



*"To create and sustain an environment
that perpetuates and celebrates Jewish
traditions, observances and sense of
community."*

ANNUAL REPORT 2020

Presented for the virtual
Annual Meeting
of the Members
June 14, 2020
10 AM

2020 RABBI ANNUAL REPORT

We count multiple years in the Jewish calendar: Rosh Hashanah as the head of the liturgical year, Rosh Hodesh Nissan with the new season of spring, Tu B'Shvat and the birthday of the trees, and the more obscure beginning of Elul and the season of teshuvah and repentance.

This annual report is an accounting of a year that has passed in the life of our beloved JCOGS community. However we have had, I am sure of it, more than one year that has passed. There are at least two years: the one before the coronavirus and the one after.

The one before included many moments of gathering and face-to-face connection:

- We started last summer with the second visit from Jonathan Golden, PhD, facilitating Hartman Institute based learning on Israel.
- We also held our 5k Family Fun Run/Walk, which I survived.
- Shabbat included many themed evenings, from Musical Shabbats, to Homegrown Shabbat where members help co-lead services, to focusing on disability rights. The High Holy Days drew hundreds gathered from near and far at JCOGS, to Sukkot on the Farm, and then multiple Hanukkah parties including down in Mad River Valley. We held an Interfaith Thanksgiving service and snowshoed for “Shoe BiShvat.”
- Alison and I hosted several times in our home, as we seek to build opportunities for relationship building and community connections. And eating. We held a Labo(ur) Day Chillin’ and Grillin’, and a “Friendsgiving” potluck and havdalah with 50 people dancing the hora in our foyer.
- JCOGS launched some new music with the Sanctuary Sessions, including two videos for Hanukkah and Purim, and a song “Never Say” written for our members Sara and Irwin Tauben after last summer’s glorious Farm Dinner.
- Members began to meet in each other’s homes for the first gatherings of our Homegrown Judaism: Kibbitz conversations. It was an opportunity for members to get to know each other, learn what connects each of us to Jewish life, while also considering how each of us can contribute to JCOGS.
- We touched on current events with hot topics discussions during Torah on Tap, a Lights for Liberty protest on immigration, a march in the Pride Parade, and we supported the work of the Lamoille Community House and the Racial Equity Alliance of Lamoille.
- Adult education included Torah study, Hebrew classes, The Art of Writing a Sermon, and the Balancing Act of Being a Jewish Parent. We had a remarkable Shabbaton visit from my mentor Rabbi Rim Meiowitz, and a lovely visit with Ariel Fogelman of Keshet Educational

Tours.

- Our family and youth activities included Kinderlach and Gesher for our young families, Olam Chesed Wednesday program for elementary aged youth, Mitzvah! and our teen program, Ateed.
- We also launched a Green Team that is already helping sustainability efforts within and beyond our community.
- There were babies born, Mitzvah ceremonies and weddings celebrated, and sadly, mourning and loss.

It is bittersweet to think about all of these events and programs, in light of the 'second year' that we had, the post-virus year. Since then:

- All of our services have gone virtual. In doing so, our attendance for Friday night's has, at times, quadrupled.
- We held our annual second night Passover Seder, among other Passover offerings, with tables set and meaningful connections.
- We have used online platforms to welcome babies into the world and have performed our first Zoommitzvahs in May and June of this year, offering meaningful life cycles even from a distance.
- JCOGS led the way in collaborating with Jewish Communities of Vermont, Living Tree Alliance, and the rest of the community in pulling together a rich array of Shavuot programming, bringing people from across the state together over Zoom.
- Our chesed committee has called each of our members individually at least once, and kept up with congregants who are our first responders and the most vulnerable.
- Perhaps most importantly in this critical time, we have partnered with United Way to bring more PPE for those on the front lines, and with Capstone Community Action and the local schools to provide cell phones to families in need of online support for their youth.
- And we are looking into live streaming and long-term technology to help facilitate online services and learning for years to come.

While our first JCOGS Israel trip has been postponed, our programming is still going strong. What is parallel from the time before and after COVID-19 is that we have shared simchas and sorrows. We have continued to connect to the greater community in impactful ways. And we will support those in need as we have always done, now with even greater conviction that community is essential. We are all essential.

Tihyu bri'im, may we all be safe and well.

Rabbi David

2020 PRESIDENT ANNUAL REPORT

Dear JCOGS community,

I think it's safe to say that our 2019-20 year ended differently than we had planned. We spent the last quarter of this fiscal year sheltering at home, attending services virtually, due to the Covid-19 crisis. Yet, I can also safely say that it has been a good year for JCOGS.

We started with the "Kick off the Summer" Shabbat in June, and a barbecue in July sponsored by our Shalom Committee, including a special tribute to Lisa Carrick and Skip Wentz for their dedicated service to JCOGS.

