



# BETH EL PROGRAMMING GUIDE

## 2025–2026 / 5786

Dear Beth El Community,

Shana Tova!

As we embark on another exciting year at Beth El Synagogue, we are delighted to introduce our programming lineup for 2025-2026. We have worked hard to curate a diverse and engaging calendar of events that will bring our community together through learning, celebration, and shared experiences.

Beth El offers many in-person congregation-wide events including kiddush luncheons, Tiki Bar Shabbat, Shabbat on the Lake, the annual Gala, and BBQ Bash. There are also many focused, smaller groups offering educational, religious, and/or entertainment opportunities for everyone from Tots to Seniors.

We also offer online experiences, including the “Exploring the Prophets” series and the Global Day of Jewish Learning. Our “Partnership in Jewish Programming” offers fascinating virtual journeys to Jewish communities around the world. These programs provide an opportunity to explore our shared history, as well as discuss issues shaping the Jewish world today.

The beauty of Beth El is the breadth of activities to enjoy, either as a guest, a volunteer, or an organizer. The dedication of so many people including the Board of Trustees, committee heads, and countless volunteers working behind the scenes makes all these programs a joy to be part of. Their efforts reflect the heart & soul of Beth El, and we are incredibly grateful for their contributions.

I encourage you to join us for as many of these events as possible; get involved, and bring your friends and family. Together, we'll make this year one to remember.

Shalom u'vracha,

***Jonathan Schaffel, Vice President - Programming***

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# **Women's League**

**Shari Benson, President**

The Women's League of Beth El is a group of dedicated, vibrant, and energetic women. We are women of all ages and professions who believe in supporting our synagogue through the works of Women's League.

We do not just support our synagogue, but also our Jewish and local community.

One way to support our Women's League is by sending a Leagram to members of our synagogue to celebrate their birthday or anniversary. The list of members' birthdays and anniversaries is published in the Shalom every other month.

A second way you can support our efforts is by purchasing Good and Welfare cards — appropriate cards for all the life cycle events are available.

A third way is to participate in our annual New Year's Gram program.

And finally, please continue to support our fundraising efforts by purchasing gift cards, e-cards and shopping at our wonderful gift shop!

Make sure to check your emails and the Shalom for fun events sponsored by Women's League, and keep a lookout for an invitation to our Women's League Paid-up Membership Brunch.





# Men's Club

*Our motto: "Help out and have fun"*

**Brian Albert and Bob Held, Co-Presidents**



The Beth El Men's Club has a great year planned. For starters, we have a full slate of Sukkot-related events. We'll fuel up with our **Kickoff Breakfast** on **September 29** and then start Part 1 of Sukkah building for the synagogue and Rabbi's house. Part 2 will take place on **Sunday, October 6**, and finally, we will gather to disassemble the sukkah on **Sunday, October 27**.

**Super Bowl Sunday**, February 9, starts with the World Wide Wrap and breakfast, with instruction on wrapping tefillin, and in the evening, the **Essen and Fressen** cooking team's Super Bowl Party. Families are welcome at both events.

Special Shabbat: **Men's Club Shabbat** is **February 14-15**. Please join us as club members lead services and read Parshat Yitro.

We are planning a **Deli Night** with Essen and Fressen on **Sunday, June 15**.

Also on the docket for this year: cooking for the religious school **Chanukah party** and **Purim Carnival**, our **Hearing Men's Voices** discussion series, **Yom HaShoah yellow candle distribution**, **Passover wine sale**, and much more. Our full calendar can be found on the next page. You can also pick up a copy outside the synagogue office or send an email to [mensclub@bethel.net](mailto:mensclub@bethel.net).



## **Beth El Men's Club 2025-2026 Calendar**

*All Synagogue Members are welcome to attend all events*

- Sunday September 29 – Men's Club Kickoff Breakfast and Sukkah Building 9:30 AM (Rain Date Sep 24)
- Sunday October 6 – Sukkah Building Part II 9:30 AM (Rain Date Oct 13)
- Sunday October 27 – Sukkah Takedown
- Sunday December ?? –Northern New Jersey Regional Man of the Year Event – 1 PM
- Sunday December 8 – Religious School Chanukah Latke making
- Sunday January 12 – Hearing Men's Voices (with Breakfast) 9:45 AM
- Sunday February 9 – World Wide Wrap (and Breakfast) 9 AM
- Sunday February 9 – Super Bowl Party with Essen and Fressen 6 PM
- Friday February 14 – Men's Club Shabbat 6 PM
- Saturday February 15 – Men's Club Shabbat 9 AM
- Sunday March 2 – Yellow Candle Packing 12 PM
- Sunday March 9 – Purim Carnival Food Stand 11 AM
- Monday March 13- Purim Wine Tasting and Sale during services
- Sunday June 15 – Deli Night with Essen and Fressen 6 PM

