

Bet Mishpachah

An Egalitarian Synagogue Embracing Diversity



High Holy Days Supplement

5784 (2023)

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Bet Mishpachah

An Egalitarian Synagogue Embracing Diversity

Bet Mishpachah was founded in 1975 and is celebrating our 48th year of integrating and celebrating our LGBTQ+ and Jewish identities.

www.betmish.org

<https://www.facebook.com/betmish>



Erev Shabbat Services

Every Friday at 8:00 pm, followed by a social hour (*Oneg Shabbat*)

2nd Friday of the month – *Mizmor Shabbat*

Shabbat Morning Services

2nd & 4th Saturdays of the month at 10:00 am,
including a Torah reading and lively discussion, followed by *Kiddush*

Sign Language Interpretation available upon request
For more information about sign language interpretation,
Email: sign@betmish.org

Board of Directors 2023-2024

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Paula Morris

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Thank You to . . .

High Holy Day Coordination

Paula Morris, High Holy Day Chair
Joshua Maxey, Executive Director
Kasey Bigsby, Director of Operations

Yizkor Booklet

Allan Armus

Appeals

Mindy Gasthalter
Deborah Hyman
Alfredo Gomez

Flowers

Royce Cohen of Royce Flowers

Shammas

JuJuan Dye

High Holy Day Supplement

Liat Novek





High Holy Days Service Schedule

Friday, September 15th, Erev Rosh ha-Shana 1, 8:00 pm: Rabbi Jake Singer-Beilin and Alex Carter co-lead, with Rabbi Ben Shalva as *Hazzan* and Rabbi Jake Singer-Beilin as *Darshan*. John Kaboff, cellist. In-person Sign Interpretation.

Saturday, September 16th, Rosh ha-Shana Morning 1, 10:00 am: Vinny Prell and Scott Reiter co-lead, with Rabbi Ben Shalva as *Hazzan* and Neela Taub as *Darshanit*. John Kaboff, cellist.

Saturday, September 16th, Tashlich Service, 3:00 pm: Eryca Kasse leads at the P Street Beach (P Street and 23rd St NW).

Saturday, September 16th, Erev Rosh ha-Shana 2, 8:00 pm: Allan Armus leads. Vinny Prell as *Darshanit*.

Sunday, September 17th, Rosh ha-Shana Morning 2, 10:00 am: Jeff Burka and Paula Morris co-lead with Marc Bernstein as *Darshan*.

Sunday, September 17th, Tashlich Service, 4:00 pm, Yutta Brettschneider leads at Bladensburg, Waterfront Park, (4601 Annapolis Road, Bladensburg, MD 20710). Meeting point is at the visitor center. For more information contact Yutta at: yuttab@verizon.net or 240 328 8415

Friday, September 22nd, Erev Shabbat Shuva, 8:00 pm: Rabbi Jake Singer-Beilin leads.

Saturday, September 23rd, Shabbat Shuva, 10:00 am: Rabbi Jake Singer-Beilin leads.

Sunday, September 24th, Kol Nidrei, 7:00 pm: Ruth Potts and Scott Reiter co-lead, with Rabbi Ben Shalva as *Hazzan* and Rabbi Jake Singer-Beilin as *Darshan*. John Kaboff, cellist.

Monday, September 25th, Yom Kippur Morning Service, 10:00 am: Rabbi Jake Singer-Beilin and Rachel Hamberger co-lead, with Rabbi Ben Shalva as *Hazzan*. *D'rash* written by Sarajane Garten, z"l, read by Elyse Wander. John Kaboff, cellist.

Monday, September 25th, Martyrology/Yizkor Service, 12:30 pm: Allan Armus and Elke Martin co-lead. John Kaboff, cellist.

Monday, September 25th, Rabbi's Study Session, 3:00 pm: Rabbi Jake Singer-Beilin teaches.

Monday, September 25th, 5:00 pm, Mincha Service: Rabbi Jake Singer-Beilin and Mindy Gasthalter co-lead with Rabbi Ben Shalva as *Hazzan*. In-person Sign Interpretation.

Monday, September 25th, N'ila/Havdala, 6:00 pm: Rabbi Jake Singer-Beilin and Paula Morris co-lead with Rabbi Ben Shalva as *Hazzan*. In-person Sign Interpretation.

Chadeish Yamèinu k'Kèdem

Our prayerbook for the High Holy Days is titled “*Chadeish Yamèinu*” (Renew Our Days) from the verse “*chadeish yamèinu k'kèdem.*”

The root of *kèdem* has meanings that refer both to what is behind and what is ahead. It is where the Garden of Eden is said to be.

Rabbi Robert Scheinberg teaches:

“*Chadeish yamèinu k'kèdem* means, ‘Renew our lives, as you renewed our lives after we were exiled from the Garden of Eden.’

It is then not a plea for restoration of a formerly perfect condition, but rather it is a plea for resilience, a plea for the ability to renew ourselves after future crises and dislocations, just as our lives have been renewed before.

As Elie Wiesel said, ‘G-d gave the first Human a secret — and that secret was not how to begin, but how to begin again.’”





Yom Kippur Study Session with Rabbi Jake Letting Go: The Difficult Task of Forgiveness

Texts and reflections on resentment, anger, and release. When can we forgive, and when is it just too much to ask?

Greetings from our Rabbi

When I work with wedding couples, I like to share the following text with them about the 18th Century Chasidic leader Nachman of Bratzlav:

A group of people who have been to a wedding are on their way home. One says, “It was a beautiful wedding. I liked the food.” Another says, “It was a great wedding. The music was marvelous.” Still another says, “It was the best wedding I ever went to. I saw all my good friends there, and we had a terrific time.” Reb Nachman, who overheard them, says, “Those people weren’t really at a wedding.” Then another wedding guest joins this group and says, “Blessed be G-d. Thank G-d those two got together!” At that Reb Nachman says, “Now that person was at a wedding!”

