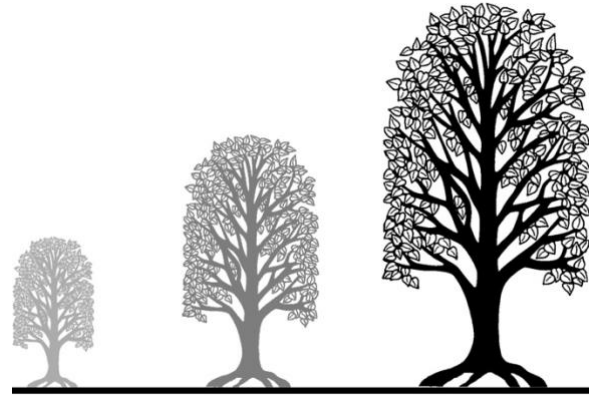


BETH ISRAEL CONGREGATION

862 Washington Street

Bath, Maine 04530



July/August 2023

Tammuz / Av / Elul 5783

Rabbi's Message (presented at the annual meeting, June 25, 2023)

Good morning.

It is really so wonderful to see everyone here this morning. Beth Israel Congregation has not gathered for an in person annual meeting since 2019. Indeed, these past four years have been full of immense heartbreak. Over one million people died from Covid 19 in the United States alone. Thousands of adults lost their jobs and subsequently their basic sense of stability. And our children missed countless hours of socialization and schooling so crucial to their development. Life as we knew it was torn from our grasp.

In March of 2020 when the world shut down. Here at Beth Israel, we adapted quickly moving all of our spring and summer Shabbatot and holidays to Zoom. B'nai mitzvahs were canceled or postponed. Baby namings and shiva minyanim took place on the screen. This was certainly not the Jewish communal life we thought we had signed up for.

Yet, we continued to adapt. We persevered and shifted, we did the best we could in strange and trying circumstances to keep our community together.

Eventually though we ventured outside donning masks when we gathered. Being outside was and still is wonderful as we are lucky to live in such a beautiful place. Yet this new partial solution offered up new logistical and communication challenges. This past year in many ways been the most difficult of the past 4 pandemic years.

With covid restrictions significantly loosened, our lives have been replete with questions from the seemingly mundane to the existential. Can we be together and take off our masks? How contagious are the new covid variants? What can we do to support youth facing mental health crises? Can we safely gather in the synagogue as Jews given the rise of anti-semitism? Will we need to turn on a dime again?

We cannot underestimate the level of stress felt on so many levels by the uncertainty, fear and anxiety of the recent past. These few years have left an indelible mark on our emotional and spiritual lives.



And yet through all of this, thank God, here we are, sitting face to face, enjoying a nosh, ready to celebrate the year going out, show gratitude to our many leaders, discuss what comes next and dream together. Being back together in person, is truly a blessing.

We have a lot to celebrate from this past year, and much to discuss and look forward to for the coming year.

- We have a thriving Hebrew school with 25 kids this past year and about the same anticipated for next year.
- Our teachers brought joy, fun and learning to each Hebrew school class and worked to implement our Hebrew school curriculum.
- This year we will unveil a new Hebrew school program for B'nai mitzvah age students to enable middle schoolers to stay in Jewish community with their peers and leading towards more robust programming for our Jewish teens in the future.
- We are blessed to continue our relationship with the Center for Small Town Jewish life and host a student rabbinical fellow.
- Finally, we are working to strengthen and rebuild our relationship with Bowdoin Hillel in this post-pandemic time.

I want to acknowledge Beth Israel board members who served our shul this past year. Thank you for your leadership, perseverance, humor, curiosity, care and stewardship on behalf of Beth Israel Congregation.

And to each of you here, thank you for your support of Beth Israel. your love of our community, and of Jewish life through efforts both large and small, to help us build a thriving Jewish community in our region. Thank you.

In Pirke Avot, Ethics of our Fathers, we learn the following:

Al shelosha devarim ha olam omad

Al ha Torah, v' al ha avodah v'al gemilut chassadim

On three things does the **world** stand, on Torah, on service and on acts of loving kindness.

