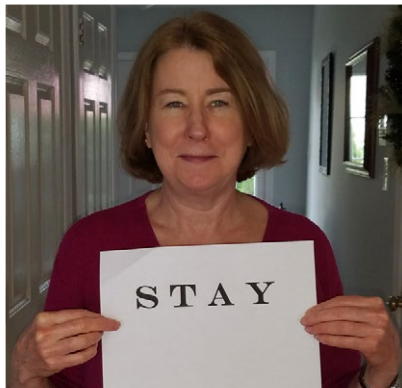
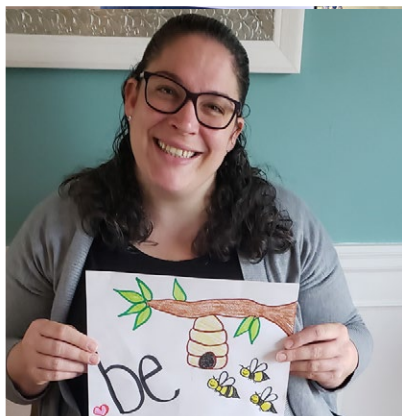
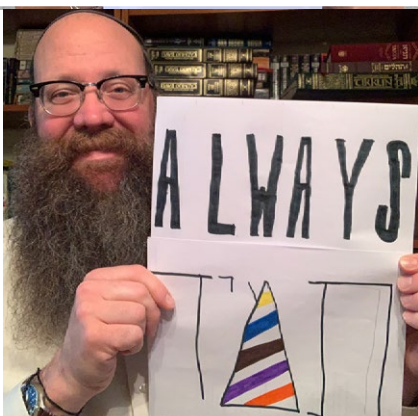




Beth Or Spotlight

May-June 2020 | Volume 64, Issue 5 | Iyar-Sivan-Tammuz



Welcome to a special electronic-only version of the Beth Or Spotlight.

The congregation moved to a virtual model as we were putting together this issue. All of our usual articles and promotion for upcoming in-person events were put on hold. We revised the May/June issue to showcase how our Beth Or community has responded to and is coping during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Please take the time to read the articles, review the photos, and kindly, take note of our loyal caterers and advertisers who are mostly small businesses which have been deeply impacted by the shut down. Your support is greatly appreciated.

May Worship Schedule

Friday, May 1 Shabbat Aharei Mot-Kedoshim

- 10:45 am Tot Shabbat with Rabbi Marx – Facebook Live
6:30 pm Family Shabbat Worship with Rabbi Marx & Cantor Murley – Facebook Live
7:30 pm Kabbalat Shabbat Worship with Cantor & Lori Green – Facebook Live

Saturday, May 2

- 8:30 am Shabbat Storytime & Activities for Young Children – Facebook Live
9:30 am Torah Study – Zoom
8:00 pm Havdallah with Rabbi Marx – Facebook Live

Friday, May 8 Shabbat Emor

- 10:45 am Tot Shabbat with Rabbi Bonder – Facebook Live
7:30 pm Shabbat Worship with Rabbi & Laurie Marx Honoring our Chai Members – Facebook Live

Saturday, May 9

- 8:30 am Storytime & Activities for Young Children – Facebook Live
9:30 am Torah Study – Zoom
8 pm Havdallah with Rabbi Bonder – Facebook Live

Friday, May 15 Shabbat Behar-B'chukotai

- 10:45 am Tot Shabbat with Cantor Green – Facebook Live
7:30 pm Shabbat Worship with Rabbi Bonder & Cantor Green – Facebook Live

Saturday, May 16

- 8:30 am Shabbat Storytime & Activities for Young Children – Facebook Live
9:30 am Torah Study - Zoom
8:00 pm Havdallah with Cantor Green – Facebook Live

Friday, May 22 Shabbat B'Midbar

- 10:45 am Tot Shabbat with Rabbi Marx – Facebook Live
7:30 pm Shabbat Worship with Rabbi Bonder & Cantor Murley – Facebook Live

Saturday, May 23

- 8:30 am Shabbat Storytime & Activity for Young Children – Facebook Live
9:30 am Torah Study – Zoom
8:00 pm Havdallah with Rabbi Marx – Facebook Live

Thursday, May 28

- 7:00 pm Tikkun Leil Shavuot Study Session with Rabbi Bonder – Zoom

Friday, May 29 Shavuot

- 9:00 am Shabbat/Shavuot Worship with Yizkor – Facebook Live
7:30 pm Shabbat Worship with Rabbi & Laurie Marx – Facebook Live

Saturday, May 30

- 8:30 am Shabbat Storytime & Activity for Young Children – Facebook Live
9:30 am Torah Study – Zoom
8:00 pm Havdallah with Rabbi Bonder – Facebook Live

June Worship Schedule

This schedule is subject to change. The June schedule will be determined once we know whether we are having virtual or in-person services. Please check the website calendar and Community Matters emails for updated information.

Friday, June 5 Shabbat Naso

- 6:30 pm Family Shabbat Worship
6:30 pm Kabbalat Shabbat Worship

Saturday, June 6

- 9:30 am Torah Study

Friday, June 12 Shabbat B'haalot'cha

- 7:30 pm Shabbat Worship with Installation of Officers & Board of Trustees

Saturday, June 13

- 9:30 am Torah Study

Friday, June 19 Shabbat Sh'lach L'cha

- 7:30 pm Shabbat Worship

Saturday, June 20

- 9:30 am Torah Study
11:00 am Shabbat Worship with the Bat Mitzvah of Lauren Silverman, daughter of Robert and Alison Silverman

Friday, June 26 Shabbat Korah

- 7:30 pm Shabbat Worship



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Confronting Impurity and Finding Wholeness

Rabbi Gregory S. Marx, Senior Rabbi

How does Covid-19 spread? How far must we stand away from other people? Is there a slip stream that is created if we are social distancing but walking behind a jogger? What can we do to keep ourselves virus free? What is the duration for hand washing? These are all the questions with which we are struggling over the last several months.

I have been writing and speaking about what our traditions can teach us during this pandemic. I have spoken about resiliency, responsibility, maintaining our relationships and of course being reasonable. But these issues, I have realized were worried about thousands of years ago, when our ancestors worked on the issue of transmission of ritual impurity. And I think there are lessons to be drawn.



Rabbi Gregory S. Marx

From the Rabbi's Desk

The Talmud talks about *tumah*, ritual impurity. For the rabbis, *tumah* acts just like a virus: It's invisible, intangible, but highly communicable, which can jump from person to person and surface to surface. Tractate Pesachim known as the *sugya* of Rabbi Hanina Segan HaKohanim ("Hanina the Deputy High Priest") discusses in fine detail which substances transmit impurity and in what degree. Here, is a quote from Pesachim 17a, describing a hypothetical chain of transmission of *tumah*:

"The corner of the garment comes into contact with a dead creeping animal, conferring upon the garment first-degree ritual impurity status; bread comes into contact with the garment, conferring upon the bread second-degree ritual impurity status; stew comes in contact with the bread, conferring upon the stew third-degree ritual impurity status; wine comes in contact with the stew, conferring upon the wine fourth-degree ritual impurity status; oil comes into contact with the wine. In that case, does the wine confer upon the oil fifth-degree ritual impurity?"

