

Mishpachtenu

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Hag Pesah Sameah

Passover 5785 Edition



Congregation Beth Shalom
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CONGREGATION BETH SHALOM

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How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Matzah

Rabbi Seth Adelson
Senior Rabbi
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When I was working as a rabbi on Long Island, every year one of the local supermarkets would have a spring promotion where they would give you a five-pound carton of matzah if you spent more than \$100. This caused an annual pile-up of these freebies in our donation bin at the synagogue, to the point where we had to be gently reminded by the food pantry which collected them that their recipient families did not care for matzah.

There are people in this world who enjoy matzah, who in fact eat it all year long. I have never been one of those people; in fact, I studiously avoid matzah for 346 of the 354 days of a typical Jewish year. I won't touch the stuff between the 23rd of Nisan and the 14th of Nisan of the following year.

But, as you surely know, an essential piece of Jewish practice is suffering, and there is a good reason for that: occasionally we have to be miserable to remind ourselves of the things for which we are grateful. Pesah observance is never simply a matter of avoiding bread for eight days; it is never merely about having a couple of glorious meals with family and friends and recounting the most resonant, most foundational story of Jewish peoplehood. Pesah is, rather, *Hag haMatzot*, the festival of the bread of poverty. It is an expansive and expensive reminder that we should not forget those who lack all that with which we have been blessed.

We open the seder by saying, *Kol dikhfin yeitei veyeikhul*. Let all who are hungry come and eat. About this, Rambam tells us (*Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Shevitat Yom Tov* 6:18) that, "The one who locks the doors of his courtyard and eats and drinks along with his wife and children, without giving anything to

eat and drink to the poor and the desperate, does not observe a religious celebration but indulges in the celebration of his stomach." The matzah is a deliberate diet disruption, intended to ensure that you do not turn the seder into a dinner party.

And so, frankly, we need the matzah. It is simply too easy to forget our higher obligation to those in need at this time. But the crunchy, thirst-inducing blandness, crying out in our mouths for a swig of Mogen David, calls us back to our most essential, personal obligations. So lean into the matzah – it's good for you.



SPRUCE UP YOUR SEDER!

SATURDAY, APRIL 5 | 1:00 P.M.
WEINBERG PAVILION

ARE YOUR MAXWELL HOUSE HAGGADOT SHOWING SIGNS OF WEAR? COULD YOU USE SOME FRESH SEDER MATERIAL? HOW ABOUT A NEW HAROSET RECIPE?

JOIN RABBI ADELSON FOR THIS ENGAGING DISCUSSION ON HOW TO MAKE YOUR SEDER MORE MEANINGFUL AND MORE ENJOYABLE FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS.



OUR LEADERSHIP

A Message from Our President

Paul Teplitz
President
pteplitz@me.com



Winter is giving way and spring is in the air. Daylight savings time has begun, and we moved an hour forward. And soon we will gather around our Seder tables this Passover to engage in one of our most meaningful traditions. The story of our Exodus from Egypt is not just a recounting of ancient history; it is a living narrative that continues to shape our identity, our faith, and our continuing commitment to move from a space of constriction to one of openness and freedom.

Passover reminds us that we were once strangers in a strange land, bound by the chains of oppression, and that through faith, resilience, and divine guidance, we found our way to freedom. This message is as relevant today as it was thousands of years ago. Just as the seasons move in their eternal cycle, we are called upon not only to remember but to relive that journey as if we, too, went out from Egypt and moved closer to freedom with each step.

As an egalitarian congregation, we embrace the delicate balance between tradition and modernity, between preserving our sacred rituals and making them inclusive and meaningful in our lives today. We use the Haggadah to ask questions, to engage in dialogue, and to pass down our traditions to the next generation.

Freedom is not just the narrative about escaping bondage; it is about the responsibilities that come with it. We are tasked with building a more just and compassionate world, caring for those in need, and ensuring that all who are hungry have a place at the table. Our Seder is a reminder that redemption is a continual process.

As a congregation, we take pride in coming together as a community, strengthening our bonds through prayer, learning, and acts of loving-kindness. This

Passover, may we be inspired by our ancestors' journey and renew our dedication to our values and traditions. Now is the time to deepen our faith and reaffirm our commitment both to one another and to Beth Shalom, our spiritual home.

Wishing you and your loved ones a Chag Pesach Sameach. I hope that your holiday is filled with joy, meaning, and renewal.

I look forward to seeing you in shul!

B'Shalom,
Paul M. Teplitz



PRE-PASSOVER PIZZA DINNER

**Thursday, April 10
5:30 p.m.**

SAMUEL & MINNIE HYMAN BALLROOM

Registration is required. To register, go to:
BethShalomPgh.org/2025PrePassoverPizza
or scan QR code on this flyer.



Adults - \$10/each
Children - \$5/each
Family - \$25/each

**Sponsored by
the Men's Club**



A Message from our Executive Director

Robert Gleiberman
Executive Director
ExecDir@bethshalompgh.org



It is always welcomed when we start to come out of the darkness and into the light. When we start to come out of the cold and into the warmth. This is a trigger for most people, especially me, to get excited about what is ahead.

As I am drafting this article in mid-March, we are getting ready to celebrate the holiday of Purim, followed quickly by the holiday of Passover. The period of Purim to Passover is a very busy time of year.

PURIM

Purim began the evening of Thursday, March 13, when we had a fantastic day of festivities, including the reading of the book of Esther, the Megillah. We started the day with our ELC (Preschool) having activities with all the children, their parents as well as other family members, from 9:30 AM till 2 PM in our Samuel and Minnie Hyman Ballroom. Each class took turns celebrating Purim with special activities and treats.

Later in the day, the entire congregation and guests came in costume at 5:15 PM for family friendly Purim activities and a dinner for families with young children. This early activity was followed by everyone going to our Faye Rubenstein Weiss Sanctuary for more Purim fun, Magillah reading and costume contest.

On Purim day, we celebrated with CDS (the Community Day School) at CDS for morning Minyan and the Megillah reading.

In conjunction with the Purim festivities and services, we launched our annual Mishloah Manot program. This annual endeavor was an incredible success due to the arduous work of Ira Frank, Mindy Shreve, Roger Zimmerman, Rich Feder along with the volunteers that helped create and produce an

amazing experience for the entire congregation. Everyone received a Mishloah Manot bag with all kinds of goodies. The bags were delivered between March 9 and March 12.

PASSOVER

Passover begins on the evening of Saturday, April 12 with most people attending a first night Seder. Passover has long been the most celebrated and anticipated Jewish celebration. In addition to our festival worship services and kiddushes, see page 16 for a full listing, we will host our Annual Second Night Seder, the evening of Sunday, April 13. We are again expecting a large crowd, as Rabbi Seth Adelson leads us, as we remember the struggles of our ancestors and celebrate together as a community with our participation and enjoyment of a wonderful festival meal. We look forward to seeing everyone of all ages gathered in the Samuel and Minnie Hyman Ballroom. See page 23 to sign up for the Seder.

