

TEMPLE BETH CHAI



**GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY
1972-2022**

CELEBRATION NOVEMBER 19, 2022



TEMPLE
BETH CHAI

Est. in 1972, Hauppauge NY

Rabbinical Leadership:

Rabbi Alan C. Stein

Synagogue Leadership:

Robin Cramer, President

Erik Kolodny & Gary Spielman, VPs

Mark Pluskalowski, Treasurer

Dr. Fran Eichler, Secretary

Barry Mirsky, Financial Secretary

November 19, 2022

Message from Our President

Temple Beth Chai is celebrating its 50th year as a congregation, Mazel Tov! This is a wonderful and important milestone and is the result of the years of hard work and dedication of our beloved clergy, congregation, family and friends. As we come together to celebrate, please take a moment and reflect on your fondest memories of TBC. It is important to always remember what TBC means to you and that it holds a special place in your heart.

This 50th Golden Anniversary Journal will take you down memory lane, including the history of our cherished Synagogue and special memories through the years. We hope you enjoy it and let's keep on making memories for years to come, L'dor v'dor!

A special thank you to the 50th Planning Committee. Without their hard work and dedication this would not have been possible – Rabbi Alan Stein, Helen & Ed Bergman, Marsha Cohen, Myra Friedman, Tricia Gomer, Lenny Grundt, Erik Kolodny, Laraine & Barry Mirsky, Rachel Miller, Robin Spencer, Phyllis Stein and our adjunct member Les Goldschmidt.

Shalom,

Robin Cramer

Robin Cramer

President

870 Townline Road, Hauppauge NY 11788 * www.bethchaiofhauppauge.com * (631) 724-5807 * Bethchai@optonline.net



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ב"ה

November 19, 2022

26 Cheshvan 5783

Dear Temple Beth Chai Family:

It is a great honor to address our temple family as your rabbi on the fiftieth anniversary of the formation of Temple Beth Chai. Formation of a synagogue is no easy feat. To bring a synagogue from idea to reality requires hard work, determination, dedication, and funding along with a *gezunt* dose of *mazel*.

Over the years, our "Little Temple in the Woods" has established itself in the Hauppauge community with firm roots. We are proud to have a beautiful building and a membership that is truly dedicated to the continuation of Conservative Judaism in Hauppauge. When so many synagogues around us are folding, we seem to be the "little temple that could!"

There are so many people to thank for 50 years of success. I offer a hearty "todah rabah" to our founding members whose vision and belief saw the need for our synagogue in western Suffolk County, to our former rabbis and cantors who served our congregation with love and devotion, to our current president Robin Cramer and former presidents who have worked tirelessly for the benefit of our congregation, to our current and past temple executive board and board members over the years who dedicated their time and efforts to ensuring TBC's success, to our current and former staff and bingo volunteers. Without all of you, your efforts and dedication, Temple Beth Chai might not still be here.

A synagogue relies not just on clergy, board, executive board and staff, but on its members to keep it alive and vibrant! Each Shabbat, yom tov service or social event that you attend furthers our growth and exemplifies your profound dedication to Temple Beth Chai.

For me personally, Temple Beth Chai has special meaning. I share the bimah each week with my father Cantor Stephen Stein. This year we celebrated my son, Harris, becoming a bar mitzvah. We have held a concert, barbeques, musical Shabbat services and even a winter party. Over the last three and a half years, I have had the pleasure of getting to know many of our members, officiating at their simchas, and guided our members through difficult times such as losing a loved one. I hope and pray that our continued efforts to grow Temple Beth Chai will succeed.

On this special night, please join me as we recite the *Shehecheyanu* prayer. *Baruch atah adoshem, elokeinu melech ha-olam shehecheyanu, v'kiy'manu, v'higiyanu lazman hazeh*. Praised are you, o Lord our G-d, king of the universe, who has given us life, sustained us and brought us to this joyous time. Mazal tov to Temple Beth Chai! I am looking forward to Temple Beth Chai enjoying another 50 years of success! G-d bless.

