

beth shalom
auckland new zealand
בית שלום



April 2021

Nissan~Iyar 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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- Vice President, Alistair Kirk, vice_president@bethshalom.org.nz (Vision Project)
- Secretary, Carol McCracken, secretary@bethshalom.org.nz (Hebrew School and Adult Education)
- Treasurer, David Singer, treasurer@bethshalom.org.nz, (Finance Committee)

Board members and portfolios

- Julie Dick, primroseji@gmail.com, Burial & Benevolent Society
- Terry Haffern, haffernt@outlook.com, Ritual, Garden
- Jessamie Milton, djmhippy@gmail.com
- Ted Ries, tedbries@gmail.com, Security, JCC
- Shane Sampson, shane@bethshalom.org.nz, Finance Committee
- Michelle Wise, wisemichelle@gmail.com Membership
- Rachel Zussman, rachelzuss@hotmail.co.nz

- Educator, Debbie Miller educator@bethshalom.org.nz
- Community Care, Lita Summerfield, serendipitylins40@gmail.com
- Senior Outreach, Chris Shiller, shiller@orcon.net.nz
- Auckland Jewish Burial & Benevolent Society, Sue Berman ... 022 051 3589, ajbbs@bethshalom.org.nz

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

During COVID-19 Level 1, all services

will be in the Sanctuary and livestreamed on OneRoom unless otherwise advised.

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Coming up in April

- **Saturday 3 April, 10am**, Shabbat Morning and 7th Day Pesach service including Yizkor.
- **Wednesday 7 April, 7pm** Yom HaShoah at AHC, Greys Ave.
- **Friday 9 April, 6.30 pm**, we will remember the people of Humpolec lost in the Holocaust during our Friday night service. Helen Schamroth will speak about remembering the Holocaust through her art.
- **Saturday 10 April Shabbat Kat** for pre-schoolers from 10-11am.
- The next **Experiential Jewish Learning** will be on **Sunday 11 April at Beth Shalom starting at 9.30am**. We are going to the Auckland Museum for a Yom Hashoah field trip. We are going to do a questionnaire worksheet in the WWII section and then break into three groups to talk to 3 people who will tell their family stories during the holocaust - Judi Lubetzky, Daniel Porat and Naomi Meltzer. For all information on Hebrew School and Introduction to Judaism classes, contact educator@bethshalom.org.nz
- **Tuesday 13 April, 7:30pm Yom HaZikaron** at Beth Shalom.
- **Friday 16 April, 6.30pm**, we will be streaming our Erev Shabbat service to congregations of the World Union. Please come along to show our Community to the world. Our service will be led by Rabbi JoEllen Duckor. There will be a finger food kiddush after the service kindly put on by the Burial and Benevolent Society.
- **Saturday 1 May** save the date -**Joint Ramadan Iftar Dinner** with the Pearl of the Islands Foundation hosted at Beth Shalom.
- **Sunday 2 May, 4pm**, Annual General Meeting of the Burial & Benevolent Society.



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From the President

March has been another busy month at Beth Shalom. For me, a main focus was being ready for the AGM. If you weren't at the meeting, you might want to read my speech, which we've attached later in this Teruah, but there are a few things from my speech that I'd like to highlight.

Changes to the Board membership - some goodbyes and some hellos After six years as our Treasurer, Shane Sampson decided not to stand again for the position. I would like to thank him sincerely for the countless hours and the huge amount of work he's put into getting our finances into good shape.

I'm delighted to welcome David Singer onto the Board as our new Treasurer (in addition to remaining as the Treasurer of the B&B), and to David Robinson and Susanne Murek, who'll be part of the newly formed Finance committee to support David. I'm also delighted to welcome Jessamie Milton and Rachel Zussman as Board members.

I'm really looking forward to working with the new Board - Alistair Kirk (Vice-President), David Singer, Carol McCracken (Secretary), Michelle Wise, Shane Sampson, Ted Ries, Terry Haffern, Julie Dick, Rachel Zussman, Jessamie Milton.

Youth membership - a vital component of a thriving community One of our ongoing issues has been how to engage our younger members. And part of this was the fact that we don't have many young members! As one way to address this, the Board decided to change our 'Student' category to a '**B'nei Mitzvah**' category, to recognise this groups' halachic status as adults in our community and to link them to us. One of the tasks of our new Board will be to populate this category and the '**Young Adult**' (previously called "Youth") category. Thanks to Liora Bercovitch for providing impetus and good thinking to the discussion around amending these categories.

Honorary Life Memberships - celebrating invaluable members of our community At the AGM, we also granted two very special members of our Beth Shalom family, Naomi Johnson and Chris Shiller, Honorary Life Membership, in recognition of the amazing contributions they have made over many years and many areas of community life.

A note from me - past successes and future opportunities As I said at the AGM, I'm excited about the opportunities that lie ahead, the progress we have made, and the wonderful team around us making this happen. 2021 is another critical year and, having established our foundations, we will see some of our critical projects, such as the Vision Project and the rabbinic search, come to fruition. There also has been progress on other projects such as the JCC opportunity.

We want you to be involved! I urge you to share your thoughts and views, get involved and help chart a course for the exciting and important year ahead.

