



September 2020

Elul 5780~Tishrei 5781

Teruah



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

(ISSN 1177-2352)

Our Board members

Affiliated with the Union for Progressive Judaism (UPJ)

Charities Commission Registration Number CC29542

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- Jude Berman, judemberman@gmail.com, Membership
- Julie Dick, primroseji@gmail.com, Burial & Benevolent Society
- Terry Haffern, haffernt@outlook.com, Hebrew School
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- Sandra van Eden, waiatamanu1@gmail.com, Gardening, Membership

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

**During COVID-19 Level 2, Friday services will continue via Zoom and
Saturday services will be in the Sanctuary and livestreamed on OneRoom.**

Contents

Opinions expressed in Teruah do not necessarily represent the views of Beth Shalom Board of Management.

1. September 2020 Elul 5780~Tishrei 5781
2. Our Board members
3. ToC - Box
4. Coming up ...
5. From the AGM via Zoom 30.8.2020...
6. From our new President ...
7. From the Board ...
8. High Holy Days Services 2020~5781
9. Rabbi George Wielechowski writes ...
10. Mishkan T'Shuvah for High Holy Days
11. The Buzz
12. Prayers for healing ...
13. Ritcom Reports... Experiencing the Divine Presence from a Jewish Perspective
14. Education Update
15. Auckland Jewish Burial & Benevolent Society Inc
16. Let's Read ...
17. Women's Refuge Winter Appeal

Coming up in September

- Please be sure to read our updated Alert Level 2 Covid Safety Plan which was emailed to you this week. We urge people to wear masks in enclosed spaces in line with the Ministry of Health guidance. We will always have some available at Beth Shalom if you are on our premises without one.
- You will also have received an email about the High Holy Days which will be online, streamed from the Sanctuary this year using OneRoom.
- Mishkan T'Shuvah, our new Machzor, is available to buy for \$90 from the office if you did not buy it last year. With services being online this year it will be very useful to have your own copy at home.
- To update or add any family members to the Yizkor book, please contact the office by 23rd September. This book will then be available to any member on request.
- The Reverse Tashlich beach clean scheduled for Sunday 13 September has been postponed to later in the year.



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From the AGM via Zoom, 30 August 2020

Good afternoon everyone. My name is Alistair Kirk and I am the Vice President and acting president of Beth Shalom.

This may be the toughest address I have had to prepare and deliver. Typically these kinds of things are reflective and upbeat, celebrating the highs, acknowledging the difficulties and ending on a positive. I'm going to give that a go and see what happens, but I need to tackle some issues head on.

Without doubt we have some things we can be rightly proud of while carrying on in difficult circumstances.

Let's take a look at some of the highs:

- There has been a dedicated group of people who have worked tirelessly to adapt to the unprecedented changes demanded by Covid-19
 - Naomi Johnson and the Ritual Committee have gone above and beyond to adapt to an online environment and ensure that we have had services throughout the past months. They are also working hard to try to ensure that the High Holy Days continue to be the spiritual highlight of the year.
 - Debbie Miller and her team of dedicated Hebrew school teachers have ensured that Hebrew school and wider education programmes have continued. This includes a wonderful Sukkot Tikkun Leil, which was held via Zoom and attended by about 40 people.
 - We have celebrated B'nai Mitzvot and are blessed to have Chris Shiller and Terry Gelbart as wonderful, dedicated b'nai mitzvah teachers.
 - The B&B, under Sue Berman and her very able committee has continued to run all their crucial services, so important at this time,
 - Christine O'Brien has continued her work from home, but has also been available at odd hours and given generously of her time and knowledge.
 - Chris Shiller and Lorna Orbell have organised a phone tree to ensure that we keep in contact with all our members who need any support and provided whatever services they may need during what has been a very challenging time for so many people
- It feels like a long time ago now, but we also had a wonderful 2019's High Holy Day period overseen by Rabbi Miri Gold with the introduction of our new Machzor
- We've strengthened bonds through the wonderful interfaith work so ably led by Naomi Johnson and Paul Wilton
- We've welcomed 13 new members to Beth Shalom since August 2019.
- We've transitioned our accounting system to Xero, which means that all data is held on the Beth Shalom computer system and is visible to a larger group of people.

It's really important that we take a moment to reflect on these and to offer sincere gratitude to the group of people who give so much for this community.

At the same time though, we also farewelled our President and friend, Debbie Swiatek who set off on a new adventure with Mike and family, initially to Colombia and subsequently to the US. Debbie has been and is a powerhouse at Beth Shalom, a board member for many years as Secretary, Vice President and President. Sharp witted, insightful, no nonsense and really funny she has contributed so much to Beth Shalom and we miss having her here. She is still very much connected and I certainly value her ongoing wisdom and advice when I catch up with her. Hopefully we'll get her back to New Zealand in the not too distant future, but until then, let's take a moment to acknowledge and thank the wonderful Debbie for all she does for us.

These are indeed challenging times. The annus horribilis that is 2020 we all understand far too well. The concerns and fears that we experience in our day-to-day, professional and home life are echoed in our Beth Shalom world and we're running on fumes, trying to keep things moving but uncertain about what the future looks like. We find ourselves at a crossroads and a crossroads that has, in truth, been coming for some time:

I'm going to start by acknowledging and taking responsibility for the shortcomings of the Board over the past 18 months. The delays to issuing and collecting membership levies and the delays - some of which were out of our control - on getting our accounts audited is unacceptable and I can tell you that each of us feels that weight of disappointment. We have responded by redefining processes, committing to timelines and increasing support for the Treasurer- but again, the Board acknowledges the impact of this breakdown in process and we are sorry that we find ourselves in this position.

