

Congregation Beth El of the Sudbury River Valley
Virtual Board Meeting Minutes
Thursday January 20th, 2022 7:00pm

In attendance: Ann Barysh, Andy Goldberg, Barbara Miller, Carolyn Schwartz, Cynthia Myersberg, Debbie Glass, Jake Steinmann, Jerry Kazin, Jim Billings, Jocelyn Bailin, Josh Davidson, Judy Goldberg, Marla Lewitus, Michelle Fineblum, Steve Breit, Steve Probst, Beth Schine, Scott Newman, Shoni Aronovich, Rabbi Josh Breindel. Guest: Karen Blumenfeld

Welcome: Jim Billings

Good to see everyone again , hope you are all healthy.

Hebrew with Janet: NTzL- Rescue me!

December Meeting Minutes: Approved unanimously

Temple Administrator's Report: Beth Schine

Full Report attached. Membership has stayed the same, however one resignation is in process. We will be reaching out to recent prospective families.

Rabbi's Report: Rabbi Breindel

Full report attached

Education Reports: Scott Newman and Shoni Aronovich

Full report attached

MLK MetroWest Day of Service update: Shoni

Shoni gave background on this program – it previously had been coordinated by the JCRC's Telem program and JTI (Jewish Teen Initiative). Both of these programs recently shut down. JLOFT decided to take it over this year and, in partnership with Volunteer Ventures MA (run by folks who had previously worked at Telem) worked hard to create meaningful, intergenerational, Covid-safe programming. There were three projects available; kits were put together for participants to pick up and prepare at home while the desk-building kits were on site to put together. The day itself was freezing cold but there were sandwiches, hot chocolate, lots of snacks and fantastic participation!

Finance Report: Steve Probst

Full report attached

Numerous questions were asked about the financial report. **Responses** from Steve include:

- Our deficit this year will be less than anticipated due to somewhat less spending and larger than expected fundraising
- Our expenses next year will increase with the addition of a new clergy person. We should assume that our deficit will increase as well

- Current budget forecasts/predictions are made based on our historical data. There are many factors that can influence this that we cannot predict – stock market, membership numbers, inflation, etc.
- We are fortunate enough to have deep reserves despite our ongoing deficits. If we need to spend money to make improvements that might increase/improve our building/membership please ask, we can often “find” the funding. Fund allocations can come from the Beth El Fund for the Future, the Carob Tree Initiative, and the Capital Fund. Applications are made to the allocations committee, and the form can be found on our website or at the office.

Tikkun Olam Report: Michelle Fineblum

Full report attached

Updates: Beth El hosted the MetroWest Free Medical Program for its first 15 years. Since we closed our building due to Covid, MWFMP has been operating at other locations, most recently at a church in Framingham. They are losing this space next week and will be relocating to another space for about 6 months. They are interested in talking with Beth El about having us host them again starting in the fall. They promise to be fully respectful of all BE rules and regulations. BE already has many community members engaged with MWFMP as volunteers.

Anti-Defamation League Pilot Program: Marla Lewitus

The ADL and the URJ have combined to create a joint program to discuss and combat the rise in antisemitism. 20 synagogues across the nation, of diverse backgrounds and configurations, have been selected to participate; Beth El is one of them! This gives us a national stage to discuss antisemitism and create small programs for Beth El as well as be part of national-level discussions and programming. The group will convene every three months, plus will have ongoing online collaboration. The Beth El task force is headed by Andy Goldberg; other members of the committee are Michelle Fineblum, Judy Katz, Paul Rosenbaum, Martin Brauer, Emmy Suhl and the Rabbi. All are welcome to join!

Congregation Beth El Anti-Racism proposal: Michelle Fineblum and Karen Blumenfeld Michelle and Karen, as well as a few other members of the Beth El anti-racism group, attended a workshop/training session last spring designed to help small organizations work towards becoming anti-racist. They have been working ever since then to draft this resolution for the Board. The proposal is as such (full proposal with footnotes, etc. is attached):

Congregation Beth El of the Sudbury Valley: Antiracism Resolution

Introduction

Racism poses a threat to our democracy and directly affects the Jewish community (see Appendix 1). Building on our Jewish commitment to social justice and our solidarity, as Jews, with other historically subordinated groups, we are obligated to speak up and take action to divest racism of its power within and beyond the Beth El community (see Appendix 2). Through this Resolution, Beth El seeks to embed a racial equity lens into all aspects of congregational life.