L'shalom, Olga

AGM speech from the President

I am honoured and humbled to be speaking to you in my capacity as President of the Board.

I stand here representing a large group of people who work tirelessly to make Beth Shalom the wonderful place it is.

Before I go any further, I'd like to acknowledge some of these.

- First, my fellow Board members, who have volunteered and given generously of their time. I thank you all
- Our Ritual Committee, led by Naomi Johnson, who have given countless hours to arranging services and adapting to an on-line environment.
- Debbie Miller in her role as Educator, and Debbie in her capacity managing the Hebrew School. Sincere thank you to her and her dedicated helpers who volunteer their time and expertise so generously.
- Sue Berman and her B&B committee, who have adapted to a difficult situation and made it possible for people to mourn in ways that are meaningful during this extraordinary year. They also continue to provide financial support to a large number of people.
- Our wonderful Community Care group, led by Lita Summerfield and Chris Shiller, helped by a group of dedicated volunteers, who have kept in contact and provided care for so many people over this time.
- Our Garden committee.
- Our amazing service leaders.
- Our shamashim.
- Chris Shiller and Terry Gelbart, who are our outstanding bnei mitvah teachers.
- Barbara Hill, who has given countless hours as our Recording Officer for our AGMs and also maintained our Policy Manual.
- Christine O'Brien, who has worked at all times of the day and night keeping our admin going.
- Paul Wilton, who is leading the group working with the AHC regarding the JCC, and gives so generously of his time in so many capacities.
- Lenny Bloksberg and Bill Merrill, for all the maintenance work you do for us.
- And so many more unsung heroes and heroines, including my family.

I thank you all. And apologise if I've forgotten to name anyone.

For most Jews, it is written on Rosh Hashanah and then judged on Yom Kippur.

But this timeframe does not apply to the President of the Board at Beth Shalom. For me, it was written (and spoken) at Rosh Hashanah, but will be judged here – at the AGM. I will leave it to you to judge, but what I see before me is a community that is functioning well, financially robust, and about to embark on a series of growth projects, the likes of which we haven't seen for many decades.

I would like to update you on all the projects that are on the go and to report against the priorities I set out in my Rosh Hashanah speech.

Finances: When I spoke at RH, I said that my first priority was operational – Getting our house in order. For me the prime focus of this was making sure that our finances are in order and processes are embedded to ensure that they stay that way.

Shane Sampson with the ongoing support of Susanne Murek, has embedded processes and systems to provide better visibility of our finances and ensure that critical activities such as the invoicing and collection of membership dues are up to date and managed in a regular, timely way. Thank you Shane and Susanne.

The Board has committed to a timetable for membership fees collections: Fees will be reviewed in December of each year; invoices will go out in January each year, with a series of reminders and follow ups; tax certificates will go out by May each year; people paying by automatic payment will be asked to increase their contributions when fees are reviewed.

We will do our utmost to work to this timetable this year and going forward.

After 6 years of serving as Treasurer, Shane has chosen to step down. I would like to acknowledge and thank him most sincerely for the untold hours, the commitment, and the stewardship he's shown over the last 6 years as our Treasurer. I am delighted that he's agreed to stay on as a Board member for a new term to help with the handover to our new Treasurer.

I am delighted to confirm that David Singer has agreed to take on the role of Treasurer, in addition to remaining Treasurer of the B&B.

Once of the conditions under which David agreed to step into the role is that we establish a Finance Committee to oversee Beth Shalom's finances.

Sincere thanks to David Robinson for agreeing to serve with David Singer and Susanne on this committee. With this group, we know that we have a strong team to ensure our financial health.

In my Rosh Hashanah speech, I said that my other priorities were three strategic projects (The Jewish Community Centre (JCC) proposal; the need for Rabbinic presence; the Vision Project), plus a priority for us as a community to have activities and learning that connects us to our Judaism and one another.

I'll speak to these one by one (But again, a reminder that there is info in your folder about these priorities)

The JCC opportunity: The JCC opportunity: We all have our views on this one. I'm going to share my personal one. We have a once in a lifetime opportunity being offered to us to consider. In my role on the Board, I believe that we have an obligation to explore this opportunity fully. We need to get all the facts and information we need so that, when we vote as a community, we have the best information and advice possible to make a decision that best serves the needs of Beth Shalom for generations to come. We owe it to future generations to make a wise and well-considered choice.

Before I go further, I would like to acknowledge and thank the amazing group of people who kept the 'JCC flame' alive over many frustrating months: Paul Wilton, Ted Ries, John Pezaro and Judith Marks. Without their many hours of hard work, their vision and dogged perseverance, we would not be in a position to explore this opportunity.

Last year, this group and I met with members of the Fisher family and the AHC working group to clarify the Fisher family's thinking behind their bequest to the AHC Trust to help purchase the Remuera property. They saw this as an opportunity to establish a Jewish Community Centre bringing together all parts of the Auckland Jewish community, including the many different interest groups and youth groups. At that meeting, we also discussed the possible option of our acquiring 514A Remuera Road, which is under a separate title on the Remuera site. Following this, we were able to establish a clearer plan to move forward, as set out in the joint statement that was sent to our community on 21 January 2021.

We have a big workload ahead to gather information and data that will allow us to make an informed decision when we vote. To help with this work, a number of people have agreed to step in to help shoulder the load.

