



RABBI  
MICHAEL UNGAR



חג פסח  
כשר  
ושמח

Wishing you  
a kosher and  
happy Pesah!

## A World Still Turned Upside Down

Last year in the newsletter article that I wrote preceding Purim, I talked about “A World Turned Upside Down,” referencing the story found in the Book of Esther and the state of the contemporary world. Little did I know at the time that I wrote that article that Purim would be the last semblance of “normal” before the COVID-19 pandemic changed our world and our lives forever.

In that article I talked about how Jews have faced difficult situations over the years; there have been times when we have feared for our very survival. The story of Esther, Mordechai, and Haman is a reminder of our vulnerability. The heroes of the story, of course, are heroic because they both stood up for who they were. They were unapologetic about being Jewish and, in the end, they and the people were rewarded.

The pandemic we are still enduring is not all that different from this story; as Jews and as humans we are concerned about our survival. The virus is deadly and while the vaccines are being distributed the infection and death rates continue to climb. How do we respond to this in a Jewish way? We continue to observe the *mitzvah* of *Bikkur Cholim*—visiting the sick. We care for those who are ill as best we can and support the

efforts of front-line caregivers in hospitals, nursing facilities, and elsewhere. We are also guided by the principle of *Pikuach Nefesh*, doing what we can to save lives, like wearing a mask and social distancing.

Beyond this, we also fear for what this pandemic means for our community in the long-term. Judaism is practiced with others; we need at least ten adults for certain prayers. We study in partnership. We often engage in *Tikkun Olam* through group efforts. What effect will enforced separation have on our ability to connect with each other and with God? Our response here should also be rooted in our tradition.

Over the centuries, we have confronted crises that forced us to re-think (short- and long-term) how we “do Judaism.” This was true after the destruction of both Temples in Jerusalem, during the Enlightenment, and after the Holocaust. We must have the courage to find new ways to uphold our traditions and values. We must, like Mordechai and Esther, be the best Jewish and human selves we can be in order to ensure that our people will be around physically and spiritually in an uncertain future.

Rabbi Michael Ungar

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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:benews3246@gmail.com), if you need help with signing up.

# A Temporary, Awful Interlude

Beth El –The Heights Synagogue has a way of doing things that involves community connectedness and joint efforts to accomplish our goals. We are a COMMUNITY, and togetherness is our way of life. The pandemic has interfered with gatherings of any sort for many types of noble, and important, and FUN, and religious, and social events. Even our Tzedakah events have been affected! Our food drive, in contrast to prior years, was an individualized and disconnected experience – we are accustomed to visiting with Scott and his myriad helpers at the front door of the synagogue, but we could not do that this year.

We have had to scramble to figure out how to replace so many of our traditions with healthy alternatives. If we can't meet for Purim, how do we perform the mitzvah of *shalach manot*? So many of our activities and services have necessarily shifted to Zoom gatherings. I personally find them remarkably unsatisfying. Purim is a quintessential getting-together holiday, but our celebration needs to be on Zoom this year. Looking at miniature video images of our members and friends for an hour or two does not cut it for me.

So the challenge has been: How to move forward as a congregation, as a community, with a key element of our connectedness missing. A few members of our group had

pressed for a resumption of gatherings with appropriate cautions: social distancing, masks and face shields, body temperature thermometers, no physical contact, hand-washing and sanitation, etc. The Board, which is our governing body, decided not to go this route at this time, to err perhaps on the side of caution and to show our solidarity with others who are willing to make sacrifices in the interest of limiting the pandemic's damage to public health.

Yet I understand and respect those people who were pressing for gatherings once again. It's hard to feel connected with our congregation without our traditional forms of – connection! And tradition is one of the “Big Three” in our self-description as an independent congregation (along with the fact that the congregation is both egalitarian and participatory).

We must recognize the reality of the pandemic for what it is. Each of us almost certainly knows some people who have been infected by the COVID-19 virus, and I know of several who have died. The danger in this sickness is real and those who deny this reality do us all a grave disservice. I look forward to the time when it will be normal to greet, shake hands, and hug family and friends at Beth El –The Heights Synagogue once again.

