HAPPY 70TH BIRTHDAY

RABBI DAVID STEINHARDT

As Rabbi David Steinhardt celebrates his 70th birthday, B’nai Torah Congregation extends warm wishes and heartfelt gratitude for his dedicated leadership and unwavering commitment to the community.

As we reflect on his many contributions, we join together in wishing him continued success and good health for years to come.

Happy Birthday, Rabbi Steinhardt!
Dear Friends,

When I think about my Jewish attachments, specifically the influences that created those attachments, I know they were from several different people and experiences. Upon reflection, I can say that the Passover Seder was one of the most important times and places where this was found. And its influence and meaning came from a few different elements of that experience. Let me explain.

I have spoken with many of my generation who grew up with the “Maxwell House Haggadah” and sat bored as an older grandfather or relative chanted his way through a service that no one understood. On this night of questions, their biggest question was, “when do we eat?” That wasn’t my experience. Our family used a Haggadah produced by our synagogue, and it framed the most important parts of the service with readings that reflected the quest and meaning of freedom for the Jewish people and for Americans. The adults at the table loved and encouraged the participation of the children who were present. And I loved hearing my grandmother’s voice.

The seder also had resonance because the older generation of my family were refugees from Europe and immigrants to America. Their story made the Passover story even more real. I loved hearing those stories. And even though they were often recounted annually, the stories never lost their fascination. On Passover, we all should be hearing stories, recounting events from our personal pasts, and listening to the questions and stories of our children.

Perhaps most importantly, my Passover experience helped shape an understanding - which I carried and still carry – about the meaning of being Jewish. It contained an essential dimension to our story as a people. We remember the past as to not allow tyranny to prevail again. We remember our past to sensitize us to the needs of others - immigrants, the hungry, the poor, and the oppressed. We were there, so when we arrive at places of freedom and comfort, we become responsible for those in need. That is one of my essential understandings of what Judaism is trying to teach. We started homeless and powerless. So now we ask, who are we once we gain a home and power? What are our responsibilities?

Soon we will sit at our seders and have an opportunity to be teachers to our children and grandchildren. We shouldn’t waste that chance. Talk about the past and the values you learned from the past. Teach what it means to be a part of the Jewish people and to live a Jewish life.

Chag Sameach V’Kasher, 
Rabbi David Steinhardt
THANK YOU FOR A WONDERFUL 2023 CONCERT SERIES

Photos by Jessica Vernoff
There’s a children’s song I remember from growing up called Simcha Rabah – Passover Joy. The words translate to “lots of joy, lots of joy; spring arrived, and Pesach came with it.” Pesach always reminds me that it’s time for renewal and joy.

In my family, we all wore white for the seder and my grandparents played the accordion while members of our family sang Passover songs in Hebrew and some in Romanian. It was always filled with joy. Through the years, as generations passed away, our family’s Seders got smaller and when I came to the United States, the nature of my Seder experience really changed as I tried to find a place to be, or created a Seder for myself and others. When we open the door for Elijah, we are reminded to open a door to guests too. If you have an extra seat at your Seder table, please extend an invitation to someone who may be looking for a place. It’s a mitzvah and will bring joy to you and those at your table.

Pesach also reminds me of renewal of the soul and courage. When metaphorically we feel like we’re facing an ocean that we can’t cross, we should remember that the sea can part, and we can walk through it if we have the courage. And there is joy and singing with timbrels just like Miriam on the other side. Just like the Israelites, we all face fears, threats, and challenges – big and small. Believe in yourself and in the universe and pray for yourself too, as we often pray for others but forget ourselves. I encourage you to clean the chametz from your life, your body, and your soul; these deserve a deep cleansing sometimes too. Release yourself from toxic situations. It may not be easy, but once you realize that your body and soul are your home - and slavery is not an option - you must move forward, just like the Israelites had to move forward - with lots of faith and love. When you see the opportunity for the sea to part, walk through it, there may be a chance to dance with your timbrels at the end of the journey.

Tell the story from generation to generation, and don’t forget to tell your story, to the next generations. Everyone can be a teacher, and everyone can learn from your stories.

And, if you have a moment, listen to Miriam’s Song by Debbie Friedman z’l - grab a drum, dance around and feel the joy!

Wishing you a beautiful spring season filled with dancing, singing, praying, community and a clean heart.

Blessings,

Cantor Magda Fishman
A special THANK YOU to our Chai Members whose continued generous support makes B'nai Torah’s outstanding programming possible.

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Barry & Joan Winograd
Teri Woloksky

As of 3/23/2023
It’s hard to believe it has already been a year since I celebrated my first Passover at B’nai Torah. When I think back over the past year, I feel immense gratitude and joy. During this time, it has given Emily and me the opportunity to reflect on where we came from, where we are currently in our lives, and what we hope for in the future.

As we transition into Spring, we also begin our Pesach celebration. This season and holiday share a deep and meaningful connection that the Jewish community has celebrated for generations. Spring is a time of rebirth, renewal, and growth, while Pesach, Passover, is a time of remembering the Jewish people’s liberation from slavery in Egypt. The themes of freedom and the new beginnings of Pesach align perfectly with the spirit of Spring.

