PROGRESSIVE JUDAISM IN ISRAEL

by Rabbi Martin P. Beifield, Jr.

Meir Azari is a leading Progressive (the name in Israel for Reform Judaism) Rabbi in Israel. He serves as the Senior Rabbi and Executive Director of the Daniel Centers for Progressive Judaism in Tel Aviv. Rabbi Azari and the work of the Daniel Centers are changing the face of religious life in Tel Aviv and introducing Israelis to the dynamic possibilities of liberal Judaism.

We have often read about the struggles facing Progressive Judaism in Israel. The deeply entrenched Ultra-Orthodox religious establishment routinely blocks efforts by Progressive synagogues and institutions for building permits and equal access to funding. Some Ultra-Orthodox Rabbis are openly contemptuous of every expression of Judaism not their own and frequently criticize Reform, or Progressive, Judaism. Furthermore, non-Orthodox Judaism is a foreign concept in Israeli culture. Most Israelis do not identify as Orthodox or Ultra-Orthodox but Orthodox Judaism is the religion they do not practice. Progressive Judaism barely registers on the religious radar screen in Israel.

Until the 1980s most leaders of Reform Judaism in Israel were American-trained rabbis who had made Aliyah. The movement was comprised mostly of American ex-pats and was in many respects a “translation” of American Reform Judaism. It became clear that Reform Judaism, if it was to prosper in Israel, needed native Israeli rabbis and a native Israeli audience.

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There are now a group of native-born Israeli rabbis who are slowly changing this, and Rabbi Azari is one of the outstanding figures in this effort. He was ordained in 1992, after completing a newly-created program at the Jerusalem branch of the Hebrew Union College to prepare native Israelis for the Reform rabbinate.

On October 30th, Rabbi Azari will join us as the guest speaker at our annual Brotherhood Shabbat to tell us about the activities of the Daniel Centers in Tel Aviv and the challenges and opportunities for Reform Judaism in Israel.

Rabbi Martin P. Beifield, Jr.
Sophia and Nathan Gumenick Senior Rabbi

To the High Holiday Ushers

We did it! We all did it! It could not have been done without you!

The High Holiday services went smoothly and our ushering part went even more smoothly. That we received many compliments is clearly due to what we ALL, collectively, have done. The congregation appreciated our effort. We appreciate your efforts and the time you put in to make the ushering a success.

Even after many years, the process continues to be a learning experience for everyone associated with making our High Holy Day observances a pleasant event. We get better each year and expect to continue doing so. Because we are constantly making changes, we welcome any and all ideas.

Thank you each and every one. We hope it was as enjoyable for you as it was for us and that you will be willing to participate again next year.

L'Shana tovah

A Warm Welcome to Our New Members!

by Carol Ann Callahan, Membership Committee Chair

We are so happy that you have made the decision to join our Beth Ahabah family and we look forward to meeting you. We hope that you will become involved in many of the exciting things happening in and around our congregation.

Someone from our membership committee will be in touch with you to make sure we capture your family’s picture and a short biography for our new member bulletin board always on display in the Goldburg Auditorium.

Please save the date and join us as we welcome all of our new members at our Hanukkah dinner on Friday, December 11th, 2015. More info will follow in coming weeks.

We at Beth Ahabah are excited to share our vibrant new interactive, web based program called “Beth Ahabah Connect.” It will make becoming involved and engaged in our community easy and help you meet others in our congregation just like you! Ask us how to get connected to this easy, fabulous resource available to all our members.

Lastly, don’t forget to visit our web site http://www.bethahabah.org. Please visit it often for up to date happenings and useful information. In addition to our members, our warm and engaging staff are always happy to be of assistance.

If you need additional information or have any questions, please feel free to call me at (804) 967-9280 or email me at carolann.c@verizon.net.

We are all looking forward to getting to know you.
By Katie Roeper, President

I read once that most Boards spend the majority of their time on the “How” to exist – things like budget, staffing and systems as opposed to the “Why” – things like vision, mission, and values. While the everyday operations of the Temple are vitally important, we also need to focus on the long-range goals, with one eye always on the future. This is especially true as we embark on the transformational journey we have been discussing over the past year.

Change begins with first imagining the future. Just as Moses commissioned twelve leaders to travel ahead of our people, to spy on the land God had promised and to bring back their accounts, the Beth Ahabah Board has been envisioning our destination. What do we want to look like as a Synagogue in the next decade and beyond?

In June, the Board began a visioning process to explore “possibilities” for our future. Much in the way that the charettes encouraged us to dream about the bricks and mortar and our physical space, this process helps us to focus on the less tangible aspects of who we are as a congregation, such as engagement, identity, communication, spirituality, and relationships. Thank-fully, we are not starting at ground zero. Visioning (both formal and informal) has been part of our leadership fabric for many years and much has already been achieved, thanks to those whose shoulders upon which we now stand.

Youth and family education and programming under the umbrella of The Family Connection is fostering Jewish identity, strengthening relationships between youth, families and individual members, and encouraging engagement.

Religious School education is moving from structured classroom study to experiential learning, with thematic electives, multi-grade interest classes and field trips.

Youth participation in Jewish summer camps is on the rise and Camp Sababa is a local option to bring adventure camping to middle school youth.

Chavurot (friendship groups) are developing, each with a common thread, such as life stage, children, location, and/or special interest.

Over 30 volunteers are working with “Senior Bridge” to reach out to the oldest members of our Beth Ahabah community.

The Council for Social Justice, with the largest committee in 10 years, held a retreat recently to plan its strategic direction and set priorities.

The Communication Committee is continually enhancing our website, posting blogs on interesting Temple interactions and has a growing facebook following.

Beth Ahabah Connect is a new and exciting social media tool designed specifically to create and strengthen relationships with and between members.

As we continue this transformational journey, it is important to celebrate the milestones along the way and to recognize the individuals who are helping us to achieve our goals through a shared vision. To date, we have over 150 members who are serving on committees or are involved in projects to lead our congregation forward. While it may not be possible to list each name individually, please know that we thank each and every one of you for your dedication and spirit of giving. And, if you are not yet involved, please let us know where your passion lies so we can help you join this incredible collective effort!

