



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

May Calendar

Sun. May 4 (in person)

Goos Event –

Snacks @ 12:00pm

Concert @ 12:30pm

Fri., May 9 (hybrid)

Shabbat Services @ 6pm

Sat., May 10 (hybrid)

Daf Yomi @ 10am

Torah study @ 10:30am

Potluck lunch @ 12:15

Sun., May 11 (in person)

Fiber Arts @ 1-3pm

Sat., May 17 (hybrid)

Torah study @ 10:00am

Shabbat Services @ 11 am

Potluck lunch @ 12:15 pm

Sun., May 18 (in person)

Outdoor Space Dedication @

11:30am, followed by

Israel/Palestine Discussion

Thurs., May 22 (hybrid)

Soup and Study @ 6pm

Sun., May 25 (in person)

Touch Drawing Workshop@

1-4:30 pm

Fri., May 30 (hybrid)

Shabbat Services @ 6pm

Sat., May 31 (hybrid)

Daf Yomi @ 10am

Torah study @ 10:30am

Potluck lunch @ 12:15

From the desk of Rabbi Asch...

We are now in the midst of counting the Omer, remembering our march out of slavery in Egypt to the revelation at Sinai. The counting of the Omer is simultaneously a easy and difficult mitzvah. It takes less than a minute—just say the blessing and count the day. How much easier could it be?



But there's a catch. You have to count every day; for seven weeks. Remembering to do something each day is hard, and if you miss a day then you can still count, but you can't say the blessing. I don't know about you, but it can be hard for me to remember to do something every single day! It seems to set us up for failure. While I love the practice of counting the Omer and encourage you to take up that practice, I think that trying to be perfect in our routines can set us up for failure.

I'm a big fan of the habit of "dailyish," which I learned about from Oliver Burkman's new book *Mediations for Mortals*. He says that "an every-single-day rule is so rigid, so intolerant of the vagaries of life, that you'll inevitably soon fall off the wagon. And once that's happened, you lose all motivation to continue – so you end up doing less, in aggregate, than if you hadn't been quite so exacting in your demands."^[1]

So how do we reconcile these two desires – the need to count every day and the recognition that we might need to take a day off every so often? Luckily, Judaism is replete with contradictions that have to be resolved. I think that we can take two lessons from this period of the Omer. First, there is an importance to the discipline that we learn from Judaism. What we eat (and don't eat), how we celebrate Shabbat and holidays can be important practices that we

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June Calendar

Sun., June 1

Blintz Cooking @ TBD

Annual Meeting @

4:30-6:15pm (hybrid)

Shavuot Dinner @ 6:15pm

Shavuot Learning @ 7:00pm

Mon., June 2 (hybrid)

Shavuot Services with Yizkor

@ 9-10:30am

Sun., June 8 (in person)

Fiber Arts @ 1-3pm

June 13-15 (in person)

Maine Conference for Jewish

Life

Wed., June 18 (hybrid)

Soup and Study @ 6pm

Fri., June 20 (hybrid)

Shabbat Services @ 6pm

Sat., June 21 (hybrid)

Daf Yomi @ 10am

Torah study @ 10:30am

Potluck lunch @ 12:15

Hebrew School

May 4, 11, & 18

June 1

Teen Group

May 18 @ 7pm

Lunch & Lounge 6/1 @ 12pm

Rabbi's Message, continued from page 1

take on regularly. And, sometimes we'll mess up, but we shouldn't stop all together. We can always get back into practices that enrich our lives.

Finally, the regularity of some activities helps us to cherish the new when it comes our way. This month I am especially looking forward to the Goos event on May 4th with Cantor Sheila Nesis, the dedication of our new outdoor space on May 18th, and Shavuot and our Annual Meeting on June 1st. We have a lot to be thankful for and these events allow us a chance to be in community and share with one another. As the weather warms and the days lengthen, I hope you'll find some time to engage with the TBE community.

