

# TEMPLE BETH EL

FALL RIVER, MASSACHUSETTS



92nd Year

May 2020

Iyar/Sivan 5780

No. 9

## Regular Service Schedule (Currently online via Zoom)

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| Morning Minyan (Monday & Thursday)..... | 8:00 am  |
| Friday Evening Services .....           | 5:30 pm  |
| Shabbat Morning Services.....           | 10:00 am |

## NEWS AND NOTES MAKE THE FRONT PAGE!

Well, this May bulletin is certainly a first – a bulletin reporting on events that could only take place “virtually” (on Zoom), and informing you of future events that also can only take place virtually...at least for the foreseeable future!

Of course no one can foresee the future these days...all we see are question marks! It puts me in mind of one of the plagues inflicted upon Egypt in the Passover story – the Plague of Darkness. We, of course, can still walk around without bumping into things – but we cannot see into the weeks or months ahead and feel at a loss for making plans going forward.

So I ask you to bear with us and realize that anything “announced” here as taking place virtually may be subject to change – if we get lucky enough for this coronavirus pandemic to pass sooner than is currently being projected, which will enable us to return to normal services, classes and other events taking place in person in our beloved Temple Beth El on High Street!

### Currently...

We are holding Friday night, Shabbat morning, Monday and Thursday morning (and recently had Pesach festival morning) services on Zoom (an electronic platform that allows people to interact electronically from their separate computers, tablets, or smartphones). Additionally, Rabbi Mark has been conducting weekly intermediate and advanced Hebrew classes on Zoom. Marie has been sending out email invitations to our members (if you are not on her email list and would like to be, please send a request from your email address to the office at templebethel@comcast.net, asking to be added to the email list). We have decided that these offerings are best done “by invitation only” because there have been reports of some congregations experiencing malicious actors “crashing” Jewish virtual services. Thus it is necessary to exercise this level of caution.

On the bright side, for those of you who live scattered across the country, it is a nice opportunity to have you join us from CA, CT, RI, FL, NY,

Boston, or wherever you may be “sheltering in place.” We have greatly enjoyed seeing some of you online who we do not ordinarily get to see!

Even if Zoom services are not for you, please visit the temple website [www.frtemplebethel.org](http://www.frtemplebethel.org) frequently to see what new notices and offerings have been posted. Near the beginning of our “sheltering in place” I began writing and posting a week-by-week series of reflections on this strange time we are living through entitled “The Corona Chronicles”; Rabbi Mark has been posting his commentary on the weekly Torah portions.

### Looking forward...

We are currently in the period of time known as *sefirat ha-Omer* (the Counting of the Omer) – when we count off 49 days between Pesach and the upcoming holiday of **Shavuot**.

**Shavuot** will begin on **Thursday evening, May 28th**, with our traditional evening Torah-study known as **Tikkun Leil Shavuot** – which, at this point, as far as we can tell, will be a virtual (Zoom) study-session. Sometime during the week leading up to that night, a Zoom invitation will go out inviting you to join us to study together online (**8-9:30 PM**).

The theme of this year’s *Tikkun* will be “**Jewish perspectives on the meaning of Freedom.**” We will study a variety of understandings of this elusive concept beginning with the Written Torah, proceeding through the Oral Torah, and also take in some contemporary perspectives from both Israel and the Diaspora. Study texts will either be made available ahead of time through email downloads which you will be able to print out, or through a screen-share. Stay tuned...

**The two festival days of Shavuot are Friday May 29th and Shabbat May 30th.** You may join these services online (unless we are no longer “sheltering” by then!), beginning at 10 AM – with Yizkor on the second day, May 30th, beginning at approximately 11:45.

*Please see page 5 for Jewish Movies & Media*

A message from our Spiritual Leader,  
Rabbi Mark Elber

## “Sacred Time and Sacred Space”

A traditional Jewish life is filled with moments of sacred time and sacred spaces. In terms of sacred time, we have a yearly cycle and a weekly cycle. In the yearly cycle that is 5780, our connection with public sacred space has been disrupted and temporarily altered. The sacred space that is Temple Beth El with its sanctuary and chapel is inaccessible to us at the moment. It feels like a rupture to which we are slowly adapting. For the time being we have transferred our services and classes via the wonders of technology to “Zoom.” Of course it’s not the same experience as being in the physical presence of each other in community, but the fact that we’re able to create a “virtual” community via technology is something to be grateful for. I cannot help but imagine how much more difficult our social distancing and self-isolating would be if this coronavirus pandemic had occurred prior to the proliferation of computers and the internet. So our notion of “sacred space” has changed – at least temporarily.

