



Congregation B'nai Israel

Frequently Asked Questions

WHAT DENOMINATION OF JUDAISM IS CBI?

CBI is affiliated with the Conservative Movement. Our community, however, reflects a broad range of Jewish observance, and a wide diversity of backgrounds. There is no expectation that you observe Judaism one way or another; we are united by a love of Judaism and desire to be part of a vibrant Jewish community. People with all levels of observance feel at home at CBI.

WHAT IF MY PARTNER, SPOUSE OR FAMILY MEMBER IS NOT JEWISH?

We are very welcoming to interfaith/blended families. A significant percentage of our members, including synagogue leadership, are part of blended families. The issue of interfaith inclusivity has been a major focal point for the past year. At the June 2017 Annual Board Meeting, the Congregation voted to change the by-laws so that the non-Jewish partner in an interfaith family would be a full voting member of CBI.

IS CBI LGBTQ FRIENDLY?

We are very welcoming to LGBTQ individuals and families. Many of our members, including board members, are LGBTQ identified, and we have an active synagogue presence at the Pride March every year.

WHAT IS THE BELIEF SYSTEM OF YOUR MEMBERS?

If you surveyed our 370 member families you would probably find 370 different theologies, ranging from atheist or agnostic to deep personal relationships with G-d. We have mystics and spiritual seekers and self-described non-believers and cultural Jews.

WHERE DOES CBI STAND ON THE ISRAELI/PALESTINIAN ISSUE?

There is probably no issue that elicits more opinions (and emotions) among members than that of Israel/Palestine. As a synagogue, we unconditionally support the State of Israel and the Jewish people's right to self-determination. As a community, we welcome the broadest diversity of opinions and engage them through speakers and lectures representing different viewpoints.

ARE CBI MEMBERS LIBERAL OR CONSERVATIVE OR SOMEWHERE INBETWEEN?

In general you will find that the political leanings at CBI are consistent with what you find in the Valley in general. We are a community that provides a spiritual home for people with diverse political leanings and lifestyles. We welcome open and probing debate about politics and religion and, of course, how they intersect.



WHAT IS RELIGIOUS LIFE LIKE AT CBI?

CBI has members of all ages with activities for everyone. On a typical Saturday morning, children in our innovative youth and family program meet, an introductory study group takes place, and Shabbat services are conducted in the sanctuary. We have joyful family programming almost every week, often with singing, dancing, and theatre. Everyone comes together for a Kiddush meal at about noon. Friday evening services are held weekly, with special programs like a frequent musical Shabbat service and services on Abundance Farm.

WHAT IS THE SOCIAL ATMOSPHERE LIKE AT CBI?

CBI is a place where lots of activities are going on all the time. We are socially and politically engaged. We are connected with the earth and operate Abundance Farm, our own food justice farm and outdoor classroom adjacent to the synagogue. The weekly Kiddush is a place to see old friends and meet new ones. We run creative, exciting programming for holidays, attracting large numbers of people from all over the region.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE ACTIVITIES AT CBI?

We have a great variety of programs for all ages nearly every week of the year, including holiday observance (Purim and Simchat Torah are especially fun!). Other programs include:

- Abundance Farm, a working farm right on the synagogue grounds
- ALMA, a twice-weekly Religious School that includes family programming
- Gan Keshet, a vibrant pre-school
- The CBI Outdoor Club, offering hikes, paddling and other adventures
- Tikkun Olam, a social action group
- Annual fundraising dinners with music and dancing
- Weekly Kiddush, a delicious vegetarian lunch after Saturday morning services
- Friday night services
- Adult education classes
- The CBI Café, a weekly program on Sunday mornings in the spring and fall, featuring speakers from our community and beyond
- Occasional Saturday afternoon speakers following the Kiddush

WHAT DOES IT COST TO BE A MEMBER OF CBI?

We are 100% committed to making CBI affordable to everyone who wants to join. The full cost of CBI family membership is \$1,631 for the first year and \$2,039 after that. Discounts are available, and many people do not pay the full amount. The abatement process is easy, confidential and non-intrusive. You pay what you can.