

# HCRJ

August 2014

## HOUSTON CONGREGATION FOR REFORM JUDAISM



### Pitching Our Tent for All Who Wish to Enter

Over the course of the past year, our congregation has been actively engaged in a city-wide effort to develop new strategies to engage the broader Jewish community. This project, sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Greater Houston is called **Big Tent Judaism**. This approach to Jewish engagement draws from the values and vision of our Biblical forbearer, Abraham, whose idea of an open tent has become an ideal model for Jewish hospitality.

In direct contrast to the “members only” model which has dominated congregational life for decades, the “big tent” approach strives to engage everyone who may be interested in our programs, regardless of formal affiliation. To that end, we have expanded our congregational reach by seeking to actively engage newcomers, proactively follow up with those who attend our services and programs, and seek ways to lower any obstacles that people may perceive regarding participation. Like a tent which is open on four sides, we are actively seeking ways to welcome all who enter our space.

One of the most successful programs we have developed has been for the youngest members of the Jewish community. Through Tot Shabbat and Torah Tots, families with very young children have had the opportunity to be a part of our community on an ongoing basis. These programs are open to all who have children ages 5 and under, and over the course of a year, we have broadened our ability to develop relationships and strengthen bonds of community. In the coming year, we intend to build on our successes.

Other programs that have experienced remarkable success regardless of membership include our monthly Book Club, Interest Group, Sup and Swap and Knitzvah Group gatherings. Each of these adult activities has generated steady interest and ongoing participation. Members are encouraged to bring friends and, as a result, each respective community has grown with time.

In the month of August, we intend to open the HCRJ “tent” on a grand scale as we have set aside two very special Sabbath services designed to welcome all who may be curious about our congregation. Each of these services is described in detail on page four.

As we prepare to begin a new Religious School calendar year, and as we begin to consider our High Holy Day plans, please consider ways that you can serve as an ambassador of HCRJ. If you know people in your circles of friends and family who may be searching for a spiritual home, invite them to join you for services or a program. We are proud of what we have to offer. Help us open the tent wide to all who wish to be a part of our congregational family.

### HCRJ High Holy Days Packet



Watch your mailboxes for our High Holy Days packet which you should be receiving any day now. This packet contains all the information you need for the upcoming High Holy Days. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the temple office.

Please note that only members in good standing will receive tickets to the High Holy Days services. *Members in good standing are those who have paid in full (1) the previous fiscal year's Building Fund and membership dues, and (2) the first quarter of this fiscal year's Building Fund and membership dues by August 29, 2014.*

## AUGUST CALENDAR

- |    |          |  |
|----|----------|--|
| 1  | 6:00 PM  | Tot Shabbat                              |
|    | 6:15 PM  | Family Dinner                            |
|    | 7:15 PM  | Family Shabbat Services                  |
| 6  | 7:00 PM  | Basic Judaism Class                      |
| 8  | 7:15 PM  | Shabbat Services/Welcome Cantor Tunitsky |
| 12 | 11:30 AM | Knitzvah Group                           |
| 12 | 7:00 PM  | Board Meeting                            |
| 13 | 7:00 PM  | Basic Judaism Class                      |
| 15 | 7:15 PM  | Shabbat Services/Kids 4 Peace            |
| 20 | 7:00 PM  | Basic Judaism Class                      |
| 22 | 7:15 PM  | Shabbat Services                         |
| 24 | 9:00 AM  | First Day of Religious School            |
| 26 | 11:30 AM | Knitzvah Group                           |
| 27 | 7:00 PM  | High Holy Days Workshop                  |
| 29 | 7:15 PM  | Shabbat Services                         |
| 31 |          | <b>No Religious School</b>               |



### High Holy Days Food Drive

Please bring non-perishable food (preferably nutritional canned items) to the HCRJ office through the High Holy Days to be donated to the hungry.

#### Kickoff at Religious School Open House on August 24

There will be a basket for donations located at the entrance for your convenience. Food will be donated to Turning Point Center.

### Two Shabbat Services of Welcome August 8 and August 15 at 7:15PM

Join us for two amazing Sabbaths in the month of August. Each of these service has been designated "Welcome Shabbats" as we open HCRJ to all who may be looking for a congregational home. More details can be found on page four.