Bud Stern, Co-President

## Upping Your D'var Torah Game

Divrei Torah are not just for the Rabbis--especially at BE-THS. For some, the thought of having to talk about the Torah portion is terrifying. Others feel somewhat comfortable but still see room for improvement. Join Rabbi Ungar on Wednesday, March 10 at 7:15 pm via Zoom for a workshop that will help veterans and newbies alike to get the most out of the experience of writing and delivering words of Torah.

Questions? Contact Rabbi Ungar at [rabbi@bethelheights.org](mailto:rabbi@bethelheights.org).

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# NEWS FROM BETZ EL

# חדשות

## Condolences to:

ניחום אבלים

➤ Donna Spiegler and Phil Kalina, on the recent death of Donna's brother, Jeffrey Spiegler z"l.

➤ Ruth Cantleberry, in memory of her brother, Morton Glaser z"l.

➤ Ruth Cantleberry, in memory of her husband, Bernard Cantleberry z"l.

## Refuah Sh'lema to:

רפואה שלימה!

➤ Rabbi Moshe Adler

➤ Philip Piccus

➤ Marsha Katz

➤ Ieda Warshay

➤ Miriam Palevsky

➤ Laura Gooch and David Kazdan, in memory of Bob Finkelstein z"l.

➤ Laura Gooch and David Kazdan, in memory of Jere Robins z"l.

➤ Laura Gooch and David Kazdan, in memory of Jonathan Richmond z"l.

➤ Laura Gooch and David Kazdan, in memory of Linda Robinson z"l.

## Mazal tov to:

מזל טוב!

➤ Alan Lerner and Erica New on the engagement of their son, Zack Lerner, to Miriam Goodman.

➤ Lowell and Marsha Katz, on their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary.

➤ Lowell and Marsha Katz, in memory of Marsha's mother, Sylvia Protus z"l.

➤ Lowell and Marsha Katz, in memory of Marsha's sister, Marilyn Protus Fischer z"l.

## Yasher Koah to:

יישר כוח!

➤ Joe and Mia Buchwald Gelles, whose daughter, Ruth Gelles, is the project lead at CDC for the national retail pharmacy distribution program. Rolling this out so quickly on the heels of leading the CDC in their national vaccine distribution program for nursing homes and other long term care facilities is a reflection of her incredible hard work and dedication.

➤ Marty Gelfand, who was elected by the Cuyahoga County Democratic Party Executive Committee to fill a vacancy in the party's Central Committee to represent Cleveland Heights Precinct 2B, where he and his family moved last summer.

➤ Martin and Nancy Kosmin, to the MLK Food Drive.

➤ Alan Lerner and Erica New, in memory of Irvin Lerner z"l.

➤ Alan Lerner and Erica New, in memory of Sonny Lerner z"l.

➤ Rabbi Alan and Jean Lettofsky, in memory of Seth Loeb Lettofsky z"l.

➤ Nancy Levin, in honor of Rabbi Michael Ungar, on his being awarded an honorary Ph.D. from the Jewish Theological Seminary.

➤ Gabrielle Millas

➤ Gabrielle Millas, in honor of our treasured friendships.

➤ Adam and Samantha Probst

➤ Eran Shiloh

➤ Barry Starr, in memory of Robert and Sarah Starr z"l.

➤ Bud Stern, in memory of Helene Stern z"l.

➤ Bud Stern, in memory of Mildred Stern z"l.

➤ Bud Stern, to the Presidents' Discretionary Fund.

➤ Leonard Tracht

➤ Harriet Tramer

## Thanks for contributions to:

תודה!

➤ Richard Adler

➤ Sherry Ball and Marty Gelfand, in memory of Marty's mother, Eleanor Gelfand z"l.

➤ Sherry Ball and Marty Gelfand, in memory of Marty's aunt, Edith Gelfand z"l.

➤ Kenneth Bardach, in honor of Blanche and Jack Valancy.

➤ David and Karen Bardenstein

➤ Ruth Cantleberry, in honor of her grandson, Aiden Ballonoff, who became a bar mitzvah on December 19, in Damascus, Maryland.

➤ Ruth Cantleberry, in memory of Bud Stern's mother, Mildred Stern z"l.

## Thanks for donations in response to the Year-End-Appeal to:

תודה!

