

A New Haven Tradition since 1892

BEKI bulletin

Congregation
Beth El-Keser Israel

Tamuz-Av-Elul 5774

Vol. 20 Issue 7

Page 15: A Message from Rabbi Tilsen

TISHA BE'AV

**"Destruction of
the Temple of
Jerusalem," by
Francesco Hayez,
Galleria d'Arte
Moderna, Venice.**



The fast day of Tisha Be'Av ("ninth day of the Hebrew month of Av") will be observed on Monday night Aug. 4 and Tuesday Aug. 5. The Mincha afternoon service is at its usual time, 5:45p to 6 p.m. The fast begins at 8:05 p.m. The Maariv evening service and the reading of Eikha (Lamentations) begin at 8 o'clock and conclude at 9.

The Shaharit service on Tuesday Aug. 5 is from 7 to 8:30 a.m. The evening and morning services include the reading of the Biblical Book of Eikha (Lamentations). On Tuesday morning, according to the Ashkenazic custom generally followed in our community, *tallit* and *tefillin* are not worn (although *tallit qatan* is worn).

At the afternoon Mincha service, from 5:45 to 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, *tallit* and *tefillin* are worn, with the recitation of their usual *berakhot*, and a brief Torah reading is chanted along with a *haftara*.

The fast is observed from 8:05 Monday night until 8:42 Tuesday night. As a sign of mourning, many refrain from wearing leather shoes and ostentatious clothing, and do not enjoy music, intimate physical relations or entertainment until Wednesday night (i.e., 24 hours *after* the end of the fast of Tisha Be'Av). The extension of the mourning practices is in part recognition that the Temple burned for two days and some of the early sages believed that the memorial should be observed on the tenth as much as or instead of the ninth.

SHABBAT SCHMOOZE

Jobs, Wages and Unemployment in New Haven: A Presentation by New Haven Rising

Join us for an informative presentation and discussion of the New Haven economy and the employment problems facing a wide range of New Haven residents. Facilitated by Jim Berger and Scott Marks. July 26 at 12:45 p.m.



Scott Marks, left, and Jim Berger

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Benefit Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel

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BEKI Bulletin

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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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Tisha Be'Av

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Tisha Be'Av commemorates the destruction of the first two Temples and other tragedies that have taken place in our long history. The destruction of the Temples represents the downfall of the independent Jewish government, the devastation of Jewish society and tragic loss of life. The downfall of the Bar Kokhba government and the Roman massacre and destruction of Betar occurred in 135 C.E. On Tisha Be'Av in 1290, King Edward I signed an edict expelling the Jews from England. Likewise, the expulsion of Jews from Spain occurred on that date in 1492. The fast is the only full-day fast on the Hebrew calendar besides Yom Kippur. Those with medical conditions that require oral medications or eating are urged to consult their medical and rabbinic authorities.

A *seudat mafseget* (meal before a fast) is a modest undertaking. Before undertaking any fast, one should eat a nutritious meal of normal proportions. Fresh fruits and vegetables are believed to help maintain hydration. Consult your dietician or medical references for other dietary and medical advice.

Tu Be'Av

Tu Be'Av (15 Av) occurs on Sunday night Aug. 10 and Monday Aug. 11.

From The Jewish Encyclopedia (1906):

Popular festival in Judea during the time of the Second Temple.... According to a tradition preserved in the Mishnah (Ta'anit, iv. 9, 10; Gem. pp. 26, 31), on that day, as well as on the Day of Atonement, the maidens of Jerusalem, rich and poor, without exception, dressed in white, went out to dance in the vineyards with the young men, asking them to make their choice of a partner for life. The fair ones sang: "Young men, turn your eyes to beauty; for woman stands for beauty." The patricians' daughters sang: "Young men, turn your eyes to noble parentage; for woman is the preserver of family pride." Those possessing neither beauty nor noble birth sang: "Grace is beautiful and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised." Of the many reasons given in the Talmud for the celebration of this day, that attested by the oldest authority, R. Eliezer ben Hyrcanus of the first century (Megillat Ta'anit, v.) is that it was the great day of wood-offering, when both priests and people brought kindling-wood in large quantities to the altar, for use in the burning of sacrifices during the whole year. ... The actual explanation is given in Meg. Ta'anit, v. and Mishnah, iv. 5, according to which nine families of Judah brought at certain times during the year the wood for the burning of the sacrifices on the altar, in accordance with Neh. x. 34; on the Fifteenth Day of Ab, however, all the people, the priests as well as the Levites, took part in the wood-offering.

— Kaufmann Kohler, *Jewish Encyclopedia*



USY Encampment

Aug. 18-24 at CRNE; info www.tinyurl.com/hanefeshencampment14.

USY Subsidy

Any USY member who is attending Encampment, a USY or Ramah summer program in the US or Israel, is eligible for a Youth Commission subsidy. Contact Emily BEKIBJUSY@gmail.com.

Sunday Testing

Sign up for Sunday testing for SATs and ACTs. <http://sat.collegeboard.org/register/special-circumstances> and <http://www.actstudent.org/faq/nonsat.html> for more information.



USYers

המקום ינחם

HaMaqom Yena'hem

With sorrow we note the passing of
Barbara Gilbert,
sister of Richard (& Leatrice) Brodner

Claire Proctor

Paul Goodwin, father of Richard
Goodwin (& Rachel Lampert)

Margaret Curtin Barnett,
wife of Al Barnett

Dominic Palumbo,
father of Joseph (& Jessie) Palumbo



Margaret Barnett

May the Almighty comfort those who mourn

HaNoladim BeMazal Tov

Mazal tov to Sarah Miller and Eliezer Lee Cruz and their son Pablo, and to Cathie & Ron Miller, on the birth of their son, brother and grandson, Mateo Refael, in July, and his entering into the covenant through the rite of brit mila on the eighth day.

