



Welcome to
Temple Beth El of Augusta, Maine

embracing a spirit of community, lifelong Jewish learning, commitment to inclusiveness, and active participation in Jewish life in Central Maine

artwork by Lenora Leibowitz

Iyyar-Sivan-Tamuz 5780/May-June 2020

From the desk of Rabbi Asch

As the last newsletter came out, I was just returning from my sabbatical, rested, refreshed, and ready to go! Little did I know how important it was going to be for me to have some extra energy...

Throughout all the changes in the last few months, one thing has remained constant—Temple Beth El has continued to provide opportunities to connect with Jewish community, mark important rituals, reach out to those in need, learn Torah, pray, and educate all, young and old alike. As much as we all long to be back in our newly renovated sanctuary, we have shown that our community is not just about our building, but about our connections with one another and supporting a vibrant and relevant Jewish life, no matter what the circumstances. In addition to a little bit of *tachlis* (basic facts), I'd like to offer some initial thoughts about what this disruption might mean for us as a community moving forward.



Tachlis

- Thanks to the amazing work of the Covid-19 Task Force and some quick learning about technology, we quickly transitioned to online services. We are offering more than ever before—weekly Shabbat services and Torah study, Daf Yomi, a new Judges class taught every week and havdallah.
- I continue to meet regularly with people via phone or Zoom including tutoring Hebrew, doing pastoral care, and talking regularly with our president, Chuck Cohen.
- Our board has been diligent about addressing the new circumstances, including quickly implementing a system to reach out to congregants and meet their needs.
- We have joined with many state-wide events, including Shabbat services with the Center for Small Town Jewish Life, a Yom HaShoah program with the Holocaust and Human Rights Center, and films with the Maine Jewish Film Festival. Look for even more learning partnerships to come.
- Our new Office Manager, Dawn Fecteau, jumped right into work. She and Rabbi Asch were only in the office together one day before the stay-at-home order went into effect. She has been working closely with Hildie Lipson and others to get up to speed and has been doing a great job at keeping us on track.

Bigger picture questions

- How do we retain some of the advantages of gathering online? We have people regularly joining us who did not before because it was too far to travel, they live out of state, or they didn't feel well enough. We have also had remarkable Hebrew School attendance as our students no longer have to drive an hour for Hebrew School but can roll out of bed five minutes before class. If our Passover seder was held in person, it would have been snowed out! How do we keep the convenience and larger reach of online opportunities once we gather in person? How do we build connections between those attending online and those attending in-person?

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TBE Schedule: May—June

Services

Every Saturday night at 8pm (or later)
Havdallah

Friday, May 1
7:00pm Shabbat Service

Friday, May 8
5:00pm Shabbat Service

Friday, May 15
5:00pm Statewide Shabbat Service

Friday, May 22
7:00pm Shabbat Service

Friday, May 29
9:00am Shavuot Service
5:00pm Shabbat Service

Friday, June 5
7:00pm Shabbat Service

Friday, June 12
5:00pm Shabbat Service

Friday, June 19
7:00pm Shabbat Service

Friday, June 26
5:00pm Shabbat Service

Torah Study

Saturday, May 2, 16, 23, & 30
Saturday, June 6, 13, 20, 27
10:30am

Hebrew School

Sunday, May 3, 10, 17 & 24
9:30am Hebrew School

TBE Activities

Every Wednesday
12-1pm The Book of Judges

Monday, May 11
6:30pm Introduction to Judaism

Monday, May 18
5:30pm Soup & Study

Wednesday, May 13
6:00pm TBE Board Meeting

Sunday, June 7
10:00pm Annual Meeting

Wednesday, June 17
5:30pm Soup & Study

Getting onto Zoom

Until further notice, all TBE activities will take place via Zoom. The link and password for the meeting remain the same. Please contact the office for the login information of if you need help setting up Zoom.

Todah Rabbah

- **The Covid-19 Task Force:** Chuck Cohen, Fran Rudoff, Scott Schiff-Slater, Susan Bakaley Marshall, Lila Solomon
- **Jay Collins** for helping create the Passover Seder
- **Madeline Cooper** for going above and beyond—leading Torah study, giving sermons, and co-leading the Passover Seder.
- **The entire board** for their extraordinary work over the past few months.
- **Ellen Freed and Mike and Sarah Drickey** for delivering Passover Food.