^[1] <https://www.oliverburkeman.com/dailyish>

"The Doers Band"

by Ellen Freed

*The kitchen it waits for gatherings galore
As our congregation enlarges more and more
The plates and the dishes collect in the sinks
For someone quite visual I'll tell you it stinks
The help that is needed is easily at hand
Join us and offer to be in the doers band
You can load and unload the faithful dishwasher
You can do it and we'll so love your offer
The fridge needs to be monitored and counters kept neat
Do a bit of your part before taking your seat
There are chairs to set up and flowers to weed
Minyans to make and many requests you may heed
You can join a committee or a few tasks take on
There are office details galore handled by our beloved Dawn
When a phone call you get or the Rabbi asks kindly
Please consider agreeing and joining us not blindly
We'll offer you training and support as it's needed
Thanks for answering the call
You'll be happy you agreed-ed*

TBE in Action!



Join Us for the Annual Meeting!

Sunday, June 1 @ 4:30pm

Please join us for our annual meeting, Sunday, June 1st at 4:30pm. We'll hear important updates about the Temple including a presentation of the TBE budget and a report from Rabbi Asch and President Arwen Agee. We'll thank the outgoing board members for their service and award the Volunteer of the Year to a deserving congregant. This is not only a time to get up to date on Temple business, it is also a great time to meet some new people. Please stay afterwards for a potluck dinner. In honor of Shavuot we'll provide blintzes. We welcome contributions of side dishes and dessert. Childcare will be provided during the meeting. Please let Dawn know if you would like childcare.



Goos Moving TBE Forward Event

Sunday, May 4th

12:00 Snacks and socializing

12:30 Concert

Cantor Sheila Nesis joins us for our Annual Goos Moving TBE Forward Event. We are so excited to hear from Cantor Nesis who will be joined by two musicians. She will perform a variety of songs from Ladino songs, to songs from the liturgy, and even some that you haven't heard before. She'll explain the origins of some of these songs and there will be a chance for you to do some singing as well. Join us at noon for snack and socializing. The concert begins at 12:30pm.



WZO Elections: Voting closes May 4th. It's not too late to vote!

[Vote Now](#) in the World Zionist Congress Elections

What are the World Zionist Congress (WZC) elections?

The WZC is a democratically elected international body that convenes every five years. It offers a way for Diaspora Jews like you to have a voice in Israel and stand up for democracy, security, and a path to peace. The WZC allocates \$1 billion each year to Jewish causes in Israel and world-wide.

Why should I care?

The WZC is a powerful voice for our values in Israel. Our delegates will support equality for women, rights for the LGBTQ community, funding for Progressive communities in Israel, and recognizing Reform conversions. We need your votes to ensure a democratic, pluralistic Israel.

How do I vote?

Go to [this website](#) to register and pay a \$5 fee. You will then receive an email with a pin number. Follow the instructions to go to [this website](#), enter your pin, and vote.

I want more information:

Great! Watch this [informative video](#) with Rabbi Asch and Rabbi Vinikoor and visit the [URJ ARZA website](#) for more information, FAQ's, and a step-by-step guide to voting. Still have questions? [Reach out to Rabbi Asch](#). Several people have reached out to ask specific questions about voting, the Jerusalem Program, and different slates. Rabbi Asch wants to answer your questions!

I'm having technical difficulties or want a paper ballot. What do I do? [Reach out to Rabbi Asch](#).

NEW THIS WEEK:

I voted, now what?

Let us know by filling out [this form](#) or [emailing Rabbi Asch](#). We are in a fierce competition with Beth Israel (Bath) and every vote counts!

I AM RUNNING IN THE WORLD ZIONIST CONGRESS ELECTION

Vote Reform Slate #3

March 10 - May 4, 2025

[Vote at zionistelection.org](#)

Join me in the fight for Israel's future rooted in safety, peace and democracy for all people.



