



# Congregation Beth Mordecai

*A Jewish Home for the Soul*

January 2015

Tevet/Sh'vat 5775

## WHITE OUT FRIDAY NIGHT

Friday, January 23



"White Out Friday Night" is a short, contemporary and meaningful update on the spiritually resonant Friday night service, and is sure to leave you dancing and singing in the street!

Come dressed in white to reflect the snow on the ground and the purity in our hearts, and get ready for a service like none you've ever seen with plenty of singing, soul searching, music and dancing.

**7:00pm - Service**

**7:45pm - Potluck Dinner**

Please RSVP to  
Rabbi Saks  
(ari.saks@gmail.com)  
with what you will be bringing.

**Argentina**  
**November 2015**  
**Are you coming?**



### Need a Ride?

The Wilf Jewish Community Center is now offering transportation to the synagogue primarily for seniors and those unable to drive. Special needs accommodated (wheelchairs, walkers, etc.).

Transportation will be offered on the first Friday and Saturday of the month. Services on Friday begin at 8pm and end between 9:00 - 9:30pm (after oneg). Services on Saturday begin at 10am and end between 12:30 - 1:00pm (after Kiddush).

If interested, contact Sherry Weber  
(908.451.9708 or sweber7854@aol.com).



## Congregation Beth Mordecai

Established 1897

Address 224 High St., Perth Amboy, NJ 08861  
Office Phone 732.442.1373  
Rabbi's Phone 732.442.2431  
Office E-mail OfficeBethMordecai@gmail.com  
Rabbi's E-mail Ari.Saks@gmail.com  
Office Hours 10am - 2pm Monday - Thursday  
Website http://BethMordecai.org

### Synagogue Staff

Rabbi Ari Saks  
Executive Director Elliot Rubin

### Board of Trustees

President Norman Silverstein  
Vice President Alan Roy  
Treasurer Matt Richter  
Budget Director Cheryl August  
Secretary Scott Gursky  
Past President Michael Gast  
Past President Ron Miskoff  
Past President Larry Deutchman  
Other David Bennett  
Other Ann Blog  
Other Sandy Katz  
Other Steve Safran  
Other Louis Sher

### Committee Contacts

Caring Sherry Weber 908.451.9708  
Duck Race Alan Roy 908.403.4303  
High Holidays Marc Fertik 732.390.3348  
David Bennett 732.494.9029  
Oneg/Kiddush Betty Fertik 732.407.0821  
Mary Ann Strauss 732.572.4176  
Social Media Avi Duvdevani 917.301.1045  
Strategic Planning Marc Fertik 732.390.3348  
YJPA Stella Morrison stella.morr@gmail.com



## Acknowledge the Occasion through Beth Mordecai

*"Tzedaka is equal in importance to all other commandments combined."*  
-Talmud

**I am pleased to make a contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
to the following fund...**

- ☐ **Rabbi's Discretionary Fund**  
Allows the rabbi to support special programs and individuals in need.
- ☐ **General Fund**  
Applied to the operating budget of the congregation.
- ☐ **Friday Night Oneg Fund**  
Used for cookies and other noshes following Friday night services.  
A contribution of \$50 supports one oneg.
- ☐ **Shabbat Morning Kiddush Fund**  
Used for luncheons and noshes following Saturday morning services.  
A contribution of \$100 supports one Kiddush.

**...in honor, memory or appreciation of:**

### My Information:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**Please send this contribution form and check directly to the synagogue office.  
Checks should be made payable to "Congregation Beth Mordecai".**



**Contributions to the above listed funds may  
also be made on the synagogue website  
through our secure PayPal link.**

*Your generous and thoughtful support keeps the synagogue running  
& helps with a multitude of worthy projects that enrich & invigorate  
our community. Todah Rabbah - many thanks to you all!*

### General Fund Donations

Paulette & Sandy Katz  
Elyse Lyons  
Elliot Rubin  
Patricia & Stephen Safran  
Libby & Allen Weingarten, in celebration of  
Mike Shevell's 80th Birthday

