



The MESSAGE

HOUSTON, TEXAS DECEMBER 9, 2007 29 KISLEV 5768 VOL. XLIII, No. 7



FRIDAY, DECEMBER 14

Candlelighting Time 5:06pm
5:00pm J.B. Greenfield Chapel
6:00pm Shabbat Renewal
with Scholar-In-Residence:
Dr. Michael Cook
6:00pm ES 3rd Grade Service
6:15 Shabbat Yachad
7:00pm Shabbat Dinner and 1st
Presentation by Scholar-In-Residence:
Dr. Michael Cook

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 15

Parashat Vayigash
8:30am J.B. Greenfield Chapel
9:00am Museum Minyan
9:30am Sanctuary Service
9:30am Jr. Congregation
9:30am Mini Minyan
9:30am Tot Shabbat
11:20am 2nd presentation by
Scholar-In-Residence:
Dr. Michael Cook
11:30am Weekly Torah Study
3:45pm Shalosheudos Meal
and 3rd presentation
by Scholar-In-Residence:
Dr. Michael Cook
5:00pm J.B. Greenfield Chapel

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 16

9:00am Breakfast & 4th Presentation
by Scholar-In-Residence:
Dr. Michael Cook

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 21

Candlelighting Time 5:08pm
5:00pm J.B. Greenfield Chapel
6:00pm Shabbat Renewal

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 22

Parashat Vayechi
8:30am J.B. Greenfield Chapel
9:00am Museum Minyan
9:30am Sanctuary Service
11:30am Weekly Torah Study
5:00pm J.B. Greenfield Chapel

ANNOUNCING HAZZAN PROPIS' HILARIOUS NEW CD

Over the years, Hazzan Propis has become widely admired for his marvelous talents as a Cantor. But there is another side to Hazzan Propis, a side which reflects his marvelous sense of humor and his exquisite ability to put new (and very funny) words to well-known melodies.

For a completely different kind of CD from Hazzan David Propis, check out **Shticks & Stones**, newly available from the Beth Yeshurun Sisterhood Gift Shop.



WITH RABBI ROSEN

The spiritual warmth in our Chapel

When people think about worship services at Beth Yeshurun, the focus of attention is most often our magnificent Barg



Sanctuary or the midsize Freedman-Levit Sanctuary. But for many people in our congregation and community, the J.B. Greenfield Chapel is their preferred spiritual home.

It is easy to understand why. A 250-seat sanctuary is decidedly more intimate than a 1200-seat one—and the services are con-

ducted in a way that focuses more on the ebb-and-flow of davenning than on the life cycle ceremonies (such as Bar or Bat Mitzvah) which play such an important and meaningful role in the other Sanctuary services.

For many of our members, the first exposure to the Chapel coincides with the desire to say Kadish for a newly-deceased relative. People often tell me that the hard-

est part of going to the Chapel that first day is walking through the door. People ask themselves:

- Will I really feel welcome?
- Will the “regulars” accept me?
- Will the service be intelligible?
- Will I feel out of place—or at home?

Invariably, people discover that the “regulars” in our Chapel are among the most beautiful and welcoming people in our congregational family. Before long, even the most hesitant guests feel at home, and many

mourners end up continuing their relationship with the Chapel for years to come, not out of obligation but out of desire.

The daily minyan in our Chapel also draws Jews who are visiting our community, and they too come away deeply moved and filled with appreciation for the warmth which permeates the Chapel service. In letters I have received over the years, many visitors to Beth Yeshurun have poignantly expressed their sentiments:

From Portland, ME: “Thank you for the welcoming kindness shown to me and my family during shiva at Beth Yeshurun. We all instantly felt embraced by the morning congregations and breakfasts. We were saddened in a way to return to our respective homes because we knew we didn’t have congregations like this

to go to where we live...”

From Grand Terrace, CA: “...We arrived at the Synagogue with some apprehension.... unfamiliar with the services. We appreciated the welcome that you gave to us and your help in following the service...We wish to thank you and



the other members of your congregation who helped us at a very difficult time...”

