



## The Bet Ha'am Weekly Email

### Words of Torah from Rabbi Saks

Included in this week's Torah portion, Emor, is the requirement of the Israelites to bring an omer of their first harvest to the priest, with which the priest will make an offering beginning after the first day of Passover. An omer, in this context, is a measure of grain, estimated at about two quarts, but this commandment is the basis of the period of the Omer, the fifty days between Passover and Shavuot. During the time between Passover and Shavuot, we count each day of the Omer as we journey from redemption, marked with the observance of Passover, to revelation of Torah at Mount Sinai, celebrated on Shavuot. While this was originally an agricultural practice aimed at thanking God for the bountiful harvest, today the Omer period has taken on a spiritual significance. It is considered a mourning period for a variety of reasons. One such reason is that we lament that even though the Israelites were freed from bondage, they were not immediately prepared to receive Torah, not yet ready to shed the emotional and spiritual bonds of slavery. The exception to this mourning period is the 33rd day of the Omer, indicated by the Hebrew letters that add up to the number 33, lamed and gimel, giving us the holiday called Lag ba-Omer. This year, Lag ba-Omer begins tonight, Thursday, April 29, at sundown. In another story about the Omer, Lag ba-Omer is the day on which a plague afflicting the students of Rabbi Akiva had ceased. The students had been involved in an intra-communal conflict. Lag ba-Omer teaches us of the threat that infighting poses to a community's sustainability and the potential that exists when we work well together. At this juncture in the Omer period, we remind ourselves of the bounty we've received from God and express our gratitude, at least in part, by working together so that when we stand again at Sinai on Shavuot we are prepared, as a whole community, to accept Torah once again.



### In-Person Worship Resumes!

We will begin in-person services in our sanctuary on Shabbat morning, May 8. There will be a number of safety protocols in place, including,

- Attendance will be limited. Registration is required.
- Everyone must wear a mask at all times when on our property.
- All attendees must be at least 2 weeks post final vaccine.

This is likely to last throughout the summer, with the possible exception of outdoor family services. If you are interested in attending a service in our sanctuary, please indicate all of the dates which you are able to attend when you register. If there are more people interested in attending than spots available we will hold a lottery to determine participants.

If you indicate interest in attending in person you will receive an email indicating which services you will be able to attend. The email will also provide detailed information regarding Covid protocols.

All services will continue to be live-streamed on Zoom. All who register by the Friday deadline (whether or not you have requested to be in person) will receive the link for the live-streamed services.

Questions can be addressed to Lynn Urbach at [LynnMaine@gmail.com](mailto:LynnMaine@gmail.com)

## Shabbat Service and Torah Study Registration

### IMPORTANT!!!

April Zoom links will also be used on Saturday, May 1 for Torah Study and Shabbat Morning Worship (including the Bat Mitzvah on Saturday) to avoid switching months in the middle of Shabbat.

- To register for April **Friday night worship**, [click here](#).
- To register for April (and May 1) **Torah Study** on Saturdays, [click here](#).
- To register for April (and May 1) **Saturday morning worship**, [click here](#).
  - To register for **Wednesday morning minyan**, [click here](#).

Registrations close at noon on Fridays. Zoom links will be sent by 4:00 PM on Fridays to all who have registered by the deadline. *We cannot send Zoom links after 4:00 PM on Fridays.*

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

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### Register now to receive **May Shabbat worship and Torah Study links!**

Reminder: April Zoom links will also be used on Saturday, May 1.  
**The May Zoom links will not be active until on Friday, May 7.**

- To register for **Friday night worship**, [click here](#).
- To register for **Torah Study** on Saturdays, [click here](#).
- To register for **Saturday morning worship**, [click here](#).
- To register for **Wednesday morning minyan**, [click here](#).

## Worship Schedule

### Friday, April 30

#### **Tot Shabbat, 5:30 PM**

Families with children under the age of 5 are invited to join Rabbi Saks for a special interactive online Tot Shabbat via Zoom. We will welcome Shabbat with a special service full of songs, stories, crafts, games, and blessings.

