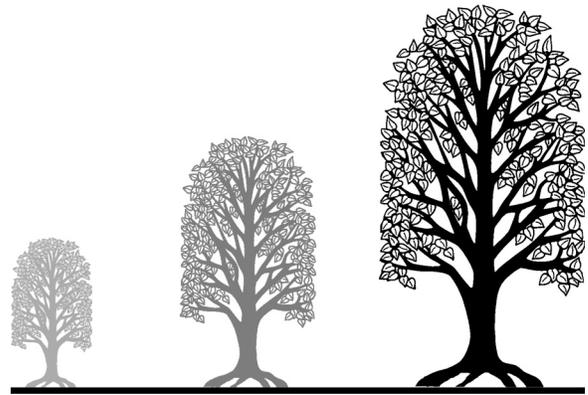


BETH ISRAEL CONGREGATION
862 Washington Street
Bath, Maine 04530



November/December 2019

Heshvan / Kislev / Tevet 5780

Rabbi's Message

Dear Beth Israel Members and Friends

It was truly a blessing to spend the Jewish month of Tishrei praying, singing, learning and celebrating with you. I am full of gratitude to you all for the open hearts that you each brought forward during the High Holidays. Your enthusiasm and participation makes our diverse community so beautiful.

We are now in the heart of fall and with this season comes an acute awareness of time. In her poignant poem entitled, *Time*, American Jewish poet and translator Marcia Falk gives voice to the way time both moves forward and works in a cycle. She writes about time:

We use it-wisely or not. We fill it and mark it. We try to stop it, but there is no end to it. And yet, we never have enough.

It is a circle, and it is a line. Moving forward, day by day, year by year, we come round and round again. Again the spring, again the fall-but every leaf a new one, every fall a new shape falling.

Always starting, never finished, we live always in the between.

No time, we say, we have no time. Yet we have all the time in the world.

And there is no time like now.



Here Falk points out the cyclical *and* linear nature of time, which feels so relevant especially in the autumn season. Every year we partake in the same fall rituals: perhaps we rake leaves, buy a pumpkin or two and take out our winter gloves. Like the cycle of Jewish holidays and of reading Torah there is comfort in repetition. And yet, each year is distinct from the next. Each year brings new challenges, loss, growth, birth, and death.

May you navigate this time of change with ease. I look forward to more opportunities for community and connection in the weeks ahead.

L'Shalom
Rabbi Vinikoor

President's Message

by Peggy Brown

What was your initial reaction to hearing that Erev Rosh Hashanah services would be held at Bowdoin College? Was it a raised eyebrow? Were you confused and a little disappointed? Or were you keen on trying a new venue and an opportunity to meet and worship with some new people? Maybe a little bit of all of these?

For me, the idea of changing the venue for one of my favorite holiday services was a little stressful. I couldn't picture a better place for the service than our beautiful little antique building on Washington Street. Why were we doing this?

Turns out, other members of Beth Israel had similar reactions. As the date came closer, people called or emailed to confirm the location, the time and to find out : Why?

The response to the why could be summed up with a very rational answer. We share our rabbi with Bowdoin College. They need her. We need her.

As it turned out, the place and the service were lovely. The Kresge Auditorium was comfortable and accommodated us all. The Bowdoin students and other members of the community who attend services at Bowdoin were welcoming. Rabbi Vinikoor and student Rabbi Jill Rubin conducted a service which skillfully brought together members of both communities and spoke words which moved us. Most notable, the room was filled with young, old and every age in between. The service included readings from several Bowdoin students whose thoughtfulness, talent and care was inspiring. As a friend from Beth Israel commented to me later: "Those young people give us hope for our future."

Those who were lucky enough to have secured space at the dinner following the service were treated to Bowdoin's famously good food in beautifully appointed rooms. It was a delight to sit together with folks from our Jewish community with whom we seldom break bread.

Walking home with John and Jane later in the dark fall evening, we reviewed the event and agreed: It was good. And it felt like the beginning of a new year.

Hebrew Class for Adults

by Rabbi Vinikoor

Tuesdays from 7:00–8:30 pm
Beginning November 5
Synagogue

Are you new to reading Hebrew in the prayer book or do want to brush up on your Hebrew reading skills? If so, this is the class for you! This multi-session class will help you improve your Hebrew reading skills and enable you to participate more fully in prayer services and Jewish ritual and cultural life. All are welcome!

For more questions or to reserve your spot in the class contact Rabbi Vinikoor at rabbivinikoor@gmail.com. There is still room for more.

