

BEKI Bulletin

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March 2000 Vol. 6 Issue 3

ק"ק בית אל-כתר ישראל

Adar 2 5760

Master Plan for BEKI: In the Works

BEKI is creating a Master Plan for its building this spring. We have hired David Thompson, a well-respected local architect, to prepare the Master Plan. He will be meeting with the Rabbi, Board members, synagogue staff, synagogue committees and interested congregants from January through April. Mr. Thompson will have the Master Plan completed in time to present to the Synagogue at the annual membership meeting in June.

The Master Plan has been sponsored through a major gift from **Drs. Paula Hyman and Stanley Rosenbaum**.

Why does BEKI need a Master Plan now?

A Master Plan is a design for the synagogue building that shows how improvements will be made to the synagogue over the next ten years. We need to make major changes to our heating, cooling and air-handling systems in the next two to three years. In order to determine what kind of system we need, and where to place the pipes and ducts, we need to know what the building design will be for at least the next ten years. It would be wasteful to put a set of pipes in a wall next year, only to find out we have to move them in five years because we need to change the room layout.

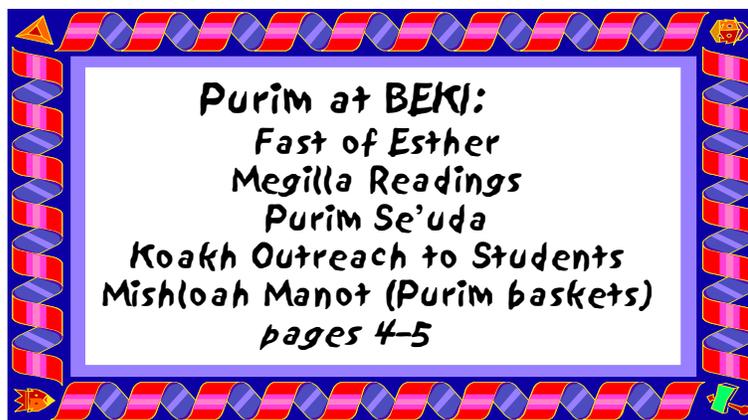
Our heating system needs updating. BEKI was required by state law to remove its underground oil tanks this past year.

New Religious School to Open Autumn 2000

In 1983, BEKI formed a community religious school, the "United Hebrew School" (UHS), with Temple Sinai of West Haven. The following year, the Westville Synagogue joined as a sponsor of the School. As recently as six years ago, the three congregations had a total of less than forty children in the School.

During these past six years, our Congregation has undergone a significant demographic transition. Among other changes, the number of minor children in the Congregation has grown from under 70 to over 200. The enrollment in the religious school has increased by more than 75%. During this period, Temple Sinai withdrew from the School, and the number of children enrolled from the Westville Synagogue has declined to a handful. This last fact does not represent a negative development for the Westville Synagogue, as more of its families are choosing to enroll their children in Jewish Day Schools.

After some discussion with officials at the Westville Synagogue, BEKI parents, educators and Directors, the decision has been made to end the operation of the United Hebrew School at the conclusion of the current academic year and to begin conducting the school as The New School at BEKI



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How to Contact the BEKI Bulletin

Responses to "A Message from Rabbi Tilsen," questions for "Dear Rabbi" and Letters to the Editor can be sent to: Editor, BEKI-Bulletin, 85 Harrison Street, New Haven, CT 06515 or by email to jjtilsen@beki.org.

Rabbi Tilsen's mail and e-mail are opened directly and exclusively by the Rabbi himself and are as secure and confidential as mail and e-mail can be.

Calling BEKI

To call BEKI, dial (203) 389-2108.

When the automated attendant answers, dial any of the numbers below for the desired extension. You don't have to wait to hear the whole recorded greeting. If you don't have a "touch-tone" phone (i.e. a phone that dials by sending tones), wait to the end of the greeting and you will then be able to leave a message for the Administrator. A shortcut: To skip to the end of a greeting, press asterisk (*).

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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, donations, or special activities, call the Synagogue office (203) 389-2108, or write to 85 Harrison Street, New Haven, CT 06515-1724 or email: jjtilsen@beki.org

or see our web page created by Phill Simon: www.beki.org

For information about advertising, call the synagogue office. Deadline for submission of ads or articles is the 1st of the month preceding publication.

