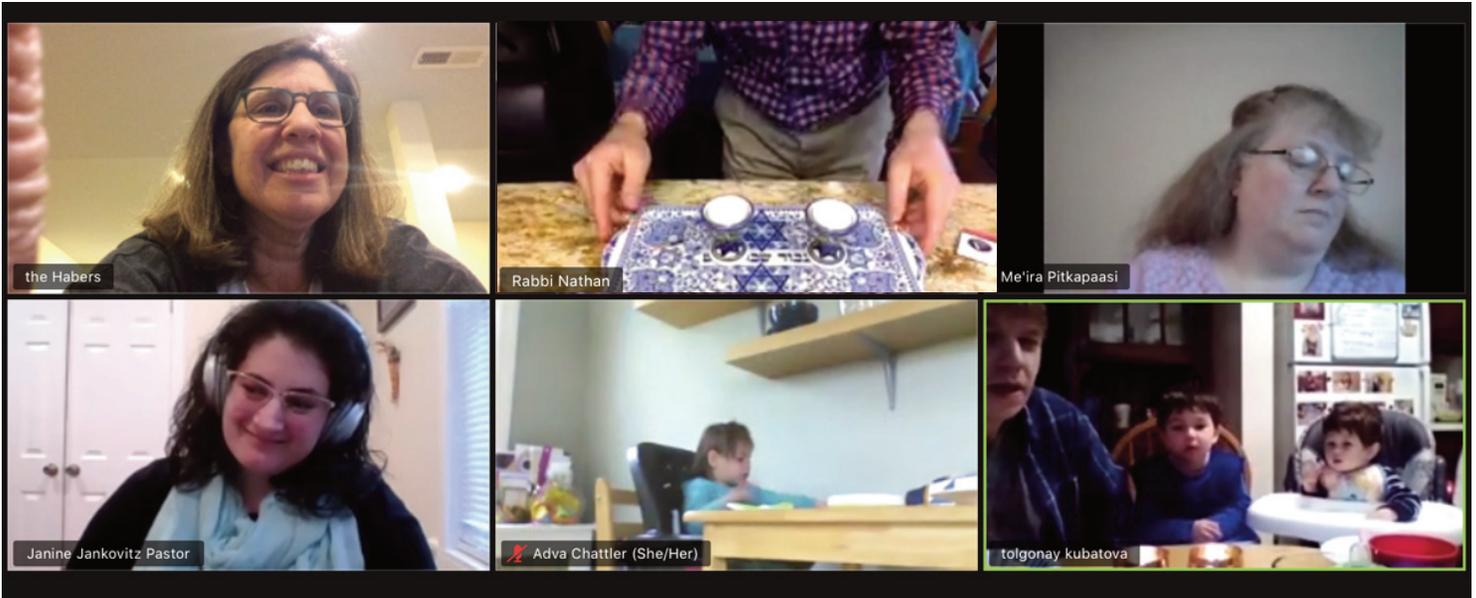


# The Israelight

*Congregation Beth Israel of Media  
A Reconstructionist Jewish Community*



While we have not been able to be together in person, the Hebrew School has continued to be active virtually throughout April and May via on-line Zoom Hebrew School sessions. Highlights included a Zoom model seder and, most recently, our final Dorot session of the year, which included a virtual tour of Israel led by Principal Adva and a breakout session for teens and adults led by Rabbi Linda with a special guest, live from Israel, Yael Hirsch Biederman from BINA (an Israeli-born movement at the intersection of Jewish education and social activism). Our HUGE gratitude goes to Adva and to all the Hebrew School teachers, all of whom didn't miss a beat in transitioning to on-line teaching and continued to put their hearts and souls into teaching our kids from a distance. The kids were engaged and clearly having fun, and it was great over-hearing the laughter, discussions, and tefillah singing every Sunday morning. Even the Gan (kindergarten) class and Tot Shabbat went virtual! We offer our additional thanks to Morah Me'ira, who did weekly bonus Zoom tefillah practice sessions with the Hay class throughout much of the year. As we are winding down our school year, we are sad not to be able to be together to celebrate our graduates in person, but we want to offer our biggest congratulations to this year's graduates, Julia Walsh, Noah Walsh, Alex Shapiro-Colarocco, and Hannah Beck! We will miss them but hope they will return next year as madrichim to support the Hebrew School students.

Wishing everyone a healthy, socially not-quite-as-distanced, and fun-filled summer. --The Education Committee

<b>From both Rabbis</b>	3		<b>Yahrzeits;</b>	6
Spiritual & Financial support; FUSE			We remember them;	
<b>Board of Directors</b>	4		<b>Donations</b>	7
CONGREGATION MEETING SCHEDULED		Table of Contents	Thank you	
<b>Religious Priactice Committee</b>	5		<b>Social Action Committee</b>	8
Shavuot; High Holy Days			Food Service; Coaching in Chester	
<b>Adult Education</b>	5		<b>from Reconstructing Judaism</b>	9,10
Exploring Judaism; Lunch & Learn			Questions for our time...	



