



BETH
CHAIM
CONGREGATION

Celebrating
Spiritual
Community
Since 1978

THE STAR

VOLUME 45 | ISSUE 2 | MARCH/APRIL 2023 | ADAR/NISAN/IYAR 5783

*Chag Pesach
Sameach*



Happy Purim!

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NOTE: The STAR is currently only available in digital format.

The Digital Color Edition of The Star is available online. To view/download The Star and enjoy the benefits of hyperlinks, go to the Beth Chaim website: <https://www.bethchaim.com/news/beth-chaim-star>.

You can also find the link to the Digital Color edition on our Members Only Facebook page and in the weekly Happenings.

Follow us on Social Media:



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Our Mission

At Beth Chaim Congregation, we are reimagining how we experience and celebrate Judaism, and how we are a source of belonging that enriches and uplifts the lives of our members. Our approachable, flexible worship, grounded in tradition yet modernized, embraces spirituality and soulful Jewish practice.

- We welcome with warmth all who seek a connection to Jewish life regardless of their religious beliefs and experiences. We **embrace Jews of all backgrounds** as well as those new to Judaism **and interfaith relationships** and meet our congregants wherever they are on their **Jewish journey**.
- We are your Jewish **community** in the East Bay. We celebrate your simchas, and we are there with chesed in your times of need. We are your people, your community, a place to belong.
- Our **Sisterhood, Brotherhood, youth opportunities, and events** for all can fill your Jewish soul.
- **We learn.** Our Tree of Life preschool, Beit Midrash, B'Nei Mitzvah program and adult education opportunities provide lifelong enrichment of your Jewish experience.
- We are a **tranquil place of togetherness** and Jewish spirituality in the beautiful Danville hills.

Are you, or someone you know, being abused?

If you need help, please contact:

SHALOM BAYIT HELP HOTLINE AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Helpline: (866) 742-5667 (SHALOM-7)

Toll-Free within the Bay Area

(510) 845-7233 (SAFE) outside the Bay Area

(650) 574-7233 (SAFE) Peninsula office

For questions or support, contact:

Shalom Bayit

(510) 845-8874

communities@shalom-bayit.org



COMING SOON! Events not to miss in March & April

Mark your calendar for these upcoming events. *Check the weekly Happenings and [Beth Chaim website](#) for details, to RSVP, and for updates or changes.* Also visit our website for a full listing of [Worship Services](#).

Date	Event	Day	Time	Where
MAR 2	Sisterhood Monthly Walking Group	Thursday	9:30 AM	Lunardi's Parking Lot
MAR 2	Film "Perfect Strangers" EB Jewish Film Festival	Thursday	7:00 PM	Century 16, Pleasant Hill
MAR 4	Community Purim Celebration	Saturday	7:00 PM	BCC
MAR 5	Torah Tots – Purim!	Sunday	10:00 AM	BCC
MAR 6	Gianni's Tips for Change Beit Midrash Fundraiser	Monday	6:00 PM	Gianni's Italian Bistro, San Ramon
MAR 10	Tot Shabbat	Friday	5:45 PM	BCC
MAR 10	Sharing Shabbat: Breakfast for Dinner!	Friday	6:00 PM	BCC
MAR 10	Ruach Service	Friday	7:00 PM	BCC
MAR 11	Aviva Feder Bat Mitzvah	Saturday	10:00 AM	BCC
MAR 12	Holocaust Survivor Program	Sunday	11:00 AM	BCC
MAR 13	Genealogy Club	Monday	7:00 PM	BCC
MAR 16	Chazanut Monthly Circle	Thursday	7:00 PM	BCC
MAR 17	Sharing Shabbat Together – Israeli Dancing	Friday	6:00 PM	
MAR 19	Beth Chaim Town Hall Meeting	Sunday	9:30 AM	BCC
MAR 21	Sisterhood Book Club	Tuesday	7:00 PM	BCC
MAR 24	Sharing Shabbat Together	Friday	6:00 PM	BCC
MAR 27	Sisterhood Rosh Chodesh Nisan Gathering	Monday	7:00 PM	BCC
MAR 28	CCJCC Discussion about Israel	Tuesday	7:00 PM	Virtual
APR 5	Office Closed for Passover at noon	Wednesday	12:00 PM	
APR 5	Passover begins at sundown	Wednesday		
APR 6	Office Closed for Passover	Thursday		
APR 6	Sisterhood Monthly Walking Group	Thursday	9:30 AM	Lunardi's Parking Lot
APR 6 - 13	PASSOVER			
APR 10	Genealogy Club	Monday	7:00 PM	BCC
APR 14	Sharing Shabbat Together	Friday	6:00 PM	BCC
APR 16	Torah Tots - Passover	Sunday	10:00 AM	BCC
APR 18	Sisterhood Book Club	Tuesday	7:00 PM	BCC
APR 20	Chazanut Monthly Circle	Thursday	7:00 PM	BCC
APR 21	Tot Shabbat	Friday	5:45 PM	BCC
APR 21	Sharing Shabbat: Dinner on the Patio!	Friday	6:00 PM	BCC
APR 21	Shabbat Service	Friday	7:00 PM	BCC
APR 22	Eva Yankilovich Bat Mitzvah	Saturday	10:00 AM	BCC
APR 23	I-SRV Earth Day Celebration	Sunday	1:00 PM	Peace Lutheran Church
APR 25	Sisterhood Rosh Chodesh Iyar Gathering	Tuesday	7:00 PM	BCC
APR 28	Sharing Shabbat Together	Friday	6:00 PM	BCC
APR 29	Alexis Blackman Bat Mitzvah	Saturday	10:00 AM	BCC
APR 30	ISRAFest75 Celebration	Sunday	10:00 AM	Stone Valley MS

Ongoing Weekly Activities

Religious School	Sundays	9:15 AM	BCC
Bagels & Blocks	Mondays	9:00 AM	BCC
Brotherhood Hiking Group	Wednesdays	8:30 AM	
Mah Jongg	Fridays	1:00 PM	Virtual

Looking for more activities? [CCJCC Under One Tent](#) offers a calendar of offerings in the East Bay area. Click on the image for details.



Special Events and Workshops

Join us for spirit filled evenings with our Beit Midrash Students!

Rockin' Ruach
Tot Shabbat & Shabbat Service

Fridays
March 10 & April 21

5:30pm Tot Shabbat
6:00pm Community Dinner
7:00-8:00pm Shabbat Service

The Beit Midrash at Beth Chaim

Bagels & Blocks

Mondays at 9am
contact us for dates!

Beth Chaim Sanctuary

Bring your little one and schmooze with other caretakers!
Toys and treats provided.
Intended for babies 0-2, but older kiddos welcome!

Contact Ed. Dir. Shelby Meyer Margolin for more info
educator@bethchaim.com



Beth Chaim Congregation is proud to sponsor
"Perfect Strangers".

Thursday, March 2, 7:30 PM

7 childhood friends meet up for dinner with unexpected consequences. A delight!

For more information about the film, passes & tickets:

www.eastbayjewishfilm.org



BETH CHAIM'S PURIM FEST
 Saturday March 4 at 7:00pm
FUN FOR ALL ADULTS!

Axe Throwing
 Magician
 Costumes optional
 Snacks
 Basketball shooting
 Balloonist
 Caricaturist

Adult beverages sponsored by Brotherhood &
 Hamantaschen by Sisterhood

Gianni's
 ITALIAN BISTRO

TIPS FOR CHANGE

BETH CHAIM RELIGIOUS
 SCHOOL FUNDRAISER

MONDAY, MARCH 6

100% OF TIPS & 10% OF
 FOOD/DRINK ORDERS GO
 DIRECTLY TO THE BEIT MIDRASH!

FOR RESERVATIONS:
 CALL 925-820-6969
 OR
 GO TO GIANNISSANRAMON.COM

Be welcomed & served by BCC
 Board of Directors & Members!

Open for indoor & outdoor dining or take-out/delivery
 2065 San Ramon Valley Blvd

Shabbat
 Together!
 Dance
 Together!

Mar 17th

BYO Dinner 6:00pm
Folk Dance 7:00pm

Beginner Israeli Folk Dancing with Dorrit
 Hoffman.

Dorrit will show us the basic steps and lead
 us in easy-to-follow classic Israeli tunes and
 dances

RSVP for Israeli Dancing
March 17

**A
 CONVERSATION
 WITH
 HOLOCAUST
 SURVIVOR
 RALPH SAMUEL**

**Sunday March 12, 11:00 am at
 Beth Chaim Congregation**

Join us as we listen to Ralph share about his
 childhood as a Kindertransport child and about
 his life's journey from Germany to the U.S.