Dinner Club

by Peggy Brown

Hello Dinner Club!

For our November Dinner Club meet up, we will be at Urban Element, 235 Lewiston Road in Topsham.

If you've never joined us before, come on out!
We would love to have you.

Date: Tuesday, November 12th
Time: 6:00 pm
Place: Urban Element, 235 Lewiston Road in
Topsham
RSVP to Peggy (phone or email) by Friday,
November 8



New Prayer Books

by Rabbi Vinikoor

Friday, December 6
6:00 pm Shabbat Evening Service
7:00 pm Dinner and Talk
Synagogue

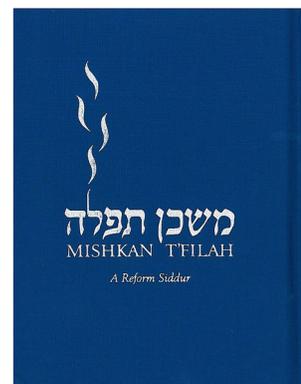
After a thoughtful and deliberative process led by our prayer book committee and in consultation with the Board and the support of a generous donor, Beth Israel will be adopting a new *siddur* (prayer book), *Mishkan Tefillah* beginning this December.

We will officially begin using our new siddurim at our Shabbat evening service on December 6. We are so pleased that we will have Rabbi Sonja Pilz visiting with us over that weekend. Rabbi Priz is an editor of the CCAR Press (publisher of our book). Prior to joining the Central Conference of American Rabbis as editor, she taught Worship, Liturgy, and Ritual at HUC-JIR in New York, the School of Jewish Theology at Potsdam University, and in many congregational settings.

Our service will be followed by a potluck dinner and learning session with Rabbi Pilz.

Join us on Shabbat December 6 to celebrate and learn!

Stay tuned for more details and to sign up to bring a dish and help our community usher in this new phase of prayer and song together.



Hebrew School Shabbat

by Marilyn Weinberg

Saturday, December 7
10:00 am
Synagogue

Our wonderful Hebrew School students (and their teachers) will be trying something new this year. For many years our Hebrew School students have led a Friday evening Shabbat service. And they have been amazing. This year they are expanding their learning to include a Saturday morning Shabbat service.

A potluck luncheon will follow the service at 11:30.

You'll be impressed by what this joyful group of dedicated learners has accomplished, and your participation will reinforce the feelings of community and connection that are possible when studying and celebrating Judaism. Let's fill the sanctuary!

Hope you can make it.



Our Rabbinic Fellow, Rachel Putterman

by Rabbi Vinikoor

At her last visit in September, Rachel led a lively Shabbat discussion about the *Avinu Malkeinu* prayer and on Sunday taught a fascinating adult learning session on Women wearing Tefillin. As a project in Rabbinical school, Rachel developed a series of videos to educate people of all genders and Jewish denominations about how to wrap Tefillin. Learn more about this project and watch the video here:

<https://hebrewcollege.edu/introducing-all-genders-wrap/>

We are thrilled that Rachel will be joining us again on the weekend of November 15-16 and December 6-7. Stay tuned for opportunities to learn with her through this fantastic addition to our Beth Israel community.



Community Chanukah Party

by Marilyn Weinberg

Friday, December 27

3:30 pm

Minnie Brown Center

Chanukah begins Sunday night, December 22, 2019 and continues through Sunday, December 29. We will start our community celebration with cooking, games and crafts for all ages at 3:30 pm.

Menorah lighting and Chanukah and Shabbat songs will begin at 5:30 pm and then, at 6:00 pm under the lights of our candles, we will have a lovely Shabbat dinner featuring special Chanukah treats including potato latkes and sufganiyot, yummy jelly doughnuts.

Our celebration will be on the 6th day of Chanukah so we will be lighting seven (6 plus Shamash) candles together. Bring your menorah and candles. The stage will be glowing bright! We look forward to seeing you.



Social Action Committee

by Joanne Rosenthal

Members of the congregation and committee are active in local efforts to support asylum seekers that have settled in Bath. They serve as family navigators, drivers, mentors, advocates, lawyers and tutors. I encourage you to support the programs that help so many families in the Bath-Brunswick area including, the Bath Food Pantry, the Patten Free Library, Sagadahoc Indivisible, Curtis Memorial Library, Midcoast Hunger Prevention Program, Tedford Housing, the Gathering Place and the Oasis Free Clinic. Midcoast Hospital and other practitioners who providing free health care to the families.

