



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



**Chanukah
Party
2023!**



A message from our Spiritual Leader, Rabbi Mark Elber

It's 2024. It feels like it was just 2023. Actually, it feels like it was just 2013, when we first arrived in Fall River at the end of June, when Lev was ten years old and he's about to turn 21 and is in the middle of his junior year of college. So much has changed in ten short years.

We, as a congregation, have aged ten years, of course. Sadly, quite a number of congregants are no longer with us having either moved away or passed away, but we have gained new members too. The world also has changed significantly in these last ten years. Among the changes is that incidents of antisemitism have increased significantly in recent years and particularly since October 7th, though as far as I know, we have not experienced any dramatic change in that regard in Fall River. Temple Beth El has received a number of supportive phone calls from the Christian community since October 7th. Despite all of these changes over the course of the years, we have been staying as active as we can as a community.

Every Friday evening service we've gotten at least a minyan and often twice that (including our zoom participants). We usually don't get a minyan on Shabbat morning, but once a month since January 2023, we've been getting a Shabbat morning minyan for our "Make a Minyan" Shabbat service. We hosted a congregational party at our house on the Sunday evening of Chanukah this year and there were about 18 people present – (18) *chai* – life!!

Our monthly "Sunday at the Jewish Movies" is slowly growing in attendance again. There's no question that we're going through changes, but it's essential that we keep the spark alive, that we keep the Jewish presence in Fall River, which has a long, glorious history, aflame.

I know I've said this on previous occasions, but it bears repeating: every single member is a valuable part of the community. Every person's presence makes a difference, changes the dynamic in the room, whether that room is the chapel, the vestry, the sanctuary, or our home. Every voice that joins us in song or conversation strengthens our community, lifts us up.

This month's Torah portions are all about the Jewish people as a community, as a corporate body. In the book of Genesis, which we completed in December, the portions primarily coalesce around the families of the patriarchs and matriarchs. January contains the first four *parashiyot* (Torah portions) of the book of Exodus in which we become a people. These four portions include the exodus from Egypt. In the first *parasha*, in fact in the first chapter of Exodus, the phrase *am b'nei Yisrael* (the nation of the descendants of Israel) is used. This phrase occurs nowhere else. Essentially you can see the last four books of the Torah as a saga of the development and evolution of the Jewish people in preparation for entering the Promised Land, the Land of Israel. So much of Jewish identity has been bound up in the

Land of Israel and in the Hebrew language. In our tradition, the spiritual tradition of our people, what we call "Judaism," is not differentiated from the culture of our people.

Judaism is not a "religion" in the Western sense of the word. It is much more accurately described as the major 20th century Jewish thinker, Mordecai Kaplan, described it in the title of his most influential book, "Judaism as a Civilization." I personally like to define Judaism as the spiritual traditions of the Jewish people. One of the major differences between Orthodox Judaism and non-Orthodox Judaism is that the non-Orthodox denominations see Judaism as an ever-evolving civilization, rather than claiming that both the entire Torah and Talmud (what in our tradition is referred to as the "oral Torah" *Torah sheh'b'al peh*) were given to Moses at Mt. Sinai as the Orthodox believe. Conservative Judaism tries to conserve as much of the tradition as possible while acknowledging the necessity of change as conditions of life and society evolve.

In the Talmud, in *Pirkei Avot* (the Ethics of Our Ancestors), there is a famous saying attributed to the ancient sage, Hillel: *Al tifrosh min hatzibor* (Don't separate yourself from the community). None of our spiritual heroes were people who achieved some sort of enlightenment out on their own – they all are renowned for their commitment to the community and the insights they bring to everyone. Moses goes to Pharaoh and says: "let my people go." He was there on behalf of all the people, not just himself or a select few. If you notice, nearly every single prayer in the *Siddur* (the Prayer Book) is formulated in the plural, almost never in the singular. The concern tends to be about *Klal Yisrael* (the totality of the Jewish People). In a number of places in the Talmud one finds the expression: *kol Yisrael arevim zeh bazeh* (all of Israel, i.e. the Jewish people, are responsible for one another).