And from Flushing, NY: “I just wanted to thank you again for being so nice to me. I have told my relatives in Houston...how comfortable you and the members of Beth Yeshurun made me feel.”

Yes, our Greenfield Chapel is a wonderful asset to our congregation. May it and the people who sustain it by their presence each day be sustained and strengthened in their efforts.

WINTER 2008 AKIBA SCHEDULE



SUNDAY 10:00 A.M. – 11:00 A.M.

(JAN. 6 – MAR. 16)

Contemplating the Tough Questions

with Rabbi Rosen

Is there a God and how do we know it? If God is perfect, why is the world so imperfect? Does God control everything that happens? What does “chosen people” mean today? And if we’re “chosen,” why is the number of Jews so small? Rabbi Rosen will

draw you into a serious discussion on these and many other questions like them that have baffled Jews for centuries. Join Rabbi Rosen as he addresses these issues head-on.

Invitation to Judaism

with Rabbi Morgen

This is a year long course geared especially for those thinking about conversion to Judaism. Major beliefs, holidays, life cycle and other practices will be discussed.

Jewish Nuts and Bolts I

with Rabbi Strauss

Reconstruct your understanding of Judaism. This is the first year of a two-year course which will survey Jewish beliefs, holidays and life-cycle events. It is designed to enrich your understanding of the Jewish way of life and thought. It will also serve as the first year of the Adult B’nei Mitzvah program’s Judaic Studies component.

Hebrew Reading II

with Cantor Diane Dorf

For those who already know the Hebrew alphabet, this class will guide you in understanding Hebrew words, grammar and common prayers in the Siddur (Jewish prayerbook).

Everyday Holiness

with Rabbi Horwitz

Rabbi Horwitz will guide the class in the process of Jewish spiritual development called “Musar.” Using the text *Everyday Holiness*, by Alan Morinis, the class will work on “soul traits” including humility, patience, gratitude, compassion, faith, responsibility and others. Purchase of the book is required for the class. Copies will be available at the first session. Call (713) 666-1881, or write GSCHNURR@BETHYESHURUN.ORG to reserve your copy.

SUNDAY 11:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.

(JAN. 6 – MAR. 16)

Beginning Hebrew

with Cantor Dorf

Hebrew for the absolute beginner. Learn to recognize and read the aleph-bet (Hebrew alphabet), develop fluency in reading and jump into the reading of Hebrew prayers in the Siddur. This year-long

course is part of the conversion and Adult B’nei Mitzvah programs at Beth Yeshurun, but, space permitting, is open to anyone who would like to learn Hebrew.

Authentic Kabbalah

with Rabbi Horwitz

Forget the pop-culture hype about Kabbalah (Jewish Mysticism). This is the real thing. Rabbi Horwitz will provide you with clarity and insight into why Kabbalah is important to Judaism, how it has affected Jewish prayer, ritual and halachah (Jewish law) and how it has influenced the way Judaism looks at intimate relationships, eroticism and the soul’s intense and persistent desire to connect with God.

Torah and Commentaries

Rabbi Dov Nimchinsky

In this engaging class, Rabbi Nimchinsky will examine key passages of the Torah through the lens of several classical commentaries, (Rashi, Ramban, Rashbam, Ibn Ezra and others) explaining not only how they differed in their interpretations, but also why they did so.

MONDAY 7:30 P.M. – 10:00 P.M.

(ONGOING)

Israeli Folk Dancing

with Rachel Rozycki-Weisblatt

Traditional Jewish and Israeli folk music, lyrics and dance tell the story of the Jewish people. Dances vary with rich Chasidic, Yemenite, European and contemporary Israeli sounds and steps. Classes are open to all ages and levels of experience.

