



CONGREGATION ETZ CHAIM

BIDDEFORD, MAINE

Congregation Etz Chaim

York County Jewish Community News

www.etzchaimme.org

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Rosh Hashanah Services

Wednesday, Oct. 2: Evening Service, 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, Oct. 3: Service, 8:45 a.m.-12 p.m.

Friday, Oct. 4: Service, 8:45 a.m.-12 p.m.

Tashlich at Saco River to follow, approximately 12:30 p.m.

Yom Kippur Services

Friday, Oct. 11: Kol Nidre Service, 6 p.m.-7:30 p.m.

Saturday, Oct. 12: Service, 8:45 a.m.-12:30 p.m. (Yizkor Service begins at 10:45 a.m.)

Services Resume, 4:15 p.m.

Break Fast at conclusion, approximately 6:15 p.m.

Cantor's Corner: Do a Mitzvah in November

Cantor Beth Strassler

We begin the New Year with the best of intentions. After looking at ourselves in a critical light with regards to our pursuit of living a good and moral life, followed by repenting for our less than virtuous life, we hope to be granted atonement and begin again.

What better way to begin the New Year than by doing a mitzvah? A good deed, yes, but not for the purpose of boasting. And not without the commitment to follow the Jewish definition of what a mitzvah IS. Jewish values determine which deeds are worthy of being called "mitzvot" (plural).

The word mitzvah actually means "commandment." We were given 613 commandments by G-d at Mt. Sinai to guide our behaviors throughout our life. We look at a b-mitzvah as the time when each child takes on the responsibilities of following these commandments and reporting directly to G-d, no longer depending on the mediation of parents.

Jewish tradition says that we each have free will. That is, free will to follow the commandments set forth at Sinai. We may choose to live our life according to G-d's ways, or not.

This November, I urge you to cast your ballot. Doing so means taking action to work with G-d to create a better world. It means making choices that help create the world we want to live in. In a democratic society, that means choosing to vote.

The mantra repeated in this country is that this November's presidential election will be close. However, we each count. Every one of us — IF we exercise our right to vote.

A 19th-century rabbinical story tells of a man who did not have enough money to pay his taxes. Therefore, he would not be allowed to vote in the upcoming election. His rabbi told him, "Sell your tallis and tefillin to pay the taxes. You may borrow these from another, but the right to vote cannot be borrowed from someone else."

The story of choosing the artist to design the Mishkan in the desert tells us that G-d chose Bezalel but immediately sought the people's opinion to confirm this leadership choice. It is taught in the Talmud that "A leader is not to be appointed unless the community is first consulted."

Voting confirms the Torah's belief that we humans have a partnership with G-d in the "heavenly" work of government. Yes, G-d created the world, but we are here to help make it better, to do "tikkun olam" (repair the world). Rabbi Tarfon said in Pirkei Avot (135 CE), "It is not up to you to finish the work, but you are not free to abandon it." Engage. Participate. Vote.

Make a voting plan. Put it in your schedule. Tell it to a friend to make yourself accountable. Make sure you know where to go, when the polls are open, and how you will get there.

Even better, sanctify your vote with a blessing. Recite it when you walk into the voting booth: **"Baruch attah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, grant us the courage to commit to being full members of society by casting our vote."**

Here is one more blessing to help each of us through these difficult and divisive times: **"Baruch attah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, please place in our hearts the wisdom to understand those who do not share our views."**

May the coming year bring peace, joy, and good health to you and your loved ones,
I hope to see you often,
Cantor Strassler

"We may not be commanded exactly to [vote] but we are fools, hypocrites and worse if we fail to vote. Judaism puts values front and center, and in a democracy, voting is the core expression of values."

- Rabbi Fred Scherlinder Dobb of the Reconstructionist Movement

A Tapestry Completed: My Mom's Bat Mitzvah at Age Eighty

Leah Macomber

When the bar/bat mitzvah finishes the Haftorah blessings, we rejoice celebrating another thread being added to the fabric of the Jewish tradition. Or, as Cantor Strassler says, "Your voice has been added to the chorus of voices who have gone before you."

We can't help but rejoice. This person has grown into an "adult" right before our eyes, has worked hard to learn Torah, and has made a commitment to Judaism. Although the kid has the starring role, I confess that I like to watch the parents. Their smiles beaming, so excited the day has finally arrived; their chins quivering, bewildered by how quickly the time flew by (*Sunrise, Sunset*); their bodies oozing with pride as they witness their baby, who once just babbled and drooled, chant the ancient words of Torah with perfect poise and elegance. (That's how it is remembered.) It's always a beautiful accomplishment — shared.

