

CHADASHON

Shanah Tovah!

Beth Emet's Guide to a Joyful New Year

2026 | 5787



THE HIGH HOLY DAYS AT A GLANCE

There is nothing quite like being at Beth Emet during the High Holy Days! Whether in-person, surrounded by smiling faces, or participating virtually by creating a sacred space in your home, we bring ourselves to this important moment of reflection, introspection, and renewal. We are grateful for the opportunity to worship together.

For those who are worshipping in-person, your name badge is your access to High Holy Days services. Please show it to the ushers each time you enter the building. For those participating remotely, see instructions for access below. If you have questions now or during the holidays, please call the office and select "0" during office hours and "4" throughout the holidays.

Schedule

Erev Rosh Hashanah – Friday, September 11

8:00 pm **Erev Rosh Hashanah Service**

Rosh Hashanah First Day – Saturday, September 12

9:00 am **Chavurah Service** followed by *Tashlich*

11:30 am **Traditional Morning Service**

2:30 pm **Family Service for 4th Grade and Younger with Rabbi Immerman and Lauren Reeves**
(Popsicles on the Playground following services)

Rosh Hashanah Second Day – Sunday, September 13

10:00 am **Second Day Rosh Hashanah Service**

Shabbat Shuvah – Friday, September 18

6:30 pm **Shabbat Shuvah Service**

Shabbat Shuvah – Saturday, September 19

9:30 am **Shabbat Shuvah Morning Service**

Kol Nidre – Sunday, September 20

7:00 pm **Kol Nidre Service**

Yom Kippur – Monday, September 21

9:00 am **Chavurah Service**

9:00-11:00 am Teen Drop-in, Perlman Room

9:30 am **Adult Study**

11:30 am **Traditional Morning Service**

2:30 pm **Adult Study**

2:30 pm **Family Service for 4th Grade and Younger with Rabbi Immerman and Lauren Reeves**

3:45 pm **Concluding Service** (to include Afternoon, Healing, Yizkor and N'ilah)

Erev Sukkot – Friday, September 25

6:30 pm **Evening Service** followed by Dinner

Sukkot – Saturday, September 26

9:30 am **Festival Morning Service** followed by Lunch in the Sukkah

Wednesday, September 30

4:45 pm **Beth Emet & JCC families with young children**

Erev Simchat Torah – Friday, October 2

5:30 pm Family-Friendly Dinner followed by 6:30 pm **Evening Service**

Simchat Torah – Saturday, October 3

9:30 am **Morning Service**

Legend:

**Live In-Person Services
Accessed via LiveControl**
(bethemet.livecontrol.tv)

**Live In-Person Services
Accessed via Zoom**

In-Person Only

ADDITIONAL HIGH HOLY DAYS INFORMATION

Live Access

You can view all Sanctuary services via livestream at **bethemet.livecontrol.tv**. No registration is required for the livestream. All Sanctuary services will also be recorded and available after each service at **bethemet.livecontrol.tv**.

Machzorim/Prayer Books

Beth Emet uses *Mishkan HaNefesh* for the evening and traditional morning services, as well as Second Day Rosh Hashanah. For those participating in Chavurah services, we will provide a special Machzor.

Hachnasat Orchim: Welcoming Each Other

We greet the High Holy Days this year with a grateful heart as we come together. We welcome all members who regularly attend services, as well those who have not been in the Sanctuary for a few years, new members, and guests. As part of our ongoing campaign to build a stronger, more welcoming community, we distribute name badges in lieu of traditional High Holy Days tickets. This embodies the virtue of *Hachnasat Orchim*, welcoming the stranger, and what better way to do this than by sharing our names with one another and wishing a L'shanah Tovah.

Inclusion

Beth Emet is dedicated to creating a space and programs in which everyone can participate. We have available hearing assisted devices and a hearing loop system, large print Machzors, fidgets, walker check and escort assistance, and special seating. For those who wish to worship in a smaller space, please enjoy the Beit Midrash next to the Sanctuary where you will be able to see and hear the service.

Safety and Security

Safety and security are paramount at Beth Emet. Please wear your name badge at all times while at Beth Emet for services. Take a moment to locate the emergency exits which are located along the east wall of the Sanctuary (to Ridge) and through our main entrance in the Lobby. For medical emergencies, please contact a staff member or an usher. The Automated External Defibrillator (AED) is located just inside the lobby coat room and in the Weiner Room coat room (lower level). If you see anything suspicious, alert a staff member or an usher.

Mobile Devices

Please silence your cell phone before entering the Sanctuary. If you must take a call, please leave the Sanctuary out of respect for those around you and the sacredness of our worship.

Children at Chavurah and Traditional Services

Children's energy and curiosity are part of what makes our community as vibrant as it is! Children are welcome to participate in ways that fit their age and ability. Bring along a book, a coloring book or other activities, or other quiet toys. During the service, children may stand and sit with the congregation, sing along to familiar melodies, hold the siddur, or touch the Torah as it passes. If your child needs a wiggle break, step out together and rejoin when ready. We ask that the lobby stay quiet, as sound carries back into the Sanctuary. We're happy to point you to a nearby space to move around more. Our hope is that children grow up feeling this is their Sanctuary, too!

Tashlich

Tashlich is the act of Teshuvah that offers a way to express our desire to be free from sin and our hope that we will be forgiven for misdeeds. Sometimes people choose to throw a small stone or a stick into the water to represent a sin they're casting away this season.

Wearing White on Yom Kippur

On Yom Kippur, it is customary to wear white clothing as a symbol of purity. On Yom Kippur, we spend the whole day in fasting and prayer and are considered as pure and holy as the angels. We encourage the community to join together on Yom Kippur by wearing white to honor this tradition. It might be a white dress, a white shirt, or white sweater – whatever white clothing you have.

HIGH HOLY DAY G'MILUT CHASADIM DRIVES

Both donations may be dropped off at Beth Emet 9:00 am - 5:00 pm on Yom Kippur Day.

Yom Kippur Connections for the Homeless Clothing Drive

When Evanston clergy came together in 1984 and founded the city's first overnight shelter, Rabbi Peter Knobel z"l was at the forefront of the effort. The shelter became the cornerstone of the work that Connections for the Homeless does in our community, and its partnership with Beth Emet is as critical as ever. The agency delivers essential services to people facing homelessness and housing insecurity in the northern suburbs. Over the years, Beth Emet members have supported Connections with a wide range of volunteer activities.

This year we are conducting another clothing drive. The items requested include:

- men's and women's new underwear (men's preferably boxer style)
- men's casual clothing which includes jeans, khakis, t-shirts, sweatshirts, sweat pants, jackets and belts
- men's and women's shoes and especially winter boots
- rolling suitcases and backpacks
- men's, women's, and children's winter accessories such as gloves, scarves and hats
- children's winter coats



Pack The Ark Pantry Yom Kippur Collection Drive

More than 3,400 Jewish individuals and families rely on The Ark's pantries in Chicago and Northbrook for access to kosher food, personal care products, and household essentials, up 20% over last year. The Ark provides an array of vital human services for physical, emotional, financial, and spiritual health for 5,000 Jewish families and individuals.

Drop off your donation when you arrive for services or throughout Yom Kippur Day. Alternatively, you may donate cash or purchase items on Amazon and ship directly to The Ark. Scan the following QR Code for information about the three ways to give.

All food donations must be certified kosher and have at least six months before expiration (after March 20, 2027). The Ark does not accept Del Monte or Kirkland canned vegetables. Do not bring any items in glass containers. Foods that do not meet The Ark's Kosher standards, such as non-Kosher organic foods, will be redistributed to one or more area food pantries.

REQUESTED ITEMS: canned goods, condiments, and sides, grains, household products, personal care products.





RABBI

Brian Immerman

On Rosh Hashanah, we dip apples in honey to symbolize our hope for a sweet new year. I prefer to use granny smith apples as the sour notes combine with the sweet honey for a remarkable taste in my mouth. I can still taste both the apple and the honey, but together they complement and support each other, creating something special.

The same goes for Beth Emet. Each of us brings something unique: our own identity, history, hopes, pains, desires, and gifts, and when we gather together, we become so much more than the sum of our parts. We form a community that supports, celebrates, respects, and helps each other and our greater community. Together we worship, learn, and act to enrich both ourselves and those around us.

