

השופר haShofar

of DeKalb and Sycamore

Congregation Beth Shalom

820 Russell Road

DeKalb, IL 60115

CALENDAR

Friday, February 3	Shabbat Service	7:30 p.m.
Saturday, February 11	Shabbat Service	10:00 a.m.
	Tu B'Shevat	
Friday, February 17	Shabbat Potluck (dairy)	6:30 p.m.
Friday, March 3	Shabbat Service	7:30 p.m.
Thursday, March 9	Book Group	7:00 p.m.
Sunday, March 12	Megillah Reading	11:00 a.m.
	Potluck Lunch (dairy)	
	Purim Carnival	
Thursday, March 16	Adult Education Program	7:00 p.m.
Friday, March 24	Shabbat Potluck (meat)	6:30 p.m.



February-March 2017 Shevat-Adar 5777

Carol Zar, editor

Message from The President

Greetings to the members of Congregation Beth Shalom.

I wish you a happy new year of the Common Era, 2017 and hope this message finds you and yours in good health and spirits. With the coming year, we on the CBS Board, with the advice of Rabbi Barb, are undertaking the tasks of cleaning and refurbishing the basement and other areas of the congregation building to be more useful as well as warmer and more welcoming. We have begun by organizing a group to clean and sort through the materials in the downstairs storage closet that have accumulated for many years. We are also taking an inventory of all the furnishings and furniture in the basement. We hope to have this task well underway by the time of the next Shabbat potluck. While we certainly have some ideas for improving the look and utility of the building, any and all ideas that anyone in the congregation has for improvements would be very welcome. Feel free to come talk to, call or email me to let me know any ideas you have.

Time's passage brings changes to all things, and so I announce that Sharon Scott, who has cleaned and helped maintain our community building for many years, has decided to retire. She has always been diligent and flexible in her work, willing to vary her schedule to help prepare the building for holidays, meals, events, and festivals, often at short notice. I worked with her for years as building and grounds chair and as president and always found her pleasant to work with. She had a real affection for us that transcended mere employment. She will be missed, and we at CBS wish her the best of fortune in all her new endeavors.

In the coming months, we have several activities to offer:

- We will have a Shabbat services on February 3 and March 3 at 7:30 p.m.
- On February 11, we will join together for a Shabbat morning Service at 10:00 a.m.
- We will have a Shabbat potluck (dairy meal) on February 17 and another on March 24 at 6:30 p.m. The latter will be meat meal.
- The book group will meet on March 9 at 7:00 p.m.
- On March 12, we celebrate the **Festival of Purim** with a Megillah reading, a carnival, and a potluck lunch.
- Rabbi Barb Moskow will present an adult education program at 7:00 p.m. on March 16.

As always, if you have any questions, concerns, opinions, or news, please feel free to contact me at

Rfeldacker1@gmail.com or call me at 815-762-0204

Message from The Rabbi

The Struggle to Improve

Are you a saint, a scoundrel, an average person, a peasant, or a composite? To find out, we can turn to the text of *Pirke Avot*. *Pirke Avot*, usually translated as “Ethics of the Fathers”, is filled with pithy statements of wisdom. Often read on Shabbat afternoon, it is the most easily accessible section of the Talmud for those new to text study.

If you’re ready to find out, please read each section and select the statement, either A, B, C, or D, which best describes you. Bear in mind you are choosing the statement which describes you as you currently are, not selecting the one you aspire to.

1. There are four character traits among people:
 - A. Mine is mine and yours is yours.
 - B. Mine is yours and yours is mine.
 - C. Mine is yours and yours is yours.
 - D. Yours is mine and mine is mine.

2. There are four kinds of temperaments:
 - A. One who is quick to understand but quick to forget.
 - B. One who understands with difficulty but forgets with difficulty.
 - C. One who is quick to understand and forgets with difficulty.
 - D. One who understands with difficulty and is quick to forget.

3. There are four types of students:
 - A. One who is quick to understand but quick to forget.
 - B. One who understands with difficulty but forgets with difficulty.
 - C. One who is quick to understand and forgets with difficulty.
 - D. One who understands with difficulty and is quick to forget.

4. There are four types among those who give *tzedakah*:
 - A. One who wants to give but does not want others to give.
 - B. One who wants others to give but does not himself give.
 - C. One who wants to give and wants others to give.
 - D. One who does not want others to give and does not himself give.

