



# Shabbat Shalom

9 Kislev 5776  
November 21, 2015

*Parashat Vayetzei*

## This Week at Beth El Synagogue

### Saturday, November 21:

*Havdalah—5:46 pm*

|                                   |                            |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Shabbat Mishnah Study             | 8:45 am                    |
| Orthodox Kehillah Services        | 9:00 am                    |
| B'nai Mitzvah Peer Tutoring       | 9:00 am                    |
| Main Sanctuary Services           | 9:30 am                    |
| Children's Services               | 10:30 am                   |
| D'var Torah with Rabbi Elie Spitz | 11:45 am                   |
| Shiur with Rabbi Elie Spitz       | 1:00 pm<br>(after Kiddush) |

### Sunday, November 22:

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| Weekly Sunday Minyan                   | 9:30 am  |
| Talmud Torah                           | 9:30 am  |
| Final Shiur with Rabbi Elie Spitz      | 10:30 am |
| Kitah Zayin participate in Final Shiur | 11:30 am |
| Hudi Gross Unveiling                   | 1:00 pm  |
| Monthly Durham Community Café Dinner   | 5:30 pm  |

### Monday, November 23:

### Tuesday, November 24:

### Wednesday, November 25:

|                         |         |
|-------------------------|---------|
| Weekly Wednesday Minyan | 8:00 am |
| NO TALMUD TORAH         |         |

### Thursday, November 26:

BETH EL SYNAGOGUE CLOSED

### Friday, November 27:

*Candle Lighting—4:44 pm*  
BETH EL SYNAGOGUE CLOSED

### Upcoming Events:

- ✧ Sat. 11/28 Shabbat Mishnah Study
- ✧ Sat. 11/28 Orthodox Kehillah Shabbat Morning Services
- ✧ Sat. 11/28 NO B'nai Mitzvah Peer Tutoring
- ✧ Sun. 11/29 Sunday Minyan
- ✧ Sun. 11/29 NO Talmud Torah (PreK-7)
- ✧ Wed. 12/1 Weekly Wednesday Minyan followed by Shiur
- ✧ Wed. 12/1 Talmud Torah (2-6)
- ✧ Fri. 12/4 B'nai Mitzvah Tutor Shabbat Dinner

### Gabbai Schedule

Contact the scheduled gabbai if you'd like to request an *aliyah*, other honor, or to volunteer to lead a service in the Main Sanctuary. Gabbaim will try to accommodate requests made on Shabbat morning (by 10:15am, before the Torah service) but we ask for your understanding if all honors have been previously claimed during the week.



|                             |               |  |
|-----------------------------|---------------|--|
| 11/21 Vayetze               |               |  |
| Shula Bernard               |               |  |
| shulabernard@gmail.com      | 919-967-9393  |  |
| 11/28 Vayishlach            |               |  |
| Roger Perilstein            |               |  |
| rperilstein@hrc-pa.com      | 919-286-9814  |  |
| 12/5 Vayeshev               |               |  |
| Isaac Price                 |               |  |
| isaac@isaacprice.org        | 919-886-5453  |  |
| 12/12 Miketz                |               |  |
| (Rosh Hodesh and Chanukah)  |               |  |
| Diane Markoff               |               |  |
| diane.markoff@earthlink.net | 919- 969-8953 |  |

This weekend's Kiddush lunch is hosted by:  
*Miriam and Arie Ehieli in honor of the upcoming wedding of Eric Ehieli and Wendy Walker.*

Beth El is a welcoming community of members with diverse backgrounds, ideas, levels of knowledge, and observance. We are an egalitarian Conservative congregation, and a member of the Southeast Seaboard district of United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism (USCJ), and the Orthodox Union.

