Chailights

Community Bulletin of the
Jewish Federation of Fort Wayne
December 2026 - January 2027

Confronting the Shoah

Mark your calendars! Holocaust scholar **Dr. David Lindquist** will once again present *Confronting the Shoah*, a seven-week course beginning in January 2027.

This important course provides participants with comprehensive historical and contextual knowledge of the Nazi Holocaust. Through the seven sessions, participants will have the opportunity to deepen their understanding of the Holocaust and its historical significance.

Classes will be held on **Tuesdays, January 5, 12, 19, and 26, and February 2, 9, and 16, 2027**, at the **Stillwater Hospice Peggy F. Murphy Community Grief Center**, 5920 Homestead Road, Fort Wayne.

Classes begin at **7:00 p.m.** and will last approximately **2 to 2½ hours** each.

There is **no cost** for Federation members, teachers, principals, historians, or high school juniors and seniors. For all others, there is a **$5 fee** to cover the cost of materials.

Click here to register, or contact the Federation office at **(260) 456-0400** or **office@fwjf.org**.

Professional Growth Points (PGP) certificates will be available at the conclusion of the program for those who request them.

Thank you to the **Dr. Harry W. Salon Foundation** and the members of Federation for their continued support of this important educational program.

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Ladies' Night Out — Rosh Chodesh Women's Group



What a wonderful fall of dining together! Our Rosh Chodesh group has enjoyed several evenings of good food, laughter, and friendship. In September, seven ladies gathered at Casa Ristorante for a lovely evening of catching up, meeting new friends, and enjoying a delicious meal. It's wonderful to see our group continue to grow!

Our October dinner at P.F. Chang's was another success, with nine women joining us. It was especially nice to see our usual crowd along with some familiar faces we hadn't seen in a while. These evenings are a great way to reconnect, share a meal, and enjoy time together.

We have two more opportunities to get together! Join us for dinner on **Wednesday, December 16, at 6:00 p.m. at Granite City**, and again on **Wednesday, January 20, 2027, at 6:00 PM at Taj Mahal**.

All Jewish women in our community are warmly invited, and each guest pays for her own meal. Please RSVP one week before each dinner to **office@fwjf.org** or call **(260) 456-0400**.

We look forward to sharing more wonderful evenings together. We can't wait to see you!

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Friends,



It is always so nice to share such positive updates!

Bat and Bar Mitzvah Celebrations

This past month has been a wonderful time to be part of the Fort Wayne Jewish community. We are especially proud of Eleora Soltz and Samuel Gordon as they celebrated their Bat and Bar mitzvahs. These milestones remind us of the special young members of our community and of all those who help guide and support our children as they transition into Jewish adulthood.

Partnership2Gether Travelers to Israel

Two adult members of our community, Bonnie Pomerantz and Dr. Josh Wallet, traveled to Israel through two different programs within our Partnership2Gether relationship. We look forward to sharing more about their travels and observations in the near future.

Recognition at the General Assembly

I was blessed to join fellow Jewish Federation professionals at the annual General Assembly. During a breakfast gathering of Federation executives, the Jewish Federation of Fort Wayne was recognized as one of only three "small" Federations to achieve three important accomplishments: surpassing annual campaign expectations on a per-capita basis, increasing the number of Lions of Judah, and achieving multiple consecutive years of annual campaign growth. This recognition is a wonderful reflection of the generosity, commitment, and dedication of our community. Many thanks to all of you! I also had the opportunity to reconnect with some very special former (but forever) members of our Fort Wayne community. It was a true honor to hear about the wonderful things they are doing.

Annual Campaign – Thank You!

A special thank you to everyone who has contributed, or will be contributing, to our Annual Campaign. Your generosity makes a difference and allows us to continue carrying out our mission and serving our community.

IN REMEMBRANCE

With so much that is positive happening, we also want to remember those members of our community who have recently passed away. These very special people contributed so much to our community over the years and will remain in our thoughts and prayers.

Michael Theise

PJ Library

Congratulations to Eleora Soltz for being selected to PJ Library's 2027 National Advisory Committee

Mazal Tov

PJ Library's 2027 National Advisory Committee is a team of kids who read and review books the program is considering. Members get sneak previews of candidate books and share their opinions, which the Book Selection Committee takes "super seriously" when deciding which books to offer each month. Members can also join author interviews, kids' webinars, and more.

UPCOMING & PAST EVENTS

Rosh Chodesh Movie Night!



Our Rosh Chodesh Women's Group invites you to join us for a fun evening of pizza, friendship, and a movie! This event is **free and open to everyone in our Jewish community**, so invite a friend and come enjoy the evening with us!

We'll gather at the Peggy F. Murphy Community Grief Center (5920 Homestead Road, Fort Wayne) at **6:00 p.m.** on **Saturday, January 16, 2027,** to enjoy pizza and watch *Full Court Miracle*.

Please RSVP no later than **Monday, January 11, 2027**, by emailing **office@fwjf.org** or leaving a message at **(260) 456-0400** so we know how many to plan for.

A big Todah Rabah to our amazing Rosh Chodesh committee for organizing another amazing event and bringing our women together. We look forward to seeing you there!

DUPLICITOUS REFUGE: THE STORY OF JEWISH REFUGEES IMPRISONED IN MAURITIUS

Rebecca Saunders, Professor of Comparative Literature at Illinois State University, gave a fascinating talk on Wednesday, November 18, 2026, at the Rifkin Campus about the little-known story of Jewish refugees imprisoned in Mauritius.

