

TEMPLE BETH SHALOM

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Temple Beth Shalom
P.O. Box 9142
Hickory, North Carolina 28603
www.hickoryjewishcenter.com



From the Bimah: Our Rabbi's Message

Rabbi Dennis Jones

The "Festival of Lights" is Upon Us!!

As we prepare for our blessed season of Hanukkah, I am still basking in the glow of what for me ended up being a meditative and moving Thanksgiving. With all the changes forced upon us by the novel coronavirus pandemic, I was feeling moody and self-absorbed about not being able to share a Thanksgiving meal with extended family and friends. That was all changed by a 23 second video clip of the late Jeopardy host, Alex Trebek, encouraging his viewers to be thankful, keep the faith, and be forward looking in spite of our current troubles, promising that we will be a "better society" for having gone through this. The thought of Mr. Trebek recording this hopeful message knowing that he was in the last stages of pancreatic cancer humbled me and moved me beyond words. I have watched the clip dozens of times, tearing up each time. If you have not seen it, check it out at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PPGHAN_Ij58, or just Google "Alex Trebek Thanksgiving Message."

With the increased spread of Covid-19, I am sure that our Hanukah will be very different this year as well. Yet this may be the closest parallel to the deliverance of our people in a time of adversity, as happened at Hanukah, that we have experienced in our lifetimes. You know that the history of the Jewish people for 4000 years is a litany of overcoming trouble, tyranny, and oppression, by the Hand of Adonai, and emerging stronger, more faithful, and more prosperous. I am optimistic that we will emerge from this battle with Covid-19 and be that “better society” of which Alex Trebek spoke.

You know I like to remind all my friends that Hanukah is **NOT** the Jewish Christmas. The one major similarity the holidays do share, their 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. Hanukah, 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 Hanukah 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. Hanukah’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 maniacal 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 (100-300 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 Hanukiah, a nine canded menorah used specifically for Hanukkah evenings. Historians 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 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 of blessed memory, the former Chief Rabbi of the British Isles, wrote, “**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.” While 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 also rededicate ourselves 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 import 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 social justice and peace, which according to the Hebrew Prophets and echoed in our *Aleinu* prayer, will hasten the acknowledgement and sovereignty of the Creator *encompassing the entire earth*. This year, as you observe your **Festival of Lights**, will you not pledge yourself to those values the Prophet Isaiah says will make the Jewish people a “light to the nations”? Isaiah records Adonai’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!!

President’s Message

Susan Goldstein, President

So -- have you ever wanted to visit Tbilisi, Georgia? Do you even know where it is? I didn’t until I received an email from the Jewish Federations of North America *Network of Independent Communities* (JFNA). JFNA, in collaboration with the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) invited me to go on a virtual mission to Tbilisi on Thursday, December 10, from 11:00am until noon. I thought, why not? It’s free, and I’ve never been to Georgia (the country, not the state).

We’re going to learn about the amazing history of the Georgian Jews, who trace their history back thousands of years, learn about delicious Georgian food, experience some Georgian dancing, enjoy a walking tour of Tbilisi, and celebrate the first night of Chanukah with the Georgian Jews.

Why don’t you join us? Just go to www.jewishfederations.org and scroll down to UPCOMING. Oh, and as I do just that, I see there’s a virtual mission to Washington, D.C. coming up on February 1st and 2nd. Wouldn’t want to miss it, so I’m going to mark my calendar and hope you’ll mark yours!

And, if you want to squeeze in some first rate learning before Chanukah, on Sunday, December 6th, from 1:00pm until 6:00pm, join Limmud North America for *A Festival of Jewish Ideas*. There are multiple classes from which to choose each hour. There’s a \$36 fee for this one, but MANY learning opportunities so it’s a bargain! Visit www.limmudna.com to register for the Limmud eFestival.

I look forward to seeing you on Friday evening, December 11th, at 7:00pm when we welcome Shabbat together virtually and light the second Chanukah candle.

Chag Chanukah Sameach!