The purpose of a wedding is to celebrate two people who have found love and commitment, everything else is lovely, but is not really the point. The same can be said for our High Holy Day experience at Bet Mishpachah. We hope that the setting will be comfortable and beautiful. We hope that you get to see people whose presence brings you joy, and you get to check in with those who you have not seen recently. We hope that the food at the Break-The-Fast is tasty and fills your belly. But those are not the reasons why we come together as a sacred congregation to observe the High Holy Days. Those things are important and wonderful, but if you leave only thinking about those things, then - to paraphrase Reb Nachman - you were not really at the High Holy Days.

Why do we come together? Rabbi Alan Lew wrote: “Every soul needs to express itself. Every heart needs to crack itself open. Every one of us needs to move from anger to healing, from denial to consciousness, from boredom to renewal. These needs did not arise yesterday. They are among the most ancient of human yearnings, and they are fully expressed in the pageantry and ritual of the Days of Awe, in the great journey we make between *Rosh ha-Shana* and *Yom Kippur*.”

Those of us at Bet Mishpachah who are leading you through the services and the liturgy of the High Holy Days hope that the experiences we create will achieve the true purpose of this sacred moment in the Jewish calendar. Let the melodies and the words permeate into you and affect your spirit. Let the meaning of these days, and the reality of joining countless Jewish communities around the world and throughout our history fill us with a sense of wonder and meaning. Let us turn towards one another and to the Holy One of Blessing so that these High Holy Days will renew our souls and renew our days. Then, you will leave this space and be able to say “I was really at the High Holy Days.”

Rabbi Jake Singer-Beilin

Greetings from the President

Dear Members and Guests,

On behalf of Bet Mishpachah's Board of Directors, welcome to you all who are gathering with us to celebrate the High Holy Days. Bet Mishpachah is very happy again to provide you with the opportunity to observe the holidays together, whether in person or via livestream. We hope you will continue to join us for years to come.

In this spirit of community, I want to take this occasion to express my profound gratitude to all of the people who have devoted themselves for months to bring our High Holy Day services to you. To our High Holy Day Committee and its chair, our Director of Religious Affairs, Paula Morris, our Rabbi, Jake Singer-Beilin, our *Chazan*, Rabbi Ben Shalva, our Executive Director, Joshua Maxey, our Administrator, Liat Novek, our lay service leaders, our *darshanim* and *darshaniyot*, our appealers, our speakers, and everyone who has provided them with logistical, administrative and technical support, I want you to know how greatly we appreciate your efforts. If it were not for you, we could not offer our High Holy Day services featuring our unique liturgy that expressly addresses us as LGBTQ+ people, along with our families and allies. Also, to our Board of Directors and our committees and volunteers who have given so much of your free time and energy, together with all of you who have renewed your memberships, and our Membership Committee and its Chair, our Director of Membership, Deb Hyman, thank you. Without you, not just these High Holy Day services, but Bet Mishpachah itself would not be possible.

For those non-members who are joining us for these High Holy Days, I wish that you find inspiration here and I urge you to become members and contribute your own gifts to the growth of this inclusive and egalitarian community. However you identify yourself, wherever you come from, and with whomever you are affiliated, Bet Mishpachah embraces you.

From the joy of *Rosh ha-shana* to the introspection of *Yom Kippur* and to the growth in the year to come, I pray you find the connection and spiritual resonance you are seeking. It is here to be found; I assure you.

May you all be inscribed and sealed for a good, sweet and healthy year!

Mitchell Haymes, President





Greetings from our Executive Director

Dear Bet Mishpachah,

Shana Tova! Here we are at the start of another year in our Jewish calendar. As we gather for the High Holy Days and welcome in the year 5784, I want to extend my heartfelt wishes for a meaningful and blessed season to each one of you.

During this time of reflection, introspection, and renewal, we come together as a community to seek forgiveness, embrace gratitude, and deepen our connection to each other, our traditions, and the Divine. Now is the time for us to look inward and strive for personal growth as we embark on a new year filled with hope and possibility.

This month of *Elul*, I have had many opportunities to reflect on the past year and the many ways in which we were able to come together as a community. We reinstated Shabbat dinners; hosted several guest speakers; strengthened partnerships with local Jewish institutions; and increased our social media presence just to name a few.

These ways in which we come together as a community would not have been possible without the unwavering dedication and support of our staff, board of directors, and many volunteers. I extend my deepest gratitude to everyone who contributes each day to making Bet Mishpachah a true family. As we begin this new year, I am filled with much hope for our future. We are still growing with new ideas and community connections. Through our collective efforts, we can make a positive impact as DC's LGBTQ+ synagogue.

May this High Holy Days season be a time of deep spiritual reflection, connection, and abundant blessings for you and your loved ones.

L'shana Tova Tikateivu—may you be inscribed for a good and sweet year ahead.

With warmest wishes,

Joshua Maxey
Executive Director

Mizmor Shabbat Musical Services

On the second Friday of each month, one of our wonderful and talented song-leader/guitarists, ***Rabbi Ben Shalva*** or ***Robyn Helzner***

leads us in lively, spiritual singing as part of the Erev Shabbat service.



October 13, November 10, December 8 and so on into 2024!



a community of empowerment
and recovery for women

Hello fellow Bet Mish members and friends!

Each year, the congregation designates the amazing N Street Village for its High Holy Days act of *tzedaka*. For our new year of 5784, we will participate in the Village's annual SHERO Campaign and Walk on October 21st. This will replace our previous Amazon Wishlist initiative and collection, which can still be done year round.

Please consider joining the SHERO/Bet Mishpachah team, donating towards our *Chai* goal of \$1800, and/or walking on the October 21st Walk in our neighborhood. We would love to have your involvement in any way that works for you in support of our community partner. To donate or register, go to: <https://sherowalk23.nstreetvillage.org/team/bet-mishpachah>

Thanks in advance!

James Radack (he/him), chairperson, Bet Mishpachah Social Action/Justice committee.



Sukkot

Sukkot is the first of the three annual pilgrimage festivals (*Shalosh R'galim*). This year, *Sukkot* begins on Friday night, September 29th (the 15th of *Tishri*), just five days after *Yom Kippur*. Joyously celebrating *Sukkot* is a terrific way to put into practice our resolutions for enhancing our spiritual lives and becoming more involved in the Jewish community in the New Year 5784.

