



# Congregation Beth Mordecai

*A Jewish Home for the Soul*

February 2016

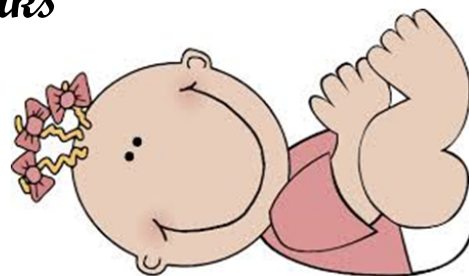
Sh'vat/Adar I 5776

## Brit Bat & Naming Ceremony for Baby Girl Saks

February 14 - 3:30pm - Beth Mordecai

Please join us to welcome our daughter into the covenant of the Jewish people with a Brit Bat & Naming Ceremony.

Short mincha (afternoon) service, followed by the ceremony and a Seudah (small festive meal).



Hosted by Rabbi Ari & Rachel Saks

## DAY OF STUDY: Our Favorite Jewish Things



February 28  
10am - 1pm  
Neve Shalom  
(250 Grove Ave., Metuchen)  
**FREE!**



### SESSION 1: Choose One

**What Jews have to Teach the World:  
The Imperative to Hear the  
Call of the Other**

Rabbi Eric Rosen (Neve Shalom)

**More than Just Words on a Scroll:  
Perspectives & Teachings from a  
Life-Long Torah Reader**

Rabbi Ari Saks (Beth Mordecai)

**Top 10 Unique Places to Visit in Israel**  
Barbara Spack (JCC of Middlesex County)

### PROGRAM

REFRESHMENTS

Representatives  
from each  
community will  
share some of  
their favorite  
foods & recipes.

REFRESHMENTS

For more Info:

Hazzan@NeveShalom.net  
732.548.2238 x14

### SESSION 2: Choose One

**Jews & Broadway**

Hazzan Sheldon Levin (Neve Shalom)

**A Seder for All: Child-Friendly Seder  
Ideas That Everyone Will Enjoy**

Jennine Shpigel (JCC of Middlesex County)

**Mathematical Philosophy or Jewish  
Mysticism?: Sefer Yetzirah, the  
Book of Formation**

Rabbi Daniel Vaisberg (Neve Shalom)



## 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 Alan Roy  
Vice President Cheryl August  
Treasurer Marc Fertik  
Secretary Scott Gursky  
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Past President Michael Gast  
Past President Ron Miskoff  
Past President Larry Deutchman  
Trustee David Bennett  
Trustee Ann Blog  
Trustee Steve Safran  
Trustee 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
	Jeremy Strauss	732.331.4049
Strategic Planning	Marc Fertik	732.390.3348
YJPA	Stella Morrison	



## 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 \$75 supports one oneg.

### Shabbat Morning Kiddush Fund

☐ Used for luncheons and noshes following Saturday morning services.

A contribution of \$125 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".**

**DONATE NOW**

Secure Donations  
by **PayPal**



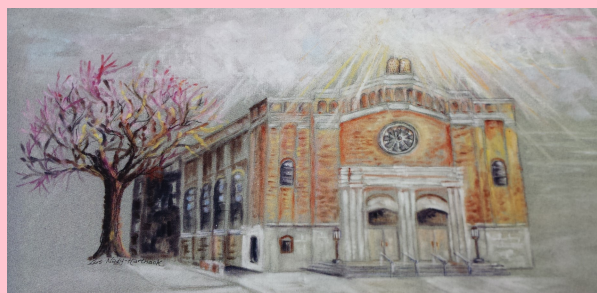
**Contributions to the above listed funds may  
also be made on the synagogue website**

*Thank you for your generous and thoughtful support of our funds  
which keep the synagogue running & help with a multitude of worthy  
projects that enrich & invigorate our community.*

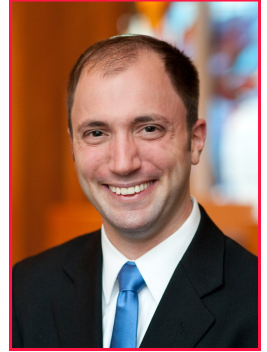
*Todah Rabbah - many thanks to you all!*

