



B'NAI JEHOShUA BETH ELOHIM
where *community* matters

YOU BELONG

Making BJBE Your Spiritual Home

Welcome to BJBE!

Thank you for your interest in B'nai Jehoshua Beth Elohim (BJBE)! We are a diverse congregation which welcomes new members because we believe that each family/person brings talents, energy and perspective that enrich us.

With over 1000 families, BJBE offers dynamic, innovative programming to our members and guests. Whether your interest is a Jewish education for your children, experiencing a variety of worship services, thought-provoking adult education, or repairing the world, we have activities to introduce those looking for a spiritual home to our community. We provide a place for those looking to make a difference and make connections.

Please read through the following information to learn more about our congregation. If you have any questions, please contact Chime Costello, Executive Director, at ccostello@bjbe.org or 847.940.7575.



“BJBE’s new membership model breaks down the financial barriers for synagogue membership. We have found an incredibly supportive community and spiritual home within BJBE.”

– Recent BJBE Member

BJBE'S GROUNDBREAKING MEMBERSHIP MODEL: A SHARED SACRED PARTNERSHIP

In the summer of 2019, we revolutionized our membership program to meet the evolving needs of our congregation and community. We transitioned from a traditional dues model – employed by synagogues for decades – to our Shared Sacred Partnership, a self-directed membership program that allows our members to determine how they want to support BJBE. **Instead of paying assigned dues amounts, each household is given the freedom and responsibility to consider an annual commitment that is meaningful and affordable**, and that will support BJBE's annual financial needs.

This model embodies three commitments:

- 1** **A commitment to meeting members where they are.** We invite our members to reflect on what would be affordable for their households; what would be a meaningful commitment, a gift of the heart; and what will support BJBE's financial needs. We trust that each household will do what is right for their family.
- 2** **A commitment to community.** We work to remove financial barriers to membership to improve retention, increase engagement, and attract new families through a self-directed model.
- 3** **A commitment to streamlining requests.** Our Shared Sacred Partnership commitment bundles together our membership commitments and annual giving. This means fewer distinct financial requests.

"What BJBE showed with the transition to SSP is that --- while typically it is we congregants who put faith in our synagogue --- here, the synagogue truly put faith in us. We only wish our SSP (commitment) could come nearly as close to giving BJBE what BJBE has given us through community, spirituality, and an overwhelming sense of belonging."

– Members for 7 Years

Why We Made This Shift

We believe that by allowing members to self-direct their membership commitment, they will feel more engaged and have a stronger sense of ownership in the synagogue's well-being.

We are confident our new model is transforming our members' relationships with BJBE, becoming less transactional and more thoughtful, meaningful, and holy. The end result is a stronger, more engaged community supported by a sustainable annual revenue stream.

TORAH:

LEARNING THAT INFORMS AND TRANSFORMS

Education has always been a central focus at BJBE. Our reputation for lifelong learning reinforces the core Jewish value of education through participation in experiences that challenge the mind and uplift the spirit.

Jewish Learning Center (JLC) Campus

When entering the building, you walk down the vibrant, pictorial Hall of History, 400 feet of wall murals displaying hundreds of archival, museum quality photos, maps, and documents depicting the history of the Jewish people - teachable moments that spark curiosity and interest. The school features five distinct learning centers that embody each of BJBE's five core values; each is unique in design, decor, and theme. In addition, a state-of-the-art Creative Studio provides a home for art, crafts, and technology; and a second studio supports performance, dance, and movement activities. The 20,000 square foot JLC is connected to the main building by an enclosed link, the Rabbi Mark S. Shapiro Gateway, creating a campus environment.

*Send Your light and Your truth and they shall lead me.
Psalm 43:3*

Jewish Learning Center (JLC): Sunday and AfterSchool

Our JLC provides a solid foundation for our students' transition from Jewish children to Jewish adults. Our goal is to inspire students to live Jewish lives, develop lifetime commitments to Jewish learning, and foster the development of positive Jewish identities. We believe that every Jew makes his/her own personal brit (covenant) with God, and we want our students to make choices about their identities based upon a wealth of Jewish experiences and information. In addition, our JLC has an Inclusion Facilitator who helps to provide a safe and nurturing Jewish education within the general BJBE classroom for students requiring additional support and resources.

