

# **Beth Israel Congregation**

## **Shabbat Honoring Minyan Captains**

### **Saturday, January 28, 2023**



**Bob Ahronheim**

**Maureen Ginsburg**

**Lisa Bardach**

**Barry Gross**

**Karlan Bender**

**Matt Kaplan**

**Jeff Bernstein**

**Harvey Michaels**

**Bob Blumenthal**

**Michael D. Morris**

**Art Gershowitz**

**Michael Steven Simon**

***Shimon the Righteous taught: Do not be like servants who serve the master in the expectation of receiving a reward, but be like servants who serve the master without the expectation of receiving a reward, and let the fear of heaven be upon you.  
(Pirkei Avot 1:3)***

## **From Rabbi Nadav Caine**

Coming into the chapel on a cold wintry night to assemble a minyan (often with a few phone calls along the way) and lead a service is no rational person's dream of prominence and status. It is a humble service to God and to one's fellow Jews, and is a model of the religious attitude to which Shimon ha-Tsaddik summons us. The commentator Bartenura writes that the Mishnah needed to say such people should have some fear, because their natural proclivity is selfless love. When we ask, "Who among us serves with love?" we need look no further than our minyan captains, may a blessing be upon them.

## **From Deborah Loewenberg Ball, President**

My father died at the end of December 2019. Being able to be with others every evening, davening and being able to recite the mourner's kaddish was an incredible comfort in ways I had never experienced quite so intensely. Each of the minyan captains brought their own style, ruach, and commitment — in different ways, and each deeply grounding for me. When I traveled for work, I found other minyanim, but none felt like ours. Here at Beth Israel, I experienced also getting closer to others who were saying kaddish, too, or who were just there to support the community and make it possible for us to have a daily minyan. The minyan captains made us all feel so welcome.

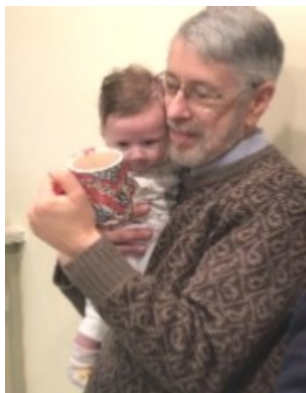
Less than three months later, we were in lockdown and minyan shifted to Zoom. That was a new experience, but even more, I felt the special caring emanating from each of the leaders, and this soon became a special and comforting nightly ritual. I looked forward to logging in and seeing all the screens, and joining with the different voices of the different captains and seeing the others who were joining that evening. I will always be grateful to Jeff, Matt, Lisa, Art, Bob H., Karlan, Bob B., Barry, and Harvey for making this minyan and meaningful community possible, even as they had to innovate a new way of enacting it. It has been, and continues to be, an enormous contribution to all of us and to the congregation.

## **From Martha Young, Vice President for Religious Affairs**

I started attending minyan on a more regular basis after my father (z"l) passed away this past summer. I was comforted by joining with other BIC members on Zoom, knowing that they, too, had gone through what I was currently experiencing. And in return, I've become part of this BIC minyan community, for which I am grateful.

I was amazed to discover that most of our current minyan captains have been volunteering for years and sometimes decades! Quietly, with devotion and loyalty, they perform a mitzvah for BIC members with no expectation of "pay-back." They don't call attention to themselves and most congregants may not know how much time these captains give to Beth Israel.

Thank you minyan captains, past and present, for your dedication and service to our community. We apologize if we inadvertently omitted anyone who served as a minyan captain over the years.



## **Bob Blumenthal**

I became bar mitzvah at BIC in 1964, when Rabbi Harold White was here. A few decades later, after a stint on the nominations committee, I was Religious Affairs VP 2010-16, Exec VP 2016-18, President 2018-20, and Immediate Past President 2020-2021. Beth Dwoskin and I have three kids, all of whom had brit milah/simchat bat and b'nai mitzvah at BIC, with Rabbi Dobrusin officiating. Beth also served a term

on our Board, and is the long time chair of the Library Committee. In my non-family, non-BIC life I'm a microbiologist at University of Toledo's College of Medicine & Life Sciences (for those interested, my research is on evolution of regulatory systems in bacteria, and epigenetics in a wider range of organisms).

