



ANNUAL MEETING REPORTS

2023 – 2024

5784

Sunday, May 19, 2024

3:30 PM

Annual Meeting Agenda

May 19, 2024

1. Welcome/Determination of Quorum
2. D'var Torah-Rabbi Samuels
3. Reports
 - a. Rabbi's Report-Rabbi Samuels
 - b. Treasurer's Report-Karen Sloss
 - c. President's Report-Jodi Litt
4. New Business
5. Eternal Flame Award
Rabbi Samuels and Jodi Litt
6. Adjournment

2024-2025 CBI Board of Directors Slate

EXECUTIVE TEAM:

President:	Jodi Litt
Vice President 1:	Erin Cohen
Vice President 2:	Jane Relin
Treasurer:	Karen Sloss
Secretary:	Tammy Dixon

AT LARGE BOARD MEMBERS:

Steve Ban *
Jason Benhaim
Stuart Berman
Paul Blum
Tamar Clarke
Miriam Davids
Kevin Donner *
Josh Greenberg
Binner Perper *
Terri Weiner

*Indicates those members who are up for re-election.

Rabbi's Report

Every year I mention how hard it is to believe that I have been your rabbi for so many years and this time around it is even harder. July 1, 2024 will begin my 13th year as your rabbi. This is my one and only bar mitzvah year! When I first visited CBI back in 2012 just a few weeks before Shoshana was born, I had no clue that this synagogue community and city were going to be my family's home for the long run. I can't imagine being anywhere else and I know that Nicole, Eytan, and Shoshana all feel the same as I do. I continue to feel increasingly blessed to be able to walk with you on our Jewish journeys. I want to also thank you for walking alongside my family during one of our very special Jewish life-cycle moments when Eytan became a bar mitzvah back in September. Shoshana will become a bat mitzvah in August 2025. And here I am about to start my own bar mitzvah year with you.

The following is a brief recap of this past year. I focus on education, festivals, worship, life-cycles, and Israel.

Education

My Judaism 201 class continues to attract students from all backgrounds. This is a pre-requisite for any conversion student, and it also serves as a form of outreach to the wider community. I love teaching this course and I welcome anyone to take it.

Last year I taught a course on Medical Ethics and as I write this report, I am in the midst of teaching a survey course on the Hebrew Prophets. In late winter I taught a mini course on Jewish festival customs and the laws of kashrut to Hillel students on campus. I have taught several times through WWU's Academy for Lifelong Learning, and I am in agreement to teach a class on Ethical Wills this coming year.

Andrea Shupack is back and teaching classes on Hebrew and Trope. Stu Berman taught a course on King David. Each week I lead Torah study. I have been in discussions with some folks about bringing a scholar-in-residence to CBI sometime next year. If there are topics you would like to see covered by a visiting teacher or in future courses, please let me know.

The course that I most love teaching is our Keshet's Confirmation class of high schoolers. This year we studied what it means to be an advocate by looking deeply into many issues, such as: gun violence prevention; criminal justice reform; death penalty; gender pay gap; climate justice; hate crimes; Israel/Palestine and more. Chaperoning them to DC and watching them lobby our elected officials on some of these issues was a highlight of my year. I hope you will attend the Confirmation service on Friday, June 7th to wish our graduating students a hearty "mazel tov!"

Jewish Festivals

Living according to the rhythms of Jewish time can be so centering and meaningful. Celebrating holidays and observing festivals in the community fills my cup.

Not long ago we celebrated Passover and held our annual Second Night Community seder. Bravo, once again, to Jane Hammerstrom, Nicole Samuels, and the rest of the seder committee for making this year's event so successful. I had a lot of fun leading with Mikayla Goodkin. Shavuot is a few weeks away. We observe this holiday by learning Torah from each other. If you are interested in leading a brief Jewish teaching, let me know. Last year we learned about Jewish culture in Seinfeld, the origins of the Kaddish, rabbinic midrash, Jewish basket weaving, and Jews in the NHL.

Our Purim and Chanukah parties were two more successful observances and programs. Many thanks to Sarah Cobb, Gayle Kinney, Cathy Zitzer, and the many volunteers who made these holidays so inviting and fun. These are two of the most important events we put on as many unaffiliated Jews join us to celebrate. Life doesn't get much better than when the shul is filled with people of all ages enjoying being Jewish.

On May 5th we were led in a moving Yom HaShoah service by our 7/8th grade Kesher students. They created the whole service with the help of their teachers, Daniel Sauter and Ray Wolpow. On May 13th we observed a moment of silence for Israel's fallen soldiers and then celebrated Israel's independence with our Yom Hazikaron/Ha'atzmaut event. A big thank you to the Program committee for taking the lead on this year's gathering.

Our High Holy Day experience was lovely, once again. I am so pleased to have finally used Mishkan HaNefesh. I hope everyone felt that this mahzor was much more accessible. It was a pleasure to lead these services with Andrea Shupack and the many others who participated. Writing sermons for the HHD's is part of the job I take very seriously. I hope that my sermons opened your mind and filled your souls. This year I spoke about: God, Gender and Judaism, Holiness, and Life after Death. This coming year I plan to write two sermons on Israel and two on High Holy Day themes.

