics: for many years he authored a monthly Torah commentary for the *Chicago Jewish News*; in 2013 his book, *Encountering Torah: Reflections on the Weekly Portion*, was published and distributed to the entire membership of Beth El; and when the Rabbinical Assembly undertook publishing an extensive volume on Jewish law and customs, *The Observant Life: The Wisdom of Conservative Judaism*, Kurtz authored the section on Civil Morality.

Due in large part to his extensive leadership roles, Beth El became recognized as one of the country's leading Conservative congregations.

Kurtz also saw providing leadership to community and professional organizations as an important part of his rabbinate. Among the many roles assumed by him during his tenure at Beth El were president of the Chicago Board of Rabbis, president of Masorti Olami, president of the American Zionist Movement, president of the international Rabbinical Assembly, and service as a member of the Board of Governors of the Jewish Agency in Israel. He served for many years on the Rabbinical Assembly's Committee on Jewish Law and Standards, writing many *teshuvot*, legal opinions on issues of Jewish law, and he also fulfilled numerous leadership roles at the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago. Although he received many honors from organizations recognizing his service, the one he appreciated the most, and the only one now displayed in his home, is the Julius Rosenwald Award from the Jewish Federation, recognizing his many years of extensive community leadership.

During his tenure at Beth El, Kurtz earned the respect and appreciation of his congregation, and he forged close personal friendships with many congregants. Due in large part to his extensive leadership roles, Beth El became recognized as one of the country's leading Conservative congregations. In late 2018, on the cusp of Kurtz's retirement, the congregation held a gala dual celebration of its 70th anniversary and of the rabbi's thirty-one years as its senior rabbi, designating him as Rabbi Emeritus and wishing him and Bryna well as they departed Beth El and made aliyah to Israel.

Events At A Glance

DECEMBER 2025

Lunch & Learn with Rabbi Michael Schwab

Thursday | December 4 | 12:00pm

Sisterhood Torah Fund Book Club:

By Any Other Name by Jodi Picoult

Shabbat Afternoon | December 6 | following Kiddush

Men's Club Chanukah Party

Sunday | December 7 | 6:00pm

Chanukah Challahkiah Class with Anya Viner

Sunday | December 7 | 12:15pm

Sisterhood Mahjong/Canasta Open Play

Monday | December 8 | 10:00 am

Men's Club: Bagels for Your Brain

featuring Beth El Member Roberta Kwall

Sunday | December 14 | 9:45 am

Chanukah Concert with Musical Group Six13

Tuesday | December 16 | 5:30 pm

Chanukah Afternoon @ The Movies

Thursday | December 18 | 11:15 am



JANUARY 2026

Sisterhood Rosh Chodesh Group — L'dor Va'dor: What is Your Legacy of Laughter, Love and Life?

Shabbat Afternoon | January 10 | following Kiddush

Sisterhood Mahjong/Canasta Open Play

Monday | January 12 | 10:00 am

Sisterhood Mitzvah Moments: A Visit to an Assisted Living Community

Monday | January 19

Used Book Sale

Wednesday | January 21 – Tuesday | January 27

Sisterhood/Men's Club Ballroom Dancing Instruction

Saturday | January 24 | 7:00 pm

Men's Club: Bagels For Your Brain with Beni Gliksberg

Sunday | January 25 | 9:45am

Family Book Club: *Don't Feed The Lion* by Bianna Golodryga & Yonit Levi

Sunday | January 25 | 12:00 pm



FEBRUARY 2026

Sisterhood Torah Fund Book Club:

My Childhood In Pieces, by Edward Hirsch

Shabbat Afternoon | February 7 | following Kiddush

Worldwide Wrap followed by Bagels For Your Brains

Sunday | February 8 | 8:45am

Sisterhood Mahjong/Canasta Open Play

Monday | February 9 | 10:00 am

JTS Scholar Weekend with Shuli Rubin Schwartz

Thursday – Saturday | February 12 – 14

Sisterhood Vashti Night: A Women's Celebration with Food, Belly Dancing and Storytelling

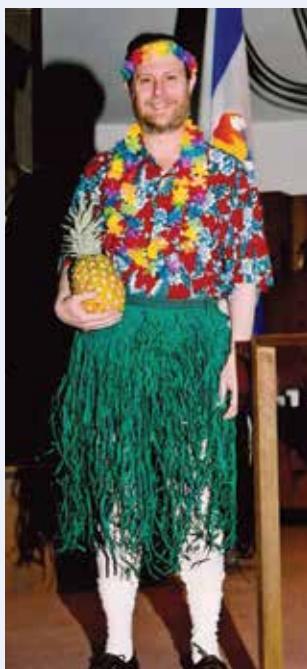
Wednesday | February 18 | 8:00 pm



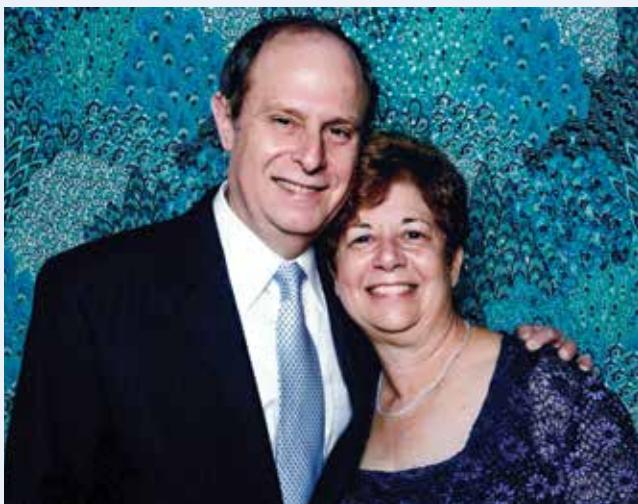
Today Rabbi Kurtz and Bryna reside in their home on Ein Gedi Street in the Talpiot neighborhood of Jerusalem. He serves on the board of the Fuchsberg Center for Conservative Judaism and continues to teach, via Zoom, for the Spertus Institute and at the Schechter Institute in Jerusalem, as well as providing Beth El congregants with occasional live-stream adult education classes. And he spends as much time as possible with his grandchildren.



