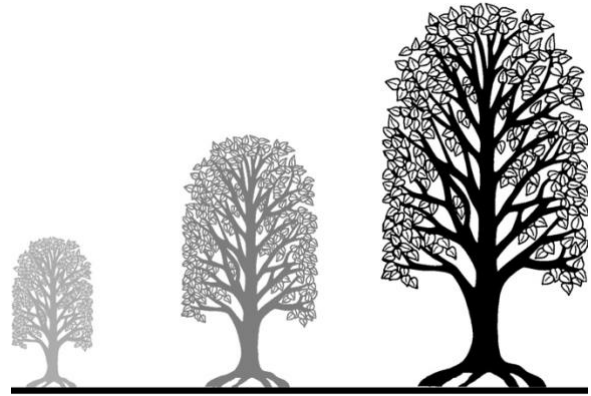


BETH ISRAEL CONGREGATION
862 Washington Street
Bath, Maine 04530



November/December 2023

Heshvan /Kislev/Tevet 5784

Rabbi's Message

Dear Beth Israel Members and Friends,

This past month has been full of pain and tragedy. From the events of October 7 in Israel that led to an ongoing war to the tragic mass shooting in Lewiston, we are on edge, worried, angry, grieving and so much more. Indeed, we may feel helpless in the face of such horrors. We may feel burnt out, and just plain sick and tired. I know I've felt many of these emotions quite often over the past weeks, and I yearn to feel safe and at ease again.

In moments of despair, I've asked myself, what can I do right now as a Jew? A Jewish life centers around community, connecting with God through prayer, and remembering the past to help us build a better future. But at this time, I want to highlight two other enduring Jewish values that speak to us in this moment.

First, the necessity of acting in our world. Tikkun olam means repairing our world and acknowledges that while our world is broken, we are responsible for repairing it step by step. Action can take many forms, including a simple phone call to a friend, baking cookies for a neighbor, cooking a meal for someone who is ill, donating money, supporting legislation and organizing others to do so.

And second, is the necessity of cultivating simcha (joy). I realize it can feel antithetical to be joyous in the midst of tragedy, when we are weighed down with pain and fear. And yet, joy is just what we need to keep our spirits going. Cultivating joy can take many forms such as sharing stories, laughing at stupid jokes, baking, watching a funny movie, connecting with friends, being outside in nature, celebrating Shabbat in community and so much more.

We must not let the pain of the world destroy our spirits. If we act, even in small ways, and work to cultivate joy, together we can have the strength to rebuild our community.

With prayers for peace, safety and compassion,

Rabbi Vinikoor



Sabbatical

by Rabbi Vinikoor

As this is my 7th year with the congregation, it is customary in Jewish tradition to be on sabbatical for a period of time. I will have my sabbatical this year from December 11 through March 11 and for another three months the following year (dates TBD). I am so grateful for this time for rest and rejuvenation. With the help of the Beth Israel board, I have organized a fantastic team of lay leaders and visiting rabbis to carry out my various responsibilities at the synagogue. Stay tuned for more details as well as a date to reconnect with me when I return over cookies and tea!

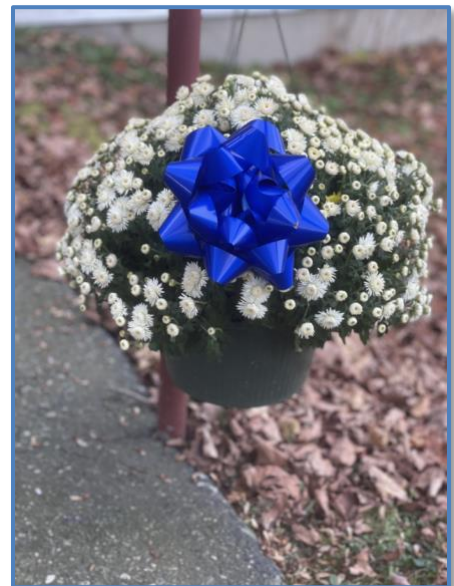
President's Message

by Marilyn Weinberg

Just a very short time ago we were gathering together as a community to celebrate our month of holidays starting with Rosh Hashanah and ending with Simchat Torah. Even a threatened hurricane didn't diminish our delight in connecting with each other as we shared meals, music, and prayer. And then the unspeakable actions of terrorists, killing almost 1500 Jews, ended our joyous celebrations. As for many of us, we were speechless. What can we do? How do we respond? I felt a great need to be together with my Jewish community.