➤ Bill and Carol Bruml

➤ Robin Dubin and Richard Krueck

➤ Barbara and Barry Epstein

➤ Adi and Judith Gerblich

(continued on page 4)

# CALENDAR, MARCH 2021

5781 ניסן / אדר

## Notes:

1. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic, all service dates, times, and even locations, are subject to change.

2. The Pesah schedule of services is incomplete.

Watch your email for updates.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 25 – *Erev Purim*

7:30 PM – *Megillah* reading via Zoom

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26 – *Purim*

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 27 – *Shushan Purim, Shabbat Tetzaveh*

10:00 AM – *Shabbat morning services via Zoom* (Schmoozing begins at 9:30 am)

THURSDAY, MARCH 4

7:30 PM – *Weekday Ma'ariv* service via Zoom

SATURDAY, MARCH 6 – *Shabbat Ki Tisa*

*No services planned*

SUNDAY, MARCH 7

1:30 PM – **Book discussion with Rabbi Ungar via Zoom.** Discussion of Alan Morinas' "Everyday Holiness" will continue.

7:00 PM – *Midrash class via Zoom*, led by either Rabbi Ungar or Barry Starr.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 10

7:15 PM – "Upping Your D'var Torah Game," a Zoom workshop, led by Rabbi Ungar, that will help both newbies and veterans learn how to get the most out of writing and delivering words of Torah. (See page 2 for more information. Watch email for the link.)

SATURDAY, MARCH 13 – *Shabbat Vayakhel-Pekudei*

10:00 AM – *Shabbat morning services via Zoom* (schmoozing begins at 9:30 am)

SUNDAY, MARCH 14

7:30 AM – **Rosh Chodesh Nisan walking meditation.** For details, check the blog at [www.roschodeshcleveland.blog](http://www.roschodeshcleveland.blog) or contact Kirby Date, [kirby@kmdateplanning.com](mailto:kirby@kmdateplanning.com).

FRIDAY, MARCH 19

5:30 PM – *Kabbalat Shabbat* services via Zoom.

SATURDAY, MARCH 20 – *Shabbat Vayikra*

*No services planned.*

SUNDAY, MARCH 21

7:00 PM – *Midrash class via Zoom*, led by either Rabbi Ungar or Barry Starr.

THURSDAY, MARCH 25

7:00 AM - *Morning service via Zoom.*

SATURDAY, MARCH 27

10:00 AM – *Shabbat morning services via Zoom.* (Schmoozing begins at 9:30 am)

## NEWS (continued from page 3)

End of Year Appeal Donations, continued

- Stephanie Gordon
- Emily and Paul Klarreich
- David and Judie Perelman
- Juliana Sadock Savino

- Frederick and Joyce Tavill
- Bruce and Polly Wilkenfeld

Thanks for Mailing Help to:  
➤ Bill and Carol Bruml

תודה!

# Successful MLK Food Drive 2021!

Because of COVID, the Beth El –The Heights Synagogue Food Drive, typically held on Sunday of MLK weekend in memory of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. z”l, lasted the month of January and was entirely virtual. Members and friends of BE–THS donated a total of \$1,796.00 to the Heights Emergency Food Center. The amount donated, per government criteria, can serve up to approximately 7,200 meals! It can also be used for six months worth of typical delivery costs, which equates to 30,000 pounds (15 tons) of the food they order from the Greater Cleveland Food Bank. To all of those who participated: Thank you for another successful MLK Food Drive. ~ Scott Wachter

## Yahrzeits, March 2021

### Adar ~ אדר

Sue Klein	17 Adar 5777
Clarence Libman	17 Adar 5743
Isadore Glanz	17 Adar
Abram Woolf	17 Adar II
Bernice Shanker	18 Adar 5776
Solomon Malkin	19 Adar
Mary Cernigoj	19 Adar II
Louis Davis	19 Adar II
Illane Klein	20 Adar 5776
Esther Hollander	20 Adar
Daniel Geddes	20 Adar
Irwin Palevsky	20 Adar II 5768
Shelley Birkner	20 Adar II
Barbara Becker	22 Adar 5739
Meyer Hoffer	22 Adar II 5776
Frank Milinsky	22 Adar II
Ida Weiss	23 Adar
Harvey Mendel	24 Adar II 5760
Sanford J. Mintz	25 Adar 5748
Miranda Claire Bryant	25 Adar
Nili Adler	25 Adar 5774
Libby Magnus	26 Adar 5762
Leo Berman	26 Adar
Lawrence Sussman	26 Adar
Jacob Gerblich	27 Adar
Joseph Fromson	27 Adar
Michael Chasis	27 Adar II
Jacob Fromson	27 Adar II
Celia Auerbach	28 Adar
Pauline Shamis	28 Adar
Max Brodman	28 Adar II
Leo Moskovitz	29 Adar
Lena Greenhut	29 Adar

