The Hourglass

BULLETIN OF THE HEBREW CONGREGATION OF ST THOMAS

DECEMBER 2020

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December Services and Programs

Parashat Vayishlach Genesis 32:4 - 36:43

- 4 Erev Shabbat Family Service, 7:00 PM AST
- Fri <u>https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3407744312</u> Meeting ID: 340 774 4312
- 5 Shabbat Morning Worship and Study,
- Sat 10:30 AM AST (9:30 AM EST) https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3407744312 Meeting ID: 340 774 4312

Chanukah

- 10 First Night of Chanukah
- Thu First candle lit in our homes

Parashat Vayeshev; Shabbat Chanukah Genesis 37:1-40:23

11 Night of a Thouasnd Menorahs:

Fri Special Service for Shabbat and Chanukah Each family should bring a menorah! <u>https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3407744312</u> Meeting ID: 340 774 4312

12 Shabbat Morning Service in the Sanctuary,

Sat **including B'not Mitzvah of Ariel Rosenthal** and Lyra Rosenthal, 10:30 AM AST The service will also be livestreamed at <u>https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3407744312</u> Meeting ID: 340 774 4312, and on Facebook and You Tube

12 Chanukah Concert with Nefesh Mountain

Sat RSVP by December 10 to get a ticket See page ____ for more detail.

Parashat Miketz Genesis 41:1-44:17

- 18 Erev Shabbat Service, 7:00 PM AST
- Fri <u>https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3407744312</u> Meeting ID: 340 774 4312
- 19 Shabbat Morning Worship & Study, 10:30 AM
- Sat <u>https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3407744312</u> Meeting ID: 340 774 4312

Parashat Vayigash Genesis 44:18 - 47:27

- 25 Special Early Erev Shabbat Service,
- Fri 6:30 PM AST (5:30 PM EST) https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3407744312 Meeting ID: 340 774 4312
- 26 Shabbat Morning Service in the Sanctuary,
- Sat including Bar Mitzvah of Parker Eli Clesner 10:30 AM AST (9:30 AM EST) The service will also be livestreamed at <u>https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3407744312</u> Meeting ID: 340 774 4312, and on Facebook and You Tube

Parashat Vayechi Genesis 47:28-50:26

Jan 1 Champagne Shabbat

- Fri Special Early Erev Shabbat Service, 6:30 PM AST (5:30 PM EST) Bring a bubbly drink to the Live Stream as we toast farewell to 2020 and share hopes for happiness and health in 2021! <u>https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3407744312</u> Meeting ID: 340 774 4312
- Jan 2 Shabbat Morning Worship and Study,
- Sat 10:30 AM AST (9:30 AM EST) <u>https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3407744312</u> Meeting ID: 340 774 4312



Viva La Difference! Message from Rabbi Michael L. Feshbach

Without a doubt, this is going to be a very different holiday season than any of us have experienced before. We are learning to juggle new technology, to form family "pods," to be clear and firm and direct with strangers whose masks too casually slip off their faces.

And there may be hope on the horizon, but the potential for a tragic and very challenging few months ahead looms large right now.

When I think about just how "different" our lives are now, it occurs to me that focusing on difference flows fairly naturally from the very theme of our holiday of the season. At its core, Chanukah is *not*, as commonly perceived, just the Jewish version of the joyous, light-in-the-darkness, universally themed celebration of Winter. In fact, one could easily argue that its original historic message is not about universal joy, but, rather, the preservation and celebration of difference!

How so? As I have argued extensively <u>elsewhere</u>, the whole familiar tale of a little jar of oil lasting for eight days actually first appears five hundred years after the events referenced in the holiday. Contemporary sources describe only the oppressive rule of the Seleucid Empire -- the Syrian-Greeks -- who used a heavy hand to force all subject nations into a kind of cultural, economic and religious uniformity. It was precisely their resistance to assimilation, their determination to absorb from the Hellenistic world all around them only what they chose to take, which made the Maccabees heroes. This is the true miracle of the season, and the secret of Jewish survival when no other peoples or cultures who fell under the sway of the Hellenistic world managed to preserve their independent identity!

