

**A Selection of Events and Milestones in CBST's  
Transgender & Nonbinary History**

updated through the end of 2021

(to submit additions or corrections to this timeline, email [tcalhoun@cbst.org](mailto:tcalhoun@cbst.org))

**1994**

- May: Journalist Donna Minkowitz speaks at services about the Brandon Teena's life and tragic death, a story which she broke in *The Village Voice*

**1996**

- "Bisexual & Transgender" added to CBST tagline

**2002**

- February 2: Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum & Rabbi Roderick Young present "Transgender issues and Judaism" at Hebrew Union College. This seminar (and one at RRC in 2003), organized by Rabbi Margaret Moers Wenig, was the first in any rabbinical school to address psychological, legal and religious issues affecting people who are intersex, transgender or transsexual.

**2003**

- December 13: CBST hosts exclusive after party for Dana International, Israeli Transgender singing sensation and Eurovision winner, after her NYC debut concert at the Beacon Theater

**2004**

- CBST hires transgender rabbinical student Reuben Zellman as Children's Educator.
- CBST publishes on website a detailed guide to addressing practical transgender issues at CBST and the broader Jewish community
- June 18: Guest Speaker: Dr. Barbara E. Warren (Director for Organizational Development, Planning and Research at The LGBT Center, developer of the Gender Identity Project, the Center's peer empowerment program for transgender and transsexual people.)

## 2005

- Reuben Zellman hired as CBST's first transgender Cooperberg-Rittmaster Rabbinical Intern and first transgender rabbinical intern in any synagogue.
- CBST adopts a gender-neutral bathroom policy: There is a designated gender-neutral bathroom at all CBST events.
- January 20: Shmooze on the film Transamerica. A CBST member who acted in the film shared his experience and impressions.
- April 10: Trans Brunch Panel and Exhibit: God created them male and female [and every combination in between]: Gender Identity, Intersexuality, and Transsexuality: Rabbi Kleinbaum moderates, Panelists: Rabbi Margaret Moers Wenig, Donna Cartwright, Paisley Currah.
- July 26: Special Performance for CBST members of Somewhere In Between: a play about gender identity by Transgender Israeli playwright Ronny Almog, part of the Fresh Fruit Festival.
- November: CBST commemorates Transgender Day of Remembrance in Shabbat services, and recites a prayer for the occasion composed by CRRRI Reuben Zellman

## 2006

- March: Cooperberg-Rittmaster Rabbinical Intern Reuben Zellman teaches a course entitled Gender, Transgender, and Intersex People: What Jewish Texts Have to Say (3 sessions)
- March 2: Prof. Jill Weiss teaches: The Gender of Gay: Transgender Inclusion in US Gay Identity and Politics
- April 14: Shmooze on Legal Issues facing Transgender people with NY Law School Prof. Art Leonard
- May: Cooperberg-Rittmaster Rabbinical Intern Reuben Zellman facilitates Confidential Discussion Group for Jews of Transgender, Gender-Queer, or Intersex Experience (3 sessions)
- June 23: CBST co-sponsors the Second Annual Trans Day of Action, including the Rally to Stop the Murder of Trans People

## 2007

- February 16: Gender Diversity Shmooze with CRRRI Rachel Weiss, Mike Waldman, Aari Ludvigsen, Rabbi Elliot Kukla sponsored by the Trans Working Group
- February 27: Rabbi Elliot Rose Kukla teaches “Toward a Jewish Liberation Theology for Men, Women and Everybody Else”: mining Jewish sacred texts for the spiritual implications of expanding our understandings of sex and gender in Judaism.
- November: Transgender Day of Remembrance Shabbat, with guest speaker Aari Ludvigsen.
- December 1: Transgender Informal Dinner, gathering at Moonstruck after Friday night services. The email address [trans@cbst.org](mailto:trans@cbst.org) is used for the first time.

## 2008

- May: Trans Working group forms a book club
- June: Publication of trans inclusive CBST siddur which includes blessings for transition and readings for Trans Day of Remembrance
- Jacob Lieberman gives membership talk at Rosh Hashanah
- November 21: Yeshiva University Professor Joy Ladin is Scholar in Residence

## 2010

- In March of 2010, photographer Josh Lehrer produced “Becoming Visible,” at the Robert Miller Gallery. The exhibit was comprised of eleven cyanotype portraits of homeless transgender teens. Josh later brought the exhibit to CBST.
- Trans Working Group changes its name to Trans Empowerment Coalition
- Social Justice Rabbinical intern Cecilia Beyer speaks about Trans issues at CBST retreat
- February 26: Trans Open Mic for self-identified Transgender, Transsexual, Trans, Genderqueer, Gender Benders or Gender Performers
- March 7: Joy Ladin teaches at the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Transforming Beitecha Conference about finding inspiration in Psalms as a Trans person

