



**Nissan~Iyar 5782**

**May 2022**

**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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Website: [www.bethshalom.org.nz](http://www.bethshalom.org.nz)

## Executive

- President, Michelle Wise Szecket, [president@bethshalom.org.nz](mailto:president@bethshalom.org.nz)
- Immediate past president, Olga Bernstein, [olga.bernsteinz@gmail.com](mailto:olga.bernsteinz@gmail.com)
- Vice President, Ted Ries, [vice\\_president@bethshalom.org.nz](mailto:vice_president@bethshalom.org.nz)
- Secretary, Rachel Zussman, [secretary@bethshalom.org.nz](mailto:secretary@bethshalom.org.nz)
- Treasurer, David Singer, [treasurer@bethshalom.org.nz](mailto:treasurer@bethshalom.org.nz), (Finance Committee)

## Board members and portfolios

- Kate Bukowski, [kate.bukowski@gmail.com](mailto:kate.bukowski@gmail.com)
- Suzanne Murek, [susanne.murek@gmail.com](mailto:susanne.murek@gmail.com)
- Shane Sampson, [shane@bethshalom.org.nz](mailto:shane@bethshalom.org.nz), Finance Committee
- Arie Rosen, [rosenari@gmail.com](mailto:rosenari@gmail.com), Ritual Committee, Education Committee

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

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

We are now at the Orange level of New Zealand's Covid response. At Beth Shalom, we are no longer using vaccine passes but will **continue to require masks to be worn inside at Beth Shalom events/gatherings, including services and Hebrew School.** We made this decision because masks are an effective way to limit the spread of Covid which is particularly important when singing and it is important that we continue to protect each other when we choose to gather together on-site. Smaller, private meetings or gatherings run by other organisations at Beth Shalom may choose not to require masks, so for all events/gatherings we will advertise clearly whether or not masks are required. However, we strongly encourage masks to be worn at meetings on-site at all times

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# Coming up in May ...

**Looking for Shabbat dinner hosts:** The conversion committee would like to match up our conversion candidates with members of the Beth Shalom community for Shabbat dinner. This is a great chance to get to know one another and welcome potential new members. If you are interested, please let Christine at the office know. Trudi Sawyer is the Co-ordinator.

**Friday 13th May** Erev Shabbat musical service with Rabbi Dean and musicians.

**Saturday 14th May** Shabbat Morning service led by Rabbi Dean.

**Friday 20th May** Erev Shabbat service with the baby naming for the daughter of Liora Berkovitch and Andrew Weipers and board induction led by Rabbi Dean followed by a finger food Kiddush.

**Saturday 21st May** Shabbat Morning Service led by Rabbi Dean.



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# From our new President

My presidential term has gotten off to a busy start. After accepting a thorough handover from Olga, I reflected on what direction I would like us to take and where to initially prioritise my time. How do we grow our membership and ensure each member feels connected with the Beth Shalom community in the way they want and need?

I started with getting the background and an update on the Jewish Community Centre in Remuera. Our members have done an incredible job at organizing ourselves under the leadership of David Kranz. Since our AGM, we have had no fewer than 6 meetings and a site visit. However, I recognise that we have not communicated as well as we could have about all that has been happening. I personally commit within the next month to inviting our members to an open discussion about the steps being taken to secure our space in the new site should we want it.

It was exciting to also hear about Jewish Auckland (JA), which will be a social and cultural hub that any Jewish person can join. Avi Shenkin is leading the JA team and is looking for “enthusiastic motivated people who can envisage JA being an integral body within the Jewish community.” Please let me know if that is you.

Our new Board has sought training in governance and learning how to be a better Board member, through a series of workshops provided by ANCAD aimed at non-profits. At the first one I quickly realised that (a) most of us have never been on a Board before and there are a set of skills required to be successful, and (b) at Beth Shalom, the Board is in charge of both management/operations AND strategy/governance. Ideally this is two groups of people. Watch this space for how we might restructure.

I personally could not do this role without support. In my day job, I am an Obstetrician and Gynaecology specialist at Auckland Hospital, and a Senior Lecturer and Deputy Head of my department at the Auckland University medical school, where I teach and do research in women's health. With such a busy 24/7 job, I probably wouldn't even eat if it wasn't for my husband Nic who keeps our family life going. He has fully supported me to take this on and will keep me from letting it take over everything else.

