

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

Tevet-Shevat-Adar 5781/January-February 2021

From the desk of Rabbi Asch

It's fair to say that just about everyone is looking forward to 2021. There is a feeling that when midnight comes and January 1st is officially here, everything will be better. 2021 doesn't have to be great, just better than 2020 and that upward trajectory will start on January 1st. The idea that January 1st has magical properties is scientific. Studies tell us that people are more likely to start working towards a new goal during a time that represents new beginnings. This is called the "Fresh Start Effect." It's not just January 1st. People are more likely to start a new project on the first of the month, on their birthday, and even on a Monday. And, after a crazy 2020, we are all looking for a fresh start this January.

While we might be hoping that January 1st will magically solve all the problems of the last year, we know this is not the case (sorry to be a downer). Judaism teaches us that when trying to make change we need to have patience. Our "fresh start" holiday is Yom Kippur. But before we get to that day, we have more than a month of warming up. For the month of Elul we reflect on our actions, during Selichot we say the same prayers we will say on Yom Kippur, and on Rosh HaShanah we start ten days of intense introspection. The 1st of January and the 10th of Tishrei don't magically change us or the world. That change happens only with careful and long-term work.

Do I hope 2021 will be better? Absolutely. But I am mindful that we have to work to make it better. We have to continue supporting all who are struggling during this time. We have to continue to wear masks and keep our physical distance, even though we are tired. We have to get vaccinated when we are able. And, we have to continue, through all of the pain and sorrow, to find hope. Finding hope means recognizing that while 2021 will be better, that improvement won't be instantaneous. We need to practice patience. I want to close with this poem by Stuart Kestenbaum, Maine's poet laureate and a member of Temple Beth El in Bangor.

Holding the Light for Kait Rhoads

Gather up whatever is glittering in the gutter, whatever has tumbled	Whether we created God or God created us
in the waves or fallen	it all comes down to this:
in flames out of the sky,	In our imperfect world
	we are meant to repair
for it's not only our	and stitch together
hearts that are broken,	what beauty there is, stitch it
but the heart	
of the world as well.	with compassion and wire.
Stitch it back together.	See how everything
	we have made gathers
Make a place where	the light inside itself
the day speaks to the night	and overflows? A blessing.
and the earth speaks to the sky.	

I hope that in the coming, imperfect year, you will find beauty, light, and blessing.

TBE Schedule: January—February

Services

Havdallah Saturday, January 2nd& 9th at 5:30pm Saturday, February 13th & 20th @ 6:00pm

Shabbat Services @ 7:00pm *Friday, January 1st (at 5:30pm) Friday, January 8th Friday, February 12th Friday, February 19th*

Shabbat Services with Beth Israel (Bath) @ 5:00pm Friday, January 15th & 29th

Adult Study

Daf Yomi @ 10:00 am Saturday, January 2nd, 9th, 16th, & 23rd Saturday, February 6th, 13th, & 20th

Torah Study @ 10:30am Saturday, January 2nd, 9th, 16th, & 23rd Saturday, February 6th, 13th, & 20th

Hebrew School

Sunday, January 10th, 17th, 24th, & 31st at 9:30am

Tu BiShvat Seder at 10:30am on January 31st!

Sunday, February 7th, 21st, & 28th at 9:30am

No School on February 14th!

TBE Activities

Prophets Study @ 11:00am Thursday, January 7th, 14th, & 28th Thursday, February 11th, 18th, & 25th

Racial Justice Discussion @ 7:00pm *Thursday, January 7*th *Tuesday, February 23*rd

TBE Board Meeting Thursday, January 14th from 6:00 – 8:00pm Thursday, February 11th from 6:00 – 8:00pm

Intro to Judaism Class @ 7:00-8:30pm Tuesday, January 19th

Annual Ice Storm Wine Tasting & Silent Auction *Saturday, January 30th, 5:30-7:30pm*

Tu BiShvat Seder with Hebrew School @ 10:30am Sunday, January 31st

Purim with TBE @ 6:30pm Thursday, February 25th (Casting Call 1/5 @6:30)

Getting onto Zoom

Unless otherwise noted, 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 or if you need help setting up Zoom. You must register for Center events to receive the unique link for those programs.