Rabbi Kurtz greets the congregation in 1988, soon after being called to serve at Beth El.



Purim, 2004



Rabbi Kurtz and Bryna Kurtz at Beth El's 70th anniversary and the 70th anniversary of the State of Israel Celebration in 2018.

What Exactly Does HAZAK Do?

When we encounter someone asking this question, we are thrilled to share the amazing ways the HAZAK committee, and our dedicated volunteers, act as ambassadors of kindness in and for the Beth El community. We strive to bring a ray of sunshine, a thoughtful word, a helping hand or a show of concern into the lives of our members. These are some of the ways we accomplish our goal:

Food

Since June of 2020, with the help of various vendors and chefs, we have been fortunate to provide over 720 individual meals to our community. Shabbat or Yom Tov meals are provided for someone who is recovering from surgery, illness, unable to cook for themselves, or going through a rough patch. As one recipient remarked, "Food is Love!"

Exercise

Equally as important as providing sustenance, HAZAK offers free physical strengthening sessions twice a month via our Core, Balance & Stability classes, facilitated by Gina Pecucci, Certified Senior Fitness Specialist. Attendees participate at their own level and speed, using simple, easy modifications Gina provides. The camaraderie is palpable and enjoyable. Come join us!

Bikkur Cholim

We send Refuah Shlemah cards to members who are ill or recovering from surgery. The rabbis also phone our congregants to check on them and let them know they are thinking of them.

Programs

Our committee plans interesting programs for members, such as topical movies with discussion, holiday celebrations, speakers and more. These programs provide extra socialization for members and stimulating, fun events to participate in.

All of this, and more, would not be possible without the generosity of the Leonard and Diane Sherman Family Foundation. For that we are grateful.

If you are interested in learning more about how you can contribute and help brighten the lives of seniors, contact us at: Mary Ellen Bowers Goldsmith, eyerishmar@comcast.net, or Jackie Melinger, jackiemelinger@gmail.com.

JTS Scholar Weekend with Shuly Rubin Schwartz

THURSDAY
FEBRUARY 12, 2026
7:00PM
Field Family Lecture

FRIDAY
FEBRUARY 13, 2026
6:00PM Kabbalat Shabbat
D'var Torah

SHABBAT MORNING
FEBRUARY 14, 2026
Sermon and a Post-Kiddush
Conversation



The eighth chancellor, Shuly Rubin Schwartz is the first woman to serve in this role since JTS was founded in 1886. She was also one of the first women on the faculty and played an instrumental role in introducing Jewish gender studies into the curriculum. As a scholar, she continually expands our understanding of American Judaism, Jewish life, and culture.

It's All in the Beth El Family

Mazel Tov to:

Rebecca and Brad Ader On the birth of their child	Jeff and Mindy Gordon On their 40th wedding anniversary	Ken Levin On his 88th birthday	Sandy Starkman On the anniversary of her Bat Mitzvah
Annie Block, daughter of Sara and Greg Block On becoming a Bat Mitzvah	Linda and Leon Gottlieb On the birth of their granddaughter, Lilah Grace Boyman	Alexa and Allen Levy On the birth of their daughter, Lottie Baker Levy	Sandy Starkman and Larry Pachter On their 45th wedding anniversary
Amy and Ricky Bortz On the birth of their son, Jordan Samuel Bortz	Marisa Gottleib and Ariel Boyman On the birth of their daughter, Lilah Grace Boyman	Jillian Mosk, daughter of Jodie and Mark Moss, and Zach Levin, son of Nancy and Adam Levin On their wedding	Merle and Steve Tovian On their 50th wedding anniversary
Brian and Gail Boorstein and John and Carly Levy On the birth of their grandchild, Lottie Baker Levy	Jeff Grafstein On the 54th anniversary of his Bar Mitzvah	Joshua Pascal, son of Deena and Keith Pascal, and Alexandra Emmerman, daughter of Hillary and Todd Emmerman On their wedding	Reuben Warshawsky On the anniversary of his Bar Mitzvah
Mary Ellen Bowers On her 70th birthday	Benjamin Gruby, son of Lindsey and Michael Gruby On becoming a Bar Mitzvah	Deena and Keith Pascal On the birth of their grandson, Jonah Abraham	Tami and Reuben Warshawsky On their 40th wedding anniversary
Mary Ellen Bowers and Larry Goldsmith On their 15th wedding anniversary	Marlene Halpern On her Simchat Torah honor as Kallat Bereshit	Melanie Pascal and Drew Turchin On the birth of their son, Jonah Abraham	Marhsall and Lita Weinstein On their 60th wedding anniversary
Ben and Mary Channon On their 16th wedding anniversary	Stuart Hochwert On his Simchat Torah honor as Hatan Torah	Janet and Gary Resnick On the birth of their granddaughter	Len and Bobbie Tenner On their 65th wedding anniversary
Mary Channon On her 41st birthday	Adam Kahn On his 48th birthday	Rocky and Earl Rubinoff On the birth of their grandson, Jordan Samuel Bortz	Noah Weil, son of Sara and Jason Weil On becoming a Bar Mitzvah
Stuart Cohen On the 60th anniversary of his Bar Mitzvah	Michael Katz On the 70th anniversary of his Bar Mitzvah	Susan and Mark Sacks On their 40th wedding anniversary	Karen Weiss On her Simchat Torah honor as Kol Ne'arim
Steve Coven On his birthday	Barry and Debbie Kravitz On their 40th wedding anniversary	Stuart and Marlene Senescu On their 53rd wedding anniversary	Brian Whittman On his 54th birthday
Noa Deutch, daughter of Jen and Todd Deutch On becoming a Bat Mitzvah	Judy and Sandy Kutin On their 25th wedding anniversary	Anna Solomon On the baby naming of her daughter, Maya Solomon	George and Lena Whittman, children of Leslye and Brian Whittman On becoming B'nai Mitzvah
Abigail Glick, daughter of Riffe and Jonathan Glick On becoming a Bat Mitzvah	Bobbi and Jeff Kwall On their 45th wedding anniversary	Madeleine Solomon On the baby naming of her granddaughter, Maya Solomon	
Riffe and Jonathan Glick On their 16th wedding anniversary	Mark Lampert On the 50th anniversary of his Bar Mitzvah		

