Each Evening at 5:30 *

We’ll light the Hanukkah menorah in the BEKI lobby every evening (except Shabbat) at 5:30, starting Sunday, Nov. 28. Join us in person or at tinyurl.com/BEKIschmooze.

Children’s Event Dec. 1 *

BEKI is celebrating Hanukkah with PJ Library on Wednesday, the fourth night. The program starts with a Hanukkah read-aloud at 4 pm at Mitchell Library, then comes to BEKI at 5:15 for crafts, lighting the menorah, and a singalong with Josh Perry, ending at 6:15. Every child will receive a Hanukkah goody bag. The community is welcome. RSVP to office@beki.org.

Hanukkah Singalong Dec. 4 *

Join us around the campfire on Saturday, the seventh night, at 7 pm for havdalah, menorah lighting, and an hour of Hanukkah songs. We’ll have song sheets with old favorites plus new tunes too. Hot beverages (and sufganiyot) will help keep you warm. In case of rain, we will move inside.

Violin Concert Dec. 11

Violinist Ilana Zaks will return on Saturday, Dec. 11. Join us at 7:30 pm in the BEKI library. Now in her second year in the master’s program at the Yale School of Music, Ilana has been described as a “fearless, refreshing and commanding” performer. Please arrive promptly since doors will be locked. In person only.

Interfaith Family Life Dec. 12

Rabbi Woodward will lead “A Rabbi’s Reflections on Christmas and Hanukkah,” a conversation for interfaith families on Sunday, Dec. 12 at 11 am. Raised in an interfaith and mixed-race family, he invites participants to bring questions or ideas about how to navigate the winter holidays. This will be a safe space for discussing the joys and difficulties of interfaith family life. In person only.

* Please bring men’s winter coats, boots, sweatshirts, sweaters, flannel long-sleeved shirts, scarves, winter hats, mittens, gloves, and (new only) warm socks for the Hanukkah clothing drive to support New Haven’s Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen (DESK).
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: bulletin@beki.org
• Visit our web page: www.beki.org
• Follow us on social media:

Deadline for submission of ads or articles is the first of the month preceding publication.

Annual subscription is $36

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If you have questions or concerns, please speak with a Board member.

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Sanctuary Redesign

Sanctuary Redesign Meeting

The sanctuary redesign committee is working to create a worship space that is rooted in BEKI tradition, embodies our present community, and speaks to our future. Their mission statement is to design an inspirational sanctuary that is warm, inclusive, accessible, and feasible.

After meeting with four architecture firms, the committee is now selecting an architect and negotiating an agreement for the initial phase of the project, known as conceptual design.

At a congregational meeting on Thursday, Dec. 16 at 7:30 pm, the committee will present the results of the November online survey and will seek additional feedback. Join the meeting at tinyurl.com/BEKIschmooze.

After the meeting, the committee will work with the architect to synthesize that feedback and produce several possible designs. These will be brought back to the congregation for discussion.

By this spring, the committee hopes to produce a design that has the support of the congregation and Board of Directors and is ready to implement.

As part of its work, the committee has reviewed background material, including BEKI’s original 1959 building plans; documents from the BEKI 2000 planning and renovations; and work by a more recent committee examining possible changes for the sanctuary. In order to learn from their experiences, the committee is talking with other congregations that have redesigned their sanctuaries.

Our synagogue was designed in 1959 for a congregation with a rabbi and cantor, a choir, and a formal, hierarchical style of worship, the committee notes. “We want to create a sanctuary that reflects our 21st-century values of warmth, inclusiveness, and spiritual intimacy, and that enhances our volunteer-led services in which we are all participants, not audience members,” they explain.

Their overarching goals involve making our sanctuary more comfortable physically (which includes heating, cooling, ventilation, acoustics, and seating); accessible for all people; more intimate in scale and layout; warmer and more inviting to everyone.

In his charge to the committee, President Yaron Lew outlined several components to investigate: covering the sanctuary’s cinder block columns with a more appealing finish; rearranging the seats into a horseshoe shape facing the reader’s table; making the bimah accessible for people with mobility challenges; replacing the folding divider between the main sanctuary and the social hall; addressing the sanctuary ceiling.

The committee is also considering other possible elements of a redesign, including windows, floor covering, lighting, the ark (or its doors), and the wood panels flanking the ark.

