



The MESSAGE

HOUSTON, TEXAS MAY 3, 2009 9 IYAR 5769 VOL. XLIV, No. 18



FRIDAY, MAY 8

Candlelighting Time 7:45pm
6:00pm Shabbat Renewal
with the Koren Family
6:15pm Shabbat Jam
6:45pm J.B. Greenfield Chapel

SATURDAY, MAY 9

Parashat Emor
8:30am J.B. Greenfield Chapel
9:15am Museum Minyan
9:30am Sanctuary Service
Bat Mitzvah: Stephanie Koren
9:30am Jr. Congregation
11:30am Weekly Torah Study
7:30pm J.B. Greenfield Chapel

FRIDAY, MAY 15

Candlelighting Time 7:49pm
6:00pm Shabbat Renewal
with the Blechman Family
6:15pm Shabbat Yachad
6:45pm J.B. Greenfield Chapel

SATURDAY, MAY 16

Parashat Behar
8:30am J.B. Greenfield Chapel
9:15am Museum Minyan
9:30am Sanctuary Service
B'nai Mitzvah: Scott &
Sarah Blechman
9:30am Jr. Congregation
11:30am Weekly Torah Study
7:30pm J.B. Greenfield Chapel

Come Celebrate Shavuot With Us!



Thursday Night - May 28 at 6:45 pm

Night of Study & Reflection

Free & Open to the Community

Made possible by a wonderful gift from Carol Emery
& special friends (to be named)

Details on page 3

Friday - May 29 at 9:30 a.m.

Combined Sanctuary/Museum Minyan Service

Saturday - May 30 at 9:30 a.m.

Yizkor

Sanctuary Service

Shavuot Blintz Luncheon

A gift of Shirley & Bruce Stein

--- OPEN BOARD MEETING ---

Tuesday, May 19, 2009 at 7:30 p.m.

Topic: 2009-2010 Synagogue Budget

(The proposed budget will be mailed.)

WITH RABBI MORGEN

Ruth – The Bible’s Model Jew by Choice

On Shavuot (“The Feast of Weeks”) our tradition teaches us to read the Biblical Book of Ruth. There are at least two reasons for this tradition. First, one of the central scenes in the story of Ruth takes place during the spring grain harvest and Shavuot is the festival that marks the end of the wheat harvest. The second reason is that Ruth is a Moabite woman who voluntarily leaves the comfort, convenience and congeniality of living with her family and tribes-people in order to become a member of the Jewish people. By taking on the commandments and responsibilities of being a Jew, she symbolizes the act of faith the Jewish people accepted upon themselves when they stood at Mt. Sinai, accepting God’s commandments and promising to follow God’s laws.

Ruth’s story is very rich in emotional and romantic elements as well as in ethical and moral messages.

The story begins with an Israelite woman named Naomi who moves with her husband and their two sons to Moab from their home in Bethlehem in the land assigned to the tribe of Judah. Shortly after arriving in Moab, Naomi’s husband, Elimelech, dies. Her two sons then marry Moabite women (who apparently did not “convert” to Judaism before the marriage). Then catastrophe strikes Naomi again and her two sons die within a short period of time. Neither of the sons had yet given Naomi grandchildren, and she is now utterly bereft and forlorn.

Naomi decides that there is nothing left for her in Moab, and so she should return to Bethlehem. Her two daughters-in-law at first choose to go back with her. But Naomi tells them that she has no more sons for them to marry, and suggests that they will probably not fare well as strangers and impoverished widows in Israelite territory. (Remember, too, that the Moabites had not been friendly neighbors to the Israelites.) So one daughter-in-law takes Naomi’s advice and returns to her own kinsmen for support and comfort. But Ruth, the second daughter-in-law, is not to be deterred. Apparently

out of love, kindness and commitment to her aging mother-in-law, she chooses to leave behind what would certainly be an easier life with her own people, to go to a foreign land and face unknown challenges as a member of the Jewish people.

Ruth’s famous declaration (“Do not urge me to leave you, to turn back from following you. For wherever you go, I will go. Wherever you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people. Your God, my God. Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. I vow before God that nothing but death could part me from you.”) has become a *sine qua non* for most ceremonies celebrating the conversion of someone to Judaism.

In the end, Ruth finds happiness gleaning in the fields of a distant relative of Naomi’s named Boaz. He is apparently a fairly well-to-do, but somewhat aging estate owner (and bachelor). Boaz demonstrates his kindness toward the stranger, Ruth, by instructing his field-workers to leave behind extra grain for her to collect behind them as they harvest Boaz’s crop. Rather like the scene in “South Pacific,” the estate owner has cast his eyes upon Ruth from a distance (across a crowded field), and he knew even then that this was some enchanted (or *beshert*) encounter. The two married, and the closing lines of the Book of Ruth inform us that their son Obed was the grandfather of none other than King David.