Just as the Jewish people were freed from slavery, people can use the energy of Spring to break free from whatever is holding them back in their lives. Whether it’s a bad habit or a negative mindset, Spring is a time to embrace change and move forward. As we experience more daylight and illumination, this season reminds us that light will always return to our world. There’s a deeply spiritual element to this that we can carry into our Passover seders and holiday experience.

As we gather at our seders this year, we will retell the story of the exodus from Egypt and celebrate freedom together. The Seder is a time to reflect on the past, celebrate the present, and look to the future. That’s why we end the Seder by saying “B’Shana Haba’ah B’Yerushalayim - Next Year in Jerusalem” as an aspiration to the ideals we hope for as we look ahead.

For me personally, this is a significant time of reflection and change, and I look forward to a bright future with my kallah (bride) Emily and our B’nai Torah family, as we embark on a new journey together in our lives.

I wish you all a Chag Sameach,

Rabbi Evan Susman
A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

As I write this article, we have just completed two of the most amazing weekends at B’nai Torah.

First was the installation ceremony of Cantor Fishman followed by the Annual Gala that evening. It was wonderful to see Cantor Fishman be installed as our senior cantor after having the installation delayed so long due to the pandemic. If you attended, either in-person or virtually, you know that we had five cantors from throughout the country who came to celebrate this joyous event. As President, in addition to feeling pride in and for our Cantor, I was just as proud by the reaction of these cantors to our congregation. All the visiting cantors spoke of how amazing it was to have such large crowds for Shabbat. But even more impressive to them was the spirit and singing by the congregation. To those of us who attend regularly it may feel normal – but it is not! Several cantors told me that they stopped singing at times, just so they could listen to the voices of our congregation! We have a special congregation, and Shabbat at B’nai Torah is unlike any other congregation – the visiting cantors made that clear! If you have a chance, come to Shabbat services on Friday evening or Saturday morning and experience something truly extraordinary!

The gala was equally amazing as we honored Cantor Fishman and awarded Nancy Goldstein Inaugural Melanie Jacobson Inspirational Jewish Leadership Annual Award for her years as Director of the Taubman Early Childhood Center. We had more of our younger members in attendance than ever before – a true cross-section of our entire community! It was a joy to see everyone celebrate together supporting our honorees and B’nai Torah. What a wonderful evening for everyone!

If the installation/gala weekend was not excitement enough – we had an equally amazing weekend the following week with our Purim carnival. Eight hundred (YES-800!) people attended – children, parents, and grandparents – and everyone enjoyed the food, rides, animals, and community spirit. It was an incredible sight!

The events of these two weekends were very special but they do not happen by themselves. It took a tremendous amount of time and effort by volunteers and staff to make these events the success they were. We are so fortunate, and I am so grateful, to all those who work tirelessly on behalf of B’nai Torah. And I thank all the congregants who support our programs throughout the year!

Chag Sameach,
Ed Sopher
As Passover approaches, I find myself reflecting on the deep history of our people, the present, and our vision for the future. The Hebrew word “Haggadah” comes from the verb “l’hagid,” which means “to tell.” Passover tells the story about the exodus from a land of oppression. The foundation of this narrative connects our people to the past and inspires our identification and values now and into the future. The story of the shared struggle has given us a unique perspective to empathize with those who still live under oppression, and to reflect on our need for gratitude for the freedoms and the lives we live.

At Passover, we are reminded of the challenging times our people have faced. We realize the responsibility to care for our people when threats abound. But we also care for others. We resolve to help the less fortunate with innovative approaches. With tremendous congregational support, we are making a difference in the lives of so many, and we will continue to work together to eradicate hunger and homelessness.

During Passover, we sing the humbling words of “Dayenu,” which makes us pause in gratitude for the good that we experience. There are things we might take for granted like the ability to be safe in our synagogue home, where we provide opportunities for our youngest and oldest members; spiritual, cultural, and learning experiences. We work hard to ensure that our communal home is strong by continually reinforcing the infrastructure of our building and protecting it, and our members. We are currently in the process of replacing our tile roofs, and we are constantly evaluating, increasing, and empowering our contracted security team with the tools they need to keep us safe. We have offered security trainings to our staff and community, and we will continue to do so.

Passover is a time to celebrate Jewish freedom and resilience. In this spirit, we are grateful for the ability to safely celebrate together. Just over the last few months, thousands have walked through our doors to celebrate 30 years of music together at our uplifting and exceptional concert series, Cantor Magda Fishman’s long-awaited and inspiring Installation, our Star Light Star Bright Gala, and our Purim Carnival which was filled with the joy of children’s laughter. And so much more is planned!

What I notice repeatedly in our synagogue is that family is the foundation of Jewish life. How blessed are we that our children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren have found a comfortable Jewish home. Our congregation will continue to lead the way to a strong Jewish future as we continue to build an intergenerational community where we join together, share stories, and learn from each other. Perseverance is part of the Jewish character.

Together, we have new stories to write - filled with hope, faith, optimism, and opportunities to establish a strong foundation for our children and grandchildren to thrive in. We invite you to be a part of this narrative. For more information on how you can help shape the future, please contact Susan Levine, our Development Consultant, at Susan.Levine@bnai-torah.org.