*Bob and Beth have been members of Beth Israel from 1987. Bob was a minyan captain from 2004-2018 until he became president of Beth Israel Congregation.*

## **Michael D. Morris**

I am a retired university of Michigan chemistry professor married to Leslie Morris. We have four children and three grandchildren. Our four children are scattered across the continental United States. Only one lives in Ann Arbor. One is retired, two work for non-profits, and one works for a software company in California.

[While] I was serving on the BIC board I was a minyan captain for two or three years.



*Michael and Leslie have been members of Beth Israel Congregation since 1986.*

Involvement and support for those who are remembering a loved one, contributing to a communal experience, and a moment in a day to be close to God. Feels good, spiritually connected and contributing myself for others who benefit from my involvement. Spiritually refreshing. The least that I can do in gratitude, one day at a time. (Joel Saper)

Seeing and talking to members of the community I might not otherwise have regular contact with, providing a space for people who experienced losses recently or have a Yahrzeit to remember their loved ones in a caring setting, providing community during the pandemic when we all felt so isolated. (Matt Kaplan)

After my dad died (in 1998) I came to realize and appreciate how much saying kaddish and having the support of others at minyan helped me through my grieving process. Throughout that year I saw many others going through the same process and saw how important it was to them. I also saw that at times it was difficult to get a minyan. When my year had passed, I decided to continue attending, to stay connected to the people and the process, and to help with having sufficient people to make a minyan. I came on Wednesdays, as that is the day that my parents regularly attended. In 1999 we were looking for a new co-captain for Wednesdays and I agreed to take that on. I was going to be there anyhow, I saw how difficult it was to find new captains, and I was happy to be able to help out by taking on that role. (Art Gershowitz)

Being a minyan captain is a great way to help your congregation. If you don't attend minyan regularly now, pick a night and start coming. Then take that next step when you're ready and the opportunity arises. (Bob Ahronheim)

That Judaism does not take place in a vacuum, it takes community, and that members of our congregation enjoy getting together and sharing difficult times and memories of loved ones. (Matt Kaplan)

I became committed to the Beth Israel minyan after my father's death in 1984. It was frequently difficult to get a minyan, but some minyan captains had a real knack for getting us to 10 in a timely way. When I finished saying Kaddish for my father, I decided to become a minyan regular. After that it seemed only natural that I should take on the responsibilities of a minyan captain when that position was vacated. I would be remiss if I did not mention the strong work of Arnold and Ellyne Monto, who covered the captain's duties quite often when I was unavailable. (Barry Gross)

Of course, mincha and maariv are daily services and not just for mourners. But, between the minyan captain experience and service on the cemetery committee, I learned how completely disorienting is the death of somebody close to you and how well Judaism does at helping the mourner deal with the shock and gradually return to normal life. That is very different from what one experiences with the loss of an immediate family member or a close friend. (Michael D. Morris)

For us, we're in Florida and there's no daily minyan except Chabad, so we really appreciate it! Thanks for everyone's dedication and commitment. (Roberta Tankanow)

I feel holy when I am present with others for a common goal for the good of everyone. (Rita Gelman)

The initial challenge of setting aside the time has diminished and it's now simply a part of my routine. The two challenges that remain are to round up more people on those evenings when we don't have enough for a minyan, and to find somebody to take my place when I travel or some event requires me to be elsewhere. These challenges are only intermittent, and are typically pretty easily managed. (Art Gershowitz)

My brother Darwin Bender passed away in January 2021 during the height of the pandemic. Having a shivah minyan on Zoom was a great comfort. I had relatives in attendance from around the country. (Karl Bender)



## **Matt Kaplan**

Caroline and I moved to Ann Arbor in 1994, and we joined Beth Israel at that time so that we would be part of a Jewish community from the outset. Our family has been very involved since then. After attending HDS, our daughter attended BIC religious school. I was on the board in many capacities, including co-chair of the Synagogue 2000 committee, membership VP, religious VP, and president, and I have been an active participant in services as a Torah reader and davener. Caroline has led High Holiday services and participated in a number of musical events. In my non-synagogue life, I am Executive Director of UM's Center for Research on Learning and Teaching (CRLT).

