

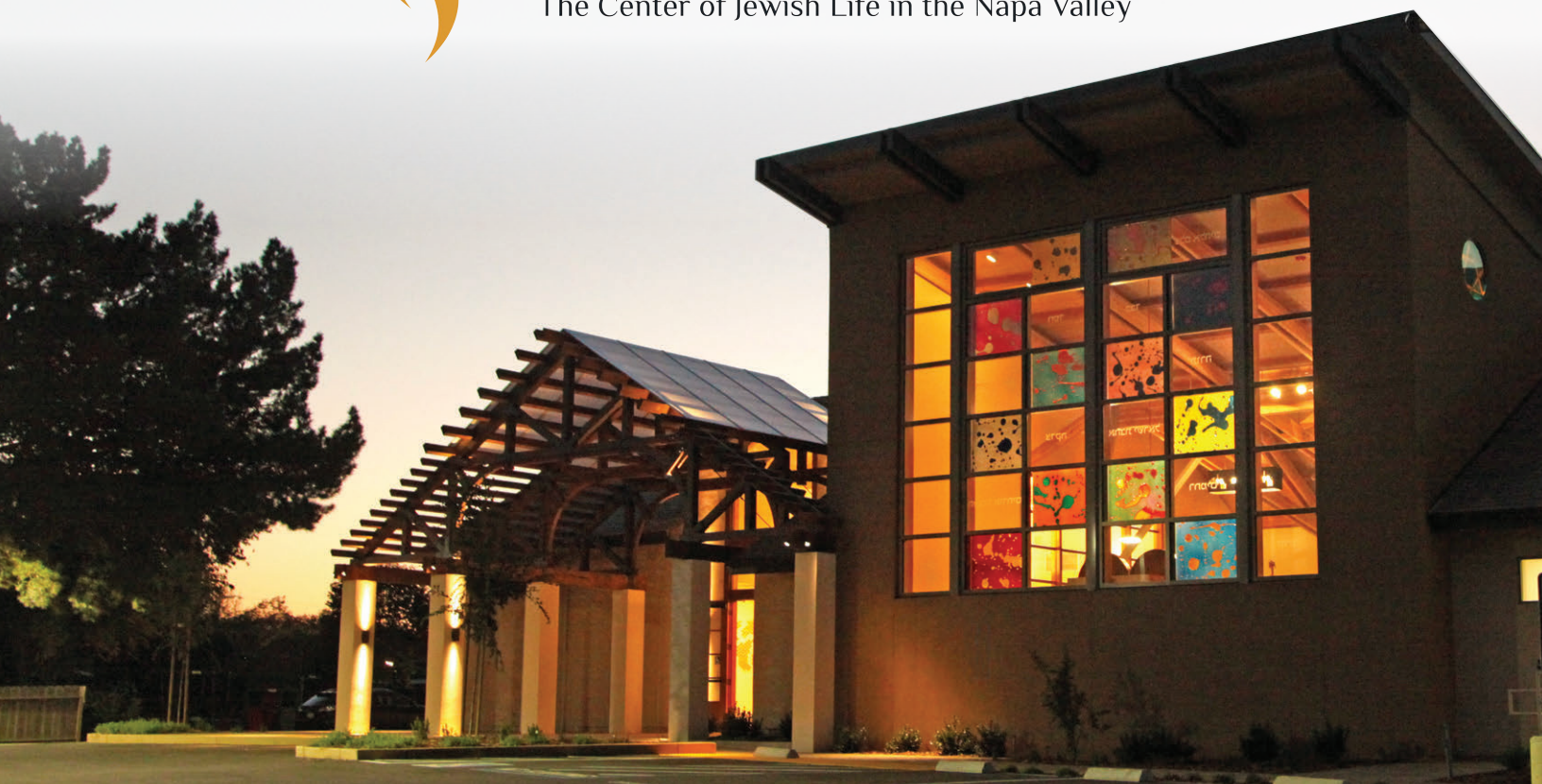
# December Newsletter



CONGREGATION

## Beth Shalom

The Center of Jewish Life in the Napa Valley



## In this issue...

*Click an entry to jump to its page*

- A note from Rabbi Art
- President's message
- Dialogue with the Director
- Birthdays & anniversaries
- Yahrtzeits
- Services & Torah portions
- Calendar of events
- Youth corner
- Members
- Recent donations
- Preview of upcoming events
- Ways to support Beth Shalom
- About & contact

# A note from Rabbi Art

## A word from Rabbi Niles:

*Rabbi Niles will be on sabbatical until January. Please contact the office (by [clicking here](#)) or Rabbi Grand if there is anything you need.*

## Rabbi Art's thoughts

As Chanukah approaches, we reach the darkest days of the year. We'll light the candles, and we'll celebrate the victory of Maccabees. But there's another story that I want to tell you – a story that happened almost 400 years after the Maccabee's rebellion.

