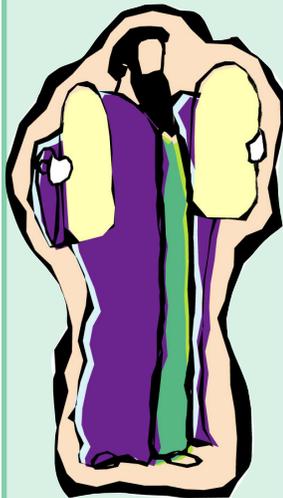




RABBI
MICHAEL UNGAR

Shavuot
May 28-30

ג' - ז' סיון



מועדים
לשמחה

A World Turned Upside Down... again

Two months ago, I wrote a Newsletter article entitled “A World Turned Upside Down.” I wrote it in reference to the world in which Mordechai and Esther lived. Extraordinary times called for these two to step up and be their best selves—and be true to their Judaism.

Little did most of us know in early February when I wrote that article that we would be living in the world of COVID-19 today. Just when we thought our world could not be any more turned upside down, here we are.

No need to enter into a discussion of how our world has changed. We are all living it. As I write this in early April isolation, I take the bet that this will still be going on when you receive your Newsletter in late April.

Looking back on my article from March, I realized that the lessons from Purim are helpful to us as we make our way through this period. As in the Book of Esther, we don't really know why God has put us in the position; we can

certainly say that God has nothing to do with it, and the real question is how did we allow ourselves to get so deeply into this mess? The same was true for Mordechai and Esther. Through it all, however, they stayed true to who they were. These days call on us to do the same; we should not give up our core values in these critical times. As with the heroes of the Purim story, being true to ourselves is not enough. We need to step up and be more than we have in the past. We need to reach out and help how and when we can. We need to be willing to sacrifice for the greater good. Like Mordechai and Esther, we may find ourselves in uncomfortable situations. With faith, however, and the support of our loved ones and community, we will make it through these difficult days. We have in the past, and we will again.

I miss seeing all of you in person. I know we all look forward to the day when we again can gather face-to-face and hand-in-hand. May God make help us make that day arrive soon.

Beth El - The Heights Synagogue builds vibrant Jewish community.

We welcome all in participatory, traditional, egalitarian worship and learning.

Saturday Morning Services at 9:15 ♦ 3246 Desota Ave., Cleveland Hts., OH 44118 ♦ ☎216-320-9667

Co-PRESIDENTS



JOEL GENUTH



BUD STERN

Contact Information

**QUESTIONS? CONCERNS?
COMMENTS? COMPLAINTS?**
Please do not hesitate to contact the Presidents by e-mail president@bethelheights.org or telephone
Joel (617) 943-2076
Bud (216) 991-7383

**HELP US
STAY IN TOUCH!**
Please be sure we have your current contact information. Send changes to info@bethelheights.org or call
(216) 320-9667

**KEEP UP WITH THE NEWS!
JOIN THE
BE-THS LISTS!**
Send an e-mail to Carol Bruml, benews3246@gmail.com, if you need help with signing up.

Voice, Video, Text, or Email: Communicate!

I am writing this column in the safety and security of my home on Van Aken Blvd. BE-THS has been unable to hold public services or other events for over a month. Our congregants are scattered among towns, cities, villages, and states near and far – but those nearby may feel just as separated as those in another state.

I say this in order to underscore the importance of maintaining communication during this difficult time. Various board members have frequently communicated among ourselves by email, and the Rabbi has sent out videos for our congregants with Torah commentaries and other messages. Several of our members set up electronic access to seders via Zoom or other interactive web systems.

We encourage everyone to join the BigList and to sign up for email newsletters. After the May issue, we may decide not to continue to mail paper copies until this is over, due to the added risks of having multiple people come together to fold, stuff, seal, sticker, and mail the paper newsletters.

Please, those of you who are not part of the “Big List,” our main email listserv, sign up now. While we are and remain a community, meeting together in these times is too risky. While meeting and travel restrictions remain the order of the day, Internet communication is our contact avenue. There is a link, “Join our Google Groups,” near the bottom of the BE-THS

homepage from which you can do this; email Carol Bruml, benews3246@gmail.com, if you have any difficulty.

We also encourage you to sign up for the “Off Topic” list, which shares messages that are not directly shul-related. Recently, we have shared members’ suggestions for interesting and educational things to do while we are essentially homebound. See above for instructions; they are the same as for the “Big List.”

And call someone you know to schmooz over the phone. Use FaceTime or the other live video systems that I don’t know about.

Email Carol, benews3246@gmail.com, if you’d like to receive your newsletter via email (and are not already getting it that way).