Our Values

We believe that:

- Every person is created in God's image and has equal value and dignity.
- Our Beth El community, and the communities we live in, are enriched by diversity in all its forms.
- Our commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging requires ongoing learning, reflection, action, and personal and institutional transformation.

Our Commitment

Based on these values, the Board of Directors hereby establishes the goal of Beth El becoming an antiracist¹ congregation that:

- Challenges practices, policies, programs and norms across the congregation (committees, school, governance documents, HR, etc.) that reinforce white dominance at Beth El.
- Promotes a congregation-wide culture of inclusion, diversity, equity, and belonging.
- Creates opportunities for learning about racism² in all its forms (individual, interpersonal, institutional and ideological), antiracism³, white supremacy⁴, and the experiences of Black, Indigenous and other People of Color, including those who are Jewish.
- Encourages members, clergy and staff to challenge ourselves and our assumptions about race as a means toward spiritual wholeness in the Jewish tradition.
- Inspires members, clergy and staff to move from learning and theory to antiracist action, especially in partnership with Black-led organizations and Jewish progressive organizations.

Implementation

Through this Resolution, the Beth El Board authorizes the leaders of the Antiracism Working Group to partner with clergy, staff and members of the Board to:

- Gain an understanding of the experiences of Black, Indigenous and other People of Color at Beth El and in other Jewish spaces.
- Evaluate Beth El's practices, policies, programs and norms through a racial equity lens and recommend improvements.
- Work together to overcome barriers to change and implement improvements.
- Monitor progress on an ongoing basis and submit an annual progress report to the Board and Congregation at its Annual Meeting.

By voting to approve this Resolution, the Beth El Board commits to give its time and attention to accomplishing the goals described above. The Board will re-evaluate and, if needed, update this resolution in two years.

Presentation included background, definitions, significance, and more. Being anti-racist is deeply rooted in Jewish values and tradition. We must root out intolerance wherever and whenever it exists. We must be open and curious about who we are and understand that our actions present and reverberate in the larger world, regardless of our intent. This is an invitation for Beth El to reflect and make change in positive ways.

Motion: To adopt the anti-racism resolution

Motion approved: 15 in favor, 1 abstention

Security Task Force: Jim Billings

Our security task force has been reactivated. We need to maintain this as an ongoing group; as the incidents of this past week prove, we cannot afford to become complacent – make a few changes and then let it slide. We are putting together a task force made up of a broad cross-section of the community and are *looking for people willing to be involved*. There will be trainings for key people

Meeting adjourned: 8:55pm

Respectfully submitted,

Jocelyn Bailin

Clerk, Congregation Beth El of the Sudbury River Valley

Attached Reports:

Rabbi

Education

Tikkun Olam

Temple Admin

Finance Committee

Anti-Racism Resolution (full)

Rabbi Report: December-January 2021-2022

Ritual

- Coordinating visit with our **third guest Shabbat leader, Zachary Mayer (1/28-29)**
 - **Board presence requested at these Shabbatot (and special events)**
- **Partnering with lay leaders on Shabbat leading** (and constructive feedback).
- Working with Debby Young and Ann K on **Tu B'Shevat seder (1/16)**

Lifecycle/Pastoral

- **Increased congregational anxiety and concern about COVID.**
 - Appreciation for leadership's support. Desire for more communication on all aspects of temple life and planning during this transition year.

Community outreach/events

- Will be **presenting for LimmudBoston** (3rd consecutive year) at 3:20 PM on 1/16
- About to record **100th episode of "Rabbi Reflections"** on *Chagigah* radio show!
- Will be **shadowed by two Hebrew College students for conversion training** as I work with a new candidate through 2022. This is a joint program with Hebrew College and Mayyim Hayyim (doesn't require additional workload from me).
- **Beth El will be a test site for ADL/URJ Act Against Antisemitism Pilot Project.**
 - Thanks to Michelle and the task force for helping us to help support the Jewish community! More info to come.

