

The Star

Monthly newsletter from
Congregation Beth Elohim
in Acton, Massachusetts



[Having trouble viewing in email? Click here to view as a webpage.](#)

April 2023 • Nisan/Iyyar 5783

- Message from our co-presidents Jaymi and Chuck
- Message from Rabbi David
- Gertrude Budiansky's Matzo Farfel Pudding Recipe
- New member profile: The Kaplan Family
- CBE's Volunteer Security Team
- Get to know BBYO!
- The People of Chelm Want To Know.....
- Lifecycle and milestone events in our community
- Calendar
- Donations
- Resources
- Feedback/get in touch with us

In this issue...

"Pesach a la mano!" If you attended our choir's magnificent program on Friday night then you heard the classic Ladino song by Flory Jagoda admonishing us that Passover is at hand! We are truly blessed to share two remarkably beautiful messages — from our co-presidents and our rabbi — touching on the upcoming holiday and its meaning not only in our lives but in our CBE story. If we had just these two pieces this month and nothing else — Dayenu! — it would be have been enough! But there is more: a family Passover recipe; a profile of a new member family that has jumped right into CBE community life; the scoop on a volunteer team that works tirelessly to keep our community safe; and an introduction to BBYO from two of our teens. Kvell over photos of a wedding and — not one — but two B'nei Mitzvot. And, of course, we would not be complete without a Passover question for the People of Chelm and the monthly list of donations from our supporters. Enjoy!

Message from our co-presidents Jaymi and Chuck



Telling Our Story

The seder plate is the original charcuterie board. We gather around the table with family and friends. We take part in a prayer. We eat something off the “board.” A few readings, another blessing, a glass of wine. And around it goes. We tell the archetypal story of freedom from bondage, of redemption from suffering. Some of us will innovate, acting out plagues, posing modern questions. Some of us will bring out the Maxwell House Haggadot* from our closets and ignore the wine stains. The afikomen will be hidden and found. We will open our doors for Elijah. The power of the seder is in the retelling, the longevity of the tradition. With whomever we gather, whatever the style of our seder, we join with the Jews of the world, past, present, and future in a common ritual.

At the end of the Exodus from Egypt, about which we will read on Pesach, comes the journey of our people to the Promised Land. The wilderness experience of our ancestors is a meaningful analogy for the past fifteen months. While the march from Egypt to Canaan should only take a few weeks, we know that it took so much longer. The forty years of travel is meant to convey a deep transition, not just a simple change of location. Enduring the wilderness was a transformative experience, one enormously well-worth the rigors of that journey. Our predecessors needed the time of transition in order to be worthy of inhabiting the Promised Land.

So too has our CBE community endured some prolonged wanderings, several transformations – each one bringing a separate journey and a renewed strength. Now that our latest is complete and we welcome Rabbi David as our permanent Rabbi, we start a new journey to ensure a successful transition towards the growth and enrichment of our

community. This will require all of us marching together to reach our Promised Land. The wandering will be difficult, but necessary. We will need yet-untapped leaders and ask each of you to be part of our collective journey.

As we each enter our own Passover practice and traditions, let us remember to connect, share our tables and ask and answer questions. As a community we will blend tradition with innovation. We will make the wandering worthwhile, enduring and thriving. We will make the story our own and come out stronger.

Chag pesach sameach,
Chuck and Jaymi

**Editor's note: We were delighted to find that Maxwell House still updates and publishes a free Haggadah (plus shipping) — and we promptly ordered two dozen!*

Message from Rabbi David



*In this family photo Rabbi David and his son Pukar prepare shira, traditional Indian date syrup charoset.**

A Passover and Springtime Message

With the arrival of Spring comes Passover, one of my favorite holidays. Passover is inextricably connected to Spring – a time of renewal, growth, and hope. Spring makes us happy. When the days grow longer and warmer, when the first crocuses appear in our front yards – we are naturally joyful. In the romantic poetry of the Biblical Song of Songs, the poet – perhaps King Solomon – writes:

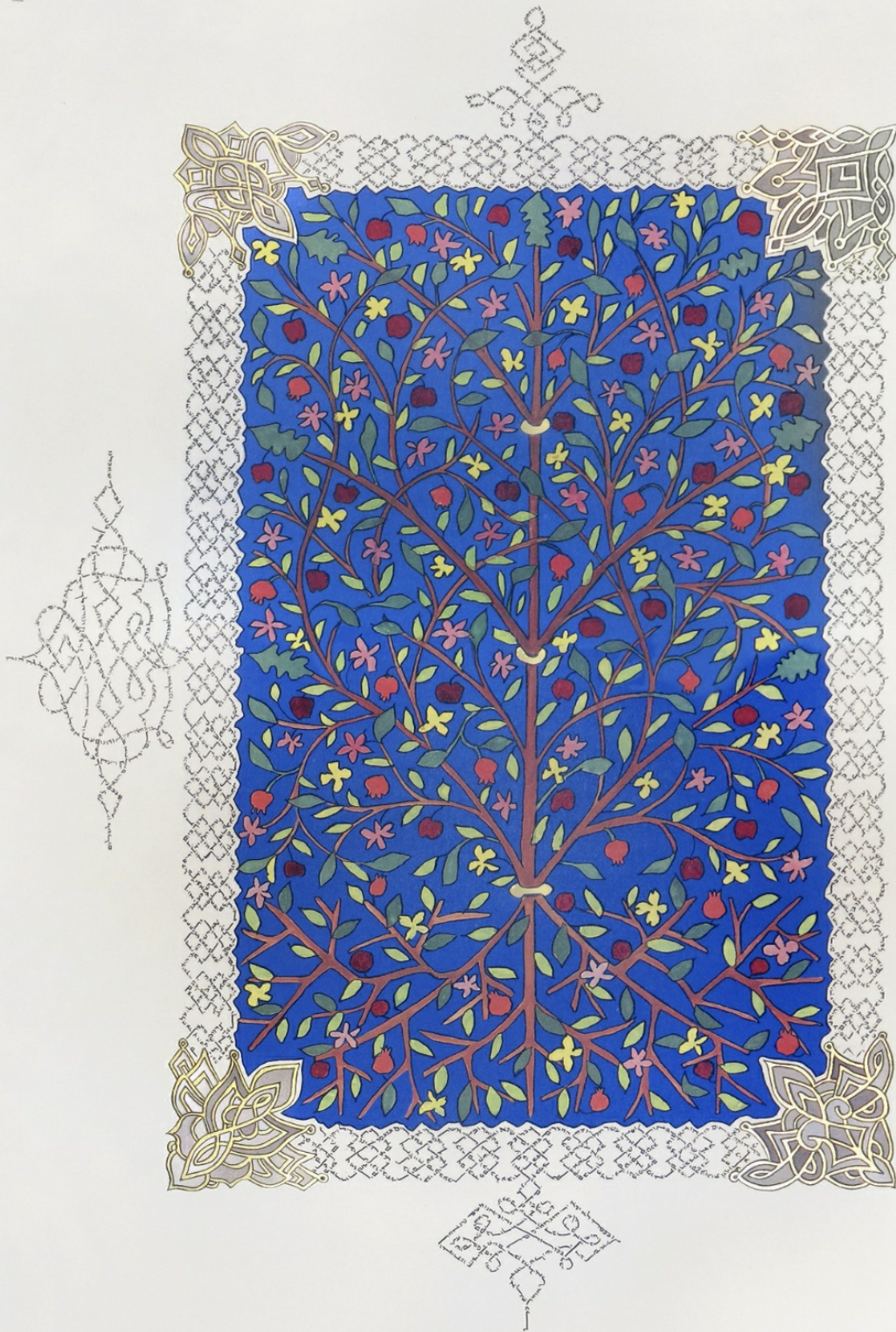
“Arise, my darling, my fair one, come away. For now, winter is past; the rains are over and gone. The blossoms have appeared in the land, the time of singing has come; the song of the turtledove is heard in our land. The green figs form on the fig tree, the vines in blossom give off fragrance. Arise, my darling, my fair one, come away.” (Song of Songs 2:10–13)

What do Spring and Passover have in common? They are both beginnings. Spring is simply the start of a special time of the year when the weather gets warmer. As Tolstoy famously wrote, “Spring is the time of plans and projects.” We joyfully plan with great hope in the Spring, but we do not yet know what success we will ultimately achieve. Our joy rests in the potential. It is also the beginning of an agricultural season whose success is not at all assured.