Zoom in for Abigail Stevens's Bat Mitzvah **Saturday, May 9: 10:30am—12:00pm**

Please join us for the "Zoom Bat Mitzvah" for Abigail from 10:30-12:00 on Saturday, May 9! Anyone wishing to participate can log in by 10:20 am. The link is: <https://zoom.us/j/6057928965> (Zoom Meeting ID: 605-792-8965). If you need the password please contact the office.

Abigail is the daughter of Rebecca Stevens, and the granddaughter of Li'el Boudreau. A sixth-grader at Winthrop Middle School, she loves animals, card games, Jewish music, bike riding, hiking with her dog Buddy, and spending time with her family, especially her baby sister Hannah.



Abigail has worked hard all year to master the blessings and her Torah portion, Emor. The service will include readers from around the country and Israel. Abigail will give a dvar Torah on observing Shabbat, and describe her mitzvah project with Rabbi Susan on the important bond between the young and the elderly. Li'el will offer the Haftarah portion, and Rabbi Sruli Dresdner and Rebbetzin Lisa Mayer from Temple Shalom will end the ceremony with a short musical performance.

Meet Dawn Fecteau, TBE's New Office Manager

Because of her passion for supporting service-orientated organizations, Dawn has a long history of working for nonprofits. She spent over twelve years as the Director of Education & Member Services for a trade association representing home care and hospice. Additionally, Dawn was the HR Director for Maine Quality Counts, an organization that was focused on improving the quality of care in Maine.

She lives in Chelsea with her husband of twenty-seven years, Marc. They are both very excited for the arrival of a grandson who is due to make his appearance in late June!

Dawn is looking forward to meeting everyone in the future.



Are We Who We Thought We Were?

By Chuck Cohen, President

Three years ago, I was asked, and nervously agreed, to serve as President of our Temple. At the time, I expected that the Temple might face challenges along the way and there certainly have been. To name a few, there was the implementation of the Terumah funding system: security issues raised by the increase in anti-Semitism and the Pittsburgh and San Diego shul shootings; the Building renovation project; and the filling in for the Rabbi during her recent sabbatical. All of these challenges, however, pale in comparison to the current challenge we now face with the COVID-19 pandemic.

As many of you may recall, on March 7th, the Temple held its annual Purim Party. The evening was marked by levity, camaraderie, delicious hamantashen, and some amazing acting. Each day during the following week seemed to bring additional worsening news of the virus's spread and its impact on individuals and the nation's health system. In response, the TBE Board established a COVID Task Force to address the worsening situation. Based on its consideration of the public health data and advice from the medical community, the Task Force concluded that for the indefinite future, all in-person Temple events should be cancelled beginning March 13th. Subsequently, we closed the Temple's office to walk-in traffic and suspended regular office hours.

Although, in-person contacts have been eliminated, the Temple has continued to function and to serve the needs of the Jewish community in central Maine. As described in Rabbi Asch's article, through the miracle of modern technology, we have held weekly Shabbat and Havdallah services, conducted weekly Torah Study discussions, and also did a virtual community Seder. While we miss seeing each other in person, these virtual events have been a huge success and participation in many activities has actually increased.

As part of our response to the COVID situation, the Temple Board members attempted to make contact with all congregants to see who might like a phone visit, assistance with getting groceries or pharmacy items, or other assistance and support. In addition, we surveyed congregants to see who might be willing and able to help as part of the Temple's response. Susan Blakey Marshall has been coordinating the Temple's response efforts here and is matching volunteers with those in need of services. Follow-up contacts are planned for the end of April and early May.

Finally, the Temple has through our weekly newsletter tried to keep the community informed not only of all Temple events but also of events of interest offered by other organizations in Maine and of resources and activities which might be of help in coping with the isolation resulting from the current social distancing requirements. And thanks to Cree Krull, the information has been disseminated in a comprehensive, understandable, and often humorous fashion. Cree's presentations have brought a smile to my face and taught us the importance of maintaining our sense of humor in these grave times.

