



Bethesda Jewish

December 2023 Kislev/Tevet 5784 Rabbi Eric L. Abbott Rabbi Emeritus Sunny Schnitzer



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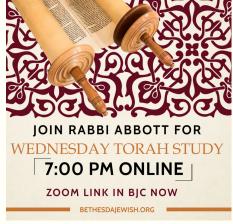
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Rabbi Abbott's
Online Scheduler
is now open!
Want to meet one-on-one?
Click here and pick a time
that works for you.

### **BJC REGULAR PROGRAMMING**







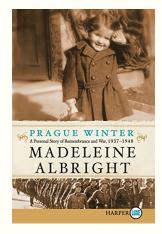




### **BJC Book Club Notice**

The BJC Open Book Club meets virtually at 8 PM on the fourth Wednesday of the month. Our upcoming selection is:

December 27- Prague Winter: A Personal Story of Remembrance and War by Madeleine Albright is an exploration of the Cold War memories of ordinary civilians and the moral decisions they made, constructed with multiple settings ranging anywhere from the bomb shelters of London to ancient Bohemian castles to Terezin's penitentiaries.



If you are not already on the book club's email list and would like to join us for any or all of our meetings, please let Evelyn Ganzglass at eganzglass@gmail.com know and she will add you to the list.

### **BIC Administration**

### Spiritual Leader

Rabbi Eric L. Abbott rabbiabbott@bethesdajewish.org

### **Synagogue Director**

Geryl Baer

geryl@bethesdajewish.org

### **Program & Communications Director**

Amy Kertesz

amy@bethesdajewish.org

### **Religious School Coordinator**

Rebecca Leavey

becky@bethesdajewish.org

### Rabbi Emeritus

Rabbi Sunny Schnitzer rabbisunny@bethesdajewish.org

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## THE RABBI'S MESSAGE

Rabbi Eric. L Abbott

### Lighting the Menorah: Proud to Be Jewish

These past couple of months, my heart has been in the East. I have frequently thought about the Jewish spiritual homeland, the State of Israel. Even when I

might disagree with governmental policies or military decisions, my heart aches for the Jewish people—friends, teachers, family, strangers—living through war. I also feel for the innocent lives caught in the crossfire and hope for a day when Israel—safe, secure, democratic—can live at peace with its neighbors.

And because my mind has wandered toward Israel so often, I am often flooded by memory. For instance, about eleven years ago, on a wintery December night, I wandered through the Haredi (Ultra-Orthodox) neighborhood of Mea Shearim in Jerusalem. Normally, this type of place is not for people like me: I do not dress in a black fur hat, black jacket, or stockings. I do not believe men and women should be separated on the streets or in the synagogue. I do not think modern technology should be kept an arm's length away.

And yet as I wandered the streets on this cold, winter night in the Holy Land, I felt connected to this community, to Jews in Jerusalem and Israel and the whole world. For at every house sat a chanukiyah, a Chanukah menorah, resting in a glass case outside the door. The candles burned fiercely in the darkness as multiple menorot lit up the alleyway from each entranceway. This display was their way of publicizing the mitzvah of the Chanukah candles. The Talmud teaches that we are to place the chanukiyah outside if possible, or in a window if not (Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 21b). When we do, we remind the world of the miracle of the holiday.

Yet the Talmud continues: If it is a time of danger, one may place the menorah on a table in the middle of the house. In other words, if you think that having the menorah on display will draw too much attention, then the Talmud permits you to not publicize the miracle in the same way.

In this moment in time, this text from the Talmud resonates deeply with me. It is a scary time to be a Jew or be in a Jewish family—and a scary time to show off our Judaism. There is a lot of antisemitism in the world, which has only been stirred up and conflated with the war in Israel-Palestine. Antisemitic incidents have increased tremendously since October 7.

With the world and nation as it is right now, I appreciate that the Talmud tells us it is okay to pull back a little bit. It is okay to acknowledge our fear and to protect our families and loved ones. It is okay to not publicize the mitzvah by showing off our menorah.

And yet, the Talmud also makes it very clear: While that step back is fine, it is not ideal. Ideally, we would light the menorah in the window or at the door. It is as if our Sages implore us to declare, "Here I am. I am Jewish. And I am proud." When we do, we connect with our Jewish family all over the world, especially in the East, especially in Israel.

