

Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey Journal

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May 2026

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Rabbi's Message

Dear Friends,

It was in 1990 that theologian and professor emerita at Manhattan College, Judith Plaskow, published *Standing Again at Sinai*, a groundbreaking work of Jewish feminist theology. In it, she argues that God's revelation happened not all at once, to a single, uniform people, but that it continues to unfold in every generation, including our own today. Faithfulness to that revelation, therefore, requires ongoing reimagining. It is an ever-expanding process that makes room for voices historically absent or unheard.

Sinai, in her telling, is not only a moment in the past, but an ongoing experience, one that calls each generation and individual to see themselves as present, addressed, and responsible.

It is a powerful image: not just standing at Sinai with Moses back then, but standing there *again*, and *again*, and *again* today as we continue celebrating the glory of revelation.

At the same time, The Book of Exodus describes that moment at Sinai with striking ambiguity:

וַיִּצְבּוּ בְּתַהֲתִית הַהָר

"They stood at the foot of the mountain" (Exodus 19:17).

What makes this ambiguous is the fact that the word **בְּתַהֲתִית** can be translated faithfully not only *at the foot of*, but also *underneath*. Picking up on that second meaning, Rabbi Avdimi bar Hama bar Hasa offers a decidedly bold and

(continued on the next page)

Calendar of Events

Sunday, May 3

9:30am: Hebrew School

Monday, May 4

7:00pm: Board of Trustees Meeting

Saturday, May 9

9:30am: Shabbat Morning Service

Saturday, May 16

11:15am: Torah Study (Zoom only)

Sunday, May 17

9:30am: Hebrew School

1:00pm: Chaverim Mother's Day Tea
At Ruth's (see Pg. 6)

Friday, May 22

7:00pm: Shabbat Evening Service
Shavuot Observance

Sunday, May 31

9:30am: Hebrew School

Monday, June 1

7:00pm: Board of Trustees Meeting

Saturday, June 6

9:30am: Shabbat Morning Service
Hebrew School Consecration
Celebration of Graduates

Sunday, June 7

9:30am: Breakfast and Annual Meeting

Rabbi's Message (continued)

unsettling interpretation.

כָּפָה הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא עָלֵיהֶם אֶת הָהָר כְּגִיגִית

“The Holy One, blessed be God, suspended the mountain over them like an overturned barrel.”

Babylonian Talmud (Shabbat 88a)

It is a stark ultimatum: accept the Torah or bring destruction upon yourselves, which is a profound metaphor for the divine coercion inherent in the covenant. That is, revelation was so overwhelming that we Children of Israel were stripped momentarily of our own free will. Ultimately, the relationship between the Jewish people and our Torah is not merely a choice, but an existential necessity, upon which our very survival depends.

And yet, the Talmudic text then goes on to insist that the covenant was accepted in the days of Esther , שמחה in a *renewed* and *willing* way (Shabbat 88a; cf. Esther 9:27). Revelation, therefore, just as Plaskow continues to teach almost two millennia later, is not a one-time event, but a process that must be chosen again and again. And yet, the Talmud itself is not satisfied to leave the story there; the passage goes on to reinterpret the covenant as something we have to accept , שמחה anew, *again and again and again*. Revelation is not a one-time event. It is an ongoing process, one that must be revisited, reclaimed, and reaccepted in every generation.

The midrash deepens this idea even further. In Shemot Rabbah, we are taught that the divine voice at Sinai did not emerge as a single sound, but rather:

הַקּוֹל הָיָה יוֹצֵא וְנִחְלַק לְשִׁבְעִים קוֹלוֹת לְשִׁבְעִים לְשׁוֹנוֹת

“The voice went forth and divided into seventy voices, into seventy languages.”

Why seventy? Because in rabbinic imagination, seventy represents the fullness of human diversity. Revelation was delivered not in a singular concrete manner, but rather was refracted, translated, and personalized so that each individual could hear according to their own capacity.

A similar idea appears in Pesikta de-Rav Kahana (Piska 12:25), which teaches that God's Voice was experienced differently by each person at Sinai.

The point is that revelation is not monolithic. It is relational.

Not one voice, but many.

Not one interpretation, but a cacophonous chorus that comes together only when every voice is heard.

And perhaps that is the deepest truth of Sinai: that even at the moment of greatest unity, there was also multiplicity. Even at the moment of divine speech, there was diversity of hearing.

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Rabbi's Message (continued)

We live in a time of constant noise: competing narratives, endless commentary, and a world that values certainty over understanding.

And yet, Jewish tradition points us elsewhere.

