



HISTORIC B'NAI JACOB SYNAGOGUE

Nissley at Water Streets
Middletown, Pennsylvania 17057

2021 SUMMER NEWSLETTER

Services Calendar

(Until further notice, all services held via ZOOM)

Erev Rosh Hashana	9/6/2021	7:00 pm
Rosh Hashana	9/7/2021	9:00 am
Kol Nidre Service	9/15/2021	7:00 pm
<u>Yom Kippur</u>		
-Yom Kippur		9:00 am
-Yizkor	9/16/2021	11:00 am
-Mincha		5:00 pm
-Ne-eila		6:00 pm
Shabbat Service	10/1/2021	7:30 pm
Shabbat Service Honoring Veterans	11/12/2021	7:30 pm
Board Meeting & Chanukah Party	12/5/2021	12:00 pm
Shabbat Service	12/10/2021	7:30 pm

SOCIAL HALL REPAIRS

Over 15 years ago and then again about 7 years ago, we had temporary repairs done to our Social Hall's floor in the basement of the synagogue. It has now become apparent that we need to make permanent repairs. The floor was built in 1906 over the ground and supported by wood beams which are now rotting away due to moisture coming up from the dirt underneath. This caused several areas of the floor to get soft and start sinking in. The plan, after an inspection by a structural engineer, is to pour concrete over a layer of crushed stone and a water vapor barrier. They will be doing this work once the inspection is completed. This will be a very expensive repair, but it will be permanent. **Please consider this when making your High Holy Day donation this year.**

Special thanks to Bailie Imber for referring us to SGH Engineering of Structures and Building Enclosures. Until then, a temporary plywood walkway has been installed which will allow us to use the bathrooms when in person services begin again.

By Larry Kapenstein

YOVEL – 5782 – “FREEDOM

THROUGHOUT THE LAND” (DROR BA’ARETZ)

Our YOM KIPPUR Service on Thursday, September 16, 2021/5782 will include the special “blast of the Shofar” heard only every FIFTY YEARS, as we celebrate the JUBILEE YEAR as directed in VAYIKRA/Leviticus 25:9-24.

The Hebrew word for JUBILEE is “YOVEL” and its message “TO PROCLAIM LIBERTY THROUGHOUT THE LAND” (DROR Ba-ARETZ) has resonated to this day. That phrase was inscribed on THE LIBERTY BELL when it arrived in Philadelphia in 1752, but it was not until 1837 that the name LIBERTY BELL was first used in the New York Anti-Slavery Society’s publication of “Liberty.” YOVEL is a period of LIBERTY AND REDEMPTION that reminds us at 25:23 that we are but “strangers and settlers” on earth with the G-d to whom belongs all the earth. In the Yovel passages, the Torah uses the Hebrew form of the word “redeem” that is associated with G-d (ga’al) rather than the form associated with us (pidyon), reminding us, as during the YOM KIPPUR Service, that G-d will redeem us when we return to G-d on YOM KIPPUR and that acts of liberation and redemption set forth in the Yovel passages are part of our continuing return to G-d. YOVEL is a special year in which our relationships to the land and to each other receive special focus. While “the land” throughout which Yovel reaches may be seen as limited to Eretz Israel, its model challenges our better selves to remember, as we do each Pesach, that we were once slaves whom G-d redeemed and now can do the work of TIKUN OLAM, for the whole earth.

By Bruce Baron

ORSTEIN/B'NAI JACOB SCHOLARSHIP WINNER 2021

This year's scholarship of \$1,000 was awarded to Quinn Dworchak. Quinn told us in an essay to apply for the scholarship, that she was a determined, strong, and passionate student. She had pushed herself last year harder to overcome the murder of her older brother Torin who was killed in 2019. His death caused her to understand what she needed to do to make the life she was given great. It pushed her to strive for better grades and apply to colleges.

She will be attending West Chester University to pursue a degree in Occupational Therapy. If her last name sounds familiar, her older sister was a recipient of our scholarship a few years ago. She was able to overcome the odds also after being born with Osteogenesis Imperfecta Type III. Quinn's older sister contributed to her passion because she never let her disease define her. She is currently set to graduate from Penn State in May.

We certainly wish this worthy scholarship winner the best in all of her future endeavors. This scholarship is given annually to a graduating senior from Middletown Area High School who will be attending college and has "overcome the odds to succeed" just like the founders of B'nai Jacob Synagogue and Ida Prouser Orstein did.

By Larry Kapenstein



From left: Larry Kapenstein, Quinn Dworchak, Bruce Baron

MIDDLETOWN PRESS & JOURNAL CEASES PUBLICATION

The Middletown Press and Journal newspaper ceased publication on July 1, 2020 after proudly covering the Middletown area for 166 years since 1854. For the entire life of our Shul, the Press and Journal was very kind to us, publishing many articles and even a recent opinion piece about our “fund raising” effort to rebuild our front steps and façade written by the editor.