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BEKI-Bulletin

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A Message from Rabbi Tilsen & Dear Rabbi
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Torah Readers

Thanks to Dr. Paula Hyman for coordinating the Torah readings for the book of *Bereshit* (Genesis) and to Marsha Beller for coordinating the Torah readings for the book of *Shemot* (Exodus). Darryl Kuperstock will be coordinating the Torah readings for the book of *VaYiqra* (beginning 18 March). If you would like to read Torah, or learn how to read Torah, call Darryl at (203) 387-0304 (kuperst@aol.com)

Rabbi Tilsen to attend Rabbinical Assembly Convention

The 100th annual meeting of the Rabbinical Assembly, the worldwide organization of over 1,500 Conservative-Masorti rabbis, will take place at the end of March in Philadelphia. Those needing to be in contact with Rabbi Tilsen are advised of his planned absence during this period.

Sermon Bites

As we approach national elections this November, it has become the “conventional wisdom” of the major Networks that the American public does not want to hear more than 8 seconds, on the average, of the words of the candidates during news stories in prime time. Thus, the phenomenon of “Sound Bites.”

Now, for the *talmid hakham* (student of tradition) on the go, here are a few “sermon bites.”

Talmud Torah, the act of Torah study, is the primary form of Jewish worship.

When we pray as a community, God is our audience.

A prayer is valued for its sincerity above its eloquence or musicality.

If you can't afford a babysitter, you can't afford to go to the casino.

Jews by Choice are one of the greatest treasures of our people.

The center of Jewish life is the home.

Our High Holy Days services are designed to *facilitate* reconciliation between people and Teshuva, but attendance at them does not *constitute* reconciliation and Teshuva.

Our siddur is a carefully crafted work that has its own literary structure.

The intellectual and religious integrity of both partners of an inter-faith couple must be respected.

Teach your children what you really believe about religion, God and values.

“Conservative,” “Orthodox,” “Reform” and “Reconstructionist” are names of organized movements and philosophies, not adjectives for defining how religious a person is.

God didn't free us from Egypt so we could be “Free to be You and Me” but to do God's own work.

Praying in Hebrew is our ideal but God is fluent in many languages.



Rabbi Tilsen



HaMaqom Yinahem

We mourn the deaths of

Jessie Ossen, aunt of Eric & Marsha Beller

Arthur Katz, father of Matthew Katz & Ronni Rabin

Wilbur Witten, father of Barbara & Michael Susman, Richard & Marcia Witten, Beloved Companion of Belle Reese

Paltiel Sela, father of Nadav & Rita Sela

Sam Miller, husband of Rena Miller

Maurice “Moe” Miller, husband of Helen Miller

Mario Vaccaro, grandfather of Janet & David Golden

Books For Our Sister City

We are again collecting new books for children in our sister city of Afula-Gilboa as well as children in New Haven. Please bring them to the synagogue and leave them in the designated box in the cloakroom. The collection will continue through the end of Passover.

Mimi Glenn



Fast of Esther

The holiday of Purim commemorates the defeat of a plot of genocide against the Jews in the Persian Kingdom over twenty centuries ago. The dramatic (and some would say comic) story is told in the Biblical Book of Esther, which is read on the night and morning of the holiday.

The Fast of Esther, which is observed the day before Purim, marks the serious side of the holiday. While on Purim we joyously celebrate the failure of the plot and mock the racism of its hatches, on the Fast of Esther we fast and pray that we will bring the world to an era that does not know the threat of genocide. The Fast of Esther begins at dawn on Monday 20 March 2000 (the first day of spring). Monday shaharit morning services are from 7:00a to 7:45a and include "Avinu Malkenu — Our Father, Our King," familiar to all from the Yom Kippur service. As on other half-day fasts, no food or drink is consumed. The Fast of Esther is a minor fast, and therefore those with any significant medical contraindications should not undertake the fast. The minha afternoon service is at

5:45p and ends at 6:05p. The fast ends at 6:33p, or when the person observing the fast eats, whichever comes first.

The similarity to Yom Kippur continues with the solemn Kol Nestle service, from 6:30p to 6:33p.

