



The Bet Ha'am Weekly Email

Words of Torah from Rabbi Saks

In this week's Torah portion, Nitzavim, which we will revisit in less than two weeks' time on Yom Kippur, we read that God made the covenant not only with the Israelites standing at Mount Sinai, but also with all of those who were not there that day.



Our commentators vary on what this means. Some indicate that it refers specifically to those who, in that generation and future generations, would choose Judaism. Others say that it is about whoever would choose to follow in the footsteps of the Israelites who were present that day. The explanation I like the most is that all future generations of the Jewish people were present, if only in spirit, when we entered into the covenant with God. The 18th century Ladino commentary, *Me'am Lo'ez*, which came out of the Ottoman Empire, asks how future generations can enter into the covenant if they were not yet alive. The answer is found in our Passover Haggadah, where we read that if God had not redeemed us from Egypt, our children and our children's children would have still been slaves in Egypt. Future generations are able to enter into the covenant, even though not physically present, because others laid the foundation.

As we enter this unprecedented High Holy Day season, let us draw from this moment in our story. Our story tells us that it is not our physical presence that connects us with God and each other, but rather our claiming our place at Mount Sinai and accepting the legacy of Judaism that has been passed down to us.

Worship Schedule

Friday, September 11

Family Shabbat Experience 6:00 PM

Join us for an interactive, kid-friendly Shabbat service that includes music, a story, and moments to bond as a community.

The registration link from July/August's Family Shabbat Experience will work for this service! If you cannot find it, please email [Karen Hindall](#) before noon on Friday. If you didn't register, please register before noon on Friday using the link in the technology box below.

Thank you to board member Andrea Krasker Gavin for making announcements. Before *Kaddish*, Rabbi Saks will invite anyone who wishes to say a name to unmute themselves and share the name of the person they are remembering.

***B'Yachad* | Together** will not meet this week.

Saturday, September 12

Torah Study 9:00 AM

If you haven't registered for Torah Study already, please do before noon on Friday. Please see the Technology box below. The study sheets are [here](#) and [here](#).

Shabbat Morning Worship 10:30 AM

Before *MiShebeirach* and *Kaddish*, Rabbi Saks will invite anyone who wishes to say a name to unmute themselves and share the name of the person they are remembering.

Selichot 5:00 PM

This year, our Selichot service has been prerecorded. We will send the link to people who have registered; if you have not registered, [send us an email](#) before noon on Friday, September 11. [Read more](#) about our service.

Wednesday, September 16

Morning Minyan 7:30 AM

Join congregant Daniel Oppenheim for the morning service. Please see the technology box below for details.

Technology

Register for Zoom worship BEFORE NOON ON FRIDAYS

- **Once you are registered, the same link will work through the end of September.**
- **Each service has a different link.**
- **DO NOT LOSE the link that you receive. It is unique to you.**
- If you do lose it, please contact the office before noon on Friday. We are unable to help with lost links on Friday nights or Saturday mornings.
- Family Shabbat and Tot Shabbat will have their own links.

The registration links:

- For **Friday night Family Shabbat** at 6:00 p.m. [click here](#).
- For Saturday morning **Torah Study** at 9:00 a.m., [click here](#).
- For **Saturday morning worship** at 10:30 a.m. [click here](#).
- For **Wednesday morning minyan** at 7:30 a.m., [click here](#).

Prayerbooks

We are grateful to the CCAR for providing virtual versions of our prayer books [here](#). However, if you would prefer to have a real book in your hands, you may order the prayerbook we use from the [CCAR press](#) ([large print](#) also available) or Amazon. Please be sure to order **Mishkan T'filah for Shabbat, Transliterated** (NOT for Shabbat, Weekdays, and Festivals) so that you'll have the right page numbers. It costs around \$37.

Religious School

First Day of Religious School! On Zoom

9:45 AM K'tanim

10:30 AM Shalom Yeladim

9:30 AM Kindergarten

9:00 AM Grades 1-6 (individual classes continue after tefillah)

5:00 PM Grade 7

6:30 PM Grades 8-10

Religious School Registration Is Still Open

[Click here](#) to register. School starts (fully virtual) on September 13.

We do not yet know how much, if any, of the school year will be in-person. Please remember that Congregation Bet Ha'am depends on the religious school tuition for support. Students will have opportunities to build social connections with their Jewish peers, as well as receiving enriching curriculum, regardless of format.



[Register HERE](#)

Virtual Visits to Israel

Tel Gezer: Where Bible meets history and archeology

Sunday, September 13, 12:30 PM

Last month, our friend and Israeli tour guide Yoram Preminger took us up the *te'* (mound or hill) to see the top of Hiriya Park. This month he guides us from one *te'* to another to Tel Gezer. Today it looks totally desolate, but over 3,000 years ago, Gezer was a major Canaanite center. It was situated on an extremely strategic spot, above a coastal byway that served traders, warriors, and travelers for thousands of years. King Solomon rebuilt it and turned it into one of his main fortified cities. Archaeologists have been uncovering its turbulent history ever since.