*Matt and Caroline have been members of Beth Israel Congregation since 1994. He has been a minyan captain since 2015.*

## **Art Gershowitz**

I've been a member of Beth Israel since I was four months old, when my family moved to Ann Arbor. My bar mitzvah and wedding to Barbra were both at Beth Israel, as were numerous other family events. As an engineer I specialize in the design and development of medical devices, primarily related to cardiopulmonary applications. In addition to being an avid cyclist, I play several instruments (clarinet, piano, hammer dulcimer) and make (and consume!) really good pancakes. I first captained minyan in 1999 and have been the Wednesday captain since then.





## **Barry Gross**

I am a former University of Michigan radiologist. My wife Susan (the Sunday night minyan “social director”) and I both retired from U of M in 2015. Prior to retiring I had previously served on the Beth Israel board and chaired the nominating committee. Susan has served on the boards of multiple local Jewish organizations, including a stint as president of the Hebrew Day School of Ann Arbor

Our three kids are all HDS graduates, and all had Bar or Bat Mitzvahs at Beth Israel (as did Susan); two of the three were married by Rabbi Dobrusin. We have taken advantage of retirement to visit them and our six grandchildren more frequently, initially in Chicago, New York City, and Denver. Since 2017 our daughter Carrie, son-in-law Jonathan, and their (now) 3 children have lived in Ann Arbor, which was a great convenience for them and us during the early days of the pandemic. They are also Beth Israel members. Our daughter Lauren, son-in-law Noah, and their 3 children live near Boston, and our son Paul and daughter-in-law Susannah live in Atlanta.

Retirement has also allowed us to spend more time with multiple family members and close friends, many of whom live in Ann Arbor and also in metro Detroit, where we both grew up. And it has given us more time for walks and yoga sessions in an effort to age gracefully.

My major civic focus in retirement has been turning out the vote.

*Barry and Susan have been members of Beth Israel Congregation for 40 years and he served as a minyan captain for over 25 years.*



Gathering in prayer with my fellow congregants is a deeply moving experience. (Congregant)

My dad died in 1984. I had no preconceived idea of whether I would say Kaddish haphazardly or frequently, but I found it to be a tremendously healing ritual. After that, I became a weekly minyan regular, and a few years later I was needed as a minyan captain. (Barry Gross)

I'm kind of amazed that it's still the same people leading minyan who were leading it when I was saying kaddish for my father and then my mother. I think of the devotion of the captains and the members of the community, not saying kaddish, who are dedicated to strengthening our community by making a minyan every day for people saying Kaddish. (Dana Horowitz)

I remember calling a few friends a few days before my father's first Yahrzeit to make sure we'd have a minyan that night. I was blown away to see over 25 people at minyan that night. (Lisa Bardach)

I've been attending the minyan since early on and drew personal support from that connection when my father passed away in 1982. It didn't take long before I stepped up to lead the service and became a minyan captain. I've stuck with it all these years, appreciating how the minyan is a source of strength to the BIC community collectively, as well as to its individual members. I'm also a past BIC board member, as well as a familiar face at Shabbat morning services. (Bob Ahronheim)

As I commented earlier, the experience broadened my understanding of Judaism. I read two or three books on Jewish mourning practices. Looking at it from the outside is very different from personally experiencing the passing of a friend, let alone a family member. (Michael D. Morris)

I want to give a huge shout out to the minyan captains. While I occasionally went to evening minyan in the "before times", I was a regular during the year we (my brother and I and often Ron and Chris) went to say Kaddish for our mother, z"l., Simcha bat Etka v'Rachmiel — Simi Cutler.

Just a year and half later the world had changed for everyone with COVID and our world had changed with the death of our father, Aaron Zelig ben Chaya Simcha v' Shmuel Ber, Zelig Cutler.

I want to thank Beth Israel for allowing evening minyan to continue using Zoom as that made it possible for us to continue saying Kaddish for him. It was a year of sadness as there were a number of us "regulars" who came to recite the Kaddish.

Yes, people tired of Zooms for work, meetings and, definitely, school but Zoom for evening minyan, was wonderful. We met other people who became our "Minyan Mishpocha" and looked forward to seeing them every night.