The co-chairs of the committee are Carole Bass and Rick Saltz. Other members include Lynn Brotman, Jonathan Gordon, Howard Gralla, Marga Hirsch, and Eric Dunsker (Board liaison and House Committee chair).
Dec. 15 Explore Prayer

On the third Wednesday of the month, which is Dec. 15, you are invited to join Prayer and Liturgy at BEKI, an Ongoing Exploration with Rabbi Carl Astor. Hebrew proficiency is not required, nor is previous participation. The focus is to better understand the language, the historical context, and the spiritual meaning of our prayers and liturgy. The special Zoom link for this program is https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83810021641?pwd=ejVqK3pta0e0UH1HRytVbDUyWG1WQT09.

Changes to Minyan Times

Morning minyan on Friday, Dec. 24 and also Friday, Dec. 31 will be at 9 o’clock.

Update on Kiddush

Kiddushim have returned to a more familiar, though not entirely normal, state. The four teams are up and running and some teams still have spots for new members (see Ellen Cohen in person or ellen.cohen@snet.net). We are cooking with renewed attention to healthful, tasty food while minimizing waste. We are also paying attention to cost, locally produced and ethically sourced food. We will continue to eat outdoors until the Covid-19 case rate for New Haven County drops sufficiently. In the meantime, dress appropriately. Unless the weather drops below 40F, we will continue kiddush outside; we promise hot soup and warm company.

Learn to Read Torah

BEKI is offering “Learn to Leyn,” a six-week Torah trope course with Cantor Shoshana Lash, starting Jan. 5. This will be a free, one hour, in-person class, each Wednesday at 6:10 pm. For more information and to register: cantorSL@yahoo.com.

BEKI’s Musical Heritage

Ethnomusicologist Rachel Adelstein, a BEKI member who for years has created engaging presentations about Jewish music, will launch a 6-part Zoom program Jan. 10, focusing on the origins and the evolution of the tunes we use in our services at BEKI. Plan to join her Mondays at 8 pm at tinyurl.com/BEKIschmooze.

Welcome New Members

Laura Van Metre Baum, Aaron Baum, Mira and Yael Konstanze and Alexander Kunst

Message from President Yaron Lew

As we look back on 2021, please compliment yourself on your resilience and perseverance. Things have not been easy, but we made it through. We should all be thankful that Covid cases are going down, vaccination rates are going up, morale is rising, and life is starting to come back to normal. As we celebrate our collective comeback, please take the time to thank those who helped you through the hard times—our healthcare workers, our strong and supportive community, our scientific professionals, and everyone around you who provided a shoulder to cry on or an outreached hand to pull you through.
Programming

BLUEGRASS AT BEKI

The annual bluegrass concert has returned. Kol Kahol as well as The Bluegrass Characters Revue will present “A Tribute to Phil Zimmerman and Stacy Phillips” at BEKI on Thursday, Dec. 23.

The annual event was organized by Stacy Phillips, a Grammy Award winning musician, known for both his musicianship and his heimisha stage banter. When Stacy died in June 2018, his band, which had been called Stacy Phillips and His Bluegrass Characters, continued the December tradition, led by Stacy’s longtime friend, collaborator, and bandmate Phil Zimmerman.

Phil, who was a multi-instrumentalist and a leader of musical instruction camps, died in April 2021. This year’s performance by the remaining Characters will be a tribute to both Stacy and Phil.

Also performing is Kol Kahol, formed in 2019, drawing inspiration from bluegrass icons as well as what they call original “Jewgrass” musicians from the ’70s and ’80s, including Stacy Phillips. Kol Kahol’s music is also influenced by contemporary Jewish bands such as the Klezmatics, the Moshav Band, and Nefesh Mountain.

One of the group members, violinist, bassist, and vocalist Sofia Chiarandini, was Stacy’s student. A classical as well as bluegrass violinist, she is a graduate of the Berklee College of Music.

Other members of Kol Kahol are mandolinist and vocalist Ariel Wyner, who serves as a High Holy Day cantor and tours with the Ruta Beggars, Boston’s premier bluegrass band; G Rockwell, a banjoist, guitarist, mandolinist, vocalist and composer, currently studying at the New England Conservatory of Music; and Korey Brodsky, a Boston-based guitarist and mandolinist.

Kol Kahol seeks to push the boundaries of contemporary Jewish music and traditional American Roots music within the context of Jewish prayer. In combining these two musical identities, they offer a unique spiritual experience to those who are wrestling with their own identity, particularly regarding what it means to be an American Jew. They believe that Jewish liturgical music can expand beyond traditional melodies while maintaining its essence in a traditional prayer structure.

“At heart,” they explain, “we are all bluegrass musicians, and we center ourselves—and thus our new music—in its natural groove and language.”