What Better Way to Spread the Word

by Russell Finer, FSA, Executive Director

Businesses throughout the country use newsletters like B’Yachad to obtain new customers as well as reinforce existing relationships with current customers. This proven and cost-effective way of advertising gets noticed by its loyal community-based readership. Each time we publish B’Yachad our members read it and many of them hold onto it until the next issue is published. Advertising in B’Yachad lets you reach desirable customers in our area. What’s more, it delivers a very positive impression about your business and supports our temple. Won’t you help spread the good word about your business? For more information about this method of advertising, please contact Russell Finer (r.finer@bethahabah.org) or Susan Morgan (smorganpr@comcast.net).

Thank you.
After much visioning, planning and preparation, the Generations Capital and Endowment Campaign launched over the High Holy Days and is moving forward with strong congregational support. Research and early fund-raising efforts led the Campaign Steering Committee and the Board to develop a phased approach. The speed by which we move from one phase to another will be dependent on the dollars raised.

Based on what has been pledged to-date and what is a realistic capacity, the Steering Committee made a fundraising recommendation to the Trustees and Board. The Trustees endorsed the recommendation and the Board has approved a campaign goal for Phase One of $3,055,00 for the renovation and construction portion of the campaign and a second goal of $1,000,000 to add to the endowment.

Phase One of the campaign will incorporate many of the dreams that were expressed during the Charettes (dream-building sessions). Beyond the systems and basic facility updates, Phase One will take steps toward unifying the campus, creating flexible space to maximize use, providing better administrative and youth space, and offering green space.

To begin, Phase One will address a number of “must-do” items to include: new HVAC for the Sanctuary Building, remodeled bathrooms, repairs to fire doors and escapes, and roof and masonry issues for the Sanctuary. Provided we reach our anticipated goal, Phase One also calls for enhancements to include: a primary entrance, which will begin to unify the campus; expansion of the Sanctuary foyer; refurbished kitchen; cosmetic improvements in the Goldburg and Religious School; a garden, lounge and office/classroom/meeting space in place of the current breezeway; and relocation of the administrative offices, which will make them more visible and accessible and will create the opportunity for a new source of revenue in the current administration building. The plan also includes technology and security upgrades that would support wireless, streaming, and monitors.

The transformation that our congregation is embracing will benefit each and every member in different ways and will help our entire Beth Ahabah community be more connected to one another and to our Judaism. It is our hope that every member will contribute toward its success to the greatest extent possible. For additional information, please view the campaign video and very preliminary ideas available on the Beth Ahabah website at www.bethahabah.org. As we progress through the stages of the campaign and construction, we will post updates online. Additionally, we welcome your questions, thoughts and ideas. To share them, please contact a member of the Generations Steering Committee.

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**Save The Weekend:**
**Honor Rabbi Beifield & Ina Ginsberg**

June 3 & 4, 2016
Elegant Oneg & Saturday Evening reception

Please put this important weekend on your calendars now!
CBA SENIOR BRIDGE
CONTINUING TO CONNECT
by Rachel Schmidt, Program Co-ordinator

Funding for Beth Ahabah’s Senior Bridge comes from The Hebrew Fund for the Aged of Richmond that has supported the Richmond community for the past 36 years. In addition, The Genesis Fund of the Richmond Jewish Federation, a communal source for research, development and special project funding is supporting the project. In less than two years, 39 congregational volunteers have connected with 44 seniors over the age of 80.

Part of Senior Bridge’s focus is to support our volunteers and seniors with educational programming. The first of these sessions will discuss Jewish Approaches to Health and Wellness: A look at texts from prayer book to Tanach and Talmud to Maimonides as well as the Jewish approach to the issue of health. These workshops are open to everyone with details to be posted on the temple website.

Congregational volunteers’ and seniors’ comments on Senior Bridge;
“I look forward to calling Harold. I have known him for 50 years. He was part of the group that my parents sat with at all the events at Lakeside Country Club.”

“I thought you would want to know that Bob and I are discussing me joining his weekly bridge playing class offered at his residence. He had his 90th birthday last month.”

“I had a wonderful conversation with Mr. B this morning. He shared a little bit of his background with me including his lifelong connection to Beth Ahabah dating back to when Rabbi Calisch was the congregation’s leader.”

“Thank you for your effort to bring the seniors members back into the Temple family. Now set up some special programs for us seniors to meet each other.”

Our bridge building continues with 28 seniors waiting for their volunteers. Please consider becoming a part of this Beth Ahabah experience!

Contact Rachel via e-mail at: rachelcohenschmidt@gmail.com

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR CARITAS:
by Chuck Greenberg

Beth Ahabah will again serve as an intake site for the CARITAS Program for the homeless. CARITAS stands for Congregations Around Richmond Involved To Assure Shelter. From Saturday, December 20, 2015 through Friday, February 12, 2016, persons seeking shelter for the night will come to our school building at approximately 5:45 p.m.

We need volunteers to help CARITAS personnel sign in the homeless, offer them refreshments and make our guests feel at home until the CARITAS bus takes them to their shelter for the night. The bus arrives at approximately 7:00 p.m. Volunteers need to be at Temple by 5:30 p.m. and should be finished by approximately 7:15 p.m.

Two volunteers are needed per night. There will be CARITAS personnel as well as a Beth Ahabah staff member present each evening. No advanced training is needed to perform this mitzvah. Please consider volunteering as an individual or a family. Most Beth Ahabah volunteers agree to work the same night each week for the duration of the program. Several members who have participated in the program with their teenage children have found this a rewarding family experience.

Items such as appropriate magazines, playing cards, books and toiletry items are always welcome as donations. To sign up or for more information, please contact Chuck Greenberg at 794-6800 or cgre41@yahoo.com.

