



The Bet Ha'am Weekly Email

Words of Torah from Rabbi Saks

Parashat Yitro, this week's Torah portion, is one of two that contain the Ten Commandments. (They are reiterated, in a slightly different form, in *Parashat Va-et'chanan* in the book of Deuteronomy.) Contrary to popular belief, the Ten Commandments are not God's top ten list, not the most important of the 613 commandments of Judaism. They are just the tip of the iceberg and the introduction to observing the mitzvot that the Israelites receive in the wilderness. With this in mind, we have to wonder why these ten? Why not any of the other 603? Why isn't, "Love your neighbor," on this list? How come, "Be kind to the stranger?" or "Love the Eternal your God?" are not included? The Ten Commandments give us insight into the two overarching relationships that when done well make life rich: relationships with others and relationship with God. The first four of the ten (I am Adonai your God, have no idols, do not use God's name in vain, keep Shabbat) guide us in our relationship with God. The last five (no murder, no adultery, no stealing, no bearing false witness, and no coveting) guide our relationships with other people. It is the fifth of these Ten Commandments that bridges the gap: honor your parents. Whether it our biological parents, the ones who raised us, or the symbolic ancestors who preceded us, the honor we bestow upon our ancestors, real and symbolic, can be an indicator of the relationships that we have with others and with God. It's important to note, though, that the text does not tell us we have to love our parents. It does not demand a good relationship with them. Torah knows that these may not be possible. But it does ask us to bestow honor upon them and to honor them with the people we are, even when the people they were can sometimes make that task more challenging.



Worship Schedule

We are now using **February** Zoom links for Shabbat worship and Torah Study.

Registrations close at noon on Fridays.

Links will be sent by 4:00 PM on Fridays to all who have registered.

We cannot send Zoom links after 4:00 PM on Fridays.

Read more about our service and our prayer book [here](#).

Friday, February 5

Friday Night Shabbat Worship 7:30 PM

Thank you to board member Donna Landau for making announcements.

Register to receive the **Friday Night Shabbat Worship** Zoom link, [here](#).

Saturday, February 6

Torah Study 9:00 AM

Torah study using *The Mussar Torah Commentary* continues--but you don't need to own a copy. Read more [here](#), under the "Torah Study" heading.

Register to receive the **Torah Study** Zoom link, [here](#).

Shabbat Morning Worship 10:30 AM

Register to receive the **Shabbat Morning Worship** Zoom link, [here](#).

Wednesday, February 10

Morning Minyan 7:30 AM

Led by congregant Daniel Oppenheim.

Register to receive the **Wednesday Morning Minyan** Zoom link, [here](#).

Religious School

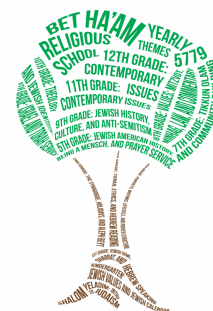
Religious School on Zoom

Sunday, February 7

Meeting in the *morning* this Sunday:
Grades K-12, K'tanim

What's Happening?

This Sunday at 9:30, Grades 6-12 are invited to a special Water Diplomacy Program, presented by EcoPeace Middle East. There will be no evening school classes that night.



Announcing Bet Ha'am Religious School's 2021 Purim Drawing Challenge! Religious school students of all ages are invited to draw a scene from the Purim story and email a copy to Sam. These will be shared at the assembly closest to Purim. Entries are due February 19.

[Register Here](#)

Free Online Lunch & Learn Program

The State of the Ark - A visual exploration and analysis of *Exodus 25:10-22* Wednesday, February 10 at 12:00 Noon on Zoom

Presented by photographer Robert Diamante, graduate of the Bangor Theological Seminary.

A free lunch and learn program from USM and the JCA, co-sponsored by Congregation Bet Ha'am, Temple Beth El, Shaarey Tphiloh, and the Maine Jewish Museum. **Advanced registration required by Tuesday, February 9.**

[Register Here](#)

Havdalah Together

February 13, 6:00 PM Havdalah Together

Winter is here, which means Statewide Havdalah. This month we will be led by Rabbi Rachel Isaacs from Beth

Israel, Waterville and Rabbi Lily Solochek from Adas Yeshurun, Rockland. Join Jews from across the state as we say goodbye to Shabbat and welcome a new week. This gathering is sure to be spirited and thought-provoking.



Please register to receive the Zoom details. You'll receive a confirmation email that contains the link, and a reminder email the Friday before the service.

Havdalah Registration

For Your Parsley Planting Pleasure



The Garden Committee has a limited number of parsley planting kits available to anyone who would like to try their hand at growing parsley. Plant now and have parsley ready for your Passover seder. Kits include seeds, soil, planter, and planting instructions. They will be available on a first come, first serve basis until gone. No reservation is required.

