

Shabbat Shalom

Vayeshev

December 13, 2025 | 23 Kislev 5786

Havdalah 5:13pm

Welcome to Beth Jacob Congregation, a Jewish community that comes together to nurture relationships with God and each other. We are a Conservative synagogue that values Torah (study), Avodah (reverential service) and Gemilut Hasadim (acts of loving-kindness). We believe every person has an equal opportunity to be part of our community regardless of age, race, ability, special needs, financial status, sexual orientation or gender identity. We're glad you've joined us this Shabbat!

Thank you to everyone who contributed to Shabbat services this week.

D'var Torah:

Rabbi Tamar Magill-Grimm

Mashgiach:

Dominic Ackerman

Greeters & Security:

Will Thomas, Tessa Silver,
Barbie Levine, Mindy Ratner,
Davida Alperin

Kitchen Crew:

Tauby Mintz, Daniel Markon,
Michael Zaslofsky
Fran Van Slyke-Zaslofsky

Gabbaim:

Eric Pasternack,
Leonard Oppenheimer,
Stuart Kaufman

Our services depend on the participation of our community members. We welcome diverse voices and talents to lead our community in prayer and to read Torah.

Please sign up at Beth-Jacob.org/DavenOrTorah.

Torah Reading

First / Rishon Aliyah
Second / Sheni Aliyah
Third / Shelishi Aliyah
Fourth / Revi'i Aliyah
Fifth / Chamishi Aliyah
Sixth / Shishi Aliyah
Seventh / Shevi'i Aliyah
Maftir
Haftarah

Genesis 37:1-37:11 p. 226
Genesis 37:12-37:22 p. 228
Genesis 37:23-37:36 p. 230
Genesis 38:1-38:30 p. 233
Genesis 39:1-39:6 p. 238
Genesis 39:7-39:23 p. 239
Genesis 40:1-40:23 p. 242
Genesis 40:20-40:23 p. 244
Amos 2:6-3:8 p. 247

Ellen Johnson
Elaine DuFresne
Ely Sheinfeld
Natan Paradise
Monica Kelley
Sara Lynn Newberger
Giulia Girgenti
Giulia Girgenti
Sharon Press

Senior Rabbi:

Rabbi Tamar Magill-Grimm
RabbiTamar@Beth-Jacob.org

Executive Director:

Sonya Rapport
Sonya@Beth-Jacob.org

Director of Congregational Programming:

Frances Fischer
Frances@Beth-Jacob.org

Interim Limudim Coordinator and Rabbinic Intern

Rimon Reches
Rimon@Beth-Jacob.org

Youth and Education Coordinator:

Marisa Goffman
Youth@Beth-Jacob.org

Co-Presidents:

Leonard Oppenheimer & Tessa Silver
President@Beth-Jacob.org

Rabbi Emeritus:

Rabbi Morris Allen

Inspired by Love

By Rabbi Eric Woodward

Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel, New Haven, CT

In Parashat Vayeshev, Joseph, while working as a slave to the Egyptian nobleman Potiphar, is propositioned by his master's wife. "Lie with me," she coos — repeatedly. He consistently refuses.

It is traditional to read this as a story of our hero rising above sexual temptation, an ethical exemplar who does not give in to his baser impulses. After a rocky youth, in this moment Joseph is becoming a model of moral backbone, no longer led by his desires, but by his knowledge of what is right.

But this view of the story leaves out something important. Joseph is a slave and therefore not only subject to punishment for sleeping with his master's wife, but also liable for not listening to his mistress. He's proverbially damned if he does and damned if he doesn't. From the moment Potiphar's wife invited him to bed, Joseph was doomed. Why not, he might have reasoned, simply accede to her request and try to earn protection from her that way? Looking at it this way, we see more than a simple story of temptation resisted. We see a character trying to make sense of their moral values in a dangerous situation.

There's a midrash that heightens this reading. In Genesis 39:12, we read that Potiphar's wife, frustrated by Joseph's constant rejection, grabbed his tunic and demanded that he sleep with her. A volatile situation has now become truly dangerous, and her advances have become physical. A sexual assault is in progress. The Talmud (Sotah 36b) records that, at the very moment Potiphar's wife grabbed Joseph's tunic, "the image of his father appeared to him in the window."

If we read this as a simple story of temptation resisted, the midrash here suggests that the vision of his father strengthens Joseph to refuse the advances of Potiphar's wife. Indeed, this is the direction the rest of the talmudic text takes. But we can also read this midrash differently, in a way that increases our empathy with Joseph.

