



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

March Calendar

March 1 (hybrid)

Shabbat Services @ 6pm

March 2 (hybrid)

Daf Yomi @ 10am

Torah Study @ 10:30am

March 3 (in person)

Fiber Arts @ 1-3pm

March 4 (hybrid)

Soup and Study @ 6pm

March 8 (in person)

Hike with Hildie @ 10am

March 10 (hybrid)

Rosh Hodesh @ 4pm

March 15 (hybrid)

Meditation @ 5:15pm

Shabbat Services @ 6pm

March 16 (hybrid)

Torah Study @ 10am

Shabbat Services @ 11am

March 19 (Zoom)

Board Meeting @ 6pm

March 23 (in person)

Purim @ 6pm (adults only)

March 31 (in person)

Fiber Arts @ 1pm

From the desk of Rabbi Asch...

The last few weeks we have been reflecting on the beginnings of Covid. One of the things I remember from that time is how the weeks seemed to blend together. With all our routines disrupted, it was hard to tell the difference between a Monday and a Wednesday. But Shabbat helped to mark time. No matter what happens during the week, Shabbat arrives every seventh day, right on schedule. It is there if we Zoom into services, come in person, bless the candles and eat a nice meal or even if we do none of those things. That constancy is important.

I love being back at TBE after some time away, seeing regular folks and those who pop in occasionally. I love that Shabbat observance at TBE is a constant—you can come every week or come when you feel you need an infusion of community, song, study, or reflection. And while I look forward to the highlights of our calendar—in the coming months Purim and Passover—the is something beautiful about the regularity of Shabbat.



In Judaism, we have a principle that we elevate that which is done regularly over that which is done occasionally. Therefore, Shabbat takes precedent as the most important holiday, since it happens every week. Similarly, when we say kiddush on Friday night, we bless the wine first (*borei p'rei hagafen*) and then bless the day of Shabbat itself. One reason is that we have wine frequently (especially in ancient days when it was what most people drank regularly), but we only have Shabbat once a week.

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April Calendar

April 1 (hybrid)

Soup & Study @ 6pm
Omer Intro with David Faigin

April 5 (hybrid)

Meditation @5:15pm
Shabbat Services @ 6pm

April 6 (hybrid)

Torah Study @ 10am
Shabbat Services @ 11am
Potluck Lunch @12:15pm

April 7 (hybrid)

Rosh Hodesh @ 4pm

April 9 (hybrid)

Board Meeting @ 6pm

April 19 (hybrid)

Shabbat Services @ 6pm

April 20 (hybrid)

Daf Yomi @ 10am
Torah Study @ 10:30am
Potluck Lunch @12pm

April 23 (hybrid)

Passover Seder @ 5:30pm

April 28 (in person)

Goos Moving Forward event
@ 10:30am

April 30 (hybrid)

Passover Service/Yizkor @ 9am

Hebrew School

March 3, 10, 17, 31
April 7 & 28

Teen Program

March 17 & 31
April 7 & 21

Rabbi's Message, continued from page 1

I look forward to seeing many of you for our fabulous Purim celebrations and our meaningful Passover seder. We are already planning for a cooking contest, a fun filled spiel and a gift exchange. Passover will feature a new retelling of the Passover story and all your favorite songs as well as our new Covid liturgy written by all of you. And, through these next few busy months we'll also have the constancy of Shabbat. David Mahfouda will be joining us for two weekends, we'll have a Shabbat hike, and we'll have our regular Shabbat services and Torah study. No matter how you connect with TBE, we'll see you soon!

Two Visits with David Mahfouda!

David comes to teach us not once, but twice in the next two months. Mark your calendars for March 15th and March 16th and April 5th and April 6th. Back by popular demand David will be leading a chanting meditation before Shabbat services at 5:15pm each Friday night. Come for just the chanting or stay for services at 6pm. David will also be leading us in Torah study and Shabbat services on Saturday morning. Check your weekly email for other opportunities to learn with David while he is with us in the next few months.



Get Ready for Purim!



It's happening, peeps! Purim is officially on a Saturday night, March 23. Let the rejoicing begin! We'll have an amazing adult Purim celebration. See below for all the details.