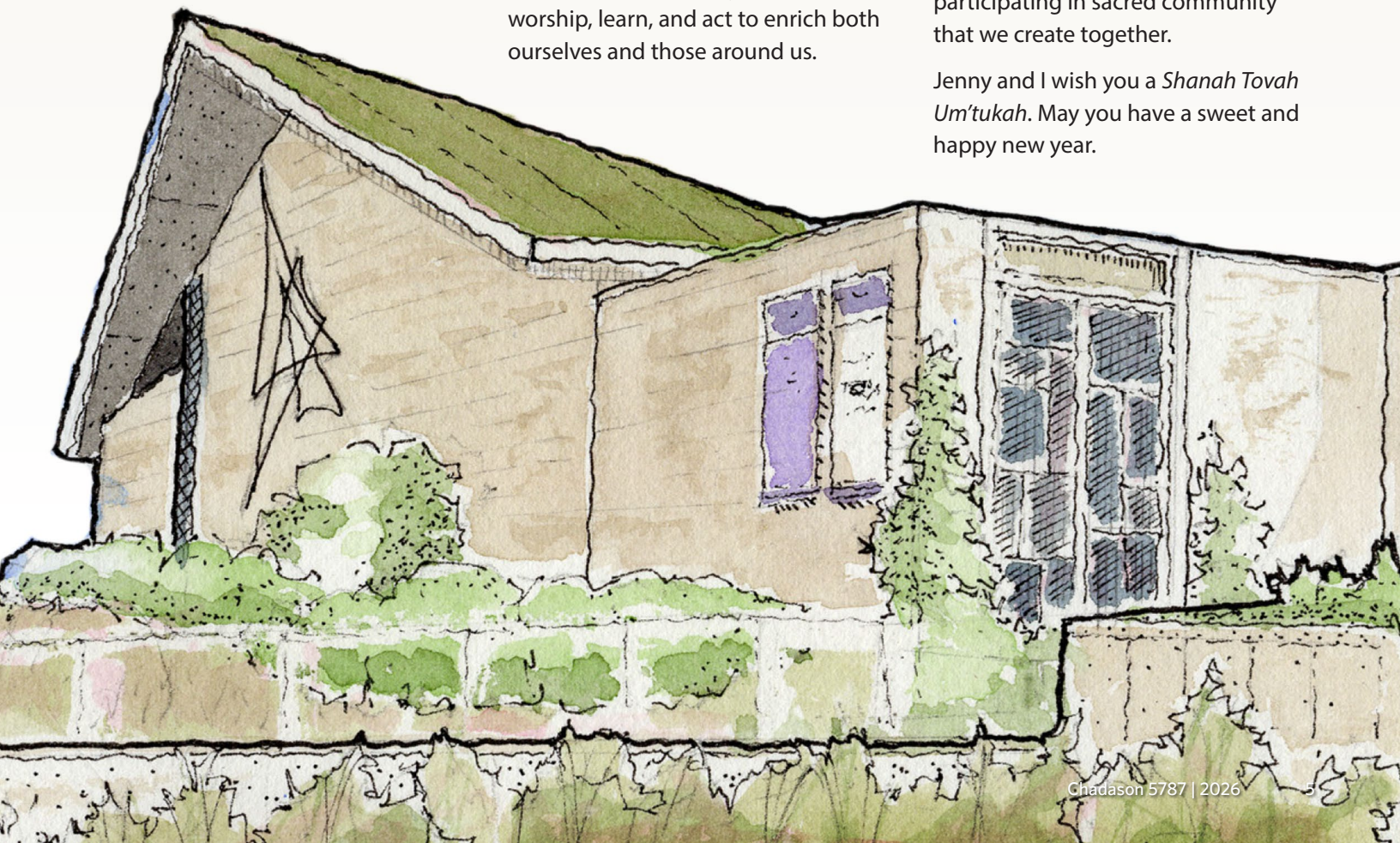
Beth Emet is more than a place where we gather for prayer, learning and social justice; it's a home, a *bayit*, to which we return week after week, year after year, to be together. Every experience helps us find meaning, purpose and connection.

I am blessed to join the Beth Emet family and to partner with an incredible professional team and dedicated lay-leadership.

I am blessed to find a home in which Jenny and I can raise our two children to love both our neighbors and strangers as they learn to love themselves and their Judaism.

Our family looks forward to meeting everyone in the new year and participating in sacred community that we create together.

Jenny and I wish you a *Shanah Tovah Um'tukah*. May you have a sweet and happy new year.





CANTOR

Natalie Young

Creating Sacred Space Together

As I begin my fourth year at Beth Emet, I find myself filled with gratitude. It is both a joy and a privilege to now be the senior member of our clergy team, welcoming our newest colleagues, who have already become a blessing to our community.

The High Holy Days invite us to pause—to notice where we have been, to celebrate what has taken root, and to imagine what is still possible. As I reflect on these past three years, what stands out most is not simply the programs we've created, but the spirit with which this congregation has embraced them. Beth Emet has continually demonstrated a willingness to be curious, to experiment, and to trust that tradition and innovation can walk hand in hand.

Together, we have expanded the ways we gather for prayer through Soul Spark Shabbat, Shir Shabbat, and Kolot Shabbat—each offering a unique pathway into Jewish worship through music, contemplation, participation, and joy. We introduced our Gift of Challah ritual, extending the warmth of our Shabbat table into the homes of members celebrating

life's milestones or facing moments of loss. We launched Kochavim, our youth choir, creating a space where young voices can discover the beauty of Jewish music while building confidence, friendship, and community. We have continued to weave new melodies into our worship, commissioned original music, and explored how singing together has the power not only to enrich our services, but to deepen our relationships with one another and with the Holy One.

These initiatives have never been about simply adding something new. They have been about creating more points of connection—moments that invite people to experience Judaism with their minds, their hearts, and their whole selves. They have been about building a community where everyone can find a doorway into belonging.

As meaningful as these past three years have been, I believe we are only beginning.

This year, I am especially excited to launch the **B'TZALEL Arts & Music Festival**, a dream that has been growing in my heart for quite some time. Inspired by the biblical artist B'tzalel—who was filled with *chochmah* (wisdom), *t'vunah* (understanding), *da'at* (knowledge), and *ruach Elohim* (the spirit of God) to build the Mishkan—the festival celebrates a profound Jewish truth: creativity itself is sacred.

Throughout the coming year, Beth Emet and congregations across Chicagoland will host workshops that invite participants of every age to connect, create, and collaborate through music, visual art, cooking, storytelling, dance, writing, and hands-on artistic experiences. Each gathering will explore how creative expression can deepen Jewish learning, strengthen relationships, and awaken the divine spark within each of us. The journey will culminate next spring as our community gathers at Beth Emet for a joyful festival showcasing the incredible creativity that has emerged throughout the year.

One of my deepest hopes is that B'TZALEL helps us rediscover something we sometimes forget: every one of us is creative.

As we enter this new year, may we continue to be a community that embraces possibility with open hearts. May we have the courage to try something new, the wisdom to learn from one another, and the creativity to build spaces where love, belonging, and holiness can flourish.

Thank you for trusting me to dream alongside you. I cannot wait to discover all that we will create together in the year ahead.

Shanah Tovah Um'tukah—may this be a year of creativity, connection, and abundant blessing for us all.



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Allan Bogan

As I reflect on my first year serving as your Executive Director, a huge, joyous smile comes to my face! I'm celebrating the last year with so much gratitude and appreciation for each one of you in this inspiring and meaningful community. If I didn't get to meet you in my first year, please reach out so we can get to know each other in the near future.

I spoke last year at Rosh Hashanah about my focus on People and Processes. Together, we've made great progress on some of our processes and I'm excited about even more improvements in the year ahead. We've got incredibly talented people on the professional staff and have added new faces to the team. As a new team, we're building relationships, learning how best to communicate, and work to stay focused on the most important priorities that need to be addressed to ensure we have a successful congregation.

Mazal Tov and Thank You to Board President Nisan Chavkin, along with all of the Officers and Board members for their true collaboration partnering to support staff and clergy this past year. My Executive Team partners, Rabbi Immerman, Cantor Young, Director of Lifelong Learning Lauren Reeves, and I are collaborating with the Board to create a community we can all be proud of and where meaning, inspiration, positivity, and joy can be found for all of our members. And this summer, our Program Team consisting of Rabbi Immerman, Cantor Young, Lauren Reeves, Debbie Siegel-Acevedo, our Director of Community

Engagement, Emmie Weprin, our Director of Youth Engagement, and I drafted five annual goals that we aim to achieve this year in partnership with the board, committees, and all of you. Our high-level goals for the FY26-27 program year are the following:

- Deepen our culture of care, belonging, and connection
- Cultivate and empower leaders as partners in shaping community experiences
- Deliver high-quality, mission-driven programming that centers member engagement
- Continue to navigate Beth Emet's organizational transition
- Realize Fiscal Year 2027 budget and create foundation toward longer-term financial sustainability

We're open to feedback at any time to help hold us accountable to achieve these ambitious goals.

Finally, I'd like to also acknowledge and share my appreciation for the other members of the Professional Staff team including Ben Shalom, new Facility and Technology Manager; Executive Administrative Assistant Miriam Ratowtiz; Educational Programs Administrator Melinda Valverde; new Member Accounts Administrator Rose Isaily; our maintenance crew of Rony St. Victor, and Marshall Gray, Michael Louime for keeping the building functioning behind the scenes; and Butch Mayer for leading our security operations to keep us all safe.

Wishing you a healthy and sweet year ahead.



DIRECTOR OF LIFELONG LEARNING

Lauren Reeves

Last year I stepped into this community knowing it would be a transition. Standing on the bimah at N'ilah at the end of Yom Kippur, I was overcome with a feeling I couldn't identify at first. By the end of *Havdalah*, I could: it was the feeling of being home. Even writing this, I'm tearing up remembering how fully I was embraced by the people at Beth Emet.

This year, I've met even more people, learned even more names, and continued step by step toward the horizon. There is so much to love about Beit Sefer and all the learning that happens at Beth Emet. Our core values and the heart of the program remain steady. At the same time, I'm beginning to identify thoughtful shifts that can further strengthen the learner experience across every age.

For example, in partnership with others, I've developed competencies that articulate a clearer picture of what learners gain from Beit Sefer. These competencies describe who our learners are becoming, not just what they know. While learning goals focus on specific knowledge and skills, competencies reflect the growth, habits, values, relationships, and ways of engaging with Jewish life that develop throughout a learner's journey at Beth Emet. They invite Beit Sefer learners to ask questions like "Who am I becoming?" and "What wisdom can Torah and Jewish tradition offer my life?"

Serious learning has always meant more than rigor for its own sake. It means real engagement with a text, an idea, or the people wrestling alongside you. That's the spirit we're building this year. You'll start to see some new components alongside the ones you know: a little more conversation woven into the study, a little more room for relationships to grow alongside the text in front of us. Adult learning at Beth Emet takes seriously not only the ideas we study, but the people with whom we study them. From our youngest through adulthood, we take the learner seriously. A three-year-old asking what God looks like or a tenth grade BE Noar learner wrestling with what courage means deserves the same respect for their curiosity, abilities, and interests as any adult.

The year ahead holds so many experiences to share together. From large gatherings to more intimate learning, we'll deepen our relationships with each other and with Judaism, building an even stronger learning community at Beth Emet.



PRESIDENT, BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Nisan Chavkin

This past year, our theme for One Congregation, Many Voices was “Thresholds.” We discussed how we experience change personally, communally, and as a people.

