

Congregation Ahavas Achim

P.O. Box 334

Westfield, MA 01086

MARCH/APRIL 2021 NEWSLETTER

<http://www.congregationahavasachim.org/>

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sat. Mar 27 @ 5:30pm - Passover Seder (Zoom invite to be sent out by the Cantor)

Sat. Apr 10 and Sun. Apr 11– Adult Ed (see details)

Fri. Apr 23 @ 7:15pm – Erev Shabbat Service

Please join us via Zoom until further notice. Cantor Reaboi sends out Zoom invitations prior to each service or event. Please contact us at ahavasachimquiry@gmail.com or leave a voicemail message at (413) 642-1797 if you want to say Kaddish or have any suggestions for us.

Board Meeting: Meetings are held via conference calls during the pandemic. Our next meeting is scheduled for April 14th. All are welcome to join. Please let us know if you are interested so we can include you in our call.

Hebrew School:

Coordinator: Andy Blumenthal

(Please call him at (413) 569-1148 if you or another member of our community has expressed interest.)

Yahrzeit

With great sadness, we remember the following people on the Yahrzeit of their passing:

		<u>2021</u>
Betty Grodzen	Adar 17	3/1
Doris Goldberg	Adar 18	3/2
Miriam Shepard	Adar 20	3/4
Harvey Roazen	Adar 22	3/6
Max Flax	Adar 27	3/11
Lauren Rosenthal	Adar 30	3/13
Howard Mackler	Nisan 9	3/22
Wally Goldstein	Nisan 11	3/24
Richard Lee Kaufman	Nisan 15	3/28
Blanche Schachter	Nisan 16	3/29
Phyllis Brody	Nisan 21	4/3
Pauline Tucker	Nisan 21	4/3
Hyman Schachter	Nisan 29	4/11
Janice Bowman	Iyar 5	4/17
Abraham Haselkorn	Iyar 14	4/26
Don Riddle	Iyar 14	4/26
Alda Haselkorn	Iyar 17	4/29
Esther Goldstein	Iyar 18	4/30

Hebrew Free Loan Association:

The Hebrew Free Loan Association of Greater Springfield offers interest-free loans to Jewish individuals and families whose needs are urgent and who may not qualify for personal loans from a bank or other financial institution. For more information, go to:

<https://hebrewfreeloanassociation.org/>

From the desk of Cantor Colman Reaboi:

(Following are two articles from Cantor Reaboi focusing on the holidays of Purim and Passover)

Purim:

Dear Friends,

We are well into the Hebrew month of Adar. The special holiday we celebrate this month is the Festival of Purim. That is why the Talmud says that "When Adar enters, joy increases. (*Ta'anit* 29a)". I don't know about you but after the past year, I could use an increase in joy this season!

When we think of Purim, we think of Purim spiels, costumes, Megillah readings... and *hamantaschen*! What you may not know is that there are four mitzvot (commandments) that are associated with the Festival of Purim:

Reading the Megillah

On Purim, the Megillah is read aloud in synagogues all over the world – and this is one time when no one is discouraged from making noise during the service! In fact, listeners shake their groggers (Yiddish for “noisemakers”) every time they hear the name of the villain of the story, Haman. Many communities also stage funny purimspiels (Yiddish for “plays”) to accompany the Megillah reading.

Mishlo'ach Manot- Giving Gifts to Friends

The second mitzvah is sending gifts, or *mishloach manot* which is Hebrew for Purim gift baskets. Gifts of food to friends and colleagues ensure that everyone has the means to be happy, further foiling the evil plans of Haman. Here are some easy [gifts in a jar](#) to assemble with your family for your mishloach this year. Don't forget to add [a special gift tag](#) too!

Having a Special Meal

In addition to the *purimspiel*, the costume parade, and baking hamantaschen, many families also

enjoy [the Seudah](#), or the Purim feast. Basically, this commandment is to “eat, drink, and be merry.”

Matanot Levyonim

Giving directly of those experiencing poverty, *matanot l'evyonim*, is the fourth mitzvah. Giving to others, especially on Purim, ensures that everyone has the means to celebrate during the holiday and also honors Esther and Mordechai's legacy of saving the Jewish people. Fulfilling the mitzvah of *matanot l'evyonim* can be as simple as dropping coins into a [tzedakah](#) box or making donations of food or clothing to a local pantry or shelter.

This year, CAA will not be holding a Purim Festival. But there are a variety of Purim spiels and Megillah readings online. As for giving during this season? It's not too late to give gifts to friends and strangers in need. Perhaps it is the giving that will 'increase your joy' this month.

May your month of Adar be filled to the brim with joy, laughter, l'chayims and random acts of loving-kindness!

Chag Purim Same'ach,

Cantor Colman Reaboi

Passover:

Z'man Chiruteinu- The Season of Our Freedom

Dear Friends,

It's hard to believe that a year has passed since the Pandemic closed the world down and shut us in for nearly a year. Not too long ago, we were struggling to decide how to proceed with services and events. Sadly, Purim was cancelled. Holocaust Awareness Weekend was cancelled as well, and the much-anticipated Passover Seder was reduced to a Zoom event. But over time we managed to continue providing meaningful Shabbat services and Adult Study, as well as a great High Holy Day season.