A group of rabbis were sitting around debating what kind of wicks can be used in Shabbat candles. And eventually, the conversation died down. It seemed as if every possible argument had been considered.

But there was one rabbi who just loved debating, so he started another discussion. "The rules for Chanukah candles are different," he said. And before he could start another debate, another rabbi jumped in. "Why do we



celebrate Chanukah?" he asked.

And this was the answer he gave: When the Greeks entered the Temple, they polluted all the oils in the Temple, and when the Hasmonean dynasty overcame and defeated them, they checked and they found but one cruse of oil that was set in place with the seal of the High Priest. There was in only enough to light a single day. A miracle happened, and the lit from it for eight days. The following year the Sages fix those days, making them holidays for praise and thanksgiving.

Those lines I just quoted come from the Talmud – a forty two volume collection of Jewish law. All we know about Chanukah, all we know about the oil and

# A note from Rabbi Art

the miracle comes from that one little paragraph. And that story has given us hope for hundreds of generations.

In the end, Judaism is not about the laws, and it's not about the customs. Judaism is about the stories we tell each other – stories about hope, stories about miracles, stories about love and kindness. And somewhere in that story of the menorah, there's a powerful truth.

“We live in a time,” said one Chassidic master, “when that cruse of holy oil is gone. But God placed a drop of holy oil in the heart of every Jew. And as long as we have that drop of oil within us, we can create light for each other.”

The story of the menorah, the story that ancient rabbi created, is a story about every Jew who ever lived. And it's a story about you.

All of us have stories. All of us have stories of times when the world seemed dark, and then suddenly there was a miracle, and the light was there. And there are thousands of stories out there – chicken soup, in effect, for the Jewish soul.

I'd love to get together with you – to share stories, to laugh, to schmooze, and to share those moments of hope. So I've set up two sessions on Zoom, one this month and another in January (*details in the Calendar of Events in this newsletter*). I'll bring a couple of stories that are touching and warm, and we'll see where they take us. And we'll find strength and warmth together.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Art', with a stylized, flowing script.

# President's message

## Dear Beth Shalom family,

As we come to the close of another year, I take a moment to pause, reflect, and give thanks for the blessings our community has shared. This has been a year of connection, learning, and renewal at Beth Shalom.

I am deeply grateful for the dedication, generosity, and spirit each of you brings to our community. Whether you've joined us in prayer and song, celebrated milestones, and supported one another through joy and loss – each moment has reminded me that our congregation is not just a building or a program – it is a living, breathing community of people who care deeply, show up for one another, and bring Judaism to life in meaningful ways. By volunteering your time, contributing financially, or simply offering a kind word, you have helped sustain the heart of our congregation.

As I look ahead to 2026, I do so with excitement and hope. We are



planning meaningful worship experiences, engaging learning opportunities for all ages, and new ways to build community and connection. Your continued involvement ensures that our synagogue remains a place of warmth, purpose, and belonging.

If you have not yet made your High Holy Day donation, I invite you to consider how you can help sustain and strengthen our congregation in the year ahead. Your support makes everything we do possible—from holiday services to offering inspiring education for our children, teens, and adults, to caring for members in need of support. Every gift, large or small, strengthens our shared future.



# President's message

Together, we have built something remarkable. Let's carry that energy forward into 2026.

May the coming year bring health, peace, and joy to you and all you love.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eve". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The letter "E" is large and loops around the "ve". The signature is positioned above a thin, light gray horizontal line.

# Dialogue with the Director

## It's beginning to look a lot like...

I bet you thought I was going to say Christmas...but no, I have Hanukkah on the brain, obviously. The smell of latkes, the taste of cookies, the glow and warmth of the lights, the triumph, the celebration, the miracle, and of course the presents...

