

Beth Tikvah  
B'nai Jeshurun

בית תקוה בני ישורון

BTBJ...Where You Belong!

# The Ruach!

February—March 2024  
SH'VAT 5784 - I ADAR 5784

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Beth Tikvah  
B'nai Jeshurun

## **BTBJ Celebrates 50TH ANNIVERSARY & VALARIE HURWITZ**

**Save the Dates  
March 8th & 9th**



# WINTER CALENDAR

# FEBRUARY—MARCH 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
28	29	30	31	<b>FEBRUARY</b> 1 7:30am Minyan Zoom Only	2 6:00pm Shabbat Service with Kitah Bet	3 9:30am Services with Torah Study
4 9:30am Minyan 11am Men's Club & Sisterhood Distillery Tour at Philadelphia Distilling	5	6 7pm Sisterhood Craft Night	7	8 7:30am Minyan Zoom Only	9 6:00pm Aleph Consecration 7pm Kehillah Dinner	10 9:30am Services celebrating Kitah Dalet and Kitah Hay
11 9:30am Minyan 10:15am World Wide Wrap w/Gimel Students	12	13 6:30pm IYUN	14	15 7:30am Minyan Zoom Only 7:15pm Board of Director's Meeting	16 6:30pm Services on Zoom only	17 9:30am Services Zoom Only
18 9:30am Minyan In person and Zoom	19 <b>PRESIDENT'S DAY  ECC CLOSED</b>	20 7:30 pm Musical Adventures in the Siddur	21	22 7:30am Minyan Zoom Only 7:15 pm Town Hall Bylaw Meeting	23 6pm Services featuring Kitah Mechina	24 9:30am Scout Shabbat Services 7:30pm CL Chef in Residence Aliza Greene "For Love of Chocolate"
25 9:30am Minyan 10:15am Anti-Defamation League Program	26	27 6:30 pm IYUN	28 6:30 pm Megillah Prep Open Hour	29 7:30am Minyan Zoom Only	<b>MARCH</b> 1 6pm Services	2 9:30am Services Bar Mitzvah of Zachary Segal
3 9:30am Minyan 1:30pm Sisterhood Tea Offsite	4	5	6	7 7:30am Minyan Zoom Only	8 6:00pm Kehillah Shabbat Dinner 7pm Service BTBJ's 50th Anniversary Celebrating Valarie Hurwitz	9 9:30am Services honoring anniversary w/extended kiddush Sat. Evening: GALA BTBJ's 50th Anniversary Celebrating Valarie Hurwitz
10 9:30am Minyan 10:00am ECC PSG Breakfast with characters 10:15am Genizah Sorting	11	12 6:30 pm IYUN	13 6:30pm Community Purim Basket Packing & Men's Club Megillah Prep	14 7:30am Minyan Zoom Only 7:15 Board of Directors Meeting	15 6:30pm Services	16 9:30am Services featuring Gimel 10:00am RS Shabbat Club
17 9:30am Minyan 10:00am Purim Palooza  Civil Rights trip	18 Civil Rights trip	19 Civil Rights trip	20	21 7:30am Minyan Zoom Only	22 No Services	23 EREV PURIM 9:30am Services 7:00pm Purim Megillah Reading
24 PURIM 9:30am Minyan	25 <b>ECC CLOSED</b>	26 <b>ECC CLOSED</b> 7:30 pm Musical Adventures in the Siddur	27 <b>ECC CLOSED</b>	28 <b>ECC CLOSED</b> 7:30am Minyan Zoom Only	29 <b>ECC CLOSED</b> 6:30pm Services	30 9:30am Services with Torah Study
31 9:30m Minyan	<b>APRIL</b> 1	2 7pm CL Book Club	3	4 7:30am Minyan Zoom Only	5 6:30pm Services	6 9:30am Services Bat Mitzvah of Alyssa Fox





Roni  
Handler,  
Rabbi

One of my first introductions to the BTBJ community, outside of the ECC, was Shabbaton. In 2017 I served as Sabbatical Rabbi, and I was immediately welcomed into this warm, joyful, and spirited community. I learned that weekend what I still know to be true about BTBJ. Our greatest strength and what makes us who we are is our community.

The warmth and commitment of our members is felt not only at Shabbaton, but every time one immerses themselves in BTBJ community, be it for a Shabbat service, a learning opportunity, or a social event. We strive to have something for everyone, and whether a person dips in occasionally or immerses themselves each and every week in what our community has to offer, we hope that each person walks away inspired, grounded, and connected.

As I settle back in after our 2024 BTBJ Shabbaton and prepare for our upcoming BTBJ Civil Rights Trip, I feel very much immersed. There is a verse in Psalm 23 which ends with the words, "kosi r'vayah," which means, "my cup runs over." This feeling of abundance is one that I hope to carry with me in the days ahead and is what I hope all BTBJ members feel after engaging with our community.

Kosi r'vayah, thanks to all the volunteers who helped make our 2024 BTBJ Shabbaton possible, especially our teens who not only helped plan our programming, but who also served as stellar role models for our younger students who were in attendance. Kosi r'vayah, to all our community members who brought their full selves to Shabbaton and were present and engaged from beginning to end. Kosi r'vayah, each time I am reminded that BTBJ continues to be a warm, welcoming and Hamish Jewish community. May we all be blessed with abundance in the days ahead and may BTBJ continue to be a source of abundance for us all.



## President's Message



**Alana F.  
Dunoff,  
BTBJ  
President**

Shalom to My BTBJ Community,

As of this writing the invitations to our BTBJ 50th Anniversary Celebration, honoring Valarie Hurwitz, are officially in the mail! There is quite a big group of dedicated volunteers and staff who have all been working diligently to help plan this exciting and memorable weekend. Thank you!

Even though you have received the invitation and have seen plenty of information electronically, I thought it might be helpful to take a moment to share with you the details of this very special weekend of March 8-9, 2024.

### Friday March 8. Evening

We will begin the weekend with our Kehillah Shabbat Friday night Services. You can join us for shabbat dinner starting at 6pm (additional fee required), followed by a spirited and musical service honoring Val and her 48 years of service to BTBJ. After services, the Hurwitz Family invites the entire community to a special Oneg. And I know for certain there will be mini hot dogs and lots of treats!

### Saturday March 9. Morning.

Shabbat Services will begin at 9:30am as we focus our attention on honoring and remembering our first 50 years as Beth Tikvah B'nai Jeshurun. After services, the community is invited to a Kiddush graciously sponsored by our affiliates – the Men's Club, Sisterhood, and the Parent Support Groups for the Early Childhood Center and the Religious School. Our affiliates are a critical foundation of our community, and we are grateful for their unwavering support.

### Saturday March 9. Evening.

In the evening, slip on your dancing shoes, cocktail attire, and make your way to the Hilton on City Line Avenue to spend the evening celebrating with our community. For those wanting to start the night off earlier, we will gather at 6pm for a cocktail reception with heavy hors d'oeuvres (the invitation inadvertently said dinner, apologies for that error).