Thank you to David Kranz, who has agreed to take over managing the project and heading up the group who will work with the AHC JCC governance group. Thank you also to Ted Ries and Tamara Liebman for agreeing to be part of this group with David.

We then have an amazing team of people who have agreed to support and front the many aspects of this project: Paul Wilton (Property), Judith Marks (Operations), John Pezaro (Design), as well as David Robinson (Finance), Shane Sampson and Liora Bercovitch. Also Peter Bruell and Rob Bernstein, who have been tasked by the Board with getting planning advice and valuations on 180 Manukau Road, 79 Margot Street and 514A Remuera Road.

I want to be clear on what we know now and what we still need to determine. From the joint statement of 21 January, we know that:

- We have an opportunity to explore obtaining title of 514A Remuera Road, which is part of the Remuera campus.
- If we move onto this site, Beth Shalom will need hold absolute autonomy over its religious and social practices.
- The current thinking is that the rest of the site will be kosher and subject to Orthodox halacha, although exactly what this will entail is not clear yet.
- Any agreement will need to ensure that members of both congregations will be welcomed and encouraged to be part of the JCC, regardless of creed, colour or sexuality

There is a large amount of information that our working groups will need to determine: The financial costs of the move and ongoing operational expenses, including maintenance and security; whether there will be communal areas and, if so, how these will function; how the Hebrew school will work; our relationship and that of our Rabbi to Kadimah. As a community, we will also need to decide about the possible advantages and disadvantages of any move.

When it's time for us to vote as a community, I want us to be in a position make decisions based on facts and hopes, not fears.

Rabbinic presence: I agree with the many people who have approached me about our need for a rabbi.

Some of you may remember that we went out on what turned out to be an unsuccessful rabbinic search a few years ago. While we did not appoint a Rabbi at that point, it introduced us to some wonderful people and opened the door to new possibilities.

The Board has now restarted this search, but with a bit of a difference:

- Firstly, we have decided not to go out to market. Over the last few years, we have established relationships with a number of well-respected rabbis, who have built up knowledge of our community and have indicated their interest in joining us as our Rabbi. We have decided to limit our search to this group in the first instance.
- Second, we have a wonderful rabbinic search group - Alistair Kirk, Chris Shiller and Julie Dick - who have been looking at possible models for rabbinic presence. They have been grappling with questions such as: Why do we want a Rabbi? What would we like this person to do? Is the role full-time? Could it be shared among a number of people? Could it be shared with other communities across New Zealand? This is exciting and innovative thinking. We'll keep you updated as the model takes shape.
- Third, I would like to see a more sustainable model for funding a rabbi, other than just using membership fees and donations. As part of this, we are looking at whether we could possibility make use of our property assets to create an ongoing funding stream for a rabbi. Part of Peter Bruell and Rob Bernstein's brief is to explore the development potential of the Margot Street property.

We already have money that has been generously donated to fund a rabbi, but we need more to be able to confidently offer the position. I am pleased to let you know that we will be starting a rabbinic fund, so that we know that we are in a position to fund a rabbi when we are ready to make an offer.

And I assure you, we will not make decisions about a model for rabbinic presence or make any firm offers to any candidates without coming back to you for comment and approval. Beth Shalom is, and will always be, a democracy.

The Vision Project: The Vision Project, which aims to identify and respond to the current and future needs of Beth Shalom, has been a huge focus over the last year. The working group made up of Alistair Kirk, Julie Dick, Ted Ries, Olga Bernstein, Chris Shiller, Jessamie Milton and Rachel Zussman has made good progress under the guidance of Rabbi George Wielechowski. The project outlines a Theory of Change model and aims to answer the questions “what do we want to be?” and “who for?”. Simple questions on the face of it but really difficult to answer without jumping to “everything for all people!”. Our conversations have explored how we provide a place for people to practice traditional forms of worship, new forms of spirituality, a space for activists (Tikkun Olam) and a non-judgmental space for people to connect or reconnect with their Judaism.

After countless hours working through the model and enlisting the help of Dr Tobi Belzer, Research Associate at the University of Southern California, we are now at the point of jumping into conversations with our community – members, non-members and critically those we would like to serve. We are right now finalising the structure and questions for individuals and small groups which is the most exciting and rich part of this process. Your views and those of others will define our focus for the years ahead.

This has taken longer than we thought and hoped, but the journey to date has been really exciting. We know you are eager to get involved and that is the process from here and once the invitations go out, we really urge you to share your thoughts. We expect this project will be completed by the middle of this year and we look forward to sharing our collective findings then. Our thanks go to the working group, Rabbi George and Dr Belzer for all of the work to date

I'd like to offer a special thanks to Alistair Kirk, my wonderful Acting Vice-President, who has not only provided unfailing support to me, but has given innumerable hours to his work for the community and is leading two of our most important initiatives – The rabbinic search and the Vision Project

Community events – We also have a group of people have been looking at providing more ways for our community to come together: socially, spiritually and joyfully.

Thank you to Tanya Thomson for organising our Beth Shalom hikes, and to the generous people who have opened their homes and provided teas after each hike: Tammy and Ted Ries, Tamara Liebman and Patrick McGrath, and Viv and Phil Josephs.

