

THE SCHRIER

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER OF WEST PASCO
Home of Congregation Beth Tefillah

January-February 2026
Tevet/Shevat/Adar 5786

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Upcoming Events

We want you to be aware of these events which will occur in early March.

Join us for the reading of the Megillah as we celebrate Purim on Monday, March 2, 2026. We will have an ice cream social at 6:00 pm and then enter the Sanctuary for the reading of the Megillah at 7:00 pm.

On Sunday, March 8, 2026 Nancy Sinkoff, Professor of Jewish Studies and Academic Director of the Allen and Joan Bildner Center for the Study of Jewish Life at Rutgers University will host a lecture on the topic "Did American Jews Ever Agree About Israel". This informative program will begin at 2:00 pm and is free of charge, but reservations are necessary.

JANUARY/ FEBRUARY HIGHLIGHTS

- * Thursday 1/1 New Year's Day
- * Monday 1/12 7 pm JCC Board Mtg.
- * Monday 1/19 Martin Luther King Day
- * Tuesday 1/27 Int'l Holocaust Remembrance Day
- * Monday 2/2 Tu B'Shevat
- * Monday 2/9 7 pm JCC Board Mtg.
- * Monday 2/16 Presidents' Day

**Shabbat Services
Conducted by Ron Becker and Perry Werbel**

**EVERY FRIDAY EVENING at 7:00 PM
EVERY SATURDAY MORNING at 9:30 AM**

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE-by Eileen Hochstadt

Judaism's View of Time by Rebezzin Heller from Aish.com

Time isn't just clocks and calendars—it's a stream of endless opportunities imbued with potential holiness. One of the easiest questions to answer is: "What time is it?" One of the most difficult questions to answer is: "What is time?" We measure time's passage by hours, days, months, and years, but what is the elusive reality that we are measuring? A physicist would answer that time is the way that we measure the rotations and revolutions of the heavenly bodies. But while the movement of the heavenly bodies is circular, the human sense of time is linear. On the physical level, the earth turns around today just like it turned around yesterday. On the deepest level, however, we know that yesterday should not be just a repetition of today, and this year should not be just a repetition of last year. We understand intuitively that our lives must move not in circles, but in spirals, with every rotation higher than the preceding one. We also know that time runs out, and our bodies can endure only a certain number of years before they perish. This subconscious awareness of our own mortality also colors our relationship to time and its passage. The Arizal, the almost legendary mystic scholar, pointed out that the rotations and revolutions that physically mark the passage of time have a spiritual parallel. Every year is in terms of its potential, as is every month, every day, every hour. Thus, no two prayers are ever the same. A prayer recited this year can draw down spiritual forces that could not have been drawn down last year, or ever before in history. Every day and moment has its own gift in terms of its particular constellation of energy. We can either utilize that gift or spurn it.

TIME FOR CHANGE

The Hebrew words that describe time's passage reinforce this message. The Hebrew word for "year" is *shana*, which shares its root with the word *shoni*, which means "change." The word for "month" is *chodesh* which shares its root with the word *chadash* which means "new." The passage of time is supposed to change us in significant ways. How can we develop a meaningful relationship to time?

Sanctifying time by the ritual called "*Rosh Chodesh*," the new moon, is the very first commandment that we were given as a nation. This commandment reveals how Judaism relates to time.

Let us first look at the historical background of this mitzvah. On the eve of the Exodus, the Jews in Egypt were ready to begin their lives as a nation. Slavery taught them never to willingly serve an earthly master, nor to let themselves fall into the role of oppressor. They also saw great miracles that revealed to them G-d's presence, devotion to His people, and ability to change the rules of nature.

Up to that point, the Jews were passengers on a journey not of their own choosing. G-d was now giving them a commandment that would move them from passivity to active self-definition. They were told to sanctify time.

SANCTIFYING TIME

Rosh Chodesh, the sanctification of the new moon, occurred when two witnesses testified before a panel of three competent judges that they had seen the first sliver of the crescent moon in the sky, and the judges then declared the beginning of the new month. That sliver of moon appears only on the eve of the 29th or 30th day of the month. If the moon could not be seen (for instance, because of cloudy weather), the 31st day of the old month would be declared the first day of the new month. A fascinating clause in the law is that the new month does not begin until the judges actually proclaim it. For example, if on the 30th day a delay takes place preventing the witnesses from arriving on time or preventing the judges from taking their testimony until nightfall, no matter how many people saw the new moon, the new month will begin on the 31st day and not before.

