COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND LIFELONG LEARNING
2017-2018

A Time for Everything Under the Sun: the Rhythms of [Jewish] Life
The philosopher Ecclesiastes wrote that for everything there is a season. (The ‘turn, turn, turn’ part was added a few thousand years later, by Pete Seeger). We will explore what this might mean as our Bet Torah theme for the year. What does it mean to mark time? What does it mean to make time? Is there really, as Ecclesiastes says, a time for weeping and a time for laughing, a time for wailing and a time for dancing? How about a ‘thyme’ for eating? Join us all year for discussions, and meaningful programs as we reflect on these questions and their impact on our lives.

Small Groups
Bet Torah’s ongoing small group initiative is an effort to help people get to know each other better, to explore a challenging topic in a small group, and to deepen people’s connection to the Jewish tradition. In keeping with our theme for this year, these groups of approximately 15 people will share thoughts and ideas about the Rhythms of [Jewish] Life and how people might think about these through a Jewish lens. The groups include people with a wide variety of backgrounds and Jewish knowledge and are facilitated by either Rabbi Koffman or Rabbi Brusso. If you would like to join a group, or start a group and think you might be able to gather some other interested folks, please email rabbikoffman@bettorah.org.

Jewish Qi Gong and Mindfulness
Join Nancy Fried-Tanzer and Robin Wald for an enjoyable hour of Jewish-themed Qi Gong and mindfulness. Together we will integrate Jewish wisdom with gentle physical postures, movement, breathing and guided mindfulness practices. This workshop offers an opportunity for improved health and vitality, relaxation, mental discipline, spiritual connection and deeper Jewish understanding. All ages, abilities and fitness levels welcome. No prior experience with Qi Gong, mindfulness or Jewish study required. Comfortable clothing and sneakers or bare feet are suggested, no mats required. Nancy S. Fried-Tanzer, M.Ed, is a health educator specializing in healthy aging. She is an instructor of Chronic Disease Self-Management Programs developed by Stanford University in addition to "Matter of Balance" (fall prevention strategies). She incorporates many of these strengthening and joint lubricating exercises into the warm-ups of her Qi Gong classes. Robin Wald, RYT, is a yoga and mindfulness instructor and Jewish educator. She has been teaching integrated Jewish yoga and mindfulness programs for synagogues, organizations and private clients for over ten years.

4 Mondays at 9:45-10:45 am: September 25, October 16, 23 and 30 (in the Library)
No charge for Bet Torah members
Prayers and Rituals in Historical Perspective
Dr. Benjamin Gampel Returns

Once again, we are fortunate to have Dr. Benjamin Gampel, professor of Jewish History at the Jewish Theological Seminary, join us for another one of his fascinating journeys into Jewish history and practice. No matter the depth of your commitment to traditional Jewish observance, it is important to pause and realize that prayers and rituals are not only vehicles by which Jews perform their religious obligations, but contain within their enactment the history of the Jewish people, and the development of Judaism. This seminar will take you on an archaeological and historical study of Jewish prayers and rituals. Among the topics to be covered in this 8-week course are:

- The development of the Kol Nidrei recital on Yom Kippur eve
- A deconstruction and analysis of the uNetaneh Tokef prayer from High Holiday Musaf
- The growth and development of prayers for the government of the countries in which Jews have lived
- The Song of the Sea - Shirat haYam - and its inclusion in daily prayers
- The mystical poem, Anim Zemirot, and corporeal descriptions of God
- How to behave in shul: A history of random violence and incessant chatter within the holy precincts
- The story of nittel nacht: Jews’ “observance” of Jesus’ birth
- The development of the penitential prayers, selihot, that usher in the New Year
- Vengeance in the Haggadah
- Candle lighting on Sabbath and Holidays (Women and the Obligation to Light Candles on Friday evening: A Story about Rabbis, Karaites, Christians, and Original Sin)

8 Sunday mornings from 10:00am-12:30pm: October 15, 22, 29, November 5, 12, 19, December 3, 10
Class Fee: $350.00   Registration: To register, contact Jerry Fensterstock (jerryf@pipeline.com) Please note: To assure a quality experience, the class will be limited to 30 enrollees

Adult “Bar and Bat Mitzvah”

Maybe you never had a bat mitzvah because girls didn’t do that when and where you grew up. Maybe you grew up in a secular Jewish home that didn’t believe in celebrating bar mitzvah. Maybe you became Jewish later in life. Maybe you had a Bar or Bat Mitzvah when you were younger but now want to learn how to read Torah and Haftarah, and to deepen your understanding of prayer and Torah from an adult perspective. The good news is that it’s never too late! Join together with other like-minded adults from the Bet Torah community in a very special year of learning, exploration and synagogue skill-building as you work towards celebrating your journey with the broader Bet Torah community at Shavuot services next year. Classes will be held on Sunday mornings. Interested? Please email rherman@bettorah.org. Basic Hebrew reading is a prerequisite.
Bet Torah in the City
Bet Torah in the City returns for its third season! Get to know your fellow Bet Torah commuters as we share lunch and opinions over Jewish texts in midtown offices. Rabbi's Brusso and Koffman will alternate in facilitating the conversations each month. If you are interested—even if you think you might be able to attend only one or a few of the dates—please email rabbikoffman@bettorah.org so we can add you to our email list.

