

TEMPLE BETH SHALOM

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From the Bimah: Our Rabbi's Message



Dennis Jones, Student Rabbi

A Time for Rededication

I cannot count the number of times I have been asked by my well-meaning Christian friends, “Hanukkah - isn’t that the Jewish Christmas?” This year, in particular, as our Christian neighbors gather around their trees or attend religious services on Christmas Eve, Jews will be lighting the first candle of their Hanukkiah at sundown to welcome the first day of Hanukkah. Coincidentally, we will be lighting our eighth, and last, candle on New Year’s Eve. What timing!! Now, I know my friends are only expressing an interest in my faith and a concern about things that are important to me, but how can I politely tell them that there is almost no similarity between Hanukkah and Christmas other than occurring at about the same time of year. In reality, the one major similarity the holidays do share, their

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commercialization, would not be considered a good thing by many people. Christmas, of course, marks the birthday of the central figure of the Christian faith and object of their worship. One might say that without Christmas there would be no Christianity. Judaism has no such central figure. Hanukkah, by comparison, is a relatively minor religious celebration commemorating the cleansing or rededication of a *holy place*. It was, for centuries celebrated very simply by just the lighting of candles, sharing of meals, and saying of prayers. In fact, most people are not aware that Hanukkah is not even mentioned in the Hebrew Bible. It does not rank among the major observances like the Sabbath, Passover, Shavuot, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and Sukkot, each of which is commanded several times in the Torah itself. Hanukkah's first mention in Jewish sources is in the books of First and Second Maccabees. These two books were not included in the Hebrew canon of scripture, but are assigned to a collection of writings known as the Apocrypha or Pseudepigrapha.

At a time in the second century before the Common Era, when the Syrian Greeks were occupying the Land of Israel and the holy city of Jerusalem and the practice of Judaism had been forbidden by the evil ruler, Antiochus Epiphanes, a small band of Jewish rebels rose up under the leadership of Mattathias, of priestly descent. Though vastly outnumbered and poorly equipped, these Jewish guerrillas, led by Mattathias' son, Judah, nicknamed "Maccabeus—The Hammer," succeeded in defeating the Syrian armies in battle after battle, ultimately taking back the city of Jerusalem, including the Holy Temple and the area surrounding it. Once the Temple was back in Jewish hands, attention was turned to the problem that the Temple had fallen into disrepair and had been defiled. Repairs were quickly made, and a new and undefiled altar was constructed. Then, according to tradition, three years to the day after Antiochus had defiled it, on the 25th day of the Hebrew month of Kislev, a festival was inaugurated for the cleansing and rededication of the holy place.

According to the Book of Maccabees (Chapter 4), the festival for the dedication of the Temple lasted eight days. That is not surprising to scholars because when Solomon built the first Temple he chose to dedicate it during the feast of Sukkoth, an eight-day festival. Since the Jews under Antiochus' harsh rule would not have been able to celebrate the festival of Sukkoth in the Fall, it is only natural that they would have wanted to do so, even belated, as a part of the Temple's rededication. It is not until Talmudic times (300-500 C.E.) that we find reference to the "miracle of the oil." The *Talmud* (Shabbat 21b-23a) tells us that, as a part of the rededication, vessels of undefiled oil were sought for the lighting of the menorah. According to the Torah (Exodus 27:20-21) the Temple menorah is to burn day and night perpetually. Unfortunately, only one vessel of oil was found uncontaminated, about enough to burn for one day. Miraculously, that one day's supply of oil burned for the eight days of the dedication—the time it took for a fresh supply of kosher olive oil to be prepared. Josephus, who also writes in the Roman period, referred to Hanukkah for the first time as the "Festival of Lights" (*The Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 13, Chapter 7).

Being a post-biblical holiday, for centuries Hanukkah was celebrated by Jews very simply with the lighting of a Hanukkiah, a nine canded menorah used specifically for Hanukkah evenings. Scholars

believe the exchange of gifts did not begin until relatively recently when Jews in areas where Christmas was celebrated with gift giving decided that in order to keep their own children from becoming jealous they too would begin to give gifts. Even so, Hanukkah gifts were quite modest, usually a small sum of money or Hanukkah “gelt.” It was not until the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and mostly in America, that that began to change. Dianne Ashton, professor of Religious Studies at Rowan University, in her book, *Hanukkah in America* (NYU Press, 2013), has shown how in America the evolution of Hanukkah and Christmas have gone hand in hand in many ways. The growth and development of both holidays has been fueled by rapid industrialization and the resulting blossoming of a consumer-based economy. The marketing around both Christmas and Hanukkah, designed to promote the consumption of goods, has led to the popularization of both holidays that is far beyond any celebrations that occurred in previous centuries. Now, nobody enjoys the benefits our free enterprise economic system more than I, however, I think most people would agree with me that the extreme commercialization of these holidays has detracted somewhat from their intended deeper spiritual meaning.

