WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH YOUR ONE WILD AND PRECIOUS YEAR?

Rabbi Alyson Solomon, Interim Senior Rabbi

In The Summer Day, the late, great poet Mary Oliver writes: “Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?” In preparation for the upcoming Days of Awe I ask myself and you, “What will I do with my one wild and precious year?” Said another way: what is my mission for the year ahead: 5780?

What, in this year to come, will I, will you, be at the cause of? What will you author or inspire, give birth to or launch and let go? What mountain will you climb or relationship will you mend? What difference will your presence make in your home, your family and your community this year?

Speaking of community, in my first two months with BCC, I am moved by this very wonderful congregation - your love and passion for our community. BCC’s mission is ever more urgent: to be a safe, loving and vibrant Jewish home and community for LGBTQ+ individuals and the parts of ourselves which are hidden, misunderstood and still to be known. To fulfill this mission, each of us, in our most kind and generous fullness, is needed.

I love co-creating with our talented Cantor, staff and lay leaders. With you we are learning, teaching and creating meaningful services, community experiences to cultivate our leadership, revive our havurot, social action and caring committees. I’m grateful to each of you for your warm and generous welcome and appreciate that it is not always comfortable or easy to open our hearts newly, especially during times of transition. Thank you for taking time to meet with me, call me and call on me, reach out via email and during our gatherings to tell me about yourself and share your vision for BCC with me.

My question about your mission for 5780 is not simply theoretical. I ask it also of myself. I am here at BCC on a mission: to love and support you during this year of transition, pastorally and spiritually, as a rabbi, teacher and vision holder. My mission has three components: pastoral care, teaching, and visioning with you and your leadership.

To inspire us, Torah illustrates this idea of being on a mission, being sent. God says to Moshe in Numbers 13:2: שלחהו send out, one person from each of the twelve tribes to scout out the land of Canaan. God says: be courageous and bring back fruits from the land.

Each scout was a shaliach, a messenger, with a purposeful task and mission. For decades Tzofim, Israel Scouts, has sent out a shaliach, a messenger to various cities and summer camps internationally to connect youth with Israel and Israeli life. Chabad also sends out shluchim, ambassadors, to live in cities around the world and share Torah. So what is your mission?

Where will you go and what will you teach this year?

To me this concept of being a shaliach, a messenger on a mission, has a very unique resonance. This past summer marked my tenth year since my ordination as a rabbi from Hebrew College in Boston. Ten years ago ten classmates and I gathered for ordination, to receive our teachers’ blessings. There were three sifrei torah present as a jury of witnesses and three officiating rabbis, with over a hundred clergy present.

My teacher, Rabbi Arthur Green, the founder and now rector of our rabbinical school, placed my tallit and his hands on my shoulders. Then, the dean of our school, Rabbi Sharon Cohen Anisfeld, offered each of us a personal blessing and, in turn, each new rabbi shared a few words and completed our remarks with the same exact phrase from the Book of Isaiah, chapter 6 verse 8: ויאמר הנה שלחני Then I said: ‘Here am I; send me.’

The scene in the Book of Isaiah is one we know from the Amidah, our standing prayer, during which we go on our toes and say: kadosh, kadosh, kadosh - holy, holy, holy. In the Book of Isaiah, we read how God’s robes fill the sacred space and the angels flutter in awe. Then, Isaiah breaks out of what feels like a mystical trance and speaks these two transformative words: הנה שלחני. Hineini, shlachani. I’m here. Send me.

And I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?

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Every day, and especially as the New Year calls us to awaken, it is an auspicious and urgent time to powerfully take on the words of Isaiah and make them our own. So I ask you, what will you do with your one, wild and precious year? Whether over tea or Torah, on a yoga mat or a trail, I look forward to meeting each of you. Tell me your mission for 5780 and how I can support you. To what quest or purpose will you proudly and eagerly proclaim: “הִנְנִי שְׁלָחֵנִי.”

Please reach out - RabbiAlysonSolomon@bcc-la.org (323) 931-7023 x200.

**MY GOALS AS YOUR NEW PRESIDENT**

Shalom, BCC! This is my first article for G’vanim in quite a while and my first as President. Thank you to the clergy, staff and board members for making last week’s Shabbat BCC board installation service meaningful, energizing, and engaging. Then, on Sunday afternoon, September 8, many of us attended our BCC Town Hall meeting. There, we responded to the findings from the Rabbinic Search Committee’s community reflections meetings and survey. This will help us prepare the application for publication through the Central Conference of American Rabbis in search of our next rabbi. It was great to see this community building in action. You can find updates on our webpage at https://bcc-la.org/rabbinic-search-committee-information/

Please let me share my goals with you as gathered from my experience as a member of BCC for the last 20 years (including serving on the board) and from my caring deeply about our successful transition over the next year:

- Invigorate BCC’s volunteer culture
- Increase engagement with LGBTQ, allies and Jewish communities
- Define strategic priorities and prepare to celebrate our 50th anniversary (in 2022)
- Improve our long-term financial security

With these goals in mind, we will be on our way to embracing the future.

Also, I am including something new to this column with a word cloud extrapolated from a question on the community reflections survey.

