

# Chadashot Ha'am

March 2014 Adar II 5774

# A Message from Rabbi Saks

Last month, I journeyed through Israel with nineteen other members of our Bet Ha'am community. Our pilgrimage to

Israel was incredible and I look forward to our sharing more details about the phenomenal trip with you in the near future. For now, I want to highlight just one aspect of our trip that, I think, sets Israel apart from travel to any other place. Our nine days in Israel were bookended by Shabbat. We arrived in Tel Aviv on

Friday afternoon, February 14 and left nine days later, after making Havdalah (the service at the end of Shabbat that returns us to the regular week) in a Jerusalem restaurant. Our awareness of Shabbat around us on both that first day in Tel Aviv and that last day in Jerusalem reminded me that it is Shabbat that makes Israel so different from any other country in the world.

When we landed in Israel, the flight attendant wished us a Shabbat Shalom. This was not because we were a group of American Jews coming to Israel, but because the whole Israeli culture has an awareness of Shabbat.

As we were wrapping up our tasting tour of the Levinsky Market in Tel Aviv, our guide, Yoram, called our attention to the hustle and bustle of people rushing around in anticipation of *Shabbat*. He shared with us that while his own *Shabbat* observance, like that of many secular Israelis, is not

marked by attending services, studying Torah, or hearing the weekly Torah portion chanted, he does observe *Shabbat* simply by

being in Israel. It's one thing for Jews living outside of Israel, among other religions and cultures, to break from the routine around us to make Shabbat. It's an entirely different thing for the culture in which one is living to change its pace to match the arrival of Shabbat.

At the end of our trip, as Shabbat was approaching and we were among the throngs at Machane Yehudah, Jerusalem's outdoor market, we were aware of the fervor with which people were preparing for Shabbat. Some, of course, would light candles at exactly the prescribed time and make their way to Kabbalat Shabbat services. Many, though, were on their way to family dinners, easing their way into Israel's weekend.

On our first Shabbat in Israel, we worshipped with Beit Tefilah Israeli, a homegrown Reform congregation founded primarily by Israelis, which is unlike most of the Reform congregations in Israel. On our final Shabbat in Israel, we worshipped with Kehilat Tzur Hadassah, a Reform congregation comprised of many North American ex-pats – and more typical of Reform Israeli congregations. Thinking about these two very different congregations and the varied ways in which Israelis engage with

Shabbat, I realized that the common thread is the overarching awareness that it was Shabbat.

On our trip, I came to understand, even more deeply than I have before, how important it is for each of us to engage with Shabbat in a way that is uniquely meaningful.

We have planned Shabbat services on Friday, March 7, to provide such an opportunity within our Bet Ha'am community. Through what we are calling Shabbat in Three Experiences, we will offer a variety of choices to engage with Shabbat, hopefully in a way that is meaningful to you and leads to an overarching awareness of Shabbat. We will begin at 6:30 PM with a congregational potluck Shabbat dinner, followed by three concurrent Shabbat experiences at 7:30 PM. Rebecca Wohl-Pollack will lead a study session on a piece of Shabbat liturgy; Jane Sloven, Joe Py, Sharon Newman and Perry Newman will lead a meditative Shabbat service: and I will lead a Kabbalat Shabbat service in the sanctuary. We will all come together in the sanctuary toward the end of these experiences for concluding prayers and Kaddish. And then we will continue our celebration of Shabbat together with an oneg in the social hall.

I hope that, like the varied ways in which Israelis engage with Shabbat that surrounds them, you will find a way to engage in this Shabbat experience, immersing yourself in a way that works for you.

# President's Message - Lisa Munderback

The Board of Trustees approved the Strategic Plan less than a year ago and we are making great strides toward completing the action steps for each of the goals listed below. Many great things are happening at Bet Ha'am!

# Foster Connections within the Bet Ha'am community:

Our series of neighborhood meetings is gathering folks for discussions with the rabbi about the Strategic Plan, input regarding the roles of those in member families who are not Jewish and building connections with one another. You will be invited to a gathering near you, if you haven't been already.