Shabbat

Our "big tent" continues to expand as we offer more shabbat experiences to the community. This coming year we will have five different shabbat morning experiences (Contemplative, Renewal, Reform, Conservative, and Tot shabbat). Friday evenings are also different with Family shabbat, Ma'ayan Shir, and services led by Andrea Shupack and Mikayla Goodkin. Even if worship is not what connects you to Judaism, consider attending to meet more of your wonderful community. I added one more Shabbat experience to my monthly schedule with a trip to the Willows on the fourth Friday of each month. These visits have been lovely.

Life-cycle Events

We had many b'mitzvah celebrations this past year, including Eytan's. Thank you again for joining my family in this simcha. It was one of the best days in our lives. We have two coming up in August and then next year's 7th grade class will be the biggest in congregation's history. Get

ready for 19! I am grateful to Leah Bordman for leading our b'mitzvah program with me. All of our teens shine and their divrei torah are insightful and inspiring.

Last year I got back into the (pre-covid) routine of doing more counseling in my office, making more house visits, and seeing people in the hospital. Please let me know if you hear of folks who could use a visit. Thank you to our Care Committee for looking after so many people in our community.

Each year we lose precious dear ones in our community. I feel privileged to be able to spend time with them and their loved ones. Thank you for showing up to support your friends and making a minyan when called upon. And thank you to Janis Ban, Marcy Probst, and everyone else who assists me and the families when there is a death in the community.

Israel

October 7th is a date that will demarcate Jewish time for all time. This has been one of the worst years for Israel and for the Jewish people. Israel is still at war with Hamas, which is nothing other than a genocidal regime and jihadist death cult. There remain scores of Israeli hostages in nightmarish conditions. Innocent Gazans are suffering. And the world seems to have completely lost its mind. Anti-Semitism and anti-Israel sentiments are on the rise. College campuses are ablaze with Jew-hatred. The Jewish community has lost trusted allies and partnerships. This is a scary time to be Jewish and supportive of Israel. But this is who we are and we will not waver or bend to the cause of the day. While I may criticize policies such as the judicial overhaul, I will remain steadfast in my support of Israel's right to defend herself and of the Jewish people to self-determination in our homeland. I will continue to speak out on Friday evenings about the war and other issues that are relevant to this time. In the language of my other life in the brokerage world, I remain long on Israel and the Jewish people.

Thank You

Finally, I want to make sure I express gratitude to a few people. First, our amazing staff: Sarah Cobb, Ken Weaver, Victoria Mayers and Leah Bordman. And the biggest thank you to Mary Somerville who I had the pleasure of working with for 12 years. Second, our Board of Directors led by Jodi Litt. Last year I wrote how she had my full confidence and support and that feeling has only been magnified. I can't remember a more efficient and dedicated Board.

Thank you all for sharing your gifts with this community. Thank you for the honor of serving as your rabbi.

FINANCE COMMITTEE and TREASURER'S REPORT

Chair: Karen Sloss (Treasurer & Chair)

Committee Members: David Goldman, Josh Greenberg, Jeff Jaffe, Dan Ohms, Renee Relin, David Robinson, Miriam Schwartz, and Terri Weiner. Also, Jodi Litt, President and Rabbi Joshua Samuels, ex-officio.

The Finance Committee oversees the CBI annual budget and various financial issues that may arise. During the past year, the Finance Committee discussed and made recommendations to the Board on a new annual budget, advised on the Endowment Investment Policy and developed a new Spending Policy to relieve the Board from having to approve every off-budget expense.

CBI SPENDING POLICY

Expenditures in the amount of \$1,000 or less are allowed after the individual purchaser has agreement on the purchase from both the CBI President (or designate) and the CBI Treasurer. These expenditures may use funds from either the Building Fund or General Reserves. Any un-budgeted expenditures over \$1,000 must be approved in advance by the Board of Directors.

Beth Israel's finances continue to be strong and remain on budget thanks to generous annual contributions from our membership. The Finance Committee and Board are extremely grateful for the CBI community's enduring support of our operations, programs and other endeavors.

BUDGET

The attached spreadsheet reflects the current year's finances through the end of March 2024. Expenses are in line with the budget, and this year's income is strengthened with a surge in new members and an impressive response (generous donations) to the news that our security costs suddenly increased with no warning. Also, our staff is diligent in keeping costs under control. And all this in a year when we added two new staff and sponsored more programs!

In the same spreadsheet, please note the far-right-hand column with the budget for next year (July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025) which was just approved at the April Board Meeting. Expenses are anticipated to grow by about 7.5% next year, including a doubling of security costs, so sources of income will need to rise accordingly to balance the budget. CBI primarily relies on the community spirit and generosity of our membership to make all this happen! Aside from occasional donations from "friends of CBI", there is no outside funding of our operations, so everyone doing their part to sustain our vibrant congregation is sincerely appreciated.

ASSETS and LIABILITIES

Thanks to the generous New Synagogue donors, CBI has the good fortune to own its building and property outright (no debt) with a value of approximately \$9 million! In addition, CBI maintains a comfortable Savings Account balance of \$225-250k (equivalent of 5-6 months' expenses) and currently has a balance of over \$100k in the Building Fund (all earmarked for specific projects). Other "restricted" funds, targeted to specific uses, hold approximately \$80,000.

