

Congregation Beth El of the Sudbury River Valley

Board Meeting 10/14/2021. 7:30pm

In attendance: Steve Probst, Joshua Davidson, Steve Breit, Jim Billings, Jerry Kazin, Scott Newman, Rabbi Josh Breindel, Shoni Aronovich, Judy Goldberg, Marla Lewitus, Carolyn Schwartz, Deb Glass, Beth Schine, Cynthia, Neil Frieband, Michelle Fineblum, Jacob Steinmann, Cat Kaner, Barbara Miller

Rabbi's report: attached

Administrator's report – Beth and Steve Probst

- Current confirmed members (209) slightly ahead of where we were exactly a year ago. But number of members who are not yet confirmed is low, so estimated current membership of 229 is down a bit from a year ago.
- Dues payments and estimates so far are in line with budgeted dues revenue

School report – Shoni

- Shared pictures of face-to-face meetings recently
- 12 kids in grades 8-12
- Collaborative Middle School – grades 6-7 – about half the kids (8 of 16) are from Beth El
- JLoft – youth activity – Shoni runs it with the Rabbis from Beth El and other congregations (no other youth directors involved)
- Have scheduled a family event – mental health workshop – this Monday for the high-school students and parents

School report – Scott

- Students meet in the big white tent in the parking lot on Sundays; have subdivided it into four “classrooms”; tent will end at end of October because of the weather
- Parents hang around in the parking lot, bring lawn chairs, so good community-building
- Planning apple-picking joint with Tikkun Olam, with plan to donate some of the apples to Sudbury Food Pantry
- Total school enrollment (pre-K-5): 27 (and no 5th graders)
- Physical plant (building, classrooms, playground) in better shape now than before Covid
- Planning “family Shabbat” events for the coming year
- High School Students are eating dinner indoors – Marla

- Traditionally start with dinner (often pizza) before Monday evening classes. Would like Board's permission to start this again indoors. LS High School has cafeteria open with students eating in same way as pre-COVID

Motion: That we permit the high school students to remove their masks indoors while they are having dinner

Motion approved: 10 in favor, 3 opposed, 1 abstained

Zoom Membership – Carolyn

- See slide shown by Carolyn for scope, price, etc.
- Would require additional staffing if we commit to more online. Park Avenue synagogue website prices this at \$850
- Judy – Jocylyn reported that others were charging \$350-\$500 for this
- Jim – not going to decide tonight, need to do more research on what other synagogues are doing – pricing, restrictions, etc.
- Neil – also to figure out what our costs will be to do this
- Beth – important to recognize that this could imply closing some Beth El activities to non-members, which would be a big cultural change at Beth El

Clergy search committee – Bonnie Jenson and Howard Boles

Long discussion about draft job posting creating by search team

Remaining notes are incomplete.

Reports attached:

Rabbi report

School K-6 report

Tikkun Olam report

Steve Probst, filling in for Jocylyn Bailin

Rabbi Report Aug-October 2021

Ritual

- Crafted and led High Holiday services (Selichot, R”H day 1 and 2, Y”K) with Lorel
Special thanks to Craig for going far above and beyond in doing sterling work for our community. Thank you to Jason for superb camera work, to Mitch Kramer for coordinating and to the office for their diligence.
- Led Sukkot services with Lorel
- Worked with Aimee to lead Yizkor services (first service without Lorel)
- Coordinated with Carolyn and Dan Goodman (special thanks!) to craft and hold Simchat Torah services

Lifecycle/Pastoral

- Finn Doyle was called to the Torah as a bar mitzvah!
 - **Strong request:** join us this Saturday as Will Roberts is called to the Torah and 10/30 as Gabriel Newman will be called to Torah
- Lorel and I conducted wedding for Hannah Szydlo And Andrew Gardner

Community outreach/events

- L’hitra’ot Shabbat for Lorel – amazing thanks due to Marjorie and Shirley as well as their committee!
 - Facilitated Torah study with Rabbi Kushner, MC’ed gala evening

Programming and education

- Working closely with Scott and Shoni on planning the next academic year, including with fellow rabbis for J-LOFT
 - This Sunday will include a social action project for our Torah Class

Administrative

- This remains where I’ve invested most of my times, meeting/coordinating with:
 - **Strategic Plan committee**
 - **Education staff**
 - **Technology team** (hybrid services – Shabbat and High Holidays)
 - **Ritual committee**
 - **Search Committee**
 - **Membership committee** (and working with new/prospective members)
 - In addition to regular weekly meetings with all **professional staff** individually and collectively.