Condolences to:

Michael Cahr On the loss of his wife, Naoma	Gerry Kaplan On the loss of her daughter-in-law, Randi Kaplan	Peter Oshin On the loss of his father, Dr. David Oshin
Todd and Lisa Fishbein On the loss of their child, Kayla Fishbein	Allan Koltin On the loss of his father, Seymour (Cy) Michael Koltin	Robin Shartag On the loss of her mother, Marian Raphaeli
Hazzan Jenna Greenberg On the loss of her brother, Jeremy Greenberg	Susan Millner On the loss of her brother, T. David Brent	Rebecca Simon On the loss of her father, Earle Skiest
Larry Greenberg On the loss of his mother, Eleanor "Eki" Greenberg	Debra Natenson On the loss of her mother, Joyce Brodsky	Bobbie Tenner On the loss of her sister, Marilyn Baker Schwartz
Barbara Hoffman On the loss of her grandchild, Kayla Fishbein	Randi Newman On the loss of her husband, Dr. Robert Parr	Loren Weil On the loss of his father, Felix Weil

IN MEMORIAM:

Naoma Cahr
Kayla Fishbein
Dr. Robert Parr
Myrna Siegel
Ruth Stern

Kiddush Co-Sponsors:

Sara and Greg Block Riffe and Jonathan Glick Jeff and Beth Grafstein Michael and Betsy Katz Barry and Debbie Kravitz	Bobbi and Jeff Kwall Suzie and Mark Lampert Jodie and Mark Mosk NSS Beth El Men's Club NSS Beth El Sisterhood	Deena and Keith Pascal The Ritual Committee Susan and Marc Sacks Sandy Starkman and Larry Pachter Len and Bobbie Tenner	Merle and Steve Tovian Sara and Jason Weil Leslye and Brian Whittman
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Rabbi Schwab Discretionary Fund

In honor of Annie Block, daughter of Sara and Gregory Block, on becoming a Bat Mitzvah – Adam and Allison Nemirov

In honor of Ellen Doppelt's special birthday – Stuart and Barbara Hochwert

In honor of Fran and Mark Levy's 50th wedding anniversary – Arthur and Lynn Cohen

In honor of Karen Weiss on her Kol N'arim Simchat Torah honor – Sally Aaron

In honor of Mark and Susie Pollack's 40th wedding anniversary – Daniel and Honey Bronson

In honor of Noa Deutch, daughter of Jen and Todd Deutch, on becoming a Bat Mitzvah – Adam and Allison Nemirov

In honor of Rabbi Schwab and with gratitude and appreciation for your help and insight and great spirit during Jordan Samuel's bris – Earl and Rochelle Rubinoff

In honor of Steve Levin's birthday – Stuart and Barbara Hochwert

In honor of Susan and Marc Sacks on their 40th anniversary – Lee and Margaret Cohn

In honor of the baby naming of Karen and Hal Sider's grandson, Solomon Glass – Renee and Elliot Roth

In honor of the baby naming of Madeleine Solomon's granddaughter – Ron and Eileen Goldberg

In honor of the birth of our granddaughter, Lilah Grace Boyman, daughter of Marisa Gottlieb and Ariel Boyman – Leon and Linda Gottlieb

In honor of the birth of our granddaughter, Lottie Baker Levy – Brian and Gail Boorstein

In honor of the wedding of Isabel and Adam and with appreciation to Rabbi Schwab – Martha and Brad Glass

In memory of Alan Larry Balter – Stuart and Barbara Hochwert

In memory of Allene "Eenie" Frost, beloved mother of Ira (Elise) Frost, Skip Frost and Bonnie Spangler, beloved grandmother and great-grandmother – William and Joan Brodsky

– Stuart and Barbara Hochwert

– Karen Weiss

In memory of Berenice and Ralph J. Epstein, beloved mother-in-law and father-in-law – Sam Shanes

In memory of Bernard Reisin, beloved father and grandfather – Richard and Karen Reisin

In memory of Harry Reisin, beloved grandfather – Richard and Karen Reisin

In memory of Caron Knopoff, beloved aunt – Jori and Leah Brajer

In memory of David Hoffman, beloved husband of Barbara Hoffman, beloved father of Brian (Melanie) Hoffman, Lisa (Todd) Fishbein, Devorah Sarah, grandfather and brother – Stuart and Barbara Hochwert

In memory of David Kupfer, beloved father of Stuart (Linda) Kupfer, beloved grandfather and great-grandfather – Stuart and Barbara Hochwert

In memory of David Schwab, beloved grandson – Leah Grant

In memory of Dr. Arthur B. Grant, beloved husband – Leah Grant

In memory of Edith H. and Sidney Weiss, beloved mother and father – Karen Weiss

In memory of Frieda Rosen, beloved mother – Leonard and Rochelle Foxman

In memory of Irene Strauss, beloved sister of Marlene Kaplan, beloved mother, grandmother and aunt – Stuart and Barbara Hochwert

In memory of Jean Lang, beloved mother – Stephen and Judy Smiley

In memory of Joyce Brodsky and with appreciation to Rabbi Schwab – Debra and Adam Natenson

In memory of Joyce Brodsky, beloved mother of Debra (Adam) Natenson, beloved grandmother and beloved sister – Robert and Sharon Abrams

– Stuart and Barbara Hochwert

In memory of Marian Raphaeli, beloved mother, and with appreciation to Rabbi Schwab – Michael and Robin Shartag

In memory of Marilyn Baker Schwartz, beloved sister of Bobbie (Len) Tenner, beloved wife, mother and grandmother – Stuart and Barbara Hochwert