The CBI Finance Team includes Sarah Cobb as Office Manager & Bookkeeper and Terri Weiner as Bookkeeping & Accounting Consultant.

Congregation Beth Israel Annual Budget

	CURRENT YEAR Budget 2023-2024	BUDGET As of 3-31-24	Percent of Budget	NEWLY APPROVED Budget for 2024-2025
Income		75.00%		
Dues	\$415,000	\$331,267	80%	\$425,000
Keshet Tuition	41,000	46,097	112%	59,000
Keshet Scholarships & Discounts	7,000	0	0%	9,000
Keshet Donations & Programs	15,000	636	4%	6,000
Donations - General	27,500	25,996	95%	30,000
HH Tickets & Donations	5,000	5,513	110%	6,000
Program Income – Events/Adult Ed *	10,000	11,521	115%	6,000
Program Income – Holidays	9,000	7,324	81%	10,000
Facility Rentals	4,000	810	20%	3,000
Fund Raising (Scrip)	9,000	6,332	70%	9,000
Shofar	900	1,435	159%	1,200
Investment Income	9,000	6,573	73%	10,500
Total Income	\$552,400	\$443,504	80%	\$574,700
* Programs \$8,867 Adult Ed \$2,654				
Expenses				
Bank Service Charges	\$900	\$2,068	230%	\$2,500
Building Maintenance	41,000	30,185	74%	42,000
Security Guards & Systems	28,000	21,902	78%	56,000
Committee Exp & Leadership Dev	2,000	331	17%	1,500
Conference for CBI President	2,500	0	0%	2,500
Volunteer Appreciation	500	0	0%	500
HHD Expenses (non-security)	9,000	8,098	90%	9,000
Donations	1,500	0	0%	1,500
Consulting and Legal Services	500	0	N/A	500
Insurance Coverage	12,000	13,440	112%	14,000
Licenses & Taxes	2,400	955	40%	2,200
Payroll – Rabbi, Admin, Soloist, Yth Grp	277,000	199,955	72%	267,000
Postage and Delivery	900	771	86%	1,000
Programming - Event/Adult Ed **	12,000	8,315	69%	15,000
Programming - Holiday	9,500	3,283	35%	10,000
Religious School Expenses	100,000	73,170	73%	92,000
Supplies	14,000	14,779	106%	14,000
Telephone & Internet	8,500	5,054	59%	8,000
URJ Dues	18,500	9,776	53%	21,000
Utilities	12,000	10,671	89%	13,000
Total Expenses	\$552,700	\$402,754	73%	\$573,200
** Programs \$7,933 Adult Ed \$382				
Net Income after Expenses	(\$300)	\$40,750		\$1,500

Education

KESHER ANNUAL REPORT

Leah Bordman and Victoria Mayers

This year in Kesher has been such a joy for children, families, and staff alike. We are all extremely proud of the product that we've been putting out into our community through Kesher since October! This year, (so far) we've had 90 students enrolled in our school, ages Gan (one through four years)-10th grade, and we employed 10 teachers, including two specialists. We also trained 10 Madrichim, who worked with Leah Bordman each month to dive deeply into their role in the classroom through conversations and activities based around role modeling, building connections, and communication.

The number one and number two goals of our school are for kids to be healthy and safe here, and for them to feel loved and respected by their teachers and their peers. Overwhelmingly, we have met these goals throughout the year. By ensuring our students feel safe and loved in the synagogue, we create a foundation for Jewish education that we can continue to build upon during their entire journey with us, and that they can take with them as part of their Jewish identity beyond Kesher as well.

Each of our classes from K-8th grade have led (or will lead) a service this year, and the ones that have happened already were awesome and meaningful. The students spent a month leading up to their class's service working with their teacher(s) and our Music Specialist, Mikayla Goodkin to choose themes and music that matter to them. In addition to class services, Mikayla's role in Kesher has been to bring fun Jewish music activities to each classroom every week. She curates and implements unique and age-appropriate lessons for every age group, and it's a joyous thing to hear our students singing in the building all throughout the Kesher day.

With our new Hebrew Specialist, Jason Benhaim, each class K-6 receives between 15-30 minutes of Hebrew lessons each week. These lessons are taught through creative and experiential methods that Jason has worked all year to design, thinking deeply about what each age group needs to know, and what would be the most effective ways of learning. During the weekdays, fifth and sixth grade students have mandatory Zoom Hebrew lessons with Jason and Leah Bordman as well. These small-group individualized learning pods have been a fantastic way for students to get specialized attention and assistance in their Hebrew education.

The seventh/eighth grade class spent this year studying Holocaust education with their teacher Daniel Sauter and our visiting expert Ray Wolpow. This class read books and articles, interacted with artifacts and watched films to gain a deep and meaningful wealth of knowledge on this important subject. They will be presenting their hard work to the community at the Yom Ha'Shoah service later this month.