CBA COMMUNITY
IN SYMPATHY TO THE FAMILIES OF...
Belle Olshansky
 mother of Ken (Karen) Olshansky
Barbara Greenberg
Doris Beifield
 mother of Rabbi Martin P. Beifield, Jr.
 and Ina Ginsberg
 grandmother of Adam Beifield

CONGRATULATIONS TO...
Rick & Susan Morgan on the birth of their grandson, Jaylen Lee Morgan, born August 16, 2015. Also to parents Aaron Morgan & Jana Moran.
ADDITIONAL JELF OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE FOR SPRING AND SUMMER SEMESTER

For many, even with scholarships and government loans, the cost of higher education can be prohibitive. Jewish Family Services (JFS), in partnership with The Jewish Education Loan Fund (JELF), helps provide extra funding that helps a student cover the cost of their education.

JELF gives interest-free loans to Jewish students from Virginia, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina for education past high school, including college, graduate school or vocational training programs. JELF loans are need-based and students come from diverse and varied backgrounds. JFS promotes the work of JELF by helping administer these loans.

Applications for a JELF interest-free loan for the spring and/or summer 2016 semesters will be available on the JELF website from September 1 to September 30, 2015. Interested applicants can contact Ellen Glass at eglass@jfsrichmond.org or call 804.282.5644 ext. 224.

For more information on JELF loans, visit www.jfsrichmond.org/jelf or go to www.jelf.com.

B’nei Mitzvah

JORDAN GREEN
October 3, 2015

Jordan will be called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah on Saturday, October 3. Jordan is the daughter of Jeff and Kathy and the sister of Max. She is the granddaughter of Stanley and Linda Green, and Joan Haber and the late JP Haber.

Jordan is a 7th-grade honor student at Liberty Middle School in Hanover County. She plays volleyball and lacrosse and enjoys dance. Jordan is an avid reader and creative writer and hopes to someday combine her love of gourmet food and travel with her writing as a career path. She enjoys music, spending time with her family and her two dogs and hanging out with her friends.

For her Mitzvah Project Jordan is organizing a children’s book drive. She is asking family and friends to help her collect books to donate to kids at Massey Cancer Center.

We are extremely proud of Jordan and look forward to celebrating this wonderful event with family and friends.

TYLER WALDMAN
October 10, 2015

Tyler Waldman will be called to the Torah as a Bar Mitzvah on Saturday, October 10, 2015. Tyler is the son of Andy and Rori Waldman and the younger brother of Samantha Waldman.

He is the grandson of Sonny Nash and Mr. and Mrs. Steven Waldman.

Tyler participates in the Gifted & Talented program and is a straight A honor student at Chickahominy Middle School. He plays travel baseball and is a starting shortstop, and also plays catcher and pitcher. Tyler also participates in a youth basketball league.

He is an avid reader and won second place in the Accelerated Reading program in school.

Tyler is looking forward to sharing this special day with his family, friends and the Beth Ahabah community. We are very proud of Tyler and his achievements.

Mazel Tov!

B’nei Mitzvah continue on page 7
Jacob Henry Lavelle will be called to the Torah as a Bar Mitzvah on Saturday, October 17, 2015. He is the son of Lara and Jeffrey Lavelle.

Jacob is in 7th grade at Bailey Bridge Middle School. He plays the clarinet in the school band. Jacob is a Black Belt in Tae Kwon Do, playing all sports, especially basketball, is an avid gamer, and enjoys playing with his dog, Zoey.

For his Mitzvah Project, Jacob volunteered at a veterinarian’s office where he helped care for sick animals. He enjoyed being able to help, learn and give some love to the animals there. Jacob really enjoyed this experience.

We are extremely proud of him on his hard work in preparing for his Bar Mitzvah. We are looking forward to celebrating this day with family, friends and the Beth Ahabah Community.

Ali Cohen will be called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah at 5:00 pm on October 17, 2015. Ali is the daughter of Neil and Susan Cohen and the sister of Zach and Sophie.

Ali is an eighth grade student at the Collegiate School where she plays volleyball and soccer. She enjoys acting, photography, listening to music and spending time with her family and friends.

For her Mitzvah Project, Ali volunteered at the Voices Together Camp at the Jewish Community Center. She helped a six-year-old boy with autism learn to swim and participate in daily camp activities.

Ali and her family are looking forward to honoring this joyous occasion with friends, family and members of the congregation.

Grace Novey will be called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah on Saturday, October 24, 2015. She is the daughter of Steve and Beth Novey, older sister of Bowman, and granddaughter of Bari and Joni Novey, and James and Alice Du.

Grace is an 8th grade student at Robious Middle School. She is an avid swimmer and loves to spend time with her friends. For her Mitzvah Project, she has been spending time volunteering at Shalom Farm in Goochland, Virginia. Shalom Farm is a 6 acre sustainable farm that provides fresh produce for local communities with low access to healthy foods.

We are proud of her hard work and dedication, and look forward to sharing this very special day with family, friends and the Congregation of Beth Ahabah.

For families with students in college or graduate school: The Beth Ahabah Sisterhood will be sending students a little something for Hanukkah.

Please send your child’s name, email address, school, and year to Lori Bekenstein at lori.bek@verizon.net. Even if contact information has not changed from last year, please email Lori to confirm your student’s contact information.
Michael Ackley will be called to the Torah as a Bar Mitzvah on Saturday, October 31, 2015. Michael is the son of Melissa and Matthew Ackley and the brother of Morgan Ackley. He is the grandson of Robert and Carol Kast and Stephen and Adriane Ackley.

Michael is an 8th-grade student at Robious Middle School. He plays travel baseball for RISE and volleyball for James River High School.

For his Mitzvah Project, Michael distributed food through the Chesterfield Food Bank at several locations. Michael is looking forward to sharing this special day with his family, friends and the rest of the Beth Ahabah community.

Madison Miller will be called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah on Saturday, November 21, 2015. She is the daughter of Kim and Martin Miller and the younger sister of Megan.

Madison is a seventh-grade honor roll student at Robious Middle School. She loves to dance and is a member of the Pink Ladies competition dance team at Encore Studio. She loves the beach and being active.

For her Mitzvah Project, Madison handmade and distributed blankets for children undergoing chemotherapy at MCV. She was inspired by our neighbor who underwent successful treatment for leukemia.