### YJPA

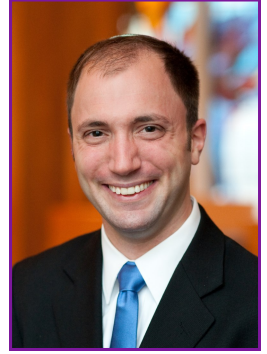
Mary Ann & Jeremy Strauss

### Rabbi's Discretionary Fund Donations

Carol Gale & Jules Einhorn  
Miriam & Jay Hamelburg  
Richard Klein  
Bernice & Bernard Magier



## LET US PRAY ON IT



Imagine having a problem you need to deal with or a challenge you are facing. How do you approach it? Well if we're honest with ourselves, many of us willfully ignore that challenge, choosing instead to let time heal its wounds until the next moment we are confronted by that same challenge. Yet even those of us who by default choose to let nature takes its course find ourselves at certain moments really wanting to find an answer to that challenge. A part of each of us, even if it's only a small part, wants to change. And as we begin a new year (granted, a "secular" year) the desire that permeated our lives in late September to do *t'shuavah*, to return to our true selves, returns to the forefront of our minds.

So if we agree (albeit tenuously) that even for the most stubborn of us this time of year motivates us to change, I ask again...how do we approach that change?

In our saturated media culture, one only needs to google the issues we are facing to discover the ten best tips to overcome them. All of the information we need is at our fingertips. We just need to point, click, and browse.

But the religious imagination is not as quick to assume that simply having information at our disposal is the solution to our challenges. Rather the religious imagination says that our response needs to be a step before collecting information; it needs to be a step in the direction of prayer.

Countless times throughout our tradition, in Talmudic, medieval, and Hassidic thinking, the term for "prayer" (*t'fillah*) is connected to the root for "listening" (*sh'ma*). This should not come as a surprise. For instance, the weekday Amidah includes the blessing "Blessed be God who hears prayers" (*shomea t'filah*). More famously, the principal prayer (or affirmation) that resonates through every Jewish soul is called...the *Sh'ma*. What's more, the relationship between listening and praying is extended to mean that listening is an *important act of prayer*. Just because we add many words to our prayers doesn't mean that God will hear them (Isaiah 1:15) and even if we blow our prayers through the loud sound of the shofar, the sound that comes back to us may only be a "still small voice" (*Un'taneh Tokef* in Rosh Hashanah liturgy). In other words, when we're praying on an issue, what we're really doing is actively listening to hear the subtle sounds around us that can point us in the right direction, the sounds that emanate from God.

And perhaps that's the rub of prayer – that prayer is inherently connected to hearing (and devoting ourselves) to God (see Rambam's Introduction to Laws of Prayer). For many of us, hearing God is almost as difficult (if not more) than deciding to try and change. It's much easier to ignore trying to see God's presence than actively pursuing God's presence, especially when the central act of that pursuit is the difficult one of listening. Yet despite all of our misgivings about God, despite all of the times of the year that we might wonder whether or not God is here and whether or not God *can hear*, perhaps there are certain times when we can push ourselves to find God, to push ourselves to listen for God's still small voice, to push ourselves to let God change our lives for the better. Maybe there is a time when faced with a challenge, we can take a moment, no matter how short, to pray on it. And maybe, just maybe, that prayer will lead us to change.

May each of us have a happy, healthy, and prayerful 2015.

*Rabbi Ari Saks*





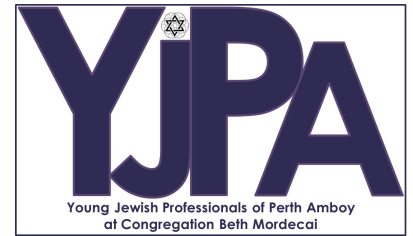
## BRANCH OUT A TU B'SHEVAT POTLUCK

**Friday, February 6**  
**5:45pm**  
**Stella's Home**

Come celebrate the birthday of the trees with other young adults.  
Environmentally themed cocktails and drinks will be provided.

RSVP to Rachel (rdsaks@gmail.com) and let her know what tree/dried fruit/nut themed dairy dish you can bring. If you can't think of one, she'll be happy to suggest one!

