



CONGREGATION
BETH ISRAEL

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2025 HESHVAN/KISLEV/TEVET 5786

THE SHUL SHOFAR

VOL. 30, NO. 2 * Congregation Beth Israel * Bellingham, WA 98229 * bethisraelbellingham.org * (360) 733-8890

An Evening with Yiscah Smith

BY CHERRYNE KRAVITZ



Planting Seeds of the Divine
Torah Commentaries to Cultivate Your Spiritual Practice | YISCAH SMITH

Israeli author Yiscah Smith will be speaking at CBI on **Wednesday, November 19 at 7:00 pm** about her new book, *Planting Seeds of the Divine: Torah Commentaries to Cultivate Spiritual Practice*. Yiscah is a beloved teacher of Jewish spiritual texts and practices at the Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem; as well as on Applied Jewish

Spirituality, an online Jewish studies platform.

Some of her inspiration comes from the Piaseczna Rebbe (Rabbi Kalonymus Kalmish Shapira), who was the rabbi of the Warsaw ghetto where he wrote a set of spiritual diaries that he hid from the Nazis when he recognized the end of the Warsaw ghetto was near. He sadly perished in the Holocaust, but the diaries were saved.

Yiscah Smith also derives much spiritual nurturing from her garden at her home in Jerusalem. She studied at Yeshivas in Jerusalem at an earlier time in her life, but now calls herself post-denominational.

In this book, she weaves together her love of study of Jewish texts, Hasidic thought, and experience as a meditation teacher, all with a set of new eyes on the Torah as a spiritual path.

Yiscah Smith gifts us with an immersion in the Mikvah of Torah that fills us with light and inspiration. There is a stated and unstated

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FROM THE RABBI

The Oil That Shouldn't Have Lasted



Every year when Chanukah comes around, I think about how strange it is that we call it the "Festival of Lights" and

not the "Festival of Victory." After all, the Maccabees defeated the mighty Greek army, reclaimed the Temple, and restored Jewish sovereignty for the first time in centuries. Yet when the rabbis later told the story, they downplayed the military heroism and elevated a quieter miracle: a single cruse of oil that burned for eight days.

It's one of the more subtle acts of rabbinic editing in our tradition — taking a story about power and turning it into a story about perseverance.

There's a striking midrash that expands on that moment. It says that when the Maccabees entered the desecrated Temple, they didn't just find it in ruins; it reeked of defeat. The altar stones were overturned, the lamps shattered. The people, the text says, were "exhausted of heart." What they needed most wasn't another battle — it was proof that holiness could

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- Results of the World Zionist Congress Elections, page 4
- Faces in Our Community: Tracey and Rick Levine, page 8



From the President...

My Heart Is Full



As I sit down to write, the High Holy Days have just drawn to a close — and my heart is full. Over these past few weeks, our

sanctuary was alive with prayer, learning, and the simple joy of being together. I was reminded again and again of the incredible community that CBI is.

What moved me most was the many ways people showed up.

- Congregants who studied and prepared to read Torah and Haftorah for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.
- Our choir, led so beautifully by Andrea, elevating the services with their voices.
- A thoughtful Yom Kippur study session where attendees leaned into *teshuvah* together.
- The Book of Jonah read in both English and Hebrew by community members.
- And in the kitchen on Yom Kippur afternoon — volunteers slicing bagels, washing fruit, and creating generous platters so we could break the fast as one community.
- Our Membership Committee and Board greeting each of you,

offering prayer books, and being a steady, welcoming presence.

I also joined the first day of Keshet Religious School. We kicked off with a pancake breakfast for students, families, and the Keshet team — the social hall buzzing with new-year energy. During *tefillah*, (the weekly prayer session), students, parents, and teachers were singing, stretching, and practicing gratitude. It was a beautiful reminder that our community is multigenerational, vibrant, and growing.

I told Rabbi that watching everyone participate in their own way filled me up. As I shared on Erev Rosh Hashanah, my hope is that every person who walks through our doors feels at home — able to take a deep breath and know they're among friends. That is the heart of CBI.

I hope you feel that warmth whenever you come to CBI — whether it's for services, a program, adult learning, mahjong, knitting, or bringing your children to Keshet. If you're looking for a way to connect more deeply or to feel more "at home," I'd love to talk.

I'm always here for you.

You can reach me at erin.cohen@bethisraelbellingham.org

ERIN



CONGREGATION BETH ISRAEL

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The Shul Shofar

Volume 30, Number 2
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Deadline for submission of all articles and calendar events for the January/February issue is DECEMBER 8. Call the office for more information.

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From the Keshet Center for Jewish Learning

Keshet Updates

BY VICTORIA MAYERS, KESHER CO-DIRECTOR

October 5 was Keshet's first day of school, which went extraordinarily well. Families enjoyed a pancake breakfast, socialized with CBI Board Members who attended the open house, listened to a newly established security policy for Keshet, and visited classrooms to participate in activities. Adding to the excitement of the first day of Hebrew school, each class visited the synagogue's *Sukkah* for which students created decorations, said the blessings, and some even enjoyed their snacks inside the structure. See photos on page 9.

Keshet Needs Volunteers

At the time of this writing, we still need more readers for our students during library time. Volunteers need to arrive by 10:15 am and stay until noon. Books are pre-selected by Victoria; all teachers bring students to the

Keshet library and remain with their class throughout the duration of their time slot. Readers are never left alone with students. Keshet kids really enjoy being read to, so please consider joining the team and come in to read.