One of the wisest Rabbis of our own time, Jonathan Sacks, the former Chief Rabbi of the British Isles, writes, “Hanukkah is about the freedom to be true to what we believe without denying the freedom of those who believe otherwise. It’s about lighting our candle, while not being threatened by or threatening anyone else’s candle.” (<http://www.rabbisacks.org/>) The name *Hanukkah* is based on the Hebrew word, *chanak* (chet-nun-kaf), which means “to dedicate.” Remembering that our ancestors in centuries past struggled to maintain their religious freedom, and to rededicate the place considered most holy to them, should we not rededicate ourselves also to the things that matter most—faith, justice, and love? There is no doubt that the observance, prayers, acts of contrition, and seeking of forgiveness that we observe from Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur are of greater importance biblically and historically. But, we do have, during these cold winter months, an opportunity to *recommit* ourselves to the promises so recently made at Yom Kippur to uphold the high moral and ethical standards of our Jewish tradition. It is, in fact, the pursuit of these values which, according to the Hebrew Prophets and echoed in our *Aleinu* prayer, will hasten the knowledge and sovereignty of the Creator encompassing the entire earth. This year, as you observe your Festival of Lights, will you not pledge yourself anew to those values the Prophet Isaiah (4:6) says will one day make the Jewish people a “light to the nations”? Isaiah records God’s message to us: **“I will make *you* a light to the nations, so that *my* salvation may reach to the end of the earth.”** *Ken yehi ratzon*—May this be God’s will!!

The President's Message

Marsue Davidson, TBS President

The temple has been blessed by a number of people making donations which are deeply appreciated. Their mitzvot allow us to get some much needed renovation completed and keep our doors open to all, regardless of ability to pay dues or Sunday school fees. And managing all of this without having to raise dues in more than 16 years.

The temple is also able to support the community with donations to groups. We also like to hear from you, our members, of any special donations or charities that you would like us to support. Temple Beth Shalom is blessed with a congregation that freely expresses their wishes for continued improvement and giving and this is greatly appreciated by your Board of Directors.

Again this year, we enjoyed a fun and meaningful celebration of Sukkot. Thank you to Rabbi Dennis for making sure we had a wonderful sukkah to celebrate in. It was a beautiful day outside with the children and temple members sharing Sukkot together. Our younger children of TBS prepared decorations while the older children built the sukkah with Dennis. We gathered together for a meal and shared in the blessings of the Lulav and Etrog. It was a fun time for all who participated. (We noted that there was plenty of room in the sukkah for more TBS family and friends and hope next year we'll do a better job of filling it up).

We also celebrated Simchat Torah and read the beginning of the new year Torah readings. We learned about the cycle of Torah readings, and carried all our Torahs around the temple seven times. The Sunday School children all attended this service as part of their Sunday School commitment, and enjoyed the teachings of the Torah and Dennis' spiritual insight.

Time spent with family and friends reflects the Jewish values of family and community. We look forward to seeing everyone this month for our December services and the Torah reading.

Be safe and have a wonderful Hanukkah, shalom.



TBS Sunday School Program

Marsue Davidson, Director Sunday School



Our Sunday School program will meet at its regular time, 10am, and then have its annual Hanukkah festivities in conjunction with the Temple Beth Shalom Sisterhood Hanukkah Fair on Sunday, December 11th. TBS sisterhood will host the Temple Beth El Gift Shop again this year and we are making this event our TBS Hanukkah celebration!! The children will join in the fun of shopping for Hanukkah, making crafts, and eating snacks. We are inviting everyone from the temple to attend this special event

with Sunday School and Sisterhood.

The Temple Beth El gift shop will bring many items for Hanukkah from their store including kitchenware, jewelry, and games.

Sunday School parents, temple members and the Hickory community are all invited to share in this special event. Please mark your calendars and come check it out! You never know what treasures you might find! Join us for this wonderful event and community fellowship in support of the women and children of Temple Beth Shalom.

Don't forget to look at the last page of this bulletin for Sunday School dates, times, lesson plans, and services.

TBS Sisterhood

Lin Gentry, Sisterhood President

Our next meeting will be Tuesday, December 6th at 6:30pm at DaVinci's on Highway 127. I'll send out a reminder beforehand so you can let me know if you'll be there.