### Family Shabbat

**August 1 at 6:15 PM**

Please join us for our August Family Shabbat dinner:



**August Menu:** Pizza, chicken nuggets and mac n cheese. Dinner is \$5 per person.

**Save the date:** September's family Shabbat will be a Greene Family Camp Reunion!

### Tot Shabbat Services: August 1



Tot Shabbat: 6:00 pm  
Join Elmo and Rabbi Gross for Shabbat fun.

### The God Box

Save the Date: September 11

*The God Box* is an award winning one-woman show about the struggle to find faith in a multi-faith world. Gloria Adelman is the quintessential Jewish "bagels and Schmeeeeeah" mother. When her daughter dies, she discovers the unthinkable—her daughter was exploring other religions. Amid Buddhas and Bibles, Gloria searches for her daughter's true faith in order to give her the right funeral. *The God Box* is a hilarious and poignant tale of how faith is passed on, and what happens when it isn't. More details to follow in Reflections and the September bulletin.

### Knitzvah Group

We chat, we eat, we knit / crochet, all for good causes! Join us the second and fourth Tuesday of each month from 11:30 to 1:00. Newcomers are always welcome. Basic instruction is provided.



### Calling All College Students (and their parents):



**HCRJ would like to keep in touch with you!** Please send us your email address, college and year in school to [hcrj@hcrj.org](mailto:hcrj@hcrj.org).

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

### Honors and Memorials

In honor of Morris Schultz's 90th birthday

From **Miriam & Allan Graber, Susan Krovetz and Charna & Ronnie Graber**

In honor of the naming of Jonathan Robinson Schramm

From **Gail and Jerry Robinson**

In memory of Louis Schlanger

From **Ruth Schlanger and Mike Malloy**

In memory of Julian Mayerhofer

From **Stephen and Lila Shain**

In memory of G. John Veta

From **Sherry Veta Snyder**

In honor of Larry Bernard's birthday

From **Robert and Johnita Lebow**

In memory of Celian Lewis

From **Julia Miller**

In memory of Sylvia Robins and Abe Margolin

From **Robert and Johnita Lebow**

In memory of Eyal, Gilad and Naftali

From **Michael and Gary Nathanson**

In memory of Eyal, Gilad and Naftali

From **Ted and Maria Johnson**

In memory of Sol Goldman

From **Lauren and Alan Gordon**

From **David and Anita Grobart**

From **The Dan Hawk Family**

From **Charlotte Robinson**

From **Marcia and Bill Chaffin**

In memory of Fred Lewis

From **Julia Miller**

### Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

From **Larry and Katherine Buck**

From **Julie Barry**

In honor of the marriage of Brendan Malloy and Marina Hyde

From **Brendan Malloy and Marina Hyde**

From **Ruth Schlanger and Mike Malloy**

In honor of Matthew Pappas Bar Mitzvah

From **Annalee Pappas**

In memory of Rhoda Fleisher

From **Madeleine and Michael Appel**

In honor of the wedding of Zach and Susie

From **Mike and Kitty Kahn**

In memory of Sol Goldman

From **Pearl Goldman**

### Special Music Fund

In memory of Shawna Markoff

From **Chris, Nora and Evan Brown**

### Torah Tots

From **Coby and Frank McElroy**

In memory of Eyal, Gilad and Naftali

From **Michael and Gary Nathanson**

### General Operating

From **Ted and Maria Johnson**

### Religious School

From **Tevin Marks and Kayla Marks**

### Sponsored oneg/family dinner

From **Melvyn and Jeanette Douglass**

In memory of Doris Rose

From **Darlene and Dan Medford**

In honor of their anniversary

From **Miriam and Allan Graber**

### Youth Programming

In honor of Michelle Renfrow

From **Gary and Michael Nathanson**

### Welcome New Members

Maryellen McSweeney

Ginny Schroeder

Aaron Weinmann and Lindsay Jones

### Condolences

Our heartfelt condolences...

To the family of Barbara Friedman on the death of her mother, Sylvia Engler, who passed away on June 12, 2014

To the family of Nancy Johnson on the death of her mother, Rhoda (Rifka) Fleisher, who passed away on June 29, 2014.

