

# BI@Home:

coming to you while you aren't going anywhere

Welcome to the first issue of BI@Home, Congregation Beth Israel's print newsletter delivered to the homes of all of our members. Why do we need a new newsletter?

- Because so much email is coming into your inboxes, and you could use a summary of what's happening at BI.
- Because we all need a break from looking at screens, so it's good to have BI information in a handy hard copy format.
- Because everyone enjoys getting some mail in a physical mail box!
- Because everyone could benefit from a list of upcoming BI events that you can magnet to your fridge or fold and put in your pocket.

We're all getting through the difficult time of adapting to life with the Coronavirus in our own ways. We at Congregation Beth Israel are working to provide all the community and caring and spiritual and intellectual growth opportunities you've come to expect from us, but we need to provide them in new ways.

BI@Home is a "new" new way to communicate with our members and provide some information about what's happening. In this newsletter you'll find messages from our rabbi and lay leaders, ideas from congregants, and a calendar of events for the next four weeks. We'll give information on how to access our many offerings and whom to contact to get questions answered. We plan on sending BI@Home every 2-3 weeks, as long as our community needs it. Questions about the newsletter or ideas for future editions? Contact Newsletter Editor Dale Rosenberg at [dale.rosenberg@bethisraelworc.org](mailto:dale.rosenberg@bethisraelworc.org) or call the office at 508 756-6204 to arrange to talk with Dale.

## *A Word from Rabbi Fellman: Sanctuary*



“וַעֲשׂוּ לִי מִקְדָּשׁ וְשָׁכַנְתִּי בְתוֹכָם. VeAsu Li Mikdash VeShachanti BeTocham.” They shall make Me a sanctuary, and I will dwell among them. (Shemot 25:8) This was the line that I used almost two years ago when we dedicated our newly renovated sanctuary. A space that still gives me a warm feeling of calmness, of community, of awe, and of appreciation. A space that now sits empty because of COVID-19.

This verse is the command to build a sanctuary for the Divine Presence; that is, the physical structures that were built to serve the Divine. There is an emphasis on the earthly creation of this - it is not about creating a spiritual or lofty sanctuary, it is about creating a physical one - one that we can inhabit. But the text, specifically the word “BeTocham” can also be read as ‘in their midst’ instead of ‘in it’ - within every single person who seeks to be in relationship with The Divine or even with holy community.

This holiness in community is what I have seen emerge in incredible ways since our sanctuary and building have been physically closed. We have been holding twice daily minyanim via Zoom. Our classes, learning opportunities, and social gatherings have been moved online and continue. Congregants have been reaching out to help others financially, physically, and emotionally by calling, shopping, and lawn visits. Our community has been physically gathering in ways that bring our incredible warmth and love to mourners to offer support where hugs are not able to be offered.

We are working to make sure that we are reaching and serving the needs and desires of our community and appreciate and value your participation in helping to identify, communicate, and address the varying needs. Conversations are already happening about how we are going to continue to celebrate upcoming B'nai Mitzvah, Aufrufs, holidays and more- in person or virtually. We invite you to be part of these conversations by contacting myself or a board member. Thank you for your holiness and your support.

## Have You “Gone to” Services at BI Lately?

Beth Israel’s services are, necessarily, a little different since we’ve had to close the building, but they are still full of music, spirituality, and connection. Connection to God, to one another, to the Jewish people. We hold worship services twice a day during the week via Zoom. Our Shacharit service contains most of the traditional prayers but omits ones that are only said with a minyan, with the exception of Mourner’s Kaddish. We say Mourner’s Kaddish if we get a minyan of congregants calling in.

Evening Services have fewer of the traditional prayers but always includes a teaching from the Mishneh led by Rabbi Fellman. They also include Mourner’s Kaddish. Many of us derive a lot of satisfaction from knowing we’re enabling those among us in mourning or observing a yahrtzeit to say Kaddish. And these brief services (generally 30 minutes) make for a wonderful framing of the day and a chance to see and hear our neighbors and fellow congregants.