From Ruth’s story, then, we learn several important lessons. First, kindness and commitment to friends and relatives (such as Ruth’s kindness to her mother-in-law) is not only its own reward, but often leads to even greater achievements and benefits. Second, be kind to strangers (as Boaz was to Ruth). You never know where such kindness will lead. As a people, we Jews must be welcoming, supportive, and generous with anyone who chooses to join the Jewish faith and community. Ruth represents the Bible’s model for a Jew by Choice: an adult who chooses to bind her (or his) destiny to ours, to accept the challenges of learning a different pattern of faith and culture, to help raise the next generation of Jews, and to lend their hands to our eternal task of perfecting the world under God’s universal sovereignty. What a gift Jews by Choice bring to our people!

A NIGHT OF TORAH STUDY IN CELEBRATION OF SHAVUOT

STRANGE AND TROUBLING STORIES IN THE TORAH

Thursday Night, May 28, 2009, starting at 6:45

Made possible by a wonderful gift from Carol Emery and special friends (to be named)

“How to Study Strange and Troubling Texts”

WITH RABBI STEVEN MORGEN

8:00 p.m. SHAVUOT SERVICES Freedman-Levit Sanctuary and the J.B. Greenfield Chapel



We honor the men and women who made the commitment this year to deepen their commitment to Beth Yeshurun and their Jewish heritage. We are proud of what they have done and what we have shared, and on Shavuot we salute them as they complete an extraordinary year of study.

We Study 2 Stories Before the Meal

THE HARLOT ON THE SIDE OF THE ROAD

Looking for a strange and troubling story? How about being seduced by your daughter-in-law? That's what happened to Judah, leading to centuries of speculation on how such a thing could have happened! WITH RABBI DAVID ROSEN

THE DONKEY THAT TALKED

A talking donkey in the Torah? And a smart one at that! But he knew something his master didn't, and from this "smart a..., er, donkey" came centuries of commentaries about him and the guy who rode him. WITH RABBI BRIAN STRAUSS

LIGHT FESTIVAL MEAL

In Stein Hall (no charge, but please RSVP NGONZALES@BETHYESHURUN.ORG)

And a Final Story After the Meal

EVE, THE APPLE AND THE TALKING SERPENT

A simple story that every child learns in First Grade, but the story of Eve, Adam and the snake is one of the most troubling stories in all the Torah. And not just for Jews, but Christians too! WITH RABBI STEVEN MORGEN






Last but Not Least

The Sweetness of Torah: Gala Ice Cream Sundae Finale



May at Beth Yeshurun



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
B/M: Bar/ Bat Mitzvah CLT: Candle lighting HHS: Hillel High Sch. MM: Museum Minyan RS: Relig. School YA: Young Adults YF: Young Families SH: Sisterhood BH: Brotherhood	Visit www.bethyeshurun.org for event details and updated times				Friday Night Alive! 6:00 PM  CLT: 7:40 PM Chapel 7:00 am 6:45 pm	B/M: Reagan Bazarsky Alexandra Wiesenthal MM 9:15am Sanctuary 9:30am Jr. Cong. 9:30 am Tot Shabbat & Mini Minyan 9:30am Torah Study 11:30 Chapel 8:30 am 7:30 pm
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
RS 5 th grade Historical Trip Akiba Chapel 8:00 am 7:45 pm	Security Cmte. Chapel 7:00 am 7:45 pm	Membership Cmte. SH Board Mtg. HHS/Last session Chapel 7:00 am 7:45 pm	RS 4 th gr. field trip Chapel 7:00 am 7:45 pm	Chapel 7:00 am 7:45 pm	Shabbat Renewal 6pm Congregational Shabbat Dinner With Deidre Berger Shabbat Jam 6:15pm Shabbat Jam Family Shabbat Dinner CLT: 7:45 PM Chapel 7:00 am 6:45 pm	B/M: Stephanie Koren MM 9:15am Sanctuary 9:30am Jr. Cong. 9:30 am Torah Study 11:30 Chapel 8:30 am 7:30 pm
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Akiba Chapel 8:00 am 7:45 pm	Chapel 7:00 am 7:45 pm	Lag B'Omer SH Spring Program HHS Confirmation Chapel 7:00 am 7:45 pm	100 Jewish Men  Chapel 7:00 am 7:45 pm	Chapel 7:00 am 7:45 pm	Shabbat Renewal 6pm Shabbat Yachad 6:15pm CLT: 7:49 PM Chapel 7:00 am 6:45 pm	B/M: Scott & Sarah Blechman MM 9:15 am Sanctuary 9:30 am Jr. Cong. 9:30 am Torah Study 11:30 Chapel 8:30 am 7:30 pm
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Akiba Last Day of RS Chapel 8:00 am 7:45 pm	Budget Cmte. BYDS Spring Book Fair Chapel 7:00 am 7:45 pm	Exec. Cmte Brd. of Trustees BYDS Spring Book Fair Chapel 7:00 am 7:45 pm	BYDS Spring Book Fair YES Group Study Session YES Group Luncheon Investment Cmte. Chapel 7:00 am 7:45 pm	BYDS Spring Book Fair  Chapel 7:00 am 7:45 pm	Yom Yerushalayim Shabbat Renewal 6pm HHS All Grade Shabbat Dinner BYDS Spring Book Fair CLT: 7:53 PM Chapel 6:45 am 6:45 pm	B/M: Allison Wolgel MM 9:15am Sanctuary 9:30 am Jr. Cong. 9:30 am Torah Study 11:30 Chapel 8:30 am 7:30 pm
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Rosh Chodesh Chapel 8:00 am 8:00 pm 31 Chapel 8:00 am 8:00 pm	Memorial Day Syn. Ofc. Closed  Chapel 8:00 am 8:00 pm	Chapel 7:00 am 8:00 pm	Chapel 7:00 am 8:00 pm	Erev Shavuot Tikkun Leil Shavuot Chapel 7:00 am 8:00 pm	Shavuot I Syn. Ofc. Closed Shabbat Renewal 6pm Shabbat Yachad 6:15pm CLT: 7:57 PM Chapel 8:30 am 6:45 pm	Shavuot II Yizkor  Chapel 8:30 am 6:45 pm

