Welcome to the Congregation Beth El Adult Education Programs for the Winter/Spring of 2012.

Congregation Beth El Adult Education offers classes, programs, and activities that deepen and enrich the Jewish learning of our congregants. Drawing from the rich resources of our congregation and our community, we offer a stimulating learning environment that encompasses the full range and diversity of the Jewish experience.

Roots and Branches: Texts and Ideas of the Jewish Tradition - “The Prophets”

Sponsored by the Beth El Adult Education Committee

Dates: Sunday at Beth El, January 8 – April 1 (no meeting February 5 and March 4) Spring dates to be arranged.

Time: 10:00 – 11:30 am

Presenter: Rabbi Yoel Kahn

Join Rabbi Yoel Kahn for an open-ended, on-going, ever-changing exploration of the core ideas and texts of the Jewish tradition. This fall, we will study the prophet Ezekiel along with the Twelve “Minor” Prophets (can you name them?), looking at their place in Jewish history, their impact on later Jewish ideas and their meaning for today. This on-going class is open to everyone. Class is free; drop-ins welcome! No prerequisites, no prior knowledge required.

Winter series begins January 15. schedule and topics to be announced.

Open to everyone; free; drop-ins welcome!

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Beth El Lay-Led Torah Study

Sponsored by the Beth El Adult Education Committee

Dates: Every Shabbat in the Beit Midrash

Time: 9:15 – 10:15 am

Our Mission: To create a meaningful spiritual community through an enriching congregant-led study experience. To study the Torah together, to give every congregant an opportunity to delve into our tradition, and to offer those who wish to do so the opportunity to present a drash that is relevant to current times.

Our Core Values: Our Torah Study Community is built on a deep and fundamental respect for different opinions, backgrounds, and perspectives. Part of our vibrancy stems from the fact that we have such a broad spectrum of beliefs (from near-Orthodox to atheist) and backgrounds (Jews, non-Jews, and others, from all parts of the world.)

Our approach is egalitarian: Everyone has an equal opportunity to speak and listen. We believe that each person has something important to say regardless of rank, profession, or academic standing.

Our Torah Study community is lay-led and self-determined. We have grown from a small group to one that is large, excited, and committed. We come together each week to offer parts of our hearts and souls to each other.

Finally, we come each week to learn and grow by participating together in an intellectually stimulating, emotionally supportive, and spiritually nurturing experience.

For more information, contact Beverly Eigner, beignert@comcast.net or 510-549-3800.

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Cosponsors: Congregation Beth El, Jewish Community Relations Council

**The Arab Spring One Year Later**

In January 2011, the self-immolation death of a Tunisian fruit-stand owner lit the flames of revolt throughout the Arab world. In a region where absolute rule from the top has been the norm for millennia, what triggered this unique wave of democratic reforms, and where will it go from here?

These questions and more will be taken up by our speakers. Jehon Grist will explore patterns of rule in the Middle East and Israel from ancient times into the 20th century, and Prof. Farid Senzai will delve into the processes that led to this revolution and its prospects for the future.

**Please Note:** Participants are encouraged to attend the Beth El Men's Club program *Israel and the Arab Spring* with Michael Nacht, January 18, 7:00 pm.

For more information, call Beth El at 510-848-3988.

*Tuesdays, March 6 - March 13*

*Time: 7:30 - 9:00 pm*

Registration for this class is $20 to the public, or $15 for Beth El members, payable to Lehrhaus Judaica.

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Cosponsors: Congregation Beth El, Congregation Netivot Shalom, Congregation Beth Israel

**Beginning Modern Hebrew (Winter)**

**Dates:** Wednesdays, January 18 - February 29

**Time:** 6:30 - 7:30 pm

This class is a continuation of Beginning Modern Hebrew from the fall, for individuals beginning to understand the Hebrew alphabet, grammar, and vocabulary. A continuation of the Beginning Hebrew from the fall, this class is open to new students provided they consult with the instructor before signing up.

**Required text:** *Hebrew from Scratch*, available at Afikomen Judaica.

Registration for this class is $95 for the public, $80 for Beth El members, payable to Lehrhaus Judaica.

For more information or to register for this series, please contact Lehrhaus Judaica http://www.lehrhaus.org/ or 510-845-6420.