The prophet Elijah encounters God not in the majestic wind, not in the overwhelming earthquake, not in the magnificent fire, but in a קוֹל דְּמַמָּה דְקָה, a still, small voice (I Kings 19:12).

As we prepare to celebrate Divine Revelation at our JCNWJ Shavuot service on Friday, May 22, tradition is inviting us to cultivate the ability and eagerness to hear that voice.

To listen not only for God, but for one another.
To listen not only for certainty, but for wisdom.
To listen not only to respond, but to be changed.

The *Sefat Emet* (1847 – 1905) teaches that the voice of Sinai never ceased; it continues to echo through time, up until today and beyond. The question is not whether revelation still exists. The question is whether we are open to it.

That is the posture of Sinai: openness, humility, and the willingness to grow.

This year, as we approach Shavuot, we might ask:

Are we making space to hear something beyond the noise?
Are we willing to grow toward revelation, rather than waiting for it to arrive?
Are we ready to stand again at Sinai—not as we were, but as we are now?

Because Shavuot is not only about what happened then.

It is about what is still possible now.

So please come help us turn that which is possible into that which is real on Friday evening, May 22, as we celebrate our arrival to Shavuot.

Come stand with us again at Sinai, through prayer, learning, and community.

L'Shalom,

Rabbi Dubin

President's Message

Dear Members of the Congregation,

As my term as President comes to a close, I have spent significant time reflecting on the growth and lessons this experience has afforded me. Early in my tenure, a congregant mentioned in passing that "the temple runs itself." While intended as a way to encourage me to relax, that statement has stayed with me because, in reality, our temple thrives only through the dedicated effort and active participation of its members.

In our interactions with one another, I encourage us all to communicate through the "Three Gates": Is it true? Is it kind? Is it necessary? By ensuring our words are accurate, empathetic, and helpful, we strengthen the foundation of our spiritual home.

While I have personally found this philosophy challenging at times, I remain committed to this standard. Although I have not always succeeded in meeting these goals daily, I feel I have made significant progress.

As a non-profit organization with a very limited budget and only two paid staff members— Rabbi Dubin and our music teacher, Debbie Apsel—we rely entirely on your time and expertise. Volunteering is not just helpful; it is essential to our financial stability and our ability to remain a spiritual home for Warren County and the surrounding areas.

Our "product" is spiritual connection, community, and education. We foster Jewish identity through your active participation. By volunteering for critical roles, we collectively create a sense of ownership that sustains our membership year after year. Every week, we depend on volunteers to manage security, welcome visitors, teach Hebrew, organize school activities, fundraise, and maintain our building through tasks as simple as washing linens or taking out the garbage.

While we must manage our operations with the efficiency of a business, we are ultimately a personal and emotional home. By volunteering, you perform a mitzvah that brings us closer together and ensures our community continues to thrive. To maintain this momentum, we need fresh ideas and new energy to keep our Board of Trustees running effectively.

We have several upcoming openings for the 2026–2028 term, including Vice President, Ritual Chair, Chaverim Co-chair, Hebrew School Education Chair, and 2 Member-at-Large positions. This is a vital opportunity to step up, have your voice heard, and see your ideas implemented. I ask that you please consider serving in one of these roles to help lead us into the future.

It has been a true honor to serve you.

Humbly,
Suzanne Marr
President

Updates & Events

TORAH STUDY

The Torah study group is an informal discussion group, led by Rabbi Dubin and participants.

Since 1998, the group has read the five books of the Torah and part of Nevi'im (Prophets); in the latter, we have completed Joshua, Judges, and Book 1 of Samuel. We are now on Book 2 of Samuel, which includes the story of King David.

As we continue to discover, there is more to this story than most adults learned in Sunday School. Discussions often take unexpected turns, especially when we make connections between the ancient text and modern life.

Meetings are on Saturday mornings, monthly, on Zoom at 11:15 a.m. (till 12:30 or 1:00, depending). Upcoming dates are May 16 and June 13. All are welcome to join us—no prior experience needed.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89728604184?pwd=L0tBSmhoSDZ3Vk5sdlRRc1Y4QmY4UT09>

Yahrzeits

Michael S. Lewis	Grandfather of Rabbi Lewis
Saul Schutzbank	Father of Howie Schutzbank
Irwin Finkelstein	Father of Shelley Finkelstein
Dora Merein	Grandmother of Lois Goldberg
Robert Joseph Heller	Cousin of Rabbi Ellen Jay Lewis
David B. Pinn	Father of Helen Mattson
William Moorehead	Father of James Moorehead
Larry Vogel	Uncle of Robin Hall
Carol Fleckles White	Sister of Daniel Fleckles
Keith Ehrenreich	Cousin of Edythe Herson
Gerald Klein	Uncle of Gerri Klein
Susan Waxman	Mother of Debbie Kahan
Reuben Marcovitch	Father of Edythe Herson
Joseph Posner	Grandfather of Tracey Bauer
Larry Bauer	Brother of Mo Bauer
Alan Berkman	Relative of Rabbi Lewis

Yahrzeits are observed on the anniversary of the passing of loved ones, based on the Hebrew calendar. If any Yahrzeit information is missing or incorrect, please notify the Temple.



