

THE SHOFAR

TEMPLE BETH EL OF ONEONTA'S MONTHLY BULLETIN

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We have just come through a very intense period in the Hebrew calendar. In the period of three weeks, we celebrated Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Shemini Atzeret, and Simchat Torah. This is both a solemn period and then a joyous period. We have finished a cycle of the Torah with Deuteronomy and we have begun anew with Genesis. So too has our congregation begun a new cycle. Traditionally there is a long break between the end of the spring when the school year ends and when our annual cycle of visits from the Cantor pauses for the summer. After the slowdown from June, July, and August now is a renaissance, a rebirth of our congregation.

At the Sukkot dinner on October 18, Jim Berkovitz mentioned to me how alive and vital the synagogue seemed not only because of the High Holy Days but because there seemed to be a change in the aura of the congregation. We are having interest from previous members in rejoining and interest from others in joining us for the first time. We had vibrant activities on the afternoon of Yom Kippur with Torah study and a workshop on forgiveness which attracted 20+ people. He knew about changes in the Hebrew School program and commented on how much music we had in the temple. Jim suggested putting together additional programs including movies, arts, hands on activities, seminars and more actively publicizing them. I agreed with him and then congratulated him on his appointment as Chair of the newly created, newly in the sense of that exact minute, Adult Education/Cultural Activities committee. Thankfully for me he accepted and as of this date is actively working on programming..

We can revitalize the synagogue, bring it back to its glory days when we had more than 100 members, when there were all sorts of activities, when we had more than 1 or 2 b'nai mitzvahs per year, but it is going to have to be an "all hands on deck" project. Everyone needs to do something to **[cont'd on page 2]**



ONEGS

If you would like to sponsor an Oneg to celebrate a simcha or in honor or in memory of someone, please CALL or TEXT Faye Munson at (607) 434-3911. PLEASE DO NOT SEND EMAILS.

TODA RABA/THANK YOU

- Thank you so much to Paula Friedman for the donation in memory of her son Adam.
- Special thanks to Ken Sider for organizing the October 7th memorial service.
- Many thanks to Steve Feuer and Roger Chauveron for setting up our sukkah, and then taking it down and storing it for next year.
- Our thanks to Bernadette Winters-Bell for her October 20th talk about the Solidarity trip to Israel. The main message of her talk was that Israelis are very grateful for Americans who care about what is happening to them.
- And many thanks to Steve Feuer, Gail Feuer, and Howie Gelbsman for shopping for and preparing the breakfast, and then cleaning up afterwards.

promote the life of our community. We won't be able to develop new programs and activities, or even maintain all we have now, if it is the same handful of people doing all the work.

With this in mind, and acknowledging that I do not have all the info on all the members, I am asking you to send me an email with the following information; name, address, phone number, and email address. I know I should have this on a spreadsheet but I'm working on putting that together. I'm also working on listservs of who gets the shofar by email, one list for members and one for other interested parties. We also need for you to dig deep and decide what types of activities you are willing to work on. We will find a way to connect you with whomever is leading that effort or responsible committee. My email is rjs@alum.mit.edu and my phone number is 607-222-7019.

Finally, to all those who receive The Shofar who are not members of the congregation, please help in whatever way you can. If you live locally, volunteer. All of you please consider joining. We need the support and I suspect most of you do too. -Richard Sternberg

HOW DO WE TEACH OUR CHILDREN ABOUT ISRAEL IN 2024?



Cantor Green

As a teenager, after the Six Day War in 1967, I was taught this "sugar coated" view that Israel can do "no wrong." Israel was always correct, moral and above reproach. Today, in 2024, I have teens who come home from college and ask me: "How do I deal with BDS (Boycott, Divestment, Sanction) and Anti-Israel/Antisemitic Demonstrations on my campus? And why didn't you tell me the truth about Israel?" Social media and the college campuses espouse a very different view of Israel than what we taught our children in synagogue

Jewish education forty years ago and even today in many Hebrew schools.