We have also had Tikkun Leil, organized by Debbie Miller, excellent on-line learning sessions arranged with Temple Sinai and the UPJ, and a range of excellent sessions organised by the NZ Zionist Federation and others.

I'd now like to talk about two items that weren't on my list at Rosh Hashanah but which have also been addressed in the past year:

Hebrew School: As many of you will be aware, the roll of the Hebrew School had shown a fall-off of numbers. To address this, Debbie Miller ran a series of focus groups with Hebrew School parents and other interested people. From this, she developed a new model for the Hebrew School, which was agreed by the Board and implemented at the beginning of the year. We now have Experiential Learning. On Sunday mornings, Hebrew classes at different levels run throughout the morning. Each child attends the Hebrew class appropriate to their level of proficiency and then two activities, which aim to teach about Judaism in a fun and interactive way. To date, feedback about the new format has been positive. We currently have 34 students in the school, as well as four bnei mitzvah students.

As the Vision Project progresses, we may adjust the programme again, depending on need.

Membership categories: I think back to Roger Reynold's asking us at an AGM many years ago now "Where are our young people?". And looking round this room tonight, that is still a concern. It's a concern we need to address as a priority, both to ensure continuity, and so that we have these voices heard about the JCC proposal.

Thank you to Liora for giving us the impetus to relook at our membership categories and for the time she's given to start looking at these categories.

Following conversations with her, the Board has accepted an amendment to Bylaw 1.1.

We have replaced our Student category with a Bnei Mitzvah membership category. This will be given to every young person who has a bnei mitzvah at Beth Shalom, or whose family joins Beth Shalom when they are between the years between bnei mitzvah and 16 years of age, both in future and retrospectively. This will allow us to acknowledge these young people's status as adults halachically, and also connect them to the community.

We also have renamed our Youth membership category as Young Adult membership.

One of the priorities of the new Board will be to start 'populating' these membership categories.

Also, as a step towards bringing younger voices into our decision making and governance structure, I am delighted that Jessamie Milton and Rachel Zussman have agreed to join the Board.

From all of this, you can see that we're at a time of exciting growth. There has been a huge amount of work put into a raft of strategic and important projects. We need your commitment and support to make it happen.

So on reflection, after a year like no other, I am excited about the opportunities that lie ahead, the progress we have made and the wonderful team around us making this happen. This year is another critical year and having established our foundations we will see the critical projects come to fruition. I urge you to share your thoughts and views, get involved and help chart a course for the years ahead....

The Buzz ...

Our Second Night Community Seder was attended by 65 people on Sunday 28 March. It was a very special occasion. The Seder Service was superbly led by Chris Milton and included a number of modern additions to reflect inclusivity in our Beth Shalom Community that is so important today. Thank you to everyone who brought along salads to complement a wonderful meal prepared by Amy Wong-kam and Helen, her co-chef.

Thank you also to everyone on the Ritual Committee, Christine in the office, and to all those who helped with the preparation from setting up the hall and tables, making the seder plates ably led by Pam Miller, letting people in at the gate and dishwashing. We thank Lenny for supplying the horse radish so essential to any seder. We also thank the Burial and Benevolent Society for generously providing money for our Elijah tickets which allowed people to attend who may otherwise not have been able to.

It was a real team effort. - Naomi





Auckland Holocaust Memorial

On March 8, the Auckland Holocaust Memorial Trust chaired by Bob Narev received landowner approval from Auckland Domain Committee for the Auckland Holocaust memorial 'Garden of Humanity' at the Fairy Pond site in front of the Wintergardens.

The Committee is thrilled to have made it over this giant hurdle and are now getting ready to face the next hurdle - resource consent. The Trust will continue to update you as the project progresses and if the resource consent application is successful, the design will be finalised and shared with you and fundraising will begin in earnest for what will be a gift to the city of Auckland, and a wonderful legacy for the New Zealand Jewish Community.

For more information, please email Bob at fab@narev.co.nz

or Nadine Rubin Nathan at nadinerubin@me.com

We were finally able to drop off the donations and toys Dasan made to the Henderson animal shelter. They were so happy and appreciative! *Genice Paullay-Beazley.*



Chris Shiller hard at work sorting out our Tzedakah for the Women's Refuge



AGM - B&B

The Auckland Jewish Burial & Benevolent Society will hold their Annual General Meeting on Sunday 2 May at 4:30pm.



**New Zealand
Jewish Council**

Rūnanga Hūrai o Aotearoa | המועצה היהודית בניו זילנד

24 March 2021

Dear Olga Bernstein, Auckland Progressive Jewish Community

Re: Mt Hutt and the naming of places to honour a Nazi

Last year, we became aware that Mt Hutt had named a ski slope and a cafe after Willi Huber, an unrepentant former volunteer member of the Waffen SS.

Many of you will have signed the petition initiated by Rob Berg, demanding that the slope and cafe be renamed.

The New Zealand Jewish Council and the Holocaust Centre of New Zealand have been working with a wide range of supporters and individuals to ensure that NZ Ski, the owner of Mt Hutt, renamed the slope and cafe. We are delighted to advise that this has occurred in time for the upcoming ski season.

