

## BI@Home: News from your home away from home

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### *In This Issue*

A Word from Rabbi Fellman – p. 1  
BI Centenary – p. 2  
President's Message – p.3  
Update on COVID and Mask Policy  
– p. 3  
Lady Rose Tea – p. 4  
Bagels and Books and Spring – p. 4  
Rabbi Capers Funnye – p. 4  
Yom Ha'Atzmaut/Israel Bonds  
Program – p. 5  
Lag B'Omer BBQ – p. 6  
Brotherhood Events – p. 6  
Shavuot – p. 7  
Annual Meeting – p. 7  
Pride Shabbat and LGBTQ Rights  
in Israel – p. 7  
Rimon: Working to Make Every  
Class Count – p. 8  
Tot Shabbat – p. 10  
Summer Reading for Children –  
p.10  
USY – p. 10  
Trees – p. 12  
Adult Education – p. 13  
Fiscal Year 2023 Dues – p. 16

### *A WORD FROM RABBI FELLMAN*

Dear BI Family,

These past two years have been hard. It is jarring to think that we just celebrated our third COVID Pesach.

I'm writing simply to let you know that *I see you* and the gigantic effort it has taken to endure this time, which has confronted congregants of all ages with terrific challenges.



Maybe you are the one I see “flexing” your schedules to send those pre-sunrise emails and squeezing in work calls after tucking little ones in at night. Maybe you are the one I see constantly rearranging your schedule to accommodate classroom closures, unreliable childcare, and trips to the doctor's office or COVID test site every time there is a runny nose. Maybe you are the one I see making more frequent visits to frail family members and elderly friends to give them extra help in these difficult times, or maybe you are the one I see agonizing over the struggles you are too far away to assist. Maybe you have felt isolated and lost trying to navigate technology that has changed all of the ways in which you have interacted with others up to now. Maybe you are the one I see trying to postpone family travel, or reconfigure *s'machot* (joyous occasions), welcome new babies to this world with family a screen, and wait years for a family member's dear embrace.

I'm pretty sure you are the one I see amid a whole crowd of us who feel pain at how acclimated we have become to this world of masks, perpetual testing, and fear of contact. I see our exhaustion from never-ending risk-assessment. I see our dimming spiritual selves, as we thirst for connection to That Which Is Greater without any space in our lives to push away our anxieties and invite even a moment of calm, let alone sacred encounter.

I see that for two years, you've known almost no rest—even God couldn't go a week without a day off.

As pandemic numbers continue to fluctuate and there seems to be no end in sight, the world seems ready to return to normal. It's easy to feel forgotten once again. While our COVID policies will continue to evolve with the ebb and flow of infection rates, know that *Your Beth Israel community has not forgotten you and we want you here in synagogue whenever you feel comfortable to join us*. If you're able to pray with us in the

sanctuary, feel safer when you are greeted at the door by congregants who are checking everyone's vax status. Take advantage of our two-three chair seating groups for added safety. Use our assisted hearing devices if you need to. Feel free to bring your children or grandchildren and invite them to enjoy the toys and books in our Sanctuary "Pray-ground" and parade together with us around the room as we return the Torah to the ark. As kids slowly rejoin our services, I have heard countless congregants remark how special it is to hear their voices again – we have missed their laughter, their running, and even their meltdowns.

I also hope that you would consider staying for lunch after services. Our kiddush tables offer the same friendly conversation you remember from the before-time, while setting the chairs a bit farther apart. And there is a seat for you! We have high-chairs and a child-height table available for your little ones. And if you're eager for outdoor gatherings, we too look forward to offering more chances for outdoor meet-ups as the weather warms and welcome your help in planning them.

With all you're holding, getting out the door to come to *shul* may seem like a far-off dream, and that's okay. But know also, that **we have no expectations of you once you're here**. You don't need to be perfectly dressed or perfectly behaved. You don't need to know what to do or where to go. For many of us, it's been two years since we've been in a prayer space in person. There is so much that we are still learning to navigate. Some of you have never been parents or grandparents in a non-COVID world. Some of you have never had to care for frail loved ones under these conditions, either – or most tragically, cope with a loss at a time when the people who would normally gather to comfort you are blocked by covid. We get that, and we're here to help support and acclimate you however we can.

The **omer**, the period of 7 weeks from Pesach to Shavuot is a time to reflect, count our blessings and remember that we are grounded; to the community, to Mitzvot, and literally to the earth we stand on. Counting the omer highlights the agricultural dimension of the festivals of Passover and Shavuot. In ancient times, a measure of the first barley to be harvested (called an omer) was brought to the Temple as an offering of thanksgiving and gratitude. We count on you and are here when you need or want to count on us.

