

November, 2019 Newsletter



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B'nai Portland



Thoughts From Rabbi Laura



Contents

Community Events	2
The Jewish Roots of Thanksgiving	2
Donations	3
Simchas & Sorrows	3

A Jewish Thanksgiving?
Yup, not only possible
but recommended. Think
about it - on
Thanksgiving we open
our houses for people to
come share a festive
meal, to be thankful for
our blessings, and to
recognize our freedom.
What's not Jewish!?

In our family, we sometimes go
around the table and each person
says three things they are thankful
for. Sometimes we write them on a
card, collect them, mix them up, hand
them out, and once read aloud try to
figure who wrote it. In Hebrew
school we talk about the people who
prepare the meal and who host the
dinner. I often suggest your kids
show gratitude by offering assistance.
Important lessons to learn and make
your children feel relevant.

I know for many this holiday is
difficult: relatives that are behavior
problems, loved ones who have
passed are not present in physical
body, people who simply live far
away and can't make it. Always
remember our sufferings aren't
visible to others and others' suffering
aren't visible to us. Cut people slack,
be extra kind, patient, and thankful!

We wish you easy and safe travels,
lots of laughs, moist turkey, smooth
gravy, and awesome desserts!

~ Rabbi Laura

Upcoming Shabbat Services

All Services begin at 6:30pm
at Lunt Auditorium in Falmouth
unless otherwise noted.

November 8th

December 15th Chanukah Party 4 -6 pm

January 10th



November's Shabbat Tzedakah

Wayside Food Project - Please bring
healthy snacks for children.

Community Events and Happenings

PJ Library is Hosting a Shalom Baby Shower!

Sunday, November 17, 9:30-10:30 am
Jewish Community Alliance
1342 Congress Street, Portland



Mazel Tov! PJ Library invites families who have welcomed a new child in the past year to join us to celebrate your newest family member! Please join us for a nosh and some playtime. Meet other new parents and receive a welcome gift for your child.

RSVP requested so we can have your child's gift ready.

RSVP to Andrea at 772-1959 or pjlibrary@mainejewish.org.

The Jewish Roots of Thanksgiving

On Thanksgiving, we will pause and take a moment to say thanks. One of the perennial questions asked is: Is Thanksgiving Jewish? We have a great answer, courtesy of Moshe Sokolow, professor of Jewish education at the Azrieli Graduate School of Yeshiva University:

Fleeing from persecution in England, the Pilgrim passengers on the Mayflower brought along their principal source of religious inspiration and comfort: the Bible. One particular edition of the Bible (published in 1618) is known to have been in the possession of none other than William Bradford, who would later serve as governor of Plymouth Colony. This edition was supplemented by the Annotations of a Puritan scholar named Henry Ainsworth (1571-1622).

Shortly after their landfall in November 1620, Bradford led the new arrivals in thanking God for the safe journey that brought them to America by reciting verses from Psalm 107. Curiously, Ainsworth's Annotations to verse 32 of that psalm ("And let them exalt him in the church of the people, and praise him in the sitting of the elders") contains the following remarks:

And from this Psalme, and this verse of it, the Hebrues have this Canon; Foure must confess (unto God) The sick, when he is healed; the prisoner when he is released out of bonds; they that goe down to sea, when they are come up (to land); and wayfaring men, when they are come to the inhabited land. And they must make confession before ten men, and two of them wise men, Psal. 107. 32. And the manner of confessing and blessing is thus; He standeth among them and blesseth the Lord, the King eternal, that bounteously rewardeth good things unto sinners, etc. Maimony in Misn. Treat. Of Blessings, chap. 10, sect. 8.

If any of this looks familiar, it is because Ainsworth essentially copied over an English version of Maimonides' comprehensive legal code, the Mishneh Torah (in Ainsworth's rendering, Maimony Misn.), Hilkhhot Berakhot (Treat. of Blessings) 10:8, which prescribes the four conditions under which birkat ha-gomel, the blessing after being spared from mortal danger (itself derived from Psalm 107), is to be publicly recited. Citing additional verses from the psalm, Bradford compared the Pilgrims' arrival in America to the Jews' crossing of the Sinai Desert, corresponding to "wayfaring men, when they are come to the inhabited land"-one of the four conditions requiring "confession."...

[T]he very first prayer the Pilgrims recited immediately upon their arrival in the New World had its origins in a distinctly Jewish practice. Accordingly, he considers this prayer service to be the original "Thanksgiving" – a service which predated, by a full year, the three days of feasting that served as the basis for the current American holiday. Even without turkey and cranberry sauce, this vestige of Jewish influence on the religious mores of the U.S. is worth our acknowledgment and contemplation – and, of course, our thanksgiving."

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Donation

Bill Gerber
Rebecca Stern
Judy Cutler
Karen Cashman
Angela & Zachary Sclar
Sharon & Elliot Katz
Adam Kriesberg
Jared & Jen Levin
Shari & Scott Redan

Dan Pearl
Lisa Friedlander & Tom Cloutier

Lois Rowe

Izzy Chaleff
Lisa Margulies & Steven Silver

In Honor of

High Holidays
Yom Kippur
Yom Kippur
Yom Kippur
Rylee's Bat Mitzvah
Rabbi Laura
High Holidays
Kol Nidre
Sponsor of Lunt Auditorium
for October
High Holidays
Sponsor of Lunt Auditorium
for November
In Memory of Lorraine &
Sidney Winters

*If you would like to honor or remember someone, please
consider making a tax deductible donation to B'nai Portland.
All monies received are used towards
programming and activities*

Simchas & Sorrows

**Mazel Tov to Tobie Feigenbaum on Noa
becoming Bat Mitzvah.**

**Mazel Tov to Samantha Reisman and
Tony Caola on their upcoming
wedding.**

*Please let B'nai Portland know of any simchas or
sorrows so we can share them with the
Congregation.*



Check Out Our Website at
www.bnaiportland.com

Thanks to Rich Brooks and **FLYTE
MEDIA** for their donation and help
creating our site!

