

**Congregation Beth El of the Sudbury River Valley**  
**Virtual Board Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday February 10th, 2022 7:00pm**

**In attendance:** Ann Barysh, Barbara Miller, Carolyn Schwartz, Cynthia Myersberg, Debbie Glass, Jake Steinmann, Jerry Kazin, Jim Billings, Jocelyn Bailin, Josh Davidson, Judy Goldberg, Marla Lewitus, Michelle Fineblum, Neil Frieband, Sabina Pestka, Steve Probst, Staff: Beth Schine, Scott Newman, Shoni Aronovich, Rabbi Josh Breindel. Guests: Craig Ross, Jason Daniels, Gail Kazin, Liz David, Lizza Sandoe, Susan Tohn, Charlie Raskin, Sarah Green-Vaswani, David Waldman

**Welcome:** Jim Billings

**January Meeting Minutes:** Approved unanimously

**Staff Reports:**

**Rabbi's Report:** Rabbi Breindel

Full report attached

Report on CLI – Clergy Leadership Initiative. This is a program that RJB was invited to participate in about a year ago. The purpose is to drive exploration of and innovation in clergy leadership for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. At this point RJB embarking on a leadership-related project that will span the next 18 months. The project is designed around the question: “What are your greatest strengths as a congregation? What are your greatest challenges?”. Our greatest challenge that we face now is the need to build community; we don't really know one another, we feel siloed, we are disconnected. To this end the project will be about addressing this challenge and bringing our community together, spiritually, emotionally, personally, and, G-D willing soon enough, physically. RJB is working with a group and there are very concrete steps being put in place. The rabbi plans that he and the Board will be in core partnership, and the Board will be kept informed throughout the project.

**Temple Administrator's Report:** Beth Schine

Full Report attached.

**Education Reports:** Scott Newman and Shoni Aronovich

Full reports attached

**Committee Reports:**

**Tikkun Olam Report:** Michelle Fineblum.

See full report attached

**Talmud Torah Report:** Barbara Miller

Full report attached

## **Finance/ Treasurer Report: Neil Frieband**

Report attached

## **Clergy Search Update: Rabbi Breindel & Jim Billings**

We are into second round interviews, with four candidates still in play. We have had second round interviews with three of them and the last one will be this coming weekend. Overall, we received about 20 applications, held 11 first round interviews, and have winnowed that number down to four. Finalists will be invited to Beth El for a weekend of services and study.

## **Gender Neutral Bathroom proposal: R. Feynman, Susan Tohn**

PPT attached.

R Spoke about growing up at Beth El and how it has always felt like a second home. However, R now identifies as transgender, and while warm feeling and happy memories still exist, the lack of a gender-neutral bathroom feels most exclusionary and unwelcoming. Susan Tohn notes that of Beth El's 231 member families, there are at least two dozen that she can think of that have LGBTIQ family members. That is not insignificant!

Post-presentation Q&A

Do you have a preferred option (of the three options presented)?

A: We each have our personal preferences, including me. However, I will consider it successful and be happy with any of the three options, as long as something happens!

Q: what are the associated costs?

A: We don't have exact numbers. The least expensive option would be to keep our existing bathroom configuration, make the stalls floor-to-ceiling, and have all bathrooms be gender neutral. The second cost-wise would be the center bathroom carve-out. The most expensive option would be to add the bathroom(s) to the education wing.

Q: Concern that all feedback is to be gathered via focus group, as folks may not feel comfortable speaking out against GN bathroom(s) in a forum where the facilitators are personally impacted and the strong bias/emphasis is towards acceptance. Strongly encouraging the use of an anonymous survey so that all POV can be shared.

A: We have looked into that; the concern is that in nearly every single anonymous survey on this topic some people are incredibly hostile and rude. This group does not want to be subjected to that kind of vitriol. We are trying to figure out if there is a way to have an anonymous survey while eliminating, or greatly reducing, the likelihood of such an occurrence.