There always has been both a public sphere and a private sphere of sacred space. The home is such a central part of the practice of Judaism. The placing of *mezuzot* (mezuzahs) on the doorposts of the rooms of our apartment or house attempts to foster a sacred atmosphere in each room in which we dwell. If we create something of a Jewish library for ourselves, however large or small, that cultivates a certain environment in our house. When we light candles for Shabbat or holidays, that also lends something special to a room, combining both sacred time and sacred space.

The table at which we eat, according to our tradition, is likened to an altar. Most of the sacrifices in the ancient Temple (the *Beit HaMikdash*) were eaten. Salt would be put on the sacrifices which is where the custom of putting salt on our bread after making the *motzi* comes from. The custom of having two loaves of bread or *challah* over which to make the *motzi* on Friday night and Saturday morning reminds us of the two portions of manna that the Torah tells us our ancestors gathered on Fridays during the forty years of wandering in the wilderness of Sinai because it was forbidden to gather manna on Shabbat. Of course keeping kosher to whatever degree someone does, contributes daily to the Jewish sense of sacredness in our homes.

I grew up in a fairly traditional home. We had a *mezuzah* on our front door, my mother lit candles on Friday at sunset and only bought meat from the kosher butcher a few blocks from our house (there were three kosher butchers in our small neighborhood of Sunnyside, Queens – two of the butchers had beautiful voices and often led services at the Orthodox shul to which we belonged). Even though I never saw my father put on *tefillin*, my mother expected

me to do so every morning after I became a bar mitzvah. As I grew older, I became increasingly interested in Jewish observance and attended services more and more, which introduced me to a lot of Jewish practices I was unfamiliar with, but which I found very beautiful. The most intimate time was Saturday towards the end of Shabbat, when between the afternoon and evening services (*mincha* and *ma’ariv*) we would sit around a table, have a small meal, and sing traditional Shabbat table songs (*z’mirot*) until Shabbat was over. It was mostly older European men and a few American-born teenagers or fellows in their early 20s. Each older person at the table had their song that they would lead. The atmosphere was very warm, with such a love of *Yiddishkeit* (Jewishness). It was very moving. Shabbat really felt like an “oasis in time” as Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel called it.

This month of May culminates with the holiday of Shavuot which biblically was an agricultural holiday but evolved after the destruction of the Temple into a commemoration of the receiving of the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai. The holiday occurs seven weeks after Passover. During the seven weeks between Passover and Shavuot we traditionally count the *Omer*. The *Omer* was a measure of barley grain offered at the Temple. Our ancient sages calculated that the biblical holiday of *Shavuot* (whose name means “weeks”) coincided with the revelation at Mount Sinai. We count each day in anticipation of the revelation of Torah. Passover is “the season of our liberation” from slavery in Egypt, while *Shavuot* is the beginning of the liberation to live a life of meaning and spiritual depth that engagement with Torah implies.

Our lives have a cyclical quality during the course of the year and the seasons, and a more linear trajectory when viewed over the course of our lifetimes. Hopefully we’re always growing in some way or other, continuing to learn and evolve. Because nothing stands still, the way we understand Torah hopefully deepens as we grow in wisdom through the years. The counting of the *Omer* is not just a matter of passing the time, but hopefully a daily reminder to make each day count. What makes sacred space sacred is the spiritual energy we invest in that space. Otherwise a sanctuary is just a lot of seats and some ornaments. What makes sacred time sacred is similarly the spiritual energy we infuse it with. The Western Wall (the *Kotel*) is just stones without the incredible history of Jewish existence that transpired in its precincts. Part of the demands of these days of social distancing and self-isolating is providing spiritual sustenance and support for each other despite our physical separation. We make this period of time meaningful by how we live these days despite the inherent restrictions. Please join us in our services. Take care and stay healthy.