Each of us will need to make the decisions that are right for ourselves and our families. Yet no matter what we decide, let us continue to be proud of being Jewish. Let us continue to stand with the people of Israel, even if it raises complicated feelings and questions (and even as we might support innocent Palestinians, too). Let us support our community through our new Hineini annual campaign and other methods of support. Let us wear those Star of David necklaces, place those "Proud to be Jewish" bumper stickers on our cars—and light those menorahs.

And in so doing, may we bring light into this dark world. Amen.



### FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Issie Resti

When rabbis analyze Torah or other sacred books, they often look at things like *gematria* (the numerical value of words) or the multiple meanings of a single word in order to derive a deeper understanding of the text. One homonym that comes to mind for me this month is *kol*, which can mean both "voice" and "all." December

means we kick off our annual fundraising campaign, *Hineini*. We know we need to raise \$95,000 in order to cover the difference between what we ask members to contribute in yearly dues and what it actually costs to keep the synagogue running. But we have also set a goal of 100% participation from our members. Regardless of how much each person is able to give, we want the entire congregation, *kol ha'kehilah*, to participate. Why is this one of our goals? Is there really any qualitative difference between us meeting our target through every person giving according to their means or just having a few people give much larger amounts? Does communicating that we value each donation, whether it's \$18 or \$10,000, in some way discourage larger contributions, thereby putting in jeopardy our ability to raise the funds we need? If so, is it worth the risk? To answer this, I think we need to look at that other meaning of *kol*, voice.

When I donate money somewhere, I do it not just because I know the funds are needed, but also because it's a way I can speak up and say "This mission is important to me." By making a contribution to BJC, you are helping ensure that we continue to be a place of learning, of faith, of community. A place where we teach our children how and why to fulfill their own obligation to *tikkun olam*, where we join together with other faiths in moments of unity, where we know we can count on each other to share in a laugh at moments of celebration and to provide comfort in hard times. By contributing to *Hineini*, you are using your voice to say that what we do matters to you.

If you are anything like me, part of what drew you to BJC was its inclusive values and commitment to social action. I love that BJC offers so many ways of engaging with like-minded congregants in acts of *tikkun olam*. BJC is an extension of my family and of my home, and I donate to BJC because it is one of the best ways I can communicate the importance of its role in my life. I encourage you to make your voice heard, to proclaim that BJC is a part of who you are and what you value. Even if you can't give as generously as you would hope to, please remember that every contribution makes a difference, not only because it helps us meet our financial goals but because it adds your voice to the chorus saying that what BJC does matters to you, to your fellow congregants, and the larger community.

B'shalom,

Issie issieresti@gmail.com (301) 326-9142

### YOUTH EDUCATION 2023-2024 OPEN FOR REGISTRATION!



# BJC Youth Education Becky Leavey Religious School Coordinator

Happy Winter, and happy Hanukkah!

Our religious school community has been busy! November brought meaningful interfaith programs, family Shabbat fun, insightful teenage discussions, and an exploration of B'tzelem Elohim (honoring the image of God in ourselves and in others) through art and drama, and so much more!

We are looking forward to celebrating Hanukkah together in class and at our family programming this month. Plan to join us on Friday, December 8 for a joyful Hanukkah celebration, musical Shabbat service, and delicious dinner. We are looking forward to celebrating with each of you! (Learn more and RSVP here.)

I send a special note of gratitude to our Judaics and Hebrew teachers. Through a uniquely challenging time, their hard work, creativity, and dedication to our students continues to be an inspiration to all of us!

Wishing you a happy and healthy month, and looking forward to a beautiful new year together.

Becky Leavey Religious School Coordinator





# **SNAPSHOTS**

Getting Together for Worship, Meaning, and Fun

### **WORSHIP SCHEDULE UPDATE**

BJC continues our Friday night worship at 7:30 PM. Saturday morning services begin 10:30 AM. Consult BJC Now for the latest information and for links to services if you prefer to worship virtually.