Once again the Jewish people get to rejoice in our victory over the oppressors. The Macabees stood their ground against the Syrians, and notwithstanding the destruction of the temple, they were able to rebuild by the glow of the fire from the oil that lasted, not one, but eight days!

Despite not being allowed to study, the Macabees devised a game (dreidel) to practice their Hebrew. And because of all of this, we get to celebrate by playing games, singing songs, eating greasy food and with presents of course! Who doesn't love a good reason to celebrate, especially when chocolate coins are involved?

At the end of this month, I will be



traveling to Israel with a volunteer trip through Birthright. Thankfully, they extended the age limits on some of their trips. I have only ever been to Israel once, 6 years ago for my nephew's bar mitzvah. We filled a tour bus and traveled the whole country over the course of 10 days. I think it will be interesting to compare my previous trip with that of a post October 7th Israel. I expect security to be a bit elevated, naturally, but as far as the people and the "vibe" I think Israel and the Israeli spirit will be as alive as ever.

Judaism emphasizes remembering history to learn, grow, and build a better tomorrow, using past experiences to inform present actions and future

# Dialogue with the Director

aspirations. Even painful memories can be transformed into lessons for a more meaningful future. So, as we have always done, we will stand up, wipe ourselves off and learn from the past. Not going to Israel wasn't even a consideration when I heard about this trip. We don't recoil, but rather, like the Macabees, we move forward and rebuild.

I look forward to celebrating Hanukkah with all of you on December 14th at 5:30pm. I look forward to the glow from the myriad Hannukkiot throughout the social hall, the children laughing as they play games or make menorahs, and the grownups watching with their hearts and their bellies full as we come together as a community in celebration.

*Mazah  
& Rebel*

## Celebrating in December

### Birthdays

- 3** Jacki Knell, Samuel Sparks, Ophir Orr (60)
- 5** Barbara Levin, Mark Gardner
- 6** Allison Frost
- 8** Sasha Rozenberg, Michael Dellar (80),  
Tamar Weir
- 9** Ari Eisenberg, Lauren Cheven
- 10** Anita Catlin
- 11** Hazel Weiss
- 12** Tom Sabo, Vanessa Blatteis
- 13** Jonah Eisenberg
- 14** Rachel Friedman (96)  
Cadale Newton-Kotch
- 15** Lee Trucker
- 16** Oliver Lustig, Haley Hollnder
- 17** Forest Downey, Irit Weir
- 18** Barbara Schwartz
- 19** Gage Goldman, Kate Enos,  
Dick Wollack (80)
- 20** Rivka Livni
- 21** Matthew Zeiderman, Griffin Riendeau
- 23** Mark Charney, Suzie Frank
- 25** Sylvia Samrick (80), Maxwell Petrick
- 27** Geffen Abramovitch, Carol Ash  
Joe Winograde, Miriam Siegel
- 29** Melvin Cohen (92), Bradley Wasserman,  
Karen Lustig (60), Elizabeth Olcott (65)
- 31** Paul Frank (85)



### Anniversaries

- 19** Bob & Berit Muh
- 26** Barbara & Marty Nemko  
Rona Kevin Brackett  
Sasha Rozenberg & Michael Lyght
- 27** Paul & Suzie Frank
- 28** Roberta & Robert Solomon

**Donate or  
sponsor an Oneg  
in honor of a  
special occasion**



## We remember

We remember and honor loved ones on the anniversary of their passing on these days in December:

- 1** Marsha Lee Saxton,  
Thelma Schnitzer, Claire Stein,  
Alan Jawitz
- 2** Harry Zeitlin, Jacob Rosen
- 3** Philip Duben, Herbert Padrid,  
Bernard Charlup
- 4** Harriet Kesselman Hansher,  
Jack Fleiderbaum, Annie Levi ,  
Gertrude Corrente, Joseph Kostin,  
Lucille Meltzer, David Ash,  
Max Charlup
- 5** Sallie Alice Goldman,  
Velma Hirsch
- 6** Elaine Pesses
- 7** Milton I. Goldstein, Paul Deckter,  
Roberta Conrey
- 8** Oscar Dover, Louis Friedman,  
Pearl Schein
- 9** Dorothy Sills, Donald S. Feiner,  
Eva Haplerin Bartos
- 10** Jennie Stone, Robert Wilvers
- 11** Jacob Margolis
- 12** Herman Mautner

