

# Temple Beth Elohim

A blend of faith and friendship for over 100 years

Visit our website: [www.templebethelohim.net](http://www.templebethelohim.net)

Volume 17 Issue 2

November/December 2019

Cheshvan/Kislev/Tivet (5780)

**Reminder:** We return to Standard Time at 2 a.m. on Sunday, 3 November 2019.

# The Rising Star

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## IS IT A MENORAH OR IS IT A CHANUKKIYAH?

English speakers most commonly call the lamp a “menorah” or a “Chanukah menorah.” The Hebrew word *menorah* simply means “lamp”. In Modern Hebrew the lamp is generally called a *chanukkiyah*, (חֲנֻכְיָה) a term coined at the end of the nineteenth century by Hemda ben Yehuda, whose husband Eliezer ben Yehuda was the leading force behind the revival of the Hebrew language.

In the United States, the public display of *chanukkiyahs* and Christmas trees on public grounds has been the source of legal battles. Specifically, in the 1989 Allegheny County v. ACLU case, the majority of the US Supreme Court ruled that the public display of *chanukkiyahs* and Christmas trees did not violate the “Establishment Clause” because the two symbols were not endorsements of the Jew-

ish or Christian faith, rather the two items are part of the same winter-holiday season, which, the court found, had attained a secular status in U. S. society.

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### CHANUKAH AT TEMPLE BETH ELOHIM

Members of the Executive Board and the Trustees are currently making plans for a *Chanukah* celebration. We light the first candle on Sunday evening, 22 December 2019. The eighth candle will be lit Sunday 29 December 2019. Our plans will be shared with you via e-mail and on our website [www.templebethelohim.net](http://www.templebethelohim.net) We are all looking forward to the celebration.

## Wisdom From Afar....

Suzan Cohen

Last year, *Chanukah* was relatively “early” – the first night was Sunday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>. It was so nice that the holiday didn’t have to compete with either Thanksgiving or Christmas for our attention. This year, however, *Chanukah* is late, very late. The first night is Sunday, December 22<sup>nd</sup>. And, let’s be honest, it’s hard to be content with lighting candles and playing *dreidl* when *It’s a Wonderful Life* is on tv and everywhere you look is decked out with colorful lights.



Ritual Scholar Suzan

It doesn’t help that *Chanukah* isn’t technically a holy day; we are not commanded by the *Torah* to observe it. The story of the Maccabees and the miracle of the lights actually resides in the *Apocrypha*. But by choosing to observe *Chanukah*, we affirm the message of the holiday – that the struggle to maintain our religious freedom, for ourselves and others, is worth the sacrifice. Though I have to admit that when someone asks me whether I’m ready for Christmas, I’ll probably still just smile and say, “I sure am!”

In many ways, I’m grateful that *Chanukah* doesn’t get the same attention as Christmas. Many Christmas movies and songs are good, but most are pretty bad. And then all of the advertising for sales and high-pressure messages to buy, buy, buy! It all serves to commercialize, trivialize, and neutralize the message of the holiday. It all makes me think that being largely ignored by the mainstream society is not such a bad thing.

So whatever plans you may have, just let me say *chag sa’meach!*



The Executive Board and Trustees of  
TEMPLE BETH ELOHIM  
wish their members and friends

*safe travels to those “going to”  
and those “coming from” faraway places  
for joyous celebrations*

## Temple Beth Elohim Board of Directors

**President:** Richard Dimentstein  
(rdimentstein@gmail.com)  
**President Emeritus:** Gene Vinik  
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TEMPLE MEMBERS, please note: You have access to membership information by going to [www.chaitrack.com](http://www.chaitrack.com). If you need a user name and password, contact Andy Friedman, [andy.friedman@hotmail.com](mailto:andy.friedman@hotmail.com).

Let us fervently pray for the comfort and recovery of our dear temple members and friends and for the continued strength of their caregivers



Susan & Brian Berry Myles Derison

Dr. Eric Heiden Richard Horowitz



Donna & Tom Llewellyn Dick Rosen Roberta Schwartz

## Tree of Life



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Inscriptions may be up to 3 lines with 20-25 characters per line. Use a separate sheet if you wish to order more than three leaves.

Leaf 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Leaf 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Leaf 3 \_\_\_\_\_

A check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (\$36 per leaf) has been enclosed. Checks should be made payable to **Temple Beth Elohim**.

Thanks for your support.

Mail to: TBE, PO Box 571, Georgetown, SC 29442

Let us pray together for the speedy recovery and complete restoration of health of

**SHANE FINKEL**

grandson of Carrol Sallas

## CHARITY DRIVES

We have set up two receptacles in our social hall. One is for clothing items. The other is for non-perishable food, toiletries and sundries. All that we collect will be donated to a local shelter or food pantry.

Please remember this when you are removing things from your drawers, closets and cabinets.