A strong majority culture pushes towards conformity. The story of our survival, the events we still celebrate, show a stubborn minority, determined to preserve a faith, heritage and way of life distinct from that of the numerically and even, at first, militarily superior world in which they lived.

To say, then, that Chanukah is just the Jewish version of a universal theme, just one flavor in the overall flow of the season, is to miss the essential point. But if you were to push the idea, and demand a lesson that can be learned by all peoples from our distinct holiday, it would be this: **it's okay to be different.**

This is about more than not always knowing how to respond when people wish us "Merry Christmas." Eventually I grew more comfortable with that moment.

No, if you want to make Chanukah about more than its original setting of the surprising survival of our people, then let it be a check against group-think, against assumptions, against the notion that everyone is, or should be, or even could be always the same.

We share an essential humanity with all other people and peoples, of course. But who we are, how we see ourselves, the way we are in the world -- that is not the same at all. And, really: it's okay to be different!



VESHIVA UNIVERSITY ACCEPTOR

For an article on a very similar theme I just found by Rabbi David Hartman z"l (of blessed memory), click <u>here</u>.

People of the Book?

Happenings at The Hebrew Congregation of St Thomas

Message from Marilyn Blackhall, President



Synagogue committees and efforts are continuing, and our Social Action Committee is embarking on a new project. The committee is working to set up a library at the Family Resource Center (FRC) which is is a private nonprofit agency in St. Thomas, providing a counseling program and shelter for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. While the library will have some adult books, it will largely provide books for children while they are living there.

Committee members are Mark Borden, Chair, Brook Robin, Suzi Grbinich, with Rabbi Michael Feshbach, Administrator Stella Minion and Marilyn Blackhall ex-officio. Each of us will be taking on specific roles. Suzi, for example, will be contacting publishers for donations and purchases of books that are age appropriate to the children of parents that use the services of the FRC and that contain characters and story lines that children here will recognize. Children's classics that feature skill development, sharing, and other positive qualities will be explored.

The project is in its developmental stage and aspects such as the logistics of getting books, funding and library set-up are still being explored.

If you have interest in being a part of this committee, or have any ideas to suggest, or if you have books that are almost new for children or adults, and are approved by the committee for inclusion, or if you wish to contribute financially to this specific project, please contact the Synagogue by email or phone and you will be responded to.

(Continued on page 6)

(continued from page 5)

A special thank you to Rabbi Feshbach for continuing his efforts and determination in connecting us with on-line Shabbat evening and morning services where we can see one another, interact, sustain our relationship with Judaism... and yet be safe. Many other congregations have online services, but a majority are prerecorded, which makes it far less personal and with less effort expended. While our current situation is definitely a loss for some who have been accustomed to Friday nights and even Saturday mornings at our historic Synagogue, we do have the benefit and privilege of personally relating to our Chai Members and to one another, which is incredibly special, even if we are not physically present in the Sanctuary.

You can attend services by logging onto Synagogue.VI to find the Zoom password. For the time being, most Erev Shabbat Services begin at 7:00 PM AST EST and 6:00 PM AST. (There are some exceptions; see December 25 and January 1.) Shabbat Morning Services start at 10:30 AM AST and 9:30 AM EST. New, beginning this month: we are using the same login information for every one of our services. You can join us by going to <u>https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3407744312</u>. If you are already on Zoom, use Meeting ID 340 774 4312. (And yes, this is also our landline phone number.)

And please remember, NOT EVERYTHING IS CANCELLED.

Sunshine is not cancelled. The coming of spring is not cancelled. Relationships are not cancelled. Reading and naps are not cancelled. Devotion is not cancelled. Music and dancing are not cancelled. Imagination is not cancelled. Kindness and hope are not cancelled.