### Nisan ~ ניסן

Sam Zavelowitz	1 Nisan
Bertha Weisberg	2 Nisan 5759
Ella Rothstein	2 Nisan
Minnie Silverman	2 Nisan
Mary Valancy	3 Nisan 5767
Samuel Chernikoff	3 Nisan
Julius Weil	4 Nisan
Edward Einhorn	4 Nisan
Ida Grossman	4 Nisan
Gloria Horwitz	4 Nisan
Max Newman	4 Nisan
Rose Kushner	4 Nisan.
Louis Levine	5 Nisan
Armin Rothstein	6 Nisan
Gertrude Adler	6 Nisan 5762
Isadore Einhorn	7 Nisan
Ben Engel	7 Nisan
Ida Glanz	8 Nisan
Gregory Reimer	9 Nisan
Saul Louis Meyers	10 Nisan 5767
Iris Bergsman	11 Nisan 5766
Israel David Margolin	11 Nisan
Leonora Katz	12 Nisan
Elyse Sloane-Felber	13 Nisan 5778
Hyman Fromson	13 Nisan
Barbara Joyce Gilden	13 Nisan
Abraham Gordon	14 Nisan
Morris Schwartz	14 Nisan
Samuel Rottman	15 Nisan
Elinor Orche	15 Nisan
Clara Soffer	15 Nisan
Sarah Kornhauser	15 Nisan
Leslie Rolle	16 Nisan 5765
Celia Davis	16 Nisan
Louis Widzer	16 Nisan
Mike Michelson	17 Nisan 5766
Rabbi Samuel Fredman	17 Nisan 5701

**POWER OF ATTORNEY  
FOR THE SALE OF HAMETZ**

**Pesah 5781 (Passover 2021)**

I, the undersigned, fully empower and permit Rabbi Michael Ungar to act in my place and stead, and in my behalf, to sell all hametz possessed by me (knowingly or unknowingly) as defined by Torah and Rabbinic law (i.e., known hametz, substances of doubtful hametz status, and all kinds of hametz mixtures); hametz that tends to harden and to adhere to the inner surfaces of pans, pots or cooking and utility vessels; and all kinds of live animals that have been eating hametz or mixtures thereof. I further authorize Rabbi Michael Ungar to lease all places wherein the hametz owned by me may be found, especially but not exclusively on the premises located at:

\_\_\_\_\_  
*(full address, including city and state)*

Rabbi Michael Ungar has the full right to sell and to lease by transactions, as he deems fit and proper and for such periods of time as he believes are necessary for the halachically effective disposal of my hametz as defined above.

I further give Rabbi Michael Ungar full power and authority to appoint a substitute in his stead with full power to sell and lease as provided herein. The above given power is in conformity with all Torah and Rabbinic laws, and in accordance with the laws of the State of Ohio and of the United States of America.

I hereby affix my signature on this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, in the year \_\_\_\_\_, as reckoned in the United States of America.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City, State, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_ You will receive an email receipt from Rabbi Ungar. If you have not received this receipt by noon on March 25, please contact Rabbi Ungar directly, by phone (614-579-1336 ) or email ([rabbi@bethelheights.org](mailto:rabbi@bethelheights.org))

***Please see that your authorization reaches the Rabbi by 5:00 PM, Thursday, March 25, 2021. Thank you.***

Selling the hametz is a free service, and donations are entirely voluntary.  
Should you wish to make one, please make your check payable to the order of  
BETH EL – THE HEIGHTS SYNAGOGUE and earmark it “Maot Hittin.”  
This is a fund for purchasing Passover food for needy Jews.

**Please mail your forms directly to Rabbi Michael Ungar  
25876 Fairmount Blvd, Beachwood, OH 44122**