

THE TEMPLE ISRAEL NEWS

ATHOL, MASSACHUSETTS VOL. 27 KISLEV-HESHVAN 5766 DEC. 2005 - JAN. 2006

“we go to their house for Christmas and they come to our house for Hanukkah or Passover.” We must

Rabbi's Message

Christmas and Hanukah on the same day?! Oy va voy! Our “December Dilemma” – that is celebrating Hanukah in the World of an ever-expanding Christmas – has just morphed into “December Dilemma”!

All of a sudden, we are not just confronting Christmas in the shopping mall; we must respond to an invitation from a non-Jewish relative to celebrate Christmas with a part of our family. All of sudden, we are not just debating whether to sing Christmas songs in the school choir; we are asked to accompany a family member to Midnight Mass and leave our candles burning at home. It is one thing to say “no” to a child wanting to sit on Santa’s knee, but quite another to refuse an invitation from in-laws to celebrate their holiday. Is there a difference between “celebrating” Christmas and observing “Hanukah”? Is there a difference between appreciating another’s holiday and appropriating it as one’s own?

On the one hand, we feel threatened because Christmas bells drown out all of our good intentions to carry on the tradition of Hanukah. On the other hand, we Jews ought to laud our Christian brothers for celebrating a holiday that promotes peace and fellowship and all the good things Jews care about. Christmas threatens us because its basic message is so good – so close to the universalism that Judaism also manifests. We Jews also look forward to the day when diverse people share common values. But we Jews also want to hold on to our uniqueness. As Dr. Ron Wolfson has taught, Christmas becomes a problems for us, because it is so close – yet so far away.

Every family has its own way of negotiating these problems: mouthing certain words to Christmas carols, “visiting” but not celebrating Christmas, extending “Seasons Greetings” to our postman,

keep a perspective, I feel. After all, Christmas is, in essence, non-Jews doing very Jewish things – acting as families and expressing universal values. Christmas is very compelling for us, but boundaries are also important. It remains close and yet it is so far away.

Merry Hanukah!

Rabbi Perlman



Upcoming Shabbat Schedule

December 2-3 Shabbaton Kislev

Friday, December 2

6 PM Pot luck Dairy Supper
7 PM Kabbalat Shabbat Services

Saturday, December 3

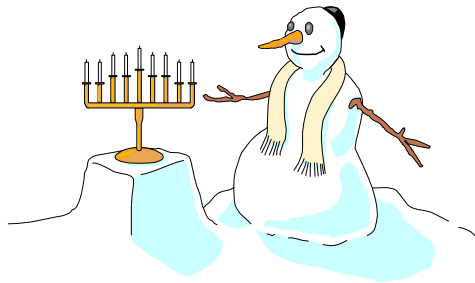
9:15 AM Meditation
10:00 Morning services
10:30 Children's Services
11:30 Torah Discussion
12:15 PM Cholent lunch followed by discussion and singing

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4:30 PM Sunset discussion for children
5:00 PM Havdalah

11:30 Torah Discussion
12:15 PM Cholent lunch followed by
discussion and singing



3:30 PM Sunset discussion for children
5:00 PM Havdalah

**January 6-7
2006 Shabbaton Tevet**

**Sunday, December 11
Family Program with Janice Colbert**

“Make Your Own Dreydel”

4:00 – 5:30 PM at Temple Israel!



December 30-31 Shabbat Hanukah

Friday, December 30

6 PM Pot luck Dairy Supper
7 PM Kabbalat Shabbat Services
8 PM Hanukah Party

Saturday, December 31

9:15 AM Meditation
10:00 Morning services
10:30 Children’s Services

Friday, January 6

6 PM Pot luck Dairy Supper
7 PM Kabbalat Shabbat Services
8 PM Hanukah Party

Saturday, January 7

9:15 AM Meditation
10:00 Morning services
10:30 Children’s Services
11:30 Torah Discussion
12:15 PM Cholent lunch followed by discussion
and singing
3:40 PM Sunset discussion for children
5:10 PM Havdalah

PLEASE LEND US A HAND!
PLEASE JOIN TEMPLE ISRAEL’S
CAPITAL CAMPAIGN--AN AMBITIOUS
AND IMPORTANT PLAN TO RAISE \$100,000 FOR
CAPITAL EXPENDITURES FOR OUR TEMPLE!

To make a separate Capital Campaign donation for the

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building, please send a check to

Temple Israel c/o Elice Clark

P.O. Box 2542 Fitchburg, MA 01420

Thank you, in advance, for your generosity!



A Special Welcome

To Our New Children's Service Leader

We welcome Susan Pepper-Aisenberg as our new Children's Service leader. Susan will meet with children between 10:30 AM-12:00 PM during our monthly Shabbaton program. In the service, Susan will lead prayers with the children and will lead a discussion about the portion of the week.

Before the close of the adult services, Susan and her friends will share what they have learned. Susan has already lent a creative spark to Temple Israel's services. Last month the children presented the story of Abraham with puppetry and song! Adults are welcomed to join Rabbi Perlman in the Uchitel Chapel for prayers and Torah discussion.

**HAPPY
HANUKKAH**

For more information, please call Temple Israel in Athol at 978-249-9481. Our new voice mailboxes are now in operation. You may also directly contact President Dr. Myron Maron at 978-724-0238 or Rabbi Jonathan Perlman at 413-736-1033 (home) or 413-739-4715 (work) Ask for Rabbi Perlman.