Beth Emet has crossed many thresholds this year. We welcomed new members of our professional team. We celebrated Rabbi Andrea London for her quarter century of leadership and service. And we have embraced Rabbi Brian Immerman and his family. That is a great deal of change.

Throughout this transition, our Board of Trustees and Past Presidents have guided us with great insight and commitment. They are careful stewards who have approved a balanced budget for the second year in a row. Our Foundation provides critical support for our daily and long-term efforts. Our lay leadership is ensuring that we have the resources we need for today as well as preparing for the needs of tomorrow.

We are also guided by the wisdom and passion of congregants. This past year Matt Feldman, Ali Finkel, and the members of the Rabbinic Search Committee identified and recommended Rabbi Immerman. Lizzie Graham, Brad Zakarin, and the Ma’avar Committee are helping to introduce Rabbi Immerman and helping him meet us as well. Jeff Mann and Shari Reiches led the establishment of the Kavod Fund, and Suki Fisher and Debbie Render and the Kavod Celebration Committee created an unforgettable weekend as we honored Rabbi London and

her legacy. These are just some of the many efforts led by the committees, classes, services, and working groups that make up Beth Emet.

Each of us has a story that led us here. Sarah and I were not raised at Beth Emet or in the Reform tradition. Like other immigrants, we have tried to be good citizens by learning the laws and customs of our adopted community. We also dreamed that our children would grow up in a place they could truly call home. Part of that sense of belonging comes from honoring our stories—our own, that of Beth Emet, and the story of our people.

As we conclude the annual Torah cycle, Moses recounts in Deuteronomy the journey of our people as they prepare to cross over Jordan. Although Moses cannot be with them, he knows the importance of the people understanding their experience in order to follow G-d’s teachings. Our history is the necessary context for our future.

Our people does not forget the past, nor are we its prisoners. I remember the terrible shock of the Egyptian attack in the Yom Kippur War. I also remember the exhilaration of the Egyptian president’s visit to Jerusalem just four years later. Our stories help us respond to sorrow and remain open to those moments when hope begins anew.

Chotmeinu b’Sefer HaChayim—May all of us be sealed in the Book of Life for a good year. Sarah and I wish you a *Shanah Tovah Um’tukah*—a sweet and good 5787.



TREASURER, BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Adam Prawer-Stock

I begin with an enormous Thank You to everyone who contributed to the *B'Yachad* (together) fundraising campaign this past March, helping us achieve our goal for the second year in a row. Over the past two years, 69% of congregants have contributed to *B'Yachad*. Thank you!

B'Yachad replaced Mitzvah Appeal in 2025. This was the second of a four-year plan to stabilize the synagogue's finances. Our success from *B'Yachad*:

- Positioned us to attract, and ultimately hire our very talented new Senior Rabbi
- Eliminated our balance on our line of credit and, as a result, avoid interest charges
- Made it possible to pass a balanced budget for the second year in a row (Fiscal Year July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027)
- Meant that we did not raise dues... again
- We have not raised dues in 12 out of the last 19 years

Our success with *B'Yachad* has been an indication of the love and care our members have for Beth Emet and what we can accomplish, together.

While your *B'Yachad* contributions continue to bolster our financial foundation, we are also grateful for private donations and grants this past year which helped fund:

- The mural in the entrance hallway
- New speakers in the sanctuary
- New bathrooms in the school
- New stained glass in the sanctuary and Beit Midrash (and the Crown Room next month)

There is still work to do in order to get our synagogue financially sustainable. Next Spring, as we launch the third year of *B'Yachad*, we will be sharing plans for how Beth Emet can sustain its finances after the fourth year and beyond. In order to achieve this year's balanced budget, which is predicated on our success with *B'Yachad*, we will need your generosity.

If you have any questions, please reach out to me personally.

Wishing you a healthy and sweet year ahead.



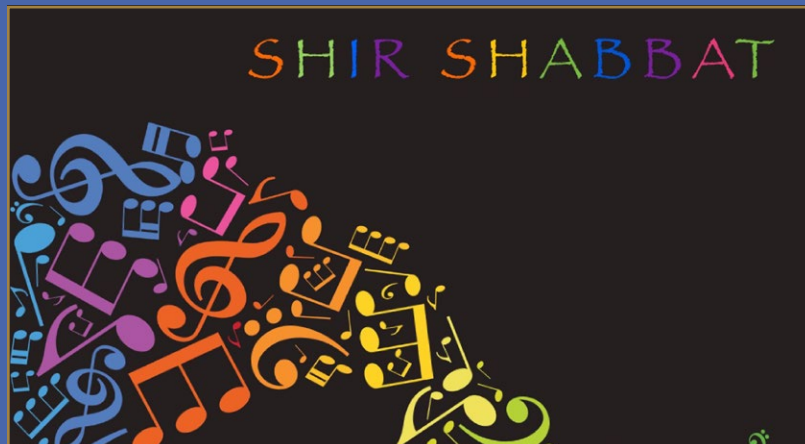
WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Soul Spark Shabbat

Step into a transcendent Shabbat service unlike any other! Immerse yourself in an extraordinary fusion of spirituality and melody, as our esteemed clergy, talented musicians, and captivating singers lead you through a tapestry of soul-stirring music, profound meditations, and illuminating teachings. This extraordinary service is an opportunity to enrich your soul and deepen your connection to the sacred rhythms of Shabbat.



- October 16 • November 20 • December 18 • January 22 (and Dor L'dor Shabbat/ Shabbat Shirah)
- February (none) • March 19 • April 16 • May 21 • June 18



Shir Shabbat

Join us for Shir Shabbat, a joyful and uplifting monthly service designed for the whole family! In just one spirited hour, experience the warmth of community through vibrant music, singing, and an engaging story that brings Shabbat to life for people of every age and stage. Whether you're young or young at heart, Shir Shabbat is the perfect way to welcome Shabbat with joy, connection, and celebration. Come sing, smile, and connect with your community. Everyone is welcome!

- October 2 (with Simchat Torah celebration) • November 6 (with Committee Fair & Teen Songleading Fellowship)
- December 4 (Shabbanukah) • February 5 (with JCC art event and dinner) • March 5 • April 2 • May 7

Kolot Shabbat

Step into a Kabbalat Shabbat grounded in Hebrew, music, and memory. Together we'll sing cherished melodies and connect with the rhythms of Jewish prayer that continue to inspire across time and generations. Whether you grew up with these melodies or are discovering them for the first time, all are welcome—come listen, sing, and be lifted. Watch EmetMail and the website for details.



Worship Opportunities – *continued*



Tot Shabbat for Families with Young Children

Saturday, October 24

Friday, November 20

Saturday, January 23

Friday, March 5

Saturday, April 17

Friday, May 7

5:00–5:45 p.m.

Welcome Shabbat with joy, music, and community! Designed especially for young children and the grown-ups who love them, our Tot Shabbat features energetic singing, stories, movement, and family-friendly Shabbat blessings. Check our website for registration details.

Saturday Morning Services

Kahal Shabbat | 9:30–11:30 am

Kahal is a service where everyone is welcome for communal worship, reflection, and Torah study. The word *kahal* means community, and our highly participatory service features heart-warming music and thought-provoking discussion of the week's Torah portion. The service takes place from 9:30–11:30 am and is followed by Kiddush and socializing as well as a monthly potluck lunch. Sign up for a Kahal honor on our website to identify your role in the service!

Kabbalat Mitzvah Service

Select Saturdays | 10:30 am

All are welcome to celebrate our Kabbalat Mitzvah students as they take their place in the community during select Saturday morning Shabbat Services during the year. These services are led by our learners as they mark this meaningful milestone in their Jewish journey.



Sunday Minyan

Sundays | 9:30 am

The Sunday Minyan offers an opportunity for weekly prayer in a more intimate setting. It is ideally suited for mourners to say Kaddish supported by the community, or for others looking for an inter-generational environment that explores beyond the Shabbat and holiday liturgy. The Sunday Minyan is a welcoming setting for people developing a weekly prayer practice, and for those with more experience who are looking to deepen their practice within the Beth Emet community.

Participants are encouraged to wear a *tallit* and *tefillin* according to their comfort level.

Holidays

Beyond our special Shabbat services, Beth Emet celebrates the full Jewish calendar together to mark sacred time as a community. Purim brings our light-hearted *spiel* and megillah reading, costumes, and joy. Sukkot, Passover, and Shavuot are marked with festival services that connect us to themes of gratitude, freedom, and revelation. Chanukah gets its own special Shabbat celebration, filling our hearts with light and song.



MUSIC INITIATIVES



Kochavim

Every voice has the power to inspire! **Kochavim (stars)**, **Beth Emet's Youth Choir**, meets on select Sundays, 9:00–9:30 am before Beit Sefer, offering learners the opportunity to explore Jewish music, grow in confidence, and experience the joy of singing together. Throughout the year, Kochavim will help lead worship and share music that strengthens our community and enriches our celebrations. Please contact Cantor Young at nyoung@bethemet.org to sign up or for any questions.

Sing Unto God Teen Songleader Fellowship

Yearlong songleader training for Jewish teens in 8th-12th grades

The Sing Unto God Jewish Teen Songleader Fellowships help emerging Jewish teen songleaders build the skills, confidence, repertoire, and leadership experience to lead music in synagogues, camps, religious schools, youth groups, and Jewish communities.

Fellows begin with a regional weekend retreat at Beth Emet, the weekend of November 6-8, continue with monthly online learning, and receive mentorship from clergy, educators, and Jewish music leaders throughout the school year.

We are looking for people to offer home hospitality to our participating teens for the weekend.

Sing Unto God is part of the year-long B'tzalel initiative. See our website for details and registration.



YEAR-LONG INITIATIVES

B'tzalel Arts & Music Festival

B'TZALEL ARTS & MUSIC FESTIVAL – CHICAGO EDITION

Connect. Create. Collaborate.

Where creativity becomes sacred work

Register through the website:

<https://btzalelartsandmusicfestival.org/>

Who was B'tzalel?