Plenty of Latkes = Chanukah Party

The Keshet admin team is coordinating a latke-making party on Saturday, December 13, starting at 3:00 pm. These collaborative cooking/baking parties are extremely fun with people sharing stories, jokes, and laughter as we make latkes together. Please come join the fun.

This year's Chanukah party on December 14 will begin earlier, at 11:30 am, and conclude at 1:30 pm. Planning has begun and we need several volunteers to assist with setting up, cleaning up, monitoring the food tables, and helping with activities like arts and crafts.

How To Volunteer

To help with latkes, the Chanukah party, or reading to Keshet kids, contact Victoria Mayers at Victoria.mayers@bethisraelbellingham.org



Synagogue 411

Archives:

Tim Baker, (360) 305-6945

Care:

Elsie Sokol, (360) 393-9618

Sarah Witte, (360) 296-3058

Membership:

Sue Mahar (360) 319-5314

Library, Scrip:

Joan Wayne, (360) 676-8939

Gartner Scholarship Fund:

Carol Robinson, (360) 671-3852

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Our 5786 Keshar Staff — Part 2



Sydney Wolfson (he/him) is one of two teachers for the **eighth-grade** class. He and his family have been part of Congregation Beth Israel since 2015, where he attended Keshar and was later a madrich in the eighth-grade classroom. In his free time, he loves to cook and explore the out-

doors, whether that be on skis, hiking, or via kayak.



Jordan Verkh-Haskell (they/them) is the Building Sub for Keshar. They have been a member of CBI since 2011 and attended Keshar up until their B'nei Mitzvah in 2015. They love playing the piano and have also been really interested in Japanese food and culture over the past few years. They

are hoping to travel there soon.



Orly Ziv-Mazim (she/her) is part of the **seventh-grade** team this year. Born and raised on a kibbutz in Israel, she moved to the PNW thirty years ago and raised her kids, Elan and Neri, here in Bellingham and at Beth Israel. She looks forward to mutual learning.



Hannah King (she/her) is teaching the **seventh-grade class**. She has been attending Beth Israel for two years and is excited to participate in the Keshar program! Her favorite hobbies are reading, cooking, photography, creative writing, yoga, hiking, playing games of all kinds, and, most

of all, spending time with her husband, Andrew, and baby boy, Julian.



Scott Foss (he/him) is the **second/third-grade** Keshar teacher. He has been involved with CBI since 2023. He has obtained a BA in Visual Arts and Creative Writing, and a Master's in Elementary Education. In his free time, he enjoys drawing comics and designing tabletop games.

Gayle Kinney (she/her) is now teaching the **fourth/fifth-grade** students. [See previous issue.]

Results of the World Zionist Congress Elections

BY DAN RAAS

Liberal Judaism in the United States had the best showing ever in the recent delegate election for the World Zionist Congress (WZC). Thanks to everyone who voted. Vote Reform (the URJ slate) led all other organizations with 47,648 votes, which netted 33 delegates to the WZC.

Mercaz (Conservative/Masorti slate) came in third overall with 27,765 votes, yielding 19 delegates. In fifth place overall was HaTikvah (the progressive slate) with 11,505 votes, earning 8 delegates. Other slates allied with the URJ received smaller vote totals and single-digit delegates.

Orthodox and associated slates received a majority of the 224,969 valid votes and a majority of the 152 delegates allotted to the United States. Those results were delayed by the need to examine tens of thousands of ballots cast mostly for Orthodox slates that were challenged for such violations as voting more than once, hav-

ing a dead or underage person named as the voter, using the same credit card for more than five ballots and similar accusations. One slate was disqualified for repeated violations of the rules.

Voting in Canada resulted in 10 of 19 delegates from groups allied with the Reform movement.

The thirty-ninth World Zionist Congress meeting dates in Jerusalem are October 28-30, 2025. 525 delegates elected from around the world will meet: 29% from the United States, 38% from Israel, and 33% from other countries in the Diaspora. WZC allocates over \$1 billion (US) each year to non-profits based in Israel and internationally. The funds come mostly from Israeli taxpayers, Jewish federations in the Diaspora and private donations. Members of WZC vote on the allocations.

The next election is scheduled for 2030.

The full report by the American Zionist Organization is at tinyurl.com/3yvpdarw

Eight Lights

ACROSS

- 1 Skagit Valley flower
 6 Classic soft drink
 10 Degrees for poets
 14 Common dress shape
 15 Panache
 16 Light
 17 Also-ran's concession
 18 "Tale as _____", Beauty and the Beast classic
 20 Light
 22 That, in Oaxaca
 23 Fishing tool
 24 Federal tax collection agcy.
 25 Build
 27 With 49 across, this season's holiday
 31 Restaurant chain P.F. _____
 35 Hawaiian island
 36 Title for DDE
 38 "2 Cool 4 ____" (BTS album)
 39 Rat-____ (drumming sound)
 40 Rusty on the diamond
 42 Teensy
 43 Fat molecule
 45 Letters inscribed on a crucifix
 46 College bball league
 47 Short-hand pros

