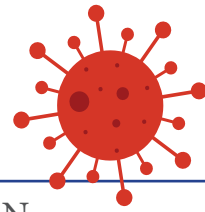


Sim Shalom

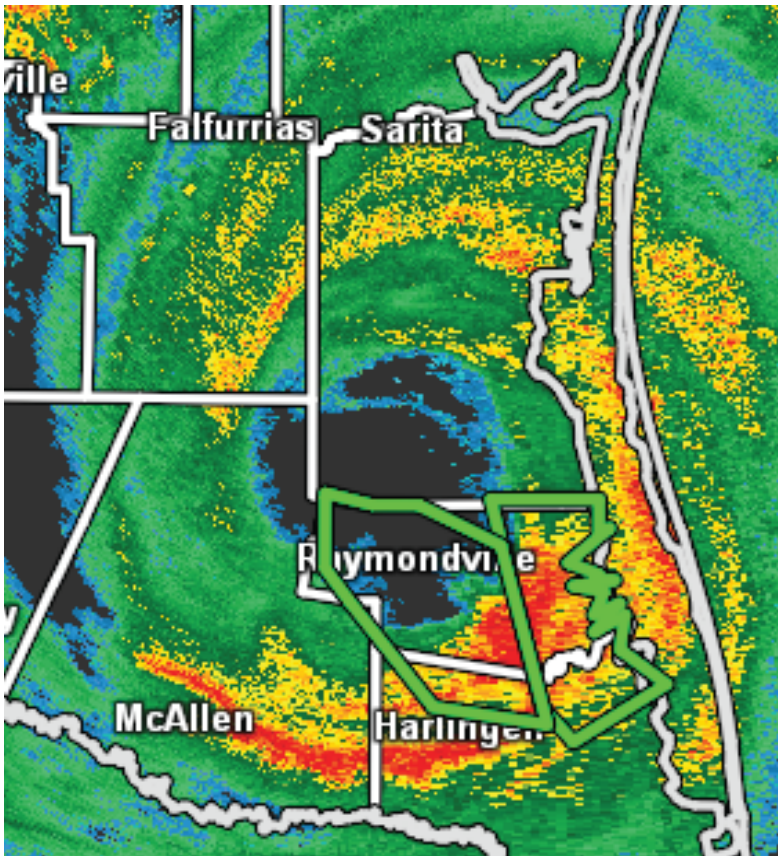


PLAGUE YEAR
Edition

THE NEWSLETTER OF TEMPLE BETH ISRAEL, HARLINGEN

FALL 2020

Welcoming Temple Beth-El, Brownsville & Temple Beth El, Corsicana & Irving Havurah



Hanna's handiwork

Temple Beth Israel
closed until new
roofs, interior repairs
can be made

(see Page 3)

Join us for virtual

High Holiday Services

(See Page 2)



Old message,
new medium.



Come get your Siddur and participate with our Rabbi during virtual services or say your own prayers at home.

Because of the pandemic, the Harlingen temple board and the Rabbi decided that we will not have in-person services for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

To help the congregation, we will make available the temple's weekly siddur — the blue "Gates of Prayer" book — as well as the High Holidays Makzor — the red "Gates of Repentance" book — and the small booklet for the Selichot service.

I will be in the Harlingen temple parking lot from 10 a.m. to noon on Sunday, September 6, for anybody who would like to come and pick up any of the books. Members can get the books on loan or buy them for \$20 each; non-members will need to leave a \$20 deposit or can also buy them for that cost.

Bill Berg has volunteered to bring any books to those who live in Brownsville and would like to pick them up at his house. Contact Bill at billberg42@gmail.com.

Please join the virtual services when possible. Also if you would like to hear in person the MITZVAH of the blowing of the Shofar, we will be blowing the Shofar at the temple parking lot at 3 p.m. September 19 and 20.

Shalom,

Fernando A. Russek

Gabbai

High Holiday Services

Services will be conducted online using the Bluejeans site or app. Each service will have the same meeting ID and will not require a passcode to join. Here is the link for all services — <https://bluejeans.com/711383774>

The Rabbi needs you to participate! He will assign certain English parts of the services. If there is a part you would like to read, please contact him by text at 214-293-6515 or email at frank@rabbifrankjoseph.org.

