



Beth Emeth Observer

BETH EMETH CONGREGATION

13702 W. Meeker Blvd.,
Sun City West, AZ 85375
623-584-7210

bethemethaz@gmail.com
www.bethemethaz.org

Office hours Mon-Fri - 9 AM - 12 PM

Rabbi Jeffrey B. Lipschultz

KISLEV-TEVET 5782

December 2021

"More Than Just The Conservative Congregation of the West Valley, We Are A Community"



We joyously welcome back
our snow birds!

We have missed you!



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SABBATH CANDLE LIGHTING

December	
3	5:02
10	5:02
17	5:05
24	5:08
31	5:13

Volume 2021
Number 10



FROM THE DESK OF MARILYN NEWBERG, PRESIDENT

We have come to the end of 2021, part of me is happy, another sad. Sad, because we lost members and many have health issues. I really hope that 2022 will give them strength.

Ketzi, Sally, Stacy, with the extra help from volunteers, were able to honor veterans of all wars. I was so proud to be a part of this event. Our special guest, coordinator, and teacher, came from our neighboring state of California. Desiree Luethy, from the Alexandria Academy zoomed this event. We even had a 1940's fashion show, and bake sale. People, and students, from both near and far (Saudi Arabia), witnessed the stories of a few of our local vets.

Our dues for 2022 will remain the same. Prices are going up, and not just the gas. Our electricity, gas, heating, and maintenance all rapidly increased this year. We could really use volunteers. Any time that you may have to offer will be appreciated.

Would you like to work for our Judaica shop? Once again, Barbara Newman donated \$1000.00 to Beth Emeth. Your support makes this possible. We have yahrzeit candles in stock. Get them while they last.

Have you thought about purchasing a memorial plaque? Forms are in the office.

Please come in and get a tzedakah box. Start putting in your change and singles. You will be surprised how fast that money grows. I check to see how much I have collected, and when I reach \$18, then I write a check and start over.

I wish you a very happy new year. I look forward to sharing 2022 with you.

Shalom, Marilyn Newberg

Note to all singers and keyboard players

After a very long gap in activities caused by the pandemic we are restarting our choir activities. Music is in our hearts. We remember fondly our Choir Kabbalat Shabbat services. We are keeping it melodious and mostly familiar. Old favorites are on the program, liturgical and secular, and we would like nothing more than make everyone in the sanctuary sing with us. and if you have some new melodies, bring them in.

And we would like an accompanist. We have a keyboard but we need a player! Bring your finger gymnastics!

Please let Morrie Hesch, Natalie Morrison or Iris Johnson know if you would like to join.

Why Christmas? Thoughts on the December Dilemma

By Rabbi Jeffrey Lipschultz



December is here and as Chanukah prepares to leave us on December 5th we look at the festivities of the other holiday in December as we as American Jews, look to the big elephant in the room that comes in the month of December, Christmas. I have to admit, it's a bit controversial as a Rabbi to speak of the holiday, especially because it's not our holiday. More importantly, Christmas can be a bit uncomfortable for those of us who don't celebrate it. We Jews sometimes feel that we are the missing element in the fun of the December season, not invited to a party that seems so exciting. So, as we all prepare to embrace the December holiday season I thought I would give some thoughts on Christmas.

The term 'why Christmas' is an idea I had in looking at the Talmudic response to Chanukah. The Talmud, commentaries on the Torah, begins 'Mai Chanukah' or Why Chanukah. The Talmud (Shabbat 21b) delineates the miracle of the oil as the background of the holiday. The Talmud then establishes that Chanukah was formulated with the following ingredients: "yom tov (holiday), hallel (praise), and hodaah(thanksgiving)." These are the essential religious elements of the holiday and the significance of its holiness that makes Chanukah worthy of celebration with joy. The Talmud uses this question of why Chanukah to ask the deeper question of what makes this day special for Jews. It answers it with the miracle and the holiness of the days that are commemorated by the oil of the menorah. The rabbis felt the need to address this question with the opening statement of Mai Chanukah or why Chanukah because it was addressing a time that Jews had been celebrating since the military victory of the Maccabees over the Syrians and were trying to formulate the reason for the celebration and find a holiness that is involved in the celebration that went with the joy of the season. With Chanukah ending so early in December we can ask the question, "What about Christmas and why not celebrate it?"