Todah Rabbah

• Our Fabulous Hanukkah Committee: Ilana Gilg, Ben Gottlieb, Nancy Kelly, and Lila Solomon for putting on seven fabulous nights of celebration.

• Mark Leibowitz and Nancy Katz for their wonderful presentation about their creation of the stainedglass window.

Sabbatical II and Our New Rabbi (Again)

By Chuck Cohen, TBE President

Back in 2019, in what now seems like the good old days, I discussed Rabbi Asch's upcoming sabbatical. As explained there, the Rabbi's current contract allowed for a three month sabbatical in late 2019-early 2020, and allows for another three months of sabbatical to be taken during the months of July 2020 and June 2021. Rabbi Asch will be taking one month of this remaining sabbatical time starting on January 11, 2021.

Back in November of last year, I confessed that the thought of the Rabbi leaving us for three months made me a little queasy. Thanks to the outstanding work and leadership of the Sabbatical Committee, we proved that "we could do this!" We have essentially gotten the band back together for another tour of duty for the January 2021 Sabbatical. So, going into this sabbatical, I feel much more confident in our ability to keep the ship afloat and moving forward this time around and, thus, much less queasy.

Although Rabbi Asch may be around town during the sabbatical, to fulfill our obligation to the Rabbi and to allow her a peaceful and restful time away from her duties, it is imperative that we treat the Rabbi as unavailable during this time period. The responses to the Sabbatical FAQs below provide you with a list of who to contact in a variety of situations that may arise during the sabbatical.

Finally, some very good news to end 2020 and start 2021. I first introduced the topic of the Rabbi's then upcoming sabbatical, as part of a review of the book "The New Rabbi." It only seems fitting then as part of this discussion of the Rabbi's Sabbatical II, that I announce that we in fact have a "new" rabbi starting July 1, 2021, who in fact happens to be the same person as the "old" Rabbi. Specifically, it is with a great deal of pleasure and excitement that I can report that Rabbi Asch and TBE have agreed upon the terms of a new contract, which will take effect on July 1, 2021. Under the terms of the agreement, Rabbi Asch will continue to be our Rabbi for an additional five years, or June 30, 2026! Greater detail on the terms of our new contract will be provided in a subsequent newsletter.

Rabbi Asch's Sabbatical Leave Frequently Asked Questions January 11, 2021-February 7, 2021

What is a sabbatical?

The term "sabbatical" is related to the word Shabbat (a time of rest). In the Torah, every seventh year is a sabbatical year where the land lies fallow. Sabbaticals are typically taken by rabbis in their seventh year of work for a congregation. During this period Rabbi Asch will not be working and will have the opportunity to rest and study as well as spend time with her family. Rabbi Asch will also have one month of sabbatical in her next contract year.

Who will serve the congregation during Rabbi Asch's sabbatical?

We have a talented group of lay leaders Daf Yomi and Torah study while Rabbi Asch is gone. We will be joining with Rabbi Vinikoor's congregation in Bath for Shabbat services. Madeline Cooper will be teaching our Prophets Study and Frankie Sandmel will be teaching Introduction to Judaism. All of Rabbi Asch's regular responsibilities will be covered by congregants or guest teachers. This will be a chance for everyone to learn from some wonderful rabbis and Jewish scholars. Additionally, we have a talented team serving as our sabbatical committee to make sure that everything runs smoothly.

What's happening at TBE

Who do I call if I have an emergency?

Nancy Kelly is serving as the contact person in case of a death or serious illness. Several local rabbis have volunteered to be available to officiate at funerals and support families through the grieving process. We also have a dedicated group of volunteers under the leadership of Susan Bakaley Marshall who can help those who are ill with visits or meals.

