



BETH EL

The Heights Synagogue

NEWSLETTER

August 2020
אב/אלול 5780

It's All About the Relationships



RABBI
MICHAEL UNGAR

The month of August contains two notable moments on the Jewish calendar.

The first is Tu B'Av, the 15th day of the Hebrew month of Av. It is the Jewish equivalent of Valentine's Day; historically, it was one of two occasions on the Jewish calendar when romantic matches were made (the other

being Yom Kippur afternoon). In some circles in the Jewish community, it has taken on the significance of a day dedicated to demonstrating love not only toward our partners, but toward others as well. Of course, as Jews, love is on our mind quite a bit. We recite in the *Shema* twice daily that we are to "love the Lord our God." We are also commanded to "love our neighbors as ourselves." It is hard to obey a commandment to feel an emotion, but the Sages urged us to behave in ways that give honor, respect, and dignity to others. Love could not just be a word; we had to demonstrate it.

Later in the month is *Rosh Chodesh Elul*, the beginning of the last month on the Hebrew calendar that immediately precedes Rosh Hashanah. It has been noted that the letters of the word *Elul* (*Aleph, Lamed, Vav, Lamed*) are an acronym for *Ani L'Dodi v'Dodi Li*—I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine. As we approach the High Holy Days, the month of *Elul* with its daily blowing of the Shofar and readings of Psalm 27, are meant to help us refocus on our relationship

with our "beloved," namely, God.

August this year holds for us a special emphasis on relationships, but, again, this is an idea that is not confined to one month. Judaism is all about relationships. The *Brit*, the covenant between our people and God is a relationship. Jewish peoplehood is based on a shared sense of history, mission, and destiny. We also know that we do not live in a vacuum; Jews have always lived in relationship with the nations around them (sometimes more positively than others).

Recent events in our country have forced all of us to confront the relationship with have with our neighbors and fellow citizens. The deaths of George Floyd and other people of color has heightened our sense of responsibility to others. COVID-19 is causing us to physically distance, but there are ways in which many are coming together to move our nation forward with liberty and justice for all. It is a complicated matter, and challenging.

Human beings are social animals. We are not meant to live alone. We often find our context and meaning in community. Tu B'Av and Elul are times for us to recommit to the ideals of love for ourselves, our families, our neighbors (whether they look, believe, or sound like us), and our God. This year, perhaps more than in a long time, we are beckoned to not only talk about love, but also demonstrate it in ways that help to bring peace, justice, and holiness into our midst. As we do, we should remember that it's all about the relationships.

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.

The Ins and Outs of Kabbalat Shabbat

On June 26, 28 people gathered in Cumberland Park for Friday night services, our first in-person gathering since we closed our building. We signed in to make contact tracing easy should it later prove necessary. We learned to recognize each other while wearing masks and keeping our distance. We prayed and listened to a d'var given by Barry Starr. We left the park at least as clean as we found it.

At the end of the services, Barry Starr, who also had been leading Ma'ariv, asked whether we should regularly offer a Friday night service in Cumberland Park. No formal discussion with motions and votes ensued, just widespread muttering among those gathered with some comments shouted out. But in that mysterious way that consensus sometimes emerges from a group, those gathered clearly were happy with holding services every other Friday in Cumberland; on the "off Fridays," Rabbi Ungar will Zoom a Friday night service that ends at the ritual onset of Shabbat.

"So what was the experience like?" I imagine everyone who was not in attendance thinking. I can only speak for myself and prefer not to. Being co-president and being fond of writing does not make my perspective especially typical or meritorious. I'm not going to take up space naming all the attendees, but it's not classified information, and nobody should have any difficulty gathering the impressions of attendees. You are, of course, welcome to ask me.

As a co-president who enjoys writing, I do wish to point out that I expect there to be

a range of levels in risk aversion within the congregation. Each of us has idiosyncrasies in our situations, personalities, histories, and psyches that affect his/her response to risks and opportunities. Attending the service was right for me. Not attending was right for others. My views on what's right for me are subject to change as are everybody else's on what's right for him/her.