Chag Pesach Sameach,
Leesa Parker
Grandparents today have a much different look and role than they did many decades ago. Grandparents tend to work longer and live longer. The family unit that was once neighborhood driven now roots in different places in the country. Here in Florida, we are famous for our “snowbird” community. Relationships between grandchildren and grandparents can vary from daily care to weekly visits, or to long-distance Facetime conversations. Any way you view it, grandparents have a strong bond and important place in the upbringing of a child.

In researching intergenerational connections, I found that there are many reasons as to why these relationships are important. But these few truly resonated with me:

- **Unconditional love** - Grandparents are known to love grandchildren unconditionally for who they are. They accept their challenges and celebrate their accomplishments. Grandchildren feel unconditional love and often gravitate to the grandparents for validation and support.

- **Stability** - When the world within a family unit is turning in a new direction, (new birth, loss of a job, divorce, sickness, etc.) grandparents are there to bring stability to children. Children learn that when times are uneasy, grandparents are always there to make their world a better place.

- **Perspective** - Children need to understand the “why” in all we do. Grandparents speak about the past. Memories of their young childhood, teen years, loving relationships and their dreams that have come true, are lessons for our children. Through these memories, grandparents model and bring values and to children.
In the Torah, God promised Abraham that he would multiply his descendants as the stars in the sky. This we see has happened; our Jewish people have multiplied. But what is most incredible is how our traditions continue, albeit with modern day changes. Grandparents continue to bring Jewish traditions and values to grandchildren. It may be a Friday evening Shabbat dinner with fresh baked challah, the miracle of Chanukah and the lighting of the candles, the baking of hamantaschen at Purim, or the upcoming Passover Seder and finding the afikomen. These traditions create memories and connections from generation to generation. These memories are the seeds that are planted in raising Jewish children who will one day become Jewish grandparents.

In February, we hosted Grandparent’s Day ECC Shabbat for over 500 people. We had grandparents who flew in from distances as far as Israel for this incredible event. The tears were flowing for so many as we lit our candles, sang Shabbat favorites, danced with the Torah, and ended our service in the singing of L’dor V’dor. It was a beautiful day for all in attendance. Knowing that my grandchildren will continue our family’s Jewish traditions is beyond important to me. Personally, my heart was overflowing the day my grandson from Pennsylvania came to attend our ECC Shabbat at B’nai Torah.

The benefits of intergenerational relationships are reciprocal. Our grandparents live full-hearted lives with the love and support of their children and grandchildren. Our young children are growing and thriving and continuing Jewish traditions and learning. As Passover is upon us, it is a time to embrace the significance of family and friends through the generations.

Chag Pesach Sameach,
Naomi Gordon

Passover Cooking Corner

Rabbi Susman and Jack Herman from Rose Caterers at B’nai Torah Congregation exchange tips and tricks for making delicious matzah ball soup!

Jack’s Tip: The secret to great matzah balls is to use club soda instead of water – it makes them nice and fluffy!
It’s been a busy few months at the Mirochnick Religious School, filled with lots of learning and fun!

In January, we enjoyed a special B’nai Torah University program in celebration of Israel at 75 featuring the Bible Players. We celebrated Tu B’Shevat with a First Friday Shabbat with JARC where together we explored the seven species with a Tu B’Shevat seder. We also had a very meaningful morning with author and artist Day Schildkret during which we created our own impermanent art installations and learned how we can be more connected to nature and appreciative of its natural beauty and blessings.

In February, we partnered with the B’nai Torah Men’s Club for World Wide Wrap, a wonderful program that introduces students to the mitzvah of wrapping tefillin. Our fifth-grade students had an opportunity to paint their wooden tefillin boxes. And of course, we can’t forget the incredible and festive Purim megillah reading and carnival in early March when hundreds of our families came together to celebrate.

Wishing everyone a Zissen Pesach!
The Meryl & Ron Gallatin Tzedakah, Learning, and Chesed (TLC) program teaches our community the importance of living a Jewish life committed to the values of dignity, social justice, and Tikkun Olum.

We all know that the story of Passover is ultimately about freedom. But there are so many who are not free. They are not free from hunger, strife, injustice, and illness. So as we remember and retell our story, we also remember not to “PASS OVER” the chance to make a difference. Even a small action can create a large impact.

Here are some ideas for making a difference this Passover: Don’t pass over someone who may need a helping hand. Pass along your leftovers to the hungry. Share a compliment or spread kindness to a passerby. Just as we can make things holy during Passover, we can make a difference!
Last month, at our Annual Torah Fund Brunch, Women’s League very proudly presented the Miriam’s Timbrel Award to Ruth Weiner. I chose to tell you this story because we see Ruth Weiner as a contemporary Miriam.

The Biblical Miriam - Moses’ sister - was an integral part of the Exodus story. Those who are familiar with Biblical stories know that a woman’s name is rarely mentioned. However, in the story of Passover, we meet five women; four are even named! All were brave and pursued justice. Women’s League chose Miriam to represent the ideal model for the Torah Fund award.

Two Midrashic stories tell us that Miriam helped her mother deliver babies and that Miriam stood up to her father and argued with him to do right by their family. The Bible tells us that she watched over her brother when he was placed in a basket on the Nile, offered to help Pharaoh’s daughter with the baby, and later in life she rebuked Moses about his neglect of his wife. Miriam’s most public act was leading the women in song and dance after they crossed the Red Sea.