Joseph's father Jacob, who loved him, favored him and from whom he was violently torn, was a source of security and affirmation. Perhaps seeing his father was not simply a reminder of patriarchal authority and traditional moral values, but much-needed spiritual succor for a young man alienated, lonely and afraid. Jacob's face in the window might have bolstered Joseph's confidence. In two weeks' time, in Parashat Vayigash, we will be reminded of what Jacob means to Joseph. When he is finally reunited with his brothers, Joseph poignantly asks: "Is my father still alive?" Even after decades apart, his father is an emotionally central person for him.

When we read the midrash this way, we see that morality does not have to depend on the imagined surveillance of a distant source of authority. It can be based instead on the presence of love, compassion and meaning. If we want people to behave well, we should help them to feel safe, connected and accountable to each other.

This applies theologically, as well. We lose something if we imagine God as simply the Great Surveiller. If we instead understand ourselves in a relationship — a covenant, or brit — with God, it can be that loving relationship that inspires our behavior. In a world where God is often hidden from us, those moments we sense God peering in at the window can be powerful.

Inclusivity and Accessibility During Services

We recognize the variety of needs within our community and strive to provide access to all through physical, emotional, and/or sensory accommodations. The majority of our prayers and scripture readings are conducted in Hebrew, so we invite those who do not read Hebrew to use a copy of the transliterated prayerbook (siddur) found on the table near the entrance to the sanctuary. We have large print books, braille prayerbooks, and listening devices available on the bookshelf in the lobby. There is also a sensory-friendly room just off the sanctuary with a speaker and window from which services can be experienced. Please ask the greeter near the sanctuary door if you need help locating any of these. Please reach out to our office if there are needs that aren't being met.

TODAY at Beth Jacob



Limudim: Our Learning Community

We begin with breakfast at 9:00am. We are so excited to see our building full of families engaged in fun and meaningful Jewish learning!

Science Fiction Table at Kiddush

Poetry Reading--a Post Kiddush Learning

Penny Simison will read some poems from her book *Precarious*, about tough times and resilience. Several of the poems came out of a trip to Holocaust sites in Poland, and some of them think about God (really).

Children are Welcome in our Sanctuary!



We encourage children's participation in services and love having them in our sanctuary. Older children are encouraged to lead parts of the service and/or read Torah once able to do so. Younger children are invited to carry crowns during the Torah service and are also invited to the bimah for Adon Olam each week. At the end of services they can visit the rabbi's magic tallis bag to receive a lollipop or mini bubbles. Parents, please let Rabbi Tamar know if you do not want your child to receive one of these items.



Yahrzeit List for Week Beginning December 13, 2025 / 23 Kislev 5786

The seventh aliyah is reserved for those observing yahrzeits during the coming week. If you are observing a yahrzeit this week, please come forward at the seventh aliyah and give your full Hebrew name to the gabbai who will call you to the Torah. Your full Hebrew name includes your name and then ben/bat/mibeit and your parents' names or Avraham and Sarah. Please say your name loudly and clearly, so that the gabbai can hear it.

Masks are required on the bimah during the Torah service. If you do not have one, please get one from the basket by the greeter and put it on prior to coming up for an aliyah.

December 13/23 Kislev

Arthur Alpert
Gertrude Cohen
Bella Cohen
Janice Shaina Cohn
Stuart Goldbarg
Anne Levy
Tilly Siegel
Iris Buten Newman
Lorraine Frank Gilead
Lorraine Hertz

December 14/24 Kislev

Nancy Clark
Al Cohen
Martin Falk
Morris Finsky
Bernard Olshansky
Winnie Underhill
Ben Chase
Leah Legan

December 15/25 Kislev

Ruth Bonder
Harry Cohen
Molly Cohler
Armon Kamesar
Max Kaplan
Hyman Korsh
Ann Markon
Sara Meirovitz
Henry Parasol
Ike A. Soldosky
Oskar Stein
Ben Sturrey
Mollie Goldie Uditsky
Ida Valdman
Eva Wernick

December 16/26 Kislev

Sarah Bergman
Myron Block
Ruth Blumenfeld
Irving Gotlieb
Max Grandt
Francis Helfrick

December 16/26 Kislev cont'd

Ann Rosenthal
Faye Schulman
Rose Jean Sharpe
John Silver
Ruth Simon
Clara Segal
Annie Kaufman
Lena Neff
Celia Lechtman

