

TEMPLE BETH OR 40 YEARS

The Light

December 2024

☆ Today...and for Generations ☆

Volume XXXIX, Issue 11

The Maccabees and the IDF: Courage Across the Ages



As Hanukkah approaches, we look forward to lighting candles, enjoying latkes, exchanging gifts, and spinning dreidels in celebration of the Festival of Light. This joyous season commemorates the ancient

victory of the Maccabees—a small yet determined group of Jewish fighters—who defied the mighty Seleucid Greek Empire. Against overwhelming odds, they reclaimed their land, rededicated the Temple, and preserved their faith and culture for future generations.

Since our modern-day Hanukkah celebrations are somewhat frivolous, we tend to forget that they commemorate a Maccabean Revolt (167–160 BCE) marked by terror, loss, and fierce resolve. It was a struggle not only for survival but for the right to live as Jews in their homeland. Today, the Jewish state faces a similarly daunting battle, contending with a seven-front war against terrorism.

As we light the menorah this year, we reflect on the striking parallels between these two struggles. Just as the Maccabees fought to safeguard their identity and freedom, modern-day Israel continues to battle for its survival against forces seeking its destruction.

Over 2,000 years ago, Judea faced the oppressive rule of the Seleucid Greeks, who sought to erase Jewish practices and impose Hellenistic culture. The Maccabees, led by Judah and his family, fought not for conquest but to protect their faith, their way of life, and their



homeland. Their courage and determination became a defining chapter in Jewish history.

Today, the threats have evolved. Israel now faces terrorism—indiscriminate rocket attacks, assaults on civilians, and organizations openly committed to its annihilation. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) stand as the shield against these threats, embodying the same unyielding courage and resilience as the Maccabees of old.

So, this year, let us honor their bravery by standing with Israel, deepening our understanding of the challenges it faces, and fostering hope for a future of peace. This Hanukkah, as we kindle our candles, may we also honor the men and women of the IDF—the modern-day Maccabees—who defend freedom, security, and the enduring spirit of the Jewish people. May their sacrifices pave the way for peace in a precarious region, and may their victories, like those of the

Maccabees, become stories of triumph celebrated for generations.

As we pray for the swift conclusion of Operation Iron Swords (October 7–present), let us hope it does not last as long as the Maccabean Revolt, and that it too will bring true victory, security, and peace. May the day come when we sing songs, share symbolic foods, and light candles to celebrate a hard-earned peace.

May the increasing light of the Hanukkah lights
Dispel the darkness of the global Jewish crisis,
Bring miraculous blessings from the Holy One,
And protect today's IDF soldier-Maccabees.

Hag Sameach,
Rabbi Judy Chessin



THE LIGHT

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Our Lives

Do you have news or need prayers? Contact the Temple office at 937-435-3400 to share a birth, marriage or seek get-well wishes. Your congregation cares about you!

The congregation sends prayers of *Refuah Shlema* to:

Sarah Adams, Hagen Blimbaum, Arlene Graham, Melissa Guadalupe, Neil Kahn, Benjy Klein, Anne Rosset, Ron Solomon, Laurie Verson, and Peter Wells

The congregation extends its deepest sympathy to

Rabbi Judy Chessin and family on the passing of her father Newton Chessin
Brian and Jessica Simpson on the passing of her stepfather William B. "Bill" Hershey III

December *Yahrzeit* Remembrances

Temple Beth Or remembers our loved ones on the Sabbath nearest the anniversary of their passing or *yahrzeit*. The following names will be read during services this month.

