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The Monthly Newsletter of



CONGREGATION
BETH TORAH

May 2023 • Issue 351 • Iyar/Sivan

ANNUAL MEETING

Sunday, May 21st

10:00 a.m.



Join the Interfaith Effort for Justice

On Tuesday, May 2 at 6:00 p.m., Beth Torah will join 25 other religious institutions in Johnson County to present solutions that create justice in our community. Since late summer of this year, 35 Beth Torah members have begun working on the congregation's largest social justice project. The coordinated efforts of our Good Faith Network will be presented at this Nehemiah Action, as the evening is known.

Hosting this event is **Resurrection, a United Methodist Church, (Building A) located at 13720 Roe Avenue in Leawood.** The evening marks the culmination of community conversations, research, analysis, and solutions that will be presented to policymakers in Johnson County.

The objective of the evening is much more than just sharing information with elected officeholders and appointed officials and other concerned citizens. Instead, the Good Faith Network seeks a commitment to action, the acceptance of a blueprint that can be adopted to eliminate major injustices within Johnson County. The blueprint presented to officials may need to be modified, but the ultimate objectives and outcomes need to remain intact.

This year's justice agenda involves the following three issues:

Mental Health Crisis Care was identified by Good Faith Network in last year's priority as a major concern for Johnson County. A primary solution offered by the Network was a crisis stabilization center that provides short-term stays for people in mental health crisis. The crisis center will decrease the community's use of emergency rooms and inpatient facilities.

Ending Homeless is another issue that was recognized last year. A study by Housing and Urban Development indicates that 180 individuals are homeless in Johnson County on any

continued on back page



Remarks

Rabbi Javier Cattapan, Senior Rabbi

Twenty-five Years Serving the Jewish People

It is hard to believe that this Spring marks the 25th anniversary of my ordination as a rabbi. When I was a seminary student at HUC-JIR in Cincinnati, every year, a group of rabbis would come to campus to receive their Doctor of Divinity degree, *honoris causa*, in appreciation for their service to the Jewish people. Obviously, my fellow students thought that they all seemed old and that 25 years was a long time into the future. What we did not know then is that two and half decades later, we would be "those" rabbis.

Before my admission to HUC, my plan was to become a Conservative rabbi at the rabbinical seminary I was already attending in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The decision to leave my home country and everything I had known was not an easy one. In part, it was prompted by the seminary's policy in place at that time that forbade ordaining openly gay rabbis. As it turned out, attending HUC was the best decision I've ever made in my career. The College-Institute welcomed me with open arms and made possible my becoming a rabbi as a complete, honest individual. I am thankful for my years in Cincinnati and cannot express enough how much impact the faculty and my classmates had on me during those formative years.

In 1998, I could not have imagined the many people I would be blessed to have as congregants, co-workers, and colleagues—including non-Jewish clergy—in the last twenty-five years. I met them while serving three congregations in Ohio, Indiana, and Kansas, and their influence has endured to this very day. Their respect and care, and, in many cases, their continued friendship, have enriched my life as a rabbi and human being in ways that words cannot express. And yes, even those who were sometimes a bit difficult to deal with taught me important lessons about patience and resiliency.

During the first week of May, I will travel to New York City to participate in the College-Institute's graduation ceremony, where, alongside many of my classmates, I will receive my Doctor of Divinity degree *honoris causa*. This time around, much to my surprise and delight, I will be one of the "old" rabbis!

Everyone is invited to attend the ceremony in person and virtually. You can find more information about the ceremony and opportunities for a celebratory gift in my honor at <https://huc.edu/about-huc/graduation/25-anniversary/>. **You must register to attend in person or receive the streaming link. [Click here](#) to register.**

President's Corner

Happy May Everyone...

This month brings us warmer weather (*yippee!*) and the end of the school year with high school and college graduations. I'm proud to announce my daughter Elyanna will be a University of Kansas graduate in less than a month. Hard to believe. She warned me not to wear my Mizzou Class of 1978 t-shirt to the ceremony.

Springtime is in full bloom. The smell of fresh cut grass and smoke from dormant BBQ grills now fill the air. The new baseball season is well underway with the annual statement "all things are possible" (except for the Royals) and summer is right around the corner.

The Weiner Religious School will have confirmation on May 25. This is a small but very active and engaged group of young adults. I would like to invite and encourage everyone to attend and support our confirmands.