Programming and education

- Concluded **three-part series for JLCMW Middle School** 12/8, 12/15, 12/22
- Collaborating **with Anti-Racism on MLK event** featuring Rabbi Rachael Bregman (Saturday, 1/22). Click [here](#) for an article about some of her recent activities.
- Planning to launch a **monthly Jewish sci-fi book club** in late Feb. Stay tuned.

Administrative

- Ongoing meetings with: **Strategic Plan committee, Education staff and committee, Ritual committee, Search Committee, Anti-Semitism taskforce**
- Meeting with **new and prospective members**
- Coordinating with **professional staff** individually and collectively.

Professional Development

- Received \$3,500 grant for **executive coaching** from CJP! More info to come.
- I am attending the **CLI virtual retreat** from 1/10-14. I will officially return on Saturday. Rabbi Polisson will provide pastoral coverage.

- **IJS retreat will run the week of 1/17.** I hope to attend some parts virtually – I'll not be formally attending the retreat.

Teen Education and Engagement Report

January 2022 - Shoni

- **High School**

- Wrapping up the first semester, attendance was solid up to the last week, when several kids couldn't attend for Covid-related reasons. Siyyum class is a little behind and will be catching up with added sessions in the second semester.

- **Middle School**

- We are generally very happy with how the collaborative MS program has been running for the first semester. The program includes about 20 students in grades 6-7, with 11 from Beth El, **including 5 new students who joined this year.**
- Rabi Breindel and I have already taught out units, Scott's is coming up. Most families have not taken advantage of the offering of an additional Hebrew session.

- **J-LOFT**

- January event of making glass mezuzahs worked out great, with 15 teens attending the event at Kerem Shalom. Second Semester will begin in February, with both the rabbi and I offering classes. J-LOFT is hosting the MetroWest MLK Day of Service this year, which is expected to be a large event.
- We have secured additional funding of \$5,000 from CJP for the MLK event.

- **General**

- I would like to express my gratitude to everyone on the board, the staff, and members of Beth El for the support I've received over the past month following the passing of my father.



Youth and Family Education Report – January 2022

Well, we had a good run in-person!

Just before winter break, we moved to virtual learning. COVID numbers are on the rise, with the state hitting over 20% now.

1. **This time, kids are the ones getting sick. My policy has been to err on the side of caution**
2. **Now that building is closed to congregant traffic, we are aligned.**
3. **I don't see how we would return before February break – but we are watching closely.**

COVID Committee will meet next week to discuss going forward. Thank you for your continued confidence in allowing me to do what is needed to keep people as safe as possible.

II. Tot shabbat Friday night is back to virtual as well. We hope that connections made will last through the COVID surge. I am working hard to keep everyone connected and maintain relationships.

a. Over Chanukah, The Rabbi and I ran a program at the library, and some of them will attend Tot Shabbat.

- III. **This week, I am making phone calls to this year's new families to ask how it's going for them and to answer any questions they might have about going virtual. Calling them to check-in is an essential part of the kind of relationship building I do with them.**

IV. **Faculty meeting Jan 6th topics included:**

1. **Re-acclimate staff to online learning. Discussion of logistics and best practices related to the shift.**
2. **Keeping Hebrew skills and learning going strong**

This year is different because our students have had in-person connections first.

We hope that this increases tolerance and aptitude for virtual Hebrew learning. We will be ramping up our use of "Shalom Learning:" our electronic partner, so that the teachers can focus on teaching from those great materials more. c. Best practices to maintain relationships with families when we don't see them in person Began prep for a faculty-led Passover family program.

V. Looking ahead

a. Family Tu B'shvat Program Jan 16th – was going to be in-person -now virtual

- i. **Rabbi Josh and I had it planned but I am now re-designing it as a short online program, instead.**
- ii. **Additionally, that evening I will be providing some of the music for the congregational Tu B'shvat seder. Hoping to draw some families into that as well despite the late hour start.**

VI. Questions, connections, comments are always welcome. Email is best, as I am currently working from my home office, entering building as needed.

