



CONGREGATION
B'NAI TIKVAH

TIKVAH TALK

Volume 43 Issue 3 | January-March 2025

REFLECTIONS...

By Rabbi Jennie Chabon



Dear friends,
On February 15th, I will be taking a 5-month sabbatical after 20 years of serving this blessed community. I came to CBT when I was just 28 years old in 2004. Three teenage children, one rabbinic ordination

and two decades later, I am ready for a break!

While I am gone, you will be held and guided by many fine people. First and foremost, our incredible staff will continue to be the steady hand that makes everything run smoothly for our community. While we will be streamlining some of our programming due to our reduced capacity in my absence, our staff will be working as hard as ever to ensure that everything we offer is infused with our signature CBT spirit and style.

As always, our board of trustees will continue to engage in critical conversations about the vitality and future of CBT, offering their time, effort and vision to ensure that our sweet community continues to thrive and grow in the years ahead.

Lori Siegel, our esteemed president and acting executive director, will continue to work tirelessly while

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EDUCATION

By Sue Bojdak, Director of Education



“Surely, this Instruction which I enjoin upon you this day is not too baffling for you, nor is it beyond reach. It is not in the heavens, that you should say, ‘Who among us can go up to the heavens and get it for us and impart it to us, that we may

observe it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, ‘Who among us can cross to the other side of the sea and get it for us and impart it to us, that we may observe it?’ No, the thing is very close to you, in your mouth and in your heart, to observe it.” Deuteronomy 30:11-14

How do we bring the teachings of Torah, our Jewish ethics and values, into our bodies so that the impulse to live a righteous Jewish life is so close that it’s instinctive? Like everything we learn, it takes practice practice practice. That is what we are doing in our new weekly Tuesday school exercise that we call Playing with Jewish Values. Every week 3rd through 6th graders do 20 minutes of Jewish values practice.

Playing with Jewish Values is grounded in actual play. We have four mixed-age teams of 10-12 kids

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COLUMNS

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UPCOMING HOLIDAYS

March 13: Purim

CALENDAR

Scan Here!



MISSION STATEMENT

At Congregation B'nai Tikvah, we believe that a kind and vibrant Jewish community deepens and restores our sense of purpose and connection to the world. We are dedicated to learning, music-infused prayer, personal relationships and a commitment to social justice and welcome all who are looking to explore the many innovative paths to meaning that Judaism has to offer.

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CONTACT

Office Hours:

Monday-Friday: 11:00 am - 5:00 pm

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WELCOME

to our new families!

Aimee & Anton Ennik
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Jessica Kessin and Family
Karen & Kyle Leonard
Isabelle & Jason Licht
Beth & Stan Pollock
Laura Rubin
Victoria & Jeffrey Rutsch
Jo & Sarah Unruh
Rachael & Joshua Weingarten

MAZEL TOV

to our new babies!

Paige Harper Shapiro, Daughter of Rachel and Justin Shapiro
Max Raucher, Grandson of Mona Epstein

SAVE THE DATE

Annual Gala April 26

Follow us on instagram and facebook
[@congregationbnaitikvah](https://www.instagram.com/congregationbnaitikvah)



SISTERHOOD NEWS

By Mona Epstein, Sisterhood President

In October Booksisters read “Heaven and Earth Grocery Store” by James McBride and discussed it in an evening in the Sukkah.

Our Wise Aging discussion group met in the CBT library to view a film called “Lives Well Lived.” The film, made by a local Bay Area film maker, interviewed 40 people aged 75 to 100 who shared their insights for living a meaningful life. Following the film we had a lively conversation about our own lives.

In November we also had a discussion of Dr. Becca Levy’s article “Breaking the Age Code.” We discussed aging in place and the supports needed in December.

Booksisters met in November to review “Drama Queen- One Autistic Women and a Lifetime of Unhelpful Labels” by Sara Gibbs, a first person account of growing up on the spectrum.

In December we had our Sisterhood Hanukkah party with latkes and a potluck (photo below).

In January we will read “The Glass Maker” by Tracy Chevalier. We continue our Wise Aging series in January and February with speakers on healthy aging. Check the Monday email for details.

