From Pesah to Shavuot

Sefira – Counting the Omer

At the second Seder (Tuesday night April 15), we began daily sefarat ha-omer (counting of the omer), a counting of days to Shavuot, the next major festival. The counting, preferably done each night for 49 nights, is an expression of eager anticipation, commemorating the period of expectation and preparation we experienced in the Exodus from Egypt until the revelation at Sinai.

The simple home ceremony is printed in most siddurim (prayer books), including Sim Shalom, immediately after the weekday evening service. While it is a mitzva prescribed for adults, sefarat ha-omer can also be a fun, artistic and joyous ritual for families with children.

In the days before printed calendars, calendar watches and daily newspapers, the sefira served to keep the liturgical calendar of the Jewish People synchronized, no simple accomplishment, given the dispersion and isolation of much of the community. The term omer refers to the measure (one handful) of grain that was used to create a physical relic of the counting. With a physical reminder, even illiterate people could do a recount in case they forgot the day’s number.

Families with young children may use this opportunity to help their children understand and experience anticipation, planning, counting and hope.

Teach us to number our days, that we may attain a heart of wisdom
Psalm 90:12

LaG BeOmer

BEKI’s Practically Annual LaG BeOmer Kumsitz Campfire Sing-along will be on Motse’ei Shabbat (Saturday Night) May 17, at the residence of hosts Andy Hirshfield & Monica Starr, 145 Cleveland Rd., New Haven. Gathering begins at 8:30 p.m.; counting the Omer, recitation of Havdala and ignition of the bonfire will be at 8:47 p.m. Hebrew and other Jewish folk-songs will be sung, many bags of marshmallows will be consumed, and countless twigs will be burned in the fire. Free parking for BEKI members and their guests.

This Sing-along is made possible with the support of the Morris & Sara Oppenheim Endowment for Sacred Music at Beth El-Keser Israel and by Andy & Monica.

Shavuot Two-Day Festival: The Jewish Hajj

The Festival of Shavuot (“Weeks”), one of the three major pilgrimage festivals, celebrates the anniversary of the Giving
Benefit Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel

Ask us about establishing a fund, trust or annuity to ensure BEKI’s future.

Charitable giving strengthens our Community and provides the donor with tax savings.

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Chair, Board of Trustees

Lisa A. Stanger, Esq.
Director
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leitanger@jewishnewhaven.org

BEKI Bulletin

The newsletter is published monthly by Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel for the benefit of its members. Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel is affiliated with the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism.

To contribute articles or for inquiries regarding membership:

• Call the Synagogue office: (203) 389-2108
• Write: 85 Harrison Street, New Haven, CT 06515-1724
• Email: jjtilsen@beki.org
• Visit our web page: www.beki.org

For advertising information, call the synagogue office.
Deadline for submission of ads or articles is the first of the month preceding publication.
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A Message from Rabbi Tilsen & Dear Rabbi
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of the Torah at Sinai some 3,326 years ago. The word **hag** (pilgrimage festival) is known widely by its Arabic cognate, **hajj** (which, for Muslims, means pilgrimage to Mecca). The Torah commands, “Three times a year – on the Feast of Unleavened Bread, on the Feast of Weeks, and on the Feast of Booths – all your males shall appear before the Lord your God in the place that He will choose. They shall not appear before the Lord empty-handed, but each with his own gift, according to the blessing that the Lord your God has bestowed upon you” (Deut. 16:16-17).

Shavuot comes at the culmination of the counting of seven weeks from Pesah, and will be a major observance at BEKI this summer. Just as we look forward to important events in our personal lives, so too our ancestors enthusiastically and devoutly anticipated the event at Sinai. By participating in BEKI’s Shavuot observance, we re-enact the extraordinary experience of our ancestors and show our own enthusiasm for receiving Torah.

**Tiqun Leil Shavuot**

Our annual Tiqun Leil Shavuot Night of Study takes place on the first night of Shavuot, Tuesday June 3. Dairy and pareve refreshments will be served. That means **cheesecake**.

Candle lighting is at 8:02 p.m. The evening begins with the Minha Afternoon Service, from 8 to 8:15 in the George G. Posener Daily Chapel. A shiur will begin at 8:15 p.m.

The brief Festival Evening service, from 9 to 9:20, will be followed by refreshments and additional presentations.