Will Rabbi Asch be in contact during her sabbatical? Will she be checking email or answering her phone?

Rabbi Asch will not be checking in on the synagogue during her absence. One goal of the sabbatical is for Rabbi Asch to step back from the day-to-day work of the synagogue to gain distance and clarity. This will help her return refreshed and renewed.

Email: Rabbi Asch will not check her email during her sabbatical. Please do not send her emails. If you forget and email her, you will receive a detailed "away" message directing you who to contact in her absence. When Rabbi Asch returns to work, she will delete all emails in her inbox without reading them. *Phone Calls and Texts:* Rabbi Asch will also not answer calls or texts to her emergency cell phone. TBE President Chuck Cohen will be in touch with Rabbi Asch if an emergency arises that the board feels needs her attention.

Social Media: Rabbi Asch will not check social media during absence and will not see your posts or Facebook messages.

No doubt many of you will see Rabbi Asch around town during her time "away." We ask that you not discuss synagogue business with her when you see her around town. You should feel free to ask her if she has read any good books or cooked any new recipes lately!

What will Rabbi Asch be doing on her sabbatical?

Rabbi Asch has two goals for her sabbatical: rest and learning. Rabbi Asch will be teaching a JanPlan course at Colby College on "The Good Life." She will also be supervising her children's at-home schooling (and thus learning a lot!). She plans to spend time being outside, reading, cooking, and listening to podcasts.

Who do I contact with questions about the sabbatical?

You may speak with you may contact Rabbi Asch prior to the commencement of the Sabbatical or Temple President Chuck Cohen prior to or during the Sabbatical.

Who is in charge of what during the sabbatical?

Sabbatical Committee: Chuck Cohen, Nancy Kelly, Cree Krull and Susan Bakaley Marshall will be serving as the sabbatical committee and making sure that everything runs smoothly while Rabbi Asch is away. Torah Study and Daf Yomi: Cree Krull Services: We are invited to join with Beth Israel (Bath) Hebrew School: Bria Watson and Jenna Greenbaum Prophets Study: Madeline Cooper Introduction to Judaism: Frankie Sandmel Pastoral Care: Susan Bakaley Marshall Death and Serious Illness: Nancy Kelly is the contact person and will have a rabbi get in touch with you Weekly Email: Cree Krull Discretionary Fund: Reverend Carie Johnson

What's happening at TBE

Gratitude & Joy for Our Rabbi

By Emily Bessey, TBE Board Member

For each bi-monthly newsletter a board member is asked to write an essay for our community about ANYTHING IN THE WORLD. This is a simple, yet slightly overwhelming ask, as there are LOTS of things in the world worthy of the time it takes to write an essay. I'm writing this the week Hanukkah begins, so naturally my mind drifts to things that bring me joy and a sense of gratitude. I've been thinking a lot about how grateful I am that my children get to attend a joyful little Montessori school in Fairfield called Kennebec Montessori School (KMS). It's a phenomenal school. Honestly, I am a huge proponent of public schools and never imagined I'd be sending my kids to a private school for their elementary years, but here we are. When something is working well for a child, why mix it up? Daisy has attended this school since she was 2³. In the Montessori philosophy, children follow a 3-year cycle, so the teachers get to know the kids really well. Daisy is now in her 9th year at KMS. She has grown up in this school and the teachers not only know her, her strengths, and her areas in need of growth, but they truly see her and her heart and her worries and her shine. These teachers really get her to her core. It's Daisy's last year there and I've been thinking about how sad it will be for her to lose that comfort of having adults in her life, outside of her parents, who know her and love her. But then it hit me. There is someone else in her life that she gets to see regularly who knows her and gets her... Rabbi Asch.