Our Stowe Jewish Film Festival presented four films at the Spruce Peak Performing Arts Center: Reaching for Zion, Sammy Davis Junior: I've Gotta Be Me, Joseph Pulitzer: The Voice of the People, and Chewdaism: A Taste of Jewish Montreal. We presented a staged reading of Eight Nights, raising money for the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society. We held a Farm Dinner Fundraiser at the beautiful Sandiwood Farm.

The winter is slower at JCOGS, but we did manage to do quite a bit. Share the Light was a rocking all-Vermont Hanukkah party, organized by Cyndy Wyatt and Nancy Salzman. On December 25, we held the Second Annual Noncompetitive Board Game Competition. Our friends at St. John's in the Mountain Episcopal Church hosted the larger community in a call to end antisemitism and religious violence.

In January 2020, in honor of the 75th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz death camp and International Holocaust Remembrance Day, JCOGS in conjunction with the Vermont Holocaust Memorial presented the award-winning, short documentary "The Number on Great-Grandpa's Arm." Then, our annual Yom HaShoah interfaith commemoration program went virtual, with 47 members of JCOGS, the greater Stowe community, and faith leaders took part in the online program.

Our cemetery, Darchei Shalom was originally designed with two sections to meet the needs of our diverse membership. The Chesed section was for those who wanted a traditional Jewish cemetery while the Emet section is available for Jews and non-Jewish partners and cremated remains. This year, our cemetery committee worked hard to create a third section, Tzedek. The Tzedek section will be for 'Green Burials' only. While 'Green Burials' are very similar to traditional Jewish burials, the real

difference is how the section is maintained. The emphasis is on letting the land go towards a natural state with native flora and fauna encouraged to flourish instead of the more traditional monoculture of Chesed and Emet. The committee plans to have this section fully operational and ready for burial plot sales in June.

Our building committee is tireless in their dedication to caring for our beautiful building. Susan Bayer-Fishman's leadership and her committee's consistent hard work are often overlooked, and they deserve a great deal of credit.

Thank you to Beth Liberman for her inspired work as our director of family and youth education. Thank you to Olivia Easdale for keeping us running smoothly, even from a distance. Immense gratitude to all our committee chairs and volunteers who are the spirit and energy of our community.

With our switch to virtual services in March, we've seen record attendance at Friday night and Havdalah services. How fortunate we are that Rabbi David has jumped into this challenge with both feet. We are indeed beyond lucky to have such a talented and committed rabbi leading us in these times.

I would be remiss if I didn't thank our board for their work. Each member of our board works hard in their individual committee. When they come together, they may disagree, but they always work to find the consensus that is best for JCOGS as a whole. I am incredibly grateful for their dedication, and it is a pleasure to work with them. Our youth board member, Ayla Oshkello, is headed off into adulthood and will be leaving the board. Matt Yoskowitz and Edee Simon-Israel have completed their terms with aplomb, and while they have chosen not to serve another term right now, they are incredibly valued members of our community. I thank Ayla, Matt, and Edee for their dedication and service to our community.

Sincerely,

Emily Rosenbaum

2020 FINANCE ANNUAL REPORT

Dear JCOGS Community,

What a year it has been! I stepped up as the chair of the finance committee last July 1st, 2019 and already have experience estimating the economic effects of a global pandemic.

But in all seriousness, the finance committee was doing great work in the pre-COVID19 environment and is now working overtime within the COVID19 environment. We started the fiscal year with a budget that had been built, examined, and re-examined by everyone who interacts with the budget, their committees, and the board. Over the summer, we quickly identified that a historical accounting method for how our Profit & Loss statements handled payroll taxes was undercounting the full payroll tax cost. At the October Board meeting, the board approved adjustments to the budget to account for the additional, correct payroll tax costs. In September, our beloved finance committee member, Al Besser, also retired from the committee after many years of service – we were so fortunate to have his perspective at the table and his personality in our lives.

Throughout the fall and winter, the finance committee continued to monitor the budget to actuals and kept the board apprised of any anomalies. We also fielded requests from committees for movement of budgeted funds between line items and made recommendations to the board on requests for additional expenditures. The FY2021 budget process started on January 22nd, with everyone who interacts with the budget receiving a spreadsheet containing prior year expenses, prior year budget, current year expenses to date, and current year budget. Budget meetings/phone calls were held the first week of March. At the March board meeting, the finance committee presented a FY2021 budget based on the pre-COVID19 environment that required board input on key policy decisions which were challenging to make in the face of the start of COVID19. The finance committee met twice in April to monitor actuals and discuss the approach to the FY2021 budget in light of COVID19. The finance committee presented a first quarter FY2021 budget that was passed at the May Board meeting.

This may be the first year in recent history that the annual report does not contain a 12-month budget. However, I believe that a quarterly approach to budgeting, acting swiftly based on the changing environment, is necessary for the next year.

I will speak in detail at the annual meeting on necessary revenue downgrade assumptions made in the first quarter FY2021 budget but for now I would just like to say this – if you feel that JCOGS is value-added to the Jewish community in north-central Vermont, and to you personally, and if you have the ability to give at the same level, or even a bit more than prior years, please do so. Thank you to everyone who donated in the past year and to the members of the finance committee. This year will be challenging, and the way we face that challenge together will be a source of great opportunity.