This unfortunate episode will serve as a warning to those seeking to rewrite history and pay homage to Nazis, whether intentionally or not.

We thank all those of you who signed the petition and worked on this issue.

Stephen Goodman and Deb Hart

Ramadan Iftar Dinner, Saturday 1 May

Enjoy a Ramadan Iftar Dinner & Great Company



PEARL OF THE ISLANDS
FOUNDATION INCORPORATED



Beth Shalom Progressive Synagogue &
Pearl of the Islands Foundation Inc.
are proud to present 'Iftar at Beth Shalom'

Please join our friends from Pearl of the Islands in a joint Ramadan Iftar dinner. Our function will start with the Call to Prayer for our Muslim friends at 5:40pm and the breaking of the fast with Hors d'oeuvres at 6:00pm. We will then move into Havdalah as we close Shabbat at 6:15pm followed by dinner.

To book your place, please RSVP by 22 April to Beth Shalom office on 524 4139 or email the office office@bethshalom.org.nz leaving your contact details. Please advise any dietary needs eg gluten free, vegan etc. This will be a vegetarian meal - we will provide simple recipes for Beth Shalom members to provide the main course.

Date: Saturday, 1 May 2021

Time: 5:30pm for a 5:40pm start

Venue: Beth Shalom Progressive Synagogue

Address: 180 Manukau Rd, Epsom, Auckland 1023

'Iftar' refers to the dinner that signals when Muslims can break their fast during the Islamic Holy month of Ramadan which starts on 13 April this year and lasts for one month. Ramadan is a period of fasting, charity-giving, inner reflections and self-accountability for Muslim people all around the world.

On this special occasion, we celebrate diversity in our harmonious society by coming together for this dinner, which has and will continue to enhance and deepen the relationship between New Zealand Muslims and members of the Jewish community. The dinner is organised in the spirit of sharing common values that unite New Zealanders from all cultural and faith backgrounds.

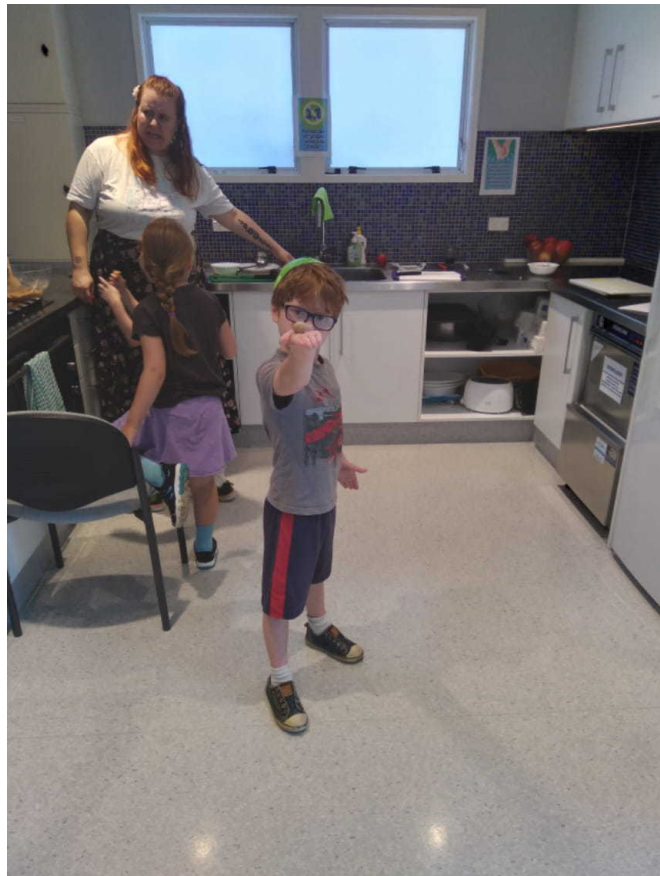
We are pleased to join with Pearl of the Islands Foundation co-hosting this Ramadan Iftar dinner at Beth Shalom for a second time - refer to the flyer - on Saturday 1 May. Please come along and share this interfaith occasion with us. The event in 2019 was very special and well attended. We look forward to our second experience of a Muslim/Jewish interfaith Iftar dinner. Registration is essential. RSVP by Thursday 22 April please.

Education

Contact: educator@bethshalom.org.nz

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

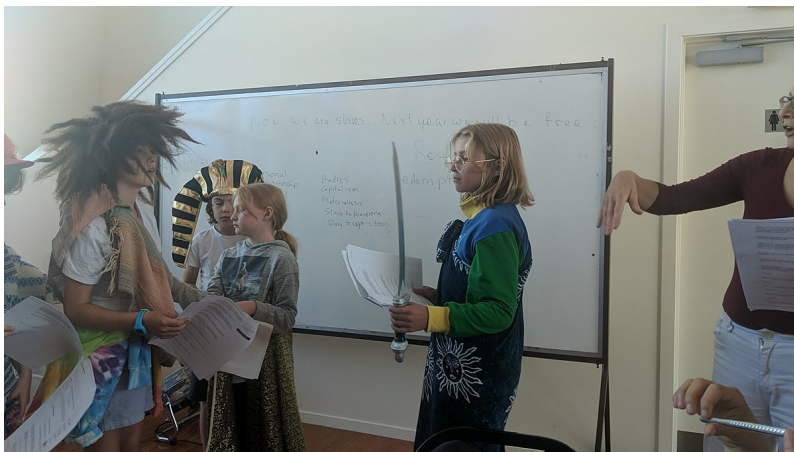
Kita Aleph learning how to make matzah balls.