Save the date for Sisterhood Shabbat March 21 where we name this year’s Woman of Valor.

Don’t forget to check the ride board if you are attending services and reach out to Chesed if you need assistance.

Sisterhood Mah Jong continues at CBT on the second Thursday of the month 1:00- 3:30. Contact Judy Weil at 925-788-4766.



PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

By Lori Siegel, Board President



At the heart of any thriving synagogue is the dedication and involvement of its members. Our synagogue is more than just a place of worship; it is a community, a family, and a source of inspiration and support for all who walk through its doors. To ensure that our community continues to grow and flourish, we need your help. By joining a committee or serving on the Board of Trustees, you can play a vital role in shaping the present and future of our synagogue. You may also choose to show up and support our different programs. I hope that we all take the time to connect within our CBT community.

Early in 2025, we will be launching Tikvah Tribes. We will offer 5 different types of small interest groups that you may join to connect. Run by members of our community, Tikvah Tribes will give you a chance to get to know members within our community who have similar interests. Do you like to taste wine? Go hiking? Dine Out? If you have an idea or would like to lead a Tribe, please contact Irene Zelman at irzelman@gmail.com.

We also have recently formed a new club within our community, Women of Tikvah. The first event was at Fizz Champagne in Walnut Creek. This is a chance to connect and join all ages of women through different types of programming led by Jennifer Croshall and Brittany Rein. Sisterhood is also active and thriving and some of their future events will collaborate with Women of Tikvah, too!

Why Get Involved?

- **Make a Difference:** Committees and the Board oversee the decisions that affect everything from programming to finances, spiritual growth to community outreach. Your involvement directly influences the quality and direction of our synagogue’s offerings and impact.
- **Strengthen Connections:** Working alongside fellow members fosters deeper relationships and a stronger sense of belonging. Collaborating on shared goals builds bonds that enrich your synagogue experience.
- **Bring Your Voice:** Your unique perspective and skills are invaluable. Whether you’re passionate about education, youth engagement, social action,

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EDUCATION

Continued from Page 1

(consistent from week to week) who are given a 10-minute challenge to complete as a team. Everyone on the team must participate. We have done 3-legged relays, balanced objects on rudimentary scales, led one another in trust walks, created composite portraits of our teammates, told Jewish jokes and so much more.

At the conclusion of each activity every team must link the activity with the value of the day, i.e. *nedivut*/generosity, *simcha*/joy, *kehillah*/community, *kavod*/respect, as in, "How was generosity necessary to complete today's task?" Once we made our way through our ten core values, teams shifted to identifying 1-3 values they used that day to complete the task at hand. In this way we begin to relate our abstract Jewish values to concrete lived experiences of play, collaboration, and the work of being in community with one another.

Teams are deliberately mixed-age and randomized, not chosen by students. The practice is to employ these values with everyone, to work on building connections with people we don't know, who are hard for us, who feel random. This makes us work harder to build our

values muscles while we are also building a broader and deeper sense of our CBT community.

Our teams are also leaderless. The kids have to figure out how to organize themselves week over week. The variety of tasks emphasizes different skills in different weeks so that kids with different skill sets can shine. Part of the work is for the kids to figure out amongst themselves how to tackle the task at hand. Sometimes it works great. Sometimes it's a hot mess. There are disagreements and bad ideas. There are kids who wander off or feel excluded. Thirteen weeks in, kids are starting to identify when they break down as a team and are learning to recover. They are looking out for each other and correcting their mistakes. They are reaching out to ensure everyone is included.

Through playful active learning our kids are thoughtfully practicing bringing their Jewish values to life, not just so they can do that work at CBT, but so they can bring it home, to the classroom, recess, lunch room, playdates, extra-curricular activities. So that being their righteous Jewish selves all day, every day is instinctive; it's embodied Torah, in their mouths and in their hearts.

How are you playing with your Jewish values?