The minyan captains make this possible. They are warm, welcoming, knowledgeable and help us all feel like a community. There were many times I wasn't sure what day of the week it was until the minyan captain for that day appeared on the screen.

Personally, we are grateful for the opportunity to continue with Zoom. I hope the minyan captains continue in their roles for a long time to come or until someone else steps up for this important task. Evening minyan is a blessing, a mitzvah and we hope others will join us. (Lonnie Sussman — Elana Yehudit bat Simcha v' Aaron Zelig)

I became a minyan captain after my father (former BIC member Hal Blumenthal, z"l) died in 2003, and Bob Ahronheim noted that he had both Tuesdays AND Thursdays at that point and would DEARLY love some help. For a while after my kids' bnai mitzvah, I would cajole them and Beth into coming along — instant half-minyan. I stepped back when I became BIC President. (Bob Blumenthal)

Our minyan captains are incredible. They do so much for our community, and they ask for nothing in return. It's truly a selfless service that they provide. I am honored to know them! (Meg Bernstein)

I enjoyed having an opportunity to learn the weekday Mincha and Maariv services and it is an honor to lead the service and help make a minyan for those saying Kaddish. (Karl Bender)

I am very indebted to the Beth Israel Congregation minyan captains who reliably show up weekly on their assigned day to lead the minyan. They serve our community of mourners and others who regularly show up to create the minyan. The minyan captains would always patiently lead the Mourner's Kaddish, making all of us feel we could recite the prayer with purpose and intention. Each minyan captain had their own approach—like on Monday when Lisa would have her photo backgrounds from her travels, or on Wednesday when Art would be davening in Ashkenazi and he never failed to ask us if anyone had a Shehechyanu. All the mitzvah captains had a sense of commitment that created a space of respect and shared purpose for prayer.

Saying Kaddish daily was meaningful in a way I hadn't anticipated. It felt in the midst of my sadness and grief I could do something purposeful for myself, for our family who had passed away, and for our minyan mishpacha who showed up nightly. There was a sense of responsibility and sacred obligation to join each night and recite the prayers. As the eldest adult child and having seen my father go to minyan daily for his own parents for a year I realized that I had a sacred obligation to do this. Losing our mother only six weeks after our father meant I felt even more keenly that I would continue daily for the extended year.

Since my parents died during COVID and the BIC minyan was on Zoom it meant that I could pray with BIC congregants, the familiar faces I'd seen while attending BIC with my parents and using the prayers, tunes, cadence that I'd grown up with. I live in St. Louis now and my family belongs to a Reform synagogue which does not have a daily minyan, so having the opportunity to Zoom with Ann Arbor and BIC minyan was what I needed to honor my parents as they had honored their own parents. (Sharron Pollack)

I would encourage anyone to do this, even if only for a shorter specified term (a year or two), because in all likelihood most of us will want to say Kaddish for a family member. If you won't support the daily minyan, it may not be available when you need it. (Barry Gross)

First and foremost [a daily minyan] is providing a crucial service for the Congregation. Sometimes (often involving luck in my case) you say the right thing in the right way at the right time, and fellow congregants who are dealing with pain and loss are comforted a bit. It's certainly a good feeling when it happens. But there is also getting into the rhythm of prayer on a more regular basis — it stays with you, even after your time as a captain is over. (Bob Blumenthal)



## **Karlan Bender**

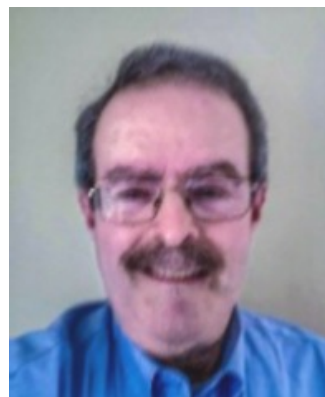
I am a Workers Compensation and Social Security disability attorney married to Linda Bender, a psychotherapist, for 35 years. Our oldest son Jacob is an attorney who practices law with me. He is married to Melissa Bender, who teaches science and math at Pioneer High School. They have one son, Danny, age 3. Our younger son Joshua is a 4th year rabbinical student at JTS.