VOLUNTEER AWARDS BRUNCH

Lastly, I want to remind everyone of one of our most important programs of the year, our Volunteer Awards Brunch. Please save the date of Sunday, April 6 at 10:30 AM. This is the day that we annually acknowledge all our wonderful volunteers that make Beth Shalom the amazing place it truly is.

This year's award winners are,

- **Jay Fingeret**, for the Lester A. Hamburg Member of The Year
- **Fred Newman**, for the Nathan E. Snader Distinguished Service Award
- **Kate Wrenshall**, for the Ethel and Bernard Halpern Young Leadership Award
- **Robin Halpern**, for the Pittsburgh Jewish Chronicle Volunteers of The Year Award
- **Hannah Adelson** and **Aviv Diamant** for the Daniel M. Plaut Youth Service Award

I know you all join me in congratulating all this year's very deserving award winners.

Wishing all of you a happy and healthy Passover season.

OUR LEADERSHIP

A Message from our Associate Rabbi

**Living between things,
Versus being constantly
present**

Rabbi Mark Asher Goodman
Associate Rabbi
mgoodman@bethshalompgh.org



"It's not even Purim yet!"

A week ago - this would be early March - I saw a social media post from my local city council person wishing me a happy passover. Down below, several shall we say 'disgruntled' constituents noted that this was waaaay too early; the kids would say they were 'triggered'. I was mostly amused, but I reached out to the councilwoman and noted Passover was still about 50 days away. She apologized that she had a new staffer, and the post was removed.

We humans are always both looking forward, backward, and at the present. I rush to the store to buy something I need in three days and I'm forced to remember where the plastic bags were the last time I was at Giant Eagle: future, present, past. In Hebrew, that's *Yihyeh*, *Hoveh*, *ve'Hayyah*. All of those are conjugations of the word 'to be', which contains by coincidence the primary letters of God's name: Yud, Hay, and Vav. In other words, God is the thing that is present in the past, in the now, and in the future.

Humans, less so. Today, as I write this, it is Purim. I'm still throwing together mishloach manot bags to deliver later today: very 'now' (maybe a little 'late.') But I'm also starting to think about what I need to clear out of the pantry for Passover and what I want to focus on at my seder. I'm not fully present in the moment because I am both planning responsibly and anxiously being distracted by something else. We humans and our brains are so developed that we sometimes are incapable of just Being. Here. Now.

A few weeks ago I was learning a commentary on a verse in which God tells Moses: "And you (v'atah) shall further instruct the Israelites..." Rabbi

Menachem Mendel of Vitebsk, who died in 1788, comments as follows:

The words 'v'atah' - and you - refer specifically to prayer. That a person speaks to the Kadosh Baruch Hu in second person: 'you'.

So to it is with the Jew that says 'I will pray with *kavannah* only on Shabbat,' at the hour when the Kadosh Baruch Hu is together with every Jew, and the other six days of the week I will be negligent and hurry in my prayers, and will be satisfied with mumbling lips. This is not the good way. Always, always one should have *kavannah* fitting for *tefillah*, and one should be content to merit to say before the Blessed One: "You."

Kavannah, whether in prayer or in life, is just the Jewish concept of being present – of focusing on the now. The rabbi is teaching that one needs to be present in the now, always. My councilwoman thrust me forward into that panicked moment of 'oh no! I need to clean my kitchen! I need to buy matzah!' Etc. And that's ok. We are constantly both living between the current moment and the next moment; anticipating, predicting, worrying; and also focusing, breathing, being in the now. Remember to have *kavannah* for Purim on Purim, and Pesah on Pesah. And also: it's ok to worry a little about where you'll buy your matzah. Be here now. Be there now, too.

Pre-Benei Mitzvah Retreat

**Friday, May 16, 2025
to Sunday, May 18, 2025**

Emma Kaufmann Camp, Morgantown, WV

The Pre-Benei Mitzvah
retreat will be here
before you know it!



We strongly encourage all of our 5th and 6th grade families to join us for this retreat, one of several membership milestones at Beth Shalom. This is an essential way to create connection among our younger families. The price is \$360/family.

Registration is required. To register or for more info, scan QR code.



A Message from our Development Director

Rabbi Andy Shugerman
Development Director
RabbiAndy@bethshalompgh.org



One of my favorite customs for Shabbat HaGadol, specifically on the Saturday afternoon right before Pesah, is to read the Maggid section of the Passover Haggadah in advance of the First Seder. Just as I often feel that I need the Second Seder to explore all of the great ideas in our retelling of the Exodus narrative, so too does this preview of the ritual meal offer a way to deepen our immersion in liberation consciousness. When given serious attention beyond the seder itself, the Haggadah offers us a message for transforming the way we eat and the way we conduct ourselves every day of the year.

A couple of the best-known passages in the Haggadah actually first appeared as a single unit in Mishnah Pesachim 10.5 (my translation follows):

Rabban Gamaliel did state, “Whoever has not referred to these three matters on Passover has not fulfilled his obligation, and these are they: the Passover [offering], unleavened bread, and bitter herbs. ‘Passover’—because the Omnipresent passed over the houses of our ancestors in Egypt. ‘Unleavened bread’—because our ancestors were redeemed in Egypt. ‘Bitter herbs’—because the Egyptians embittered the lives of our ancestors in Egypt.”

In every generation, a person is duty-bound to see him/herself as if he/she personally went forth from Egypt, as it is said, “You shall tell your child in that day saying, ‘It is because of what Hashem did for me when I went free from Egypt.’” (Exod. 13:8). Therefore we are duty-bound to thank, praise, glorify, honor, exalt, extol the One who made for our ancestors and for us all these miracles, [the One who] brought us forth from slavery to freedom, anguish to joy, mourning to festival, darkness to great light, subjugation to redemption, so we should say before Him, “Hallelujah!”

This rabbinic text explains how we must meet two very different obligations—one ritual, one psychological—in order to fulfill our duties for the Passover seder. Rabban Gamliel’s teaching presents discussing and then eating symbolic foods as the most important part of the seder. Each food item involves midrashic wordplay and also signifies a stage in our people’s journey from slavery to freedom. From that relatively concrete approach, the latter part of the Mishnah advances a much more abstract requirement that we see ourselves personally as having gone forth from Egypt. While Rabban Gamliel’s task is mostly self-explanatory, the subsequent duty begs the fundamental question of how one might accomplish such a feat of spiritual imagination. For that reason, some editions of this Mishnah and of the Haggadah record the obligation as one of outward demonstration as well as inner contemplation.

Indeed, both parts of this Mishnah address a combination of inner and outer expressions of gratitude for our redemption from bondage, a theme that highlights our heritage’s unique contribution to discussions of food security and sustainability, global poverty, and injustice. We must heed the charge of our Haggadah—“Let all who are hungry come and eat!”—as a call to action for true social change.

Pesah Seder

A key step to a meaningful seder is to get a good haggadah. If you stick with whatever you have but people complain, well, it might be time to invest in something more up to date. Your rabbi can help with suggestions or ask friends if they have a version that they enjoy.



