

A New Haven Tradition since 1892

# BEKI bulletin

Congregation  
Beth El-Keser Israel

Iyyar-Sivan 5782

Vol. 28 Issue 5

Message from Rabbi Woodward: Page 14

## SANCTUARY REDESIGN

"I love the light colors and the windows."

"Lots of great new ideas."

"It is a beautiful design."

Those were among the reactions of BEKI members to preliminary sketches of the synagogue's proposed sanctuary redesign.

The sketches, released in time for Rabbi Woodward's installation celebration in late March, represent the framework of a conceptual design for a worship space that reflects BEKI's 21st-century values: warmth, inclusiveness, spiritual intimacy, and true egalitarianism.

Among the major features of the proposed redesign:

- Large new windows on the north (courtyard) wall, bringing in lots of natural light
- A new window above the ark
- A new ark, yet to be designed
- A lower ark platform, with ramps on each side
- Interior walls clad with stone at ground level and bamboo above
- All movable chairs, allowing full accessibility and flexible seating arrangements
- Low bookcases across the back of the room, creating an entry area that is partially separate from the prayer space.

BEKI members provided detailed and valuable feedback to the Sanctuary Redesign Committee. Overall response to the conceptual design was positive. People loved the new windows, the brightness and the accessibility. Many people suggested additions or changes—all of which the committee considered carefully.



The design builds on priorities expressed in a November 2021 congregational survey: accessibility; a new seating layout; improved acoustics; better climate control and air quality; more natural light; and a warm atmosphere that fosters community, participatory prayer and singing, and a spiritual experience.

As you read this, the redesign team is working on multiple fronts:

Architect Michael Goldblum is preparing schematic drawings—more detailed and technical than the sketches.

A newly formed implementation committee is talking with construction firms to get cost estimates.

The redesign committee is working to fill in the blanks in the preliminary sketches, including decorative elements and furniture selection.

Decorative elements and furniture selection will be crucial to how the sanctuary looks and feels, and how it functions as a worship space. The ark design and furniture shown in the sketches are placeholders. The redesign committee will consider numerous options for filling in those blanks, and will keep the congregation informed as we move forward.

By early summer we hope to know how well the estimated project costs align with the budget. If everything goes well, construction could start in late 2022 or early 2023.

We are excited to reach this stage of the redesign project, and even more excited to look forward to BEKI's beautiful future.

For more information, see [beki.org/sanctuary-redesign](https://beki.org/sanctuary-redesign).  
Questions or comments? [sanctuaryredesign@beki.org](mailto:sanctuaryredesign@beki.org)



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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:

- Call the Synagogue office: 203.389.2108
- Write: 85 Harrison Street, New Haven, CT 06515-1724
- Email: [bulletin@beki.org](mailto:bulletin@beki.org)

• Visit our web page: [www.beki.org](http://www.beki.org)

• Follow us on social media:  

• 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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## Board of Directors

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

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PHOTO BY GARY HOCHMAN

**Rachel Light reads Megillat Esther at the bimah with Marga Hirsch.**

### Learn to Read Torah

By popular demand, BEKI is offering another session of “Learn to Leyn,” a six-week beginners’ Torah trope course with Cantor Shoshana Lash, starting May 18. 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](mailto:cantorSL@yahoo.com).

### Note These Service Times

The next First Friday at Five-Thirty, our Kabbalat Shabbat services at the more kid-friendly time of 5:30 pm, will be May 6. Everyone is welcome for this kid-friendly, though not specifically kids’ service.

Morning minyan on Monday, May 30 will start at 9 am because of the public holiday.

### Sefira – Counting the Omer

In our daily sefirat ha-omer [counting of the omer], we are counting towards Shavuot, our next major festival. The count, preferably done each night for 49 nights, is an expression of eager anticipation, commemorating the period in the Exodus from Egypt until the revelation at Sinai.

### Lag BaOmer Kumsitz

Wednesday evening May 18 is Lag BaOmer, the 33rd day of the Omer. The folk-custom is to sing around a campfire at a “kumsitz,” meaning “come” and “sit.” We will gather at 8 pm in the BEKI courtyard. We’ll sing

niggunim—which have no words—as well as traditional American songs and Jewish songs from our song sheets. The sheets and recordings of all songs are at the BEKI website under Resources>Holiday Songs, thanks to Ritual co-chair Max DuBoff. In case of rain, the kumsitz will be delayed until the next evening.

### Shavuot!

Arriving the night of June 4 and lasting for two days, the holiday of Shavuot celebrates the first growth of the season and the giving of the Torah. We’ll have more details on our Tikkun Leyl Shavuot in the June Bulletin, but suffice it to say for now that we’ll be up late the night of June 4 studying Torah and eating cheesecake. Chag Sameach!

