

Beth El Quarterly Bulletin

June 2016

Sivan 5776



FROM OUR RABBI: Illness and Love Are Ill-Defined

Illness is ill-defined. Sometimes it's clear when to start praying for someone who is ill: Cancer. Surgery. Heart Attack. Stroke. Often it's not.

Should we pray for healing when someone has a cold? What about for a "routine surgery" (such a phrase feels oxymoronic)? What about the flu? Or a broken arm? Or chronic depression? Or diabetes? Should praying for someone be reserved for when life is in imminent danger? Or should we continue to pray for those who struggle with chronic, lifelong illnesses? Can a person be in our prayers for "too long?" What would that mean?

I am grateful these days to carry a different question with me: When do you stop including someone's name in your prayers for healing? Or, more specifically, should I stop including Jennifer's name in my prayers for healing? Jen is, thankfully, done with chemo, done with radiation. Her strength is returning. Her hair is growing. She

is resuming a regular schedule. Except. Except she still has a port. Except every three weeks until October, she will receive infusions. Except labs and tests. Except, like every cancer patient, we carry the fear of cancer's return. Do I stop praying now that the toughest part is done? Do I keep praying for healing even though the uncertainty persists and some of these scars are now life's new normal?

Jewish law defines so many things. How much wine must be drunk in each of the four cups on Passover? (3 ounces). How many ounces of matzah must one eat on Passover night? (2.6 ounces for Motzi-Matza, 1.3 ounces for Korech, and 2.6 more ounces for Afikomen.) How long does one say kaddish for a parent? 11 months. Judaism expresses so much through measurement in an effort to understand when we have – and have not – fulfilled God's commandments. I've yet to find an answer to the question, "Exactly when do you stop including someone's name in your prayers for healing?"

Someone suggested, "Ask the person if s/he still wants you to pray for him/her." But nobody can make it alone. We are not always our own best judge. The Talmud (Berachot 5a) relates the following story:

Rabbi Johanan once fell ill and Rabbi Hanina went in to visit him. He said to him: "Are your sufferings welcome to you?" He replied: "Neither they nor their reward." He said to him: "Give me your hand." He gave him his hand and he raised him. Why could not Rabbi Johanan raise himself? — They replied: The prisoner cannot free himself from jail.

Sometimes a person may insist, "I'm fine now," when they are not. We should never publicly disclose someone's illness against their will. But, if we continue to pray privately for someone, are we committing a sin? Is it ethical to pray for people privately even if they don't want us to?

Every three weeks — at least — I say Jen's name in my personal prayers for healing. I pray the treatment should go smoothly. I pray her healing should continue. But at a staff meeting after Passover, I explained to Sheri and the staff that we feel like Jen is out of the woods. I announced we could take her name off "the list." Yet Gladys continues to say Jen's name on Shabbat and, when she does, I'm grateful Jen remains in her heart and the heart of so many others. I'm grateful for the love we have experienced the past nine months and I'm okay that it's hard to tell exactly when it will be over. The fuzziness of this period will continue for a while and I'm okay with it.

Because while it is true - illness is ill-defined – it is also true – so is love.

The Beth El Bulletin is the newsletter of Beth El Congregation.

We appreciate any feedback and input. Bulletins are also archived online.

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Gabbai Rotation

Please contact the weekly Gabbai, if you'd like to request an aliyah or help lead services at aliyot@betheldurham.org

Please do not call on Shabbat or other holidays

7/2 Shelach Lekha David Rubin

7/9 Korach Bernie Fischer

7/16 Chukat Jon Wahl

7/23 Balak Shula Bernard

7/30 Pinchas
Diane Markoff

8/6 Matot-Masei Isaac Price

8/13 Devarim Hazon Alan Mandel

8/20 Vaetchanan Nahamu Roger Perilstein (rperilstein@hrc-pa.com)

8/27 Ekev
David Kirsch
Bat Mitzvah of Devon Fischer

9/3 Reeh/Rosh Chodesh Elul Matt Diamond

9/10 Shoftim

David Rubin

Bat Mitvah of Avital Hirsch

9/17 Ki Tetzei Shula Bernard

9/24 Ki Tavo Bernie Fischer

10/1 Nitzavim
Diane Markoff

Want to know more about what's happening at Beth EI?

http://www.betheldurham.org/calendar/
http://betheldurham.org/community-announcements/

BE a B'nei Mitzvah

Mark your calendars for these

upcoming B'nei Mitzvah

Devon Fischer August 27, 2016

Avital Hirsch September 10, 2016

Jerrod Meltzer October 22, 2016



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BE @ Beth El

Check out these upcoming events at Beth El! Visit www.betheldurham.org for more information.