**Whenever you're ready to return and bring yourselves back into our spaces, we're here.** Until then, know that **we see you**, know that we count on you, know that **we care for you**, and know that every day **your families and your Beth Israel community are blessed to have you**.

L'Shalom,



## ***BI Centenary is Coming!***

**Our beloved Beth Israel will have its 100<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2024. It will be here before you know it. We want our centenary to be a celebration for the ages. Interested in working on the planning of events and activities? Have stories and pictures of the old days at BI? Just want to help in any way that's needed? We have a committee that has started the planning, but there is still room for you! If you'd like to pitch in, contact Rabbi Fellman or Nancy Spitulnik ([spitulnn1@yahoo.com](mailto:spitulnn1@yahoo.com)).**

## ***RETROSPECTIVE ON THE PRESIDENCY***

### ***PAULA SOMMER, BETH ISRAEL PRESIDENT***

After Pesach, our festival of freedom, now we are counting up toward Shavuot, anticipating the revelation of receiving the Torah at Mount Sinai. Ah, revelation!

As I near the end of my presidency, I want to share how uplifting this experience has been for me. It has been a revelation to experience the heroic efforts of so many. I am reflecting on the amazing work of our creative rabbi, our dedicated staff, our committed officers, our devoted board members, our thoughtful committee chairs, and every congregant I've spoken with during this unusual time of COVID. So many have given so much, and we have emerged stronger for it. You have astonished me with your commitment.



Our community has had to be flexible to meet the challenges of the pandemic. All of you – the awesome heroes I just mentioned – have kept our BI family together. We have managed to worship together, to learn together, to celebrate together, and to offer comfort and support to one another during life's more challenging times. We have celebrated b'nai mitzvah, joined mourners, and socialized with our Brotherhood/Sisterhood summer BBQ, our neighborhood shofar blowing, Chanukah laughter, and Purim Spiel. We learned to identify trees in winter, as we walked around our beautiful campus. We learned from USY about food insecurity, and how our young people are helping locally. We enjoyed a wonderful crafting session, where our youth and their family members of all ages were inspired to personalize a page for their Haggadah. We welcomed a new Torah chanting cohort, and challenged ourselves with many educational offerings, even while staying safe on Zoom. We have listened to one another.

Your input has helped your leadership discern the safest mask policy throughout the pandemic, and we will continue to revisit this policy as conditions change, relaxing mask requirements for services and other events when we can safely do so. Meanwhile, we have started holding some meetings in the building in person.

I have always prioritized listening to all your individual voices. Your voice counts. Please join me at our annual meeting on Wednesday, June 8, at 7:30 p.m. as we share our stories of the last year and look forward to welcoming a new leadership team for our beloved shul, the team who will lead us to our 100th anniversary. I am grateful for all we have accomplished together and look forward to our bright future.

## ***UPDATE ON COVID AND MASK POLICY***

We are all looking forward to the day when we can pray together mask-free, our voices rising with no barriers, as we used to do in the Before Times. As we previously reported we would, we've revisited our COVID policies now that Pesach is over. With the increased virulence of the BA-2 Omicron variant, we will not be changing our policy at this time. As our Medical Advisor, Jeremy Golding, MD, FAAFP often says: we are tired of COVID but it's not tired of us! We will continue to require medical/surgical masks for congregants during services and will offer the current configuration of seats, which allows for household groupings distanced from others. Service leaders will be unmasked but distanced from the congregation and during the Torah service all participants (readers, gabbaim, ark openers, those having aliyot, etc) will remain masked because of the proximity. We continue to require that those who stay for kiddush lunch wear their masks until they are seated at their table, and replace the masks when done eating and drinking. We continue to monitor the situation and will relax our policies when it is safe to do so.

## **LADY ROSE TEA**

**Sunday, May 1 10:00 – 11:30**

BI Sisterhood and Social Action Committees are banding together for a program on combatting Period Poverty. Girls all over the world have to miss school during their menstrual periods for lack of affordable menstrual products. Barbara Trudel, founder of the organization Days for Girls, will speak. Her group sews and delivers reusable menstrual pads to girls globally.

Tea will be served. There is no charge for this program but we ask that all attendees bring an unopened box of menstrual products which will be given to South High School, so menstruating students can have access to them at no charge.