I've had the honor of being the parent three times at Congregation Etz Chaim, and I thought I would never have those awesome b'nei mitzvah feelings again. But I did — last month when, with the cast of characters flipped, my mom, at age 80, stood at the bimah for her (first) bat mitzvah, and I sat in a pew smiling, quivering, and beaming with pride.

I grew up in a Jewish household with my five siblings in Arizona and remember when my mom converted to Judaism and all of us were blessed in the mikvah. She wanted it to be official before my youngest brother was born in 1974; at the time, my siblings and I didn't understand the hoopla, but, in reflection, her decision to convert dramatically helped to shape our religious values. Her hands ushered in Shabbat; her challah was gorgeous and delicious (still the best I've ever had); she prepared and participated in the seders; she helped us with our Hebrew homework; she planned our trips to Israel where she insisted that we plant trees in the spirit of tikkun olam.

All six of us were bar/bat mitzvahed, and my mom planned the details — from the invitations to the band, caterers, and photographers. When we became adults and we didn't live together, she sent us hamantaschen and Hanukkah cookies, called on Rosh Hashanah (as she was preparing a feast herself), blessed our children, sent us postcards from her travels around the world where she always visited synagogues and Jewish museums, attended all of her grandkids bar/bat mitzvahs (11 to date), and she helped us lead good (Jewish) lives.

The way she tells it, she had fleetingly considered having a bat mitzvah when she was 60, having found an antique yad in Italy, thinking, "Maybe I'll use it if I ever have a bat mitzvah"; and again when she was 75, traveling to Israel and buying a beautiful new tallis in Safed, thinking "Maybe I'll wear it if I ever have a bat mitzvah"; and then, after a year of tutoring sessions by one of her grandchildren, and after taking Hebrew classes at Arizona State University online during COVID, she thought, "I think I can keep going and actually have a bat mitzvah." She asked her husband, her rabbi, her kids, a couple of friends, "Do you think I can do it?" Everyone said yes, enthusiastically, because if you know my mom, you know a woman who can do anything she puts her mind to. Plus, she is very smart and has an excellent singing voice.

She was optimistic that she really could succeed in this accomplishment, and even when her rabbi had a scheduling conflict, she persevered. She called on our childhood rabbi (her friend from decades before). He had retired from his rabbinical practice 25 years prior (he said the hours were so long he feared an early death), had become a flight attendant for Southwest Airlines (which he loved), and had recently retired from that career. When my mom asked him for help to get ready for a bat mitzvah that coincided with her 80th birthday (then a year away), he jumped out of retirement and onto "Team Karen."

When we all got the "save the date" announcement, flights, hotels, and rental cars were booked with joyous speed. This was happening, and everyone was excited! And yes, we all asked "Why? Why now?"

Fast forward to the event itself, on June 29, at Temple Emanuel in Tempe, Arizona. (By the way, this was the same temple that my parents helped start back in the 70s — there is a plaque in the lobby with their names on it.) Most of my siblings, nieces and nephews, and grandnieces and grandnephews were there — and lots of people from my mom's Jewish and non-Jewish communities. I was expecting a great service, of course, but I was not expecting the rush of feelings that came with it. When I saw my mom greeting the guests, I was instantly proud of her. This was important to her, and she didn't need to justify it.

"Shabbat Shalom!" we greeted each other, and I gave her a quick hug and kiss. She looked amazing — poised and confident, ready for the show (not like a nervous bar/bat mitzvah student, not like the nervous/excited parents — more like the rock star that she is.) I took my seat with my husband and kids, a sister and her family at one side, a sister and her family behind me, other siblings and family and cousins and others across the rows. The pews were filled with that familiar buzzing bat mitzvah anticipation.

After a peppy Micha Mocha, the synagogue fell silent. This was it! She started with a prayer written by Aden Solovy from his book, *Jewish Prayers of Hope and Healing*. It was as if she started here to answer the questions she had heard probably a hundred times in the last year, "Why are you doing this? A bat mitzvah when you're 80?" And she answered with questions

This Moment

How did I arrive at this place?
This joy and wonder
This hour. This moment. This life.
Choices. Events. G-d.
My decisions. The decisions of others.
The hand of our Creator...