### **Beth El Synagogue**

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Rabbi: Daniel Greyber  
Rabbi Emeritus: Steven Sager  
Synagogue President: Rachel Galanter

## Parashat Vayetzei

Adapted from <http://www.learn.jtsa.edu>

This week's Torah reading, Vayetzei (Genesis 28:10-32:2), opens and closes with flights of angels accompanying our forefather Jacob (aka Israel, though, he won't get named that until next week), as he flees from and returns to the Promised Land. When Jacob leaves, he is running in fear for his life. For our father Jacob has cheated his macho older brother Esau once too often, so much so that he has threatened to kill him. Of course, Esau isn't that much older, for the two brothers are twins. But as any set of twins will tell you, the one who came first, even if by mere seconds—that one is the elder. We might assume, along with the Bible, that birth-order matters. But Genesis is all about the younger supplanting the older and we are on solid ground suggesting that this sibling rivalry stuff is at the very heart of this week's Torah lesson.

Our biblical patriarchs famously upset birth order as they struggle for ascendancy over one another. Baby brother Isaac, thirteen years younger than his half-brother Ishmael, assumed the mantle of covenant when he supplanted his elder. Jacob actually bought Esau's birthright for a bowl of lentils and then through fraud, stole his father's blessing. It is the latter theft that made Esau see red. So as our portion begins, Jacob flees to his mother's brother's family. The Torah regales us with the way Uncle Laban serves Jacob his just deserts when he repeatedly changes Jacob's wages as a shepherd. In a coup of measure-for-measure punishment, Laban deceptively marries Jacob to weak-eyed Leah in place of her younger sister: the beloved, beautiful Rachel.

Laban insouciantly informs him, "We don't put the younger before the elder here" (Gen. 29:26). The Talmud (BT Bava Batra 123a) works very hard to make the sisters Rachel and Leah complicit in Laban's deception of Jacob. It reports how Rachel explained to Jacob that her father would try to deceive him and give him Leah instead. Jacob, the Talmud says, tells her that he is an old hand at deception, and he doubts that Laban can pull the wool over his eyes. To be sure, however, Jacob gives his adored Rachel certain signs by which he can know that it is her and not Leah. Jacob cannot imagine that Rachel might have compassion for her elder sister—after all, he had not a shred of consideration for his older brother.

Yet, the Talmud tells us, Rachel actually supplied Leah with the signs that Jacob had given her. Although Jacob thought he was bedding Rachel, surprise, surprise, "in the morning, it was Leah!" (Gen. 29:25). I love how the rabbis re-read the Genesis account not only to give Jacob his comeuppance, but to emphasize the love and sympathy sisters share with one another. It appears, if but for a brief moment, that the men of the Talmud understood women's emotional solidarity and even applaud it. Unfortunately, it is emphatically not the story that Genesis tells us. Leah remains the hated sister, pitifully naming her sons after her varying states of emotional distress. Rachel, for her part, however beloved and pretty she may be, remains barren. In a society that values women for their offspring, Rachel, bereft of children, is reduced to begging her husband, "Give me children or I'll die!" (Gen. 30:1). Jacob, who remains as thoroughly unsympathetic to his family as he is to his descendants—we who read about him—pushes her off and blames God for her abject state. It turns out that Rachel getting married is yet one more family tragedy.

Throughout the Torah reading, the women compete for their husband's attention through sex and children. The competition is intense enough that each sister pathetically goes so far as to offer Jacob her handmaid as a way of providing more offspring and keeping his interest. By the end of the portion, Jacob has four wives, 11 sons (Benjamin will be born in next week's Torah reading), and many daughters (all unnamed except for Dinah—we'll hear more about her next week, as well). If you think the sibling rivalries have finally burnt themselves out, well, there is still a lot of Genesis to read. Jacob's sons, the tribes of Israel, are chips off the old block when it comes to supplanting one another. Reuben even goes so far as to supplant his father Jacob (see Gen. 35:22, also next week).

As will be clear from this last paragraph, a great deal of the story is waiting to unfold. Meanwhile, next week we all will experience the gathering of the clans that we call Thanksgiving. Around our table we shall sit with siblings, parents, step-parents, half brothers and sisters, children and step children, the entire blended family of Israel. There may be those who are no longer invited to our tables. There are others whose absence we mourn. Each adult at the table carries within him or her secrets, resentments, family history, and, God willing, love. As we look around that table and recall our ancestors Jacob and his many wives and children, let us give thanks for what we have. All these generations after Jacob, we still are, at times, neurotic, dysfunctional, or in other words: family. Let us rejoice with love that we are still here, and give thanks to God for all we share.