In memory of Morris Vishny, beloved grandfather – Richard and Karen Reisin

In memory of Paul Lang, beloved father – Stephen and Judy Smiley

In memory of Randall Horwitz, beloved father – Jori and Leah Brajer

In memory of Sandra Aronin, beloved mother of Jeff (Lisa) Aronin and beloved grandmother – William and Joan Brodsky

In memory of Shael Siegel, beloved husband of Myrna Siegel (z"l), beloved father, grandfather and brother – Gerald and Adrienne Lasin

– Jori and Leah Brajer

In memory of T. David Brent, beloved brother of Susan (Robert) Millner – Steven and Linda Feinstein

In memory of Tillie L. and Abraham Shanes, beloved mother and father – Sam Shanes

In memory of Willard Aaron, beloved husband – Sally Aaron

With appreciation for Rabbi Schwab's kindness and support – Gail Shaps and Jack Bierig

With appreciation to Rabbi Schwab – Joel and Basia Retsky

With appreciation – Melissa Cannata

Rabbi Freedman Discretionary Fund

In honor of Fran and Mark Levy's 50th wedding anniversary – Arthur and Lynn Cohen

In honor of Tami and Reuben Warshawsky's 40th wedding anniversary – Lee and Margaret Cohn

In honor of the baby naming of Madeleine Solomon's granddaughter, Maya Beatrice – Phil and Doreen Feitelberg

In honor of the bris of Solomon Glass, son of Sandy and Ali Glass – Matt and Jamie Pestine

In honor of the brit milah of our grandson, Solomon Reuben Glass, and with appreciation to Rabbi Freedman – Hal and Karen Sider

In honor of the wedding of Isabel and Adam and with appreciation to Rabbi Freedman – Martha and Brad Glass

In memory of Evelyn Smiley, beloved mother – Stephen and Judy Smiley

In memory of Ilene Strauss, beloved sister and aunt, and with appreciation to Rabbi Freedman – Marlene Kaplan and Audra Kaplan and Family

In memory of Ilene Strauss, beloved sister, and with appreciation to Rabbi Freedman – Marlene Kaplan and Family

In memory of Marian Raphaeli, beloved mother, and with appreciation to Rabbi Freedman – Michael and Robin Shartag

In memory of Marilyn Baker Schwartz, beloved sister of Bobbie (Len) Tenner, beloved wife, mother and grandmother – Stuart and Marianne Taussig

In memory of Marvin Wein, beloved father, and with appreciation to Rabbi Freedman – Stuart Wein and Family

In memory of Myrna Siegel and with appreciation to Rabbi Freeman – Family of Myrna Siegel

In memory of Myrna Siegel, beloved mother and grandmother – Sally Aaron

– Jori and Leah Brajer

In memory of Naoma Cahr, beloved wife of Michael Cahr, beloved mother, grandmother and sister – Mark and Laura Lieberman

In memory of Randi Kaplan, beloved daughter-in-law of Gerry Kaplan and beloved wife of Daniel Kaplan – Debra Rade

In memory of Rose Feitelberg, beloved mother – Phil and Doreen Feitelberg

In memory of Ruth Stern, beloved mother and grandmother – Fran Rabinowitz

In memory of Shael Siegel, beloved husband of Myrna Siegel (z"l), beloved father, grandfather and brother – Fran Rabinowitz

With appreciation for Rabbi Freedman's kindness and support – Gail Shaps and Jack Bierig

With appreciation to Phil and Doreen Feitelberg for the creativity and artistry they share so generously – June Back Frydman

With appreciation to Rabbi Freedman for officiating at the baby naming of our daughter, granddaughter and great-granddaughter, Audrey Affrunti – Stephen Levin and The Affrunti Families

With appreciation – Shoshana Winton

Rabbi Kurtz Discretionary Fund

In memory of Elick Lindon, beloved father, Ludwig Hoffman, beloved father, and Trudy Westheimer, beloved aunt – Gary and Debbie Lindon

With appreciation to Rabbi Kurtz – Anonymous

Hazzan Sandler Discretionary Fund

In honor of Hazzan Sandler being named one of JUF's 36 under 36

– Michael and Jackie Melinger

– Patricia Shapiro

– Cindy Shekhtman

In honor of Stuart Hochwert on his Hatan Torah Simchat Torah honor – Matt and Jamie Pestine

In honor of the moving experience and being a part of the choir during Neilah – Michael and Betsy Katz

In memory of Walter Becker, who loved Jewish music – Sandra Becker

With appreciation for Hazzan Sandler's kindness and support – Gail Shaps and Jack Bierig

With appreciation to Hazzan Sandler – Michael and Robin Shartag



Hazzan Greenberg Discretionary Fund

In memory of Jeremy Greenberg, beloved brother of Hazzan Jenna Greenberg (Rabbi Joshua Ginsberg), beloved son of James Greenberg, beloved husband of Leslie Greenberg, beloved father of Raya and Clyde and beloved uncle

- Steve and Wendy Abrams
- Jerry and Annette Blumberg
- Ron and Eileen Goldberg
- Stuart and Barbara Hochwert
- Daniel and Wendy Kahn
- Gerry Kaplan
- Elise Kline
- Ellen Lavin
- Julie Liss-Katz
- Benjamin Kopin and Beth Shapiro Kopin
- Michael and Jackie Melinger
- NSS Beth El Sisterhood
- NSS Beth El Ritual Committee and Morning Minyan
- Ira and Debbi Rosenberg
- Michael and Barbara Salberg
- Dr. David and Rabbi Ora Schnitzer
- Patricia Shapiro
- Cindy Shekhtman
- Michael and Sara Sher
- Pam and Richard Schlosberg
- Sandy Starkman and Larry Pachter
- David and Judy Weiss
- Karen Weiss
- Richard and Judy Zelin

With appreciation for Hazzan Greenberg's kindness and support – Gail Shaps and Jack Bierig

With appreciation for the daily minyan and the dedication, care and love during the past year mourning my father, Jay Warshawsky – Reuben and Tami Warshawsky

With appreciation to Hazzan Greenberg for her consistent, reliable and upbeat morning minyan leadership – Larry Goldsmith and Mary Ellen Bowers