December 6

Genevieve K. Ryan 12/4
Dennis James Hammonds 12/5
Franklin Mugford 12/7
Irene Sachs 12/7
Greg Lindsay 12/8
LaDonna Sowry 12/8
Dr. Stuart M. Denmark 12/9
Lillian Reich Herrmann 12/9
Deanna Pickard 12/9
Herbert Remer 12/9
Bertha Troy 12/9
Isaac Char 12/10
Pearl Farber Stein 12/10

December 13

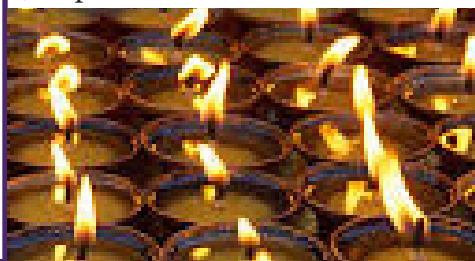
Richard Kirtland 12/11
Robert Walder 12/11
Martin Berks 12/12
Harry Solganik 12/12
Barbara Shackelford 12/13
Elaine Kramer 12/14
Leatrice Phillips 12/15
Dr. Leon Rosenbaum, Jr. 12/15
Joseph Bettman 12/17

December 20

Dorothy Dicker 12/18
Bruce Holroyd 12/18
Mary Francis Bauer 12/19
Lillian Skelley 12/20
Stephen Meyers 12/21
Matilda Moltz 12/21
Melvin Bressler 12/22
Rochel Turetsky 12/22
Herman Skiller 12/23
Ruth Alexander 12/24
Sidney Alexander 12/24
Jordan Bettman 12/24
Ronald Bressler 12/24
Ruth Hoffman 12/24
Eric Segalewitz 12/24
Patricia Throckmorton 12/24

December 27

Ralph Lehman 12/26
Harry Patterson 12/26
Richard Flagel 12/27
Joan Summers 12/27
Rae Engel 12/28
David Hochstein 12/28
Carl Hoffman 12/28
Joan Lehman 12/28
Cecelian Levy 12/28
Sylvia Cohen 12/29
Reuben Miller 12/30
Esther Reich 12/30
Helen Ruth Goldstein 12/31
Mandy Stamper 12/31
Dorothy Westmoreland 12/31



We Couldn't Do It Without You!

Temple Beth Or could not accomplish anything without teamwork. Thanks to every contribution of prayer, time and funds, we can fulfill our mission of being a warm, welcoming place for ALL.

Financial Donations

General Fund

In Memory of:

Helen Reger
 Sharyn Reger
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 Sharyn Reger
 Richard Flagel
 Marni Flagel

In Memory of:

Elaine Kramer
 Penney and Douglas Poling
 Stuart M. Denmark
 Linda and Scot Denmark

In Appreciation of:

Mark Gruenberg as Temple President
 Lori Roth

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

In Memory of:

Samuel Lauber
 Ellen and Aaron Lauber
 Newton Chessin
 Gary Holstine
 Marni Flagel
 Raymond Lemberg
 Gary Holstine

Campership Fund

In Memory of:

Larry Briskin
 Dena Briskin
 Felice Arst
 Dena Briskin

Special Thank You

A special thanks to those magnificent hosts and chefs who made our *Simchat Torah* Hope for the Hostages dinner a success. The program was sponsored by Miriam De La Cruz, Angela Gruenberg, and Annie Self, each of whom contributed amazing delicacies. A shout out to our challah chef, Bill Kirtland; and Scott Segalewitz for contributing delicious bourekas. All hostages were remembered and shared a virtual seat at our tables. May they come home soon and enjoy their favorite foods with their loved ones.



Temple's many funds provide a meaningful way to mark the life cycle events we all experience. From a birth to a graduation, from the recovery from an illness to a promotion or marriage, we all experience joy and sadness throughout our lives. To express your caring and concern, please send your tribute card and minimum \$10 donation to the Temple office. All donations are tax deductible.

Thank you to our Donors!

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 Annie and Craig Self
 Jo Anna Szymborski

Celebrating Our First Festival of Lights with Eliana



This year, Rachel and I have the joy of celebrating Hanukkah with Eliana for the very first time. As we prepare for these eight nights of light, warmth, and wonder, I find myself reflecting on the symbolism of Hanukkah and the unique

opportunity to see the holiday through Eliana's curious eyes. There's a timeless beauty in the glow of the Hanukkah candles, but this year, that glow feels even more radiant as we anticipate the light of Eliana's joy illuminating our home.

