



Introduction

Welcome to Our Community

Congregation Beth Israel encourages our members to become active participants in the life of our synagogue. Non-Jewish family members are welcome and encouraged to participate fully. Currently, our membership includes more than 200 families – mostly from Whatcom and Skagit counties, as well as southern British Columbia. We are a Reform congregation, affiliated with the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ).

Our congregation, under the spiritual guidance of Rabbi Joshua Samuels, offers weekly Friday night Shabbat services, twice monthly Saturday morning Shabbat services, a monthly Tot Shabbat service, regular Torah study sessions, and ritual observance of all Jewish holidays throughout the year. All are welcome to attend.

In addition to High Holy Day observances, each year Congregation Beth Israel hosts a community Seder at Passover, Purim Carnival and Purim Spiel, Chanukah Party, and a variety of other traditional celebrations. We often host guest speakers on Jewish topics, visiting scholars, and guest cantors, who share their considerable talents with us.

Among the benefits of Congregation Beth Israel membership are:

- Becoming part of a vibrant, active, and growing Jewish community with a rich history that spans more than one-hundred years in Bellingham.
- Having a spiritual home for observing Jewish holidays and important life cycle events.
- Participating in the building and consecrating of our new synagogue.
- Receiving Bar or Bat Mitzvah training for boys and girls coming of age, or B'nai Mitzvah training for adults.
- Enrolling in Congregation Beth Israel's Religious School (Kindergarten – 9th grade confirmation).

- Becoming active in our youth group, NFTY-Northwest Chapter, that meets regularly for social and educational programs.
- Enjoying special programming for very young children (Tot Shabbats).
- Partaking of a variety of programs and adult education classes on a wide range of Jewish topics.
- Studying for conversion for those wishing to become Jewish.
- Receiving our monthly newsletter, *The Shul Shofar*, to stay abreast of synagogue events and activities.
- Participating in the activities of the Sisterhood or Brotherhood.

We invite you to daven (pray), schmooze, and come celebrate Shabbat with us. By joining Congregation Beth Israel you are contributing to the preservation of a Jewish heritage that is more than 5,700 years old.

Contact Information

Congregation Beth Israel
 2200 Broadway
 Bellingham, Washington 98225

Phone: 360-733-8890
 Fax: 360-733-9842

Rabbi: Rabbi Joshua Samuels
 Administrator: Mary Somerville
 Email: office@bethisraelbellingham.org
 Website: www.bethisraelbellingham.org



History

History of Congregation Beth Israel

The Bellingham Jewish Community has a rich heritage dating back to 1908, when our congregation was formed primarily by Lithuanian immigrants who came to the shores of the far western United States.

Initially our synagogue was located at the corner of Dupont and H Streets. The congregation moved in 1929, when the synagogue building was completed, to its current location at the corner of Broadway and Irving. Originally designed for an Orthodox community, the men worshiped in the larger downstairs area of the sanctuary, while the women worshiped from the balcony. The congregation evolved from Orthodox to Conservative following World War II, at which time both men and women began to sit and worship together.

In 1986, Congregation Beth Israel affiliated with the Reform movement under the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, now known as the Union for Reform Judaism. Before this affiliation, our history had been rooted in the Conservative movement. Today, to best serve the needs of all our members, we draw upon both traditions for our services and celebrations.

After a time without a Rabbi, in 1951, Rabbi Frederick Gartner became the rabbi and leader of our community. Largely due to his efforts, our congregation began gaining considerable respect from other religious leaders in our area. Rabbi Gartner retired in 1982, after successfully leading the way for women to gain equal status in religious observance.

Following Rabbi Gartner's retirement, Rabbi Harold Reubens and then Rabbi Uri Bella served our community on a part-time basis for the next five years. Both commuted from Richmond, British Columbia.

Rabbi Michael Oblath served as the religious leader of our community from 1987 to 1996. He was our first Reform rabbi.

Rabbi Yossi Liebowitz became our rabbi in August of 1996. He helped meet the spiritual and communal needs of our growing membership through music and community outreach for seven years.

From August 2002 through June 2005, Rabbi Yossi Zylberberg served Congregation Beth Israel, sharing his love of Torah and traditional practice.

Rabbi Cindy Enger served as our rabbi from July 2005 through June 2012. Under her leadership our congregation grew significantly to more than 200 households. Through her spiritual guidance Rabbi Enger offered us a variety of new learning and worship opportunities. Construction of our new synagogue began under her tenure.

Rabbi Joshua Samuels

Rabbi Joshua Samuels became the spiritual leader of Congregation Beth Israel in July 2012. He is excited to join the Beth Israel community as our rabbi. Rabbi Samuels previously served Temple Beth Hillel in the Los Angeles area. During his tenure there, Rabbi Samuels enjoyed teaching adult education courses, organizing annual community-wide days of social action, providing spiritual care to home-bound congregants, interacting with the early education students, and leading Jews and non-Jews in prayer and Jewish ritual life.

