



The Bet Ha'am Weekly Email

We Need Your Input!

It's not a tsunami, but our finances are scary....!

We need your help to determine our future. If you want early input to the Board's direction, please attend one of our listening sessions!

At Bet Ha'am our expenses exceed our income, an untenable situation. We must make some major changes to how we generate income. The Board of Trustees is inviting all synagogue members to one of two listening sessions. This is an opportunity for you to tell the board how you think we should address our ongoing budget deficits, what membership at Bet Ha'am should include, what you hope will not change, and to respond to some of the ideas that have already been raised. Everything is on the table. It is important that we get input from a large number of congregants before we make changes to our current financial model.



For more information, check out the treasurer's presentation from the May 11, 2021 Annual Meeting [here](#).

Bet Ha'am Financial Listening Session I: Wednesday, June 2, 7:00 PM

Bet Ha'am Financial Listening Session II: Sunday, June 6, 10:00 AM

If you are unable to attend one of these meetings, feel free to email your thoughts, questions, and concerns to treasurer@bethaam.org or President@bethaam.org.

You must register for these sessions. Register [here](#) for the session on Wednesday, June 2 at 7:00 PM. Register [here](#) for the session on Sunday, June 6, at 10:00 AM.

Words of Torah

Rabbi Saks is away for a three-month sabbatical. While he is away, we will be sharing Words of Torah from various Jewish educational resources.

This week's Torah reading, *B'haalot'cha*, takes place just a few days journey from Mount Sinai; already the Israelites are "complaining bitterly" before God about food. "If only we had meat to eat! We remember the fish that we used to eat free in Egypt, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic. Now our gullets are shriveled. There is nothing at all! Nothing but this manna to look to!" (Numbers 11:4-6). God's response is to provide an overabundance of meat to the Israelites "until it comes out of your nostrils and becomes loathsome to you. For you have rejected the



Eternal who is among you, by whining before God and saying, 'Oh, why did we ever leave Egypt!'" (Numbers 11:20).

The following edited commentary was written by Rabbi Phyllis Sommer:

...God's response can be, for us, a reminder that gratitude must be taught and reinforced. Sure, the Israelites were acting fairly rebellious and whiny. But think about their previous situation: their Egyptian overlords would give them only what was necessary to keep them alive and working. There was no "gifting" and no "loving" and no "relationship-building." These things take time to adapt to and to understand. The Israelites weren't quite ready to understand the beauty of God's gift, and God isn't ready to teach them about the value of gratitude. Much like children who need a prompt to say, "thank you," so too do the Israelites need to learn not only to say the words, but also to experience the feeling of gratitude.

There's a story about [Rabbi Israel Salanter](#), the founder of the *Mussar* movement, who inquires as to why a cup of coffee in a restaurant is so expensive. He is reminded by the owner that while coffee is, in fact, merely beans and water, the experience of drinking the coffee in the restaurant with its fine linen, delightful ambiance, and excellent service is worth the money. Rabbi Salanter expands this idea to teach a better understanding of gratitude for something as simple as water; we are not grateful only for the creation of water but for the air that helps us to breathe as we drink the water, the way the water flows into the vessel, and even the singing of the birds as we drink the water - all of this is included in our gratitude for something as ubiquitous as water.¹

The Israelites still see the manna as merely a means of nourishment provided to them by a source with whom they don't yet have a long history of a loving relationship. They aren't quite ready, unlike Rabbi Salanter, to see the deeper message in the gift of the manna. Eventually, they will get there. Just like our children who need to be reminded, "what do you say?" Reading over this story of childish ungratefulness only serves to show us just how very far we have come, and of course, how very far we can continue to grow.

From: <https://reformjudaism.org/learning/torah-study/torah-commentary/bringing-israel-parenting-new-nation>

¹ This story is from "Tevunah," by Rabbi Yisrael Shlomo Gordon, quoted in "Torat Yisrael M'Salant" and was received in [a lesson](#) by Alan Morinis, founder of the [Mussar Institute](#). [Rabbi Phyllis A. Sommer](#), RJE is director of congregational learning at *Am Shalom* in Glencoe, IL.

In-Person Worship Resumes!

