

# TEMPLE BETH EL

FALL RIVER, MASSACHUSETTS



97th Year

December 2024

Cheshvan/Kislev 5785

No. 4

## Regular Service Schedule - In Person and Via Zoom

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

### Books, Books, Books for Sale! Mark your Calendars!

From Dec. 9th through Dec. 11th, Sisterhood will be in charge of helping to sell the many books in our vast library. We will be there from 10 am until 2 pm, all 3 days. There will also be other items for sale, such as kitchen goods. Donations appreciated. So, bring a shopping bag and spend some time looking around. You never know what treasures you might find!



## "Maestro"

**Sunday, December 15th at 2 pm**



*Maestro* is a towering and fearless love story chronicling the lifelong relationship between Leonard Bernstein and Felicia Montealegre Cohn Bernstein.

*See page 5 for more details.*

## Community Chanukah Party Sunday, December 29th at 4 pm

It's nearly time for our TBE Community Chanukah party! Once again, we will celebrate the season at the home of the rabbi and cantor. We hope to see you there!

**Please RSVP to  
the office by Monday,  
December 23rd.**



## "Make a Minyan"

Saturday, December 28th  
we will be celebrating the  
50th anniversary of  
Leonard Lehrer's bar mitzvah

*Kiddush to follow, sponsored by  
Leonard & Soili Lehrer*

*We hope you will join us!*

A message from our Spiritual Leader,  
Cantor Shoshana Brown

*The Gift of Friendship*

It felt as though the Jewish holidays – from Rosh Hashanah through Simchat Torah – were quite “late” this year, but of course, as I have heard Rabbi Mark say, “the Jewish holidays are always *on time*,” coming just when they are supposed to come according to the Jewish calendar. And yet, as most of us live primarily according to the secular calendar, in synch with the rest of the world, they nonetheless felt “late.” This was the first year that Rabbi Mark and I were not able to attend “Parents’ Weekend” at Champlain College (in Burlington, Vermont) since Simchat Torah ended on a Friday evening, just where Shabbat began; and so we could only get up to see Lev for about half of the Sunday of that weekend at the end of October (all of the other parents had already left campus).

And as soon as we returned from Vermont, Election Day was upon us: all the nation was waiting expectantly to find out which candidate the voters of our nation would choose. Some people were very happy with the results, others extremely disappointed. Whether you belong to the former group, or the latter, it seems a fairly commonly-held feeling that we are all emotionally exhausted.

Add to this that Rabbi Mark and I were called upon to perform two funerals near the end of October, and, shortly after Election Day, I sang at the funeral of the father of one of my dear friends (whom I have known since college), who was buried in Lincoln, Massachusetts. It was great to be able to be there by my friend’s side, but I was feeling wrung out.

And thus it was with great joy that I took off a couple of days in the middle of November to spend with another old friend, Amy Attias (who played the violin and sang with me during two Yom Kippur services at TBE some years before the pandemic). Amy lives in the Berkshires now, and neither one of us wanted to travel far; we just wanted to spend some quality time together, since our lives are not situated in such a way that we can see each other very often. I had selected the picturesque town of Shelburne Falls on the Deerfield River as a place for us to meet up, where we stayed at a quaint Victorian inn.

Shelburne Falls is extremely quiet in the middle of November, with the tourist season decisively over. Only a few restaurants are open mid-week in the area. Our inn offered no television. That was fine. All we wanted to do was talk, share cups of tea, and glasses of wine, and take walks around the town (and up Mt. Sugarloaf in Deerfield, MA). And yes, we also made a little music together. Amy remarked on our last day there that the time we had spent together was the longest stretch of unmediated time (that is, shared with no electronics, no screens) that she had spent in another human being’s presence in a very long time. It felt restor-

ative, and so joyful! (We were also lucky to enjoy some very beautiful, sunny weather – so warm that we could still eat at outdoor café tables.)

I write and speak frequently about the importance of *community* – and indeed, I feel strongly that community is crucial to our health and wellbeing both as Jews and as human beings. But, on a slightly smaller scale, another part of human life that makes our lives deeply satisfying and meaningful is *friendship*. Unlike marriage, friendship is not about creating a family together; it is usually not about partnership in a business or other enterprise. It has no ulterior motive. It is just about joy and love – and sometimes, the offering of a helping hand, a sympathetic ear, a shoulder to cry on.

