Dear Friends:

Leshone Toyve & Welcome!

As we enter into these Days of Awe, I am guided by the sense that this particular year offers us an opportunity for transformation like no other.

The intersection of the global pandemic and the political moment has opened our eyes to the truth of our individual and collective lives. We don’t need to wait for the call of the shofar, we are already awake. Now is our time to examine what we have learned and to set our course for our next chapter. There is no going back; our collective visions are needed to reimagine our future.

At Boston Workers Circle (BWC) our members create that future together and we want you to join us! Not a member yet? Click here to join (or find membership info on pg 18).

While we miss gathering in person, this booklet is your guide to our (temporarily virtual) member-led community & the abundance of offerings we have in store for you this fall. In addition to our traditional offerings from Adult Ed (Find this fall’s class entitled “People Power: Bridging Movements and Generations in 2020,” on pg 8) to more Yiddish classes than ever (pg 11), we bring you this pandemic/racial justice uprising edition with opportunities to plug into our member to member Mutual Aid Network (pg 15), to teach and learn from each other through A Bisl or to learn together in our anti-racism study group (pg 9).

In Community,

Jen Kiok
Executive Director

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Holiday programs weave together readings, reflections, and music that draw on Jewish tradition as well as contemporary texts. We have created secular rituals that feel deeply meaningful and spiritual in the sense of community connection. By connecting to each other, to our history as a people, and to our passion for social justice, our vibrant community provides a sense of identity and belonging and a source of inspiration and strength. Whatever your level of Jewish knowledge, whatever the faith, ethnic, or gender diversity of your family or upbringing, you are most welcome to join us.

2020-2021 HOLIDAYS & COMMUNITY GATHERINGS

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RITUAL COMMITTEE

Our rituals are all created and led by our community. The Ritual Committee creates the services for High Holidays, the Tu B’Shvat Seder, and the Community Passover Seder. We welcome new members to join the Ritual Committee to help us craft these services.

CONTACT CHAIR: LINDA GRITZ, KATZGRITZ@GMAIL.COM

SHABES COMMITTEE: FALL 2020 GATHERINGS

Our Shabes gatherings include inspiring readings, joyful song, secular ritual blessings, and meaningful conversations currently over Zoom. Please join us for a time for reflection, restoration, and connection.

- Friday, September 26, 6:00 p.m. - Time for Reflection Shabes, hosted by the AWESomes Committee for the Days of Awe
- Friday, November 6, 7:00 p.m. - Post-Election Shabes

CONTACT CO-CHAIRS: JILL EDELSON, MARIE ARIEL, LAURIE GOLDMAN, CIRCLESHABES@GOOGLEGROUPS.COM

Celebrating Intergenerational Connections Shabes, November 2019
SHULE: JEWISH CULTURAL SUNDAY SCHOOL

Our Shule engages children grades K-7 in an exploration of identity rooted in Jewish culture and social justice. The Shule curriculum draws from Jewish history, traditions, and progressive values to connect young people to the values that shape our identity as a people.

We are proud to be a community where families from a wide variety of religious, racial, ethnic, and Jewish and non-Jewish backgrounds feel welcome and participate in all levels of the organization. We are proud to be an open and affirming community for LGBTQ families and children.

We learned a lot this spring about virtual Shule and are privileged to have resources and a lot of thoughtful and creative people on the Shule committee, BWC Board, and staff who have been working hard to make this a successful year. And a big thank you to all of our parents for their support and dedication to continuing their child’s Jewish social justice learning!

Wondering if the Shule is right for your family? We would be happy to answer all of your questions!

CONTACT EDUCATION DIRECTOR: MEIRA SOLOFF, MEIRA@CIRCLEBOSTON.ORG

TEENS ACTING FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

Teens Acting for Social Change (TASC) provides a space for teens to support each other, build community, learn about social justice issues, develop leadership skills, and take action. Teens run the group with support from the adult coordinator, Emilia Diamant. The youth in TASC get to decide what TASC will focus on each year.

Previous TASC projects have included: leading a community-wide workshop on gender identity, Walk Out Against Gun Violence at Smith & Wesson, Raise Up signature collection: Fight for $15, Paid Family & Medical Leave, and lobbying our state representative to support the Youth Jobs Campaign.