A zoom gathering followed led by both Rabbi Vinikoor and Rabbi Asch. Several days later we had an opportunity to join together with Rabbi Vinikoor in person, to pray, to sing and to share our sadness and also our fear of the future. Please let there be no more bloodshed on either side. On each occasion I felt comforted and enveloped in warmth by my community.

Later in the week, as I walked by Minnie Brown, I saw two lovely hanging plants, suspended on the rails of the walkway to the front door. Who left them? There was no card. When did they appear? Such a thoughtful and beautiful message of kindness left by friends who wanted to show their support. I felt some happiness amid some of those dark clouds that seemed to be flowing around us these days.



As we navigate through these challenging times, I am reminded of the importance of community; both our Beth Israel community and the larger community around us. Together, we can get through these difficult times. Over the next few weeks and months, I encourage you to reach out to others. Offer your support and friendship to those who are struggling. And don't be afraid to ask for help when you need it. Call a friend to talk or come to one of the many activities going on in our Beth Israel community. It will help. We do need each other.

Maine Jewish Film Festival

by Marilyn Weinberg

November 4–11

We are so pleased to be able to share information about the upcoming 2023 Maine Jewish Film Festival from November 4–11

This year they are showcasing new films from 8 countries/ 4 continents in multiple locations: Portland, Bangor, Brunswick, Lewiston, Waterville, and Bethel.

Opening Night 25th Anniversary Celebration and Screening will be November 4 at the Portland Museum of Art.

Find the full lineup, schedules and ticket info at mjff.org



Willow Halpin's Bat Mitzvah

by Anne Schlitt

November 18, 2023

10:00 am

Please join us in welcoming Willow as a bat mitzvah! Willow is a thoughtful, empathetic, hard-working young woman with a talent for organizing people and making things happen. A freshman at Morse High School, she loves reading, traveling, hiking, listening to music, and spending time with her friends.

She's very engaged in her school, participating in sports (field hockey, lacrosse) and clubs (Interact Club). She's also a strong swimmer with Long Reach Swim Club, where she's competed since the age of 8. Willow has enjoyed working with Shoshi Gordon and the rabbi during this learning process and is grateful for all the support and friendship from Beth Israel over the years.



Hanukkah Music and More

by Marilyn Weinberg

Date: December 7

Time: 6:00 pm

Light the menorah for the first night of Hanukkah and then come to the Bowdoin College campus to add to your celebration.

Join for conversation, music, and fried treats with The LeeVees as they perform songs from their Warner Brothers released record titled *Hanukkah Rocks* and much more. Creator of NPR's Tiny Desk concert Bob Boilen declared it "the greatest holiday record of the past 20 years." Musicians Adam Gardner (Guster), Dave Schneider (Zambonis), Shawn Fogel, Daniel Saks and Tim Walsh will be featured in a roundtable conversation with Rabbi Carolyn Braun and Professor Margaret Boyle about Judaism in pop culture, Hanukkah through song lyrics and across languages.

The LeeVees are a rock band from New York City. Gardner and Schneider thought it would be fun to form a rock band, a Jewish one, that only wrote songs about Hanukkah, because there was a dearth of contemporary songs about that holiday. It first came to prominence near the end of 2005 with its debut album. After realizing its initial approach was rather narrow, it continues as a band with a strong Jewish identity.



The event is co-sponsored by the Harry Spindel Memorial Lecture Fund, the Jewish Community Alliance of Southern Maine, the Rachel Lord Center for Religious & Spiritual Life, and the Latin American, Caribbean and Latinx Studies program.

Tickets are free but registration is required. Register at:
bowdointickets.universitytickets.com/w/event.aspx?id=1444

Community Hanukkah Celebration

by Marilyn Weinberg

Date: December 10

Time: 3:00 pm

Get your menorah and candles ready and save the date as we gather together at the synagogue on the third night of Hanukkah. We are still in the planning stages, but you can guess there will be singing, menorah lighting and some fried treats to share.

Stay tuned to your weekly emails as final details will be shared.

If you are interested in being on the planning committee or if you have ideas to share please contact Marilyn Weinberg at info@bethisraelbath.org



Minnie Brown Renovation

by Marilyn Weinberg

We signed a contract! On October 20, the intrepid renovation committee members, Marty Fox, Peggy Brown and Marilyn Weinberg met with Peter Bethanis, our architect, and Brent Poulin, from Poulin Construction, to sign a contract and finally begin the Minnie Brown renovation project. Work should begin in early November. We will give you regular updates throughout the coming year.



Social Action Committee Update

by Phyllis Wolfe and Peggy Brown

In October, the Synagogue's Social Action Committee participated in Bath's Window Dressers event. Window Dressers brought community volunteers 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, interior-mounted storm windows. Twenty-five families received 140 window inserts!