Robert & Jane Stern on the birth of their granddaughter Aviva.

Marsha Beller on the birth of her grandson Jacob Isadore Beller-Rechler, son of Sarah and Scott, and his entering into the covenant through the rite of brit mila on the eighth day.

Mazal Tov

Jessie Karsif & Eli Chalmer on their qid-dushim (marriage under a huppa), and to Brian Karsif & Elizabeth Karpf and Ben & Erin Karsif.

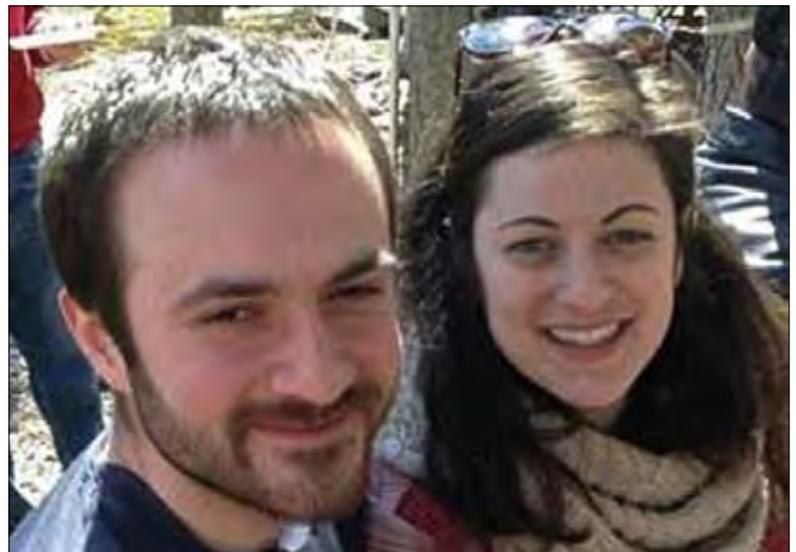
Annie Bass & Marissa Weiss on their qid-dushim (marriage under a huppa), and to Paul & Carole Bass and Sarah Bass.

Benei Mitzva Celebration

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



Annie Bass & Marissa Weiss



Eli Chalmer and Jessie Karsif

Rabbi's Tzedaka Fund

- Daniel Leisawitz & Daniela Viale in appreciation to BEKI community
- Lou & Lisa Petrillo with prayers of compassion
- A Friend of BEKI with thanks for support
- Alan Lovins & Trish Loving in memory of Paul Goodwin
- Alan Lovins & Trish Loving honoring the wedding of Jessie Karsif & Eli Chalmer
- Karen Kassap & Cary Caldwell
- Albert Feldman marking the yahrzeit of Tillie Leah Friedman
- Howard & Willa Needer
- Lou & Lisa Petrillo marking the yahrzeit of Peter Meyers
- Cathie Fuller & Ron Miller celebrating Darryl Kuperstock's 50th bat mitzva anniversary

Qiddush Sponsors (minimum \$280)

- The BEKI Congregation honoring our teen Shamashim
- Sara Labowe & Steven Stoll
- Mark & Renee Kohn
- David & Darryl Kuperstock
- The Buckman family, the May family, the Minsky & Fenick family, Alan Rosner & the Shragis family

Chai Fund (minimum \$18) to support synagogue operations

- To Elijah Labowe-Stoll in honor of his Bar Mitzva
- To Bud Volain with sympathy on the passing of Claire Volain by Charlie Ludwig
- To Frances Goldberg-Cohen with sympathy on the passing of Ethel Epstein by Charlie Ludwig
- To Avital Sutin in honor of her Bat Mitzva by Gloria Cohen
- To Charlie Ludwig with sympathy on the passing of Violet Ludwig by Lana & Martin Gad
- To Stanley Rosenbaum with sympathy on the passing of Ida Tatelman Hyman by Joanne Foodim & Rob Forbes
- To Stanley Rosenbaum with sympathy on the passing of Ida Tatelman Hyman by David & Darryl Kuperstock
- To Judith Rosenbaum with

sympathy on the passing of Ida Tatelman Hyman by David & Darryl Kuperstock

- To Adina Rosenbaum with sympathy on the passing of Ida Tatelman Hyman by David & Darryl Kuperstock
- To Elijah Labowe-Stoll in honor of his Bar Mitzva by Gloria Cohen
- To Darryl Kuperstock in honor of the 50th anniversary of her Bat Mitzva by Helen Rosenberg
- To Bud Volain with sympathy on the passing of Claire Volain by David Golden
- To Darryl Kuperstock in honor of the 50th anniversary of her Bat Mitzva by Sherry Kent
- To Stanley Rosenbaum with sympathy on the passing of Ida Tatelman Hyman by Herbert & Hannah Winer
- To Darryl Kuperstock in honor of the 50th anniversary of her Bat Mitzva by Herbert & Hannah Winer
- To Richard & Leatrice Brodner with sympathy on the passing of Barbara Gelbert by David & Darryl Kuperstock
- To Charlie Ludwig with sympathy on the passing of Violet Ludwig by Barbara & John Johnson

Synagogue Fund (minimum \$10) to support synagogue operations

- To Frances Goldberg-Cohen with sympathy on the passing of Ethel Epstein by Leon Cummings
- To Marisol Sanchez-Moycik with sympathy on the passing of Maria Rosa Sanchez by Leon Cummings
- To Stanley Rosenbaum with sympathy on the passing of Ida Tatelman Hyman by Sharon & Dan Prober
- To Susan Jacobson with sympathy on the passing of Rebecca Govrin Jacobson Marge & Al Barnett
- To Bud Volain with sympathy on the passing of Claire Volain by Doris & David Sagerman
- To Frances Goldberg-Cohen with sympathy on the passing of Ethel Epstein by Doris & David Sagerman
- To Charlie Ludwig with sympathy on the passing of