TASC is open to all 8th - 12th graders, and is a great way for Shule grads and families to stay connected to our community.

Social Distance Kickoff
Sunday, October 4, 11:30 a.m., location TBD

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT: CIRCLEBOSTON.ORG/TASC OR CONTACT TASC COORDINATOR EMILIA DIAMANT, EMILIA@CIRCLEBOSTON.ORG.

Our family of four kids has thrived attending the Shule. The combination of Secular Jewish cultural learning and the focus on social justice and activism feel like home to us. We have switched back and forth to reform temples closer to our home and always return to Shule. Our oldest child’s B’Nai Mitzvah was an amazing experience and we look forward to the younger 3 completing their Jewish learning in meaningful ways.”

- THE SHAMON FAMILY, SHULE FAMILY
AGING IN COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

The Aging in Community Committee (AIC) gathers the voices of BWC's older members and works to create a community that can sustain and nourish us as we age. We provide opportunities for learning, support and activism. Please join us at one of our upcoming events:

Planning Ahead for End of Life Care: Making Decisions Now Helps Everyone
Sunday, October 4, 10:15 a.m. on Zoom
This will include a review of key documents as well as areas for thought preparation and action.

"As a long lived person, the Aging in Community group helps me realize that my experiences, concerns, and kvetches are not unique to me. Sharing them, and knowing that participants can support me and I them, is a major benefit of the group for me.
- NAOMI B. ISLER, BWC MEMBER"

November & December discussions TBD. We usually meet on Sunday mornings at 10:15 a.m.

CONTACT CO-CHAIRS: DIANNE PERLMUTTER, DIANNP27@COMCAST.NET MARSHA LAZAR, MARSHA.LAZAR@GMAIL.COM

"AIC is a place where folks with open minds and open hearts explore the challenges, the opportunities, the joys and the sorrows of ‘the golden years.’ Doing it together is a rich experience, I think, for all of us. By the way, my father (a BWC member) used to joke: ‘my golden years are pyrite.’ He would have fit right in.
- MIKE FELSEN, BWC MEMBER, FORMER BOARD PRESIDENT"
ADULT EDUCATION

ADULT EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Our adult education programming is geared toward exploring Jewish history, ritual, and thought from a secular perspective, and support our community’s vision for building a better world (a besere velt). The Committee seeks out stimulating topics and instructors to inspire our community. If you are interested in supporting a class or learning more, please contact:

CONTACT CO-CHAIR: JEDD COHEN, JEDDCOHEN@GMAIL.COM

FALL COURSE OFFERINGS

People Power: Bridging Movements and Generations in 2020
Tuesdays, 7:00-8:30 p.m., Oct. 20, 27 & Nov. 10 (3 Sessions)

What can we learn from the vast history of social movements in this time of pandemic and uprising? What about this moment looks familiar to historical moments that we have lived and learned about? How are communities leveraging knowledge and relationships to adapt and respond?

Join us for a 3-session course focused on the role of social movements in molding our collective history. We will explore how the past is shaping the future as we collaboratively frame our roles in this pivotal time. We will think about our connections to various social movements, look at case studies about different methods of change, and articulate the ways in which we want to move forward with our knowledge of social movement ecology.

LEARN MORE & REGISTER NOW: CIRCLEBOSTON.ORG/ADULT-EDUCATION

Pathways to Peace in Israel-Palestine
Tuesdays, 7:00 p.m., Jan. 12, 19, 26 & Feb. 2, 9 (5 Sessions)

This course examines different ways to resolve, transform or ameliorate the conflict, taught by two experts on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It includes an overview of conflict resolution, history of diplomatic attempts to resolve the conflict, a consideration of whether a two-state solution is still possible, and the history of grassroots initiatives to promote peace. This course will give you a historically informed, holistic understanding of ways to end the occupation.

Sephardic Jews and Race in America
Spring course; dates and times to be decided

This course will focus on the immigration obstacles Sephardic Jews encountered when emigrating to the United States.

CLASS UPDATES POSTED ON: CIRCLEBOSTON.ORG/ADULT-EDUCATION

CIRCLE BOOK GROUP

The Circle Book Group meets monthly on Sunday mornings to discuss fiction and nonfiction books with Jewish themes and/or by Jewish authors. This is an open group that welcomes all readers interested in expanding their understanding of the wide variety of Jewish experiences throughout history and across the world. Join us for discussion over Zoom (and for coffee and bagels when we can gather together in-person again).

