

Happy New Year!

May 2021 be a year of health and a return to in-person connections.

A Special Shabbat Shira with Cantor Ellen Dreskin

Saturday, January 30, 10:00 am

Shabbat Shira Through Story and Song

Our celebration of *Parashat B'shalach* and the parting of the Sea of Reeds gives rise to the idea of music as Midrash. Come experience how our prayer melodies express our faith, our theology, our doubt, and our culture, as we worship together on this very special **Shabbat of Song**.



Congregational Information Session about the Strategic Plan

Plan to join us on Zoom **on Sunday, January 17, 2021 at 10:00 am** for a congregational information session about the Strategic Plan. Watch ORbits for more details. You should receive a notice with the meeting agenda and the final report from the Strategic Plan Task Force. Please make sure to read the report carefully prior to the meeting. We encourage you to send your questions in advance to **Melanie Field**. We will make every effort to include the responses in our presentation. There will also be opportunities to ask questions at the meeting. If you need more information, contact **Melanie**.



House of Light

3215 Lombard Ave, Everett, WA 98201

425.259.7125

Founded 1985

TempleBethOr.org



Our Rabbi

President's

Message

K'hilah/

Mishpachah

Torah

Avodah

Tzedakah/

Tikkun Olam

Leadership

Sacred Communication

Words are powerful in our Jewish tradition. The Torah begins with God creating the universe through words: "God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light" (Genesis 1:3). The 15th century German text *The Ways of the Righteous* explains "with the tongue, one can perform limitless acts of virtue...[and] can commit numerous great and mighty transgressions."

The way we communicate with one another has changed drastically over my not-so-long lifetime. I started to email in high school to communicate with camp friends; I shared a Pine account with my mom. I rented my first cell phone during my junior year abroad in Israel and immediately started texting.

The preeminent Jewish writer on the ethics of speech and language, the *Chofetz Chaim*, experienced similar innovation in communication during his lifetime. He was born in 1839 just after the invention of the electric telegraph and lived to

experience telephones and radio before he died in 1933. He famously reflected: "When people are preparing a telegram, notice how carefully they consider each word before they put it down. That is how careful we must be when we speak." Perhaps it was adapting to new technology that inspired his dedication to the subject of communication. Scholars also suggest that he was responding to fierce tension and lack of civil discourse within his Jewish community of Lithuania.

The current political climate and pandemic have taken a toll on healthy communication. Division and lack of civility not only play out in the public arena but also on our social media accounts and family Zoom gatherings. I have to admit that over the past months my temperament has been cranky at times and my language has been terse and even salty.

Our Temple President, **Melanie Field**, has prioritized

fostering a culture of kindness in our community.

We agree that in order for us to infuse our synagogue with kindness we first must look at how we communicate. For the past two months I have worked with Temple leaders **Melanie Field, Vicky Romero, Bob Goodmark, and Sonia Siegel Vexler** on Beth Or Communication Norms. We hope these norms will be a tool and a resource for all Beth Or meetings and discussions, from board meetings to book club. Our Small Group Initiative and Governing Board have already begun to adopt these norms and **Melanie Field** will introduce them to committee chairs in February. Our tradition holds that words have the power to create and it is our blessing that these norms will build and support Temple Beth Or as a *k'hilah kedoshah*, sacred community.

Rabbi Rachel Kort



Temple Beth Or Communication Norms

B'tselem Elohim • בצלם אלהים Each of us is created in God's image

Listen to understand/not to respond.

Express disagreement with ideas, not individuals.

Maintain confidentiality about the conversation and who said what, unless given permission to share.

Tzimtzum • צמצום -The art of contraction and expansion

Step Up/Step back – make room for others to speak. Consider challenging yourself to participate.

Our Definition of "Jewish" Time

Start and end meetings on time.

Respond to emails or phone calls within three days (unless otherwise requested). When this time frame isn't doable simply acknowledge that communication was received and share when you will be able to respond.



Meet the President

I am honored to serve as the President of the 2021-22 Temple Beth Or Governing Board (GB) and look forward to working with this GB. While I have known some of you for nearly 30 years, some of you I have yet to meet - so I thought I should properly introduce myself.

