



BETH EL

The Heights Synagogue

NEWSLETTER

September 2020
אלול 5780 / תשרי 5781



RABBI
MICHAEL UNGAR

An Uncomfortable High Holy Days

You may have heard the story of the old Jewish man who was involved in a traffic accident. Nothing too serious, but the EMTs thought it a good idea to take him to the hospital just to have him checked out. They got him on the gurney, covered him with a blanket, strapped him in, and loaded him into the back of the ambulance. As they were about to close the door, one of the EMTs asked, “are you comfortable?” The old man responded, “I make a nice living...”

Our society places a lot of emphasis on comfort. Our homes must be comfortable. Our cars must be the ultimate in comfort. Even our news is presented (or not) in such a way as to not cause too much discomfort. It’s a part of the American psyche.

Judaism, on the other hand, doesn’t place much value on comfort. On the contrary, Judaism often asks us to be uncomfortable. For example, look at the Torah readings for Rosh Hashanah. On the first day, we read about Sarah and Abraham casting Hagar and Ishmael out of their home into the wilderness. On the second day, we read about the near sacrifice of Isaac by his father. Neither of these is a comforting story; one might think that the sages would have chosen another set of Torah readings for these most holy days—maybe the story

of Creation—but instead we are made uncomfortable.

This is, of course, reflective of what the High Holy Days are supposed to elicit within us. The Ten Days of Repentance are anything but comfortable. We are supposed to reflect on our deeds and misdeeds from the previous year, and plan for how to do better in the coming year. Part of that process involves honestly looking at our shortcomings—not a comfortable thing to do in the least. Repentance is not something to be done from our recliners with a remote control; it involves discomfort.

Throughout the rest of the year, this idea also holds significance. We look at the world around us and see things that are not right: injustice, suffering, war, illness, etc. These make us uncomfortable and should impel us to try to bring healing. The prophets continually railed against the people who got comfortable and cushy; once that happened, the sinning began. This kind of comfort is what is often referred to today as “privilege.”

On a more concrete level, this year will be especially uncomfortable. COVID-19 means that we won’t be able to gather together as we have in the past. We will

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*To the entire
BE-THS family:
L’shanah tovah
tikatevu -
May you be
written down for
a good year.*

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.

Goodness and Gratitude Comes to a Screen Near You

For the past couple of years, our board meetings have begun with “Goodness and Gratitude.” We ask board members to share positive comments before we get down to business.

Because the pandemic prevented an in-person annual meeting, I want to borrow a page from the board meetings and share a “Goodness and Gratitude” with the congregation, expressing our appreciation of the service given by those members who left the board in June.

Thank you to:

- Beth Wachter for her diligence as Secretary. Beth remains on the board, as Social Action Chair.
- Becky Schur for an outstanding job as Social Committee Chair.
- Mike Stekloff for his many contributions to the functioning of BE-THS.
- Amit Shuck for her enthusiasm as chair of Family Education.
- Marsha Katz for her sage comments as an At-Large board member.
- Robin Dubin for her contributions as Immediate Past President.

In addition, thank you to:

- Marvin Palevsky for cleaning, repairing, and improving our building.
- Brian Aronson for keeping our financial records and managing our cash flow.
- Craig Hoffman for overseeing our finances.

And thank you to all those members who continue to volunteer for the congregation in various capacities!

Bud Stern, Co-President

Racial Justice: A Personal Perspective

a Panel Discussion, via Zoom

Sponsored by Beth El-The Heights Synagogue

When: Sunday, August 30th, 6:30 pm via Zoom

RSVP to Beth Wachter at bethwachter59@gmail.com

by August 28 in order to receive Zoom link

Please join us for an informative discussion about racial discrimination led by two experts with deep personal knowledge of the issues. We will learn about the impacts of discrimination on communities of color and ways in which we can all work toward real solutions. Our featured speakers are:

Councilwoman Phyllis Cleveland, who since 2006 has represented Cleveland Ward 5 since 2006, which encompasses the neighborhoods of Central, Kinsman, Midtown and part of Downtown. She serves as Majority Leader, chairwoman of council's Transportation Committee, and vice-chair of Development Planning and Sustainability, and of Workforce and Community Benefits. Ms. Cleveland also serves on the Finance Committee, the Rules Committee, and the Mayor's Appointments Committee. She has worked tirelessly on ridding the city of abandoned, dilapidated properties and developing affordable housing.

Jamie Saunt, who has a Master's Degree in Social Work from CSU. Her work has involved in-home Early Childhood therapy for eight years. Prior to that, she worked in the HIV community for four years, doing outreach and working with chronically homeless HIV patients. The vast majority of her clients live in very poor neighborhoods throughout Cleveland. Almost all are African-American. Jamie has five children, two of whom are biracial male teenagers.



JUDAISM
DOESN'T PLACE
MUCH VALUE
ON COMFORT

RACISM IS AN
UNCOMFORTABLE
TOPIC

JOIN US
ON
AUGUST 30
FOR A PANEL
DISCUSSION
ON
RACIAL
JUSTICE

LET
YOURSELF
GET
UNCOMFORTABLE

NEWS FROM BETH EL

חדשות

High Holy Day Services

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, High Holy Day services this year will be foreshortened versions that we will offer both in-person and via Zoom.

The same services will be offered in both formats, with different leaders.

In-person services will be strictly limited, and will require prior reservations.