Bar~Bat Mitzvah learning how to lead a service.



Mock Seder



Story of Pesach play at the Mock Seder



Cleaning up matzah crumbs



Educator's Update: Experiential Jewish Learning aka Sunday school

Mock seder was tons of fun with lots of singing , student participation and a dramatic presentation of the exodus it was lots of laughs and yummy food.

11th of April is our next session and it will be a field trip to the Auckland Museum for Yom HaShoah. We will learn about the Holocaust and World War II with a questionnaire guided exploration of the exhibit and a move to the break-out room to meet with 3 speakers who will share their family's stories with the students. Many thanks to Daniel Poratt, Judi Lubetzky and Naomi Meltzer. We will meet up at the shul first to arrange transport. Parental participation is needed.

After that the students will be off for school holidays. And on our return, we will start the "Living Jewish History Project". We are looking forward to picking out famous Jews throughout Jewish history and researching, writing and acting out their journeys. We need researchers, writers, photographers, and film editors. If you have any of these skills and would like to help out please be in touch with educator@bethshalom.org.nz.

Shavout is around the corner and I am looking for interesting speakers for the tikkun leil. It can be anything Jewish from film, Jewish studies, history and art and music.

Shabbat Kat was tons of fun two weeks ago with 7 littlies and 7 adults. We made ribbon and rhythm sticks to accompany us with our Hebrew songs. We always have a great time, and the kids and adults are really starting to know their Hebrew songs.

Bnei Mishna is going on a shabbat retreat on April 23-24 at Goat Island. We love camping and sharing shabbat together.

April 30-May 2 Shabbat study and children's program will be happening in Christchurch. We want to support this community and help them out by having a program supported by UPJ and the Beth Shalom educator.

Yom HaShoah at AHC, 7th April, 7pm



Please join us as we commemorate

Yom HaShoah

— 2021 —

Righteous Among the Nations

חסידי אומות העולם



Holocaust Memorial Day

Wednesday 7th April 7:00pm • Place: AHC Hall

Yom HaZikaron at Beth Shalom, 13 April 7:30pm



Yom HaZikaron

**Remembering Israel's Fallen Soldiers
and Victims of Terror**

Tuesday 13 April 7:30pm

Beth Shalom Progressive Synagogue



יזכור

Ritcom Reports ...

This year Erev Yom Hashoah falls on Wednesday 7 April and it will be observed by the Auckland Jewish Community at the Auckland Hebrew Congregation, Greys Avenue at 7pm.

The Yom Hashoah annual commemoration remembers the 6 million Jews who lost their lives in the Holocaust and also remembers the many other non-Jews who lost their lives because of their religion, sexual orientation, disability or race. The Zionist Federation of NZ organises this Community event and we hope to see a good number from Beth Shalom there on the night.

Beth Shalom has in our foyer a torah scroll that once belonged to the Humpolec Jewish community in what was then Czechoslovakia. It was one of many torah scrolls that were confiscated but later found their way to the Memorial Scrolls Trust in London. The scroll in our foyer is on loan from this Trust. Every year we remember the people from Humpolec by including a commemoration during an Erev Shabbat service close to Yom Hashoah.

This year our commemoration will be on Friday 9 April. Helen Schamroth, a Second Generation Holocaust survivor, will give a short talk during the service on how she has remembered the Holocaust through her art. Please come along to remember the people of Humpolec and take another look at the torah in the display box in the foyer.



The Importance of Remembering

The best way to honour the memory of Holocaust victims is through Jewish continuity.

We always talk about remembering in conjunction with the Holocaust. Remember the six million. The world must remember so that a holocaust can never again happen. Remember those who perished in order to honor them and give their deaths meaning.

Memory Has Brought Us This Far

It is memory that has allowed us to last through thousands of years of history. Our religion and our people are founded on the collective memory of revelation at Sinai. Scripture throughout commands us to remember: Remember the Sabbath day([Exodus 20:8](#)), observe the Sabbath as a reminder of the Creation([Exodus 20:11](#)) and of the Exodus([Deuteronomy 5:15](#)); remember, continually, the Exodus; remember what the evil Amalek did.

Yom Hashoah 2021 begins the evening of 7 April.

All those memories define us and help us keep focused on the goal of our national mission. As the Baal Shem Tov (the founder of [Hasidism]) taught, "Forgetfulness leads to exile while remembrance is the secret of redemption," words that appropriately guard your exit from the history museum at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem.

The wall above the eternal flame in the Hall of Remembrance of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC also invokes memory. "Only guard yourself and guard your soul carefully, lest you forget the things your eyes saw and lest these things depart your heart all the days of your life. And you shall make them known to your children and to your children's children" ([Deuteronomy 4:9](#)).

Memory as a Positive Force

The biblical citation etched into that wall, while an apt admonition in the face of Auschwitz, is out of context. What the original usage enjoins us never to forget is the experience at Mount Sinai and the laws given to us there, the positive context for purposeful living.