Our upcoming *Purim Shpiel* and Carnival on March 16 will be an opportunity for kids and adults to have fun, be loud and eat yummy *hamentaschen*. This is an event not to be missed!

Sligo Road, with our very own Perry and Sharon Newman, will be playing at Bet Ha'am on April 5. This will be a great opportunity to listen to music, catch up with old friends and make new friends. There will also be a silent auction, so we hope you come prepared to bid on some awesome items.

# Engage in Tikkun Olam:

The Social Action Committee, with the leadership of Eleanor Goldberg and Randi Greenwald, is exploring several ways to enhance *Tikkun Olam*, including working with the Education Committee on ways to include *Tikun Olam* in our Religious School curriculum. Please consider joining committee members in volunteering at the Wayside Food Program and/or donating winter clothes and toiletries for refugees. Our *Shabbat* service on March 21 will focus on immigrant needs. George Budagu Makoko, an emigre from the Democratic Republic of Congo, will be our guest speaker.

# Avodah:

The Gabbai Committee is meeting regularly as a sounding board for Rabbi Saks as he tries new melodies and other ways to transform worship.

# **Lifelong Learning:**On January 10 an

On January 10 and 11, our Religious School students in seventh through tenth grades participated in an overnight Shabbaton at Camp Ketcha, along with Rabbi Saks, Orly Biggie and several helpful volunteers. Activities included games, group problemsolving exercises, a Shabbat worship service created in part by students, a magician, and a guided meditation with Steve Steinbock. Reviews of the retreat were

extremely positive. Students appreciated the time they had to get to know each other and hang out.

The weekend of January 31 through February 2 was also a special one, especially for families and students in kindergarten through sixth grade. Bet Ha'am welcomed award-winning musician and Jewish educator Shira Kline. Shira led our families in song, worship and story throughout the weekend, culminating in a community concert on Sunday afternoon. Shira was involved with members of all ages since she also led *Torah* study on Saturday morning and held a Parent/Teacher workshop on Saturday afternoon.

# House/Garden/Grounds:

We were selected by the Huffington Post as the third most stunning synagogue in the world! A total of fifty synagogue buildings were recognized. Due to this and other publicity, we have had several visitors who inquired about renting our facility for weddings and other activities, which could generate revenue for the congregation.

### Finance:

The Finance Committee, chaired by Ben Grant, and the Board of Trustees, are reviewing and discussing the budget for next year and beyond. Our intent is provide a sound and responsible fiscal foundation so that our congregation can thrive.

Much is happening at Bet Ha'am and there is much more to come! We hope you will participate and create deeper connections with fellow members each month.

### Congregation Bet Ha'am

81 Westbrook Street South Portland, Maine 04106 Phone (207) 879-0028 Fax (207) 879-1866 TTY available www.bethaam.org

Rabbi Jared Saks
Orly Mende son Biggie, Religious School Director
Kris Dorer, Executive Director
Teri Berenson, Bookkeeper
Karen Hinda I, Administrative Assistant
Chris Skidgel, Custodian

### **Executive Committee**

Lisa Munderback, President Andrew Kosak , Vice President Ben Grant, Treasurer Nathan Szanton, Secretary Lisa Pierce, Past President

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Jane Snerson
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Lee Tabenken
Deborah Tilman Stone

### 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.

# Office extensions and email addresses:

Rabbi Saks, Ext. 100
ravsaks@bethaam.org
Orly Biggie, Re igious Schoo Director, Ext. 102
or y@bethaam.org
Kris Dorer, Executive Director, Ext. 104
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Karen Hinda I. Administrative Assistant, Ext. 101
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office@bethaam.org

# From the Executive Director

Kris Dorer



# Places to Go, People to See

Congregation Bet Ha'am has begun a collaboration with ITNPortland (the Independent Transportation Network). Through a grant from the John T. Gorman Foundation, we are now able to provide transportation with dignity, and

according to ITN guidelines, to congregants who are seniors or who have a visual disability.