Stella's address will be shared when RSVP is received.



## *Murder Mystery Party*

**Saturday, February 28**  
**7:30pm**  
**224 High St., Perth Amboy**  
**\$20 Admission**

Register online at  
[www.bethmordecai.org](http://www.bethmordecai.org) or send  
payment to Sherry Weber  
(3 Sunflower Ct., Edison, NJ 08820)



**Online Parashah Class - Fridays - 12pm - Open to All**

Get in the mood for Shabbat... from the comfort of your computer! Join the Rabbi for interesting insights into the week's Torah portion during the lunch hour. To attend the LIVE class, email the Rabbi (ari.saks@gmail.com). If you miss it, watch it online (Go to <http://bethmordecai.org/category/parashah-class/>).

**Friday Night Services - Fridays - 8pm - Open to All**

Join us for spirited and lively participatory services. Each service includes elements of singing, storytelling and conversation with the community. Monthly themes:

**Celebration Shabbat - 1st Friday of Each Month (January 2)**

Commemorate your birthday or anniversary in the upcoming month with a special Friday night celebration, to be followed by a Blowout Oneg Shabbat (sponsorship opportunities available).

**Pardon the Interruption - 2nd Friday of Each Month (January 9)**

A series of 3 conversations that interrupt the Jewish ritual service in order to understand different prayers and sections of the service on a deeper level. The conversations, each 5-7 minutes long, are thematically tied and interspersed throughout the service.

**Current Events Sermon - 3rd Friday of Each Odd # Month (January 16)**

Once per month, Rabbi Saks will deliver a formal sermon on a Jewish interpretation of a relevant current events topic. The sermon will rotate between Friday nights and Saturday mornings.

**Saturday Morning Services - Saturdays - 10am - Open to All**

Traditional, egalitarian and informative. We connect participants to traditions while actively engaging them in the service. There is ample opportunity for in-depth learning of the prayers and the Torah Portion. Monthly themes:

**Torah Talk - 1st Saturday of Each Month (January 3)**

Engage with the Torah reading of the week on a deeper, more profound level by bringing the wisdom of Torah into conversation with other sources of wisdom, including that of our own lives.

**Pardon the Interruption - 2nd Saturday of Each Month (January 10)**

See description above.

**Current Events Sermon - 3rd Saturday of Each Even # Month (February 21)**

See description above. The sermon will rotate between Friday nights and Saturday mornings.



KEEP  
CALM  
AND  
SHABBAT  
SHALOM

TOT

**January 17 - 11am - This Month's Theme is "Tu B'Shevat"**

Celebrate Shabbat through this fun and interactive service with songs, story time, an activity or craft (Shabbat-friendly, of course!) and a kiddie Kiddush!

This is a FREE 1 hour program run by an accredited teacher and designed for children ages 2-5. Kiddush with the congregation to follow.

For information, or to register, please contact the office.



LIGHT CANDLES		SHABBAT ENDS	
Jan. 2	4:24pm	Jan. 3	5:28pm
Jan. 9	4:30pm	Jan. 10	5:34pm
Jan. 16	4:38pm	Jan. 17	5:41pm
Jan. 23	4:46pm	Jan. 24	5:49pm
Jan. 30	4:54pm	Jan. 31	5:56pm
Feb. 6	5:03pm	Feb. 7	6:04pm
Feb. 13	5:12pm	Feb. 14	6:12pm
Feb. 20	5:20pm	Feb. 21	6:20pm
Feb. 27	5:28pm	Feb. 28	6:28pm

Times are specific to Perth Amboy; from Chabad.org.

## LEARN & PRACTICE HEBREW

### Individual Hebrew Practice - Date & Time TBD with Rabbi

In this independent study program, participants will meet with the rabbi 1-on-1 for 30 minutes to learn and practice their Hebrew. Designed for beginners but open to all, the course will utilize the book "Teach Yourself How to Read Hebrew" as well as online tutorials. During the 1-on-1 meetings, participants will have the opportunity to review the homework in the book or practice a prayer/reading they are learning on their own. If interested, please email Rabbi Saks ([ari.saks@gmail.com](mailto:ari.saks@gmail.com)).

