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December 6, 2009 19 Kislev, 5770

Temple *Or Olam*



TOT SHABBAT

Please bring children age 1-5 to our first Tot Shabbat Service, where they will experience 30 minutes filled with song, movement, and play. Older children are welcome to come, but please keep in mind that this service is being designed for ages 1-5.

Bagels and cream cheese, anyone? We ask that everyone bring something to nosh after our service.

PLEASE RSVP to rabbi@or-olam.org by December 9 and let us know if you are coming!

Event: Tot Shabbat

Date: December 12

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- *Dec. 12 10AM: Tot Shabbat*
- *Dec. 13 9:45AM: Religious School*
- *Dec. 13 2PM: Torah Study*
- *Dec. 19 3PM: Hanukkah Party*
- *Dec. 20 9:45AM: Religious School*
- *Dec. 20 2PM Torah Study*
- *Dec. 25: No Shabbat Service*
- *Dec. 27: No Religious School*
- *Dec. 27 2PM: Torah Study*
- *Jan. 3: No Religious School*
- *Jan. 2 2PM: Torah Study*
- *Jan. 10 9:45AM: Religious School resumes*

MiLev HaPardes *From the heart of the orchard by Dr. Barbara Thiede, student rabbi*

How could we celebrate Hanukah and understand on a deep level – even on a spiritual one – why we call it the Festival of Lights?

What is it about the chanukiah that makes it so critical to a holiday about fighting oppression – and winning? Why does the miracle we celebrate center around the mere existence of light itself?

After all, what we mostly do during Hanukkah is party down. We light the chanukiah, of course, and place it in the window. But then, for most of us, the real fun begins.

We fry the latkes and eat them with delight (or with sour cream or applesauce). We play with metal, wooden, or plastic dreidels. We open presents. We laugh at each other's jokes. We try out a gadget or a game.

The candles of our Hanukkah menorah shine into the black night.

But often, they shed their light without anyone paying them much attention. Mostly, we come back to collect the chanukiah when the candles have burned down, when the party is over.

We are missing an opportunity to take in a miracle.

Imagine kindling the candles and staying with the Hanukkah menorah. Imagine postponing the latkes, the games, and the presents. Instead, sit before the little flames each night and take those twenty or thirty minutes to meditate or pray or, simply, rest in the candlelight and the quiet.

These candles evoke a universal, sacred truth.

All of humanity longs for light in the midst of darkness. We all pray for the peace the flickering lights of our candles represent. Gathered at our kitchen tables or in our living rooms, gazing at the small flames that magically extend to light the darkness beyond, we become



conscious, again, how precious and fragile our world is.

A candle burns only when it is protected, safe. It is a delicate, tender thing. A mere breath can end a candle light's life.

We no longer possess the sanctuary that once belonged to us. We were not able to protect the Temple from destruction. For two thousand years, Jews have practiced the art of creating sacred space with their own hands, in their own homes.

In the midst of darkness, we can't help but pull our loved ones closer to us. We can't help but acknowledge the fragile existence we enjoy.

Those ancient Jews lit the menorah and hoped for a miracle.

What if we lit our Hanukkah candles each night and sat with each other in quiet and sacred space, soaking up the sweet miracle of light itself?

Then we would know why we call this holiday our Festival of Lights.

HANUKKAH PARTY

Temple Or Olam is having its annual Hanukkah party on Saturday, December 19th, from 3PM to 5:30PM at McGill Baptist Church. We will be in the sanctuary so there will be plenty of room.

The religious school students will be performing an original Hanukkah play, the likes of which have never been seen before anywhere. Rumor has it that some characters in the play are a horse, Joseph with his coat of many colors, and Albert Einstein. There will also be plenty of music and dancing, latke eating, and more. The party will end with a Havdallah service.

Please RSVP to the temple's phone number: 704-720-7577.

Cost: Members are free
Non-Members: families: \$36;
individuals: \$18; students: free

NOTES OF THANKS

It is a wonderful thing for a temple to be in the position of owing many people thanks. It means that we have all benefited from the generosity and talents of those who have pitched in. We can't begin to list everyone who deserves thanks, so it's up to all of us to show our appreciation for each other.

Thank you to **Ashley** and **Jessica** for your work with the religious school. Also a special thanks to the teenagers, **Kyla**, **Zach**, and **Pamela**, who are absolutely essential volunteers with the school. If you're the parent of a child at religious school, please thank these young people when you see them!

Thank you to **Laiko** for your enthusiasm and organization in planning the Hanukkah party. Not to mention the contributions you're making through your work with the youngest members of our congregation.

Finally, thank you to **Seth**, for designing this beautiful logo for Temple Or Olam. We have already used it on photo cards, and we expect to use it on the website as well. Look at it carefully. Do you know what the points of the star are?



