

# Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey Journal

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Facebook: JCNWJ & JCNWJ Members Only

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## Rabbi's Message

Dear Friends,

As the leaves finish their brilliant turning and the air settles into its December stillness, we now begin to anticipate the Chanukah miracle. At the same time, Thanksgiving lingers just behind, keeping gratitude very much in our thoughts.

In moments like this, caught between one holiday that celebrates abundance and another that celebrates light born in darkness, Tradition offers a remarkably steady and wise perspective on what it means to live with a grateful heart.

We know this hasn't been an easy year for the Jewish people. Antisemitism continues to be on the rise in ways that confuse and unsettle too many of us. It can indeed be difficult to hold onto gratitude sometimes.

And yet, gratitude has always been one of Judaism's most powerful tools for resilience. We're not asked to ignore what is hard, but to remember what is good. Holding both gratitude for what we have and concern for what might be waiting — both at the same time — may not be easy, but it is profoundly Jewish.

Gratitude is not a way of pretending that everything is fine when it's not. Instead, it's a spiritual choice to notice the good that is present alongside the hard. It reminds us that fear does not define us and that the Jewish people have always found ways to cultivate light even in challenging times.

It's important to keep in mind that Jewish practice treats gratitude as more than just "good manners; it is a spiritual

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## Calendar of Events

### **Monday, December 1**

7:00pm: Board of Trustees Meeting

### **Friday, December 5**

6:00pm: Washington Boro Menorah Lighting

### **Saturday, December 6**

10:45am: Shabbat Morning Service  
Honoring Volunteers

### **Sunday, December 7**

9:30am: Hebrew School  
12:30pm: Adult Ed—BYO Lunch & History  
of Modern Zionism Part 4 (see Pg. 11)

### **Saturday, December 13**

11:15am: Torah Study on Zoom

### **Sunday, December 14**

9:30am: Hebrew School  
12:30pm: Adult Ed—BYO Lunch & Zionism in  
modern-day Israel presented by special  
guest Rabbi Amy Klein (Gerri's sister)  
5:15pm: Menorah Lighting & Music at  
Chesapeake Tavern—Long Valley

### **Friday, December 19**

7:00pm: Shabbat Evening Service  
Chanukah Observance/Party

### **Sunday, December 21**

9:30am: Hebrew School

## Rabbi's Message (continued)

discipline that refocuses our inner life and strengthens our outer one. This way, living with gratitude benefits us in both profound and practical ways.

The very first words we Jews are meant to speak each morning, often before we've even summoned the strength to open our eyes, are *Modeh/Modah ani l'fanecha* ("I am thankful to You [God]"), which steadies us in gratitude before doubt or anxiety or distress gets the chance to knock us off kilter. When the soul is grounded at the beginning of each day, we emerge set to dance through life with greater dignity and generosity.

The Talmud's instruction to recite a hundred blessings each day is meant not as a burden but as a prompt: when we notice the colors of sunrise, the ingenuity of scientists, the genius of Mozart, the comfort of familiar poems, the laughter of children, the voices of loved ones, the roof over our head, each small acknowledgment becomes a thread in the fabric of gratitude, stitching together moments that might otherwise pass unnoticed. This, in turn, reduces anxiety and increases our joy. Gratitude is nourished by attention.

The Talmud also insists that blessings are incomplete until they lead to action. When we appreciate our blessings, we feel more responsibility to share them, which turns gratitude into kindness, and kindness into community.

Similarly, Abraham Joshua Heschel taught that we should live with "radical amazement," the understanding that ordinary life is, in fact, extraordinary, which sharpens our senses and broadens our heart, helping us to see holiness in the everyday. This, in turn, enriches our spiritual lives and deepens our sense of purpose.

The rabbis point out that *hakarat ha-tov* (recognizing the good in our lives) proclaims that our existence is intertwined with others, both human and Divine. Such recognition nurtures a heightened sense of humility, which deepens our relationships. Gratitude leads to humility, which then leads to compassion, forgiveness, and interconnectedness.

To be sure, gratitude does not cancel struggle; it walks beside it. The Psalmist writes:

*Hodu L'Adonai ki tov*

Give thanks to God, for God is good

— Psalm 136

This is not naivety; it's courage. Giving thanks is choosing to see goodness even in uncertain times, and believing that compassion can still shape our world. Even in the concentration camps, we hear of Jews somehow making space to recite Shabbat blessings — gestures that surely helped sustain their spirit against unthinkable odds. Gratitude doesn't remove suffering; it gives us the strength to endure it.

