

THE BOSTON SYNAGOGUE

Creating An Independent & Unorthodox Egalitarian Jewish Community In The Heart of Downtown Boston

Located in Charles Riv

August 18, 2009

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For the latest information

Go to:

www.bostonsynagogue.org

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Dear Friends,

It's that time of year again. With the end of summer in sight, preparations and planning are underway for the High Holy Days and the coming year.

We continue to be committed to being an open and independent egalitarian community in downtown. We welcome active participation by women and men across Jewish denominations – and welcome you, your spouse or companion -- wherever you may be on your Jewish spiritual journey.

ENHANCED RABBINICAL SUPPORT

Each year, we talk with members and think about what we can do to make our synagogue a better place.

Now that the HVAC situation is in hand, our current focus is on enhancing our *level of rabbinical support*. While we are proud of our talented range of rabbinical and ritual support, we also are aware that for some people, the lack of a resident rabbi has been a key shortcoming.

Accordingly, we have arranged with Rabbi Ben Lanckton to provide us with these services as our new *Rabbi-in-Residence*. In this capacity, Rabbi Lanckton will be available for counseling and life cycle events (our other rabbis will be available as well). Rabbi Lanckton can be contacted through the synagogue for his hours of availability. More details are on the synagogue website, www.bostonsynagogue.org.

As background: Rabbi Lanckton was raised in suburban Boston, and lives locally with his wife and children. He has a degree from Yale, and was ordained at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, the leading institution for conservative Judaism. Currently, he is the Jewish Chaplain at Mass General.

As part of this new relationship, Rabbi Lanckton will be teaming up with Dr. David Fishman to conduct our High Holy Day services. During Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur -- please introduce yourselves to him and say hello! We also are planning for Ben to be with us more frequently than last year, as well as for special Friday night dinners for Succot and Chanukah.

In addition to Rabbi Lanckton, we will be hosting a new fifth year rabbinic intern from Hebrew College. Tamar Grimm. Tamar will be with us leading services on several Shabbats a month. She will also be involved with adult education, the Hebrew school, and more.

AS WE LOOK BACK ON THE LAST YEAR, WE HAVE A LOT TO BE PROUD ABOUT:

HEBREW SCHOOL

Our most precious assets are our children – and as a member you play a vital role in nurturing our future and passing on traditions from one generation to another. In our school, we also welcome children from interfaith families.

In past years, our Hebrew school had between 5 and 8 students per year. This past year our Hebrew school grew to 16 students – and this coming year prospectively will be growing further. Increasingly, the back of our sanctuary is being taken up by artwork and work product coming from our Hebrew school kids.

For these students and their families, we have served a critical function. Sunday mornings are a time for the kids to get together in a Jewish environment. For many of them, if we didn't exist, they might not get a Jewish education at all. We're also particularly proud of parents' feedback in a recent survey: Unlike their own typical experience -- their kids actually enjoy going to Hebrew school!

During the past two years, we have worked to upgrade our support of the Hebrew school – engaging our Rabbinic intern to work with Talia Etedgee, our long-standing teacher and another teacher. This gave us a teaching staff of three, enabling us to provide age-appropriate teaching and groupings starting with children as young as four. Like last year, our rabbinic intern, Tamar will be working with Talia to continue to provide a rich experience for our students and parents. Our congratulations to Talia on her recent marriage!

PROGRAMMING

In response to requests by our members, this past year the synagogue offered social in addition to adult education programming. These Sunday afternoon programs, co-sponsored with Zionist House, focused on the Faces of Israel. The series kicked-off with a panel discussion that included Israel's Consul General to Boston, Nadav Tamir. It was a great way for people to get together over wine and cheese. We also had a great session led by Josh Ruboy of the Butcherie and a wine expert, on Israeli wines and food pairings. Based on the overwhelmingly positive feedback, we are in the planning stages for a new Israel-related series for

And there's more to this past year....

THE GREENING OF THE SHUL

This year, the heating and air conditioning (HVAC) was replaced in two phases – and we now have a cutting-edge ‘green’ high-efficiency ductless system. Our results are being studied by the Massachusetts Interfaith Power and Light organization as a green test case for other churches/ synagogues (www.mipandl.org). While we expect a five-year pay-off, the synagogue had to dip into its reserves in order to provide more efficient heating and air conditioning. We hope that you will enjoy the climate during the holidays!

CORE COMMUNITY

Our weekly community continues to be strong. We have a number of regulars for whom getting together on Shabbat and talking with their friends over Kiddush lunch has become an important part of their weekly cycle. When visitors from out of town stop by, they invariably are impressed by what a nice and warm place we are, and our interactive Torah discussions appear to be something they don't see at home.

WE STILL HAVE A LOT TO DO! WE NEED YOUR HELP!

ANNOUNCING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE BOSTON SYNAGOGUE RABBINIC FUND

Adding to our rabbinic support takes money, which our current budget cannot cover. We therefore need your help to fund this additional commitment level.

To do this, we have decided to establish the *Boston Synagogue Rabbinic Fund*, in which the level of the funding will determine the level of enhanced rabbinic support that we can provide.

In particular, we are asking our members to consider making a voluntary contribution to help defray the costs: a minimum of \$200 for family memberships and \$100 for single memberships. All those contributing at these levels or above will be acknowledged publicly during the High Holy Day services.

In donating to the Synagogue Rabbinic Fund, we have one request; which is that these donations not come at the expense of donations that you may be planning on making for our annual Yom Kippur appeal (which are essential for covering our basic budgetary requirements).

STAYING IN CONTACT

In this Internet era we regularly communicate by email. Please make sure that you are on our email list to receive the latest updates and announcements, and please notify us if your email address changes. And keep checking the website for the latest schedule of holiday services and times, Friday night dinners and other events and classes.

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We look forward to a wonderful year ahead. With your membership and participation we can all contribute to creating a dynamic community for Jews in the heart of Downtown Boston.

Shalom and may we all be inscribed for a healthy and fulfilling New Year,

Bette L. Siegel
President

Susan Schreiner Weingarten
Chair