Rabbi Mark

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

What an unprecedented time we are living in! Along with many of you, my wife Judy and I have been staying at home...so ordered not just by our governor but by our children! While I miss the hustle and bustle of "ordinary" life, it is nice to have a chance to relax, read, do some yardwork, and eat three meals a day at home.

Life at the Temple has changed with the times. Soon after we were forced to close our doors due to the coronavirus, Rabbi Mark used his resources to learn how to conduct online interactive services via Zoom. While it isn't a perfect solution, it is a wonderful temporary solution, as it keeps our members (both near and far) involved in the Temple and connected to their faith, it offers them the comfort of our traditional services during these stressful times, and perhaps most important of all, it offers the chance to interact with others. Thanks to Rabbi Mark and Cantor Shoshana for bringing Temple Beth El into the 21st century!

Until we are cleared to reopen all of our regular services will be conducted via Zoom (Monday & Thursday minyan at 8 am, Friday night at 5:30, Shabbat morning at 10 am). We will also conduct Zoom services for other special events like Shavuot. Look for emails with invitations to join the meeting.

Now more than ever it is vitally important to be on our email list. We keep the list private, and only use it to keep you up-to-date with all that is happening. It is also the only way to get invited to our Zoom services. If you wish to be included, simply send an email to the office at templebethel@comcast.net.

It is also a good idea to check our website regularly. Not only can you get the latest updates, but we are regularly posting new articles, including Cantor Shoshana's weekly column, "The Corona Chronicles." Rabbi Mark has also been writing an article about the weekly portion. Visit [www.frtemplebethel.org](http://www.frtemplebethel.org)

I want to thank both George and Marie for all they continue to do behind the scenes while the Temple is closed. George is keeping very busy with cleaning, repairs, and junk removal. Marie has been keeping the business running, sending out cards, keeping the website updated, and keeping us all up-to-date through emails. With the two of them taking care of things at the Temple, it allows the rest of us to stay home and not worry. Thank you both!!

Lastly, please remember that you are not alone. Please call us if you need a helping hand or simply someone to talk to.

*Steve Silverman*  
President

*Sisterhood President's Message*

Here we are, almost in May, and while the flowers are blooming, we could do with a little more warmth! Summer can't get here fast enough for me.

I hope you are all taking advantage of the stay-at-home order, relaxing and resting up for when things reopen. This is a great time to read. If you need some new book ideas, check out our website. All 94 books we have read are listed there - just click on the link on the left that says "Book Club is Back!" Many can be borrowed from Boston Public Library and downloaded to be read on a Kindle, Nook, or using the Kindle app on any computer, tablet or even phone. Go to [BPL.org](http://BPL.org) to learn more.

I for one am looking forward to playing mah jongg with the new cards, and I will be first in line at the salon, but for now I am content to stay home. Hopefully everything will be able to open safely soon.

It goes without saying...stay safe and healthy, and if you need anything, don't hesitate to call the office or another Sisterhood member.

*Libby Cohen*  
Sisterhood President



Cherry tree in full bloom opposite Charlton Hospital

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## SERVICE SCHEDULE

**May 2020: Iyar/Sivan 5780**

*Until we reopen, please join our internet Zoom services. Email the office for more information!*

Friday, May 1 (7 Iyar)

Shabbat Service 5:30 pm  
Candle Lighting 7:26 pm

Saturday, May 2 (8 Iyar)

Weekly Portion: Akharei Mot-Kedoshim 10:00 am

Friday, May 8 (14 Iyar)

Shabbat Service 5:30 pm  
Candle Lighting 7:34 pm

Saturday, May 9 (15 Iyar)

Weekly Portion: Emor 10:00 am

Tuesday, May 12 (18 Iyar)

Lag Ba'Omer

Friday, May 15 (21 Iyar)

Shabbat Service 5:30 pm  
Candle Lighting 7:41 pm

Saturday, May 16 (22 Iyar)

Weekly Portion: B'har-B'khukotai 10:00 am

Friday, May 22 (28 Iyar)

