

# השופר haShofar

of DeKalb and Sycamore

Congregation Beth Shalom  
820 Russell Road  
DeKalb, IL 60115



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## CALENDAR

Thursday, October 11	Book Group	7 PM
Friday, October 12	Shabbat Service	7:30 PM
Tuesday, October 16	Board meeting	7 PM
Sunday, October 21	Dinner & Movie Night	5:30 PM
Friday, October 26	Shabbat potluck (dairy)	6:30 PM
Friday, November 9	Shabbat Service	7:30 PM
Tuesday, November 20	Board meeting	7 PM
Friday, November 30	Shabbat potluck (meat)	6:30 PM

**October-November 2018 / Heshvan-Kislev 5779**

*Jackie Laks Gorman, editor*

## ***From the President***

Greetings from your president. It was a great pleasure for me to be among you this year for all of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, to help build and decorate the sukkah, and to sing songs of praise as we celebrated Simchat Torah. I missed this last year while away in the East. Thanks to Rabbi Maralee Gordon and Zach Weiss, our cantor, for their leadership; to Harvey Blau and Koleynu for their singing; to Jason Hanna for arranging the rituals; and to Jerry Zar for his resounding blasts of the Shofar! Thanks also to our Torah and Haftarah readers and Torah bearers and all who pitched in to participate and help.

Now as the time of our High Holy Days passes into the approach of fall, let us welcome the season with renewed energy, curiosity, community, and compassion for those in need.

Thanks to all who contributed to our drive to feed those who hunger in our community with either food or bags; they were deeply appreciated. This year as in years past, we will be participating in the Salvation Army's Thanksgiving food drive. We are now collecting money and will soon ask for volunteers to help with this. ***Please send your check to Adam Sinason, 1530 Crayton Circle W, DeKalb, IL 60115. Your tax-deductible gift should be made payable to Congregation Beth Shalom.*** Together, we can ease the burden of hunger in our community and provide a meal for those with limited means to celebrate, as we would wish to.

Under the direction of our ritual chair, Jason Hanna, and with the guidance of instructors Jordan Landauer and Sasha Cohen, we began our Religious School on September 23 with decorating the sukkah. We plan to hold classes and activities every other week, so school will be in session on October 21, November 4 and 18, and December 2 and 9, before we break for the winter. We may revise our schedule with the advice of a new rabbi, but until then, if you know of any children or parents looking for religious instruction and fun, please contact either Jason ([jasonkhanna@yahoo.com](mailto:jasonkhanna@yahoo.com)) or me (see below) and have them join us!

This month and next, we will gather together for several events and services, and we are grateful for the continued guidance of Rabbi Gordon, who will lead us at least through the year as we seek a hire a new rabbi. All events are at the synagogue. Come join us for:

Book Group: October 11, 7 PM - 8:30 PM  
Shabbat evening service: October 12, 7:30 PM - 9:30 PM  
Movie Night: October 21, 5:30 PM - 8 PM  
Shabbat potluck (dairy): October 26, 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM  
Shabbat evening service: November 9, 7:30 PM - 9:30 PM  
Shabbat potluck (meat): November 30, 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM

For questions about our activities, you can consult the congregation website at <http://bethshalomdekalb.org>. If you have any questions or concerns not addressed on the website, email me at [President@BethShalomDeKalb.org](mailto:President@BethShalomDeKalb.org), or call me (815) 762-0204.

Shalom,  
Rob Feldacker, President

## ***From Rabbi Gordon***

I am in the middle of planning an interfaith Thanksgiving program that will take place in McHenry County, sponsored by FaithBridge. We decided our theme for this year (similar to previous years) would be “Living in Unity; within diversity all are one.” We’re planning to have some community singing about unity in diversity, a drumming circle, and readings on topics such as “Living Wisely” from a variety of religious traditions. We also want to have one-on-one conversations on the topic between people who don’t know each other. In thinking about it, I realized the question I wanted to ask is “When do you feel comfortable among strangers?” I thought about actual scenarios where a group of total strangers feels comfortable with each other. Here are some I came up with: singing a song together, watching a TV monitor at the airport when it’s the final innings of a World Series game, listening to music together in a large concert hall, laughing together at a funny announcement from the bus driver, working together in a soup kitchen. I’m sure you can think of more. It’s when we are experiencing something together that we feel a connection with people we don’t know, with people we might avoid, given a choice. And it’s when our shared values of helping others bring us in contact with others helping and with those in need.

