

Beth Israel Sinai News

The Monthly Newsletter of Beth Israel Sinai Congregation

December 2024

Cheshvan - Kislev 5785

Rabbi's Message

The rancor of extreme political rhetoric resonates through the halls of power. Inflexible ideological positions are used to shout down opposing political points of view. Political opposites are accused of being national traitors. A nation built on consensus for over two and one half centuries has suddenly found it impossible to carry on the affairs of state. The main objective has become appeasing local constituents at the risk of alienating the entire nation. Nothing substantive can be achieved.

If you think I am referring to our current national political dilemma, think again. I am referring to the two centuries between the political conquest of the known world by Alexander the Great in the latter 4th century BCE and the Chanukah rebellion of 165 BCE. Under the early Greek conquest, different political subcultures and religions were allowed to exist provided they accepted the ultimate political authority of the Greek Empire. Israel continued to maintain its sacrificial religion in Jerusalem under the guidance of the Priesthood. Many Jews became infatuated with various aspects of Greek culture. The first translation of the Bible from the ancient Hebrew was into Greek in the Egyptian city of Alexandria. Jews who accepted Greek culture became known as Hellenists. Hellenists were divided into those who became totally assimilated into Greek culture, some going so far as to try to reverse their circumcisions, and those Jews who selectively incorporated aspects of Greek culture while still adhering to their traditions. Hellenists of all shades of opinion initially coexisted in Israel for most of the third century BCE and the first part of the second century BCE. Consensus on the issues of the day was virtually always achieved. This political and religious pragmatism continued until the rise of the Assyrian King, Antiochus.

One of the Antiochus's first acts was to make the study of Torah illegal. Many of the more rabid Hellenists accepted the validity of this law as a means to further their acceptance into Greek society. Soon they were at odds with many of their coreligionists. Factions could no longer compromise. Tensions accelerated as Jews often reported other Jews to the authorities who had the temerity to study Torah. The incident that resulted in the rebellion of the Maccabees was the attempt by Hellenist fanatics to slaughter a pig in the Holy Temple. Judah Maccabee and his sons launched the first recorded fight for political and religious freedom.

Perhaps the situation in America is not exactly the same as in Greek ruled Israel. No one has outlawed what Americans can read or banned a particular form of religious observance. Still, the fact that our political leaders stress ideology at the expense of doing what is best for the nation has often resulted in the inability to compromise that existed in ancient Israel. The story of Chanukah just might prove to be a valuable tool for politicians who wish to forge political compromise benefiting the greatest number of our citizens.

SEE YOU IN SHUL,
RABBI MARTY

Chanukah starts this year on the evening of December 25, 2024. I will have items for sale in the synagogue if you wish to purchase them. There are candles, cards, gifts.

We have a camp fund for people who wish to go to Israel. If you are interested please let a board member know so we can help defray a bit of the cost. You must be a member to be able to use the camp fund.

Cemetery Notes

The Racine Jewish Cemetery is five acres located at 612 Lathrop Ave. It is a well maintained, park-like setting. A resting place for all Jews. .

There is a Reform section of the cemetery where Jews and their non-Jewish family members can be buried together.

For more information about the purchase of cemetery plots or perpetual care, please call Marc Greenberg 702-465-4805

ZOOM LINK INFO

Meeting ID 86963820547

Passcode 812975

Phone Number

1-309-205-3325

The Presidents Message

You can easily join our synagogue family we have affordable full memberships and we have associate memberships for those who may live too far from us to become an active member. Whether you want to attend weekly or just when you have time please consider joining with a membership. Your membership helps to keep our synagogue open and vital.

If there are any programs you think would be interesting and they are on zoom let us know and we can try to have the program on zoom for you to enjoy at the synagogue.

You can reach me by phone 262-945-7675

Joyce Placzkowski President

Rabbi Adelberg is offering free Hebrew classes to children. Please call Rabbi Adelberg 847-529-1609 to setup appointments. Donations to the Rabbi's discretionary account are always welcome, and tax deductible.