Next gathering: Sunday, September 27, 10:15 a.m. on Zoom
Book: “Dinner at the Center of the Earth” by Nathan Englander
Find updates on circleboston.org/circlebookgroup

CONTACT CO-CHAIRS: FREDI DWORFIN, FREDIDWORKIN@GMAIL.COM
SHELLY DEIN, SHELLYDEIN@HOTMAIL.COM
MARIE ARIEL, MGARIEL@ICLOUD.COM

ANTI-RACISM STUDY GROUP

Emerging from the Circle Book Group, this group will focus on topics such as the history of race in the U.S., understanding whiteness, and creating structural change.

Upcoming meetings: Thursday, October 1, 7:00-8:30 p.m. OR
Sunday, October 4, 12:30-2:00 p.m.

CONTACT: ANTI-RACISM-STUDY-GROUP@GOOGLEGROUPS.COM
A BESERE VELT COMMUNITY CHORUS

If you enjoy singing in a spirited and harmonious multi-generational 70-person chorus, A Besere Velt is a great place to give it a try! A Besere Velt, which means “A Better World,” is BWC’s chorus that sings in Yiddish, English & other languages to celebrate our cultures & rise up for social justice. We will not be gathering physically in the 2020-2021 season until it is prudent to do so, but we will continue to make music in ways that are rewarding and safe. No audition is required, ever.

First Rehearsal: Saturday, October 3

CONTACT CHAIR: BOB FOLLANSBEE, BOBMOSHE@GMAIL.COM

A Besere Velt recording with Polina Sheperd & Lorin Sklamberg, Dec. 2019

YIDDISH LANGUAGE COURSES

Whether you are totally new to Yiddish or already know a few basics, we offer classes for all learners! Classes continue for a winter/spring semester; new students are welcome to join. All classes will be virtual this fall.

Fall: 9 weeks, starting the week of October 12
Mondays: Advanced Language Through Literature class
Tuesdays: Beginner, Advanced Beginner, & Intermediate classes
Wednesdays: Beginner 1, Beginner 2

We are in the process of creating more classes to accommodate the demand!
For updated class info and to register, visit: circleboston.org/yiddishclasses.

YIDDISH VINKLS

Our conversation group currently meets once a month on Zoom. Whatever your level of Yiddish, this is an opportunity to sharpen your skills in a comfortable and informal setting. Drop in anytime!

2nd Thurs: Somerville 7:30-9:00 p.m.; Brookline (on pause)
Contact Mike Katz (see below) for details.

YIDDISH SING

Monthly gathering to learn and sing Yiddish folk songs. Songbooks provided. All welcome, regardless of singing ability or knowledge of Yiddish.

Fourth Thursday of the month*, 7:30 p.m. on Zoom until we can meet together again.
*In November & December, Yiddish Sing meets 3rd Thursday of the month

YIDDISH SVIVE

Meet-ups for young adult Yiddish speakers and students. Join us online for singing, game night, and conversation. Contact Lily Weitzman (see below) for meeting information.

YIDDISH READING GROUP

The Yiddish Reading Group is continuing to meet each Friday at 10:30 a.m. over Zoom, and always welcomes new members. We read a new Yiddish story every few weeks or so, with an informal discussion in English.
Contact Mark Stewart, madestew@gmail.com for reading & Zoom info.

We are planning live and Zoom special programs, watch circleboston.org for details.

CONTACT YIDDISH CO-CHAIRS: MIKE KATZ, NARISHKUP@GMAIL.COM
LILY WEITZMAN, LWEITZMAN@COA.EDU

A BISL: MEMBER TO MEMBER LEARNING SERIES

What is A Bisl? In Yiddish, it means “a little bit.” For Boston Workers Circle members, it means a chance to learn and share a little bit about a topic that excites you. In this time of isolated virtual reality, we heard from members that folks wanted places to connect. So, in collaboration with the Adult Education Committee, BWC opened up this virtual member to member learning exchange series, A Bisl.

Upcoming: Like Leafless Branches Coming Back to Life: A Sukes Willow Workshop, Tuesday, October 6, 7:00-8:00 p.m.

