

VOICES

*Deep Roots,
New Growth*

VOICES

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Jewish Life Unfolding

By Rabbi Daniel Brenner



IN 1927, a small group of Jewish families gathered in a congregant's living room with a bold and hopeful idea: that Jewish life could take root and flourish here in Santa Barbara.

They could not have imagined the full story that would unfold over the next century. They could not have envisioned the beautiful campus we now call home, the generations of children who would grow up here, the music and prayer that would fill these spaces, or the thousands of families who would shape this community. But they believed deeply enough in the future to begin embodying the teaching from Pirkei Avot.

Lo alecha hamlacha ligmor, v'lo ata ben chorin l'hibateil mimena.

It is not our duty to complete the work, but we are likewise not free to desist from it.

Jewish communities do not survive automatically. They continue because people choose, over and over again, to invest in them with their time, generosity, leadership, and love. For ninety-nine years, this congregation has been sustained by that commitment.

I see it everywhere.



I see it in the joy and noise of Tot Shabbat, where young children dance, sing, and absorb the feeling that Judaism is something warm and alive. I see it in the seriousness of our learners—teenagers, adults, lifelong students—who continue to ask sacred questions and search for meaning together. I see it in the quiet dedication of those who show up regularly for prayer, not because life is simple, but because community and ritual help hold us steady through life's uncertainty.

I also see it in the ways our congregation continues to evolve. We are still exploring what our new campus can become and how Shabbat can inspire people in fresh and meaningful ways. There is something deeply healthy about that willingness to keep imagining. A congregation that stops dreaming about its future has already begun to lose part of itself.

And yet, for all the changes Jewish life continues to undergo, some things remain remarkably constant.

There is a photograph from my installation as Senior Rabbi that I cherish dearly. In it, Rabbi Cohen stands beside my family as we shared with the congregation that our daughter Nava was in remission from cancer. Every time I look at that image, I am reminded that a synagogue is not just an institution of Jewish life. It is a sacred community that carries people through life's deepest pain and greatest joy. It is a place where generations

Photos (L-R): Return of the Torahs to CBB; Rabbi Brenner at the MoBB BBQ



Photos: Rabbi Brenner's installation

stand beside one another. A place where no one is alone.

That is what I believe our predecessors were really building back in 1927.

Not only a synagogue, but a *Kehilah Kedosha*, a sacred community.

Of course, we enter our centennial at a complicated moment. The rise in antisemitism has shaken many of us. The broader instability of the world makes the future feel uncertain. At the same time, Jewish communities everywhere are wrestling with difficult questions about identity, belonging, and what younger generations will seek from Jewish life in the decades ahead.

The truth is, we do not fully know what Judaism will look like one hundred years from now. Neither did the families sitting in that Santa Barbara living room nearly a century ago.

What they understood—and what every generation of Jewish people here has understood since—is that our work is never complete. It is a reason to invest more deeply in community, relationships, learning, and purpose. Jewish continuity has never depended on perfect clarity about the future. It has depended on the willingness of people to keep showing up for one another and to believe that Jewish life matters enough to



carry forward. To not desist from the work.

As we prepare to celebrate Congregation B'nai B'rith's centennial next year, we will tell stories, honor the generations who came before us, and celebrate the remarkable community that has grown here over the last ninety-nine years. We should do all of that joyfully.

But I also hope we will recognize something deeper: that anniversaries are not only about looking backward. They are invitations to notice what is happening around us right now, and imagine what could yet come to be.

That is the real meaning of turning one hundred: not simply celebrating how long we have existed, but recommitting ourselves to the idea that Jewish life here is still unfolding—still growing, still adapting, still dreaming—and still worth building together a warm and vibrant house of living Judaism. ■



A Sanctuary to Call Home

By Cantor Mark Childs

IN CONTRAST TO the cathedral-like sanctuaries of Wilshire Boulevard Temple in LA or Temple Emanu-El in NYC or San Francisco, our Girsh-Hochman Sanctuary is quite humble. It does not inspire jaw-dropping awe. There is no cavernous echo. Missing is a loft from whence a hidden choir sings from on high accompanied by a pipe organ. It lacks a bimah distant and elevated above the congregation. And yet...

When visitors take a tour of our campus and enter our sanctuary, they consistently remark on the warmth and intimacy of the space. The chairs are comfortable and moveable, and everyone feels close to the bimah. The room is acoustically pleasing and provides an excellent venue for worship, concerts, assemblies, and programs. I am proud of our Girsh-Hochman Sanctuary

and deeply grateful to be back after our Building Dreams wanderings. As is often the case when we travel, returning home brings a sigh of relief, contentment, and appreciation.

While most of our campus was recently upgraded and rebuilt, the Girsh-Hochman Sanctuary was left virtually unaltered. It is now time to make some necessary upgrades to our technical infrastructure. When we were in residence at Trinity Lutheran, our online community became accustomed to (and spoiled by) the three-camera setup installed there. Upon our return to CBB we reverted to our single consumer-grade camcorder to provide the video. That camera is operated by hand (thank you Howard!) and has poor performance in low-light situations. We are in the process of installing three

remotely operated, high-quality pan-tilt-zoom (PTZ) cameras that will allow for multi-camera switching and very detailed definition. This will, of course, necessitate a make-up department for our clergy. While there is no substitute for attending our services and programs in-person, we recognize that there are many legitimate reasons for watching online. We truly want to make our offerings accessible to all.

Accessibility also extends to audio. We are rebuilding our sound system by replacing our aging and obsolete hardware with new technologies that will provide increased fidelity and flexibility in our spaces. This will include updated connections to your hearing aids via Bluetooth and your cellphones, allowing

Continued on page 34

Sacred Journeys

By Rabbi Maddy Anderson



DEATH AND MOURNING

are among the most difficult and yet the most universal of human

experiences. Most of us carry long lists in our hearts of those we have loved and lost. I have learned, both personally and pastorally, that grief does not end when shiva does.

In the first days after a death, we are surrounded by family, by community, by the structure of ritual. The meal of consolation is prepared. The minyan gathers. People show up at the door with food and with presence. But as the weeks of *sheloshim* give way to the longer months ahead, the calls slow down. The world moves forward.

Jewish tradition understands this. The architecture of our mourning practices is not arbitrary. We are taught to slowly step back into the world one week, one month, one year at a time. It is a structured yet flexible blueprint, built on the wisdom that significant loss requires

time to recalibrate, to process, to find our footing again. Our tradition asks us to feel our grief fully rather than push it aside.