Updates & Events

CHAVERIM

Chaverim will sponsor a Mother's Day Tea on May 17 at 1pm hosted by Marilyn and Ruth. See the ad below for more details.

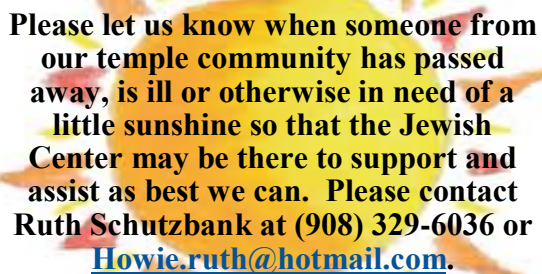
Also, watch your email and the WhatsApp group for information about hiking opportunities.

JOIN us on FB at "**JCNWJ members only**" page for updates and/or add "**WhatsApp**" to your smartphone to get current updates. We look forward to seeing you all at events this year!

Continue to watch your email and the WhatsApp chat for updates on future events.

Questions, please contact Marilyn Muskar at msmusikar@gmail.com.

A Reminder from the Sunshine Committee



Please let us know when someone from our temple community has passed away, is ill or otherwise in need of a little sunshine so that the Jewish Center may be there to support and assist as best we can. Please contact Ruth Schutzbank at (908) 329-6036 or Howie.ruth@hotmail.com.



Please join us to celebrate
the sisters & mothers of the
JCNWJ
Mother's Day
TEA PARTY

MAY 17, 2026 | 1:00 PM

hosted by Marilyn and Ruth
25 Stewartville Rd., Stewartville, NJ

RSVP: (609) 651-2674 Marilyn
or (908) 399-7625 Ruth

Updates & Events

ADULT EDUCATION

Thank you to everyone who attended Rabbi Dubin's engaging series on the **History of Modern Zionism**. Links to video recordings of these sessions have been e-mailed to the congregation; if you still need a link, or more than one, please e-mail Sharon with date[s] you need (sharonherson@comcast.net.)

A theological exploration of **G-d/Adonai/Elohim: Who? What? Where?**, a series to be led by Rabbi Dubin will take place in fall 2026 and will begin after the High Holidays; precise dates and times TBA.

Remember to check out the website of **Temple Emanu-el's Streicker Center** for fascinating online programs, many of which are free. Register in advance at streicker.nyc.

DONATIONS

In memory of Ken Yanow
- Helene Weiman

In memory of Michael S. Lewis
- Rabbi Ellen Lewis

In honor of Torah Study
- Marjorie Schnader

In memory of David Pinn
- Helen & John Mattson

In memory of Reuben Marcovitch, Keith Ehrenreich,
and Zelda Marcovitch
- Edythe Herson

In memory of Carol Fleckles White
- Daniel Fleckles

In support of the JCNWJ
- Jeff Fenton
- Bruce & Sylvia Tucker
- Dianne Margolin

BUILDING UPDATE

If you notice that something is running low and needs to be replaced (either in the bathrooms or kitchen), please let me know.

You can either call or email me at irishirsch@comcast.net or 908-239-4585.

FOOD DRIVE

We continue to collect food donations at the temple for local food pantries. All contributions are appreciated.

Iris Hirsch
Ritual Chair

JCNWJ Services



80TH JUBILEE
CELEBRATION

Save the Date

*Let's celebrate the
JCNWJ together!*

Saturday, Oct. 3, 2026
6:00 PM - until?

BELVIDERE MANOR
689 WATER STREET
BELVIDERE, NJ 07823

Jewish Center of NW Jersey • Washington, NJ

MISHABEIRACH LIST

Please continue to call or email Sharon Herson (908-537-4378 or sharonherson@comcast.net) with names of friends and family to add to our Mishabeirach List.

Please ALSO REMEMBER to let Sharon know when the time comes to REMOVE THE NAME.

Thanks for your attention.



Jewish Center of NW Jersey's

ANNUAL MEETING

Sunday - June 7, 2026

🕒 9:30am - breakfast
10:00am - meeting

RSVP Suzi - phone or text
908.343.1135

- ○
- ○
- ○
- ○
- ○

Must be present to VOTE:
New Board, Updated Bylaws, Budget,
Membership Dues, Possible Vision Statement

JCNWJ Services

Lifecycle!

