

beth
shalom
auckland new zealand
בית שלום



May 2020

Iyar~Sivan 5780

Teruah



*A strong, vibrant community with a spiritual heart
embracing Jewish life and its diversity.*

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Affiliated with the Union for Progressive Judaism (UPJ)

Charities Commission Registration Number CC29542

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Service times are Fridays at 6:30pm and Saturdays at 10am.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, services are being provided via Zoom. Please check your emails for access information.

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Coming up in May

- **Friday night service 1st May**, 6:30pm - check your emails for Zoom access.
- **Rabbi Ed Rosenthal** will be leading our **Virtual morning Shabbat service on 9 May at 10am**. Rabbi Ed was our Rabbi some 30 years ago with Beth Shalom being his first pulpit. Rabbi Ed's youth, his ability to truly connect with his congregants and his vitality for life and especially scuba diving that managed to feature in every sermon, make him a much loved former Rabbi for our shul. Many of us have stayed in touch with Rabbi Ed over the years and he was with us for our 50th Jubilee. We are truly thrilled that Rabbi Ed will be leading our service on 9 May.
- **For all information on Hebrew School and Introduction to Judaism classes, contact educator@bethshalom.org.nz for the links.**
- **Saturday 16th May**, Shabbat Kat online 10-11am.
- Beth Shalom office will be closed for the duration of the COVID-19 lockdown period but phone messages and emails will continue to be actioned. Both Christine and Debbie will be working from home.
- **Keep checking your emails for official messages from community groups and weekly services. GMAIL USERS CHECK YOUR UPDATES TABS OR YOU COULD MISS IMPORTANT INFORMATION.**
- **A reminder about our prayers for healing; if you would like our home prayer group to pray for healing for you or for someone close to you please advise the office.**



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From the President ...

Hi all,

I could hear the collective sigh of relief last Tuesday all the way from Bogota! So glad that you all have been stepped down to Level 3 and that you can now get a good cup of coffee and you have a choice for dinner! As you probably already know, the New Zealand response to Covid-19 has made the news globally. Even Noticias Caracol, the Colombian national news carrier, has had a story about Jacinda Ardern and how successful you have all been (and yes, I read the article in Spanish!).

We have also been rather successful battling Covid-19 here in Colombia. For those who don't know, Colombia has a population of just under 50 million people. Our curve has been flat for a wee while now, but we have not started to decrease the numbers of infected just yet. I won't give you numbers as they will already be outdated by the time you read this. We are still locked down until 11 May, but I am optimistic that we will be able to at least take a walk after that.

Getting back to New Zealand, Level 3 will not see much of a difference in the day to day workings at Beth Shalom. We are not an essential business and since we can safely and effectively execute the day to day running of the Shul from remote locations, we have chosen to keep the doors closed for the immediate future. The board will be discussing what Level 2 looks like and will share that with you as we approach that time.

I would be remiss if I didn't say thank you to the many people who have been keeping the fires burning at Beth Shalom. The board has continued to meet via Zoom and has been working diligently to make sure that when this crisis passes, we will be ready to resume our religious lives safely and smoothly. Kudos to Naomi Johnson and the Ritual Committee who have been streaming Friday night services and to Lenny Bloksberg who so very ably led a wonderful first night Seder for Pesach.

We have also been blessed to have guidance from afar to help us celebrate the holidays and the Sabbath. First, thank you to Rabbi George who led a second night Seder for us from his home in California. As the second night is usually when we celebrate Pesach together as a congregation, it was especially meaningful to be together via Zoom and we appreciate Rabbi George staying up late to accommodate us!!

A huge thank you goes out to Rabbi Dean as well. Rabbi Dean led a Saturday morning service for us from his home in Arizona. I am pretty sure he was the very first rabbi in America to celebrate the Sabbath that morning! We also owe him a huge debt of thanks for officiating at the funeral of Miriam Singer, may her memory always be a blessing.

That is all from my corner of the world. Please stay safe and healthy. Remember that there is always someone here if you need any kind of help. The office is not open, but the phones are monitored and someone will get back to you ASAP.

B'Shalom, Debbie

Services for May will be mostly via Zoom.



Prayers for Healing Group

A group of Beth Shalom members has commenced, to think of and pray for individuals in our community, who are in need of healing.

The idea is that this group is not an organised group or minyan. Simply, caring people who, when made aware of the need, help healing with the power of prayer.

And that families in distress might receive comfort from the knowledge that this is taking place.

Caring for the unwell is part of being a community.

For those interested, I can supply articles: "The Jewish Way in Healing", and some scientific research on the positive power of prayer in healing.

