



# BETH EL PROGRAMMING GUIDE

## 2026–2027 / 5787

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# **BETH EL PROGRAMMING GUIDE**

## **2026–2027 / 5787**

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 2026-2027. We have worked hard to curate a diverse and engaging calendar of events that will bring our community together through spirituality, learning, celebration, and shared experiences.

In addition to religious services tailored to different communities, Beth El offers congregation-wide events covering every interest. These include kiddush luncheons, Tiki Bar Shabbat, Shabbat on the Lake, the annual Gala, Superbowl parties, a Broadway Revue, and much more. There are also many focused, smaller groups offering educational, religious, and/or entertainment opportunities for everyone from Tots to Seniors.

In addition to in-person activities, we offer online pursuits including the "Exploring the Prophets" series and Book Club. 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; learn something new and/or just have some fun. 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***  
***Stacey Karp, Co-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 of our big annual events will be a Broadway Revue on March 1, 2027.

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 **August 30** and then start Part 1 of Sukkah building for the synagogue and Rabbi's house. Part 2 will take place on **Sunday, September 6**, and finally, we will gather to disassemble the sukkah on **Sunday, October 11**.

**Special Shabbat:** Men's Club Shabbat is **January 29-30**. Please join us as club members lead services and read Parshat Yitro.

The **World Wide Wrap** will take place this year on **Sunday January 31**, with instructions on wrapping Tefillin and a breakfast. This will be a great tutorial and practice session for your first time, first time in a long time, or even if you are a seasoned pro. Open to Men, Women, and Teens.

**Essen and Fressen Super Bowl Party** will be **Sunday, February 14 at 6 PM**. Join us for the big game with an in-house catered spread that always dazzles. Families welcomed.

We are planning a **Deli Night** with Essen and Fressen on **Sunday, June 13**.

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 2026-2027 Calendar**

*All Synagogue Members are welcome to attend all events*

- Sunday August 30 – Men's Club Kickoff Breakfast and Sukkah Building 9:30 AM (Rain Date Sep 20)
- Sunday September 6 – Sukkah Building Part II 9:30 AM (Rain Date Sep 20)
- Sunday October 11 – Sukkah Takedown (Rain Date Oct 18)
- Sunday December [TBD] – Northern New Jersey Regional Man of the Year Event – 1 PM
- Sunday December 6 – Religious School Chanukah Latke making
- Sunday January 10 – Hearing Men's Voices (with Breakfast) 9:45 AM
- Friday January 29 – Men's Club Shabbat 6 PM
- Saturday January 30 – Men's Club Shabbat 9 AM
- Sunday January 31 – World Wide Wrap (and Breakfast) 9 AM
- Sunday February 14 – Super Bowl Party with Essen and Fressen 6 PM
- Sunday March 14 – Yellow Candle Packing 12 PM
- Sunday March 21 – Purim Carnival Food Stand 11 AM
- Monday March 22- Purim Wine Tasting and Sale during services
- Sunday June 13 – 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 14 – E&F Super Bowl party (Families Welcome), 6:00pm
- Friday, May 23 – E&F BBQ cooking for ABC Shabbat (Families Welcome)
- Sunday, June 13 – Deli Night (Families Welcome), 6:00pm
- Sunday, July 2 – Cooking for Beth El BBQ Bash 11:00am



# **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:**

- September 30, 6pm Pizza in the Hut
- December 7, 7:45pm Outdoor Chanukah Candle Lighting
- December 9, 6pm Outdoor Chanukah Candle Lighting
- December 18, 6pm Glow Shabbat Dinner
- March 5, 6pm Shabbat Across America and New Member Shabbat
- April 17, 9am Membership Anniversary Shabbat
- June 25, 5:45pm Shabbat on the Lake





Beth El  
Synagogue



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 23 at 5 PM: Hickory Corner-Sukkot
  - September 24 at 5 PM: Robbinsville-Sukkot
  - October 22 at 5 PM: Robbinsville-Tzedakah
  - December 2 at 5 PM: Hickory Corner-Chanukah
  - December 3 at 5 PM: Robbinsville-Chanukah
- Pizza in the Hut: September 30 at 6PM
- Community Menorah Lighting:
  - December 7 at 7:45 PM
  - December 9 at 6:00 PM
- Outdoor Shabbat Services: June 25, 2027, Shabbat on the Lake on Lake Drive Gazebo in Robbinsville
- 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***

