



# Chadashot Ha'am

October, 2012

Tishrei/Cheshvan

## A Message from Rabbi Saks

If there were one holiday that meant "family" to me more than any other, it would be Thanksgiving. It was the one holiday when most of my extended family was often able to come together. So, when I found an affordable flight home from Israel during my first year of rabbinical school and could spend Thanksgiving with my family, I jumped at the opportunity. I didn't know then how important that trip would be.



Earlier that year, after I'd left for Israel, my grandfather had moved into a nursing home. While his faculties were nearly all there, the machine was wearing out, as my father would say. We knew he wouldn't be with us much longer. So on Thanksgiving morning, we gathered at the nursing home by my grandfather's bedside. I didn't realize that this gathering with his entire family would be the permission he needed to begin to let go. When I landed back in Israel on Monday, I learned that my grandfather had died while I had been in flight. So, I booked a flight back for his funeral.

Every Thanksgiving since then has been different. No matter where we are, even when we're not all in the same place, there's still a sense that there's an empty seat at the table. One of the most comforting traditions of Judaism

has been the permission to acknowledge that empty seat.

The *Yizkor* service, which gets its name from the opening words of the service's central silent prayer, "*Yizkor Elohim* (May God remember)," is probably most familiar to you from the afternoon of *Yom Kippur*. There are few services that are as emotionally charged and heartfelt as this service, which affords us the opportunity to remember our loved ones, no matter when they died.

There are three other times during the year when we also recite *Yizkor*. *Yizkor* is also included on the last day of each of the three festivals: *Passover*, *Shavuot*, and *Atzeret-Simchat Torah*. Judaism teaches us that our mourning is never really over. Even after we have completed *Shiva*, the intense first week of mourning; *Shloshim*, the thirty-day transitional period; and the first eleven months of saying *Kaddish*, we continue to mourn. We observe *Yahrzeit*, marking the anniversary of our loved one's death. And with *Yizkor*, we note the empty seat at our tables when we gather for holidays. In Judaism, it's not about picking up the pieces and moving on; some of those pieces are lost forever. It's about figuring out how to move forward with what we have left and how the memories we hold can comfort us long into the future.

I remember growing up and watching people leave the sanctuary on *Yom Kippur* when the *Yizkor* service began. They left because they believed that it was improper for someone whose parents were still living to remain for that service. Unfortunately, that inaccurate and superstitious practice diminishes the power of *Yizkor*. The original intention of *Yizkor*, as Rabbi Dr. Reuven Hammer teaches, "was for the community to pay homage to the martyrs of Judaism." We all have the charge and the honor to remember.

Just as we gathered for *Yizkor* on *Yom Kippur*, I invite you to join us for *Yizkor* throughout the upcoming year. We will next observe *Yizkor* on Monday, October 8, at 10:00 AM on *Atzeret-Simchat Torah*. We will also observe *Yizkor* on the last day of *Passover* and on *Shavuot* morning. I look forward to remembering our loved ones with you. *Zichronam livracha*, may their memories be a blessing.



## President's Message - Lisa Pierce

### Jumping in With Both Feet

It takes me a long time to warm up to things that are outside of my comfort zone. Often, when life presents me with opportunities that are not a natural fit for me, I simply opt out. Activities involving water are usually at the top of my "No thanks" list. I just don't care for getting wet.

Recently, I found myself accompanying a friend to *Mayyim Hayyim*, the *mikvah* (ritual bath) in Newton, Massachusetts. My role that day was supporting cast. Driving there, I had no thought or desire to participate in any way other than as a driver and a companion.

We enjoyed a tour of this beautiful facility and learned about the various ways the *mikvah* could be used. As we relaxed into the couches in the waiting area, a bride-to-be and her entourage were completing their rituals in celebration. We soaked up the peaceful energy of the gardens, the flowing water, and the sacred intentions that pervaded the air. No one was more surprised than I to find that, when offered a chance to do an immersion myself, the words that came out of my mouth were, "Sure, okay."