Open for Q&A after presentation

Masks will be provided and required for all ages



**Celebrate Israel's 75th Birthday
at
ISRAFEST75**

Sunday, April 30, 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Family Programming, Interactive Youth Activities (ages 3-13), Music, Israeli Dancing, Lectures, Yoga with a Hebrew Twist, Films, Food and More!

Free Admission. Find out more at <https://www.ccjcc.org/israel75>

Presented and underwritten by the Contra Costa JCC
Cosponsors include Beth Chaim Cong., Cong. Beth Emek, Cong. B'nai Shalom, Cong. B'nai Tikvah, Consulate General of Israel, CCJ Day School, CC Midrasha, Diablo Valley Hadassah, Shevet Egoz, Temple Isaiah.



We acknowledge and honor the Bay Miwok, Ohlone, Northern Valley Yokut tribes, and all of the indigenous people of the lands where we reside

Spiritual Sustenance: refreshment, guidance, transformation, vision, action

I-SRV Earth Day Festival: Sowing Seeds of Hope

April 23, 2023, 1:00 – 4:00 PM
Peace Lutheran Church
Danville

from Dominion to Stewardship

awe wonder curiosity learning

Interfaith of the SRV
Diverse in Expression
United in Purpose

Connecting with people who value the earth and share concern for the ecosystem's wellbeing

Photo by Anna Goncharova on Unsplash

Editor's Note

by Deborah Wechsler

Our community newsletter, the Beth Chaim Star, is published six times each year. Regular sections include:

What's Happening Next (Calendar)
President's Letter
Rabbi articles
Spiritual Life / Jewish Holidays / Lifelong Learning
Articles about recent activities pref. with photos
Membership
Sisterhood & Brotherhood

Gratitude Notes and Donations
PreK: PJ Library / Torah Tots / Tree of Life
Beit Midrash, Bnei Mitzvah, Contra Costa Midrasha
Yahrzeits
Wedding & Member Anniversaries; Kids' Birthdays
Simchas (Weddings, Births, etc)

The deadline for submitting articles is the 20th of the month preceding publication, as follows:

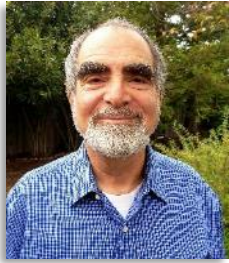
January (1st week) for Jan/Feb issue **due Dec 20**
March 1 for Mar/Apr issue **due Feb 20**
May 1 for May/June issue **due Apr 20**

July 1 for July/August issue **due June 20**
Sept 1 for Sept/Oct issue **due Aug 20**
Nov 1 for Nov/Dec issue **due Oct 20**

Please contact me (debwex52@yahoo.com) with your thoughts and ideas for regular sections or special articles.

Rabbi Dan's Reflection

By Rabbi Dan Goldblatt



Interfaith Earth Day Festival

So many of us are concerned about the environment. We read articles from sources we trust, and the news often seems quite depressing. We wonder what can we do to make a

difference for our children and grandchildren?

Sunday, April 23rd, I-SRV, the Interfaith of the San Ramon Valley is planning an afternoon festival that invites us to gather with others who share our deep concerns and questions to learn about opportunities to make a meaningful contribution to environmental issues here in our own valley and stand together with others who wish to do the same. The Town of Danville is one of the many co-sponsors of this festival that will feature music, art exhibits, movement (including a labyrinth walk), presentations, panel discussions and children's activities that celebrate our ability to care for the earth and focus our energies on environmental well-being in our area.

There will be stories of hope that will inspire and uplift the work people are doing and solutions we are finding in our local community. We will have a land acknowledgement and will honor the history of the indigenous peoples who lived here.

We have invited eco-friendly food trucks with food provided from the diverse cultures in our area for a very family-friendly afternoon.

Please stay tuned as more specific details are shared. Plan to attend with your family and friends. Beth Chaim is honored to be a co-sponsor of this important multi-faith, multi-cultural Festival to honor work being done in our area to raise environmental awareness and foster greater involvement in this essential work.



President's Message

by Arie (AJ) Cohen, President

Beth Chaim Considering Affiliation with the Union of Reformed Judaism

I want to let you know about a very important change that we are looking at in the near future for Beth Chaim.

As we know, there are three major issues that our community needs to address this year: our upcoming rabbinic transition, growth as a congregation and alleviating some of our financial burden.

With that in mind, I met with Evan Levy, a current board trustee, and Marc Feder, a current board VP, who are heading up the Rabbinic Transition committee, bringing a larger idea that could potentially help address these three main concerns for our community. The resulting proposal is that we change our current status as a non-denominational congregation and become a Reform congregation affiliated with Union of Reformed Judaism (URJ).

When Debbie Roof, our current Director of Membership meets with potential members for the first time, one of the first questions she is asked is "What Jewish Movement is Beth Chaim affiliated with?" Since we are not currently affiliated, it is not an easy question to answer. We are not affiliated with the



Reconstructionist movement, but we do use their books of worship. Rabbi Dan is ordained in the Renewal approach to Judaism, which is trans-denominational.

Affiliation with the Reform movement has many potential benefits. The Jewish Reconstructionist Federation has approximately 100 houses of worship and 65,000 members across the US. The Reform Movement (URJ) has approximately 900 houses of worship and 1.5 million members. The Reform Movement is the largest growing movement when compared to Orthodox, Conservative and Reconstructionist. When I recently sat down with Rabbi Dan to discuss our plans, he mentioned that the current trajectory of Judaism suggests that within the next 10-15 years there will be only two major movements, Reform and Orthodox.

Affiliation with the URJ will also support our children in many different ways, which we anticipate will attract families with young children. The URJ offers 15 different summer camps, a local, state-wide and national youth group program (National Federation of Temple Youth or NFTY), Israel programs for high school students, and Youth Leadership Training. One of our goals is to attract families into our congregation and this will help us to accomplish that goal.

The URJ will help us with our Rabbinic transition. We can work directly with the URJ to help us recruit and transition with our next rabbi. They will offer support and guidance during the transition process.

I also discussed this upcoming rabbinic transition in detail with Rabbi Dan. We have been extremely blessed to have had him lead our congregation for almost 30 years and our goal is nothing less than giving him the *Kavod* "honor and respect" that he deserves as he transitions into his next chapter.

Rabbi Dan is fully committed to doing what is best for us as a community. We have included him in our discussions and look forward to his continued support. During our last board meeting one of our members asked him, "If we affiliate with the Reform movement, will we lose our sense of who we are as a Beth Chaim community?" Rabbi Dan's response was quick and simple, "No, I believe it will only get stronger."

There are many other reasons that we feel affiliation is the right choice for us.

- Congregational services at discounted costs will make it easier and less expensive to run our congregation.
- Assisting with developing leaders for change within our congregation, our community and Israel.
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and Social Justice Training
- Partnerships with the Anti-Defamation League and Secure Community Network.

The benefits of being affiliated with the URJ come with a financial cost. We have worked out a financial plan with the URJ that is extremely beneficial to our congregation. They have offered us our first year at no cost and a slow ramp up to full costs that will take four years. The terms are not prohibitive, and if we use all that is offered to us our growth should offset these costs. This ramp up period will give us the time to grow, to embrace our partnership, to become more financially secure, and to solidify our location here in Danville as the Reform congregation of choice.

Beth Chaim Congregation has the opportunity to place ourselves in front of the curve. We intend to be proactive, instead of reactive to the shift and merging of these major trends in organized Judaism.

Our board has voted unanimously to proceed towards Reform affiliation through the URJ. We have support of our Brotherhood and Sisterhood leadership and are now looking to our community for your support as well. **Please join us for a Beth Chaim Congregation Town Hall on Sunday March 19th at 9:30 AM** in the sanctuary to be a part of this historic moment. This will be a meeting where we can educate our community and also seek your much needed input.

In the meantime, please reach out directly to me, Evan or Marc with any questions you may have.

B'Shalom, Arie Cohen and the Beth Chaim Board of Directors

Trustees added to Beth Chaim Congregation 2023 Board of Directors

At the first Board meeting of each year the new Board nominates and votes on up to three additional members, at Trustees. This position is meant to be an honor and the appointment must be voted on and approved by a 2/3 majority of the Board. Trustees are selected for their demonstrated experience, skills, and passion for the success of Beth Chaim Congregation. We are pleased to communicate that the following people were appointed as Trustees at the January Board meeting.