Driving means freedom, independence and the ability to get to where you want to go. We have at least several congregants who might not be able to get to our services and programs due to restrictions on their driving. ITN provides rides for any purpose, 24 hours a day, in private automobiles with drivers who are trained to ensure safety and comfort.

Through our grant, we have started a fund to help pay for our congregants to access ITN's services. A congregant who is a volunteer driver for ITN also has donated some of his mile credits to this fund. We have been supporting rides two days a week to a few of our congregants, and we hope to help others get to Bet Ha'am and other local destinations of their choice.

We are in **great need** of volunteers to help us sustain this effort. ITN allows you to volunteer by either driving your own car or one of their fleet of vehicles, and you can make your own schedule. You are matched with wonderful riders who need transportation to anything from religious services to a hair dresser, a medical appointment or a book club. Ride credits are accrued for each mile that you drive, and these miles are credited to Bet Ha'am Riders' Fund to help our congregants. You can also donate your vehicle to ITN for ride credits.

To learn more about ITNPortland, visit their website at <a href="https://www.itnportland.org">www.itnportland.org</a>. If you are interested in participating in Bet Ha'am's ITN project as either a rider or volunteer, it is important that you contact Kris directly in the Bet Ha'am office at 879-0028 x104 or <a href="https://kris@bethaam.org">kris@bethaam.org</a>. Together, we will help more of those in our Bet Ha'am community get out and about, which will bring us all closer together.

# Schedule of Services

# Saturday, March 1

Torah Study 9:00 AM Worship Service 10:00 AM Parashat P'kudei

# Friday, March 7

Shabbat in Three Experiences

Sanctuary Service 7:30 PM Meditation Service 7:30 PM Study Session 7:30 PM

# Saturday, March 8

Torah Study 9:00 AM Worship Service 10:00 AM Parashat Vayikra

# Friday, March 14

Family Kabbalat Shabbat 6:30 PM

# Saturday, March 15

Torah Study 9:00 AM Worship Service 10:00 AM Parashat Tzav

# Sunday, March 16, Purim

Megillah Reading 10:00AM

# Friday, March 21

Kabbalat Shabbat Service 7:30 PM

# Saturday, March 22

Torah Study 9:00 AM Worship Service 10:00 AM Parashat Sh'mini

# Friday, March 28

Kabbalat Shabbat Service 7:30 PM

### Saturday, March 29

Torah Study 9:00 AM Worship Service 10:00 AM Parashat Tazria

# From the Religious School Director

Orly Mendelson Biggie



Every year, the Maine Jewish Film Festival generously invites our teenagers to a screening for youth as part of the Maine Jewish Film Festival. This year's film is My Australia, a Polish movie that takes place after World War II. Two brothers, Tadek and Andrezej, join a rowdy and anti-Semitic organization. Their mother is a Holocaust survivor who has been keeping her Jewish

identity secret. She does not realize what is going on until the boys are arrested after the organization raids a Jewish neighborhood. She reveals that, though raised as Catholics, her sons are Jewish. The mother decides to move her family to Australia, but it turns out that she wasn't really trying to reach Australia. You'll have to see the film to learn the rest of the story!

I hope that all of our sixth through twelfth grade students will join us on March 23 at 2:30 PM at the Nickelodeon to take advantage of this wonderful opportunity.

My Australia is about finding family roots and struggling to form identity in a new country. Although the movie is a youth screening, adults would enjoy seeing it too. You may also want to check out the full selection of Jewish and Israeli movies that will be part of the Maine Jewish Film Festival from March 22 through March 29.

March also brings us the fun of Purim. Please join us for the *Megillah* reading and our highly anticipated Purim Carnival on March 16!