Like most Jewish holidays, *Sukkot* has many layers of meaning. In *Sh'mot* (Exodus) 34:22, *Sukkot* is established as the annual fall harvest festival (*Chag ha-Asif*) in the Land of Israel. In *Va-yikra* (Leviticus) 23:42-43, *Sukkot* commemorates the People of Israel's temporary dwellings and their direct dependence on G-d during the 40 years they wandered in the wilderness after the exodus from Egypt.

To observe both meanings, we are to dwell in temporary booths (*sukkot*) with roofs made of leaves and branches (*s'chach*), spaced so that we can look up and see the stars. We are to eat, sleep and welcome guests in our *sukka* during the eight days of the holiday as is observed in the diaspora (seven days in Israel). The *megila* (scroll) traditionally read on *Sukkot* is *Kohelet* (Ecclesiastes), which focuses on the impermanence of life ("Vanity of vanities...") and the eternal values we strive to live by always.

The other *Sukkot* observance is "taking the Four Species" – the *lulav* (an unopened date palm frond), *hadas* (myrtle), *arava* (willow) and *etrog* (citron) – and, after reciting the blessing, shaking them in six directions: up, down, left, right, forward and back to attest to G-d's sovereignty over all of Creation. This ritual also symbolically voices a prayer for sufficient rainfall for the Earth's vegetation in the coming year.

Sukkot – Let's Celebrate

Friday, September 29th – Erev Sukkot Special Speaker on Climate Change

Sukkot is often referred to as *hag ha-asif*, “The Harvest Festival.” Because of this strong association with the environment, we are delighted to have Dr. Deborah Seligsohn, professor at Villanova University, an expert on aspects of climate change as a speaker. As a 20-year veteran US diplomat, she focused on the science of climate change and environmental issues throughout Asia. After services, Dr. Seligsohn will update us on trends, compare actions taken by the two largest carbon emitter nations – the U.S. and China, and, what we can do as individuals to have a real impact.

Please join us for what will be a very enlightening evening, starting with Shabbat services at 8:00 pm.

Join us for a special *Sukkot* program Saturday, September 30th, at 6:30 pm Potluck dinner in the *Sukka* at the EDCJCC

Fulfill one of the *mitzvot* of the holiday of *Sukkot* – eat in a *sukka*. We have reserved the *sukka* at the EDCJCC for a special Bet Mishpachah program. Bring your own meal and dessert, or a side dish to share. We will begin the evening with *Havdala* to end Shabbat. Bring a friend! Bring your partner! All are welcome. There will be a *lulav* and *etrog* available for those who wish to recite the blessing (another *Sukkot mitzva*).

RSVP to mgasthalter@gmail.com so we know how many to expect.

Open *Sukka* in the garden of Yutta Brettschneider and Barbara Backer Thursday, October 5th at 7:30 pm

You are invited to join Yutta and Barbara in their lovely garden *sukka* at 3712 Perry Street, Brentwood MD 20722. Bring a vegetarian snack for a shared meal after a short service.

For more information, contact Yutta at: yuttab@verizon.net or 240 328 8415

Rabbi Jake's Fall Classes



Rabbi Jake will be teaching a wonderful variety of class topics this fall. These classes are free-standing events. Join us for one or all.

The Stories We Tell – Folktales and stories in our tradition and the values they teach - Saturday, October 14th, following services, at 12:30 pm. In-person and live-streamed via Zoom.

We love stories, and there are lots of them that come from Jewish tradition or are used in Jewish settings as teaching tools.

Whether these stories originated in the Old Country or more currently, they engage us and attempt to inspire us to live up to

our ideals. Let's find out why we keep coming back to these stories, and why they have spoken to Jews for so many years.

Sing a New Song - Part 2 - A survey of new melodies for ancient texts. Wednesday, October 25th, at 7:30 pm. Live-streamed via Zoom.

Jewish musicians and composers are always finding new ways to bring meaning to ancient texts. We'll hear how some of them have interpreted them through song with examples from Israeli artists, queer Jews, and camp song leaders, and do some singing along as well. This class will continue the musical exploration that we began in the spring and will build on that foundation. All are welcome to attend regardless of musical ability or whether you attended Part 1.

Superstitions from the world-wide Jewish community - Wednesday, November 15th, at 7:30 pm. Live-streamed via Zoom.

Why do people spit three times when they hope that something bad won't happen? Why do others place salt in their pockets or in the corners of rooms? Why is there a common practice of closing holy books that have been left open on a table? These superstitions exist in Jewish communal practice, as others. We'll look at some well-known, and some not well-known, superstitions from throughout the Jewish world and dig into their origins and meaning.

Questions and Answers - Reading Rabbinic responsa literature for our modern times - Saturday, December 9th, following services, at 12:30 pm. In-person and live-streamed via Zoom.

There is a body of Rabbinic literature that attempts to answer new questions that did not arise in the classic Jewish legal texts. This type of rabbinic literature applies the foundation of law to new situations in Jewish life. We'll focus on ways in which different movements have responded to questions that affect life for Jews who are members of the LGBTQ+ community. Our Jewish community is always evolving, and rabbinic responsa literature reacts and helps shape that evolution.

The Zoom invitations will appear closer to their dates in the weekly electronic newsletter, "This Week and Beyond," on our Facebook page www.facebook.com/betmish, and our website www.betmish.org. Classes are always free for members of Bet Mishpachah. There is a suggested donation of \$10 for non-members which may be made on our website.



News From Bet Mishpachah's Programming Committee

2023 has been an exciting year for Bet Mishpachah's newly reconstituted programming committee. The committee's goal was to develop interesting programs to build our community and complement our robust religious program. Meeting monthly, the committee brainstormed to develop new programs and solicited ideas from the congregation about what would be of interest.