Megilla Readings

The *Megilla* (Book of Esther) is read during the evening service, which begins at 6:30p on Monday

20 March 2000, and then again at 7:00a Tuesday 21 March 2000. If you are a megilla reader and have not yet reserved a chapter to read, run, don't walk, to the nearest telephone and call Rabbi Tilsen at 389-2108 x10 or email to



readmegilla@beki.org. Come one, come all! Hearing the reading of the Megilla (or reading it oneself) is a Biblical commandment (*mitzva*). Other Purim *mitzvot* (religious imperatives) include sending food gifts to a neighbor, alms for the poor, and a feast on Purim day. Children are reminded to keep their adults from talking or making too much ruckus during the actual Megilla reading at BEKI.

J. Deborah Ferholt, M.D.
and
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Purim Se'uda

On Purim afternoon, Tuesday 21 March 2000, a *Se'uda* (Feast) will take place from 5:00p to 8:00p, including a light dairy dinner. Preregistration is required by Wednesday 15 March 2000. The cost is \$8 per adult, \$4 per child, \$22 maximum per household when registered and paid in advance (or \$100 per adult, \$50 per child or \$200 per family at the door).

Highlights may include dancing and games with Liverpool Productions; a theatrical reading of the Purim Chelm Play "When Shlemiel Went to Warsaw," adapted from I.B. Singer by Ruth Silver, and produced and directed by Anne Johnston (to act in the play, call Anne Johnston at 389-9184 today!); Ruthie Greenblatt as Cutesie the Clown, with face painting and balloon animals; Amy Pincus leading a Purim Songs Singalong; Magician Andy Weinstein; a special Purim *Birkat Hamazon* (Grace After Meals); "BEKI 2001: A Space Allocation Odyssey," and more.

If you would like to volunteer to help, call Miriam Benson at 389-6137 x1 or email to mirbenson@aol.com. Help is needed on the following committees: Decoration, Set-up, Registration Table, Food Preparation, Food Serving, Clean-up. If you have a short Purim *shpiel* (amusing skit) to present, call Miriam. Registration forms will be in the mid-month mailing and are available from the BEKI office.

The music and dancing at the seuda is provided with the support of the **Morris & Sara Oppenheim Endowment for Sacred Music**.

Koakh Outreach to Students

We will be sending *mishloach manot* (Purim baskets) packages to our students away at school. If you would like to send one or more packages, please contact Mimi Glenn at 397-3851 by 12 March 2000, with name, address and a short message to be included in the package.

Mishloach manot

Purim Baskets can be ordered from the BEKI office by Friday 10 March. You can collect the baskets and deliver them yourself on Purim evening or morning, or you can have the BEKI Basket Bearers bring the baskets to your recipients within their delivery area. To order, call Mary Ellen at 389-2108 x14 (beki@snet.net) or download an order form from www.beki.org/forms.html and fax it to BEKI at (203) 389-5899 or mail to 85 Harrison Street, New Haven CT 06515-1724.



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Master Plan for BEKI

(Continued from page 1)

We currently are operating the synagogue heating system with temporary tanks that have a storage capacity that is far too small. We need to determine what fuel we will use, where we will store it, and how it will be piped to the boiler. We also need to look at the heating system as a whole, to determine how to make it more efficient. Our cooling system also needs updating. The chiller is older than many of the congregants. The synagogue staff and Board have done remarkably well in keeping it functioning well so far. But the fact that it failed twice last summer is an indication that the time for replacing it is near. Again, we need to determine what system to use, and where to put it. In order to ensure that we don't duplicate expenses in the future, we need to plan for our expansion over the next ten years.

What issues will our Master Plan address?

The Master Plan that David Thompson prepares for us will address the following key issues:

- Floor plan and space design for each room in the synagogue. As the congregation grows and its requirements change, we need to have a plan for flexible changes to the space that shows how to accommodate the congregation's needs.
- Mechanical and electrical systems design. Our heating and cooling systems have served us very well over the past 40 years, but are in need of up-

dating. The master plan will furnish us with the approach for changing these systems over time.