Passover is called *z’man heiruteinu*, the celebration of our freedom. But the Exodus was only the beginning of that process of our independence and spiritual growth as a people.

The most beautiful Haggadah I have ever seen is the David Moss Haggadah. Moss created the Haggadah over many years in the style of illuminated medieval manuscripts, with beautiful, full-page illustrations. My favorite is called “The Tree of Life” – which Moss uses as the first page of his Haggadah. Years ago, I ordered a print of this Tree of Life as a wedding gift for my sister and brother-in-law, which contains the following description: *“Passover celebrates beginnings: The Exodus as the birth of the Jewish people and the annual rebirth of Spring. Every beginning is a seed which contains, in potential, all that may later grow forth.”*

This first page, shown here, contains in its micrographic border the entire text of the Haggadah:



Click on the image to view an enlarged version. For more on the 1980 "My Haggadah" project, visit davidmoss.com/projects/moss-haggadah/

Very fittingly for the season, I am feeling tremendous joy and potential as your new permanent rabbi. In our short time together, we have already begun to build and grow in

important ways together. I look forward to our continuing to dream, build and celebrate together at CBE. We feel the joy and hope for renewal and growth – the anticipation that we are at the beginning of something truly special.

For those who I have gotten to know over the past months, I look forward to getting to know you even better, and for those I don't know as well or have not met yet, I look forward to the opportunity to connect. Please reach out, and I would love to meet here at CBE or at Acton Coffee House.

I wish you and your families a *Zissen Pesach* – Joyous and Fulfilling Passover!

Your Rabbi,
Braham David

**Editor's note: In our recent Q+A with Rabbi David, we linked to the [2018 article](#) that featured this photo along with an interview with Rabbi David about how his family has celebrates his heritage. The website supports the organization Be'Chol Lashon ("in every tongue") which "strengthens Jewish identity by raising awareness about the ethnic, racial and cultural diversity of Jewish people and experience around the globe." We think it is worth a look.*

Gertrude Budiansky's (z"l) Matzo Farfel Pudding Recipe

Submitted by Gary Budiansky

My mother compiled a collection of favorite recipes for Passover. Gertrude lived in an apartment building off of Queens Boulevard in New York City. She had lots of Jewish friends in the building and they swapped recipes often. Gertrude lived in apartment 5A. She got this recipe from Miriam, across the hall in 5D. Matzo Farfel Pudding is a side dish that you would serve at dinner. It serves 10–12. Judy and I tested the recipe last month. It was quite good. Everyone had seconds.



(above) The recipe as prepared in Judy and Gary Budiansky's kitchen, and (right) Gertrude's handwritten copy.

Matzo Farfel Pudding
1 lb matzo farfel
1 c onion - chopped
1 c celery
2 cans 4oz mushrooms
(slices)
4 T vegetable oil
6 eggs (separated)
2 tsp salt
1/4 tsp pepper
① place farfel in colander
② pour hot water over it &
squeeze dry immediately
should be slightly crisp
③ Brown onions, celery,
mushrooms in oil for 5
minutes & add to farfel
④ add egg yolks & slightly
beaten in salt & pepper ⑤ Beat
egg whites until stiff &
fold into mixture. Bake
greased 2 1/2 qt pan for 40
to 45 minutes 325 oven

Matzo Farfel Pudding

- 1 lb. matzo farfel
- 1 c. chopped onion
- 1 c. chopped celery
- 2 4 oz. cans sliced mushrooms
- 4 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- 6 eggs, separated
- 2 tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. pepper

Place farfel in a colander and run hot water over it to dampen it. Squeeze dry immediately. (It should be slightly crisp.) Pour into a bowl.

Brown onions, celery and mushrooms in oil for 5 minutes and add to the farfel.

Beat egg yolks with salt and pepper and add to the farfel. Mix well.

Beat egg whites until stiff and fold into mixture.

