

December, 2020
Kislev—Tevet 5781

MESSENGER

שליח

Temple Hesed, 1 Knox Road, Scranton, PA 18505



Dec 6 @ 4 pm: “Encore” Jewish Mysticism Class: Ecstatic Kabbalah and Mystical Hanukkah Secrets

Due to the number of requests, Rabbi Daniel’s mysticism class will have an “encore” session on Sunday, December 6th from 4pm to 5:30pm. Even if you haven’t been attending, you’re welcome to join us for this special session. In it, we’ll examine “ecstatic” — also called “prophetic” — Kabbalah, learn about the Jewish mystic who was thrown in jail for planning to convert the pope, and discover Kabbalistic secrets to Hanukkah. If you haven’t participated in the past, please email Rabbi Daniel at (rabbidaniel@comcast.net) in advance of the class so he can send you the class materials before the session begins.

To join, just click:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83700031974?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83700031974?pwd=elk0WEI_Gek5QT3JYQlBDc1ltbkE5UT09)

[pwd=elk0WEI_Gek5QT3JYQlBDc1ltbkE5UT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83700031974?pwd=elk0WEI_Gek5QT3JYQlBDc1ltbkE5UT09)

Or from the Zoom app, enter Meeting ID: 837 0003 1974 and Passcode: Zohar

No Services December 25 or January 1

You might not have known, but in many parts of the world, January 1 is not only a New Year’s day, but it also marks the celebration of Jesus’s circumcision. If you assume Jesus was born on December 25th (not necessarily a sound assumption, as the early Church didn’t celebrate it at all, and when it was first celebrated, the date chosen was January 6, which was itself a guess), the eighth day, when the bris would have been celebrated, would be January 1st. Some say that this is why it was chosen as the New Year’s in the Western world, though there are alternative explanations.

In any case, for an entirely different set of reasons (including family travel and businesses being closed), Temple Hesed will not be having services on either December 25th or January 1st. There also will not be a chanting circle on December 26th, though one is planned for January 2nd. Depending on the current state of the pandemic and vaccines, we will decide in January whether or not any services or programs will be in person, and we will continue to evaluate each month.

RELATED STORY ON PAGE 2



Donations to Temple Hased

Major credit or debit cards accepted.

Minimum \$10 donation for acknowledgement in the Messenger.

To donate contact Marlene Gianzanti, Temple Administrator at 570-344-7201

Donations will be published next month.

In the event clicking on a link does not work, just copy the link and paste it onto your browser address line.



All Services, Chanting Circles, and Programs virtual during December

Given the rising number of COVID-19 cases, along with hopes that vaccines will soon be available, all Temple Hased services, programs, and so on will be held online during December.

Friday night services will continue to be available both on Zoom and via YouTube.

December 4th will be at 6 pm,

- December 11th will be our Hanukkah service (see article below) at 7 pm,
- December 18th will be at 8 pm, and there will be no Shabbat service on December 25th or January 1st.

Hanukkah Family Service on December 11, 7 pm

While we won't be able to join in person this year, we'll still have a festive Hanukkah celebration online, featuring music by Ed Snitko, a story by Rabbi Daniel, and a hi-tech menorah courtesy of the Union for Reform Judaism's Sci-Tech camps.

Make sure to have your home menorah ready to join in! As with all our Friday night services, you can join on Zoom by clicking:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89442525110?pwd=T1U0a0x1RjhoSnNPYXp4S2R4UG9tQT09>

Or from the Zoom app enter Meeting ID: 894 4252 5110 and Passcode: Hased

You can also watch (but not participate in readings and so on) on YouTube on the Temple Hased channel:https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCwWXduQKzeDWe6lfbDSNLTw?view_as=subscriber
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCwWXduQKzeDWe6lfbDSNLTw?view_as=subscriber

Happy Hanukkah to all!



