

News Release

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Contact: Kelly Statmore
215-862-1912
littleshul@kehilathanahar.org

KEHILAT HANA HAR CELEBRATES ITS BAR MITZVAH YEAR

NEW HOPE, Pa. – Kehilat HaNahar, the Little Shul by the River, has reached the age of Bar Mitzvah. To celebrate this rite of passage, the Shul will hold a Bar Mitzvah service and celebration the weekend of May 11.

Founded in 1994, “The Little Shul by The River” has grown from a small group of worshippers meeting once a month in an apartment building, to a Reconstructionist Synagogue that offers a full array of creative religious services, continuing education programs, Shul school instruction, and holiday celebrations throughout the year.

Led by Rabbi Sandy Roth for 13 years, Kehilat HaNahar is now home to more than 350 residents living in the greater Delaware River Valley. Its religious school has grown from 12 children at the start to more than 100 today. The Shul now offers classes for kindergarten- through high school-aged students.

“Our history has and always will emphasize the power of community,” says Rabbi Roth. “We offer a warm, diverse and caring home for spiritual, religious and cultural experiences that is unparalleled in the Delaware River Valley. Our Bar Mitzvah celebration marks a milestone in what has been, and will continue to be, a steadfast commitment to providing a spiritual home for generations of Jewish families.”

In 1997, Kehilat HaNahar purchased the historic New Hope School House (circa 1851), and transformed it into a place of worship while maintaining its original charm. It also became the first, and is still the only, Synagogue in New Hope’s history. Set in a wooded area, the Shul sits atop one of the most spectacular sites in the 170-year-old

borough. The Sanctuary and Social Hall, still with their original tin ceilings and walls, are bathed in the warm glow of stained glass windows created and donated in honor and memory of Shul families and loved ones. The Synagogue's Torah is a Holocaust Torah, says Rabbi Roth. It was purchased by selling patches on two large quilts that hang in the Shul's Social Hall.

The Aron Kodesh, or Ark, that houses the Torah and the Ritual furniture was designed by artisan and renowned furniture designer Jeffrey Greene.

Outside the Shul, on a garage wall, sits a Mosaic created by the Shul Youth Group and well-known artist Isaiah Zager.

“This mural is an absolutely beautiful testament to Jewish resilience,” says Rabbi Roth. “We created it on the exact spot that was desecrated with anti-Semitic threats and symbols in 2000. It is a powerful reminder that we must be ever vigilant in our commitment to protecting religious freedom in America.”

For the past 13 years, Kehilat HaNahar has created a place of worship dedicated to serving a diverse cross-section of people. Today, it is home to young families, single-parent households, empty-nesters, interfaith couples, gays and lesbians, and Jews who practice Judaism in a way that enhances and is relevant to their current-day lives.

Kehilat HaNahar's Bar Mitzvah service will be held on the weekend of May 11. Friday evening Shabbat services will begin at 7:30 p.m., followed by a special Oneg. Saturday morning services will begin at 9:30 a.m., followed by a luncheon. The public is welcome to attend, but seating is limited. To attend, please RSVP in advance to 215-862-1912 or littlehul@kehilathanahar.org.

In addition to the Bar Mitzvah service in May, the Shul has been marking the occasion with other religious and celebratory events, including High Holy Day services, Chanukah, Tu B'Shevat, and Purim celebrations, Potluck Suppers, “Feast for Funds” Dining Circles, and a Bar Mitzvah Capital Campaign to support further growth and building improvements. On April 3, the Shul will hold its 13th annual Community

Passover Seder, which typically brings people from all over the region together to recall the historical Exodus from Egypt.

Kehilat HaNahar is a Reconstructionist Synagogue in the heart of New Hope. In addition to traditional weekly Shabbat services, Rabbi Sandy Roth leads monthly family, children's, meditation and musical services, as well as a host of continuing education programs, and a rich Shul school curriculum. For membership information, program details or directions, contact 215-862-1912, or visit www.kehilathanahar.org.

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