The 1,580 Central European Jewish refugees fled the Nazis for Palestine in 1940 but were then forcibly removed from Palestine by the British Mandate. They later were deported and imprisoned on the remote island of Mauritius.
She also discussed Nathacha Appanah's The Last Brother about a friendship between two boys, the Indo-Mauritian Raj and the Jewish-Czech David, both of whom are fleeing from violence and unbearable loss.

She is the author of "*Lamentation and Modernity in Literature, Philosophy, and Culture*."

The program was sponsored by Zachor, a joint committee of the Jewish Federation of Fort Wayne, Congregation Achduth Vesholom, and PFW's Institute for Holocaust and Genocide Studies. Thank you to Kathy Sider for organizing the program.


Dr. Rebecca Saunders with Michael Theise, Executive Director of the Jewish Federation of Fort Wayne; Dr. Steve Carr, Director of Purdue Fort Wayne's Institute for Holocaust and Genocide Studies; and Kathy Sider from Congregation Achduth Vesholom and chair of the Zachor committee.







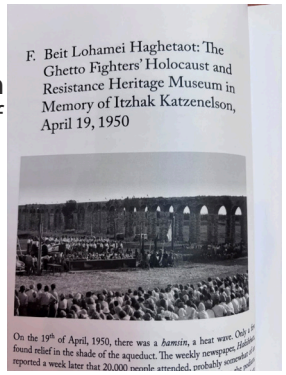
Israel: An Incredible First Visit and an Experience I Will Never Forget!

I recently had the opportunity to travel to Israel for the first time as part of the Northern Exposure Seminar for Lay Leaders and Federation Staff. What an incredible experience! I joined representatives from eight other Partnership communities across the United States: Indianapolis, Akron, Dayton, Louisville, Omaha, South Bend, Toledo, and Des Moines. Together, we spent three and a half days exploring the Western Galilee, followed by two days in Tel Aviv.



Our first day began at Galilee Medical Center, a hospital designed with underground, fortified facilities to protect patients and staff during times of war. It was an eye-opening introduction to the realities of life in northern Israel. From there, we visited Kibbutz Hanita, located right along the Lebanon border! It was quite something to see just how close we were to the border. We also visited a local gin distillery, where we learned about the production of kosher spirits and saw some really interesting bottle artwork and equipment. We ended the day with a wonderful dinner and the beginning of some new friendships.

During our stay, we were based in Nahariya, a community where Jews, Muslims, Druze, Christians, religious, and secular residents live and work together. It was wonderful to see people from such different backgrounds sharing a community and working toward a common future. This theme of living together peacefully would continue throughout our trip.


F. Beit Lohamei Haghetaot: The Ghetto Fighters' Holocaust and Resistance Heritage Museum in Memory of Itzhak Katzenelson, April 19, 1950

On the 19th of April, 1950, there was a *hamsin*, a heat wave. Only a f found relief in the shade of the aqueduct. The weekly newspaper, *Hadas* reported a week later that 20,000 people attended, probably somewhat e

Our second day began at the Ghetto Fighters' House Museum, which commemorates the Warsaw Ghetto fighters and the Holocaust. The museum's exhibits were incredibly powerful, with immersive experiences and meaningful symbolism throughout. We also attended the opening of the new Resilience Center at Western Galilee Academic College, where Jewish and Arab students study together. We learned how virtual reality and other innovative approaches are being used to help soldiers process trauma and develop mindfulness. It was exciting to see how our Partnership communities have helped make this important resource possible.



We then explored the ancient city of Acre (Akko), which has a history dating back approximately 5,000 years. It is another wonderful example of people of different faiths and backgrounds living side by side. We ended the day with dinner at a local host family's home. They welcomed us so warmly, and the food and lively conversation made for a very special evening.

Our third day brought some of the most emotional and memorable moments of the trip. We met parents who lost their sons on October 7, 2023, at the Nova music festival. Both young men had been trying to help other concertgoers escape when they were murdered by Hamas terrorists. Hearing their parents share their stories and talk about their sons was heartbreaking. One family created a beautiful memorial garden featuring 25 mosaics made from photographs of their son, honoring the life he lived and the memories he left behind. Another family shared how, even though their son is buried in England, they have returned to Israel many times since his death because they feel closer to him there. Their strength, openness, and determination to keep their sons' memories alive left a lasting impression on me.



We also visited an extraordinary bilingual kindergarten in Kibbutz Evron. Established in 2018, it brings Jewish and Arab children together to learn Hebrew and Arabic from an early age. The idea is simple but powerful: replace fear with familiarity, understanding, and friendship. Seeing these children learning and playing together was a wonderful reminder that meaningful change can begin at a very young age.

MY TRIP TO ISRAEL - continued



We finished the day at Rosh HaNikra, where the views of the Mediterranean Sea and the white limestone grottoes were absolutely breathtaking. We also saw *The Last Embrace*, an art exhibit honoring parents who lost children on October 7. The day ended with a delicious kosher Druze dinner, another opportunity to experience the region's rich cultural diversity. Unity, connection, and resilience were certainly the themes of the day.



On our fourth day, we continued learning about the people and programs making a difference in the region. We met middle school students participating in the Youth Futures program, which provides much-needed emotional and mental health support. It was encouraging to see the attention being given to the well-being of these young people.