# **Religious School News**

- Thank you to last month's substitute teachers: Jeff Schwartz and Jill Rosenthal.
- Thank you to Larry Landau for teaching Israeli folk dances to our fourth, fifth and sixth grade students.
- Third Grade Parent Program Sunday, March 2, 9:40 -11:00 AM
   This year's theme is Israel. Rabbi Saks will lead the program, The Land of Israel: Exploring Our Connections, Connecting Our Children. Parents of all third grade students are encouraged to attend.
- Purim

The Megillah reading and the Purim Carnival will be held during Sunday morning Religious School on March 16. Plan to join us for this festive, fun celebration! Evening Religious School will meet at its regular time.

- Fifth and sixth grade Ellis Island simulation Sunday March 30, 9:00 AM noon All students in fifth and sixth grades will become immigrants-for-a-day during our Ellis Island simulation. We need parents to assist as the officials on the Island. Please call Orly (879-0028) if you can volunteer.
- Grades 4A and 5 Shabbat dinner and service - Friday, March 14 Families of students in grades 4A and 5 are invited to join us for a Shabbat potluck dinner and services on Friday, March 14, beginning at 5:30 PM. Please RSVP by March 7.
- Students in grades seven through ten will attend the Maine Jewish Film Festival on Sunday, March 23, beginning at 2:30 PM. For more information, please see Orly's article.

# **Shabbat in Three Experiences**

Three Choices for Shabbat Services on Friday, March 7



Join us as we open our doors to celebrate Shabbat in new ways. On Friday, March 7, we will have three simultaneous offerings to create opportunities for more people to find a meaningful connection with Shabbat. These three experiences will speak to each of us differently, and we will also have opportunities to spend time together as one community at our dinner and oneg. We hope you will encourage family and friends who may not usually come to Bet Ha'am for Shabbat to join us as we explore these experiences together.

6:30 PM Potluck Dinner

7:30 PM Worship Service in the Sanctuary led by Rabbi Saks

Meditative Service in Room 205 led by Jane Sloven, Joe Py, Sharon Newman and Perry Newman

Adult Learning Study Session in Room 104 (Adult Learning Room) led by Rebecca Wohl- Pollack

We will all come together for closing prayers including *Kaddish* and we hope you will stay for a festive oneg.





# Sunday, March 16

10:00 AM

MEGİLLAH Reading
and PURİM SHPİEL

Followed by a fabulous

PURIM CARNIVAL

with games,
delicious goodies, prizes
and a whole lot of fun!

Bring your friends! Fun for the whole family! Costumes encouraged. End time 1:00 PM.



# **Social Action Committee News**

Please join us at services on March 21 at 7:30 PM.

The Social Action Committee continues to focus on immigration, and we hope you will join us at Shabbat services on March 21 to meet and hear our neighbor, Georges

Budagu Makoko, author of the memoir,
Ladder to the Moon. Makoko will speak about his peaceful childhood in the
Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda and how it was shattered with the genocide that began in 1994 and continued for years.
He will tell us about his harrowing journey from the war-torn region to the United States - and eventually to Portland, where he now lives as a U.S. citizen. Don't miss it!

Our next meeting is **Sunday**, **March 9**, at 10:00 AM.

The Social Action Committee will host the Bet Cafe on **Sunday**, **April 6**.

# Rosh Chodesh/New Moon Circle

Discussion is underway about the possibility of a monthly gathering to celebrate the renewing of the moon. The new moon offers a time for attuning with the cycle of the seasons and the unique energy of each month.

Traditional practices for the new moon include reciting special blessings in the synagogue and outdoors under the moon and gathering women to light candles, sing and dance. Contemporary practices include studying about Jewish women, saying modern prayers such as those by Marcia Falk, conducting healing ceremonies and planning gender inclusive celebrations.

Please contact Mindy through the synagogue office at 879-0028 if you are interested in being part of these or other versions of this rich tradition.