The rabbis were concerned, almost obsessively, about ritual impurity long after the Temple sacrificial system ceased to function, because they hoped that the Temple would one day be rebuilt. Ritual impurity continues to be a concern for rabbis till this day in Orthodox circles. In fact, coming in contact with certain things or fluids can make a person unclean, that will require immersion in a mikvah.

According to the Talmud, you don't have to actually touch a corpse to become impure or *tamei*; just being under the same roof as a dead body is enough. Metal instruments like spoons can become *tamei*, but earthenware vessels can't. This may sound arbitrary and illogical, but then, until the discovery of germ theory by Louis Pasteur and Robert Koch in the late 19th century, "scientific" theories about the spread of disease weren't much better. Our word "flu" comes from the Italian *influenza*, referring to the malign influence of the stars, which was supposed to cause the disease. Quarantine was based on the number *quattro* or 40 which was connected to the time Noah was on the ark, as God "purified" the earth. As late as the 1850s, most doctors believed that cholera and other infectious diseases were caused by "miasmas," vapors generated by decomposing matter.

We have been and will always be concerned with invisible enemies that contaminate. But our tradition tells us that we can be purified. We can be made "clean." We have been here before and will probably be here again. But we will confront the impurities, of our lives, and we will overcome. While our response is more modern, and with less reliance on spiritual purification and more on physical cleanliness, it is still relevant to the crisis in which we find ourselves. We have many times before fought for freedom from contamination; we will continue to do so now, and probably will, way into the future. I know that many are anxious about their lives and their future. I know that many are ill, but we will triumph; I know, because our ancestors did before us, by pulling together and resiliently trusting in our covenant with God.

We Are Still A Community

Josh Gottlieb, Beth Or President

As of when I write this column in mid-March, the coronavirus outbreak has been designated as a pandemic. With each passing day, everyday life in America is changing at an ever-quickening pace. School systems, colleges and universities are closing their buildings and converting to remote learning; many office workers are working from home; travel is dropping precipitously due to the risk of exposure on planes, ships, in hotels and destinations; professional and college sports have been suspended; movie theaters and performance venues are struggling or have already shut their doors; restaurants and bars are beginning to be limited to take out and delivery; and the list of impacts to our way of life goes on and on. We as Americans have been told by the public health experts, doctors and scientists that we must make major changes to nearly every aspect of how we and our families conduct our lives.



Josh Gottlieb

President's Corner

In the midst of all this, Beth Or too has had to adjust in profound ways. Services (Shabbat evening and morning) as well as Religious School/ Youth, CECE and numerous events have been affected by the closing of the building, which was done based on guidance from the CDC and local health officials. We could no longer gather in large groups so that we could reduce the risk of spreading the coronavirus.

Rabbi Marx, Executive Director Amy Abrams, clergy, school leaders, and other critical members of the staff, in partnership with the lay leadership team and the full board of trustees, have continued to prioritize the safety and health of our congregants and staff above all else.

However, collectively we also strive to ensure that the bonds that bind us together as a community remain strong throughout this period of social disruption. The first Shabbat after the building closed, Rabbi and Laurie Marx led Friday night services from their home, and more than 100 congregants joined them via Facebook Live. Over 50 congregants, including many young children, watched and commented as Rabbi and Rina Bonder and their children made challah French toast on Shabbat morning. Our clergy mean so much to all of us, no matter our ages or how we choose to take part in congregational life.

Torah study and other classes were held via Zoom meetings to allow for the usual vibrant give and take. Many CECE teachers have connected with their young students by using Facebook to read them stories. Sisterhood, Brotherhood, Executive Committee, and ultimately the board of trustees all kept the congregation moving forward through the use of Zoom meetings as well. We may not be shaking hands, but we continue to make deep and meaningful connections.

So the lesson we learned is that the coronavirus pandemic has the power to fundamentally alter our way of life. It was unable to break those connections between all of us as members of this congregation who are devoted to not only our own families but to our larger Beth Or community. We didn't just retreat to our family rooms to watch tv. We maintained our commitment to making Beth Or a key part of our lives through worship, the involvement of our children of all ages, affinity groups that connect us to friends with similar interests — all of these and more!



Rabbi Jason Bonder

From the Rabbi's Desk

**Part of the wisdom
of Jewish ritual
is in the repetition.**

Repetition, Repetition, Repetition

Rabbi Jason Bonder, Associate Rabbi

There is a joke about a person who went to pray at the Western Wall three times a day every single day of his life. Once a news crew caught up with him and the news anchor asked, "We heard you come here every day three times a day. What is it like when you pray?" The person answered, "I'll tell you something... Some days I feel the presence of the Almighty. Other days, I feel like I'm talking to a wall."

Even the ancient rabbis of Talmudic times knew that prayer was not going to be an awe-inspiring experience time after time. Part of the wisdom of ritual is not in who commanded us to do it, and it is not even about the elevation of our spirit. Part of the wisdom of Jewish ritual is in the *repetition*.

I remember reading in Sebastian Junger's book, *Tribe*, about a group of soldiers who had learned of an impending attack sometime in the next few days. There also happened to be psychologists there who decided to do an experiment on these soldiers. I can't believe the soldiers let the scientists conduct this study after they had heard this news. Nevertheless, they did. The test was simple. Every few hours soldiers had to spit into a test tube so that the scientists could measure their stress hormone levels throughout this endeavor. I thought the scientists were going to observe a direct relationship between time and stress. As the time drew closer and closer to the attack, stress levels would increase. But the opposite was true. When first hearing about the impending attack, the soldiers stress hormone spiked. But as the attack drew nearer, the soldiers began to rely on what they had trained for over and over again. Once they were engaged in their preparatory tasks for battle, their stress levels continually diminished. This is the power of repetition. This is the power of ritual.

I am writing this article in truly frightening times. We are in our first week of practicing good social distancing to combat COVID-19. It is in moments like these that I am so grateful to have established regular Jewish rituals for myself. Sometimes the rituals I engage with lift my spirit. In other times I feel weighed down by the obligation to do them. Nevertheless, in moments like these, I have discovered how much of a resource these rituals have become. Even though these rituals are much more inspiring when performed with a sanctuary full of people, they are still bringing me comfort in these difficult times. Despite feeling physically far away from all of you, knowing that so many of us share in these practices brings me an even greater sense of calm and togetherness. I wish us all much health and strength in the months to come.

Only Dogs Are Happy During Covid 19

Cantor David Green



Cantor David Green

The only one who is happy in our house is our dog, Lucy. My wife, Lori and I are not typically home too much, so our dog is usually starving for our attention. This is no longer the case. She gets all the attention and walks she wants. It is truly a “dog’s life.”

For the rest of us, this is a really tough time. In numerous phone calls, Facetime and Zoom, I hear fear, anxiety, anger, stress and or boredom. At the same time, we are all trying to make the best of very difficult circumstances.

So what can we do? The great Hasidic Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav of the early 19th century had some insight to address this question. He stated: “No strife can separate humankind even in thought. You make peace in your heaven, you bring contrary elements together. Extend abundant peace to us and to the whole world, so that all discords be resolved in great love and peace.”

How do we prevent separation of human interaction when we cannot get within six feet of each other? Beth Or and most other synagogues and churches have already implemented ways to reduce that separation.

So many have been uplifted by attending Facebook Live services, Zoom Torah study, virtual Jewish classroom studies for children, teens and adults and hundreds of phone calls by clergy and volunteers.

Of course, it is not the same as a kiss, hug or enjoying prayer and other activities together, but it is the next best thing.