Hearing her voice, my heart melted into a puddle of pride. I did not look for other people to watch; my eyes were glued on my mom. I didn't think about how I had been a parent of a bat mitzvah student because this was different; but, for an instant, I remembered being at the bimah myself when I was 12 years old, my voice cracking, my soul praying I wouldn't forget a note. I listened to my mom and my childhood rabbi sing together, and I marveled at *this moment* — her perseverance, her elegance, her commitment, and spirit. We smiled and cried while she chanted the Torah — every note was perfect.

P.S. She used the yad from Italy. She wore the tallis from Safed. She coordinated a wonderful luncheon and a swanky evening party. We danced the *Hava Nagila* and hoisted her high in a chair. We rejoiced — feeling threads of tradition weave tightly together.



Three generations of Bat Mitzvah: Leah, Karen, and Lucy



Leah's Mother Karen and son Eddie



The Bat Mitzvah "girl" with grandchildren Austin, Lucy, and Eddie

Pious Ali: A Special Speaker at our 2024 Annual Meeting

David Strassler

At Congregation Etz Chaim's Annual Meeting this summer, community activist and public servant Pious Ali spoke to us about: "Finding Compassion and Empathy in a Diverse and Divided World."

Pious was introduced to us by our long time, active member Sue Rubin, who was first introduced to Pious by her daughter Sarah about 20 years ago. Sarah and Pious worked together at the Seeds of Peace Camp in Otisfield, Maine.

Pious shared with us his journey from being born and raised — and then employed as a photojournalist — in Ghana, West Africa, to arriving in Maine in 2002. Prior to coming to Maine, he first moved to New York City in 2000. But due to 9/11 and the tension this created in the Muslim community, he decided to look for a different place to live in America. This was NYC's loss and Maine's gain. He has since been active in Portland politics and working with teenagers.

Being a facilitator at the Seeds of Peace Camp, he learned about the stressful issues that not only affected Israeli and Palestinian teenagers but also those who lived in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and many other countries. "I learned how to open my heart and my mind to engage with people who don't look like you or [who do] not agree with you, based on differences of faith, race, or economic class," he said. This outlook has shaped his future view of the world and the values and skills that have been the basis of his involvement in politics.

"I like to bring people together — to get people to talk and learn from each other," he shared. This has subsequently led him to be a board member at not only the Seeds of Peace but also at the Holocaust and Human Rights Center in Maine. And in 2010, he founded the Empowered in the City of Portland Refugee Service. His primary focus there is to create opportunities for unengaged community members to voice their opinions and empower young individuals to advocate for themselves. Pious finds that the best way for him to get across his message is to "share his journey" with many schools and organizations across the state of Maine.

In addition to the presentation and discussion at the Annual Meeting, he spent time with several of us, sharing ideas with individuals or small groups.

"We all live in this world together, and it does not matter what we look like. It does not matter how we worship. It does not matter what language we speak. It does not matter what food we eat. It does not matter who we choose to live with. We have to work with each other and create a place, a world, where each of us will feel safe living next to each other," he stated.

As I am writing this article about a month after Pious' talk, it sounds very similar to the Democratic platform that I am hearing as I watch the Democratic National Convention. People are people, and everyone deserves respect.

Pious ended his presentation by answering questions from our membership. A theme I heard several times was how easy it is to get teens to engage with each other through art, theater, and sports. They learn to connect and become friends easier than adults do through these activities.

It became clear to me that his strength as a facilitator is his ability to create a safe space and teach how to engage in respectful dialogue, despite individual differences.

Watch Pious Ali's presentation at Congregation Etz Chaim here: https://youtu.be/w3sKWfDE8_0?si=FCrqa0UiaDOWaXpa



Pious Ali delivers "Finding Compassion and Empathy in a Diverse and Divided World" at Congregation Etz Chaim Annual Meeting on July 21, 2024.

Congregation Etz Chaim Receives Space in Mount Sinai Cemetery's Interfaith Section

David Strassler

Some good news for our Jewish community! After many years of working toward this goal, Congregation Etz Chaim now has real estate in the Mount Sinai Cemetery in Portland in its newly opened interfaith section. This is a place where someone who is non-Jewish may be buried next to their Jewish spouse/partner/family member. We now have three couples in our congregation who have recently bought plots there: David and Beth Strassler, Jeff and Adrienne Levy, and Jack Schraeter and Chris Simons.



