



February - March 2024

Volume 71 Issue 1

From Rabbi Michael Silbert

rabbi@tbdrochester.org

We Are Not Alone

I was weighing some pears in the supermarket a few days ago (D'anjou, if you must know) when a complete stranger tapped me on the shoulder, smiled warmly and said: "You are not alone."

Honestly.

In rapid succession, I went through this progression of thoughts:

Is she getting impatient that I'm taking too long with the produce scale?

Is she following me?

No, wait - she's noticed the *kippah* on my head! Israel...

Resolution of a fleeting mystery: I realized she'd seen my *kippah* and was making a comment to me about Israel. Decoded, "*You are not alone*" meant she could tell I was a Jew and wanted to let me know that she shares my concerns for Israel and the Jewish people at this difficult time. She's not the first non-Jew to tell me that recently. Over the past few months, we've had a number of guests come to services to show their support and family friends also have reached out to us; our neighbors; teachers at our kids' schools; the real estate agent who sold us our house!

However, in contrast to these messages, as Israel has pursued its campaign to rout Hamas from Gaza following the October 7th massacre, the din of critical voices rising even more steadily comes as no surprise.

As soon as we heard the initial reports on that fateful Saturday morning, I had the sense that even before Israel launches a response, it's already caught between a rock and a hard place. On the one hand, they have endured an attack of unimaginable brutali-

ty and gruesomeness, yet much of the early expression of sympathy would likely not last long, for as soon as Israel would join this war it did not start, it would inevitably come under a barrage of condemnation from the rest of the world. To paraphrase the title of Dara Horn's book, "People Prefer Dead Jews", sometimes it really does seem that the world feels much more comfortable with Jews who die than with those who survive. Damned if we die and damned if we don't.

At the same time, just because Israel's detractors reflexively accuse her of disproportionate retaliation, doesn't mean it never happens... It took only a few days for the terrifyingly ambitious goal of wiping out Hamas to be announced. The longer the war continues, the more fearful I become about just how achievable this is, at least without causing total and utter devastation in Gaza. And yes, we *should* feel that we have a stake in the wellbeing of Gazan civilians for numerous reasons: political, human, even *Jewish*.

After all, who among us has failed to learn the lesson around the Pesach Seder table about not rejoicing when God's Egyptian children suffered from the plagues? Is there any Jew who defiantly refuses to remove those 10 drops of wine, unwilling to diminish their joy at our enemies' demise as our tradition teaches us? Our stomachs ought to turn when we see the daily images of dust-filled flattened cities. How will we know when the last Hamas killer has been killed? How many dead and displaced civilians are enough? When does it become too much? On the other hand, the Seder never teaches us to submit to our compassion by surrendering to our enemies so that they can kill us and be victorious instead of us. Putting our own nation / families / children / selves first in a war situation is a moral choice

(Continued on page 10)

Thank you to all who attended the Temple Congregational meeting on November 19, 2023

BOARD OF TRUSTEES / OFFICE

While most of our temple Board of Trustees remains intact, Cindy Halpern's term has ended. We thank Cindy for her participation on the Board and for her continued work with the Ritual Committee. Marc Lande has been elected to a three-year term on the board and Judy Fleissig and Scott Bauman have been elected to another three year term each. Thank you to all the Board members and Executive Board members for their efforts this year.

Our move to Temple Beth El was the biggest change this year, followed closely by the need to hire a new office manager. We are thankful to **Misael Colon** who continues to help us several hours a week while we are searching for a permanent replacement.

ACTIVITY COMMITTEE

In October I convened the first Activity Committee meeting with several congregants in attendance. We discussed the genesis of this committee:

- There was a recent Board discussion about tikkun olam in the form of donations the Temple was giving to other non-profits in Rochester and whether we should express tikkun olam in a different manner — such as volunteering time in community notfor-profits;
- There has been a request for the Rabbi to teach classes for the congregants without any specific topics developed.

Our move to Temple Beth El has introduced the opportunity to collaborate in various areas of temple life. In the hope of getting more involvement of congregants, I placed tikkun olam, social events, and education under the rubric of an Activity Committee.