WEDNESDAY 7:30 A.M. AFTER MINYAN

(ONGOING)

Rabbis’ Breakfast Club

with Rabbis Rosen, Morgen, Strauss and Horwitz

Join the Rabbis of Congregation Beth Yeshurun after the morning Schacharit service for bagels and more, plus a little Torah. The Rabbis will present an eclectic overview of all things Jewish.

WEDNESDAY 10:30 A.M. BEFORE YES LUNCHEONS

(DEC. 20, JAN. 16, FEB. 20, MAR. 19, MAY 21, JUN. 18, JUL. 2)

with Rabbis Rosen, Morgen and Strauss

Come and join in an inspiring discussion of current interests.

WEDNESDAY EVENINGS

(ONGOING)

Open Bet Midrash

with Rabbi Horwitz and Rabbi Morgen

A uniquely Jewish program for interactive study: Rabbi Horwitz teaches Talmud and Rabbi Morgen teaches Bible.

SATURDAY AFTER MINCHAH BEFORE SUNSET

(ONGOING)

Shalosheudos Study

with Rabbis Rosen, Morgen, Strauss and Horwitz

The Rabbis will alternately teach each of these short study classes on a variety of topics of current interest.

AROUND THE SYNAGOGUE

■New Early Childhood/Kinder playground

The brand new BYDS Early Childhood/Kindergarten Playground has officially opened for play. "Completion of our brand new area of the Tapper Playground, which had been under construction since the beginning of the summer, had been delayed due to excessive rain," explained Gale Friedman, Preschool Principal, "So needless to say, the children were all quite excited when it officially opened in late October."

Toddlertown, a play area appropriate for children 15 months through two years, contains small slides, a small playhouse, swings and climbing areas. Noah's Ark, a life-sized, boat-shaped structure positioned in the middle of the playground area, serves as a large climbing and play-center with several slides, and other means for exploration. The playground also includes spring riders, swings and a large canopied sandbox. An open grassy area, surrounded by a concrete tricycle track, provides opportunities for free play, ball games and running. All of the playground's equipment meets the most recent safety requirements according



to the American Society for Testing and Materials standards for playgrounds and the Consumer Product Safety Commission guidelines. Toddlertown and Noah's Ark are separated by a child proof gate so that the youngest students are confined to the areas safest for their ages. Both Toddlertown and Noah's Ark include a rubber fall surface used in areas where children are likely to sit on their knees. The large canopy, which hangs over the sand box, protects the children from excessive sun.

"Money obtained from major school fundraising campaigns, Ma'ayan (Annual Giving) and Share the Magic, along with the generous help of additional private donors, made this almost \$240,000 project possible," said Gary Swartz, President of the School Board of Trustees, "A project of this magnitude requires the cooperation

of the administration, teachers, lay leaders and the school community at large. We are very fortunate to have such incredible support from so many dedicated individuals and families." A Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting ceremony was held Wednesday, Nov. 16. Students, teachers, staff, parents and lay leaders gathered as Gary Swartz expressed his appreciation for everyone involved in making this project a reality. Rabbi Strauss led a special Shehecheyanu prayer. Debbie Greenberg, parent of students, Jack, Kate and Anna, provided the honors of cutting the "grand opening" ribbon.

AKIBA CLASS & YES GROUP CHANGES

- *The next YES Group Akiba class will be held Thursday, Dec. 20, at 10:30 a.m.*
- *The next YES Group Luncheon will be held Thursday, Dec. 20, at 11:45 a.m.*

We hope to see you there!

It's a Mitzvah!

Interested in sponsoring a Chapel Minyan weekday breakfast, a Chapel or Museum Minyan Shabbat Kiddush or shalashudos in memory of your loved one? Contact Eileen Pettigrew, Food Service Manager, at EPETTIGREW@BETHYESHURUN.ORG or (713) 666-1881, ext. 368. Sponsorships will be acknowledged in service announcements.

Standard breakfasts and kiddushes are \$125 minimum, Shalashudos are \$150. Special meals may be arranged with the Food Service Department and monthly sponsorships are available. All sponsorships must be paid in advance. Dates may be reserved in the order they are received.