**Essen & Fressen** is the Men's Club cooking team. It has won the FJMS International Torch Award. We have four events planned for this year:

- Sunday, February 9 – E&F Super Bowl party (Families Welcome), 6:00pm
- Friday, May 9 – E&F BBQ cooking for ABC Shabbat (Families Welcome)
- Sunday, May 18 – Cooking for Beth El BBQ Bash 11:00am
- Sunday, June 15 – Deli Night (Families Welcome), 6:00pm



# Membership Committee

*Melinda Korbman, Vice President*

*Celeste Albert, Chairperson*

Beth El prides itself on its warm and haimish community, starting with our active Membership Committee. We'd love for you to join us! Our committee focuses on member outreach, integration, and retention, with programs aimed at prospective and new members, and reconnecting with current ones. Activities include themed Shabbat dinners, Young Family Programs, Jewish Holiday Library Storytime, and Outdoor Shabbat Services.

Not into meetings? No problem! We need volunteers for event setup, cleanup, greeting, and registration. Please contact Celeste Albert at (732) 236-8486 or [membership@bethel.net](mailto:membership@bethel.net). We'd love to have you!

## **Upcoming Events:**

- October 12, 11am Pizza in the Hut
- December 12, 6pm Pre-Chanukah Shabbat Dinner
- December 15, 7:45pm Outdoor Chanukah Candle Lighting
- December 17, 6pm Outdoor Chanukah Candle Lighting
- March 6, 6pm Shabbat Across America and New Member Shabbat
- April 18, 9am Membership Anniversary Shabbat
- June 26, 5:45pm Shabbat on the Lake





Beth El Synagogue with the support of The Jewish Federation Princeton Mercer Bucks presents JPOP (Jewish Pop-Up) Experiences. We will be JPOPPing in the community at local libraries, parks and more.

Don't miss out on these exciting programs including:

- Jewish Holiday Library Storytime and Crafts
  - September 17 at 5 PM Hickory Corner-Rosh Hashanah
  - September 18 at 5 PM Robbinsville-Rosh Hashanah
  - December 11 at 5 PM Robbinsville-Chanukah
  - December 18 at 5 PM Hickory Corner-Chanukah
- Pizza in the Hut: October 12 at 11 AM
- Community Menorah Lighting:
  - December 15 at 7:45 PM
  - December 17 at 6:00 PM
- Outdoor Shabbat Services: June 26 Shabbat on the Lake
- And More. . .

Open to the Community! Check [www.bethel.net](http://www.bethel.net) or contact Celeste at [membership@bethel.net](mailto:membership@bethel.net) for more information.





# **Fundraising Committee**

**Pam Cohen, Vice President & Co-Chair  
Laurie Berman, Co-Chair**

Our **Fall Fundraiser** will take place on

**Saturday evening, November 15, 2025, at 7:00 PM**

Join us for **Comedy Night at Beth El** - featuring four headlining comics:

Scott Blakeman, Bob Greenberg, Joey Novick, and Ellen Orchid

Tickets are just \$54 | Sponsorship is \$180 & includes 1 ticket

## **Save These Dates:**

### **• Trivia Night Returns! •**

with Sam the Trivia Guy

**Saturday, January 24, 2026, 7:00 pm**

Get your Trivia Team (up to 8 people) together now!

—Details to Come—

### **• Spring Fundraising Gala •**

**Sunday, March 15, 2026, 4:30 PM**

**“Cheers for Team Beth El”**

*In Honor of*

Murray & Beth Brenman

AJ & Shari Sabath Phillips

—Details to Come—

### **• PLUS: Saturday, May 31, 2026 •**

**for a possible Late Spring Event you won't want to miss!**

For more information, contact [fundraising@bethel.net](mailto:fundraising@bethel.net)

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# **Programming Committee**

**Jonathan Schaffel, VP Programming**

Mark your calendars for a variety of exciting events.