Violet Ludwig by Doris & David Sagerman

Ari Nathan Levine Children's Library Fund

- To Noam Benson-Tilsen in honor of his birthday by Caleb Freiman

Louis Friedman Scholarship Fund

- In memory of Goldie & Eli Kasimer by Tina N. Kasimer

Humash Dedication

- In memory of Violet Ludwig by Jeffrey Zonenshine & Marcia Minuskin

The Barzillai Cheskis BEKI Youth Israel Scholarship Fund

- To Stephanie & Michael Smerling and family, and Natalie Millman with sympathy on the passing of Steve Millman by Rena Cheskis-Gold, Marty Gold & family

The Harold & Arthur Ratner Memorial Fund

- In honor of Mikki Ratner becoming a great-grandmother and Betsy Ratner becoming a grandmother by Richard & Michael Kahn

Yahrzeit Fund (\$5 minimum) to support synagogue operations

- In memory of her mother Sara Oppenheim by Joyce & Michael Bohnen
- In memory of Rose Hodes by Joyce & David Popowski
- In memory of Katie Press by Joyce & David Popowski
- In memory of Moses Henken by Gladys Lipkin
- In memory of Philip Lipkin by Gladys Lipkin
- In memory of Katie Press by Lynne & Jeff Heisner
- In memory of Rose Hodes by Jeff & Lynne Heisner
- In memory of Milton Hirshfield by Jay & Marge Hirshfield
- In memory of Tema Hirshfield by Jay & Marge Hirshfield
- In memory of Murray Ratoosh by Sheri Ratoosh & Alan Glombicki

- In memory of Eli Kasimer by Joseph Kasimer
- In memory of Goldie Kasimer by Joseph Kasimer
- In memory of her grandmother Ida Brunswick by Barbara Cushen
- In memory of Samuel Olmer by Diana O. Bander
- In memory of Estelle A. Kone by Carolyn Kone & Allan Rubenstein
- In memory of Regina Lowi by Beatrice & Richard Brodner
- In memory of Sara Oppenheim by Anita & Michael Malina
- In memory of Anne Benson by Joanne & Steve Rudof
- In memory of Mendel Rosner by Sara-Ann & Hillel Auerbach
- In memory of Breindel Levine by Rabbi Murray Levine
- In memory of Israel Glazman by Polina Naiman
- In memory of Eli Slopak by David Schwartz
- In memory of Louis Goldbloom by Norman & Edith Goldblum
- In memory of Marilyn Levine by Mordechai Levine
- In memory of Leonard Brill by Doris Brill
- In memory of Isaac Walinsky by Albert Friedman
- In memory of Estelle Gottfried by Helene & Edward Vanderhoef
- In memory of Rose Cohen by Doris & Stephen Brody
- In memory of Shlomo Steuer by Anna Goldberg
- In memory of Giselle Goldberg by Anna Goldberg
- In memory of Morris Maltin by Ted Maltin
- In memory of Hajnalka L. Winer by Herbert Winer
- In memory of Milton Weiner by Joanne & Steve Rudof
- In memory of Hyman Matloff by Kenneth Matloff
- In memory of Eli Berman by Richard Neveloff
- In memory of Simon Berman by Richard Neveloff
- In memory of Milton Smirnoff by Bea Smirnoff
- In memory of her aunt Mildred Rieser by Sherry Kent
- In memory of his father Michael Freiman by Jonathan Freiman

We are called or emailed to attend daily services by our minyan captains, for the morning prayers as well as evening prayers.

In the morning it might seem too early to get up, too cold or too hot outside or there might be other excuses. In the evening one might be too tired after a long working day or there might be family obligations. Perhaps with this explanation you might decide not to attend a minyan to support your fellow congregants.



Mimi Glenn

The qaddish is not so much a prayer for the eternal well-being of the departed but an expression of *tsiduq ha-din*, expressing acceptance of God's actions. Despite life's bad events, by joining with others in the community experiencing the same loss, pain, even anger, we praise God's rightfulness and find ways to cope and build for the future. To do so we very much need at least a community of ten adult Jews to form a quorum for the recitation of certain prayers, including the qaddish.

Coming together with other Jews as a minyan forms a caring, reciprocal community of shared emotions, interests and support. If Jews come to BEKI when in need of the community, then should we not respond, "hinnenu, we are here, what time does the minyan begin?"

The death of a loved one is always a shock. In the beginning of the mourning period we are bereft and alone. But in a short period, for those who continue to come, the minyan unites the mourners with each other and with the rest of the community.

Sometimes when there is not a quorum of ten, a disappointment settles within those present, as if there is something amiss with the orderliness of our Jewish world.

As a community, we pride ourselves on *gemilut hasadim*, *tsedaqa*, and *tiqun olam*. By attending our daily minyan we have a vision of being personally responsible for building a more perfect Jewish world. When you are called or emailed

to attend a minyan, please come and support your fellow BEKI congregant.

• • •

As you look forward to summer and fun, Sisterhood members will be making plans for the New Year. New items in the GiftShop will be ordered, as well as plans for meetings with guest speakers.

Adele and I as well as the Sisterhood board wish you a great summer.

Hope to see you all in the fall.

Mimi Glenn

More Sisterhood News

Summer is upon us and we are enjoying the warm weather, catching up on the books we didn't have a chance to read this winter, picnic with family and friends and just veg out.

But we have a Fast day on Tisha BeAv, the Fast of the Ninth of Av, Tuesday Aug. 5. It is a day of mourning to commemorate the many tragedies that have befallen the Jewish people on the 9th of Av.

Tisha BeAv means the "ninth (day) of Av." It primarily commemorates the destruction of the first and second Temples, both of which were destroyed on this date, the first by the Babylonians in 586 B.C.E., the second by the Romans in 70 C.E. Many other tragedies that befell the Jewish People also occurred on this date, most notably the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492 and from England in 1290.