Shiurim begin at 8:15 p.m. and will be presented late into the evening. Please see “This Week at BEKI” (www.beki.org/bulletin/happenings.pdf) for a complete list of presenters and schedule.

**Shavuot Mornings**

**Yizkor Memorial Service**
**Book of Ruth**

The Shavuot First Day Festival Shaharit Morning Service begins at 9:15 on Wednesday June 4. The service includes the full recitation of Hallel. The afternoon and evening services begin at 5:45. Candle lighting Wednesday night is at 9:02 p.m. or later.

The Shavuot Second Day Morning service begins at 9:15 on Thursday June 5. The Festival service includes a **Shaharit** morning service, **Hallel** (Psalms of praise), a Torah reading and **Haftara**. Following the Haftara (prophetic reading), the Yizkor Memorial Service is held. The Yizkor memorial service is one of four such services during the year that help us recognize our feelings of loss, which are sometimes especially intense during the Festival season, and to honor the memories of our loved ones.

Following Yizkor, the Book of Ruth is read to a uniquely beautiful and ancient melody based on the same system of **ta’amei hamiqra** (“trope”) found in most of the Hebrew Bible. Then the Festival **Musaf** additional service is recited.

Some Congregants may leave during qiddush for a hike to the top of West Rock. Weather permitting, bring appropriate shoes and leave with friends from the lobby.

The Festival Minha service is held in the George G. Posener Daily Chapel from 5:45 to 6:05 p.m.

---

**Mazal tov to**

Steven Fraade on being honored at the May 11 conference “Rabbis and Other Jews: Rabbinic Literature and Late Antique Judaism.”


**Upcoming Benei Mitzva Celebrations**

Elijah Labowe-Stoll, son of Steven Stoll and of Sara J. Labowe, May 9-10, **parashat BeHar**.

Randy Kohn, son of Mark & Renee Kohn, May 16-17, **parashat BeHuqotai**.

Emily Sachs, daughter of Robert & Betsy Sachs, granddaughter of Ivan & Rita Sachs, July 19, **parashat Matot**.

---

**Pesah**

Continued from Page 1

Visit us at www.beki.org
Youth

Kadima & USY

My Leap of Faith
BY NATALIE MAY

“We’ve got the perfect position for you.” It was an invitation that would transform my year, but after only three weeks in a new high school I was uneasy at the idea of another change. I had transferred to the Jewish High School of Connecticut for my junior year and was still adjusting to the intimate atmosphere, menu of tefila options, and Judaics courses. I was excited about the switch, but unsure about the idea of joining another Jewish community so soon. After further explanation, I learned that the BEKI-BJ chapter of USY was seeking a Communications VP for its board – someone to take notes at business meetings, create flyers advertising events, and provide announcements to both congregations. As an organization enthusiast I was intrigued, but part of me worried about whether I would belong in a youth group where well-established friendships between long-time members flourished and traditions such as the passing of Soule, Hanefesh region’s stuffed mascot, remained unknown to me.

I took a leap of faith into my faith, and, looking back, I could not be happier. Working with my fellow board members, I learned about reaching out to eighth graders who worried about the switch from Kadima to USY, creating themed meeting programming, and the art of documenting each moment to share on Facebook and in shul bulletins. I was inspired by the regional officers’ sleepover, became comfortable with my chapter at weekly lounge nights, and loved meeting so many new people from across Connecticut and Western Massachusetts at Spring Convention. As chapter president this year, I extend the same invitation to anyone in grades 8-12 looking for the experience of a lifetime. I didn’t believe them at first, but it’s true; whether you’re an officer or a member, we do have the perfect place for you in USY.

BEKI-BJ Kadima

BEKI-BJ Kadima has had such an exciting past few months. From painting seder plates for Passover, to Shabbat game day, to dodgeball, bowling, and laser tag, to baking brownies, and let’s not forget the Hanefesh overnight at Prime Climb. There is something for every middle-schooler at BEKI-BJ Kadima. We are now inviting all 4th graders to join BEKI-BJ Kadima. Come see what the fuss is all about. Come meet new friends, spend your weekends with other Jewish kids just like you. Contact Emily Zaghi, BEKI-BJ Kadima Youth Group Coordinator, at BEKIBJkadima@gmail.com for a membership application today. Also, don’t forget to check out our blog at www.BEKIBJKADIMAUSY.blogspot.com for more pictures, event announcements, membership applications, and more.