## **Tiki Bar Shabbat – September 5, 2025**

*We kick off the year with a fun celebration of Shabbat including Pacific-style food, music, drink, and décor. All are welcome!*

## **Virtual Tours of the Jewish World Zoom Series**

*Our Partnership in Jewish Programming Zoom series takes you on a virtual journey of unique Jewish communities around the world. An exciting opportunity to learn about international Jewish life.*

Upcoming Sessions:

- Thursday, September 18, 2025, 8:30 PM - 10:00 PM
- Sunday, November 2, 2025, 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM
- Thursday, December 4, 2025, 8:30 PM - 10:00 PM
- Thursday, January 8, 2026, 8:30 PM - 10:00 PM
- Thursday, April 23, 2026, 8:30 PM - 10:00 PM
- Thursday, May 7, 2026, 8:30 PM - 10:00 PM

## **Adult Nights Out**

*Join us for various adventures outside shul, including karaoke, game nights, and more!*

## **ABC Shabbat – June 12, 2026**

*Aleph-Bet-Class Service. Celebrating love, music, and upscale BBQ!*

## **Beth El BBQ Bash - May 18, 2025**

*Get your grill on with your Beth El friends! Good food and good fun await.*

Stay tuned for details on these and more exciting events! Please reach out to Jonathan Schaffel at [programmingvp@bethel.net](mailto:programmingvp@bethel.net) if you would like to help with planning or setup/cleanup. Ideas for new events are always welcome!



# **Education/Youth Committee**

**Sara Stopek, Chairperson**

The Education/Youth Committee manages the operation of the Religious School, which includes Torah for Tots (PreK 4 and Kindergarten), Hebrew School (grades 1-7) and Hebrew High School (grades 8 and up). The Religious School is influential in growing and maintaining the connections between the Religious School and our membership as well as overall involvement in Beth El Synagogue. We also oversee the synagogue youth groups, including Pre-Kadima (grades 3-5), Kadima (grades 6-8) and USY (grades 9-12).

The Education/Youth Committee also oversees programming for the Religious School, including family events, Hooray for Holidays (children 18 months through kindergarten and their families), class dinners, summer meet-ups and schoolwide activities related to the Jewish holidays throughout the year. We are always looking for volunteers for all of our Religious School and Youth events

The committee also helps determine policy and curriculum and helps formulate rules and regulations for the administration of the Religious School, subject to approval of the Board of Trustees. The rulings of the Rabbi on all issues of Halacha are final.

The Education/Youth Committee meets approximately once every other month. All parents and caregivers of Religious School and Youth families are welcome to attend the meetings by contacting the chairperson. Those interested in participating in the committee, or to volunteer in any way, please contact Sara at [stopek.sara@gmail.com](mailto:stopek.sara@gmail.com). Thank you!

Meetings are at 7:30pm on Zoom unless noted otherwise.

- October 16 2025
- December 11 2025 (at 8pm)
- January 29 2026
- April 23 2026
- May 28 2026



## **Ritual Committee**

***Dan Bershad, VP of Ritual/Education  
Jonathan Steinberg, Committee Chair***

The Ritual Committee serves as the Board of Trustees's arm regarding the religious services and associated policies of Beth El Synagogue.

The committee meets virtually on the first Wednesday of the month after the Wednesday evening minyan.

The committee, along with Rabbi Nover and the advice and supervision of Rabbi Kornsgold as our Halachic authority, oversees the operation of prayer services and minyanim at the synagogue, coordination and distribution of honors on the High Holy Days, arrangements for shomrim (those who stay with someone from the moment of death until the time of burial), shiva minyanim, and letters for mourners with helpful information related to the mourning period and dates of future yahrtzeits. We strive to keep services running smoothly and efficiently whether daily, on Shabbat, or on a holiday, which includes coordination for ushering at B'nai Mitzvah.

We deal with issues relating to prayer services which range from decorum to babysitting. We also oversee the distribution of tzedakah from the minyan pushkas (collection boxes), care and repair of our Torah Scrolls by our "Holy Rollers," the Summer Sermon Series, and awarding of the Sobel Award for an outstanding B'nai Mitzvah Tzedakah Project and gifts to those achieving milestones in the Torah Reading Program (TRoPe) and Haftarah Reading Program (HaRP).

For any questions, or if you would like to join our committee or attend a meeting, please contact Jonathan Steinberg at [JHS7977@hotmail.com](mailto:JHS7977@hotmail.com) or 609-223-3844.



# Minyan

**Murray Brenman, Coordinator**

Beth El believes in the importance of community and supporting our members. Our morning and evening **Minyanim** (daily services) offer important support for congregants who are in mourning or who wish to mark the **Yahrzeit** for a loved one by reciting **Kaddish**. These services can also provide a casual way to learn different parts of the service, to brush up on your Hebrew, to reflect on your day, and to get to know other people in our Beth El family.

