



HISTORIC B'NAI JACOB SYNAGOGUE

Nissley at Water Streets
Middletown, Pennsylvania 17057

on the National Register of Historic Places (built in 1906)

SUMMER 2022 NEWSLETTER

Services Calendar

Erev Rosh Hashana (5783)

Sun. Sep. 25 - 7:00 PM

Rosh Hashana

Mon. Sep. 26 - 9:00 AM

Kol Nidre

Tue. Oct. 4 - 7:00 PM

Yom Kippur

Wed. Oct. 5 - 9:00 AM

Yizkor - 11:00 AM

Musaf - 12:30 PM

Mincha - 5:00 PM

Ne'ila - 6:00 PM

Shabbos Service Honoring Veterans

Fri. Nov. 11 - 7:30 PM

Shabbos Service

Fri. Dec. 2 - 7:30 PM

Hanukkah Party & Board Meeting

Sun. Dec. 18 - NOON

The Social Floor Project is Underway

Our Shul has been blessed once again by the support of our Congregation and friends to renovate the floor and drainage of our Social Hall to remediate and prevent further damage from underground water. Our Shul received engineering consulting assistance from one of our members and from a local engineering firm to develop the plans for the project and has contracted with a local building company to complete the work. The project includes removal of the current tile floor, installation of a clean stone base and a thick concrete slab, including a vapor barrier, welded wire mesh, expansion joints, saw-cut

joints and liquid curing, along with a central catch basin/floor drain, upgrading to the sump pump systems (including a new secondary unit), new perimeter drain boards and pipes along the foundation to capture drainage water and route it to the sump pump, and installing new replacement flooring. Work on the project began on Monday, August 1, 2022 and should be completed by the end of August 2022, with temporary storage upstairs in the sanctuary (see photo). We are also contracting separately to repoint the outside brickwork. Fundraising for this project was coordinated by our Shul Treasurer and Vice-President, Larry Kapenstein, along with Board Member Ed Beck. Donations include a large "naming" donation from the Singer Family and underwriting from the Berman, Javitch and Lipsett families, as well as a hundred (100) separate contributions from our Congregation, friends and other houses of worship, including pooled contributions in honor of Marlin Toser's 90th Birthday. Havu LAdonai.

Contributions for this project may still be made through our Shul's website "Donation" link (www.bnai-jacob.org) or by mail (c/o 121 Shirley Dr., Middletown, PA 17057).



Other Improvements

In 2022, there were several improvements at B'nai Jacob. Due to the pandemic, we had an air purifying system installed. We also had new lighting installed throughout the sanctuary as well as a new light going down the steps to the social hall to help with visibility when going downstairs to the bathrooms and social hall (the photo also includes pictures put up in honor of the Singer Family's support for the Social Hall Project). There are also cushions now in the back 3 rows on the right side of the sanctuary which haven't been used yet because of the pandemic.



Finding Friends On Zoom – The Amazing Reach of Virtual Space

While having our services on ZOOM for the past several months is certainly not the same as being together in the Shul (Hinneh mah tov umah na'im, shevet achim gam yachad - not to mention our wonderful oneg's afterward), the amazing reach of virtual space has brought us special delights. While when our services start at 7:30 pm on Friday, it is 7:30 a.m. on Saturday in Perth on the west coast of Australia when the historian of one of our founding families, Anne Prosser, joins with us for conversation and prayer along with the Imber Family in Ann Arbor, Michigan, with links to the same founding

family and with some similar experiences with family and friends in South Africa. The service is led by our Hazan, Marc Bluestein, from his home in Philadelphia, with a congregation from Harrisburg, Hershey, Hummelstown, Mechanicsburg, Middletown, Newport, and York, including new faces recently moved from Carlisle and San Diego. Hinneh mah tov umah na'im, shevet achim gam yachad! We are checking out preserving this amazing gift through simulcasting even when we are back in the Shul and to celebrate Marc Bluestein's 10th Anniversary as our Hazan.

A New Beginning – Dr. Ilana De Laney

A new day, a new year, a new job, a new life, a new relationship, a new location, a new start—they all come to us without permission, in the best and worst way. They barge in our front door with the beautiful promise of second chance and new potential and unexpected opportunity.

Last year my daughter married her beloved and moved from San Diego to Middletown PA. We thought that we could just visit and get used to the distance. However, we felt, after less than a year, that our heart is where our daughter is. So, we said goodbye to our friends and family and moved to Middletown.

Making a change can be challenging. At the beginning of a new year we intuitively may recognize this: that no matter how many good intentions we have to lose weight or eat better or change that bad habit that **we ultimately**

are not in charge of every detail of life. I also find that once we let go and open the heart to change, then the journey is good for us. B'nai Jacob welcomed us right away as well as our neighbors and daughter's friends. My work in San Diego allowed me to work remotely and the little town life has become ours. So we are on a good journey right now, enjoying every minute and soaking it up...because no season lasts forever. This is the delicate beauty of life.

Debbie Friedman's rendering of *Tefillat Haderech* (the wayfarer's prayer) offers a blessing to all those about to embark upon a journey: May we be blessed as we go on our way; May we be guided in peace; May we be blessed with health and joy; May this be our blessing, amen; May we be sheltered by the wings of peace; May we be kept in safety and in love; May grace and compassion find their way to every soul; May this be our blessing, amen.

Scholarship Awarded

Gavin Guckavan, the 2022 Orstein/B'nai Jacob scholarship award winner, was a freshman when his brother was tragically killed while serving in the military. This was a devastating and life-changing event for the entire family and especially Gavin as the youngest. With the support of his amazing family, he was able to achieve academic honors as a student and continue his swimming and soccer career. Gavin became a top athlete in both sports. Throughout his four years, Gavin struggled with grief but did not let it determine the trajectory of his life and instead allowed the support he had from friends and family to lift him when he was unable to do so for himself. He showed resiliency through high school and will be continuing his education at Clarion University majoring in Education. Gavin has earned the respect of his teachers and peers and certainly could have let the tragedy that occurred in his family be an excuse to flounder or give up, but he did not. He is a great kid who has empathy and compassion for others and a desire to do great things.

Thank you to all who donated to help him defer some of the cost of his education through this generous \$1,000 scholarship.



Art Donations

In 2022 Ruth Siegel donated two Israeli lithograph prints to B'nai Jacob Synagogue that were originally her grandfather's. He had purchased both prints on one of his many trips to Jerusalem in the 60' or 70's. He bought them from the artist at his studio. She wanted to find a good home for them because she just didn't have room in her house. She did, and we at B'nai Jacob will treasure them.

The prints are "City of King David" and "Simchat Torah" by Yossi Stern. Mr. Stern was born in 1923 in Hungary, but emigrated to Israel in 1940 by himself at 17. He studied at the Bezalel Art Academy and then worked as a graphic editor for Hagana's official paper and then later for Yediot Abronot, Davar, and others. The paintings received from Ms. Siegel are "Artist Proofs" which can be very rare and valuable.



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 email link at bnai-jacob.org.

2022 Executive Committee Officers

President—Bruce Baron
Vice President—Larry Kapenstein
Treasurer—Larry Kapenstein
Assistant Treasurer—Loren Barisch
Secretary—Bruce Baron