As you may know, these asylum seekers are not permitted to work prior to beginning the legal process of seeking asylum. If you would like to learn more about this issue, The Midcoast New Mainers Group will hold a meeting on November 7 at which Attorney Miriam Johnson, who attends Beth Israel, will speak about her work as a pro bono attorney with ILAP. Email midcoastnewmainersgroup@gmail.com, or join the Midcoast New Mainers Facebook Group for more information.

And for those interested, HIAS, (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society) offers congregations educational resources about advocating for and protecting the rights of immigrants and refugees. On their website, HIAS.org, there is information about what is needed at the border and Jewish led initiatives around the country.

Other members of the committee are taking steps to initiate the "greening" of the synagogue, so contact Jill Standish for more information.

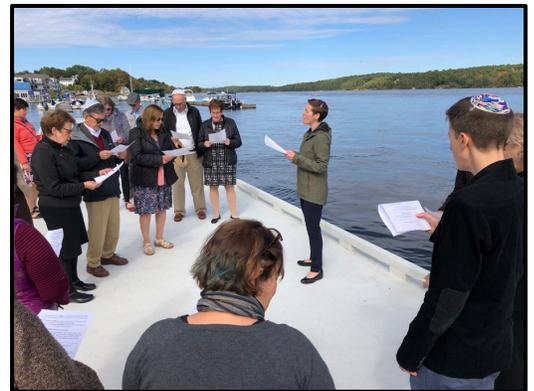
And once again, Beth Israel will be providing the Christmas dinner on December 25 for guests at the Tedford Shelter. Watch for more information in early December.

High Holidays

by Marilyn Weinberg

We celebrated a most wonderful High Holiday season together. We began at Bowdoin College with a lovely service and dinner. Our next day was a full one with meaningful services, a community luncheon, tashlich at the waterfront and a family service.

The evocative haunting tunes of Kol Nidre filled our sanctuary on Erev Yom Kippur, followed by a beautiful morning service and lovely closing service and break fast. What a wonderful community we have.



Sukkot and Simchat Torah

by Marilyn Weinberg

What a beautiful day we had to celebrate Sukkot outside with our Hillel friends and many community members. We learned about the fragility of housing for many people and the how this holiday is still meaningful today.

Our Simchat Torah celebration was filled with energy, joy and lots of dancing and “hula hooping” as we reached the end of this High Holiday season. We were happy to have members from Augusta Beth El join us and share this festive holiday.



Beth Israel Cooks and Eats

by Peggy Brown

On September 22, twenty members of the Beth Israel community gathered at the home of Norma Dreyfus and Stan Lane in Arrowsic for an opportunity to share food, swap recipes and get together for no other reason than to spend time together and possibly even make some new friends. Of course, the food was amazing and ranged from chopped liver to falafel to apple cake. There was wine and beer and coffee. Thank you to Norma and Stan for opening their lovely home to this first time event, and thanks to all who came with food (or without!) to join in a Sunday evening of hanging out with good company and good food. All who attended deemed the event a success and look forward to more in the future.



Hebrew School

by Marilyn Weinberg

The new Hebrew School year has started with enthusiasm and energy from our students, teachers and parents who join us. Our students thrive under the leadership of Rabbi Vinikoor. Special thanks to Gila Cohen-Shaw for stepping up and joining our amazing teaching staff of Susan Horowitz and Alina Shumsky. And our wonderful volunteers of Karen Totman, MichelleLisi-D'Alauro and Elise Hocking make the program flourish.



Beth Israel Welcomes and Supports Refugee Family

by Rachel Bouttenot

The Mid Coast New Mainers Group approached Beth Israel in August to ask if our community would be willing to sponsor a refugee family from the Portland Exposition Center moving to Bath. When Rabbi Vinikoor asked Katherine and I to serve as the point people for this effort, we jumped at the opportunity. Additionally, dozens of people have come forward to offer support, rides, translation, and assistance.

In early August, Katherine and I met our family at their new apartment in Bath. The young family consists of a father, a mother, a 5-year-old son, and a 2-year-old daughter. They come from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which they left over a year ago. They fled to Angola where they lived for about 7 months before making their way to Peru. From there, they walked and occasionally got rides to the Texas border. In June, about 300 people, mostly asylum seekers from the DRC and Angola, were sent to the Portland Exposition Center, which had been set up as temporary housing. Eventually, our family (and a few others) agreed to move to Bath.

