

# Congregation Ahavas Achim

P.O. Box 334

Westfield, MA 01086

MAR / APR / MAY 2023 NEWSLETTER

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

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sat. 3/11 @ 10am –Shabbat Morning Service via Google Meet

Thu. 4/6 – Second Night Passover Seder (details to follow)

Sat. 4/22 @ 10:00am –Shabbat Morning Service

Sat. 5/6 @ 10:00am –Shabbat Morning Service

Fri. 5/19 @ 7:00pm – Shabbat Evening Service

Fri. 6/2 @ 7:00pm – Shabbat Evening Service

Sat. 6/17 @ 10:00am – Shabbat Morning Service and pot luck picnic gathering (details to follow)

Please contact us at [ahavasachiminquiry@gmail.com](mailto:ahavasachiminquiry@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. Our next meeting is scheduled for April 12th. All are welcome to join. Please let us know if you are interested so that we may include you in our call by emailing [ablumenthal@congregationahavasachim.org](mailto:ablumenthal@congregationahavasachim.org)

## Hebrew School:

Coordinator: Andy Blumenthal

(Please call him at (413) 569-8399 if you or another member of our community has expressed interest.)

## YAHZRZEIT

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

2023

|                     |            |      |
|---------------------|------------|------|
| Gail Wertel         | Adar II 10 | 3/3  |
| Irwin Rosenak       | Adar 12    | 3/5  |
| Betty Grodzen       | Adar 17    | 3/10 |
| Doris Goldberg      | Adar 18    | 3/11 |
| Miriam Shepard      | Adar 20    | 3/13 |
| Harvey Roazen       | Adar 22    | 3/15 |
| Max Flax            | Adar 27    | 3/20 |
| Lauren Rosenthal    | Adar 30    | 3/23 |
| Howard Mackler      | Nisan 9    | 3/31 |
| Wally Goldstein     | Nisan 11   | 4/2  |
| Irene Bernstein     | Nisan 14   | 4/5  |
| Richard Lee Kaufman | Nisan 15   | 4/6  |
| Blanche Schachter   | Nisan 16   | 4/7  |
| Phyllis Brody       | Nisan 21   | 4/12 |
| Pauline Tucker      | Nisan 21   | 4/12 |
| Hyman Schachter     | Nisan 29   | 4/20 |
| Janice Bowman       | Iyar 5     | 4/26 |
| Abraham Haselkorn   | Iyar 14    | 5/5  |
| Don Riddle          | Iyar 14    | 5/5  |
| Alda Haselkorn      | Iyar 17    | 5/8  |
| Esther Goldstein    | Iyar 18    | 5/9  |
| Stanley Lewin       | Iyar 28    | 5/19 |
| Leah Ruth Chase     | Sivan 5    | 5/25 |
| Alfred Levy         | Sivan 7    | 5/27 |

Congregation Ahavas Achim wishes to thank all its friends and members for their generous donations:

Fran Eisenberg - in honor of her grandchildren Delaney, Marley and Easton – General Fund

Bob and Judy Brown – General Fund

*\*Donations received as of 2/28/23*

Congregation Ahavas Achim wishes to thank all its friends and members for their generous donations (cont'd):

Marcia Kahn - General Fund

Wendell Choo – General Fund

Time, monetary and/or food donations made toward Christmas day dinner at the soup kitchen:

Sandy Mackler

Fran Eisenberg

Arthur Haselkorn

Bob and Judy Brown

Carol and Nate Rosenthal

Wendy Blondin

Barbara and Michael Davenport

Lynne Goldberg and Simon Wool

Elsa Rosenak

Rissa Larsen

Susan Mackler

Peggy McLennan

Jill Podell

Laura and Talia Marx

Maureen Cain

*\*Donations received as of 2/28/23*

Message from Rabbi Colt:

(February 2023)

Two months ago we gathered together for the community Chanukah party. A surprisingly, delightfully large crowd gathered outside in downtown Westfield to light the Chanukah menorah publicly. I was moved to see several families with children in the crowd; some of the children were decked out in Chanukah themed PJs and sweaters. It seemed important to their parents that they see Judaism proudly practiced in public, and that they be able to wear signs of their Jewish identity just like their Christian peers wear Christmas PJs.