- May 16: High T: Perspectives on Trans Lives - CBST's Trans Empowerment Coalition hosts a panel discussion with Jill Weiss, transgender legal expert, Rafi Daugherty, a local trans activist, Shelley and Steve Schwartz, parents of a transgender son, and Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum.
- June 11: Trans Empowerment Coalition hosts Trans Pride Performance open mic night.
- July 17: Trans Empowerment Coalition Havdalah and Picnic
- June 25: Trans Empowerment Coalition joins 6th Annual Trans Day of Action March & Rally at City Hall
- Torah service language officially updated across all minyanim to have multiple gender-inclusive options
- December 8: Trans Chanukkah party

## 2011

- February: CBST screens Gen Silent as part of a collaboration between Chesed, the Trans Empowerment Committee and Koleinu to discuss issues of aging in the LGBTQ community. The film features the story of a trans woman and her (lack of) access to quality, respectable healthcare.
- March 16: Rabbi Jo Hirschmann speaks at JTS about Gender Transitions as part of the Topics in LGBTQ Pastoral Care series for clergy and students, presented by CBST.
- April: CBST retreat hosts a trans-only safe space workshop. Pronoun stickers are instituted as part of retreat name tags.
- June: Rabbi Rachel Weiss speaks on an interfaith panel at the National Trans Health Conference in Philadelphia on Gender and Spirituality and Trans identities in religion.
- June 17: S. Bear Bergman Trans Pride Performance

## 2012

- June 22: Kate Bornstein is the guest speaker for Pride Shabbat Service.
- New York City Department of Buildings grants approval for all gender restrooms in new building.
- November 11: Jewish LGBTQ Families Book Fair and Gender Fabulous Storytime – authors include S. Bear Bergman

## 2013

- May 18: S. Bear Bergman performance
- November 20: Trans flag dedicated on Transgender Day of Remembrance.

## 2016

- Trans 101 class held for all interested Jewish clergy
- November: annual Trans Day of Remembrance Shabbat observance

## 2017

- June 2: Dr. Jillian Weiss is Trans Pride speaker
- July 26: CBST contingent joins NYC rally at Times Square against banning of trans military service
- November: annual Trans Day of Remembrance Shabbat observance

## 2018

- March 22: Rabbi Moskowitz taught about trans & nonbinary Jewish sources at a LGBT 60+ day of learning
- March: annual Trans Day of Visibility Shabbat observance
- May 1: Rabbi Mike Moskowitz is hired as CBST's full-time Scholar-in-Residence for Trans and Queer Jewish Studies.
- June 8: Rabbi Moskowitz introduced at a dinner with CBST's trans, GNC, nonbinary members before giving the drasha at the Trans Pride Shabbat Service
- August 2-4: Rabbi Moskowitz and Rabbi James host a CBST table at the Trans Health Conference in Philly
- October 18: Rabbi Moskowitz begins teaching a monthly Trans Torah Study on Thursday evenings with a ma'ariv service with a *trichitza*
- October 21: Rabbi Kleinbaum issues statement in response to further attempts to roll back trans rights:  
<https://www.facebook.com/BeitSimchatTorah/posts/2430640503643053>
- October 24: CBST hosts a rapid response gathering to share prayers and action commitments after the US administration attacks on trans rights
- November: annual Trans Day of Remembrance Shabbat observance

- Selected articles and other writing by (or co-authored by) Rabbi Moskowitz:
  - <https://www.tabletmag.com/sections/news/articles/what-the-torah-and-talmud-teach-us-about-calling-transgender-people-by-their-names>
  - <https://auburnseminary.org/voices/rabbi-moskowitz/>
  - <https://jewishweek.timesofisrael.com/im-a-boy-and-these-are-my-clothes/>
  - <https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/wrestling-with-mourning-on-transgender-day-of-remembrance/>
  - <https://jewishweek.timesofisrael.com/coming-of-age-as-gender-non-conforming/>
  - <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/2018/09/18/sukkot-security-and-transgender-rights/>
  - <https://forward.com/scribe/403274/7-ways-straight-jews-can-become-better-lgbtq-allies/>
  - <https://jewishweek.timesofisrael.com/im-an-orthodox-rabbi-marching-with-pride/>
  - <https://yourbayit.org/noahs-ark-a-failed-ally-ship/>
  - <https://www.tikkun.org/nextgen/2018/06/21/pride-how-50-years-of-hopeful-resistance-can-inspire-us-today/>
  - [https://medium.com/@ariel\\_49854/interfaith-leaders-stand-up-for-yes-on-3-campaign-583ef2ad7e0c](https://medium.com/@ariel_49854/interfaith-leaders-stand-up-for-yes-on-3-campaign-583ef2ad7e0c)
  - <https://jewishweek.timesofisrael.com/cisgender-humility-and-accepting-the-torah/>
  - <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/2018/05/11/the-torah-of-action-2/>
  - <https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/not-everything-is-as-it-appears-to-be-a-guided-discussion-for-passover-international-transgender-day-of-visibility/>
  - <https://www.tikkun.org/nextgen/2018/03/16/redeeming-religion-from-slavery/>