This teaching reminds us that as Jews we believe that our actions and practices matter. We are bold enough to think that the ways in which we treat each other and this precious earth holds up the world.

Beth Israel- you carry out these three tasks quite well. You study and teach, you work to serve God and our world, and you endeavor to carry out acts of loving kindness.

And yet there always more to do, more room to grow and ways to improve.

*On three things does the **world** stand, on Torah, on service and on acts of loving kindness.*

May we keep this teaching at the forefront of our mind as we grow and change in this new year. Learning, supporting, and becoming stronger together.

Kein Yehi Ratzon. May it be so.

Poetry for the Jewish Year

by Rabbi Vinikoor

Our Jewish year overflows with holidays and holiness, ritual, rites and recipes. This summer we'll explore these sacred times on our Jewish calendar, through the mode of poetry. Each session we'll study a different Jewish holiday or two and a selection of poems that accompany them. All texts in English. No RSVP required.

July 6 – 7:00 pm

Passover and Shavuot

July 20 – 7:00 pm

Purim and Hannukah

August 3 – 7:00 pm

Sukkot and Shabbat

August 17 – 7:00 pm

Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur



Services and Torah Study – Inside and Outside

by Marilyn Weinberg

July and August will bring more opportunities for services and study both inside the synagogue and outside. Torah Study will now be held on a weekday outside in the library park. July dates for Torah study are listed with August date coming soon.

July 7 - 7:00 pm

Service inside the Synagogue led by Rabbi Vinikoor followed by oneg

July 8 - 10:00 am

Shabbat morning service followed by potluck luncheon

July 17 - 1:00 pm

Torah Study in the Park (Library Park in Bath)

July 28 - 5:30 pm

Shabbat Under the Stars; potluck dinner followed by Shabbat evening service at Dreyfus-Lane home

July 29 - 10:00 am

Shabbat Nature Walk at Butler Head in Bath

July 31 - 1:00 pm

Torah Study in the Park (Library Park in Bath)

August 4 - 7:00 pm

Service inside the Synagogue led by Rabbi Vinikoor followed by oneg

August 5 - 10:00 am

Shabbat morning service followed by potluck luncheon

August 18 - 5:30 pm

Shabbat Under the Stars; potluck dinner followed by Shabbat evening service at Vinikoor-Finn home

August 19 - 10:00 am

Shabbat Nature Walk, location TBD

Minnie Brown Center Renovation

by Peggy Brown

The planning for improved accessibility, safety, security, energy efficiency and functionality at the Minnie Brown Center has come a long way. As of mid-June all the building permits have been secured. Our architect, Peter Bethanis, and his team of mechanical, plumbing/heating, and electrical engineers are preparing their final draft plans to send out to bid in July. The Rabbi and Hebrew School teachers are packing up their rooms in anticipation of moving to the synagogue for a temporary relocation while the building is under construction. We hope to have them back in a newly renovated building next spring. More information to come this fall.

To make a donation in support of this project: www.bethisraelbath.org/take-action

Minnie Brown Center Clean Out Day

by Peggy Brown

Sunday, July 16
9:30 am

All hands on deck!

We need help sorting, packing, moving and throwing things away as we prepare the Minnie Brown Center for demo and reno work. If you can come for an hour, or two, or even longer, please let us know by submitting your name below. If you have a pick-up truck or an SUV with large cargo space to help with carting stuff, please let us know. We'll have food on hand!

Sign up below so we know to expect you.

Here it is: <https://forms.gle/5b7ZDBv9NRRqua8U7>



We need your help...PLEASE!

Summer Social

by Marilyn Weinberg

Come to a Beth Israel Summer Get Together

Many of you were away for the winter and a number of individuals and families have joined our congregation without getting to know many of our long-time members.

So, we are having a party!

Who is invited: All of you

When: Sunday, August 13, 4:00–5:30 pm – Just drop in

Where: Outside, at the home of Norma Dreyfus and Stan Lane in Arrowsic

We will have appetizers and beverages and lawn games as well. Bring the family.