The scope, scale and complexity of the COVID pandemic and its impact on our health, economic and social lives and the country's health systems is enormous and unprecedented. When asked when he thought that

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What's happening at TBE

Rabbi's Message, continued from page 1

- What requires in-person meeting and what can we do online? Should more board and committee meetings happen online? Should Hebrew School be held online a few times a semester? How do we continue to take advantage of online offerings or have guest speakers join us online?
- How do we continue to reach out to one another? We have seen people reaching out to one another even more than before. Even when we meet in person again, how do we keep up these connections? As we get busy with everyday tasks once again, how do we prioritize being with one another?
- What rituals do we need at this new time? We are experiencing loss and grief as well as joy. How do we mark these occasions? How do we mark the ability to gather together in person once more? What does Jewish ritual offer us in this new time?

I look forward to discussing all these questions (and more) when we see one another in person again. In the meantime, please reach out if the Temple can help you and join us online. See you on Zoom!

President's Message continued from page 4

we might be able to return to some type of normal life, Dr. Anthony Fauci, the country's head of infectious disease control, stated that he could not put a date on such a thing, and that the virus itself will determine when this happens. Dr. Fauci also said that the process of going back to normal will not be like flipping a switch but rather will be a gradual process which occurs in phases. In the coming weeks then, we will have many difficult decisions to make as we both try to define the "new normal" for our Temple and the best path to that "new normal." As we do so, the Temple leadership's primary concern will be the health and safety of our congregants and staff as well as the health and safety of those who work for us and in our community. Our decisions will be based on the best medical and public health information available to us.

In a recent interview on "60 Minutes" conducted after the death of his father from COVID, jazz musician Wynton Marsalis said that the current COVID crises will test us and we will see if we are the people we thought we were before the crises. In prior remarks to the congregation and statements to others, I have described TBE as a generous, caring, and respectful community. Our actions to date during the COVID crises have certainly affirmed these descriptions of our attributes. I am quite confident that at the end of this dark tunnel we will be able to say proudly that, yes, we are the community that we thought we were going into the tunnel.

Shavuot Study with Beth Israel in Bath

**Thursday, May 28th
6:30-9:30pm**

Join with us as we learn from a variety of teachers, hear music, participate in a quiz, and engage in ritual. We will celebrate receiving the Torah at Sinai with learning and community.

Shavuot Morning Service with Yizkor

**Friday, May 29th
9:00am**

We will join together for a brief service, some study and a time to remember our loved ones who have died in years past.

Gratitude and Inspiration Amidst a Global Pandemic

By Emily Bessey

These are unprecedented times. I am sitting here trying to think of some witty way to spin the fact that the world is turned upside down. The economy is in a free fall, and small businesses are struggling. We are wearing face masks to the grocery store and are cautiously waving to neighbors from the safety of our driveways. The news is full of horror stories about overwhelmed emergency rooms. It can feel quite overwhelming. And there is sadly no witty way to spin it.

My world has gotten very small. Each day is like the movie “Groundhog Day.” Our family gets up, has breakfast, and engages in some version of home schooling. We go for a walk in the neighborhood, do some art, or bake something. Maybe we Facetime a family member. Sometimes we watch a movie. My goal is creating normalcy for the girls, to minimize anxiety. I imagine life feels very confusing and unsettling for a 10-year-old and a 4-year-old: yes, school is out 3 months early; no, you can't return to your dance classes; I don't know if summer camp can happen. One thing I do know is that every night at dinner, Ruby instigates a go-round to talk about something we are thankful for. Because, as crazy as the world is, there are many things to be grateful for. Our family is healthy. We have enough food and toilet paper. We live in Maine where there are very few people and therefore plenty of space to walk 6 feet away from others. We are getting lots of family togetherness, and are finding creative ways to connect with family and friends who live far away- or even down the street.

Along with gratitude, there are also opportunities for inspiration. Who knew that the guy working in the produce department would be seen as a national hero? Ray (whom we actually know quite well because B.G.P — Before Global Pandemic— Ruby would talk to EVERYONE at the grocery store) is putting himself and his family at risk to ensure that we have fresh fruit and veggies to eat. Thank you, Ray. One of my best friends from college, Reuben, is an ER doctor at Maimonides Medical Center in Brooklyn. He and his team are literally on the front lines of this pandemic. Thank you, Reuben. There are members of our own community, like Tim Gagne and so many other doctors, nurses, medical techs, and hospital custodians who are doing all they can to help people who are sick. Then there are the Post Office and FedEx workers, nursing home staff, journalists, trash and recycling workers... and on and on. So many people who have put their contribution to the running of our society above their worries about catching the virus. Saying ‘thank you’ feels too simple. I hope over time they will all come to feel the immense gratitude and awe we hold for their service to the greater good.