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Cosponsors: Congregation Beth El, Congregation Netivot Shalom

**Intermediate Modern Hebrew (Winter)**

**Dates:** Wednesdays, January 18 - February 29

**Time:** 7:45 - 8:45 pm

This class is for individuals who can read and write, but have little knowledge of Hebrew vocabulary and grammar. Learn to create simple sentences, verbally and in writing. A continuation of the Intermediate Hebrew from the fall, this class is open to new students provided they consult with the instructor before signing up.

**Required text:** *Hebrew from Scratch*, available at Afikomen Judaica.

Registration for this class is $95 for the public, $80 for Beth El members, payable to Lehrhaus Judaica.

For more information or to register for this series, please contact Lehrhaus Judaica at 510-845 6420 or visit www.lehrhaus.org.

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Honoring Tradition, Celebrating Diversity, and Building a Jewish Future
Cosponsors: Congregation Beth El, Congregation Netivot Shalom

Intermediate Prayerbook/Biblical Hebrew 2A (Spring)

Dates: Sundays, April 8 - June 10 (no class 5/13, 5/27)
Time: 4:30 - 5:55 pm

The third semester of the introductory sequence of Biblical Hebrew grammar, this course covers the more complex features of the language commonly found in Biblical and Siddur (prayerbook) texts. After a brief review of material covered in the previous semester, we will continue to introduce features of the verbal system and new grammatical components. Students will begin to translate simple Biblical passages and more lengthy Prayerbook passages to develop reading and comprehension skills.

Prerequisite: Lehrhaus Judaica’s Beginning Prayerbook/Biblical Hebrew 1A-1B, or equivalent.


Registration for this class is $95 for the public, $85 for Beth El members, $70 for Learning for Life (age 65+) and $70 for full time students, payable to Lehrhaus Judaica.

For more information or to register for this series, please contact Lehrhaus Judaica at 510-845 6420 or visit www.lehrhaus.org.

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Beginning Modern Hebrew (Spring)

Dates: Wednesdays, March 14 - May 2
Time: 6:30 - 7:30 pm

This class is for individuals beginning to understand the Hebrew alphabet, grammar, and vocabulary. The third part of a year-long Beginning Hebrew sequence, this class is open to new students provided they consult with the instructor before signing up.


Registration for this class is $110 for the public, $90 for Beth El members, payable to Lehrhaus Judaica.

For more information or to register for this series, please contact Lehrhaus Judaica http://www.lehrhaus.org/ or 510-845-6420.

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Intermediate Modern Hebrew (Spring)

Dates: Wednesdays, March 14 - May 2
Time: 7:45 - 8:45 pm

This class is for individuals who can read and write, but have little knowledge of Hebrew vocabulary and grammar. Learn to create simple sentences, verbally and in writing. A continuation of the Intermediate Hebrew from the winter, this class is open to new students provided they consult with the instructor before signing up.


Registration for this class is $110 for the public, $90 for Beth El members, payable to Lehrhaus Judaica.

For more information or to register for this series, please contact Lehrhaus Judaica at 510-845 6420 or visit www.lehrhaus.org.

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Advanced Biblical Hebrew 3: The Song and Story of Deborah (Spring)

Dates: Sundays, April 8 - June 10 (no class 5/13, 5/27)
Time: 6:00 - 7:30 pm

Imagine traveling back in time to Israel's birth moment, somewhere between the late 13th-12th centuries BCE. That's what we'll do as we translate and analyze passages from Judges 4-5. Judges 4 offers a prose account of Deborah's struggle with Sisera dating to perhaps the 7th century; Judges 5 sings a poetic version of the story that is one of the oldest texts from the Bible, perhaps dating before 1000 BCE. Our course will employ Bibleworks 9 software to project the Hebrew, Septuagint and Vulgate texts onto a large screen along with the ongoing class translation.

Registration for this class is $95 for the public, $85 for Beth El members, $75 for Learning for Life (age 65+) and $75 for full time students, payable to Lehrhaus Judaica.

For more information or to register for this series, please contact Lehrhaus Judaica http://www.lehrhaus.org/ or 510-845-6420.

Tu B'Shevat Seder Dinner

Date: Wednesday February 8, 6:30 pm

Have you ever been to a Tu B'Shevat seder? Modeled on the Passover seder, the Tu B'Shevat seder includes drinking four cups of wine with varying percentages of red and white wine or juice, representing perhaps the shifting of yearly seasons. There are also readings on trees and fruit from a range of Jewish literature, and a variety of fruits and nuts are sampled. This year, dinner will be included in our seder. Kindly RSVP by February 3 on Beth El's website so we know how many people to expect.

