

A Brief History of Judea Reform Congregation

In 1961, a handful of local Jewish families dreamt of a Reform congregation for the Durham and Chapel Hill, NC area. They combed the telephone directories, university faculty lists and community rosters to spread the news. They held services in their basements. When the group outgrew their homes, they borrowed the Quaker Friends Meeting House. When they outgrew the Friends Meeting House, they used the Temple Baptist Church. To accommodate the many Chapel Hill congregants, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services were held in the Community Church of Chapel Hill. By the end of the decade, this experiment in Reform Judaism had become a growing concern. Every time our founders took a step forward, they found solid ground. The congregation grew. With nearly 100 families, Judea Reform Congregation dedicated its own synagogue on Durham's Cornwallis Road in 1971.

One new sanctuary, one major addition, two land purchases, 31 years and four rabbis later, Judea Reform Congregation has more than sextupled in size to become the largest Reform congregation in the Triangle. Our talented rabbis and staff serve up a menu of Jewish activities for all ages, and our dedicated lay leadership guides us with thoughtfulness and commitment. History has given us confidence to build for the future in the tradition of the founding families of Judea Reform Congregation. Judea Reform is a member of the Union for Reform Judaism.