



## The Bet Ha'am Weekly Email

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### Words of Torah from Rabbi Saks

When Jacob wrestles with the angel in the famous scene depicted in this week's Torah portion, *Vayishlach*, he demands a blessing before the angel departs in the morning. We know that the blessing is a change in Jacob's name—he will now be called Israel—but the Sages wonder why Jacob asks for a blessing at all. One theory is that the angel with whom Jacob is wrestling is Esau's guardian angel, the same Esau from whom he stole the blessing when they were younger. In this moment before he reunites with his brother, Jacob realizes that in spite of their past, he needs not only his father's blessing, but his brother's, too. When he could have been too afraid to meet Esau, after all they had been through, Jacob musters the courage not only to meet his brother, but also to ask for his blessing and, we hope, to offer his own as well. We can be inspired by Jacob's courage to seek and offer the blessings that we need in our lives.



### Worship Schedule

#### Friday, December 4

##### **Shabbat Worship 7:30 PM**

Thank you to Melissa Montefel for leading our service. Thank you to board member Kira Wigoda for making announcements. 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.

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#### Saturday, December 5

##### **Torah Study 9:00 AM**

Thank you to Jay Sherwin for leading Torah study using *The Mussar Torah Commentary*. 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**

Thank you to Daniel Oppenheim and Catherine Share for leading our service. Thank you to Mylan Cohen for leading the Torah service and to Catherine Share for sharing a d'var Torah. 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.

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#### Wednesday, December 9

## Morning Minyan 7:30 AM

Please use the link below to join us for morning minyan led by congregant Daniel Oppenheim.

## Registration Links & Notes

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.

At Friday night and Saturday morning worship services, you will be invited to unmute yourself before *MiShebeirach* and *Kaddish* to share the name of the person you are remembering.

We are grateful to the CCAR for providing virtual versions of our prayer books [here](#). If you would prefer to have a real book, you may order one 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.

## Change Is Coming



Get ready! **Starting in January, we will have all new service links.** You will register for them in the same way as outlined above. However, the links will be good for January only. We will repeat the process and have all new links again in February.

We are making this change to improve Zoom security while improving access to services for our guests.

**Registration for the January links will open on December 24.**

## Religious School

### Religious School on Zoom

#### Sunday, December 6

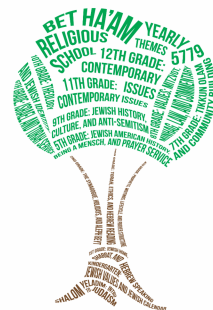
9:00 AM Grades K-6 (Tefillah & Class)

5:00 PM Grades 7, 11-12

5:30 PM Grades 8-9

#### What's Happening?

This week, we introduce a new feature: A glimpse into what's happening in the religious school. Education Director Sam Spinrad writes, "The evening school enjoyed the Virtual Maine Jewish Film Festival movie *Abe* in their previous class. The film tells the story of a bar mitzvah-age



Brooklyn youth who strives to unite the Israeli and Palestinian sides of his family through cooking."

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## Youth Group

**December 17, 7:00 PM**  
**Virtual Chanukah Celebration!**

Details to come! Zoom link is [here](#).

Questions? [Contact Andrea Levinsky](#).

## Light Up the Night!

One of the most wonderful evenings in our community is our annual Light Up the Night Family Chanukah Shabbat service, when over 100 folks from the Bet Ha'am community gather to celebrate Chanukah and welcome Shabbat, lighting dozens of *chanukiot* (Chanukah menorahs) in our sanctuary garden windows. We'll still be holding Light Up the Night on **Friday, December 11 at 6:00 PM**--albeit on Zoom. Please join us for an interactive family shabbat and Chanukah service including Chanukah music, dancing, a story, and holiday quizzes!



Here's something else wonderful: We are excited to share that Rabbi Saks will be gathering with small groups from our congregation throughout the holiday for **Chanukah candle lighting on Zoom**. Sign up below (choose just one night, please) to join one of these gatherings to light candles, sing songs, and play dreidel with each other and with Rabbi Saks. We will send you the Zoom link closer to the date.

[Sign Up HERE](#)

And yes! We have your holiday items in our gift shop.

- Chanukah candles: \$2 or \$8
- Chanukiyot (Menorahs): Traditional or electric starting at \$10
- Gelt: No nuts/pareve, \$1.05 per bag
- Assorted dreidels and holiday cards

Contact Teri Berenson to arrange payment and outside pickup: [teri@bethaam.org](mailto:teri@bethaam.org) or call her Tuesdays through Thursdays, 10:00am to 2:00pm at 207-879-0028.

### **Statewide Chanukah Celebration** **Saturday, December 12, 5:30-6:15 PM**

Join the Rabbi Saks and the Center for Small Town Jewish Life on the third night of Chanukah for an all-Maine celebration!

- Welcome the new week with a spirited Havdalah led by Cantor Sheila Nesis.
- Bring your chanukiah so you can light candles with Rabbi Darah Lerner of Beth El Bangor.
- Experience a Chanukah play written by Rabbi Lily Solochek, Rabbi Carolyn Braun, and Rebbetzin Lisa Mayer especially for this celebration—performed by rabbis from across the state!
- Enjoy music from Rabbi Sruli Dresdner and Rebbetzin Lisa Mayer.

CSTJL thanks its co-sponsor, the Jewish Community Alliance of Southern Maine.

Register [HERE](#)

## News from the Tikkun Olam Council

The Tikkun Olam Council has decided to join a project of the Maine Gun Safety Coalition, a grassroots organization founded in 2000 to protect Maine families and communities from gun violence. The project is called Show Up Network (SUN). It will help participants find effective ways to SHOW UP for gun safety. Please read more on our website [here](#), under the Show Up Network tab.

If you would like to join SUN, please register below.

Sign Up [HERE](#)

## News from the Office

### Stone Soup

Stone Soup is a Shabbat gift to our congregants. Read all about it [here](#) (on the Stone Soup tab). 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."

### Reopening Plans

Our recently updated reopening memo is now available [on our website](#).

## 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.

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

**December 9: The Life Ahead.** "In seaside Italy, a Holocaust survivor with a daycare business takes in a 12-year-old street kid who recently robbed her." Available on Netflix.

**December 23: The Other Story.** "The story follows the wedding planning of two *Baalei Teshuva*, and the bride's family's plans to sabotage the wedding. The film focuses on the bride's complicated relationship with her father, as well as the divorced parents' relationship with each other." Available on Amazon Prime.

### Curbside Library Borrowing

Although the building remains closed, you may borrow a book from our wonderful library using curbside pick up. Read more on our [library page](#).



## Notable Upcoming Services

**Friday, December 11**  
**Light Up the Night, Chanukah Service**

**Saturday, December 12, 5:30-6:15 PM**  
**Statewide Chanukah Celebration**

## Donate to Bet Ha'am

Did you miss **#GivingTuesday**? Or did you remember to give to many organizations, but forget your synagogue? Don't despair! We are happy to accept donations any day of the week, any week of the year. Please click the button below to support the annual fund or another fund that you love. We will be grateful.

[Donate Now](#)

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

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