Community Read

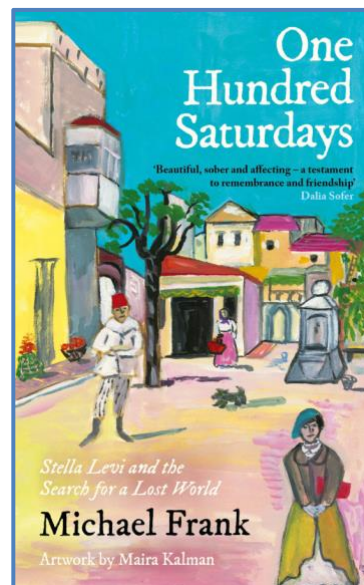
by Debbie Smyth

On **Sunday, August 20, 2:00-4:00** we will meet IN PERSON to discuss ***One Hundred Saturdays***, a memoir of nonagenarian Stella Levi as told to author, Michael Frank. Please hold the date and join us.

We think you will find this book fascinating. Recognized as one of the Wall Street Journal's Ten Best Books of the Year and winner of the National Jewish Book Awards for Holocaust and Sephardic Culture, *One Hundred Saturdays* tells Stella's remarkable story of growing up in the vibrant world of Jewish Rhodes that had existed for half a millennium, the deportation to Auschwitz that extinguished ninety percent of her community, and the resilience and wisdom of the woman who lived to tell the tale.

In addition to or instead of reading the book, you can see Stella in action and view video interviews with her and Michael Frank. There are many videos if you search Stella Levi or *One Hundred Saturdays*. These will get you started.

- <https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/One-Hundred-Saturdays/Michael-Frank/9781982167226>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h14HweLyuyg>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3VSJkzHNgu8>



We will let you know where to gather as we get closer in time. Should you have any questions, feel free to contact Debbie Smyth at communityread@bethisraelbath.org

To register and receive information about this event: <https://forms.gle/KDJscaUcsMcQD25K7>

Elul Fest

by Anita Lichman



Have you ever heard of Elul? It's the Hebrew month dedicated to spiritual preparation for Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, and Simcha Torah. This year Temple Beth El in Augusta, Temple Beth Israel in Waterville, Beth Israel Congregation in Bath, and the Peter Alfond Foundation teamed up to create a festival for families to celebrate Elul together.

To help us prepare for the holidays, as a larger Maine Jewish community, the Elul Festival will have Jewish food cooking demonstrations by our own Susan Horowitz, yoga to bring inner focus with our own Sara Helman, a live demonstration of Torah scribing, music performances and more. In addition to the activities there will be a complimentary food truck with lunch items so families can enjoy the day with minimal hassle managing logistics of snacks and lunch.

Jennifer Kanwit and Anita Lichman, members and parents of Hebrew school students, have been on the planning committee and would like to personally invite you to this event. The cost is \$18 per family. Come join in the fun and connect with other Jewish families across Maine! The Elul Fest is happening on August 27 from 10:00 am–1:00 pm at Temple Beth El in Augusta and register at: colbycollegejewishlife.regfox.com/elulfest-2023.

Where, Oh Where Have Our Torah Scrolls Gone

by Rabbi Vinikoor

Through our partnership with the Center for Small Town Jewish Life, two of our four *sifrei Torah* (Torah scrolls) are in the expert care of Soferet Julie Seltzer who is currently cleaning, fixing and sprucing them up for the upcoming year. Our Torah scrolls will be back in Maine on August 27 in the afternoon when Julie will be at Temple Beth El in Augusta to teach us about the work of a soferet (Torah scribe). Learn more about Soferet Seltzer [here](#) and don't miss this opportunity to learn from her when she's in Maine! You can help bring our Torah scrolls back to Bath too! Please RSVP to Rabbi Vinikoor if you can attend this event.



Hebrew School Enrollment

by Marilyn Weinberg

Beth Israel Hebrew School will resume classes on September 14, 2023. Whether you are a new or returning student, it's time to fill out the Hebrew School registration form.

Go to our website to get more information and access the enrollment forms. We charge only a \$50 book fee per child for Beth Israel members.

