



חדשות Chadashot

Tevet/Shevat 5784
January 2024

News from The West Temple



Happy Tu BiShvat!

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Rabbi Brown

The Value of Jewish Rituals

This month's article is the third and final part of my Rosh Hashanah sermon. The first two parts were in October and November's monthly bulletin. Last month I talked about the March on Israel in Washington, D.C., which went way beyond my expectations as a successful, well planned, well-implemented, peaceful event. I continue to pray for the release of the Israeli hostages who are being held by Hamas and for peace to come to Israel, Gaza/The West Bank, and the whole world.

And now, on to the final installment of my Beth Israel-The West Temple bulletin article:

There is deep value in learning and practicing our traditions and customs whether you believe in God or not. These are about our relationships with others.

After college I sold all my stuff, bought a bicycle, some maps, camping equipment and a train ticket. After biking in the southeastern United States, I took the train to Seattle. When I ran out of money, I was able to get a job in a fish cannery in Alaska. At the cannery, I met a young Israeli couple and as the only Jews in the cannery, we instantly connected. Honestly, I'm not sure we would have been friends in a different setting. But in that setting where we were the only Jewish people, surrounded by religious Christians, we connected around speaking Hebrew, rituals related to Shabbat, and Israeli dancing.

During the three-day ferry ride from the cannery in Juneau, Alaska to Bellingham, Washington, I made friends with three other people. Two of them were Jewish. We realized that Rosh Hashanah would fall during our trip, so at our next stop, one of us got off the ferry, scouted out some honey and a few apples and got back on the boat. The four of us "made Rosh Hashanah" on the deck of the ferry by saying a few Hebrew blessings for a good year and eating apples and honey.

In observing this ritual together, we were able to connect deeply with each other in a way that I don't think would have been possible had we not known and "practiced" this apple ritual to welcome the new year.

Rachel Naomi Remen tells a great story in her book [Kitchen Table Wisdom](#) about one of her patients. This patient did not grow up in a traditionally observant Jewish home but found herself with the job of "turning over the kitchen" for Passover for a friend, by removing "everyday" dishes and utensils and replacing them with "Passover" dishes and utensils.

Her patient explains how the task was really difficult because there was SO MUCH kitchen stuff - dishes, pots, knives and forks, and pancake turners. In some ways, it was almost a meaningless task for her. And then she had an epiphany! She says, "In the blink of an eye, ... I was in the company of women across more than five thousand years. And too, at that very moment, all over the world there were women asking themselves this very question in every human language, 'Where do I put these everyday dishes?' And I was among them, too. (continued Page 3)

"Well, Rachel, I almost dropped the dishes, I was so surprised. ... I had this vast perspective. I knew myself to be a thread in a great tapestry woven by women in the name of God since the beginning. You would think this would make you feel small, but it didn't. I was a single thread, but I *belonged*, something I had never experienced before. For a few seconds I had a glimpse of something larger, not only of who I am but Whose I am. It only lasted for a Second, but I can remember it very clearly. I feel changed by it."¹

There is something profoundly meaningful in performing rituals that belong to *us*. Recognizing that she was among hundreds, thousands, hundreds of thousands of people who were packing up everyday dishes in order to make room for Passover dishes made that act deeply meaningful.

Dipping an apple into honey, wishing each other a sweet year, and eating that apple, knowing that we are in the company of people all over the *world* and *through time* makes the act much more than merely eating an apple on the deck of a ferry. Though we were the only Jews on that ferry, we were not alone!

Right after we moved to the Cleveland area, my father died. We knew hardly anyone, and except for one person I knew from long before rabbinical school, we had no friends here yet. We came home from New York after the funeral, anxious to transfer my father's fish that we had shlepped from NY, to its tank, which we had also brought from my father's house. I felt so sad that I wouldn't have people taking care of us during shiva, we wouldn't have people to make a minyan so that I could say kaddish.