## **Beth El Technology Upgrade – Craig Ross and Jason Daniels**

Presentation attached

Craig and Jason presented plans for upgrading the technology setup at Beth El.

Over the past two years each of them has put in *at least* a half dozen hours per week, more on the High Holidays and more for any special event (ex: Shabbat Rinah) to set up and break down our audiovisual technology that we have been using since the start of Covid shutdowns.

In addition to all the time they have spent, they have also been bringing in pieces of their own equipment worth thousands of dollars to supplement what BE owns. This is deeply appreciated and is simply unsustainable.

Craig and Jason did countless hours of research to find out what other congregations, of all religious backgrounds, use for audiovisual technology. Many have become quite tech savvy and they learned a lot in the process. In addition, Craig and Jason researched the equipment thoroughly before putting together their proposals.

The proposals differ mostly in ease of setup and ease of running the system. Some, maybe even much, of the setup/maintenance work can be done by volunteers that Jason and Craig will train; we will also want to have paid support. There are existing companies that provide this kind of a/v support to organizations, so it should be relatively easy to find someone to work with.

There are two options for funding this upgrade:

1. We could bring it to a vote at the Annual Meeting
2. The Board could vote to appropriate the funds from the CTI (Carob Tree Initiative).

### **Virtual Hevra – Carolyn Schwartz**

Presentation attached.

Carolyn and a small team have refined the proposal for a virtual hevra membership category. The parameters are set out in the presentation. The main goal of this membership category would be to retain Beth El members who are moving away but still want to remain connected to Beth El. It would also offer a membership option to those with physical disabilities that preclude them being able to travel to BE. It would differ from the existing Friends of Beth El category in that they would essentially have all membership privileges except 1) voting 2) childrens' education, 3) life cycle event support, 4) in person attendance. Clergy support would be limited and at clergy discretion.

Zoom links would no longer be available on the public website; they would be sent out via email and could also possibly be posted in the members-only section of the website.

Q&A

Q: how much revenue will this bring in?

A: This is not supposed to be a money-making venture. The goal is to retain members who are moving away (along with some of the funds we lose when they leave), and possibly attract new members.

Q: Won't this keep people from being able to visit/access our community?

A: We will not turn anyone away. If they show up in-person they can come in and join us. When people keep showing up in person we eventually approach them about membership. The same would apply to the VH; after a certain number of virtual visits, we would approach them about membership.

Q: We have been increasingly collaborating with other congregations on programming, sharing websites and zoom links. Can we continue to do so without requiring those people to join our VH?

A: yes

Q: Will this prevent past BE members from showing up at Beth El?

A: We will not turn anyone away, virtually or in-person. We will ask them to join if they keep showing up.

**Executive Session invoked: 8:57pm**

**Meeting adjourned: 9:35pm**

**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

Gender-neutral bathroom

Technology update

Virtual Hevra

## Rabbi's Report Jan-Feb 2022

### Ritual

- Gratitude to Debby Young and Ann K for leading **Tu BiShevat seder (1/16)**
- Coordinated visit with our **third guest Shabbat leader, Zachary Mayer (1/28-29)**
  - Very positive feedback. Curious for board feedback.
- Coordinating visit with our **fourth guest Shabbat leader, Cantor Louise Treitman (2/11-12)** **Please make every effort to attend at least part of her visit.**

### Lifecycle/Pastoral

- **Led reflection circle** in response to events at Temple Israel in Colleyville, TX.
- **Increased congregational anxiety and concern about COVID.**
  - Increased sense of disconnection. We need to be open to new ways to create feeling of mutual support and coherence for our community.

### Community outreach/events

- **Coordinating MetroWest Shavuot celebration.**
  - Lorel has coordinated this in the past – I'm making very slow progress.
- **Presented at Hebrew College winter seminar**

### Programming and education

- Collaborated **with Anti-Racism on MLK event** featuring Rabbi Rachael Bregman (Saturday, 1/22). Will be meeting with her to discuss future programming.
- **Stephanie and I will co-lead monthly Jewish sci-fi book club (8:00 on 2/23)**
- Working with rabbinical student **Lisa Feld on a joint Midrash-writing workshop** at Beth El through the early spring.
- Coordinated with **Inclusion Committee for JDAIM through February.**
- **Tidbit of Torah on Sunday mornings** – weekly time to connect with students

### Administrative

- **2<sup>nd</sup> round clergy search interviews** in progress; concluding next week.
- Meeting with **new and prospective members**
- Coordinating with **professional staff** individually and collectively.