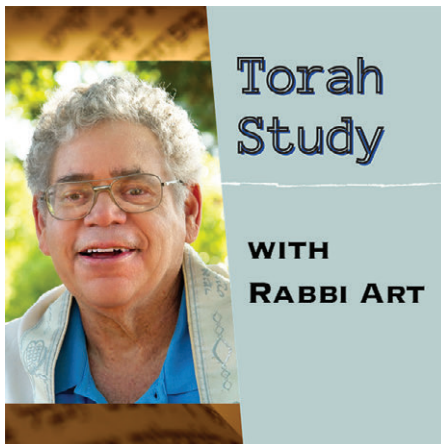
- 15** Isadore G Meyers, Majer Danon,  
Anna Sarah Shanske
- 16** Adele Pesses Kaplan,  
Ann Nuemann-Libov
- 17** Sophie Boverman, Richard Magano,  
Yosef Shein
- 19** Edward Goldberg, Dorothy Novack,  
Batia Lubliner
- 21** Rebecca Baylinson,  
Moshe (Max) Levin, Esther Abrams
- 22** Molly Dover, Allan Unger
- 23** Morry Sherman, Joseph Segal,  
Joyce Wright, Leon Bloomberg
- 24** Melvin Eisenberg,  
Vladislava Chernish, Ludwig Green
- 25** Etty Tetenman, Alan Balccher
- 26** Ludwig Green, Garry Singer,  
Annie Lazarus, Sam Fink
- 27** Howard Rosenthal, Michael Leaken
- 28** Ben Solomon, Lilian Garber
- 29** Helen Schwartz
- 30** Jack J Schwartz, Ludwig Strauss,  
Oscar Altman, Mrs Herman Shwarz,  
Ethel Bas Simcha Abramowicz,  
Simca Ben Chaim Abramowicz
- 31** Arthur Waldinger, Ruth Watter

**Make a donation in honor  
of a loved one**



# Services & Torah portions

Torah Portion	Service led by	Oneg sponsored by	Start time
<b>December 6</b> Vayishlach • וַיִּשְׁלַח And He Sent Genesis 32:4–36:43	<b>Family service!</b> Led by Dania Massey Drash: Alan Goldstein Music: Gordon Lustig Special Guests: Our Religious School Students	Kathleen Conrey	6:00 pm
<b>December 12</b> Vayeishev • וַיַּעֲשֶׂה And He Settled Genesis 37:1–40:23	Rabbi Grand & Gordon Lustig Special Guest: Joanne Sutro & Laura Keller Coyote PIN project	Kathleen Conrey	6:00 pm
<b>December 19</b> Mikeitz • מִקֵּץ At The End Genesis 41:1–44:17	Rabbi Grand & Gordon Lustig	Hannah Paley's 29th Birthday	6:00 pm
<b>December 26</b> Vayigash • וַיִּגַּשׁ And He Approached Genesis 44:18–47:27	Shira & Efi Lubliner and Gordon Lustig	Kathleen Conrey	6:00 pm



## Torah Study

10:30 - 11:30 am

**Saturday, December 20**



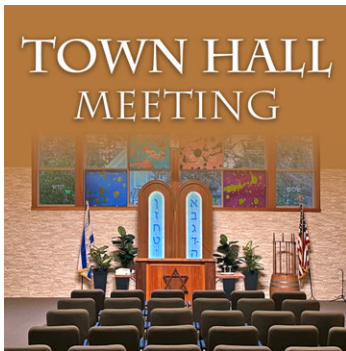
## Healing Circle

10:30 - 11:30 am

**Saturday, December 13**

## This month at Beth Shalom

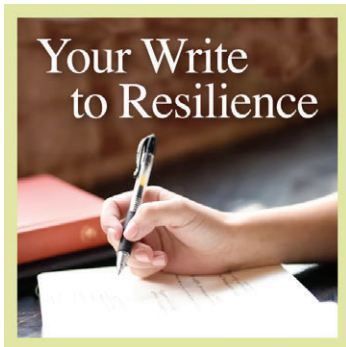
This newsletter is published at the beginning of the month, but new events are added all the time and details can sometimes change. Be sure to check the Upcoming Events section on our website for all the latest.