Rabbi Erica Asch





**Registration for The Maine Conference for Jewish Life is open.
Reserve your spot today!**



For so many of us, the Temple is our place to find community, to connect to our traditions, to find hope and joy, and to find support when we struggle. To do so, however, we need your continued support through your *terumah*. Packets for the 2025-2026 fiscal year will be going out soon. Your timely response in returning the pledge form is not only greatly appreciated but it's also needed for budgeting purposes. Thank you!

The Simple Power of Kehillah

By David Faigin

One of my all-time favorite rules in Judaism is that certain things, at certain times, require that 10 people gather together in person. I deeply appreciate the fact that not only is there a mandate in Judaism that *requires* that we form a sanctified community, it puts an actual number on it. Besides being an adult and Jewish, though, the guidelines do not specify how we're supposed to look, how we're supposed to vote, how we're supposed to raise our children, or what cereal we are supposed to eat in the morning. The minyan is just about showing up; choosing actively to give and receive community for a greater purpose.

These days, we're all witnessing more and more consternation, frustration, anger, fear, worry, and uncertainty. Fear and anger about the government. Fear and anger about democracy. Fear and anger about security, the market, etc. We try, with varying degrees of success, to avoid loneliness, cynicism, hopelessness, and the toxic impacts of rage. Though while so much around us seems to be changing so quickly, I also see what has *not* changed in our human yearnings and connections. Evolutionarily or otherwise, I don't see humans changing very quickly. Not in our core elements, not in the fundamental ways we relate and support one another. There may always be divisions, ignorance, "othering," demonizing etc. However, there will also always be the simple truths of human bonding: how we find and give support, develop collective identity and purpose, and the beautiful and simple ways that Shalom is transferred between people in the tiniest and most important moments.

In my efforts to help others, and myself, I keep coming back to the same idea over and over again: "This might be easier than it seems." It's easier than it seems because the beautiful bonding that comes from a shared laugh is involuntary. It's easier than it seems because when you show up for a minyan, it is suddenly everybody and nobody's responsibility. We immediately belong and lean in together. It's easier than it seems because generosity of heart and responding to someone scared or in need has nothing to do with which political sign they have in their yard, or which flag they fly.

Our minds overcomplicate our individual and collective struggles. Our attention is bought and sold 24 hours a day. We are so often distracted from the simplicity in front of us. The simplicity of a child's exploration, the simplicity of awe in the glorious mundane moments, the wordless simplicity of a hug.

Don't get me wrong, there are extensive efforts, emotionally and psychologically, that are involved in the bridge building that we need as a society right now. Whether it be in our own community with the Israel-Palestine discussions at TBE, or the community-based efforts growing

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Kehillah, continued from page 5

in the country to connect across political and ideological divides. We are asked to learn and listen to others and ourselves in new ways. We find out that in the process of remembering our humanity and working for connection with others, we will inevitably find some discomfort. What I want to emphasize here more than anything is that there is a central structure that is a conduit for connection and healing in our lives despite that discomfort: *Kehillah*. Community.