We may not be as happy as our dogs (if you have one), but there is still much we can do to follow Rabbi Bratslav’s advice. “No strife can separate humankind.”



I've Got The Power

*Cantor Jaime Murley,
Adjunct Cantor*

If I was ever worried about my kids not having “cool” stories of overcoming adversity in their childhoods to share with their future grandchildren, 2020 took care of that for me! Quarantine in the Murley house was moving along just fine until we lost power on the first day of Passover and it stayed out for over 30 hours (the majority of which were the waking ones). In retrospect, it wasn't a very long time, but in the moment, it felt terrifying. We couldn't take a break from the power-less house at a restaurant, or a movie theater, or at my dad's house like we normally would have without social distancing rules in place. We were worried about losing all the refrigerated food I had been lucky to accumulate during market shortages, and the thought of having to “brave” the supermarket setting again to replace everything, was really upsetting and nerve racking. Worst of all (to the three kids in my house), we had no Wifi and limited cellphone use. We were alone, trapped, cold, and completely disconnected from the rest of the world. It felt awful because we didn't know how long it would last. Apparently, we can handle quarantine, and we can handle blackouts, but NOT AT THE SAME TIME!



Jaime Murley



As an extrovert and a person who craves social interactions, the idea of being socially disconnected has been the hardest thing about this time of quarantine for me. Anyone who knows me will attest to the fact that I am far from being a tech expert. I only JUST got on Facebook a few months ago, and so adjusting my career from one that is up close and personal, to one that completely relies on technology has been an extraordinary challenge for me. I am incredibly grateful for the people at Beth Or (Jillian Peskin and Rabbi Bonder come to mind) who have calmly and patiently been able to explain to me how to connect with my Beth Or family through technology. Through those internet connections, I have been able to continue doing what I love... spreading joy and community through Jewish music. That is not something I just like to do, but rather something I need to do in order to maintain a sense of who I am.

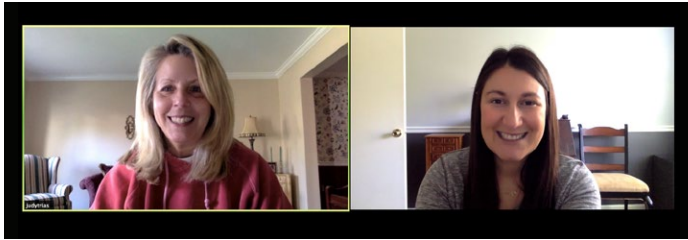
So many people I know have lost their jobs and their sense of security. During these uncertain times, I can't express how fortunate and blessed I feel to be able to continue doing what I love because of technology.

We need to be socially distant but we don't need to be emotionally distant. So, unless you lose power (which I pray doesn't happen to you!!) there's no reason to disconnect from the world, and there's definitely no reason to disconnect from Beth Or. Please stay well and please stay safe; and, don't forget to sing along, and definitely “comment” or “like” what I do on Facebook! I love reading your comments and “hearing” what you have to say while I anxiously await singing with you (and Cantor Green!!) in person again! Until then.....



Socially Distant but More Connected than Ever

Judy Trias, Director of Marketing & Communications
Jillian Peskin, Director of Member & Youth Engagement



Judy and Jillian

March 12, 2020 was a typical day, until 2:30pm, when our day-to-day lives changed in an instant! At the Beth Or office, we huddled together around a computer screen listening to Governor Wolf shut down all the schools in Montgomery County including pre-schools and daycare centers, effective immediately. We left work feeling very uncertain, only to find out the next day that the county was also switching to a work at home model, implementing a new term, "social distancing", and all large in-person gatherings, including Shabbat services would

be cancelled. While we couldn't spend Shabbat in our sanctuary together, we all knew that Friday, March 13 at sundown, Shabbat would begin regardless.

As the communications and engagement team, we had to quickly devise a plan and put it into action, knowing that moving to a virtual synagogue would be a learning curve for our community. Within what felt like a microsecond we had a full gamut of worship and educational programming. In addition to that, we quickly mobilized volunteers through Caring Congregants to help our most

Andi Holtzman Drucker *What a beautiful way to end Shabbat with so much Beth Or love. We're living remotely right now so somehow the pandemic brought us home to you.*

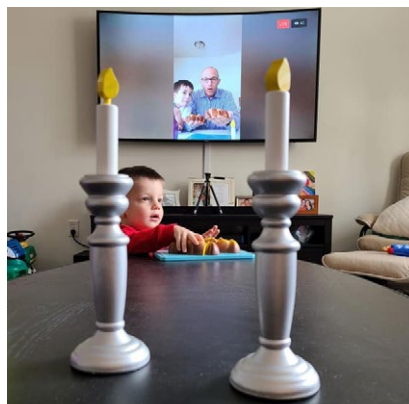


First Night Seder with Rabbi Marx



A Different Seder for 2020

Laura Gansler Lynam
That was lovely. Nice to feel connected to the Beth Or community even though we can't be there.



CECE Tot Shabbat



Kabbalat Shabbat with Cantor and Lori Green

Harry Girsh *I appreciate being able to recite Kaddish for my mother's recent passing. With the inability to gather community around us, it is especially helpful to have a virtual community. thank you so much.*

vulnerable community members, and our website became our “building”. We continued communicating through our weekly emails, and enhanced our facebook and instagram posts. We quickly upgraded our zoom account! Rabbi Marx even dubbed himself a “Baby Zoomer” instead of a Baby Boomer! All of our clergy and educators quickly learned new tools and best practices to connect virtually with our community. And, our community learned to embrace technology, too!

WOW! To say we have been overwhelmed by your response would be an understatement. We would like to share just a few stats, facebook comments and photos on the next few pages to best tell our **Beth Or Goes Virtual** story. Your response has energized us beyond measure! While we have been physically apart, in some ways this experience has brought us closer together.



Senior Staff Meeting: The Beth Or Bunch

Randi Schwartz Burstein I didn't know about this until I saw it on my feed this morning. Watching this brought tears to my eyes and reminded me why I love being part of this community in both times of stress and happiness. Thank you for always knowing exactly what we need!



Young Family Seder



CECE Tot Shabbat ➤



➤ First time using Zoom to Facebook Live: Family Shabbat with Rabbi Bonder and Cantor Murley

Ellen Werther I am grateful to be able to say kaddish for my parents supported by others

Susan B Miller
I cannot believe how much comfort this gave me. Wonderful — such a blessing to be able to be a part of my synagogue — from Oregon!



First time streaming Shabbat



First Night Seder with Rabbi and Laurie Marx



Life Long Learning Class



Rabbi Bonder & Chef host Shabbat story time

Andrew Johanson
Greg, wonderful message, so thoughtful and stirring, Laurie — lovely singing. Sweet service,; thank you.
Wendy&Andy

Lois Lambersky One thing that is unchanged in this crazy time is Cantor's beautiful voice and the joy he brings to Shabbat

Andrea Wachstein Cohn Thank you so much for inspiring us to reach inside ourselves for a sense of peace. Shabbat Shalom!