In-person Shabbat services in our sanctuary have begun! There are a number of safety protocols in place, including,

- Attendance will be limited. Registration is required.
- Everyone must wear a mask at all times when on our property.
- All attendees must be at least 2 weeks post final vaccine.



This is likely to last throughout the summer, with the possible exception of outdoor family services. If you are interested in attending a service in our sanctuary, please indicate all of the dates which you are able to attend when you register. If there are more people interested in attending than spots available we will hold a lottery to determine participants.

If you indicate interest in attending in person you will receive an email indicating which services you will be able to attend. The email will also provide detailed information regarding Covid protocols.

All services will continue to be live-streamed on Zoom. All who register by the Friday deadline (whether or not you have requested to be in person) will receive the link for the live-streamed services.

Services will be held at Bet Ha'am on the dates listed below. When you register for the monthly Zoom service you will be asked if you want to attend in-person services and will have the option of choosing the date(s) that work for you.

Friday, May 28th

Saturday, June 5

Friday, June 18

Saturday, June 26

Questions can be addressed to Sylvia Most at sylviamost@gmail.com.

Registration for Worship and Torah Study

Want to register to participate in worship or Torah study?

It's easy to do! Click on the registration links (listed in the worship schedule box below) for whichever sessions you wish to attend. Please be sure to register by noontime on Friday, which is when registration closes each week. Everyone who registers by the deadline will be sent Zoom links, regardless of whether or not they also indicate upon registration that they would like to attend in-person worship in the sanctuary. Zoom links will be sent by 4:00 PM on Fridays. Easy!

Please note: *We cannot send Zoom links after 4:00 PM on Fridays.*

Read more about our service and our siddur (prayer book) [here](#).

Last Week to Use May Zoom Links

**NOTE: This is the last weekend we will be using May Zoom links.
Please see the box below for June registration information.**

Registrations close at noon on Fridays.

Zoom links will be sent by 4:00 PM on Fridays to all who have registered by the deadline.

We cannot send Zoom links after 4:00 PM on Fridays.

Read more about our service and our prayer book [here](#).

Register Soon For June Zoom Links

A separate email will be sent out early next week to register for June Shabbat worship and Torah Study links.

We will start using the NEW links on June 4.

Note: May service links will NOT work after this weekend.

Worship Schedule



Friday, May 28

Tot Shabbat, 5:30 PM

Families with children under the age of 5 are invited to join Bet Ha'am Religious School Director, Sam Spinrad, for a special interactive online Tot Shabbat via Zoom. The theme this month is self-control. We will welcome Shabbat with a special service full of songs, stories, crafts, games, and blessings. [Register here](#).

Friday, May 28
Shabbat Worship, 7:30 PM

Thank you to **Shenna Lee Bellows** for being our Shabbat speaker presenting her talk, "Good Trouble": Advancing Equity and Justice In Challenging Times.



Shenna Lee Bellows is the 50th Maine Secretary of State having been elected to this position on December 2, 2020, by the Maine Legislature. Previously she was the Executive Director of the Maine State ACLU. Most recently she was the Executive Director of the Holocaust and Human Rights Center of Maine. She served in the Maine Senate from 2016-2020.

Thank you to Melissa Montefel for leading our worship service.

Thank you to board member Mike Levine for lighting our Shabbat candles and for making our announcements.

Register to receive the **Friday Night Shabbat Worship** Zoom link, [here](#).

Saturday, May 29
Torah Study, 9:00 AM

Torah study using *The Mussar Torah Commentary* continues--but you don't need to own a copy. Read more [here](#), under the "Torah Study" heading.

Thank you to Mylan Cohen for leading Torah Study this week.

Register to receive the **Torah Study** Zoom link, [here](#).

Saturday, May 29
Shabbat Morning Worship, 10:30 AM

Thank you to Mylan Cohen for leading our worship service.

Thank you to Wendy Hayes for reading Torah and Haftarah on Saturday.

Register to receive the **Shabbat Morning Worship** Zoom link, [here](#).

Wednesday, June 2
Morning Minyan 7:30 AM

Thank you to Daniel Oppenheim for leading Morning Minyan.

Register to receive the **Wednesday Morning Minyan** Zoom link, [here](#).

