



חדשות Chadashot

Shevat/Adar 5784
February 2024

News from The West Temple



Features

Rabbi's Desk	...1,2
President's Desk	...3-5
Educator's Desk	...6,7
You're Invited	...8-10
Celebrations	...11
Yahrzeits	...12
Service Schedule	...13
Contributions	...14



On the Current Situation in Israel

When I lived in Israel for two years during rabbinical school, the second intifada was going on. At first, I listened to the news on the hour almost every hour – I thought it would help me improve my Hebrew skills. But what I found was that it was making me sick – physically ill. So I stopped listening to the news. These days, I don't listen to the news so much as read it. We subscribe to a few newspapers, so I have good access to the news. But what I am finding is that I can't read articles about Israel. They are too distressing.

I feel powerless when it comes to Israel/Gaza. Beyond donating money to organizations that are helping Israelis who are affected by the Hamas attack on October 7, and Israelis who continue to be affected by Hezbollah in the north, there isn't much that I can do.

(continued Page 2)

I am furious that Hamas started this. Over the years, Hamas has received hundreds of millions of dollars in aid. They used that money to build tunnels, to amass weapons, and to train terrorists. They *could have* used that money to build a seaside resort paradise. The tourist dollars would then have funded great schools, outstanding medical care, luxurious housing, and all the other trappings of a good life for the people of Gaza. Instead, Hamas leadership left their people living in poverty in order to fund a terrorist infrastructure designed to wipe out Israel.

What's going on is devastating. Gazan civilians are being displaced and are losing their lives. Young Israeli soldiers are losing their lives. People all over are suffering the trauma of a brutal attack and a now-ongoing war.

I recently studied a commentary regarding the Israelites leaving Egypt. The commentator talked about how, even though the Israelites and Pharaoh weren't listening to Moses, God told Moses to lead the Israelites *gently*.

Often, when people don't listen, we yell; we think that somehow, if we were louder, they would do what we want them to, or they would see things our way. But this commentary suggested that the Israelites were traumatized. They were exhausted. They were mired in the "way things are" and just getting through the day, so they didn't have the presence of mind to know that any other options existed. So, they didn't listen. And God suggested that the way to get through to them was to be *gentle*, not harsh.

I wonder what would happen if Israel and Gaza (and the West Bank, Iran, and the Houthi rebels) were to approach each other *gently*, without fighting, without harshness, keeping in mind that all people are created in God's image and no one is really "better" than anyone else.

There is so much fighting, so much anger and so much suffering right now. So many people are traumatized, exhausted, and mired in "the way things are" that there is no way for people to see their way (or talk their way or hope their way) to relief. But they need relief – especially the families of the soldiers, the victims of the attacks, and the people in Gaza and Israel who have been displaced and don't have a place to live or the ability to work. They need relief. We all need relief.

May the end of this war come soon. May the hostages be restored to their families and to their homes. May we all approach each other with gentleness and even love.

From the President

Beth Israel would not function without our volunteer leaders. Whether you are new to Beth Israel, or a member of many years, please consider board membership. Terms are two years and we meet monthly, mostly via Zoom. We are responsible for the governance and management of our congregation and our resources. We also always need other volunteers for non-board positions.

Below are short descriptions of our Board positions and other volunteers. If you are interested in service, or would like to see the full position descriptions, please email me at president@thewesttemple.org.

Holly Neumann is the chair of our Nominating Committee. The President works with the Committee to create a slate of new board members ready for approval at the Congregational meeting held prior to our new fiscal year, July 1, 2024.

Officers - President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary

The Officers of the Board are the management team. They work with the Board members to ensure that we follow our governing document, our Constitution. In that role, the Officers are also responsible (with help from a special committee set up for that purpose) for identifying, interviewing, and hiring clergy.

The Rabbi and Education Director serve as ex-officio (non-voting) members of the board, and their advice, insight and expertise are essential.

President

The President works with clergy, staff and board to ensure smooth functioning - setting the agenda and facilitating the monthly board meetings, working to build consensus and making decisions when needed. The President has oversight over all of our standing committees, and works with the officers - vice president, treasurer and secretary - to provide a steady hand.