December 17/27 Kislev

Colleen Barnett
Harold Katz
Adrienne Mandle
Vincenza Meli
Rose Milner
Jeanne Rochlin
Borris Ward
Morris Mark
Rose Stein
Samuel Portnoy
Thomas Dobo

December 18/28 Kislev

Todd Guberman
Libbie Knutson
Mark Sullivan
Mark Weinberg
Morris Allen
Arthur Kaplan
Ruby Horne

December 19/29 Kislev

Ruth Abrahamson
Cecelia Bernstein
Miriam Elliot
Max Goldberg
Bernice Kamesar Lee
Jennie Rose Marofsky
Suzanne Paine
Norman Schwartz
Evelyn Solsky
Simon L. Zeff
Marjorie Volk

Ongoing	
<p>For the Jew in the Pew Every 1st, 3rd, and 5th Saturday 9:15 am in the Saide Chapel Join Rabbi Lynn Liberman in the Chapel for some thoughtful study of the Book of Psalms.</p>	
<p>Stand Up, Sit Down, What Does It All Mean? Every 2nd & 4th Saturday, 9:15 in the Saide Chapel, Starting January 10 For the curious and confused. Guest teachers will explain the prayers, the services, and the movements associated with Shabbat. Attend as you can.</p>	
<p>Tot Shabbat 10:00 - 10:30 am in The Nursery Join us on the first Shabbat of the month in the nursery for Tot Shabbat. We will have a song-filled Shabbat Morning Service for BJC's littlest ones (0-3 years old). We will then have an oneg and playtime for parents to schmooze and kids to play.</p>	
<p>Pre-Shul Playgroup—Every Friday at 10:30 am Join our open play time for young children and their caregivers. Meet in the nursery every Friday morning from 10:30am until naptime.</p>	
<p><u>ADULT EDUCATION:</u></p> <p>Introduction to Judaism, with Rabbi Cathy Nemiroff Monday evenings Beth-Jacob.org/Intro</p> <p>Morning Mishnah, with Rabbi Tamar Magill-Grimm Wednesdays at around 8:00 am (after minyan) in the Saide Chapel and online Join on Zoom at Beth-Jacob.org/Minyan</p> <p>Tanach, with David Rischall Sundays 7:30-8:30 on Zoom: https://us06web.zoom.us/j/79546614386 Questions? Call David at 651-230-3911.</p> <p>Limudim Adult Ed Tuesdays 6:30-7:30 Register at Beth-Jacob.org/LimudimAdultEd</p> <p>Why the Jewish Holidays are Wise with Sara Lynn Newberger Hebrew for Adults with Lydia Schultz</p> <p>Raising Jewish Kids—A Conversation Circle Tuesdays 5:30-6:30 in the Chapel For parents and caregivers, interfaith families, Jewish couples, single parents... basically anyone involved in raising Jewish kids. Talking about the blessings and challenges, sharing struggles, ideas and resources.</p>	  

EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Lighting the Path Forward - Year-End Fundraiser

Watch our menorah light up as we reach our goal!

Each flame represents the commitment of our community to ensuring a bright future together. With your support, we will light the path for the next 40 years of Jewish life, learning, and community.

Thanks to the extraordinary generosity of multiple community members, our shamas has been lit. Every dollar you give will be matched—up to \$80,000. This means your gift has double the impact as we work together toward our congregation-wide goal of \$160,000.



Pajama Hanukkah Extravaganza Tuesday, December 16, 5:30-7:30

Food! Crafts! Music! Fun for the whole family! Come in your pajamas and enjoy dinner and a special Hanukkah celebration, complete with Wendy Baldinger's Wiggle, Jiggle, Jam. If you are in Limudim or Gesher, it's free! Otherwise, dinner is \$10/person. Register at Beth-Jacob.org/PHE



Movie & Chinese Food December 25

Spend December 25 with the oldest of Jewish traditions: Chinese food and a movie! We're going to see a matinee at the Eagan Emagine theater on December 25. Then up the street for Chinese dinner at Anna Chung's.

To RSVP and for more info contact Linda Perry at lperry3060@gmail.com.



December Yahrzeits Kiddush December 27

Please consider honoring your loved ones with December yahrzeits by joining this group sponsored kiddush. Beth-Jacob.org/Kiddush



Shabbatluck January 2, 6:00pm

Come for the services, stay for the dinner! Services start at 6:00; Dairy/veggie pot-luck dinner follows. Register so we know to expect you!



Game Day January 10, after kiddush

Play games we have here, or bring your own. New games have been donated. All ages welcome! Stay for as much of the afternoon as you like.

