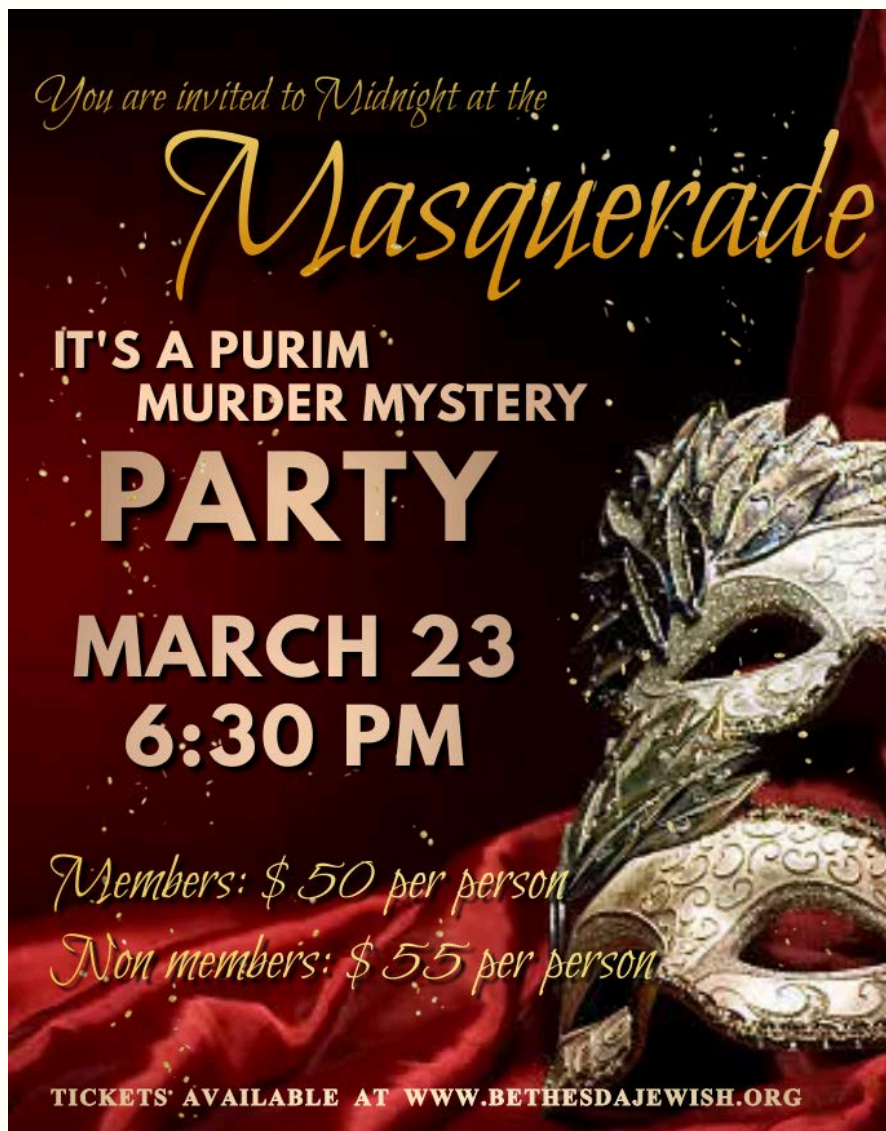


March 2024
Adar I/Adar II 5784

Rabbi Eric L. Abbott
Rabbi Emeritus Sunny Schnitzer

You are invited to Midnight at the
Masquerade
**IT'S A PURIM
MURDER MYSTERY
PARTY**
**MARCH 23
6:30 PM**
Members: \$ 50 per person
Non members: \$ 55 per person
TICKETS AVAILABLE AT WWW.BETHESDAJEWISH.ORG



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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

Start Learning With Us!
Adult Hebrew Class



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TWISTED
stitches

A New Knitting and Crochet Group at BJC

Beginners
and Advanced
Welcome!

Interested?