# Notes from the Garden

With snow covering everything on the ground, we Our last note is to share that the Garden are using imagination to envision what our gardens will reveal come spring. Eli Rosen is starting seeds for our raised beds as his mitzvah project, and we have been talking with him and imagining what we want to grow and eat this season. What a great excuse for perusing the seed catalogues! Thank you Eli, and thank you Rachel Stamieskin for advisina Eli.

On March 9 the Garden Committee will host Bet Cafe. We promise a delicious spread and the opportunity for you to help us imagine garden activities for the upcoming year.

On March 23, with the help of our sixth graders, we will thresh the wheat crop from last fall. That will encourage us to imagine what we might bake with the wheat and how our winter wheat fared under the snow. We will set up our threshing operations indoors where anyone interested can help.

Committee mourns the loss of Ruth Higgs. Ruth spent a season weeding our sanctuary garden almost daily. Her love of our garden as a place of peace and renewal reminds us all to imagine how it can be such a place for us too.



# Just in Time for Purim!

The Purim Superhero, by Elisabeth Kushner, is a picture book for children from four to eight years old.

Nate has a Purim dilemma. He loves aliens and really wants to wear an alien costume for Purim, but his friends are all dressing as superheroes and he wants to fit in. What will he do? With the help of his two dads he makes a surprising decision.

The book is published by Kar-Ben Publishing and is the winner of Keshet's national book writing contest. It is the first picture book about a Jewish holiday that features a family with same-sex parents.

Thank you to Susan Paris for donating this book to Bet Ha'am's library in honor of the author, who is a long-time friend.

# **Second Graders Present Blankets** to Project Linus

On Sunday, January 26, our second grade Religious School students presented six handmade, no-sew blankets to Melodie Provost, from Project Linus. Project Linus provides blankets to sick children through the hospitals in Cumberland and York counties. Our students made blankets for older boys, since this is what Project Linus needed most. The students enjoyed making the blankets and helping other children through their mitzvah project, as you can see in the photograph. For more information on Project Linus, contact Melodie Provost at 284-5606.



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# Maine's Traditional Irish Band at Congregation Bet Ha'am Saturday, April 5, at 7:00 PM

# SLIGO ROAD



Please join us for an evening with Sligo Road, featuring Bet Ha'am's own Sharon and Perry Newman along with the talents of Kim Kenway and Peter Walsh.

Enjoy classic sing-alongs, touching ballads, rowdy foot-stompers and boozy laments!

Tickets are only \$10!
Bring your friends and family!

The festivities will include

- · a silent auction full of incredible items
- sweets and treats from Bet Ha'am member, cookbook author and baker extraordinaire Elise Richer
- cash bar, with wine generously donated by Matthew Tabenken

All proceeds will go to providing more wonderful opportunities like this one to hang out with friends at Bet Ha'am. Donations welcome

Thank you to Lee and Jamie Broder, Kate and Sam Hirsh, Karen and Alan Lukas, Emily McEntee and the members of the band for making this special event possible

# 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:
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Lehman Fund for Gardens & Grounds
Religious School Library Fund
Rosalyne S. & Sumner T. Bernstein
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Rabbi Sandmel Education Fund
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Youth Fund

# Zecher T'zaddik L'vrachah

- Condolences to Abe Clott on the loss of his sister, Ruth Higgs
- Condolences to Eileen Arsenault on the loss of her father, Samuel Litwin

# **Bet Ha'am Donor Gallery**

# We thank our generous contributors

# **Adult Library Fund**

- •In honor of the remarriage of Gail Kass and Susan Horowitz by Donald Quaid and Sherrie Bergman
- •In memory of Esther Bergman by Donald Quaid and Sherrie Bergman

### **Annual Fund**

•Lauren Vedal

# **Capital Fund**

- •In memory of Martin Kohn by Laura Kittle and Jeremy Moser
- •In memory of Virginia Kittle by Laura Kittle and Jeremy Moser