We then traveled to Tel Aviv and visited the Peres Center for Peace, where we viewed an exhibit honoring the victims of October 7. We learned more about Shimon Peres and his vision for Israel. One of his regrets was that he hadn't dreamed bigger! His belief in technology and innovation helped shape Israel into the innovative country it is today. We also visited Hostages Square, shopped at the lively flea market, and finished the evening with a food and drink tour. There was certainly no shortage of things to see and experience!



Our final day included a wonderful historical tour of Tel Aviv. We enjoyed lunch at the market and heard journalist Yaron Decker discuss Israel's upcoming election. He shared a particularly interesting connection to history, as he was the last person to interview Yitzhak Rabin just ten minutes before Rabin was assassinated. We wrapped up the seminar by sharing our thoughts, reflections, and takeaways from the week.



Throughout our visit, one message kept coming through: resilience, unity, and connection. We met people who have experienced unimaginable loss and hardship, yet continue to find ways to move forward. We saw Jewish and Arab communities working together, children learning alongside one another, and organizations finding creative ways to support people and rebuild lives.

I came home with so much to think about and process. I have a much deeper appreciation for our Partnership and the relationships we have built with the Western Galilee. The mission of *Connecting People to People* became very real to me. These aren't simply programs or partnerships on paper; they are relationships between people who care about one another and want to make a difference.

This was my first trip to Israel, and it certainly won't be one I forget. I am incredibly grateful to the Federation and the Partnership for making this opportunity possible. I returned with wonderful memories, new friendships, a greater connection to Israel, and a desire to learn even more.

There is so much more to see, learn, and experience. Who knows? Perhaps another trip to Israel is in my future!

Am Yisrael Chai!







PARTNERSHIP2GETHER (P2G)

Your Direct Connection to Israel

Partnership2Gether (P2G) is a program of the Jewish Agency and the Jewish Federations of North America, promoting people-to-people relationships through cultural, social, medical, educational, and economic programs. **The Western Galilee Partnership connects 17 U.S. communities of the US Central Area Consortium, Israel's Western Galilee and Budapest, Hungary.** Read more here.

From Our Friends at Partnership2Gether!

The Western Galilee Partnership connects 17 U.S. communities of the US Central Area Consortium, Israel's Western Galilee and Budapest, Hungary. Our members have benefited from programs we've offered with guests who've come from the Western Galilee to Fort Wayne, as well as opportunities to travel in our Partnership area. We are excited to share with you a diverse list of à la carte programs from our Partnership2Gether. We invite you to sign up for the programs that spark your interest! These programs are a great way to engage with Jewish communities throughout our Partnership2Gether Consortium without needing to leave your home.



Budapest Seminar for NextGen (adults 30-47): The Seeds of Change
We are working to bring our Partnership2Gether NextGen community together in Budapest, Hungary, in January 2027.

This exciting initiative, developed by our Partnership's International Young Leadership, aims to bring together young adults from Israel, the U.S., and Hungary for five days to:

- **Connect** with fellow participants from Israel, the U.S., and Hungary
- **Explore** Budapest and discover its rich Jewish history
- **Give back** through a meaningful community volunteering activity

Dates: January 20–24, 2027
Location: Budapest, Hungary
Participation Fee: $500 per person, including accommodations, meals, and seminar activities.
****Flights and travel insurance are NOT included.**

If you are interested, please complete our initial interest form.

Please note that the seminar is still in the planning stages, and all details are subject to final confirmation.

Questions? Contact NextGen coordinator Sivan Friedman Lavi.

What are we talking about this month:

Hanukkah

Happy Hanukkah

Lighting the Hanukkah menorah



The candles are placed in the menorah from **right to left**, with one more candle added each night.

Light the *Shamash*, the helper candle, first. Then say two blessings – one for lighting the candles, and one for miracles.



Baruch ata Adonai,
Eloheinu melech ha'olam,
asher kideshanu bemitzvotav
vetzivanu lehadlik ner shel
Hanukkah

Dear God, Creator of our world, thank You for giving us rules that make our lives special and for teaching us to light these Hanukkah candles.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר
קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל חֲנֻכָּה

Amen

Use the Shamash to light the other candles, starting with the newest candle, on the left.

Baruch ata Adonai,
Eloheinu melech ha'olam,
sheh'asa nisim lavoteinu
bayamim haheim bazman
hazeh

Dear God, Creator of our world, thank you for performing miracles for our ancestors, long ago and now.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שֶׁעָשָׂה
נִסִּים לַאֲבוֹתֵינוּ בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם בַּזְּמַן הַזֶּה

Amen

If it's the first night of Hanukkah, add a third blessing for celebrating.

Baruch ata Adonai,
Eloheinu melech ha'olam,
shehecheyanu
vekiyemanu
vehigi'anu
lazman hazeh.

Dear God, Creator of our world, thank you for keeping us alive so we can celebrate this important moment.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
שֶׁהֶחֱיָנוּ וְקִיְּמָנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לַזְּמַן הַזֶּה

Amen

PJ Library

To learn more go to **pjlibrary.org/hanukkah**

How to Play Dreidel



Supplies:

Dreidel

At least 10 tokens per player (tokens can be any small item — dried beans, chocolate coins, pennies, etc.)

To set up, distribute the tokens evenly among the players.

Arrange yourselves in a circle. Have each player put one of their tokens into the center — the "pot."