But a year later, it feels as if nothing has changed. With Passover being a little more than three weeks away, it's time to think again of shopping for matzah and all the other details that go into planning a Seder and observing Passover. It can be depressing to many who already feel isolated. After all, *Pesach* is the most popularly observed Jewish Holiday.

But if we pay attention to the lessons learned on Passover, it can bring meaning to our celebration that goes beyond the two Seders. Pesach has four different names: *Chag Hamatzot* (the holiday of matzah), *Chag Hapesach* (the holiday of the Passover Sacrifice), *Chag Ha'aviv* (the holiday of Spring), and *Z'man Chiruteinu* (the Season of our freedom). This season doesn't really feel as if we've achieved much freedom, and we still have a way to go before it can be said that we are back to normal again (Sigh).

But what kind of freedom do we celebrate on Passover? In Exodus, we read the story of the liberation from Egypt, where we were slaves for 400 years. We are also reminded of this event three times a day, as the Exodus is mentioned in every Jewish service. Honestly, it seems like overkill. Do we really have to be reminded of the liberation from bondage each and every day?

In his book, "The Jewish Way: Living the Holidays" Irving Greenberg states that the experience of *Yitzi'at Mitzrayim* (The Liberation from Egypt) is a paradigm. "Slavery is merely an exaggerated version of the reality endured by most human beings...The downtrodden and the poor accept their fate as destined; the powerful and the successful accept good fortune as their due...The most devastating effect of slavery, ultimately, is that the slave internalizes the master's values and accepts the condition of slavery as his proper status...her moral and psychological reality..."

In essence, the Exodus shatters the slave mentality and motivates us to seek freedom from today's conceived task masters. On Passover, we are reminded that there was a time in our history when we had no rights nor identity. The very name for Egypt in Hebrew- *Mitzrayim*- means "Narrow Places". But as the story goes, with the help of God's outstretched arm we were able to

pull out of those narrow confines and walk out as free people.

Jewish wisdom teaches us that we need daily reminders that true change can happen for us all. Freedom from our personal bondage is possible. Perhaps not with the parting of waters or sending down Plagues. But we can achieve freedom, one step at a time. As we continue our daily exercises of social distancing, cleanliness, and vaccinations, we are a few steps closer to escaping that narrow place which we all are living in.

A year has passed but the light is within sight. Freedom is within our reach! We are getting closer each day. May we all come out of this pandemic stronger in our faith, and grateful for what really matters. And may the Story of Passover be an inspiration to others seeking freedom from their own slavery.

Bivrachot, Yours in Blessing,

Cantor Colman Reaboi

Adult Education:

Please join us for an Adult Education to commemorate Yom Hashoah - Holocaust Remembrance Day.

Cong Ahavas Achim, in conjunction with the Jewish Student Organization at WSU, will be sponsoring a Holocaust themed movie on Saturday, 4/10, followed by a discussion. Details regarding this event will be forthcoming.

Cantor Reaboi will also lead a discussion with Fred Gross, a Holocaust survivor who fled France as a very young child. With details from his mother and older brother, Mr. Gross subsequently wrote a book titled "A Child's Journey into France." He will be speaking on April 11 at 4:00pm. There will be a Q & A afterwards. A Zoom invitation will be sent prior to the event.

Healing Service:

Congregation Ahavas Achim will be holding a short, ten-minute service every Friday, called the *Refu'ah Group*. Every Friday at 1pm, Cantor Colman Reaboi will go live on Facebook and ask members and the greater community to participate. We will share the names of friends and loved ones, do special readings and prayers for healing. We will also recite the *Kaddish* for anyone who has a *Yahrzeit*. This weekly Refuah Group can be viewed on Facebook Live on Congregation Ahavas Achim's Facebook page.

<https://www.facebook.com/AhavasAchimWestfield/live/>

Happy Birthday!

Birthday wishes go out to the following:

Jason Blondin	March 2 nd
Nate Rosenthal	March 14 th
Fran Eisenberg	April 6 th
Carol Rosenthal	April 7 th
Nancy Rapisarda	April 15 th
Bob Blondin	April 18 th
Lynne Goldberg	April 21 st

Facebook:

Congregation Ahavas Achim is now on Facebook!

Please click on the following link to find us:

<https://www.facebook.com/AhavasAchimWestfield/>

Once you find us, please "Like" our page. Feel free to post comments or any pictures that you would like to share with us. You will also be able to find announcements and listings for our services and events. If you have any questions, or would like us to post any announcements, events or pictures for you, please email them to: Carol and Nate Rosenthal - ncrose@comcast.net

Fundraising:

Did you know that Congregation Ahavas Achim has a unique AmazonSmile link that makes it easier for people to find and support us? We ask that you consider using our link if you will be shopping on Amazon anyway.

<http://smile.amazon.com/ch/51-0141633>

Click on the above link and you will be taken directly to smile.amazon.com where you are then automatically asked if you want to support Congregation Ahavas Achim. In doing so, that allows us to receive 0.5% of the price of your smile.amazon.com purchases. Please be sure to use our unique link in place of www.amazon.com as only purchases made at smile.amazon.com are eligible.