The program will run from 7:30 to around 9:30 pm. The doors to BEKI will open when the downstairs social hall is ready for seating, around 7 pm. No food or beverages will be served this year, and none should be brought into BEKI. Masks are required for all audience members.

There is no charge for admission, but the musicians will pass the hat.
The next art exhibition will be works by Bruce Oren, who is a painter, photographer, draughtsman and designer, but primarily a stone sculptor working in marble, limestone, granite and soapstone.

Entitled “Entropy Warriors,” this exhibition of sculpture, photography and paintings will be on display from Dec. 4 to Feb. 26.

Bruce studied fine art at the University of Maryland. For nearly thirty years, he kept a day job as photo editor and informational graphics reporter at the Houston Chronicle.

He is a direct carver of stone. He begins carving without preconception, maquette or plan, letting the stone initially dictate its progress. After the stone is roughly carved, “the rock reveals its forms hidden inside,” he explains. “It’s nothing cosmic. It’s like seeing shapes in clouds — a natural variation of gestalt closure.”

Some of his work plays on one’s mind seeing figurative images in random or abstract shapes. He has compiled a book, Pareidolia, that challenges readers to see figurative form in abstract images.

Judaism informs his art, “Just as it informs nearly everything I do to some degree,” he explains. “We are, after all, just ridiculous collections of our combined experience.”

A New Haven resident and BEKI member, Bruce serves as this bulletin’s (volunteer) layout and design editor. His other projects at BEKI include creating the new interior for our aron hakodesh, designing the hamsa logo and building new shelves in the rabbi’s office.

Join us in the gallery after kiddush lunch on Saturday, Jan. 8 for a conversation with the artist, starting at 12:45 pm.
Youth Activities

BEKI YOUTH GIVE BACK

BY ANNIE NORMAN-SCHIFF, YOUTH AND FAMILY PROGRAMMING DIRECTOR

The teens of BEKI USY incorporate giving back into many of the things they do. This is not just a job for our Social Action/Tikkun Olam Chair, sophomore Daniel Manning. It is a focus and a responsibility for everyone.

On Nov. 7, BEKI USY met at the JCC to volunteer with Dignity Grows, a project that provides people in need with essential items that are not frequently donated: toiletries and hygiene products. Ten teens helped pack reusable tote bags with a month’s worth of toothpaste, soap, shampoo, deodorant, and more. Afterwards, they shared a sandwich lunch and went outside to play foursquare and the Israeli game gaga.

The next week, BEKI USY jumped into its largest tzedakah project of the year: baking Thanksgiving pies. After a hiatus last year due to COVID, the teens were finally back in the kitchen. In one marathon Sunday afternoon, they assembled over 100 Kosher pareve pies, both apple and pumpkin, and froze them for future baking. A majority of these pies were purchased by members of the BEKI community for their Thanksgiving feasts. The rest were sponsored as direct donations to local families in need.

Thank you so much to everyone who purchased pies, both for themselves and for others. The project was once again a great success.

Hanukkah Parties

Hanukkah comes early this year, but BEKI kids are prepared to party. We are holding two Hanukkah parties, one for families with young children, and a second party for our Kadima and USY youth groups.

Families with Young Children
Hanukkah Story Time and Lights
Wednesday, Dec. 1, 4-6:15 pm
This party, co-sponsored by PJ Library, has two parts:
• 4-5 pm: Story Time at Mitchell Library
• 5:15-6:15 pm: Crafts, Candle Lighting, and more at BEKI

For Middle and High Schoolers
USY and Kadima Hanukkah Party
Sunday, Dec. 5, 4-6 pm
Jewish tweens and teens are invited to BEKI for this Hanukkah bash, a joint party for our Kadima (4th-8th grade) and USY (9th-12th grade) youth groups. We will be frying latkes; holding a dreidel tournament; and making cards for people who need their days brightened.

Zohar and Asher Rosenberg, Ella May, and Miles Katz sort the many tote bags they packed for Dignity Grows
**JCARR Update**

JCARR has been busy with Family 6, who arrived at the end of August. Learning English through enrollment in ESL classes at New Haven Adult Education and home tutoring is ongoing. The most immediate need is securing employment for Ahmed, who is a young man in his 30s.

JCARR has been updated regarding Afghan refugees. The role that JCARR will play in this refugee crisis will depend on how many committed volunteers are available to provide the services needed to resettle a refugee family. Contact Madeleine Kleinman madk117@gmail.com for more information on how you can help.