Notable Upcoming Services

Guest Shabbat Speaker, Rabbi David Sandmel, Friday, June 4, 7:30 PM
Bet Ha'am's first Rabbi, now the Senior Advisor on Interreligious Affairs at ADL (Anti Defamation League) speaking on reflections about antisemitism.

Elena Rosenberg Bat Mitzvah, Saturday, June 12, 10:30 AM

Out Of The Office

Karen Hindall is out of the office on vacation until June 1. If you need assistance you can email karen@bethaam.org and her out of office auto-response will direct you to the

person who can help!

Service Leaders Needed!!!

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With the Rabbi going on sabbatical, we need service leaders for May, June, July and the first half of August. If you would like to lead or co-lead, there are dates available for Zoom and in-person services, with May being the most urgent. If interested, willing and able, please contact Melissa Montefel at missyjo314@hotmail.com or call/text 207-939-8568. Thank you!!

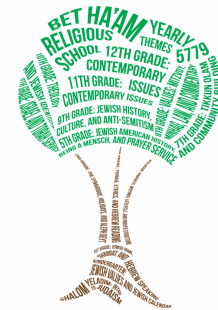


Religious School on Zoom

Sunday May 23 was the last day of Religious School this year!

Thank you to all our volunteer teachers from 2020-21! Email Sam at sam@bethaam.org if you're interested in teaching next fall.

If you are interested in enrolling a child or teaching at religious school, email Sam at sam@bethaam.org



Bet Ha'am Youth Picnic

Bet Ha'am is hosting a Youth Group picnic on June 16, at 6 PM with a rain date of June 17.

Meet at Fort Allen Park: 49 Eastern Promenade, Portland, ME 04101 at 6 PM by the gazebo. Please pick up teens by 7:30 PM. Anyone in grades 8-12 are welcome!

Please RSVP [here](#) by June 13, and let us know if you have any dietary restrictions. We will probably have pizza!



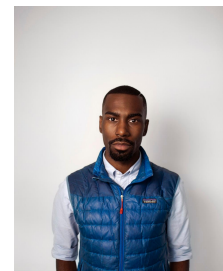
Participants are expected to distance and wear masks when not eating.

Youth group advisors: Andrea, Kate, Sid, and Hannelore

Recording Available

Dear Friends,

On April 22, we were honored to welcome DeRay Mckesson to speak to the Maine Jewish community about racial justice in Maine, specifically about ending police violence in our state. DeRay Mckesson is a co-founder of [Campaign Zero](#), dedicated to ending police violence, especially against people of color. He shared with us some of the successes and challenges of our state and empowered us to do the work towards racial justice and racial equity. If you missed DeRay's talk, please reach out to Karen (karen@bethaam.org) for a link to the recording. We hope you'll watch and rewatch it and consider what change you can be in the world.



L'Shalom,
Rabbi Saks

Solar Energy Fundraiser

Support Local Maine Solar, Lower Your CMP Bill and Raise Money for Bet Ha'am

Bet Ha'am was recently contacted about a new fundraising initiative involving congregants who may be interested in community solar. PowerMarket is an operator of multiple community solar energy farms on the east coast including one located in Baldwin, Maine that is currently looking for "subscribers." Subscribers are self-designated CMP customers who wish to buy a portion of their electricity from a community solar farm. The electricity is sold at a discount and produced with a lower carbon footprint.



The initiative presented provides that PowerMarket and Darrell Cooper of Energy Audits Ltd. will donate \$150 to Bet Ha'am for each subscriber who signs up using the promo code "Bet Ha'am." There is no upfront cost to sign up, subscribers typically save about 10% on their CMP bill, and they can cancel at any time on 60 days' notice.

You can obtain more information, and if interested become a subscriber through the PowerMarket/Baldwin Community Solar project website at:
<https://account.powermarket.io/bethaam.html>.

If you have questions about the donation to Bet Ha'am, please contact Mark Stone at lmstone@lmstone.com

Tikkun Olam

Welcoming The Stranger (WTS) Recruiting Mentors for Asylum Seekers



Welcoming The Stranger (WTS) is recruiting mentors to match with a growing list of prospective mentees seeking asylum. Please go to the [website](#) for more information and an [application form for mentors](#).

WTS is a grassroots project matching mentors with asylum seekers to help them integrate into the Greater Portland community. Bet Ha'am members have participated in this cross cultural friendship and partnership since its inception in 2016 .