Assuming – and these are not trivial assumptions – assuming the City of Cleveland Heights continues to keep its parks open and assuming the CDC and other arbiters of scientific consensus do not change their views on efficacious ways of mitigating the risk of COVID-causing virus transmission, we will be offering Friday night services in Cumberland Park, on the terms we set for the June 26 gathering, on July 10 and 24, August 7 and 21, and September 4. Rabbi Ungar will Zoom services on July 17 and 31, August 14 and 28, and September 11. Starting time will be 6:30 PM, regardless of whether we are in the park or Zooming, until sunset shifts too early for that. September 18 is Erev Rosh Hashanah. What we'll do then is anybody's guess at the time I'm writing, in early July.

By offering in-person and Zoomed services on alternating Fridays, I hope we'll be pleasing many congregants some of the time. I would have considered such a result a success during good times. During a pandemic, I consider such a result a home run. (Yes, I miss baseball as well as indoor services.)

Joel Genuth, Co-President

High Holy Days 2020

I can never keep track of the proper order for the three words in our mission statement, so no surprise that I'm unsure if the correct saying is a riddle wrapped in a mystery wrapped in an enigma or some other order. But that's what the High Holy Days look like from the perspective of the Board, the Ritual Committee, and the ad hoc COVID-19 Task Force.

What few certainties I can enunciate are almost all negative:

- We will not host a large, indoor gathering in our sanctuary while the virus is a threat and the outdoor temperatures are likely to be comfortable. That would be irresponsible.
- We will not host an outdoor gathering longer than 90 minutes unless we can figure out a way to provide access to bathrooms. No explanation needed.
- We cannot control the weather.

The only brief summary I can offer of where we currently stand is that lots of Board and Ritual Committee members are kicking around lots of ideas. We have been gathering ideas from other synagogues across various affiliations and are having conversations with some of our members. Several people are doing the leg

work to learn which are feasible and infeasible. If you are called or emailed for information or input, please be generous with your time.

My lone positive certainty is that we will *try* to do something. "Try" is in italics because there is no guarantee of success.

If you have a positive idea about what to do, send it on or phone it in. Everyone's contacts are in the Membership Roster. If your idea is not something we're already considering, we'll add it to the list.

I enjoy writing, but I'm not having fun writing this article; no doubt you are even less pleased with what you are reading. But that's life in a pandemic, and life is unqualifiedly good.

Whatever we end up offering will be strangely different from every prior year. Each of us will have to decide what is best for his/her spiritual health. Nobody should feel s/he is giving insult or being insulted as a result of one's own or someone else's decision.

Joel Genuth, Co-President



HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT BETH EL, AND IT WON'T COST YOU A SHEQEL!

If you shop on Amazon at all, just switch your account over to Smile.Amazon. If you are a Prime member, you can use that as well. Beth El is now listed as a supported charity at Smile.Amazon and they will send a percentage of your purchase to Beth El as a donation.

You can use this link to go directly to Smile.Amazon and the Beth El connection: <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/34-1226206>

Try it! You'll like it, and so will the congregation!



NEWS FROM BETHEL

חדשות

Condolences to:

ניחום אבלים

- Joel Genuth and his family, on the recent death of Joel's father, our member, Saul Genuth z"l.
- Polly Wilkenfeld, on the recent death of her aunt, Felicia Shapiro z"l.

Refuah Sh'lema to:

רפואה שלימה!

- Harvey Jacobs
- Marsha Katz

Congratulations to:

מזל טוב!

- Joel Falck and Julie Rabin, whose son, Josh Falck recently became engaged to Stacie Roseman.
- Honey Massey, on the birth of her new granddaughter, Arabella Thursday Penarelli, to her daughter and son-in-law, Rivkah and Jason Penarelli. The family lives in Hercules, California.
- Adam and Samantha Probst, who welcomed their first child, Asher Stanley Probst, into their world on May 27.

Yasher Koah to:

יישר כוח!

- Former member Jeffrey Halpern, who was recently promoted to Assistant Professor (with tenure) at the University of New Hampshire College of Engineering and Physical Sciences.

Farewell to:

שלום ולהתראות

- Stacia Dearmin, who is moving to Florida, in order to better support her aging parents. She says, "As I contemplate re-establishing my life somewhere new, I'm reminded of the many meaningful ways in which BE–THS and the wonderful people there have contributed to my life and that of my children over the last two decades, and I want to thank you for that. Your knowledge, love, and *ruach* have enriched us all. Especially right now, I wish you all good health, prosperity, and peace."