And finally, Rabbi Dean, I wouldn't have taken on this role at all if it wasn't for you. I have already had first-hand experience of your commitment, thoughtfulness, leadership, initiative, and pastoral care. I so look forward to seeing what we can achieve together.

**Michelle Wise Szecket**



# From Rabbi Dean

When I was in my mid-twenties, I joined my synagogue Board. That was well before Rabbinical school; I was a young executive working in Hollywood, and my synagogue mattered deeply to me. I had never taken an adult leadership role before. Being a Board member changed my life.

I got to see – from the inside – how our community really worked: how the decisions were made, how the priorities were balanced. I felt personal responsibility for programmes, operations, finances, personnel, and policy. I had a real say in all those matters. And I felt deeply honoured to be listened to by our rabbi, president, and other members of the board – some of whom were twice my age.

We are about to induct a new Board of Management at Beth Shalom. Nine community members have stepped up to lead, alongside President Michelle Wise Szecket. They work in a wide range of professions and practice their Judaism in very different ways. Some were born Jewish; some became Jewish. Some have strong Hebrew skills, others know a smattering of Yiddish, and others are only comfortable in English. Truly international, they come from New Zealand, Israel, Germany, South Africa, Canada, and the United States. There are grandparents, parents, and people without children. One member grew up at our shul. Our board is truly diverse.

Their commonality – the tie that binds them together as a board – is the sense of responsibility they feel to Beth Shalom. They want to inhabit a vibrant community where we support one another through the entirety of our lives. They share a vision of an active Progressive Jewish community in Auckland and throughout the country, one that meets the needs of today's Jews and is a beacon of justice, equality, learning, togetherness, and joy. And they want to ensure Beth Shalom's future for generations to come.

Dr. Arie Rosen, from Israel, works as a Senior Lecturer at the University of Auckland Faculty of Law. Even with his impeccable academic credentials, I've seen him relish his two young daughters' eagerness to participate on Sunday mornings. He describes his Board service this way: "there is joy in doing something for your congregation, throwing yourself into it, and being able to contribute where you think you can do the most good. There is also joy in doing all of this within a group of able and like-minded people."

David Singer, our Treasurer, has had a successful career in business. He writes, "I decided to serve on the Board as my way of giving back to a community which warmly welcomed me when I arrived from South Africa in 1985. It made a big impression on me. Being on the Board is a small way of saying thank-you to the Beth Shalom family."

As Beth Shalom's rabbi, I sit on our Board. I do not, however, have a vote.

In my years as a Board member and rabbi, I've been blessed to work with excellent boards and presidents. That said, board members are volunteers, and are limited by time, experience, and personal psychology. They need community members to do the work of community, and to hold the Board accountable. No synagogue "belongs" to the Board (or the rabbi). It belongs to the community.

We need you! We need you to lead services, read Torah, and serve as Shammashim. We need you to invite Conversion Candidates to Shabbat dinner at your home, and to check in on one another when someone's sick. We need you to join committees, attend the AGM, and ask probing questions. The synagogue Board depends on the active participation of the membership. That we have a capable Board does not absolve the rest of the community from participation.

Board service is not easy. The hours are long; the work never seems to finish. People complain a lot. The Board considers complicated issues of true and lasting significance.

Board service should not, however, be thankless.

I hope everyone who reads this column will reach out to at least one Board member to thank them for their leadership. They deserve it.

Please join me at Shabbat services on 20 May as we induct our new Board of Management.

## **Rabbi Dean Shapiro**



**Board of Management, 2022–2023**  
**Beth Shalom:**  
**The Progressive Jewish Community of Auckland**

Michelle Wise Szecket, President  
Ted Ries, Vice President  
David Singer, Treasurer  
Rachel Zussman, Secretary  
Olga Bernstein, Immediate Past President  
Kate Bukowski  
Susanne Murek  
Arie Rosen  
Shane Sampson  
Dean Shapiro, Rabbi





# Passover Picnic in the Park

The Alfresco Seder in the Park was such a fun event led by Rabbi Dean Shapiro. We celebrated Pesach with a creative and activity-filled second seder while enjoying the tranquility of Cornwall Park. Thank you, Rabbi Dean, for bringing us a seder with a difference.



