



# Bethesda Jewish Congregation

## At-A-Glance

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### Spiritual Leader:

Director of Education & Congregational Life:  
Synagogue Administrator:

### Hazzan Sunny Schnitzer

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Established in 1964, BJC is a liberal Jewish congregation whose members engage in a wide spectrum of Jewish practice. All are welcome, regardless of religious background. BJC stresses equal participation of all its members in all aspects of congregational life. BJC currently has about 225 households from Maryland, DC, and Northern Virginia, and continues to grow.

By choice, BJC is not affiliated with any of the major organized movements in Judaism. We are a trans-denominational congregation, predominantly using a Reform prayer book, plus additional liturgies created by Hazzan Schnitzer and drawn from traditional, Reconstructionist, Renewal and other sources. BJC is on the cutting edge of contemporary Jewish practice, yet maintains a strong connection to tradition.

### Worship Schedule:

1st Friday	N'tivim L'Shabbat (Pathways to Shabbat) Music Service, 8:00 pm
2nd Friday	Shabbat Service with Guest Speakers, 8:00 pm
3rd Friday	Simchah B'Shabbat (an all music service), 8:00 pm
4th Friday	Tot Shabbat, 6:30 pm
	Service of Meditation at 8:00 pm
Saturday Mornings:	10:30 am (except July and August)
Havdalah Services:	several times a year
Youth/Family Services:	8-10 times during the school year, usually on 2nd Fridays, 7:00 pm

**Religious School:** BJC's School meets on Saturday mornings for classes and special programs, with Wednesday Hebrew classes added during grades 4-7. On Shabbat, students in Grades 4 and up have the opportunity to observe and participate in Shabbat Morning worship several times each year. The school has an enrollment of approximately 125 students. Parents are welcome and encouraged to be active participants in school activities. Our program includes interactive, multi-disciplinary learning, experiential programs, tzedakah/social action engagement, music, dance, arts, field trips, and more.

Students in Grades 3-7 begin their Saturdays at 9:00 am with Hebrew Studies. Judaic Studies for grades K-7 begin with a brief all-school Shabbat experience at 9:45 am. Wednesday Hebrew Classes for 4-7th grades meet from 4:15- 5:45 pm. The Pre-K group usually meets two Saturdays a month from 10:30 - 11:30. Our Tihon (grades 8/9) and Confirmation (grade 10) programs also meet on Saturday mornings from 9:45 am - 12:15 pm.

**Bar/Bat Mitzvah:** The Hazzan provides personal instruction, leadership, and direction for each B'nai Mitzvah. Creative services are an option, and here is flexibility in setting dates. The program includes family learning and social action components as well.

**Adult Education:** In addition to our including weekly Torah study, BJC offers various classes throughout the year including Adult Hebrew, Introduction to Judaism, and other specialized subjects, all at no charge to members. Annually, the congregation engages in joint study programs with the members of Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church.

**Book Club:** Our Book Club meets monthly on Wednesday evenings at 8:00pm to discuss books of topical interest.

**Family Education:** BJC offers programs throughout the year, with a major annual event each spring. BJC celebrates all of the major holidays as a congregation. Examples include our Second Night of Passover Seder, Sukkot, Hanukah and Purim events, a Tu B'shvat Seder, as well as many other exciting programs, often including guest instructors and entertainers.

**Social Action:** BJC is committed to social action. Tzedakah and Tikkun Olam are important values that shape our Congregation. We provide ongoing support to Cuba's Jewish communities, especially in smaller, more isolated towns like Sancti Spiritus, Camaguey, and Santa Clara, by sending supplies and funding Jewish studies. In partnership with Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church, BJC also sends funds to Neve Shalom, a joint Palestinian/Jewish school in Israel. Closer to home, both congregations support the nearby National Center for Families and Children in Bethesda, as well as other organizations including A Wider Circle, Bethesda Cares, Bethesda Help Food Closet, Martha's Table, DC's Dinner Program for Homeless Women, the American Red Cross, Potomac Conservancy, Habitat for Humanity, Yachad, and others.

**BJC's Relationship with Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church (BHPC):** Over the years, our two congregations have become spiritual siblings. We celebrate Thanksgiving together with a joint service, engage in congregational dialogues to further mutual understanding, and undertake joint social action projects. In 2004, the congregations reaffirmed this special relationship by reaffirming the written covenant between us.

**Worship Space:** BJC has always been housed at BHPC. Seven years ago, the two congregations jointly embarked on a capital campaign to renovate and build dedicated sacred space. Covenant Hall is BJC's permanent worship space, with an Ark housing our Torahs, and a *ner tamid* (eternal light.) High Holiday services are held in the church sanctuary, which is appropriately modified for Jewish worship.

**Synagogue Support:** Members enable BJC's operations and activities through "Synagogue Support." BJC does not have a "building fund." We welcome everyone regardless of ability to pay and are pleased to make private arrangements with anyone for whom the level of synagogue support and/or tuition presents a problem. There are different support levels for singles, single parents, families, and retired couples. Synagogue support includes High Holiday tickets. First year members can receive a 25% discount on Religious School Judaic Studies tuition for their children.

**High Holidays:** In addition to the full complement of High Holiday services for adults, the Hazzan leads a family service for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. There is also an age-appropriate little children's service. Non-members are welcome to purchase tickets by contacting the office.