Thanks for Contributions to:

תודה!

- Richard Adler
- Bruce and Judie Amsel, in hope for a quick return of all of us.
- Bruce and Judie Amsel, in appreciation of Barry Starr.
- Sherry Ball and Marty Gelfand, in memory of Marty's

father, Ernest Gelfand z"l.

- Sherry Ball and Marty Gelfand, in celebration of Rabbi Ungar's special, synched Hebrew and Gregorian birthday.
- Henry Bloom and Marilyn Malkin, in honor of Leon Gabinet's 93rd birthday.
- Henry Bloom and Marilyn Malkin, in memory of Ann Shalowitz Bloom z"l.
- Michael Bloomfield and Shelley Costa Bloomfield, to the Kiddush Fund.
- Michael Bloomfield and Shelley Costa Bloomfield, to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund.
- Bill and Carol Bruml, to the Chesed Fund.
- Bill and Carol Bruml
- Bill and Carol Bruml, for postage for the membership mailing.
- Bill and Carol Bruml, to the spring Capital Improvement Campaign.
- Bill and Carol Bruml, in memory of Saul Genuth z"l.
- Amy and Alan Cadesky
- Ruth Cattleberry, in memory of her father, Al Glaser z"l.
- Ruth Cattleberry, in memory of Jesse Cattleberry z"l, the mother of Ruth's late husband, Bernie Cattleberry z"l.
- Ruth Cattleberry, in memory of Leon Ballonoff z"l.
- Laura Gooch and David Kazdan, in memory of Irving Markowitz z"l.
- Stephanie Gordon, to the spring Capital Improvement Campaign.
- Barry Gorn and Lynn Teichman, in memory of Sara bat Rachel vYisrael z"l.
- Craig and Janet Hoffman, in honor of the birth of a son to Adam and Samantha Probst.
- Karen Katzman, in memory of Robert J. Williams z"l.
- Susan Klarreich
- Martin and Nancy Kosmin
- Rachel Kurland, in honor of Rabbi Michael Ungar on Father's Day, with love and thanks for being such an amazing stepdad and friend.
- Rabbi Alan and Jean Lettofsky, in memory of Jerry and Phillip Lettofsky z"l.
- Beverly Levy, in honor of Rabbi Ungar's birthday.
- Michael Madorsky
- Gabrielle Millas, in celebration of Shavuot 2020!

- **Stephen Pepper and Linda Tobin**, in honor of the birth of Adam and Samantha Probst's son.
- **Gabrielle Millas**, to our vibrant community.
- **Adam and Samantha Probst**, in honor of their son Asher's bris.
- **Juliana Sadock Savino**, in memory of Rachel Savino z"l.
- **Eran Shiloh**, to the Presidents' Discretionary Fund.
- **Bud Stern**, towards membership in Greater Cleveland Congregations.
- **Bud Stern**
- **Beth and Scott Wachter**
- **Beth and Scott Wachter**, to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund
- **Beth and Scott Wachter**, in honor of Shani Gelles' graduation from college.
- **Beth and Scott Wachter**, for postage for thank-you notes.

Thank You for Supplemental Contributions in Addition to Membership Dues to:

- **Henry Bloom and Marilyn Malkin**
- **Michael Bloomfield and Shelley Costa Bloomfield**
- **Molly Brudnick**
- **Robin Dubin and Richard Krueck**
- **Joel Genuth**
- **Saul Genuth z"l**
- **Ilene Gertman**
- **Stephanie Gordon**
- **Fern Grunberger**
- **Sharona Hoffman and Andy Podgurski**
- **Ari Klein and Ditte Wolin**
- **Gabrielle Millas**
- **Betsy Moss**
- **Stephen Pepper and Linda Tobin**
- **Philip Piccus**
- **Adam and Samantha Probst**
- **Leonard Tracht**
- **Rabbi Michael and Michele Ungar**
- **Beth and Scott Wachter**
- **Ieda Warshay**

High Holy Days

We will notify you via email once decisions are made regarding the High Holy Days this year.

If you are not on the BE-THS "BigList," our main email listserv, contact Carol Bruml, benews3246@gmail.com, and she can help you get added.