Earlier today, before this planning meeting, I read an article by Neal Gabler in *The Forward*, entitled “Forget Politics: America is Undergoing a Moral Revolution.” His first sentence is:

On any given day, one doesn’t have to look very far—no farther than your newspaper or news broadcast—to see a world spinning wildly out of control, to see every single decent human value trashed and then trashed again, to see egregious behavior treated as if it were normal, to see the worst people empowered and the already dispossessed further disempowered and even abused.

Later in the article he writes:

Once we knew right from wrong and made ourselves conform. Now we don’t. We suddenly live in a moral vacuum where lying, bragging, insulting, bullying, assaulting are now perfectly acceptable, where tearing children away from their parents is policy, where denying the needy benefits is something to boast about, where white supremacists are honored. This isn’t liberal cant. I am talking morality—right and wrong, good and evil....

To save what remains of morality, those of us who still believe in it have to insist upon it. We can point to the nation’s moral decline. We can call out transgressors in moral terms and ask them to justify their behavior morally. We can use words like “evil,” “right and wrong,” “good and bad,” because these terms are meaningful in our current context. We can ask that the media take moral stands, as some did during the civil rights era, where Klansmen and police beating protesters were not considered equivalent to the ones being battered, but instead were labeled for what they were: morally deficient.

He ends with these words:

We can ask our religious leaders how they can square their support of heinous behavior with moral precepts. And we can tell our political leaders that we want every policy they advocate to be morally based. We can do all these things, and should do all these things, because what is happening to America today isn't simply political disagreement or cultural tribalism. What is happening to America is an attack from the right on the very basis of civilization, morality—an attack it might not be able to survive.

This is a diversity in which we cannot find unity: Moral precepts vs. lack of moral precepts. When we feel helpless to stem the tide of vitriol and the attrition of a sense of obligation to equal treatment and equal justice that we see on a national level, perhaps we can find unity in reaching out to help others in our diverse community, as is our norm. We will contribute to the Thanksgiving Baskets, we will help people get to the polls to vote, we will continue our contributions to the food pantry. And we will continue to speak out.

(You can read Gabler's complete article at <https://forward.com/culture/411452/forget-politics-america-is-undergoing-a-moral-revolution/>)

## ***Thanksgiving Baskets: A CBS Tradition***



As we have for many years, Congregation Beth Shalom will put together Thanksgiving Baskets for needy local families. Adam Sinason, who has so efficiently coordinated this project for several years, has again volunteered to be in charge.

You know the system: We collect money. Adam purchases food in bulk. We fill the baskets (actually, they are bags, but we still call them "baskets"). Then we deliver everything to the Salvation Army, which collects names of families in need and distributes the baskets throughout the area.

The baskets are designed to provide Thanksgiving dinner. The Salvation Army gives us a list so that all baskets contain the same food. Once again, last year, our members contributed enough money to fill a record number of baskets—more than any other local religious organization, most of which have much larger memberships.

So, this year, if you will again send a check, Adam will again make trips to the supermarkets and get the biggest bang for your buck. ***Checks should be made payable to Congregation Beth Shalom, marked for "Thanksgiving Baskets," and sent to Adam Sinason, 1530 Crayton Circle W, DeKalb, IL 60115. Money must be received by Wednesday, November 11.***

You can also volunteer to help fill the baskets, which takes less than an hour. Watch your email for specific information on when this will take place.

## High Holy Days Thanks

# תּוֹדָה רַבָּה

I've been attending High Holy Days services at Congregation Beth Shalom for about ten years now. Though I've always been inspired by the services, this year brought me an increased appreciation of the work that goes into planning them and the people who make them possible.

This year, Maralee Gordon, our congregation's former rabbi, returned to lead us in worship, and Zach Weiss once again joined us as cantorial soloist. Their words and song greatly enhanced our experience of the holidays. And of course it would not be the High Holy Days at Beth Shalom without our congregational choir, Koleynu, under the direction of Harvey Blau. Though their singing may seem effortless, it is a product of months of practice, for which the rest of us are grateful.

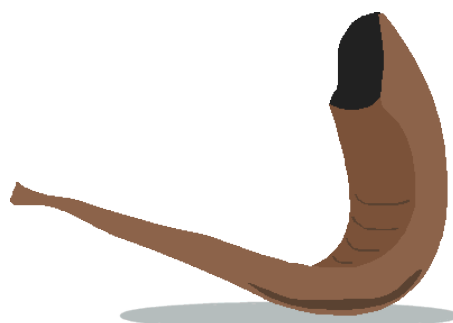
Since the Torah is so central to our morning worship, special thanks go out to Roberta Maxfield and Barbara Kaufmann, who chanted Torah on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, respectively. (Incidentally, Barbara also baked the wonderful treats served on Erev Rosh Hashanah!) Haftarah was read by Rivka Baker on Rosh Hashanah and Carol Zar on Yom Kippur.

