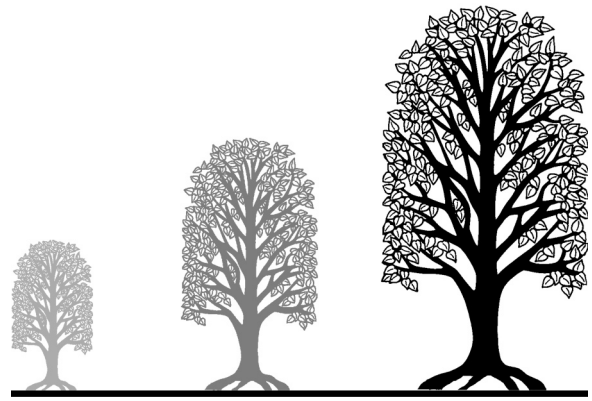


BETH ISRAEL CONGREGATION

862 Washington Street

Bath, Maine 04530



January/February 2019

Tevet /Shevat/Adar I 5779

Rabbi's Message

Dear Beth Israel Congregants and Friends,

Many of you attended the community-wide vigil on November 4 when hundreds gathered at the Bath Gazebo to share painful stories, stand together in memory and show love and support. In addition to this beautiful showing of love, our synagogue's mailbox has been full of cards and letters from faith institutions, schools and individuals from across the state. I am heartened by these notes and I want to share with you a sampling of their content:

From the Bath Middle School Civil Rights Team:

We just wanted you to know that we support you and stand with you in solidarity always.

From the Maine School of Math and Science:

There is no room for anti-semitism in this world and we want to foster a society where we respect each other's religion and beliefs. You have our love and support through this dark time.

From the Hope Gateway Church in Portland:

Our hearts break and we are filled with righteous anger over the violent act of anti-semitism in Pittsburgh. Please know that we stand with you, heart to heart, in solidarity and prayer, and we are committed to doing everything we can to end anti-semitism and bigotry in every form.

From the Windham Middle School Civil Rights Team:

You are not alone! It's going to be ok! Stay strong.

In this new year of 2019 let us imagine together a world with less hate and more love. Let us work together for a world brimming with compassion and care for the most vulnerable. May we make this world possible by joining hands together with our own Jewish community and beyond. As we begin the new secular year, I pray that we are girded in strength by the love expressed to us by our friends and neighbors. I pray that the image of the vigil with hundreds of candles glowing can be etched in our hearts and cause us to work for peace and love for all people.

L'Shalom

Rabbi Vinikoor



President's Message

by Marilyn Weinberg

As we head into the season of cold weather and snow we can only delight in the warmth and good cheer at Beth Israel. We have had some wonderful Shabbat services, meaningful programs and celebrations. There are children in our midst and there is a feeling of hope and promise for our future.

Last year Rabbi Vinikoor and I attended a Northern New England gathering called "How Successful Congregations Embrace Change: A URJ Day of Learning" in Belmont, MA. It was interesting to interact with so many other congregation members from New England. I learned that we have much in common with many of them regardless of size and location.

Our takeaway from this experience was that change is wonderful, but it is best to make changes with what they termed "small experiments." So this winter Beth Israel is going to try our own small experiment. Coming to Shul in the winter at 7:00 pm on a Friday evening can be a challenge. If you have young children, it interferes with bedtime. If you are trying to fit it in right around dinnertime, you often have to rush to come on time. And when it is cold and dark (as it is in the winter here), it is just hard to leave a warm house.

So from January through March, we will have one special Shabbat each month that we are calling "Souper Shabbat." We will have an early service starting at 5:30 pm. The length of the service might vary depending on the age range of the participants. When the service is over we will gather downstairs and share a Shabbat meal together with challah, hot soup and salad and of course dessert. It will be a great way to help us through these winter months and give us an opportunity to share a meal and reconnect. Stay tuned for how to sign up to help with food and logistics for Souper Shabbat. And let us know what you think.