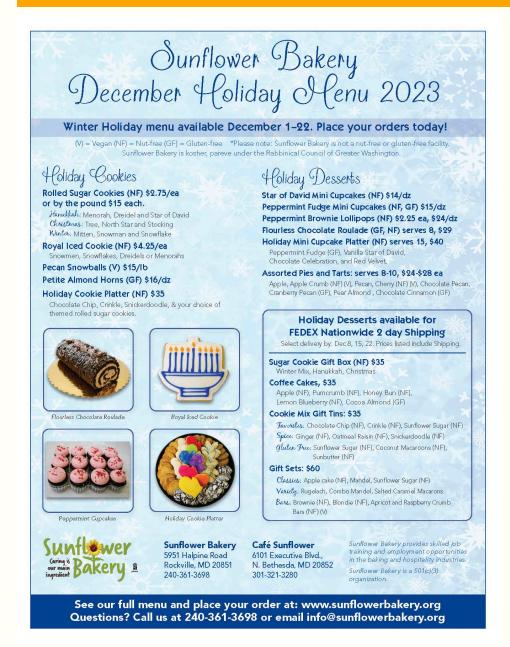


# UPCOMING EVENTS



# **SNAPSHOTS**

# Getting Together for Worship, Meaning, and Fun







BJC runs on volunteer power! Grab your preferred Oneg date while you can. Dates in December and January are available. Thank you for your generosity and time! Click here to sign up for a Friday Night Oneg.

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### MARCH FOR ISRAEL

It was a powerful day at our nation's capital as BJC came together and rallied with over 290K of our brothers and sisters. For peace. For Israel. For all those held hostage to come home. The in-person gathering represented about 4% of the American Jewish population. An additional 250,000 watched via livestream.

The speaker line up was impressive, with several prominent lawmakers including House Speaker Mike Johnson and Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries. The crowd also heard from Chicago natives Jon Polin and Rachel Goldberg, parents of Hersh Goldberg-Polin, who was kidnapped from the Supernova music festival on October 7.

Thank you to everyone who came, whether you met up with us, rallied individually, or watched online. We are stronger together.

Am Yisrael Chai!

# **SOCIAL ACTION**



### Let's Help Our Friends Stay Warm By Harri j. Kramer

As you have seen by now, the Social Action Committee (SAC) has launched a short-term project to collect coats and winter paraphernalia for our friends at the Stepping Stones Shelter in Rockville. BJC supports Stepping Stones throughout the year by providing meals once a month.

We need coats in all sizes for children, and we can also use adult coats as well. Our goal is to collect at least 50 coats. From now through December 19, we're accepting clean coats and jackets to be distributed to the Stepping Stones residents. Please look through your closets and find those coats and jackets you're not wearing anymore or that your kids have outgrown. If you think you may have a coat but it's not as clean and ready to wear as you like, we have an angel on the SAC who will take care of getting the coat in spiffy shape.

Looked through your closet and can't find anything? Think about a dash to Walmart, Target, or Costco to pick up something new. We also welcome hats, gloves, mittens, and scarves.

The coats will be distributed as part of Stepping Stones Holiday Boutique. Each holiday season, Stepping Stones Shelter sets up and decorates a holiday boutique where families can pick out unwrapped gifts for their children for about 5 days leading up to Christmas. Parents are empowered to choose presents and wrap them afterward for their children. Stepping Stones asks that donors and sponsors help fill our boutique with gifts for all ages, including children and adults. Last year about 45 families, including the families in the shelter and former families, came to shop at the boutique.

While BJC is focused on coats, hats/mittens, and scarves, Stepping Stones welcomes other donations for their Holiday Boutique. This is what they are looking for:

For kids: toys, stuffed animals, arts & crafts, trucks & trains, dolls, balls, Pokeman, educational toys
For teens: leggings, athletic wear, journals & sketchpads, water bottles, makeup balls, gift cards to Five Below
For adults: bath & body lotions, perfumes, fashion jewelry, scarves, wallets, gift cards to Giant & Safeway
For all ages: pajamas, slippers, socks, board games, and gift cards to Amazon, Target & Visa.

Why not bring your donation when you come to BJC on December 1 for Tot Shabbat or December 8 for our Hanukkah celebration? Just remember to bring your donations to the BJC office by December 19.

## HINEINI ANNUAL GIVING CAMPAIGN



Scan the QR code to donate today or click here.



Our main goal is 100% Participation towards our \$95,000 benchmark

Where do your donations go?

**Sustain Programming:** Your donations enable us to host a wide range of events and programs that cater to the needs and interests of our diverse congregation. From Shabbat and holiday services to community outreach, religious school, and social gatherings, your support ensures that we can offer enriching experiences for everyone.