One of the events that brought the most excitement was the 70th Anniversary celebration of the Temple in 2024! There were several ideas of how we can celebrate this event. This most promising is to combine the celebration with our well-attended annual picnic. A performance of the Rochester Jewish Cho-

rale appears promising. Please contact me if you want to join the planning for this event.

We also discussed visiting the Safe Haven Holocaust Refugee Shelter Museum (in Oswego) covering a very current topic.

COLLABORATION

I recently received information about Temple Beth El's Strategic Plan that is outlined below:

Preserving and Advancing Conservative Judaism in Rochester

The mission:

- Create and sustain an environment where Conservative Judaism is celebrated and shared among a diverse, inclusive and engaged community
- Learn how congregants want to observe, celebrate and embrace our faith
- Carry out the promise of the Farash Foundation grant by working to engage congregations sharing Temple Beth El building space, including clergy and leadership
- Honor the history of all congregations sharing Temple Beth El building space now and in the future.

This plan has facets that include Temple Beth David as an important player in this Conservative Jewish campus. I am our Temple's representative in their strategic planning task force. In a December 17 meeting there was much discussion about what makes a Conservative Jewish community. More meetings of the task force are planned for the new year.

Another point of cooperation is occurring now through the end of February. Rabbi Bitran El will be on sabbatical and Rabbi Silbert will be filling in for him for lifecycle events, as needed. The Temple Beth David Board and Rabbi Silbert have also agreed for Rabbi Silbert to lead joint Shabbat services six times in the Temple Beth El sanctuary through these two months with the intervening services in our chapel.

(Continued on page 11)



Thank you to **Scott Davis** for sponsoring the last kiddush of 2023 in honor of his birthday, and thank you, **Lewis Rothberg and Shelby Nelson**, for sponsoring the first Temple Beth David kiddush of 2024 after services on January 27th.

We continue to enjoy twice-monthly kiddush lunches for Temple Beth David. Thanks to all who sponsor these and volunteer to help with preparations, set up and clean up.

We also share kiddushim with Temple Beth El. For each, we contribute volunteer help and prepared food items. We've discovered that many Temple Beth El members love Rabbi Skopitz' (z"l) cholent! In appreciation of sharing Shabbat kiddushim Temple Beth David sends a quarterly donation to Temple Beth El.

February 3rd, Parashat Yitro, "Jethro..."

Combined Temple Beth David-Beth El service and kiddush. Prep help is needed in the upstairs kitchen on Thursday, February 1st, 9:00-11:00 am. Set up and clean up help is needed February 3rd before and after kiddush.

February 10th, Parashat Mishpatim, "Ordinances..."

Temple Beth David will hold its own Shabbat services in the Chapel, followed by kiddush in the Youth Lounge. Kiddush is sponsored by **Karen Schaffer** in honor of Jewish Disability Awareness and Inclusion Month. *Prep help is needed on Friday, February 9th, 2:00-4:00 pm, in our kitchen and Youth Lounge. Set up and clean up help is needed February 10th before and after kiddush.*

February 17th, Parashat Terumah, "Offering..."

Combined Temple Beth David-Beth El service and kiddush. *Prep help is needed in the upstairs kitchen on Thursday, February 16th, 9:00-11:00 am. Set up and clean up help is needed February 17th before and after kiddush.*

February 24th, Parashat Tetzaveh, "Command..."

Temple Beth David will hold its own Shabbat services in the Chapel, followed by kiddush in the Youth Lounge. Kiddush is sponsored by **Kevin & Judy Fleissig**. *Prep help is needed on Friday, February 23rd, 2:00-4:00 pm, in our kitchen and Youth Lounge*. Set up and clean up help is needed February 24th before and after kiddush.

March 2nd, Parashat Ki Tisa, "When you take..."

Temple Beth David will hold its own Shabbat services in the Chapel, followed by a kiddush in the Youth Lounge. Kiddush is sponsored by **Jayne Miller** in celebration of her sister Nancy's birthday. *Prep help is needed on Friday, March 1th, 2:00-4:00 pm, in our kitchen and Youth Lounge. Set up and clean up help is needed March 2nd before and after kiddush*

March 9th, Parashat Vayakel, "And he gathered..."