Transfer to a greased 2-1/2 quart baking dish.

Bake in 325° oven for 40 to 45 minutes, until browned on top.

Makes 8-10 side dish servings.

New member profile: The Kaplan Family

*This month we
resume our feature*



of new members of our community. Thank you to the Kaplans for participating! Left to right: Marilynn, Jake, Eva and Josh Kaplan

What were you looking for when you joined CBE?

A community where we could connect with families who share our values and interests and with whom to share in the simchas and challenges of Jewish life in our new home of Acton.

So far, what are the most fulfilling parts about being a member for you and/or other family members?

Having Jake return from Religious School not only with *"tzedek tzedek tirdof"* rolling off his tongue but eager to offer up his own interpretation. We very much appreciate how at CBE Religious School students are encouraged to interact with texts and concepts.

Tell us anything you'd like us to know about you and your family!

This iteration of the Kaplan family, established on the west coast about a decade ago, has returned east where both Marilynn and Josh were raised and have roots. Marilynn enjoys volunteering within the CBE and broader Acton communities. She lends her time to the AB United Way and two AB school committees that provide guidance around Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) topics for the District. At CBE, Marilynn joined Na'aseh and Kulanu where she has been inspired to persevere on matters of respect and justice. She also says "Hi!" to fellow congregants who volunteer or donate to Household Goods where she recently started working as a volunteer coordinator.

Josh splits his time between worrying about the Red Sox and trying to figure out how to discover new small molecule therapeutics. He's always up for talking about either.

Jake, aged 9, and Eva, 7, are students at Douglas Elementary and at CBE Religious School, where they are appreciative of the warm and friendly welcome offered by classmates and teachers alike.

CBE's Volunteer Security Team



We are grateful to Oleg Volinsky for his informative behind-the-scenes look at a team of volunteers working to keep us all safe. Oleg and his wife Vanessa have been members of CBE since 2000. Their children attended both the ELC (at the time JCC) and CBE religious school. Oleg is currently serving as an at-large member of the CBE board of directors.

In recent years, we have seen a significant rise in antisemitic events and incidents related to religious institutions. The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) reports that antisemitic incidents are up by 42% in New England since 2021, mostly in Massachusetts. This trend brought to the forefront the issue of security at synagogues and Jewish organizations.

To give special attention to congregations' safety and security concerns, several years ago Congregation Beth Elohim leadership created a security team. The Security Team consists of CBE members — Alan Weiss, Rick Green, Ian Schenkman, George Morton, Oleg Volinsky, and Arye Hess — who help improve CBE security and safety procedures and capabilities. Members of the security team, together with lay leadership and professional staff, work together to improve physical building security, coordinate security for the high holidays and other events as well as organize training sessions for members of the congregation and staff. During the past 12 months, the Security Team has focused on obtaining grants for security improvement and for private security presence, establishing consistent communication with local public safety departments, and rolling out the incident reporting portal.



This past Wednesday's Security Team meeting on Zoom: Oleg Volinsky, Rick Green, Ian Schenkman, Alan Weiss, Arye Hess and George Morton.

The Security Team has been communicating periodically with local public safety officials and community outreach officers. The team established good relationships with members of Acton Police and Fire departments. Members of the Security Team periodically meet with members of both departments to discuss issues around safety and security of Beth Elohim property and Beth Elohim membership. Acton Fire and Police departments conduct periodic walks through the building to familiarize themselves with the facility in case of emergency, to understand concerns around the area of the sanctuary where our Torahs are located, and to provide specific procedures around ELC safety and security. Acton Police Department provides additional patrolling around CBE during the religious school hours and during religious holidays. Both public safety departments welcome the interaction and the Security Team is excited to continue these positive engagements.

Another important aspect of the work of the Security Team is obtaining funding for safety and security improvements around the CBE building. These grants are essential to provide necessary safety and security improvements that otherwise would not be funded. Over the years, the team applied for and received several grants that contributed to installation of a special shatter protective film on all external glass at CBE as well as exterior cameras. The Security Team is continuously looking for funding and will continue to apply for grants from government agencies to make further safety and security improvements.