[Register HERE](#)

Save the date for another program with Yoram! Details TBA.
Sunday, October 25 at 12:30 PM

Social Action

Maine's online system for applying for an absentee ballot for the November election is now available. Any Maine registered voter can choose to vote absentee, either by mail or in person. But to receive a ballot by mail, you must fill out the online request form. Once you have voted, you may choose to mail in your ballot, return it to your city clerk or town hall prior to or on election day, or take it to your polling place on election day.

Voting is a mitzvah and as part of our campaign to reach 100% congregation participation, we encourage you in this time of COVID-19 to take advantage of the absentee option. ~Catherine Share

[Request an Absentee Ballot](#)

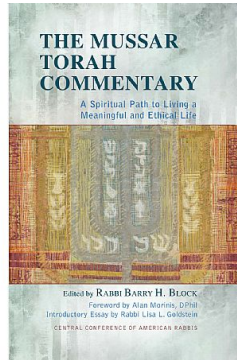
News from the Office

On **Monday, September 14 at 1:00 PM**, tune into OUT Cast on WMPG community radio (90.9 FM in Portland, ME) for an interview with Rabbi Saks on "Queer Spirit," a series

of conversations exploring queer life and the power of the sacred.

Rabbi Saks says, "Part of my responsibility as a rabbi is to help inspire my congregation and the Jewish community to fix the world in which we live."

WMPG writes, "It's a wonderful interview, not to be missed!"



At Bet Ha'am, people gather for our weekly Torah Study on Saturday mornings at 9:00 AM. Some have been coming for over thirty years. Others are just dipping their toes in the water. Everyone is welcome.

Starting October 17, we will be exploring Torah through the lens of *The Mussar Torah Commentary: A Spiritual Path to Living a Meaningful and Ethical Life*. You may buy a copy [here](#) or [here](#) (be sure to choose Bet Ha'am's Smile account) or from your local book seller. Scholarships are available--please email [Karen Hindall](#). You should also feel free to join Torah Study if you don't have a copy--we'll be

reading passages aloud. [Read more](#) about this new practice in Rabbi's blog.

Regulars, please note: We will not be sending materials in advance while we use this book to guide our study.

Stone Soup

We are pleased to offer Stone Soup again this week and, with your support, on future Fridays. Please stop by the building on **Friday between 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.** to pick up a container (or two, if you have a family) of frozen vegetable soup for your Shabbat table. Read more about Stone Soup (and find the ingredient list) [here](#).



Congratulations!

Congratulations to Chris and Theresa Skidgel and big sisters Mary and Sarah on the arrival of baby Christopher on Friday, September 4. We can't wait to meet him!

If you would like help getting **essential supplies**, like groceries or medication, or if you would like a weekly phone call check-in, we are here! Please [email us](#) and we will match you with a volunteer. We extend this invitation to our summer-resident congregants as well as those who live here year-round.

Adult Learning and Socializing

B'Yachad | Together

Come relax and talk virtually with your Bet Ha'am community before Friday Shabbat services! Simply dine and/or share a glass of wine together? Share your newest knitting creation, a few pictures of your garden or last vacation, or the latest book you've read? Our virtual Zoom "social hall" will be open an hour before 7:30 PM services for you to stop by and chat. [Register here](#). Please contact congregant [Wendy Hayes](#) with questions.



B'Yachad | Together will not meet this week.



TV Discussion Group

Please join congregants Melissa Montefel and Wendy Hayes, co-facilitators, for a discussion group about Jewish-themed shows. The group meets at 7:00 PM for fun, talk, and insights.

September 16: Something a little different! Please watch a free screening of "Those Who Remained", available from the Maine Jewish Film Festival as a free stream (from September 11 noon to September 13 at 7:00 PM) [here](#). "Two traumatized Holocaust survivors form a tenuous bond in this exquisitely crafted Hungarian drama." Read more [here](#).

September 30: "Outback Rabbis" available on Amazon. "On a road trip like no other, ultra-Orthodox Chassidic rabbis hit the Aussie bush looking for 'lost Jews'."

Please email [Wendy](#) for the login or with questions or suggestions for future movies.

Curbside Library Borrowing

Although the building remains closed, you may borrow a book from our wonderful library using our new curbside delivery on **Fridays between 10:00 a.m and 1:00 p.m.** Our library offers 3,000 volumes, including both contemporary fiction and non-fiction works about life-cycle events, holidays, Jewish parenting, and Torah study.



Please visit the [library page](#) on our website for a description of how the program works. The same page also has access to our online catalog and direction on how to use it.

Notable Upcoming Services

Friday, September 18
Erev Rosh Hashanah

Saturday, September 19
Rosh Hashanah

Sunday, September 20
Second Day Rosh Hashanah

Sunday, September 27
Kol Nidre

Monday, September 28
Yom Kippur

For more on High Holy Day services and programs, please look for the High Holy Day email that will arrive Friday morning. Limited information is also available [on our website](#). You can register for services by clicking the button below. **Registration is required to attend services; we will not be sending the links to our lists.**

[High Holy Day Registration](#)

Sustaining Bet Ha'am

Thank you to everyone who is supporting us as we try to close our budget gap! Your financial commitments and gifts to the annual fund are greatly appreciated. You can also support Bet Ha'am by clicking the button below.

Donate Now

Congregation Bet Ha'am | 81 Westbrook Street, South Portland, ME 04106

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