• • •

Thank you for supporting our Yellow Candle Project. Sisterhood would like to thank M. Banquer, G. Cohen, D. Wright, S. Saxe, E. Benson, J. Hayward, S. Jacobson, B. Cushen, L. Wilburn, R. Wizner, L. Siegel, Goldberg-Cohen, T. Rose, S. Schwartz, R. Lettick. The money that was raised is used to award BEKI students with a stipend towards their Jewish endeavors. So far four students have taken advantage of the stipend. More students can apply for a stipend this year.

We are offering a 10% discount on all merchandise purchased from the Sisterhood Gift Shop during June and July.

**So hurry in for the best selection. Open by appointment. Contact giftshop@beki.org
For more information please contact Mimi Glenn (203) 397-3851.**

MORE SOLAR FOR BEKI?

Our congregation has won an opportunity to produce our entire demand for electricity from our own rooftop. The local and regional utilities selected BEKI through a lottery of qualified applicants to serve as a site for an extended photovoltaic array, in order to satisfy the utilities' mandate under federal and local laws to supply a growing proportion of electricity from renewable sources. BEKI could receive \$135,000 over the next nine years as a reward for undertaking the full project.

The full scope would be a 100 kilowatt array placed on the roof of the social hall and sanctuary, and on the remaining space on the classroom wing. The [current photovoltaic array at BEKI](#), installed in September 2006 on part of the classroom wing, is nominally a 10 kilowatt system. The decision to consider this now is driven in part by the new roof sections installed in 2013, which optimizes the length of time the array might be in service, and by the likelihood that the new ZREC (renewable energy credit) subsidy agreements will be less generous or eliminated next year and in coming years. We do not expect the cost of new systems to decline substantially in the short term, nor do we expect the price of electricity supplied by the utility to decline in the long term.

The cost to purchase and install a 100 kilowatt array at BEKI is about \$250,000. Net of maintenance and other costs, the array would return at least \$25,000 a year to BEKI in saved electric costs and the utility subsidy to BEKI for the first 15 years, and about \$15,000 a year in years 16 to 25 or beyond, expressed in current dollars and assuming electric rates do not change substantially in the next 25 years.

Such a return would represent a significant continuing benefit to the synagogue. It would also be one way to implement and express our desire to reduce our consumption of fossil fuels, and could reduce the stress on the local electric grid.

Where do we get \$250,000? The Congregation recently completed a major fundraising program, BEKI-120, and is presently completing a significant building renovation (see "Windows 2014 Update" this issue). There is reluctance to undertaking an elective fundraising campaign that would, at least in some unknown measure, compete with and detract from the necessary Annual Campaign or an appeal to provide for some possible imminent building repair such as roof replacement. (The roofs over the social hall and classroom wing are new, but the roofs over the sanctuary and lobby-office are about to sing *Adon Olam*.) For these reasons, there

is a disinclination to launch a broad-based campaign.

However, it is possible that some members or supporters might be motivated or inspired to support a Solar program in a way that will on balance provide more funding for all of our needs. The significant savings – about 3% of our annual budget if the full \$250,000 is raised in donations – would provide relief to our budget that might make it easier to proceed with other needed projects. While our fundraising has to depend on our members, it is possible that additional support could be found elsewhere such as through a Connecticut corporate donor who can take advantage of available tax credits for solar projects, or other supporters who just want to help in this worthy effort.

Happily, the project can be scaled somewhat, so that it could be carried out with \$150,000, which is about 2/3 the size of the full program, and providing 2/3 of the benefit. While that would sacrifice \$45,000 of the subsidy, it would make the project, at least in its smaller version, seem more within reach. It is not that a quarter of a million dollars is a lot of money while \$150,000 is chump change, but we have a track record of generous donors who have supported projects on this scale.

A careful analysis of the utility's net metering system will be undertaken to insure that the scale of the project maximizes the benefit to the synagogue and best uses our resources. Likewise, structural suitability and roof integrity issues will be scrupulously attended to in planning and installation, should the project proceed. This will include a plan for snow removal in case of extraordinary snowfall. As our Congregation has owned and operated a rooftop PV system since 2006, we have some experience to guide us.

Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel seeks to be a model urban institution and to promote good citizenship among its members. The community seeks to comply with the Biblical law of *בל תשחית* *bal tashhit*, which prohibits destruction of the natural environment and wasting of resources. The congregation aims to put the *conserve* into Conservative Judaism.

If you are interested in learning more about this proposal, or might like to participate in planning and execution of fundraising or installation, or would like to be asked to be a major donor should the plan be adopted, please contact Vice President Yaron Lew, Rabbi Tilsen or President Andy Hirshfield.

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Windows 2014 Update

The project to replace windows on the east and north sides of the building (parking lot and driveway side) and repair associated masonry is on schedule and within budget. Window air conditioners in the affected rooms are being replaced, and openings and units are being installed for the first time in the Administrator's (Peggy's) Office and Room 6 (K-2 Kehila, BRS and Talmud Torah Meyuhad classroom). Painting of affected interior areas will also be completed. If the project continues to proceed at its current pace, and if no new significant building problems are discovered in the process, it will be completed or substantially completed before Rosh Hodesh Av at the end of July.

Members and guests will notice that the windows are new-looking, double-paned and can be opened, and open wider than the original windows. This will provide better ventilation, reduce heat gain and loss and thereby keep the temperatures more moderate and comfortable, making the rooms easier and less expensive to heat and cool. The clear

glass will offer views of the grounds and sky. The exterior bricks will look less broken and chipped, and will significantly reduce structural deterioration. The new air conditioners will also enable us to cool the room more effectively, efficiently and consistently.

The windows were manufactured in Marlborough, MA, and the air conditioners were assembled in the southern United States and Mexico. The contractor and workers are local.

Thanks to Project Director Dennis Rader and Grant Writer officer Barbara Rader and the Windows 2014 Team, including Building Chairperson David Wright and officer Yair Minsky, as well as Bob Spear and Eric Dunsker, for planning and executing the project or advising and facilitating.