Many other congregants and community members played valuable roles in our services. Of special note are Jeff Hecht, who served as Gabbai on Rosh Hashanah, Carol Zar, who served as Gabbai on Yom Kippur, and Jerry Zar, who (literally!) set an appropriate tone by sounding the shofar for both holidays. Thanks also to those who did an *aliyah* or carried, lifted, or wrapped a Torah. By my count, about 25 different people had an honor during High Holy Days services.

Services this year were held again at the synagogue on Russell Road. Although setting up for services is not as onerous as it was when they were held at NIU, it still takes work. I'd like to thank Jackie Gorman, David Gorman, and Rob Feldacker for setting up chairs and setting out prayer books; Jeff Hecht and Carol Zar for finding and copying translations of the Torah and Haftarah readings; and Elizabeth Bass for creating the contribution pamphlet.

To all of them—and to all of those I may have forgotten—*todah rabah!* You are appreciated.

— Jason Hanna, Ritual Chair



## ***... And Then There Was Sukkot and Simchat Torah***

Once the High Holy Days were over, did we rest on our laurels? No! We quickly turned to the next fall holidays.

On Sunday, September 23, we gathered to construct the sukkah in the parking lot. Several congregants helped to ensure that the sukkah was structurally sound enough to make it to the end of the holiday. James Cohen, Nahum Shemi, Rob Feldacker, and David Gorman mounted ladders, swung hammers, and hauled wood. Lady Cohen provided the lovely tapestries for the interior of the sukkah. Emma Cohen helped to decorate the sukkah, along with Religious School students Rachel and Eowyn Feldacker and Lorelei and Phoebe Hanna. Our Religious School teacher, NIU student and Hillel leader Sasha Cohen, educated the students and kept them mostly on-task.

On Friday, September 28, many of us hoped to eat a meal in the sukkah. These hopes were dashed by the weather. Despite the rain and cold, more than 30 of us gathered in the synagogue for a potluck. Thanks to the Cohen family, Rob Feldacker, David Gorman, and Sam Hanna for setting up tables and chairs upstairs.



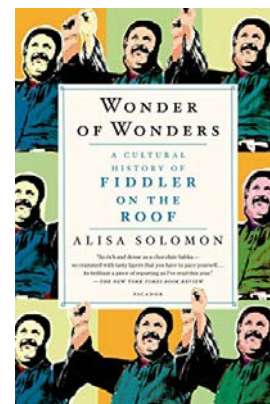
*At left, an eager Religious School student lends a hand. At right, the students with “the longest paper chain in the world.” Each year, amazingly, their new chain is the longest ever made.*

But the holidays were not over! On Monday, October 1, several congregants celebrated Simchat Torah, marking the completion of the annual cycle of weekly Torah readings. We sang and danced with the Torahs, and Rabbi Gordon read the last few verses of Deuteronomy, followed by the first verses of Genesis.

— Jason Hanna, Ritual Chair

## October Book: Wonder of Wonders

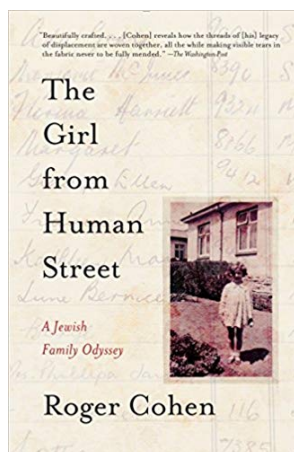
*Wonder of Wonders: A Cultural History of Fiddler on the Roof*, by Alisa Solomon, will be our first Book Group read this year. The book looks at *Fiddler's* antecedents in the stories of Sholem Aleichem and on the Yiddish stage, the making of the musical itself, and the show's history and impact around the world.



The book is described in the *New York Times* as exploring “not only the making of the musical, but also the way the show reflects evolving Jewish cultural identity in America and around the world. It’s about how gentiles see Jews and about how Jews see themselves. It’s about a particular moment in American history when identity politics, feminism, generational rifts, ethnic pride, concerns about authenticity and an interest in immigration history came together in a rich cholent. It’s about a particular time in Broadway history when the musical was changing from something stagy and stilted to something more musically and formally challenging.”

We’ve probably all seen productions of *Fiddler*, as well as the movie, so the discussion should be lively. Join us on Thursday, October 11, at 7 PM. All are welcome, even if you haven’t read the book.