With Chanukah knocking at our door (the first candle is Sunday night, December 14), let's keep in mind that noticing even the smallest light — a drop of oil, a moment of safety, a single act of courage — can sustain an entire people. Gratitude trains us to look for that light, to remember it, and to trust in its endurance.

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## Rabbi's Message (continued)

All in all, gratitude makes us more resilient, more joyful, more connected, more generous, and more spiritually awake. It aligns us with what is good, strengthens us through what is hard, and reminds us that even in challenging times we are surrounded by blessings that sustain and uplift us.

As we step into December, carrying both the echoes of Thanksgiving and the approaching glow of Chanukah, may we allow ourselves to feel the fullness of this moment. And may our gratitude, steady and sincere, strengthen our courage and deepen our hope.

Wishing us all a month of gratitude, resilience, warmth, and growing light.

בְּהַכָּרַת תּוֹדָה לְכֻלָּם (*b' Hakarat Todah l' Kulam*)

With gratitude for all of you,

Rabbi Dubin

### A Reminder from the Sunshine Committee



Please let us know when someone from our temple community has passed away, is ill or otherwise in need of a little sunshine so that the Jewish Center may be there to support and assist as best we can. Please contact Ruth Schutzbank at (908) 329-6036 or [Howie.ruth@hotmail.com](mailto:Howie.ruth@hotmail.com).

## President's Message

Amidst the current holiday season, I've been reflecting on my own journey—my growth into my authentic self and how I show up for myself and others. Taking on the role of Temple President has been profound, teaching me about myself, others, and the dynamics of our interactions. I strive to lead with compassion and respect, always considering the bigger picture and the overall benefits to our organization, and the community at large.

As we ALL reflect on our own fortunes—our health, homes, food in our bellies and families—I encourage you to consider those in our community who are struggling and may need support. If you have the means, please consider donating to a local charity. Even a small contribution can make someone else's holiday season a little easier.

Here is a list of local Warren County food pantries by town, including DASACC:

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Phone #</b>
<b>Panther Valley Ecumenical Church</b>	908-852-5444
1490 Route 517	
Hackettstown, NJ 07840	
<b>United Presbyterian Church of Alpha</b>	908-454-2464
859 High Street, Alpha, NJ 08865	
<b>Belvidere United Methodist Church</b>	908-475-4065
219 Hardwick Street, Belvidere, NJ	
<b>First United Methodist Church of Blairstown</b>	908-362-6693
10 Stillwater Road, Blairstown, NJ	
<b>Evangelical Free Church of Blairstown</b>	908-362-8979
11 Lambert Road, Blairstown, NJ	
<b>First Presbyterian Church of Blairstown</b>	908-362-5254
35 Main Street, Blairstown, NJ 07825	
<b>St. Jude's Catholic Church</b>	908-362-6444
7 Eisenhower Road, Blairstown, NJ	
Blairstown, NJ 07825	
<b>Calvary Bible Fellowship Church</b>	908-995-7678
191 Route 627, Phillipsburg, NJ	
Phillipsburg, NJ 08865	
<b>Church of the Covenant Orthodox</b>	908-850-8910
319 Blau Road, Hackettstown, NJ	
<b>Drakestown Church</b>	908-852-4460
6 Church Road, Hackettstown, NJ	
<b>Seventh Day Adventist Church</b>	973-876-0763
927 Route 517, Hackettstown, NJ	

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## President's Message (cont'd)

