



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

January Calendar

Jan. 1st (on Zoom)

Daf Yomi @ 10am
Torah Study @ 10:30am

Jan. 2nd (on Zoom)

Rosh Hodesh Group @ 2-3pm
For women & non-binary people

Jan. 8th (on Zoom)

Daf Yomi @ 10am
Torah Study @ 10:30am

Jan. 14th (on Zoom)

Shabbat Services with Beth Israel (Bath) 7pm
Look in your weekly email for a special link

Jan. 15th (in person)

Shabbat the Wild at Viles Arboretum @ 10:30am

Jan. 19th (on Zoom)

Board Meeting @ 6pm

Jan. 22nd (on Zoom)

Daf Yomi @ 10am
Torah Study @ 10:30am

Jan. 29th (on Zoom)

Ice Storm Wine Tasting and Auction @ 5:30pm

Hebrew School (on Zoom)

9:30-11:00
January 9, 16, 23, 30

From the desk of Rabbi Asch...

As the Omicron variant is sending many of us back inside and Temple activities back online in January (except for our Shabbat in the Wild hike!) I've been thinking about the nature of community. In one sense, it makes me sad to see only the little boxes on the screen and to sit alone in my office or in the synagogue while leading. I know we will miss the informal hallway conversations, seeing one another, and sharing space together. But, as this pandemic has dragged on, I have also come to see the beauty of an online community. At a recent shivah minyan, we were joined by TBE members from near and far, as well as family members from across the country. Childhood friends were able to join to offer comfort to the family. I don't know that we can measure the relative merits or shortcomings of gathering online or not, nor is that really the best use of our time. In some form, our online community is here to stay even when we do move back to in person gatherings.



Given that we will most likely be going back and forth between online and in person for the foreseeable future, we should ponder how to make sure that we connect to one another and continue to strengthen our community even when we are physically apart. Here are some of my ideas. I welcome yours.

• **Show up!** The best way to build community is to be there. I encourage you to attend Torah study and Shabbat in the Wild this month, and to support our fabulous congregants who have volunteered to lead. We also look forward to our Ice Storm Wine Tasting and another visit from Alex Matthews in February. Your

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February Calendar*

* Check the weekly email to see if we will be in person in Feb.

Feb. 4th with Alex Matthews
Shabbat Services @ 6pm

Feb. 5th with Alex Matthews
Daf Yomi @ 10am
Torah Study @ 10:30am

Feb. 12th
Torah Study @ 10am
Shabbat Services @ 10:55am

Feb. 16th
Board Meeting @ 6pm

Feb. 25th
Shabbat Services @ 6pm

Feb. 26th
Daf Yomi @ 10am
Torah study @ 10:30am

Hebrew School
9:30-12:00
February 6, 13, 27

Rabbi's Message from page 1

presence makes a difference. I'll look to incorporate more opportunities for discussion when we are all online.

• **Volunteer!** Susan Bakaley Marshall has been "marshalling" our Bikkur Holim efforts by herself for the last few years. She now has a committee to assist with arranging meal deliveries, rides, calls and visits (if safe). If you have some time to spare, let Susan know that you are willing to help (wiserock@fairpoint.net or 207 589-4632).

• **Ask for Help!** You don't need to be undergoing a life crisis to reach out for some help. If life is a little bit stressful and you could use a few meals, let us know. If you are spending more time at home and would love a call or two to brighten your week, we can help. We can only be a community if you let us know how we can assist. Our family was recently the recipient of meals during the high holidays (a very busy time) and after Chris' mom died. It was incredibly helpful. Let Susan know if we can provide some assistance for you.

• **Start Something!** Thanks to the interest and initiative of two congregants, we have a Rosh Hodesh group and Social Justice Torah discussion group starting in the next few months. These groups are a chance to get to know other Temple members, learn together, and have some fun. Do you have an idea for a new program or activity? Let me know.

The Baal Shem Tov was asked why the Amidah, the central prayer of the daily service, begins with "God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob." Isn't that redundant? Why not just say "God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob"? The Baal Shem Tov answered: "The God of Jacob was not the God of Isaac, and the God of Isaac was not the God of Abraham. Each grasped God in his own way, and so must each of us. Only then will God's presence continue to dwell in this world." We are part of a tradition which has changed over time. The Baal Shem Tov would have never imagined that we would include Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah in our prayers! As our ancestors have many times before, we too must change as our circumstances change. I look forward to seeing all that we do in the months and years to come!