On Fridays, we have Kabbalat Shabbat before Shabbat comes in. After Shabbat is over we join the Fellman family via Facebook Live as they engage us in their Havdalah service.

All of our services, except for Havdalah, are conducted via the Zoom conferencing application. Don’t know how to use Zoom or where to get the credentials for particular Zoom calls? Worried about attending services in your pajamas but don’t know how to turn off the video? Contact the office and you will get the help you need to start going to shul without leaving your home.

## Our Beth Israel Community

## Nancy Spitulnik, President

“Positive communities are groups that inspire their members in ways that promote a sense of self-discovery and group connection, encouraging members to express their beliefs and values, as well as build relationships with others.” Stephanie Caldwell

When I was thinking about what to write for this first BI@Home newsletter, I kept thinking about what makes Beth Israel so special for me. I realized it was the sense of community that we have built together that helps us feel connected to each other and to the larger world.



Caldow, writing for PositivePsychology.com, states that the quality of a community depends on the sense of engagement and happiness individuals draw from community interactions. Positive communities provide members with a sense of belonging, a support system in time of need, and opportunities for “self-reflection and exploration of core values and beliefs.”

I strongly believe that Beth Israel has many of the characteristics that are the foundation of positive communities. These include:

- Working together toward a common goal of Jewish learning and the building of values that guide our lives.
- Prioritizing the well-being of every member of the community as we support and care for each other.
- Fostering connections among members through varied opportunities for positive interactions.
- Accepting and celebrating diversity, which makes us stronger as we grow and learn from each other.
- Celebrating our community heritage and traditions that provide the framework for our actions and beliefs.
- Working to have a positive impact on the larger world to make it a better place for all people.

While no community is perfect, Caldwell states that dedicated effort and commitment to building a place of encouragement and conviction helps every community grow stronger. This is what makes Beth Israel so special for me, and why I’m honored to be the President of such an outstanding congregation as we work together to create a positive, caring, and dynamic community.

## Mark Your Calendars Now: Wednesday, June 10 – The BI Annual Meeting

Beth Israel’s annual meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 10, at 7:30. We will be holding a virtual session then, summarizing the year we’ve finished and looking forward to the year to come. A slate of officers will be presented and voted on. Look for more information about the annual meeting in the next issue of BI@Home.

As I approach the end of my term as VP for Membership, and as I sit home during the COVID-19 Quarantine, it is a good time to reflect on the past and ponder the future.

Two themes come to mind:

- 1) There is a lot going on at Congregation Beth Israel. From book discussions to barbecues; from Talmud class to cooking class; from minyan to Mah Jongg, there is something for everyone.
- 2) Many of us feel that there are times when we don't know what is going on. I hear it all the time: "Oh, I didn't know, I would have liked to have come".



I learned the Rule of Sevens in a Marketing class I took in the early 90's for a Physician Executive Program. It goes like this: If you want to get something out there you need to say it seven times, in seven different ways, and don't expect any more than 7 seconds of attention from your target audience.

But that's so 90's! A couple of years ago I sat in on another Marketing seminar, and the updated stat that stuck with me is we should not expect any more than an initial 3 seconds of attention from anyone we are trying to reach with a message. I said to myself, "wow, in 20 plus years, the human attention span has dropped by more than 50%".



If you have made it this far, congratulations! You now have some new information you can drop at a meeting or a cocktail party.

We hope BI@Home will become a physical attestation to the wonderful world of B.I. that not only will you treasure and read cover to cover while enjoying your favorite easy chair, but that you will leave around in a prominent place in your home for friends and relatives to peruse (when we are finally allowed to have them back in our houses!).

The publication will serve as a calming antidote to the barrage of electronic messaging we are all subject to on a daily basis. My wish is that this will be an effective tool as we look to live out our collective Vision of *Welcome, Engage, Inspire and Grow*. I look forward to our eventual face-to-face (maybe 3 foot, 3 second) contact.