Andrew and Gail Brown Technology Endowment Fund

In honor of Andrew Brown – Josephine Russ

In honor of Annette and Gerald Blumberg – Andrew and Gail Brown

In memory of Felix Weil, beloved father of Loren (Diane) Weil and beloved grandfather – Andrew and Gail Brown

Ann and Jack Weinberg Holocaust Memorial Education Endowment Fund

In memory of Marilyn Baker Schwartz, beloved sister of Bobbie (Len) Tenner, beloved wife, mother and grandmother – Joel and Pearl Kagan

Camp Ramah General Scholarship Endowment Fund

In honor of Fran and Mark Levy's 50th wedding anniversary – Michael and Denise Heimlich

Family Engagement Fund

In honor of Karen Weiss, Marlene Halpern and Stuart Hochwert for their Simchat Torah honors – Larry Goldsmith and Mary Ellen Bowers

General Unrestricted Endowment Fund

In memory of Marian Raphaeli, beloved mother of Robin (Michael) Shartag and beloved grandmother – David and Alissa Simon

In memory of Shael Siegel, beloved husband of Myrna Siegel (z"l), beloved father, grandfather and brother – Wendy DeBoe

Gertrude Lederman Family Continuing Education Fund

In honor of Marlene Halpern on her Kallat Bereshit Simchat Torah honor – Daniel and Wendy Kahn

In honor of Richard Kahn, son of Danny and Wendy Kahn, on his wedding – Paulette Margulies

In memory of Marilyn Baker Schwartz, beloved sister of Bobbie (Len) Tenner, beloved wife, mother and grandmother – Paulette Margulies

In memory of Naoma Cahr, beloved wife of Michael Cahr, beloved mother, grandmother and sister – Paulette Margulies

In memory of Ruth Stern, beloved mother and grandmother – Rodney and Marilyn Slutsky

In memory of Shael Siegel, beloved husband of Myrna Siegel (z"l), beloved father, grandfather and brother – Rodney and Marilyn Slutsky

With appreciation for Rabbi Schwab's Lunch and Learn – Sally Aaron

With appreciation to Carl Schrag for Breaking Jewish News and Views – Jeffrey Goldman

Glass Family Music Endowment Fund

In memory of Shael Siegel, beloved husband of Myrna Siegel (z"l), beloved father, grandfather and brother – Philip and Ellen Glass

HAZAK Fund

In honor of Maria Ponsillo and Arthur Rabinowitz – Gerry Kaplan

In honor of Marlene Halpern on her Kallat Bereshit Simchat Torah honor – Patricia Shapiro

In honor of Mary Ellen Bowers on her birthday

- Bob and Beth Footlik
- Matt and Jamie Pestine
- Karen Weiss

In honor of the birth of Mary Ellen Bowers and Larry Goldsmith's granddaughter, Maeve – Paulette Margulies

In honor of the engagement of Jorie Dayan, daughter of Medwin and Maryl Dayan – Daniel and Jodi Weiss

In memory of Howard Edelman – Patricia Shapiro

In memory of Jeremy Greenberg, beloved brother of Hazzan Jenna Greenberg (Rabbi Joshua Ginsberg), beloved son of James Greenberg, beloved husband of Leslie Greenberg, beloved father of Raya and Clyde and beloved uncle – Jonathan and Holly Reinsdorf

In memory of Joyce Brodsky, beloved mother of Debra (Adam) Natenson, beloved grandmother and beloved sister – Jonathan and Holly Reinsdorf

In memory of Kayla Fishbein, beloved child of Todd and Lisa Fishbein, beloved sibling of Talia, Sarah and Emma and beloved grandchild of Barbara Hoffman – Daniel and Jodi Weiss

In memory of Lavina Baron Friedman, beloved mother – Ken and Marcy Levin

In memory of Marilyn Baker Schwartz, beloved sister of Bobbie (Len) Tenner, beloved wife, mother and grandmother – Jerry and Annette Blumberg

In memory of Max Taussig, beloved brother of Stuart Taussig – Gloria Taussig

In memory of Randi Kaplan, beloved daughter-in-law of Gerry Kaplan and beloved wife of Daniel Kaplan

- Bob and Beth Footlik
- Larry Goldsmith and Mary Ellen Bowers
- Michael and Jackie Melinger
- Patricia Shapiro

In memory of Ruth Stern, beloved mother and grandmother – Ken and Marcy Levin

In memory of Shael Siegel, beloved husband of Myrna Siegel (z"l), beloved father, grandfather and brother – Jerry and Annette Blumberg

With appreciation for HAZAK and the rideshare program – Laeh Grant

With appreciation to HAZAK

- Betty Ann Levin
- Larry Weiner

With appreciation to HAZAK for the Hoshanah Rabbah Morning service and breakfast and a movie – Nessia Frank

Holocaust Memorial Endowment Fund

In memory of Seymour "Cy" Michael Koltin, beloved father of Allan (Sharon) Koltin, beloved husband and grandfather – Pamela Borobetz

In memory of Shael Siegel, beloved husband of Myrna Siegel (z"l), beloved father, grandfather and brother – Ken and Marcy Levin

Horwitz-Hoffman Youth Lounge Maintenance Endowment Fund

In memory of David Hoffman, beloved husband of Barbara Hoffman, beloved father of Brian (Melanie) Hoffman, Lisa (Todd) Fishbein, Devorah Sarah, grandfather and brother

- Andy and Esther Dosick
- Bud and Hazel Herzog
- Paulette Margulies

In memory of Kayla Fishbein, beloved child of Todd and Lisa Fishbein, beloved sibling of Talia, Sarah and Emma and beloved grandchild of Barbara Hoffman

- Steve and Wendy Abrams
- Laurence and Corinne Baskin
- Jerry and Annette Blumberg
- Jori and Leah Brajer
- David and Joyce Dlugie
- David and Francine Ephraim
- Benjamin and Wendy Frank
- Larry Goldsmith and Mary Ellen Bowers
- Gerry Kaplan
- Michael and Jackie Melinger
- Minda Raffe
- Skip and Lynn Schrayer
- Patricia Shapiro
- Sandy Starkman and Larry Pachter
- Len and Bobbie Tenner
- Steven and Roni Weiss