**Question 22 - What would you like rabbinic candidates to know about BCC?**

This word cloud reflects the frequency of words used by survey respondents, with a larger font indicating a more frequent response. The search committee will translate this into a narrative with sentences that will describe BCC for rabbinic candidates. As you can see, our members believe BCC is best described as a welcoming and diverse community, congregant-centered, with an emphasis on being a safe place for LGBTQ individuals, their families, and an appreciation of our unique place in Jewish and LGBTQ history.

The High Holy Days will be here before you know it. A big thank you to our many volunteers. I invite you to engage and participate in 5780.

Shanah tovah u’metukah. Wishing you a healthy, sweet new year.

president@bcc-la.org

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**COMMUNITY LEADS (ROSHIM)**

- C is for Community……..Rosh: Mark Homyk
- A is for Action …....... Rosh: Jessica Donath
- L is for Learning …….……. No current rosh
- R is for Ritual …................. No current rosh
- G’vanim “Hues (of the rainbow)”

**STAFF**

- Interim Senior Rabbi ……….. Alyson Solomon
- Executive Director …… Rabbi Jonathan Klein
- Vice President .......................... Elizabeth Savage
- Secretary ................................. Marsha Epstein
- Treasurer ................................. Michael King
- Executive Officer ………….. Richard Lesse

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

- Marc Gotttehrer, Mark Homyk, Jeffrey Janis, Jim Potter, Donna Quigley Groman, James Sutherland, Hannah Theile,

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**EXECUTIVE OFFICERS**

President ........................ Jay Jacobs
Executive Vice President . Elizabeth Savage
Vice President ........................ Ginger Jacobs
Secretary ................................. Marsha Epstein
Treasurer ................................. Michael King
Ex Officio…………………………Richard Lesse
In the ten years since Juval Porat has been known as the first cantor to be ordained in Germany since WWII, he's come to be known for much else.

Some might call him their song leader; others their friend and spiritual guide. He's produced albums and concerts, conducted BCC’s choir, taught classes and spiritual workshops, and worked collaboratively with Rabbis Lisa Edwards, Heather Miller, and Alyson Solomon. Cantor Juval has celebrated anniversaries and weddings and welcomed new babies with congregants, and he has stood with mourners following community losses and also mass shootings.

But it is probably his love of music and liturgy, weaving the traditional with the contemporary in a collaborative fashion, as well as cultivating relationships with congregants, that he finds most rewarding about his role. "I hope that my passion for keeping our traditional liturgy alive by setting it to different kinds of music that I research and discover is as exciting to the congregants as it is to me," he said. "There's an ongoing, probably never-ending conversation about the balance of innovation and the traditional, and it's something that fascinates me and is part of my work on an ongoing basis when I plan services."

Looking back on the past decade, Cantor Juval acknowledged the many challenges he faced when uprooting from Germany to California. Back then "I did not imagine that my body or even my psyche would respond in such an intense way as it did when I actually made the move," he remembered. Leaving behind the familiar—he had spent several years living in Berlin, where he ultimately graduated as the first cantor from Abraham Geiger College since the war—was difficult, and living in Los Angeles presented quite the culture shock.

Another adaptation he had to make in coming to BCC was the fact that Judaism as it was practiced in the United States was very different from what he had learned in Germany. Also, Cantor Juval recognized that when he came to BCC, he was inheriting a culture and community already built on decades of tradition, most recently on the musical front from Cantorial Soloist Fran Chalin, who had retired in December 2007.

He began introducing some of the repertoire he learned in Germany in small doses. "It took me about 2 or 3 years of experimenting and adjusting—seeing what worked and what didn't—until I was able to find a good balance," Cantor Juval said.

This kind of fresh approach was exactly what BCC leadership at the time was looking for, remembers Bruce Maxwell, who initially met Cantor Juval while vacationing in Berlin in early 2008. At the time, Maxwell was serving as BCC treasurer and encountered Cantor Juval at an event at the Oranienburger Strasse Synagogue where filmmaker Sandi DuBowsky was speaking. He encouraged Cantor Juval to apply for the position of High Holiday cantor that year.

"A young, gay, cantorial student? I got kind of excited, like, 'Oh, I want to meet this guy!'" Maxwell recalled. "We were looking for someone for High Holidays, and it would be kind of interesting to get somebody who's young and new and different than most of the cantors we were meeting in LA. . . . When I first met him at that lunch, he was very soft-spoken and seemed very intriguing to me, just very intellectual. When he spoke, he had something interesting to say."

For Brett Trueman, who was BCC president at the time, the idea of bringing in Cantor Juval was also refreshing. "I thought, 'Wow, a young guy, which is good for the congregation and [would present a] good image to attract people to BCC,'" he recalled. "He seemed pleasant, he was quite knowledgeable, and his knowledge of Hebrew I thought was a big plus."