Past topics have ranged from drawing lessons, to pruning bushes, playing Klezmer music, Spanish lessons, Yiddish comedians, and more!

LEARN MORE AND REGISTER HERE: CIRCLEBOSTON.ORG/A-BISL
**JEWISH MUSLIM SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE**

Through political action, relationship building, and community education, the Jewish Muslim Solidarity Committee (JMSC) works to build relationships among Jews and Muslims in Greater Boston and joins with the Muslim community in opposing Islamophobia in all its manifestations.

This coming year, we will work with the BWC Shabes Committee to co-host a post-election Shabes, host a film (The Feeling of Being Watched) and discussion about surveillance of a Muslim community outside of Chicago, and hopefully get together with our Muslim allies to strategize about fighting Islamophobia under whatever government we have as of January 2021. As always, we will continue to respond to incidents of Islamophobia.

The JMSC meets monthly - via Zoom for now - on first Thursdays at 7:00 p.m. We welcome new members. If you are interested, please contact a co-chair (see below).

CONTACT CO-CHAIRS: LAURA DERMAN, LAURA.DERMAN@GMAIL.COM
BETSY ABRAMS, BETSYABRAMS@HOTMAIL.COM

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**ACTING FOR RACIAL & ECONOMIC JUSTICE (AFREJ)**

As White Jews, Jews of Color, and non-Jewish allies, we work for racial and economic justice in the BWC community, the Jewish community, and the Boston community at-large. During this time of pandemic and national uprising, we put together a document outlining how we are going about the work of fighting for economic and racial justice during this time. You can [take a look at it here](#).

This year our committee will continue to focus on the work of reparations. To learn more, check out our [resource guide](#) and the recording we made of our [Reparations 101: A Bisl](#)!

On October 29th, 7-8:30 p.m., we are welcoming three guest speakers, Kathleen Anderson (N’COBRA New England) and Teegrey -- two racial justice and reparations activists from the Western MA group Racial Justice Rising, and Woullard Lett (Northeast Regional Representative of N’COBRA), to discuss what fighting for reparations at the national and local legislative levels looks like.

During the **week of November 16th** we are planning an event with Lotte Lieb Dula, creator of reparations4slavery.com, as we look at the stories of those involved in the reparations movement and explore our own family stories, histories and heritages.

Join our email listserv! We provide resources on various social justice related issues, news, events and much more! We look forward to you engaging with our work.

CONTACT CO-CHAIR: NAKHIE FAYNSHITEYN, NICKFAYN@YAHOO.COM

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(L): AFREJ at a Climate Strike march. (R): Reparations & Teshuva event with Rabbi Lynn Gottlieb and Dr. Dave Ragland.

JMS Zoom action to Stop CVE (countering violent extremism) funding, May 2020.
IMMIGRANT JUSTICE & SANCTUARY WORKING GROUP

The Immigrant Justice & Sanctuary (IJS) Working Group was formed with the intention to honor the mutual aid and immigrant roots of the Boston Workers Circle. Our current work focuses around the intersection of our broken immigration justice system and the toll Covid-19 places on vulnerable communities. We recognize that many axes of injustice intersect to position immigrants as particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 and, as such, have been deeply engaged in efforts to redistribute financial resources to help such immigrant individuals and families maintain stability and self-determination during these times.

We are currently partnering with the Boston Immigrant Justice Accompaniment Network (BIJAN/Beyond) to provide financial relief through mini-grants using money we have raised. Thus far we have raised $30,000 and have provided grants to 37 individuals and families. In addition to the financial support, we also offer support and accompaniment as the folks we work with continue to navigate the many challenges of daily life. Grantees have stated such assistance has been “a drop of water in a dry desert” and that “my family is so thankful for all of you and thank you for making me a part of this group. I love you all and hope to meet you someday. Thank you for the support and for giving me the grant.”

This work has been inspiring and challenging and we are always looking for more folks to join in our efforts. We welcome anyone who would be interested in serving as a “buddy” to help administer our grants and support the recipients. We are particularly always looking for Spanish speakers. If you are interested in learning more and joining us, please email us at bwcimmigrantjustice@gmail.com!

CONTACT CO-CHAIRS: BWCIMMIGRANTJUSTICE@GMAIL.COM

BWC Mutual Aid Network

"JUST CALLING TO SAY HELLO!"