### Pride Shabbat

If you’d like to participate in the service on Saturday, June 11, please tell Rachel Adelstein, our [ritualcoordinator@beki.org](mailto:ritualcoordinator@beki.org). Contact Rebecca Weiner if you’d like to sponsor the kiddush lunch.

### Honoring Graduates

We’ll have our Shabbat in honor of graduates on Saturday, June 18. We hope all of our graduates—middle school, high school, college, graduate school—will participate in the service; please contact our [ritualcoordinator@beki.org](mailto:ritualcoordinator@beki.org). We encourage parents of graduates to check in with Rebecca Weiner about co-sponsoring the kiddush lunch that day.

# MUCH TO CELEBRATE

The congregation is invited to two celebrations on Saturday morning, May 28: a bar mitzvah and an aufruf. Kid-dush lunch sponsored by the two families will follow.

## Joel Grutzendler Bar Mitzvah

That Shabbat, *parashat Bechukotai*, is the bar mitzvah of Joel Grutzendler, child of Nicole Korda and Jaime Grutzendler. Joel, a 7th grader at Ezra Academy, enjoys competitive gymnastics, science and building computers. Joel also loves socializing with his friends, sleepovers, computer games and making money selling random things from his house on eBay.



**Joel Grutzendler**



**Ben Rodwin, flanked by son Charlie and wife, Rozzie, holds newborn Shayna Jeanne.**



**Bruce Spierer and Jhena Vigrass**

## Vigrass-Spierer Aufruf

That same morning, we will celebrate the aufruf of new members Bruce Spierer & Jhena Vigrass. Bruce and Jhena were set up on a blind date by a mutual friend who knew that they were both (1) Jewish and (2) into plants and farming. And it worked! Fast forward 4+ years, many moves between Staten Island, Jerusalem, and New Haven, graduate school and career changes, and they're finally getting married.

## Mazal tov

To Rozzie and Ben Rodwin, and Charlie, on the birth of Shayna Jeanne Rodwin

## Welcome New Members

Alisa and Glenn Levine, parents of Rozzie Rodwin

## Annual Meeting

BEKI's annual meeting will be in person (not on Zoom or on livestream) on Monday, June 20. We encourage you to attend 5:45 pm minyan, followed by a buffet supper at 6:15 pm. The meeting will begin at 6:45 pm and end by 8 pm.

The next slate of officers and board members will be presented; the past year will be reviewed; endowment and membership figures will be shared. This is also our opportunity to thank President Yaron Lew and Principal Ina Silverman for their years of service.

**המקום ינחם**

*HaMakom Yinahem*

With sorrow we note the passing of

**Shirley Mattler**, widow of Edward Mattler

*May the Almighty comfort those who mourn*

## Rabbi's Installation

We acknowledge with appreciation the following who made special donations for the Rabbi's installation:

- James M. Shure, who sponsored the brunch
- Alisha Crutchfield-McLean of Bloom for the bimah flowers
- Allen Samuel Photography
- Isaiah Cooper and members of the Nu Haven Kapelye for musical entertainment

## The Great Give

The Great Give on May 4-5 is a lovely New Haven philanthropic tradition. If you want to participate, BEKI is one of the organizations you can support, and your donation will help our operating budget. However, because of significant processing fees, the Great Give is NOT the best way to support BEKI. Instead, donate through our website or send a check. If you are sending in a large donation for the Sanctuary Redesign, please send a check, if possible, so that we will not incur credit card fees.



ALLEN SAMUEL PHOTOGRAPHY

**Rabbi Eric Woodward speaks during his March 27 installation.**

## Help BEKI Find Free Money!

BEKI qualifies for free money to make our building more energy-efficient. But we need your help to make it work.

Specifically, we need to find a corporation that wants to take advantage of a 100 percent state business tax credit through the [Neighborhood Assistance Act](#). BEKI could receive up to \$150,000 per year.

The NAA allows companies to invest in energy-conservation work at nonprofit organizations, at zero net cost to the corporations. The hitch: they must be "C corporations." LLCs (limited liability corporations) and "S corporations" don't qualify. So please — if you manage, work for, or have a contact at a C corporation in Connecticut, please let Peggy ([office@beki.org](mailto:office@beki.org)) or Yaron ([president@beki.org](mailto:president@beki.org)) know.

## Message from President Yaron Lew

*Adapted from his March 30 email to the congregation*

# SANCTUARY FUNDRAISING



**Yaron Lew**

These are great and exciting times at BEKI.

The installation ceremony was a great success. I was overjoyed to see so many of you join the celebration. The feelings of excitement, love and joy that I felt throughout the building were both uplifting and reassuring. I firmly believe that we have a great foundation for a thriving, relevant

and growing congregation. I want to thank all of you who joined us and all who worked hard to organize the event.