I write this column as we are preparing this year for the Jewish Holiday of Shavuot, of receiving Torah. I have been asking myself what is the Torah that will serve us for the unprecedented moment of living through a pandemic? Where can we look backward in order to help us move forward?

One part of our story that might be useful is directing our attention to an earlier unprecedented moment of our history when the Jewish people were forced into exile after the destruction of the Temple. I've noticed some interesting parallels:

- Just as the Jews lost their physical sacred center of gathering and practice, we too have not been able to gather in our sacred center of the synagogue
- Just as Judaism had to transform and reinvent itself, we too have had to do quite a bit of reinventing these past weeks on how we gather and stay connected.
- Just as the home became a "mikdash me'at" a microcosm of the Temple which could allow Jews to carry out rituals that connected them to Temple practice, so too have our homes become our centers of practice, our places that connect us to each other and our communal spiritual home.

What gave our Jewish leaders of the past the gumption to reinvent themselves? The Talmud tells us the story of Yochanan ben Zakkai, the distinguished pupil of Hillel, who managed to avoid the Zealots who were intent on fighting the Romans (and having others do so) to end by having his students smuggle him out of the city in a coffin. The Talmud continues the story and says that because of his acumen Yochanan ben Zakkai convinced the Roman general Vespasian to allow him to set up a new center of learning and practice in Yavneh. (The Talmud actually criticized him for not thinking bigger and asking the general to spare Jerusalem!)

Whether or not the story is actually true (unlikely), its symbolic power is real. Yochanan ben Zakkai had to bury a part of his past (by literally burying himself) but at the same time had to carry the essence of his past experience (also himself) into a new present. We too, at this moment, are being asked something similar. What of our past is not serving us at the moment (e.g. gathering in large groups) but what are the essential pieces of our experience we get to carry with us into the present moment?

I have felt like we are part of this experiment together. Like our ancestors we are trying to find ways to build a new structure of Jewish life and practice where we make our homes into "mikdashei mea't," microcosms of holiness and where we find ways of keeping our connections with each other strong through prayer, learning, socializing, and serving others.

One of the foremost intellectual products of Yavneh, the new Jewish center, was the creation of the Mishnah, a Jewish living code based on Temple practice that guided the community in its day-to-day life with instructions varying from how to pray, conduct business, and generally maintain holiness. Like R. Yochanan himself, the Mishnah was a document that looked backward while guiding people forward.

I'm not sure what our "mishnah" will be for the current moment as we are creating our new "Yavneh." But in this time of preparing Shavuot, of being open to our Torah of this moment, I invite us to consider what are the instructions we want to enact that will allow both our personal and communal Jewish identities to remain strong and nourished? However they end up looking, these instructions will draw from the core values that have distinguished us as a people — the cultivation of holiness, of caring for others in need, of justice, and of our keeping our ever evolving Torah at our center. May our past and our connection serve to guide to an even stronger and continually evolving future.

### Rabbi's Note

Rabbi Linda Potemken



Two months into the pandemic I began reading a book called *Healing Through the Dark Emotions*, written by a Jewish psychotherapist, Miriam Greenspan. Greenspan's wisdom is gleaned from her clinical training and from her experiences as the daughter of holocaust survivors and living through her own profound losses.

She quotes Rabbi Mendl of Kotzk who teaches that the world breaks our hearts wide open, yet it is the openness that makes us whole. She invites us to see that this open self reveals that the

world, even in its toughest moments, is charged with the sacred.

As we live into this third month of the pandemic I encourage you to stay open to all of the feelings that arise and to become acquainted with and give voice to your vulnerability. Paradoxically, it is through allowing the fullness of that experience, by opening to vulnerability, that we stay strong, whole and spiritually nourished. Through our openness, we are better primed to experience the sacredness that is still around us, even in the midst of the pain.

As you open to vulnerability it is important to stay connected to others. As you find ways to do this I encourage you to avail yourself of the opportunities offered by our congregation. Through services, classes, support groups and zoom social activities this community can be an anchor through the long uncertain storm of covid. .



### SUPPORT THROUGH SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

#### Expanded Service Schedule Continues

BI will continue to offer an expanded service schedule through the month (and beyond) Please tune in for Friday night (7:30pm) and Shabbat morning (9:45 am) services and for spiritual practice, Monday through Friday, at 9am.

Please continue to check daily and weekly emails for announcements about support groups, classes, and other meaningful zoom gatherings.

