



Congregation Beth El

High Holy Days 5782

Hear the Shofar! Daily Blasts During Elul

Daily Sounding of the Shofar

During the Hebrew month of Elul, we sound the shofar every day. These blasts are a “wake-up” call to our spirits, intended to inspire and remind us to engage in the soul searching needed to prepare for the High Holy Days. The sound is also significant as it brings our community together and elevates our Divine spirit.

Beginning on the first day of Elul, August 9 and continuing until September 5, we will gather on Zoom every evening (except for Friday evenings, when the shofar will be heard during Shabbat services) at 6:00 pm for a brief message for reflection and to hear the shofar. On Saturdays, we will begin with Havdalah. Please join us on Zoom (no prior registration needed). We will start at 6:00, and the Shofar will be sounded at about 6:05. You may drop in early to shmooze if you wish. [Click here to join every evening at 6:00pm!](#)

We also invite everyone to help sound the shofar during these gatherings! There are 24 opportunities. If you or a member of your family would like to blow the shofar for us, please contact [Lisa Feldman](#).

Daily Emails During the Month of Elul

Once again, Ritual Committee members have curated a series of brief readings on the themes of the High Holy Days season. Sign up to receive a short, daily email posing ideas and questions for reflection about the themes of the Days of Awe. Subscriptions were automatically renewed, but if this is new to you, you can [subscribe directly in ShulCloud](#) or by sending an email to shalom@bethelberkeley.org.

Journeys Through Mishkan HaNefesh (Beth El's new High Holy Day Machzor (prayer book))

This year, we are excited to introduce our new High Holy Day *Machzor* (prayer book), Mishkan HaNefesh. Mishkan HaNefesh offers meaningful

liturgy for both regular service attendees and those new to Jewish spirituality and practice. In the weeks leading up to the High Holy Days, we are excited to offer a series of programs allowing us to explore and become comfortable with our new *Machzor*. [These learning sessions will take place on Zoom \(click here to join\).](#)

Thursday, August 19th at 7:00pm: Discovering our new Machzor (High Holy Day prayer book)

Join us as we explore *Mishkan HaNefesh*, our new *Machzor*. In this session, we will highlight similarities and differences between this new prayer book and *Machzor HaMakom*, our High Holy Day prayer book from the last several years. Our exploration will consist of music, poetry, and meaningful conversation.

Thursday, September 2nd at 7:00pm: Exploring the Shofarot Service

A central theme to the High Holy Days is hearing the call of the shofar. Join us as we explore the history of the shofar and shofar service, its role during the High Holy Days, and the beautiful poetry and explanations that are found within *Mishkan HaNefesh*.

New Year's Mikvah

Sunday August 15, 4:00 pm. Open to everyone.

Ready to wash away the last year before entering the new one? Join Rabbi Stern for a reflective and musical gathering and ritual immersion in the *mayim chayim* (living waters) of the Bay! We'll gather on the sand at Albany Beach, located on the Albany Bulb at the west end of Buchanan Street in Albany. Following some shared singing and reflection, we'll enter the waters of the Bay for a ritual immersion. Wear your bathing suit under your clothes, bring a towel and warm layers—the water is cold!

The Amazing High Holy Day Race!

The High Holy Days are coming and it is time for us to begin our High Holy Day journey together! From the month of [Elul](#) (last month of the Jewish calendar) leading us into Rosh HaShanah, through Sukkot and Simchat Torah, this period of time calls us to reflect, learn, and experience Judaism both individually and as a community!

Welcome to the Amazing High Holy Day Race! Over this period of time we will join together for some (friendly) competition and great *ruach* (spirit) as we make our way through a series of challenges that reflect on the High Holy Day season! [Click here for an example Challenge Card!](#) **The top three teams will receive some amazing prizes from some of your favorite East Bay establishments!**

Join us in this fun and engaging way to experience the High Holy Day Season of 5782! Here is how to get started:

1. Pick your team! Your team can include your family, can be a team of 1, can be a team of multiple individuals or families joining together!
2. Once you have picked your team, come up with a creative team name! (10 points!)
3. Fill out this [simple form \(less than 30 seconds\) to register your team!](#) (5 points just for signing up!)
4. Spend this High Holy Day season making your way through a list of challenges. Many challenges will require a picture to document the experience. **On Thursday, August 9th, the YAFE Team will send each team captain a Challenge Card for you to document your challenges and mark completions.** [Click here for an example Challenge Card!](#)
5. We will begin the Amazing Race with our **Opening Ceremonies on Saturday, August 28th from 3:30-5:00pm at Congregation Beth El** and conclude with the **Closing Ceremonies on Tuesday, September 28th at 5:30pm**, as part of our Simchat Torah celebration!

S'lichot Program & Service

Saturday, August 28th, 7:30 pm (New Time!)

The High Holy Days, known in Hebrew as the *Yamiim Nora'im*— the ten Days of Awe— are preceded by S'lichot, when we first hear the familiar and powerful words and melodies of the season. S'lichot is always observed on the Saturday evening the week before Rosh Hashanah. We will begin with Havdalah, and then will explore together the idea of *T'shuva* (returning) across Jewish life and thought, engaging with a spectrum Jewish thinkers, from the Torah to today. We will prepare for our own season of transformation as we see the bimah transformed for the New Year. The S'lichot program and service will be mixed presence (both in person and on Zoom). Everyone is welcome! [Click here to join on Zoom!](#)

Elul Reflections with the Union for Reform Judaism!

This year, the Reform Movement has put together a free online reflection resource to help prepare oneself for the High Holy Day season. [Click here](#) to learn more and participate!

The Shofar Project: A Four-Week Online Program of Awakening and Renewal

August 8 – September 6

The Shofar Project is a **free** program open to people of all backgrounds who want to make this a year of continued awakening, responsiveness, renewal, and transformation. It takes place during the Hebrew month of Elul, a traditional period for intensive spiritual reflection, introspection, and moral accounting. [Additional information and signup.](#)

Each week of The Shofar Project you will be introduced to a teaching by a member of the IJS faculty that frames the theme for the week's practice (email arrives each Sunday). After you register, you will also receive access to over 25 free online events that explore the themes of Shemitah described below:

- A live 30-minute daily (Monday-Friday) Jewish mindfulness meditation practice that includes a teaching and guided meditation led by IJS staff and outstanding guest instructors from various Jewish denominations
- A live 30-minute "Torah Study to Sustain The Soul" session focused on a classic Jewish text with Rabbi Jonathan Slater each Tuesday
- A live 45-minute Jewish yoga session each Monday led by Cantor Elizabeth Shammash

The Shofar Project is offered in partnership with the Institute for Jewish Spirituality, the Union for Reform Judaism, the Central Conference of American Rabbis and other partners. Participate in as many program elements as you'd like as often as you can. Enrollment is free and open to all. [Sign up here.](#)

Further resources for personal exploration and preparation for the High Holy Day season can be found on the High Holy Days pages of ReformJudaism.org, Judaismunbound.com, and MyJewishLearning.com.