



[www.Bnai-Abraham.org](http://www.Bnai-Abraham.org)

58 Crosswicks ▪ PO Box 245 ▪ Bordentown, NJ 08505 ▪ (609) 298-1527

## *Welcome to our community...*

Thank you for your interest in Temple Bnai Abraham . a Jewish Reconstructionist Federation [JRF] affiliated congregation. Enclosed please find the information you requested on our synagogue, including:

- Who We Are
- Hebrew School
- Youth Group
- Community Affairs
- Mission Statement
- Membership Registration
- Community Programs
- Religious Services
- Sarah Seidel Sisterhood
- Adult Education
- History of Bnai Abraham
- Contact Information
- Membership Fees & Dues
- Reconstructionist Affiliation

As you are sure to learn upon your first visit to Bnai Abraham, we are a warm, close-knit Jewish community with a long, rich, documented history. Our membership draws from our home town of Bordentown and surrounding areas to gather in our synagogue, which we have owned since 1918!

You are welcome to join us at Shabbat services, High Holidays, or any of our adult education classes. The times and dates are on the enclosed calendar or in our community newsletter and on our website [www.Bnai-Abraham.org](http://www.Bnai-Abraham.org).

We hope you will decide to join our community. When you are ready, please fill out the enclosed registration form and return to Kim Aubry, Membership Chair, at the above address. We will look forward to seeing you soon.

Loitraot,

<i>Kim Aubry</i>	<i>Membership</i>	<i>(609) 499-4840</i>	<a href="mailto:info@bnai-abraham.org">info@bnai-abraham.org</a>
<i>Julie Pfau</i>	<i>Rabbi</i>	<i>(404) 545-0133</i>	<a href="mailto:rabbijulie@bnai-abraham.org">rabbijulie@bnai-abraham.org</a>
<i>Robin Afrime</i>	<i>President</i>	<i>(609) 499-1761</i>	<a href="mailto:raffrime@burlington-nj.net">raffrime@burlington-nj.net</a>



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## *Who We Are & Our History*

Temple B'nai Abraham is a small but diverse Jewish community located in historic Bordentown, New Jersey. Our community is both progressive and traditional, enjoying a rich Jewish heritage and history. We are a Reconstructionist congregation and are open and welcoming to all who join.

Records of the Jewish community in Bordentown date back beyond the 1830s, when local Jews played an important part in the town's history. Moses Wolf, a Jewish tailor and clothing store owner, was elected mayor in 1874 and served through 1877.

As the Jewish Community grew and became more active, a group of energetic residents formed the "Bordentown Hebrew Association" in 1917. Their stated intent was to hold and maintain services for the worship of G-d and the promotion of good fellowship according to the tenets of the Hebrew faith. It also gave its corporation the power to build a synagogue and Hebrew school.

In July of 1918, the Bordentown Hebrew Association purchased our temple . the double house at 58-60 Crosswicks Street. By that same fall, the residence was converted to a Shul, and High Holy Day services were conducted there for the first time. In December, 1918, the "Bordentown Hebrew Women's Association" was formed to serve as an auxiliary to the men's group. A Hebrew scholar from Jerusalem was hired in 1921 to serve as resident spiritual leader and Hebrew teacher.

Today, the tradition continues at this same location with our temple serving as synagogue, sanctuary, community center, and Hebrew school. Our Rabbi is a student of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College in Wyncote, Pennsylvania.

## *Mission Statement*

Temple B'nai Abraham is a Reconstructionist congregation dedicated to creating a caring and inclusive community, and to enhancing Jewish life through learning and communal activities. We view education for ourselves and our children as fundamental to Jewish life. We do this in order to enhance our own lives as contemporary Jews and to perpetuate our bond and our children's bond to our heritage.

In order to reach our goals, we recognize the need to explore and experience community from various approaches. We believe that the focused evolution of our Jewish community may occur in a beneficial manner if we endeavor to continue to provide a variety of social, religious, experiential, and educational services for our members. In doing so, we hope to develop connections to other Jewish people and Jewish communities.