### Group Hebrew Practice - January 8 - 7:00pm - Free for Members

Practice your Hebrew skills for 30 minutes on the 2nd Thursday of each month. Participants will be partnered up to practice prayers from the service or pages from the "Teach Yourself How to Read Hebrew" book. This opportunity is open to all, but is specially designed to supplement those doing independent study with the rabbi.



### The Secrets of Hebrew - January 8 - 7:30pm - Free for Members; \$10 per session for Non-Members

Come and learn the secrets of the Hebrew language in this special class designed to demystify each letter of the Hebrew alphabet from א to ת. Each month, we will unpack a letter in terms of how it sounds, how it is written, and how it is used both in the Torah and in rabbinic midrash. We will also learn some important words (vocabulary) associated with each letter, how they are formed and how they work together (grammar). December's letter will be ג ('gimel').

By developing an understanding of each letter (i.e. its "secrets") participants will develop a deeper appreciation and understanding of Hebrew in total. This 45-minute class takes place on the 2nd Thursday of each month. This opportunity is open to the community.

## WHERE'S THE RABBI?



### Learn with the Rabbi

**Wednesdays - 9:30am**

**Panera Bread in Woodbridge (by Wegman's)**

Learn some inspiring Torah with Rabbi Saks at "Yeshivat Panera"!

### Ask the Rabbi

**Wednesdays - 12:00pm**

**Menlo Park Mall Food Court**

Have a question? Take a seat! Rabbi Saks will answer any question on any topic. This is also a great, low-barrier opportunity to introduce potential new members to the Rabbi and our Jewish Home for the Soul... so spread the word!!!







## Erev Hanukkah ©

By Elliot Rubin

Twas erev Hanukkah and throughout the whole house  
 Mom's brisket was cooking and permeating her blouse.  
 The latkes were sizzling, our home smelled of oil  
 We were shvitzing and tired while the chickens did boil.

There was no brick chimney or old socks to fill  
 The kinder sat motionless right by the windowsill.  
 Waiting for our Bubbe to visit that night  
 And Zayde to drive her and then have a bite  
 Of Momma's home cooking, and egg noodle, too  
 With stuffed derma tummies, we were a full crew.

Then Uncle Moishe parked in front, his old battered van,  
 And out came our cousins, chalk white with no tan.  
 There was Yossie & Malka & Chaim & old Tante Fran,  
 And Channa & Dovid & Schmuie & some unknown man.

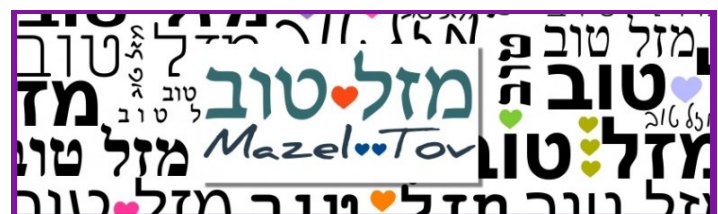
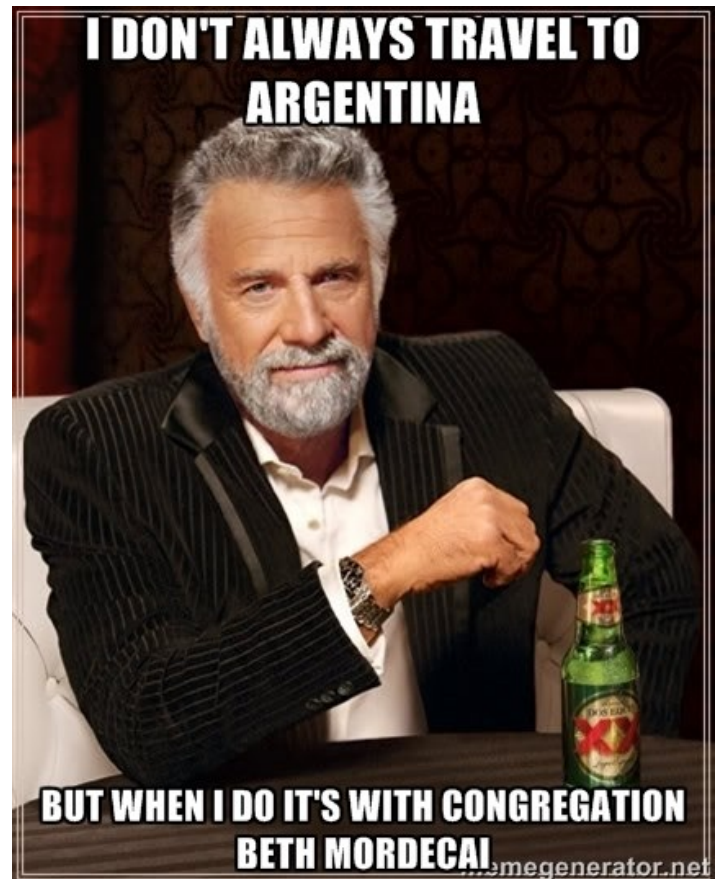
He was tall and all wrinkled and hair flaxen white  
 His beard was so long it seemed not to end  
 But as he stepped out, he did have to bend  
 And we saw fall from his black coat  
 Some letters and cards we forgot to send  
 To a Rebbe some questions, just questions, to no end  
 But he thought them good, maybe, that will depend.