At the same time, let's take a temperature check on the broader state of our community right now:

Our community is run on the good will of fewer and fewer dedicated volunteers who more than shoulder the load. The same group of people who are simultaneously committee members, Shammashim, lay leaders, teachers and sometimes even Board members. There is no band of community members, at least that we can see, lining up to help bolster these numbers.

The Community is in a funk and engagement is patchy. On the one hand, we see great participation in activities such as the shabbaton and of course High Holy Days. But in general the community is disengaged from the everyday activity of Beth Shalom. And with a small group of organisers, with multiple priorities from Beth Shalom and the rest of their life, there just isn't the momentum and resource we need to give Beth Shalom the shot-in-the-arm we need right now.

And sadly, and in truth, your board is a reflection of this malaise. Conflicting priorities, multiple hats and broken systems have got us to almost breaking point. We see and acknowledge the frustration and anger of the community and I can tell you, hand on heart, that no one is setting out to do anything other than the best job they can, with the resources we have. No one is setting out to delay communication, or select a Rabbi, or have our accounts audited. Most of the board has held positions on the board for a number of years and those newer members are long standing, very active people within Beth Shalom, also acting as lay leaders and, Shammashim and committee members concurrently. And as if to illustrate the point, we arrive at our AGM, with the prospect of completing the year without a president or vice president and no sign of anyone jumping forward to help fill these vacancies. Now more than ever, I urge you to volunteer your time and if you have a view and vision for how things should be run consider this your opportunity to step forward.

In response we have secured more voluntary financial support for the treasurer and a review of processes (led by Olga Bernstein). I believe these processes and focus areas will help steward us out of the doldrums to an extent but without a succession plan, this runs the risk of being a short term fix.

Sadly or perhaps encouragingly, the situation Beth Shalom finds itself in is not unique to us and is the reality for religious and voluntary organisations across the world. Every week we see communities merge, fold and adapt. Our opportunity right now is to take this moment in time and decide as a community what it means for us. We can either carry on and hope that the systems that previously worked will work again (if we get people to see them through) or evolve and adapt to better reflect the changing needs of our increasingly diverse Jewish community.

So there are 2 key projects under way to address some of this.

The first is the ongoing dialogue with the Auckland Hebrew Congregation about sharing a Jewish Community Centre (JCC). As advised before, this is not a decision to take lightly or rush and our approach to date has been to engage in authentic, respectful dialogue that outline the fundamental needs of the Progressive Jewish community before engaging in thorough consultation and debate with our Beth Shalom members. The work to date, led by Paul Wilton, John Pesaro and Ted Ries, has been thorough, professional and excellent. The Board is very grateful to the team for leading the conversations and process, with Beth Shalom's interest front and centre. As we have said many times over the last year, no decisions about the JCC have been made and won't be made until we have had understood all the needs of the Beth Shalom community. It is however a critical moment in our 60 plus years and a decision that will have lasting ramifications. This is truly a pivot point.

The second key project tackling our challenges is the Vision Project. Under the guidance and support of Rabbi George Wielechowski we are embarking on a process to help articulate the fundamental needs and desires of our members and those we wish to serve, as well as articulate what we can do with the resources we have. This Theory of Change process has been used by many organisations and will help crystallise how we support the needs of our diverse community into the future. This is a large undertaking and is being stewarded by a working group made up of Board members (Ted, Olga, Julie and myself for the Board) as well as Chris Shiller and Rachel Zussman - again the Board is very grateful to each of these for giving their time so generously and graciously. The process will comprehensively engage the widest community - our active members, (dis)/engaged youth, Hebrew School parents, long standing members, new members, rural members - and critically, unaffiliated Jews and other Progressive Jewish community leaders and other stakeholder groups. This process will be challenging and will force us into truly evaluating how we enable and empower our community to express their Jewish identity in ways that make sense to them today and into the future. Fundamental questions about the types of programmes and services we run, the support people need, and how we structure membership, will all be on the table. This project will take place over the next 6 months and your voice is needed and welcome. I strongly urge you to get involved and have your say. I really hope you feel encouraged to help reset the foundation, acknowledging all that has made us such a wonderful vibrant community today and addressing how we ensure we are relevant to Progressive Jews through Aotearoa into the future. This is a critical project and again thank you to the working group and Rabbi George.

Before I hand over to Shane for the financial report, I'd just like to summarise where we are at. At our core we have a vibrant, passionate, committed group who give whole-heartedly to Beth Shalom and help drive participation and involvement. But we're a little frazzled and finding ourselves at a strategic crossroads. We need to take stock by listening to our members and potential members and help shape a backdrop for Progressive Jewish life in New Zealand, with Beth Shalom and its members firmly at the heart of the decision making. Our focus as a Board will be on facilitating the conversations about both the JCC and Vision Project as well as committing to tighter process around memberships, policy and finances in general. We can and will address these challenges head on. And if we can broaden our base of doers, we will look back at this once-in-a-generation moment and see it for the amazing opportunity it is.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of your Board of Management - Shane, Olga, Ted, Julie, Sandra, Terry, Carol, Jude and Debbie and to both Suzanne and Sam who are standing down following this AGM. Your dedication and service is greatly appreciated and I thank you for your support.

I'll now hand over to Shane....