Sacred Journeys is our congregation's commitment to honoring that blueprint in a living, human way. Brought to CBB by lay leader Toby Donner, who developed a similar program at her former synagogue, Sacred Journeys pairs trained congregant volunteers with mourners for the full year following a death. Volunteers reach out at key moments across the mourning calendar and are trained to listen without rushing, to sit with silence, to ask simply: *Can you tell me about your loved one?* And when deeper support is needed, they know how to gently open the door to clergy.

I have come to believe that spiritual care is less about providing answers and more about presence. It is about holding space for someone navigating uncertainty and helping them feel, even in the hardest moments, that they are not alone. That is what Sacred Journeys offers. Not solutions, but companionship. Not certainty, but community.

The *Kaddish Yatom*, the Mourner's Kaddish, is the thread that weaves our mourning practices together from the moment of burial through the end of time. Remarkably, it says nothing about death at all. Written in Aramaic so that all could understand it at the time, it is an act of praise and a declaration of defiance, trusting faith in the face of loss. The Kaddish is not recited alone, because it requires a community to answer. Sacred Journeys is an extension of that same truth—the belief that mourning was never meant to be a solitary act.

If you have experienced a loss and would like to be connected with a Sacred Journeys volunteer, please reach out to me or to the CBB office. And if you feel called to offer this kind of presence to others—to be the voice on the other end of the phone when the world has gone quiet for someone who is grieving—I would love to speak with you about becoming a volunteer.

Grief is a long journey, and at CBB, no one has to take that journey alone. ■



Letter from CBB's President

Governance for the Community

By Nick Woolf



HELLO FROM THE MIDPOINT of my two-year term as your President. My first year coincided with our move into the expanded, beautifully renovated campus, along with an explosion of activities that allow every member, if they wish, to join with others in enriching their involvement with Jewish

life at CBB. You need only scroll through the biweekly VOICES emails – which I hope you do – to easily find something appealing to participate in. And now, after many years of the enormous Building Dreams project followed by the search for a new Senior Rabbi, it has been a relatively calm year for the Board of Trustees. My focus in leading the Board this year has therefore been to take a breath and assess where we are and where we want to be.

The governance of CBB was designed long ago when the congregation was small, had no professional staff, and with Board members responsible for all that had to be accomplished. Our membership has now grown to over 850 families, and to managing the volume of activities we now offer has required a corresponding growth in professional staff. It is now a good time to review our governance structure to consider whether it continues to be well-suited to our large congregation and professional staff.

This is not an easy question to answer, particularly as 25 Jews, the current size of our Board, will always have more than 25 opinions. Therefore, an experienced facilitator from the Union of Reform Judaism led a CBB Board retreat last December. We learned a lot about best practices at similarly sized Reform congregations, and together we determined the priorities for

a majority of the Board members. We will now be spending my second year working on those priorities together.

One priority we determined at our recent retreat was to move towards a common practice in reform congregations, of making the Board a “community within a community.” Non-profit boards do not function in the same way as commercial boards, and the Boards of Reform congregations generally serve different purposes than non-profit boards. We are in part fiduciaries, responsible for the proper organization and administration of the synagogue. But we are also in part a representative group of our members in sacred partnership with one another for the benefit of both ourselves and the congregation as a whole. Recent years have required a primary focus on the first role. We now have the opportunity to spend some Board meeting time furthering the second. I hope and expect that gradually, both parts of our purpose will become equal, and that Board membership will be increasingly sought as a highly desirable and enjoyable way to contribute to our congregation.

In 2027, we will mark our first 100 years as a congregation. As we prepare for our centennial celebrations, I look forward to the coming year and hope to pass on to the next President a Board as well-functioning as was passed on to me. ■



The CBB Irving and Marlyn Bernstein Leadership Institute

By Aaron Ettenberg and Joni Meisel



SEVEN RABBIS AND TWO CANTORS AGO,

that's over four decades for those of you who were around back then, an important conversation was had about the need

to find the right people to populate the many important positions on our congregation's Board of Trustees. With the encouragement of Rabbi Rick Shapiro, who had only just joined CBB, the conversation took place between two prominent, dedicated and very active members of our congregation—Maryln Bernstein z"l and Joni Meisel. It was thought that what was needed was some form of leadership development course whose aim would be to work with a small cohort of CBB members nominated by the synagogue's leadership as having the potential to step up and serve the congregation in a more significant capacity.

Irving Bernstein, Marlyn's beloved husband, had recently passed and she saw this as an opportunity to honor his legacy by funding the cost of the program, and the *CBB Irving & Marlyn Bernstein Leadership Institute* was born.

In the early years, Joni organized and coordinated the program on her own, and in the decades that followed it became a team effort with Deborah Naish and/or Aaron Ettenberg working together or alongside Joni as co-Chairs of the Institute. The over-arching goals of the program have always been two-fold: first, to educate participants about the inner workings of the synagogue – its history, structure, and function; what does it take to operate the organization and



Photos (T-B): From left to right: Jim Sinai, Michelle Berkowitz, Robyn Young, Anna Burnbaum, Adam Karofsky, Alicia Beckett, Hillary Weintraub, Debbie Rehr, Carla Kiesler, Rabbi Maddy Anderson, standing at the back are co-leaders: Joni Meisel and Aaron Ettenberg

where does the money come from to do so? What is CBB's stated mission, our values? What educational programs do we have and what is the central role of music in our services?

The second of our two primary goals centers around the concept of leadership. How is it defined, both inside and outside the Jewish world? How are decisions made at CBB and who makes them? We discuss the importance of "shared governance" and "consensus building"? What are the different but overlapping roles of the staff, clergy and lay-leaders? What is the role of the Board of Trustees in the decision-making process.

Of course, this being a Jewish program, we begin each three-hour monthly session with a catered meal during which we discuss the session's agenda and address any lingering thoughts about prior topics. Classes are kept small (10-12 inquisitive souls) so that each participant can fully engage with the material, share ideas and ask questions. Over the course of the 6-8 month syllabus, we get to learn directly from our Rabbi and Cantor, from our Executive Director, our President and the Directors of our educational programming. As the leaders of the Institute, we work hard to plan what we hope will be an enjoyable, educational, and even inspirational experience for those who participate, and given the number of alumni who have subsequently taken on Board positions, Committee Chairs, and even Presidential duties, we must be doing something right. So thank you to the leadership team for continuing to support this important endeavor and to all the present, past and future participants whose time and energy make CBB the fabulous Jewish home that it has become. ■

Building Community at CBB

ONE OF THE STRENGTHS of our community is the many ways you can connect at CBB, through small circles or larger gatherings, with others who share common interests and experiences. The reflections below highlight some of our offerings.