Contact Amy in the BJC Office

**JOIN RABBI ABBOTT FOR
WEDNESDAY TORAH STUDY**
7:00 PM ONLINE
ZOOM LINK IN BJC NOW
BETHESDAJEWISH.ORG

**single in
the city**
A new group for our age 50+ single members

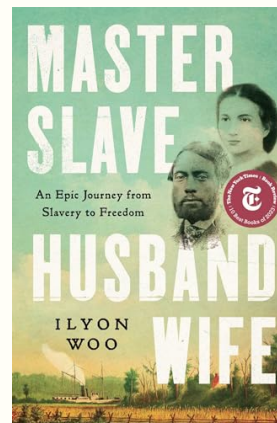
ROSH CHODESH
join the women of BJC
for a monthly gathering

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:

March 27- *Master Slave Husband Wife: An Epic Journey from Slavery to Freedom* by Ilyon Woo, tells the remarkable true story of Ellen and William Craft, who escaped slavery through daring, determination, and disguise, with Ellen passing as a wealthy, disabled White man and William posing as "his" slave.

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.



BJC Administration

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THE RABBI'S MESSAGE

Rabbi Eric L. Abbott

The Joy of Purim Amidst Dark Times

Singing! Dancing! Gifts! Costumes!

These are some of the festive activities that you will find on the holiday of Purim. Purim celebrates the victory of a diasporic Jewish community over the wicked Haman who wanted to kill our people. We honor our heroes, Queen Esther and her cousin Mordecai. We eat Hamantaschen, fruit- and jam-filled pastries said to resemble either Haman's ears or Haman's hat. We read the Megillah, the scroll which contains the Book of Esther, and boo when we hear Haman's name. We dress in costumes. We give gifts to each other and to those in need. And we overall have a fun, festive time.

But this year, Purim might feel different. How are we supposed to feel so joyous with everything that is going on in the world today? With so much antisemitism in America and abroad, with over one hundred Israeli hostages still in Gaza, with innocent Gazans caught in the crossfire of Israel's efforts to rid the world of Hamas, with Israelis traumatized by the horrors of October 7—one might ask, should we even celebrate Purim this year?

To me, the answer is a resounding yes—yes; of course; how could we not? Purim is a joyous holiday—some would say THE joyous holiday. Our tradition declares this over and over. The Mishnah, for instance, teaches us to dedicate the entire month of Adar—the entire month of which Purim is just one day—to joy: “When Adar enters, we increase joy.”¹ The whole month is a celebration.

In fact, there are times when joy must supersede grief. The Talmud teaches that if a wedding party and a funeral procession both come to a crossroads, the wedding has the right of way.² This is not to say the funeral is unimportant, of course—but that some joys take precedent.

This year, we will still hold our grief. We will mourn the loss of life in Israel and even, when it comes to the innocent civilians, in Palestine. We will pray for the release of the hostages. We will strive for peace in the Middle East. We will combat antisemitism.

And we will also celebrate. We will come together as a community. We will wear silly costumes and play fun games. We will read the Megillah and shout “Boo!” at Haman's name. We will even have a family Purim Carnival on March 16 and adult “Mystery at the Masquerade” Purim Party on March 23—make sure you sign up for these!

In this way, we will find joy in sad times. We will find confidence in scary moments. And we will find light in darkness. For as the Book of Esther says: “The Jews enjoyed light and gladness, happiness and honor.” So then, so today.

Kein yehi ratzon—May this be God's will.

1. Babylonian Talmud, Taanit 29a.

2. Babylonian Talmud, Ketubot 17a.



FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Issie Resti

Purim is one of those holidays with a lot of fun traditions in remembrance of a very challenging time. In this case, we are commemorating, among other things, the bravery of Queen Esther, who risked her life by revealing to her husband that she was Jewish. She did so in the hopes of convincing him to save her people from

the death sentence handed down to them by his right-hand man, Haman. There are many legends associated with the story of Esther that help us understand the lengths she went to, prior to telling the king the truth, in the hopes of keeping both her secret and her connection to her Judaism. One detail that always sticks out to me is how she subsisted entirely on seeds, nuts, and legumes during her time in the palace, as these were the only foods she could be certain were kosher. Even as she enjoyed the luxuries, parties, and servants associated with the life of a queen, she practiced this restriction as a way of preserving who she truly was.