As I write this, Israel's war with Hamas is still raging. The conflict has been used as an excuse for a great deal of antisemitic statements and acts. The loss of innocent civilian lives is always a tragedy, but the level of hypocrisy and double standards is easily demonstrable with only a couple of observations such as comparing the amount of protest and anti-Israel vitriol expressed about this war in comparison to what these same people expressed regarding Syria and its army's war against its own people in which somewhere between 580,000 and 613,000 people have been killed. Or, for example, with asking would any president of an elite university have trouble answering unequivocally that calling for the genocide of a people violates their university's code of conduct if it were voiced about any minority other than us? The hypocrisy is staggering, but I can't say it's totally surprising. Nevertheless, we still say as a community, as *Klal Yisrael*, *Am Yisrael Chai* (the Jewish people lives!!). My parents told me that during World War II, Jews referred to each other as *Amkha* (literally belonging to "your people") and that an expression among survivors and Jewish partisans was to defiantly say in Yiddish: *shrei chai v'kayam* (shout out that we live and endure). This is a time for *Klal Yisrael to shrei chai v'kayam!*

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By now all of our congregants should have received a letter sent out in mid-December discussing our plan to sell the Temple complex and move to a smaller, more affordable location.

While this has been a heartwrenching decision, after eighteen months of analysis and discussion we feel that moving to a more suitably-sized location is the only way to insure that we can provide a home for our congregation and the local Jewish community well into the future. If you did not receive the letter, you may read it online on our website at www.frtemplebethel.org.

If you have any feedback, we would love to hear from you. So far all of the notes we have received have been supportive, including a heartfelt note from Rabbi William and Nathalie Kaufman, who despite having so many fond memories of their time spent here, understand the need to downsize to provide a place for our congregation to stay active and viable.

Please know that this move will not affect the Temple Beth El cemetery. We have a special endowment fund that will provide for control and proper maintenance of our cemetery for decades to come.

Please welcome our newest members, Mr. Herbert Shander and his wife, Dr. Bente Hoegsberg.

I wish you all a happy and healthy 2024.

Steve Silverman
President

Fall River United Jewish Appeal, Inc.

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e-mail: fruja@comcast.net

Friendly Visitor: Arleen Bor is ready, willing and able to visit the sick or shut-ins. Please call the UJA office at (508) 673-7791 to schedule a visit.

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Sisterhood President's Message

As we prepare to welcome in 2024, we as fellow Jews are still in a fight for religious freedom. The Jewish festival of lights, Chanukah, has just concluded. When the Maccabees revolted against the Seleucid Empire, the stage was set for Jews across the world to be in a constant battle for religious rights. With the rise of antisemitism, this is more than evident.

Let me wish each and every one of you a safe, healthy and prosperous 2024. I hope as we go forward our President, Steve Silverman, continues to recover his strength. We need him as the fearless and knowledgeable leader that we always depended on. Also, we need Ken Littman back in place, to help us transition into the next phase for Temple Beth El.

I want to wish our elder statesman, Bill Chebot, a very happy Birthday!!! You are so missed!

So, until next month, continue to watch your email. Marie Twomey does an awesome job keeping us up to date on what's happening.

Libby Cohen
Sisterhood President

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 - Wednesday - Friday, 9 am to Noon

OFFICE CLOSED:

Monday, January 1st - New Years Day
Monday, January 15th - Martin Luther King Day

Please note that the printed January bulletin will be delayed this month, but it will be available on our website by January 1st.

LEADERSHIP

Mark Elber.....Rabbi
Shoshana Brown.....Cantor
Stephen Silverman.....President
Jeffrey Entin.....Vice President
Libby Cohen.....Secretary
Robert Falconero.....Treasurer
Libby Cohen.....Sisterhood Pres.
William E. Kaufman.....Rabbi Emeritus

SERVICE SCHEDULE

January 2024: Tevet/Sh'vat 5784Friday, January 5 (24 Tevet)

Candle Lighting	4:10 pm
Shabbat Service	5:30 pm

Saturday, January 6 (25 Tevet)

Weekly Portion: Sh'mot	10:00 am
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Thursday, January 11 (1 Sh'vat)

Rosh Chodesh Sh'vat	
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Friday, January 12 (2 Sh'vat)

Candle Lighting	4:17 pm
Shabbat Service	5:30 pm

Saturday, January 13 (3 Sh'vat)

Weekly Portion: Va'era	10:00 am
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Friday, January 19 (9 Sh'vat)

Candle Lighting	4:26 pm
Shabbat Service	5:30 pm

Saturday, January 20 (10 Sh'vat)

Weekly Portion: Bo	10:00 am
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Thursday, January 25th (15 Sh'vat)

Tu BiSh'vat (Jewish Arbor Day)	
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Friday, January 26 (16 Sh'vat)

Cancel Lighting	4:34 pm
Shabbat Service	5:30 pm

Saturday, January 27 (17 Sh'vat)

Shabbat Shirah	
Weekly Portion: B'shalakh	10:00 am

"Make a Minyan" Shabbat Service

Please join us on Saturday, January 27th at 10:00 am in the chapel or on Zoom. It has been wonderful to hear Torah chanted at these special services, and we can't do it without you! Nice Kiddush-luncheon to follow!

