

HAPPENINGS

DECEMBER 2009

NUMBER FOUR

From Our Rabbi

Getting to know the Maccabees.

As we celebrate Hanukkah, that begins on the evening of December 11th, I wonder how many of us really know who are the Maccabees.

Much of what we know about the Maccabees comes from an apocryphal (that is an ancient text that did not make into the official version of the Jewish Bible) book. The book of Maccabees has, however, been preserved and is part of the Christian Bible. In fact there are 5 different texts that deal with this topic. Most important for us is the First Book of Maccabees. This book was written by an anonymous Jewish historian who lived in the land of Judea in the second century BCE. The book describes the uprising of a small group of Maccabees, led by Judah, against the pagan armies of the Syrian King. The Maccabees won back the right of the Jews to practice Judaism thereby preserving monotheism in the world. The Maccabees also reestablished the political independence of the Jewish people and rededicated the Temple in Jerusalem.

The Maccabees' leader was Judah, who lead his four brothers into a revolt. Their story began when a Greek ruler tried to force their father, Mattathias, a Jew from the priestly class, to offer a sacrifice to a pagan god. Not only did Mattathias refuse, he murdered the Greek official. The Greek king Antiochus launched a series of reprisals, including desecrating the Holy Temple in Jerusalem by filling it with statues of Greek gods. Mattathias and his five sons rose up against these actions and fought for Jewish liberation of Judea.

These band of freedom fighters came to be called Maccabees, a word that comes from the same root as "hammer" since they were said to use guerrilla

techniques that were like hammer blows to their enemies.

The patriarch Mattathias was killed shortly after the fighting against the Greeks began. His son Judas (also known as Judah) is credited with great tactical ability and unparalleled bravery. By the end of the war against the Greeks, the only brother to have survived was Shimon (Simon).

The heroes of the Hanukkah story, the Maccabees, latter came to be known as the Hasmoneans, were guided by their fierce and steadfast belief in God. In fact, Jewish sources credit the Maccabees' faith for their tenacity in driving out the Greeks from Judea. Immediately upon their victory, the Maccabees rededicated the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, which had been desecrated by the polytheistic Greeks during their rule of the city.

In the longer-term, the Maccabees' victory preserved the right of Jews to practice their monotheistic faith and reestablished the national independence of the Jewish people in Judea for one hundred years, until 63 BCE.

We will observe Hanukkah both on the 11th at the NRT by lighting the first candle and on the 18th at Village Shalom, where we not only will have a full service and light the candles but also will enjoy the Play "Chanukah Magic" presented by some of our children.

A Happy Hanukkah to all of you.

Rabbi Jacques Cukierkorn

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WORSHIP HOURS

December 4 6:30 p.m.
Guest Speaker - Rachel Amando Bortnick

December 11 6:30 p.m.

December 18 6:30 p.m.
Family Shabbat Service at Village Shalom

December 25 6:30 p.m.

Guest Speaker

On **Friday, December 4**, we will have a special guest speaker for our Shabbat Service. Rachel Amando Bortnick will take us on a “Sephardic Journey” as she talks about the history and culture of Sephardic Judaism. Rachel was born in Turkey and has since traveled the world in her efforts to preserve the Ladino language and to share her Sephardic heritage. Following the service we will have a special Oneg Shabbat featuring Sephardic food.

Mazel Tots

Sunday, December 6, Mazal Tots will have a special Hanukkah program this month. We would like to encourage you to think about Jewish friends with toddlers that you would like to invite to join us. If you are bringing a guest, please call Chris at Temple to RSVP your guest. I want to make sure I have enough latkes for everyone.

Family Shabbat Service at Village Shalom

The air is alive with excitement as we prepare for our special Chanukah Service **at Village Shalom on Friday, December 18**. The children will put on our production of *Hanukkah Magic*. The play features a Giant dreidel, latke, and gelt that sing and dance! Also our K and 1st graders will perform two special songs. Bring your menorah to light and we will see you at 6:30 on December 18 for a festival of lights and song.

“Thumbs Up” Awards!

I would like to give a special *Thumbs Up* to all of the children who participated in our last Family Shabbat. They did a great job in leading the service and providing special music for us...also a big thank you to all of the parents and families who attended. I think it was our biggest Family Shabbat ever. We’ll do it again!

We also have a new program going on behind the scenes that not too many people know about! We have wanted to reach out and make a connection with our college students, and this year we finally got some things in place to do just that. Michael Rosenblum took the lead and we sent a “Care Package” to each of our first year college students. It included a few practical items and some real essentials, like gum, popcorn and candy! We wanted to show them that they are still in our thoughts and that we really know what is important to Jewish college students...food!