6 Thursdays From 12:00-1:30 pm: October 19th, November 16th, January 19th, February 15th, March 15th, April 19th

iEngage, Israel's Milestones and Their Meanings: The Legacy of the Past and the Challenges of the Future, Taught by Rabbi Brusso
Memory is a central element in defining modern Jewish identity. As we look to Israel’s future, we need to engage anew with our past and explore its meanings and consequences. Through the consideration of major historic moments, this iEngage Project series grapples with the different ideas and values that shape the meaning of modern Israel, Zionism, and Jewish identity today. This innovative course explores the pivotal events of 1947 and 1967 - following the 1917 Balfour Declaration - as key moments when Zionism unleashed new thinking about the meaning of Jewishness for generations to come. The course engages Jews in an open and pluralistic discussion about issues of Jewish identity, peoplehood, ethics, and theology, as they relate to nationhood, land, sovereignty, Jerusalem, occupation, and moral red lines.

6 Evenings At 8 pm: January 4th, January 11th, January 17th, January 25th, February 8th, February 15th
No charge for Bet Torah members

Bet Torah Paired Learning Program
Work schedule preventing you from participating in Jewish learning? Car pool, kids' sports practices, and hectic life in general keeping you from exploring the questions about Judaism you always wanted to ask? Curious about topics as diverse as secular Jewish culture, Jewish life cycle ceremonies, and what G-d, prophecy, and free will mean to us as Jews? If so, please consider taking part in Bet Torah’s Paired Learning program. Bet Torah Paired Learning, is a fun, exciting, and easy way for Bet Torah members to connect with one another or family members while learning a topic of your choice. It does not matter whether you work in the City or spend your daytime hours driving the kids all over Northern Westchester. Each study pair will select when and how it wants to meet (whether in person at Starbucks, at Bet Torah, on a hike, or via Skype, FaceTime or Google Hangout), each week’s materials will be available on line, and each study session will require little or no outside reading. If you were able to attend this past year’s evening Shavuot program you witnessed the success of last year’s Paired Learning program and the enthusiasm of the participants who taught that evening, and you can read about what Jerry Fensterstock had to say about his experience at http://ejewishphilanthropy.com/how-a-jewish-learning-program-surprised-
Film Screening and Discussion: “In Search of Israeli Cuisine”
A mouthwatering portrait of the Israeli people told through their food. The filmmakers follow Michael Solomonov (Zahav Restaurant in Philadelphia) into restaurants and home kitchens, wineries, bakeries and cheese makers, he eats street food and visits markets. All over the country, he discusses traditions, ingredients, the origins, and the future of Israeli Cuisine.
Join us for great food, a great film and a great discussion.
Sponsored by Life Long Learning, Cultural Arts and Israeli Affairs
No charge to Bet Torah members

Great Jewish Books Club
Why are there so many Jewish opticians? Jews like to read. We are, after all, the people of the Book. Since the 2nd century CE, at least, Jews have been voracious readers - outnumbering much of the world in literacy. So what could be more natural for a thinking synagogue, like Bet Torah, than to have a club devoted exclusively to books of Jewish significance. The Great Jewish Book Club, is devoted to important works that have Jewish Content or Jewish Authors or subjects significant to Judaism. Our selections are as varied as Bintel Briefs (Letters to the Forvarts) and Judah Ha Levy. Each time we meet we select the next book and appoint someone to lead the discussion. I can't predict what is coming but I can tell you what read in the last year: What Went Wrong, Lewis; Ornament of the World, Menocal; Salafism in Lebanon, Rabil; NY Times Magazine - Middle East, Anderson; Mamelah Knows Best, Ingall; Acts of Faith, Patel; Disobedience, Aldeman; Night, Weisel; Genius of Judaism, Levy; A Horse Walked into a Bar, Grossman. Not all were masterpieces, - some were serious works, some novels, some light and fluffy. But all contributed to our understanding of who we are. Join us. You can select which books you want to participate with and how much you want to do so. We meet Thursday nights every month or so. We start at 8pm and rarely are here after 9:30. You choose what books you want to read and your level of participation. You will gain an expanded mind. You loose nothing but ignorance. To join send your email address to Edgfeinberg@gmail.com. There is no cost and no obligation.

Friday Morning Women’s Torah Study Group
Share a morning of study and exploration of the weekly parashah, from the woman’s perspective! This year we have also been studying Pirkei Avot: The Ethics of the Fathers. Learn how to incorporate the teaching from the Torah into your everyday life. No experience necessary, the only requirement is an eagerness to learn and discover the treasures of Torah. Participants may take turns leading the discussion and providing a light breakfast for the group. New participants are always welcome and encouraged to join in.
Fridays 10:00-11:30am

Saturday Morning Parashah Discussion
Each Shabbat at 9:00AM a group of Bet Torah congregants gets together to discuss that week’s Torah portion before services. Members of the group take turns each week leading what is always a lively and informative discussion. A wide range of Torah knowledge is on display as every participant brings their own perspective and insight to the conversation. Coffee and cake help lubricate the exchange of ideas. No-one knows too much or too little to participate. Please join us for this fast half hour of Torah conversation. We meet in the small conference room and look forward to having you share your thoughts and ideas with us.

Saturdays at 9:00am

Beginning Hebrew
Have you always thought about learning Hebrew? Do you wish you could follow along with the prayers, or wish you could help your kids as they prepare for their B’nei Mitzvah, or hope to read the signs when you go to Israel? Well now’s the time to learn! Nili Ionascu will once again start a weekday beginning Hebrew (day and time to be determined based on interest). If you have any doubts about how much fun and how easy it is to learn, just ask her very enthusiastic students from last year’s class! Interested? Please email rabbikoffman@bettorah.org.