After witnessing Cantor Juval’s first BCC High Holiday services, Maxwell observed that he was a “really good match” with Rabbi Lisa Edwards. “They worked well together, and both of them have a similar demeanor and complemented each other well.” When Cantor Juval was invested as a cantor at the Rykestrasse Synagogue back in Berlin in June 2009, Maxwell, Trueman, and Rabbi Edwards all went to support him. "The ceremony itself was impressive," Trueman said. "I was proud of him. People clearly respected him, and it was fun to be around him during that time." The cantorial selection committee brought him to BCC full-time in 2009, and Cantor Juval was officially installed as BCC’s cantor on June 18, 2010.

It wasn’t long before Cantor Juval was plaiting his style of Judaism into BCC services and programs. "As I grew as a cantor and evolved and kind of got to know the culture of the land, I was able to bring my own interests in and touch upon..."
Continued from page 3

mindfulness and meditation, collaboratively explore pathways towards meaningful worship whether through poetry, pop culture, dance, and whatever else provided inspiration,” he said. In the ensuing years, Cantor Juval has produced three albums—“Shalem,” “Optimism,” and “Theology,” organized multiple collaborative cantorial concerts, and brought in guest musicians like Noah Aronson and Cantor Rebekah Mirsky. Congregants may have also noticed interesting instruments joining them at services, including a duduk, electric bass, shruti box, and a beat sampler.

Cantor Juval gleefully remembers celebrating with the congregation when same-sex marriage was legalized in 2015 and somberly recalls organizing a community vigil following the Pulse Nightclub shooting in Orlando, FL in 2016. Marching with the congregation with the Torah to the new BCC building, singing the song he wrote for the occasion “House of New Life” in 2011 is also a highlight of his time here.

One of Cantor Juval’s most meaningful memories was during the High Holidays of 2014, when the whole congregation was mourning the sudden passing of its member William Korthof. “When leading the congregation through the Unetaneh Tokef prayer, I couldn’t hold back my emotions, and it was then that the congregation carried me, rather than the other way around,” he said. “In a way, being able to express my grief from the bimah in that moment felt like an arrival to me, as I felt a sense of safety in which I allowed myself to be held by the community.”

Most recently, Cantor Juval has entered into a collaborative relationship with Interim Rabbi Alyson Solomon, who said, “the idea of partnering with Cantor Juval was, and is, one of BCC’s most compelling assists. Cantor Juval is full of depth, integrity and soul. I am grateful to daven on the bima with him, experiment with spoken-word, liturgy, teaching modalities and compassionate community building. Our full-house collaborative community Tisha b’Av experience was a highlight so far in our creative synergy. Grateful and excited for what’s to come!”

Throughout his life, Cantor Juval tries to encompass Jewish values like Shir Hadash (new song), Ahavat Hinam (baseless love), and Gemilut Hasadim (loving kindness). “I have this ability to hopefully activate somebody else’s desire to connect with our tradition through a song, wordless melody, or teaching is an awesome realization,” he said.

Looking to the future, Cantor Juval thinks it will be exciting to answer the question of what an LGBTQ space looks like “in a world where, at least in the Reform Jewish scene, there’s more and more openness toward LGBTQ families and individuals.” He’d like to see the community welcome people in non-heteronormative and non-monogamous relationships; expand the space of inclusion for the transgender community, Jews of color, and Jews by choice; lift up those not in relationships as well as those without children; and also foster a new generation of congregants through expansion of the BCC school. Cantor Juval would also like to encourage greater musical participation by lay leadership through mentorship, specialized training, and ongoing dialogue.

“I’m mainly grateful for the trust and playground that I get to have and that’s put in my lap,” he said. “99% of the time I’m asking to do something, and I just get the green light to do it. And that’s been really, really wonderful.”
KADIMA: OUR SEARCH FOR BCC’S NEXT RABBI

Ginger Jacobs and Elizabeth Savage, Co-chairs

Our search for BCC’s next “settled” or permanent rabbi is now in full swing. As co-chairs of the Rabbinic Search Committee, we are committed to conducting this search on behalf of the congregation in a way that is thoughtful, transparent, responsive to our members, and in accord with the spiritual values and practices of Judaism and the Reform movement of which we are a part.

In this article we hope to answer some of the questions you may have. We also plan to maintain a page on the BCC website that will keep you updated during the months ahead.

What are the steps in the rabbinic search process, and what is the timetable for it?

In order to take full advantage of the placement process of the CCAR (Central Conference of American Rabbis, the rabbinic arm of the Reform movement), we will need to publish our position description with the CCAR by shortly after High Holidays. That is when openings for the following year are traditionally announced. Rabbis who are interested will begin to submit their resumes to the CCAR soon after our rabbinic position is posted. The CCAR Placement Commission will review them to make sure they are qualified and will then forward them to our Search Committee for review.

The Search Committee will review applications on a rolling basis and will conduct interviews by telephone, Zoom, or Skype during the remaining months of 2019. We will likely invite two, three, or four candidates for a 2 to 3 day visit to BCC during January and February of 2020, to allow BCC members an opportunity to meet them. The Search Committee will then deliberate and recommend a candidate to the Board of Directors. Upon approval of the Board, the congregation will be asked to approve the new rabbi at a special congregational meeting in the spring of 2020. This will allow sufficient time to negotiate a contract and for the new rabbi to make arrangements to begin serving BCC on July 1, 2020.

How will the congregation be able to have input into this process?