We are so excited and proud of Madison for balancing her busy schedule in preparation for her Bat Mitzvah. We hope you can join her family and friends as we celebrate this Simcha.

Make flags to use for marching around with the Torah. An easy method is to use foam sheets and self sticking foam shapes (now available at dollar stores) for the flag and attach them to wooden dowels with heavy tape.

Make a wearable mantle (Torah cover). Using an old bed pillow cover for each child, cut a hole for the head in the end opposite the opening and two arm holes near the top of each side. Let each child use a variety of materials to decorate their mantle. Wear them to march with the Torahs.

Visit the synagogue sanctuary to look at the ark and the Torahs. Ask a rabbi or other authorized person to take a Torah from the ark and show it to you. If you do not have a real Torah available to you use a miniature one that has Hebrew writing. Look at the beautiful cover on the Torah. It is called a mantle. It is there to protect the Torah scroll. See how the Torah is rolled up. Look at how the letters are written in a special way called calligraphy. We use a yad, a pointer, which looks like a hand to point to the words when we read the Torah.

- See more at: http://www.reformjudaism.org/simchat-torah-activities-kids#sthash.RPLZrQJn.dpuf

**First Days:**

**Midweek Hebrew**

Wednesday, October 7

**Midrasha**

Monday, October 19

**Recipes From Our Mothers’ Kitchens:**

Have a cherished Holiday recipe you’d like to share?

Scan it from an old sisterhood or temple cookbook if you love the graphics, or send the details in an email to Susan Morgan at smorganpr@comcast.net
**REMEMBERING KRISTALLNACHT**

From the US Holocaust Museum Encyclopedia

*Kristallnacht*, literally, “Night of Crystal,” is often referred to as the “Night of Broken Glass.” The name refers to the wave of violent anti-Jewish pogroms which took place on November 9 and 10, 1938. This wave of violence took place throughout Germany, annexed Austria, and in areas of the Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia recently occupied by German troops.

**Origins of the Name**

*Kristallnacht* owes its name to the shards of shattered glass that lined German streets in the wake of the pogrom—broken glass from the windows of synagogues, homes and Jewish-owned businesses plundered and destroyed during the violence.

**Assassination of Ernst Vom Rath**

The violence was instigated primarily by Nazi Party officials and members of the SA (*Sturmabteilungen*: literally Assault Detachments, but commonly known as Storm Troopers) and Hitler Youth.

In its aftermath German officials announced that *Kristallnacht* had erupted as a spontaneous outburst of public sentiment in response to the assassination of Ernst Vom Rath. Vom Rath was a German embassy official stationed in Paris. Herschel Grynszpan, a 17-year-old Polish Jew, had shot the diplomat on November 7, 1938. A few days earlier, German authorities had expelled thousands of Jews of Polish citizenship living in Germany from the Reich; Grynszpan had received news that his parents, residents in Germany since 1911, were among them.

**NOVEMBER 9–10**

Violence began to erupt in various parts of the Reich throughout the late evening and early morning hours of November 9–10. At 1:20 a.m. on November 10, Reinhard Heydrich, in his capacity as head of the Security Police (*Sicherheitspolizei*) sent an urgent telegram to headquarters and stations of the State Police and to SA leaders in their various districts, which contained directives regarding the riots. SA and Hitler Youth units throughout Germany and its annexed territories engaged in the destruction of Jewish-owned homes and businesses. Members of many units wore civilian clothes to support the fiction that the disturbances were expressions of ‘outraged public reaction.’

Despite the outward appearance of spontaneous violence, and the local cast which the pogrom took on in various regions throughout the Reich, the central orders Heydrich relayed gave specific instructions: the “spontaneous” rioters were to take no measures endangering non-Jewish German life or property; they were not to subject foreigners (even Jewish foreigners) to violence; and they were to remove all synagogue archives prior to vandalizing synagogues and other properties of the Jewish communities, and to transfer that archival material to the Security Service (*Sicherheitsdienst*, or SD). The orders also indicated that police officials should arrest as many Jews as local jails could hold, preferably young, healthy men.

**DESTRUCTION OF SYNAGOGUES AND BUILDINGS**

The rioters destroyed 267 synagogues throughout Germany, Austria, and the Sudetenland. Many synagogues burned throughout the night in full view of the public and of local firefighters, who had received orders to intervene only to prevent flames from spreading to nearby buildings. SA and Hitler Youth members across the country shattered the shop windows of an estimated 7,500 Jewish-owned commercial establishments and looted their wares. Jewish cemeteries became a particular object of desecration in many regions.

*Kristallnacht* figures as an essential turning point in Nazi Germany’s persecution of Jews, which culminated in the attempt to annihilate the European Jews.

Immediately following Sukkot, we celebrate Sh’mini Atzeret and Simchat Torah, a fun-filled day during which we celebrate the completion of the annual reading of the Torah and affirm Torah as one of the pillars on which we build our lives. As part of the celebration, the Torah scrolls are taken from the ark and carried around the synagogue seven times. During the Torah service, the concluding section of the fifth book of the Torah, D’varim (Deuteronomy), is read, and immediately following, the opening section of Genesis, or B’reishit as it is called in Hebrew, is read. This practice represents the cyclical nature of the relationship between the Jewish people and the reading of the Torah.

**HISTORY**

As Sukkot comes to an end, we encounter additional special days in the Jewish calendar: Sh’mini Atzeret and Simchat Torah.

**Sh’mini Atzeret** is Hebrew for “eighth-day convocation,” is the name given to the eighth day of Sukkot. Leviticus 23:36 proclaims: “On the eighth day you shall observe a holy convocation.” Jews in biblical times observed Sukkot for seven days. For them, this eighth day came after Simchat Torah; for Orthodox, Conservative, and many Reform Jews today, it is the last day of the Simchat Torah festival.

Sh’mini Atzeret was originally a time of reflection on the holy days of Sukkot, which had just ended. Jews who left the booths they had occupied throughout Sukkot engaged in a final day of prayer before returning to their daily routine. Over time, Sh’mini Atzeret also became a day on which Jews recited a special prayer for rain in the year to come – quite appropriate in view of Simchat Torah’s agricultural motif.