Rabbinical

Reflections

Rabbi Daniel J.
Swartz

Dialing Hanukkah Back — and Forward

As with everything else in these pandemic times, Hanukkah will look very different this year. In-person community galas, synagogue parties, even large family gatherings will be (or at least, should be for health reasons!) off the table. But just because we have to cut back on some of the celebratory aspects of Hanukkah doesn't mean that it won't be special. Indeed, dialing the public pomp back creates a wonderful opportunity to "dial forward" some of other, potentially more meaningful aspects of the holiday.

For example, did you know that American households produce an average of 25% more waste between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day? The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that we produce an additional 1 million pounds of trash each week during this time! Holiday food waste, wrapping and packaging, and extravagant shopping all contribute to this waste. But what if, instead of focusing on Hanukkah's glitz, we saw it as a time for mitzvot?

For example, look at the current "tradition" of Hanukkah gift giving — "tradition" because it is a modern American invention, an adjunct to the mass commercialization of Christmas. I'm not naive enough to believe that people will suddenly stop giving gifts on Hanukkah. But we can shift at least some of our gifts into occasions for doing a mitzvah or two. Fortunately, the same internet that provides round-the-clock shopping binges also makes it easier to find non-material gift choices. For example, the Union for Reform Judaism has developed a "social justice gift guide" specifically for the eight nights of Hanukkah: (<https://reformjudaism.org/jewish-holidays/hanukkah/social-justice-gift-guide-hanukkah>)

Though not specifically Jewish — indeed, despite the name, it goes well beyond holidays altogether — the site

"Simplify the Holidays" (<https://simplifytheholidays.org>) is filled with ideas about how we can transform the idea of gifts from something fleeting, material, and harmful to our planet's future into lasting memories created by helping to build a better future. At a time when so many are facing financial crunches, such experiences have the additional benefit of making Hanukkah more affordable. The site also contains facts and figures about how much is caused by different choices and many resources for reducing your impact on the planet.

Choosing such gifts would align their giving much more closely with the central values of Hanukkah. At its core, Hanukkah is a holiday that celebrates resistance to a culture that focuses on superficial beauty and the idolatry of wealth. The Haftarah for Hanukkah (Zechariah 2:14-4:7) points to another aspect of Hanukkah that is especially pertinent in our age of climate disasters. It concludes with a vision of the 7-branched menorah in the Temple being surrounded by two olive trees. Golden olive oil flows directly from the olive trees to the menorah, yielding an eternal light. A seven-word Hebrew phrase is proclaimed, one word for each light of the menorah, "Not by might, not by power, but by My (God's) spirit." (Zechariah 4:6)

What does this mean, and what light does it shed upon our present situation? The integration of the olive trees and the menorah is one of the most ancient metaphors we have for the modern concept of sustainability. Use is balanced by growth, left and right are symmetrically balanced, and the whole image is meant to remind us not to focus on our own political might or technological power, but on the Divine spirit, who values the goodness of Creation far above the creation of wealth. The evergreen

olive trees — despite nowadays being seen as a symbol of peace — would in ancient times have been seen as an additional sign of eternity. This passage also raises echoes in our mind of the story of from the Talmud (Shabbat 21b) about the Maccabees finding a single cruse of oil, which miraculously lasted for eight days. How's that for an example of energy conservation!

A few lines further down in Zechariah, the prophet records another observation, seemingly an aside, which should bring us hope as we contemplate both the long road back from the pandemic and overwhelming task of combatting climate change. The word of God, the prophet recounts (4:10) is "Do not scorn the day of small beginnings." Olive trees grow slowly, and cultures often shift even more slowly. But if we make this Hanukkah a time of "small beginnings" in a journey to future that is more just and sustainable, we will make the holiday come alive in way that shopping never can.

