



The Maplewood Jewish Center has new moved to its new and much larger premises at 113 Parker Ave.

Photo by Elaine Durbach

Maplewood shul moves to new, roomier digs

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Call it the little shul that could: The Maplewood Jewish Center, known until recently as Beth Ephraim and a decade ago battling to survive, is celebrating its growth with new, larger premises.

The congregation celebrated its move to a red brick building at 13 Parker Ave. with a Sept. 21 outdoor party.

Rabbi Sholom Bogomilsky and his wife, Frumie, welcomed dignitaries, including Maplewood Mayor Ken Pettis and councilwoman Kathy Leventhal, along with a crowd of around 200.

The Chabad-affiliated center, housed in what is now known as the Charles Kimmel Building, features a neoclassical peaked roof and white columns.

The building features 6,000 square feet of space — triple the space the congregation had in its former home just a few blocks away — set in spacious grounds. The long ground-floor room, with its gently curved ceiling, has a handsome ark and a *bima*, ready for the High Holy Days.

The building has accommodated various churches over the years, most recently a Latino congregation.

As part of its transformation into a synagogue, the white steeple was taken down. But, as the Bogomilskys said, there was little else to suggest its previous incarnations.

The new venue is situated within the *eruv* — the Shabbat boundary marker — established last December. By happy chance, it also has the advantage of being directly across the street from the Bogomilskys' home and the center's Kinder Gan preschool, which Frumie runs.

The center was previously housed in a converted home on the corner of Prospect Street and Parker Avenue. It moved there a few years after its establishment as an Orthodox congregation in 1961. The old building could hold just a few dozen people for services, and the Saturday kiddush was set up at the back of the main room, an unavoidable distraction from



Rabbi Sholom Bogomilsky and his wife, Frumie, welcomed members of their congregation into the new home of the Maplewood Jewish Center.

Photo by Melv Wevven

Now, there is a social hall the same size as the sanctuary, with an adjoining kitchen.

"Now, the women can set up the kiddush downstairs without disturbing anyone, and there's plenty of room," Frumie said. There are also a number of classrooms, enough to accommodate religious-school classes, the planned expansion of the preschool, and the center's adult programs.

Sholom Bogomilsky grew up in Maplewood, not far from the congregation in Newark's Ivy Hill led by his father, Rabbi Samuel Bogomilsky. His parents still live in the house just a few blocks away.

An accountant by profession, Sholom Bogomilsky began helping out at Beth Ephraim on a part-time basis in the 1990s. After a break of a few years, he and Frumie returned to lead the congregation in 2001. He

Shul News

So much has happened as the revitalization of our shul in a very short time. The calendars were met with much interest and who received it. We thank a

This year before Rosh Hashana our children learned about making their own. Each child made their own shul.

The high holidays were busy with so many new faces. Chazzan Melv Wevven was crowd involved. We were inspired by Sholom shared with us through

The winter weather has kept you from Paul Pogash for shove anyone has a snow blower that knows of a snow blower that surely use one to make access weather.

Additionally, we have installed that is attached and running bringing the shul fully up of special emergency light

still works full time as an accountant to his rabbinical duties.

When he took over the congregation membership had dwindled to a few families. It is now up to 45 families. Regular Saturdays, it was getting hard in all those coming to the service.

The community plans to retain the building, to provide accommodations upstairs for the two young women in its preschool, and possibly to reconfigure the ground-floor room.

Millburn Realtor Dave Cooper made the purchase. He and his wife, Amy, an associate executive vice president of the Federation of Central New Jersey, joined the congregation in 2000.

Dave Cooper described the move as "the real deal," with the passion, integrity and warmth to form a true congregation. He and his wife, Amy, supported this congregation's struggle to survive and thrive. "What an unbelievable, I don't think they sleep," he said.

The purchase of the building was possible by a gift from the family of Charles Kimmel, who died in 2000. He and his wife, Cookie, lived in Lakewood through friends, they had shared in the congregation's struggle to survive and thrive.

Speaking at the event, his son, Rabbi Sholom, his father loved children and was taken particular pleasure from his children. Kinder Gan grow in this new venue. His mother added, "I could hear my mother approving of our decision."

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