For more information, contact the Beth El office, 510-848-3988.

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Sponsored by the Beth El Adult Education Committee

Purim

Date: Wednesday March 7
Time: 6:30 pm and 7:30 pm

We will celebrate Purim this year with Two Festive Megillah readings. Come for one or both!

At 6:30 pm hear the Megillah in Hebrew from beginning to end. Snacks and libations will be served while the story is told.

At 7:30 pm come to the multi-lingual reading: Listen to highlights from the Megillah in a multitude of languages. Rabbi Zellman will teach Purim songs; snacks, schnapps and juice will be sampled. To volunteer to read in a language of your choice (all languages encouraged)

For more information, contact Ruth Ehrenkrantz at ruthehren@comcast.net.

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Freedom Fest: Liberate your Passover Experience

Date: Sunday, March 18
Time: 10:00 am-1:00 pm at the JCC (Walnut and Rose)

How do I add something new to my seder this year? What is the meaning of all the items on the seder plate? And how do I engage people of all ages in the seder? If these are some of the questions you are asking about Passover, make sure you attend this year’s Passover University! Join us for different courses and instructors from all over the East Bay! For more information, contact Debra@bethelberkeley.org.

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Our Traditional 2nd Night Community Passover Seder

Date: Saturday, April 7
Time: 6:00-9:00 pm

Join Rabbis Yoel Kahn and Reuben Zellman along with Beth El friends, old and new, for a festive Passover celebration and delicious catered kosher-for-Passover meal. We are never too old nor too young to learn and retell the story of our own and other’s stories of liberation. Through song, ritual, and discussion, we will retell the Passover story, making connections to our own lives and our world.

Members: Adults $54 - Young Adult (30 and under) $36 - Children $18
Guests: Adults $72 - Young Adult (30 and under) $36 - Children $25 - College students with $18

Through the generosity of anonymous Beth El members, no one will be turned away because of inability to pay.

Childcare will be provided for children 5 and under. Please register by Thursday April 5 at www.bethelberkeley.org/pesach

For more information, contact the Beth El office, 510-848-3988.

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Supper & Schmooze

Date: Saturday, March 24 • 6:00 pm
Location: Starts at Beth El with Havdalah and appetizers, then off to the various homes for supper... and schmooze

The Annual Beth El Supper & Schmooze Event (formerly called Lichvod HaTzibur Dinners) will be on Saturday, March 24th. We are looking forward to a great turnout!

Come join us for a wonderful intimate home cooked meal at the homes of our fellow congregants after enjoying appetizers and music with Isaac Zones at Beth El!

This is a great way to get out for an evening and get to know a small group of your fellow Beth El'ers, while sharing common interests... music, games, wine.... Some dinners will have a specific theme, others just a 'schmoozing theme'!

To help meet the spiritual, educational and cultural needs of our synagogue, we ask that you make a donation to Beth El, comparable to the amount you might spend on a fine meal in a gourmet restaurant.

For more information, contact the Beth El office, 510-848-3988.
Childcare will be available at Beth El during the dinner!

Beth El Kevah Learning Group
A text study for mothers and grandmothers

Dates: 2nd Sunday of every month
Time: 7:30-9:00 pm in the Beit Midrash

Join our regular study group, led by Rabbi Dorothy Richman, as we explore the Jewish approach to parenting. We will cover different holidays, traditions and customs and look at them from the woman’s perspective. To register, please contact nsilver@kevah.org

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Sponsored by the Beth El Social Action and Adult Education Committees and the Men’s Club

Political and Economic Perspectives on the Presidential Election

Date: Thursday, May 24 • 7:00 pm

How much do Americans really care about inequality? Will the Occupy Movement make any difference in the upcoming presidential election? What are the real issues that influence the American political economy?

Come hear two friends who have been arguing about American politics for the last 30 years, Beth El members David Tabb, emeritus professor of political science and Norman Schnieder, emeritus professor of urban studies and economics at San Francisco State University.

For more information, contact the Beth El office, 510-848-3988.

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Honoring Tradition, Celebrating Diversity, and Building a Jewish Future
The Courage to Remember Exhibit

*Dates: April 16 – 30*

Congregation Beth El will host the Simon Wiesenthal Center’s Museum of Tolerance traveling exhibit *The Courage to Remember* this April. The exhibit will be on display in the Beth El Gallery and Social Hall from April 16th to April 30th, and will be a feature of the community wide Yom Ha Shoah service at Beth El on the evening of April 18. This 40-panel visual narrative created by The Wiesenthal Center is a powerful and comprehensive educational tool which can be used as the centerpiece for special events, and as a visual curriculum for educators.

