

Report to Har Shalom Board from October 20 to November 18, 202

Rabbi Laurie Franklin



Parashat Vayishlach, Nireh Or

Services and Special Observances

- 4th Friday 4 All, once/month
- First Saturday Torah service, once/month
- Musical Kabbalat Shabbat/once/month

Education, Adult and Youth

- Atidaynu, bi-monthly on Sundays
- Bmitz Hebrew, TBA
- Torah study, 2 to 4 Saturdays/month
- Special Torah study with Hebrew focus, once/month
- Beit Midrash, Mondays, weekly "Kohelet"
- Lunch with the Rabbi, Wednesdays, weekly, *Mouth of the Donkey*
- Hebrew for Beginners, Wednesdays, 10-week series
- Biblical Hebrew, continuing, Wednesdays, 20-week series

Har Shalom Administrative & Planning

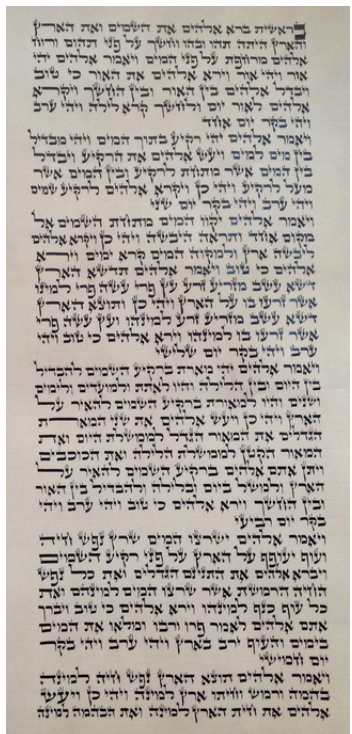
- Weekly meet-up with Past-President Holly Kingsford, President Dave Jolles, and Bert Chessin/Google doc with notes
- Content for weekly
- Atidaynu planning

Pastoral, Outreach, and Greater Community

- **Pastoral** (details confidential): Individual sessions, phone calls and emails, responses to requests for information, and other services, 5 to 10/week
- **Greater Community**
 - Missoula County Public Schools, I-VALUE, monthly meetings. Created Hanukkah guide for MCPS teachers' newsletter
 - Missoula Interfaith Collaborative Clergy meetings
 - MHRN Board member: Montana Human Rights Network
 - Missoula County Government: justice, equity, diversity, inclusion task force meeting, every other week

Abstract

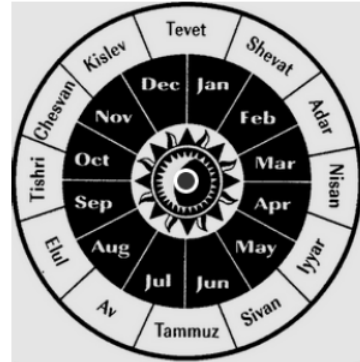
- Prepared "Hanukkah Guide for Our Schools" for Missoula County Public Schools (*see below*)
- Beit Midrash, Lunch with the Rabbi, Hebrew resumed mid-October, well-attended and active
- Hanukkah party planning ongoing. Security a concern.
- My calendar of Har Shalom activities and appointments is available to every board member, using your Har Shalom email address and password to gain access to the Har Shalom office suite



Hanukkah for our schools: A brief guide

Rabbi Laurie Franklin/November 2021

Hanukkah is called "Festival of Lights" because we light a special menorah (lamp) at home, called a "Hanukkiah" (hah-new-KEY-uh), for eight days in a row. In 2021, Hanukkah begins at sunset on Sunday November 28 and continues until sundown Monday December 6. Some people note that Hanukkah dates seem to move around; in fact, Hanukkah always begins on the 25th of the Hebrew month of Kislev. However, the Hebrew calendar and Gregorian calendar do not match, so Hanukkah's dates vary on the Gregorian calendar.



Hebrew and Gregorian Calendars

What is Hanukkah about?

Hanukkah means "dedication". The holiday marks the unlikely military triumph of a small band of hill fighters, the Maccabees, who drove the Syrian Greek army from Jerusalem and the surrounding territory (Second Century BCE). The great Temple of the Jews had been turned into a stable for the occupying army, so Hanukkah celebrates its reclamation and rededication.

Why eight candles?

The Rabbis of the Talmud tell a story about a miracle: The golden Temple lamp was an oil lamp, rather than a lamp of candles. When it was time to rekindle the Temple lamp for the rededication, the people found a single container of prepared oil, enough to light the lamp for one day only. But the lamp was intended to burn perpetually—all hours, all days—and it would take eight days to prepare more ritual oil. Wonder of wonders, the single container of oil lasted eight full days!

Hanukkah customs: Food, Gelt, Dreidels, Presents

- We eat foods cooked in oil, such as potato latkes (potato pancakes) and sufganiyot (doughnuts), to commemorate the miracle of the oil.



Potato Latkes and Apple Sauce



Chocolate Hanukkah Gelt

- Hanukkah gelt: The word gelt is Yiddish for money. In Eastern Europe, people would give Hanukkah gelt to impoverished, young Torah (Hebrew Bible) scholars so they could get something special to eat and pay their teachers. These days, Hanukkah gelt refers to chocolate, foil-wrapped coins or gifts of money.

- A dreidel is a small top, spun by hand, that is used to play a game. When Torah study was outlawed by non-Jewish authorities, students would pretend they were playing dreidel games to evade detection. If they were accused of study, they would say, "We are only playing dreidel!" The dreidel has four sides, each with a Hebrew letter. The letters stand for the words, "A great miracle happened there." In Israel, the letters are different, standing for "A great miracle happened **here**".
- Presents? The custom of giving Hanukkah gelt also developed into gift-giving, perhaps in emulation of Christmas, but is not central to Hanukkah.



Dreidels

How to light a Hanukkiah



Two styles of Hanukkiah

Each evening, we add one candle until, on the eve of the last day, we light all eight. We light the newest day's candle first, beginning at the right side of the Hanukkiah. In addition to the daily candles, there is a special candle, called the "shamus" (SHAH-muhs), whose role is to light the others. So, a proper Hanukkiah has nine candle holders. The daily candles are arranged at the same height, and the shamus might be either set to one side or in the middle of the eight, and might be at the same level of the other candles or higher.

A menorah with seven candle holders is not a Hanukkiah but is a representation of the Biblical seven-branched menorah of the ancient Jewish Temples.

We place the Hanukkiah in a window or in a wind-proof location (I light a Hanukkiah on my front porch in an aquarium with a lid). When the candles are burning, we celebrate by singing Hanukkah songs, playing dreidel, and enjoying food. When Jewish people live in places where it is dangerous for them to be open about their religious identity, the Rabbinic Sages said it is okay to light the Hanukkiah inside the house, away from public view.

How important is Hanukkah in Jewish practice?

Hanukkah is considered to be a relatively "minor" holiday compared to observances mandated in the Bible such as the New Year, the Day of Atonement, and Passover. It originated with the Jewish Sages, long after the codification of Torah. Nonetheless, through public menorah lightings and with its proximity to Christmas, Hanukkah has gained additional prominence. For American Jews, it is a meaningful affirmation of identity at a time when most commercial activity focuses on the Christmas season. The magic of candle lighting in the darkest time of year is a beautiful reminder of the cyclical nature of the seasons and the wonder of creation.

How do you greet someone during Hanukkah?

"Happy Hanukkah" is the standard English greeting.