In the Book of Exodus, B'tzalel was the master artisan chosen to design and build the Mishkan (Tabernacle), the sacred space where the community would gather to encounter the Divine. Torah tells us that he was filled with *chochmah*, *t'vunah*, and *da'at*—wisdom, understanding, and knowledge—and the ability to teach others. B'tzalel didn't create alone; he inspired a community of makers, each contributing their unique gifts.

This festival is rooted in that same idea: that creativity is holy, and that art becomes sacred when we connect, create, and collaborate.

What is the B'tzalel Arts & Music Festival?

The B'tzalel Arts & Music Festival is a multicongregational, community-powered, creative initiative that will unfold over the course of the year and will culminate in a vibrant, joyful festival day.

Part 1: Community Workshops (September 2026 – May 2027)

Build relationships through creativity. Local artists, musicians, and creators lead hands-on workshops for participants of all ages and backgrounds.

Workshops include:

- Exploring our Jewish Hearts and Souls Through Poetry: A Generative Workshop
- Shaping Sacred Space: Create Your Own M'zuzah
- Kol Hadorot: The Stories We Tell
- Illuminate the Light: Recycled Chanukkiyot Workshop
- A Taste of Freedom: Passover across the Diaspora
- Nisim B'chol Yom: Capturing Daily Miracles through Photography
- Behind the Mask: Designing the Story of Purim
- Eat, Pray, Paint

Each workshop is not just a class—it's a creative journey where participants connect—with one another, with tradition, and with their own creative voice. Throughout the workshop series, participants will explore their skills and bring ideas to life. This is a space to experiment and take creative risks, learn new techniques and deepen existing talents, and transform inspiration into something tangible and meaningful

Like the artisans of the Mishkan, each person contributes something uniquely their own.



Part 2: The Festival Day (May 23, 2027)

At the culmination of the workshop series, the entire community will gather for a one-day festival celebration featuring:

- Art exhibits showcasing participant work
- Live performances (music, dance, theater)
- Interactive art experiences
- Opportunities to meet the artists and makers

This is our modern-day Mishkan, a space built through collaboration, shaped by many hands, and brought to life through shared creativity.

One Congregation, Many Stories: What's Ours?

Beth Emet's Multigenerational, Year-Long, Congregation-Wide Dialogue

In the Book of Genesis, God asks Adam, "Where are you?" A simple question with profound meaning, not only in the Torah but in our lives today. The question — "Where are you?" (in Hebrew *"ayeka"*) — is particularly timely for our Beth Emet community as we begin a new chapter under the spiritual leadership of Rabbi Immerman.

Our congregation-wide salon groups this year will explore that question as we read the book, *Where Are You? Finding Yourself in the Bible*, by Rabbi Josh Franklin. The book uses geographic locations from the Torah (Eden, Mount Sinai, the wilderness, Mitzrayim, etc.) as metaphors for exploring our personal experiences. The book will lead to rich and meaningful discussions within our salon groups as we contemplate where we have found moments of Eden, of constriction and liberation, of spirituality, and of communal gathering at "the well" in our own lives.

Throughout the year, in addition to the salon group discussions led by our lay facilitators, we hope to share personal stories offered by congregants that highlight different aspects of this theme. Mark your calendars for the evening of Friday, March 12, when we'll come together for a special storytelling event.

Since their beginning several years ago, the salon groups have become a vibrant part of Beth Emet. New groups are forming. They meet roughly three times during the year at a member's home, on Zoom, or at the synagogue. If you are interested in joining a group and engaging in these conversations, please send a note to Debbie Siegel-Acevedo at dsiegelacevedo@bethemet.org. We're looking forward to another year of communal enrichment.

Buy the book here:



Tikkun Middot

Tikkun Middot is the Jewish practice of cultivating our inner lives through intentional work on our values and character. Small groups, guided by trained facilitators using the Institute for Jewish Spirituality's Tikkun Middot curriculum, explore qualities such as patience, compassion, gratitude, trust, forgiveness, humility, and mindful speech. Through Jewish texts, meditation, reflection, and honest sharing, we develop practical tools for responding to life's challenges with greater wisdom and intention. Between gatherings, participants continue the practice through personal reflection and conversations with a *chevruta* (learning partner), discovering how we can deepen our exploration of ourselves and develop practices that can lead to meaningful transformation.

Why Join a Tikkun Middot Group?

How can you be your best self? Tikkun Middot is a Jewish practice of intentional personal growth. Through guided reflection and supportive community, you'll build practical habits for responding to life's challenges with wisdom and compassion. Congregants have found that Tikkun Middot groups have strengthened their relationships to others, deepened their connections to Beth Emet, and been a source of friendship.

Choose the path that's right for you:

Tikkun Midot: New group forming! This ten-session group offers a welcoming space to slow down, reflect, and engage deeply with Jewish wisdom and community. A focus on middot (values and character traits) emerges from the traditional Jewish practice of Mussar. Each session focuses on a single *middah* (character trait) through text study, meditation, guided reflection, and meaningful sharing. Whether you're new to Tikkun Middot or returning to the practice, you'll find a supportive community for growing ourselves with intention. This Va'ad (group) will meet monthly beginning in December.

Tikkun Middot Through the Senses: Explore each *middah* through art, creativity, movement, and other sensory experiences

Some insights can't be reached by words alone. Tikkun Middot Through the Senses offers a unique, hands-on approach to spiritual growth and self-reflection. This six-session journey uses writing, art, music, movement, and prayer to explore sacred character traits. No creative experience necessary—just an open mind and a desire for discovery to embark on this unique path into Jewish spiritual practice. This Va'ad will meet monthly beginning in November.

Fight Like a Mensch: Tikkun Middot for Democracy: Strengthen the character and skills to engage across differences with courage, curiosity, and integrity.

How do we stay grounded in our values during times of political polarization? Using a curriculum developed by Kirva, this eight-session group explores how Jewish ethical practice can shape the way we engage in civic life. Together, we'll cultivate the resilience, compassion, and courage to navigate political engagement that upholds your values with integrity and contribute thoughtfully to our communities. This Va'ad will meet every two to three weeks beginning in December.

For questions and more information or to speak with the group facilitators and past participants, please contact Director of Lifelong Learning Lauren Reeves or Tikkun Middot coordinator Marci Dickman.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Committee Fair

Friday, November 6 | 5:15pm

Join us on for a taste of Beth Emet. Representatives from all Beth Emet committees will share ways to engage in our various initiatives. Come learn about all Beth Emet has to offer and get involved!

Rabbi Immerman's Installation

Friday, November 13

9:30am Torah Study

5:45pm Festive Oneg

6:30pm Installation Shabbat Service

8:00pm Dessert Reception

Saturday, November 14

9:30am Shabbat Morning Kahal Service led by Rabbi Joe Black followed by potluck lunch

7:00pm Rabbi Joe Black in concert

On November 13-14 Rabbi Immerman will be installed officially as the fourth senior rabbi of Beth Emet The Free Synagogue. At this historic moment, our community will gather for celebratory worship, learning, and a special concert led by Rabbi Immerman's mentor Rabbi Joe Black, who grew up at Beth Emet.



The poster features a background image of a sunset over a body of water. At the top left is the Beth Emet logo, which includes a stylized menorah and the Hebrew text 'בית אמת' (Beth Emet). Below the logo, the text 'Beth Emet' is written in a large, blue, serif font. Underneath that, 'COMMUNITY RETREAT' is written in a smaller, black, sans-serif font. A pink, cursive-style text reads 'A time for renewal & Jewish joy'. The dates 'JAN 29-31, 2027' are prominently displayed in a large, bold, black font. Below the dates, 'OSRUI, Oconomowoc, WI' is written in a smaller, black, sans-serif font. The text 'Three days to strengthen your connections and experience a spirited, intergenerational Shabbat at camp' is written in a black, sans-serif font. At the bottom, 'RECHARGE - RECONNECT - REPLENISH' is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font. A black rectangular box at the very bottom contains the text 'REGISTER BY NOV 30 FOR EARLY BIRD RATE. REGISTRATION OPENS SOON!' in white, sans-serif font.

בית אמת
Beth Emet
COMMUNITY RETREAT
A time for renewal & Jewish joy
JAN 29-31, 2027
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Three days to strengthen your connections
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REGISTRATION OPENS SOON!



"We are so happy we attended the Beth Emet Community Retreat. The programming was enriching and engaging, and the retreat afforded us the opportunity to expand our connections within the Beth Emet community, forming new and lasting bonds with other members." —SANDI AND ELIZABETH LERNER

ENGAGEMENT

G'milut Chasadim, Acts of Loving Kindness

Shabbat Greeter / Usher Coordination Initiative

It's an easy way to get involved and make others feel welcomed as they arrive for worship. Whether being a greeter at the entrance to assist with nametags or a welcomer as worshipers enter the Sanctuary, this is an important role in celebrating Shabbat. This also lends an extra eye to further enhance our security on Friday evenings. For more information and to sign up, contact the office at office@bethemet.org.

Rabbi Peter and Elaine Knobel Soup Kitchen at Beth Emet

Beth Emet operates its Soup Kitchen from our own kitchen, serving nutritious meals in the Crown Room every Wednesday to unhoused and food-insecure members of our community. If you haven't volunteered before, please consider joining us! We are always looking for adult volunteers (with limited spots for children ages 6 and above). Weekly bakers are also needed. Contact soupkitchen@bethemet.org to sign up. For those looking to be part of our wonderful committee on a more regular basis (site supervisors, hosts, clean-up crew, musicians), please reach out to leslieshulruff@gmail.com for more information.

Soup Kitchen Coat Drive

Help our guests stay warm this winter! Every winter, the Soup Kitchen Committee collects gently used or new adult-sized warm winter coats, sweaters, boots, hats, gloves and scarves for our guests. Help get the word out by sharing this info with your friends and family! Stay tuned for more detailed information in EmetMail this winter. If you have questions or want to volunteer, contact Leslie Shulruff at leslieshulruff@gmail.com.