**FINANCIAL HARDSHIP?** For those of you who may need some assistance for your small business or other financial issues that have arisen from the pandemic, consider consulting the following resources: The Hebrew Free Loan Society of Philadelphia: <https://hflphilly.org/>

Grants, loans, other resources: [jewishtogether.org](http://jewishtogether.org) run by the Jewish Federations of North America.

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### FUSE - Fellowship for Urban Suburban Engagement

We are happy to announce FUSE has decided to host the Courageous Conversation Virtual Meetings on June 17th. You can register for this event by using the links below:

Our hope for our bi-monthly gatherings is that they continue to create a sense of community among the FUSE network and new participants. The "Courageous Conversations" series is the staple of our get-togethers where we continue to discuss issues such as racism, bridge building between communities and other topics that are important to our communities. Sharing conversation in a safe space, and learning together we believe existing relationships will be strengthened and new relationships will be formed. These events highlight the importance of diversity and understanding each other's cultures in building relationships. .

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### SOCIAL PROGRAMS SCHEDULED

Thank you to all who agreed to lead a social program this month. As the Israelight is being assembled, these are being firmed up. Look for emails with details about dates, times, activities

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### How to Reach our Rabbis

By phone: (610) 566-4645, choose option 1 if Diane does not answer. A voice message left for either Rabbi will reach them quickly.

By e-mail: Rabbi Linda: [ravltp@bethisraelmedia.org](mailto:ravltp@bethisraelmedia.org) Rabbi Nathan: [rabbinatehan@bethisraelmedia.org](mailto:rabbinatehan@bethisraelmedia.org)

Not sure who's 'on' this weekend? Check the calendar, easily available at [bethisraelmedia.org](http://bethisraelmedia.org) and on the penultimate page of this Israelight. Also, each rabbi's e-mail account responds with a message indicating which rabbi is 'on.'

In cases of a real emergency...

Senior Rabbi Linda's and Associate Rabbi Nathan's home phone numbers can be found in the Member's Area of our website under How to Reach Our Rabbis and in our Directory.

**The Rabbinic Liaison Committee** exists in most Reconstructionist communities to ensure the maintenance of a good working relationship between the rabbis and the congregation. While congregants are always welcome and encouraged to discuss questions or concerns directly with Rabbi Linda or Rabbi Nathan, they may at times feel more comfortable talking to the Rabbinic Liaison committee. Issues raised by congregants are discussed confidentially and, when appropriate, are shared with a Rabbi in a constructive manner. To discuss a question or concern with a lay member of the committee please feel free to contact: *Julian Yates* ([jyates@udel.edu](mailto:jyates@udel.edu)) *Deb Erie* ([debjoerie@gmail.com](mailto:debjoerie@gmail.com)), *Emily Levine* ([emily@emilysquireslevine.com](mailto:emily@emilysquireslevine.com)), or *Linda Cohen* ([lhc@comcast.net](mailto:lhc@comcast.net)).

President's Message:

LYNN CASHELL



As I reflect on my first year as president, I am struck by the many things I never expected to happen. After all, I had fulfilled this role before so knew what to expect, or so I thought. Man plans, God laughs.

For a small community, I never expected the loss of so many of our beloved members: Bobbi Coleman, Ruth Gottlieb, Lorraine Gross, Anita Potemken, Max Ruby, and Eleanor Strauss. Plus the losses many of us, including myself, have grieved over this past year. May their memories be a blessing and may they continue to fill our hearts with love.

Our world has completely changed due to COVID-19 / the Coronavirus / the pandemic. Words that were never part of our vocabulary have become part of our everyday lives. The last time our community gathered in our beautiful sanctuary was for Purim and a memorial service in early March.

I never expected to become proficient, practically overnight, in my ability to create and teach digital lessons, or not to see my classroom filled with the beautiful faces of my 4th graders again this year.

What always meets my expectations is our community. We have stepped up in numerous ways by attending services, classes, and support groups as well as, sadly, funerals and shiva minyans all via Zoom. Over 75% of our membership voted via proxy so we could have our status as a nonprofit organization which will open doors to other opportunities. 60 of us attended a Special Congregation Meeting to vote on our Articles of Incorporation and finalize the voting for our nonprofit status.

If I were to sum up this year of unexpectedness, it would be this: despite all the unexpected events, we still show up! We show up and share food, books, and puzzles. We show up by posting online humor and magnificent music. We show up with our love, gratitude, and compassion.