Respectfully submitted, Scott Newman, Director, Youth and Family Education



Tikkun Olam Update – January 2022

In reflecting on the past year, I'm inspired by how many of our fellow members make time in their schedules for Tikkun Olam and how they approach their work in the spirit of collaboration and mutual support. They make time to care for members of the Beth El and broader communities; they make time to support immigrants; they meet and plan to determine how to most effectively think about -- and affect -- climate change, racism, hunger and isolation. Please read and join! Email tikkunolambethel@gmail.com if I've missed anything or if you don't see contact info. *Thanks to all for your important and holy work!*

Join the Antisemitism Task Force!

Meaningful change happens when we speak up: we need to be and engage with the world when things aren't right. The Anti-Semitism Task Force has recently formed here at Beth El. Now is your chance to be part of this local movement in its infancy, at a time when it seems the world needs it most. We are a group determined to make positive change through action and education.

Please come to see what we are trying to effect and be part of the collective positive strength. Being proud of your heritage is never cause to feel less than, or afraid. We look forward to your participation in whatever way you are able. Please email tikkunolambethel@gmail.com for more info.

Successful Youth & Family Ed & Tikkun Olam Book Drive!

You all are amazing! Check out the mound of children's books donated during the most recent book drive. The Youth & Family Education and Tikkun Olam committees asked you to help the next generation learn the meaning of repairing the world. You answered with over 600 books! The [Friends of the Framingham Library](#) is delivering your books to those most in need in the Framingham community. Thank you all – this was a good end of year mitzvah!

What other ways can our Beth El groups collaborate to turn our Tikkun Olam values into action? Contact tikkunolambethel@gmail.com with your ideas and energy!

Green Team: This month:

For the New Year, the Green Team offers some simple climate action resolutions:

1. Watch *Don't Look Up* with family and friends (it's on Netflix). [Here's the Rotten Tomatoes review.](#)
2. Register for the January 27th webinar on Greening your Home Electricity – switch to electricity made from solar or wind. It's easy and makes a difference. Register [HERE](#).
3. Check out more possible climate actions on the MassEnergize/JCAN platform – join a Beth El team and resolve to taking at least one action this month! <https://community.massenergize.org/JCAN>

Did you miss the December 15th Green Challenge webinar? Want to join over 70 Beth El households already taking climate actions? You can! Click [here](#) for the recording to learn more, sign up, and start your climate journey today!

Sign up for the GreenTeam list-serv by emailing greenteam-subscribe@members.bethelsudbury.org Have questions? Contact John Harper at jpharper47@gmail.com to connect with a Green Team person. **Antiracism Working Group:**

This month the Antiracism Working Group sponsored:

A holiday gift drive for youth served by All Things Art, Inc. in Roxbury. Several members of the Working Group hand delivered the gifts to All Things Art, and a number of Beth El members also made monetary donations. All Things Art offers creative activities to low-income youth who live with difficult circumstances in under-resourced Boston communities. The program's inspiring Founder and Executive Director, Latanya Henderson, recently spoke at Beth El as part of a panel discussion on Bending the Criminal (In)justice System Toward Justice.

A community discussion of a New York Times article, BIPOC or POC? Equity or Equality? The Debate Over Language on the Left

An Antiracism Learning Group discussion of Nella Larsen's 1929 book "Passing" and the eponymous Netflix film directed by Rebecca Hall.

Coming in January:

Jan 8: The Ongoing Journey: Rectifying Institutional Racism in the Arts, featuring Janie Cohen, Director of the Fleming Museum of Art, Burlington, Vermont

Jan 14: MLK Day Shabbat evening service, featuring Martin Brauer, Lisa Breit and Lisa Goodman and of the Beth El Antiracism Working Group

Jan 17: MLK Day program, Racial Justice and Communal Safety: Cultivating MLK's Legacy, presented by Congregation Beth Elohim, Acton, and featuring U.S. Attorney Rachael Rollins (Beth El is a co-sponsor)

Jan 22: MLK Day Program, Sharing My Experience as the Rabbi of Brunswick, Home of Ahmaud Arbery, featuring Rabbi Rachael Bregman who grew up at Beth El

Jan 23: Being a Jewish Antiracist: Can we dismantle antisemitism without dismantling white supremacy?, LimmudBoston, facilitated by Vivian Tseng and Lisa Goodman of the Antiracism Working Group

Jan 23: Antiracism Learning Group Discussion of Common Ground by J. Anthony Lukas

Group contacts: Judy Goldberg and Karen Blumenfeld (antiracism@BethElSudbury.org)

Sanctuary Committee:

We succeeded in raising the money we need for the rest of our obligations to the Ayala family. This was a big relief.