May also brings us the Beth Torah annual meeting. This year our annual meeting will take place on Sunday May 21. Everyone will receive a copy of the 2024 budget and associated documents. The annual meeting is your opportunity to learn about the state of the synagogue, hear the treasurer's report, and to ask questions and provide feedback on the financial workings of the congregation. I encourage everyone to attend and let your voice be heard. If you cannot be with us, please make sure your proxy card is turned in so we can properly move our agenda forward.

Last but certainly not least, the winds of change have returned to Beth Torah. Rabbi Cattapan's contract calls for us to declare now, our intentions when his contract ends on June 30, 2024. We recently met with Rabbi and the decision was made not to renew his contract. A search committee is being formed and we will begin the journey of finding a new Senior Rabbi for our congregation. The process will be transparent, and we welcome input from everyone.

Please be assured that through the end of Rabbi's contract on June 30 2024, it will be business as usual at Beth Torah. Weekly Shabbat and High Holy Days services will continue as will all life cycle events. Plans are already underway for next year's Purim carnival, Chili Cook off and congregational Passover seder. Our second annual CBT backyard BBQ bash is June 24 and will be bigger and better than last year. Also in the works is a Las Vegas night, food trucks, and other surprises from the CBT Women's Group and our upcoming adult education events are too numerous to list.

Sadly, the rumor mill is already running at full steam. It's been brought to my attention that "some people" heard we are merging with B'nai Jehudah, the building is already up for sale, we are shutting down the WRS and we are merging the WRS with B'nai Jehudah. There is absolutely no truth to any of this and it has never come up for discussion since I have been President for the last two years. If you are hearing any of this nonsense, please disregard. Contact me directly or call the office with any concerns or questions.

Beth Torah is in transition. As in the past, we will rise and work together as a congregation to form our next chapter. We can say the same thing about Beth Torah that we can about the new baseball season: All things are possible.

Larry Myer

President, Board of Trustees



Music & More



We are only four months in to the Gregorian year, and what a year it's already been! We celebrated *Shabbat Shirah* and *Israel Shabbat*. We sang and prayed with our Weiner Religious School learners and their families. And our final Family Service Shabbat of the semester is coming up this Friday!

To all of you who continue to show up and support our community—through your presence, your sponsorships, your donations, and your comments—*Thank You!* From our youngest to our oldest, from our newest hands to our old pros, our worship teams work hard, pouring their hearts and souls into co-creating moving, worshipful events for the congregation.

Here's what is coming up in May!

- ✧ Family Service Shabbat / Torah Service / 5th Grade *Chag HaSiddur* (May 5)
- ✧ Ask the Rabbi about Shavuot / Graduate Recognition / Camp Blessing (May 19)
- ✧ Potluck Productions Play Reading (May 21)
- ✧ Pride Shabbat Choir Rehearsals Begin (May 24)
- ✧ Erev Shavuot Worship & Confirmation (May 25)

ATTENTION MUSICIANS!

Pride Shabbat is approaching. Choir rehearsals begin May 24 and band rehearsals are TBD. Please email me for more info!

Shalom, Lezlie

Weiner Religious School



I am excited to announce that starting June 1, 2023 I will be the full-time Principal and Administrator of the Weiner Religious School.

Be on the look out for activities and events happening this summer at CBT! Big changes coming!

It's hard to believe that we are getting close to the end of the 2022-2023 school year. We survived Passover and I prefer not to see Matzah again until next year. Our WRS family Passover Chocolate Seder was quite the sugar rush! TAG, Confirmation, Sunday school students, and parents participated in the Seder. This will forever be a WRS annual tradition. We spent a wonderful Shabbat evening together as our 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th graders took part in the service. Mrs. Ellenberg's 5th grade students used their creativity to present their Jewish Hero Reports. We even went on a field trip and spent the day at the JCC celebrating 120 years of JFS. Parent orientation for the 2023-2024 school year was a success. If you need help with registration or have any questions please don't hesitate to reach out.