If you wish to be part of this group

Or, if you know of someone who is unwell that would appreciate our prayer

Please contact Leon Goldwater or Christine O'Brien at shul office

Leon: ldgoldwater@gmail.com 020 403 88054

Christine: office@bethshalom.org.nz 524 4139

THE BUZZ



Chris and Arthur Berman enjoyed COVID-19 lockdown Residents Happy Hour on the balcony of their apartment.

Lenny Bloksberg
conducts the first
Virtual Seder
Wednesday 8 April,
2020



Wendy Wilton: "Absolutely all credit to Lenny and Elena Bloksberg for hosting a virtual first night Seder. It was a lovely and thoughtful Seder and lovely seeing so many friendly faces enjoying themselves. I loved the "shared meal" which was very interactive and had a great spirit. A special and unique Seder."

Lenny Bloksberg: "It is so empowering to be part of a community that is continuing with the traditions regardless of what challenges the world presents."

Naomi Johnson: "We were treated to two very special Sedarim, the First Night offered locally by one of our congregants and the Second Night by a Rabbi in San Diego. Despite not being physically together the experience for me was actually richer this year. When it came to the break in the service for the meal on the First Night, it just felt like a dinner party, as if we were actually present and not in a virtual environment."



Erev Shabbat service, Friday 10 April, 2020



Rabbi George's Zeder, Thursday 9 April 2020.

**Thanks Tanya Thomson for the
screenshots**

On Saturday 18th April, Rabbi Dean Shapiro from Temple Emanuel of Tempe in Arizona shared Shabbat morning service with us on Zoom. This was a very special Shabbat service to have Rabbi Dean with us, even if it was only virtually, and it was also very special for him as well. Rabbi Dean took a moment to scroll through the gallery to see all our faces and commented that it was as if had just gone back ten years in time. We also were very happy to see Haim with us.





On 14 April 2020 Beth Shalom joined the Pearl of the Islands Foundation (an Islamic Group) and the Holy Trinity Cathedral for an Abrahamic Interfaith Prayer Meeting on Zoom to pray for all who have been and are currently being affected by the deadly coronavirus. Paul Wilton and Naomi Johnson led the Jewish part of the prayer session. During our prayers we remembered those who have sadly lost their lives and prayed for the medical and scientific personnel working so hard at this very tough time. Paul sang the Misheberach for healing to conclude our part of the programme. The session was well received by those who joined the Zoom session. The full prayer service is available [here](#)

I would like to thank all those who are helping provide services by zoom during this abnormal period. I would especially like to thank Lenny and Elena Bloksberg for leading such a wonderful virtual First Seder and Rabbi George for leading a very interesting and enjoyable Second Seder. We thank Rob Bernstein who has set our service leaders up for Zoom and we thank Lenny, Chris Milton and Paul Wilton for leading our Friday night services. We are very grateful to Temple Sinai for inviting us to join them with their Saturday services and know some of their members have joined us for our Friday night service.

We thank Rabbi Dean for sharing Shabbat morning with us all the way from Arizona from where he led such a special Shabbat for us all. Thank you Rabbi Dean.

We would also like to thank Christine in the office for her flexibility and help which has involved her being available to help us send out communications at weekends and on public holidays. It has been a real team effort and rewarding for us all.

Naomi Johnson for the Ritual Committee

Auckland man Laurence Reynolds celebrates 105th birthday on lockdown

5 Apr, 2020 5:03pm Reproduced with kind permission of the NZ Herald



By: Melissa Nightingale

NZ Herald reporter based in Wellington, melissa.nightingale@nzherald.co.nz @mel_nightingale



Laurence and Claire Reynolds go to the window of their rest home to see local loved ones waving from the gates. Photo / Supplied

An Auckland man has celebrated his 105th birthday surrounded by his family and friends - on video call, of course. Laurence Reynolds today turned 105 at his rest home in Auckland, with loved ones joining in on a Zoom call.

"People from all over the world have been part of the Zoom party, which has been really special," said daughter Alison Dyson.

During the party, other loved ones who lived locally gathered at the gates of the Elizabeth Knox Home and Hospital - at a safe distance from one another - and waved to Reynolds.



Laurence

Reynolds gives wife Claire Reynolds a smooch in the window of their rest home after waving to guests. Photo / Supplied



Loved ones joined the party from all over the world. Photo / Supplied

Dyson said people joined the video call from London, Paris, Jerusalem and Australia.

Reynolds celebrated his birthday with his wife of 74 years, Claire Reynolds, by his side. The pair had their wedding anniversary a few weeks ago.

Dyson said it was "very special" to have family "participating in what is a milestone for somebody who we just greatly love and respect".

She said the volunteers and staff at the rest home had a "generous spirit and appreciation of the residents" which helped make today's celebration a reality.