So everyone did come for dinner that night  
 The Rebbe, the family, the cousins, you see  
 For erev Hanukkah there was no TV  
 The family came, not just for the food  
 But to gather together and quietly schmooze.

**Share Your Story.**

**Contact Rabbi Saks (ari.saks@gmail.com).**

**Next Bulletin Deadline - January 16**



### Birthdays

Theo Eskow

Ann Blog

Anita Krentar

Barbra Siperstein

Sheila Brown

Cheryl August

Gary Blog

Neil Hunter

Marsha Duvdevani

Scott Gursky

Renee Klein

Alvin Kravet

Bernard Magier

Charles Adell

Berniece Magier

E. Harry Korbman

Susan Bernstein

Miriam Hamelburg

### Anniversaries

Lisa & Ronald Weiss

Marsha & Avi Duvdevani



## Decision time is here!

With most of the planning complete, it is now time to know if there is enough support to pursue booking the Argentina trip (**November 1-10, 2015**).

**The base cost per person is \$2,350.** This is based on a commitment by 20-24 people. This cost does not include airfare for both roundtrip flights to Buenos Aires and Iguazu Falls. (As of December 22nd, **airfare was approximately \$1,600.**)

The tour company (Isram) has arranged a very full itinerary, including these tours:

- 1 day at a Gaucho ranch, including a kosher dinner
- a 1/2 day boat trip on the Tigre River
- a Tango show, including a kosher dinner
- a Jewish heritage tour
- a tour of the Opera House
- a city tour of Buenos Aires
- 2 nights at the UNESCO heritage site at Iguazu Falls
- PLUS, Rabbi Saks is arranging a shared Shabbat evening at one of the premier synagogues in Buenos Aires.

What a priceless opportunity to experience the culture of Argentina with our synagogue family, and with Rabbi Saks leading the group!

Each congregant may bring a non-member to travel with. **The cost for a non-member will be \$2,450.** The additional \$100 covers the synagogue's expenses.

The most current draft of the itinerary has been sent to congregants' homes. Please review it to understand the value and opportunity that is being presented.

**A verbal commitment is needed by January 15th and a \$100 deposit (per person) by January 31st.** The deposit will be counted towards the base cost per person of the trip.

Please call **Felice Gruber (908.753.5259)** or email **Anita Krentar (neatsea.ak@gmail.com)**.

Felice & Anita will try to answer any questions or concerns and will be happy to accept your commitment.







*Flynn and son*  
FUNERAL HOMES

**JAMES J. FLYNN, MANAGER**

424 East Ave.  
Perth Amboy, NJ 08861  
732.826.0358  
NJ Lic. No. 4152

**BRENDAN J. FLYNN, MANAGER**

319 Amboy Ave.	23 Fords Ave.
Metuchen, NJ 08840	Fords, NJ 08863
732.548.2134	732.826.0358
NJ Lic. No. 4105	NJ Lic. No. 2158

**Who Do I Call?**

When a death occurs, the emotion of the moment can cause a bit of confusion. Some important phone calls need to be made.

