

SECULAR HUMANISTIC JUDAISM

Provides a home for cultural Jews who want to retain identity with their Jewish heritage, culture and customs within a non-theistic environment.

To read about Secular Humanistic Judaism in North America, and throughout the world refer to the following web sites:

[Congress of Secular Jewish Organizations
www.csjo.org](http://www.csjo.org)

[Society for Humanistic Judaism
www.shj.org](http://www.shj.org)

[International Federation of
Secular Humanistic Judaism
www.ifshj.org](http://www.ifshj.org)

VSHJ MEMBERSHIP

Everyone is invited to be a guest of VSHJ to see if our approach of celebrating Jewish History, culture and traditions is compatible with their personal expression of being Jewish. We welcome all prospective members who feel comfortable in our community, regardless of their Jewish or non-Jewish background.

Single Membership: \$110

Family Membership: \$165

Special arrangements for reduced membership are available on request.

Please direct membership questions to the Membership Chair, Edward Davidson at 250.383.5881 or binners888@gmail.com

SECULAR HUMANISTIC JEWS BELIEVE THAT:

- Judaism is the evolving historical experience and cultural creation of the Jewish People.
- The Jewish people are not unique, not a chosen people.
- A Jew is a person who identifies with the history, culture and future of the Jewish People.
- Jews and Judaism have made significant contributions to the betterment of our world.
- The universe exists on natural laws, independent of supernatural intervention.
- Human beings are the creators of morality and have the power and responsibility to shape their own lives and destiny.
- There is no evidence supporting conscious life after death.
- The consequences of our actions are in our lifetime, not as reward or punishment in a world hereafter.
- We derive our spirituality from our sense of connection to nature and other human beings and by appreciation of beauty both in nature and in the artistic and intellectual creations of human beings.

VSHJ
3636 Shelbourne Street
Victoria, BC V8P 4H2
www.vshj.ca
info@vshj.ca



A COMMUNITY OF
CULTURAL JEWS



VSHJ is a registered non-profit society and an affiliate of the Congress of Secular Jewish Organizations

FAQS

What is a Secular Humanist Jew?

Secular Humanistic Jews understand Judaism as the human-centered history, culture, civilization, ethical values, and shared experience of the Jewish People. For us, the message of Jewish history is that we have the power and the responsibility to take control of our own lives.

What is the role of faith for Secular Humanistic Jews?

Secular Humanistic Judaism places strong “faith” or belief in the ability and moral responsibility of human beings to decide what is necessary to make a better society. Humanistic Judaism philosophy involves the natural world, from this universe, from nature and from relationships with others.

What is the distinction between Humanism and Humanitarianism?

Humanitarians are people who take specific charitable actions for the good of others and we honour such people whatever their beliefs. Humanists also involve themselves in humanitarian endeavours, especially social activism as a matter of choice and conscience, not as a commandment.

Can anyone join a Secular Humanistic Community?

In secular Humanistic Judaism, a Jew is a person of Jewish descent or any person who wishes to identify with the history, culture, ethical values, community and the fate of the Jewish people. We welcome anyone who wishes to be part of our community.

What is VSHJ’s relationship with the Victoria Jewish Community?

VSHJ is an integral part of the Victoria Jewish Community. We take part in all community events and are represented on the Board of Directors of JFVVI (Jewish Federation of Victoria & Vancouver Island). Overall, we support the initiatives of JFVVI which in turn assists the funding of our programmes.

How does VSHJ celebrate holidays and life cycle events?

Secular Humanistic Judaism is committed to maintaining Jewish culture and traditions. We celebrate traditional Jewish holidays and life ceremonies in many meaningful ways. Through the year, our members are able to feel the power of the High Holidays, the uniqueness of Chanukah, the significance of the Seder, the coming together in marriage, the joy of naming a baby, the nachas of the B’nai Mitzvah and the close connection when loved ones are interred or cremated with dignity and respect.

What services are used for Secular Humanist Jewish celebrations?

A secular adaptation from traditional Jewish ritual is blended with readings from various Jewish and non-Jewish sources specific for each holiday or celebration, such as mythologies, poetry, traditional Yiddish and Hebrew songs, new music, speeches by world leaders, and other readings to support the theme. We are able to be creative and relevant

which results in conditionally satisfying, rich, varied and meaningful Jewish festivals and celebration observances.

What services does VSHJ provide?

Our community meets once to twice a month usually on Saturday afternoons at the JCC in Victoria, for discussions on a variety of relevant topics, honouring of life cycles as well as celebrations of Shabbat, Havdalah, and major Jewish holidays. We create rich programs for Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur, Chanukah, Succot, Tu B’Shevat, Purim, Passover, Yom Hashoah and Shavuot.

Our Ceremonial Leader provides an educational and emotionally supportive role for our members and assists with life cycle events such as baby naming, B’nai Mitzvah training, weddings, funerals and memorial services.

For more information about important life cycle event ceremonies contact:

CEREMONIAL LEADER: Sharon Kobrinsky
250.474.7173
skobrinsky@shaw.ca