For more information:

www.bethisraelbath.org/hebrew-school



Dinner Club

by Peggy Brown

Beth Israel Dinner Club is alive and well and meeting monthly. All are welcome! Getting together for a meal is a wonderful way to get to know the other members of our congregation, solidify friendships and have a few laughs. Come alone or bring a friend. We meet at a local (Bath/Brunswick area) restaurant on the 3rd Tuesday of the month at 6:00 pm.

This spring we've had lovely meals at Bath Brewing Company and Flight Deck in Brunswick.

Interested in being on the Dinner Club mailing list to receive our monthly invitation?

Email Peggy to get your name added to the list: dinnerclub@bethisraelbath.org

Sacred Ground Summer 2023

by Joanne Rosenthal



We all want to see improvements in the racial disparities in our society, but it can be difficult to have meaningful conversations about these issues. The Sacred Ground program uses discussion groups led by trained facilitators in order to make this conversation safer and more impactful. Groups of 6-9 participants and two trained facilitators meet for 90 minutes over the course of eleven sessions. During this time they watch and discuss films exploring the history of racism in American society and begin to envision a different future together. Roughly 150 people have participated so far, and the feedback has been so positive that we are starting additional groups in the fall. We plan to offer both in-person and Zoom groups at a variety of times. We hope you will join the conversation!

Learn more and register by visiting our website at <http://stpaulsmaine.org/learning-sacred-ground-new> or by contacting our Program Coordinator, Andrea Lauerma at SacredGroundME@gmail.com / (207) 295-7856.

Social Action Committee Update

by Phyllis Wolfe

In mid-October our committee members and hopefully other members from the synagogue will participate in the local Window Dresser's Community Build. Window Dressers bring community volunteers of all economic and social situations together to improve the warmth and comfort of interior spaces, lower heating costs and reduce carbon dioxide pollution by producing low- cost insulating window inserts that function as custom, inside mounted storm windows.

Not only will we do a mitzvah for an individual's homes but also foster goodwill and partnerships throughout the area. More information on this specific project will follow in the next newsletter and early fall.

We always welcome new members and ideas. Please join us as we explore and adopt sustainable habits that protect our environment, improve our health and reduce energy expenses.

You can contact us at socialaction@bethisraelbath.org

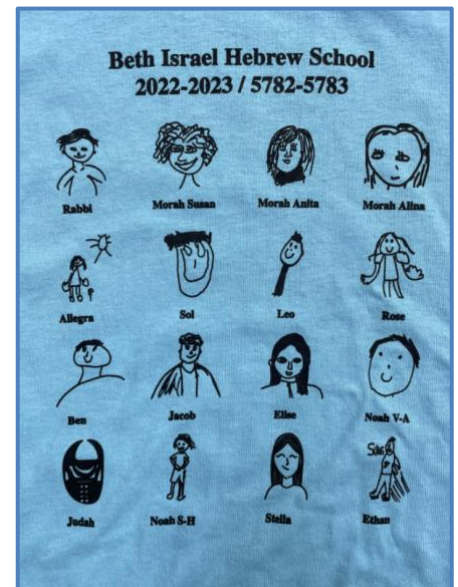


Hebrew School

by Marilyn Weinberg

After a year of studying together, sharing challenges, and working together on many projects. our wonderful Hebrew School students ended their school year with songs, games, yummy food and special T-shirts. The bonds they made during the year will last many years to come.

Thanks to all the teachers and parents who helped make it happen.



Hebrew School Service

by Rachel Connelly

It was so wonderful to attend the Hebrew school service earlier in June. The bimah was overflowing with children from age 5 to post bar mitzvah. Six sixth graders officially graduated and will all go on to study together and separately for their upcoming B'nei Mitzvah.

I felt a special pride in the vibrancy of their enthusiasm fueled by the wonderful leadership of Rabbi Vinikoor and a large cadre of teachers and other volunteer adults from our community. It truly takes a village, and we have a village! Congratulations to all the children and kudos to the parents who prioritize their children's religious education and to their teachers (meant in the broadest sense). Congratulations also to the board of the synagogue and past board members who invested so much of their time to revitalize this community.