Some comments on the status of synagogue life at this uncertain time

Dear Friends: We cherish our connections with each other -- with you -- during this time of COVID and caution. A few notes and observations:

- Relationships are the most important part of what we do. Please feel free to reach out to any of us, at any time, for any reason. Rabbi Feshbach can be reached at 301-980-5465 or by email at michael.feshbach@gmail.com.
- We look forward to being physically together again. We have installed temporary plexiglass in the Sanctuary (not altering any of our historic structure), and continue to explore safe ways of being in person. We have held a few mask-wearing, socially distanced limited-attendance services, while streaming live at the same time, and are hoping to do so again on December 12. But we monitor the situation daily.
- We are aware of your concerns about the number of emails we send out. We understand; our inboxes are overflowing as well. But when we have combined multiple emails into one, others have said each flyer had too much on it. Like many other organizations, we are trying to find the right balance; please be patient with us!

- All communities depend on the volunteer hours of countless dedicated inviduals. We are blessed with those helping our House Committee, our Development efforts, preservation and restoration of our Cemetery and, now, our newly revitalized Social Action work. We could still use help, though -- even from those off island -- with areas such as Life-Long Learning and, most immediately, Communications. If any of you have expertise in maintaining websites or in PR and are able to help, please contact Stella Minion at stella@synagogue.vi.
- We thank our donors and supporters towards the back of every issue of The Hourglass. But those words are not enough to convey how much we depend on, and are grateful, for ongoing support. Just recently we have had help in obtaining (or ordering) the equipment we will need to stream services, repairs to water damage, installation of some solar panels, and much more. To all of you, truly: the need is ongoing, and real, and your help is very deeply appreciated!



Light Up the Night: <u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jzh-TKzXN2k</u> Maccabeats: A Hamilton Chanukah --<u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u3UubcYj49k</u> 613: A Dfferent Hamilton Chanukah -- <u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qWcd-K8_X34</u> Peter, Paul & Mary: Light One Candle -- <u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h1cRXgDFiSs</u> Adam Sandler's Chanukah Song -- <u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KX5Z-HpHH9g</u>

Some Chanukah Music Videos

Chanukah begins this year on Thursday night, December 10, with the lighting of the first candle. We come together as a community, virtually and online this year, for several celebrations of the eight-day holiday. But Chanukah is basically a homebased observance. As evening falls, we position our menorahs in a window, if at all possible, so they can be seen from outside. We light, and recite, the blessings below:

Chanukah Candle Blessings

From all of our leaders of the past, we learn what it means to be Jewish. This Chanukah, we dedicate our lives to God and our proud heritage of Judaism as we recite these blessings:



BLESSED are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of all, who hallows us with mitzvot, commanding us to kindle the Chanukah lights.

BARUCH atah, Adonai)) TI	בָרוּדָ אַתָּה,
Eloheinu, Melech haolam,	הָעוֹלָם,	אֶלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶדְ
she-asah nisim laavoteinu v'imoteinu	לַאֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ	שֶׁעֲשָׂה נִסִּים
bayamim haheim baz'man hazeh.	בּזְמַן הַזֶּה.	בּיָּמִים הָהֵם

BLESSED are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of all, who performed wondrous deeds for our ancestors in days of old at this season.

For first night only

שָּרָוּדָ אַתָּה, יְיָ Eloheinu, Melech haolam, אֶלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶדְ הָעוֹלָם, shehecheyanu v'kiy'manu v'higianu laz'man hazeh. הַעּוֹלָם,



Night of a Thousand Menorahs Friday, December 11, 2020

A Virtual Chanukah Family Service , 7:00 PM AST

led by Rabbi Michael Feshbach and Visiting Cantorial Soloist Talia Feshbach, Streamed by Zoom: <u>https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/3407744312</u> or use ID 340 774 4312. Or find us on Facebook or You Tube!

> Bring your family Menorah for individual lighting! We can celebrate together even as we are still partly apart!