Men's Club Shabbat. Temple Beth David will share services and kiddush upstairs with Temple Beth El. Prep help is needed in the upstairs kitchen on Thursday, March 7th, 9:00-11:00 am. Set up and clean up help is needed March 9th before and after kiddush.

(Continued on page 11)

All in the Family

Birthdays

February

Bonnie Abrams February 3 Philippa Jacobson February 8 Marc Lande February 9 Dr. Steven Meyers February 13 Susan Langmann February 14 **Thomas Wolbert** February 18 Helen Kashtan February 23 Rabbi Michael Silbert February 24 Sanford Toole February 25 March Michael Peres March 7 Joyce Towber March 11 Seth Katzman March 20 Michelle Gross March 21 Anne Goldin March 24 Harrison Smookler March 25 Mobeen Shirazi March 26 March 28 Kellie Hyman Roberta Kinel March 29

Anniversary

March

Phillip and Sue Lederer March 4



Celebrating a special event?

Have special family news?

Submit details to the Temple Office for inclusion in our Weekly News email or the printed *Bulletin*.

Photos must be original files that are of good quality.

SEND A CARD TO A FRIEND OR LOVED ONE!

FRIEND OR LOVED ONE!	
Checks payable to: Temple Beth David	Minimum donation \$10, or two for \$18
Date Amount enclosed \$	
Donor Name:	Recipient Name:
Address:	Address:
Phone:	Phone:
□ Get Well Wishes □ Happy Birthday □ Congratulations on	☐ In Memory of
Note:	
□ David Solomon Operating Fund□ Herb Kraus Adult Education Fund□ Mitzvah Kiddush Donation	□ Rabbi Discretionary Fund□ Rabbi Aaron Solomon Torah Repair Fund□ Rabbi Skopitz Fund

DAVID SOLOMON FUND

IN MEMORY OF

Sheila Markowitz

Scott and Merrie Franklin Cindy Halpern Howard and Helen Kashtan Bernard Roth Daniel and Risa Saltzman

Brian Wasserman Paul Eissenstat

Scott Bauman

Dr. Isadore Neurock

Frances Neurock

Harry Vine Max Gross

Stanley and Michelle Gross

Leonard Gordon

Eissenstat Family

Phillip Stark Valerie Stark

Karen Schaffer

Sam Cohen

Sandra Cohen

Gary Cohn

Roberta Kinel

IN HONOR OF

Jewish Movie Club Robin Benmergui

Linda Epstein

IN SUPPORT

Michael and Toby Berke Theodore and Shirley Levy Margaret Shaw Helen Klein Estate of Marci Miller

RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

IN MEMORY OF

Michael Greenberg

Michael and Laurie Peres

Beverly Stark Millard Schaffer

Karen Schaffer

Donna Wexler Larca Sheldon Feuerstein Lee Rosenthal

Sidney Markus

Eli Rothstein

Bill and Lisa Keeley

IN HONOR OF RABBI

Ira Cohen and Ellen Frank

MITZVAH KIDDUSH FUND

IN MEMORY OF

Milton Lande

Marc Lande and Linda Servetnick

Sylvia Weber Wilma Mevers

Steven Meyers and Barbara Weber

IN HONOR OF

Lily Sherman

Cindy Halpern Howard and Helen Kashtan

Scott Davis' Birthday

Scott and Lori Davis

RABBI AARON SOLOMON TORAH REPAIR FUND

IN MEMORY OF

Abraham Lutzky Dora Lutzky Myrna Lutzky Robert N. Herman Ruth Lederer

Phillip and Susan Lederer

Anita Bauman David Bauman Eli Bauman Ida Priceman Joe Priceman Marvin Davis Samuel Bauman Rochelle Kashtan

Scott Bauman

Marcia Davis

Scott and Lori Davis

Fajwel Kinel

Roberta Kinel

Harold Feinberg

Rhea Feinberg

Morris Schnidman Shirley Schnidman

Y'hoshua Schnidman

Frank Schnidman and Kim Liberty

IN HONOR OF

Bernard Roth's 99th Birthday

Scott and Lori Davis' 35th Anniversary

Stan and Michelle Gross'

Anniversary Scott Bauman

IN SUPPORT

Edward and Susan Drexler

RABBI SKOPTIZ FUND

IN MEMORY OF

Ira Kinel

Roberta Kinel

Marie Goldwasser Nathan Goldwasser

Fay Neuberg and Anna Neuberg Korus

February and March 2024 Yahrzeits

The yahrzeit date that appears here is the date of observance using the secular calendar.