Shalom,

Rabbi Alan Stein

Rabbi Alan Stein



Officers and Trustees 2022-2023

<u>Officers</u>	<u>Name</u>
President	Robin Cramer
Vice Presidents:	
1st Vice President	Erik Kolodny
2nd Vice President.....	Gary Spielman
Treasurer	Mark Pluskalowski
Financial Secretary	Barry Mirsky
Recording Secretary	Fran Eichler
Rabbi	Alan C. Stein
<u>Trustees</u>	
Ritual	Lew Arem
At Large	John Cramer
At Large	Myra Friedman
Legal	Penny Glaser
Building and Grounds	Steve Kornblatt
Good and Welfare	George Mann
Catering	Gail Spielman
Sisterhood Representative	Helen Bergman
Men's Club Representative	Neal Miller





Rabbinical Leadership

Year(s)	Names
1972	Rabbi Louis Blumenthal
1972-73	Rabbi Kaufman
1973-76	Rabbi Joseph Langner
1976-80	Rabbi Judah Newberger
1980-81	Rabbi Poupko
1981-85	Rabbi Jacob Goldstein
1985-92	Rabbi Howard Buechler
1992-93	Rabbi Shapiro
1993-03	Rabbi Laurence Bazer
2003-19	Rabbi Rhonda Nebel
2019-Present	Rabbi Alan Stein





TBC Board Presidents

Year(s)	Name(s)
1972-73	Bruce Miller
1973-74	Jack Kornreich
1974-75	Ken Schwartz
1975-76	Phil Cohen
1976-78	Tyrone Rakitin
1978-79	Jack Kornreich
1979-80	Joel Lebowitz
1980-82	Barry Mirsky
1982-84	Barry Cohen
1984-85	Paul Beeber
1985-86	Barry Cohen
1986-87	Rich Susser
1987-89	Mickey Pepper
1989-91	Howard Ende
1991-93	Gene Lesserson
1993-94	Jack Kaplowitz
1994-96	Stephen Borman
1996-97	Barry Cohen
1997-98	Kenneth Krasner
1998-00	Barry Cohen
2000-02	Martin Hirschfield
2002-05	Bruce Streger
2005-06	Barry Cohen
2006-07	Barry Cohen and Bruce Streger
2007-08	Bruce Streger
2008-10	Lory Arem and Kenneth Krasner
2010-11	Bruce Streger
2011-14	Barry Cohen and Bruce Streger
2014-17	Dan Kamel and Maureen Schwartz
2017-19	Maureen Schwartz
2019-22	Robin Cramer and Rachel Miller
2022-Present	Robin Cramer



Men's Club Presidents

Year(s)	Name(s)
1972-74	Tyrone Rakitin
1974-76	Mike Levine
1976-77	Allen Soifer
1977-78	Joel Lebowitz
1978-79	Martin Saal
1979-81	Robert Brand
1981-83	Joel Schwefel
1983-84	Arnold Feldman
1984-86	Stuart Fishkind
1986-88	Stephen Borman
1988-89	Arnold Feldman
1989-90	Stephen Borman
1990-92	Steve Chodos
1992-93	Jack Kaplowitz
1993-95	Kenneth Krasner
1995-96	Kenneth Krasner and Saul Morris
1996-98	Saul Morris
1998-99	Gary Marks and Ed Norwick
1999-2001	Gary Marks
2001-03	Harvey Lapidus
2003-05	Skip Eichler
2005-07	Martin Hirschfield and Michael Wistreich
2007-09	Gary Spielman
2009-10	Bruce Streger
2010-14	Gary Marks and Gary Spielman
2014-16	Gary Spielman
2016-17	Ira Landman
2017-18	Gary Marks and Gary Spielman
2018-Present	Gary Spielman

Sisterhood Presidents

Year(s)	Name
1972-73	Arlene Kaye
1973-74	Marilyn Rakitin
1974-76	Lorraine Persten
1976-78	Carole Benowitz
1978-79	Leslie Rothkopf
1979-80	Vivian Barton
1980-82	Laraine Mirsky
1982-83	Roberta Rosenthal
1983-85	Linda Bard
1985-86	Marsha Cohen
1986-87	Nancy Susser
1987-89	Marsha Feldman
1989-91	Judy Pepper
1991-93	Barbara Fishkind
1993-94	Rita Morris
1994-95	Ellen Drucker Albert
1995-87	Phyllis Krasner
1997-98	Amy Durshlag
1998-00	Gwen Haft
2000-02	Rebecca Muller
2002-04	Rose Marks
2004-05	Rose Marks and Rebecca Muller
2005-06	Fran Eichler and Rebecca Muller
2006-08	Fran Eichler
2008-17	Rebecca Muller
2017-19	Lory Arem
2019-22	Paula Lubell
2022-Present	Gail Spielman