Martin Fishman, Trustee

Martin and Karyn Fishman and children Joshua and Sara have been Beth Chaim Congregant members since 1997. Martin has served on the Board of Directors since 2005. His early engagement was to capitalize and ensure the future of Beth Chaim's land investment, in our Holbrook property, becoming a Jewish Home in Danville. After successfully leading a fundraising team, obtaining the largest single donor (Nathan Shappel) providing \$1 million + \$1.5 million from our members, we successfully raised \$2.5 million combined. Martin then facilitated and oversaw the Building Committee Construction and delivered our new HOME, 1800 Holbrook Drive, in 2007. Martin served as President (2007-2008), Past President and has served as a Trustee for 12 years. Martin is an accomplished global senior executive who has managed technology companies for over 30 years including PC's, displays, software, peripherals, SaaS, IoT and, consumer electronics.



Evan Levy, Trustee

Evan and his wife Stacey have been members of Beth Chaim for 23 years. Their three children have all gone through the Beth Chaim religious school and B'nei Mitzvah program. Evan has served on the Beth Chaim board in previous years as Treasurer and Social Action Chair. Evan was the Finance Officer for the City of Livermore for 15 years before retiring. Currently, Evan volunteers as a fundraiser and advocate for Shalom Bayit and is a home chef for Community Kitchens. If you drive the Camino Tassajara corridor on any given day you will see Evan walking his two beloved goldendoodles.



Judith Markowitz, Trustee

A native of East Hampton, New York, where her parents were founders of the Jewish Center of the Hamptons, Judith began her life-long journey there to create a Jewish life for herself and her family. After graduating from Ithaca College, with a dual major in classical flute performance and business, Judith began an extensive career in Human Resources. She has held senior HR positions at American Express, Jordan Marsh and Macy's. Judith's desire to contribute beyond volunteering in her community led to new career opportunities as a Jewish communal professional. She has held director roles at The Reutlinger Community for Jewish Living, Beth Chaim Congregation, the Contra Costa JCC, The Jewish Federation of the East Bay, and currently works at Hebrew Free Loan Association of San Francisco. Judith has been an active volunteer in our Beth Chaim community serving for eight years on the board of directors, High Holy Days chairperson, and on a variety of committees and special initiatives. Judith is best known in our community for the spirituality and singing voice she brings as a lay leader for our religious services. Judith and her husband Glen Schabacker have been members of Beth Chaim for 27 years. Their daughter Shoshanah, who grew up in our community, now resides with her husband Leo in Seattle. Judith and Glen live in San Ramon and feel deeply blessed to be a part of the Beth Chaim community.



Passover – Tradition! (or Not)

The 14 Steps of a Traditional Seder

By Rabbi Barry D. Lerner

This article provides a breakdown of the seder: each major component and the order in which it traditionally occurs. For more details, including readings, words to the blessings and other materials, you will want to consult a [Haggadah](#).

Note: Before the seder begins, the host traditionally lights the holiday candles and say the blessing.

Barukh atah Adonai Eloheynu melekh ha-olam asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu lehadlik ner shel yom tov.

1. *Kadesh* — Kiddush

On Friday evening add the first portion (biblical selection on the Sabbath). On Saturday evening, add the Havdalah section separating sanctity of Sabbath from sanctity of holy day.

2. *Urhatz* –Wash

Washing preparation for eating vegetable entree (Karpas). Since the need for such washing was questioned, no blessing is required. It is good to go around to each of the participants, pouring water over the hands from a pitcher into a bowl.

3. *Karpas* — Spring vegetable

Any vegetable that is not bitter may be eaten. Among vegetables used are celery, parsley, onion, and potato. Dipped in salt water for purification and seasoning they remind us of the vegetation of spring, or the baby boys cast in the Nile, or the tears shed by the slaves. The blessing said is the usual benediction of thanks before eating any vegetable.

4. *Yahatz* — Divide

Break the middle matzah into two parts. Take larger part, wrap it in napkin and save for the conclusion of the meal. Try—but don't try too hard—to keep it from being stolen by the children because it must be available for the end of the meal.

5. *Magid* — Narrate

- Lift up the plate with the symbols of affliction. The traditional invitation to the stranger to join the seder is offered.
- The wine cups are refilled.
- The youngest person at the seder asks [the Four Questions](#).
- The Response to the Questions. Read portions in unison. Have other portions recited by different individuals at the table.
- [The Four Children](#)
- [The Ten Plagues](#). Since our “cup of salvation” cannot be regarded as full when we recall the suffering of the Egyptians, a drop of wine is removed from the cup with the mention of each plague.
- *Dayenu* (It Would Have Been Enough). Let all present join in the refrain thanking God for all the miracles he bestowed upon the Israelites.
- The cup is again lifted in joy, thankful for God's deliverance, ready to praise Him with the first word of the Psalm of praise (Hallel).
- Two Psalms of the Hallel.
- Drink the wine, with the blessing of salvation.

6. *Rohtza* — Wash

Ready to eat, the hands are washed before the meal, as is required at any meal similar to the previous hand-washing. Now, though, all wash with the usual benediction as the hands are dried.

7. *Motzi-Matzah*

The first food at the meal is, as usual, bread (naturally, however, this bread—the matzah—is unleavened bread). The usual *berakhah* [blessing]—the *motzi*—is recited. However, before eating the matzah, a second *berakhah*, thanking God for the requirement to eat matzah, is recited.

8. *Maror* — Bitter Herbs

Small pieces of horseradish are dipped into the haroset (symbolic of mortar) to indicate that overemphasis on material things results in bitterness. Before eating it, a berakhah thanking God for this requirement is recited. Some people mix the ground horseradish with charoset, combining this with “IX.”

9. *Korekh* — Hillel Sandwich

In ancient times, the Talmudic scholar Hillel ate the three symbolic foods (lamb, matzah, and bitter herbs) together so that each mouthful contained all three. Thus the symbols of slavery and of liberation were intermingled. Now that we do not have the Paschal lamb, we eat just the matzah and horseradish in a “Hillel sandwich”. No special blessing is said, but we do read the words recalling Hillel’s practice.

10. *Shulhan Orekh* — Meal

The joyous feasting gives us the feeling of human fellowship in harmony with God.

11. *Tzafun* — Dessert

Now the afikomen. Either someone has “stolen” it, or parents can hide the afikoman when it is first put aside (Step 4) and let the children look for it during the meal to win a prize.

12. *Barekh* — Grace After Meals This is the usual “*bentschen*,” grace after meals, including, of course, thankfulness for the Passover holiday. Fill the cup before this grace and drink the third cup at its conclusion, with the usual “*bore p’ri hagafen*” blessing.

At this point in the seder, we **Open the Door for Elijah**, who by tradition is the forerunner of the Messiah, the harbinger of hope. Sing “*Eliyahu Ha-navi*.”

13. *Hallel* — Psalms of Praise

The rest of the evening is given over to hymns and songs. The Hallel is completed, and all join in singing songs: *Adir Hu*, *Had Gadya*, etc.

14. *Nirtzah* — Conclusion

With the traditional formula, the seder is concluded, and we sing *L’Shana HaBa’ah B’Y’rushalayim* [Next Year in Jerusalem].

How to Lead a Kick-Ass Seder

Published in jewbelong.com

Passover is fast approaching, and Jews the world over are planning their Seders. But the sad truth is so many Seders are as dull as a piece of plain matzo. But they don’t have to be! Just follow these simple steps to host a Seder that will seriously kick some ass.

1. THE SEDER POLICE: There are none. Yes, there are certain traditions to a Seder. In fact, the word Seder means “order,” and there is a specific order that you are supposed to follow. But if you’re the Seder Leader (SL), you are the master of the table. If you want to have a rip-roaring Seder, do whatever feels right. We think most Haggadahs are deadly dull. So, many people take control and make their own Haggadahs. Feel free to download ours or make your own at www.haggadot.com. (But for God’s sake, don’t wait until the day before Passover!)

2. WATCH OUT FOR TOO MUCH HEBREW (AKA DON’T PLAY “WHO’S THE BETTER JEW?”): You know that uncomfortable feeling when you’re at a Seder with a bunch of people, there are only four who know the words to some Hebrew song, and the rest sit there uncomfortably while they stumble through it? We do, too. And it can make people feel like bad Jews. This is NOT the feeling you want to elicit at your Seder. So, if you’re going to include Hebrew, make sure your guests understand it, or keep it to a minimum.

3. HATERS GONNA HATE: Last year, our friend Jenna led a Seder, and just as everyone was sitting down at the table, Jenna’s mother-in-law proclaimed, “Let’s make this quick; I’m hungry!” Are you kidding? Nothing like a comment that takes the wind right out of your sails. But know that problematic people will make negative comments, and be ready

to power through it. (At the end of the night, Nasty Mother-In-Law actually said it was the best Seder she had ever been to. Oh, snap!)