- Arrive at 6pm in a costume (yes, that means you!) Bring canned corn, canned soups or peanut butter for the food pantry
- Enjoy alcoholic and non-alcoholic cocktails [We'll also have pizza and snacks, we're not animals! Plus hamantaschen.]
- Our Purim spiel is back—you won't want to miss seeing Chuck on the stage (no word yet on how many hats he will be wearing this time!)
- Get ready to bake. Our latke contest was so much fun (great move, Lila and Tim, using your own home-grown potatoes!) that we're bringing back some cooking for Purim. Bring a Purim themed dessert. It doesn't have to be hamantaschen, but it does have to tie into the Purim story. Write three sentences on a notecard to explain the connection. The treats will be judged blind (well, the judges will see the treats, but not your name).
- We're also introducing a white elephant/Yankee swap/that thing that you have to do when you go to Christmas parties. Bring something from your house (no shopping people!) that is worth \$10 or less. Points if it is funny. Wrap it and let the fun begin.
- Will there be announcements? Yes, yes there will. You'll have to be there to see who we decide to roast. Will there be a gong? Only the planners know. You have to come by to find out.

This fabulous event is happening **in person only**. Need a ride? We are HAPPY to get you to and from TBE. We know some folks don't like driving at night, or just feel safer with a ride after they've been celebrating. Contact Enigmah (Enigmah@protonmail.com) by March 7th if you want transportation to our event.

**Hebrew School
Purim Carnival Extravaganza
Sunday, March 24th at 10am
(Madrachim arrive at 9:00 for set up)**

All right folks, you know the drill. Costumes required (you too, parents), games, hamantaschen making, nail and face painting, songs, a skit and whatever else we dream up! Adults are welcome too. We encourage parents and grandparents to stay with their kiddos to join in the fun!

**Need Mishloach Manot?
We've got you covered!**

We are selling mishloach manot with yummy treats (hamantaschen, Bamba and whatever else looks good), a grogger and a beautiful sticker. Boxes are only \$10 for one or two for \$18. Proceeds will go to TBE and the Augusta Food Bank. Boxes can be picked up from TBE Friday, Saturday or Sunday. We'll give you all the details when you order.

Coming Soon: Our New Outdoor Space!

We are thrilled to announce that Temple Beth El has raised nearly all the money required for the proposed pavilion and outdoor landscaping project. The Board of Directors gave final approval of the project on March 16th. We expect construction to begin this summer.



The new outdoor garden and pavilion will provide accessible, safe, and flexible space for a wide range of spiritual, educational, and social activities for decades to come. This project is possible only because of the generous support of Temple members who have contributed \$128,000 in grants and pledges, over 90% of the anticipated cost. If you have been considering a gift, we would love to hear from you as soon as possible!

A gift for this project is a lovely way to honor loved ones and people who have made a difference in the vibrancy of Temple Beth El. Click [here](#) for information on [naming opportunities](#). We will begin the process of ordering pavers and benches in early April, so **please let us know if you would like to select a naming opportunity no later than March 31**. Fran Rudoff will be reaching out via email to all those who have contributed to finalize naming requests.

If you would like to make a donation for this project, please complete the [pledge form](#). Contact Fran Rudoff at frudoff@gmail.com with any questions. Thank you!

MULTI-MEDIA CLUB: APRIL 15TH @ 6:00PM

The next meeting will be at 6:00pm on April 15th, when we will review the movie "Hester Street". The movie is available for rental on Amazon Prime for about \$4. If you have trouble accessing it, please contact Peter Rosenberg at 207-441-9682.



We will be discussing life on the Lower East Side between 1880 and 1930, why and how it became a haven for Eastern European Jewish Immigrants and why it disbanded. We will also discuss the practice of obtaining a "get," a Jewish divorce, why it was difficult and why it was important. Our third topic will be the flowering of artistic life in the Lower East Side including the musicians, writers, and actors that grew up in these conditions (Irving Berlin, the Gershwins, Yip Harberg, Eddie Cantor and many others), a history of the Jewish Theater, and other topics related to this time period. Please also plan to come with suggestions for the next meeting, whether book or other media.

