



*October 2008*

***A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT***

**Our Beth El Family:**

**The High Holy Days are approaching, and they have always been a time of introspection, both individually and as a congregation. For the past few weeks we've been reading in the Torah from the book of Deuteronomy, in Hebrew D'varim, or the "words." I've always found this part of the Torah inspiring. These are Moses' final discourses and summary of their history since leaving Sinai that he gives to the people of Israel as they are ready to cross the Jordan River into the promised land after wandering for 40 years in what Moses calls "the great and terrible wilderness."**

**I recognize that many of us leave a somewhat rocky year behind us, a "terrible wilderness" of our own. But just like our ancestors, we can and will move forward into a new year.**

**We see the term "D'varim in a number of places in our traditions. What are commonly called the Ten**

**Commandments are actually termed "Aseret Had'varim," the Ten Words. In Deuteronomy we also find the V'ahavta in which we say "V'hayu had'varim ha eileh": "set these words which I command you this day upon your hearts:" We are a people always concerned with, consumed by – some would say obsessed with – words.**

**We will be hearing a lot of "words" during the upcoming holidays, most of which I'm sure will be inspiring, and I will have more "words" for you at the holiday services, but I want to begin with this: In Deuteronomy the generation that left Egypt had shown by their lack of faith in God's words that they were unworthy of entering the promised land, and the new generation is standing at the precipice. We are a small, small congregation. I know that from looking at the member numbers of congregations that call themselves small and whose presidents post on the URJ's presidential listserv. But as we face a new year we**

must never lose faith in what we can accomplish together. And the coming

year will be a sweet, peaceful, and happy one for all of us.

Gary

***FROM THE RABBI'S DESK***

**My dear fellow Valley Jews and Friends, Shalom.**

**Rosh Hashanah has come and gone. We are now in the midst of the solemn time of the Yamim Nora'im (days of awe). In a very short time, it will be Yom Kippur (the day of atonement).**

**IN OUR COMMUNITY**

**The congregation has been a busy place. Rabbinic education initiatives, services, social action, and Tzedakah efforts have all started up and are in full swing. We have some new students in the Religious school, and the all-new Pre-School program is moving forward. Planning for the High Holidays is complete, and we are in the midst of them now. There are new social events being planned. The Chevrah Kadishah (holy burial society) continues to move forward. The caring committee is operating. We have determined to undertake some social action projects as a community. The board is actively working on improvements for the congregation. This is looking to be a full and very active year.**

**I hope that you will take advantage of all that our community offers, as well as make your own contribution to our community. There is always room for another pair of hands and a willing heart.**

**THE CALENDAR & HOLIDAYS**

**TISHREI → CHESHVAN (OCTOBER)**

**Tishrei runs from September 30<sup>th</sup> until October 29<sup>th</sup>. The 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> of October are Rosh Chodesh (new month/moon) for Cheshvan. Cheshvan runs from October 30<sup>th</sup> to November 29<sup>th</sup>, and the 30<sup>th</sup> of November is Rosh Chodesh Kislev.**

**The evening of September 29<sup>th</sup> was Erev Rosh HaShanah (evening of Rosh HaShanah, the New Year). Rosh HaShanah day was on September 30<sup>th</sup>, and for those who celebrate two days, October 1<sup>st</sup>.**

**We are starting this month (October) in the midst of the Yamim Nora'im and will arrive at Yom Kippur with the Erev Yom Kippur (with Kol Nidre) service on evening of the the 8<sup>th</sup> of October, with Yom Kippur day being the 9<sup>th</sup>.**

**The Yamim Nora'im (days of awe) are seen as a time given us to finish the work of doing Teshuvah and making amends with others in advance of Yom Kippur, a period when we are given an opportunity to amend our ways, seek forgiveness, and prepare ourself to be ready and fit to turn and return to G-d, and to acting in a godly way. In the final moments of Yom Kippur, we understand at a deep level the metaphor that our**

chance to make amends is now drawing to a close, the gates of prayer are closing, the day of judgement is ending, our last opportunity to seek a merciful judgement is drawing to a close, and we are approaching the moment of the sealing of the book of life for the coming year with the decree of judgement contained for us therein. Truly a time of awe for anyone who has sincerely examined their deeds and past failings.