To the family of Sol Goldman, husband of Pearl Goldman, father of Stuart and his wife Debbie Goldman and grandfather of Tyler and Hayden Goldman. Sol passed away July 20, 2014.

*May the memory of our beloved ones always remain a blessing to those who were graced by their presence.*

### SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

A wonderful mitzvah opportunity awaits you!

If you wish to sponsor a meal or a Sabbath reception, please let us know by filling out the form below or by contacting the temple at least two weeks prior to the event. We hope you will consider this special sponsorship opportunity. Thank you for your ongoing support of HCRJ.

- ☐ Sabbath Oneg : \$100.00
- ☐ Religious School Breakfast: \$100.00
- ☐ Family Shabbat Dinner: \$150.00
- ☐ Contribution to Arrangements Fund: \$\_\_\_\_

In honor/memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of event: \_\_\_\_\_

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

### August Sabbath Oneg Sponsorships:

**August 1:** Available

**August 8:** Available

**August 15:** Available

**August 22:** Available

**August 29:** Available

Please contact Melissa Wolfson at [hcrj@hcrj.org](mailto:hcrj@hcrj.org) if you are interested in sponsoring on one of the open dates.

## **Two Shabbat Services of Welcome**

Join us for two amazing Sabbaths in the month of August. Each of these services has been designated "Welcome Shabbats" as we open HCRJ to all who may be looking for a congregational home. Please bring your friends and family.



**August 8** Join us as we welcome Cantor Vadim Tunitsky for his first service at HCRJ. This sacred service will kick off a year-long exploration into the world of Jewish music as once a month, as well as throughout the High Holy Days, Cantor Tunitsky will bless us with his magnificent voice, his kind heart and his glorious smile.

This year-long musical program promises to provide all of us with a number of extremely beautiful musical highlights through worship services, concerts and more. It is our hope that through this majestic musical adventure, all of us will learn and grow as we open ourselves to new dimensions of our cultural heritage.



**August 15** Join us for a profoundly moving service as a group of teens from Israel and the Palestinian territories grace us with their stories after having spent the previous week at a camp called "Kids 4 Peace". The purpose of this camp, which takes place outside of Houston, is to promote transformational encounters through a residential camp for Israeli, Palestinian and American teenagers. Dialog is facilitated by United States diplomats, former Israeli and Palestinian combatants, artists, and religious leaders from each faith.

These brave souls have committed themselves to learning from each other despite the ongoing context of hatred and violence that surround them every day. Learn about this groundbreaking camp and how it has transformed these peace-minded teens as our guests will share their experiences.

## **Temple Life Committee**

The Temple Life Committee needs YOU to help provide the heart of HCRJ. We are known as a caring congregation, and we need you to help us continue that caring in the years ahead.

Historically, Temple Life has sent cards on life cycle occasions, worked with families mourning a death, visited congregants who have been hospitalized, and provided meals to those who have suffered a loss or a time of ill health or otherwise need support, kept in touch with our college students, produced memory books for our B'nai Mitzvah children, provided transportation to synagogue religious services for those who need it.

**If facilitating our Mitzvah work appeals to you, please email Melissa Wolfson, our Temple Administrator, at [hcrj@hcrj.org](mailto:hcrj@hcrj.org) or Madeleine Appel at [mgappel@comcast.net](mailto:mgappel@comcast.net).**

This is a great opportunity to enjoy fellowship with fellow congregants and provide support to those in our congregation family in times of sorrow, need and joy. The more hands, the more we can do.

## **Update from HCRJ's Knitzvah Group**

Started in December 2009, the group is nearing its 5-year anniversary. It has met faithfully every second and fourth Tuesday morning even when the building was undergoing major renovations. Members offered their homes for the meetings.