Only in the 11th century did the 9th day after the beginning of Simchat Torah take on both the name and the festive ritual of what we now recognize as Simchat Torah. An annual holiday of this nature implies a one-year cycle of Torah reading, but such was not always the case. In ancient Palestine, Jews followed a triennial, or three-year, cycle of Torah reading. The one-year cycle was a custom of the Babylonian Jewish community. It was not until the 8th century that the great majority of Jews adopted the annual system. Simchat Torah as an annual observance, then, emerged only after the divergence in customs over the Torah reading cycle was resolved.

In Israel, Simchat Torah is observed on the one and only day of Sh’mini Atzeret, but for most Israelis it is just another day of Sukkot vacation. In many towns, public celebrations are held on the night after Simchat Torah. Known as hakafot shniyot (second processions), these events are simulations of Simchat Torah dancing and singing, but with professional musicians and electronic amplification. They are, in effect, “reruns” of Simchat Torah, designed to allow the public to enjoy the holiday without any of the restrictions or accoutrements of religion. These public festivals are usually popular and crowded.

**CUSTOMS & RITUALS**

The symbolic message of the customs associated with Simchat Torah emphasize that the Torah is the prized possession of the Jewish people, representing our heritage and history, and linking Jews to each other over many generations. The words recited at the end of reading each book of the Torah inspire and represent this history: Chazak, chazak, v’nitchazeik. “Be strong, be strong, and we will strengthen each other,” building a living Judaism through study, action, and commitment.

During congregational Simchat Torah celebration and services, the Torah scrolls are taken from the ark and carried by congregants around the synagogue seven times. During these seven circuits, or hakafot, those not carrying a Torah often will wave brightly colored flags and sing Hebrew songs. The hakafot are accompanied by singing, dancing, and flag-waving, all of which symbolize the collective joy of Torah study and a commitment to lifelong Jewish learning.

The origin of making, decorating, and carrying flags during the hakafot is unclear. Some scholars hold that marching with flags recaptures the history of the 12 ancient tribes of Israel, when each tribe had its own banner. Other scholars believe that this practice originated in the Middle Ages and was borrowed from certain Christian customs.

Turning the Torah continues on page 11
The Torah service is the focal point of the Simchat Torah celebration. One rabbi, cantor, or member of the congregation opens the Torah and reads the last section of the fifth and final book of the Torah, D’varim (Deuteronomy). A second person then opens another Torah scroll and reads the opening section of the first book of the Torah, B’reishit (Genesis). The selection from D’varim tells of the death and legacy of Moses, the prophet and leader of the Jewish people. The reading from B’reishit, the very first words of the Torah, recounts the story of God’s creation of the world.

Torah: The Tree of Life
What is the Torah and Why Do We Study It?

“It is a tree of life to all who grasp it, and whoever holds on to it is happy; its ways are ways of pleasantness, and all it paths are peace.” (Proverbs 3:17-18)

In its broadest sense, Torah is sometimes used to refer to the vast library of Jewish text. More specifically Torah usually refers to the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Hebrew Bible – Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. These books make up the story of the Jewish people. These ancient stories touch upon science, history, philosophy, ritual and ethics. Included are stories of individuals, families, wars, slavery and more. Virtually no subject was taboo for Torah. Running through these stories is the unique lens through which the Jewish people would come to view their world and their God.

Interpreting Torah
Throughout most of Jewish history, the Torah functioned as “the law” for Jews. Its commandments and the interpretation of them regulated both Jewish personal and communal life. The calendar was set according to the festivals and sacred holy days prescribed by the Torah. Regulations concerning public safety, diet, marriage, divorce and the rearing of children were all found in the Torah. An interpretation of diagnosing an illness may have worked thousands of years ago but would not in today’s scientifically advanced world. Laws regarding divorce that may have made sense for Jews living in seventeenth-century Europe may not apply as well today.

In order to accommodate such changing needs and circumstances, Jews created a process of interpreting Torah that continues to this day. Explanations and interpretations were collected and formed the Midrash Agadah (literary and moral explanations) and Midrash Halachah (legal explanations). Many of these make up the Talmud. After the completion of the Talmud rabbis such as Maimonides, Rashi, Abraham ibn Ezra and Abravanel – to name just a few – continued to process of interpreting Torah.

Every generation of Jews has had its commentators. Today discoveries in archeology, comparative religion, and linguistic analysis contribute to our understanding of Torah. For most of history, women’s voices were absent from the interpretation of Torah. However, for the last generation, women have been contributing to this wonderful process and have added a unique and much needed understanding of our sacred text.

How We Read Torah
The Torah is divided into fifty-four sections, each one called a sidra or parasha. Each week, on Shabbat another portion is read (some weeks have a double portion). In most Reform synagogues, a portion of the sidra is read. On Festivals, Reform congregations read from the portions traditionally assigned to those holidays. In addition, a selection from the Prophets or Writings is read each week. Known as the Haftarah, this reading is selected to relate to the text of the Torah portion. In most synagogues, the Torah and Haftarah portions are chanted.

Most synagogues have at least several Torah scrolls, from which the Torah is reading during worship services. It is handwritten on parchment made from the specially treated skin of a kosher animal and the letters are inscribed with a quill pen by a specially trained scribe called a sofer.

The cycle of Torah reading is completed within one year. On the holiday of Simchat Torah, the last and first verses of Torah are read as the cycle continues. This is a joyous observance, often accompanied by dancing and music.
CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE IN JEWISH EDUCATION

On Sunday, August 23rd, forty-five Jewish teachers representing a number of Richmond’s Jewish Educational institutions gathered together at the Virginia Holocaust Museum for a morning of learning, sharing and inspiration. The Innovations in Education Professional Development Workshop was sponsored by the Richmond Council for Jewish Education and PJ Library. Fifteen Beth Ahabah Religious School teachers attended the program which featured workshops on creative teaching methods, a guest speaker, awards ceremony, trivia game fun, a delicious catered lunch and the camaraderie of fellow teachers.