Prior to Temple Beth Hillel, Rabbi Samuels received his ordination from Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Jerusalem and Los Angeles. It was during these five years that he served Jewish communities in Santa Barbara and Temecula, CA. Rabbi Samuels also honed his skills in providing pastoral care to hospice and hospital patients working at UCLA Medical Center and Kaiser Home Hospice. In addition, he was the recipient of The Samson H. Levey Memorial Prize for showing greatest promise in the study of rabbinic literature and Talmud .

Rabbi Samuels attended the University of Wisconsin-Madison, receiving a B.S. in Marketing. For six years, prior to entering rabbinical school, he worked in institutional equity sales and brokerage operations in San Francisco and Los Angeles at Sutro & Co., Sanders Morris Harris, and Stone & Youngberg, LLC.

Rabbi Samuels is originally from San Francisco. He comes to Bellingham with his wife Nicole, a registered nurse, and their two children, Eytan and Shoshana.



Programs & General Information

Religious Services

Shabbat is celebrated weekly at Congregation Beth Israel with services on Friday evenings and on two Saturday mornings each month. There is a weekly Torah study from 9:30 am to 10:30 am each Saturday. To accommodate different needs and schedules, Friday services begin at 6:30 pm, 7 pm, or 8 pm on different weeks of the month. Included in these choices are a monthly Friday evening family service and a Saturday morning Tot Shabbat. The schedule is included in the bi-monthly newsletter, *The Shul Shofar*. Email reminders of Shabbat schedules along with other events are sent each Wednesday to all members who elect to receive them. You can also check the synagogue website for more information at www.bethisraelbellingham.org.

Special services are held for all Jewish holidays. Times and dates for these services will appear in *The Shul Shofar* and weekly emails, as well as on the synagogue website (www.bethisraelbellingham.org). Our services are a welcoming blend of traditional and modern, Hebrew and English, prayer and song. Guests are welcome. Please join us. Life cycle events are honored, including baby namings, B'rit Milah (circumcision), Bar/Bat Mitzvah, weddings, funerals and headstone unveilings.

Holiday Celebrations

Our celebration of Jewish festivals and holy days accommodates those members who come from more traditional backgrounds, as well as those with more contemporary viewpoints. Our goal is to learn about and celebrate the richness of Jewish life and custom. Annual celebrations include Purim festivities, a community Chanukah party, and a wonderful Simchat Torah service. Tu B'Shvat and Passover Seders have been enjoyed as a community and in large groups in private homes. Yom Kippur is usually followed by a congregational "breaking of the fast."

High Holy Day Services

Members in good standing are not required to purchase tickets. Visiting relatives of members in good standing may purchase tickets for 50% of the non-member rate. Full-time students and active-duty military personnel receive complimentary tickets. There is only one ticket for all High Holiday events. Congregation Beth Israel extends

reciprocity to out of town guests who are members in good standing of another Reform congregation.

B'rit Milah (Bris) & Naming Ceremonies

Please contact the synagogue office for information.

Religious School

Our religious school provides an active program for kindergarten through high school. The curriculum includes Judaic studies and Hebrew, and is structured to create a positive experience for our students. We encourage our young congregants to learn and grow as a community and to take pride in the richness of Jewish civilization. We also offer various activities for preschool children, including a once-a-month Tot Shabbat. Registration packets are generally mailed in June. Please call the office, (360) 733-8890, if your children have not previously registered.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah

Bar/Bat Mitzvah training will be arranged with the Rabbi. A handbook helps guide families through this important process.

Cemetery

Burial plot	Contact Debbie Adelstein for the current rate for members.*
Chevra Kadisha services	No charge to members \$250 (non-member rate)
Yahrzeit plaques	\$250

*To qualify as a member, you must have been a member for the previous two years, or, if having recently arrived in the area, have joined in the first year of residence in community. A \$500 credit will be given on the non-member rate to an immediate relative of current members who moves to the area but does not meet the residency requirements.

Adult Education

Adult education at Congregation Beth Israel is an ever-changing menu of classes and activities that include adult B'nai Mitzvah training, history, Torah and Talmud study, Hebrew, Israeli politics, and Jewish ethics.

Brotherhood

The Brotherhood of Congregation Beth Israel is a men's group dedicated to having fun and participating in casual activities together and simply getting to know one another better. Our past activities have included father-children bowling, meeting at restaurants, sponsoring the Religious School picnic, and going to Seattle Mariners games. Alan Stone, President.

