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B’nai Zion Officers & Staff

Head Rabbi Scott Rosenberg
Rabbi Emeritus Stephen A. Leon
Executive Director Debra Pazos
Program Manager Denise Tolentino
President Shane Lipson
1st Vice President Edward Dubowitz
2nd Vice President Kristin Kimmelman
3rd Vice President Felicia Rubin
Treasurer Fred Hirsh
Secretary Dora Roe
USY President Julian Cohen
USY Advisor Consuelo Madero
Sisterhood President Debbie Cohen

Synagogue Services

Weekday Services:
Monday - Friday 7:00 am
Monday - Thursday 6:30 pm

Shabbat Services:
Friday evening 6:15 pm
Torah Study 9:00 am
Shabbat Service 9:30 am

Saturday Mincha followed by Seudah
Shlesheet, Ma’ariv, Havdalah
Jan 5, 12, & 19 5:00 pm
Jan 26 5:15 pm

Sunday Services:
8:30 am
By request only: 5:00 pm (contact the
office by the Monday before)

Please Join us
For Services

Office Closures

New Year’s Day January 01
Martin Luther King Day January 21

The Messenger is published monthly.
DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT
ISSUE OF THE MESSENGER IS
January 15TH

Articles and photos should be emailed to the synagogue office at:
programs@cbzep.org

Congregation B’nai Zion
805 Cherry Hill
El Paso, TX 79912
915-833-2222
www.congregationbnaizion.org

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The first Mishnah in the tractate Rosh Hashana teaches us that we, as Jews, celebrate New Years four times a year. The first of Nissan is the New Year for Kings and seasons. The first of Elul is the New Year for tithing animals. The first of Tishre is the New Year for the counting of years, Sabbaticals and Jubilees. Interestingly, the date of the fourth New Year is a matter of debate.

The School of Shammai claims the first of Shevat is the New Year for trees, while the School of Hillel claims it is the 15th of Shevat. We know that the School of Hillel won this debate, but why the difference?

When I try to answer this question, I think the answer lies in the difference between the first of the month and the fifteenth with regard to the moon. The fifteenth day of any Hebrew month is the full moon. The sky is brightest and the most light can be seen through the darkness. On the first of the month, there is no moon and the sky has the least illumination.

In setting the New Year for trees on the fifteenth day of the month, the School of Hillel was promoting a tradition of light and hope. In the middle of winter, in the darkest season of the year, at a time where darkness is most felt, the School of Hillel understood the need to associate the coming spring and the celebration of the trees with the brightest day of the month.

Tu B’Shevat is a holiday about optimism. It is a celebration of growth and rebirth. It is a reminder of the power of life to renew itself. This message, the School of Hillel understood, was a necessary one not only in antiquity, but throughout time.

This year, Tu B’shevat falls on the day that we as Americans observe Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Monday, January 21, 2019. On June 5, 1963, Dr. King published an essay called Strength to Love where he says “Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that.” As I read this quote this year, I celebrate how similar its message is to the lesson of the School of Hillel’s message about Tu B’Shevat.

So when we look up in the sky on Sunday night, January 20th, we should remember this teaching of the School of Hillel and deepen our appreciation of Tu B’Shvat, the New Year for trees, and also honor the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. who wove some very Jewish teachings into his life and preaching.

-Rabbi Scott Rosenberg
Members and Friends,

Over the past several months, I’ve had the opportunity to talk of the great strides our Community is making. Programs abound. Membership has increased. Engagement in the spiritual life of our Community is incredible. I’m writing just after the tremendously successful back to back Chanukah evenings, the first featuring performances by our children followed by the dinner with comedian Joel Chasnoff. And in about a month, volunteers will be hosting our always successful Casino Night. Our office staff is keeping us moving forward and the energy of Rabbi Rosenberg seems unmatched.

In fact, we have just begun a 3 year effort that charts our future. New Rabbi. New Executive Director. New Programs. New Outreach. New Membership Program. New Talmud Torah Curriculum. And we are seeing results. We’ve had many new members join, including 2 families that previously left and were excited to rejoin. We’re refocused on making Conservative Judaism relevant and welcoming all who wish to practice it.