Respectfully,

Candace Elmquist
Finance chair & treasurer

QUARTER 1 2021 BUDGET

Annual Report Categories:	FY2020 Budget	FY2021-Q1 Budget
INCOME		
Fund for the Future - Phase 2	163,000	0
Membership Dues	138,625	93,998
Benefactor Campaign	38,000	19,700
General Donations	21,000	9,140
Fundraising Events	12,000	6,000
Children's Education	80,344	20,680
Shabbat	9,220	0
Festivals & Holidays	14,180	3,000
Programming	20,450	2,300
All Other	5,330	1,800
TOTAL INCOME	502,149	156,618
EXPENSE		
Clergy	151,795	41,287
Accounting/Financial Management	16,640	3,272
Office Administration (incl. transaction fees)	81,829	25,781
Facility Operation & Maintenance	66,094	12,640
Children's Education	111,061	25,063
Shabbat	23,780	2,450
Festivals & Holidays (incl. ritual items)	19,175	3,609
Programming	22,175	2,325
Tikkun Olam	1,000	250
All Other	410	250
TOTAL EXPENSE	493,959	116,927
NET INCOME	8,190	39,691

2020 SLATE OF BOARD MEMBERS

The following board members will be voted on at our annual meeting. We will also take nominations from the floor. Every JCOGS member unit gets one vote in the election of board members, which takes place on even numbered years.

Candace Elmquist

Lis Erickson

Lynne Gedanken

Sarah Ibson

Steven Levine

Emily Rosenbaum

Harold Schwartz

Debby Sherman

Amy Wenger

Cyndy Wyatt

2019-2020 DONOR LIST

The one who gives to those in need lends to G-d. Proverbs 19:17

Your charitable giving supports our operating budgets and those families who cannot afford membership nor tuition in our religious school. Thank you.

Over \$5000

Glenn Danziger*
Mi Corazon Foundation, Frank Motter
Deborah & Ron Feinstein*
Debora & Stephen Sherman*
Kim Yellin & Marc Stern*

\$2,500-4,999

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\$500-999

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(*includes Benefactor Appeal contributions)

Please note this donor list excludes 25th anniversary campaign contributions.

2019-2020 BENEFACTOR APPEAL

Ambassador (\$5000 – up)

Glenn Danziger
Deborah & Ron Feinstein
Kimberly Yellin & Marc Stern

Benefactor (\$2500 - \$5000)

Gretchen Rous Besser & Albert G. Besser
Harvey Herman
Shelli & Alan Solomon

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Lynne Gedanken
Kim Kaufman & James Goldsmith
Marion Hecht
Judith Wine & Steven Levine

Carole & Stephen Lichtenstein
Priscilla & Andrew Minkin
Emily & Jeffrey Rosenbaum
Marcie & Bill Scudder
Debra & Stephen Sherman
Barbara & David Siegel
Judith & Norris Wolff

Sustainer (\$500 - \$999)

Charlene & Sig Baltuch
Barbara & Robert Bauman
Mitzi & Hillel Becker
Betsy & David Blechman
Deborah Black & Michel Kabay
Cyndy Wyatt & Ken Marin
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Harold Schwartz
Mel Siegel
Joan Spiegel
Barbara Stern
Carole Teplick
Katie & Matt Yoskowitz
Marlene Maron & Michael Zacharias
Edith Black Zfass

TZEDAKAH REPORT 2020

“Tzedakah and acts of kindness are the equivalent of all Mitzvot of the Torah.”

Jerusalem Talmud

It is with gratitude and respect that your Tzedakah Committee share with you our 2019 distribution allocations. It is only through your generous donations that we were able to fund the following US and Canadian non-profit organizations.

United Way of Lamoille County

Vermont Food Bank

Lamoille Community Food Share

Food Share Thanksgiving Basket Appeal

Lamoille Community House

Capstone Community Action: Home Heating Program

Clarina Howard Nichols

North Central Vermont Recovery Center

Copley Hospital Foundation

Stowe Weekend of Hope: In Memory of Jane Lande

Children's Literacy Foundation

Hillel-UVM

Stowe Community Church Fund

Mazon Canada

MADA Community Center

Agence Ometz

Auberge Shalom

Camp B'nai Brith

Jewish People School Fund

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Cyndy Wyatt	Trustee
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Sadie Ellner	Youth Intern
Ayla Oshkello	Youth Trustee
*Executive Committee Member	
**Partial year	

COMMITTEES AND CHAIRS

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BUILDING – Susan Bayer-Fishman

CEMETERY – Steve Berson

CHESED – Cynthia Wyatt

CHILDREN'S EDUCATION – Matt Yoskowitz

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FINANCE – Candace Elmquist

GOVERNANCE – Steve Levine

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