## **BAGELS AND BOOKS AND SPRING**

**Sunday, May 1 10:00 – Noon**

BI and PJ Library present Bagels and Books and Spring. Join us on Sunday, May 1, as BI Early Childhood Educator Rowan Mason leads a Bagels and Books session focusing on spring.



There will be books for all ages, a spring craft, and food, of course.

## **Worcester Black-Jewish Alliance**

**Please join us for a special program with Rabbi Capers Funnye**

**Rabbi Capers Funnye: My Sacred Journey to Judaism: Reimagining the Ties that Bind the Black and Jewish Communities**

**Monday, May 2, 7:00 pm**

**Location: Belmont A.M.E. Zion Church, 55 Illinois Street, Worcester**



Rabbi Funnye is an African-American Rabbi who leads the 200-member Beth Shalom B'nai Zaken Ethiopian Hebrew Congregation in Chicago. He happens to be the cousin of Michelle Obama. Rabbi Funnye will present on the path that led to his conversion to Judaism, as well as his perspective on the relationship between the Black and Jewish communities.

This event is partially funded by B'nai Brith Worcester Lodge 600 and is a LEAD Program.

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***Yom Haatzmaut/Israel Bonds Program, May 15 at noon  
Congregation B'nai Shalom, Westborough***

For the second year in a row, a young person from Congregation Beth Israel is the honoree at the Israel Bonds Event for Central Massachusetts, this year combined with a Yom Haatzmaut celebration held at Congregation B'nai Shalom. Let's plan on congratulating our own EmmaChaya Lipton-Praver by showing up in force!



May 15th 12PM  
at Congregation  
B'nai Shalom

Wear Blue & White  
for  
Israel's 74th Birthday

**YOM HA'ATZMAUT**  
*Israel Independence Day*

**Honoring  
Robin & Andy Feldman**  
Junior Honoree:  
EmmaChaya Lipton-Praver  
To RSVP visit:  
<https://jewishcentralmass.org/bonds>  
Suggested \$18 donation per family

- Israeli lunch
- Wine tasting
- Drum circle
- Dancing
- Activities for the whole family



## ***LAG B'OMER BARBECUE***

***May 19 5:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m.***

Come to BI on Thursday, May 19 for a community-wide festive event celebrating Lag B'Omer. Legend has it that in the time of Rabbi Akiva, his students were dying of plague by the thousands during the period of counting the Omer. On the 33<sup>rd</sup> day, though, the plague stopped. Lamed Gimmel – Lag – is the Hebrew number 33. To this day many Jews observe the period of the Omer as one of semi-mourning, when weddings are not held and hair is not cut. The restrictions are lifted, though, on the 33<sup>rd</sup> day and there are bonfires and feasting and celebration.



We've been dealing with our own "plague" in the form of the pandemic these last two years and our traditional Lag B'Omer celebration has also been "plagued" by bad weather. Last year we had a drive through barbecue, making the best of a rainy day when we weren't able to move inside. This year we are hoping for good weather, but will have an event, rain or shine.

We are planning a small fire pit and also a barbecue. There will be a professional storyteller, sidewalk chalk, and other outdoor activities and games. It's a chance to enjoy the spring, celebrate with neighbors and with members of the Jewish community from all over Central Massachusetts, and to have a kosher cookout without doing the cooking yourself. Leaders from the other synagogues and Jewish organizations in our area will participate in the planning. Mark it on your calendar now!

In case of inclement weather, we'll hold a modified event indoors. If we need to do that, we will observe safe COVID precautions as we do during kiddush lunches and other indoor events.

## ***BROTHERHOOD SHABBAT AND FJMC PICNIC AT ELM PARK***

***May 14 and 22***



Don't miss the annual Beth Israel Brotherhood Shabbat on Saturday, May 14. Brotherhood members and USY members will read Torah, lead services, and offer a Dvar Torah. There will be a special catered lunch sponsored by the Brotherhood.

Our local region of the Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs (of which BI Brotherhood is a part) is planning a picnic at Elm Park on May 22 at 1:00 p.m. Our Brotherhood members are involved in the planning and the whole shul is invited. There will be an option

to purchase kosher deli sandwiches or you can bring your own food. Look for lots of fun activities for the whole family. Everyone is invited. Watch your weekly emails for more details.

## ***SHAVUOT IS COMING!***

***June 4 (at sundown) through June 6***

Beth Israel has great plans for Shavuot this year. Shavuot begins on Saturday, June 4 at sundown and lasts through Sunday and Monday. We will have a three-day Shabbat/Chag stretch full of joy and revelation! We'll join in on the Rabbinical Assembly's Tikkun Leyl Shavuot on Saturday night. Details will be sent as soon as they are available.

