

# HCRJ

Summer/Fall 2023

## HOUSTON CONGREGATION FOR REFORM JUDAISM

### Rebuilding Faith in an Increasingly Skeptical World



Over the course of the past few decades, our nation and our world have suffered an erosion of faith in our institutions, our leaders and even in our democracy. We have lost faith in our systems of justice, education, and healthcare. We have lost faith in the capacity of our elected officials to work together for the greater good of our communities. We have lost faith in the idea that our sources of media can communicate truthful, objective information. In almost every corner of our society, faith has been compromised, and it has had an impact on the way in which we see and interact with each other on a daily basis.

Indeed, faith is in a state of crisis, so how do we begin to get it back?

One path forward involves recognizing that faith is somewhat hardwired into our hearts and minds. The truth is that whether we like to admit it or not, we exercise faith all the time. Without faith, we would never fly on airplanes. Without faith, we would never take medicine; we would never improve our diets; we would never sacrifice ourselves for a greater good or put ourselves in uncomfortable situations for something we hope will be better down the road.

When employed with intention, faith can be an empowering and liberating mechanism that moves us forward when we feel stuck and gives us courage after we stumble. Faith provides us with a sense of resolve and ambition regardless of any obstacles that may be in our path. In a world that often makes us feel small and insignificant, faith can help us channel our skills and resources to meet the challenges we face with hope, vision and resilience. In this way, faith might be understood as a kind of mental and emotional bridge that gets us from the everyday struggles of life to a place of peace and resolution.

In each of these situations, faith is not something that comes out of nowhere. Our faith is not blind. It is rooted in our experiences, and it is anchored in trusted perceptions of realities we have faced in the past.

We are able to get on an airplane because past experiences support our belief that the plane will not fall from the sky. We are able to take random medications because we trust in our doctor's knowledge and anticipate that the prescription drug will do what it is supposed to do. There are countless daily activities that employ faith this way, for the truth is, there is never a guarantee that what we hope for is what will happen. In these cases, and in so much of what we do, faith is a part of how we operate.

In these times of skepticism and mistrust, we all need a boost in faith. Our Holy Day Season is just around the corner providing us with an ideal opportunity to strengthen and restore faith in our lives, faith in our futures, and faith in God. Our rituals and prayers invite us to embrace faith as a driving force for renewal within ourselves, our relationships, and our place in the universe. During this sacred season, our traditions seek to help nurture faith in how we think and how we live by encouraging us to imbue every moment with purpose, meaning, intent, and direction. In short, the primary themes of our High Holidays invite us to live with the conviction that despite the way things may appear to be, despite any perceived obstacles in our path, things are and will be ok.

As we prepare to welcome 5784, may the rituals and traditions of our holy season enable each of us find ways to recognize, embrace, and unleash the power of faith in our daily lives and find ways to apply it in an increasingly skeptical world.

On this page you will find the HCRJ calendar of programs. As our programming schedule is ever changing and growing, please visit our website at [www.hcrj.org](http://www.hcrj.org) for details and the most up to date information for our various events. Questions regarding our programs can be directed to Beth Nelson at [Beth@hcrj.org](mailto:Beth@hcrj.org).

## September Calendar

4	10:00AM	Senior Chai Yoga
6	10:00AM 1:00PM	Mah Jongg Watercolor Wednesday
7	1:00PM	Mah Jongg
8	6:30PM	Selichot Shabbat Services
10	9:00AM	First Day of Religious School
11	10:00AM	Senior Chai Yoga
13	10:00AM 1:00PM	Mah Jongg Watercolor Wednesday Art
14	1:00PM	Mah Jongg
15	8:00PM	Erev Rosh Hashanah Service
16	9:15AM 11:00AM	Rosh Hashanah Family Service Rosh Hashanah Adult Service
17		No Religious School
18	10:00AM	Senior Chai Yoga
20	10:00AM 1:00PM	Mah Jongg Watercolor Wednesday Art
21	1:00PM	Mah Jongg
22	6:30PM	Shabbat Shuvah Services
24	8:00PM	Yom Kippur Kol Nidre Service
25	9:15AM 11:00AM 1:00PM 2:15PM 3:00PM 4:00PM	Yom Kippur Family Service Morning Service Discussion Hour Transition & Reflection Period Afternoon Service Memorial and Concluding Service <i>Light bite bagel break fast at approximately 5:30PM</i>
27	10:00AM	Mah Jongg Water Color Wednesday Art Class
28	1:00PM	Mah Jongg
29	6:30PM	Sukkot Shabbat Services

