

Congregation Ahavas Achim

P.O. Box 334

Westfield, MA 01086

JUN / JUL / AUG 2025 NEWSLETTER

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

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Fri. 6/13 @ 7:00pm – Shabbat Evening Service

Sat. 7/26 @ 10:00am – Shabbat Morning Service* and pot luck picnic gathering – Stanley Park - Westfield Bank Pavilion B – a sign-up sheet will be sent out ahead of time to let us know that you are coming and what dish you would like to bring.

***(This is our last service of the year. The High Holiday schedule, and Sept service dates, will be provided later this summer.)**

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. Our next meeting is scheduled for July 9th. 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

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:

		<u>2025</u>
Leah Ruth Chase	Sivan 5	Jun 1
Alfred Levy	Sivan 7	Jun 3
Joseph Goodman	Sivan 13	Jun 9
Mary Garber	Sivan 15	Jun 11
Maurice Goldstein	Sivan 15	Jun 11
Emily Wright	Sivan 17	Jun 13
Les Gubkin	Sivan 18	Jun 14
Sidney Ball	Sivan 23	Jun 19
Marvin Wool	Sivan 23	Jun 19
Alex Flatt	Sivan 24	Jun 20
Albert Shepard	Sivan 24	Jun 20
Carol Beckwith	Sivan 24	Jun 20
Seymour Newman	Sivan 25	Jun 21
Clara Goldberg	Sivan 25	Jun 21
Mary Libby	Sivan 27	Jun 23
Helen Gubkin	Sivan 27	Jun 23
H. Tucker	Sivan 28	Jun 24
Bertram Siegel	Sivan 29	Jun 25
Doris Levy	Tamuz 1	Jun 27
Leonard Levy	Tamuz 10	Jul 6
Adele K. Blumenthal	Tamuz 18	Jul 14
Abraham Rosenthal	Tamuz 19	Jul 15
Maude Lewin	Tamuz 20	Jul 16
Eva Caplin	Tamuz 21	Jul 17
Anna Grodzen	Tamuz 23	Jul 19
Michael Temkin	Tamuz 24	Jul 20
Edward Lewin	Tamuz 25	Jul 21
Seymour Greenberg	Tamuz 29	Jul 25
Mae Sharin	Av 2	Jul 27
Helen Goldberg Ball	Av 6	Jul 31
Harold Bernson	Av 13	Aug 7
Daniel Goldberg	Av 15	Aug 9
Freida Caplin	Av 29	Aug 23
Helen Cheskin	Elul 2	Aug 26
Evelyn Goldberg	Elul 7	Aug 31

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

Jeff Stoloff – General Fund

Susan Mackler – General Fund

**Donations received as of 5/31/25*

Pesach:

Congregation Ahavas Achim joined together again in person for a Community Passover Seder on Sunday, April 13th at the 2nd Congregational Church social hall. It was a participatory Seder led by Rabbi Shahar Colt with readings, prayers, and songs. Everyone in attendance was welcome to read from the inclusive Hagaddah and we all enjoyed the traditional Seder foods for dinner.

The Seder was attended by members of the Congregation and their families, as well as members of the community and congregants from the 2nd Congregational Church. This was made possible through a grant sponsored by Jewish Endowment Foundation of the Jewish Federation of Western Massachusetts. It truly was a joyous celebration, a delicious meal and a very enjoyable evening for all who were there.

Many thanks to Fran Eisenberg for her planning and coordinating efforts in bringing this Seder together for all to enjoy.

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

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/>

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, 2025. If you are having difficulty, please contact someone on the board to discuss an alternative payment plan.

Happy Birthday!

Birthday wishes go out to the following:

Dave Wright	June 4 th
Alyssa Eisenberg	June 23 rd
Robert Wool	July 12 th
Arthur Haselkorn	July 30 th

Happy Anniversary!

Anniversary wishes go out to the following:

Michael & Barbara Davenport	July 7 th
Robert Wool & Lynne Goldberg	July 9 th
Bob & Wendy Blondin	Aug 6 th
Nate & Carol Rosenthal	Aug 12 th

Rabbi's Message:

May 2025

Dear Ahavas Achim Community,

As I write this, we are in the period of counting down the days between Passover and the holiday of Shavuot. Shavuot is a pilgrimage holiday outlined in the Torah. In Biblical times, on Shavuot, farmers brought the first fruits of their harvest to the Temple. Notably, in addition to this agricultural component, the rabbis understood Shavuot as the holiday celebrating the anniversary of the giving of the Torah at Mt. Sinai.

An obvious question about Shavuot often comes up: How is the holiday both about first harvests and receiving Torah? What's the connection? There are many Midrashim, rabbinic stories about Torah as life giving sustenance. One Midrash names that Torah can be compared to five different precious liquids: water, wine, honey, milk, and olive oil (Devarim Rabbah 7:3). This Midrash compares the qualities of each of these liquids to the Torah. For example:

When you make olive oil, it begins bitter but is sweet in the end. It's the same with words of Torah. A person struggles in the beginning, but it turns out good in the end....

Another interpretation: Just as olive oil brings life to the world (because it's healthy and nourishing), the Torah also brings life to the world.

Just as olive oil brings light to the world (because it can be used to fuel oil lamps), the words of the Torah also bring light to the world.

In my experience, I really have experienced the power of Torah in all these ways- and I've seen it working in our Ahavas Achim community. It can be challenging, but ultimately rewarding to study. It can be life-giving in the

way that living Jewish practices provides meaning for the passage of time and life cycles. And Torah learning that reflects deeply about life's multiple truths, complexity, beauty can be affirming of our human realities in the context of the wide universe.

One way that the Torah is clearly life-affirming is in the mitzvah of feeding the hungry- not the "deserving hungry" or the hungry people who look like you, just the obligation to provide food for those who need it. This is the energy that motivates our own community to show up regularly to serve meals at the Westfield Soup Kitchen. This is the basic premise of humanitarian aid work.

As a community, we may find ourselves landing in different places around how to relate to Israel. However, in each conversation that I have had with community members about Israel's military actions in Gaza, there has been an acknowledgement of pain and injustice for the innocent lives lost and harmed.

In that light, I am writing to share a simple, powerful campaign that each of us can join, and that Ahavas Achim's board has signed on to. [Food Aid for Gaza](https://foodaidforgaza.org) (foodaidforgaza.org) is an open call from the Jewish community to support food aid for people in Gaza and an end to the Israeli government's food aid blockade. Signing on does not indicate support for any organization's larger agenda or other political frameworks.

I hope you will consider signing, and sharing the link with your friends and family. The goal is for 18,000 Jews to sign - to say that feeding the hungry is a

Jewish value, and that we choose life: For every Israeli. For every Palestinian. For all the people of the land. For all of us.

If you have questions, concerns or reflections, I welcome conversation- please don't hesitate to reach out by email or to find a time to talk about whatever is on your minds, about this campaign or anything else.

I look forward to seeing the Ahavas Achim community for services on Friday, June 13th, and then July 26th for our summer picnic.

Rabbi Shahar