This \$80,000 project was funded through a joint matching grant from the Jewish Foundation of Greater New Haven and the Jewish Federation of Greater New Haven, and the major support of the Borick Family (LIATIS Foundation), the Paul Goodwin Family, Linda Schultz & Howard Gralla, David & Joanne Goldblum, Gloria Cohen, Jonathan London, Baruch & Corinne Levine, Eric Dunsker, and others. Thanks to our generous donors for making these repairs and improvements a reality. 



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Come Build with BEKI – Update and Call for Support

We are on our way to building our seventh house with Habitat for Humanity.

Once again, BEKI's energetic volunteers will have the opportunity to participate in building a new home from the ground up. Now active in the Sleeping Giant Build group, BEKI continues its work with Habitat as we have previously, beginning in 2002 with the Circle of Faith Covenant Build and then with Amity Cares – Habitat for Humanity, founded by BEKI member Cathie Miller. Now, with SGB once again, along with others in the wider Westville/Hamden/North Haven community (other synagogues, churches, civic organizations, schools) and the wonderful family who will eventually live there, we'll begin work this month.

BEKI's participation has given us the opportunity to meet and befriend others from the wider community, and to work together to create something new, not for ourselves, but for the benefit of six fantastic, hard-working and committed families. Working alongside these families, building their homes, we have helped realize their dreams (and ours of working toward Tikun Olam).

What an amazing feeling to watch the wood you have just been nailing be raised in the air and suddenly become the frame of a new house!

Everyone is welcome and needed (including unskilled workers – there are so many things you can do). Workers must be 16 years of age or older.

We hope to be building one Sunday a month at least into the fall.

There's a catch

In spite of our volunteer participation, BEKI has not been listed as an official sponsor of the last couple of houses we have helped to build. ***It is our goal to change that this time around.*** You can help. Many of our members make private donations in support of Habitat for Humanity. If you do, or if you will consider now supporting this work, we can reach our goal of dedicating \$3,000 of BEKI members' Habitat for Humanity donations to the Sleeping Giant Build project. If you have donated funds to Habitat since fall 2013, (including any matches from your employer), these can be so designat-

ed by marking on your check "SGB for BEKI," calling the local Habitat office (203) 785-0794, or **indicating so when making your donation online. We have many supporters, but need more.**

Schedules for Sunday workdays will be publicized once confirmed.

Over the course of building the five Habitat homes on which we have volunteered, **86 BEKI volunteers** have

helped with framing, painting, siding, waterproofing, roofing, insulating, installing drywall, clearing land, cleaning, polishing, trimming, sanding, planting, building cabinets, building planters and benches, fundraising, planning and many other tasks that go into building a home. Most of these volun-

teers had never before had the opportunity to learn or use these skills and have found even just that a really rewarding experience. *Join our crew.*

Please contact Darryl Kuperstock (203) 387-0304 kuperst@aol.com to let her know that you are interested in volunteering for a Sunday workday or if you would like to help out in some other way.

Menschlichkeit – What a Concept

Over the course of the last couple of months, the expanded BEKI Tikun Olam Committee has embarked on a discussion to clarify its goals and priorities. With your help, we hope that we can work to meet these goals and strengthen an environment in which Tikun Olam ("repairing the world") thrives at BEKI.

BEKI Tikun Olam Committee Goals

Mission Statement: To promote *Menschlichkeit* among BEKI members.

It is the general goal and standing order of the Tikun Olam Committee (TOC) to foster the notion that we are all obliged to help make this a better world in which to live and to provide support and resources to BEKI members who wish to make that happen. The mere existence of the TOC should mean that BEKI members never have to look far to discover ways to help "repair the world."



Join BEKI Habitat Team for Funfest for Humanity, benefit for Sleeping Giant Build, Sunday Aug. 17 noon to 3 p.m. on the Hamden Green (Dixwell Avenue). Live music, touch-a-truck, crafts, food, more, info www.sleepinggi-antbuild.org kuperst@gmail.com.

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Tikun Olam

Continued from Page 9

Actively undertake a limited number of social action projects each year outside the BEKI community, but within the purview of the general and overall values expressed by the community.

Members of the TO Committee should act as leaders for these projects, while recruiting BEKI members to assist in execution. The specific projects should avoid overtly political activities (such as election organizing), though the TOC recognizes that many Jewish and BEKI values regarding social justice overlap with political causes.

Educate and inform the BEKI community about TOC activities.

By doing so, the TOC hopes to connect BEKI members to social action projects in order to (a) staff these projects, (b) foster good community-relations among BEKI members, and (c) serve as a general resource of community service knowledge and experience for BEKI members.

Provide a resource for students and those seeking community service opportunities.

The TOC aims to provide information and guidance for younger members of our community, including students preparing to become *benei-mitzva*, students looking to fulfill other community service requirements or otherwise seeking to becoming more involved in social action work, and adult

community members with a general interest. At the very least, the TOC should be always prepared to provide a list of potential *tikun olam* activities/projects (preferably via the website), as well as general guidance through infrastructure and support.

Engender meaningful connections among BEKI members.

Through activities and projects, the TOC hopes to connect BEKI members to each other and create a stronger internal sense of community.

Engender connections between the BEKI community and the broader community.

Through activities and projects, the TOC hopes to connect BEKI members to those beyond our immediate community, whether with other faith-based organizations (Jewish or otherwise), other similarly-minded/socially-conscious groups, or people in the community (near and far) who may benefit from our work or knowledge.

In the coming months, we hope to regularly inform our community of projects actively underway, educational programs being planned and serious enhancement to the committee's resources on BEKI's soon to be launched redesigned website. If you are interested in working on any of these aspects of the T.O. Committee, or have ideas you'd like to share, please contact our committee chairs: Darryl Kuperstock kuperst@gmail.com – or Nate Bixby Nathan.bixby@gmail.com.



