

Our Mission

Our members foster a caring community by nurturing each other's spiritual, intellectual, emotional and physical lives.

We encourage and accept each other's varied paths and expressions of Judaism.

We are inclusive and accepting of difference.

We connect with our ancestors and Jews around the world through observance of Jewish life cycle events and holidays.

As a participative community, we depend upon the active participation of all members in community life.

We enhance our Jewish identities through social action and participation in the larger Jewish community.

We commit to actively educating ourselves and our children, and to support and encourage others in developing Jewish skills and knowledge.

Our services are conducted in an informal, relaxed manner, with an emphasis on continued learning.

It is our policy to keep our dues and religious school fees at a minimum. We recognize, however, that there are some people for whom full dues may not be possible. We will never turn away a person for being unable to pay.

What is Reconstructionist Judaism?

For Reconstructionists, Judaism is more than the Jewish religion, it is the entire cultural legacy of the Jewish people. Reconstructionist communities are characterized by their respect for such core values as democratic process, pluralism and accessibility. They create participatory, inclusive and egalitarian communities committed to exploring Jewish life with dedication, warmth and enthusiasm. Participation of non-Jewish partners of synagogue members is welcomed. Children's participation in all synagogue programs is welcomed, regardless of which parent is Jewish.

Reconstructionist congregations make many of their decisions about ritual practice on the basis of study, conversation and group decision making. Rabbis are a source of authority, not *the* source of authority.

Reconstructionist synagogues generally observe *kashrut* to some degree, utilize *kippot* and *tallitot*, and usually include more Hebrew in their services than Reform congregations. While respectful of traditional Jewish observance, Reconstructionists are also open to new interpretations and forms of religious expression. As Rabbi Mordecai M. Kaplan, the founder of Reconstructionism, taught, tradition has "a vote, but not a veto."

Reconstructionists hold diverse ideas about God. We believe that there is one God, and there are many ways of understanding and talking about God.

HEBREW CONGREGATION OF SOMERS

Northern Westchester/Putnam's
Reconstructionist Synagogue



SCHEDULE OF RELIGIOUS SERVICES AND RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

Services are offered weekly on alternating Friday nights and Saturday mornings. We offer a "Tot Shabbat" service for children 4-8 once monthly. Please contact the synagogue or visit our website for a monthly calendar of services.

HOLIDAY WORKSHOP	ages 4 and 5	Sundays 10 AM-12 PM, six sessions per year
GAN	ages 6 and 7	Sundays, 10 AM-12 PM
ALEF and BET CLASS	ages 8 and 9	Sundays, 9AM-12PM
GIMEL and DALET CLASS	ages 10 and 11	Sundays 9 AM-12 PM / Wednesdays 4:15-6:15PM
HAY CLASS	ages 12 and 13	Sundays 9AM-12PM/ Tuesdays 6-8 PM
HEBREW HIGH SCHOOL	post b'nai mitzvah	Sundays 10AM to 12 PM
MOREH HADASH (TEACHER TRAINING)	15 years and older	To be arranged

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HEBREWCONGREGATIONOFSOMERS.ORG

Our History

The **Hebrew Congregation of Somers** had its beginnings in the summer of 1944. The summer community of Shenorock, a hamlet within Somers, had, at that time, approximately 20 Jewish families. The congregation's first Shabbat service was held in the basement of Samuel Schuckman's house in August 1944. Weeks later, the first Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services took place in the living room of Irving Lasher's home. The seeds for a synagogue had been firmly planted! Land was donated, and money was raised to construct a "House of Gathering and Worship." Construction of the sanctuary was a cooperative and voluntary effort led by dedicated and determined families. From its inception as a summer shul, **Hebrew Congregation of Somers** now operates year-round. Our members hail from communities across Northern Westchester and Putnam.



Our Leaders

Rabbi FRED SCHWALB has served in lay leadership positions at the Society for the Advancement of Judaism in New York City, and at Bet Am Shalom in White Plains before coming to **Hebrew Congregation of Somers**. He has worked as a Jewish educator, and has traveled to Israel countless times as a student, madrich, tour guide, and businessperson. He graduated from the University of Wisconsin with dual majors in History and Semitic Languages, and received his Masters of Arts in Hebrew Letters and his rabbinical degree from Reconstructionist Rabbinical College. He resides in Croton with his wife and children.

Religious School Director TAL HADANI-PEASE is an alumni of the Ramaz School. She is a graduate of SUNY Purchase, where she majored in fine arts and minored in Jewish Studies, with a focus on Hebrew literature. She was previously a Hebrew school teacher for the **Hebrew Congregation of Somers**. Her interests include all art forms, including photography, quilt making, knitting, bookbinding, printmaking, Native American crafts, macrame, ceramics and silkscreen. She resides in Sherman, Connecticut with her husband and daughter.

Religious Education

The goal of religious education at **Hebrew Congregation of Somers** is to provide a building block for the child's continued participation in Jewish tradition and ritual. Classes are small, so that each child can receive individualized instruction and attention. Each teacher is committed to ensuring that Hebrew school is a positive experience, and that each child enjoys and benefits from time spent in class.

Extracurricular activities such as guest speakers, family education programs and school trips are offered. In addition to our twice weekly program for children ages 8 through 13, we offer a holiday workshop for 4 and 5 year olds, a Sunday school program for first and second graders, and a weekly Hebrew High School/Youth Group for post-bar/bat mitzvah teens.

We at Hebrew Congregation of Somers believe strongly that Jewish education is a life-long endeavor. For both convenience, and to demonstrate these values to our children, we teach a number of adult education courses during the hours of our religious school. We offer guest speakers throughout the school year on various topics of Jewish interest.