4. PREPARE, PREPARE, PREPARE: If SLs spent as much time preparing their Seder service as cooks spend preparing the Seder meal, celebrating Passover would be a lot more meaningful. But what happens all too often is that SLs think they can just wing it – and they can't. You have to spend real time preparing your Seder. It will make all the difference. Seders do not have to be boring, but SLs do need to step it up.

5. KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE: Who's going to be at your Seder? If you're having Jews and non-Jews, then be prepared to explain a lot of stuff. Even if it's only Jews coming, you should still give explanations. We've been going to Seders our entire lives, and it wasn't until we put together our own Haggadah that we really learned the details. If you are hosting a cerebral group and want to go around the room and ask what freedom means to each of them, go right ahead; but don't try that with every crowd. If you're having a bunch of kids over, make sure you either serve appetizers or have snacks on the table. And don't be opposed to setting up *A Rugrats Passover* in the den for the kids who hit the wall.

6. WINE IS YOUR FRIEND: Not much to say about this one except it's more fun singing "Dayenu" with a buzz.

7. THE JEWS ARE COUNTING ON YOU: Leading a kick-ass Seder is important. What if it's the only Jewish experience your cousin Rachel has the entire year? It's your job to inspire her with some fun and spirituality. Yes, that's a lot of pressure, but you're up to it. Now go have a fabulous Pesach!

Spiritual Life

by Larry Candeub, Director Religious Affairs/Spiritual Life



Please feel free to contact me,
Larry Candeub,
Bccreligiousaffairs@gmail.com
with ANY thoughts you have
about this, or things you
would like to see for next
year...it's all about serving our
community.

But Services are SOOOOOO long.....

Since I've been your Religious Affairs/Spiritual Life guy, I have heard this and seen it in surveys. It always makes me think...what should we give up, trade out, modify, etc. to make the Services shorter. I never have an answer.

Rabbi Dan speaks of "*kavanah*", or intention when we gather for Services. That's where I begin my journey for the evening. I enter our Sanctuary knowing that some things will resonate with me, some items may not. My *kavanah* is rarely tied to a time frame. My *kavanah* is to have the opportunity to reconnect with myself and take a break from the day-to-day routine of the week. I am never disappointed.

Everyone has their own *kavanah* for entering our home. For instance, during our Sharing Shabbat Together, some members come only for dinner and schmoozing. Some skip the dinner and come for the prayers. Others bring a friend and some folks come just to support the program, or person that is presenting a program. Everyone comes for their own reason.

So, my challenge to you is to find your *kavanah*, and be with us. If your *kavanah* is just to hear a few prayers, come be with us for that time. If your *kavanah* is to celebrate a B'nei Mitzvah and just want to hear the Torah portion recited, come late, leave early...do what you need to do. If your *kavanah* is to just join us for an Oneg and schmooze, come on down. The time you spend in the Sanctuary is totally up to you.

Bottomline, we love to have our friends and family in our BCC home. Whenever you come, we're happy to have you be with us in Community. I look forward to sharing a few moments with you in the future.

Purim Preparations!

Sisterhood Hamantaschen Baking

For the past several years, members of our Sisterhood have been getting together to bake Hamantaschen for our Purim celebrations. They did so again this year on February 26th. Organized by Vikki Alpert and Jane Ware, seven women made 350 hamantaschen for the Tree of Life goodie bags (*mishloach manot*) and Beth Chaim's Purim Party coming up on March 4. In addition to Vikki and Jane, bakers included Fran Birnbaum, Deborah Blankfeld, Debbie Ferman, Sara Goldstein, Debbie Roof and



Ruth Swedlow.

Here is their favorite hamantaschen recipe from The Second Avenue Deli Cookbook.

Hamantaschen (Makes approx. 36 cookies)

Dough Ingredients

4 cups flour
2 tsp baking powder
1 tsp vanilla
½ tsp salt
3 eggs
1 cup sugar
Extra sugar for sprinkling
½ cup vegetable oil
Shortening to grease cookie sheet
Juice and zest (very finely grated rind) of 1 whole orange and 1 whole lemon

Glaze and Sealer Ingredients

1 egg, beaten and diluted with 1 tsp water
1 Tbsp heavy cream (or use non-dairy creamer to make a parve version)

Ideas for the filling: apricot, raspberry, poppyseed, prune, or anything else you desire (if you'd like to make a filling from scratch, just Google search a recipe). *SOLO Cake and pastry fillings, available at Draegers, Lunardi's, and on Amazon work really well.*

Preparation

1. In a large bowl, sift flour, baking powder, and salt. Set aside.
2. In another large bowl, beat eggs with an electric mixer until fluffy, and set aside.
3. In a third bowl, combine sugar, vegetable oil, orange and lemon juices and zests, and vanilla. Add this juicy mixture to the eggs and blend well. Then add flour-baking powder-salt mixture and continue mixing until your dough forms a ball and pulls away from the sides of the bowl. Turn dough out onto a well-floured board and knead until it no longer sticks to your fingers.
4. Divide dough into 4 sections. On a well-floured board, using a floured rolling pin, roll out the dough to a 1/8-inch thickness. Have filling, egg glaze, sugar, cookie cutter, flatware teaspoon, pastry brush and greased cookie sheet close at hand.
5. Preheat oven to 375 degrees.
6. Use a cookie cutter or jar lid to create circles about 4 inches in diameter.
7. Place about 1 teaspoon (a flatware teaspoon, not a measuring spoon) of the filling in the center of the circle, fold in sides, and press dough to seal, creating two sides of a triangle. Use a little of the egg glaze mixture as "glue" if you need it. Then fold the bottom of the circle up to form the third side of your "tricorne," leaving a little of the filling visible in the center. Brush topside of each pastry well with egg glaze mixture, sprinkle with sugar, and place on the greased cookie tray.
(Since cutting circles leaves a lot of marginal dough, you'll have to gather scraps in a ball and roll them out again.)
8. Bake for 15-20 minutes or until your hamantaschen are a light golden brown (check after 15 minutes to see how they are doing).
9. Let hamantaschen cool before you remove them from the baking tray with spatula.

Happy Baking!

Sharing Shabbat Together

A look at some of our recent Shabbat gatherings



Seventeen members of our community have been discussing various ways to reinvigorate our Shabbat celebrations. There were over 60 people who provided input to our Shabbat Committee and enabled us to plan some fun and creative ways to celebrate Shabbat as a Community.

Each Shabbat begins with lighting the Shabbat candles and the Blessing for the challah and wine. Then we schmooze, eat and truly enjoy each other's company. We do the Prayer for Healing, the Mourners Kaddish and then usually have some type of community engagement. It is a very sweet time.

We have held several Sharing Shabbat Together events and all have been joy-filled community gatherings. Thank you to the following Beth Chaim members who volunteered time and energy to help create these meaningful experiences: Beth Chaim Brotherhood, Jessica Kolis, Janet & Harold Freiman, and Deborah Wechsler.

We also enjoy a Bring Your Own Dinner and traditional Shabbat service each month.

Shabbat Zen Doodling with Jessica Kolis – Feb. 17



Contra Costa Humane Society with Janet & Harold Freiman – Feb. 10



Living Jewishly in Indonesia with Deborah Wechsler – Jan 13



It's Time for a Hineni Moment

By Michael Kolis, Director at Large, Advocacy



Among many things we have learned from Rabbi Dan is the meaning of the word “Hineni.” As we read from the Torah on Rosh Hashanah, G_d calls out to Abraham, and Abraham responds, “Hineni,” “Here I am.” Thus begins the Akedah, the story of the binding of Isaac. We are also familiar with the story of the

burning bush, when G_d calls out to Moses, and Moses responds “Hineni.” “Here I am.” Soon we will recount the story of Moses and redemption at our Passover Seders.

In its most literal sense, Hineni means “here I am.” But we understand it to mean much more—an acceptance of a calling, a willingness to fulfill a duty or undertake a mission. At least that’s how I understand it. Which brings me back to the subject of antisemitism. As antisemitism propagates across every element of society, I think we face a moment to which each of us should respond “Hineni.”