Dodgeball at B’nai Jacob

Enjoying CT Sportsplex
Contributions

Rabbi’s Tzedaqa Fund (minimum $25)
- Alan Lovins & Trish Loving in memory of Violet Ludwig
- Evelyn Rose Benson in appreciation to Rabbi Tilsen & Miriam Benson for honoring her on her birthday at Shabbat services on 15 March
- Saul & Sonya Goldberg in memory of Violet Ludwig
- Alan Lovins & Trish Loving in memory of Sydney Kemper
- David Schwartz in memory of Violet Ludwig
- Albert B. Friedman marking the yahrzeit of Sam Sam
- For selling Hametz: Jay & Marjorie Hirshfield; Jonathan Freiman; Jay & Lynn Brattman; Harold & Stephanie Bird; Gloris Cohen; Bill Shragis; Rabbi Murray Levine; Sharon & Dan Prober; Barbara & Dennis Rader; Tamar Edelkind; Sarah Serkin; Rabbi Richard & Judy Eisenberg; Betty & Arthur Levy; Ruth Silver; Polina Naiman; Tina Rose & Seth Pauker; Bud & Mickey Chorney; Howard Gralla & Linda Schultz; Harriet Friedman; Robert & Jane Stern; Albert Friedman; Stewart Frankel & Joy Kaufman; Elma Guttenberg; Lisa & David Weiss; Morris Bell & Raina Sotsky; Harold & Barbara Miller; Joy Kaufman & Stewart Frankel;

Qiddush Sponsors (minimum $280)
- Bill Hallo
- Rabbi Murray Levine
- Stan Saxe
- The Weintraub Family
- The Family of Evelyn Rose Benson
- The Lettick Family
- Marsha Beller
- Shula Chernoff
- Esther & Irwin Nash
- Dan & Sharon Prober
- The Family of Steven Fraade

Chai Fund (minimum $18) to support synagogue operations
- To Evelyn Benson in honor of her milestone birthday by Herb & Hannah Winer
- To Susan Jacobson with sympathy on the passing of Rebecca Jacobson by Robert & Judith Jacobson
- To Talia Weintraub in honor of her Bat Mitzva by Harriet Friedman, Charles Bruce & family
- To Jacob Lettick in honor of his Bar Mitzva by Harriet Friedman, Charles Bruce & family
- To John Levy with sympathy on the passing of Beverly Levy by the Rothman family
- To Roz Ben-Chitrit with sympathy on the passing of Tosis Schwartzbaum by the Rothman family
- To Hana Feldman in honor of her Bat Mitzva by Gloria Cohen
- To Talia Weintraub in honor of her Bat Mitzva by Gloria Cohen
- To Jacob Lettick in honor of his Bar Mitzva by Bobbie & Harold Miller
- To Alan & Sandy Abramovitz with sympathy on the passing of Allan Kabel by Bobbie & Harold Miller
- To Jacob Lettick in honor of his Bar Mitzva by the Gad family
- To Bud Volain with sympathy on the passing of Claire Volain by Morton Dimenstein
- To Bud Volain with sympathy on the passing of Claire Volain by Paul & Carole Bass
- To Bud Volain with sympathy on the passing of Claire Volain by Joanne Foodim & Rob Forbes
- To Bud Volain with sympathy on the passing of Claire Volain by Steve & Rachel Wizner
- To Bud Volain with sympathy on the passing of Claire Volain by David & Darryl Kuperstock

BEKI Religious School
- To Talia Weintraub in honor of her Bat Mitzva by Ina Silverman & Jay Sokolow
- To Jacob Lettick in honor of his Bar Mitzva by Ina Silverman & Jay Sokolow
- To Bud Volain with sympathy on the passing of Claire Volain by Ina Silverman & Jay Sokolow

Hesed Committee
- To Poopa Dweck by Linda Grazier

The Barzillai Cheskis BEKI Youth Israel Scholarship Fund
- To Talia Weintraub in honor of her Bat Mitzva by Rena Cheskis-Gold & Marty Gold
- To Dan & Sharon Prober in honor of the birth of their grandson Reuben Joseph by Rena Cheskis-Gold & Marty Gold