Host:
Men of Beth El Durham
919-886-5453

When:
Thursday, July 7 at 6:00 PM

Where:
Durham Bulls Athletic Park
409 Blackwell Street
Durham NC 27701

Durham Bulls Game

BE at a Glance
August & September

<u>August</u>

5 Rosh Chodesh Av 13 Erev Tish'a B'Av 14 Tish'a B'Av 19 Tu B'Av

22-28 USY Encampment26 Bat Mitzvah of Devon Fischer27 Bat Mitzvah of Devon Fischer

September

4: USY/Kadima Wet and Wild

9: Bat Mitzvah of Avital Hirsch

10: Bat Mitzvah of Avital Hirsch

11: First Day of Talmud Torah

11: Yom Beth El

11: Social Action Meeting

18: MoB Kick-off Event

18: Sisterhood Welcome Brunch

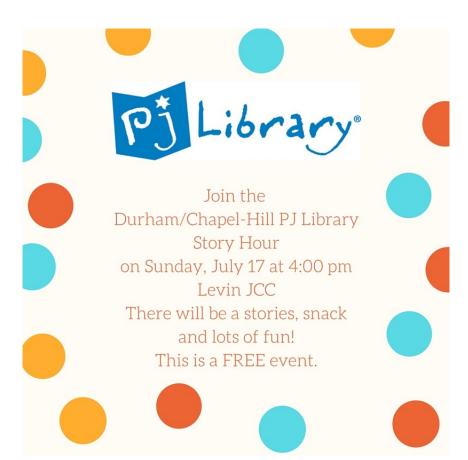
22: Lunch and Learn with

Rabbi Greyber

23: Young Adult Shabbat Dinner at Greybers' with Moishe House

24: NC Pride Parade

25: Jon Levinson Lecture in memory of Hudi Gross









FROM THE PRESIDENT—Noah Pickus

The week after I was elected President of Beth El, Phil and I found ourselves struggling to get the GPS to work leaving BWI airport. Phil, a retired furrier from New York, is President of his Conservative synagogue in Florida. Together, we were headed for the Pearlstone Retreat Center for a Sulam for New Presidents offered by the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism (USCJ).

In part, I was there in line with our initiative to assess the programs offered by USCJ. Other such efforts include the Sulam for Emerging Leaders led by Tal Wittle and Rabbi Greyber in Durham. First Vice President (read: your next president) Debbie Goldstein and I joined this group for their final session. It was moving to see how engaged the participants were in thinking about Beth El in their lives and their role in sustaining the synagogue.

I was also at Pearlstone because I felt unprepared to lead Beth El. I grew up Reform in Northern California, and it has been an extended process of coming to embrace what is so singularly powerful about Conservative Judaism and to find my home at Beth El. Each of the presidents I met from California, Florida, Georgia and the Northeast had a similar story of feeling unprepared for this particular kind of leadership. Where could we find guidance?

As it turns out, the parashah for that Shabbat, Emor, offered help — although at first it was more daunting than comforting. Emor is essentially a manual for priests: "The Lord said to Moses: Speak to the priests, the sons of Aaron and say" The focus is on tumeh or ritual impurity and specifies the restrictions on priests for contact with the dead. As a commentary in Etz Hayim observes, these rules reflect a deeper view that priests should be models of dealing with grief and loss, exemplars for the community on how to maintain balance amidst devastation.

The obligations of leadership loom even larger in the text when it turns to Chillul and Kiddush Hashem – the prohibition not to desecrate the name of G-d and the commandment to sanctify G-d's name. ("You shall not profane My holy name, that I may be sanctified in the midst of the Israelite people.") In his law code, Maimonides identified the characteristics of leadership that fulfill these obligations: gentle in conduct, affable even when affronted, courteous even to those who treat you with disdain, and careful to avoid extremes and exaggerations.