CONTRA COSTA MIDRASHA

By Devra C. Aarons, CCM Director

Highlights from our Fall 2024 semester include:

- Wednesday night programming this October featured a visit from Olympic gold medalist, Amit Elor. She shared an amazing slide show and told us how it felt to win Olympic gold, how much she loved connecting with the Israeli athletes in Paris and answering questions from our teens about competing and daily training work.
 - November featured our first retreat of the year amidst the redwood trees in the Santa Cruz mountains. While Havdalah always takes my breath away, this retreat a number of B'nai Tikvah teens read Torah and gave the D'var Torah about Abraham's journey out of Ur and towards Canaan.
 - In December we held a Giving Circle between seniors citizens and teens. A Giving Circle is a chance for a group of people to pool their charitable funds to donate to chosen non-profit organizations the group picks. Almost 40 teens, seniors and educators joined together to talk about giving, tzedakah and volunteering. They examined five non-profits and picked Tiny Village Spirit, a group building tiny homes in Richmond for youth experiencing homelessness.
- We have so much we are looking forward to this Winter, including...
- Impact Builder teens are doing a three-month dive into the world of free bike repair and maintenance with The Crucible in Oakland.
 - We have a retreat at the end of January and the middle of March! We can't wait to have more time in nature, away from technology and immersed in Jewish



community and Shabbat.

- On February 22, 2025 - CCM's Annual Gala happening at the San Ramon Marriott where CCM will honor our Executive Director, Devra Aarons for her 18 years of service, creating impactful Jewish teen community and connection. Learn more at ccmidrasha.com/gala.

Please spread the love about Contra Costa Midrasha! Let the teens in your life know about Midrasha and our myriad of programs. Schedule a time to talk with our Director, Devra Aarons at devra.aarons@ccmidrasha.com or check out our website at ccmidrasha.com. There's something for every teen and enrollment is always open!

We have a new website URL and email addresses.

Please use [tikvaeastbay](http://tikvaeastbay.com) instead of [tikvah](http://tikvah.com) moving forward.

Look out for a new website design soon!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Continued from Page 3

membership, fundraising, or synagogue governance, there's a place where your contributions will shine.

· **Learn and Grow:** Serving on a committee or the Board is a meaningful opportunity to develop leadership skills, gain new experiences, and deepen your understanding of synagogue operations and Jewish communal life.

Committees to Consider

Our synagogue offers a variety of committees to suit diverse interests and talents. Some of the areas where you can make a difference include:

- **Education:** Help shape our educational programs for children and adults, fostering lifelong learning.
- **Chesed:** Support a community member in need of a ride to Shul, with a meal.
- **Membership:** Engage with new and existing members to build a warm and welcoming community.
- **Finance:** Support our community with our annual budget and financial decisions.
- **Ritual:** Support clergy in creating and implementing meaningful Shabbat and High Holiday services and support events that celebrate Jewish traditions and spirituality.
- **Social Action:** Lead initiatives that reflect our values and create positive change in the wider community.
- **Fundraising:** Support the financial health of our synagogue through creative campaigns and events.
- **Israel & World Jewry:** Supporting our community by building a strong connection between the people of Israel and CBT.



Upcoming Events

Women of Tikvah:

Saturday, January 4, 4:30-5:45 pm
Pre yoga meet up at Rooted Coffee (1321 Locust St)

Sunday, February 2, 10:15 am
Hike during Sunday School (pending weather).
Meet in front of CBT.

Saturday, March 15, 7:00 pm
Bowling & Dinner at Pinstripes.
More details to come.

Membership Committee:

New Member Shabbat Dinner and Service January 17

Get Involved and Connect!

Every week in our Monday email we share upcoming programming for many of our clubs. Look for upcoming events for Sisterhood, Men of CBT, Women of Tikvah, Keshet, and our newly formed Garden Club.

Serve on the Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees provides critical leadership and vision for our synagogue. As a board member, you will:

- Collaborate on decisions that guide our synagogue's future.
- Represent the interests and needs of our community.
- Help steward resources to ensure our synagogue's sustainability and growth.
- Support the Rabbi and Executive Director by advising and consulting.
- Oversee CBT's financial health.