FAMILY ALBUM

■ Anniversaries

- 5/3 17 Edward & Shelly Gardner
56 Tom & Kay Goldman
5/5 41 Nathaniel & Linda Addleman
30 Harry & Teri Greenblatt
5/6 2 Robert & Beverly Pickelner
3 Brent Wasserstein & Sallye Wolf Wasserstein
18 Fred & Julie Wolgel
5/7 9 Todd & Michelle Gottesman
15 David & Joan Rosenthal
9 Fred & Nancy Stow
5/8 15 Nelson Gruber & Manizeh Mirza-Gruber
5 Steven & Jill Newman
5/9 11 Randy & Heather Reichstein
5/11 40 Floyd & Charlotte Goldberg
7 Mark & Beth Sanders
5/12 63 Paul & Revekka Belkin
8 Reid & Anissa Friedman
18 Jeffrey & Cynthia Gollomp
5/13 8 Michael & Barbara Gamson
14 Charles & Bettina Katz

- 19 Jeffrey & Lisa Myers
14 Martin & Cindy Reichek
19 Jay & Valerie Resh
64 Sidney & Sarah Schwartz
5/14 37 Jay & Betty Epstein
14 Michael & Shelley Wiesenthal
5/15 21 Rory & Laura Alter
10 Gary & Bonnie Blumberg
38 Jerry & Elaine Feiner
26 Geoffrey & Barbara Koslov
34 Burton & Mary Kunik
34 Joshua & Zahava Levy
67 Iosif Tsimelzon & Yelena Lozinskaya
5/16 22 Frank & Salli Goldberg
10 Steve & Pepi Nichols

■ Condolences

*The congregation extends its sincerest condolences to the families of --
Dr. Zidella Brener, Esther Davidson, Gary Gotlieb,
Bessie Mitz, Myrna Rudolph, Ron Wuntch
May their memories be for a blessing.*

The Sisterhood of
Congregation Beth Yeshurun
wants You to be the star of our
SPRING MOTHER-DAUGHTER LUNCHEON
AND SISTERHOOD BOARD INSTALLATION
TUESDAY, MAY 12, AT 11:00 A.M.

YOU are the star if you are
*A Mother * A Daughter
*A Gift Shop Volunteer
*A Sisterhood Board Member
or just joining your Friends for Lunch

Your check is your reservation.
Mail your check for \$18
made payable to BY Sisterhood to:
Beth Yeshurun Sisterhood
4525 Beechnut St., Houston, TX 77096

For more information, please contact
Sheila Franklin at
SHEILAWFRANKLIN@SBCGLOBAL.NET

A night of fraternity and brotherhood mixed with a little matzah!

The 100 Jewish Men presented the Men's Model Passover Seder led by Rabbi Strauss and Hazzan Propis on April 1st. Men attended the event to learn, share and discuss topics based on a new Haggadah entitled "The Men's Seder." The group explored what it means to be a Jewish man and came together to eat, laugh and share stories.



B'NAI MITZVAH



SARAH BLECHMAN
MAY 15-16

Sarah Anne Blechman is the daughter of Emily and Steve Blechman and the sister of Scott. Her proud grandparents are Herman and Rhoda Sklar of Houston, Dawn Blechman of Loveland, CO, Lila Blechman of Nobleboro, ME, and the late Sheldon Blechman.

