

Chesed 12/2/18

The meeting was attended by Rabbi Yaffe on speakerphone! Present were Elaine Acker, Ken Gorenstein, Ausher Kofsky and Rick Granowitz.

Rabbi Yaffe gave a dvar torah in which he analogized the flame and wick of the Channukah menorah and candles to our soul and body respectively. Without the body to perform mitzvot, the soul is incomplete. This equation can be extended to the two components of compassion, the feeling of sympathy and performing acts of loving kindness. Feeling compassion is important, but incomplete without doing good deeds to help the mourner.

We welcome Lynn Dashevsky to our committee! We acknowledged and thanked the donors to the Chesed Committee, especially sisterhood and our committee's members.

Prior to the meeting Gerry Canter reported by mail that phone calls and limited visits to homebound congregants are going nicely. Marion is visiting congregants at Glenmeadow as needed, as a representative of the Chesed Committee. We discussed our Google drive spreadsheet listing congregation members who could benefit from visits. Rick will update the spreadsheet and since only one or two committee members use the spreadsheet, other committee members and congregants will call the office with the name of a homebound congregant so that Rabbi Yaffe and Lisa can update the list. If they so choose, Chesed committee members can access the list for the purpose of entering the date of the most recent contact and indicating whether the homebound person wants a rabbinical visit. The privacy of congregants who do not want visits will be respected. The Committee was happy to hear that Rabbi Yaffe plans to visit homebound congregants one-half day a week. If members are aware of congregants who want calls and are not getting them, or those who are getting calls and do not want them, please call Lisa at the office so she can update the list.

Rabbi Yaffe, Rabbi Wolff and Elaine have been visiting congregants at the Jewish Nursing Home, Ruth's House and Genesis House faithfully. A note is left if congregants are unavailable at the time of a visit so they and their family know that a visit was made. With Lisa's help Elaine will print Chesed Committee note paper for this purpose.

One member of the committee who is the member of the month is responsible for orchestrating shiva related activities. The Rabbis or Lisa will call or email the member of the month with the name of the member in mourning. The member of the month will follow the bereavement instructions. The member of the month may call Rabbi Yaffe to ask if he or the rebbitzin is available to cook a Friday night meal for the mourner for up to ten persons. If they are not available, they can ask Karen Shore, and if she is not able to cook, the member of the month can decide on another approach, such as purchasing the meal from Crown Market in Hartford, or planting a tree in Israel through the Jewish National Fund Tree Center, or simply making a donation. The member of the month should make sure a cook is available before offering the Friday night meal to the mourner. The meal would be available to congregants living in Springfield or Longmeadow. The member of the month is responsible for contacting the mourner, making arrangements with the cook, picking up the meal and delivering it to the mourner on Friday afternoon before Shabbat, along with two challah from Stop and Shop and a bottle of kosher wine if possible. Whoever cooks the meal will submit their bills to B'nai Torah. The mourner will also receive thoughtful handwritten notes of condolence from Marion on B'nai Torah stationery. The member of the month is responsible for giving Brenda Canter a copy of the deceased's obituary, or name and date of death, and calling the next member of the month to remind them that they will be on service.

Brenda and Gerry Canter deliver yahrtzeit candles to the local family of the deceased congregant whether the family is or is not a member of B'nai Torah prior to the first yahrtzeit.

Gerry continues to make deliveries to new members. Ausher arranged to have two trees planted in Israel in honor of two recent marriages. The member of the month is also responsible for arranging a meal for the family welcoming a new baby and will use the same protocol as the meal for mourners.

Sydney will post a summary of the meeting on the website with the help of Lisa. Miss Eliana Olkin produced a beautiful design for the Channukah card which was mailed out by Sydney. The greeting card list consists of homebound congregants, Jewish Nursing Home and Ruth's House residents; mourners who lost a loved one within the last twelve months, out of town congregants and B'nai Torah leadership. The list is edited by Sydney with the help of Lisa, who consults with Gerry Canter, and Rick Granowitz receives a final copy of the updated list. If you wish to add or delete a name from the list, please call Sydney at 413-567-3466. Hillel Kofsky will be designing the Peseach card. Channukah Samaeuch!