The publication and distribution of the JTS Parashah Commentary are made possible by a generous grant from Rita Dee and Harold (z"l) Hassenfeld.

### BE at Beth El

Beth El Synagogue welcomes the following new members to our community: Yochai Ben Haim & Shira Anderson; Marilyn Hogle; and Janice & Larry Stolzenberg

### BE Mazel Tov

Mazel Tov to Eric Ehieli and Wendy Walker on their forthcoming marriage!

## Refuah Shleymah רפואה שלמה

|  |  |                    |
|--|--|--------------------|
| Aharon ben David u'Miriam (Alan Goldman)             | Rifka bat Idel v'Elka (Suzanne Furst)                | Ilene Jacobson     |
| Aliza Chana bat Leah                                 | Rut bat Sarah (Suzanne Furst)                        | Jennifer Krunkosky |
| Baruch ben Shalom v'Raisel (Bernard Leibel)          | Sara bat Hinda (Sylvia Dante)                        | Inez McFarling     |
| Baracha bat Sarah                                    | Sarah Gittel bat Rut (Sue Perlo)                     | Ezra Rapport       |
| Ben-Zion ben Sarah                                   | Shira Batya bat Meirav                               | Jack Reich         |
| Chana bat Malkah                                     | Shmuel ben Shoshana                                  | Michael Rockman    |
| Daronit Esther bat Tuvia v'Leah (Jennifer Greyber)   | Sprinya Simcha bat Yehudah v'Chana (Susan Rosefelde) | Pearl Rohde        |
| David ben Sarah (David Leitner)                      | Tuvia ben Shmuel v'Tziporah (Tovia Lebovich)         | Richard Roth       |
| Eliyahu Chanan ben Sarah (Ed Gagnon)                 | Tziporah bat Esther                                  | Carmen Sadowsky    |
| Gershon Yonah ben Tevya haKohen v'Chanah Leah haLevi | Yehudit bat Rachel                                   | Lauren Schiro      |
| Hannah Leah bat Sarah (Anna Crollman)                | Lee Ballen   | Orrie Wilner       |
| M'cor Eyshel bat Esther Tzvia                        | Lucretia Bell  | Amy Wolf           |
| Miryam bat Rivkah (May Segal)                        | Sonia Berman   |                    |
| Ovadya ben Elinor (Ovadya Fleishman)                 | Anne Boyd  |                    |
| Reuven ben Chanoch v'Dinah (Robert Feurst)           | Cynthia Brown  |                    |
|  | Anna Crollman  |                    |
|  | Lydia Cowan Davis                                    |                    |
|  | Elinor Fleishman                                     |                    |

Please contact the synagogue office with any additions or changes to this list.

## Yahrzeits יארצייט

|                         |                   |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Emil Agid               | Mary Forshag Hill |
| Alfred Louis Gabin      | Lisa Kaplan       |
| Nathan Wilbur Gladstein | Robert Lipton     |
| Lilly Miller Gladstein  | Morris Mazursky   |
| Bernard Greenberg       | Charles Sawilosky |
| Phil Hartman            | Kenneth Slatkoff  |

## BE Babies

Mazel Tov to Nancy Strauss on the birth of her granddaughter, Marian Rose Handler, on October 25th in New York. The proud parents are Rebecca and Ben Handler.

## BE Remembered

Beth El Synagogue extends condolences to:

\*Susan Cohen, Peter Goldberg and their family on the death of Susan's mother, Estelle Cohen who passed away on Sunday, 11/15. Funeral services took place in Florida. There will be a shiva minyan at their home on Sunday evening at 7:00.;

\*Sue Slatkoff, Ronald Strauss and their family on the death of Sue's brother-in-law, Eylon Shalev who passed away on Saturday, 11/14. Funeral services were held in Israel.