I spent 10 years on the BIC Board and served as President 2014-16. I love our liturgy and our lay-led services.

*Karlan has been a minyan captain since 2018 and he and his family have been members of Beth Israel for 33 years.*

## **Bob Ahronheim**

I'm a Michigan native. I've lived in Ann Arbor and been a BIC member since the late 1970s. I worked at the Ann Arbor News (remember newspapers?) for many years, mostly in copy editing and laying out the news pages, working my way up to assistant news editor. My wife Judy was a longtime middle manager at the University of Michigan Library. We're both retired but keep busy volunteering part-time with Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County. I also run a teeny online bookstore out of our home as a hobby. Our two children are both alumni of the Hebrew Day School of Ann Arbor. Daughter Esther is a globetrotter in technology work, currently with Oregon-based battery maker Powin. Son Benjamin is married with two children and lives here in Ann Arbor; thanks to him, Detroit Catholic Central High School (in Novi) can attest to having at least one Jewish teacher on staff.



*Bob and Judy have been members of Beth Israel Congregation for 44 years and Bob has been a minyan captain since the early 1980's.*

Depending on how many regulars were saying Kaddish, it could be feast or famine. It was very disappointing to be unable to get minyan for someone with a yahrzeit. I would always call if we were only 1 or 2 people short of a minyan, but in some cases for yahrzeits I might call for as many as 5 people. But then the process was long and drawn out, and I hated to have someone that I called show up when I had otherwise been unable to get to 10. (Barry Gross)

The liturgy can become more meaningful through repetition. Nothing has worked in the long run to encourage minyan participation. People are much more likely to come to minyan on Zoom than in person. I'm grateful to those who come to minyan all the time (Harvey Somers, Joel Saper, Glen Modell, that I know of), and to those who come regularly on a specific day, and to Gloria, who comes when I'm leading, and to those who come just because they feel like it on that day. (Harvey Michaels)

I wanted to share my gratitude for the minyan captains. When my mother died suddenly, I decided that going to daily minyan for the 11 months following her death was comforting and helpful for my healing. I feel so grateful to the minyan captains for volunteering their time to make sure that people like me had an opportunity to participate in this daily ritual — what a service to those of us who needed it. The following year when my official mourning period was over, my son became a bar mitzvah. For his mitzvah project, he decided to go to minyan once a week to help make the minyan for those who needed it. The minyan captains welcomed him and although he was just 13 years old, treated him with the respect and reinforced the mitzvah he was performing. For these reasons and more, I deeply appreciate the work of these special congregants. (Jen Rosenberg)

Minyan Captains, somehow you're always there for weekday services. Thank you for opening the doors to the temple both in person and online. Your time and warm welcome are a gift to our community— and the jokes are often good, too. I am grateful that you make it possible to make minyan at Beth Israel. Several years ago, on a night when services weren't held at the synagogue but at a shivah house, a minyan captain helped me find the way. Thank you. (Rachel Levy)

Often when someone is attending to recite kaddish they will share something about the person for whom they're reciting. Regardless of the tenor of the story being shared (touching, inspirational, funny) it's always a pleasure to hear a remembrance and to learn more about a person, whether I knew them or not. At the end of minyan, I ask if anyone has cause to recite the Shehecheyanu. We've learned of new children and grandchildren, engagements, birthdays, trips, successful medical treatments, significant accomplishments, and other notable events. One time a family from out of town wanted to recite. They were in town because their son/brother was having a department chair dedicated in his name at UM. It's a pleasure to learn of and share in these celebrations. (Art Gershowitz)

I would not hesitate to try being a minyan captain. Although it takes time, any attempt at meaningful prayer and connecting with others can never be a waste of time. (Karl Bender)

Our marvelous minyan captains:  
They are Hineni heroes, all.

- 1) they are steadfast
- 2) they are funny
- 3) they are open hearted

4) their historic and present willingness to bring a minyan to a home for shivah is amazing — and one of the most powerful experiences a congregation can have — that with next to no effort on one's own part, the congregation surrounds one, in one's home, with solidarity, strength, and affirmation when one is at that part of grieving that one's own soul and body are almost no longer connected.