**Hanukkah Clothing Drive**

During the week of Hanukkah, please fill the donation boxes in the lobby with brand new or gently-used items that are clean and in good condition, to be distributed by the Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen (DESK). We are collecting winter gear for men: winter coats, boots, sweatshirts, sweaters, flannel long-sleeved shirts, scarves, winter hats, mittens, gloves, and (new only) warm socks.
Let’s Grow Our Membership

By Mimi Glenn, President of Sisterhood

Thank you to all our BEKI chaverot (friends) who joined Sisterhood this fall. We now have almost 60 members. Kol hakavod. However, I would be thrilled if all our chaverot would join and make it 100 percent membership.

Sisterhood supports our beloved congregation, but I also feel very strongly that we should support the Women’s League for Conservative Judaism Torah Fund. The campaign was launched in 1942, the year I was born in Israel. It provides scholarships to two U.S. seminaries — The Jewish Theological Seminary and Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies — as well as institutions in Israel, Argentina, and Germany.

Please become a member and help us continue this wonderful organization. Who knows? Perhaps someone you know might attend one of these programs, and you will have the satisfaction of knowing you gave them a chance to do so.

The Sisterhood Board wishes you and your family a Happy Hanukkah.

Sisterhood Store News

Since Hanukkah continues until Monday, Dec. 6, you still have time to head into the Sisterhood shop for some amazing Hanukkah treats — visual and otherwise — to celebrate. We have beautiful candles, menorahs for all ages, jewelry for your doorpost or your wrist/neck/ears. And books! We are open Sunday 9ish to noon-ish, Tuesdays for morning and evening minyans, Wednesday in conjunction with Hebrew School … and basically, whenever you want. Send an email Giftshop@BEKI.org and Harriet and Karen will be there.

Tree of Life Awaits Your Leaf

The Tree of Life at the entrance to BEKI is a collection of gold-colored leaves that honor people and moments in our lives. For $118 you can add a leaf. Contact Marjorie Wiener at 203.387.6278 or marjoriwiener@yahoo.com.
Contributions

Rabbi’s Tzedakah Fund
With thanks for the warm welcome by
• Rochelle Rondinone
In honor of Rabbi Eric’s sermon on nonbinaryness by
• Debbie Elkin
To Lisa Stanger on the yahrzeit of Melvin Stanger by
• Louis Petrillo
In honor of Rabbi Eric Woodward by
• Dan & Beth Weintraub
In appreciation of Rabbi Woodward by
• Joanne Foodim, Rob Forbes, Stacey Foodim-Sloan & Edward Foodim

Kiddush Fund
• Helen Rosenberg & Keith Richter
• The Robbins family
• David Schwartz
• Julie & Samuel Katz
• James M Shure Educational Fund
• The Botwick-Ries family
• Morris Bell & Raina Sotsky

Chai/Synagogue Fund to support synagogue operations
To Joanne Foodim & Robert Forbes and family with sympathy on the passing of Marilyn Foodim by
• Donna Kemper & Ron Zlotoff
• Herb & Yvonne Kolodny
• Deborah Fernbach & Jonathan Bell
To Eva & Frank Schultz in honor of their new addition by
• Dan & Sharon Prober
To Rachel Wiseman Gerber & Alan Gerber in honor of Eva & Miriam’s weddings by
• Dan & Beth Weintraub

To Karen Kassap & family with sympathy on the passing of her cousin by
• Ellen Cohen & Steven Fraade
In honor of Aviva Robbins’ Bat Mitzvah by
• Rachel Bashevkin
• Gloria Cohen
To Lucia Press by
• Jeff & Lynne Heisner (to the Kiddush fund)

Liora Lew Endowment for the Advancement of Youth Education and Youth Activities
• Adna Linden