When God says in the Creation story, “It is not good for the *adam* (the human being) to be alone,” we all know that the *partner* God will create for this first human is to be the first woman, and so we think of the first human relationship in the world as that of a man and a woman. But as precious as the relationship between a husband and wife is in our tradition, *friendship* is also seen as one of the essential ingredients to making a life worthwhile. In the Rabbinic tradition, a *chaver* (“friend,” but also one’s Torah-study partner) was indispensable for gaining understanding both of Torah and of life in general.

Elie Wiesel has written, in his novel *The Gates of the Forest*:

“Friendship marks a life even more deeply than love. Love risks degenerating into obsession, friendship is never anything but sharing.”

Of course we *do* love our friends. Wiesel here is contrasting friendship-love with romantic love, which *can* be both obsessive and possessive. A healthy friendship, by contrast, does not exhibit such qualities. It is not grasping, or controlling, but only life-enhancing. My favorite quotation about friendship is from the diarist Anais Nin, who wrote:

“Each friend represents a *world* in us, a world possibly not born until they arrive, and it is only by this meeting that a new world is born.”

The *world* that is born between friends is one that sustains human life, because it brings forth the joy of being alive, of being privileged to participate in the drama of human consciousness in this world, for however brief a time. As we head into the year’s darkest month (which we will illuminate with our celebration of Chanukah), I wish you all the light and joy and love that come with gatherings of community, family, and dear friends – for truly, these are what give our lives their deepest-rooted fulfillment, and their peak joys. I look forward to hosting many of you at our TBE community Chanukah party at our home on Walnut Street on December 29th, and wish you all a *Chanukah Sameach*,

Cantor Shoshana

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The sky is falling!

That's how we feel sometimes, especially when rainstorms bring down pieces of the ceiling, but we are not done yet!

A new chapter is beginning for Temple Beth El. For almost one hundred years the Temple survived and even ruled High Street, but the building is not surviving. We have many maintenance issues that make continuing in the present facilities more and more difficult. For each problem we have to choose whether to restore, repair, or just keep a close eye on the situation. Over the years various Board members have recognized what was coming, but understandably they did not want to proceed. Now the time has come to move ahead.

We also need to be able to continue with our current operating funds. Thanks to the Jewish Omni Fund we are managing, but we must act.

Like you, the Board is not happy about the situation, but we must act in order to keep the doors open to all.

Here are some examples we have dealt with in the last few months: Chunks were falling from the foyer ceiling, repaired by covering it with screening. A water tank that works with the boiler had to be replaced. The towers and the roof seem to have new leaks every month. We have patched the roof but the towers would require a huge restoration, so we try to catch the leaks in buckets.

Do you have any ideas for a new location? Do you have any ideas about how to rehabilitate the building? Do you have any ideas about what to do with all of the "stuff" we have accumulated over the last 100 years? We will have some sales and auctions coming up, but we know we are still going to end up with thousands of items. One thing we know for sure is we won't have room for it all at our new location.

So, is the sky falling? No, but we need your help to write this new chapter. Please pass this message along to those who have moved away. In the meantime we continue to do what we must to keep the building safe, both for our congregation and the school, and we continue to be open for services, special events, movies and more.

Please let us know if you have any ideas...our minds are wide open!

*Rick Schwartz*  
President

## Sisterhood President's Message

As I sit here writing December's column, the rain is coming down. Much as I prefer the sunny weather we've been enjoying, we need this rain to alleviate the drought conditions we are experiencing. So, a good book is next on my to do list for today.

Speaking about books, we are in the process of preparing for our upcoming book sale. We have many interesting reads available, whether you like fiction, nonfiction, educational etc. We will be in the Temple library Monday, December 9th through Wednesday, December 11th from 10 am until 2 pm. Please stop in and pick up something good to read. Bring a shopping bag, and be prepared to browse. A small donation would be appreciated. Thank you in advance.

On Saturday, December 28th we will be celebrating the 50th anniversary of Leonard Lehrer's Bar Mitzvah. Please join us for this special "Make a Minyan." Leonard and his lovely wife Soili are sponsoring the kiddush luncheon.