# Yom HaZikaron



## יום הזיכרון Yom HaZikaron

Remembering Israel's Fallen Soldiers and Victims of Terror  
יום הזיכרון לחללי מערכות ישראל ולחללי פעולות האיבה

יום שלישי 3.5 בשעה 19:30 • Tuesday 3rd of May 7:30pm

Beth Shalom Progressive Synagogue  
180 Manukau Road

Until we meet again





# Yom Ha'Atzmaut



## Yom Ha'Atzmaut

family celebration

**Sunday 8.5.2022**

2pm-4pm

- ★ BYO Family Picnic ★
- ★ Israeli band playing live music ★
- ★ Kids activities ★

Venue - Mount Eden Normal Primary School, Valley Road,  
Mount Eden, Auckland 1024



# Women's Refuge Winter Appeal



It's that time of year again to launch our Women's Refuge Winter Appeal.

They are in need of new or "clean, near new" clothing such as winter pajamas - for children of all ages and women - blankets, socks, jerseys and track suits, hats and scarves, outdoor wear - rain jackets, boots and umbrellas.

Because of Covid and the several lockdowns over the last two years there is an ongoing need for non-perishable food and especially at the moment, they are asking for pasta sauces, tuna or tinned fish, long life milk, tea and coffee.

As always toiletries are needed - soap, deodorant, hand cream, sanitary products, shampoo, conditioner etc., for the women and for the children and babies - toothpaste, toothbrushes, nappies, bottles and baby food.

Also, on the list this time is toilet paper - I was told that it is the one item that runs out the quickest as the safe houses have to be kept well stocked.

We will continue this special appeal for the next couple of months - Winter is just a few weeks away.

If you are unable to deliver the goods to shul, please contact:

Chris Shiller, mobile 021 177 4934, Email [shiller@orcon.net.nz](mailto: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 always very much appreciated.

# Ukrainian refugees in Poland celebrate Passover

*from Sarah Livschitz*

We've just celebrated the holiday of Pesach, the holiday where we traditionally commemorate our freedom. We can understand Pesach as being about both "freedom from" - freedom from slavery, freedom from tyranny - and "freedom to" - freedom to be Jews, freedom to self-determination. Every year I find something in these themes that relates to my life at this moment. Often this is metaphorical. This year, as the Ukrainian people fight for their freedom and tens of thousands pour over the borders as refugees, the Pesach themes of freedom and liberation feel very literal.

About a month before Pesach, a pop-up shop for Ukrainian olim (the nearly 15,000 refugees who have immigrated to Israel to escape the war) opened in Jerusalem one weekend. They needed extra volunteers, so I signed up with a few of my rabbinical student peers. Emotions were high in the store. "Freedom from" is a beautiful thing - they were free from deadly gunfire and constant danger. Yet it had come at a huge cost.

The vast majority of olim who came to the store were women. Many of those who wanted to talk told us that they had been forced to make an impossible choice, leaving their husbands and houses in Ukraine to save their children. Some hadn't been able to contact relatives in Ukraine for days and didn't know if they were still alive. At best, they had brought a single suitcase with them, and the pop-up store - entirely set-up and stocked by a local Chabad house, who activated their members to donate the goods - provided an essential stop to stock up on soap, a shirt appropriate to the Middle Eastern climate, or a toy for their child. Almost none knew where they were going beyond the next few hours, and we were constantly asked for directions to obscure hotels that they were staying in for the night.

The experience stayed with me. A few weeks later, a colleague asked me and another rabbinical student to accompany her in leading a Pesach seder for Ukrainian refugees in Poland. It was an incredible privilege. We are a people who have been refugees countless times since we crossed the Red Sea, chasing "freedom to" be ourselves despite what it has cost us. Many of us name familial generations not in people, but in countries and pogroms. In this light, "freedom to" means not just remembering what it feels like to be free, but also remembering what it feels like to not be free. Our experiences of slavery, both imagined and real, puts an obligation on us to help others similarly striving for freedom to be independent.

While in Poland, we spent a day working at the World Central Kitchen in Warsaw, where we manned the children's corner. The parents were so glad that their kids could forget the war and just play for a few hours. One image really stood out to me. This adorable child pulled a piece of white paper towards her and in a steady hand, she drew two big, identical hearts next to each other. The first, she coloured half blue and half yellow - the colours of the Ukrainian flag. The second, she coloured half red and half white - the colours of the Polish flag. Delighted with the outcome, she proudly showed it to me and asked to stick it up on the wall of the tent. It was hard to hold back tears.

