

# CENTER FOR SMALL TOWN JEWISH LIFE



**October 2020/Tishrei 5781**

Dear Friends,

Can you believe the High Holidays and festivals are behind us? We hope that your holidays were meaningful, and that whether in person or online, you found ways to connect with community during this season of renewal. Now the morning air is crisp and there are fewer leaves on the trees every day, but the opportunities to learn and celebrate Maine Jewish life together abound! We have much to offer in the coming weeks and months. Read on for an array of opportunities to learn, discuss, sing, cook, and play together. Register early and often! We look forward to seeing you.

With warm wishes,  
The Center Staff

## Beit Midrash

JUDAISM AND THE  
OBLIGATION TO ACT



**Join us on Monday, October 19 at 6 p.m.**

Beit Midrash brings together college students and community members for several evenings of study throughout the year. This fall, Beit Midrash is going virtual and is the perfect opportunity to end the fall holiday season with some Jewish learning.

Join us via Zoom to learn with fellow community members from the comfort of your home. We will explore a series of classic and contemporary texts that discuss what Jewish tradition has to say about our obligation as social actors. When and how do we have to take part in our community? Do we have an obligation to act beyond the Jewish community? How do these issues relate to student responsibilities toward their community and our responsibility around racial justice? We'll discuss these questions and more!

[Register Here](#)

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## Teen Event • Word Power! Sunday, October 25, 7-8:30 p.m.



Join us on Zoom for an evening of word play and fun! We'll start with some Jewish learning about the power of words in the world, then break out into a rousing game of Zoom Scattergories! This is a chance for teens to meet our awesome new Fellows for the year (two college students who are looking forward to hanging out) and reconnect with friends from across the state.

[Register Here](#)



## COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

### What is the Role of Religion in Civic Life? Sunday, October 25, 7-8:30 p.m.

This online program will feature a conversation between Rabbi Lisa Vinikoor of Beth Israel Congregation in Bath, Zach Heiden, Chief Counsel at the Maine ACLU, and Pastor Craig Riportella of Centerpoint Community Church in Waterville. Following a question and answer session, we will invite community members and college students into breakout rooms to continue the conversation.

[Register Here](#)

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# Is Liberal Democracy a Jewish Value?

DR. ELIAS SACKS  
RABBI RACHEL ISAACS



**Wednesday, October 28, 7 p.m.**

In nations around the world, and increasingly in Europe and the Americas, societies are electing leaders and empowering parties that are publicly questioning and challenging the wisdom of liberal, democratic forms of government. We have witnessed animosity toward political values that appeared beyond debate in the post-World World II order: the value of separation between religion and state, international cooperation and alliances, and the separation of powers. The struggle between those who embrace liberal Democracy as an inherent good and those who are skeptical of its value exists not just on a global scale, but is causing major division in Jewish communities as well.

In this conversation, Dr. Elias Sacks, Director of the Program in Jewish Studies at the University of Colorado, Boulder, and Rabbi Rachel Isaacs, Assistant Professor of Jewish Studies at Colby College, will examine these trends through the lens of Jewish history and thought, considering past and present intra-Jewish debates about the best and “most Jewish” forms of political organization, and how global trends could impact the Jewish future in the United States and abroad.

[\*\*Register Here\*\*](#)

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## **Announcing the 2020/5781 Fall Shabbaton!**

### **Online, Saturday, November 7 and Sunday, November 8**

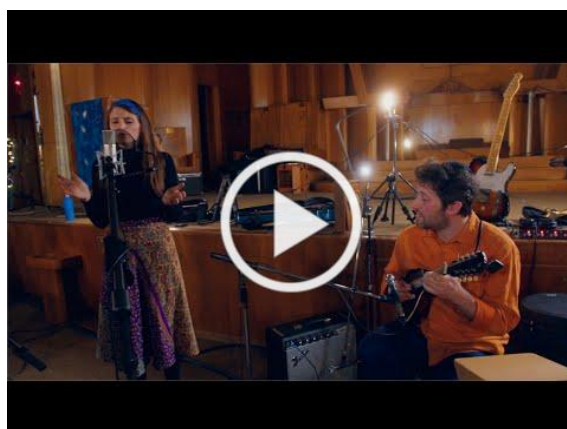
Join us for the seventh annual Fall Shabbaton—and the first virtual Shabbaton of its kind! At the conclusion of Shabbat on Nov. 7, we will gather online in joyful community to welcome in the new week with Havdalah and a concert with Deborah Sacks Mintz of the Rising Song Institute.

The Shabbaton continues on Sunday, Nov. 8, with a rich set of sessions where we'll explore topics of racial justice and diversity

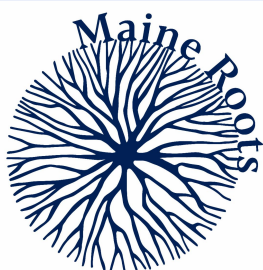
in the American Jewish community, prepare food from global Jewish traditions, bring our young people together for Jewish values and fun, imagine with our rabbinical fellows what a post-pandemic Jewish community can look like, and more—all on Zoom!

Mark your calendars and register for a weekend of music, learning, and friends.

[Check out our website for more information.](#)



**Register for the Shabbaton!**



## **The Maine Roots Retreat is back and going virtual!**

**Saturday, November 7 and  
Sunday, November 8**



Join us for a weekend of connection and reconnection to our roots in the Maine landscape and Jewish community! This virtual retreat is open to Jewish adults, ages 22-33.

The Maine Roots retreat will begin with Havdalah on Saturday evening and run through Sunday afternoon. Our schedule will weave in and out of programming for the Fall Shabbaton—

with dedicated sessions just for our cohort. Together, we will explore racial justice and diversity in the Jewish community, move through an embodied Jewish practice workshop,



cook delicious food, and forge connections, all while remaining connected with the wider Maine Jewish community.

This retreat is virtual, but we've worked to design offerings to engage our bodies, senses, hearts, and minds. Registration is \$18 and covers an awesome package mailed to your door full of everything you'll need for the weekend.

Maine Roots is generously supported by Moishe House and the Center for Small Town Jewish Life. Questions? Email Sarah Rockford at [sjrockfo@colby.edu](mailto:sjrockfo@colby.edu)

**Learn More and Register for the Retreat Here!**

## In the Community

**COME  
TOGETHER**

**GA  
2020  
VIRTUAL**

### **Come Together for the Jewish Together Experience**

**October 25-27, 2020**

Never have all our communities been so challenged, all at once and on every front. And never have we come together so successfully to collaborate on solutions. What lessons have we learned? What problems have we yet to solve? What opportunities lay ahead for the organized Jewish community? It's time to come together once again—all of us—to reflect, learn, and prepare for what lies ahead. Jewish Together, a special plenary of the first-ever virtual General Assembly of the North American Jewish community, will be that opportunity.

**Learn More Here**

[The Center for Small Town Jewish Life](#)



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