It is important to not solely focus on the doom and gloom that can feel all consuming. One day, we will return to a time similar to B.G.P. I hope when that day comes, we face it with more appreciation for little luxuries, like going for a walk with a friend. Or attending services as a community, all in the same sanctuary and not just on the same zoom call. Or even being able to buy toilet paper with reckless abandon. And maybe we will look at teachers, medical providers, restaurant staff, and grocery cashiers with much deserved admiration and respect. Until normalcy returns, I wish you all the best. Stay home and stay healthy.

What's happening at TBE

JOIN WITH US

H A V D A L L A H

E V E R Y

S A T U R D A Y

8 P M

WINE | SPICES | CANDLE
SING | CONNECT | CELEBRATE |

TEMPLE BETH EL

THE BOOK OF JUDGES

*Join us as we study this fascinating and funny
book. No prior experience required.*

WEDNESDAYS
12-1PM
LOGIN WITH THE
REGULAR ZOOM LINK

Join for as many sessions as you are able. Rabbi
Asch has recordings if you miss a session!

SUNDAY,
JUNE 7TH

10:00 AM

JOIN US!

Annual Meeting

Congregational updates, the Temple service award and more!

Join us on Zoom for our Annual Meeting. Hear about the congregation, including a financial report, thank outgoing board members, and look back on the past year. Login information in the weekly email.

Call the office if you need help with Zoom

**Midrash: More than
Rabbinic stories**
Delve into midrash about
the 10 commandments

Monday, May 18th
5:30-7:00pm



SOUP AND STUDY

JOIN US FOR A DISCUSSION OF
JEWISH TEXTS ON ZOOM
BYOS (BRING YOUR OWN SOUP)



Judaism and Pandemics
What can Jewish texts tell us
about Covid-19?

Wednesday, June 17th
5:30-7:00pm

Hebrew School Goes Online...and Gets 100% Attendance!

Our Hebrew school has made the transition to online learning! We are joining together for 45 minutes of circle time with a story, songs, and a fun activity, and then each class spends 30-45 minutes on Jewish learning. Recently we voted for our favorite Jewish foods. Babka won, followed by hamentaschen, matzah toffee crunch, and bagels and cream cheese. The kids have been doing an activity each week--cooking a new Jewish food, creating public art, creating a scene from Passover, coming up with new Jewish objects and more. The individual classes have also adapted to online learning. Rich Goldman's b'nai mitzvah class is ending each class with music performed by a student. Emily Bley's class recently wrote their own psalms. Bria Wastson's class brought their dogs to join them at Hebrew School. While we look forward to being together in person, our online gatherings have brought a smile to our faces and enabled us to continue providing Jewish content and community for our youngest members.



Donations

Building Fund Capital Campaign

- Margaret and Louis Metzger
- Nancy Ross and George Viles
- Rabbi Susan Bulba Carvutto
- Seth Greene



Rabbi Discretionary Fund

- Mathew Rolnick
- Michael Levey
- James Dayboch
- Sarah & Michael Drickey

Yahrzeit/Memorials

- Emily & Jerry Bley in memory of Lauraine Goodrich
- Li'el Boudreau and Rebecca Stevens in memory of Hyman Cohen
- Sarah & Michael Drickey in memory of David Spaulding
- Joan & Lowell Freiman in memory of Laura Goldstein
- Joan & Lowell Freiman in memory of Sidney Goldstein
- Jane & Richard Golden in memory of Rose Golden
- Anya & Allen Goldey in memory of Laura Goldstein and Lillian Freiman
- Anya & Allen Goldey in memory of Sidney Goldstein
- Pauline & Reginald Hannaford in memory of Henry Thielman and Helen Hannaford
- Ellen Kandel in memory of Charles and Dorothy Bader
- Michael Levey in memory of Todd Greene
- Doretta Shapiro in memory of Todd Greene
- Joe O'Donnell in memory of Todd Greene
- Mort and Barbara Libby in memory of Louise Macy
- Barbara Mayer & Chuck Acker in memory of Louise Macy
- Kate McLinn in memory of Louise Macy
- Marie Sacks in memory of Louise Macy
- Deborah & Sidney Sewall in memory of Louise Macy
- Beth & Steven Shapiro in memory of Louise Macy
- Doretta Shapiro in memory of Louise Macy
- Sue & David Offer in memory of Samuel Gershon
- Beth & Steven Shapiro in memory of Rose Golden and Shirley Siegel
- Dace and Jon Weiss in memory of Irving Weiss
- Gail and Gary Weiss in memory of Max Cohen
- Marty Weiss in memory of Sam Weiss

Making a donation to Temple Beth El is a special way to honor family and friends.