## October Calendar

1	9:00AM 12:00PM	Religious School Family Breakfast Sukkot Potluck Lunch
2	10:00AM	Senior Chai Yoga
4	10:00AM 1:00PM	Mah Jongg Water Color Wednesday Art Class
5	1:00PM	Mah Jongg
6	6:15PM 7:15PM	Shabbat Dinner Simchat Torah Shabbat B'Yachad Service
7	9:30AM	Cars, Coffee & Conversation
8	1:00PM	Simchat Torah Religious School
9	10:00AM	Senior Chai Yoga
11	10:00AM 1:00PM	Mah Jongg Watercolor Wednesday Art
12	1:00PM	Mah Jongg
13	6:30PM	Pink Ribbon Shabbat Services
15	9:30AM 1:30PM	Religious School Interfaith Kickball Tourney
16	10:00AM 6:00PM	Senior Chai Yoga Senior Chai Art Class
18	10:00AM 1:00PM 6:30PM	Mah Jongg Senior Chai Art Class Beginner/Learn to play Mah Jongg
19	1:00PM	Mah Jongg
20	6:30PM	Shabbat Services
21	5:00PM	Bat Mitzvah of Samantha Perkins
22	9:30AM 1:30PM	Religious School Mah Jongg Game Day
23	10:00AM	Senior Chai Yoga
25	10:00AM 1:00PM	Mah Jongg Senior Chai Art Class
26	1:00PM	Mah Jongg
26	6:30PM	Consecration Shabbat Services
29	9:30AM	Religious School
30	10:00AM	Senior Chai Yoga

## **Mazel Tov to the 2023-24 Board of Trustees**

On Friday, August 25, the 2023-24 HCRJ Board of Trustees will be installed at Shabbat Services. We are grateful for the leadership of these individuals who will serve as stewards of the congregation.

### **Mazel Tov to:**

JoAnn Innerarity (President)  
Ed Hurwitz (Vice President)  
Bruce Shelby (Treasurer)  
Laura Rosenfield (Secretary)  
Adam Forman (Immediate Past President)

### **Board of Trustees**

Adriana Bain  
Cory Baum  
Amie Hill  
Kitty Kahn  
Marc Levinson  
Ray Morgenstern  
Lauren Salomon  
Anat Shaw



**HCRJ Board Retreat with Alyse Kirschen,  
URJ Facilitator on August 13, 2023**

## **Welcome to HCRJ!**

Please join us in welcoming the newest members of HCRJ:

Jamye & Rick Barron  
Robin Beerman  
Sara & Mark Edelman  
Jason & Rita Fleisig  
Shelley Green  
Shoshana & Daniel Jackofsky  
Kathy Kremer  
Betsy & George Lowe  
Linda & Paul Lynn  
Maria May  
Linda & Gary Mendeloff  
Miles & Melissa Mendeloff  
Rebecca & Steven Polansky  
Edie Premazon  
Leta Schoen  
Eileen Silverman  
David & Neha Smith  
Natalie & Ryan Stephens

## **Brag & Boast**



Mazel Tov to Mary Alice & Michael Parmet on the birth of their granddaughter Peyton Pearl Parmet. Proud parents Matt & Kelly Parmet.



Mazel Tov to Samantha Perkins, daughter of Jaime and Aaron, who will become a Bat Mitzvah on October 21.



Mazel Tov to Randy Czarlinsky for receiving the Hans Mayer Jewish Communal Professional Award.



We are very excited to welcome Beth Fine-Nelson to our staff. Beth has arrived at a time when we are reimagining ways to engage our community and build on the amazing programming which has been nurtured by Justin Deutsch.

Beth comes to us from Temple Sinai in Sharon, Massachusetts, where she served as the Education and Events Director. Her work as a Jewish professional spans decades, and she comes to HCRJ with a wide variety of skills in programming, education and communications.

Beth's title will be Director of Communications and Engagement, and her kind demeanor and engaging personality will soon be associated with the kind of warm, welcoming spirit that we have all come to appreciate at HCRJ. If you are ever near HCRJ during the day, please pop in and say "hello."