### Wednesday, December 10

7:00 pm

Make your voice heard! Join our Ad Hoc Strategic Planning Committee to offer your comments and questions about Congregation Beth Shalom in the sanctuary.



### Thursday, December 11

3:30 pm - 5:00 pm

Guided wellness practice based on the science of expressive writing. New participants always welcome. Click to inquire.



### Sunday, December 14

5:30 pm - 7:30 pm

Come light up the night with us at our festive Hanukkah celebration: music, laughter, and joy for all ages. Including dreidel, games, latkes, gelt, soufganiyot (jelly donuts), menorah lighting, music and more.

# Calendar of events



## Monday, December 15

It's movie night at Beth Shalom! Tonight's film: *Eight Crazy Nights*. Pizza and popcorn will be served! [Click to register](#)

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## Tuesday, December 16

10:30 am - 12:00 pm

Join us at our monthly book club. We'll be discussing *The Color of Water* by James McBride. New participants always welcome. [Click to inquire.](#)

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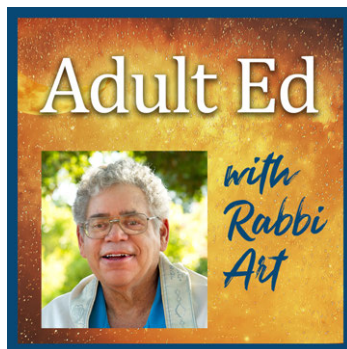


## Tuesday, December 16

7:00 pm

All members are invited to attend our monthly Board of Trustees meetings. Your participation is not only welcomed – it's your right as a valued member of our congregation. [Contact Eve if you would like to attend by clicking here.](#)

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## Monday, December 22 & Wednesday, January 14

7:00 - 8:30 pm

Two separate Zoom sessions with Rabbi Art!

# Youth corner

## Family Shabbat

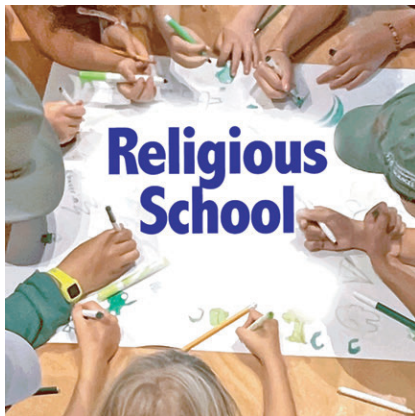


### Friday, December 5 is Family Shabbat

Together we'll welcome Shabbat with a kid-friendly twist.

Service is at 6:00 pm, with Oneg at 7:00 pm

## Religious school



### December Religious School schedule:

- **Sunday, December 7** 9:30 am
- **Sunday, December 14** 9:30 am

[Download the complete Religious School calendar](#)

## G'Dilah גדילה Youth Group for 6th grade & up



### Wednesday, December 10

7:00 pm

Our Youth Group combines social connections with deeper Jewish learning. Teens build lasting friendships while exploring their Jewish identity in ways that feel relevant and engaging to their lives.



# Members

## Find fellow members

Members can access our directory to get in touch with other members:

- ✓ **On our website** ([www.cbsnapa.org](http://www.cbsnapa.org)): Click Login button in the upper right, login, then click View My Directory.
  - ✓ **Email**: Email [office@cbsnapa.org](mailto:office@cbsnapa.org) and Marah will email you a copy of the member directory.
  - ✓ **Hard copy**: Email [office@cbsnapa.org](mailto:office@cbsnapa.org) and Marah will print a hard copy of the member directory for you to pick up.
- 

### Interested in membership?

Being a member brings so many benefits and perks, plus your membership supports a vibrant Jewish community in Napa.

If you're curious about membership at Congregation Beth Shalom, click to learn more:

[Learn about membership](#)



**Need a ride to service or a synagogue event?** Contact Marah and she will connect you with our transportation committee. Call (707) 253-7305, email [office@cbsnapa.org](mailto:office@cbsnapa.org), or [click here](#).