Israel Through a Different Lens: An Art Exhibit of the Work of Miriam Stern

Miriam Stern, a member of the Jewish Art Salon, has a solo exhibit in BEKI's lobby and hallways from June 1 to August 29. A painter, printmaker, and installation artist, Stern often creates thematic series that express Jewish values and ideas.

The artwork in this exhibit was inspired by photographs Stern has taken on her travels far and near, in Israel, China, and the Berkshires. These pieces demonstrate the artist's process of developing a body of work in various media, including unique prints, oil paintings, and collages. She begins the process by using the computer to manipulate elements in the photos and transform them. These new images become the basis for "unique prints" that combine digital and traditional printmaking methods.

The oil paintings, derived from the prints, become more

abstract expressions. As the photographic image used in the print is further removed from its source, it becomes less recognizable. Stern states that the process of starting with a photograph of a real object or place and changing it until it becomes something else fascinates and challenges her and that by working in a series format she is able to produce a body of work that includes paintings, prints, and collages.

Stern has exhibited in both the United States and Israel, and has won numerous awards and prizes. Recently she has had one-woman shows at Johnson & Johnson Headquarters in New Brunswick, New Jersey, and the Watchung Arts Center in Watchung, New Jersey. Her art has been reproduced in magazines and books of poetry. In addition to producing art, she has curated several art exhibitions and also lectures about Art as Midrash.

Shabbatot (Saturdays)

דרשנים

Darshanim

Darshan – 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:

Baruch Levine will serve as darshan on Shabbat morning July 5, *parashat Balaq*.

Emily Sachs (Bat Mitzva) will serve as darshanit on Shabbat July 19, *parashat Matot*.

Steven Fraade will serve as darshan on Shabbat morning Aug. 30, *parashat Shoftim*.

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.



Baruch Levine



Steven Fraade



David Kuperstock



Nadav Sela

Sundays

Genesis Stories as Jewish Myth An 8-week course with Rabbi Alan Lovins

Sunday mornings Sept. 7 - Oct. 26 9:45-11:15

Enrich your High Holiday experience by participating in this course on the book of Genesis (Bereishit). Rabbi Alan Lovins will examine the historical and literary context of the Torah, exploring the ways in which the book of Genesis represents a revolutionary break with the world from which it emerged. Over eight weeks participants will read the stories of the book of Genesis, discussing them in depth and gaining new understanding and insights regarding the basic message of the Jewish Scripture. The first session will be a historical and literary introduction to Genesis, contrasting it to the prevailing mythological world view of other contemporary cultures. In ensuing sessions the class will read and discuss the following stories: Creation; Cain and Abel; the Flood; the Tower of Babel; and Sodom and Gomorrah. The class concludes with a session to review thoughts and insights gained.

The following text is required:

Nahum Sarna, *Understanding Genesis* (published in 1970), available in paperback from Amazon.com and not expensive.

Rabbi Lovins also recommends *The Torah, a New Translation of the Holy Scriptures* (Jewish Publication Society of America, 1962). This is not required but highly recommended and very readable.

By way of introduction to the course Rabbi Lovins explains that the Torah, the basic document of the Jewish religion, teaches values and promotes principles that help civilize humankind and enhance our quality of life. It is not 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. We will see how our myth was a



Alan Lovins

Continued on **Page 12**

Adult Studies

Continued from **Page 11**

version of the more universal myth of the region and the times. Our story enabled us to eliminate magic from the Jewish religion. 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, Christianity and Islam, and the cornerstone of the Western World.

All sessions are free and open to the public and no registration is necessary. Attendance at all sessions is encouraged but not required. For further information call the BEKI office, (203) 389-2108.

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 and new participants are welcome. Hebrew and English texts are available. The RSG meets immediately following the 7 a.m. *shaharit* service. On Labor Day, Sept. 1, the RSG will meet at 9:45, after the 9 o'clock morning service. With Jon-Jay Tilsen.



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.



Murray Levine

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 icooper@cooperlaw.net.



Isaiah Cooper

The Sanhedrin Study Group will be on recess from July 17 until resuming Oct. 23.

Every Day

Divrei Torah on the Web

Commentaries on various weekly Torah portions and related topics by BEKI members and guests are available at <http://beki.org/hungry.html>. Recently added is [Parashat BeMidbar Devar Torah](#) by David Kuperstock, May 24. ☆



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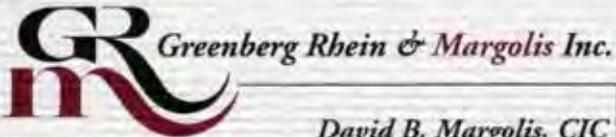


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MISPLACED MATRIARCHS

A Pedantic Message from Rabbi Tilsen

The modern version of the opening blessing of the Amida used in some Reform and Reconstructionist *siddurim* (prayer books) and *mahzorim* (festival prayer books) is now an unwelcomed and confusing option in Conservative prayer books, which are otherwise among the finest available. Before presenting the problem, let us review the place of this blessing and its history of development.

The *medial* blessings of the Amida were formulated at the end of the first century of the common era in rabbinical conclaves with the understanding that individuals were free to elaborate on the basic text. This invitation to personalization is expressed in our Siddur Sim Shalom, for example, in the added elaboration to the prayer for healing. More widely known are the many additions of *piyyutim* (poems) for Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur, most medieval or ancient but different in each edition.

However, the *opening* paragraph of the Amida, often referred to as the “Avot” (ancestors) blessing based on a key word, is a carefully constructed literary unit based on ancient texts. By rabbinic rule, its language and that of two following blessings cannot be changed, in part so that it can remain a universal element unifying the Jewish People and expressing core ideas, and in part because it is not intended as a place for individual expression or petition. The long-standing exceptions to this rule are phrases such as “*zokhrenu le-hayim*” added or substituted on the Yamim Noraim (Days of Awe), and the seasonal variations “*mashiv ha-ruah*” (winter) or “*morid ha-tal*” (summer). Beyond those, no change was allowed to these

blessings.