We'll also have local study led by some of our learned congregants. There will be two brief study sessions during Shabbat services and one each day of Shavuot, in lieu of a sermon. On Sunday (First Day of Shavuot) we will have Mincha and Ma'ariv at 6:00 p.m. and on Monday (Second Day) we'll have Mincha only at 7:00 p.m. and congregants will finish the holiday on their own, perhaps after one more slice of cheesecake. We will have resumed in person (with Zoom option) evening services before Shavuot, so all of the services throughout the Chag will be multi-access.



## ***ANNUAL MEETING***

***June 8 @ 7:30 p.m.***

Let's all join together for the Beth Israel Annual Meeting, which will be held both in person and on Zoom on Wednesday, June 8. This is a chance to hear from shul leadership on the major events of the past year and plans for the future.

We'll get a chance to vote on the proposed slate of officers and trustees as well as the opportunity to thank the outgoing leaders. Be there and reminisce about the events of 5782 and get a glimpse of 5783 at BI.

## ***PRIDE SHABBAT AND LGBTQ RIGHTS IN ISRAEL***

***Saturday June 11 @ 9:30 a.m.***

***Sunday, June 12 @ 4:00 p.m.***



To mark LGBTQ Pride Month, Beth Israel will once again hold a Pride Shabbat service, with special readings and a speaker. This year's Pride Shabbat will be held on Saturday morning, June 11. All are welcome. Although Rimon will have finished the school year, families with children are encouraged to attend and there will be a chance for the kids to help with decorations and hear stories featuring LGBTQ characters. Rabbi Ahuvah Loewenthal and Dale Rosenberg will sponsor the kiddush (cosponsors welcome), with rainbow-themed desserts and decorations to represent LGBTQ pride.

Then on the next day, Sunday June 12, there is a video presentation for all of Jewish Central Massachusetts on LGBTQ Rights in Israel. We will have a showing in person at BI, followed by a discussion. All are welcome.

***RIMON – WORKING TO MAKE EVERY CLASS COUNT***  
***DALE ROSENBERG, DIRECTOR OF LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT***

The last two years have been difficult for everyone, of course. It has been a very different experience for school children, though, than for those of us whose school days were many years ago. I expect that for most of the adult members of our congregation, their schools never closed down unexpectedly, except for the occasional snow day. And, for obvious reasons, those of us who came of age during the twentieth century generally did not switch from bricks-and-mortar to online school and back when we were children. We missed school for illness, of course, but we went to school with sniffles and other minor ailments. And we didn't generally isolate or quarantine.



The children of BI, however, have experienced sudden school closures; transition to online classes; masks and social distancing when they returned to the classroom; isolation at home when a member of the family got COVID, and more changes that interfered with normal school activities and socializing. Rimon Religious School switched to Zoom lessons for over a year, from March of 2020 through the entire school year 2020-2021. When we resumed in-person instruction last fall, it was with masks, social distancing, and open windows. During the time of the Omicron surge when we stopped having Shabbat services in person, we stopped having Rimon Shabbat classes, as well. Although the school year we are ending this May has had quite a lot of in-person instruction and group activities, I can't say the year has been a normal one.

What is "normal" anyway? What can that word mean to children for whom a two-year period is a much larger percentage of their lives and memories than it is for adults? The graphic below, from the "WeAreTeachers" Facebook group, illustrates the impact of these two unusual years on schoolchildren.



Think back to your children or yourselves when they/you were, for example, in Grade 4 and then in Grade 7. How very much people changed and grew over that time! How present they were in their Seventh Grade selves



at age 12 or 13. How much they thought of the “now” as the standard by which the past was judged and the future projected.

That is just as true of our Beth Israel children today. For them, though, there is the added element of a huge change in their lives over two years ago. The change they experienced **is** now everyday life, the past experiences of maskless classes and coming to school with Kleenex and cough drops receding into long ago memory.

What of the younger ones who never had what we consider a normal school year? How has the pandemic shaped their lives and their sense of what it means to be with a peer group, to learn, to enjoy classroom activities? These are questions I ponder often in planning my Rimon classes.



Still, as disruptive as the pandemic conditions continued to be this year, it was a great joy to be together in person. We studied our monthly heroes by reading, discussing, watching videos, putting on plays. We engaged in parasha debates. We explored Jewish texts and Jewish values and often talked about how the ongoing pandemic affects – but cannot suppress – Jewish communal life.