**Dan Bershad, Vice President  
Beth Weissman and Robert Schweitzer, Co-Chairs**

Our **Fall Fundraiser** will take place on

**Saturday evening, November 21, 2026, at 7:00 PM**

Join us for Karaoke and Kocktails at Beth El - featuring Phil Sanfilippo:  
Enjoy an evening of singing, cocktails, and food (lite bites and desert)

Tickets are just \$60 | Sponsorship is \$180 & includes 1 ticket

### **Save These Dates:**

**• Winter Fundraiser •  
Saturday, January 23, 2027  
Bingo Night!**

*—Additional Details to Come—*

**• Spring Fundraising Gala •  
Sunday, March 14, 2027, 4:30 PM  
“Yacht Rock Radio”**

*—Additional Details to Come—*

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



# Programming Committee

**Jonathan Schaffel, VP Programming**

*Mark your calendars for a variety of exciting events.*

## **Tiki Bar Shabbat – Friday, October 23, 2026 6PM**

We kick off the year with a fun celebration of Shabbat including Pacific-style food, music, drink, and décor. Please reserve in advance.

## **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, January 21, 2027, 8:30 PM - 10:00 PM
- Sunday, January 31, 2027, 8:30 PM - 10:00 PM
- Sunday, February 28, 2027, 8:30 PM - 10:00 PM
- Thursday, March 4, 2027, 8:30 PM - 10:00 PM
- Sunday, April 4, 2027, 8:30 PM - 10:00 PM
- Sunday, May 16, 2027, 8:30 PM - 10:00 PM

## **Adult Nights Out**

*Join us for various adventures in small groups outside shul, including:*

- Hightstown Brewery: September 24, 2026, Thursday, 7PM
- Trenton Ironhawks hockey game – January 24, 2027, Sunday, 3PM
- Grounds for Sculpture walking tour – April 11, 2027, Sunday 1PM

## **Crypto Jews of New Mexico: Returning Home Again**

Presentation by Dr. David Grayson about a special, little known population of Jews in America.

- Sunday, November 15, 2026, 10AM In Person and on Zoom. All Welcome.

## **Beth El BBQ Bash - May 23, 2027**

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



**ABC Shabbat – July 2, 2027**

Appreciation of Beth El's Congregation. Celebrating Judaism, music, and food!

**Security seminars**

Security is a necessary part of Beth El synagogue which we take very seriously. There will be ongoing seminars run by both Beth El congregants and outside consultants on various security topics throughout the year. Keep an eye on the monthly Shalom, as well as the online calendar for more information

- **Stop the Bleed seminar:** Sunday, August 16, 10AM, in-person (registration required)
- **Stop the Bleed seminar:** Sunday, October 25, 10AM, in-person (registration required)

**Programming Committee Meetings on Zoom**

Join us to share new ideas and help lead any of the events above!

- October 6, 2026, Tuesday, 8PM
- January 5, 2027, Tuesday, 8PM
- April 6, 2027, Tuesday, 8PM

**Please reach out to Jonathan Schaffel** at [programmingvp@bethel.net](mailto:programmingvp@bethel.net) for any event, and if you would like to help with planning or setup/cleanup. Thanks!



# ***Education/Youth Committee***

***Sara Stopek, Chairperson***

The Education/Youth Committee manages the operation of the Religious School, which includes Torah for Tot's (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.

- Nov 12 2026
- Jan 21 2027
- March 11 2027
- May 13 2027



## ***Ritual Committee***

***David Grayson, 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 yahrzeits. 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 2026 – 2027**

## **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 14 (Zoom only) and 28
- October 5, 12, 19, and 26
- November 2, 9, 23, and 30
- December 7, 14 and 21
- January 4 and 25

Dates beginning in February will be announced at the end of 2026.

## **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 14 and 28
- October 12 and 26
- November 9 and 23
- December 7 and 21
- January 4 and 25

Dates beginning in February will be announced at the end of 2026.

*All dates subject to change.*

**Please call/email the synagogue office for confirmation.**

## **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***

October 22; November 19; December 10;

January 14; February 4; March 4; April 1; May 13; and June 24.

*In person only*



**In The Wake of Destruction**

The destruction of the Second Temple of Jerusalem in 70 CE by the Romans could have been the end of Judaism. Instead, almost 2,000 years later, we are still here. How did that happen?

Together, we will explore the ways that an emerging class of Jewish leaders who called themselves rabbis transformed Judaism into something that could withstand the loss of the Temple and could be transported all over the world.