There are four components to the integrated Judaic and Hebraic education we provide:

- JLC Sunday for students in Kindergarten - 6th grade
- JLC AfterSchool for students in 3rd - 6th grade, meets on either Tuesday or Wednesday
- Chai School for students in 7th - 10th grade, including Confirmation, meets on Sunday
- Dine & Drash for students in 11th - 12th grade, meets monthly

At BJBE we hope that through sacred text and song, through transformational learning and community, we will find ourselves empowered and inspired to explore our connection to one another, the larger Jewish community, and God.

Cantor Jennifer L. Frost

TORAH: LEARNING THAT INFORMS AND TRANSFORMS

B'nai Mitzvah Journey

A Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a sacred journey in your family's life and an important step in the pursuit of lifelong Jewish learning. Our students obtain all the tools necessary to be engaged and active participants in our worship experience. We acknowledge and celebrate that every child is unique and comes to us with different strengths. We believe that every child is capable of becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah in their own way. Your child will experience a renewed sense of self-confidence and maturity, and feel uniquely linked with family, community, and the history of the Jewish people. B'nai Mitzvah studies are encompassed in our rich and diverse nationally-recognized B'nai Mitzvah program: Three Portals to Meaning and Purpose, developed through the URJ's B'nai Mitzvah Revolution. Students and their families choose from three tracks at the end of their 4th grade year.

My Personal Prayer Journey: Torah + Prayer + Creativity

The mission of this portal is to create proficient prayer-participants who will read, connect, and interact with the prayer service in a way that resonates with their personal interests and passions.

Team Tzedek: The Obligation to Give Away Time + Money + Kindness

The mission of this portal is to create a community committed to improving the world through acts of loving kindness, community service, and advocacy for social change.

My Israel: The Land + Personal Family Experience

The mission of this portal is to cultivate a meaningful personal relationship with Israel's history, culture, and people through traditional and experiential learning, both at home and on the ground in Israel.



TORAH: LEARNING THAT INFORMS AND TRANSFORMS

Madrichim Program

We have an innovative, nationally-recognized teaching assistant program for students in 8th-12th grades. These teaching assistants work in the JLC, assisting the teachers and working one-on-one with students. This program gives our teenagers the opportunity to make a difference in the education of our younger students.

Chava Center

BJBE's early childhood program fosters a vibrant and innovative Jewish learning community where child-focused exploration, creativity, and collaboration inspire our activities and curriculum. Our professional staff creates a safe, nurturing, and stimulating environment designed to facilitate social, emotional, physical, intellectual, and Judaic growth and development. The Chava Center offers programs year-round, including preschool, summer camp, on-site enrichment programming, and tot-adult classes.

Adult Education

Lifelong learning is a priority because it empowers us to make informed decisions about our Jewish lives. We offer many classes and enrichment opportunities to increase Jewish literacy, add substance and spiritual meaning to our lives, foster Jewish continuity, and build and sustain our community. Some of our ongoing programs are Shabbat morning Torah study, Tuesday Symposium, member-initiated Learner's Circles, Adult B'nai Mitzvah classes, and Sunday morning adult learning. To accommodate today's busy schedules, our adult education offerings take place at a variety of days and times.

Studying at BJBE is helping me find meaning and purpose, giving me direction. I love applying the lessons of the Torah as an adult, now that I am ready and open to receiving it.

Member for 11 Years



AVODAH:

WORSHIP AND SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Our services are designed to provide an array of opportunities for families and individuals to connect with one another and with God. We are dedicated to enhancing the spiritual life of our congregation through a variety of prayer, programs, and services for all ages, knowledge levels, and interests. Judaism teaches us that *Avodah*, spiritual practice, is one of the three pillars on which the world stands. Learn about our different Worship opportunities below.

Friday Night: Erev Shabbat **Shabbat with our T'filah Band**

A joyous, musical service that will make you want to get up and dance!

Simply Shabbat

A traditional, soulful service featuring contemplative music and a formal sermon.

Matzah Ball Shabbat

Beginning with an oneg of matzah ball soup, this inspiring multi-generational service features our Kol Simchah Youth Choir.

