



BETH CHAVERIM



HUMANISTIC JEWISH COMMUNITY



What's Happening at Beth Chaverim

Ma Nishmah

Saturday, April 6th - Feed My Starving Children

Sunday, April 7th - Sunday School Resumes

Saturday, April 13th - Charoset Making Program

Sunday, April 14th - Maot Chitim Passover Food Packages Delivery

Wednesday, April 17th - Book Group

Sunday, April 21st - Chocolate Seder

Tuesday, April 23rd - Second Night Community Seder

Sunday, May 5th - Sunday School Ends

Saturday, June 8th - Wine and Cheese Shavuot

Sunday, June 30th - St. Paul's Soup Kitchen



You can find all of this information & more on our [website](#) under [“News & Events”](#)

Beth Chaverim Steering Committee

President - Carolyn Lewis

Secretary - Steve Rusnak

Treasurer - Deb Rusnak

Past President - Deb Rusnak

Members at Large - Dan Lewis, Alan Solid, and Rachelle Durrer

When Two Things are True

This month we will celebrate the holiday of Passover. It is the most celebrated holiday on the Jewish calendar by American Jews, and there are more editions of the Haggadah than any other Jewish book. Reflective of American Jews' overwhelming embrace of Passover, of all the Jewish holidays, Passover is the only one almost exclusively known in America by its English name rather than its Hebrew name of Pesach. It is a curious combination of two things: a narrative that we know not to have happened as there is no evidence for an enslaved Hebrew population in Egypt nor a mass exodus AND the celebration widely marked with a seder that retells that narrative. Yet we experience no cognitive dissonance over this. We can easily hold both things as true because we have embedded in our collective DNA the memory of a story told for generations. Indeed Judaism is a religion of memory and our stories are the repository of that memory. As storyteller Susan Stone recently told our Sunday School students when asked if the stories she told were real, "all stories are real" and she could have just as easily added even if they are not true. There are eternal truths of the story that we highlight as its central theme of freedom resonates through the ages. We can understand tiny imprisonments that hold us back from achieving what we can, and unthinkable imprisonments that continue as of this writing as 134 Israelis remain hostage in Gaza.

The ability to hold two things at the same time as true demonstrates our wisdom and our compassion. We need to strive to abide by "yes and" instead of "no but." Our core Humanistic Jewish value of human dignity does not come with an asterisk that adds but only if the human is Jewish. We would be sorry humanists and Jews if that were the case. Our world is fraught with complexities, polarization and conflict. Perhaps one way to overcome these things is to go back to another core value, respect. We do not need to agree with one another but we need to respect one another. We do not need to align ourselves with others but we need to see the humanity in others. We do not need to make unnecessary or unreasonable compromises in our beliefs because integrity is yet another core Humanistic Jewish value but we need to attempt to understand another's point of view. Humanistic Judaism provides a theological framework that allows us to hold two things as true at the same time. At times of deep sorrow, we nonetheless have the capacity to experience great joy. At times of great personal joy, we have the capacity for empathy for those who are suffering. The Passover seder includes a physical manifestation of this notion as we diminish our cup of wine ten times to remember the suffering even of our ancestral oppressors. My seder may not look like yours but I'm quite certain that we can agree on the personal meaning we each derive from it.

Let us pledge to ourselves and one another that we will do all we can to uplift those we can reach. Let us use this season of renewal as a time to recommit ourselves to making our world a better place. And let the message of Passover, the message of freedom, be closer to reality in the coming year.

B'shalom, Rabbi Jodi 

Beth Chaverim Mission Statement

Beth Chaverim is a place for individuals and families to explore their Jewish heritage and traditions, to learn to think critically and independently about religious and theological issues, and to develop meaningful and relevant Jewish identities through education.

President's Column

As the vibrant colors of spring begin to bloom around us, we find ourselves surrounded by the beauty of renewal and growth. In the heart of Beth Chaverim Humanistic Jewish Community, the spirit of Humanistic Judaism flourishes like the blossoms of spring, bringing vibrancy, meaning, and a unique sense of purpose to each individual. In our community, we celebrate the beauty of diverse human experiences, valuing the uniqueness that each person brings to our shared tapestry. The uplifting essence of Humanistic Judaism lies in its unwavering commitment to human dignity and the flourishing of the human spirit.