Do not wonder if you are alone in feeling like antisemitism is becoming more prevalent in the United States and elsewhere. In February, the American Jewish Committee published its most recent survey on [The State of Antisemitism in America 2022](#). The AJC reports on the experiences and perceptions among Jews and non-Jews of antisemitism in America and how it has affected them. Forty-one percent of Jews generally feel that the status of Jews in America is less secure than it was one year ago. Young Jews experience antisemitism more than older Jews do, likely attributable to their presence on social media and on college campuses. Eighty-four percent of young Jews have experienced antisemitism online, and 26 percent of those young Jews report feeling physically threatened. A meaningful percentage of college students also report “covering” their Jewishness—avoiding identifying themselves as Jews. Disappointingly, while both Jews and non-Jews recognize antisemitism as a problem, Jews recognize or perceive the increase in antisemitism in a way and at a magnitude that non-Jews do not. That tells me, once again, that Jews cannot rely on others to defend them. Society appears mostly to regard it as the Jews’ problem or is at a minimum insensitive to it.

Consider Rihanna’s recent Super Bowl halftime performance. What should we take from it that Rihanna opted to perform songs produced by and originally performed with Jew hater and Hitler admirer Kanye West (“Ye,” as he currently prefers), and even Ye’s own song, “All of the Lights.” A couple days after the Super Bowl, Noa Tishby, Israel’s Envoy for Combating Antisemitism, posted a video online expressing the Jewish community’s disappointment with Rihanna’s choice of promoting Ye’s music. You guessed it. The prolific responses included all manner of Jew hate, threats of violence, claims that “Kanye was right,” and Hitler admiration.

Closer to home, we continue to hear about antisemitic acts and threats to members of our own community, in the local schools and online. Other than occasionally expressing disappointment and declaring that this is not what we stand for, the schools’ reaction is typically decrying all forms of hate, but not doing anything affirmative to protect Jewish students. One of our local schools, when questioned why it still has no plan to give students off for Yom Kippur this fall, responded that the school had already lost school days because of flooding from the winter rains. In a different school year! I call that indifference.

To be sure, there are various efforts by Jewish organizations to combat antisemitism, and even a White House-level task force led by Second Gentleman Doug Emhoff. And be sure to heed Rabbi Dan’s February 7th vlog about deplatforming online antisemitism! More about those in a later issue. But what can we do, at a community level, to tap into those efforts, to help ourselves and our children? Are we really going to leave this in the hands of others and hope for the best?

Please contact me, and let’s get to work together to combat antisemitism. We have some ideas, we welcome yours, and we will share more information in the coming weeks and months. But most of all, we welcome your participation. Perhaps you can help interface with the local school districts or I-SRV. Maybe you’d like to work with local law enforcement, etc. Could you help plan presentations by the likes of AJC and ADL? We also need to work with our teens and college-bound students to prepare them to cope with antisemitism in their communities. Opportunities abound for direct and meaningful action.

I hear our Jewish community calling. Can we get a Hineni? Let me know at mkolis1218@gmail.com.

Generosity

"It's not how much or how little you have that makes you great or small, but how much or how little you accomplish with what you have." - Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch

[GIVING FUNDS](#) | [Building Fund](#) | [Community Fund](#) | [Religious School Fund](#) | [Rabbi's Discretionary Fund](#) | [Torah Restoration & Sacred Objects](#)

If you would like to make a donation you now can do so online using this [link](#). Every effort is made to individually acknowledge each donation by letter. If a donation is made in memory of someone the family is notified and if a donation is made to honor someone he or she is notified as well. The generous support of the synagogue made by member and non-member contributions is very much appreciated. Donations are listed by the donor's name followed by the honoree's name.

Community / General Fund

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Ellen Sue Parker	
Chris Louie	
Harry & Laurel Slomowitz	In Memory of Laurel's mom and dad, Penny and Monroe and Harry's mom and dad, Mila and John
Tiffani Doughtie	
Paul & Patricia Yamshon	In memory of Leonard J. Yamshon, MD
Evan & Stacey Levy	
Paul & Patricia Yamshon	In memory of Zachary Nelson, cousin of Arie, Yoel and Jonathan Cohen
Larry & Barbara Candeub	In memory of Zachary Nelson, cousin of Arie, Yoel and Jonathan Cohen
Judith Markowitz & Glen Schabacker	
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Harold & Janet Freiman

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William & Lynn Katz	In memory of Meyer Hyman, father of Lynn Katz
Bruce & Carol Rosenbaum	

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Effortless and cost-free ways to support our community!



Do you shop at Draeger's or Lunardi's? A new year is here again, and with it comes fundraising opportunities to keep Beth Chaim Congregation going strong!

It's easy to help our Beit Midrash! Simply visit escrip.com/wheretoeam and get signed up with any of our participating merchants, including local stores Draeger's and Lunardi's.

Membership

"... Community - in the fullest sense: a place and all its creatures - is the smallest unit of health" – Wendell Berry

Welcome to New Members – Lisa and Steve Ruderman!

by Debbie Roof, Director, Membership



Our newest Beth Chaim members, Steve and Lisa Ruderman, moved to Danville from San Diego in December 2022, and have gotten very involved with Brotherhood, Sisterhood and many Beth Chaim events! When you see them, please introduce yourselves and give them a warm welcome!

Here is some interesting information about these fun new members:

Beth Chaim: Tell us about your family:

Lisa & Steve: Our daughter Danielle is a photographer in LA. Our son Michael is in the Bay Area, working as both a research physician and clinical psychiatrist in San Francisco. After graduating from Harvard Medical School in Psychiatry, he became a faculty member of UCSF.

Beth Chaim: Where did you both grow up?

Lisa & Steve: We both grew up in the suburbs of Chicago. Lisa's family moved to California in 1962. Her Dad became the first Jewish dentist in Santa Barbara. Lisa was confirmed in a small temple, called Congregation B'Nai Brith.

Lisa went to San Marcos High School in Santa Barbara, then UCLA, where she majored in psychology and theater. She studied in England at the Drama Studio in London. After she met Steve, Lisa transferred from UCLA to UC Santa Barbara.

Steve feels extremely fortunate to have grown up in Glencoe, IL. He had a Bar Mitzvah in Chicago at Temple Sholom, on Lake Shore Drive. Then he was confirmed at North Shore Congregation Israel in Glencoe. Steve went to Northwestern University, and then to Rush University Medical School in Chicago. His residency was in Santa Barbara.

Steve and his brothers put themselves through college and medical school by teaching sailing lessons and lifeguarding at the Glencoe Beach. His folks thought the cost of their education was something their boys should be responsible for. Steve taught sailing to Lisa's cousin Stevie, who was disabled, for seven summers. Stevie would tell Steve about his beautiful cousin in Santa Barbara, but Lisa and Steve had not met. Lisa's aunt was always trying to have Lisa meet Steve when she came to visit.

Beth Chaim: How did you two finally meet?

Lisa & Steve: Steve's parents were visiting him from Chicago, when he was doing his medical residency at Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital. He was on call, so he suggested they go to the local temple for Shabbat and meet some families and have a meal there. Lisa's grandmother was on the welcoming committee for the temple. Lisa was an actress at the time, living in LA. Steve was a starving intern, so Lisa's mom invited Steve for dinner one night, to meet Lisa. A few days after that dinner, Steve called Lisa and invited her to come back to Santa Barbara for an annual picnic event for the hospital. They got engaged after four months of dating and were married four months later at the same temple where Lisa had been confirmed in Santa Barbara. They were the first wedding in their brand-new building. Lisa's grandfather carved the lions and the ten commandments in the wooden ark, and they are still there today. They have now been married for 44 years.

Beth Chaim: Tell us more about your careers:

Lisa & Steve: Steve joined Scripps Hospital in San Diego to start his medical career as an internist. After a few years, the chief of staff at Scripps asked Steve to audition for a medical advisor spot on ABC TV. He did a weekly TV show for 33 years, which eventually led to him receiving a CHAD award, for his community service on TV. During this same time he worked as an internist on senior staff at Scripps for 42 years, and retired almost 3 years ago.

When their youngest child Michael was about 10 years old, Lisa went back to school to get her MFT, from the University of San Diego. She specialized in EFT - emotionally focused therapy, for couples and families, and became a



trainer and supervisor, both locally and internationally. Lisa also had a private practice at Scripps Memorial Hospital in San Diego, where she was in the same office building as Steve. Lisa retired in 2022.

Beth Chaim: How did you choose Beth Chaim?

Lisa & Steve: We had sold our house in San Diego and moved to Danville, to be closer to our son who was in the Bay Area. We were looking into all the temples in the area, and our son found Beth Chaim online and thought it sounded really interesting. Lisa went to a Sisterhood luncheon, Steve went on a Brotherhood hike, and Larry gave them a tour of Beth Chaim, where they met Neela and Rabbi Dan. They immediately decided to join Beth Chaim, and joined a new Chavurah that formed in Dec.