Facing Our Spiritual Struggles

By David Faigin, TBE Board Member

I'll never forget sitting in temple as a child, transfixed by the melodies of the cantor and the thoughtful stillness within the Amidah. I remember I was nine or ten years old when I first started to have my own inner experience of meaningful prayer and personal exploration of what Adonai meant to me. It was strange for me, feeling the excitement of this new spiritual growth, but also a sense of separation. How this was entirely my own experience, differentiated from my parents' personal experiences and from the inner experiences of those other congregants around me. Differentiating can be uncomfortable, as children - and throughout our lives. We are asked to feel and identify our own unique perspective, goals, needs and values. How are we to find our own way, connect to our own spiritual truth while continuing to feel bonded to our family, social group, and religious community? How do we reconcile our sense of self when we discover we feel conflicted, lost, lonely, or empowered in a way we did not expect?

In graduate school I had the privilege of getting instruction and mentorship from a leader in the field of the psychology of religion. Dr. Ken Pargament was Carol Ann's primary mentor, and while she specialized her training in this field, I learned a great deal in this sphere from them both. One of the topics that has always interested me is spiritual struggles. Researchers have discovered that spiritual struggles tend to fall into several different categories, including grappling with questions about ultimate meaning, morals, doubts, interpersonal struggles around religion or spiritual beliefs, and challenges in our relationship with the Divine. These struggles often arise at times of transition, are linked to traumatic events, or from changes in how we feel called to participate in our lives, and in our religious and spiritual communities. As humans we wrestle in this realm of questioning, no matter our religious beliefs or affiliations. We can find ourselves conflicted within our own personal sense of meaning and morals, in relationship with and understanding of God, and between ourselves and other Jews or Jewish communities. Research in this area has pointed to some important take-aways for all of us: spiritual struggles are normal and expected, they are not a sign of a lack of commitment in our life or "weak" faith, and, like it or not, some struggles can be resolved, while others cannot. One of the aspects of Judaism that I deeply appreciate is the ancient and ongoing Talmudic tradition of debate in exploring the struggles and confusions that naturally arise from living our Jewishness, while also living within the fears and complexities of all our human communities. Commentary on past debates, leading to more questions which create more struggle, which call us back to debate and reconsiderations. Over and over. Century after century. War after war.

The current war has sent terrible and complicated reverberations throughout the world, and the Jewish world especially. One can palpably feel the emotional and spiritual struggles within our Jewish communities, and within each of our hearts and minds. The places some of us have always looked for cohesion, may not be offering that right now. A person we assumed shared a belief we hold dear may seem more distant from us. The things we are asked to do mentally and spiritually

might feel beyond our resource or capability. We might feel unmoored from something, or burdened with a conflict within us that is hard to articulate, even if someone asks us about it. Something within us or something outside of us may be asking us to do something we don't feel we can do. To separate Judaism from the politics of fear and pain, or not. To separate affiliation from our humanity, or not. To answer for something in the face of peaceful protest or in the face of enlivened and ignorant hate. To find a grounded place to stand to help draw the world back together, even as it feels pulled apart even further.

It is sobering that research on spiritual struggles indicates consistently that living with unresolved struggles correlates with poor physical and mental health outcomes; however, there is also brightness and opportunity in this picture. If we seek out and engage with the resources that we need to address our spiritual struggles, they become an opportunity to care better for ourselves, examine our beliefs more closely, choose behaviors that are aligned with our values, and ultimately grow as a person. When we see our common humanity within our different personal struggles and look deeper to find the places we are bound to each other beyond institutional conflict, we can find paths to the wholeness we need to grow spiritually, and as a Jewish people.

As a child, I couldn't quite understand how it was possible to feel more alone and somehow more connected at the same time. Spiritual and emotional complexity wasn't as fascinating and inspiring as it is for me now. My path in search of connection to Adonai and Judaism, and to all of you reading this, is far from over. Struggles are part of the path. May we all find our way through the struggles we must experience. To find something more in ourselves, and in one another.

For those interested in further reading on spiritual struggles, here is a good place to start:

https://www.templeton.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Spiritual-Struggle-Whitepaper_FINAL-10.5.pdf

Thank you from the TBE Wine Tasting Committee

The TBE Wine Tasting Committee would like to thank all who attended, bought raffle tickets, and bid on items. And a BIG THANK YOU to each of our congregation's committee members who delivered on diverse and delightful donations for the baskets. Your bountiful benevolence is beyond belief, and we appreciate all who ate, anted up, and accepted their raffle prizes with amusement.