TBS Sisterhood is getting very excited about our annual Hanukkah fair coming up on Sunday, December 11th from 11am to 2pm. The gift shop from Temple Beth El in Charlotte will bring items to our temple so we don't have to shop online or drive far away to shop for Hanukkah. There will be hanukkiah, tallits, kippahs, jewelry, Hanukkah sox, kitchen items, toys and games, pottery, aprons, mezuzah, kiddish cups, challah covers, Shabbat candlesticks, and much, much more! Please save the date, put it on your calendar and set a notification---we'll have a great time shopping and enjoying each other. The Sunday School will meet downstairs from 10am to 12 noon that day, so the parents and families can shop! The first person to email me the word gelt will win a prize at our December meeting. This is a great social opportunity for everyone in the community, not just for sisterhood. If

there is something special you're interested in this year, let me know and I'll ask if they can bring it. Check out their Facebook page called "Discovered Traditions at Temple Beth El" to see their shop. Two great things about this event are that the gift shop's profits go toward supporting their religious school at Temple Beth El, and also our sisterhood gets a percentage of what gets sold at our temple on the 11th. Invite your friends and family to join us--it'll be lots of fun!

Harriet Sederholm Scholarship Fund



The Harriet Sederholm Scholarship Fund was established by a long-standing Temple member, Burt Sederholm, to honor his wife Harriet, who died shortly after her retirement after 25 years with the Catawba County Department of Social Services. Mr. Sederholm's efforts provided the initial funding from generous family members and friends and it has been added to over the years. The scholarship fund dividends are used to provide scholarship awards. **Scholarship awards are available to students, and may be used for college, summer camp, or other educational enrichment programs.** Temple members are looked upon favorably, but one does not need to be a temple member nor Jewish to apply. Candidates must submit an essay to any one of the committee members. The essay will explain who the candidate is, what they are doing currently, what their plans are for the future, how the scholarship funds will be used and, if applicable, what the connection may be to Jewish life.

Interested students should submit their essay by April 30th. The scholarship season runs from May 1-April 30. All applicants will be notified in writing if their application has been approved or declined by May 15th. Awards should be mailed to recipients by May 31st.

The essay should be emailed to any of the committee members: Lin Gentry, Julie Owens or Sandy Guttler. Naturally, the committee encourages everyone to make a tax-deductible donation to the Scholarship Fund at any time.

Temple Board

Our next board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 7th at 7pm. Board meetings are open to all temple members. Please join us and become a part of our TBS family,

TBS Board members are:

Student Rabbi:

Dennis Jones

Officers:

Marsue Davidson, President

Vice-President TBA

Treasurer - Susan Reider

Secretary - Tiffany Hull

Past President - Barbara Laufer

Members at Large:

Liz Correll

Marion DuBow

Debra Engelmann

Lin Gentry

Sandy Guttler

Pam Jones

Aaron Tosky

Karen Ferguson



Ritual Committee

Aaron Tosky (aaront9348@aol.com) is the chairperson of the Ritual Committee, and the members are Dennis Jones (rabbi), Jane Mandle, Pam Jones, Barb Laufer, Ron DuBow and Marsue Davidson (ex officio). They plan to update wedding and building use policies and the Temple Beth Shalom Index of Life Cycle Events (birthdays, anniversaries, and yahrzeit). Please provide any information you might want included in the Life Cycle Events. You may contact either Aaron or a committee member if you have any questions regarding temple ritual and/or have suggestions.

Simchas

Joy Kastan and her husband Peter invite everyone to attend Joy's Bat Mitzvah on Saturday, January 7th, at the 10am service at Temple Beth Shalom. They also invite everyone to a luncheon following the morning Shabbat service. We hope that you all will come to help Joy and Peter celebrate this very joyous and important occasion. Thank you all for setting this date aside for them.

