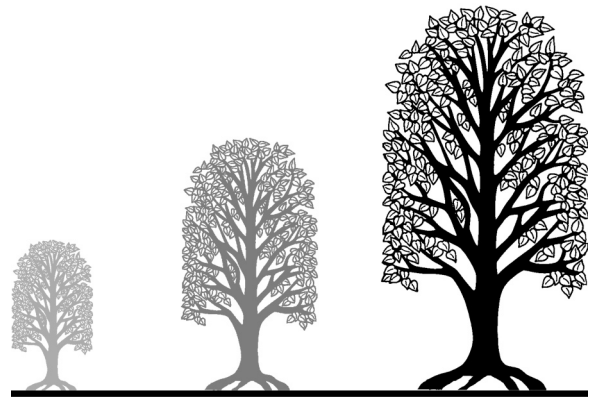


# BETH ISRAEL CONGREGATION

862 Washington Street

Bath, Maine 04530



July/August 2019

Sivan / Tammuz / Av 5779

## Rabbi's Message

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Dear Beth Israel Community Members and Friends,

It's early summer here in Maine. The sun shines brightly, the leaves glimmer a vibrant green hue, baby birds peak out from their nests not quite ready to fly. The summer season brings with it a sense of hope as we enjoy a break from our usual routines, staying outside a bit later to enjoy the long days.

I feel blessed to have reached this beautiful season. And yet, in the same breath, I harbor a gnawing despair over the tremendous pain and suffering of so many in our country—the assault on a woman's right to make her own medical decisions, the inhumane treatment of immigrants and refugees, the depression and addiction that afflicts so many. These and many other crises weigh on me daily.

In our Torah we read about our obligation to protect the widow, the orphan and the stranger. These three categories represented, at the time of the Torah's authorship, the most vulnerable humans in the society. As such, our Torah text repeats numerous times both the injunction against harming the orphan, the widow and the stranger and the mitzvah to care and protect those same people. Those considered most in need thousands of years ago, continue to be in our time. As Jews we read and re-read our Torah text to understand and act. These texts of compassion towards the most vulnerable are needed right now to remind us of the urgent need for action on the imperative to protect the most vulnerable in our midst. The prophet Isaiah implores: "Learn to do good. Devote yourselves to justice; Aid the wronged. Uphold the rights of the orphan; Defend the cause of the widow." (Isaiah 1:7)



Let these words of our sacred texts remind us of the obligations we have to aid the weakest in our community. Be it through donating our time, money, or raising our voices in the public square to defend the rights of those in need, I urge you to act today, tomorrow and the seasons to come.

With a prayer for peace,  
Rabbi Vinikoor

## President's Message

*by Marilyn Weinberg*

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We held our annual meeting on June 12 and it was so encouraging to see a good number of members. We spent some of our time in small groups chatting and making lists of those things that we enjoyed over the past year and what we see as some of the challenges and hopes we have for the future. We then shared our lists and found that most of them held similar ideas and highlights. I would like to summarize them for you.

Some of our joys

- Our Hebrew School and their wonderful teachers and students. We love the services they lead.
- Increased connectedness to our community. We appreciate the updated website and email blasts. We also appreciate the support we got during times of loss and illness from our wonderful Sunshine Committee.
- An active social action committee. We appreciate the work they are doing with the New Mainers group.
- Our special services with visiting Rabbis and our "Souper " Shabbats during the year.
- The work the security committee with their quick response during challenging times.

Challenges and hopes for the future

- Finding financial security in the coming years
- Expanding our social and cultural programming
- Being known for doing good work in the community
- Updating all of the systems at the Minnie Brown Center and making it truly handicapped accessible.

We would like to thank retiring board members Marty Fox and Todd Gandler who will be leaving the board after six years of service. New board members joining us will be Ben Crystal and Steven Paul. Peggy Brown, Lou Ensel and Stan Lane were reelected for another 3-year term.