—Rabbi Daniel J. Swartz

Multifaith Chanting Circle: Eternal Light — December 5, 12, and 19

This year 2020 has been a year of multiple darkneses, ranging from climate disasters to the pandemic to social divisions. But even as the days get shorter, we are starting to see some light up ahead. In our December Multifaith Chanting Circles, we'll celebrate that light and learn how to hold onto it even in the midst of darkness. Join us for a series of light-filled chants and practices, as well as a welcoming and supportive group. To

join (everyone is welcome, and no prior experience is needed) just click:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83570030002?pwd=TE8xQ2NDTi8xSk83cnRSQXFMY2IUdz09>

Or from the Zoom app, enter Meeting ID: 835 7003 0002 and Passcode: Gratitude

Interfaith Thanksgiving Service a Success Despite “Technical Difficulties”

In some ways, it was more complicated even than High Holy Day services. We had to coordinate a Lenape Ceremonial Chief from Easton, Bahai, Sufi, and Christian prayers, recorded greetings from Temple Israel and Friends of the Poor, and songs from U Scranton students, all while dealing with ECTV's live-streaming capabilities. The result was... 2020 appropriate, but many, many people nevertheless enjoyed it, and the various streams received over 1000 “hits”! If you missed it “live,” you can see a very nice TV story about it here:

<https://fox56.com/news/local/interfaith-service-kicks-off-thanksgiving-events-for-friends-of-the-poor>

and you can watch the service itself here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=86U_Sx_GuKQ&feature=share&fbclid=IwAR0hTXxEexZefgefCWjpBG__9cncrZmWLRzBdq9TCBJm2GoCTZI7u5AbfUk

Reform Jewish Leader Congratulates Biden and Harris on Victory

WASHINGTON - In response to Vice President Biden and Senator Harris's achievement of the necessary 270 electoral college votes to make them the next president and vice president, respectively, Rabbi Jonah Dov Pesner, Director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, issued the following statement on behalf of the Union for Reform Judaism, Central Conference of American Rabbis, and the wider Reform Jewish movement:

We congratulate President-elect Biden and Vice President-elect Harris on their victory in the 2020 election. Assuming the final count confirms this outcome, we urge a peaceful transition of power for the good of the nation and the integrity of our democracy.

As the new administration prepares to take office in January, it must act swiftly to address the many policies implemented over the past four years that have done untold harm to Americans and to the United States' stature in the world. People of Color continue to live with the trauma and hurt caused by the disproportionate number of police shootings, higher rates of COVID deaths, and inequities in education, employment, housing, and more. Refugees and asylum seekers are being turned away; immigrant children have been separated from their parents; and members of immigrant communities overall are living in fear of deportation and persecution. The Supreme Court could soon dismantle the Affordable Care Act, leaving millions of Americans without vital health coverage. LGBTQ+ families are concerned about the possible end to legal recognition of their marriages and about having religious freedom claims to discriminate against them upheld by the courts. Transgender Americans are being marginalized and denigrated by the federal government, including those who wish to serve their country in uniform. Reproductive rights are being challenged in states nationwide and Roe v Wade is in danger of being overturned. And the impacts of climate change are seen in American communities grappling with floods, fires, hurricanes, and other extreme weather events. We will work to dismantle the systems that continue to oppress Americans from historically marginalized backgrounds and hold the Biden-Harris administration accountable for addressing these and so many other pressing issues of social justice and moral urgency. We will also hold the new Congress accountable for addressing these issues.

Though the Senate majority remains undecided, we are deeply concerned by the possibility that should Sen. McConnell return as Majority Leader, he will use his power to stonewall rather than to fulfill his legislative responsibility to the American people. The election has exposed the nation's deep fault lines. Political leadership that places partisanship second to the well-being of the nation overall can begin the healing process that is so desperately needed.