When asked how they decided so quickly to join Beth Chaim, both Lisa and Steve said they really liked the community and all the people they were meeting at Beth Chaim. It was a very warm welcome. Beth Chaim has a very genuine sense to it. When they first met Rabbi Dan, they could tell he was a very good listener, and was sincerely interested in getting to know them, and was very kind. They were hoping to establish meaningful relationships, which they already have.

Both Lisa and Steve like all the social events at Beth Chaim, and try to go to everything – the Sisterhood lunches, walks, Hanukah party, Brotherhood hikes, etc. and will be at the adult Purim party! They love how friendly and inclusive the people are here. They feel right at home at Beth Chaim!

Chavurah at Beth Chaim Congregation



Another new Chavurah is getting started with a combination of three new families who joined Beth Chaim in 2022, along with four long time member families. Our ongoing Chavurah groups met in

December to plan out the 2023 calendar with monthly fun social events. We currently have well over 100 members connected through six active Chavurah groups. If you are looking to join a Chavurah group, please contact me at debbie.roof@yahoo.com.

**chavurah* - a small group of friends who get together to socialize, celebrate and have fun. Joining a *chavurah* enriches their experience as members at Beth Chaim, through meaningful relationships and positive connections.

Simchas

"A mind that is stretched by a new experience can never go back to its old dimensions."

Oliver Wendell Holmes

Congratulations to Sue Friedman on the birth of her granddaughter. Shayna & John, and little brother Hugo are thrilled to welcome Adina Laurel Hayes to their family!



Sisterhood

by Lois Kamoroff and Suzie Homer, Sisterhood Co-Presidents



Sisterhood News!

What a busy few months we've had this new sisterhood year, 2023!! We have been collecting dues and have had a great response. If you've haven't paid your dues yet and/or a new synagogue member, please consider joining our Sisterhood Group at just \$40/year. Our dues are used for programming, donations to the Temple when needed for special functions, and hosting Friday Night Shabbat Services.



Money (\$40) can be sent through Zelle, Venmo, or Check to our Treasurer, Audra Saul:

Audra Saul
mobile: 925-984-6703
4100 Whispering Oaks Lane
Danville, CA 94506
email: audrasaul@hotmail.com



We started off this year with our Kickoff Luncheon, planned by Vikki Alpert and Jane Ware. They did a lovely job setting up the room, providing a delicious lunch, fun bingo games, original favors for everyone and outstanding raffle prizes. Thanks to all who participated, and congratulations to our raffle winners: Susie Cherry, Deborah Blankfeld, and Mary Day.



In February a small group made their own original tallitot, which we hope to wear when we host a Shabbat Service. Elaine Lederman, Susan Volsky, Deborah Wechsler, and Lois Kamoroff worked with Rabbi Jamie and her creative friend, Jenny Goldman, who brought her sewing machine and made our task so much easier. What a fun time we had!! We can't wait to be able to wear them!



We had our first movie adventure and saw the comedic film, "80 for Brady". Thanks to Vikki Alpert, Jane Ware, Mary Day, Sandi Morris, Sandy Shalon, Elaine Lederman and Lois Kamoroff for joining this first movie adventure at The Lot in San Ramon. We look forward to many more movie dates; anyone interested in organizing, please contact Lois or Suzie Homer.

Sisterhood is grateful to our monthly program leaders who do an excellent and dependable job in continuing our religious education as well as, social gatherings. Thank you to Deborah Wechsler for our Rosh Chodesh programs, Deborah Blankfeld for our book group and selection of informative and interesting reading materials, Janice Frankel for planning our monthly social lunches, and our First Thursday and Every Friday morning (Debbie Weiner) walking groups.

With Spring around the corner, we hope to see more of you and see you at more of our special programs and events.

Shalom,
Lois & Suzie



Brotherhood

by Paul Yamshon, Brotherhood President



What We Do Together Matters

One of my favorite Bob Dylan songs, *Mr. Tambourine Man*, contains a lyric, “It’s time for my boot heels to be a wandering” and that’s what I’ll be doing in the second half of the year after my daughter’s wedding. It’s been an honor to have served as Brotherhood President during the last two- and one-half years. Burt Feldstein has graciously volunteered to take over May 1. Burt has been a Beth Chaim member and Brotherhood Board member for many years. He currently serves as the Brotherhood Treasurer and was Brotherhood “Man of the Year”. The Brotherhood will be in great hands and the transition will be seamless.



I took over for Jeremy Smith in June 2019 when he announced he was moving to Portland. I soon found out that being President wasn’t as easy as Jeremy and all the past presidents made it look. But I am grateful for the experience and had truly great support from the Brotherhood Board, Brotherhood members, Rabbi Dan and my wife Patricia who listened to me drone on for hours.

No one saw the pandemic coming. There wasn’t a manual on how to keep an organization connected. We had to shift gears quickly and had many great programs on Zoom. We were fortunate enough to keep members during this time. I tip my hat to the Brotherhood members that stepped up to volunteer for these programs and participation was good. We were fortunate that we didn’t lose any members to Covid.

In my view, what makes a temple successful is more than just money. Its participation. It’s being in Brother and Sisterhood. It’s volunteering a few hours a month to committees or providing help where help is needed. It’s about trying new things or being part of the solution. It’s about being social. My view is this. BCC could be debt-free, and we would still have the problem of engagement. Getting volunteers to help with basic temple needs like building the Sukkah or taking the portable Chanukiah to Black Hawk is always a challenge.

Getting new guys to come into Brotherhood is not happening at the scale it could. In the case of the Brotherhood, we’d love to turn the reins over to the younger generation! So please step up and help Burt with your ideas for Brotherhood events and your actions when the synagogue calls for Brotherhood assistance.

I also want to thank the BCC Board past and present. Board members serve our community tirelessly. For me it was a steep learning curve. I have learned more about the inner workings and issues of BCC during the past few years than the previous 23 as a member. I am grateful for all the explanations and advice I have received from the Board and am confident in our future.

I look forward to the future of Brotherhood and BCC. May our little Shul on the hill continue to shine bright. So my friends, I leave you with “In the jingle jangle morning I’ll come following you”.

As always please feel free to reach out to me paul.yamshon@gmail.com or 925-487-9253.

Social Action | Tikkun Olam

"The greatest religious problem today is how to be both a mystic and a militant; in other words how to combine the search for an expansion of inner awareness with effective social action, and how to feel one's true identity in both."

Ursula K. Le Guin

by Naomi Ehrlich, Director, Tikkun Olam



Passover Food Drive 2023

Passover is quickly approaching and what would the holiday be without traditional Passover items such as matzo, gefilte fish, and matzo ball soup? This year, JFCS is asking Beth Chaim Congregation to only purchase

boxes of tea for the 150 bags that the agency fills each year. The agency will be dropping the bags off with the Jewish elders in the East Bay who either cannot afford to purchase the Passover items or are homebound.

Here is your opportunity to join us in performing this important mitzvah. We are one of only two East Bay synagogues that participate in this special project with the Jewish Family and Community Services of the East Bay. Sign up [HERE](#) and choose as many items as you are willing to donate for this worthy cause. Please note: We also need money which will then be used to purchase additional boxes of tea. Please drop off a check payable to Beth Chaim Congregation and write "Passover Food Drive" in the memo section or a donation can be made on our website and please specify JFCS Passover food drive.

Please drop the boxes of tea off before March 24, 2023 at the Beth Chaim office. There will be a box set aside for the tea. If for whatever reason it is difficult to drop off at BCC, please let me know and I can make other arrangements.



If you are spring cleaning for Passover, please consider donating any unwanted unopened food items. We have Contra Costa Food Bank donation bins located in the BCC Lobby and you can drop off any time during office hours or before services or Religious School.

If you have any questions, please contact me.

Thank you for your continued support for
BCC's Tikkun Olam!

Winter Nights Shelter 2023

It was another successful year as Beth Chaim Congregation along with St. Timothy's Episcopal Church, co-hosted homeless families at the Winter Nights Shelter program. Thank you to our BCC members who volunteered to cook meals, donate the food to run the shelter for a week, set up and clean up, and provide childcare. The young families appreciated all of the delicious dinners, breakfasts, and the two children's birthdays that were celebrated. All of the leftover food was sent to the Winter Nights Shelter parking lot program in Pittsburg which provides supervised, overnight parking in East County. Also, thank you to the volunteers who were so flexible with the changes that needed to be made to make the shelter work as efficiently as possible.



Milestones

"In any given moment we have two options: to step forward into growth or step back into safety."