But then they showed up. We knew hardly anyone, but because of our Jewish tradition to sit *shiva*, people who were barely more than strangers – many who hadn't even met us yet – showed up at our house to make the minyan, to get me water test strips for the fish tank, to make sure we had plenty of food during that week of mourning. It was one of the most profound experiences I had ever had, and it was simply because everyone knew "that's what we do when someone dies."

¹ Rachel Naomi Remen, MD, *Kitchen Table Wisdom*, p. 266-269, Riverhead Books, The Berkley Publishing Group, New York City, 1996

For those of us who have access to Judaism, whether you are a “religious” person or not, whether or not you believe in God, our Jewish rituals are powerful because they bond us with each other, with a shared past, with a hoped-for future, and give us a way to express what can’t be properly expressed through words alone. That makes them deeply valuable and worth practicing.

May the new year 2024 be a year of joy, good health, love, and deep connection.

Rabbi Rachel Brown

From the President

Dear friends and congregants,

Beth Israel - The West Temple has invested in our security in recent years - a new camera system that ties in directly to the police and the Federation security team, upgraded locking doors, and more secure windows. We continuously review and upgrade our systems, often requiring a significant investment of our resources. And our local police department has been extremely responsive and has stepped up their patrols.

Even so, the Jewish community here and elsewhere has experienced acts of vandalism. As you know, we were targeted with an antisemitic graffiti, and our local cemetery was adjacent to another which was targeted. Synagogues across the world have been tagged and vandalized - it's an ever-growing list. And of course, Jews have been individually and collectively targeted in ways that until recently seemed unimaginable. We must be vigilant.

But the most important element is US - the people who work, pray, celebrate and volunteer at Beth Israel - The West Temple. During these trying times, we are called to be alert. We must be careful when we have visitors or workers in the building, and we cannot simply assume that everyone has good intentions. These are extraordinary times. Tensions in the Jewish community, and indeed the world, are quite high. The Board, staff and clergy have had ongoing discussions of our security in the current climate, and we are committed to both taking extra care while still being the open and welcoming community we have always been.

In addition to regularly communicating with the police, city council, the Federation, the Secure Community Network, and the FBI, we ask that everyone take extra care as the first line of our defense. If you see something, say something.

We take these threats very seriously. On top of ongoing investigations, we are working behind the scenes to ensure that the next time anyone attempts to vandalize us again, they will be brought to justice!

Thank you,
Walter Wright

Lifelong Learning Series:

The Art of Jewish Pop Music with Joel Keller

Sunday's January 7, 21 and February 4, 2024 at 7:30 pm-8:30 pm



"The Art of Pop Music – Barry Manilow"

Barry Manilow got his big break while working with Bette Midler at the Baths in New York City. He became her Musical Director and went on to become one of the most recognized singer/songwriters of his day. We will be learning about his life and hearing a number of his most popular hit songs.



"The Art of Pop Music – Carole King"

Carole King's career began at age 8 with a performance of "If I Knew You Were Coming, I'd've Baked a Cake" on a children's radio program in New York. Her career as a composer and performer will be presented along with many of her songs sung by both herself and other artists for whom she composed. The program will follow her career from the 1950's through her 2015 induction as an Honoree of the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.



"The Art of Pop Music – Neil Diamond"

Neil Diamond's career as a singer/songwriter got off to a rocky start, but once his early songs began being covered by other artists, he took off like a rocket. We will learn about his early life, the lean 7 years before he became a household name. We'll listen to a number of his most memorable recordings and learn about the many honors he has earned as a recording artist.



"The Art of Pop Music – Bette Midler"

This presentation follows the career of "The Divine Miss M" from her birth in Honolulu, Hawaii through her move to New York and beyond. In addition to learning about her life and musical successes, we will listen to many of her recordings.



“The Art of Pop Music – Billy Joel”

Billy Joel is one of the top singer/songwriters of the 70’s, 80’s and 90’s. We will learn about his background and listen to many of his hit songs, including “Piano Man,” “We Didn’t Start the Fire,” and “The Longest Time,” and explore some of the high (and low) points of his career.



