

Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey Journal

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Rabbi's Message

Dear Friends,

Generally speaking, while the commercial culture in which we live has raised Chanukah to the level of one of the “big deal” holidays, religiously speaking, we know that it isn’t. It’s not mentioned in the Hebrew Bible. We don’t spend hours worshipping in temple. There is no fasting. All in all, according to the rabbis of tradition, Chanukah is listed as one of the “Minor Holidays.” Still, though, all commercial considerations aside, I believe firmly that in times like today, when there is so much chaos and threat to civilized life, we would do well to focus a little more thought, and a little more weight, on our celebration.

Historically, the festival of Chanukah commemorates the victorious Maccabean revolt against Antiochus IV, whose troops had taken our Temple, barred us from using it, and desecrated it beyond imagination. Then, having liberated the Temple from the Greeks through battle, our Maccabean ancestors found enough oil to keep what was supposed to be an eternally burning menorah (to represent the eternal presence of God amongst us) lit for just one day. The miracle that we celebrate each year, of course, is that that tiny bit of oil kept burning until replenishment could be secured and brought back to the temple. That is, one day’s worth of oil kept burning for eight full days.

(continued on next page)

Calendar of Events

Friday, December 8

6:00pm: Dinner & Shabbat Evening Service
New members & Chanukah
(see Pg. 4)

Saturday, December 9

10:30am: Torah Study on Zoom (see Pg. 5)

Sunday, December 10

9:30am: Chanukah Party &
Community B’yachad

Friday, December 15

5:00pm: Last Night of Chanukah
Happy Hour - Sisters Only (see Pg. 6)

Saturday, December 16

9:30am: Hebrew School
10:45am: Shabbat Morning Service
Kiddush/Lunch to follow

Sunday, January 7

9:30am: Hebrew School

Monday, January 8

7:00pm: Board of Trustees Meeting

Friday, January 12

7:00pm: Shabbat Evening Service

Note: Most in-person events will also be available virtually on Zoom.

Rabbi's Message (continued)

Our Chanukah celebration focuses on that miracle. In a wonderful spirit of joy and play, we light candles, give gifts, eat delicious oil-fried latkes and *sufganiyot* (donuts) . . . eight days of Happy Chanukah Hoopla.

I suggest, though, that there's more for us to do.

Chanukah comes from the Hebrew root כ-נ-ח (Chet-Nun-Chaf), which means "to dedicate," or "to consecrate." Named thus, the thrust of the commemoration is not on the oil that lasted so wondrously, but on the **consecration** of the holy sanctuary we managed to reclaim. Indeed, Judah sent his forces into the Temple and had it rebuilt and cleaned, so that we could resume the holy work we so desperately yearned to do.

So, yes, let's celebrate miracles this year, but if we really want to honor the essence of Chanukah, I would say that we should be thinking about how we can rededicate the sacred spaces in our lives, and in our hearts. Perhaps there are spaces that we have handed over to others unwittingly, or inner gifts we've let go to waste. This is a perfect time to take pause, reclaim our sanctuaries (at both 115 Youmans Avenue, and elsewhere, too) and rededicate our focus to all that is good. And then . . . let's go ahead and eat some donuts.

Chag Chanukah Sameach (Happy Chanukah),

Rabbi Dubin



President's Message

This has been a very difficult time for us Jews in America. As we watch the war with Hamas, we have such mixed feelings. We want to destroy Hamas, as their stated goal is to remove Israel from the face of the earth, but we also can't ignore the overwhelming destruction that has come to innocent Gazans with the IDF's campaign against the actual enemy.

I hear from many people – young people especially – how they are having sympathy for the Palestinians. I, too, have sympathy for them. I, too, do not want to see any loss of life other than Hamas terrorists. And even then, my preference would be to capture them rather than kill them, as any loss of life is unacceptable to a Jewish person.

So there is a dilemma here on how to feel. Sitting in our ivory towers in the US, where bombs are not falling on us, it is easier to feel for both sides, but sometimes you need to take a stand and decide which of the alternatives is better.

For me, I stand with Israel. Israel's not perfect, because no nation is perfect, but it is the only democracy in the Middle East. They are a powerful ally to the United States. It is the only place in the world where Jewish people can say they are truly "home." And if you think that because we are Americans that Anti-Semitism will not affect us, look back at pre-Nazi Germany. Most of the Jewish people in Germany considered themselves Germans first and Jews second. I see the danger of that same mindset in this country, including myself. But when Anti-Semitism rears its head and violence descends upon the Jewish people of this country, no Jew will be safe – regardless of how they reacted to the current war. That is not how Anti-Semitism works.

