

השוֹפָר haShofar

of DeKalb and Sycamore

Congregation Beth Shalom
820 Russell Road
DeKalb, IL 60115



CALENDAR

Friday, March 24	Shabbat Potluck	6:30 p.m.
Thursday, March 30	Adult Ed	7:00 p.m.
Saturday, April 1	Shabbat Service	10:00 a.m.
Monday, April 3	<i>Seder Reservations due</i>	
Tuesday, April 11	Community Second Seder	6:00 p.m.
Monday, April 17	<i>Lox and Bagel Reservations due</i>	
Friday, April 21	Shabbat Service Koleynu will sing	7:30 p.m.
Thursday, April 27	Book Group	7:00 p.m.
Sunday, April 30	Lox and Bagel Brunch	10:00 a.m.
Friday, May 5	Shabbat Service	7:30 p.m.

March-April 2017 Adar - Nisan 5777

Carol Zar, editor

From the President:

Greetings to all the members of Congregation Beth Shalom

In 1904, my great-grandparents David and Yetta Feldacker left the Jewish Pale of Settlement around Kiev to come to the U.S. It is likely they were among the many Jews fleeing persecution and unrest in the wake of a failed revolution against the Russian Tsars. They settled in St. Louis and raised a family of eight children, my grandfather Morris and all my great-aunts and great-uncles growing up there. They lived to see their children thrive and make a home here in their adopted country, and upon their passing they were laid side by side in the Chesed Shel Emeth Cemetery in University City, Missouri where they rest along with my great-grandmother Rebecca and many of my cousins and extended relations. In February, a person or persons unknown came into the cemetery and vandalized almost 200 gravestones, part of a disturbing pattern of such incidents, along with bomb threats and hate-filled graffiti targeting locations of Jewish cultural life across the country. Fortunately for me, no stones marking my family's graves were disturbed. And fortunately for Jews here in the United States, as of yet no real bombs have been discovered near Jewish community centers or schools. But these incidents show that we do not escape the troubles of the past or of a place by leaving; wherever we go the legacy of our common humanity, both good and bad, goes with us and demands eternal vigilance to protect what is good in our lives.

In the month of Nisan (April) we will observe the holiday of Passover and join together in the Seder, both in our own families and as a community. Like my great-grandparents, the Hebrews of Egypt left the land of their oppression seeking a new life in a land of opportunity; and again, like my great-grandparents, they discovered joys, hardships, and dangers before them. I do not pretend to know what sustained my great-grandparents on their journey, whether they were people of faith or great learning. I only know that like me, like all of us, they strove to make a life here free from terror and full of opportunities that they could pass on to their children.

The deeds of hatred and fear, vandals and bomb threats, that fill our news feeds these days can cloud out the good in the world. They can make us fearful and reluctant to act. But it is only through action that we can make the world better. Through good actions like the community, Muslim and Jewish and Christian, who came together to restore the sanctity and raise the damaged gravestones again in Chesed Shel Emeth. Communities like those can show us the way forward to better days, like those ancient Hebrews who made a home in Israel, and my great-grandparents who made a home here. As we are told in the book of Joshua, "Be strong and have courage, do not fear and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

This spring we will continue to come together and act in community, to provide charity, to worship, to talk, and to celebrate the life we have made here. Whether you wish to gather for

good acts, to find support, or merely to find company and good food, come join us! Here is a list of upcoming events:

- March 24th Shabbat Potluck (meat meal) at 6:30 p.m.
- April 1st (no really!) Shabbat Service at 10:00 a.m.
- On April 11th we will celebrate Passover Community Seder at 6 p.m. (**Note the announcement both in Hashofar and Online. Please send in your reservations by the deadline so we know how much food to prepare.**)
- April 21st Shabbat Service at 7:30 pm
- April 30th Lox and Bagel Brunch at the home of Avi and Elizabeth Bass at 10:00 a.m. **Again, please send your reservations in so we can provide proper amounts of food.**
- May 5th Shabbat service at 7:30 p.m.

As always, if you have any questions, concerns, opinions, or news, please feel free to contact me at Rfeldacker1@gmail.com or call me 815-762-0204

From the Rabbi: Ten Jewish Sensibilities

Twice a year we are blessed with opportunities to take our Jewish identities in for a semi-annual check-up. The High Holy Day season encourages us to focus on the two universal themes of repentance and renewal. The holiday of Passover brings attention to our sense of peoplehood as we participate in the seder. In each instance we are faced with the challenge of determining what it means to be Jewish. How do we individually identify as a Jew and how does the way we identify affect our actions in the world?