Even as we await the final election results, we are especially proud that the Reform Movement's nonpartisan 2020 civic

engagement campaign, "Every Voice, Every Vote," has been our largest and most successful effort to engage U.S. citizens in our democratic process. Together, we have mobilized more than 500,000 voters and worked tirelessly to ensure that every voice is heard and every vote is counted in this election. As we look ahead, we recommit to passage of the John Lewis Voting Rights Restoration Act in the next Congress so that every eligible American has access to the polls and has their vote counted.

We know that for many Americans, the results of this election are not what they hoped for. The Reform Jewish Movement will continue to support our congregations and communities as spaces that strengthen the essential and enduring ties among us, fostering unity and healing. Local, state, and national leaders must do the same. Private citizens and public figures alike have a responsibility to recognize and respect the humanity in others. Those unwilling to do so – including those who traffic in white supremacy – betray the values of our nation. As we move forward from this election, let us work together to build a nation of justice for all.



December 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4 Services 6pm *	5 Chanting circle* 11:30 am to 12:30 pm*
6 "Encore" Jewish Mysticism Class: 4 pm*	7	8	9	10 Hanukkah Eve 1st Candle	11 Hanukkah Services 7pm* 2nd Candle	12 Chanting Circle 11:30am- noon* 3rd Candle
13 4th Candle	14 5th Candle	15 6th Candle	16 Board Mtg 6pm* 7th Candle	17 8th Candle	18 Services 8 pm*	19 Chanting Circle 11:30 am to Noon*
20	21 First Day of Winter	22	23	24	25 No Services	26
27	28	29	30	31	.	

5781 Holiday Calendar

Rosh HaShanah —
Sept. 18-19

Yom Kippur — Sept. 27-
28

Sukkot — Oct. 2-9

Sh'mini Atzeret-
Simchat Torah — Oct.
9-10

Hanukkah — Dec. 10-18

Tu Bishvat — Jan. 27-28

Purim — Feb. 25-26

Passover — Mar 27-Apr.
3

Yom HaShoah — Apr.
7-8

Yom HaZikaron —
Apr. 14-15

Yom HaAtzmaut —
Apr. 15-16

Lag BaOmer —Apr. 29-
30

Shavuot — May 16-17

Tishah B'Av — July 17-
18

Selichot Service —
Aug. 28

Torah Portions

Name	Civil date	Hebrew Date
Vayeshlach	Dec. 5, 2020	19.Kislev.5781
Vayeshev	Dec. 12, 2020	26.Kislev.5781
Mikeitz	Dec. 19, 2020	4. Tivet.5781
Vayigash	Dec. 26, 2050	11.Tivet.5781

More information available from URJ.org

“You
can't put
'thank you' in your
pocket.”

JAHRZEITS

Week Ending November 28 (Service December 4)

*Lena Kurlancheek Silverstein, *Hyman Weiss, *Brian David Schneider, *Steven Rex Tepper, *Hannah Klein Smith, *Albert Pace, *Frank Bernard Cohan, *Richard Oppenheim, Leo Moskovitz, *Sophie Stone, *Philip Ungar, *Jack Goldman, *Selma Berger, *Susan Lonstein, *Anne J. Lipsins, *Jacob Ackerman

Week Ending December 5 (Service December 4)

*John Ross Lauer, *Dr. Jonas Selverstone, *David Rothenberg, *Albert Jacobs, *Miriam Parker Gelb, *John J. Gaffney, Arthur Selznick, *Harry Lonstein, *Esther C. Oppenheim, *Jean Stein Sutton, *Linda Lee Leventhal, Dr. Newton Freund, *Rudolph M. Goldsmith, *Etta C. Levey, Marilyn Perfilio, *Herman Ziman

Week Ending December 12 (Service December 11)

*Anna L. Brownstein, *Ellis M. Oppenheim, *Irwin E. Alperin, Ira Lauscher, Rose Fine, *Erich Traub, *Esther Gordon, *Fannie Roos, *Jonas Lauer, *Sadie Freeman, *Yetta Linder, *Abraham D. Goldberg, Ruth D. Karnoff, Michael Mitchell, *Louis E. Newman, Bernardine Kaplan, *Harriet D. Morris, *Dr. Leon Braunstein, *Frank Feldman, *Mary Leventhal