History of the Cemetery

The land for Mount Sinai Cemetery, consisting of one and a half acres off Warren Avenue in Portland, was first purchased in 1894 by the Portland Hebrew Benevolent Association. The Mount Sinai Cemetery Association was incorporated on November 26, 1920. Since 2016, the cemetery has been owned and operated by Southern Maine Jewish Cemetery Association

(SMJCA). Rabbi Gary Berenson presently serves as president. The cemetery address is 159 Hicks Street in Portland.

If you are interested in learning more, contact David Strassler: president@etzchaimme.org

Dr. Morton Gold's "Prayer for Peace"

Joyce Hollman

Dr. Morton Gold, Congregation Etz Chaim's piano accompanist, has composed more than 126 pieces of music over his decades-long career, including oratorios, concertos, and chamber pieces. But his most recent composition, "Prayer for Peace," holds special meaning for him.

"There's an awful lot of recent eruption of antisemitism. People have sometimes got their priorities mixed up, especially with the war in Gaza, taking it out on the people who have nothing to do with it, namely us," he says. "I wanted to bring out the expression of the hope for peace for us and for all mankind."

"Prayer for Peace" features a melody that tugs at the heart. It was premiered on August 2 when Cantor Beth Strassler performed it at Congregation Etz Chaim's Friday night Shabbat service.

When I spoke with Dr. Gold, or Mort, as he is affectionately known by us, he described to me his process for writing a piece like this: "If you start with the harmony, the melody will reveal itself very shortly. Most amateurs start with words and put a tune on top of it. Then they try and fit some harmony to it. It usually doesn't work out that way."

Mort originally started writing the song for three instruments. Then he "realized that it had more of a future with voices." So, he wrote three different versions of the song. One was with English text and another with Hebrew text, both in the key of C major. "Then I realized that's very nice for people with high voices, but there are more people who sing in the alto range," he says. So, he wrote a third version, this time in the key of A flat. It was only after the musical composition was complete that he wrote the words to "Prayer for Peace." "In every good piece of music, the tune makes the words stick out," Mort explains. "There's no such thing as the words making the tune. It's the tune that makes the words."

When I heard the song for the first time, I had no idea it was Mort's composition, let alone his newest one. But I immediately went to Beth after services to tell her how beautiful the music was — and how emotional.

Mort started composing when he was 17 or 18, which he says is "very late in the game." He told me that no matter what job he's held, he's always tried to keep composing. His first teaching job was in Ellsworth, where students had a choice between band, chorus, or study hall. Mort taught 50 band students and over 100 students in chorus. He later spent 10 years as the accompanist for the Sanford High School Chorus. Among Mort's many other teaching positions, he spent 18 years as a professor of music at Nasson College in Springvale. For the past 16 years, he has been an organist at St. George's Episcopal Church in Sanford and still works as a substitute teacher at Sanford High School. A former teacher myself, I was surprised that he still chooses to deal with high school students. "I like to keep busy," he says.

In 2015, Mort accompanied now-cantor Beth Strassler at her graduate recital at Hebrew College in Newton, Massachusetts. It was through this association that Mort came to Etz Chaim and began working with Beth to compose and accompany music for our services. Presently, Mort graces our Shabbat services by accompanying Cantor Strassler and our small choir on the piano. His musical accompaniment adds a rich new dimension to many of the prayers and songs that are part of the service.

We are blessed to have Dr. Morton Gold as part of our community and pray that he will be with us making music for many more years to come.



Shopping for a Steinway Cantor Beth Strassler

When the newly established Sanford Performing Arts Center (SPAC) needed a discerning ear to select which of seven Model D Steinway pianos to bring home to Maine, they called on Dr. Morton Gold, former chair of the music department at Nason College in Springvale.

Dr. Gold flew to the Steinway factory in Astoria, New York, with Brett Williams, the SPAC artistic and managing director. He put each piano through its paces, filling the room with the beautiful sounds of composers such as Brahms and Beethoven. He chose the piano that he deemed head and shoulders above the others, and its new home is either on the stage at SPAC or resting in a custom-made, climate-controlled room backstage.

Nearly every pianist who performs at SPAC remarks that it is one of the best they have ever played! One renowned pianist who has played at every major concert hall in Maine believes it is the finest piano in the state.

Dr. Gold playing the new piano for the first time at Steinway Hall on April 17, 2018.