As Humanistic Jews, we find inspiration in the inherent worth and potential of every individual. This positive philosophy encourages us to explore the depths of our identities, embracing our diverse backgrounds, beliefs, and personal narratives. It's a celebration of authenticity and the rich mosaic that forms when we come together in solidarity and respect.

In the embrace of our community, we lift one another up, offering support, understanding, and a sense of belonging. Whether we are celebrating life's joys or navigating its challenges, the core spirit of Humanistic Judaism is our guiding light. It prompts us to ask meaningful questions, seek knowledge, and continually evolve on our individual and collective journeys.

Forming a supportive bond within our congregation involves fostering a sense of community, shared values, and meaningful connections. Though we are a small community, we are certainly a mighty one, and we can continue to strengthen our bonds through our shared involvement.

Community building events bring members together outside of formal services: social gatherings, potlucks, cultural outings, or community service activities; offering opportunities for members to interact in a relaxed setting can help build personal connections.

Discussion groups facilitate shared learning around topics relevant to Humanistic Judaism including ethical dilemmas, personal journeys, or explorations of humanist philosophy. Learning together fosters a sense of intellectual engagement and provides a platform for members to explore their beliefs and values collectively.

Open dialogue allows members to share their perspectives and deepen their understanding of one another.

Acknowledging and celebrating significant life events within the congregation help us recognize and support one another during these moments, and a sense of unity and caring is reinforced. Our community support network expands into a wider network for mutual support during challenging times. Members can offer assistance, whether it's practical help, emotional support, or companionship. Knowing that there's a community to turn to in times of need strengthens the sense of belonging.

President's Column (Continued.)

Participating in acts of kindness and social justice as a group not only benefits the wider community but also strengthens the bonds among our Beth Chaverim community who share a commitment to making a positive impact.

Developing inclusive rituals and traditions that reflect the humanistic values of the congregation include ceremonies for life events, holidays, or meaningful milestones. Crafting shared rituals reinforces a sense of identity and unity within our community.

Establishing effective communication channels, such as these newsletters, social media groups, and our congregation website, keeps members informed about community events, updates, and opportunities for involvement. Clear communication fosters a sense of connection and engagement.

With this structure, our congregation can continue to cultivate a supportive bond, creating a vibrant and connected community centered around shared values and a commitment to human dignity. The beauty of being a Humanistic Jew lies in the empowerment to shape our own destinies, informed by our shared commitment to human values. In the uplifting embrace of our community, we discover strength, resilience, and the collective power to create a world that reflects the principles of justice, compassion, and the flourishing of every human life. Together, we forge ahead, inspired by these ideals that make Humanistic Judaism a beacon of hope and positivity in our lives.



Rewind! The Beth Chaverim community circa 2016

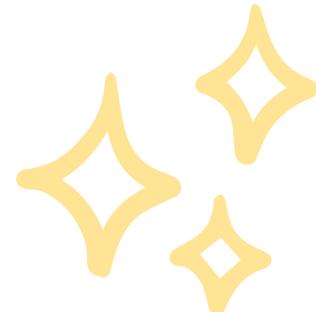
● ● ● ● ● Carolyn Lewis ● ● ● ● ●

What's Happening at Beth Chaverim – Ma Nishmah

Mazel Tov

Linda and Rich Horn on the birth of their grandson Hugo Maurice

Trish Newman on her adult bat mitzvah



Donations

Alan and Rhonda Solid



Todah Rabah

Jodi and Juan Hernandez for supplying all the ingredients and making latkes for our Sunday School Chanukah celebration

Thank You

Dan Lewis for substitute teaching and leading our Tu B'Shevat seder

Nancy Freedkin for providing the dough and supplies to make hamantashens for our Sunday School Purim, and Jillana Enteen for helping with our celebration