Now take turns spinning the dreidel. When it lands, the letter facing up will tell the player what to do:

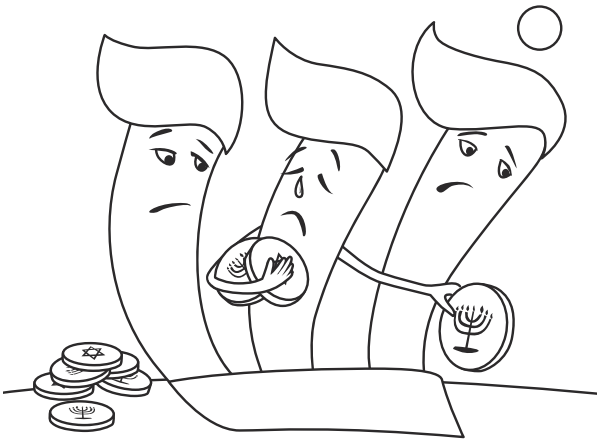
- **Nun:** **Nothing.** Don't take from or add to the pot.
- **Gimel:** **All.** Take all of the tokens from the pot.
- **Hay:** **Half out.** Take half of the tokens from the pot.
- **Shin:** **One in.** Add one token to the pot.



Anytime the pot is emptied, each player puts one token back in before the next person spins. As players run out of tokens, they're out — and the last person remaining is the winner!

PJ Library

Shin



Put one in

For more fun Hanukkah themed activities, visit pjlibrary.org/hanukkah.

PJ Library

PJ Library

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ODDS AND ENDS



Dear Jewish Federation of Fort Wayne,

Thank you so much for the money to go on a trip to Israel, and for planting a tree there in my honor. Also, thank you for the baking opportunities for me to make money for camp, and also for facilitating the gifts from my bat mitzvah for camp. This will be my first year going the whole summer! (I am imagining at the end of a PBS show where it says "Made possible in part by...") We really could not have done it without you.

Eleora Soltz





It may be winter, but we are getting ready for summer! Mark your calendars for three fun-filled weeks of Camp Joe at Metea County Park. We will meet June 21 - July 9. Registration will open soon! Stay tuned.







JOIN US FOR LATKES AND LIGHTS AT HANUKKAH PARTY
Celebrate the start of the Festival of Lights with our Temple family on Friday, December 4. Light the candles, spin the dreidel, enjoy a holiday dinner, and share the warmth of Jewish community at our annual Hanukkah service and party. Please bring your *hanukkiyah* and candles to light for the first night of Hanukkah.

Join us for our Shabbat-Hanukkah service at 6 p.m. The service also will be on YouTube. Candle lighting and dinner will follow. The menu includes meat and vegetarian options, salad, latkes, and *sufganiyot*. Share in the fun for all ages – games, a photo booth, holiday music, and more – and crafts for the kids.

Please make a reservation for dinner by contacting us at (260) 744-4245 or office@templecav.org by Tuesday, December 1. Cost is $10 for adults and $5 for children ages 4-12 (3 and under are free). Payments must be made online. If you need the vegetarian option, please tell us when you RSVP.

Thank you to Denny Reynolds and the ROMEOs for sponsoring the latkes and *sufganiyot*, and to Stephanie Gottesman, Jay Zemmol, Kate Crell, Deborah Bauer, and Caylen Weisberger for organizing the festivities. Thanks also to the Dr. Harry W. Salon Foundation for its support.

ISRAEL AT A CROSSROADS: ELECTIONS, POLITICS, AND THE ROAD AHEAD WITH ISRAELI JOURNALIST MARK LAVIE
Join us on Wednesday, December 2 at noon in person or on Zoom for a timely conversation with journalist and author Mark Lavie**,** who has spent more than five decades reporting on Israel and the Middle East.

As Israel navigates the aftermath of its elections and the process of forming a new government, Mark will offer his perspective on the political landscape, the issues shaping Israel's future, and what recent developments may mean for Israeli society and the wider region. Drawing on his decades of experience as a correspondent, Mark will help us make sense of the latest developments and consider what may lie ahead. The program will include time for questions and discussion.

Please bring your lunch and learn with us at this Learning Cafe. Can't join us in person? The event will be streamed via Zoom. The link will be included in the weekly email to our Temple family.

INDIANA ISRAELITEN: THE GERMAN-JEWISH ROOTS OF INDIANA JEWISH HISTORY
Presented by Michael Brown, Executive Director of the Indiana Jewish Historical Society
In the mid-19th century, German-speaking Jews left Central Europe in search of democracy, dignity, and economic opportunity. Some made their way to Indiana, where they established small, close-knit Jewish communities.

Who were these early Jewish settlers? What brought them to Indiana, and how did they shape Jewish life in our state? Join Michael Brown at our Beit Midrash on Wednesday, December 9 at 7 p.m. on Zoom as he explores their remarkable story and the lasting influence of these immigrants on American Judaism as we know it today.

The Zoom link will be in the weekly email to our Temple family.

SHARE YOUR TALENTS AT BEIT CAFÉ 2027!
Calling all singers, instrumentalists, comedians, spoken-word artists, and anyone else in our Temple community with a talent to share!

We're bringing back Beit Café: A Temple Coffee House on Saturday, January 30 at 7 p.m. at the Temple, and we want YOU to be part of the show! Whether you've performed before or have always wanted to give it a try, we invite you to join us for an evening celebrating the talents and creativity of our Temple family.

Interested in performing? Contact Rabbi Meir at rabbi@templecav.org, even if you're just thinking about it.

JEWISH WISDOM FOR THE CHALLENGES OF BEING HUMAN
A Six-Part Adult Education Series with Rabbi Meir Bargeron
January–March 2027
What can Jewish tradition teach us about the challenges we face in everyday life? How do we handle anger, find the capacity to forgive, or know when to speak up and when to remain silent? Can we really change the habits and attitudes that sometimes get in our way?