Stay in touch. Joel and I would like to hear from you (jgenuth@hotmail.com; docbud406@sbcglobal.net). The Rabbi is available to respond to every life cycle issue. Our building may be empty (actually our staff persons are there part of the time), but the community is open for business.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Bud Stern

NEWS FROM BETHA EL

חדשות

Refuah Sh'lema to:

- Harvey Jacobs
- Marsha Katz

רפואה שלימה!

Condolences to:

- Former member, Michael Bloom, and his family, on the recent passing of Mike's mother, Corinne Pearl Bloom z"l.

ניחום אבלים

Mazel Tov to:

- Harvey and Karen Kugelman, on the recent marriage of their daughter, Sonny, to Marc Eichenbaum. Marc and Sonny live in the Washington Heights section of Manhattan, where they each continue their education: Sonny at Touro College's Lander College for Women, and Marc in Yeshiva University's *smicha* program, which will lead to his ordination this May.

מזל טוב!



Thanks for Contributions to:

- Rabbi Moshe Adler, in memory of Nili Adler z"l.
- Adi and Judith Gerblich, in memory of Michael Bloom's mother, Corinne Bloom z"l.
- Adi and Judith Gerblich, in honor of Carol Bruml's unbelievable work.
- Ilene Gertman
- Fern Grunberger, in honor of Becky and Erin's son, Eli.
- Rabbi Alan and Jean Lettofsky, in memory of

תודה!

Corinne Bloom z"l.

- Gabrielle Millas, for the fantastic miracles outlined on Purim.
- Gabrielle Millas, in memory of her grandfather, Maxwell Press z"l.
- Gabrielle Millas, in remembrance of a gorgeous Pesah that she will never forget.
- Marvin and Miriam Palevsky, in memory of Miriam's father, Meyer "Mike" Hoffer z"l, and Marvin's father, Irwin "Brother" Palevsky z"l.
- Stephen Pepper and Linda Tobin, in thanks to all their friends who shared good fun and treats at Purim.
- Stephen Pepper and Linda Tobin, to congratulate Noam Gelles and Kymberlie Koehler on their engagement.
- Stephen Pepper and Linda Tobin, to congratulate Sonny Kugelman and Marc Eichenbaum on their marriage.
- Adam and Samantha Probst
- Juliana Sadock Savino, to the Kiddush Fund.
- Eran Shiloh, to the Presidents' Discretionary Fund.
- Dorothea Small, in memory of Aaron Small z"l.
- Donna Spiegler
- Rivka Taub, in memory of Moshe Taub z"l.
- Anonymous, group contributions on Erev Purim.

Thanks for Donations to the Spring Capital Improvement Campaign to:

תודה!

- Kenneth Bardach, in honor of Blanche and Jack Valancy.
- Matthew and Natalie Barratt
- Carol and Howard Berusch, in honor of Russell Berusch and Lisa Berusch
- Molly Brudnick
- Frank and Jeanette Buchwald
- Fern Grunberger
- Joel Heller
- Sharona Hoffman and Andy Podgurski
- Rabbi Alan and Jean Lettofsky
- Gabrielle Millas
- David and Judie Perelman
- Devorah Silverman
- Rabbi Michael and Michele Ungar

CALENDAR, MAY 2020

5780 אייר / סיון

Watch your email. If the restrictions on group meetings are lifted, the schedule below may change on fairly short notice.

Many synagogues are streaming their minyanim and Shabbat services. B'nai Jeshurun has invited our congregation to join their services (which they are both streaming and transmitting via Zoom); further information may be found at <https://www.bnajeshurun.org/pray-with-us-shabbat>. B.J. is still deciding how to handle Shavuot services this year, but they promise that the Tikkun Leyl Shavuot WILL be held. We will update you via the BigList, as soon as we know (see Bud's article, and join the BigList, if you have not already done so!).

TUESDAY, APRIL 28 – Yom HaZikaron

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29 – Yom HaAtzma'ut

SATURDAY, MAY 2 – Parashat Ahare Mot/Kedoshim

SUNDAY, MAY 3

1:30 PM – 2:45 PM – Book discussion with Rabbi Ungar via Zoom: “Everyday Holiness,” by Alan Morinis.

Send a message to Rabbi Ungar, rabbi@bethelheights.org,

if you would like to receive an invitation to participate.

7:00 PM – Midrash Class, led by Rabbi Ungar via Zoom. Send a message to Rabbi Ungar, rabbi@bethelheights.org, if you would like to receive an invitation to participate.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 6

7:30 PM – Mishna Class, led by Alan Lerner via Zoom. Send a message to Alan Lerner, lerner44120@yahoo.com, if you would like to receive an invitation to participate.

SATURDAY, MAY 9 – Parashat Emor

SATURDAY, MAY 16 – Parashat B'har/B'hukkotai

SUNDAY, MAY 17

7:00 PM – Midrash Class, led by Rabbi Ungar via Zoom. Send a message to Rabbi Ungar, rabbi@bethelheights.org, if you would like to receive an invitation to participate.