On Sunday, December 29th at 4 PM sharp, Rabbi Mark and Cantor Shoshana will be hosting our annual Chanukah party at their home. We will be treated to latkes and apple cake prepared by our gracious hostess, Cantor Shoshana. Watch your email for an RSVP request. A good time is promised, so plan on attending.

So until next month, stay safe and healthy.

*Libby Cohen*  
Sisterhood President



## LEADERSHIP

Mark Elber.....	Rabbi
Shoshana Brown.....	Cantor
Richard Schwartz.....	President
Leonard Lehrer.....	Vice President
Libby Cohen.....	Secretary
Robert Falconero.....	Treasurer
Libby Cohen.....	Sisterhood Pres.
William E. Kaufman.....	Rabbi Emeritus



## Service Schedule

### December 2024: Cheshvan/Kislev 5785

Sunday, December 1 (30 Cheshvan)

Rosh Chodesh Kislev

Monday, December 2 (1 Kislev)

Rosh Chodesh Kislev

Friday, December 6 (5 Kislev)

Candle Lighting 3:56 pm

Shabbat Service 5:30 pm

Saturday, December 7 (6 Kislev)

Weekly Portion: Vayetzei 10:00 am

Friday, December 13 (12 Kislev)

Candle Lighting 3:57 pm

Shabbat Service 5:30 pm

Saturday, December 14 (13 Kislev)

Weekly Portion: Vayishlahk 10:00 am

Friday, December 20 (19 Kislev)

Candle Lighting: 3:59 pm

Shabbat Service: 5:30 pm

Saturday, December 21 (20 Kislev)

Weekly Portion: Vayeshev 10:00 am

Wednesday, December 25 (24 Kislev)

Erev Chanukah

Light 1st Chanukah candle in the evening

Thursday, December 26 (25 Kislev)

Chanukah – First Day

Light 2nd Chanukah candle

Friday, December 27 (26 Kislev)

Chanukah – Second Day

Light 3rd Chanukah candle before Shabbat candles

Candle Lighting: 4:03 pm

Shabbat Service: 5:30 pm

Saturday, December 28 (27 Kislev)

Chanukah – Third Day

Weekly Portion: Miketz 10:00 am

Light 4th Chanukah candle after 5:09 pm

Sunday, December 29 (28 Kislev)

Chanukah – Fourth Day

Light 5th Chanukah candle

Monday, December 30 (29 Kislev)

Chanukah – Fifth Day

Light 6th Chanukah candle

Tuesday, December 31 (30 Kislev)

Chanukah – Sixth Day

Rosh Chodesh Tevet

Light 7th Chanukah Candle

## “Make a Minyan”

Saturday, December 28th we will be celebrating the 50th anniversary of Leonard Lehrer's bar mitzvah

Please mark your calendars and plan to join us either in the chapel or on Zoom. The service begins at 10 am, but please be sure to arrive before 11 am in order to be counted.

Plan to stay for the nice kiddush luncheon to follow, which is sponsored by Leonard & Soili Lehrer.

January's "Make a Minyan" will be Saturday, January 18th.

## Books, Books, Books for Sale! Mark your Calendars!

From Dec. 9th through Dec. 11th, Sisterhood will be in charge of helping to sell the many books in our vast library. We will be there from 10 am until 2 pm, all 3 days. There will also be other items for sale, such as kitchen goods. Donations appreciated. So, bring a shopping bag and spend some time looking around. You never know what treasures you might find!



## TEMPLE FAMILY

- Our sincere condolences to Paula Rubin and family on the loss of Dr. Herb Rubin, past president of Temple Beth El.

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### TBE News & Notes

Our **Sisterhood Shabbat on November 16th** was such a lovely event. If you haven't been coming to our monthly "Make a Minyan" Shabbat services, give us a try! The service is followed by a kiddush luncheon, nothing fancy, but always *heimish*. **December's Make a Minyan** will be on **Saturday, December 28th**, and it will be sponsored by **Leonard Lehrer** in celebration of the 50th anniversary of his bar mitzvah – all are welcome!

Our **Sunday Afternoon at the Jewish Movies** series continues...with apologies about the November movie which people probably did not have enough advance notice of, since the November bulletin was slow in arriving (we were so busy in October!). No one showed up to watch *iMordechai*, so we will try that one again later in the year. Our December movie will be on Sunday December 15th; and the January movie will be on January 26th.