- First, a medical authority must be contacted to sign a death certificate.
  - Second, the funeral home must be contacted to make arrangements to transfer the deceased to the funeral home.
  - Third, contact the synagogue.
- A death may occur at any time of night or day; it is important to leave messages in a few places to ensure the rabbi will get back to you. Please call/email

**Rabbi Ari Saks**

**732.442.2431**

**732.442.1373**

**ari.saks@gmail.com**

**A DONATION HAS BEEN MADE TO THE SYNAGOGUE BY:**

Arthur Aneckstein in memory of Ida Shangold  
 Robert Arky in memory of Arthur Arky  
 Dorothy August in memory of Hannah August  
 Sue Bazer in memory of Samuel, Philip & Esther Feldman  
 Sheldon Becker in memory of Fannie Burg  
 Lois Berkowitz in memory of Edward Berkowitz  
 Roni & Ronald Berkowitz in memory of Sadye & Louis Goss  
 Rhona & Fred Bernhardt in memory of Ian Bernhardt & Fanie Sherman  
 Marcy Sanders Bezark in memory of Joan Sanders  
 Sandra & Richard Brown in memory of Hannah Katz  
 Sheila & George Brown in memory of Abraham Welkis  
 Martin Clawans in memory of E. David Clawans  
 Paula & Martin Cutler in memory of David Levinson  
 Michael Denes in memory of David J. Buchsbaum  
 Marsha & Avi Duvdevani in memory of Yair Duvdevani  
 Robert & Esther Eagle in memory of Anna & Benjamin Eagle  
 Phil Eichen in memory of Roslyn Eichen  
 Barbara & Jerome Eisner in memory of Sarah Okner  
 Dora Fass in memory of the Phillips family  
 Judy Gilbert in memory of Dr. Stewart Gilbert  
 Marcia & William Goldberger in memory of Max Goldberger  
 Barbara Greenspan in memory of Celia Davidson, Lillian Fink & Isadore Greenspan  
 Lauren & Neil Hunter in memory of Kenneth Hunter  
 Penny & Steve Jaffe in memory of Dotty Gampel Shapiro  
 Judith Kaleko in memory of Florence Klein Garb and Joseph L. Klein  
 Judy & Leo Kaufman in memory of Sol Kaufman  
 Dori Klang in memory of Phyllis & Morris Shulman  
 Ethel Klein in memory of Fannie Klein  
 Joan Kossowsky in memory of Philip Kossowsky  
 Dorothy Lemelson in memory of Lena & Louis Ginsberg  
 Allan Lesslauer in memory of Dorothy & Jack Lesslauer  
 Bernice & Bernard Magier in memory of Karl Magier  
 Shelli & Lewis Mandel in memory of Murray Mandel  
 Norma Jacobson Messing in memory of Dr. Murray Jacobson  
 Arlene & Seymour Miller in memory of Mildred Wedeen & Meyer Miller  
 Ila & Patrick Miller in memory of Lena & Louis Ginsberg  
 Selma Mitzman in memory of Irving Mitzman  
 Roslyn & Bill Monsky in memory of Louis Miller  
 Ronnie Hirschorn Polnerow in memory of Bertha Hirschorn & Kevin Marc Polnerow

**MAY THEIR MEMORY BE FOR A BLESSING.**

*As long as we  
live, they too  
will live; for  
they are now  
are a part of us;  
as we remember  
them.*

- Jewish Prayer

#### A DONATION HAS BEEN MADE TO THE SYNAGOGUE BY:

Arlene Price in memory of Sylvia Boerer

Elaine & Gordon Reibman in memory of Helen Gold Reibman, Emil Landau & Gussie Gold