We are also taking a new approach to budget and endowment. Financially successful Congregations have worked to build an endowment fund – a fund of money whose interest is used to support the budget without touching the core amount. Around the country, many Congregations are relying on endowments and, closer to home, the El Paso Jewish Community Foundation has proved this model works.

With the leadership of a small finance committee, and in conjunction with this multi-year strategy, CBZ is embarking on creating a new, permanent endowment to meet our needs and those of our future generations. This ambitious plan aims to raise $5 million with commitments over a 5-year period. The endowment will be securely locked within the El Paso Jewish Community Foundation so the money is forever a source to support CBZ. This is a very different approach to how CBZ has previously managed funds raised through major giving campaigns and prevents the fund corpus from ever being consumed.

Over the next several months, we’ll be inviting everyone to inscribe their names into the permanent future of our Community. There is a place for everyone to be a part of this 5-year plan, through gifts large and small. And, contributions have already begun coming in. An initial launch has achieved $1.5 million in commitments. I, along with many others, am confident in our future. Our Board members and trustees are undertaking the work of reaching out to you for your support. When they do, greet them openly. This is not simply a stand-alone endowment campaign; it is one component among a number of changes we’re undertaking strategically, operationally, and financially.

Some 40 years ago, our Community embarked on an ambitious plan which led to the construction of our building. Now, today, a similar plan by our Community will ensure our existence for years to come.

Sincerely yours,

-Shane Lipson
Chanukah at B’nai Zion was particularly fun and festive this year. Our Talmud Torah students, along with students from EPJA and TMS, brought the community together on the 2nd night of Chanukah as they sang, danced, beat drums and performed in skits. The evening was topped off with delicious latkes and sufganiyot.

Many thanks to the Rubin Family who once again sponsored a Chanukah dinner for the congregation. More than 260 people enjoyed an outstanding meal and a wonderful evening on the last night of Chanukah. Rabbi Leon opened the event by leading us in singing traditional Chanukah songs. After dinner, Rabbi Rosenberg invited members who joined B’nai Zion in 2018 to light their Menojis as he formally introduced them and welcomed them to our synagogue family. Then Joel Chasnoff regaled us with his hilarious comedy bringing Chanukah 5779 to a close on the happiest of notes.

Last November, Rabbi Rosenberg and Shane Lipson, our president, sent a letter to every member of our congregation asking each to support the perpetual care of our cemetery. According to Jewish tradition, a cemetery is a holy place more sacred even than a synagogue. For Jews, the care of cemeteries is an essential religious and social responsibility. The Talmudic saying “Jewish gravestones are fairer than royal palaces” (Sanh. 96b; cf.) reflects the care that should be given to Jewish graves and cemeteries.

The entire Jewish community shares responsibility for the protection, repair, care and maintenance of their cemeteries. At one time, we would have volunteered to take care of the cemetery ourselves, but today that is not practical. Instead, we employ cemetery caretakers. The total cost of cemetery care, primarily the cost of caretakers and the water bill, is about $60,000 each year. As the administrator of the Cemetery Perpetual Care, I am very happy to report that we’ve had a terrific response to Rabbi’s and Shane’s letter. As of the end of December, we were nearly 15% to our goal of $60,000.

To all who have participated and to those who are planning to, I quote Rabbi Abraham Ginsberg who stated at the Interdisciplinary Conference on Jewish Cemeteries in Europe in 2015 that it is “our obligation to ensure the protection and preservation of Jewish graves, wherever they may be located. In the same way, we are assured that the souls of the deceased are indebted to those who act for the protection of their graves and intercede on their behalf in the higher worlds.” And I thank you.

May your 2019 be filled with love, family, good health and prosperity.

-Debra Pazos
Headline 11/26/2018 “Landlord Tells Hackney Haredi Tenants their Mezuzahs Must Be Removed”

This is the headline that greeted me from JewishPress.com last November 26th and, while troubling, it is only one article in a daily series of stupidity, ignorance, and hatred that is reported each and every day. If you would like to read the article, it can be found at: http://www.jewishpress.com/news/global/uk/landlord-tells-hackney-haredi-tenants-their-mezuzahs-must-be-removed/2018/11/26/.

