Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey
Journal

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November 2026

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Rabbi's Message

Dear Friends,

As you may already know, Israeli citizens went to the polls last Tuesday (October 27) to elect the Jewish nation's next government. In the course of events, a profound question became front and center: Can Jewish and Arab citizens become genuine political partners in shaping Israel's future?

Neither major bloc of parties won a majority in the 120-seat Knesset, but the two Arab-led parties, *Ra'am* and the Joint List, together won 19 seats, which could make their support decisive in forming the new government. Yet most Jewish-led parties remain unwilling to include Arab parties in a coalition. One notable exception is The Democrats, whose leaders, including Reform rabbi and Knesset member Gilad Kariv, advocate Jewish-Arab political partnership.

This election invites us to consider what a more inclusive Israeli democracy could look like, what such a partnership would require, and why it matters to us as American Reform Jews.

Arab citizens, roughly 20 percent of the citizenry, are integral to Israeli society, serving in every sector of Israeli life. According to the National Library of Medicine of the NIH, for example, more than 40 percent of newly issued medical licenses now go to Arab and Druze physicians, and 49 percent of the country's pharmacists are Arab. Yet Arab communities disproportionately face violent crime, inadequate housing, underfunded schools, and unequal public investment. These concerns go to the heart of what citizenship means in a democracy.

(continued on the next page)

Calendar of Events

Sunday, November 1
12:30pm: Adult Education: Jewish Theology

Monday, November 2
7:00pm: Board of Trustees Meeting

Saturday, November 7
11:15am: Torah Study (Zoom only)

Sunday, November 8
12:30pm: Adult Education: Jewish Theology

Saturday, November 14
10:00am: Shabbat Morning Service

Sunday, November 15
12:30pm: Adult Education: Jewish Theology

Saturday, November 21
10:00am: Shabbat Morning Service
Chaverim potluck lunch
following (see Pg. 6)

Sunday, November 22
12:30pm: Adult Education: Jewish Theology

Most events are also available on Zoom

Rabbi's Message (continued)

Israel's Declaration of Independence promises social and political equality to all its inhabitants. An Arab family confronting violent crime deserves the same protection as a Jewish family. Recognizing this does not diminish Israel's identity as the national home of the Jewish people, but rather calls on Israel to fulfill both halves of its promise: Jewish self-determination and democratic equality.

We cannot pretend such a partnership is simple. *Hadash's* platform is anti-Zionist, *Ta'al's* is generally anti-Zionist and Arab nationalist, and *Balad* champions a "state of all its citizens" in place of a Jewish state. These three parties make up the Joint List, the larger of the two Arab-led political entities, and their positions threaten the foundations of Israel as a Jewish state.

These differences are not small, and Jewish Israelis are right to take them seriously. Any political cooperation with Arab parties must safeguard Jewish security. The Jewish people's right to self-determination in their homeland is not a bargaining chip in coalition negotiations, and a partnership that weakens it is unacceptable.

At the same time, Israel's electoral system makes coalition building essential. The question is not whether Arab parties disagree with Zionism, since some clearly do, but whether they should be excluded because they are Arab, or evaluated, like every other party, by what they will commit to in a governing agreement. Israeli governments routinely bring together Jewish parties with sharply different views on religion, economics, security, and even Zionism itself. Why not here, too?

The Bennett-Lapid government of 2021–2022 showed that cooperation is possible. *Ra'am,* unlike the other Arab parties, joined that government and negotiated over public services, budgets, and community priorities while helping to govern the Jewish state. The experiment was short-lived, but its significance endures. This election offers another test, one that would demand serious negotiation and firm assurances on Israel's security.

I believe inclusion would also strengthen Jewish security. Supporters of partnership contend that a society is safer when its minority has a stake in the system rather than standing outside it. Many Arab citizens appear to want exactly that. A May 2026 survey by Tel Aviv University's Moshe Dayan Center found that 77.2 percent of Arab respondents support including an Arab party in the next coalition, and about three-quarters support voluntary non-military national service for Arab high school graduates. A community seeking integration is a partner to be encouraged, not a threat to be contained. Exclusion tells Arab citizens that no participation will give their votes weight, and it strengthens those who insist they have no place in Israel's political system. Parties in government must answer for outcomes, including security. Parties kept permanently excluded have little reason to moderate.

Public safety is also a shared concern. The same survey series found that more than 71 percent of Arab citizens name violence and crime in their communities as the most urgent issue, and nearly 77 percent report a low sense of personal security. Addressing that requires trust between Arab communities and the state, which is hard to build when Arab representatives are shut out from participating in decisions about policing and budgets. None of this guarantees safety, and inclusion is no substitute for security safeguards. But it shows that partnership and security can be allies rather than opposites.

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Rabbi's Message (continued)

The Democrats stand out as a Jewish-led party actively advocating the inclusion of Arab parties in a governing coalition. Party leader Yair Golan has called such cooperation natural, appropriate, and democratic, and Reform Rabbi Gilad Kariv, number 3 on the party's slate, has stressed the importance of Arab representation to Israeli democracy. This reflects values at the heart of Reform Judaism: equality, human dignity, pluralism, and the conviction that justice must be expressed through society's institutions.

For me, as a deeply committed Zionist, supporting Jewish-Arab cooperation is not a departure from my goals. It expresses the Israel for which I pray: a secure Jewish homeland that honors the democratic rights of all its citizens. Because I care about that homeland, cooperation must never come at the expense of Jewish security. At the same time, I do not accept that Jewish political legitimacy requires excluding Arab citizens from decisions about their own country. A democracy cannot honor equality while treating the votes of one-fifth of its citizens as inherently unacceptable. Nor can a Jewish state ignore the question of whether its governing partners will defend it.

