

Dear Friends,

As spiritual leader of this community, I would like to encourage you to see making dues commitments to the JCA as an appropriate time for spiritual reflection.

One question we ask ourselves is: what does membership in a community mean? These days, congregations struggle against the notion that membership is a fee-for-service proposition and what members pay in dues is based on what they feel they are getting.

I will tell you the truth. You can “get” many things the JCA has to offer – rich and meaningful services on Shabbat and holidays, opportunities for education and social action, a warm sense of community as soon as you enter the building – without being a member.

However, membership in a community like the JCA is not about “getting”. It’s about sustaining. Even more so, it’s about creating. Together we create a vibrant Jewish present that gives us the potential to hope for the future. We support gifted and passionate professionals and dedicated lay leaders.

In a world often beset by deeply troubling fragmentation and insecurity, we continue to nourish each other on a daily basis, with a sense of fellowship and shared purpose. What we do is infinitely more rewarding than getting, and that is – giving.

In order to maintain this beloved community, each of us is asked to pay our fair share in dues. I invite you to respond to this invitation now in the spirit of creating, sustaining, nourishing, and giving.

b’shalom,

Rabbi Benjamin Weiner

Our Community

The JCA offers an environment of warmth, joy, compassion and belonging, in our daily lives and in times of celebration and crisis.

Founded in 1969 to foster a “spirit of Jewish community” in Amherst, today we have a diverse membership of more than 300 households: families, couples and individuals from Western Massachusetts and beyond.

We value openness and welcome all to our community, including all sexual orientations, people of color, interfaith couples and their children, people with disabilities and those of limited economic means.

Embracing the values of our heritage, we honor the assertion in Pirkei Avot (Teaching of the Sages) that the world stands on Torah (study and mizvot), Avodah (worship), and Gemilut Hasadim (acts of loving kindness).

We share and enhance our understanding and practice of Jewish ritual and tradition through prayer services, cultural experiences and lifelong educational programs.

We provide opportunities for participation and volunteer engagement within the JCA and in the wider world. As our community struggles with issues of oppression, social justice, peace, a clean and safe environment, and true equality, we strive to place our actions in a context of chesed and tikkun olam.



FAIR SHARE DUES

Welcome to our inclusive and dynamic spiritual community!

We support and celebrate each other in our individual lives, in community, and in our work together as we strive to meet the challenges of our world.

JCA Fair Share Dues Policy

Several years ago, the leadership of the Jewish Community of Amherst implemented an extensive community process to determine the best way to both express our communal values with regard to money and to meet the financial necessities of the JCA.

Our underlying principle was the belief that no one should ever be denied access to Jewish community because of an inability to pay. Also, no one should have to experience proving financial need. The result of our community discussion was a move from a fixed dues model to a Fair Share Dues system. This avoids the need to negotiate an abatement that often feels uncomfortable on both ends.

Our dues policy is a progressive one. A series of household income brackets is used to determine the fair share dues amount. There is no need to furnish documentation when specifying your household income level.

Your choice is based on an honor system; one that is premised on appreciating that affiliation with Jewish community is a way to create sacred relationships, friendships, and personal experiences, and is not merely an obligation.

To sustain this community, we depend on each of us contributing financially to our maximum capacity, consistent with income guidelines. While we fully recognize that this represents a complex experiment in living our values, we remain strongly committed to the Fair Share Dues system.

Fair Share Dues Calculation

Household Income	Your Dues Level
Less than \$40,000	\$180
\$40,000 - \$79,999	\$1,200
\$80,000 - \$119,000	\$1,800
\$120,000 - \$159,999	\$2,400
More than \$160,000	\$3,000

- New members are offered a substantial discount for the first year of membership.
- Members of another synagogue are expected to pay only 50% of the Fair Share Dues for their income category.

Contact Us

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