5) I am one of those who intensely misses in-person minyan at BIC. I would never assert that Zoom minyan might not be equally valuable for those who cannot get to BIC for whatever reason, but in times of great, deep, dark pain, just showing up to minyan can be a source of reaffirmation, a way to say, "at least this I can do adequately. I am counted and countable for something." Its structure along with the requirements to dress, leave one's own space, and go into a public, dedicated prayer space are tonic for people sinking in the shadows, giving them no escape from feeling the vibrancy or the tiredness or pain of others. Minyan is a living refutation of despair. Hineni. (Congregant)

I felt motivated to be a minyan captain after my mother died. I was intent on making minyan somewhat more personable. At the time of course it was in person and with the help of those that attended, I instituted a 2-minute d'var torah in between afternoon and evening minyan. I think that this was mostly favorably received. Sometimes we went around the room and introduced ourselves and who we were saying kaddish for. I also had periodic snacks (grape juice) to celebrate the end of a learning — i.e. we did some Mishna and also went through the book *The Mystical Aleph-bet*. (Michael Simon)

Being a minyan captain has been very rewarding, and it is not hard to integrate into your week — it's only half an hour or so, and most of the days are split between 2 people, so you'd only be doing it every other week. The service is not difficult to learn, and many of us would be glad to help you do so. It is a great service to the community! (Matt Kaplan)

I enjoy meeting new people, reconnecting with people I already know and the weekly contact with minyan “regulars.” I also find it fulfilling to help make a minyan so that, for people whom reciting kaddish is important, reciting kaddish is possible. (Art Gershowitz)

Minyan can help provide a sense of comfort and order when you lose someone you love. I meet lots of people that I otherwise would never have met. My father z"l was frequently called upon to lead minyan in homes for shivah minyans in his last 20 years, and he was very proud of being able to do that mitzvah. I love being able to share that with him. (Lisa Bardach)

Mike and I both grew up Reform, so it was natural when we first married to start going to the nascent Reform temple in Ann Arbor. We joined officially in 1973 when our son started kindergarten, and both our children and two of our grandchildren were bar/bat mitzvah there.

In 1987 my mother died, however, and I wanted to say daily Kaddish for her. TBE did not have a daily minyan, so I started attending the one at BIC. After a few months, it didn't seem right to go to daily minyan and not join the synagogue, so we officially joined, and we've been members of both shuls ever since. (Liz Fried)



## **Lisa Bardach**

I grew up in the Conservative Movement, and much of my philosophy and observance comes from involvement with United Synagogue, specifically Kadima, USY, and Nativ (United Synagogue's Gap Year program). I have been involved in Conservative shuls everywhere I have lived, which has given me an immediate sense of belonging each time I have started in a new place. I have been tutoring B'nei Mitzvah students for more than 30 years, another great way to be part of the community. One of the things I have enjoyed most is working with kids with special needs to make a meaningful experience for them. Professionally, I'm a speech-language pathologist. My specialty is augmentative and alternative communication, so I work with adults and children who are unable to speak and benefit from the use of technology to help them express themselves and access the world. I own a private practice, and I also work for ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease) of Michigan.

*Lisa has been a member of Beth Israel Congregation since 1990 and a minyan captain since 1995.*

## **Harvey Michaels**

I'm married to Gloria Helfand. We have two adult children in their early thirties and no grandchildren. I retired from the U.S. EPA, Office of Transportation and Air Quality. I'm a member of Beth Israel's Green Team, working to lower our carbon footprint and educate our congregants. I'm on the Religious Affairs Committee, along with most of the other minyan captains. I am engaged in some volunteer liberal activities (to save our democracy, cut carbon emissions, stop deforestation, protect biodiversity, promote social justice, diminish inequality, etc.).



*Harvey and Gloria have been members of Beth Israel Congregation for 24 years. Harvey has been a minyan captain since 2018.*



Attending BIC evening minyans regularly has been a very special privilege for me since the onset of the COVID pandemic.

I spent most of 2013 attending BIC in-person minyans to say daily Kaddishes after the death of my mother. My attendance then was to fulfill my responsibility as a Jewish son. That year, I valued those who attended to make up the minyan each evening.