An extra special shout out to our stupendous sommelier **Syd Sewall**~ you are the best in the biz! We can't forget our auspiciously astonishing auctioneer, **Chuck Cohen** - you amazed us with your antics! And our equally exceptional Auction Coordinator, **Fran Rudoff**- your attention to detail, your diligence, and your dedication to the Wine Tasting cause is beyond compare. This year's event raised the most money ever!!

Hope and Then There's Tikvah

By Chris Marshall and Susan Bakaley Marshall

In these times the two of us are heartbroken about the news from Israel and Palestine. It's easy to close down in despair or anger, and we Jews have a history of collective trauma that can get reawakened by the events we watch unfolding. Hope seems hard to come by.

But "hope" in Hebrew is tikvah (as in the Israeli national anthem). It's remarkable that the very same Hebrew word also means "cord", a thing made of multiple strands gathered and plaited into a strong line. The way we usually use it, "hope" often means an unspecific positive attitude that something will work out. Tikvah is more powerful– it's about discovering a clear "line" forward that will lead us out of despair into a realistic and peaceful future.

Where can we look for tikvah these days? The two of us want to see a Jewish democratic state as well as a Palestinian entity, a shared society or two states with mutual understanding with peace among the communities. Sure, but how to get there? Where's the "cord" to follow?

Well, there are groups in Israel/Palestine who have been following that cord of tikvah for years. They're calling for a political settlement and an end to violence, but they aren't waiting for that to get going. No matter what unfolds, there will still be two peoples on one land—and these groups realize they'll have to come to terms with each other, listen to each other's stories, collaborate on grassroots projects, work for equal justice, and build cooperation.

They're doing it. The present war has made things much harder but....they're still doing it.

Their work inspires the two of us, because we see it as the only hope for the future. As we write this in mid-April, hostages are still being held by militant terrorist groups; there are thousands of innocent civilian deaths in Gaza, children there are malnourished, about 1.9 million people (80% of the Gazan population) are displaced, food and water have disappeared, the medical system has been destroyed. There's a severe humanitarian crisis. The extremists– Netanyahu's right-wing government and Hamas and other terrorist groups–need to stop the fighting so the people and groups who are working together can continue what they know is possible.

We want to share some of these groups' work with you. Maybe it'll give you more tikvah too. (Most of these groups have YouTube videos and web pages.)

Roots/Shorashim/Judur: <https://www.friendsofroots.net> is made up of Israeli Jews and Palestinians living in Samaria/West Bank. Founded by a settler rabbi and Palestinian/Arab partners. In this socially segregated society, they've built integrated community centers, youth programs, and more grassroots local initiatives. (They have a US tour going on right now.)

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"Hope," continued from page 8

Standing Together /Omdim Beyachad/ Naqif Maan <https://www.standing-together.org> builds capacity for cooperation with scores of chapters, political action to defend civil rights for all groups, return of hostages, and huge public actions (their meetings attract thousands). They had a recent tour in the US.

Combatants for Peace <https://afcfp.org/> is former fighters on both sides who realized the futility of the violence and work together for peace. They have a good documentary, "Disturbing the Peace."

[Womenwagepeace.org.il](https://www.womenwagepeace.org.il) is two sister organizations cooperating for equal rights and an end to the violence.

A Land For All--Two States One Homeland (ALFA) <https://www.alandforall.org/> has policy visions for political solutions.

The New Israel Fund <https://www.nif.org/> is "committed to democratic change within Israel" and helps fund most of these initiatives.

The Parents Circle Family Forum <https://www.theparentscircle.org/en/pcff-home-page-en/> members are bereaved families on both sides who realize the shared pain that must be recognized in order to move forward.

<https://www.ettyhillesumcards.com> Dina Awwad-Srouf and Emma Sham-Ba Ayalon are a Palestinian and an Israeli, two peace activists who believe that Etty Hillesum (a writer who perished in Auschwitz at age 29) wrote wise words of deep humanism that the world needs now so urgently. They facilitate international online circles. One is offered during March.

Watch these groups' videos—you can hear their own voices and experience what they're doing on the ground in Israel/Palestine.

Passover is right around the corner!

Join us for the hybrid TBE Community Seder TUESDAY, APRIL 23rd at 5:30pm. More details to come in your weekly email, but here are the basics.