Susan

TBS Sisterhood

Lin Gentry, Sisterhood President

This has been quite a year! It has seemed to drag, and yet, it's already December! My family had a very strange thanksgiving, with everyone in their own homes, trying to figure out how to make mom's special dishes. Lots of texts between my brothers and me. We weren't crowded around a huge table full of kids, with loud talking, and lots of wine. I hope your thanksgiving was safe and meaningful. Usually at this time of year, the sisterhood hosts the gift shop from Charlotte's Temple Beth El for our annual Hanukkah fair. We did it virtually this year, and Dee and Phillip were able to

deliver our treasures up to Hickory. Thank you to those who participated.



I'd like to do a Trivia night, for everyone, on a zoom. I'm thinking of a Saturday night-maybe January 2nd? Let me know what you think. Also, let me know how you want to do a 'book discussion'. Maybe that could be a Sunday afternoon? How about Jan 31st? Again, open to everyone. Maybe we talk about what we've read,

recently or a while

ago, that we'd like to tell others about. Please email me with your preferences on a date/time.

In the Torah portion for the week of Nov. 28, Vayitzei, most summaries say it's about Jacob leaving Beersheba and setting out



for Haran. However, a lot can be studied about the relationship between Leah and Rachel, and their relationship with G-d. There's competition, exchanges, and

collaboration between them, and they are the ones, along with Bilhah and Zilpah, who birth the People of Israel.





TBS Sunday School Program

Kathy Jones, Sunday School Principal

This month, Sunday School students continued their Hebrew studies and also delved into the meaning of *yachad*, or “unity”, as it relates to Judaism and the community. We also covered the history and traditions of Chanukah. Sadly, due to COVID-19, we will not be able to have our traditional Sunday School Chanukah party this year. But we will still have some fun! Craft projects and goodie bags will be delivered to the homes of all of our students during the week and all TBS friends and families are encouraged to light their Hanukiot together on the 2nd night of Chanukah, Friday, December 11th, at 7 PM, via Zoom. Then on Sunday, December 13th, at 10 AM, we will continue our annual tradition of playing Chanukah Bingo, although it will be done virtually on Zoom! The entire congregation is invited to play along with us. There are many prizes to be won! If you would like to play, email Kathy Jones at krsjones2002@yahoo.com. Participants will be emailed 4 Bingo cards, to print and play, as well as a video to view the available prizes. The Zoom invitation will be sent the day prior, on December 12th. Delivery of the prizes will be arranged with each player after the game. Let’s all play along!



Please Join TBS Sunday School for Our Annual Chanukah Party Bingo

When: Sunday Dec. 13, 2020

10:00 AM

Where: On line via Zoom (Link will be sent to you on Sat. Dec. 12th.)

How: Email Kathy Jones for Bingo Cards by **Dec. 3rd.**

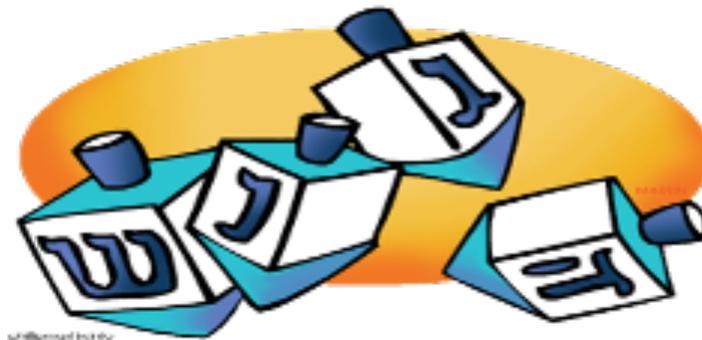
4 Cards will be emailed to you for printing:

Krsjones2002@yahoo.com

We will play the game as usual with the Bingo numbers being called out and each player crossing out the numbers on their cards until Bingo is called.

Prizes will be won and will be available for pickup at TBS at a scheduled safe time or, if you need assistance, will be delivered to your home.

Let's all enjoy each other's company, have some fun, and keep our tradition alive even during these difficult times!



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 is available to students. Temple members are looked upon favorably, but one does not need to be a temple member nor Jewish to apply. The scholarship fund dividends are used to provide scholarship awards. Candidates may 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, Karen Ferguson, 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 will be **Wednesday, December 9th, at 6:30pm via Zoom**. Board meetings are open to all temple members. Contact Susan Goldstein if you wish to join the meeting.