Some highlights of what we have been doing this year include outings to the movies and the theater, trips to the Jewish Museum of Maryland in Baltimore and the recently-opened Capital Jewish Museum in DC, and inspiring presentations from an "accidental activist" from PFLAG, a trans activist from Israel, and an LGBTQ author about the quasi-hidden LGBTQ presence in Jewish history and thought.

In the coming months, we have exciting programs in store as well that will include a potluck in the *sukka* at the EDCJCC, a picnic in Rock Creek Park, a presentation by a climate change activist about the "big heat," and a question-and-answer session with VA Senator Adam Ebbin about the challenges of promulgating LGBTQ-friendly legislation.

If you are interested in joining our committee, attending one of our programs, or have ideas for future programs, please contact us at programs@betmish.org. We look forward to hearing from you!

Starting in October, we will be instituting "***Simchat Shabbat***," a way in which our members can celebrate together. Let us know if you have cause to celebrate in the way of a birthday, anniversary, or other special occasion and we will share in your joy each month.

A special blessing will be recited for all who participate.
If you would like to help sponsor the enhanced *Oneg* for that Friday, please let us know.
Contact Liat at administrator@betmish.org.

How Does Bet Mishpachah Put On These Services?

It requires the efforts of many dedicated volunteers. But it also requires money. . . .

Bet Mishpachah runs on a very lean budget. For the past 48 years, we have benefited from the considerable efforts of the many volunteers. It is only as a result of their efforts that Bet Mishpachah is able to provide enriching services and activities throughout the year.

But volunteers are not enough. We have paid staff, including our Rabbi; we pay significant rent; and we have many other expenses that allow us to continue to serve our members and our community.

It costs over \$1,500 per member to keep Bet Mishpachah running, an amount that is not covered by our modest basic dues. And many members pay what they can, but less than full dues. This means we must rely heavily on the generosity of other members and friends of our community to make up the difference.

First year dues are only \$180 and include High Holy Day tickets, plus we offer discounted membership for those who live out of the metropolitan area. No one is ever denied membership for financial reasons. We are a *Mishpachah*, a family of choice, and all are welcome in our home, our *Bayit*.

Help support us. Become a member. Or, if that is not right for you at this time, make a generous donation to Bet Mishpachah, so it can survive and flourish as the only GeLiBTe* synagogue in the Washington area.

Donations can be made via the PayPal Giving link, Zelle, Venmo or CashApp on our website, www.betmish.org, or sent to:

Bet Mishpachah
PO Box 1410
Washington, DC 20013

*acronym for GLBT meaning “beloved” in Yiddish



Special Thanks ...

... to members who have generously supported Bet Mishpachah at enhanced levels of membership

Bet Mishpachah's membership dues pay our rent, staff, rabbi, and the many religious and social activities we provide throughout the year.

To all who have become members during this year, we say: Thank you!

Ability to pay is never an obstacle to becoming a member. For those members who can afford to provide extra financial support to Bet Mishpachah, we have enhanced levels of membership. We give special thanks to the following members who (as of going to print) have generously supported our synagogue through their enhanced membership:

Patron

Anonymous Member
Morris Umansky

Benefactors

Mindy Gasthalter
David Schwarz
Noah Wofsy

Sustainers

JonRobert Johnson
Joel Martin
Joseph Pomper
Thomas Sachs
Barry Kropf
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Al Munzer and Joel Wind
Rachel Nancollas and Elliott Sprehn
Elyse Wander and Judith Retchin

Supporters

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Susan Silber
Seymour Stern
Steven Weinberg
Murray Woldman
Robert Hollis and Donald Jewler
Deb Hyman and Paula Morris
Maxine Klane and Elaine Raksis



More Special Thanks

To our dedicated volunteers who have generously given their time to help the many committees that collectively work together in supporting our core values while embodying our Jewish traditions in 5783.

Andrew Abrams
Allan Armus
Douglas Auerbach
Whitney Babash
Judy Barlas
Isaac Belfer
Joel Berelson
Marc Bernstein
Kasey Bigsby
Louis Blank
Jeff Burka
Alexandra Carter
Keith Cohen
David Cohen
Nathaniel Deutsch
Devra Floyd
Eva Freund
Barry Friedman
Glenn Garelik
Sarajane Garten, z"l
Mindy Gasthalter
Erica Gloger
Barbara Goldberg
Alfredo Gomez
Letitia Gomez
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Rod Ross
Tom Sachs
David Schwarz
Susan Silber
David Sobelsohn
Stuart Sotsky
Marisa Uchin
Joel Wind
Noah Wofsy
Rachel Wolkowitz



Meditations

On Awareness

Most of us are not usually paying attention to what we actually do and say.
We are not really eating when we eat;
we are not really sleeping when we sleep.
Our minds are distracted and our thoughts are scattered.
Too often, we are either lamenting about and clutching at the past,
or anticipating and fearing the future.
Instead of fully inhabiting our bodies and experiencing our experience,
we're semiconscious at best—not fully present, barely aware.
This sad state is reflected by the foolish and mindless things we do
as we whizz along life's fast lanes,
as if driving on autopilot.

We become so busy, and we scurry about so quickly,
that we forget to stay in touch with who we are,
what we are,
and what we are doing.
In this way, we miss the beauty;
we miss the sadness;
we miss the actuality,
the full texture of our lives.
We miss the truth of our experiences, moment to moment.
Our lack of mindfulness makes us careless:
often we hurt others without thinking,
or sometimes without noticing we've done so.
And we hurt ourselves.
We keep falling asleep at the switch of our lives,
leaving ourselves vulnerable to all kinds of accidents, both physical and emotional.
Not paying attention to our lives in the immediacy of the present moment,
we find ourselves embroiled in disastrous personal relationships.

Practicing mindful awareness is how we develop insight and self-realization.
The more fully engaged in simply doing what we are doing,
the more awareness and insight we bring to bear upon it,
the more we get done, spiritually speaking.

Lam Surya Das

Hinèini

Hinèini means “here I am,” but it is not a geographical answer.
It is not the answer to “where are you?”
It is the response to the challenge to acknowledge the truth of the present moment,
to recognize what needs to be done,
and to prepare to do it.