Very shortly after Yom Kippur, starting Monday, October 13<sup>th</sup> in the evening, we enter into the celebration of the holiday of Sukkot (the festival of booths). Sukkot is an eight day festival, so it ends at sundown on the 21<sup>st</sup>, but we slide directly into the next holiday, Simchat Torah, picking up the evening Sukkot concludes, and the holiday period goes right through until sundown the next day (the 22<sup>nd</sup>).

There will be a Sukkot service on the evening of Monday, October 13<sup>th</sup> at Temple House of Israel. It is open to the both congregations. We will begin at 6 pm with 'Pizza in the Hut' – a meal and celebration of Sukkot, the Feast of Booths, in the Sukkah at THOI. I am hoping that we will also have lots of people, especially young ones, there to help decorate the Sukkah further – there is never such a thing as too many paper chains! ☺ We will follow with a service at 7:30 pm to celebrate the holiday, including readings from the Torah and Haftarah.

On Friday, the 17<sup>th</sup> of October, we will have a service for Shabbat at Beth El, and we will celebrate Simchat Torah then. Again, I hope everyone will come and join in. as we march and dance with the Torahs, and read the very end of the Torah, turning immediately to start over at the very beginning! This will also be the Consecration service for new students in the religious school.

## TORAH PARASHIOT

Torah parashiot (Torah portions) read for the period covered by this newsletter include the following in October: Vayelech, Ha'azinu, Chol Hamo'ed 3d day Sukkot Shabbat, Vezot Habrachah, and Bereshit, drawn from Devarim (Deuteronomy) 31:1 to the end of the Torah, and Bereshit 1:1-2:3.

Haftarot read on Shabbatot (Sabbaths) in October include selections from Hosea 14, Micah 7, Joel 2, 2 Samuel 22, Zechariah 14, Joshua 1, and Isaiah 42-43.

The Torah parashah (portion) for Yom Kippur morning is from Devarim (Deuteronomy) 29-30, Parashah Nitzavim, telling us that we stand today before G-d, and describing the covenant, and the commandments, along with the choice of the blessing or the curse/life or death.

The Haftarah (reading from the prophets) for Yom Kippur morning is from Isaiah 58, concerning what sort of fast day and sacrifice and what actions G-d seeks of us.

The Torah reading for Yom Kippur afternoon for the Reform movement is from Vayikra (Leviticus) 19, and lays out some of the commandments setting forth central ethical precepts. Other congregations may read from Vayikra 18, which concern a different group of commandments.

The Haftarah reading for Yom Kippur afternoon is the book of Jonah. 'Nuff said, I think.☺

## SOME ITEMS OF NOTE

I want to highlight a few things that are recent or will be coming up.

You should find a Jewish calendar available to you at High Holiday services,

courtesy of Reynolds Hamrick Funeral Home. Please feel free to take one.

There is a Shabbat service weekly at Beth El. When the rabbi is not present, these services are lay-led. Consult the congregational calendar for details, and see the website, Bridge, and announcements for any changes.

At THOI, there is a rabbi-led Shabbat service generally every other week. Consult the congregational calendar for details, and see the website, bulletin, and announcements for any changes.

## **OTHER PROGRAMS & SPECIAL ACTIVITIES**

If you feel a conversation with the rabbi on any topic would be of benefit to you, please be in touch to make an appointment. You can call or email Rabbi Joe.

Please know that we always seek congregant and guest participation in services throughout the year. If you are interested in taking a role in a service, please be in touch with Rabbi Joe or Gary Stein or Judy Freudenthal. Roles include: reading Torah, reading Haftarah, delivering a Devar Torah, serving as Gabbai (the “MC” for the Torah service), reading an English reading, or having an honor. The Honors we usually confer in our services include being called up for an Aliyah (saying the blessings for the Torah or the Haftarah reading), serving as Hagbah (lift, hold, and carry the Torah), Gelilah (undressing and dressing the Torah), or Petichah Usegurah (opening and closing the Ark).

