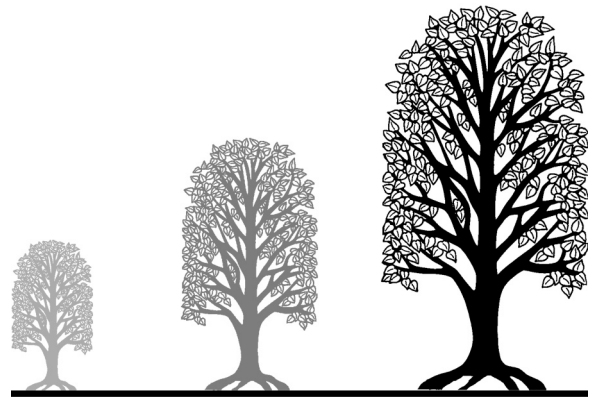


BETH ISRAEL CONGREGATION

862 Washington Street

Bath, Maine 04530



March/April 2019

Adar I / Adar II / Nisan 5779

Rabbi's Message

Dear Beth Israel Community members and friends,

I recently attended a gathering in Chicago of 130 Reform rabbis who are engaged in social justice work in their congregations and communities. There we learned from leader and activist Reverend Michael Ray-Matthews who agitated us to cultivate what he terms our moral imaginations. He taught that moral imagination is the ability to envision the world different from and better than how it is and to build that world into reality.

The Purim story, which we'll read as a community later this month, displays a terrific example of moral imagination. According to the story in Megillat Esther, Esther hides her identity as a Jew when she becomes queen. Yet when she learns that her husband, the king, will condone the murder of her fellow Jews, she is distraught. Her uncle Mordechai challenges her to take action and no longer hide her identity saying "Perhaps you have achieved this status for just such a crisis as this." (Esther 4:14) Mordechai's ongoing support and this insightful question bolsters Esther's courage to act. She reveals her true identity as a Jew to the king and saves the lives of her people. Esther and Mordechai imagine a different fate for their people and turn their vision into reality.



There are several morals to glean from the Purim tale, but I think the imperative of cultivating our moral imaginations is a critical one for us today. May we be inspired by this story to build our own moral imaginations in the service of improving and sustaining our world for ourselves and generations to come.

L'Shalom,
Rabbi Vinikoor



President's Message

by Marilyn Weinberg

Although the weather has certainly taken up a lot of our thoughts and energy this winter, we are fortunate at Beth Israel to be in the midst of some very exciting times.

Our new winter Souper Shabbat has been so well received and welcomed during the dark days of winter. Sitting down with friends and new acquaintances has been a wonderful way to get that Shabbat feeling that can be missed when you are trying to rush through dinner at home to get to services on time. Next winter we will definitely do it again.

Meanwhile our board has been busy with so many initiatives. We are working on expanding our Chai committee and have added a social/cultural-planning group to the mix. Our new security committee, headed by Peggy Brown, has been very active in developing policies and practices to make our buildings more secure while still trying to be open and welcoming. You might already notice new lighting outside our buildings.

Our building committee, headed by Marty Fox, has been actively working with the security committee. This group always has so many projects to tackle and has put in an enormous amount of volunteer time. They are presently researching options to make our Minnie Brown center a little more comfortable during all seasons (especially during the hot summer).

And finally our fund raising committee, headed by Rachel Connelly, has formed a group that will be focusing on our upcoming 100-year anniversary. In November of 1919 a group of Jewish residents signed a charter and pledged to form Beth Israel Congregation and build a synagogue on Washington Street. in Bath. So November of 2019 will be a very notable occasion.

If you would be interested in working on any of these committees please let us know. We would love your help and support.

I am inspired by the energy and enthusiasm at Beth Israel and I am hopeful for the future of our little congregation, which is growing every month...amazing. Come to everything, or maybe just one thing, but come.

*"May love and harmony, peace and friendship
abide among us, now and evermore."*



PURIM CELEBRATION

Synagogue

Please join us on
Thursday, March 21
for our *Community Purim* celebration.

Don't forget to come dressed in costume!

5:30 p.m. - Megillah Reading

6:15 p.m. - Pizza & Hamantaschen



Come and shake your gragger and stamp your feet.

This will be a Megillah reading not to be forgotten. Fun for all ages.

Hebrew School Update

by Rabbi Vinikoor

We've had a terrific beginning of 2019 in our Hebrew School. Our students continue to be engaged in learning Jewish culture and ritual, prayers, Hebrew and history as well as holiday traditions. Highlights from this past month include: learning new modern Hebrew words (stay tuned for our latest video), practicing prayers, studying the lives of Jewish heroes from the past to the present, such as Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai, celebrating how trees grow and planting seeds that we hope will sprout for Passover!

