

From the Rabbi Michael Silbert

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Just a few days ago, Temple Beth David's Ritual Committee met to develop a proposal for how we should handle High Holy Day services in the year of COVID-19. This is not an easy issue. I try to avoid negativity

but this truly felt like a lose / lose situation: attempting to hold services online would be dramatically different to anything we've ever done before and might alienate some people. However, *not* holding services would make this the first year in TBD's history that the congregation would not attempt to serve the spiritual needs of our community over the High Holy Days.

The ten of us entered the meeting expecting one particular outcome, yet after speaking, listening, considering and really opening themselves to others' ideas, most left the meeting having changed their minds in one way or another.

These are the proposals which emerged -- by consensus, I might add:

1. TBD will not hold any in-person services (i.e. we will not gather in a physical location) for the High Holy Days in 2020, as we do not believe it is safe for our community to do so, based on the scientific knowledge about the virus and its transmission that is currently available. (At the time of this writing, neither would it be legal for the entire community to gather in a single location.)

2. We will not live-stream a service.

There was unanimous agreement that it is impossible to capture the spirit and emotional impact of a "real" service online. Those at the meeting who had participated in other Zoom services in recent months found them to be unsatisfying and spiritually unmoving alternatives to live in-person services.

While the traditional melodies of the High Holy Days are central to many peoples' enjoyment of the services, current technology does not allow people to join in and for their voices to become part the music of the service. This has left many with a disappointed, empty feeling - almost of being a spectator watching a show on a screen - that is quite at odds with the typical character of most TBD services.

An aspect of Temple services which becomes deceptively

complicated when they are held online, is Torah reading. When respective Torah readers chant the verses they've prepared, each one in front of their own computer, there is no way that they can each have a kosher Torah scroll in front of them. When the chanting is done from a Chumash instead of a Torah scroll, the blessings are not recited before each reading, and consequently this voids the honor of giving *aliyot* to members of the community. And that's just in those congregations that do read Torah online from a Chumash; plenty Conservative congregations that have gone the on-line service route have decided to leave out Torah / Chumash reading altogether, because it is just too complicated in terms of Jewish law.

And this is but one example of the *halachic* (Jewish legal) complexities when holding a service online. Needless to say, there are more.

In the remaining space that has been allotted to me in this edition of the bulletin, allow me to switch gears from that which we will not be doing this year, to the ways in which we will be trying to create meaningful High Holy Days experiences for our members:

The following will be *prerecorded* and made available online for Beth David members to view if and when they choose:

- Sermons
- Shofar blowing
- Musical and liturgical highlights
- Kol Nidre
- Yizkor

Furthermore, a packet will be mailed to members of our community in the weeks before the High Holy Days which will contain guidance and suggested activities designed to structure the High Holy Days and to help us observe them in alternative ways. The packet will include:

- Readings
- Points and questions to discuss with others and/or to contemplate oneself
- Activities

(Continued on page 6)



What a challenge this COVID-19 era is to Temple Beth David! We are all about community - Shabbat services and dinners, festival services, and even administrative meetings give us the opportunity to see each other and communicate. And while we long to be with each other and share the rituals that form our life together, we are sometimes frighteningly aware of the dangers of spreading the coronavirus and endangering people for whom we care so deeply. When our Ritual Committee met recently to plan for the High Holy Days, the group faced the question of how we can possibly provide meaningful services to our congregation given the restraints we currently face.

When I attended the Ritual Committee meeting as a guest, I thought I knew how the discussion would unfold: the rabbi would explain the implications of the teshuvah published by the United Synagogues of Conservative Judaism that dealt with such topics as using the internet for services. The Committee would then make the decision to permit High Holy Day Zoom services. The planning would begin.

I couldn't have been more wrong. I greatly underestimated the creativity of the members of Ritual and their desire to find a spiritually rewarding alternative to often unappealing Zoom services. There was general agreement that the format of Zoom makes it impossible to capture the feeling we get when we participate in person during High Holy Day services. The members of the committee decided that we would be setting ourselves up for disappointment if we were to go that route.

The Ritual Committee decided instead on a novel approach: Ritual will prepare a packet to be mailed to congregants to guide them in spending the holiday in a meaningful way. The packet will contain poems, meditations and other writings as well as internet links to pre-recorded videos, all designed to guide us through a meaningful - although very different - experience. I so look forward to seeing how Ritual will use its creativity to help us through the holidays in a way that will not be a second best service, but a new spiritual expression, unique to our congregation.

The rabbi then met with the Executive Committee and the Board of Trustees to present this new approach and he received their approval. Certain Board of Trustee members expressed a deeply felt loss of our in person services. While we are committed to meeting in our sanctuary only after a COVID vaccine is available or we determine that we can otherwise meet safely, Ritual will look into ways that we might safely have some personal contact for High Holy Days and beyond. Thanks to all who participated in the meetings and are working to help our synagogue through this difficult time. Some concerned and dedicated congregants along with our rabbi will be helping us to find new pathways until we can return to the ones we know and love.