- Abraham Maslow

Wedding Anniversaries

<u>Names</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Years</u>
David & Cindy Watkin	March 3	11
Julia & Dave Abelmann	March 5	18
Mark Garetz & Ellen Rosenbluth	March 7	13
Peter & Vickie Eiges	March 9	32
Lara Groch & Jeremy Wall	March 14	8
Serena Piazza & Sushil Rajendran	March 16	20
James Sorhagen & Jean Lee	March 19	18
Erin & Andy Sacks	March 20	19
Sam & Debbie Ferman	March 23	48
Jon Bronstein & Christa Joseph	March 30	36
Steve & KT Waxman	April 5	42
Deborah Wechsler & Bruce Bilodeau	April 11	31
Leonard & Joanne Becker	April 25	36
Stephanie & Mark Abramowitz	April 27	20
Elaine & Herb Lederman	April 29	61

Membership Anniversaries

<u>Names</u>	<u>Years</u>	<u>Names</u>	<u>Years</u>
Scott & Catherine Heller	23	Jeffrey & Rhona Shulman	8
Barb Carpenter	22	Joey & Sabrina Kaminsky	4
Bobby & Linda Carp	21	Jeffrey Mueller	3
Lois Kamoroff	19	Adam & Elizabeth Leftik	3
Kenneth & Marija Bleier	10	Ray & Susan Cherry	1



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Milestones, cont'd

Children's Birthdays

Name	Birthday	Age
Meghan Simpson	March 2	8
Danielle Abelmann	March 3	15
Mathew Kuritz	March 5	12
Kami Rosenblatt	March 6	17
Harlow Heiden	March 9	13
Morgan Sacks	March 12	16
Averie Bleier	March 19	17
Jacob Gracer	March 28	16
Braxton Rhodes	March 28	11
Leonardo Dublin	April 4	14
Meyer Hanlon	April 5	4
Avery Mann	April 6	12
Lev Frank Manansala	April 7	6
Ariel Goldshteyn	April 9	11
Kalea Thompson	April 10	16
Parker Abramowitz	April 11	16
Noah Cohen	April 11	15
Abby Shapiro	April 15	12
Melanie Moglia	April 16	12
Cassidy Rosenblatt	April 19	13
Brayden Rosenblatt	April 19	13
Skye Levy	April 19	11
Ethan Binder	April 20	14
Sara Eisenberg	April 22	8
Eli Cohen	April 22	13
Ethan Karatov	April 25	16
Kyla Cohen	April 26	17
Alice Welch	April 29	12
Cora Welch	April 29	12

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BETH CHAIM




Tree of Life Learning Center welcomes and celebrates children from all backgrounds and works with families to ensure that all family traditions are respected and valued.

If you or someone you know has an interest in the wonderful opportunity the preschool offers to children, please contact Kelley Cohen at kelleycohen@treeoflifelearningcenter.com or 925-285-5005.



Tree of Life Learning Center is a private, family-owned, developmentally based Jewish preschool, offering full-day, part-day, and school-day programs for children ages 2 – 5 years-old.

Director: Kelley Cohen

[Kelleycohen@treeoflifelearningcenter.com](mailto:kelleycohen@treeoflifelearningcenter.com)



Join PJ Library Parent Connector **Ema Lara** and music leader Tkiya at Beth Chaim Congregation. For anyone with little ones ages 0-5!



Torah Tots

Sundays

10:00am

March 5 - Purim!
April 16 - Passover



Tot Shabbat

Fridays

5:30pm

March 10
April 21



BCC is proud of its religious school program serving pre-school through high school. We offer Torah Tots, Sunday School for ages 5+, B'nei Mitzvah Program, Madrichim Program, and a robust teen program in partnership with Contra Costa Midrasha.

Grades K-7



Shelby Margolin
Principal, Beit Midrash

When I think of Beth Chaim, one word always comes to mind: community. Our goal at the Beit Midrash is to ensure our children feel the comfort and joy of a Jewish community that learns, *noshes* (eats), *davens* (prays), and *schmoozes* (talks)

together. After a long winter break, our first Sunday back was extra sweet as students were so excited to see each other, share what they did over the break, and get back to our playful and meaningful Sunday School activities. At our January *ruach* service, children were excitedly asking their parents if the “cool song leader” would be coming—they now think of her as a celebrity of sorts! Mishpacha groups baked together, played Middotopoly (Monopoly—but infused with Jewish values!), and congratulated Eli Cohen on his Bar Mitzvah. It is a beautiful thing to see any community form, but a community of Jewish children feels extra special!

I’d love for you to see our community in action at two upcoming events that will be fun for families, empty nesters, and everyone in-between! The first is our **Gianni's Italian Bistro Fundraiser on Monday, March 6th**. Our yearly event boasts delicious food, an opportunity to hang out with your favorite Beth Chaim people, and the best wait service in town, as Beth Chaim members will be your servers. 100% of tips and 10% of your order will go directly to the Beit Midrash so we can continue improving our curriculum, school-wide events, and young family programming. For reservations, call 925-820-6969 or giannissanramon.com. There is both indoor and outdoor seating available, or you can take out.

The second fun event is our ***ruach* service on March 10th**. The Feder family is hosting a delicious breakfast-for-dinner at 6 PM followed by our pajama themed *ruach* service at 7 PM. *Ruach* services are truly special, filled with – you guessed it – extra *ruach* (spirit). There is extra singing and extra voices, resulting in extra connection. The more we fill our sanctuary, the more we all feel the special community we have at Beth Chaim. I hope you’ll join – pjs or not – and experience the *ruach* for yourself!

As always, we’d love for our adult Beth Chaim community to get involved with our children. Each one of us has a special gift. I invite you to think about your gift and share it with our children (i.e., lead an art project, gardening activity, a cooking/baking activity, share your family’s story, etc.). If you are interested in getting involved, I am here to take care of all the logistics to make that happen!

With gratitude,

Morah Shelby Meyer Margolin
Principal, Beth Chaim Beit Midrash



Contra Costa Midrasha functions as Beth Chaim's teen program, and Beth Chaim makes an annual per student contribution to augment the tuition and retreat fees of Midrasha.

Grades 8-12

By Devra C. Aarons, Executive Director, CCM

Shalom Friends at Beth Chaim!

Wow! In early January we returned from our amazing Contra Costa Midrasha "*Mifgash Choref*" (Winter Encounter) trip to Israel. During our 11-day trip, seven CCM teens and two educators (plus college intern, Shannah Saul, Beth Chaim family member!) had amazing adventures with teens from both the Holtz Academy in Tel Aviv and Monsenzon School in Hod HaSharon. Together our American teens traveled with the Israeli teens to experience the diversity of Haifa, the stunning beauty of the Ein Gedi wilderness (including a stunning sunrise hike up Masada), shopping in Tel Aviv, praying at the Kotel and so much more. We were hosted by families from the schools, enabling our teens to also experience first-hand what it's like to live in Israel, while also deeply bonding with the Israeli families and teens. Thank you so much to you, our Beth Chaim partners for your support of this amazing program! We look forward to sharing more news like this in the future.

The Gala was this past Saturday and was absolutely fabulous! Thank you to all who attended, celebrated 36 amazing years of Midrasha, and helped us ensure that we'll keep going for (at least) 36 years more!

If you couldn't make it and would still like to contribute, you can still make a huge difference by giving to our Gala's Fund A Need campaign. CCM's Fund-A-Need campaign supports scholarships for teens to participate in Midrasha programs and summer trips to Israel. You can [learn more and make a gift here!](#)

Save the Date this summer from June 20 - 30, 2023 to help host at least 30 Israelis for our third year of Mifgash - where Israeli and American teens tour the Bay Area, learn about Jewish life in America and bond while in line at Six Flags. This has become one of CCM's signature programs. Even if you don't have a teen, consider hosting one of the visiting educators. For more information, contact the CCM office at 925/944-4701 or office@ccmidrasha.com



Devra Aarons,
CCM Director

As always, spread the love about Contra Costa Midrasha! Let the teens in your life know about Midrasha and our myriad of programs. Schedule a time to talk with our Director, [Devra Aarons](#) or check out our website at ccmidrasha.com. There's something for every teen!

B'nei Mitzvah

Siman Tov u'Mazal Tov!

Wishing our B'nei Mitzvah success, happiness, friendship, health, and adventure. We're very proud of their accomplishments and we look forward to celebrating many simchas as they grow into adulthood.