We do have so many wonderful things to appreciate in our congregation, and yes we face some challenges. You will be hearing more how we will address those challenges as the new board begins their work. And from every group, on top of our lists, is our appreciation of our wonderful Rabbi. Thanks to all of you who participate. It truly matters.

## New Board Members

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Although Todd Gandler and Marty Fox will be leaving our board (after 6 years), we are excited to welcome Ben Crystal and Steven Paul to join our leadership team. Although both are fairly new to Beth Israel, we are pleased that they are willing to jump in with both feet and engage in helping our congregation continue to grow and flourish.

### **Ben Crystal**

Originally from Liberty, New York, Ben is relatively new to Maine, having moved to Brunswick from Somerville, Massachusetts about two years ago with his wife, Susan Kamin. He has two children and two stepchildren, all of whom have finished college and are out making lives of their own. Ben works full time in the medical device industry, with a focus on clinical trials and

regulatory compliance. Being outdoors, whether it be hiking, biking, snowshoeing or just sitting with a good book and a cold drink are a few of his favorite pastimes. He also enjoys playing sax and is a member of the Ideal Maine Social Aid and Sanctuary Band, a Portland based activist band with a mission to support community, inclusivity and fun. He is excited for the opportunity to help out at Beth Israel and become more involved in the community.

### **Steven Paul**

Steven is originally from New York City, and has lived in five states in three time zones before settling in Maine, coming most recently from Pittsburgh. He has a master's degree, and has worked in economic development, entrepreneurship, process improvement and events management for the private, public and nonprofit sectors. He lives in Arrowsic with his wife Anita, who also serves the Beth Israel community as a Hebrew School teacher, and two boys, Jacob and Max, who enthusiastically attend. Family time is spent outdoors as much as possible, including snowshoeing and cross country skiing in winter, and biking, hiking, birding and camping in the warmer months. Steven has been an Outsider for LL Bean since 2012.

## **Zach Stern-Hayes and Sid Pols B'nai Mitzvah**

*by Kate Stern*

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Saturday, July 6  
Synagogue  
10:00 a.m.

Zach Stern-Hayes and Sid Pols will be called to the Torah for their first Aliyah at Beth Israel on Saturday, July 6. All are welcome to join in the celebration with their families, and stay for bagels and fruit after services. But both boys would want it to be known that it will be a very informal affair.

Zack and Sid just finished eighth grade, and will be starting high school in Brunswick in the fall. Zach has spent the past year exploring his family's refugee story on his Zayde's side, and learning about the experiences of modern refugees. This past spring Sid volunteered for the local youth baseball program. Both boys will be doing more volunteering as part of their Tikkun Olam project over the summer.



## **Adult Education**

*by Rabbi Vinikoor*

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### **Summer Learning: July 24, August 7, August 28, September 11**

Interested in learning something new this summer about Jewish culture, history and prayer? Join Beth Israel members and friends on four Wednesday evenings this summer at 6:30 pm. Rabbi Vinikoor will teach a session about Jewish prayer and we expect to learn from guest teachers on topics such as the Jews of Cuba and more! Stay tuned for exact topics and location. All are welcome.

### **Coming this Fall: Prayer Book Hebrew**

Rabbi Vinikoor will teach a multi-part class on prayer book Hebrew. Whether you are new to reading Hebrew in the prayer book or want to brush up on your reading skills- this is the class for you. If you are interested or even just curious about this opportunity please contact Rabbi Vinikoor at rabbivinikoor@gmail.com. All are welcome.

### **Dinner Club**

*by Peggy Brown*

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Hello Dinner Club!

For our July Dinner Club meet up, we will be at Scarlet Begonias in Brunswick. If you've never joined us before, come on out! We'd love to have you. Good food and good company!

Date: Tuesday, July 9

Time: 6:00 pm

Place: Scarlet Begonias, 16 Station Ave. Brunswick

RSVP to Peggy (phone or email) by Friday, July 5.

