

Please join
Adas Kodesch Shel Emeth
and the entire community
in celebrating *Shabbat*
and honoring

Cantor Joel Kessler February 2, 2008.

Services begin at 9:00 AM

at Adas Kodesch Shel Emeth
followed by a

Kiddush Luncheon

sponsored by the
Va'ad HaKashruth of Delaware.



Cantor Joel (left) with Rabbi Daniel Channen (right)
from Yeshivas Pirchei Shoshanim at the celebratory
dinner following the ceremony at the *Kotel*

At noon on January 22, 2008, our Cantor Joel Kessler, in a ceremony at the *Kotel* (Western Wall) in Jerusalem, received *Semicha* (rabbinic ordination). *Mazal Tov* to Cantor Joel on this wonderful achievement from the Rabbi, President and Board of Governors. Cantor Joel has achieved a significant milestone in his life and will add a new source of expertise to our congregation and our community.

In the middle of 2006, the Kesslers visited a friend, Rabbi Jeremy Booty, who a few years earlier, had received his *Semicha* through a *Yeshiva* known as Pirchei Shoshanim, located online at www.shemayisrael.com. The *Yeshiva* was created specifically to provide an opportunity for people who are already working in their careers and want to continue their studies on a serious level. The program is so highly respected that it has been approved by the Chief Rabbinate of Israel (who usually participates in the *Semicha* ceremony).

Pirchei Shoshanim offers students a number of choices as to which course of study they wish to pursue. Like his friend, Cantor Joel selected the *Issur V'heter* program, specializing in the area of *Kashrut*. Cantor Joel has been working on his *Semicha* since October, 2006, and this is how he explained his program of study:

The Issur V'heter course of study involves three semesters of deep textual study in Hebrew and English covering three volumes of the Shulchan Aruch; Melicha (salting meat), Basar B'chalav (meat with milk) and Ta'aruvos (mixtures), with the various commentaries. There are approximately thirty lessons, which are sent two per week, with three quizzes and one final for each semester. The Yeshiva is now holding actual classes in Lakewood, NJ, Baltimore, MD, New York, NY and Jerusalem. (I attended one in Jerusalem 13 months ago...) and also sponsors Chavrusas (study partnerships) in a variety of locations. After completing the three semesters and passing all three finals, the applicant is invited to come to Israel to take the cumulative final. If one passes that, then there is a large ceremony at the Kotel at which time Semicha (rabbinic ordination) is awarded.

Cantor Joel related that he is "being blessed with a double *Semicha*, as Rabbi Avraham Goldstein of the Diaspora Yeshiva has magnanimously offered to grant me *Semicha* at the *Kotel* upon my passing the program." This is the same Rabbi Avraham Goldstein who was recently in Wilmington sharing his vast knowledge and understanding of Judaism and the world. Cantor Joel's teachers could hardly object to the special recognition he is receiving, as they got their *Semichot* from Rabbi Goldstein as well!

At services on *Shabbat*, Rabbi Dresin, who served as Cantor Joel's sponsor for *Semicha*, will be re-conferring the *Semicha* on behalf of Pirchei Shoshanim, the *Yeshiva* that Cantor Joel attended.