### **Launching the BI Sharing/Caring Clearinghouse!**

Many of us are engaged in a variety of volunteer activities for our Beth Israel community and for the larger community in which we live. Beth Israel congregant Bunny Callahan had the wonderful idea of collecting information on activities we can do from our homes during this difficult time, and then sharing those ideas with Beth Israel's membership.

Are you involved in a volunteer activity that benefits the community? Are you looking for something to do? Do you have an idea that could help, but need more people to participate to make it happen?



Write to Dale Rosenberg at [dale.rosenberg@bethisraelworc.org](mailto:dale.rosenberg@bethisraelworc.org) or call the BI office at 508 756-6204 and they will arrange for you to speak to Dale. She will put together a Clearinghouse Database, keeping track of activities and ideas submitted and matching people with activities. We'll feature some of these activities in future editions of BI@Home.

## What Does Our Synagogue Do for Our Members? Herb Daroff, Chairman of the Board

I have been a member of a Conservative synagogue all my life. My parents joined the local synagogue when they bought their first house. I went to Hebrew School there; two days a week after school, and Sunday, as well as junior congregation on Shabbat. When Andrea and I married, we joined that same synagogue. When we moved to New England, we picked Sharon because it had two Conservative synagogues. We joined Beth Israel before we moved into our home in Worcester just six and a half years ago. So, for me, being part of a synagogue community is automatic.



That's not true for everyone. We might want to say to current and future congregants, "Don't ask what your synagogue can do for you. Ask what you can do for your synagogue." However, we need to be able to answer their question, "What can my synagogue do for me?"

Beth Israel is committed to doing all we can for our congregants. During our current isolation, Beth Israel has continued to conduct morning and evening minyan. We have continued to offer classes for adults and children. When family members of congregants die, we line up in the parking lot to pay our respects to the mourners.

As I am writing this, we just heard about a congregant testing positive. Dozens of posts immediately followed offering assistance and support. As another congregant just texted, "Try to take comfort from the clear community of support." The out-pouring of support from the Beth Israel family continues to demonstrate our communal heart.

My former synagogue had a motto, "More than a building." Beth Israel is much more than a recently beautifully renovated building, as we are seeing so clearly now that we can't use our building. We are a community of caring people, and I am very proud to be a part of that community.

### Sharing Knowledge with Your BI Community

We have a great wealth of knowledge in this congregation and an even greater wealth of enthusiasm. We have doctors, lawyers, scholars of all kinds, cooks and storytellers and writers and commentators. You've all enriched the lives of your fellow congregants by sharing your expertise, whether in a dvar torah, a lecture, or just a conversation over kiddush lunch. Our building is closed now, but the flow of knowledge should not be! BI needs your expertise and your love of learning and teaching, particularly during this time.

Would you be willing to offer an Adult Education class, via Zoom, on a topic that's near and dear to you? It can be a single lecture or a multi-lecture series. It doesn't matter if you aren't tech savvy, as long as you have the basic equipment (computer, tablet, or smartphone with camera and microphone). We're looking to have a congregant-led Adult Ed opportunity each week, in addition to Rabbi Fellman's excellent Wednesday night and Friday morning classes and her teachings during the daily minyanim.

Dale Rosenberg is happy to coach you on using Zoom and on lecture techniques, to help you develop visual aids, if you want, and to provide technical assistance during your presentation. Contact her at [dale.rosenberg@bethisraelworc.org](mailto:dale.rosenberg@bethisraelworc.org) or call the office at 508 756-6204 to arrange to talk with Dale. She'll get you ready for your close up! Your fellow congregants will be so glad to see you and hear what you have to say.

