

Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey Journal

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Rabbi's Message

Dear Friends,

If you're like most Americans — and certainly if you're like me — you take advantage of the secular New Year to reflect on where you are, and where you'd like to be. In Jewish terms, this is one of those moments of *heshbon hanefesh*, an accounting of the soul, much like we do at *Yom Kippur*. January 1st is a threshold: a time for resolutions, for promises to do better, to be better, to be healthier, to live more intentionally.

As we stand at the transition into a new secular year, we ask: *How will we be the best we can be?* To that, allow me to add another question, a *critical* question —one directed especially to the Jewish community: *Will we show up?*

I hardly need to remind you that Jewish life since last January 1st has been marked by fear, grief, anger, and exhaustion. In response, many of us have chosen caution and disengagement — often wisely. But there is a quiet danger in letting caution turn into absence. When Jews stop coming to services, stop learning, stop gathering, stop being visible in public and in community, something deeper than attendance numbers is at stake. Jewish life itself begins to suffer.

Showing up is no small thing. It never has been. Jewish life is built on presence — on *minyan*, on community, on

(continued on the next page)

Calendar of Events

Sunday, January 4

9:30am: Hebrew School

Monday, January 5

7:00pm: Board of Trustees Meeting

Saturday, January 10

10:45am: Shabbat Morning Service

Sunday, January 11

9:30am: Hebrew School

Saturday, January 17

10:45am: Shabbat Morning Service
w/ Mt. Pisgah AME Church (MLK Weekend)

Sunday, January 18

11:00am: Sunday Morning Service
at Mt. Pisgah AME Church

Saturday, January 24

11:15am: Torah Study on Zoom
1:15pm: Chaverim—Luncheon at Daddy's Place—Easton, PA

Sunday, January 25

9:30am: Hebrew School
12:30pm: Adult Education: History of Zionism, BYO Lunch

Sunday, February 1

9:30am: Hebrew School
12:30pm: Adult Education, BYO Lunch

Rabbi's Message (continued)

collective learning and shared ritual. Private conviction matters, of course, but Judaism has never survived on private conviction alone. We survive, and thrive, when we gather, argue, sing, study, and care for one another face-to-face. So even our understandable absence, if it should become habitual, weakens the fabric of Jewish community.

Over the past decade, Jewish life, not only in America but across the world, has been shaped increasingly by a single overriding message: *Safety First*. Of course safety matters! And we should be proud of the measures our leadership has taken over recent years to secure our building and protect our community. Protecting Jewish life is *non-negotiable*.

But safety alone is not a vision.

If what we, and *especially* our children, absorb from Jewish life primarily is fear, caution, anxiety, or even disinterest, if they learn that being Jewish mostly means locking doors, guarding entrances, hiding symbols, worrying, or even just distancing ourselves so as not to have to think about it, we mustn't become surprised as our Jewish community becomes distant and frayed.

Our children deserve more than a Judaism of survival. They deserve a Judaism of meaning, joy, and purpose. They deserve a Judaism of relevance and determination. Stories that inspire, rituals that enliven, learning that challenges, and communities that model courage rather than retreat. Above all, they deserve to see adults who show up, physically and spiritually, not because it's easy, but because it matters.

Which brings us to Jewish visibility.

There are moments in history when simply being open and unapologetically Jewish itself becomes a mitzvah. I believe this is one of those moments. A *mezuzah* on our doorpost. A *Magen David* around our neck. A synagogue sanctuary and rooms of learning that are alive, full, and active. Public ritual. Public learning. Public acts of *tzedakah* and solidarity. These are not acts of provocation. These are acts of faith.

Jewish visibility is not about bravado. It is about refusing to let fear or indifference be the final authors of our story. Every generation is asked the same question in a different form: will Jewish life contract under pressure, or will it respond with presence?

Showing up does not mean ignoring danger. It means insisting that Jewish life is worth the effort, the inconvenience, and sometimes the courage it requires. It means coming to services even when it would be easier to stay home. It means educating our children not only so they will *know* they are Jewish, but so they will *love* being Jewish. It means choosing Jewish community — again and again and again.

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Rabbi's Message (continued)

As this new year begins, the question before us is not simply what do we hope will change in the world? It's not just how we will become better human beings? It is also this: ***What are we willing to do to preserve and enhance the beauty of Jewish life?***

Jewish life has never asked us to be fearless. But it *has* always asked us to be present.

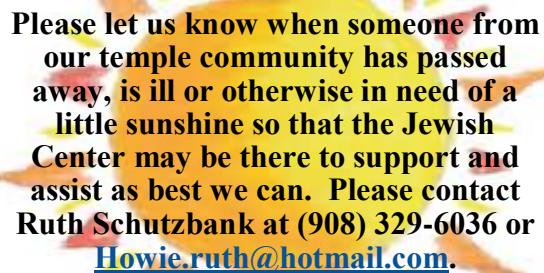
And right now, showing up matters.

With gratitude for my JCNWJ Family,

לשנה טובה L'Shanah Tovah, Happy New Year!

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.

President's Message

As 2025 draws to a close and we reflect on the Chanukah season, I find myself thinking deeply about the theme of rededication. We commemorate the miracle of light and hope provided by a single sacred jar, and in today's environment of rising antisemitism, violence towards fellow Jews and uncertainty, that search for light feels more relevant than ever.