If you would like to explore opportunities for connection, contact Rabbi Belle Michael, Director of Engagement and Community Programs, at belle@cbbbsb.org.

Doug Weinstein, Baking Traditions

Baking Traditions was born from the realization that delicious family food traditions were being lost with the loved ones who made them. Cataloging, preserving, and sharing those family baking and food traditions, in my humble opinion, is one way of keeping alive the memory of those we love while building new friendships and traditions of our own.

Carla Kiesler, Baking Traditions

“Baking Traditions” brings to mind my Nana Freda and Bubbe Jenny making challah, filling the kitchen with warmth, love, and comfort. This past year in the Judy Meisel Teaching Kitchen, I’ve baked with fellow CBB members, sharing family and Jewish recipes from near and far. Through food, we connect—over tea and mandelbrot, High Holy Day cookie trays for CBB’s neighbors, and Passover desserts. These moments strengthen our community and carry traditions across generations. In recent years, I’ve realized I want to focus my energy where it brings the most meaning: here at CBB, in its community, programs, and future.



Sebastian Fishman, MoBB

Ten years ago, a handful of men gathered to build community through faith. From that small beginning grew a vibrant men’s group, the Men of B’nai B’rith, a name coined by our own David Gaynes. MoBB welcomes all ages and stages of life, with no registration or membership. Participation is easy—just show up. Activities range from service projects and outdoor events to light-hearted fun (we are men, after all). We take ideas from the members and work together to make them happen, like organizing a Super Bowl watch party. Rooted in shared values and fellowship, this group remains focused on forging relationships with a commitment to our community.



Josh Symonds, Keshet

I came to Keshet looking for a place where being queer and being Jewish didn't need to be reconciled, as opposed to almost everywhere else in my life. What I found was more than that: a group that takes both seriously, where I can be exactly who I am. As a newer member, what's struck me most is the ease of belonging, the warmth that asks for no translation. CBB's tagline is about building together the House of Living Judaism. Keshet is one of its brightest rooms, and I've been grateful to step inside this year.

Kate Leader, Art

Before Rabbi Cohen retired, he asked me to lead discussions about what the beautiful new Seymour & Shirley Lehrer Art Studio could become for our community. Our goal was to make art opportunities available to ALL congregants, whether they called themselves artists or not.

We began with Open Studio, giving anyone a chance to work on their own project while connecting with like-minded people. From there we added workshops in watercolor and Jewish-themed art, an Artists' Social for exploring Santa Barbara's art scene, and a gorgeous exhibition of CBB artists that opened on May 18th. Building an art space is an evolution, and we are learning what works and what doesn't. We hope to see you there.



Mimi Meiselman, Mah jongg

Over the past year, the weekly Mahjong gathering has flourished from a small group into one of CBB's warmest communities. We are fortunate to have such a warm, inviting space, where beginners and experienced players come not just to play, but to connect. None of it would be possible without the dedication of CBB staff, leadership, Laura Habecker, Debbie Rehr, and Kiki and Bob Wells.

If you haven't joined us yet, come find us one Tuesday afternoon in Sara's Social Hall. The sound of tiles and laughter will guide you in.



Lisa Silverstone, Knitting Circle

I thoroughly enjoy Shabbat services and volunteer work I've done at CBB over the past several years, but I was looking for a deeper connection with people I could engage with in a more personal way. The Monday Knitting Circle filled this need. Each week, I look forward to seeing the same group, and the occasional new one. We've built a connection far exceeding "knit knitter, purl two." New knitters are celebrated as their skills improve, longtime knitters help beginners, and we all cheer on those who finish their first project. For me, it was a white sweater that I didn't finish this past winter, but I'll be warm next winter. We catch up on the week's events: home remodels, visits from children and grandchildren, travel plans. We have a genuine interest in each other's lives.

Attending Friday night services feels more like a community, there's always a smiling face, a hug, or a wave from across the sanctuary from someone I now get to call a friend.



Photos (L-R): Wings of Livnat; Mitzvah Day with first responders and blood drive



Tikkun Olam

By Rabbi Belle Michael



FOR THE PAST TWO YEARS, our central Tikkun Olam initiative, “**Our Family in Israel,**” has focused on supporting the survivors of Kibbutz Kfar Aza following the devastating events of October 7. This connection has taken shape through several deeply

impactful projects. One of the most memorable was the visit of eight women from Kfar Aza to Santa Barbara, offering our community the chance to create personal relationships and stand in solidarity. In Israel, we contributed to the creation of a *Healing Arts Center*—a space where residents can process trauma, express themselves creatively, and rebuild a sense of community. CBB also sent “Quilts of Love” handmade by CBB members, along with bathing suits for children, and art supplies. We also funded programs supporting the emotional well-being of their teens. As Kfar Aza continues to rebuild both physically and emotionally, our bond was honored as eight women from CBB traveled to Israel this year to plant a tree in the community symbolizing resilience, hope, and enduring connection.

Mitzvah Day brought our community together in a different but equally powerful way, centered on the urgent and sacred

responsibility of emergency preparedness. Rooted in the Jewish value of *pikuach nefesh*, the obligation to protect and preserve life, the day inspired hands-on acts of care and readiness. Community members donated blood, practiced CPR, assembled care kits for local shelters and emergency go-bags for seniors in our community, and thanked local first responders. Each action reflected a shared commitment to safeguarding one another in times of crisis.

Together, these and many other efforts highlight the essence of Tikkun Olam: repairing the world through both global connection and local responsibility. Whether standing with our extended family in Israel or caring for our neighbors at home, we are moved to act by the same values. These initiatives remind us that compassion, preparedness, and community are intertwined. Through meaningful action and enduring relationships, we strengthen the fabric of our community and help ensure that no one faces hardship alone. ■

If you would like to engage in Tikkun Olam at CBB, or explore opportunities for connection, please contact Rabbi Belle Michael, Director of Engagement and Community Programs, at belle@cbbbsb.org.

