Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey
Journal

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October 2026
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Rabbi's Message

80 Years (and counting…)

Eighty years!

Take a moment to let that sink in.

Eighty years of Jewish gathering,
of Jewish learning,
of Jewish baby namings,
of Jewish *b'nei mitzvah,*
of Jewish weddings,
of Jewish celebrations and holiday gatherings.
Eighty years of people coming through our doors
at of the happiest of times, and the most difficult.

This Saturday, thanks to the extraordinary visioning and planning by a wonderful team of volunteers led by Jeannie Berkowitz, we'll have the opportunity to celebrate all of it.

And I can't wait, because in this case, 80 isn't just a number. It's the people, the memories, the struggles, the laughter, the commitment to Jewish life, and the ***sheer determination***, that have kept this congregation alive and vital for all these years.

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Calendar of Events

Friday, October 2
7:00pm - Shabbat Evening Service, Simchat Torah observance

Saturday, October 3
6:00pm - 80th Jubilee at Belvidere Manor

Monday, October 5
7:00pm - Board of Trustees Meeting

Sunday, October 11
10:00am - Chaverim (see Pg. 9)
12:30pm - Adult Education - Jewish Theology (see Pg. 10)

Friday, October 16
7:00pm - Shabbat Evening Service

Saturday, October 17
11:15am - Torah Study (Zoom only)

Sunday, October 18
TBD - Adult Education

Sunday, October 25
TBD - Adult Education

Friday, October 30
7:00pm - Shabbat Evening Service

Most events are also streamed on Zoom.

Rabbi's Message (cont'd)

Our 80th anniversary is more than a milestone.

It's a reminder that the JCNWJ doesn't simply exist.

It's the people who make it exist.

It was in 1946, that a small group of Jewish merchants, manufacturers, factory workers, educators, businesspeople, professionals, and farmers, originally from Brooklyn, Plainfield, Pennsylvania, and elsewhere, decided that having Jewish families scattered throughout the area wasn't sufficient. They had already been worshipping as a small group of about 10 families in borrowed space since 1939, but they needed something more. They needed an actual Jewish community in an actual permanent Jewish home. They needed a place to socialize, educate their children, celebrate Shabbat and the holidays, and build a Jewish future for their families.

The founding families came from different places and different walks of life, but they shared a desire to create something profound and enduring ***together***.

So they did something about it, which then set the tone for the Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey ever since. From our very beginning, **JCNWJ has always been a congregation that figures out how to make Jewish life work.**

Over the next few years, this tiny Jewish community raised an astounding $30,000. That, along with the donation of land from a local manufacturer named Joe Springer, our founders built the temple on Youmans Avenue that we still inhabit today.

But making Jewish life work in 1940s Warren County wasn't always easy.

Jewish-owned stores in Washington and Hackettstown stayed open until 8:00 p.m. on Friday nights just to survive. So Shabbat services couldn't begin at the traditional hour.

Their solution?

8:30 p.m.

In other words, before we ever started debating what the "right" way to do Jewish life was, our founders were already doing what Jewish communities have always done:

They adapted.

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Rabbi's Message (cont'd)

They found a way.

They also couldn't afford a full-time rabbi. So they found someone who could work with their budget and schedule.

Soon enough, Rabbi Joseph Gelberman began traveling from New York City to serve the congregation, which he continued doing for an astonishing **31 years**.

Imagine that!

After his retirement in 1989, a short succession of rabbis served the congregation until Rabbi Ellen J. Lewis arrived in 1994.

Rabbi Lewis would become another enormously important part of our history, serving as our spiritual leader for **19 years**, until her retirement in 2013.

During her tenure, the Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey made an important transition.

Once a "country Conservative" synagogue, JCNWJ affiliated officially with the Reform Movement**.**

Again, we adapted.

We didn't stop being the congregation we had always been. We continued the traditions and relationships that had sustained us. And we also continued to grow into who we were becoming.

This is fundamental to who we are, and who we've always been.

Eighty years of figuring it out.

Eighty years of self-reflecting.

Eighty years evolving when necessary.

We've never been a large congregation.

We've never had unlimited resources.

We've never had the luxury of simply doing things because that's the way everyone else does them.

Instead, we've always asked:

Who are we? What works for us?

And then we've been creative enough to make it happen.