## **RABBINIC EDUCATION INITIATIVES**

Some of the classes/courses have begun!

1. If you are interested in or wish to consider conversion, or just want to learn more about Judaism (whether you are Jewish or not), you are invited to take the Introduction to Judaism (ITJ) course, offered beginning September 14<sup>th</sup>. This is useful if you simply want to know more about Judaism, and is a prerequisite to those who may be thinking about conversion. This will be a twenty-two class session course [so it is NOT TOO LATE to sign up] covering holidays, life cycle events, some history, practices, beliefs, customs, literature, and a smattering of other matters. Students will also be asked to attend some services and events, and go on a limited number of field trips during the course of the year. The classes will meet on Sunday afternoons, usually at 4-6 pm. The location will be provided to those who sign up (either Staunton or Harrisonburg). The next two class meeting (as I write this, on September 28<sup>th</sup> and October 5<sup>th</sup>) will be at Temple House of Israel in Staunton (due to other events on the calendar). If you know of anyone else who might want to take such a course, please encourage them to contact Rabbi Joe. We have twelve signed up for this class now, and the discussions have already been lively!

2. In a series of classes that follow a theme, but each one is stand alone, I intend to look at the Tanakh in some detail, and especially at the doings of the women included in various sections, and try to tease out a bit of their stories, as well as look at the historical and contextual world in which those stories are unfolding. The setting for this class would be akin to a seminar in which we would look at the story of one woman in each class, and read the text (in English), talk about the background, and discuss the story. I am scheduling this as a Sunday afternoon class, from 2-3:30 or 4 pm. It will be held monthly. Some months

we will be at THOI, but the bulk of the classes will meet at Beth El in Harrisonburg. The first class was on September 14<sup>th</sup> at Beth El. We took a look at Chava (Eve) and the ‘other’ woman, focusing on chapters 1 and 2 of Bereshit (Genesis). We had a great discussion, and it was really quite a lot of fun. The next class will be on October 12<sup>th</sup> at 2 pm at Beth El in Harrisonburg. Our topic will be a few of the women along the way in chapters 3-11, and then we will begin with a close look (probably over two sessions) at Sarah.

3. If you have been meaning to learn how to read Hebrew (or improve your reading) in order to better follow services, speak with the rabbi: a beginner’s class has been scheduled for the fall, to begin in November, on Monday the 10<sup>th</sup> at 6 pm. This is envisioned to be a six session course, including mastery of the alefbet and vowels, an initial introduction to some vocabulary of the liturgy, and some writing practice (new this year) to reinforce what we have covered. This course is similar to what has been offered in past under the titles Introduction to Hebrew, Crash Course in Reading Hebrew, and Read Hebrew America.

4. If you are interested in studying for and celebrating a B’nai Mitzvah, or in learning to leyn (read/chant) Torah and/or Haftarah, or to lead services, or serve as a gabbai, please be in touch with the rabbi. Classes are planned for later this year. More information will be forthcoming soon.

Much farther ahead:

5. Another series of monthly stand alone classes will be titled “Everything you wanted to know about ‘X’ in Judaism (but were afraid to ask)” (EYWTKA). We will look at food, sex & relationships, business ethics, speech, community, prayer, and many other topics. Because each class stands alone, no one would be

compelled to commit to all the topics; you could attend when it is convenient and still fully participate. We will start this class in January, at 7 pm, and it will alternate between Thursdays at Beth El and Mondays at THOI.

6. A shorter series of two to three classes, will be an examination of the Prayer service, in which we would examine the source, structure, development, and practices of the three daily services, and the variations for holidays. This will begin late in January.

7. Two other classes will be a ‘How to be a Gabbai’ (HTBA) (master of ceremonies for the Torah service) class, and ‘How to be a Shaliach Tzibur’ (service leader) two-part series. These will also begin in January.