<b>Trinity United Methodist Church</b>	908-852-3020 x 408
213 Main Street, Hackettstown, NJ	
<b>St. John's United Methodist Church</b>	908-459-5759
354 High Street, Hope, NJ	
<b>Knowlton United Methodist Church</b>	908-496-0161
503 Route 94, Columbia, NJ	
<b>Fellowship Outreach Ministry</b>	908-859-0134
300 Cromwell Street, Phillipsburg, NJ 08865	
<b>NORWESCAP</b>	908-454-7000
Blessed Hope Church of the Nazarene, Phillipsburg, NJ	908-454-5070
<b>Branching Out Food Pantry</b>	908-454-2579
340 Anderson Street, Phillipsburg, NJ	
<b>Catholic Charities</b>	908-859-5447
387 South Main Street, , Phillipsburg, NJ	
<b>River of Life Presbyterian Church</b>	908-213-1377
445 South Main Street, Phillipsburg, NJ	
<b>St. Luke's Episcopal Church</b>	908-859-1479
500 Hillcrest Blvd., Phillipsburg, NJ	
<b>Hillcrest 7th Day Adventist Church</b>	908-689-7774
590 Route 57, E., Port Murray, NJ	
<b>Faith Discovery Church</b>	908-689-7777
33 Brass Castle Road, Washington, NJ	
<b>First Presbyterian Church of Washington</b>	908-689-2547
aka "Community Food Pantry of Washington"	
40 E. Church Street, Washington, NJ	
<b>The Outreach Connection</b>	908-574-2292
423 NJ-31, Washington NJ	
<b>The Washington Basket-Open Cupboard Food Pantry</b>	908-730-7320
386 E. Washington Ave., Washington, NJ	
<b>Washington United Methodist Church</b>	908-689-0105
116 E. Washington Ave., Washington, NJ	
<b>Domestic Abuse &amp; Sexual Assault Crisis Center</b>	908-453-4121
29c Broad Street, Washington, NJ	

NORWESCAP Donation Link:

<https://norwescap.org/donate/>

## VP Corner

Dear Temple Members, I hope you are all doing well!

Over the next several days, the Board of Trustees will be conducting a phone outreach to check in with you, see how you're doing, and gather your input on a few important items.

We ask that you be open and honest—your feedback is extremely valuable to us.

Looking forward to seeing you at the Chanukah service on December 19th!

Gerri



### Chanukah 2025 Miracle!!

**Free JCNWJ Membership from Chanukah  
through the end of July**

**Please join online:** <https://jcnwj.org/membership-application/>



**Questions?**

**Please reach out to Beth at 908 303 3868 or Gerri at 908 455 1285**

**\*\*one offer per family\*\***

# Updates & Events

## TORAH STUDY

The Torah study group is an informal discussion group, led by Rabbi Dubin and participants. We are now reading and discussing 2 Samuel, which includes the story of King David. The discussions often make connections between the ancient text and modern times.

The next meetings are December 13 and January 24, both at 11:15am on Zoom.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89728604184?pwd=L0tBSmhoSDZ3Vk5sdlRRc1Y4QmY4UT09>

## ONEG OPENINGS

The following dates are still open. If you have not yet hosted an oneg, please choose a date and contact me.

2/21/26 Saturday service - 1 host needed

3/7/26 5:30pm Purim Spiel - 1 host needed

3/13/26 5:30pm service - 2 hosts needed

4/25/26 Saturday service- 1 host needed

5/22/26 Friday evening - 2 hosts needed

6/19/36 Friday evening - 2 hosts needed

7/10/26 Friday evening - 2 hosts needed

8/14/26 Friday evening - 2 hosts needed

Iris Hirsch  
irishirsch@comcast.net  
908 239 4585



# Chaverim

Chaverim is open to all adult members of the congregation. There is an \$18 membership fee per family.

The next event will be a Chanukah party, following the Shabbat evening service and coordinated with the ritual committee. This will be on December 19, with the service beginning at 7:00pm. Please bring a Chanukiah and latkes if you are able.

JOIN us on FB at “**JCNWJ members only**” page for updates and/or add “**WhatsApp**” to your smartphone to get current updates. We look forward to seeing you all at events this year!

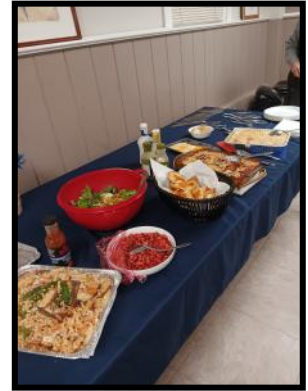
Questions, please contact Marilyn Muskar at [msmusikar@gmail.com](mailto:msmusikar@gmail.com).