This past week I was teaching my elementary school students' religious school class in the Boston area. This week we read the story "Hammerin' Hank: The Life of Hank Greenberg," a beautifully illustrated and concisely told story of the challenges and successes Hank Greenberg faced. We read about how strongly Jewish fans felt about seeing a publicly Jewish major league baseball player. Just like his Jewish fans at the time hotly

debated whether he should have played ball on the high holidays, my students easily jumped into that debate. They have experienced having to choose between beloved activities and Hebrew school or Jewish holiday observances. Although I don't think they found the idea of a Jewish major league player to be a big deal, I think they understood that he was a big deal for being one of the first ones. They resonated with his experiences of facing antisemitism and supporting Jackie Robinson in facing racism from fans and players. They understood intuitively that he represented Jews publicly in a powerful way, and that was meaningful to them.

Both of these experiences, witnessing the Jewish children of Westfield and in my religious school class in Boston, reminded me powerfully that representation matters. It matters to children in the process of forming their Jewish identities, but it also matters to adults too! We continue to grow and develop in our Jewish identities over the course of our lives. Being publicly Jewish is not always easy, but I believe it is worth it. Connecting across lines of difference normalizes Jewish presence, and makes it easier for those who come after us. We come together at Jewish events (like the upcoming Passover Seder!) to energize our Jewish souls and support each other in continuing to live Jewish lives, both privately and publicly. I look forward to seeing you at our events on zoom and later in person this spring, as we continue to find meaningful ways to live our Jewish lives together.

*Rabbi Shahar Colt (she/her)*

*Congregation Ahavas Achim*

*Jewish Chaplain, Westfield State University*

## **Christmas Day Soup Kitchen**

**(December 25, 2022):**

We wish to thank all those who had a hand in providing a very special Christmas meal on Sunday, December 25th at Our Community Table Soup Kitchen in Westfield. For the third consecutive Christmas, our volunteers prepared and packaged individual to-go meals for folks to pick up and bring back to their homes. We gave out approximately 50 meals. Everyone said the meal was really great, and much different than the usual soup kitchen dinners. They also greatly appreciated their gift bags of socks, gloves, hats and personal care items.

Our group of volunteers really stepped up to meet the needs of the community. Their generosity and willingness to share their time and talents brightened this Christmas for us all. Putting this together is truly a community effort. Bob and Judy once again cooked the meat to perfection and delivered it sliced and ready to be packaged.

Special thanks to Fran and Sandy for organizing this event and to everyone who provided their time, food, and monetary contributions to make this meal possible.

## **Chanukah in Westfield:**

The city-wide Menorah Lighting Ceremony in Westfield took place at 6:30pm on Sunday, December 18<sup>th</sup> at Park Square in downtown Westfield. Thank you to Mayor Mike McCabe for having the outdoor Menorah, honoring the wonderful Jewish community of Westfield and hosting the Community Menorah Lighting. Thank you also to Rabbi Shahar Colt who led us in prayer and songs. The ceremony was very well attended by many members of our Jewish community, as well as other people from Westfield and other surrounding areas. After the lighting ceremony, everyone was invited back to the First United Methodist Church for delicious latkes while many played the Dreidel game with wagers of gelt. A great time was had by all.

## **Happy Birthday!**

**Birthday wishes go out to the following:**

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

## **Happy Anniversary!**

**Anniversary wishes go out to the following:**

Leslie & Rich O'Donnell    May 26<sup>th</sup>

## **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/>

## **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](mailto:ncrose@comcast.net)**

## **Reminder:**

**Dues payment plans ended in February unless special arrangements have been made. All membership dues should have been paid in full by February 15, 2023. If you are having difficulty, please contact someone on the board to discuss an alternative payment plan.**