Laurence and Claire Reynolds video call with family and friends for Laurence's 105th birthday.
Photo / Supplied

The couple only moved into the rest home when Reynolds was 104 - before that they lived in a private apartment with some home care provided.

Dyson described her father as a "caring and compassionate person" who lived through two World Wars, the Great Depression, and pandemics including the Spanish Flu.

He studied as a doctor at the University of Otago, and specialised in cardiology, going on to become a ship's doctor on a cargo vessel.

He was working in London when World War II broke out.

"Straight away he went to New Zealand House to offer his services but as they were not recruiting he joined the Royal Army Medical Corp and was in uniform by mid-October 1939," Dyson said.

"He rose to the rank of Major and held acting rank of Lieutenant-Colonel for a while."

Dyson said Reynolds established the first coronary care unit in New Zealand, where important medical trials were undertaken. He also set up the first cardiac rehabilitation unit.

He has four children with his wife, of which Dyson is the youngest.

She had fond memories of her father taking a full month of unpaid leave to spend time with them at a lakeside bach in the summers.

"We would go fishing and get up early in the morning - the fog would rise up off the lake and we would have quiet time ... in the evening he would be playing cards and having a whisky or two."



Claire and Laurence Reynolds have been married for 74 years. Photo / Supplied

Dyson said her father had "enjoyed his life to the fullest" and had sustained a "very loving relationship with my mother".

"Look, life is never perfect and I think they are a great example to us all of how you just support each other and get through life's challenges and risks and keep going with a really positive attitude."

His long life, "perpetual optimism", and his pleasure in family, friends and his work were a reminder during the Covid-19 pandemic that "such challenges can be met with hope and belief in better times to come".

Education

Beth Shalom Sunday/ Hebrew School

We hope we get to restart at level 2, May 17th

Keep you posted, but until then it is Hebrew online.



Hebrew studies
history



Jewish stories



Jewish studies



Jewish

Your place to make friends and build community.

Contact: educator@bethshalom.org.nz Ph: 027 765 3677

Beth Shalom Hebrew school has gone online. Some of our Sunday school students and some adults have taken up the challenge and decided to study Hebrew everyday online. It is amazing to see their progress.

Our Bar and Bat Mitzvah students are also studying with Debbie Miller and Chris Shiller online service leading and Torah portions so they can keep on track for their bar and bat mitzvahs.

Level 3 is not going to allow us back in the shul so I am still relegated to only Zoom contact from home. We hope at Level 2 we are back in the shul but until then we are going to postpone Shabbat Kat till May 16th.

SHABBAT KAT

Online Children's service

Saturday 16 May, 2020, 10-11am



Singing



Puppets



Dancing



Torah



Stories



Hebrew



Challah and juice



Musical instruments

Bring all your spirit and energy.

Contact: educator@bethshalom.org.nz

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Introduction to Judaism is still learning together every week on Sundays 1;30-3.30pm. It is not in place of the course; it is in addition to their schedule.

Shavout is also scheduled for Thursday May 28th at 6.30pm. Please let us know if you are interested in doing a session either online or in person. We are not sure of the circumstances.

Contact: educator@bethshalom.org.nz

Earth Day: Here is some interesting material in honour of Earth Day

Introduction to Judaism: <https://reformjudaism.org/jewish-views-environment>

Jewish Text on the Environment: <https://www.ramahoutdoors.org/directors-blog/top-ten-jewish-texts-on-the-environment/>

The Jewish Plan for how to treat the land and let it rest- Shmitta:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=unXbzVmZtGQ>

Bal Tashchit

Jewish law prohibits wasteful consumption and needless destruction.
This is the law of *Bal Tashchit*, do not destroy.

Today, the laws of *Bal Tashchit* are understood as a prohibition against wasting natural resources in the context of our fragile global environment.

The Deuteronomy text describes a common practice in ancient warfare, where the attacking nation would destroy its enemy's fruit trees and fields.

In the *Mishneh Torah* text, we see that unlike many legal systems that permit people to destroy their own personal property, Jewish law forbids us to do so. The *Etz Hayim Chumash* points out that this follows the Jewish belief that we are only the custodians, not the owners, of nature.

Kashrut - Nigel Savage, Hazon founder speaks about keeping kosher as an environmental issue. Please look at the time listed here 4.28-5.20 to see what Nigel has to say. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=25CcYi9sJq8>

Parshat Hashavou Tzorat Leprosy or something different

Strong case for how bad speech (malicious gossip) about one another cuts us off from community and our spiritual life. It is also a case against being haughty, egotistical or full of oneself to the point of thinking poorly about other. Both are causes for a spiritual death of our communal life and behaviour.