There were four workshops to choose from that covered a range of topics: Livening up your Hebrew Classroom; Teaching a Tough Subject: Using the Resources at the VA Holocaust Museum; Getting Rid of the Text Book!:Using Picture Books as a Teaching Tool in a Creative Classroom; and Projects-Based Learning.

Teachers’ hands were literally flying into the air to answer Jewish Education Trivia questions and win storybooks for their classrooms! It was difficult to stump this group of educators!

The guest speaker, Steve Kerbel, is an independent education consultant in the Greater Washington DC area, who has been involved in formal and informal Jewish education, youth group, camp, day school and congregational school for the last 30 years. He spoke on engaging students and parents in the classroom, using technology to an advantage and how to make the classroom a place of invested learning. It was a great way to get prepared and inspired for a new school year.

Several teachers were honored for their own Innovations in Teaching during the 2014-2015 year including our own Rachel Beck-Berman (Ivrit Shalosh) and Jordan Wiburn (Grade 5 Judaics). They were awarded a certificate and will each receive a micro-grant from the RCJE to support innovative programming for their classrooms this year. Their students will certainly benefit from their excellence and dedication!

FAMILY FALL HIKING/OUTDOOR CLUB

Sunday, October 4: Belle Island
Sunday, October 18: Forest Hill
Sunday, November 1: Pony Pasture
Noon - 2 PM

Bring a picnic lunch and join us for a hike as we to learn about water quality on the James River and participate in a community service project.

Program leader: Jeff Reynolds, Director for the Division of Enforcement for the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, has 34 years of mountaineering experience and two boys in the Religious School.

These outings will be open to people of all hiking levels, but geared towards 7 yrs and up. For more information contact Millie Becker at millie_becker1@yahoo.com

The Richmond Council for Jewish Education supports our community teachers by sponsoring annual Professional Development Workshop and through scholarships for Jewish educational opportunities outside our community.
SEVENTH GRADE FIELD TRIP TO THOMAS JEFFERSON’S MONTICELLO
Sunday, November 15
The 7th grade will be taking a trip to Monticello as part of our American Jewish History curriculum. The focus of the trip is Thomas Jefferson’s contribution to religious freedom and its impact on the Jewish community. Additionally, the students will learn about the Levy family, who saved and restored Monticello after Thomas Jefferson’s death. Parents are needed to chaperone and drive. For more information please contact Ramona Brand at r.brand@bethahabah.org

FAMILY MINGLES
October 4th - Fourth & Fifth Grade
November 2nd - Sixth & Seventh Grade
from 9:30 to 10:45 AM
In the Joel House

Join us for brunch and mingle with other parents in your child’s class. It’s a great way to make connections!

MUSICIANS WANTED FOR THE NEW RUACH NOAR BAND
We’re forming a new band for musicians in grades 7 through 12, who are interested in playing Jewish and non-Jewish music with friends. Rehearsals follow Religious School classes from 11:45 AM to 1:15 PM most Sundays.

For more information or to join, contact Hannah Piracha at pirachahm@vcu.edu.

RUACH CHADASH!
Singers and Piano Players in grades 7 through 7 are invited to be part of our Youth Musical Ensemble. Rehearsals follow Religious School classes from 11:45 AM to 1:15 PM most Sundays.

Experience a wide range of Jewish music including Yiddish, Israeli, Ladino, Shabbat and holiday tunes, Swing, Contemporary and more! For more information or to join, contact Ramona Brand at r.brand@bethahabah.org.

Rehearsals start on Sunday, October 4th. Come see if it’s for you.

ETZ CHAYIM
Singers ages 5 to 10 are invited to sing in our delightful young children’s choir. Rehearsals follow Religious School classes from 11:45 AM to 1:15 PM most Sundays.

Our wonderful young singers bring joy to monthly Family Services and participate in special holiday and Mitzvah Day performances.

Musical Director: Natan Berenshteyn

BETH AHABAH TEENS
By Brian Strauss, Teen Engagement Specialist

Beth Ahabah Teens are going to start the year off with an event at G-Force on Sunday, October 4th, after Religious School. This event is open to everyone in 8th through 12th grade, so come for a great time!

The Midrasha Retreat will be October 23rd to the 25th. We will spend the weekend in Church Hill at a retreat center. It is a time to hang out with friends, play games and learn more about Israel. It is one of the highlights of the year for the teens who participate.

We will have a Teen Mitzvah Project run by JeRAFTY on Sunday, November 15th after Religious School. We will be making PB&J sandwiches to hand out in Monroe Park.

From November 20th to the 22nd, we’ll attend the NFTY-MAR’s Fall Kallah. Look for more details as we get closer to the event.

Look for more news in the Teen Newsletter, which goes out twice a month!
DONATIONS

TEMPLE FUND
IN HONOR OF:
Herb Heltzer’s special birthday
   Ann Bendheim
   Katy & Jimmy Yoffy
David & Lesley Greenberg’s special anniversary
   Ann Bendheim
   Katy & Jimmy Yoffy
IN MEMORY OF:
Harriett Goodman & Henry Holtzman
   Denise Goodman Keil
Fred Baron
   Mark Baron
Ida Gunst
   Marjorie Gunst
Lillian A. Seitz
   Dr. Orestes & Patrice Zalis
Harold Rapp
   Ken & Katie Roeper
   Laura & Rob Davidson
Hans Falck, in celebration of his life
   Ken & Katie Roeper
Miriam Fogel
   Leta & Peter Greenberg
Tamara Kotlyar & Brandman Lazar
   Alex & Ita Berenshtein
Murray Schwartz
   Scott & Nancy Bellemann
Samuel Snyder
   Allen Finer
Samuel & Rebecca Billye Michael, my parents
   Sherlee Michael
Josef Albert Dolgansky
   The Dolganski Family
Rose Rudnick
   Alan Rudnick & Marc Villamiel
Albert Katz
   Ken & Katie Roeper

Estelle Finer
   Russell Finer
Steven Finer
   Russell Finer

CANTOR GOLDMAN MUSIC FUND
IN MEMORY OF:
Marvin Berlin
   Alan & Sandy Corbett
Florence Stillerman
   Fern Stillerman Cohen
My loved ones
   Debra & David Gardner