Margaret Lange, Program Director

Save the Dates

January 17th and 24th Artist Colony with Eugene Bortnick (www.lifePainter.com). Join our artist colony! Even if you don't think you are an artist...don't let that stop you. We are going to have fun, learn how to draw and paint... *and then...*we will have an Art Exhibition and Dinner on January 29. This is a family program but we encourage adults to come also. (Children should probably be about 2nd grade or older.)

Mazel Tots Hanukkah Celebration Open House

On **Sunday, December 6 at 10 a.m.**, the NRT will be hosting a Mazel Tots Open House Hanukkah Celebration for members and prospective new members with children ages 5 and younger. We will be eating latkes and gelt, spinning dreidel, coloring, lighting the menorah and hearing a story or two. Please join us and bring your friends! RSVP to the Temple office at 816-523-7809 so we will be sure to have enough latkes! Hee, hee!

Family Shabbat Service on November 6



First row: Zandy Swartzman & Dahlia Cukierkorn. Second row: Harry Swartzman, Walter Fromm, Paige Holmes, Leah Cohon, Roger Heidgerken, & Zoe Honeck. Last row: Rabbi Cukierkorn, Raquel Cukierkorn, & Charlie Fromm.

Lunch With The Rabbi

This month's Lunch with the Rabbi will cover the topic of the death penalty. Come and join us on **Wednesday, December 9** at noon in our Temple's Library and let your opinion be heard. Lunch will be provided by Mama's 39th Street Diner through the generosity of Michael Rosenblum. Please make your reservation with the Temple office at 816-523-7809.

From Our Religious School

How quickly time flies! We are nearing the end of the first semester, and classes have been going very well. Students have been enjoying music with Devra Lerner as well as using the computers and checking out books in the library with the help of Diane Levin, Judy Fudenberg, and Pat Sanditz. The 5th graders, with teacher Debbie Entine, researched the Five Books of Moses using the computers. 6th grade teacher Donna Holmes has been covering G'milut Chasadim which teaches us to follow the laws of the Torah by performing Mitzvot. Seventh graders studied about immigration and Ellis Island with teacher Adrienne Applebaum.

We also enjoyed watching several students take an active role reading and playing music during the Shabbat service on November 6. Thank you to all the parents for bringing their children!

Don't forget to come watch our students perform at Village Shalom for Shabbat Services on December 11.

Winter vacation dates are December 20, 27, and January 3, and students return on January 10.

Enjoy the holidays with your families.

Ann Brendle
Religious School Director

From Our President

Dear Fellow Members,

The first night of Hanukkah begins on December 12th this year. As you are aware, exchanging presents is one of the rituals associated with this festive Holiday. Reality is that gift giving may look different for many of us. Without a doubt, non-profit organizations have been especially hit hard in this financially down turned environment; the Temple is no exception. I'll be forthright . . . please consider making a donation to one of the many causes listed below in lieu of, or at least in addition to, a gift. The Temple has a wide array of donation opportunities which your contribution will help make an appreciated difference in keeping our viable programs strong. If you have any questions about how any of the funds listed below benefit our membership and community, please feel free to contact me.

Endowment Fund
Krasne Scholar In Residence Fund
Levin Library Fund
Pulpit Flower Fund
Rabbi's Discretionary Fund
Sally Valenti Children's Fund
Temple Operating Fund

Carol, Samantha and I extend our warm wishes for a Happy and Healthy Holiday Season.

Tom Barnett
President

Porter Reel Read Program

The Porter Reel Read Program is off to a great start this year. The following people have read enough books to earn movie tickets: Zandy Swartzman, Julia Cohon, Allie Erdner, and Nathan Barewin.

We Gratefully Acknowledge the Following Contributions to The New Reform Temple

To the Levin Library

In Memory of Roz Ginsburg
by Mrs. Marjorie Bercu

To the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

In Memory of Jeanne Benjamin
by Mr. & Mrs. David Benjamin
by Mr. & Mrs. Neil Sloman

In Memory of Allen Block
by Mrs. Gloria Block

In Honor of Mr. & Mrs. Edward Porter's Anniversary
by Mr. & Mrs. Rip Grossman

In Memory of Elaine Ryder and In Acknowledgment of Rabbi Cukierkorn's Friendship and Support
by Joan Ryder, Suzanne Beatous, Louise Ackerman

To the Sally Valenti Children's Fund

In Memory of Jeanne Benjamin
In Memory of Roz Ginsburg
In Memory of Marsha Goldman
by Mrs. Lisa Lefkowitz

To the Temple

by Mr. & Mrs. David Porter
by Mr. & Mrs. Edward Porter

In Memory of Jeanne Benjamin
by Mr. & Mrs. Tom Davidson
by Mr. & Mrs. Lester Siegel

In Memory of Danny Braude
by the Honorable & Mrs. Harold Lowenstein

In Memory of Elaine Ryder
by Mr. & Mrs. Tom Davidson
by Laura Ziegler Davis, Gardiner Davis & Family
by Mr. & Mrs. Lester Siegel
by Mr. Paul Uhlmann Jr.