### Personal/Professional Development

- **Continuing to develop CLI project** to draw us closer as a community
- Will be taking a few vacation days at the end of the month to coincide with my kids' February break (will not affect Shabbat or emergency pastoral coverage)

## **Beth El Board of Directors Meeting February 10, 2022**

### **Temple Administrator's Report**

#### **Brief update on numbers:**

- Membership remains unchanged from last month at 231. (Last month's number should have been 231 – a member who had already been reported as resigned was included in the list in error, there have been no new resignations)
- Another \$45,087 in dues were collected in the last month, bringing total collected to date to \$415,657

#### **Problems/issues recently dealt with:**

- No heat in administrative office as well as other (fortuitously unoccupied at present) offices/ classrooms. Intermittent problem took two weeks to definitively diagnose and fix. Some disruption to working schedules for Svetlana and me. Thank you to Dave Waldman - the office is now habitable again
- Recent overnight power outage again resulted in disruption to phone system, highlighting greater urgency of deciding and acting on selection of new phone system. In process. Jerry and I are working on this.

#### **Projects:**

- Transfer from Chaverware to ShulCloud: Onboarding new database has begun - have done preliminary data transfer, will check for errors/anomalies so they can be fixed before doing final transfer. Starting with review of billing/bookkeeping data, so initial onboarding training involves Carolyn, Neil and me. After this phase, will include Svetlana as well. Will spend about 6-8 weeks in the onboarding process, learning the database, organizing data, before retiring old database and going live with new one.
- Setting up calendaring meeting for 2022-2023 - Have not had a true calendaring meeting in the last 3 years, primarily due to COVID. Program scheduling has been happening on a rolling basis, without a systematic coordination among different cohorts/committees. In spite of this, we have had some notable examples of collaboration/cross-fertilization (e.g., Chanukah event; The time has come! An email will go out this week inviting various VPs, committee chairs, and others whose roles make them stakeholders in planning the calendar for the year. Hoping to set a date in late March or early April.
- Employee Handbook – closing the loop on a project that was nearly completed with Laurie Margolies, Debbie and I have gone over the handbook and are wrapping up the few loose ends, expect to be able to report on this soon, likely in time for March Board meeting.

#### **Committees/members/groups with whom I'm involved or to whom I offer support**

- Member of COVID task force
- Meeting scheduled with antiracism group with VP of HR and me
- Phone call w/ R re: proposal for gender neutral bathroom
- Consulting and administrative support around various proposals, ideas, events:
  - Scotch tasting
  - Gift card drive for Afghan refugees
  - Rachael Bregman's talk and other MLK related programming

- Membership - Held training session in use of Pastoral Reach
- Purim planning
- Working with rabbi on program planning ideas that emerge directly from individuals rather than from “usual” committee structure, connecting to existing committees where there’s a fit, supporting directly in other situations.
- B/B mitzvah coordinators - had first meeting with next Torah class cohort in January; working with rabbi and Marla and Nancy around setting dates for Torah class, reaching out to potential new members currently in collaborative middle school.

**Things that I routinely spend a not insignificant portion of my time doing:**

- Working with members of committees who are planning events, providing support around creating emails, coordinating publicity schedule, Zoom hosting
- Responding to phone calls from members with questions about schedules, accessing video archives, Zoom links, billing
- Technology for Zoom/hybrid programs - Planning, setting up, testing in advance
- Weekly meetings with rabbi, president, and staff

# **Teen Education and Engagement Report**

**February 2022 - Shoni**

## **High School**

Getting ready for a more steady second semester, which hopefully will take place in person (HS students are *over Zoom*), especially when they do go to school every do.