SELICHOT 8 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 12

ROSH HASHANAH Erev 7:30 p.m. Friday Sept. 18

Rosh Hashanah I 10 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 19

Rosh Hashanah II 10 a.m. Sunday, Sept. 20

Hear the shofar from your car in the Harlingen temple parking lot at 3 p.m. each day.

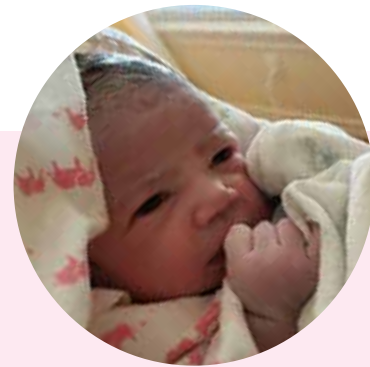
YOM KIPPUR Kol Nidre 7:30 p.m. Sunday, September 27

Morning Service 10 a.m. Monday, September 28

Afternoon Service 3 p.m.

Yizkor approximately 5 p.m.

Ne'ilah approximately 7 p.m.



MAZEL TOV to the Newman family on the July 19 birth of their daughter!

A baby-naming ceremony will be held during the Torah service on the first day of Rosh Hashanah, Sept. 19.

HANNA'S HANDIWORK

Fundraiser to repair hurricane damage and refresh the temple

Back in 1910, several Hidalgo and Cameron county families founded a small Jewish congregation. The group first rented a space, but in 1935 they built a building in Mercedes. In 1948, the members from the two counties separated and built temples in Harlingen and in McAllen. Our Temple Beth Israel in Harlingen was completed and held its first High Holiday services on Sept. 20, 1950.

This Rosh Hashanah will be the 70th anniversary of our beautiful temple and the 110th anniversary of the Jewish community that came together in 1910.

So many histories, so many memories, so much of the Jewish imprint and life in Harlingen and surrounding communities has been influenced, exalted and supported by our beautiful, happy, joyful community.

We had plans for a big celebration of this milestone to take place during our 5781 Jewish year, but the coronavirus pandemic has made that impossible. We are reminded how important little things are — like getting together for support and prayer. Though we will stay safe and refrain from in-person services for now, when the time is right, we will celebrate our history and look forward to 70 more years of Jewish life here.

Because of this we need to ask for the help of our members and friends. Last month's Hurricane Hanna damaged our buildings, and we are in the process of talks with our insurance carrier to find out what will be covered by our policy.

We expect that we will need to install a new roof on the temple and Sunday School, refinish our pews, install new flooring to the bima and do some other needed maintenance like painting. We estimate we will need to raise at least \$50,000 for this work.

We hope we all can help, like the founding families have done in the past, to invest for the future of our Jewish community.

Please consider a donation to the temple Building Fund or a contribution to the GoFundMe account that is being established for this purpose.

Toda raba,
Thank you very much,
Fernando A. Russek





FROM THE RABBI

Shalom,

Last Wednesday evening we began the new month of Elul on the Hebrew calendar, which means in one month we will start observing the High Holy Days — Yaamim Nora'm, the Days of Awe.

In many countries and cultures, like America, we celebrate a new year with parties, loud music and festive behavior like dropping a ball in Times Square and singing Auld Lang Syne.

As Jews however, we welcome our New Year with serious introspection, self-evaluation, soul searching, an "inventory of the soul." By engaging in these practices, by assessing what has transpired during the year, as Rabbi Dov Peretz Elkins stated in his book, *Rosh Hashanah Readings*, "We hope to embark on a much brighter tomorrow."

Our communal prayers in the synagogue and our private prayers focus on assessing our conduct and behavior in the past year, making amends for our mistakes and seeking forgiveness from our family, friends and all whom we have wronged and from G-D.(1)

Being completely honest with ourselves is never easy; therefore we begin preparing for the New Year during the month of Elul. During the month of Elul we recite Selichot — special penitential prayers focusing on Divine forgiveness of sins. Some of these prayers are among the oldest in our liturgy.(2) Except on the Sabbath, we also blow the Shofar at the end of the morning service every day, and we recite Psalm 27 at our daily morning and evening services.