**Congregation Beth Israel**

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**Worcester, MA 01609**

**Phone: 508-756-6204; FAX: 508-757-6650**

**Office Hours (Phone and Fax only): Monday thru Friday 8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.**



## Upcoming Events at Beth Israel May 10 – June 7

*Remember: All programs can be accessed via computer, tablet, smartphone, or regular telephone. Call the office at 508 756-6204 for assistance in accessing any program.*

<b>Sunday, May 10</b>	<b>Mother's Day – Honor a Mother (yours or someone else's) for all she does!</b> 8:15 a.m. Shacharit services including Mourner's Kaddish 7:00 p.m. Evening Services including Mourner's Kaddish
<b>Monday, May 11</b>	7:30 a.m. Shacharit Services including Mourner's Kaddish 2:00 p.m. Individual Hebrew Tutoring Sessions for Rimon Students 4:30 p.m. Rimon Virtual Classroom 5:00 p.m. Mindfulness with Elena 7:00 p.m. Evening Services including Mourner's Kaddish
<b>Tuesday, May 12</b>	<b>Lag B'Omer Have a BBQ!</b> 7:30 a.m. Shacharit Services including Mourner's Kaddish 7:00 p.m. Evening Services including Mourner's Kaddish
<b>Wednesday, May 13</b>	7:30 a.m. Shacharit Services including Mourner's Kaddish 2:00 p.m. Individual Hebrew Tutoring Sessions for Rimon Students 4:30 p.m. Rimon Virtual Classroom 7:00 p.m. Evening Services including Mourner's Kaddish 7:30 p.m. Adult Education – Megillat Ruth with Rabbi Fellman, pt. 1
<b>Thursday, May 14</b>	7:30 a.m. Shacharit Services including Mourner's Kaddish 12:00 noon Lunchtime Schmooze with Rabbi Fellman 7:00 p.m. Evening Services including Mourner's Kaddish
<b>Friday, May 15</b>	7:30 a.m. Shacharit Services including Mourner's Kaddish 10:00a .m. TGIF Parasha Class with Rabbi Fellman 10:00 a.m. Tot Shabbat with Rowan Mason 6:00 p.m. Kabbalat Shabbat B'Yachad 7:45 p.m. Candlelighting
<b>Saturday, May 16</b>	<b>Shabbat Shalom!</b> 9:00 p.m. Havdalah with the Fellman family
<b>Sunday, May 17</b>	8:15 a.m. Shacharit Services including Mourner's Kaddish 9:30 a.m. Brotherhood Breakfast – Topic to be announced 7:00 p.m. Evening Services including Mourner's Kaddish
<b>Monday, May 18</b>	7:30 a.m. Shacharit Services including Mourner's Kaddish 2:00 p.m. Individual Tutoring Sessions for Rimon Students 4:30 p.m. Rimon Virtual Classroom 5:00 p.m. Mindfulness with Elena 7:00 p.m. Evening Services including Mourner's Kaddish
<b>Tuesday, May 19</b>	7:30 a.m. Shacharit Services including Mourner's Kaddish 7:00 p.m. Evening Services including Mourner's Kaddish
<b>Wednesday, May 20</b>	7:30 a.m. Shacharit Services including Mourner's Kaddish 11:00 a.m. Crown Market Pick Up – Outside the BI Building 2:00 p.m. Individual Hebrew Tutoring Sessions for Rimon Students 4:30 p.m. Rimon Virtual Classroom 7:00 p.m. Evening Services including Mourner's Kaddish 7:30 p.m. Adult Education – Megillat Ruth with Rabbi Fellman, pt. 2
<b>Thursday, May 21</b>	7:30 a.m. Shacharit Services including Mourner's Kaddish 12:00 noon Lunchtime Schmooze with Rabbi Fellman 7:00 p.m. Evening Services including Mourner's Kaddish 7:30 p.m. Beth Israel Board Meeting
<b>Friday, May 22</b>	<b>Yom Yerushalayim!</b> 7:30 a.m. Shacharit Services including Mourner's Kaddish 10:00 a.m. TGIF Parasha Class with Rabbi Fellman 10:00 a.m. Tot Shabbat with Rowan Mason 6:00 p.m. Kabbalat Shabbat B'Yachad 7:51 p.m. Candle Lighting