When they moved into their Bath apartment in August, our family had a few duffel bags of belongings. Thanks to the efforts and donations of the Beth Israel community, they quickly accumulated beds, linen, kitchen-ware, furniture, and many other comforts for their new home. Among the most generous of these donations were a new washing machine, a beautiful wooden frame for the boy's bed, new car seats, and many small items that might have been overlooked if not for the thoughtfulness and insight of our community.

The Beth Israel network, along with many folks from the Mid Coast New Mainers Group, have also served in providing rides and coordinating various social services. We have succeeded in enrolling the boy in school, gaining the entire family access to doctors, legal services, assisting them with working with the Bath Food Bank, WIC, and General Assistance, and coordinating a team, led by Karen Totman, Susan Horowitz, and Gila Shaw, to build them a supply of winter clothing and gear.

As we continue this effort, we are so very grateful for the support of the Beth Israel community. We have been honored to be a part of this, to live our Jewish faith, and to witness how deeply our congregation has committed itself to welcoming the stranger and loving our neighbors. Thank you for stepping up and offering your time, energy, and money to make this transition for our family a little easier. If you are interested in getting on our email list for future calls for support, please email me.



Donations

Memorial Gifts

- Ansel and Zira Schiffer in loving memory of the Schiffer and Koerner Families lost during the Holocaust
- Richard Smith in loving memory of his father, Jacob Smith
- Mary and George Samiljan in loving memory of her mother, Rita Ramsey
- Ansel and Zira Schiffer in loving memory of Charles and Renata Schiffer, Dr. Lottie and Sadie Linder and Ann Lindner
- Betty and Martin Welt in loving memory of her mother, Ilse Fuchs
- Andrew and Chris Schoenberg in loving memory of his mother, Elayne Schoenberg
- Marc and Crissy Swartz in loving memory of his mother, Janet Lee Swartz
- David Michelson and Yeomni Ahn in loving memory of his brother, Gregory Michelson
- Adele Rubin in loving memory of Harold and Dorothy Rubin; Peter Rubin
- Gila and Howard Cohen-Shaw in loving memory of Joseph I. Cohen and Leonard G. Shaw
- Betty and Marty Welt in loving memory of her father, Henry Fuchs

For the Benefit of the Synagogue

- Nathan Cogan for the Building Fund and the Centennial Celebration
- Thyle Shartar and Marty Fox
- Howard Shaw and Gila Cohen-Shaw
- Bob Vinikoor
- Aaron and Liza Greenwald
- Karen and John Totman
- Ansel and Zira Schiffer wishing Zira Schiffer a speedy recovery
- Marilyn and Fred Weinberg
- Norma Dreyfus and Stan Lane
- Sheldon and Denise Tepler
- Barbara Baseman
- Reginald and Tinker Hannaford
- Steven Stern and Arlene Morris
- Andy and Debbie Hagler
- Harry and Kathy Reissman
- Staring Hobel Family Fund
- Rabbi Simeon Maslin
- Merna and Joseph Guttentag
- Rachel Robillard
- Sanford and Cynthia Boxerman
- Rachel and Michael Connelly
- Matthew Budd and Rosalind Gorin
- Campbell and Jennie Clegg
- Howard and Stephanie Pruzansky
- Erich and Pauline Haller
- Herb and Harriet Paris
- Alina Shumsky and David Chatalbash
- Jeff Cohen and Nancy Heiser
- Paul Linet

- Jay and Lenore Friedland
- Josh Katz and Joanne Rosenthal
- Matt and Karen Filler
- Susan Feibelman and George Turner
- Carol and Marty Eckstein

In Honor of

- Amy Waterman in honor of Marilyn and Fred Weinberg
- Shari Sage in honor of the 65th Anniversary of Rabbi Simeon and Judy Maslin
- Ansel and Zira Schiffer in honor of Herman and Helen Koerner and Thomas Leahy
- Ann Silver, Martin Katz and Linda Saltzman in honor of Barrett and Barbara Silver
- Deborah and Richard Finn in honor of Rabbi Vinikoor
- Peter and Miriam Selig in honor of Barbara Lenox's birthday

Refugee Asylum Fund

- Staring Hobel Family Fund
- Ruth Benedikt
- Lorna Grenadier

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

- George and Mary Samiljan
- I Michael Goodman
- Jesse Green in memory of Anne Greene

Welcome New Members

- Annie Valliere
- Ellen Bard
- Carol and Marty Eckstein and Family
- Elaine Povich and Ron Dziengiel
- Greg and Ellen Friedel and Family
- Elinor Rosenberg



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.