Professional Development

- Working hard on Clergy Leadership Incubator (CLI) programs.



Tikkun Olam Update – October 2021

Rabbi Breindel spoke movingly at the High Holidays about the importance of each of us deciding how we would act to repair the world, to perform Tikkun Olam, this year. Please read about the many ways our fellow congregants are engaged in Tikkun Olam and consider joining. 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!*

- **Haitian Refugee Family:** The desperate situation of refugees at the southern US border became very real to us when a Haitian refugee family arrived here, hosted by a Sudbury resident. They arrived exhausted, ill, and in need of virtually everything for basic survival and comfort. When the urgent call went out from the Sudbury Town Social Worker for the refugee family in need of immediate help, Beth El members were quick to respond. Within hours, donations of clothing, food, winter shoes and boots, baby items, and much more were offered. Over the next few days, the response was so widespread that it became apparent that some coordination was needed to ensure that the desired supplies went to the refugee family without overwhelming them, either with quantity or frequent visits. The young refugee family has been so very grateful, always ending a visit with "G-d bless you". We wish the same for them. *Thank you to Judith Lytel for all your work as coordinator liaison and thanks to the dozens of Beth El members who stepped forward so generously to give and drive items.*
- **The High Holiday Food Drive:** *Thanks to the many generous Beth El families who donated to the High Holiday Food Drive!* Our most recent tally shows over \$3800 in donations, plus \$226 in donations made directly to some of the four nonprofits! The funds will be divided equally among Sudbury Community Food Pantry, A Place to Turn Natick, Voices Against Violence, and Family Table. They each do wonderful work supporting our Metrowest neighbors. Thank you to our liaisons to the organizations: Deborah Oppenheimer, Shirley Hui and Esther Heimberg, to John Harper (Food Drive Coordinator Emeritus) for your guidance, and to Beth Schine, Svetlana Taksa and team for making it happen!
- **Sanctuary Committee:**
- **Ayala Family:** Our committee's work has recently been focused on supporting the Ayala family. We're now working on helping them move toward financial self-sufficiency. This is challenging, between the pandemic's impact on job availability, language difficulties and Ana's unexpected pregnancy. The Ayalas very much want to be self-sufficient, and we're working with them toward this goal. We still need to raise \$6000 to get to that point. We will continue to be involved with the Ayalas longer term, e.g., helping them deal with the schools, and supporting them in other ways.

Legislative activity: We will be re-invigorating our legislative activity.

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 (kathleenbean@gmail.com). For info on Friday afternoon stand-outs or other Sanctuary Committee activities, contact Carl Offner (carl.offner@comcast.net).

- **Anti-Racism Working Group:** This month:

Following the September program at Beth El organized by Elaine Barnartt-Goldstein - "What Does Rosh ha-Shanah Have To Do With Prisons?" - members of the Antiracism Working Group joined a rally in Framingham, signed petitions, and contacted our elected representatives to advocate for the passage of Bill S2030/H1905 which would place a five-year moratorium on prison construction.

The Antiracism Book Group organizers, Lisa Breit and Ann Barysh, are exploring ways to expand the scope of the group in the coming year. The book group, having almost completed its first year, has proved to be an incubator and anchor for people who want to learn more about anti racism work. Lisa and Ann hope to broaden next year's work to include movies, documentaries and other forms of art and information to deepen our learning. The Book Group will discussed *So You Want To Talk About Race* by Ijeoma Oluo in September. New participants are warmly welcome.

The Antiracism Programming team - Lisa Breit and Ann Barysh - is exploring the following programming for the coming year: environmental justice, antiracism legislation/policies at the state level, criminal justice reform, film and culture, and Jewish multicultural adoption. Antiracism programs will be open to the Metrowest Jewish community.

The Antiracism Working Group developed antiracist [Greeter guidelines](#) for ushers at Shabbat and High Holidays.

Members of the Working Group developed [inclusion and belonging language](#) to augment the accessibility language on Beth El's "About Us" web page.