Bernice Ring in memory of Alan & Fred Ring, Lena & Joseph Scheller

Millicent Rose & Adrian Simons in memory of Jerome Simons

Nicole & Barry Rosengarten in memory of Rae Rosengarten & Ruth Jacobson

Vardi & Alan Roy in memory of Israel Joseph Roy

Debbie & Carl Rubenstein in memory of Nathan Rubenstein

Lorraine Scheps in memory of Celia Zelbo

Donna Cohen Scher in memory of Albert Cohen

Helen Wong Seidman in memory of Miriam Esther Seidman

Helen Selinger in memory of Olga Sloan

Rona & Richard Silberberg in memory of Amelia & Mollie Kohn

Dorothy & Jordan Solkowitz in memory of Louis Spivak

Libby & Allen Weingarten in memory of Pauline & Samuel Weingarten

Norma Witkin in memory of Paul Witkin

Judy & Les Wurtzel in memory of Rose Wurtzel

Arnold Zimmerman in memory of William Zimmerman

Nate Zimmerman in memory of William Zimmerman

**MAY THEIR MEMORY BE FOR A BLESSING.**

**We Remember**



The Board of Trustees meets once per month at the synagogue. If there is a matter you would like to address, please contact the synagogue office for the time and date of the next meeting, and to be placed on the agenda.



## IMPORTANT

This bulletin contains the most current information for the events/services within. **Changes will be communicated by e-mail.** If you are not on our e-mail list, or need to update your e-mail address, contact the synagogue office.



"You should check your e-mails more often. I fired you over three weeks ago."



*Can you lend a hand?*

**Volunteers are needed for:**

- Office Assistance
- Writing for the Bulletin
- Caring Committee Visitors
- Opening Up for Services & Events
- Shabbat Morning Coffee Set-Up
- Organizing & Sponsoring Kiddush

**To help, please contact the office!**

**Next Bulletin  
Deadline  
JANUARY 16**

submit your  
**NEWS**

submit your  
**EVENT**



Join us on  
**Facebook**

Join our Facebook page for more news and learning opportunities:

- Kidz Korner**
- Jewish Current Events Update**
- Blast from the Past**
- Rabbi's Journal**

PLUS Israeli news, interesting articles, fun videos, conversations with other members and more!

[www.facebook.com/CongregationBethMordecai](http://www.facebook.com/CongregationBethMordecai)

Your **DAILY** source to connect with your Jewish Home for the Soul.



**JANUARY**

- 02** 12:00pm - Online Parashah Class  
**02** 8:00pm - Shabbat Services - Torah Talk  
**03** 10:00am - Shabbat Services - Torah Talk  
**07** 9:30am - Learn with the Rabbi  
**07** 12:00pm - Ask the Rabbi  
**08** 7:00pm - Group Hebrew Practice  
**08** 7:30pm - Secrets of Hebrew  
**09** 12:00pm - Online Parashah Class  
**09** 8:00pm - Shabbat Services - Pardon the Interruption  
**10** 10:00am - Shabbat Services - Pardon the Interruption  
**14** 9:30am - Learn with the Rabbi  
**14** 12:00pm - Ask the Rabbi  
**15** DEADLINE - VERBAL COMMITMENT FOR ARGENTINA  
**16** 12:00pm - Online Parashah Class  
**16** 8:00pm - Shabbat Services - Current Events Sermon  
**16** DEADLINE - INPUTS FOR FEBRUARY BULLETIN

**JANUARY & FEBRUARY**

- 17** 10:00am - Shabbat Services  
**17** 11:00am - TOT Shabbat Services  
**21** 9:30am - Learn with the Rabbi  
**21** 12:00pm - Ask the Rabbi  
**23** 12:00pm - Online Parashah Class  
**23** 7:00pm - Shabbat Services - White Out Friday Night  
**24** 10:00am - Shabbat Services  
**28** 9:30am - Learn with the Rabbi  
**28** 12:00pm - Ask the Rabbi  
**30** 12:00pm - Online Parashah Class  
**30** 8:00pm - Shabbat Services  
**31** 10:00am - Shabbat Services  
**31** DEADLINE - DEPOSIT DUE FOR ARGENTINA (\$100)
- 
- 06** YJPA Tu B'Shevat Potluck Dinner  
**08** Cooking with Rachel  
**15** Community Day of Learning