If you need a little more time to get all fancied up, please join us at 7:15pm for Havdalah and a very

special program honoring Val and our 50th Anniversary. And then we will spend the rest of the evening dancing, enjoying dessert and raising a glass as we honor our past and make new memories together.

### *Honors and Fundraising.*

This weekends' events are not only about honoring Val and our 50th Anniversary. They are also a major fundraiser for our shul. If you recall from my Yom Kippur speech, we raise the additional funds we need each year through both our High Holiday pledges – which we successfully did! (thank you very much) and through fundraisers like this very special weekend.

There are a few ways that you can participate and continue to show your support.

1. Show up. Yes, just coming to some or all of the weekend's festivities is the perfect way to support BTBJ!
2. Become a sponsor. There are multiple levels of sponsorship that each have a variety of benefits, including tickets to Shabbat dinner and our Saturday night Gala.
3. Advertise in our Program Book. Share your good wishes and photos, advertise your business, or help us find other businesses to advertise in our program book.

And finally, we have one more very special way that you can consider supporting BTBJ. In honor of the magic that Val has provided to BTBJ for 48 years, we have created a brand-new Fund, called Val's BTBJ Beautification and Enhancement Fund. The purpose of the fund, which will be administered by the Executive Advisory Board, is to support the needs of BTBJ aimed at continuing the legacy, dedication, and impact of Valarie Hurwitz and which can include but will not be limited to beautification and enhancement, operations, improvements to BTBJ, and/or support for special projects and programming. You can find all of this information on our website at [www.btbj.org](http://www.btbj.org) where you can RSVP to attend any or all of the events, become a sponsor, purchase an ad, share the link with others to be a sponsor or purchase an ad, or make a donation to Val's fund.

We are grateful for whatever you can do and however you can join us.

Now all that is left is to figure out what to wear!

Shalom.





**Rabbi  
Kami Knapp  
Schechter,  
Educational  
Director**

By March, we will be quickly approaching the middle of our Spring Semester. In conjunction with Martin Luther King Jr. Day we began the semester with Mitzvah Day on January 15th. Our classes completed projects for both the BTBJ and larger communities. Some projects of note were: polishing the BTBJ silver, making care packages for residents of an assisted living home, blankets for an animal shelter, and cookies for Meals on Wheels. Our students learned about different mitzvot associated with the community projects to round out their learning!

Our class services have also begun and so far they have been wonderful! Gan and Nitzanim had an impressively attended Havdalah service and dinner (around 85 people!). In February Aleph will have a beautiful consecration service in which all Aleph students will receive a mini Torah to symbolize a formal commitment to their Jewish education. In the next few weeks we will have Kitah Bet's (4th grade) Friday night service and dinner, Dalet (6th grade) and Hay (7th grade) Saturday morning service and lunch, and Mechina's (2nd grade) Friday night service and dinner. We round out the class services in March with the Gimel (5th) class Saturday morning service and lunch. We welcome all congregants, both students of other grades as well as congregants with no students in the Religious School to join us in these festive and moving services.

In February our Gimel class will be joining the Men's Club to wrap tefillin on the day of the World Wide Wrap. In the weeks leading up to the World Wide Wrap the students will create their own tefillin, learn about the different parts of the phylacteries, including writing their own prayers to put in their tefillin.

We are busy planning the Religious School and Hay/Teens Purim Palooza; more info to come as we get closer to Purim in March.

Kitah Hay (7th grade) will be visiting Washington DC and going to the United States Holocaust Memorial

Museum in late April and in May the teens will be heading to NYC to walk in the shoes of a Jewish immigrant in the early 20th century! Seats in the buses will first be open to students in the respective classes but we will then open the seats to others who may be interested.

And if you can believe it, we are also starting to prepare for next year's schedule, classes, and enrollment process. We hope to have more info on the school year by the beginning of summer so that you can get your students signed up for our religious school before they head out of town for the summer! Look for a detailed calendar, RS enrollment rates, and an added family education piece to the 2024-2025 school year!



**Gan  
Nitzanim  
Havdalah**





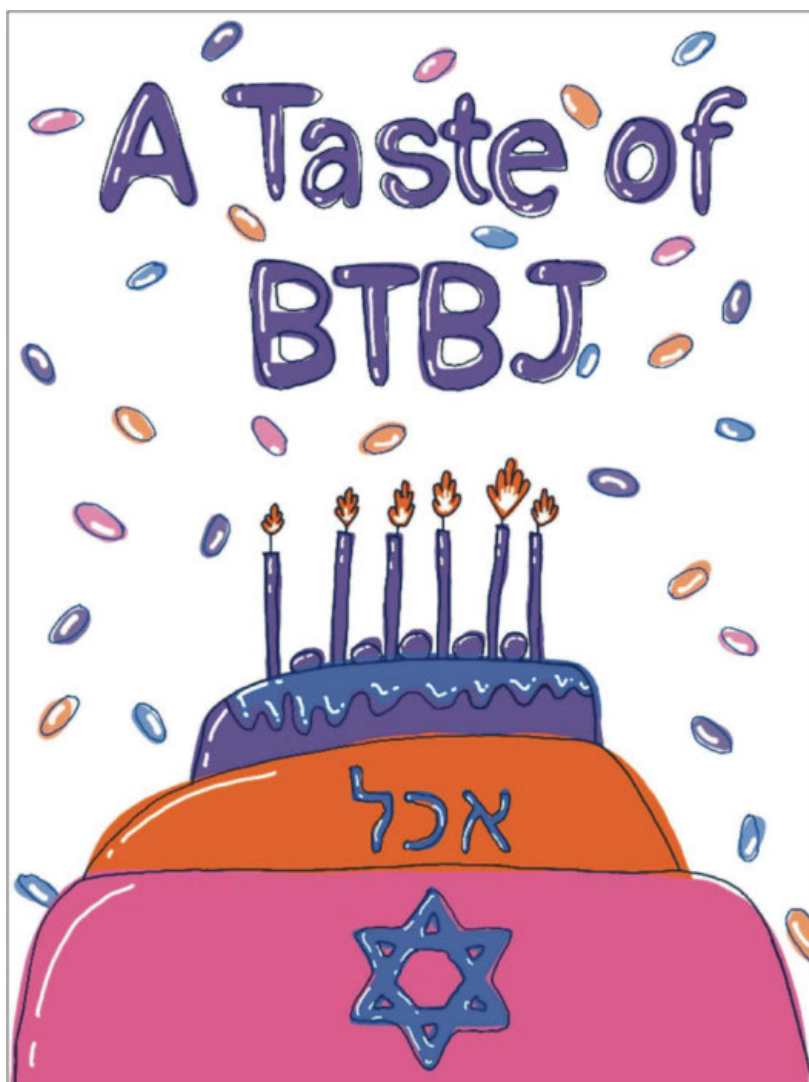
Fundraising  
Ways &  
Means  
Annette  
Swartz

**The Cookbooks are IN!**

Please pick up your copy in  
the Main Office.