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Rabbi's Message (cont'd)

Sometimes the results have been wonderfully ambitious.

When the congregation decided that our three-level building needed an elevator so that everyone could access it, our members raised **more than $70,000** to make it happen.

When we wanted a new Torah scroll that people could actually lift comfortably and dance with on Simchat Torah, the congregation raised another **$19,000**.

Mind you, though, these are not just stories about fundraising.

These are stories of values.

They tell us that the people who came before us understood something we too often forget today: Sometimes the most important thing we can do for the Jewish future is to make Jewish life more accessible to the people who are here today.

And then came the next chapter when, on July 1, 2015, after two years of Rabbi Mary Zamore leading the JCNWJ, I was introduced as your new rabbi. In fact, that new Torah I mentioned above was dedicated on Youmans Avenue the very same day we all gathered for the first time at Jerry and Rita Berkowitz's home with our annual summer picnic that afternoon.

Now in my 12th year as your rabbi, one of the things I continue to appreciate most about this congregation is how much we continue to have in common with our founders eight decades ago.

Our circumstances are different.

Our world is different.

Our Jewish community is different.

But the fundamental question is exactly the same:

How do we make Jewish life work in Warren County?

How do we celebrate Shabbat and the holidays?

How do we continue to learn?

How do we do our part to repair the world around us?

How do we be there for one another when life is difficult?

How do we celebrate when life is good?

How do we want to wrestle with what it means to be Jewish in our particular moment?

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Rabbi's Message (cont'd)

What can we ensure this little Jewish community in Northwest Jersey continues to provide the home it has provided us?

This is why our 80th anniversary matters..

We're not looking simply at what we've accomplished.

We are standing on the shoulders of those who've spent 80 years figuring out how to create Jewish life on Youmans Avenue, and we are committing ourselves to continue on well into the future.

So let's celebrate!

On **October 3**, we are going to celebrate all of it.

The people who founded this congregation.

The rabbis who've served it.

Rabbi Gelberman and his remarkable 31 years.

Rabbi Lewis and the 19 years she gave to this community.

Rabbi Zamore and her enthusiastic 2 years.

The lay leaders who've given countless hours to keeping us going.

The teachers who've taught our children.

The musicians who've have filled our sanctuary with song.

The volunteers who've made it work.

The families who've celebrated *b'nei mitzvah*.

The adults who've studied Torah.

The community that has held one another during times of grief.

The friends who've laughed together.

And all the people, Jews and non-Jews alike, who've walked through our doors and said, simply:

This is my Jewish community. I belong here.

This is what we are celebrating. Not a building. Not an institution.

A community. And after 80 years, that deserves one spectacular birthday party.

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Rabbi's Message (cont'd)

So please join us on **October 3 for our 80th Anniversary Jubilee.**

Come if you've been a member for decades.

Come if you joined recently.

Come if you grew up here.

Come if your parents or grandparents were part of JCNWJ.

Come if you haven't been around in a while.

Come because you have memories to share.

Come because you want to hear the stories.

Come because you want to celebrate the people who made this place what it is.

Or simply come because **this is your Jewish home.**

Eighty years ago, a group of Jews in Northwest Jersey decided they needed a place to be Jewish together. They built it. Generations of others sustained it. And now it's our turn.

Happy 80th birthday, JCNWJ.

May we continue to adapt,

laugh,

learn,

pray,

sing,

argue,

celebrate,

figure it out,

and, most importantly,

show up for one another for many, many years to come.

So on October 3, let's celebrate the best way we know how:

Let's gather and be Jewish, *together*.

!JCNWJ, יובל תדלוה 80 שמח – *Yom Huledet 80 Sameach, JCNWJ!*

Happy 80th JCNWJ!

President's Message

The weather is getting cooler, and before long, the leaves will begin to turn. Summertime has come and gone—my, oh my.

As we head into the fall, there will be some changes to the JCNWJ service schedule. Once Daylight Saving Time arrives, almost all of our services will be held on Saturday mornings. This change is being made to accommodate the growing number of members who are having difficulty driving at night. We hope you will support this decision by joining us for Saturday morning services in person. Your attendance will help demonstrate that we have made the right decision for our congregation.

Deb Apsel is taking the lead in running our Chaverim group, and we hope many of you will join this wonderful group of friends. We would like to see Chaverim become an opportunity for many social activities, both inside and outside the temple, throughout the coming year.