While the stakes may not be quite as high, there are times in modern America when we, like Esther, must consider our place on the spectrum between full assimilation and strict observance. For many of us, where we fall on this continuum is fluid, and the decisions we make about how and when to practice our Judaism may seem inconsistent to others. An example that always springs to my mind is Hank Greenberg, raised in an Orthodox home but not terribly observant as an adult, who famously chose not to play in the World Series on Yom Kippur in 1934, although he had played days earlier on Rosh Ha'Shanah and regularly played on Shabbat. To me, what's important is not that others understand the whys and hows of my choices, but that I understand them. We are taught that we are all made *b'tzelim Elohim*, in God's image. Just as we can each reflect God in ourselves while looking and behaving differently than everyone else, we can also embody Judaism without strictly conforming to the practices of others. This is an important part of how I understand Judaism.

You can imagine how grateful I am to have in BJC a spiritual home that encourages congregants to find their own, unique spiritual path. Our Purim celebrations this year are a perfect example of how BJC provides a mix of age-old customs, modern traditions, and entirely new ways to celebrate. We can emulate our ancestors by giving members of the community (both at BJC and beyond) gift bags filled with yummy treats through the Mishloach Manot fundraiser. Our religious school families (and anyone else who enjoys games, inflatables, and crafts) will have a Purim carnival on March 16th and for adults, there will also be a brand new event, an interactive murder mystery, on March 23rd (right after the community Megillah reading). Whether you participate in all these events or just one or two, I'm sure you'll find that being at BJC, with BJC, makes the holiday an even richer and more meaningful experience.

Ah freilichen Purim,

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

YOUTH EDUCATION 2023-2024



BJC Youth Education Shoshanah Drake & Kaitlin Blackburn Education Committee Co-Chairs

It's hard to believe how fast this school year is going! Many of our families got on their PJ's and shared in the February Havdalah event this month. Participants made gratitude journals and Havdalah spices. The Rabbi told a story about Havdalah and shared this beautiful way to end Shabbat together. A wonderful time was had by all! Thank you to Kaitlin Blackburn for chairing this event.

February started with continuing learning about the Jewish value of *Achrayut*, doing what you can to make the world a better place. This was followed by the value of *Hakarat Ha Tov*, seeking joy and being grateful. Students will continue with this value through March.

A great way for BJC members to seek joy and for BJC to be grateful is through volunteering! Our upcoming Purim Carnival on March 16th is going to be bigger and better than ever but we need YOUR help to make it happen. **Please consider volunteering your time to help here.**

We hope you join us for a quick service and bite to eat and mark your calendar for our April Tot and Family Shabbat on April 5th! While your calendar is out, mark April 13th for our Passover Event. More details will be coming shortly!

Volunteers are always needed and appreciated! Even if you haven't had a chance to volunteer before, please consider sharing some of your gift of time. Contact **Becky Leavey** for more information. As always, thank you all for being with us as a community and part of our BJC family! We value and appreciate all of you!



WE OFFER

- ✓ K-6 plus 7th Grade Bnai Mitzvah Prep
- ✓ Tichon Teen Class
- ✓ Individualized Hebrew Instruction
- ✓ Free first year membership for new families

BETHESDAJEWISH.ORG/YOUTH
OPEN FOR 2023/2024 ENROLLMENT





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

Torah Study with
BJC and the
Ugandan
Jewish Community
of Abayudaya
(People of Judah)

Thursday March 7
10 am EST
6 pm Uganda time

Zoom Link Will Be in
BJC NOW



March 7- Adult Ed with Abayudaya at 10:00 AM

BJC is excited to announce that we will resume a joint adult education program with members of the Abayudaya Congregation in Nasenyi Uganda beginning March 7. Sessions will be held monthly. Topics will include the Jewish holidays, Jewish practices, and Jewish wisdom/law. Each online session will be led by a knowledgeable member of BJC.

March 11- Amy in Israel at 7:00 PM

Program Director Amy Kertesz recently spent a week in Israel volunteering at the Gaza Border with Jewish National Fund. Join online for a Zoom presentation of the mission, March 11 at 7 PM. Zoom link will be in BJC Now.



March 17- Antisemitism & Islamophobia Panel at 3:00 PM

The ICPC invites you to participate in a Panel Discussion on Islamophobia and Antisemitism on Sunday, March 17, at 3:00 PM. The event is being co-sponsored by the Jewish-Islamic Dialogue Society of Washington D.C. (JIDS) and Jews and Muslims and Allies Acting Together (JAMAAT).