OUR LEADERSHIP

Growing with the ELC

Hilary Yeckel

Director of the ELC

hyeckel@bethshalompgh.org



Hello Congregants-

We just entered the second half of our school year, and spring months at the Beth Shalom Early Learning Center. Our educators and students continue to engage in exciting and educational experiences in their classrooms. I have watched different age groups create beautiful pieces of art which emerged through lessons of dinosaurs, outer space, and different countries. If you have time to visit the ELC, you will see these impressive pieces of documentation hanging in our hallways and classrooms.

The ELC was fortunate to begin 2025 with some new materials for our classrooms, playground, and school community through a \$7,000 grant award from the Keystone STARS Continuous Quality Improvement Award. Some of the items we purchased included several new riding toys for our small playground, outdoor chalkboards, dress up, manipulatives, science kits, puzzles, and interactive hallway installation games on the first floor.

Another exciting addition to our program this Spring was adding a science class for our older toddlers once a week. This is a new opportunity for this age group and expands our science program to four of our five age groups. The toddlers have enjoyed their classes with Morah Elaine, and have engaged in hands on learning about magnets, colors, and shadows.

As the weather warms and we enter the Passover season, our classrooms will explore the holiday in many ways. Children will engage in learning about the plagues, search for the afikomen, hold seders, and much more. Our specialists will create meaningful moments in art, science, and music allowing children to experience the holiday through all of their senses.

Lastly, Beth Shalom ELC administration is proud to announce that as of March 10th our entire program hours were extended until 5pm. This has been a goal for school administration and higher leadership, and we are pleased that we are able to offer this additional hour to all our families and continue to provide high quality care.

As always, if you have a question or would like to inquire about how you can support the ELC please call the office at 412-421-8857. I look forward to hearing from you!



BETH SHALOM EARLY LEARNING CENTER

INFANCY - PREKINDERGARTEN

At Beth Shalom Early Learning Center, we recognize the importance of the early years in a child's development and acknowledge the impact that a quality early education experience can have on a child's future success. We believe that each child is a unique individual, who is continually shaped by their social and cultural environments.

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Learning with J-JEP

Rabbi Larry Freedman
Director of J-JEP
 RabbiLF@jjep.org



Rabbi Irwin Kula asks, “What do we hire a holiday to do for us?” Now, I am a practical person. I enjoy a good hamantash. I like a little maror once a year. I’m not above a little fun with holidays. (Well, maror isn’t fun for me but it’s pretty hysterical watching others eat it.) But for me that only goes so far. I want to know why. What is a holiday, beyond fun, offering us? What does it do for us? How does it lift our spirits or appeal to intellect or move us to make the world a better place? If I am going to engage this or that holiday, I want to know what we hire that holiday to do. The holiday should work for us otherwise what should be joyful becomes a grim obligation. No thanks.

So let’s talk about what we want holidays to do for us. At J-JEP we teach customs and we teach meaning and we teach a little bit of the development of these holidays. We try, at an appropriate level for very young Jews, to help them have personal practice, personal spiritual connection, personal pride in Jewish heritage. We hire these holidays to do a lot!

How about you? What do you ask a holiday to do? What do you want them to do for your family? Famously at a Pesach seder, the youngest child -via the four questions- is asking just that. What are we doing all these things for, on this night that isn’t like any other night? And we have answers at the ready either in our memories or written right there in the Haggadah.

Let’s build on that. Purim has four mitzvot. One of them is mishloach manot (shalach munes my mother would say). This is the giving of gifts to friends and receiving gifts in return. We have been organizing a variation with our Make One/Take One at the Purim carnival but what could it mean if a bunch of families arranged a swap? Sharing, tradition, community,

kindness, joy, meaning. That’s my list. What would the sharing of gifts do for you and your family? What job could it serve you?

Come this fall Sim^hat Torah will fall on Wednesday. Sim^hat Torah should be a joyous crescendo to all the fall holidays but, to be honest, a lot of people are tired after all the holidays so sometimes it just doesn’t get the big hurrah it should. At J-JEP we want Simchat Torah to give our students pride in restarting the reading of Torah, joy, physical connection to something holy, a sense of ownership of Torah. We clean the Torah each year. That’s a start. But what else could we do to get the holiday to teach or inspire?

What do you want a holiday do for you? Here’s a quick survey to help us at J-JEP gain insight towards helping us gain more and more from Jewish holidays. You can access the survey by scanning the QR code below. I added my ideas but I hope you’ll add your own ideas so we can crowd source a great job description for Jewish holidays.



Photos taken during World Wide Wrap on Sunday, February 9, 2025 with J-JEP students at Rodef Shalom.



OUR LEADERSHIP

A Message from our Derekh Coordinator

Shari Rapowitz Woldenberg

Derekh Coordinator

swoldenberg@bethshalompgh.org



Since 2025 began with a divisive world at home and abroad, I focused on programs which build community and celebrate Jewish culture. We started with Keshet L'Teva yoga Sunday mornings, which focused on environmentalism and preserving our earth. We also began a Composting Program during Saturday kiddish, with the goal of reducing single use plastics. As stewards of our planet, we hope to continue and grow this six-month trial Composting Program along with our Solar Panel program.

On February 8th, we enjoyed a fun night of Clues & Shmooze (with some booze!). It was a fantastic event, with over 140 community members laughing and smiling in our Samuel and Minnie Hyman Ballroom. Thank you, Noah Lubowsky and Aaron Smuckler! We also started weekly Game Days every Thursday in our Samuel and Minnie Hyman Ballroom from 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. We set up tables for bridge, mahjong, and scrabble, and it is wonderful to see community members enjoy spending time together. Please join us, all levels welcome!

We started March with a new Tiferet Yoga series focused on the theme of Joy leading up to Purim. We also hosted a performance of two melodramas by Israeli Actor/Director Roy Horovitz called, "When the Omelet Touches the Salad" and "Jonathan." Thank you to those who made donations so we could present this artistic work free of charge. In addition, we hosted a delegation of Muslims, Christians and Jews from Bahrain, Israel and Morocco. Their goal was to model the power of interfaith and international friendships in bringing about a hopeful future for people of all religions throughout the middle east.

Zarky Rudavsky spoke about life in Israel today and the importance of voting for Mercaz and securing a voice in Israel. He will teach how to

vote on our computers and iPhones, and will set up a voting table during our Purim celebration and Megillah reading. Then on March 26th, the rescheduled event we have been waiting for, the Pittsburgh Jewish Book Festival talk featuring Michael Solomonov and Steven Cook discussing *Zahav Home* and middle eastern cuisine.

Finally, in the interest of human rights for all in this country, we hosted several educational programs. On MLK Weekend, Rabbi Andy Shugerman led a Shabbat Shiur discussing the connections between Martin Luther King Jr. and Abraham Joshua Heschel. We hosted a JTS Student Ambassador, Ariel Dunat, who talked about Trans Halakhah. Rabbi Adelson will be teaching Pesach 101 on April 5th, and on the second night of Pesach, we invited guests and will continue our interfaith conversations. Congregation Beth Shalom welcomes all, for as you know, we were once strangers in a strange land and have learned empathy and mercy.