Stop by Bet Ha'am Monday-Friday, between the hours of 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM. The kits will be outside in the drop-off/pick-up bin located in the main courtyard. Please help yourself. Thank you for remembering to sanitize your hands before touching the bin.

Free Sukkah Available

Tom Rosen has a sukkah that needs a new permanent home. The sukkah kit is free but will need to be transported. It is currently is disassembled. The kit includes the 2x4's that make the frame, bamboo rolls for the roof, wind screen for the sides, and plastic vines. If interested, please email [Tom](#).



In Case You Missed *Sing Unto God*

Long before Rabbi Saks was a rabbi, he loved singing with his classmates and cantor in religious school and family services. Growing up, Jewish melodies inspired him and helped him to fall in love with Judaism and Jewish life. As a teenager, through his involvement in NFTY (the North American Federation of Temple Youth), he learned that much of the music that stirred his soul was written or inspired by Debbie Friedman, of blessed memory. In fact, much of our contemporary Jewish music, both in Reform Jewish life and in Jewish life around the world.

If you missed the January 28 event, *Sing Unto God*, an evening of song and memory celebrating the legacy of Debbie Friedman, you can find it [here](#). If you want to know about more opportunities like this from HUC (Hebrew Union College), you can learn more [here](#).

A graphic for 'Kumsitz Sing Unto God' featuring a photograph of a large crowd of people singing with their hands raised in front of a mountain range. The text 'Kumsitz' is in large red letters, and 'Sing Unto God' is in white script. Logos for Hebrew Union College and Jewish Institute of Religion are in the top right. Below the photo, it says 'Commemorate Debbie Friedman's legacy on the occasion of her 10th yahrzeit'.

Ongoing Programs

Shabbat Candle Lighting

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, 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](#).

[Sign Up Here](#)

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.

B'Yachad | Together

Come relax and talk virtually with your Bet Ha'am community before Friday Shabbat services! We will meet every Friday except the second Friday of the month when there is a 6:00 PM Family Shabbat service. [Read more here](#). [Register here](#). Please contact congregant [Alan Davis](#) 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.

February 17:

Blazing Saddles - "**Blazing Saddles** is a dang great comedy that couldn't be made today. **Blazing Saddles** (1974) aschews the political correctness that is strangling modern Hollywood. Instead of preaching against bigotry, **Blazing Saddles** mocks bigotry by allowing it to reveal its own absurdity. For that ALONE **Blazing Saddles** is both genius and courageously rebellious." Available on Amazon Prime (and probably libraries & many of us have copies on DVD)

March 3:

Two movies are being generously offered by the Maine Jewish Film Festival. See [MJFF.org](#) to get a pass for the February 19-21 MJFF Weekend Edition.

They Ain't Ready for Me - "The story of Tamar Manasseh, an African American rabbinical student, who has led the fight against gun violence in her Southside Chicago neighborhood. A fascinating look at the complex identity and motivations of an extraordinary person who is Jewish and black, and how these intersecting identities offer her a road map for addressing one of America's most urgent crises."

Rosenwald - "The story of Julius Rosenwald, the son of an immigrant peddler, who rose to head Sears, and partnered with Booker T. Washington and African American communities to build 5,400 Southern schools in African American communities in the early 1900s during the Jim Crow era. As much the chronicle of African American struggle and achievement as the story of a remarkable individual who was inspired by the Jewish ideals of tzedakah (charity) and tikkun olam (repairing the world). Commentary from George C. Wolfe, Julian Bond, John Lewis and Maya Angelou, an alumna of a Rosenwald school."



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

Purim Together

February 25 at 6:30 PM

We could all use a little celebration! Get your costumes ready, grab a festive drink, and join us for Purim. There will be a *spiel* presented by Temple Beth El (the one in Augusta), a chance to share some unusual hamantaschen combinations, and a special challenge for our local clergy (shhh....it's a surprise). As part of the fun we'll invite you to send in a picture of yourself modeling your Purim costumes; we'll string the images together into a video. Serious prizes will be awarded. More details to come!

But wait, there's more. We'll also have a traditional reading of the *megillah*, so get out your groggers and make some noise!

Half of all donations for this program will go to support Maine's Good Shepherd Food Bank, feeding the hungry in our state. It's an easy opportunity to fulfill the Purim mitzvah of providing gifts for the needy.

To receive Zoom details, please register below. After you sign up, you'll receive a confirmation email with the program link.

[Register Here](#)

Saturday, March 6

Julia Young Bat Mitzvah

Saturday, March 13

Zephyr Conford Bar Mitzvah

Donate to Bet Ha'am

Please consider donating in any amount to Congregation Bet Ha'am--with your help, we can close the budget gap! We are grateful for your support.

[Donate Now](#)

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