The Sanctuary Redesign Fundraising campaign is

going to start soon. I'm happy to report that even before we officially kicked-off the campaign, we already have over \$200,000 in pledges and donations. This shows the level of enthusiasm our members feel towards this project. You don't have to wait until we call you. Feel free to make your donation or pledge right now. If you are wondering how much to give and are looking for guidance, our goal is 10 times the Annual Appeal donation from every member. I know it's an ambitious goal, but I have full faith in our members to come through. Please consider the fact that BEKI is one of the only synagogues that doesn't charge an annual building fee, and factor all the years you didn't have to pay that into your donation.

### Program with Rabbi Carl Astor

On Wednesday, May 11, you are invited to join Prayer and Liturgy at BEKI, a monthly exploration of the language, the historical context, and the spiritual meaning of our prayers. Please note that there is a special Zoom link for this program.



ALLEN SAMUEL PHOTOGRAPHY

**Rabbis Woodward and Astor at Woodward's installation.**

### Conversation with the Artist

Suzanne Neusner, whose *Fiber Arts* exhibition is on display upstairs at BEKI, will speak about her work on [BEKI Zoom](#) Thursday, May 12 at 7:30 pm. For over 35 years, Neusner has focused on abstract imagery through a variety of weaving and quilting techniques. Her work includes playful reinventions of traditional Jewish themes such as matzoh covers. For inspiration, she draws from her natural surroundings in the Hudson Valley as well as from her prior explorations in other media. Her exhibition will run through



**Suzanne Neusner's bright and colorful fiber art**

June 4. Some of her work is on sale at the BEKI Gift Shop.

### Singing in the Courtyard

See page 3 for information about our annual kumsitz around the fire pit, Wednesday, May 18 at 8 pm (in person only).

### JCC Event with Rabbi Woodward

The JCC Beckerman Cultural Arts Series on Wednesday, May 25 will offer a discussion of cultural conflict, led by BEKI's Rabbi Eric Woodward. As the concluding event in the series, the conversation will reflect on three films and two author programs in the Cultural Conflict category and will pose questions such as: How does this type of conflict affect those living it? Is lasting peace possible? What steps should and can be taken to alleviate conflict? [Register Here](#) to join this free 7:30 pm program on Zoom.

## Gift Shop

### New Jewelry Arrives

The BEKI Gift Shop has wonderful presents for Mother's Day and Graduation. We have lots of new jewelry, including bracelets, rings, necklaces and earrings. Come in and see. We're also on Instagram: follow us at *bekijudaicgifts*.

Is your graduate moving to their own place? We have a wonderful assortment of mezuzahs, cookbooks,

coasters, and mugs. We also have books for all ages, games, and puzzles.

We are open every day except Shabbat by appointment. Or drop in after morning minyan on Sunday and Thursday, and evening minyan Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. If you don't see what you want, let us know, and we will get it for you: Karen Kasap 203-430-2182; Harriet Friedman 203-675-8607.



# Kids Sing, Parade, and Celebrate

BY ANNIE NORMAN-SCHIFF,  
YOUTH AND FAMILY  
PROGRAMMING DIRECTOR

It has been a festive spring for kids at BEKI. Between Purim celebrations and the installation of Rabbi Woodward, the congregation's children had the chance to celebrate and contribute.

BEKI kids and their families gathered on March 16 for an incredibly joyful celebration of Purim. This was our largest event for children since the beginning of the pandemic, with over 50 in attendance. (It seemed as though at least half of them were dressed as characters from the Disney movie *Encanto*!)

First, Annie Norman-Schiff, dressed as a giraffe, told a kid-friendly version of the Megillah story. Wicked Haman's name was drowned out for minutes at a time. Then, everyone moved outside for a light meal for the kids and a chance to show off everyone's fantastic costumes. Some of the best family costumes included the Naveh-Sterns as



PHOTO BY GARY HOCHMAN

**Eva, daughter of new members Shelli Farhadian and Michael Chiorazzi, participates in the Purim program.**

characters from *The Princess Bride*, and the Abrahams as Scrabble tiles spelling PURIM. Rabbi Eric led the crowd in a costume parade while dressed as the *Encanto* character Bruno, leading a singalong of the movie soundtrack. Finally, plenty of children joined the congregational Megillah reading in the sanctuary, sharing their spirit with the whole community.

## Children's Choir

On March 27, as BEKI members of all ages celebrated the installation of our Rabbi, our children were no exception. A new BEKI children's choir, with Rachel Light as conductor and Josh Perry accompanying on guitar, met over many weeks to rehearse for this event. Fifteen children ages 5 to 12 performed at the installation, singing two Hebrew songs, "Hinei Mah Tov" and "Etz Chaim Hi." A number of choir members sang solos and trios, or had speaking parts to introduce the songs. Thank you to Rachel, Josh, and the entire children's choir.