Various projects have captured the interest of the knitters and crocheters. In the beginning, we worked on tiny hats for premies. These went to the hospital to be presented to newborns. Sweaters, scarves and hats were created for the Women's Center and for other organizations that help the needy with clothing. In 2012, the group started creating 8" squares which were then stitched together into 40 square afghans or 20 square lap robes. In 2013, the 8" square project produced over 75 lap robes and 25 other items such as scarves and shawls which were presented to Seven Acres on November 26<sup>th</sup> in time for Hannukah. HCRJ had help for this project from Temple Brith Shalom, Temple Emanu El, Shirley Sirota's exercise group, relatives and friends. On Mitzvah Day 2013, some members started working on baby love blankets which are a project of the Thread Alliance, Sheila Aron founder. The blankets are small knitted squares. One corner of the square is sewn to form a cute animal face. These are comfy objects given to children who have been the victim of a trauma of some kind. This project still continues. A new project this year involves creating scarves for the 2015 Special Olympics athletes. Each state picks their own color scheme. Texas colors are blue and green.

Knitters and crocheters can and do work on any of the projects. We try not to pick anything too complex since it interferes with the chatting. We welcome experienced workers or novices. Instructions are available at all times from our members. There can be as many as 14 or as few as 6 or 7. We enjoy each others company and get inspired by what others are doing.



## **A Message from Hilary Kamin: HCRJ's Director of Education**

Welcome back Religious School families! The new school year is just around the corner. The HCRJ teachers cannot wait to see all of the smiling faces of your children and watch them reconnect with each other. We have a fantastic year ahead filled with fun, friends, and fabulous programs! For our youngest little ones, our Torah Tots program is back by popular demand! We are offering a brand new class for our 10th graders as a part of the Ozrim program and are thrilled to tell you all about our exciting middle and high school youth group events! We invite you to share your enthusiasm for our school with friends and family and please invite anyone who may be interested to attend our Opening Day of Religious School on August 24th. If you have not yet registered for Religious School, forms are available at [www.hcrj.org](http://www.hcrj.org). We look forward to seeing you all on August 24th at 9:00AM.

### **Religious School Open House**

**Sunday, August 24, 2014**

**9:00 - 11:00 am**

#### **Parents and Students:**

Don't miss this exciting first day of Religious School. The program will include:



- **Opening Assembly at 9:30AM**
- **Bagel Brunch for all to enjoy**
- **On Site Registration**
- **Meet the Teachers**
- **Learn about New Programs**

At our opening assembly we will be discussing all of the new and exciting courses we are introducing this year. Additionally, we will explore ways in which you can be an integral part of your child's Jewish education and discuss opportunities to get more involved at HCRJ.



### **M & M Meet and Greet:** **Get to know HCRJ's Youth Programming Staff**

The summer is winding down, and as we start the school year, we are excited to introduce a new youth program format to our families. Max Williams, our exciting youth group advisor is being joined by our new Youth Engagement Director, Michelle Renfrow, and the two of them have been planning some amazing programs for our youth at HCRJ.

Please come and meet Michelle and Max on our opening day festivities on Sunday, August 24th, called "How Well Do You Know Your M & M's?" Come with your sweet tooth and as much knowledge as you may have about Max and Michelle for a fun, crazy day of learning about your youth team and enjoying a sweet dessert party.

### **Torah Tots is Back at HCRJ!**

Bring friends or make new friends!

Join us each week for hands-on activities, singing, and fun as we explore together Shabbat, Jewish holidays and more. Torah Tots is for children ages 18 months to 4 years, accompanied by an adult. The program is free and open to the public. The program will take place on Sunday mornings from 10:00AM to 10:45AM beginning Sunday, September 7th. For questions or more information contact [Hilaryk@hcrj.org](mailto:Hilaryk@hcrj.org)



During our summer time Torah Tots, children learned of the story of Noah's Ark. Kids dressed up as animals, searched for olive branches in the sanctuary, ate a Jell-O rainbow and created Noah's Ark artwork.

## Basic Judaism Class Begins in August

This four-week course is designed for adults who wish to deepen their knowledge and appreciation of Jewish history, beliefs and practices. Basic Judaism is an ideal course for everyone at HCRJ and serves as a wonderful overview for newcomers to our faith.

Each week we will address an independent course topic, so you may pick and choose the classes according to your needs and interests. Topics and dates are listed below.

Please RSVP to the temple office at [hcrl@hcrl.org](mailto:hcrl@hcrl.org).