Beth Emet staff volunteering at the Soup Kitchen

Shabbat Connections

Would you like to share your delicious cooking with others? Every Friday, one volunteer for Shabbat Connections prepares and brings a Shabbat meal to Beth Emet. Another volunteer picks up the meal and delivers it to someone in our Beth Emet family in a time of need or transition. Whether you would like to regularly participate in doing this *mitzvah*, or lend a hand once or twice a year, we'd love your help. It's also a fabulous way to meet other Beth Emet members. Financial support is available to offset food expenses.

Shiva Minyan Leaders

Leading Kaddish for those in mourning.

When a member of our community experiences a loss, Shiva Minyan volunteers offer comfort and support by leading services in the homes of mourners. This rewarding volunteer opportunity is for you if you are comfortable leading a Shiva service or are interested in learning.

Gift of Challah

There's nothing quite like the smell of fresh-baked challah, with the warmth, the comfort, and the love it carries. A Gift of Challah is our initiative where members of our community sign up to bake a challah to share on Friday night. Each week, we identify someone who could use a little extra love—whether they're celebrating a joyful accomplishment, marking a meaningful milestone, or moving through illness or a difficult time. Your challah is a tangible gift of care and connection, reminding them that they are not alone. Sign up to bake a challah or two for a designated Friday. Drop off your challah at Beth Emet on Friday afternoon, and we'll deliver it with love. Together, we can spread joy, comfort, and blessing—one loaf at a time. **Contact the office if you'd like to bake or if you'd like to nominate someone to receive a challah.**



Committees

Adult Education

Crafting meaningful learning opportunities for adults

The Adult Education Committee plans a wide array of classes and learning opportunities for our congregants. Lifelong Learning is a core value of Beth Emet and a vibrant avenue into Judaism for many people. This group is for you if you are passionate about learning or if you have an idea to offer. Contact: Reva Denlow revadenlow@gmail.com or Barb Schoenfield barb.schoenfield@gmail.com.

Avodah Committee

Bring spiritual vision to life

The Avodah Committee plays a vital role in supporting our clergy by helping bring their spiritual vision to life. Throughout the year, the committee coordinates worship honors for holidays and ensures that our ritual items and sacred spaces are properly maintained and prepared for meaningful observance. Contact Jonathan Hartman-Seeskin hartmanseeskin@gmail.com.

Inclusion Committee

Fostering a culture of belonging at Beth Emet

The Inclusion Committee is looking for passionate members to join our mission of creating a safe, welcoming, and accessible space for everyone. Our key initiatives include cultivating an environment of belonging and connections, enhancing accessibility in physical and digital infrastructure, examining our practices and identifying areas in need of improvement, and collaborating and communicating with other Beth Emet committees. We are comprised of individuals with disabilities (visible or invisible), family members/caregivers of someone with a disability, professionals working within the inclusion field, and idea-sharers with a vision for community growth. If you are ready to make a difference, reach out to Terri Michaels tkm5859@gmail.com or Heather McGee heather_kwc@hotmail.com.

Israel Committee

Understanding Israel through our hearts and minds

Beth Emet Israel Committee's mission is to provide balanced programming about Israel for the congregation. Working in collaboration with Rabbi Immerman and the Adult Education Committee, the Israel Committee's programs focus on political, cultural, social justice, educational, musical, and business aspects of Israel. Contact Zach Selch selchzach@gmail.com or Mark Schoenfield markschoenfield@gmail.com.

Social Justice:

A Coalition of Committees and Initiatives

The work of Tikkun Olam (repairing the world) is ongoing. Now more than ever, it is important for our voices to be heard, our actions to make a difference, and our commitment to doing the work stay strong. As Jews, it's imperative that instead of accepting the world as it is, too often full of fear, hatred and disengagement, we work to create the world how we imagine it could be: rich with respect, love, and understanding.

From advocacy to social action to direct service to *tzedakah*, the Social Justice Coalition is an umbrella arm for many of the Tikkun Olam efforts that we undertake as a congregation.

Last year, we introduced a new framework for bringing our various committees together to learn and support one another in our dedication to social justice. We will continue having four regular meet ups a year. We already held our August kick-off and upcoming meet ups are scheduled for 12/8, 3/2, and a potluck in June. Meet ups are open to all and will often involve an educational program, as well as some hands-on service projects. This is the perfect opportunity for those of us who want to become more engaged in social justice efforts and are curious to get a taste of the various initiatives that our subcommittees have embraced.

Watch Emet Mail for more details. We hope that you will consider getting involved, whether it's to pitch in for a couple of hours on a one-time service project or join one of our committees described below for a more ongoing commitment.

The Social Justice Leadership Team currently includes: Judy Caplan, Ted Goldsmith, Lisa Levine, and Sharon Smaller. This leadership group is always open to new members.

For more information about the Social Justice Coalition, contact Ted Goldsmith at Dett50@aol.com.



Advocacy

Creating the world we want by acting on our values and supporting just policies

Behind every problem facing society, there is a policy solution. Working to achieve policies that promote justice, compassion, and respect is the focus of the Advocacy Committee. Our work includes an array of actions – calling, emailing, texting, attending public actions, visiting elected representatives to speak on behalf of legislation that promotes justice, and behaving with respect and fairness for all.

We work in partnership with other Reform congregations through RAC-IL and the broader Jewish community as members of the Jewish Council on Urban Affairs (JCUA). Regardless of the problem – gun violence, environment, homelessness, caring for new arrivals, abortion access, anti-queer and gender efforts, or something else – there is a role for you. This is the place where you can exercise your power for good. Contact Judy Caplan at judithcaplan60660@gmail.com for more information.

The Election Is Coming! The Election Is Coming! You Are Needed.

Jews were active advocates for the adoption of the 19th amendment in 1920, and now, over a century later, we are still fighting to ensure that everyone can exercise their sacred right to vote. Voting is how we make our voices heard.

With our vote, we have an opportunity to advance the causes that are important to us, protect democracy, and stop potential attacks to our democracy in their tracks.

Beth Emet has formed a Protect the Vote Team. We know that the best way to strengthen our democracy is together—through relationships and meaningful action. We'll be doing things like writing postcards/text banking to voters, building connections with local elections officials, and educating our community on ways to respond if safe elections are threatened.

And it all starts with you.

Would you be open to joining us? Contact Judy Caplan at judithcaplan60660@gmail.com

Beacon of Light

Standing against hate, fear, and despair

Started by Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum, the Beacon brings together people of all faiths and secular backgrounds who feel called to stand with those facing injustice. The Beacon mobilizes its diverse community members to take action. Where there is cruelty, we create visible acts of solidarity and compassion. Where there is fear, we build community and mutual understanding. This powerful movement, which is spreading throughout the country, is held in Evanston weekly, on Thursday evenings. The Beth Emet community, along with members of other local faith communities, stand together with signs in hand to stand against the hate, fear, and despair that is so prevalent these days. See you on the corner of Dempster & Ridge. Contact Susan Laws susan.laws@yahoo.com with any questions.

Connections for the Homeless

Working towards ending homelessness one person at a time

Beth Emet has a strong partnership with the work of Connections for the Homeless, a local organization that recognizes that homelessness is the predictable result of systems that don't work for everyone. Everyday they show up for people facing housing instability with dignity and practical supports that address urgent needs via financial assistance, shelter and housing. They turn frontline lessons into action by advancing housing solutions, shifting policies and challenging systems that perpetuate homelessness. Their volunteer and advocacy opportunities are open to everyone no matter age, ability, or resources. Contact Stephanie Linn steph.linn@gmail.com to get involved.

Dayenu Circle: **A Jewish Call to Climate Action**

Transforming concern about climate change into action

Are you ready to learn more about how our collective effort can have an impact on climate change? Curious about steps you can take to reduce your carbon footprint? Interested in lending a hand to make Beth Emet become an even more sustainable facility? The Dayenu Circle (our environmental or green team) meets monthly to share information, advocate for clean, renewable energy and environmental justice, plan educational programs, and take steps to become sustainable both in our own homes and at synagogue. Dayenu Circle members participate in the Interfaith Action of Evanston's Climate Change & Justice Working Group. In collaboration with the national Dayenu arm based in D.C., we will get involved this fall with a voter turnout project for the upcoming November midterms. Come join us! Contact Sharon Smaller sharonsmaller@gmail.com or Chris Wynn bcwynn@sbcglobal.net with any questions.

Immigration Subcommittee

Supporting immigrants and refugees

Members of the Immigration Subcommittee are engaged in actions to support immigrants and refugees. Among these are partnering with the Jewish Council on Urban Affairs to lobby for state and local legislation, volunteering with the Sanctuary Working Group Accompaniment Program, attending Chicago City Council hearings concerning matters that impact the immigrant community, and of course, raising voices at the Beacon of Light Protests each Thursday. Contact Cheryl Gold artsmartee@gmail.com to get involved.

Interfaith Action of Evanston

Sharing ideas across faiths to serve our community through action and advocacy

Being a part of Interfaith Action of Evanston is a great way to meet and volunteer alongside many like-minded people of different faiths in the community. Beth Emet members have been busy volunteering with Interfaith in many ways: the overnight shelter that is housed in Beth Emet and other faith communities, the Warming Center, donating toiletries not covered by SNAP cards, participating in the "Walk for Warmth," and the Vision Keepers Dinner to honor exceptional volunteers and to raise awareness and funds for the overnight shelter. Being involved with Interfaith Action allows for participation in all kinds of community dialogue and advocacy that promote social justice. Contact Leslie Shulruff zamaed@comcast.net to get involved.

A Just Harvest Soup Kitchen

Serving dinner to warm the soul as well as the stomach

Every day, A Just Harvest provides a healthy meal to more than 150 people in the Howard Area community. Beth Emet continues a 35-year tradition begun at Temple Judea Mizpah, preparing

and serving lunch on the fourth Wednesday of the month. A Just Harvest also operates a food pantry and other economic activities to build community in the Howard-area neighborhood. Contact Michelle Oxman at moxman616@gmail.com to get involved.