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

- **Green Team:**

It's official! October's Climate Menschen are Craig Ross and Denise Nelken! New insulation and new windows have cut their energy consumption. Their mini-split heat pump units allow them to reduce their gas consumption still further. Since their Cape style home was not suitable for solar, they signed up for Eversource's Inspire program to green up their electricity. They recycle through Natick's fantastic recycling program. Their food waste magically turns into compost to feed the garden. And, the Monarch butterflies and the bees are loving the milkweed and other pollinator-friendly plants they've planted. Read more at the Green Team webpage under Repair the World: www.bethelsudbury.org/repair-the-world/green-team/

The Rabbi has set each of us two climate challenges – taking a climate action this year, and talking with a friend or family member. Which climate action will you take? So many ways. Learn more at <https://community.massenergize.org/JCAN/>.

The Green Team plans to celebrate the good actions already done by Beth El's climate action heroes! We'll be looking for your help in spreading the word. Stay tuned!

Want to try composting? It's easy. Don't have a place to compost? Check out Black Earth Compost's composting service: <https://blackearthcompost.com/> Contact Linda Klein with your questions at lindaklein840@gmail.com.

Just Thinking: Wondering how to start a climate conversation with a friend? Wondering what to say to your young kids? There are lots of resources. A Google search yields many links; here are three:

<https://www.nature.org/content/dam/tnc/nature/en/documents/lets-talk-climate-how-to-guide-pledge.pdf>

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/all-around/Pages/Talking-with-Children-about-Climate-Change.aspx>

Let Greta talk- <https://www.climaterealityproject.org/blog/7-best-ted-talks-about-climate-change>
Sign up for the GreenTeam list-serv by emailing greenteamsubscribe@members.bethelsudbury.org . Have questions? Contact John Harper at jpharper47@gmail.com to connect with a Green Team person.

Green Note about L'Hitraot Celebration: Those of you who attended the L'hitraot celebration for Lorel may have noticed the wonderful composting and all the trash averted. The Beth El team composted food scraps and used compostable serveware. They learned a lot from composting for this large event and hope to incorporate lessons learned into Beth El's regular practice. It does take some work and education. For more info: Linda Klein at lindaklein840@gmail.com.

- **Inclusion Committee:** The Inclusion Committee is engaged in several areas: We are excited to bring in Bamidbar, an organization that focuses on strengthening peoples' mental health coping skills, among youth and adults. We have run one program with them (9/1) which was fully subscribed and have another upcoming session on 10/18:
- Completed: September 1st from 7:00-8:15pm. "The physiology of Stress" - an interactional workshop where participants mapped their stress and how it evidences itself in their bodies and then coping skills.
- Oct. 18th from 7-8:30: an intergenerational program with high schoolers and their parents. The title is "Burnout and Boundaries."

The inclusion committee is talking with different constituent groups about gender neutral bathrooms. It is important to talk with many people to make sure we are focusing on inclusion. For more information, contact Susan Tohn at susanleetohn@gmail.com.

- **Support and Connection for Beth El members:**
Hevra Mishpacha continues to be here to support our community members. The need is always real, no matter what the season. In recent weeks we have provided multiple meals and phone support for congregants facing challenging circumstances. If you or someone you know are in need of congregational support please don't hesitate to reach out to Jocylyn Bailin at pi_joy@yahoo.com.
- **Tzedek Scholarship Fund:** The Tzedek Scholarship Fund Committee has reviewed applications and 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, contact Janet Buchwald at luckydog18@comcast.net
- **Tzedaka Hevra:** 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.
- **Blood Drive:** We are working on organizing another blood drive at Beth El after our successful drive this summer. Stay tuned! For information: Jordan Oshlag at jordanoshlag@gmail.com
- **MetroWest Free Medical Program:** Our Program has passed some significant milestones as we return from our long Covid hiatus and *begin seeing patients in person*. We saw our first Women's Health patients on July 17 and the first Adult Medicine patients on August 10. Our first Vision clinic will be on October 25. The visits are taking place at 110 Edgell Road in Framingham on the campus of First Parish Church, our other partner congregation. 110 Edgell is separate from the main church building which makes it more feasible to maintain Covid protocols. We're taking the usual Covid precautions you would encounter in any doctors office (pre-screening, patients waiting in their cars, etc.). We are continuing to meet the needs of many other patients virtually. Another milestone is that the Program just signed an agreement with AthenaHealth to acquire their Electronic Medical Records (EMR) system provided at no cost to free clinics. This system will support appointment scheduling and follow up and telemedicine as well as medical recordkeeping. We have also received several new grants which indicate our funders' continued confidence in our Program and its mission.