Vice President

The Vice President stands in for the President when that person is unavailable. The VP provides support and is a trusted advisor. The VP also chairs the Development Committee and plans events and fundraising efforts.

Treasurer

The Treasurer provides oversight of all temple fiscal matters - pays the bills, reviews contracts and expenses, manages membership fees, investments and donations. Chairs the Finance Committee and develops an annual budget. Ensures fiscal health and transparency. Prepares fiscal reports for monthly board meetings and twice yearly Congregational Meetings

(continued Page 4)

Secretary

The Secretary's role is to take minutes of the monthly Board meetings, to prepare them for distribution to the Board, and to ensure that the records are maintained. This person is the "institutional memory" of our congregation. By the way, it's also a great way to get to know our congregation.

Standing Committee Chairs - Religious School, Adult Education, Ritual, Facilities (Building & Grounds), Finance, Development, Communications, Membership, Security, Social Action

The Standing Committee Chairs are also, by default, board members. As the heads of committees, they manage these efforts and report to the board on their goals, activities and outcomes.

Religious School

Responsible for the education of our youth, our volunteer teachers, curricula and special events. Oversight and planning for Camp Kee Tov, Winter U, and welcoming our Shin Shin. This is a big role - our youth are our future. Works closely with the Rabbi. Chaired by the Education Director, who reports on activities in our monthly Bulletin, and writes grant requests to support these efforts.

Adult Education

Oversight of Torah Study and other special activities and guest speakers. All things that support "lifelong learning" for our adults. Works closely with the Rabbi and the Education Director.

Ritual

Responsible for guiding us in our expression of Judaism - ritual, prayer and celebration. During the High Holy Days, helps to welcome members and guests and supervises the ushers. During the week, helps to engage and support lay leadership in leading services. Works closely with the Rabbi and the Education Director.

Finance

Sets an annual budget, reviews our expenses and income. Ensures fiscal health and transparency. Chaired by the Treasurer.

Development

Plans and executes events, programs and activities to raise funds to support the congregation and its operations. Chaired by the Vice President.

Communications

This is a new position! This person manages our publications - the monthly Bulletin, and the weekly News You Can Use email distribution. They also work with the website manager to develop relevant messaging for our members and guests. They may also survey congregants to help understand their needs. Creates a "brand" for Beth Israel.

(continued Page 5)

Membership

Welcomes new members - in-person, personal contact via notes and calls, and planned activities. Tracks the number of members, works with Office Manager and Treasurer to keep our list current. Hosts the Annual Congregational Picnic and the Monthly Congregational Dinners - plan menu and activities and develop invitations for News You Can Use and Bulletin. Plans the Annual New Member Service in conjunction with Rabbi.

Facilities (Building and Grounds)

Oversight of all matters relevant to the functioning of our building, grounds and all systems - HVAC, security, computers, etc. Works with members of the Facilities Committee, the Treasurer and President on contracts, costs and oversight of repairs, maintenance and capital improvement. Develops and troubleshoots systems to insure smooth operations.

Security

Manages our professional and volunteer security teams; liaison with the Cleveland Police Department and our ushers for High Holy Days and special events. Works with Facilities to ensure effective systems for fire and safety. Helps to manage overflow parking. Assists with grant writing efforts to support security.

Social Action

Works with the Rabbi, Education Director, the Religious Action Committee of the Reform Movement and others to develop programs and activities. Coordinate letter writing, presentations, youth actions, and other congregational activities. Coordinates the Food Pantry and solicits donations.

Other Positions (non-board)

We have *many* other volunteers who provide support. These are non-board positions but are no less important. They include the volunteer administrator, office assistants, cemetery, web developer, the *chesed* caring committee, and the broadcast team. Also, our volunteers who teach Sunday School, teach Hebrew, and mentor Bar and Bat Mitzvah students are essential. Other volunteers lead services on Friday or Saturday nights, lead or participate in Torah Study, serve on committees and work in our kitchen.

Thank you board and volunteers for all that you do! And if you're not a current board member or volunteer, consider becoming one!!