<b>Saturday, May 23</b>	<b>Shabbat Shalom!</b> 9:00 p.m. Havdalah with the Fellman family
<b>Sunday, May 24</b>	<b>Rosh Chodesh Sivan!</b> 8:15 a.m. Shacharit Services including Mourner's Kaddish and Hallel 9:30 a.m. Breakfast Learning: History of the Bagel with Carol Kaufman 7:00 p.m. Evening Services including Mourner's Kaddish
<b>Monday, May 25</b>	<b>Memorial Day</b> 7:30 a.m. Shacharit Services including Mourner's Kaddish 5:00 p.m. Mindfulness with Elena 7:00 p.m. Evening Services including Mourner's Kaddish No Rimon Tutoring or Class
<b>Tuesday, May 26</b>	7:30 a.m. Shacharit Services including Mourner's Kaddish 7:00 p.m. Evening Services including Mourner's Kaddish
<b>Wednesday, May 27</b>	7:30 a.m. Shacharit Services including Mourner's Kaddish 2:00 p.m. Individual Hebrew Tutoring Sessions for Rimon Students 4:30 p.m. Rimon Virtual Classroom 7:00 p.m. Evening Services including Mourner's Kaddish 7:30 p.m. Adult Education – Megillat Ruth with Rabbi Fellman, part 3
<b>Thursday, May 28</b>	<b>Erev Shavuot!</b> 7:30 a.m. Shacharit Services including Mourner's Kaddish 6:00 p.m. Evening Services and Yizkor 7:57 p.m. Candle Lighting
<b>Friday, May 29</b>	<b>First Day Shavuot – Chag Sameach!</b> No TGIF No Tot Shabbat 7:58 p.m. Candle Lighting
<b>Saturday, May 30</b>	<b>Second Day Shavuot – Chag Sameach and Shabbat Shalom!</b> 9:15 p.m. Havdalah, Melavah Malkah and Tikkun Leyl Shavuot
<b>Sunday, May 31</b>	8:15 a.m. Shacharit Services including Mourner's Kaddish 7:00 p.m. Evening Services including Mourner's Kaddish
<b>Monday, June 1</b>	7:30 a.m. Shacharit Services including Mourner's Kaddish 2:00 p.m. Individual Tutoring Sessions for Rimon Students 4:30 p.m. Rimon Virtual Classroom 5:00 p.m. Mindfulness with Elena 7:00 p.m. Evening Services including Mourner's Kaddish
<b>Tuesday, June 2</b>	7:30 a.m. Shacharit Services including Mourner's Kaddish 7:00 p.m. Evening Services including Mourner's Kaddish
<b>Wednesday, June 3</b>	7:30 a.m. Shacharit Services including Mourner's Kaddish 2:00 p.m. Individual Hebrew Tutoring Sessions for Rimon Students 4:30 p.m. Rimon Virtual Classroom 7:00 p.m. Evening Services including Mourner's Kaddish 7:30 p.m. Adult Education – LGBT Rights in the United States 50+ Years after Stonewall with Dale Rosenberg (in honor of Pride Shabbat)
<b>Thursday, June 4</b>	7:30 a.m. Shacharit Services including Mourner's Kaddish 12:00 noon Lunchtime Schmooze with Rabbi Fellman 7:00 p.m. Evening Services including Mourner's Kaddish
<b>Friday, June 5</b>	7:30 a.m. Shacharit Services including Mourner's Kaddish 10:00 a.m. TGIF Parasha Class with Rabbi Fellman 10:00 a.m. Tot Shabbat with Rowan Mason 6:00 p.m. Kabbalat Shabbat B'Yachad 8:03 p.m. Candle Lighting
<b>Saturday, June 6</b>	<b>Pride Shabbat! In Honor of LGBT Folks at BI and Everywhere (see 6/3 program)</b> 9:15 p.m. Havdalah with the Fellman Family
<b>Sunday, June 7</b>	8:15 a.m. Shacharit Services including Mourner's Kaddish 7:00 p.m. Evening Services including Mourner's Kaddish