I had two reactions to this text. The first was, well, that's a daunting list! And, fast upon the heels of that thought, was a second one: it's a privilege to be called to live up to those expectations. (Or, as a wise former president said, "make sure you tell everyone 'thank you and it's a privilege to serve!'") We are not always called to be our best selves. Demanding as it is, it's a special honor to try.

There's also a second part to Emor that provides a complementary leadership lesson. It starts with a prohibition that grates on our modern ears: against priests with broken limbs or physical scars officiating. There is a long discussion in the commentaries about this focus on the physical. For its part, Etz Hayim suggests a view that there are virtues to having leaders who have been broken – physically, emotionally, or spiritually – because they are more likely to be cured of their arrogance. Paradoxically, their weakness becomes their strength.

I like this reading. It accords with my own sense that the incomplete leader is often the best leader. He or she is more likely to recognize limitations and to seek wisdom in the strengths of others. This has already become clear to me in our new Executive Committee of the Board. The diverse capabilities that Debbie Goldstein, Leslie Winner and Rachel Galanter bring give me faith. Collectively, we can continue to build a Beth El that is more welcoming, more Jewishly engaged and educated, more financially secure – and more ready than ever to inhabit a renovated home, the object of our Capital Campaign.

Last week the entire Board met for a half-day retreat to assess these priorities and to begin charting the specific steps we would each take to achieve them. It was a wonderful moment where the complementary strengths of twenty congregants came together to chart our course ahead. I ask all of you to help us in this journey.

Membership Committee

Imagine: Within your first year as a member of Beth El, you are invited at least once to a member's home for a Shabbat meal. You receive a personal invitation from a member to join in on an event or activity that meets the interests you indicated in your membership form. You come together with other new members for a schmooze and a ritual moment with Rabbi Greyber. So while you actively seek out ways to engage with the synagogue and its community, the synagogue and community are opening their arms wide to bring you in.

The 2016-17 Beth El Membership Committee has just begun to envision how to continue to build upon the incredible work and successes of (endlessly energetic) former Membership Chair Andrea Ginsburg. Norma Gindes, Valerie Glassman, Alex Schnitzer, Andrea, and I are thrilled to serve on this committee together to continue to find meaning and build community with our prospective and newest members. So our first question to you: Are you willing to host a new member for a Shabbat meal during the coming year? Please fill out this brief form to let us know (link: http://tinyurl.com/BEMembership), and we will be in touch!

Kim Langsam

Beth El Membership Chair

Capital Campaign

Nathan Bearman and Gary Zarkin, Campaign Co-Chairs, provided an update on the status of the \$4.1 m campaign to renovate and remodel Beth El. A key theme they discussed is that current members of Beth El have benefited from the leadership and generosity of those who came before us and who gave us a wonderful building and spiritual home so our community could thrive. It is now our responsibility and our privilege to step up and do what needs to be done to care for our home.

They noted that the Campaign Steering Committee hired moss+ross, based in Raleigh, as our campaign fundraising consultants. We signed a contract with them on April 7 and we have all hit the ground running. We are working with them to develop a multi-phase campaign plan that takes us through the completion of renovations.

They discussed three campaign phases: the Campaign Readiness & Key Gifts Phase (February - July 2016), the Major Gifts phase (August-September 2016), and the Community Gifts Phase (Oct 2016 – 2017). If all goes well, construction would start in Q1 of 2018. The Campaign Steering Committee has met with several prospective donors, but have not formally solicited these individuals. However, enthusiasm for the project has been so high that they announced 11 members of the Beth El community have already pledged \$505,000 (!)

We are on our way, and optimistic that the Beth El community will step up and support our building campaign for current and future Beth El members!

The B&G Taskforce is supporting the Capital Campaign by developing renderings to allow the congregation and potential donors to get a feel of the space. These images will showcase the following:

- An east-facing sanctuary with flexible seating
- · A new entrance to the building with a welcoming lobby and café
- A new administration wing

Over the past year, we have heard a lot of positive and constructive feedback regarding the design. We are working to rearrange a couple key aspects of the floor plan to allow for more efficient use of the ground floor and to incorporate an elevator.

If anyone has comments please feel free to email them to drewlangsam@gmail.com.

<u>Talmud Torah</u>

We've wrapped up another successful year in the Talmud Torah and Youth Education department here at Beth El, so now what?