I started to think about this affront to those receiving the letters or, rather, demands and on a personal level, as well. The article made me revisit the how and why of Mezuzahs and appreciate the message they convey to all who enter and leave a building (or, at least, those who understand). The custom of affixing a mezuzah to the doorpost fulfills the biblical commandment: “You shall write them upon the doorposts (inscribe them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates) (Deuteronomy 6:9). The mezuzah distinguishes a Jewish home and is a visible sign and symbol to all those who enter that a sense of Jewish identity and commitment exists in that household.

Digging a little deeper and perhaps more in line with the hatred and violence we see today, are discussions about the Mezuzah’s purpose as protection of the house and its inhabitants. The word “mezuzah” occurs in the bible the very first time in the account of Exodus before the last plague smiting the Egyptians’ firstborn when G-d forewarned the Jewish people to mark their doorposts with the blood of the sacrificial lamb. There are a great number of articles discussing the power and purpose of the Mezuzah, but what strikes me is the physicality of the Mezuzah. I thought about how we view the use of the Mezuzah by the physical act of coming or going through a doorway and touching our fingers to it.

We don’t place a mezuzah on windows and nothing is said in Exodus about the Angel of Death entering through the window or other openings. But that was thousands of years ago. Today we do have a problem with evil entering though windows not the glass kind; the Microsoft kind. Wouldn’t it be nice if a new antivirus/anti-hate, antisemitism, anti-fraud program called “Mezuzah” was designed to protect us when working or playing on the internet? Then again, had all this been considered at its inception, perhaps the program would have been called “Doors” rather than Windows. I guess “Windows” is an appropriate name because it lets us see things, but not act physically on them.

The problem with all of this is that a physical commitment to our beliefs and backgrounds must exist alongside the symbolic. Many of us have fallen victim to expressing in words our disgust for what’s going on in the world without taking action. Blaming others for our failures, falling prey to the belief that we can be all things Jewish without the physical action to solidify who and what we are to our spouses, children, friends does not fulfill the commandment.

LET’S DO SOMETHING PHYSICAL

Take some time, help us make a Minyan, volunteer at the Synagogue, take a study course and share these experiences with others. Start by placing Mezuzah on your doors, help your children do the same. Teach them the difference between internalizing their Judaism and experiencing it. If you so desire, send pictures of the Mezuzah on your doors to the Tourism boards in Europe expressing our pride in ourselves.

-Fred Hirsh
Teams maintain a special cohesive bond which permits greater accomplishments. As “Sisters,” we have worked for the betterment of all congregants to “reach out” and partner with other groups. During the school year, Sisterhood’s “touch” extended to our youth. This commitment is demonstrated with Talmud Torah through the sponsorship of the Tu B’Shevat Seder, Israeli dance lessons with Dora Roe and Bar/Bat Mitzvah gifts. Also, Sisterhood plans to assist BSUZY through a dedicated fundraiser along with continued support for College Connection. Yet, our reach is not limited to those groups.

Sisterhood’s very existence depends upon Congregation B’nai Zion. As an auxiliary group, we would not be able to provide as many mitzvot without congregational support. Moving towards the Sentimental Journey (centennial celebration), Sisterhood is extremely grateful for all B’nai Zion has provided. In return, we pledge to do more for the synagogue. During January, the B’nai Zion Sisterhood Directory will be distributed to all congregants. In addition, many of our “Sisters” will lead the sponsored Shabbat (if you are interested in participating, contact Dora Roe (doramroe@yahoo.com or 915-613-8055 to text). Likewise, we will join the “CBZ Team” through the Purim Project and Casino Night fundraisers as well as begin kitchen equipment replacement. However, Sisterhood remains “true” to its spirit with programs and events for “Sisters.”

Throughout 99 years, Sisterhood has maintained diverse educational, religious, social and tikkun olam activities. This will continue, along with opportunities for team members to develop leadership skills. More importantly, we provide friendship that only “Sisters” share. Plan to join a team this year!

In Sisterhood,

-Debbie Cohen

Latkes & Vodka

El Paso Children’s Donations

Sisterhood Shabbat!

