

**Bar Mitzvah**  
**of**  
**Abraham Benjamin Roisman**  
**אברהם בנימין**



**December 19, 2020**  
**4 Tevet 5781**  
**Parshat Miketz**

**Congregation Etz Hayim • Arlington, Virginia**  
**Virtual Shabbat Morning Service**

Dear Family and Friends,

We are delighted to welcome you to Congregation Etz Hayim's virtual Shabbat Morning Service to worship and celebrate with us as Abe is called to the Torah as a Bar Mitzvah. And thanks to the connective power of technology, we are honored to have you join us on Zoom from near and far.

While this is not the way any of us imagined Abe's bar mitzvah, as they say in the movie Frozen 2, a favorite in our house, some things never change. The faith, love, and traditions that are the foundation of this day remain the same, as does our joy on this *simcha* (happy occasion). We also are reminded at this challenging time of the resilience of the Jewish people over many centuries, not just to survive, but to worship our faith no matter the size of the obstacles or the state of the world.

It is a rite of passage for a Jewish child around 13 years of age to become a "child of the commandments" (a *bar*, *bat*, or *b'nei mitzvah*, depending on the child's gender identity). While a special ceremony is not required as a child reaches the age of Jewish adulthood, it is traditional to mark this milestone in a ceremony that celebrates the first time someone is called to read the Torah in front of their community. This ceremony builds on Jewish traditions that are thousands of years old, representing the promise to teach the wisdom of the Torah to our children from one generation to another, *l'dor v'dor*.

As Abe becomes a Bar Mitzvah today, he accepts responsibility for his actions and embraces the obligations of Jewish life, including observing *mitzvot* (commandments) and holidays, studying Torah and participating in prayer, and engaging in acts of *tzedakah* (righteousness) and loving kindness. We are so very proud of Abe's accomplishments and all the work he has done to prepare for this special day. And we view with love and admiration the commitment he has demonstrated in doing so entirely remotely during a pandemic.

We have prepared this program to help enhance your participation in the service. Electronic copies of the *siddur* (prayer book) and *chumash* (book with Torah and Haftarah readings) are on our bar mitzvah website, <https://mzeltovabe.com/congregation-etz-hayim-zoom-services/>. While much of the service is in Hebrew, the *siddur* includes translations and explanations. And, of course, if you have any questions afterward, we would be glad to answer them.

As a reminder, please remain on MUTE unless asked to unmute. There will be an opportunity at the end of the service to talk with us. And, if possible, please keep your video on throughout so that Abe will be able to see that you are part of the service.

Thank you so much for being with us!

Wishing you *Shabbat Shalom* (a peaceful Sabbath),  
Natalie, Rich, Abe, Eva, and Sam

## THE SERVICE

You may wonder why we are in our driveway and front yard in the middle of December, rather than inside with you on Zoom. Jewish law teaches that *pikuach nefesh* (saving a life) overrides virtually any other religious rule, and our synagogue is closed for everyone's safety. However, certain prayers and rituals can only take place when there is a *minyan* (a quorum of 10 Jewish adults). We are grateful that we can have a *minyan* outdoors in order to complete the full service this morning in a manner that will keep us safe.

Abe's bar mitzvah *tallit* (prayer shawl) is a gift from his Aunt Aileen Heiman, Uncle Brian Fink, and cousins Nathan and Izzy. The four corners of the *tallit* contain fringes and knots that represent the 613 commandments Jews are required to fulfill. Abe's *kipphah* (skull cap, a head covering also known in Yiddish as a *yarmulke*) belonged to his great-grandfather Dr. Abraham Golden, of blessed memory, for whom Abe is named.

We start the morning with *Shacharit*, and Abe will lead portions of this service.

We then move to the Torah Service, in which part of the weekly Torah portion is read aloud from the Torah scroll. The Torah is a large scroll of parchment upon which a specially trained scribe writes the first five books of the Bible by hand in Hebrew calligraphy. It is Judaism's holiest ritual object, and handling the Torah is always marked with ceremony and reverence. Although we are not at Etz Hayim today, we are so grateful to be able to conduct our service with one of the synagogue's beautiful Torahs.

Abe will lead the Torah service. When we aren't in a pandemic, the Torah is removed from the ark in a ceremonial manner and carried around the congregation so congregants can touch it with a *siddur* or *tallit*. Unfortunately, COVID precludes this custom today, and we look forward to a time when we can do so again.