We were so pleased that Hebrew School alumna, Leah Totman, helped out when she was home over winter break and we are lucky to have Bowdoin first year, Elise Hocking, return second semester to help with the younger students. Student-rabbi Lily Solochek visited in February and shared with us new ways of thinking about prayer and movement.

In addition to our studies, in our weekly prayer service, we are learning to recite the Shabbat morning Torah service. For some students this is brand new, and they are doing a great job of learning about Torah service rituals. Our older students are doing a great job of modeling how to pray and sing along.

All of our learners continue to bring much energy and enthusiasm each week to the Minnie Brown Center. Please join us as we celebrate Purim together on March 21 at 5:30 pm. We look forward to seeing you then!

L'Shalom

Rabbi Vinikoor, Alina, Susan, Anita

Community Passover Seder

Saturday, April 20

5:00 p.m.

Minnie Brown Center

You are invited to join family and friends for a potluck
Community Passover Seder.

Reservations required by April 12.

Please e-mail info@bethisraelbath.org

To cover expenses:

\$5.00 per person/\$10.00 per family for members

\$10.00 per person/\$20.00 per family for non-members



Social Action Committee

by Joanne Rosenthal

Members of the congregation are engaging in immigrant justice in several ways: Serving as mentors with new Mainers living in Bath, attending interfaith actions calling for an end to child separation and detention, and visiting with representatives from Maine ACLU, Immigrant Legal Advocacy Program, Welcoming the Stranger and the Opportunity Alliance. We are learning ways to support these programs as part of our commitment to immigrant justice through the Reform Movement's Brit Olam. In the footsteps of the the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) "We understand better than anyone that hatred, bigotry, and xenophobia must be expressly prohibited in domestic and international law and that the right of persecuted people to seek and enjoy refugee status must be maintained. And because the right to refuge is a universal human right, HIAS is now dedicated to providing welcome, safety, and freedom to refugees of all faiths and ethnicities from all over the world." (<https://www.hias.org/history>)

You may have heard that plans are underway to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the signing of the Beth Israel Congregation Charter in 1919. As we look back with gratitude to our founders, there will be opportunities to re-envision our future as a diverse congregation committed to Tikkun Olam. We hope to collect and compile our collective ideas for repairing the world. Watch for more information!

Upcoming dates include:

- Social Action Committee Meetings: March 12 and April 9: 4:00–5:30pm - Newcomers welcome! We meet in Bath, the exact location TBD.
- Maine Jewish Film Festival: www.mjff.org, March 9–17.
- A Spring Celebration to Welcome New Mainers. Saturday, March 23, 2019, UUCB Church Brunswick. International Music, Food, and Friendship; hosted by Maine Veterans for Peace. FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. Bring a potluck dish for others to sample, and if you wish, wear clothing from your country of origin. Donations to Refugee and Immigration Services at Catholic Charities are welcome. FMI contact Doug Rawlings: rawlings@maine.edu

Tu Bishvat

by Camille Kauffunger

In January, Beth Israel partnered with the Kennebec Estuary Land Trust (KELT) to celebrate Tu Bishvat or the Birthday of the Trees. KELT Stewardship Coordinator Cheri Brunault taught our Hebrew School students about tree identification and benefits on a tour of the trees in Library Park and led a “sold out” Tree Appreciation Walk through Thorne Head Preserve in Bath to an adventurous group of participants from Beth Israel and around the state. Recognized as a passionate woodlands expert, Cheri has since accepted a position as an Executive Director of another Maine land trust, and we feel especially grateful to have been inspired by her this Tu Bishvat. Cheri also expressed being genuinely curious about and impressed by a Jewish holiday encouraging the respect for our arboreal neighbors that she aims to spread daily through her land trust work.



Souper Shabbat

by Camille Kauffunger

Beth Israel had all the right ingredients this winter for a series of three warming Kabbalat Shabbat services starting at the earlier time of 5:30 p.m. and ending with a communal meal and camaraderie. We thank all of you for supporting this tweak in our routine Shabbat schedule with the intention to make it easier for some of us to be out in the coldest and darkest months of the year and to incorporate families with earlier bedtimes in general. We certainly think we are on to a good recipe for making a “Souper Shabbat”, and we welcome your feedback as we make notes in the margin for next winter.