In a time of social distancing, we need our communities more than ever. Beth Israel is a shining example of how best to do that. Who's laughing now?  
Lynn Cashell, a grateful President

We will convene our semi-annual **Congregation meeting on Sunday, May 31 from 10-11:30 AM**. The Zoom link will be sent out closer to the meeting date. On the agenda:

Vote on the slate for the incoming Board members: Steve Goldfield, Financial VP,

Kim Dumoff and Steve Friedman, Members at Large. Josh Waterston will be the Council of Past Presidents representative.

Gratitude to members exiting the Board: Alan Ross, Daniel Chattler, Linda Cohen

Approve the budget (Attached is a copy of the Budget for your reference)

Rabbi's Report

Committee reports

Community building discussions

Bring your own nosh and I look forward to seeing you on May 31! Lynn Cashell, President.

<b>BI BOARD OF DIRECTORS</b>	<b>COMMITTEE CHAIRS</b>	
<b>EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE</b>	Membership	Susan Robinson, Dina Jacobs
Lynn Cashell	Hebrew School Education	Lisa Blaskey DeCamp
President	Religious Practice	Larry Hamermesh
Emma Lefkowitz	Social Action	John Greenstine, Louis Friedler
Executive Vice-President	Adult Education	Marion Hamermesh, Rich Remenick
Dan Chattler	Facilities Co-ordinators	Chris Pragman, Ron Romoff
VP, Finance	Immediate Past President:	Joyce Romoff
Jennifer Waterston	Council of Past Presidents:	Linda Cohen
VP, Communications	<b>MEMBERS AT LARGE:</b>	Steve Plotkin, Alan Ross, Nancy Blank, Jackie Gelman

## Shavuot, Thursday evening May 28 at 7:30 pm



Shavuot marks the transformative event of receiving the Ten Commandments, and we will celebrate this year by gathering (online, of course) with our BI community and with the larger Reconstructionist community. On Erev Shavuot, Thursday, May 28, we'll come together by Zoom at 7:30 p.m., beginning with a short festival service in which we'll celebrate Janine Paskovitz Pastor's work with us as our rabbinic intern this past year, and bless her as she enters the rabbinate. Following the service, we will begin learning with two sessions focusing on Torah text and interpretation. One will be taught by Richard Remenick and one by Janine Paskovitz Pastor. After that, those who wish to continue studying will have the opportunity to participate in the international online program presented by Reconstructing Judaism, offering Torah learning until 7:30 the next morning (yes, you get to stay up all night!). Register to participate. At 9 am Friday morning, our morning spiritual practice service will include Yizkor.

As part of the Shavuot celebration, let's transform our spaces by decorating them for the holiday with flowers and fruits to mark the agricultural roots of the holiday (the offering of first fruits). It is also traditional to eat dairy (blintzes, ice cream, pizza, etc.), and at the end of our Thursday night service, before we join the international program, we'll be invited to share with each other descriptions or images of the offerings we brought to the holiday.



## High Holy Days Update and Request

The Rabbis and Religious Practice Committee had already begun some planning for High Holy Days back in March, just before the stay at home orders began. Right now, it is hard to plan a week or two in advance, and that makes planning for the holidays a bit of a challenge since we won't know what the conditions will be in September. That said, we have been working with the board and tech committees so we can start to figure out what our observance and celebration might look like this year. **It would be really helpful to hear from folks about what they love about, or get the most out of, our High Holy Days events, so we can explore ways to bring those aspects to the community.** Because High Holy Days services will be offered virtually to at least some extent, please also share some of the pros and cons you are noticing in terms of using Zoom and other virtual platforms. As always, we welcome your comments and suggestions. Send them to [larry@hamermesh.com](mailto:larry@hamermesh.com) or [llblechner@gmail.com](mailto:llblechner@gmail.com). Be well.

## Adult Education

### Exploring Judaism Series: Six questions about Jewish Theology

Sunday evenings: 7pm-8pm, June 7, 14, 21, 28 July 12, 19

Friends, all are welcome to our ongoing series of Exploring Judaism classes. We have covered Jewish time and Jewish prayer and are now shifting our focus to Jewish theology. This next series will focus on "six questions of Jewish theology" and we will delve into questions such as "Does God care what we do personally?" "Can humans influence God?" "Is there a Reconstructionist theology?" Folks are welcome to attend individual sessions or the whole series! Looking forward to continuing the learning and conversation. - Rabbi Nathan

### IN THE "STUDY" OF THE SENIOR RABBI

Lunch and Learn with Rabbi Linda

Tuesday May 26 12:00 - 1:00

Preparing for Shavuot, Pirket Avot, Chapters of the Sages

Tuesday June 23 12:00 - 1:00 Topic: TBA

Mussar with Rabbi Linda (Closed Group)

June 18 12:45-2:15



Your support for Adult Education at Beth Israel helps us to have the really excellent programming we expect. Contributions in honor of, in memory of, or in gratitude for can be directed to the Adult Education fund.