In the twentieth century, the overwhelming need to recognize and elevate the status of women in Jewish civilization impelled the Chancellor of the Jewish Theological

Seminary, Rabbi Ismar Schorsch, to endorse what had become a popular practice in our communities of adding the names of the matriarchs Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah to this blessing. While we may debate the choice of name order or even the merits of *these* four women instead of Miriam, Ruth, Mikhal or Esther, or even Bilhah and Zilpah for that matter, this wording was the only one approved by



the Chancellor and has become the most widely used, preserving the value of the commonality of the liturgy while elevating the status of women for good reason.

The particular wording that appears in our *Siddur Sim Shalom* reflects a very common traditional formulation of matriarchs, that is, *these* four in *this* order. While calling the God of Israel “God of Sarah” or “God of Rebecca” has a sound basis in the Biblical text and the common midrash, the equation of the God of Israel to “God of Rachel” and “God of Leah” is somewhat dubious. Nevertheless, for literary, historical and perhaps ideological reasons, this formula is standard and there is no permission in our communities to deviate from it.

To this point, all is well and good.

The offending phrase inserted in some modern prayerbooks is the misplaced word “*ve-immoteinu*,” “our matriarchs.” Remarkably, the otherwise fine Conserva-

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Misplaced Matriarchs

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tive *Mahzor Lev Shalem* has this insertion in the Hebrew (“ve-elohei avoteinu ve-immoteinu”) but not in the English (which reads “and God of our ancestors”), and demarcated by square brackets. The word, as misplaced here, is either a grammatical monstrosity or a radically heretical theological claim. Here is why this is so:

The blessing as we have it, including the names of the four matriarchs, is presented here phrase by phrase, in English; those who know the Hebrew probably know it by heart.

Blessed are
You
Adonai
our God
and God of our forebears (Heb. avoteinu)
God of Abraham
God of Isaac
And God of Jacob
God of Sarah
God of Rebecca
God of Rachel
And God of Leah.

This formulation repeats the word “God of...” because that is simply the most elegant Hebrew style, and perhaps one might say it means to teach us that even though our ancestors experienced God very differently from one another, we are still talking about the same God (or the same “idea” or “thing”). It places each reference to God in apposition, that is, it places them as equals, making it clear that they refer to the same thing (i.e. the same God).

The problematic and incorrect insertion in the Hebrew renders the phrase “Elo—heinu ve-lo-hei avoteinu ve-immoteinu.” The only way this can be construed in Hebrew (at least if we have any rules of language, and certainly in the register of Hebrew used in the liturgy, not to mention Bible and other literature), has “ve-immoteinu” in apposition:

...
Adonai
our God
and God of our forebears
and our mothers
God of Abraham ...

After 3,000 years (or at least 2,000), we have resurrected the Mother Goddess, or Adonai’s consort Ashera, or perhaps adopted a new form of ancestor worship.

It says, “Adonai = our God = God of our forebears = our mothers = God of Abraham.” That is because the *semikhut* (conjoined noun form) in Hebrew allows only a single word or unit as the *somekh* (element to which the prior word or term, called the *nismakh*, is attached). If one can find an acceptable *somekh* with more than one word, it surely does not include an attached pronoun (the “—einu” ending). Yo bro I am talking about proper Hebrew, not Tel Aviv slang or some Aramaic pidgin.

The author might have meant to say “God of our Patriarchs and Matriarchs,” but Hebrew normally does not form *semikhut* (conjoined word series) in this way. Even if one were to accept this unlikely construction as legitimate, the most normal way to construe it is as I have presented it, equating God and our mothers.

In *Mahzor Lev Shalem*, two versions of the opening blessing of the Amida are presented, side-by-side. On the left side, the blessing includes the names of the four matriarchs, and has the word “ve-immoteinu” surrounded by square brackets. It is possible that a reader might interpret the brackets that surround the word “ve-immoteinu” to mean “substitute this word for the previous word” or as a commentary, or an optional addition or an addition required just on certain occasions (such as Shabbat). Unfortunately, siddurim use parentheses and brackets in inconsistent and sometimes convoluted and confusing ways.

If the brackets are construed to indicate an optional substitution, the word would by no measure improve the blessing, and would mean taking away an important and well-established idea: It would remove reference to non-female ancestors other than the three named. Surely no one intended that.

As a practical level, having the unexplained option of a word in brackets, even more than the two side-by-side options, wreaks havoc in a community such as ours where any one of dozens of individuals may serve as *shaliach tsibur* (prayer leader). Synagogue etiquette and *halakha* (law) demand that the leader use the text set before him or her by the congregation. This text, with multiple options, some of which would be “wrong” by all accounts (such as substitution instead of addition), and some of which would be the

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Misplaced Matriarchs

Continued from Page 16

wrong choice for the particular community, guarantees error and conflict surrounding what is by all accounts a central passage in the liturgy, no matter how hard the rabbi or conductor may try to offer clear directions.

Even if one were to say “let the grammar be damned,” the phrase suffers an additional problem. The word “*avot*” (with the attachment “-einu” making it “our”) means “ancestor, forebear, principal,” and can be used for inanimate things that serve as a base or category head (as in “*avot melakha*,” “categories of labor”), as well as the more narrow meaning “father.” In rabbinic literature, the word “*avoteinu*” is sometimes applied to the list of matriarchs alone, without males, demonstrating that the term is meant in its generic sense. The position of the word before a long list of appositives (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob; Ha-El, etc.) further indicates that it is probably not meant to merely introduce a list of specifics but rather stands on its own.

