

TEMPLE BETH SHALOM

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From the Bimah: Our Rabbi's Message

Rabbi Dennis Jones

Where Has 2022 Gone!?!?

I hope everyone had a festive and meaningful Thanksgiving with friends and family. Now that Covid-19 is diminishing in its effects on our world, things are beginning to feel a lot more normal. Just one more thing for us as American Jews to be thankful for. I cannot say enough what a privilege it is to live in a country with the level of prosperity, freedom, and human rights that we enjoy. And while that prosperity, freedom, and rights are not complete yet for every member of our society, we as a people are always working toward that founding principle. It is hard to believe that we have come to the last month of the 2022 calendar. Where has the year gone!?!? But that brings us to everyone's favorite winter holiday—Hanukah, another celebration of freedom, really!!

While our well-meaning Christian friends often confuse Hanukah with some type of "Jewish Christmas," I always like to remind people that it definitely is not!! 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 the 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 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 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 Hanukkah, a nine-candled 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 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 have 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 of our free enterprise economic system more than I do. 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, **“Hanukah 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 *Hanukah* 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 acknowledgment 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.”** At that time, according to the Prophet Amos, **“...justice [will] roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.”** *Ken yehi ratzon*—May this be God’s will!!

Message from TBS Board

Jodi Lavin-Tompkins, Member-at-Large

Hello fellow members of TBS,

It has come to our attention that the addition of a Caring Committee would add to making our congregation warm and welcoming. The duties of the committee are yet to be outlined, but generally, this type of committee provides support and outreach to members when needed or requested. I was on the receiving end of Caring Committee support when after we had a house fire when we lived in Minnesota, members of the committee brought us dinner the first few nights when our house was unlivable, and we had to be housed in a nearby hotel. Imagine how that made us feel! Well, now we want to give back and are looking for others who want to participate. Please send me an email at jodi.m.lavintompkins@gmail.com if you are interested in participating in this committee.

Warm Regards,

Jodi



TBS Sisterhood

Sheri Stock, Sisterhood President

Hello TBS!

Sisterhood hosted an amazing Hanukkah Fair in coordination with Temple Beth El! We sold \$2400 worth of merchandise, got a check for \$240, and several members got freebies and discounts! St. John made latkes and we ate them as fast as he could cook them! Thank you all for supporting Sisterhood!

And... the Hanukkah Fair continues! If you go to Temple Beth El's website (Discovered Traditions is the actual name of the gift shop) and type in TBS at checkout, you will get a discount! I will be picking up any items that are ordered and bringing them with me to services or to your house. Dee (the manager of Discovered Traditions) said she does not have a lot on the website right now, but if you contact her, she will help you find exactly what you're looking for! The phone number for Discovered Traditions is (704) 749-3060.

In other exciting news, St. John will once again be making homemade latkes for us for our annual Hanukkah Bingo! If you haven't tried one of his latkes.....you should! We will of course have applesauce and sour cream. We will also have ketchup and hot sauce for me since that's how I eat my latkes LOL.

On January 6th at 6 pm, Sisterhood will be hosting our first (and I hope this becomes a regular thing!) Shabbat dinner at the Synagogue! This will be a potluck meal. I will bring the main course, and it will be a pareve/dairy meal (Remember we cannot bring meat into the synagogue).

I hope everyone has an amazing Hanukkah and a very happy New Year!

Much love...Sheri



TBS Sunday School Program

Kathy Jones, Sunday School Principal

TBS Sunday School Program

TBS Sunday School is continuing to grow! We are now up to 17 children! Everyone is getting excited about the upcoming Hanukkah Party on Sunday, December 18th from 10 AM to 12:00 PM. The entire congregation is invited and encouraged to attend! We will be playing Bingo, with plenty of prizes for everyone, as well as having a luncheon filled with your

favorite Hanukkah foods and goodies! If you tasted and loved St. John Stock's latkes at the Hanukkah Fair on November 20th, he will be back for an encore performance at the party! So, please make plans to come!

During the Torah Service on Saturday, December 31st, one of our Sunday School long time students, Pierce Reed, will be having his Bar Mitzvah. He has been working hard on his portion and we hope everyone will attend and join us in celebrating his accomplishments!

Sunday School is raising funds by providing Hanukkah cards, wrapping paper, and gift card boxes to the congregation. They are available in the TBS foyer from now till Dec. 18th. A 50 cents donation per item is requested. The money will go to help the Sunday School with their annual community project (TBD).

As always, if you would like to know more about the TBS Sunday School Program, please contact Kathy Jones, Principal, at krsjones2002@yahoo.com



Harriet Sederholm Scholarship Fund

The Harriet Sederholm Scholarship Fund (HSSF) was established by a long-time Temple member and past President, Burt Sederholm (may his memory be a blessing), to honor his late wife Harriet, who died shortly after her retirement from

25 years with the Catawba County Department of Social Services. The scholarship committee is a sub-committee of the Temple Beth Shalom Board. The committee manages funds invested for the purpose of rewarding one-time scholarships with the earnings from the invested funds. These awards honor the memory of Harriet Sederholm and her efforts to improve the lives of so many impoverished adults and children in Catawba County.

The HSSF scholarship is available to students. Candidates will 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.

The committee will make decisions based on the following preferences but not absolutes:

- ◆ Is the applicant a temple member or related to a temple member?
- ◆ Is the applicant Jewish?
- ◆ Will the funds be used for educational needs?
- ◆ Will the funds make a difference regarding the applicant's ability to benefit from the activity?
- ◆ Is the activity something deemed to be of value by the committee?