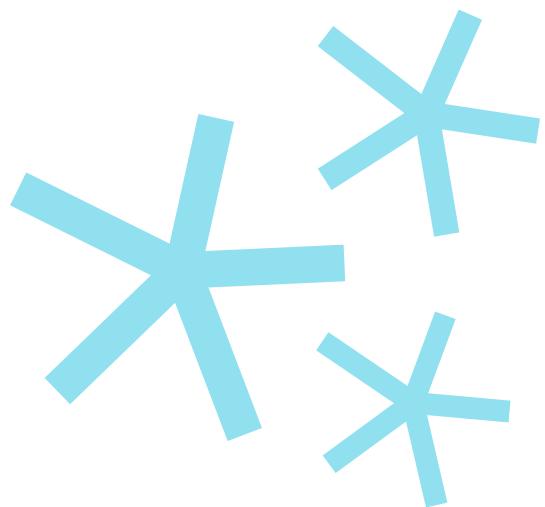
Beth Chaverim Remembers

Mary Mason, mother of Robin Chessick

Earl Rusnak, Jr., father of Steve Rusnak

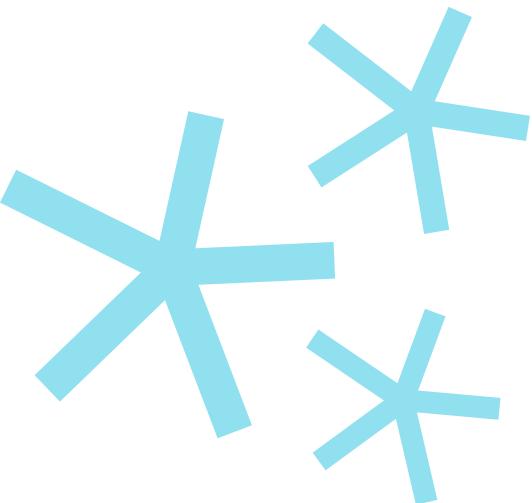


Winter Happenings



Top: As part of our study of Israeli culture, we learned about the Dead Sea and applied Dead Sea mud masks.

Bottom: We learned about archaeology and each student “dug” their own “tel” or hill to find artifacts.



Winter Happenings



We celebrated Purim with storyteller Susan Stone, and making hamantashen.



Save the Date!

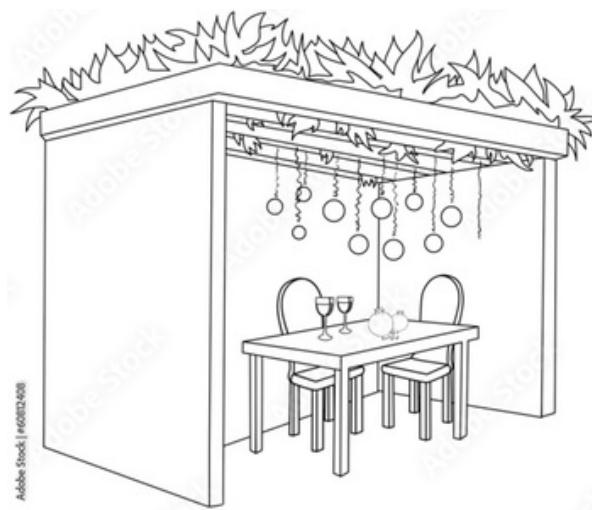
SAVE THE DATE!

You are invited to celebrate the holiday of Shavuot on Saturday, June 8 at 6 pm at Garfield's Beverages in Deerfield. We will have a wine tasting and apropos of the holiday varieties of cheese to taste. Please rsvp to info@bethchaverim.net if you are able to attend.



Need a Sukkah?

One of our members has a sukkah that was handmade with excellent craftsmanship. It comes with all the easy to assemble parts and instructions. Please contact Rabbi Jodi if you would like to have it.