By Larry Kapenstein

EDITOR'S VOICE

An effort to preserve a Middletown gem

It's not often that local residents get a chance to peek into the historic B'nai Jacob Synagogue in Middletown, the oldest building erected as a synagogue in Dauphin County.

The house of worship, built in 1906, is used less frequently than in the past. The beautiful pews were saved from the original Dauphin County Courthouse. The Torahs are more than 200 years old. The windows are stained glass, and the auditorium, untouched since it was built save the carpeting in the aisles, is lit by original brass fixtures.

Outside, the entrance steps, added in 1921, were crumbling and needed to be replaced, and the congregation went to work raising the \$25,000 needed to do the job. Surprisingly, no grants were available, though the building is on the National Register of Historic Places – since 1985, in fact.

But people have rallied to help. A GoFundMe campaign has raised almost \$15,000 from donors who gave as much as \$1,000 to those who could spare only \$25. An anonymous donor has stepped in to match dollar-for-dollar the contributions the congregation collects until Monday, Aug. 31 – up to \$5,000.

And Laura Silver, author of “KNISH: In Search of the Jewish Soul Food,” has agreed to appear at a fundraiser next month to raise money for the project. Details of the fundraiser and how she learned about the project – an overheard conversation in New York hotel lobby – can be found in our story, which appears on A1 in this issue.

The effort to raise money for the project is proof, as the anonymous donor told us in an e-mailed statement, that “we can all do something for our hometown community to help honor the past, support the present, and nurture the future of places and programs that meant so much to us as kids.”

The synagogue is a Middletown gem, and we are grateful to those who have helped preserve it.

DEPARTING CLERGY IN MIDDLETOWN

Father Tim Sahd has replaced Father Ted Keating at Seven Sorrows Church in Middletown. For more than 20 years now our synagogue has participated in the Interfaith Thanksgiving eve service at Seven Sorrows with clergy from all the different faiths in Middletown. Father Keating particularly liked the "Call to Worship" developed by Larry Kapenstein, so much so that he asked for a copy of it, and also the blowing of the Shofar by Kevin Snell. The service is usually led by Pastor Richard Eckert of St. Peter's church. Unfortunately, our synagogue's good friend Pastor Eckert, from St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Middletown, will be retiring this year. For many years, members of our Shul were invited to lead a Passover Seder for the Confirmation Class at St. Peter's. We will miss our fellow leaders of faith in Middletown.

By Larry Kapenstein



From left: Kevin Snell, Pastor Richard Eckert, PhD., Larry Kapenstein

CONSIDER AN ENDOWMENT FUND DONATION

Please help ensure Historic B’nai Jacob (HBJ) will be here for the next generation and consider HBJ’s Endowment Fund in your estate planning. For over 115 years, congregants of Historic B’nai Jacob have ensured that our community Shul has been here for those who came after them.

In partnership with the Jewish Community Foundation of Central PA, we have established the Historic B’nai Jacob Endowment Fund to preserve our special Shul for the future and keep it dues-free. Setting up a legacy gift is free and easy when you set it up with a Foundation professional. Donating can be done through a will, a trust, or a letter of intent. For further information and free help, please go to: <https://pajewishendowment.org/cjl/> or contact one of the following individuals: By Ed Beck

Dr. Ed Beck	HBJ Committee Chair	freindlymensch@aol.com 717-576-5038
Paulette Keifer	Executive Director of the Jewish Community Foundation of Central PA	Paulette.keifer@pajewishendowment.org 717-409-8220

THE SYNAGOGUE HAS A NEW AIR PURIFICATION SYSTEM

Recently installed by F.M. Berkheimer, Inc., a Halo-Led with Reme-Led Technology is now in full operation at B’nai Jacob. It treats every cubic inch of air-conditioned space, thereby reducing airborne and surface microbials, bacteria, viruses, mold, smoke and VOC’S with the added benefit of reducing airborne allergens, dust and particulates. This, along with masks and vaccinations of our members, will hopefully allow us to have in person services in the near future.
By Larry Kapenstein

ZOOM SERVICES

B’nai Jacob has not been able to have services at the building since February 2020 because of the virus, but we have been very grateful to have been able to broadcast our services via ZOOM. This has enabled congregants from several other states to join us online. Thanks to Marc Bluestein for being able to conquer the challenges of doing online services.

Historic B’nai Jacob Synagogue is located in Middletown, PA near the Harrisburg International Airport. If you have news you want to share or would like to be added to our mailing list, please send that information through the e-mail link at bnai-jacob.org.



2021 Executive Committee Officers

President – Bruce Baron

Vice-President – Larry Kapenstein

Treasurer – Larry Kapenstein

Secretary – Bruce Baron