## December Book: A Transcontinental Family Odyssey



The December choice for our reading group is *The Girl from Human Street: A Jewish Family Odyssey*, by *New York Times* columnist Roger Cohen. The book traces four generations of his family, from the 19th century to today, and from Lithuania to South Africa under apartheid, and then to England, the United States, and Israel.

He writes of the family prospering in South Africa. There, even though there was some anti-Semitism, Jews primarily were considered a part of the white majority, not a minority. As an older relative said, “Thank God for the blacks. If not for them, it would be us.” Cohen travels to the town in Lithuania from which his grandparents came, back to South Africa where he was born and where some family still lives, to England where he grew up, and to Israel, where other relatives live.

Intertwined with the family saga is the story of Cohen’s mother, who suffered from depression, which Cohen attributes to her wanderings, just as Jews have wandered over the centuries. She is the girl who lived on Human Street in South Africa.

Read the book and join us on Thursday, December 13, at 7 PM.

Links to reviews:

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/bookreviews/11376484/The-Girl-from-Human-Street-Ghosts-of-Memory-in-a-Jewish-Family-by-Roger-Cohen.html>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/01/books/review/the-girl-from-human-street-by-roger-cohen.html>

[https://www.amazon.com/dp/B00LYXPYIA/ref=dp-kindle-redirect?\\_encoding=UTF8&btkr=1](https://www.amazon.com/dp/B00LYXPYIA/ref=dp-kindle-redirect?_encoding=UTF8&btkr=1)

— Elizabeth Bass, Adult Ed Chair

## ***Dues Reminder***

A short reminder that annual dues and donations are requested at this time of year. Membership renewal forms for 2018-2019 were sent out in the regular mail to all persons who were CBS members last year. If you have not already done so (and a BIG thank you to those who have), I encourage you to return your completed form to the congregation as soon as possible. The updated information from everyone's forms will be assembled in December and sent out as a Membership Directory. Please send your form, and a check if you want to pay by check, to: **Congregation Beth Shalom, P.O. Box 1177, DeKalb, IL 60115.**

You can also pay dues and make donations online using our congregation's website. Point your browser to: <http://bethshalomdekalb.org/donate-to-cbs/> and then click on the box (or boxes) you would like to use. Online payments are made through a secure link with PayPal, which accepts most any major credit card.

Congregation Beth Shalom exists, and continues to do the good work that we do each year, only throughout the generosity of our members' dues and donations. If you have any questions about dues or donations, or need to make special arrangements, please feel free to contact me by email at [Treasurer@BethShalomDeKalb.org](mailto:Treasurer@BethShalomDeKalb.org). Finally, please know that no one will be denied membership for financial reasons, and that all information is maintained in strict confidence. Thank you.

— Jeff Hecht, Treasurer

## ***Buildings and Grounds Update***

Late summer was a busy time at our building on Russell Road. You may recall that we discovered in Spring 2017 that the roof was shedding tiles to form a big hole, and this August a new roof finally went on, complete with new gutters. It seems to be watertight so far. Just before that happened, the compressor on the air conditioner went and had to be replaced. In addition, the exterior lights, many of which had blown out, were replaced, so people can see their way around the building after dark. Trees and bushes were also trimmed, and the dead tree you may have noticed on the side of the building has been removed. Next up: a parking lot re-seal, coming in Summer 2019.

— David Gorman, Buildings and Grounds Chair



## Roots and Writers: Our Next Film & Food Night



Many American Jews have families that came to the United States in the late 19th and early 20th century from Eastern Europe. You'll see some fascinating photos—and film clips—of Jewish communities then on both sides of the Atlantic as well as learn about the famed writer Sholom Aleichem in the documentary *Sholom Aleichem: Laughing in the Darkness*. The *New York Times* described it as “a rich, beautifully organized and illustrated modern history of Eastern European Jewry examined through the life and work of the author.”

We'll show the movie on Sunday, October 21, preceded by a catered buffet dinner at 5:30 PM.

The *Times* review says the film portrays the “history and dissolution of Eastern European Jewish culture and the conflicting desires of later generations to remember and to forget.... One of the film's central themes is Sholem Aleichem's personification of the tug of war between nostalgia for the past and the impulse to leave it behind. As millions of Jews emigrated to the United States, where they found it easier to assimilate, Sholem Aleichem was not everyone's idea of a forward-looking cultural hero.... The movie's old photographs conjure the look and vitality of shtetl life so vividly you can almost feel yourself jostled in the crowded and dusty streets....”