Best wishes to my temple family,

Maxine

All in the Family

July Birthdays

Barbara Gertzog	July 1
Ira Goldman	July 14

July Anniversaries

Ethan & Ruth Aranov	July 2
Bruce & Anne Goldin	July 6
Andrew & Karen Berger	July 19
Harry & Adele Gan	July 29

August Anniversaries

Neil & Kellie Hyman	August 15
Scott & Merrie Franklin	August 20
Philip & Joanne Katzman	August 20
Leon & Sarisa Zoghlin	August 24

August Birthdays

Mike Berke	August 2
Howard Kashtan	August 2
Marcia Davis	August 4
Andrew Berger	August 8
Scott Bauman	August 9
Kevin McTighe	August 14
Ron Brandwein	August 18
Leo Zoghlin	August 18
Linda Phillips	August 19
Bernard Roth	August 19
Sarah Eckhaus	August 22
Neal Eckhaus	August 22
Dolly Fishman	August 22
Sherry Goldman	August 23
Dan Nussbaum	August 23
Jonathan Feldman	August 24
Sidney Markus	August 24
Ben Zoghlin	August 26
Alison Helms	August 28
Shelly Braiman	August 30

**Happy 50th Wedding Anniversary to
Ron and Jean Brandwein**



In celebration... I had planned to sponsor a Kiddush on May 30 in memory of Sylvia, whose 4th yahrzeit was May 31, but couldn't, of course. However, coincidentally, my granddaughter, Elisheva Meystel, gave birth to a beautiful baby girl, Stella Rose, on May 27. Elisheva and Meir gave her the Hebrew name of Zelda, after Sylvia, whose Hebrew name was Zelda Tzipora. Elisheva herself was named after Sylvia's mother. - Bernie Roth



Mazel Tov to Dan and Alice Nussbaum

whose son Joe's production *Just Add Magic* has been nominated for two daytime Emmy awards: best children and family show and best cinematography.



Elie Silbert's Bar Mitzvah!

Elie was working hard to prepare for his Bar Mitzvah (*Beha'alotecha*) in June. And then came COVID-19! With just weeks to go, his parents didn't know what to tell him: would family and friends be able to come from South Africa, Israel, and across North America? Would Elie realize his dream of standing in front of the TBD community in our sanctuary?



In the end the family realized this would have to be a two-part celebration as Elie insisted on reading his original portion. Therefore, Elie shared his chanting with extended family, online, and also looks forward to celebrating with his TBD community in a meaningful way once it is safe for everyone to be together again!

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Received April 16, 2020 - June 15, 2020

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Elaine Gallant

Sylvia Roth

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Remember the old days, when we used to have Shabbat morning services? One of our favorite moments each week was (and will be again!) just before the Torah service, when we would go around the room and announce any good news, birthdays, anniversaries etc. which might have occurred the prior week / be occurring the following week. Well, just because we're not together in the sanctuary for the interim doesn't mean that we don't want to celebrate along with you.

So, next time you have any good news for us to share in this new weekly *Good News & Mazal Tov* spot in our newsletter, just call the temple office or send an e-mail with the details to office@tbdrochester.org with the subject line: "Good News!"



In an effort to share and connect with one another during this temporary time of separation, we are preparing a temple directory to share with temple members. The directory will include members' names, mailing address(es), telephone number(s), email address(es) and a photo to accompany the contact information.

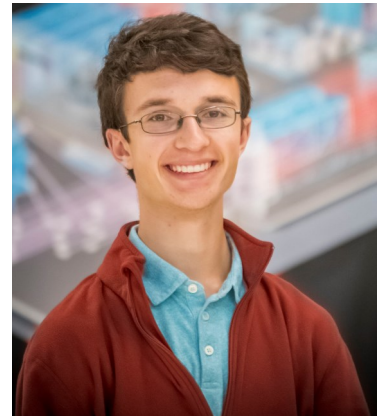
Please send your digital family photo to office@tbdrochester.org or contact the temple office to make an appointment for the temple photographer to visit your front door. If you have a paper photo to submit, please mail it to Rebecca Weber, 26 Seminole Way Rochester, NY 14618. We will scan your photo and return it to you by mail.



The golf outing has been cancelled this year due to current conditions, but we look forward to planning for the outing next year.

Class of 2020

Henry graduated from Brighton High School. He will be attending Yale in the fall, hopefully in New Haven but possibly from his childhood bedroom, which at least would allow more time with his cat. He is thinking about majoring in Mechanical Engineering and hopes to play in the Yale Symphony Orchestra and get involved in some of the other activities like Model UN and Ultimate Frisbee that he enjoyed in high school.