The Harold & Arthur Ratner Memorial Fund
- To Rick & Judy Eisenberg with sympathy on the passing of Marshall Eisenberg by Betsy Ratner & family
- In memory of her father Charles Miller by Mikki Ratner
- In memory of her mother Etta Miller by Mikki Ratner
- To Adele Tyson in honor of the birth of her great-grandson by Mikki Ratner
- To Bud Volain with sympathy on the passing of Claire Volain by David & Darryl Kuperstock

Synagogue Fund (minimum $10) to support synagogue operations
- To Roz Ben-Chitrit with sympathy on the passing of Tosis Schwartzbaum by Leon Cummings
- To Hugh Fryer with sympathy on the passing of John Fryer by Leon Cummings
- To Bud Volain with sympathy on the passing of Claire Volain by Leon Cummings
- To Bud Volain with sympathy on the passing of Claire Volain by Gladys Lipkin
- To Bud Volain with sympathy on the passing of Claire Volain by Joan & Alan Gelbert

Yahrzeit Fund ($5 minimum) to support synagogue operations
- In memory of Anna & Herman Braginsky by Dorothea Braginsky
- In memory of Anita Palmer by Marsh & John Reynolds
- In memory of Sylvia Matloff by Harriet & Jack Kitavitz
- In memory of Celia Russ by Doris & Stephen Brody
- In memory of Bessie Kaufman by Florence Kaufman
- In memory of Morris “Moish” Schnitman by Helene Vanderhoof
- In memory of Else Gesund by Hans & Irmgard Gesund
- In memory of Louis Katz by Sharon & Dan Prober
- In memory of Rose Katz by Sharon & Dan Prober
- In memory of her beloved father Martin Faymann by Beatrice Faymann Brodie & Gordon Brodie
- In memory of Lester Isenberg by Janis Isenberg
- In memory of Charlotte Isenberg by Janis Isenberg
- In memory of her grandfather Phillip Kantrowitz by Sherry Kent
- In memory of her uncle Irving Berman by Sherry Kent
- In memory of Lillian Gell by John & Marcia Gell
- In memory of Herbert Hershbain by Debbie & Louis Siegel
- In memory of Shirley Rudof by Steve & Joanne Rudof
- In memory of Boris Levitan by Polina Naiman
- In memory of Miriam Stern by Melanie & James Wolf
- In memory of Paul Klein by Morris & Elaine Klein
- In memory of Kate Rachlin by Kranie & Earl Baker
- In memory of Max Gad by Martin & Lana Gad
- In memory of Bessie Flamer by Mickey & Bud Chorney
- In memory of Belle Avrin by Susan & Bob Spear
- In memory of Nathan Avrin by Bob & Susan Spear
- In memory of Murray Spielman by Tamar Edelkind
- In memory of Bluma Soloway by Minna & Lewis Kaufman
- In memory of his father Marvin Spielman by James Spielman

In-Kind Donations
- Seventy-eight (78) assorted books to the BEKI Library from Donna Levine including art, scholarly and Judaica books

Frankel-Matller Memorial Fund
- To Carol & Warren Novick with sympathy on the passing of Sidney Levinson by Debra Levine
- To Carol & Warren Novick with sympathy on the passing of Sidney Levinson by Shirley Mattler

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BEKI Bulletin May 2014  5
Shabbatot (Saturdays)

Darshanim

Darshanim – noun, plural dar·sha·nim. Judaism. a preacher or teacher of Aggada or Halakha in a synagogue.

Rabbi Tilsen has invited the following speakers to serve as guest Darshanim in the coming weeks:

Elijah Labowe-Stoll, bar mitzva, will serve as darshan on Shabbat Parashat BeHar May 10.

David Kuperstock will serve as darshan on Shabbat Parashat BeMidbar May 24.

Shabbat Shalom Torah Study

The Shabbat Shalom Torah Study meets every other Saturday morning at 10:45 in the office and is an ideal setting for veteran and novice shulgoers alike to explore the scriptural readings and liturgy of the day in a supportive setting. Expertly led by Steven Fraade, with Rabbi Alan Lovins, Rabbi Murray Levine, Nadav Sela, David Kuperstock, Isaiah Cooper, Rabbi Eric Silver and others, the Shabbat Shalom Torah Study is a nurturing exploration of practice and theory presented in a participatory, non-threatening and multi-generational setting. Many members who take advantage of this unique offering feel a deeper sense of awe born of increased understanding and appreciation of the Torah reading, Haftara (Prophetic reading) and liturgy.