Pre-registration is required. Register for Tot Shabbat [here](#). After registering, you will receive an email with the Tot Shabbat Zoom link.

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

Thank you to board member Catherine Share for making announcements.  
Thank you to the Petrucci family for lighting our Shabbat candles.

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



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### Saturday, May 1

#### **Torah Study, 9:00 AM (Remember to use your April Zoom link!)**

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](#).

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### **Shabbat Morning Worship, 10:30 AM (Remember to use your April Zoom link!)**

Mazal tov to Sabina Petrucci, child of Diane Simon and Noah Petrucci, who will be called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah on Saturday.

Thank you to Diane Newman for making our board presentations.

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

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### **Wednesday, May 5**

#### **Morning Minyan 7:30 AM**

Led by congregant Daniel Oppenheim.

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

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### **Notable Upcoming Services**

**Aziza Morrison Bat Mitzvah**, Saturday, May 15, 10:30 AM

## **Religious School on Zoom**

### **Sunday, May 2**

Grades K-10 on Zoom

#### **What's Happening?**

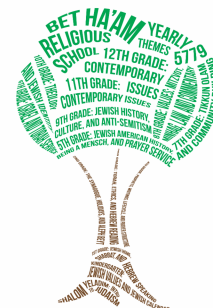
Next week is Teacher Appreciation Week! Don't forget to show our volunteer teachers extra appreciation on Sunday.

#### **Bet Ha'am Youth Group**

Please join the Bet Ha'am Youth Group (grades 8-12) for a virtual game night on April 29 at 7:00 PM. Have a game you want to play? Let us know! See you then! Andrea, Kate, Sid, and Hannelore  
FMI: [Andrea Levinsky](mailto:Andrea.Levinsky).

Zoom link: <https://maine.zoom.us/j/82662909156>

If you are interested in enrolling a child or teaching at religious school, email Sam at [sam@bethaam.org](mailto:sam@bethaam.org)



**THIS WEEKEND! Join Us for Our Spring Gala!**

# A DRAMATIC AFFAIR

A VIRTUAL EVENING WITH MAINE DRAMATISTS

CONGREGATION BET HA'AM

MAY 1, 2021 AT 8PM

FEATURING PLAYS BY

*Brent Askari*

*Bess Welden*

*Monica Wood*

BROUGHT TO LIFE BY

*Mad Horse Theater Company*

*ASL Interpreting Provided*



BETHAAM.ORG/GALA

## Last Chance to Win the Adventure of a Lifetime Raffle!

*All proceeds support "A Dramatic Affair," our biggest fundraiser of the year*

Our famous Adventure of a Lifetime Raffle is a playful way to expand the fundraising power of "A Dramatic Affair." Wishing on your dreams helps secure an enduring future for Bet Ha'am. We hope you will play along!

Tickets are \$100 each and no more than 150 tickets will be sold. One winner will be chosen by drawing to select from our two prize categories, each valued at \$5,000. You can:

**Travel the World** – Got pent up travel desires? When the time comes to act on them confer with our travel mavens to create the trip of your dreams.

*or*

**Feather Your Nest** – Use your winnings to enhance your home or life. Be fanciful or practical. We encourage you to shop local!

### Raffle Ticket Sales Extended!

**Raffle tickets must be purchased by 8:00 PM on Saturday, May 1.  
Payment must be made with a credit card.**

[Purchase Your Tickets Here](#)

**Let's spend a much-needed evening together! Purchase your Zoom admissions today!**



"A Dramatic Affair" is Congregation's Bet Ha'am's biggest fundraising event this year. Please help support our mission and programs by joining us for these 3 world premiere plays:

*Tikkun Olam*, by Brent Askari

directed by Marie Harmon and featuring Allison McCall and Jake Cote

*June 20/20 reVision(s): A Fire Diary*, by Bess Welden  
directed by Stacey Koloski and featuring Reba Askari

*The Male Gaze*, by Monica Wood  
directed by Chris Price and featuring Brent Askari, Janice Gardner and  
Christine Marshall

**May 1 at 8:00 PM**

**Registration, Contributions, and Don't Forget Those Raffle Tickets!**

**ASL interpreting will be provided.**



### **Can't Make The Event on May 1?**

Anyone who supports our event with a contribution will receive a link to a recording of the entire evening that will be accessible throughout the month of May.

