



The Bet Ha'am Weekly Email

Words of Torah

Rabbi Saks has been busy during his sabbatical! We are proud to share his words and [full op-ed piece](#) (below), which appeared in the Bangor Daily News on July 5, 2021.



Jewish tradition teaches us that everyone is made b'tzelem Elohim, in the image of God. We are enjoined to treat each other with dignity. Nobody should live in fear of discrimination or experience discrimination because of who they are. Yet most states lack laws protecting members of the LGBTQ community from discrimination. Federal civil rights laws also fail to protect people based on sexual orientation or gender identity. It is time for Congress to pass the Equality Act. Call your Senators at (202) 224-3121 and demand they support the Equality Act.

LGBTQ Americans, like all people, are made in the divine image and deserve to be treated with dignity.

Ten years ago, my husband and I were deciding where to spend the next chapter of our lives together. As a rabbi, I looked for a new congregation to serve. Painfully, I had to ignore opportunities in [over half of the United States](#) — in any state that



lacked nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ people. It was the only way to

ensure that my family and I would be treated equally under the law.

Jewish tradition teaches us that everyone is made b'tzelem Elohim, in the image of God. We are enjoined to treat each other with dignity. Nobody should live in fear of discrimination or experience discrimination because of who they are. Yet [most states](#) lack laws protecting members of the LGBTQ community from discrimination. Federal civil rights laws also fail to protect people based on sexual orientation or gender identity. It is time for Congress to pass the [Equality Act](#).

The Equality Act would expand federal civil rights laws to protect LGBTQ people. The act would make it illegal to discriminate against members of this community in employment, housing, credit and federally funded programs. It would also ensure non-discrimination in access to public places and spaces, like restaurants. The Equality Act expands these protections not only for the LGBTQ community, but for other marginalized groups such as religious minorities, women, immigrants, and people of color.

Today, LGBTQ Americans can be evicted, thrown out of restaurants, and denied loans because of who we are and who we love. [More than one in three](#) LGBTQ Americans — including nearly two-thirds of transgender individuals — have experienced some form of discrimination in the last year, according to a national survey fielded by the Center for

American Progress. [More than half](#) of LGBTQ Americans live in states that allow anti-LGBTQ discrimination. Moreover, states have introduced [dozens of anti-LGBTQ bills](#) this year alone, enacting twenty-two of them already. Crossing state lines should not mean losing legal protections that are afforded to other groups.

This situation is an affront to my Jewish values. Judaism has celebrated a diverse spectrum of sex and gender identities for centuries. Many of our texts proudly affirm the existence of transgender, intersex and genderfluid individuals. Beyond this recognition of diversity, we are commanded not to stand idly by when others are suffering. As a Jew, I feel obligated to stand up against discrimination today, for my community and all the other communities that the Equality Act will protect.

The House of Representatives has [already passed](#) the Equality Act. Now, the Senate must act. As a Mainer, I call on Sen. Susan Collins to join with Sen. Angus King in [cosponsoring](#) this bill. Collins has [already worked](#) to abolish discrimination against LGBTQ citizens during federal jury selection. It is my sincere hope that she will support LGBTQ Americans again by cosponsoring the Equality Act and urging her colleagues to do the same.

Some detractors argue that the Equality Act limits religious liberty. Nothing could be further from the truth. In some states today, it is legal to throw someone out of a retail store for wearing a yarmulke, cross necklace or hijab. The Equality Act will protect people of faith from this sort of discrimination. That is part of why over [120 faith-based organizations](#) have formally endorsed this bill, including the Union for Reform Judaism, NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice, and Muslim Advocates. In March, the U.S. Senate held its first hearing on the Equality Act. Sen. Chris Coons of Delaware, who is an ordained elder in the Presbyterian Church (USA), held up a petition from more than [17,000 people of faith](#) in support of the Equality Act.

A majority of Americans [support](#) protecting LGBTQ people from discrimination in jobs, public accommodations and housing. Substantial majorities in every major religious group, from Jews to evangelicals to Catholics to the religiously unaffiliated, support this measure as well. It is time for our laws to reflect what so many of us already believe: that LGBTQ Americans, like all people, are made in the divine image and deserve to be treated with dignity.

The act is simply about treating everyone as we would want to be treated, a value we all share. I'm proud that my family has made a home in our state. I'll be even more proud when Collins becomes a co-sponsor of this historic legislation.

Photo credit: Nina Mahaleris / BDN

Join Us In Person!

- Registration is no longer required for in-person sanctuary services - just show up!
- Everyone must wear a mask at all times while attending services as we will be singing.
- It is our hope to hold one in-person service at Bet Ha'am every weekend. We can't wait to see you there!
- All services will continue to be live-streamed on Zoom. See below details.

Questions can be addressed to Sylvia Most at sylviamost@gmail.com.

Want to Join Us Via Zoom?

All services will continue to be live-streamed via Zoom. In addition, Torah Study will continue meeting via Zoom, most likely throughout the summer.

Want to join us via Zoom? Just click on the links provided below. **Please note: Zoom links will no longer be emailed on Fridays, but they will always be provided in**

the **Thursday congregational emails**. It's that easy!

Join the **Friday Night Shabbat Worship** service, [here](#).

Join the **Torah Study** session, [here](#).