Hanukkah is often understood as a holiday of miracles—the miracle of the oil that lasted eight days, and the miracle of the Maccabees' victory against all odds. Yet, as we prepare for this Festival of Lights, I find myself drawn to the quieter, everyday miracles Hanukkah celebrates—the miracle of resilience, the miracle of hope, and the miracle of light itself.

The Talmud in Shabbat 21b teaches us about the *mitzvah* (commandment) of lighting the Hanukkah menorah. It specifies that the candles should be placed outside the home, visible to those passing by, to publicize the miracle. This year, as Eliana gazes at the flickering flames for the first time, I hope to be reminded that the miracle of Hanukkah is not just about what happened long ago but about the light we continue to kindle in the world today. We light our hanukiah not only to remember but to inspire—to illuminate our homes and, in turn, to bring light to others.

Eliana's presence in our lives is a light all her own. As Rachel and I prepare to share these Hanukkah traditions with her, I think about the teaching in Proverbs (20:27): "*The soul of a person is the lamp of God.*" Each of us carries a divine spark within us, and as parents, we are privileged to nurture that spark in Eliana. Just as the *shamash*, the helper candle, ignites the other candles on the Hanukkah menorah, so too do we strive to ignite within her a love of Judaism, a passion for justice, and a commitment to bringing light to a sometimes dark world.

Hanukkah is also a time to reflect on perseverance and hope. The Maccabees faced overwhelming odds, yet they stood firm in their beliefs and fought to preserve their traditions. In the words of Rabbi Nachman of Breslov: "*The whole world is a very narrow bridge, but the main thing is not to be afraid.*" This teaching resonates deeply with the story of Hanukkah, and it resonates with us as



new parents. Each day with Eliana brings new joys and challenges, and while the path of parenthood can feel like a narrow bridge at times, the light of her presence strengthens us, reminding us not to be afraid.

Finally, Hanukkah is a celebration of renewal and rededication. The Hebrew word Hanukkah means "dedication," a reminder of the rededication of the Temple after its desecration. For Rachel and me, this holiday marks a rededication to the sacred work of parenting, to creating a home filled with love, Jewish values, and the kind of wonder that lights up a child's eyes.

As the Hanukkah menorah's candles grow brighter with each passing night, may we all reflect on the light we bring to our own homes and communities. May the teachings of Hanukkah guide us to appreciate the miracles—both large and small—that fill our lives. And may the light of our *hanukiah*, like the light in Eliana's eyes, serve as a reminder of the divine spark within each of us, a spark capable of kindling a flame of hope, resilience, and joy.

Rachel, Eliana, and I wish you all a Hanukkah filled with light, laughter, and love. May we all, like those who came before us, find strength in our traditions and inspiration in the glow of the candles we light together.

Chag Urim Sameach—Happy Hanukkah!
Rabbi Ben Azriel

President's Message

I wish you all health and happiness for Hanukkah and for the new year.

We Need Your Help

As we get close to the end of the year, I would like to ask you to consider how you can use some of your extra time. Please help me, fill in some gaps and make the member experience for everyone at Temple Beth Or a positive one. Here are some of the areas where we need help:

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| Bookkeeping | Temple Watch |
| Marketing | Audio Visuals (<i>Shabbat</i>) |
| Human Resources | Sponsor an <i>Oneg</i> |
| Facilities | Join Torah Study on the 1st and 3rd Saturday |
| Membership | Usher for a Friday night service |
| Adult Education | Sing with the Choir |

Let me know if you have other talents to contribute to the Temple.

Artisan Fair and Brisket Sale — Sunday December 8 from 10a to 2p
Find art and presents for the holidays. Enjoy a wonderful brisket meal.

Navigating Loss — Thursday December 19 from 6p to 7p
We have all lost someone close to us. Enjoy comfort foods while we learn about the five stages of grief and other information that will help us all move closer to healing.