8. A multi-session class that will meet about twice a month starting in January will be Torah with Commentary (TWC). In it, we will look at a Torah parashah, and read along with it several of the commentators writings on that section. We will discuss what their questions may have been, as well as what our questions would be. This is another set of standalone classes – one need not attend all of the sessions.

9. Torah Limud – a monthly Torah study session at Beth El that looks at that week’s Torah Parashah and tries to fit it into the context of the larger story. Open for discussion. This will usually take place on Friday evening from 6:30 to 7:30, and you are welcome to bring a meal to eat while we talk. On some occasions, it will be moved to Saturday morning, when we have a Shabbat morning service, and in that case, will follow the service, and any Kiddush that is offered. The first session was Saturday morning, September 20<sup>th</sup> following the Shabbat morning service at Beth El. We had a nice group remain after the Kiddush luncheon for a little learning.

The next session will be November 7<sup>th</sup> (delayed due to the High Holy days).

10. Torah Lishmah – a monthly text study session at THOI that looks at something in the way of a Jewish text, drawn variously from Torah, Nevi'im (Prophets), Ketuvim (Writings), Talmud, the Zohar, and other Jewish texts. Open for discussion. This will usually take place on Friday evening from 6:30 to 7:30, and you are welcome to bring a meal to eat while we talk. On some occasions, it will be moved to Saturday morning, when we have a Shabbat morning service, and in that case, will follow the service, and any Kiddush that is offered. The first session was Friday, September 12<sup>th</sup>, at 6:30 pm, prior to our Shabbat evening service at THOI. The next session will be October 31<sup>st</sup> (delayed due to the High Holy days).

Please let Rabbi Joe know if these possibilities would be of interest to you.

## ADULT EDUCATION INITIATIVES

In an entirely different direction, there was some desire to have adult education programs offered, other than those that I put on. We have some congregants who have expressed interest in bringing in local experts who can present a variety of programs to our community, along the lines of the program on global warming last year. I am all in favor of this kind of program, and would be happy to support those involved in bringing this kind of program to our community.

As one suggestion, perhaps these members can encourage an appropriate local expert to lead a series on Islam, or possibly to lead us in study of Islam and Judaism. This is an area and a topic that the URJ has suggested would be valuable for Reform congregations to study as a group.

I am hopeful that we can arrange these adult education programs

throughout the year, in addition to the rabbinic offerings, and present an ongoing 'lernhaus' on a variety of different topics.

We can also try to arrange for a group visit to the Blackfriars theater again, as that seemed to be very well received. We can request that Ralph Cohen (if available) or another person involved with the performances, speak to us about the play, as he did recently for *The Jew of Malta*.

The Shenandoah Valley Holocaust Education Week is a major initiative. It needs more hands and energy than any one person can provide. If you would like to be part of making this happen, please speak to Rabbi Joe. Planning is going to get under way very soon. Ron Ornstein has offered to help out, so you would not be doing it alone.

There are many other possibilities to volunteer and help our community continue to grow and be vibrant – please consider signing up and taking on one or more of these roles.

## CLOSING MESSAGE

A typical and traditional greeting between Jews in the period following Rosh Hashanah and leading up to Yom Kippur is: *Le shanah tovah umetukah tichatemu* (may you be sealed [the inscription be made permanent] for a good and sweet year). My wish is that this year will be for all of us and all of our loved ones a year of blessing, a year of love, a year of health, a year of prosperity, a year of healing, and a year of success. *Ken Yehi Ratzon* (so may it be G-d's will). I look forward to joining you for the solemnity and joy of Yom Kippur, as well as to enjoying our communal life in the coming year.

*Rabbi Joe Blair*  
*October 2008*

**REACHING THE RABBI & THE  
RABBI'S AVAILABILITY**

The rabbi is available to meet by appointment. If you wish to meet or speak with the rabbi, please email or call to set an appointment.

The office is not staffed and the building is generally closed when the rabbi is not in. Messages are checked by the rabbi at both congregations, and email is frequently read during the week. Please understand that the rabbi will not be available or reply on Shabbat or on Jewish holidays unless it is an emergency that cannot wait.

