Shabbat Shalom

Toldot

November 22, 2025 | 2 Kislev 5786 Havdalah 5:20pm

Welcome to Beth Jacob Congregation, a Jewish community that comes together to nurture relationships with God and each other. We are a Conservative synagogue that values Torah (study), Avodah (reverential service) and Gemilut Hasadim (acts of loving-kindness). We believe every person has an equal opportunity to be part of our community regardless of age, race, ability, special needs, financial status, sexual orientation or gender identity. We're glad you've joined us this Shabbat!

Thank you to everyone who contributed to Shabbat services this week.

D'var Torah:

Michael Hofrichter

Gabbaim:

Erin Webb, Stuart Kaufman

Davenners:

Bernie Miller, Razele Hofrichter, Sara Lynn Newberger **Greeters & Security:**

Sharon Press, Eric Pasternack Lou Leichter, Davida Alperin, Andy Greenfeld

Mashgiach: David Zehavi

Kitchen Crew:

Nicole Guthrie, Neal Gale, David Siegel, Yelva Lynfield Senior Rabbi:

Rabbi Tamar Magill-Grimm Rabbi Tamar@Beth-Jacob.org

Executive Director:

Sonya Rapport Sonya@Beth-Jacob.org

Director of Congregational Programming:

Frances Fischer Frances@Beth-Jacob.org

Interim Limudim Coordinator and Rabbinic Intern

Rimon Reches

Rimon@Beth-Jacob.org

Youth and Education Coordinator:

Marisa Goffman Youth@Beth-Jacob.org

Co-Presidents:

Leonard Oppenheimer & Tessa Silver President@Beth-Jacob.org

Rabbi Emeritus:

Rabbi Morris Allen

Our services depend on the participation of our community members. We welcome diverse voices and talents to lead our community in prayer and to read Torah.

Please use this QR code, or sign up at



Beth-Jacob.org/DavenOrTorah.

Torah Reading

First / Rishon Aliyah	Genesis 25:19-26:5	p. 146	Brad Elkin
Second / Sheni Aliyah	Genesis 26:6-26:12	p. 150	Elaine DuFresne
Third / Shelishi Aliyah	Genesis 26:13-26:22	p. 150	Louis Hunter
Fourth / Revi'i Aliyah	Genesis 26:23-26:29	p. 152	Ellen Johnson
Fifth / Chamishi Aliyah	Genesis 26:30-27:27	p. 153	Giulia Girgenti
Sixth / Shishi Aliyah	Genesis 27:28-28:4	p. 157	Jeremy Newberger
Seventh / Shevi'i Aliyah	Genesis 28:5-28:9	p. 160	Hannah Stein
Maftir	Genesis 28:7-28:9	p. 161	Hannah Stein
Haftarah	Malachi 1:1-2:7	p. 163	Sharon Presss

This week's kiddush is co-sponsored by a generous gift from the legacy of Lois Newberger z"l and in appreciation of the Kesher/Connections Committee and all they do to create community.

Opening the Conversation

This portion records the first instance in the Torah of someone initiating a dialogue with God.

By Rabbi Lisa Grushcow

Senior Rabbi, Temple Emanu-El-Beth-Sholom in Montreal.

Isaac and Rebecca are married, and Rebecca is barren. So Isaac prays to God on her behalf, and she becomes pregnant with twins. It's a difficult pregnancy, as the children struggle in the womb. Rabbinic interpreters imagine Esau trying to come out when Rebecca passed places of idol worship, while Jacob tries to come out when she passed places of Torah study. And then, we come to the words that for me, jumped off the scroll: She said: If so, why do I exist? And she went to inquire of the Eternal. And the Eternal answered her... (Genesis 25:22-23)

The content of God's reply is significant: God explains that the struggle taking place in her womb will continue in the world, and that the older twin (Esau) will serve the younger (Jacob). This explains a lot of what happens next, and suggests that Rebecca's act of duplicitousness, in which she tricks her husband into granting Jacob the blessing he intended for Esau, is actually her following the direction that God gave her. But what was stunning to me then, and continues to move me now, is the simple fact of the exchange. Rebecca, at a challenging moment in her life, asks God a question which relates to the very nature of her existence: Why am I here? Why is this happening? Why me? And God replies.

For millennia, interpreters have buffered the directness of this exchange. Rebecca inquired of God, yes, but it must have been through the yeshiva of Shem and Ever, the ancient school of Jewish learning where, the Midrash tells us, Jacob strained to emerge from the womb. Or: she went to ask the prophets (Rashbam). Or: she prayed (Ramban). Or: she went to inquire not of God, but into the nature of God (Kli Yakar). Or, in a move that seems drastic but in fact is the logical conclusion of a patriarchal view that can't really imagine Rebecca addressing God directly, it is Isaac, not Rebecca, who asks God and is answered (Josephus' "Antiquities of the Jews").