Our Ruth Weiner had the courage to pursue her Judaic studies at a time when women were not given that opportunity.

Ruth grew up in Chicago in the late 1920’s, at a time when Jewish girls were not encouraged to attend Hebrew school past the age of 10. Ruth fought her parents and insisted on continuing her Judaic studies. She loved the Biblical stories and immersed herself in Biblical women’s roles. Later, when she became a teacher in a Jewish School, she produced skits and plays and brought these women to life in front of her audiences.

I met Ruth at a Women’s League Passover celebration event here at BTC twenty years ago. Ruth was the entertainment. She told the story of the Exodus as Miriam, the Biblical heroine, who was our Ancestors’ symbol of freedom and leadership.

Our Ruth, the rebel, did not give up as a young girl. Nothing could stop her from furthering her education as girl in a man’s world, just like the Biblical Miriam who was not afraid of the Pharaoh’s decree, and who stood up to her brother Moses. From these women, we learn to stand up for what we believe is right, to lead and teach by example.

Women’s League stands for Education and Leadership- we support all our students at B’nai Torah. We also raise funds to offer scholarships to Rabbinic and Cantorial students while attending the Conservative Movement’s five Seminaries around the world. We stand for the future of an educated and a free Jewish Community.

May we be like Miriam and Ruth Weiner - leaders in education and justice.

Have a sweet Pesach,

Shula Fleischer
Women’s League President
Last month our Men’s Club partnered with our Mirochnick Religious School (MRS) families, staff and clergy to host our International Federation of Jewish Men’s Clubs World Wide Wrap. The WWW is an event that has participation by thousands of youth all over the world. It is a time when we teach our students how to wrap Tefillin and continue this historically important tradition through the generations. This event was very impactful on our participants. Much thanks to Rabbi Susman, Cathy Berkowitz, Beth Herman, Cantor Paul Goldstein, Saul Schildhorn and Robert Miron for their help. There were over 100 participants at this worldwide wrapping event!

To commemorate Yom Hashoah on Sunday, April 16 at 10 am, there will be a Yom Hashoah Memorial Service which will include survivors of the Shoah. Men’s Club will be giving Yellow Candles out to congregants as they exit the ceremony. Proceeds of this Yellow Candle fundraising distribution will go toward scholarships from our Men’s Club for our Mirochnick Religious School students to attend the March of The Living program. Yellow Candles will also be given out to congregants after Shabbat Service in the lobby two Shabbatot before this Memorial Service.

Remember, “Together...We Can Do So Much More...!”

Elliot Burns
President, Men’s Club
On Sunday, March 5, our Melton Alumni Association held our 9th annual gathering to celebrate The Florence Melton School of Adult Jewish Learning at B’nai Torah Congregation sponsored by Jo Robbins and Dorothy Wizer.

Dr. Sandra Lilienthal, a member of the Melton faculty said, “I have seen people learn together that I thought had known each other forever, only to have found out that they met and bonded in a Melton class just a few years ago. She continued, “It’s a different bond than just going out for coffee regularly. The bond is not just between people, but between OUR people.”

It seems that Melton is more than just Jewish literacy. Melton is a mechanism for building a stronger Jewish Community. Our Melton school is a perfect example of that as our students represent multiple shuls in the area as well as those that are unaffiliated and even those that live in other parts of the US and Canada.

This fall, we will offer a few brand-new Free Taste of Melton classes and encourage everyone at B’nai Torah to participate and find out what Melton is all about. If you are looking to start Melton classes, look no further than our new entry point called, the Living Wisdom Journey.

Other new classes to look for will include the Jewish State: Examining the Jewish Identities of Israelis, an Israeli Literature class representing a wider range of selections from Mizrachi, female and non-Jewish Israeli voices, and Jewish Mysticism: Tracing the History of Kabbalah. Classes will be announced in May.

Our incredible faculty includes Marion Hirschmann & Dr. Sandra Lilienthal, Rabbi David Steinhardt, Rabbi Dr. Leon Weissberg and our newest member of the faculty, Harvey Leven.

For more information, contact me at melton@bnai-torah.org.

Penina Bredoff
Adult Education & Melton Director
On March 25, B’nai Torah held its inaugural Eight Three Club Shabbat, where our community celebrated all those turning 82 or 83 as they were called to the Bimah to celebrate their B’nai Mitzvah. According to Psalm 90:10, “The span of our life is 70, or given the strength, 80 years.” It has become customary to celebrate 83 with your second (or first) B’nai Mitzvah because 70 + 13 = 83.

Mazel Tov to the Eight Three Club 5783!

To commemorate the inaugural Eight Three Club B’nai Mitzvah Class of 2023/5783, this beautiful Havdalah set was presented to the congregation.

This will become an annual celebration, so feel free to reach out to Penina Bredoff, at Penina.Bredoff@bnai-torah.org sign-up for next year.

SAVE THE DATE

MAY 18

THE FIRST ANNUAL YIDDISHE CUP

WHAT IS A YIDDISHE KOP?

Usually, it means a brilliant way of Jewish thinking... but this time around, it means the smartest way to have a ton of fun at our Synagogue Golf Tournament.