I grew up in a Maryland suburb of Washington D.C. in a not very observant Conservative Jewish home with two older brothers. My parents were a mixed marriage, my mother being from Brooklyn (Dodgers fan) and my father from Manhattan (Yankees fan). I attended college and graduate school in Minnesota and California, studying Chemistry and Engineering. I did some other moving around but eventually my husband, Vinaya Chopuri, and I moved to Mukilteo in 1993 and joined TBO soon thereafter. We have two adult children. Our daughter, a mathematician, lives in Minneapolis. She is working virtually for the University of Michigan as a post-doctoral fellow. Our son lives in Iowa City, where he is pursuing his PhD in Astronomy at the University of Iowa. Both attended TBO Religious School and became b'nei mitzvah on the TBO bimah.

I retired from engineering consulting in the late 90's to manage our increasingly chaotic household and to volunteer in the community. In addition to various TBO roles, assisting with the kids' school activities and volunteering with other organizations, I served on the boards of the Mukilteo YMCA and the Kamiak High School Performing Arts Boosters. I also served on the Park and Arts Commission and on the Planning Commission for the City of Mukilteo.

When not answering emails, I love being outside. I am not an adrenaline seeking adventurer. I just like to putter in the yard, walk in the neighborhood, kayak in flat water, play in the water or snow, and go for moderate hikes. I also love music and singing and anything to do with food - growing it, preparing it, talking about it, eating it. . . . Pre-COVID, I recall that I enjoyed travelling.

I can't end this article without acknowledging the fantastic leadership of the outgoing President, **Vicky Romero**. She had a very tough set of challenges. She was absolutely the right president for us in that time. We needed someone with her dedication and focus to get us through those difficult issues. Thanks, Vicky for all of your hard work. We were really lucky to have your service.

Shalom,
Melanie

Our Rabbi

*President's
Message*

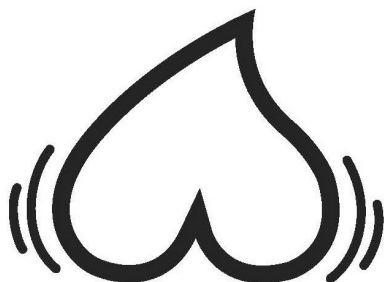
*K'hilah/
Mishpachah*

Torah

Avodah

*Tzedakah/
Tikkun Olam*

Leadership



**MOVE YOUR
TUCHUS-A-THON**
Temple Beth Or

Or... Just Move-A-Thon!

Congratulations to **Cari Goldman**, winner of our Move-Your-Tuchus-A-Thon logo contest! Thanks also to **John Bennett** and **Eldon Wexler** for their creative entries.

The Move Your Tuchus-A-Thon will be held **March 13-27, 2021**. Look for more information coming your way soon with all the details. Everyone is encouraged to participate! The primary goal is to get moving and stay healthy during this winter of social distancing and limited activity, while also benefitting Temple Beth Or.

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Virtual Shabbat and Worship Service Offerings in January

Please find Zoom invitation links in ORbits.

K'hilah--Community Shabbat

Friday, January 1, 5:45 pm

A Musical, Multi-Generational Shabbat with Rabbi Kort and Noah Zeichner

Join us for a Multi-Generational, Musical Shabbat worship experience that includes community, candle lighting, singing, and a story. There will be an opportunity to remember loved ones with our *Kaddish*—mourner's prayer. This service is great for all ages and will last about 45 minutes.

Shabbat Service and Board Installation

Friday, January 8, 7:30 pm

Join **Rabbi Kort** and **Shoshana Stombaugh** for a more formal Shabbat worship experience using our prayer book, *Mishkan T'filah*. This Shabbat service will include a *drash* (sermon), and an opportunity to remember loved ones with our *Kaddish*—mourner's prayer. This service is geared towards our adult and b'nei mitzvah student community and will last just over an hour.

Shabbat Service

Saturday, January 16, 10:00 am

Join **Rabbi Kort** and song leader, **Bernie Busch**, for a more formal Shabbat worship experience using our prayer book, *Mishkan T'filah*. This Shabbat service will include a Torah reading, Torah teaching, and an opportunity to remember loved ones with our *Kaddish*—mourner's prayer. This service is geared towards our adult and b'nei mitzvah student community and will last just over an hour.

