



The Bet Ha'am Weekly Email

Words of Torah from Rabbi Saks

With this week's Torah portion, *Lech L'cha*, the Biblical story shifts from the universal to the particular. Our tradition teaches us that Torah begins with the story of creation to remind us that even as God has called us to a particular mission as the Jewish people, we are not to forget that we are part of something larger than ourselves; all people are created in God's image and the whole world, not just ourselves, is our responsibility. In *Lech L'cha*, God selects Abraham and Sarah to be the progenitors of the Jewish people. When God calls Abraham, God says, "Go forth from your native land and from your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great and you shall be a blessing" (Gen. 12:1-2). The Torah doesn't tell us why God selects Abraham and not some other person. The *midrash* though addresses this: It tells us that Abraham, tending his father's idol shop, smashed the idols and blamed it on the largest of them; when his father replied that a stone idol could not have smashed the others, Abraham challenged his father, asking why he believed in images that cannot do things (Genesis Rabbah 38:13).



We are called to be a light to the nations. As Jews, we have a particular mission on which the well-being of the whole world depends. There are many ways for us to make those changes and this coming week, it is with the ballot box. Voting is a fulfillment of the *mitzvah* (commandment) to pursue justice. If you haven't already voted, now is your chance. **It's too late to mail in your ballot.** It will not arrive in time. But you can still bring your absentee ballot to your city's or town's drop box. You can still vote early in person. And you can always vote in person on election day (and register at the polls if you're not already registered). This week, as our story shifts from the universal to the particular, let us not lose sight of our particular obligation to repair the world.

Worship Schedule

Friday, October 30

Shabbat Worship 7:30 PM

Thank you to Sharon Newman for leading our service. Thank you to board member Catherine Share for making announcements. The link is in the registration box below.

You will be invited to unmute yourself before *MiShebeirach* and *Kaddish* to share the name of the person you are remembering.

B'Yachad | Together will meet before the service at 6:30 PM. Please see the Adult Socializing box below for details.

Saturday, October 31

Torah Study 9:00 AM

Thank you to Mylan Cohen for leading this week's exploration of 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.

Shabbat Morning Worship 10:30 AM

Thank you to Toby Rosenberg for leading our service. Thank you to Louise Abramson for reading Torah.

You will be invited to unmute yourself before *MiShebeirach* and *Kaddish* to share the name of the person you are remembering.

Wednesday, November 4

Morning Minyan 7:30 AM

Please use the link in the Registration box below and join us for morning minyan led by congregant Daniel Oppenheim.

Registration Links

Please register **BEFORE NOON ON FRIDAY** to receive the Zoom links for worship and study.

- The Friday night link will work for **ALL** Friday night services (whether at 6:00 PM or 7:30 PM) until the end of December.
- The Saturday link will work for **ALL** Saturday morning worship (including b'nai mitzvah services) until the end of December.

As always, the Torah Study link will work for all Torah study sessions and the morning minyan link will work for all morning minyanim through the end of December. Tot Shabbat will have its own link.

- For **Friday night worship**, [click here](#).
- For Saturday morning **Torah Study**, [click here](#).
- For **Saturday morning worship**, [click here](#).
- For **Wednesday morning minyan**, [click here](#).

Please remember to register by noon on Friday. **We will not be able to send links on Saturday or Sunday.**

Religious School

Religious School on Zoom Sunday, November 1

Morning School:

9:00 AM Grades 1-6 Tefillah & Assembly

9:30 AM-12:00 PM Grades 1-6 (including 2nd grade virtual field trip & 1st grade Hebrew)

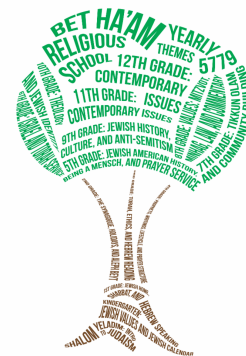
Evening School:

5:00 PM: Grade 7 Class

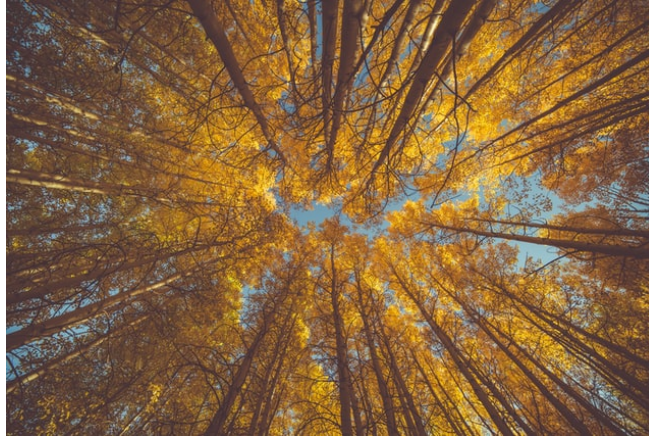
5:00 PM: Grades 11-12 Class

5:30 PM: Grades 8-10 Classes

6:15 PM: Grades 7-10 Shoko & Sheetuf



Multi-Faith Gathering



A Multi-Faith Gathering of Hope Before the Election Monday, November 2 at 7:00 PM