The iCenter, a think tank on modern Israel educational pedagogy, has spent fifteen years addressing this issue. They encourage Jewish educators to "educate" and not indoctrinate, stress "heart" as well as "intellect" and most importantly: "Engage diverse narratives." We must discuss with our students the conflicts of the settlements, the "green line," the suffering of the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, as well as the Chamas October 7 horrific attack on Israel and Israeli suffering since the attack. I witnessed this summer firsthand in Israel this sense of suffering, sadness, dismay, frustration and fear of what is to come next. One of many events not reported in the West is the tremendous casualties of literally thousands of Israeli soldiers who lost

limbs and sustained other traumatic injuries as well as dealing with PTSD.

At the same time, I saw a tremendous spirit to go on living normal everyday events. The cafes are crowded until 3 am and students go to schools and universities as normal. I also witnessed efforts to find peace, in little ways with the Palestinians. One third of the Israel's medical staffs are Palestinian, and thirty percent of the patients in Israeli hospitals are Muslims. I saw a beautiful program of hope with a large Kindergarten class and its teachers who were Christian, Muslim, and Jewish, studying and playing together in Jaffa, even in the midst of Israel's war with Chamas and Hezbollah.

As we pass the first year of this new level of conflict, how do we teach our children and ourselves what approach to take with this complex conflict?



What should be emphasized in this approach is to allow for dialogue, genuine exchange of conflicting views and creating opportunities to really "listen" to other views. Yossi Klein Halevi, in his book, *Letters to My Palestinian Neighbor* states: "We are intruders in each other's dreams, violators of each other's sense of home. We are living incarnations of each other's worst historical nightmares."

Does this mean there is a solution to the conflict? Not yet, but the first step is to share and listen to divergent narratives. Parker Palmer, the top universally respected secular educator says it best:

"Holding the tension of paradox so that our students can learn at deeper levels is among the most difficult demands of good teaching. We will not be able to teach in the power of paradox until we are willing to suffer the tension of opposites, until we understand that such suffering is neither to be avoided nor merely survived but must be actively embraced for the way it expands our hearts."

Yes, continue to teach the passion of Zionism, but also discuss with our students the conflicting and divergent narratives that comprise this complex Middle East conflict.



WHEN YOU SEND MAIL TO TEMPLE BETH EL

Please address all mail to Temple Beth El to our post office box (PO Box 383, Oneonta, NY 13820) and not to the physical building.

And please direct your mail to the "Attention of" the Treasurer, President, or other Officer or Committee Chair, on the envelope. Thank you.

WHAT'S HAPPENING THIS MONTH



DISCUSSION GROUP: "WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE JEWISH?"

THIS COMING SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2nd— Come attend Jim Bercovitz' and Alice Lichtenstein's Discussion Group "What Does It Mean to be Jewish?"

We are pleased to announce the SECOND meeting of the Temple Beth El monthly Discussion Group.

On Yom Kippur, Alice and I facilitated our first discussion on "Repentance and Forgiveness". This hour-long discussion turned into a revelation of sorts—aside from the incredibly wise and interesting comments of the people who participated—we discovered that we are all connected in deep ways from the hospitals where we were born to places that we and our ancestors have lived. Our participants included people from all over the United States—California, Fort Wayne, Indiana, New Jersey—and the world--Sao Paulo, Basel, Jerusalem. It turns out that if you want cosmopolitan, spend an afternoon at Temple Beth El.

In the hope of further exploring our intellectual and spiritual identities, our next discussion group will focus on the simple/complex topic: "What Does It Mean to be Jewish?"

We will be handing out copies of David Remnick's New Yorker profile of the late Hamas leader, Yahya Sinwar; a NYT article about the late, great Columbia University historian of Jewish History, Salo Barron, and excerpts from Israeli journalist, Ari Shavit, "Promised Land" (The Triumph and Tragedy of Israel). If you are able to read these pieces ahead of our discussion, please do.

Further, we'd love to make the discussion a culinary experience as well! Please bring something to share if you are motivated (or have time). [Editor's note - all food must be dairy or pareve.] We're very much looking forward to lively conversation and breaking bread with any or all members of Temple Beth El, Jewish or not. Please feel free to invite Jewish friends who may not be members. The more the merrier!

Saturday, November 2nd | 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. | TBE Library

TOT SHABBAT ON NOVEMBER 22 AT 7 PM

All the Sunday school children/ parents and other children /parents interested in TBE are invited to Tot shabbat on November 22nd led by Barbara Roberts. No preparation is required, just come. Stan Fox is sponsoring the Oneg. Other TBE members are invited to attend/assist

MEMBER NEWS

TBE Hebrew school graduate Sam Heindl gets an "aleph" for this final-project painting for his Oneonta High School art class. Along with 19 other student paintings, it was selected for a display on the trash bins along Main Street in Oneonta. Sam is the son of Jessica Wintringham and Brett Heindl.