## Schedule of Events

- **Chanukah Gift Drive** – Hunterdon Developmental Center (***Diane Margolin & Debbie Kahan are coordinating***)
- **December 19** – Chanukah party / bring your chanukiah and a dozen latkes (***ritual will coordinate***)
- **January 25, 1pm** – co-ed luncheon at Daddy's Place, Easton, PA - Please carpool due to limited parking.
- **February 21** – Movie (TBD) and discussion at the temple
- **March 1** – Hamantaschen baking at 9:30 to 10:00 am with Hebrew School, followed by volunteer bakers for Mishloach Manot at 10:15
- **March 22** – Passover recipe swap; bring your favorite dish, with recipe cards to share - at 10am
- **April 25 or 26** – Hiking event TBD
- **May 17** – Mother's Day Tea Party / BYO Luncheon – place TBD

**See photos on the next page from our Havdalah & Swap Event**

# Photos



Photos by Marsha & Marilyn from the Chaverim Havdalah & Swap—November 15

# Updates & Events

## DONATIONS

In memory of Jessica Hirsch  
- Howie and Iris Hirsch

In memory of William Hopkins  
- Edythe Herson, Sharon Herson & Daniel Fleckles

In memory of Shelley Herson  
- Edythe Herson, Sharon Herson & Daniel Fleckles

In memory of Nannette Hoffman  
- Edythe Herson, Sharon Herson & Daniel Fleckles

In memory of Phillip Peck  
- Edythe Herson, Sharon Herson & Daniel Fleckles

In memory of Max Weil  
- Ruth Schutzbank

In memory of Jean Siegel  
- Rhonda Jordan

Rabbi Ellen Lewis

Cheryl Cohen

## Yahrzeits

Maxwell Gross	Son of Marsha Gross
Michael Weiner	Husband of Diane Margolin
Charlotte Rems	Mother of Linda Margolis
Klaire Katz	Mother of Marsha Gross
Phillip Peck	Cousin of Edythe Herson
Max Weil	Father of Ruth Schutzbank
Jean Siegel	Mother of Rhonda Jordan
Dora Melnick	Mother of Barbara Simons
Leslie Apsel.	Mother of Debbie Apsel
Nannette Hoffman	Cousin of Edythe Herson
Richard Herson	Husband of Edythe Herson
Shelley Herson	Brother-in-law of Edythe Herson
Lisa Greene	Sister of Sandy Kahan
Jackie Spinner	Mother of Robin Hall

Yahrzeits are observed on the anniversary of the passing of loved ones, based on the Hebrew calendar. If any Yahrzeit information is missing or incorrect, please notify the Temple.

## FOOD DRIVE

We continue to collect food donations at the temple for local food pantries. All contributions are appreciated.

Iris Hirsch  
Ritual Chair

## BUILDING UPDATE

If you notice that something is running low and needs to be replaced (either in the bathrooms or kitchen), please let me know.

You can either call or email me at  
irishirsch@comcast.net or 908-239-4585.

# Adult Education

## LET'S FIND OUT, Part I: Adult Education at the JCNWJ in the year 5786

**Rabbi Dubin is teaching two courses, one in the late fall and one in the spring, that will deal with questions of interest to many of us. Attendance in person is preferable, but Zoom will be available as needed.**

The first is dealing with the **History of Modern Zionism**. Rabbi Dubin will cover significant historical events, personalities, and writings, beginning in the mid-nineteenth century and ending with the current situation in Israel/Gaza. The first three sessions have already taken place, but recordings are available. The remaining two sessions will meet in the simcha room on Sunday afternoons, 1:00–2:30: BYO lunch and come around 12:30.

**Dates: Parts 4 and 5 will be December 7 and December 14 in-person and on Zoom.**

**If you missed them, Sessions 1-3 were recorded and sent out by email.**

**PLEASE WATCH FOR ADDITIONAL CLASS DATES IN JANUARY.**

The second course will be a theological exploration of **G-d/Adonai/Elohim: Who? What? Where?** And any other questions that participants may have. The meeting time and place will be the same as for the first series; the precise spring dates and number of sessions will be announced later.

*If you have any questions or would like to do advance reading, please contact Rabbi Dubin.*

# JCNWJ Services

*Lifecycle!*

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115 YOUMANS AVE. WASHINGTON, NJ

## MEMBERSHIP~

Family, married and/or with children ..... \$1450.00  
Single, individual ..... \$ 725.00

## BABY NAMING~

Member at scheduled service ..... Donation  
Member at other-than scheduled service ..... \$ 180.00  
Non-member at scheduled service ..... \$ 360.00

## B'NAI MITZVAH~

Bar or Bat Mitzvah ..... \$ 360.00  
Bar or Bat Mitzvah when CIF is not PIF .....\$1476.00  
Additional \$1000 may be applied to CIF