Summer Kabbalat Service: June-August

Refresh your spirit and welcome Shabbat in an intimate Shabbat service. We conclude with an oneg under the stars in our beautiful courtyard (weather permitting) or Village Center.

Saturday: Shabbat

Kol Shabbat Service: Morning

A traditional Shabbat morning service, rich with music. Explanations and meanings are woven into readings in the intimate setting of our Chapel at this weekly service, followed by community Torah study.

B'nai Mitzvah Service: Morning & Afternoon, various dates

Celebrate with BJBE teens and their families as they take on the obligation of becoming Bar and Bat Mitzvah. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah students co-lead the entire service along with the clergy, chant Torah and Haftarah, and deliver inspiring *Divrei Torah* (sermons).

Family Havdalah: Afternoon, various dates

Experience Havdalah through a short, multi-sensory service, with songs, stories, and special craft activities. Say good-bye to Shabbat and usher in the new week with sweetness and light in this program designed for the young and the young at heart.

Wednesday: Minyan

BJBE offers additional opportunities for communal prayer on Wednesday mornings, followed by Talmud study.

See bjbe.org/worship-services for service times.

AVODAH: WORSHIP AND SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Festivals and Holidays

The communal celebration of Jewish festivals and holidays is an important part of belonging to any synagogue. There are many opportunities throughout the year to share these times with your congregational family. In addition to our many customary holiday offerings, we have special traditions associated with a number of holidays:

- **Simchat Torah:** a joyful musical celebration, which includes JLC Consecration
- **Passover:** a women's seder, a community second-night seder, and a youth group chocolate seder are all offered
- **Shavuot:** participation in a community wide celebration or late-night study sessions featuring BJBE clergy and lay teachers

For both **Rosh Hashanah** and **Yom Kippur**, our members have the option to select the service that best fits their needs:

- **Traditional Service**, featuring our High Holy Days Choir and geared toward adult worship, unites all the elements of the BJBE High Holy Days experience: meaningful prayer, Torah, choral music, and a moving and thought-provoking sermon.
- **L'Dor Vador Service**, our multi-generational service offers a spiritual opportunity for all members of BJBE's families and is appropriate for school-age children, parents, and grandparents. This service includes contemporary and traditional readings, music, vocal ensemble, Torah reading, and a sermon.
- **Celebrations for Families with Young Children**, providing a festive and fun atmosphere for preschool through kindergarten-age children, their parents, and other family members and friends to celebrate the High Holy Days.



AVODAH: WORSHIP AND SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

BJBE Choirs

Our choir members have a passion for music and an enthusiasm for singing the melodies of our people. BJBE also offers our members the opportunity to sing regularly during services.

- **Kol Simchah (Voice of Joy)**, our Junior Choir, is comprised of 2nd - 6th graders who participate in our Family Shabbat service. Rehearsals include attention to music, text, expression, and fun!
- **BJBE Adult Choir** is an important addition to our High Holy Days experience at BJBE. Members who participate in this choir have a unique opportunity to enrich the heart and soul of our congregation.
- **BJBE Multi-Generational Choir** is comprised of the Adult and Junior Choirs that come together during some services and events throughout the year to enhance the worship experience.

We affirm the goodness in life when we offer a daily prayer of gratitude. When life is difficult, and still we find the spiritual fortitude to offer a prayer of gratitude, then we declare possibility, optimism, hope.

-Rabbi Karyn D. Kedar



G'MILUT CHASADIM: ACTS OF LOVING KINDNESS, SOCIAL ACTION, & JUSTICE

Social Action

In keeping with Reform Judaism's long tradition of *Tikkun Olam*, healing the world, BJE is involved in a variety of activities that have a positive impact on our local communities and across the world. Regular activities include providing food for the homeless through Project Nourish and delivery of Maot Chitim; blood drives; collections of shoes, eyeglasses, toiletries, and more in our Village Center Tzedakah Niche; and a variety of Jewish Learning Center mitzvah projects.

The trip to New Orleans combined several things that are so important to me, things that have defined me over the years, and sadly, things that have fallen by the wayside. I am speaking about purposeful, meaningful work, Judaism and Jewish music, and making connections with people. Throughout the weekend I kept feeling that I was home.