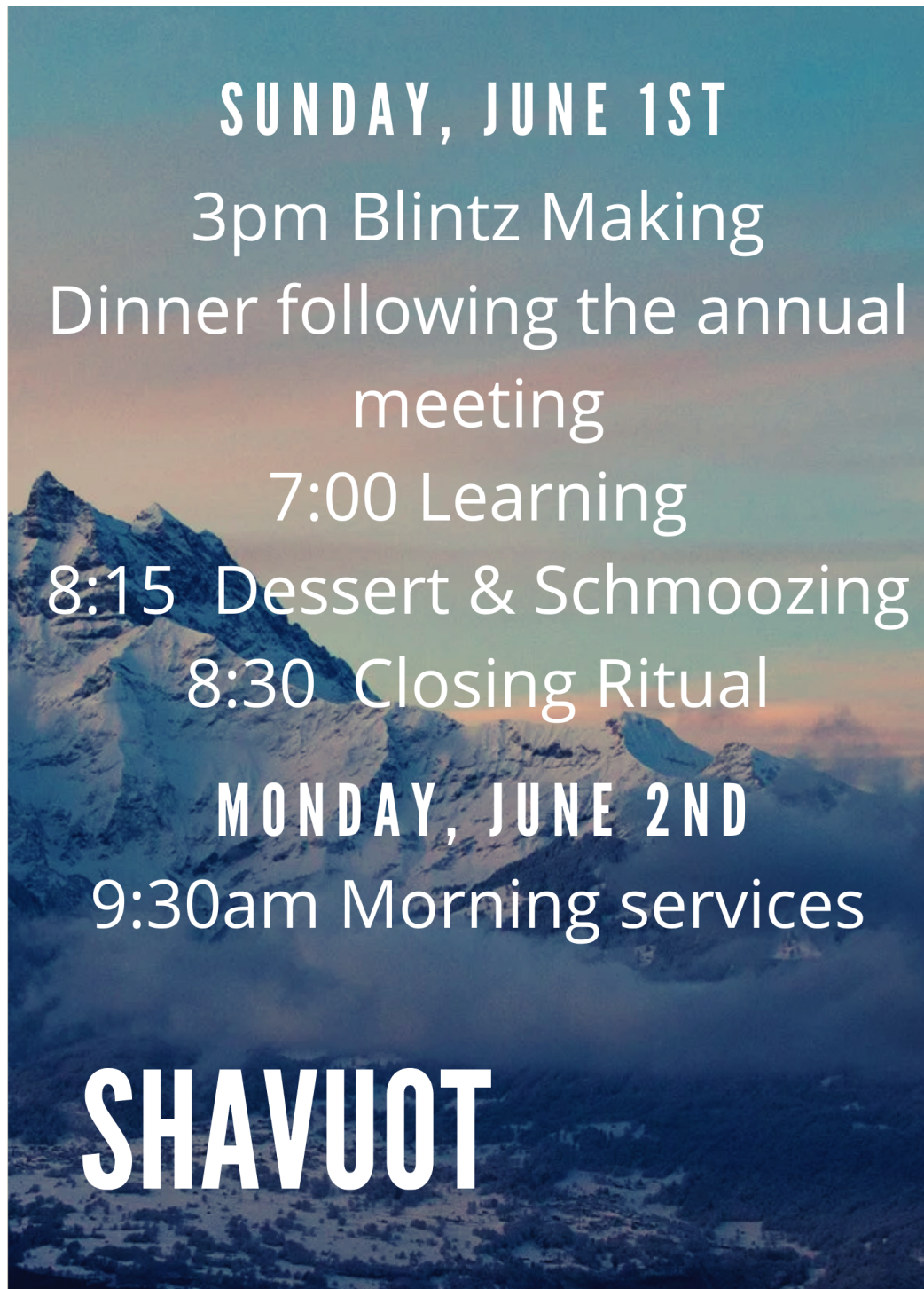
Community takes a thousand forms and impacts us in myriad ways. Research has shown that when we connect to community, we are healthier. Sociologist Robert Putnam, in his influential book *Bowling Alone*, warned of the decline of community life in America. (also check out the related recent documentary *"Join or Die"*) Fewer people, he noted, were joining clubs, attending religious services, or participating in civic groups. This loss of "social capital"—the trust and local networks that connect people—weakens our democracy and our individual well-being. Political conversations are tense, trust in institutions is low, and social media often amplifies division. But according to Putnam and others, strong local communities can help reduce these divides. When people know each other as neighbors or fellow volunteers first—before knowing their political views—they're more likely to listen with empathy and seek common ground.

The good news is that communities like TBE are part of the solution. Every time we show up for services, volunteer on a committee, or lend a hand to a fellow member, we strengthen the ties that hold us together. We create a culture of reciprocity, care, and connection. That's social capital—and it's what makes both synagogues and neighborhoods thrive.