As Rabbi Jonathan Sacks has stated, properly entered into, these 10 Days of Awe can potentially be a life-changing experience. The Days of Awe force us to ask the most fateful questions we will ever ask:

Who am I? Why am I here?

How shall I live? How have I lived until now?

How have I used G-D'S greatest gift of time?

Who have I wronged, and how can I put it right?

Where have I failed, and how shall I overcome my failures?

What is broken in my life and needs mending?

What chapter will I write in the Book of Life?

No one who has genuinely experienced these Days of Awe lives an unexamined life. In these days of reflection and introspection, we stand in the presence of G-D, knowing how short and vulnerable life really is, and how little time we actually have here on earth.(3) If we had not internalized these concepts before, the current pandemic has made these questions realities in our lives.

The best characterization of the Jewish people ever bestowed upon us, and the one that resonates most meaningfully to me, is the definition affectionately conferred by the Arabs centuries ago when they named us "The People of The Book." Out of all the High Holy Day machzurim I have read, none is

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Online services

Live at facebook.com/frank.joseph.9041
Also available there for viewing later.

FRIDAYS

Kabbalat Shabbat service, 7 p.m.

SATURDAYS

Shabbat service, 10 a.m.

SUNDAYS

Shacharit Service 10 a.m.

Gates of Prayer will be used for all the services. If you prefer a different prayerbook, previously recorded services available on YouTube use different books. Please note: It's not unusual for the online services to break off because of technical difficulties such as the loss of our internet signal. When that happens, we will resume the service in a second Facebook post. We are sorry for the inconvenience.

FROM RICHARD FOURZAN

Temple President, Harlingen



Shanah Tova, everyone!

A new year begins, and with it, new hopes and wishes for all of us!

We are a strong people... pandemic, hurricane, bigotry, and destruction have recently knocked on our doors; but here we are, happy and ready to tell the story of what has been going on in our lives. We stand tall.

We have not had services inside the synagogue for over 5 months, maybe six at the time this newsletter is published. Our Pesach celebration didn't happen at the temple, and from there, it all seemed to tumble down including parts of the building itself.

Thanks to Rabbi Frank and Laurie, anyone who is willing and has an account has been able to watch regular services online from day one of our forced quarantine. The Rabbi has offered to provide High Holy Day services, including Selichot. Please read more about it elsewhere in the newsletter. Thank you, Rabbi, for the services and thank you, Laurie, for your knowledge of technology to make all this happen.

After Hurricane Hanna, the board met and discussed repairs to the building. There were some construction flaws at the temple that could not be overlooked anymore. We must fix our synagogue before major damage occurs! In popular words, we need to rebuild the temple. We owe it to the temple and ourselves to have a strong structure that will last even longer for us and those after us.

There are several things that need immediate attention. I will let Fernando's contribution to the newsletter mention what is needed exactly. I can tell you that when I went inside the building and heard from Fernando what needs to be done, my jaw dropped to the

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FROM ALMA RUSSEK

Temple Treasurer, Harlingen



Dear members of the congregation,

It's been a while since the last time I've sent a letter to you all as treasurer of Temple Beth Israel. A lot has happened during these times of 2020. My daughter, Rachel, tells me that even though Rosh Hashanah is coming up again, it feels like it was just yesterday.

How time has flown by. In the next few weeks, we will begin a new year of membership. With this, you will be receiving a letter from me of your dues for 2020-2021. If you don't receive the letter within the month of September, please let me know so that I may resend it. Even though services have gone virtual, the temple's costs are still the same. This is why we need your support in these rough times. Thank you all.

Shana Tova Umetukah!

G'mar chatima tova!

Thank You

Donations to the Harlingen Temple

TO THE BUILDING FUND,
in loving memory of Gilbert Weisberg

Fernando and Alma Russek
Rabbi Frank & Laurie Joseph

TO THE GENERAL FUND,
in loving memory of Gilbert Weisberg

Ron Polan
Joan Weisberg
Shirley Chesten
Eddie and Linda Rosen
Joe E. Baldwin

Betty Bentsen Winn
Janice Katz
McKinley Carter
Paul and Mirna Rodriguez
Pamela Weisberg
Martha Barvin
Sara M. Beer and David A. Stohl