For more information, contact the Beth El office, 510-848-3988.

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Current Trends in End-of-Life Choices

*Date: Sunday April 29*

*Time: 10:00 am – noon*

*Location: Congregation Beth El*

Join us for a panel discussion on current trends in end-of-life choice, including the following issues:

- What is the Reform Jewish perspective on end-of-life choice for the terminally ill, including hastening death?
- What is the current legal framework for end-of-life choice in California?
- How can I prepare myself now to ensure my wishes are met at the end of my life?
- What are the legal medical options for terminal patients who want to hasten death?

For more information, contact Ruth Ehrenkrantz, ruthehren@comcast.net

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Amos Oz: The Nature of Dreams

*Date: Sunday, April 22*

*Time: 7:00- 9:00 pm*

A film by Yonathan and Marsha Zur, Israel, 2009

86 Minutes, Hebrew and English, English Subtitles

Exploring the persona of Amos Oz, the film opens a rare window of opportunity to experience the world as observed through the eyes of one of Israel's greatest authors; a man of whom it has been said, knows Israeli society inside out, especially since he is an outsider, in a very profound sense, of all worlds.

The screening will be followed by a panel discussion by Beth El congregants.

For more information, contact the Beth El office, 510-848-3988.

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Honoring Tradition, Celebrating Diversity, and Building a Jewish Future
The Beth El Season of Listening

An important part of Beth El’s mission is to build a vibrant, inclusive community where individuals feel strongly connected to our synagogue and to each other. In order to bring this vision to reality, Beth El has initiated a “Season of Listening” that involves dozens of small “house parties” in congregants’ homes throughout this fall and winter. These meetings will be organized and facilitated by members of the Beth El Listening Campaign Committee. Towards that same end, we will also continue with the one-on-one conversations that began last winter. We urge every member of the Congregation to attend either a House Party or a one-to-one meeting.

This initiative is designed to bring the diverse voices of our congregation together so that we can learn from each other and harness the power of our whole community toward social justice for our members, our city, our state, our country and our world.

We will present the results of these conversations to the Congregation on the Community Shabbat of March 16, 2012.

We urge every member of the Congregation to attend either a House Party or a one-to-one meeting. Please join us for this extraordinary opportunity to strengthen our Beth El community. We can’t do it without you.

For more information about the Listening Campaign and hosting or attending a house party, please contact a member of the house party subcommittee:

- Maxim Schrogin: maximds@aol.com
- Cathy Stevens: cathytevans2008@sbcglobal.net
- Adele Amodeo: aamodeo46@aol.com

Hams on Wry: A Night of Jewish Humor

Date: Sunday, April 15
Time: 7:00 – 9:00 pm

Please join Beth El’s own funny man Barry Silverblatt as he hosts a special night of hilarity in which YOU are the star. With an open mike, be prepared to stand up and deliver a joke (or jokes), a funny song or other comedic presentation for the amusement of the assemblage. Or, if you’re the shy type, just come and enjoy the humor of your brave Beth El congregant comedians.

Remember, without YOU, there is no show!!!

Requested contribution $10 to cover beer, seltzer, peanuts and pretzels – the perfect noshes for an evening of Jewish humor.

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Sponsored by the Beth El Adult Education Committee

Field Trip: The Reutlinger Community for Jewish Living in Danville

Date: Monday, March 19 • 10:00 am

The Reutlinger Community for Jewish Living began over fifty years ago as the Home for Jewish Parents in Oakland. In 1999, their 110,000 square foot multi-level care facility was opened in Danville and renamed. The community is home to 180 residents living in the Sukkat Shalom Skilled Nursing unit, the Assisted Living apartments, the Tikvah Enhanced Care Center or the Traditions Memory Care Center.

A maximum of 12 Beth El members are invited to take a field trip to tour and enjoy a lunch at the Reutlinger Community.

We will meet at Beth El to carpool, leaving promptly at 10 am. We will have a tour at 11 and lunch at 12, returning to Beth El before about 2 pm.

Each carpooler will be asked to pay the driver $2.

Since we are limited to 12 visitors, if you are interested you must RSVP by March 1 with Beverly Eigner, beigner@comcast.net, or 510-549-3800.