Our shared space at TBE is more than a place to pray. It's a place where relationships grow, where values come to life, and where the foundations of a healthy society are quietly rebuilt, week after week. We know each other's names. We celebrate simchas and mourn losses together. We share challah, stories, and responsibilities. We come together not because we agree on everything, but because we are committed to each other. We celebrate differences, study Torah with curiosity, and embody the Jewish value of *machloket l'shem shamayim*—disagreement for the sake of learning and connection.

As my family has experienced a dramatic increase in social capital in our local neighborhood recently, I am more and more inspired to promote similar connections within our TBE community. Right now, the membership committee and the board are having discussions about how we might build more geographically localized member groups. Whether it's Shabbat dinner, lending a hand or a snow shovel, or just getting together for tea, there is a tremendous opportunity to build more social capital and connections with other TBE members who live close to you.

We never have to wait for kindness, respect, and community. They are available to us at all times, and they have always been the building blocks of justice, and the critical salve to loneliness and despair. There are so many ways we can, and NEED TO, help make a minyan in our lives and communities. The benefits are huge. It's simpler than we think.



SUNDAY, JUNE 1ST

3pm Blintz Making
Dinner following the annual
meeting

7:00 Learning

8:15 Dessert & Schmoozing

8:30 Closing Ritual

MONDAY, JUNE 2ND

9:30am Morning services

SHAVUOT

Shavuot Celebration: Shavuot is here. Join for a festive dinner on June 1st following the annual meeting and stay for some learning. We'll begin our program around 7pm. Interested in teaching? Let Rabbi Asch know. We welcome all sorts of teaching from art projects, to song, to text study. We're looking forward to celebrating receiving Torah with you!

Shavuot morning service with Yizkor: Monday, June 2nd at 9:30am. Join us at 9am for our Shavuot morning service with Yizkor. We'll read Torah and haftarah, and a chance to remember our loved ones who have died.

Good News — Help for the Unhoused in Augusta

By Chuck Cohen

As you know, bad news seems to be all around us these days. But this past February, the Augusta area got some really good news when the United Community Living Center opened its doors. The UCLC, located on 12 Spruce Street in Augusta, will provide a daytime safe space for the unhoused community. The Center will give its clients an opportunity to: prepare light meals and snacks; receive mail; access computers and printers; shower and securely store their belongings. The UCLC will double as a daytime warming and cooling center.



The Center will use a low barrier/high touch model of care. This means that they will accept clients regardless of substance abuse issues and will assist clients with moving their lives forward in ways that they choose through the employment of Community Health Workers. Center guests will be encouraged, but not required, to work with CHWs who will: help them navigate through the complicated world of social service and health systems; assist with and provide support to achieve goals related to education and employment; and coordinate medical and community care for people with multiple conditions. The UCLC will partner with local health professionals to provide basic care (foot care, wound care, and health screenings); referrals for treatment and specialty services; medicated assisted treatment for substance use disorders; and harm reduction and/or recovery services.

The road to opening the Center was long and arduous. It included a broad community-wide fundraising campaign to buy the property and working with the Augusta Planning Board to get the necessary approvals. Many Temple members pitched in on this effort to make the dream of the UCLC a reality and a big thank you goes out to all those that helped!

The goal of the Center is to operate 365 days a year. At the current time, as the Center ramps up its operations and staffing, the Center is open on Sundays. Open hours will be expanded to cover all weekend days in the very near future. As the Center ramps up, it could use help stocking its cupboards to support the unhoused and this is where we, as a community, come in.

The Temple's Board is sponsoring a drive to collect personal hygiene items such as shampoo, soap, and body wash which will then be donated to the UCLC for distribution to its guests. In the weeks leading up to, and as part of the Temple's Annual Meeting on June 1st, we'll have boxes in the Temple's lobby where you can drop off your donation. Check out our weekly bulletins in May which will have reminders and more information on the drive. And let's continue to make some good news!