Before this day, ritual immersion always sounded old-world and irrelevant to me – something that I would automatically opt out of. But something about the preparation instructions that *Mayyim Hayyim* thoughtfully provides had important messages for me. Be present. Be grateful. Be you. Everyone and every body are sacred. I read the page with a longing to feel that assurance.



I made a conscious decision to get out of my own way, and to clear my head and give it a try. As I moved through the ritual, I thought about all of the things that brought me to that moment. I have much to be grateful for. The warmth of the pool wrapped me in safety as blessings flowed through my mind and out of my mouth. As I completed the ritual, the water lifted me up, lighter and lighter each time until I was done. I felt different as I walked away, looser and more free.

I learned many things that day. Certainly it was an example of "You never know unless you try." And an example that often amazing things are just around the corner if only you can muster the courage to leave your comfort zone. In addition, what resonated with me was the importance of *kavanah*, of intention. This ritual held enormous meaning for me in the moment, mostly because I was given the space to fully embrace it. The snarky little voice in my head would not have disappeared so easily without the intention of the guides who run *Mayyim Hayyim*. They have thought carefully about what their guests will see and do and need at each step of the way and how to make it all as easy and accessible as possible, both physically and spiritually. It simply would not have worked for me if these wonderful people hadn't

gone out of their way to create a safe space.

In reflecting on this experience, I wonder about the ways in which my intentions make a difference to others. We are all guides in one way or another. Even in small ways, when we share our thoughts and opinions, we have the opportunity to guide others with receptiveness and respect. And in large ways, like when we act as ambassadors for the various aspects of our own spiritual home, we have the opportunity to guide others with welcoming smiles and open hearts. My experience at *Mayyim Hayyim* that day was wonderfully positive. I wonder just how much we can make a difference for each other and our guests if we approach each experience and interaction at Bet Ha'am with *kavanah*, with sacred intention.

### Chadashot Chai-lights

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**Office Hours:**

Tuesday - Friday, 9:00 AM-4:00 PM  
 The office is closed on Mondays.  
 Building Use: All meetings, events or gatherings must be scheduled with the office.

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**From the Religious School Director****Orly Mendelson Biggie**

The Jewish calendar is a lunar calendar. Even though the Jewish holidays always occur on the same day in the same Jewish month, the date on the civil calendar changes from year to year. Rosh Hashanah is on the first day of *Tishrei*. Other holidays during *Tishrei* are *Yom Kippur*, *Sukkot*, *Shemini Atzeret* and *Simchat Torah*. In Israel and in

Reform synagogues *Sukkot* is celebrated for seven days, so *Shemini Atzeret* and *Simchat Torah* are celebrated on the same day and called *Atzeret-Simchat Torah*. Orthodox and Conservative congregations celebrate eight days of *Sukkot* and *Simchat Torah* is celebrated a day later. This year, *Atzeret-Simchat Torah* begins on the evening of October 7.

*Simchat Torah* means Rejoicing in the Torah and marks the completion of the annual cycle of reading the Torah. Each week, a few chapters – a *parasha* or portion – are read in every synagogue. We begin with the first chapter of Genesis and end with the last chapter of Deuteronomy. On *Atzeret-Simchat Torah* we read the final portion of Deuteronomy and then the first chapter of Genesis. As we do so, we are reminded that the Torah is a circle that never ends. We celebrate the holiday with singing, dancing and *hakafot* (processions) around the sanctuary. After the seriousness of the High Holy days, *Atzeret-Simchat Torah* is a time to rejoice.

Our tradition has been to honor our first graders and other students who are new to Religious School with a Consecration ceremony on *Atzeret-Simchat Torah*. We rejoice as our new students stand in front of the ark and sing the *Shema*. The rabbi and their parents bless our students and each child receives a small Torah. I hope that, despite the long holiday weekend, you will join us on Sunday evening, October 7, at 6:30 PM for *Atzeret-Simchat Torah* and Consecration.