### Wednesday Evenings 7:00 - 8:30

August 6: God, Torah and Israel:  
The Foundations of a Faith

August 13: The Evolution of Values and Laws

August 20: Jewish Prayer and Ritual Practice

August 27: Shaping Sacred Time

## High Holiday Baking Days

**Where:** HCRJ Kitchen  
**When:** September 14 and 28 from 9:30AM to 11:30AM  
**What:** Baking for the High Holiday Onegs  
**Why:** To stock the freezer with your favorite treats and have fun baking with others!



The Temple will supply flour, white sugar, butter, eggs, vanilla, salt, baking powder, baking soda, and cooking spray.

Please bring your favorite recipes and any special ingredients and baking pan(s) you will need. Please RSVP to Melissa in the temple office or call her if you have any questions at 713-782-4162 or [hcrl@hcrl.org](mailto:hcrl@hcrl.org)

### Adult B'nai Mitzvah Class

We are proud to be offering a new Adult B'nai Mitzvah preparation course. During the months of preparation, we will develop skills in reading Hebrew, explore the meaning of Jewish prayers and broaden our understanding of the structure of Jewish worship in general.

If you are interested in joining this class and preparing yourself for this spiritually enriching experience, email Rabbi Gross at [rabbigross@hcrl.org](mailto:rabbigross@hcrl.org)



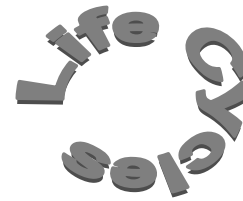
A special thanks to photographer Ozen Ahmed.

## Friends of Iman's 4th Annual Interfaith Iftar

On July 17, HCRJ hosted an interfaith Iftar (Muslim break-the-fast for Ramadan) Over 170 Jews, Muslims and Christians attended a powerful presentation by women leaders from each faith tradition. The topic was "Traditions of Compassion: Presented by the Voices of Women Leaders." The speakers included Rabbi Jill Levy, Pastor Kimberly Orr and Dr. Monira Kundi (seen in the photo with Rabbi Gross and Riaz Siddiqi).

This interfaith program was sponsored by the Friends of Iman. Iman Haq was a humanitarian, thespian, equestrian, friend and philanthropist. She was taken on her 20th birthday. What the world lost in light, it gained in hope. Those whose lives she touched organized, creating the Friends of Iman. The "Friends" as they are called, are the silver lining in this tragedy. This mission of "Friends of Iman" is to bring faith to the world by continuing Iman's altruism. This is reflected in their motto, "We all need a little Iman," which doubles Iman's literal name with its Arabic translation "Faith." By combining their efforts, Friends are able to reach a multitude of those in need; while improving themselves as harbingers of faith.

This event helped each of our communities celebrate our common values in a world climate that is consumed by religious tensions and conflict.



## AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

8/1 Neha Smith  
8/1 John Landa  
8/2 Annalee Pappas  
8/4 Adam Forman  
8/4 Lynn Bliss  
8/4 Josie Kaplow  
8/5 Jack Rubin  
8/5 John Cosgrove  
8/5 Mike Appelbaum  
8/6 Leslie Lovett  
8/6 Marcia Chaffin  
8/6 Emily Weinstein  
8/6 Gloria Herman  
8/6 Jessica Solera  
8/7 Elliot Evans  
8/9 Julia Miller  
8/9 Bruce Weiner  
8/10 Meredith Magzen  
8/11 Barbara Friedman  
8/11 Patricia Susman  
8/11 Bill Tonn  
8/12 Charlotte Robinson  
8/13 Robert Rubin  
8/13 Beverly Painter  
8/14 Maryellen McSweeney  
8/15 Randy Smith  
8/15 Alan Barbee  
8/16 Kristin Helfand  
8/17 Dawn Rubinstein  
8/17 Lila Shain  
8/19 Barry Glickman  
8/19 Tevin Marks  
8/20 Joel Kravitz  
8/21 Lilly Lerner  
8/22 David Smith  
8/25 Jane Wagner  
8/25 Brent Speer  
8/25 Bill Helfand  
8/25 Jill Ferguson  
8/28 Manfred Sternberg  
8/29 Howard Fireman  
8/30 Cindy Lipshutz  
8/30 Fran Aden  
8/30 Evelyn Lazear