Mourner	Remembering	Relationship	Yahrzeit 2020	Yahrzeit 5780
Lauri Mansky	Henry Goodman*	Father	June 1	9 Sivan
Marilyn Drukin	Herman Lichtman*	Father	June 2	10 Sivan
Susan Klein	Harry Klein*	Father	June 3	11 Sivan
Judy Kinman	Louis Lazarus	Father	June 4	12 Sivan
Elaine Wasekanes	Bernard (Sonny) Kesselman	Father	June 7	15 Sivan
Robert Stone	Henry Blitzstein	Uncle	June 7	15 Sivan
Candy Berlin	Elsie Berlin	Mother	June 8	16 Sivan
Cheryl Siskin	Arnold Siskin*	Father	June 10	18 Sivan
Susan Meyer	Robert Sauv�	Father	June 11	19 Sivan
Andrea Apter Chen	Stanley Meriam Apter	Father	June 12	20 Sivan
Natalie Finkelman Bennett	Irv Finkelman*	Father	June 13	21 Sivan
Scott Manaker	Ronald Manaker	Father	June 13	21 Sivan
David Cashell	Sylvia Naylor	Mother	June 14	22 Sivan
Steven Arnold	David Irving Arnold*	Brother	June 14	22 Sivan
Kathleen Fink	Frances Delaney	Mother	June 17	25 Sivan
David Gaieski	Constance Gaieski	Mother	June 17	25 Sivan
Eleanor Skale	Joseph Skale	Father	June 19	27 Sivan
Neil B. Kauffman	Ruth Kauffman	Mother	June 19	27 Sivan
James Wilson	Ann Wilson	Mother	June 24	2 Tammuz
Barbara Kaplan	Ernest Faerber	Father	June 25	3 Tammuz
Jill Whitcraft	Jacques Cohen	Grandfather	June 25	3 Tammuz
Robert Stone	Vicki Brown	Friend	June 27	5 Tammuz
Naomi Sav	Jessie Glassman	Mother	June 27	5 Tammuz
Gwen Miriam Sigler	George Sigler	Grandfather	June 27	5 Tammuz
Al Carpey	Sissy Carpey	Wife	June 28	6 Tammuz

\*after a name indicates that there is a plaque.



Yahrzeit begins at sundown the evening before the date shown.

## SAFETY AND SECURITY

Alan Ross

In these trying times, one piece of **good news** that was announced on March 11 was that Congregation Beth Israel was the recipient of a \$69,000.00 grant award through the Pennsylvania Nonprofit Security Grant Fund Program, one of 113 synagogues, churches, and other nonprofit organizations in the state to secure assistance to upgrade security infrastructure at their facilities. Due to the hard work of Rae Roeder, our synagogue's need to obtain financial assistance for this purpose was finally recognized. In addition, Beth Israel was one of only ten synagogues that received an additional \$10,000.00 in funding through a lottery administered by the Jewish Federation Real Estate Group. What we are most grateful for, however, is a substantial amount of additional funding for these projects provided through the generosity of several congregation members.

We are also very thankful for the time and expertise that has been devoted to the subsequent complex administrative process by Kristin Marder, Josh Waterston, and Steven Goldfield. We have been meeting with various contactors (while practicing social distancing and using facial coverings) at Beth Israel to determine which businesses will be designated as the proper ones to perform the necessary work of installing a surveillance camera system, an improved access control/monitoring system, and replacements for all the exterior doors. Reisa Mukamal and Candy Berlin of the Design Committee have kindly agreed to assist in this aspect of the renovations, which we hope to have completed in the not-too-distant future.

**General Fund**

*Andrea and David Wasser* in honor of Laura Lee Blechner for her patience, diligence, and positivity with the Biblical Hebrew class.  
*Larry and Marion Hamermesh* in memory of Carol Briselli's brother, Sheldon Isaacson  
*Marilyn Drukin* to Carol Briselli in memory of your dear brother, Shelly Isaacson.  
*Joyce and Ron Romoff* for Zoom update  
*Josh and Jennifer Waterston* for Zoom update  
*Carol Briselli* in memory of my beloved brother, Sheldon Isaacson

**Rabbi's Discretionary Fund**

*Jackie Gelman* with gratitude for our Rabbis and for all the virtual support they are providing.