If you know of others who would like to receive this email, please forward.

If you would like your name taken off of this email list, please let me know.

Peggy Brown



### **Habitat for Humanity Walk**

*by Robert Gersh*

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On Sunday, May 5, 2019 the Beth Israel Congregation had a team that walked three miles in the Habitat for Humanity 7 Rivers Maine 26th Annual Spring Walk to Build fundraiser in Brunswick. The team raised a total of \$677.00! The team organizer was congregant Robert Gersh. On behalf of the Congregation, Robert would like to extend a hearty thank you to the following people who contributed towards the team's fundraising goal. Sid & Diane Cohen; Jon Lichter; Eileen & Alfred Stern; Kate Stern & Cathy Hayes; Hannah Reese and Paul Hyman; Rachel & Katherine Bouttenot; Dr. James Raker & Virginia Van Slyck; Nonny Soifer; Karen & Matt Filler; and Robert Gersh.

Participants in the Beth Israel Congregation team on the day of the walk included: Eileen Stern, Alfred Stern, Hannah Reese, Kate Stern, Katherine Bouttenot, Rachel Bouttenot, Danielle Keller; children Noah, Oscar, Ethan and Sylvie; Robert Gersh, and his dog Pinky; and Jon Lichter and his dog Chloe.

## Shabbat Under The Stars

*by Marilyn Weinberg*

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July 26      6:30 p.m.  
August 23    6:30 p.m.

In keeping with a summer of Beth Israel outreach programs, we will be hosting two additional Shabbat Under the Stars programs this summer. Taking services outside seems like a perfect way to celebrate Shabbat. At each home we will have a brief prayer service and D'var Torah, and then have time to connect with each other over dessert.



On Friday, July 26 at 6:30 p.m. we will gather at the home of Gila and Howard Cohen-Shaw in Brunswick.

On Friday, August 23 at 6:30 p.m. we will gather at the home of Jay and Lenore Friedland in Brunswick.

We will send out an email reminder and directions to each home. Bring your lawn chairs and let's hope for good weather.

## Tour and Lunch at the Highlands

*by George Krassner*

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Thursday, July 18  
The Highlands, Topsham  
11:00 a.m.

George Krassner has arranged for a tour and complimentary lunch prepared by the chefs at The Highlands of Topsham, an award-winning continuing care community. George has been a resident there for nine years and recently welcomed Beth Israel member Jan Levitt. In just a couple of months, Jan has made many friends and participated in a wide range of events and resident activities. Rabbi Vinikoor was our guest in May to conduct special Sunday services for Highlands residents.

The Highlands is located at 30 Governors Way in Topsham, and has a variety of homes and apartments on a 100-acre campus. The community offers the options of independent living, assisted living, and memory care. There are exercise classes, a warm salt-water pool, annual lobster bakes, entertainment, performances by the Maine State Music Theater, all-day dining, hiking trails, chorale, transportation to events, and innumerable amenities.

If you are interested in joining us for the tour and catered lunch, for yourself and/or parents or relatives, we will meet in the lobby of the main lodge at 11:00 am. Please contact George no later than July 15 to reserve your place. George is always available for personal tours as well. The main number for The Highlands is 725-2650.



## Security Committee Update

*by Peggy Brown*

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Since writing the update for the May-June newsletter, the Security Committee has been busy. On Saturday, May 11 we had our system and our responses put to the test when we were visited by a stranger who came into the synagogue and sat down in the back pew of the sanctuary while we were preparing for our usual Shabbat morning service and Torah Study. Without going into detail, between a conversation I had with him and his overall demeanor I became uncomfortable.

I called the police. The dispatcher took the information I gave which was something like "I don't know if he poses a threat or not." She sent an officer who was at the synagogue in about five minutes. Officer McIntire came in quietly, using a radio earpiece instead of his squawk box and stood silently in the synagogue foyer with our visitor in his line of sight for the rest of the hour-long service.