Hebrew School Picnic

SUNDAY JUNE 1ST | 10:00 AM
TEMPLE BETH EL

We will celebrate the end of our Hebrew School year with games, crafts and a picnic lunch. We'd love to have the whole family join us. More details in your weekly email.



TOUCH DRAWING WORKSHOP

Sunday May 25 1:00-4:30PM at Temple Beth El

RSVP required to Susan by May 20th - moonarts@gmail.com or Call 207-589-4632

Size limit: 12 people maximum with a minimum of 5 people.

All materials supplied.



Susan Bakaley Marshall, artist, retired art therapist and clinical counselor, is a Touch Drawing facilitator. She has been using Touch Drawing for personal creative expression and with others for over 20 years.

A Personal Exploration of Counting the Omer Art Exhibit and Workshop

The art exhibit at TBE this month reflects a few years of making art based on the timeframe of counting the Omer. What started me on this journey was realizing that my maternal grandmother died on the first day of counting, and my mother many years later died on the forty-eighth day, one day before we end the counting.

I kept asking myself, what meaning does this time and space have for me? What is the significance of Counting the Omer, besides acknowledging the days and processing my grief? I've had many years to personally explore this. Starting in 2023 I began using an art process familiar to me called Touch Drawing ©.

"Touch Drawing is a simple yet profound process. Paper is placed over wet paint. The pressure of fingertips on the page forms images on the underside. The hands are extensions of the soul, moving in response to the sensations of the moment. Channels of expression open, enabling feelings to flow. A series of drawings is created, each a stepping stone deeper into the self."
Deborah Koff-Chapin, creator

At times it's journaling in images. There is a definite spiritual aspect to using this method since one uses their hands directly on the paper, allowing what wants to be revealed to come through.

It's perfect for offering a workshop at TBE. If you'd like to explore creating with your hands, no art experience needed, come join me on May 25! We will have completed six of the seven weeks of counting the Omer on that day. You will certainly have the opportunity to tap into your own unique creative expression.

Temple Beth El Outdoor Space Dedication and Celebration!

May 18 @ 11:30 am

The TBE Community will gather on May 18th to dedicate and celebrate our beautiful new gardens and pavilion, the FINAL chapter of our 15-year long renovation and expansion project! Altogether, our community raised close to \$950,000 to ensure that TBE has inspiring, safe, secure, energy efficient, and accessible spaces for decades to come!

We will honor everyone who has contributed to this endeavor, with special thanks to Charlie and Nancy Shuman for their extraordinary support of Temple of Beth El. Many of you chose to remember and honor loved ones with paving stones and benches, and we will share special blessings for them. You will also have the opportunity to thank the designers of this lovely space. Refreshments will be served! Please join us for this simcha!!

We Need Your Help to Purchase Outdoor Chairs

A finishing touch for our outdoor spaces will be the purchase of chairs and tables so we can fully use the garden without schlepping furniture in and out of our buildings.

We have selected some durable and comfortable chairs (3 different styles for the pavilion and the lawn) and a small number of outdoor tables for the pavilion. A sample of each are pictured below (we will purchase some waterproof seat cushions too!).

To help cover these final costs of the project, we are asking TBE members to purchase a chair for a donation of \$54 (or \$108 for 2 chairs). If every family purchases a chair, we will meet our goal! You can make a gift [here](https://www.bethelaugusta.org) or send a check to TBE with a note "for garden chairs." Thank you so much for contributing to the final phase of our building project.