November Birthdays

- 2 Gordon Blatt
- 10 Margaret Boyle
- 11 Judy Wolfe
- 11 Cathey Hayes
- 15 Alva Gandler
- 16 Larry Loeb
- 18 Rebecca Dunham
- 19 Joe Lisi
- 21 Joan Fields
- 21 Kathy Reissmann
- 25 Laura McCandlish
- 27 Rabbi Lisa Vinikoor
- 28 Erich Haller

November Anniversaries

- 2 Cristina & Stacey Giuliani
- 30 Anita Lichman & Steven Paul

December Birthdays

- 2 Bob Lobis
- 2 Jennifer Kaplan
- 4 Ellen Bard
- 6 Todd Gandler
- 13 Karen Filler
- 19 Marty Welt
- 23 Sylvie Helman
- 23 Judah Helman
- 31 Cristina Giuliani

December Anniversaries

- 15 Joan & Jeremy Fields
- 20 Elliot & Helene Lerner



Remembrances for November–December 2019

May their memories be for a blessing.

WE REMEMBER	HEBREW DATE	CALENDAR DATE FOR 2019
Miriam Rosen	4 Heshvan	November 2
Ted Tessler	4 Heshvan	November 2
Thelma Fox	6 Heshvan	November 4
Herman Greenhut	7 Heshvan	November 5
Milton S. Gross	7 Heshvan	November 5
George Gould	8 Heshvan	November 6
Milton Lobis	9 Heshvan	November 7
Rachel Schneiderman	10 Heshvan	November 8
Minnie Brown	14 Heshvan	November 12
Abraham Travers	15 Heshvan	November 13
Selma Shapiro Blatt	16 Heshvan	November 14
Isadore Singer	16 Heshvan	November 14
Nettie Friedland	19 Heshvan	November 17
Esther Itzkowitz	25 Heshvan	November 23
Isidore Panish	25 Heshvan	November 23
Ida Krassner	29 Heshvan	November 27
Irving Benjamin Isaacson	30 Heshvan	November 28
Judith Krassner	2 Kislev	November 30
Esther Friedman	4 Kislev	December 2
Arthur B. Levitt	5 Kislev	December 3
Sidney Lasher	6 Kislev	December 4
George Schoenberg	10 Kislev	December 8
Sylvia Greenberg	11 Kislev	December 9
Samuel B. Becker	11 Kislev	December 9
Samuel Soifer	16 Kislev	December 14
Hans Meissner	22 Kislev	December 20
Morris Greenberg	24 Kislev	December 22
Theresa Lobis	1 Tevet	December 29



They Sat in the Back

by Hannah Daniel

This poem, written by Hannah Daniel, a student at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, commemorates the victims of the Tree of Life synagogue shooting in October 2018.

We sat in the back.
We were 13 years old, itchy, tired, and we didn't want to be there.
We were anxious to leave our seats—
we sat in the back to sulk,
to count on our fingers how many more Saturday morning services
we would have to endure before we could check
the box for our b'nai mitzvot.
We picked at our nails,
but we sang the blessings because we loved them even still.
The minutes limped along.
We shifted in our dresses and our ballet flats that were getting a little too small.
Our stomachs rumbled as we waited for kiddush
and we sat in the back of the room.

They also sat in the back.
Our matriarchs, our door-holders,
the ones who had prepared our kiddush that morning.
The ones who knew the code to the building was the same year it was built,
the ones who drove us to this service.
They were the ones who sang in the choir,
the ones who taught your children their aleph bets.
They sat nearest to the entrance, the ones who walked with walkers.
The ones who parked right outside the temple doors to rest
their stiff backs on stiffer benches each Saturday morning.
The ones who have seen their children
and their children's children
through the sanctuary's doors.
They built this place up from the ground
and they sat in the back.

We did not want to sit in the front, where we might catch the eye of the rabbi,
where God might see our lips stumble on our prayers.
We sat in the back so we might easily slip out to use the bathroom,
to get a drink of water, to check the broken clock in the hall.
We sat in the back so that we could be the first to leave.

They sat in the back because they arrived early.
They were our living ancestors, our minyan makers.
They sat in the back and they knew your name
because they had been the first ones to welcome your family into the synagogue
with a warm hug and boker tov.

We sat in the back; we wanted to leave.
They sat in the back; they didn't have time.