Interested students should submit their essays 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 meeting is December 21st, at 6:30 pm at the temple and on Zoom. Board meetings are open to all temple members. Contact Susan Goldstein if you wish to join a scheduled monthly meeting.

Board members are:

Officers:

Susan Goldstein, President

Barbara Laufer, Past President

Mary Lee Tosky, Acting Vice President

Susan Rieder, Treasurer

Lin Gentry, Secretary

Members at Large:

Liz Correll

Karen Ferguson

Derek Cooperberg

Sheri Stock

Susan Tiger Huitt

Jodi Lavin-Tompkins

**The TBS board thanks
you for your donations**



**TBS monthly donations to local charities
went to Hospice in November, and
Kwanzaa Family Inn for the month of
December**

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



Please consider pairing with a board member(s) to host a Shabbat or Holiday 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.

TBS Community Mitzvah Projects

Thanks, this month go to Jodi and Rhett Lavin-Tompkins for their donation of a bed to help a future family in need, Micah and Amanda Baumfeld for their generous financial donation to Sisterhood for challah supplies, and to Roy and Sarah Ashkenaz for donating six more plush Torah scrolls to help our children participate in the Torah Services! These are the types of Mitzvot that help us continue to be a caring and giving community!

The cold weather is back and the homeless in our community need warm clothes and supplies. Please consider donating new or gently used:

Gloves, hoodies, coats, knit hats, thick socks, knit scarves, sweatshirts, sweatpants, hand warmers, sleeping bags, and backpacks (all sizes).

You may bring these items to services at TBS during the month of December. There is a donation box in the foyer for you to place them in. CRSAC members will deliver all donated items to local homeless shelters at the end of the month.

If you are unable to attend services to drop off items and need someone to pick them up or you would like to donate funds to use toward this mitzvah project, or any other one, please contact the CRSAC Chairperson, Kathy Jones, at krsjones2002@yahoo.com

TBS MESSAGE BOARD

This space is reserved for members to send kind notes and acknowledgements to one another. If you wish to have your message printed here, please send it to Karen Ferguson, karen.sederholm@gmail.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

Jack and Hannah Levy
Druzy Dreams Crystals
<http://www.etsy.com/shop/druzydreamscrystals>

Dr. David Peltzer
Newton Family Physicians
767 West First Street
Newton, NC 28658
828 465-3928
www.newtonfamilyphysicians.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
- Ben Setser 12/21
- Eva Reed 12/28
- Andrew Weatherly 12/29
- Donnie Powell 12/30
- Sarah Peltzer 12/31

Anniversaries

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

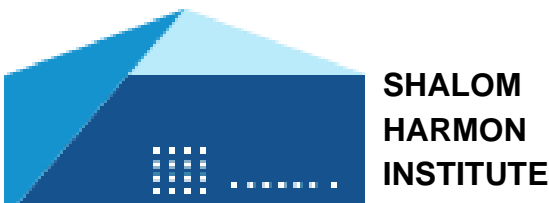
Yahrzeits

- Joseph Brisbane 12/5
- Ruth Morewitz 12/7
- Fannye Katzin 12/7
- Herman Davis 12/9
- Helene Tiber 12/16
- Judith Katzin Coen 12/17
- Justine Lavin 12/27
- Arnold Simons 12/30

Local and Regional Events



Many ASU events are open to the public (in-person and virtually). For more information, go to: <https://holocaust.appstate.edu/events>, or contact the Center at 828.262.2311 or holocaust@appstate.edu.



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

Temple Beth Shalom has an active membership in the Catawba Valley Interfaith Council, where Rabbi Dennis served as president for 5 years and now serves as secretary. You can find out more about this organization and its activities at: <https://www.facebook.com/CVICNC/>.

Schedule for Rabbi Services and Sunday School 2022-2023

For event updates, email: info@hickoryjewishcenter.com

DATE	EVENT	BULLETIN DEADLINE
December	2 Friday Night Service 7:00 PM	November 20
	4 Sunday School 10:00 AM	
	18 Sunday School Hanukah Party/Bingo 10:00 AM	
	31 Saturday Morning Service 10:00 AM	
January	13 Friday Night Service 7:00 PM	December 18
	15 Sunday School 10:00 AM	
	28/29 Saturday Morning Service 10:00AM/ Sunday School 10:00 AM	
February	11 Saturday Morning Service 10:00 AM	January 22
	12 Sunday School 10:00 AM	
	24 Friday Night Service 7:00 PM	
	26 Sunday School 10:00 AM	
March	6 Erev Purim Service/Megillah Reading 7:00 PM (Monday)	February 19
	11/12 Saturday Morning Service 10:00 AM/ Sunday School 10:00AM	
	24 Friday Night Service 7:00 PM	
	26 Sunday School 10:00 AM	
April	6 Passover Community Seder 6:00 PM (Thursday)	March 19
	15/16 Saturday Morning Service 10:00AM/ Sunday School 10:00 AM	
	28 Friday Night Service 7:00 PM	
	30 Sunday School 10:00 AM	
May	6/7 Saturday Morning Service 10:00 AM/ Sunday School 10:00 AM	April 23
	19 Friday Night Service 7:00 PM	
	21 TBS Annual Membership Meeting 10:00 AM (Sunday)	
	25 Erev Shavuot Service 7:00 PM (Thursday)	
	28 Sunday School 10:00 AM	
June	3/4 Saturday Morning Service 10:00 AM/ Sunday School Final Session/Party	May 21
	23 Friday Night Service 7:00 PM	
July	8 Saturday Morning Service 10:00 AM	N/A
	21 Friday Night Service 7:00 PM	

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.