Every May, as we celebrate the official last days of school, I'm met with the same questions at the end of the school year. "What do you do over the summer? Do you take time off?" Many people don't realize that the work of an Education Director doesn't stop on the last day of school. So many of the things that make for a successful school year, actually start over the summer. We've already planned out our calendar for the upcoming school year and brainstormed new and exciting programs and classes.

Each summer we stop and take time to think about how to make the next year better. We evaluate the past year's programs and discuss what we should repeat, what we should edit and what we should get rid of.

Each summer we search for new teachers who will take our curriculum to the next level through engaging

and creative lessons. We spend time talking with our returning teachers to find ways to keep them energized and excited about their successes and challenges. We talk about new opportunities, new partnerships, and new ways of approaching various situations.

Each summer we organize our files, clean out the closets, shop for new supplies and explore additional books and resources to bring into our school. I love the day when all of the new story books arrive and I get to spend an afternoon reading each one to myself before sharing them with our students! (P.S. We are EXTRA excited this year because of the launch of PJ Library in our community! If you haven't signed up yet, you have to check it out.

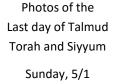
This is a fantastic initiative to bring Jewish story books into your home for free!)

Each summer we meet, and think, and plan and dream about what the upcoming year will bring (and yes, we all take a little time off too).

Elisabeth Albert
Education & Youth Director



Beth El Talmud Torah





Teen Engagement-Jews on the Move

It was a wonderful year for our Beth El teens! We started off the year with a BBQ and ended with a picnic, getting outside and moving is a very important part of what we do! There were 31 other teen events this year, including a break room on High Holidays, a "Chopped" event with Judea Reform, an NC-Wide Shabbaton with 31 Jewish teens in the area, and Kings Dominion Day with the Seaboard Region. It has been great getting to know all the teens and building leadership within our organization. We even hosted one event this year that was planned by the teens!

We have so many wonderful activities, collaborations and opportunity for leadership coming up! Look out for our first few events, happening before the High Holidays. Our first event will be a Havdalah Bonfire in late August, followed by the Beth Meyer-Beth El Annual Wet & Wild trip on Labor Day weekend. We are also currently taking sign-ups for "Teen Shabbat," a Saturday service lead entirely by our teens! And this is all just in the first month! There will also be a small group of teens working to design the new Teen Lounge, which will replace the old hospitality room. This space will be officially open by the high holidays, and is a space for teens to come hang out for a little while during the service. The space will always be open, allowing for our teens to come and relax, get some work done, or play a game!

Also, when Community Midrasha is hosted at Beth El, we will have official open time right before classes for the kids to come for a hang!

Looking forward to an amazing year together!

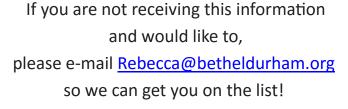
Rebecca Levine Director of Teen Engagement



















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<u>Yarhzeit Reminders</u>

Sivan		July
25	Theodore	1
	Brody	
26	Esther Enzer	2
27	Dennis Hart 3	
27	Joseph L.	3
	Wechsler	
28	Lottie Frohman	4
29	Julius Concors	5
29	Isaac Evans	5
29	Reba Levine	5
29	Rose	7
	Sugarman	
Tammuz		July
1	Zevel Berman	7
1	Robin Berry	7
1	Joshua Berry	7
1	Eva Gadlli	7
1	Herman Scherr	7
1	Akiba Sitron 7	
2	Mitchell 8 Bergman	
2	Samuel Cooper	8
2	Mollie Gabin	8
2	Rivka Rachel 8	
	Ginton	
2	Samuel Levine	8
2	Dalia Frider 8 Weinisman	
3	Hannah Lakin	9
4	Pearl Fisher 10 Alexander	
4	Willaim Cassell	10
4	Sheila Krolik	10
4	Etta Lind	10
5	Vivian Fishkin	11
5	Ida Grossman 11	
5	Gertrude 11	
6	Donald Benjamin 12 Hackel	
6	Mildred Marcus	12
8	Neil Felmus	14
8	Elizabeth Gay 14	
0	Thurston	4 F
9	Rachel Geller	15

