

Congregation Beth Hatikvah
Jewish Historical Society of MetroWest Archives
Prepared by Jill Hershoin (11/1/10 and revised on 12/27/11)

Record Group: 1

Collection Number: 16-10

Creator: Congregation Beth Hatikvah

Inclusive Dates: 1994-present

Extent: 3 cf

Abstract: Historical records of Congregation Beth Hatikvah

Acquisition information: Acquired by the Society in 2010. Materials in the collection were donated by Bob Max, Eric and Karen Corbman, Micael Fineman, Deborah Bozik and the records from the congregation.

Preferred Citation: Congregation Beth Hatikvah Collection, Jewish Historical Society of MetroWest

Access restrictions:

The collections of the Society shall be available for examination and study by any member of the public under the normal security procedures and other special procedures established for the protection of the specific collections.

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History:

Congregation Beth Hatikvah was established in February, 1994 as the first Reconstructionist congregation in Morris County. The founders were former members of Temple Sinai, a Reform Jewish congregation in Summit, NJ. Ruby Reimer writes: "On February 27, 1994 about 80 people gathered at the Murray Hill Inn to hear informed comments by the Executive Director of the Jewish Reconstructionist Federation, Rabbi Mordechai Liebling. They agreed to establish a Reconstructionist congregation in Chatham which is a pivotal location in this region and which did not have as yet a Jewish house of worship.

In April following, a first service was held at Corpus Christi Church. And in May, services continued next door at the Presbyterian Church on Southern Boulevard.

[Because the congregation was so young, lay-led services were held in members' homes and] student Rabbis came to lead services on High Holy Days. Rabbi Brian Field became the first part-time Rabbi in July of 1994 and served for two years.

During 1994 the congregation adopted a constitution, elected a board of trustees, started a religious school, created newsletters and became affiliated with the Federation of Reconstructionist Congregations.”

In 1997, Rabbi Amy (Levenson) Small was hired in part-time capacities which eventually lead to her position as a full-time Rabbi. Rabbi Small is very active in local and national programs. Her leadership has been quite remarkable; serving on the boards of interfaith coalitions, on Governor Jon Corzine's Advisory Commission of Faith-Based Initiatives and is Past-President of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association.

By 2007, the community was ready to buy a building, and the congregation moved from Chatham to neighboring Summit. The congregation continues to grow and had been active in many projects including a Jewish Food project and incorporating Jewish music into curriculums and the community.

Scope and Content:

The collection contains some important documents from the early days of the Congregation. The meeting minutes from Board Meetings and Executive Committee Meetings are lacking consistency and there are gaps in-between the years. Some of the folders in the minutes series contain merely agendas or some notes only and do not contain any minutes. Individual committee meeting minutes can be found within the "Committee" series in this collection. There are some gaps in the newsletters. Also note that there are hundreds of newspaper clippings. The resources needed for this project would be costly as there are far too many clippings for the archivist to photocopy let alone inventory. The dates of the newspaper clipping range from the infancy of the Congregation to present.

Conservation Notes: Newspaper clippings should be photocopied

Removals: None.

Organization:

The materials are organized alphabetically, then chronologically within the series. This collection is comprised of paper and photographs and is divided into thirteen series as follows:

- I. Administrative
 - a. Board Lists

- b. Building-Related
- c. By-Laws and Constitution
- d. Correspondence
- e. Forms, Policies & Procedures
- f. Misc.
- g. Mission Statement
- h. Organizational Charts
- i. Minutes
- j. Staff

- II. Clubs & Groups
- III. Committees
- IV. Education – Hebrew School
- V. Events
- VI. Finance
- VII. Legal
- VIII. History
- IX. Membership
- X. Photographs
- XI. Press
- XII. Publications
- XIII. Publicity