As you work your way around this issue, finding the "correct" answer to how we should react will never be easy. We need to educate ourselves, read and listen to as many perspectives as we can, and do our best to figure out what is the best path forward.

May the hostages all be brought home safely, and may the conflict be over with as little damage to both the Israelis and the Palestinians, and may Hamas be rendered ineffective as to be able to cause damage to Israel – nor the innocent residents of Gaza – anymore.

Howie



Updates & Events

DONATIONS

In memory of Barbara Simons
- Trucilla Sabatino & Stephen Melnick

In memory of Elaine and Jessica Hirsch
- Howie Hirsch

For Giving Tuesday
- Adam Tucker
- Suzi Marr
- Lydia Cotz
- Ruth Schutzbank

SPIELERS WANTED

Heads up for our Purim Spiel! Anyone interested in the crazy fun please let me know. I'm not sure what the theme will be yet but whatever it is we will have our usual blast!

Rehearsals will begin in January, usually after Sunday school but we will go with the flow with our fluid schedule.

The Spiel performance will be March 22nd.

I hope you will join in!

Your dedicated Spiel Director,
Debbie Apsel
Debapsel@gmail.com

NOVEMBER YAHRZEITS

Mike Weiner	Husband of Diane Margolin
Charlotte Rems	Mother of Linda Margolis
Klaire Katz	Mother of Marsha Gross
Phillip Peck	Cousin of Edythe Herson
Max Weil	Father of Ruth Schutzbank
Jean Siegel	Mother of Rhonda Jordan
Dora Melnick	Mother of Barbara Simons
Elaine Lavine	Grandmother of Teri Stanton
Leslie Apsel	Mother of Debbie Apsel
Nannette Hoffman	Cousin of Edythe Herson
Richard Herson	Husband of Edythe Herson
Shelley Herson	Brother-in-law of Edythe Herson
Molly Finkelstein	Mother of Shelley Finkelstein
Art Lavine	Grandfather of Teri Stanton
Jackie Spinner	Mother of Robin Hall
Jessica Hirsch	Daughter of Iris and Howie Hirsch
Laurette Fromer Pinn	Mother of Helen Mattson
Mary Saylor Kalb	Wife of Gerry Kalb
Lisa Greene	Sister of Sandy Kahan

Note: If any Yahrzeit information is missing or incorrect, please notify the Temple.

NEW MEMBER SHABBAT

Please join us for our New Member Shabbat Service next Friday night, December 8th at 7:00 p.m. We will enjoy dinner together before services beginning at 6:00 p.m.

ALSO... Remember to bring your Hanukkiot and candles as we celebrate Hanukkah together at this Shabbat Service.

We hope you can join us as we welcome our new members and celebrate Hanukkah together!

Updates & Events

TORAH STUDY

The Torah study group is an informal discussion group, led by Rabbi Dubin and participants. We take turns reading and discuss the paragraphs/chapters as we go. We often touch on/get really into contemporary events, even though we are reading the first book of Samuel.

We are coming up on the stories of King Saul, and David and Goliath. At our next meeting (December 9 on Zoom), we will be starting chapter 9 (1 Samuel: 9), which begins the story of the first king of the Israelites (Saul). The group is open to all. Try it, you might like it!

FOOD DRIVE

Thank you for your participation in the High Holiday food drive. We will continue to be able to accept non-perishable food items at the temple. We are also holding a coat drive at this time to provide for those in need during the upcoming winter.

The food pantries are in dire need of supplies to fill their shelves as more and more people are in need and your generosity will help fill that need.

Thank you for your continued support!
-Iris

BUILDING UPDATE

If you notice that something is running low and needs to be replaced (either in the bathrooms or kitchen), please let me know.