Supporting TBE



General / Other

- Linda Kallin, in honor of Natasha Rosenbaum
- Judith Lombard, in honor of Natasha Rosenbaum
- Deb & Syd Sewall, in honor of Natasha Rosenbaum
- Julia Underwood, Sheloshim service

Rabbi Discretionary Fund

- Rich Dana
- Bruce & Nancy Schatz
- Anya Goldey, in memory of Sidney Goldstein

Yahrzeits/Memorials

- Carol Barlow, in memory of Walter Barlow
- Sue and David Offer, in memory of Samuel L. Gershon
- Anya Goldey, in memory of Lillian Freiman
- Anya Goldey, in memory of Laura Goldstein
- Ellen Bader Kandel, in memory of Charles Bader
- Paul Kuehnert and Judith Graber, in memory of Susan Knowlton & Joan Graber
- Richard and Jane Golden, in memory of Rose Golden
- Steven and Beth Shapiro, in memory of Rose Golden
- Steven and Beth Shapiro, in memory of Shirley Siegel
- Deborah and Jeffery Gussoff, in memory of Abraham Gussoff
- Deborah and Jeffery Gussoff, in memory of Samuel Kosak
- Jay Collins, in memory of Anna Imondi

- Sarah & Mike Drickey, in memory of Shawn Walker
- Joe O'Donnell, in memory of Ann O'Donnell
- Joe O'Donnell, in memory of Henry Price
- Jonathan & Dace Weiss, in memory of Irving Weiss
- Natasha Rosenbaum, in memory of Erwin Lewis
- Natasha Rosenbaum, in memory of Leon Monash
- Natasha Rosenbaum, in memory of Sylvia Rosenbaum



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Rabbi Emerita

Rabbi Susan Bulba Carvutto

The office is open Tuesday,
Wednesday, and Friday.

May Yahrtzeits

May 1st	Louise D. Cohen
May 1st	Aaron Frankel
May 1st	Anthony Imondi
May 1st	Rebecca Slosberg
May 3rd	Edward Vincent Growick
May 3rd	Max Slosberg
May 3rd	Samuel Weiss
May 4th	Sylvia Parker
May 5th	Marie Corner
May 6th	Jean Dietz
May 7th	Allen Davis
May 8th	Suzanne K. Rosenberg
May 10th	Hilbert Tapp
May 11th	Benjamin R. Slosberg
May 11th	Elizabeth Lipman Winter
May 14th	Tyler Lessard
May 14th	Leon Monash
May 14th	Meyer Schwartz
May 16th	Edwin Eckert
May 17th	Robert Bien
May 18th	Julian Sacks
May 20th	Suretta Hollander
May 21st	Daniel Moyer
May 21st	Dorothy Moyer
May 22nd	Carol Bernstein Hecht
May 24th	Clara Miller Weiss
May 26th	Erika Ellen Briggs
May 26th	Marion Fusco
May 27th	David Boughton
May 28th	Fred Slater
May 29th	Matthew Peter McLinn
May 30th	Justin Blauner
May 30th	Albert Freiman
May 30th	Fred Sewall
May 31st	Jean Bakaley
May 31st	Josep Schatz

June Yahrtzeits

June 1st	Samuel Lerman
June 3rd	Stuart Boughton
June 3rd	Asher Pfeferstein
June 6th	Jack Drickey
June 6th	Sidney Gussoff
June 6th	Robert Powell
June 6th	Joan "Jet" Price
June 7th	Joseph Leroy Shed
June 7th	Julius Sussman
June 8th	Howard S. Slosberg
June 12th	Paul Adler
June 12th	Beverly Gass
June 14th	Albert Abraham Rosenberg
June 14th	Erica Sandler
June 14th	Webster Shipley, Jr.
June 15th	Aviva Schnur
June 16th	Beverly Gussoff
June 16th	John Thielman
June 16th	Sylvia Rosenbaum
June 17th	Reginald Hannaford
June 22nd	David Pollack
June 26th	Beatrice Director
June 27th	Ruth Gross
June 27th	Miriam Weiss
June 28th	Dora R. Slosberg
June 29th	Sol Moser
June 30th	Marcia Allen



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