### **What the Directors are Saying About Their Plays:**

*Tikkun Olam* - "I like this play because it's so relatable. No matter who you are there has likely been a time in your life where you are in a moment of questioning everything. These moments are really scary and they're hard because we feel alone. This play has helped me feel not so alone."

*June 20/20 reVision(s): A Fire Diary* - "Against the backdrop of one critical pandemic month full of social upheaval and protest, *June 20/20 reVision(s): A Fire Diary* is a snapshot of the complicated (and often conflicting) emotional responses so many of us experienced in 2020. Bess perfectly captures the urgent, messy process of grappling with self-identity and privilege - at an exact moment it would have been easier to hide and stay silent and safe - inside our homes, in front of our screens, and behind our masks."

*The Male Gaze* - "This is marvelously disconcerting, funny and clever short piece that's been a joy to work on with Monica, Janice, Christine and Brent."

### **A DRAMATIC AFFAIR SPOTLIGHT**

DAVID BASS-CLARK (MC for "A Dramatic Affair") - Theater and music have always been close to David's heart. He has performed in plays since he was 5 years old when he got his first role at Children's Theater of Maine. Throughout his religious education at Bet Ha'am he gleefully participated in the annual Purim play and later volunteered on Sunday mornings as a music teacher and song leader. He continued his theatrical pursuits in outdoor stage productions at Funtown, Broadway musical reviews at Anthony's Italian Kitchen, and Shakespeare at the Stage at Spring Point. Some of his favorite roles include The Leading Player in *Pippin*, El Gallo in the *Fantasticks*, and Sky Masterson in *Guys and Dolls*. David



considers Lyric Theater, Portland Players and Good Theater to be his second home. When not on the stage, David is known to many as a technology evangelist, and the Director of Augmented and Virtual Reality Research & Development at Unity College.

[www.bethaam.org/gala](http://www.bethaam.org/gala)

## Shabbat Service and Grade 12 Graduation

**Friday, May 7, 7:30 PM**  
**Shabbat Service and Grade 12 Graduation,**

This year's religious school graduating class consists of high-achieving academics, Tikkun Olam champions, and local leaders. You are invited to attend the virtual 12th grade graduation on May 7 at 7:30 PM to honor them. We look forward to seeing what these young adults achieve in the world!



## Annual Meeting

**Tuesday, May 11, 6:30 PM**  
**Annual Meeting**

The Annual Meeting will be held by Zoom on Tuesday, May 11, beginning at 6:30 PM. There are several reasons it is important for members to attend.

- Breakout groups will discuss ways to address our current unsustainable financial situation. All possibilities are on the table; this is your opportunity to let the board know how you think we should address our financial problems!
- We need a quorum for the election of new board members and officers to be valid.
- The Jane Snerson Distinguished Service Award is going to someone who has done a tremendous amount of work for our congregation for many, many years. We owe this person quite a bit. Come to the meeting to find out who we are honoring!



Registration in advance is required.

[Annual Meeting Registration](#)

## 11th Annual Plant Sale

**Great news! In *just over two weeks*, we will be having...**

**The Garden Committee's 11th Annual Outdoor Plant Sale at Bet Ha'am!**

**Sunday, May 16, 2021  
9:00 AM - 1:00 PM**

**All Covid Safety Protocols will be followed.**



**The plant sale is possible only with your support!**

All plant sale proceeds support the Garden Committee's efforts to plant, harvest and donate fresh produce from our raised bed gardens to those in need, to promote educational gardening events and projects at Bet Ha'am and to care for our beautiful gardens.

**We need your help to have a nice variety of plants and seedlings for customers to purchase.** Donations of sun, shade, foliage, and flowering plants are needed.

Perennials, annuals, and seedlings are needed too!