Latke Recipes, Guide to Games, and Chanukah Songs for home celebration sent out separately, or by request to <u>info@synagogue.vi</u>





A first draft of a PDF version of the service we will use that night can be found at https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/

review?uri=um:aaid:scds:US33fa05d8-fd8f-4495-af5d-95923eddee43





A working link for the PDF version of the Friday night service can be found here: <u>https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:31fac5d8-fd8f-4495-af5d-</u>

95923eddee43

Shabbat and Chanukah Morning Service, including the B'not Mitzvah of Ariel Rosenthal and Lyra Rosenthal

> Saturday, December 12, 2020, in the Sanctuary and Streamed, 10:30 AM AST (9:30 AM EST)

> > Join us in person or online, for this special service the first Bar or Bat Mitvzah of a member of our congregation in many years!

Livestream: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3407744312 or use Meeting ID: 340 774 4312

NEFESH MOUNTAIN A HANUKKAH 2020 HOLIDAY CONCERT

LIVE FROM THE BARN AT LEVON HELM STUDIOS

Note: This concert is at 9 PM St Thomas time

Register for the Concert by December 10 Go to the website <u>nefeshmountain.com/hanukkahlive2020.</u> (This is a special page for synagogues "hosting" the concert. Registration is free for you, although sponsorships helping us do this are welcome!)

Claim your ticket with nugs.net. On December 10 you will receive an email from the streaming site nugs.net with a link and personalized code for your free ticket. Once you have the code head over to 2nu.gs/register to create a free account with nugs.net. Once your account is created, you can redeem your ticket at 2nu.gs/codes with your provided code.

9 PM AST LIVE-STREAMING SAT. DEC. 12 8 PM ET

NEFESH

EWISH. BLUEGRASS. AME

In addition to the Chanukah Concert, the dynamic Jewish Bluegrass group Nefesh Mountain will also help lead an Erev Shabbat Friday night service, streamed live and interactive, probably on January 8, 2021.

Sponsorship support welcome! Watch for more detail soon. With questions or for more information call 340-774-4312 or write info@synagogue.vi



Annual Service in honor of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Friday, January 15, 2020, probably 7 PM AST

Save the date now for this special service. Through Zoom livestream, pre-recorded segments, partly in person or some combination of all three, we are working with all high schools on St. Thomas and St. John to continue this important tradition! Details to be determined.

Birthdays and Anniversaries

December Birthdays

	Dec 1
Alexandra Laing	Dec. 1
Mitchell Rieder	Dec. 1
Frances Rosenthal	Dec. 2
Rachel Rampino	Dec. 4
Agi Rampino	Dec. 6
Ryan Eilon	Dec. 11
Hank Feuerzeig	Dec. 12
Samuel Laing	Dec. 17
Henri Minion	Dec. 19
Owen Goldberg	Dec. 20
Larry Goldman	Dec. 26
Carole Goldberg	Dec. 28
Andrea Goldberg	Dec. 29
Alan Friedman	Dec. 30

December Anniversaries Larry and Helen Goldman Dec. 27



רפואה שלימה

A complete recovery to:

Robin Adler Laurie Allen Charles Arthur **Pauline Balsam** Alan Brostein Amiel Cohen **Quinn Copps Yigal Ehrlich** Jared Falek Gina Talia Farahnick Marci Finkelstein Julie Friedman Marilyn Grishman Violet Adelaide Johnson Jay Kranitz Sheri Levson Linda Lewensohn Steven Markowitz Tom McCoy

Sheldon Minion James Nicholson Maria Grace Nicholson **Ruth Novick** Ella Ogden **Erik Pedersen** Rosa Pupko **Dorothy Ring** Monte Rosenthal Henia Rubins John Schenkel **Ruth Schloss** Maxine Shayna Stark **Bill Stein Robert Tunick Rachel Wallace** Andrea Weibel Rona Wolfso Rayna Sandra Zaner



Please be in touch with us to let us know of any updates. Hopefully we will hear from you with good news, of recovery and a return to health for you or your loved ones. You can write us at info@synagogue.vi.

We remember former members and those who are dear to our members.

