



## 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

#### **Fri., Jan. 2 (hybrid)**

Shabbat services @ 6pm

#### **Sat., Jan. 3 (hybrid)**

Daf Yomi @ 10am

Torah study @ 10:30am

Potluck lunch @ 12:00pm

#### **Sun., Jan. 4 (in person)**

Security Training @ 10am

#### **Wed., Jan. 7 (hybrid)**

Soup & Study @ 6pm

#### **Sun., Jan. 11 (in person)**

Sunday Schmooze @ 10am

#### **Fri., Jan. 16 (hybrid)**

Shabbat services @ 6pm

#### **Sat., Jan. 17 (hybrid)**

Torah Study @ 10am

Shabbat Services @ 11am

#### **Fri., Jan. 23 (hybrid)**

Shabbat services @ 5:30pm

#### **Sun., Jan. 25 (in person)**

Israel/Palestine Disc. @ 1pm

#### **Sat., Jan. 31 (hybrid)**

Daf Yomi @ 10am

Torah study @ 10:30am

Potluck lunch @ 12:00pm

### *From the desk of Rabbi Asch...*

As we begin the secular new year, we are also ending the book of Genesis and beginning the book of Exodus. As you may know, we read the entire Torah throughout the year, beginning on Simchat Torah. [You can find the weekly Torah portion at [www.hebcal.com](http://www.hebcal.com)]. While the book of Genesis contains the narratives of the patriarchs and matriarchs, the book of Exodus starts to tell the story of *b'nai yisrael*, literally the children of our patriarch, Israel (also called Jacob). More broadly, this phrase comes to mean the Israelite people, the journey to peoplehood takes an entire book.

At the end of the book of Genesis, Israel shares different a message with each one of his children. He says "Assemble and harken, Oh sons of Jacob; Harken to Israel your father." (Genesis 49:2) Some, like Judah, receive praise and some, like Simon and Levi, are chastised. Although they are one family, the descendants of each of the twelve sons are promised different destinies.

But this family is forged into a people during the course of the book of Exodus. They suffer slavery, they make a daring escape, they receive the law at Mount Sinai and they suffer trials and tribulations and even triumphs together. The individual blessings merge into a communal one. At the end of the book of Exodus, the people are again assembled to hear important information. This time, Moses calls them together to instruct them in building the *mishkan*, the portable wilderness sanctuary. And we read that Moses "gathered the whole Israelite community" (Exodus 35:1).

At the end of Genesis, the people are called *b'nai ya'akov*, the sons of Jacob. After the descendants of Jacob journey from slavery to freedom, they are called *kol adat b'nai yisrael*, all of the community of Israelites.

**Continued on page 2**

## February Schedule

### Sun., Feb. 1 (in person)

Yad BiSh'vat Seder @ 10:45 am

### Fri., Feb. 6 (hybrid)

Shabbat services with Rabbi Vinikoor @ 6:00 pm

### Sat., Feb. 14 (hybrid)

Daf Yomi @ 10am  
Torah study @ 10:30am  
Potluck lunch @ 12:00pm

### Sat., Feb. 21 (in person)

Hike with Hildie @ 10am

### Sun., Feb. 22 (in person)

Israel/Palestine Discussion @ 1pm

### Wed., Feb. 25 (in person)

Hamantaschen Making @ 5pm

### Fri., Feb. 27 (hybrid)

Shabbat services @ 6pm

### Sat., Feb. 28 (hybrid)

Daf Yomi @ 10am  
Torah study @ 10:30am  
Potluck lunch @ 12:00pm

## Rabbi's Message, continued from page 1

The story of the book of Exodus is not just one of leaving servitude in Egypt and serving God, it is the story of the establishment of a community. The tribes have not given up their identities, indeed, we read throughout the Torah genealogies which categorize people by tribe. However, their individual identity is not as important as the communal one. At the end of Deuteronomy, Moses assembles the community one last time and includes everyone, the elders, the strangers, the women and children, the woodchoppers and waterdrawers as he reiterates their covenant with God (Deuteronomy 29:9-11).

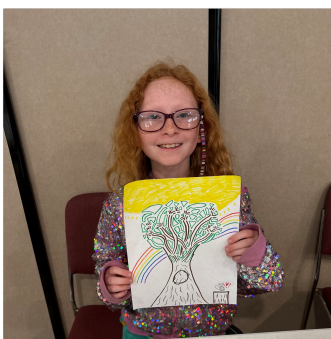
Today we may feel that we are living at the end of the book of Genesis, where different groups share different destinies and different understandings of the world and their place in it. This division can be seen in the Jewish community, in Maine and in our country. What does it take for us to live in the world we see at the end of Exodus, where people are a community and share a common destiny?