I am personally looking for that same sense of guidance to ensure I make sound decisions across all areas of my life—personally, professionally, and regarding our temple business. My faith remains the foundation of my hope for mankind and a better future; it reminds me that we cannot pray for our own sustenance without seeking it for others. It is only through a collective "we" that we can reach a better place. "...That there is no way to get from here to there except by joining hands, marching together." -Mishkan T'filah

As we move into the secular New Year, I invite each of us to consider how we can best move forward. We have the opportunity to release what no longer serves us and to set—or reset—our goals for our families, our finances, and our temple community. Clear communication and collaboration always work best. I hope we can all take this time to focus on what brings true meaning and joy to our lives. I hope we can share that with family, friends and our communities.

Wishing you a meaningful transition into the year ahead.



Photo from Chanukah: Chesapeake Tavern Event

Updates & Events

TORAH STUDY

The Torah study group is an informal discussion group, led by Rabbi Dubin and participants.

Since 1998, the group has read the five books of the Torah and part of Nevi'im (Prophets); in the latter, we have completed Joshua, Judges, and Book 1 of Samuel. We are now on Book 2 of Samuel, which includes the story of King David.

As is the case with Chanukah miracle, there is more to this story than most adults learned in Sunday School. Discussions often take unexpected turns, especially when we make connections between the ancient text and modern life.

Meetings are on Saturday mornings, monthly, on Zoom at 11:15 a.m. (till 12:30 or 1:00, depending).

Upcoming dates are: January 24, February 14, March 7, April 11, May 16, and June 13. All are welcome to join us—no prior experience needed.

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

Yahrzeits

Jessica Hirsch	Daughter of Iris and Howie Hirsch
Laurette Fromer Pinn	Mother of Helen Mattson
Mary Saylor Kalb	Wife of Gerry Kalb
William Hopkins	Friend of Sharon Herson
Isaac Nudelman	Grandfather of Tracey Bauer
Roland Bakonyi	Husband of Esther Bakonyi
Ellen Field	Mother of Alison Shelofsky
Joseph Berkowitz	Father of Jerry Berkowitz
Sid Goldstein	Father of Iris Hirsch
Naomi Davine	Cousin of Edythe Herson
Gussie Zaret	Grandmother of Lois Goldberg
Rose Margolin	Mother of Diane Margolin
Sol Rems	Father of Linda Margolis

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.



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 **luncheon at Daddy's Place**, a Middle Eastern restaurant, in Easton, PA. It will be on **Saturday, January 24 at 1:15pm**. Carpooling is encouraged and **please RSVP** to Suzi at 908-343-1135.

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!

Continue to watch your email and the WhatsApp chat for updates on future events.

Questions, please contact Marilyn Muskar at msmusikar@gmail.com.



Photos from Hebrew School
Chanukah Celebration

Updates & Events

DONATIONS

In memory of Elaine Hirsch & Sid Goldstein
- Howie and Iris Hirsch

In memory of Arthur Marcovitch & Naomi Davine
- Edythe Herson

In memory of Lonnie Bier
- Sharon Herson

In memory of Joseph Berkowitz
- Jerry & Rita Berkowitz

In memory of Ellen Field
- Allison & Andrew Shelofsky

In memory of Laurette Fromer Penn
- John & Helen Mattson

In memory of Edward Lewis, Lillian Jay, and
Theodore Jay
- Rabbi Ellen Lewis

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, Adult Education at the JCNWJ: PART 1: History of Zionism, taught by Rabbi Dubin

From Genesis 12 to the founding of Jerusalem to the Persian, Greek, and Roman conquests . . . to the Haskalah (Enlightenment) and the events of the 19th and 20th centuries, the history of Zionism is a complex one. Four fascinating sessions, in person and on Zoom, have brought the story into the 1950s. The last session, #5 (on zoom), featured guest lecturer Rabbi Klein, a brave liberal activist rabbi who lives in northern Israel, who spoke about the ongoing protests and events of the past several years. The remaining sessions will deal with the second half of the 20th century up to the present. Mark your calendars, the dates are as follows: Sundays at 12:30pm, BYO lunch. January 25, February 1, February 15, and February 22.

A special event will be held on Sunday, March 29 at 1:00pm: Sandra Luckow, the filmmaker whom we met and whose film on mental health we saw several years go, will present her latest work, *Vanishing: A Love Story*. "A feature-length documentary film about award-winning novelist Cai Emmons and her loving, open-hearted journey towards death" with dignity. For details about the film's story, check out the official website: vanishingalovestory.com

Let's Find Out, Adult Education at the JCNWJ: PART 2:

Rabbi Dubin will begin another exciting series of adult education classes in March: **A Theological Exploration of G-d: Adonai/ Elohim: Who? What Where?** Times are Sundays at 12:30pm, BYO lunch. These are the dates: March 15, March 22, April 12, April 19, April 26, May 3. Again, please mark your calendars and come in person or join on Zoom. Sessions will also be recorded.

JCNWJ Services

Lifecycle!

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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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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
- ❖ 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.

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 | 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

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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) or Ruth Schutzbank (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.