The story of the morning ends peacefully. Our visitor walked out and was followed by Officer McIntire and another officer who had joined him. The two officers spent some time talking with him on the Washington Street sidewalk, trying to find out more about him. It turns out that the young man had some previous encounters with the police. As they left, I locked the synagogue doors behind them.

Bath P.D. Corporal Garret Olson told us later that we had done the right thing. We had let our instincts guide us and that was good. We were to call them any time. It didn't matter if we turned out to be wrong. They would rather have us err on the side of caution.

The experience of that Saturday felt important. We got a signal that we needed to do something more to make ourselves safe. And so from that experience some more security measures were put into place:

- The doors to the synagogue will be locked as soon as services begin. We will still welcome you if you arrive late; just use the call box to the right of the doors. Tell the greeter who you are and stand in front of the peepholes so they can see you.
- We will encourage visitors to contact the rabbi ahead of time or come as the guest of a congregation member.
- The first of our ALICE (response to active shooter situation) trainings occurred on June 26. There will be additional trainings held periodically so that any member who is interested can be trained.
- The doors of the Minnie Brown Center are always locked during Hebrew School and Tot Shabbat services.
- All of our Hebrew School teachers will have the ALICE training. Rabbi Vinikoor and the teachers will have an updated security plan in place for Hebrew School in the fall.
- We are developing a core group of greeters who will be trained and regularly available at our services. If you are interested in joining us, we would love to have you!
- There will be paid police protection at high profile holidays and services such as B'nai Mitzvah, High Holidays and other events where we have a large crowd.

If you have questions that have not been answered here, please feel free to get in touch.

Peggy Brown

## Hebrew School

*by Rabbi Vinikoor*

In May our students enjoyed celebrating Yom Ha-Atzmaut, Israel Independence Day, with learning and fun. This included exploring the diverse populations that live in contemporary Israel, breaking a sweat with Israeli dancing, cooking three different kinds of hummus (plain, red pepper and orange!) and voting on our favorites, and learning about modern Israel's early pioneers and the development of kibbutzim. In honor of Yom HaShoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day, Hebrew school parent, Kate Stern, shared excerpts from the draft of her book based on her own family's experiences of the Holocaust. We ended the year by studying and doing the various traditions related to the festival of Shavuot including studying Torah, learning about the ten commandments, eating dairy and harvesting (Note: we planted since in late May it was not quite time to harvest!).

The Hebrew school year finished with our 6th grade graduation and Hebrew school service on June 7. Our four graduates led the community in prayer and song, offered interpretations of prayers, and shared reflections about their time at Hebrew school. We are proud of them. We wish all of our students and families a good and safe summer break and look forward to learning and building community with you all starting in the fall!



## Hebrew School Shabbat

by Camille Kauffunger

Beth Israel Congregation Hebrew School was proud to graduate four students at our student led Shabbat Service on Friday, June 7, 2019. Hebrew School classmates since kindergarten, Eydie Kaplan, Judah Greenwald, Molly Tefft, and Mayim Feinberg, supported our younger students and led our community through service with the same sensitivity our teachers witnessed from these compassionate learners each Thursday during the school year. Our young graduates thoughtfully shared reflections on the Shabbat prayers, the holiday of Shavuot, and the dedication of their teachers as they welcomed our weekly holiday from the bimah with comfort and poise.