Copies are available for purchase in the main office.

*Hurry! Quantities are limited.*



**Title Winner:**

**Betsy Berger**

**Cover Art Winner:**

**Pierce Koren**

*Special thanks to  
Cami Merrigan  
for the digital rendering  
of the cover art!*

*We are thrilled to  
share that we  
have a collection  
of nearly  
70 delicious  
Kosher-Style  
recipes in  
the cookbook!*

**Only \$36**





Rachel Fox,  
Sisterhood

Hi Sisterhood,

We hope you are off to a fantastic 2024! We had a great Sisterhood/Men's Club Shabbat in early January. Sisterhood members Mindy Davidoff, Rabbi Isabel de Koninck and I read Torah, which is always a great experience! Men's Club members Warren Chiara, Sandy Wine, Cantor Benjamin and Mark Levy read Torah as well. Many others helped lead different prayers and were invited to the bima for Aliyot during the service. Afterwards, we joined together in the social hall for a light brunch provided by Sisterhood and the Men's Club. Thank you to everyone who participated in this service.

Sisterhood planned a great craft night in January to make resin dipped challah boards, with over forty of our members scheduled to attend. Due to icy weather, we rescheduled the event to our "rain date" of February 6<sup>th</sup>. For those of you who did not originally RSVP and are interested in joining us on February 6<sup>th</sup>, please let us know, as we have some open spots.

We are also looking forward to a private distillery tour and tasting with Men's Club at Philadelphia Distilling on Sunday afternoon, February 4<sup>th</sup>. Sign up by January 31<sup>st</sup> to reserve your spot for this joint affiliate event.

And finally – please mark your calendars for Sunday afternoon, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, when we will be joining together for High Tea at The Village Teahouse in Lansdale. Space is limited so if you are interested in this event, please RSVP now.

Stay warm during these cold months, and I hope to see you at our upcoming events!





**Warren  
Chiara,  
Men's Club**

While the Eagles faded in January and we had our first significant snowfall in a couple of years to disrupt our schedules, Men's Club was busy gearing up for the first Men's Club/Sisterhood Shabbat in quite a while.

The Men's Club joined with Sisterhood last month to lead a Shabbat morning service, which included having several members reading from the Torah. By taking a portion, I hope that it shows that reading Torah is not as intimidating as it looks. Yasher koach to all those who read or had an aliyah during the service, and if you are interested in reading from the bimah at a future service, please contact Cantor Benjamin. We had about 40 people in attendance and many stayed for the extended kiddush to socialize and catch up with one another.

Men's Club is excited to be teaming up with Sisterhood again in February when we carpool down to Philadelphia Distilling for a private tour of their facilities. Join us to learn about the history of the company and meet their talented team. The tour includes a welcome cocktail and a flight of Philadelphia Distilling's premium spirits.

The following weekend on February 11 is the World Wide Wrap, where we gather for minyan and wrap for Israel. As we do every year, we are inviting the Gimel class to join us, so if your child is in that class, please come out and wrap with us. Afterward, we will gather in the social hall for a nosh and a program led by Cantor Benjamin.

Our last event in a busy February is Celebrating Havdalah and "For Love of Chocolate," co-sponsored with Congregational Learning. Chef and author Eliza Green returns to BT-BJ to teach us about the surprising history of Jews and chocolate. She will feature, and we will sample, Italian-Jewish Chocolate-Cherry Biscotti, Sephardic spiced hot chocolate, plus many more treats. I hope that you can make it to this event on February 24 at 7:30 p.m.

That's it for the Men's Club this month. If you are a member and would like to become more involved by taking on a board position, please reach out to me at [warrenchiara@yahoo.com](mailto:warrenchiara@yahoo.com).

**BTBJ Sisterhood and Men's Club Present:**

**A Private Distillery Tour and Tasting  
Sunday February 4, 2024**



**25 E. Allen Street Philadelphia, PA 19123**

**Agenda:**

**11:00 AM– Bagels & Schmear at BTBJ**  
**11:45 AM– Depart for Philadelphia Distilling**  
**1:00 PM– Tour of Distillery and Tasting**  
 (Meeting at BTBJ is optional. Parking in Fishtown can be challenging)

**Cost:**

**\$20– Members of Sisterhood or Men's Club**  
**\$30– Non-Members of Presenting Groups**  
**Pay and Register via Venmo to Jay Halbert– @Jay-Halbert**

**RSVP by Wednesday January 31, 2024**  
**Space is Limited.**  
**Registration on a First-Come Basis**

**Questions:**

**Sisterhood: Randi Halbert: [rhalbert@comcast.net](mailto:rhalbert@comcast.net)**  
**Men's Club: David Barrist: [dbarrist@yahoo.com](mailto:dbarrist@yahoo.com)**

**WRAPPING TEFILLIN IN  
SOLIDARITY WITH ISRAEL**



Sunday, February 11, 2024

9:30 Minyan with Program to Follow

Join the BT-BJ Men's Club and our Gimel students in the annual World Wide Wrap, and wrap for Israel, in solidarity with the IDF soldiers who are unable to wrap themselves. The wrap will be followed by bagels and smear and educational learning with Cantor Benjamin.

Contact Men's Club President Warren Chiara at: [warrenchiara@yahoo.com](mailto:warrenchiara@yahoo.com) for more information.

This program is open to all congregants, so please join us in support of Israel. This is a free event, however we ask that you register for planning purposes.



## Highlight On Our Esteemed President, Alana F. Dunoff



### A Profile of Alana Dunoff *The Psychology of People and Buildings*

*ARC Facilities*

by Jack Rubinger  
December 12, 2023

Alana Dunoff,  
Consultant & Adjunct Professor, Temple University

Temple University facilities management professor Alana Dunoff wants students to know that careers in facility management offer great depth in a variety of disciplines, from real estate to operations to finance.

"We try to provide a holistic view of the industry so students will see that every day there are new challenges and opportunities to learn about security and risk assessments, IT and occupant services," she said.

For Alana, the most rewarding part of teaching is the belief that she's helping make a difference in the lives of young people, as they launch into a "fabulous" career. "I love it when they come back to visit and their employers ask for more like them," she said. Through her program at Temple University, students can choose different pathways, including historic building preservation or facility management.

Her own career has been eclectic. Before focusing on higher education, consulting, and public speaking, she was a strategic facility planner and a project manager at an architectural firm.

Right now, she worries about filling gaps in the facilities workforce.

"We need people from the trades, from facility management programs, and from administration," she said. "Some people are great at coordinating things, and the next thing you know, you're managing a move, and you get to be a facilities coordinator."

All the lessons, voices, and experiences come together for her in the university setting. Now, in her 11th year at Temple, Alana is still learning – from her students, from listening to her consulting clients, and from thousands of conversations about how people interact with the built environment during her 20 years in the academic world.