Sarah is a sixth-grade Vanguard student at Johnston Middle School and a member of Girl Scout Troop 4009. For her Mitzvah Project, she collected books that were donated to a school that was greatly affected by Hurricane Ike. She is pleased to share this simcha with her brother, Scott.



SCOTT BLECHMAN
MAY 15-16

Scott Frederick Blechman is the son of Emily and Steve Blechman and the brother of Sarah. His proud grandparents are Herman and Rhoda Sklar of Houston, Dawn Blechman of Loveland, CO, Lila Blechman of Nobleboro, ME, and the late Sheldon Blechman.

Scott is a seventh-grade Vanguard student at Johnston Middle School and a member of Boy Scout Troop 806. For his Mitzvah Project, he collected books that were donated to a school that was greatly affected by Hurricane Ike. He is pleased to share this simcha with his sister, Sarah.

■Max Hoffer receives 2009 Chesed Award



Max Hoffer was recently honored at Congregation Beth Yeshurun's Hillel High School Graduation as the 2009 recipient of the Kevin Michael Penn Chesed Award. Max's essay, describing how simple acts of kindness can define you as a person, truly captured the meaning of the award and its purpose. Max, a junior at The Kincaid School, is the son of Gayle and Scott Hoffer.

The Chesed Award, established by Susan, Jeffrey and Kacie Penn, honors the memory of their beloved son and brother. It is awarded annually to a junior in the Hillel High School. Through this award, his family hopes that Kevin's generous spirit, kind heart and compassion for others will live on as acts of kindness such as these are honored.

■JFS interest-free student loans available

Interest-free student loan applications are being accepted by JFS for the 2009-2010 academic year. Applications will be accepted from students entering their first year of college, and students in undergraduate, graduate or professional programs. All applications and paper work must be completed by May 29. Please contact Toby Newman, LCSW, TNEWMAN@JFSHOUSTON.ORG or Linda Greene, LMSW, LGREENE@JFSHOUSTON.ORG at Jewish Family Service, (713)-667-9336 for more information.

BIG CHANGES ARE COMING!!!!

Watch for BIG CHANGES in
The Message
The Shavuon
Making donations to Beth Yeshurun



The MESSAGE

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WWW.BETHYESHURUN.ORG

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Paul Katz, Brotherhood President.....pkatz88@comcast.net
Lester Rosen, YES Group Chair.....lrosen@aol.com

Hillel Confirmation to be held May 12

Tuesday, May 12, 2009 promises to be a truly special evening for Hillel High School at Congregation Beth Yeshurun. Fifteen tenth graders will receive certificates of their Confirmation. Students will lead a Ma'ariv service and will speak on the issues of Believing, Behaving and Belonging, the themes of our Confirmation Retreat. We will also be handing out several awards. The Confirmation Ceremony begins at 7:30 p.m. The community is invited to celebrate with our Confirmands and their families.

This year's Confirmation class and their proud parents are:

Amanda Alexander	Shelly & Mike Alexander
Leslye Barth	Carin & Todd Barth
Amelia Bell	Judy & David Bell
Ryan Brown	Toby & Gregg Brown
David Chaluh	Susan & Nissim Jessie Chaluh
Brian Gustafson	Stephanie & Paul Gustafson
Jared Hartman	Janice Roggenkamp & Michael Hartman
Natalie Johary	Susan Fromer Johary & Isaac Johary
Brooke Kantor	Linda & Curtis Kantor
Kali Lang	Linda & Michael Lang
Alexandra Levy	Malka & Brad Levy
Daniel Marine	Sandi & Keith Marine
Zachary Strauss	Shelly & Steven Strauss
Maia Vexsler	Sandra & Pablo Vexsler
Natalie Weisfeld	Debra & Sheldon Weisfeld

Celebrate Cancer Survivorship

FRIDAY NIGHT ALIVE! SERVICE
June 5, 2009

The rabbi will offer a special blessing for
anyone touched by cancer

In collaboration with CanCare, Inc.




THE SAN LUIS RESORT
SPA & CONFERENCE CENTER



SAVE THE DATE

Beth Yeshurun Family Retreat

Visiting Scholar: Rabbi Matt Berkowitz
Questions? Please contact Rabbi Strauss

January 29-30, 2010

San Luis Resort
Galveston, TX

WEEKDAY SERVICES IN THE J.B. GREENFIELD CHAPEL
May 3-8: Sun 8am, Mon-Fri 7am, Sun-Thu 7:45pm
May 10-15: Sun 8am, Mon-Fri 7am, Sun-Thu 7:45pm

Upcoming Message Deadline
May 25 for the June 14 issue