As for the B'nei Mitzvah class, this year there were three students in the seventh grade, who were a part of last year's b'mitzvah class with Leah Bordman and Rabbi Samuels. There are two students left to become b'mitzvah, Koby and Vivi, both of whom will finish up in August. Next year, the incoming seventh grade class is currently made up of 19 individuals – the biggest class in CBI history. Because of this size, next year could look different regarding the b'mitzvah preparation provided by Leah and Rabbi.

The Massa class had another year of Israel learning with Gaby Mayers, in conjunction with the teens involved in Everett. They will be leaving for their Jewish Spain/Portugal trip on June 26th.

The Confirmation class also had a great year of deep learning of social justice with Rabbi Samuels. Five teens traveled to Washington D.C. earlier this year to lobby in front of nation representatives at the L'Taken program. They will be sharing this experience at their Family Shabbat service in June.

As mentioned above, there were 10 Madrichim in Kesher this year. They are: Aviva Weinstein, Bella Gentry, Natalie Ravitsky, Evan Konikoff, Lucy Naiman, Liza Jane Price, Lior Somers, Orion Dixon, Lucy Greenberg, and Sydney Wolfson. These teens were given the option of minimum wage pay or volunteer hours and have spent most Sundays in the classroom assisting teachers and learning to be Jewish leaders.

This year we also implemented a volunteer reading program in Kesher. Every week, volunteers, organized by Victoria Mayers, came to Kesher to read aloud to Gan-fifth grade students. These amazing volunteers also spent time in the classrooms teaching cooking and art lessons, and without them big events such as the Chanukkah Party and Purim Carnival could not have happened.

Registration for Kesher 2024-2025 opens on July 1!

Thank you to this year's incredible Kesher staff:

Darcie Donegan (Gan)

Kellan Moss (K/1)

Naomi Schapiro (K-3 Mentor)

Sam Schwartz (2/3)

Parker Geffen (4)

Abby Kroopkin (5)

Hannah Shernicoff (6)

Daniel Sauter (7/8)

Jason Benhaim (Hebrew Specialist)

Mikayla Goodkin (Music Specialist)

Thank you to our staff, KAG, and the community of volunteers who made Kesher a priority – our school wouldn't function without helpful folks like you! And finally, thank you to the families who put your trust in us for your child's Jewish education!

Facilities

FACILITIES MAINTENANCE & MANAGEMENT

Chairs: Joshua Greenberg and Isaac Blum

Committee Members: Josh Greenberg, Katie Edelstein, Marta Brand, Isaac Konikoff, Karen Sloss, Dan Raas, Dan Ohms, Miriam Schwartz, and Tammy Dixon

The Facilities Maintenance & Management Committee (FMMC) is a coordinating committee; which means that it really is made up of representatives from other committees except for the Chairs who help run the meetings. The FMMC includes the chairs of Property & Grounds, Building Maintenance, Safety & Security, Technology, Interior Design, Events and Rentals, Legal & Liability. The committee also helps support task forces that have been set up to deal with the Facility, such as Kitchen and Irrigation Well Task forces.

The purpose of the Facilities Maintenance & Management Committee is to ensure that there is always open discussion and transparency between the various sub-committees to ensure that the decisions we make in the present for the future of the CBI community are carefully considered and impact us all in the best way possible.

Committee chairs bring decisions that need to be weighed or voted upon to the FMMC, often before they are presented to the Board of Directors. Ultimately, it's the committees and task forces that do the amazing work required to keep our synagogue building operating. It's the job of the Facilities Maintenance & Management Committee to keep sight of how these individual committees fit together like a mosaic and are accountable to budgetary and logistical constraints. Congregation Beth Israel is a large facility, and it takes a lot of coordination and cooperation behind the scenes to keep it running smoothly.

This year we are happy to report that the upstairs commercial kitchen got started and is almost complete. The task force has some final organizational things to work on and complete this summer. Another item that is currently in progress came out of early Kitchen task force discussions and that was how to improve the parking area next to the back patio. This is going to be finished up to help facilitate the use of that area by food trucks during events. While the kitchen is a great resource, sometimes it's easier to coordinate with a food truck to provide the catering and this update will make that much easier with steps down to the parking area and high-power electrical outlets for the food trucks to use.

We are looking forward to working on our list of projects to continue improving the CBI facility and making it feel like our home.

MAINTENANCE REPORT

Chair: Marta Brand

The big news for the year is that we hired Ken Weaver as a half time maintenance person. What a gem he's turned out to be. He takes on every job with enthusiasm, and best of all, competence. He's replaced our Merry Maid's cleaning service, our outside ground's maintenance, our snow removal service and next year he'll save us a bundle on furnace maintenance. He helps with the setup of the tables and special events. He's always ready to tackle small and large maintenance issues. He's a terrific organizer and has done wonders organizing the storage areas as well. With Ken's help, our Synagogue building and grounds have never looked better.

We've purchased a new commercial washer/dryer. A John Deere mower and snow blade have been ordered which should make grounds maintenance a lot more efficient.

By the time we have our annual meeting, we should have ten more acoustic panels installed in the hall and foyer. Thanks to Terri Weiner, Jane Relin and Vicky Garfinkle for helping on the committee!