As one of their recent initiatives, the committee has worked with CBE's web team to create an incident reporting and tracking system. Because most major security events are often preceded by offenders scouting the targets for a period of time, it is a critical security capability to identify possible patterns between various events. This reporting and tracking system is an important tool in preventing more significant incidents. The incident reporting system allows members of the CBE community to report suspicious events and associated details. This data enables the congregation to keep track of ongoing incidents or suspicious events, identify possible that otherwise would allow to prevent possible security incidents. If you witness an incident or see something suspicious, [please complete this security incident form](#) — which you can also find under the Member tab on the CBE website. You must log into your website account to view and complete the form, available to congregants and professional staff.

The Security Team meets twice a month via Zoom. Members of the congregation professional staff and lay leadership frequently attend parts of meetings to discuss ongoing concerns and ways to improve the CBE community safety and security. Any member of the congregation interested in joining the Security Team is welcome. The Security Team can be contacted at security@bethelohim.org.

Get to know BBYO!



We received this great article from Seth Rosenman and Ellie Blumberg about the Jewish teen program BBYO and the Ariel Ometz chapter. Based in the Acton area, some members of the chapter are also part of our CBE congregation, though the chapter is open to Jewish teens from surrounding towns regardless of synagogue membership. Seth and fellow CBE teen Sam Pollak currently both serve on the BBYO New England regional board, while Ellie is the current president of Ariel Ometz. We hope you enjoy this sneak preview — in the future we hope to feature personal stories about life in BBYO. Pictured: Seth, Ellie and Sam at a BBYO national conference in 2022.

BBYO is the world's leading pluralistic Jewish teen movement. The organization aspires to involve more Jewish teens in more meaningful Jewish experiences while welcoming Jewish teens of all backgrounds, denominations, genders, races, and sexual orientations. BBYO aims to help teens develop strong Jewish identities while fueling a passion for making the world a better place. BBYO encourages teens to take initiative in their communities and become leaders. BBYO spans across 60 countries with over 725 chapters, growing every year. The organization is made up of the Aleph Zadik Aleph (AZA) Fraternity, founded in

1924, and the B'nai B'rith Girls (BBG) Sorority, founded in 1944.

The New England Region (NER) of BBYO is home to 13 chapters across Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Vermont with over 500 members ranging from grades 8th-12th. NER BBYO allows for teens to explore their Jewish identities in a safe environment while embracing new experiences, opportunities, and traditions. Each chapter, based on locality, hosts events for their members. Events are planned by teens, for teens. Programming ranges from fun activities like bowling and making s'mores over a bonfire, to meaningful programming around social justice, leadership development, community service or celebration of Jewish holidays. The region also hosts larger events, including a kickoff program in October, overnight conventions, dances, and sports tournaments. There truly is something for every teen in NER BBYO.

Our Ariel Ometz chapter of BBYO is a vibrant, co-ed group of teens with members across Acton, Boxborough, Concord, Littleton, Westford, Sudbury, Lincoln, Burlington, Leominster, and other surrounding towns. The chapter has seen a resurgence in membership over the last few years, and now our thriving community offers regular programming for teens in the area. Recently, we have hosted numerous events for teens, including ice skating, games night, a murder mystery themed event, paintball, pottery painting, and a donation drive for the Ginny's Helping Hand Food Pantry as part of our community service initiative.



Ariel Ometz members at a Movie Night program!

Teens and their families can learn more about upcoming events with the Ariel Ometz chapter by emailing Regional Director Jeff Hast at jhast@bbyo.org or our chapter board members at ariel.ometz.bbyo@gmail.com, or by following our chapter on [Instagram](#). For regional info, visit the New England Region BBYO [web page](#) or [Facebook page](#).

The People of Chelm Want to Know...



Illustration by Maurice Sendak.

For years the “People of Chelm” column has challenged The Star readers with questions drawn from the long and rich history of Jews and Judaism. We are delighted to continue this tradition, with abundant thanks to Bob Ferrara and Waky.