Beth Israel Tallit Makers

by Marilyn Weinberg

With the help of Rebecca Dunham, several Beth Israel members and friends have been gathering for a number of weeks to create their own unique tallit. There have been challenges, especially sewing, and learning how to tie the “strings” to make it “kosher.” And there has been excitement as the work proceeded and we shared our designs. They should all be completed by the high holidays so keep your eye out for some exclusive and unusual tallaisim.

Many thanks to Rebecca Dunham for sharing her expertise and having patience with all of us as she answered our questions and helped us with the challenges each of us faced.



Yahad

by Rachel Connelly

Our monthly program for preschoolers and their families wrapped up the school year with a pretend trip to Israel, which included making passports, donning backpacks and stuffies, and “flying” from Minnie Brown to the synagogue building to zoom with Rachel’s sister Francine in Israel.

Thanks to Fred Weinberg for running the technology on our end, the children were able to use the big microphone to ask Francine questions and see photographs of animals and plants in Israel. We then “flew” home to Minnie Brown and celebrated Israel’s 75th birthday with a birthday cake complete with candles.

Yahad programming will start up again in the fall with monthly programs on Sunday mornings (usually the first Sunday of the month) aimed at children 2 to 5, plus siblings and a caring adult. We usually explore upcoming holiday themes and/or Jewish values with playtime, stories, songs, crafts, and snack.

If you have a child in this age range, I hope you will join us in the fall. In August, look for our announcement of the dates of the fall meetings.



Trauma Support Group

by Rabbi Vinikoor

Through my work with the Brunswick Area Interfaith Council, I became aware of the following support group and wanted to share this information with our congregation.

Traumatic stress is a widely misunderstood condition that is prevalent in our society. For many, living with traumatic stress presents significant challenges.

Who We Are

We are individuals who have experienced traumatic events and their disruptive effects in our lives. We wish to share our experience with others to help all find success in dealing with the many impacts of trauma.

Where We Meet

First Parish Church, Pilgrim House, 9 Cleaveland Street, Brunswick, ME 04011

When We Meet

Every Monday Evening from 6:00–8:00 pm

What Does It Cost

There is no cost to attendees

If you have questions or wish more information, please feel free to contact us at wepromotehealing@gmail.com. Follow us on Facebook at [MidCoast Maine Trauma Peer Level Support Group](#).

New Members

- Lawrence Hobel

Donations

Memorial Gifts

- Norma Dreyfus and Stan Lane in loving memory of her mother, Dr. Rose Goldberg
- Marina and Stephen Singer in loving memory of her father Victor Shapiro and her brother, Samuel Shapiro
- Linda Silberstein and Larry Loeb in loving memory of her mother, Thelma Silberstein
- Peggy Brown and John Martell in loving memory of her mother, Lucille Wernick Hershenhart
- Donald and Mara Giuliani in loving memory of his father Nicholas Giuliani
- Sharon Drake in loving memory of her father, Edward Kravitz and her brother, Larry Kravitz
- Pauline Hannaford in loving memory of her husband, Reg Hannaford
- Jay and Lenore Friedland in loving memory of his father, Edward Friedland
- John and Marilyn Darack in loving memory of his mother, Marion Darack
- Daniel Morgenstern and Moriah Moser in loving memory of his father, Frederic Morgenstern
- Lon and Ilissa Povich in loving memory of his parents, Don and Janice Povich
- Bud and Mary Samiljan in loving memory of his father, Joseph Samiljan
- David Michaelson and Yeonmi Ahn in loving memory of his mother, Julia Michelson
- Erich and Pauline Haller in loving memory of his aunt, Rose Roman
- Philip Russell in loving memory of Natalie Russell

For the Benefit of the Synagogue

- Sandy and Cynthia Boxerman
- Kathy Meyer and Harvey Yaverbaum
- Steve and Marina Singer in honor of their grandson, Sid's graduation from Brunswick High School and granddaughter Isabella Pols' graduation from the College of the Atlantic
- Matt and Karen Filler in honor of the Bat Mitzvah of Evelyn Kahn daughter of Ben Kahn and Emily Filler Kahn
- Margaret Curley in honor of the Vinikoor-Finn Family



Jewish Community Alliance
of Southern Maine

We gratefully acknowledge that the Beth Israel Congregation Hebrew School is supported financially by the Jewish Community Alliance (JCA) of Southern Maine. For more information visit them at www.mainejewish.org.