INTERIOR DESIGN GROUP ANNUAL REPORT

Chair: Katie Edelstein

Committee Members: Vicki Jaffe, Vicky Garfinkle, Miriam Schwartz, Marla Finkelstein, Dan Ohms, and Cherryne Kravitz

The IDG was initially formed in 2017 with the goal of selecting and overseeing interior design finishes during construction of the new synagogue. The IDG continues to integrate the original vision set forth by the IDG when it was initially formed, *"maintain the overall 'feel' of warmth, quietness, formality, and sacred space"* of the new synagogue.

During the past year, IDG's focus was centered around the bima, focusing on ways we could accentuate the sanctity of this area of the sanctuary. The group began considering the next steps in replacing the current bima lectern with a new lectern that will complement the beautiful Ark that was built and installed three years ago. To date the group has discussed lectern design options, including but not limited to one larger lectern vs two lecterns as in the past including next steps with getting pricing and created a design that is ready to implement when funds are available. As a way to enhance and beautify the bima, IDG's plan is to install

wall hangings on either side of the Ark that will include the beautiful needlepoint pictures of the six days of creation being made by Roby Blecker. The group is also considering the idea of painting the walls of the bima area that will help to accentuate the sanctity of the bima area.

In an effort to create a welcoming environment, the Interior Design Group provided a seating area on the main floor foyer area including couches, and side tables.

In the coming year, the Interior Design Group will continue to be available to work in conjunction with any group as it relates to interior design features of the synagogue, including but not limited to the Acoustics Task Force, Dedications Committee, Yahrzeit Task Force, Kitchen Task Force, Program Committee, and any other group in need of input from the Interior Design Group.

COMMITTEES

CARE COMMITTEE 2023-2024

Chairs: Sarah Witte (Co-Chair) and Else Sokol (Co-Chair)

Committee Members: Sylvia Williams, Geraldine Reitz, Joan Wayne, Becky Van Glubt, Tracey Levine, Jodi Litt, Jerome Rosen, Cherynne Kravitz, Deborah Oksenberg, and Nancy Luster. Our Board Liaison is Terri Weiner.

The Care Committee has engaged in another full and meaningful year of practicing G'milut Hasadim and Rachamim. We continue to provide meal trains, cards, support and check-in calls to those in need.

This past year we have accomplished the following:

- Provided ongoing phone and other support for those on our Chavurim list: congregants and greater Jewish community members who are at risk for adverse emotional, spiritual and physical health consequences due to physical ailments, social isolation, or mental or physical disability;
- Organized more than seven meal trains for congregants with temporary needs for support.
- Assisted with the delivery of the *mishloach manot* for Purim.
- Planned and executed a congregant's large wardrobe donation as a fundraiser for the Massa group.
- Assisted a congregant with a complicated home clean up (although the end goal was not met).
- Provided financial and emotional support for a greater community member experiencing homelessness and suicidal ideation.
- Engaged and helped organize the Skagit Jewish group to aid with an isolated congregant family with multiple ongoing unique health challenges.

Plans for the coming year include continuation of our routine support for the community, including advocating for those in our congregation who, for whatever reason, are uncomfortable to return to CBI in-person, or who live in the north county and don't attend programming if it requires driving at night.

We are collaborating with the JEMS group for conversations with our elders.

We are also working on our Shtetl project- organizing congregants by neighborhood to facilitate neighbors helping neighbors.

We encourage congregants who want or need support to contact us at carecommittee@bethisraelbellingham.org.

CEMETERY COMMITTEE & CHEVRA KADDISHA SUBCOMMITTEE

Chairs: Marcy Probst (chair of finances), Janis Ban (chair)

Committee Members: Diane Garmo, Dan Ohms, Cora Boothby, Kathi Paluch

Members of *Chevra Kaddisha*:

Women: Diane Garmo, Cora Boothby, Janis Ban, Corinne Gimbel-Levine, Marcy Probst; Geraldine Reitz, Sarah Bauman, Miriam Schwartz, Andrea Shupack, Teresa Sommers

Men: Emil Hecht, Steve Ban, Hank Levine, Barry Landau, Dan Ohms, Mark Weinstein, Miles Bryant, Todd Witte, Serge Lindner, John Schapiro

Mission Statement of the Cemetery Committee:

- Continue ongoing sale of cemetery plots
- Provide ongoing community education on burial practices and end of life issues
- Provide Chevrah Kaddisha services as well as help families with burial arrangements, coordinating with Rabbi and Bayview Cemetery at the time of death
- Ongoing maintenance of CBI cemetery
- Maintenance of cemetery records, financial records and policies.

Cemetery Committee:

- Continued ongoing work of maintaining cemetery, responding to inquiries, helping families buy plots and deal with burial issues at time of death, facilitating details around setting headstones, arranging for Chevra Kaddisha services, etc.
- Since April 30, 2023, we have performed four Taharot, had two burials, sold 13 plots, and had five headstones installed.
- We installed three new benches in the cemetery, put some new shrubs in the garden and replaced a tree in the cemetery that had died.