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Please visit the JCC's web page at:

jccwestpasco.com
(our easy-to-remember site!)

Find us on Facebook, too
(and don't forget to 'like us').

A Message From Ron Becker

Dear friends, what a wonderful fall season we had! To recap, we participated in the community interfaith Thanksgiving service held at Temple Beth David this year. We continued our tradition of serving at the holiday tent with Metropolitan Ministries spreading cheer and hope in addition to vital food and resources for those in need. We held Sunday volunteer clean-up days to spruce up the synagogue and the grounds. We held our first classic car show. We celebrated Hanukkah and conducted our first **outdoor** Havdalah ceremony as we enjoyed the annual Cotee River Boat Holiday Parade while eating latkes, sufganyot, and other goodies. We enjoyed a Hanukkah themed bring-your-own casserole Shabbat dinner and shared Hanukkah cheer lit the first candle and ate even more latkes with residents at the Trinity Place assisted living center. And finally, we will enjoy a New Year's eve dinner and party. Thanks to all who planned and participated in these events and for those who missed them, we missed you and hope that you will support our synagogue and community events in the future. You are guaranteed to enjoy them!

Now as we begin our winter season, we continue to work together to pray and study, to enjoy holidays and other special events, and to participate in community interfaith events and volunteer where needed.

We will once again participate in the communitywide Martin Luther King Day observance on Monday, January 19th.

10:30 AM – Symbolic Walk: The day begins with a short walk from the Union Baptist Church, located at 6235 Pine Hill Road, Port Richey, FL 34668 to the historic Booker T. Washington Schoolhouse down Pine Hill Road.

11:00 AM – Main Celebration: The march ends at the African American Club of Pasco, located in the Booker T. Washington Schoolhouse at 6105 Pine Hill Road, Port Richey, FL 34668, where the formal program begins.

Program Highlights: The event features performances from local children and youth, sacred melodies, creative tributes, and guest speakers.

We have participated in this important inspirational interfaith event for many years and hope to have a great turnout again this year!

We will be celebrating Tu B'Shevat celebrating the rebirth of trees and all of nature's bounty with a Tu B'Shevat seder on Sunday, February 1st at 11 am featuring "first fruits" including dates, figs, olives, and sweet treats. It is a time to reflect on humanity's role as stewards of nature.

We will be celebrating the joyous holiday of Purim on Monday, March 2nd beginning with a social hour at 6 pm and followed by the reading of the Megillah (the Book of Esther) at 7 pm.

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DATES TO REMEMBER

1/1	Bingo Marathon 11:00 am
1/2	Religious Services 7:00 pm
1/3	Religious Services 9:30 am Bingo 3 pm
1/4	Bingo 1:30 pm
1/5	Bingo 11 am
1/9	Religious Services 7:00 pm
1/10	Religious Services 9:30 am Bingo 3 pm
1/11	Bingo 1:30 pm
1/12	Bingo 11 am
1/12	JCC Board Meeting 7 pm
1/16	Religious Services 7:00 pm
1/17	Religious Services 9:30 am Bingo 3 pm
1/18	Bingo 1:30 pm
1/19	Bingo 11 am
1/19	Martin Luther King Day
1/23	Religious Services 7:00 pm
1/24	Religious Services 9:30 am Bingo 3 pm
1/25	Bingo 1:30 pm
1/26	Bingo 11 am
1/27	Int'l Holocaust Remembrance
1/30	Religious Services 7:00 pm

1/31	Religious Services 9:30 am Bingo 3 pm
2/1	Bingo 1:30 pm
2/1	Tu B'Shevat/Mitzvah day 9 am
2/2	Bingo 11 am
2/6	Religious Services 7:00 pm
2/7	Religious Services 9:30 am Bingo 3 pm
2/8	Bingo 1:30 pm
2/9	Bingo 11 am
2/9	JCC Board Meeting 7 pm
2/13	Religious Services 7:00 pm
2/14	Religious Services 9:30 am Bingo 3 pm
2/15	Bingo 1:30 pm
2/16	Presidents' Day
2/16	Bingo 11 am
2/20	Religious Services 7:00 pm
2/21	Religious Services 9:30 am Bingo 3 pm
2/22	Bingo 1:30 pm
2/23	Bingo 11 am
2/27	Religious Services 7:00 pm
2/28	Religious Services 9:30 am Bingo 3 pm



