



17 July 2019

A letter from our Shul President, Shelly Mintz

Dear Members and Friends of B'nai Israel Congregation:

If you are seeking a truly memorable religious experience for the upcoming High Holidays, may we suggest you join us at historic B'nai Israel Congregation where individuals, friends and families of all backgrounds and levels of observance are welcome and where you will be part of all the vibrancy, joy and community of Judaism. The High Holy Days are a wonderful time for families and friends to celebrate together at the Synagogue. Whether you are shomer Shabbos, or you've learned and forgotten, or the High Holy Days experience is new to you, we invite you to join us for a unique and beautiful experience.

Our spiritual leader, Rabbi Etan Mintz, will preside over our services and deliver insightful sermons about personal spirituality, social morality, and our role as Jewish people in the modern world, words especially appropriate for the High Holiday season. He will be joined on the Bima by Cantor Allan Berman. Cantor Berman is a lyric tenor trained in voice and music at Peabody Institute of Music, University of Maryland, Towson State University and under the direction of Cantors Abraham Denburg and Daniel Gildar. He has traveled throughout the world performing and davening for many Shuls and programs for over 20 years. He is a member of the Cantorial Council of America and B'nai Israel is honored to claim his great talent for our High Holiday services.

A lot has happened this past year at B'nai Israel. A generous grant and your donations enabled us to remodel our kitchen and install new carpeting in the entryway. Our concert series in partnership with Creative Alliance continued, and a new collaboration with the Gordon Center has generated a series of chamber music concerts. Our popular Torah Café has had many inspiring sessions. Thanks to generous donations of time and talent by young members we have had a successful Ulpan and classes in leyning. Our culture committee is working hard to schedule additional events for the upcoming year.

Most importantly, the Synagogue is busy preparing for Descendant's Day. This is actually a series of events honoring our history and unique place in Maryland Jewish life as the oldest continually operating synagogue in the State. Under the leadership of Rabbi Mintz and our staff, interns and members have been busy searching for and reaching out to the descendants of members going back to the Synagogue's founding in 1873. A variety of activities are planned throughout 2019 and 2020 honoring and commemorating the specific history of B'nai Israel and the general history of Baltimore's Jewish population that, at one time, centered around Jonestown. All culminating in a Shabbaton in the spring of 2020.

Please check the accompanying forms for ordering seats and sending in your membership dues. Most of the membership levels now include High Holiday reserved seats as part of the membership fee. Please consider this year upgrading to one of our Sustaining or Society level memberships to help sustain vibrant Jewish life downtown. Your membership contribution is needed more than ever this year as, like so many houses of worship, B'nai Israel has had to implement security measures to address the increased risks faced by houses of faith. While our first and foremost concern is the safety of all who enter in peace, we have also diligently tried to prevent the new security costs from diminishing our primary goal of serving our community. But to maintain a safe, secure, stable environment while simultaneously continuing the Synagogue's spiritual and community activities requires your help.

The same form also allows you to submit listings for our Book of Remembrance used during the year each time the Yizkor Memorial Prayer is recited. For those with nostalgic ties to B'nai Israel who worship elsewhere, may we suggest you consider an Associate Membership and a contribution to the Book of Remembrance in memory of loved ones who have come before to this beautiful shul. Please also be a part of the Descendant's Day events.

We hope you enjoy the summer and yet find the time to respond to our High Holy Days offerings. For more information, please contact our office or check out our website.

Looking forward to seeing you in shul.

Sincerely,

Shelly Mintz

Shelly E. Mintz
President