The MESSAGE

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FAMILY ALBUM

■ Anniversaries

12/10 41 Hertz and Dorita Aron
 19 Leon and Michael Blum
 12 Joel and Allison Goldberg
 12/11 36 Gilbert and Lillian Peck
 32 Mishael and Bracha Radom
 12/12 2 Mark and Tanya Strum
 12/13 21 Randy and Joni Levy
 54 Morris and Sylvia Schultz
 12/14 10 Adele and Aaron Adelstein
 21 Cecil and Mireille Chait
 33 George and Sofia Gerszen
 21 Mark and Shelley Grenader
 4 Aaron and Joelle Miller
 52 Herbert and Aileen Tiras
 4 Paul and Suzanne Wishnow
 12/15 44 Julius and Avril Danziger
 54 Stanley and Renee Feig
 32 Maurice and Suzanne Leibman
 12/16 32 Trevor and Ruth Rabie
 12/17 29 Lewis and Lynne Gottschalk
 52 Edward and Harriet Reitman
 12/18 47 Sheldon and Shirley Arsham

19 Howard and Wendy Cohen
 47 Norman and Clarice Miller
 30 Meir and Pearl Monk
 11 Charles and Estelle Racusin
 52 Earl and Janice Selzer
 24 Michael and Sherry Van
 8 Matt and Bianca Wigder
 12/19 42 Richard and Sharon Kammerman
 36 Jerome and Elaine Rose
 37 Howard and Hedy Spiegel
 15 Bradley and Robin Stein
 8 Christopher and Carolyn Wade
 53 Stanley and Bobbie Weinstein
 12/20 9 Douglas and Tracy Dow
 20 Paul and Rae Engel
 19 Marc and Alice Levin
 48 Samuel and Judy Magids
 43 David and Rochelle Skibell
 10 Mark and Polina Strug
 15 Shahar and Lisa Yoram
 12/21 38 Jack and Ell Jana Camhi
 55 Alfred and Sylvia Freedman

55 Robert and Clara Gold
 5 Mark and Ali Katz
 27 Martin and Barbara Lindenberg
 55 Robert and Sondra Shapiro
 12/22 50 Kenneth and Charlotte Croft
 33 Steve and Elaine Epstein
 22 Scot and Sherri Farrell
 24 Keith and Sandi Marine
 5 Jeffrey Plastrik and Mara Gittess
 33 Haskell and Judith-Ann Rosenthal
 33 Jerry and Faye Wender

■ Condolences

*The congregation extends its sincerest condolences to the families of--
 Sonya Cooper-Newkirk, Paul Epner
 Deborah Fenberg, Renee Goldman,
 Esther Groudine, Azik Perelberg,
 Alan Reed, Dorothy Scott, Ida Siegel
 May their memories be for a blessing.*

Join Us at Beth Yeshurun for an Extraordinary Weekend with World-Class Scholar!

Dr. Michael Cook

**Jewish Christian-Relations:
 Retrospect and Prospect**



Friday Night, Dec. 146:00

Shabbat Renewal with Remarks by Dr. Cook
 followed by

A BEAUTIFUL SHABBAT DINNER

Adults \$18, Children \$9, Prepaid Reservations Only

[Special Children's Program during Dr. Cook's talk]

Please RSVP TFRIEDMAN@BETHYESHURUN.ORG

Dr. Cook's 1st Presentation:

**"Jews Shouldn't Read the New
 Testament!"**

**(Has This Advice of Our Sages
 Ceased to be Sage Advice?)**

Shabbat Morning, Dec. 1511:15

Following all Shabbat Services
Dr. Cook's 2nd Presentation at 11:15 a.m.:

**"Images of Jesus in the Talmud:
 Their Abiding Legacy for Jewish-Christian
 Relations Today"**

Shabbat Afternoon, Dec. 153:45

Shabbat Shalosheudos Meal (No Charge)

Dr. Cook's 3rd Presentation:

**"Why Did Virgin Birth Stories Arise:
 A Jewish Understanding of Christmas'
 Origins"**

[You are invited to remain for end-of-Shabbat Chapel Services
 beginning at 5 p.m.]