The program often focuses on the scriptural readings, but also addresses the prayer liturgy and other topics related to the liturgical calendar, scriptural readings or current issues of concern.

Everyone is welcome to participate regardless of religious status or background. It is suitable for mature, or at least well-behaved, youth along with adults.

Sundays

Origins: The Genesis Mythology


The Torah is the basic document of our religion. It teaches values and promotes principles that help civilize humankind and enhance our quality of life. It isn’t history or science as we understand those today. The book of Genesis teaches many of Judaism’s revolutionary insights and truths via myth. Many of these circulated among the peoples in the Middle East thousands of years ago, and the Jews gave them their own unique direction and stamp, by which we deviated from paganism and more primitive morality. It is a lesson in how the Jews differed and developed ideology that has sustained us and kept us relevant for three thousand years.

This study series, beginning on Sept. 14, will look at the Bible stories as Jewish myth in the context of the other cultures that we lived among. We will see how our myth was a version of the more universal myth of the region and the times. We will attempt to see how we differed and went on to establish a world view that was radical and more adaptive to the times – a religious and ethical world view that became the basis of the other two Abrahamic faiths, both Christianity and Islam and the cornerstone of the Western World. With Alan Lovins.

Mondays

Rashi Study Group: Shemuel

Each Monday morning from 7:45 to 8:30 adults meet in the Library Chapel to read Rashi’s commentary on the TaNaKh (Hebrew Bible). The Rashi Study Group (RSG) has begun the Book of Shemuel (Samuel). Characters in the narrative include the Prophet Samuel, King Saul and King David, Mikhal, Batsheva, and more.

It is possible to join the study group for a single meeting or to begin at any time. Knowledge of Hebrew is not necessary. Rashi purported to explain the peshat of the text, i.e., the meaning in its historical, literary and linguistic context. Visitors

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and new participants are welcome. Hebrew and English texts are available. The RSG meets immediately following the 7 a.m. shaharit service. The RSG will meet at 9:45 to 10:30 a.m. on Monday May 26, following the 9 to 9:45 a.m. Memorial Day service. With Jon-Jay Tilsen.

Wednesdays

Hebrew Word of the Week

The Wednesday morning service (shaharit) features a 180-second “Hebrew word of the Week” to promote the learning of Hebrew. The Hebrew language is highly structured. Most words are based on three-letter roots, and are made with a limited set of verb or noun forms. By learning a few dozen roots and a small set of word-forms, it is possible to roughly translate Hebrew words isolated from any context, something less often possible in English. The Word of the Week often relates to the weekly scriptural readings, enhancing personal study and public Torah discussion.

Rabbis’ Study Group

Wednesdays with Murray is a weekly study group exclusively for rabbis, facilitated by Rabbi Murray Levine. The Wednesday study group affords local rabbis an opportunity to pursue their own talmud torah (Torah study) in a “safe” setting and with opportunities to learn from each others’ experience and insight. The study group meets Wednesday mornings in the Rosenkrantz Family Library. For more information, call Rabbi Murray Levine at (203) 397-2513.

Thursdays

Mini Morning Learning Service

The Thursday morning services are supplemented with commentary and teaching relating to the history, themes, choreography and language of the daily morning service. Shaharit service is from 8:15 to 9:15 on Thursdays; on other weekdays, the service begins at 7 a.m.

Sanhedrin Talmud Study Group

The Sanhedrin Talmud Study Group meets on Thursdays during the lunch hour (noon to 1). The Group has met weekly since 1999. For some participants, this is their first direct experience with Talmud text; for others, it is a continuation of a long journey. The Group focuses on the issues raised in the Talmud, with less attention to the technical aspects of the text. Knowledge of Hebrew or Aramaic is helpful but not required.

The Talmud, based on an oral text, has no beginning or end. One can begin study at any point; now is the best time. The Sanhedrin Talmud Study Group meets in BEKI’s Rosenkrantz Family Library. For information, contact Isaiah Cooper at his law office icoooper@cooperlaw.net.