5. There are four types among those who attend the House of Study:
 - A. One who attends but does not practice the *mitzvot*.
 - B. One who practices the *mitzvot* but does not attend regularly.
 - C. One who attends and practices the *mitzvot*.
 - D. One who neither attends nor practices the *mitzvot*.

To achieve "saintly" status, you should have selected "C" each time. Although I have no doubt that all of you selected the saintly answers, there may be a few of you who want a few tips on how to become even more saintly. Here are a few painless steps to take:

Start by noticing the everyday miracles. Each morning we wake up ... that's a miracle! Our bodies function reasonably well ... that's a miracle! To acknowledge the source of these daily miracles, start your day with this prayer of acknowledgement.

Praised are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, who has fashioned the human body with sublime wisdom, creating an intricate network of veins, arteries, structures and organs each of which must function properly for our survival. Praised are You, Adonai, who heals all creatures and performs wonders.

Add awareness and intention to your day. Notice the new, the beautiful, the unusual, and the extraordinary. Heighten your mindfulness with a blessing. Here are two blessings for special occasions which might come in handy:

Shehecheyanu (recited upon wearing new clothes or using something new for the first time.): *Praised are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, Who has given us life, sustained us, and helped us to reach this moment.*

Shekacha Lo B'olamo (recited upon seeing trees or objects of great natural beauty.): *Praised are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, Who has such beauty in the world.*

Adding meaningful, consistent spiritual practice to your daily routine can be a struggle, but as the Kotzker Rebbe (Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Kotzk) said, "If someone says to you, I struggled but still did not discover, do not believe him. Because the struggle in and of itself is a great discovery, a great find indeed."

Make It Easy for All to Enjoy!

The CBS Board asks you to be sensitive to the allergies and food preferences of congregants when attending meals at our building. To assist that, tables will have areas labeled *Meat* (when appropriate), *Vegetarian*, and *Gluten-Free*. When bringing a dish for a potluck or helping to set out food, please put it in the appropriate space. *It would also be very helpful if you brought a serving utensil for your dish.* And, very importantly, please do not switch serving pieces among dishes because of the possibility of cross-contamination. Thank you for your cooperation.

Siddur Mishkan T'filah & Chumash Etz Hayim: Torah And Commentary

Under the guidance of our Board of Directors, we have selected a new siddur, *Mishkan T'filah*, a publication of the Reform movement.

According to the publisher, CCAR Press, this siddur includes:

- Broad selection of readings, including beloved passages from our Reform liturgical tradition and great poetic writings from throughout Jewish history
- Faithful, elegant translations
- Contemporary, gender-inclusive English
- Theological and stylistic diversity
- Full transliteration
- Extensive commentaries, source notes, and usage guides
- More than 100 contemporary and traditional song texts
- Innovative design in two-page spreads (additional Shabbat services in linear style also included)
- Two-color printing to enhance usability

Siddur *Mishkan T'filah*, already in use at our congregation, takes the place of the Saturday morning blue booklets and the Friday evening maroon siddur.

We have also added 25 copies of *Etz Hayim: Torah and Commentary*, produced by the Conservative movement. According to its publisher, “it features the renowned 1985 JPS English translation; authoritative Hebrew text according to Masoretic tradition; essays on key themes by prominent Conservative movement rabbis and scholars; two separate sections of commentary, representing two approaches to interpreting the Torah. New haftarah commentary by noted biblical scholar Michael Fishbane points out the connections to the weekly Torah portion, provides line-by-line commentary on the prophetic text, and indicates readings for Sephardic and Ashkenazic communities; special section pointing to Jewish laws based on biblical passages (halakhah l'ma-aseh); notation of traditional readings for Sephardic and Ashkenazic communities.”

Mishkan T'filah and *Etz Hayim* were donated in loving memory of Solomon and Margot Feldman

Thank You, Thank You

Thank you to the Hechts and the Basses for hosting our December and January onegs, respectively. Both provided delicious goodies. And a second thank-you to Jeff and Leslie Hecht for serving as hosts for our January Shabbat potluck. We appreciate the effort you all put forth.