TBS Board members are:

Officers:

- Susan Goldstein, President
- Barbara Laufer, Past President
- Susan Rieder, Treasurer
- Tiffany Hull, Secretary



Members at Large:

- Liz Correll
- Mary Lee Tosky
- Karen Ferguson
- Linda Greenfield
- Lin Gentry
- Kathy Jones
- Amy Hedrick
- Susan Huitt
- Jodi Lavin-Tompkins

Donations



Donation received from the Cohn family to the Building and Grounds fund, for Landscaping, with thanks to Dr. David Peltzer and Rabbi Dennis Jones for the Ronald Jacob Cohn BRIS 9/17/20

TBS Gives through Donations

Our donation for December was sent to the Kwanzaa Inn

Do you have a favorite charity you would like us to donate to? Let us know.

Please consider these funds for your next donation:

Building and Grounds Security
Sunday School
Community Relations

TBS Message Board

Happy Chanukah and well wishes to my TBS friends from Burt Sederholm

If you wish to post a message to acknowledge a special event or achievement, condolence, or send a get well message, give or send your message and a \$5 donation to Temple Beth Shalom Message Board, PO Box 9142, Hickory, NC 28603. A greeting card will be sent acknowledging your donation and your message will appear here in the next issue of the TBS Bulletin.

TBS Community Mitzvah Projects

Recently, our neighbors living at the Hiddenite Family Campground, in Alexander County, experienced a flash flood which killed 5 residents, including a one-year old child. Thirty people had to be swift water rescued by emergency personnel. Not only did these families lose loved ones, but they also lost everything they owned, including their vehicles. Area Churches and agencies immediately put out the call for help. The Temple Beth Shalom Community Relations and Social Action Committee responded with a cash donation. In addition, several TBS members supplied bedding and household goods to help the families move into new campers donated by Samaritan's Purse. If anyone would like to give additional support, donations may be made to East Taylorsville Baptist Church, P.O. Box 906, Taylorsville, NC 28681 with a memo that it is for the "Hiddenite Campground Benevolence Fund".

Also, during the month of November, several TBS members donated furniture, small appliances, and cleaning supplies to help rehouse a homeless family of four. The family is thrilled to be back in a home of their own. In addition, TBS members, in cooperation with a local mental health agency, donated cloth face masks, warm scarves, hats, gloves, hygiene back packs, and tents to some of the area's homeless people who do not have shelter.

Thank you so much to everyone who donated and helped with these mitzvot. Increasing the well-being of humankind is one of the key elements of tikkun olam. TBS encourages all of its members to participate in *tzedakah* (justice and righteousness) and *g'milut hasadim* (acts of loving kindness) as individuals, but also as part of our Jewish community. This is especially critical right now due to the devastating effects of the pandemic. If you know of local organizations or individuals in need of support during this trying time, please contact the CRSAC Chairperson, Kathy Jones, at krsjones2002@yahoo.com.

TBS Member Business Directory

Let us know if you would like to list your business here in the Bulletin. It is a free benefit of TBS membership

Dr. Laura Faruque
A Woman's View
915 Tate Blvd SE
Suite 170
Hickory, NC 28602
828-345-0800

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

Ghiora Mehler
The Southern Chickpea
Falafel Truck
thesouthernchickpea.com
828-999-0496



Temple Beth Shalom Life Cycle December Events

Birthdays

Nick Weatherly 12/3	Ginny Sobotkin 12/18
Roberta Atkins 12/3	Ben Setser 12/21
Kathy Jones 12/5	Eva Reed 12/28
Pete Sobotkin 12/6	Andrew Weatherly 12/29
Herman Garrick 12/12	Donnie Powell 12/30
Pam Axler 12/12	Sarah Peltzer 12/31
Hannah Davidson 12/13	
Barry Sobotkin 12/16	

Anniversaries

Larry and Barbara Laufer 12/28
Henry and Linda Greenfield 12/31

Yahrzeit

Joseph Brisbane 12/5
Ruth Morewitz 12/7
Herman Davis 12/9
Helene Tiber 12/16
Justine Lavin 12/27
Arnold Simons 12/30