Please Join Us!

Saturday, January 26, 2019
If you would like to participate in the service, please contact Dora Roe at doramroe@yahoo.com or 915-613-8055 to text
Security Committee Update

At Congregation B’nai Zion, your safety and security is one of our top priorities. We want you to come to services and not have to worry. In the aftermath of the Pittsburg incident, we formed a security team and continue to expand it. Although we don’t expect to ever have an emergency, we want to be prepared and take every precaution possible to protect you, your family, and all our guests while we continue to have an inviting community. This committee is reviewing all aspects of security and safety. We are in communication with various agencies that are helping us achieve our goal of creating a safe place of worship. We have had, and continue to have, meetings, conference calls, trainings, and site visits.

We have made policy changes and recommendations to the board and to the office. One such change was moving Friday evening and Saturday morning services to the Sanctuary and keeping the doors locked during services. We understand that for some people this may seem like a nuisance, but we are doing it for the safety and well-being of all our members and guests. We are also working with local and federal law enforcement and the fire department to establish procedures for any possible emergency. Soon, we will distribute these procedures, along with emergency exit plans, to all congregants.

Recently, Raymond Mesta, David Sabal, Dora Roe, and Friend of Shul Jeri Hallberg attended the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) certification training hosted by the El Paso Office of Emergency Management and by FEMA. Edward “Doobie” Dubowitz, our 1st Vice President, who has been an active member of the local CERT for over a year, was one of the instructors. This certification class includes basic firefighting, first aid, search and rescue procedures, and ends with an extremely realistic emergency simulation that puts all the things learned in the course to the test and puts it all into practice. We are working on having this course offered again, this time at the synagogue. We need at least 20 participants. If you would like to join the next CERT class or want to be a member of the security committee, contact Doobie at edubowitz@gmail.com.

Remember, we are all responsible for the safety and security of our Shul. If you see something, say something.

*Photography by Edward “Doobie” Dubowitz*
SHABBAT JUNIOR CONGREGATION
An exciting Shabbat program just for kids while you attend services!

EARLY ONEG
From Sukkot To Tu B’shvat
CBZ brings to you...
The EtrogCello Oneg Shabbat

Featuring the fruits of Tu B’shvat

Friday, January 18th at 5:30 pm

TALMUD TORAH

Tu B’Shvat families are invited to a family Tu B’shvat seder and dinner on Wednesday, January 23, 2019

Menu: Traditional Israeli meal featuring the fruits of Tu B’shvat

Students meet at 4:00 pm / Families join them at 5:30 pm

Sponsored by Congregation B’nai Zion and CBZ Sisterhood

RSVP by Wednesday, January 16
Community Chanukah Event

We had a wonderful time watching the students perform this year for our Community Chanukah Event. The students were from Congregation B’nai Zion Talmud Torah, the El Paso Jewish Academy and the Temple Mt. Sinai Religious School. Morah Esther Kuchinsky worked extra hard to write and produce the program this year. It included prayers, songs, dances and skits. We all joined in the lighting of the menorah outside, then went in to enjoy the program and ended with wonderful latkes and sufganiyot prepared by the CBZ kitchen. It was a fun opportunity for our community to gather and enjoy the children.

- Kara Jones
Interim Head of School / El Paso Jewish Academy

Congregation B’nai Zion’s Chavurah Oneg Shabbat

Congregation B’nai Zion was excited to welcome more than 65 people to its first Chavurah gathering on November 30. This getting-to-know-you event was a follow up to this summer’s event when members filled out information forms that helped the Chavurah Committee pair families and individuals with community members who have common interests.

The early oneg preceded Kabbalat services and provided an opportunity for each group to gather as a Chavurah for the first time. We were also able to help people form new Chavurot or join some of the newly founded groups. Delicious appetizers contributed to an atmosphere of Shabbat and fellowship.

This Chavurah Oneg was just the first of many upcoming community Chavurah events. Between events, groups will create their own fun with planned activities and social events. If you haven’t yet joined a Chavurah, don’t miss out. Contact B’nai Zion at (915) 833-2222 or email us at programs@cbzep.org and we will help you find a Chavurah.