Thanks to all of you who volunteered this fall to do a reading, light the candles, supply an oneg or food for a potluck, and attend so many events. And thanks to all who have made generous donations to keep the lights burning bright at Beth Israel. The energy and enthusiasm at Beth Israel is inspiring and hopeful for the future of our little congregation.

Winter Adult Learning Series:

What are Our Communal Responsibilities as Jews?

by Rabbi Vinikoor

Part 2: Sunday, January 6, 4:00 pm, Synagogue Community Room

Part 3: Sunday, February 10, 4:00 pm, Synagogue Community Room

In Pirke Avot we read that Rabbi Hillel taught: "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? If I am only for myself, what am I? And if not now, when?" Join Rabbi Vinikoor to explore this and other Jewish texts about individual and communal responsibility. We'll look together at Biblical, Rabbinic and contemporary texts and share our own experiences in this three-part class. Come to one or all sessions.

A Tree Appreciation Walk for Tu Bishvat

by Camille Kauffunger

The Jewish holiday of Tu Bishvat arrives early this year, starting at sundown on Sunday, January 20, and ending the evening of Monday, January 21. Sometimes referred to as the “New Year of the Trees,” In contemporary times, the holiday of Tu Bishvat is recognized as an ecological awareness day or “Jewish Earth Day” and is often celebrated in Israel and other warmer regions by planting trees. Although January weather in Maine doesn’t allow for this tradition, it’s a perfectly beautiful time of year to appreciate trees and all their winter secrets!

On Sunday, January 20, Beth Israel and The Kennebec Estuary Land Trust (KELT) invite kids, adults, and families to celebrate Tu Bishvat with a Tree Appreciation Walk at Thorne Head Preserve. Join KELT’s Stewardship Coordinator for a walking exploration and appreciation of trees – how they grow, what species we have in Maine, and the many ways in which trees benefit our lives. This family-friendly walk starts at 1:00 pm and is expected to run about an hour and a half. If conditions are icy, participants might be asked to bring traction spikes, ice cleats, or similar.

Cheri Brunault will lead participants through the forest, stopping to admire and learn about the different species and ages of trees on the property. Cheri will share information about the history of trees in Maine, neat facts about tree biology and communication, how trees support woodland animals, and focus on admiration for the strength, resilience, and beauty of our arboreal neighbors.

Please register for this walk with KELT at 207-442-8400 or online at www.kennebecestuary.org/upcoming-events/tree-appreciation-walk. Space is limited. Suggested donation is \$5. In case of severe weather, the walk will be rescheduled and registrants will be notified. To reach Thorne Head Preserve from Route 1, exit onto High St in Bath, and take High St. north to the end of the road, where the preserve parking lot is located.



Upcoming Family Learning Series: Creating Shabbat Family Rituals

by Rabbi Vinikoor

Sunday, February 10
11:00 am-1:00 pm
Minnie Brown Center

Join Rabbis Lisa Vinikoor and Lily Solochek for the second part in our three-part learning series for families with children. At each session children will create Shabbat related ritual objects while parents learn about and deepen their understanding of and fluency with Shabbat rituals and practice. For any questions contact Rabbi Vinikoor at rabbivinikoor@gmail.com. Please rsvp to office@bethisraelbath.org.

A Food Tour of the Talmud - A Project Zug Event

by Marilyn Weinberg

Sunday, February 3
Minnie Brown Center
1:30 pm

On Sunday, February 3 at 1:30 pm at the Minnie Brown Center, Beth Israel Congregation will be the gathering point for a new online learning opportunity sponsored by the Center for Small Town Jewish Life and the Jewish Community Alliance of Southern Maine.

At this gathering we'll engage in a conversation and presentation from farmers Karl Schatz and Margaret Hathaway of Ten Apple Farm, who will speak about ethical consumption. Learn about their work at www.tenapplefarm.com

We will also launch this exciting ten-week online course through Project Zug focused on Food and the Talmud. If you are interested in deep Jewish learning and/or food ethics and the Talmud, this is the class for you.

Through Project Zug you'll be paired with an online study partner to do meaningful learning facilitated by Rabbi Aviva Richman of The Hadar Institute, New York.