Harry graduated from Brighton High School. He will be attending the University of Chicago in the fall, where he hopes to continue participating in theatre and performance groups and explore many subjects on his way to declaring a major.



Noah graduated from the University of Rochester with a degree in mechanical engineering and honors for his academic and research achievements.

He moved to Ann Arbor, MI to work for an opto-mechanics company.



Congratulations!

Stan and Elaine are very proud of their son, Jake, who recently graduated from Washington University in St. Louis. While Stan and Elaine were disappointed that there was no regular in-person graduation ceremony, they and Jake's older siblings Aviva and Aaron were happy to be able to celebrate Jake's virtual graduation.



Abby graduated from School of the Arts and will be attending University at Buffalo as a Psychology major with a double minor in Health and Human Services and Spanish.



Charles graduated from Pittsford Mendon High School and will be attending U Mass Amherst in the Fall. He is interested in political science, history, law and excited by the opportunities in those areas at U Mass.

Yahrzeits

			Date Observed
July 1 Chaya Sarah Schnidman	July 16 Al Newman Inge Schaffer	August 1 Sam Kinel	August 16 Rose Zoghlin
July 2 Anna Roxin	July 17 Joel Kerker Ruth Forchheimer Kraus	August 2 Norman Steinberg	August 18 Harold Fishman
July 6 Jacob Neuberg Kurt Peter Schaffer	July 18 Isadore Braiman	August 3 Nuftule Feinberg Burton Freedman Joe Priceman	August 20 Rose L. Gordon
July 7 Eli Bauman Boruch Bobkowsky Shaya Sora Bobkowsky Moshe Nechamia Bobkowsky Sora Blumert Bobkowsky	July 19 Hyman Abrams	August 5 Sadie Greenberg Max Kessler	August 21 Mildred Ganon
July 8 Al Diamond	July 20 Jerome Rothstein	August 9 Martha Barufkin Driss Arthur Caplin Belle Kessler John Herbert Skiba	August 22 Beatrice Goldman Evelyn Sharf
July 9 Joseph Retta	July 21 Morton Brodsky	August 10 Mary Rubin	August 24 Benjamin Spitulnik
July 11 Daniel Markus	July 22 Paul Cherkasky Phillip Haymoff Irving Kessler Karen Phillips Ruth Servetnick	August 11 Fronie Hoffman	August 26 Rose Applebaum Gertrude Toole
July 12 Tillie Gross	July 23 Ida Priceman	August 12 Samuel Messinger Elizabeth Palagyi	August 28 Amalie Kraus Celia Markus
July 14 Jacob Wexler	July 25 Michael Zeif	August 14 Ira Lurie	August 31 Linda-Sue Edwards Sumner Shechet
July 15 Rose Cohen David D. Gordon	July 26 Hena Gewertz Bromberg	August 15 Jacob Ettingoff	

The yahrzeit date that appears above is the date of observance using the secular calendar. These dates match those of the Hebrew calendar for the actual date of death.

We also are investigating the possibility of holding an outdoor Tashlich service that will include a Shofar service, where there will be sufficient space for participants to observe appropriate social distancing. Details are not final at the time of writing (in June), however we look forward to letting you know the plans as soon as they are in place.

I mentioned earlier the challenge of resisting negativity's gravitational pull during a time of crisis such as this. As I reflect on the past few months and then also on the months ahead, it actually becomes clear to me that there is so much we have to be grateful for and to feel positive about:

As far as I know, not a single one of our Temple Beth David community has contracted the virus

Our community has remained strong and active in new and innovative ways

Technology, although frustrating at times and never as good as being in person, has made it possible to connect with each other and to know that we are not alone

Even though the High Holy Days will not be the same this year, we have a team of leaders who are committed to making them meaningful, nonetheless

My best wishes to everyone for a lovely summer, that it should be enjoyed in good health and that we should continue to develop new and wonderful ways to reach out and to connect with each other, safely.

Bivrachah – בברכה - with blessings,

Michael

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- ☐ Mitzvah Kiddush Donation

- ☐ Herb Kraus Adult Education Fund
- ☐ Rabbi Skopitz Fund
- ☐ Torah Repair Fund
- ☐ Soldiers Project



Donations and dues payments may now be accepted online! Visit our donate page at www.tbdrochester.org/donate Online donation minimum \$10.



Do you receive our Weekly News email?

If not, you are missing out on the latest news about Temple Beth David services and events, as well as community information. Call or email the Temple Office to add your name to the mailing list!

HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996) is United States legislation that provides data privacy and security provisions for safeguarding medical information. Hospitals are no longer permitted to contact the temple office to notify us of admitted congregants.

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