Allen Bernstein
Gary Block
Elliot Burns
Cherie Chosid
Richard Chosid
Shula Fleischer
Judith Friedman
Allan Goldstein
Henry Karpf
Joseph Katz
Seymour Kirshner
Edward Klarberg
Jack Rosenthal
Howard Schechter
Joanne Shulman
Irwin Slurzberg
Rita Tenenbaum
Sheila Trossman
Sidney Wener
EVA GRANIT-WELCH  April 22, 2023
Daughter of Ornit Granit and Jordan Welch
Mitzvah Project: Eva is hosting a toy drive and fundraiser for the 4Kids Foster Agency and she also raised over $600 for a family in need

JASON WEISSBLUM  April 29, 2023
Son of Dana & Lonn Weissblum
Mitzvah Project: Jason is serving meals to the food insecure through both Jewish Family Services and Meals with Meaning, with a goal of improving conditions for those in our community who are in need

ZACHARY BLUM  May 6, 2023
Son of Amanda & Michael Blum
Mitzvah Project: Zach is planning a sports event for the foster children that live at the children’s villages of Florida

RAQUELA FRIEDMAN  May 13, 2023
Daughter of Rena Friedman
Mitzvah Project: Raquela is collecting and donating books for local Jewish preschools and Jewish synagogues and also collecting and donating toys to children’s hospitals in south Florida

MASON SCHNEIDER  May 21, 2023
Son of Melissa & David Schneider

DANIEL ROSENTHAL  May 29, 2023
Son of Carolina & Adam Rosenthal
Bar Mitzvah will take place in Israel

HANNAH FRIEDMAN  July 8, 2023
Daughter of Leorah & Michael Friedman

CHASE TRAVIS  July 20, 2023
Son of Tamara & Anthony Travis
Our Youth program has been very busy these past few months! Our K-5th Grade kicked off the year with a fun cupcake and cake war. Chalutzim (K-2) were given different bible stories and decorated their cakes based on the story! Chaverim (3rd-5th) was given cupcakes and had challenges to decorate their own cupcakes. In February, Chalutzim made their own bird feeders in honor of Tu B’Shvat and Chaverim played Minute to Win It! We are looking forward to more great programs to finish out the school year! Chalutzim & Chaverim meet once a month on Sunday after Religious School.

USY & Gesher (6th-12th grade) have been very busy since the start of January! We’ve done everything from make cards for the Senior Living Facilities to deliver for Valentine’s Day, a trip to Universal with our HaNegev Region and BRUSY & CSK hosted a Shabbaton overnight at B’nai Torah. For the Shabbaton we had 50 participants from the Arvot Sub-Region. During the Shabbaton we held Shabbat services, made 150 sandwiches for the homeless, did Purim skits and ended our weekend at Xtreme Action Park. A good time was had by all!

Elections were held for the 2023-2024 School Year. We want to thank everyone from this year’s board and are looking forward to what’s to come for next School Year!

If you have any questions about Youth Group, please reach out to me at Brusy@bnai-torah.org.

Amanda Marks
“In every generation one is obligated to see himself as though he [too] came out from Egypt.”

At the Passover seder, Jews are commanded to tell the story of their slavery and redemption to their children and grandchildren. Retelling the story of their ancestors’ exodus helps it become part of the next generation’s consciousness, understanding they are the product of the events that happened previously. Therefore, the continuity of Jewish existence is dependent upon the success of Jewish parents to convey the story of its past to their children. As the last Holocaust survivors leave this world, it is the responsibility of their children and grandchildren to ensure that the lessons of the Holocaust will not only be passed down through books or film but in the voices and memories of those who bear living witness to it. Second and third generation survivors can ensure that others understand the human face of the Holocaust, as well as its place in Jewish history and how it is viewed and discussed today. They are the last living link to survivors, so it is through them that future generations will hear the actual stories of their parents’ and grandparents’ survival. Our stories are what binds the present generation to past events and to a brighter future. Holocaust education makes sure “never again” is a reality; that the Holocaust is never forgotten and never repeated. With the rise of antisemitism and discrimination against many groups, second and third generation survivors can teach the lessons of the Holocaust and how to standup to hatred and oppression of all kinds.

Passover seder is an opportunity for us to think more consciously about those who are still oppressed and to hope that people today will know freedom and have a better future. This is why we say, “Next year in Jerusalem”.

MICHELE SCHER, MSW
PASTORAL CARE/HAZAK COORDINATOR

Yom HaShoah Commemoration
A world without Survivors: Preserving the lessons and legacy of the Holocaust

Sunday April 16
11 am

Please join us on Sunday morning for an important and meaningful Yom HaShoah event that will include a procession of survivors, liberators, and second and third generation survivors, followed by a Yom HaShoah service.
How Passover is Celebrated Around the World

This spring around the world, Jewish families just like yours will be simultaneously celebrating Passover and commemorating the Israelites’ journey from slavery to freedom. And although Passover is celebrated at the same time the world over, people in different countries practice different customs and eat different types of foods.

In this virtual Passover journey, discover a few of the many different traditions in cultures all over the globe. Which ones resemble customs you follow in your own home? Which ones would be the most interesting to try?

Syria

Many Syrian Jews take the tradition of symbolically acting out the Exodus a step further by taking some matzah, placing it in something like a backpack, and throwing it over their shoulders. This is followed by a Hebrew verse about leaving the desert in haste.