If you have member news that you would like to share with the congregation, whether a joy or a sorrow, please send it by email by the 25th of the month to Hollie Jaffe @ hjjaffe@hotmail.com for publication in the net Shofar. Please put "Member News" in the subject line of your email.





HEBREW SCHOOL: BY LOIS CHERNIN

For Rosh Hashanah, Roger Chauveron brought two shofars to Hebrew School and the students had a wonderful time blowing them.

All of the classes are learning the alef-bet.

In Junior Congregation, the students are learning the Sh'ma and what it means, from Faye Munson and Roger Chauveron.

A YIZKOR SERVICE WAS HELD OCTOBER 7, 2024 AT TEMPLE BETH EL

TBE held a Memorial Service on October 7th to commemorate one year since the massacre in many communities in southern Israel. Ken Sider conceived and organized the program "to remember those we lost, pray for those still missing and to stand with Israel."

Richard Sternberg welcomed the attendees, Ohad Shem-Tov lit a memorial candle and read the names of communities attacked. Elliot Cohen, Roger Chauveron, Amy Zoltick, Joan Puritz, Deb Marcus, and Lois Chernin each read a passage from a poem or our prayerbook. Steve Feuer said Kaddish. Alice Lichtenstein performed "Dance of the Blessed Spirits" on the flute. Ohad Shem-Tov played the memorial prayer "El Maleh Rachamim" on piano, and sang it together with Hollie Jaffe, the words tailored for the October 7th victims. Bernadette Winters Bell spoke about her recent trip to Israel with Cantor David Green and his wife Lori along with members of his congregation, recounting meetings with soldiers. Ohad Shem-Tov also spoke about the events of last October 7th.

Following is the full text of Ken Sider's "Yizkor Reflection":

"Tonight, we gather for a Yizkor service marking the one-year anniversary of the horrific attack against Israel. Yizkor is Hebrew for "You Shall Remember" and tonight we will remember. We will mourn those who were murdered, pray for those who are missing, and stand with the Israel and the soldiers of the Israel Defense Forces.

During the past year, we have seen terrible suffering across Israel, and this has been compounded by a worldwide reaction that rather than pressuring Hamas to immediately release all the hostages and end the war, blamed Israel for October 7 and even justified Hamas's atrocities. Earlier this year, Bret Stephens, a conservative voice at the NY Times, wrote:

"Maybe there should be more public pressure on Hamas to surrender than on Israel to save Hamas from the consequences of its actions." Twelve months later, Gaza is in ruins, Beirut is under siege, and Israel is in a state of war. The peaceful resolution we wished for is unrealized, and Israel again faces enemies on all sides. In this moment, Israelis feel not only rage, but profound grief. The wars of self-defense and self-preservation, in Gaza





and now Lebanon, remind us that Israel uses weapons to defend its civilians, but Hamas and Hezbollah use civilians to defend their weapons. Israel, a country with one of the strongest militaries in the world faces a dilemma: How to balance their power with morality.

In September, I celebrated Shabbat at a Conservative synagogue in Manhattan where, during the oneg, a temple member told me he wished Israel would just flatten Gaza. I responded politely that indiscriminately killing the innocent among the guilty does not seem like a Jewish value. But he was unmoved. In March, during my time volunteering in Israel on an air force base in the Negev, a few of my fellow American volunteers cheered at the sound of IDF jets bombing Gaza. These reactions to the war speak to grief and rage and serve as reminders of the importance of balancing power with morality.

Israel, unlike most nations, has made sincere efforts to strike this balance by honoring the Hague Regulations of 1869 and warning civilians of imminent attacks. In both Gaza and Lebanon, Israel sends warnings to civilians by phone and text. Though reporting shows that Hezbollah and Hamas urge their people to ignore Israel's warning, Israel is making an effort to balance power and morality. So, what of us, the Diaspora Jews? We live thousands of miles from Israel, enjoy the luxury of safety in the United States, and can do very little to help. Rabbi Donniel Hartman, a modern Orthodox rabbi in Jerusalem, suggests our attitudes can inform our actions, and he asks: Are we Genesis Jews or Exodus Jews?