HEBREW CEMETERY FUND
IN MEMORY OF:
Lynn Rubens Wolf, my dear sister
   Jane C. Rubens
Marjorie Osterweis Rubens, my adored mother
   Jane C. Rubens
Joseph M. Rubens, Jr., my adored father
   Jane C. Rubens

MABEL STRADLING ORGAN FUND
IN MEMORY OF:
M. David Shapiro, my beloved father
   His daughter, Katherine Shapiro Wooton; son-in-law, Bill; granddaughters, Amy & Lisa

RICKI KESTIN FUND
IN HONOR OF:
Camp Sababa Staff – Another great year!
   Chuck & Mary Greenberg

MUSEUM & ARCHIVES
IN HONOR OF:
Edith Brenner’s Speedy Recovery
   Carol & Michael Sesnowitz
   Genie & George Crawford
   Bonnie & Mike Eisenman
IN MEMORY OF:
Shirley Markhoff
   Claire & Bob Rosenbaum

An armed security guard is on duty at Hebrew Cemetery on the first and third Sundays of the month from Noon to 3:00 p.m.

WANTED: CBA BLOG MASTER
Love blogging? Looking for a way to get more involved with the CBA community? We need your help. Volunteer today as the CBA Blog Master! Contact Executive Director, Russell M. Finer at 804.358.6757 or rfiner@bethahabah.org for details.

B’Yachad
DEADLINES For EDITORIAL & ADVERTISING
December/January 16: due Friday, October 23
For more information about advertising in the bulletin, contact Russ Finer in the Temple office, 804.358.6757.

Please submit editorial and camera ready ads to Susan Morgan, smorganpr@comcast.net
In 1878, the Board of Managers of Congregation Beth Ahabah approved Rabbi Michelbacher’s request to create a Family Record Book. The book’s pages list information about each of the members’ families, usually but not always including the names of the husband and wife, where they were from, their marriage date and officiant, plus the names, gender, and birthdates of their children. There are about 157 family entries, not including second marriages.

Today, the staff of the Museum and Archives routinely use these records to assist people researching their Richmond ancestors. Rabbi Michelbacher had no way of knowing that the Congregation would eventually establish a Museum and Archives, but he clearly knew the value of saving family records for future generations.

**JEWISH RICHMOND TRIVIA**

Rabbi Michelbacher included his own family in the Family Record Book. He first married Marie (Mary) Traubel, with whom he had three children. Marie died at age 32, four days after the birth of their third child. Rabbi Michelbacher then married Miriam Angle, the daughter of the first President of Beth Ahabah, Myer Angle. They had ten children of their own.

**Gifts That Make A Difference...Sinchah or Remembrance**

Charitable Giving in honor of or in memory of a loved one is an important tradition for the Beth Ahabah congregation. Making a gift to the temple offers a positive way to affirm your values and priorities and protect our future Jewish way of life. Honoring a friend or loved one through charitable gifts is often an especially meaningful act of paying tribute to someone special, while assuring that worthwhile giving continues to influence our children, grandchildren and the world around us.

Beth Ahabah has a wide range of donation opportunities available. The list can be viewed on the Temple website or you can call the Temple office at 804.358.6757.

Thank you for your consideration.
**Studying Torah**

For the Jewish people, the study of Torah never ends. Each year, as we read the sacred text again, it can be as if we are reading it for the first time. Each encounter with sacred text offers the possibility of new meanings. The Reform movement has published a number of editions of the Torah, with contemporary commentary.

Interested in studying Torah? Check in with the Beth Ahabah office for information on Rabbi Beifield’s Torah study group. No experience is necessary and newcomers are always welcome.

A first-century CE teacher, Ben Bag Bag, taught his students, “Turn the Torah, and turn it again, for everything you want to know is found within it.” (Avot 5:25) The study of Torah can be both an intellectual adventure and a spiritual journey. The many meanings of Torah offer the potential to add greatly to one’s life.

- See more at: http://www.reformjudaism.org/torah-tree-life#sthash.CycjJoSV.dpuf

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**Ten Minutes of Torah**

from urj.org

Each weekday, more than 20,000 subscribers receive an email that brings the Jewish world to them. From Torah commentaries written by scholars to recipes for baking challah, Ten Minutes of Torah explores the great variety of Jewish life. Over the years, subscribers have studied the history of Jews in America, Mishnah, Jewish ethics, Hebrew and more. They’ve been inspired to delve more deeply into the weekly Torah portion and prayer (’t’filah). And they’ve renewed their connection with Israel by hearing from experts on the front line.

What better way to start you day than with words of Torah? No matter where you are, Jewish life is as close as your email box.

BROTHERHOOD
By David Feibish, President

Who says Brotherhood only offers meetings, how about FREE BEER AND FOOD!

Not long ago it came to my attention that men of our congregation who are not active to any degree in Brotherhood may think we only offer them meetings!

Well, it is true we need to have meetings, though always with food to nosh or a meal appropriate for the occasion. We reflect and debrief on recent activities or events to refine and improve for the next time. We plan for marketing, supplies and volunteers needed for upcoming activities on the calendar. Of course we are open to consider and are frequently asked through the course of the year to participate or assist in the activities of various committees and Religious School, all a part of the Beth Ahabah family.

By the time this bulletin arrives, a selfless group of Brotherhood volunteers will have already put on our award-winning Congregational Picnic. Brotherhood will have already provided Shabbat service ushers, B’Nei Mitzvah gift presenters and ushers and other needed assistance during the High Holy Days.

These various volunteer activities only involve a tiny amount of time in relation to our collective programming hours. This involvement through Brotherhood has a huge and important impact on our congregants’ orderly and comfortable enjoyment of a service or Temple activity. The sense of self-fulfillment derived from your help and presence is immeasurable and truly appreciated by all.

So Men, Brotherhood hears you! In addition to upcoming sporting event gatherings and planning other social events, Brotherhood will soon be providing details to attend a FREE BEER and FREE FOOD private event at Hardywood Brewery on 11/11/15.