Beth El offers **Minyanim** Monday and Wednesday evenings (8:00pm), Thursday at 7:15am and Sundays at 8:45am. To ensure we have the minimum 10 Jewish adults (age 13+) required to recite **Kaddish** and other prayers, we rely on you, our congregants, to help by attending **Minyan** a few times a year. Please take a moment to check the annual "Minyan Makers" assignment list in the *Shalom*, and note "your" weeks. We also send email reminders, so watch your email! Please help your fellow congregants by making a commitment to attend a **Minyan** whenever you can - it can really make a huge difference. For more information email: [minyan@bethel.net](mailto:minyan@bethel.net)

## Catering/Room Rentals at Beth El

Please contact the synagogue office, (609) 443-4454 or [office@bethel.net](mailto:office@bethel.net) for information about catering and/or room rentals at Beth El.



# **Adult Education**

*Taught by Rabbi Jay M. Kornsgold*

## **Classes 2025 – 2026**

### **Torah and Tea**

Come and enjoy a lively discussion of the Torah portion over a light lunch, dessert, coffee, and tea.

*Mondays, Lunch at 1:30pm, class from 2:00pm – 3:30pm*  
In person and on Zoom

- September 8 and 15
- September 29 – Led by Rabbi Nover
- October 20
- October 27 – Led by Rabbi Nover
- November 3, 10, 17 and 24
- December 1, 8, 15 and 22
- January 5 and 26

Dates beginning in February will be announced at the end of 2025.

### **Exploring the Prophets**

Who are the prophets, what do they stand for, and what can we learn from them? In this course we will examine the second part of the Tanach, the Prophets.

This class will meet one to two times a month on Mondays.

*Mondays, 8:45pm to 10pm*

*On Zoom only*

- September 8 and 15
- October 20
- November 3 and 17
- December 1 and 15
- January 5 and 26

Dates beginning in February will be announced at the end of 2025.

ALL DATES SUBJECT TO CHANGE.  
PLEASE CALL/EMAIL THE SYNAGOGUE OFFICE FOR CONFIRMATION.



## **Liberal Zionism for the 21st Century**

**This class will begin on Sunday, December 21, 10:15am - 12 noon**

This course is dedicated to understanding liberal Zionism in this challenging moment. In this course, Hartman scholars offer frameworks to grapple with the contemporary challenges to liberal Zionism, including the dominant critiques against Israel and Zionism post-October 7. Learners will gain a deeper understanding of the key values that animate liberal Zionism and how to approach the core issues that have emerged during these many months of war. Topics include:

- Understanding Liberal Zionism Today
- The Challenge of Liberal Zionism
- Responding to the Charge that Zionism is a Colonial Project
- Grappling with the Charges of Genocide and Apartheid
- Criticism and Solidarity: Liberal Zionism when Israel Offends
- Compassion for the Other in a Time of War

Each unit includes an article by a Hartman scholar and a podcast conversation between Tal Becker and the author.

This class will meet on Sundays from 9:45 am to 11:30 am on the following dates in person and on Zoom:

December 21 (10:15 am - 12 noon); January 4; January 11; February 1; March 15; March 29; April 12; April 19; May 3; and June 7.

## **The Rabbi's Roundtable**

Join Rabbi Kornsgold for a spirited monthly discussion on current events related to Jews and Israel.

Thursdays, 10:30 am to 11:45 am In person only  
January 22; February 26; March 26; April 30; May 14; and June 18.



# **Scholar-in-Residence**

**Danna Livstone, Chairperson**

Save the Date: **Scholar-in-Residence 2026 will be held on January 30-31, 2026!** We will be hosting **Dr. Gary Rendsburg of Rutgers University**. It promises to be a fun and enlightening weekend, so please plan on joining us.

Our Scholar-in-Residence program is an annual event that provides an opportunity to learn from a wonderful scholar in an intimate setting. Our program includes a Friday night dinner followed by a lecture from the scholar. Saturday morning services are followed by a congregational lunch and learn which is free to all. Saturday evening presents a third opportunity for learning, often including an audio/visual component. Saturday night's session has been virtual for the past few years. Past scholars have included Rabbi Dr. Rachel Sabath Beit-Halachmi, Rabbi Dr. Shmuly Yanklowitz, Rabbi Elliot Goldberg, a virtual presentation by Rabbi Dr. Shai Held, Rabbanit Sara Tillingier Wolkenfeld, Dr. Matt Reingold, Dr. Sarah Bunin Benor, and last year's presentation by Rabbi David Wolpe.

We are always happy to have sponsors for this program. A donation of \$250 includes two dinners on Friday night and inclusion in an exclusive meet-and-greet with our scholar on Saturday afternoon. Donations can be made in honor of anyone you like, or in memory of a loved one. Additional contributions to the Scholar-in-Residence Fund in any amount are always appreciated. Sponsorships and donations will be acknowledged on table tents during the program. Sponsors are automatically given the opportunity to help select the scholar for the next year.