Echoes From the Archives: Through the Doors of Time

Jennie Aranovitch

As the editor of YCJC News, and as the synagogue's historian, I am pleased to announce the launch of a new recurring column in our congregation's newsletter: Echoes From the Archives. This column will share tidbits of the synagogue's rich history and will often feature historical photographs, newspaper articles, and other documents. My hope is that these glimpses of our congregation's past will inspire pride in our present-day congregation, respect for those who came before us, and a sense of responsibility to be good stewards of the special congregation we inherited as our own.

This inaugural appearance of Echoes From the Archives shares the article below, published on Aug. 11, 1965, in the *Biddeford-Saco Journal*, a predecessor of the now defunct *Journal Tribune*. The article and accompanying photograph describe the work of a Congregation Etz Chaim committee to "spruce up" the exterior of the synagogue and to raise funds for exterior and interior remodeling.

The committee, composed of chairman Irving Sandler; the congregation's then Vice President Charles Cohen; and committee members Harold and Bernard Cowan, future congregation President Arnold Shapiro, and Sam Robinson, donated their time, we learn from the article, to clean, scrape, repair, and paint the synagogue. Of particular interest is the mention of the committee's decision to change the color of the synagogue's doors from red to blue, in honor of the Israeli flag.

In much more recent history, 2022 to be precise, those beautiful front doors, original to the structure built in 1874, were removed and replaced, having sustained water damage and, due to their inward swing, among other things, not rising to the level of modern-day security needs.

According to congregation President David Strassler, who serves on the present-day Building Committee, there was a desire, despite additional costs involved, to replace the doors with new ones of a similar blue hue. "There was a common perception that we had to keep the doors blue because they had always been blue," he said. "Come to find out [from the article] that they had not always been blue."

Congregation Helps In Repair Of Synagogue

Biddeford's Jewish house of worship on Bacon Street has been cleaned, scraped and painted by several members of the congregation who donated their services to fix up the synagogue. The front of the building has received a coat of white paint that glistens in the bright August sun. Doors in the place are painted blue.

Charles Cohen, one of the committee that has worked for three weeks on the project, said the doors were changed from red to blue honoring the Israeli flag. A small house next to the synagogue is used for the holiday of Succoths. The Jewish people commemorate the event each year at the time when the Jews left Egypt and lived in huts on their march. The ceiling of the building is slatted with boards upon which branches are placed to symbolize living under thatched roofs.

Much work has been done by the group led by Cohen in cleaning, painting and fixing a leak in the front of the building.

Members of the committee include Chairman Irving Sandler, Harold Cowan, Bernard Cowan, Arnold Shapiro, Samuel Robinson and Cohen.

A Fund Raising Drive starts with kick-off at the Lafayette Hotel, Old Orchard Beach, on Aug. 22 at 6 p.m. for the Congregation Etz Chaim synagogue, according to the Vice President of the group.

The dinner is to provide funds for the extensive remodeling both inside and outside of the synagogue on Bacon Street, Biddeford. The dinner is for the entire congregation and is sponsored by Charles Cohen.

For me, as someone deeply interested in the history of the synagogue and as a lover of historic architecture, the color of the doors was not my main concern when learning that the committee had decided that the originals needed replacing. I was heartbroken that the doors themselves were being removed.

Those beautiful, massive wooden doors had stood at the threshold of five generations of my family's comings and goings to and from the synagogue for over 116 years. To me, they were a symbol of the fortitude of the congregation, the portal of the synagogue itself that has served the community far longer than any one president or spiritual leader.



PLAN FUND DRIVE — Charles Cohen, left, and Max Ruben shown in front of newly renovated synagogue on Bacon Street, Biddeford, as they talk over plans for the Kick Off Fund Raising Drive to aid in paying for work completed. The Etz Chaim syna- gogue has been redecorated by members who worked on the project in their spare time. Cohen is vice president and Ruben is president of the Congregation Etz Chaim Synagogue. White with blue doors were used for color.

Every time I entered the synagogue, I felt the weight of the doors – not just the physical heaviness, though that alone, as I passed through them, filled me with a sense of security (ironic as it may be, given one of the reasons cited for replacing them), but the weightiness of my responsibility to do my part to preserve the community and culture into which they usher those who passed through them. If I close my eyes now and concentrate, I can feel the sensation of opening the door, my body instinctively knowing just how much of my weight to push, via my right shoulder, in order to enter what always seemed, in every sense of the word, a fortress.