WRS Confirmation students are preparing for their big day. It brings me such joy to see our Confirmation students in this stage of their lives. I have had the privilege of watching Alice Lenz, Evie Latman, and Emma Bowen grow into the kind, compassionate, and strong young people they are today. It will truly be an honor to watch them take this next step in their Jewish lives and become Confirmands. **The Confirmation ceremony will be held on Thursday, May 25, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. at CBT.**



As we get towards the end of the year it is important to recognize the hard work, passion, and love our incredible WRS staff has dedicated to our learners and community. Thank you **Hannah Ginsberg** and **Alex Mead** for leading our TAG students on their Jewish educational journey. Thank you **Stephanie Kolb** for creating such fun and engaging lessons for your learners. You have built some beautiful relationships with the littles and I see how much they care for you. Thank you **Alex Mead** for being a team player and always being flexible. Teamwork truly does make the dream work. Thank you **Denise Ellenberg** for always going above and beyond for your students. You have such a passion for teaching Judaism and your students will never forget the knowledge and values you provide. Thank you **Betsy Wanger** for always being patient and supportive for our learners and teachers. Thank you **Sierra Debrow** for your love, guidance, and optimistic outlook on life. Thank you **Zach Zwibelman** for EVERYTHING you do to make WRS and CBT the amazing place it is. If I named them all this would turn into a chapter book. For the man who never has too many tasks, we appreciate you more than you know! Thank you **Norine Rosenblum** for all of your silly songs, arts and crafts, and embellishments. Kiddos you had 20 years ago still remember your matzah song! Thank you **Elaine Tobias** for bringing back library and story time. You have helped encourage students to read Jewish literature and enjoy it. Thank you **Lia Davidson** for always being available and ready to help. Thank you **Rabbi Cattapan** for your contribution to our Jewish community and I look forward to working with you. Thank you **Dr. Howard Pitler** for volunteering your time, advice, and guidance. You are a positive role model for our community. Thank you **Marcia Rittmaster** for your knowledge and wisdom. You are an inspiration and a wonderful mentor. Thank you **Lezlie Zucker** for creating an original song for our Hebrew word of the day, always going with the flow, and filling our souls with Jewish music. Thank you to all of the wonderful madrichim who are positive role models and leaders in our Jewish community. Thank you **Alice Lenz, Emma Bowen, Rex Heberd, Caroline Simpson, Caroline Gordon, Jonathan Raymond, Johnathan Kerstein, and Ilan Falicov.**



Put it on your calendar!

- ✧ **Friday, May 5, 2023** is our 5th grade family worship service and celebration.
- ✧ **Sunday, May 7, 2023** is our last day of Sunday School.
The Women's Council is bringing an ice cream truck to CBT **at 11:45 a.m.** for students, staff, and families.
- ✧ **Thursday, May 25, 2023** Confirmation ceremony at 6:30 p.m.
- ✧ **First day of Sunday School is September 10, 2023.**
- ✧ **First day of TAG is Wednesday, September 27, 2023.**

*Shalom!
Morgan*

SICCHAT SHABBAT: SHABBAT CONVERSATIONS

9:00 – 10:15am every Saturday in the library OR ONLINE:

beth-torah.org/virtual-sanctuary/

May 5: Ancient Flood Myths, presented by Emily Albano

April 12, 19, 26: Sichat with Rabbi Cattapan

WATCH FOR SUMMER AND FALL EVENTS!

Contact Jill Maidhof jill.maidhof@gmail.com | 913.832.4477



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
30 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:30am Weiner Religious School 10:30am Sunday Morning Mussar 	May 1 First Day of Asian Pacific American Heritage Month	2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5:45pm Good Faith Network Nehemiah Assembly 6:30pm Jewish Living 	3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6:30pm TAG
7 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9am Spring Blood Drive @ B'nai Jehudah 9:30am Weiner Religious School 	8	9 Lag BaOmer	10 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6:30pm TAG
14 Mother's Day <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1pm Movers + Schmoozers - 5783 Small Group 	15	16 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5:30pm Game Night - 5783 Small Group 6:30pm Jewish Living 7pm Song Session 	17
21 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10am CBT Annual Meeting 10am Soul Stirring - 5783 Small Group 3pm Potluck Productions Play Reading 	22	23 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6:30pm Jewish Living 	24 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1:30pm Smiles with Tiles - 5783 Mahjong Small Group 7pm Pride Shabbat Choir Rehearsal
28 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2pm Book Club: That Book I Meant to Read - 5783 	29 Memorial Day	30 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6:30pm Jewish Living 	31 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7pm Pride Shabbat Choir Rehearsal

Spring Blood Drive Details!