Reading from the Torah requires extensive preparation. Typically, someone studying for a b'nei mitzvah identifies the date and corresponding Torah portion well in advance so that they have time to learn how to read Torah in general – which includes reading the Hebrew calligraphy with no vowels, as well as singing in accordance with the Torah trope, special punctuation that shows how to chant the words – and to practice the specific Torah reading for that date in particular. Abe has been studying with his bar mitzvah tutor since the beginning of 2020.

You may follow the Torah readings in Hebrew or English in the *chumash*. Abe will share some of his thoughts about the significance of the Torah portion. The reading is divided into seven sections, and we thank family friend Michael Jacobs and our rabbi, Rav Natan Freller, for reading Torah along with Abe. Each reading is preceded by an *Aliyah*, which means “a going up.” Having an *Aliyah* is considered an honor, and we are grateful that in addition to Mike and Rav Natan, family friends Susan Hamm and Laura Naide (Congregation Etz Hayim Education Director) are able to join us in person to have *Aliyot*.

We are especially thankful that several family members are here to be honored with *Aliyot*. Aunt Aileen Heiman, Uncle Brian Fink, and grandparents Tina and Henry Heiman will have *Aliyot* in honor of all the aunts, uncles, cousins, and grandparents who are with us in person and in spirit.

Abe will be honored with the special Maftir *Aliyah* and will chant that part of this week's Torah portion. For his reading, he will use a personalized *yad* (pointer) that was made for him on a 3-D printer by Dr. Barry Ginsberg, so that he would not need to share a *yad* with any other readers. Abe will then chant the *Haftarah*, a selection from the prophetic writings. After Abe finishes the blessings after the reading of the *Haftarah*, those who are present will shower him with candy to celebrate his bar mitzvah and symbolize the sweetness of studying Torah.

Abe will also lead *Musaf*, the concluding portion of our service, including a fun tune for the closing prayer, *Adon Olam*. Normally, we would conclude by reciting the *Kiddush* and *Hamotzi*, the blessings over wine and bread, but we will not do that because we are not eating and drinking as a group. We hope you plan to enjoy a festive meal in your home following the service!

### OF BLESSED MEMORY

We remember those who are no longer with us. Thinking with love of these family members, of blessed memory:

Molly Cohen	Bernard Heiman	Mary Richard
Abraham Golden	Bette Heiman	Beatrice Roisman
Cissie Golden	Sylvia Heiman	Morris Roisman
Benjamin Goldstein	Maurice Kaye	Carol Selby
Estelle Goldstein	Sarah Kaye	Stephen Selby
Etta Goldstein	Earl Richard	

### THANK YOU

We thank the teachers and clergy, past and present, of Congregation Etz Hayim, each of whom has had a hand in preparing Abe for his bar mitzvah and for his life as a Jewish adult. We are deeply grateful to all of Abe's religious educators – beginning as early as Congregation Etz Hayim preschool, and carrying through to his bar mitzvah tutor, Fred Cooper; Education Director Laura Naide; and our new rabbi, Rav Natan Freller. We welcome Rav Natan to our community and are thrilled that he can join us in person today. We know that this will be the first of many *simchas* that we celebrate together at (or near) Congregation Etz Hayim with Rav Natan.

Thank you to the Etz Hayim community, and especially to friends and neighbors Sharon Beth and Jeremy Bronheim, who kept a Saturday morning service alive through a *havurah* (informal prayer

assembly) when COVID first struck in our area. Thank you to Etz Hayim Religious Affairs Committee Chair Naomi Halpern and her committee for working to continue services via Zoom throughout the summer and fall. It is this Congregation Etz Hayim online community that got our family through those first difficult weeks and months, and it is this community that has welcomed and supported Abe as he has attended virtual Saturday morning services throughout the pandemic to prepare for this day.

Thank you to Laura Naide, Alexis Joyce, Marcy Burka, Patricia Citro, and Edgar Rendon, our synagogue's dedicated professional staff, for all their help and all they do for Congregation Etz Hayim.

Finally, we thank the family, friends, and neighbors who have supported us as we prepared for Plans A through Y of this unconventional event and who have stuck with us as we finally execute on Plan Z. You have responded to countless urgent text messages with patience and creativity; you have run errands; you have provided supplies; and you have shown us time and again that the importance of this day is not only in ritual but in love and community. We are so fortunate to have you in our lives.

**We wish we could hug every one of you who is with us today online and in person. Instead, we keep our distance today so that we can celebrate together for many more tomorrows. Thank you for staying safe. We love you and wish you good health, and we can't wait to see you soon.**