The seder was organised by the Jewish Community Centre in Krakow. The JCC has become a beacon for refugees during the invasion; turning overnight into a humanitarian relief powerhouse. Its director, Jonathan Ornstein, emphasizes that he is driven to help refugees because of his - and our - Jewish history. JCC Krakow is providing outsized support to refugees, housing hundreds of people in hostels every night and feeding thousands, as well as providing wrap-around support in the form of Polish language lessons, psychologists, and support workers. His efforts have been featured on [CNN](#) and in the [New York Times](#), and he and his staff absolutely deserve all the praise they have received.

The seder itself was a chance for refugees that identified as Jewish to return to normality for a while as they participated in a familiar annual ritual. Prior to the invasion, there were between 49,000 and 400,000 Jews living in Ukraine (depending on how you count). There was a similarly wide - and delightful - variety of practice at the seder, from the community elder who wore a tallit for the entire evening and asked to bless the first cup of wine, to the people for whom this was clearly a less common experience.

When Jonathan opened the seder by welcoming them into the community and acknowledging what they had been through, there wasn't a dry eye. The room felt hollow with the absences of so many friends and family still in Ukraine or killed in the war. However, over the course of the evening, the air became more celebratory, and people increasingly volunteered to participate. Our translator - herself a Ukrainian refugee with a young child - spent the whole evening selflessly trying to make sure everyone was heard despite her own emotions. At the end of the evening, the tears returned and there were endless hugs and thanks to the JCC staff.

I'm now back in Israel, but I can't stop thinking about the faces and thinking about the stories of those I've met. From the little girl at the train station to our translator at the seder, their strength and optimism was undeniable. Equally inspiring were the Polish people, who have mobilised as one to help their neighbours. They showed me that the Pesach story - "freedom from", "freedom to" - continues to be a story of our people and of others we care about. They also showed the power of a small action in making a difference. If enough people donate a lunch, open their homes for a night, or offer a smile, we can collectively help each other to pass through anything.



There are many organisations providing on-the-ground support to Ukrainian refugees, including World Central Kitchen, the Joint Distribution Committee, and the World Union for Progressive Judaism. You can support their efforts at the following links:

[World Central Kitchen](#)

[Joint Distribution Committee](#)

[World Union for Progressive Judaism](#)



# HARRY KRAVITZ (or Kravis)

Submitted by Norma Delgarno from Rotorua

I first looked into the story of Harry Kravis when I was out one Anzac Day two years ago, while biking around the beautiful Government Gardens here in Rotorua, and I came across a field of remembrance. Amidst the myriad of white crosses, was one white sign that stood out: a Star of David. I had to investigate this lone Jewish soldier from our town. So, I went to the Rotorua District Lakes Council where they found Harry's papers and details buried in their archives.

When researching this young man, I felt sad. He was the only child of Jacob and Betzy, and had apparently died alone far from his parents, as so many did then. I understand his father Jacob could be buried at Waikumete and was at one time a member of Beit Israel community (Greys Avenue), neither of which has been confirmed.

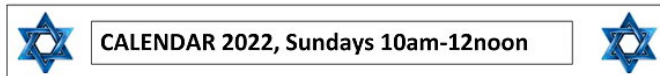
Harry was born in England on 19<sup>th</sup> Feb 1889. His parents originally came from Russia and settled in London. The father Jacob was born in Zhitomer in Russian Poland and worked as a tailor. Reading through the notes, I think that there may have been a breakup of the marriage, because Betzy the mother eventually settled in Canada along with Jacob's brother. I don't know why Jacob and Harry came to faraway NZ; anyway, Jacob eventually settled in Rotorua and set up as a tailor in Tutanekai Street. Harry was their only child and worked in the business with his father.

When Harry was 28 and the First World War began in 1917, he enlisted in the NZ Expeditionary Force as a Driver (50967). Sadly, while in service, he contracted bronchopneumonia and died on October 22<sup>nd</sup> 1918, and is buried in France.



# Education

We are returning to indoor Sunday school as of May 8th. We will still be conscious of doing things with significant space.