The position description that we will post with the CCAR includes a number of questions about BCC and the candidates we seek. It asks about BCC’s primary goals and hopes for the next few years, about the most important issues and challenges facing our congregation, and about our core strengths and values. It asks for the qualities that are most important in our new rabbi, the most important priorities of our new rabbi, and the most important things a rabbinic candidate should know about BCC.

In order to answer these questions, we have sought input from as many BCC members as possible. We held five “community reflection meetings” during the month of August, two at BCC and three in members’ homes around the LA area. Each meeting was led by a trained facilitator and sought input directly related to the questions on the CCAR application. The comments of BCC members at each meeting were recorded anonymously by a “scribe” during the meeting and then collated with the comments from the other meetings. Some 60 BCC members attended these meetings.

We also made available a short online survey to allow those who were unable to attend one of the meetings in person to provide input as well.

On September 8, we presented the results of the survey and the community reflection meetings at a “town hall” at BCC, from 4:00 to 5:30 at which members could consider the opinions of the congregation as a whole and provide additional input if desired.

The Search Committee will take all of this information into consideration in completing the application to the CCAR. Our current clergy and staff will also have an opportunity to provide input at this stage.

What are the qualifications for rabbis to apply to become BCC’s next rabbi?

Any rabbi who is a member of the CCAR may apply to serve BCC, whether or not they were ordained at Hebrew Union College (the seminary of the Reform movement). Since we are a small congregation, rabbis with any level of experience are eligible to apply. Beyond that, we can set our own criteria for evaluating rabbinic candidates, so long as they comply with the law and CCAR guidelines.

Will BCC members be kept informed as the search proceeds?

We will keep the congregation informed of our progress in a general sense through our webpage and periodic articles in the newsletter. However, when rabbis begin to submit their resumes, the Search Committee will be required to maintain strict confidentiality about who has applied to become our next rabbi. This confidentiality extends to BCC’s current clergy and staff and to family and friends of the Search Committee members. This is necessary because some of the rabbis may not have informed their current congregations or employers that they are seeking a new position. It would also harm BCC’s reputation if we become known for “leaks” in the search process. If Search Committee members decline to answer questions about the search, they are not being rude or secretive but rather are maintaining the necessary confidentiality of the process.

Once we invite a few candidates to visit BCC, their identities will become public to our members and to their current congregations or employers.

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Who are the members of the Search Committee and how were they selected?

There are ten members of the Search Committee, including the two co-chairs. The other eight are Robin Berkovitz, Davi Cheng, Mark Homyk, Naomi Katz, Jack Kelly, Deborah Lowe, Bruce Maxwell, and Larry Nathenson. They were nominated by the co-chairs and submitted to the BCC Executive Committee, which consented to these nominations. The members serving on this committee reflect the diversity of our congregation in terms of gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity, race, age, length of membership, prior service to BCC, and family status (including parenting). Also, members of this committee have diverse work experience as teachers, managers, lawyers, HR administrator, insurance broker, community activists, LGBTQ archives, social services, the arts and more.

Based on the CCAR recommendations, the Search Committee members were also selected for their ability to embody certain character traits from the Mussar tradition of Judaism, and have signed a Covenant that embodies these character traits in support of central Jewish values. These values are:

- **L’shem shamayim** (literally, “for the name of heaven”) – we work for the sake of our sacred community and will only recommend a candidate we can support with whole hearts and in unity. We will put aside personal desires and interests for the sake of the congregation.

- **Eilu v’eilu** (literally, “these and these”) – each member’s words are equally important and reflective of the divine spirit within each of us and will be considered appropriately. We will work together as a team to make judgments that are well considered, neither impetuous nor indecisive.

- **Derech eretz** (literally, “the path of the Earth”) – we will treat one another with kindness, courtesy, decency, and humility. We will listen to one another and choose our words calmly and carefully.

- **Lashon hara/chasui** (literally, “evil tongue/sanctuary”) – we will make our committee a sanctuary from gossip about each other and about the rabbinic candidates.

The work of the Search Committee will be time-intensive, involving numerous evening and weekend meetings. We are aware that the choices we make will affect all the members of BCC, both now and into the future. Rabbi Alyson Solomon, in her role as Interim Rabbi, will assist us in this process. We will benefit from her years as a congregational rabbi and her special training in the interim rabbi process, as well as her skills as a change management consultant for Jewish non-profit organizations. With your help, support and input, we will accomplish our holy task and find the right new rabbi for our community. We are looking forward to the journey together. If you have additional questions, please feel free to contact us at gingerj18@gmail.com and ehsavage@charter.net.

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DEVELOPMENT AT BCC: HELP MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN OUR FUTURE!

Jeffrey Janis

Have you ever thought about the various ways you could use your talents and activities you enjoy to support BCC? Do you like to talk to people and build relationships? Are you an outgoing person who likes to organize events? Are you interested in learning more about fundraising and how to do it? Do you like to write?

Whatever your talents and interests, the Development (Fundraising) Committee needs you!