But the last three years of the minyans have now allowed me to support others as they joined together on Zoom to say their Kaddishes to fulfill their responsibilities to their loved ones.

I join with the many others who are recognizing today the very special role played by the BIC “team” of minyan captains who have volunteered to lead our minyans for years or decades. Whether we as BIC members are dealing with the grief of recent losses or showing up annually for Yahrzeits, we join the evening minyans confident that a minyan captain will lead us through the Ma’ariv and/or Mincha services with respect.

And I can only add my grateful appreciation for all the years they have been doing this. (Harvey Somers)

I've met congregants I otherwise would not have met. I've learned more about Jewish ritual and practices. I've experienced how Jewish practices help foster invaluable community support, in good times and bad. (Art Gershowitz)

Getting a minyan. This has been easier during the pandemic, but we still have times when we do not get 10, which is particularly disappointing for people saying Kaddish. It's a small-time commitment. I'm hoping this event can encourage community members to take time out of their busy schedules to help make a minyan and strengthen our community in the process. (Matt Kaplan)

...it was hard when we had just eight people, with one or two wanting to say Kaddish, and I had to let them know I couldn't round up the last two. The other side of that coin, is recognizing the goodness of people who would leave their dinner half-eaten and drive through snow to complete a minyan — you know who you are, and hopefully know how much you were/are appreciated. (Bob Blumenthal)

I have a growing appreciation of our liturgy. I am constantly finding something new in it. (Karlan Bender)

It is gratifying to be able to help someone else experience the healing nature of Kaddish that I had also experienced. Serving in a long-term capacity gave me lots of contacts for members of the congregation to call when we were short of a minyan (as we frequently were). I knew who lived nearby and who was further away, which households had 1 or 2 people who would come and which had 3 or more, who didn't mind being called week after week and who preferred sporadic calls, and so on. (Barry Gross)

I have learned how much minyan matters to people who are grieving. (Lisa Bardach)

For me, the minyans have served three purposes:

1) They anchor my day. 2) They give me a space to stop what I am doing and engage in serious prayer. 3) They have given me a sense of community. It's good to see the same faces, night after night. Some of the folks there, I feel that I know even though I have not met them. 4) They give me a way to contribute to the Beth Israel community. (Glen Modell)

Daily minyan first became important to me only after our mother died and I wanted to say Kaddish along with my father, sister, and our spouses. I intended to attend daily for just one month. But I quickly found the experience was so integral to my moving through the grieving process that I continued for the entire year. I dropped in afterwards sporadically to help make a minyan for others. Then, when our father died I needed the minyan again, and it was there. I'm grateful to all the captains and regulars at Beth Israel who assure this genius gift of our tradition is available. (And I continue to drop in to help make a minyan.) (Dan Cutler)

...when I was in a rock band I learned how much rehearsal and behind-the-scenes work it took to have a successful gig. Being on committees, the board, and as minyan captains, you learn the equivalent lesson. The services and activities that "just happen" take substantial effort by a number of people, and (as in many other aspects of life) it's good to contribute to those efforts if/when you can. (Bob Blumenthal)



## Michael Steven Simon

I was brought up at Temple Beth Israel (Reform congregation) in Chicago/Skokie IL. I moved to Ann Arbor in 1983 to do an Internal Medicine residency at the University and later fellowship in Medical Oncology and then Master of Public Health. I currently work as a breast cancer medical oncologist and in the area of cancer genetics at the Karmanos Cancer Institute.

Wendy and I were married by Rabbi Alan Kensky at BIC on June 21, 1987. At BIC I have been most active with the Green Team and have served on the board as Membership VP. The Green Team manages the BIC garden at County Farm Park where 100% of the produce is donated to Food Gatherers. We are responsible for ensuring that all the Kiddush items are composted. The Green Team is a member of Ann Arbor District 2030 and is putting together a plan/proposal for the complete electrification/decarbonization of our buildings. Looking towards a brighter energy efficient future for our congregation (check out our web site embedded in the BIC website).

*Michael and Wendy have been members of Beth Israel Congregation for 36 years. Michael first served as a minyan captain in 1998.*



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