Standing on One Foot

Judaism in roughly 140 characters

"We are committed, in the enduring Jewish tradition of support for social action and social progress, to community service and actions for social justice. We each take responsibility for our own behavior, and all of us take collective responsibility for the state of our world." (Core Principles of Humanistic Judaism)

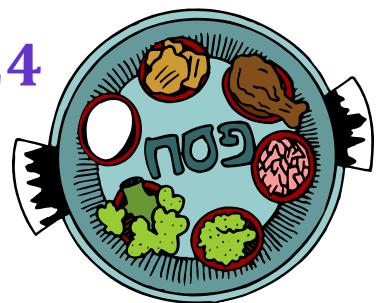
Seder Reservation Form

Why is This Night Different
From All Other Nights?

It's the Beth Chaverim
2nd Night Seder!

Tuesday, April 23, 2024

6:00 PM



Hilton Northbrook
2855 N. Milwaukee, Ave., Northbrook

Dinner Includes

Gefilte Fish
Matza Ball Soup
Mixed Green Salad

Entrée (Choose ONE) - Brisket of Beef, Roasted Half Chicken,
Grilled Salmon or Passover Vegetarian Lasagna

Dessert - Flourless Chocolate Cake, Strawberry Shortcake

Bring your own wine or grape juice

\$48/adult
\$25/child

Deadline April 17th

Send Payment to:

**Beth Chaverim Humanistic Jewish Community via Paypal, Zelle/QuickPay
or mail a check directly to Beth Chaverim**

[Click to send us your food order.](#)

Beth Chaverim Book Club

Join us as we discuss “The Golem of Brooklyn,” by Adam Mansbach on April 17. From penguinrandomhouse.com, ““A devastating romp through history, a bonkers road trip through America, this novel could not be any funnier—or any more important.”—W. Kamau Bell

In Ashkenazi Jewish folklore, a golem is a humanoid being created out of mud or clay and animated through secret prayers. Its sole purpose is to defend the Jewish people against the immediate threat of violence. It is always a rabbi who makes a golem, and always in a time of crisis. But Len Bronstein is no rabbi—he’s a Brooklyn art teacher who steals a large quantity of clay from his school, gets extremely stoned, and manages to bring his creation to life despite knowing little about Judaism and even less about golems. Unable to communicate with his nine-foot-six, four hundred-pound, Yiddish-speaking guest, Len enlists a bodega clerk and ex-Hasid named Miri Apfelbaum to translate....

The Golem of Brooklyn is an epic romp through Jewish history and the American present that wrestles with the deepest questions of our humanity—the conflicts between faith and skepticism, tribalism and interdependence, and vengeance and healing.”

In May we will consider “We Were the Lucky Ones” by Georgia Hunter. As described on amazon.com, “It is the spring of 1939 and three generations of the Kurc family are doing their best to live normal lives, even as the shadow of war grows closer. The talk around the family Seder table is of new babies and budding romance, not of the increasing hardships threatening Jews in their hometown of Radom, Poland. But soon the horrors overtaking Europe will become inescapable and the Kurcs will be flung to the far corners of the world, each desperately trying to navigate his or her own path to safety.

As one sibling is forced into exile, another attempts to flee the continent, while others struggle to escape certain death, either by working grueling hours on empty stomachs in the factories of the ghetto or by hiding as gentiles in plain sight. Driven by an unwavering will to survive and by the fear that they may never see one another again, the Kurcs must rely on hope, ingenuity, and inner strength to persevere.

An extraordinary, propulsive novel, We Were the Lucky Ones demonstrates how in the face of the twentieth century’s darkest moment, the human spirit can endure and even thrive.”

Adult Education

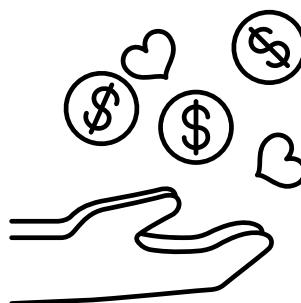
Our journey through the Bible text, in English, continues as we look at certain overall recurring motifs. We will examine the motif of the second born prevailing and then the motif of the barren woman. Check our website for the dates.



Support Beth Chaverim through Donation Matching

Amazon has discontinued its Amazon Smile donation program. Thank you for everyone who has used it over the past number of years to generate donations for Beth Chaverim.

If your employer has a matching program for donations you make, please note that Beth Chaverim is a certified 501 (c)(3) organization; if needed we can supply the necessary documentation to receive matching donations.