Week Ending December 19 (Service December 18)

*Nancy Stahler, *Morris Cohen, *Anna Swartz, *Fannye M. Slavitz, *Lea S. Mauer, *Maxine Wylen, Doris Toledano Frieder, *Toby Rodgick, *Rose Schudmack, *Gloria Dinner, *Samuel Roos, *Sarah Greenberger, *George Joseph Weisberg

Week Ending December 26 (Service January 8)

*Margaret Smith, *Minnie Ginsburg, *Rebecca Newman, *Carolina Schwartz, *Goldie Neumann, *Morris Goldsmith, *Israel Greenberger, *Elliott Weisberger, *David Zukowski, *Edward Berger, *Chester Levy, *Bernard Rymland, *Isadore Adelman, *Harvey Sanford Siegel, *Gus Weinberger

Week Ending January 2 (Service January 8)

*Meyer Davis, Ralph Meyer, *David Rosenberg, *Martin Weilheimer, Jerry Kline, *Bernard Wormser, *Herbert Smith, *Carole S. Goodman, Bessie Kaplan, *Jessica Parker Mannoff, *Judith Pell Weinberger, *Isaac Ziegler, *Janet Phillips, *Jennie Bakaley, Grace E. Davis, *Louis Kleeman, *Olga Adelman, *Blanche Silverstein

There will be no services on December 25 and January 1. Kaddish will be observed on JAN. 8, 2021.

Get
Wells

Michael Cornfield
Mark Davis
Don Dembert
Lynne Fragin
Larry Golden
Maggie LoRusso
Rich Mates
Charlotte Milliken
Chelsea Minkoff
Harriet Noble
Jane Oppenheim
Charlene Ostro
Emily Trunzo
Joel Vener

TEMPLE HESED

1 Knox Road
Scranton, PA 18505

Office: 570-344-7201

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Website: <http://www.templehesed.org>

ABOUT TEMPLE HESED:

Temple Hesed, a Reform Synagogue founded Aug. 20, 1860, is Scranton's first and oldest Jewish congregation. It is one of the earliest congregations to join the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, now the Union for Reform Judaism. It has been a member since Dec. 12, 1874.

The synagogue serves the needs of individuals and families in Lackawanna County and surrounding areas. Situated on Knox Road, off Lake Scranton Road in the East Mountain section of Scranton, the current building opened in 1973. Temple Hesed operates a cemetery on West Warren Street in Dunmore.

The office is open Tuesday-Thursday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.; and Friday 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Rabbi Swartz is happy to set appointments at any convenient time. Contact him to set a time. The rabbi also has "drop-in" hours every Tuesday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and Friday from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. The Rabbi holds these times open for visits or calls for which an appointment was not or could not be made.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, appointments should be made for all meetings with the rabbi.

The Temple Hesed Cemetery is open for visitation six days a week. Visitation hours are: Monday-Friday 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Sunday 8 a.m. till dusk and it is closed for Shabbat on Saturday. For more information, call the office.

Temple Hesed

The Temple of Loving-Kindness

On the Web at: templehesed.org

SPIRITUAL LEADER

Rabbi Daniel J Swartz

570-877-3454 (cell)

570-344-7201 (office)

rabbidaniel@comcast.net (email)

OFFICERS

Esther Adelman, Steven Seitchik and Cheryl Friedman — **Co-Presidents** Jeffrey Leventhal — **Treasurer** Jennifer Novak — **Secretary** Joan Davis — **Assistant Secretary**

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Honorary Life Board Member: Jane Oppenheim

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Edward Snitko—*Director of Music*

Jennifer Rosen Novak— *Director of Social Media*

Rich Mates—*Editor Messenger* (hesednews@gmail.com)