Sisterhood

Congregation Beth Israel's Sisterhood is a women's group interested in female camaraderie and activities that support the synagogue. Among its many projects and activities, Sisterhood provides a Jewish calendar for all congregants, helps maintain the social hall and kitchen, and arranges for refreshments at Shabbat onegs and other special occasions. Each Bar or Bat Mitzvah candidate receives a special gift from the Sisterhood. This group also sponsors the community break-the-fast after Yom Kippur and Jewish camp scholarships for members' children, and gives to the community at large. Bonnie Stone, Treasurer.

Youth Group: Phat

People Here At Temple (PHAT) is the congregation youth group consisting of Jewish teens. This group engages in a variety of social and Jewish community activities. Affiliated with the North American Federation of Temple Youth (NFTY) organization.

The Shul Shofar

The Shul Shofar is the newsletter of our Jewish community. It is published bi-monthly and is sent to all members and subscribers. *The Shul Shofar* includes a calendar of events and articles from the rabbi and congregational leaders which help keep us all in touch. For further information about this newsletter, please contact the editor of the *Shofar* at 733-8890.

\$35.00 per year

No charge for congregation members

Website

Our congregational website, www.bethisraelbellingham.org, includes a listing of synagogue events and activities happening in our community. Updated regularly, it features information on worship times, holiday celebrations, the religious school, special programming, social action projects, and ongoing activities – such as Torah

Study, and Board meetings. An electronic version of *The Shul Shofar* is posted on the website along with general information on Judaism and holiday observances from the Union of Reform Judaism. Site visitors can also track the construction progress of our new synagogue building on San Juan Boulevard. In addition, there is a “members only” section. Melissa Schapiro, Communications Chair.

Beth Israel E-News

Each Wednesday, the office sends out an email to members on upcoming events and activities. Mary Somerville, Office Administrator.

Professional Services Directory

The first Congregation Beth Israel Professional Services Directory was produced in 2011 by the Membership Committee. Synagogue members who own businesses are encouraged to list the goods and services they provide so other members may patronize them. The Directory is updated yearly.

ScripProgram

Supplements synagogue operating income through using a successful scrip program. Joan Wayne, Leader.

The Max Glass Library

The Congregation Beth Israel Max Glass Library was founded in 1963 and now has over 1,400 items, including books, games, cassettes, and discs. The library is located in the social hall and is open during activities at the synagogue or by appointment. Inquiries regarding the library should be directed to the Library Committee.

Hadassah

Hadassah, the Women’s Zionist Organization of America, has a chapter in Bellingham. Most noted for its support of two hospitals in Israel, Hadassah also funds a community college, supports Youth Aliyah, is a primary contributor to the Jewish National Fund, and sponsors a youth movement, Youth Judea, in the United States. Hadassah is a vehicle for participation by Jewish women across America. Please direct inquiries to either Katie Edelstein or Debbie Adelstein.

Golden Girls

A gathering of “golden age” women who meet monthly – often for lunch at a local restaurant – to socialize and have fun. The specific date and location can be found in each issue of *The Shul Shofar*.

Building Use

Synagogue members may use the social hall for receptions following life cycle events. The scheduling is done through the synagogue office. Cleaning is the responsibility of the member using the building.



Congregation Beth Israel Committees

Building Committee: Focuses on the maintenance, functional improvement, and aesthetic enhancement of the synagogue building and grounds. Floyd King, Chair.

Capital Campaign Committee: Raises money to build our new synagogue. David Goldman, Chair.

Care Committee: Coordinates assistance and support for members experiencing illness, loss, natural disaster, or other major life change. Sylvia Fragner, Chair.

Cemetery Committee: Oversees maintenance and improvement of the Jewish cemetery and sale of cemetery plots. Assists families in the selection of plots, funeral arrangements, scheduling graveside funerals and notifying the Care Committee telephone tree. Debbie Adelstein, Chair.

Communications Committee: Assists and supports in maintaining current communications and marketing tools, and seeks innovative ways to enhance communications both within the synagogue community and with the outside community. Oversees content, development, and administration of the synagogue's website and development of the membership directory. Melissa Schapiro, Chair.

Finance Committee: Collects synagogue dues and monitors the annual budget on a monthly basis. Prepares the congregation's annual budget, obtains audits as needed, and determines appropriate investments for the synagogue's reserves. Steve Spitzer, Treasurer and Chair.

Library Committee: Seeks acquisitions and maintains the synagogue library. Collects donations for the library. Joan Wayne, Chair.

Membership Committee: Welcomes and provides information for prospective and new members. Expands community awareness of Congregation Beth Israel and the benefits of synagogue membership. Develops activities to identify potential members. Encourages interested families and singles to become members through hospitality and Jewish programming efforts. Maintains a Professional Services Directory of members. Hosts the annual New Members Dinner, a summer Ice Cream Social, and Rosh

Hashanah Oneg. Coordinates varied social events to facilitate integration of members to the synagogue community. Ann Suloway and Rita Spitzer, Co-chairs.