Yahrzeits, August 2020

	Av ~ אב
Maurice B. Lavine	11 Av 5718
Joe Neuger	11 Av 5754
Hanna Tepper	11 Av 5700
Lisa Kurzbauer	11 Av
Sarah Fried Weiss	12 Av 5723
Marcia L. Jacobs	14 Av
Harry Tinman	15 Av 5729
Doreen Tavill Erstling	16 Av
Norman Paul Glanz	16 Av 5723
Sarah Blume Levine	16 Av 5737
Stanley Neuger	17 Av 5777
Ida Greenstein	18 Av 5728
Lena Freed	19 Av 5726
Morris Ginsberg	19 Av 5732
Esther Ann Farachi	20 Av 5739
Helen K. Weil	22 Av 5752
Joseph D. Klein	23 Av 5718
Samuel Messerman	24 Av 5748
Vladimir Bonacic	26 Av 5759
Dr. David Russack	27 Av 5743
Sadie Landesman	27 Av

Bernard Mason	29 Av 5719
Joshua Andrew Topy	30 Av 5767

	Elul ~ אלול
Osher ben Zalman Rabinovich	1 Elul
Esther Liederman	1 Elul
Dr. Philip Kazdan	3 Elul 5778
Victor Linden	3 Elul 5755
Alter David Miller	3 Elul 5732
Isaac A. Belkes	3 Elul 5703
Rose Rapport	4 Elul 5723
Jack Malkin	4 Elul
Walter Kugelman	5 Elul 5771
Chari Shanker	5 Elul 5767
Rev. Nathan Davidson	6 Elul 5741
Ira Marks	9 Elul 5771
Sarah Rottman	9 Elul
Benjamin Slor	9 Elul 5731
Kimberly Carr	11 Elul 5771
Sylvia Jane Starkman	11 Elul 5743
Regina Stern	11 Elul 5712

CALENDAR, AUGUST 2020

5780 אב/אלול

FRIDAY, JULY 31

6:30 PM – **Kabbalat Shabbat** services via Zoom

SATURDAY, AUGUST 1 – *Parashat Ve'et-hannan*

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 5 – *Tu B'Av*

FRIDAY, AUGUST 7

6:30 PM – **Kabbalat Shabbat** services in Cumberland Park, weather permitting

SATURDAY, AUGUST 8 – *Parashat Ekev*

SUNDAY, AUGUST 9

1:30 PM – **Book discussion with Rabbi Ungar, via Zoom.** Currently, they are discussing Alan Morinis' *Everyday Holiness*. Copies of the book are available from Mac's Backs at a 20% discount. Send an email to the Rabbi, rabbi@bethelheights.org, if you wish to participate and are not already a member of the group.

7:00 PM – **Midrash Class, led by Rabbi Ungar or Barry Starr, via Zoom.** Contact the Rabbi, if you wish to participate and are new to the group, so he can send you the Zoom link.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 14

6:30 PM – **Kabbalat Shabbat** services via Zoom

SATURDAY, AUGUST 15 – *Parashat Re'eh*

THURSDAY-FRIDAY, AUGUST 20-21 – *Rosh Chodesh Elul*

7:30 AM THURSDAY – **Rosh Chodesh walking meditation.** Meet at Shaker Lakes Nature Center. Social distancing observed. Further details at <https://roshchodeshcleveland.blog/>

FRIDAY, AUGUST 21

6:30 PM – **Kabbalat Shabbat** services in Cumberland Park, weather permitting

SUNDAY, AUGUST 23

7:00 PM – **Midrash Class, led by Rabbi Ungar or Barry Starr, via Zoom.** Contact the Rabbi, if you wish to participate and are new to the group, so he can send you the Zoom link.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 22 – *Parashat Shofetim*

FRIDAY, AUGUST 28

6:30 PM – **Kabbalat Shabbat** services via Zoom

SATURDAY, AUGUST 29 – *Parashat Ki tetse*

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 4

6:30 PM – **Kabbalat Shabbat** services in Cumberland Park, weather permitting

Kabbalat Shabbat Services

Kabbalat Shabbat services are currently being held at 6:30 PM on alternating weeks in Cumberland Park (weather permitting) or via Zoom; see the calendar above for which dates are at which location. If you come to services at Cumberland, bring your own chair or blanket, be aware that park restrooms are NOT available, and be sure to carry out with you everything you have brought in, leaving the park as clean (or cleaner) than it was when you arrived.