The Chavurah Oneg Shabbat was sponsored by the Jewish Community Foundation of El Paso.
Chanukah Celebration at Congregation B’nai Zion

On Sunday, December 9, 2018, Congregation B’nai Zion held its annual Chanukah dinner with over 260 members of the Jewish community in attendance. The evening commenced with the lighting of the menorah and continued with a delightful dinner. During the program, B’nai Zion welcomed its new members for 2018. The evening ended with a hysterical performance by Joel Chasnoff who had everyone in tears of laughter.

A special thanks to Stanlee & Jerry Rubin for generously sponsoring our Chanukah celebration.

Photography by Edward “Doobie” Dubowitz
Thank you to the following members for sponsoring:

**Saturday Kiddush Lunch:**
11/24 Henri Rafael – In loving memory of Soraya Rafael

Many thanks to Stanlee and Jerry Rubin for sponsoring our Chanukah Dinner.

Thank you to Mike Batkin for generously dedicating the Lions of Judah stained glass window in the Memorabilia Room in memory of his son Joshua.

For many years, our Sunday evening minyan has rarely been attended. Our Ritual Committee discussed this and decided to try offering Sunday evening minyan only on request. Effective immediately, if a member is saying Kaddish or observing Yahrzeit and requests a Sunday evening minyan, we will gladly work with that member to help make a minyan. To arrange for a Sunday evening minyan, e-mail or call the synagogue office on or before the Monday before the requested minyan date. We hope that this suspension will be temporary and that you, our members, will choose to support us so that a regular Sunday evening minyan can resume.

**In Honor Of**

Lauren Davis - We enjoyed the Shabbat dinner on 11/9. Thanks for having us.
Caren and Jules Szanton

Hal, Jack, Sandy and the entire Peitzer family – Congratulations on the marriage of Lisa to Sam Shkolnik
Irwin, Beth Debra, Maurice and Shayna Kurland

Fraker Family - Get Well Soon
Jeffrey & Catherine Weislow

**In Memory Of**

**General Donation**
Sidney Zaben from Richard & Eileen Armour
Jean Bayer from Jack & Ruja Cohen
Joan Feinberg from Arlene Feinberg
Amelia De La Rosa from Stanley & Elena Goldman
Sara Hauptman from Guy & Margie Hauptman
Samuel Metzger from Dr. Boris Kaim & Fifi Heller-Kaim
Benjamin Kleiman from Gil Kimmelman

Yochel Kofsky from Herbert Kofsky
Rowena and Solomon Heller from Anita Kolleeen
Ida Epstein from Sherman & Sandra Levenson
Herman Morgan from Arvin & Beverly Robinson
Rebecca Morgan from Arvin & Beverly Robinson
Bluma Robinson from Arvin & Beverly Robinson
William Robinson from Arvin & Beverly Robinson
Ida Epstein from Annalie Rollins
Howard Liebman from Stanlee & Jerry Rubin

**Cemetery Perpetual Care**
Esther E. Mintz from John & Debbie Johnson
Karen Licht from Kenneth & Joan Korn
Mary Koortz from Bertie Siegelman
WILD WEST CASINO NIGHT
at B’nai Zion

Saturday February 9, 2019
7:15pm

Professional Dealers
Villa Band
Silent Auction
Appetizers & Open Bar

Western attire encouraged!

$45 per person
$60 per person at the door
Advance tickets available online
& at the B’nai Zion office