TBC 50th Planning Committee Members

Name (s)		Responsibilities
Robin Cramer & Rabbi Alan Stein	-	Co-Chairs
Robin Spencer	-	Journal & Personal Memory Pages
Myra Friedman	-	Corporate Sponsors & Ads
Erik Kolodny	-	Corporate Sponsors & Ads
Laraine & Barry Mirsky	-	Photo Boards and Montague
Les Goldschmidt	-	Photo Boards and Montague
Lenny Grundt	-	History of TBC
Marsha Cohen	-	History of TBC
Phyllis Stein	-	History of TBC
Rachel Miller	-	Silent Auction
Helen & Ed Bergman	-	Event Details & Coordination
Tricia Gomer	-	Event Details & Coordination





TBC History

in

Words & Photos





History of TBC

50 Years! Fifty years is a significant milestone: Fifty years of planning and building. Fifty years of learning and teaching. Fifty years of faith and prayer. Fifty years of friends and family. Could those ten families gathered in 1972 in the home of the Glasbergs to discuss the possibility of creating a temple have imagined the impact that such a meeting would have on the lives of hundreds of families? Could they have imagined this 50th anniversary celebration?

Early in 1972, Rabbi Kapner advertised in a local newspaper that he wished to start a new Conservative Synagogue in the Hauppauge area. A group of residents, including the families of Phil Cohen, Murray Glasberg, Dick Goldberg, Jack Kornreich, Joel Lebowitz, Mike Levine, Marv Levy, Bruce Miller, Tyron Rakitin, Martin Doris and Madeline Trica agreed to incorporate Temple Beth Chai. Temple Beth Chai was born, named and chartered in 1972. Dues were \$18 per month! Services, led by congregants, were held in homes until space was rented at the Calvary Lutheran Church on Townline Road.



There, services were held and students began their bar and bat mitzvah lessons. The first High Holiday Service, planned and led by congregants, was held in the Suffolk Medical Arts Building and honored with a borrowed Torah housed in a converted broom closet. Our first part-time rabbi was Rabbi Louis Blumenthal, the father of congregants Rita Bikwid and Linda Feldman. Rabbi Blumenthal's family, the Bikwids and Feldmans, presented TBC with its first Torah. Funds for a second

Torah were raised by congregants and presented to the Temple in June 1973. In 1972, we also saw the establishment of the Sisterhood and the Men's Club – organizations vital to the growth of TBC. Sisterhood initially met at the Smith Haven Mall; Men's Club met in Commack. Our second rabbi was Rabbi Kaufman, an Orthodox rabbi who spent Shabbat in a trailer on the grounds of the Church.

In 1973, Rabbi Joseph Langner was hired as our first full-time rabbi and TBC relocated to the animal hospital vacated and donated by Phil Cohen. In two large rooms and one small kitchen, we started to grow. We conducted services, ran programs, officially established a Hebrew School with classes held in the basement of Phil Cohen's home under





the guidance of Suri Oberlander and Shula Gutterman, and celebrated our first B'nai Mitzvahs, Adam Miller and David Doris.

There too, Story Time for preschoolers began, Judy Pepper established a library, and we held our first Sisterhood Fashion Show at the Huntington Town House on April 15, 1973. Our second High Holiday Services, in 1973, was held in the Engineers Hall in Hauppauge. On December 15, 1974, with few resources and a lot of spirit, our new home was dedicated. TBC flourished; Rabbi Langner was followed by Rabbi Judah Newberger, installed December 12, 1976, and we were already outgrowing the animal hospital. We dreamed of having our very own building.



Phil Cohen helped make this a reality by providing the five acres of land upon which the new Temple Beth Chai would be erected as our own engineer, Jordan Ruzz, oversaw it all. Architects were consulted; plans were made, and people donated time and money to make the new building a reality. In 1977, contracts were signed, and the groundbreaking ceremony was held on Sunday, June 4, 1978. In 1979, the dream came true, celebrated with a joyous march up Townline Road

from our first home in the animal hospital to the present home of Temple Beth Chai. The Jewish Community House of Laurelton-Springfield helped “furnish” our new temple by donating their torahs, prayer books and other accoutrements with the agreement that we would hang and perpetuate their memorial boards, which we proudly do to this day.