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Beth Shalom

DEREKH

Weekly Games

for Bridge, Mahjong & Scrabble players

♠ ♥ ♣ ♦

Thursdays

2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

at Congregation Beth Shalom

in the Samuel & Minnie Hyman Ballroom

Join fellow Bridge, Mahjong and Scrabble enthusiasts for weekly game sessions. Open to everyone, members and non-members. No cost to attend.

Questions or additional information, contact Shari Woldenberg at swoldenberg@bethshalompgh.org

MAHJONG

SCRABBLE

Mahjong players should bring card and set if you have one.

10 Congregation Beth Shalom • www.bethshalompgh.org • 412.421.2288

Beth Shalom Youth Zone

Marissa Tait

Director of Youth Programs

mtait@bethshalompggh.org



Passover is more than just a time of remembrance; it's a vibrant celebration filled with energy, tradition, and the promise of new beginnings. This festival ignites our spirits, inviting us to relive the miraculous journey from slavery to freedom through heartwarming stories, festive meals, and joyful traditions passed down through generations.

This year, the Youth Department is excited to enhance that celebration with an Afikoman scavenger hunt like no other! Designed for grades 2 through 12, clues to locate the Afikoman will be hidden in various areas of the building, encouraging our young participants to embark on an adventurous quest.

To ensure that every participant enjoys the event, the hunt will be divided into different time slots tailored for specific age groups. This way, everyone—from energetic second graders to spirited twelfth graders—can join in the fun.

Imagine the thrill as clues lead to hidden treasures, the laughter shared among friends, and the excitement in the air as tradition meets playful competition. The Afikoman scavenger hunt is not just an opportunity to connect with our rich heritage, but also a chance to create unforgettable memories. Join us as we celebrate Passover with laughter, learning, and lasting memories. Come be a part of the tradition and excitement at our Afikoman hunt event!



AFIKOMAN SCAVENGER HUNT

Get ready for a thrilling adventure as you navigate through clues and challenges to uncover the afikoman

**TUESDAY
APRIL 8**

**\$5 TO OFFSET PROGRAM COSTS / RSVP BY APRIL 6
TO RSVP, SCAN QR CODE ABOVE**

**GRADES
2-5**

**4:00 PM -
5:00 PM**

**GRADES
6-8**

**5:15 PM -
6:30 PM**

**GRADES
9-12**

**6:30 PM -
8:00 PM**



Countdown to Pesah 5785/2025

MA'OT HITTIN - PASSOVER TZEDAKAH FUND

From the beginning of the month of Nisan, we are especially sensitive to the needs of fellow Jews who may need our special help and support toward fulfilling all the *mitzvot* of the Pesah season. If you or another member are in need of financial assistance to purchase Passover food, please contact Tika Bonner at 412-421-2288 x114 or tbonner@bethshalompg.org. All requests will be kept confidential.

A form for donating to our Ma'ot Hittin fund is available on page 14.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR SATURDAY NIGHT START

Since Pesah begins on Saturday night this year, no hametz may be owned or consumed after Friday morning, April 11. On Shabbat, please use Kosher-for-Passover egg matzah instead of Challah. Light Yom Tov candles from an existing flame on Saturday night after 8:38 p.m. First Seder should not start until this time.

FAST OF THE FIRST BORN & *SIYYUM BEKHORIM*: THURSDAY, APRIL 10

All first-borns should fast on this day, usually the day before Pesah in commemoration of the deliverance from Egypt of the Israelite firstborn. The Rabbi offers a *siyyum* (public completion of study) which is followed by a festive meal at which all present may eat, and once having eaten, a first born need not fast that day.

The *siyyum* and the *se'udat mitzvah* will be held this year on Thursday morning in person at 8:15 a.m., following the 7:30 a.m. morning minyan. The *Siyyum Breakfast* is sponsored by Stanley & Cherie Maharam in loving memory of beloved parents and grandparents Bess & Aaron Maharam.

BEDIKAT HAMETZ: THURSDAY NIGHT, APRIL 10

The traditional search for hametz on the night before Pesah falls this year on Thursday night immediately after sunset. The blessings for *bedikat hametz*, found at the beginning of most *Haggadot*, are recited and the *kol hamira* formula nullifying unseen hametz may be recited. Hold any found hametz for ritual burning the following morning, April 11. If you need help finding these prayers, please contact Rabbi Adelson.

SALE OF HAMETZ: FRIDAY MORNING, APRIL 11, before 11:00 A.M.

One of the central commandments of Pesah is that we rid ourselves of all forbidden hametz in our possession. Individuals who fully observe Pesah do their best to eliminate hametz as far as possible and then traditionally resort to the procedure of "selling" any hametz which may have been packed away or missed.

All hametz must be removed or sold by 11:00 a.m. A form for selling your hametz is available on page 14.

Please return it to our office by April 11 first thing in the morning.

BI'UR HAMETZ - FRIDAY MORNING, APRIL 11

The ritual burning of the hametz found during Thursday night's search should be completed by 11:00 a.m.

The stove should be fully kashered and all cooking proceeds in Pesah pots with Pesah utensils only.

Traditionally no hametz or matzah is eaten after this time until the seder.

Candle Lighting Blessing

BLESSINGS FOR KINDLING FESTIVAL LIGHTS FOR YOM TOV EVENINGS

#1 - Yom Tov Candle Lighting Blessing (1st, 2nd, 7th, and 8th nights when not also Shabbat)

ברוך אתה ה' א-להינו מלך העולם, אשר קדשנו במצותיו, וצונו להדליק נר של יום טוב.

Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheni melekh ha'olam, asher kiddeshanu bemitzvotav, vetsivanu lehadlik ner shel Yom Tov.

#2 - *Shehehyanu* Blessing (1st night only)

ברוך אתה ה' א-להינו מלך העולם, שהחיינו וקיימנו והגיענו לזמן הזה.

Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheni melekh ha'olam, shehehyanu, vekiymanu, vehigi'anu lazeman hazeh.

#3 - Shabbat and Yom Tov Candle Lighting (instead of #1 when on Shabbat)

ברוך אתה ה' א-להינו מלך העולם, אשר קדשנו במצותיו, וצונו להדליק נר של שבת ושל יום טוב.

Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheni melekh ha'olam, asher kiddeshanu bemitzvotav, vetsivanu lehadlik ner shel Shabbat veshel Yom Tov.

Pesah Yizkor Appeal 5785

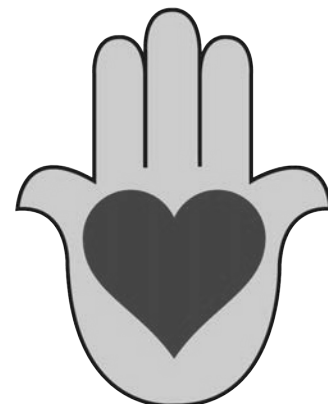
Each year, during the holidays of Pesah, Shavu'ot, Yom Kippur, and Shemini Atzeret, a special Memorial Service is held. It is a time when we honor the memory of our beloved departed family members. Yizkor Services are held on these four holidays and, in the tradition of the mitzvah of giving, an appeal is made for funds during the *Yizkor* Service.