FRIDAY, MAY 22 – Yom Yerushalayim

SATURDAY, MAY 23 – Parashat B'midbar

SUNDAY, MAY 24 – Rosh Chodesh Sivan

7:30 AM – Walking Meditation: Meet at Shaker Lakes Nature Center. Due to the outdoor, individual, and religious nature of our walking meditation, the group is continuing to meet, while following social distancing rules.

THURSDAY, MAY 28 – Erev Shavuot

FRIDAY, MAY 29 – Shavuot I

SATURDAY, MAY 30 – Shavuot II

SATURDAY, JUNE 6 – Parashat Naso

SUNDAY, JUNE 7

1:30 PM – 2:45 PM – Book discussion with Rabbi Ungar via Zoom: “Everyday Holiness,” by Alan Morinis.

Send a message to Rabbi Ungar, rabbi@bethelheights.org, if you would like to receive an invitation to participate.

Passover 2020

How was this night different from all other nights?

Passover 2020

Honey Massey wrote eloquently about her family's celebration of Passover this year. Her article arrived too late to be attached to the printed copies of the newsletter, but is attached to the emailed copies.

One of the most important parts in the *Haggadah*, which tells the story of Passover, is the Ma Nishtanah, or The Four Questions. Traditionally chanted by the youngest child in the family, he or she prepares for this with great excitement. All of the adults focus their attention on this one child, and no matter what the result, they will heap praise on that child.

The Four Questions are actually just one question: "Why is this night different from all other nights?" However, there are four answers. Seder night is different because on this night --

1. We eat unleavened bread or matzah instead of Challah.
2. We eat bitter herbs to remind us of our slavery.
3. We dip greens into salt water to remember the tears we shed as slaves.
4. We recline, because only free people have the luxury of relaxing and eating without fear.

This year, the questions apply not only to the Seder night, but to the entire holiday. Why is this Passover different from all others Passovers?

The entire world is experiencing a pandemic – the Corona Virus – a plague which, in its power to afflict and kill, is equal to those in the Haggadah. In order to slow down the rate of infection and the number of deaths, we have been ordered to "Shelter in Place," i.e., to not leave our dwellings except to buy food or medical supplies.

Last year, everyone in our family was together at a beautiful country estate, with wraparound decks overlooking acres of landscaped gardens. There were game rooms and a swimming pool, pool tables and ping-pong tables, and a fireplace. For eight days we slept, cooked, ate, played, and laughed together. Although we were not planning to return there this year, we looked forward to creating again the more traditional Seders held at my niece Jamie's house, with everyone from the California contingent and the Cleveland contingent, and with the assorted friends who are always invited to share in our festivities. A month before Passover, with the pandemic on the horizon, it became clear that the Californians would not be coming. They, along with us, would be quarantined in their homes. A holiday that depends on family and friends together was to be spent apart. There would be no shared readings, singing, discussions, no delicious shared meal, no Passover skit. And for those of us who live alone, perhaps no Seder at all.

This was a world-wide tragedy. Christians celebrating Easter, Muslims celebrating Ramadan. They, too, would be isolated, alone, and fearful that they or their loved ones might become ill.

I'm no fan of technology, but now I am forever grateful for its powers. When social distancing was established around the world, college classes, yoga classes, book clubs, outreach organizations, and all kinds of individuals and groups began to increase their use of a social media platform called Zoom. So when synagogues shut down, a special Rabbinic mandate permitted religious services to be held through Zoom. That's when Jamie announced that we would do a Seder in that manner. And it would include all of us, everyone who would have come in person.

Some things never change. Jamie called it to begin at 5:30 but when Illy, who had the Zoom account, invited all to join, Jamie was still organizing. Each family had their own Seder plate, meal, and *Haggadot*, but once Jamie was ready, she led us as if we were all under one roof. People in California joined in at lunchtime. (They *really* had to be well-prepared!) We went around and took turns reading, just as if we were all seated next to one another. We dipped, we leaned, we sang, we analyzed, and discussed. Some things never change. People lost their place in the text, others focused on when we would eat – if not the meal, then at least the “Hillel sandwich,” a matzah sandwich with bitter herbs, and the haroset, the sweet apple and nut and date mixture. As Jamie lingered, some complained that they were hungry, couldn't we skip some parts and get to the meal? Some things never change: Jamie is not one to skip.

Although each family had prepared their own meal, Mick and Elijah had prepared food as if the twenty guests were all at their table. Because we were apart, in each household the youngest one could recite the Four Questions. We could start with Ella, age 2, move to Naomi age 5, then to Ari age 12. Babies Zo Zo and Nico do not yet talk. Being in their own homes allowed each family to put the little ones to bed as needed and, yes, there were some adults who nod-

ded off, too. The technology affords this flow, in and out. There was even time for a skit. The hiding by the adults of the afikomen – the middle matzah – and the search for it by the children. To find it and re-hide it, and the intense bargaining to regain it... took place in each household.