First Grade Religious School



Family Game Night and Virtual Shabbat Service



Shabbat with Rabbi and Laurie Marx

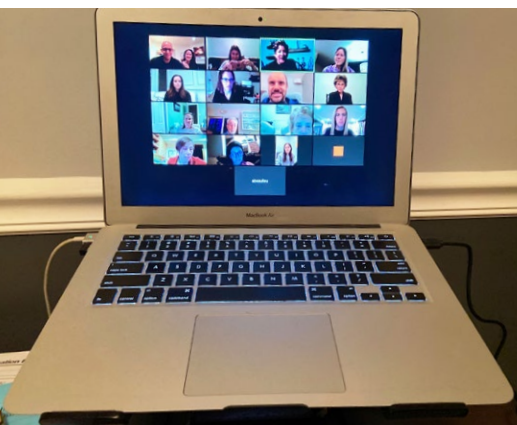
Carole Grossman Chasen This is wonderful. I thought I would be alone with my puppy but wow, here I am with all of you at the Marx's Seder table... What an inclusive warm feeling, this is family



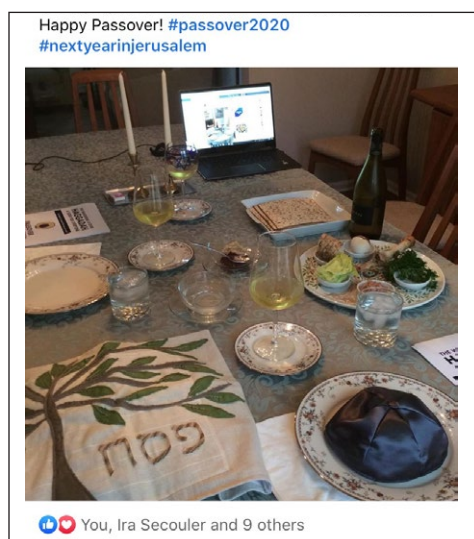
Yom HaShoah Program



Shabbat Zimriya with Rabbi Bonder and Cantor Murley



Virtual Mid-Week Social Happy Hour



Virtual Seder

Amy Abrams Good to "see" so many of you joining us. Feel like I am sitting in the chapel with all of you



YOBO teens attend NFTY PAR

Laura Zinker Thank you for your continued efforts of caring, love, and support. Although we have only been members for a short while, Brad and I eagerly look forward to the day when we can physically re-join the community and become active members on Friday nights and Saturday morning Torah study.



Sharing CECE Tot Shabbat Photos on Instagram



Zoom Sunday School

By The Numbers

Emails: Avg. **65% - 80%** Open Rate

Friday Night Shabbat on Facebook Live: Avg. **150** live views and **1000+** total views

Havdallah on Facebook Live: Avg. **100** live views and **800** total views.

1st Night Seder: **1.6k** views

Torah Study Zoom Participants: Avg. **50** participants

Tuesday Zoom Lifelong Learning Series: Avg. **100** participants

Zoom Religious School: Up to **180** attend Sunday School.

CECE Tot Shabbat on Facebook Live: Avg. **100** live views and **600** total views

Support Groups: **3** new types of support groups to meet our community's needs

Instagram: **30** congregants tagged Beth Or in their Instagram stories to date..

Caring Congregant Volunteers: **50** congregants volunteered to grocery shop, make calls and more.

Bob Sklenar Thank you Cantor Green and Rabbi Bonder for bring some normalcy to an abnormal world. Shabbat is my oasis in an arid existence; a lighthouse in the stormy sea of uncertainty. Shabbat Shalom

Distance Learning Means Fun and Flexibility

Aaron Nienshultz, Director of Religious School

What an end to the school year it has been! We've held Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday classes over Zoom, with whole-school sessions as well as individual class programs, and it has been amazing. Of course technology comes with hiccups, but for the most part, everything has run smoothly. To have hundreds of religious school students show up to Zoom classes, all together—that would put a smile on anyone's face!

And I want to give a HUGE shout-out to our fantastic Beth Or Faculty for their incredible flexibility and creativity during these challenging weeks. They've reworked lesson plans, created interactive and engaging ways to teach, and shown flexibility in making the last two months of religious and Hebrew school something very special.



Aaron Nienshultz

Jill Bascove	Rabbi Jason Bonder	Yael Freiman
Stacey Gutman	Victoria Levin	Cantor Jaime Murley
Rachel Older	Susan Silverman	Renee Strausberg
Melanie Beifel	Rebecca Carlin	Allison Garber
Bekah Jacobson	Vivian Lichtman	Liam Nienshultz
Wendi Pacinelli	Rozi Snyder	Hillary Wagner
Fay Benshetler	Miriam Conner	Alexis Goldman
Dale Laing	Michele Machles	Susan Novick
Ashley Rossi	Sherry Spector	Loryn Whitman
Lee Berman	Kayla Diamond	Cantor David Green
Susan Levey	Rabbi Greg Marx	Sydnee Novick
Jill Rucker	Beth Stoloff	Lori Zislis



Leonard &
Madlyn Abramson
Education Center

CONGREGATION BETH OR

Don't forget to register for school next year! While early-bird registration is closed, regular registration runs from May 1 through June 15; after that, all students not enrolled by June 15 will be automatically enrolled with a late charge.

You can find more resources by going to <https://www.bethor.org/learn/religious-school-k-12/registration-important-school-year-information>. There you'll find the school calendar, information about our educational programs, our parent handbook, and more. Of course, if you have any questions, please contact me at aaron@bethor.org.

May/June Candle Lighting

Friday, May 1 • 7:38 pm
Friday, May 8 • 7:44 pm
Friday, May 15 • 7:50 pm
Friday, May 22 • 7:57 pm
Friday, May 29 • 8:02 pm

Friday, June 5 • 8:07 pm
Friday, June 12 • 8:11 pm
Friday, June 19 • 8:14 pm
Friday, June 26 • 8:15 pm



Learning Together While Staying Apart

Sara Baum, Early Childhood Director

I want to start by expressing my gratitude to the teachers and families of the Center for Early Childhood Education. Everyone began our transition to virtual learning with patience and open minds. We were able to stay connected to each other from the very beginning of our time apart.

Our children are continuing to flourish and learning together through multiple online platforms. From Facebook to Zoom and everything in-between. Teachers are dropping materials off at children's homes while practicing social distancing, they are providing one on one connections through Facetime, and get their classes together on Zoom.

We are finding new ways to be together every day! At the end of every week we look forward to celebrating with our clergy during our weekly Shabbat through Facebook Live. We hope you can join us on Friday mornings.

I always knew we were fortunate to have teachers who truly care about their craft but this experience has shown everyone that we are truly blessed. Our learning continues outside the walls of our school but we look forward to welcoming our youngest community members as soon as we can!

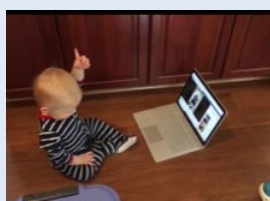
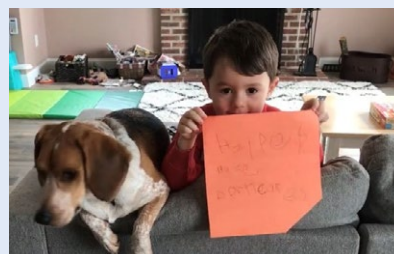


Sara Baum



**Zipporah S. Abramson
Center for Early
Childhood Education**

CONGREGATION BETH OR



"Not Mitzvahs" 2020

Please help us recognize all of our B'nai Mitzvah students and families who had to reschedule their services and parties. The dates below were the originally scheduled B'nai Mitzvah. We thank every affected family for their support and cooperation, and look forward to celebrating with you at a later date.