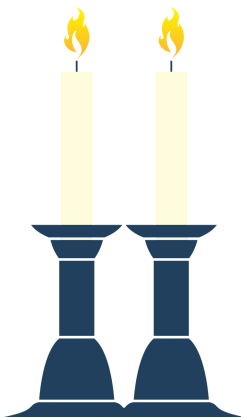
In [this video](#), Rabbi Saks joins with faith leaders from across the State of Maine in pledging to protect and preserve democracy by voting; to ensure that our neighbors can exercise their right to vote; to refuse to accept election results until all votes are counted; to uphold the principle of the peaceful transfer of power after a free, fair, and respected election; and to support or join those who engage in non-violent direct action in the event of any unjust usurpation of state authority that undermines the democratic process.

You can sign the pledge as well, using faith language or secular text at www.defendingdemocracyfaithfully.com.

Then, please join Rabbi Saks and leaders of Southern Maine's faith communities on the eve of the election to share prayers and messages of hope and peace. Together, we will rise above the partisanship and join our voices in solidarity at this key turning point for our nation.

The service will be live-streamed on the Maine Council of Churches' Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/mainecouncilofchurches>. You do not need to have a Facebook account to access the service. If prompted to enter a username and password, simply close that prompt.

Candle Lighting



Have you noticed that we haven't been lighting Shabbat candles at our services on Zoom? In part, it's because Shabbat and holiday candle lighting are traditionally a home ritual, not a congregational ritual. The early Reform rabbis, seeing that the members of their congregations were no longer participating in this home ritual, moved candle lighting, kiddush, and motzi to the sanctuary to include more Jews in this tradition. Now that we all experience worship from our own homes, we have the unique opportunity to bring Shabbat candle lighting back into our homes.

If you miss candle lighting at the start of services, why not share your home candle lighting with us? Please consider signing up to be a candle lighter at an upcoming Zoom Friday night service. You may choose to do this in memory of a loved one for whom you're observing yahrzeit that week, in honor of a celebration in your life, or just because you want to engage in this ritual.

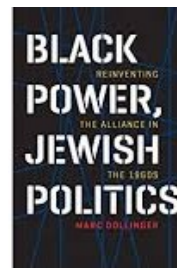
[Candle Lighting Sign Up](#)

To learn the candle lighting blessing, click [here](#) and go to track 42. You can find the words [here](#).

Bernstein Memorial Scholar

TONIGHT!! Register by Noon!

Each year, the Rosalyn S. and Sumner T. Bernstein Memorial Scholar-In-Residence program makes it possible for us to bring a leading figure in the Jewish world to our synagogue for study and celebration. This year, we will welcome (on Zoom) Professor Marc Dollinger, author of *Black Power, Jewish Politics: Reinventing the Alliance In the 1960s*.



1619, 1654, 2020: Jews and Racism October 29 at 7:00 PM

We will explore the documents in a primary source reader that Dr. Dollinger co-edited with Gary Zola get to the heart of American Jewish support, complicity, and benefit from institutional racism. This talk will be a deep dive into the ways that Jews, as whites, have succeeded in the U.S. because of institutional racism. This is talk for people who want the most direct and honest assessment of the current national climate.

Register [HERE](#)

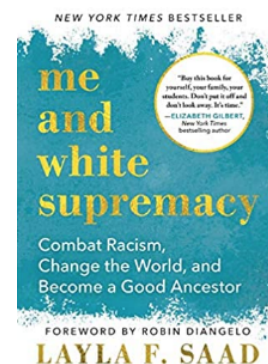
You can watch last week's presentation, "[Jews, Whiteness, Power, and Privilege](#)," [here](#).

We are pleased to offer signed copies of Dr. Dollinger's book. **There are three more copies available for \$35.** If you would like a copy but find the price prohibitive, please [email Rachel Lefkowitz](#).