Mindfulness is also “here I am, not hiding,”
and it is also an expression of freedom.
Even when experience is painful, especially when it is dire,
mindfulness is freedom from extra anguish, from the extra pain of futile struggle.

“This is what is true.
These are the possibilities.
I understand the necessary response.
And sometimes, there are no possibilities other than surrender.
So, I surrender.”

Hinèini is also the imperative to be fully present,
in moments of special joy
as well as in everyday moments,
of the amazing blessings of simply being alive.
My father said grace at dinnertime,
and sometimes, probably in an attempt to be modern and funny, he would say,
“well, here we are again, G-d.”
That was it.

The whole grace.

Maybe that is the whole grace.

Here we are.

Here I am. *Hinèini*.

Sylvia Boorstein

Autobiography in Five Short Chapters

I.

I walk down the street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I fall in. I am lost. I am helpless.
It isn't my fault.
It takes forever to find a way out.

II.

I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I still don't see it. I fall in again.
I can't believe I am in the same place.
It isn't my fault.
It still takes a long time to get out.

III.

I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I see it there. I still fall in.
It's habit. It's my fault. I know where I am.
I get out immediately.

IV.

I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I walk around it.

V.

I walk down a different street.

©1977 Portia Nelson, There's a Hole in my Sidewalk: the Romance of Self-Discovery

According to Rambam (Maimonides), the highest level of *t'shuva* is when you confront the same situation you were in when you sinned before and you have the potential to commit the sin again, and, nevertheless, abstain from committing it, not because of fear or lack of strength, but simply because you have turned and done complete *t'shuva*. *Mishneh Torah 2:1*

Forgiveness Prayer

Compassionate One, Creator of Worlds,
I stand before You
And before my fellow humans
Pardoning, forgiving
All those who have hurt or angered me
Or sinned against me.

Whether this hurt was one of
Bodily harm,
Financial loss,
A wound to my honor,
Or anything else that is mine –

Whether the other was forced to hurt me
Or did so willingly,

Whether I was harmed by word or by deed,
Whether this wound is a new one
Or one left over from so long ago –

I forgive because we are both human.
May no person be held guilty on my account.

I forgive because I don't want to hurt anymore.

Forgiving One, help me to forgive.
Help me to be forgiven.
In this season of forgiveness, Holy One,
Make me willing to start afresh
In this new year.

Chavurat Shalom, adapted by Rabbi Laurie Green

On *U-n'taneh Tòkef*

One of the major challenges of the High Holy Day liturgy is the solemn prayer called *U-n'taneh Tòkef*. It speaks of “who will live, and who will die” in the New Year.

Read literally, it means that G-d judges us and writes us into the Book of Life... or not. But the *Mishnah* (*Avot* 3:16) tells us to read this prayer not literally but metaphorically, saying that what it *really* means is that **during the year we each write a Book of Life for ourselves through our own deeds.**

As Jews, we are taught that we are collectively responsible for the society we live in and that we are to side with the oppressed against the oppressor.

One of the most frequently repeated phrases in the Torah is

“because you were strangers in the Land of Egypt.”

We know what it is like to be oppressed, therefore we must be vigilant in fighting oppression. And we must take extra care to ensure that we ourselves do not oppress anyone or any group.

This reinforces the idea that every deed counts, everything we do matters. We never know what act or word will leave an impression or tip the scale, now or in the future. This strengthens the imperative from Rabbi Hillel:

If not now, when?

- * For the things we can change, there is ***T'shuva***:
realignment, returning, repentance.
- * For the things we cannot change, there is ***T'fila***:
prayer, meditation, introspection.
- * For the help we can give, there is ***Tz'daka***:
justice, righteousness, charity.

With each act or failure to act, we write our own Book of Life.

As we begin the New Year 5784, each of our Books is blank.

What kind of story will your Book tell at the end of this New Year?

Will it tell a story of Justice and Compassion?

An Ashàmnù for Privilege

We have abandoned, we have appropriated,
We have belittled, we have believed the unbelievable,
We have given too little, we've given too late, we have given up,
We have denied, we have distorted,
We have victim-blamed, we have zoned out,
We have chided, we have chastised,
We have taken, we have turned away,
We have yielded, we have yet to act,
We have kept to ourselves, we have been complicit, we have laughed off,
We've made excuses, we've minimized, we've mocked,
We've neglected, we've negated, we have grown numb,
We've sent our regrets, we've averted our eyes,
We have forsaken, we have pitied, we have failed to imagine new possibilities,
We have explained, we have criticized,
We have rationalized, we have refused responsibility,
We've shamed the innocent, we've suppressed,
We have talked...and talked...and talked, but we have not listened,
We have not sought the truth, we have told ourselves lies,
and we have believed them.

Elliott bat Tzedek, adapted by Rabbi Laurie Green

Disloyal Jew

I am a disloyal Jew.
I am not loyal to a political party.
Nor will I be loyal to dictators and mad kings.
I am not loyal to walls or cages.
I am not loyal to taunts or tweets.
I am not loyal to hatred, to Jew-baiting,
to the gloating connivings of white supremacy.

I am a disloyal Jew.
I am not loyal to any foreign power.
Nor to abuse of power at home.
I am not loyal to a legacy of conquest, erasure and exploitation.
I am not loyal to stories that tell me whom I should hate.

I am a loyal Jew.
I am loyal to the inconveniences of kindness.
I am loyal to the dream of justice.
I am loyal to this suffering Earth
And to all life.

I am not loyal to any founding fathers.
But I am loyal to the children who will come
And to the quality of world we leave them.

I am not loyal to what America has become.
But to what America could be.
I am loyal to Emma Lazarus.
To huddled masses.
To freedom and welcome,
Holiness, hope and love.