## Religious School News

**Consecration Ceremony on *Simchat Torah*:** Please join us on Sunday, October 7, at 6:30 PM to celebrate *Atzeret-Simchat Torah*. We will also have a ceremony of consecration to honor our first graders and new students to our Religious School.

**The first grade Family Shabbat** program will be on Sunday, October 21, from 9:30 AM to noon. Parents of first grade students will participate in a study session about Shabbat and create a Shabbat heirloom with their first grader.

**The second grade Family Connection** will have its first session on Sunday, October 28. Parents will study with Rabbi Saks and then participate in a joint session with their children.

**Thank you** to Andrea Summers and Corey Kuhl for helping with apples and honey during morning Religious School.

**Thank you** to Kimberly Shur for helping set up our classrooms for the start of school.

**Thank you** to John Cole for organizing the office and school storage areas as well as some of our classrooms. What a wonderful difference!

Come Learn about URJ Summer Camps!  
Sunday, October 21, 11:30 AM to Noon



Please join us in the sanctuary with your children in second through tenth grades on Sunday, October 21, for a special presentation about URJ summer camps. Laura Gurvis from Crane Lake and Eisner Camps will share information about this wonderful Jewish experience for children. Our URJ camps blend informal Jewish education with sports, arts, and cultural events to create an all-encompassing Jewish experience.

### Welcome New Members

Joshua & Lesley Levy  
Albert & Christiane Shems  
Mark & Jennifer Shinnars  
Natasha Goldman & Joachim Homann  
Cynthia Atkinson & Catherine Share  
Sara & Bob Gorstein  
Joshua Rosenberg  
Amy & Michael Rovin  
Heather & Corey Walker  
Welcome back: Sam & Deb Barouch

## Schedule of Services

### Friday, October 5

*Kabbalat Shabbat Service* 7:30 PM

### Saturday, October 6

Torah Study 9:00 AM

Worship Service 10:00 AM

Hanna Paris Bat Mitzvah,  
daughter of David Paris  
*Parsha Chol HaMoeid Sukkot*

### Friday, October 12

*Family Kabbalat Shabbat* 6:30 PM

### Saturday, October 13

Torah Study 9:00 AM

Worship Service 10:00 AM

*Parsha Bereshit*

### Friday, October 19

*Kabbalat Shabbat Service* 7:30 PM

### Saturday, October 20

Torah Study 9:00 AM

Worship Service 10:00 AM

*Parsha Noach*

### Friday, October 25

*Kabbalat Shabbat Service* 7:30 PM

### Saturday, October 27

Torah Study 9:00 AM

Worship Service 10:00 AM

*Parsha Lech-Lecha*

**Please join the congregation  
in celebration as our students  
are called to the Torah as  
B'nai Mitzvah.**

## Adult Learning Opportunities for 5773

The Bet Ha'am Adult Learning Committee is planning a variety of programs for this year. We hope you will be able to participate in some or all of them! Of course, Torah Study continues every Saturday morning at 9:00 AM. Two levels of beginning Hebrew classes will start in October. The popular Thursday mini-series will return in both fall and spring with three classes to choose from. We will also offer the Passover Workshop again. Stay tuned for announcements of more programs, including the spring Sumner T. and Rosalyn S. Bernstein Scholar-in-Residence Weekend.

**Torah Study:** Rabbi Saks, every Saturday at 9:00 AM. Delve into the week's Torah portion. No experience necessary. All are welcome.

**Learn to Read Hebrew** - Lynn Urbach, Sunday mornings, starting October 14

Beginning Hebrew: Learn the *Alef-Bet*, 9:40 - 10:30 AM

Begun Hebrew: Beginning to Read, 10:40 - 11:30 AM

Participants must purchase the text for these classes. Beginners will start with *Aleph isn't Tough*. Begun will use *Aleph isn't Enough*. Space is limited. Contact the office to register for this class. Contact Lynn Urbach ([lurbach1@maine.rr.com](mailto:lurbach1@maine.rr.com)) with any questions.