Questions about this program?

We're happy to talk to you! e-mail Melanie Weiss at maweiss@colby.edu

Register online at:

<https://colbycollegejewishlife.regfox.com/project-zug>

For additional information go to:

<https://tinyurl.com/ya29uqe6>

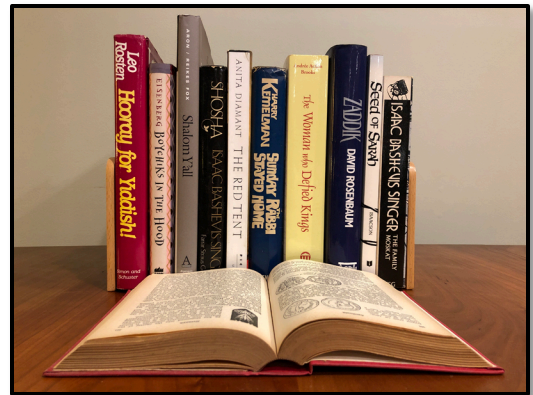


Attention Book Lovers!

by Barb Inkellis

Are you interested in starting or attending a book club at Beth Israel? Let me know if you'd like to help in the planning. We need to decide how often we meet, where we meet, the time of the meetings, how we select books, etc. I'd like to have a planning meeting in the January/February time frame and then launch in February/March. If you can't come to a planning meeting but would like to provide input I am happy to listen.

Feel free to contact me with your ideas or just to express your interest.



Social Action Committee

by Joanne Rosenthal

It is encouraging to have increasing participation in this committee, enriching discussions and offerings of different perspectives and ideas for moving forward. The first action step being planned is an "inside out" approach, whereby members of the committee will meet with agency representatives and leaders in the immigrant rights community. This is for the purpose of becoming better-informed and effective advocates on behalf of refugees and asylum seekers living in our midcoast communities. The next action step will be the planning of an educational program with speaker(s) pertaining to immigrant justice. The Religious Action Center (RAC) of the Reform movement and HIAS offer a multitude of resources for congregations engaging in this work.

The committee meets on the second Tuesday of the month at 4:00–5:30 pm, usually at Lou Ensel's wonderful conference space. If you are at all curious or interested, please join us, and call Joanne Rosenthal with any questions.

The next meeting will be on Tuesday, January 8 at 4:00 pm.



Student Rabbis

by Camille Kauffunger

Thanks to Beth Israel's relationship with Colby College's Center for Small Town Jewish Life, November was full of programming extras to enrich our spiritual connection to Judaism.

On November 2, Gabby Foster, a Colby Religious Studies and Dance dual-major, gently introduced movement into our Shabbat evening service. She had promised no prior dance experience was necessary, and indeed with sensitivity and grace, Gabby successfully got a full room of diverse congregants moving to choreography organically inspired by the words and movements of those in attendance. As our first Shabbat service following the Tree of Life shooting in Pittsburgh, Gabby's exercises offered us a new and meaningful way to be in community and connect with our Jewish identity.

While Gabby got us stretching our comfort zone inside the synagogue, on November 17, Center for Small Town Jewish Life Rabbinical Fellow Natalie Shribman got us stretching our bodies outside the sanctuary for a Saturday morning prayer run through the city streets of Bath. Natalie's format allowed for various fitness levels by incorporating stops along the way to regroup with communal prayer, some traditional like the Barchu and L'chi Lach, and others, such as Oh Guide My Steps, with words on theme to heighten the experience of a prayer in motion. We thank Rabbi Shribman for sharing her skills and for guiding our spiritual practice in this invigorating direction!

Beth Israel's Student Rabbi and Small Town Jewish Life Fellow, Lily Solochek kept our youngest and most active members busy at the Minnie Brown Center on November 18 during the family learning session Creating Shabbat Family Rituals. While Rabbi Vinikoor explored the topic of Shabbat with parents upstairs, Rabbi Solochek rolled up their sleeves and made challah and challah covers with the children downstairs. Rabbi Solochek also met with a group of adults on the same day to teach about water in Jewish tradition and the ritual of the mikveh.