## AUGUST ANNIVERSARIES

8/6 Bill & Gayle Tonn  
8/6 Andy Edison & Donna Lax-Edison  
8/7 Sidney & Ione Moran  
8/9 Jeffrey & Karen Kabin  
8/10 Martha & Jerry Kennedy  
8/10 John & Yvonne Cosgrove  
8/11 Michael & Madeleine Appel  
8/12 Aaron & Jaime Perkins  
8/12 Tom & Bobbi Asarch  
8/13 Bruce & Harriet Spain  
8/15 Moise & Joan Levy  
8/17 Jeffrey Fleisher & Elizabeth Vann  
8/23 Marty & Michelle Gross  
8/24 Bruce & Carol Appelbaum  
8/25 Gary & Susan Rachlin  
8/25 Manfred & Molly Sternberg  
8/29 Marvin & Ann Lerner  
8/29 Randall & Cynthia Anhalt  
8/31 Theodore & Joan Helfgott  
8/31 Stuart & Stephanie Rosen

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO OUR KIDS!

8/2 Shane Appelbaum  
8/5 Gilliana Gaines  
8/7 Zoey Weinstein  
8/11 Karen Hoff  
8/13 David Hoff  
8/14 Phoebe Cosgrove  
8/15 Ryan Beckelman  
8/15 Pierce Cohen  
8/16 Ellie Sondock  
8/19 Geoffrey Lore  
8/22 Max Sternberg  
8/23 Aidan Glasser  
8/25 Roberto Salomon  
8/26 Francesca Farris  
8/26 Evan Danek  
8/26 Brian Brochstein  
8/27 Eliot Herbst  
8/28 Sara Frank  
8/28 Samuel Frank  
8/31 Simon Gross

## AUGUST YARZEIT

8/1 Sara Bronstein  
8/1 Samuel Rosenbaum  
8/2 Ruth Rosen  
8/3 Gaynor Janes  
8/3 David Smith  
8/3 Irving Selber  
8/4 Adrian Levy  
8/4 Louis Shain  
8/4 Richard Beckelman  
8/4 Adrian Levy  
8/6 H.J. (Ray) Bernard  
8/7 Max Nathanson  
8/7 Selma Motley  
8/8 Gertrude Frost  
8/13 Morris Hershkowitz  
8/14 Eleanor Sondock  
8/15 Filmore Sondock  
8/17 Paul Nagel  
8/18 Keith Frank  
8/18 Bettie Farfel  
8/18 Jeffrey Graber  
8/20 Edna Soifer  
8/22 Joseph Bernstein  
8/22 Sophia Goldfield  
8/24 Jack Miller  
8/24 Sadine Litowich  
8/24 Leon Nathanson  
8/25 Leland Shain  
8/26 Morris Markman  
8/26 Murray Gidseg  
8/26 Bayla Markman  
8/26 Phillip Markman  
8/26 Ida Leben  
8/27 Thomas Spain  
8/27 Helen Oppenheimer  
8/28 Alvan Wolfe  
8/30 Violet Mesinger  
8/31 Trudy Smith  
8/31 Mae Hecht  
8/31 Mickey Markman

You are invited to join HCRJ  
for our monthly



August 1, 2014  
Dinner 6:15 pm  
Sabbath Services 7:15 pm

\$5.00 per person

Please feel free to bring a side dish to show off your culinary talents.

### August Menu:

Pizza, chicken nuggets  
and mac n cheese.

**Steven M. Gross**, Senior Rabbi  
rabbigross@hcrj.org (private email)

**Michael P. Le Burkien**, Rabbi Emeritus  
rabbileburkien@sbcglobal.net (private email)

**Melissa Wolfson**, Temple Administrator  
hcrj@hcrj.org

**Hilary Kamin**, Program/Education Director  
hilaryk@hcrj.org

**Julie Barry**, President

**Bruce Shelby**, Vice President

**Debby Jones**, Secretary

**Sandy Kantor**, Treasurer

**Madeleine Appel**, Past President

**Darlene Medford**, Membership Chair

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**Mailing Address:** 801 Bering Drive, Houston TX 77057  
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Newsletter articles, suggestions for articles and corrections are welcome. Deadline for submission is the 15th of the month.