**Thursday Mini Series** - October 25, November 1 & 8: 7:00 - 8:30 PM

Choose one of the following classes:

- A Jew Looks at the New Testament - Rabbi Bill Leffler
- Vessels of Light: an inquiry into Jewish mystical tradition - Steve Steinbock
- Reel Theology: Theological Encounters with Contemporary Culture - Rabbi Jared Saks

**Passover Workshop** - March 10, in the afternoon.

**Spring Mini Series** - March 28, April 4 & 11, 7:00 - 8:30 PM

### Melton

Several Melton programs are being offered in the area, some of which meet at Bet Ha'am. These are excellent programs for adults. These programs provide excellent learning opportunities for adults, with fun and interesting discussions—and not homework or exams. Financial aid is available for those who need help with the fee. Contact the JCA (772-1959) for more information.

**Melton Foundations** - Foundations of Jewish Family Living – 10 sessions - Wednesdays at 8:45 AM. Designed for parents raising children with Jewish values. No previous knowledge necessary.

**Melton Core Curriculum** - 30 weeks of text-based study. For more information, [www.mainejewish.org](http://www.mainejewish.org).

## Strategic Planning Update

On Rosh Hashanah morning, Rabbi Saks shared with the congregation the visionary work of Rabbi Hayim Herring from his book, *Tomorrow's Synagogue Today*. "Exploring a Twenty-First-Century Synagogue," the book's second chapter, formed the basis of the first meeting of the Strategic Planning Study Circles held in early September. The participants in each Study Circle explored some of Rabbi Herring's out-of-the-box possibilities for redefining the synagogue in a 21st Century context.

The Strategic Planning Study Circles are the primary working groups of the strategic planning process. After analyzing the ideas and questions generated by congregants at the Annual Meeting in June, the Strategic Planning Team identified nine areas for in-depth study:

Data Gathering and Demographics

Communication, Marketing and Membership

Lifelong Learning

*Tikkun Olam* and Community Connections

Engagement with Israel

Innovative Trends in Jewish Living

Worship and Ritual

Finances

House, Garden and Grounds

We have put together congregant Study Circle groups for each topic, and a member of the Strategic Planning Team leads each group. More than 60 congregants are involved in this wide-ranging work. Each Study Circle has three main tasks: to review and document current Bet Ha'am policy and practice, to study innovative trends and best practices across North America, and to create a report of findings, including recommendations. We have compiled an extensive list of resources that explore the range of current thinking on synagogue transformation and highlight practical ideas being adopted by congregations across the country for each topic.

The Study Circles and the Strategic Planning Team continue to welcome your ideas and suggestions. To help spark your thoughts, we encourage everyone to explore the resource materials that we are continuing to compile. If you would like a copy of our resource list, would like to participate in one of the Study Circles, or want to share your thoughts, please feel free to contact Elaine Falender, Strategic Planning Team chair, at [efalender@gmail.com](mailto:efalender@gmail.com) or 799-8102.

## Garden Notes

It's beginning to feel autumnal in the gardens. We have been enjoying an abundant harvest from our raised garden beds. Our gardens have provided enough produce for donations to the Jewish Family Services food pantry each week and contributions to our own Kiddush luncheons as well. Soon we will install our hoop covers so we can plant vegetables that should produce into the early winter months. If you have experience gardening with hoop covers, please contact Toby Rosenberg at [toby@awi.net](mailto:toby@awi.net) and share your knowledge.

On Sunday, September 9, twenty-one energetic volunteers spruced up our grounds for the High Holy Days. Everyone was delighted at how quickly things were accomplished with so many hands at work. Thanks to Toby Rosenberg, Beth Simpson, Karen Lukas, Laura Kittle, Ruth Higgs, Cathy Breen, Ben Grant, Caroline Eliot, Samantha Johnson, Harry Johnson, Susan McMillan, Jason Singer, Kate Hirsh, Larisa Semenuk, Jeremy Moser, Karen Silverman, Rachel Burger, Erin Koepf, Cory Kuhl, Margaret Carver and Kate Madigan Hirsh. Many thanks to Panera for donating a feast of breakfast goodies.