**Leave your plant donations at Bet Ha'am.** Starting on May 9, you can drop your potted (or plastic bagged) plants off by the raised beds. Read more on how to repot home garden plants [here](#). If you purchase plants and flats for yourself at a garden center, please consider picking up an extra to donate to this fundraiser!

**Need more information about the sale?** You can find it [here](#), or get it by emailing Joan at [garden@bethaam.org](mailto:garden@bethaam.org).

**Thank you. See you at the sale!**

## Adult Learning with Rabbi Alice Goldfinger

**May 26, June 2, and June 9, 10:00 - 11:00 AM**  
**The Carob Tree in the Cave and Other Talmudic Tales with Rabbi Alice Goldfinger**



Advanced registration is required. Class size will be limited to 15. The Talmud is the primary text of Jewish law and lore whose sources date from the first few centuries of the common era. Traditionally, the highest aim in Talmud study is to elucidate Jewish law (*Halacha*). The narrative passages (*Aggadah*) have been viewed as illustrations of, or digressions from, *Halacha*. In this class we will study three Talmudic narratives and mine them for their wisdom, beauty and literary achievement.

Registration closes at 12:00 Noon on Friday, May 14, or when 15 person limit is reached - whichever comes first. Rabbi Goldfinger will email all participants directly after registration has closed.

[Class Registration](#)

## Solar Energy Fundraiser

**Support Local Maine Solar, Lower Your CMP Bill and Raise Money for Bet Ha'am**

Bet Ha'am was recently contacted about a new fundraising initiative involving congregants who may be interested in community solar. PowerMarket is an operator of multiple community solar energy farms on the east coast including one located in Baldwin, Maine that is currently looking for "subscribers." Subscribers are self-designated CMP customers who wish to buy a portion of their electricity from a community solar farm. The electricity is sold at a discount and produced with a lower carbon footprint.



The initiative presented provides that PowerMarket and Darrell Cooper of Energy Audits Ltd. will donate \$150 to Bet Ha'am for each subscriber who signs up using the promo code "Bet Ha'am." There is no upfront cost to sign up, subscribers typically save about 10% on their CMP bill, and they can cancel at any time on 60 days' notice.

You can obtain more information, and if interested become a subscriber through the PowerMarket/Baldwin Community Solar project website at: <https://account.powermarket.io/bethaam.html>.

If you have questions about the donation to Bet Ha'am, please contact Mark Stone at [lmstone@lmstone.com](mailto:lmstone@lmstone.com)

**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](#).



## Candle Lighting Sign-Up

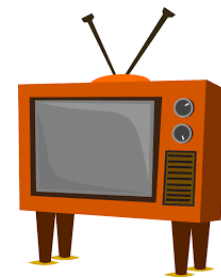
## B'Yachad | Together

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 and Movie Discussion Group

Please join congregants Melissa Montefel and Wendy Hayes, co-facilitators, for a discussion group about Jewish-themed movies and 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.



### May 12:

#### *The Book Thief*

While subjected to the horrors of World War II Germany, young Liesel finds solace by stealing **books** and sharing them with others. In the basement of her home, a Jewish refugee is being protected by her adoptive parents.

Amazon Prime

### June 9:

#### *Shtisel*

A Haredi family living in an ultra-Orthodox neighborhood of Jerusalem reckons with love, loss and the doldrums of daily life. We'll be discussing all three seasons of Shtisel available on Netflix so we're giving you plenty of time!



## 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](#).

## So Much Going on in Our Community!

We are fortunate to be in a community where there is so much going on Jewishly that we cannot possibly list all of the happenings here. Please check out the websites listed below for all kinds of activities – movement, art, spirituality, books, movies, Jewish education, and more. Bet Ha'am often co-sponsors programs with these community leaders.



**SAVE THE DATE! For the Maine Conference for  
Jewish Life  
Sunday, June 13, 2021**

Join the Center for Small Town Jewish Life on Zoom for an afternoon of interactive learning and community celebration! Stay tuned for more details and information about how to register.



CENTER FOR  
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## 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\*\*](#)

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

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