These are questions people have wrestled with for generations, and Jewish tradition offers some fascinating insights. Join Rabbi Meir for six conversations exploring what the Torah, Talmud, and Jewish ethical teachings have to say about the challenges of being human. We'll encounter some surprising ideas, consider different perspectives, and discover how ancient Jewish wisdom can speak to our lives today.

Join us:
- **Learning Café: What Do We Do With Our Anger?** – Wednesday, January 6 from noon to 1 p.m. in person and on Zoom.
- **Beit Midrash: Is Forgiveness Always Required?** – Wednesday, January 13 from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Zoom.

JOIN THE FUN AT JOY VEY! A KID-ISH SHABBAT
Families with young children are invited to Joy Vey! A Kid-ish Shabbat on Saturdays, December 12 and January 9 at 10:30 a.m. Musician Juliette Nehring joins us in December.

Meet us at the Temple to introduce your child to the beauty of a Shabbat morning service with prayer, singing, movement, joyfulness, and friends. Folks are encouraged to stick around afterwards for a nosh and social time.

CELEBRATE SHABBAT AT THE TEMPLE
Begin your weekend with Shabbat and share the warmth of Jewish community at Congregation Achduth Vesholom in person or via livestream on YouTube.

Rabbi Meir Bargeron leads services most Fridays at 6 p.m. Ron Friedman usually leads worship on the first and third Saturdays at 9:45 a.m., with Rabbi Meir offering a D'var Torah. We'll celebrate Hanukkah on Friday, December 4 at 6 p.m. We will not have a Shabbat service on Friday, December 25 and Saturday, January 2.

Joy Vey! A Kid-ish Shabbat for families with young children will meet on Saturday, December 12 and January 9 at 10:30 a.m. Find the latest schedule at www.templecav.org.

APPLES, AND MORE FOR THOUGHTFUL THURSDAYS FAMILIES
This year's Thoughtful Thursdays Apple Project has been fruitful indeed. Generous donations helped us to provide each of our 52 Brightpoint Head Start students and their teachers with a bag of a dozen fresh apples. That's roughly 70 bags of apples, totaling about 840 apples!

The apples were purchased from Phil's U-Pick Apple Orchard in Huntington, a family-owned seasonal farm. We're grateful for their generous support over the years to help us stretch our dollars for this important project.

Our bag assembly team will meet next on Wednesdays, December 2 and January 6 at 10 a.m. at the Temple. Help also is needed the day before on Tuesdays, December 1 and January 5 at 10 a.m. to set up for the bagging. Additional volunteers are welcome.

Thoughtful Thursdays is a joint project of Congregation Achduth Vesholom and the Jewish Federation of Fort Wayne. Thank you to Thoughtful Thursdays Chair Joanne McCrory and her team!

Clothing Donations Needed
Thoughtful Thursdays is also collecting donations of hats, gloves, socks, and underwear for boys and girls in sizes 2T-5T and sizes 6-8 (XS, S, M, L). Donations of a few winter jackets and pull-ups in those sizes also would be appreciated. Items will be distributed as needed to the Brightpoint children. Items may be dropped off at the Temple. Monetary donations also can be made online to "Project Assist/ Thoughtful Thursdays."

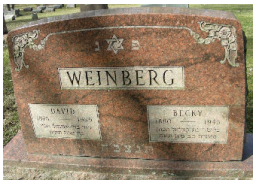
NEIJGS

Upcoming NEIJGS Program: Immigration & Naturalization Records
Unlock the paper trail behind your immigrant ancestors with this engaging three-part exploration of U.S. immigration and naturalization records. Learn how changing laws created the passenger lists, visa files, registry files, alien registrations, A-Files, naturalization records, and other key sources genealogists rely on today. Discover what these records may reveal, how factors such as marriage, citizenship, and military service affected documentation, and how to navigate the often-confusing United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Whether you're tracing an arrival or a path to citizenship, or searching for the right USCIS file, you'll gain practical strategies to uncover richer details and avoid research dead ends.
Speaker: Alec Ferretti
Dates: February 10, 17, and 24

Preserving Our Community's History: The Fort Wayne Jewish Families Tree
Many of us start researching family history with just a name or two, but that initial search often opens the door to a much larger story. Right now, I'm working through a full review of the Fort Wayne Jewish Families tree, which has grown to over 8,200 individuals. So far, I've re-examined about 1,400 entries—verifying records, clearing up conflicting details, and adding roughly 400 new names to our shared history. To date, I've researched last names from Aa through Dh.

Recently, a relative of the Weinberg family contacted me for help with his family tree. His inquiry centered on "David Weinberg reportedly born April 10, 1872…deceased January 7, 1959 in Indiana…" I was pleased to share a photograph of his ancestor's headstone at the Fort Wayne Jewish Cemetery. But the real genealogical work was just beginning. As I examined our records, I discovered three different men named Samuel Weinberg. Determining which Samuel belonged to this particular family was essential. Here's what the records revealed:

- ***Samuel Weinberg (1907–1999):*** *Appears in our records as someone who moved to the Fort Wayne area in the 1990s.*
- ***Sam Weinberg:*** *A possible connection to the Goldstine family, although the details of that relationship remain unknown.*
- ***Samuel Weinberg (1903-1975) - The Match:*** *Census records from 1910 through 1930 place Samuel living with his parents, David and Rebecca Weinberg, in Fort Wayne, IN. In the 1930 census records, Samuel is listed as a practicing physician. He married Elaine Gelb in 1932, and the couple eventually settled in Marion, Indiana, where they raised two daughters.*



The photographs below offer another dimension to the research. On the left is David Weinberg, whose photograph was provided by the relative who contacted me. On the right is Samuel Weinberg, pictured in the 1923 Fort Wayne Central High School yearbook.