Walter Wright

From the Educator

"Avodah" is a Hebrew word used in the bible that has two distinct yet intertwined meanings which include both "worship" and "work." The dual meaning of this ancient word inspires powerful wisdom for modern times. One of the images that Avodah invokes is that it is a word for how the Israelites "worked in the fields" and at the same time was a word that was used for worshipping the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah. The Israelites understood that, as they worked in the fields, they were also responsible for helping to feed those who did not have enough food. Sharing with others in need was... and still is, a sacred responsibility.

This is a message that we continue to teach over and over to our children, and it is one that was exemplified by a Mitzvah project our students in Religious School took part in this past January. Our PK-12 grade students fulfilled their work helping people in need living in our local community. The students in BI-TWT's Religious School participated in a special Mitzvah Project to help feed residents at the Lutheran Men's Homeless Shelter. The students assembled over seventy-five homemade bagged lunches which were delivered to the shelter. The program was made possible through donations of food from our families and BI-TWT's Rosenblum Social Action Fund. *Kol HaKavod!* to all our amazing students and teachers who illustrated how working together as a community brings us close to each other and to God.



We are so proud of all our students who are making a difference in the lives of so many people in our community!

Debbie Chessin

February Schedule:

Sunday, 4th – Religious School-10-12 pm
Kinder Kraft and Kooking-10-11 am

Monday, 5th – Hebrew School-6:30 pm

Sunday, 11th – Religious School – 10-12 pm

Monday, 12th – Hebrew School- 6:30 pm

Sunday, 18th – No Religious School- President's Day Weekend

Monday, 19th – No Hebrew School

Sunday, 25th – Religious School – 10-12pm

- Grades PK-2 Family Program- 10-12 pm

Debbie Chessin, Director of Education*

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

Lifelong Learning Series:
The Art of Jewish Pop Music with Joel Keller
February 4, 2024 at 7:30 pm-8:30 pm



"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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Congregational Educator: Debbie Chessin
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Buildings & Grounds Committee: Justin Morse
Membership Committee: Jennifer Sedlak
Finance Committee: Robin Kaufman
Cemetery Committee: Rick Keller
Public Relations Coordinator: Becky Watts
Communications: Geralda Simko
Bulletin Editors: Geralda Simko & Pat Outlaw

**Join us for
Shabbat Service and Dinner
in honor of our new members at Beth Israel – The
West Temple**



Friday, February 23, 2024, 6:30pm

Please join us for Shabbat and Dinner in honor of our new members! Together, we will enjoy an early Shabbat service followed by a kosher-style dinner.

\$18 per person (under 13 are free) provides a dairy Pasta-stravaganza, including salad, challah and dessert!

RSVP through Wednesday, Feb 21st.

Payments can be made by check, Venmo, or cash. Share a little nosh, and enjoy spending time together in person!

Please RSVP to Karen McAleer at veep@thewesttemple.org

BETH ISRAEL THE WEST TEMPLE

PURIM

Raffle Baskets!

Parking Shuttle!

Dancing! 8:00-11:00pm

Party

A JOYFUL CELEBRATION OF THE PURIM HOLIDAY FOR ADULTS

SATURDAY MARCH 23RD 2024 (RSVP BY 3/16)	MEGILLAH READING BY RABBI RACHEL BROWN & FRIENDS 7:30-8:00 PM
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HOSTED AT BETH ISRAEL THE WEST TEMPLE
14308 TRISKETT ROAD-CLEVEAND, OH

DRESS IN COSTUME OR WITH MASQUERADE FLAIR

DJ*HEAVY APPETIZERS*DESSERT*TWO DRINK
TICKETS & CASH BAR

RSVP link in News You Can Use

You must RSVP to attend. The link is in the News You Can Use emails.

We invite you to join us for an adult-only (21+) Purim Party at Beth Israel - The West Temple, which will take place on Saturday March 23rd, 2024 from 7:30 pm to 11pm at The Temple.

This 1st (Annual) Purim Party is a celebration and FUNdraiser.

It's a night you won't want to miss! Tasty hors d'oeuvres, drinks, a DJ, and lots of games!