Beth Shalom President, Olga Bernstein

I am both honoured and apprehensive to be taking over from Debbie Swiatek and Alistair Kirk as President of the Beth Shalom Board. I'd like to thank them both for the amazing work they have done for all of us. As Alistair said so well in his speech at the AGM, these are indeed challenging times.

Some of our challenges/opportunities are strategic -

- We have too few people shouldering the work for the community, an aging demographic, a lack of engagement and energy.
- We also have an opportunity to be part of a Jewish Community Centre (JCC).

Other issues are more immediate -

- We need to improve our processes and management practices, especially around finances.
- We are needing to adapt to the 'new normal' brought about by the pandemic we are living through.

So, what am I committing to as President?

- I am committed to working with Shane Sampson, our Treasurer, to get our collection of fees into order and ensure that processes are in place and working going forward. I'd like to acknowledge and thank Shane and Susanne Murek for the time and energy they're putting into this vital project.
- I see the Vision Project as a key initiative and will continue to support the working group - Alistair Kirk, Rabbi George, Ted Ries, Julie Dick, Chris Shiller and Rachel Zussman.
- I will support the work that Paul Wilton, Ted Reis, John Pezaro and Judith Marks are doing in their discussions with the AHC about the JCC
- I want to make sure that you, our community, are kept informed of progress on our major projects. As part of this initiative, we now have a 'From the Board' section in the Teruah. Unless you know what's happening in the background, it's difficult to be involved and feel engaged. If you'd like communication in other forms, please let us know.
- I want us to review the 'new member experience' and ensure that people feel welcomed and included when they join Beth Shalom.
- I want to see more people involved in making Beth Shalom a great community.
- I trust our wonderful committees to make good decisions. The Board and I will be there to support them and build on ideas.

What I am not committing to is doing this alone. I take on this role in addition to a full-time work role, as well as my role as a wife to Rob, a mother to Alexa, Ciara and Jenna, a daughter to Leah.

I know that our wonderful Board, committees and volunteers will be there to pick up some of the work. But they can't do everything.

I am putting out an appeal to you. We need you to stand up and help. If you think something needs to be changed, improved, updated, please volunteer to be involved. We are in this together and together we can ensure that Beth Shalom continues to be a warm, welcoming, well-functioning community.

To contact me: I would love to have the time to speak to every one of you, but this is just not possible. If you'd like to get in contact with me, please email me at president@bethshalom.org.nz and I or someone who can answer your question will respond as soon possible.

If you have general queries, Christine O'Brien has a huge wealth of knowledge and is available to help. She works Monday and Wednesday until 1pm and Thursday and Fridays until 2pm. She can be contacted on (09) 524 4139 or on office@bethshalom.org.nz

FROM THE BOARD

.....what is happening within our community and what we have been working on recently.

We will have had the AGM by the time you read this.

- The Board had a very successful first of four meetings with Rabbi George on August 16th for the Vision Project.
- **The High Holy Days:** Planning is proceeding, with a lot of work done by the Ritual Committee drafting various scenarios under the different COVID-19 Levels. Please check your emails for updates.
- **JCC (Jewish Community Centre):** Communications and discussions have been taking place with regard to this project. We will set a date for a Beth Shalom community meeting to discuss the status of the project and again solicit feedback when we have further clarity regarding the COVID-19 Levels. If you have any thoughts at this stage about the project, we do want to hear from you.

The Board of Beth Shalom (Board) is leading our community in a strategic planning exercise, called the Vision Project. The main product of this work will be a Theory of Change (ToC), a document which will set out the core goals, values and principles of Beth Shalom. The ToC will act as a road map for future growth and change, by which we hope to ensure the congregation's long-term health and viability.

To this end, a Vision Project Working Group has been set up, of some Board members and other members of the congregation. The WG is designed to be representative of, and sensitive to the concerns of the Beth Shalom community as a whole. It will structure a process for soliciting feedback from the congregation as to how we see ourselves and what we want and need as a strong, vibrant community with a spiritual heart embracing Jewish life and its diversity. This feedback will be conducted in a way which ensures maximum community participation.

Security Update

The new fence along the front of the shul has been completed, and the street-facing camera and intercom are now operational. This will enable us to see and communicate with any visitors who want to come onto the property from inside the building, and to control access more safely. At the moment, the gate has both a card reader and a physical keypad to provide entry. In the next few weeks, the keypad will be removed, and entry will be by way of keycards only. The cards will be issued to the same list of people who currently hold physical keys to the front door. During events when we are expecting guests (services, Hebrew School, etc), we can bypass the keycard reader for specific time windows so that guests can enter without keycards.

The new alarm system has also been activated. It is similar in operation to the prior system, as it features a keypad in the same location. Alarm codes for current holders have not changed. The only difference will be a slightly changed sequence of keys to be pressed once the code has been entered. The security contractor is creating a "cheat sheet" describing the procedure, which will be issued to staff, shammashim and others who require the ability to arm and disarm the alarm system. We expect to issue the sheet by Friday 3 September.

In the next few weeks, when all facets of the new system are in place, we will hold on-site training for those that require it, and will also distribute full documentation on how the new hardware operates. There will be a bit of a learning curve, but our physical security should be enhanced.