49 With 27 across, this season's holiday

51 Pasty person?

53 Sheep's bleat

54 Light

57 Long-time procedural drama

58 Pretentious, inflated speech

62 Coveted airplane assignment

65 Famous sled dog

66 Priceless?

67 The Emerald Isle

68 ____ Pradesh (India's most populous state)

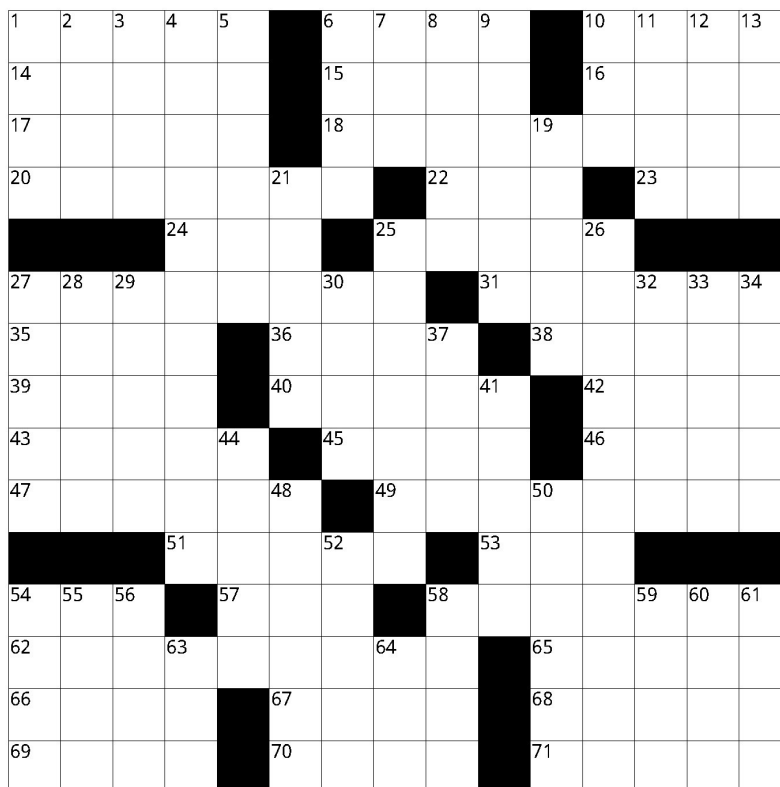
69 Model Banks

70 Procrastinator's promise

71 Light

DOWN

- 1 Mermaid feature
 2 Uma's role in "The Producers"
 3 Simba or Mufasa
 4 Enacting
 5 Czar known as "the Great"
 6 Light
 7 Building wing
 8 "S.N.L." alum Bill
 9 "Be right with you!"
 10 Treyf diner staple
 11 Light
 12 Paintballs, e.g.



13 Went fast

19 Goldman's partner

21 Replies to an invitation

25 Rigby of song

26 Relaxing with bubbles

27 Young horses

28 Totally wipe out

29 Circle or square

30 Intro drawing class

32 "Take it down a ____"

33 Implied

34 ____ a fox

37 Ride the waves

41 "The Hobbit" hero

44 "La ____ Vita"

48 Figures (out)

50 Two-syllable unit (latin)

52 "Old

MacDonald" refrain

54 Huck Finn's transport

55 Light

56 River of Belgium

58 Bingo call

59 Kind of sax

60 Light

61 Civil wrong

63 Meadow

64 Not prone to crushes, briefly

Deadline for *My Jewish Journey Anthology* Extended

We have received beautifully written and wonderfully meaningful submissions to this new publication, and we believe there are others in our congregation that should be included. We are extending the deadline to December 31, 2025...just because we know the next few months are busy.

Be broad in your imagination and interpretation of the theme. While family histories have an important role to play, we are looking for more personal to you interpretations than simply charting factual history.

Since we want to include everyone, we are thinking of a youth section, so encourage your teenagers to

write a story — how becoming a B'nei Mitzvah made them think about being Jewish, for instance.

Aim for between 600 and 1500 words, or 3-12 pages, double spaced. Please give your story a title. Send it to holly.witte@bethisraelbellingham.org

AN EVENING WITH YISCAH SMITH

Continued from page 1



current in this study of Torah. We can each be in conversation and experience intimate encounters with the Divine Source within us and around us, each of us in our own individual way. Yiscah's hope is that a seed of this consciousness will be awakened and nurtured through the book.

Planting Seeds of the Divine is a collection of commentaries on the 47 parshiot (chapters) of the Torah, some

of which are double portions. They are ordered according to the five books — Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Each chapter is a stand-alone, whether it is to accompany the weekly *parsha*, or as a source of inspiration at any time. She begins each commentary with a selected verse from each chapter, highlighting a spiritual quality. Then, there is a brief summary of the Torah portion as it unfolds from the previous one to contextualize the highlighted verses. What follows this summary are renowned Biblical commentaries throughout the millennia and sources such as the Babylonian Talmud, Midrash, and expansive rabbinical Biblical exegesis through such luminaries as Rashi, Nachmanides, and Sforno to name just a few. The next section contains spiritually infused writings of Hasidic and neo-Hasidic masters that address each *parsha*'s spiritual deeper dimensions, as well as Yiscah's own understanding which has fresh and new insights. Lastly, there are experiential, emotional, and heart-centered practices such as visuali-

zations and breath work to help cultivate the spiritual teachings. Each chapter is meant to take us beyond the intellect to go deeper and deeper and touch our soul through the heart, body, and emotions.