We will have all the exciting details in an upcoming email.

If you would like to support our Purim in its first year, please consider donating a good or service as a raffle basket item.

We would be honored to include your business/employer.

☆ Celebrations ☆

February Birthdays – 2024 – Children

	<u>Date</u>	
Leona Fisher	February 17	4 th
Clara Payne	February 17	10 th
Evan Wald	February 18	5 th
Camille Lazar	February 20	7 th

February Birthdays – 2024 - Adults

	<u>Date</u>	
Jeffrey Heller	February 2	
Donna Sweet	February 5	
Julian Ross	February 6	
Becky Watts	February 8	
Richard Sweet	February 10	
Valerie Tate	February 12	
Robert Brehm	February 16	
Lynn Mansfeld	February 18	
Mindy Bedrossian	February 19	
Lisa Feldman	February 19	
Arthur Gold	February 19	
Carole Mason	February 22	
Ellen Goodworth	February 26	
Susan Wagner	February 27	



Wedding Anniversaries – February 2024

Dr. Theodore Provder & Joan Saks	February 5	7 th
Sid & Margery Ordog	February 14	67 th
Mike & Janina Levin	February 26	35 th

PERPETUAL YAHRZEITS

February 2024

WEEK ENDING FEBRUARY 3

Sidney H. Berns
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

WEEK ENDING FEBRUARY 10

Harold Friedman
Mildred Sherrick
Nita Zisser
Herman Provder
William Winokur
Jeana Mandel
Alfred Zisser
Charlotte Ryan
Sara Brecher
Ruth Erlick Lisbon
Morris Schwartzenfeld
Joann Zabarsky Jessup
Janice Eilberg
Shepsel Grinberg



WEEK ENDING FEBRUARY 17

Harry Miller
David Finkelstein
Benjamin Rimm
Naomi Sharman Ault

WEEK ENDING FEBRUARY 24

Catherine Diamond
Nanette Dreshfield
David G. Sweet
Emanuel N. Stern
Cheryl Horvitz
Hilda Mailman
Dolores Pordy
Wayne T. Puntel

WEEK ENDING MARCH 2

Bina Levin
Charles K. Seldin
Lona Gruber
Daniel Barnes
Tino Fernandez
Rodgers Gerhardt
Sonia Keller

May their memory be a blessing

Service Schedule February

Friday Evenings

All Friday services on ZOOM,
unless otherwise noted.

February 2

7:30pm Kabbalat Shabbat
On ZOOM
Rabbi Brown

February 9

7:30pm Kabbalat Shabbat
ON ZOOM
Luis Fernandez

February 16

7:30pm Kabbalat Shabbat
ON ZOOM
TBA

February 23

7:30pm Kabbalat Shabbat
In person at the Temple
(dinner to follow)
Rabbi Brown

Saturday Mornings

All Saturday services in person,
unless otherwise noted.

February 3

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

February 10

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

February 17

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

February 24

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

CONTRIBUTIONS

January 2024

General Fund

In Memory of

Erwin Lezberg

-Cathryn Stein & David Seldin

Herman Provder

-Dr. Theodore Provder

The Evy & Lou Rosenblum Fund for Education & Social Justice

A donation from JK Craig & B. Balogh

Rabbi Brown's Discretionary Fund

In Memory of

Martin Sacher

-Linda & Joel Keller

Larry Keller

-Linda & Joel Keller

Leo & Ilse Machol

-Scott & Barbara Machol

Linda Steerman

-Scott & Barbara Machol

Diane Kirstein

-Scott & Barbara Machol

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

In Memory of

Seth Lettofsky

-Rabbi Alan Lettofsky

Singer-Lader Music Fund

In Memory of

Erwin Lezberg

-Rabbi Enid C. Lader & Dr. Harry
Lader

Regina Curran

-Rabbi Enid C. Lader & Dr. Harry
Lader

Anne Webster

-Rabbi Enid C. Lader & Dr. Harry
Lader

Molly Lader

-Rabbi Enid C. Lader & Dr. Harry
Lader

Thank you!