March 21- Mahjonn at 7:00 PM

Mahjonn is back for our monthly session! Come play with BJC and friends, have a nosh, and win some fabulous prizes. Beginners and players of all experience welcome. Please register in advance. We're just playing for fun and bragging rights so join in!



UPCOMING EVENTS



SNAPSHOTS

Getting Together for
Worship, Meaning, and Fun

Megillah Reading

Come Hear The Story of
Esther and Have a Cocktail!

March 23
5:30 PM

 Bethesda Jewish
CONGREGATION

PURIM CARNIVAL

SATURDAY, MARCH 16
1:00- 3:00 PM

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 **60**
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Bethesda
Jewish
CONGREGATION

BJC IS TURNING 60!

SAVE THE DATE

Casino Night

MAY 11, 7:00 PM

WE TOOK A BIG BET 60
YEARS AGO. NOW IT'S
YOUR TURN!

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT



Annual Member Lunch

What a fantastic Shabbat we had as the BJC community came together for the annual Member Lunch on February 10th. Both veteran and new members were honored during the service, and Covenant Hall was full.

Thank you to Goldberg's Bagels for an amazing spread. We hope everyone enjoyed!

Even though the Member Lunch is over, don't be a stranger! We'd love to see everyone for services, for adult education, or for fun. And we could always use a volunteer or two!

PJ Havdalah

Our BJC families joined the Religious School for PJ Havdalah on February 24th! Blankets and stuffies were on display in full force.

Everyone enjoyed a pizza dinner, made crafts, and sang along with Rabbi Abbott as Shabbat ended.

Thanks to PJ Library for bringing books to share!





An Easy Way to Get Involved and Get Others Involved

By Harri j. Kramer

Many of us are tuned in to this election season. And many are not. Of course, it's overwhelming. But, whether we choose to engage or not—in an overly broad representation—I will suggest that nonetheless we know when the primaries are, how to register, and how to vote.

It's simply not that way in much of America. The **nonprofit, nonpartisan** Center for Common Ground, through its Reclaim Our Vote initiative, is focused on reaching Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) voters. Reclaim Our Vote (ROV) uses post cards, texts, and phone banking to “build effective, respective, and relevant campaigns that engage BIPOC voters around upcoming elections.”

In 2020, BJC promoted the post-carding initiative and encouraged our congregants to get involved in getting out the vote. The Board of Trustees has once again endorsed this campaign, which is getting underway now as the primaries begin. This get-out-the vote effort provides early voting locations and times, voter registration deadlines and information, and information on getting free rides to the polls.

In short, as ROV says, “We understand that information is power, and we work to empower voters.”

A lot of information—particularly data on this initiative's effectiveness—is available at their website: <https://www.centerforcommonground.org/reclaim-our-vote>

In 2020, I wrote thousands of postcards. Literally. And, it couldn't be easier. This is what is involved:

- You buy the postcards and stamps. These racially inclusive, uplifting, colorful and eye-catching postcards with voting rights themes that were designed by young immigrant artists of color. At about 5 cents each/or \$25 for 500, they are reasonably priced.
- You buy the stamps.
- You buy the address labels, which cost under \$9 for 900 labels.

And then you get the addresses by logging onto their system. You also get a script, which has been tested for appropriateness with the target audiences.

We know post-carding, along with texts and phone banking, increases voter turnout. I'm willing to help anyone get started and willing to host post-card writing get togethers.

You can do as much or as little as you like. Those who have post-carded in the past found it easy and rewarding.

Pop me an email and I'll help get you going. [Click here to get in touch](#). Please join me in this exercise to make voting accessible to all!



Black History Benefits All

By: Karen Levi

Last month, I had the privilege of attending the Obermayer Awards, which is part of a larger organization called "Widen the Circle." One of the winners was a woman I nominated, Marie Rolshoven, whom I have worked with in Germany.

The Obermayer Awards honors Germans who have worked tirelessly to increase multicultural understanding, including remembrance work around Germany's problematic past. "Widen the Circle" broadens the vision, linking activities in Germany to similar ongoing work in the United States.