**Provide Financial Aid:** We believe that no one should be denied the opportunity to participate in our synagogue, religious school, or other vital programs due to financial constraints. Your donations allow us to provide financial assistance to families in need, ensuring that all members of our community can fully engage in their faith and heritage.

**Operating Costs:** Our dedicated rabbi, educators, and administrative team work tirelessly to serve the needs of our congregation. Your donations enable us to compensate them fairly for their vital contributions to our community. In addition, your gifts maintain our sacred partnership with 6601 Bradley Blvd.

Bethesda Jewish Congregation (BJC) is a 501(c)(3), which means your donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

L'Dor V'Dor: \$15,000 and above
Eternal Light Supporter: \$5000 to \$14,999
Rabbi's Circle: \$1000- \$4999
Torah Guardian: \$361-\$999
Sustaining Donor: \$18-\$360

We are pleased to accept checks sent directly to the office or members can donate through the Member Portal on the website. Nonmembers are welcome to make a donation by credit card, or by sending a donation to our office.

Give Appreciated Stock. Consider transferring stocks to BJC for a tax-deductible contribution that will support our Jewish community and BJC programs. Check with the office for details.

Direct an IRA Withdrawal to BJC. If you are age 72+ and have an IRA with a mandatory minimum withdrawal, consider supporting BJC's programs with a charitable gift from your IRA. There may be added benefits to giving through an IRA.

Write BJC into your Will/Estate Plan. After you have taken care of your family and friends, naming BJC and other charitable organizations in your will is a true mitzvah —a lasting gift expressing your commitment to Jewish life, Jewish values, and to the future of BJC.

# **OUR MEMBERS**

### REMEMBRANCES

Ever confused about when we remember the yahrzeit of your loved one? You can choose to remember this special date according to the Hebrew or English calendar. Get in touch with Geryl Baer in the office to review and verify the accuracy of your records.

### Yahrzeits December 2023

Evelyn Adlerstein, mother of Maran Gluckstein John Allmendinger, father of Amy Kertesz William Baer, father of Louis Baer Henry Barak, father of Diane Horn Sharon Berk, mother of Lauren Kline Robert Blaney, father of Maureen Pelter Herbert Abraham Blumenthal, father of Diane Blumenthal Lawrence Bogorad, Father-in -law of Cynthia "Cindy" Bogorad John Brenits, brother of Donald (Don) Brenits Sara Dash, mother of Judi Dash Helen Davis, grandmother of Wynne Busman Zena Feldman, mother of Helen Dalton Phyllis Frank, mother of Stuart Frank Reba Frankford, mother of Norma Stern Rose Gordesky, grandmother of Joan G Kaufman Rhoda Horowitz, aunt of Wynne Busman Florence Isaacs, mother of Virginia Cover Clara Landaw, grandmother of Lance Pelter Jeff Schaffer, beloved of Carolyn (Carie) Schaffer Cookie Solomon, aunt of Burton Bachrach Jordan Stepper, father of Shirley Altschuler Lisa Sternfeld, sister of Eliot Sternfeld Yetta Sternfeld, mother of Eliot Sternfeld Jacob Taylor, father of Lyne Taylor-Genser

### LET THE RABBI PROVIDE PASTORAL SUPPORT

Please be in touch with me in times of joy, sadness, or illness in your life or in the lives of a loved one or another member of the congregation. If you have a pastoral need, please call the BJC office at (301) 469-8636 or email me at rabbiabbott@bethesdajewish.org. For a lifecycle emergency during non-office hours, please call (301) 664-4585. When I am away, please contact Geryl Baer in the BJC office at (301) 469-8636, admin@bethesdajewish.org. She will know how to contact me or my substitute.

# **OUR MEMBERS**

### **NACHAS NOTES**

Editor's Note: Share the joys in your life! Send to: amy@bethesdajewish.org

- Mazel Tov to the Kline family on Evan's Bar Mitzvah!
- Mazel Tov to the Lindholm family on Nicholas's Bar Mitzvah!