Some families turned lemons into lemonade and created virtual "Not Mitzvahs" to help commemorate what would have been their original special day.



March 21

- **Logan Frost**, son of Ryan and Jennifer Frost
- **Lauren Silverman**, daughter of Robert and Alison Silverman

March 28

- **Emily Amerstein**, daughter of Michael and Marcie Amerstein
- **Madden Benjamin**, daughter of Jay and Amy Benjamin

April 4

- **Robert Gartside**
- **Sari Gartside**, daughter of Robert and Wendy Gartside
- **Dylan and Ilan Goldstein**, sons of Howard and Andrea Goldstein

April 18

- **Claudia Cagnoli**, daughter of Joe and Lori Cagnoli

May 2

- **Griffin Whitman**, son of Will & Loryn Whitman
- **Harrison Steinberg**, son of E. Matthew Steinberg & Rachel Levine Steinberg

May 9

- **Gabriel Meinstein**, son of Adam Meinstein & Odile Gelinard
- **Daniel Adam Somerman**, son of Peter & Stefanie Somerman

May 16

- **Sydney Salin**, daughter of Michael & Donna Salin

May 23

- **Jordyn Levine**, daughter of Brian & Jen Levine

May 30

- **Jenna Seidman**, daughter of Michael & Rhonda Seidman

June 6

- **Leo Kuznits**, son of Tamir & Jennifer Kuznits
- **Ryan Drossner**, son of Eric & Samantha Drossner
- **Emmanuelle Kramer**, daughter of Henry Kramer & Cindy Au-Kramer

June 13

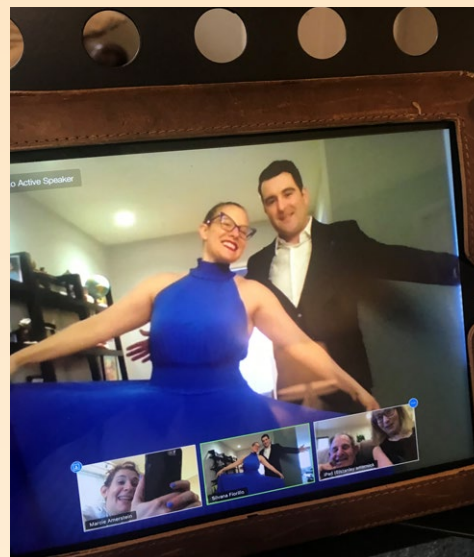
- **Emily Amerstein**, daughter of Michael & Marcie Amerstein
- **Cooper Murley**, son of Lucian & Jaime Murley

How the Amerstein Family Created A Special Day For Emily

After a year of hard work, study, and planning, March 28 did not turn out exactly how we envisioned it would be. Due to isolation policies and closures, Emily's Bat Mitzvah was indefinitely put on hold. Knowing how disappointed Emily would be on that Shabbat, the Amerstein family took control of the day. We scheduled an informal living room zoom service for that morning attended by grandparents, aunts, uncles, and her current TV crush-Patrick Dempsey. Emily read some prayers, then her Torah and Haftorah portions. We presented her with a Kiddush cup in honor of the occasion. This was celebrated afterwards with our own brunch and some special poems and video good wishes.



Since Emily's nighttime party was also cancelled, we decided to improvise with our own at home. Michael decorated the family room with lights while Emily got dressed up in her cocktail attire. I unpacked my sealed wedding gown since it was also our 15th wedding anniversary, and we both beautifully pranced about and posed for pictures, some even wearing corona masks. We even had a "Not" Mitzvah cake with 13 candles. The evening concluded with a special mitzvah zoom party put on by Emily's friends. It was certainly not the day she had been anticipating, but nevertheless a day filled with great joy and love.



We Are A Sacred Community

Ellen Werther, Caring Congregants



Ellen Werther

Covid-19 has been a battle of a lifetime on many fronts. It has tested our faith, our endurance, and our concern and compassion for one another. We will have a new sense of appreciation for things we once took for granted.

Compared to those courageous providers “on the front” performing lifesaving services on a daily basis, we have been incredibly lucky to be safe and out of harm’s way if we follow the guidelines.

Here at Beth Or, when the segment of our population 60 and over was put on alert due to their vulnerability, Caring Congregants stepped forward to perform the mitzvah of outreach. Volunteers could certainly help those who because of shelter-in-place might be sensing feelings of isolation, anxiety, and general unrest due to uncertainty.

With the support of Jillian Peskin and Judy Trias a memo was circulated to the congregation offering opportunities for people to make calls, shop for those

with compromised health issues, and give technical support for all to be able to avail themselves of the excellent, ongoing programming by our invaluable clergy and staff.

Volunteering extended to our young families who mailed colorful drawings and cheerful notes to local continuing care facilities to brighten the days of residents.

The response was so heartening. We had an outpouring of volunteers willing to put others before themselves. In return, they could reap the satisfaction of knowing they made a difference and lightened the hearts of many.

It became readily apparent that the recipients of this support felt a true connection to their Beth Or community and those who did the outreach performed the mitzvah of *Tikkun Olam*. One elderly congregant commented: “People questioned why I joined a congregation one hour away... now I know why.”

We can all be caring congregants. We are indeed a “sacred community”.

As Abraham Joshua Heschel said, “Just to be is a blessing. Just to live is holy.”

I am so proud of our congregation. I feel so blessed to be a caring congregant and a part of this exceptional Beth Or community. May we go from strength to strength.

A heartfelt thank you to those who so generously donated to Caring Congregants Fund to help those affected by COVID19.

Putting others before oneself is such a beautiful mitzvah. At this time of many challenges and uncertainty, you have certainly made a difference and made *Tikkun Olam* a reality.

— Ellen Werther

Planning for 5781

There are 27 congregants on the Beth Or Social Action Committee from high-school age to retirees. At our February meeting, the Library was buzzing as our dedicated group mapped out activities for the coming year, 5781. In the span of 90-minutes, the Committee's motto, Striving — Caring — Making a Difference, led to our planning a calendar of events for the Mitzvah Months of November and December.

But planning is only half the story. It is the involvement of our congregational family that brings about the results that we share with you throughout the year. Together, we are making a difference for those in need.

We are proud to be a group of 27, but there is plenty of room to grow! If you would like to get involved, please be in touch with us. Our emails are listed below.

Planting to Feed the Hungry

The arrival of Spring means that the Beth Or 'Corner of the Land' gardening season is upon us. If you are new to the Congregation or have not participated in the past, this is an opportunity to show off your gardening skills or make the point that anyone can be a gardener! Join Co-chairs Bruce Dorsey and Mitch Diamond as they prepare the ground, plant, weed, and harvest. All vegetables will reach Montgomery County residents who are experiencing food insecurity.



Bruce and Mitch may be reached at brucedorsey11@gmail.com and mdiamond@atkore.com.

Is this year's Mental Health Awareness Month different from all other years?

For the past few years, the Social Action Committee has hosted a program in May to recognize Mental Health Awareness Month. This year is different for all the reasons we know from daily headlines, but it is no different in that we can continue to share relevant information.

Our Committee collaborates with NAMI Montgomery County, an organization that is a valuable community resource. They are the local affiliate of the National Alliance on Mental Illness whose mission is to improve the lives of individuals and families affected by mental illness through recovery-focused support, education, and advocacy.