Uganda

Uganda has a unique take on Passover because of the much more recent freedom finally realized by the Abayudaya, the Jews of Uganda. Judaism was outlawed in Uganda from 1971 to 1979, and the relatively new freedom of worship has meant that Passover celebrations have taken on a new, and very personal meaning.
Romania

Romanian Jewish families make Passover interactive in a similar way to Syrian Jewish families. At the part of the Haggadah that says, “We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt” (Avadim Hayinu in Hebrew), Jews in Romania fill a pillowcase with heavy objects and carry it around the table, with each person at the seder taking a turn. And you thought hiding the afikomen was hard work!

Yemen

Is your favorite symbolic Passover food the egg? The Adeni community, as the Jews from Aden in Yemen are known, traditionally eat eggs as the main dinner course at their seders. These days, the Adenim have more substantial meals, but some families still opt for eggs in a variety of forms, from fried to hard boiled to omelets. Also, instead of a seder plate, Yemenite Jews place their symbolic items directly on the table or in small bowls in front of each person.

Afghanistan and Iran

Although most of the Jewish people of Afghani and Iranian descent are living elsewhere, the Sephardi Jews from the Persian region maintain one quite interesting seder custom. When it comes time for “Dayenu,” the song that lists God’s miracles, stating that each one would have been enough, some Sephardi Jews conjure images of the enslaved Israelites being whipped by actually slinging huge scallions or green onions at each other. Talk about a lively seder!

Gibraltar

Jewish residents of the British territory of Gibraltar on the southern border of Spain often add a little something extra to their charoset, the chunky mixture of fruits and nuts. Kids especially look forward to the charoset part of the seder, which is a nice sweet departure from some of the more bland or bitter symbolic foods. But because this thick spread is meant to resemble the mortar used by the Jews while enslaved in Egypt, Jewish families in Gibraltar add actual brick dust to the mixture! Good news, though – if you’re using just a little bit of brick dust each year, one brick can last through seders for countless generations.
Turkey

Parsley plays a significant role in most seders, but in Turkish homes, the parsley sprig has an extra role to perform. Each person takes a piece of this sign of spring and recites a verse in Arabic. As each word is said, seder guests bless each other, holding the parsley and wishing every person a blessing for the year.

Poland

Another community that reenacts a portion of the Passover story is located in Góra Kalwaria, Poland, where seder guests act out the crossing of the sea in their dining rooms. Some families even pour water on the floor to make the experience all the more realistic.

India

Most seders involve welcoming Elijah to the festivities by opening the door and reserving a separate cup of wine on the table. Indian Jews add another symbolic cup, called Pharaoh’s Cup, which wine is then poured out of for all the other glasses. In this way, the power and stubbornness of cold-hearted Pharaoh is diminished.

Article courtesy of PJ Library. To sign up for the free gift of Jewish books, visit pjlibrary.org or for more information on local PJ Library family and grandparent programs, please email pjlibrary@bocafed.org
JGN’s partnership with B’nai Torah represents a new chapter in our organization’s evolution. Together we will explore and pilot new approaches to support and empower grandparents to be ambassadors for a Jewish life of meaning and joy to the members of their intergenerational families. We undertake this effort with the realization that intergenerational Jewish families have changed dramatically. Our shared goal will be to continue to advance BTC’s role as an inclusive and welcoming congregation for all.

Founded, five years ago, the Jewish Grandparents Network is the first and only national organization supporting grandparents as they embrace both traditional and radically new roles in their families. Through creative initiatives, network-building, advocacy, research, and institutional partnerships, we foster new models of grandparent engagement for the benefit of our families, our communities, and our future.

In order to better understand grandparents and grandparenting today, we began our organizational journey by listening and learning. Through strategic studies, focus groups, and conversations, we have gained an unmatched understanding of today’s grandparents and grandparenting today. For instance, we learned that:

- Grandparents provide essential support to their adult children and their grandchildren: 1/3rd of grandparents provide childcare and transportation services on a regular or on an as-needed basis.
- Grandparents want their grandchildren to be connected Jewishly: Nearly 2/3’s of Jewish grandparents want their grandchildren to have a strong connection to Judaism and to be interested in doing Jewish activities. Seventy percent want to teach their grandchild about Jewish heritage.
- The Jewish family is changing: 53% of grandparents have at least one grandchild being raised in a multi-faith family. One out of every five Jewish grandparents today has a spouse or partner who is not Jewish.

Our partnership with BTC will begin as we began our efforts in the creation of the Jewish Grandparents Network; by listening and learning. In the weeks ahead we will conduct multiple focus groups and individual interviews and will send out questionnaires to congregations and community members. Having gathered this important information, we will work hand in glove with BTC leaders to develop strategies for the coming years.

Growing up, my grandfather “Pop Max” played an important role in my engagement in Jewish life. He and my Nana Frances took me to Israel for the first time. He supported my decision to become kosher. He modeled Jewish leadership through his involvement in his Synagogue.

To a great extent, this is the question we hope to explore together with the BTC community: How can grandparents play an active, impactful role in nurturing their grandchildren’s and family members’ engagement in a Jewish life and a Jewish community that is filled with meaning, joy, and spirituality. We welcome your feedback and thoughts as we begin this important initiative together.

I look forward to seeing you at B’nai Torah. I’ll be the one sharing pictures of my grandchildren.