Kath Bean and Carl Offner have been talking about renewing our efforts in the field of legislation. We sent a letter of support for the proposed Massachusetts Safe Communities Act to the members of the Joint Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security of our state legislature, which is the committee that is initially dealing this bill. It is similar in intent to the Sudbury Welcoming Town Resolution, which we also supported, and which takes law enforcement out of the business of immigration enforcement. We will be convening a small subcommittee within a week or so to discuss how we can do more in this area, particularly in coordination with HIAS.

There will be a stand-out in Sudbury Center on January 6 from 4-5 PM to remember and reject the attempted coup in Washington a year ago.

For info on the Ayala family, contact Judy Katz (judy16k@gmail.com) or Judy Sletzinger (jsletzinger@gmail.com). For info on legislative action, contact Kath Bean (kathleencbean@gmail.com). For info on Friday afternoon stand-outs or other Sanctuary Committee activities, contact Carl Offner (carl.offner@comcast.net).

Blood Drive:

We had to cancel the 1/11 blood drive due to COVID. We're hoping to reschedule as soon as it is safe to do so. Any questions, please contact Jordan Oshlag at JordanOshlag@gmail.com.

Support and Connection for Beth El members:

Hevra Mishpacha, Beth El's caring community initiative, continues to facilitate support between members of the congregation. If you or anyone you know would appreciate and/or benefit from a friendly call, a ride, a warm meal, an extra set of hands, or anything else you can think of, please don't hesitate to reach out to Jocylyn Bailin or Carol Sheingold. If you'd like to volunteer to be part of the support network, please contact either of these two folks as well!

Inclusion Committee: We're involved in a couple of areas:

We have a gender-neutral bathroom committee, operating under the authority of the inclusion committee. The co-chairs are Susan Tohn she/hers and R Feynman they/them. We will be meeting in January to learn about the Massachusetts laws around disability and inclusion as well as the Jewish perspective and how all of that connects to our mission statement and commitment on our website that "we welcome all genders." R will be doing an informational presentation to the board, followed by a discussion at the February Board meeting. R will then do the

same presentation followed by discussion with the congregation in February. In March, we will have several opportunities for the congregation to be educated about the issues and to discuss different viewpoints. By the end of March, the gender-neutral bathroom committee will make a recommendation to the board, which they will review at the April board meeting in time to include any financial decisions in the capital budget.

We're working on programming plans for JDAIM (Jewish Disability Awareness, Acceptance and Inclusion Month) which is February. For more information about the Inclusion Committee, contact Susan Tohn.

MetroWest Free Medical Program: Please read our exciting update at this [link!](#) Some highlights: we're seeing patients in person and virtually, and we'd love to have you volunteer. For more information, contact Beth El member Gary Hirsch.

Tzedaka Hevra: Are you interested in expanding the reach of your Tzedakah but aren't quite sure how? Our Hevra meets every two months to learn about Jewish charitable organizations in the United States and Israel that are helping people and changing the world...and to enjoy a communal meal, because - Beth El. We currently fund about 25 charitable organizations and are looking ahead to next year, expecting an increasing need of our funds. During our meetings, we learn about and determine which organizations are worthy of our funding and reflect our priorities. We often hear directly from their representatives about the work they do, what they will do with our funds, and what they plan to do in the future. If you want to give but may not have time to research and understand enough about the wide range of charitable organizations in need of money, consider joining our Hevra, which is open to any Beth El member. We welcome new members. For info, email Ira Silver isilver@framingham.edu.

Tzedek Scholarship Fund:

The committee has selected a new scholarship recipient for the 2021-22 academic year. To date we have funded seven students, all of whom have graduated. For info: Janet Buchwald (luckydog18@comcast.net).

Help for Congregants Who Need Food Assistance:

Any congregants who could use some food assistance should contact Deborah Oppenheimer directly at deb_oppenheimer@alumni.pomona.edu; all information will be kept confidential. If any need assistance

getting pantry (or other) groceries delivered to them, contact Neighborhood Brigade (with whom Deborah has partnered). Any congregants who live in Lincoln or Sudbury should contact Sudbury Neighborhood Brigade about home deliveries, at Sudbury MA Neighbor Brigade <sudburyma@neighborbrigade.org>.