ALLEN SAMUEL PHOTOGRAPHY

**BEKI's children's choir made its debut at the Rabbi's installation ceremony March 27.**

# HELP FOR UKRAINE

The first of many humanitarian missions bringing much needed medical and non-medical supplies to Ukraine has begun. Please bring your donations to BEKI. The donations will be brought to Jewish Federations and other local groups traveling to Poland. The donation box is located on the top shelf in the BEKI coatroom.

- Cold and flu remedies
- Cough medicine
- Acetaminophen
- Allergy medications
- Aspirin

- Heartburn remedies
- Laxatives
- Anti-diarrheal
- Gas relief
- Gastrointestinal relief
- Sleep aids
- Band aids and bandages
- Also welcome: diapers, menstrual pads or tampons.

In the interest of keeping weight to a minimum, please donate medications only in tablet or capsule/liquid gel form. NO BOTTLED LIQUIDS.



Jewish Community Alliance  
For Refugee Resettlement

## JCARR Update

Family 5, an asylum-seeking family from Congo, is continuing to work with legal representation to gain refugee status in the U.S. JCARR helped them find and move into a more livable apartment in New Haven in anticipation of their new baby. Now JCARR is arranging for child care while Ruth is in the hospital and gathering the many items needed for the newborn. If you would like to give a gift via the baby registry at Target, contact Madeleine Kleinman at [madk117@gmail.com](mailto:madk117@gmail.com).

## Only Fair Trade Chocolate

If you're organizing an event at BEKI, please remember that we use only fair trade chocolate. If you would like to see your options, a list is regularly updated at the BEKI website: <https://www.beki.org/resources/food>



Lana Gad and Becky May use fair trade chocolate in the BEKI kitchen.

# Scanning for Ancestors Exhibition

BY THE BEKI ART COMMITTEE

*The Ancestors Exhibition* returns to BEKI for a second edition of our High Holy Day show. As we begin our preparations for the 2022-5783 exhibition, we are accepting submissions of photographs and images of paintings of BEKI ancestors dating from before 1950. As in our first edition, we define the term “ancestors” broadly to include anyone so close that they were considered family, including people in pictures who cannot be identified but were defined as family by oral tradition. Non-Jewish ancestors are of course included, as we would like this exhibition to continue to reflect the diverse ethnic backgrounds of our BEKI community.

A scanning session will take place on Monday, May 9 from 2 to 5:45 pm in the BEKI lobby. New this year, we will also be available to help with full quality direct downloads from camera phones.

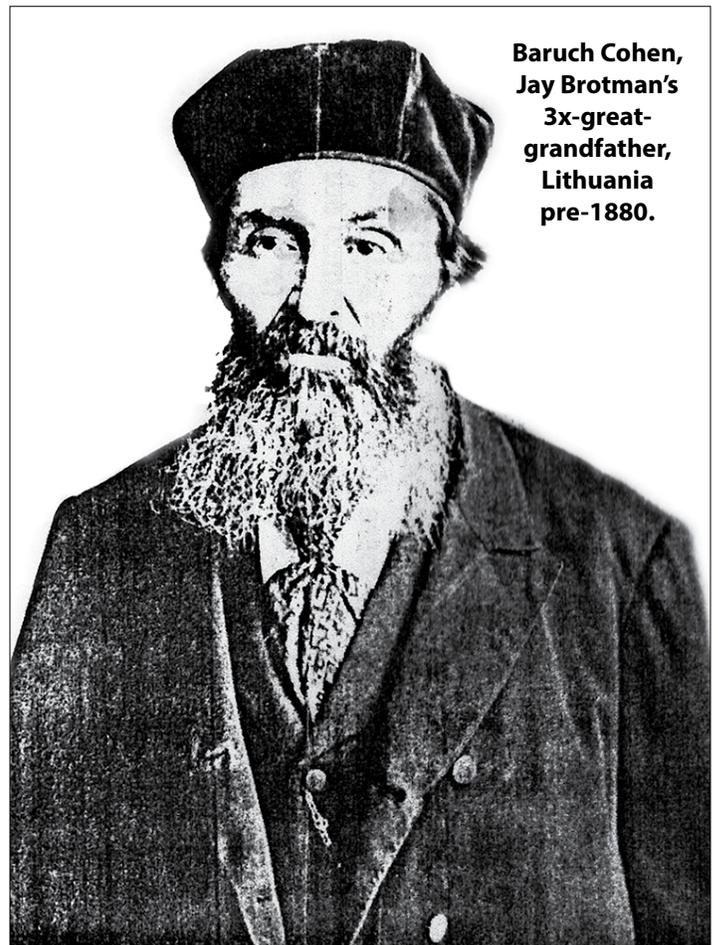
BEKI members who want to scan files on their own scanners should double the size of the scan, either by putting in 600 dpi or entering double size. We have had some success with printing photographs of photos and paintings taken by camera phone; however, it is very important that these be sent as full size. Images should be sent to [beki.photos@gmail.com](mailto:beki.photos@gmail.com), with large files sent by a free transfer service such as <https://wettransfer.com>.