Let's make a concerted effort to connect with our fellow congregants through fun, educational, and interesting activities. We understand that everyone has a busy schedule, but we encourage you to find time to participate in some of the Chaverim activities. We think you will be glad you did!

Our High Holiday services were especially inspirational this year. A number of our musical congregants, along with people who are close to our congregation, generously shared their time and talents to create an exceptional series of services. From Rabbi Dubin's friend's daughter to Andrew Ostenfeld to Deb Apsel's son-in-law, Ben Nause, we were fortunate to have some marvelous musicians accompanying those leading us in prayer.

Most notable were Adam Tucker, with his wonderful tenor voice, and Faye Fletcher, with her beautiful soprano voice. Both of them brought an extra dimension to our services and helped make them particularly moving and inspirational.

Thank you to all of you who contributed your time and talents to make the High Holidays so meaningful.

Lastly, Rabbi Dubin's sermons on political homelessness left many of us thinking about where we fit within the current American political spectrum. As always, there are no easy answers, but his words certainly gave us much to consider.

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President's Message (cont'd)

As we move through autumn, I encourage you to take some time to look around Warren County and appreciate the beauty of the season. While Vermont is spectacular in places during the fall, there are plenty of beautiful spots right here in our own backyard. You don't have to travel for hours to enjoy gorgeous views and the changing colors of autumn.

And if you are reading this before the October 2nd Simchat Torah service. Please come and help us wrap the Torah around the sanctuary. We need everyone's help to make this a wonderful and memorable experience!

With much love and gratitude,

Howie

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.

Updates & Events

CHAVERIM

Our 1st meeting will be Sunday October 11th at 10 AM.

We will focus on schmoozing with each other and how we can connect with the community in need around us, such as:

Voices for Justice is a small group running out of Trinity Church helping immigrants in hiding in Hackettstown for fear of extreme unjust treatment and helping families of those who have been thrown into Delaney Hall in Newark.

DASACC is an organization helping abused families that are in hiding from extreme family abuse.

Our contributions to help will be simple! I will find out exact needs—food, $, clothing, etc for each group. I will be in touch with both.

If you feel inclined to do so, you can bring a food pantry item or $25 gift card to Shop Rite to the first meeting as a start for our mitzvah work. No pressure at all as your support and ideas are so appreciated as well!

We will have monthly gatherings giving us much needed connection time and will plan other simple events—like happy hours, movie nights, etc.

One event being planned is a show at Centenary Theater in Hackettstown Nov 7th, 7:30pm. A Jewish comic, Phoebe Potts. Fun evening so let me know if you're interested. All are invited! So far 7 are interested. I'll buy a group of tickets when all are confirmed. $32 each. Let me know by October 11th.

Get ready for a meaningful year ahead filled with great energy, support and sweet connections!

Your co-chair, Debbie

debapsel@gmail.com

908-310-5395

CHAVERIM

Updates & Events

ADULT ED

What Do Jews Believe? Six Weeks of Jewish Theology at JCNWJ

This six-week course (October 11 – November 15) facilitated by Rabbi Dubin will explore some of the most profound questions in Jewish theology through the writings of major Jewish thinkers of the modern and contemporary eras.

Our primary text will be **Eugene Borowitz's *Choices in Modern Jewish Thought***. Borowitz introduces us to many of the competing theological possibilities available to modern Jews, from traditional belief to existentialism, religious humanism, mysticism, and radically modern understandings of God and revelation.

Among the thinkers we will study through Borowitz are **Martin Buber, Franz Rosenzweig, Abraham Joshua Heschel, Mordecai Kaplan, Leo Baeck, Hermann Cohen**, and others.

But ***Choices in Modern Jewish Thought*** was published decades ago, and, unsurprisingly, Jewish theology did not stop there, so we will also expand his conversation with several voices that have continued to shape contemporary Jewish thought, including, but not limited to, **Judith Plaskow**, **Rabbi Rachel Adler**, **Marcia Falk**, and **Rabbi Rebecca Alpert**.

Please understand: the goal of this course is **not to determine what Jews are supposed to believe**. It is to give us the vocabulary, history, texts, and ideas to wrestle honestly with some of Judaism's biggest questions.