Week of December 1-10

Ovadia Rahmin Avigdor, Max Becker, Lola Bookman, Judy Brizdle, Raymond Camhi, Peyser Cohen Mary Demetriff, Elliot Fishman, Leo Flashman, Dora Gottenberg, Irving Grishman, Daniel Lee Heftel George Horwitz, Charlotte Isaacs, Israel Levin, Maxell S. Matt, Isidor Paiewonsky, Josephine E. Pomeranz Elaine Athias Robles, Frieda M. Schwartz, Herb Stein, Charles J. Weiss, Lisa E. Whitney

Week of December 11-17

Anita Anton, Adele Berlin, Gussie Berner, Morris Fidanque De Castro, Judith Fields Sidney K. Halpern, Samuel J. Karlin, Leah LeBlang, Norma Lenkowsky, Hyman Livinson Helen Sheftelman, Leah S. Shein, Steven Geller Silverman, Belle M. Stern, Sidney Werbel

Week of December 18-24

Gladys Robles DeCastro, Max Geller, Adele Weiner Gordon, David Greenman, Abraham Heller Stanley P. Lapin, Romi Levine, Hulda Paiewonsky, Louis Richwerger, Helen Rothman Dorothy Schwimmer, Douglas Sell, Hyman Shein, Eva Geller Silverman, Doris Tunick, Cherie Young

Week of December 25-31

Louis Fleishman, Irving M. Grishman, Bernice Hoffeld, Nanci B. Margolis Evelyn Migdal, Gwenn Alyce Rosov, Yosefa Shamir, Jack Soloway Frank Steiner, Arlene M. Turk, Minnie Weinberger

We remember our Chai Members and those who are dear to our Chai Members

Week of December 1-10

Bernard Abels, Betsy Abrams, Jeffrey Askenas, Morris Azrolan, Charles Blumenkehl, Rubin Block, Daniel Chaifetz, Louis Cohen, Harvey Culter, Edith Echenberg, Robert Einhorn, Estelle Faskow, Avrum Fitch, Ellen Fitch, Mark Fitch, Marvin Fleischer, Edith Freeman, George Fried, Ray Garron, Manuel Goldman, Estelle Green, Morris Herman, Stuart Kalaminsky, Phyllis Koenigheit, Sylvia Kowalsky, Saia Kugler, Rita Kupetzky, Reva Lander, Rebecca Leff, Herman Levin, Estelle Levy, Samuel Lewin, Herbert Lifland, Lena Mansky, Nathan Meister, Margaret Menin, Pamela Mitchell, Bessie Mittleman, Marie Morris, Sadie Nappen, Abe Neiberg, Beatrice Nelson, Esther Ozsarfati, Frieda Padwo, Meyer Paker, Thomas Price, Dr. Stanley Reichman, Harvey Rosen, Lillian Rosen, Hymen Rosenberg, Howard Rosov, George Salzman, Selma Schneider, Reuben Schwartz, Harry Shayman, Leopold Shevelev, Hannah Sichel, Rabbi Samuel Simson, Sarah Spector, Pincus Stahl MD, Madi Taylor, Evelyn Troy, Hazel Tynes, Eve Volkman, Paul Wapner, Janet Weiss, Mary Wolf, Emil Zagon, Ray Zimmerman

Week of December 11-17

Robert Abrams, Kirmit Alleyne, Raiza Berg, Anna Berkman, Irving Block, Simon Bookspan, D. L. Brechner, Milton Chasin, Esther Cohen, Charles Dashe, Esther Elzweig, Birdie Epner, Matthew Fox, Raymond Friedkin, Gertrude Frumkin, Louis Glick, Hannah Golderger, Florence Goldman, Anne Goldner, Frank Goldstein Sol Goldstein, Adele Gordon, Abraham Gross, Nochem Guttenberg, Herman Jaffe, Perry Jaffe, Lola Kader, Abraham Kahalas, Gisela Kestenbaum, Ruth Kobart, Harry Kornell, David Lefkowitz, Jeanette Leibson, Norman Levin, Samuel Levine, Sylvan Levitan, Hyman Libowsky, Sol Lisitza, George Marks, William Menin, William Nathan, Marilyn Paget, Beatrice Parker, Bessie Perlman, Herbert Posner, Kathy Reidhaar, Marvin Ridzinksi, Sima Ritersky, Mildred Romanoff, Minnie Rosenblum, Ann Rubinstein, Harry Rubinstein, Maurice Rubner, Jacob Saltz, Lois Schur, Robert Segal, Gary Shapira, Harold Shapiro, Becky Sherman, Oscar Siegal, Sydney Simon, Gussie Sinnreich, Robert Slan, David Sobel, Charlotte Sporn, Milton Steinberg, Nathan Volkman, Kate Weinstein, Stanley Weintraub James Wilson, Barney Woldow, Robert Woldow, Bee Wolf, Pauline Zeiger