**Social Action Fund**

*Judy Kinman* in memory of Sheldon Isaacson, brother of Carol Briselli, brother-in-law of Bob Briselli and Uncle of Matt  
*Marilyn Drukin* with thanks to the SAC for their work  
*Andrea Apter and Harry Chen* in memory of Stanley Apter, Penny Apter, Tze Kong Chen, Julia Chen  
*Allan and Robin Ross* to the Mother's Day Food Drive  
*Diane Longenecker* to the Mother's Day food drive in honor of all the fine women in her life.  
*Jennifer Lenway* with thanks to SAC for their good work  
*Linda Cohen* in memory of Sheldon Isaacson, brother of Carol Briselli  
*Deb Erie and Lynora Underwood* for Mother's Day Food Drive  
*Dina Jacobs and James Wilson* for Mother's Day Food Drive  
*Karen Vesely* for Mother's Day Food Drive

**Hebrew School Chocolate and Coffee Drive**

John Greenstine and Amy Binder, Linda Cohen, Steve Platt, Laura Lee Blechner, Judy Kinman, Adam Nichols, Sharon Boyd, Deb Erie, Jessie Mann, Jen Katz-Buononcontro

**Prayer Book Fund**

*Shoshanna Gottlieb* in memory of Ruth Gottlieb, beloved mother

**Adult Education**

*Marion and Larry Hamermesh* in honor of Julie Mayer, for her sessions on living together as a couple during the pandemic  
*Judy Kinman* in memory of Sheldon Isaacson, brother of Carol Briselli, brother-in-law of Bob Briselli and Uncle of Matt

**Condolences**

To *Carol Briselli and her family* as they mourn the loss of Carol's brother Sheldon Isaacson due to COVID 19. Our sincere sympathy to Carol and Bob and Matthew as they absorb this profound loss.

To *Shoshanna Gottlieb and family* on the passing of her mother, BI member Ruth Gottlieb. We extend condolences to Shoshanna and Ronen, to their children Anna, Andrew and Jason and for those who know them, and to Shoshana's brothers, Chuck and Daniel. May Ruth's memory serve as a blessing to her loved ones and to all who knew her.

**Sending you blessings for healing:**

*Dottie Jenkins, Ron Romoff, Andrew Kelly, Alan Fink, Deanie Heller, Jane Laffend, Lynn Kelly, Helena Landis, Geoff Horowitz*

Please be sure to let the Rabbis know when you or someone in the congregation is in need of a blessing for healing.

*Your generous support not only enables Beth Israel to provide a robust variety of programs that foster the spiritual needs of our community, your support also enhances our ability to bring about tikkun olam through our social action initiatives. Your generosity is appreciated now more than ever. Please consider honoring a friend or a loved one through a contribution to any of our designated funds.*

*DID YOU KNOW... if you're going to make a contribution by check to a restricted fund, like the Rabbi's Discretionary or Social Action Funds, that it's better for you (and for us), if you make your check payable to "Congregation Beth Israel of Media." You can always note any special purpose for the contribution in the memo line of your check. Why? "Congregation Beth Israel" is the correct payee. Also, by noting the special purpose, if any, on your check, we can make absolutely certain that your donation is directed to the appropriate fund, your account is properly credited, and your end-of-year tax letter is accurate. Like you, the rabbis, administrative staff, directors and officers of BI are absolutely committed to making certain your donation is put to its intended purpose. Please help us help you to make certain that happens. Thank you.-Joyce*

## Mother's Day Drive-by Food Drive

Honoring our mothers as heroes, Beth Israel members and friends came through in many ways. The easiest to count and greet were the drivers of the twenty-three vehicles that pulled up, allowing our masked volunteers to unload the many bags and boxes. But then there were eleven purchases of the \$100 BI-Giant gift cards, which also benefited our congregation. And, there were the strong, silent types, who donated directly to Chester Eastside and the Media Food Bank, without applause or acclaim. "Who was that masked man," you ask? Let us not forget the masked volunteers: Harry Chen, Mary Ellen Feustel, Joe Deutsch, Elaine Feldman, John Greenstine and Ala Hamilton-Day, and vital coordination by Louis Friedler and Elaine Wasekanes.

We raised an amazing amount of high quality food and cash, all desperately needed. When the appeal was issued, 69 families a week had been served by the Media Food Bank, but within days the number jumped to 79 families. The numbers of hungry people are rising just as precipitously for Chester Eastside.

Thank you, Congregation Beth Israel. You make us proud to be members of this congregation!



Physically distancing with Josh Waterston and Ala Hamilton Day  
Some of the groceries designated to Chester Eastside, Inc

Ala Hamilton Day readying to take a portion of groceries to the Media Food Bank  
Socially distant volunteers Mary Ellen Feustel, Joe Deutsch and Harry Chen

## June 29 Food Service—Cooks Needed!

The Life Center in Upper Darby welcomes members of Beth Israel to prepare and serve (or deliver) dinners for their homeless residents on Monday, June 29. The need remains high, but because of "social distancing" rules, we're uncertain whether we'll be able to serve the diners or only deliver the food. Please respond to John Greenstine (jgreenstine@yahoo.com) if you can cook and prepare as we have in the past, and we will respond according to the hygiene rules currently being observed at the shelter.