By the time you read this, our Religious School students will have helped to thresh and grind our harvested wheat. We plan to use the flour to bake *challah* to share in our *sukkah*.

This autumn we will also plant more winter wheat. The weekly email will let you know about Tuesday evening and Sunday morning gardening opportunities. Our volunteers have really kept us going this season, and we look forward to creating more such opportunities in the coming year as we further integrate our gardens into our congregational life.



## Social Action Committee

The Social Action Committee will meet on October 10 at 7:00 PM at Bet Ha'am to continue our work on the marriage equality campaign, immigrant issues and helping to provide food to those in need. We invite all interested congregants to participate. For more information, please contact Shoshana Hoose, committee chair, at [shoose@maine.rr.com](mailto:shoose@maine.rr.com).

### Wheat Threshing



## Adult Library News

Now that Religious School has begun again, the library is staffed on Sunday mornings from 10:00 AM to noon. The library is also staffed on Thursday afternoons from 1:00 to 3:00 PM. Please drop in and visit.

### New Computer

Thanks to a very generous donation from Roz Bernstein, the library now has a new laptop and software called PatronSearch, making the entire collection accessible on line. Just follow the simple directions to search by author, subject or title. When your selection pops up, look for the call number (which are letters) so you can locate it on the shelves. As you enter the library, the shelves on your left hold books with call numbers from B through BS. Books with call numbers from D through DS are on the wall starting at the office door; books with call numbers of E, F, Fiction and so on wrap around the rest of the library. Reference books, and oversized books, including art books, are on the wall surrounding the office pass-through.

### How to Use the Library

The library is open for you to borrow books or browse whenever the synagogue is open. To borrow books, you must have a library card. One of the clipboards on the reading table tells how you can get a card. The other clipboard explains how to borrow a book at times when no volunteer library staff is available.

If you take a book to browse and do not sign it out, please put the book on the cart for staff to re-shelve.

The library is wireless for easy internet access. You can plug in at various outlets located around the room.

Welcome to new library card owners: Jill Backman, Victoria Rosenthal, Wendy Hayes and Rich Levy.

Interested in Learning about Archiving? If so, the library is interested in YOU! If you are tech-savvy and are willing to help us digitize various aspects of Bet Ha'am's history, please contact the office or Donna Landau, [dmlandau@hotmail.com](mailto:dmlandau@hotmail.com)

**Calling All Knitters and/or People Who Can Work a Crochet Hook** — The Comfort Shawl Project is continuing after a summer hiatus. Become a partner with other knitters who are helping to create warm, cozy shawls for Jewish patients visited by chaplain Rosie Wohl in hospitals and homes. To find out more, contact Donna Landau, [dmlandau@hotmail.com](mailto:dmlandau@hotmail.com). If you would like some company as you get started, please join Donna in the Bet Ha'am Library on Sundays between 10:00 AM and noon.

## Join the Bet Ha'am Donor Gallery

We invite you to join the Bet Ha'am Donor Gallery today! We have many needs and many ways for you to contribute. If you have an event you would like to celebrate, a person you would like to honor, a *yahrzeit* to remember, or you just want to help support our programs, please fill out the form and send it along with your check to Bet Ha'am. Include an address if you would like an acknowledgement to be sent.

Our Donor Gallery listing should read:

Please acknowledge to: \_\_\_\_\_

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Check enclosed for \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Fund choice (please check one):

- \_\_\_\_\_ Annual Fund
- \_\_\_\_\_ General Fund
- \_\_\_\_\_ Rabbi's Discretionary Fund
- \_\_\_\_\_ Adult Library Fund
- \_\_\_\_\_ Berkowitz Open Door Fund
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- \_\_\_\_\_ Cohen Fund for Worship & Learning
- \_\_\_\_\_ Goldfinger Fund for Israel Travel
- \_\_\_\_\_ Religious School Library Fund
- \_\_\_\_\_ Rosalyn S. & Sumner T. Bernstein Scholar in Residence Fund
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### ***Bet Ha'am Donor Gallery***