QUESTION: Early this April we celebrate Pesach and the Passover Seder, the most widely observed of all the Jewish holidays. Countless Jewish households in almost every country on the globe honor Passover. This ceremony is a celebration of so many things - of liberty, of freedom from oppression, of the natural God-given rights of all people, of the making of the Jewish people into a nation. In the twenty-third chapter of Exodus, Pesach was decreed to be one of the three pilgrimage festivals when many Jews made the journey to Jerusalem to give offerings and celebrate. But its origins go back further than that. Do you recall when and where the very first Passover occurred? And for those who are really on the ball, do you know when the SECOND Passover happened?

Ponder your response – and find the answer further along in this email.

Lifecycle and milestone events in our community

Mazel tov to Michelle and Chris Siegert on the March 4 wedding of son Andy to Michaela Savram (now Siegert!). Thank you to Michelle for the lovely photos – especially the ketubah-signing. In the family photo, in addition to Andy, Michaela, Michelle and Chris, are daughter Beth and her boyfriend Seth Groveunder.



Mazel tov to Lillie Freidel-Sobel and her parents Alayne Freidel-Sobel and Jason Sobel. Thank you to Jason for sharing these lovely photos of Lillie's February 18 B'nei Mitzvah.



Mazel tov to Cameron Carvalho and his parents Alyson Saykin and Andrew Carvalho. Cam's Bar Mitzvah on March 18 was not only a family event — it was a celebration of the CBE community as well. We learned while preparing this issue that four of Cam's religious school teachers — Morah Bryna, Morah Alana, Morah Cindy and Morah Naomi — participated by reading Torah or having an Aliyah, that Mike Stark played guitar during the service and

arranged a duet with Cameron on ukulele, and that Rabbi Emeritus Mintz joined Cameron for the Kiddush and Hamotzi.



Cam gets a high-five from Religious School teachers Mora Bryna and Mora Alana:



Has your family celebrated a recent simcha or milestone? Send us up to 6 photos with a brief description; and we will make a selection to include in our next newsletter.

Email communications@bethelohim.org.

What's happening at CBE this month?

Visit our [online calendar](#) for up-to-the-minute programming.

Donations

The congregation thanks our members, their relatives and friends, and the larger community for donations received during the month of March. If you do not see your donation, please look for it in our next newsletter, or contact communications@bethelohim.org.

Amy Naparstek Israel Scholarship Fund

Fred & Doris Goldstein / In memory of Norma Zimmer, mother of Linda Sagor

Fred & Doris Goldstein / In memory of Elane Weiss, mother of Sandy Haber

Cantoral Fund

The Linden Family / With thanks to Cantor Sarra for leading a meaningful and healing shiva in memory of Carole "Pip" Ulin

Chesed Fund

The Linden Family / In memory of Carole "Pip" Ulin, with thanks to the Chesed Committee for all their care, concern and help with shiva

Dan and Shelley Klein / In honor of Ava Berson becoming a Bat Mitzvah. Mazal tov!

Choir Fund

Don Hoban & Marcy Epstein Hoban / In honor of Purim

General Fund

Emily & Michael Blumberg / In honor of Purim

Jaymi & Joseph Formaggio / In honor of Purim

Elizabeth & Ike Walker / In honor of Purim

Lindsay & Erik Rosenman / In honor of Purim

Tom & Marlene Wachtell / In honor of Purim

Jodie & Robert Zwirn / In honor of Purim

Rachel & Lee Gwaltney / In honor of Purim

Frank & Linda Cohen / In honor of Purim

Edward & Nancy Kleiman / In honor of Purim

Susan & Geoffrey Doherty / For the remembrance of Carol Ziller

Bob & Kathie Becker / In memory of Carole Deborah Ulin

Bruce Leicher & Ellen Sachs Leicher / In memory of Carole Ulin, mother of Wendy Linden

Marvin & Karen Gould / In memory of Dr. Carl Bender

Bob & Kathie Becker / In memory of Elane Kanengiser Weiss, mother of Sandy Haber

Maida & Glenn Fund / In memory of Elane Kanengiser Weiss, mother of Sandy Haber

Susanna Wood / In memory of Howard Scala, given by his sister Susanna Wood, on the occasion of his Yahrzeit

Bob & Kathie Becker / In memory of Linda Smith

Sandra Roschelle & Peter Darlow / In memory of Miriam Roschelle, mother of Sandy Roschelle