TBS Member Business Directory

Dr. Ron DuBow
Internist, Geriatric Specialist
(elderly care) Pediatrician
2651 Morganton Blvd SW
Lenoir, NC 28645
828-757-8950

Dr. Laura Faruque of
A Womans View
915 Tate Blvd SE
Suite170
Hickory, NC 28602
828-345-0800

Dr. Mark Faruque of
Bethlehem Family Practice
174 Bolick Lane Suite 202
Taylorsville NC 28681
828-495-8226

Marsue Davidson, RN DCS
Unifour Nursing
805 W. 25th Street
Newton, NC 28681
828-464-0244
www.unifournursing.net

Robyn Diamond, Certified Health
and Wellness Coach, Specializing
in Digestive
Health and Stress Management
843-991-6338
Robyn@HealthHappyYou.com
www.HealthHappyYou.com

Temple Beth Shalom Life Cycle December Events

Birthdays

Nick Weatherly 12/3
Roberta Atkins 12/3
Kathy Jones 12/5
Pete Sobotkin 12/6
Herman Garrick 12/12
Pam Axler 12/12
Hannah Davidson 12/13
Barry Sobotkin 12/16
Ginny Sobotkin 12/18
Aviella Ogilvie 12/17
Eva Reid 12/28
Andrew Weatherly 12/29
Donnie Powell 12/30
Sarah Peltzer 12/31
Aaron Kane-Eames 12/31

Anniversaries

Larry and Barbara Laufer 12/17
Aaron Richards 12/17

Yahrzeits

Joseph Brisbane 12/5
Ruth Morewitz 12/7
Herman Davis 12/9
Helene Tiber 12/16
Arnold Simons 12/30

Member Business Directory (cont'd)

Professor Gitlin Hebrew Lessons
109 6th Ave NE
Hickory, NC 28601
828-328-9443

Alice Guy of
The Hickory Wine Shoppe
238 Union Square NW
Hickory, NC 28601
828-334-4441
Info@HickoryWine.com

Michelle Oxenberg Jordon
Managing Director of Design
3166 Main Ave. S.E.
Hickory, North Carolina 28602
828.322.3480 Ext. 271
michelle@robertabbey.com

Marc Fedder M.D., F.A.C.P.
Frye Care Internal Medicine of
Hickory
915 Tate Blvd Suite 186
Hickory, N.C., 28602
828-303-2131

Karen Ferguson, MAIT
Certified Professional in Learning
and Performance
KB Learning Designs
kblearningdesigns.com
karen.sederholm@gmail.com

Local and Regional Events

Looking for family entertainment this Fall? Here is a link to lots of local events.

<http://hickory.macaronikid.com/article/1319494/fall-events-festivals-in-hickory-and-western-piedmont>

A Holocaust survivor will be the guest speaker for:

HUMAN RIGHTS DAY SERVICE
December 10, 2016 at 4:00 pm
Episcopal Church of the Ascension
726 1st Ave NW, Hickory

Sponsored By: Catawba Valley Interfaith Council,

Human Rights Day commemorates the day on which, in 1948 following World War II, the United Nations adopted a Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It was the first global enunciation of human rights and one of the first major achievements of the United Nations. At this time in our history, when many people around the world are being denied basic human rights, it is appropriate for the community to be celebrating Human Rights Day. A meaningful part of the service on December 10th will be reading a proclamation by the City of Hickory lifting up the importance of this observance of Human Rights Day.

The theme for this year's celebration is "Stand Up for Human Rights" and the speaker for the occasion will be Renee Fink from Chapel Hill, NC who was sent into hiding from the Nazis at the age of four. She lived through a heavily bombed part of Holland during World War II. She will share an overview of the Holocaust and how it should speak to us today about our thoughts and actions related to human rights.

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CVIC is a newly formed organization striving to bring together faith based and secular communities for the purpose of dialogue, information sharing, and celebration in order to foster a compassionate community where all are accepted and respected.

Schedule for Rabbi Services and Sunday School 2016-2017

Date		Comments	Bulletin Deadline
December	9/10	Services 7:30pm / 10:00am	November 26
	11	Sunday School 10am and Sisterhood Hanukkah Fair/Party 11am - 2pm	
	25	First day of Hanukkah!!	
January	6-8	Services 7:30pm/Sunday School 10am	December 24
	22	Sunday School 10am	
February	3-5	Services 7:30pm/Sunday School 10am	January 21
	19	Sunday School	
March	10-12	Services 7:30pm/Sunday School/Purim (Megillah Reading/Party) 10am	February 25
	26	Sunday School 10am	
April	7-9	Services 7:30pm/Sunday School 10am	March 25
	11	Passover Community Seder (Tuesday) 6:00pm	
	23	Sunday School 10am	
May	5-7	Services 7:30pm/Sunday School 10am	April 22
	21	Sunday School 10am	
	30	Erev Shavuot Service (Tuesday) 7:30pm	
June	2-4	Services 7:30pm/Sunday School End of Year Party 10am	May 20

Submissions for the bulletin may be sent to Karen Ferguson at karen.sederholm@gmail.com. Please respect the posted deadlines. All submissions are reviewed by the TBS Board before publication.