***Sundays, 9:45 am to 11:30 am except as noted.***

In person and on Zoom

October 18; November 8; December 6 (10:15 am to 12 pm);

January 24; February 28; March 28

**Torah Guide to Observing Justice, but Pursuing Righteousness: Congruence or Conflict?**

Taught by Rabbi Dr. Joseph Novick

Join us for an engaging exploration of classical Jewish sources as we examine the delicate balance between law, fairness, compassion, and moral responsibility. Through textual study, we will ask some difficult questions: When is fairness enough and when does the Torah demand more of us? Does compassion ever compromise justice? What does it mean to build a society and a self that honors both?

This class will challenge us to see how Torah can offer a lens on contemporary issues.

***Tuesdays, 10am - 11:15am***

In person only

- October 13, 20, 27
- November 3, 10, 17, 24
- December 1, 8, 15, 22

Rabbi Dr. Joseph Novick received his Ordination from Yeshiva University and Doctorate in Psychology from Rutgers University. He was a faculty member of the Jerusalem Academy of Judaic Studies and the Melton Institute. Rabbi Novick was a founding member of Bridges to Understanding, an Inter-Ethnic Coalition, and the Jewish Identity Project at Rutgers University. Rabbi Dr. Novick taught Holocaust Studies and Psychology at Kean University and served as a pulpit Rabbi, school psychologist and Director, Jewish Community Relations Council.

Rabbi Dr. Novick looks forward to beginning a Weekly Ethics, "Etika Shavuee" Program to help us appreciate the importance of community as the foundation of society.



# **Scholar-in-Residence**

**Danna Livstone, Chairperson**

Save the Date: **Scholar-in-Residence 2027 will be held on February 5-6, 2027!** We will be hosting **Dr. Yossi Chajes of Haifa University** who is a specialist in Jewish mysticism. He is the author of *Between Worlds: Dybbuks, Exorcists, and Early Modern Judaism* (2003) and *The Kabbalistic Tree* (2023). You may have heard him teach online at My Jewish Learning. This is a rare opportunity to learn from him in person. 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 or hybrid 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 Tillinger Wolkenfeld, Dr. Matt Reingold, Dr. Sarah Bunin Benor, Rabbi David Wolpe, and last year's presentation by Dr. Gary Rendsburg.

This year the SIR Committee needs the help of the congregation. More sponsors and supporters and donors are needed to sustain top notch programs.

- **Sponsorship: \$300 includes two dinners Friday night and a meet and greet with the Scholar**
- **Supporter: \$180 includes one dinner Friday night**
- **Donor: Any amount is encouraged**

These contributions 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. All levels of giving will be acknowledged on table tents throughout the weekend if received by January 24, 2027. Sponsors and Supporters are automatically given the opportunity to help select the scholar for the next year.

**Please contact Danna Livstone ([drlivstone@gmail.com](mailto:drlivstone@gmail.com)) with any questions.**



## ***Israel Bonds Breakfast***

Beth El Synagogue will hold its 28th State of Israel Bonds Breakfast on

**Sunday, December 13, 2026 at 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 2026-2027 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** ([anitabf18@gmail.com](mailto:anitabf18@gmail.com)) or **Trudi Perlman** ([trudiperlman@gmail.com](mailto:trudiperlman@gmail.com))



## ***Shabbat Study Group***

***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.

Select Saturdays after Kiddush, In Person.

## ***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.

## ***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.**



# 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. Attending this service helps fulfill the service requirement outlined in the Parent Handbook.

## **Young Families**

In addition to our many programs for children, we also have several events for Young Families. We have hosted a Splish Splash Shabbat and a Beth El Night at Trenton Thunder for families, in addition to all our synagogue programming, where children of all ages are welcome. We hope that you'll join us throughout the year, as we create opportunities for our youngest ones to get together, celebrate being Jewish, and have lots of fun.



# Youth Groups

*Sarah Donsky, Youth Director and USY Advisor*

**Pre-Kadima (3rd–5th graders):** Mercer County Chaverim 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 Fall Crafts, ice skating, and much more.

**Kadima (6th–8th graders):** Mercer County Gesher will be meeting once a month to build their social community. This year our Kadima participants will get to start the year with an Escape Room, trip to Urban air, Tie-Die T-shirt Making, Ice Skating and more.

**USY (9th–12th graders):** Our USY program is run by our student USY board and overseen by our Youth Director. We are starting with Fall Fest After Dark at Shady Brook Farms, hosting an Eagles vs Steeler's Tailgate Game, Movies & Chinese night, and more.