We will no longer accept text messages, as images sent via text are reduced in quality in the process of sending, and require extensive editing time to compensate. Additionally, many of us will not have access to free wifi as we travel.

Images from the first edition of *The Ancestors Exhibition* can be found on the BEKI website: <https://www.beki.org/our-community/gallery-art/beki-ancestors-2021>. Send questions to: [beki.photos@gmail.com](mailto:beki.photos@gmail.com)



**Maria Rangel Woodward, Rabbi Eric Woodward's abuela, Ciudad Ixtepec, Oaxaca, Mexico, early 1920s.**



**Baruch Cohen,  
Jay Brotman's  
3x-great-  
grandfather,  
Lithuania  
pre-1880.**

## Rabbi's Tzedakah Fund

- Evelyn Wortsman Deluty & Marvin Deluty in honor of Rabbi Eric Woodward, Katharine Baker, Ayelet & Tamar
- Daniel Schopick with thanks to Rabbi Eric Woodward for conducting a beautiful funeral service in honor of Dr. Baruch Abraham Levine
- Louis Petrillo to Hyla Greenberg in memory of her parents Abraham & Miriam Goldstein
- Louis Petrillo to Marc & Myra Goldfarb in memory of their parents Carl (Kasreal) & Helen Chorney Goldfarb and Abraham & Miriam Goldstein
- Louis Petrillo to Paul & Cindy Goldenberg in memory of their parents Hyman & Martha Goldberg and Roy & Flora Carter and their friend Jeff Golden
- Louis Petrillo to Linda Friedman in memory of her parents Solomon Elias (Zalman Elia) Polikoff & Beatrice Lorraine (Brina Leah) Polikoff Kessler and her friend Naomi Zelnick
- Louis Petrillo to Susan & Robert Amatruda in memory of their parents Leo Mayne Fine & Marcia Fine and Joseph & Sylvia Amatruda
- Louis Petrillo to Bruce & Susan Forrester in memory of their parents Joy Levin & A. Theodore Forrester and Joseph & Sylvia Amatruda
- Rebecca Weiner in memory of her Zaydee Seymour Weiner and in honor of Rabbi Eric whose good advice brings her Zaydee to mind
- Dr. Arielle & Rabbi Jason Rubenstein to the Woodward & Baker family in honor of Rabbi Woodward's installation
- Sarah, Patrick & Alex Manion on the occasion of Alex's conversion to Judaism with thanks for the help and support
- The Lerner Family in honor of Rabbi Woodward's installation

## Kiddush Fund

- Diane Purvin & Seth Rosenthal
- Gloria Cohen
- Karel Koenig
- Nanette Stahl

## Chai/Synagogue Fund to support synagogue operations

### To Susan Jacobson with sympathy on the passing of Mike Teitelbaum by

- Ellen Cohen & Steven Fraade
- Karen Kassap & Cary Caldwell
- Donna Kemper & Ron Zlotoff
- Rachel Wiseman-Gerber & Alan Gerber

### To Jim Berger, Jennifer Klein & Family with sympathy on the passing of Susan Berger by

- Sarah Miller, Lee Cruz, Pablo & Mateo
- Rena Cheskis-Gold & Marty Gold (to the Barzillai Cheskis BEKI Youth Israel Scholarship Fund)
- Steve & Rachel Wizner
- The Freiman-Light Family
- Ellen Cohen & Steven Fraade
- Joanne Foodim & Rob Forbes
- David & Darryl Kuperstock
- Karen Kassap & Cary Caldwell
- The Rastelli-Weiner Family

### Ina Silverman & Jay Sokolow (to BEKI Religious School)

- Rachel Wiseman-Gerber & Alan Gerber

### To Donna Kemper & Ron Zlotoff with sympathy on the passing of Isobel Kemper by

- Rachel Wiseman-Gerber & Alan Gerber

### To L Rosenthal in honor of their b'mitzvah by

- Ellen Cohen & Steven Fraade
- Rena Cheskis-Gold & Marty Gold (to the Barzillai

Cheskis BEKI Youth Israel Scholarship Fund)