A Personal Journey Toward Judaism

By Nancy Kelly

For almost 25 years it has been my privilege to be a member of Temple Beth El. Often during services, I find myself looking around at the other congregants and wondering what their story is and how they found their way to the temple. I offer the following as a piece of my journey to our temple and to Judaism.

Growing up in the suburbs of Boston in the late 40's and 50's, my first experience with religion was attending the Natick Congregational Church along with my sibling and my father. Seven or eight years of Sunday School gave me the opportunity to study the Old Testament. Our bedtime was comprised of playing a hand of Gin Rummy and my father reading stories or psalms from the Bible. When I was of age to become confirmed however, I could not follow through and in fact, refused to do so.

It was at this time, that I stumbled upon a letter in a borrowed purse, which would open me up to a glimpse of my history and that of my mother's. The letter from my mother's brother in Miami, explained that he had been searching for her since the end of WW II. He was getting married and wished for her and her family to attend the wedding. My mother had told us that her brother was deceased, so you can imagine the surprise. As I unpacked the letter, I learned that my uncle had left Toronto at the onset of the war, and now owned a band of radio stations across the Gulf Coast. The wedding would be held at the Americana Hotel in Miami Beach and many of the Sandler relatives would be traveling to attend.

My mother had received this letter and chosen not to disclose it to any of us. She had always refused to share any information about her family in Toronto, including the names of my grandparents, or great grandparents or where they came from. All of this was to change as we did travel to Miami for the wedding. Uncle Jack was very proud of his Judaism, his family, and his heritage. Thus began my introduction into my family story at his most elaborate wedding.

I learned my grandparents immigrated to Toronto in 1910 from Vilnius, Lithuania, to escape the programs and anti-Semitic environment building in the country. (Other family members had fled to Montevideo, Uruguay). They were cousins and lived with my great grandparents in downtown Toronto on Yonge Street, along with many aunts and uncles. When my mother was two, her father died and my grandmother brought the family back to Lithuania for a few years, until the money ran out. Upon returning to Toronto, mother was placed in a TB Sanatorium until she was 13. During that time, my grandmother died, and mother was an orphan. Upon leaving the sanatorium, she was instructed to never, ever disclose her Judaism. She never did. She denied her background all her life and refused to ever share as much as her given name with me. I was

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left with a yearning for who I was. It is said that you cannot know where you are going until you know where you came from. My siblings did not/do not share my quest for knowledge and to this day, do not embrace their Jewish background.

Fast forward to my marriage to an amazing Irish Catholic, historian, and genealogist. Richard devoted many years to researching the Sandler Family and their journey to Toronto. We spent time reading all the microfiche available on the family life and eventually located the cemetery where my grandmother, Liba Sandler, is buried. I was able to place some of mother's ashes there a few years ago.

Among the first events that Rabbi Susan initiated was a class called "A Taste of Judaism." My husband signed us both up for the course. For the very first time, I felt as though I belonged somewhere. I found community within the walls of our small temple and was introduced to a plethora of wonderful people. Rabbi Susan and I studied the works of Harold Kushner. Ironical that I was too scared to enter Temple Israel as a teen, I found great comfort in his words. Then with a cold (Mikvah) dip into Lake Cobbesssee, my journey into Judaism began to take on a life and I became a member of our temple.

I would be remiss not to mention the wonderful women who welcomed me. Among them: Rose Golden, Lela Seigel, Belle Grodinsky and Doretta Shapiro. They were my mentors as they dedicated their labors of love to our temple. Soon I was to meet Deb Sewall and Sue Offer and the three of us, along with others, formed the Fundraising Committee. We held plant sales, coffee sales, ethnic cooking classes, and of course, the now famous Wine Tasting!

It has been my honor to meet and work with so many wonderful people from our community through the years and to have the guidance and support of two wonderful Rabbis. When I enter our temple I feel, in some small way, a reconnection to my Sandler family.

Membership Questionnaire

TBE is in the process of updating our records and need your help. Be on the lookout for the "Membership Questionnaire 2022" to arrive in the mail. Once you receive the questionnaire, please take the time to complete the form and return it to the TBE office. Thank you in advance for your help.



The Temple Turkeys often come to services, but only human members will receive the Membership Questionnaire. Fill yours out today!



Auction and Wine Tasting

Saturday January 29th at 5:30 pm

Join us on **Zoom** for an evening of delicious Spanish wines and a world class auction!