These bright and dedicated students are grateful for the opportunity to get to know our Maine Jewish community and to learn about integrating their areas of expertise and passion into congregation life. Thank you for supporting their programming.



Dinner Club

by Peggy Brown

Since the high holy days in September, the Beth Israel Dinner Club has met for three delightful meals at local restaurants. This month we enjoyed delicious Vietnamese food at Lemongrass in Brunswick. It's been great to make new friends and meet up with friends we've known forever. Newcomers are always welcome!

The Dinner Club meets the second Tuesday of each month. If you aren't on the mailing list but would like to be, contact Peggy.



Hebrew School Update

by Rabbi Vinikoor

It's hard to believe that we are finishing the first half of our year together at Hebrew School. Our students continue to be enthusiastic participants in our weekly learning and community time. They did an excellent job on November 30 in leading our community in prayer and song. They also are great cooks and made spinach and cheese borekas and vegetable soup for all. We love being their teachers!

Here are updates from our teaching team:

Anita (Grades K-6 Hebrew Through Movement)

Since September all the students, from kindergarteners to sixth graders, have been participating in Hebrew Through Movement lessons weekly. So far, the students have learned 20 Hebrew vocabulary words and almost completed the first three levels of Hebrew Through Movement. Moreover the lessons have been filled with action and laughter. Sometimes the students call the class "jumping class"!



It has been a pleasure to see the students' Hebrew vocabulary comprehension grow. Each week students are learning to listen closely and interpret words, now full sentences, such as "walk to the chair and sit down please" and "jump to the table and run to the window" It is exciting to think of where we are heading as a school with increased Hebrew language comprehension over these next few months. If you are interested in this class you can follow along with us through the Hebrew Through Movement website www.hebrewthroughmovement.org.

Susan (Grades K-2 Judaics)

We are always busy at Hebrew school, and lately we have been cooking up a storm! We made a pot of Jacob's lentil soup, the one for which Esau gave up his birthright. We chopped and chopped and chopped the veggies for a big pot of minestrone as well as rolling out dough and mixing filling and assembling borekas for our Hebrew School Shabbat service. Finally, we all made doughnuts for Chanukah, lots of crazy shapes, sugar and sprinkles for decoration. We watched over Marilyn's shoulder as she expertly fried them up in her deep fryer. There was not a speck of doughnut left over! I love cooking with the kids and am looking forward to incorporating more recipes into our afternoons.



On the non-edible side of things, we have been reading many stories from the Torah. From Jacob and Esau to Joseph and his brothers, there seems to be plenty of sibling rivalry going on, something most of the kids can relate to. The kids love crafts, so there is always a creative way to help express something about the story we have read. Look for something coming home over the winter break having to do with Mitzvot. I will be giving you some ideas of good deeds you can do together!

Alina (Grade 3-6 Hebrew)

We are continuing to learn Hebrew reading, vocabulary and grammar, to help read common prayers, and understand their meaning. At holiday times, students have also presented plays to their peers, which explain the meaning and context of these prayers.

Rabbi Vinikoor (Grades 3-6 Judaics)

Our focus this semester has been on learning about and doing ethical mitzvot (commandments). In particular we learned these mitzvot: Welcoming Guests (*Hachnasat Orchim*), Care for the Sick (*Bikkur Holim*), Protecting Animals (*Tzaar Baalei Hayim*), Acts of Charity (*Tzedakah*), Not Gossiping (*Lashon Hara*), All people are created in the image of God (*B'Tzelem Elohim*), Freeing Captives (*Pidyon Shevuyim*) and Acts of Loving Kindness (*Gemilut Chassadim*). To practice these mitzvot students created and sent get well soon cards to community members who were ill, organized a tuna can drive for the Bath Food pantry and welcomed guests into our Sukkah, and taught the younger students about their learning. I hope that by studying these ethical mitzvot our students will understand how as Jews they can strive to build a more compassionate and just world in our local area and beyond.