"When people talk about space, they get territorial," said Alana. She recalled a story about consulting for an organization's IT department.

"There was a big brouhaha between those who wanted

cubicles vs. those who wanted more collaborative conducive open spaces. It was like a battle between two pirate ships. I learned that one size doesn't fit all. People are passionate about their space. But you've got to use humor to diffuse tensions and bring people together."

Alana has a Master's in Facilities Planning and Management. In college, she was interested in architecture and buildings and urban planning, and she was a psychology major, so she gravitated more toward environmental and social psychology studies – the study of humans in their environment. She was introduced to IFMA when she found a program called Design and Environmental Analysis at Cornell. "I didn't know what facilities management was, but I was intrigued by the combination of things that I really had passion around, like, psychology and people and buildings and I didn't know that they could come together."

A fan of author Malcolm Gladwell's thought processes about turning things upside down, she refers to his podcast and books such as *Revisionist History*. Other inspirational books include *Lessons in Chemistry* by Bonnie Garmus and *The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store* by James McBride. For fun, she enjoys the *Smartless* comedy podcast which connects and unites people from all walks of life to learn about shared experiences through thoughtful dialogue.

Alana reaps the benefits of getting outside through gardening, and growing flowers and vegetables which she calls "nourishing experimentation." Alana sees herself reflected in her two girls, a freshman at Georgia Tech and another studying architectural drafting in high school.

Alana is also a director of the Women in Facility Management Association, which offers mentorships, scholarships, events, and networking opportunities.

When Alana is seeking guidance, inspiration, and support, she taps into the IFMA Fellows group – citing Peggy McCarthy who's been helpful over the years.

She does feel that the facility management industry has a branding problem and that people outside of the industry struggle with all that it entails and its potential. Part of the challenge is that different industries have varied job titles. For example, in the hospitality industry, the preferred title is Facility Management Engineer. That title might be off-putting for some. Alana sees a bright future for facility management. "We're teaching people how to be managers and run buildings," she said. "Doesn't that sound exciting?"

As for career advice for women, Alana said, "Be curious, ask, learn and engage."

*Goldsteins' Rosenberg's  
Raphael Sacks INC.*

PRESENTS

BETH TIKVAH B'NAI JESHURUN'S  
50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

*Honoring  
Valarie Hurwitz*

March 8th and 9th, 2024



# *Weekend Details*

## **Friday Night - March 8, 2024**

### **Kehillah Shabbat Services at BTBJ**

**6pm- Shabbat Dinner**

**Adults \$25/person; Children \$15 per person**

**7pm- Shabbat Services**

*Services will be followed by a Thank You Oneg hosted by the Hurwitz Family*

## **Saturday Morning - March 9, 2024**

### **Shabbat Morning Services at BTBJ**

**9:30am Shabbat Morning Services Honoring our 50th Anniversary**

*Services will be followed by an extended Kiddush hosted by Sisterhood, Men's Club,  
Religious School & Pre-School Parent Support Groups*

## **Saturday Evening- March 9, 2024**

### **Gala at the Hilton on City Line Avenue**

**6:00-11 pm- Cocktail Reception, Havdalah, Desserts, Drinks and  
Dancing**

**BTBJ members: \$180/person; Friends of BTBJ \$216/person**

**7:15-11 pm- Havdalah, Dessert, Drinks and Dancing**

**BTBJ members \$90/person; Friends of BTBJ \$118/person**

***RSVP by February 19th at [www.btbj.org](http://www.btbj.org)***



### **Presenting Sponsor(s): \$5,000**

10 Full Access Passes - Shabbat Dinner, Saturday Night Cocktail Reception & Dessert Soiree  
Reserved Seating for Shabbat Dinner & Saturday Night  
Website and welcome signage listing  
Full page (back cover or inside front cover) ad in program

### **Double Chai: \$3,600**

8 Full Access Passes - Shabbat Dinner, Saturday Night Cocktail Reception & Dessert Soiree  
Reserved Seating for Shabbat Dinner & Saturday Night  
Website & welcome signage listing  
Full page ad in program

### **Chai: \$1,800**

4 Full Access Passes - Shabbat Dinner,  
Saturday Night Cocktail Reception &  
Dessert Soiree  
Website listing  
Half page ad in program

### **Gold \$1,000**

3 Full Access Passes - Shabbat Dinner,  
Saturday Night Cocktail Reception &  
Dessert Soiree  
Website listing  
Half page ad in program

### **Silver: \$540**

2 Tickets Saturday Night Cocktail Reception &  
Dessert Soiree  
Website listing  
1/3 page ad in program

### **Bronze: \$360**

1 Ticket Saturday Night Cocktail Reception &  
Dessert Soiree  
Website listing  
1/3 page ad in program

*A portion of all sponsorship and ad proceeds will be dedicated to  
The Val's BTBJ Beautification and Enhancement Fund.*

*To purchase sponsorships or program ads and for more information on individual tickets visit [www.btbj.org](http://www.btbj.org)*



BETH TIKVAH B'NAI JESHURUN PROUDLY INVITES YOU TO

**CELEBRATE OUR  
50TH ANNIVERSARY**

*Honoring Valarie Hurwitz*

March 8th & 9th, 2024

## **Advertise in Our Program Book**

*For those interested in supporting BTBJ by advertising your business or sharing your well wishes in our program book we offer the following options. Programs will be available during the Gala and downloadable from our website. We will also spotlight advertising businesses on our social media.*

*A portion of all sponsorship and ad proceeds will be dedicated to  
The Val's BTBJ Beautification and Enhancement Fund.*

### **Full Page Ad: \$720**

*Complimentary with Presenting and Double Chai sponsorships.  
Option to include both full-color images and text.*

### **Half Page Ad: \$360**

*Complimentary with Chai and Gold sponsorships  
Option to include both full-color images and text.*

### **Third Page Ad: \$250**

*Complimentary with Silver and Bronze sponsorship.  
Option to include both full-color images and text.*

### **Program Listing: \$72**

*One line individual, family, group or business listing*

**Purchase Ads & Sponsorships directly at [www.btbj.org](http://www.btbj.org) or by sending a check to**

**BTBJ  
1001 Paper Mill Road  
Erdenheim, PA 19038**

**Please make checks payable to BTBJ.**

*If you need assistance with your advertisement or sponsorship please contact the  
Office at BTBJ at 215-836-5677 or [office@btbj.org](mailto:office@btbj.org)*

### *A Very Different Mission*

by Heather Brucker



My volunteer mission to Israel landed at Ben-Gurion airport as the entire country commemorated the 100th day since the atrocities and kidnappings of October 7. I was unsure what to expect, but looked forward to doing my small part to bring healing, love and support to the people of Israel. When we landed in the early morning, our group was in high spirits. The Aroma coffee shop was staffed by smiling Israelis, and had we not just passed through the international hall of arrivals that was lined with posters of the Hostages, it did not feel like we had landed in a war zone.