Member for 13 Years



G'MILUT CHASADIM:

ACTS OF LOVING KINDNESS, SOCIAL ACTION, & JUSTICE

Social Justice

Social Justice is an essential component of Reform Judaism. To be a Reform Jew is to hear the voice of the prophets in our head; to be engaged in the ongoing work of *Tikkun Olam*; to strive to improve the world in which we live; to be God's partners in standing up for the voiceless and fixing what is broken in our society.

At BJBE, we make a collective effort to bring our values to bear in the community at large. Our Social Justice Team works across lines of faith, race, and class, and against all forms of hate and discrimination. We engage on issues of local, national, and global concern. We participate in interfaith coalitions and activities. We speak out on behalf of the vulnerable and we seek justice for all. All action is non-partisan in nature and rooted in Reform Jewish values.

BJBE in the Community

We partner with key national and local organizations - including the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism (RAC), the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), and United Power for Action and Justice, among others, to bring our Jewish values to action.

BJBE is certified as a Safer Synagogue by Jewish Community Abuse Resources, Education & Solutions (JCARES), a coalition dedicated to addressing abuse across the Jewish community and perpetuating healthy, peaceful, Jewish homes, families, and relationships. Our leadership has been trained in understanding the impact of abuse across the lifespan and improving access to support for congregants experiencing abusive situations.

BJBE has been certified as a Green Faith place of worship since 2012, which affirms that we believe that protecting the earth is a religious value, and that environmental stewardship is a moral responsibility.



COMMUNITY: MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS

BJBE is an inclusive and welcoming community. We encourage participation from all who seek a connection to Jewish life and want to be part of our sacred community regardless of religious background, race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, political affiliation, ability, age, sexual orientation, and gender identity. We encourage all to participate in our community, regardless of knowledge of Hebrew or Judaism.

Sacred Partnership

At BJBE we believe that the congregation is led by a sacred partnership of lay leadership, clergy, and staff. We join together with a sense of mission and mutual respect, keeping our focus on the core values of our synagogue while embracing new ideas and approaches. BJBE invites all congregants to step into leadership roles. We believe that leadership is a sacred calling which adds meaning and purpose to our lives.

Community at the Center

BJBE's emphasis on community is evident the minute you walk through our doors. Our Village Center is a hub of activity, with family and friends spending time together before, during, and after services, events, classes, and special occasions. There is a vibrant energy that runs through our building that connects all of us. Affiliating yourself with a spiritual home is a transformational decision, and we hope that you will join our vibrant community. If not, most importantly, we hope that you find the place where you and your family are comfortable and can engage most wholly in Jewish life.



BJBE:

WHERE *COMMUNITY* MATTERS

With community as our central value, we aspire to build a center for Jewish life, a place for laughter and joy, for meaningful conversation and friendship.

Interfaith Families

We are grateful for the many contributions that our interfaith members bring to our congregation. We recognize interfaith families to include non-Jewish partners, and/or the extended non-Jewish family who love them. We welcome all who enter to experience Judaism and become engaged in Jewish activity.

Inclusion

We believe that all people, regardless of their ability, have the right to be a valuable and participating member of their community. In connection with our Jewish values and mission, BJBE's Inclusion Committee is dedicated to creating a welcoming and accessible community for people with disabilities and their families. We actively partner with Keshet and are part of a multi-congregational alliance, HUGS, to provide inclusive worship, educational, and social experiences in a supportive environment.

Social Groups

In order to foster friendships and build community, we have a number of social groups that are loosely based around demographics, such as families with young children or empty nesters. These groups plan dinners, engaging activities, and outings based on their participants' interests.

BJBE Stars for Business Networking Group

We believe networking is an important part of belonging to a synagogue community: an opportunity to make new contacts, share interests, and learn more about others. Networking is valuable for people at every professional level. At BJBE, it is not just about helping yourself, but about helping others, too.

Youth Groups

Our children come together to engage in community service, weekend retreats, and other religious and social events. This informal educational experience is open to students from third grade through high school.