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Sponsored by the Beth El Adult Education Committee

Field Trip: Maharaja: The Splendors of India’s Royal Courts at the San Francisco Asian Art Museum, a docent tour, led by Beth El Member Carol Goldman

Date: Tuesday, March 13 and/or March 15 • 10:00 am

This exhibition explores the extraordinary culture of princely India, showcasing rich and varied objects that reflect aspects of royal life. The exhibition includes nearly 200 dazzling works of art including magnificent paintings, photographs, textiles and dress, jewelry, jeweled objects, metalwork and more.

The collective work, spanning 250 years, will awaken you to the rich historical and cultural legacy of India’s royal courts. Maharaja brings viewers precious art objects spanning three centuries that saw the decline India’s Mughal Empire in the early 18th century, the rise of new independent kingdoms, domination by the English East India Company, colonization in 1858, India’s independence movement and the collapse of British rule in 1947.

Beth El member and Asian Art Museum Docent Carol Goldman will guide us on the tour.

We are limited to no more than 20 participants on the tour. If there is sufficient demand we can take the tour on both March 13 and March 15.

The Asian Art Museum is very convenient to the Civic Center BART station. Meet at the museum’s entrance on Larkin Street (the far left-most door) at 10 am promptly.

Admission to the museum (pay at the door) is $17, $13 for seniors. There will also be a charge of $5 for the docent tour.

If you are interested in participating, you must RSVP by March 1 to Beverly Eigner at beigner@comcast.net or 510-549-3800.

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Congregation Beth El Adult Education Programs – Winter/Spring 2012

Sponsored by the Beth El Adult Education Committee

Lunch & Learn Forums
“In pursuit of Lifelong Learning”
Dates: Second Thursday of every month
Time: Noon – 1:30 pm
Bring a brown bag lunch. Dessert and beverages will be provided.

Wills, Trusts and Estate Planning
Date: February 9
Time: Noon – 1:30 pm
Presenter: Jill Dodd

Writing your own Ethical Will
Date: March 8
Time: Noon – 1:30 pm
Presenter: Ann Gonski

The Lazy Gourmet: Real Food, Real Easy
Date: April 12
Time: Noon – 1:30 pm
Presenter: Josie Shapiro and Marjorie Gelb

Book Discussion: The Finkler Question by Howard Jacobson
Date: May 10
Time: Noon – 1:30 pm
Presenter: Rabbi Yoel Kahn

Sponsored by the Beth El Adult Education Committee

The People of the Book are Meeting and Reading
A reading & discussion series on Jewish literature lay-led by members of Congregation Beth El

Pictures at an Exhibition by Sahar Houghteling
Date: Thursday, February 16
Time: 7:00 pm
Presenter: Susan Carter

The Hare with the Amber Eyes by Edmund de Waal
Date: Thursday, March 15
Time: 7:00 pm
Presenter: Wilma Rader

Rise: A Novel of Contemporary Israel by Yosef Gottlieb
Date: Thursday, April 19
Time: 7:00 pm
Presenter: Marilyn Margulius

Son of a Small Hero by Mordechai Richler
Date: Thursday, May 17
Time: 7:00 pm
Presenter: Barry Silverblatt

Collector’s Cookbook by Alegra Goodman
Date: Thursday, June 21
Time: 7:00 pm
Presenter: Beverly Eigner

Watch for details in the Beth El Builder and the weekly e-mailings. For more information, contact Beverly Eigner, beigner@comcast.net, or 510-549-3800.

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Honoring Tradition, Celebrating Diversity, and Building a Jewish Future
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Learn and Sing with the Beth El Chorus

Dates: Rehearsals take place Wednesday evenings
Time: 7:00 - 8:45 pm in the Sanctuary

Our chorus sings at occasions throughout the year: Shabbat, the High Holy Days, and public performances. Join us for fun, learning, great people and glorious music!

Always open to new singers--any member of Beth El who loves to sing is encouraged to join us!

No musical background necessary (rehearsal CDs are available as well as sheet music)

The commitment is one "season" at a time--you can sing with the chorus for one or more sets, without committing to any other time of year.

Learn celebratory and reflective music of Jewish cultures from Casablanca to Poland to Israel and more; develop your knowledge of Jewish languages, liturgy and artistic traditions as well as musical skill; and have a lot of fun in a lively and supportive community atmosphere.

Full rehearsal schedules are available via the Music Board, newsletter and e-updates, or contact Rabbi Reuben Zellman, Assistant Rabbi and Music Director, RabbiRZ@bethelberkeley.org, 510-848-3988 ext. 228.

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