Our Passover *Yizkor* Service will take place on Sunday morning, April 20, at approximately 10:30 am. It is appropriate to make a contribution in order to link the memory of dear ones to an act of loving kindness. If you wish, please fill out the form below with the name of the loved ones you wish to honor.

If you would like additional information regarding the *Yizkor* Appeal, please call the office at 412-421-2288. With grateful thanks for your continued support of our synagogue, and with all good wishes for the coming Festival.

Please tear off and mail to:

Congregation Beth Shalom
5915 Beacon Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15217



I/We wish to contribute to the Passover *Yizkor* Appeal

Online form available at www.bethshalompgh.org/Passover-Yizkor-Appeal-5785

In memory of: _____

(Please Print)

Enclosed please find my check in the amount of: \$ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone #: _____

Email: _____

Ma'ot Hittin - Passover Tzedakah Fund

With the approach of spring and Passover, it has always been the tradition of our congregation to establish a Ma'ot Hittin fund which will be used to help the impoverished Jews of our city and others in need to prepare for the great festival of liberation. It is our communal responsibility to provide the necessary food for a Passover Seder and for the observance of the holiday in general. If you or another member are in need of financial assistance to purchase Passover food, please contact Tika Bonner at 412-421-2288. All requests are kept confidential.

Please send us your contribution (checks should be made payable to Beth Shalom Ma'ot Hittin Fund) so that we have adequate funds to help the many Jews who will be turning to us prior to Passover. Your generosity will help make other Jewish families happy as they celebrate this holiday of freedom. Thank you.

MA'OT HITTIN - PASSOVER TZEDAKAH FUND

Online form available at www.bethshalompgh.org/maot-hittin-5785

Enclosed is my contribution in the amount of \$_____ for the Ma'ot Hittin Fund. Please make check payable to Congregation Beth Shalom Ma'ot Hittin Fund. Thank you.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone #: _____

Email: _____



PLEASE CUT AND RETURN EACH FORM SEPARATELY

SELLING OF HAMETZ - מכירת חמץ

Hametz, not explicitly defined in the Torah, is described in rabbinic literature as being these five species of grain: wheat, spelt, oats, barley, and rye. Although matzah must be made from one of these, we are forbidden by *halakhah* (Jewish law) to eat, own, see, or benefit from any other form of these grains on Pesah. (Please note: rice, legumes, quinoa, corn, etc. are not hametz. See pg. 15 for more details.)

Please take the opportunity to fill out the form below and return it to the synagogue **no later 11:00 a.m. on Friday, April 11** in order to have your hametz included in the sale.

It is customary to include a donation to support the vulnerable in our community. These funds will be contributed to Rabbi Adelson's Discretionary Fund which is used to provide scholarships, offer assistance to those in need and to promote Jewish cultural, educational and religious activities.

Hag kasher vesameah (A Happy and Kosher Pesah)!

Rabbi Seth Adelson

CONTRACT FOR THE SELLING OF HAMETZ 2025/5785

Online form available at www.bethshalompgh.org/selling-hametz-5785

I (We) _____ hereby fully empower and authorize Rabbi Seth Adelson to dispose of all hametz that may be in my (our) possession – wherever it may be: at home, place of business or elsewhere (knowingly or unknowingly). Rabbi Adelson has the full right to sell, dispose of and conduct all transactions in accordance with the detailed terms explained in the Hebrew contracts. The above power hereby given is meant to conform with all Torah and Rabbinic regulations to meet the requirements of Jewish law.

Name(s): _____

Location of Hametz: _____

Amount donated: _____

Sign Here: _____

A Brief Pesah Kashrut Guide

A full description of kashering processes and listing of permitted foods can be found at:
www.rabbinicalassembly.org/holidays/pesah-guide-2025

The process of kashering utensils depends on how the utensils are used. According to *halakhah*, leaven can be purged from a utensil by the same process in which it was absorbed in the utensil (*kevalo kakh polto*). Therefore, utensils used in cooking are kashered by boiling, those used in broiling are kashered by fire and heat, and those used for only cold food are kashered by rinsing in cold water.

A. Earthenware (china, pottery, etc.) may not be kashered. However, fine translucent chinaware which has not been used for over one year may be used if scoured and cleaned in hot water.

B. Metal utensils (wholly made of metal) used in fire (spit or broiler) must first be scrubbed and cleansed and then made as hot as possible. Those used for cooking or eating (silverware, pots) must be thoroughly cleaned and completely immersed in boiling water. Pots should have water boiled in them which will overflow the rim. The utensils should not be used for a period of at least 24 hours between the cleaning and immersion in boiling water. Metal baking utensils cannot be kashered.

C. Oven and Ranges - Every part that comes in contact with food must be thoroughly scrubbed and cleaned. Then, the oven and range should be heated as hot as possible for a half hour. If there is a broil setting, use it. Self-cleaning ovens should be scrubbed and cleaned and then put through the self-cleaning cycle. Continuous-cleaning ovens must be kashered in the same manner as regular ovens. A microwave oven, which does not cook the food by means of heat, should be cleaned and then a cup of water should be placed in it. Then the oven should be turned on until the water "boils." A microwave oven that has a browning element cannot be kashered for Pesah.

D. Glassware - Authorities disagree as to the method of kashering drinking utensils. One opinion requires soaking in water for 3 days, changing the water every 24 hours. The other opinion requires only a thorough scrubbing before Pesach, or putting it through the dishwasher.

E. Dishwasher - After not using the dishwasher for a period of 24 hours, a full cycle with detergent should be run. It may then be used for Pesah.

F. Electrical Appliances - If the parts that come in contact with *hametz* are removable, they can be kashered in the appropriate way (if metal, follow the rules for metal utensils). If the parts are not removable, the appliance cannot be kashered. (All exposed parts should be thoroughly cleaned).

G. Tables, closets and counters - If used for *chametz*, they should be thoroughly cleaned and covered and then they may be used.

H. Kitchen Sink - A metal sink can be kashered by a thorough cleaning and by pouring boiling water over it. A porcelain sink should be cleaned and a sink rack used. If, however, dishes are to be soaked in a porcelain sink, a dish basin must be used.

I. Hametz and non-Passover utensils - Non-Passover dishes, pots and *hametz*, whose ownership has been transferred, should be separated, locked up or covered, and marked so as to prevent accidental use.

Permitted Foods

A. The following foods require no *kasher lePesah* label when purchased before or during Pesah: fresh fruits and vegetables that have not been coated, eggs, unflavored tea bags, unflavored regular coffee, 100% Extra Virgin Olive Oil, whole or raw tree nuts, whole (unground) spices, fresh fish from a kosher source and fresh kosher meat or frozen, raw hekshered meat (other than ground products as ground products with prohibited materials could be made on the same equipment).