Candle Lighting Times

January 2	5:29 pm
January 9	5:34 pm
January 16	5:40 pm
January 23	5:45 pm
January 30	5:51 pm
February 6	5:57 pm
February 13	6:02 pm
February 20	6:07 pm
February 27	6:12 pm

Giving back to the Community

Metropolitan Ministries holiday tent,
November 25, 2025



You can read more about these and other dedicated volunteers in the Hernando Sun where their picture is on the front page! The site is:

<https://www.hernandosun.com/2025/12/14/holiday-spirit-alive-and-well/>

A Message From Ron Becker

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And we will continue our volunteer service at Metropolitan Ministries on the last Thursday of each month (January 29 and February 26) at their headquarters on Route 19 in Holiday. Stay tuned for the exact times and sign up links and please, try to make room in your schedule so that we can continue to meet our quotas for this vital service to the community.

Finally, please save the date of Sunday, March 8th at 2 pm as we will host a lecture by Nancy Sinkoff, Professor of Jewish Studies and Academic Director of the Allen and Joan Bildner Center for the Study of Jewish Life at Rutgers University. Her topic is "Did American Jews Ever Agree About Israel" and the talk will be followed by a reception featuring delicious desserts crafted by our own Megan Hochstadt of "Meganables Edibles". The program is sponsored by the Rutgers University Foundation and will be open free of charge to the public. It will be a unique opportunity for us to hear from a distinguished scholar on a critical topic that concerns us all.

And of course, we continue to provide Shabbat services and a minyan for all those who need to say Kaddish in memory of loved ones. In January, we will begin the Book of Shemot (Exodus) and continue our prayer and study every Shabbat evening and morning. Please consider attending our religious services and celebrate your life cycle events by sponsoring a Shabbat luncheon so that we can share meals and good company together throughout this winter season.

See you in shul and in the community!

Ron Becker, Spiritual Leader

Tu B'Shevat

In honor of Tu B'Shevat (New Year to the Trees) we will have a Mitzvah Day and work to *spruce* up our outdoor areas. This will take place on Sunday, February 1, 2026 from 9 am to 11 am.

Afterwards, we will enjoy a Tu B'Shevat luncheon including first fruits. There is a nominal charge of \$10.00 per person for lunch.

Please call Marie in the office to RSVP so that we know how much food to prepare.

The Mitzvah Days previously scheduled for January 13 and February 15 have been canceled.

The time is
always right
to do
what is
right.

- Martin Luther King, Jr.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day January 19, 2026

Please see Ron Becker's article on page 3
for information about this year's
MLK Day events.

November Car Show

On November 2, 2025 we held our first Car Show. This event was very well received. But it would not have happened if it were not for the hard work of some of our members. **Debbi Robinson** and **Jerry Landsberg** were co-chairpersons of this event and spent countless hours sweating all of the details. They were ably assisted by others who volunteered in various tasks.

They are, in alphabetical order:
Natalie Cohen
Brett & Kelly Landsberg
Danielle Merkel
Wendy Seldin

Thank you all for your hard work which produced a truly enjoyable afternoon.

We are working on another Car Show, but we don't have details as of yet. Be on the lookout for details as they become available.



COTEE RIVER BOAT PARADE

Pictures by Kathy Horner



Thank you, Ron and Chris, for once again hosting us at your home by the river.

**START THE NEW YEAR BY
YELLING “BINGO!”**

**Join us on New Year's Day,
January 1, 2026 for BINGO
including PARTY GAMES!**

**Doors open at 9:00 am and
the first game is at 11:00 am.**



On Friday, December 12th, friends and family met to celebrate Shabbat and an early start to Hanukkah.

If anyone left hungry, it was their own fault!

Photos by Barbara D. Johnson



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Continued from page 2

This is no mere technicality. From the standpoint of Judaism, time is not a mechanical physical reality, defined by the movement of the heavenly bodies. Rather, time is defined by human beings, as declared by the Jewish court. This means that we are going beyond just noticing physical changes in the sky; as spiritual beings we take responsibility for actualizing the potential holiness that G-d imbues in each moment. Each time the moon finds the sun again and receives its light once more, something profound takes place. G-d wants His people (as represented by the witnesses and the court) to find Him again, and to rediscover His light, even though it is often obscured by periods of darkness and spiritual concealment. Therefore, the new moon is a time of spiritual and moral rebirth of our inner selves.

MAZAL TOV?