While most people say they hate to fundraise, it actually can be a lot of fun and can connect all of our congregants to each other. Fundraising is not just asking people for money. It’s building relationships and deepening our connections to BCC. BCC is a special and unique community. This committee is looking for people who want to help with strengthening our Mitzvah Circle, and letting congregants know about the various programs that BCC offers and how they can support them - i.e. Torah Study, Book Club, Social Action, special holidays, Great Chefs, etc. Or maybe you are interested in helping to write a grant or an email asking for money?

Our Executive Director Rabbi Jonathan Klein has created an excellent fundraising plan that is our roadmap for the next year. If you have any interest in helping out on this committee, please contact the Development Committee Chair – Jeffrey Janis at jeffreyjanis@yahoo.com.
We hope all our BCC families had a safe summer full of growth and exploration! The BCC Youth and Family community can’t wait to see you all again for the High Holy Days and our fall programs. We start the year with an engaging and interactive Intergenerational/Family Service on Rosh Hashanah morning – join us to ring in the new year with some joyful learning, singing, and community building!

Save the dates for our Fall 2019/5780 Youth and Family Programming with BCC:

**Monday, September 30:**
Rosh Hashanah Youth & Family Programs (at Temple Isaiah)
- 9:30-9:50 – Ages 0-99: Intergenerational/Family Service – Main Sanctuary
- 9:50-10:20 – Ages 0-18 (friends under 8, please bring a grown-up with you for this part!): Children’s Service – Social Hall
- 10:20-1:30 – Ages 0-15: Childcare/Youth Activities Available – Classroom
- 1:00-1:30 – Ages 13-18: Teen Track Jonah Teen Talk Practice / Prep – Social Hall
- 3:00-3:30 – Ages 13-18: Teen Track Jonah Teen Talk Rehearsal – Social Hall
- 3:30-3:45 – Ages 13-18: Jonah Teen Talk – Main Sanctuary

**Saturday, October 1:**
Exciting activities for Baby Kibbutz, Ohr Chayim, Teen Track, & parents!

**Tuesday, October 1:**
Tashlich – Santa Monica Beach, 4:30 pm

**Wednesday, October 9:**
Yom Kippur Youth & Family Programming (at Temple Isaiah)
- 9:30-9:50 – Ages 0-99: Intergenerational/Family Service – Main Sanctuary
- 9:50-10:20 – Ages 0-18 (friends under 8, please bring a grown-up with you for this part!): Children’s Service – Social Hall
- 10:20-1:30 – Ages 0-15: Childcare/Youth Activities Available – Classroom
- 1:00-1:30 – Ages 13-18: Teen Track Jonah Teen Talk Practice / Prep – Social Hall
- 3:00-3:30 – Ages 13-18: Teen Track Jonah Teen Talk Rehearsal – Social Hall
- 3:30-3:45 – Ages 13-18: Jonah Teen Talk – Main Sanctuary

**Saturday, October 19:**
- 3-5pm – Ages 0-18 and Parents: Sukkot-Palooza and Ohr Chayim Open House (at BCC)
- Bring your friends with kids ages 0-18 to experience a day with our BCC Youth and Family communities!
- Exciting activities for Baby Kibbutz, Ohr Chayim, Teen Track, & parents!

**Saturday, October 26:**
- 10am-12:30 – Ages 5-18: Ohr Chayim (at BCC)
- Jonah Teen Talk Practice / Prep – Social Hall
- 10am-12:30 – Ages 5-18: Ohr Chayim + Teen Track (at BCC)
- 10am-12:30 – Ages 5-18: Ohr Chayim + Teen Track Rehearsal – Social Hall
- 10am-12:30 – Ages 5-18: Ohr Chayim, Teen Track, & parents!

You can download the full year’s calendar of BCC’s Youth & Family programs and register for Ohr Chayim on the BCC website: [https://bcc-la.org/programs/ohr-chayim-religious-school/](https://bcc-la.org/programs/ohr-chayim-religious-school/)

For more information about any of our Youth and Family programming at BCC, email Rae Antonoff Portnoy, Director of Education, at [rae@bcc-la.org](mailto:rae@bcc-la.org).

**BE CHOSEN: JOIN BCC’S NEW HAVURAH FOR YOUNG ADULTS**

**Jack Kelly**

Chosen is BCC’s new havurah (social group) for all folks between 18 and 39 years old who are looking to expand and grow in their queer Jewish identity through community with others. We want to create a spiritual and sacred space for those in our BCC family who want to meet and socialize with other young Jewish adults. Our havurah is here to explore what it means to be a young queer Jew today through holiday celebrations, Shabbat dinners, workshops, field trips, and social justice. Come find your chosen family of God’s chosen people!

Join us at one of our upcoming events:

**Saturday, September 28th - Apple Picking at Riley’s Farm.** Shanah Tovah Umetukah! We’re spending our last Shabbat of 5779 picking apples at Riley’s Farm in Yucaipa to prepare for the new year. We’ll discuss our hopes, dreams, and aspirations for 5780 while enjoying the beautiful outdoors. Email Jack to sign up!

**Thursday, October 17th - Movie Night in the Sukkah.** Spend the evening laughing under the stars! We’re watching a double feature of Mel Brooks films, Blazing Saddles and Young Frankenstein, as we relax in our beautiful BCC sukkah. Bring blankets, pillows, and snacks to share! Come for one movie or both. Blazing Saddles at 7pm, Young Frankenstein at 9pm.