This is a dilemma many in our Jewish community go through because we have this great desire not only to fit in but to join in this great celebration that seems to be passing us by. It's like there is this great party going on in our society and we Jews are not invited. So when the question of "Why Christmas?" is asked, many turn and answer "Why not?"

The answer to this question of why Jews should not celebrate Christmas is because Christmas is not our holiday and even though the great aesthetic appeal is there, we should not cheapen the beauty of this spiritual holiday by embracing the worst aspect of it which is the materialism that has accompanied Christmas with its spiritual celebration.

Now, I must admit as a young person I struggled with this holiday in many ways. When I was seven, my parents divorced, and when I was nine, my father remarried a lovely woman who was not Jewish. She brought two children into my father's life and thus Christmas became an integral part of that home. My father was quick to put up not only a Christmas tree but also all the trimmings that comes with Christmas. My father's house started to look like a giant Hallmark Card. In the custody agreement my dad had me and my brother for holidays so I would spend Christmas with my dad and his new family and so I had the experience for part of my childhood of waking up and trolling through all the presents on Christmas day. I even had a stocking on the fireplace as a child. But as I grew older I began to realize that what I liked about the holiday was materialistic, after all, who did not like getting presents. But the presents were, in a sense, hollow because it had no great spiritual connection to it. Waking up and opening presents as a Jew on Christmas was like eating candy for dinner, enjoyable but not very substantial, because the meaning of the holiday was lost on me.

I eventually let go of Christmas when I was a teenager and my brother and I opted to have Christmas Eve with my mom at the local Chinese restaurant and we would then head to my dad's for Christmas dinner,

again resembling something out of a Hallmark card. This was how I spent the holidays throughout my childhood and many of my friends would joke with us on Christmas day that we had to make it to the Lipschultz family Christmas dinner. When I moved to Israel I actually began to miss the Christmas holiday because I was not home for that crazy dinner with my dad and my stepmother's sisters and aunts. When I got married, my wife and I had the fun task of dividing up our time between our families when we visited Phoenix in the winter. I made sure that we set aside Christmas dinner with my dad so all our family could get to know her. She often joked that she not only married another Jew but a Rabbi and now she had Christmas for the first time in her life. When my brother David was killed in 2004 that was when we felt something was truly missing in my family's life and I began to recall all those times around that silly Christmas tree he and I would spend together joking about this strange thing of Christmas being in our life.

My dad died 12 years ago and with his passing I finally said goodbye to Christmas and all the trimming that came with it. The first year without him we went back to the old Jewish tradition of Chinese food on Christmas day and walking around our neighborhood and of course a movie in the evening. I think it was when Christmas left my life that I began to appreciate it a little more because I was once again looking at Christmas as an outsider. At Christmas time, I think all Jews see themselves as our great forefather Joseph, who became an Egyptian with great honor, but in his heart he missed his family and the family traditions that go with it. Joseph was an outsider always looking in trying to find his place. When Joseph encountered his brothers after years of contemplation of their evil deed of selling him into slavery the only emotion that came to him was that he was happy to see his brothers and be together and from that joy of seeing them he found in his heart the ability to forgive them.

I find myself this year thinking like Joseph, wondering where my time with my dad had gone. I have spent so many Christmas days with him and it makes me sad that all I have now is memories, but it is those memories that drive all of us during this holiday season and is what makes the season holy. I look now at my sons and we build our new traditions. Ari, who unbeknownst to him, was given a Christmas stocking from my dad when he was one year old to hang up on his fireplace on Christmas. My dad was very sick at the time and we knew his time was short and as I was about to call him and tell him not to put the stocking up on the fireplace my wife said to me, "let this pass," and I did knowing that this might be the last Christmas I will have with my dad. That was my last Christmas.