David Raphael is the Co-Founder and Executive Director of the Jewish Grandparents Network
The JOYS and the OYS of Grandparenting

We are so fortunate to have all four grandchildren living five minutes from us. The joys are living in the moment, having so many fun vacations together, going to Ahava and Shabbat together, attending all the dance recitals, unlimited play time and activities, dance parties, making banana splits, and all the giggles we can listen too. The only OY is when our own children tell us we buy too many toys and provide too many goodie snacks.

-Janie & Steven Appelbaum

In our grandchildren we see the physical legacy that we will leave behind. We have the time and privilege to listen, to share adventures, ideas, and family history, and most importantly, to be their constant champion.

- Gail and Marshall Burack

Being an involved grandparent means you’re always there to assist your family, and your grandchildren know they can count on you. One of life’s greatest joys is having one of your grandchildren running up to give you a big hug when they see you.

- Hedy and Bryan Wasserman

The relationships that we develop as grandparents are priceless (and sometimes very exhausting)! There are unbelievable, unconditional feelings of love, joy, gratitude, everlasting bonds, and faith in the future. And, yes, there are oys. As the Bubby, I am not in overall control and need to respect my children’s approaches to raising their children. It’s not always easy, but the rewards are without measure!

-Lory Brenner

We love seeing grandparents with their grandchildren at B’nai Torah! We asked some B’nai Torah grandparents with children in our schools to tell us:

What are the JOYS and the OYS of grandparenting?
YOUR PHILANTHROPY CAN TRANSFORM LIVES TODAY AND LONG INTO THE FUTURE.

How?

It’s About our Foundation. It’s About Legacy Giving.

It’s about the power to:

• ENVISION TOMORROW
• CHANGE OUR PHILANTHROPIC CONVERSATION
• RAISE THE STAKES AND OUR UNDERSTANDING OF IMPACT GIFTS
• CREATE BOLD BRIGHT FUTURES

We’re thinking forward and are committed to data informing and driving our future decision-making and planning. Therefore, in a small random sample, twenty-five Foundation and B’nai Torah Board members were interviewed over the past several months in an effort to get some preliminary anecdotal understanding of general motivations for Legacy giving.

What Did We Find?
THE SINGLE MOST SIGNIFICANT REASON FOR GIVING WAS IDENTIFIED AS:

each congregant’s “relationship with Rabbi Steinhardt”

THE SECOND REASON WAS

a real, significant, and abiding “emotional attachment to the synagogue for life cycle events”

THE THIRD REASON WAS

“the deep meaning of the L’Chaim Torah Project”
What Does This Tell Us?
Rabbi Steinhardt is a powerful ambassador to talk with people about our vision, mission and desire to create transformative impact philanthropy opportunities.

Legacy giving is about dreaming big…dreaming a bold new future based on our past successes, and we need to talk about it more.

We need to recognize the deep emotional connections people have for B’nai Torah and for the Jewish future, and ensure that we create opportunities for giving based on Impact.

We need to build a whole team of leaders who can and will talk about Foundation endowment gifts with our congregants.

Let’s talk about it more...think back and ask yourself:

What led you to make your first gift to the congregation?
What moves you to be such a loyal donor/member?
What is your most meaningful experience with B’nai Torah?
Would you like to honor or memorialize anyone through a legacy gift?
What impact do you hope your gift will have on future generations?
What would you most like to see Foundation funds used for in the future?

Join the conversation…and join us in our heartfelt thanks and deepest gratitude to our Ner Tamid members (listed on page 36) who had the foresight and commitment to B’nai Torah Congregation, and have created a solid foundation upon which to build our Jewish tomorrow.

If you’d like to know more about building a strong vibrant future, please contact Rabbi Steinhardt’s office, Spencer Sax at ssax@ssclawfirm.com or Susan Levine at Susan.Levine@bnai-torah.org.
BUILDING A STRONG FUTURE FOR
B’nai Torah Congregation

“Before you are a leader, success is all about growing yourself.
When you become a leader, success is all about growing others.”
-Jack Welch, Chairman and CEO of General Electric 1981-2001

If the healthiest organizations are dynamic and ever evolving, as Jack Welch noted, then it stands to reason that good leaders must be able to motivate the people around them to embrace the challenges and changes required of nimble organizations both in times of stability and times of crisis. B’nai Torah Congregation has a rich history of outstanding leaders and the ways in which they have left their indelible marks on our beloved synagogue serve as remarkable examples for the leaders of the future.

Melanie Jacobson, Chair of the uplifting and emotionally rich L’Chaim Torah Project, believes so passionately about the need for and importance of good leadership, that she recently created the Melanie Jacobson Inspirational Jewish Leadership Award. This new, dynamic program will honor an individual within our B’nai Torah community whose love for our synagogue and whose hard work has significantly contributed to the growth, excitement, and success of B’nai Torah’s past, present and future.

The Inaugural award was presented to Nancy Goldstein, Director of the acclaimed Ruth and Edward Taubman Early Childhood Center for 25 years and an essential part of our B’nai Torah family. Nancy, a beloved leader in the Boca Raton early childhood educational community, was recognized with the award at our Star Light Star Bright Gala, which honored Cantor Magda Fishman and celebrated her long-awaited formal installation as our Senior Cantor which was delayed by the pandemic.