Some of us wrapped, taped and finished inserts. Others brought food for the volunteers. Shout outs to Thyle Shartar, Kristin Propp, Jill Standish, Marty Fox, Elinor Rosenberg and Phyllis Wolfe for their volunteer efforts.



Next on our agenda is promoting a Beth Israel Climate Action Team that will work to confront the climate crisis and take action together. We'll involve children who attend our Hebrew School and even some high school students. It's going to take all of us on all fronts in a variety of ways working together. Need more convincing? Then watch this short video:

www.theenvironmentexcuse.org

If you are interested in joining the Climate Action Team and representing Beth Israel Congregation in this effort email socialaction@bethisrealbath.org

In addition, the Religious Action Center of the Reform movement is having a webinar on November 16 at 5:00 pm. Tomás Carbonell, who is a leader in the Office of Air and Radiation at the EPA, will speak on cutting carbon emissions. The OAR is key to creating strong standards. The RAC's campaign leaders will share the work we have done this year to show public support for climate regulations, and we will hear from the EPA about the next steps in their efforts to cut climate pollution.

All are welcome, regardless of your experience or any actions you've taken with the RAC's Power for Purpose Campaign. We need a full Zoom room to show EPA leadership the support they have for bold action on climate. Show your support by just showing up.

[Register today](#) to secure your spot for this urgent opportunity to advocate for climate justice.

Kulanu

by Joanne Rosenthal

Beth Israel is proud to be participating in ADL's Kulanu: Synagogues in Action Against Antisemitism!

We are part of a network of hundreds of congregations across the United States and Canada committed to the critical work of combatting antisemitism and hate. With rampant antisemitism and hate on the rise, Kulanu empowers us to address these issues using a whole-of-society approach through self-driven programming, expanded incident reporting, and community mobilization.

ADL's Kulanu Program is national in scope, but local in our focus, guiding us to forge formative relationships in our community through collaboration and bridge building between our synagogue and our neighbors.

Kulanu Working Group Meeting: October 31 @ 5:00 pm on zoom. Contact Kulanu@bethisraelbath.org to join this group.

There will be an ADL Kulanu kick off program webinar: November 2 at 7pm on zoom. This will help us understand program expectations and connect with the regional cohort around collective goals. Register at adl.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_-ffUkjPwSmqgO19YjnQF2g

Join Kulanu congregations from across North America on Thursday, November 16 at 7:00 pm for a virtual learning session and text study marking Kristallnacht, featuring Rabbi David Wolpe, ADL's Rabbinic Fellow. This session will reflect on the events of Kristallnacht through the lens of Jewish thought leaders and foundational texts, offering hope in the face of rising antisemitism and hate today register at app.box.com/s/e2sggyow0fpdnf3b0cucd05axa8auan



Security Update

by Peggy Brown

The events of recent weeks have been on all our minds and put us on edge. Members of the congregation have been asking about Beth Israel's security measures. While we have been building our security and safety protocols and routines over the past five years, we are always looking for ways to improve. Recently we surveyed other synagogues in southern and central Maine to compare notes. Our security measures are completely in line with what other congregations are doing. We follow the recommendations of the Secure Community Network, CISA, FEMA and the Department of Homeland Security.

On October 17, the Beth Israel Security Committee met with 2 FBI Special Agents who had reached out to us as part of their effort to establish relationships with members of the Jewish community throughout Maine during this time of increased tension. The two agents reviewed our security protocols, took our questions, and filled us in on what the FBI knows about hate groups in the state of Maine.

- We were assured that there are no current threats to the local community. While antisemitic threats, language, and misinformation is rising, there have been no incidents in Maine at the time of our meeting.
- They encouraged us to report to the FBI even seemingly small things if they cause us some concern or unease; relating to us how those small "pieces" often help in developing a bigger picture.
- They fielded questions from us regarding the role of local PD and the kind of information they have. While our local police department has been supportive, the FBI keeps an eye on the bigger picture of what is happening state and region wide.

In general, they were impressed with our security protocols and felt that we were taking the necessary precautions to keep our members safe.

What are these precautions?

- Off duty Bath Police Department officers hired as Security Detail for high profile gatherings
- Greeters for events and Hebrew School screen admission to the building and serve as watchful eyes and ears. They also make a connection with all who enter using "the Power of Hello". Simply saying hello can prompt a casual conversation with a new person, providing an opportunity to establish a connection.
- Registration required for large events
- Doors locked once services (or Hebrew School) begin. Only known persons granted entry.
- Exterior video cameras are operating at all times. Interior monitors allow us to see who is approaching the building.
- At services and other gatherings, we are incorporating activities which allow us to strengthen our personal bonds and get to know one another.