Having a large tree is wonderful, but the real point is to help us understand who these individuals were, where they lived, and how they shaped our community. At its core, genealogy is about keeping memory, identity, and generational connections alive.

I invite you to explore the FWJF tree on Ancestry by becoming a member of NEIJGS today!

Northeast Indiana Jewish Genealogy Society
From Generation לדור ודור To Generation

CHABAD

Did you know that in the story of Chanukah, the ancient Greeks were totally fine with the Jewish people studying Torah?

When the Syrian Greeks took control of Judea, they outlawed the fundamentals of Jewish life:. Shabbat, kosher, Brit Milah (circumcision) etc.

Chabad Fort Wayne

They wanted to remove the entire Jewish belief system. They desecrated the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. They set up altars in town squares and forced Jews to offer pigs to mock the sacrifices in the Temple. They invested much effort to get the Jews to Hellenize, to assimilate to their culture, which championed physical prowess and the power of human intellect.

They didn't mind if the Jews studied Torah, only that the Jews believed that the Torah was Divine.

As we know, the Torah was given to the Jewish people at Mount Sinai, not just the Ten Commandments or the Five Books of Moses. The vast majority of Torah was given orally to Moses by Hashem, and he taught it to the Jewish people, who in turn passed it on to their children and students, generation after generation.

The Greeks didn't care if the Torah was studied as an intellectual pursuit. They actually appreciated that. They only wanted us to forget that the teachings of the Torah are Divine.

The Torah is G-d's wisdom, which is tied to His very essence. The Torah was given to us as a handbook for life. The Torah guides us how to be our best selves, much as the manufacturers give you a manual that tells you the best way to use the latest piece of technology.

The Greeks tried to uproot that belief. They tried their very best. But we know the end of the story. With Hashem's help, the few and the weak defeated the great and the mighty and we won the war. The Jewish people inaugurated the Holy Temple and rekindled the Menorah, whose oil miraculously burned for eight days till they procured new pure oil.

That is what we celebrate on Chanukah.
Many have risen to destroy us. Not just physically but spiritually. The Greeks, and many others, wanted to defeat us by taking our G-d away.

But while the Greeks and their ideological successors are found in history books, we stand here, thousands of years later, more devoted and committed than ever to serving our father in heaven, proudly celebrating Jewish life in 2026. And no matter how hard anyone tries, that will continue forever and ever.



Join us on the third night of Chanukah, December 6th at 4:30 p.m. at the Arcade, Electric Works to celebrate our Jewish Pride.

Lechayim! Rabbi Levi Danow

WOMEN'S PHILANTHROPY

Lion of Judah



History and usage

The Biblical Judah (in Hebrew: Yehuda) is the original name of the Tribe of Judah, which is traditionally symbolized by a lion. In Genesis, the patriarch Jacob ("Israel") gave that symbol to his tribe when he referred to his son Judah as a Gur Aryeh, a "Young Lion" (Genesis 49:9) when blessing him. In Jewish naming tradition, the Hebrew name and the substitute name are often combined as a pair, as in this case. The Lion of Judah was used as a Jewish symbol for many years, and as Jerusalem was the capital of the Kingdom of Judah, in 1950 it was included in the Emblem of Jerusalem.

Who They Are:

Dynamic, philanthropic Jewish women who create social justice, aid the vulnerable, preserve human dignity and build Jewish identity. 17,500 women around the world are proud Lions of Judah, donating at least $5,000 to Federation every year.

Pomegranate Pin

An ancient symbol found carved into the lintels of the earliest synagogues, the pomegranate has carried with it the concepts of Judaism for generations.



The Pomegranate pin was introduced as a way to inspire giving from women of all stations. Three decades after its inception, more than 7,000 pins have been distributed across North America.

It represents the best of what Federation does – bringing together like-minded donors to do a world of good.

To qualify, women must donate $1,800 or more to the Federation's Annual Campaign.

Where Can You Get Challah, Kosher, or Vegan Items in Fort Wayne?

TRADER JOE'S®
4110 W. Jefferson Blvd.
Fort Wayne, IN 46804
260-432-5828
www.traderjoes.com

GEORGE'S INTERNATIONAL MARKET
2021 Broadway
Fort Wayne, IN 46802
260-420-5565
georgesinternationalmarket.com

Loving Café
Healthy Vegan & Vegetarian Cuisine
7605 Coldwater Rd Suite A
Fort Wayne, IN 46825
260-489-8686
lovingcafefw.com

THE FRESH MARKET
6306 W Jefferson Blvd
Fort Wayne, IN 46804
260-459-9691
www.thefreshmarket.com

3 RIVERS CO-OP NATURAL GROCERY & DELI
1612 Sherman Blvd
Fort Wayne, IN 46808
260-424-8812
www.3riversfood.coop

TUITION REIMBURSEMENT

The Jewish Federation of Fort Wayne is excited to remind our families about the Jewish Studies tuition reimbursement program.

A student whose family is a member of the Federation will be reimbursed at a rate based on one-half the tuition cost per Indiana University credit hour for classes taken in Judaic Studies.