At our recent Purim celebration, I spoke with an attendee who self-identified as a Jew, who rarely partakes in synagogue life but vigorously participates in the Jewish imperative to make the world a better place. Our talk recalled for me, an article by Vanessa L. Ochs, a professor in the Department of Religious Studies and Jewish Studies Program at the University of Virginia, in which she puts forth a hypothesis of what it means for many Jews to be Jewish in America.

Professor Ochs wrote, I've heard it said, "I'm not really religious but I like to think of myself as a good Jew." This line references an unarticulated code that many Jewish Americans try to follow — even judge themselves by — a code that overlaps but is not synonymous with the requirements of Jewish law or traditional practice.

I call that code "The Ten Jewish Sensibilities." These are particularly Jewish ways of thinking about what it means to be human, ways that guide and orient a person's actions and choices. Knowing the code can help us anticipate how we'll lead our lives and make decisions...

Ochs continued,

...I believe that most Conservative Jews, Reform, Reconstructionist, and Renewal Jews, and the vast majority of non-practicing secular Jews do have a well-defined set of principles that guide them, whether or not they are aware of it. Even when Jews act against halakhah, ignoring it intentionally or unintentionally, there are still, as I calculate, ten essential Jewish sensibilities guiding their behavior.

I believe that Ochs is spot on with her assessment. So much so that I want to share her well-articulated “Ten Jewish sensibilities” with you. As you read through, try to think of examples from your life, and from your own personal practice that connect with each sensibility.

1) Making Distinctions: *Havdalah*

Making distinctions matters to us. They may be temporal — such as making a distinction between special times and everyday times. We take calendars seriously: we honor vacation time, family time, and birthdays. While we celebrate the blessings of everyday life, we understand that special occasions have a holy dimension that we mark. Some distinctions are personal and create new situations, like marriage ceremonies or graduations.

2) Honor: *Kavod*

We are aware that we do not live in a social vacuum and that our actions have consequences. We want to be respected. Thus, we aspire to act in ways that will bring honor to ourselves, to our families, and to the communities we belong to. We want to be worthy of honor after we have passed on and our deeds and choices are remembered.

3) Turning: *Teshuvah*

We believe it is possible to reflect upon one’s life, turn it around, and experience forgiveness from others while also feeling a sense of renewal for ourselves. We are works-in-progress, and self-improvement is always possible. We give ourselves and others opportunities to change.

4) Dignity; Being in the Image of God: *Tzelem Elokim*

We seek ways to conduct ourselves and to treat others with the greatest of respect in order to preserve our own dignity and the dignity of each individual and to prevent humiliation. We are aware that dignity is possible only when one is free and self-sustaining. We care about education because having knowledge enhances one’s self respect and ability to live in a dignified manner. We might care about appearances, knowing that dressing appropriately enhances one’s self-respect and honors others. We are likely to engage in political, charitable, and volunteer activities (such as mentoring the underprivileged, working for civil rights, or building housing for the homeless) that increase the dignity of others.

5) Saving a Life: *Pikuach Nefesh*

We believe that as long as one is healthy there is reason to celebrate. We toast, “*L’Chaim!*” “To life!” We do not take health, the number one blessing, for granted, and we feel the miraculous nature of every recovery. We understand that life is fragile and go to extremes to save a life.

6) Being a Really Good Person: “Be a *Mensch*”

We aspire to be a mensch, someone who acts with compassion toward others. In ourselves and in others, we value the human qualities of being attentive, empathetic, and discrete, and of making sacrifices when necessary. We try to be good friends and neighbors. A mensch’s broad reserve of compassion extends toward all Jews, wherever they live, and toward all people, particularly the vulnerable.

7) Keeping the Peace: *Shalom Bayit*

Certain decisions or gestures are made not only because they are appropriate but also because they serve to keep the peace, settle differences, keep a family together, and create harmony instead of divisiveness.