The book has been highly acclaimed in reviews by the Jewish Book Council as well as *The Times of Israel*, to name a few. This is her second book, her first is entitled *Forty Years in the Wilderness, My Journey to Authentic Living*. Yiscah hopes to cast a wide net of readership to be inclusive of Jews, non-Jews, beginners and experienced Torah learners, as well as clergy.

On a personal note, several of us in the congregation have firsthand experience with the author. Andrea Shupack, our Cantorial Soloist, says, "Yiscah is always a joy to study with and learn from. She brings much passion and depth to her teaching. When I studied weekly with her at Pardes no matter what mood I arrived into class, I always came out with new insights, my heart more open and my soul more nourished. I study with Yiscah in zoom classes, delving into the spiritual diaries of the twentieth century Piaseczna Rebbe, and now her latest book. I am always amazed and inspired by the pure delight, enthusiasm and fire I derive about Jewish spirituality from spending time with her."

The talk is free and open to members and non-members. Please register for the event at bethisraelbellingham.org/author-yiscah-smith-at-cbi/ or scan the QR code if you are planning on attending. Donations are entirely voluntary but appreciated. Books will also be on sale at the event. Yiscah is an inspirational speaker, bringing us into her warmth and enthusiasm for the material, Judaism, and the Jewish spiritual path. Hope to see you all there.



Classic Potato Latkes

BY MELISSA CLARK (NEW YORK TIMES)

2 large Russet potatoes (about 1 pound), scrubbed and cut lengthwise into quarters

1 large onion (8 ounces), peeled and cut into quarters

2 large eggs

½ cup all-purpose flour

1 teaspoon fine sea salt, plus more for sprinkling

1 teaspoon baking powder

½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Safflower or other oil, for frying

Step 1

Using a food processor with a coarse grating disc, grate the potatoes and onion. Transfer the mixture to a clean dishtowel and squeeze and wring out as much of the liquid as possible.

Step 2

Working quickly, transfer the mixture to a large bowl. Add the eggs, flour, salt, baking powder and pepper, and mix until the flour is absorbed.

Step 3

In a medium heavy-bottomed pan over medium-high heat, pour in about ¼ inch of the oil. Once the oil is hot (a drop of batter placed in the pan should sizzle), use a heaping tablespoon to drop the batter into the hot pan, cooking in batches. Use a spatula to flatten and shape the drops into discs. When the edges of the latkes are brown and crispy, about 5 minutes, flip. Cook until the second side is deeply browned, about another 5 minutes. Transfer the latkes to a paper-towel-lined plate to drain and sprinkle with salt while still warm. Repeat with the remaining batter.

The Kvelling Corner

Welcome to our new members!

- **Lyssa and Dan Anolik** – Bellingham, daughter: **Arielle** (11)
- **Hope Corbin and Drew Cherry** – Bellingham, daughter: **Tessa** (15)
- **Meg Delzell** – Bellingham
- **Neal Keeshin** – Anacortes
- **Mike and Whitney Queisser** – Bellingham, daughter: **Eva** (3)
- **Russell Silverman** – Bellingham

Annual Chanukah Party

Come celebrate Chanukah on Sunday, December 14 at 11:30 am. The party is open to the whole congregation and our friends.

Time: 11:30pm to 1:30pm

Where: CBI Social Hall

Food and Activities: Celebrate with latkes, jelly donuts, the annual soup cookoff, Chanukah-themed crafts and games, and the annual Dreidel Spin-off (*If you have the trophy from last year, please return it.*)

Support: If you are interested in helping, please contact Keshet Co-Director Victoria Mayers at victoria.mayers@bethisraelbellingham.org or Sarah Cobb at office@bethisraelbellingham.org

Chanukah Candle Fundraiser: Boxes of candles will be for sale at CBI beginning on Sunday November 16 and available as long as supply lasts. Cost \$5 each box. Total amount goes to help with the party expenses.



Jerome Rosen, M.Ed

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A Life of Giving: Tracey and Rick Levine

BY MINDA RAE AMIRAN

When Tracey got on the bus taking high school students to orientation for a trip to Israel in 1981, there was only one empty seat. It was next to Rick, a boy she remembered dimly from B'nai B'rith events that brought Jewish kids from Tucson, where she lived, together with some from Phoenix, Rick's hometown.

They talked all the way to the orientation meeting, from New York City to Pennsylvania, and were assigned to the same group for the 6-week Israel visit. Despite living in different cities and going to different colleges, they haven't been separated since.

It was not hard for them to see one another on weekends when they lived two hours apart, but harder when Tracey went to USC for Broadcast Journalism and Rick to Stanford to study Biology. Taking a gap year after college, they married just before moving to LA, where Rick went to UCLA Medical School and Tracey got a dream job working for a company that produced TV sports and entertainment programs for networks.

Tracey specialized in golfing events, work that took her all over the country. When, after four years, Rick got a residency in pediatric medicine at Children's Hospital in Seattle, Tracey's employers suggested that she go freelance as an associate director. To this day she still gets her choice of associate director jobs, serving as right hand to directors and producers, connecting with sponsors and announcers, editing videos, coordinating timing, and dealing with on-air emergencies — such as when the TV screens went black in New Orleans in the middle of a broadcast. While Tracey still favors golf, working mainly for the Golf Channel, and sometimes for the Masters Tournament for CBS, she also engages with other sports events, including the World Feed for the Super Bowl every February.