As many of our youth are attending college all over the country and the tuition varies considerably from college to college, this policy provides equitable treatment to all of our university students.

A transcript, showing the course and grade received, and a copy of a fee payment receipt must be submitted as proof for reimbursement. The Federation reserves the right to request a syllabus or additional description of the class taken. A C+ grade or its numerical equivalent must be earned in the coursework in order to qualify for reimbursement.

Family membership is defined as a minimum gift of $108.00 to the most recent Federation Annual Campaign, which runs from November through March.

If you have any questions, please call Michael Theise at (260) 456-0400 or contact him at director@fwjf.org

S.K.I.P.
(**S**end a **K**id to **I**srael **P**rogram)

Established in 1984 by the Jewish Federation of Fort Wayne in partnership with Congregation Achduth Vesholom, and revised in November 1999, the program has provided a savings vehicle for many families and has helped make a trip to Israel a reality for so many of our youth. The Federation portion of the savings plan is provided by income from the Federation Endowment Fund for members of the Jewish Federation of Fort Wayne.



The Federation, for each year a child participates in **S.K.I.P.**, contributes $200.00 per year per child. This is matched by a Congregational contribution of $75.00 per year. Your parent contribution, on behalf of each participating child, is $175.00 or more per year.

The program is available to local youth enrolled in their congregational religious school in grades 1-10. The fund may be used for an organized trip to Israel any time after grade 10 until the youth reaches age 23.

Each **S.K.I.P.** account is supplemented by a gift from the **HY AND LORRY GOLDENBERG BIRTHRIGHT FUND and the MINNETTE AND MEYER RUCHMAN FUND.**

Looking for a bar/bat mitzvah, confirmation, or special gift for one of our local youth? Please consider making that gift to their **S.K.I.P**. Fund account. An acknowledgment will be sent to you and a card indicating your gift will be sent to the designee.

Enrollment packets will be sent to all families not yet enrolled. If you do not get a packet or have any questions, please contact Federation's Executive Director Michael Theise at director@fwjf.org or (260) 456-0400.

ODDS AND ENDS

GIFT GIVING MADE EASY



Setting up your own philanthropic legacy is easier than you might think. Through the Jewish Federation, you can establish a Donor-Advised Fund (DAF) with no setup costs or administrative fees. This personal charitable fund allows you to make tax-deductible contributions, invest the assets for potential growth, and recommend grants to your favorite charities over time. Whether you're interested in supporting Jewish causes or any other charitable organizations, a DAF offers a simple, flexible way to organize your giving while potentially reducing your tax burden. The Federation's staff will handle all administrative details, allowing you to focus on the joy of giving.

CREATE A JEWISH LEGACY - SEASONS CHANGE, BUT YOUR LEGACY IS ETERNAL

Jewish tradition teaches that one of our main responsibilities is to make the world a better place for future generations.

Federation's role is to secure the future of the Jewish community at home, abroad, and in Israel.

Working with local, national and international partners, we help Jews around the world live a Jewish life and ensure that no Jew is left behind.

You can create a lasting legacy with the Jewish Federation of Fort Wayne to benefit your children, grandchildren, and future generations, while supporting the causes you care about. Using a current or deferred endowment gift, you can become part of Federation's Legacy Society.

The Board of Directors and the staff of the Jewish Federation of Fort Wayne wish you a happy, healthy 2027!



Please note that our office will be closed on Monday, December 21 - January 3, and on Monday, January 18. We will check emails and phone messages occasionally during our break. We will get in touch as soon as we can.

Enjoy the holidays!



WE ARE HERE TO HELP



We are very fortunate to have a social worker who is able and willing to assist any member of the Fort Wayne Jewish community in need of services.

She works for us as a volunteer on an as-needed basis.

If you become aware of someone in the Jewish community who may need assistance at some point, please let us know. Obviously, this would be kept in the strictest of confidence. Contact us at (260) 456-0400 or office@fwjf.org.

Help is Available

We know that during these trying times, we can all use a little help once in a while. For those in need, we do offer food vouchers and gas cards. Please call the Federation office at (260) 456-0400. All calls are confidential.

We are also accepting donations of gas cards. If you would like to make a donation, please send in a check with "gas card" in the memo or call the office.



Do you have a car, truck, van, SUV, boat, motorcycle, ATV, RV, trailer or airplane that you no longer need or use?

Donating them has never been easier! Simply choose CARS and their trained staff will guide you through the donation process.





The Audrey & Joe Gerson Free Loan Fund was set up to offer an interest-free loan up to $2,000 to members of the Jewish community who are undergoing financial hardships. Please call the Federation office at (260) 456-0400 to speak to someone confidentially.

We are here to help!

Wellspring interfaith social services
Serving Fort Wayne's Central City Every Day.

Wellspring provides essential necessities of clothing, food, and personal hygiene items. In addition, Wellspring offers after-school and summer programs for youth, as well as programming for older adults and adults with disabilities. Call today at 260-422-6618 or visit our website www.wellspringinterfaith.org to learn more. All services are free of charge and no referral or voucher is needed. We are here to serve all who need our help.