By Reb Irwin Keller
Sonoma County, California
student member of Ohalah,
the Association of Rabbis for Jewish Renewal

Bet Mishpachah Committees

Bereavement Support

Bet Mishpachah is available to lead and/or arrange for a funeral, *shiva*, memorial, or unveiling service for our members. Bet Mishpachah is part of the Jewish Funeral Practices Committee of Greater Washington and has arrangements with local funeral homes to provide a respectful funeral in keeping with Jewish traditions at a modest cost. Bet Mishpachah has volunteer bereavement support coordinators in Maryland, DC, and Northern Virginia. Contact Rachel Hamberger at bereavement@betmish.org in time of need for an immediate response or to volunteer to assist in this important communal service.

Bikur Cholim (Visiting the Sick)

The purpose of *Bikur Cholim* is to assist members of the congregation who are ill. Our congregational family also provides support and comfort during times of illness and hospitalization. If you become ill or know of another member who is ill, please let us know. Prayers of healing are recited each week at our Shabbat services. If you are interested in becoming a member of the *Bikur Cholim* committee and are available to visit or assist ill members of our congregation, please contact Barbara Lewis at bikurcholim@betmish.org.

Book Readers' Group

The Bet Mishpachah Book Readers' Group gets together about every 6-8 weeks for a virtual, lively discussion of the book that we have just read. For more information, email: bookgroup@betmish.org. Selections for upcoming groups discussions are listed in "This Week and Beyond."

Chavurot

Our *Chavurot* have resumed planning with bagel brunches, dinners, and movies, as well as informational and educational events. Specifically, in the Northern Virginia and Maryland areas. If you are interested in participating, and you live in NOVA, please contact Eva Freund at novachavura@betmish.org; in Maryland contact Deb Hyman at membershipdirector@betmish.org.

Cemetery Committee

The Cemetery Committee oversees the maintenance of the Bet Mishpachah section of the Elesavetgrad Cemetery. They interface with individuals and families wishing to acquire a grave site, erect a memorial stone, arrange for a burial, and schedule an unveiling. They also represent Bet Mishpachah on the Elesavetgrad Cemetery Board of Directors. Contact Allan Armus at 703-525-4261 or Cemetery@betmish.org.

Communications

The Communications Committee helps inform both the congregation's membership and the wider LGBTQ+ and Jewish communities about the congregation's activities. It does this through a variety of media: our weekly electronic mailing, "This Week and Beyond," the monthly *Mishpachah Member's Monthly* newsletter, our website (www.betmish.org), and Facebook page (facebook.com/betmish.) Additional volunteers, particularly with copy editing or web design skills, are welcome. For further information, contact Liat Novek at administrator@betmish.org.

Education

The Education Committee plans creative and innovative courses, workshops, our annual *Shabbaton*, and special events. The committee also periodically sponsors a scholar-in-residence weekend of programs as well as special guest speakers at services. The Education Committee welcomes volunteers to initiate, lead, or coordinate programs. To get involved, please contact Jeff Kahn at education@betmish.org.

Hospitality Committee

Like to entertain? Like to plan meals? Like to greet people? Then the hospitality committee is right for you. Several times a year, we have Congregational Dinners and Sunday brunches, as well as *Oneg Shabbat noshes* following services. Come help us plan and set up. Bring us your ideas. Contact Kasey Bigsby at oneg@betmish.org.

Keshet Rising

The group meets monthly for a gathering of Queer Jews from Gen X to Gen Z, is committed to building connections within the Bet Mishpachah and greater LGBTQ+ communities while creating programs that help young professionals meet one another, network and share ideas. In the past, we have met for Happy Hour on a Friday afternoon and then gone together to Shabbat services. For more information, contact executivedirector@betmish.org

Liturgy

The Liturgy Committee developed the *Siddur* (prayerbook for Shabbat and festivals) and the *Machzor* (prayerbook for the High Holy Days) used at Bet Mishpachah. Much of the material is of particular relevance to our community and all is gender sensitive. For more information, contact Scott Reiter at liturgy@betmish.org.

Membership

The Membership Committee works actively on member recruitment and retention with active outreach, communication and evaluation. It develops membership policies and practices. If you are interested in working with the Membership Committee, please contact Deb Hyman at membershipdirector@betmish.org.

Nominating Committee

Each Fall, we convene three people to work together on the Nominating Committee whose job it is to seek volunteers to fill the open positions on the board. Some board terms are for one year, some for two, but each year there are positions to fill. If you would like to serve on the Nominating Committee or on the Board of Directors, please email president@betmish.org.

Programming Committee

Our programming committee has been hard at work. Meeting monthly, we plan and propose a variety of activities including speakers, movie outings, day trips, dinners and holiday celebrations. Why not tell us what you would like to do? Contact Joseph Pomper at programs@betmish.org.

Religious Affairs

The Religious Affairs Committee addresses issues pertaining to religious policy and practice and the spiritual direction of the synagogue. It recruits and trains lay service leaders, plans services for Shabbat and Holidays, and innovates new service formats such as *Mizmor* Shabbat and Learner Services. To become involved in the Religious Affairs Committee, please contact Paula Morris at religiousaffairsdirector@betmish.org.

Shabbat *Oneg* and *Kiddush*

Each Friday night and Saturday our services are followed with Shabbat socials (*Oneg* Shabbat and *Kiddush*) as a welcome part of our Shabbat celebration. We welcome your sponsorship to celebrate or commemorate a special event, or “just because.” Sponsoring at this time will ensure we can maintain our festive *Oneg* and *Kiddush*. If you would like to be a sponsor, please contact our Operations Director, Kasey Bigsby at operationsdirector@betmish.org.

Social Activities

Our Social Activities Committee arranges for members of the congregation to gather together for social and cultural activities. We plan and host Shabbat dinners, bagel brunches with special speakers, theater events, our annual movie and Chinese dinner on December 25th and other fun outings. To get involved, please contact social-events@betmish.org.

Social Justice

The Social Action/Social Justice Committee leads activities including the N St. Village Drive at the High Holy Days, collecting donations for the Queen Esther Fund at Purim to go to a worthy Jewish or LGBTQ organization, distributing food items to needy families at Passover (Project Hope), Labor on the Bima at Shabbat services around Labor Day, and more. To join this active group and carry on the Congregation’s mission of *tikun olam* (repair of the world), contact James Radack at social-action@betmish.org.