“Leadership is an art - the combination of effective progressive thinking, and the respectful direction of and collaboration with others,” said Melanie Jacobson. “Nancy’s tremendous contribution to early childhood Jewish education is a testament to and the essence of leadership. She created a new program, and over 25 years grew it, and it now has a stunning enrollment of over 200 children. Nancy’s past work is sure to have a powerful impact on future generations, and I am so thrilled that this first award was presented to her, during an event that recognized our own exceptional Cantor Fishman, another strong, inspiring community leader.”

Sound leadership is critical to the success of thriving organizations, and Congregation B’nai Torah is fortunate to have a strong group of leaders who are deeply committed to sustaining and growing of our beloved congregation. We saw this during the challenging past three years, and under their steady-handed leadership our organization and community emerged better, stronger, and more resilient after the fact.
“Leadership comes in many different shapes and sizes and the attributes of good leaders are ever evolving because good leaders are always growing,” said President Ed Sopher. “We are so fortunate to have such passionate, committed leaders to help steer B’nai Torah Congregation forward into the future in good times as well as in times of crisis. It is truly a blessing.”

The following excerpts from an article by Dr. Hal Lewis are reprinted with permission from The Spertus Institute, and illustrate the idea of leading in a crisis. The complete article can be found on Dr. Lewis’s blog:

Right about now, I am pretty sure that the question you are not asking yourself is “What can I learn about leading in a crisis from a first-century rabbinic sage?” While certainly not surprising, I’d like to suggest that, in fact, there is much to be learned from that ancient rabbi, whether we have any connection to his faith, his world view, or his classical writings. The rabbi in question is Yohannan ben Zakkai (I will call him YBZ for short) who lived in the Land of Israel during the period of Roman occupation nearly two thousand years ago.

By the seventh decade of that new era, Roman soldiers had tightened their strangle-hold on Jerusalem. YBZ understood all too well that death and destruction would soon follow. But what was at stake was much more than the city and its buildings, or even its residents. YBZ, already a revered scholar and respected community leader, knew that, along with the city, Rome was poised to destroy the Holy Temple, the epicenter of Jewish life in the ancient world. To sack the Temple meant to destroy the entirety of the Jewish experience as it represented everything the ancient Jewish people knew to be true and right and normative.

With destruction pending, both the nation and YBZ faced their greatest crisis. Rather than wallow in the uncertainty of what was yet to come, YBZ negotiated a radical plan with the Roman general Vespasian, not to rebuild the Temple, which the Romans would never have allowed, but to establish an academic academy and supreme court in the small village of Yavne, safely distanced from the holy city. It was in Yavne that impassioned learning and pious living would continue, altering forever the post-destruction experience. YBZ was unwilling to let his community’s way of life crumble along with the Temple itself. He sought to maximize the opportunities inherent in the crisis at hand. He knew what few others in his day comprehended. Despite the importance of Jerusalem, responding to the crisis by continuing to do what had always been done was nothing short of a prescription for disaster.

The move to Yavne is a metaphor for all of us! During times of extreme crisis, we must not allow ourselves to be paralyzed by a failure of imagination. Rethinking how we do business, even if it requires a complete reconfiguration of everything we previously thought to be true, is the only way to survive the crisis. YBZ embodied the resilience and agility every crisis leader must master, whether a small business owner, a corporate executive or a nonprofit CEO. Our leadership at B’nai Torah, volunteer, clergy and staff, is a proud tribute to the culture of excellence we continue to build.

To explore the leader in you, and future leadership opportunities, please contact Leesa Parker, our Executive Director at leesa.parker@bnai-torah.org.
Celebrating with you the miracle of Passover and wishing you peace and joy!

– Lowell Glazer

Wishing a joyous and healthy Passover to the B’nai Torah community.

Tamara + Richard Morgenstern

This Passover, May Your Cup Overflow With Happiness and Prosperity.

Happy Passover!

Selma Lee and Daniel Weiss
The Goldsmith Family is proud to support B’nai Torah Congregation and honored to serve as Bronze Star Sponsors of the 2023 Star Light Star Bright Gala.

Happy Passover!

Eda and Cliff Viner

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Every year, we ask you to participate in this important process for our congregation. Please join your fellow congregants at our annual election of new Board Officers and Trustees. We will also present the proposed 2023-2024 Budget and other matters.

Tuesday, May 2, 2023
VOTING BEGINS AT 12 PM/NOON

Ballot drop-off in Main Lobby
OR
Vote in-person at the time of the meeting

Remaining meeting agenda items begin at 7 pm in-person and on livestream.
CHECK YOUR EMAILS FOR THE LIVESTREAM LINK
TRIBUTES AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO B’NAI TORAH CONGREGATION

October 1 through December 31, 2022

Bereavement Group
- Jennifer Chase: In memory of Michael Leinwand
- David & Debbie Gitter: In memory of Benjamin Maginnick

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- Edward & Roseanne Sophier: In appreciation of attending services while in Florida
- Richard & Serena Werber: In memory of Lillian Grodin
- Ralph Wertheimer: Tzedakah
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- Wallace & Deborah Zuckerman: In memory of Isaac Goby becoming Bar Mitzvah

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Mark Bertuch Make A Difference 2022-2023
- Henri & Rhoda Sue Bertuch: Tzedakah

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