Sisters Solidarity Trip to Israel

By Janet Wolf, Executive VP

IN EARLY FEBRUARY, I traveled with seven extraordinary women from CBB to reconnect with our “sisters” from Kibbutz Kfar Aza. Before the trip, our Santa Barbara Sisters group had met twice, and while a few of us were friends, most were simply acquaintances. By the time Belle Michael, Julie Wood, Elizabeth Gaynes, Lisa Raphael, Melanie Freeman, Susan Percal, Tessa Kaganoff, and I left Israel nine days later, we had become a family.

We arrived at Ben Gurion Airport on February 10, 2026, and traveled to Beersheba, where we stayed in a beautiful home prepared for us with extraordinary care by our Kfar Aza sisters. That first evening, Jacqueline, our chef, welcomed us with a homemade Moroccan dinner and continued to nourish us throughout our stay. Every detail of the trip was thoughtfully

planned, creating a foundation of warmth and connection from the start.

The next day, we visited our sisters at Kibbutz Ruhama, where many are living temporarily. As we toured the kibbutz, including the Healing Arts Center and community spaces, they spoke candidly about their emotional journeys since October 7. Their honesty was both powerful and humbling.

Over the following days, we experienced the richness and complexity of southern Israel through cultural and educational visits. We explored Sderot’s food scene, stitched needlepoint alongside Ethiopian Israeli women, visited Ben-Gurion University, and learned about innovative PTSD treatment programs

for children. At Soroka Hospital, we witnessed the aftermath of the June 2025 Iranian missile strike, deepening our understanding of Israel’s resilience.

Shabbat was especially meaningful. Our Kfar Aza sisters prepared a beautiful dinner filled with tradition, music, and warmth. The next day, a severe sandstorm kept most of us indoors, where hours of conversation and reflection led to moments of remarkable openness and vulnerability.

The emotional weight of October 7

Continued on page 32



May Their Lives Be For a Blessing

June 2025 to June 2026

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Bernice Weider
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Adele Rosen
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Donald Smilovitz
David Nathan Zahler
Shirley Lehrer
Arlyn Goldsby
Barry Bienstock
Doris Medved
Jody Church
Robert Baum
May Karin
Arthur Kroot

*Ha'Makom yenakhem etkhem betokh she'ar avelei Tziyon v'Yerushalayim.
May God console you among the other mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.*

In Jewish tradition, memory is a sacred act. We honor those who have passed by speaking their names, sharing their stories, and carrying forward the values they brought to our community.

As we reflect on the losses of this past year, we hold these individuals and their loved ones in our hearts with compassion and gratitude. Judaism teaches that caring for one another through times of grief and transition is among our holiest responsibilities.

If you or someone you love has experienced a loss, or if you would like to begin conversations about preparing for end of life with dignity, meaning, and Jewish support, please know that our community is here for you. Please contact CBB to speak with a member of our Clergy team at 805-964-7869.



Photos (L-R): Bunco Night; Planting the Margaret Singer Memorial Garden.

Promise Kept: The Creation of "Nashim"

By Marcy Wimbish, Past President



WHEN Congregation B'nai B'rith's Sisterhood dissolved after years of dedicated service, its absence left a void in the heart of our community. Sisterhood had long been led by the beloved Bobbi Kroot, and after she passed away, the group slowly

faded. At the Friday night service honoring the women who had shaped Sisterhood, I felt the weight of that loss in our community. That evening, I made a promise to those women that we would bring Sisterhood back.

Years later, that promise has taken form as *Nashim*—the Hebrew word for “women.” Together with Ann Pieramici, CBB's Vice President of Programs, we envisioned Nashim as

a multigenerational affinity group that would engage women across backgrounds and interests. With staff input, we invited about twenty women of all ages to serve on an advisory committee and help shape what this new chapter might look like.

Our first event—a lively Bunco night—filled the new CJL library with laughter and connection, bringing together women spanning five decades. Since then, Nashim has hosted a wellness program, a community hike, and a Tu B'Shevat planting of a beautiful lavender garden behind the preschool in memory of Margaret Singer. On Mitzvah Day, we came together to assemble emergency go bags for distribution to senior members in our community. In May, Nashim took on a fun challenge: *Trivia Night—Men of B'nai B'rith vs. Nashim*. It was a joy to bring these two groups together for a night of friendly competition and laughter. The Nashim events are always listed in CBB's Voices emails, so please look for our promotions and join us. Women of all ages are welcome!

We're especially grateful to our generous sponsor, Art Kroot z”l, Bobbi's husband, whose support has honored her legacy and enabled Nashim events to date to be free of charge for participants.

Nashim represents more than just a new group: it is the fulfillment of a promise, a bridge between generations, and a celebration of the vibrant women who continue to nurture the spirit of CBB. ■

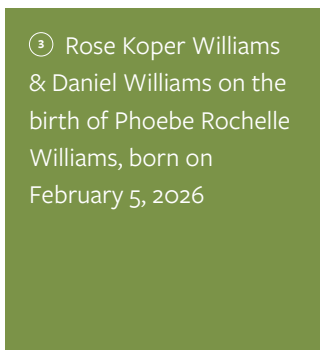
Mazel Tov! *In Our Lives*



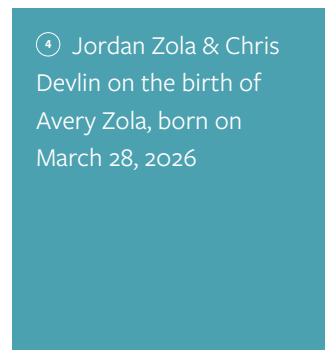
① Jasmine & Cameron Nelson and older siblings Avi & Aria on the birth of Adi Nelson, born on April 9, 2026



② Mia Winthrop Haber & Daniel Haber and older brother Eli on the birth of Julian Sage Haber, born on April 9, 2026



③ Rose Koper Williams & Daniel Williams on the birth of Phoebe Rochelle Williams, born on February 5, 2026



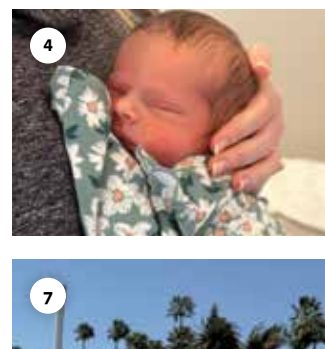
④ Jordan Zola & Chris Devlin on the birth of Avery Zola, born on March 28, 2026