Soul Stitchers

Knitting for those who could use a hug

Soul Stitchers started in memory of Nikki Zarefsky z"l. We meet monthly in person during spring through fall and on Zoom during the winter. We have made shawls and wraps for congregants, baby blankets, and hats and other winter accessories for children and adults who need them. New knitters and crocheters are always welcome. For more information, contact Michelle Oxman at moxman616@gmail.com.



Tzedakah Committee & Tzedakah Grant Fund

Ensuring our community's Tzedakah reaches those in need

The Tzedakah Committee administers the Tzedakah Grant program and encourages families to give tzedakah as a regular part of their Jewish daily lives. This committee participates in other activities that promote righteous giving, including food drives and supporting the work of other initiatives at Beth Emet. Our current grant application is open until October 31. If you are involved in or know of a non-profit that may be eligible for consideration, please encourage that organization to apply! Contact Barry Isaacson at barryisaacson@comcast.net for more information.

TOTS - 7TH GRADE

Families with Young Children

Beth Emet offers many ways for families with young children to connect and grow together. Gan Yom Rishon, our interactive Sunday morning class (9:30-11:00 a.m.) for children ages 3-4 and a trusted adult, introduces little ones to Jewish holidays, rituals, symbols, and values through songs, art, and celebration. Families do not need to be Beth Emet members to join this class.

We're also excited for special programs coming up this year:

- Tot Shabbats on Friday evenings and Saturday mornings
- Pizza in the Hut on September 30
- Joint JCC/Beth Emet Chanukah candle lighting on December 10
- Shabbat and art activity on February 5

We're planning additional weekend events sprinkled throughout the year. These programs are designed to welcome families right where they are, building community and Jewish joy from the earliest years.



8TH - 12TH GRADE

BE Noar

BE Noar is Beth Emet's teen education program for learners in 8th – 12th grade. Throughout the year, participants engage in a variety of mini-series centered on topics such as: antisemitism, immigration, environmental justice, and Jewish history in Chicago. Most of these themes are selected by the teens themselves, giving them an active role in shaping their Jewish learning experience.

Classes are co-taught by Lauren Reeves, Emmie Weprin, and a variety of guest educators, including clergy, Beth Emet members, community leaders, and other experts. Learning extends beyond the classroom through both on-site activities and off-site experiences inspired by students' interests.

Kabbalat Torah

Kabbalat Torah is Beth Emet's equivalent of Confirmation for 12th graders and is led by **Rabbi Immerman**. This program explores Jewish thought, theology, and identity, helping teens develop a personal philosophy of life while considering how Jewish teachings and community can remain an important part of their lives as they transition into adulthood. Much of the learning is driven by students' own questions and interests, creating meaningful conversations about faith, ethics, and Jewish living.

As part of the program, participants travel to **New York City** with Rabbi Immerman to deepen their understanding of Jewish history and heritage while sharing a memorable experience together.

To register for the 2027 Kabbalat Torah class, contact Melinda Valverde at learning@bethemet.org.



Beit Sefer (K-7th grade)

Beit Sefer is Beth Emet's religious school for learners through 7th grade, building Jewish identity through Torah, prayer, holidays, and Jewish values. Learners form real relationships with peers, teen *madrichol*, and teachers in a lively, creative environment full of art, music, and books. The program culminates in Gesher,

our 7th grade bridge program, which helps learners navigate the transition from Jewish childhood to Jewish adulthood as they prepare for Kabbalat Mitzvah. Because Jewish learning is strongest when it extends beyond the classroom, families are invited into Shabbat, holiday, and grade-level programming throughout the year. This year, Beit Sefer begins Sunday, September 27. We'd love to welcome you to our program!

Kabbalat Mitzvah

Kabbalat Mitzvah marks a young person's step into Jewish adulthood, when a teen takes their place as a full member of our community. Learners work directly with our rabbi, cantor, tutors, congregant mentors, our Director of Lifelong Learning, and our Director of Youth Engagement to prepare. Getting ready to celebrate Kabbalat Mitzvah includes in-depth Torah portion study, practicing their Torah and Haftarah portions, and family sessions with the rabbi. As part of their preparation, teens also complete a Gemilut Chasadim (acts of loving-kindness) project. Our Beit Sefer curriculum lays the groundwork for Kabbalat Mitzvah from the earliest grades, with formal preparation beginning in 5th grade.



Teen Social Justice Trip 2027

In 2017, Beth Emet teens traveled to El Paso, Texas, for a social justice trip that changed how they saw the immigration story. They met people living the reality of the US-Mexico border, did hands-on service work, and brought home lessons about a piece of Jewish values that Chicagoland can't teach on its own. The impact lasted well beyond the trip.

This year, our teens will get that experience again.

Save the date: February 12-15, 2027.

Teens from Beth Emet and JRC will travel to Tucson, Arizona, for a social justice trip to meet local stakeholders and immigrants, work with local non-profits, and dig into why immigration is a Jewish value.

For questions, more details, and early registration, contact Director of Youth Engagement Emmie Weprin at eweprin@bethemet.org.



Teens in 2017 on their trip to El Paso, Texas. This photo shows New Mexico, Mexico, and the Rio Grande behind them. We are excited to help our teens experience a similarly impactful border trip this year!

Youth Group Events for 4th-8th Graders



Our occasional youth group events for younger teens and tweens provides 4th-5th graders and 6th - 8th graders opportunities for fun, semi-structured social spaces that

meet adolescents at one of their greatest periods of change and growth. Our lifelong learning team works to create events during the school year that give middle schoolers an opportunity to connect socially with their Beit Sefer and Beth Emet community. Events include activities such as Olympics-themed games, cookie decorating, or exploring Evanston.



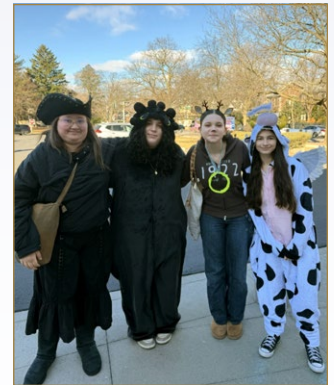
BESSY

BESSY (Beth Emet Senior Synagogue Youth) is our peer-led high school youth group. The relationships built in BESSY go beyond the strictly social to encourage and build leaders.



Each year, BESSY helps organize and run the Purim Carnival. BESSY events range from hosting a coffee house from seeing improv at the Second City to crafting nights to social justice activities!

For questions about the board or to become involved with BESSY please contact Director of Youth Engagement Emmie Weprin at eweprin@bethemet.org.



Madrichol

Madrichol (9th-12th grade teacher assistants) help out in Beit Sefer classrooms or in the office. Madrichol work during Beit Sefer on Sunday mornings and/or Thursday afternoons.

Our Madrichol make a positive impact on children and our learning community, helping them grow in their role as leaders at Beit Sefer and at Beth Emet. Madrichol often continue working with children as summer camp counselors or working in education in college and beyond.

The **Madrichol in Training** program prepares 8th graders to become youth leaders in Beit Sefer classrooms.

Meeting approximately 10 Sunday mornings throughout the year from 10:30 am to 12:00 pm, participants learn practical classroom leadership skills and gain experience supporting younger learners. Upon completing the program, participants are prepared to serve as Madrichol during 9th – 12th grade.



Know Your Genes, Protect Your Future: Hereditary Cancer Testing Explained

When: Sunday, October 18, 10:30–11:45 am

Location: Weiner Room | In-person & Virtual

Leader: Judah Gavant, *JUF Norton & Elaine Sarnoff Center for Jewish Genetics*

What if one test could help protect your loved ones for generations? Join the Norton & Elaine Sarnoff Center for Jewish Genetics and genetic counselor Scott M. Weissman for an informative and accessible conversation about the Sarnoff Center's new Hereditary Cancer Testing Program. The discussion will be moderated by Beth Emet member Dr. Ed Linn. Join us and discover how genetic testing can help detect cancer early, guide prevention and treatment, and protect your family for generations to come.

Trip to the Anne Frank Exhibit

When: Tuesday, October 20, 9:00 am

Location: Griffin Museum of Science and Industry

Leader: Adult Education Committee

Beth Emet adults are invited to carpool together to the Museum of Science & Industry for a shared visit to its Anne Frank exhibit. We'll explore the exhibit together, taking time to sit with Anne's story and what it still asks of us today, before heading to lunch together in Hyde Park to talk, reflect, and connect as a community. This is a chance to learn, remember, and be together, all in one afternoon. The deadline to sign up is October 4 due to the museum's advance ticket purchase policy.

Responding to Antisemitism with School-age Children

When: Sunday, October 25, 10:30–11:45 am

Location: Weiner Room | In-person only

Leader: Lauren Reeves

How do we talk to our kids about antisemitism in ways that are honest, age-appropriate, and empowering? This session offers tools and resources to parents, grandparents, educators, and anyone who loves a child tools and an opportunity to help each other navigate these difficult but necessary conversations. We will explore how to respond in the moment, how to build resilience, and how to support each other and our children.

Enduring Dilemmas in Judaism and at Beth Emet

When: Sunday, November 8, 10:30–11:45 am

Location: Weiner Room | In-person only

Leader: Lauren Reeves

Director of Lifelong Learning, Lauren Reeves, recently completed her Master's degree in Jewish Education at Hebrew Union College, and this program is an exploration of that journey. Lauren will present her capstone thesis, which explores the enduring dilemma of Home and Horizon that have shaped Jewish life and continue to animate the conversations we have right here at Beth Emet. Come hear the ideas she has been wrestling with, ask hard questions, and share in the joy of our educator's remarkable achievement.