There is more we can and will do. We need to improve our synagogue building so that it has more exits and better accessibility. We need to practice emergency routines and protocols so that they become ingrained and automatic. We always need more volunteers to help out as Greeters. [Here's a link](#) to sign up for more information.

Hebrew School

by Marilyn Weinberg

Our wonderful Beth Israel Hebrew school started off this year in a new space; our synagogue building. With the support of our dedicated parent volunteers and our teachers led by Rabbi Vinikoor, our students adapted beautifully. Using every available space (including outside), Jewish and Hebrew learning has been flourishing. In addition, we have our largest B Mitzvah class taught by Shoshi Gordon, talented Hebrew school teacher, a favorite Beth Israel B mitzvah tutor and terrific senior at Bowdoin College majoring in English and Education. Thanks to all who have made this transition successful.



High Holidays

by Marilyn Weinberg

It was so lovely to gather in person for our special Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services this year to welcome in year 5784. Although a hurricane tried to get in our way, and day one of Rosh Hashanah was virtual. On day two Rabbi Vinikoor led us in services that were filled with prayer, music and the inclusion of so many community members. With family services and an outside tashlicht service with Shofar blowing, and of course our amazing potluck luncheon and break fast, our high holidays this year were uplifting and memorable.



Progressive Sukkot Celebration

by Marilyn Weinberg

The weather was clear and the skies were blue as we visited three different Sukkahs in Bath for our community Sukkot celebration. We started at the Finn-Vinikoor home to begin our Sukkah blessings with the lulav and etrog and enjoy some delicious appetizers. We enjoyed soup and salads as we progressed to the Horowitz-Gersh sukka. And for the first time we had a Sukkah erected at the synagogue where we again repeated the blessings and enjoyed some sweet treats and good conversations. Sukkot is such a lovely holiday.



Simchat Torah Celebration

by Marilyn Weinberg

Simchat Torah is a celebration of the Torah, and it has become customary in many congregations to unroll the Torah and read from different sections. In the past we never attempted it in fear we would not get enough people to make it safe. But this year our community turned out and with the help of Joe Blumberg (our rabbinic intern) we had an amazing celebration. After reading several portions, the remaining Torahs were removed and singing and dancing prevailed. We ended with aliyot for all involved. It was memorable.



Dine Around

by Elaine Koufman

Thank you, Peggy Brown, for keeping this fun gathering going for several years. As the new chairperson for the Beth Israel "Dine Around" social group, I invited suggestions from members at dinner last week. So far brunch, lunch and a possible change from Tuesday nights were suggested.

I am working on a November brunch and December lunch. Details to follow soon. I would love to hear from you with your thoughts and ideas on how you might see this fun activity continue.

Contact me, Elaine Koufman, at dinnerclub@bethisraelbath.org to share your ideas.



New Members

- Michael Feldman
- Julie Meyer

Donations

Memorial Gifts

- Joe and Merna Guttentag in loving memory of his father, Samuel Guttentag and his brother, David Guttentag
- Merna and Joe Guttentag in loving memory of her father, Daniel Cohn
- Nathan Cogan in loving memory of Professor David Zibblatt
- Betty and Marty Welt in loving memory of her parents, Ilse Fuchs and Henry Fuchs
- Deborah Silverman in loving memory of her mother, Winifred Gay Silverman
- David Michelson and Yeonmi Ahn in loving memory of his brother, Gregory Michelson
- Paul Linet in loving memory of his father, Sanford Linet and his wife, Susan Linet
- Joelle LaPorte in loving memory of Dolores Kleinberg
- Theodore Stainman in loving memory of his parents, Henry and Hattie Stainman
- Robert Vinikoor in loving memory of his wife, Shelia Vinikoor
- Howard Waxman in loving memory of his father, Ralph Waxman
- Stephen and Marina Singer in loving memory of his father, Isadore Singer
- Richard Smith in loving memory of his mother, Sara Smith
- Shelia Cohen in loving memory of her father, Henry Cohen

In loving memory of George Isaacson

- Fred and Marilyn Weinberg
- Jay and Lenore Friedland
- Joanne Rosenthal and Josh Katz
- Anonymous