We played Israeli games with our Shaliach Aviv Jerbi. We had parties, including a birthday party for Aviv where we compared American and Israeli birthday customs.

We were also able to resume having Snack in Hebrew, where the students learn the names of the snack foods and ask for them in full Hebrew sentences. There is not enough time in the Religious School schedule to teach conversational Hebrew but having a “taste” of Hebrew reinforces the idea of Hebrew as a living language, one that belongs to them and that they can study in depth as they get older, if they choose to.

I never counted on the disruption that COVID-19 brought to my students’ lives. I never could have imagined it. Still, I’ve tried my hardest to make every class count. At the end of the previous school year, we finished Rimon by saying “Next Year in Person.” It was – like the traditional end of the Pesach seder – a statement of hope. In this case it was a hope that was realized. I am honored to have taught the children of the Beth Israel community for the past four years. Over the last two plus years, I’ve tried to bring some semblance of “normal” – whatever that means – to their religious school experience.



## ***TOT SHABBAT***

We are very happy that Tot Shabbat is back in person! Our preschool classroom is once again a place of play, learning, and Shabbat celebration on the first Saturday morning of each month during the Rimon school year.



Families with children age seven and under are welcome to join Early Childhood Educator Rowan Mason at 10:30 a.m. on May 7 for an all-singing, all-dancing, all-delight service for the little ones and their accompanying grownups. At the end of the program, we will invite the Tot Shabbat families to join Rimon Religious School for snack in Hebrew and a story (in English). This will be the last Tot Shabbat of the 2021-2022 school year. Let's make it one to remember!

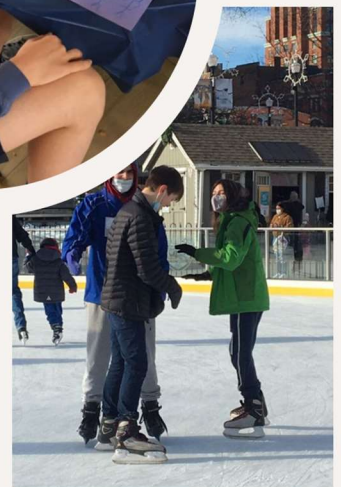
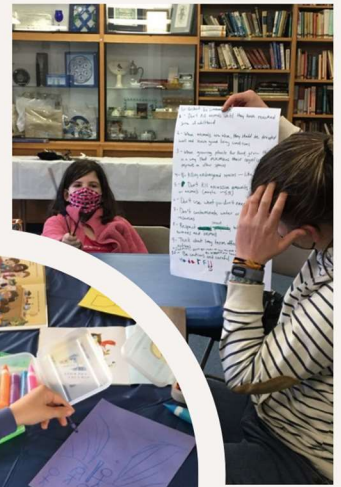
## ***LOOKING FOR SUMMER READING FOR YOUR CHILDREN OR GRANDCHILDREN? WE HAVE BOOKS FOR YOU!***

Rimon Religious School and the Beth Israel Library have an assortment of books of interest to children of all ages. Congregants often donate books that their children or grandchildren have outgrown. Recent donations include a number of books for children in the upper elementary age. Would you like to borrow some books for the summer? Contact Dale Rosenberg, Director of Learning and Engagement. Tell her what your children's interests are and she can recommend some books. She'd be glad to discuss the books with your children after they read them, too!

## ***A GREAT YEAR FOR USY! ROWAN MASON, YOUTH ADVISOR***

As we come to the warm months, USY is kicking back and focusing on fun. We are planning an outing to Boundless Adventures, a ziplining park in Berlin MA, for a treetop adventure together! We will also be hosting outdoor lounges to gather and enjoy the sun as we play kickball and other outdoor games. Our teens continue to have the opportunity for leadership as they take on discussion guide roles in our havruta learning, of which we have one more session this spring. We will close out our year with elections for next year's board, inviting in the next round of teen leadership. At the request of our teens, our elections will take place outdoors with a slip 'n slide!

Take a peek at some scenes from our year on the next page.