Current Politics

When: Tuesday, November 10, 7:30–9:00 pm

Location: Weiner Room | In-person & Virtual

Leader: David Zarefsky

A congregational favorite returns! In this installment of his ongoing lecture series on contemporary public issues of interest to Jews as citizens, David Zarefsky will turn his analytical lens to the aftermath of the November 2026 elections and what they mean for our political landscape. David is the Owen L. Coon Professor Emeritus of Communication Studies at Northwestern University, specializing in argumentation and the analysis of American political discourse, as well as a past president of Beth Emet. Join us for what is always a thoughtful, nuanced conversation that helps us make sense of the moment in which we are living.

Leipzig Revisited: Rabbi Black's Journey Back

When: Sunday, November 15, 10:00–11:30 am

Location: Weiner Room and Zoom

Leader: Rabbi Joe Black

Rabbi Joe Black and his extended family recently returned from visiting Leipzig, Germany, the city in which his mother—our past president, Sophie Black—was born and from which she fled in 1938 after experiencing Krystallnacht, the "Night of The Broken Glass." Their trip was at the invitation of the city and was part of a program designed to welcome back the descendants of former Jewish "Leipzigers" who survived the Shoah (Holocaust). Rabbi Black will share his reflections, including some music he has written, about this powerful and emotional journey.

Russian Migrants and the Illegal Border Crossings of the Late 19th Century

When: Wednesday, November 11, 7:00–8:30 pm

Location: Weiner Room | In-person & Virtual

Leader: Professor Anastasiia Strakhova, *University of Illinois*

In the late 19th century, hundreds of thousands of Jews fled the Russian Empire, many crossing borders illegally in search of safety and a new life. Professor Anastasiia Strakhova from University of Illinois brings her scholarly expertise to this fascinating and deeply resonant chapter of Jewish history, exploring who these migrants were, what drove them to leave, and how they navigated a world that was often hostile to their passage. The echoes of their story in our own moment are impossible to ignore.

Eight Days of Chanukah?

When: December 2, 7:00–8:30 pm

Location: Weiner Room | In-person & Virtual

Leader: Rabbi Brian Immerman

As children, we often state with pride that Chanukah lasts for eight nights instead of just one. Have you ever wondered why? Rabbi Immerman will guide us through a text-based discussion, examining the Book of Maccabees and other commentaries to learn the four reasons why we get to celebrate Chanukah for eight crazy nights.

ADULT EDUCATION (Continued)

The Day Judaism Began: The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah

When: Tuesday, February 23, 7:00–8:30 pm

Location: Zoom only

Leader: Rabbi Simcha Bob

The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah describe a dynamic period in the narrative of our people. During the first decades following the return from Babylonian exile, new rituals emerge which provide the foundation for our Jewish lives. In this class, Rabbi Simcha Bob will look closely at key verses from Ezra and Nehemiah which reveal the birth of Judaism as we know it, drawing on his new book to explore how Isaiah's vision that Torah would come forth from Zion unfolded in these days. Topics will include the shift from Paleo-Hebrew to the Hebrew script we use today, the start of public Torah reading before the community in Jerusalem, and the emergence of the Jewish calendar, including month names like Elul and Kislev.

Sacred Endings: Jewish Death, Burial, and the Chevra Kadisha

When: Wednesday, March 3, 7:00–8:30 pm

Location: Weiner Room | In-person & Virtual

Leader: Rabbi Brian Immerman and Fay Lipschultz

Chicago's Progressive Chevra Kadisha performs the sacred work of tahara, preparing our community members for burial with dignity and care. This session explores that practice alongside a text study on Jewish laws and rituals surrounding death and burial, connecting tradition to the work our community does today. Join Fay Lipschultz for a conversation on the Progressive Chevra Kadisha, and text study with Rabbi Brian Immerman.

Before "Here There Are Blueberries": The History Behind the Play

When: Wednesday, April 7, 7:00–8:30 pm

Location: Weiner Room | In-person & Virtual

Leader: Lauren Reeves and Doug Hoffman

"Here There Are Blueberries," running at Northlight Theater in Spring 2027, is a powerful and haunting drama that draws on real photographs discovered at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Join Director of Lifelong Learning, Lauren Reeves, and Adult Education Committee member, Doug Hoffman, for a pre-performance session that explores the history behind the play, offering context that will deepen your experience of this remarkable work. This session is a wonderful complement for those attending the performance as part of a congregational group outing.

Biblical Stories in Conversation with Hebrew Poetry

When: Friday, April 9, 10:45 am–12:00 pm

Location: Weiner Room | In-person & Virtual

Leader: Professor Hanna Seltzer, Northwestern University

Explore how modern Hebrew poetry engages with biblical narrative. The session will pair a biblical story with a Hebrew poem (in English translation) that echoes, reinterprets, or wrestles with it. We'll start with a brief literary look at the story, then turn to the poem to explore its connection to the source text. Come curious about how our oldest stories keep finding new life. The class is taught by Hanna Seltzer, Beth Emet member and Northwestern University professor.

Weekly Torah Study

When: Friday mornings starting October 9, 9:30–10:30 am

Location: Weiner Room | In-person & Virtual

Leader: Rabbi Brian Immerman

Join Rabbi Immerman each week to study our weekly Torah portion and uncover the many layers of meaning for both our ancient ancestors and us today. As we engage with our sacred text, we will also explore other writings, both ancient and modern, to provide and expand our understanding while providing insight and clarity. Whether you've been studying Torah for decades or are new to regular study, our rich discussions will be sure to inspire.

Adult Hebrew Classes

For many people, Hebrew is a gateway to community and learning, opening doors spiritually, intellectually, and socially. It connects us with people in Israel, Jewish communities worldwide, and fellow learners here at Beth Emet. Whether you're starting from scratch or building on what you know, now is the perfect time to learn in our supportive, stimulating classes. Hebrew classes meet weekly on Sunday mornings during the school year starting in late September (with breaks for Thanksgiving, winter, and Passover). Scholarships are available. You can register for these classes on our website or contact Director of Lifelong Learning, Lauren Reeves, for more information.

Beginner Hebrew

This beginner class is an opportunity for learners with no or limited Hebrew background to become familiar with the alphabet, how to sound out words, and begin to develop proficiency. You will also acquire some basic Hebrew vocabulary. This class meets a requirement for Adult Kabbalat Mitzvah.

Advanced Beginner Hebrew

If you'd like to participate more meaningfully at services, this class can help you continue to develop your Hebrew skills. This class is for participants who know how to decode Hebrew letters and vowels to sound out words. Participants will develop reading proficiency while exploring the structure and themes of prayers. This class meets a requirement for Adult Kabbalat Mitzvah.

Beginner Conversational Hebrew

Build confidence speaking and understanding modern Hebrew in a welcoming, low-pressure environment. Participants will read news articles, discuss life and current events, and other basic conversations in Hebrew. The only prerequisite is basic Hebrew skills.

Intermediate Conversational Hebrew

Take your Hebrew to the next level in an immersive, conversation-driven class inspired by the Ulpan approach. Using Hebrew as the primary language of instruction whenever possible, you'll strengthen your speaking, listening, and comprehension skills through engaging discussions, real-life scenarios, and authentic materials.

More to Come This Year

This is just the beginning! We have a wonderful slate of additional adult education and Israel Committee programs in the works for later this year. Watch Emet Mail and our website for updates throughout the year!

ISRAEL COMMITTEE EVENTS

Where Is Israel Headed?

When: Tuesday, October 6, 7:00-8:30 pm

Location: Weiner Room | In-person & Virtual

Leader: Mark Schoenfield moderating with Zach Selch and Joel Hodes

Israel's national election may be the most important election in its history. Where is Israel headed? What are Israelis' key current concerns and hopes for the future? What will this mean for the relationship between Israeli Jews and American Reform and Conservative Jews? Zack Selch and Joel Hodes will provide their analysis as they are interviewed by Mark Schoenfield.

Rabbi Arik Ascherman: A Champion of Human Rights

When: Wednesday, November 18, 7:30-9:00 pm

Location: Weiner Room | In person & Virtual

Leader: Rabbi Arik Ascherman and Rabbi Brian Immerman

Human rights and the vision of a peaceful Israel, one that honors the dignity of every person, are the focus of this event with Rabbi Arik Ascherman. An Israeli Reform Rabbi who has called Israel home for most of his life, Rabbi Ascherman founded Torat Tzedek (Torah of Justice) in 2017, an organization grounded in the belief that honoring God's image in every human being requires concrete action to protect human rights. For over thirty years, including his tenure leading Rabbis for Human Rights, he has confronted injustice in Israel through teaching, advocacy, and direct support for Palestinian farmers facing state-sanctioned and settler violence. His voice has carried into the courts, the Knesset, the public square, and the international press.



18% off Early Childhood Tuition

Chai Discount for New Beth Emet Members

We're more than just a preschool; we're a welcoming Jewish community where families build lasting bonds. Become a part of our family and give your child the gift of chai!

Contact Liza Monge at lmonge@jccchicago.org or 847.763.3571, Ext 9641

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SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES and FACILITY RENTAL



Onegs and Soul Spark Sponsorship

Celebrate Shabbat with Us — Sponsor an Oneg or Soul Spark Shabbat. There's something truly special about gathering together to welcome Shabbat — and you can help make it even more meaningful by sponsoring an Oneg Shabbat or a Soul Spark Shabbat service. Whether you choose to bring homemade treats or arrange for catering, an Oneg is a beautiful way to foster connection, joy, and community. Once a month, our Soul Spark Shabbat offers a contemplative, music-filled experience that nourishes the soul and uplifts the spirit. Sponsoring one of these gatherings is a heartfelt way to mark a special occasion, celebrate a simcha, or honor the memory of someone dear. To learn more or choose a date, please reach out to Allan Bogan, abogan@bethemet.org — we'd love to celebrate with you.

Facility Rental at Beth Emet

Whether you're celebrating a life cycle event, hosting a family reunion, or convening a conference, Beth Emet offers beautifully renovated event spaces at highly affordable rates. We can accommodate groups up to 600, and we make planning a breeze by helping you arrange for catering/bar, technology, and other services you need to make your special event or meeting a success.