You do not need a background in philosophy or theology. You do not need to believe in God. You do not need to have answers.

You simply need to be willing to ask questions.

Six weeks. Centuries of Jewish thought. A conversation about God, Torah, revelation, peoplehood, gender, sexuality, suffering, prayer, and what it means to be Jewish today.

Come ready to think. Come ready to question. Come ready to wrestle.

[You can purchase Eugene Borowitz's *Choices in Modern Jewish Thought* online through various used book sources, priced around $10.00.]

The first session is October 11 at 12:30pm. The starting time for subsequent sessions is to be determined.

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 1 Samuel. We are about to complete 2 Samuel, which concludes 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). The next meeting will be October 17. All are welcome to join us on Zoom—no prior experience needed.

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

YAHRZEITS

Belle Fromer Shure	Aunt of Helen Mattson
Nora Lessne	Cousin of Edythe Herson
Isadore Sachat	Grandfather of Barbara Simmons
Thelma Rivera	Sister of Stuart Goldberg
Henrietta Goldstein	Mother of Iris Hirsch
Frank Bronico	Father of Jeannie Berkowitz
Michael Levin	Cousin of Rabbi Ellen Jay Lewis
Bea Kaplan	Cousin of Sharon Herson
Stanley Shelofsky	Father of Andy Shelofsky
Gerturde Lewis	Mother of Rabbi Ellen Jay Lewis
Francine Fisch	
Leon Fisch	
Karen Goberman	
Rose Blum	
Hyman Kwartler	
David Simms	
Florence Davis	
Ida Galen	
Celia Robins	
Benjamin J. Silverman	
Ruth Simkowitz	
Sigmund Zuckerman	
Earl Aaron Levine	
Samuel Davis	
Raymond Cohen	

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.

Stephens State Park - 9/7/26

Updates & Events

DONATIONS

In Memory of Nora Lessne, Bea Kaplan & Arlene Gordon

- Sharon Herson, Daniel Fleckles & Edythe Herson

In Memory of Richard Herson, Shelley Herson, Nannette Hoffman & Phillip Peck

- Sharon Herson, Daniel Fleckles & Edythe Herson

FOOD DRIVE

Local food pantries can use monetary donations (preferred), along with non-perishable food items, to provide food to those in need within the community. Donations can be made through the JCNWJ if you would like.

Thank you for your generosity.

Iris Hirsch

MI SHEBEIRACH

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

Thanks for your attention.

JCNWJ Services

Lifecycle!

JCNWJ.ORG • 908.689.0762

115 YOUMANS AVE. WASHINGTON, NJ

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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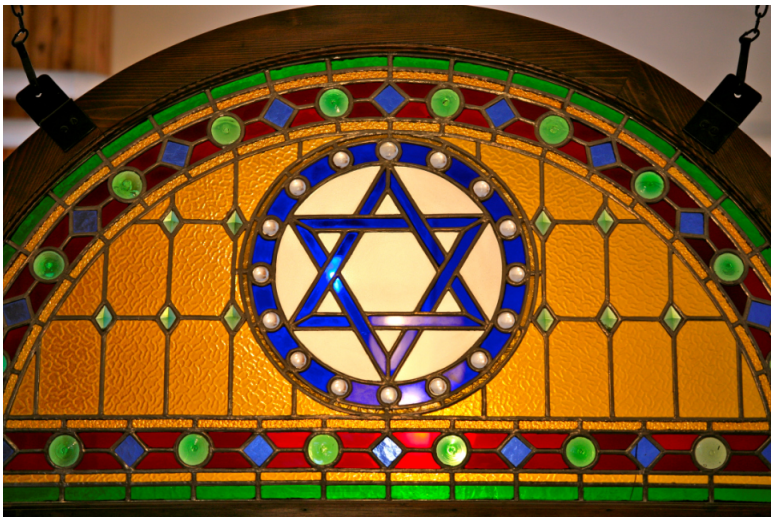
115 YOUMANS AVE. WASHINGTON, NJ

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



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: 29C BROAD STREET | WASHINGTON, NEW JERSEY 07882
OUTREACH: 908.453.4121 | OUTREACH FAX: 908.223.1146 | SAFE HOUSE: 908.453.4181 | SAFE HOUSE FAX: 908.453.3708

Partners

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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.