

Congregation B'nai Shalom

בני שלום



We are a diverse, inclusive, and welcoming community, providing a hub of Jewish life for people from over 25 different towns. Community Connections lie at the heart of Congregation B'nai Shalom. We seek ways of enabling people to connect with each other at every Shabbat and Festival gathering, every aspect of our education and youth programming, the social justice opportunities we provide to make a difference in our wider community, and the cultural events we offer throughout the year. Activities are organized by staff, a variety of volunteer committee and project groups, as well as a vibrant Sisterhood and Brotherhood who run many social and educational activities.

Prayer and Ritual



For centuries, prayer and ritual have brought us together as Jewish communities, marking significant transitions in seasons, life stages, and creating balance between work and rest. As a Reform Jewish community, we anchor ourselves in tradition while re-making and re-creating worship and ritual that will continue to help us find meaning in these rhythms of life. We celebrate those rhythms in the myriad ways we celebrate Shabbat, the festivals, and life cycle moments that bring us together in joy and in sorrow. The first Friday of every month is Shabbat Rishon, a family-oriented service, and Friday night Shabbat services can range from the traditional to the experimental, featuring our choir, our T'filah and Klezmer bands, chanting and meditation, guest speakers, and many more Shabbat experiences. Our monthly Tot Shabbat provides an introduction to Jewish song, story, and prayer for our youngest participants. We invite you to visit us at any time for a Shabbat service or Torah study, join us remotely via the live stream on our website, or check out the archive there for examples of previous services.

Learning



We are a community committed to nurturing an active, Jewish environment that engages, cultivates, and inspires learners of all ages. In every classroom we focus on Jewish learning and religious exploration. But with children that come from dozens of different secular schools, building Jewish community is an integral part of our curriculum. A minimum of four years of learning prepares a child to lead and teach the congregation at a Shabbat morning service to mark having reached the age of bar or bat mitzvah (at age 13). Every effort is made to support children with special needs, ensuring the celebration of a bar or bat mitzvah for all of our children.

Most of our students continue to learn in our Chai school for Grades 7-12, and over 50 of our teens every year work as *madrichim* (guides) for our younger students in Religious School. We also provide youth groups from second grade through high school to help our youth connect socially. We are part of the NFTY NE Region, connecting our youth to hundreds of others all over New England, with regional events for our High School students.



Lifelong learning is a core Jewish value. We provide many opportunities for adult learning through parent programs, interfaith family conversations, a weekly Torah study group, spirituality groups, Introduction to Judaism, special events, and short courses throughout the year.

Membership



We deeply appreciate each and every one of our members. Without that support, a strong and vibrant Jewish community cannot exist. Membership, first and foremost, is a way of saying 'I belong – count me in!' It is a way of being present for each other in our times of joy and in times of need, ensuring the learning and wisdom of our faith is passed on to future generations, finding fellow seekers with whom to explore our humanity and our purpose, and participating in the ongoing work of creating a faith-based community that makes a difference in the world through acts of *tikkun olam* (repairing the world). We are dedicated to

ensuring that all who seek to join us can do so, in alignment with their financial means, to support the community.

About Congregation B'nai Shalom

Established in 1977, Congregation B'nai Shalom is a Reform Jewish synagogue with members from more than two dozen surrounding communities. We are committed to the egalitarian and inclusive nature of Reform Judaism. Our members comprise Jewish singles and couples; single-parent and two-parent families; interfaith couples and families; Jews by choice; Jews of color; and LGBT singles and partners.

We currently have about 450 member families, with about 350 children in our thriving Religious School. Our spiritual leader is Rabbi Rachel Gurevitz and our education programs are led by our Rabbi-Educator Joe Eiduson. We have a strong lay/professional partnership, with many of our members taking on positions of leadership, and helping to create and support our rich calendar of programs.

Participation and involvement are the hallmarks of our community. We are a caring community that reaches out to our members in time of joy and grief. We provide pastoral counseling and representation in civic and interfaith affairs, and identify with Jews in Israel and around the world.

We look forward to meeting you and welcoming you to Congregation B'nai Shalom – our vibrant center of Jewish community life in Central Massachusetts.