

השופר haShofar

of DeKalb and Sycamore

Congregation Beth Shalom

820 Russell Road

DeKalb, IL 60115



Happy Purim!

CALENDAR

Saturday, March 2	Shabbat Service	10 AM
Sunday, March 17	Purim Celebration	
	Children's activities	3 PM
	Megillah Reading	4 PM
	Potluck (dairy)	5 PM
Tuesday, March 19	Board meeting	7 PM
Friday, March 22	Shabbat Service, with Koleynu	7:30 PM

February-March 2019 Adar 5779

Jackie Laks Gorman, editor

From the President

Greetings to the members of Congregation Beth Shalom from your president. I hope this message finds you and yours in health and comfort and not too burdened by the troubles of the cold winter, which has us all in its grip. Fortunately, the time is not too far off when spring will come again, bringing flowers, rain, Purim with hamantaschen, and Pesach!

Purim was considered in ancient days as a time for giving gifts to those in need. Our local food pantries have expressed a need for plastic, paper, and reusable cloth bags. Please consider bringing these to the synagogue when you attend any events. They can be placed in the basket in the main hall where we place our gifts of food (which are of course still needed as well).

We have a lot going on at our building in the next few months! We are fortunate to have our new rabbi, Julie Adler, who will conduct our regular Shabbat morning and evening services, scheduled as follows for the next months:

- Shabbat morning service: Saturday, March 2, at 10 AM
- Shabbat evening service: Friday, March 22, at 7:30 PM, with a special performance by Koleynu, our volunteer congregational choir
- Shabbat morning service (with Yizkor): Saturday, April 27, at 10 AM

Along with Shabbat services, we will also be celebrating Purim on Sunday, March 17! We'll start with children's and youth activities at 3 PM, go on to the Megillah reading (with audience participation, of course) at 4 PM, and conclude with a dairy potluck with homemade hamantaschen at 5 PM.

In April, our major congregational celebration will be our Passover Community Seder on the second night of the holiday, April 20, at 6 PM. The meal will again be prepared by our treasurer and master chef Jeff Hecht and Associates, and the Seder will be led by Harvey Blau. Elsewhere in this issue of *haShofar* are full details. Please get your reservations in early! And please let Jeff know if you can offer help.

In addition to our religious celebrations, we'll also just get together as a community for our annual Lot & Bagel Brunch on Sunday, April 7, at 10 AM, hosted by Carol and Jerry Zar. Again, full details are elsewhere in this issue of *haShofar*. And again, get your reservations in early!

As if all that wasn't enough, also on the schedule are a Shabbat potluck dinner (meat) on Friday, April 5, at 6:30 PM, and a meeting of our Book Group on Thursday, April 11, at 7 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 there, email me at either President@BethShalomDeKalb.org or Rfeldacker1@gmail.com, or call me (815) 762-0204.

Shalom,
Rob Feldacker, President

Meet Our New Rabbi



Rabbi Julie Adler officially became Congregation Beth Shalom's new rabbi in February. She notes, "I'm very much looking forward to getting to know each of you: hearing about your joys and passions, and sharing space with you when it's most important." In the meantime, here are some fun facts she wanted to share with the members of the congregation:

- I live in southeast Evanston with my husband (he is a conservative rabbi), Amitai Adler, and our two kids, Michael, age 6, and Maya, almost 4.
- My kids think everyone is a rabbi: Both of their parents are rabbis and two of their grandparents (on my husband's side) are rabbis. My mother-in-law is Rachel Adler, author of *Engendering Judaism* and one of the first Jewish feminist theologians. My father-in-law is an orthodox rabbi. Once, my son asked whether our dog is a rabbi.
- I am originally from Milwaukee (my parents still live there), but I have also lived in St. Louis, Boston, and Los Angeles.
- When I'm not working as a rabbi, I'm studying in graduate school part-time at Adler University (no relation) in their clinical mental health counseling program.
- I love photography, writing (mostly creative nonfiction), being outside in nature with my kids, and discovering new "foodie" restaurants with my husband.
- I'm happiest when I am near water—at the beach near my house in Evanston, visiting the Pacific Ocean in California, or spending time on the inland lakes in Wisconsin with my family.
- I wrote my rabbinic thesis on the Book of Job. Teaching about Job (and the field of Theodicy—the question of bad things happening to good people) is one of my favorite areas of Jewish scholarship. I'm sure part of this academic interest evolved in the aftermath of surviving a ruptured brain aneurysm in my cerebellum halfway through my rabbinic studies. Doing the work of recovering from the aneurysm has been among the most important work of my life—it's made me more able to sit with suffering and to hold space for those most in need of compassion and care. Pastoral counseling and visiting the sick are two of my favorite things to do as a rabbi.