B. The following products require reliable *kasher lePesah* certification (regular kosher supervision not being sufficient) whether bought before or during Pesach: all baked goods (farfel, matzah, any product containing matzah, matzah flour, matzah meal, Pesach cakes), all frozen processed foods, candy, canned tuna, cheeses, chocolate milk, decaf coffee, decaf tea, dried fruits, herbal tea, ice cream, liquor, non Grade A butter, oils, soda, vinegar, wine, yogurt.

C. The following foods require no *kasher lePesah* label but do require kashrut supervision if purchased new and unopened before Pesach: all pure fruit juices in plastic or glass bottles, filleted fish, frozen fruit (no additives), non-iodized salt, pure white sugar (no additives), unsalted Grade A butter, white milk

D. Any processed food bought during Pesah must have a *kasher lePesah* label.

E. Any detergent, because it is not a food and it is not eaten, may be used for Pesah as long as it has valid kosher supervision.

Medicines: Since *hametz* binders are used in many pills, the following guidelines should be followed: If the medicine is required for life sustaining therapy, it may be used on Pesah. If it is not for life sustaining therapy, authorities differ in their approaches. Please consult with your rabbi. Capsules, because they do not need binders, are preferable to pills.

In December 2015, the Committee on Jewish Laws and Standards ruled kitniyot, or non-*hametz* grains and legumes such as rice, millet, chickpeas, fenugreek, etc., are acceptable for Ashkenazim to consume during Pesah provided the kitniyot have been checked 3 times before Pesah and were not stored with *hametz*.

2025 FESTIVAL OF PESAH 5785

Pre-Pesah Preparations

<u>Thu., Apr. 10</u>	Morning Service <i>Siyyum Bekhorim</i> (fast of the first born breakfast) Pre-Passover Pizza Dinner Search for <u>Hametz</u>	7:30 a.m. 9:00 a.m. 5:30 p.m. Evening	Homestead Hebrew Chapel Samuel and Minnie Hyman Ballroom Samuel and Minnie Hyman Ballroom at Home
<u>Fri., Apr. 11</u>	<i>Bi'ur <u>Hametz</u></i>	11:00 a.m.	Remaining <u>hametz</u> must be burned or sold by 11:00 a.m.
<u>Sat., Apr. 12</u>	<i>Minhah</i> Service	1:00 p.m.	Faye Rubenstein Weiss Sanctuary

Pesah candle lighting from an existing flame at 8:38 p.m. - Blessings #1 and #2 on page 12

First Seder

No evening service at Beth Shalom

<u>Sun., Apr. 13</u>	Early Morning Pesah Service with <i>Tal</i>	6:30 a.m.	Homestead Hebrew Chapel
<u>Pesah Day 1</u>	Morning Pesah Service with <i>Tal</i> Youth Tefillah Kiddush <i>Minhah</i> Service	9:00 a.m. 11:00 a.m. 12:00 p.m. 1:00 p.m.	Faye Rubenstein Weiss Sanctuary Stofman Zweig Libraries Samuel and Minnie Hyman Ballroom Faye Rubenstein Weiss Sanctuary

Candle lighting at 8:39 p.m. from an existing flame - Blessings #1 and #2 on page 12

Second Seder

No evening service at Beth Shalom

COMMUNAL SECOND SEDER (Must RSVP) 6:00 p.m. Samuel and Minnie Hyman Ballroom

<u>Mon., Apr. 14</u>	Early Morning Pesah Service	6:30 a.m.	Homestead Hebrew Chapel
<u>Pesah Day 2</u>	Morning Pesah Service Youth Tefillah Kiddush <i>Minhah</i> / <i>Ma'ariv</i>	9:15 a.m. 11:00 a.m. 12:00 p.m. 8:00 p.m.	Faye Rubenstein Weiss Sanctuary Stofman Zweig Libraries Samuel and Minnie Hyman Ballroom Homestead Hebrew Chapel

Havdalah 8:40 p.m.

<u>Fri., Apr. 18</u>	Kabbalat Shabbat / Evening Pesah Service	6:00 p.m.	Helfant Chapel
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Pesah candle lighting at 7:44 p.m. - Blessing #3 on page 12

<u>Sat., Apr. 19</u>	Early Morning Pesah / Shabbat Service	6:30 a.m.	Homestead Hebrew Chapel
<u>Pesah Day 7</u>	Morning Pesah / Shabbat Service Youth Tefillah Kiddush <i>Minhah</i> / Evening Pesah Service	9:00 a.m. 11:00 a.m. 12:00 p.m. 7:45 p.m.	Faye Rubenstein Weiss Sanctuary Stofman Zweig Libraries Samuel and Minnie Hyman Ballroom Homestead Hebrew Chapel

Candle lighting at 8:45 p.m. from an existing flame - Blessing #1 on page 12

<u>Sun., Apr. 20</u>	Early Morning Pesah Service with <i>Yizkor</i>	6:30 a.m.	Homestead Hebrew Chapel
<u>Pesah Day 8</u>	Morning Pesah Service with <i>Yizkor</i> Youth Tefillah Kiddush <i>Minhah</i> / <i>Ma'ariv</i> Havdalah	9:00 a.m. 11:00 a.m. 12:00 p.m. 8:05 p.m. 8:46 p.m.	Faye Rubenstein Weiss Sanctuary Stofman Zweig Libraries Samuel and Minnie Hyman Ballroom Homestead Hebrew Chapel

Reva Pomerantz and Lucas Heller & Ezra Mirvish and Jill Millstone are thrilled to announce that **Eliana Keren Mirvish** will become a bat mitzvah on May 24th, 2025 at Beth Shalom.



She is a vibrant member of Community Day School, where she has attended school since kindergarten. Always staying busy, Eliana loves to play basketball, swim and run. She is known for her quick wit and ease at making friends. She is an avid skier and excels at piano. Her younger siblings all look up to her and are very proud of her. Congratulations, Eliana!

Bat Mitzvah: 5/24/2025

Hannah Meira Lubowsky is the daughter of Aviva and Noah Lubowsky, the sister of Gabe Lubowsky, and the granddaughter of Dee and Howard Selekman and Steven and the late Susan Lubowsky. She will be called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah at Congregation Beth Shalom on August 30, parashat Shoftim.



Hannah will be entering 8th grade at Falk Laboratory School. In her free time, she enjoys dancing, learning to play guitar, baking, singing, crafting, reading, and snuggling her cat, Brisket.

Bat Mitzvah: 8/30/2025

We begin working with families of students in fourth grade, toward their becoming benei mitzvah. All information related to bat/bar mitzvah and so much more about the process can be found online in the Beth Shalom Benei Mitzvah Handbook, which you can download as a PDF at: BethShalomPgh.org/lifelong-learning/benei-mitzvah. For more information or questions, please contact Ashley Burse, Rabbi's Assistant, at aburse@bethshalompgh.org.