Shabbat Shira Through Story and Song with Cantor Ellen Dreskin

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Borrowing Shabbat Prayer Books: *Mishkan T'filah*

As we did with High Holy Days prayer books during COVID social distancing, we are loaning out *Mishkan T'filah* books for families to use from home for Shabbat Zoom.

Please email **Sarah** in the Temple office (office@templebethor.org) to let her know if your family would like to participate. **Vicki Schwartz** will follow up with you to arrange for you to pick up a book.

Books may not be picked up without these prior arrangements.





Social Action

Tzedakah Fund Distribution 2020

Rabbi Kort met with the Social Action Committee and interested congregants to discuss distribution of funds made available through generous donations by our Temple Beth Or community during 2020. \$4,300 will be divided equally (\$860.00 each) among the following five charitable organizations:

Environmental Defense Fund (EDF)

EDF brings people together to solve environmental challenges from many different angles. This organization uses science-driven approaches in the areas of climate, energy, ecosystems, oceans, and health.

Volunteers of America (VOA) of Western Washington

There is a greater than ever need in our community for the basics of life including food and shelter. Our local VOA food banks serve 10,000 individuals per month. In addition to hunger prevention, the Volunteers of America also helps connect individuals and families to resources. Services include behavioral health services, disability-related services, and housing and mediation such as Fair Housing/Landlord-Tenant assistance to help promote shelter and stability.

Northwest Harvest

Northwest Harvest supports many food banks and meal programs across Washington State. It is also involved in advocacy around food justice. In addition to making sure those who suffer from hunger have access to healthy food, the organization aims to shift public opinion, as well as change institutional policies and societal practices that perpetuate hunger, poverty, and disparities in our state.

Northwest Immigrant Rights Project

Northwest Immigrant Rights Project promotes justice by defending and advancing the rights of immigrants through direct legal services, systemic advocacy, and community education. Their work is driven by their values of dignity, fairness, solidarity, self-determination, safety, and inclusivity.

Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC)

SPLC works in partnership with communities to dismantle white supremacy and advance the rights of all people. It works through:

- fighting hate by monitoring hate groups and exposing their activities to the public, the media, and law enforcement;
- teaching tolerance; and
- seeking justice for the most vulnerable in our communities.

The Social Action Committee also wants to make mention of three local organizations which make a huge difference in our community and that receive support from many Temple Beth Or members throughout the year:

**Housing Hope
The Interfaith Shelter
Cocoon House**

We thank our community for its generosity.

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Leadership

Leadership Nus

At the December 2020 Governing Board (GB) meeting the following business occurred and information was shared. The GB:

1. Approved the 2021 Governing Board slate to present to the general membership.
2. Welcomed the nominated members of the 2021 Governing Board who were visiting the meeting.
3. Heard the almost final report of the Strategic Planning Task Force (see page one for more information).
4. Approved the following policies:
 - a. Creation of the Legacy Committee
 - b. Conversion of the Security Committee from a task force
 - c. Approved the wording of the Confidentiality Agreement
5. Heard positive reports from the Youth Programs and Small Groups.
6. Vicky thanked all the members of the 2020 Governing Board for their work and dedication.

A Wealth of Youth Programming Opportunities

For more than 75 years, the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ) has provided students in grades 9 through 12 immersive Jewish experiences that transform and enrich lives. Based in Reform Jewish values, these programs provide nurturing, educational, and fun experiences that promote community, enhance spiritual growth, cultivate Jewish identity, and foster lifelong friendships. Some summer programs are: trips to Israel, song leading in Atlanta, and social justice in Washington D.C. For more information go to [Youth & Teen Programs | Union for Reform Judaism \(urj.org\)](https://youthandteenprograms.unionforreformjudaism.org).

Going Paperless in 2021?

Statements are now available via email!
If you would prefer to receive your sacred commitment statements via email instead of USPS, please contact Sarah at office@templebethor.org.