The flow of spiritual force that descends each month is called *mazal*, which literally means, "that which flows." The *mazal* of the month is actually the conduit through which we can experience G-d. Each of the 12 months has an astral sign which maps out its *mazal*. In ancient times astrologers were able to read the astrological signs the way we read a map today. Obviously, the fact that I can pick up a map and find Chicago does not mean that I caused Chicago's existence. In the same sense, astrological information doesn't in any way alter reality. It just maps it out. An interesting failing in human nature is that we subconsciously confuse our ability to describe things with our ability to control them. Astrology, or knowing the "map" of how *mazal* alters our lives, can become an obsessive pursuit. The Torah tells us to walk with G-d in simplicity, and to let time unfold on His terms. We don't practice astrology, fortune telling, or any illusory means of wresting control from G-d by divining what the future will bring. An entirely different pursuit is to become aware of the spiritual nature of each month, not in order to take control, but to become aware of how to utilize these energies. One way to tap the energy of each month is through the celebration of the Jewish holidays. The holidays are not meant to celebrate past events. Rather our awareness of the past informs us about the forces that are at hand for us to use to make our present and future fit G-d's ever unfolding plan. There are seven central holidays that are mentioned in the Torah. That means that they are an integral part of G-d's blueprint of time, *mazal*, and the world's destiny. In the mystic literature the holidays are described as times of *ratzon*, which literally means "will." These are days in which G-d's will, which is usually hidden, can be seen with far more brilliance and luminosity than at any other time. In the Torah the holidays are referred to as *mo'adim*, which means "times of meeting" between us, with all of our limitations, and G-d in His unknowable infinity. The bridge that we cross to meet G-d is made by the spirit of the particular time itself, as well as the events that took place in history that give us insight into both the time and the Creator of time. Each holiday is distinct and irreplaceable. They act as lamps that give us the ability to see far beyond the ebb and flow of existence. If we change our relationship to time, we change our relationship to life itself.

SHARING THE LIGHT

Members of the JCC spread Hanukkah cheer to the residents of Trinity Place Assisted Living. Songs, sufganiyot and latkes helped usher in the holiday.

Photos by Danielle Merkel



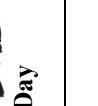
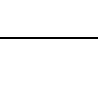
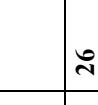
January 2026



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 New Year's Day Bingo Spectacular 11:00 am 	2 88 5:29 pm Religious Services 7:00 pm <i>Vay'hi</i>	3 Religious Services 9:30 am
4 Show Me the Money Bingo 1:30 pm	5 Bingo 11 am	6	7	8	9 88 5:34 pm Religious Services 7:00 pm <i>She'not</i>	Bingo 3:00 pm
11 Show Me the Money Bingo 1:30 pm	12 Bingo 11 am JCC Board Mtg. 7 pm	13	14	15	16 88 5:40 pm Religious Services 7:00 pm <i>V'a'era</i>	Bingo 3:00 pm
18 Show Me the Money Bingo 1:30 pm	19 Bingo 11 am MLK Day Rosh Chodesh	20	21	22	23 88 5:45 pm Religious Services 7:00 pm <i>Bo</i>	Bingo 3:00 pm
25 Show Me the Money Bingo 1:30 pm	26 Bingo 11 am	27	28	29	30 88 5:51 pm Religious Services 7:00 pm <i>B'shallah</i>	Bingo 3:00 pm



February 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Show Me the Money Bingo 11 am Mitzvah Day 9-11 a Tu B'Shevat luncheon to follow	2 Bingo 11 am  Tu B'Shevat	3  Tu B'Shevat	4	5	6  Religious Services 7:00 pm	7  Religious Services 9:30 am <i>Yitro</i> Bingo 3 pm
8 Show Me the Money Bingo 11 am JCC Board Meeting 7 pm	9 Show Me the Money Bingo 11 am JCC Board Meeting 7 pm	10	11	12	13  Religious Services 7:00 pm	14  Religious Services 9:30 am <i>Mishpatim</i> Bingo 3 pm
15 Show Me the Money Bingo 1:30 pm	16 Bingo 11 am  Presidents' Day	17	18	19	20  Religious Services 7:00 pm	21  Religious Services 9:30 am <i>Trumah</i> Bingo 3 pm
22 Show Me the Money Bingo 1:30 pm	23 Bingo 11 am	24	25	26	27  Religious Services 7:00 pm	28  Religious Services 9:30 am <i>T'zavveh</i> Bingo 3 pm