Women's Outreach

Participating in our Women’s Outreach activities is a wonderful way to meet other women in a small group setting, contribute to the life of the synagogue, start and build long lasting relationships, and participate in various social action projects. Every first Friday of the month we hold pre-service programs at 6:30 pm. Usher in your Shabbat with great company, participate in lively discussions and interactive presentations, and other times just *schmooze* with others. Check Bet Mishpachah’s weekly email, “This Week and Beyond” for other upcoming events. We use an inclusive definition of “woman” and welcome non-binary people. For more information, contact Paula Morris at programmingdirector@betmish.org.

Our Liturgy

It is with great pride and joy that our congregational family added to its unique liturgy an updated and expanded edition of our *machzor*, *Chadeish Yamèinu*, published as a hardbound volume published in 2021.

The title *Chadeish Yamèinu* (“Renew our Days”) is from the verse we recite and sing during the High Holy Days:

הַשִּׁיבֵנו יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ
וְנָשׁוּבָה חֲדָשׁ יָמֵינוּ כְּקֶדֶם

Hashivèinu Adonai eilècha v'nashùva. Chadeish yamèinu k'kèdem.

Turn us to You, O G-d, and we shall return. Renew our days ahead.

The Liturgy Committee began work on our prayerbook for the High Holy Days starting in 1994. Each year, we introduced a new booklet for one of the High Holy Day services. The publication of this hardbound *machzor* follows publication in 2017 of a revised and greatly expanded, second edition of our *siddur* for Shabbat, festivals, and special occasions, *Shavat va-Yinafash*. Bet Mishpachah began working on the first edition of our LGBTQ-affirming *siddur* in 1983; the first hard-bound edition was published in 1991 and was adopted by several other LGBTQ congregations around the country.

Our liturgy includes many readings and interpretive translations by LGBTQ+ liturgists, rabbis, and our own congregants. Both *Shavat va-Yinafash* and *Chadeish Yamèinu* attempt to reflect in words the diverse spiritual values held by members of our congregation.

As we first pioneered in 1991, English translations are de-gendered with respect to G-d. With respect to people, we avoid exclusively male expressions and add references to women, such as the Matriarchs and the Prophet Miriam.

Although the ancient rabbis enumerated six genders, the Hebrew language is structured for only two. This binary is problematic for many Jews, especially trans, intersex, genderqueer, and genderfluid individuals. Acknowledging our limitations, we have done our best to make the *machzor* even more inclusive and to explore various gender possibilities for the Divine, both in English translations and readings, and in Hebrew. For instance, the formulation that introduces blessings, *Baruch ata ...* is presented in different ways. Some use the traditional words in masculine gender, some use feminine gender, and some use both. We hope that these changes convey our belief that, while G-d has no gender, G-d includes all genders.

Bet Mishpachah
***Siddur or Machzor* Donation Form**

Bookplates

Bookplates are a wonderful way to honor or remember a special person. Bookplates will be placed in prayer books that are regularly used during our Shabbat and Festival services.

I/we wish to partner with Bet Mishpachah by donating one or more bookplates at \$54 each for a *Siddur* to remain at Bet Mishpachah and be used at services.

Wording of the Bookplate

Name of Sponsor(s): _____

In HONOR or in MEMORY (circle one) of: _____

Please submit a separate form for each Bookplate.

Copy of the *Siddur* or *Machzor*

I/we wish to partner with Bet Mishpachah with a suggested donation of \$40 for a personal copy of the *siddur* or \$54 for a personal copy of the *machzor* to take home (without a bookplate). Please mail the book to the address below.

TOTAL AMOUNT: \$_____

Check enclosed

PayPal through www.betmish.org, please be sure to enter "*Siddur*" or "*Machzor*" in the memo field if you are donating to receive a copy. If your donation is for a bookplate, please also mail this form to ensure correct wording on the bookplate.

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Date: _____

Please mail your completed donation form and your check (if not using PayPal) to:
Bet Mishpachah
PO Box 1410
Washington, DC 20013

Please contact administrator@betmish.org with any questions. Thank you for your generous support of the programs and operations of our congregational family.

Our Cemetery

Bet Mishpachah owns a section of the historic Elesavetgrad Cemetery in the Congress Heights section of Washington, DC. It is adjacent to the Ohev Shalom, Adas Israel, and Washington Hebrew Cemeteries. The address is 3233 15th Place SE, Washington, DC 20020-2903. The cemetery is Metro accessible via the Congress Heights Metrorail station on the Green Line.

Information about the Bet Mishpachah cemetery:

- Members and their immediate family may acquire sites
- The purchase price includes perpetual care
- The purchase price does not include opening and closing costs
- Gravestones are required, but are not included in the purchase price
- Pre-need purchases may be paid in full or in installments
- Time of death purchases must be paid in full within 45 days of interment
- Interfaith couples are permitted; however the certificate of ownership will be registered in the name of the Jewish spouse
- Non-Jewish religious symbols are not permitted on gravestones
- No other faith services may be conducted graveside
- Inurnments of cremated remains are permitted
- Grave liners are not required

For further information or to purchase a site, contact Allan Armus at 703-525-4261.

Additionally, Bet Mishpachah is a member of the Jewish Funeral Practices Committee of Greater Washington (JFPC). The JFPC has contracts with Hines Rinaldi Funeral Home (Silver Spring – 301-622-2290) and Cunningham Turch Funeral Home (Alexandria VA – 703-549-1800) to provide traditional funeral services to the Jewish community at very reasonable prices, and with Fram Monument Company (Rockville – 301-605-8081) to provide granite and bronze markers at discounted prices. Both contracts can be viewed in full text at the JFPC website, <http://dc.jewish-funerals.org>. Click on "contracts" in the green menu bar.