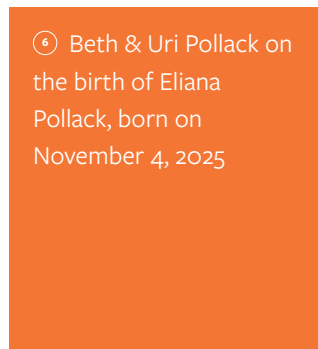
⑤ Hannah and Steve Kezian on the birth of Clark Kezian on January 19, 2026



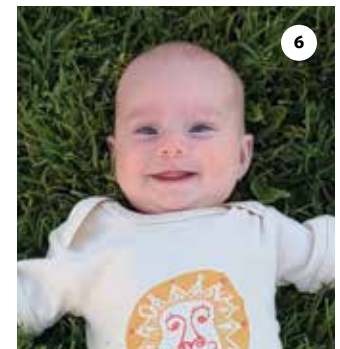
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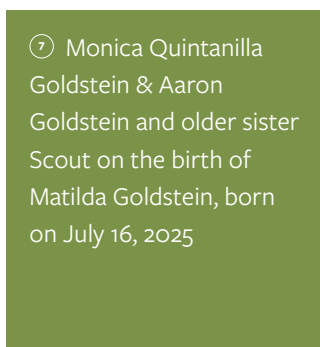
④



⑥ Beth & Uri Pollack on the birth of Eliana Pollack, born on November 4, 2025



⑥



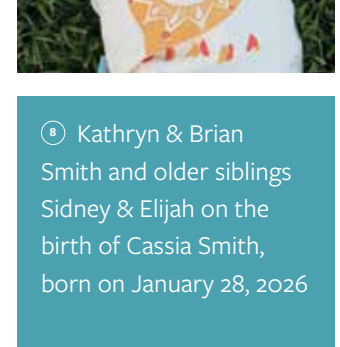
⑦ Monica Quintanilla Goldstein & Aaron Goldstein and older sister Scout on the birth of Matilda Goldstein, born on July 16, 2025



⑦



⑧



⑧ Kathryn & Brian Smith and older siblings Sidney & Elijah on the birth of Cassia Smith, born on January 28, 2026

⑨ Sarah Buck & Gad
Girling on the birth of
Tuesday Girling, born on
May 3, 2025



⑩ Rose & Jason Levy
and older sister Scarlett
on the birth of Norah
Levy, born on July 16,
2025



⑪ Sara & Elliott Winder on
the birth of Maximus Winder,
born on October 30, 2025

⑫ Rebecca & Eric Duncan
and older sister Hope on the
birth of Ezra Duncan, born on
September 29, 2025



⑬ Orly & Grant Aaron and
older sister Eden on the birth
of Lilien "Lily" Aaron, born on
June 20, 2025

⑭ Shaina & Anjuli Semiatin
and older sister Adriel on the
birth of Elias Semiatin, born
on June 7, 2025



⑮ Rachel Cohen &
Zachary Eilon and older
sister Laila on the birth
of Noa Eilon-Cohen, born
on September 6, 2025



⑯ Jessica & Michael
Lightfoot and older sister
Evelyn on the birth of
Edward Ellis Lightfoot,
born on October 1, 2025



⑰ Michelle & Matthew
Simpson and older sister Tahlia
on the birth of Asher James
Simpson, born May 16, 2026

⑱ Michelle Berkowitz & Shane
Holt and older sister Ora on
the birth of Estie Ariella Holt,
born on April 17, 2026





Youth Education: BHY

By Serena Zahler, BHY Trustee



BEIT HAYELADIM PRESCHOOL is delighted to use our brand new, state-of-the-art playground built during Building Dreams for outdoor education! We spend the majority of our day outside and the new playground makes learning outdoors

a wonderful experience for all. The Noah's Ark climbing structure is the centerpiece of the landscape, representing Torah and Jewish learning, on the only Jewish-themed playground in Santa Barbara.

Two large yards offer open spaces for teacher led activities, for children to run, ride, climb, throw, kick, and slide, developing their large motor skills. Other impressive and popular features are the water tables with built-in pumps, nestled against huge sandboxes provide rich sensory experiences and are a playful nod to Santa Barbara's beach culture. The families and students of BHY are deeply grateful for the opportunity to play and learn in this beautiful Jewish setting every day.

"The new water play elements have been amazing, not only on hot days, but because they are accessible to all, promote fine motor skills, cooperation, and imaginative play! Ezra says he loves playing with his friends in the play yard so much!"

—Melissa Avila, mother of Ezra



“Since the new playground has opened, my daughter’s ability to confidently ride the scooters and bikes available at BHY has skyrocketed which has translated to evening scooter or bike rides at home. I love that she is able to practice these skills at school while also learning about safety, turn taking and being aware of others in her environment”

—Michelle Berkowitz, mother of Ora

“It’s truly a joy hearing from Shiloh on our car ride home how she and her classmates played on Noah’s ark...sometimes recreating the Torah story, other times hide and seek or becoming new characters going on far off adventures while playing on and within the ark. They are not just internalizing Noah’s story of resilience, but also using the playground as a foundation for imaginative and creative play”

—Serena Zahler, mother of Shiloh



L'Taken Teen Trip

By Rabbi Maddy Anderson

THIS PAST WINTER, I traveled with eight of our teens to Washington, D.C. to participate in the Bernard and Audre Rapoport L'Taken Social Justice Seminar, a program run by the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism. *L'Taken*, meaning "to repair" in Hebrew, brings Jewish teens from across the country

together to learn about pressing public policy issues and advocate directly with their elected officials on Capitol Hill.

Our group chose to focus on three critical issues: banning assault weapons, protecting the climate, and access to mental healthcare in schools. The teens spent the weekend deepening their

knowledge, grounding their advocacy in Jewish values, and crafting passionate speeches to deliver to their Senators and Representatives. The experience was transformative.

Beyond the advocacy work, the teens visited the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and the National Museum of African American History and Culture, powerful reminders of why the work of justice and repair matters. All of this while connecting with Reform Jewish peers nationwide who share their commitment to tikkun olam, repairing the world. ■

"Our trip to Washington, D.C. taught me that our country's issues are complex and we can and should work together to make them right."

—Jacob



Confirmation Trip to San Francisco

By Sadie Dent

MY CONFIRMATION CLASS spent much of the year planning a trip to San Francisco, where we stayed at a Jewish farm, Urban Adamah. While the weekend included fun activities around the city, it offered something more meaningful: the chance to truly bond with one another.

Being away from our usual routines and consciously putting our phones away, allowed for deeper conversations and real connection. Whether playing card games late at night or singing along to guitar, these small moments became the most meaningful. They allowed me to get to know my peers in a more genuine and personal way.