- As always, our seder is a potluck. This helps keep costs low. Look for an email with a sign up sheet. We'll count on you to provide the food!
- Cost will be \$7 per adult/\$5 per child payable in advance or at the door. Maximum of \$25 per family. Those joining online, we encourage you to make a donation of \$5-\$10 to help us cover the cost of hiring technical support for the seder. We welcome additional donations to help offset our security costs.
- Our seder will include traditional foods, prayers, singing and a lot of fun! It is for all ages and everyone is welcome to join us.

HEBREW SCHOOL UPDATE

My name is Lilah Goldey, and this is my second year volunteering as a madricha at our temple's Hebrew School. This winter has been very busy for the kids at Hebrew School. There are three classrooms this year! I've been primarily working with the younger kids.

While Rabbi Asch was on her sabbatical, Rabbi Solochek, Rich Goldman and Bria Watson stepped in to help. During this time, we have had a special Tu'Bshvat Seder. The younger class created tree posters to decorate the synagogue for the Seder. Parents, community members and the Hebrew school students attended.



Supporting TBE



General / Other

- Charlene Clevlen
- Rich Dana
- Richard Forcier
- Kala Ladenheim
- Joe O'Donnell
- Matthew Rolnick
- Jean and Bill Seager
- Natasha Rosenbaum

Rabbi Discretionary Fund

- Richard Dana
- Cindy Langewisch

Yahrzeits/Memorials

- Anya Goldey in memory of Laura Goldstein
- Beth Koopman in memory of Jane Bridgman Koopman
- Brenda Shaw in memory of Todd Greene
- Carol Barlow in memory of Walter Barlow
- Deborah & Jeff Gussoff in memory of Alvin Kosak, Clara Greenberg and Rabbi Jacob Kestin Shankman
- Ellen Freed in memory of Leah Freed
- Emily & Ethan Bessey in memory of Amy Gross
- Emily & Ethan Bessey in memory of Leo Bessey
- James Orenstein in memory of Rosa Orenstein
- Jay Collins in memory of Anna Inindi
- Jerryanne LaPerriere in memory of James LaPerriere
- Jerryanne LaPerriere in memory of Sylvia LaPerriere
- Joan Freiman in memory of Laura Goldstein
- Paul Kuehnert in memory of Eunice & Ted Kuehnert
- Pauline (Tinker) Hannaford in memory of Henry Thielman
- Rich Dana in memory of Selma Dana
- Sarah & Mike Drickey in memory of Davis Spalding
- Seth Greene in memory of Todd Greene
- Stephen & Beth Shapiro in memory of Faye Goldberg Montell, James, Carvutto, and James Montell



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Rabbi Emerita

Rabbi Susan Bulba Carvutto

The office is open Tuesday,
Thursday and Friday.

March Yahrtzeits

March 2	Perry Bakaley
March 2	Edwin Aaron Macy
March 3	Sadie Frankel
March 3	Lillian Freiman
March 3	Samuel L. Gershon
March 3	Milton Prager
March 3	Elizabeth Sax
March 3	Hyman Norken
March 7	Joan Graber
March 9	George O'Brien
March 13	Aaron Archie Kraus
March 13	Sydney Sewall
March 16	Elizabeth Sax
March 16	Elenor Sylvia Slosberg
March 17	Mildred Tapp
March 19	Rose Golden
March 23	Nick Scott
March 28	Naomi Faigin
March 29	Daniel Clifford Gross
March 30	Joseph Shapiro



Portland Chevra Kadisha
Jewish Funeral Home

471 Deering Ave.
Portland, ME 04103
207.774.3733

April Yahrtzeits

April 3	Cynthia Haderski
April 4	Hyman Sandler
April 8	Shirlie Goldman
April 8	Toby Rudginsky
April 9	Charles Bader
April 10	Lewis Brown
April 11	Hymen Bresloff
April 11	Abraham Gusoff
April 11	Jonathan Schiff
April 12	Lillian Lerman
April 12	Shawn Walker
April 14	Ken Allen
April 14	Bruce Hollander
April 15	Jane Kaminsky Millette
April 16	Martin Evenchik
April 17	Erwin Lewis
April 18	Irving Berman
April 19	Richard Harding
April 19	Shirley Siegel
April 20	Samuel Kosak
April 21	Leonard Dansky
April 22	Maria King
April 24	Rose Parkin
April 25	Lillian Shapiro
April 27	Robert Sandler
April 28	Tishelle Glant- Scheinman
April 28	Lena Slosberg Lait
April 28	John Marshall
April 29	Jill Bresloff