Interpretation is an essential tool when we approach an ancient text. And in fact, we do have other instances in the Bible where "inquiring of God" actually means asking a prophet. One could make the case that it's not at all obvious what it means to inquire of God, and there is great richness in the interpretations that suggest this inquiry takes the form of philosophical musings or prayer. But sometimes, we are so focused on the interpretive meaning that we miss the obvious meaning. And the obvious meaning of this text is that Rebecca approaches God with a question and God answers her.

Torah Commentary

CONT.

Even more significant, Rebecca is the first person in the Torah to start a conversation with God. Adam, Eve, Noah – all of them answer God's questions or reply to God's commands, but none of them initiate contact. Even Abraham, who famously responds hineini ("here I am!") to God's call, does not start the conversation. Abraham challenges God about the destruction of Sodom and Gemorah, but only after God shares the divine plan with him, opening the door to Abraham's response. It is Rebecca, out of a very embodied and personal struggle, who asks God for an answer and receives one.

Parashat Toldot contains a powerful example of a woman's voice, a human voice, with the courage to cry out to God and demand a response. Rebecca is worried about her children. She is worried about her own life. She wants to know why she suffers. And she doesn't take her question to a scholar or a prophet. She doesn't subsume it into philosophy or prayer. She speaks directly to God. Like so many women after her, she is misinterpreted and misunderstood. But God understands her, and God responds.

Our Torah is bold enough to preserve Rebecca's conversation with God. May we, created in the divine image, also strive to hear and honor every voice. And may we, like Rebecca, have the courage to open the conversation.

Transgender Day of Remembrance



Thursday was Transgender Day of Remembrance - a day to honor the memory of transgender people who have been victims of anti-transgender violence and hate. It serves to raise awareness about violence and discrimination against the transgender community, memorialize those lost, and reaffirm the need for equality and justice. Today at the 7th aliyah, in addition to the yahrzeits, we will read aloud the names of transgender individuals who died this year as a result of violent hate-crimes.

Children are Welcome in our Sanctuary!



We encourage children's participation in services and love having them in our sanctuary. Older children are encouraged to lead parts of the service and/or read Torah once able to do so. Younger children are invited to carry crowns during the Torah service and are also invited to the bimah for Adon Olam each week. At the end of services they can visit the rabbi's magic tallis bag to receive a lollipop or mini bubbles. Parents, please let Rabbi Tamar know if you do not want your child to receive one of these items.

Today at Beth Jacob



Limudim: Our Learning Community

We begin with breakfast at 9:00am. We are so excited to see our building full of families engaged in fun and meaningful Jewish learning!

Kesher Shabbat

Make sure you get a nametag in the Lobby, and enjoy shmooziing with people you haven't met before!

The Encampments--Tonight at 7:00pm

See this documentary to hear the voices of those protesting in their own words. A discussion led by Rabbi Tamar Magill-Grimm and Rabbi Adam Stock Spilker will follow the film.



Yahrzeit List for Week Beginning November 22, 2025 / 2 Kislev 5786

The seventh aliyah is reserved for those observing yahrzeits during the coming week. If you are observing a yahrzeit this week, please come forward at the seventh aliyah and give your full Hebrew name to the gabbai who will call you to the Torah. Your full Hebrew name includes your name and then ben/bat/mibeit and your parents' names or Avraham and Sarah. Please say your name loudly and clearly, so that the gabbai can hear it.

Masks are required on the bimah during the Torah service. If you do not have one, please get one from the basket by the greeter and put it on prior to coming up for an aliyah.

November	22/2	Kis	lev
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Fannie Chase Hannah Kramer Leonard Lazarus

Leon Price

Noah Rosenbloom

Ira Schultz

Anna Silverstein Levin

Teresa Galban

Jacob Freed

November 23/3 Kislev

Eddie Ackerman Chasiah Cohen Hannah Feldman Giorgio Girgenti Fred Grantz Renay Kushner Benjamin Markovitz Seymour Peyton Rae Robinson Jave Peschko

Hyman Glicken

November 24/4 Kislev

Irving Berlin Mary Calof Isedor Goldetsky Joe Marsh

George Penner Morris Portnoy Paul Potamkin

Harry Silberstein Benjamin Simon

November 25/5 Kislev

Jake Dremmer Esther Friend Simone Jacobson Hyman Kaplan Joseph Lapp Silver Michael Shaol Pozez Bertha Schlimovitz