Directly from the airport on Monday morning, we headed to a farm where we packed hundreds of pounds of vegetables. The farmers were all called up to serve in the IDF and the migrant workers went back to their home countries, and there was no one to work the fields. Bushels and boxes of fresh vegetables were readied to be distributed to schools, restaurants and army bases across the country. It felt good to be doing something so critical to health and survival. We also went to Pantry Packers, a group similar to Philadelphia's own JRA, to continue to help provide food to families in need. A need that existed before October 7, and that has sadly grown significantly since. After having the chance to help with food supply and food insecurity in Israel, we shifted to an opportunity to help provide spiritual support when later that day, we learned to tie the special knots on tzitzit, the prayer garments worn by religious men. As there are "no atheists in the fox hole," non-religious soldiers and even men who are not Jewish were requesting them. We were taught the specific way of tying the strings and the blessings to recite to make them "kosher." We felt a powerful connection, knowing these would go directly to the men defending Israel, and we hoped our prayers would give them strength.

After a fast dinner at the hotel, our small group gathered to hear Jacqui and Yaron Vital, whose daughter Adi was murdered on October 7 at her home on a kibbutz. Adi, 31, killed one of the terrorists who had invaded her home and penetrated her safe room while her 3-year-old and 1-year-old sons were hiding behind her. She was killed, but astonishingly, the terrorists let her children go. Adi's husband, who had

left their home earlier in the morning for an annual tiyul (hike) with friends, also survived. When asked how she found the strength to go on, Jacqui replied "there were so many miracles that day." She urged us to tell her daughter's story and not remain quiet, and we promised we would.

On Tuesday we visited the Reuth Rehabilitation Center. The staff there, along with the patients, (many patients and doctors are Arab Israeli) spoke not only of the importance of physical rehab, but psychological healing as well. Nowhere was this more evident than when we met Ayal, a young man who was seriously injured on October 7 defending his kibbutz. He talked about how far he has come through his physical rehab but also about how his spiritual rehab will take much longer. He said talking about what happened has been healing for him, and he thanked us for listening, even though the privilege was ours.

The afternoon stop was fields outside of Kfar Truman, where we planted lettuce. The foreign migrant workers fled the country when the war started, and the labor shortage in Israel remains significant. As a result, many markets have had produce shortages. It felt good to put our hands in the ground, planting lettuce that will be ready to harvest just before Purim.

We then headed to the Nachshonim army base, which is home to many of the IDF's infantry divisions. We helped to prepare and serve a BBQ dinner for 400 soldiers. These young men and women had just returned from serving 100 days in Gaza and this was their first dinner back in Israel. They were mechanical engineers, the first group of reservists who went into Gaza, and they were trained to detect and disable explosives and clear structurally safe pathways for the ground troops. We prepped salads, manned grill stations, and spoke with the young men and women. They were as appreciative of our visit as we were of their service. They thanked us profusely for being there and supporting them, but it felt like the least we could do to thank them for all that they are doing. Over and over, they told us, "We are not doing anything special. We want to be here. We do it for our country but mostly we do it for ourselves."

Our third day had us heading south to the town of Ofakim, which is less than 20 miles from the Gaza border. Ofakim was one of the communities attacked by Hamas terrorists on October 7. We spent time at a high school working side by side with students to build a therapeutic garden. We heard their stories and their concerns about the future; we shared lunch together and even danced a bit. We spoke with a boy whose father was killed in front of him, and others who spent hours in their safe rooms. As we worked, we couldn't help but notice the sounds of booms from Gaza and the sight of helicopters flying overhead that we were told were airlifting injured soldiers out of Gaza. After we left the school, we drove through the neighborhoods of Ofakim and saw homes riddled with gunfire holes.



We then traveled to the Bedouin town of Rahat, where we worked at a community foundation that was set up to provide food to Bedouin and Jewish families in need. The Bedouin community serves in the IDF alongside their Jewish neighbors, just as they care for each other in this community center. We helped pack boxes of donated food supplies. We were asked to write personal notes on our boxes (to be translated into Arabic), letting the people receiving them know that they are cared about.

Our final day started with Tefillah at the Kotel, where we directed our prayers towards The Western Wall, one of our people's holiest and most ancient sites. We prayed for healing, strength, and for the IDF. The Kotel is a powerful reminder of the resilience of the Jewish people, and praying in front of this wall, that has heard our cries and joys for generations, is very moving. We also visited a new memorial that has been set up in the Kotel plaza for all those who have been killed since October 7, a sad testament to the reality. They have been updating it daily, adding names and Yahrzeit candles.

We then headed back to Tel Aviv and helped prepare Shabbat dinner for soldiers' families at Citrus & Salt. Originally a cooking school, the owners, two sisters from California, have spent the last 3+ months cooking for soldiers and for the families they leave behind. Many of the soldiers we spoke with told us that they were not the ones doing the hardest jobs- it was their wives who were left home with the children, who they credited with displaying strength and bravery. Citrus & Salt was granted an emergency kosher certification, allowing them to provide food directly to the army and anyone in need. We prepared an elaborate meal for more than 100 families, cooking and packaging bolognese, grape leaves, chicken, veggies, and more. The food preparation was laborious and complex, and it felt as though we were infusing each meal with love, hopeful that the recipients would feel a warm hug from us. It was powerful to be part of yet another grassroots effort to support those most in need during these challenging times.

We then gathered together with hundreds more in Hostage Square to mark Kfir Bibas' first birthday. The beautiful redheaded child, who was taken hostage at 9 months, turned one year old that day. 104 days later, he remains in captivity, along with his brother, mother, and father. A quarter of his life has been spent in Gaza. Along with powerful installations, a simulated Gazan tunnel and the now-famous empty Shabbat table, almost all of Israel's premier children's artists sang as part of the ceremony, billed as "The Saddest Birthday Party in the World." The redheaded baby was celebrated with hundreds of orange balloons released up into the sky, a tribute that was recreated all over the world.