If you have questions, please text Ted Ries on 021 249 3777

High Holy Days 5781

As we said in the email letter that went out a few days ago, the High Holy Days are a time of spiritual introspection. Our dearest wish was to celebrate the High Holy Days as a community. However with all the uncertainty about alert levels and restrictions, we have decided to take the cautious approach and to plan for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur as if the current restrictions of gatherings limited to 10 people plus service leaders will still be in place. This will mean that almost everyone, other than people involved in leading the service, will need to watch the **online livestream** beaming from the Sanctuary using the OneRoom facility.

We will start our High Holy Day season with our Selichot service on Saturday 12 September as we look to ourselves to seek and offer forgiveness. We will then move into Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur - you can see the times of the services on the accompanying posters.

While it will of course not be the same, not being able to be together observing these festivals in a communal way, we do hope that you will find the festivals nevertheless meaningful. Mishkan T'Shuvah, our new Machzor, provides familiar as well as new rich texts to heighten our awareness at this special time of year. We encourage you to use these for communal or private reflection.

On behalf of the Board and Ritual Committee, we wish everyone *Shanah Tovah Umetukah* and well over the Fast. May the coming year bring more opportunities and fewer challenges.



High Holy Days Festivals and Services

Selichot 12 September 7:00pm סליחות

Rosh Hashana ראש השנה

Evening 18 September 6:00pm ערבית

Morning 19 September 10:00am שחרית

Kever Avot 20 September 2:00pm קבר אבות

Held at Waikumete Cemetery

NOTE:

Service attendance will be via
livestream on OneRoom live from
the Beth Shalom Sanctuary.

Except Kever Avot, at Waikumete Cemetery

Beth Shalom 2020/5781

Yom Kippur יום כפור

Kol Nidre 27 September 7:30pm כל נדרי

Morning 28 September 11:00am שחרית

Study Session 2:00pm מדרש

Musaf 3:30pm מוסף

Afternoon 5:00pm מנחה

Yizkor 6:15pm יזכר

Neilah 7:00pm נעילה

Rabbi George writes ...

Back in December of 2019 (which feels like forever ago), I remember everyone was saying it.

From global media commentators to government leaders to local community groups to neighbors and friends. Two Thousand Nineteen just seemed like the year when one awful thing after another . . . after another . . . just kept happening . . . around the world . . . to everyone.

By the 31st of December last year, it was the thought in the air; all over television and the Internet, part of the zeitgeist: Good riddance to 2019. This next year, 2020, would have to be better. Definitely. (Wouldn't it?)

I'm definitely not suggesting we compare one tragedy or one experience of loss or grief to another; there is no gain in that exercise. But it would be disingenuous of me not to point out that 2020 has been the year when everyone's lives, everywhere, changed. When the tenuous nature of a reality we believed so solid and comfortable crumbled for every one of us; when every life, family, community, nation--the whole world--has been shaken to its foundations; every heart broken. Our reality right now is overwhelmingly, scaringly, real, and most of us will have recently found ourselves staring down events and emotions for which we feel completely unprepared.

But though the road ahead is still difficult, we are prepared. We've done this together before. Many times. Through plagues and famine. Through invasion and wars. Through genocide and on the other side of genocide. And each time, we get through, together. As Hemingway wrote, "The world breaks everyone and afterward many are strong at the broken places." The many, if they come together, can be strong in the broken times and places of this world. And these are exactly the kind of moments that our High Holy Day traditions were built for.

This month of Elul and the period between Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur gives us the ancient formula for how to make it through even the most difficult of challenges:

Come together and stand before the uncertainty as one. If we can't do it in person, then let's do it creatively. Let's pray and talk together about how we feel over the phone, send letters and cards with Psalms or poems or encouraging words from the heart. Let's light candles on our front porches and in our homes, just because we can and the world needs more light. Let's smile more. People can feel it, even behind the masks.

Open our hearts and close the door on conceit. Let us publicly acknowledge, together, that no one is truly self-reliant or self-made and that no one, individually, can overcome what we are facing. Let us confess, as one spiritual entity, finally, that we are inextricably interdependent. We will only make it through this, if we all make it through.

Embrace transformation. This is the crucial moment where we can decide to react to our individual and shared reality with a flow of love instead of pain, from this point forward. This decision, if we can make it, is the single hardest thing most of us will ever do. It is the part of the formula, they say, that comes to us from a time out of time and long, long ago. It comes directly out of the mystery and power and grace of that idea we call God.

And the essence of the ancient formula has always been the same:

We can only access the comfort and strength we crave, together.

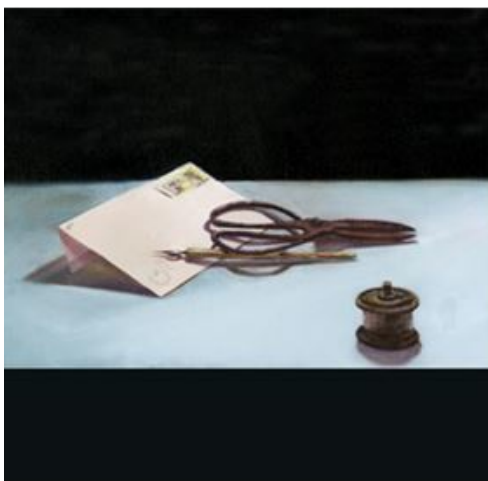
Rabbi George Wielechowski

This essay was informed and inspired by the teachings of Rabbi Alan Lew, z"l.



Participate in online services with your own Mishkan T'Shuvah.