Humanist Café - Food for the Mind & the Appetite

HUMANISM IN A NUTSHELL



SOURCE: HUMANISTS UK

HUMANIST

@SCRIBERIAN



Rabbi Sherwin T. Wine

“Science simply means responsibility to the evidence of controlled investigation. Supernatural powers, supernatural beings and supernatural purposes have no place in the scientific perspective.”

(“A Provocative People”)

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Humanist Café - Food for the Mind & the Appetite

Italian Charoset



Ingredients

- 1+1/2 cups chestnut paste
 - 1/2 cup pine nuts
- 10 ounces dates, chopped
- Grated rind of one orange
- 12 ounces figs, chopped
 - 1/2 cup white raisins
 - 2 Ths poppy seeds
 - 1/4 cup dried apricots
- 1/2 cup chopped walnuts
 - 1/2 cup brandy
- 1/2 cup chopped almonds
 - honey to bind

Combine all ingredients, gradually adding just enough brandy and honey to make the mixture bind.

Can You Help?

Over the past few years, we have had several families within our community that have had a temporary set back, ie: a surgery, loss of a job, family crises, etc. "Helping Hands" is available to help with the needs of these families, either through delivering a meal, or driving to a doctor's appointment or any other minor needs a family could use. If you would like to be added to the list of members who will assist when needed, please email us and we will contact you when the need arises. Thank you to everyone who has volunteered already; it is greatly appreciated. Any family needing assistance can seek it by contacting Rabbi Jodi.



We are always looking for some assistance, large and small, for our events.

Please let us know if you are interested in helping.



Humanistic Judaism 101



- Defines Judaism as the collective historic experience of the Jewish people and promotes a community of shared Jewish values.
- Promotes the development of a strong Jewish identity, especially for those Jews who cannot intellectually or emotionally embrace a supernatural being, or who are unsure about the existence of such a being and want to express their Judaism in an honest and meaningful way.
- Emphasizes the capacity in all human beings to improve themselves and the world through learning and the performance of good deeds.
- Teaches that ethical behavior is conduct which enhances the dignity of every individual.
- Understands that ritual without meaning is simply empty ritual and that liberal Judaism is authentic Judaism without apologies to the present or nostalgic bows to the past. Beth Chaverim is affiliated with the Society for Humanistic Judaism.

Did you know?

Rabbi Jodi Kornfeld is available to conduct life cycle ceremonies including weddings, baby namings, and funerals for members and non-members. Contact Rabbi Jodi for further information at:

(847) 945-6512

rabbijodi@gmail.com

Thank You for Reading!

This is a quarterly publication by



Beth Chaverim

Humanistic Jewish Community

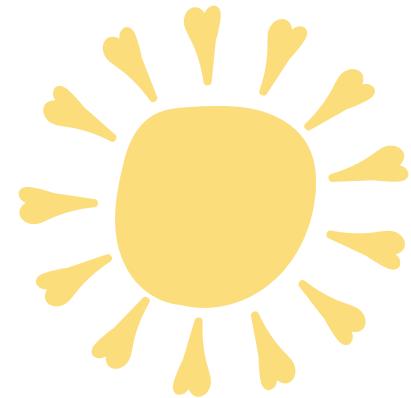
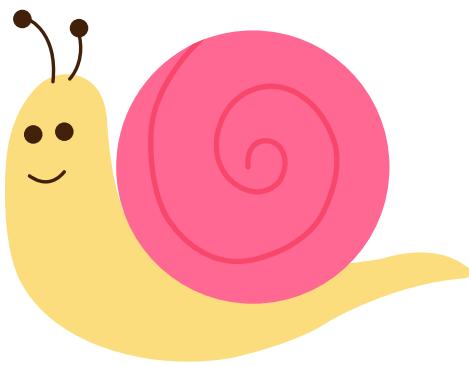
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<http://bethchaverim.net/>

Rabbi - Jodi Kornfeld

Administrator - Linda Horn

Editor - Lindsey Grant



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**Humanistic
Judaism**

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Unlocking Jewish

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