Mentors may provide a wide range of support through information, referrals, connections . This support may relate to transportation, housing, employment, education, English, culture, and more. Mentors are not expected to be Social Workers!

Along with knowing they are helping asylum seekers navigate a new community, mentors comment on the mutual benefits of cross cultural sharing and how mentees appreciate regular contact with someone who cares.

If you wish to contact a WTS Steering Committee member/experienced mentor, please go to our [contact page](#) or email info@wtsmaine.com.

Ongoing Programs

Shabbat Candle Lighting

Please consider signing up to be a candle lighter at an upcoming Zoom Friday night service. You may choose to do this in memory of a loved one for whom you're observing yahrzeit, in honor of a celebration in your life, or just because you want to engage in this ritual. You can read more from Rabbi

Saks [here](#); learn the candle lighting blessing [here](#) (on track 420); and find the words [here](#).



Candle Lighting Sign-Up

B'Yachad | Together

There will be no B'Yachad meeting with Marilyn and Alan Davis this week, May 28. They are delighted to be able to attend services in the sanctuary and will be unable to host, but will return via Zoom on June 4.



TV and Movie Discussion Group

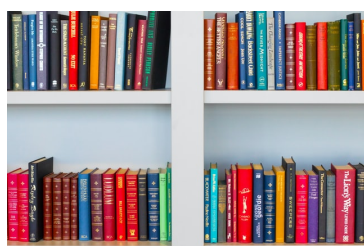
Please join congregants Melissa Montefel and Wendy Hayes, co-facilitators, for a discussion group about Jewish-themed movies and shows. The group meets at 7:00 PM for fun, talk, and insights. Please email [Wendy](#) for the login or with questions or suggestions for future movies.



June 9:

Shtisel

A Haredi family living in an ultra-Orthodox neighborhood of Jerusalem reckons with love, loss and the doldrums of daily life. We'll be discussing all three seasons of Shtisel available on Netflix so we're giving you plenty of time!



Curbside Library Borrowing

Although the building remains closed, you may borrow a book from our wonderful library using curbside pick up. Read more on our [library page](#).

So Much Going on in Our Community!

We are fortunate to be in a community where there is so much going on Jewishly that we cannot possibly list all of the happenings here. Please check out the websites listed below for all kinds of activities – movement, art, spirituality, books, movies, Jewish education, and more. Bet Ha'am often co-sponsors programs with these community leaders.

The Maine Conference for Jewish Life Sunday, June 13, 2021

Join the Center for Small Town Jewish Life on Zoom for an afternoon of interactive learning and community celebration! Stay tuned for more details and information about how to register.



Though the Center for Small Town Jewish Life is not able to hold the Maine Conference for Jewish Life in person once again this year, they are still very excited for their online mini-conference on Sunday, June 13, 3:00 - 6:00 PM. Like all Center programming, one registration link will enable you to come and go throughout the afternoon. A full schedule will be posted online in the coming weeks and will be emailed out to registrants once finalized.

They're looking forward to announcing a full lineup later this month, but they're happy to announce right now that Tree Spirits of Oakland, Maine, will be offering a cocktail/mocktail lesson at the start of our conference! The first 50 people to register will receive a bottle of their SubLime, a fruit-bitter and brandy-based mixer for FREE!

Later registrants will have the option to buy a bottle with their registration for a discounted price. The Tree Spirits experts will lead a brief demo—you can follow along with or without a beverage!

Stay tuned for updates about speakers and sessions. They look forward to seeing you in June!

[Learn More and Register Here](#)



There are new exhibitions at Maine Jewish Museum starting May 13. Learn more [here](#).

This piece, [which is for sale](#), is a sample from the Chris Beneman exhibit, a percentage of each sale will go to financially support the museum's mission of celebrating and honoring the contributions and diversity of Maine's Jewish community.

If interested in purchasing a piece of art please call Nancy Davidson at (207) 239-4774

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Donate to Bet Ha'am

Please consider donating in any amount to Congregation Bet Ha'am--with your help, we can close the budget gap! We are grateful for your support.

[Donate Now](#)

Congregation Bet Ha'am | 81 Westbrook Street, South Portland, ME 04106

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