**November TBD - Chosen Family Potluck Thanksgiving.** Thanksgiving can be a difficult holiday in our community, so we want to be your chosen family for an evening. We’ll break bread and give thanks over a potluck Thanksgiving dinner, date and location TBA. More details to come! If you are interested in hosting, talk to Jack.

We look forward to creating community with you! If you have any questions or comments, please contact Jack Kelly ([jacklovestv@gmail.com](mailto:jacklovestv@gmail.com)) or board member Marc Gotttehrer ([m_gottehrer@hotmail.com](mailto:m_gottehrer@hotmail.com)).
HELP RENEW BCC’S COMMITMENT TO SOCIAL ACTION IN OUR COMMUNITY

Jessica Donath

Homelessness, trans rights, and climate change—these were just a few of the issues that attendees of the first meeting in late August of BCC’s revamped Social Action Committee found important to tackle.

At the same time, we are also aware that we don’t have to reinvent the wheel in every case. Project Chicken Soup (PCS), an organization that has been cooking and delivering healthy meals to folks living with HIV/AIDS, cancer or other serious illnesses, had its origin at BCC. In the near future we want to refocus and strengthen our relationship with PCS, so be on the look out for an invitation to cook 1,000 meals on Sunday morning.

And as important participation in rallies and demonstrations is, the Social Action Committee also wants to create and facilitate long-term change in areas that are important to our community. To make sure we are pressing full steam ahead in the right direction, we are seeking your input. If you have ideas and suggestions or want to share your thoughts, please email Social Action Committee co-chairs Jessica Donath (Jessica.donath1@gmail.com) or Kenna Love (kennalove@artnet.net.)

Or come to the Social Action Committee brainstorming session during the Yom Kippur break at Temple Isaiah and tell us what keeps you up at night. Together we can change the world!

REPORT FROM THE BCC TZEDAKAH COUNCIL

It’s hard to believe another year has passed and we’re ushering in the New Year 5780. Where does the time go? While we’ve all had many reasons to celebrate in the past 365, we also continue to witness the need for the work of BCC’s Tzedakah Council to carry on.

Whether it’s the ongoing threats to undocumented individuals, the unprecedented violence plaguing our schools and streets, the growth of homeless populations in our city and across the country, or the constant threat to the state of Israel, our work seems never to be done.

While it all may seem hopeless, there are reasons to celebrate. A job found, good health after a scare, a new home after a period of homelessness, acts of kindness too many to count… There are reasons to celebrate every day.

Several people are doing so much good work in Los Angeles, around the country, and around the world. And being on the council enables us to interact with these do-gooders and to participate in the important work each of them does every day. The following four organizations will benefit from the distribution of funds from the Tzedakah Council this cycle. Each organization will receive $250.

Bloom Again Foundation
Established in 2008, this charity provides rapid-response financial assistance for living essentials to working women living at or near the poverty level when medical challenges stretch their already-limited resources.
To donate or to learn more, visit https://bloomagain.org.

HIAS
For more than 130 years, HIAS (founded as Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society) has provided assistance to those in need, especially those who migrate across national borders. Currently the organization is helping those who have left their homes in Venezuela and now find themselves in need of a visa to enter Ecuador. HIAS provides assistance for significant legal and protection needs, single-parent heads of household, survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, those with chronic illnesses and disabilities, older adults, youth separated from their families, and LGBTQ communities.
To donate or to learn more, visit https://www.hias.org.

Na’Amat Israel
A voice for women and children in Israel, Na’Amat provides funding to day-care centers, technological high schools, and women’s health, social services, and legal aid clinics in Israel.
To donate or to learn more, visit https://naamat.org/tag/naamat-israel.

Jovenes Inc.
This organization provides homes and families for those without. Located in Boyle Heights and serving communities throughout Southeast LA County, Jovenes Inc. provides housing, healthcare, education, employment, and trauma-recovery services.
To donate or to learn more, visit https://www.jovenesinc.org.

These are just four charities doing the important work of repairing our world. If you know of a cause that would benefit from our charity funds, or if you’re interested in participating in the work of our committee, find one of us during the High Holidays, or leave your name at the check-in desk and we’ll contact you!

And remember, the Tzedakah Council collects money for the next round of donations at the High Holidays and Pesach. Please bring your tzedakah cans (pushkes) to Temple Isaiah during High Holidays, whether full, half-full or with just a dusting of coins. Bring your old can and take a new one.

Jim Potter, Angela Brown, Bonnie Kaplan, and Steve Hochstadt
MEET SHIRLEY HIRSCHBERG,  
FACILITATOR OF OUR LIFE TRANSITIONS GROUP

Shirley Hirschberg is a Social Worker, Life Coach and Bereavement Counselor, certified by Cedars, who has been facilitating BCC’s Life Transitions Group for many years. BCC Treasurer Mike King interviewed her for G’vanim.

Shirley, tell us a bit about the Life Transitions Group.