When you consider that Rick is a busy physician, Tracey has a demanding job, and that they have raised two children while also filling their lives with an extraordi-



Tracey and Rick Levine

nary amount of public service, you have to wonder how they have managed it. It is through the clear priorities they adopted at the outset, never allowing their work to be all-encompassing. Their son, Jeffrey, was born in Seattle, and Tracey could use the flexibility of her work schedule for time to nurture him. Upon completing his residency, Rick looked for a pediatric practice that valued the family life of its doctors and nurses; he hadn't expected to find himself in a small city like Mount Vernon, but that was where he discovered a practice that allowed him time off to care for Jeffrey and their Mount Vernon-born daughter, Hannah, when Tracey was away on a job.

In Mount Vernon, Tracey and Rick soon found themselves embraced by the small, warm community of CBI members living there, whom they cherish to this day. Upon joining CBI, they began driving the children to Keshet classes and other activities in Bellingham twice a week. In addition Tracey joined the Keshet Committee, and Rick's began teaching Torah stories to third and fourth graders, which he did for several years.

Continued on page 12



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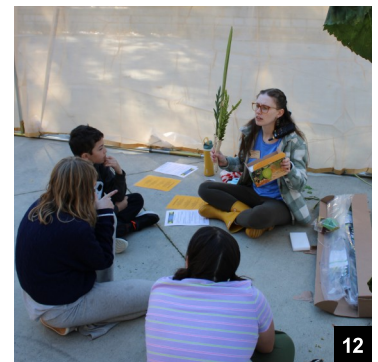
9



10



11



12

1. *Tashlich* at Lake Padden. 2. Flipping pancakes on the first day of Keshet. 3. Friends on the first day of Keshet. 4. Keshet opening *tefillah*. 5. Families getting blessed on the first day of Keshet. 6. Teacher Jason Benhaim and his son, Oren. 7. to 10. Building the *sukkah*. 11. and 12. Leah Bordman teaching students how to shake the *lulav*.

Birthdays

NOVEMBER 2025

11/01 Gerald Manganaro
 11/01 Erin Uloth
 11/01 Rachel Witter
 11/01 David Ziegler
 11/02 Henry Honeycutt (13th)
 11/02 Max Nahani Braunstein (16th)
 11/02 Lev Shuster
 11/04 Samuel Kennedy (20th)
 11/04 Patrick McGarrity
 11/04 David M. Schlitt
 11/06 Rodney Shainbom
 11/07 Steve James
 11/08 Rob Grossman
 11/10 Scott Foss
 11/10 Urtica Goldman
 11/11 Stephanie Korn
 11/11 Wendy Schwartz
 11/13 Peter Auerbach
 11/13 Alex Bokser
 11/13 Miriam Schwartz
 11/14 Jessica Galbraith
 11/14 Raphael Judah Schapiro (25th)
 11/14 Shoshana Ruth Schapiro (25th)
 11/14 Isaac Solomon Schapiro (25th)
 11/16 Kristan Brennan
 11/16 Jane Relin
 11/16 Toby Sonneman
 11/17 Bonnie Stone
 11/17 Jay Wolfman
 11/18 Rita Spitzer

11/19 Anita Meyer
 11/20 Erin Cohen
 11/20 Willow Corey-DuBow (22nd)
 11/20 Francisco Leyva
 11/23 Mike Altman
 11/23 Dan Anolik
 11/23 Nina Stein
 11/23 Maya Stein (12th)
 11/25 Sylvan Weinstein (15th)
 11/26 Tamar Clarke
 11/26 Jonathan Hillel
 11/27 Kathleen Bell
 11/27 Elkah Katz
 11/29 Arundel Pritchett
 11/29 Xavier Sommers (14th)
 11/29 Ellianah (Elly)
 Tilland-Stafford (17th)
 11/30 Orion Dixon (17th)
 11/30 Priscilla Feld
 11/30 Rochelle LaPlante
 11/30 Sarah Witte

DECEMBER 2025

12/01 Juna Blue Martinez (11th)
 12/02 Karen Bailor
 12/04 Elizabeth (Betsy) Becker
 12/04 Rachel LeWitte
 12/04 Rebecca Oliver
 12/07 Alyssa Diller (25th)
 12/07 Eden Kinney (18th)
 12/08 Benjamin Becker

12/08 Robin Curtis
 12/08 Levi Goodwin (10th)
 12/09 Miriam (Mira)
 Schott McCurdy (5th)
 12/10 Trisha Adelstein
 12/10 Lia Kuenzel
 12/11 Marvin Wayne
 12/13 Sheldon B. Pravda
 12/13 Charles Redell
 12/13 Rory Verkh-Haskell (20th)
 12/14 Laurel Peak
 12/15 Niall O Murchu
 12/16 Corinne Gimbel-Levine
 12/18 David Strich
 12/19 Peter Burkill
 12/19 Cathie Diller
 12/19 Shira Gold
 12/19 Cinda Zemel
 12/22 Michelle Anderson
 12/22 Jennifer Seltz
 12/23 John Sternlicht
 12/26 David Halpern
 12/27 Philip Buri
 12/27 Jacob Garretson
 12/28 Ella Keefe
 12/28 Mark Pomerantz
 12/29 Andrew Schwarz
 12/30 Shawn Clarke
 12/30 Wendy Westgate

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Nu? Interested in Yiddish?