Please mark your calendars and be sure to arrive (in person or on Zoom) before 11 am!

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Thank you for your donations received through Dec. 23rd

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Husband, Robert "Ruby" Lipson
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 Renee Lipson
 Anna Nerenberg,
 Marc, Lee & Jacqueline
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 Dr. Harvey Reback
 Dr. Harvey Reback
 Lisa Shapiro
 David Shuman
 Ellen Mark
 Marilyn Sokoll
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CAPITAL FUND**In honor of Bill Chebot's 96th birthday**

Libby Cohen

In memory of my beloved husband, Dr. Michael Makowski, on his birthday.

Carleen Makowski

For the recovery of Ken Littman

Libby Cohen
 Iris Katzman
 Harvey & Elaine Weiss Reback
 Ron & Carol Schwartz
 Sisterhood of Temple Beth El

For the recovery of Larry Meyerson

Harvey & Elaine Weiss Reback

For the recovery of Steve Silverman

Libby Cohen
 Harvey & Elaine Weiss Reback
 Ron & Carol Schwartz
 Sisterhood of Temple Beth El

With prayers for the State of Israel and Jews all over the world.

Cheryl Crossley-Simmons

MORNING MINYAN FUND**For the recovery of Ken Littman**

Bill Chebot

SPECIAL GIFTS**In loving memory of my parents, Gloria & Jerry Baskin, and my grandparents; Ida & Dave Appel and Julia & Mike Baskin**

Laurie Baskin and Family

In memory of my beloved husband, Allen Taradash

Shirley Taradash

TBE News & Notes

I am happy to report that those of us who gathered for our **TBE Chanukah party** on the fourth night of Chanukah (December 10th) had a truly lovely time. We were 18 people altogether – the number for *chai*, “life” – and may this be a sign that our congregation will continue to be alive and vibrant for many years to come!

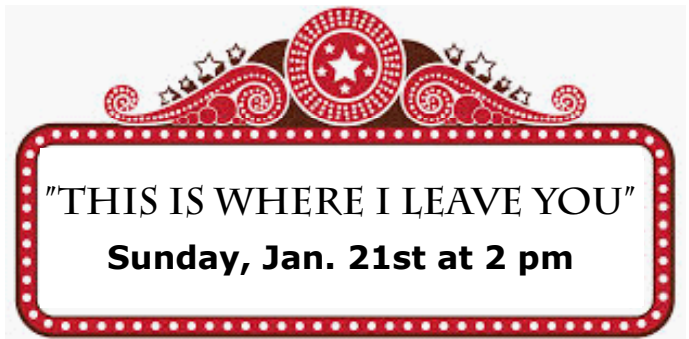
On the 17th of December a small “crowd” of us gathered for the **December Jewish film, *Maktub***. This film was really a delight: laugh-out-loud funny, and at the same time touching. Rabbi Mark was also pleased that some of his Hebrew students were able to recognize Hebrew words here and there. (If you missed this film, you can also find it on Netflix – but it won’t be as much fun watching it without our TBE crowd!)

As I write these notes, our **“Make a Minyan Shabbat”** monthly services have succeeded in getting a minyan for ten consecutive months – and by the time you get this bulletin it will be eleven months. This has been a great positive addition to our congregational life, ensuring that the sound of Torah being chanted is not forgotten in our community. Please save the date for our **January Shabbat morning service and luncheon – Saturday, January 27th**. The service begins at 10 AM, but as long as you join us (either in person or on Zoom) by 11, you can help us keep up our record!

Of course we have services on Shabbat mornings every week, and for those of us in attendance, the Torah study is lively and engaging, even if we do not have a minyan to chant the portion from the scroll.

This January we enter the Hebrew month of *Sh’vat*. The 15th of *Sh’vat* – known as *Tu BiSh’vat* is both a full moon and the Jewish “new year for the trees.” Although we do not have a *Tu BiSh’vat* seder planned this year, on the Friday night closest to this date, Jan. 26th, we will give particular honor during our Kabbalat Shabbat service to trees and the environment. This is also, coincidentally, the night before our “make a minyan” Shabbat service, Saturday, January 27th, which is known as “*Shabbat Shirah*” – the **Shabbat of Song**, due to the chanting of the Song of the Sea in this Shabbat’s Torah portion (the song of thanks after escaping across the Sea of Reeds).