### To Diane Krevolin and family with sympathy on the passing of Daniel Krevolin by

- Rachel Wiseman-Gerber & Alan Gerber
- To Gloria Cohen in honor of her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday by
- Ellen Cohen & Steven Fraade
- David & Darryl Kuperstock
- Steve & Rachel Wizner
- Linda Schultz & Howard Gralla
- To Karel Koenig in honor of her milestone birthday by
- Ellen Cohen & Steven Fraade
- To Mimi & Effie Glenn in honor of their 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary by
- Ellen Cohen & Steven Fraade
- To Debra Levine, Judith Resnick and family with sympathy on the passing of Shirley Mattler by
- Barry & Polly Kraus
- Matthew Katz & Barbara Fitzgerald
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## Liora Lew Endowment for the Advancement of Youth Education and Youth Activities

### In honor of Ina Silverman's Retirement as BEKI's Religious School Principal by

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- The Rastelli-Weiner Family

## Yahrzeit Fund to support synagogue operations

### In Memory of:

- Her husband Jack S. Greenberg by Belle K. Greenberg
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- Ruth & Sidney Silverman by Susan & Lowell Cantor
- Harold Brown by Phillip & Lauren Brown
- Samuel Segan by Alan J. Segan
- Ethel Prete by Alan J. Segan
- Morris "Moishe" Schnitman by Edward & Helene Schnitman Vanderhoef
- His mother Esther Baer by Irving D. Baer
- Departed ones by Rachel Wiseman-Gerber
- Bluma Soloway by Minna & Lewis Kaufman
- Her grandfather Phillip Kantrowitz by Sherry Kent
- Her aunt Violet Ludwig by Sherry Kent
- Her uncle Irving Berman by Sherry Kent
- Max Gad by Martin & Lana Gad
- Kate Margolies by Carol Marcus
- Her beloved husband Louis Pearlin by Harriet Pearlin
- Her beloved mother Thelma Kugell by Harriet Pearlin
- Ethel Frey by Eileen Schuman

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### Tree of Life Awaits Your Leaf

The Tree of Life at the entrance to BEKI is a collection of golden leaves that honor people and moments in our lives. For \$118 you can add a leaf. Contact Marjorie Wiener at 203.387.6278 or [marjoriowiener@yahoo.com](mailto:marjoriowiener@yahoo.com)

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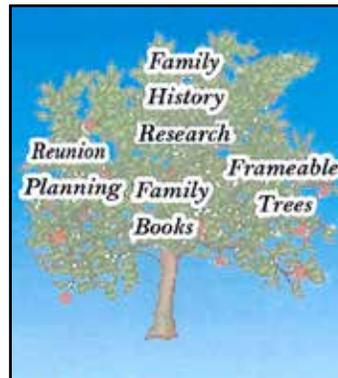
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## Making a Minyan and Torah Reading

To make sure we have a minyan consistently, please, if you can, make a weekly commitment to one or more service times. Let Max DuBoff [duboff.max@gmail.com](mailto:duboff.max@gmail.com), Rachel Wiseman Gerber [wisemangerber@gmail.com](mailto:wisemangerber@gmail.com), or one of the minyan captains know about your availability.

We're also looking to expand BEKI's pool of Torah readers, both for Shabbat and weekdays. Please let Rachel Adelstein ([ritualcoordinator@beki.org](mailto:ritualcoordinator@beki.org)) know if you want to read a segment of any length, including if you want to but don't yet know how. Help is available.

Thanks to everyone who helps make BEKI services strong.



## Many Generations

Kim Formica  
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BY APPOINTMENT

## Advertise Your Business in the Bulletin

Would you like your ad here in the coming year? Each month, the BEKI bulletin reaches over 700 households, most of them in the New Haven area. Check with Peggy in the BEKI office about our variety of ad rates.

## Join BEKI on Facebook

Everyone is encouraged to join the [BEKI Facebook group](#). You'll enjoy the humor, community information, and links to cultural opportunities. You'll want to choose the private group with the stained-glass window image. Just ask to join. (The BEKI page with the hamsa is the public-facing page, which has few postings).

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# ON BEING SEEN

From the moment BEKI came into our world, it felt right for us. But more than that, it felt as though we truly saw each other. More than bashert, I think what I really felt – and I think what you really felt – was the joy and love and vulnerability of being seen. None of us ever pretended to be perfect. We just stood, very honestly, facing each other.

There's a famous comment by Rashi, the medieval Jewish genius commentator. He looks at the first line of the Torah – you know, “Bereshit Bara Elohim,” “When God began to create Heaven and Earth,” and Rashi says, “Why do we start here?” That seems like a weird question to ask – I mean, it's creation – but he says, basically that we should start in Exodus 12. Why does Rashi say we should begin in medias res? Why pick this seemingly random point 33 percent of the way into the Torah?