These dates match those of the Hebrew calendar for the actual date of death.

FEBRUARY

February 3
Rose Kessler
Florence Levinson
Lillian Narotsky

February 5 Herman Miller

February 6
Peter Carl Abrams

February 8
Minnie Himmelstein
Dr. Sidney Schatz
Elynor Vine

February 10
Julian Braiman
Sara Feldman
Frank Sherman
Fanny Simon Passer

February 11 Werner Schaffer

February 12
Earl Schwartz

February 14Minnie Blumkin
Shirley Shapiro

February 17 Daniel Nussbaum

February 18 Norman Klein Harry Roxin Anna Schrier

February 21 Sarah Fleisher

February 22Bluma Schonbrun

February 23 Faye Goldin

February 26 Max Palagyi

February 27
Gertrude Brodsky
Jacob Haymoff
Samuel Markus

February 28
Annette Harris
Albert Marcusfield

February 29 Amy Brody

MARCH

March 1 Jordan Cohen Leila Markus

March 2
Anna Weinstein

March 3 Louis Klein

March 4
Jacob Goldman
Betty Seigel

March 6 Mollie Roth Jewell Rothstein

March 7
Harry Cohen
Molly Cohen
Sophie Isaacson

March 8 Harry Herman Stephen Sigelow

March 9 Bessie Klein

March 19 Lillian Abelson Sara Brodsky

March 20 Alan Herman

March 28 Morris Herman

March 29 Jacob Schwartz

Please call the Temple Office if you or a family member is in the hospital. We want to offer comfort to congregants who are ill. Hospitals are not permitted to contact us with patient information.

Rabbi Silbert has prepared a booklet of reflections on healing and connection.

Contact Rabbi Silbert or Temple Office for a copy.





Honoring Jewish Traditions & Practices

DANIEL "DANNY" ZYSMAN—LICENSED MANAGER

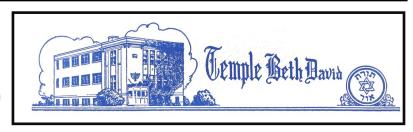
Brighton Memorial Chapel, Inc.

3325 Winton Road South Rochester, NY 14623 Phone: 585-427-8520

Website: www.BrightonMC.com E-mail: Danny@BrightonMC.com

LOOKING BACK: Temple Beth David 1953-2023

Throughout 2024, *The Bulletin* will feature information about Temple Beth David over the decades in celebration of our 70th Anniversary. Much of the following comes from a publication prepared by the planning committee for our 50th Anniversary celebration; some comes from the Temple archives. Thank you to **Alison Helms**,



Sue Lederer, Bernie Roth, and others who have been saving items of historical interest in the our Archives since 2004.

On October 30, 1953, a group of Irondequoit Jews informally met and made a historic decision to form a congregation. The fact that there was no sanctuary, finances, spiritual leader or any other manifestations of a synagogue did not deter these determined individuals from holding Shabbat evening services just three days

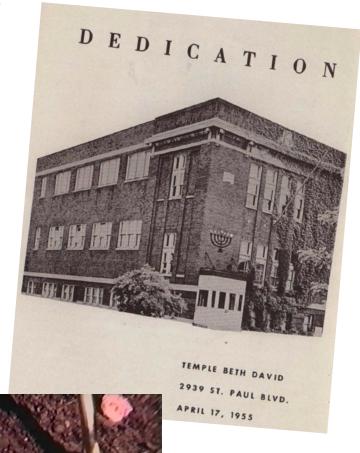
later in the rented basement of the old Grange Hall — a building later occupied by the venerable House of Guitars.

Six days later, more than 100 men and women gathered to endorse the idea of creating a Conservative congregation. Fifty-three families immediately joined. The Congregation's name was chosen to commemorate the 3,000th anniversary of the founding of the Temple in Jerusalem by King David.

Within weeks, Sunday and Hebrew schools were also established...