So, you remember your elders speaking in Yiddish when they didn't want you to understand what they were saying? Are you curious to know what their secrets were?

Do you have old letters from your Yiddish-speaking relatives you'd love to be able to read?

Want to impress folks on the street on your next visit to Brooklyn's Crown Heights or Borough Park, or to Pico-Robertson in L.A.?

Or are you just interested in the amazing flowering of Yiddish culture that is now being revived by folks like your fellow congregants who come to the *Yiddisheh Ringele* (the Yiddish Circle)?

If so, please contact Hank Levine, who chairs Ringele, at HLevineMD@aol.com. We meet online on alternate Thursdays from 1:30-3:00 pm, although there is some interest in resuming in-person meetings and in evening meeting times. The next meeting is on September 11. All of what we say in Yiddish is translated into English, and all the Yiddish is transliterated using English letters — we don't use Hebrew letters at all.

No proficiency in Yiddish is needed! Interest and/or curiosity are enough! All of us are still learning, and several are beginners.

Kum! Du velst zayn hartzik farbetn! (Come! You'll be warmly welcomed!)

Anniversaries

Nov 7	Sarah and Norman DesRosiers	#21
Nov 16	George and Fay Farkas	#29
Nov 22	Jesse Math and Cat Toren	#8
Nov 23	Iris and Kevin Parker	#50
Nov 25	Solomon and Emily Faulk	#18
Dec 9	Stu and Judy Berman	#51
Dec 12	Natalie and Steven Schram	#10
Dec 15	Jeffrey and Priscilla Feld	#45
Dec 20	Sue and Hans-Rudolf Guenter-Schlesinger	#41
Dec 21	Corey Welch and Judy Diamond	#39
Dec 21	Louis and Marcia Lippman	#60
Dec 22	Terri Weiner and Rob Lopresti	#49
Dec 24	Yehuda and Kathi Fox	#6
Dec 28	Emma and Matthew Hawthorne	#14
Dec 28	Jesse and Nicky Naiman	#21
Dec 29	Armando and Diana Lindner	#60
Dec 30	Joan and Marv Wayne	#54
Dec 31	Tracy and Cathie Diller	#28

Did we miss your anniversary? Call the office at (360) 733-8890 or email office@bethisraelbellingham.org with the month, day, and year of your special day.

FROM THE RABBI

Continued from page 1

still live among them. That's what the light gave: not just illumination, but hope restored.

It's easy to see why the rabbis made that the centerpiece of Chanukah. They knew that military victories fade, but hope — that thin, trembling flame — needs to be rekindled every generation.

Our world could use that kind of light right now. There are days when it feels as though the oil is running out, when cynicism, conflict, or exhaustion seem to dim our collective

spirit. Chanukah reminds us that faith is not measured by how much fuel we have left, but by our willingness to strike the match anyway. Miracles, it turns out, are usually born from small acts of stubborn hope.

This year, when you light your menorah, whether surrounded by family, friends, or even by yourself, take a moment to notice how that first candle can make an entire room glow. It's a modest kind of miracle. No fanfare, no drumroll — just one wick defying the dark. I always forget how powerful that small act feels until I strike the match and drip a little wax on the tablecloth. Then it hits me: The simplest

moments often hold the deepest holiness.

So as we fry, sing, spin, and celebrate, let's also recommit to the quiet miracle of not giving up — to keep adding light where darkness feels inevitable. May your candles burn steadily, may your laughter be bright, and may your faith in goodness outlast the oil.

Chag Urim Sameach. May this Festival of Lights bring warmth, wonder, and renewed hope to you and all those you love.

RABBI JOSHUA SAMUELS

FACES IN OUR COMMUNITY

Continued from page 8

Rick also joined the boards of health-care-related organizations, while Tracey helped found the non-profit Children's Museum of Skagit County, now at the Outlet Mall in Burlington. Tracey explained that when they moved to Mount Vernon in 1995, there wasn't much for children to do. The museum, which is based on the model of interactive play for the whole family, was a labor of love. It took years of advocacy to raise the necessary funds and in-kind contributions. Opening at last in 2003, the museum now incorporates exhibits and children's activities 7 days a week, runs a preschool, and houses the Family Resource Center, which supports families in need with supplies from diapers to car-seats. It employs a director, three full-time staff, and several part-timers. Tracey is still an active board member and plans the museum's annual auction. Rick serves on its advisory council.

All this while, Rick was practicing at Skagit Pediatrics, an independent clinic, where he developed an interest in integrated patient health. In 2024, his clinic merged into the Skagit Regional Health network. While he retired from seeing children after almost 30 years, "retired" isn't the right word, because he still works with the larger network to develop a program that integrates behavioral health services into medical care. He also sits on a several health-related boards and committees. Being "somewhat retired," as he says, gives him more time to spend with his family, and in particular, to help his parents in Phoenix.

Tracy and Rick's children are now out in the world, of course. Jeffrey, 30, works as a global development consultant in Seattle, currently on a project for the Gates Foundation. He met his wife, Alexa, in Malawi; she is British, and teaches preschool. Their daughter, Maeve, was born this past

May 2 to doting grandparents.