For many years, it was our family tradition to bargain for something big, and then be satisfied with something smaller. Plane trips became boat trips, became visits to the Science Center to watch a movie about plane and boat trips. Here, each set of kids bargained with their own parents, giving the kids an advantage.

Some things never change. Singing the songs that conclude the Seder as a round, each person had a specific part, and had to remember to chime in at the correct time. Since we have all drunk four large cups of wine and are tired, people inevitably forget when they're supposed to join in. It always brings laughter.

Our Seder went until 11:30 PM. It was lovely. I can't think of any tradition we missed.

Ever since I returned to Cleveland, I knew I'd be having the Seder at Jamie's, and have thus become somewhat lax in my own Passover preparations. But this year, I knew I would be on my own. I returned to my past: I changed my pots and pans, dishware, utensils, and bought lots of Passover food.

I thought of the time when I was a mother with three little kids, when we would end Passover by waiting until three stars appeared in the sky, give the bakeries time to prepare, and go out for pizza. This year, when the last night of Passover was over, Illy drove over wearing her mask and gloves, bringing a pizza that Izik had made. I came down wearing my mask and gloves. We waved. Some things remain the same, other things had to be different.

Next year together, anywhere.

Honey Massey
April 2020



Yahrzeits, May 2020

אייר ~ Iyar

George Friedlander	7 Iyar	Irving Markowitz	27 Iyar 5740
Sam Neuger	8 Iyar	Miriam Zaremsky	27 Iyar
Sam Auerbach	9 Iyar	Rachel Savino	28 Iyar
David Shamis	9 Iyar	Mollie Davis	28 Iyar
Sarah Frumker	9 Iyar	Rachel Barazone	28 Iyar
Annie Keller	10 Iyar	Isaac Genuth	29 Iyar
Shirley Markowitz Katz	11 Iyar 5765	Elka Genuth	29 Iyar
Max David Fredman	11 Iyar 5765	Ernest Gelfand	29 Iyar 5759
Chaim Gabinet	12 Iyar	Allen Goldstone	29 Iyar 5764
Rose Hemple	12 Iyar	Goldie Lederer	29 Iyar
Sarah Friedman	17 Iyar	Bessie Stashower Fredman	29 Iyar 5726
Bernard Century	17 Iyar 5777	Anna Weinberger	29 Iyar
Edith Piccus	17 Iyar 5778	Clara Kord	29 Iyar
Sari Rivkah Herzig	18 Iyar 5771	Donna Williams	29 Iyar
Yevgenia Probst	19 Iyar 5773		
Sylvia M. Lavine	19 Iyar 5735		
Stanley Donald Stone	19 Iyar 5776		
Ethel Eisman	19 Iyar		
Jacob Gutterman	19 Iyar		
Shmul ben Zavel HaCohen	19 Iyar		
Jerome Wachter	21 Iyar 5770		
Samuel Herman Katz	21 Iyar		
Harold Saul Neuger	22 Iyar		
Florence Schlinger	24 Iyar		
Gerson Carr	24 Iyar 5770		
Al Glaser	25 Iyar		
Aaron Schneider	26 Iyar		
Nathan Valancy	26 Iyar		

סיון ~ Sivan

Rachel Leah Tavill	1 Sivan
Bernard Goldstone	1 Sivan 5772
Anna Krasny	2 Sivan
Anna Gutentag	2 Sivan
Celia Jacobs	3 Sivan
Sadie Rocker	3 Sivan
Violet Saunt	4 Sivan
Anna Davidson	4 Sivan
Abe Morris Abelkop	4 Sivan
Louis Mayzel	7 Sivan 5745
Reuben Schutz	7 Sivan
Aviva Hoffman	8 Sivan 5773

A Prayer of Hope During This Pandemic

*We are frightened, God,
Worried for our loved ones,
Worried for our world.
Helpless and confused,
We turn to You
Seeking comfort, faith and hope.*

*Teach us God, to turn our panic into patience,
And our fear into acts of kindness and support.
Our strong must watch out for our weak,
Our young must take care of our old.
Help each one of us to do our part to halt the spread of this virus*

*Send strength and courage to the doctors and nurses
In the frontlines of this battle,
Fortify them with the full force of their healing powers.
Send wisdom and insight to the scientists
Working day and night across the world to discover healing treatments.
Bless their efforts, God.
Fill our leaders with the wisdom and the courage
To choose wisely and act quickly.
Help us, God, to see that we are one world,
One people
Who will rise above this pandemic together.*

*Send us health God,
Watch over us,
Grace us with Your love,
Bless us with Your healing light.
Hear us God,
Heal us God,*

Amen.

Rabbi Naomi Levy

<https://www.tolsc.org/covid19>