Israel must remain a place where Jewish history, Hebrew culture, and Jewish life flourish, and where Jews can defend themselves. It must also protect the rights and dignity of its Arab citizens, who are full members of Israeli society. I do not vote in Israeli elections, and Israelis will determine their own government's future. But we can encourage a political culture that values cooperation over exclusion and judges potential partners by their actions and commitments rather than their identity.

May this election open the way to a more inclusive democracy, in which Jewish and Arab citizens work together for safer communities, fairer public services, and a shared future. Such a partnership would not weaken Israel's Jewish identity. It would show that the democratic values we cherish as Reform Jews are essential to the flourishing of the Jewish state.

Rabbi Dubin

President's Message

One of Rabbi Dubin's favorite prayers is Ma'ariv Aravim, which speaks of the earth's natural cycles. The exchange between day and night and the changing of the seasons.

For those of you who have been lucky enough to travel around Warren County and the surrounding areas for the past few weeks, you have been witness to what I think has been the most spectacular autumn colors I have ever seen around here. The colorful leaves are seeming to last for longer than I can remember and I have been lucky enough to see many spots where the views were spectacular. If you read this message early in November, you can still get out to look. I was at the Delaware Water Gap with James Moorehead on Wednesday, and the views from the mountain top were spectacular. Thursday evening late at night, I saw my first bear cub in a while. I am so happy that Iris and I moved here almost 40 years ago. I love living in the country with nature all around me.

For those of you who attended our 80th Jubilee on October 3rd, I hope that you had as good a time as I did, seeing most of our temple members, our Rabbi Emirita, Ellen Lewis, a wonderful band who had many of us up and dancing a good deal of the evening and just general happiness amongst our temple family. Let's do our best to keep the spirit of that evening in our hearts and in our actions for the coming year.

I will leave you with four pictures from Warren County this fall.

This one is from a pond on Rockport Road in Oxford.

This is from the red dot trail at Worthington State Forest (A strenuous hike).

And lastly two from Allamuchy Pond off of Route 517 (Exit 19 off Route 80). With much love to all, Howie

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). We are about to complete our reading of II 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 November 7 and December 12. All are welcome to join us—no prior experience needed.

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

YAHRZEITS

Joyce Shubs	Aunt of Helen Mattson
Stephen Margolin	Father of Diane Margolin
Sarah Fromer Zeiden	Aunt of Helen Mattson
Pory Margolis	Mother of Bob Margolis
Myra Novy	Aunt of Robin Hall
Adam Nathanson	Son of Ginger Nathanson
Maxwell Gross	Son of Marsha Gross
Michael Weiner	Spouse of Diane Margolin

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.

DONATIONS

In Memory of Sid Goldstein, Elaine Hirsch, Ronni Goodman & Jessica Hirsch
- Howie & Iris Hirsch

Updates & Events

CHAVERIM

A few wonderful Chaverim events on the horizon:

- Gift drive for Hunterdon Developmental Center - look for email
- Friendsgiving! Special potluck after morning services Nov 21st. We are honoring our founders first cookbook so watch your email for the potluck sign up and a copy of the cookbook to pick your dish! Leaders from Voices for Justice will join us! (the organization we are helping with for donations in support of families of detained immigrants)
- Chanukah singing at Heath Village Retirement Home in Hackettstown Dec 5, 4pm.

Ongoing drives for funds, toys and coats for families subjected to awful treatment as they visit their loved ones at Delaney Hall Detention Center in Newark. We are helping them feel valued and cared for!

❤️ We are a small but mighty very special group so let's keep connecting and making a difference where we can! A total feel good! ❤️

Follow Chaverim on WhatsApp and watch for emails. Questions? Contact Debbie at debapsel@gmail.com or 908-310-5395

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

ADULT EDUCATION

What Do Jews Believe? Jewish Theology at JCNWJ.

This course, facilitated by Rabbi Dubin is exploring some of the most profound questions in Jewish theology through the writings of major Jewish thinkers of the modern and contemporary eras. We have now completed the first four sessions, looking at the ideas of Hermann Cohen, Leo Baeck, Mordechai Kaplan, and Franz Rosenzweig.

Our primary text is 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. You do not need to purchase or read the text in order to participate.

Some of the thinkers we will be studying in future weeks include Martin Buber and Abraham Joshua Heschel.

Beyond the theologians in Borowitz's text, we will look at 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.

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

Sessions are most Sundays (see the calendar on Pg. 1) at 12:30 to approximately 2:30. You may also bring lunch if you would like.

Updates & Events

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.

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 and monetary donations (preferred by the food pantries) at the temple for local food pantries. All contributions are appreciated.

Iris Hirsch
Ritual Chair

JCNWJ Services

Lifecycle!

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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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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

Custom Woodcraft by J

Rustic Birdhouses, Wall Hangings and Custom Framed Artwork. Commissioned work available upon request. Check out my work on Instagram: **@customwoodcraftbyj**

Contact James Moorehead at (908) 455-1286 for details

Please join us at **Infloressense** in Belvidere Sunday, November 15th from 1-4 PM for a wine & cheese open house (241 Water St, Belvidere 07823)

RSVP for the open house to Gerri 908 455 1285

Want to place an ad in the JCNWJ Journal?

Reach out to Adam Tucker at adamt180@gmail.com. We can include your business card or other content. Donations to the JCNWJ are appreciated.

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: 1.866.8BE.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

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