Watch your email for information.

Condolences to:

ביחום אבלים

- The family of Morry Shanker z”l, who recently passed away.

Refuah Sh’lema to:

רפואה שלימה!

- Harvey Jacobs
- Marsha Katz
- Marvin Palevsky
- Miriam Palevsky

Congratulations to:

מזל טוב!

- Former members Vicki Rosales and her daughter, Jillian (Jilia) Rosales Sacharow, on the birth of Jillia’s son, Adir Gabriel. Jillia and her husband, Joey Sacharow, live in Jerusalem.

Thanks for Contributions to:

תודה!

- Rabbi Moshe Adler
- Henry Bloom and Marilyn Malkin
- Henry Bloom and Marilyn Malkin, in honor of an anonymous helper.
- Molly Brudnick, in memory of Hyman Brudnick z”l.
- Molly Brudnick, in memory of Mary Brudnick z”l.
- Robin Dubin and Richard Krueck, in memory of Joseph Meyer Dubin z”l.
- Leon Gabinet
- Ilene Gertman
- Gabi Hays
- Craig and Janet Hoffman
- Alan Lerner and Erica New
- Gary and Marilyn Magden, in memory of Joseph Magden z”l.
- Gabrielle Millas, in honor of hope.
- Gabrielle Millas, in honor of the ethics of her father and *Pirkei Avot*.
- Gabrielle Millas, for Tu B’Av.
- Gabrielle Millas, in honor of those who are working to make our observance of the High Holy Days possible this year.
- Judith Neuger, in memory of all of the past Neugers z”l.

- Stephen Pepper and Linda Tobin, with congratulations to Adam and Samantha Probst, on the birth of their son, Asher Stanley Probst.

- Adam and Samantha Probst
- Ilana and William Schmitt
- Amit and Shlomo Shuck, for the donation of lumber for the playground bench.
- Bud Stern
- Leonard Tracht
- Rabbi Michael and Michele Ungar, in appreciation for being part of this wonderful community.
- Ieda Warshay, in memory of Marvin Warshay z”l.
- Ieda Warshay, in honor of Matthew Warshay’s graduation from Brown University.
- Rose Wilcher, in memory of Arnold Stone z”l.

Thanks for Contributions in Memory of Dr. Saul Genuth z”l to:

תודה!

- Molly Brudnick
- Bill and Carol Bruml
- Robin Dubin and Richard Krueck
- Dan and Marcy Fertel
- Adi and Judith Gerblich
- Iris Goodman
- Fern Grunberger
- Craig and Janet Hoffman
- Sharona Hoffman and Andy Podgurski
- Ari Klein and Ditte Wolin
- Rabbi Alan and Jean Lettowsky
- Gabrielle Millas
- Stephen Pepper and Linda Tobin
- Juliana Sadock Savino
- Barbara and Robert Stern
- Beth and Scott Wachter
- Bruce and Polly Wilkenfeld
- Neil Wolfson, Wendy Wolfson, and Deborah Wolfson Brackstone

Book of Remembrance

Many things in our world have been disrupted over the past months but, as always, Beth El --The Heights Synagogue will be memorializing our dear ones with a printed Book of Remembrance this year.

If you would like to have a listing, please do the following:

- **If you have had a listing in the past**, find and review your previous listing in the Book of Remembrance from last year. If you did not receive a PDF copy of last year's book, request one from Carol Bruml (benews3246@gmail.com) or Karen Kugelman (kugelman2@aol.com).
- **By return e-mail, let me know of any changes or additions, or if you would just like to repeat last year's listing.**
- **If you have never had a listing, please consider one for this year and let me know by return e-mail.** Your support will honor those we have lost and help us to continue the programming we have offered during the past months and hope to offer in the future.
- **Send your donation to Beth El – The Heights Synagogue**, by postal mail to 3246 Desota Avenue, Cleveland Hts., OH 44118. You may also pay on-line through our website using PayPal, at <https://bethelheights.org>. **In either case, please mark your donation “For BOR.”**

Deadline for receipt of your request is September 7.

We are again suggesting donations of \$10.00 per name – the same as since the year of our first Book of Remembrance, 1999. However, if you can, please consider making an additional donation in memory of your loved ones – this is one of our shul's significant fund-raisers of the year.

If you attend our live High Holy Day services, you will receive a printed copy of the Book of Remembrance on Yom Kippur. **On request**, we will make plans to mail you a copy after Yom Kippur; **please add \$1.00 to your donation** to cover first class postage. Members will receive e-mailed copies after Yom Kippur.



Wishing you a year of sweetness and good health,
Karen Kugelman

Uncomfortable High Holy Days

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have two parallel services—one, in-person and one, on-line. We won't be able to see our friends the way we usually do because of the masks, nor will we feel the comfort of the hugs of our fellow congregants. Meeting in a small crowd at the shul for a shortened service will feel uncomfortable. Participating in services on a computer/cellphone screen will not be much better.

Our discomfort can be a source of kvetching and

nothing more (we Jews are good at that!), or we can use that discomfort as an inspiration to make things better. We can draw on that which bothers us to improve ourselves and the world around us. This year at the High Holy Days we may not exactly be comfortable but let us hope that the experience will ultimately help us to “make a nice living” in the year ahead.

Michele and I and our family wish you and your families a happy, HEALTHY, and uncomfortable 5781!