It's because Exodus 12 represents a core transition moment – the beginning of the new story the Israelites are creating after the exodus from Egypt. In its context, it takes place right after the ninth plague, and the Israelites have heard that tomorrow they will go free from 400 years of slavery, and God says to them, “This month shall be for you the beginning of months, and here is how you will memorialize this event every year with a Seder.” It's God's way of saying: today is day zero.

But we don't start in medias res, Rashi says. We don't start with the political and theological creation of the Jewish people. We start, instead, at the very beginning – the creation of the world – to give us the story context. It's to train us about our place in the entire world, not just as Jews, but as humans, and it's to tell us, and this is what I want to focus on, that the stories that bring us to these core moments – the stories that precede the moments of in medias res – those make us who we are.

My story? There are two halves. In one half, I came to BEKI carrying trauma. But in the other half, I came to BEKI feeling very much in my own power and in my own voice. I wouldn't want to go through those traumatic events again, but they were, frankly, a holy ordeal, a nisayon, that made me who I was. This is the case for many of us. We have multi-faceted experiences that make us who we are. And one of my goals, as a rabbi, and I think one of the goals of our tradition, is to elicit us to reflect on the experiences that have made us who we are.

Every time we meet each other, we're in medias res; we're in the middle of living our lives. But we bring to

those meetings a whole trousseau of past experiences, a jumbled bundle of narratives.

Who are you, and what is your story? Life hasn't been easy the past years. And it wasn't such a picnic before then, either. But there have also been moments of beauty and joy.

We at BEKI are at an exciting time in our story. We've brought together a lot of wisdom and vision to think about how we can build a sanctuary that expresses our values as a community. It's a place where we can stand, as I said earlier, openly and honestly facing each other. I want to ask you to open your hearts so that you can be brave. So that we can be brave. Brave enough to give more than generously, brave enough to invest, and brave enough to stretch your view of what is possible.

That's not the only exciting thing happening. Our Education Vision Committee has been forming a vision for a holistic approach to childhood education at BEKI, from birth to twelfth-grade, that unites aspects of character-building, literacy, and community in programs and teaching both formal and informal.

We have challenges, too, and there are opportunities in the hard things. The pandemic has heightened our awareness that we have a deep need for connection. That's what synagogue is for. Political chaos has awakened us to a need for moral imagination and courage – and Judaism is really good at that. What our synagogue does – the attempt to create a loving alternative to a world that can be so hard – that's more important than ever. And I think we're doing it.

This morning is really a celebration of love – of the possibility of finding love in honestly facing each other and sharing our vulnerability and humanity. Of the possibility of being loved by God in all of our texture and context, not only loved in medias res, but loved since the beginning, through all you've been through.

An installation is not about standing here today and promising a glorious future. It's about recognizing that, whatever the future brings, we're going to walk through it together. We're going to be there for each other, full of openness and love and vulnerability. Full of dancing and learning and real simcha shel mitzvah, the joy of this covenantal lifestyle. Full of support and care, and full, I imagine, of really good food.

I see you, and you see me. And being seen is one of the most beautiful things in the world. As the Talmud in Chagigah says: Ha-ba lirot, ba le-heiraot. When we come to see, we are also seen. 