With all that's happening, *we need more volunteers and staff*. We're especially looking for physicians in adult general medicine and Psychiatry to add to our volunteer staff. We're also looking for nurses in adult medicine and Psychiatry for volunteer positions. For more info, please contact our Clinical Coordinator, Sandra Dickie (sandra@metrowestfreemedicalprogram.org). We also need someone for a communications position including maintaining web site and sending out newsletters. This could be a volunteer or possibly paid part time. Please contact Gary Hirsch at GBHirsch@comcast.net if interested.

- **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 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.jrcrboston.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, TikkunOlam tikkunolambethel@gmail.com



Youth and Family Education Report – Oct 2021

- I. The year has begun.
 1. Classes are happening in the tent. This was not a budgeted item.
 - i. Thanks to the allocations committee for approving and covering the expense
 2. A little trial and error with family Hebrew - levels have determined 2 classes needed.
 3. Class for family Hebrew currently combines 2nd and 3rd grade families
 - i. Too big
 - ii. Asked for funding for another teacher for family Hebrew so we can split the group.

Approved by allocations committee
 4. We renewed tent for another month, in hopes that weather is mild enough to use it.
 5. Just sent out a poll to the families to see what they would do, given the options when we can no longer use the tent:
 - i. Go indoors with masks and precautions
 - ii. Go virtual
 - iii. Anecdotes from the form-results still in collection:
 1. "If my kid needs to go virtual, I don't think he can make it"
 2. Virtual might be OK now that they are not doing it all day every day
- II. **HHD in a tent.**
 - a. `Was wonderful to get everyone together.
 - b. First time offering a "family service " – something that Rabbi Josh and I agreed was needed.
 - i. Rosh Hashana went well.
 - ii. Yom Kippur was moved to virtual – due to weather.
 1. While fine, Rosh Hashana was better!
 - iii. We learned a lot from what we did this year, and will build on it for next year.

III. SCHOOL YEAR

- a. Collaboration with the Tikkun Olam Committee
 - i. Met with Tikkun Olam (John H and Michelle) to discuss possible intersections between the school population and the greater congregation.
 1. "Apple Picking for a Purpose"
 2. Ongoing book drive – theme related. Spring: ecology; Fall: holidays
 3. Backpack drive at end of the year for kids starting school in Sept.
 2. I want to thank the teachers in front of this group who have been amazingly flexible during this time.

3. I encourage you, if you have not done so, to come down and experience a Sunday with us. It really has been very sweet and exciting.
 4. Parents have been gathering in the lot during school and seem to be getting to know one another – important to build community cohort. Starting to think about adult learning for them. Some helped with the Sukkah building and dismantling.
- IV. **ENROLLMENT** – we lost a family with 3 children and gained a family with 3 children. Two prospective in the hopper. New family started two weeks ago. The family that left has not given a reason why but quite resoundingly said that it is NOTHING to do with the program or Beth El and more to do with their personal life.
- V. **Building update:**
- a. **New furniture is in the works for classrooms – time frame unclear**
 - b. **Water fountain maintenance was performed**
 - b. Playground being cleaned and spruced up
 - c. Education wing is being cleaned and painted. Some of that is done. I have asked to clear the rooms of any remaining attic or celebration debris so that we can return to rooms if parents are comfortable.
 - d. We have started having bagels and hot chocolate and coffee on Sundays again. Just outside.
- VI. **Looking ahead**
1. **The early high holidays means that we have a number of ‘normal Sundays’ coming up which are more than welcome at this point. Next big event will be Chanukah.**
 2. **Rabbi Josh and I have been discussing a congregational Hannukah celebration for families. This, hypothetically would be the first of 5 family shabbats this year – a new program where we provide a welcoming and appropriate Shabbat experience for all ages.**
- VII. **QUESTIONS or COMMENTS?**
- a. Email Scott snewman@bethelsudbury.org
- VIII. Good and Welfare:
- IX. My Son Gabriel’s Bar Mitzvah will be on the 30th. We won’t have many guests from out of town,

but we will have a larger celebration later in the year when it is safer to do so. All are invited to stop by our place Saturday afternoon after services between 3-6pm on the 30th. 9 Oak Knoll Rd, Natick. We will have a tent on our front lawn for COVID safety. My family is honored to share the simcha with the community.

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