The book of Exodus offers some clues. It might be tempting to say that we become a people when we face a common enemy, and while in the Exodus story the Egyptians are certainly the enemies, that type of thinking will only serve to divide us. Perhaps the Israelites become a people when they realize they are not in control and that they are responsible and accountable to God. That exact theology might not work for everyone, but it provides us a lesson—don't be too sure of yourself, recognize the humanity in others, and remember the importance of community.

## Introducing the Sunday SCHMOOZE

**Sunday, January 11<sup>th</sup> from 10-11:30am**

Everyone is invited to join us at TBE for bagels, conversation, and a generally good time. The first Sunday Schmooze, presented by our membership committee, will be Sunday, January 11<sup>th</sup> from 10-11:30am. TBE will provide bagels and fixings as well as coffee and tea. Come and meet some new people and hang out. You'll also have a chance to hear from the Sabbatical Committee and Bikkur Holim Committee and pack some bags for TBE folks who are feeling under the weather. Join us!





# TBE in Action!



# Rabbi Asch's Sabbatical Leave Frequently Asked Questions

**January 21, 2026-February 22, 2026**

## **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's new contract states that she will be on sabbatical one month each year.

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

We have a talented group of lay leaders who will keep the Temple running in Rabbi Asch's absence. Daf Yomi, Torah study, services, Hebrew School and our Tu BiSh'vat Seder will all still be happening.

## **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 Liz Sizeler who can help those who are ill with visits or meals. Please note that Rabbi Susan is not available to officiate for life cycle events.

## **Will Rabbi Asch be in contact with us 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 have the ability 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 be checking 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 be answering calls or texts to her emergency cell phone. Temple President Arwen Agee will be in touch with Rabbi Asch if an emergency arises which the board feels needs her attention.

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

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**Sabbatical FAQ, continued from page 4**

No doubt some 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 do I do if I hear of a need in the community?**

If you hear of someone in need you don’t need to solve the problem yourself. Please pass that information along to the appropriate person (usually Liz or Nancy). If they need more help from the community they will let you know. Sending requests to one person makes sure we aren’t duplicating efforts (and contacting other rabbis multiple times!)

**What will Rabbi Asch be doing on her sabbatical?**

Rabbi Asch has three goals for her sabbatical: travel, learning, and time with family. Rabbi Asch will be spending 10 days in Israel and will travel to Boulder to take part in a coaching group with other rabbis. She plans to spend her time in Maine enjoying the outdoors, cooking, listening to podcasts, and maybe organizing the house!

**Who do I contact with questions about the sabbatical?,**

You may speak with sabbatical committee chair David Faigin with questions. He can be reached at (207) 808-1082 or [dfaigin@gmail.com](mailto:dfaigin@gmail.com).

**Who is in charge of what during the sabbatical?**

**Sabbatical Committee:** David Faigin (Chair), Nancy Kelly, Sue Offer, Arwen Agee, and Liz Sizeler and will be serving as the sabbatical committee and making sure that everything runs smoothly while Rabbi Asch is away.

**Hebrew School:** Rich Goldman ([richardgoldman2013@gmail.com](mailto:richardgoldman2013@gmail.com))

**Pastoral Care:** Liz Sizeler ([lsizeler@fairpoint.net](mailto:lsizeler@fairpoint.net))

Please contact Liz if you have a need for calls or meals.

**Death and Serious Illness:** Nancy Kelly is the contact person.  
Call (207) 242-2539 and Nancy will put you in touch with a rabbi.

**Discretionary Fund:** Pastor Chrissy Cataldo, Winthrop Congregational Church (UCC) (865) 773-5151. If you have a financial need, please contact Pastor Chrissy and she can help. No one on the sabbatical committee or in the congregation will know about your request.

**General Questions:** Dawn Fecteau, Temple Office, [bethelaugusta@gmail.com](mailto:bethelaugusta@gmail.com), 207-622-7450  
Please contact Dawn with questions about services, learning, Hebrew School or anything else. She can put you in touch with the correct person.

# Kindness, Friends, Love, & Light

By Rich Goldman

As you open the front door to the Shuman Center, just look up the stairs. Your eyes will adjust and shift upwards, and then you will be drawn up the steep (I'm 71 after all) and narrow staircase. And you will see brightness and color, joy and heart. You will see our Hebrew School mural.