Israel Scholarship Endowment Fund

In honor of Bobbi Kwall's special birthday – Larry Goldsmith and Mary Ellen Bowers

Jack and Mildred Cohen Religious School Endowment Fund

In honor of Miles Atlas, son of Dana and Joshua Atlas, on becoming a Bar Mitzvah – **Syndi Salat**

In memory of Shael Siegel, beloved husband of Myrna Siegel (z"l), beloved father, grandfather and brother – **Steven and Wendy Abrams**

In honor of Miles Atlas, son of Dana and Joshua Atlas, on becoming a Bar Mitzvah – **Syndi and David Salat**

In honor of Sally and Paul Aaron and family. Thanks for letting me join you at Rosh Hoshanah services – **Elana Stern**

In memory of Anna Winterman Szanto, beloved mother – **Michael Szanto**

In memory of Lois Hirschfield, beloved mother – **David and Pamela Hirschfield**

In memory of Martin Meyerson, beloved father – **David and Pamela Hirschfield**

Joseph and Mae Gray Cultural and Learning Center Fund

In honor of Karen Weiss on her *Kol Ne'arim Simchat Torah* honor – **David and Francine Ephraim**

In honor of Marlene Halpern on her *Kallat Bereshit Simchat Torah* honor – **David and Francine Ephraim**

In honor of Stuart Hochwert on his *Hatan Torah Simchat Torah* honor – **David and Francine Ephraim**

In memory of Ruth Stern, beloved mother and grandmother – **Paulette Margulies**

In memory of Zachary Berns – **Michael and Debora Pinzur**

Kopin Family Children's T'filot Endowment Fund

In memory of Shael Siegel, beloved husband of Myrna Siegel (z"l), beloved father, grandfather and brother – **Mitchell and Karen Kopin**

LGBTQIA+ Fund

In honor of the marriage of Danny and Wendy Kahn's son Richard to Joshua Stadlan – **Andrew and Gail Brown**

Maxwell Abbell Library Fund

In honor of Abigail Glick, daughter of Jonathan and Riffe Glick, on becoming a Bat Mitzvah – **William and Barby Loeb**

In honor of Daniel Fishbaum, son of Anne McDonagh and David Fishbaum, on his engagement – **Cindy Shekhtman**

In memory of Abraham de Leeuwe, beloved husband and father – **Paulette Margulies**

In memory of Ruth Stern, beloved mother and grandmother

– **Robert Berger**
– **Gerry Kaplan**

In memory of Shael Siegel, beloved husband of Myrna Siegel (z"l), beloved father, grandfather and brother

– **Theodore and Cheryl Banks**
– **Robert Berger**

In memory of Sidney Starkman, Mildred Starkman, Sidney Pachter and others on Yizkor – **Sandy Starkman and Larry Pachter**

Minyan Fund

In memory of Harry Back, beloved father – June Back Fryzman

In memory of Hiennech Svarc Back, beloved mother – June Back Fryzman

In memory of Hirshel Back, beloved father – June Back Fryzman

In memory of Irving Wygodny – Avrum and Jill Miller

In memory of Lois May Ruderman, beloved mother – Robert and Carol Ruderman

In memory of Randi Kaplan, beloved daughter-in-law of Gerry Kaplan and beloved wife of Daniel Kaplan – Seth and Marlene Halpern

In memory of Shael Siegel, beloved husband of Myrna Siegel (z"l), beloved father, grandfather and brother – Skip and Lynn Schrayer

With appreciation for the daily minyan and the dedication, care and love during the past year mourning our father, Larry Field – Joseph and Cynthia Kaplan

Miriam and Bernard H. Sokol Hebrew High School Fund

In memory of Bernard and Miriam Sokol, beloved father and mother – Jerome and Gail Taxy

In memory of Kayla Fishbein, beloved child of Todd and Lisa Fishbein, beloved sibling of Talia, Sarah and Emma and beloved grandchild of Barbara Hoffman – Ronnie Jo Sokol

In memory of Myrna Siegel (z"l), beloved mother and grandmother – Ronnie Jo Sokol

In memory of Randi Kaplan, beloved daughter-in-law of Gerry Kaplan and beloved wife of Daniel Kaplan – Ronnie Jo Sokol

In memory of Ruth Stern, beloved mother and grandmother – Ronnie Jo Sokol

In memory of Shael Siegel, beloved husband of Myrna Siegel (z"l), beloved father, grandfather and brother – Ronnie Jo Sokol

NSS Beth El Camp Scholarship Fund

In honor of Dr. Lenna Silberman completing her doctorate – Brian and Hillary Wenk

In honor of the wedding of Ashley Kaufman, daughter of Dr. Gary and Merle Kaufman – Steven and Jill Hoffman

In memory of David Hoffman, beloved husband of Barbara Hoffman, beloved father of Brian (Melanie) Hoffman, Lisa (Todd) Fishbein, Devorah Sarah, grandfather and brother – Alan and Margaret Silberman

In memory of Edward Margulies, beloved husband of Paulette Margulies, beloved father and grandfather – Alan and Margaret Silberman

NSS Beth El Sisterhood Special Gifts Fund

*In honor of Karen Weiss on her *Kol Ne'arim Simchat Torah* honor*

– **Matt and Jamie Pestine**
– **Patricia Shapiro**

In honor of my Sisterhood Mazel Mail birthday greeting – Sandy Starkman

In memory of Allene "Eenie" Frost, beloved mother of Ira (Elise) Frost, Skip Frost and Bonnie Spangler, beloved grandmother and great-grandmother – Benjamin Kopin and Beth Shapiro Kopin

With appreciation to Jackie Melinger for her kindness and wisdom – Debra and Adam Natenson

NSS Beth El Special Gifts Fund

In honor of Eric and Tracy Lynn and a peaceful and sweet new year – Shelly Lynn

In honor of Michael Katz's 70th anniversary of his Bar Mitzvah – Arthur Rabinowitz and Maria Ponsillo