Sunday school with **Walls** is now in Orange and is moving indoors

Term 2, May 8 <sup>th</sup> to July 8 <sup>th</sup>		Activity- Israel themed term	Speakers	Value and theme
				What does the holocaust mean?
Sunday 8 May	Sunday School	Yom HaShoa, Yom Hatzmaout A personal story liberation and founding of a Jewish state. Hebrew class	What is the connection? Stories Hebrew through movement -Deb Hebrew study- Ofer Bar Bat Mitzva- Elena	Being Child in the time of war? Compare life in China to life in Israel. What did Israeli independence mean to him?
Sunday 15 May	Sunday School	Yom Hazikaron- stories from Israel. A Trip to Israel's Har Herzl's new history museum.	Memorial days and a Jewish state.	Why are there wars?
Sunday 22 May	Sunday school	People of Israel through your tastebuds	Making all sorts of Jewish foods from different lands that make up Israel, Food fair and the history of each people's journey to Israel.	Borekas, Jacknuns, Kneidelach, falafel with hummus and techina
Sunday 29 May	Sunday School	Counting the Omer and Jerusalem where and why is it so important	Jews are a mathematical people	
Jun 4 <sup>th</sup> , 5.00pm Sat.	Shavuot Tikkun Leil Shavout		Check out the poster	
Monday 6 Jun	Queen's Birthday			
Sunday 12 June	Sunday school	Auckland Zoo.	Kosher and Non-kosher animals what is the difference? Thinking about animal welfare is a Jewish value.	Off-site fieldtrip with parents
Sunday 19 June	Sunday school	Write plan. Timeline exercise choices.	How did the Jews get to Israel?	
Sunday 26 June	Sunday school	Proud to be a Jew	Dealing with difficult situations about Israel and being Jewish in a non-Jewish world using puppets and drama.	

Updated Thursday, 27 January 2022

**Shabbat kat will be back on May 7th in the Hall.**

**Introduction to Judaism** will also resume on May 8th

**Hebrew** We will also resume Hebrew on Zoom.

Beginner - learning the letters and vowels in order to be able to follow the siddur  
(email: [educator@bethshalom.org.nz](mailto:educator@bethshalom.org.nz))

Beginning - a reader who will be learning to read modern Hebrew with a knowledge of all the letters and vowels (email: [educator@bethshalom.org.nz](mailto:educator@bethshalom.org.nz))

Bar Bat Mitzvah service leading Monday evenings at 7pm on Zoom

## Experiential Judaism Seder Gallery



Debbie Miller, Educator, Beth Shalom Progressive Synagogue  
027 765 3677, [educator@bethshalom.org.nz](mailto:educator@bethshalom.org.nz)

Shavuot: Night of Jewish Learning

# SHAVUOT

Night of Jewish Learning

Beth Shalom: The Progressive Jewish  
Community of Auckland

SINGING, LEARNING, PRAYING, STRETCHING  
COOKING, CREATING, CONNECTING

**4 JUNE STARTING AT 5 PM  
IN PERSON AT 180 MANUKAU ROAD**





Service leaders roster will be published progressively in the weekly email newsletter.



## 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](mailto:ldgoldwater@gmail.com) 020 403 88054
- Christine: [office@bethshalom.org.nz](mailto:office@bethshalom.org.nz) 524 4139

# Community Care ...

Hi Everyone,

Welcome news that we are at last back in orange, with a lot of restrictions lessened and/or lifted. With the darker evenings and the cooler weather, we know that Winter is around the corner, so we have to be preparing for it.

Although we are now not quite so worried about Covid -19, it is still lurking there along with other normal Winter nasties like flu etc, so we must still take care of ourselves, and let others (like C/Care) family or the Rabbi help us when needed.

We hope you all enjoyed Pesach with many of us able to be involved with the services and appreciate the Rabbinic presence and input.

I would like to thank all the volunteers who helped pack and deliver the Pesach parcels for the most senior members of our congregation and thank those who delivered them to all four corners of Auckland.

## **Volunteers needed for Shalom Court**

New Zealanders from all walks of life are deservedly renowned for volunteering where help is needed. It is something to be proud of and Shalom Court really needs a helping hand from volunteers. They need volunteers from all ages and backgrounds for the following:

- Spend some time talking with the residents and listening to their stories.
- Play board games or puzzles.
- Help by reading to residents.
- Drivers to and from community-based events.
- Shabbat services - become a Kiddush volunteer by leading one or two Friday night services each year.
- Bring your musical talents to the residents.
- Be part of Happy Hour once a month.

Adults, families, and students are welcome to become volunteers. If you have some spare time, please do contact Shalom Court - phone 09 512 7325 or email [office@shalomcourt.co.nz](mailto:office@shalomcourt.co.nz)

## HOW CAN THE COMMUNITY CARE TEAM HELP?

As usual, we are here to help and support you. Please feel comfortable to ask us

- After a fall or feeling unwell
- Finding it a challenge to do things for yourself,
- Need a helping hand short term,
- Perhaps need to just talk to someone,
- Need help with filling out forms,
- Need someone to be with you when visiting a doctor,
- Or need support getting X-rays done.