## The Temple Beth Elohim Gift Shop Is Now Open

Each and every Friday, before *Shabbat*, we will be selling Judaic items such as *mezuzah*, *yahrzeit* lights, ceramic trivets, Chanukah candles, and an assortment of unique objects d'art. Joy Birnbaum and Carrol Sallas will be on hand to act as customer service representatives.

## BIRTHDAYS

### NOVEMBER

22 Mike Specht  
28 Dyan Cohen



### DECEMBER

9 Rob Goldman  
16 Carol Willey  
17 Nancy Koppel  
19 Herb Feinberg  
20 Roberta Schwartz  
24 Steven Schwartz  
25 James Bennett

### NOVEMBER

2 Donna & Tom  
Llewellyn  
6 Dyan & Alex Cohen

## ANNIVERSARIES

### DECEMBER

21 Debbi & Webster  
Jones



## Why the Maccabees Aren't in the Bible

The First and Second Books of *Maccabees* contain the most detailed accounts of the battles of Judah Maccabee and his brothers for the liberation of Judea from foreign domination. These books include within them the earliest references to the story of *Chanukah* and the rededication of the Temple, in addition to the famous story of the mother and her seven sons\*. And yet, these two books are missing from the Hebrew Bible.

In order to begin addressing the question of this omission, it is important to understand the formation of the Hebrew biblical canon. The word “canon” originally comes from the Greek and means “standard” or “measurement.” When referring to a scriptural canon, the word is used to designate a collection of writings that are considered authoritative within a specific religious group. To the Jewish people, the biblical canon consists of the books found in the *Tanach* (Hebrew Bible).

The canonization process of the Hebrew Bible is often associated with the Council of *Yavneh*, around the year 90 CE. Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai managed to escape Jerusalem before its destruction and received permission to rebuild a Jewish base in Yavneh. It was there that the contents of the canon of the Hebrew Bible may have been discussed and formally accepted. However, this is a scholarly proposition that has lost adherents in recent years. Be that as it may, some of the debates surrounding these discussions – whenever and wherever they may have taken place – do appear in rabbinic literature, although we have no complete surviving record of these debates. Therefore, we can only speculate on why some materials were excluded from our canon and others included.

In spite of the fact that various non-canonical writings did not make it into the Jewish canon, they nonetheless contain much of value and are worthy of study, even if the rabbis did not consider them to be divinely inspired or as holy as the Bible. Many of these writings appear in a category of documents known as the Apocrypha. The apocryphal writings contain books that existed supposedly at the time of Yavneh, but for whatever reason were not included in the biblical canon. It is in this category that we find the books of the Maccabees. There are various theories to explain the exclusion of the apocryphal books. One theory is that only books written

originally in Hebrew were considered for inclusion in the canon. However, the Book of Daniel, although included within the canon, is to a large extent written in Aramaic. Even more problematic is the fact that scholars believe that the First Book of Maccabees was indeed written originally in Hebrew, therefore meeting the language criterion for inclusion – and yet it is absent from the biblical canon

Another theory to explain the omission of the first two Books of Maccabees is based on the dating of these documents. Although it is often assumed that the biblical canon was formalized at Yavneh, there is some speculation that the accepted list of books was in existence long before. In other words, perhaps the gathering of rabbis at Yavneh inherited a list of documents already unofficially recognized as canonical and simply formalized this list.

If this is true, the relatively late date of the Maccabean revolt would preclude its inclusion in an already accepted previous list. It would be too “new” a book for serious consideration, since it had no history grounding it securely within tradition. This theory, however, is severely weakened through a comparison with the Book of Daniel, since Daniel is included within the biblical canon in spite of the fact that most scholars date the latter book to the time of the Maccabean revolt around 165 BCE – in other words, to the time of the story related in the Books of Maccabees.

It has also been suggested that the exclusion of the Books of the Maccabees can be traced to the political rivalry that existed during the late Second Temple Period between the Sadducees and the Pharisees. The Sadducees, a priestly class in charge of the Temple, openly rejected the oral interpretations that the Pharisees, the proto-rabbinic class, openly promoted. The Maccabees were a priestly family, while the rabbis who may have determined the final form of the biblical canon at Yavneh were descended from the Pharisees. Is it possible that the exclusion of the Books of Maccabees was one of the last salvos in the battle between the Pharisees and Sadducees? Would the rabbis at Yavneh have been inclined to canonize a document that so clearly praised the priestly Hasmonean family?

\*See p. 5 of this newsletter.



Maccabean Revolt

# DONATIONS



**Michele G. & Jim Bennett** donated High Holiday flowers for our *bima*  
**Noreen Davis & Alan Gramet** to the General Fund  
**Jill & Al Dimarchi** to the General Fund  
**Marlene Krauthamer** to the General Fund  
**Nellie Roth** to the General Fund  
**Carrol Sallas** funded holiday *challah*  
**Lisa & H. David Steele** to the General Fund  
**Sheila & Henry Weiss** to the General Fund



## THE MOTHER AND HER SEVEN SONS

Shortly before the revolt of Judas Maccabeus, Antiochus IV arrested a mother and her seven sons, and tried to force them to eat pork. When they refused, he tortured and killed the sons one by one. The narrator mentions that the mother “was the most remarkable of all, and deserves to be remembered with special honor. She watched her seven sons die in the space of a single day, yet she bore it bravely because she put her trust in the Lord.” Each of the sons makes a speech as he dies, and the last one says that his brothers are “dead under God’s covenant of everlasting life.” The narrator ends by saying that the mother died, without saying whether she was executed, or died in some other way.