Plans for next year:

- ◆ Create a scatter garden for cremains/Aquamains
- ◆ Work on installation of our old memorial plaques in the new building
- ◆ Continue ongoing work

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

Chair: Melissa Schapiro

With assistance from Sarah Cobb, Rabbi Samuels, Leah Bordman (Kesher) and Nora Mazonson (Shofar).

Formed in 2010, our mission is to assist and support the CBI community, including its staff and lay leadership, in maintaining current communications and marketing tools, while identifying and realizing innovative communications' opportunities and strategies that will enhance and meet the needs of the congregation and the broader community. See Policy/Procedure approved 2020 for specific details.

Highlights of this past year's activities:

- 2023-2024 activities include managing updates to the website, such as adding events, maintaining members-only documents and member registration.
- Coordinating/training new office manager on registration forms and congregation communications, such as Timbrel.
- Creating print and online marketing materials for an increased number of programs and events.
- Maintain Facebook and Instagram accounts, with a format and timing to keep posts consistent, with help from rabbi and Kesher co-director Leah Bordman.

Plans for upcoming year:

- Continue to update the website, with information to be shared by appropriate parties, whether committees or staff.
- Have social media planned, written and scheduled for publication at least a month out.
- Continue to organize the Workspace shared folders with photos, templates and documents to be used across the organization, for internal and external publications.

New members welcome!

The committee has been more of a team, with various staff or volunteers helping with specific tasks as needed. Skills/experience that would be helpful on a regular basis would be someone knowledgeable about web design and management, marketing and/or public relations.

FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE

Chair: Karen Sloss

Committee Members: Steven Garfinkle and John Schapiro

The CBI Fundraising Committee oversees all fundraising for CBI and stands ready to assist other committees in any fundraising aspects of their activities. In addition to the Committee's

activities, CBI's Scrip Program (managed separately—please see the separate Scrip Report in this packet) is an ongoing fundraiser and Keshet runs an annual Mishloach Manot (Purim) fundraiser dedicated to funding Keshet (Religious School) tuition scholarships.

During the past year, the Fundraising Committee addressed the need to raise more money for the Building Fund to afford the extensive list of projects designed to complete and improve the synagogue campus. Additionally, a healthy reserve balance in the Building Fund is a high priority. The Committee set a goal of raising \$500,000 for the Building Fund over the next two to three years. This will give many members a fresh opportunity to support the ongoing "construction" of our new synagogue. Approximately \$400,000 will go towards specific projects while at least \$100,000 will remain as a "cushion" to cover major building repairs, equipment replacements and new projects in the future. A couple of the current projects are replacing a water pump and holding tank to achieve normal water pressure in the building and upgrading an area adjacent to the social hall patio for food trucks.

Last fall, the Fundraising Committee assisted with the HHD Prayerbook Fundraiser, which was super successful, enabling CBI to acquire new HHD Prayerbooks for regular and family services.

The idea of a CBI Endowment Fund surfaced a couple of years ago as a key strategy for long-term financial security for CBI. Recently, the Board approved an "Endowment Investment Policy" jointly developed by the Endowment and Finance Committees. All donations to the CBI Endowment Fund will be invested in perpetuity (not spent). The Fund will be managed by the Endowment and Finance Committees. The income generated by the Endowment may be spent on operations, capital projects or programs as outlined in the Endowment Policy and subject to Board approval. Gifts to the Endowment Fund can be made during one's lifetime or as a bequest (at death). Bequests are typically made in a will or trust or when the Endowment is a beneficiary of a retirement account or life insurance policy.

We are deeply grateful to the many members who generously donate to various funds or programs or general operations at CBI. Together with membership and tuition payments, this extra support makes a huge, positive difference in our CBI experience.

The Committee is actively seeking new members who either have or want to gain skills in fundraising, marketing, or business development.

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Co-chairs: Mitch Press and Rena Ziegler

Committee Members: Josh Greenberg, Erin Cohen, Ellen Smith, Roby Blecker, Bruce Van Glubt

The Governance Committee makes recommendations to the Board regarding ways to improve the organizational structure, communication flow, and operations of the synagogue. The

Committee is sometimes tasked by the Board to update an existing Board position description or CBI policy or to develop a specific policy if there is no existing policy document. Our overall goal is to make sure that we have consistent, fair, and consensual governance guidelines for CBI.

Our work in the past year focused on the structure of our CBI committees and clearly defining the purpose and functioning of each committee. As a result, every committee is creating a brief Charter document for review and approval by the Board.

We've also helped clearly define different lay groups within CBI, such as Committees, Subgroups, Task Forces and Coordinating Committees.

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Chair: Ellen Smith

Committee Members: Paul Blum, Dan Ohms, Roby Blecker, Bruce Van Glubt, and Jodi Litt.

Paul Blum has handed over the leadership of this committee to Ellen Smith and we thank him for his excellent work as chair over the past three years.

The HR Committee has continued to assist in the yearly performance review process for CBI staff, which is the main mechanism for ensuring that employees of CBI are treated professionally, fairly, and consistently.

In collaboration with the board of directors and the rabbi the HR committee has assisted in the hiring of new employees during this past year. Employment agreements have been negotiated in consultation with HR committee members as well.

Currently our committee is working on updating our charter as well as the CBI Employee Manual.