“The Music of Barbra Streisand”

Barbra Streisand is the “Grande Dame” of music and movies during the last half of the 20th Century. This program will first provide her biographical and professional information, including some details of her personal life. We will then listen to 10 of her top hit songs including “Woman in Love,” “Evergreen,” “Don’t Rain on My Parade,” and “You Don’t Bring me Flowers,” the last of which was sung as a duet with Neil Diamond.

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RBG A One Woman Show

A live, one woman show presentation!

Ruth Bader Ginsburg will be portrayed by actress Juliette Regnier (from the local group Women in History) in this very entertaining one woman show. Ruth Bader Ginsburg was the first female Jewish Supreme Court Justice from 1993-2020. She held many "firsts" in her long, distinguished career!

Sunday, January 21, 2024 at BI-TWT
Performance time 10:30 am - 11:45 am

There will be light breakfast following the show.

Suitable for ages 13 & up

RSVP to Beryl Palnik berylpalnik@yahoo.com

This entertaining performance is sponsored by Beth Israel Chaverim Jr. Youth Group.

From the Educator

I would like to wish all our families a happy and healthy new year. The weather may have turned cold and snowy, but BI-TWT continues to offer a wide range of engaging educational and social programs for learners of all ages.

Welcome Back to Religious School- Sunday, January 14. We will have a Mitzvah Day project and the students in Grades PK-12 will be making bagged lunches which will be donated to the Lutheran Men's Shelter. We kindly ask for the following donations from each of our families.

Grades PK/K- Each family donates two loaves of bread.

Grades 1&2- Each family donates one jar of peanut butter and one jar of jelly.

Grade 3&4- Each family donates two packages of cookies.

Grades 5 & 6 Each family donates- one box of individual pretzels or chips.

HS- Each family donates one bag of clementines.

The logo for Mitzvah Day features the words "Mitzvah" and "Day" stacked vertically in a white, sans-serif font. The text is centered within a solid green rectangular background.

This January we will have Mini Winter University held Sunday, January 21 and Yom Israel on Sunday, January 28 from 10-12 pm. The workshops on both Sundays will take the place of regularly scheduled religious school classes for our learners. Students are expected to attend the workshops on both Sundays. There will be several workshops and guest artists for learners of all ages. The workshops and activities will be open to students, parents, teachers, and all members of BI-TWT. There is no cost for any of the workshops.



The workshops will be held Sunday, January 21 and Sunday, January 28. The descriptions are as follows:

1. **January 21-** 10:30am-11:45am- RBG- A One Woman Show- for students in Grades 5-12 and adults. A live, one woman show presentation by Ruth Bader Ginsburg from Women in History. There will be a light breakfast following this show. Please register on the Sign-Up Genius.
2. **January 21-** 10:15am- 11:00am-Music with Jami Lercher- for PK-4. Learn about Jewish music from around the globe. Please register on the Sign-Up Genius.
3. **January 21-** 11am-11:30am- Diggin” Your Garden- Plant your own glow in the dark terrariums for Tu B’Shevat.
For ages PS-3/4 and their families- Please register on the Sign-Up Genius.



Yom Israel- Sunday, January 28, 10-12 pm

Yom Israel will bring together the entire congregation for special intergenerational learning opportunities that will explore the diverse culture of Israel. The program is being sponsored by a special grant which the Jewish Federation of Cleveland uses to mark Israel at 75. The program is free and open to all students, families, and members of our congregation. See the following descriptions of the workshops.

1. Israel Scaventure- or Great Israel Scavenger Hunt – 10:15-11:45 -A virtual team-based scavenger hunt that takes the participants on a race throughout Israel- Ages Grades 3-Adult- -Rabbi Brown. Please register on the Sign-Up Genius.

2. Piven Arts Workshop- participants will be inspired by Israeli artist- Hanoch Piven to create a one-of-a-kind piece of art that expresses their personal identity and connection to Israel. 10:15-11:15-Grades PS-Adults. Please sign up on the Sign-Up Genius.

3. What's Cooking In Golda's Kitchen- Inspired by Golda Meir (Israel's first and only woman prime minister) 10:15-11:15- Make some of her favorite recipes which reflect the diverse Israeli culture from Jewish communities around the world.