So even if we understood the phrase as a mutant *semikhut* form, we might initially construe it as “God of our forebears and matriarchs,” suggesting that our matriarchs are not a subset of our forebears but rather a distinct group. Alternatively, if this forces us to disambiguate “*avoteinu*” as “patriarchs,” then it would lead us to so understand other occurrences of the word in the liturgy, that is, to understand “*avoteinu*” in the limited sense of “patriarchs” excluding matriarchs, which would be both inconsistent with the generally accepted meaning and utterly counter to the purpose of including the matriarchs in the first place. Adding the matriarchs here causes them to be ejected in every other place the word “*avoteinu*” occurs.

The result of this awkward and incorrect wording is to

force readers to say, “the phrase ‘our matriarchs’ doesn’t belong here” – suggesting “our matriarchs don’t belong here” -- precisely the opposite of the editors’ presumed intent.

While the grammar offered in this new version of the prayerbook is wrong, there is of course a way to correctly state what might have been the intent. One would simply add the word “God of”:

our God
God of our forebears / patriarchs
and **God of** our matriarchs

This alternative, while grammatically correct, still suffers from the problem of interpretation described above. The mahzor *On Wings of Awe* to its credit does in fact use this grammatically correct formulation, but blows it later in the paragraph by adding the same word in another phrase where it is grammatically impossible or very clumsy, “*hasdei avot ve-immahot*” and makes the same grammatical mistake in another insertion later.

The better way to attain a worthy outcome is to leave the opening blessings of the Amida as they are, which include the names of the four matriarchs, and add references to our female historical leaders and role models elsewhere in the liturgy where their placement might enhance the liturgy and in ways that are grammatically correct and sensitive to the literary quality and style. Happily, there are a number of such places just waiting for the arrival of these women like a traveler watching for lost luggage. While the opening blessing of the Amida holds an elevated place in our liturgy, the insertion here is tantamount to tokenism, and in any case, we assert, the desired result could be better obtained by using our tradition’s “binders full of women” and sprinkling them generously throughout.



Book of Life

Sisterhood is honoring Carole & Paul Bass as 2014 Book of Life honorees. Book displayed in lobby; inscriptions \$18 from Sisterhood.

Rabbi’s Annual Report

Rabbi Tilsen’s Annual Report for 2014 (July 2013 – June 2014) is available at www.beki.org/tilsen/annual14.pdf and in the literature rack

in the lobby. The report supplements the reports of synagogue committees and describes highlights, progress and challenges of the past year. It also offers occasional prospective comments.

July 2014

3 Tammuz 5774 - 4 Av 5774

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 7:30pm Israeli Dance 3 Tammuz	2 4 Tammuz	3 12:00pm Talmud Study Group 5 Tammuz	4 Office Closed/Independence Day 9:00am Shaharit 8:11pm Candle Lighting 6 Tammuz	5 Balak Darshan: Baruch Levine 10:45am Children's Programs Qiddush: Levine (Baruch & Corrine) 5:45pm Minha 7 Tammuz
6 8 Tammuz	7 7:45am Rashi Study Group 10:00am Yoga Hour 9 Tammuz	8 7:30pm Israeli Dance 10 Tammuz	9 7:00pm Social Action/Tikkun Olam meeting 11 Tammuz	10 12:00pm Talmud Study Group 12 Tammuz	11 8:09pm Candle Lighting 13 Tammuz	12 Pinhas I Kings 10:45am Children's Programs 10:45am Shabbat Shalom Torah Study Qiddush: Backer & Kramer 5:45pm Minha 14 Tammuz
13 15 Tammuz	14 7:45am Rashi Study Group 10:00am Yoga Hour 7:30pm Executive Board Meeting (off-site) 16 Tammuz	15 Fast of Tammuz 17 Exodus Isaiah 7:30pm Israeli Dance 17 Tammuz	16 18 Tammuz	17 19 Tammuz	18 Emily Sachs Bat Mitzva 20/30's Havura Dinner (off-site, reservations required) 8:05pm Candle Lighting 20 Tammuz	19 Mattot Jeremiah Emily Sachs Bat Mitzva 10:45am Children's Programs Qiddush: Sachs 5:45pm Minha 21 Tammuz
20 22 Tammuz	21 7:45am Rashi Study Group 10:00am Yoga Hour 7:30pm General Board Meeting 23 Tammuz	22 7:30pm Israeli Dance 24 Tammuz	23 25 Tammuz	24 26 Tammuz	25 7:59pm Candle Lighting 27 Tammuz	26 Mase Jeremiah 10:45am Children's Programs 10:45am Shabbat Shalom Children's Programs Qiddush: Kent & Shure 12:45pm Shabbat Shmooze "Jobs, Wages & Unemployment in New Haven" 5:45pm Minha 28 Tammuz
27 29 Tammuz	28 Rosh Hodesh Numbers 7:45am Rashi Study Group 10:00am Yoga Hour 1 Av	29 7:30pm Israeli Dance 2 Av	30 3 Av	31 4 Av		

Service Times

Sundays	Mondays	Tuesdays	Wednesdays	Thursdays	Fridays	Saturdays
9 a.m. Shaharit 5:45 p.m. Maariv	7 a.m. Shaharit 5:45 p.m. Maariv	7 a.m. Shaharit 5:45 p.m. Maariv	7 a.m. Shaharit 5:45 p.m. Maariv	8:15 a.m. Shaharit 5:45 p.m. Maariv	7 a.m. Shaharit 6 p.m. Qabbalat Shabbat	9:15 a.m. Shaharit Before sunset: Minha



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Friday Night and Shabbat Morning Greeters, Shabbat Mincha (Saturday afternoon) and Maariv (Saturday night during winter).

If your name was left out by mistake or you'd now like to be included, please request an "available" date from Rabbi Tilsen by email or phone (but not in person on Shabbat, as we cannot schedule on that day). Normally several additional dates become available during the course of the semester, and anyone erroneously omitted will be the first to be asked to fill those dates.