



Congregation Etz Chaim

Community, Spirituality, and You

Andrea J. Cosnowsky, Senior Rabbi
Frederick Kamil, Associate Rabbi
Carol Meyer, Executive Director
Marla Friedman, Religious School Principal
Steven M. Bob, Rabbi Emeritus
Anne Stein, Educator Emerita
Rachel Wood, Inclusion Specialist

Inclusion/Diversity

Congregation Etz Chaim is a community, not just a building. We make every possible attempt to make our environment as welcoming as possible. We have greeters in our foyer to welcome people on shabbat and other worship services. Our goal is to create a space where all feel welcomed within our building and all families feel comfortable participating in meaningful ways at all worship services, programs, family events and congregation committees. A variety of accommodations are available.

Diversity at Etz Chaim is also part of our inclusivity. We have been an interfaith family welcoming congregation for many years. The congregation participates in a variety of interfaith activities throughout DuPage County. We welcome people with diverse backgrounds including people from different ethnic groups, the LGBTQ+ community and those with varying abilities.

Worship Services

Worship Services at Etz Chaim are streamed to allow all people to participate in worship. Upon request Deaf Sign Language Interpreters are available. Communication Access Realtime Translation. (CART) services will be provided for major holidays and programs. The sanctuary is accessible allowing all to be called to the bima to take a part in the worship service. Lighted magnifying glasses, hearing assist devices and book lights are available. A table is in the back of the sanctuary containing quiet sensory activities for children who may have a difficult time sitting in their seat.

Religious School

Our Religious School is sensitive to the educational journey of our students and understands that each child is unique and should be allowed to learn in a manner that is appropriate for their learning needs. In Pirke Avot (22:6) we are told, "Teach each child according to his or her own abilities". We work hard to help all the children to realize their fullest potential and skill level. Assistants are available to support a student with distinct learning abilities in their classroom. A resource room is available to be used for pull out sessions or to accommodate a child whose learning needs can not be met in their grade level classroom.

Preparation for a student's Bar or Bat Mitzvah is individualized and is adapted for the individual learning abilities of the student.

Jewish Disability and Inclusion Month (JDAIM)

February is Jewish Disability and Inclusion Month (JDAIM). It is a unified effort among Jewish organizations worldwide to raise awareness and foster inclusion of people with disabilities. JDAIM is a call to action for all of us to act in coherence with our Jewish values, honoring the gifts and strengths that we each possess.



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Inclusion Committee

The Inclusion Committee is committed to helping address the needs of all members and is available to help coordinate any adaptations that may be requested. The committee is open to anyone who is interested in assisting in this venture. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Inclusion specialist cec.inclusionspecialist@congetzchaim.org

Summary

At Etz Chaim we are committed to accessibility and disability inclusion, grounded in the belief that we are all created b'tselem Elohim (in God's image). B'tselem Elohim reminds us to ensure that all people have equal access and equal opportunity.

Inclusion is a mindset, an attitude, and a way of thinking that provides opportunities for full meaningful engagement, contributions, and belonging for all members of our Community. Our Inclusion Committee is dedicated to helping our synagogue become a more welcoming, accessible, and inclusive community by sensitizing the synagogue community to the needs of congregants with differing abilities and by reducing existing barriers to each member's full participation.

We recognize that inclusion is a process and a journey we take together.