



ADULT LEARNING



Programs and Events for Adult Education 2022-23

עַל שְׁלֹשָׁה דְּבָרִים הָעוֹלָם עוֹמֵד:
עַל הַתּוֹרָה, וְעַל הָעֲבוּדָה, וְעַל גְּמִילוּת חַסְדִּים.

"The world stands on these three:

Learning (Torah), **Spiritual Life** (Avodah), and **Acts of Kindness** (Gemilut khasadim)."
(Mishnah, Avot 1:2)

Learning is a pillar of the world, and of our Jewish life. Join us in some of the many exciting and diverse programs and learning events.

This year, we offer different times, different formats, different venues:

On the weekend and during the week; discussion and personal reflection; working on learning Hebrew and prayers, or working on our own character and spiritual life. We meet at Beth Shalom, and off-site as well.

You can choose a short series, regular weekly ongoing programs, more intense or more relaxed schedules.

We hope you find the right place and event for you.

Adult Hebrew Class

As we do every year, we have a new class this Fall. Once again, we have a diverse group of students: Some are Jewish, and some are not; some are members of Beth Shalom, and some are not; some are learning how to read Hebrew for the first time, and some learned how to read Hebrew previously, in one of our previous Adult Hebrew classes, or maybe several decades ago. For this course, we presume that everyone is learning how to read Hebrew for the first time.

Rabbi Mike Stevens teaches, using the book *Learn Hebrew Today: Alef-Bet for Adults*, by Yedwab and Bogot. As we learn the Hebrew, we are also introduced to six dozen Hebrew reading and Jewish concepts.

We meet **each Sunday on Zoom, from 10:00-11:30 a.m., and from September 11 through December 18**. Each class session will be recorded, and each week, I'll send you the invitation for our Zoom class and the link to our recording.

A Returning Program at *Beth Shalom*

Mussar - Jewish Spiritual Practice

Mussar is a centuries-old Jewish tradition that can help you develop inner awareness, and bring about transformation of the traits of the soul, in order to become the finest version of the person you already are.

We are born with certain character traits, and also acquire some of them through life; sometimes these are helpful, but often some of our default modes of thinking and acting lead us to conflict, make our relationships difficult, or stand in the way of the happy life we would like to live. Mussar tells us that we are not doomed to stumble on the same obstacles, and it teaches us that our character traits can be worked on: we can strengthen the positive ones, we can soften the negative ones; we don't have to just react to things, we can learn the skills enabling us to choose each time how we confront daily life challenges.

Mussar is a bit *like a fitness class or Yoga*: a set of teachings and daily practices, which do with our soul what a good workout does with our body: help our spirit to be stronger, more nimble, flexible, happier and at peace.

"Every one of us is assigned to master something in our lives. You have already been given your assignment and you have already encountered it, though you may not be aware that what faces you is a curriculum, nor that this is the central task of your life. Mussar's purpose is to help you wake up to your personal curriculum and to guide your steps toward mastering it."

- From *Everyday Holiness* by Alan Morinis.

The World of Mussar is opening for all ... you are invited to enter.

We are embarking on a program of study and practice in the way of the Jewish spiritual tradition of Mussar, and everyone is invited to join. Mussar has been undergoing a revival in the Jewish world, and we are fortunate to be able to offer this curriculum, created by Chai Mitzvah. This program is suitable for all, regardless of level of Jewish knowledge. There are no pre-requisites nor is Hebrew required.

How does one practice Mussar?

Mussar has a learning component, *but it is not “a class.”* Mussar has a group component, *but it is not group therapy.* When you join our Mussar group, you will be given weekly texts to read individually in advance of our meeting. Questions, exercises, and suggestions are provided to prompt inquiry and insight. All materials are in English, and where Hebrew is used, it is transliterated and translated. As we move forward, each weekly reading is followed with suggested practices for you to do on your own, daily and weekly, where what you learned comes to be experienced.

Every two weeks, we meet in a group of fellow Mussar practitioners to address questions and practices focused on the *middah* (soul-trait) of that week, and to discuss personal progress, insights and issues. Experience has shown that these meetings create powerful spiritual community, reinforcing commitment and deepening participants' learning. These guided discussions in a small group are led by Rabbi Ariel Edery — who has specifically trained at the Mussar Institute to lead Mussar groups. Participants come to explore their own personal curriculum with the safety and support of other like-minded seekers, without judgements or unwanted advice.

Get a Taste – How We Do Mussar? – a free One-Session Introduction

Join us for one session on **Tuesday, January 17 at 7:00 pm.**

We will introduce the tradition of Mussar and explain how you may engage in it through our *Mussar group* this year.