#### **We thank our generous contributors**

##### **Annual Fund**

- Kim Williams & Warren Heaps
- In honor of Erin Koepf and Sharon Ash Tancredi for chairing the Holiday Committee by Jane Snerson
- Rosalyn S. Bernstein
- In memory of Esther Webber by Wilma & Stephen Rose
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- Sharon Ash Tancredi
- Jill & Michael Epstein
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- Alan & Jill Morris
- In memory of Robert Bronstein by Piotr & Rachel Stamieszkin
- Sue Howard
- In memory of Polly Bloomstein by Amy & Stefan Iris
- Dana & Eric Anderson
- Emily & Rebecca Brocks
- Toby Rosenberg
- JoAnn & Wayne Goodman
- Jerry Olshan & Lynn Urbach
- In appreciation of Morah Ellie Miller by Pam Weiss & Ken Lemieux
- Orly Biggie
- Mary Parsons
- Dan Fishbein & Ilene Schuchman
- Barry & Roberta Zuckerman

##### **Adult Library**

- Rosalyn S. Bernstein

##### **Rabbi's Discretionary Fund**

- In loving memory of Michael Barriault by Toby Rosenberg
- In appreciation of Rabbi Saks for his guidance by Leora Rabin & David Inger
- With appreciation to Rabbi Saks by Sharon Ash Tancredi

##### **General Fund**

- In memory of grandmother, Sarah Poplinger, by Ginger & Ray Spiro
- In appreciation of High Holy Day services by Harriet Wallerstein
- In appreciation by anonymous
- In memory of father, Samuel Alpren, on his *yahrzeit* by H. Michael Alpren
- In memory of David Rickless on his *yahrzeit* by Wendy & Bill Sirois
- In appreciation by anonymous
- In appreciation of Teri Berenson by Jeff Kimball & Tim Jarvis
- In appreciation of Rachel Stamieszkin for teaching of Torah for Joe's Bar Mitzvah by Leora Rabin & David Inger
- In appreciation of Sharon & Perry Newman for their music by Leora Rabin & David Inger

##### **Religious School Library Fund**

- In appreciation of High Holy Days by Arleen & Barry Weiss

##### **Goldfinger Fund for Israel Travel**

- In memory of William J. Leffler by Bill & Ki Leffler
- Jeremy Moser & Laura Kittle
- Tom & Elizabeth Rosen
- Rosalyn S. Bernstein

### ***Zecheh T'zaddik L'vrachah***

- Condolences to Nanette & Larry Chern on the loss of Nanette's mother, Esther King



# OCTOBER 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 Office Closed <i>Sukkot</i>	2	3 Morning <i>Minyan</i> 7:00 AM	4	5 <i>Kabbalat Panim</i> 7:00 PM <i>Kabbalat Shabbat</i> Service 7:30 PM	6 Torah Study 9:00 AM Worship Service 10:00 AM Hanna Paris <i>Bat Mitzvah</i>
7 <i>Atzeret-Simchat Torah</i>  Consecration and <i>Atzeret-Simchat Torah</i> Service 6:30 PM	8 Office Closed	9	10 Morning <i>Minyan</i> 7:00 AM	11	12 <i>Kabbalat Panim</i> 6:00 PM Family <i>Kabbalat</i> <i>Shabbat</i> Service 6:30 PM	13 Torah Study 9:00 AM Worship Service 10:00 AM
14	15 Office Closed	16	17 Morning <i>Minyan</i> 7:00 AM	18	19 <i>Kabbalat Panim</i> 7:00 PM <i>Kabbalat Shabbat</i> Service 7:30 PM	20 Torah Study 9:00 AM Worship Service 10:00 AM
21	22 Office Closed	23	24 Morning <i>Minyan</i> 7:00 AM	25	26 <i>Kabbalat Panim</i> 7:00 PM <i>Kabbalat Shabbat</i> Service 7:30 PM	27 Torah Study 9:00 AM Worship Service 10:00 AM
28	29 Office Closed	30	31 Morning <i>Minyan</i> 7:00 AM			