Check out the website for more information and contact Ben Shalom at bshalom@bethemet.org for rental details.



Ways to Give

There are many ways to support Beth Emet and ensure the stability of our congregation for years to come. You may donate online through *MyBethEmet*, our community portal, whether you're a member or a guest. Members in need of login information should contact the office for assistance. Prefer to make a donation over the phone? Call 847-869-4230 ext. 0 for a quick and friendly experience. If mailing a donation is more convenient, simply send a check to Beth Emet at 1224 Dempster, Evanston, IL 60202, and let us know how you'd like the donation directed. Additionally, those interested in donating appreciated stock or via a Donor Advised Fund may contact the office for routing details. Every donation helps support our vibrant community.



ADDITIONAL GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

Dor L'Dor

FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION

"Just as my ancestors planted for me, so too, will I plant for my children."

—Talmud, Ta'anit 23A

Dor L'Dor provides perpetual support for our synagogue's programs and services through bequests. A legacy gift becomes part of the Beth Emet Foundation's invested funds and only a portion of the income earned is spent each year. As the investments grow, Beth Emet can flourish for generations to come. Beth Emet has received more than \$500,000 from bequests since the program was established.

How to participate: Join the 100+ members who have already signed up! It's easy to ensure that what you love about Beth Emet continues to thrive. You're automatically a part of Dor L'Dor by making a specific bequest to Beth Emet in your will or trust, or by naming the synagogue as a beneficiary of an insurance policy, annuity, or retirement account. Please let us know by completing a simple form at BethEmet.org/legacy. It's non-binding and you don't need to tell us the terms of your gift.

Thank you!

We thank the following who have indicated that Beth Emet is in their legacy giving plan or have left money to Beth Emet upon their death.



Anonymous (6)
Anonymous* (3)
Mrs. Theodora S. Aronson *
Sheryl and Stopher Bartol
Nancy and Phil Bashook
Diane* and Karl Berolzheimer
Sophie* and Sydney* Black
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Paula Jacobi and Todd Wiener
Dan and Leslie Yamshon
Susan Fisher and Jonathan Yenkin
David and Nikki* Zarefsky

*Denotes deceased



Dor L'Dor Portrait: Suki Fisher and Jonathan Yenkin

"The Beth Emet community is a source of strength through the good times and the difficult ones. Giving back to this loving community is important to us. It is a fulfilling thought that we will continue to provide support after our passing. By participating in Dor L'Dor, we also demonstrate to our family the value of charitable giving. We don't know what the future holds for the Jewish community, but we do believe that our progressive synagogue should continue to shape and influence it. We hope that our gift helps Beth Emet continue its role as a leader in the Jewish world and its place in the hearts of so many for years to come."

— Suki Fisher and Jonathan Yenkin

ADDITIONAL GIVING OPPORTUNITIES (Continued)

B'Yachad

ANNUAL FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN: COMING FEBRUARY/MARCH 2027

There is still work to do to achieve financial sustainability. As we launch the third year of B'Yachad, we will be sharing plans for how Beth Emet can sustain its finances after the fourth year and beyond. In order to achieve this year's balanced budget, which is predicated on our success with B'Yachad, we will need your participation. Thank you for your generosity to support Beth Emet!



Visit <https://bethemet.org/give/ways-to-give/> for more information on this year's B'Yachad campaign.

Beth Emet Foundation

The Beth Emet Foundation is one of the cornerstones of the synagogue with an increasingly important role as a supplemental source of funding for the extensive and important programming that goes on at Beth Emet throughout the year. The Foundation is Beth Emet's endowment and was created with great foresight in 1965 to support the synagogue and advance its religious, educational, and social action programs through total or supplemental funding that otherwise would not be available through the synagogue's budget. The Foundation has been, and continues to be, funded through generous gifts from members and others in the Jewish community. Most of the Foundation funds require that the principal in the fund remain untouched from year to year, thereby ensuring the future success of our community. Thus, it is the investment returns on the funds that provide the funding each year. The Foundation currently has over \$6,700,000 in assets. This past fiscal year, income from these assets provided over \$271,000 to support programming and other synagogue needs.

What you can do:

The best way to help the Foundation support Beth Emet Synagogue, now and into the future, is to donate to the Assuring our Future Fund, but any interest in giving warrants a conversation that we would love to have. Donations can be made in cash, appreciated securities, or through Donor-Advised Funds or Qualified Charitable Contributions from IRAs. Another way to provide long-term funding for the Foundation and the Synagogue is by joining the membership of Dor L'Dor, where members commit to including the Beth Emet Foundation in their estate plans.

As we begin our annual journey with reflection, repentance, prayer, and forgiveness, and commit to a better version of ourselves in the coming year, we can reacquaint ourselves with different aspects of the synagogue, be it prayer, mitzvot, programming, or general operations. If you would like more information on the Foundation, what it helps to fund, or how to contribute, please contact Brad Wynn wynnb23@gmail.com, Foundation Board President, or other members of the Foundation board listed below.

L'Shanah Tovah,

Brad Wynn, *President Beth Emet Foundation*

Beth Emet Foundation Board

Bradley Wynn, *President*

Mike Isaacson, *Treasurer*

Rob Levin, *Secretary*

Matt Feldman, *Past President*

Ellen Frank-Miller

Tony Maidenber

Diane Williams

SHEHECHEYANU

Cantor Natalie Young

Blessed is this breath, this heartbeat this day
A gift wrapped in sunrise unfolding its way
For the fruit not yet tasted, the paths yet begun
The laughter of children, the kiss of the sun

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
שְׁהַחֲיוֹנוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ וְהִגִּיעֵנוּ לְזֶמֶן הַזֶּה

Baruch Ata Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha-olam
Shehecheyanu, v'kiy'manu, v'higianu laz'man hazeh (2x)

For seasons that circle, for joys 'long the way
We give thanks for the blessing, of this precious day
We honor the journey of time that has passed
We stand here with courage in this moment at last

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
שְׁהַחֲיוֹנוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ וְהִגִּיעֵנוּ לְזֶמֶן הַזֶּה

Baruch Ata Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha-olam
Shehecheyanu, v'kiy'manu, v'higianu laz'man hazeh (2x)

The best is yet to come...

Who to Contact for What at BE

Brian Immerman

Senior Rabbi

bimmerman@bethemet.org

Lifecycle Events
Spiritual Leadership & Pastoral Care
Torah Study & Conversation

Natalie Young

Cantor

nyoung@bethemet.org

Leading Worship & Special Performances
Music & Prayer Education
Pastoral Care & Lifecycle Events

Allan Bogan

Executive Director

abogan@bethemet.org

Membership & Fundraising
Contracts & Partnerships
Oneg Shabbat and Other Sponsorships

Lauren Reeves

Director of Lifelong Learning

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Adult Learning
Beit Sefer Religious School Program
Families with Young Children

Debbie Siegel-Acevedo

Director of Community Engagement

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Community Programming
Communications
Membership Engagement

Emmie Weprin

Director of Youth Engagement

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Youth Programming
BESSY
Gesher

Ben Shalom

Facility and Technology Manager

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Facility Operations
Technology
Rental Contracts

Miriam Ratowitz

Executive Administrative Assistant

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Membership Support
Rabbinical Support
Yahrtzeits

Melinda Valverde

Educational Programs Administrator

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Adult Education Support
Beit Sefer Support

Rose Marie Isaily

Member Accounts Manager

risaily@bethemet.org

Billing & Accounts Receivable
Donor Receipts
Payment Processing & Records

Rachel Silvert

Kabbalat Mitzvah Program Coordinator

KabbalatMitzvah@bethemet.org

Kabbalat Mitzvah Scheduling

*We ask you to refrain from conducting
synagogue or committee work on
Shabbat or Jewish holy days.*



JOIN CANTOR NATALIE YOUNG ON THE AMERICAN CONFERENCE OF CANTORS MUSICAL JEWISH ADVENTURE IN MOROCCO

FEBRUARY 2027



Join the ACC and participants from across North America as we discover the sights, scents, spirit, and song of Jewish life in Morocco! Morocco's Jewish history dates back over 2,000 years, making it one of the oldest Jewish communities in the world. Jewish life flourished in Morocco under various dynasties, with vibrant communities in cities like Fes, Marrakech, and Casablanca. Today, the legacy of Moroccan Jewry remains alive in historic synagogues, bustling medinas, and the deep connections between Jewish and Muslim traditions. This will be a journey to remember!

ON THIS TOUR, YOU WILL:

- Experience voices and spirit of the ACC through concerts and musical additions throughout our journey.
- Encounter and interact with leadership from Morocco's Jewish communities.
- Enjoy Moroccan culture and cuisine, from traditional meals to hands-on encounters with local artisans.
- Engage through social action, including conversations with Muslim students honoring the country's Jewish traditions.



Learn more about this trip at

<https://secure.ayelet.com/ACCMorocco2027.aspx>



For assistance with flights, please contact anjie@ayelet.com or 800-237-1517 x340.

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1224 Dempster Street
Evanston, IL 60202

Professional Team

Rabbi Brian Immerman
Cantor Natalie Young
Allan Bogan, Executive Director
Lauren Reeves, Director of Lifelong Learning
Debbie Siegel-Acevedo, Director of Community Engagement
Emmie Weprin, Director of Youth Engagement
Miriam Ratowitz, Executive Administrative Assistant
Melinda Valverde, Educational Programs Administrator
Ben Shalom, Facilities and Technology Manager
Rose Isally, Member Accounts Manager
Butch Mayer, Head of Security
Rony St. Victor, Building Staff
Marshall Gray, Building Staff
Michael Louime, Building Staff
Rachel Silvert, Kabbalat Mitzvah Program Coordinator
Barb Wertico, Accompanist
Asher Navisky, Cantorial Assistant

Rabbis Emeriti

Rabbi Andrea C. London
Rabbi Peter S. Knobel ז"ל
Rabbi David Polish ז"ל

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