We know some of these suggestions may not be possible at the moment, but we can still help you put things into place, for when they are. Like always though, we need to know if you want help of some kind before we can give it. Do **you** know of someone who is unwell, that would benefit from

- **a phone call?** MOST important at this time. People on their own, even if they are well, can feel very isolated during lockdown and a friendly voice can be very comforting, OR
- a get-well card,
- some flowers to cheer,
- receive a frozen meal. Get a family member to call us if you cannot.

## INDEPENDENCE IS WONDERFUL

Consider how a helping hand can support you in achieving this.

Especially when it is offered willingly by members of our team.

# LET US KNOW

We also want to know and share your good things, so tell us  
if there is a special Anniversary, or a new baby,  
or any other happy event on the horizon.

**Please, continue to take care and stay safe.**

**Chag Pesach Sameach**

**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](mailto:shiller@orcon.net.nz)

Lita Summerfield 021 297 9462 (TEXT ONLY) or email: [serendipitylins40@gmail.com](mailto:serendipitylins40@gmail.com)

Lorna Orbell 022 026 2897 [chaim@slingshot.co.nz](mailto:chaim@slingshot.co.nz)

# Burial & Benevolent Society: AGM

Warm greetings to you all -

This last month we have provided our services and support to the families of Janet Allen [founding member and first Secretary of Beth Shalom] and Irene [Renee] Levy, an elder resident at Shalom Court for some years. May their memories be for a blessing.

We are entering the colder months of the year and there is no doubt with heating and the general cost of living that this season will come with increased household costs. The membership donations enable us to support your household, if you are experiencing an increase of costs that feels stressful or that have an impact on your wellbeing, please let someone know so we can assist.

Remember the act of tzedakah is two way - it is as important to receive as it is to give assistance when you can.

I am pleased to share the President's report from our recent AGM and to confirm our committee this year as Sue Berman, David Zussman, Sue Pezaro, Jack Wilton, David Singer, Stephanie Markson and Barbara Sandler.

If you are interested in the work of the B&B and would like to know more about how you can contribute or would like to consider joining the committee there is room around the table.

President Report - 7 April 2022

Nga mihi nui kia koutou - shalom b'shalom and warm greetings everyone.

Thank you to those able to attend and show your support for the work of the Burial and Benevolent Society, and warm greetings to all our members and donors whose contributions assist in the work of the Society.

This is my third report to the community within a Covid affected world, and although there have been shifts in circumstances since March 2020, including the introduction of vaccines that allowed for more connection and larger gatherings, we are still in no way back to the way things were - hence yet another AGM online.

In last year's report, I talked about our dependence on one another, on our systems and structures for wellbeing. A year out, our interdependence and need to support one another remain as critical to our own wellbeing and the wellbeing of our community and wider society as ever. Being able to hold each other up and to have a community framework for doing it, is especially important during hard times and times of deep grief.



There were again times over this year that our ability to attend in person for burials and services was disrupted by lockdowns and alert level restrictions. We attempted to be adaptable and pragmatic in our approach during these times without compromise to our Jewish traditions or our legal requirements. The difficulties of managing to support each other within the Covid restrictions were acutely felt and experienced by the Miller family with the death of their beloved son and brother David. We extend our thanks to the many people in our community and beyond who found ways within the lockdown restrictions to provide comfort and support to the family sitting shiva. We'd like to acknowledge also the Board of Beth Shalom for the additional care and support opportunities that they provided to the community. I also add our deep thanks to all those who generously donated to the support fund for the Miller family allowing the Burial and Benevolent Society to provide immediate as well as ongoing care to the family.

We remember members who passed away since the last AGM in May 2021 and extend our ongoing love and support to their families. May their memories be for a blessing.

**Eunice Defries, Gordon Stern, Philip Butler, David Raphael Miller,**

**Claire Reynolds, Bette Thompson**

We add our condolences also to those members who experienced a bereavement this year with family members overseas. We wish you all a long life and may their memories be for a blessing

As well as serving our members, the Society responds to requests for support from non-members who are Jewish and request our guidance and services. This year we recently supported the Besser family with the passing of **Johnathan Besser** and the family of **Gaby McLaughlin**.