We strive to preserve and develop Jewish traditions by merging past and present in a spirit of democracy, participation, egalitarianism, and creative thought within a Reconstructionist framework.

We endeavor to provide excellence in Jewish education. In doing, so we hope to pass on our values and traditions to future generations of Jews. It is our desire to provide a viable center of living Judaism where people can find meaning in worship. In this way we create, grow and protect connections to G-d, Judaism, and community.



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### *Religious Services*

At Bnai Abraham, you will find engaging and exciting prayer services, full of warmth and song. Friday evening services are conducted in our sanctuary most weeks at 7:30 pm. A Saturday morning service and Oneg+lunch is held once each month. In addition to the regularly scheduled Shabbat services, special holiday services are always offered. Both men and women participate fully in all religious services, and our inclusive interfaith policy invites the participation of non-Jews. As we are an open and democratic community, discussions and questions regarding the services and sermon are invited and encouraged.

### *Hebrew School*

Our religious school provides education to children from Kindergarten through Bar/Bat Mitzvah. At all levels, the educational objective is to present a balanced program of Hebrew language, Jewish prayer, holidays and life cycle events, as well as history, arts, and Jewish culture to our students. There is a regular junior congregation included in the Sunday morning program.

### *Adult Education*

Temple Bnai Abraham is committed to the traditional Jewish value of lifelong education. We offer adult programs in the Torah, the Bible, and arts, as well as Jewish history, meditation, and culture.

### *Community Affairs*

Our congregation is involved with furthering the Jewish commitment to the local, national, and international community, focusing on all relevant issues. We support freedom and democracy, as well as human-rights agendas. We actively support and participate in social action activities. The community supports a pluralistic Israel, where all parties and citizens have an equal opportunity. Our local Jewish community has been an important part of the rich 300-year history of Bordentown and remains committed to working closely with the community-at-large.

### *Sarah Seidel Sisterhood*

Our Sisterhood offers ongoing informative and entertaining social programs. It provides a forum for the women of our community to join together in a relaxed, supportive, and informal atmosphere. The Sisterhood is involved in many activities for the temple, such as organizing the Oneg Shabbat program, fundraising, maintaining a gift shop, organizing an annual blood drive, assisting families sitting shiva, and providing support for bar/bat mitzvah families. Members are encouraged to join the Sisterhood at an annual cost of \$30.00. Sisterhood holds meetings throughout the year, usually at our shul, and typically on the second Monday of the month. Meeting dates are posted in our newsletter.

### *"Tot Shabbat"*

Led by our Rabbi, our Tot Shabbat+group for children approximately 6 years of age and under gathers once a month on Shabbat. They share candle-lighting, blessings over the wine & challah, singing, story-telling, and circle-time, all culminating in a pot-luck dinner. This program is designed to include the younger children of our community, and to provide them with a sense of Jewish identity and heritage early on. Siblings are always welcome!



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### *What is a Reconstructionist?*

As Reconstructionist Jews we are willing to question conventional answers and keep open minds. We are Jews who take the Jewish tradition seriously and live Jewish lives even though we might not believe in the divine, supernatural origin of the Torah. We believe that just as Jewish civilization has adapted to new circumstances throughout Jewish history, so must it adapt to modern North American society.

We Reconstructionists tend to conduct more intimate worship services in which everyone is involved. Being a Reconstructionist indicates active participation - the reconstruction of Jewish life and tradition to integrate it with the particular lifestyle that each of us chooses. As members of the Reconstructionist community we commit ourselves to ongoing study, focusing on mitzvah, social action and social equality.