### Some parting thoughts:

- In many ways, life in large parts of Israel feels normal. And yet, things aren't normal. The country remains at war and there is a heaviness in the air at all times.
- To have any chance of really beginning to move forward, the hostages need to be returned home. It is on the minds of everyone at all times.
- The physical toll of October 7 is significant. Injured soldiers and citizens continue to work toward healing. Construction work is slowly beginning to repair damaged physical spaces.
- We heard from many that the toll on the soul of the nation is even more significant. People are just beginning to grapple with the social/emotional toll this all continues to have. You feel it everywhere and from just about everyone. Rebuilding the soul of the nation will be the greatest challenge ahead, and it will take a very long time.
- While a recap of our itinerary has value, what is difficult to convey are the individual stories of terror and suffering, then hope and survival, that were shared with us by every person we met. Every Israeli has their own experience of October 7 and the aftermath, and they all acknowledged how helpful it is to get to talk about it. They were grateful to us for bearing witness and allowing them to share. Each account was horrifying and inspirational at the same time.
- There was a palpable feeling of community and unity, and it was clear that everyone is doing whatever they can. The resiliency, innovation and patriotism of the Israelis is strong, and provided us with intense motivation to keep doing whatever we can from here. One woman told us, while this is the darkest time in Israel's history, it is also a time of great beauty and magic, as people lift each other up and support one another.
- Americans are used to Israelis being in crisis, and Israelis themselves are used to it. Israel is either on the precipice of a crisis, enduring a crisis, or emerging from a crisis. This has been their way of life. But Israel is not used to America being in crisis at the same time. Israel needs Jews around the diaspora as much as the Jewish people need Israel, and the antisemitism around the world is in some ways, as difficult for the Israelis as the war is. We were told again and again how destabilizing it is for Israelis to wonder and worry about the safety of Jews outside of Israel, and many Americans who had made Aliyah struggle with feeling unsupported by their families back home.
- We were told that Israel is the only nation in the world that people flock to in times of war, instead of fleeing. Bringing people together is always a good thing. Bringing people to Israel is an especially good thing. Bottom line, if you can, find a way to get to Israel, GO.



Zachary Spencer Segal  
Son of  
David & Lauren Segal,  
Brother of Molly Segal  
becomes a Bar Mitzvah  
on March 2, 2024

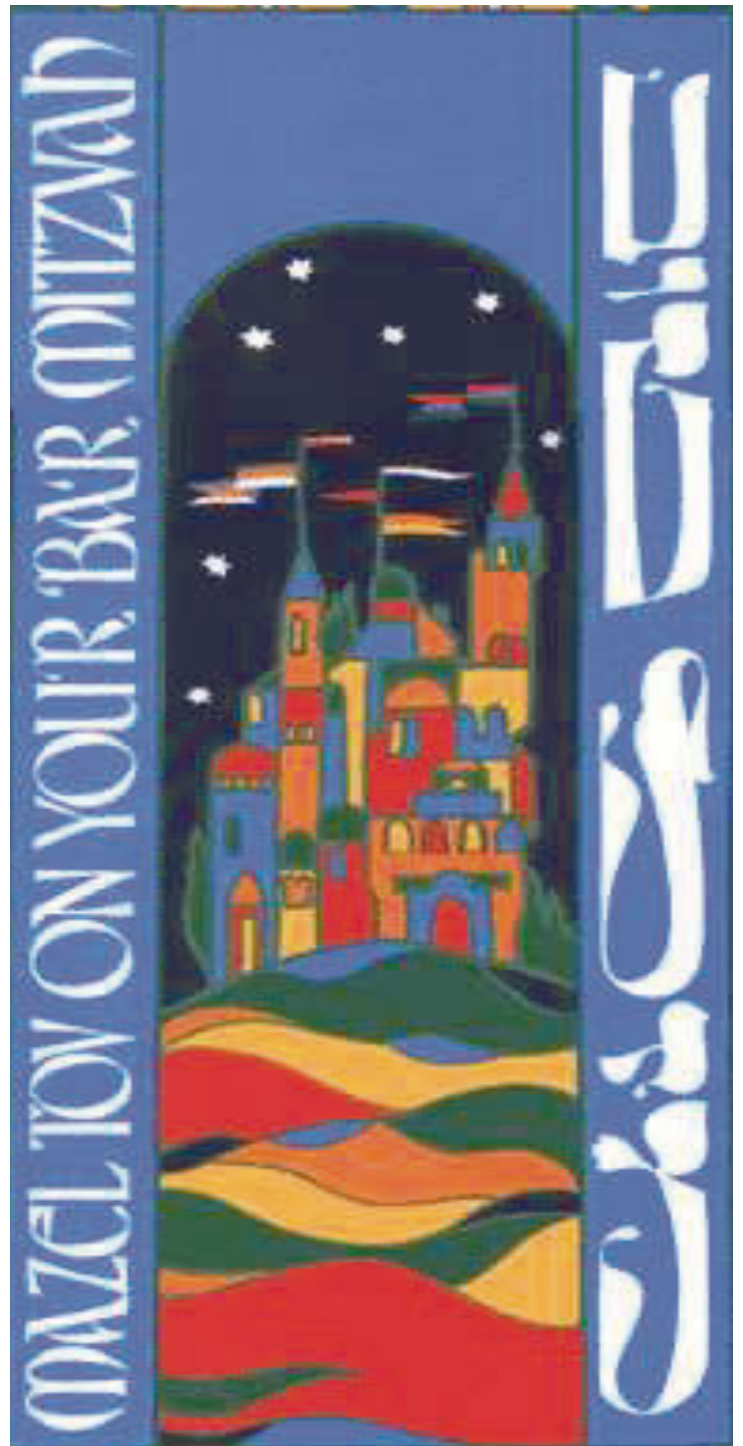
Zach has been preparing to become a Bar Mitzvah since beginning his Jewish Education at BTBJ, where he has attended since being a Tiny Tot in the Early Childhood Center. Post preschool, Zach has continued his education in the BTBJ Religious School. Zach enjoys being a part of the Jewish community and learning more about his heritage. Zach is a hard worker both at BTBJ and Colonial Middle School (CMS) where he is a Distinguished Honors student. In addition to being a hard-working student, Zach is a great friend, brother, cousin, and son to all. Zach attends Camp Nock-A-Mixon where he continues to learn life skills and the right way to treat others as another part of his maturation into an adult.

In addition to academics, Zach is a lover of sports – especially basketball, tennis and NFL football. Zach plays basketball for CMS, Whitemarsh Travel Basketball and East Coast Power – and is known for his shooting prowess and leadership. Zach is also hoping to play Tennis at CMS and enjoys playing Fantasy Football with his friends.

For his Mitzvah Project, Zach will collect items for the Mitzvah Circle. The mitzvah circle provides basic goods, case management, coaching, and referrals to individuals and families facing poverty, homelessness, illness, and other difficult circumstances. He will collect items from his friends and family to donate to those in need as well as volunteer his time at their warehouse to help sort through donations in order to help others.

We are so proud of Zach for being a hard worker and always being comfortable in his own skin. Whether it's the work he puts in for school or sports, Zach always works incredibly hard. Zach's has seen a variety of successes and failures in his life – and has always learned and progressed from every instance. Everyone who knows Zach, knows his great sense of humor and smile. Zach always brings a level of fun to every situation and helps keep smiles on all the faces around him. He has

worked enthusiastically for his Bar Mitzvah – studying his prayers and Torah portions diligently. We would like to thank all of Zach's BTBJ teachers (from ECC and on) and especially Cantor Benjamin and Rabbi Roni for all of their time, guidance and patience in preparing Zach for this big momentous occasion. In addition, we'd like to thank all of our family and friends for always providing love, support and guidance to Zach and for celebrating this important simcha with us.