## **UPDATE: OUR BEAUTIFUL BI TREES**

**PAT BIZZELL (WITH SCOTT O'TOOLE, AND SHOSHANA ZARITT)**

We are blessed to enjoy many beautiful trees on the Beth Israel property, thanks in part to our woodland setting and in part to the generosity of many donors and the ingenuity of Jordan Robbins, z"l, who obtained many of them at little or no charge. It's fitting that the lovely grove in our front lawn memorializes him. It's also very fitting that in the previous *BI@Home*, Rabbi Fellman developed a tree metaphor to describe the growth and maturity of our congregation as we near our 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

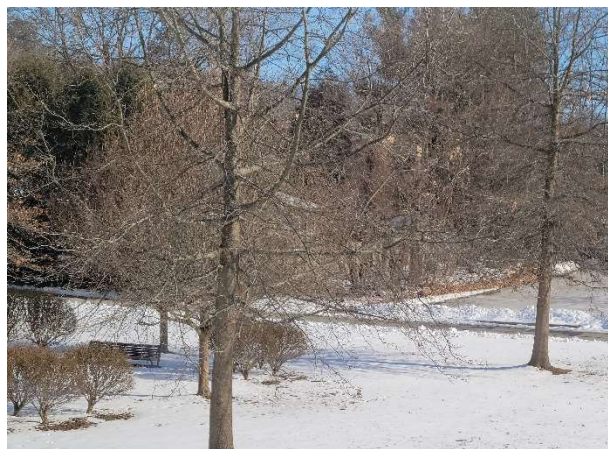
At the same time, if we want to continue to enjoy our green legacy, our trees need to be maintained, fertilized and pruned, and removed when they outlive their beauty or worse, become serious hazards. Sadly, many ash trees in our neighborhood have been killed by the emerald ash borer beetle, leaving bare limbs and trunks that fall randomly and pose a serious threat to people and property. Other nuisance trees have outlived their beauty. Scott O'Toole has done heroic work maintaining our grounds, but some of the needed work really requires professional arborists.

David Cohen and Howard Drobner, Facilities Committee chairs, have asked Scott, Shoshanah Zaritt, and me to form a Tree Committee to research a process to remove trees that need to go and to prune others that need shaping for their health. We have interviewed several companies and received their proposals for a one-time overhaul of our entire property, and for on-going annual maintenance. As spring unfolds, we are making recommendations to David and Howard on how to proceed. Support for this effort will have to go beyond the resources already donated to the existing Tree Fund, where life cycle events have been recognized.

When we invited proposals, we did not tell the arborists with whom we walked the grounds what we wanted done. We just said, "Tell us what you see." They did, with a remarkable degree of agreement. We had some problems in mind, but they opened our eyes even more. We will host several walks around the property so that you can see the trees through our eyes. Watch the weekly emails for dates and times.

You may have noticed already that a few of the dead ash trees in the side lawn, behind the ark end of the main sanctuary, have been removed, ending a hazard to the many strollers who cross our grounds, sometimes along with their dogs. The remaining dead trees in that unsightly clump – which reminds me of a set for Shakespeare's *Macbeth*! – will go as well. We hope you will see more progress in beautifying Beth Israel soon.

Please feel free to contact any one of us with comments or questions.

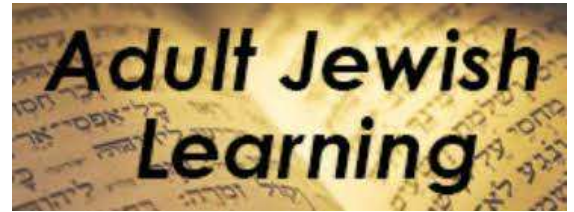




## ***ADULT EDUCATION AT BETH ISRAEL: THERE IS SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE!***

Adult Education for 5782 has such exciting and varied options, your biggest problem will be finding time to fit in all the classes you want to take! Whether you are a spiritual seeker, a literature nerd, a crafts buff, a novice at Jewish learning, or a prospective Torah reader or service leader – we have a learning opportunity for you! See below for details on current and upcoming courses.

Questions about the courses or ideas for future ones? Contact Director of Learning and Engagement Dale Rosenberg at [dale.rosenberg@bethisraelworc.org](mailto:dale.rosenberg@bethisraelworc.org).



### ***BING Presents: Doorpost Makeover***

#### ***A Mezuzah Making Workshop with Arielle Ganem-Rosen and Jonathan Boyar Rescheduled to Sunday, May 8 at 10:30 on Zoom***



Join BING, on Sunday, May 8, in creating mezuzah cases from colorful, quick-baking polymer clay provided by BI. This is a forgiving material that doesn't require an artistic background to work with, so everyone can feel comfortable being creative and unique. Creating these mezuzah cases will be paired with learning about how kosher mezuzahs are made, why we place them in Jewish homes, as well as learning how mezuzah case styles differ around the Jewish world. What's more - if you can't

participate synchronously, you can even do it on your own time, as we will provide videos of how to make a mezuzah. This will be an exciting and creative way to mark Mother's Day with themes of marking doorposts, Jewish identity, the home, welcoming guests, and spring ushering in new beginnings. A Mezuzah case makes a great Mother's Day gift, too.