### General Fund Donations

Dina & Edward Grinshpun  
Fred Podbielak



## The Reality of Now vs. the Expectation of Tomorrow



By the time you receive this I will be a papa for the second time and I hope you'll join Rachel and me for our daughter's *Brit Bat* as we welcome her into the covenant of the Jewish people on Sunday February 14th at 3:30 pm at Beth Mordecai. But what's odd about this article is that I am writing it *before* the girl is born. I'm assuming a reality before it happens. Is that what Jews do?

When it comes to two of the most important stages in life, birth & death, Judaism seems to favor *not* assuming anything as a given. When it comes to death, we are told to not speak about the arrangements of the funeral in the presence of a loved one who is a goses, who is terminally ill and on their death bed. Thus even an inevitable future is put off until that future becomes the present. Meanwhile, when it comes to birth, the stringencies against assuming a future reality are even more latent. For instance, traditionally one does not say *mazel tov* ("congratulations") to the soon-to-be parents while the woman is pregnant. During pregnancy, it's customary to say *b'sha-ah tova* ("may it be in a good hour") as if to say that there is nothing to congratulate right now. Instead, we *hope* that when the baby is born, everything *will* be ok and *then* we can congratulate you. Likewise, many soon-to-be grandparents find it odd when their children want to have a baby shower before the baby is born as if we are tempting the *ayin hara* (evil eye) to ruin our plans to have a family. These customs are in addition to the *halakhic* requirements to not officially name a boy until his bris and, God-forbid, to not sit shivah for a baby who dies within the first 30 days of life.

All of these customs and laws are designed to make us hyperaware that nothing should be taken for granted. But as human beings, the weight of expectation often exerts more power than the reality of our present. Our hopes and dreams (and even our pain) that are just around the corner are so palpable and hold such immense consequences that it seems wrong to *not* consider them before they become the reality. Whether it's setting up a baby's room or making final arrangements for a loved one, we are conditioned to do what we can *now* to prepare for *tomorrow*. But while there may be logistical realities when it comes to matters of birth and death that compel us to take care of things beforehand, some aspects of the Jewish wisdom to *not* prepare for these eventualities remains relevant, especially when it comes to bringing a new child into the world.

If we are conditioned from birth to focus on preparing for the future, then what's to stop us from continuing that process once the baby is alive? Every stage of development will be carefully anticipated and inevitably when certain stages aren't reached in the time frame anticipated by common wisdom, we worry that our children will *never* reach that stage. That worry can last a lifetime -- will she pass her test tomorrow? will she make friends at camp? will she get into the best school? will she be successful? Much of our worry is based upon not knowing the future that lies ahead and our inability to control exactly what will happen.

In response to this worry, Judaism reminds us to appreciate each stage as *it* comes. One of my favorite verses from Proverbs (22:6) is *חנך נער על פי דרכו גם כי יזקין לא יסור ממנה*, which means "teach a child according to his [or her] way so that [knowledge] won't disappear when he [or she] gets older." I love this teaching because it asks us to focus on the here and now, to not be overly concerned about what happens tomorrow. As long as we take care of what happens now ("teach a child according to his [her] way") they will turn out just fine when they're older ("knowledge won't disappear when he [or she] gets older"). We have to trust what we see in front of us, always hoping for the best and praying for God to give us (and our children) the guidance we need to enjoy the present and willing to accept whatever happens in the future.

Kol Tuv,  
Rabbi Ari Saks

# got shabbat? now, shalom!

## 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:

### ***Pardon the Interruption - February 12***

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.

## 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:

### ***Pardon the Interruption - February 13***

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.