Local and Regional Events

Member Business Directory

Scott and Julie Owens
Taste Full Beans Coffeehouse
29 2nd St NW
Hickory, NC 28601
828-325-0108
www.tastefullbeans.com

Dr David Peltzer
Newton Family Physicians
767 West First Street
Newton, NC 28658
828 465-3928
www.newtonfamilyphysicians.com



Renowned Social Psychologist, Professor James Waller, on “Becoming Evil: How Ordinary People Commit Genocide and Mass Murder” -- In Commemoration of the Liberation of Auschwitz by the Red Army

This presentation will start on Tuesday, January 26, at 7:00 pm EST. Based on an evolutionary perspective, Prof. Waller offers an equally intriguing and disturbing psychological view of how (almost) anyone can participate in genocidal crimes. The event also marks and commemorates the 76th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz camps by a division of the Red Army’s First Ukrainian Front in January of 1945.

Like (almost) all CJHPS events, this online program is free of charge and open to the public. For more information, please contact the Center at 828.262.2311 or holocaust@appstate.edu. The Zoom registration will open in early January.

Temple Beth Shalom has an active membership in the Catawba Valley Interfaith Council, where Rabbi Dennis serves as president. You can find out more about this organization and its activities at: <https://www.facebook.com/CVICNC/>.



Follow this link for information about upcoming online events at SHI: <https://www.hartman.org.il/programs/>



When we get back to temple again, please consider pairing with a board member(s) to host a weekend at Temple Beth Shalom. When members contribute to the life of our synagogue in this way, we all feel a part of our Jewish community and an active participant in assuring its well-being.

Schedule for Rabbi Services and Sunday School 2020-21

Date	Event	Bulletin Deadline	
December	11 13 26 27	Virtual Friday Night Service (Second Night of Hanukah) 7PM Virtual School Hanukah Party 10AM Virtual Morning Service 10AM Virtual School 10AM	November 25 (Wed.)
January	8 10 23 24	Virtual Night Service 7PM Virtual Sunday School 10AM Virtual Morning Service 10AM Virtual Sunday School 10AM	December 26
February	5 7 20 21 26	Virtual Friday Night Service 7PM Virtual Sunday School 10AM Virtual Saturday Morning Service 10AM Virtual Sunday School 10AM Virtual Friday Night Service/Purim Megillah Reading 7PM	January 30
March	5 7 20 21 28	Virtual Friday Night Service 7PM Virtual Sunday School 10AM Virtual Saturday Morning Service 10AM Virtual Sunday School 10AM Virtual Passover Community Seder(Sunday) 6PM	February 27
April	9 11 24 25	Friday Night Service 7PM Sunday School 10AM Saturday Morning Service 10AM Sunday School 10AM	March 26 (Fri.)
May	7 9 16 22 23	Friday Night Service 7PM Sunday School 10AM Erev Shavuot Service (Sunday) 7PM Saturday Morning Service 10AM TBS Annual Membership Meeting (Sunday) 10AM	April 24
June	4 6 19	Friday Night Service 7PM Sunday School Final Session 10AM Saturday Morning Service 10AM	May 28 (Fri.)
July	9 24	Friday Night Service 7PM Saturday Morning Service 10AM	N/A

Want to contribute to the TBS Bulletin? Send entries to Karen Ferguson at karen.sederholm@gmail.com. All entries are reviewed by the TBS Board before publication.

Thanks to all who completed the online TBS Index Update form. If you were unable to complete the form online, please print and complete this page and submit it by email or snail mail.

TBS Index updates

To report updates to our list of **Birthdates**

Please include name and date (month and day) to be added. Is this a member, or what is this person's relationship to a member? Member name must be included.

To report updates to our list of **Anniversaries**

Please include names and date (month and day) to be added. Is one or both a member of TBS, or what is this couple's relationship to a member? Member name must be included.

To report updates to our list of **Yahrzeits**

Please include name and date (month and day) to be added. Was this a member, or what was this person's relationship to a member? Member name must be included.

**If you can scan and email your list please send it to: karen.sederholm@gmail.com
Or print and send by snail mail to: Karen Ferguson, 311 N Bridge St, Elkin, NC 28621**