We especially want to invite newer male congregants of Beth Ahabah, those men who are curious about Brotherhood and thinking about being active to any degree but want to meet, ask questions or discuss whatever in a casual setting with current members of our Brotherhood auxiliary.

Email me at oldbenz@aol.com or call me at 804-967-2735 anytime if you have any inquiries about our CBA Brotherhood.

David S. Feibish, GRI
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or David.Feibish@joynercommercial.net

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Awarded RAR Life Membership

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B’yachad, the temple bulletin, is supported through the generous support of our advertisers. Show that you appreciate them by using their services and/or products. When you do, please mention that you saw their ad in the Congregation Beth Ahabah B’yachad.
Fortunately, its location was not forgotten.

Organizations maintain burial records with varying degrees of accuracy, which may indicate the importance they place on such information. When we began creating the online Jewish burial database several years ago (see and search it at www.bethahabahmuseum.org), we regularly found mistakes which we promptly researched and corrected. We still find them, though less frequently. We see things like people recorded as being in incorrect grave plots, having died before they were born, or entered into the records with incorrect names. We rarely see, however, instances in which people or their grave information have been temporarily lost. We have never seen an instance where a building was constructed over a grave, completely concealing it from view and perhaps from memory.

Unfortunately, this happened to the grave of a very important lady. The good news is that someone remembered its location, enabling her descendants to later restore it to the dignity it deserves.

Do you recall the story about Commodore Uriah P. Levy, a Jewish naval officer from the War of 1812 and who was also a Jefferson scholar? To make a long story short, Levy learned that Monticello was falling into disrepair and bought it in 1834. His family owned it for over 90 years, and spent considerable sums preserving and restoring it. The Commodore’s mother, Rachel Phillips Levy, lived there for many years and upon her death in 1839 was buried on the grounds near the main house. She could not be buried in the cemetery on the estate because it was (and still is) owned by the Jefferson family and is reserved for them alone. Rachel’s grave is located on Mulberry Row, which was the location of various outbuildings and homes for Jefferson’s slaves.

For some reason, perhaps the need for building space or just poor record keeping, her grave was covered first by a wash house and later by another small building. Both buildings had sturdy stone foundation walls, and it is likely that the foundation wall of the first building later served the second building as well.

In 1869 the building on the site was dismantled, with the exception of the foundation wall. This wall now serves as a permanent border around the grave, which has been augmented by a stone slab bearing key names and dates. The original stones stand at the head and foot of the plot.

Today this peaceful spot overlooks gardens and vineyards that are being restored to their 19th century form based on the plant research always underway at Monticello. A comfortable bench under a large tree provides a cool and comfortable spot from which to contemplate the ideas that Thomas Jefferson gave us, and the foresight and dedication of Commodore Uriah P. Levy, whose personal resources ensured the preservation of this wonderful and historic place.

Please visit our wonderful and historic place at 1109 West Franklin Street any day except Friday or Saturday between 10 and 3. Bring your visitors.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friday, October 2</td>
<td>Shabbat Service</td>
<td>7:30 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday, October 3</td>
<td>Tot Shabbat</td>
<td>9:00 AM</td>
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<td>Bat Mitzvah of Jordan Green</td>
<td>10:30 AM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunday, October 4</td>
<td>Religious School</td>
<td>9:15 AM</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Brotherhood Board Brunch</td>
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<td>4th &amp; 5th Grade Parent Mingle</td>
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<td>Simchat Torah Celebration</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Simchat Torah Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, October 7</td>
<td>Midweek Hebrew</td>
<td>5:30 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday, October 9</td>
<td>2nd &amp; 3rd Grade Shabbat Service w/ Etz Cha'Yim followed by Shabbat Dinner</td>
<td>6:15 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday, October 10</td>
<td>Bat Mitzvah of Tyler Waldman</td>
<td>10:30 AM</td>
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<td>Sunday, October 11</td>
<td>Religious School</td>
<td>9:15 AM</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“An Israel Conversation”</td>
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<td>Yoga</td>
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<td>Wednesday, October 14</td>
<td>Midweek Hebrew</td>
<td>5:30 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday, October 16</td>
<td>Shabbat Service w/Birthday &amp; Anniversary Aliyahs</td>
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<td>Saturday, October 17</td>
<td>Bat Mitzvah of Jacob Lavelle</td>
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<td>Bat Mitzvah of Ali Cohen</td>
<td>5:00 PM</td>
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<td>Sunday, October 18</td>
<td>Religious School</td>
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<td>Kindergarten Gesher</td>
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<td>WRI (Sisterhood) Brunch</td>
<td>9:30 AM</td>
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<td>Monday, October 19</td>
<td>Midrasha</td>
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<td>Wednesday, October 21</td>
<td>Midweek Hebrew</td>
<td>5:30 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday, October 23</td>
<td>Shabbat Service</td>
<td>7:30 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday, October 24</td>
<td>Bat Mitzvah of Grace Novoy</td>
<td>10:30 AM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunday, October 25</td>
<td>Religious School</td>
<td>9:15 AM</td>
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<td></td>
<td>First Grade Gesher</td>
<td>9:30 AM</td>
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<td></td>
<td>B’nei Mitzvah Logistics Workshop</td>
<td>9:30 AM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday, October 26</td>
<td>Midrasha</td>
<td>6:30 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, October 28</td>
<td>Midweek Hebrew</td>
<td>5:30 PM</td>
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**Community Calendar Information:**

- Community Calendar October/November
- Community Calendar Information is subject to change, please check the calendar online at bethahabah.org.
The Changing Landscape of the Reform Movement in Israel
Friday, October 30

The Reform movement today is a small but growing and vibrant voice for pluralistic Judaism in Israel. Why has its presence been so small in the past and what are the prospects for its future?

Join us on Friday, October 30, at 7:30pm for Brotherhood Shabbat services including an insightful and stimulating discussion led by Rabbi Meir Azari, Senior Rabbi at the Daniel Centers for Progressive Judaism in Tel Aviv and prominent leader of the Reform Movement in Israel.

Learn about the history of the Movement, the current situation, the challenges and opposition it faces, and how its leaders and communities are acting to deepen and broaden its impact and presence in Israeli society.