To those who come from a mixed family Christmas carries a very special connection of family experiences and thus Christmas can have a secular meaning by celebrating the traditions of someone you love even if it's not your tradition but as for Jews celebrating Christmas might be aesthetically meaningful but it lacks the spiritual connection that so many in America find connection to and thus it is not recommended to celebrate just to fit in as an American Jew. I think we would feel the same way if a non Jew did a Faux Mitzvah without understanding the important coming of age celebration that involved much work and preparation before the great party that so many look at.

This year as Ari became Bar Mitzvah he asked about being normal and celebrating Christmas and I finally had the talk about growing up with my brother and our Christmas tree. The Christmas that was so important to me eventually left this earth much like my dad and now I shall make new memories and new traditions. It saddens me that my sons will never know my dad or his uncle David and the connection we had to Christmas but they will know me and the stories I will tell them of my childhood under my father's Christmas tree. I hope they will be able to appreciate the holiday of Christmas that has so much meaning to so many in the world even if it is not their special day and not incorporated into their lives. To all of you as we approach this non Jewish holiday together, take time to think of these moments you have with each other. Christmas is not our holiday but your time together is precious and please allow each of your moments together to be meaningful.

Have a happy holiday break.

In Loving Memory

The following Yahrzeits will be observed during December 2021, Kislev - Tevet 5782

Kaddish may be said on Friday evenings and Saturday mornings.

El Malei Rachamim, the memorial prayer, may be said on the Thursday preceding the Yahrzeit at 9:00 a.m. Minyan.

DATE	OBSERVED	DECEASED	RELATIONSHIP	OBSERVANT
12/1/2021	Kislev 27, 5782	Sylvia Morrison	Mother-in-law	Natalie Morrison
12/1/2021	Kislev 27, 5782	Ada Sherman	Mother	Rochelle Bailey
12/3/2021	Kislev 29, 5782	Rebecca Gotlieb	Mother	Helene Schreiber
12/3/2021	Kislev 29, 5782	Erna Konig	Grandmother	Keren Goldberg
12/8/2021	Tevet 4, 5782	Sophia Franek	Mother	Susan Hersch
12/8/2021	Tevet 4, 5782	Nicholas Rosenthal	Husband	Gyorgyi Rosenthal
12/9/2021	Tevet 5, 5782	Bernard Sontag	Father	Joseph Sontag
12/13/2021	Tevet 9, 5782	Phyllis Sontag	Sister	Joseph Sontag
12/14/2021	Tevet 10, 5782	Samuel Goldman	Father	Gloria Greenberg
12/15/2021	Tevet 11, 5782	Johannes Behrendt	Father	Tom Behrendt
12/16/2021	Tevet 12, 5782	Louis Kanter	Father	Phyllis Frank
12/18/2021	Tevet 14, 5782	Chaya Ben Yosef	Mother	Shoshana Perlmutter
12/19/2021	Tevet 15, 5782	Esther Rachel Karofsky	Aunt	Marilyn Newberg and Rhoda Lesner
12/21/2021	Tevet 17, 5782	Rose Rothenberg	Grandmother	Owen Segall
12/22/2021	Tevet 18, 5782	Henry Rosenstein	Father in law	Joy Epstein
12/22/2021	Tevet 18, 5782	Anna Silverman	Mother	Iris Silverman
12/23/2021	Tevet 19, 5782	Hyman Kornheiser	Father	Beverly Merchant
12/24/2021	Tevet 20, 5782	Julius Merchant	Father-in-law	Beverly Merchant
12/25/2021	Tevet 21, 5782	Maurice Morrison	Father-in-law	Natalie Morrison
12/29/2021	Tevet 25, 5782	Selma Kleinman	Mother	Elliot Kleinman
12/30/2021	Tevet 26, 5782	Samuel Cohen	Father	Dr. Abraham Cohen
12/30/2021	Tevet 26, 5782	Stanley Gubin	Husband	Shirley Gubin
12/30/2021	Tevet 26, 5782	Siegmund Paul	Father	Ronald Paul
12/30/2021	Tevet 26, 5782	Charles Rich	Father	Gerald Rich
12/30/2021	Tevet 26, 5782	Hannah Rubenstein	Mother	Sarah Klein