Shabbat Service 5:30 pm  
Candle Lighting 7:48 pm

Yom Yerushalayim  
Jerusalem Reunification Day

Saturday, May 23 (29 Iyar)

Weekly Portion: B'midbar 10:00 am

Sunday, May 24 (1 Sivan)

Rosh Chodesh Sivan

Friday, May 29 (6 Sivan)

Shavuot – First Day 10:00 am  
Shabbat/Yom Tov Service 5:30 pm  
Candle Lighting 7:54 pm

Saturday, May 30 (7 Sivan)

Shavuot – Second Day 10:00 am  
Yizkor: Approximately 11:45 am

## TEMPLE OFFICE

385 High St, Fall River, MA 02720  
Tel: (508) 674-3529 Fax: (508) 678-6735  
E-Mail: templebethel@comcast.net  
Website: frtemplebethel.org

OFFICE HOURS:

Monday - Friday, 9 am to Noon

OFFICE CLOSED:

Until further notice. Should we reopen in May, we will be closed:

Monday, May 25th - Memorial Day  
Friday, May 29th - Shavuot 1st Day

## Fall River United Jewish Appeal, Inc.

385 High Street, Fall River, MA 02720  
Tel: (508) 673-7791 Fax: (508) 678-6735  
e-mail: fruja@comcast.net

Office Hours: Monday & Thursday, 9 am to Noon

Friendly Visitor: Arleen Bor is our "Friendly Visitor" and she will be ready, willing and able to continue her visits as soon as it is safe to do so. In the meantime, feel free to call the UJA office at (508) 673-7791 to schedule an upcoming visit.

Senior Center: (at the Fall River Jewish Home)

**Open for take-out** 5 days a week for lunch...Kosher and delicious. For reservations/cancellations call the Nutrition Office at (508) 324-4619. or (800) 293-8943 before 1:30 pm on the previous business day.

## College Scholarships

Scholarships are available to all students residing in the greater Fall River area.

Applications are available in the Temple office and should be completed by the student and returned as soon as possible.



The Scholarship Committee must have scholarship applications in hand by June 15, 2020

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## Jewish Movies and Media

Alas, we have not been able to gather for our "Sunday afternoons at the Jewish movies" for 2 months. We certainly look forward to watching together again when this pandemic passes! In the meantime, here are a few films and/or TV series worth noting that you might be able to watch from home:

**Harriet:** bio-pic about Harriet Tubman, "the black Moses." Fabulous recent film (available through Netflix DVD or for rent via Comcast Xfinity) with wonderful music to boot!

**Unorthodox:** Netflix 4-episode TV series about a Satmar Hasidic woman who flees her Brooklyn community to find life on her own terms in the secular world. If you liked Shtisel, you will probably like Unorthodox, which features some of the same actors and similar conflicts between community, creativity and self-expression, but with a different outcome.

**The Plot against America:** HBO TV mini-series version of Phillip Roth's 2004 novel of the same name (our Fall River-born Nancy Shore has a walk-on role!).

**Fauda:** Netflix has recently released the third season of this Israeli-made television series (which premiered in 2015) telling the story of Doron, a commander in the Mista'arvim unit and his team as they pursue a Hamas arch-terrorist. (Warning: an exciting thriller that will keep you on the edge of your couch – but avoid if you are upset by violence on screen.)

**The Pianist:** the 2002 Academy Award-Winning adaptation of the memoir of the Polish-Jewish pianist and composer (and Holocaust survivor) Władysław Szpilman. I have been trying to get a copy of this film for some time to show at the Temple but it was not available in our Netflix DVD subscription – but I noticed recently that it is now available to stream on Netflix, so you can now watch it from home.