...In May 1954, negotiations were initiated to purchase the Unity Recreation Hall at the intersection of Titus Avenue and St. Paul Boulevard....As membership expanded, it soon became evident that the Temple's first home would not be its last. Unable to expand the building on the existing property, a search was initiated to find a suitable site.

A groundbreaking ceremony was held in November 1963 for a new building at St. Paul Boulevard, large enough for the 300+-member congregation, containing a sanctuary, social hall, and classrooms. The actual construction of the building - a slow and difficult process - was completed by November 1, 1969, thanks to the dedicated hands-on work of many of our founding congregants.



FEBRUARY & MARCH 2024



JEWISH MOVIE CLUB

BENT



WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 7,

@ 8:00PM

TUBI • 1 HR 44 MIN • 1997

LOST IN THE WHITE CITY



WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 21

@ 8:00PM

TUBI • 1 HR 32 MIN • 2014

BYE BYE GERMANY



WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6

@ 8:00PM

TUBI • 1 HR 42 MIN • 2016

THE SIGN PAINTER



WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20 @ 8:00PM TUBI • 1 HR 53 MIN • 2021



Temple Beth David will be celebrating Purim with Temple Beth El!

Saturday, March 23

Family-friendly Megillah reading in Sanctuary at 6:45 p.m.

Full Megillah reading in Chapel at 8 p.m. (after Havdalah)

Sunday, March 24

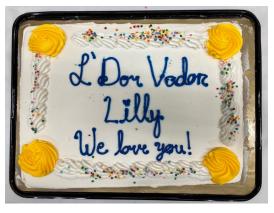
Full Megillah reading in Chapel with Shacharit services at 8:30 a.m.

Temple Happenings



Temple Beth David celebrated Chanukah December 10 with potato and zucchini latkes, singing with **Bonnie Abrams**, and lighting our *chanukiot* together. We also delivered Chanukah party bags to congregants who have difficulty getting out at night.

Many thanks to the amazing people who made our dinner such a big success. We couldn't have done it without you!



We had a special kiddush in honor of Lilly Sherman, who has been a member of Temple Beth David for 69 years! Thank you Cindy Halpern and Howard and Helen Kashtan for sponsoring a kiddush lunch in her honor.

Deadline for our April /May 2024 Bulletin is March 15.

From the Rabbi ... Continued

(Continued from page 1)

that's easily justified. Besides, who among us has failed to learn the lesson of the Holocaust that when our enemies pledge to get rid of us – not make peace with us, but eliminate us – they usually proceed with alarming resolve?

There is no way that the leaders of Hamas are surprised by a response of this magnitude. They know Israel too well. Even as their own people's suffering increases by the day, they continue to coax Israeli aggression further by promising that October 7th is but the first act in a long playbook. I proposed in a sermon shortly after that day which will live forever in infamy that the aim behind Hamas' series of strikes over the years has never been to conquer Israel outright, nor is it in their own people's best interests. Rather, it's a protracted, decades-long campaign aimed at ever increasing escalation itself, thereby luring Israel into ever stronger reactions, resulting in an unstoppable hemorrhaging of Israel's legitimacy on the world stage. It's a slow path to *Judenrein* 2.0.

Hamas' leaders seem to be placing their money on predicting a long-range outcome that –while it might cost many Palestinian lives in the interim – Israel cannot survive forever without friends and support. Current polls which show President Biden's diminishing favorability among members of his own party because of his dogged loyalty towards Israel would appear to be just the kind of short-term development that Hamas hopes for. Furthermore, have you been following developments at the International Court of Justice in the Netherlands? That crumbling sound you hear is the daily erosion of Israel's reputation.

At the time of writing in mid-January, 11,000 rockets have been fired from Gaza into Israel *since* October 7th. Some of these were even fired in the very moments that South African lawyers held the floor in The Hague, accusing Israel of genocide. More than 100 hostages are still being held in Gaza. MORE THAN 100 HOSTAGES ARE STILL BEING HELD IN GAZA!