# Recent donations

## תודה רבה

We thank these generous donors:

### General Fund:

In honor of Stan & Ada Press – Michael & Lauren Chevlen

In honor of Gabriella Ruth Zeiderman, mom Kate Enos,  
dad Matthew Zeiderman – Judy Nystrom & Bill Vermeere

### Music Fund:

In memory of Michael Blend – JoAnne Miller

### Pool Fund:

In memory of Blanche & Joseph Burgheimer – Martha & Richard Pastcan

### General Fund:

In memory of Joseph Santana – Fred & Kathryn Goldman

In memory of Sallie Goldman – Fred & Kathryn Goldman

*Celebrate a simcha,  
commemorate a loss or  
mark a special occasion by  
contributing to Congregation  
Beth Shalom.*

**Donate to Beth Shalom**



# Preview of coming events

Save  
the date

# Israel's Economic Future

## "Israel's Post-War Economy in 10 Numbers"

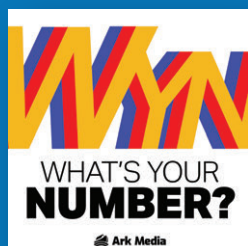
with guest lecturer  
**Michal Lev-Ram**

**Wednesday, January 28**  
7:00 pm

Congregation Beth Shalom  
1455 Elm St. • Napa, CA

*What's Your Number?* is co-hosted by Michal Lev-Ram & Yonatan Adiri, Israeli entrepreneur and former advisor to Shimon Peres.

Each week, Michal & Yonatan unpack the latest developments affecting the Israeli economy, keeping you updated on both short- and long-term implications of global events.



**Listen today**  
on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, & ArkMedia.org



**Michal Lev-Ram** is a seasoned business journalist who has spent more than 15 years at *Fortune*, where she currently serves as Contributing Editor. Michal is also a contributor at CNBC, and has written for outlets like *The Free Press*, *Fast Company*, *Esquire*, and the *SF Standard*. Michal is the co-host of the popular podcast ***What's Your Number?***, a weekly series focused on the Israeli economy.

 CONGREGATION  
**Beth Shalom**  
The Center of Jewish Life in the Napa Valley  
[www.cbsnapa.org](http://www.cbsnapa.org)

# Preview of coming events

Save  
the date

# Torah Yoga Day Retreat

תורה יוגה



**Nourish body, mind, & spirit in Napa Valley  
with Diane Bloomfield**

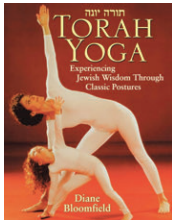
**Sunday, February 15**  
12:00 noon – 5:00 pm • \$100

**Day retreat includes:**

- Torah Yoga class
- Torah study & discussion
- Restorative sound bath
- Refreshments & kosher snacks



Guest teacher **Amy Hall**  
will guide the immersive  
sound bath experience



**Diane Bloomfield** is an internationally acclaimed teacher & author who founded Torah Yoga®, blending the wisdom of Jewish tradition with the mindful practice of yoga. She is the author of the classic *Torah Yoga: Experiencing Jewish Wisdom through Classic Postures* as well as her new book *Playing With Fire: Hebrew Doorways to the Jewish Soul*.

Based in Jerusalem, Diane teaches Torah Yoga around the world.

**Torah** - the ancient living wisdom of the Jewish people - has guided the Jewish people on their journey of light and holiness for thousands of years. When paired with the mindful movement of breath and yoga, its teachings come alive in a deeply personal way.

We're excited to welcome Diane Bloomfield from Jerusalem to share her unique blend of movement & Torah insight, rooted in the deep well of kabbalistic and mystical tradition.

Join us for an uplifting afternoon of movement & meaning. Come be renewed in the beauty of community & Torah. No experience necessary. All are welcome.

- Plenty of free parking
- Yoga props provided

**Info & register:**

[connect@napavalleyyogacenter.com](mailto:connect@napavalleyyogacenter.com)

Retreat location:

**NAPA VALLEY  
YOGA CENTER**

1115 Jordan Lane, Napa, California  
[www.napavalleyyogacenter.com](http://www.napavalleyyogacenter.com)

To benefit:

 **CONGREGATION  
Beth Shalom**  
The Center of Jewish Life in the Napa Valley

[www.cbsnapa.org](http://www.cbsnapa.org)



# Preview of coming events

## Exciting events coming our way

In the surrounding pages, you'll find details on several exciting events coming to Beth Shalom in the months ahead...