MEMORIAL PLAQUE
*in loving memory of
Israel Gilbert Weisberg
March 31 1931-July 12 2020*

Susana Weisberg
Monica Weisberg Stewart
& Elizabeth D. Weisberg

TO THE GENERAL FUND
Julian Reyes

TO THE RABBI'S
DISCRETIONARY FUND
Noe L. Flores
Bryan and Shirley Hewitt

FROM THE RABBI *Continued from Page 4*

more meaningful, contemplative and better compiled than the one we use, *The Gates of Repentance*. I want to thank the board for taking the initiative to make those books available to the congregation for prayer at home. If we sincerely reflect on our prayers and what we are reading, by the end of Yom Kippur, WE WILL DEFINITELY COME AWAY TRANSFORMED!

During this pandemic, the Biblical commandment that keeps running through my mind on a daily basis is “Choose Life, That You May Live!” It is incumbent upon us to do everything in our power to support our health! Therefore, we will be conducting virtual participatory online services this year. While congregational services are always the ideal, if we have our prayer books and participate, we can still experience extremely meaningful services and spiritually fulfilling Days of Awe!

As we are about to begin the New Year of 5781, let us remember that every day we are privileged to live is a wonderful blessing. As we read in Psalm 118:24, “This is the day which the L-RD has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it!” During the coming year, let us take nothing for granted, but rather let us sincerely appreciate every blessing and every day G-D grants us. During the coming year, let us ask forgiveness of those we have wronged, and let us strive to be the most compassionate, caring, charitable, forgiving, empathetic individuals we have the power to be!

On behalf of Congregation Temple Beth Israel, we invite all the communities to join us for our High Holy Day Services!

Laurie and I wish everyone a wonderful, happy, healthy, prosperous, peaceful, fulfilling New Year of 5781.

Shanah Tovah! May you be inscribed in G-D’s Book of Life for a good year.

Shalom U’v’rahchah,
Rabbi Frank Joseph

We are investing in a future with YOU



Since I was 15 years old, there are only two goals I have ever desired.

The first is summed up in a Psalm we recite every morning and evening during the month of Elul. It is from Psalm 27:4. “One thing I asked of The L-RD, that shall I seek; would that I dwell in the house of The L-RD all the days of my life.”

My other great desire is to be a Rabbi serving an entire community. I will continue to serve Corsicana and strive to ensure the legacy of my father, Rabbi Ernest Joseph. I will also strive to ensure the continuity of Irving Havurah. But above all, I want to be remembered for being a Rabbi in the Rio Grande Valley.

To that end, we have purchased a home to remodel across the street from the temple, our favorite place in Harlingen!

Laurie and I wish to express our thanks to Fernando Russek Jr. and to the Board of Directors at Temple Beth Israel for enabling our dreams to come to fruition.

“How goodly are your tents o Jacob, your dwelling places o Israel!”

Rabbi Frank and Laurie Joseph

1) *Rosh Hashanah Readings*, Introduction xvii, Rabbi Dov Peretz Elkins
2) *The JPS Guide To Jewish Traditions*, pages 178-179, Ronald L Eisenberg
3) *The Koren Rosh Hashanah Mahzor*, p.xiii, Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

FROM RICHARD FOURZAN *Continued from Page 5*

ground. A new roof is a definite need, but please read Fernando's assessment of the damages and repairs. Thank you, board members, for a great meeting we had to solve these needs.

Rosh Hashanah is the time for renewed commitments and that includes membership fees. I will speak bluntly and without sugar-coating it, we need your fees to help with the cost of repairs. The insurance company has been contacted, and we will soon hear what they have to offer; there are funds in the bank accounts, but we do not want to deplete investments, and we cannot use for repairs specific monetary gifts we have received. Please look at your finances and please commit to pay your fees so we can have a healthy synagogue to feel proud of, and to go to soon.

We are also setting up a GoFundMe fundraiser for needed repairs, regular tune-ups, and beautification of the synagogue. Thank you, Angela, for helping with this. We also have a building fund already in place. Can we please donate to it to help with repairs? It is a big-ticket expense, but if we all pull together, I know we can do it. Your help is needed now more than at any other time. Fundraiser donations can easily be made through PayPal by going to the TBI webpage (harlingentemple.com) or by sending a check to Alma who, as usual, will keep a spreadsheet with amounts, names, and causes. We would like to send an update of the work by Hanukkah (again, the rebuilding of the temple). If we may please count on you, it would be great if we could get enough to fix the building with the donations you will kindly send, including a Siddur check-out initiative for High Holy Days. Read about it elsewhere here in the newsletter in Fernando's article.