### ***Shabbos, Schnapps & a Schtickle of Yiddishkeit - February 20 - 9am***

Learn about Jewish tradition, religion and history with an early morning sip of schnapps (optional!). The experience runs in lieu of services. We'll schmooze with families from Tot Shabbat as they have a kiddie Kiddush, then learn something interesting together according to Tot Shabbat's theme for the month, and we'll wrap up with Kiddush. This program is intended for ALL members of Beth Mordecai, especially those who are more interested in learning & discussion than services.

### ***Current Events Sermon - February 27***

Rabbi Saks will deliver a formal sermon on a Jewish interpretation of a relevant current events topic.



732.407.0821  
bettymf@me.com

732.331.4049  
straussjer@gmail.com

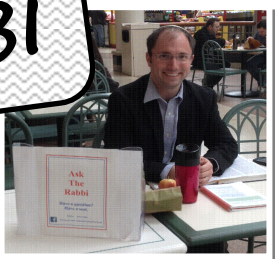


# Tot Shabbat

CONNECTING YOUNG FAMILIES TO JEWISH LIFE.



February 20 - 10:00am



## Ask the Rabbi

**Returning on Wednesday's in March!!!!**

**12:00pm**

### Menlo Park Mall Food Court

Have a question? Have a seat! Bring your lunch and ask the rabbi ANY question you like...seriously! First person there will get a free drink from the rabbi!



**February 21 - 12:30pm - St. Peter's Episcopal Church  
in Perth Amboy**

A monthly support group to help couples negotiate issues related to faith, tradition & family that stem from having different faith backgrounds and religious traditions. Co-facilitated by Rabbi Saks & Reverend Anne-Marie Jeffrey.



## Veterans Home Visit

**Tuesday - February 16 - 3:30pm**

Join Rabbi Saks, the Caring Committee and other members from the Jewish Home for Your Soul to help care for Jewish veterans every other Tuesday afternoon.

Contact Sherry Weber for more details  
(sweber7854@aol.com).



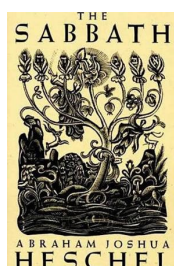
**Wednesday - February 10 - 9:30am  
Panera Bread in Woodbridge**

At the suggestion of a member and in connection with our pillar of SHABBAT, Rabbi Saks will lead a book group on Abraham Joshua Heschel's, "The Sabbath."

~ No need to prepare for this first introductory session. ~

A syllabus will be handed out that contains all reading assignments.

The book group will meet every other week.



**New  
Program!**

LIGHT CANDLES		SHABBAT ENDS	
Feb. 5	5:02pm	Feb. 6	6:03pm
Feb. 12	5:10pm	Feb. 13	6:11pm
Feb. 19	5:18pm	Feb. 20	6:19pm
Feb. 26	5:27pm	Feb. 27	6:26pm

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





**Friday, February 19**

**7:00pm**

**Private Home in Perth Amboy**

Come celebrate Shabbat at a private home in Perth Amboy with other young adults and families. Contact Stella for more details and to RSVP (YJPerthAmboy@gmail.com).



**Save the Date:**

**Saturday, March 19**

Details forthcoming!



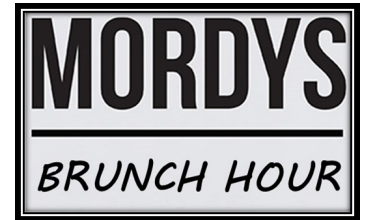
**UPDATE:**

The YJPA food drive for St. Peter's Episcopal Church's food pantry was a rousing success! Our December holiday drive was DOUBLE our drive from Passover! Our leadership got a brief tour of the food pantry, and we saw ourselves how our donation made a tremendous difference to those in need in the city. We can't wait for the opportunity to double our contribution yet again during our next drive starting the end of March through the days before Passover. Keep an eye on the bulletin, announcements, and Facebook for more details.

**March 12**



**March 13**



**It's Purim!!!  
Megillah Reading  
March 23**



**Shabb  
atapa  
Looza**



**Saturday, April 23**

**6:15pm**

**Congregation Beth Mordecai**

Traditional seder and service. Cost TBD.

More information to follow.