Clearly, our enemy is still actively at war with us after breaking a ceasefire in place until October 7, so what then is Israel supposed to do? Initiating a ceasefire seems absurd to most Israelis when Hamas is still bent on their destruction. Furthermore, the irony that people around the world are calling for a ceasefire from Israel without any preconditions of Hamas' release of the remaining hostages, only drives home the point to Israelis that few are interested in the plight and victimization of both sides.

Which brings me back to my new friend – the one I met at in the fresh produce aisle. Against a backdrop of Israel's war as well as rising antisemitism throughout the Diaspora, it is easy to succumb to despair and to feel that we are alone. There are times when I ask myself if I'm going crazy, or did others just not see – in real time! – what happened on October 7th? And if they saw it, how have they convinced themselves to summarily dismiss it, or even to suggest that the video footage might have been fabricated by Israel? How does one wrap one's head around the audacity of denying what we have all seen with our own eyes? The relationship between the truth of these events and its deniers is no different to what we experienced on January 6th 2021, in Washington DC, or dare I say with denial of the Holocaust. When what we all saw happening live is denied, history ceases to exist. Nothing is provable anymore. These deniers might live among us, yet they do not live in the same reality that we do and they do not uphold the same fundamentals of the civilization in which we live. No wonder so many of us feel so alone.

Despite this, arguably we are less alone than we've been in the past. Widespread hatred of Jews and designs to marginalize and even destroy us are nothing new. But I cannot imagine that in times gone by when tyrannical plots against us have been hatched, that so many others have come out in our defense.

The Jewish People has never won any popularity contests. Especially in modern times, getting by in the margins can feel too difficult for many Jews to contend with compared to the alternative of unburdening oneself of this yoke and disappearing into the majority. But living with a mission is not necessarily meant to be easy. For that is who we are and it is that same mission which also brings joy and meaning to our lives. Together we have something wonderful and I'm glad to tell you that in addition to each other, we also have friends out there. We are not alone.

עם ישראל חי - The People of Israel lives on and thrives!

From the President ... Continued

(Continued from page 2)

LOOKING AHEAD

As I enter my second year of the presidency, I am aware that there are several "loose ends" related to our move and here are some items that I and others will address:

- Identify a place to display the two "Trees of Life".
- Follow-up on replacing the chapel doors with more secure doors.
- Placing two Torah holders in the Chapel.
- Hire an office manager.
- Improve our office internet connection
- Reinvigorate our Temple website

The Temple Beth David Board and I thank you for your continued financial support of the Temple. We are dependent on dues and contributions to keep funding kiddushes, salaries, and office operations.

I welcome new ideas and everyone getting more involved in the Temple community. Volunteers with energy are what keep us active and moving forward.

We wish you health and blessings for the new year!

Phil Katzman and the

Temple Beth David Board of Trustees

Kiddush News ... Continued

(Continued from page 3)

March 16th, Parashat Pekudei, "Amounts of..."

Temple Beth David will hold its own Shabbat services in the Chapel, followed by a kiddush shared with Temple Beth El upstairs. *Prep help is needed in the upstairs kitchen on Thursday, March 14th*, 9:00-11:00 am. Set up and clean up help is needed March 16th before and after kiddush.

March 23rd, Parashat Vayikra, "And [He] called..."

Temple Beth David will hold its own Shabbat services in the Chapel, followed by kiddush in the Youth Lounge. Purim begins this evening. *Anyone interested in sponsoring this kiddush? Please contact the Temple Office. Prep help is needed on Friday, March 22nd, 2:00-4:00 pm, in our kitchen and Youth Lounge. Set up and clean up help is needed March 23rd before and after kiddush.

March 30th, Parashat Tzav, "Command..."

Temple Beth David will hold its own Shabbat services in the Chapel, followed by a kiddush shared with Temple Beth El upstairs. *Prep help is needed in the upstairs kitchen on Thursday, March 28th*, 9:00-11:00 am. Set up and clean up help is needed March 30th before & after kiddush.



What food do you associate with each week's parashah? Do you have something to celebrate or commemorate?

Contact the Temple Office about sponsoring a kiddush luncheon, cholent or a treat!



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Temple Office:

585-266-3223 office@tbdrochester.org www.tbdrochester.org



Board of Trustees Meeting Tuesday, February 20

7:00 pm via Zoom.

Contact the Temple Office for login information