The NAMI message is that mental illness is NOT the result of personal weakness, lack of character, or poor upbringing. The good news they share is that mental illness is treatable and recovery is possible.

All NAMI programs are FREE, as listed on their website, namimontcopa.org. They offer online and in-person educational courses for individuals and families, and a peer-to-peer recovery education program. Their support groups, many of which run virtually, are geared to families, parents of children and adolescents, spouses, and those in recovery.

Next year, the Social Action Committee will focus its Mental Health Awareness program on addiction. If you wish to participate in the sub-committee to be headed by Jody Pascal, we will welcome hearing from you.

The Knitting Circle Forges Ahead with Knitzvahs During the Pandemic

During this time of uncertainty, one thing remains constant with no interruption: members of the Beth Or Knitting Circle continue performing knitzvahs! Best known for their beautifully crocheted and knitted blankets for patients in the hospital, convalescing, or undergoing treatment, the group led by Chair Faye Benshetler has expanded into sewing masks to meet the high demand at the Abramson Center. Special thanks to Faye for uniting the group via zoom these last several weeks, and to every congregant who contributes their time and handicraft skills to the Circle.



We look forward to seeing all members of our Beth Or Family soon!

Susy Krimker, Social Action Chair, susykrimker@gmail.com
Margie Chachkin, Social Action Vice-Chair, chachkin@aol.com

Be Counted

Noah Fischer, Social Justice Chair

The 2020 Census and the November General Election remind us that being counted has significance for the Jewish people.

The translation of census-taking in Hebrew is “lift up the head.” There was a purpose in counting starting with the first census in the Torah, which showed growth and strength in numbers: 600,000 Jewish men departed from Egypt with their wives, children, and elders.

Similarly, to be counted in the 2020 Census and to vote in the November 3, 2020 general election has significance and purpose. We contribute to society and have something to show as a result of doing so.

The Social Justice Committee made voter registration forms available in the Spain Lobby, but with the building being closed we suggest that you visit votespa.com for the form. **The last day to register for the November 3 election is October 19.** If you are already registered to vote in Pennsylvania, you don't have to register again unless you are changing your name, address, or political party. You must be 18 years of age on or before the day of the next election. College students can register and vote where they live while attending college in Pennsylvania and can use an on-campus or off-campus address. Students have the option to register and vote at their prior home address. Absentee and Mail-In Ballot applications may also be found at votespa.com. Polls will be open on November 3 from 7 am to 8 am.

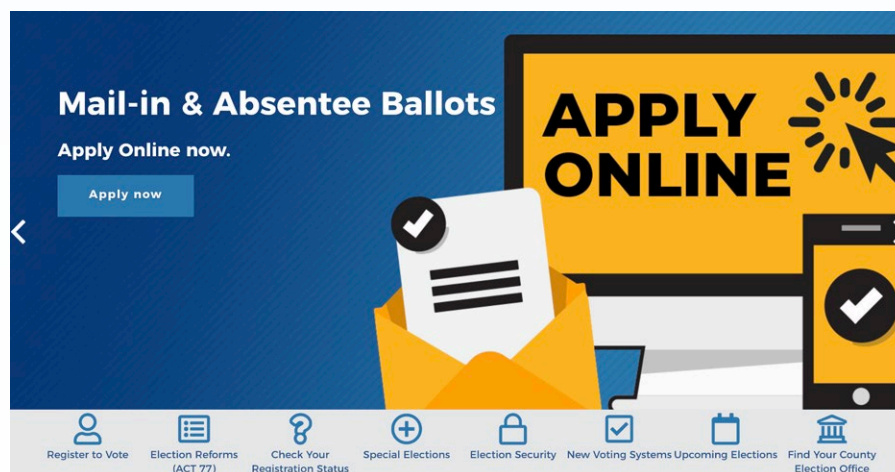
Working with Our Neighbors

It was an honor for the Social Justice Committee to have a member of Bethlehem Baptist Church (BBC) attend our last meeting earlier this year. BBC is interested in starting a similar committee and had the opportunity to hear about our programs and mission statement (below). Beth Or has also been a model for the Upper Dublin Lutheran Church Advocacy Team, which recently sponsored an event to raise awareness about ‘period poverty’ with a collection for homeless and domestic violence shelters in the area.

When Beth Or reopens, I hope to meet you at future programs that support our mission:

To educate, advocate and take action on issues affecting the rights and dignity of all people;
to engage and activate our community in one of Beth Or's core values, *Tikkun Olam* — the Jewish responsibility to help make the world a better place.

Noah Fischer, Social Justice Committee Chair, Noahfischer25@yahoo.com



Olitsky Art Gallery – Artist Jody Walker

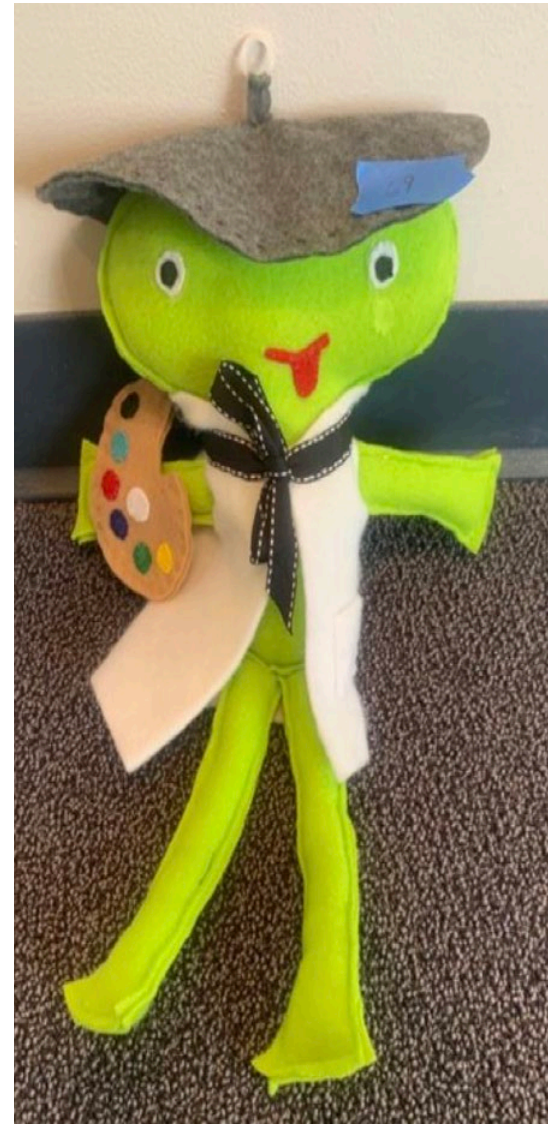
Jody's art will be on display when the building reopens.
Here is a message from Jody:

Bonjour mes amis. C'est moi, Monsieur Grenouille, the greatest French amphibian artist. Just look at my fashionable beret, my impeccably clean smock, and the palette with the paints I use so masterfully. As a highly respected leader of my froglets, my aristocratic pedigree radiates through my marvelous green skin, and the heavenly sound of my ribbiting, riveting voice. And you know, we French creatures are masters of sophisticated romance.

I have been hanging from the wall of the Olitsky Gallery since March 12, when the Beth Or building was closed due to a pandemic. On that day, Jody Walker finished hanging her show with the help of her son, Jack, and her brother, Andrew. But no one has seen it yet. As was to be expected, I puffed out my chest and assumed control over all the objets d'art on the gallery walls. I can say unequivocally that Jody's creations are colorful, cheerful, humorous, and somewhat risqué.