Maine Jewish Film Festival

by Marilyn Weinberg

This year Beth Israel will again be a proud sponsor of the Maine Jewish Film Festival. So mark your calendars for the week of March 9–17. There will be movies at the Eveningstar in Brunswick again. It's a great time to go out when winter still seems to be holding on and share some great movies together. They have not yet published the final schedule but it will be posted at <https://mjff.org>.

Community Vigil

by Marilyn Weinberg

A group of concerned members gathered at the synagogue with Rabbi Vinikoor on Sunday, October 28 to share our outrage and sorrow over the terrible murder of innocents. As we aired our anger and fears, we decided to involve our non-Jewish community members who were equally upset over the violence perpetrated by ignorance.

On Sunday, November 4, members of our Beth Israel Congregation joined with the wider Midcoast community to share our concern and sorrow after the horrific murders at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, PA.

Over 500 people from Damariscotta to Portland gathered around the gazebo of the Bath Library Park to show their support and concern to our members. Clergy from all faiths spoke and Yartzeit candles were lit in memory of all those killed by gun violence. Powerful speeches were given by Marina Singer, Diane Gilman and Sheldon Tepler. Candles were held by all to remind us of the importance of light and love in the face of darkness.

Meanwhile Rabbi Vinikoor has been inundated with letters and cards from local community members, clergy, and students expressing their concern and support. Our hope is that this act of violence can be something to promote peace and understanding among us all.



Hanukkah

by Marilyn Weinberg

On Sunday, December 9, we gathered at our Minnie Brown Center to celebrate Hanukkah with candle lighting, dreidel spinning, singing and devouring lots of delicious latkes cooked by Susan Horowitz Gersh and Donnie Spiegelman Boyd.



Remembrances for January–February 2019

May their memories be for a blessing.

WE REMEMBER	HEBREW DATE	2019 CALENDAR DATE
Fred Lenox	24 Tevet	January 1
Frank Welt	24 Tevet	January 1
Sterling Shapiro	25 Tevet	January 2
Jennie Ensel	25 Tevet	January 2
Howard Kaplan	27 Tevet	January 4
Sheila Vinikoor	27 Tevet	January 4
Janet Lane	29 Tevet	January 6
David Lichter	29 Tevet	January 6
Milton Millstein	1 Shevat	January 7
Alan Meyer	1 Shevat	January 7
Alex Mutterperl	1 Shevat	January 7
Anne Alvare	2 Shevat	January 8
Deborah Cohen	5 Shevat	January 11
Sonia Wernick	6 Shevat	January 12
Freda Selig	10 Shevat	January 16
Susan Spiegelman	11 Shevat	January 17
Max Fox	16 Shevat	January 22
Dean Milkes	16 Shevat	January 22
Else Chaim	16 Shevat	January 22
Ann Isacoff	16 Shevat	January 22
Francis Rosner	17 Shevat	January 23
Julian Cohen	18 Shevat	January 24
Ed Benedikt	19 Shevat	January 25
Benjamin Gersh	19 Shevat	January 25
Harold Lempert	21 Shevat	January 27
Jerry Spiegelman	21 Shevat	January 27
Shirly Welt	21 Shevat	January 27
David Fields	22 Shevat	January 28
Leon Berman	23 Shevat	January 29
Bernice Samijan	24 Shevat	January 30
Susan M Furnberg	24 Shevat	January 30
Chenka Rosenmann	25 Shevat	January 31
Harry Raker	27 Shevat	February 2
Frances Feldman	29 Shevat	February 4
Marvin Weinberg	29 Shevat	February 4
Michael Hagler	1 Adar I	February 6
Selma E Gilman	5 Adar I	February 10
Rose Hurwitz Silver	5 Adar I	February 10
Ann Torow	8 Adar I	February 13



Frances Weinberg	8 Adar I	February 13
Carol Jablow	12 Adar I	February 17
John Ramsey	15 Adar I	February 20
Howard Kempler	16 Adar I	February 21
Helen Freedman Cohen	20 Adar I	February 25
Sarah Goldman	20 Adar I	February 25
Mishael Selig	21 Adar I	February 26
Susan Linet	21 Adar I	February 26
Mary Panzeri	22 Adar I	February 27

