



The Bet Ha'am Weekly Email

Words of Torah from Rabbi Saks

The book of Numbers, which we begin reading this week with its first portion, *Parashat B'midbar*, begins with a census of the Jewish people. The purpose of this census is to assess how many men over the age of 20 are available to serve in an Israelite army's conquest of the Promised Land. This is not the first census in Torah and, chronologically, the last one, in *Parashat Ki Tisa*, wasn't even that long ago. Why are there numerous censuses of the Israelite people? Nachmanides, the 13th century Spanish commentator, examines this census and the one in *Parashat Ki Tisa*, which was a half-shekel assessment of the people for the purpose of constructing the *Mishkan*, the portable wilderness sanctuary, to find an answer. There, each person was assessed the same amount, regardless of status, and the coins were counted, rather than the people. Here, though, each person stands before Moses and Aaron, according to their own name and ancestral house, in order to be counted. We see in this census that this presents an opportunity for Moses and Aaron to see the individual worth of each person. Today, too, we need not only to see how many people make up our community, but the individual value of each of those people and what each one has to offer.



In-Person Worship Resumes!

In-person Shabbat services in our sanctuary have begun! There are 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 Sylvia Most at sylviamost@gmail.com.

Registration for Worship and Torah Study

Want to register to participate in worship or Torah study?

It's easy to do! Click on the registration links (listed in the worship schedule box below) for whichever sessions you wish to attend. Please be sure to register by noontime on Friday, which is when registration closes each week. Everyone who registers by the deadline will be sent Zoom links, regardless of whether or not they also indicate upon registration that they would like to attend in-person worship in the sanctuary. Zoom links will be sent by 4:00 PM on Fridays. Easy!

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

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

Worship Schedule

Friday, May 14 Shabbat Family Service, 6:00 PM

Thank you to the Morrison family for lighting our Shabbat candles.
Thank you to board member Diane Newman for making announcements.
Register to receive the **Friday Night Shabbat Worship** Zoom link, [here](#).

Saturday, May 15 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](#).

Saturday, May 15 Shabbat Morning Worship, 10:30 AM

Mazal tov to Aziza Morrison, child of Dana Gold and Robert Morrison, who will be called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah on Saturday.

Thank you to Lynn Urbach for making our board presentations on Saturday.

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



Sunday, May 16 Erev Shavuot and Confirmation, 6:00 PM

Our 10th grader Tobias Lodish co-leads this service celebrating the giving of Torah, his Jewish identity, and the affirmation of his commitment to the Jewish community. Click [here](#) to register and receive the Zoom link to join the service.

Thank you to Sharon Newman for providing music at this worship service.

Wednesday, May 19 Morning Minyan 7:30 AM

Thank you to Daniel Oppenheim for leading Morning Minyan.

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

Notable Upcoming Services

Elena Rosenberg Bat Mitzvah, Saturday, June 12, 10:30 AM

Service Leaders Needed!!!

Service Leaders Needed!

With the Rabbi going on sabbatical, we need service leaders for May, June, July and the first half of August. If you would like to lead or co-lead, there are dates available for Zoom and in-person services, with May being the most urgent. If interested, willing and able, please contact Melissa Montefel at missyjo314@hotmail.com or call/text 207-939-8568. Thank you!!



Religious School on Zoom

Sunday, May 16

Morning: Grades 1-6, K'tanim, Shalom Yeladim

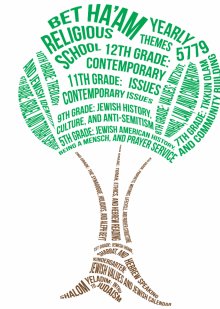
5:00 PM Grades 11-12 Last Class

6:00 PM Erev Shavuot Service and Confirmation (Grades 7-10 attend)

What's Happening?

Mazal tov to Tobias Lodish, our confirmation student of 2021!

Come by Bet Ha'am 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM on Sunday for the annual Plant Sale!



If you are interested in enrolling a child or teaching at religious school, email Sam at sam@bethaam.org

11th Annual Plant Sale - May 16



This Sunday!!!

**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 too!

It's not too late to bring plant donations to Bet Ha'am. You can even bring them on Sunday! Alternately, 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.

Thank you. See you at the sale on Sunday!

Critical Finance Meetings

**Bet Ha'am Financial Listening Session I
Wednesday, June 2, 7:00 PM**

Bet Ha'am Financial Listening Session II

Sunday, June 6, 10:00 AM
Critical: We need your input!



At Bet Ha'am our expenses exceed our income, an untenable situation. We must make some major changes to how we generate income. The Board of Trustees is inviting all synagogue members to one of two listening sessions. This is an opportunity you to tell the board how you think we should address our ongoing budget deficits, what you hope will not change, and to respond to some of the ideas that have already been raised. Everything is on the table. So it is really important that we get input from a large number of congregants before we make changes to our current financial paradigm.