Amidst all of the color and designs, your eyes will quickly focus on four Hebrew words: Chesed, Chavarim, Ahava, Or. Kindness, Friends, Love, and Light.



And, thus, you will bear witness to a sacred space. You will study the mural and you will notice a beautiful tree with long roots, numerous stars of all types, the sun clouds and the earth, friends playing as well as cats and dogs, the Shuman Center with a rainbow over a torah, a burning bush, a map of Maine, a menorah, a dreidel, a shofar and many, many happy faces.

You may ask yourself a question. How did this happen?

Several years ago, we were fortunate enough to have a cute set of twins gracing our Hebrew School: Ava and Noah Katz. After their b-mitzvahs, both were *madrachim* during their high school years and then they were gone, off to college. Ava, it turns out, is not only a delightful person, but she is also an accomplished artist and a gifted teacher. And so, when Rabbi Asch thought it was time for a Hebrew School mural, she knew just the person for the task: Ava Katz.

Ava asked our students to think and reflect on what makes our Hebrew School space special. What makes it a sacred space? What brings light into sacred spaces? What do you bring to this place to illuminate it, to bring the energy and the light?

And the students told her. We are friends. We are kind. We try to act with love and see the light.

Ava wondered where the children would take this. In the first class she asked them what brings you light, and they drew their ideas on practice papers. Later Ava came back and painted a blue and green canvas on the wall, safe and welcoming colors, she believes, which also represent the grass and the sky. Then she started to sketch onto the canvass the kids' pictures and ideas.

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**Mural, continued from page 6**

But, she stopped. She thought this isn't only my mural, it belongs to all of us so she made the brave decision that is so difficult for a teacher. Let's let the children paint the mural. Ava returned to the mural and colored over her drawings, leaving only the blue and green canvas.

The next Sunday, the children returned to Hebrew School and learned that they would be drawing on the wall. And so, they started, and Ava guided as she "let go," as all good teachers must.

Finally, the third Sunday arrived. Students who had missed the opportunity to express their ideas on the wall were given the chance. Students who wanted to add ideas and sketches painted away. Students who wanted to amend, went at it. And every now and then, Ava added an idea, or a sketch, or a helpful suggestion.

As the third class ended, Ava saw all that she had done with the students. She found it good. She could see every child who had touched the mural. She could see who is in the Hebrew School and that each child brought who they are to the mural.

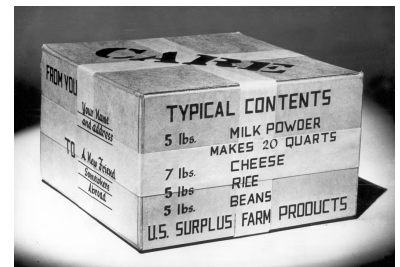
Now when Ava looks at the mural she feels a sense of well-earned pride, for her and for her students. And she appreciates how this project has given her a chance, once again, to connect with the Temple Beth El community-adults and kids.

I hope you will come to the Shuman Center and look up, see the light, feel the love and kindness, and appreciate the friends.

## Donations Needed for Care Packages

The Bikkur Cholim Committee is going to make care packages for members who are under the weather. We will be assembling them at the Sunday Schmooze on Sunday, January 11th at 10:00am. We are asking for donations for the bags (see below). Please drop off your donations at any time before January 11th, or bring them with you to the Sunday Schmooze.

- Canned soup
- Tissues (travel size)
- Cough drops
- Teas
- Chapstick
- Hand sanitizer
- Puzzle books



If you or someone you know is feeling under the weather, please let Liz Sizeler know and we will get a care package to you! You can contact Liz at [lsizeler@fairpoint.net](mailto:lsizeler@fairpoint.net) or 207-322-0168.

**MLK Day Event**  
**Monday, January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2026**  
**9:00am - 12:30**



*Honoring the Dream,  
While Continuing the Journey*

**9:00am ~ breakfast**  
**9:30am ~ programming begins**

Winthrop Congregational Church, UCC, 10 Bowdoin Street, Winthrop  
Sponsored by the Winthrop Area Ministers Association

## **Todah Rabbah (Thank You!)**

- **Chuck Cohen and Fran Rudoff** for representing TBE at the Religious Actions Center's Consultation on Conscience in Washington, DC.
- **David Faigin** for teaching Hebrew School while Rich Goldman was away.
- **Dawn Fecteau** and the Social Justice Committee for hosting a showing of *Building Hope: Ending Homelessness* at TBE for the broader community.
- **Ellen Freed** for provisioning our Hanukkah gift shop.
- The **Fundraising Committee (Chris Myers Asch, Vicky Cohen, Deborah Gussoff, Cindy Langewisch, Nick Rehagan, Lila Solomon)** for planning and putting on our first Murder Mystery!