The Sanhedrin Study Group will not meet on May 8 or on June 5 & 26.

Every Day

Divrei Torah on the Web

A collection of Divrei Torah (Torah commentaries) and essays by members and Rabbi Tilsen is posted on BEKI’s website under “Adult Studies” and “Meet Rabbi Tilsen.”

The Jewish Business League

meets on the third Wednesday of each month at Tower One/Tower East in New Haven

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Dear Rabbi,

Why the mad rush to eat pizza or bread the minute Passover is over? Is it such a deprivation? Is the festival so unwelcome that they can't wait for it to end?

Signed, Miffed by Muffins

Dear Doughnut Denier,

Rabbi Yirmiyahu said in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yohai, and Rabbi Yohanan said in the name of Rabbi Shimon HaMehozi in the name of Rabbi Yohanan HaMekoti, ‘Whoever makes Esur leHagg [Isru Hagg, the day after the Festival] into a day of [festive] drinking and eating is considered by scripture as one who has built the altar and offer upon it a sacrifice.’ (Sukka 45b).

While the last days of Sukkot and Pesah have their own ceremonies, the heightened spiritual sensitivity, emotional state and logistical needs of the major festivals carry over to the “day after.” Instead of experiencing those days as “downers,” we seek to extend joy of the festivals and seek a “soft landing” through rituals such as havdala or celebrations such as the Maimuna.

When Diaspora Jewry adopts the Israeli liturgical calendar, the celebration of Isru Hagg may be a necessary shield against that transition being no more than another way to make people work more and enjoy life less. We need to protect that day as a “day off” for all but emergency workers.

Dear Rabbi,

The times given for the end of Passover (havdala) were different in various local publications, including two variations in BEKI material. Why the difference?

Signed, Timed Out

Dear Good Time for All,

The havdala times were established for four different kinds of BEKI members:

- 7:19 p.m. – the lax Jew
- 7:20 p.m. – the average Jew
- 7:21 p.m. – the pious Jew
- 7:22 p.m. – the religious fanatic

While one should be meticulous in observing the prohibition against hamets (leavened foods) on Passover, and careful not to contaminate Passover utensils in the transition, there is no fundamental reason to be strict at the end of Passover when it is observed eight days in the Diaspora. The “eighth day” of Passover is not a Biblical institution and should be seen as a temporary institution.

However, since many of us or our children may move to Israel or otherwise adopt the Israeli liturgical calendar (i.e., seven days of Passover), we must take care not to create a tradition of laxity at the end of the festival, since strictly following the prohibition “really” does matter when we are observing just seven days. In other words, it is OK to be lax at the end, just don’t make a habit of it.

---

Can You Hear Now, O Israel?

The sanctuary has been fitted with an assistive listening system.

A “Hearing Loop” installed this month magnetically transmits sound to hearing aids and cochlear implants with telecoils (“T-coils), bringing clear processed sound directly to listeners using suitably equipped hearing aids. Instead of the sound traveling from the loudspeakers and reverberating through the room before entering a hearing aid, the sound from the Hearing Loop is broadcast directly to the hearing aid.

This is the same system used in the New York City subway system at information booths and in many museums.

Almost all in-the-ear and behind-the-ear hearing aids come equipped with T-coils that enable them to function as wireless loudspeakers. Some hearing aids require that the T or MT mode setting be switched on by the user; users may experiment to find the optimal setting. Please ask your audiologist for instructions or demonstration of how to enable this feature in your hearing aid.
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### Service Times

- **Sundays**
  - 9 a.m. Shaharit
  - 5:45 p.m. Maariv

- **Mondays**
  - 7 a.m. Shaharit
  - 5:45 p.m. Maariv

- **Tuesdays**
  - 7 a.m. Shaharit
  - 5:45 p.m. Maariv

- **Wednesdays**
  - 7 a.m. Shaharit
  - 5:45 p.m. Maariv

- **Thursdays**
  - 8:15 a.m. Shaharit
  - 5:45 p.m. Maariv

- **Fridays**
  - 7 a.m. Shaharit
  - 6 p.m. Qabbalat Shabbat

- **Saturdays**
  - Before sunset: Minha
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