For more information, check out the treasurer's presentation from the May 11, 2021 Annual Meeting [here](#).

If you are unable to attend one of these meetings, feel free to email your thoughts, questions, and concerns to treasurer@bathaam.org or President@bethaam.org.

You must register for these sessions. Register [here](#) for the session on Wednesday, June 2 at 7:00 PM. Register [here](#) for the session on Sunday, June 6, at 10:00 AM.

Recording Available

Dear Friends,

On April 22, we were honored to welcome DeRay Mckesson to speak to the Maine Jewish community about racial justice in Maine, specifically about ending police violence in our state. DeRay Mckesson is a co-founder of [Campaign Zero](#), dedicated to ending police violence, especially against people of color. He shared with us some of the successes and challenges of our state and empowered us to do the work towards racial justice and racial equity. If you missed DeRay's talk, please reach out to Karen (karen@bethaam.org) for a link to the recording. We hope you'll watch and rewatch it and consider what change you can be in the world.



L'Shalom,
Rabbi Saks

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>.

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

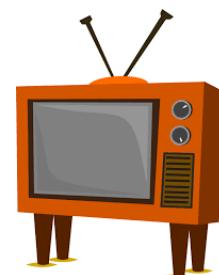
B'Yachad | Together

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 26:

Here We Are

A drama about a father son road trip

Love & Stuff

A documentary that explores motherhood, loss and the burdens and blessings of 'stuff.' Available through the May 14-16 Maine Jewish Film Festival (free, but must sign up for the tickets)

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.

Thursday, May 20, 6:30 PM

**Biddeford Cultural and Heritage Center sponsors:
"The History of Jewish Life in Biddeford-Saco" A
Virtual Community Presentation In Honor of Jewish
American Heritage Month**



BCHC board member, local historian, and fourth-generation member of one of Biddeford's oldest Jewish families, Jennie E. Aranovitch will present on topics including Jewish emigration to Biddeford; the history of Biddeford's synagogue, Congregation Etz Chaim; and the cultural aspects of Jewish life in Biddeford-Saco. Read more [here](#).

Tuesday, May 25, 7:00 PM

**Fighting White Supremacy in 2021:
From Charlottesville to the Capitol**

Presented by the JCA's Community Relations Council

From the Charlottesville violence to the Capitol insurrection to the shootings in Atlanta targeting the Asian American community, hate crimes and domestic extremism are at record levels -- and we're facing a dangerous and dire threat of white supremacy.

Join us via Zoom for a critical conversation with Integrity First for America's Amy Spitalnick on their groundbreaking Charlottesville suit and how we can fight back against the rising tide of violent hate. We will be joined by Maine Secretary of State Shenna Bellows, Portland City Councilor Pious Ali, and Reverend Kenneth Lewis who will participate in this important conversation.

Co-sponsors as of 5.11.21:

Center for Small Town Jewish Life | Green Memorial A.M.E Zion Church | Hope Gateway Church | Hope Acts | Immigrant Legal Aid Project | Maine Jewish Museum | Maine Council of Churches | Maine Immigrant Rights Coalition | National Council of Jewish Women | Portland Empowered | Temple Beth El Portland | Temple Beth El Augusta | Welcoming the Stranger | Temple Shalom Auburn | Holocaust Human Rights Center of Maine | Greater Portland Immigrant Rights Center | Etz Chaim Synagogue Portland

[Register Now](#)

**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.



Though the Center for Small Town Jewish Life is not able to hold the Maine Conference for Jewish Life in person once again this year, they are still very excited for their online mini-conference on Sunday, June 13, 3:00 - 6:00 PM. Like all Center programming, one registration link will enable you to come and go throughout the afternoon. A full schedule will be posted online in the coming weeks and will be emailed out to registrants once finalized.

They're looking forward to announcing a full lineup later this month, but they're happy to announce right now that [Tree Spirits](#) of Oakland, Maine, will be offering a

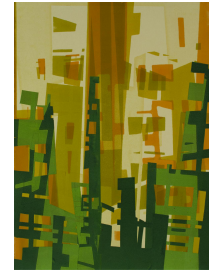
cocktail/mocktail lesson at the start of our conference! The first 50 people to register will receive a bottle of their SubLime, a fruit-bitter and brandy-based mixer for FREE!

Later registrants will have the option to buy a bottle with their registration for a discounted price. The Tree Spirits experts will lead a brief demo—you can follow along with or without a beverage!

Stay tuned for updates about speakers and sessions. They look forward to seeing you in June!

[Learn More and Register Here](#)

There are new exhibitions at Maine Jewish Museum starting May 13. Learn more [here](#).



[Jewish
Community
Alliance of
Southern Maine](#)

[Center for Small
Town Jewish
Life](#)

[Southern Maine
Jewish
Cemetery
Association](#)

[Maine Jewish
Museum](#)

[Levey Day
School](#)

[Maine Jewish
Film Festival](#)

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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