On the Adult Education Front:

The weather was cold, but clear, for our snow-delayed Food & Film Night on January 7. Nineteen of us first feasted on a delicious and bounteous Middle Eastern buffet, catered by Jamrah. Then we saw the Israeli-French film *The Other Son*. See below for more on the adult ed. front.

Elizabeth Bass, adult education chair

March Book Club Selection: *For the Relief of Unbearable Urges*

The next choice for our book discussion group is *For the Relief of Unbearable Urges*, a short story collection by Nathan Englander, which has had many positive reviews and earned Englander a PEN/Malamud Award and the Sue Kaufman Prize for First Fiction. The book, available in paperback, is described as “energized, irreverent, and deliciously inventive” on the Barnes & Noble website.

All are welcome to join in our lively discussions, though having read some or all of the book helps. The Englander book will be discussed at 7 p.m. on Thursday, March 9.

An excerpt from *The New York Times* review: Meet Nathan Englander, a bad boy of Jerusalem, a former yeshiva student from New York now at home in secular Israel, who happens to be a very good writer. In his extraordinary debut collection of stories, *For the Relief of Unbearable Urges*, Englander combines a compassionate grasp of the Orthodox Jewish world with the skeptical irreverence of one estranged from yet still oddly defined by it. The fiction that results is not so much a betrayal of Orthodox Judaism as it is a revelation of the human condition ...

... Englander doesn't shy away from much, even imagining the inner lives of ultra-Orthodox women. In "The Wig," he explores the very idea of female beauty and sexual longing in a buttoned-up, long-sleeved world. Here the wigs worn by these women to cover their heads, shaved in the name of sexual modesty, become a delicate scrim behind which he speculates on conflicted questions of beauty, modesty and allure as seen through the eyes of an Orthodox sheitelmacher, or wigmaker.

So Close And Yet So Far Away: One Jew's Journey To Cuba.

Thursday March 16 7:00 pm with Rabbi Barb Moskow

Explore the rich heritage, unique customs, and surprising multi-layered history of the Jews of Cuba who went from feast to famine, as Rabbi Barb Moskow presents her journey to work with the Jewish communities in Santiago, Camaguey, Santa Clara, Cienfuegos, and Havana. She'll also talk about smuggling in forbidden items, wandering the streets of old Havana, learning salsa, playing dominoes on the streets, smoking a cigar, walking in the footsteps of Ernest Hemmingway, visiting the Rosenbergs, and so much more.

And a Good Time Was Had by All

Nearly forty congregants and family members enjoyed our pre-Chanukah celebration. On December 18, we gathered to the delightful smells of latkes being prepared by the Hecht Family. The children were treated to craft projects led by Rabbi Barb and religious school teacher Stephanie Marshall. During dinner, the homemade menorahs were presented by their creators. Each was a creative masterpiece! (Pictures can be seen on the final page of haShofar.) This new attraction made the evening even more fun than usual. The evening was capped off as we were led by Harvey Blau and Koleynu in singing some of our favorite songs. Those who came donated toys and games to be given to the children at the Children's Learning Center.

Special thanks to Harvey and Koleynu, Rabbi Barb, Stephanie, the Hechts and our anonymous clean-up crew, and to all who helped make this evening a success.

Missy Garman, social events chair

Volunteers Help Feed Our Community



Thanks to December Salvation Army food pantry volunteers Elizabeth Bass and James and Lady Cohen, and to Hope Haven volunteers Jeff and Barb Parness and to Jeff, Leslie and Rachel Hecht for providing a meal in January. Hope Haven is currently serving 40+ residents.

These mitzvahs serve many people in need in our DeKalb community and are very much appreciated.

Liz Blau, social action chair, liz@lizblau.com

Chatter

Congregation Beth Shalom has two new retirees in its midst. **Harvey Blau** and **Missy Garman** retired from their respective jobs at the end of December. Harvey spent an incredible 47 years as a professor in the Department of Mathematical Sciences at NIU and Missy was a social worker in the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. They are both enjoying some much deserved travel time.

The 2016 Great Menorah Contest



Caitlin Gorman:
Most unusual materials



Emma Cohen:
*Most likely to elicit a
Response of "Huh! –
How did you do that?"*



Eowyn Feldacker and Mom:
Most unusual materials



Hanna Family:
*Most unusual
materials*



Rachael Feldacker:
Most creative design



Liz Blau:
Most creative design