**NEW This Year:** This year we are all excited to join with The Jewish Center of Princeton for all of our programming this year. Some programs will take place at Beth El, some will be at The Jewish Center and some will be off-site trips. We will also continue to host larger multi-synagogue and Chapter events for our USYers throughout the year, including an end of the year trip to Hershey Park.

**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 Beth El Seniors, a varied group of interesting, vital people age 55 and older, including couples and singles who enjoy all sorts of subjects and activities, as well as each other's company. 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 most meetings for those who cannot come in person. Our meetings are usually on the third Thursday of the month, from September to May. Weather will never be an issue—if we cannot meet in person, we will pivot to Zoom! Meetings 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 refreshments for our meetings.

Everyone is always welcome to join us at our meetings, whether or not dues have been paid, 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 in my monthly e-newsletter.

## **2026-2027 Meeting/Program Dates**

(All dates are subject to change.)

- Meetings: September 24 (fourth Thursday); October 15; November 12 (second Thursday); December 17; January 21; February 25 (fourth Thursday); March 18; no meeting in April;
- Food and a Flick: May 20, 2027
- HaZak Shabbat: Saturday, June 5, 2027
- Summer Opera Program: Sunday, June 27, 2027

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



# ***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 more information:**

**Contact Caryn Alter ([jewishgenealogy.mercer@gmail.com](mailto:jewishgenealogy.mercer@gmail.com), H: 609-426-4919) or  
Stacey Palant ([jewishgenealogy.mercer@gmail.com](mailto:jewishgenealogy.mercer@gmail.com), M: 609-373-2609),  
or the Synagogue office.**



# Book Club

**Karen Richtman, Coordinator**

If you love to read provocative, thought-provoking Jewish-themed books and then discuss them, we are 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, Sunday mornings on Zoom.

## **Here is the list of books and dates for the 2026-2027 Book Club:**

- 9/6/26      *Sons and Daughters* - Chiam Grade
- 10/25/26   *Queen Esther* - John Irvin
- 11/22/26   *This is not About Us* - Allegra Goodman
- 12/20/26   *Cammy Sitting Shiva* - Cary Gitter
- 1/17/27     *In the Family Way* - Laney Katz Becker
- 2/14/27     *One of Them* - Kitty Zeldis
- 3/14/27     *Sisters of Fortune* - Esther Levy Chehebar
- 4/11/27     *I Wanted to be Wonderful* - Lihi Lapid
- 5/23/27     *Lake Burntshore* - Aaron Kreuter
- 6/27/27     *The Tavern at the End of History* - Morris Collins

**Please contact Karen Richtman at [609-426-9437](tel:609-426-9437) (home) or [purrfekt40@aol.com](mailto:purrfekt40@aol.com) for more information, or if you are interested in joining us!**



# **Rosh Chodesh Group for Women**

***Danna Livstone, Coordinator***

Now entering its eighth 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:

- **SUKKOT:** Tuesday, Sept. 29, 2026, 7 pm in the BES sukkah, in person
- **Cheshvan:** Sunday, Oct. 11, 2026 7:00 PM
- **Kislev:** Tuesday, Nov. 10, 2026 7:00 PM
- **Tevet:** Thursday, Dec. 10, 2026 TBD
- **Shvat:** Friday, Jan. 8, 2027 Rosh Chodesh Shabbat & dinner
- **Adar 1:** Sunday, Feb. 7, 2027 time TBD
- **Adar 2:** Tuesday, March 9, 2027 7 PM
- **Women's Seder (tentative):** Sunday, March 28, 2027
- **Nisan:** Wednesday, April 7, 2027 7PM
- **Iyar:** Saturday, May 8, 2027 7PM Seudah Shlishi
- **Sivan:** Sunday, June 6, 2027 11 AM Brunch

Of special note this year is our special Shabbat Rosh Chodesh on Friday evening, January 8, 2027. 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.

**Contact 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 and donors make sure they happen, and we need your help!

We have synagogue prepared Kiddush lunch twice a month and some holidays. Please consider joining our team of dedicated volunteers. 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** (for each individual volunteer activity):

- Shopping: Shoprite = ~1 hour, Restaurant Depot = ~2 hours (based on store)
- Lunch Setup: 2 hours - 10am–12pm
- Lunch Clean Up: 1–1.5 hours
- 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, Peri Orlando 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 Peri Orlando at [perirorlando@gmail.com](mailto:perirorlando@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-Coordination***

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.





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