



The Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum & Randi Weingarten

FUND FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

at Congregation Beit Simchat Torah

We name this new Social Justice Fund to honor Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum and her wife, CBST Rebbetzin Randi Weingarten, in honor of Rabbi Kleinbaum's 32 years as CBST's first Senior Rabbi.

The very formation of Congregation Beit Simchat Torah was an act of social justice, declaring to the world that this new community would openly celebrate being gay and Jewish. "The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone" (Psalm 118). Those who could not be openly gay and fully Jewish in existing communities in the 1970s created a home where they could joyfully be both.

Since then, the definition of our "gay" community has expanded to include the full spectrum of sexual orientations and gender identities, honoring the words of Rabbi Kleinbaum's installation *drash*/sermon to the community on September 11, 1992, when she spoke on a verse from that week's haftarah, Isaiah, 54:2:

*Enlarge the site of your tent;
Extend the size of your dwelling.
Do not stint!
Lengthen the ropes and drive the pegs firm.*

Rabbi Kleinbaum continued: "Imagine a CBST that could educate our young to help build a world where the senseless hate of our day and time is only of historical interest.

"Imagine a CBST that is a training ground for rabbinical students from all the movements in the pastoral care of people with AIDS and their families.

"Imagine a CBST that is a center for Jewish Arts. Our life and work together must be founded on our mutual sacred orientation, celebrating the events of our lives, being involved in the social concerns of our day."

Rabbi Kleinbaum's vision remains driven by her conviction that we live out progressive Jewish values, and her insistence that we seek social justice in a partnership with the Holy One that begins inside — but always extends beyond — the boundaries of our synagogue community. "Social Justice is rooted in our Jewish tradition, texts, history and liturgy, and we don't separate spirituality from social justice."

Today, Social Justice at CBST reflects the inspiration Rabbi Kleinbaum found in Isaiah 54:2 three decades ago. We expand our tent because we remember the pain of our being excluded and the moral obligation to act for those who are excluded today. CBST's social justice work covers a range of important issues and communities, including:

- Building interfaith and multifaith relationships with our Christian, Muslim, and Hindu friends.
- Supporting queer and HIV+ asylum seekers and others through the CBST Ark Immigration Clinic.
- Helping queer Orthodox and Ultra-orthodox Jews be fully themselves as they come out within their religious framework, building on the legacy of CBST's key role in transforming how Reform, Conservative, Reconstructionist movements view LGBTQ+ issues.
- Advocating to end mass incarceration and to achieve racial justice.
- Educating and engaging in creating peace, justice and security for Israel-Palestine.
- Recognizing the need to provide community support for LGBTQ+ individuals who are aging.
- Provide values-based guidance, grounded in Jewish texts, for a new generation of social justice leaders who work in areas as diverse as pregnancy justice, climate justice, affordable housing and homelessness, immigration rights, anti-racism, civil equality, labor rights, workers' rights, and more.

CBST expresses its commitment not only through education and prayer, but through direct service and advocacy.

As Rabbi Kleinbaum often reminds us, "Social Justice is rooted in our Jewish texts, history, theology and liturgy. We don't separate spirituality from social justice. Joy is an act of spiritual and political justice."

Our initial goal is to raise \$1.5 million to establish the fund and continue raising money to secure its future as a dedicated permanent fund within the synagogue.

All contributions to the Fund will be 100% tax-deductible.

Annual allocations from the Fund, and supervision of all Social Justice work and staff, will be made by the Senior Rabbi under the annual budget authority of the Board of Directors, guided by an advisory committee that will include Rabbi Kleinbaum, Rebbetzin Weingarten, and social justice leaders within the CBST community.