If you'd like to help shape future Scholar in Residence weekends, please contact Danna Livstone at [drlivstone@gmail.com](mailto:drlivstone@gmail.com).

## **Israel Bonds Breakfast**

Beth El Synagogue will hold its 27th State of Israel Bonds Breakfast  
**Honoring Beverly and Jerry Cohen.**

**Sunday, December 14, 9:45am**

To make reservations, please call the Bonds Office at (800) 752-5652



## **Israel Affairs Committee**

**Anita Fray and Trudi Perlman, CoChairs**

The mission of the Israel Affairs Committee is to provide education about the State of Israel. We will invite knowledgeable speakers and will periodically provide relevant movies and discussions to enhance our knowledge about Israeli culture, current events and "what makes Israel tick".

Our programming will avoid being labeled as pro-Democrat or pro-Republican or left or right wing. We are pro-Israel Zionists.

The Israel Affairs Committee is currently planning its events and speakers for the 2025-2026 programming year. Please stay tuned for announcements once these are finalized.

Future programs will be published in the Shalom and in Beth El's weekly email updates. We request that non-members who attend make a donation to Beth El.

For more information, please contact  
Anita Fray ([anitafb18@gmail.com](mailto:anitafb18@gmail.com)) or Trudi Perlman ([trudiperlman@gmail.com](mailto:trudiperlman@gmail.com))

## **Maimonides and Munch**

**Led by Rabbi Matt Nover**

How do we do Jewish? What does it mean to believe? What does the Torah look like when we apply it in real life? Join in exploring the Mishneh Torah by Maimonides, also known as the RaMBaM, one of the greatest Jewish thinkers ever.

Saturdays after Kiddush, In Person.



# ***Global Day of Jewish Learning***

## **"70 Faces of Torah"**

A worldwide initiative to bring Jews together in a mutual appreciation of Jewish wisdom, history, and culture. This year study's theme, "70 Faces of Torah," celebrates Judaism's embrace of multiple and competing perspectives to enrich our understanding of the world, Torah, and ourselves.

**Sunday, November 9, 2025 | 9:45am – 12:00pm**

In person and on Zoom  
Watch For Details

## ***Religious School***

***Rabbi Matthew Nover, Assistant Rabbi & Education Director***

Our comprehensive Religious School prepares children to be engaged members of the Jewish community. From Torah for Tots (ages 4 and 5) through Hebrew High School, our interactive curriculum challenges students.

A vast range of study includes Bible, Jewish history, holidays, customs, and the Hebrew language. Students learn to lead prayer services, taking time to speak about their meaning. Through field trips and participation in community work, students gain valuable lessons in performing mitzvot.

For more information, please call (609) 443-4454.

## ***Shabbat B'Yachad Family Service***

***Rabbi Matthew Nover, Assistant Rabbi & Education Director***

Celebrate Shabbat with the family on Shabbat B'Yachad! The service is an interactive experience with prayer and discussion – a great experience for all!! These will be held on select Saturday mornings.



# *Hineini Shabbat Services*

*Rabbi Matthew Nover, Assistant Rabbi & Education Director*

Throughout the year, Rabbi Nover will run special parallel Shabbat services that explore different parts of prayer. Come join him for meditation, learning, singing, and find your own connection to the prayer services. Select Friday and Saturdays.

## *Youth Services*

### **Tot Shabbat**

***Danna Livstone, Service Leader***

Tot Shabbat for young children through kindergarten—together with their parents—usually takes place on Shabbat morning twice a month, starting at 10:30 AM. New friends from outside the Beth El community are always welcome! To be added to the Tot Shabbat email list, please ask the office or contact Morah Danna at [drlivstone@gmail.com](mailto:drlivstone@gmail.com).

### **Beginners Junior Congregation**

***Rachel Steinberg, Service Leader***

Beginners Junior Congregation (BJC) is designed for Aleph & Bet students (1st & 2nd grade). It highlights Friday night service prayers the students learn in Religious School and holidays. It meets twice a month on Saturday mornings at 10:30am. Attending this service helps fulfill the service requirement outlined in the Parent Handbook.

### **Junior Congregation**

***Michael Benson, Service Leader***

Junior Congregation is held almost every Shabbat other than holiday weekends at 10:30am for students in third through seventh grade. Students participate and assist in leading a condensed Shabbat morning service.



# Youth Groups

*Sarah Donsky, Youth Director and USY Advisor*

**Pre-Kadima (3rd–5th graders):** Mercer County Pre-Kadima meets once a month. During these events, our younger youth get to know each other in a social environment. This year we invite our 1st & 2nd graders to join our events four times a year to get a taste of Pre-Kadima. We are excited for our upcoming events this year including High Holy Day sweet treat making, bowling, ice skating, cupcake wars and much more.

