

BJC Presidential Messages
Vance Reese
August 22, 2025

I am honored(?) to be nominated, appointed, elected to a role that I never sought, but which seemed to seek me out. I agreed to it, trusting that things will continue as they have in the past several years: Howard will continue to do the things he enjoys - coordinating the Torah study group and searching for speakers for us and our community. Justin will continue to coordinate the Chevra gatherings on Wednesday evenings. Norm will continue to be with us to provide support and leadership in all the ways he enjoys. Our brilliant D'var-deliverers will offer their insights when asked and when willing. And all the people here will continue to be the supportive, loving people that you are.

I also agreed to do the job, trusting that Marilyn presented the By-Laws accurately - that the only thing required of the president is to call four Board meetings a year. I'll likely do a bit more than that.

Towards that end, let me announce several executive orders that I'm planning to launch when my regime takes over in October. These are just a few of them. You can expect more to come.

- 1) First of all, I plan to launch a full-scale investigation of the previous president. One man certainly can't have done all that he did during his tenure, therefore I think he must be some sort of robot clone.
- 2) Secondly, I plan to establish a new committee called DOJE - the Department of Jewish Education. As part of that executive order, the Torah study group's budget will be cut by 75%.
- 3) Thirdly, Chevra will have to rename itself as MATZA - Make America Try Zoom Again.
- 4) I am announcing tariffs on all churches in Brevard. From now on, they will have to pay us to use their spaces. If they do not comply, we will resort to our Jewish Space Laser Team, which, as you know, started the California wildfires back in 2018.
- 5) We will build a big, beautiful wall. I propose it to be erected at Jerry and Jackie's house to keep out the deer.
- 6) Rather than build a temple for our use, we will build the Schmackit Club - a Jewish community center with just a gym, because apparently 75% of our membership works out regularly.

I know you probably want to hear more of my actual thoughts, but truth told, they bubble up in the context of working with the community I'm in. If you were to press me, to speak of plans for the future of the BJC, I would have to borrow these lines from Fr. Thomas Merton, a Cistercian monk who lived the last half of his life in the Abbey of Gethsemani near Louisville, Kentucky.

My Lord God,
I have no idea where I am going.
I do not see the road ahead of me.
I cannot know for certain where it will end.
nor do I really know myself,
and the fact that I think I am following your will
does not mean that I am actually doing so.

But I believe that the desire to please you
does in fact please you.
And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing.
I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.
And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road,
though I may know nothing about it.

Therefore will I trust you always though
I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death.
I will not fear, for you are ever with me,
and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.*

I wish us all a good next two years. All of us will be helping each other on our journey through the desert.

**“The Merton Prayer” from [Thoughts in Solitude](#) by Thomas Merton. Copyright © 1956, 1958 by The Abbey of Our Lady of Gethsemani. Used by permission of Farrar Straus Giroux.*