



The Bet Ha'am Weekly Email

Words of Torah from Rabbi Saks

Abraham and Sarah have quite the week this week. In *Parashat Vayeira*, they learn they will have a son in a year's time, even though both of them are in their nineties. Abraham argues on behalf of the citizens of Sodom and Gomorrah, but can't stop God from destroying those cities. Abraham pretends that Sarah is his sister, not his wife, putting her in a compromising position with King Abimelech of Gerar. And when Isaac is born to Abraham and Sarah, Sarah pleads with Abraham to cast out Hagar and Ishmael, Sarah's handmaid and Abraham's firstborn. Then ultimately, Abraham prepares offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice to God.



Commentators have often noted how Abraham protests the destruction of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, but puts up no protest when God tells him to sacrifice his son, Isaac. How can we look up to this patriarch when he seems inconsistent in his concern for the well-being of others? Professor Yeshayahu Leibowitz, citing *midrash*, indicates that Abraham's silence in regards to his son doesn't come from a place of fear, but rather from a place of faith. On the other hand, Sodom and Gomorrah's fate is an issue of justice. In order to improve the world, we to both cultivate faith and work for justice. Different situations require a different balance of these two. In the near sacrifice of Isaac, Abraham focuses on himself and his relationship with God, trusting that God will see to the sheep, in place of Isaac, for the burnt offering. With Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham focuses on the needs of others. This week, perhaps you need to cultivate your faith, turn inward, and trust that God holds you. Perhaps you need to work for justice, turn outward, and bring God's presence to others who may not be feeling it. Either way, do the work that calls to you in this moment.

Worship Schedule

Friday, November 6

Shabbat Worship 7:30 PM

Thank you to board member Jason Singer for making announcements. Thank you to Daniel Polisner for lighting candles in honor of his bar mitzvah. The service 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, November 7

Torah Study 9:00 AM

Our exploration of Torah through the lens of *The Mussar Torah Commentary* continues. 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.

Shabbat Morning Worship 10:30 AM

Mazal tov to Daniel Poliser, child of Jennifer and David Polsiner, who will be called to the Torah as a Bar Mitzvah. The service link is in the registration box below.



Thank you to board member Donna Landau for making our board presentations.

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

Wednesday, November 11

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.

If you lose your links, please [email the office](#) before noon on Friday and we will resend them to you directly. Please be sure to say which links you'd like.

- 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](#).

We will not be able to send links on Saturday or Sunday.

Religious School

Religious School on Zoom Sunday, November 8

Morning School

9:00 AM: Grades 1-6 Tefillah & Assembly
(Talent Show update is being emailed today.)

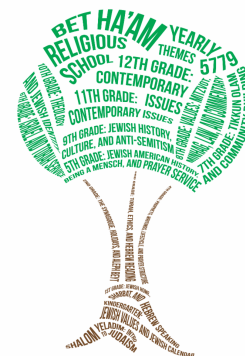
9:45 AM: Ktanim

9:30 AM-12:00 PM: Shalom Yeladim, Kindergarten, & Grades 1-6

Evening School

5:00 PM: Grade 7 Class

5:30 PM: Grades 8-10 Classes

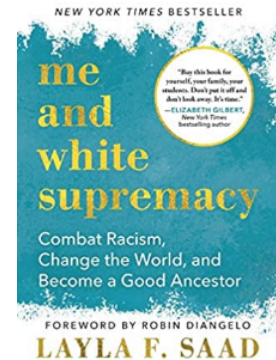


Wednesday, November 11

6:00 PM: 6th Grade B'Mitzvah Family Program Part II

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.

Meetings will be **Mondays, November 16, November 23, November 30, and December 7 at 6:30 PM.** Please register below! You can purchase the book [here](#) or [here](#) or [here](#). (If you use Amazon, be sure to choose Bet Ha'am's Smile account.)

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

Life and Legacy Program

Bet Ha'am's Legacy Task Force is excited to announce that the Harold Grinspoon Foundation (HGF), a national organization devoted to the preservation of vibrant Jewish life, has selected the Jewish Community Alliance of Southern Maine to assist in developing a culture of legacy giving in Southern Maine.



HGF has allocated \$30 million for training and support in sixty-three communities around the United States, and collectively, their Life and Legacy program has inspired over 1 billion dollars in legacy gifts to Jewish communities across the country over the past nine years.

Congregation Bet Ha'am, Temple Beth El, and Congregation Etz Chaim have been selected as participants in Harold Grinspoon's Life and Legacy's nationwide training program under the auspices of the Jewish Community Alliance. The Life and Legacy program is designed to help ensure a strong and sustainable future for Jewish communities and to provide opportunities for our forward-thinking members to demonstrate their passion and commitment for after-lifetime giving. Our legacy task force is excited to be able use HGF's resources to help secure a stronger fiscal future for generations to come!

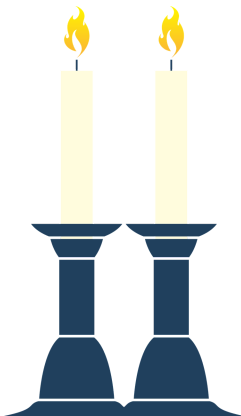
If you have questions about the program or about legacy giving, please contact congregant [Bill Welch](#).

Interfaith Thanksgiving Service

Join Rabbi Saks at a interfaith Thanksgiving service on **Wednesday, November 25 at 7:00 PM** on Zoom. Faith leaders from numerous communities in the Greater Portland area will lead a service of gratitude in advance of our Thanksgiving holiday. We will have details soon!



Candle Lighting



Shabbat and holiday candle lighting are traditionally a home ritual, though early Reform rabbis moved the practice to the sanctuary. Now that we all experience worship from our own homes, we have the unique opportunity to bring Shabbat candle lighting back to where we live--and to share it with others.

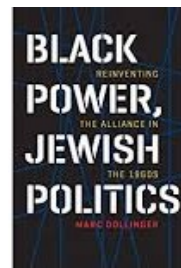
Please consider signing up to be a candle lighter at an upcoming Zoom Friday night service. You may choose to do this in memory of a loved one for whom you're observing yahrzeit that week, in honor of a celebration in your life, or just because you want to engage in this ritual. You can read more from Rabbi Saks [here](#); learn the candle lighting blessing [here](#) (on track 420; and find the words [here](#).

[Candle Lighting Sign Up](#)

Bernstein Memorial Scholar

Thank you to everyone who joined us for this year's scholar in residence! We were pleased to see congregants and friends from near and far. If you missed the presentations, or if you'd like to review what you learned, you can watch "**Jews, Whiteness, Power, and Privilege**" [here](#). You can watch "**1619, 1654, 2020: Jews and Racism**" [here](#).

We have **three more signed copies of Dr. Dollinger's book, *Black Power, Jewish Politics***. Each copy is \$35. If you would like a copy but find the price prohibitive, please [email Karen Hindall](#).



News from the Office

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."

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.



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 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](#)

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

[Unsubscribe_gleckman@mindspring.com](mailto:unsubscribe_gleckman@mindspring.com)

[Update Profile](#) | [About our service provider](#)

Sent by rachel@bethaam.org powered by



Try email marketing for free today!