Joshua Smotkin

November 25/5 Kislev

(cont'd)

Mayer Winer Morris Zuken Mollie Goldrich Irma Silverstein Kassel Rubenstein

November 26/6 Kislev

Esther Berkus Maury Bernstein Rose Elperin Abraham Goldstein Ruth Keller Michla Smith Cassandra Elinor Amesley Robert Baldinger Alexander Silver Martha Gaba

November 27/7 Kisley

Abraham Cooperman Adeline Freeman

Freada Ginsburg Millman

Evelyn Goffman Rose Levitz

Isaac Jacobs Rose Marvy

November 28/8 Kisley

Robert Dworsky Roberta Hirsch Block Mary Kapitansky Delbert Lange Sherry Mendelsberg Eugene Roguski Morris Rolnick David Ross Harold Louis Miller Reuben Legan

Upcoming at Beth Jacob - November 22, 2025

Ongoing

For the Jew in the Pew

Every 1st, 3rd, and 5th Saturday 9:15 am in the Saide Chapel Join Rabbi Lynn Liberman in the Chapel for some thoughtful study of the Book of Psalms



Tot Shabbat

10:00 - 10:30 am in The Nursery

Join us on the first Shabbat of the month in the nursery for Tot Shabbat. We will have a song-filled Shabbat Morning Service for BJC's littlest ones (0-3 years old). We will then have an oneg and playtime for parents to schmooze and kids to play.



Pre-Shul Playgroup-Every Friday at 10:30 am

Join our open play time for young children and their caregivers. Meet in the nursery every Friday morning from 10:30am until naptime.



ADULT EDUCATION:

Introduction to Judaism, with Rabbi Cathy Nemiroff Monday evenings

This class is a general introduction for people who are curious, considering conversion, or would like a refresher. Zoom link will be given to those who register. Beth-Jacob.org/Intro



Morning Mishnah, with Rabbi Tamar Magill-Grimm

Wednesdays at around 8:00 am (after minyan)

in the Saide Chapel and online Join on Zoom at Beth-Jacob.org/Minyan



Tanach, with David Rischall

Sundays 7:30-8:30 on Zoom: https://us06web.zoom.us/j/79546614386 Questions? Call David at 651-230-3911.

Limudim Adult Ed

Tuesdays 6:30-7:30 Register at Beth-Jacob.org/LimudimAdultEd

Why the Jewish Holidays are Wise with Sara Lynn Newberger Hebrew for Adults with Lydia Schultz



Raising Jewish Kids-A Conversation Circle

Tuesdays 5:30-6:30 in the Chapel

For parents and caregivers, interfaith families, Jewish couples, single parents... basically anyone involved in raising Jewish kids. Talking about the blessings and challenges, sharing struggles, ideas and resources.

EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Help With Our New Playground-TOMORROW

We are in the final stage of installing a playground behind the social hall! We need *your* help to put down landscaping fabric and schlep wood chips into place. Please join us Sunday, Nov 23, 10 AM-noon in the back of the building. If you have them, please bring your shovels, work/garden gloves, and wheelbarrows. Questions? Contact: Becky Taurog at 734-222-8190 or rtaurog@gmail.com

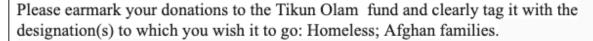


Collection for those facing Homelessness Through November

We have a collection box in the lobby for items needed by those facing homelessness or housing insecurity. Items most needed are socks, underwear, diapers, and feminine products.

The Social Justice Committee welcomes monetary donations toward the drive.

The Afghan Refugee Resettlement and Mentoring Team is also seeking emergency funds at this time to offset the loss of SNAP (aka, Food Stamps) for the families Beth Jacob continues to assist.





October 7 Memorial

Many have been wearing yellow pins or the silver hostage necklaces for over two years. Some of us have taken them off and some of us will wear them until all of the bodies remaining in Gaza are returned.

Those who are ready to remove pins and necklaces are invited to bring them to the shul and place them on a displayed Torah cover that is not being used as a memorial for the atrocities of October 7th, 2023.



From the Archives

Saturday, December 6, after kiddush

Kate Dietrick, Archivist for the Upper Midwest Jewish Archives at the University of Minnesota, will join us to speak about the recent donation to the archives of over 100 boxes of materials documenting Beth Jacob's history. She will share stories uncovered from the materials donated and discuss why having this collection in the archives contributes to the essential task of preserving local Jewish history.



Poetry Reading

Saturday, December 13, after kiddush

Penny Simison will read some poems from her book Precarious, about tough times and resilience. Several of the poems came out of a trip to Holocaust sites in Poland, and some of them think about God (really).