From Rabbi Adler

Dear Beth Shalom Community,

I am so pleased and honored to be your new rabbi. I hope we'll come to know one another well over the coming weeks and months. I look forward to sharing time and space with you as we journey through the Jewish year together.

The first significant Jewish milestone we will share together is the upcoming holiday of Purim (which we'll celebrate on Sunday, March 17). Purim celebrates Queen Esther and her cousin Mordecai saving the Jews from the wicked Haman, a story told and retold each year from the Scroll of Esther. The word *Purim* means "lots" in reference to the lottery Haman used to determine the day he would choose for massacring the entire Jewish population of the Persian Empire. Haman's plan, however, is thwarted. Through a seemingly crazy, mixed-up series of events, the Jews of Persia are saved from destruction, and Haman and his 10 sons are killed on the very gallows he had erected to kill Mordecai and the Jews.

I find that the story's significance is in its spiritual and symbolic truth rather than in its historicity. The Talmud tells us: "Whoever reads the Megillah backwards does not fulfill his obligation." Our sages explain that *backwards* here does not mean in reverse order; it means that whoever reads the Megillah merely as ancient history has missed the point. The Purim story, they argue, is still directly relevant to our contemporary world.

The message of Purim is that no matter how hard we work to control our lives, how diligently we plan and prepare, life is inescapably unpredictable. On Haman's whim, the Jews of Shushan saw their whole world turn upside down, and we could too: "grief turned into joy, a day of mourning into a day of celebration" (Megillat Esther 9:22). Our response is to celebrate and masquerade, to get so drunk that we can't tell the difference between good and evil. We eat, drink, dance, and laugh in the face of our darkest fears—the possibility that human life and human history can change in an instant, that life is essentially chaotic.

But contained within the traditions of Purim is also a recipe for meaning amidst the chaos. The *mitzvot* associated with the holiday require us to respond to our vulnerability with a radical embrace of life: acts of justice, kindness, and love. We embrace the confusion and moral ambiguity of Purim with a renewed commitment to social transformation, by giving our family and friends sweet gifts (*mishloach manot*) and by giving *matanot l'evyonim* to the poor. In other words, the only way to make sense of the randomness of life and death is to honor the loving relationships that sustain us and work to address the imbalance of fortunes that leaves some with abundance and others with nothing. Purim offers us a way create order within the chaos: to respond to the threat of fragility by pouring more kindness and sweetness into the world. These traditions of Purim highlight the fact that while we can't control the world, we can control the way we live in it.

Though I've only been with you for a few short weeks, I can already tell that Congregation Beth Shalom is a place where acts of kindness abound. I hope that I will merit the opportunity to relish in the sweetness you share here and perhaps offer to you some of my own.

With Blessings,

Rabbi Julie Adler

Lox & Bagel Brunch

**You are invited to join us for the Annual Lox & Bagel Brunch
Sunday, April 7, 10 AM until 12 noon**



At the home of
Carol and Jerry Zar
3095 Wolf Court, DeKalb

\$18 members
\$20 guests

Pre-paid reservations are due by Friday, March 29. Checks should be made out to Congregation Beth Shalom and sent to Carol Zar at the above address. Guests are more than welcome. This is a good opportunity to invite someone who might be interested in joining our community. The more the merrier!

Purim Is Coming!

Our congregational Purim celebration will take place on Sunday, March 17. Children's and youth activities will begin around 3 PM, to be followed by a Megillah reading at 4. Wear a costume and come prepared to make some noise when Haman's name is said.