**Kadima (6th–8th graders):** Mercer County Kadima will be meeting once a month to build their social community. This year our Kadima participants will get to start the year with a Welcome Back BBQ, Movie Night in the Sukkah at Adath, a Taste of USY event, a trip to Urban Air and more.

**USY (9th–12th graders):** Our USY program is run by our student USY board and overseen by our Youth Director. This year we started the year with a Scavenger Hunt at the American Dream Mall. We are looking forward to attending Fall Fest After Dark at Shady Brook Farms, hosting our USY overnight, and attending a Phillies Game together in the spring.

**NEW This Year:** This year we are all excited to partner with The Jewish Center of Princeton, Congregation Beth Chaim and Highland Park Conservative Temple to bring our youth programming together and build their communities bigger and stronger than ever. We have partnered for three additional events per age group throughout the year. Stay tuned for more details about these events.

**Family Friendly Programming:** I am excited to bring more family friendly programming to Beth El, including seeing *Wicked: For Good* together on November 23, 2025. More family events to come.

For more information, contact Sarah Donsky, [youth@bethel.net](mailto:youth@bethel.net)



# ***Beth El Seniors***

## ***Who we are and what we do***

***Tamara Ostrowsky, Coordinator***

Welcome to the Beth El Seniors, a varied group of interesting, vital people age 55 and older, couples and singles, who enjoy all sorts of subjects and activities, as well as the company of one another. Our programs include speakers, films, musical presentations, and discussions on a variety of topics, including Judaic themes, ethics, and current events. We meet in person at the synagogue, with a Zoom option for those who cannot come in person for most meetings. Our meetings are usually, but not always, on the third Thursday of the month, from September to May. Weather will never be an issue—if we cannot meet in person due to a snowstorm, we will pivot to Zoom! Our meetings usually start at 1:30 PM, and we always have refreshments at our in-person meetings.

Our Summer Opera program takes place in June, and on one Shabbat a year we celebrate the Seniors of Beth El on HaZak Shabbat.

Dues for the entire year of programs is only \$25.00 per member. We receive support from the synagogue, but the dues help to offset additional expenses, especially the printing and mailing costs of our monthly mailings, and the refreshments for our meetings. Everyone is always welcome to join us at any of our meetings, whether dues have been paid or not, but we do hope you will consider becoming a dues-paying member.

Information about our programs is in the Shalom, in flyers at the synagogue, on the synagogue's website ([www.bethel.net](http://www.bethel.net)) and Facebook page, in the synagogue's Tuesday e-newsletter, and of course in the monthly mailings.

For more information, please contact Tamara Ostrowsky at 609-448-5920 or at [ostrowsky4@aol.com](mailto:ostrowsky4@aol.com).



## **2025-2026 Meeting/Program Dates**

*(All dates subject to change. Meetings take place on Thursday except as noted)*

- Meetings: September 18; October 16; November 20; December 18; January 15; February 19; March 19; April 23;
- Food and a Flick: May 28 (fourth Thursday)
- HaZak Shabbat: Saturday, May 16, 2026
- Summer Opera Program: Sunday, June 14, 2026

# ***Mercer County Jewish Genealogy Society at Beth El Synagogue***

***Caryn Alter and Stacey Palant, Co-Presidents***

The Mercer County Jewish Genealogy Society at Beth El Synagogue, founded in 2005, belongs to the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies. The Society provides resources to its members through its own programs and through joint programs with other Jewish genealogy societies. It also shares information about webinars, speakers, and events that will help members broaden their knowledge of genealogy and their own family histories. Membership is free and open to the public.

For information, contact Caryn ([jewishgenealogy.mercer@gmail.com](mailto:jewishgenealogy.mercer@gmail.com), H: 609-426-4919) or Stacey ([jewishgenealogy.mercer@gmail.com](mailto:jewishgenealogy.mercer@gmail.com), M: 609-373-2609), or the Synagogue office.



# Book Club

**Karen Richtman, Coordinator**

Do you love to read provocative, thought-provoking Jewish-themed books and then discuss them? If so, we're looking for you. We mainly read novels but nonfiction also occasionally finds itself on the list. The common thread to our choices is they each have themes, protagonists, plot lines, and dilemmas leading to great discussion. We meet once a month on Sunday mornings.