## 2019

- Monthly Trans Torah study evenings continue throughout the year
- January 8: Trans Jews Are Here teaching and reception fundraiser event for convening
- February 25: CBST hosted an evening of conversation with Joy Ladin

- March 22: publication of “Textual Activism” by Mike Moskowitz, a collection of essays focused on Jewish texts and LGBTQ+ human rights. (<https://www.amazon.com/Textual-Activism-Rabbi-Mike-Moskowitz/dp/1798034506>)
- March 29 – April 1: Trans Jews Are Here Convening, welcoming over 200 trans and nonbinary Jews from across the country for three days of learning, prayer, and connection. Rafi Daugherty was the Convening Coordinator.
- June 7: Trans Pride Shabbat with guest speaker Rabbi Leah Moser
- July 24-26: Rabbi Moskowitz and Rabbi James a CBST table at the Trans Health Conference in Philly in partnership with Rabbi Leah Moser, author of Magical Princess Harriet
- August: CBST’s Trans Empowerment Team votes to rename the group, which is now “Emet: the Trans and Nonbinary Team at CBST.” Monthly team meetings continue to plan activities such as Shabbat afternoon potlucks and opportunities for activism
- November 15: annual Trans Day of Remembrance Shabbat observance
- Selected articles and other writing by (or co-authored by) Rabbi Moskowitz:
  - <https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/shabbos-shows-us-how-to-chaver-up/>
  - <https://baptistnews.com/article/transgender-day-a-chance-for-churches-to-open-doors-and-hearts-to-our-transgender-neighbors/>
  - <http://blogs.brandeis.edu/freshideasfromhbi/advancing-the-rabbinic-prescription-for-transgender-health-care/>

## 2020

- Ariel Zitny and Ze’evi Berman (both now Tovlev) hired to lead monthly Emet learning group, lead some Shabbat services, and teach in CBST’s Lehrhaus Adult Education program
- February 6: began new regular monthly learning group for trans & nonbinary CBST community members (interrupted by COVID-19)
- March: annual Trans Day of Visibility Shabbat observance, launching of custom Trans Pride kiddush cup, commissioned by CBST through Israeli artist Yair Emanuel
- June 5: Trans Pride Shabbat with guest speaker Ariel Tovlev

- November 20: Trans Day of Remembrance learning for allies online, vigil for trans & nonbinary Jews led by Ariel and Ze'evi Tovlev, and Shabbat service with guest speaker Ariel Tovlev
- Selected articles and other writing by (or co-authored by) Rabbi Moskowitz:
  - <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/2020/11/17/we-remember-and-honor-through-action/>

## 2021

- January: re-starting of monthly Emet learning (interrupted by COVID) with Ariel and Ze'evi Tovlev - continued throughout the year
- Feb 21: Evening of poetry with Joy Ladin and Ariel Tovlev
- March 24: Publication of "Chaver Up!", edited by Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum and Rabbi Mike Moskowitz, a collection of 49 essays on allyship by rabbis (<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B08ZW6NBPD>)
- March 26: annual Trans Day of Visibility Shabbat observance
- March 31: Trans Jews Are Here convening, welcoming hundreds of trans, GNC, and nonbinary Jews from around the world for a day of learning and prayer together online. Ariel Tovlev was the Convening Coordinator. (<https://cbst.org/content/trans-jews-are-here-2021-convening>)
- March 31: The Ark Immigration Clinic at CBST holds a Community Time Trans Day of Visibility memorial for our colleague Lorena Borjas, "Mother of the Trans Latina Queens Community," who died the previous year from COVID-19
- June 4: Trans Pride Shabbat with guest speaker Jericho Vincent
- November 19: annual Trans Day of Remembrance vigil with Ze'evi and Ariel Tovlev, followed by Shabbat service with guest speaker Ariel Tovlev
- December 21: co-sponsored "Bubby & Them," film screening with SAJ
- Selected writing by (or co-authored by) Rabbi Moskowitz:
  - <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/2021/05/06/anti-trans-legislation-is-against-core-jewish-values/>