- Handicapped accessibility. The addition of a handicapped accessible bathroom this past year has helped enormously. The next step is to determine the best way to make the lower social hall accessible as well.

- Building code review. The building codes have changed over the past 40 years, and the building is no longer in compliance with codes. The plan will focus in particular on life safety issues such as the number and locations of exits. As we think about how to change the designs and floor plans for various rooms in the synagogue, we will have the opportunity to make the synagogue safer as well.

- Aesthetic improvements. The BEKI 2000 planning process developed a set of recommendations for improvements in the furnishings, lighting, air handling, and wall coverings for the synagogue. The Master Plan will provide a number of alternative methods for addressing these issues.

- Parking lot grading. The parking lot has developed its own unique set of speed bumps. The Master Plan will look both at the best ways of removing these bumps, as well as traffic flow and safety issues.

How can I help?

Please let us know your thoughts, feelings and ideas. Contact John Weiser (389-0931) or Tina Rose (397-9908) with any comments or questions. We want every congregant to know about and participate in the process.

JW et al.

Law Offices of Eric I. B. Beller, P.C.
 234 Church Street, Suite 403
 New Haven, CT 06510-1802



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New Religious School

(Continued from page 1)

as of August 2000. (The official name has yet to be chosen.) Tuition should not be affected by this change. We expect most of the current faculty to serve next year under this new administration. We are also offering preferred enrollment to students whose families belong to Westville Synagogue, and we will continue to welcome students whose families are not affiliated with BEKI. Talmud Torah Meyuhad Special Education students will be welcomed from BEKI as well as those affiliated with other synagogues or unaffiliated.

For some this change is a positive step in an effort to develop and improve the religious education of our youth. For others, it is merely the unavoidable outcome of the demographic and development processes of the various institutions. We hope that for all of us it will be an opportunity to reevaluate and improve our religious school program and to rededicate ourselves as a community to providing an excellent education for all children. It should also motivate us to seek new ways to collaborate in other arenas and forge new bonds with the Westville Synagogue and other neighboring congregations.

Questions and concerns about this decision should be addressed to Dr. Brian Karsif, the officers, or Rabbi Tilsen.

We believe that by operating our own Congregational religious school we can provide better religious training for our children. It will be possible to integrate the curriculum with the Shabbat Morning Children's Programs, the Benei Mitzva Preparation Program, and the Kadima Youth Group (this being done in a way that recognizes that half of our children attend Ezra Academy or other Jewish Day Schools). We will now be able to directly involve the religious school classes in our services, and more actively promote Camp Ramah. We also hope that we will be able to provide religious training that more closely reflects our own values, standards and styles as a traditional egalitarian Conservative congregation.

The officers have asked several BEKI members, including Donna Levine, David Goldblum, Sharon Bender, and Shoshana Zax, along with Rabbi Tilsen and BEKI educators, to begin planning for The New School. Much needs to be done to develop the School's curriculum and programming. A meeting for all parents and interested BEKI members was held on 6 February. All BEKI members and supporters who are interested in developing The New School are invited to contact Donna Levine at 785-8079 (or sdsij@aol.com cc to bkarsif@yahoo.com) to discuss your concerns or ways you might become involved. Your support during this period of transition will be appreciated.

Dr. Brian Karsif, President, & Rabbi Jon-Jay Tilsen

Volunteer Spotlight

Note: This article is the first installment of what is hoped will be a regular feature in the Bulletin that highlights the activities of volunteers and volunteer opportunities at BEKI. Our synagogue depends and thrives on the commitment of time and energy by our members in many ways.

Each month, about 500 copies of the BEKI Bulletin and mid-month mailings are sent to BEKI members and others. Have you ever wondered just how so many envelopes — chock full of informational flyers and announcements — get stuffed, sealed, and labeled? Our Office Manager, Mary Ellen Mack, does not handle such a job on her own. The two monthly bulk mailings from BEKI are accomplished each month with the help of three members, **Saul Bell**, **Charlie Ludwig** and **Stan Saxe**. All long-time members of BEKI, active in the synagogue in other ways as well, Saul, Charlie and Stan come in to help out in the office twice each month with the bulk mailings.