On Wednesday, January 28, we'll welcome **Michal Lev-Ram**, co-host of the podcast *What's Your Number?*, for a talk on Israel's economic future—she's a dynamic speaker, so bring your questions.

Then, on February 15, **Diane Bloomfield**, founder of Torah Yoga, will lead a daylong retreat at Napa Valley Yoga Center to benefit Beth Shalom, followed by a book signing and discussion here on February 18.

And on February 28, don't miss **A Night at the Cabaret**, an evening of musical and culinary delights. Lots to look forward to!

## Meet the Author

Discussion & book signing with **Diane Bloomfield**

**Wednesday, February 18**  
7:00 pm

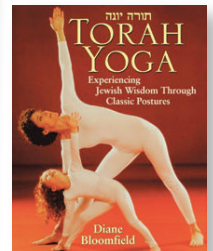
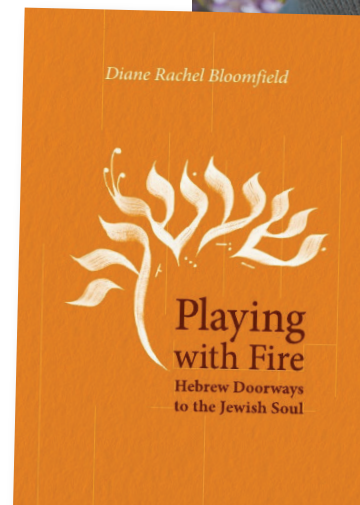
**Congregation Beth Shalom**  
1455 Elm St. • Napa  
[www.cbsnapa.org](http://www.cbsnapa.org)



Visiting us from Jerusalem, Diane is a passionate, dynamic teacher with much to share. Her latest book, *Playing with Fire: Hebrew Doorways to the Jewish Soul*, is the culmination of Diane's 40 years of Torah study and teaching.

*Playing with Fire* presents a wealth of traditional, chassidic and kabbalistic teachings, revealing the depths of the Hebrew letters, the Jewish Soul, and her own life. *Playing with Fire* invites you to dive into Hebrew and discover your soul. No Hebrew experience required!

Diane is also the author of the classic *Torah Yoga: Experiencing Jewish Wisdom through Classic Postures*. Diane will read and teach short excerpts from her book. There will also be time for discussion and book signings.





# Preview of coming events

Save  
the date

## A Night at the Cabaret

A musical evening  
to benefit



CONGREGATION  
**Beth Shalom**  
The Center of Jewish Life in the Napa Valley

**Saturday, February 28, 2026 | 6:30 - 9:30 pm**

Congregation Beth Shalom | 1455 Elm Street, Napa

Join us for a lively wine-country evening featuring  
musical performances, delectable bites, fine wine,  
and a festive cabaret ambiance.

featuring

**The Max Bonick Trio**  
**Radio Bobcat with Shane Soldinger**  
**Gordon Lustig & Special Friends**

**\$125 – Congregation Beth Shalom Members**

**\$136 – Community/Public**

**Event Sponsorships Available**

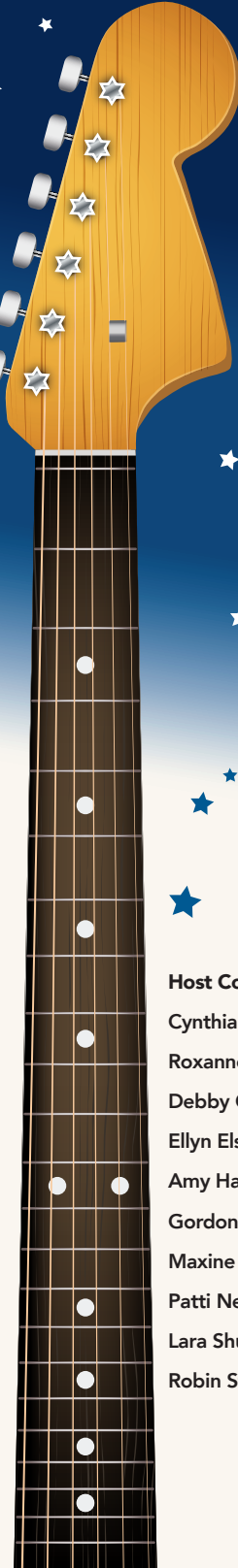
Babysitting for children ages 5+

★ **Register now:**  
**[www.CBSNapa.org/cabaret](http://www.CBSNapa.org/cabaret)**