# June 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
31 ■ 10:00 AM Congregation Meeting ■ 6:00 PM Support for People with Illness with Dr. Barry Jacobs (via Zoom) ■ 7:00 PM Exploring Judaism with Rabbi Nathan (via Zoom)	1 ■ 8:00 AM Check kids' cards ■ 7:30 PM Marple Newtown Community Band Rehearsal	2 ■ 7:00 PM Strategic Planning Committee	3 ■ 7:00 PM Beginning Biblical Hebrew 2 – second level	4 ■ 7:00 PM Beginning Biblical Hebrew 2 – second level	5 ■ BI Retreat ■ 8:09 PM Candle Lighting	6 ■ Parshat Beha'alotcha ■ BI Retreat ■ 10:00 AM Artisan's Exchange ■ 9:18 PM Havdalah
7 ■ BI Retreat	8 ■ 7:30 PM Marple Newtown Community Band Rehearsal	9 ■ 7:00 PM Executive Committee Meeting	10 ■ 7:00 PM Beginning Biblical Hebrew 2 – second level	11 ■ 7:00 PM Beginning Biblical Hebrew 2 – second level	12 ■ 8:13 PM Candle Lighting	13 ■ Parshat Sh'lach ■ 9:45 AM Pride Shabbat ■ 10:00 AM Artisan's Exchange ■ 7:00 PM BI Virtual Concert (via Zoom) ■ 9:21 PM Havdalah
14 ■ Flag Day	15 ■ 8:00 AM Check kids' cards ■ 7:30 PM Marple Newtown Community Band Rehearsal	16 ■ 7:00 PM Board of Directors Meeting	17 ■ 7:00 PM Board of Directors Meeting	18 ■ Juneteenth ■ 8:00 PM Ethnology ■ 8:15 PM Candle Lighting	19 ■ Juneteenth ■ 8:00 PM Ethnology ■ 8:15 PM Candle Lighting	20 ■ Shabbat Mevarchim ■ Parshat Korach ■ 10:00 AM Artisan's Exchange ■ 9:23 PM Havdalah
21 ■ Father's Day	22 ■ Rosh Chodesh Tammuz ■ 8:00 AM Journey to Israel – June 22 to July 2 ■ 7:30 PM Marple Newtown Community Band Rehearsal	23 ■ Rosh Chodesh Tammuz ■ ... Journey to Israel – June 22 to July 2 ■ 12:00 AM Journey to Israel – June 22 to July 2	24 ■ ... Journey to Israel – June 22 to July 2 ■ 12:00 AM Journey to Israel – June 22 to July 2 ■ 7:30 PM Social Action Committee meeting in sanctuary	25 ■ ... Journey to Israel – June 22 to July 2 ■ 12:00 AM Journey to Israel – June 22 to July 2	26 ■ ... Journey to Israel – June 22 to July 2 ■ 12:00 AM Journey to Israel – June 22 to July 2 ■ 8:16 PM Candle Lighting	27 ■ Parshat Chukat ■ ... Journey to Israel – June 22 to July 2 ■ 12:00 AM Journey to Israel – June 22 to July 2 ■ 10:00 AM Artisan's Exchange ■ 9:24 PM Havdalah
28 ■ ... Journey to Israel – June 22 to July 2 ■ 12:00 AM Journey to Israel – June 22 to July 2	29 ■ ... Journey to Israel – June 22 to July 2 ■ 12:00 AM Journey to Israel – June 22 to July 2 ■ 8:00 AM Check kids' cards ■ 5:30 PM SAC Food Service ■ 7:30 PM Marple Newtown Community Band Rehearsal	30 ■ ... Journey to Israel – June 22 to July 2 ■ 12:00 AM Journey to Israel – June 22 to July 2	1 ■ ... Journey to Israel – June 22 to July 2 ■ 12:00 AM Journey to Israel – June 22 to July 2	2 ■ ... Journey to Israel – June 22 to July 2 ■ 12:00 AM Journey to Israel – June 22 to July 2	3 ■ Independence Day (observed) ■ 8:16 PM Candle Lighting	4 ■ Independence Day ■ Parshat Balak ■ 10:00 AM Artisan's Exchange ■ 9:23 PM Havdalah



**RECONSTRUCTING  
JUDAISM**



**Reconstructionist  
RABBINICAL ASSOCIATION**

The American Jewish community, like all faith communities, is suffering and in pain at this moment of pandemic and illness – and has risen to the challenges we face with grace, fortitude, heroism and beauty.

We grieve all the lives lost and pray that their memories become blessings for all of us and we offer comfort and condolence to all who mourn.