Mark Your Calendars



Annual Congregational Meeting

**Tuesday, May 27, 2025
at 7:30 p.m.**

Topics covered will include:

Annual Budget

Annual Reports

Election of Officers and Board of Trustees

.....♥.....

Heartfelt Thanks for Your Generosity

Dear CBS Members, Staff, Family & Friends,

On behalf of my family, I would like to extend my deepest thanks to all of you for your generous donation towards the funeral expenses of my children's father and my longtime partner, Charles Green. During this incredibly difficult time, your kindness has provided us with much-needed support and comfort.

Your thoughtfulness not only eased the financial burden but also reminded us of the strong community of people who care. We are truly grateful for each of you, and we will always remember your compassion during this time of loss.

Thank you once again for your generosity and for being there for us when we needed it most.

With heartfelt appreciation,

Tika Bonner & my children:
TaShayla, Charles, & Elijah

OUR LEADERSHIP

The Sisterhood Says

Judy Kornblith Kobell
Sisterhood President
jayeko@msn.com

As the weather warms up, Sisterhood continues to keep busy.



In the beginning of March, we celebrated our annual Sisterhood Shabbat. We were fortunate to have Casey Weiss as our featured speaker. As most of you know, Casey Weiss is the CDS Head of School and an educator par excellence. We thank her for her words of wisdom. On that morning, we were delighted to honor three very accomplished congregants, Elaine Catz, Elisa Recht Marlin and Carolyn Slayton. These women have been so generous in sharing their time and abilities, volunteering in many capacities at Beth Shalom. Many of our members took part in the service and the entire congregation joined us for a delicious Kiddush luncheon.

I want to thank Helen Feder for organizing the service and its many participants. She has continued to do this for a number of years and it is so appreciated. A special thank you, as well, to Linda Newman for arranging the publicity, biographical material and the Shabbat program. Also, my deep appreciation to Dina Rayzberg and Sandy Hirsch for ordering and planning the wonderful lunch and to Pat Weiss for the lovely centerpieces.

In other activities, Sisterhood continues to host Latin Cardio classes with Connie Pollack and an ongoing Book Club. Our Judaica Shop is open by appointment with Judy Kobell (412-725-5566) or Barbara Kaiserman (412-422-5677). There is beautiful new and attractive merchandise, competitively priced with proceeds going to support Beth Shalom and its youth.

Sisterhood is always looking for new members and new ideas, so please be in touch!

All good wishes for a sweet and joyous Pesah,

Judy Kornblith Kobell
Sisterhood President

Sponsored by



MONDAY NIGHT LATIN CARDIO CLASS WITH CONNIE POLLACK

Mondays
7:15 PM - 08:15 PM
Congregation Beth Shalom

\$5/class
First class
is FREE!



All are
welcome
and no
experience
necessary!

Money collected from the class is
donated to Congregation Beth
Shalom and local charities.

For questions or more information,
contact Connie Pollack at
412.951.9584 or conniepollack@hotmail.com

SISTERHOOD JUDAICA SHOP



TO SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT, CALL
JUDY KOBELL AT 412-725-5566 OR
BARBARA KAISERMAN AT 412-422-5677.

The Men's Club

Ira Frank
Men's Club President
natfabira@juno.com



Even though Spring has arrived, the Beth Shalom Men's Club has been very active in 2025.

On February 9, the Men's Club and J-JEP held the Annual World Wide Wrap. Thanks to Rabbi Larry Freedman for his Tallit and Tefillin explanation and instruction.

On Sunday, February 16, we held our Annual Sports Luncheon. Beth Shalom welcomed over 500 people including special needs groups and local university college athletes from Pitt, CMU, Duquesne, and Carlow as well as Pittsburgh Riverhounds and Pittsburgh Passion players.

On Saturday, March 29, we will celebrate Men's Club Shabbat featuring guest speaker Bishop Kurt F. Kusserow of Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod.

Please join us on Thursday, April 10 for a Pre-Passover Pizza dinner. Registration is required. To register, see details on page 4.

This year, Yom Hashoah falls on the evening of Wednesday, April 23. Please remember to light the yellow candle delivered with the Purim bags.

Finally, please join us on Sunday, May 25 for Flag Planting at Beth Shalom's Cemetery as we place flags on all of the veterans' graves as we commemorate Memorial Day. Adults and children are welcome.

Ira Frank, Men's Club President



Men's Club Shabbat

Saturday, March 29, 2025 • 29 Adar 5785
9:15 a.m. • Faye Rubenstein Weiss Sanctuary

Special Guest Speaker: Bishop Kurt Kusserow



Join us for Men's Club Shabbat with guest speaker, Bishop Kurt Kusserow from Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod. Bishop Kusserow received a Master of Divinity degree from Trinity Lutheran Seminary in Columbus, Ohio. He was ordained to the ministry of Word and Sacrament at Mt. Lebanon United Lutheran Church in Pittsburgh. He was elected to the office of bishop of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod in June 2007.

Donations are being accepted. To donate, go to:
<https://bethshalompgh.org/mens-club-shabbat-5785/>
or by scanning the QR code on this flyer.

2024-2025/5785 Men's Club Hanukkah Gelt Winners

Congratulations to the Hanukkah Sweepstakes Winners!

Mid-day Winners

12/27/2024: Mindy Shreve
12/29/2024: Ann McDonough
12/31/2024: Phyliss Caplan
1/1/2025: William Hershman
1/2/2025: Mindy Shreve



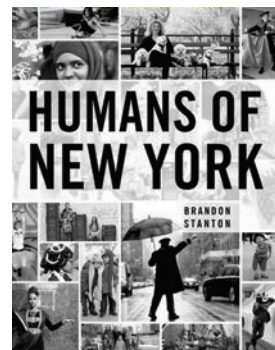
Evening Winners

12/29/2024: Avery Abrams
12/30/2024: Mark Frisch
12/31/2024: David Sufrin

Thank you for your support of our fundraiser this year.

Humans of Beth Shalom (HOBS)

As a means of introducing members of our congregation to each other, we provide this section of *Mishpachtenu*, entitled Humans of Beth Shalom (inspired by the famous Humans of New York, or HONY, series). Here, we highlight one or two member “units” (a family or individual) and we look forward to introducing others in the future. We asked the responders to identify themselves and then to respond to a subset of pre-selected questions.



The Sitter/Gal-Or Family

Name in English and in Hebrew (phonetic).

Karen Gal-Or (Karen)
Benjamin Sitter
Zev Sitter (Zev)
Eli Sitter (Eli)
Ori Sitter (Ori)

Where were you born and which places have you lived in?

Karen: I was born in Haifa, Israel, but moved to Pittsburgh when I was only 6 months old. I grew up in Squirrel Hill with my older brother and sister. I went to the University of Pittsburgh for undergrad, and then I spent a semester in Israel at Tel Aviv University, followed by a gap year there. After that, I went to Berkeley Law School, practiced law in San Francisco for a few years, and then moved back to Pittsburgh.