Presidents of Bet Mishpachah

1976 - 1977	Ed Blacker <i>z"l</i>	1998 - 1999	Joseph Pomper
1977 - 1978	Joel Martin	1999 - 2001	Mindy Gasthalter
1978 - 1979	Michael Greenwald	2001 - 2003	Milton Stern
1979 - 1980	Jerry Friedman <i>z"l</i>	2003 - 2004	Becca Gould
1980 - 1981	Jerry Goldberg	2004 - 2006	Milton Stern
1981 - 1982	David Green <i>z"l</i>	2006 - 2008	Alex Carter
1982 - 1983	Martin Less	2008	Sarajane Garten, <i>z"l</i>
1983 - 1984	Jocelyn Kaplan	2008 - 2009	Alex Carter
1984 - 1985	Barrett Brick <i>z"l</i>	2009 - 2011	Elke Martin
1985 - 1986	Fran Sneider	2011 - 2013	Sarajane Garten, <i>z"l</i>
1986 - 1988	Steve Liebfreund	2013 - 2014	Joel Wind
1988 - 1990	Beth Cohen	2014	Diane Liff
1990 - 1991	Scott Reiter	2014 - 2015	Liora Moriel
1991 - 1993	Suzanne Wandersman	2015 - 2017	Stuart Sotsky
1993 - 1994	Jeff Kaye	2017 - 2020	David Schwarz
1994 - 1995	Ruth Potts	2020 - 2022	Mindy Gasthalter
1995 - 1996	Scott Mezistrano	2022 -	Mitchell Haymes
1996 - 1997	Beth Cohen		
1997 - 1998	Georgia Korn		

HARVEY MILK *CHESED* AWARD

For service to the wider Jewish or LGBTQ+ Community

1998	Dace Stone <i>z"l</i> & Michael David Garbus	2010	Stuart Kurlander
1999	Marc Bernstein & Evelyn Torton Beck	2012	David Fox
2000	Allan Armus	2013	Sue Silber
2001	David Horowitz	2014	Letitia Gómez & Barbara Lewis
2002	Barrett L Brick <i>z"l</i>	2015	Louis Blank & Allan Armus
2003	Catherine Tarabochia	2017	Barbara Becker
2004	Alfred Munzer	2018	Barbara Goldberg
2005	Elke Martin & Dan Furmansky	2019	Ian Brown
2007	Eva Freund & Erica Nash, <i>z"l</i>	2020	Ruth Eisenberg
2008	Nancy Polikoff	2021	James Radack
2009	Lee Salawitch	2023	Ellen Oshinsky

DACE STONE MEMORIAL

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD

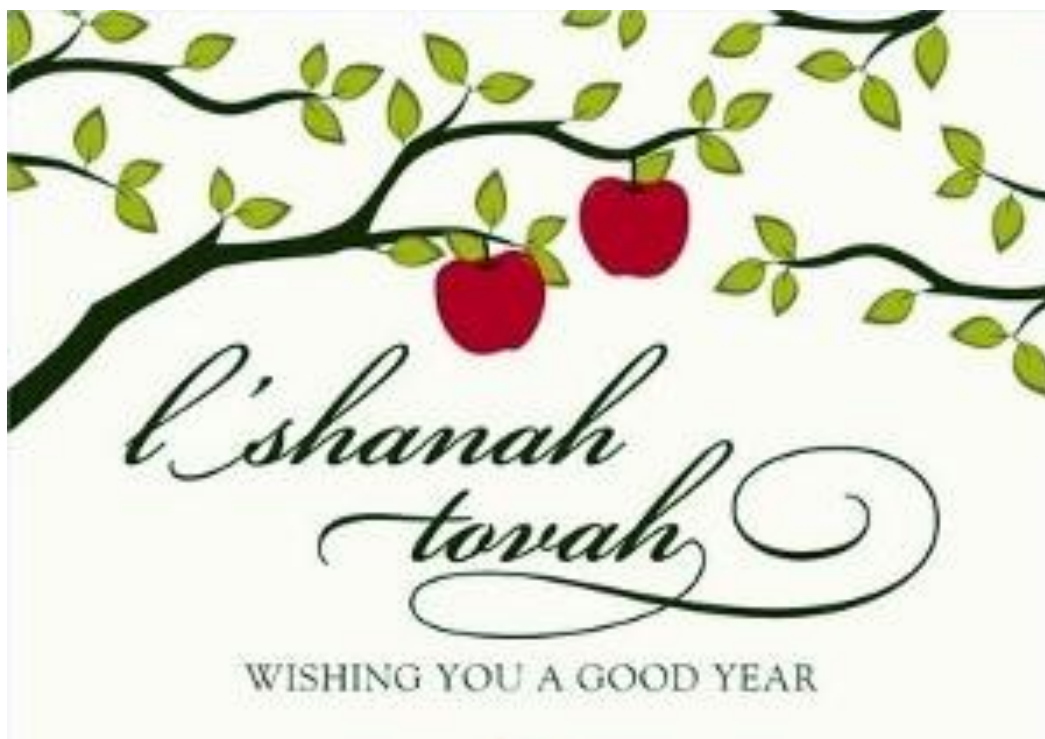
For service to the Bet Mishpachah Community

2002	Scott Reiter	2014	Yutta Brettschneider
2003	Jocelyn Kaplan	2015	Allan Armus
2004	Mindy Gasthalter	2016	Larry Neff & Louis Blank
2005	Beverly Nissenbaum	2017	Joanna Cohan Scherer & Mike Goldstein
2006	Sarajane Garten, <i>z"l</i> & Ed Lefkowitz, <i>z"l</i>	2018	Bet Mish Liturgy Committee
2007	Michael Resnick & Greg Diamond	2019	Mindy Gasthalter
2008	Charlie Stewart	2020	Michael Resnick
2009	Barbara Goldberg	2021	Devra Floyd
2011	Alex Carter	2022	Rodney Ross
2012	Joel Wind	2023	Jeffrey Kahn
2013	<i>Tach'shitim</i> , Bet Mishpachah's choir		

L'Shana tova tikateivu.

May you be inscribed for a good year.

We hope our services bring you joy,
and your meditations bring you peace



If you would like further information regarding our
High Holy Day services, please write to
hhd@betmish.org