## Purim Time!

It's January and we're already gearing up for Purim! Save the date for hamantaschen making **Wednesday, February 25<sup>th</sup> at 5pm**. We'll make all sorts of hamantaschen for our TBE parties (and maybe taste a few that night as well!) Our Hebrew School Purim Carnival will be Sunday, March 1<sup>st</sup>. More info about our adult Purim Celebration will be in our weekly emails.

Looking forward to celebrating with you!



## Tu BiSh'vat!



We all love Tu BiSh'vat, the new year for the trees (or as the kids like to say, the holiday where you drink grape juice and eat fruit). This year we are getting the party started a little early with our Yad BiSh'vat seder (held one day early on the 14<sup>th</sup> of Sh'vat) on **Sunday, February 1<sup>st</sup> at 10:45am**. All ages are invited to join us for this celebration, which will be led by our teens. And yes, there will be grape juice and fruit!

## Save the Dates!

**Funtensive**, our summer program for kids 4-12 is back for another year and will be held at TBE in Augusta. We'll run Funtensive the week of July 20<sup>th</sup>, and if there is enough interest we'll add another week—July 13<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup>. You'll receive an email with all the sign up information in early February.



# Mark Your Calendars

*Coming in 2026*

**MARCH  
1st**

## **Purim Carnival**

With our Hebrew School

**MARCH  
6th**

## **Shabbat on the Block**

Back by popular demand

**MARCH  
15th**

## **Jewish Food Festival**

A Delicious Fundraising Event

**APRIL  
2nd**

## **Passover Seder**

Join us at TBE

*Watch for details about these events in  
your weekly email and on Facebook*



## Kids Programming Schedule

### Hebrew School

January 4, 11, 18, 25

February 1, 8

### Teen Programming:

Study:

January 4 @ 7pm

Lunch and Lounge:

January 18

February 8

CSTJL Teen Program:

January 18

February 8

### 0-5 Group (9:45am)

January 18

February 1

# Hebrew School Students Learn About Sacred Spaces

By Lilah Goldey

The first part of the Hebrew School year has been very busy! This year's focus has been on *Sacred Spaces*, and we have conducted numerous activities related to this theme. The year began with learning Hebrew, Torah stories, values, and exploring nature, a sacred space, through our trail walks. Since the weather has cooled off, we have been painting our new mural with the help of Ava Katz! The students helped design, as well as paint and execute the art that represents sources of light and sacred spaces.

This past week, each class took on the responsibility of creating a dish, snack, or side to be donated to those in need. The kids loved being able to enjoy the process of cooking while acknowledging the purpose of the activity.

As we progressed through the high holiday season, students in all classes learned about each holiday. During Hanukkah the students had a great time making latkes and doing other activities! I look forward to the school year that is yet to come, and I am sure everyone else is as well.



# Supporting TBE



## **General Donations**

- Charles & Nancy Shuman, year-end donation
- Dawn Fecteau , year-end donation
- Eugene & Jean Meyers, year-end donation
- Jamie and Karin Orenstein, year-end donation
- Jeffrey & Laksana Shapiro, in honor of those who helped the family while Doretta was in the hospital
- Lauren & Christopher Hall, year-end donation
- Stacey Mondschein Katz & Robert Katz, in honor of Ava Katz
- Stacey Mondschein Katz & Robert Katz, in honor of Noah Katz
- Sue & David Offer, for the Torah project
- Chris & Thea Zinck, in memory of Pierrette Zinck
- Dean Corner, in memory of David Corner
- Gail & Gary Weiss, in memory of Max & Natalie Cohen
- Hildie Lipson, in memory of Robert Lipson
- Joan & Lowell Freiman, in memory of Beatrice Freiman
- Judith Feinstein, in memory of Morris & Martha Feinstein
- Louis & Margaret Metzger, in memory of Mollie Metzger
- Marcia & Michael Parker, in memory of Genevieve Kus
- Richard Dana, in memory of Leonora Dana
- William Dana & Emily Boochever, in memory of Lenora Dana
- William Dana & Emily Boochever, in memory of Jacob Dana