Don't forget the **Sisterhood Book Sale** December 9th through December 11th (10 AM – 2 PM, in the TBE library)...and don't forget to bring your own shopping bags!

It's nearly time for our **TBE Community Chanukah party!** Once again, we will celebrate the season at the home of the rabbi and cantor. Don't forget to respond to the RSVP request that will be coming to your email, or, if you don't do email, just call the temple and let Marie know you are coming. It will be held on **Sunday, December 29th, beginning at 4 PM.**

**And keep in mind...**our **January Make a Minyan** will be held on **Saturday, January 18th**, beginning at 10 AM (Torah reading begins around 11). We will be starting the book of Exodus, and also featuring MLK Day-related tunes in the liturgy.



## **SUNDAY AFTERNOON AT THE JEWISH MOVIES**

**Maestro** is a towering and fearless love story chronicling the lifelong relationship between Leonard Bernstein and Felicia Montealegre Cohn Bernstein. A love letter to life and art, *Maestro* at its core is an emotionally epic portrayal of family and love...and the music is fabulous! Starring Bradley Cooper and Carey Mulligan. 2023; 2 hours, 9 minutes



Shoshana and her friend Amy; Sylvia Eisner, Carleen Makowski and Shoshana at Simmons Pond Mill Preserve in Little Compton for the last hike of the year, and a lovely view of the Connecticut River and the Holyoke Range, seen from Mt. Sugarloaf in Deerfield, MA





*Thank you for your donations received through Nov 25th*

### YAHREZEITS

For the yahrzeit of my beloved... Donated by:

Mother, Bessie Bolski	Norm Bolski
Grandfather, Jacob Brown	Sheila Galitsky
Father, Carl Feldman	Gail Wilkinson
Mother, Irma Feldman	Gail Wilkinson
Father, Harry Finkelstein	Joel Finkelstein
Father, Dr. Irving Fradkin	Russell & Jane Fradkin
Mother, Lenora Goltz	Barbara & Arthur Sheer
Father, Erwin Juda	Joyce Juda
Mother, Bessie Kassler	Hannah Evans
Grandmother, Jennie Robinson	Edith K. Getchell
Grandmother, Jennie Robinson	Enid K. Lomax

### MAURICE ALPERT MEMORIAL ENDOWMENT FUND

For the yahrzeit of my beloved son, Alex Pankiw  
Sandra Alpert Pankiw

### CAPITAL FUND

In honor and to celebrate Carleen Makowski, our new  
Jewess "supreme."

Jeff Ginsberg

In honor of Carleen Makowski becoming a Jew by choice

Anne Griffin

In memory of Dr. Herbert Rubin

Nancy Winokoor

### SPECIAL GIFTS

In memory of my beloved cousin, Jeff Entin, and in appreciation of Rabbi Mark & Cantor Shoshana

Stephen Entin

## IN MEMORIAM

### DR. HERBERT RUBIN

October 30, 2024 - 29 Tishrei 5784

*May his memory be for a blessing*

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## TEMPLE OFFICE

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E-Mail: templebethel@comcast.net  
Website: frtemplebethel.org

### OFFICE HOURS:

Monday - Wednesday - Friday, 9 am to Noon

### OFFICE CLOSED:

Wed, December 25th - Bank Holiday

### ZOOM LINKS

Zoom links for regular and special  
services are now available on our website:  
www.frtemplebethel.org

## PLAQUES GALORE!

As we continue to look for a new, much smaller home we are looking for ways to reduce our contents to better fit in our new building. We already know we can't take everything, which includes over 1500 yahrzeit plaques, pew plaques, wall plaques and library shelf plaques.

If you or your parents or grandparents purchased a plaque or plaques, and you would like to have them returned to you, we are happy to give them to you. We only ask that you make a donation to cover the cost of packing and shipping if you are unable to come to the Temple to pick them up yourself.

If you are interested, please contact Marie in the office. She will locate the plaques and box them up for mailing. We are hoping to find a place for the Tree of Life, so we aren't planning to take that apart at this point. Below are samples of yahrzeit plaques, a pew plaque and a library shelf plaque.