During the past month, Jody has been sewing masks for family, friends and charitable organizations. Of course, as befits my role as a privileged sovereign, I have no need to wear a mask. Genius cannot be covered! Besides, it would make it difficult to snap at the delectable flies that wander by.

It is my duty, and great pleasure to wish you good health, and hope we will be together again soon.



Beth Or Brotherhood

Not All Heroes Wear Capes

Allan Posner, Brotherhood President



Allan Posner



Brotherhood
CONGREGATION BETH OR
Fellowship • Community
Service • Support

As the novel Coronavirus Covid-19 continues to unfold both here in Maple Glen and around the world, Brotherhood would like to let you know we are here for both our members and the synagogue at large.

I am sure everyone is familiar with the saying, "Not all heroes wear capes." Superheroes are what I would call every volunteer who is currently trying their mightiest to save and protect all of us. Our heroes are wearing scrubs and many other uniforms. They aren't patrolling the streets looking for bad guys, but instead are spending their days and nights fighting an invisible enemy called the coronavirus pandemic which is wreaking havoc across our world while trying to destroy the entire social fabric we enjoy here at Beth Or.

Just who are our heroes that are members in our congregation? They are doctors, nurses, emergency medical technicians, pharmacists, hospital administrators as well as many other health care professionals. When we think of heroes, police or firefighters come to mind. They are true heroes as we know them. But currently the real heroes don't wear badges or capes. They wear scrubs and other uniforms.

They are also the unseen heroes such as my daughter working countless hours at Jefferson Hospital creating telehealth services at the Kimmel Cancer Center so the sick, elderly and cancer stricken can be seen weekly and maintain access to their routine health care services as best they can. Change is never easy and these patients are having a difficult time adjusting.

These essential workers are keeping everyone safe as they courageously work keeping our world going while risking their own personal lives and trying to not be exposed to this growing epidemic. Many of us are currently home relaxing in pajamas, shorts or even a robe. Some of us are working from home behind a laptop. Some of our congregants have been laid off too! These essential congregants that I call heroes are busy helping others and putting their lives at risk.

While this virus is leaving a dark, dismal and devastating mark on our health and environment, it is also leaving a mark on our own congregation Beth Or. As I look around and see the weeks slowly pass by, I am reminded of the light we shine at Beth Or. Our heroes are the light we speak about as our members lead the fight.

Brotherhood would like to recognize and say thank you to all those working tirelessly in the health care professions as well as many others including grocery clerks, bankers and those delivering food to less fortunate.

Yasher Koach!

KOSHER WINE SALES

Now you can purchase kosher wine all year long and benefit Beth Or!

Use the Beth Or affiliate link on [kosherwine.com](https://bit.ly/wine2020): <https://bit.ly/wine2020> or click the KosherWine symbol on the bottom right side of the Beth Or website home page, "Connect With Us" section.

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Beth Or Sisterhood

Uniting the Community

Lois Lambersky, Sisterhood President

First, a big *Yasher Koach* and *Todah Rabah* to the clergy for all they do to keep us connected and feel loved as a community. I look forward to the Lifelong Learning, Shabbat services, Seder and Holiday services along with everything that is available to us. In these times of worldwide pandemic, isolation and social distancing, one may feel all alone and forgotten. Please know that Beth Or Sisterhood is here to help. We need to know what is on your mind.

Also, a big shout out and thanks to all the front-line workers, doctors, nurses, pharmacists, grocery store attendants, take-out clerks, food delivery staff, life sustaining stores — thank you for being there for all of us.

Please let us know if you are unable to go out and get groceries or if you need meals. Do you need essential household items? Are you able to get your life-sustaining pharmacy items? Or would you need someone to talk to? We are here.

While we are not conducting in person activities, Beth Or remains open and is offering many virtual services, classes and programs. If you would like help accessing these programs, please email me and I will pass this information to the correct people to assist with technology or other assistance.

While social distancing is so imperative, please remember again that we are here to help and listen. Soon the day will come when we overcome COVID-19 and gather as we did.

As president of Beth Or Sisterhood, I am committed to helping as many as we can and to connect people with the correct people to help. No one should go hungry, go without necessary meds or feel isolated with no one to call.

Be well, stay healthy, and *Baruch Hashem*, we will be together soon.



Lois Lambersky



Sisterhood

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Fellowship • Community
Service • Support

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- Wedding Smash Glasses and Gifts
- Jewelry
- Home Giftware
- Books for Adults and Children
- Children's Toys and Games
- Baby Gifts
- Occasion Cards

Hours:

The Gift Shop is closed while the building is closed. Hope to see you soon!

Discounts available for Sisterhood Members and Beth Or Staff | Great Monthly Sales and New Arrivals

At the time of writing this publication, the current stay at home order for Montgomery County and the state of Pennsylvania does not have a targeted end date. Therefore, all originally scheduled in-person events for May & June have been cancelled, rescheduled or put on hold.

Virtual Events on Facebook and Zoom have been created, and will continue to be created, to keep our community connected. **Please check the Beth Or website calendar, www.bethor.org/calendar as well as your weekly Chai Lights and Community Matters emails** for the most up to date information, event/program descriptions and participation links.

ONGOING VIRTUAL EVENTS/ PROGRAMS WHILE BETH OR STAYS AT HOME

Worship

Shabbat: Every Friday, 7:30 pm (also Family service at 6:30 pm on first Friday of the month)

Havdallah: Every Saturday, 8 pm

The Clergy conduct meaningful services from their homes, often joined by family members. All Worship services are broadcast live on the Beth Or Facebook page, www.facebook.com/CongBethOr.

Torah Study: Every Saturday, 9:30 am

The Clergy each take a turn leading a discussion of the week's torah portion, followed by mourner's kaddish. Torah Study takes place on Zoom. Refer to the web calendar for link to the week's class.

Young Families

Tot Shabbat: Every Friday, 10:45 am

The Clergy help our little ones prepare for Shabbat. This is a CECE weekly tradition, and all young families are welcome to join us on Facebook Live.

Shabbat Story Time & Activities with Rabbi Bonder: Every Saturday, 8:30 am

Rabbi Bonder, often joined by Mark & Sophie, reads a story or does a fun activity to kick off the day. This program takes place on Facebook Live.

Virtual Social Programs

Mid Week Happy Hour: Some Wednesdays, 8 pm

Our membership committee invites all to grab a cocktail/mocktail and some snacks and join them for fun conversation and some useful tips to help you get through another week at home. Happy Hours take place on Zoom. Check calendar and Chai Lights for upcoming dates and meeting link.

Coffee Time with Rabbi Bonder and Jillian: Every Friday, 1:15 pm

We all know Rabbi Bonder and Jillian Peskin have a gift for gab. Listen in and comment as they talk back and forth about an array of topics leading up to Shabbat, and provide some interesting insider tips, too! This program takes place on Facebook Live.

Support Groups

Support for Parents of Teenagers: Some Sundays, 7 pm

Support for Parents of Young Children: Some Sundays, 8:30 pm

Support for Adults Age 60+: Some Mondays, 11 am

Bereavement Support: Last Wednesday of the Month, 8 pm

Cantor Green is joined by accredited health professionals to lead targeted support sessions to offer advice, strategies, and help you cope with day-to-day living through the pandemic. Support Groups are held on Zoom. Refer to the web calendar and Chai Lights for upcoming schedule and participation links. If you have specific questions or topics you would like to cover, or know of someone who can use pastoral support, contact Cantor Green at dgreen@bethor.org.

