**Shabbat Shalom.**

We are happy that you have joined us as CHILD celebrates becoming a BAR Mitzvah. We hope that this booklet will enhance your enjoyment of our service. BAR Mitzvah literally means “SON of the commandment.” Upon becoming a BAR Mitzvah, CHILD is held responsible for HIS actions and is obligated to observe the commandments of Jewish law. Today CHILD will wear a tallit (prayer shawl) for the first time as a symbol of HIS new obligations. In addition to being held responsible for HIS actions, CHILD has now reached the age where HE has the right to lead religious services and count in a minyan (the minimum number of people needed to say certain prayers as a community).

**The Synagogue:** The focus of the sanctuary is the Aron Kodesh, or Ark, located on the eastern wall, directing our attention toward Jerusalem. The Aron Kodesh contains the Torah scrolls, the Five Books of Moses handwritten on parchment. Its beautiful doors depict special ritual items used throughout the year, such as a Menorah, and above the Ark itself is a depiction of the Ten Commandments. Above the Aron Kodesh is the Ner Tamid (eternal light).

**The Service:** Congregation Beth El is fortunate to have many talented and committed congregants who lead prayers and read from the Torah. You will see several different people participate in today’s service. The Shabbat morning service is divided into four major sections.

**Pesukei D’Zimra:** The preliminary service consists of blessings, psalms, and prayers of praise and gratitude to God. It establishes the mood for the rest of the prayers that follow.

**Shacharit:** The morning service includes some of our most significant prayers. The Barchu, a call to prayer, is followed by the Shema, the oldest fixed daily prayer in Judaism, which expresses Judaism’s belief in the oneness of God. Another is the Amidah, a quiet personal series of prayers said while standing and facing east. Congregants sit down as they finish the prayer at their own pace; we stand again when the reader repeats the Amidah aloud.

**Torah Service:** The public reading from the Torah is the central part of our morning worship. CHILD will lead the congregation in the Torah service. Accompanied by HIS parents, CHILD will carry the Torah through the sanctuary. Jews show their devotion by reaching out to touch the Torah mantle with the fringes of their tallitot or the edge of a prayer book and then kissing it. We remain standing until the Torah is placed on the reader’s table. The Torah is divided up into 54 parshiyot (portions), one of which is read each week. (We double up portions a few times a year.)

The weekly parasha is divided into seven sections, chanted by different Torah readers. Each Torah reader must chant the section accurately without relying on vowels, punctuation, musical notation, or separation of paragraphs, none of which are included in the Torah scroll. Before each a section, a person will be called by his or her Hebrew name for the honor of an aliyah (going up) to recite the blessings before and after the reading. After the last section of the Torah is read, a congregant will hold it up for all to see.

The rabbi will pronounce a blessing over CHILD, and the congregation responds by singing congratulations and tossing soft candy at CHILD, symbolizing the wish for a sweet life of learning.

After the Torah reading, CHILD will speak about the meaning of this week’s parasha (portion). CHILD will then chant the Haftarah (additional reading), a selection from the Prophets. After CHILD chants the Haftarah and the blessings following it, he/she will carry the Torah through the sanctuary to return it to the Aron Kodesh.

**Musaf:** The final part of the service, Musaf (“additional”), includes a repetition of the Amidah prayer. At the end of the Musaf service, CHILD and our family will join the rabbi at the wine table to say the traditional blessings over wine and bread that precede the Kiddush luncheon following the service.

We invite the congregation to join us following services at the Kiddush in honor of CHILD’s BAR Mitzvah.

**Attire:** All males are expected, out of respect, to wear a head covering (known as a “Kippah” or a “Yarmulke”). Although not expected to do so, women increasingly observe this custom.  All who ascend the Bimah for a ritual honor are expected to wear a head covering. It is customary for Jewish men to wear a Tallit, or prayer shawl, at morning Services.  Many Jewish women choose to wear a Tallit as well. The fringes of the Tallit symbolize the 613 commandments.

**Books:** The Siddur, or prayer book (blue cover), means “order” and contains prayers composed by Biblical authors, as well as Jewish poets through the ages. The Siddur is read from right to left, as is Hebrew. The Conservative Jewish Service is conducted largely in Hebrew, the language of the Bible and the revived language of modern Israel. The Chumash (from the Hebrew word for “five”, for the Five Books of Moses) refers to the maroon covered volume that contains the Torah in book form, conveniently divided into weekly readings.

**Decorum:** Shabbat (“Sabbath”) is a time of worship, study and spiritual tranquility.  Thus, cameras, cell phones, and non-medical electronic devices are not used in the sanctuary on Shabbat.  (**Please set your cell phone to the vibrate mode during the Service**. If you need to make/take an urgent phone call, please use the large coatroom in the lobby area, or simply go outdoors.) Similarly, there is no lighting of flames or writing of any kind.  Further, it is customary not to applaud during the Service. **The Shabbat morning service lasts close to three hours.** The Service is sufficiently informal as to allow one to leave and return to the Sanctuary during Services. However, please try to do so when the Ark is closed, or during breaks in the Torah reading.

**BAR Mitzvah Honors**

Opening the Ark

Aliyot – [five, including parents]

Raising the Torah

Maftir Aliyah – CHILD

Hagbah (lifting Torah)

Gelilah (binding Torah)

Holding the Torah (optional)

Prayer for the Country

Prayer for Israel

(Prayer for Peace--optional)

Closing the Ark

Candy distribution

Immediately following the Service, the entire congregation is invited to join us in the Social Hall for Kiddush.

We would like to thank …

The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Family

(list names)

**SHABBAT SHALOM! MAZAL TOV!!**

**BAR Mitzvah of \_\_\_\_**



**December 31, 2016**

**2 Tevet 5777**

**Congregation Beth El**

**Norwalk, Connecticut**