KESHER ADVISORY GROUP

Chairs: Katie Edelstein (co-chair) and Rita Spitzer (co-chair)

Committee Members: Nicky Naiman, Tammy Dixon, Robin Curtis, Darcie Donegan, Sharona Feller, Rabbi Samuels, Leah Boardman, and Victoria Mayers

The Keshet Advisory Group (KAG) is a standing committee responsible for providing guidance and support to the Keshet Center for Learning and meets 2 to 3 times per year unless there's a need to meet at another time. KAG provides additional support by:

- Assisting the Keshet Directors in matters of curriculum, programming, financial planning, administrative issues, changes in Keshet policies and strategic planning
- Planning for the opening day of Keshet, staff training, and holiday events

During the past year the Keshet Advisory Group assisted with the following:

- Assisted in creating lesson plan formats for teachers

- Created a self-reflective growth plan that can be used by teaching staff
- Supported teachers as needed
- Classroom help
- Read to students in Keshet library
- Created Keshet bulletin boards
- Participated in the fall teacher orientation as well as the open house event for Keshet parents to visit their student's classroom
- Assisted Keshet with the upcoming Mitzvah Day event

Members of KAG have continued to play a role in overseeing the three-year grant awarded to Congregation Beth Israel and Temple Beth Or in Everett from the Samis Foundation. The Massa program's focus was to create transformative Jewish experiences for post B'nei Mitzvah students (8th through 11th grade). During the past year (year two of the program):

- Massa Students met during the year to learn and have fun together as they continued to focus on Israeli history, geography, people, current events, and environmentalism and climate work being done in Israel.
- Fundraising has been an important component of this program which helped students earn necessary funds to participate in an upcoming trip and most students have earned funds by babysitting, yard cleanup, helping during b'nei mitzvahs and at designated fundraisers for the Massa program.

As June approaches and the program's second year closes, students will have participated in 18 monthly classes led by Gaby Mayers from CBI and Rabbi Rachel Kort from Temple Beth Or.

Initially we had planned for students to travel to Israel for 2 weeks for an Israeli experience, however, due to the Hamas massacre on Israel October 7, 2023, Massa students will be traveling to Spain and Portugal to step back in time to experience the Jewish heritage of those two countries.

Year Three will have a different focus. The Massa Support Team is exploring the idea of visiting other religious groups in our local communities (i.e. Sikhs, Catholics, B'hai, Greek Church, etc) to discuss commonalities/differences among religions but with the emphasis of finding opportunities to work together. Additionally, our goal during the final year of this program is for Massa students to begin mentoring the next cohort of kids preparing to join CBI's middle school youth group, JEMS. Our goal is for the students to become youth leaders and assist in planning events and activities for the final year.

LIBRARY COMMITTEE

Co-Chairs: Joan Wayne and Rob Lopresti

The library collection is strong. Thanks to suggestions from Tamar Clarke we continue to add new books to our children's and teen's collection. We are not accepting new donations to the adult library at this time.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Chair: Susan Mahar

Committee Members: Becki Van Glubt, Miriam Davids, Melissa Schapiro, Cierra Burkill

Board Liaison: Miriam Davids

Events: This has been a year of transitions. We lost some members of the committee that had been pillars on our team. Our co-chair, Ann Suloway, recently stepped down to make room for concentrating on other projects. Other members of this committee – Joan Wayne, Sarah Witte and Erin Cohen also moved on to other places within our community and they all will be missed. Our loss is their gain. Thank you for all the work you have done. Welcome Cierra Burkill to the committee! We look forward to working with you in the coming year.

We had two events this year. Our annual ice cream social and taco night in February. We acted as greeters and provided the Oneg for the High Holidays.

Ongoing: We continue to strive to welcome new members and those interested in membership at services and by personal outreach. This year we will be changing some of our processes and hope to be ambassadors for those joining and those that may be interested in learning more about membership. Welcoming new members and supporting their integration into our community is something that is a goal for our committee. We are a small but mighty group and welcome anybody who might like to join our committee.

This has been a year of growth as Beth Israel has welcomed 44 new member units to our congregation so far, this fiscal year and we have a total of 307 family members.

The committee would like to thank Rabbi Samuels, Sarah Cobb, and members of the Board for their continued support in the welcoming process.

ONEG COMMITTEE

Co-Chairs: Joan Wayne and Sarah Witte

Attendance at services seems to be increasing and congregants are enjoying sharing a nosh or meal. The upstairs kitchen is functioning and stocked with oneg supplies so hosting is easy. The list of assigned hostess dates will be coming out soon.

PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE

Co-Chairs: Melissa Schapiro and Emily Weiner

Committee Members: Erin Cohen, Sara Geballe, Cherryne Kravitz, Dan Raas, Andrea Shupack, Ann Suloway.