Thus you might consider that **January/Sh’vat** is an especially propitious time for doing the **mitzvah of donating** to your favorite organization that helps in some way to protect our seas, our trees, and any/all other parts of this beautiful planet!



SUNDAY AFTERNOON AT THE JEWISH MOVIES!

“This is Where I Leave You” is a 2014 American comedy-drama film directed by Shawn Levy and starring Jason Bateman, Tina Fey, Adam Driver, Rose Byrne, Corey Stoll, Kathryn Hahn, Connie Britton, Timothy Olyphant, Dax Shepard, and Jane Fonda. The film tells the story of four grown siblings who are forced to return to their childhood home after their father’s death and live under the same roof for seven days, along with their over-sharing mother and an assortment of spouses, exes, and might-have-beens. Running time: 1 hour, 43 minutes.

One reviewer wrote:

Just plain fun with a stellar cast and a witty script. A great piece of entertainment. And wonderful to see an ensemble cast of equally talented actors work together and play off each other. Not at all contrived, the humor comes from the situation and the relationships between the characters. I really enjoyed it and even laughed out loud in places, which for me is unusual.

Temple Family

- Welcome to our newest members, Mr. Herbert Shander and his wife, Dr. Bente Hoegsberg. They come to us from Little Compton. Perhaps they have some new ideas for our hikes!
- Congratulations to Ken Littman and his family (Susan, Jake, Abby and Jackson) on the birth of his granddaughter, Margery Marion Halavik. We are also very happy to hear that Ken is home and recuperating after a long stay in the hospital.
- Continued best wishes to Ken Littman, Steve Silverman, Larry Meyerson and Arleen Bor as they work toward full recoveries.

The bulletin of Temple Beth El (USPS-075-340) is published monthly from September to June for \$1.00 per year by Temple Beth El, 385 High St., Fall River, MA. Periodicals postage paid at Fall River, MA. POSTMASTERS, send address changes to Temple Beth El, 385 High St., Fall River, MA 02720-3348.



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.org

YAH RZEITS

1/1/2024 20 Tevet 5784
Samuel Isaac Siegel
Janet Smith

1/3/2024 22 Tevet 5784
Martha Kaufmann
Sylvia Zalkind

1/4/2024 23 Tevet 5784
Fannie Wilner Aranov
Ruth Gerard
Harriet Grunberg
Mae Hodosh
Sarah Kaplan
Dolores Leviss
Dr. Donald Rotenberg

1/5/2024 24 Tevet 5784
Bruce Kay

1/6/2024 25 Tevet 5784
Robert Chavenson

1/7/2024 26 Tevet 5784
Lillian Kline
Anna Ellison Schaffer
Sarah Sobiloff

1/8/2024 27 Tevet 5784
Sheila Holtzman

1/10/2024 29 Tevet 5784
Victor Field
Paula Fox
Birdie Phillips

1/12/2024 2 Sh'vat 5784
Betty Greenberg
Dorothy S. Levin

1/13/2024 3 Sh'vat 5784
Rose Moss

1/14/2024 4 Sh'vat 5784
George Hodosh

1/15/2024 5 Sh'vat 5784
Harry Weissman

1/16/2024 6 Sh'vat 5784
Max Horvitz
Charles Rosenberg
Philip Shapiro

1/17/2024 7 Sh'vat 5784
Louise Macy

1/18/2024 8 Sh'vat 5784
Dr. Leonard Lechan

1/19/2024 9 Sh'vat 5784
Abraham Ehrenhaus
Augusta Kaufmann

1/20/2024 10 Sh'vat 5784
Normand Futoransky

1/21/2024 11 Sh'vat 5784
Clarence Calman

1/22/2024 12 Sh'vat 5784
Tylda Schwartz
Cilla Sobiloff
Arnold Wolfson

1/23/2024 13 Sh'vat 5784
Maurice Calman

1/24/2024 14 Sh'vat 5784
Louis Freedman
Esther Mickelson
William Shriberg
Morris Wilner

1/25/2024 15 Sh'vat 5784
Margot Bogus
Adolph Feder
Cyril Hochberg
Sheila Lash

1/26/2024 16 Sh'vat 5784
Sandra Bogus
Abner Kravitz

1/27/2024 17 Sh'vat 5784
Jack Mickelson
Charles Novek

1/28/2024 18 Sh'vat 5784
Edith Gerlich
Ada Wolfson

1/29/2024 19 Sh'vat 5784
Mildred Trieff

1/30/2024 20 Sh'vat 5784
Lottie Bloom Sandler
Eugene Joseph Silverman

1/31/2024 21 Sh'vat 5784
Atty. Lloyd Belford
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