A highlight of the weekend was our Torah study with Rabbi Brenner, which grounded our experience in reflection to our Jewish identities. Rabbi led us through the PARDES method of Torah study, guiding us through layers of meaning within the Torah portion. The Shabbat service we attended at Urban Adamah was a unique, community-centered experience. During the service, we danced and sang together, reflected in the garden during the Amidah, and shared fresh challah afterward.

This trip was especially significant for me because this was not my original b'mitzvah class. While I skipped a year in school, I continued with my CBB class through my Bat Mitzvah. I feel lucky to have formed meaningful connections with my new CBB classmates. I also think this trip was

Continued on page 34



Jewish Learning Programs Come to Life

By Leah Savage, Director of JLP



WHEN OUR kindergarten through twelfth grade students descend on the new Zegar Family Center

for Jewish Life, it is filled with noise. Discussions, singing, and laughter fill the air, along with the dull thud of knives hitting cutting boards, the swishing of paintbrushes on canvases, the thump of a ball hitting the wall of the gaga court.

The students in our Jewish Learning Programs experience Jewish life in many different ways at CBB. This past year, our kindergarteners cooked recipes highlighting the seven species of Israel while they learned about Moses's twelve spies, when learning about life in Israel. While standing before the Burning Bush, Moses was told to take off his shoes because he was standing on holy ground, so our first and second graders

ran a shoe drive to help those who don't have shoes. Our third grade students made puppets and staged a Purim puppet show. While learning the story of the binding of Isaac, our fifth graders braided their own set of tzitzit. Our high school students crafted their own mezuzah cases in the Seymour & Shirley Lehrer Art Studio, and in the Judy Meisel Teaching Kitchen, they made charoset recipes from around the world. Every student in every grade delved into Jewish learning this year not just by listening, but by doing.

In the CJL, our students experience a life in which Judaism infuses everything they do: Jewish art, Jewish cooking, discussions guided by Jewish ethics, and of course Jewish prayer. The best part is they do all of this surrounded by Jewish friends. ■

"I really enjoyed making spanakopita in the kitchen, and I liked doing trope class with Cantor and t'filah in the library."
—Orelya, 6th grade

"My favorite thing I've done in the CJL this year is cooking and eating this delicious food that we made."
—Grady, kindergarten

"We're excited to make Sh'ma pillows in class."
—Jaden and Chloe, 1st grade

"My favorite thing this year in the CJL has been seeing all the little kids running around and playing with the new things!"
—Hazel, 3rd grade

"I loved seeing my brother get his Golden Alef tag in the library during t'filah."
—Eva, 6th grade

"I really liked cooking food in the kitchen."
—Peyton, kindergarten

Dreams Come True

By Elizabeth Gaynes, Executive Director



FOR NEARLY A DECADE, Congregation B'nai B'rith has been engaged in an extraordinary act of faith, vision, and community-building. On June 22, 2025, we gathered to celebrate the completion of Building Dreams—a transformative campus renewal project that will shape

Jewish life in Santa Barbara for generations to come.

As I looked around our Girsh-Hochman Sanctuary that afternoon, I felt overwhelming gratitude. Gratitude for the leadership that carried this project forward through years of uncertainty. Gratitude for the generosity of hundreds of donors. Gratitude for the volunteers, clergy, staff, consultants, architects, and builders who poured their hearts into this effort. And gratitude for a congregation that never stopped believing in the importance of creating a vibrant Jewish home for the future.

Building Dreams began in 2015 with a question: What kind of congregation did we want to become for the next generation? What followed was ten years of planning, fundraising, designing, problem-solving, and perseverance. Along the way, we navigated changing priorities, escalating construction costs, a global pandemic, and the enormous logistical challenge of temporarily relocating much of congregational life while construction was underway.

And yet, throughout it all, this community kept showing up.

More than 780 gifts were made to the Capital Campaign, representing an extraordinary level of participation and commitment. Some families made the largest philanthropic

gifts of their lives. Others volunteered countless hours serving on committees, packing classrooms and offices, hosting meetings and events, and helping us maintain continuity while our campus was transformed around us.

The result is far more than a renovated campus. It is a reimagined center for Jewish life.

Today, our campus includes welcoming gathering spaces, vibrant learning environments, beautiful outdoor plazas, new creative and program spaces, and renewed areas designed to foster connection, celebration, learning, spirituality, and community. Every corner reflects thoughtful planning and deep care for the future of CBB.

Every gift of \$18 or more received recognition on our donor wall, and many new and existing spaces on campus were dedicated.

We are especially grateful to the donors who provided gifts that named major spaces on campus:

Zegar Family Center for Jewish Life

Sara Miller McCune Social Hall

Etty & Albert Yenni Plaza

Daniel & Mandy Hochman Plaza

Shirley & Seymour Lehrer Art Studio

Judy Meisel Teaching Kitchen

Levine Leadership Hub

Michael Towbes Promenade

Continued on page 34



Building Dreams *together*

THE BUILDING DREAMS PROJECT included the creation of a brand new, state-of-the-art Zegar Family Center for Jewish Life (CJL). As part of our ongoing investment in the vibrancy and sustainability of the CJL, the Board of Trustees created two new funds to support programming, staffing, and community engagement in both the immediate and long-term future.

1. Center for Jewish Life Current Use

Fund: Immediate, flexible financial support for the Center for Jewish Life over the next 3-5 years.

2. Center for Jewish Life Enduring Impact

Fund: This fund will grow over time, with the corpus protected, and distributions will begin after an initial five-year period.

If you would like to learn more about contributing to these funds, please contact Elizabeth Gaynes, Executive Director, at elizabeth@cbbsb.org.





Children of the Covenant: Legacy Giving at Congregation B'nai B'rith

At CBB, we believe in planting seeds today so that future generations may reap the blessings of Jewish life tomorrow.

***“Just as my ancestors planted for me,
I too am planting for my descendants”***

— Babaloynia Talmud, Ta'anit 23a

Legacy giving through our **Children of the Covenant** program is an act of sacred responsibility—a way to ensure that our community, our values, and our shared spiritual home continue to thrive for decades to come. By planning to make a legacy gift, you become part of an enduring chain of tradition, linking past, present, and future. Whether through a bequest, a beneficiary designation, or another planned gift, your commitment helps secure the future of Jewish learning, worship, and community at CBB. You join others who have lovingly made a plan for tomorrow—so that the Children of the Covenant (B'nai B'rith) may always have a place to gather, learn, and grow in Jewish life.