Serving on the Board is an honor. Through Board membership, you will shape the future of CBT and leave a lasting impact on our spiritual home. The Nominating Committee will be recruiting members of our community who are interested in joining our Board. We have a few seats to fill, President-Elect, Treasurer, Secretary, and Member(s) at Large.

Your Commitment Matters

Our synagogue thrives when every member contributes their time, talent, and energy. Whether you can offer a few hours a month or take on a more involved role, your participation makes a difference.

To learn more about joining a committee or serving on the Board of Trustees, please contact me at lsiegel@tikvaheastbay.org. I look forward to continuing to build our future together!

REFLECTIONS...

Continued from Page 1

I am gone, connecting members, answering emails day and night, solving problems and listening deeply to the needs of our community.

Sue Bojdak, our extraordinary educator and my spiritual partner at CBT, will continue to inspire our community of learners with joy, depth, and playfulness, while also leading the first Friday service each month with Lisa Zeiler, running our Purim celebration, teaching on Shavuot and doing all of the magnificent and magical things that Sue does that weave her wisdom and spirit throughout our community.

We will also be bringing in guest rabbis and teachers to fill other roles in my absence. Rabbi Elizheva Hurwitz will be leading our 4th Friday service, as well as our second night Passover seder, with her creative, reflective, infectious spirit that many of you experienced when she was our rabbinic intern during covid.

Our Shir Joy service will be led, along with Lisa, by Rabbi Jhos Singer and Julie Batz, my dear friends and teachers. Julie has guided my own family through the b'nai mitzvah of all of my sons. There is no one I trust in the world more to offer deep and meaningful Jewish ritual than Julie! Reb Jhos will also be our spiritual anchor during this time, teaching lunch and learn with his not-to-be-missed wisdom and humor, connecting with the community through writing, visiting members in the hospital, meeting with individuals in need of spiritual counseling and officiating funerals when they God forbid arise.

Rabbi Raphael Asher, my mentor and our emeritus rabbi, will also be on call for pastoral emergencies, ready to lend his wise, steady, loving presence to anyone in our community in need of pastoral care, be it a shiva call, a funeral or just a comforting visit from our founding rabbi.

Our b'nai mitzvah students will continue to learn with the wonderful Ms Jenn Levine, along with Max Hess, who grew up in our community and will work with our students on writing their divrei Torah. Max gave a thought-provoking and fascinating sermon at our high holiday services a few years ago. Our students will be in great hands with Ms Jenn and Max!

Last and very much not least is you, our members, who are the true anchor that holds our community together.

I invite you to lean in more than usual while I am gone. Be the emissaries, the greeters and the connectors. Be curious about our guest teachers and leaders and show them some CBT love by showing up for services and classes and programs! A sabbatical is a wonderful opportunity to learn from new people, to experience new styles of leadership and to be reminded that it is our members who are the essential core of our beautiful community.

I will miss you all and I will come back having rested and learned and refilled my own spiritual cup in order to be your rabbi once more. Thank you for enabling me to take this time for myself and for my family. I will use it wisely and with joy.

Wrestling with Prayer with Rabbi Chabon

Prayer is both a deeply personal and communal experience, both scripted and spontaneous. So many questions come up! What do you say when it's time to pray silently? Can you just talk to God? What if you don't believe in God? When do we bow? Why do we lift our toes? Is it possible to do the wrong thing in prayer? Join Rabbi Chabon in a three-part series on Wrestling with Prayer addressing all these questions and more.

Sundays: January 5, 12 and 26 at 10:15 am in the CBT library.

Upcoming Special Services/Events

Shabbat with Winter Bake-Off January 3

Yoga Havdalah January 4

Nishma January 11

Shir Joy New Member Shabbat January 17

Nourish the Soul January 24

Shir Joy Tu B'Shevat February 14

Shabbat on the Block February 21

Camp Newman Family Weekend
February 28-March 2

Shir Joy Sisterhood Shabbat March 21

Poetry Shabbat April 4

Shabbat Under the Oak is back May 2

IN GRATITUDE TO OUR COMMUNITY

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In Honor of Spencer Regenstein's Bar
Mitzvah

