



Our Mission

The Riverdale Jewish Center (RJC) is a modern Orthodox community synagogue in the Riverdale section of the Bronx, New York. Since its founding in 1954, the RJC has served as the center of a diverse Jewish community—uniting, supporting, and inspiring the entire community in furtherance, and under the guidance, of eternal Torah law and values. The RJC’s numerous religious, social, and educational programs nourish individuals of all backgrounds and ages to grow in Torah learning, connect with God, and celebrate the beauty of Jewish life. Our members are devoted to working tirelessly for the spiritual growth and physical welfare of the Riverdale community, the Jewish people, the State of Israel, the United States of America, and humankind.

RJC Mission Statement Committee 5778:

Caroline Berman
Rabbi Dr. Moshe Drelich
Richard Goldstein
Elizabeth Holland Rothstein
Joshua Schlenger (Chair)



Our Values and Vision

I. Our Commitment to Torah Observance

We are committed to serving Hashem by leading our lives according to Torah and *halakha* (Jewish law), as transmitted by our Sages throughout the generations. The Torah's values are our values. We embrace the challenge of living Torah-observant lives while being actively engaged with the modern world.

II. Our Role as a Center

Our founding rabbis and lay leaders all saw RJC as the community shul of Riverdale. All Jews are welcome and have a place at RJC. As a fulfillment of, and without compromising, our fidelity to *halakha*, we embrace congregants of varying levels of observance and experience.

III. Our Respect and Concern for Each Other

The Torah teaches us that all people are created in *tzelem Elokim* (the image of God). We believe in the inherent dignity of, and respect due to, all people. This commitment finds special expression in how we, as members, are concerned for and take care of one another throughout the course of our life cycles. RJC is an inclusive, multi-generational family, in which we celebrate each other's joyous occasions and support one another during times of hardship and travail. Each member is crucial to the continued existence of the shul—a brick in its storied edifice.

IV. Tefila: Service of the Heart

We strive for our communal *tefila* (prayer) to be true *avoda she-balev*—personal, heartfelt supplication and communication with God. In order to achieve proper *kavanna* (focus) in prayer, RJC emphasizes reverence for the ritual service and the holiness of the synagogue space.

V. Torah Study / Jewish Education

From its earliest days, RJC has positioned itself as a center for in-depth Torah and Jewish education. Our rabbinic leadership and educators are responsible for teaching Torah to all segments of the community, across various ages and levels, and encouraging all Jews to grow closer to God and their Jewish heritage.

VI. Our Commitment to Youth

We are committed to fostering a safe, enriching, and fun environment for our children, where older members model ethical and *halakhic* behavior for younger members. This commitment is exemplified in RJC's programming for toddlers through teens, designed to encourage a love of Torah, *mitzvot*, *middot* (good character), and *chesed* (acts of lovingkindness).

VII. Love of *Am Yisrael* and *Medinat Yisrael* (the People and State of Israel)

RJC plays an active role in supporting the local, national, and worldwide Jewish community through charitable, educational, and other programs. We view the creation and continued existence of the State of Israel as a manifestation of Hashem's redemptive hand in history. Our Religious Zionism finds expression in prayer, study, communal commemoration of Israel's national holidays, and social and political action on behalf of the State of Israel, its people, and its institutions.

VIII. Our Leadership

We look to strong and dynamic rabbinic leadership to inspire both spiritual and personal growth, and to cultivate a sincere commitment to Torah observance. RJC also enjoys a robust tradition of lay leadership and participation. We expect all of our leaders to bring honor to the Torah and our community, embody the values of this Mission Statement, and serve and act in the best interests of the entire congregation.