Rabbi Newberger left us soon after our move to the new building. He was replaced by Rabbi Poupko, who stayed for a short time until Cantor Marty Goldstein arrived in 1980. In September of 1981, Marty's dad, Rabbi Jacob Goldstein, joined our congregation as he and his family added more permanent spiritual guidance, beautiful music and warmth. Under their leadership, our congregation grew significantly.



For the next decade we experienced many growing pains and achievements. We all pitched in to complete our building. Immediately a host of committees got to work: The Decorating Committee, the



Landscaping Committee, the Kitchen Committee, the Beautification Committee. Bernie Ravitz adorned our bare walls with his wooden sculptures of the Chai, the Menorah, and the Tree of Life, which still beautify our Temple today. The Library was built and dedicated in 1981 in honor of Maxwell Teitelbaum, Laraine Mirsky's father.

Sisterhood Slant kept the congregants informed and eventually became the award-winning *Chai Lites*, chronicling the various monthly activities of TBC and its organizations. Our Story Time evolved into Kosher Sesame Street under the guidance of Laraine Mirsky and continues today as Shalom Sesame led by Robin Spencer. From 1982 to 2011, Lillian Katz lovingly initiated our youngest into Hebrew School with a fun-filled program.



As always, fundraising was a priority, and we did it with a passion! Many elegant fashion shows, art auctions, rummage sales, raffles, progressive dinners, scavenger hunts, Las Vegas Nights, and comedy nights helped finance the many projects conceived and executed by an enthusiastic congregation.

We celebrated the “chai-lights” of the Jewish calendar with challah baking, model seders, Purim carnivals, Chanukah parties, and Shabbat dinners. We shared our pride in our “Sisterhood Kitchen” as Sisterhood members cooked and baked together for Shabbat dinners, Break the Fast, onegs, and Paid-Up Membership Dinners. We even published two TBC cookbooks, sharing everyone's favorite recipes.



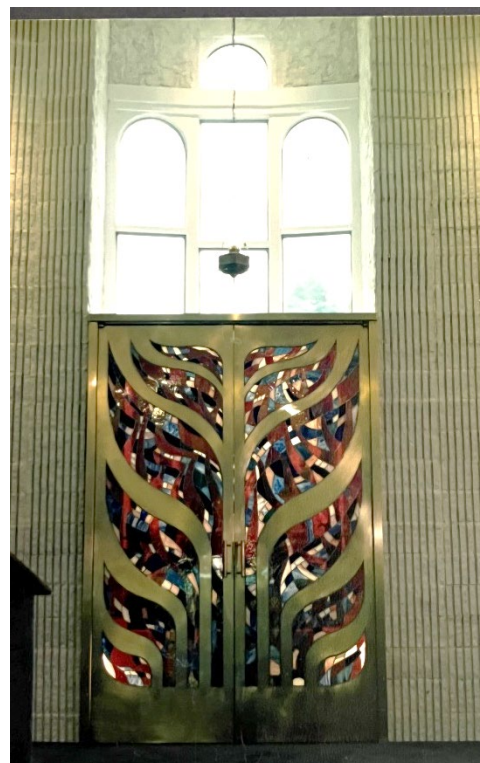
During those times, as they are now, the Temple Board of Directors, the Men's Club and the Sisterhood were the driving forces in our maturation. They guided us through many policy changes and activities. Upon Marty Goldstein's departure, we hired various cantors for our High Holiday Services. Soon after, Barry Cohen assisted in the role of cantor, which continued through the next 25 years. Other congregants graced our Bimah, leading various parts of the service weekly and during the High Holidays. Beginning in 1981, we participated in the Bar and Bat Mitzvah Twinning Program with Soviet Jews, an outgrowth of our annual Solidarity March for Soviet Jewry.

One of the most drastic changes occurred in 1982 when we voted to include women in the minyan. While there was much “discussion” and research that went into this significant change, we worked well



together to improve our synagogue in many ways. Rabbi Howard Buechler came in 1985, bringing still more changes and a new vitality to our services and rituals as TBC reached “adulthood.” Our membership was high, our Hebrew School was overflowing, and our activities were endless.