★ **All are welcome** – Invite your friends and neighbors!  
For more information: [NapaCBS@gmail.com](mailto:NapaCBS@gmail.com) • 707-253-7305

### Host Committee:

Cynthia Cohen  
Roxanne Cohen  
Debby Courtney  
Ellyn Elson  
Amy Hall  
Gordon Lustig  
Maxine Miluso  
Patti Neumann  
Lara Shumer  
Robin Stearn



# Ways to support

Congregation Beth Shalom is our home for worship, learning, and community. Consider these ways to support your community:

## Tree of Life

Honor and share in the beauty of our community's connection to Jewish life by adding engraved leaves to our Tree of Life in the main lobby.



Each personalized leaf is \$180.

[Order a leaf](#)

## Entrance bricks

Our synagogue entrance tells the story of our community through personalized bricks, each one carrying a special message from our members.



Each personalized brick is \$360.

[Order a brick](#)

## Other ways to give

Shop modern Jewish gifts, and Congregation Beth Shalom receives a donation. Click to browse:

[moderntribe](#)

Shop at your favorite online stores, and iGive works with the retailer to make a donation on your behalf to Beth Shalom. Click to get started:



# Ways to support



## **Congregation Beth Shalom is planting trees in Israel!**

Plant a tree for \$36: [click to purchase](#).



## **Interested in sponsoring an Oneg?**

Or making a culinary or monetary contribution to our Onegs?

Call (707) 253-7305, email [office@cbsnapa.org](mailto:office@cbsnapa.org), or [click here](#).

## **Donate a car or boat**



**Donate a vehicle (or boat)**, Beth Shalom benefits, and you receive a tax donation. The vehicle can be anywhere in the country, and vehicle pickup is free. [Click to donate](#), or call (888) 755-5435.



**Our Onegs are in need of baked good donations:** cookies, brownies, bars, pound cakes, loaf cakes, etc: if it freezes well, we're interested! Call (707) 253-7305, email [office@cbsnapa.org](mailto:office@cbsnapa.org), or [click here](#).



# About & contact

## Congregation Beth Shalom Board of Trustees

**President:** Eve Kahn - [President@cbsnapa.org](mailto:President@cbsnapa.org)

**Treasurer:** Scott Brown - [Treasurer@cbsnapa.org](mailto:Treasurer@cbsnapa.org)

**Secretary:** Lara Shumer

**Past President:** Roberta Solomon

### **Board members at large:**

Mark Charney

Michael Chevlen

Cynthia Cohen

Allison Frost

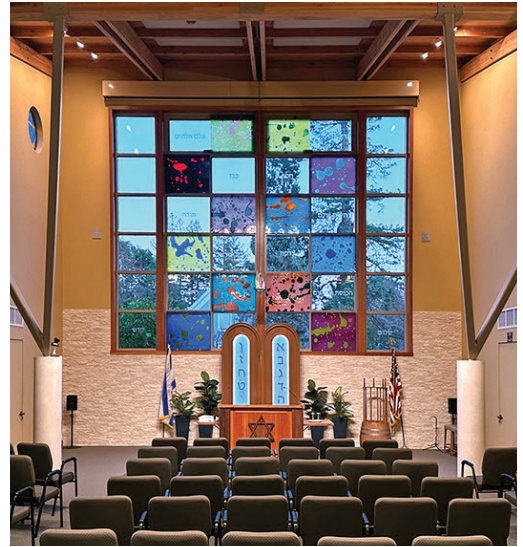
Amy Hall

Guy Levin

Suzie Myers

Naomi Petrick

Robin Stearn



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## Contact us

Please reach out with any questions, concerns, or just to have a cup of coffee and a chat. Our doors are always open to you.

### **Congregation Beth Shalom**

1455 Elm Street, Napa, CA 94559

(707) 253-7305

### **Rabbi**

Niles Goldstein

### **Executive Director**

Marah Peresechensky

[office@cbsnapa.org](mailto:office@cbsnapa.org)

### **Music Director**

Gordon Lustig

[gordondlustig@gmail.com](mailto:gordondlustig@gmail.com)