Hannah, 27, has just graduated from Northwestern University in Chicago with a doctorate in pediatric occupational therapy. She has started her clinical work at an outpatient pediatric clinic there.

When Rick and Tracey came to Mount Vernon, they never thought they would spend the rest of their lives there. But they love the life they've built in the Skagit Valley. They both enjoy hiking, and Tracey plays tennis and teaches it to children at the Skagit Tennis Association. Their next "adventure," in their words, is to find a new puppy: their much-loved Portuguese Water Dog died after fifteen years as part of the family.

Most of all, they continue to make an enormous difference to the well-being of our region through their many, many hours of devoted service.

Cooking Class

It's time for another cooking class with Samantha Ferraro of Little Ferraro Kitchen!

Learn to make two kinds of lox and a couple shmears.

Where: Beth Israel kitchen

When: Sunday, December 7,
2025 4:00-6:00 pm

Who: Beth Israel members

How: Registration link will be
in the *Timbrel* soon

Cost: \$54/person
Space is limited



November/December 2025 Service Schedule

PLEASE NOTE: Friday evening services and Saturday Torah study will be *hybrid*, allowing congregants and visitors to worship or study in person, or attend via Zoom. **Except for B'nei Mitzvah, all Saturday morning services will be in-person only.**

Saturday, Nov. 1	10:30 am Contemplative Service	Saturday, Dec. 6	10:30 am Contemplative Service
Friday, Nov. 7	6:15 pm Kabbalat Shabbat Family service (7th Grade)	Friday, Dec. 12	6:15 pm Kabbalat Shabbat Service
Saturday, Nov. 8	9:30 am Torah Study (<i>Parashat Vayera</i>)	Saturday, Dec. 13	9:30 am Torah Study (<i>Parashat Vayeshev</i>)
Friday, Nov. 14	6:15 pm Kabbalat Shabbat Service		10:30 am Saturday Shabbat
Saturday, Nov. 15	11:00 am Tot Shabbat	Wednesday, Dec. 17	6:00 pm Fourth Night of Chanukah
Friday, Nov. 21	6:15 pm Kabbalat Shabbat Service	Friday, Dec. 19	6:15 pm Kabbalat Shabbat Service
Saturday, Nov. 22	9:30 am Torah Study (<i>Parashat Toledot</i>)	Saturday, Dec. 20	11:00 am Tot Shabbat
	10:30 am Conservative Lay Led Minyan	Friday, Dec. 26	7:30 pm Shabbat Shira
Friday, Nov. 28	7:30 pm Shabbat Shira	Saturday, Dec. 27	9:30 am Torah Study (<i>Parashat Vayigash</i>)
Saturday, Nov. 29	NO SERVICES AT CBI		10:30 am Conservative Lay Led Minyan
Friday, Dec. 5	6:15 pm Kabbalat Shabbat Family Service (6th Grade)		

Erin Cohen
Travel Designer



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Special Fund Donations

CAMP/YOUTH ACTIVITIES

IN HONOR OF:

The B'nei Mitzvahs of Ezra Shupack, Shoshana Samuels, and Naomi Pomerantz.

From: Cherynne Kravitz

CARE COMMITTEE

IN HONOR OF:

Sylvia Williams and her commitment to the garden at CBI.

From: Rick and Leslie Adelstein

ENDOWMENT FUND

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM:

Bruce and Becki Van Glubt

GARTNER HECHT SCHOLARSHIP FUND

IN MEMORY OF:

Our beloved friend and congregant, Emil Hecht.
From: The Sokol Family

Karen Sloss and David Nemens
Aline and Sid Wanne
Mark and Helen Packer
Bonnie Stone

IN MEMORY OF:

Dr. Emil Hecht

From: Jennifer McAfee
Craig Murakami
Alix Snyder
Bill and Robin Carr
Michelle Smilowitz
Terry Gallagher

GENERAL FUND

IN HONOR OF:

Shoshana's Bat-Mitzvah. Many blessings as you reach this special milestone.
From: The Ravitsky Family

IN MEMORY OF:

Bill Gimbel, brother of Corrine Gimbel-Levine.
From: Wendy and Ivan Light

In loving memory of Emil Hecht.

From: Marta & Craig Brand and the Landscaping Committee

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM:

Ted and Penny Schuman

Yahrzeit:

In memory of the Yahrzeit of Cecila, Nathan, and Arnold Loober.

From: Bernice Loober

JEMS YOUTH GROUP

IN MEMORY OF:

Kevin Donner's Father

From: Karen Sloss and David Nemens

RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

IN APPRECIATION OF:

With gratitude for the support surrounding our family during the funeral of Emil Hecht.
From: Tannia Hecht

Support for our family surrounding the passing of our Dad, Emil Hecht.

From: Mia and Todd Ellis

IN HONOR OF:

- Zack Frankel's marriage to Danielle Cohen-Shohet
- Audrey LaRoy and Peter Knitch's 70th birthday
- Shoshana Samuels' Bat Mitzvah

From: Peter and Rhoda Samuels

Thank you, Rabbi Samuels, for your help with our wedding. Our family felt truly welcomed.

From: Rachel LeWitt and Kelsey Thomas

- Shoshana Samuels' Bat Mitzvah

- Etyan Samuels' 16th birthday

From: Fran Levy

Thank you Rabbi Samuels for your *midrash* on antisemitism.