Ben: I'm from Atlanta, Georgia, and I grew up with my two older siblings in a family of English professors. After graduating from Emory, I moved to the Mississippi Delta to teach fourth grade through Teach for America for three years. Then, like Karen, I went to Berkeley Law, where we met. After practicing law together in San Francisco, we both moved to Pittsburgh, where we've been ever since.

How long have you been a member of Congregation Beth Shalom?

Karen: I grew up as a member of Beth Shalom, but we recently rejoined as members after October 7, [2023], which really brought us closer to the Jewish community.

Since this is the Passover issue, can you share a Passover experience or tradition that is meaningful to you?

Karen: To me, Passover is all about family. Every year, our family gathers together—either in Boston with my brother Ronen or in Miami with my sister Anat—and the cousins (there are eight of them!) make it a lively celebration. One of our favorite traditions is putting on a silly Passover play and wearing masks of all the plagues. We also



The Sitter/Gal-Or Family with Karen's parents, Esther and Mordechai Gal-Or (They're a Purim family!)

love singing “Echad Mi Yodeah” (“Who Knows One?”) together, extremely loudly and quickly. We often invite non-Jews who are always amazed by the “balagan” (Hebrew for “mess”) of it all!

Ben: I didn't grow up with any religious traditions—my family was pretty secular, and honestly, I was a bit skeptical of religion in general. But when I met Karen, she introduced me to the beauty of Jewish traditions, and Passover really stood out to me. There's something so special about the Seder, with its unique rituals, symbolic foods, and the stories that tie it all together. It's been amazing to connect to something so deeply rooted in tradition, especially since it's all new to me. And of course, I can't get enough of the matzo ball soup and brisket!

Where were your grandparents born, and how have those cultures influenced your traditions?

Karen: My maternal grandparents were born in Poland—my grandfather in Warsaw and my grandmother in a small town called Tomoshov Lubelsky. My paternal grandparents were from Belgium. All four of my grandparents were Holocaust survivors, and they lost most of their families during the war. Afterward, they moved to Israel and helped build the country in the post-Holocaust generation.

After October 7, I had to really reflect on my family's history. While the day itself was devastating, what really hit me hard was seeing the antisemitism that surfaced in the days that followed. I was shocked to

Continued on page 21

see people I respected condemn Israel and the Jewish people and justify the brutal attacks, especially at universities and institutions I once felt proud of. That's when it became painfully clear to me: Antisemitism has been simmering under the surface the whole time. I was reminded of something my great-uncle Shalom once said about growing up in Belgium. He remembered how, before the Nazis invaded, he never experienced any antisemitism and was treated as an equal in school and in his early professional life. But within a month of the German occupation, things changed fast. The people he once thought of as friends turned their backs on the Jews, and not long after, his parents were taken to Auschwitz. Because of my family history, I feel a deep, personal responsibility to fight against antisemitism in all its forms, because I understand how quickly and quietly it can spread, even in places where you least expect it.

Ben: My dad's side of the family is German — my paternal great-grandparents were immigrants who settled in Maryland. My grandmother, a school-teacher, raised eight kids on her own after my grandfather passed away when the kids were very young. I definitely learned a lot about resilience and the importance of education from her.

On my mom's side, they're from Massachusetts, and their roots trace back to England and Ireland — my family even has a connection to the Mayflower! My parents were both English professors, so I grew up in a home where education and reading were really valued. It's something that stuck with me, and I try to pass that on to my kids. We really emphasize learning, intellectual curiosity, and having thoughtful conversations.

Describe an early memory that you have as it pertains to Israel and how it has impacted you in your life.

Karen: My earliest memory in Israel is spending summers on my grandparents' mirpeset (porch) in Haifa. I'd sleep soundly every night on the mirpeset on an air mattress, feeling the breeze, and knowing my grandparents were close by and would be making crepes in the morning. My brother Ronen and I would sneak into the kitchen in the middle of the night to eat Milky (a chocolate-cream pudding), and laugh about all the funny things our Israeli cousins said that day. These small, sweet moments are what make me feel so connected to Israel and its people—and they're what drive me to stand up for the country and its future.

Ben: Before meeting Karen, I didn't have much of a connection to Israel. But when we were in law school, I learned a lot about its history and the complexities

surrounding it. After we graduated and passed the bar, Karen and I took a trip to Israel together. It was an incredible experience. I had the chance to meet her amazing grandparents, Jacques and Marie, and while the August heat was tough on me, I loved everything about the trip — the history, the culture, and of course, the hummus! That trip really made me feel connected to Israel in a way I hadn't before, and it's something that's stayed with me ever since.

What's something you feel passionate about? (A hobby, a belief, etc.)

Ben: Music is a huge passion of mine. I've been playing guitar since high school and have been in several bands over the years. Recently, I picked up the violin and fiddle, and it's been an exciting challenge. I still meet up regularly with my band, "Music Weekend," to write and record new music. For me, music isn't just a hobby — it's essential. It's my way of decompressing and resetting after a long day. It's my therapy, my release, and something that fuels me every day.

Karen: In today's challenging environment, I'm deeply passionate about raising awareness of the hostages' plight, the struggles Israel faces, and the rise of antisemitism in America. These are all incredibly tough and scary issues, but I truly believe the best way to combat hatred is through love. We can bring light into the darkness by performing mitzvot and strengthening our community.

One of the hostages, Alon Ohel, is still in captivity, and his mother has asked Jews around the world to play music and perform acts of kindness in his merit, as well as the merit of all the hostages. In response, we've held concerts for Alon; organized events with the amazing nonprofit Our Giving Kitchen (where we come together to cook kosher meals for those in need); participated in women's Torah study with Chani Altein from Chabad of Squirrel Hill; and worked with organizations like StandWithUs to educate groups like law enforcement and elected officials about antisemitism. We also engage in political activism to support the Jewish community through Beacon Coalition. I fervently believe that through unity, love, and community, we can help fight the antisemitism we are facing.

Last question, for your kids: What's your favorite thing is about Passover and/or the Passover Seder?

Zev, age 11: I love spending time with our cousins!

Eli, age 9: I love eating matzah with Nutella.

Ori, age 6: I love getting presents for finding the afikoman. We all get presents, no matter who finds it!

STAFF DIRECTORY

Please reference this directory for professional leadership contact information.

We look forward to speaking with you!

OFFICE HOURS: Monday - Thursday, 9:00 am - 5:00 pm and Friday, 9:00 am - 3:00 pm*
* Staff schedules vary

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Congregational Second Night Seder

Sunday, April 13 at 6:00 p.m.
Samuel & Minnie Hyman Ballroom

In the spirit of being good neighbors, at this Seder we will welcome guests from Church of the Redeemer, including our dear friend Pastor Natalie Hall.

Adults - \$55/each
Children ages 3-13 - \$25/each
Children under 3 - FREE



Registration Required. To register, go to:
BethShalomPgh.org/2025SecondNightSeder or scan QR code.
RSVP deadline is Thursday, April 3, 2025.