Copies are available in sets, one for Rosh Hashanah and one for Yom Kippur. \$90 per set. Please contact the office if you don't have yours yet.



v.XIII

Jewels of Elul

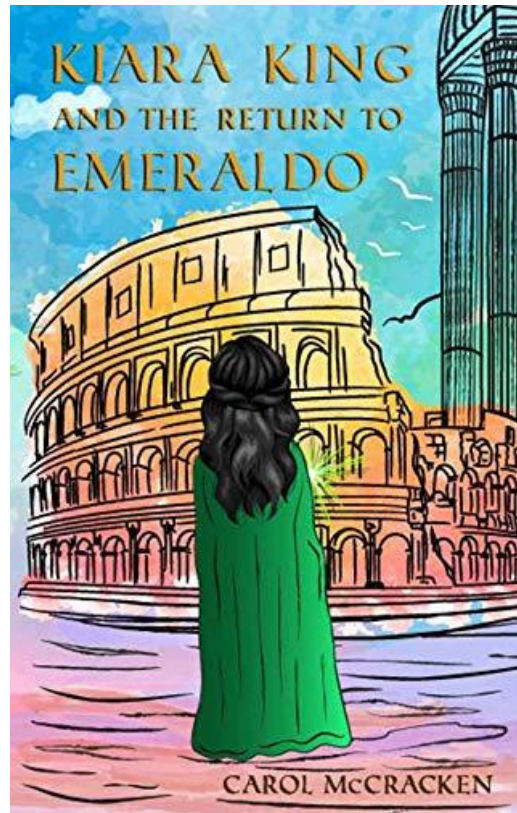
a letter to myself

As part of this year's High Holidays, [Jewels of Elul](#) are now available to us on the web, and you are able to subscribe to 'daily jewels' directly to your email-box.

Click [here](#) to subscribe.

THE BUZZ

Carol McCracken's second book has just been published, illustrated by Lilach Cohen.



On a family holiday in Rome, Kiara finds another entrance into Emerald. Returning with her brother, Kieran, things don't go quite to plan when they discover Kiara's old Nurse has been captured by Damian and Kirsh. Rescuing the Nurse becomes a priority but when a shot rings out, someone is hit. Now becomes a desperate race to save a life. And what to do with Nurse? Can a person with green skin be smuggled safely into England?

Available on Amazon and Kindle.

High Holy Day Challot

Plain \$8.00

Sultana \$9.00

Sweet Cinnamon and Walnut
\$10.00

Contact Aimee by: Friday 11th Sept

email: aimeesandler08@gmail.com or
by text on: 021-824-630

Delivery \$8.00 throughout Auckland

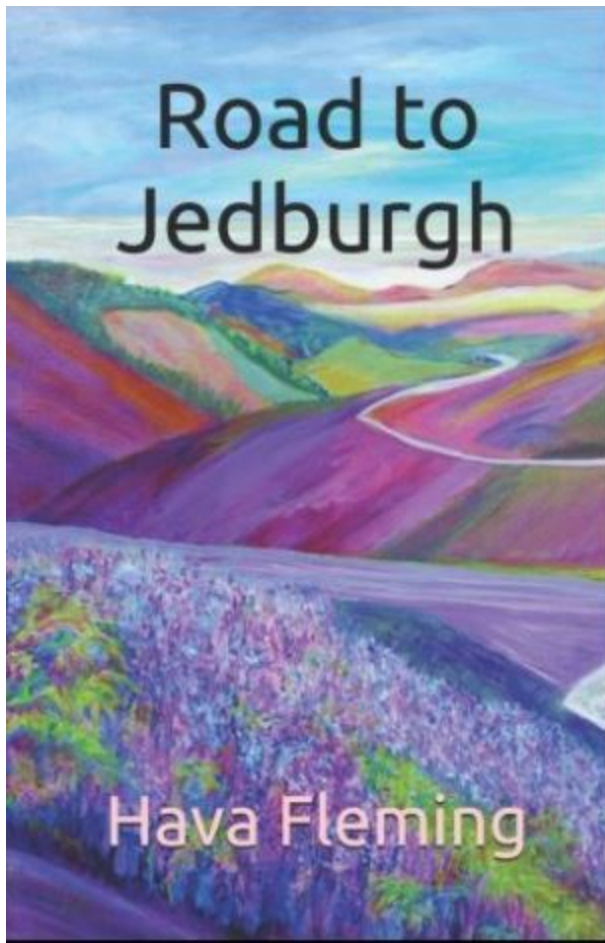
Has Your Contact Information Changed Recently? If so, or you're not certain what details we have on file for you - we'd love your help to update them so we can stay in touch! You can easily update your details by emailing to office@bethshalom.org.nz Thank you.



In conversation with Katie Hava Fleming, who is still connected to Beth Shalom from afar...

Her books, anti-semitism then and now, and especially talking about her new book, *Road to Jedburgh*. [CLICK HERE](#) for the Zoom link to hear/watch the interview.

Photo: left, son Eli Perret-Jeanneret, centre Katie Hava Fleming, daughter Tali Kylewer.





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

Ritcom Reports ...

Experiencing the Divine Presence from a Jewish Perspective

Paul Wilton was one of nine interfaith speakers who each gave a five minute talk on their faith's perspective of Experiencing the Divine Presence at an Auckland Interfaith Council event on 29 July 2020 held at the Mercy Spirituality Centre. Below is the content of Paul's excellent contribution to this event.

The Jewish Bible is known to us as the Tanach. It has three parts and the word, "TANACH", is formed from the first letter of each part:

- Torah: The Five Books of Moses
- Nevi'im: The Profits; and
- Ketuvim: The writings, including Psalms, Proverbs and so on.