This course is being provided thanks to a generous grant from the Jewish Federation of Central Massachusetts. All materials needed to make the mezuzah cases will be provided in advance. Assistance on where to acquire a kosher *claf* to put inside will also be given. To attend this class, register with the BI Office by May 5.

### ***Torah Reading for Advanced Beginners with Reena Slovin Mondays at 6:00 p.m. May 9 – June 13***

Reena's classes in Torah reading have already produced a whole new crop of Beth Israel members who can chant Torah on Shabbat and holidays. Meeting students where they are, Reena has taken on both those with no previous Torah reading experience and those who wanted to up their game. She teaches them the Torah trope system and works with them on specific passages which they then read on Shabbat as a "graduation." The last series for this school year is for a group who began earlier in the year and need a few more sessions to feel confident in showing their skills to the congregation.

Note: Reena is not taking new students at this time, but if you didn't get to learn with her this year, let Dale Rosenberg know as plans for next year are in progress.



## ***Caucasia: What If People Don't Know You Are Black and Think You Are Jewish?***

***Mondays at 7:30 p.m. 6/13, 6/20, and June 27***

Pat Bizzell invites you to discuss this engaging novel about racial identity. Young Birdie's white mother and her Black father are civil rights activists targeted by the Feds. Going into hiding, they split, her dad taking her sister Cole, who appears to be Black, and her mother taking Birdie, who is light-skinned. Mom invents Jewish names to conceal their tracks as they avoid capture and Birdie grows into her teen years. When people don't know she is Black, they air their racist attitudes; and thinking she is Jewish, they share their anti-Semitism. Finally, Birdie sets out alone to find the father and sister she misses so much! Based on author Danzy Senna's own experiences growing up light-skinned in a racially mixed marriage, *Caucasia*, her first novel, won numerous awards. We will discuss it in three sessions via Zoom and in person. Sponsored by the BI Racial Justice Committee.



*Caucasia* by Danzy Senna is available at several area libraries and bookstores. It can also be purchased as a Kindle ebook from Amazon.

There is no charge for this class. Call the office by June 1 to register.

## ***Sunday Morning Programs: Social Time and Learning***

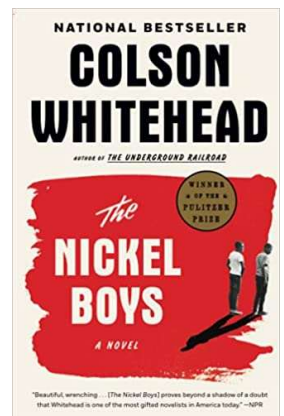
Select Sunday mornings after minyan, we hold Zoom meetings that are partly social and partly learning. We open up the Zoom at 9:00 for schmoozing and discussion. Then at 9:30 we have a presentation with a guest speaker or speakers and a Q&A session to follow. We hope that in the near future we will be able to share breakfast on some Sundays later in 2022, as the Famous Brotherhood Breakfast program returns to Beth Israel in person. We will do so as soon as it is safe. For now, you'll need to supply your own coffee and breakfast and break bread together virtually. There is no charge to attend these programs. Our final Sunday morning program of the spring season comes to us from Marcia Tannenbaum and the Racial Justice Committee:

### **Sunday, June 19. Reading Colson Whitehead, with Marcia Tannenbaum**

Colson Whitehead is an American treasure. A two-time winner of the Pulitzer Prize, he is an extraordinarily accomplished novelist and essayist. His novel *The Underground Railroad*, makes Juneteenth – a national day for celebrating the end of slavery in the United States – the perfect time to learn about him.

Marcia Tannenbaum, who recently taught a WISE series about Whitehead, will give us excerpts of what she learned in her research about him. Marcia will provide an introduction to Whitehead and a brief biography of him. She'll focus in on his two novels that won the Pulitzer:

- *The Underground Railroad* takes us through magical realism to the world of slavery and what escape from bondage looked like in Pre-Civil War America and beyond
- *The Nickel Boys*, a fictional account of an all too real "school" in the Florida Panhandle where the bodies of black youth were found buried years after the school was closed.



Whitehead's non-fiction is also superb and Marcia will introduce us to Whitehead the essayist, closing with a recommendation for his newest novel, *The Harlem Shuffle*. Whether you are a die-hard Whitehead fan already or haven't read any of his books, you will be inspired to read him by this talk!