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MEMBERSHIP~

Family, married and/or with children \$1450.00
Single, individual \$ 725.00

BABY NAMING~

Member at scheduled service Donation
Member at other-than scheduled service \$ 180.00
Non-member at scheduled service \$ 360.00

B'NAI MITZVAH~

Bar or Bat Mitzvah \$ 360.00
Bar or Bat Mitzvah when CIF is not PIF\$1476.00
Additional \$1000 may be applied to CIF

MARRIAGE~

Wedding.....\$ 360.00

DEATH/BURIAL PLOT~

Funeral..... \$ 180.00
Funeral, non-member..... \$ 612.00
Burial Plot, Easton Cemetery Market Price
All other charges payable to Easton Cemetary

Honors!

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MEMORIAL & SIMCHA

Memorial plaque, member \$ 324.00
Memorial plaque, non-member \$ 540.00
Simcha tree leaf \$ 180.00
Pew plaque \$ 252.00
Prayer book \$ 36.00
Donation card \$ 5.00 & up
Library \$ 10.00 & up

EVENTS

Kitchen/Simcha room.....\$ 252.00
+\$252.00 refundable deposit



JCNWJ Services

Do you want to see new programming?
Are you willing to coordinate a one-day event?
Here are some ideas? Do you have another idea?

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey
contact Suzi at 908.343.1135 or by
email at prez.JCNWJ@gmail.com



- o Book Club
- o Dinner & a Movie
- o Mahjong
- o Hiking / Walking / Outdoors
- o NY / Philly / Other Day Trip
- o Museum / Art Gallery Visits
- o Photography Class
- o Plays / Concerts
- o Self-Care Day
- o Scavenger Hunt
- o Sleep Over / Retreat
- o Watch Parties – Sports, Movies

IN LOVING MEMORY

YIZKOR & YAHRZEIT MEMORIAL CANDLES AVAILABLE



JEWISH CENTER OF NW JERSEY
MINIMUM DONATION OF \$18 SUGGESTED.
CONTACT SUZI MARR FOR DETAILS AT 908.343.1135

Partners

Domestic Abuse
& Sexual Assault
Crisis Center
of Warren County

Dear Members of the Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey,

"Just as despair can come to one only from other human beings, hope, too, can be given to one only by other human beings."
– Elie Weisel

At the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault Crisis Center – DASACC, we believe that these challenging times have given us an opportunity for self-reflection, learning, and growth. The mission of the DASACC is to help, serve, and advocate for those impacted by interpersonal violence, to be proactive regarding its prevention, and to create positive change.

We offer a wide range of services tailored to meet the diverse needs of those affected by interpersonal violence:

24/7 Crisis Intervention

- ❖ Emergency Shelter *individual bedrooms & pet-friendly*
- ❖ 24/7 Hotline/Helpline
908-453-4181
- ❖ 24/7 Web Chat
www.DASACC.org/web-chat
- ❖ Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Response Team

Additional Services

- ❖ Legal Advocacy
- ❖ Individual and Group Counseling
- ❖ Case Management
- ❖ Community Outreach & Prevention
- ❖ Volunteer Program
- ❖ Casa Hispana
- ❖ Wardrobe of Hope

As members of the Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey, we invite you to join us in supporting the important work of DASACC. Together, we can make a difference in the lives of survivors and create a community where everyone feels safe, valued, and empowered.

For more information about DASACC and how you can get involved, please visit our website at www.DASACC.org.

Thank you for your support and compassion.
Sincerely,

The DASACC Team

24/7 Hotline/Helpline
908-453-4181



HELPLINE: 1.888.8BE.SAFE | WWW.DASACC.ORG | OUTREACH OFFICES: 28C BROAD STREET | WASHINGTON, NEW JERSEY 07882
OUTREACH: 908.453.4121 | OUTREACH FAX: 908.223.1145 | SAFE HOUSE: 908.453.4181 | SAFE HOUSE FAX: 908.453.3788

Partners



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Wanted: Advertisers for JCNWJ Journal

Kindly take note of the ads at the end of our Journal and whenever possible, support these establishments with your patronage. It's also a good idea to mention that you saw their Temple ad. If there are any businesses that you use regularly that might be interested in taking an ad in the Journal, please contact Rita Berkowitz (berk721@aol.com) or Ruth Schutzbank (Howie.ruth@hotmail.com). You can also go to our homepage, print out an advertising form and give it directly to them to mail in.