Nominating Committee: Identifies current and potential synagogue leaders to serve as Board members and Board Officers. Recommends a slate of officers annually. Jeff Jaffe, Chair.

Oneg Committee: Organizes and oversees oneg celebrations that follow Shabbat services and other observances during the synagogue calendar year. A schedule of onegs is maintained and responsibility for these is assigned to members. Tours of the kitchen are available for new members by arrangement. Joan Wayne, Bettina Fisher, and Shelley Wolfman, Co-chairs.

Programming Committee: Organizes cultural, educational, and human interest events for the congregation. These events can be ongoing or one-time events depending upon the interests of the congregants (e.g. Israeli folk dancing, musical artists, films, and lectures). Margaret Bikman, Emily Weiner, Rakefet Richmond, Team members.

Religious School Committee: Works with our Rabbi and the Religious School Administrator to support the religious school program and coordinate holiday celebrations for the children. Rebecca Orloff and Samantha Konikoff, Co-chairs.

Scholarship Committee: Provides financial assistance via the Rabbi Fred Gardner Scholarship fund to qualifying congregants. Applicants who attend post secondary schooling and would benefit from financial assistance are potential recipients. Applicants should participate in synagogue activities, be Jewish, and strive for academic excellence. Emil Hecht, Chair.

Social Action Committee: Takes a leadership role in involving our Jewish community and congregation in community projects that focus on key social needs such as hunger and housing. By working through existing community organizations, we maximize our resources and build important alliances with the greater, non-Jewish community. Debbie Raas and Linda Hirsh, Co-Chairs.

Strategic Planning Committee: Recommends long term goals and objectives for the synagogue with the input of our committees, Rabbi, and Board. This plan forms the basis for the Board's Annual Plan. Steve Spitzer, Chair.

University Liaison Committee: Maintains communication between the congregation and Western Washington University students. Works informally with the University Hillel Group as well. Marcia Lippman and Sabrina Freeman, Co-chairs.

Committee chairs' contact phone numbers are listed in our monthly newsletter, *The Shul Shofar*.



Congregation Beth Israel Task Forces & Other Groups

Chevra Kadisha: Provides ritual purification for burials (tahara), if desired by the family of the deceased. Teams, either all-male or all-female, are prepared to provide their services. Debbie Adelstein, Coordinator.

Congregation Archivist: Tim Baker.

Governance Task Force: Examines the organizational structure of the congregation and works with the committees, Board, and the Rabbi to help create job descriptions, policies, mission statements, and procedures to assist the congregation in operating in an objective, transparent, and inclusive manner. Mitch Press, Chair.

New Synagogue Task Force: Oversees and supports the construction of our new facility. Warren Rosenthal, Chair.

Religious Practice Leadership Team: Works with the Rabbi to learn about and engage in ritual and liturgical practices. Members of the RPLT lead Shabbat services, shiva minyanim, give divrei Torah, read Torah and Haftarah, and are available to support other congregants in their learning. From time to time, the RPLT consults with the Rabbi to evaluate our minhag ha-makom (synagogue customs and practices) and potentially recommends changes. Rabbi Joshua Samuels, Leader.



Board of Directors

Board Officers

2015-2016

President	Dan Ohms
Vice President 1	Marcia Lippman
Vice President 2	Katie Edelstein
Treasurer	Steve Spitzer
Secretary	Lynn Korner
Past President	Mitch Press

Board Members

2015-2016

Paul Blum
Steven Garfinkle
Floyd King
Gaby Mayers
Mitch Press (past president)
Melissa Schapiro
Miriam Schwartz
Asher Suloway (youth representative)
Todd Witte
David Zimmerman



Donations

Where to Direct Donations

Do you wish to honor someone close to you, thank a friend, or remember a loved one? A donation to one of Congregation Beth Israel's special funds is a great way to do it! Please direct your checks (payable to Congregation Beth Israel except as noted below) and any instructions or message regarding the occasion as follows:

- Camp Scholarship
 - Care Committee
 - General Fund
 - New Synagogue Fund
 - Religious School Fund
 - Rabbi Gartner Scholarship Fund
 - NFTY (Youth Group)
 - Leadership Development
 - Rabbi's Professional Development
- Congregation Beth Israel
2200 Broadway
Bellingham, WA 98225
- Rabbi's Discretionary Fund
(payable to Rabbi's
Discretionary Fund)
- Rabbi Joshua Samuels
Congregation Beth Israel
2200 Broadway
Bellingham, WA 98225
- Max Glass Library Fund
- Joan Wayne
456 14th Street
Bellingham, WA 98225
- Hadassah Donations
(payable to Hadassah)

Cards: Bonnie Stone
Certificates: Debbie Adelstein
Tree Certificates: Janis Ban