Rabbi Asch understands the importance of kids having grownups in their lives, outside of their parents, that they can trust. She sees my kids when they are grouchy or hyper or emotional. She meets them where they are and always makes them feel like they have something to contribute to the larger group. She infuses Judaism into their identities and encourages them to feel proud of being Jewish, even though they are not surrounded by other Jewish children at their schools and in their neighborhoods. Rabbi Asch listens and reflects and takes the time to connect with Daisy and Ruby in a way that I'd imagine few Rabbis feel they have the time to do. I picture many Rabbis being content to let the Hebrew School teachers manage the little kids while he or she does more "scholarly" work. I actually believe Rabbi Asch sees working with the little ones as the scholarly work. The time she is putting into connecting with my kids will result in them feeling connected to Judaism in the larger world and it will be part of them, no matter where they go. She has taken the time to get to know them and because of this, she gets them.

The thing is... Rabbi Asch knows all of us. Can you imagine how much time and energy that takes? Honestly, I feel like you should get up right now and give Rabbi Asch a standing ovation. This woman has a heart of gold. She somehow manages to act as a floatation device for our entire community—and sometimes for other communities, too. She checks in when we are sick. She puts together calls to action when there are injustices happening in our world. She marches. She prays. She creatively engages the youth. She connects with older members of our congregation. She hangs out with the teenagers and pre-COVID she took them to trampoline parks. SHE EVEN HOSTS SLEDDING PARTIES AT HER HOUSE. Come on, people.

I grew up in a Conservative synagogue in El Paso, TX. El Paso is a city with a relatively large Jewish community despite the fact that it is literally located in the middle of nowhere. The Jews in El Paso had 3 options- a smallish Reform temple, a biggish Conservative synagogue, and a tiny Chabad community. All of the rabbis were men. If, when I was 11, you'd asked me to draw a picture of a Rabbi, it would definitely *Continued on page 6*

What's Happening at TBE

Gratitude, continued from page 5

be a poorly sketched man with a long white beard. Guess what. If you asked my girls to draw a picture of what a Rabbi looks like, it would likely be a stick figure, but that stick figure would definitely NOT have a beard. Their role models of who can be Rabbis are Rabbi Asch, Rabbi Isaacs, and Rabbi Vinikoor. How cool is that? My Rabbi growing up was a nice enough man (and he did have a beard), but he definitely didn't host sledding parties at his house (okay, truth be told, it barely snowed in El Paso, but you get my point). We are so lucky to have Rabbi Asch leading this congregation, and I am beyond grateful and filled with joy that my kids, whom she totally gets and loves, are able to grow up with her in their lives. Wishing you a safe, healthy, and joy-filled holiday season.



Purim Thurzday, feb. 25* 6:30pm

Purim 5781 is on its way, and so is the planning for everyone's favorite irreverent holiday!

Want to take part in the Purimspiel, or deliver one of our famed announcements? Whether you're curious or committed, it's time to mark your calendar for this one, peeps!

Purim 5781 Info Meeting & Casting Call Tuesday, January 5th 6:30 pm - 7:30 pm

We'll take names, parcel out parts, and lay out the game plan for the Purim celebration that will out-Zoom all others! There'll be something for everyone - even you, Shy Wallflower, so don't hold back. **The more, the merrier**



What's happening at TBE

Tu BiSh'vat Seder

CELEBRATE THE COMING OF SPRING (IN ISRAEL)

SUNDAY, JANUARY 31, 2020 10:30AM

Join with our Hebrew School to celebrate the trees. Bring: fruits and nuts white and purple grape juice. More details in the weekly email.

What's Happening at TBE

Ubriachiamoci



ZOOM IN FOR Temple Beth El's 23rd annual vino tasting Saturday, January 30, 2021 5:30 – 7:30 P.M.