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MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

Hanukah, oh Hanukah! (Please RSVP)

Laiko, Jody Mace, Reb Barbara and the Board have planned a fun party filled with singing, dancing, a play performed by our students, food, menorah lighting and a havdalah service. At our Annual Meeting in June, we talked about the need for good communication in our congregation. To that end, we ask that you PLEASE RSVP to Laiko Quintero's e-vite invitation for our Hanukkah party on Saturday, 12/19/09 and, if you are attending, tell her what type of food you plan to bring to share. It's extra difficult to plan when we don't know the number of people to expect .

Creation

Due to the continuing poor economic conditions we are creating an Emergency Fund through our Temple to assist members with unforeseen circumstances. Funds will be used to cover emergency expenses such as utilities, medicine, doctor or dental appointments or other items that may arise. Please contact Reb Barbara confidentially if you are in need of a helping hand. The fund has been started with seed money from Reb Barbara and Ralf, our Vice-President and President and their families. During this time of year when so many deserving groups are asking for your help, please consider a tax deductible donation to the Temple Or Olam Emergency Fund.

The Times They Are A'Changing

We recently underwent a Board "shuffle". Several Board members moved to different roles. This was an exciting development because folks found the right fit for their interests. It is with great pleasure that we announce that Lisa Boguslaw will become head of the Tikkun Olam committee. Many of us have missed our Tikkun Olam work. Lisa will be organizing ways for us to volunteer and give back to our communities and will be assuming secretarial responsibilities. This will allow Ginger Jensen to concentrate more on her duties as the Chairperson of the Ritual Committee which is her first love (after Tom and her children). And Laiko Quintero enthusiastically volunteered to chair the Social Committee. Many thanks to these folks who have stepped up and continue to offer us their time and skills and enthusiasm.

The Membership Committee has assigned and will be assigning Temple Buddies to new members. This will be for new members to have a current member to turn to if they have questions about anything Temple related. All current members will be assigned eventually as new members join our community.

For Your Information... Helping our Religious School

Did you know that the volunteer teachers take turns writing the lesson plans approximately once a month for our Religious School? This works well for several reasons: the workload is spread among several people (not just the Religious School Director who also happens to be the Director of Communications), the children benefit from many different, creative ideas and the teachers/volunteers don't have to write lesson plans every week. If you would like to teach our students about a certain subject or teach them a skill please volunteer or give your suggestions to Jody Mace. She can weave your skills and interests into almost any lesson plan. You do not need to be a professional. Simply have a desire to share your knowledge. Our children enjoy learning from special guests. Everyone in our Temple can be a special guest.

Wishing you a festive and Happy Hanukkah!

THOUGHTS FROM THE RITUAL COMMITTEE

Have you pulled out your menorah yet? Where will you set it this year – on a windowsill or the mantel or a sideboard?

Jews are given two commandments concerning the light given off by the chanukiah. First, we may gaze upon the Chanukah lights, but we may not use them for practical purposes. Second, although we may not use the light, we must share it. Observant Jews frequently place their menorah outside the home, the better to share the light.

Why do we share something which cannot be used? The word Chanukah, which means “dedication” or “consecration”, has the same shresh (root) as the word chinuch, meaning “education.” We are to educate the world about the miracle of Chanukah, and spread knowledge through light.

The relationship between knowledge and light goes back to the Creation. The Talmud teaches that Adam and Eve were surrounded for 36 hours by the Light of Creation, a light which G-d then realized He must hide away. But during those 36 hours, Adam “saw with it [the Light] from one end of this world into the Other.”

During Chanukah, we light one candle, then two, then three ...

$$1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 6 + 7 + 8 = 36$$

36 candles, one for each hour of the Light of Creation.

This year, consider putting your menorah on a front windowsill, so that those lucky enough to pass your windows may catch a glimpse of the perfect light which once suffused the world.

YOUTH GROUP

In November the youth group met to create beautiful Havdallah candles, as well as a few Shabbat candles, and some unique creations that defy labels. Add to the event some foosball and popcorn eating, and it was a fun night for all.

The next event will be something along the lines of laser tag or bowling. Details are being ironed out, so stay tuned. It will be held toward the end of January.

Birthdays

- Amy Notarius, December 5
- Ralf Thiede, December 8
- Kyla Mace, December 8
- Alex Partridge, December 11
- Jimmey Jacobson, December 14
- Sarasota Serulneck, December 22
- Carole Bombardier, January 1
- Alexander Horowitz, January 2
- Benjamin Roberts, January 6
- Pamela Partridge, January 8

Correction to the November Schmoozeletter: A birthday was inadvertently left off the list. Ruth Kingberg celebrated her birthday on November 23rd. Please wish her a belated happy birthday!

Yahrzeits

Gertrude Resnick, mother of Phyllis Herschenfeld
14 Kislev, December 1

Robert Lawrence Hozapfel, father of Madeline
Holzapfel Horowitz
16 Kislev, December 3

John Jensen, father of Tom Jensen
18 Kislev, December 5

Pat Notarius, mother of Amy Notarius
1 Tevet, December 18

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