Terumah

This fund includes the former General Fund and Dues and covers all temple operating expenses.

Building Fund

This fund is for major repair and rebuilding of our facilities.

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

This fund helps Rabbi Asch meet special needs in the community.

Yahrzeit/Memorials/Honoraria

These contributions are made in memory or honor of family and friends.

Memorial Plaques

Remember a loved one with a memorial plaque in the synagogue.

Donation: \$250

Payment due at time of order.

Tree of Life

Acknowledge a life milestone in a special way by adding a personalized, inscribed leaf to the Tree. Donation: \$36.

Payment due at time of order.

Please make checks payable to Temple Beth El. Indicate the fund to which you want to contribute and mail to TBE, Box 871, Augusta, ME 04332. Undesignated checks will go to the General Fund. *Temple Beth El accepts Visa & Mastercard. Please contact the office with any questions.*

Temple Beth El

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 Rabbi Erica Asch 207-242-9792
 Email: bethelaugusta@gmail.com

President

Chuck Cohen

Vice President

Mike Drickey

Treasurer

Hildie Lipson

Secretary

Judith Plano

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Emily Bessey, J. Richardson
 Collins, Mike Drickey, Richard
 Fein, Ellen Freed, Richard
 Goldman, Nancy Kelly, Cree
 Krull, Fran Rudoff, Lila
 Solomon, Chris Zinck

Honorary Directors

Peter Bickerman
 Sumner Lipman
 Deb Sewall

Committee Chairs:

Emily Bley (Hebrew School)
 Judith Plano (Yad B'Yad)
 Fran Rudoff (Fundraising)

May Yahrzeits

Anne O'Donnell	May 1st
Rebecca Slosberg	May 1st
Jean Dietz	May 2nd
Max Slosberg	May 3rd
Elizabeth Lipman Winter	May 7th
Meyer Schwartz	May 10th
Benjamin R. Slosberg	May 11th
Robert Bien	May 13th
Tyler Lessard	May 14th
Leigh Ann Lee	May 15th
Edwin Eckert	May 16th
Carol Bernstein Hecht	May 18th
Julian Sacks	May 18th
Clara Miller Weiss	May 20th
Clara Miller Weiss	May 20th
Erika Ellen Briggs	May 22nd
Marion Fusco	May 22nd
Fred Slater	May 24th
Gertrude Rudoff	May 25th
Albert Freiman	May 26th
Fred Sewall	May 26th
Jean Bakaley	May 27th
Samuel Lerman	May 28th
Matthew Peter McLinn	May 29th
Stuart Boughton	May 30th

June Yahrzeits

Robert Powell	June 2nd
Julius Sussman	June 3rd
Howard S. Slosberg	June 4th
Jack Drickey	June 6th
Joseph Schatz	June 7th
Joseph Leroy Shed	June 7th
Albert Abraham Rosenberg	June 10th
Aviva Schnur	June 11th
Paul Adler	June 12th
Beverly Gass	June 12th
Joan "Jet" Price	June 13th
David Pollack	June 18th
Beatrice Director	June 22nd
Ruth Gross	June 23rd
Miriam Weiss	June 23rd
Sol Moser	June 25th
Gloria Mondschein	June 27th
Dora R. Slosberg	June 28 th
Seymour (Sy) Mondschein	June 30th



Condolences

- To **Carol Graham** on the death of her father, Ken Allen, on April 14th
- To **Sherri Joseph** on the death of her mother, Maria King, on April 22nd.

Portland Chevra Kadisha Jewish Funeral Home

471 Deering Ave.
 Portland, ME 04103
 207.774.3733

Refuah Sh'leimah (Get Well) to:

Rabbi Susan
 Bruce Schatz
 Carole Fitzgerald
 Judy Plano