Yahrzeit Fund to support synagogue operations
In memory of:
• Samuel Adam Margolis by David Margolis
• Her beloved nephew Richard Bennett Goldberg by Charlotte Koskoff
• Her beloved sister Phyllis Goldstein Goldberg by Charlotte Koskoff
• Anna Altman by Darcy McGraw & Bruce Altman
• Samuel Levine by David Margolis
• Irving Rudof by Joanne & Steve Rudof
• Esther Landau by Ken & Linda Buckman
• Ellen Schwartz by David Schwartz
• Simon Frank by Lauren & Phil Brown
• Anna Weisinger by Rae Shnayer
• Leon Kisner by Annette Kisner
• Sadie Kisner by Annette Kisner
• Andrew & Rose Klein by Arlyne & Lester Klein
• Esther Melnick by Jay & Marjorie Hirshfield
• Her parents Lester & Charlotte Isenberg by Janis Isenberg
• Albert Hamoway by Ted Maltin
• Ruth Maltin by Ted Maltin
• Elsie Miller by Harold Miller
• Arlene Chirgwin by Roberta Atteson
• Herman Goldstein by Shirley Goldstein Frumento
• Their brother Joel Small by Rhoda & Bruce Small
• Edward Weinstein by James Weinstein
• Dora Gimple by Sidney Gimple
• Susan Gell by John & Marcia Gell
• Evelyn Cohen by Cliff & Donna Cohen
• Diana Friedman Opton by Renée Hartman
• Miriam Kahn by Richard Kahn
• Her beloved father Ben Kugell by Harriet Pearlin
• Marshall Eisenberg by Rick & Judy Eisenberg
• Her beloved dear grandpa Morris Gray by Toby & Alan Ignal
• Her beloved dear father Irving Greenberg by Toby & Alan Ignal
• Harry Goldberg by Eileen Schuman
• Samuel L. Snyder by Robert Snyder
• Gloria Goldberg by Arlene Thrope
• Jordan Goldberg by Arlene Thrope
• Cynthia Schneider by Lana & Martin Gad
• Their beloved father and zayda Albert B Friedman by Harriet Friedman & the Bruce family
• Robert Goodwin by Stacey Goodwin-Podell
• Jacob Ripkin by Jeri & John Ripkin
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Many Generations

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What will your Jewish Legacy be?

The Birn Family created a legacy for their synagogue, Congregation BEKI

"The synagogues of my youth do not exist anymore. I made a legacy commitment to BEKI to make sure that our family and future generations never have to say that. The BEKI community has supported us spiritually, intellectually, educationally and socially - it is our privilege to be able to support it back now and in the future."—Harold Birn

For more information about Create A Jewish Legacy, contact Lisa Stanger, (203) 387-2424 x382, lstanger@jewishnewhaven.org

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There’s a teaching — appearing in the Talmud and in the Zohar — that never fails to move me. “The world is maintained only by virtue of the breath and voices of children studying in the beit midrash” (Shabbat 119a and elsewhere).

I’m writing this column as children ages 5-11 are beginning to receive COVID vaccination shots. And I feel real, tangible hope.

I feel hope that the voices of children might again resound in many Jewish and non-Jewish spaces. I feel hope that the air they breathe will be devoid of COVID pathogens. I feel hope that a world that has felt far from us can return.

But it won’t return exactly as it was. We have all changed during the pandemic, and our institutions have changed, too. We’ve learned the value of Zoom meetings for committees: It is easier not to leave one’s house in the evening. We’ve learned the value of being physically present for Shabbat: It is good to be around others.

Some things we have forgotten, too. Many of us have gotten out of the habit of attending minyan, and we need help there. It’s too easy for a tragedy of the commons to occur, where everyone thinks that someone else is tak-

Eric Woodward

Hope and the Voices of Children

Eric Woodward blesses children at BEKI Religious School who received the COVID vaccine.
## Mark Your Calendar

- **Jan 8** Artist conversation with Bruce Oren
- **Jan 16** Tu Bishvat online Seder
- **Jan 26** Book talk by Jennifer Anne Moses
- **Mar 27** Installation of Rabbi Woodward
- **Apr 15** First Seder
- **June 4** Erev Shavuot
- **June 20** Annual Meeting

## December 2021

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## Service Times

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sundays</th>
<th>Mondays</th>
<th>Tuesdays</th>
<th>Wednesdays</th>
<th>Thursdays</th>
<th>Fridays</th>
<th>Saturdays</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9 am Shaharit</td>
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</table>
BEKI Services for December

All services are also available on Zoom except Friday night and Saturday morning.

Sunday 9 am (outdoors, weather permitting)
Sunday 5:45 pm
Monday 7 am
Monday 5:45 pm
Tuesday 7 am
Tuesday 5:45 pm
Wednesday 7 am

Wednesday 5:45 pm
Thursday 8:15 am
Thursday 5:45 pm
Friday 7 am
Friday 6 pm
Saturday 9:15 am

For the latest information on services, check Happenings or email bekitefilla@gmail.com

Easy Fundraiser
The Stop & Shop gift cards sold by the BEKI office are debit cards for groceries or gasoline. This is an ongoing fundraiser that costs you nothing. Contact Peggy office@beki.org to arrange pickup.

Save a Tree and Save a Stamp
Contact the BEKI office if you would like to receive your monthly yahrzeit notices and/or monthly statements via email rather than snail mail; office@beki.org or 203-389-2108 x114