The line-up of fabulous auction items is taking shape, but we need a few more gems!
What can you offer to tempt bidders to open their wallets in support the Temple?

AUCTION

Special Property Rentals: The Drickey's Cape Cod rental house is already in the mix again for 2022!

- ➔ We'd love to offer another special getaway. Do you have a summer camp? A condo at a ski mountain? A party boat you can offer for a cruise on the Kennebec or local lake?

What life experiences or talents do you have?

We'll bet you didn't know that our TBE Pres, Cree Krull, was in the energy efficiency biz in a previous life; we'll be auctioning an energy review of your home or cottage with Cree as part of the 2022 event!

- ➔ Watcha got? Can you offer a tennis or golf lesson? Do you paint, knit, or practice yoga and have a hankering to teach others? Let us know!

We know there are many excellent cooks and bakers out there in TBE-land! We'd love to add you to our list of 2022 auction contributors, which already features:

- ✓ Hildie Lipson and her famous hamantaschen;
- ✓ Nancy Kelly and her scrumptious pecan pies;
- ✓ Emily Bessey's custom three-layer cake!

*****Engage your creativity and let [Fran Rudoff](#) know what you've got! She'd love to hear from you by January 7, 2022.**

The Wine Tasting Portion of the Evening



- For **just \$50**, you get four mini bottles of delicious Spanish wines, hand selected by our in-house sommelier, Dr. Syd Sewall, plus a mini bag of tapas for noshing.
- Non-drinkers, join in on the fun for a donation of any amount.
- **Raffle tickets are 1 for \$5 or 5 for \$20;** if purchasing wine, your raffle tickets will be included in your bag o' wine.

****How to sign up by January 24th:****

- Decide how many tickets you want (including the raffle) then...
- Call 207-622-7450 or [email](#) the Temple and let Dawn know your order, by January 24th.
- Finally, pay by check, credit card by phone or [online](#).

Hope to see you on the Zoom
Saturday, January 29th at 5:30 pm
for a super fun event!

TBE Social Justice Year in Review

By Chuck Cohen

Starting with the attack on Congress on January 6th, this past year has been a difficult one for all of us who care about democracy and social justice issues. It is important, however, that even in such difficult times, we take time to celebrate our victories. For TBE's Social Justice Initiative, 2021 saw a number of achievements and victories worth celebrating. During the year we continued our Racial Discussion Group program. Discussion programs were led by a variety of presenters, were well attended, and thought provoking. We also participated in several successful social justice actions that provided a foundation for future actions both locally and on a state-wide basis. Here are some of the highlights:


- A group viewing and discussion of the movie "Dawnland," which documents the work of the Maine Truth and Reconciliation Commission around the family disruption and abuse of the Wabanaki people and children by Maine DHHS and social services programs.
- Two thought provoking presentations by our own historian of race, Chris Myers Asch, the most recent one centering on the role of Jews in race issues and the civil rights movement in the U.S.
- A discussion led by Chris Marshall on how to effectively respond to inappropriate racist remarks in social situations that we have or might find ourselves in.
- A diversity training session on how we can make TBE a more welcoming place for newcomers.
- A program led by Karen Gross, Emily Bessey's sister, on developing a "Compassion Contract" as a tool for civil discourse in our discussions.
- Participation in the Religious Action Center's Freedom to Vote Campaign, which is lobbying Congress to pass voting rights legislation. As part of this effort, our team helped organize zoom meetings attended by members of congregations from around the state and Senator Susan Collins and staffers from Senator King's office. More than 60 people attended each of the meetings.
- Adoption of a Religious Holiday Recognition and Accommodation Policy by the Augusta School Board. This policy change built upon the foundation laid by the Beth El In Action Team in 2019, when our social justice team worked with a coalition of community groups to advocate and push for passage of the policy in Augusta as well as successfully pushing for passage in RSU 2 (Dresden, Farmingdale, Monmouth, Richmond, and Hallowell), Winthrop, and Maranacook school districts.

None of this would have been possible without the active participation by a large group of congregation members and the hard work and commitment of our Social Justice Team. Thank you to all of you who participated in the programs and activities, and a special thanks to the members of the Team: Emily Bessey, Ellen Freed, Nancy Kelly, Julia Underwood, Jay Collins and of course, our spiritual leader and community organizing guru, Rabbi Asch.

We look forward to building off our past successes in 2022 by continuing to work on social justice issues of importance to us as reform Jews, developing our relations with other reform congregations in the state to work on such issues, and to continue to provide opportunities for individual growth on racial justice and social justice issues through our discussion groups.