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SIMCHAS

Birthdays

1/1
Judah Lesser

1/2
Doris Gluck
Simon Eisenberg

1/3
Danielle Hunter

1/4
Judah Eisenberg
Cherryll Lieberman
Daniel Paseornek

1/5
Eileen Armour
David Sabal

1/6
Robert Jacobson

1/7
Wilma Salzman
Alison Westermann

1/13
Ann Gronich
Eliseo Pena

1/14
Ilisa Naparstek
Marvin Rubin
Bernard Felsen

1/15
Edward Dubowitz
Beth Lipson

1/16
Beverly Robinson

1/19
Mario Aranda
Sandra Levenson

1/20
Julio Sidransky
Lenore Kobren
Benny Hunter

1/21
Benita Neumann

1/23
Guadalupe Ramos
Karen Kaplowitz
Lilian Slovick

1/24
Sam Kobren
Laura Tolentino

1/25
Mildred Levitt

1/26
Dr. Todd Reiter

1/27
Harvey Plaut

1/28
Arvin Robinson

1/29
Rose Kupfer
Audrey Lavi

1/30
Alice Kasner

1/31
Emilie Swartz
Dora M. Roe
Shaya Holland
Stephen A. Valdes

Anniversaries

1/2
Bernard & Molly Goldberg
Richard & Robin Krasne

1/4
Gail Slater & Mario Aranda

1/6
Carl & Joyce Lieb

1/7
Don & Lynette Brown
Richard & Leslie Otis

1/8
Allan & Amy Goldfarb

1/9
Richard & Leslie Grodin

1/12
Andrew & Peggy Feinberg

1/15
Louis & Miriam Rosenbaum

1/16
Carl & Natalie Scoggin
Nat & Linda Holzer

1/22
Robert & Sara Shiloff

1/29
Meyer & Melinda Marcus

Contact the Office to advertise in The Messenger and see the results for yourself.
1/01  24 Tevet
Evelynne Belford
William Beleck
Miriam Suchowiecky
Rose Wilk
Blanche Felsen
Daniel Zurio

1/02  25 Tevet
Joseph Altus
Nellie Cherno
Rosa Maurer
Bernard Gluck
Don Goldman
Vivian Katz
Theresa Anastasia Paul

1/03  26 Tevet
Steven Krisel
Batya Yellin

1/04  27 Tevet
Esther Claire Brown
Irving Gulbas
Molly de Mayo

1/05  28 Tevet
Irving Rubin
Elisa Robinson McKleroy

1/06  29 Tevet
Mordecai Aaronson
Herman Golden
Julius Feiner

1/07  1 Shevat
Leah Goldberg
Louis Rubin
Idelle Rubin
Magda Schaechner

1/08  2 Shevat
Phyllis Chonoles
Chaye Heller
Bertha Edelman
Mary Horowitz

1/09  3 Shevat
Julius Cohen
Sara Gluck
Manuel Corral

1/10  4 Shevat
Franklin Slusser
Michael Zurio

1/11  5 Shevat
Albert Nedow
Joel Kleinfeld
Rosa Wernicky

1/12  6 Shevat
Jacob Heller
Nochum Veta
G. Fred Kahn

1/13  7 Shevat
Sara Berg
Betty Nedow

1/14  8 Shevat
David Grodin

1/15  9 Shevat
Yetta Deener
Sadie Reiter
David Grunberger
Grace Ellowitz
Solomon Heller

1/16  10 Shevat
Adam Schnall
Jeannette Falber
Elizabeth Stein
Fay Cohen
Shirley Cohen

1/18  12 Shevat
Isaac Ratusnik
Phyllis Fruthandler

1/19  13 Shevat
Meyer Hutman

1/20  14 Shevat
Jean Feinberg
Oscar Eisenberg
Mercedes Sabal
Pola Kimmelman
Jean Feinberg
Edward Weislow

1/21  15 Shevat
Jacquez Guez
Max Bellman
Morris Cohen

1/22  16 Shevat
Milton Liebman

1/23  17 Shevat
Hedwig Eichenwald
Carl Weil
Bina Schlusselberg

1/24  18 Shevat
Morris Schottland
Shirley Schecter

1/25  19 Shevat
Rose Naparstek
Rudy Burgheim

1/26  20 Shevat
Edith Gronich Hirsch
Albert Stark

1/27  21 Shevat
Louis Golden
Rebecca Sheffer
Sam Fox
Herbert Roth
Lorraine Sanov Felsen
Frieda Wolf

1/28  22 Shevat
Cecelia Silbert
Charles Silbert
Kathleen Green

1/29  23 Shevat
Jacob Horn
Zalman Goldberg
Ruth Kaplowitz
Paul Burian

1/30  24 Shevat
Benjamin Levenfus
Norman Belford

1/31  25 Shevat
Shirley Weil
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