Under the guidance of Skip Eichler, we developed very active Kadima and USY programs and sent record numbers of our children to Encampment. We “Bat Mitzvah-ed” our first class of adult women in 1986. We also formed a lasting relationship with the Suffolk County Jewish Committee on Scouting through the efforts of Bruce Streger, Phyllis Stein and Ed Bergman. This led to the Scouts donating the Holocaust Torah cases and creating a Genizah. The benches in front of the Temple were provided by Girl Scouts, led by the daughter of Mike and Wendy Abramowitz. Through the generous donation of our congregants Marlene and Joel Schwefel, we expanded and beautified our Bimah.



Les Goldschmidt and Shelley Lantheaume launched our first attempts at Bingo, which has helped fund many projects, and continues so successfully today led by Gary Spielman with the support of congregant volunteers. Barry Mirsky initiated Ecumenical Thanksgiving services with the local congregations of Calvary Lutheran Church, St. Thomas More Church and Hauppauge Methodist Church, with a scholarship presented to a Hauppauge High School student. This special tradition continues today. We shared *Selichot* Services with South Huntington Jewish Center and enjoyed a comfortable place among Suffolk County temples. We had truly grown up and become an influential part of the Long Island community.



Rabbi Shapiro spent one year as an interim Rabbi and bridged the gap between Rabbi Buechler and Rabbi Laurence Bazer, who joined us in 1993. In 1996, Rabbi Bazer led a TBC tour to Israel and Jordan. Rabbi Bazer, a U.S. Army chaplain, spent time ministering to the workers and survivors at the site of the 9/11 World Trade Center attack. In 1999, we experienced a bias attack which brought us together as we furthered our commitment to our temple and Judaism.



Throughout the 1990's, we continued to improve our building and remodeled the kitchen through the generosity and hard work of the Sisterhood. The library, too, was renovated, with much of the construction done by Dan Kamel. We felt safe and secure with our security guard, Al Hayner, who protected our congregation for many years. For 25 years, our *Shabbat* and Holiday Services were and continue to be enhanced by our Torah Reader, Akiva Karalitzsky.



It seems like yesterday that we held our first Journal Luncheon, honoring our first Presidents and celebrating our Silver Anniversary 25 years ago, on September 20, 1997. Our Journal celebrations became a tradition, honoring Temple Presidents and exceptional congregants, raising money and giving us an opportunity to "party!"

Rabbi Rhonda Nebel joined us in 2003, marking another first: a female Rabbi. Our growth and development continued. In addition to leading our services, Rabbi Nebel introduced new adult classes, more youth activities, and the Blessing of the Bikes. We broke new ground again, with our first female Temple President, Lori Arem, and that tradition continued quite successfully to the present day with Maureen Schwartz, Lori Relyea, Rachel Miller and Robin Cramer.

In 2012, we celebrated our 40th Anniversary, a joyous affair marking still another milestone in TBC history.



In 2019, we were blessed with the arrival of not only Rabbi Alan Stein, but his whole family. His father, Cantor Stephen Stein, inspires us with his cantorial chants. Rabbi Stein's whole family became part of the TBC family, participating in all services, choirs, celebrations and temple events. Rabbi Stein initiated Musical Shabbats, summer BBQs, and other themed events to enhance our temple experience. Just as we were welcoming the next stage of TBC, the COVID pandemic struck and brought with it a whole new set of challenges. Rabbi Stein coordinated with Co-presidents Robin Cramer and Rachel Miller to enable the congregation to "zoom" services, so as to keep





Judaism and TBC with us in a scary new world. Having the comfort and familiarity of our Temple a click away helped us make it through those tough times.

As the pandemic lessened, we improvised with outdoor services, outdoor movies, barbecues and other socially distanced gatherings. Finally, this year, we returned to in-person services while still accommodating those who join us remotely. It is wonderful to be back in our sanctuary and appreciate its warmth and familiarity. Additions this year include new upholstered chairs, a baby grand piano and new prayerbooks.

In just the blink of an eye, we are here today celebrating our Golden Anniversary - 50 years of TBC - which began as the Little Temple in the Woods. Thank you to G-d, our Rabbis, Cantors, congregants, family, friends and supporters for helping us to reach this wonderful milestone. We will continue to celebrate with each other and contribute to keeping Judaism alive in our lives and in our community.

We look forward to many more years together. *Mazel Tov* and *L'dor V'dor!*













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