Birthdays and Anniversaries

Listing the birthdays and anniversaries of those in our immediate family creates a wonderful opportunity for our community/*shul* family to have an excuse to celebrate with each other.

July Birthdays

3	Anne Hebebrand
3	Alyssa Finn
3	Ian Friedel
7	Debra Benveniste
8	Linda Silberstein
9	Aaron Greenwald
9	Allegra Abbott
11	Ted Stainman
13	Matt Filler
13	Jonathan Dunham
15	Barrett Silver
15	Arielle Jorgensen
20	Oren Vilarello
21	Marina Singer
22	Jay Friedland
24	Howard Shaw
25	Sheldon Tepler

July Anniversaries

1	Alan Meyer & Patricia Brennan
13	Maurie Libner & Sharon Bouchard
20	Annie & Robert Valliere
23	Marina & Stephen Singer
26	Lenore & Jay Friedland
27	Jennifer DeChant & Lou Ensel

August Birthdays

1	Mary Samiljan
7	Pauline Haller
9	Oscar Starobin
14	Lou Ensel
19	Cutler Kanwit
20	Dena Verrill
21	Daniel Stone
22	Sloane Kanwit
22	Kate Stern
27	Susan Kamin
28	Steven Paul
31	Marilyn Weinberg
31	Stephen Sinclair
31	Isla Tefft

August Anniversaries

7	Sara & Andy Litt
9	Jenna Golub & Stephen Sinclair
10	Martin & Lois Samelson
11	Bob Lobis & Judy Wolfe
12	Phyllis & Joe Lisi
15	Rachel & Nathan Tefft
18	Sue & Bob Nusbaum
20	Evelyn & Mort Panish
31	Liza & Aaron Greenwald



Remembrances for July–August 2023

May their memories be for a blessing.

WE REMEMBER	HEBREW DATE	2023 CALENDAR DATE
Alice C. Meyer	13 Tammuz	July 2
Rita Ramsey	13 Tammuz	July 2
Simon Mensh	15 Tammuz	July 4
David Crystal	16 Tammuz	July 5
Anna Katz	18 Tammuz	July 7
Eleanor Tessler	18 Tammuz	July 7
Sylvia Greenhut	20 Tammuz	July 9
Bertha (Jablonsky) Berman	21 Tammuz	July 10
Bessie Singer	22 Tammuz	July 11
Milton Silver	23 Tammuz	July 12
Sheila Lichter	24 Tammuz	July 13
Harriet Crystal	26 Tammuz	July 15
Arthur Blatt	2 Av	July 20
Joseph Wolfe	2 Av	July 20
Priscilla Schwartz	3 Av	July 21
Joseph Cohen	4 Av	July 22
Henrietta Shapiro	9 Av	July 27
Reva Borenstein	10 Av	July 28
Bernard Yood	10 Av	July 28
Roslyn Goldstein/Teiger	11 Av	July 29
Abraham Linet	13 Av	July 31
David Goldman	15 Av	August 2
Max Isacoff	17 Av	August 4
Max Michelson	18 Av	August 5
Margareta Haller	21 Av	August 8
Sanford Linet	22 Av	August 9
Jacob Smith	22 Av	August 9
Barbara Baliban	24 Av	August 11
Ruth Fields	24 Av	August 11
Sarah A Greenblatt	25 Av	August 12
Charlotte Schneiderman	26 Av	August 13
Benjamin Mensh	27 Av	August 14
Kenneth Koufman	29 Av	August 16
Ayleene Feibelman	1 Elul	August 18
Zhang Mei Qin	3 Elul	August 20
Louise Nusbaum	3 Elul	August 20
Lillian Greenwald	14 Elul	August 30