All Siyyum students have topics for the final projects and the class is on track for a successful Siyyum night in early May.

## **Middle School**

Our Middle School students just began the STOP program.

Following Rabbi Breindel and me, Scott also finished teaching his unit about Tzedakah, which took place fully online.

Three MS families who joined this year attended the first Torah Class meeting and are on the way to become members (since they're in 6/7 grade they are not eligible for a free year, which prolongs their registration process comparing to younger families).

## **J-LOFT**

Gearing up to J-LOFT's spring semester, in which both Rabbi Breindel and myself will be teaching classes.

Applying for another Teen Impact grant from CJP for next year.

In communication with additional local temples about growing the J-LOFT partnership.

Plans are already being put in place for next year, including HiBuR returning, a service trip to Louisiana, as well as hosting the next MLK Day of Service. ●●●●●





## **Youth and Family Education Report – February 2022**

### **I. Virtual BE InSpirEd Continues and thrives!**

i. Decision was made to continue VIRTUAL through February break for safety ii. Families have especially appreciated all our efforts this year to keep people safe. Recap:

1. Tent for HHD
2. Classes utilizing larger open spaces
3. Mask requirements
4. Limiting traffic in building during BE InSpirEd!
5. Moving to virtual when numbers are elevated
6. Distancing when together
7. Eating OUTSIDE only

iii. We have found that online attendance has been good, and that we are not experiencing screen fatigue as much as last year. I believe this to be for two reasons:

1. They are on screens much less this year for school
2. We are constantly getting better at implementing the learning and delivery of the curriculum this way.
- a. I am very proud of our teachers for the progress they have made and their professionalism in this regard.

### **II. JDAIM**

a. In partnership with the JDAIM (Jewish Disability Awareness and Inclusion Month) we are:

i. Providing an inclusion-themed Tot Shabbat with an appropriate story about acceptance of ourselves the way we are and of those who seem different from us.

b. In PK-5, we will be focusing our Sunday gatherings on awareness about neurodiversity through songs and stories.

i. This will include a “Torah Godly-Play” presentation for our youngest learners that utilizes visual props and storytelling to discuss the Torah portion. The presentation is followed by a period of inquiry from the students into the story. This will be led by Judy Azer, our “Torah Godly Play” practitioner.

### **III. TOT SHABBAT**

a. This Friday 2/4 held virtually again.

b. Attendance has been good. Connections made are holding strong through the COVID surge which appears to be waning now. I am continuing to work toward keeping everyone connected and maintain relationships.

### **IV. GETTING OUT IN THE COMMUNITY**

a. We are currently working on scheduling more library visits for Rabbi Josh and me.

- i. We have had some recruiting success in the past with these holiday-themed teachings for tots at the Sudbury Library – so we are taking it on the road!
  - ii. Realized that when we develop a program, we can replicate it at more than one library.
1. We are reaching out to the surrounding towns to inquire about more visits so that we are better known in the community.
  - iii. These programs are a good investment because they target youngest families that may not yet be connected to a synagogue, and therefore could build our pipeline of school families.
1. We always try to ask for contact information and then invite to subsequent Tot- Shabbats, and school when age-appropriate.

## **V. HEBREW**

a. Last year when there was so much screen fatigue, the Youth and Family Education Committee made a decision to emphasize community and general Judaic learning to keep learning upbeat and fun. This meant a slight decrease in the titration of Hebrew being offered.

i. This, as expected, took a small toll on our Hebrew skills, and was unavoidable given the situation.

1. Until May last year, students had never met their teachers in person. Very hard to develop relationships and therefore expect Hebrew performance.

ii. This year, we have decided that because our families began this year in person and developed deeper relationships, it would be reasonable to approach Hebrew more intensely.

1. We have offered one-on-one Hebrew learning to every student each week, in addition to the Sunday classes.

a. This is going very well and is very high-fidelity learning.

i. We expect that Hebrew students will be caught up to pre- pandemic levels by late spring.

ii. Metrics in place to measure and be sure of progress.

iii. We are using online materials from our partner: Shalom Learning.