December Birthdays

01 Vern Davidson	07 Diane Bileski	12 Ellen Bresky	23 Keith Durwood
01 Alec Hill	08 Helene Cohen	12 Natalie Siegel	23 Sarah Stites
01 Jerry Miller	09 Andrew Fromm	13 Alexandra Copaken	24 Kate Isenberg
02 Martha Atlas	09 Doug Ghertner	13 David Isenberg	24 Ed Porter
02 Jay Menitove	09 Joseph Greenbaum	13 Fran Kapleau	24 Sydney Siegel
03 Elsa Feigenbaum	09 Abigail Margolin	14 Hannah Bortnick	25 Kristine Spitcaufsky
04 Jake Hiersteiner	09 Isabel Margolin	16 Gene Dreyer	28 Sis Rosenberg
04 Dotty Keshner	10 Frances Levitch	16 Rocky Horowitz	29 Susan Fate
04 Gene Strauss	10 Angela Levy	18 Maxwell Boasberg	29 Henry Freilich
05 Linda Braude	10 Max Wasserstrom	18 Matthew Erdner	30 Joshua Bortnick
05 Max Feinstein	11 Bill Fromm	18 Dana Holifield	30 Ellen Eisen
05 Zoe Honeck	11 Vicki Levi	18 Allison Kipke	30 Daniel Rainey
06 Annette Bloch	11 Keith Novorr	18 Tom Schoenfeld	31 Sarabeth Barnett
06 Erica Holmes	12 Meredith Angrist	21 Ann Ghertner	31 Nancy Stern

December Anniversaries

01 Daniel & Erin Margolin	25 Bob & Carole Freilich	27 Craig & Carol Wilson
04 Henry & Betty Jo Marder	26 Fred & Rosanne Wickman	29 Marc & Linda Turner
17 Eran & Helene Cohen	27 Eugene & Diane Bileski	30 John & Debbie Coe
20 Neil & Susan Sloman	27 Ken & Pam Weiner	31 Eric & Nancy Batdorf

Local Author & NRT Member

Lifelong NRT member and Sunday school teacher, Phoebe Unterman, has written and illustrated a children's book, *Through Eva's Eyes*, which has just been published and will soon be available in the KC area. The story is about her grandmother, Shoah survivor Eva Unterman, and her childhood before and during the Nazi occupation of Poland. Watch this space for a future announcement regarding a reading and book signing for New Reform Temple members and Sunday school students by Phoebe and her grandmother. A portion of the proceeds will fund Holocaust education.

NRT Going Green Fundraiser

The NRT is joining forces with Terracycle (www.terracycle.net)! We will collect and ship your empty juice pouches to Terracycle and for each pouch we turn in, NRT will earn two cents. A basket will be upstairs where members can deposit all of their empty juice pouches (Capri Sun, Honest Kids, Kool Aid, & Minute Maid pouches – not box drinks). Every little bit helps and we will be saving our planet at the same time by keeping things out of our growing landfills. Terracycle uses the empty pouches to make tote bags, lunch kits, pencil cases, and much more. If you have any questions, please contact Erin Margolin at 913-789-0962 or email at erinlynn76@aol.com.

Y A H R Z E I T S

"The memory of the righteous shall be for a blessing"

December 4

Ellis G. Bradley
Ida Bartfeld Brod
Roselle Endlich
Joseph Floret
Rose Floret
Louis Galamba, Sr.
Maxwell L. Levy
Bart R. Morse, Jr.
Myer Pearlman
Margaret Robinson
David Rothberg
Bessie Rudd
Dr. Alexander Shifrin

December 11

Barton P. Cohen
Marwyn Cohen
Aron Cukierkorn
Liesl Frankle
Sarah Green
H. Morton Helzberg, D.D.S.
Albert Kalikow
Leslie M. Lyon
Vivian K. Oppenheimer
Norman Sloman
Marianne Snower
Dorothy Steinzeig

December 18

Marjorie Bergson
Morris E. Dreyfus
Lillian Fedotin
Harrison Fink
Evelyn Friedman
Harry Gibson
Abe A. Goldberg
Ella R. Goldberger
Arvin Gottlieb
Ida Hellerstein
Meyer Hellerstein
Gus Kaufman
Michael Litan
Ethel Snyder
Ida Statland
Herbert Wolf

December 25

Ruth G. Baum
Alvin H. Berlau
Esther L. Berlau
Isadore Bigus
Selma Block
Robert J. Bordeau
Donald J. Galamba
Alexander E. Goldberger
Mary Nan Goldman
Sophia Goodman
Bess Gottstein
Harry Statland, M.D.
Olga Minskovsky
Robert L. Rosenwald
Abe O. Sackin
Barry Saltzman
Stephen J. Schoenfeld
Clara Slatinsky
Robert M. Slegman
Elaine Stern
Julianna S. Wolkoff