Bob & Kathie Becker / In memory of Rheva Kleinberg, mother of Karen Fox

Na'aseh Social Justice Fund

Judy & Gary Budiansky / For Immigration Relief

Rabbi Lewis Mintz Fund

Dan and Shelley Klein / In memory of Naomi Newman

Dan and Shelley Klein / In memory of Linda Smith, mother of Stacey Briggs

David & Gena Manalan / In memory of Dr. Carl Bender

Allie Lehmann / To thank Alan and Peggy Berko for their generous hospitality

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

The Linden Family / With thanks to Rabbi David for leading a thoughtful and healing shiva in memory of Carole "Pip" Ulin

Leslie & William Schroeder / For the sale of Chametz 5783

Edward & Nancy Kleiman / For the sale of Chametz 5783

Jeffrey & Marcy Rappaport / In cherished memory of: Alice and Ernest L. Pearlman, Marcy's beloved Mother and Father, and Roslyn and Herbert S. Rappaport, Jeff's beloved Mother and Father

Judy & Gary Budiansky / In honor of Rabbi David

David Salomon & Marilyn Leeds / For the Sale of Chametz 5783

Religious School Fund

Karen & Mark Meyer

The People of Chelm Want to Know...

ANSWER TO QUESTION POSED ABOVE: Passover is indeed a profound observance. It captures a timeless message of liberty for all of us. Each year we ourselves, not some remote ancestor, are the ones escaping from Egypt and slavery. So when was the first Passover celebrated? After a little reflection, you may remember that day got its name when the avenging hand of the Lord passed over the homes of the Israelites. As instructed, they had smeared their doorposts with lamb's blood to avoid the consequences of the tenth plague, the death of the first-born. Chapter twelve of Exodus recounts all this and also includes the details of how the Passover lamb is to be selected and prepared. Then in verse 11, the community is commanded to "eat it hurriedly: it is a Passover offering to the Lord". So the first Passover occurred in Egypt, on the night before the Israelites fled from Egypt. If we accept the historicity of this event and the scholars' best guesses on dates, this first Pesach occurred sometime before the end of the reign of Pharaoh Rameses II in 1225 BCE, over thirty-two centuries ago. Though the Israelites were commanded to celebrate this every year, the second Passover was not observed again until 40 years later, when Joshua brings them into the Promised Land after the travails of wandering in the desert.

Resources

[CBE's Chesed Committee](#) | [Contact us in a time of need](#)
[18 Doors](#) (formerly InterfaithFamily of Greater Boston)
[Anti-Defamation League](#) incident reporting
[CJP \(Combined Jewish Philanthropies\)](#)
[CJP SeniorDirect](#)
[Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life](#)
[Hadassah of Nashoba Valley Facebook](#)
[Hebrew College](#)
[Jewish Bereavement Support Group](#)
[JewishBoston.com](#)
[Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Boston](#)
[Jewish Family Service of Metrowest](#)
[Keshet](#) | A national organization that works for full LGBTQ equality and inclusion in Jewish life
[Mayyim Hayyim | Living Waters Community Mikveh](#)
[Oneinfifty.org](#) | BRCA awareness, education, and support
[Yad Chessed](#) | Emergency financial assistance to Jewish individuals and families in need
[Yerusha.com](#) | A Website for Older Childless Jews

Visit the [Resources](#) page on our website for our complete resource list.

Feedback/get in touch with us!

Let us know what you think!

Do you like the new format? What about the content? If there is an individual or effort you'd like to see featured, please let us know!

Please also don't hesitate to let us know if you had any issues with downloading, reading, or if you had any issues accessing your email version of *The Star*.

For all of the above, please write to communications@bethelohim.org.

Until next time,

The Star editorial and design team —

Gary Budiansky, Maida Fund, Rick Green, Beth Schrager, Lauren Solomon, Shoshana Zuckerman



Congregation Beth Elohim | 133 Prospect Street, Acton, MA 01720

[Unsubscribe richardalangreen@yahoo.com](#)

[Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)

Sent by bycbe_main@bethelohim.org powered by



Try email marketing for free today!