The tenderness of the evening is reflected in this introduction to the prayer of Oseh Shalom given by Molly during the service:

*Oseh Shalom is a prayer about peace. It is very short and simple but it means so much. It also means a lot to me because I have been familiar with it since I was little. This prayer tells us that God is the creator of peace. I know that not everything is peaceful, and I know not everything will be peaceful in the future, but that is all the more reason to enjoy everything that is peaceful around us. When I think about my history, I think about how my great grandmother is a holocaust survivor. She escaped from Europe when my grandfather was a little boy and still gives speeches about her experience. I want to make sure we all remember the importance of peace and keep it in our hearts.*

Molly's great-grandmother Noemi Ban mentioned here, passed away the evening of the service. A teacher, speaker and author of her experience in the Holocaust, Noemi dedicated her years to sharing her story with a message of resilience and hope, which our students have learned about from the Teffts during Hebrew school studies. There is no doubt Noemi would have taken great pleasure in seeing her great grand daughters and Beth Israel peers demonstrating such pride in their Jewish heritage and the values of Tikun Olam. Thank you to all the congregants that joined our students in celebration of Shabbat and the joys of Jewish education with prayer, music, and food. May we all continue to support the young creators of peace in our community.





## Social Action Committee Update

*by Joanne Rosenthal, Social Action Chair*

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We will do better!

Members of the congregation have become increasingly uncomfortable with the amount of single use materials that are disposed of after synagogue events, and are ready to take action! Thyle Shartar has volunteered to take the lead in organizing "The Greening of the Congregation" and would like one or two other people to join her in this effort. If this interests you, contact Thyle.

The Social Action Committee will not be meeting over the summer, however I will forward action alerts that pertain to immigrant issues and updates from the Religious Action Center <<https://rac.org>>. Several members of the committee attended the Conference on Rural Judaism where we learned about interfaith partnerships addressing anti-semitism, safety and security, and organizing within the congregational setting. There were many other sessions on a wide variety of topics and I encourage people to check out the conference in the years to come.

## Donations

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### **Memorial Gifts**

- Peggy Brown and John Martell in loving memory of her father, Harold Hershenhart
- Reg and Pauline Hannaford in loving memory of Susan Starobin
- Robert Gersh and Susan Horowitz in loving memory of his father, Fred Gersh
- Diane Gilman in loving memory of her parents, Selma and Harold Gilman
- Robert and Barbara Lenox in loving memory of his mother, Mildred Lenox
- Marc and Crissy Swartz in loving memory of his sister Lauren Beth Dunleavy
- Peggy Brown and John Martell in loving memory of her mother, Lucille Hershenhart
- Sharon Drake in loving memory of her father, Edward Kravitz
- Norma Dreyfus and Stan Lane in loving memory of her mother, Dr. Rose Goldberg
- Barbara Baseman in loving memory of her dear friend, Nelson Garnick
- Shari Sage in loving memory of her mother, Rita Pepper and Seymour, Asher and Bruce
- Donald and Mara Giuliani in loving memoary of his father, Nicholas Giuliani

### **In Memory of Janice Povich**

- Andy and Deborah Hagler
- Rea and Rebekah Polster
- Amy and Neal Reiner
- Catherine Kato and Daryl Lapp
- The Greater Boston Food Bank Team
- Peggy Brown and John Martell
- Fred and Marilyn Weinberg
- Jay and Lenore Friedland
- Don and Mary Ann Van Duyn
- The Heyison Family
- Marty Fox and Thyle Sharter

- Michael Tuteur
- April Simpson
- Ken and Linda Felter
- Reg and Pauline Hannaford
- Adrienne Baum and Keith Spiro
- John and Mary Ferma
- Norma Dreyfus and Stan Lane
- The Reid-Gerber Family
- Linda Wichlac
- Margaret Hinkle and Hiller Zobel
- Herbert and Harriet Paris
- Charles J. Dziengiel, Jr
- Grace Berestecki
- Constance Lee Lewis
- Sheree Prawer Skoler
- Noel and Harriet Barstein
- Jody and Jeffrey Ditch
- Inge Baye
- Matt and Karen Filler

#### **Rabbi Discretionary Fund**

- Lon and Ilissa Povich
- Barrett and Barbara Silver thanking the Rabbi for their beautiful honor
- Barrett and Barbara Silver In honor of the anniversaries of Pauline and Erich Haller, Barbara and Robert Lenox, Susan Horowitz and Robert Gersh, Marilyn and Fred Weinberg, and Mara and Donny Giuliani and in honor of the birthday of Mara Giuliani
- Ellen Hagler
- Bradley and Dalit Wolfe