## **High Holiday Donations**

- Angela Sclar
- Barbara Gage & Drew Laughland
- Dylan Horkan
- Julia Underwood
- Mark Lowenstein & Jennifer Meader
- Martha & Martin Fleishman

## **Rabbi Discretionary Fund**

- Mary Bayer & Leon Bresloff
- Richard Dana

## **Yahrzeits/Memorials**

- Beth and Steven Shapiro, in memory of Daniel Bulba
- Beth and Steven Shapiro, in memory of Eli Bulba





## Board of Directors

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Anyah Goldey  
Hildie Lipson

## Contact Us

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### **Rabbi**

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207-242-9792  
[rabbiasch@gmail.com](mailto:rabbiasch@gmail.com)

### **Rabbi Emerita**

Rabbi Susan Bulba Carvutto

The office is open Tuesday,  
Wednesday, and Friday.

## January Yahrzeits

Jan. 2 Judith Kosak  
Jan. 3 Leoni Adler  
Jan. 3 Milton Metzger  
Jan. 5 Howard Director  
Jan. 7 Chuck Acker  
Jan. 7 Rhoda Boughton  
Jan. 7 Leonard Levy  
Jan. 8 Dorothy Bader  
Jan. 8 Margaret Ronn  
Jan. 9 Samuel Lipman  
Jan. 9 Faye Montell  
Jan. 9 Annie Slosberg  
Jan. 11 Jarvey Gilbert  
Jan. 11 Bernard Marienhoff  
Jan. 11 Helen Sizeler  
Jan. 13 Jay Bass  
Jan. 13 Gladys Harding  
Jan. 13 Shirley Schwartz Bass  
Jan. 14 Myron Shulman  
Jan. 15 Jane Koopman  
Jan. 16 Philmore Schiff  
Jan. 16 Jeffrey Shultz  
Jan. 17 Ruth Linn  
Jan. 17 Idel Rosenbaum  
Jan. 18 Shirley O'Brien  
Jan. 18 Elkan Offer  
Jan. 18 Bettye Young  
Jan. 19 Sylvia LaPerriere  
Jan. 20 Leo Bessey  
Jan. 20 Evelyn Bickerman  
Jan. 22 Roselind Eckert  
Jan. 23 Alice Gross  
Jan. 23 Rose Orenstein  
Jan. 24 Frank Lipman  
Jan. 25 Louise Macy  
Jan. 25 James Montell  
Jan. 26 Virgilio Gonzaga  
Jan. 26 Jacques Grunblatt, MD  
Jan. 26 Frank Lipman  
Jan. 26 Louis Sizeler  
Jan. 27 James Carvutto  
Jan. 27 Leonard Fels  
Jan. 27 Rhoda Newman  
Jan. 28 Martha Feinstein  
Jan. 28 Eleanor Viles

Jan. 30 Jacob Dana  
Jan. 30 Alvin Kosak

## February Yahrzeits

Feb. 1 Thelma Gross  
Feb. 2 Clara Greenberg  
Feb. 2 Richele Gross  
Feb. 2 Beatrice Schatz  
Feb. 3 Rosa Orenstein  
Feb. 4 Leah Freed  
Feb. 4 Jacob Kestin Shankman  
Feb. 4 Eunice Kuehnert  
Feb. 4 Douglas Schair  
Feb. 6 Selma Dana  
Feb. 7 Betty Franzel  
Feb. 7 Katherine Kotopoulos  
Feb. 7 Wilbur Viles  
Feb. 8 Len Bolonsky  
Feb. 8 Erik Eckert  
Feb. 8 Lauraine Goodrich  
Feb. 8 Dina Shultz  
Feb. 9 Richard Goldman  
Feb. 10 John Stanhope  
Feb. 11 Anna Imondi  
Feb. 12 Betty Kraus  
Feb. 12 Theodore Kuehnert  
Feb. 12 Virginia Seager  
Feb. 13 Ezra Bessey  
Feb. 13 Davis Spalding  
Feb. 14 Walter Barlow  
Feb. 14 Henry Thielman  
Feb. 15 Morey Lerman  
Feb. 17 Yetta Marienhoff  
Feb. 17 Harry Slosberg  
Feb. 18 Todd Greene  
Feb. 20 Sydney Sewall  
Feb. 21 Morris Cohen  
Feb. 23 Fred Freed  
Feb. 23 Harold Shapiro  
Feb. 25 Laura Goldstein  
Feb. 25 Evelyn Weiner  
Feb. 26 Rose Golden