### *Jewish Reconstructionist Federation*

The Jewish Reconstructionist Federation represents a democratic, pluralistic, inclusive, and growing movement, with over 100 member communities in North America and around the world. JRF offers both central and regional services and facilitates networks and lateral relationships among member communities. JRF services fall under a number of categories including [Congregational Services](#), [Publications](#), [Movement-wide and Regional Community Building](#), [Education](#), [Youth and Camping](#), [Tikkun Olam](#), [Liturgy and Music](#), [Israel Programming](#), Web support. Members of JRF are represented in the larger Jewish world through work with the United Jewish Communities, the Conference of Presidents, the World Union of Progressive Judaism, ARZA, local JCRC councils, Jewish Federations, Synagogue and Rabbinic councils and numerous progressive and pluralistic organizations

### *Reconstructionist Judaism*

Reconstructionist Judaism is a progressive, contemporary approach to Jewish life which integrates a deep respect for traditional Judaism with the insights and ideas of contemporary social, intellectual and spiritual life.

#### **Judaism as the Culture of the Jewish People**

For Reconstructionists, Judaism is more than Jewish religion; Judaism is the entire cultural legacy of the Jewish people. Religion is central; Jewish spiritual insights and religious teachings give meaning and purpose to our lives. Yet our creativity as expressed through art, music and drama, languages and literature, and our relationship with the land of Israel itself are also integral parts of Jewish culture. Each of these aspects provides a gateway into the Jewish experience that can enrich and inspire us.

#### **Community as Cornerstone**

While deeply connected to the historical experience of the Jewish people, we find a profound sense of belonging in our contemporary communities as well. This connection often leads to increased ritual observance and experimentation with the ritual rhythms of Jewish life. We find meaning in rediscovering the richness of traditional ritual and creating new observances which respond to our contemporary communal and personal cycles. Reconstructionist communities are characterized by their respect for such core values as democratic process, pluralism, and accessibility. In this way, they create participatory, inclusive, egalitarian communities committed to exploring Jewish life with dedication, warmth and enthusiasm.



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## Patterns of Practice

"Torah" means "teaching." In Jewish tradition, Talmud Torah, the study of Torah, is a life-long obligation and opportunity. Reconstructionists are committed to a serious engagement with the texts and teachings, as well as the art, literature and music of tradition. But we are not passive recipients; we are instead challenged to enter the conversation of the generations and to hear voices other than our own, but to add our own voices as well.

Reconstructionist Judaism is respectful of traditional Jewish observances but also open to new interpretations and forms of religious expression. As Rabbi Mordecai M. Kaplan (1881-1983), the founder of Reconstructionism, taught, tradition has "a vote, but not a veto." Reconstructionists share a commitment to making Judaism their own by finding in it joy, meaning, and ideas they can believe. Unlike Orthodox and Conservative Judaism, Reconstructionism does not view inherited Jewish law (halahah) as binding. We continue to turn to Jewish law for guidance, if not always for governance. We recognize that in the contemporary world, individuals and communities make their own choices with regard to religious practice and ritual observance.

But where Reform Judaism emphasizes individual autonomy, Reconstructionism emphasizes the importance of religious community in shaping individual patterns of observance. Belonging to a community leads us to take the patterns of observance within that community seriously; our choices do not exist independently, but are made in response to our community as part of our participating in it. Reconstructionism thus retains a warmly traditional (and fully egalitarian) approach to Jewish religious practice.

## Spiritual Seeking

Reconstructionists hold diverse ideas about G-d, but we share an emphasis on G-dliness . those hopes, beliefs, and values within us that impel us to work for a better world, that give us strength and solace in times of need, that challenge us to grow, and that deepen our joy in moments of celebration.

Reconstructionist prayer books speak of G-d beyond the gender concepts of male/female, and beyond the traditional metaphor of "king of the universe." For example, in our prayer books G-d is addressed as, among other things, "The Healer," "The Teacher," "The Comforter," and "The Presence." We are engaged in the spiritual adventure of discovering the many attributes of the one G-d.