In the event of an urgent need the rabbi may be contacted by telephone. In that case, please call the cell phone number listed, leaving a detailed message,

and be sure to express the need for an immediate response.

If you wish to make an appointment to see the rabbi please feel free to call (886-4091) or email ([rabbijoeb@hotmail.com](mailto:rabbijoeb@hotmail.com)). To minimize driving, he is grouping most appointments in Staunton on Mondays and Fridays, and in Harrisonburg on Sundays and Thursdays. Other days may be possible – contact him to ask.

Rabbi Joe's Email:

[RabbiJoeB@hotmail.com](mailto:RabbiJoeB@hotmail.com)

Beth El Congregation  
540-434-2744

Temple House of Israel  
540-886-4091

Cell phone (Please use this # for emergencies)  
434-981-3959

***DONATIONS***

*Beth El Congregation is grateful for the following generous donations*

**[To the Janet Kohen Memorial Music Fund](#)**

**Mona Wolf**

**Bruce & Sherri Alt**

**Eddie Ney & Frances Stewart**

**Steve & Laurie Schwalb**

**Marlene & Blaine Brumbaugh**

**[Yahrzeit Memorials](#)**

**Eddie Ney in memory of Beth Ney**

**Lois Poster in memory of Marvin Poster**

**Leonard & Marilena Berman in memory of Julius Berman**

**Shirley Merlin in memory of Samuel R. Nebelkopf, father**

**Josh & Estelle Robinson donated to the Yahrzeit Memorial Fund in memory of all their relatives including Henry**

**Robinson, Ada Robinson, David I.**

**Robinson, William Robinson, Annie**

**Robinson, Joshua Robinson, Sarah**

**Robinson, Herbert Robinson, A. David**

**Good, and Marie Good**

## ***MENS CLUB NEWS***

The Men's Club had a successful opening picnic and meeting and made plans for the upcoming high holiday season. We'll be ushering for each of the high holiday services, organizing, preparing and serving the annual Break the Fast following Yom Kippur concluding service, helping with the collecting and delivering of food to First Step, and putting up the Sukkah. We invite all men, (officially members or not) to help with any of these activities.

Our next meeting will be Thursday October 23rd, meeting at Taste of Thai at 6:30 for a meal together and a meeting to follow. Please plan to join us !

If you have any questions about how you can become part of Men's Club, or ideas for projects/activities/etc... contact Ron Ornstein at [ornfam@comcast.net](mailto:ornfam@comcast.net) or by phone at 434-8695.

## ***SISTERHOOD, SHORTY NEWS***

**SISTERHOOD--**We had a fantastic first meeting, I was so glad to see everyone--it was wonderful to be there surrounded by familiar faces and new faces, thank you so much for getting us started this year!! Our next meeting will be Wednesday, October 22 at 6:00 pm, we will have lox and bagels for dinner--please RSVP to me so I know how much food to get!! A Happy New Year to all. Sherri

**YOUTH-SHORTY--** Congratulations to our small but ever so mighty **SHORTY** members and their positions for the coming year---Justin

Goldberger and Naomi Ornstein will be Co-Presidents, Isaac Falk will be VP of Programming and Grace Lambeth will be Secretary and VP of Social Action. We will all be working on leadership skills this year. I am also pleased to announce that Joel Ornstein will be helping me this year as an assistant--thank you!

Joel, myself, Naomi and Grace will be travelling to Capital Camps in Pa, Sept 26th-28th for Leadership Training. Next meeting is Thursday October 16th at 5:30pm in Harrisonburg.