VI. Looking back:

1. Success! Tu Bishvat Family Program: “Learning with the Lorax”

i. Very successful virtual program for parents and students ii. Used the Dr. Seuss Story, “The Lorax”

1. Focused on ecology with teachings from Rabbi Josh and me

2. Students were offered a planting-parsley project that they did at home.

a. Planting kits were assembled and students picked them up.

b. Parsley planting linked to ecology and Passover

2. I was also honored to take part in and provide some music to the congregational Tu Bishvat seder later that day.

VII. Looking ahead: PURIM AND PASSOVER a. Purim

1. Planning an online faculty-led spiel.

2. Not sure if we will be in person or online so developing two plans:

1. Plan A- in case we will be in person safely
  - a. Whimsical spiel on Sunday morning
  - b. Carnival to follow – with COVID-safe alterations.

2. Plan-B

- a. Likely to include a video-presented spiel
- b. Possibly some online trivia, games, and videos
  - i. A 'virtual' game carnival

**b. Passover**

- i. Faculty – driven station-based round robin to teach about Passover focusing on:
  1. Parts of the Seder
  2. Four Questions – understanding and recitation
  3. Story of Passover

**Questions, connections, comments are always welcome. Email is best, as I am currently working from my home office, entering building as needed. [snewman@bethelsudbury.org](mailto:snewman@bethelsudbury.org)**

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



## Tikkun Olam Update – February 2022

Our fellow members are engaged in Tikkun Olam on many levels and in many ways. Join us in being inspired and consider joining in! Email [tikkunolambethel@gmail.com](mailto: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!*

### Antiracism Working Group:

On January 20 the Beth El Board of Directors voted to endorse an [Antiracism Resolution](#) articulating the Board's commitment to weave antiracism into the fabric of the congregation. The resolution was drafted at the Board's request by Board vice-presidents Michelle Fineblum and Jerry Kazin, in partnership with members of the Antiracism Working Group.

On January 25, Rabbi Josh Breindel, together with several other members of the Sudbury Clergy Association, sent a letter to the Sudbury Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Commission asking that the Commission explore and open a conversation about public markers in Sudbury and their depiction of Native Americans. Members of the Antiracism Working Group initiated and helped to draft the letter.

The Antiracism Working Group presented the following events 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. Presented in collaboration with the Beth El Adult Education Committee.
- Jan 14: *MLK Day Shabbat evening service*, featuring remarks by 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 was a co-sponsor).
- Jan 22: MLK Day Program, *Sharing My Experience as Rabbi of Brunswick, GA, 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?*, Limmud Boston, facilitated by Vivian Tseng and Lisa Goodman.
- Jan 23: *Antiracism Learning Group Discussion of Common Ground* by J. Anthony Lukas, facilitated by Ann Barysh and Lisa Breit. Thanks to the energy and commitment of members of the Antiracism Working Group, we accomplished the following in 2021: [Beth El Antiracism Working Group: 2021 in Review](#).

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

### Green Team:

- February 28<sup>th</sup> - Greening Your Home Heating & Cooling webinar. Question: *What's a heat pump?*
  - Answer #1 – they pump heat in during the cold days, and pump heat out during the hot days. Simple!
  - Answer #2 – they're the go-to answer when the time comes to replace your furnace.
  - Answer #3 – MA incentives just got a LOT better. Now's a really good time to make the switch. *Learn more from Steve Breit at a Green Team webinar on February 28<sup>th</sup>. Details and sign-up to come.*
- Considering an EV for your next car? Worried about their performance in the cold? Thousands of EV drivers drive through New England (and Norwegian!) winters. Learn more – sign up for the Green Energy Consumer Alliance webinar on driving EVs in winter [HERE](#). They've many videos demystifying EVs – check 'em out!
- Help! So many ways to tap electricity made from solar and wind. How to decide? Call the Green Team! Watch the recording of our January webinar on Greening your Home Electricity [HERE](#), read the presentations [HERE](#), and contact Barry Sheingold if you've questions. Everyone can go solar!