Rabbi Hartman's question interrogates Jewish identity using a biblical distinction: The Book of Genesis vs. The Book of Exodus. Some of us are Genesis Jews, he writes, or "Lech Lecha Jews," in English, the "Go Forth" Jews who see the world as a blessing. We read God's call to Abraham, Judaism, and the Jewish community as blessings. And we live our Judaism and Jewish identity proudly. Some of us are Exodus Jews, the Jews thrust into the Pharaoh narrative. We think more about the darkest moments of our history and internalize the worst beliefs about Jews and Judaism. We dwell on our differences from the mainstream and internalize

criticisms.

Are we Genesis Jews, embracing our Identity proudly or are we Exodus Jews, being defined by those outside and often in opposition to us? Today, more than ever, we need Genesis Jews. And Israel needs us to be Genesis Jews. Genesis Jews celebrate strength and hope. We can see ourselves through our detractors' eyes yet maintain our joy in being Jewish. We can mourn the loss of all innocent lives in this war. And Genesis Jews can express disagreement with the Israeli government. Just look at Israel. During the past year, Israelis have demonstrated by the hundreds of thousands to do just this. Israelis love Israel, they serve in the IDF, and they send their children into war for Israel, and they are also vocal citizens. They are Genesis Jews expressing loyal opposition. But even that isn't enough right now. What is Israel to do?

Israeli philosopher and public intellectual Dr. Micah Goodman, urges clarity about one point: As much as Israel

might want to be loved by the West, it is more important to be feared in the Middle East. It's one or the other, he writes. For Israel to survive, it cannot be both.

Today, Israel is performing a deadly juggling act. Anger and grief. Power and morality. Love and fear. Justice and revenge. Hope and despair. Survival and destruction. Israel needs our prayers. Let's pray for those in captivity, those defending Israel, and those we have lost. Let's pray for the Israeli people and for a strong, safe, enduring Nation of Israel.

In the Talmud, there is an expression, (בזה זה ערבים ישראל כל Kol Yisra'el arevim ze ba'ze). "All of Israel is responsible for one another." Yes, we are. And tonight, Jews of all denominations, across continents, are with us in spirit, as we all, Kol Yisrael, remember October 7 and pray for a better future.

So, let us begin."



ENJOYING THE SUKKAH

The congregation celebrated erev Shabbat and Sukkot on October 18th in the Sukkah with candle lighting, the Shehekhianu blessing, blessing over “dwelling” in the sukkah, and kiddush, followed by a potluck dinner in the social hall. (Photo: Kathy Varadi and Hollie Jaffe dwelling in the sukkah for Monday morning coffee.)

Many thanks to Steve Feuer and Roger Chauveron for erecting the Sukkah and taking it down and storing it for next year.



SUMMARY OF LAST SUMMER’S SOLIDARITY MISSION TO ISRAEL BY BERNADETTE WINTERS BELL

On October 20, 2024, I shared at a combined Sisterhood & Men’s Club meeting my remembrances of a recent trip to Israel. In the beginning days of Summer 2024, I made a Solidarity Mission to Israel with Cantor Green, Lori Green, Rabbi Peter Rigler, and members of Temple Shalom of Pennsylvania. We were encouraged to hear the stories of the many Israelis we were honored to meet: refugees, soldiers, volunteers, children, parents, teachers, seniors and so many more.

According to Proverbs 24:16, “A righteous man falls down seven times and gets up.” Resilience and determination are central attributes to living a righteous life. But no one gets everything right on the first try. I was very impressed and inspired with the manner that these people lived their lives... acknowledging the realities of terrorism and war while balancing the firm decision to continue to live in fullness.

Their firmness of purpose is flourishing at the Yad Lakashish Lifeline for the Old Center. Here needy elderly are offered financial support while honoring their independence, dignity & self-worth. Artisans are trained in new skills by professional artists to create ceramics, metal works, paper, book binding, silk scarves, etc.

Here is an opportunity to support Israel at this most crucial time. I will be making an order from the gift shop of Yad Lakashish. These handmade gifts will support this outstanding program, allow us to know exactly where our financial gifts are actually assisting and to make this a special Hanukkah.