## ***SCHOOL NEWS***

**L'Shanah Tovah!**

**We are pleased to be back in full swing in our Religious School instruction. There is a tremendous energy evident in the classrooms! We know it will be a wonderful year for learning and growing together.**

**We are very pleased to welcome 11 new students and 5 new families to Religious School this year! Please make sure to mark your calendars for the Simchat Torah service on Friday, October 17<sup>th</sup> when we will officially welcome these students during the Consecration service.**

**You are also welcome to join us from 11:30-12:30 on Sundays October 12 & 19 for Sukkot and Simchat Torah celebrations with the religious school classes.**

***Wishing you peace in 5769 –  
Dara, Linda & Ruth***

**MAZEL TOV TO SUZI  
TRUBITZ AND FAMILY ON  
THE ENGAGEMENT OF  
THEIR SON UVAL TO  
HEATHER DALMY. THEY  
WILL BE MARRIED ON  
KAUAI IN MARCH 2009.**

**Becky Mintzer and family  
thank the congregation for  
their support and friendship  
during their time of need. The  
minyan was well attended and  
appreciated.**

## CALENDAR

<b>October 2008</b>						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3 <b>Rabbi Service (4)</b>	4 <a href="#">Parashat Vayeilech</a> <a href="#">Shabbat Shuva</a>
5 <b>Religious School</b> <b>Yom Kippur</b> <b>Bagel Bar</b>  <b>Rabbi Service</b> <b>Yizkor 1:00 at Beth El Cemetery</b>	6	7	8 <a href="#">Erev Yom Kippur</a>  <b>Rabbi Joe at Beth El 8 PM</b>	9 <a href="#">Yom Kippur</a>  <b>Rabbi Elwell at Beth El 10 AM</b>	10 <b>Lay Service</b>	11 <a href="#">Parashat Ha'Azinu</a>
12 <b>Religious School</b> <b>Sukkot</b>  <b>Bagel Bar</b>	13 <a href="#">Erev Sukkot</a>	14 <a href="#">Sukkot I</a> <b>Pizza in the Hut</b> <b>Joint with THOI</b> <b>At THOI</b>	15	16	17 <b>Rabbi Service (5)</b> <b>Consecration &amp; Simchat Torah</b> <b>Service (Joint at Beth El)</b> <a href="#">Sukkot IV (CH"M)</a>	18
19 <b>Religious School</b> <b>Simchat Torah</b> <b>Bagel Bar</b>	20	21 <a href="#">Shmini Atzeret</a>	22 <a href="#">Simchat Torah</a> <b>Sisterhood Meeting</b>	23 <b>Men's Club Meeting</b>	24 <b>Lay Service</b> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;">MAC Biennial -----</div>	25 <a href="#">Parashat Bereshit</a>
26 <b>Religious School</b> <b>Bagel Bar</b>  <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;">MAC Biennial</div>	27	28	29 <a href="#">Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan</a>	30 <a href="#">Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan</a>	31 <b>Lay Service</b> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;">NFTY Fall Kallah --</div>	

**OCTOBER YAHRZEITS**

01	Carrye Kohen Annette Biatch	17	Rosa Wise
02	David Rubin	18	Harriet Gould
05	Jack Lichtenstein	19	Rabbi Edward L. Israel
06	Paige Nash	20	Barbara M. Levin
08	Leonard Raff	22	Ida Zindler Dorothy D. Kaiser
09	Samuel Metzger	25	Leon Hirsch Helen Wise Sarah Lebin
12	Betty Nemoytin	26	Rosalie Amberg
13	Israel Smith Harry Katzen	27	Oscar Rodbell Marilyn Goldenthal
15	Hattie Hirsch Milton Trubitz Sarah Lovinger	29	Edith Bersson
16	Miriam Brooslin Cohen	31	Amalie G. Wise

***Board Members***

Joe Blair	Rabbi
Gary Stein	President
Jerry Minskoff	Vice President
Becky Mintzer	Secretary
Michelle Ornstein	Treasurer
Judy Freudenthal	Trustee
Andy Kohen	Trustee
Bill Ney	Trustee
Sherri Alt	Sisterhood President
Ron Ornstein	Men's Club President
Marlene Brumbaugh	At large member
Phil Renick	At large member
Margee Greenfield	Immediate Past President

**Bridge Editor**

Elliott Golub  
[Elgolubret@comcast.net](mailto:Elgolubret@comcast.net)  
181 Turkey Drive  
McGaheysville, VA, 22840  
540-289-5336