#### **For the Benefit of the Synagogue**

- Robert Vinikoor
- Oscar Starobin
- Deborah Silverman
- Lon and Ilissa Povich
- Norma Dreyfus and Stan Lane in honor of Shira Gersh's graduation from Brandeis
- Shelia Lucente for the Hebrew School



## Remembrances for July–August 2019

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*May their memories be for a blessing.*

WE REMEMBER	HEBREW DATE	2019 CALENDAR DATE
Bertyl Metz	29 Sivan	July 2
Celia Lurie	2 Tammuz	July 5
Jean Malman Becker	3 Tammuz	July 6
Rose Popper Roman	6 Tammuz	July 9
Mary Petlock	10 Tammuz	July 13
Dr. Morris Goldberg	11 Tammuz	July 14
Alice C. Meyer	13 Tammuz	July 16
Rita Ramsey	13 Tammuz	July 16
Anna Katz	18 Tammuz	July 21
Eleanor Tessler	18 Tammuz	July 21
Sylvia Greenhut	20 Tammuz	July 23
Bertha (Jablonsky) Berman	21 Tammuz	July 24
Bessie Singer	22 Tammuz	July 25
Milton Silver	23 Tammuz	July 26
Sheila Lichter	24 Tammuz	July 27
Paula Travers	25 Tammuz	July 28
Harriet Crystal	26 Tammuz	July 29
Barbara Bronstein	2 Av	August 3
Arthur Blatt	2 Av	August 3
Joseph Wolfe	2 Av	August 3
Priscilla Schwartz	3 Av	August 4
Joseph Cohen	4 Av	August 5
Rebecca Schretter	4 Av	August 5
Adaia Shumsky	4 Av	August 5
Henrietta Shapiro	9 Av	August 10
Bernard Yood	10 Av	August 11
Abraham Linet	13 Av	August 14
David Goldman	15 Av	August 16
Lillian Turet	16 Av	August 17
Max Isacoff	17 Av	August 18
Max Michelson	18 Av	August 19
Rosaline Lasher	20 Av	August 21
Margareta Haller	21 Av	August 22
Sanford Linet	22 Av	August 23
Jacob Smith	22 Av	August 23
Ruth Fields	24 Av	August 25
Sarah A Greenblatt	25 Av	August 26
Benjamin Mensh	27 Av	August 28



## Birthdays and Anniversaries

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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.

### July Birthdays

3	Anne Hebebrand
3	Alyssa Finn
8	Linda Silberstein
9	Aaron Greenwald
13	Matt Filler
13	Emily Davies
15	Barrett Silver
21	Marina Singer
21	Elliott Vogel
22	Jay Friedland
24	Howard Shaw
25	Sheldon Tepler
27	Roni Menaker

### July Anniversaries

1	Alan Meyer & Patricia Brennan
13	Maurie Libner & Sharon Bouchard
18	Emily Davies & Piper Panzeri
23	Marina & Stephen Singer
26	Lenore & Jay Friedland
27	Jennifer DeChant & Lou Ensel
28	Margaret Boyle & Andrew Lardie

### August Birthdays

1	Mary Samijan
7	Pauline Haller
14	Lou Ensel
19	Cutler Kanwit
21	Daniel Stone
22	Sloane Kanwit
22	Kate Stern
27	Susan Kamin
28	Steven Paul
31	Marilyn Weinberg
31	Isla Tefft

### August Anniversaries

11	Bob Lobis & Judy Wolfe
12	Phyllis & Joe Lisi
14	Moshe Menaker & Shana Starobin
15	Rachel & Nathan Tefft
18	Sue & Bob Nusbaum
20	Evelyn & Mort Panish
31	Liza & Aaron Greenwald