Here is the list of books and dates for the 2025-2026 Book Club:

- 9/7/25 On Her Own - Lihi Lapid
- 10/12/25 Songs for the Brokenhearted - Ayelet Tsabari
- 11/23/25 Counting Lost Stars - Kim van Alkemade
- 12/7/25 Seraphim - Joshua Perry
- 1/4/26 Dirtbag Queen - Andy Corren
- 2/8/26 Hazel Says No - Jessica Berger Grooss
- 3/8/26 The Talented Mrs. Mandelbaum - Margalit
- 4/5/26 Fagin the Thief - Allison Epstein
- 5/10/26 Scrolls of Deborah - Ester Goldenberg
- 6/14/26 Maine Characters - Hannah Orenstein

Please contact Karen Richtman at 609-426-9437 (home) or [purfekt40@aol.com](mailto:purfekt40@aol.com) for more information, or if you are interested in joining us!



# **Rosh Chodesh Group for Women**

***Danna Livstone, Coordinator***

Now entering its seventh year, our Rosh Chodesh Group is open to all women post-Bat Mitzvah age! We have wonderful women of different generations and backgrounds at our events, whether in person or virtual. It is an opportunity to share, learn, and celebrate the new month together. The schedule below indicates our planned meeting dates. Sometimes we are in person, sometimes on Zoom, and sometimes we meet in other places, so please be sure to get on the Rosh Chodesh mailing list so you can stay informed and up to date. Email Danna ([drlivstone@gmail.com](mailto:drlivstone@gmail.com)) and she will add you to the list. If you have something you would like to teach, we are happy to give you the opportunity! Please be in touch with Danna to discuss options. There is no obligation to attend every meeting-- come when you want to, skip when you want to!

Our dates for the upcoming year are:

- Thursday, October 9, 2025 7 PM in the Beth El Sukkah
- Tuesday, October 21, 2025 7 PM
- Thursday, November 20, 2025 7 PM
- Saturday, December 20, 2025 6 PM Chanukah
- Monday, January 19, 2026 MLK day details TBD
- Tuesday, February 17, 2026 7 PM
- Wednesday, March 18, 2026 7 PM
- Friday, April 17, 2026 We lead 6 PM Friday night service, followed by a congregational dinner
- Sunday, May 17, 2026 details TBD
- Sunday, June 14, 2026 7 PM

Of special note this year is our special Shabbat Rosh Chodesh on Friday evening, April 17, 2026. Please contact Pam Krieger if you would like to sign up for a part to help lead this Shabbat service. A congregational dinner will follow the conclusion of services.

Contact Danna Livstone at [drlivstone@gmail.com](mailto:drlivstone@gmail.com) to be added to our email list, or for any questions about the Rosh Chodesh Group



## Choir

*Rachel Katz, Conductor*

The Beth El Choir is a 4-part ensemble with soprano, alto, tenor, and bass voices. The choir participates in High Holiday services, some Shabbat services, the Yom HaShoah service, and community events.

We welcome new members with some singing experience. Knowledge of Hebrew is not required. Rehearsals will be held on Wednesday evenings in advance of performances.

**Rachel Katz. [rvkscoop@verizon.net](mailto:rvkscoop@verizon.net), 609-577-7116**

## Kiddush Luncheon

*Shari Sabath, Coordinator*

Kiddush lunch is one of the things that enhances the friendly atmosphere at Beth El.

Join us when you can or sponsor one. Our dairy lunches exist only because volunteers make sure they happen, and we need your help!

Currently, we have synagogue prepared Kiddush lunch twice a month. Please consider joining our team of dedicated volunteers so we can establish another complete crew. Can you help set up the meal, help clean up, or shop? Any help, be it every week or every other month, keeps the committee running and ensures we can celebrate Shabbat together over lunch.

### **Time Commitment:**

Lunch Setup: 2 hours - 10am–12pm

Lunch Clean Up: 1–1.5 hours

Shopping: Shoprite: 1 hour

Restaurant Depot: ~2 hours (based on store)

Kiddush Captain Part of Kiddush Crew team (with a break to eat, of course).

**Contact Shari Sabath, at [kiddush@bethel.net](mailto:kiddush@bethel.net) for more information.**



# ***Life and Legacy***

***Marc Perlman, Chair***

Life and Legacy was established by the Grinspoon Foundation, located in San Diego CA, to help ensure the continuity of Jewish organizations far into the future. Beth El Synagogue is one of eleven Jewish organizations in our area chosen to participate in this vital program. The Jewish Community Foundation (JCF) of Princeton is our local host organization. This program was established to help ensure that the strength and continuity of our Jewish institutions and organizations continues to exist far into the future.

There are several ways a legacy promise can be made, and legal assistance is not always necessary. We encourage you to consider your legacy to Beth El Synagogue and Conservative Judaism and make a Legacy Promise. You will be ensuring a vibrant future for Beth El.

