

**Congregation Beth El of the Sudbury River Valley**  
**Virtual Board Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday December 10th, 2020 7:00pm**

**In attendance:** Jim Billings, Jocylyn Bailin, Marla Lewitus, Steve Probst, Rabbi Breindel, Scott Newman, Michelle Fineblum, Debbie Glass, Mike Joachim, Steve Breit, Lizza Sandoe, Jesse Wertheimer, Debbie Blicher, Judy Goldberg, Barbara Miller, Shoni Aronovich, Andy Goldberg, Jerry Kazin, Neil Frieband, Cynthia Meyersburg, Jake Steinmann

**Welcome:** Jim Billings

It's Hanukkah - Chag Sameach! Warm welcome to our newest Board member, Jake Steinmann.

**Hebrew With Janet:** HNKH – On the Lighter side!

Everything Hanukkah (except no real latkes, only virtual ones)

**November meeting minutes:** Jocylyn Bailin

Minutes approved unanimously

**Rabbi's Report:** see attached

Extra notes:

\*It's Hanukkah! There's joint festival programming throughout the MetroWest area; Monday night is Beth El's night! Join us for Hanukkah fun, run by Shoni and the teens. Scott and the education program have decided to hold an outdoor Hanukkah event with firepit bonfires – one for each candle! Every family attending will bring donations for the Sudbury Food Pantry and will receive sufganiyot (courtesy of Sarah Green-Vaswani) and a dreidel. There will be songs and group blessings. This event is only for the school families, but any Board member who would like to attend is welcome.

\*RJB has been asked to do a conversion of someone from western Massachusetts. The person is joining the congregation, and would like to connect with other members, especially those with younger children.

\* The IJS (Institute for Jewish Spirituality) program, which RJB has been participating in, is normally a two-year program. Due to Covid, there's a chance it might be a three-year program this time.

\*RJB has been nominated to start a two-year clergy leadership training program with CLI. This is an amazing opportunity to work with those on the forefront of

Judaism who are thinking about and constructing creative ways to bring Judaism into the community. He has applied and hopes to be accepted – keep your fingers crossed!

**Temple Administrator's Report:**

There is no report for December. One new family has joined the congregation.

**Treasurer's Report: Neil Frieband**

Motion: that Neil, Michael Joachim, and Jim Billings be authorized signatories on the Beth El Citizen's Bank account, and that Beth Schine be an authorized signatory on the Middlesex Savings Bank account,

Motion approved: unanimously

**Fundraising Update: Judy Goldberg**

Nicci Meadow and Judy are working together on a virtual winter fundraising campaign. More details will be coming out shortly. Suffice to say, it's a game, it will be fun, and -hopefully- it will be available by New Year's day. Nicci, Judy, and all involved are hoping for 100% Board participation and support!

Note, our fundraising goal for the year is \$25k.

**Hevra Mishpacha/Caring Community Update: Jocylyn Bailin**

The Caring Community is launching a new initiative soon. Called Hope and Warmth, the two components will be a phone calling chain and a soup sharing chain. We are looking for those in our community who may be in need of a little hope and warmth over the coming long winter., whether just an extra phone call or a warm meal now and then. IF you know of anyone who you think could use a little "hug" please contact Carol Sheingold and/or Jocylyn Bailin.

**Tsibur/House update: Jerry Kazin**

The attic has been cleaned out – a big thanks to all who participated. The Kolel is now a giant staging room, full of everything that had been in the attic. Once the attic is insulated (soon) there will be less space to store stuff. Jerry is looking for volunteers to come sort through everything and determine what to keep and what to get rid of. This needs to be done by the next time the Kolel is needed, ideally sooner than that though. If you are willing to assist in this effort please let Jerry know.

**Board calls to members: Jim Billings**

It's time for us to make another round of calls to our fellow congregants. Please call everyone on your list between now and the next Board meeting (bonus if you

can do it during the holiday). Please continue to report any concerns to Jim, the clergy, or Jocelyn (Caring Community).

**Executive Session invoked 7:36pm**

Meeting adjourned 8:36pm

Respectfully submitted,

Jocelyn Bailin

Clerk, Congregation Beth El of the Sudbury River Valley

**BETWEEN MEETINGS VOTE**

January 13<sup>th</sup> Jim contacted the Board looking for approval of a congregational policy change surrounding our Covid-19 protocols. Going forward effective immediately (January 14<sup>th</sup>) the building will be closed to all non-essential persons.