Buy the book [HERE](#)

Anti-Racism Discussion Group

Please join us for a weekly discussion group of *Me and White Supremacy: Combat Racism, Change the World, and Become a Good Ancestor*, by Layla F. Saad. Saad takes readers through a step-by-step process of exploring white supremacy and how it has affected each one of us. She states, "White supremacy is a system you have been born into. Whether or not you have known it, it is a system that has granted you unearned privileges, protection, and power." She gives us tools for going deep into understanding of our own racism. She helps us find ways to become better allies to Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, and to find pathways to Tikkun Olam.



We will meet weekly for four weeks, preparing each week by reading identified chapters and writing personal responses to the journaling questions posed in the book. During our meetings, we will have a chance to discuss the questions, the process, and the issues that arise. At the end of the four weeks, we will decide if the group wishes to continue to meet and, if so, in what format.

If you wish to participate in this group, please click below to identify your preferences for when the group will meet. Once we have the dates, we will open registration.

Discussion Group

Coordinators/facilitators: Mary Lou Michael and Faith Moritz. If you have any questions, please feel free to [email Faith Moritz](#).

"You cannot dismantle what you cannot see. You cannot challenge what you do not understand." – Layla F. Saad

News from the Office



Thank you to everyone who took the survey we sent before the High Holy Days--your thoughts and suggestions helped shape what we did on Zoom and YouTube.

While the holidays are fresh in your mind, we hope you will help us! What did we get right? What should we try to do differently next time? Why did you decide not to join us? We hope you will take [this survey](#); it will take less than

ten minutes to complete and your answers are anonymous. We will leave the survey open until Monday morning.

We will read every response and even though we cannot respond to you personally, we will take all answers into consideration as we plan future online services and study groups, as well as next year's High Holy Days observance.

If you have questions or would prefer to answer by email, please [contact Lynn Urbach](#).

Stone Soup

Stone Soup is a Shabbat gift to our congregants. 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. The soup is vegetarian and kosher style; the ingredients are listed [here](#) (on the Stone Soup tab), along with an explanation of "stone soup." Many thanks to those who have donated to support Stone Soup.



Perimeter Amble

If you live near Bet Ha'am and would like to do an easy good deed, stop by some time, walk around the parking lot and gardens, and generally let people know we are keeping an eye on the place. We would be very grateful for the "neighborhood watch."



Maine Jewish Film Festival

After twenty-three years, MJFF is thrilled to announce the launch their first virtual film festival. Join them for two weeks of films and programming, specially curated by MJFF. Everything can be watched from the comfort and safety of your home. They are grateful to the supporters — sponsors, foundations, donors, and volunteers — who have made this possible!

We are fortunate to have four household tickets to MJFF I that we'd like to share--first come, first served. Please [email Rachel Lefkowitz](#) with the movie you'd like to see and its dates. You can see what movies are available by going to www.mjff.org.

Adult Learning and Socializing

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.



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.

The next two movies for the discussion group are Maine Jewish Film Festival selections. These movies are available on Amazon Prime, but we strongly urge you to support MJFF as it has enriched our community since its inception in 1998. We have been grateful for the movies and discussions that have been presented free of charge to the community during this pandemic. MJFF is truly a wonderful community organization worthy of our support.

November 11: Crescendo

"When a world-famous conductor accepts the challenge from a foundation to create an Israeli-Palestinian youth orchestra, he is quickly drawn into a tempest of seemingly unsolvable problems. Will the conductor succeed and help the young people forget their hatred, at least for the three weeks until the concert? Academy-Award nominated director Dror Zahavi directs this gripping drama as a constantly growing 'crescendo' until the last frame." VIEWING WINDOW: Nov. 8 - 10, Noon to 7PM

November 25: Abe

"Although Abe has lived all his life in Brooklyn, when he turns thirteen, the barely concealed agendas of his half-Jewish-Israeli, half-Palestinian family suddenly seem to take over. With the guidance of a multicultural Brazilian chef, Abe learns that fusion doesn't have to be confusion and starts to form his own identity. But will his family listen? This warm-hearted movie explores how food and culture can divide us, but also ultimately lead to greater understanding. Starring Noah Schnapp of Stranger Things." VIEWING WINDOW: Nov. 20 -22, Noon to 7PM

For more information, visit the MJFF site: www.mjff.org.

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

Saturday, November 7
Daniel Polisner Bar Mitzvah

Saturday, November 14

Eliana Goldman Bat Mitzvah

Saturday, November 21

Catherine Share Bat Mitzvah

Donate to Bet Ha'am

Use our Clynk tags to donate your bottle refunds to us! Choose our account on Amazon Smile! Or just click the button below and make a donation to the annual fund or another fund that you love. We are grateful for your support.

[Donate Now](#)

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