Our ad hoc “Care Team” making calls to members to check-in, May 2020.

NEW ONLINE MUTUAL AID NETWORK

Mutual aid is part of the long history of our organization, born out of immigrants’ need to support each other in their new lives in America. Decades of caring and fighting for each other have prepared us well and inspired us to create this new way of organizing ourselves to help each other.

The Boston Workers Circle Mutual Aid Network Listserv is an open resource available to members of our community.

JOIN AND LEARN MORE: CIRCLEBOSTON.ORG/MUTUAL-AID-NETWORK

“[My mother’s] philosophy, which she passed onto me, was, ‘You are only as strong as the least strong member of your community. You’re only as healthy, in all meanings of that word, as the least healthy person in your community, and that we’re put on this earth to make a difference one to the other.’... It is so representative of what BWC stands for.”

- SUSAN WERBE, BWC MEMBER ON CARE TEAM
EQUITY & INCLUSION

The Equity and Inclusion Committee was formed in 2017 to guide and strengthen the organization’s commitment to explicitly work against racism and all forms of oppression. In 2018, the Board of Directors adopted the following as 1 of the 4 Strategic Priorities, and, in 2019, voted to make the Chair of the Equity & Inclusion Committee a member of our Board Executive Committee to ensure that all key decisions are made through the lens of equity & inclusion.

Strategic Priority #1: Build an equitable community that is actively working against racism, with representation and leadership from BWC members who identify as Sephardi, Mizrachi, Jews and non-Jews of Color, multiracial, trans, non-binary, lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, working-class, low-income, poor, immigrants and people with disabilities.

We are looking for members with marginalized identities and experiences within our community, as well as members who have spent significant time understanding their own privilege and power to help guide and implement this work.

CONTACT CO-CHAIR: RACHEL HESS, RACHELLANHESS@GMAIL.COM

FUNDRAISING

The Fundraising Committee works with our Deputy Director to create and execute our annual development plan, including our major donor program, annual appeal, major events, legacy giving, and grassroots donations. This year, we are brainstorming new ways to fundraise in our current changed world.

CONTACT CO-CHAIR: AVA CHELOFF, ACHELOFF@GMAIL.COM

FINANCE

The Finance Committee provides fiscal oversight and monitors the financial health of the organization. The Committee is responsible for developing our budget, monitoring revenues & expenses, managing our investments, and creating finance policies. This infrastructure committee is truly an integral part of BWC and needs a few additional members. We are especially interested in getting some of our younger adults on the committee. No financial experience is required, and we’ll be glad to provide you with all you need to know to be an active participant. It’s a great opportunity to learn about non-profit financial operations.

CONTACT CO-CHAIR: SARAH AXELROD, STAXELROD@GMAIL.COM
BOSTON WORKERS CIRCLE MEMBERSHIP

Join or renew your BWC membership today to find your place of belonging and to grow our collective impact.

Boston Workers Circle has a strong and proud history of roots, resistance, and resilience. Generations of committed dues-paying members have led us to become the thriving, secular, Jewish, Yiddishkayt, arts, culture, and social justice community we are today.

Now more than ever, we are practicing what it means to be a community. We invite you to join us.

By joining or renewing your membership, you are becoming part of:
- A bold community of activists who rise up for justice together.
- A creative community that celebrates our vibrant culture through ritual, art, education, and song.
- A loving community that takes care of each other.
- A secular Jewish community that you can call home.

We believe in making membership accessible to all. BWC Annual Membership is sliding-scale, choose the rate that’s right for you.

To join or renew your membership, visit: circleboston.org/membership

Photos taken while dropping off flowers and thank you cards to BWC Board and Co-chairs before our Annual Member meeting, June 2020.

We are committed to keeping our programs accessible during this virtual time. Events are being planned on a shorter timeframe than usual. Please visit circleboston.org/calendar/grid for the most up-to-date info and registrations.

BOARD
Anne Greenwald, President
Libby Shrobe, Vice President
Sarah Axelrod, Treasurer
Laura Derman, Secretary
Rachel Hess, Equity & Inclusion

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Jen Kiok
Executive Director
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Maddy Popkin
Cultural Worker & Member Organizer

Sandy Martin
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Madeleine Jackman
Communications Manager