Escape to the famous wine regions of Italy with our own Syd Sewall, sommelier straordinario! It's not an *ice storm* this year, just a *pandemic*, so here's what you need to do:

- For a \$40 ticket, you'll pick up (or we can arrange a delivery) your event box at the Temple. Your box will include: 4 vino selections – 2 white and 2 red – served in mini bottles; crackers and chocolates; and any raffle tickets you purchased in advance (see below). Pick up details will be emailed to you.
- We're bringing back the popular WINE PULL from last year! When you stop by the Temple to pick up your vino, you'll be able to pull a cork and win a mystery bottle of wine – could be a finely aged Cabernet or a bottle of "Two Buck Chuck!" \$20 per pull!
- <u>Non-drinkers</u> and <u>people not in the Augusta area</u> are encouraged to sign up and join the festivities! <u>Invite family members and friends no matter where they live!</u> Please consider making a donation to TBE and show your support for this FUNdraiser!
- Buy raffle tickets and win fabulous prizes! Purchase your tickets when you sign up for the wine tasting; the drawing will be live during the evening. \$5 per ticket or 5 tickets for \$20.
- If you can, contribute something *favalosa* for a live auction with our resident humorist, aka TBE's President Chuck Cohen! We're seeking 10-12 exceptional items for the auction with values starting at \$50. Please see the attached sheet with more information about donations.
- Fire up your brain cells and start studying for an Italian vino trivia contest!
- Prepare a deliziosa Italian dinner to enjoy during the evening! We'll be sharing weekly recipes in January!

RSVP by January 26, 2021! Let Dawn know how many tickets and raffle chances you wish to purchase. Or if you just want to participate without the vino, buy raffle tickets and/or make a donation:

- Call the Temple office at 207-622-7450
- Email the Temple at bethelaugusta@gmail.com
- Visit the Temple's donation page to pay and then email Dawn to let her know how many wine tasting and raffle tickets you ordered. https://bethelaugusta.org/2014/04/28/donate-sp-741/

Ticket holders will be contacted before the event with details about advance wine pick- ups at the Temple.

What's Happening at TBE

Ubriachiamoci



LIVE Auction Donation Information for Temple Beth El's 23rd annual vino tasting Saturday, January 30,2021

We're going live this year with a ZOOM auction during the wine tasting! Please help us make this a success by donating something special. We'd like to auction 10-12 special items <u>valued at \$50 and up</u> (please save your smaller items for the 2022 silent auction!). Here are some ideas:

- Gift cards for a special meal to go from a local restaurant
- Vacation rentals (preferably within a safe driving distance)
- Pandemic appropriate outdoor activities, such as a round of golf
- Extraordinary, one-of-a kind home-baked items (your very best apple pie, your grandmother's hamantaschen, that chocolate babka!)
- Works of art
- Jewelry
- Sports memorabilia
- Your idea!

Please send an email to Fran Rudoff at <u>frudoff@gmail.com</u> or call her at 207-212-9544 with your donation idea by December 30, 2020.

Hebrew School

Special Guests Needed!

Have an extra 10 minutes? Want to help out the TBE Hebrew School? Be a special guest!

Join us from 11-11:10 on Zoom and share something Jewish with our Hebrew School kids. It could be a favorite holiday recipe, a Jewish song, art, or anything! The kids will be thrilled to meet you and will ask you a lot of questions. Email Rabbi Asch to volunteer.







Donations

General/Other

• Miriam, Robin & Aaron Asch, in support of TBE

• Jerryanne Laperriere, in honor of Miriam Asch's Bat Mitzvah

- Solomon Nethers, in support of the needs of TBE
- Karin & James Orenstein, in support of the needs of TBE
- Patrice Putman, a thank you gift for all that TBE does

Building Fund Capital Campaign

Charlene Cleven

• Richard Dana

Rabbi Discretionary Fund

 Chuck Cohen & Mary Beth Paquette in memory of Julius Goos

- Mike & Sarah Drickey
- Suzanne Harrigan
- Deborah Sandler in honor of Miriam Asch's Bat Mitzvah

Yahrzeit/Memorials

• Chris Myers Asch & Erica Asch, in memory of Robert P. Myers, Jr.