*Thank you for your donations received through April 17th*

### Yahrzeits

|  |                         |
|--|-------------------------|
| <b>For the yahrzeit of my beloved...</b> | Donated by:             |
| <b>Father, Jerry Gold</b>                | Karen Sokoll            |
| <b>Husband, Gerald Goldberg</b>          | Glenda Goldberg         |
| <b>Mother, Alice Helfanbein</b>          | Barry Helfanbein        |
| <b>Father, Dr. Jacob Helfanbein</b>      | Barry Helfanbein        |
| <b>Sister, Geraldine Kesselman</b>       | Irma Feldman            |
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| <b>Mother, Ruth Levine</b>               | Rick & Wendy Levine     |
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| <b>Father-in-law, Harry Meretsky</b>     | Shirley Meretsky        |
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| <b>Mother, Doris Rotenberg</b>           | Lisa Shapiro            |
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| <b>Father, Isadore Saxe</b>              | Arlene Rothschild       |
| <b>Mother, Martha Saxe Sobel</b>         | Arlene Rothschild       |
| <b>Wife, Shirley Stampler</b>            | Charles Stampler        |
| <b>Father, Hyman Udovin</b>              | Judith & Frank Kosofsky |
| <b>Husband, Hadley Wilkinson</b>         | Gail Wilkinson          |

### MAURICE ALPERT MEMORIAL ENDOWMENT FUND

**For the yahrzeit of my beloved father-in-law,  
Bernard Goodman**  
**In memory of Dr. Albert Resnick**  
**For the yahrzeit of my beloved uncle, Max V. Silverman**  
Sumner Alpert

### CAPITAL FUND

**In memory of Gloria Baskin**  
Paula Shaer  
**In memory of my Hebrew school classmates, Neil Gisherman  
and Rabbi Gershon Schwartz**  
Barry Helfanbein

### CEMETERY FUND

**For the yahrzeit of my beloved son, Jonathan Entin**  
Jeffrey Entin

### BERNARD HOROWITZ BUILDING MAINTENANCE FUND

**In honor of Charlie Stampler's special birthday**  
**In honor of Toby Dondis Farman's special birthday**  
Arlyne Dondis

### LEADERSHIP

|                         |                  |
|-------------------------|------------------|
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Our website is constantly changing, so be sure to check it out regularly. There are links to articles written by Rabbi Mark and Cantor Shoshana, updated service schedules and upcoming events. You can also see the bulletin there first, especially if you live outside the greater Fall River area! Go to [www.frtemplebethel.com](http://www.frtemplebethel.com).

## YAHARZEITS

5/1/2020 7 Iyar 5780  
Carlton Dubitsky  
Jason Sigal

5/2/2020 8 Iyar 5780  
Irving Kline

5/4/2020 10 Iyar 5780  
Jacob Dondis

5/5/2020 11 Iyar 5780  
Annette Horowitz  
Armin Minkin

5/6/2020 12 Iyar 5780  
Frank Feldman  
Harold Weiss

5/7/2020 13 Iyar 5780  
Lew Jill  
Marjory Packer

5/8/2020 14 Iyar 5780  
Emma Loeff Dondis  
Charles Reback

5/9/2020 15 Iyar 5780  
Bessie Cohen  
Paul Greenberg  
Anna Kuperschmid

5/11/2020 17 Iyar 5780  
Anna Goldman  
Dr. David Prial

5/12/2020 18 Iyar 5780  
Leonard Osiason  
Steven B. Singer

5/13/2020 19 Iyar 5780  
Shirley Stampler

5/14/2020 20 Iyar 5780  
Lilly Grozen  
Phyllis Mechaber  
Isaac Soorkis

5/16/2020 22 Iyar 5780  
Elaine Burt  
Melba Meister  
Hyman Pollock

5/17/2020 23 Iyar 5780  
Patricia Brown  
Rose Dondis  
Samuel Entin

5/18/2020 24 Iyar 5780  
Joseph Bolski  
Paul Woltman

5/19/2020 25 Iyar 5780  
Bennett Alpert  
Neil Roiter

5/20/2020 26 Iyar 5780  
Allan Evans  
Samuel Gerstenzang

5/21/2020 27 Iyar 5780  
Neil A. Hoffman  
Shirley Rosenthal

5/22/2020 28 Iyar 5780  
Mollie Morganstein

5/24/2020 1 Sivan 5780  
Bernard L. Cohen

5/25/2020 2 Sivan 5780  
Steven Gary Litchman

5/26/2020 3 Sivan 5780  
Lena M. Solotist

5/30/2020 7 Sivan 5780  
Isidore Horvitz  
Libbye Rabinovitz

5/31/2020 8 Sivan 5780  
Samuel Plotnick  
Jennie Winokoor

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