WHEN: Sunday, May 7, 2023
9:00 am - 2:00 pm



WHERE: Congregation B'nai Jehudah
Room 23, 24
12320 Nall Ave. • Leawood, KS 66209

https://donate.savealifenow.org/donor/schedules/drive_schedule/79679

Save the Date!!!

- ☆ Beit Midrash – July 2
“Jewish Communities of the Rhineland”
Rabbi Cattapan will share (some of) what he learned during his sabbatical.
- ☆ Bar Mitzvah of
Rex Hebbard – June 3
- ☆ Bar Mitzvah of
Harper Kane – June 17
- ☆ Pride Shabbat – June 23
- ☆ Pet Food Drive Begins – July 1

SAVE THE DATE:

May 25, 2023

Erev Shavuot
Worship &
Confirmation

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
4	5	6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 7pm The 10 Commandments: A Deep, Deep Dive 	<p style="background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 2px;">Cinco de Mayo</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 12:30pm Yiddish Group ● 6:30pm Erev Shabbat Worship w/ 5th Grade Famili 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 9am Sichat Shabbat ● 10:30am Shabbat Morning Worship
11	12	13
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 12pm Rabbi Lunch N' Learn (in person) ● 7:30pm The Movie Group - 5783 Small Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 12:30pm Yiddish Group ● 1pm Beth Torah Bakers - 5783 Small Group ● 6:30pm Erev Shabbat Worship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 9am Sichat Shabbat ● 10:30am Shabbat Morning Worship
18	19	20
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 12pm Exploring and Sharing Good Eats - 5783 Srr ● 7pm Celebrate the New Moon! (@CBT in the Libra 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 12:30pm Yiddish Group ● 6:30pm Erev Shabbat Worship: Graduate Recogni 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 9am Sichat Shabbat ● 10:30am Shabbat Morning Worship
25	26	27
<p style="background-color: #e67e22; color: white; padding: 2px;">Erev Shavuot</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 6:30pm Erev Shavuot Service and Confirmation 	<p style="background-color: #e67e22; color: white; padding: 2px;">Shavuot</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 12:30pm Yiddish Group ● 6:30pm Erev Shabbat Worship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 9am Sichat Shabbat ● 9am Coffee Across KC - 5783 Small Group ● 10:30am Shabbat Morning Worship
Jun 1	2	3
<p style="background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 2px;">First Day of LGBTQ+ Pride Month</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 7pm The 10 Commandments: A Deep, Deep Dive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 12:30pm Yiddish Group ● 6:30pm Erev Shabbat Worship followed by Beit M 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 9am Sichat Shabbat ● 10:30am Bar Mitzvah of Rex Hebbard

BOW Committee



Hello again everyone! I'm going to take a little of your time to tell you about how your Beyond Our Walls committee continues working in the background as part of CBT. Most obviously, you know about our streaming and our app (If you don't, go visit our website to find out!). Since the app and streaming are the most obvious, I'll start with some interesting facts.

The CBT App

Where are we today: We've had about 45 new application downloads this year, and we are approaching 700 downloads since we began using the app, which came about a year after we started streaming. In April alone, the CBT app was opened over 200 times with over 700 uses from those launches. Our community also streamed over 100 videos. Doing the quick calendar math, you know that there aren't 100 shabbats in April. That means people are re-

watching portions, sharing our services, and generally staying in contact, even if they aren't in the building and are Beyond Our Walls.

Where do we want to expand: Our app supports messaging. This is a private way for Beth Torah to talk with Beth Torah, and not rely upon other systems that can be problematic for privacy. We're going to start some messaging for the Weiner Religious school. As we create new groups and social programs, we can create both chat and announcement groups to help stay coordinated with each other. Do you have a great social justice idea? Let us help you keep everyone talking and coordinated! Are you thinking about a social group or chavurah? Let us help you get coordinated and make your CBT communications simpler. *This is ultimately your tool, so let us know how you'd like to use the app.* If we can do it, we'll get it sorted with you.

What else does BOW support?

BOW is supporting some very cool projects. I want to emphasize "supporting" as these are our people, all of you, coming up with ideas that we are helping to take Beyond Our Walls. "Expand" means your ideas, your desires. To give you an idea, here's just a quick list for you of what is happening now.