- Did you miss the December Green Challenge webinar? Want to join over 70 Beth El households taking climate actions? Click [HERE](#) for the recording to learn more and start your climate journey today!
- Climate video of the month: Watch *The Promise of Planetary Health* on YouTube– beautiful 10-minute video. [www.youtube.com/watch?v=9cZ0zBSJz\\_g](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9cZ0zBSJz_g)
- Check out more possible climate actions on the MassEnergize/JCAN platform – join a Beth El team and take action this month! Yes, in February. Yes, everyone. <https://community.massenergize.org/JCAN>
- Sign up for the GreenTeam list-serv by emailing [greenteam-subscribe@members.bethelsudbury.org](mailto:greenteam-subscribe@members.bethelsudbury.org)
- Which personal actions have the most carbon reduction impact? Not sure? Interested, but time limited? Contact John Harper at [jpharper47@gmail.com](mailto:jpharper47@gmail.com) to connect with a Green Team member who can help you sort through the climate information blizzard.

### **Sanctuary Committee:**

We sent out an email to the membership urging them to support two bills now before the Massachusetts state legislature:

the Safe Communities Act

the "Driver Bill"

Both of these bills, if passed, would eliminate a lot of fear experienced by immigrants and refugees and make it more possible for them to be productive members of our society. Although we have no way to know how many people from Beth El actually expressed their support for the bills, we do have some reason to think that it was significant. We hope to follow up on this and other such initiatives in the coming weeks.

For info on legislative action, contact Kath Bean ([kathleenbean@gmail.com](mailto:kathleenbean@gmail.com)). For info on the Ayala family, contact Judy Katz ([judy16k@gmail.com](mailto:judy16k@gmail.com)) or Judy Sletzinger ([jsletzinger@gmail.com](mailto:jsletzinger@gmail.com)). For info on Friday afternoon standouts or other Sanctuary Committee activities, contact Carl Offner ([carl.offner@comcast.net](mailto:carl.offner@comcast.net)).

### **The Antisemitism Task Force**

There's no better time to get involved in resisting the rise of antisemitism!

This month, members of the Antisemitism Task Force attended the first meeting of the ADL/URJ's Act Against Antisemitism Project, a new synagogue-based initiative for 2022. The exciting meeting included opportunities for synagogues across the country to connect, and provided resources on important issues, such as education and incident response. Beth El's Antisemitism Task Force, which started meeting last fall, will continue to meet regularly, with the ADL/URJ project now one of its major focal points. We welcome new members! Please email [tikkunolambethel@gmail.com](mailto:tikkunolambethel@gmail.com) for more info or let us know you're interested.

**Inclusion Committee:** We're currently involved in two areas:

**JDAIM:** The Inclusion Committee put together resources for the Beth El community for celebrating JDAIM, Jewish Disability Awareness, Acceptance and Inclusion Month. This included posting the JDAIM Resource Guide (webinars, books, films and organizations) and a list of events that will occur throughout the month on the Beth El website, Mah Chadash and Bboards. The committee recommended books about Disability and Inclusion for adults and children to be purchased for the Beth El library. Throughout the month, personal prayers, music, and d'vars will be presented about disability and inclusion at some of the Friday and Saturday night services.

**Gender neutral restrooms:** We have a gender-neutral restroom committee, operating under the authority of the inclusion committee. The co-chairs are Susan Tohn she/hers and R Feynman they/them. We met in January to learn about the Massachusetts laws around disability and inclusion and the Jewish perspective and how all of that connects to Beth El's 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.

For more information about the Inclusion Committee, contact Susan Tohn.

### **Assistance for a Grateful Sudbury Family:**

Once again, our members responded to the needs of Haitian refugees for warm winter coats and clothing. I gathered the donations and delivered them to a very grateful Sudbury family experiencing winter for the first time. For more info, contact Judith Lytel.

