



Beth Jacob Congregation Doing Tzedek January 2026/Shevat 5786 | Rabbi Tamar Magill-Grimm

Dear Beloved Community,

A year ago when we started the BJC Doing Tzedek Project, we framed it around the teaching from Pirke Avot 2:5:

"In a place where there is no humanity, strive to be a human."

במקום שאין אנשים, השתדל להיות איש

After sending out the call, we almost instantly had 40 people sign up to join our Signal groups, ready to mobilize, ready to show up to protect human rights, speak out against injustice and provide support to people in our communities.

A year later, participation has more than doubled with 85 people in our Signal groups. This is where we are sharing needs and opportunities - sign-up sheets for delivering groceries and diapers, asking for financial support for people we know in crisis, sharing about events and ways to stay safe while remaining engaged. It is incredible. And it is all based on relationships. We are mostly helping people directly, rather than donating to another non-profit organization.

Those organizations do great work, but we have found that these human connections mean that we are able to meet more specific needs and develop relationships in ways that can create ongoing understanding. A colleague I met at the clergy gathering who serves a Native UCC church in Minneapolis talked last week about the good-hearted, but misguided missionaries from other churches who used to come every summer to church where she grew up in South Dakota: a different group would come every year and paint the same wall. So that wall just kept getting a fresh coat of paint every year, but no relationships were developed and no one ever asked what the community really needed.

So, I am amazed at what we are doing and I know people's actual needs are being met. I know that the [Federation and JCRC](#) just put out opportunities for people in the community to be involved. I didn't have an easy answer for them, because so much of what we are doing is through our Signal groups. Still some of you have asked if there is a way to make a donation through the shul itself. So, we wanted to share some ways to contribute:

1. If you want to contribute to the direct support of people connected to members of our community who are in crisis, you can make a donation to [Rabbi Tamar's discretionary fund](#).

2. If you want to make a contribution towards our [Tikkun Olam fund](#), those funds primarily help organizations meeting the important ongoing needs of members of the community, such as food shelves and soup kitchens. Many of those organizations are overwhelmed at the moment, so they definitely could use additional funds at this time.
3. If you are someone who has the time and ability to deliver groceries and other household needs, the best way to get involved is through our [Immigration Signal group](#), both because there are too many to share by email and because we are better able to preserve confidentiality that way. New opportunities are continually being shared in our Signal chats as the needs continue to expand. If you haven't joined yet, you can still do so here:

Thank you all so much for all you are doing. You are making the world a little less broken. You are showing what it means to be a neighbor, what it means to be a mensch, what it means to be a human. Sending love and strength to you all.