8) Repairing the World: *Tikkun Olam*

We hold that each person should find ways to make the world a better and more just place. This stance of compassionate engagement occurs in simple individual ways as well as on larger platforms. We use our money and talents to make a difference. Engaging in world repair, we may feel as if we are “doing a mitzvah,” doing something that we are divinely ordained to do even though it is our choice. We feel that doing good works justifies our having been put on this earth. If we have been fortunate, we feel responsible to “give back.”

9) Maintaining Hope: *Yesh Tikvah*

We try to hang on to hope and resist despair. In romance, we believe we will meet our beshert, our intended one. We dream expansively and even set off on uncertain journeys with feelings of promise on the horizon. At the same time,

we accept that some things seem fated not to be. When a door closes, we face reality and move on to new possibilities.

10) Memory of One's Ancestors: *Z'chut Avot*

We feel connected to the people who came before us. We draw insight and wisdom from the experiences of our ancestors and seek to honor them with our actions. And we expect the same of our children. Thus, we honor our ancestors by transmitting the sensibilities that characterized their ideas and actions onto the next generation.

As you read "The Ten Sensibilities," I am confident that many, if not all, resonated with you. I know they have with me.

If you would like to read the entire article, and I would encourage you to do so, here is the link:

<http://shma.com/2003/12/ten-jewish-sensibilities/>

Wishing You a Happy and Kosher Pesach!

Rabbi Barb Moskow

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

Thursday March 30 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.

Shabbat Services

The following Shabbat services are scheduled for April:

Saturday, April 1 at 10 a.m.

Friday, April 21 at 7:30 p.m. **Koleynu** will be singing at this service and an oneg will follow featuring food and conversation.

Lox & Bagel Brunch

Sunday, April 30, 10 a.m. until noon



At the home of
Elizabeth and Avi Bass

224 Rolfe Road, DeKalb

Please note: You may park on either side of Rolfe Road, west of 224, or in the driveway, where there's room for four to six cars. There is a no parking zone directly in front of the house.

Reservations are \$15 for a member, \$18 for a guest. Send a check payable to Congregation Beth Shalom to Missy Garman at 818 Haish Blvd., DeKalb by April 17.

And a Good Time Was Had by All

A record turnout of congregants enjoyed participating in a delightful version of the Megillah Esther as we celebrated Purim. Major roles were taken by religious school students with everyone in attendance adding to the merriment. A bountiful lunch was enjoyed; songs were sung, led by Harvey Blau on his guitar; Meryl Domina provided activities for the younger crowd. Jackie Gorman provided home-made hamentaschen for all in attendance; and a brief but fun Purim spiel was performed by the religious school. Thanks to Rabbi Barb and teacher Stephanie Marshall for coordinating our holiday celebration!

Chicago-area Setting for Next Book Group Selection

The last book for this year's book group is *The Middlesteins*, a very well-reviewed novel by Jami Attenburgh that takes place in Chicago and its suburbs. Specific locations are used throughout.

Here's the description from Amazon: With pitch-perfect prose, huge compassion, and sly humor, Jami Attenberg has given us an epic story of marriage, family, and obsession. *The Middlesteins* explores the hopes and heartbreaks of new and old love, the yearnings of Midwestern America, and our devastating, fascinating preoccupation with food.

The Middlesteins is available from both the DeKalb and Sycamore public libraries and in paperback. So, read it, then join us on Thursday, April 27, at 7 p.m. for lively discussion with Rabbi Moscow. Everyone is welcome, whether or not you've attended previous sessions.

Elizabeth Bass, adult education chair

Thank You

Thank you to the sponsors of our Mishloach Manot Bags

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Thank you to Barbara Kaufmann for baking the hamantaschen for the Mishloach Manot Project.

Social Action

Thank you to February and March Salvation Army Food Pantry volunteers Karen Sinason, Jane Lux, and Harvey Blau, Missy Garman, and Carol Zar, and to Hope Haven volunteers Karen Sinason, Elizabeth Bass, and the Rob Feldacker family for providing meals for 50 residents in February and March.

There are openings for the Food Pantry on July 20 and August 17. If you haven't experienced guiding individual shoppers through the pantry and helping them to choose items from the shelves, you should try it! It's a rewarding experience. The pantry is in the basement of the Salvation Army Building at 830 Grove Street in DeKalb.

Liz Blau
lizblau@gmail.com
815-758-1143

Potluck and Oneg Shabbat

And thanks to Jackie and Dave Gorman for hosting our February potluck and providing the goodies for our March Shabbat evening Oneg.