# May 2022

30 Nisan 5782 - 1 Sivan 5782

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>1</b> <b>Rosh Hodesh I</b> 9:00am In-person & Zoom Service 5:45pm In-person & Zoom Service  30 Nisan/15 L'Omer	<b>2</b> <b>Rosh Hodesh II</b> 7:00am In-person & Zoom Service 5:45pm In-person & Zoom Service	<b>3</b> 7:00am In-person & Zoom Service 5:45pm In-person & Zoom Service	<b>4</b> <b>Yom Hazikaron</b> 7:00am In-person & Zoom Service 5:45pm In-person & Zoom Service	<b>5</b> <b>Yom Ha'Atzmaut</b> 8:15am In-person & Zoom Service 5:45pm In-person & Zoom Service	<b>6</b> 7:00am In-person & Zoom Service 5:30pm First Fridays at Five-Thirty - In-person Kabbalat Shabbat 7:36pm Candle Lighting	<b>7</b> 9:15am Shabbat Service (Sanctuary, in-person) 11:00am Children's Havura, K-12 Kehila, Jr. Congregation
<b>8</b> 9:00am In-person & Zoom Service 9:45am BRS Graduation 5:45pm In-person & Zoom Service  7 Iyar/22 L'Omer	<b>9</b> 7:00am In-person & Zoom Service 2-5:45pm First Ancestor Scanning Session 5:45pm In-person & Zoom Service 7:00pm General Board Meeting	<b>10</b> 7:00am In-person & Zoom Service 5:45pm In-person & Zoom Service	<b>11</b> 7:00am In-person & Zoom Service 5:45pm In-person & Zoom Service 7:30pm Prayer & Liturgy at BEKI with Rabbi Carl Astor (via special Zoom link)	<b>12</b> 8:15am In-person & Zoom Service 5:45pm In-person & Zoom Service 7:30pm Conversation with the Artist: Suzanne Neusner via Zoom	<b>13</b> 7:00am In-person & Zoom Service 6:00pm Kabbalat Shabbat (in-person) 7:43pm Candle Lighting	<b>14</b> 9:15am Shabbat Service (Sanctuary, in-person) 11:00am Children's Havura, K-12 Kehila, Jr. Congregation
<b>15</b> <b>Pesach Sheini</b> 9:00am In-person & Zoom Service 5:45pm In-person & Zoom Service  14 Iyar/29 L'Omer	<b>16</b> 7:00am In-person & Zoom Service 5:45pm In-person & Zoom Service	<b>17</b> 7:00am In-person & Zoom Service 5:45pm In-person & Zoom Service	<b>18</b> 7:00am In-person & Zoom Service 5:45pm In-person & Zoom Service 6:10pm Learning to Leyn with Cantor Shoshana Lash 8:00pm Lag BaOmer Kumsitz (raindate May 19)	<b>19</b> <b>Lag B'Omer</b> 8:15am In-person & Zoom Service 5:45pm In-person & Zoom Service 8:00pm Lag BaOmer Raindate	<b>20</b> 7:00am In-person & Zoom Service 6:00pm Kabbalat Shabbat (in-person) 7:50pm Candle Lighting	<b>21</b> 9:15am Shabbat Service (Sanctuary, in-person) 11:00am Children's Havura, K-12 Kehila, Jr. Congregation
<b>22</b> 9:00am In-person & Zoom Service 5:45pm In-person & Zoom Service  21 Iyar/36 L'Omer	<b>23</b> 7:00am In-person & Zoom Service 5:45pm In-person & Zoom Service 7:00pm Executive Board Meeting	<b>24</b> 7:00am In-person & Zoom Service 5:45pm In-person & Zoom Service	<b>25</b> 7:00am In-person & Zoom Service 5:45pm In-person & Zoom Service 6:10pm Learning to Leyn with Cantor Shoshana Lash 7:30pm Talkback with Rabbi Woodward (JCC Online Program)	<b>26</b> 8:15am In-person & Zoom Service 5:45pm In-person & Zoom Service	<b>27</b> 7:00am In-person & Zoom Service 6:00pm Kabbalat Shabbat (in-person) 7:43pm Candle Lighting	<b>28</b> Joel Grutzendler Bar Mitzvah Jhena Vigrass & Bruce Spierer Aufruf 9:15am Shabbat Service (Sanctuary, in-person) 11:00am Children's Havura, K-12 Kehila, Jr. Congregation
<b>29</b> <b>Yom Yerushalayim</b> 9:00am In-person & Zoom Service 5:45pm In-person & Zoom Service  28 Iyar/43 L'Omer	<b>30</b> Office Closed/Memorial Day 9:00am In-person & Zoom Service (Federal Holiday Service Time) 5:45pm In-person & Zoom Service	<b>31</b> <b>Rosh Hodesh</b> 7:00am In-person & Zoom Service 5:45pm In-person & Zoom Service	<b>Mark Your Calendar</b> June 5-6 Shavuot June 11 Pride Shabbat June 12 Memorial for Shula Chernoff June 18 Graduates' Shabbat June 20 Annual Meeting August 7 Tisha BeAv			
28 Iyar/43 L'Omer	29 Iyar/44 L'Omer	1 Sivan/45 L'Omer				

## Service Times

Sundays	Mondays	Tuesdays	Wednesdays	Thursdays	Fridays	Saturdays
9am Shaharit 5:45pm Maariv	7am Shaharit 5:45pm Maariv	7am Shaharit 5:45pm Maariv	7 amShaharit 5:45pm Maariv	8:15am Shaharit 5:45pm Maariv	7 am Shaharit 6 pm Kabbalat Shabbat (5:30pm on First Friday)	9:15am Shaharit



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## Services

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

Sunday 9 am	Wednesday 5:45 pm
Sunday 5:45 pm	Thursday 8:15 am
Monday 7 am	Thursday 5:45 pm
Monday 5:45 pm	Friday 7 am
Tuesday 7 am	Friday 6 pm <i>Note: On the first Friday of each month services will be at a kid-friendly time of 5:30 pm.</i>
Tuesday 5:45 pm	
Wednesday 7 am	Saturday 9:15 am

For the latest information on services, check [Happenings](#) or email [bekitefilla@gmail.com](mailto:bekitefilla@gmail.com)

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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](mailto:office@beki.org) or 203-389-2108 x114.

**Amazon Smile**  
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**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](mailto:office@beki.org) or 203-389-2108 x114