### THANK YOUS

### **DONATION GENERAL**

Bruce and Linda Baum in Honor of Rabbi Eric's kindness following the murder of my cousin

Deborah Troen Matias and her husband Shlomi on October 7

Bruce and Wynne Busman in Honor of the Bat Mitzvah of Joan Kaufman

Bruce and Wynne Busman in Honor of the Bat Mitzvah of Chana Shira Hancock

Howard Berkof and Lauren Rathmann in Honor of the B'not Mitzvah of Chana Shira Hancock and Joan Kaufman

Nancy Jo Chabot in Memory of Herbert L. Chabot

Shoshanah and Brian Drake in Honor of David Slacter

Joseph Gootenberg and Susan Leibenhaut in Memory of Susan Brome

Allen Grunes in Honor of the B'not Mitzvah of Chana Shira Hancock and Joan Kaufman

Chana Shira Hancock in Honor of Rabbi Abbott's indispensable support on my journey to becoming a Bat Mitzvah

Laurie Mabile in Honor of Joan Kaufman and Chana Shira Hancock in the occasion of the B'not Mitzvah

Terri Reicher in Memory of Sana Shtasel

David and Judy Scott in Memory of David's father, Jack Scott

Gerson and Shirley Yalowitz

### HINEINI- HERE I AM

Hal and Cheryl Bordy

**Shoshanah and Brian Drake** in Honor of Bernie and Shirley Altshuler for being present at so many BJC moments **Lauren and Samuel Kline** in Honor of Evan's Bar Mitzvah and In Memory of Sharon Berk **David and Judy Scott** 

### RABBI ERIC ABBOTT'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

Karen Jerome and Jonathan Eig in Honor of Rabbi Abbott's chapter in The Sacred Earth

Donna and Dan Goldberg with thanks for your blessings of leadership and service to the BJC community

Jim Korelitz and Liz Sloss in Honor of the B'not Mitzvah of Joan Kaufman and Chana Shira Hancock

Lorrie Van Akkeren

# THANK YOUS (CONT.)

### **THANK YOUS**

### MARAN GLUCKSTEIN EDUCATIONAL FUND

**Chana Shira Hancock** in Honor of Maran Gluckstein and her unwavering support on my journey to become a Bat Mitzvah

### THANKSGIVING INTERFAITH OFFERING

Patricia Pancoe

### AS GOOD AS WE GIVE

Lorrie Van Akkeren



### CONSULT BJC NOW FOR THE LATEST INFORMATION AND LINKS TO CONNECT VIA ZOOM

### **CALENDAR for DECEMBER 2023**

Day	Date	Starting Time	EVENT
Friday	12/1	5:30 PM	Tot Shabbat- Covenant Hall and Online
		6:00 PM	Family Service Dinner
		6:45 PM	Shabbat Services- Covenant Hall and Online
Saturday	12/2	9:00 AM	0
		9:30 AM	BJC Religious School
		10:30 AM	
Sunday	12/3	4:00 PM	Israel Benefit Concert- Covenant Hall
Wednesday	12/6	7:00 PM	Torah Today
Thursday	12/7	11:00 AM	Programming Committee Meeting- Online
Friday	12/8	5:30 PM	Hanukkah Dinner & Games- Memorial Hall
		6:15 PM	Community Candle Lighting
		6:30 PM	Hanukkah/ Shabbat Services- Covenant Hall
			and Online
Saturday	12/9	9:00 AM	Adult Hebrew Class- Lounge
		10:30 AM	Shabbat Services- Covenant Hall and Online
Wednesday	12/13	7:00 PM	Torah Today
Thursday	12/14	2:30 PM	Rosh Chodesh Circle- Lounge
		7:00 PM	Board Meeting
Friday	12/15	7:30 PM	Shabbat Services- Covenant Hall and Online
Saturday	12/16	9:00 AM	Adult Hebrew Class- Lounge
		9:30 AM	BJC Religious School
		10:30 AM	Shabbat Services - Covenant Hall and Online
Wednesday	12/20	7:00 PM	Torah Today
Thursday	12/21	7:00 PM	Mahjongg- Lounge
Friday	12/22	7:30 PM	Shabbat Services- Covenant Hall and Online
Saturday	12/23		No Saturday Services
Wednesday	12/27	7:00 PM	Torah Today
		8:00 PM	Book Club- Online
Friday	12/29	7:30 PM	Shabbat Services- Covenant Hall and Online
Saturday	12/30		No Saturday Services