From: Richard Widerkehr

Shoshana Samuels' Bat Mitzvah

From: Dennis Math

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM:

Alan Roochvarg
Brenda Miller

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIP FUND

IN HONOR OF:

Shoshana Samuels' Bat Mitzvah.

From: Rita and Steve Spitzer



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Yahrzeits

Observances follow the Hebrew calendar, unless the secular date is requested, and are read on the Shabbat prior to the observance date.

Friday, November 7

Sephora Andresen	11/08
George Bernard Levine	11/08
Lily Swartz	11/10
Robert (Bob) Farkas	11/11
Otto V. Vohl	11/12
Phillip Fine	11/13

Friday, November 14

Samuel Hecht	11/15
Josephine D. Reilly	11/16
James T. Reilly	11/16
Irving Grossman	11/17
Hilda Meltzer	11/17
Sadie Neiburger Stolzoff	11/17
Henry (Hank) Gordon	11/18
Helen Skinner	11/18
Irene Till Hamilton	11/19
Rose Weitzman Price	11/19
Myer Avraham Goldberg	11/20
Melvin Goldberger	11/20
Sylvia Sulkin	11/20
Julian Lewis	11/21

Friday, November 21

Frances (Fran) Mishler	11/24
Esther Schwarz	11/24
Marvin Siegel	11/24
Leah (Lilly) Kleiman	11/25
Bud Robinson	11/25
Lenore Shankman	11/25
Rose Wick Eigen	11/26
Jack Sheinkopf	11/26
John Paschetag	11/28
Lanny "Bip" Sokol	11/28
Zelda Turovitz	11/28

Friday, November 28

Henri Benhaim	11/29
Dick Eigen	11/29
Louis Groper	11/30
Phyllis Heck	11/30
Bernard Shuster	12/01
Shirah Tziporah Kronenberg	12/02
Amy Margolis	12/02
Gladys Bloch	12/03
Donald Waldo Redell	12/03
Ida Zderic	12/03
Edith Jensen	12/04
Abraham Andrew Widerkehr	12/04

Friday, December 5

Aaron Bell	12/06
Samuel M. Pravda	12/06
Victor Geretz	12/07
Arthur Ingberman	12/07
Abram Stolzoff	12/07
Elaine Cohn	12/08
Jean Elsa Sloss	12/08
Sanford Thal	12/08
Frank Zderic	12/08
Mikel Luster	12/09
Marion Relin	12/09
Joseph Koplowitz	12/11
Ella M. Swindell	12/11
Marvin Mortimer Wolff	12/11
Robin Hoffman	12/12
Pearl Lilien	12/12
Harold Sharpe	12/12

Friday, December 12

Diane Lewis	12/13
Martin William Sternlicht	12/13
Frances Feiger	12/14

Rachel Jaffe	12/14
Judith F. Swindell	12/14
Richard Kite	12/15
John Lester	12/15
Lucille Rest	12/16
Solomon Schwartz	12/16
Alice Behrstock	12/17
Carol Zagnoli	12/17

Friday, December 19

Joseph Soode	12/20
Glinda Blackwell	12/21
Joel Corman	12/21
John J. Read	12/21
Leslie Spitzer	12/21
Max Spigelman	12/21
Nathan Loober	12/21
Sarah Patinkin	12/21
Stanley Alper	12/21
George Shaw	12/22
Jerry Roberts	12/22
John Jasper McGarrity	12/22
Bella Heller	12/23
Bernice Kaufman	12/23
Ray Redel	12/23
Joseph Kahan	12/24
Rodger E. Whitney	12/24
Ben Gordon	12/25
Richard Bloomfield	12/25
Beatrice Weiss	12/26
Benjamin David Glazer	12/26
William Zderic	12/26

Friday, December 26

Barry Zell	12/27
Mary Vermeda Paschetag	12/28
Nicole Russell	12/28
Robert Schultheiss	12/28
Ruth Robinson	12/28
Jack Miller	12/29
John Miller	12/29
Lois Looney	12/29
Cecile R. Gordon	12/31
Milton Kaufman	12/31
George Bikman	01/01
George Garmo	01/01
Ivan Senzon	01/01
Rudolf Reitz	01/01
Haskell David	01/02
Rachel Siegfried	01/02

In Memoriam

Zichronam l'vrachah ~ May their memories be for a blessing

We are saddened to share the news of the passing of a beloved member of our Beth Israel family, **Robert Emil Hecht**, who died at home surrounded by family on Friday, September 12, 2025. He was 84.

Emil is survived by his devoted wife of 54 years, Tannia; his children, Mia (Todd) and Avi (Corinne); and his five grandchildren, Josie, Vivi, Audrey, Eloise, and Ansel.

Emil grew up at Congregation Beth Israel and became the first student to celebrate a Bar Mitzvah here in 1954. Many years later, he returned to serve our community as President of the Board of Directors. Emil was also a proud supporter of Israel and of AIPAC.

In his spare time, Emil loved fishing, sailing, hiking, camping, and — most of all — being with his family. To know Emil was to love him.

THE SHUL SHOFAR

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SAVE THE DATE!



Fourth Night for Others

**Wednesday, December 17
at 6:00 pm**

Please save the date and join the
Beth Israel community in observing
Fourth Night for Others.

More details to follow in the *Timbre!*