For more information about Children of the Covenant, visit cbbsb.org/cotc. If you have questions, or would like to learn more, please contact Naomi Kovacs, Director of Development, at naomi@cbbsb.org or 805-964-7869 x106.



Our sincere gratitude to the members of the Children of the Covenant

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 Marlyn Bernard Bernstein*
 Judy & Burt Bernstein
 Louise Blumberg-Wyner & Alan* Wyner
 Rabbi Daniel Brenner & Felicia Palmer
 Helga R. Carden*
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 Rabbi Ira Youdovin
 *Of blessed memory

2026 Jewish Heritage Trip with Rabbi Brenner

By Elayne Klasson



THERE WERE as many reasons as people when twenty-three of us signed up for the Congregation B'nai B'rith trip to Poland and the

Czech Republic. My husband David and I wanted to know more about the history of Jews in pre-war Eastern Europe. We wanted to answer lingering questions about how this near-destruction of our people could have happened. Relative newcomers to Santa Barbara, we also knew that traveling with our Rabbi and other CBB temple members would surely strengthen our growing bond with our Jewish community. But for many others in the group, children and grandchildren of victims and survivors of

the Holocaust, there were more direct connections to the Shoah. For these people, the trip was even more emotional.

I'm a writer and a big reader. I thought I knew a lot about the Jews and World War II. However, seeing the streets and towns our people lived in and for so many, perished in, was a different experience. Smelling and eating the foods, like the ruby red beet borscht and crispy piroshki of my childhood (my mother was from Ukraine), having our hearts broken touring the Warsaw Ghetto, Majdanek, Auschwitz, Birkenau Camps in Poland and Terezin in the Czech Republic, then ultimately having our hearts somewhat put back together



by meeting the leaders of burgeoning Jewish communities in Eastern Europe, was not like reading a book.

I have many pages of notes from this ten-day trip. Here are just a few highlights.

On the first day we landed in Warsaw, I was forced to examine my prejudices about the Poles. Within an hour of exploring this very attractive city, I





realized that the Polish people of the 1940s were not the same as the Poles we were encountering in 2026. This date, April 19, commemorated the Warsaw Ghetto uprising of 1943. Yellow paper daffodils, handed out by hundreds of volunteers blanketing the city that Sunday, were worn on almost every lapel. The yellow daffodil was not only a remembrance of those who perished in the Ghetto in 1943, but as a symbol that modern-day Polish Jews are emerging from the darkness of the past. The Jewish Community is experiencing a rebirth. This message was reiterated by the Chief Rabbi of Poland, Michael Schudrich, who we were honored to be introduced to by Rabbi Brenner. The number of Jews is increasing in modern Poland. Young people are learning about their roots and returning to their religion. Inspiringly, we heard this message again by Jonathan

saying Shehecheyanu". Jonathan's stirring words were one of hope. Each week, the Krakow JCC welcomes more and more to Shabbat, while also daily feeding hundreds of Ukrainian refugees and elderly survivors. Holocaust survivors are celebrated each year in June by a bike ride from the JCC to Auschwitz. Judaism is alive and well in Krakow.

In the Czech Republic, there were other contrasts of mourning and hope. We remembered and helped temple member Julia Smith grieve her late and beloved grandmother, visiting her family's former home in Brno. And, in a gesture of hope for the future, we were able to plant a cherry tree in the center of the Czech town of Pribram, near the



Ornstein, the CEO of the Krakow JCC. Outside the JCC are the words, "Come to say Kaddish, leave

memorial to Jews killed by the Nazis. CBB member Judy Mannaberg, whose family is Czech, was instrumental in forging the connection between Pribram and CBB. Our temple holds and has restored the Czech Memorial Torah Scroll from Pribram, circa 1875. Judy led us in a meaningful ceremony of tree planting as well as honoring Pribram's town officials who are preserving the memory of the Jews transported from the town during the Holocaust.

It would have been easy to feel overwhelmed by the numbers—the loss of two-thirds of Europe's Jews. Yet, somehow with the wisdom and guidance of Rabbi Daniel, the introductions made to Eastern European leaders helping to reinvigorate Judaism, and most of all, the warmth and connections made with the other CBB travelers, I came away seeing the complexity of the story of the past, the present, and the future of the Jews of Eastern Europe. Like the yellow daffodils worn in Warsaw, I saw hope for our people. ■

We Welcome Our New Members

June 2025 to June 2026

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Frances Tiger

Sara & Eliot Winder

Teresa Kuskey & Frederick Oshay

Jerry Millstein & Terri Cook



MEMBERSHIP MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Thank you for joining our community, for participating, and for contributing time, energy, and financial support! For information about membership, please contact Laura Habecker, Director of Membership, at laura@cbsb.org or 805-964-7869 x104.

Already a member?

You can renew your membership for 2026/27 online at cbsb.org/current-members



“Membership Makes a Difference!”

CBB is a Reform Jewish synagogue located in the gorgeous foothills of Santa Barbara. Incorporated in 1927, CBB’s roots began with just 15 families. Today we are proud that more than 850 diverse families and individuals call CBB their Jewish home.

Whether you made the decision to join the temple recently, or you are a longtime member, and everyone in between, your presence helps make CBB the strong, inclusive, and joyful congregation we are today.

Being a member of CBB is more than just a financial contribution—it’s a trusted relationship. In these challenging times, it is profoundly meaningful to be part of something that uplifts Jewish values, nurtures community, and brings light and purpose into the world. Together, we are building a spiritual home grounded in belonging, compassion, shared experience, and celebration.

We welcome everyone who wants to be a part of CBB’s community and we know that each person who walks through the door is unique. We have an open door policy, which means that most of our programs are open to the community. Getting involved is the best way to meet people, make friends, and discover what activities strengthen your Jewish identity and help you build community.

If you’d like to discuss membership, please contact Laura Habecker, Director of Membership, at laura@cbbbsb.org or 805-964-7869 x104.



Many thanks to everyone who came out, donned their western wear, and showed up for a stellar cause: CBB's learning programs and operations!

A huge tip of our hats to our event sponsors:

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Horseshoe Challah



Leadership Giving

Each gift of time, talent, and treasure helps sustain the welcoming spirit at the heart of our CBB community. Whether through volunteering, lending expertise, or providing financial support, every contribution makes a meaningful difference.