Donations

Memorial Gifts

- Barbara and Robert Lenox in loving memory of her mother, Freda Selig and his father, Fred Lenox
- Barrett and Barbara Silver in loving memory of his mother, Rose Hurwitz Silver
- Erich and Pauline Haller in loving memory of his grandparents, Jack and Marie Haller
- Fred and Marilyn Weinberg in loving memory of his parents, Frances and Marvin Weinberg and her mother, Ann Isacoff
- Gary Torow in loving memory of his father, Morris Torow and his mother, Ann Torow
- Bud and Mary Samiljan in loving memory of his mother, Bertha Smaijan
- Jeremy and Joan Fields in loving memory of his father, David Fields
- Karen and Matt Filler in loving memory of her mother, Frances Feldman and her grandmother, Sarah Lang
- Lynn Frank in loving memory of her father, Dean Milkes and her sister Cheryl Milkes
- Mara and Donald Giuliani in loving memory of her father, Leon Berman
- Marilyn and John Darack in loving memory of her parents, Sterling and Ruth Shapiro

- Marty and Betty Welt in loving memory of his parents, Frank and Shirley Welt
- Mort and Evelyn Panish in loving memory of his mother, Fanny Panish Mutterperl and his step-father, Alex Mutterperl
- Peggy Brown and John Martell in loving memory of her grandfather, Solomon Wernick
- Ruth Benedikt in loving memory of her husband, Edmund Benedikt
- Shelia Cohen in loving memory of her sister, Deborah Cohen
- Stephen and Marina Singer in loving memory of his sister, Anne Alvare and his aunt, Ada Greenblatt

Backpack Program

- Joan and James DurhamIn

In Loving Memory of Stephen Baseman

- Herb and Harriet Paris
- The Knickerbocker Group
- John Patterson
- Gwen Baseman

For the Benefit of the Synagogue

- David and Shifra Kossman
- George and Margaret Isaacson
- Jane Gurtman Rubin
- Amy Waterman
- Deborah Silverman
- Irl and Gail Rosner
- Stephen Blatt
- Paul Linet and Jackie Soley
- Jennie and Campbell Clegg

Rabbi Discretionary Fund

- Dan Stone and Laura McCandlish
- David Paris



Birthdays and Anniversaries

Listing the birthdays and anniversaries of those in our immediate family creates a wonderful opportunity for our community/*shul* family to have an excuse to celebrate with each other.

March Birthdays

1 Max Ergas
2 Ethan Stern-Hayes
2 Noah Stern-Hayes
3 Donny Giuliani
4 Robert Lenox
5 Gary Torow
6 Crissy Swartz
8 Tersesa Gandler
9 Andrew Schoenberg
10 Monica Blatt
12 Ethan Blatt
12 Tobyn Blatt
12 Nicholas Giuliani
13 Jennie Clegg
14 Bart D'Alauro
15 Michelle Lisi-D'Alauro
16 Peter Felsenthal
20 Maurie Libner
21 Ken Rosen
21 Zachary Stern-Hayes
28 Campbell Clegg
28 George Turner
31 Andrew Lardie

March Anniversaries

1 Ken Rosen & Ellen Kempler
15 Jennie & Campbell Clegg
19 Glen & Beth Eisman

April Birthdays

2 Lisa Tessler
3 Alan Mayer
3 Patricia Brennan
5 Nadia Leiner
5 Ellen Kempler
5 Gila Cohen-Shaw
6 Nora Boyle-Lardie
7 Sumner Blatt
8 Mort Panish
9 Susan Horowitz
9 Andrew Helman
13 Sheila Cohen
18 Barbara Baseman
18 Leslie Shaw
18 Steven Baer
19 Sara Helman
24 Jennifer Kanwit
29 Asa Meyer-Waldo
29 Asa Meyer-Waldo

April Anniversaries

5 Daniel Stone & Laura McCandlish

Remembrances for March–April 2019

May their memories be for a blessing.

WE REMEMBER	HEBREW DATE	2019 CALENDAR DATE
Harry Shartar	24 Adar	March 1
Joseph Silberstein	24 Adar	March 1
Josef & Marie Haller	26 Adar	March 3
Norman Jablow	27 Adar	March 4
Moshe Ben Gedalyah	27 Adar	March 4
Helen Ruth Charney	10 Adar II	March 17
Edward L. Selig	12 Adar II	March 19
Edward Haller	20 Adar II	March 27
Helen Isaacson	22 Adar II	March 29
Daniel Ensel	4 Nissan	April 9
Gerard Feldman	6 Nissan	April 11
Elaine Friedberg Giulianti	9 Nissan	April 14
Maurice Turet	9 Nissan	April 14
Sandor Polster	10 Nissan	April 15
Fred Gersh	13 Nissan	April 18
Ellen Leavy	14 Nissan	April 19
Virginia King	16 Nissan	April 21
Albert M. Swartz	17 Nissan	April 22
Jesse Lane	20 Nissan	April 25
Louis Sarazan	23 Nissan	April 28