- ☆ On our website, you can review any service you want. On the Virtual Sanctuary page, there are categories to help you narrow your search.
- ☆ Special programs, like the Beit programs, some Adult Education, social justice meetings, etc., have some level of BOW support. We even had one speaker ask to have theirs recorded for their own use.
- ☆ Being the technical question and IT helpers for our staff.
- ☆ Did you know the **Weiner Religious School** held a **Chocolate Seder**? Well, you can see an overview at the end of the school year. We are working with our new principal, Morgan, to support her initiatives and further promote the Weiner Religious School.
- ☆ **Most recently, our confirmation class of 5783/2023 is running an awesome project.** Many of you either have, or will be receiving, an email about participating (so be careful with your email mass deletions!). These ladies are helping to document CBT's history and celebrate our Chai Members. These are members who have been **part of the congregation for over 18 years**. Some are young adults, some are older adults, and some are smack in the middle. That's incredible, joyous, and we want to celebrate these members. Our confirmands are scheduling short interviews that take just a few minutes, to ask 5 questions. They have a great start on the project and we'll begin publishing these short interviews soon, for everyone to share. Watch your app for more information. 😊

If you want to support the BOW work, you'll find a donation link on our website. If you want to be more active with CBT and can help coordinate programs, we'd love to have you volunteer! If you want to do both, then by all means, do both! We have opportunities, both technical and non-technical, where you can help the congregation (some of them can be done from home, in pajamas). So many ways you can be involved!

For program ideas, requests to be involved, or questions about having private messaging to support your group, please email cbt.bow@beth-torah.org. You can also call TAL (technical assistance line) and leave us a message, or text us, at 913-303-1134.

To make sure you're included in the Chai Members interviews, please send an email to Julie Myer, our volunteer coordinator, at jam719@att.net.

Shalom,
Dave Zucker
Chair, BOW Committee



CONGREGATION BETH TORAH

March 10 thru April 13 2023 Tributes

Beth Torah General Fund

Claudia Alexander
Carol Ducak
Jeri Swinton & Michael Ginsberg

Yahrzeit of George Kaplan

Alice Kaplan

In Celebration of Steve & Margie Cooper's new home

Ken Kalina & Jane Erin

In Memory of Tannye Shafran

Joyce & Stan Zeldin

Rabbi Cattapan's Discretionary Fund

In Appreciation of Rabbi Cattapan

Jeri Swinton & Michael Ginsberg

Yahrzeit of Dorothy Kreitman

Joe Levy

Yahrzeit of Jeanette Stark and Meyer Kreitman

Howard & Rita Stark

Yahrzeit of Rose Skikne

Barry Skikne

In Memory of Isabelle Irene Childers and Phyllis Camorlynck

Ron & Jo Ann Ginson

CBT Fund For Families In Need

In Memory of Tannye Shafran

Stephanie & Adam Elyachar

In Memory of Marvin Robbins

Howard & Gloria Pitler

Music & Choir Fund

For the Speedy Recovery of JoAnn Harris and Bonnie Swade

Steve & Margie Cooper

In Appreciation of Dave Zucker

Steve & Margie Cooper

In Appreciation of Jim Kaplan & Lezlie Zucker

Steve & Margie Cooper

Hunger Fund

In Memory of Edward Ducak

Carol Ducak

In Memory of Larry Kalender

Sheila Goldberg & Lisa Levine

In Memory of Sion Rahbarrad

Parvin Rahbarrad

Dr. Milton L. Tate Torah Fund

In Memory of Teresa Estrada

Barbara Gutierrez

*Thank you to all who have donated
and contributed to
Congregation Beth Torah!*



CONGREGATION BETH TORAH

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Join the Interfaith Effort for Justice *continued from page 1*

given night. Throughout the year, 1,000 students in the community are precariously housed or homeless. The Network is advocating a comprehensive plan that includes a dedicated homeless coordinator.

Affordable Housing is an issue that was championed by Beth Torah Network members in our initial issues session and was the most frequently cited justice concern by all our Network members. The lack of affordable housing in Johnson County removes the opportunity for teachers, first responders, and service workers to reside in the community they serve. The Network seeks solutions that relate to incentivizing housing stock that can be affordable and long-term.

Please put **Tuesday, May 2 at 6:00 p.m.** on your calendar. Join our other faith groups to see how justice can be promoted in Johnson County. There is no charge for the event, and tickets are not required. Contact Scott Franklin (913-645-1036) or the CBT office (913-498-2212) for more information.