What we have to keep in mind in recalling the Holocaust is that memory must function, as it does in the Bible, as a positive force. It should not be used to inflict guilt and exact vengeance and certainly should not be (as unfortunately occurs) the defining element of Jewish life. We cannot raise our children to be healthy, constructive Jews by cowering them with expectations that the anti-Semitic world will force Jewish identification on them. Being Jewish mainly because the Holocaust happened or because anti-Semitism continues is not sufficient reason to hang on to a culture.

The Jews who maintained their heritage for thousands of years did so not because they were surrounded by rabid anti-Semitism. (Until Hitler's demonic program, they always had the option to abandon Judaism for another belief system.) They did so because their way of life had value.

Memory and Jewish Renewal

While you are teaching your children about this painful period, remember to teach them that: Don't talk only about the destruction but about what was destroyed: the rich culture, the intellectual accomplishments, the colorful tradition that was Eastern European Jewish life. Our heritage, our unique value system, our contributions to the world are what we must remember along with our troubled history. These are the memories that will prompt us to effectively engage in the revitalization of Jewish life.

The question each of us must ask is "How will I participate in Jewish renewal?" It may be through your children: raising them to be informed, identified Jews. (One suggested response to the tremendous loss of Jewish life is that each family have one more child than it had planned, to replenish the population, and its potential progeny, cut down by Hitler.) Strengthening the community by supporting—with money and volunteer efforts—the institutions devoted to promoting Jewish life (physical, spiritual, emotional, and intellectual) is a widespread response. Helping ensure that Israel continues to grow and progress so there will always be a safe haven for Jews is of utmost importance.

Memory, Creativity and Learning

If you are creative, produce art, literature, music, dance, or film on Jewish themes. Whether or not you are creative, read Jewish books, visit Jewish museums, attend Jewish programs, subscribe to Jewish periodicals. And, most of all, learn. Learning has always been a cornerstone of Jewish continuity and renewal.

In biblical days, the Israelites emerged from periods of idolatry, devastation, and exile by returning to Torah-reading it, trying to understand and live by it. [In modern times,] from the ashes of the respected Europeanyeshivot[academies] destroyed in the 1940's have arisen new Jewish academies and other educational programs in Israel and in America (many of them supported by funds from Jews who are not themselves particularly tradition-minded or Jewishly well educated).

Day school, supplemental, family, and adult education programs are continually being expanded. Make sure your children have access to formal Jewish education (don't overlook the possibility of organizing or attending a study group in someone's home).

All of these acts, while honoring the memory of the generations that preceded us, will create positive new memories and strong new Jewish realities for the generations that follow.

Excerpted from Celebrate! The Complete Jewish Holiday Handbook. Reprinted with permission from [Jason Aronson Inc.](#)



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SHABBATON 26-29 November



SAVE THE DATE!

FOR *SHABBATON*!

NOV 26-29, 2021

Get Away to Carey Park for a wonderfully rustic weekend with the family.

Relax in nature with the Beth Shalom community!

Full program TBD...but you can bet on a **good 'ol fashioned time** with loads of great activities for kids and adults!



beth
shalom
auckland new zealand
בית שלום

LISTEN UP...we really need event organizers to volunteer! Organizing meeting Monday May 3rd, 7pm. (in person or Zoom).

CLICK HERE FOR THE APRIL SERVICE ROSTER



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 prayers.
- 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

Community Care ...

Hi everyone, The month of March started on a low, with us going back into lockdown again, worst hit being Auckland. Fortunately though, due I'm sure, to the vigilance of New Zealanders, it didn't last as long as expected. It proves though that we **can** stay safe, as long as we keep track of where we have been, by scanning the QR codes or signing in. Wear a face covering when required and wash our hands with soap and water or sanitise. Cough or sneeze into our elbow, and remember to respect one another's physical space if we need to be out and about.

March was relatively quiet, but unfortunately towards the end a couple of our members had nasty falls. We hope by the time you are reading this you are feeling a lot better, and are well on the road to recovery. When any of you are in a situation like this, or are unwell, if there is anything you feel we can do for you, please ask, or get a family member to ask for you.

By the same token, if any of you feel there is something we could do to help someone you know in some way, be it a family member or friend, then please let us know. Maybe we could visit them, send a card to cheer them up, phone them for a friendly chat, or deliver a frozen meal, whatever?? As I've said before, if we don't know about it we can't give them our support.

As a congregation we ended last month preparing for Pesach. Community Care made up some special Pesach Packs and had them delivered to some of our long time senior members. The month ended with some of our wonderful Ritual members taking the time to provide us with the annual Second Seder, which was attended well and enjoyed by all. Thank you for that.

Take care and stay safe. Lita (Chairperson) and the Community Care Team.

Left to right, Ora Lefebvre, Chris Shiller, Barbara Sandler, Lita Summerfield, Sandra van Eden, Bill Merrill, Lorna Orbell and Sandra Brickman.

Contact:

Chris Shiller 021 177 4934
shiller@orcon.net.nz



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

Lorna Orbell 022 026 2897 chaim@slingshot.co.nz Or contact the office 09 524 4139

Baruch Dayan HaEmet Ingeborg Woolf (nee Ponger) QSO z"l 1934-2021

Her memory is a blessing unto us all.