HIKING, SINGING, PRAYING

Shabbat in the Wild



SATURDAY, JANUARY 15
10:30AM
VILES ARBORETUM,
AUGUSTA

Rabbi Asch is on Sabbatical for January

Rabbi Asch is on sabbatical from Jan. 3rd-Jan. 30th as part of the sabbatical time included in her contract. TBE's sabbatical committee will be covering regular events, meeting pastoral needs, and answering questions. Who is in charge of what during the sabbatical:

Torah Study and Daf Yomi: Cree Krull

Services: We will join with Beth Israel (Bath).

Hebrew School: Bria Watson and Rich Goldman

Pastoral Care: Susan Bakaley Marshall (wiserock@fairpoint.net), contact Susan if you have a need for calls or meals.

Death and Serious Illness: Nancy Kelly (622-4076), Nancy will have a rabbi get in touch with you.

Weekly Email: Julia Underwood, (juliamunderwood@icloud.com)

Discretionary Fund: Pastor Chrissy Cataldo, Winthrop Congregational Church (UCC) (865-773-5151)

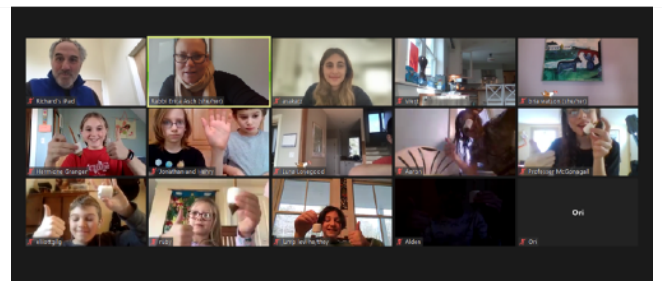
General Questions: Dawn Fecteau, Temple Office, contact Dawn with questions about services, learning, Hebrew School or anything else. She can put you in touch with the correct person (622-7450) (bethelaugusta.org).

Bikkur Holim Committee

We are pleased to have a newly formed bikkur holim committee ready to coordinate volunteers to provide meals, make phone calls, drive to appointments or meet other needs. Thank you to David Faigin, Ilana Gilg and Liz Sizler for joining the committee which is headed by Susan Bakaley Marshall. If you need help or want to volunteer please reach out to Susan at wiserock@fairpoint.net or 207 589-4632.

Online for January

Our Covid Task Force has recommended we move online for January. Join us on Zoom for all our Temple activities this month, except our outdoor hike for Shabbat in the Wild. Stay tuned to our weekly emails for updates on our February events. Questions? Reach out to Cree Krull.



Hebrew School Studies Tikvah (Hope)

By Bria Watson

A temporary return to remote Hebrew School has presented some unique opportunities for interactive learning. Teachers and madrichim have shared interesting Jewish videos, classmates have introduced their cats, dogs and stuffed animals to our vibrant Hebrew School community, and we have even experimented with finding fun Zoom filters – all while continuing to explore Jewish values, texts and history.



Our current Jewish value is tikvah – hope. From the fantastic Doodly Jew: *Why did Miriam pack a timbrel in her hasty departure from enslavement in Egypt? Because she hoped for a future with music. Hope has always been a guiding force in Jewish tradition. This hope is not passive but, like all of Jewish practice, requires active engagement as partners with God in the ongoing work of building a better world. How are you working toward the world you hope to see?*

Rosh Hodesh Group

TBE will be hosting its monthly Rosh Hodesh group for women and non-binary people on:

- Sunday, January 2/Shvat 1 at 2:00pm to welcome Shvat
- Sunday, January 30/Shvat 28 to welcome in Adar I; and
- Sunday, February 27/Adar I 26 to welcome in Adar II.



Please check the weekly newsletter for the time (and dates might be subject to change!) On Rosh Hodesh, as on other festivals, we are commanded to be joyous, offer sacrifices, and be reminded of God's divinity (Numbers 10:10 as cited by MJL). Although we will not offer sacrifices, we do hope the group will be a joyous celebration of God's divinity and a beautiful way to enter into a new Hebrew month.

Please reach out to Carrie at cmccarter1112@gmail.com with any questions.

Tu BiSh'vat Seder

WE'RE CELEBRATING ONE DAY EARLY!