FUNDS AND DONATIONS

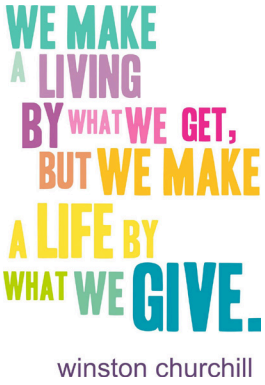
ENDOWMENT

- **Audrey and Joe Gerson Free Loan Fund**
- **Baum/Goldenberg Scholarship**
- **Emergency Cash Assistance Fund**
- **Holocaust Education Fund**
- **Jewish Experience Fund**
- **JNF - Plant a Tree in Israel**
- **Prejudice Reduction Elimination Fund**
- **Community Relations Committee (CRC):**
  To provide for local programming and events through the Jewish Federation of Fort Wayne.
- **Goldenberg Camp Joe Fund:**
  Every year we get a number of requests for assistance with the registration for our three-week Camp Joe Levine Day Camp.



- **Janet Finkel Campership Fund:**
  In April 2008, Audrey Gerson established the Janet Finkel Campership Fund in honor of Janet Finkel. This fund makes it possible to help youngsters go to a Jewish Camp or music camp.
- **PJ Library:**
  Supports reading anytime of the day, but we know that many families sit down to read books at bedtime, in their pajamas. PJ Library books can be enjoyed any time you want a good story.
- **The Martha Rothenberg Replane Theater & Creative Arts Fund:**
  This fund was created in memory of Martha Rothenberg Replane to honor her memory and her love for theater and creative arts. The fund will be used to encourage theater and creative arts presentations and knowledge in our community.

DONATIONS



Camp Joe Levine

- Donations were received from **Karen Jackson, Marcia & Denny Reynolds and Jo Ellen & Mike Rush** in memory of **Stan Levine**

General Operations

- A donation was received from **Juan Suarez**
- A donation was received from **Larry Mastbaum**

& Marni Blomquist in honor of **Cookie & Leonard Mastbaum**

Janet Finkel Campership Fund

- A donation was received from **Susie Miller** in memory of **Stan Levine**

JNF - Plant a Tree in Israel

- A donation was received from **Juan Suarez**



Online Donations Accepted!

The Jewish Federation of Fort Wayne now accepts online donations. You may contribute to our General Fund, or select a specific fund that you want to support. In addition, you may elect to have a donation made in Honor of or In Memory of an individual, and a card will be sent letting them or their families know the donation has been made.

It's secure, fast, and easy to support the Federation's work on behalf of the well-being and continuity of the Jewish people in greater Fort Wayne, in Israel, and throughout the world.

Thank you for your support. It is sincerely appreciated!

Scan QR code to donate

R.O.M.E.O.s
(Retired Old Men Eating Out)

December 3 – Mad Anthony Brewing Company
2002 Broadway

December 17 – China Palace
5810 Bluffton Road

January 7 – BB's Indian Kitchen
3235 N. Anthony Boulevard

January 21 – Casa Ristorante
7545 W. Jefferson Boulevard

Anyone interested in joining the ROMEOs for lunch can contact Denny Reynolds at 260-637-0507 or dennisreynolds@me.com

2026–2027 Board of Directors

Officers:

President: Ben Eisbart
Vice President: Bob Walters
Secretary: Lee Pomerantz
Treasurer: Jaki Schreier
Executive Director: Michael Theise

Delegates-At-Large

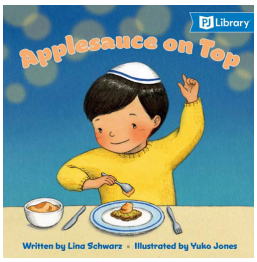
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Maureen Grinsfelder
Scott Salon
Eric Schreier
Ellen Tom
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Josh Wallet
Mimi Zelman

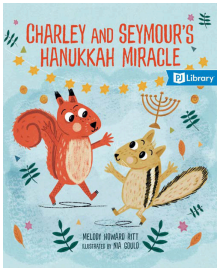
Rabbi Meir Bargeron

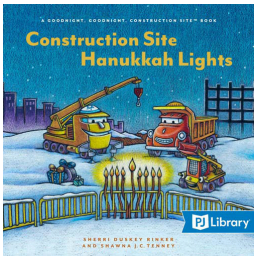
PJ Library®

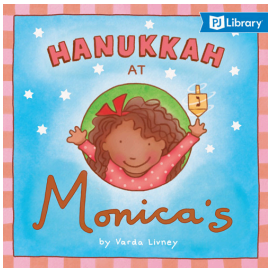
Which books did you receive this month?

A program of the Harold Grinspoon Foundation, PJ Library is made possible through partnerships with philanthropists and local Jewish organizations. Families with kids ages 6 months through 8 years old with Judaism as part of their lives are welcome to sign up.

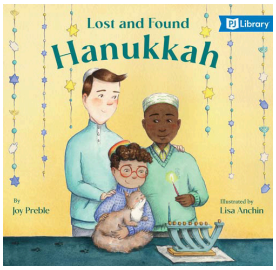


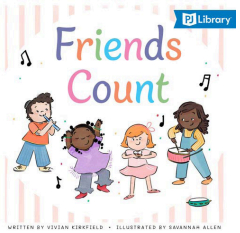


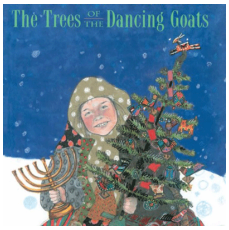












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PJ Our Way is for kids ages 9-11. It is kid-driven - they choose their own books, creating a totally tailored experience based on their own interests and reading level. To make the choice easier, our website includes summaries and author bios, along with ratings, reviews, and video trailers created by members themselves. Kids can also take polls and quizzes, participate in monthly interviews and challenges, post their own reviews, and comment on blog posts.

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