Town Hall Meeting  
Bylaw Membership Changes  
2/22/2024  
Minyan at 7:15 pm, Meeting at 7:30 pm

Dear Chavarim,

I hope you are doing well and wish you and yours a happy and healthy New Year. A little over a year ago, I was asked to chair the bylaws committee. The purpose was to analyze our current bylaws and look for areas that may need to be updated.

Changes to our bylaws must be approved by a majority of our general membership, upon a recommendation from our Board of Directors. This is usually done at The Annual Membership Meeting in May. Last year, we approved updated language that was recommended by the finance committee regarding the approval process for changes to an approved budget and other significant expenditures. We also changed the name of the Ritual Committee to the Religious and Spiritual Engagement Committee.

This year we are looking at changes to the definition of a BTBJ member. Currently, the definition of a member is, "Any Jewish person who subscribes to the purposes, principles and welfare of this congregation; and is in good standing with regard to financial obligations." The committee questioned whether this language still reflected how our inclusive kehillah actually defines a member, as our thinking and practices have evolved over the years since that language was initially adopted.

After consulting with USCJ, it was quite apparent that this simple definition was obsolete. We had several conversations with Dr. Keren McGinity, the interfaith specialist at USCJ and came up with more thoughtful language to meet the needs of today's modern Jewish world and our synagogue life.

The proposed new language not only updates the qualifications of membership, but it also updates the privileges of membership including voting rights, committee involvement, and leadership positions at BTBJ.

In the past, proposed bylaw changes have been sent out to the membership in advance of the annual meeting for review but the membership was not given a chance to hear the reasons behind the proposals and discuss any concerns prior to the annual meeting. The committee decided that it is important to give the members that opportunity for any future significant bylaw changes.

Therefore, everyone is cordially invited to attend a town hall meeting on Thursday, February 22 at 7:30 pm to go over and discuss the specifics of these proposed changes. There will not be a vote taken during the town hall. That will still occur at the Annual Meeting.

We hope you will attend and let your voice be heard to strengthen our kehillah. Meanwhile, if you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact me at your earliest convenience.

B'shalom,  
Richard Gersh  
Bylaw Committee  
Cell: 610.662.9879  
Email: [rfgersh@instamold.com](mailto:rfgersh@instamold.com)

*Refreshments will be served—Please RSVP online*

## *Shabbaton 2024 Reboot!*



We have been hosting Shabbatons since 2010. These Shabbat weekends away are a time to reconnect with family, the community and shabbat. This year we hosted Shabbaton at Camp Harlam, it is a beautiful camp, and the facilities and staff were perfect. There were just under 60 BTBJers at Shabbaton this year, we disconnected from the outside world, celebrated shabbat, studied a little torah, we learned several versions of Birkat Hamazon, we had an Israeli dance party, we played Gaga, Quizzos, and competed in a Maccabiah. We participated in a short Tu B'shvat seder, created essential blessings as our tikkun olam project, we enjoyed a very entertaining talent show and we ate s'mores around the campfire. But most importantly WE were together as a community, with time to talk, laugh, and get to know each other a little deeper.

Here are what a few attendees had to say about their Shabbaton experience:

"This was our first time attending Shabbaton (since I was a kid at BTBJ, anyway!). From the first ice breaker to the closing circle, it was a weekend full of warmth, craziness, service, and so much laughter. It was so special to see relationships formed between big kids and little kids, and to get to know our BTBJ community better on a personal level – no rushing, nowhere else to be, just focused on this beautiful weekend together. We can't wait to be part of this tradition for many years to come!"

- Allison Greenfield

"Shabbaton is one of the reasons that I love BTBJ. It's a weekend to disconnect, celebrate Shabbat, spend time with your family and friends and more importantly, meet new friends. Every Shabbaton holds a special place in my heart! Thank you to everyone who trusted our planning committee and spent the weekend with us in the Poconos. My girls and I can't wait for next year!!"

- Rachel Fox

"Shabbaton is a great way to have family and community fun without relying on screens. The activities were suitable for people of all ages. I also enjoyed that there was a good balance of religious learning and casual enjoyment." – David Kline

"Shabbaton is a great way to meet new people, create stronger bonds with old friends and watch the younger generation form beautiful Jewish friendships. It's a wonderful tradition in a fun and relaxed setting. We are so glad we took the leap to attend!" – Rebecca Schuchart

A huge thank you to all those who planned the weekend: Rachel Fox, Liz O'Flanagan, Amanda Kline, Marie Horchler, Amy Wine, Robyn Walcoff, Mindy Drossner, Eric Spiegel, Alana Dunoff, Sophia Dunoff and Brenna Fox. And to Rabbi Roni, Cantor Benjamin, and Rabbi Kami for all their work and inspiration throughout the weekend.

Save the date for next year's Shabbaton January 24-26, 2025!

- Alana







## BTBJ Supports our Unhoused Community

### BTBJ Supports our Unhoused Community in a BIG Way!

In preparation for our Tikkun Olam project for Shabbaton this year, we reached out to Rachel Grossman, the Unhoused Project Coordinator at the Colonial Anti-Racial and Social Equity Alliance (CARSEA), to see how we can help. We decided to create Blessing Essential Bags, and selected the necessary items on an Amazon wish list. We shared this list with the community and WOW did you respond!

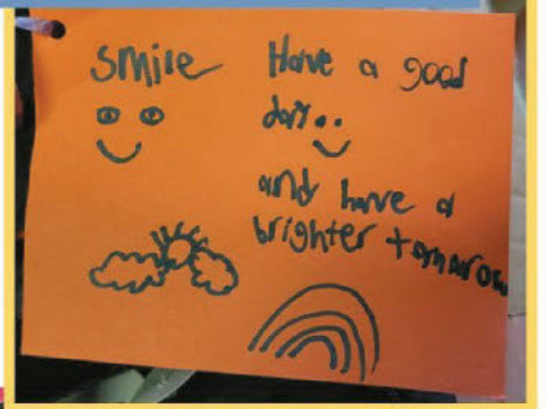
Our BTBJ community purchased dozens of items to support the unhoused members of our community. In total we collected: 29 multipacks of underwear, 13 multipacks of socks, 60 pairs of hand warmers, 66 tubes of toothpaste, 250 tooth brushes, 80 sticks of deodorant, 14 multipacks of rinse free bathing wipes, 18 bottles of no-rinse shampoo, 7 boxes of feminine products, 100 packs of peanuts, 60 packs of tuna fish, 52 granola bars, 24 bottles of gatorade, 5 sleeping bags and 1 tent!!

Many thanks to Mindy Drossner for doing the initial outreach and setting up our Amazon wish list. Thank you to all who took the time to make a donation. Thank you to Liz O'Flanagan for finding the donated canvas totes that we filled and to Marie Horchler and Debra Goretsky for organizing the Shabbaton bag stuffing and creation of the special notes of kindness attached to each bag. And finally thank you to those who attended Shabbaton for pulling it all together - kids, moms and dads.