Vote to approve was unanimous (with very slight wording changes).

SEE ATTACHED REPORTS

## Rabbi's Report December 2020

### Ritual

- **Community Chanukah initiative** – each shul “adopting” a different night. We are hosting on Monday. I’ll MC the full community gathering on Thursday night.
- **Special Shabbat services honoring Chanukah** this weekend – please join us!

### Lifecycle/Pastoral

- **Pastoral support** remains a major need (none directly connected to COVID).
- Requested to begin teaching a **conversion candidate – through Zoom!**

### Community outreach/events

- **Presented at LimmudBoston.** Well attended and a lot of fun!
- Recorded **new video for our webpage** for Chanukah.
- Continuing with weekly **Chagigah** program on WERS – 9:30ish AM on Sundays.
- Organizing **Sudbury interfaith MLK** event to build on success of last year’s model.
- Scott and I will present on **Chanukah for tots at Goodnow Library** next Thurs AM.
- **Rabbi Katy Allen (JCAN) and I** were just approved to offer a collaborative **3-session course at Hebrew College’s Open Circle Jewish Learning program** this spring on the spiritual meaning and blessings of connecting to the natural world.

### Programming and education

- Participated in **JCAN/Green Team “Jewish call to climate action”** – great feedback
- MC’ed **“Zooming to Guatemala”** event sponsored by the Sanctuary committee.
- Working with Scott and Shoni to rework **Torah Class** in the age of COVID.
- **Began new unit of Hasidic Stories** on Thurs. AM. Averaging +/-15 participants.

### Administrative

- Coordinating with Shoni and Scott on new initiatives for **Middle and High School.**
- Met with both **Tefilah Committee and Gabba'im** to vision/plan next few months.
- **Visioning team** held first meeting; working closely with Jim and LIT.
- **Was invited to apply early for next Clergy Leadership Incubator (CLI) cohort.** An honor and wonderful opportunity for me and for Beth El.

### Personal

- Will take **vacation time** to correspond to my children’s winter break (12/22-1/1). Have subs selected for the one Shabbat that I’ll be away.

## Tikkun Olam update – December 2020

In this Chanukah season, thank you to all in our Beth El community who bring light to our world through your acts of Tikkun Olam, repairing the world. Please email [tikkunolam@bethelsudbury.org](mailto:tikkunolam@bethelsudbury.org) if I've missed anything.

- **Support for Beth El members:** Winter is upon us and Covid-19 has us firmly in its grasp. Some of us are sheltering in place with family, trying to be parents and teachers and athletic directors as well as work, while others are alone in our homes with nobody to talk to and no one to give us a hug. No matter what your situation is, these are trying and stressful times for everyone. This is a time for our community to step up and take care of one another. We have two initiatives underway:
  - 1) We are putting together a calling chain - a group of people who are willing to make weekly or bi-monthly calls to other congregants. Please let us know if you are willing to do this! We are also looking for referrals of congregants who you think could benefit from a friendly phone call now and then. You can nominate yourself or someone else. Please reach out to Carol Sheingold at 617-943-3977 or [csheingold@gmail.com](mailto:csheingold@gmail.com).
  - 2) We are putting together a Share Warmth and Love brigade. Already there are over 30 Beth El-ers who have volunteered to make and deliver soup to those who might be in need of a warm and nourishing soupy hug. Soup can be delivered for serious needs like illness or being homebound, soup can also be sent to someone just having a tough week. If you would like to volunteer to make soup and have not yet done so, please let us know! And if you would like to request soup or nominate someone else to receive soup don't hesitate to reach out! Please reach out to Jocelyn Bailin at [pi\\_joy@yahoo.com](mailto:pi_joy@yahoo.com).