I am happy to report that the doors are still at Congregation Etz Chaim. While retired from their duty, they were not discarded. They remain safe at the synagogue, prized as a piece of history for all of us who loved them – whether we remember them as red or blue.



Left: Likely one of the last photographs taken that capture the synagogue's original doors intact: Josiah Aranovitch at age 16 at the building's entryway in 2020.

Right: Unhinged but not gone: The doors were saved for their historical (and emotional) value. Eva Aranovitch poses with one of the doors, both of which are currently tucked away until a plan is devised for their proper presentation.



L'Shanah Tova!

The Board of Directors and Cantor Strassler wish you and your loved ones a happy, healthy, and sweet New Year! We hope to see you at High Holiday services, beginning with Erev Rosh Hashanah, Wednesday, Oct. 2, at 6:30 p.m.

See the full High Holiday schedule on our calendar:
etzchaimme.org/calendar/



A Journey Through Moroccan Jewry: A Faraway Familiarity

Shona Workman

As we navigate challenging times, the strength of our unity and heritage becomes ever more essential. I reflected on Jewish identity and culture during my recent trip to Morocco. I visited Casa Blanca, Fez, Chefchaouen, and Rabat — each city offering unique insights into Jewish history, and day-to-day experiences of Jews, in the context of a majority Muslim country.

Every evening as the call to prayer rose up into the night sky, the feeling of religion was omnipresent in a way I had never experienced before. Despite the current conflict in Israel and Palestine, every Moroccan person who engaged me on the subject of Judaism or current events acknowledged the long history and presence of Jews in Morocco.

In Casa Blanca, the modern heart of Morocco, the Beth-El Synagogue stands as a testament to the enduring presence of Judaism. Fez, the cultural epicenter, houses the ancient Mellah (historically Jewish neighborhoods) and the Ibn Danan Synagogue, echoing a rich history of Jewish scholarship.

My visit here was mostly spent attempting to navigate the Medina. One stop on our tour, in particular, stands out. In the blessedly air-conditioned showroom of a tile and pottery shop, I found menorahs, mezuzahs, and plates — all lovingly crafted by local artists in the workshops next door. When I asked about the prevalence of Judaica and Jewish symbols, the salesperson was very excited to tell me about all of the custom orders they get from Jewish clients, as well as the long history of Jewish life in Fez. I felt so included and safe to hear this person I did not know speak so highly of the long history of my people in her country.



Shona in
Chefchaouen

Chefchaouen was my favorite city. Lovingly called the “Blue Pearl,” the unique tradition reflects a Jewish influence through its blue-washed streets, a symbol of divine presence. This is an area that is fairly new to heavy tourism and is still quite conservative and more religious than other parts of Morocco. I highly recommend a visit if you are heading to Morocco!

Finally, Rabat, the political capital, preserves the legacy of Jewish life with its Mellah and the memory of King Mohammed V, who protected Morocco’s Jews during World War II. Sadly, I was not able to visit any synagogues during my trip, but I was pleasantly surprised in each city I spent time in.

Today, Morocco is home to the largest Jewish community in the Arab world, with Casa Blanca being the main center of Jewish life, home to over 1,000 Jewish people. Despite challenges, Moroccan Jews continue to contribute to the country’s rich cultural tapestry. Let us draw inspiration from Morocco’s Jewish legacy of living peacefully and safely with Muslim neighbors. In these difficult times, standing together will ensure our community remains a beacon of hope and strength.



The Medina in Fez



The hues of the "Blue Pearl" evoke a divine presence

About Congregation Etz Chaim

Congregation Etz Chaim, founded in 1906, is a full-service synagogue located in Biddeford that serves the York County community. A non-denominational congregation, it promotes Jewish cultural, social, educational, and religious activities in an exceptionally welcoming and inclusive environment, making available a range of activities that facilitate the expression of what each individual finds valuable in the Jewish experience. We embrace people along the entire spectrum of Jewish practice and theology and welcome all who are interested in our congregation, regardless of race, ethnicity, sex, gender expression, sexual orientation, or formal religious affiliation.

For more information, visit www.etzchaimme.org

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About YCJC News

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**York County Jewish
Community News:
Fall 2024 Newsletter**

Save Our Trees: Go Green!

You can help to save our natural resources and to reduce our costs by receiving your newsletter — and all CEC community announcements — electronically. Just email us at mail@etzchaimme.org or write to us at PO Box 1473 Biddeford, Maine 04005 and ask to “Go Green.”