-led by our shin shin, Ella Ohayon . All ages. Please register on the Sign-Up Genius.

4. Start Up Nation- learn about innovations in water preservation, agriculture and influence on the world and sample some of the delicious foods that are made in Israel. led by Julia DiBaggio- 11-11:45 for Grades 5-12 and adults. Please sign up on the Sign-Up Genius.

5. Story Walk- Ella Goes to Israel- interactive storytelling and hands on activities- PK-2-open all morning 10-12 pm.

To assist with preparations, we ask that you **register by January 15**. Please use the following Sign-Up Genius Link to Register: (sent to you in News You Can Use email) <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/5080F44A4A92EA5F94-46651351-winter>

We look forward to seeing you all as we learn and grow together!

January Schedule:

Sunday, January 14: Religious School Resumes- Mitzvah Day for students in Grades PK-12.

Congregational Meeting: 11-12 pm in person and live stream

Monday, January 15: Hebrew resumes-6:30 pm

Sunday, January 21: Winter University (refer to the schedule on the previous page)

Monday, January 22: Hebrew-6:30 pm

Sunday, January 28: Religious School- Yom Israel-10-12pm (see the descriptions in the article).

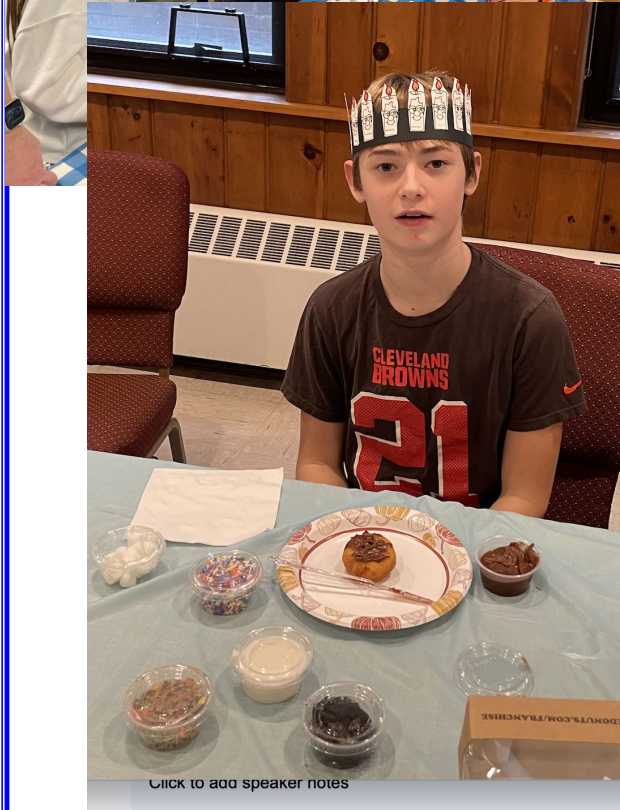
Monday, January 29: Hebrew School- 6:30 pm

Highlights from December: This month our Grades 3-6 classes celebrated Chanukah together and made Chanukah crowns and donuts! Our youngest students in Kinder Kraft and Music enjoyed a morning of celebrating Chanukah.

Debbie Chessin, Director of Education*

*This position is partially funded through the Fund for the Jewish Future of the Jewish Education Center of Cleveland.

Grades 3-6 classes celebrated Chanukah together!



[Click to add speaker notes](#)

A fun time was had by all at the annual Temple Hanukkah Shabbat and dinner. Menorahs were lit, the dreidl game played, and 72 guests enjoyed the delicious dinner coordinated by Beryl Palnik, Karen McAleer, and Debbie Chessin! Thank you everyone for your help!







We need your help with Purim this year!

Dear Friends,

We are looking for volunteers to be on the **Purim Committee.**

You will be helping organize the festivities.

Please RSVP to Karen McAleer veep@thewesttemple.org

Thank you for your help!