Gentle Reminder:

The Temple building is closed to everyone except Sarah at this point. Please do not enter the building for any reason, even to just drop something off, without coordinating with her first. The building is her safe work space where she can work without wearing a mask or gloves unless she has a pre-arranged drop-off. This also applies to times she is not in the building. Thanks, all, for your cooperation to make everyone safe and comfortable.

Temple Leadership Rabbi

Rachel Kort

Governing Board

President
Melanie Field

VP of Finance & Facilities Management
Bob Goodmark

VP of Community & Engagement
Tim Douglass

VP of Jewish Life
Jennifer Cail

Board Secretary
Tina Roth

Assist. VP of Finance & Facilities Management
James Feinberg

Assist. VP of Community & Engagement
Wanda Bresnick

Assist. VP of Jewish Life
Melissa VonAschen-Cook

Members-At-Large
Deb Henry
Eric Elsemore
Mila Lowery

Immediate Past President
Vicky Romero

Committees & Task Forces

Adult Education: Vacant

Bereavement: Susan Cross

Book Club: Ellie Hochman

Building: Jeff St. George

Calendar: Janis Warner

Campership: Sonia Siegel Vexler

College and Military Outreach: Sarah Davis

Communications: JonaRose Feinberg

COVID-19: Ron Green

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion:

Sonia Siegel Vexler

Facebook: Deb Henry

Financial Administrator: Norm Black

First Chapter: Michelle Douglass

Fundraising: Michele Goodmark

High Holy Days: Vacant

Legacy: Harold Dash

Library: Vacant

Marketing: Vacant

Membership: Leslie Elsemore

Mitzvah Corps: Carolyn Wexler

Next Chapter: Sonia Siegel Vexler

Nominations: Sonia Siegel Vexler

ORacle: Vicky Romero

ORbits: Lori Wolff

Security: Miriam VonAschen-Cook

Small Groups: Rebecca Hicks

Social Action: Naomi Katsh

Spirituality & Ritual: Vicki Schwartz

Strategic Planning: Paul Vexler

Technology: Vacant

Website: JonaRose Feinberg

Youth Education: Mila Lowery and Tina Roth

Staff

Office Administrator: Sarah Davis



January 2021

Tevet — Sh'vat 5780

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
ALL ACTIVITIES ARE VIRTUAL AT THIS TIME. Links are in ORbits.					
				1 <i>K'hilah</i> Shabbat Service 5:45pm	2
3 Exec. Bd. 9:00am B'nei Mitzvah Workshop 10:00am Adult Hebrew Class 12:00pm	4 Finance Committee Mtg, 6:30pm	5	6	7	8 Shabbat Service and Gov. Bd. Installation 7:30pm
10 Gov. Bd. Meeting 9:00am B'nei Mitzvah Orientation 10:00am	11	12	13 Legacy Committee 10:00am DEI Task Force 4:00pm	14	15 16 Morning Shabbat Service 10:00am
17 Congregational Information Session about the Strategic Plan 10:00am Adult Hebrew Class 12:00pm	18	19	20	21	22 23
24	25	26	27 DEI Task Force 4:00pm	28	29 30 Shabbat Shira with Cantor Dreskin 10:00am
31					

The Temple building remains completely closed with the exception of our Office Administrator, Sarah, and one weekly cleaning. We will keep you posted regarding reopening.

Check ORbits, TBO Facebook page, or TBO website for the most up-to-date information.



Temple Beth Or
3215 Lombard Ave
Everett, WA 98201
425.259.7125

Return Service Requested

Temple Beth Or Mission Statement

Temple Beth Or is a warm, compassionate, vibrant, spirited, inclusive, and participatory Reform Jewish community.

We are religiously and geographically diverse,
serving the northern Puget Sound region of Washington State.

As God's covenantal partners in fulfilling mitzvot, our priorities are:

- ***K'hilah*** (community)/***Mishpachah*** (family) — nurturing our interactive, multigenerational extended family;
- ***Torah*** — lifelong learning, searching for meaning, and seeking comfort and healing;
 - ***Avodah*** — worship and celebration through the observance of meaningful, creative, and traditional rituals;
- ***Tikkun Olam*** — transforming ourselves and our world through *tzedakah* (fairness), social justice, and *g'milut chasadim* (acts of loving kindness).