***Project Zug: Enjoy Jewish Education with a Study Partner at No Cost to You  
Wednesday, June 29 7:30 p.m.***

Hadar Institute's Project Zug offers a huge variety of Jewish study opportunities, with online courses developed by major Jewish scholars. With classes ranging from Mindfulness and Judaism, through the Death Penalty in the Talmud to Leonard Cohen's Vision, there is truly something for everybody.



Project Zug classes can be taken as group courses, which we've been doing for the past two years. They can also be taken by individuals studying with a chavruta (study partner). Two people who want to study together can register together, or one person can register and ask the Project Zug staff to assign a study partner. It's a great way to learn and get to know someone new or to enjoy learning with a friend or relative.

Would you like to do some learning this summer with Project Zug? Join Dale Rosenberg via Zoom on Wednesday, June 29 at 7:30 p.m. to learn how. Dale will demonstrate how to register and talk about how to choose a course and a study partner. She'll give you an overview of the kinds of classes available and explain how to register without charge, using the generous grant from the Jewish Federation of Central Massachusetts.



***Hebrew Reading Class with Ziva Rosenhand is Ongoing***

Ziva Rosenhand has been offering a basic Hebrew reading class online, that is continuing. The goal of the class is to teach the Aleph Bet and decoding of Hebrew text with vowels, allowing students to participate more fully in services and in Jewish life. The class will finish after 10 sessions. It is being offered without charge due to a generous grant from the Jewish Federation of Central Massachusetts.

Would you like to learn to read Hebrew but missed this class? Let the office know.

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**Congregation Beth Israel**  
15 Jamesbury Drive  
Worcester, MA 01609  
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Office Hours: Monday thru Friday 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.





# FY2023 Dues Information

## Dues Are Not Expected to Increase FY2023 Dues Structure

**This year, each member unit is being billed full dues in their category.** We know that many have requested and received abatements in the past. We value having you as part of our family and will work with you to ensure that your privacy and needs are met. **All we ask is that you re-evaluate what you can afford to give this year. Perhaps it will be more than last year.**

If you are in need of an abatement or financial arrangement for this year, please contact Beth Cyr, Manager of HR and Finance, at 508-756-6204 to discuss your bill.

Family (full dues) \$2250  
Family 1<sup>st</sup> year \$740  
Family 2<sup>nd</sup> year \$1500  
Single (full dues) \$1610  
Single 1<sup>st</sup> year \$540  
Single 2<sup>nd</sup> year \$1060  
Associate Family \$710  
Associate Single \$400

## Additions to Your Bill

The following categories will be appearing on your bill along with membership dues. Only the Security Assessment is mandatory because we need it to run the synagogue safely. Although the others are optional, they are central to our ability to function as a vibrant community. Please contribute as much as you can.

### Security Assessment \$50

We rely on the additional support of our community to ensure that we are able to physically gather safely. For this reason, **this is not optional.** The funds collected through this assessment support security detail over the High Holidays and at other programs and services, equipment used by our volunteers to ensure communication and security, and physically securing the building and providing surveillance.

### Technology Donation \$50

**This is an optional donation.** Over the past year, the donations to our technology fund have enabled us to stay connected as a community and to gather, seeing each other's faces. Your donations to this fund will help to ensure that we are able to continue to serve and improve our ability to reach our members all over the world.

### General Fund Donation \$180

**This is an optional donation.** As we work hard to keep dues the same and offer abatements to those who need them, we still have to balance the budget. It costs over \$3,200 per member unit to run our shul. We ask those who can to help us with our general fundraising. **Any donation is appreciated.**

### General Endowment Donation \$180

**This is an optional donation.** As we near our 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a congregation, we are appreciative of the foundation that was left for us. We now are responsible for ensuring that a spiritual and engaged community sustains for the future...We have not raised dues in hope that you will instead donate to our General Endowment Fund. This is the fund that contributes to our General Fund every year and helps us pay our bills. **The more we get from the Endowment Fund, the less we rely on dues. We are suggesting the \$180 multiple of Chai. However, any donation is appreciated.** We are trying to grow our endowment to \$6 million by the time we reach our 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2 years.

### Chai Kiddush Club Donation \$180

**This is an optional donation.** Many of us donated to this optional fund this past year even though we weren't meeting in person for a kiddush. Now that we are open on Shabbat and have kiddush each week, we look forward to sharing meals together with you and hope that you will contribute to this community builder.

Respectfully submitted,

*Andrea Goodman*  
VP of Finance