To many of you, it will simply be known as the Old Testament, but to Jews, the Tanach is our Bible.

The Divine Presence appears throughout the Tanach. From the story of the Garden of Eden, in the Torah, (Genesis, Chapter 2) - through the experiences of Abraham and his family - and then throughout the story of Moses, the Divine Presence is, well, divinely present.

This presence is experienced in different ways. Most often, the people of the Bible are the vehicle through whom the Divine Presence is manifest. God speaks to people; appears to them in dreams, helps them to perform miracles. Similarly, in Nevi'im and Ketuvim (the Prophets and Writings), there are many stories where the Divine Presence is experienced in this way.

In the Torah, God not only speaks to individuals, but also to all the children of Israel together. It is estimated that over two million people heard the voice of God at Mt Sinai as they were asked to accept and obey the Ten Commandments. Thereafter, as the Jews wandered through the desert, God's presence accompanied them, dwelling in the Mishkan (the Tent or Tabernacle). All the people would see and prostrate themselves before God, who would appear as a Pillar of Cloud by the Tent.

In Exodus Chapter 33, Moses asks God "Show me your Glory" and God agrees, but says "You will not be able to see My Face, for no man shall see Me and live". The Divine hand then covers Moses as God passes by. The hand is removed, and Moses sees God's back. And so, Moses was able to actually see God in a way that no one else has done, according to our Tradition (2.50 min).

This gives a feel for the Divine Presence, as it appears in our Bible. But what of now? How do Jews experience God in today's world? As with all peoples of faith, there are many ways, not least of which is marvelling at the wonders of nature. But let's look at three examples that relate specifically to Jewish teaching. Jews believe that the world stands on three things:

- On Torah. Studying God's word and the Laws by which we have been commanded to live, connects us with the Source of those words.
- On Avodah: This includes worship and acting in the service of God; and
- On Gemilut chasadim: Meaning acts of loving kindness.

Believing that God is ever-present, these acts all connect us to that Presence. The feeling of connection through worship can be enhanced by music and the strength of a receptive gathering.

With that in mind, I would like to end with a short ancient Hebrew chant of just two lines from Psalm 92. In English they mean:

"How great is your work, oh God, how very deep are your thoughts!"

I'd like to ask those who are comfortable to do so, to close your eyes for a moment, breathe deeply and open your hearts to these words.

Ma Gadlu ma'asecha Yah Meod amku mach'she'votekha

Haleluyah!

Paul Wilton

Education Update

Sunday school has been back in session and we have been doing some good learning, but once again we are thwarted by a COVID-19 lockdown. I still have some students who studying Hebrew with me twice a week via Zoom. I am keen to have Sunday Zoom classes for all students . Email me for an invite: educator@bethshalom.org.nz



I am currently leading Introduction to Judaism on Zoom and it seems to be a good way to keep everyone connected and learning.

Introduction to Judaism studied how to build Jewish community and leadership. What makes for great Jewish leaders? Great Jewish diaspora leaders?

Here is looking to the Tanach (Jewish sources) for some insight.(article below) and this week's torah



portion.<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/models-of-leadership/>

- Sunday School on Zoom
- Reverse Tashlich postponed due to COVID-19.

The last thing I did before I went into level 3 lockdown was, I spoke to a group of Christian college students about what Judaism is all about. I have a standard speech which I started doing about 4 years ago when I was asked to speak to many groups. It is fun to bring them to the shul and show them everything I am talking about. I really enjoy the question and answer period and I always feel that the more knowledge people have about Judaism and the Jewish people, the better off we all are.

One of the professors on the way out the gate said;

I am keen to study about the environment and what it says in the biblical texts in Hebrew. It is what I did my Ph.D on. I said "Yes", so once I get out of lock down, I have a new study partner who wants to study the Hebrew sources on environmentalism. **Is anyone else interested?**



In 2006 a high school English teacher asked students to write a famous author and ask for advice. Kurt Vonnegut was the only one to respond - and his response is magnificent: "Dear Xavier High School, and Ms. Lockwood, and Messrs Perin, McFeely, Batten, Maurer and Congiusta:

I thank you for your friendly letters. You sure know how to cheer up a really old geezer (84) in his sunset

years. I don't make public appearances any more because I now resemble nothing so much as an Iguana.

What I had to say to you, moreover, would not take long, to wit: Practice any art, music, singing, dancing, acting, drawing, painting, sculpting, poetry, fiction, essays, reportage, no matter how well or badly, not to get money and fame, but to experience becoming, to find out what's inside you, to make your soul grow.

Seriously! I mean starting right now, do art and do it for the rest of your lives. Draw a funny or nice picture of Ms. Lockwood, and give it to her. Dance home after school, and sing in the shower and on and on. Make a face in your mashed potatoes. Pretend you're Count Dracula.

Here's an assignment for tonight, and I hope Ms. Lockwood will flunk you if you don't do it: Write a six line poem, about anything, but rhymed. No fair tennis without a net. Make it as good as you possibly can. But don't tell anybody what you're doing. Don't show it or recite it to anybody, not even your girlfriend or parents or whatever, or Ms. Lockwood. OK?

Tear it up into teeny-weeny pieces, and discard them into widely separated trash receptacles. You will find that you have already been gloriously rewarded for your poem. You have experienced becoming, learned a lot more about what's inside you, and you have made your soul grow.