- Registration: at Beth Shalom, **before January 20**; the set of booklets costs \$45 for the course.
- Meetings begin on **Tuesday, January 31, at 7:00pm**
- Over the following 20 weeks, there will be a meeting **every other Tuesday at 7:00pm**, at Beth Shalom. Group meetings are about 90 minutes.
- There is a minimum and a maximum number of participants that can be in a group. Group will be formed in the order of which registrations are finalized.
- We will follow a Mussar curriculum of 12 beautifully illustrated sourcebooks featuring texts to spark meaningful discussions, and practices to cultivate each character trait (*middah*).

Traits we will explore: Wisdom/*Chochma*, Generosity/*N'divut*, Compassion/*Rachamim*, Spiritual Friendship/*Chevruta*, Equanimity/*Menuchat HaNefesh*, Order/*Seder*, Trust/*Bitachon*, Gratitude/*Hakarat Ha-Tov*, Humility/*Anavah*, Responsibility/*Achrayut*, Patience/*Savlanut*, Coming Home/*Teshuvah*.

****Please contact Rabbi Ariel Edery with any questions about the Mussar group:**
rabbi@bethshalomnc.org

Weekly and Monthly Learning and Discussion

Tanakh (Bible) Talks

A weekly and lively series of discussions on and around Biblical texts, current events, and everything we are inspired to discuss. Going on for over a decade, still having much to learn and discuss! We begin with a text, a story, or a poem, and discuss the many topics and issues it brings up, and we bring up. This year, we are exploring Rabbinic ethical texts, and the wisdom and songs of the book of Psalms

Open to all, led by Rabbi Edery, all **Mondays from 10:30 – noon**.

We meet in our Flex Space, and are always also live on Zoom.

Grief Support Group at Beth Shalom

"A time to live, and a time to die; a time to mourn, and a time to heal." Death is part of our lifecycle; losing a loved one is a sad and hard thing that happens, inevitably, to all of us at some point.

Fortunately, we do not have to go through this alone. We have a community, and we have in our Jewish tradition the wisdom of millennia that helps us navigate these challenging times. Jewish mourning rituals and customs help us do the work of mourning, so we can also resume the path of healing.

At Beth Shalom, we have our Grief Support Group, where we can find:

- A safe environment where one can tell his or her story and express feelings freely, knowing that others will be understanding, non-judgmental, and supportive.
- A place for establishing a connection with others to decrease the isolation that grief brings.
- A forum for understanding common myths about grief and typical grief patterns.
- A place for people to learn from each other through sharing their grief stories in a non-judgmental way.
- A community that validates and normalizes one's emotional reactions.
- A place for learning that there are many different ways to grieve, all of which are natural and acceptable.
- A place to receive some of the insights and lessons from our rich Jewish tradition.

Our group is open to all, free, and there is no commitment to come any more than as wished and needed. We encourage people who are dealing with a loss to take that first step and join us — whether your loss is recent or more distant, this is a good step for healing.

The group is kindly led by Natalie Winters, who brings her wealth of experience in counselling and group leading; Rabbi Ariel Edery also participates in the leading.

We meet on **Thursdays at 1:30pm, in our Flex Space.**

To hear more about this, or for any questions or comments, please reach out directly to Rabbi Edery rabbi@bethshalomnc.org. Let him know if you are considering attending, and extend the invitation to whomever you know can benefit from joining.

“Got Culture?”

These are 3 things we can safely say about Jews: We’ve been around many countries, we like to get together to talk, and even more if it is around good food!

We have a new tradition that combines all those: *Got Culture*. We meet at some ethnic food restaurant, where we enjoy a unique meal as we take the opportunity to learn about the country where the food originates, its culture, and about that place’s unique connections with the Jewish community.

In past dinners we explored Carmen’s **Cuban**, Awaze **Ethiopian**, US Southern Danny’s Bar-B-Que, **as well as Turkish, Irish, Chinese, and French cuisines, a beer brewery, and a few more.**

Join us for our quarterly dinners. (Future dinners: *all details tba in our weekly communications.*)

RSVPs are needed for each event. You can do that as the dates approach by responding to our weekly e-news or contacting our office.

Wine, Women & Wonder

This women’s study group will form a community of learners delving into joyous learning, enjoying each other’s company and imbibing our favorite wines and non-alcoholic drinks.

Led by , the first session will meet in .

Future dates and venues TBD.

Learning Opportunities Within our Wider Community

Triangle Area Rabbis Present Jewish Essentials

Want to get a good overview of the Jewish holidays, life cycle events, and learn from a variety of diverse area rabbis? Then consider taking the Introduction to Judaism Survey Course, taught by several of the Triangle rabbis, including also our Rabbi Ariel Edery.

A ten-week class offering an overview of Jewish holidays, lifecycle events, and traditions taught by rabbis from area Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox backgrounds. The class extends a pathway to Jewish studies for conversion, interfaith couples, and Jews wishing to refresh or update their religious education. ***Classes are open to all! Wednesday evenings, 7:30-9:00pm.***

All Classes will be held at: Temple Beth Or, 5315 Creedmoor Road, Raleigh, NC 27612. For more info on the course and registration call 781-4895 (x100).