COVID-19 Support Services From CJP:

If COVID-19 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. 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.

Covid-19 volunteer opportunities:

Our community rises to the current Covid-19 challenge! The JCRC, Jewish Family & Children's Service, and others offer many volunteer opportunities. If you're able to help, please take a look at their websites: www.jfcsboston.org/Volunteer/Volunteering-at-JF-CS www.jcrcboston.org/covid-19/

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 tikkunolambethel@gmail.com

Beth El's Tikkun Olam webpage

**Beth El Board of Directors Meeting
January 20, 2022**

Administrator's Report

Membership: 232

Since report on 12/9, one new member household:

David Daniel and Barbara Klipper

One resignation (was already known, became official):

Jim Ball and Anita Diamant

Dues:

Collected YTD: \$370,570

Financial commitments resolved:

- **Full Dues: 120**
 - 23 (of the 119) made add'l donations in various categories. These additional donations add up as follows:
 - Additional dues: \$12,035
 - General Fund: \$10,763
 - Other Funds: \$ 9,130
- **3% Dues: 26**
- **Adj. Dues: 62**
- **Free: 5**

Financial commitments unresolved: 19

- **Have either made payment or initiated conversation: 11**
- **Have not had any contact re: dues: 8**

Beth El's Finance Committee

We had our monthly meeting this past Thursday, and we reviewed our current financial situation in quite a bit of detail. Here's a summary, focused mostly on what it means for the Board and for us as a congregation, rather than on specific numbers.

- This year (July 2021 through June 2022), we are likely to finish in better financial shape than we had budgeted for.
 - We had budgeted for a disturbingly large deficit (\$95,000), to be covered by using funds from our Carob Tree Initiative and one other large donation account.
 - In fact, we are on track to do better than budgeted on revenues: dues collections are coming in ahead of budget, and the fundraising around Lorel's retirement was even more successful than planned.
 - Our expenses are mixed - some better, some worse, some similar, some too early to tell - relative to budget.
 - As a result, we will still run a deficit, but the amount we'll need to take from our reserves will probably be closer to \$60,000 this year than to the \$95,000 we budgeted.
- Speaking of our reserves, the stock market has been kind to Beth El over the past several years, allowing the donations people made to our endowment funds to grow. While we need to treat these communal savings with care, and there are some restrictions on using these funds, this situation has two very important implications for Beth El:
 - We have sufficient reserves to continue to cover our chronic large operating deficits for quite a few more years. (There's a lot of uncertainty about what "quite a few more years" really means, but I believe it's at least 10 years, assuming no radical changes in our membership and dues revenues over that time.)
 - We have the money to pay for high-priority things identified by the Board, even if those things are pretty expensive. So if there is something important you believe that Beth El should buy or do, but you're concerned we can't afford it, please don't be afraid to ask. It won't be appropriate for us (as a Board) to say yes to everything, but we can afford the important things.

Congregation Beth El of the Sudbury Valley: Antiracism Resolution - Final 1/20/22

Introduction

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- Creates opportunities for learning about racism² in all its forms (individual, interpersonal, institutional and ideological), antiracism³, white supremacy⁴, and the experiences of Black, Indigenous and other People of Color, including those who are Jewish.
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Through this Resolution, the Beth El Board authorizes the leaders of the Antiracism Working Group to partner with clergy, staff and members of the Board to:

- Gain an understanding of the experiences of Black, Indigenous and other People of Color at Beth El and in other Jewish spaces.
- Evaluate Beth El's practices, policies, programs and norms through a racial equity lens and recommend improvements.
- Work together to overcome barriers to change and implement improvements.
- Monitor progress on an ongoing basis and submit an annual progress report to the Board and Congregation at its Annual Meeting.

By voting to approve this Resolution, the Beth El Board commits to give its time and attention to accomplishing the goals described above. The Board will re-evaluate and, if needed, update this resolution in two years.