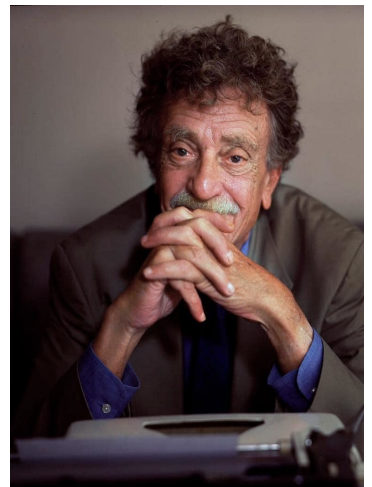
God bless you all! Kurt Vonnegut

(The original author of this post wrote) When I wrote this post I was 15. I spent a month working on an archeological dig. I was talking to one of the archeologists one day during our lunch break and he asked those kinds of "getting to know you" questions you ask young people: Do you play sports? What's your favorite subject? And I told him, no I don't play any sports. I do theater, I'm in choir, I play the violin and piano, I used to take art classes.

And he went WOW. That's amazing! And I said, "Oh no, but I'm not any good at ANY of them."

And he said something then that I will never forget and which absolutely blew my mind because no one had ever said anything like it to me before: "I don't think being good at things is the point of doing them. I think you've got all these wonderful experiences with different skills, and that all teaches you things and makes you an interesting person, no matter how well you do them."

And that honestly changed my life. Because I went from a failure, someone who hadn't been talented enough at anything to excel, to someone who did things because I enjoyed them. I had been raised in such an achievement-oriented environment, so inundated with the myth of Talent, that I thought it was only worth doing things if you could "Win" at them.



Beth Shalom Hebrew/Sunday School, Contact: educator@bethshalom.org.nz

Ph: 027 765 3677. Your place to make friends and build community.

Auckland Jewish Burial & Benevolent Society Inc

As we approach the High Holy days we continue to face a world filled with uncertainty. These are challenging times. In needing to be flexible and resilient it is good to find comfort in the familiar and in community. Our High Holy days are a time of reflection and forgiveness.

I have listened to the victim impact statements of the Mosque shooting this week and have been in awe at the expression of resolution and forgiveness that many of our Muslim cousins have expressed in court. Forgiveness is a core tenet of Islam and is an important expression in Judaism too. Forgiveness can be powerful and liberating. In our tradition it is an act we can carry out to our dying moments. The tradition of Viduy or confession lifts the burden of unresolved matter, as does the opportunity presented each year between Rosh Hashonah and Yom Kippur.

The Burial and Benevolent Society will offer an opportunity to visit Waikumete for K'ver Avot - the traditional mitzvah of visiting the graves of our ancestors. A short service will take place at 2pm on Sunday 20th September,

Members would have received our Annual Appeal letter in the month of August. It is reprinted below. Thank you to all those who have made a donation. This appeal assists with meeting the day to day and special requirements for support within our community. Without your support we would not be in a position to sustain this kind of benevolence. Please consider donating to support the ongoing work of the B&B and of the community.

Membership of the B&B is separate to membership of Beth Shalom. For membership enquiries please email the Secretary Sue Pezaro at speszaro@gmail.com

We wish you all *l'shanah tova tikatevu ve techatemu* (לְשָׁנָה טוֹבָה תִּכְתְּבוּ וְתִחַתֶּמוּ), may you be inscribed and sealed (in the Book of Life) for a good year.

Auckland Jewish Burial & Benevolent Society Inc.

August 2020 - Elul 5780

These are challenging times as we witness and experience the global pandemic in our communities and feel its impact on our loved ones at homes and overseas.

We are writing to you today to ask you to contribute to this year's Burial & Benevolent Society's Annual Appeal. A year that for many will be harder than most.

Your donation will enable us to meet the spiritual, ritual, and benevolent needs of the people in our community. The uncertainty of this crisis requires flexibility and generosity to connect with those most in need to help and support them through these difficult times.

We acknowledge and thank the professionals and voluntary workers that play an important role in the care of our community. However, they too can't do it alone.

With your help, together we can respond with kindness and compassion, with care and benevolence. As New Zealanders, we have done this before and the need continues, now more than ever.

Your donation will make a critical difference to our ability to support the community in many practical ways. With your help, we can continue to assist people with regular requests as well as the additional challenges we now face of isolation and anxiety, and disruption to employment and education.

And of course, your generosity will also help our work of consoling the bereaved and providing dignified and authentically Jewish funeral services when one of our members passes away.

Please continue your wonderful support and maintain the legacy of the Auckland Jewish Burial & Benevolent Society by making a donation. You can do this by direct credit from your bank account or you can fill in the slip at the bottom and send it back to us with your donation. Be it large or small, your contribution will be a fine example of *Tzedakah* in action.

With all good wishes and thanks,



Sue Berman (President)



David Singer (Treasurer)

Auckland Jewish Burial & Benevolent Society Inc.

B&B: 5780 ANNUAL APPEAL

YOUR ACCOUNT NUMBER HERE:

DIRECT CREDIT DETAILS: ASB BANK ACCOUNT: 12 3011 0432558 00

In the reference fields, please state your name and account number (refer above).

Example: Abe Cohen Donation Appeal

Please fill in this form and return it with your DONATION.

Name _____

Date _____

Address

Ph _____

Email _____

DONATION \$ _____

The Auckland Jewish Burial & Benevolent Society is a registered charity (CC33355). Donations over \$5 can be eligible for a donation tax credit of 33% from Inland Revenue.