I was invited by Ray Eelsing to start the group back in 2002. He suggested I speak with the clergy, which I interpreted to mean they’d conduct an interview. Speaking with Rabbi Lisa and Fran, it felt as though we were old friends immediately. They were very supportive of the idea of a group, and gave me their blessings to proceed.

How did you first come up with the idea for a Life Transitions Group?

When I was a teenager, my 19 year-old sister was killed in a car accident. My parents were bereft, and I felt I’d make it worse for them by “burdening” them with my own grief. My friends weren’t yet adult enough to support me. I had no one to share my feelings with.

I made up my mind that at some point in my life I wanted to support others, in a safe place, to share their innermost feelings and not be judged. This was my goal and I am now fortunate to be living that dream.

Are you able to share some of the things group participants deal with, without breaking any confidences?

One example I can offer is that of a group participant who came from an ultra-Orthodox background. His father, a rabbi, expected his son to follow in his footsteps. Being gay, the son knew this was not an option, so he instead became a good Jewish doctor. While in medical school he came out to his parents. The family immediately sat shiva, threw him out of the house, and asked him to never again have contact with anyone in his family (particularly his mother). He came to the group in great pain. The group members surrounded him with acceptance, love, and friendship. It was a great moment for me to witness the compassionate support everyone offered him.

Another felt she received so much from the group that she said, “Even though I don’t have any major issues right now, I don’t want to leave the group because I know I have a place to go to find support, friendship and acceptance and I don’t want to let that go.”

Who might find benefit from participating in the Life Transitions Group?

The group initially dealt with HIV/AIDS. Today, we talk of challenges such as coping with relationships, family, bereavement, career, and health. They also find themselves to be supporting their partners, spouses, friends, and aging parents.

Each person in the group is an individual. People come from different backgrounds, have different experiences, were raised with different religious traditions, and now have their own unique needs and challenges. The group is always there to help people cope with whatever they may be experiencing. It can be difficult to share some of these personal happenings with friends or family because they naturally want us to be happy – which can stifle our ability to ask for support.

This I promise: each individual will be listened to, will learn new coping skills, and will find friends, support and love.

What do you personally get out of facilitating this group?

Personally, I get a tremendous amount back, so much so that it’s difficult to properly articulate. I feel so blessed to know that people can talk to me openly without feeling judged. People come into the group with personal challenges, and I feel blessed to part of their healing process. It feels like a sacred honor.

If someone has a Life Transitions Issue they’d like to explore, how might they learn more about the group?

The prospective member should telephone Chelsie at the BCC Office (323) 931-7023 x205 and leave their contact information. I will return their call to answer any questions they may have, and to welcome them to the group if they elect to join. We welcome everyone to the group – BCC members as well as non-members, Jewish or non-Jewish, LGBT or simply an ally.

We hold the group as a ‘safe and confidential’ place. All discussion stays in the room. In the 18 years I’ve led this group, everyone has respected confidentiality. I also see people privately if that is more to their liking, and some people have elected to participate in both group meetings and private sessions.

Logistical information:

We meet the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month, 7-9 pm, at BCC
Suggested donation is $25 per session, and no one is turned away for lack of funds.
SCHEDULE FOR THE DAYS OF AWE, 5780/2019 WITH BCC

Selichot: Prayers for Forgiveness
Saturday, Sept. 21, 7-9pm at BCC
A night of reflection, featuring Cantor Rebekah Mirsky’s one-woman show “Ordination” on forgiveness & recovery

Final High Holiday Preparation Class
Tuesday, September 24, 7 – 8:30pm at BCC
Find Your Own Path to Healing: Learning with Someone Who’s Been There Rabbi RBO Bat-Or, MFT and Director of JQ Helpline & Inclusion Services shares her own personal journey from illness to healing. With exercises, text, and worksheets, Rabbi RBO, a work in progress herself, helps you explore the paths available to you. From these many paths, you can choose the one that fits for you today.

Rosh Hashanah: Birthday of the World
First Night - Sunday, Sept. 29, 7:15 – 10pm at Temple Isaiah
Seder Rosh Hashanah after services
First Day – Monday, Sep. 30, 9:30am – 12:30 pm at Temple Isaiah
Catered Luncheon after services; Tickets available at www.bcc-la.org.
Second Day – Tuesday, Oct. 1, Lay-led service, 10am – 2pm at BCC
Tashlich 4:30 pm – 5:30 pm at Santa Monica Beach
Community Dinner 6 – 8pm at the home of Allison Diamant

Yom Kippur: Day of Atonement
Kol Nidre – Tuesday, Oct. 8, 7:15 – 10pm at Temple Isaiah
Yom Kippur Day – Wednesday, Oct. 9 at Temple Isaiah
9:30 am – 1:30 pm  Morning Service
1:30 pm – 3:00 pm  Learning Opportunities
3:00 pm – 5:00 pm  Afternoon Service
5:00 pm – 5:30 pm  Reading of the Memorial Names
5:30 pm – 6:20 pm  Yizkor Memorial Service
6:20 pm – 7:30 pm  Neilah Service
7:30 pm  Community Break-Fast

Helpful Information:
Temple Isaiah is located at 10345 W. Pico Blvd, LA, CA 90064, near Beverly Glen. Street parking is available. Parking restrictions are lifted, except during rush hour. On-site parking at Temple Isaiah available by request for people with special needs. Email bcc@bcc-la.org for more information.