SUNDAY, JANUARY 16, 2021
9:30AM

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

Supporting TBE

Building Fund Donations

Seth Greene
Greene-Milstein Family Foundation
Doretta Shapiro in memory of Margery Myers

Rabbi Discretionary Fund Donations

Chuck Cohen in memory of Selma Prager
Jay Collins
Richard Dana
Seth Greene

General / Other

Charlene Clevon
Hinda Growick
David and Sue Offer
Karin and James Orenstein
Patrice Putnam in honor of all TBE does for the community
Carl Suchar & Phyllis Santer

Terumah Pledges for 2020-2021

Susan Bulba-Carvutto
Erica Rubin-Irish

Yahrzeit/Memorials/Honorariums

Jay Collins in memory of Stephen Fusco
Rich Dana in memory of Lenora Dana.
Patricia Davis in memory of Cathy Mattin
Mike and Sarah Drickey in memory of Dorothy Drickey
Mike and Sarah Drickey in memory of Beverly Drickey
Ellen Freed in memory of Murray Freed
Ellen Freed in memory of Leah Freed
Joan & Lowell Freiman in memory of Beatrice Freiman
Anya & Allen Goldey in memory of Beatrice Freiman
Seth Greene in memory of Sam Goos
Seth Greene in memory of Faye Goldberg Montell
Elaine Katz-Hanish in memory of Harriet Katz
Elaine Katz-Hanish In memory of Sidney Katz
Robert Katz in memory of Harriet Katz
Kate McLinn in memory of Gene McLinn
James Montell in memory of Abraham Goldberg
James Montell in memory of Hayden Goldberg
James Montell in memory of Joan Goldberg
Chris Myers Asch & Erica Asch in memory of Robert P. Myers
Marcia & Michael Parker Marcia & Michael in memory of Genevieve Kus
Albert Rudoff in memory of Sylvia Rudoff
Steven & Beth Shapiro in memory of Faye Goldberg Montell
Steven & Beth Shapiro in memory of Eli Bulba
Steven & Beth Shapiro in memory of Daniel Bulba



Board of Directors

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Cree Krull

Vice President

Emily Bessey

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Mike Drickey

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Mike Levey

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Honorary Directors

Peter Bickerman
Sumner Lipman
Deb Sewall

Contact Us

Office Manager

Dawn Fecteau
207-622-7450
bethelaugusta@gmail.com

Rabbi

Rabbi Erica Asch
207-242-9792

The TBE office is open
Tuesday, Wednesday and
Friday.

January Yahrtzeits

January 2nd	Edmond Betit
January 3rd	Leoni Adler
January 4th	Leo Bessey
January 5th	Syliva LaPerriere
January 6th	Jarvey Gilbert
January 9th	Louise Macy
January 10th	Jacques Grunblatt
January 11th	James Carvutto
January 12th	Leonard Fels
January 14th	Jacob Dana
January 15th	Jane Bridgman Koopman
January 16th	Thelma Gross
January 17th	Richele Amy Gross
January 17th	Ruth McLinn
January 18th	Rosa Belle Orenstein
January 18th	Bettye Young
January 18th	Elkan C. Offer
January 19th	Meyer Muller
January 19th	Douglas Schair
January 21st	Ken Allen
January 21st	Selma Dana
January 22nd	Rose Eckert
January 23rd	Len Bolonsky
January 24th	Richard Goldman
January 25th	John Stanhope
January 26th	Anna Imondi
January 26th	Beatrice Schatz
January 26th	Frank J. Lipman
January 26th	James LaPerriere
January 26th	Morris L. Cohen
January 27th	Virginia Seager
January 28th	Ezra David Bessey
January 29th	Betty Franzel
January 29th	Henry Thileman
January 30th	Morey Lerma

February Yahrtzeits

February 1st	Yetta Marienhoff
February 2nd	Todd Michael Green
February 4th	Leah Deborah Freed
February 4th	Eunice Kuehnert
February 6th	Hyman Cohen
February 7th	Odell Kominers
February 8th	Erik Eckert
February 9th	Laura Goldstein
February 11th	Lauraine Goodrich
February 12th	Theodore Kuehnert
February 13th	Davis Spalding
February 14th	Walter Barlow
February 15th	Helen Hannaford
February 17th	Harry M. Slosberg
February 19th	Daniel Moyer
February 19th	Harold Shapiro
February 23rd	Edwin Aaron Macy (Alchanah ben David)
February 23rd	Perry Bakaley
February 24th	Lillian Freiman



Portland Chevra Kadisha Jewish Funeral Home

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Portland, ME 04103
207.774.3733