For the Benefit of the Synagogue

- Judy and Steve O'Keefe
- Howard and Stephanie Pruzansky
- Greg and Carolyn Friedel
- Jay and Lenore Friedland
- Larry Loeb and Linda Silberstein
- Richard and Debbie Finn
- Simone Martell
- Erich and Pauline Haller
- Lesley Dolinger
- Dana Isenberg
- The Carr Family
- Stacy Winick and Steven Guttentag
- Paul Linet
- Louise Roman
- Bob Kofman
- Reinhold and Marchessault Family
- Jeff Fischer
- Irwin and Lori Brodsky
- Henry Goldberg and Kim Hetherington
- Herb and Harriet Paris
- Tinker Hannaford
- Rachel Sinnett
- Elaine Povich
- Kristin and Louis Propp for Simchat Torah
- Judith Pachter and P. Jay Fleisher
- Annie Valliere in honor of Leah Valliere and Simchat Torah
- Steve and Marina Singer in gratitude for Marilyn and Fred Weinberg's service to Beth Israel
- Dr. Louis and Janet Gross
- Rachel and Michael Connelly

High Holiday Flowers and Music

- Janet Marstine and Mark Polishook
- William and Anna Lempert in loving memory of Sallie Kay
- Virginia Fish
- Shira Gersh
- Marty Fox and Thyle Shartar
- Steve and Barbara Inkellis
- Barbara and Barrett Silver
- Matthew and Karen Filler a misheberach for Annabelle Filler
- Shelia Cohen
- Guttentag Winick Family
- Susan Feibelman and George Turner in honor of Linda and Jerry Shapiro
- Jon and Lorna Lichter
- Harry Reissman in loving memory of Kathy Reissman
- Bud and Mary Samiljan in honor of their children, Jake, Annie and Jaime
- Marcia and Lenny Klompus in loving memory of Jeffrey Robert Cherner

- Phyllis, Joe and Michelle Lisi in loving memory of Rose Millstein
- Louis and Kristin Propp in loving memory of Madeline and Ephraim Propp
- Jill Standish
- Mara & Donny Guilianti
- Carole and Marty Eckstein in loving memory of Paula Golden
- Debby and Richard Finn
- Abigail Lopez

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

- Marge Curley

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.

November Birthdays

2 Gordon Blatt
 7 Elaine Koufman
 11 Judy Wolfe
 11 Cathey Hayes
 15 Alva Gandler
 16 Larry Loeb
 18 Rebecca Dunham
 19 Joe Lisi
 21 Joan Fields
 25 Laura McCandlish
 27 Rabbi Lisa Vinikoor
 28 Erich Haller

November Anniversaries

2 Cristina & Stacey Guilianti
 30 Anita Lichman & Steven Paul

December Birthdays

2 Bob Lobis
 2 Jennifer Kaplan
 4 Ellen Bard
 4 Rachel Jordan
 6 Todd Gandler
 13 Karen Filler
 16 Peter Van Allen
 19 Marty Welt
 19 Richard Finn
 20 John Dunn
 23 Sylvie Helman
 23 Judah Helman
 27 Wes Flores-Lichtinger
 30 Ben Hansen
 31 Cristina Guilianti

December Anniversaries

15 Joan & Jeremy Fields
 20 Elliot & Helene Lerner

Remembrances for November–December 2023

WE REMEMBER	HEBREW DATE	2023 CALENDAR DATE
Nettie Friedland	19 Heshvan	November 3
Muriel Cohen	21 Heshvan	November 5
Joan Greenspan	23 Heshvan	November 7
Rea Turet	24 Heshvan	November 8
Irwin Metviner	25 Heshvan	November 9
Esther Itzkowitz	25 Heshvan	November 9
Isidore Panish	25 Heshvan	November 9
Faye Brodsky	4 Kislev	November 17
Esther Friedman	4 Kislev	November 17
Stephen Baseman	8 Kislev	November 21
Ben Brodsky	9 Kislev	November 22
Sara H Guttentag	9 Kislev	November 22
George Schoenberg	10 Kislev	November 23
Sylvia Greenberg	11 Kislev	November 24
Samuel B. Becker	11 Kislev	November 24
Stephen Sinclair	15 Kislev	November 28
Samuel Soifer	16 Kislev	November 29
Anne Marks	18 Kislev	December 1
Morris Greenberg	24 Kislev	December 7
Theresa Lobis	1 Tevet	December 13
Maxine Gersh	2 Tevet	December 14
Sheila Benveniste	4 Tevet	December 16
Benjamin Kaplan	5 Tevet	December 17
Morris Torow	6 Tevet	December 18
Solomon Wernick	13 Tevet	December 25
Ethel Cohn Schatz	13 Tevet	December 25
Fanny Panish Mutterperl	13 Tevet	December 25
Morris Petlock	13 Tevet	December 25
Jacob Rosen	16 Tevet	December 28
Ruth Shapiro	17 Tevet	December 29
Goldie Waxman	18 Tevet	December 30