In honor of Noah Weil, son of Sarah and Jason Weil, on becoming a Bar Mitzvah – Mark and Nina Gaines

In honor of our 40th wedding anniversary – Reuben and Tami Warshawsky

In honor of Richard Kahn, son of Danny and Wendy Kahn, on his wedding – Andrew and Laurie Hochberg

In honor of Shael (z"l) and Myrna (z"l) Siegel's 67th wedding anniversary – Paulette Margulies

In honor of the birth of Brian and Gail Boorstein's granddaughter, Lottie Baker Levy – Scott and Evie Rooth

In honor of the NSSBE clergy for all their help and dedication in helping Hazel become a Bat Mitzvah – Eric and Tracy Lynn

In memory of Allene "Eenie" Frost, beloved mother of Ira (Elise) Frost, Skip Frost and Bonnie Spangler, beloved grandmother and great-grandmother

– **Martin Keidan**

– **Michael and Varda Schary**

In memory of Art Tepfer – Samuel and Judith Bernstein

In memory of Bobbie Tenner's sister, Marilyn – Paulette Margulies

In memory of Eleanor "Eki" Greenberg, beloved mother of Larry (Elaine Weiss) Greenberg, beloved wife, grandmother and great-grandmother – Ira and Elise Frost

In memory of Joyce Brodsky, beloved mother of Debra (Adam) Natenson, beloved grandmother and beloved sister – Matt and Jamie Pestine

In memory of Kayla Fishbein, beloved child of Todd and Lisa Fishbein, beloved sibling of Talia, Sarah and Emma and beloved grandchild of Barbara Hoffman – Ira and Debbi Rosenberg

In memory of Mary Levy, beloved mother-in-law – Alvin Shulman

In memory of Norman Mizel, beloved brother – Gerald Mizel

In memory of Rose Versman – Linda Jean Versman

In memory of Ruth Stern, beloved mother and grandmother – Benjamin and Wendy Frank

In memory of Selma and Alfred Stern, beloved mother and brother – Hilda Reingold

In memory of Shael Siegel, beloved husband of Myrna Siegel (z"l), beloved father, grandfather and brother

– **Ira and Elise Frost**

– **William and Wendy Lipsman**

With appreciation to NSS Beth El – Jordan Feiger and Margalit Tocher

With appreciation to NSS Beth El for letting me participate in Men's Club activities – Gerald Frank

With appreciation to the NSS Beth El clergy and the wonderful experience we had – Benjamin Green



**Paul S. and Sylvia Steinberg
Pre-School Fund**

In honor of Matt Korman's marriage to Liza – Jeffrey and Debra Crane

In honor of the birth of our grandson, Jordan Kenneth – Daniel and Honey Bronson

In memory of Bertha Wasserman, beloved grandmother – Robert and Loree Wasserman

In memory of Shael Siegel, beloved husband of Myrna Siegel (z"l), beloved father, grandfather and brother – Mort and Miriam Steinberg

Ritual Refurbishment Endowment Fund

In memory of Ruth Stern, beloved mother and grandmother – Barbara Blumberg

In memory of Shael Siegel, beloved husband of Myrna Siegel (z"l), beloved father, grandfather and brother – Barbara Blumberg

Wishing a complete and speedy recovery to Eve Pinkert – Barbara Blumberg

Social Action Fund

In honor of Marlene Halpern on her Kallat Bereshit Simchat Torah honor – Matt and Jamie Pestine

Staff Recognition Fund

In honor of Bobbie and Len Tenner's 65th wedding anniversary – Sandy Starkman and Larry Pachter

In memory of Maxine Sprung, beloved mother – Cindy Shekhtman

In memory of Randi Kaplan, beloved daughter-in-law of Gerry Kaplan and beloved wife of Daniel Kaplan – Sandy Starkman and Larry Pachter

With appreciation to Hillary Wenk, Michelle Fetea and the Beth El staff for their continued support – Jamie Pestine and Elizabeth Ury

Tzedakah/Pushke Fund

In honor of the birth of Jan Gaines and Andy Kenoe's grandson, Levi Gray – Hal and Karen Sider

In memory of Abe Frydman, beloved father-in-law – June Back Frydman

In memory of Allen Weber, beloved son – Millie Weber

In memory of Genia Svarc Back, beloved mother – June Back Frydman

In memory of Morris Frydman, beloved husband – June Back Frydman

In memory of Rachel Frydman, beloved mother-in-law – June Back Frydman

In memory of Samuel Kurchitzer, beloved father – Millie Weber

In memory of Shael Siegel, beloved husband of Myrna Siegel (z"l), beloved father, grandfather and brother – Richard and Judy Zelin

In memory of the innocent Jewish victims of 10/7 – Paul Kredow and Ziva Green-Kredow

With appreciation to Becky and Loren Schechter for their parking help – Tracy and Eric Lynn

With appreciation to Kim and Eric Ephraim for the inclusion – Sheri and Aaron Harkavy

With appreciation to Rabbi Ben Azriel for arranging a ride for my mom – Kurt and Robyn Silberstein

Willard and Sally Arnold Camp Ramah Endowment Fund

In memory of Jack Karson, beloved father – Sally Aaron

Youth Community Fund

In memory of Kayla Fishbein, beloved child of Todd and Lisa Fishbein, beloved sibling of Talia, Sarah and Emma and beloved grandchild of Barbara Hoffman – Adam and Leslie Glazer



Social Action Committee

By Marlene Halpern | socialaction@nssbethel.org

Take Action With Us: Social Action Committee Updates!

► Scan the QR code to learn more about the Social Action Committee.



Thank you to everyone for making SAC's Fall 2025 initiatives a huge success! We had a busy fall with the following SAC-sponsored initiatives:

Pack the Pantry to benefit The Ark. We overfilled the bin during the high holidays with generous donations of kosher food, household essentials, and personal care items. You helped countless people in the Chicagoland Jewish community.

Thanksgiving Mitzvah Project was widely successful thanks to Beth El members of all ages who shopped for, made, and donated beautiful Thanksgiving baskets to benefit families from Glenwood School in Waukegan and Moraine Township Food Pantry.