Scott & Amanda Regenstein

In Honor of Ellen Duree's Birthday
Richard & Rayna Ravitz

In Memory of Aaron Greenfield
Steven Greenfield

In Memory of Daniel Asher

In Memory of Bill Rupley
Richard & Rayna Ravitz

In Honor of the Chutzpah Chavurah (a
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Arnold & Donna Hoffman

In Memory of Daniel Asher

In Memory of Lynne Elizondo
Bill & Barbara Almy

In Memory of Joseph Gitelman, Beloved
father of Jeremy Gitelman
Denise & Jamie Duran

In Appreciation of Rosh Hashanah Honor
and Appreciating to be Part of this
Wonderful Community

In Memory of Mary Ann Latona Nadler
Jerry Nadler

In Memory of Meni Levi Ancel Sadur
Craig & Ellin Sadur

In Memory of Daniel Asher
Robin Gordon

In Appreciation of Janna and George Khait
Matt & Julia Bruce

In Memory of Nina Oshinsky during
the Days of Awe, near the 15th
anniversary of her death, and for the
High Holidays
Mitch Oshinsky

In Memory of Beatrice Begun
Jay Begun

In Memory of Don Arenfeld
Amy & Joy Lerner

In Memory of Lawrence Shaw

In Memory of Esther Appleberg

In Memory of Dave Appleberg
Idelle Lipman

In Memory of Reba and Harry Rabiner
Karen Lapin & John Kobzina

In Memory of Agnes Rozsa Jacobson
Irene Jacobson & Rick Shinozaki

In Memory of Rose Kahane

In Memory of Abraham Kahane

In Memory of Joseph Oestreicher
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Hana Moran

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RABBI MUSIC FUND

In Memory of Allen Lapporte

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Tikvah Tribes: Be Part of the Fun! We're Making Connections

Gather with others from our CBT community who share the same interest as you. Have fun, grow, make new friends, and strengthen existing relationships...all while doing something you love.

CBT is forming small, similar interest groups we're calling Tikvah Tribes

Are you a writer? An artist? A film fanatic? Do you love discussing current events? Want to visit new restaurants or wineries? Go to concerts or plays with like-minded people? You could start and/or join a group about any of these topics or a topic that you love...and we haven't thought of. The options are endless!

Tikvah Tribes will be congregant led groups of 8-12 people, in order to best facilitate conversation taking place in homes, restaurants, and other welcoming spaces as determined by the group members.

If you have an idea for a group, would like to join a group, are willing to lead a group for an initial period, or have questions, please let Irene Zelman know. irzelman@gmail.com

- In Memory of Dorothy Polay Bushell
Barry & Yonina Bushell
- In Honor of Rabbi Jennie Chabon, Elizabeth and all the musicians!
- In Memory of Sidney Rapoport
- In Memory of Esther Rapoport
Cookie Svingos
- In Honor of Ellen Duree's Birthday
MaryAnn Wittenberg
Cookie Svingos
- In Appreciation of CBT
Elaine Kimball
- In Memory of Charlotte Gilman
Jeffrey Gilman & Carol Reif

SISTERHOOD FUND

- In Honor of Bubbe Mona Epstein! Mazel Tov!
Andrea Slavet

MAXIMIZE LEARNING FUND

- In Honor of Max Alberts-Siegel's Bar Mitzvah
Non Member

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- In Honor of Shana Tovah!
Debbie Weinstein & David Paulson

WITTENBERG SOCIAL ACTION FUND

- In Memory of Ida Shiela Salusky
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- In Honor of all staff who did a remarkable job making it all happen
Cookie Svingos
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David Ratner & Claire Bernardo
- In Memory of Florence Weinstein
- In Memory of Arnold Devins
Joan Weinstein
- In Memory of Victor Leventhal
- In Memory of Daniel Asher, Rabbi Asher's brother
Diane Leventhal

Tikvah Talk is quarterly!

For the most up-to-date information check your weekly emails. If you are not receiving emails from CBT, email comms@tikvaheastbay.org to ensure you're on the mailing list.

Want to go paperless? To change your Tikvah Talk delivery preferences email kathy@tikvaheastbay.org.

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