I met two individuals, Kristi Williams and Karlos Hill, who shed light on The Tulsa Massacre of 1921. Most Americans, including myself, were unaware of this tragedy until the 100th anniversary in 2021. A well-kept secret, like many horrendous events in the Jim Crow era, it is of utmost interest to Jews in the United States. The Tulsa Race Massacre was a pogrom with no purpose other than racial violence and destruction, and points to a tragic history of racism on both sides of the Atlantic. The United States is not immune to severe racial violence and ensuing deception to conceal the truth.

Thanks to the work of dedicated individuals in the United States and Germany, students from different backgrounds are learning about prejudice under the guidance of astounding educators. A small project at an elementary school in Berlin called "The Yellow Brick Wall" inspired Bryan Stevenson, Executive Director of the Equal Justice Initiative, in his efforts, including the establishment of the Montgomery Alabama Civil Rights Memorial.

Black history is related to Jewish history is related to all history. Taught properly, remembrance of the past should counter racially motivated ignorance, hatred, and violence.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ceL0qHVPak>

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/may/31/tulsa-massacre-descendants-callout-storie>

Houseplants are good, but...

By: Karen Levi

Unbeknownst to me, houseplants come with a cost to the environment. But there is hope since the benefits of indoor gardening remain. Plants improve mood, reduce indoor air pollution, give us a focus on other living things, and exist as beautiful additions to interior decor. Being mindful of the plants one selects is an example of the "little things" we do for our earth. Small acts have a cumulative effect. So do not stop growing indoor plants—here are some suggestions for making indoor gardening more sustainable.

- Try to buy plants from local nurseries as opposed to the Internet. The less distance and times a plant travels on a truck, the better. Also, one is supporting a local business.
- Swapping plants or obtaining cuttings from garden clubs or friends reduces carbon emissions from delivery trucks and money. (see above)
- Buy durable, good quality gardening supplies, including pots, shears, trowels, and stands. Protect these tools in the winter so they last many seasons.
- Make sure to recycle plastic pots and containers.
- Avoid peat soil components or petroleum-based fertilizers which emit carbon dioxide. Try to use peat-free potting mix and organic fertilizers. Compost, when possible, is a great addition to your soil.
- To avoid waste, purchase plants that are appropriate for your conditions, i.e., light, humidity, HVAC, placement of plant.

Enjoy the greenery in your home.

Use this link for more: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-solutions/2024/01/03/sustainable-houseplant-care/>

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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.

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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 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.

Shloshim

Dorothy Rosenthal, sister of Edward Elson

Aleen Chabot, mother of Elliot Chabot

Ted Weinreich, father of Elizabeth Kirkpatrick

Yahrzeits March 2024

Annette Altschuler, mother of Bernard Altschuler

Herman Bachrach, father of Burton Bachrach

Bernice Cahan, grandmother of Sandra Walter

Albert Cassell, uncle of Wynne Busman

Esther Chabot, grandmother of Elliot Chabot

Anna Dubrow, grandmother of Laurie Dubrow

Naomi Faigin, mother of Marty Faigin

Richard Getter, father of Lisa Getter Peterson

Herbert Goldberg, father of Daniel Goldberg

Louis G. Hecht, father of Louis Hecht

Shirley Hecht, mother of Louis Hecht

Donald Kerwin, uncle of Elliot Chabot

Minnie Kerwin, grandmother of Elliot Chabot

Bella Kretz, grandmother of Flanders and Alera Shtasel-Kretz

Theodore Landsman, father of Sandra Medlin

William Levine, father of Leslie Levine

Herbert Levinson, father of Phyllis Levinson

Warren Lichtenberg, stepfather of Michelle Goldstein

Shirley Ratner, mother of Gary Ratner

Connie Reider, dear friend of Joan G Kaufman

Herman Schlacter, father of David Slacter

Ann Schmalz, mother of Lorraine McMillen

Estelle Schneider, mother of Cynthia "Cindy" Bogorad

Sam Stein, father of Helen DiStefano

David Wolfe, husband of Helen DiStefano

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

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Andrew and Margaret Schwartz

NACHAS NOTES

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

- **Mazel Tov** to Martin Dickinson on his 75th birthday
- **Mazel Tov** to Diane Blumenthal and Craig Winslow on the birth of their granddaughter
- **Mazel Tov** to the Reyna family on the occasion of Isabella's Bat Mitzvah