Here is the website for this Important center: lifeline.org.il & gift shop: yad-la.com/en

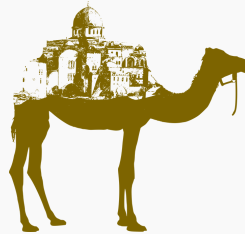
Consider supporting through purchases, and/or donations.

Remember that the prices listed are for shekels. ie \$180.00 shekels is currently \$47.43 US dollars. I have been in touch with director to secure agreement to make one combined order to save on shipping. You can place your orders with a message in the Order notes stating: Temple Beth El Oneonta NY order. I plan to place an order by November 9th

Any questions/concerns I am available at b15lola@aol.com and 607.376.6732.

There is a simple gallery of my photos in the social Hall for your viewing. These include an outdoor kitchen preparing food for soldiers, less than 2 miles from Gaza, the National cemetery, the many reminders of the hostages, Michael Levin center for supporting soldiers from around the world and many more.

Much gratitude for everyone that attended and participated in this personal important sharing.



MEMBER NEWS

If you have member news that you would like to share with the congregation, whether a joy or a sorrow, please send it via email by the 25

th of the month to Hollie Jaffe at hjjaffe@hotmail.com for publication in the Shofar. Please put "Member News" in the subject line of your email.

ADULT HEBREW CONVERSATION CLASS: OHAD SHEM-TOV

Planning a trip to Israel? Or maybe just dreaming about it? Wouldn't it be wonderful to say more than just 'Shalom'? To help bring your dreams closer, Temple Beth El is offering a 'Conversational Hebrew' class, taught by our Jerusalem born and raised member, Ohad Shem-Tov. The class will be held in the library on the same dates as the Hebrew School, from 10 am to 11:30 am. Come and learn modern Hebrew from a native Israeli and enrich your connection to the language and culture.

DONATIONS FOR ISRAEL – SAVE A LIFE IN IN ISRAEL THOUSANDS OF MILES AWAY

Your donation ensures Magen David Adom's 33,000 paramedics, EMTs, first responders, and first-aid providers -- volunteers and staff -- have the training, equipment, and medical supplies they need to treat all injured and ill people in Israel. Donate today: www.afmda.org

Please consider making additional donations to support Israel. From United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism:

- [Jewish Funders Network](#)
- [Support Masorti's Emergency War Campaign - Masorti Foundation](#)
- [Donations from USA](#)
- [Donations from International](#)
- [Jewish Federation of North America](#)



GOOD NEWS ISRAEL

Please recommend www.verygoodnewsisrael.blogspot.com to any individuals who you think need to know about the good work that Israel does.

YARZHEITS

Nov 1 – Nov 7 (6 Cheshvan)

Leo Lubell

Nov 8 – 14 (7-13 Cheshvan)

Rabbi Paul S. Reiss

Irving Shoenfeld

Irving Hertzendorf

Nov 15– 21 (14–20 Cheshvan)

Effie Ettlinger

Sherwin Seldin

Nov 22 – 28 (21–27 Cheshvan)

David Morton Gelbsman

Irene D. Allen

Nov 28 – Dec 5 (28 Cheshvan – 4 Kislev)

Louis Friedlander

May their names always be remembered as a blessing

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

In the event of a rabbinic emergency, or in the case of an urgent need, please contact Temple Beth El's President, Phyllis Sherman, at 607-376-7411 or tbeoneonta@gmail.com. In the event of a death, please contact Steven Feuer at 607-434-2538.

TORAH PARASHAS IN NOVEMBER

Nov. 2 – Noach (Genesis 6:9-11:32) “Noach” is Noah. G-d floods the world, saving only Noah, his family, and two of each kind of animal. The reason G-d does this is because of “Chamas”, the evil behavior of the people except for Noah’s family. The Hebrew word “Chamas” means “violence”, while in Arabic the word means “zeal”. Rabbi Rachel Isaacs, in a commentary on the website “My Jewish Learning”, says “The 11th-century Egyptian commentator Ibn Ezra says that this word describes two crimes in particular: theft and the exploitation and rape of women.”