Happy Hannukah - Friday December 27
Please join us for a Temple Beth Or Hanukkah Dinner and celebration.

All the best,
Mark Gruenberg, President



Scan this code to sign up to bring items for Family Service Theme Nights!

Temple Beth Or Presents:

Family Service Theme Nights!

Themed Dinner: 5:30-6:15

Family Services: 6:15-8:00

**DEC
13**

Pasta Bar

Bring pasta toppings to share!
Pasta (plain) and Salad provided!



December Chai-Lights

Friday, December 6, 6:15 p.m. In Person & Streaming

"Rock of Ages" *Shabbat*: Marc Rossio rocks the house as he and Rabbi Chessin lead a creative and Musical *Shabbat* Service. The service will be followed by *Oneg Shabbat* hosted by Sarah Adams in memory of her father.

Saturday, December 7, 10:00 a.m. In Person & Zoom

In-person Apocrypha Study: Join Rabbi Chessin and our study group at Temple Beth Or. Bring a pot-luck brunch item to share. LIVE and ZOOM.

Sunday, December 8, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Artisan Fair and Brisket Sale: Find art and presents for the holidays. Enjoy a wonderful brisket meal. See next column for additional information.

Friday, December 13, 5:30 p.m. In Person & Streaming

Family *Shabbat* & Dinner: Join us for dinner at 5:30 p.m. followed by Family *Shabbat* Service at 6:15 p.m.

Thursday, December 19, 6:00 p.m. In Person

Navigating Loss: Dinner with Comfort Foods: This class is for people that have had loss in their life, whether recent, in the past, or the future. We will share information about the 5 stages of grief and other information to help you deal with loss. Please see page 6 for more information.

Friday, December 20, 5:30 p.m. In Person & Streaming

Musical *Shabbat* Service with Choir: Join us for pre-*Shabbat* hors d'oeuvres, hosted by xxxx, at 5:30 p.m. followed by a Musical *Shabbat* Service led by Rabbi Judy Chessin at 6:15 featuring the Temple Beth Or Choir, directed by Mary 'Mahira' Rogers.

Saturday, December 21, 10:00 a.m. In Person & Zoom

In-person Apocrypha Study: Join Rabbi Chessin and our study group at Temple Beth Or. Bring a pot-luck brunch item to share. LIVE and ZOOM.

Friday, December 27, 5:30 p.m. In Person & Streaming

Potluck Hanukkah *Shabbat*: Join us at 5:30 for snacks and *Shabbat* blessings. 6:15 Service with *Shabbat* dinner to follow. We'll provide the fried chicken and latkes you provide the Hanukkah treats and sides. Including a make your own *sufganiyot* (Hanukkah doughnut) dessert bar. Please bring your menorah and 4 candles to light up the night.

Temple Beth Or's Annual



Sunday, December 8th, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Open to the public!

Artisan Crafts & Specialty Items



Stay for lunch!

Eat-in or Take-home:
Brisket Sandwiches & Combo Platters

Buy Brisket by-the-Pound and Half-Pound containers of Chopped Liver.

Visit www.templebethor.com for more information and to pre-order.

Pre-orders Strongly Recommended!



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You're Invited to Temple Beth Or's
40th Anniversary Kickoff Weekend



Friday, January 31
**40th Anniversary Shabbat
Service and Dinner**

Join us for our 40th Anniversary *Shabbat* with special guest visiting worship leader, consultant, and performer Cantor Rosalie Will

Visit
Templebethor.com
for more details

**Who
knows
one?**



Saturday, February 1

"Who Knows One?" Live
*It's not who you know,
it's who [who you know] knows!*

It's not just a show—*it's an experience!* Join Micah Hart for his interactive sensation where Jewish Geography meets laugh-out-loud games and stories. Visit whoknows1.com for a sneak peek!

Tickets:

\$25 per person... Early bird special: \$20 by January 17
Your payment secures your reservation. Includes dinner and 1 drink. Additional drink tickets: \$5

RSVP at templebethor.com



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