Rabbi Forman takes the approach of looking at the text closely for better a comprehension: <https://www.alephbeta.org/playlist/tzaraat-biblical-purification-rituals>

Rabbi Sacks looks for more of an interpretative understanding:

<https://soundcloud.com/office-of-rabbi-sacks/tazria-metzora-cc-5780>

Both are relevant and interesting. I found it an interesting challenge to try to think about how the plague of corona which kills sets the earth free. Like as part of the cure for Tzorat.

Have a look and let me know what you think?

Ritcom Reports ..

From My Jewish Learning Shavuot celebrates the first barley harvest and also the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai—the moment when Israel accepted all of God’s law. There are several biblical texts read on this holiday.

The Book of Ruth Ruth choosing to go with her mother-in-law, Naomi. Illustration from a Bible card published by the Providence Lithograph Company in 1907.



Ruth is read during the morning services of Shavuot (on the second day for those observing two days). The titular heroine, a Moabite woman, is married to an Israelite man who dies suddenly. Rather than return to her Moabite family, she follows her Jewish mother-in-law, Naomi, back to Bethlehem. Her declaration of fidelity to Naomi and the Jewish people is beautiful and moving:

“Wherever you go, I will go; wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. Thus and more may the LORD do to me if anything but death parts me from you.” [Ruth 1:16-17](#)

In Bethlehem, Ruth is as good as her incredible words; she faithfully cares for Naomi, even in hard times. Ruth goes on to remarry (to another Israelite man) and ultimately becomes the matriarch of one of the great kings of Israel, King David.

We read Ruth for a few reasons. First, Ruth’s pledged fidelity to Naomi and the Israelite God mirrors the fidelity Israel expresses to God upon receiving the Torah. Second, Ruth’s story takes place during the season of the barley harvest, the agricultural occasion for Shavuot. Finally, Ruth is the great-great-grandmother of [King David](#), who is thought to have been born and died on Shavuot.

Torah Reading for Shavuot The Torah reading for the first day of Shavuot, [Exodus 19:1-20:23](#), recounts the exciting moment of Revelation. The children of Israel are encamped at the base of Sinai while Moses ascends the mountain to receive God’s law. God descends to the top of the mountain amidst tumultuous thunder and lightning, smoke, and the blast of the shofar to deliver the Torah. The [ten commandments](#) are part of this Torah reading, and it is customary to stand when they are recited.

Shavuot

Thanks to Jennifer Gottschalk for sharing



Auckland Jewish Burial & Benevolent Society

Shalom Cheverim - I hope this message finds you and your bubble in good health and managing the days of lockdown well.

This is a time where our resilience is really tested and where we may need to apply some strategies for strengthening our resilience. Resilience is the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; to spring back from hardship or be flexible and able to move through uneasy situations. There are plenty of websites that talk about this in depth if you feel like Googling.

Here are some key recommendations:

- **Exercise** - physical exercise releases endorphins, a chemical, into our body and helps us feel good.
- **Make time for yourself** - this is about taking time to hear your inner voice - attune yourself to your body and mind by adopting a mindfulness practice, or sitting quietly. Notice how you are feeling, are you breathing deeply, are you feeling worried about anything? Remember the message of putting on your own oxygen mask before attending to others.
- **Engage in positive self-talk** - remind yourself that this too will pass; be aware of the sphere of control and influence that you hold and try not to worry about the things you have no immediate control over. Being in the moment right now is a good resilience practice if you are feeling stressed. If you are feeling calm you might like to plan your next steps. It's a great time to engage with the practice of counting the Omer!
- **Connect with others** - staying connected is important - we are deeply social beings - even the introverts among us need other people! Finding someone to check in with and chat to if you are feeling stressed or worried is really important. It is best done early before anxiety escalates. Social networks are an important resilience success factor.
- **Cultivate humour and curiosity** - working in a laugh is so liberating. We know how good a belly laugh feels!
- **Have realistic expectations of yourself and others.** Be kind and gentle to yourself - it will enable you to be kind and gentle to others.

If you want to explore ideas for building resilience further and you are an Auckland Libraries member [you can join online if you are not] you can go on the website and take on a course via [Lynda.com](#) - this site allows you to study all manner of interesting things for free.... I highly recommend it, [click here](#).

Also I encourage anyone who is feeling isolated with concerns to reach out to the community for support. The concerns may be about financial pressure, job security, personal safety in the home, managing the family in lockdown, elderly relatives, medical concerns, or you just want to have a chat. Our community is well placed to assist or refer you to the help you need.

The Burial and Benevolent Society postponed our AGM that was scheduled for March as we entered lockdown. We will see what is announced on May 11th regarding our level of alert and ability to gather before determining if we hold the meeting via ZOOM or wait to meet face to face. Meanwhile the committee continues to meet virtually via ZOOM on a monthly basis.

Wishing everyone well and safe. Stay home if you can to ensure our essential workers can go about their work with ease.