**Lifetime®**

**By Elliot Rubin**

When I was young I had a full head of hair, and a lot of curls,  
My legs were strong, and I could chase all the girls,  
The muscles were tight and taught, and I was in fashion,  
The Chevy was new and bright, and my future was flashing,

I am able to realize the end is not far from now,  
My legs don't bend and my joints do ache,  
The strong hands and feet that once were, now they shake,  
The straight back that stood so straight, now it does bow.

At night, when I shut my eyes I can see  
A full head of hair with curls, on me  
Strong legs and back, and my red fifty eight Chevy  
And the young girl that's been with me these many years  
Still radiant and beautiful, but I shed no tears.

I had a good life, and a great wife  
Loving kids, and grandkids too  
Life is not about money, or making strife  
But trying to do as much good for me, and for you

Try sharing love and smiles with those that you meet  
Even strangers that you walk past on every street  
Our time here is so short and limited, so finite  
We never know about tomorrow, or even tonight.



**Next Bulletin  
Deadline  
February 17**

submit your  
**NEWS**  
or  
**EVENT**



*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!**



**January & February Birthdays**

Benjamin Block	Lori Miskoff
Bernice Magier	Miriam Hamelburg
Betty Fertik	Dion Roy
Carol Einhorn	Harry Korbman
Deborah Adler	Claire Bennett
Elizabeth London	Shirley Levinson
Ira Semel	Susan Trager



A huge mazal tov to Lance Lyons, son of Elyse Lyons, who has recently been awarded a residency in ophthalmology. A proud moment for his mom and a wonderful tribute to his late uncle & mentor, Dr. Bob Epstein, to have Lance follow so closely in his footsteps. Well done, Lance!



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

Deborah & Barry Adler, in memory of David Adler  
 Dorothy August, in memory of Phyllis Schulman  
 Sue Bazer, in memory of Philip Feldman  
 Rhona & Fred Bernhardt, in memory of Paul Sherman  
 Sandra Gast, in memory of Jerome Gast  
 Marcia & William Goldberger, in memory of Max Goldberger  
 Dori Klang, in memory of Phyllis Shulman  
 Shirley Levinson, in memory of Reuben Levinson  
 Janet Lipman, in memory of Nathan Lipman  
 Selma Mitzman, in memory of Doris Collins and Amy Lynn Silverman  
 Dorothy & Jordan Solkowitz, in memory of Martha Spivak  
 Terry Spector & Family, in memory of Seymour Spector  
 Norma Witkin, in memory of Ida Stein

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

**We Remember**

### Shevchenko Monuments

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since 1919

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**732.442.1268**

[www.shevco.com](http://www.shevco.com)

**Please remember**

**Beth Mordecai**

**in your will**

**or as a dedicated**

**beneficiary on an**

**insurance policy.**



*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 emotional moment can cause confusion. Some important phone calls need to be made.

- 1st, a medical authority must be contacted to sign a death certificate.
- 2nd, the funeral home must be contacted to make arrangements to transfer the deceased to the funeral home.
- 3rd, 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 or 732.442.1373 | [ari.saks@gmail.com](mailto:ari.saks@gmail.com)**



# FEBRUARY

- 05** 8:00pm - Shabbat Services
- 06** 10:00am - Shabbat Services
- 10** 9:30am - Book Club
- 12** 8:00pm - Shabbat Services - Pardon the Interruption
- 10** 10:00am - Shabbat Services - Pardon the Interruption
- 14** 3:30pm - Brit Bat & Naming Ceremony for Baby Saks
- 16** 3:30pm - Veterans Home Visit
- 19** 7:00pm - YJPA Shabbat Dinner
- 19** 8:00pm - Shabbat Services
- 20** 9:00am - Shabbat Services - Schnappes & Schtickles
- 20** 10:00am - Tot Shabbat
- 21** 12:30pm - Faithful Families
- 26** 8:00pm - Shabbat Services
- 27** 10:00am - Shabbat Services
- 28** 10:00am - Day of Study