Thank you and Shana Tova! And may we all be inscribed in the Book of Life for 5781!!!!

Richard Fourzan
President

Yahrzeits

We ask that you consider a \$10 donation per name to the Temple's general fund to have your family names read at the memorial service on Yom Kippur.

Support the Temple

MEMORIAL PLAQUES

RATES FOR MEMORIAL PLAQUES: Our rate for a memorial plaque on our memorial wall is \$350. Or you can buy two for \$600. Please contact any board member to purchase a memorial plaque.

PEWS

HONOR A LOVED ONE OR A SPECIAL OCCASION with an engraved plaque on a Pew. The cost is \$1,250. See any board member to make arrangements.

Harlingen Celebrations

BIRTHDAYS

8/1	Rachel Russek
8/8	Harold Fisch
8/8	Nathan Fisch
8/10	Marina Wise-Herring
8/12	Rory Minck
8/12	Abby Warshowsky
8/20	Stan Fisch
8/25	Isaac Newman
8/30	Braulio Natanael Gaytan
8/30	Elizabeth Goldstein
8/31	Tonatiuh Gonzalez
9/4	Christine Newman
9/7	Isaiah Newman
9/14	Mary Warshowsky
9/20	Ronald Banks
10/1	Dyan Banks
10/1	Samuel Barrios
10/2	Sheila Greenfeld
10/7	Kendra Newman
10/9	Richard Newman
10/12	Brittany Stewart James
10/16	Yafah Tziporah Russek
10/23	Olga Quintero
10/23	Richard Fourzan
10/25	Roman Newman
1/6	Susie Weisberg
11/11	Luis Gonzalez
11/12	Jacquelyn Stewart
11/13	Benjamin M. Yudesis
11/14	Monica Stewart Weisberg
11/18	Elizabeth Holzman
11/20	Deborah Shoshana Russek
11/29	Ari Holzman
12/4	Ivan Shirazi
12/7	Liliana Cohen
12/10	Lori Suissa
12/17	David Goldstein
12/20	Jose Cohen
12/21	Jacquelyn Goldstein

Poetry and Narratives from a Latinx and Jewish Immigrant's Point of View -- TONIGHT

“Here are the flyers for the August 25th online Elul Zoom event co-hosted by Jewish Activists for Immigration Justice Western MA and Never Again Action Boston. We extend a warm invitation to you and your congregation to please join us. We all have great memories of sharing Friday night services and a delicious potluck with Temple Beth El members when we came to protest, witness and volunteer at the border and hope many of your members decide to attend the Elul event. If you would like to learn more about Jonathan go to <https://mendozapoetry.com/>.”

HOSTED BY JEWISH ACTIVISTS FOR IMMIGRATION JUSTICE
OF WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS
AND NEVER AGAIN ACTION BOSTON



Latinx and Jewish: JONATHAN MENDOZA ON Immigrant Narratives and Activism, AN ELUL EVENT TUESDAY AUGUST 25TH, 7-8PM

Eastern Time
(6-7 p.m.
Central Time)

Jonathan will perform poetry and do a presentation that will focus on his identity as a mixed-race second generation Mexican-American and Jewish Immigrant, highlighting documented lessons about privilege, race and class assimilation and intersectional politics, and their influences on his artistry and approach to political and social activism.

Jonathan's presentation will be set in the context of the deep call of Elul to re-inspire us to commit ourselves to actively support the movements for immigration justice and racial justice.

This is the first in a series of three-part virtual speaker series entitled Immigration Justice is Racial Justice.

ONLINE EVENT-SIGN UP AT [BIT.LY/ELULEVENTSIGNUP](https://bit.ly/eluleventsignup)

FREE EVENT, VOLUNTARY DONATIONS WILL SUPPORT

PIONEER VALLEY WORKERS CENTER AND RESOURCE CENTER MATAMOROS

SPANISH INTERPRETATION WILL BE AVAILABLE