Aviva Feder – March 11

Aviva is a bold, bright, and resilient seventh grader who is looking forward to her Bat Mitzvah as the next step in her Jewish journey-- a journey that began at Tree of Life Preschool and grew with joy and ruach every year. Aviva is also a passionate thespian, an advocate for social justice, and an emerging chef. She is funny (particularly in the genre of sarcasm) and loves a good prank. Aviva is grateful for all of the support and love from the Beth Chaim Community of teachers and friends. A particular shout out to Rabbi Dan, Morah Sam, Moreh Jeff and Moreh Jonathan for their wisdom and guidance throughout the 7th grade and Bat Mitzvah experience. We love her to the moon and back and can't wait to see what tomorrow holds.



Eva Yankilovich – April 22

Eva is a seventh grader at Charlotte Wood Middle School. She is a talented artist and loves painting, making jewelry and crafts. Eva also enjoys music and loves to sing. She has done concerts with the School of Rock and has participated in musical theater. Eva also loves animals and enjoys pet sitting and spending time with her dog, Leo. She is a big sister to nine-year-old Gabe. Our family is very excited for her Bat Mitzvah and cannot wait to celebrate with Eva.



Alexis Blackman - April 29

Lexi is a seventh grader at Stone Valley Middle School. Lexi is a thoughtful, caring and aspiring girl who enjoys competitive soccer, martial arts, tennis, and computer coding. Her passions include spending time with friends and family and serving her community. Lexi loves fishing, building Legos, creating video games (she has programmed over 100!), and reading science fiction novels. During her summers, Lexi enjoys attending sleep away camps (Camp Newman and Celiac Camp) and is looking forward this year to participating in soccer at the Maccabi Games in Ft Lauderdale. Lexi excels at science, math and technology and was selected by her teachers to participate in a STEM program at UC Berkeley. Lexi has been very active with the Diablo Valley National Charity league (and has particularly enjoyed making no-sew blankets for patients at UCSF and volunteering at the local Hospice Thrift Shop on weekends). She is particularly passionate about raising awareness and funds for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society's Light the Night Walk, which she has participated in almost every year since she was an infant. This year she will be carrying on that tradition in memory of her grandpa who recently passed away. Lexi is grateful to Rabbi Dan and the Beth Chaim staff for preparing her for her Bat Mitzvah.

Yahrzeits

Zichronam L'vracha – May Their Memories be a Blessing

Name	Date	Observed By	Relationship
Myron Kulwin	Mar 1	Harry Kulwin	Father of Harry
Donald Messing	Mar 1	David Messing	Father of David
Karen Finder	Mar 2	Scott Finder	Mother of Scott
Felicia Lubinsky	Mar 3	David Lubinsky	Mother of David
Shirley Braun	Mar 5	Neil Bernstein	Mother of Neil
David Benveniste	Mar 6	Daniel Benveniste	Brother of Daniel
Joe Yarkin	Mar 7	Mark Yarkin	Father of Mark
Sidney Fishman	Mar 11	Martin Fishman	Father of Martin
Mary Zimmerman	Mar 12	Leslie Diamond	Mother of Leslie
Marcia Rae Angelo	Mar 12	Brien Angelo	Mother of Brien
Bob Wiener	Mar 13	Greg Wiener	Father of Greg
Anne Golman	Mar 16	Janet Lieber	Mother of Janet
Joshua Benveniste	Mar 17	Daniel Benveniste	Father of Daniel
Gladys Weitzner	Mar 23	Heidi Levine	Mother of Heidi
Jacqueline Carter	Mar 24	Tim Carter	Sister of Tim
Julius Ehrlich	Mar 24	Scott Ehrlich	Father of Scott
Robert Reitzes	Mar 24	Jeff Reitzes	Father of Jeff
Barbara Fagelson	Mar 25	Stacey Levy	Mother of Stacey
Jeanne Elvidge	Mar 27	Barbra Candeub	Mother of Barbra
Barbara Becker	Mar 29	Jeff Becker, Leonard Becker	Mother of Jeff and Leonard
Elsie Carter	Mar 30	Tim Carter	Mother of Tim
Norman Rosenkoff	Apr 1	Lois Kamoroff	Father of Lois
Howard Schneider	Apr 1	Mindy Murphy	Father of Mindy
Kevin Kelley	Apr 2	Kathie Bleier	Brother of Kathie
Sondra Candeub	Apr 2	Larry Candeub	Mother of Larry
Walter Thompson	Apr 2	Michael Thompson	Father of Michael
Michael Schumow	Apr 4	Keren Carter	Brother of Keren
Norman Binger	Apr 4	Lynn Binger	Husband of Lynn
Lee Sandor	Apr 4	Janet Freiman	Mother of Janet
Phyllis Lappen	Apr 4	Stan Lappen	Mother of Stan
Ralph Bleier	Apr 5	Kathie Bleier, Kelley Cohen, Kenneth Bleier, Jason Bleier	Husband of Kathie; Father of Kelley, Ken & Jason
Joyce Weckstein	Apr 6	Lou Weckstein	Mother of Lou
Franklin Saul	Apr 6	Frederick Saul	Father of Frederick
Jack Sarver	Apr 7	Diane Sarver-Davidson	Father of Diane

Yahrzeits, cont'd

Name	Date	Observed By	Relationship
Rhoda Freiman	Apr 7	Harold Freiman	Mother of Harold
Rudy Ryan	Apr 7	Rob Kadash	Step-father of Rob
Shirley Leavitt	Apr 9	Debbie Roof	Mother of Debbie
Donald Samson	Apr 9	Glenn Samson	Father of Glenn
John Benson	Apr 10	Heidi Stagg	Father of Heidi
Bruce Cohen	Apr 11	Susan Friedman	Brother of Sue
Harriet Becker	Apr 12	Shelley Fox	Mother of Shelley
Ilse Mueller	Apr 15	Jeffrey Mueller	Mother of Jeffrey
Charles Pruzansky	Apr 15	Susan Volsky	Father of Susan
Frieda Fishman	Apr 15	Martin Fishman	Mother of Martin
Sam Silver	Apr 17	Lisa Ruderman	Father of Lisa
Ruth Novak	Apr 17	Sandy Shalon	Mother of Sandy
Bernard Brown	Apr 21	Jane Ware	Father of Jane
Mark Friedman	Apr 22	Susan Friedman	Husband of Sue
Kenneth Jordan Levy	Apr 22	Evan Levy	Father of Evan
Charles Birnbaum	Apr 24	Michael Birnbaum	Father of Michael
Paul Scott	Apr 24	Larry Scott	Father of Larry
Bernard Goodman	Apr 24	Elaine Lederman	Father of Elaine
Arnold Kaplan	Apr 26	Sheila Kaplan	Husband of Sheila
Harvey Mizes	Apr 27	Jim Mizes	Father of Jim
Phillip Goldstein	Apr 28	John Goldstein	Father of John
Ida Portnoy	Apr 29	Joy Severin	Mother of Joy
Sharon Book	Apr 30	Ira Book	Wife of Rabbi Ira Book



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BAR/BAT MITZVAH VIDEOGRAPHER. Recent graduate of the Art Institute of San Francisco Brian Hanlon is partnering with his wife and longtime BCC member and Hebrew School teacher Samantha Waxman to record your service or party. Contact us at samanthabhanlon@gmail.com or hanlon86@yahoo.com.

ACTIVITY THERAPIST. Do you have a loved one living with MCI, or Alzheimer's or other dementia? Do you have a loved one living with a terminal diagnosis? We provide 1 to 1 ongoing support for people in need in Contra Costa County. 10+ years experience connecting with elders through music, art, spiritual care, emotional support and help with end-of-life planning. Contact Z*O*E Activity Therapies (510) 926-4329, zoe@activitytherapies.org; www.activitytherapies.org.

"SPECIAL FOR SHABBAT" is written by long time professional writer and Beth Chaim member, Michelle Gabriel. The book follows the story of a little girl who finds meaning in Shabbat and challah when she discovers the beauty of both, especially for the challah that was baked special for Shabbat. A sweet story with engaging illustrations for young children. mjgwrites@yahoo.com or mjgpress.com



"ARI'S JOURNEY" a novel by late Beth Chaim member Norman Binger, is now available on Amazon.com, including as a Kindle book. Ari Cohen, an Israeli Police officer, embarks on a perilous journey to save his son from terrorists. On his odyssey he meets friends and enemies, both Palestinian and Israeli, and encounters a long-lost love.

MEMORY ALBUMS. Do you need help organizing your photos? Would you like to preserve your family memories so they can be passed on to your children and their children? Whether it's baby's first year, B'nei Mitzvah, graduation, weddings, special vacations, and more, I can preserve these memories for you or teach you how to do it. Call Melinda Bandler on 829-0782, or e-mail mhandler@pacbell.net, for a free 1-hour consultation.

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