☆ Celebrations ☆

January Wedding Anniversaries - 2024

Dan & Debbie Chessin	January 16	31 st
Ken & Bette Goodman	January 17	72 nd
Drs. Abby & David Wald	January 28	6 th

January Birthdays – Young People

Anna Sweet	January 15	15 th
Estelle Sweteye-Hutner	January 25	9 th
Ava Melott	January 28	15 th

January Birthdays – Adults

Julia Lazar	January 3
Kathryn Soucek	January 6
Joseph Tate	January 9
Brian Greenfield	January 10
Diana Strongosky	January 10
Scott Grauel	January 19
Michael Kolesar	January 20
Alice Mark	January 21
Michael Palnik	January 21
Dr. John Heimke	January 22
Dr. Neal Kaufman	January 23
Dr. Charles Levin	January 24
Morris Levin	January 24
Sonia Horvitz	January 26
Mitchell Gruber	January 28
Sarah Lazar	January 29
Mary Lou McGuire	January 30
Dalia Alterovitz	January 31
Kimberly Griffith	January 31



PERPETUAL YAHRZEITS

January 2024

WEEK ENDING

January 6

Abe Levy
Francis Diamond
Hedwig Eckstein
Leah Bloom
Mary Koschel
Samuel Lowy
Ilse Machol
Cecil Bruckman
Earl Priesand
Rabbi Herbert J. Wilner

WEEK ENDING

January 13

Donald Bogart
Edmund Button
Seth Lettofsky
Anatoly Favinsky
Leonard Heller
Elizabeth Rimm



WEEK ENDING

JANUARY 20

Molly Lader
John F. Paliyan
Mary Brehm
Larry Steven Keller

WEEK ENDING

January 27

Rose Kantor
Lester Ackerman
Sarah Schwartzfeld
Linda Smilgoff
Richard Smilgoff
Ed Heller
Hyman Miller
Gertrude Sackett

WEEK ENDING

February 3

Marc F. Greenbaum
Howard Bruce Cohen
Irving Karp
Robert Barenboim
Betty Butensky
Abraham Clymer
Janet Feigenbaum
Frances Feldmar
Arie Isaac
Gustavo Schliserman
Christine Spear
Morris Roberts

We note the passing of the following:

Dr. Stephen Kollins, father of Judy Wright, who died on
October 31, 2023;

Regina Curran, mother of Dee Lazarus, who died on
November 26, 2023; and

Edwin Lezberg, former member, who died on December
1, 2023.

May their memory be a blessing

Service Schedule January

Friday Evenings

All Friday services on ZOOM,
unless otherwise noted.

January 5

7:30pm Kabbalat Shabbat
On ZOOM
Luis Fernandez

January 12

7:30pm Kabbalat Shabbat
ON ZOOM
Rabbi Brown

January 19

7:30pm Kabbalat Shabbat
ON ZOOM
TBA

January 26

7:30pm Kabbalat Shabbat
ON ZOOM
Rabbi Brown

Saturday Mornings

All Saturday services in person,
unless otherwise noted.

January 6

9:30am Torah Study
11:00am Shabbat Service
Luis Fernandez

January 13

9:30am Torah Study
11:00am Shabbat Service
Rabbi Brown

January 20

9:30am Torah Study
11:00am Shabbat Service
TBA

January 27

9:30am Torah Study
11:00 am Shabbat Service
Rabbi Brown

CONTRIBUTIONS

December 2023

General Fund

We gratefully acknowledge donations from
Dr. Robert & Judith Weiss.

In Memory of Harvey Sherman

-Dr. Sylvia Rimm

Rabbi Brown's Discretionary Fund

In Memory of
Gerald Greenfield
-Karon Greenfield
Joseph Lisbon
-Margery & Sid Ordog
Herbert L. Levy
-Joshua Levy
Philip Mason
-Carole Mason

The Alan B. Lettofsky Fund for The Center for Jewish Life

In Memory of
Bertl Horn Loeb
-Rabbi Alan B. Lettofsky

21st Century Renovation & Capital Campaign Fund

In Memory of
Leslie J. Dus
-Kathleen Weiss

Thank you!