THANK YOU

DONATION GENERAL

Anonymous

Martie Adelman in Memory of Aleen Chabot
Bruce and Linda Baum in Memory of Edward Baum
Joel and Mary Berman in Memory of Aleen Chabot
Helen Dalton in Memory of Theodore Weinreich
Helen Dalton in Memory of Michael Dalton
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Babette Margolies in Memory of Aleen Chabot
Denise Silverberg in Memory of Aleen Chabot
Susan Charak Yarrow in Memory of Aleen Chabot

HINEINI- HERE I AM

Helen Distefano

Shoshanah and Brian Drake in Honor of Alyson Scherer-White for a wonderful Ice Cream Seder
Shoshanah and Brian Drake in Honor of The Chappell family - so happy you are part of BJC
Shoshanah and Brian Drake in Honor of The Gutmark-Buchner Family - so happy you are part of BJC
Shoshanah and Brian Drake in Honor of Kelley Landy and Family - Thank you for being a part of BJC
Shoshanah and Brian Drake in Honor of the birth of Diane Blumenthal and Craig Winslow's new granddaughter
Shoshanah and Brian Drake in Honor of Helen DiStefano - Thank you for the work you do to help refugees
Leah Katelnick and Michael Baumer
Harri Kramer and Russ Hogle in Memory of Abraham Sherman
Harri Kramer and Russ Hogle in Memory of Moshe Landsman
Carie Schaffer
Lorrie Van Akkeren in Memory of Ida R. Goldstein

OUR MEMBERS

THANK YOUS (Continued)

RABBI ERIC ABBOTT'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

Harri Kramer and Russ Hogya in Memory of Bernice S. Kramer
Shoshanah and Brian Drake in Honor of Rabbi Abbott's birthday



BJC runs on volunteer power! Celebrate a simcha or honor the memory of a loved one by sponsoring a Friday night oneg. It's easy! Dates are available in March and April. [Sign up here.](#)



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

CALENDAR for MARCH 2024

Day	Date	Starting Time	EVENT
Friday	3/1	5:30 PM 6:00 PM 6:45 PM	Tot Shabbat- Covenant Hall and Online Family Service Dinner- Lounge Shabbat Services- Covenant Hall and Online
Saturday	3/2	9:00 AM 9:30 AM 10:30 AM	Adult Hebrew Class- Lounge BJC Religious School Shabbat Services- Covenant Hall and Online Bat Mitzvah of Isabella Reyna
Wednesday	3/6	7:00 PM	Torah Today
Thursday	3/7	10:00 AM 2:30 PM	Study with Abayudaya- Online Rosh Chodesh Circle
Friday	3/8	7:30 PM	Shabbat Services- Covenant Hall and Online
Saturday	3/9	9:00 AM 10:30 AM	Adult Hebrew Class- Lounge Shabbat Services- Covenant Hall and Online
Monday	3/11	7:00 PM	Amy in Israel Presentation- Online
Wednesday	3/13	7:00 PM	Torah Today
Thursday	3/14	11:00 AM 7:00 PM	Programming Meeting BJC Board Meeting
Friday	3/15	7:30 PM	Shabbat Services- Covenant Hall and Online
Saturday	3/16	9:00 AM 10:30 AM 1:00 PM 1:00 PM	Adult Hebrew Class- Lounge Shabbat Services- Covenant Hall and Online Purim Carnival Mishloach Manot Assembly- Lounge
Sunday	3/17	3:00 PM	Antisemitism & Islamophobia Panel- Covenant Hall
Wednesday	3/20	7:00 PM	Torah Today
Thursday	3/21	7:00 PM	Mahjongg- Lounge
Friday	3/22	7:30 PM	Shabbat Services- Covenant Hall and Online
Saturday	3/23	9:00 AM 10:30 AM 5:30 PM 6:30 PM	Adult Hebrew Class- Lounge Shabbat Services- Covenant Hall and Online Megillah Reading and Cocktails- Covenant Hall Midnight at the Masquerade Purim Party
Wednesday	3/27	7:00 PM 8:00 PM	Torah Today Book Club- Online
Friday	3/29	7:30 PM	Shabbat Services- Covenant Hall and Online
Saturday	3/30	9:30 AM 10:30 AM	Adult Hebrew Class- Lounge Shabbat Services- Covenant Hall and Online