# Happy New Year 5784



We wish you and your family a Happy New Year  
full of peace, prosperity, health and fulfillment.  
*L'Shanah Tovah Tikatevu.*

## 2023 High Holy Days Schedule

### Rosh Hashanah (New Year)

**Friday, September 15**

8:00 p.m. — Rosh Hashanah Eve Service  
*Reception will follow this Service*

**Saturday, September 16**

9:15 a.m. — Rosh Hashanah Family Service

11:00 a.m. — Rosh Hashanah Adult Morning Service

### Kol Nidre

**Sunday, September 24**

8:00 p.m. — Kol Nidre - Yom Kippur Eve Service

### Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement)

**Monday, September 25**

9:15 a.m. — Yom Kippur Family Service

11:00 a.m. — Yom Kippur Adult Morning Service

1:00 p.m. — High Holy Days Discussion Hour

2:15 p.m. — Transition and Reflection Period

3:00 p.m. — Afternoon Service

4:00 p.m. — Memorial Service & Concluding Service

*Lite Bagel Reception to follow at approximately 5:30PM*

## Rosh Hashanah Lunch

Immediately following Rosh Hashanah services you are invited to join a small group of congregants for lunch. Please RSVP to Beth Nelson at [Beth@HCRJ.org](mailto:Beth@HCRJ.org).

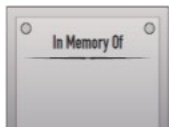
### Bakers Needed

If you are interested in baking for the Erev Rosh Hashanah Dessert Reception on September 15 please sign-up on line or contact Beth Nelson at [Beth@HCRJ.org](mailto:Beth@HCRJ.org)



### HCRJ Honey

Honey from the HCRJ bee hive is now for sale. Each 8 oz. jar is \$18. 100% of the proceeds will go to support HCRJ. To order your jar of honey, please visit the site below.



### Memorial Plaque

Remember your loved ones with a plaque on the Memorial Wall. Each plaque is \$500.

## **Yom Kippur Discussion Hour Monday, September 25 at 1:00PM**

*Faith is about seeing the miraculous in the everyday,  
not about waiting every day for the miraculous.*

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks; The Great Partnership

During our Yom Kippur Study Hour, our discussion will focus on how Judaism understands miracles, and how each of us might open our hearts and minds to seeing and understanding the miraculous in our every-day lives. As a springboard for our conversations, Sammy Berko and his parents will share the remarkable story of Sammy's death and the unfolding events that followed, which can only be described as a miracle.

Our time together is intended to help us enter our afternoon of worship with a renewed sense of God's presence. Join us for an emotional and inspiring hour, as we listen, share, and embrace the miracles in our lives.



## High Holy Days Food Drive

Participate in our High Holy Days Food Drive benefitting the Houston Food Bank. Please drop off your non-perishable items in the collection bins in the Oppenheimer Foyer at the temple. Most needed items include: Water, crackers, granola bars and other protein snacks, cereal, canned tuna, soup, ravioli, canned fruit, and canned beans, paper towels, toilet paper, paper plates, cups, utensils and cleaners.

**Please drop off your donations by October 9th, 2023. Thanks in Advance!**



## **Sacred Shabbats During the High Holy Day Season and Beyond**

**Shabbat and Selichot Services**  
**Friday, September 8 at 6:30PM**

Join us for a worship experience designed to jump start our spirits for the Days of Awe. The music of this service will re-familiarize us with the melodies we will be singing on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. This service will include a selection of sacred readings found in our prayer book specifically designated for these days of preparation.

**Shabbat Shuvah**  
**Friday, September 22 at 6:30PM**

*Shabbat Shuvah* is the Sabbath between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. The name is derived from the opening word of the Haftarah reading that urges us: *Shuvah Yisrael* "Return, O Israel, to the Eternal your God." Join us on Friday night, September 22th for a Sabbath experience as we seek to find ways to direct our good intentions from Rosh Hashanah and set a path of return as we prepare ourselves for Yom Kippur.

### **HIGH HOLY DAYS** *Family Services*

**Rosh Hashanah: Saturday, September 16 at 9:15AM**

**Yom Kippur: Monday, September 25 at 9:15AM**

**Services are open to the community (no ticket required)**

Kick off a New Year and join us on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur for family friendly, dynamic services. These services are designed to inspire children of all ages and engage our families in the process of renewal and joy.



**Questions?** 713-782-4162 [www.hcrj.org](http://www.hcrj.org)



### **Sukkot Potluck Lunch** **Sunday, October 1** **12:00pm**

Please join us in the Sukkah for an afternoon of fun, food, Football (Texans V Steelers), and Trivia.

Please bring your favorite dish to share.