## MARRIAGE~

Wedding.....\$ 360.00

## DEATH/BURIAL PLOT~

Funeral..... \$ 180.00  
Funeral, non-member..... \$ 612.00  
Located in Easton, PA ..... Market Price  
All other charges payable to Easton Cemetary

*Honors!*

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115 YOUMANS AVE. WASHINGTON, NJ

## MEMORIAL & SIMCHA

Memorial plaque, member ..... \$ 324.00  
Memorial plaque, non-member ..... \$ 540.00  
Simcha tree leaf ..... \$ 180.00  
Pew plaque ..... \$ 252.00  
Prayer book ..... \$ 36.00  
Donation card ..... \$ 5.00 & up  
Library ..... \$ 10.00 & up

## EVENTS

Kitchen/Simcha room.....\$ 252.00  
+\$252.00 refundable deposit



# JCNWJ Services

Do you want to see new programming?  
Are you willing to coordinate a one-day event?  
Here are some ideas? Do you have another idea?

## CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

*Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey*  
contact Suzi at 908.343.1135 or by  
email at prez.JCNWJ@gmail.com



- o Book Club
- o Dinner & a Movie
- o Mahjong
- o Hiking / Walking / Outdoors
- o NY / Philly / Other Day Trip
- o Museum / Art Gallery Visits
- o Photography Class
- o Plays / Concerts
- o Self-Care Day
- o Scavenger Hunt
- o Sleep Over / Retreat
- o Watch Parties – Sports, Movies

## IN LOVING MEMORY

YIZKOR & YAHRZEIT MEMORIAL CANDLES AVAILABLE



JEWISH CENTER OF NW JERSEY  
MINIMUM DONATION OF \$18 SUGGESTED.  
CONTACT SUZI MARR FOR DETAILS AT 908.343.1135

# Partners

Domestic Abuse  
& Sexual Assault  
Crisis Center  
*of Warren County*

Dear Members of the Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey,

"Just as despair can come to one only from other human beings, hope, too, can be given to one only by other human beings."

– Elie Weisel

At the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault Crisis Center – DASACC, we believe that these challenging times have given us an opportunity for self-reflection, learning, and growth. The mission of the DASACC is to help, serve, and advocate for those impacted by interpersonal violence, to be proactive regarding its prevention, and to create positive change.

We offer a wide range of services tailored to meet the diverse needs of those affected by interpersonal violence:

#### 24/7 Crisis Intervention

- ❖ Emergency Shelter *individual bedrooms & pet-friendly*
- ❖ 24/7 Hotline/Helpline  
908-453-4181
- ❖ 24/7 Web Chat  
[www.DASACC.org/web-chat](http://www.DASACC.org/web-chat)
- ❖ Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Response Team

#### Additional Services

- ❖ Legal Advocacy
- ❖ Individual and Group Counseling
- ❖ Case Management
- ❖ Community Outreach & Prevention
- ❖ Volunteer Program
- ❖ Casa Hispana
- ❖ Wardrobe of Hope

As members of the Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey, we invite you to join us in supporting the important work of DASACC. Together, we can make a difference in the lives of survivors and create a community where everyone feels safe, valued, and empowered.

For more information about DASACC and how you can get involved, please visit our website at [www.DASACC.org](http://www.DASACC.org).

Thank you for your support and compassion.  
Sincerely,

**The DASACC Team**

24/7 Hotline/Helpline  
908-453-4181



HELPLINE: 1.800.8BE.SAFE | [WWW.DASACC.ORG](http://WWW.DASACC.ORG) | OUTREACH OFFICES: 28C BROAD STREET | WASHINGTON, NEW JERSEY 07882  
OUTREACH: 908.453.4121 | OUTREACH FAX: 908.223.1145 | SAFE HOUSE: 908.453.4181 | SAFE HOUSE FAX: 908.453.3768

# Partners



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As Our Own*

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[www.warrenhillsmemorialhome.com](http://www.warrenhillsmemorialhome.com)



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## Wanted: Advertisers for JCNWJ Journal

Kindly take note of the ads at the end of our Journal and whenever possible, support these establishments with your patronage. It's also a good idea to mention that you saw their Temple ad. If there are any businesses that you use regularly that might be interested in taking an ad in the Journal, please contact Rita Berkowitz ([berk721@aol.com](mailto:berk721@aol.com)) or Ruth Schutzbank ([Howie.ruth@hotmail.com](mailto:Howie.ruth@hotmail.com)). You can also go to our homepage, print out an advertising form and give it directly to them to mail in.