- Bob Bellamn & Carole Osterer, in memory Julius Goos
- Estelle & Harvey Cooperstone, in memory of Julius Goos
- Richard Dana, in memory of Lenora Dana
- Mike & Sarah Drickey, in memory of Dorothy Drickey
- Mike and Sarah Drickey, in memory of Beverly Drickey
- Andrea Freed, in memory of Murray Freed
- Ellen Freed, in memory of Murray Freed
- Anya & Allen Goldey, in memory of Beatrice Freiman
- Maja Hrnjicebic, in memory of Julius Goos
- Nancy Kelly, in memory of John Ray
- Kate McLinn, in memory of Julius and Charlotte Goos
- Anne & Alfredo Monsivais, in memory of Lila Segal
- James Montell, in memory of Abraham Goldberg
- Susan & David Offer, in memory of Lila Segal
- Jerry & Nadine Popham, in memory of Julius Goos
- Albert Rudoff, in memory of Sylvia Rudoff
- Steven & Beth Shapiro, in memory of Eli and Daniel Bulba

Terumah Pledges

- Bob Adler and Ann-Marie Nolin
- David and Carol Faigin
- Andrea Freed
- Bob and Ava Gross
- Ellen Grunblatt and Stephen Bien
- Marcia and Michael Parker
- Lila Solomon and Tim Gagne
- Julia Underwood

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

<u>Terumah</u>

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

Phone207-622-7450Rabbi Erica Asch207-242-9792Email: bethelaugusta@gmail.com

President Chuck Cohen

Vice President Cree Krull <u>Treasurer</u> Mike Drickey <u>Secretary</u> Emily Bessey

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J. Richardson Collins, Richard Fein, Ellen Freed, Ben Gottlieb, Richard Goldman, Nancy Kelly, Cree Krull, Mike Levey, Hildie Lipson, Chris Zinck

Honorary Directors

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Committee Chairs:

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

Portland Chevra Kadisha Jewish Funeral Home 471 Deering Ave. Portland, ME 04103 207.774.3733

January Yahrzeits

January 2nd January 2nd January 3rd January 3rd January 4th January 4th January 6th January 9th January 10th January 11th January 15th January 15th January 17th January 17th January 18th January 20th January 21st January 21st January 22nd January 22nd January 23rd January 25th January 26th January 27th January 28th January 30th January 30th January 30th

Edmond Betit Rhoda Boughton Leoni Adler **Dorothy Bader** Faye Goldberg Montell Annie Slosberg **Bernard Marienhoff** Mvron Shulman Evelyn Apogi Bickerman Philmore Schiff Leo Bessey Jane Bridgman Koopman Jarvey Gilbert Ruth McLinn Elkan C. Offer Louise Macy Jacques Grunblatt Syliva LaPerriere James Carvutto Rose Eckert Leonard Fels Jacob Dana Frank J. Lipman Thelma Gross **Richele Amy Gross** Ken Allen Meyer Muller **Douglas Schair**



February Yahrzeits

February 3rd February 4th February 4th February 4th February 5th February 6th February 7th February 7th February 8th February 8th February 8th February 9th February 9th February 10th February 11th February 12th February 12th February 13th February 14th February 15th February 17th February 17th February 18th February 21st February 21st February 21st February 23rd February 25th

February 26th

February 26th

February 1st

Selma Dana Len Bolonsky Leah Deborah Freed **Richard Goldman** Eunice Kuehnert John Stanhope Anna Imondi **Odell Kominers** Virginia Seager Ezra David Bessey Erik Eckert James LaPerriere **Betty Franzel** Henry Thileman Morey Lerman Lauraine Goodrich Theodore Kuehnert Yetta Marienhoff **Davis Spalding** Walter Barlow Svdnev Sewall Hyman Cohen (Chaim) Harry M. Slosberg Frederick LaPenna Morris L. Cohen Rose Golden Laura Goldstein Harold Shapiro Molly Libben Todd Michael Green Helen Hannaford

Condolences

• Scott Schiff-Slater on the death of his mother, Lillian, on Sunday, December 20, 2020