Week of December 18-24

Eli Aflalo, Herman Berg, Irene Blackburn, Marcia Day, Pauline Diskin, Miriam Dorfman, Mildred Feldman, Sophie Fishel, Samuel Fisher, Michael Fleischer, Abraham Freeman, Emma Goldman, Ida Goldstein, Reuben Goodman, Samuel Gordon, M.D., Rose Green, Sonia Grossman, Maurice Hazen, Milton Hinden, Hyman Isaacson, Jeanette Israel, Benjamin Klein, Darlene Klein, Gertrude Lawrence, Joseph Levine, Milton Levitz, David Lewensohn, Sam Neiberg, Emily Novick, Domino Perry, Edward Port, Theresa Reish, Babe Resnic, Elaine Richman, Arnold Rodkin, Ernest Rosen, Morris Rosenthal, Dorothy Roth, Jean Ruff, Dorothy Saltiel Irving Shulman, Dorothy Shwadran, Edith Singer, Sally Soblick, Sam Soblick, Sophia Sollen, Kate Solomon, Jake Spector, Leon Steinberg, Jacob Steindler, Irving Sternberg, Jack Sussman, Sidney Wolbrom

Week of December 25-31

Bessie Adoff, Sarah Applebaum, Joseph Barisa, Susan Beck, Ray Blumenfeld, Esther Blumenthal, Martha Bookspan, Evelyn Bressler, George Bressler, Dooley Cohan, Jean Cohen, Esther Davis, Miriam Dembo, Herman Dorf, Morris Dreyfus, Martha Fink, Beatrice Freedman, Abraham Friedman, Irene Garber, Martin Glass, Bernard Gordon, Abraham Gordon, M.D., Billie Greene, Benjamin Gruberg, Lisa Guberman, George Holstein, Louis Kanter, Benjamin Katz, Lucille Kranson, Dr. Harrison Latta, Sylvia Lefkowitz, Elaine Lesnick, Claire Lipschutz, Mitchell Lupson, Shirley Mande, Elizabeth Manton, Joseph Marcus, Eddie Mazer, Selma Melasky, Samuel Miller, Rachel Ovadia, Gladys Paris, Harry Pierce, Murray Polner, Gyorgy Retsagi, Woolf Ring, Neil Robbins, James Rosenthal Abe Rudberg, Estelle Sachs, Maurice Schmerling, Maurice Schwartz, Lee Shapiro, Pearl Shayman, Helen Shebshaievitz, Ben Slosky, Otto Spiegel, Rubin Sporn, Norman Steinberg, Norman Watkins, Anita Weinstein, Evelyn Weissblum, Betty Wine, Charles Wolf, Gabriel Wolf



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Shalom and welcome to a place where history and destiny meet, where looking up, and looking down, and looking around all tell a tale unlike almost any other.

> We have come together here, as a community and as a congregation, in spirituality and study and service, one generation to the next, since 1796 — and in our current building since 1833.

In coming together now, you step into that tradition, and help write the next chapter in our ongoing story.

Rabbi: Administrator: Docent/Gift Shop Manager: Custodian:

Michael L. Feshbach Stella Minion Agnes Rampino Michael Fuertes

The Hebrew Congregation of St. Thomas

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