Welcome New Members

- Lon and Ilissa Povich
- Howard Waxman and Lisa Schinhofen
- Deborah Silverman

Donations

Memorial Gifts

- Lenore and Jay Friedland in loving memory of her father, Israel Itzkowitz
- Lenore and Jay Friedland in loving memory of her mother Esther Itzkowitz and his mother Nettie Friedland
- Joan and Jeremy Fields in loving memory of her mother, Selma Blatt
- Alexandra Gissin in loving memory of Sofiya Tsytarko
- George Krassner in loving memory of his wife, Judith and mother, Ida Krassner
- Barbara and Barrett Silver in loving memory of her father, Samuel Becker
- Jamie Kaplan and Suzanne Meeker in loving memory of his mother, Miriam L. Kirsch
- Micki Gersh in loving memory of her parents, Harold and Myrtle Leavy

In Memory of Stephen Baseman

- Fred and Marilyn Weinberg
- Philip and Susannah Hammersley
- Amy and Michael DiPaolo
- Erich and Pauline Haller
- Jay and Lenore Friedland
- Joanne and Steven Conn
- Eileen Sklaroff and Cantor Mark Kushner
- Gita Rothschild Berry
- Arnold and Nancy Aho
- Donald and Mara Giuliani
- Gail and Joseph Hoey
- Thyle Shartar and Marty Fox
- Stan Lane and Norma Dreyfus
- Rachel and Joel Reck
- I. J. and Margaret Pinkham

- Merle and Norma Greenwald
- Irene and Mark Kauffman
- Annette Levit
- Schacknow Family Foundation

For the Benefit of the Synagogue

- Jeffrey Cohen and Nancy Heiser
- Marc and Crissy Swartz
- Mark Schoninger
- Joanne Rosenthal and Josh Katz
- Robin Brooks and Jonathan Riggelman
- Sharon Drake
- Rachel and Michael Connelly
- Marilyn and Fred Weinberg
- Chris Boyd and Donnie Spielgelman-Boyd
- Nils and Karen Tcheyan
- Lawrence Hobel and Diana Staring
- Sheldon and Denise Tepler

In Support of the Hebrew School

- Stephen and Marina Singer
- Bart, Spencer, and Michelle D'Alauro

Building Fund

- Paul Linet
- Diane Gilman
- Marc and Crissy Swartz

Rabbi Discretionary Fund

- Michael and Roslyn Eschelbacher
- David Michelson and Yeonmi Ahn



Birthdays and Anniversaries

Listing the birthdays and anniversaries of those in our immediate family creates a wonderful opportunity for our community/*shul* family to have an excuse to celebrate with each other.

Jaunary Birthdays

2 Liza Greenwald
6 Jonah Kaplan
7 Julia Pols
7 Laura Katz
7 Shira Dorit Vinikoor Finn
8 Shana Starobin
9 Sylvie Rose Bouttenot
9 Mark Ireland
12 Beatrice Boyle-Lardie
14 Phyllis Lisi
14 Harry Reissmann
15 Isaac Daniel Ensel
17 Stacey Giuliani
17 Ben Crystal
17 Leah Postman
20 Eric Arthur Ensel
20 Piper Panzeri
22 George Krassner
23 Matthew Kanwit
24 Ellen Hagler
25 Robert Gersh
26 Marc Swartz
28 Julie Meyer
31 Ralph Jacobs

January Anniversaries

13 Howard Waxman & Lisa Schinhofen
21 Diane Gilman & Arthur Davis
21 Gary Torow & Denise Linet
29 Harry & Kathy Reissmann

February Birthdays

9 Lisa Schinhofen
12 Rachel Bouttenot
13 Glen Eisman
17 Julian Ireland
21 Bud Samiljan
21 Sharon Bouchard
27 Samantha Gersh
28 Christina Schoenberg
28 Richard Jablow

February Anniversaries

7 Marc & Crissy Swartz