Mission: The Program Committee provides meaningful Jewish learning and experiences through our programs to the CBI and wider communities. We aim to use programming in a variety of ways, depending on the nature of each event we plan, to accomplish one or more of the following:

- build and strengthen the CBI community
- welcome students involved with Hillel
- attract unaffiliated Jews to CBI
- build relationships with the broader community

Events in 2023-24FY brought congregants and non-congregants together for:

- Two concerts: Mark Rubin and Old-World Klezmer Duo
- Two visual art exhibitions & artist talks (by CBI members Linda Hirsh and Sarah Bauman—continuing through summer 2024)
- Talk by Marsha Lederman, author of *Kiss the Red Stairs* (in collaboration with Village Books and Wolpow Institute of WWU)
- Dec. 25th Chinese Dinner/Movie (members only)
- Beit Café (members only, plus friends)
- Film and Zoom discussion with creators of *Kaddish for Bernie Madoff* (members only)
- Wine tasting (members only, plus friends)
- Cooking class (members only)
- “Falafel & Film” showing of *On the Map* for Yom Ha’azmaut (Israeli Independence Day)
- One Whatcom discussion (supporting Social Action Committee lead)

We were especially pleased that different events have brought different attendees, including some members who rarely come to CBI activities.

Plans for upcoming year include:

- Outdoor community experience
- Concert by Red Threads
- Continuation of the visual art exhibitions, featuring two additional CBI members

- Torah Cycle concert by Andrea Shupack with other musicians
- Dec. 25th Chinese Dinner/Movie/light Hanukkah candles (first night)
- Beit Café
- Wine tasting and cooking class

Event planning for 2024-25 will be guided by success of previous events, responses to the member survey we conducted in the spring of 2024, and opportunities available because speakers or musicians are planning to be in the Pacific Northwest.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Chairs: Tammy Dixon and Dan Ohms

This past year has been an exceptionally busy one for the Safety and Security Committee. To start, the committee chair position transferred from Brooke Kassen to co-chairs, Dan Ohms and Tammy Dixon. Thank you, Brooke, for dedicating your time and energy to leading this committee.

The S&S team has been busy updating and creating a more comprehensive emergency response plan to include everything from earthquakes to active threats. We were fortunate to acquire the help of Racquel Vernola, a national expert in creating these types of policies, who has donated her time to help with this essential task. Since October we have been working closely with a variety of first responders, especially law enforcement, to set up standards and protocols in the event of an emergency. We have also been keeping tabs on the Hillel group at Western Washington University, meeting with the Western Police Chief and staff to try and help Jewish students feel safe on campus.

The S&S committee has hosted several events this past year, going over first-aid/Stop the Bleed, CPR, and Defibrillator training for CBI staff, Board Members and Congregants, led by our own Dan Ohms. Earlier this month we also had the Whatcom County Sheriff's Office out to discuss de-escalation, crime prevention and active threat response.

We have worked with the CBI Board of Directors to address changes in our security company and made appropriate adjustments to our current budget to adequately address these. The Safety and Security Committee is continuing to work towards making our community feel safe and appreciates the support we have received in doing this.

SCRIP

The scrip program has been raising funds for Beth Israel for many years. It is easy to participate. During the Covid crisis participation dropped and has not come back to pre-Covid amounts. To

find out more about the scrip program or to purchase scrip contact Joan Wayne
jawayne2@gmail.com.

SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE

Chair: Linda Blackwell

Committee Members: Peggy Hanley, Minda Rae Amiran, Jerome Rosen, Nancy Auerbach, Gloria Lebowitz, Joan Wayne, Binnie Perper, Corinne Gimbel- Levine, and Howard Sharfstein

The Social Action committee is recruiting a new person to chair or co-chair this committee. All activities except food drives are on hold until a new chair is found.

Please consider taking on this leadership role to advocate for social justice.

The Social Action committee completed many projects this past year:

- In July of 2023 we hosted an ONE WHATCOM EVENT. Participating groups were *Congregation Beth Israel*, *The Chardi Kala project* (The Sikh Community), *Connect Ferndale*, and *Better Together (Lynden)*. The goal of this dinner event was to support each other on anti-racist issues. Speakers included *Swil Kamin*, representing indigenous peoples and Rabbi Samuels. When approached to hold the event with Kamalla Kaur (Chardi Kala project) and One Whatcom the social action committee was enthusiastic. We were so grateful that anti-racist groups in Whatcom County wanted to honor Holocaust survivor Noemi Ban (z') and offer support to our Jewish community in the face of rising anti-semitism. We found allies and friends in the Whatcom County communities.
- In the fall the committee gathered food donations at the High Holidays. Once again, the congregants of Beth Israel were very generous. The donations to the Bellingham food bank were \$430 in cash with over 100 lbs of food. The Food Hills Food Bank in Kendall received \$190 plus over 120 lbs of food. The Annual Interfaith Coat drive took place in October. Ten bags of coats with numerous hats and mittens knitted by the CBI knitting group were donated.
- At the end of October, the social action committee mailed approximately 200 postcards encouraging voting in Ohio on reproductive freedom. On the ballot was an amendment to protect the right to make personal health care decisions. This letter writing project was done in coordination with the Ohio Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism. It felt wonderful that this amendment passed.
- Later in January 2024 the committee held a social action book group discussion of Deborah E Lipstadt's book *Antisemitism Here and Now*. This was attended by 15 people on Zoom.
- Finally, members of the social action committee volunteered on Mitzvah Day Projects of 2024.