Inge, born in Vienna, Austria in 1934, was the daughter of Evzen and Grete Ponger. She was only four years old when the Nazis marched into Austria during the Anschluss. She vividly recalled her neighbours putting out the Nazi flag and being happy seeing the Nazi soldiers march down their street.

This memory forever shaped her life and her mission of combating hate and antisemitism. Inge, along with her mother and father, left Austria and moved to Czechoslovakia in 1938, seeking refugee status in the United Kingdom in 1939. They were able to leave Czechoslovakia for the United Kingdom after going through a conversion to Christianity, but her family always remained committed to their roots.

Inge and her family would make the decision to emigrate to New Zealand in 1957 and begin rebuilding their lives. It was here in New Zealand that Inge met her future husband, the late Ronald Woolf, and with whom she helped set up the successful Wellington photography business "Woolf Photography." Inge was instrumental in establishing the Holocaust Centre of New Zealand, becoming Founding Director and Board Member. Inge's passion was educating students on the lessons of the Holocaust.

Throughout the years since, she has been an active volunteer and educator at HCNZ. Inge was a living embodiment of the HCNZ mission to educate all students in Aotearoa New Zealand and to ensure that we Witness, Remember, Educate, and Act. Inge was the proud mother to Deborah Hart, current Chair of the Board of HCNZ, and Simon Woolf, current Wellington City Councillor. She was an adored grandmother to Nathan, Neta, Jason, Sam, Noah, Lily-Jane, and great-grandmother to Hadar.

Loved and respected by many, Inge's legacy lives on in the thousands that have heard her speak and give her testimony. She was a bulwark against hatred and antisemitism, challenging students and adults alike to not be bystanders when hatred rears its ugly head.

"Today the lessons of the Holocaust are poignant to combat increasing intolerance and racism, to teach the value of human rights and the celebration of diversity."

Photo credit: RNZ

(Inge Woolf QSO, 2019 and 2019 finalist in the Women of Influence Awards - Community Hero category)



Auckland Jewish Burial & Benevolent Society Inc

The Burial and Benevolent Society wish the community Chag Semeach -the fullest evocation of the senses at Pesach and a renewed purpose on the theme of freedom and liberation for all.

In my pre-Seder reading, I have been particularly focused on the commentary on the fifth cup of wine and Elijah. Traditionally Elijah is associated with the heralding of a messianic age. In making the space for the arrival of Elijah the prophet we bring hope to the Seder table for a better world to come.

More contemporary readings often relate this part of our seder to a reminder of our own role and actions for bringing about the change we want to see in our world. This includes the welcoming of the stranger; the feeding of those in need - so none should go hungry; and the importance of inclusive rituals. Many progressive seders reference Miriam as a prophetic voice alongside Elijah - acknowledging women and non-binary people who have often been silenced by our traditions. In doing so we acknowledge their work in building our traditions and commit to telling their stories.

For those of us who find inspiration through art I found this link to a series of stories told through art and objects at the Jewish Museum in New York - it covers a story of the cup of Miriam amongst plenty of other inspirational content:

<https://stories.thejewishmuseum.org/welcoming-old-and-new-guests-at-the-passover-seder-elijah-miriam-and-an-orange-fa63f67a59a9>

The accompanying reminds us -

"The Seder is a moment for participants to connect to the Passover story, as well as discover and discuss its manifold meanings. The ceremonial meal is also an opportunity for people to connect and welcome guests, both new and old. This year, however, the Seder will likely look and feel different for many Jews around the world, who will be unable to celebrate with their families. Elijah and Miriam will nonetheless be present at the table, promising a healthful future".

We really are so fortunate in Aotearoa New Zealand to be able to be around a shared Seder table be it in our homes or in our Beth Shalom community seder.

There is something fundamentally good about being together and sharing food. With this in mind the B&B have committed to supporting the Beth Shalom community in a monthly kiddish after services. Please do join the special erev Shabbat Friday 16 April Service and stay for a finger food savoury supper afterwards. The following month in May we will be providing a lunch Kiddish after the Shabbat Kat service on the 22nd of May. A committee member will be present. Please do come and talk to us about any questions related to the work of the committee.

And finally this newsletter includes notice of the AGM for the Burial and Benevolent Society to be held on May 2nd at 4pm at Beth Shalom. All the current committee will be standing again. We are operating on the minimum numbers required - we would very much welcome new membership or interest in the work of the committee in order to grow succession for future years. Please let Sue Berman know if you are interested in having a chat about the work of this group. This is an official call for nominations. A nomination form is available from Christine at the office@bethshalom.org.nz

Even though at Pesach we talk a lot of Spring and renewal our lived reality leaves me wanting to also wish you all a wonderful autumn season - with plenty of Feijoas [who doesn't love them!?] and good health.

Sue Berman 022 051 3589

Shalom Court Gala FUNraiser

You're invited to a Shalom Court Gala FUNraiser

AN EVENING OF LEVITY with **DEB FILLER**

In memory of Ruth Filler

**New date - Sunday,
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CSG is looking for more people!

THE COMMUNITY NEEDS US – WE NEED YOU.

**If you are aged between 18 and 80 and would like
to contribute to your community then please
contact the CSG using the details above.**