Sunday Morning, Dec. 169:00

Sunday Breakfast (\$5 Suggested Donation)

Dr. Cook's 4th Presentation:

**"Praying FOR and Preying ON the Jews:
 Why Are Missionaries Really So Bent
 on Converting Us?"**

PRE-PLANNING IS FOR EVERYONE

The death of someone you care for, together with wanting to make the right decision – especially when you have a limited amount of time to attend to all the details – leaves many families feeling overwhelmed. Often, these decisions must be made when a family is grieving and is the least prepared. Many people have done everything they can to protect their family's future but they haven't taken care of their own funeral arrangements, leaving one of the most difficult tasks to their loved ones to figure out at a time of sadness and loss. That's why it is important to give serious thought to your personal wishes. The Beth Yeshurun Cemetery Association recommends pre-purchasing cemetery property. Pre-purchasing will give you the opportunity to discuss your wishes with your spouse and your entire family, and will allow you to include them in your plans.

Pre-purchasing cemetery lots is also cost effective. The current price of a cemetery lot for a Beth Yeshurun congregant at time of need is \$3,000.00, which must be paid in full. This can represent a hardship for the deceased's family. The pre-need purchase price is \$2,500.00 with a 20% down payment and a 24-month monthly payout with no interest.

If you would like to schedule an appointment to purchase cemetery property, please contact Arthur Miller at (713) 666-1881 or (713) 771-7964.

Winter break for BY family services

Shabbat Yachad and Jr. Congregation will both be taking a Winter Break in the upcoming weeks. Shabbat Yachad, our Friday Night Family Service will meet Dec. 7 and Dec. 14. After a break, the service will resume Jan. 11. Jr. Congregation, which provides a great learning opportunity for our young congregants, will meet Dec. 8 and Dec. 15, then break until Jan. 12. Please join us for these Shabbat family celebrations.

Irving Rothman Retires From Hillel



Dr. Irving N. Rothman who has taught in the Hillel High School 40 years announced his retirement this year. Students will miss the stories of Isaac Peretz that Dr. Rothman nar-

rated at the beginning of each session - *Even Higher* and *A Pinch of Snuff* being the most memorable. During his 40 years, Dr. Rothman taught Jewish short stories, Jewish Nobel Prize Winners in Literature, the conduct of Shabbat services and interpretations of Hebrew prayers. In recent years, Hillel students who studied the

psalms as poetry were given the opportunity to write their own poems. These appeared in published booklets with photographs taken by Dr. Rothman. Dr. Rothman claims that he found the teenagers always exciting to be with. He found them to be clever and witty, intelligent and thoughtful, introspective and provocative. In the future, Dr. Rothman expects to teach in the BY adult education program. He will continue teaching in the Department of English at the University of Houston where this year he will teach a course in Jewish American literature.

Former students who wish to honor Dr. Rothman's 40 years of service may contribute donations to a Hillel High School leadership fund intended to train students to lead services or read the haftarah and torah on a weekly basis.

WEEKDAY SERVICES IN THE J.B. GREENFIELD CHAPEL
Dec 9-14: Sun 8am (Hanukkah V), Mon-Wed 6:45am (Rosh Chodesh & Hanukkah VI, Hanukkah VII, Hanukkah VIII), Thu-Fri 7am, Sun-Thu 5:15pm
Dec 16-21: Sun 8am, Mon-Tue, Thu-Fri 7am, Wed 6:45am (Asara B'Tevet - Fast Day), Sun-Thu 5:15pm

Next Message Deadline: Dec 11 for the Jan 6 issue
Dec 25 for the Jan 20 issue
Jan 8 for the Feb 3 issue

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