Footnotes

1. "When we choose to be **antiracist**, we become actively conscious about race and racism *and* take actions to end racial inequities...Being antiracist is believing that racism is everyone's problem, and we all have a role to play in stopping it."
 - [National Museum of African American History and Culture](#)
2. "**Racism** is a system (consisting of structures, policies, practices and norms) that structures opportunity and assigns value based on...the way people look."
 - [Confronting Institutionalized Racism](#), Camara Phyllis Jones, MD, MPH, PhD
3. "**Antiracism** is the active dismantling of systems, privileges, and everyday practices that reinforce and normalize...white dominance."
 - [What Anti-Racism Really Means - and How to Be Anti-Racist](#), Kimberley Crenshaw, JD, LL.M
4. Once used only to describe racist groups such as the Ku Klux Klan, **white supremacy** is now used to describe a system of policies, practices and institutions built on the idea that people with white skin are superior to people with other skin colors. The system of white supremacy maintains white people's access to power, privilege and wealth while creating barriers to Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color accessing those same resources.
 - Adapted from [Building an Antiracist Vocabulary](#), White People Challenging Racism: Moving From Talk to Action

Appendix 1: What Do the Data Tell Us About Racism in America and the Jewish Community?

The data are clear: racism threatens our democracy and directly affects the Jewish community.

In the United States, federal government data demonstrate "the nation's persistent racial disparities in [wealth](#), [unemployment](#), [incarceration rates](#), [police killings](#), and more. Other studies clearly [show] the outsized impact of lack of [access to healthy food](#), [climate change](#), [unequal education](#), and [the coronavirus pandemic](#) on Black and brown Americans. There is also a life expectancy racial gap....Average life expectancy is 59 years old [in Roxbury] and...92 [in the Back Bay], according to a [2012 Virginia Commonwealth University study](#)." (Source: [Boston Globe](#), "[Race inequities: the facts](#)," Aug 12, 2021)

Jews of Color are estimated to comprise 12-15 percent of the American Jewish population, and this proportion is likely to increase in the future. (Source: [Counting Inconsistencies](#).) A 2021 survey of more than 1,000 Jews of Color showed that "a vast majority of survey respondents (80%) agreed they have experienced discrimination in Jewish settings. More than half reported experiencing discrimination in a Jewish spiritual community, congregation, or synagogue. Just 20% have not experienced discrimination in Jewish settings. Their experiences took the form of both microaggressions and overt challenges to the validity of their Jewish identities. In Jewish communal settings, JoC have been ignored and also showered with unwanted attention."

"[Survey] respondents described the variety of assumptions made about them. They have been repeatedly mistaken for security guards or nannies and presumed to be the non-Jewish partner or guest of a white Jewish person. In misguided efforts to make [Jewish spaces] more accessible and welcoming, JoC have been offered unsolicited explanations about Jewish rituals and practices. Many have been asked intrusive questions about how they became Jewish." (Source: [Beyond the Count: Perspectives and Lived Experiences of Jews of Color](#))

Appendix 2: Beth El History and Why Address Racism Now?

Founded in 1962, Beth El is proud of its long history of innovation. We have continually introduced new ways to enhance spiritual practice and advance social justice. We created the first feminist, egalitarian, gender-neutral prayer book in the U.S. which we still use today (in updated form, and now with English transliterations). We co-founded,

and continue to co-sponsor, Students Together Opposing Prejudice (STOP) for middle and high school students. We have long supported immigrant rights, declaring ourselves to be a sanctuary congregation in 1987 and again in 2017.

Our clergy performed its first same-sex spiritual wedding in 1992, twelve years before same-sex marriage was legally recognized in Massachusetts and 23 years before it became the law of the land in the United States. Beth El members canvassed for MA Ballot Question 3 in 2018 which assured transgender equity in public spaces in Massachusetts. We have provided free health care to those who can't afford it through the MetroWest Free Medical Clinic. And we are actively addressing climate change through Beth El's Green Team.

Our work is never complete, and we sometimes miss the mark. Following the 2020 murder of George Floyd, along with other police murders of Black Americans that were captured on cell phone videos, Beth El recognized the urgent need to step up to address racism and its deadly and destructive effects on Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC). To that end, the [Antiracism Working Group](#) was formed in 2020 to mobilize Beth El toward becoming an antiracist congregation. The purpose of this Resolution is to weave a commitment to antiracism into the entire fabric of our community.

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