### **Tzedek Scholarship Fund:**

The Tzedek Scholarship Fund recently sent out an email and snail mail flyer introducing our current scholar, Laura Jaime Lopez. Laura plans to graduate in May with a BA in Criminology, a concrete step in her plan to become a Latina police officer. The Committee is preparing to review applications for Fall scholarship recipients. For info: Janet Buchwald (luckydog18@comcast.net).

### **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!

### **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](mailto: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](mailto:sudburyma@neighborbrigade.org)>.

### **MetroWest Free Medical Program:**

Please read our latest update at this [link](#)! A highlight this month for Beth El members is an interview with our friend, Volunteer Provider Karin Segal. For more information, contact Beth El member Gary Hirsch.

### **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](mailto:JordanOshlag@gmail.com).

### **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](mailto:isilver@framingham.edu).

### **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](http://www.jfcsboston.org/Volunteer/Volunteering-at-JF-CS) [www.jcrcboston.org/covid-19/](http://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,

MichelleFineblum,VP,TikkunOlam [tikkunolambethel@gmail.com](mailto:tikkunolambethel@gmail.com)

BethEl'sTikkunOlamwebpage

## **Talmud/Torah Adult Education Jan-Feb 2022**

Tune in Saturday evening February 5, for Leonard Saxe, PhD of Brandeis, an adviser to the Pew 2020 study on American Jewry. "The Myth of the Vanishing Jew"

Advanced Hebrew with Janet Buchwald

This class will resume on Monday February 7

Beginning Hebrew

Janet has agreed to hold a beginner class if interest is there

We will contact Scott and inquire of the community. We would need at least 4 students

Starting February 23, Our Sci-Fi Rabbi and Librarian Stephanie Bennett bring us . . .

The Fantasy and Sci-Fi Book Club

Each month, they'll offer a new title to read and join together to explore its themes and perspectives on Jewish life and culture. All are warmly welcome on this wondrous journey! Our first title will be [Central Station](#) by Lavie Tidhar. The group will usually meet on the last Wednesday of the month at 8 p.m. (not 7:30, as previously planned) unless pre-empted by a holiday.

March: New Offering, along with Ritual Committee

Led by Rabbi Breindel and 4th Year HC Rabbinical Student Lisa Feld Midrash class includes both reading and writing Midrash They are planning 5 sessions, starting the first Sunday of March from 10:00-11:30 AM

They have two main goals:

- Learning classic midrashim on the theme of suppressed voices (often women) and "othering" (often surrounding tribes)
- Composing original midrashim that give voice to those who have traditionally been underserved in our tradition
- Participants would be invited to share their midrashim with the community as a whole

Saturday March 12

High Spirits at Beth El: Online pre-Purim Scotch and spirits tasting.

Get in the mood for Purim with an online single-malt whisky and spirits tasting and Beth El fundraiser. We'll taste a variety of whiskeys from around the world as well as two other spirits, carefully chosen to complement the whisky. Once again the tasting will be facilitated by Raj Sabharwal, a certified Whisky Ambassador.

We are working on more programs to take us through the end of the year as well as learning how to get the word out beyond Beth El when necessary.

It was nice to see Beth El presenters welcomed at LimmudBoston and to hear others enjoyed their sessions. Rabbi Josh, Lisa Goodman, Vivian Tseng, Cat Kaner.

Thank you for your support and don't forget to take advantage of programs as well as encourage others.

Barbara Miller

VP Talmud Torah/Adult Education

**The following reports are linked as they are in a format that I am unable to include with this report:**

### **Finance Report:**

Beth El Finance Report 2022-02-03 v1.pdf

### **Virtual Hevra Presentation:**

Virtual Hevra Data Presentation 2022 Board Meeting\_updated.pdf



## Gender Neutral Bathroom ppt:

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/11be21\\_Nkr7inms6PKCYY1VN-lcV29dfzYDy1kyct5rw/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/11be21_Nkr7inms6PKCYY1VN-lcV29dfzYDy1kyct5rw/edit?usp=sharing)