### **General Fund**

- •Mazel tov to Becca Brocks by John and Beryl Cole
- •In memory of Roger Smith's mother by Jackie Robinov
- •In appreciation by Jamie McMillan
- In appreciation of services by Harry Todtman
- •In memory of Ruth Higgs by John and Beryl Cole
- •In memory of Ruth Higgs by Alan and Doree Kalfen
- •In gratitude for Bet Ha'am's Deaf *Shabbat* and the Jewish ASL workshop by Pamela Bailey
- •In gratitude for Bet Ha'am's Deaf *Shabbat* and the Jewish ASL workshop by Alicia Cote Pieper
- •In gratitude for Bet Ha'am's Deaf *Shabbat* and the Jewish ASL workshop by Julia Schafer
- •In gratitude for Bet Ha'am's Deaf *Shabbat* and the Jewish ASL workshop by Deena Weinstein

### Lehman Fund for Gardens & Grounds

•In memory of Ruth Higgs by Laura Kittle and Jeremy Moser

# Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

•In memory of Harriet Eaton by Daria Rosen

# Youth Fund

- •In appreciation of Rabbi Saks as Rachel became Bat Mitzvah by Sherri and Mark Carignan
- •In appreciation of Rachel Stamieszkin as Rachel became Bat Mitzvah by Sherri and Mark Carignan
- In appreciation of Sharon Newman for her support of Rachel during her service by Sherri and Mark Carignan
- In appreciation of Sharon and Perry Newman and their music at Rachel's service by Sherri and Mark Carignan

# March 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Grades 1-6 Religious School 9:00 AM Kindergarten 9:00 AM Shalom Yeladim 11:00 AM Peaks Island Puppets & Pizza Party 12:00 PM Grades 7-10 Religious School 5:00 PM	3 Office Closed	4 Neighborhood Meeting 7:00 PM	5 Morning Minyan 7:00 AM	6 Adult Learning Spring Mini- Series 7:00 PM	7 Shabbat in Three Experiences: Potluck Shabbat Dinner 6:30 PM Sanctuary Service 7:30 PM Meditation Service 7:30 PM Study Session 7:30 PM	R Torah Study 9:00 AM 9:00 AM Worship Service 10:00 AM Youth Group at Otto's Pizza 5:00 PM
Grades 1-6 Religious School 9:00 AM Social Action Committee 10:00 AM Grades 7-10 Religious School 5:00 PM Grades 11-12 Community Program 5:00 PM	10 Office Closed	11 Finance Committee 12:00 PM	Morning Minyan 7:00 AM  Education Committee 6:30 PM	13 Adult Learning Committee 6:00 PM Adult Learning Spring Mini- Series 7:00 PM	14 Grades 4A and 5 Shabbat Dinner 5:30 PM Family Kabbalat Shabbat Service 6:30 PM	15 Torah Study 9:00 AM Worship Service 10:00 AM
16 Purim Celebration: Megillah Reading and Purim Shpiel 10:00 AM Followed by Carnival until 1:00 PM  Grades 7-10 Religious School 5:00 PM	17 Office Closed	18 Garden Committee 5:30 PM  Executive Committee 5:30 PM	Morning Minyan 7:00 AM  Membership Committee 7:00 PM	20 Adult Learning Spring Mini- Series 7:00 PM	21 Nominating Committee 12:00 PM Social Action Shabbat Service 7:30 PM	22 Torah Study 9:00 AM Worship Service 10:00 AM
23 Grades 1-6 Religious School 9:00 AM Grades 7-10 MJFF Youth Film 2:30 PM	24 Office Closed	25 Board Meeting 6:30 PM	26 Morning Minyan 7:00 AM Introduction to Judaism 7:00 PM	27 Library Committee 10:30 AM Neighborhood Meeting 7:00 PM	28 Kabbalat Shabbat Service 7:30 PM	29 Torah Study 9:00 AM Worship Service 10:00 AM
30 Grades 1-6 Religious School 9:00 AM Kindergarten 9:00 AM Grades 5-6 Ellis Island Program 9:00 AM Grades 7-10 Religious School 5:00 PM						