We are grateful to the medical personnel, first responders, essential workers and myriad helpers who have put their lives at risk to help serve in our communities – for them we continue to offer our prayers that they be kept from all harm and affliction.

Despite the tremendous toll this is taking on our communities – in loss of life, in sickness, in disruption of families and communities and in the financial health of our organizations and their members, we in the Jewish community have much of which to be proud and even more for which we can be grateful.

Reaction to the novel coronavirus across the American Jewish community was swift and comprehensive. Acting on our deeply held values of pikuach nefesh (saving lives); caring for the elderly, infirm and at-risk; and focusing on community wellness over individual comfort, most Jewish institutions responded with abundant caution to institute social distancing and working from home, and to completely redesign how we worship, learn, support one another, and work for the needs of our community (tzorchei tzibur) in this very stressful time.

Within days, most communities across the country shut down in-person services and moved their worship, educational programs and life-cycle events online. New forums and platforms have been utilized and invented to find ways to gather and sustain one another. The creativity that our community leaders, rabbis, cantors and educators are demonstrating has been astounding and awesome to behold.

As we continue the work of keeping each other safe and begin to contemplate a return to communal activity, we again want to be sure that our actions are dictated by our values and are in concert with the best scientific and medical advice available. To that end, Reconstructing Judaism and the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association put forth these guidelines to help local communities, congregations, schools, camps, community institutions and others make the decisions necessary to keep individuals and our communities safe.

We offer these following frameworks for decision making:

- We reject the false dichotomy between saving lives and reviving the economy: Medical science must be used as the basis upon which we make decisions about how and when to open our facilities and return to in-person programming. Opening too soon may increase the likelihood of new outbreaks and force vulnerable individuals into the position of having to put themselves at risk or forego community participation altogether, further isolating them. We hold health and safety above all other concerns as a guiding principle.
- Decisions must be local and contextual, based on local circumstances such as infection rates, testing availability, health care capacity, population make-up, availability of PPE, etc. We urge all institutional leaders to be in touch with local as well as national health and safety experts and to follow the guidance of medical experts in your area.
- Expectations must be realistic. We should anticipate that our lives and the lives of our communities will be shaped by COVID-19 for at least a year, possibly longer. The openings of our synagogues, JCCs, camps, schools, institutions and organizations will happen in stages and may also be sporadic and inconsistent. We should expect gatherings of differently sized groupings to be permitted at different times and should not be surprised if some activities that are permitted are shut down again in response to new outbreaks or other relevant conditions.
- Decisions about openings and gatherings of different sizes must be made according to medical and preparedness markers established by the CDC, state and local health authorities.
- Leaders should prepare their communities now about reimagining our high holiday experiences, our life cycle observances and our educational programs to not look “normal” for the remainder of 2020 and possibly further.

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Some questions to consider for individual institutions:

- Has your insurance company weighed in on benchmarks for reopening, and for operating any programs? Your movement institutions? How will these influence your decision?
- Will you maintain an online streaming option once you are back together worshipping in physical space? How will that need to adjust when there is also in-person worship happening?
- How many people can your prayer space hold if you are praying in family groups sitting 6 feet apart?
- How will you discourage receiving lines, physical touching or intimacy and safe distancing before or after services (during oneg or kiddush)?
- During earlier phases of relaunch, how will you cap attendance at events so there is room for members of the community to join you and so you don't go over guidelines?
- How can you encourage small group gatherings or havurot in the earlier phases of relaunching – possibly even before we move from back from social distancing? How might you continue these when in-person services resume?
- How will you ensure sanitation and disinfection in regards to communal spaces?
  - Ritual items such as kippot and tallitot, prayerbooks, etc.
  - Areas where small groups gather during the week
    - Nurseries and/or playgrounds
    - Pews or chairs following worship
    - Doorknobs, bathrooms, other areas that people touch when in your building
- How will you update your building use agreements to reflect the new realities of COVID-19?
- If someone contracts COVID-19, how will you communicate with your congregation as a whole and with individual members who may have come into contact with that individual while maintaining privacy and pastoral care?
- If someone who has been in your building contracts COVID-19, how will you do a more intensive cleaning prior to its next use?
- How will you communicate your safety plan and best practices to the congregation?

The Jewish community has faced many paradigm-shifting events in our long history. From the destruction of the ancient temple in Jerusalem to the dispersions and expulsions of the Middle Ages up until the horrors of more recent centuries, Jews have survived with resilience, creativity and fortitude to forge new ways of being and new ways of connecting again, again and again. The same will be true under this current threat and we will come to a time, may it be speedily and in our day, where once again the streets will be filled with gladness, the voices of children will sing and we shall not know fear any longer. Let us all do everything we can to help us reach that day.



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