Personal History of Beth Israel Sinai Max Gordon

Beth Israel Sinai's first building was a mansion at 10th and Main. I recall watching a service there while sitting on my father's shoulders. The mansion was razed and replaced with the most tastefully elegant synagogue I have ever seen.; I recall parading the Torah from our temporary location on 6th Street to our new home at 10th and Main. The first Rabbi I recall was Joseph Gorefinkel who dedicated the building at 10th and Main in 1953. We had 300 families, a sanctuary, social hall, theater stage, commercial kitchen, six classrooms, a finished basement, and two offices. We had a full-time Cantor and a choir. We hosted a chapter of every Jewish organization. Fundraisers resembled auctions. We produced plays and talent shows, sold challah, bagels and Jewish rye bread. We could serve dinner to 300 guest. The cantor and rabbi each had a parsonage. Quickly, High Holiday services became standing room only events.

Children who left for university did not return to mind the store. Older members stayed socially close and continued to pay dues, but they retired to California and Florida.

I was bar Mitzvah by Rabbi Hyman Cohen. It was the most memorable event in my Jewish life. I have reprised it several times, but never perfected it. I was charged with continuing my Jewish education and I sincerely intended to learn to daven like the men from Europe. I became a High Holiday Jew and an ambassador to the gentiles.

One day while I was out walking, George Stern curbed his car, lowered his window and motioned me over. He said, "It's your turn," and gave me the date of the next temple board meeting. I was assigned to the building committee. While I was at work, I received a call from Karen Lifschultz. "We need a Sunday School teacher," she said. I replied, "Karen do you know who you called? Do you want me to teach auto mechanics or sex education? Call someone else. She called back to plead that I only had to stay one chapter ahead of the students. That was the start of my service to the Synagogue. At some point I became the ritual committee. My job was to assign parts of the High Holiday service to members of the congregation. That work started on July 5th. At an annual meeting the current President said how they needed a new President. I found my self raising my hand and that is how I became the President. David Hulbert assured me that I would do fine. Rabbi Ze'ev Harari at the time announced he accepted another position. Then we hired Martyn Adelberg to Replace Rabbi Ze'ev. After my second term as President I became the treasurer. Membership had dwindled to 20 families I presented to the congregation the choice of going bankrupt or selling the building. That is how we landed where we are now.

The most important thing to me about being Jewish is being a member of the tribe. Once, Beth Israel Sinai consisted of large, related families, who knew each other well. As the old guard was replaced by new faces we became a audience. Now we are in a renewal following a disaster like those predicted by the prophets. Sharing a little personal info here in the newsletter will bring us together as a congregation once again don't be overly modest.
WHO ARE YOU?

Sisterhood

If anyone is interested in sponsoring a Kiddush just let Joyce Placzkowski know, 1 -262-945-7675. The charge for a dairy Kiddush is \$50, meat Kiddush is \$100. The kitchen can always use paper goods. If you are interested in helping to make food for the Kiddush or a Shabbat dinner just let Joyce Placzkowski know.

Donations

Mary Vite general donation
Joan Toth general donation
Max Gordon in memory of Michael Lifschutz

Beth Israel Sinai
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 Racine WI 53405

262-633-7093

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treasurer@bethisraelsinai.org

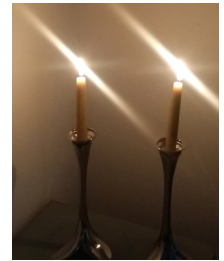
rabbi@bethisraelsinai.org

Web: www.bethisraelsinai.org

BETH ISRAEL SINAI
December 2024
Cheshvan - Kislev 5785

Shabbat & Holiday Candle Lighting Times

December 6 3:58
 December 13 3:59
 December 20 4:01
 December 27 4:05



December 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7 <i>service 10 am in person and zoom</i>
8	9	10	11	12	13	14 <i>service 10 am in person and zoom</i>
15	16	17	18	19	20	21 <i>service 10 am in person and zoom</i>
22	23	24	25 <i>1st night Chanukah</i>	26 <i>2 candles Chanukah</i>	27 <i>3 candles Chanukah</i>	28 <i>service 10 am in person and zoom 4 candles Chanukah</i>
29 <i>5 candles Chanukah</i>	30 <i>6 candles Chanukah</i>	31 <i>7 candles Chanukah</i>				