Remember that it is a mitzvah to give *and* a mitzvah to receive (because you are affording someone else an opportunity to do a mitzvah). There is no shame in wanting a phone call or a soup delivery - we all need a little hand now and then and we are all in this together. This is a way for us to take care of one another at a time when we all need each other so much.
- **Green Team:**
  - o The Green Team is focused on educating and assisting members in reducing their carbon emissions
  - o Many Beth El members joined a November 17th webinar on a Jewish Call to Climate Action featuring Rabbi Jennie Rosenn of [Dayenu](#), Rabbi Breindel, Rabbi Allen of Ma'Yan Tikvah, and Rabbi Pollison of Or Atid.
  - o Over 57 Beth El households have created accounts on the Mass Energize webpage. Please join if you have not done so!
  - o On December 8th, the Green Team hosted a webinar on Greening Your Home Electricity. Over 45 participants from Beth El and other MetroWest congregations learned about switching today to using renewable power in our homes. We will post links on the Green Team webpage to the Zoom recording and the slides.
  - o Coming on January 6th—a webinar on Green Heating & Cooling for Your Home. Separately, Green Team members also are helping Jerry Kazin, our VP/Tsibur, to secure a massive increase in roof insulation at no cost to the Congregation.
  - o Next Green Team meeting is Sunday, December 13th, at 7:30PM. Contact John Harper, [jpharper47@gmail.com](mailto:jpharper47@gmail.com) for Zoom information.
- **Anti-Racism Interest Group:** The Antiracism Interest Group has recently been renamed the Antiracism Working Group." This name change reflects our commitment to this work and the progress of our subgroups. We are more than "interested" in antiracism; we are actively working to become antiracists--in our country, in our towns and in our congregation. Active subgroups include the Resolution subgroup, which is working on an antiracism resolution to bring to the board. Such resolution will be advanced after an educational campaign within the congregation. The Reparations/Repair subgroup is reviewing the many reparations initiatives in local areas and examining the process of Truth and Reconciliation. The Programming subgroup has identified potential program topics and is exploring existing programs to bring to Beth El. The Restorative Justice subgroup is just beginning, reaching out to organizations that have experience in that work. The Book Group will alternate non-fiction and fiction books. The next book will be *Small Great Things* by Jodi Picoult. The Antiracism Conversations subgroup is considering options for more community conversations within Beth El, following up on the two Elul

Conversations. The Antiracism Working Group is also cosponsoring the screening of a film later this winter, with an associated facilitated discussion. The screening was initiated by a group in Sudbury, as a follow-up to an assessment of the racial climate at the high school. -- Judy Goldberg and Karen Blumenfeld

- **Sanctuary Committee:** We continue work in multiple areas:
  1. The Ayalas were scheduled to have their immigration hearing this month. We have just found out, however, that it has been postponed to August 2022. We think this is actually very good news, since a new administration will be in place by then and will have had a chance to undo a lot of the mean-spirited actions and policies of the current one. In the meantime, we can report that their financial situation is stable and is very gradually improving. This will be a long-term project. They are extremely grateful and moved by the support that they are receiving from Beth El, and they speak of it often.
  2. Kath Bean has been keeping tabs on legislation, as you have probably noticed on the Sanctuary list. We are particularly concerned with the Safe Communities Act (which Speaker DeLeo is clearly not happy about) and with the police reform bill, now on the Governor's desk. We are asking people to write to the Governor to ask him to sign the bill. Both these bills directly impact immigrants and refugees.
  3. The Friday afternoon stand-outs are on a hiatus, but we will be discussing this over the next few weeks to see where we go on this. There's clearly much to do.
  4. Under the Same Moon - Our sincere thanks to all who participated in and/or donated to our "Zoom to Guatemala" fundraiser for the secular Bendicion de Dios School in Guatemala for children living in abject poverty. To Rabbi Josh, sincere thanks go to his ingenuity, time spent in helping us along the way, and his heartfelt leadership as he led us down the Jewish path of tzedakah, while interviewing members of our Guatemalan effort. Thanks to Lorel for helping to support our cause and spread the word, and we were honored to have Mitch Rosenberg and Carrie Fuchs share their past interactions with our project and the meaning it has for them. You, our community, were extremely generous. We, at Under the Same Moon - the American fundraising arm, as well as the children and staff at the school have much gratitude for your efforts. Those who attended saw the impact of their gifts as each of you helps break the cycle of poverty one child at a time. As well, we loved seeing you attend, wearing your gifts from the past. You, as a community raised over \$6000.00 for this effort. In much gratitude - Jane & Martin Brauer, board members of Under the Same Moon and long-time Beth El members
- **Yad L'kashish Fundraiser:** We are still 'kvelling' at the success of our Yad L'kashish fund raiser last month. So much help from Beth Elers. so much efficient work from the great folks at Yad L'kashish/Lifeline for the Aged. So much joy in sharing this important experience with our friends and artists in Jerusalem. And so much money raised for them and for us! \$4000 for them; \$2000 for the Beth el General Fund. Thanks to all who made this happen, and we only look forward to the next Beth el trip to Israel, with a special visit to the Yad Lakashish gift shop!
- **Tzedek Scholarship Fund:** The Tzedek Scholarship Fund is truly grateful to all the generous donors at Beth El who continue to support our work. We're continuing to support our three Framingham State scholars, who are managing well adapting to the new realities of education in the time of Corona.
- **Criminal Justice Reform:** Criminal Justice Reform, in conjunction with the Anti-Racism Interest group, has begun work on a project to publicize and, if possible, aid in the establishment of more Restorative Justice Circles. There is a group in Concord which is already doing this but has not been able to connect to poorer communities. We are reaching out to the former for advice, which communities are already involved, etc. We are considering Framingham, Hudson, Maynard and Marlborough. For more info, contact Elaine Barnartt-Goldstein at [ebarnarttgoldstein@gmail.com](mailto:ebarnarttgoldstein@gmail.com).
- **Tzedaka Hevra:** The Tzedaka Hevra has had a very busy and productive year, giving away roughly \$30,000. 60% went to 3 organizations and the remaining 40% to 27 other organizations. We also made an emergency Covid donation of \$1000 that we split between Yad Chesed and Rabbi Breindel's discretionary fund. We heard from speakers representing organizations that we donate to, or that we may donate to. The Hevra meets regularly and is open to any Beth El member. To learn more, contact Ira Silver: [isilver@framingham.edu](mailto:isilver@framingham.edu)