Tammuz 9 9	Shlomo Geller	July 15
		15
9		
	Mary Kirshner	15
9	Eunice Luebke	15
10	Janet Alpern	16
10	Yetta Greenberg	16
11	Lester Bogdanoff	17
11	Albert M. Fleishman	17
11	Ann Geller	17
13	Martin Landau	19
13	Nathan Ornoff	19
14	Jorge Gadilli	20
14	Eva M. Woods	20
15	Norman Kirshner	21
16	Julius J. Bienstock	22
Tammuz		July
16	Mandel Silverman	22
17	Philip Hyman	23
19	Frances Carel	25
20	Rachel Levy	26
20	Ray Rosenstein Lewin	26
20	Juliet Schwartz	26
21	Sidney Stern	27
22	Shayna Belenko	28
22	Steven Hershenow	28
22	Myer B. Marcus	28
23	Bertha Agid	29
23	Willie Massey	29
24	Irma Fischer	30
24	Carolyn Lubovsky	30
25	Sadie Kramer	31
25	Gerri Ann Pomerantz	31

Tammuz		August
26	Grant Anderson	1
27	Joani Gudeman	2
29	Shel Feldman	4
29	Edgar Arturo	4
	Lazo-Wasem	
Av		August
1	Gus Abramnson	5
1	Meyer Alpern	5
1	Leslie Becker	5
1	Moshe-Haiym Cohen	5
2	Leon Dworsky	6
3	Louis Glaser	7
3	Samuel Kirshner	7
3	Mary	7
	Lazo-Wasem	
4	Phyllis Back	8
4	Marnie Davidow	8
4	Abraham Goldstein	8
6	Arthur Mordant	10
6	Percy Silver	10
7	Maurice "Mush" Levine	11
9	Eleanor Brooks	13
9	Clarice Goodman	13
9	Eugene Stevens	13
10	Catherine Epstein	14
10	Robert Edwin Hill, II	14
10	Julienne Marder Winner	14
12	Irving Max Halperin	16
13	Jeannette Becker	17
13	Deborah Cohen	17
13	Louis Cohen	17
13	Ruth Frank	17
13	Isaac Ornoff	17
15	Harold Schiff	19

Yarhzeit Reminders

Av		August
16	Ya'akov Frieder	20
16	Herbert Strauss	20
17	Barbara	21
	Guthmann	
17	Alice Hart	21
17	Lottie Strauss	21
18	Jay Howard Linn	22
18	Maurice Rapport	22
18	Sy Sandick	22
18	Edward Strauss	22
19	Grace Gladsten	23
19	Gerard Goldstein	23
19	Albert Kodack	23
19	Murad Sasson	23
19	Sara Sitron	23
20	Marjorie Jessinger	24
20	Dorothy Massey	24
21	Benjamin Brill, Jr.	25
21	Beatrice Pudolsky	25
22	James Airoldi	26
22	Gary Rosenberg	26
24	Irving Hoffman	28
26	Ruth Diamond Berman	30
26	Bennett Frankel	30
27	Hinda bas Iona	31
27	Ralph Schonberg	31
Av		September
28	Anna Krepchon	1
29	Dorothy Cassell	2
29	Howard Weissman	2
30	Moshe ben Shimon	3

Harriett Borman 4 Harriett Borman 4 Philip Joffe 4 Marcia Kudler 6 Ida Snyderman 6 Harry Brown 8 Eve Feldman 8 Frank Malin 8 Pearl Siegel 8 Lucille Anderson 9 Rebekah Resnick 9 Rebekah Resnick 9 Rebekah Resnick 9 Reterman Gevarter 10 Reterman Gevarter 10 Reterman Gevarter 10 Reterman 11 Ruth Blum 11 Walter Japert 12 Broadwell 12 Gross 10 Nathan E. Siegel 13 The Goldstein 14 Goldstein 14 Sadie Liberman 14 Judith Evans 15 Isaac H. Parkey IV 15
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September Bulletin:

Friday, August 5

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Services are held on Friday evenings only in conjunction with other programming or special occasions. See monthly calendars for dates and times.

Saturday morning services:

Services in the Orthodox Kehillah begin at 9:00 am

Services in the Main Sanctuary begin at 9:30 am

Weekday minyanim in the Main Sanctuary*:

Sunday mornings at 9:30 am

Wednesday mornings at 8:00 am (**7:45 am on Rosh Chodesh**)

*Please let the office know if you need to say Kaddish, even if a minyan has already been scheduled.

OFFICE HOURS:

Monday - Thursday: 9:00 am to 5:00 pm / Friday: 9:00 am to 1:00 pm

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