We will conclude with a potluck meal at 5 PM. Please bring a dairy dish (no meat or shellfish) to share. Drinks and homemade hamantaschen will be provided.

*Last year's batch of hamantaschen,
fresh out of the oven*



Upcoming Shabbat Services and Potlucks

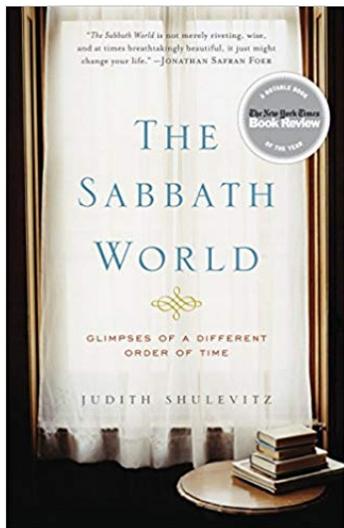
Saturday, March 2: Shabbat Service at 10 AM.

Friday, March 22: Shabbat Service at 7:30 PM, followed by an oneg. Koleynu will be singing at this service.

And looking ahead to April ...

Friday, April 5: Shabbat potluck dinner at 6:30 PM. This is a meat meal.

Book Group Selection: *The Many-Faceted Sabbath*



When I asked Rabbi Adler if she had any suggestions for our April book group read, her response was immediate. The book: *The Sabbath World: Glimpses of a Different Order of Time* by Judith Shulevitz. Here are her reasons:

Eight years after my husband and I were asked to review this book for the Jewish Book Council, it's still one of the best books I've encountered. It's essentially a memoir, peppered with the author's discovery of a universal human need for rest. Shulevitz takes the reader along on a journey through her own childhood memories of Shabbat followed by a long period of discarding the traditions that felt outdated and antiquated, and then, as an adult and academic, returning to Shabbat as part of an answer to a question driving both her personal and professional life.

The book was well-reviewed in the *New York Times* (“I found this hybrid of a book—part spiritual memoir, part religious history and sociological analysis and literary exegesis and philosophical musing—mostly irresistible”) and *Chicago Tribune* (“Shulevitz gives a nonlinear history of the Jewish and Christian Sabbaths. In exquisitely written tacks, she addresses citations in the Old and New Testaments and debates in the Talmud”).

So, get a copy, read it, and join Rabbi Adler and fellow congregants on Thursday, April 11, at 7 PM when we'll discuss it.

— Elizabeth Bass, Adult Ed Chair

Social Action Report

The Salvation Army Food Pantry is busy every day that it is open with families needing groceries. Last week, we had 38 people come through in three hours! They have food on the shelves, but donations are always appreciated, and they are very low on bags. Please remember to save and bring clean plastic, paper, or reusable cloth bags to the synagogue. There is a basket in the hallway for you to place them.

Hope Haven also sees an increase of those in need during the winter months. Thank you to Lady and James Cohen for providing and delivering a delicious, nutritious meal to the shelter this month.

— Karen Sinason, Social Action Chair

Thank You for Being So Generous

Thank you to the following people who made donations to our 2018 Thanksgiving Baskets drive:

Anonymous
Harvey and Liz Blau
Derryl Block and Steven Greenfield
Becky Cohen
James and Lady Cohen
Rob Feldacker and Valerie Garver
Missy Garman
Maralee Gordon and Leo Schlosberg
David and Jacqueline Gorman
Jason K. Hanna
Lynn Hauser and Neil Ross
Jeffrey and Leslie Hecht

Richard and Kathleen Katz
Barbara Kaufmann
Steven and Jane Lux
Eric and Linda Mogren
Jeffrey and Barb Parness
Herb and Irene Rubin
Linda Schwarz
Mark and Lee Shumow
David and Karen Sinason
Paul and Marilyn Stromberg
Jerrold and Carol Zar

Thank you to the following people who made donations to the congregation from December 2018 through mid-February 2019:

Katz Family Foundation
Daniel and Christie Klein
Jerrold and Carol Zar, in memory of Avi Bass
M. Nadine Zimmerman

Todah Rabah

Thank you to **Barbara Kaufmann** and to **Karen and Dave Sinason** for hosting potlucks in January and February, respectively, and to **Rivka and Bill Baker** for hosting our February oneg. And a special thank you to our challah bakers, **Barb Kaufmann** and **Jeff Hecht**, for occasionally supplying us with home-baked challahs. These are always a special treat.