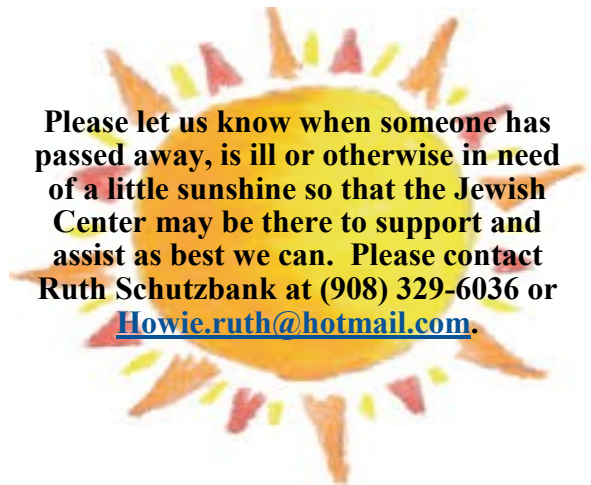
You can either call or email me at irishirsch@comcast.net or 908-850-1030.

Thank you.

Iris

A Reminder from the Sunshine Committee

Please let us know when someone has passed away, is ill or otherwise in need of a little sunshine so that the Jewish Center may be there to support and assist as best we can. Please contact Ruth Schutzbank at (908) 329-6036 or Howie.ruth@hotmail.com.



Chaverim

A reminder: Sisterhood is now Chaverim, which means “friends” in Hebrew. That means that EVERY adult is welcome. Dues are \$18.00/year and should be sent to Ruth Schutzbank. We use the dues to pay for temple activities during the course of the year.

As we have done for many years in the past, members have committed to donating Chanukah gifts for Jewish residents at the Hunterdon Developmental Center in Clinton. Many thanks to Suzi Marr for organizing and publicizing the list and collecting many of the gifts; to Marsha Gross for designing and producing unique gift cards to accompany the individual gifts; to Karen Finkelstein for taking the gifts to the Developmental Center; and to all those who donated the variety of gifts requested by the more than twenty individuals on the list.

On the first night of Chanukah, Thursday, December 7th, ADULTS ONLY are invited to Scotty’s Stadium Club, 15 Belvidere Ave, Washington. Arrive any time after 6pm. JAM (with Howie Hirsch and Paul Tarlowe, among others) starts at 7:30. Suzi is bartending. Spouses and partners welcome! On the second night of Chanukah, Friday, December 8th, the JCNJW welcomes new members with an Italian-themed dinner at 6pm and a Chanukah Shabbat service at 7pm, followed by a Chanukah Oneg. Look for a sign-up sheet for dinner (not a potluck, we’ll just need to know how many are coming). Bring your chanukiah & candles to light.

On the third day of Chanukah, Sunday, December 10th, join in the Chanukah party for EVERYONE, with craft, music, and food. Please bring a dozen latkes to share.

On the last day of Chanukah, ADULT SISTERS ONLY are invited to gather at the Inn at Glen Gardner at 5pm for a Happy Hour. Come join us for delicious appetizers and beverages (161 Main Street, Glen Gardner).

Please see the next page for the full-year schedule of events.

Upcoming Chaverim Events at JCNWJ:

Dec 7 – First night of Chanukah - celebrate at Scotty's Stadium Club - 6pm

Dec 8 – Second night of Chanukah - Dinner & Shabbat - new member and Chanukah celebration - 6pm

Dec 10 – Community b'yachad followed by Congregational Chanukah Party - noon

Jan 7 - Fiddler on the Roof at Paper Mill Playhouse, See info on Pg. 5

Jan 28 – Sharon & Risa's 80th birthdays AND "Craft with Teri" Japanese Knot bag. \$6 + material / supplies. Refreshments.

Feb 4 – Mishloach Manot and Passover Wine Fundraising meeting

March ?? — group trip to NYC to see SIX on Broadway. Drive in or take the train/subway together. Meet & depart from temple. We need group of 10 for group discount. See info on Pg. 5

March 22 -- Purim Schpiel & Mishloach Manot Distribution [please pick up]

April 13 – 7:30pm Havdalah, followed by Judaica SWAP Fundraiser & Cocktail Party

May 19 – Annual Mother's Day Tea Party - 1pm

June – annual congregational meeting [no Chaverim meeting this month]

Weekly Wednesday Night Yoga w/ Gina @ The Barn Belvidere, NJ - Spoonful of Om - special monthly rate available.

JOIN us on FB at "***JCNWJ members only***" page for updates and/or add "***WhatsApp***" to your smart phone to get current updates. We look forward to seeing you all at these events!

Questions, please call Suzi 908.343.1135

With warmest regards,

Suzi Marr & Beth Lappin
JCNWJ Sisterhood Co-Chairs

Sponsors



*Serving All Families
As Our Own*

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