On January 29, we delivered 42 blessing bags plus all the other items to the Church on the Mall, where CARSEA was hosting a code blue event (when the temperature is below 32 degrees) to get the resources out to the members of our community who are in need. We got to see first hand our donations are making an impact on our community,

Rachel Grossman, sent this note of thanks and appreciation, "I was having a rough day yesterday and after I was able to spend time with both of you my spirits were instantly lifted. It is always nice to be able to share our work with others and talk about things and solutions together. And then to top it all off when I had a little bit more time last night I went upstairs to organize the bags so that none of the notes would get ripped off and I had a chance to read lots of them and my heart is completely filled with love from all of the compassion that was put into these bags. I appreciate you both and the BTBJ congregation for their amazing generosity, time and compassion for these human beings."

For more information: <https://www.caarsea.com/> or join their Facebook group to get immediate alerts of donations and outreach programs in our community. Mazel tov to all of us!





## CONGREGATIONAL LEARNING



### IYUN

Next Classes:

Tuesday, February 13 & 27, 2024

Join the winter cohort of this  
not-to-be-missed program!

IYUN is a cohort-based Jewish learning experience for adults which was introduced to BTBJ by Rabbi Roni last year. The program is aimed at building Jewish community and a love of Torah study through the exploration of existential questions through the lens of Torah.

The practice of studying Torah is both informative and social. Participants last year built a unique, deeply Jewish kind of relationship with one another unlike anything else while they enjoyed a special space of considering our Jewish values in our challenging world.

We will start our year exploring “The Gift of Responsibility” as we learn with one another, to strengthen our relationships, and gain new perspectives.

Sessions will meet at 6:30 PM on Tuesdays at BTBJ or at a participant's home. Light dinner is served.

### Music Series - *The Music of Prayer: Exploring the Siddur*

Next Class Tuesday, February 20, 2024

During this series, we will explore the text of a prayer, focusing on the poetry, theology, and other points of interest of that session's prayer. Following the text study, we will enjoy listening to different settings of that prayer, starting with the melody most often used at BTBJ as a jumping off point, and then experience different melodies from Jewish communities around the world in contemporary settings, and do our best to embody the many modes in which Jews pray the same text.

Continuing: March 26

April 16

May 28

*All sessions will be held from 7:30 PM to 8:30 PM*



## CONGREGATIONAL LEARNING



### Chef Aliza Green Celebrating Havdalah & “For Love of Chocolate”

Saturday Evening, February 24, 2024 at 7:30 PM

Sponsored by the Congregational Learning Committee, Sisterhood & Men's Club

Join us as we celebrate Havdalah and begin the next week celebrating the Jewish history of chocolate with love and an illustrated talk from Chef-Author Aliza Green. Learn about the surprising history of the Sephardim who first brought chocolate from the New World to Old World places like Antwerp, Belgium, Bayonne, France and Livorno, Italy. She will demonstrate and we will sample Italian-Jewish Chocolate-Cherry Biscotti, Sephardic Spiced Hot Chocolate, and other delectables. Attendees will receive a set of recipes to create these dishes at home.

This program is free to members.

### Torah Lab

Next Class Wednesday, February 28, 2024  
(Megillah)

Join a growing number of our congregational family who are chanting Torah, Haftarah and Megillah. Drop into BTBJ's no pressure lab - a reader's support group for all ages. Let's gather to practice, develop strategies for learning and have fun with readers of all ages.

All sessions will be held from 6:30 -7:45 PM

Next Sessions:        March 13: Megillah  
                              April 10  
                              May 1





## CONGREGATIONAL LEARNING

### Torah Study

Next Class Saturday, March 30, 2024

Join Rabbi Roni and Cantor Benjamin during Shabbat services (when there is no B'nai Mitzvah or special programming) as we explore our ancient text and come to know the Torah in new and meaningful ways.

Rabbi Roni and Cantor Benjamin will lead us in exploring Parashat HaShavuah (the weekly Torah portion) enabling us to consider the intersection of our ancient text with modern life and discovering the Torah's enduring power and relevance.

Continuing: April 27



## Thank You For Your Contributions

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In Memory of Stella Zeide  
Mr. & Mrs. Harvey Simmens  
In Memory of Kurt Adler

### SECURITY FUND

Ms. Stephanie Amarnick  
In Honor of Nellie and Eden Hessol

### WILLIAM HURWITZ SOCIAL MEDIA FUND

Mr. Stephen Saks  
Best wishes to Valarie Hurwitz for a speedy recovery.

### *TREE OF LIFE*

Happy New Year! For this new year we need to fill up our Tree of Life in the Nuddle Lobby. Think about adding your simchas on our Tree. Great for B'nai Mitzvah, Confirmations, Birthdays, Anniversaries and Celebrations.

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Left to right: Reza Hakim Shoushtari, DMD; Jill Zurek, DDS; Jill Moniz, DDS; Lawrence Schiff, DMD. Not pictured: Richard Titlebaum, DMD





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## Schedule of Services February - March 2024

### FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 2

Light candles.....5:03 pm  
Services with Kitah Bet.....6:00 pm

### SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 3

Services With Torah Study.....9:30 am

### FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 9

Light candles.....5:11 pm  
Kehillah & Aleph Consecration.....6:00 pm

### SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10

Services with Kitah Dalet & Kitah Hay..9:30 am

### FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 16

Light candles.....5:20 pm  
Services Zoom Only.....6:30 pm

### SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 17

Services Zoom Only.....9:30 am

### FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 23

Light candles.....5:28 pm  
Services with Kitah Mechina.....6:00 pm

### SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24

Services, Scout Shabbat.....9:30 am

### FRIDAY, MARCH 1, 2024

Light candles.....5:36 pm  
Services .....6:00 pm

### SATURDAY, MARCH 2, 2024

Services .....9:30 am

Zachary Spencer Segal, Son of David &  
Lauren Segal, Brother of Molly Segal will be  
called to the Torah as a Bar Mitzvah

### FRIDAY, MARCH 8, 2024

Light candles.....5:43 pm  
Celebratory Service for BTBJ 50th Anniversary  
and Honoring Valarie Hurwitz.....7:00 pm

### SATURDAY, MARCH 9, 2024

Services Celebrating BTBJ's 50th Anniversary and  
Honoring Valarie Hurwitz.....9:30 am

### FRIDAY, MARCH 15, 2024

Light candles.....6:51 pm  
Services .....6:30 pm

### SATURDAY, MARCH 16, 2024

Services celebrating the Gimel class .....9:30 am

### FRIDAY, MARCH 22, 2024

Light candles.....6:58 pm  
*No Services*

### SATURDAY, MARCH 23, 2024

EREV PURIM  
Services .....9:30 am  
Purim Megillah Reading.....7:00 pm

### FRIDAY, MARCH 29, 2024

Light candles.....7:05 pm  
Services .....6:30 pm

### SATURDAY, MARCH 30, 2024

Services with Torah Study.....9:30 am



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