- **MetroWest Free Medical Program:** The MWFMP is “seeing” patients remotely through a combination of video calls, phone conversations, and text messaging. We’re limited right now to patients we’ve seen before and hope to extend our services to new patients at in the future when we have more infrastructure in place to support telemedicine. We’ve received some emergency grants from funders that are helping to make the transition to telemedicine. We anticipate operating this way for the foreseeable future, into 2021. Visit their [website](#) to learn more and get involved.
- **Blood Drive:** The next blood drive is planned for 2/18/21 from 2-7 pm.
- **Kiddush donation opportunities:** In lieu of hosting Kiddush at the temple, consider joining a Beth El Kiddush group, which plans to donate funds to food pantries, including [Sudbury Food Pantry](#), Greater [Boston Food Bank](#) and [Feeding America](#).
- **Covid-19 volunteer opportunities:** Our community rises to the current Covid-19 challenge! Many Tikkun Olam efforts are already underway in support of Beth El members and the broader community. More opportunities arrive in our inboxes every day. The CJP, JCRC, Jewish Family & Children's Service, and others offer many opportunities. If you’re able to help, please take a look at their websites: <https://www.jfcsboston.org/About/COVID-19-Update> <https://www.jcrcboston.org/covid-19/> <https://www.cjp.org/get-involved>
- **COVID-19 Support Services From CJP:** If the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis has affected someone you know financially, the [CJP WarmLine](#) (1-800-CJP-9500) may be able to assist. With one phone call or by filling out a simple online form, trained Warmline counselors can begin to help navigate available services across the Jewish community. JewishBoston.com also has additional information about community resources during the COVID-19 crisis. CJP has launched the CJP [Coronavirus Emergency Fund](#) in order to extend greater support to numerous Jewish social service agencies providing critical services during this time. 100% of the money raised will help community members who are facing hardship as a result of this pandemic. Anyone feeling overwhelmed with sadness, anxiety or stress, or who wants to harm themselves or others, can access the mental health, emotional support and suicide prevention program Call2Talk by dialing 2-1-1, calling 508-532-2255 or by texting C2T to 741741.

**Thanks to everyone for your holy work!** If I’ve missed anyone’s Tikkun Olam efforts at Beth El, please let me know. We’d like to share the news with the community! If something here interests you, and you don’t see contact information, let me know and I’m happy to connect you.

L’shalom,

Michelle Fineblum, VP, Tikkun Olam [tikkunolam@bethelsudbury.org](mailto:tikkunolam@bethelsudbury.org)

Beth El’s Tikkun Olam web page: [Beth El Members Joining to Repair the World](#)