We decided to feature this particular volunteer activity not only to say thanks to these members, but also to spotlight a way that others might be able to help out. Mary Ellen and this team of three need a few more people who can spend some daytime hours in the office helping with these mailings. If you can spare some time and have some experience with office work, please call Mary Ellen Mack at the BEKI office to find out how you can help with these mailings. Thanks to Saul, Charlie and Stan, and thanks to those of you who can add to their ranks! *Judy Hoberman*

BEKI Events

March - Adar I - Adar II

5760

2000

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28 Adar I	29 Adar I	30 Adar I	1 Adar II	2 Adar II	3 Adar II	4 Adar II
Shaharit=Morning Minha =Afternoon Minha-Maariv=Evening SSLM=Shabbat Shalom Learners' Minyan	BEKI phone numbers: (203) 389-2108 Fax (203) 389-5899 Mary Ellen-Office x14 Relig.School x13 Rabbi x10 Kulanu x33	Office Hours: Mon 9a-12 & 1p-3p Tue by appt. only Wed 10a-12 & 1p-6p Thu 9a-12 & 1p-3p Fri 9a-2p	7:00a Shaharit 10:30a Play Group 4:15p Relig.School 5:45p Minha-Maariv <i>(Deadline for submissions to April Bulletin)</i>	8:15a Shaharit (NEW TIME) 5:45p Minha-Maariv 5:45p Benei Mitzva 7:30p A.A.	7:00a Shaharit 5:27p Candles 6:00p Minha-Maariv <i>Bar Mitzva Jacob Stern</i>	9:15a Shaharit 10:45a Children's 10:45a Singers' Circle 5:30p Minha (Pirque Avot follows)
9:00a Shaharit 9:30a Relig.School 5:45p Minha-Maariv 6:00p Mishna Berakhot 7:15p Song of Songs	7:00a Shaharit 7:45a Rashi Study Grp. 5:45p Minha-Maariv	7:00a Shaharit 5:45p Minha-Maariv	7:00a Shaharit 10:30a Play Group 4:15p Relig.School 5:45p Minha-Maariv 7:30p Exec. Board	8:15a Shaharit (NEW TIME) 5:45p Minha-Maariv 5:45p Benei Mitzva 7:30p A.A.	7:00a Shaharit 8:00a-2:30p KISS 5:35p Candles <i>(Deadline for mid-month mailing submissions)</i>	<i>Parashat Pequde</i> 9:15a Shaharit 10:45a Children's 10:45a SSLM 5:35p Minha (Pirque Avot follows)
9:00a Shaharit 9:30a Relig.School 4:45p Purim Workshop <i>Sponsored by Saul's Circle & Kulanu Ke-ehad</i> 5:45p Minha-Maariv 6:00p Mishna Berakhot 7:15p Song of Songs	6 Adar II 7:00a Shaharit 7:45a Rashi Study Grp. 5:45p Minha-Maariv	7 Adar II 7:00a Shaharit 5:45p Minha-Maariv	8 Adar II 7:00a Shaharit 10:30a Play Group 4:15p Relig.School 5:45p Minha-Maariv	9 Adar II 8:15a Shaharit (NEW TIME) 4:45p Saul's Circle 5:45p Minha-Maariv 7:30p A.A. 7:30p Book Group	10 Adar II 7:00a Shaharit 5:43p Candles 6:00p Minha-Maariv	11 Adar II 9:15a Shaharit <i>Darshan: Peter Stein</i> 10:45a Children's 10:45a Singers' Circle 5:45p Minha (Pirque Avot follows)
9:00a Shaharit 9:30a Relig. School (Purim Carnival 11a-12:30p) 9:30a Congregational Breakfast 5:00p Children's Havurah Meeting & Dinner 5:45p Minha-Maariv 6:00p Mishna Berakhot 7:15p Song of Songs	13 Adar II <i>Fast of Esther</i> 7:00a Shaharit 7:45a Rashi Study Grp. 5:45p Minha 6:30p Maariv and Megilla Reading	14 Adar II <i>Purim</i> 7:00a Shaharit and Megilla Reading 5:45p Minha-Maariv 5:00p-8:00p Purim Seuda and Program	15 Adar II <i>Shushan Purim</i> 7:00a Shaharit 10:30a Play Group 4:15p Religious School 5:45p Minha-Maariv	16 Adar II 8:15a Shaharit (NEW TIME) 5:15p Benei Mitzva 5:45p Minha-Maariv 7:30p A.A.	17 Adar II 7:00a Shaharit 5:51p Candles 6:00p Minha-Maariv	18 Adar II <i>Shabbat Parah</i> 9:15a Shaharit 10:45a Children's 10:45a SSLM Qiddush sponsored by Ruth Greenblatt and Robert Forbes and Joanne Foodim 5:45p Minha (Pirque Avot follows)
9:00a Shaharit 9:30a Relig.School 11:30a Pesah Seder Workshop: Inviting Guests with Special Needs 5:45p Minha-Maariv 6:00p Mishna Berakhot 7:15p Song of Songs	20 Adar II 7:00a Shaharit 7:45a Rashi Study Grp. 5:45p Minha-Maariv	21 Adar II 7:00a Shaharit 12:00n-5:00p KISS 5:45p Minha-Maariv	22 Adar II 7:00a Shaharit 10:30a Play Group 4:15p Religious School 5:45p Minha-Maariv 7:45p General Board	23 Adar II 8:15a Shaharit (NEW TIME) 5:45p Minha-Maariv 7:30p A.A.	24 Adar II 7:00a Shaharit 5:58p Candles 6:00p Minha-Maariv	25 Adar II BEKI email: Office: BEKI@net.net Rabbi: jfrilsen@aol.com website: www.beki.org