Join the **Shabbat Morning Worship** service [here](#).

Join the **Wednesday Morning Minyan** [here](#).

Worship Schedule

Friday, July 9

Family Shabbat Service and Picnic, 5:00 PM
Fort Williams Park in Cape Elizabeth

The evening will begin with a festive dinner. Then, the sights and sounds of summer will enhance our worship. Thank you to Toby Rosenberg for leading our service this evening. Thank you to Diane Newman for making our board announcements.

Please bring your own brown bag dinner and carry-away your trash.



In the event of mild inclement weather (light drizzle), we will proceed with our service and picnic at Fort Williams. **In the event of severe inclement weather** (driving down rain/thunder/lightning), we will cancel our service and picnic at the park and instead offer a Shabbat service, led by Toby Rosenberg, via Zoom at 6:00 PM (see the box immediately above for the Zoom link). We will make a final weather determination at 2:00 PM on Friday. If you are unsure, please check the Bet Ha'am outgoing phone message after 2:00 PM for updates.

The Picnic Shelter is a covered structure with tables and a view of the lighthouse. Enter the park through the main entrance on Shore Road. Follow the road up the hill and over the other side to the stop sign. Turn right. The entrance to the Picnic Shelter parking lot will be on the right. The Picnic Shelter is located on the hill above the parking lot.

Pay and Display parking fees are in effect in most parking lots April 1 – November 15, 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM. There is no charge to park in the Overflow lot.

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

Saturday, July 10

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.

Thank you to Jay Sherwin for leading Torah Study this week.

Saturday, July 10

Shabbat Morning Worship, 10:30 AM (in the Sanctuary)

Thank you to Robert Morrison for leading our worship service in the Sanctuary and for reading Torah and Haftarah.

Let's enjoy a Kiddush lunch together! Please bring your own brown bag lunch and carry-away your trash.

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

We extend a retroactive thank you to Rachel Stamieszkin for reading Torah and Haftarah last weekend.

Wednesday, July 14
Morning Minyan 7:30 AM

Thank you to Daniel Oppenheim for leading Morning Minyan.

Join the **Wednesday Morning Minyan** [here](#).

Contemplative Worship Service - Always Available on the Bet Ha'am Website!

This contemplative worship service offers an opportunity for you to delve deeper into your own spiritual practice and open the pathways to God that are available to you. By making this available, we hope that you will access it anytime you need to re-center yourself or reopen those pathways to God.



You can watch the service [here](#).
Follow along with the prayer book [here](#).

Service Leaders Needed!!!

Service Leader Needed!

Thank you to all who have volunteered to lead services throughout the summer while the rabbi completes his sabbatical. Most of our services have been covered, but we still have one date left without a service leader. If you would like to lead or co-lead, the following is date available:



Saturday, August 14, 10:30 AM (TBD)

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

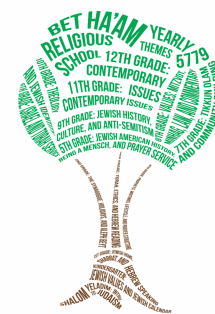
School registration 2021-22 is open! Click [here](#) to register today!

We expect to hold fully in-person classes. A virtual class is available to students who wish to continue learning on Zoom.

Early bird tuition rates end August 1. Early registration helps staff plan the year. If you're interested in teaching, contact Sam, sam@bethaam.org.

Thank you to Zach Hindall for updating our registration form.

Teachers and Sam are looking forward to seeing families in-person this September!



2021-22 Financial Commitment Letters

Pledge forms for the upcoming fiscal year are in the mail! Your membership enriches all of us and is essential to maintaining our



operations. As you consider your financial commitment for 2021-22, please be as generous as you can.

Please return your forms by July 20 or contact Teri at 879-0028 (teri@bethaam.org) with your pledge information and/or questions.

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.

Ongoing at Bet Ha'am

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

Please note: We will not be meeting on Friday, July 9 or Friday, July 16. We'll look forward to seeing you on July 23!

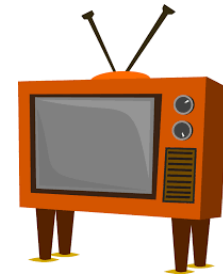
Come relax and talk virtually with your Bet Ha'am community before Friday Shabbat services! We will meet every Friday except the second Friday of the month when there is a 6:00 PM Family



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.



July 21: *Uncut Gems*

With his debts mounting and angry collectors closing in, a fast-talking New York City jeweler risks everything in hopes of staying afloat and alive. *Available on Netflix.*



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.

Tuesday, July 13, 1:00 PM EST Preserving Dilly Beans with Sheri Live in person at the JCA 1342 Congress St., Portland

Making dilly beans with an abundance of string beans this time of year is a fun and delicious way to take advantage of fresh beans either grown yourself, given to you by friends or purchased at the farmer's market or the supermarket. It is healthy, fun to make and tastes great. Led by KJFS volunteer and master gardener Sheri Fistal. Finances should not be a barrier to participation. For more information, contact Adam at aseigal@mainejewish.org.



Advanced registration required by Monday 7/12 at noon to attend in person. Event will also be livestreamed to Facebook – tune in at <https://www.facebook.com/KJFSMaine>

Register for the program [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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