Chesed Coat Drive. Once again, the Beth El community generously donated gently used winter coats and outerwear to benefit Chesed Chicago.

SAC is busy planning for our annual Spring Mitzvah Day.



Annual Mitzvah Day
Sunday, April 19, 2026
10:00 am – Noon

Join your Beth El family and friends for a day dedicated to giving, doing, and getting so much more in return! We will partner with local and global organizations to make blankets for children, care packages for the elderly, food collections for our local food pantry, and many other collection efforts and craft projects to raise awareness for mental health. There will be many other collections and projects to choose from. Stay tuned for more details and opportunities to get involved.

We're always looking for volunteers. Interested in joining the Social Action Committee? Email Marlene Halpern at socialaction@nssbethel.org.



SISTERHOOD

By Jamie Pestine and Elizabeth Ury, Sisterhood Co-Presidents

Sukkot Sunshine & Sisterhood Smiles

We couldn't have asked for better weather this past Sukkot! Sunshine, good vibes, and amazing company made our Sweets in the Sukkah program such a treat. The Miles Ury Quartet set the perfect mood for dancing, schmoozing, and even a lively round of Name That Tune, while everyone enjoyed goodies baked in the synagogue kitchen by our Sisterhood women and wrote heartfelt notes to our soldiers in Israel.

A huge thank-you to Randi Heichman, Ellen Krumbein, Suzie Lampert, and Chantal Blaustein for all their planning, cooking, and creative "styling" of the Sukkah—you made it look (and taste!) wonderful.

While the warm weather may be behind us, the smiles and connections will last all seasons. It might be cold outside, but it's always warm at NSSBE Sisterhood events! Check out the calendar for what's coming up in December, January, and February—and take a moment to think about what Sisterhood really means here.

It's that friendly face when you walk into shul, the call from someone checking in after a rough day, the friend who celebrates your good news, and a group of women who love learning, giving back, and laughing together.

If you have ideas for a Sisterhood event, a Tikkun Olam project or something to share, please contact either Elizabeth Ury or Jamie Pestine at sisterhood@nssbethel.org.

Beth El Event Showcase: Sweets in the Sukkah



The Sisterhood Gift Shop is Now Open and Ready to Brighten Your Chanukah Celebrations!

Your resource for all your Judaica. Made in Israel.

By Sulie Holt and Judy Hirsch | suliekaroholt@gmail.com, judyhirsch724@gmail.com

Whether you're looking for the perfect hostess gift, delightful toys and puzzles for the kids, or beautiful Chanukiah and candles, we have something special for everyone.

Explore our festive selection and let us make your holiday shopping joyful and easy.

We're here on Sundays from 9:00 am – 12:00 pm. For a personal appointment during the week, please contact Judy Hirsch at 847-962-8121 or Sulie Holt at 847-558-3389.

MEN'S CLUB CORNER

By Aaron Krumbein, Men's Club President | mensclub@nssbethel.org

Men's Club Kicks Off the Season!

Men's Club kicked off the season with our Annual Steak and Scotch event, with over 95 men attending, tasting different libations, and enjoying the evening's menu. We were honored to recognize the service of our previous board and install our new VPs — all under a starry sky. Thank you to everyone who helped make this such a successful event, especially Brian Jacobson, Avram Pachter, and Aaron Krumbein.

We continued with our annual Sukkot Pizza in the Hut and Football Watch Party. The weather cooperated, as more than 40 members, including many new faces, enjoyed pizza and camaraderie while watching Sunday Night Football. Many thanks to Jori Brajer and Brian Jacobson for their efforts.

As we look ahead to the winter, we have exciting Bagels for Your Brains programs scheduled — check your calendar and announcements for speakers and topics. Our next joint program with Sisterhood, Winter Ballroom Dancing, will take place on January 24.

And as always, join us on Super Bowl Sunday, February 8, for the annual World-Wide Wrap XXV, followed by a Torah Study led by one of our esteemed members.

Keep an eye out for more information on upcoming events in the Men's Club weekly email and the Kol Beth El bulletin.

If you're interested in learning more about Men's Club or have comments or program ideas, please contact me or any of the Men's Club Board members. Hoping to see you soon!

Beth El Event Showcase: Steak & Scotch



● Mazel Tov to Our B'nai Mitzvah Students

**BAR MITZVAH**

Max Berke
son of
Lisa Cooper and Michael Berke
Shabbat, December 6

**BAT MITZVAH**

Zoe Shifrin
daughter of
Chari and Aaron Shifrin
Shabbat afternoon, December 6

**BAR MITZVAH**

Daniel Richman
son of
Rebecca and Chad Richman
Shabbat, December 13

**BAR MITZVAH**

Harrison Goldstein
son of
Stephanie and Jordan Goldstein
Thursday, December 25*
*Bar Mitzvah will take place in Israel.

**BAR MITZVAH**

Jack Channon
son of
Mary and Ben Channon
Shabbat, January 10

**BAT MITZVAH**

Hannah Drumm
daughter of
Aliza and Michael Drumm
Shabbat, January 17

**BAR MITZVAH**

Alex Srour
son of
Lisa and Daniel Srour
Shabbat, January 24

**BAT MITZVAH**

Lila Derman
daughter of
Talia and Aryeh Derman
Shabbat, January 31

**BAR MITZVAH**

Kooper Halperin
son of
Melissa and Todd Halperin
Shabbat, February 14

**BAR MITZVAH**

Jacob Nemirov
son of
Allison and Adam Nemirov
Shabbat, February 21

**BAT MITZVAH**

Mila Unruch
daughter of
Alisa and Joel Unruch
Shabbat, February 28

Beth El Event Showcase: Eden Golan Performance



North Suburban Synagogue

Beth El
בית כנסת בית אל

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Highland Park, IL 60035

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**MAY 7
2026**

SAVE THE DATE

**ANNUAL
EVENT**

MICHAEL RAPPAPORT

Jewish comedian and outspoken advocate for Israel
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