**MARION HORVITZ**  
CHESHVAN 23, 2010

**MAX JACOB HORVITZ**  
SHEVAT 6, 2018

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IN HONOR OF HIS BIRTHDAY

## Field Trip to the Vilna Shul on Beacon Hill

By Nancy Seibert

On a blustery late November Sunday, Rabbi Mark, Cantor Shoshana, Lev Elber, Sylvia Eisner, Carleen Makowski and I took a tour of the historic Jewish neighborhood on Beacon Hill in Boston and its last remaining synagogue building, now known as the Vilna Shul.



Built in 1919, the Vilna Congregation was founded by immigrants from the area in and around the city of Vilna (Vilnius), Lithuania. They began organizing as a community in 1888 and founded a congregation in 1906. The synagogue built at 18 Phillips Street in 1919 was their fourth place of worship on Beacon Hill.

The congregation remained active until 1985. The abandoned property was rescued by a non-profit organization in the 1990's and has been undergoing restoration since then.



Today, the Vilna Shul ([www.vilnashul.org](http://www.vilnashul.org)) is an important center for learning about Jewish culture and the immigrant community that made Beacon Hill its first home in America.

Inside the shul sanctuary, our guide explained that the restoration process is focusing on revealing three layers of murals hidden under layers of paint. Two of the most striking murals uncovered are on the walls of the women's section. One depicts the grave of Rachel and the other the Cave of Machpelah, the site of the burials of Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebecca, Jacob and Leah. Similar folk-art paintings were a customary decorative addition to many synagogues in Eastern Europe which no longer exist.

The carved wood sanctuary ark was also designed in the style of many in Eastern Europe, featuring animal, plant and shell designs, as well as traditional Jewish symbols. Our guide along the neighborhood tour pointed out that while the Old Country art and a very traditional style of worship was cherished by the Vilna Congregation, assimilating into American culture was also very important to the community.



Top to bottom: TBE guests on the bimah of the Vilna Shul; a sample of many beautiful murals restored from walls that had been painted over; and the shul's sanctuary as it is today. Left column: stained glass window, ark and facade of Vilna Shul.





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,  
*Go to [www.frtemplebethel.org](http://www.frtemplebethel.org)*

## YAHREZEITS

12/3/2024 2 Kislev 5785

Shirley Meretsky  
Frances Sokoll

12/5/2024 4 Kislev 5785

Harry Finkelstein  
Anne Feinberg Gregory  
Paul Horowitz  
Louis Weinstock  
Donald Wiener  
Myron Wilner  
Lillian Woltman

12/6/2024 5 Kislev 5785

Neilson Caplain  
Gladys Shapiro

12/7/2024 6 Kislev 5785

Ida Z. David

12/8/2024 7 Kislev 5785

Ida Appel  
Miriam Lehrer  
Francis F. Levin  
Leah Reback

12/9/2024 8 Kislev 5785

Dr. Barry Steinberg

12/10/2024 9 Kislev 5785

Tillie Ruderman  
Esther Weissman

12/11/2024 10 Kislev 5785

Edward Adaskin  
Julius Grozen  
Eric Lawson  
David Nadien

12/13/2024 12 Kislev 5785

Sadie Katersky

12/14/2024 13 Kislev 5785

David Cohen  
Ruth Levin

12/15/2024 14 Kislev 5785

Hattie Caplain

12/18/2024 17 Kislev 5785

Sylvia T. Reback

12/21/2024 20 Kislev 5785

James Sobilloff

12/22/2024 21 Kislev 5785

Edith Gold

12/23/2024 22 Kislev 5785

Hummy Chebot  
Barry Novek  
Daniel Schafner

12/24/2024 23 Kislev 5785

Alice Helfanbein  
Elizabeth Beryl Waksler  
Donna Ann Wolfson

12/25/2024 24 Kislev 5785

Judy Berg

12/27/2024 26 Kislev 5785

Henry William Juda  
Phyllis Nerenberg  
Samuel Rotenberg

12/28/2024 27 Kislev 5785

Herbert Fleisher  
Shirley Resnick  
Murray Rosofsky

12/29/2024 28 Kislev 5785

Ann Freedman  
David Kotlen  
Bernard Miller

12/30/2024 29 Kislev 5785

Ada Haims  
Robert Lipson

12/31/2024 30 Kislev 5785

Rose Tallman



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