For more information contact Beth Nelson at [Beth@HCRJ.org](mailto:Beth@HCRJ.org)



### **Simchat Torah Shabbat B'Yachad dinner & Service**

**Friday, October 6**

**Dinner at 6:15pm and Services at 7:15pm**

Please join us for a special Simchat Torah Service as we conclude the reading of the words of Torah and immediately start again. Symbolically affirming our people's eternal devotion to our faith. We will be joined by Congregation Shma Koleinu.

*"... Teach them faithfully to your children; speak of them in your home and on your way, when you lie down and when you rise up..." (Deuteronomy 6:5-9)*



**Friday, October 27 at 6:30pm**

**Consecration** is one of the most precious ceremonies on our calendar as it marks your child's entrance into their formal Jewish Education. During this special ceremony, our kindergarten students will receive a blessing and their own miniature Torah scroll, sing the Shema and other songs.

# FAMILY PROGRAMS



**WE INVITE YOU AND YOUR FAMILIES TO JOIN US IN FUN, LEARNING AND WORSHIP!**

## SHABBAT *B'yachad*

**First Friday of the Month**  
**6:15PM Dinner**  
**(RSVP required)**  
**7:15 Shabbat Service**

A family friendly, torah centered worship experience.  
Special oneg to follow.

Geared towards children 10 and older.

## SHABBAT *Shelanu*

**Saturday, August 26**  
**at 10:00AM**

Songs, crafts, learning and snacks will shape this morning of Shabbat family fun.

For ages elementary and younger

Register with Beth at  
Beth@hcrj.org

## TORAH *Tots*

**Sunday Mornings during**  
**Religious School**  
**10:00AM to 11:00AM**

Join us weekly to learn about Jewish values and holidays through stories, songs, activities, and more! Torah Tots is free and open to the community; membership to HCRJ is not required

For ages 4 years and younger

Register with Betti Buck  
at betti@hcrj.org



## Challah Prince™

Sunday, September 10 | 2 pm  
Congregation Beth Israel  
5600 N Braeswood Blvd.  
Tickets: \$36

In celebration of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Yom Limmud, join us for a challah braiding demonstration featuring Instagram star, Idan Chabasov, known as the Challah Prince.

Participants will have the opportunity to braid their own challah and take it home to bake for Rosh Hashanah.



SPACE IS LIMITED! TO REGISTER, SCAN THE QR CODE OR VISIT  
**houstonjewish.org/challahprince**



**It's time for**  
**HCRJ's 5<sup>th</sup> Annual**  
**Mah Jongg Game Day**

**Sunday, October 22<sup>nd</sup> 2023**  
**1:30 – 4:30 PM**

**Food! Fun! Prizes!**

It's about time we get together to play mah jongg again. We hope you will join us this fall for the annual HCRJ Mah Jongg Game Day. Invite all your friends (you don't have to be a member to participate). The Mimosas, Bloody Marys and great raffle prizes will return again this year!!!!

**Register and pay:**

<https://hcrj.shulcloud.com/form/mahjongg>

Earlybird (before September 8<sup>th</sup>): \$38

Regular (after September 8<sup>th</sup>): \$45

**I PLAY**  
**MAH JONGG**  
**TOO MUCH**  
**SAID NO ONE**  
**EVER!**

Bring your favorite dish (appetizer or dessert) and the recipe.

HCRJ will compile all the recipes and provide a cookbook as a gift to you!

Questions: Please contact Debbie Barrash  
(dibphd@gmail.com) or Beth Fine-Nelson (beth@hcrj.org)





## HCRJ HAPPENINGS



### Confirmation Class of 2023

Front Row (L to R): Richard Kabin, Quin Nawotka, Aiden Gross, Henry Wise, Brandon Kamin  
 Second Row (L to R): Betti Buck, Michael Duke, Rabbi Steve Gross, Zach Marazzo



801 BERING DRIVE HOUSTON, TX 77057

**Steven M. Gross**, Senior Rabbi  
rabbigross@hcrj.org

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

**Justin Deutsch**, Executive Director  
justin@hcrj.org

**Beth Fine-Nelson**, Director of Engagement  
beth@hcrj.org

**Betti Buck**, Religious School Director  
betti@hcrj.org

**JoAnn Innerarity**, President

**Ed Hurwitz**, Vice President

**Laura Rosenfield**, Secretary

**Bruce Shelby**, Treasurer

**Adam Forman**, Past President