Nov. 9 – Lech-Lecha (Genesis 12:1-17:27) “Lech-Lecha” means “Take yourself”, G-d telling 75-year-old Abram to leave his home, taking his wife Sara and nephew Lot and the household, to go to the land of Canaan. (Their names change later, with the added letter “hay” [“h”] added.) G-d promises to make of him a great nation. When Sara does not conceive, she tells Abram to take her servant Hagar as a second wife to bear a child. She does and has Ishmael.

Nov. 16– Vayeira (Genesis 18:1-22:24) Veyeira means “And He appeared”. Three unusual visitors inform Abraham (age 100) and Sarah (age 90) that they will have a child, and they do, named Isaac. Later, G-d tests Abraham, telling him to sacrifice Isaac on Mt. Moriah. When he is about to do so, G-d stops him and a ram is sacrificed instead. Because Abraham obeyed, G-d bestows blessings on him and his descendants.

Then G-d tells Abraham to destroy the wicked cities of Sodom and Gemorrah. Abraham barter with G-d

who agrees to save the city if 10 good people can be found. Unfortunately, there aren't enough, but Lot and his two daughters escape the destruction.

Nov. 23 – Chayei Sarah (Genesis 23:1-25:18) Chayei Sarah means "Life of Sarah". The first sentence tells us that Sarah dies at age 127 and is buried in the caves of Machpelah in Hebron. Abraham's servant Eliezer is sent to find Isaac a wife. In a "meet cute", he falls off his donkey when he sees how beautiful Rebecca, his intended, is.

Nov. 30 – Toldot (Genesis 25:19-28:9) "Toldot" means "Generations" Rebecca has twin sons, the older with thick red hair and the younger holding the elder's heel. Their names are derived from these. (Esau meaning "hairy" or "rough", and Isaac meaning "heel".) Esau became a hunter and Isaac stayed home and cooked. Esau sold his right of inheritance as the older brother for the lentils that Jacob had cooked.



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 ONEONTA, NY 13820
 PHONE: (607) 432-4090
 1-800-392-1818

JEFF GELBSMAN
 MANAGER



MICHELIN



peachingroup.com
 email@peachingroup.com


426 Chestnut Street
 Oneonta, NY 13820

Tel: (607) 432-5314
 Fax: (607) 432-6124

ANDREW PURITZ
 ATTORNEY @ LAW
 189 MAIN STREET, SUITE 103
 ONEONTA, NY 13820
 OFFICE: (607) 432-0943 • CELL: (607) 287-2839
 ANDREW.PURITZ.LAW.OFFICE@GMAIL.COM

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Steven Z. Feuer
 Attorney at Law

23 Ford Avenue
 Oneonta, NY 13820
 Website: stevenfeuerlaw.com
 Email: Steven@stevenfeuerlaw.com

607-432-0108
 (fax) 607-432-0965


Bernadette Winters Bell, LMSW
 bwintersbell@gmail.com

Life, Loss & Grief Therapist




50 Dietz St Suite M
 Oneonta NY 13820
 607.376.6732

From Heartache to Healing and Hope



with host
Bernadette Winters Bell, LMSW, PLLC

"I am here holding the hope for you until you can hold it for yourself." -BWB



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THE SHOFAR

Published by Temple Beth El

83 Chestnut Street
PO Box 383
Oneonta, NY 13820
607/432-5522 (Synagogue)
www.templebetheloneonta.org

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Save the dates:

Nov. 2	10 am	"What does it mean to be Jewish?" with Alice and Jim, see page 3
Nov. 8	7 pm	Friday evening service - Cantor Green
Nov. 9	10 am	Shabbat morning Torah Study
Nov. 17	10 am	Men's Club breakfast
Nov. 22	7 pm	Tot Shabbat with Barbara Roberts
Nov. 26	7:30 pm	Oneonta Interfaith Thanksgiving Service St. James Church, See page 3

Shabbat times:

Fri. November 1	Light Shabbat candles at 5:39 pm
Fri. November 8	Light Shabbat candles at 4:31 pm
Fri. November 15	Light Shabbat candles at 4:24 pm
Fri. November 22	Light Shabbat candles at 4:19 pm
Fri. November 29	Light Shabbat candles at 4:16 pm

Hebrew School & Adult Hebrew dates:

November 3 **(TURN YOUR CLOCKS BACK!)**, 17, 24
No school Nov. 10, Veteran's Day

Temple Beth El
PO Box 383
Oneonta, NY 13820