

# Historic Woodbourne Shul Services Record Numbers

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## **Revitalized Under Rabbi Mordechai Jungreis, Khal Bnei Yisroel Proudly Welcomes All**

The modest two-story building at 457 Route 42 in Woodbourne seems typical of the dates rural buildings in the area. But take a deep breath before you step inside. Nothing will prepare you for the incredible energy crackling within. Since Khal Bnei Yisroel reopened its doors in time for the Summer 2010 season, it has accommodated an ever-expanding number of congregants from all across the Jewish spectrum. This year it set a new record: so far this summer, 70,000 have taken advantage of its services!

Not only do Jews from all walks of life find themselves at home here, there are always colds drinks and cake available to refresh oneself. Minyanim run literally round the clock: Doors open at 6 AM for Shacharis, which runs into Mincha, which runs into Maariv.... Minyanim continue long after midnight, often until 2 AM. This summer a record 40 Chiyuvim are relying on having the Amud daily in the Woodbourne Shul. Literally 10,000 people daven there each week!

The life and vigor behind this unbelievable synagogue is Rabbi Mordechai Jungreis shlit"a, Nikolsburg Rebbe of Boro Park. His broad smile, his sincere warmth and caring for all, have encouraged innumerable Mispalelim to return time and time again. He is there all day long to personally greet everyone who walks in. Stories abound of individuals of all stripes who drive long distances to enjoy the congenial atmosphere and words of encouragement. This summer one person insisted on bringing his entire family to experience this wonderful shul – including his dog!

Built in 1922 (the Woodbourne Shul joined the National Registry of Historic Places in 1999) the shul building once served a year-round community. A decline in attendance caused the shul to close for regular services around 2000. Rabbi Jungreis stepped in to revitalize the building, initiating major renovations that allow several minyanim to run simultaneously. Above all, though, his charisma has made the shul a must-see for anyone passing through Sullivan County.

The large sign hanging on the Menorah in front of the shul: "EVERYONE IS WELCOME" says it all. It was the first official act on the part of Rabbi Jungreis when he took over the shul and it has come to symbolize his unbounded love for each and every Jew. One unaffiliated Jew visited the shul in T-shirt and shorts to investigate the "Everyone is Welcome" attitude. Rabbi Jungreis greeted him with his customary hug and sat the man in the front row. That man, now sporting tzitzis, has since become a regular visitor.

In addition to the constant refreshments there is a major shiur every Thursday night at 10 PM by the renowned Rabbi Moshe Meir Weiss. The warm cholent – 18 crock pots worth at the last count! – and kugel served freely to all are also a major attraction. On Shabbos Rabbi Jungreis leads a tisch, as well as

Shalosh Seudos which is joined each week by the Biala Rebbe of Boro Park who walks 40 minutes to participate! There is also a gala Melava Malka open to all.

Many prominent Rabbonim pass through the shul as well. When he stopped by this summer Rabbi Binyomin Eisenberger remarked that the Woodbourne Shul brought together as many people as the massive Kinus Klal Yisroel of last year! On a recent visit, Rav Don Segal shlit" a asked the Rabbi Jungreis what affiliation the shul will have. Nikolsburg? "No," came the reply. "The original name hanging on the shul for the past 94 years is good enough for me: Bnei Yisroel. This shul is for you, for me, for all of Bnei Yisroel!"

Rav Don Segal shlit" a asked the shul to convey his personal wishes for a Ksivah VaChasimah Tovah to all who enter.