There are still openings on the schedule. If you would like to host the potluck on April 5 or the oneg on June 14, just send me an email or give me a call and I'd be happy to give you details.

— Carol Zar, coordinator
czar@niu.edu, 815-758-1905

Passover Help Needed

If you can help Jeff Hecht with Passover preparations on April 18, 19, or 20 (Thursday, Friday, or Saturday), please let him know at 815-895-0345 or Jeffrey@HechtHouse.com.

Congregation Beth Shalom Annual Pesach Second Seder

Traditional Kosher for Passover Seder Dinner

Saturday, April 20, at 6 PM

Led by Harvey Blau, featuring the *Season of Renewal* Haggadah

Congregation members, their families, and invited friends are all welcome.

RSVPs are a must so that we can plan for enough seating and food!



First Course

Matzoh, Maror (bitter herb), Hazeret (lettuce), Charoset (apple/cinnamon), Karpas (parsley)
Gefilte Fish and Beitzah (hard-boiled egg)
"Bubbe's Recipe" Chicken Soup with Matzoh Balls

Main Course (buffet style)

Passover Chicken Schnitzel, Court Bouillon Poached Salmon
Sweet Potato & Carrot Tzimmes, Garlic Mashed Potatoes
Spring Vegetables with Quinoa, Roasted Seasonal Vegetables

Dessert Station

Assorted "Small Cakes," Macaroons, Passover Chocolate Chip Cookies, Fresh Fruits



BRING YOUR OWN SEDER PLATE

Each family is encouraged to bring their own Seder plate – we'll provide the "fixings"! This will give you another chance to use your Seder finest and to share with other folks its history and your traditions!

Reservations are on a first-come basis and require prepayment by check to **Congregation Beth Shalom**.

All reservations must be received no later than Monday, April 8. Please print this form and mail it with

your check to: Congregation Beth Shalom

Attn: Second Seder

P.O. Box 1177

DeKalb, IL 60115

Name(s):

Adults (11 years old and older) \$18 per adult X _____ # of adults = \$ _____

Children (4 to 10 years old) \$10 per child X _____ # of children = \$ _____

Children (3 years old and under) Free per child X _____ # of children = \$ _____

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED: \$ _____

Big Jewish Liturgical Music Festival in Chicago



Hallel v' Zimra, a conference and shabbaton on Jewish Liturgical Music, Present and Future, will take place March 8-11 at Chicago venues, mostly in Hyde Park.

The shabbaton is Friday night and Saturday, and the conference is Sunday and Monday. Besides workshops and panels, there are concerts on Saturday and Sunday nights. The lineup of composers, cantors, and musicians looks impressive. Typical costs are \$36 for a conference day (\$18 if under age 30), \$25 for the Sunday night concert (\$12 if under age 30). Harvey Blau, our music and choir director, plans to attend, at least for Sunday afternoon and evening, and invites you to contact him (hblau@niu.edu, 815-758-1143) if you're interested in carpooling. For more information about the event, see the website www.kaplancenter.org/music.

The Flat's Secrets Revealed

A lively, and sometimes heated, discussion followed our showing of the Israeli documentary *The Flat* on February 10. The showing was preceded by a Middle Eastern buffet dinner, catered by Jamrah. Special thanks to Rob Feldacker, who rescued us from a technical morass, and all who lent a hand with clean-up. Suggestions for future films are always welcome so send any suggestions, whether or not you have seen them, to me.

— Elizabeth Bass, Adult Ed Chair

Chatter

The Illinois Supreme Court Commission on Access to Justice Commission (ATJ) recently selected **Marilyn Stromborg** to be a member of the Forms Committee of the ATJ Commission. The committee develops statewide-standardized forms. Marilyn is a part-time employee of the DeKalb County Circuit Clerk's Office as Legal Counsel.



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