BROTHERHOOD/SISTERHOOD EVENTS

One Book One Jewish Community (now on Zoom)

Wednesday, May 6 • 7:30 pm

Sisterhood's annual OBOJC event will take place on Zoom this year. Aaron Nielsenshultz will lead a discussion of the book, *The World That We Knew*, by Alice Hoffman. Meeting link is found on the web calendar listing.

LIFELONG LEARNING

Join us on Tuesdays for our newly added virtual Lifelong Learning Series on Zoom. Clickable links and dial-in/meeting IDs to participate can be found in the website calendar event description for each class. Upcoming classes include:

Biblical Responses to Anxiety with Rabbi Gregory Marx

Tuesday, May 5, 7 pm

This is a time of heightened fear and anxiety. How should we deal with it. For that matter, how did the Biblical authors confront their fear of the unknown. Rabbi Marx will explore a Jewish response to fear, drawing upon the wisdom of the Psalms, the Prophets and the Torah.

Psalms: A Jewish Response to Life with Aaron Nienshultz

Tuesday, May 12, 7 pm

Jews have been reading the Book of Psalms for 3000 years. This text offers comfort, complaints, aspirational wisdom, and relatable content even for our modern lives. Let's spend an evening looking at the texts themselves and how we might be able to interact with them.

"Ecclesiastes Moments" with Rabbi Jason Bonder

Tuesday, May 19, 7 pm

The book of Ecclesiastes famously begins, "Utter futility! Says Kohelet. Utter futility! All is futile." Given this opening, it is absolutely astonishing that the book made it's way into the Hebrew Bible. I imagine that we all have our "Ecclesiastes moments" during these challenging times of coronavirus. Let's examine this important voice in the Hebrew Bible and see how we may draw inspiration from it.

Throwing Stones at God's House with Rabbi Gregory Marx

Tuesday, May 26, 7 pm

We have a long tradition of arguing with God. Beginning with Abraham, continuing through Moses and Prophets, we have rarely just "accepted God's will." The notion "Thy will be done," is not heard so often in the halls of Jewish prayer. How does this fighting spirit impact our character, our hope, and help us find comfort? We will study some examples of throwing stones at God's house and the consequences of our defiance. A fine topic to discuss when so many are suffering.

Understanding Jewish Texts: Knowing your Midrash from Your Mishnah with Aaron Nienshultz

Tuesday, June 2, 7 pm

Jews are called the People of the Book—that's a misnomer, since there are many books we talk about. We'll take some time to learn what these texts are and how they all fit together.

Special Erev Shavuot Class: Tikkun Leil Shavuot with Rabbi Jason Bonder

Thursday, May 28, 7 pm

Welcome the holiday in a traditional manner with study of Jewish texts concerning revelation and redemption.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

Board of Trustees Vote on 2020/21 Budget

Wednesday, May 13 • 7 pm

All congregants are invited to this meeting, which will take place on Zoom. Link will be emailed in advance.

Annual Meeting

Wednesday, June 10 • 7 pm

All congregants are invited to this meeting. The meeting location (at Beth Or or via Zoom) is still to be determined. Details will be provided in advance.





Celebrating Your Simcha

Our beautiful building provides the perfect place to celebrate your family's simchas.

Our catering partners on the Approved Caterer List — shown below and published on our website (www.bethor.org) stand ready to provide delicious food for your event. They can provide menu options at a range of prices designed to meet your specific needs and budget.

We hope that you will consider having your celebrations at Beth Or. To learn more about hosting an event at Beth Or, please contact Amy Abrams at 215-646-5806.

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Chai-Lights — May/June 2020

May Their Memory Be A Blessing

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Rose Cobb, mother of Jolene DeFusco
Martin Pokedoff, father of Mark Pokedoff
Martin Duretz, father of Michael Duretz
Barbara F. Goldblum, mother of Becky Kilshaw
Frank Hecht, brother of Ann Beaulieu
Anita Shmukler Bloch, mother of Jodie Girsh

Bernard "Buddy" Tepper, father of Bobbi Klondar
Stanley Elgart husband of Linda Elgart
Irma Silver Malissa, mother of Phyllis Finkelstein, grandmother of Joanne Schell & Lauren Hellman
Bonnie R. Factor, mother of Lori Dubin
David Aaron Portney, brother of Kevan Portney
Pearl Fine, aunt of Ellen Wichterman, mother of Linda Judd, z"l (William) & grandmother of Shana Judd & Nina Judd

Elaine Garber, mother of Stephanie Lubin
Madlyn Abramson, wife of Leonard Abramson & mother of Nancy Wolfson
Steve Ravitz, cousin of Herb Cohen
Ronnie Marks, cousin of Doreen Marx-Krulewitch
Edward Appelbaum, husband of Laurie Appelbaum and father of Susan Wolbransky
Sydney Muchnick, uncle of Bruce Goodman and Mindy Wexler
Betty Thelma Lublin, mother of Joann Lublin

Mazel Tov

Baby Naming of Maeve Liat Millman, daughter of Joshua Millman & Sara Baum
Wedding of Allison Black, daughter of Wendy Black & Alan Black, z"l, to Shawn Downey
Birth of Willow Paul, granddaughter of Ilene Schneller & niece of Dana Marion
Birth of Jake Justice Collins, son of Chris & Sara Collins
Wedding of Hannah Berry, daughter of Don & Amanda Berry, to C.J. Argue

Memorials and Contributions

Rabbi Marx's Discretionary Fund

Donation for COVID-19 support by

Brad & Debra Pliner
Herb & Renee Cohen
Robert Ludwig & Joan Ryder
Rachel Levine Steinberg

In Memory of

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Aaron & Lois Lambersky
JOSEPH EISEN
Alan & Natalie Eisen
E. FRED BRECHER
Andrew & Dara Brecher
PHYLLIS MELAMED, Mother of Eileen Berk
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William Judd
In Honor of
Naming of ISAAC MARSHALL
Jay & Susan Freedman

RABBI MARX
Mike Snyder

Mazel Tov to

Birthday of RABBI MARX
Glenn & Nancy Hyatt

In Appreciation of

RABBI MARX
Herb & Renee Cohen
Lee Lambersky
The Klondar Family
Les Garnas & Carole Landis
Mindi Vogel
Estelle Gray
Bob & Andy Sklenar
THE BETH OR STAFF
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Donald & Amanda Berry
ARTHUR MANN
Henry Mann
SANDY HERSH
Jason & Jaime Hersh and Family

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Cantor Green's Discretionary Fund

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In Memory of

JULIAN LOEWENSTERN

Gary & Cindy Loewenstern

SHIRLEY CAMP

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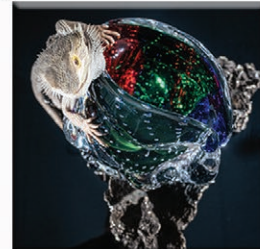


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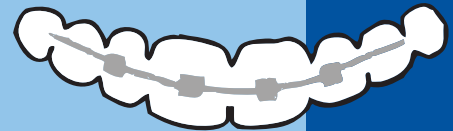
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