The thought that you need to be wealthy to make a promise is totally false. All promises, large or small, will gladly be accepted. We look forward to meeting with you to explain the benefits of this program with you and answering any questions you may have.

For further information, please contact Marc Perlman at [mlperlman@comcast.net](mailto:mlperlman@comcast.net), the Synagogue office, or the Jewish Community Foundation's website at [foundationjewish.org](http://foundationjewish.org).



## ***Social Action Committee***

***Co-chairs, Imelda Berliner and Rachael Goemaat***

The Social Action committee oversees organizing and carrying out kind deeds and Mitzvot for various organizations throughout our community. Members of the committee have an opportunity to help with many events. The largest event each year is Mitzvah Day, where many wonderful things are done for those less fortunate. Children from our Religious School are happy to participate and make something special for those in need. We donate to places such as hospitals, Jewish Family and Children's Service, Homefront, Trenton Area Soup Kitchen, The Children's Home Society, libraries, elderly in our community, and many more....

We collect food for the food pantry throughout the year, and keep our Adopt-A-Spot clean at Etra Park. Social Action also has two very successful blood drives every year.

Social Action holds a special Shabbat where we thank our committee members and synagogue as a whole for helping.

We are always looking for fresh ideas to enrich Social Action at Beth El! There really is no better feeling than knowing that you helped to make a positive difference in people's lives, and being a part of Social Action is what it is all about!!!

For more information contact Imelda Berliner at [imeldaberliner@gmail.com](mailto:imeldaberliner@gmail.com), or Rachel Goemaat at [rgoemaat@gmail.com](mailto:rgoemaat@gmail.com)



## ***The Holy Roller Society***

***Tamara Ostrowsky & Susan Schwirck, Coordinators***

When the Torah is returned to the Ark on Shabbat and Yom Tov, we chant *Etz hayim hi* "It is a tree of life..." And so it is; Beth El Synagogue houses nine of these all-natural holy scrolls. As with all sacred objects, the Torah scrolls require regular attention to assure they are in good condition and kosher or appropriate for use.

The Holy Rollers group is composed of volunteers who meet approximately once a month to check the scrolls. Our tasks include unrolling the scroll from end to end, gently wiping to remove any mold or dust, checking for and repairing small tears, and noting any damage that requires the attention of a sofer (Torah scribe).

We welcome new members to join our group.

Tamara Ostrowsky: [ostrowsky4@aol.com](mailto:ostrowsky4@aol.com) | 609-448-5920

Susan Schwirck: [celtsmom@hotmail.com](mailto:celtsmom@hotmail.com) | 609-409-8462

## ***Yad B'Yad***

***Barbara Kurlan & Paul Stollman, Co-Coordiators***

Beth El's Yad B'Yad committee ensures when a member needs assistance — perhaps during a health crisis, a family problem, an age-related issue — whatever the problem may be, our Beth El community is here to help you during difficult times. Yad B'Yad can always use volunteers, particularly during the day, to drive people to doctor's visits, services, or other appointments.

You can get in touch with us at:

Barbara Kurlan: [bhk52@aol.com](mailto:bhk52@aol.com) | 609 448-8783

Paul Stollman: [pstollman1@aol.com](mailto:pstollman1@aol.com) | 609 448-3520



## ***Bikkur Cholim Society***

***Betsy Weiss, Coordinator***

The mission of the Bikkur Cholim Society is to reach out to our Beth El members and their immediate family who live locally when they are ill in the hospital, rehabilitation facility or isolated at home. We provide visits, friendly calls and greeting cards; and can advocate for our member's needs as they convalesce.

So many of us want to make a contribution to our community, and the Mitzvah of Bikkur Cholim is a wonderful way for pre-teens, teens, and adults to reach out in a positive way. Visiting someone who is ill is an act of kindness that helps to lessen feelings of isolation. Additionally, when we contact and connect to someone who is experiencing a difficult time, we strengthen our connection to the community and make it a better place.

If you would like to be a Bikkur Cholim volunteer, contact Betsy Weiss at [medicalappeals@comcast.net](mailto:medicalappeals@comcast.net).

## ***Shomrim***

***Dan Bershada, Coordinator***

Shomrim consists of Beth El members who alternate sitting in one of three local funeral chapels when a member or close relative of a member has died and is in that chapel awaiting burial. We volunteer for this assignment out of respect, our caring and our love for our members in the Beth El community. Joining our group is a wonderful way to perform a Mitzvah, getting no "Thank You" from the recipient. If you would like to learn more, please contact Dan Bershada at (215) 680-3993.