Darshanim & Bar Mitzva in March



Jacob Stern

Jacob Stern, son of Leonard & Barbara Stern, will lead services and present a *Devar Torah* as a *bar mitzva* at BEKI on Shabbat 3-4 March.

Peter Stein will serve as *darshan* (Torah commentator) on Shabbat morning 18 March 2000.

The *Devar Torah* (Torah Commentary) presented by Jessie Karsif on the occasion of our celebrating her becoming at bat mitzva is published at BEKI's web site, www.beki.org/hungry.html, along with Divrei Torah of other BEKI members.



Pesah Second Seder

The Greater New Haven Conservative-Masorti Congregations are again presenting a Community Second Seder on the second night of Passover, Thursday 20 April 2000. For information or an order form, call Mary Ellen at 389-2108 x14 (beki@snet.net) or download a form from www.beki.org/forms.html.

KISS "Snow Day" Program to meet

BEKI's unique "Kids In Shul when they close the School" program, also known as the "Snow Day" program, will meet on Friday 10 March 2000 from 8:00a to 2:30p, and on Tuesday 28 March 2000 12:00 to 5:00p in the Claire Goodwin Children's Room. The KISS program offers a fun-filled Judaic program for elementary-school aged children on a day when Ezra Academy and public schools are closed for conferences and holidays when parents may have to work. Space is limited. Call Anne Johnston at 389-2108 x33 or email her at ajohnsto@connix.com to reserve your space or fax in the registration form available at www.beki.org/forms.html or from the office.

Upcoming scheduled days include Friday 10 March 2000 8:00a to 2:30p (Ezra In-Service Day) (note early closing); Tuesday 28 March 2000 12:00 to 5:00p (Ezra Conferences); Monday 3 April 2000 12:00 to 5:00p (Ezra Conferences); Wednesday 14 June 2000 12:00 to 5:00p (Ezra Early Dismissal); Thursday 15 June 2000 8:00a to 3:00p (Ezra Summer Vacation); Friday 16 June 2000 8:00a to 3:00p (Ezra Summer Vacation). Some dates are subject to minimum enrollment.

Thursday Morning Minyan New Time

Please note that the time of the Thursday Shahrarit Morning service will now be from 8:15a to 9:00a each Thursday (except major Jewish holidays or federal holidays as announced). Only the time of the Thursday morning service has been changed; all other service times remain the same. Sunday morning services begin at 9:00a; Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday begin at 7:00a; Thursday at 8:15a; and Friday at 7:00a. This change in Thursday morning service time is effective 02 March 2000 - 25 Adar I 5760.

Save the Date

Second Annual BEKI Spring Fling Dance, Saturday night, 1 April 2000 Details coming in mid-month mailings and next month's Bulletin