COMMUNITY: MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS

Olin-Sang-Ruby Union Institute (OSRUI)

BJBE has deep roots at OSRUI - the Reform Jewish camp in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin, a 90 minute drive from BJBE. Each summer, approximately 50 BJBE children attend OSRUI and members of our clergy and staff serve as faculty. Throughout the year, we hold weekend retreats at camp for families, adults, youth groups, and our youth choir.

Sisterhood

BJBE Sisterhood, with a membership of over 300 women, provides religious, educational, community, and social action activities for women of all ages and promotes the aims of the Women of Reform Judaism (WRJ) and the WRJ Midwest District.

Our Sisterhood provides important opportunities for congregants to socialize, learn, and grow together. Through fundraisers, events, and programs, Sisterhood projects benefit its members, our synagogue, and the broader community.

Caring Community

Our Caring Community provides spiritual, emotional, and healing support to our member families in times of joy and in times of need. Our goal is for all members to feel valued, included, and supported. When we learn that a member is in need, a skilled volunteer will make contact to provide support and to assess that person's needs confidentially. We offer everything from a phone call and/or visit at home, hospital, rehab center, or nursing home when a member needs emotional support; meal delivery when a member would benefit from receiving a prepared meal; transportation assistance when a member requires either a ride to/from BJBE or to/from medical appointments; and more.



ISRAEL

At BJBE, Israel is not simply a committee or program; it is a core value. We express this through our commitment to educational symposiums, cultural events, a robust Hebrew curriculum for adults, and yearly congregational trips to Israel. We offer both adult and family trips, as well as a triennial pilgrimage for teens to Kolin, Czech Republic, birthplace of our Holocaust Torah scroll, followed by a visit to Israel. BJBE is proud to partner with such organizations as Jewish National Fund, Association of Reform Zionists of America (ARZA), and American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC).

I climbed to the top of Masada and looked out across the Dead Sea. I will always remember that and the friends from BJBE who shared it with me.

Israel/Kolin Teen Trip Participant

The impact this trip to Israel made on our family was huge! It felt like home to all of us. The children can't wait to go back. Our son wants to study in Israel, while our daughters want to go back for Bat Mitzvah trips. Being with other families was key, the kids could relate well to each other while experiencing and marveling in what they saw. Our group loved being together so much that they want to travel the world together - the bonds were that strong!

Member for 13 Years



Our Shared Sacred Partnership: Next Steps to Join Our Community

STEP 1: DISCOVER A NEW SENSE OF BELONGING AT BJBE

We all come to BJBE from different places, seeking different things. We all find a home here. At BJBE, we all belong. Our self-directed membership model is just one way that we welcome all congregants and foster a unique sense of belonging.

Our ultimate goal is to help you find a special sense of belonging and your own special entry point into Jewish life based on your particular passions—so that when you walk through it, your soul will sing, your spirit will soar, and in time, you will come face-to-face with your destiny.

STEP 2: LEARN MORE ABOUT BJBE

Inside this booklet is information about our mission and our community; in the accompanying booklet is information about our Shared Sacred Partnership. We are committed to providing you with everything you need to make an informed decision.

STEP 3: CONSIDER YOUR SSP COMMITMENT

We trust members to do what is right for their household and to consider an annual commitment that is affordable, meaningful, and in line with BJBE's financial needs. If you want to talk with us about your Shared Sacred Partnership commitment level, please contact Chime Costello, Executive Director, at ccostello@bjbe.org or 847.940.7575 to arrange a time to talk.

STEP 4: RETURN THE ENCLOSED COMMITMENT FORM

Your Shared Sacred Partnership commitment includes membership, other annual giving campaigns, and access to High Holy Day services; this means fewer distinct financial requests. Security fees, educational fees (b'nai mitzvah, JLC, and ECC), building maintenance fund, Sisterhood, some special events, and memorial giving will be paid separately, when applicable.

Ready to join our dynamic, welcoming congregation?

With any additional questions or to return your forms please email Chime Costello, Executive Director, at ccostello@bjbe.org or 847-940-7575, online at www.bjbe.org/membership, or mail to Congregation BJBE | Attn: Chime Costello | 1201 Lake Cook Road | Deerfield, IL 60015.