



Thank you for joining us for Day 2 of “Shine a Light on Antisemitism”. Tonight, Jews around the world will light the second candle in celebration of the second night of Hanukkah.

Today we have an ambitious agenda. We hope that you will select from the portions of our site that will help you to learn something new about Jews, Judaism and antisemitism. Our topics today explore:

- The origins of the Jewish people and what Jews believe
- The variety of ways Jews observe and practice Judaism
- The diversity of the Jewish people
- When being Jewish feels unsafe

For our Deep Dives we have included additional videos and articles on those topics. We also encourage you to watch the recent program sponsored by the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center – Fighting Back Against Hate – In Conversation with Bari Weiss, Eve Barlow and Noa Tishby.

## Who are the Jews? What is Judaism?

Judaism is an ethno-religion, meaning an ethnicity and a religion, originating in Judea (Israel) almost three thousand years ago.

Judaism is a monotheistic religion and follows the customs, traditions and laws of the *Torah* (Hebrew Bible).

**WATCH:** [Introduction to Judaism](#) (2:46)

Just like many other religions, there are a variety of ways Jews observe and practice Judaism. Some Jews strictly adhere to the *Torah*, Jewish laws and customs, while others are less traditional. Some Jews (by ethnicity) are atheist (with respect to religion). Some Jews were not born Jewish, but converted to and practice Judaism as a religion.

**READ:** [The Jewish Denominations](#)

Throughout history, Jews have been persecuted and many were forced to leave their ancestral homeland, dispersing to Africa, Eastern Europe, Asia, Spain and throughout the Middle East. In modern times, Jews fled from oppression and emigrated to the United States, Australia, Latin America, Western Europe and Canada. Jews living outside of Israel today are referred to as

living in the “diaspora”. Despite the displacement of many Jews from their homeland, Jews have continuously remained living in Israel.

The initial dispersions of Jews from Israel led to distinct, regional, sub-ethnic groups depending on where each group of Jews settled, maintaining their Jewish identities while developing regional customs.

**WATCH:** [Types of Jews: Ashkenazi, Sephardi, Mizrahi and More](#) (1:40)

**READ:** [Sephardic, Ashkenazic, Mizrahi and Ethiopian Jews](#)

**READ:** [Diversity has long defined America's Jewish community](#)

Although their traditions, interpretations and practices may vary, Jews still share a unified sense of cultural and religious Jewish identity.

## HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE JEWISH?

**Globally:** 15.2 million (just 0.2% of the world's population)

- **Israel:** 6.9 million
- **United States:** 6 million (The most recent [Pew Research](#) study of Jewish Americans estimates that 2.4% of US adults are Jewish)
- **Greater Rochester:** 18,911 Jews in the Greater Rochester area (City of Rochester, suburbs and adjoining towns and villages) (To review a wide variety of focused reports from the 2019 survey: “[Every Voice Counts](#)”)

## ROCHESTER JEWISH COMMUNITY COMPOSITION

Today, the Jewish people are more diverse than ever – ethnically, racially, religiously, geographically, gender identification and sexual orientation. In the Rochester community, the “Every Voice Counts” survey found approximately:

- 1,577 Jews who identify as “Jews of Color” from a variety of ethnic and racial backgrounds (out of approximately 18,911 Jews in the Greater Rochester area)
- 333 multi-racial households and/or families

## WHEN BEING JEWISH FEELS UNSAFE

Two-thirds of American Jews say they feel less safe than they did a decade ago — and the threat of physical violence has never felt more real. With antisemitism still a palpable threat across the globe, calling it out must be a fundamental part of living a Jewish life.

**WATCH:** [When Being Jewish Feels Unsafe](#) (6:36)

## DEEPER DIVES

For additional videos on the topics of Jews and Judaism, we invite to you to watch the following:

**WATCH:** [What makes a Jew?](#) (11:56)

**WATCH:** [History of Jewish Movements: Orthodox, Reform and Conservative](#) (5:25)

**WATCH:** [Ethiopian Jewry](#) (9:23)

**READ:** [Subjected to anti-Semitism and racism, Jews of color feel 'stuck in the middle'](#)

We have also included the recent 4-part Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center program -- State of the Union, Fighting Back Against Hate, in conversation with guest speakers Noa Tishby, Bari Weiss and Eve Barlow and moderated by Jamie Gutfreund. If you want to watch all on Day 2, we have included links to each part. While we will include links to Parts 2-4 on subsequent Days, we will also provide additional materials on antisemitism.

**WATCH:** [State of the Union Part 1 - World Wide War on Truth & Facts](#) (7:23)

**WATCH:** [State of the Union Part 2 - Fighting Antisemitism](#) (9:54)

**WATCH:** [State of the Union Part 3 - Advocating for the Jewish Community](#) (9:52)

**WATCH:** [State of the Union Part 4 - "Let's Discuss the Issues"](#) (7:38)

## ACT

Stand with the Jewish community against hate and antisemitism by joining us in one of these actions to show your support:

**PARTICIPATE:** *The Blue Light Project.* Stand against hate and “Shine a Light on Antisemitism” by replacing a light outside of your home or business with a blue light or placing a lamp with a blue light in your window from December through April 26, 2023 (Yom Ha'atzmaut, Israeli Independence Day). This project is a collaboration between the Jewish Federation and ROC Against Antisemitism.

The lightbulbs will be available for pick-up at the Louis S. Wolk Jewish Community Center.

**SPREAD THE LIGHT.** Take a photo of your blue light. Post it on social media. Tag the Jewish Federation of Greater Rochester to create a community collage. #ShinealightROC #BluelightROC. You can also email your photo to [info@jewishrochester.org](mailto:info@jewishrochester.org).

The blue light bulbs have been made available through the generosity of **Kovalsky-Carr Electric Supply** and have been sourced from the electrical supply business of Holocaust Survivor, Herb Gilden. Learn about his story here: [The Starfish](#).

**DISPLAY:** Like the town of Billings, place a menorah in your window during the 8 nights of Chanukah. We have included a link to a paper menorah: <https://bit.ly/3oRLQCI>