



Columbia
Jewish
Congregation

Wherever you
are in your
journey, you are
welcome here.

Columbia Jewish Congregation (CJC) is a welcoming, egalitarian community affiliated with the Jewish Reconstructionist movement. It was founded in the late 1960's by early Columbia, Maryland residents who brought an experimental spirit and desire to create a more personal Jewish community than the synagogue life of their youths. They wanted to raise their children in a progressive environment open to all varieties of Jewish practice and learning. From this beginning, CJC and the Columbia Jewish Community School (CJCS) were born. Now an established congregation of 300 households, including traditional, interfaith, same-sex families, and singles, CJC strives to be an inspirational Jewish home that lives Torah values in our congregation and the broader community.

Our clergy and their families are integral members of our congregation, and these deep roots of friendship and mutual respect with them enhance our study and worship. We are proud of our Rabbis and Cantor for their scholarship, spiritual guidance, and passionate stands for social justice, and for their commitment to eliminating gender barriers in Jewish communal life. Our active lay leaders work closely with our clergy and staff because we believe that grassroots involvement, more than formal hierarchy, is essential for a healthy synagogue.

We honor our Jewish values by putting them at the center of our contemporary lives, and we explore innovative ways to serve members' needs and tikkun olam (healing the world). Our policies are informed but not dogmatically determined by study of traditional Jewish teachings, and collective decisions are made through respectful dialogue—"sacred argument." We apply our Jewish values to social justice challenges, such as marriage-equality and environmental protection, taking public positions on important issues in our civic community. We are inspired by Rabbi Hillel who asked, "If I am only for myself, what am I? If not now, when?"

Sharing the religious, cultural, and historical wisdom of Jewish civilization is an enduring trait of our people. At CJC, we explore Judaism in America, in Israel, and around the world. Young and old are valued as learners and teachers; and learning is informal, fun, and participative. We foster Jewish identity and knowledge in our young children, offer a comprehensive program for teens, provide B'nai Mitzvah preparation for the entire family, and explore the myriad dimensions of Jewish life through our rich adult education programs.

We form life-long friendships, share joys, and come to each other's aid and consolation in times of trouble and loss. We prize the intimacy afforded by our size, but seek to strengthen our foundation and nourish a living Judaism with new members, more children, and fresh voices. It is our practice that one's finances should not be a bar to membership. Members give back financially, as well as through gifts of energy, service, compassion, and commitment.

Wherever you are in your Jewish journey—new and curious, steeped in lifetime learning and worship, or searching for a welcoming community—CJC invites you to explore with us what it means to live as a holy people in a complex and demanding modern world.

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