## Ethics and Values

Reconstructionist communities emphasize acts of social justice alongside prayer and study as an essential part of their spiritual practice. Reconstructionist Judaism affirms that religion can and must be a powerful force for promoting communal discussion about ethics and values. The Torah tradition itself is a deep and wide resource for this project. Yet we know that generations of Jews have sharpened and distilled the ethical insights of Judaism as a result of their encounter with other cultures and traditions, and so it is in our time.

## The Reconstructionist Movement

The Reconstructionist movement has three components:

- A Synagogue Arm . the Jewish Reconstructionist Federation (JRF)
- A Rabbinical College . the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College (RRC)
- Association of Rabbis . the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association (RRA)



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## *Membership Dues / Tuition / Fees*

### **Annual Dues**

Dues include High Holiday tickets, adult education classes, and services of the Rabbi for certain life cycle events. Dues are payable in full upon joining. Payment plans can be found on the ~~%~~Membership Registration form. A member in need of special billing arrangements should contact the Temple President upon receiving their membership registration. New members joining after January 1<sup>st</sup> will be billed at 50% for the year. Children are defined as under-21 and living in the household or still attending school.

Single Membership	\$435.00	(no children)
Family Membership	\$780.00	

Note: Confidential adjustments/arrangements for those with financial needs are available through direct contact with the President.

### **Religious School**

Sunday School: Grades K through 2. **\$230.00** / child (Must be paid in full at registration)

Hebrew School: Grades 3 through Bar/Bat Mitzvah: **\$400.00** for 1<sup>st</sup> child, **\$320** for each additional child (Must be paid in full at registration)

A full Hebrew school registration form is included in these materials.

### **Bar/Bat Mitzvahs**

The parents must meet with the Rabbi and/or religious chairpersons at least one year before the date of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. At that time, full information will be furnished and preliminary arrangements will be made.

Basic lessons for Bar/Bat Mitzvah are included in the membership dues and school tuition. If additional lessons are desired or deemed necessary, financial arrangements must be made with the religious committee chairperson.

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah must regularly attend school and both the student and parent(s) are expected to regularly attend religious services. All dues and fees must be paid before a child will be granted a Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony. Bar/Bat Mitzvah protocols are available upon request through the temple President or Vice President (contact information below).



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## High Holiday Tickets

Members: All prior year's dues and fees must be paid to receive your High Holiday tickets. Your children do not need tickets until they are 21 or have finished higher education.

Additional tickets may be purchased at the non-member cost (see below). All additional tickets must be ordered in advance by contacting:

Robin Afrime  
President

(609) 499-1761

[raffrime@burlington-nj.net](mailto:raffrime@burlington-nj.net)

Sid Morginstin

Religious Vice-President

(609) 298-2891

[sidmorgy@verizon.net](mailto:sidmorgy@verizon.net)

Mike Rosen

Treasurer

(609) 298-2799

[mrosen3@comcast.net](mailto:mrosen3@comcast.net)

Tickets are printed with member/guest name and are non-transferable. Guest tickets are available to members at \$25.00 each, limited to 1 per Single Membership, and 2 per Family Membership.

Non-Members: Tickets are available at \$100.00 for each person over 13 years of age. Tickets must be paid for in advance by contacting one of the board members listed above.

## Community Center Rental

Members: \$100.00 per event, payable in advance. All dues and fees must be paid in full prior to the event. Schedule your event with the Temple President at least one month in advance. If the event requires the presence of the Rabbi, the event must be scheduled with him/her individually at least one month in advance. The Rabbi's gratuity is not included in this fee. A schedule of fees is available on request.

Non-members: \$200.00 per event. All other conditions are the same as for members.

## Memorial Plaques

Memorial Plaques are available for installation on our Memorial Board. The memorial information must be typed out and submitted to the religious committee chairman with payment in advance of \$250 deliverable to the Temple. Contact Religious Chair Sid Morginstin: (609) 298-2891 or [sidmorgy@verizon.net](mailto:sidmorgy@verizon.net).