As well as providing advice and immediate care to the bereaved, the committee helps families navigate arrangements in partnership with Davis Funeral Services. We arrange taharah, co-ordinate and facilitate the funeral service, and shiva minyan prayers. We provide a shiva food parcel and a 7-day yahrzeit candle.

I wish to deeply thank those members who make up the Chevra Kaddisha in the service of taharah – the ritual care and preparation of the body for burial. It is a sacred task, chesed shel emet (a true act of kindness) and we thank you for your generosity of time in fulfilling this ritual.

We have continued to work primarily with Davis Funeral Services. They have offered a good service with genuine care for our people. This year they invited Paul Wilton and myself to talk with their teams in person and on Zoom about Judaism and the particular rituals and needs of our communities. We appreciate that their professional development includes attention to understanding diversity and the detail of different cultural practices.

We have strengthened our communications and relationship with the officers at Waikumete Cemetery that manage the cemetery and plots. They have provided us with an updated map of plots including those already pre-purchased, and our remaining spaces, and will attend to the maintenance issues we have raised. There has been some interest expressed by members in learning about the natural burial process that is close to our Progressive burial section at Waikumete, and to this end we have discussed an invitation from Waikumete to provide a presentation and talk in the year ahead.

This year we sought out a new source of tachrachim [shrouds] which led to a connection with Rhonda Nirens the Director of Bet-Olam Jewish Funerals in Melbourne. She very generously donated a dozen tachrachim to our Society, couriered back in person by David Singer. Thank you, David. We plan in the next year to set up some online learning opportunities in consultation with Bet-Olam around best practice particularly with consolidating our taharah knowledge.

As for the benevolence side of our work, we are pleased to be in a financial position to be able to offer relief and support to families and individuals when required. We work closely with the Senior Outreach Services and the Beth Shalom Community Care group whose work has enabled many in our community to stay connected and receive the help and advice they need. Thank you to both those groups and the workers and volunteers who provide that care and support.

The committee has had some discussion on the development of systems for our documentation and membership database access. To this end we invited a consultant to advise on possible best systems and agreed to invest in the use of a Microsoft suite of products that will assist with consolidating our digital records. We have not yet begun the work of migrating our files. Subsequently, we heard at the Beth Shalom AGM of a project to expand and develop a database system and would be interested in discussions with the Board on the potential for a Society profile in those records. This will be ongoing work for the committee in the year ahead.

The work of any voluntary committee is made manageable by the many heads and hands that contribute to the work. Thank you to the elected committee for the past year David Zussman, Stephanie Markson, Barbara Sandler, David Singer, Jack Wilton who was co-opted mid-term and has learnt the ways of the Treasurer, Viv Josephs and Sue Pezaro. It has been said that having two Sue's on the committee make for one super Sue! There is no doubt that the function of this committee would be very much the poorer without Sue Pezaro whose working support in her secretary role and personal support to me as president has been incredible and is so very much appreciated

Viv Joseph is retiring from the committee to take a role with Beth Shalom. We thank you Viv for the work you did in providing us with a draft for reviewing the constitution. As discussed at the last AGM we agreed to look at the language of the constitution to ensure it reflected a more modern context. We need to pick that work up again this coming year to ensure the Constitution maintains relevance. Thank you for your contribution over this year.

David Singer is staying on the committee but has resigned as Treasurer. He has served over 7 years as the committee Treasurer and we are so grateful for that and for your mentoring and handover over the last year to Jack Wilton. Thank you, David, for all the hours of work you give to our community.

It is wonderful that we can welcome Rabbi Dean Shapiro back to Beth Shalom and to have a Rabbi to work with in the service of the Society. Since he arrived Rabbi Dean has supported our work. Although his part-time contract with Beth Shalom means that there may be times when he will not be available, we are assured of his counsel and certainly appreciate the spiritual care he brings to this work when able.

This leads me to add our deepest gratitude to Paul Wilton, Arthur Berman, and Linda Kaye who have all contributed as lay readers and advisors on funerals, unveilings, minyan prayers and read psalms at times of need. The community thank you for your service, your skilled lay reading and leadership. Thank you also to Naomi Johnston for her communication and services through the Ritual Committee of Beth Shalom in organising yizkor services. Thanks also to Christine O'Brien in the office.

Thank you in advance to members for your support through your ongoing membership fees and generous donations which allow us to support the community at times of need.

We pray the blessings for health and wellbeing, and may it be so.

**Sue Berman, President**