All Families Welcome: Join BCC’s Director of Education, Rae Antonoff. Enjoy fun family services starting with our whole community, then as a community of youth and families for our own prayer and song experience. For child-care with Miss Purple, see Child Care Registration Form at http://www.bcc-la.org. For youth and family programming during and after High Holidays: see page 7.

Ticketing Requirements: All attendees, including members, must have tickets for services at Temple Isaiah. All reservations (tickets, RH luncheon, Tashlich dinner, child care registration, etc.), must be submitted by Wednesday Sept. 25 at 5 pm. We will have your tickets for you at the Will Call Table when you arrive at Temple Isaiah. Tickets will be available for purchase on-site. No tickets required for 2nd Day Rosh Hashanah services at BCC or Tashlich dinner.

Students and New Members: Special ticket prices are available to students. New members can have the cost of their High Holy Days tickets applied to their 5780 (2019-2020) membership contribution.

Rosh Hashanah 1st Day Catered Luncheon: Vegetarian, vegan and gluten-free options available. Tickets are available for $25 per person at the door or in advance for $15 (members) and $20 (non-members).

Tzedakah Opportunities: Pushke boxes will be available for pickup at Temple Isaiah. SOVA Food Drive grocery bags and giving lists will be available on Rosh Hashanah for drop off on Yom Kippur.
Friday, Oct. 4, 7-8pm – Shabbat Shuvah: Stories of Forgiveness
Join us for our first monthly experimental service. The first Friday of each month Cantor Juval Porat and Rabbi Alyson Solomon will explore a community theme or idea. Note the earlier time to allow for more awakened energy, variety and potentially even a fresh venue about town.
During the October 4th Shabbat service we will share voices from our Forgiveness Project. If you haven’t already contributed, please do so by October 1st!
“This year, forgiveness means to me…?” Please click on this Google form and share with us and each other an anonymous brief response to this question. Offer a personal insight, story, poem or song (100 word max). Click here to peruse and pray on each other’s creative responses.
For thoughts or questions about our monthly experimental Shabbat please email your clergy or markhomyk@gmail.com.

Sukkot - Join Us Under the Stars
Our lives are fragile. We’re reminded of this especially during the Festival of Sukkot. Join us for a Sukkot to remember!

Sunday, October 13, 10am-2pm - Sukkot Building: Decoration and Brunch
Building begins at 10am; ten volunteers are needed. Light lunch served at noon. Bring a decoration, poem, or photo to hang or decorate the sukkah. RSVP by Oct 1 to Mark Homyk - markhomyk@gmail.com if you plan to attend and volunteer to help build.
5-7pm Erev Sukkot potluck dinner and service

Monday, October 14, 7-8:30pm - Mindful Sukkah Sit w Cantor Juval Porat

Tuesday, October 15, 7-8:30pm - Torah and Tonic in the Sukkah w Rabbi Alyson Solomon

Thursday, October 17, 7-11pm - Sukkah Party and Movie Night for 20s & 30s “Chosen” Havurah (w Na’avor TransHavurah) RSVP by Oct 8 to Jack Kelly at jacklovestv@gmail.com.

Friday, October 18 - Shabbat Ushpizen / BCC Open House and New Member Shabbat. Open-mic oneg in Sukkah, MC’ed and led by Rey Grosz.
Please invite guests and neighbors to experience and share their creativity with BCC. To share a 2-3 minute talent, poem, story or song at the open-mic oneg please RSVP to Rey Grosz by Oct 11.

Saturday, October 19, 10am-1pm - Shabbat Minyan (a monthly BCC tradition)
3-5pm, Sukkah Palooza, Baby Kibbutz, Teen Track & Youth & Family Open House

Sunday, October 20, 4-7pm, Simchat Torah with Gay Gezunt klezmer band
4-4:30pm Yizkor service, 5-7pm Simchat Torah experience.

Tuesday, October 22, 7-8:30pm - Torah Study with Rabbi Solomon (a weekly BCC tradition)

Friday, October 25, 8-10pm - Ruach Chayim musical service (a monthly BCC tradition). Join us for dinner in the neighborhood prior.

MAZEL TOV
We wish a hearty “mazel tov” to these BCC members on their recent accomplishments and simchas.

Elyse Saragossi and Michael Hart, proud parents, and Bonnie Moore and Carol Saragossi, proud grandparents, on the recent birth of their son and grandson, Jaxon Jason Hart.

Neal Wiener for setting two International Gay & Lesbian Aquatics records at the Flushing Meadows – Corona Park Aquatic Center in New York, June 24-28. Neal set new records in the men 75-79 200 SCM (short course meter) freestyle and 50 SCM butterfly. Neal is a member of the WH2O (West Hollywood Aquatics) team, which came in second overall out of 72 teams competing. The event was part of the celebration of World Pride and the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots that launched the modern gay rights movement.

If you have good news to share with the BCC community, please send it to the BCC office (bcc@bcc-la.org). We want to celebrate with you!