The *Talmud* tells a similar story, but with refusal to worship an idol replacing the command to eat pork. Rabbi Judah said the characters in this version are the woman and her seven sons. The unnamed king is referred to as the “Emperor” and “Caesar.” The woman commits suicide in this rendition of the story. She went up on to the roof and threw herself down and was killed.

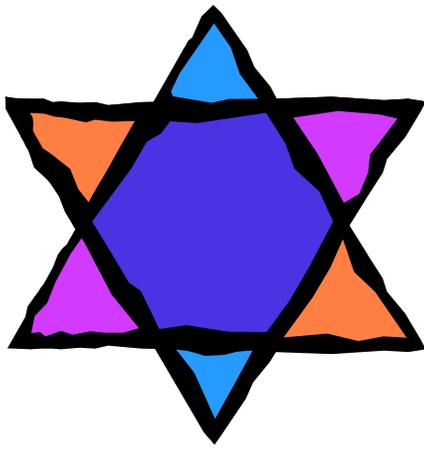
### Our New Safety Measure

The side door of our synagogue (Highmarket Street) will be locked once services begin at 7:30 p.m. Worshipers are asked to proceed to the main entrance (Screven Street). If this is a hardship, then please ring the doorbell to the right of the doorpost and someone will let you in.

### *Mi Shebeirach* List

A prayer for healing is chanted at each *Shabbat* service. The leader of the service will read from a list and then invite the congregation to call out names that are not on this list that is read weekly. If you wish to have a name added to the weekly list (or removed), you must submit the name to Richard Dimentstein ([rdimentstein@gmail.com](mailto:rdimentstein@gmail.com)).





First Class  
Postage

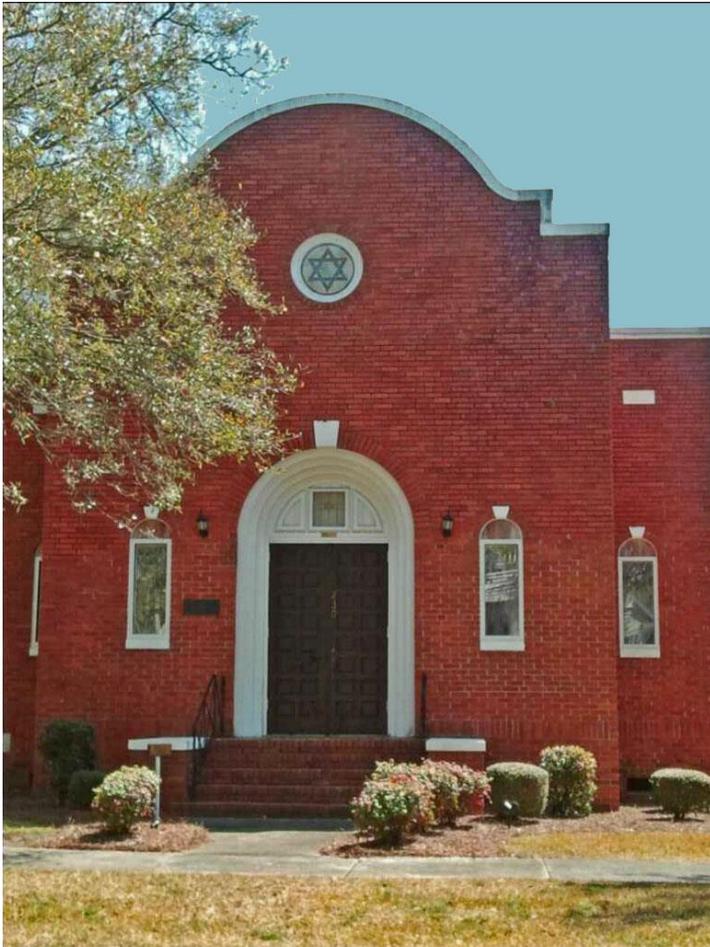
# SHALOM

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**Temple Beth Elohim**  
**P. O. Box 571**  
**Georgetown, SC 29442**

## Temple Beth Elohim

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### Committee Members

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Finance Chair: Michele Gershman Bennett  
Sunshine Committee Chair: Tish Richter  
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Web Page: Joy Birnbaum  
Special Events: Donna Llewellyn, Tom Llewellyn  
Website ([www.templebethelohim.net](http://www.templebethelohim.net)): Joy Birnbaum  
Photography: Rosa Lee & Eric Heiden