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Book list - a new list of titles to choose from...

Bibi, the Turbulent Life & Times of Benjamin Netanyahu - Anshell Pfeffer

A Tale of Love and Darkness - Amos Oz

In the Land of Israel - Amos Oz

To the End of the Land - David Grossman

My Michael - Amos Oz

Seven Years - Etgar Keret

Like Dreamers - Yossi Klein Halevi

My Promised Land - Ari Shavit

The Jew in the Lotus - Roger Kamenetz

This is My God - Herman Wouk

Man's Search for Meaning - Victor Frankl

The Sabbath - Abraham Joshua Herschel

All Who Go Do Not Return - Shulem Deen

To Heal a Fractured World - Jonathan Sacks

The Interestings - Meg Wolitzer

Here I Am - Jonathan Safran Foer

When I Lived in Modern Times - Linda Grant

Fleishman is in Trouble - Taffy Brodesser-Akner

Women's Refuge Winter Appeal

Our Women's refuge Winter Appeal was due to be launched in April this year but due to the lockdown and COVID-19, this unfortunately was unable to go ahead. However, you will have noted that winter is far from over and, also due to lockdown and COVID-19, the Women's Refuge's need for warm clothing for the women and children, is greater than ever before.

They are in need of new or "near new" clothing such as winter pyjamas - especially for children of all ages - socks, jersey's and track suits, hats and scarves, outdoor wear - rain jackets, boots and umbrellas.

There is always an ongoing need for toiletries - soap, deodorant, hand cream, sanitary products, shampoo, conditioner etc for the women and for the children and babies - toothpaste, toothbrushes, nappies, sippy cups, bottles and baby food.

We will continue this special appeal until Rosh Hashanah in September - if you are unable to deliver the goods to shul, please contact Chris Shiller (mob 0211774934, email shiller@orcon.net.nz) and a plan will be made to collect your items.

The Women's Refuge has asked me to pass on their grateful thanks for the continued support by the Beth Shalom community over many years, your donations are very much appreciated.

Give a Kid a Blanket

We were recently contacted about a community activated action group - that you may have already heard about - called '**Give A Kid A Blanket**'. Their objective is to bring much needed warmth to thousands of children and families across Auckland this winter. A bit of background - it was established in 2015 by social practice artists Bernie Harfleet and Donna Turtle Sarten. These donations come from across the wider Auckland area and beyond. While providing practical support for those in need, the project does not focus on recipients, which can be victimising, but rather the actions of kindness from donors which the project joins together to form a community action of kindness.

"We hope items will be either new or in excellent pre-loved condition" says Sarten. "We want recipients not only to feel warmer, but importantly valued by the community".

"The donated items are requested for families through public health nurses, social workers and community workers. Once orders are made up they are gifted to children and their families through these professionals.

We are entering the peak of the winter season, and a warm bed at night becomes a fundamental health need for our children and their families.



For more information on how you can help visit their [Facebook page](#) and I think there is also a Give-a-little page. If you - or anyone that you know - would like to support this important cause, there is a drop off point at the School Uniform Centre in Remuera Road or you can of course drop items off at shul. Alternatively we can arrange for goods to be collected and so if you live north of the bridge, contact Chris Shiller on shiller@orcon.net.nz mobile 0211774934; if you live south of the bridge contact Sue Kranz sue@kranz.nz or mobile 0211714852.

Community Care

Hi Everyone

The last 6 months of the Jewish year have been a challenge to us all, each in our own way, and will certainly remain in our memories as a year to remember. Sadly despite all our individual diligence, we have gone a bit backwards, so we just all have to keep up the good work, in order to go forward again, so that next year the memories will be more enjoyable, and with less uncertainty.

On behalf of the Community Care Team, I would like to wish you all, and your families, Shana Tovah and well over the Fast. May you be inscribed in the Book of Life for a good year.

Please remember, we are here to help you in any way we can, and once again, ask you to give us the information we need, to be able to do that. We also ask the families of older parents to let us know too, if there is any way we can help, support and/or give comfort to in some way to your loved ones.

At the moment of writing we cannot visit, (we hope that has changed by the time you are reading this) but are able to make contact by telephone or email, and can send a card.

Take care, obey the rules, they are for all our own good, we want you all to stay safe.

Lita and the Community Care Team

Contact: Chris Shiller 021 177 4934 shiller@iorcon.net.nz

Lorna Orbell 022 026 2899 chaim@slingshot.co.nz

Lita Summerfield 021 297 9462 (TEXT ONLY) serendipitylins40@gmail.com

Or contact the office 09 524 4139



2020 VISION

UPJ VIRTUAL BIENNIAL

SAVE THE DATE!

UPJ Virtual Biennial: 2020 Vision

Sunday 9 November 2020

The in-person UPJ Biennial planned for 5-8 November 2020 has been postponed to **14-17 October 2021**, and we are pleased to announce that our special guest speaker Rabbi Sharon Brous of Ikar in Los Angeles will be with us at that time.

This year, on **Sunday 8 November 2020, a Virtual Biennial** will be offered, with an online introduction from Rabbi Brous.

During July, Biennial chair Susan Kadar spent 10 days conducting interviews with UPJ congregations throughout the region to determine a program that will best suit the needs of our constituents for the Virtual Biennial.

Early-bird registration, including details about the program and speakers, will be launched on 1 September on the [UPJ website](#).

For more information, contact the UPJ office at: upj@upj.org.au