To our Leadership donors, your generosity helps ensure that our doors remain open to all—creating a community where everyone is welcomed, valued, and able to participate regardless of financial circumstance. Because of your commitment, we can continue to nurture connection, learning, worship, and care for one another for generations to come.

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Listing reflects all tax-deductible contributions during the 2025/26 membership year, as of June 15, 2026.

**Of blessed memory*

Giving Feels Great!

As we begin a new year together, your generosity helps Congregation B'nai B'rith continue to thrive as a vibrant, welcoming Jewish community. By making CBB a philanthropic priority, you are not only supporting our congregation today, you are helping to strengthen our Jewish home for generations to come.

Below are some of the CBB Special Funds that offer support to our programs and community. If you are interested in sponsoring a program, creating a legacy gift, or establishing a new fund to support an area of passion, we would love to start a conversation with you. Together, we can help shape the future of CBB and our community.

Allow CBB the flexibility to support the areas of greatest need

General Fund

Secure the future for generations to come

General Endowment

Center for Jewish Life (CJL) Endowment Fund

Cantorial Endowment

Empower CBB's leaders

Clergy Discretionary Funds

Executive Director's Discretionary Fund

Repair the world

Tikkun Olam Fund

Mitzvah Day

Care for our community when they are in greatest need

Chevra Kadisha

Etty Yenni Jewish Community Support

Support youth education

Beit HaYeladim Preschool (Special Projects & Scholarships)

Jewish Learning Programs (Special Projects & Scholarships)

Temple Youth Group

Teen Travel Fund

Support culture, arts, and music

Center for Jewish Life (CJL) Current Use Fund

Gayle Rosenberg Fund (supports SML speaker series)

Harold and Sylvia Oreskes Music Fund

To learn about giving to CBB, visit cbbsb.org/give or contact Elizabeth Gaynes, Executive Director, at elizabeth@cbbsb.org.



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you to hear the sound more clearly and at your own volume, without making the room louder for everyone else.

I won't burden you with the details of the brains of the sound; a new mixing board, processors, computers, and more all need replacing. Suffice it to say that the upgrades require considerable funds. We are grateful to the congregants who have already given us donations to underwrite these upgrades. If you enjoy the benefits of participating via Zoom or livestream, please consider contributing to the Oreskes Music Fund. Technology is always changing and is never inexpensive.

Looking forward to the coming year, please expect many enriching opportunities for gathering in our Girsh-Hochman Sanctuary. As I write this, new musical commissions are being written for our congregation and will premiere in our lovely sacred space. Lectures and educational events are filling the calendar. And as always, we gather in prayer each week on Shabbat. It's good to be home! ■

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became especially real during our visit to the Nova Festival site. And yet, later that day at the Home of the Wounded Warrior, we danced with veterans in wheelchairs to "Am Yisrael Chai," a moment of profound joy amid deep sorrow.

At Kibbutz Kfar Aza, we witnessed both devastation and resilience: homes marked by violence beside others being rebuilt. On our final day in Beersheba, we planted a tree at Kfar Aza, a symbolic act of renewal and hope.

Our last days in Tel Aviv felt different. After such intense connection, being

alone in a hotel room, separated from my Santa Barbara sisters, felt unsettling.

We returned home on February 19, and just days later, war broke out again. We quickly reconvened at my house and reached out to our sisters in Israel. Once again, we found ourselves leaning on one another for support.

This journey changed me in ways I couldn't have imagined. It deepened my connection to Israel and Judaism and strengthened a sisterhood that will remain with me forever. ■

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particularly meaningful for many of my classmates, whose b'mitzvah year fell during Covid.

In the years to come, when I walk through the synagogue and see the Confirmation Class of 2026's photo on the wall, I will be reminded of the relationships and memories we made on this trip. ■

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The June ribbon-cutting and dedication ceremony gave us an opportunity to pause and celebrate the many people who made this possible. Rabbi Steve Cohen reflected on the remarkable journey that brought us to this moment. Campaign leaders Diane Zipperstein, Steven Amerikaner, and Nancy Sheldon were recognized for guiding a successful capital campaign. Project co-chairs Martie Levy and Judi Koper were honored for shepherding the design and construction process from beginning to end with wisdom, patience, and extraordinary dedication.

We also celebrated the many professionals and project partners whose talents helped bring the vision to life—from Blackbird Architects and Schipper Construction to

the Tynan Group, Montecito Bank & Trust, and the many consultants, subcontractors, and local partners who became part of our extended CBB family during these years.

Perhaps most importantly, the celebration reminded us that Building Dreams was never simply about buildings. It was about creating beautiful, sacred, and meaningful space for community.

Over this past year, as we returned fully to campus life, we have had the joy of watching these spaces come alive. We have celebrated holidays, lifecycle events, worship services, classes, concerts, preschool activities, meetings, community gatherings, and countless informal moments of connection. We have continued fine-tuning the campus and learning how these new spaces can best serve our growing and evolving congregation.

And now, the campus is busier than ever.

Seven days a week, children are learning here, congregants are gathering here, friendships are being formed here, and Jewish life is flourishing here. The energy on campus has affirmed what so many people believed from the very beginning: that investing in community matters.

Building Dreams required enormous effort and sacrifice from many people over many years. Yet standing in our renewed spaces today, watching our community thrive, it is clear the investment was worthwhile.

This project was built not only for ourselves, but for future generations—for the children who will learn here, the families who will celebrate here, the friendships that will grow here, and the sacred moments that will unfold here for decades to come.

We called this project Building Dreams. Today, those dreams are alive. ■



Congregation B'nai B'rith

Established in 1927,
2027 will mark 100 years of Jewish Life
at Congregation B'nai B'rith!

We plan to celebrate **ALL YEAR LONG!**

www.cbbsb.org/100-years

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CONGREGATION B'NAI B'RITH
LED BY RABBI DANIEL BRENNER
NOVEMBER 7-16, 2027



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CONGREGATION B'NAI B'RITH

High Holy Days

2026

Saturday, September 5

Selichot

Friday, September 11

Erev Rosh Hashanah

Saturday, September 12

Rosh Hashanah

Sunday, September 20

Kol Nidre

Monday, September 21

Yom Kippur

We look forward to welcoming everyone to CBB for High Holy Days this year as we gather in community, reflection, and celebration.

Visit cbbsb.org/hhd for details.

OUR MISSION

Congregation B'nai B'rith is a diverse, inclusive community of individuals and families building together a warm and vibrant house of living Judaism.