Our last Middle Eastern buffet, catered by Jamrah, was a big hit, so we are having an encore. Dinner will feature chicken shawarma, falafel, pita, hummus, salad, and various sauces. Advance reservations and payment for dinner are required. Send a check for \$11.50 per person, made out to Congregation Beth Shalom, to Elizabeth Bass, 224 Rolfe Road, DeKalb IL 60115. **Reservations must be received by Wednesday, October 17.** Guests and teens are welcome. There's no charge if you want to join us just for the film, which should start soon after 6:15. We'll be done by 8 PM.

— Elizabeth Bass, Adult Ed Chair

Links to reviews:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/08/movies/sholem-aleichem-laughing-in-the-darkness-review.html>

[https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/sholem\\_aleichem\\_laughing\\_in\\_the\\_darkness\\_2011/](https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/sholem_aleichem_laughing_in_the_darkness_2011/)

<https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/sholem-aleichem-laughing-in-the-darkness-2011>



## ***Annual Picnic Recap***

The annual welcome back picnic was a huge success. Thanks to Karen Sinason for her perfect planning and execution, to David Sinason for delivering the drinks donated by Louie Schoenberg and American Liquors, and to David Gorman for his expert grilling. The weather was beautiful and the nearly 50 people in attendance enjoyed a kosher hot dog lunch and visiting with friends old and new.

— Missy Garman, event coordinator

## ***Social Action***

We are so appreciative of the time and work given by our volunteers, who always step up to keep our commitments to feed the needy in DeKalb. Thank you to Elizabeth Bass for providing a nutritious and delicious dinner to the residents of the Hope Haven homeless shelter. Carol Zar worked at the Salvation Army Food Pantry, helping to fill grocery bags for those also in need. Thank you to her, and a reminder that we do these mitzvahs every month. If you are interested in joining this wonderful group, please contact me.

— Karen Sinason, Social Action Chair

## ***Onegs and Potlucks***

Thank you to Elizabeth and Avi Bass for hosting the first potluck of our activity year on August 31. Hope to see many of you at future dinners.

— Carol Zar, coordinator

## ***Upcoming Shabbat Services and Potlucks***

*The following events are scheduled for the next months:*

Friday, October 12: Shabbat Service at 7:30 PM, followed by an oneg.

Friday, October 26: Shabbat potluck dinner at 6:30 PM. This is a dairy meal.

Friday, November 9: Shabbat Service at 7:30 PM, followed by an oneg.

Friday, November 30: Shabbat potluck dinner at 6:30 PM. This is a meat meal.

## ***A Note from Linda Schwarz***

In the final minutes of the Minchah/Neilah service ending the Yom Kippur observance, Rabbi Gordon commented beautifully that it had been 15 years since she had last officiated at Beth Shalom's High Holiday services, and she was struck by the cohesiveness of the congregation during these services. Various members also commented on their appreciation of the congregation. I agreed, though I did not comment.

For many years, I have felt the pull of this rather small congregation and have chosen to attend High Holiday services in DeKalb, rather than at the larger congregation to which my children and grandchildren now belong (they live in a western suburb). I have felt joy and comfort, as well as the sadness of the Yizkor service, among friends and familiar faces.

But, during my recent disability, I was totally unprepared for the community response. Organized by Elizabeth Bass (who dubbed the participants part of "Linda's Crew"), members of Beth Shalom—as well as other friends—volunteered to bring me dinners, do errands, drive me places, visit, and play games.

So, thank you, thank you to the following ladies of Linda's Crew (sometimes including spouses) for delicious food and/or runs to the grocery store, or for offering the same, or for their company at critical times: Rivka Baker, Elizabeth Bass, Deb Booth, Thecla Cooler, Missy Garman, Jackie Gorman, Jitka Hurych, Barbara Kaufmann, Mary Lincoln, Jane Lux, Jan Modloff, Karen Sinason, Marilyn Stromborg, Carol Zar.

In addition, I received help and encouragement from others who were not on Elizabeth's list and I thank them, most gratefully, as well.

— Linda

## ***Chatter***

Congratulations to **Lisa Freeman**, who was named president of NIU in September. Lisa first came to NIU in 2010 and has served as vice president for research and graduate studies, executive vice president and provost, and interim president. She is NIU's first woman president and first Jewish president.

Mazel tov to **Karen and Dave Sinason** on the marriage of their son Adam to Ashley Hock on September 29. Both are NIU graduates. Of course, Adam is the long-serving coordinator of our Thanksgiving Baskets drive, which he is doing again this year.