Happy Birthday

Happy Birthday to:
Max Lazar 12/6/2021
Sarah Klein 12/28/2021



No Anniversaries in December

REMEMBERING THE LIBRARY LADY

Beth Emeth lost yet another member with the recent passing of Adele Sacher who had been a regular attendee at Friday Erev Shabbat services as well as attending services during holidays.

She was known to many as the "Library Lady" because of her involvement in the Sun City West library. Not only did she remember plots and characters, Adele generated readers' interest in Nordic writers.

During her last ten years at the library, she served as a reader advisor and could direct library patrons to books on subjects in which they were most interested.

Possessing a phenomenal memory, Adele had what amounted to a Fan Club who would look forward to her selections when the library conducted book sales. Her book table would sell out quickly and require restocking.

According to her daughters Enid and Tammy, Adele had wanted from an early age to become a librarian because of her love for books and read as many as four or five each week. It has been estimated that she had read as many as six thousand books.

An active member of the stitching club at Sun City West, Adele's examples of needlepoint show a great attention to detail, usually with additions which were above and beyond the original patterns.

According to her daughters, Adele used to love cooking shows on television and her love of cooking was exemplified when she made latkes and hamantaschen for her coworkers at the library.

We will miss you, Adele
Your friends at Beth Emeth.



HANUKKAH LATKE LUNCH

Sunday Dec. 5th at 12:30

Only \$12 Such A Deal!

Latkes with sour cream and applesauce, salads,
dessert, coffee and tea.....

Call to make your reservations!

623-584-7210

Then send your check to the office!



KIDDUSH FUND

Help us continue to be able to provide kiddush after services. Whether you want to sponsor a full kiddush, or just contribute to the Kiddush Fund, together we can resume this tradition.

Why not make a donation in honor of a birthday, anniversary, or special family event?

Sharing your gratitude for the blessings in your life builds community.

Be sure to mark any checks for "Kiddush Fund". If you are interested in helping prepare food please call the office and let us know.



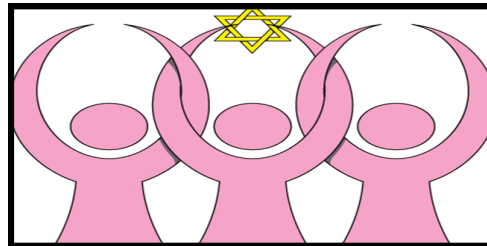
CALLING ALL MEN

Men's Club on November 21st held our annual Hot Dog day and our volunteers made it a success! Thanks to all who rolled up their sleeves to help.

Our next Board meeting will be at the shul at a date and time to be announced. We will further seek to fill positions and identify upcoming events. Looking forward to seeing you there and working with you.

Tom Behrendt
Men's Club President

SISTERHOOD



Beth Emeth Sisterhood is represented on the Congregation Board and is supportive of its actions.

If you wish to communicate with Sisterhood please send an e-mail to Beth Emeth with a notation for Sisterhood.

Sisterhood hopes and prays everyone is well .

Alice Mason

Would you like to volunteer? That would be so wonderful. Lots of things happen in the shul during the week. Those that are at work are definitely multitasking in the office and in the kitchen and other places. Here is a list of things of activities you may be interested in. Take home a form from the lobby or drop us a line at Bethemethaz@gmail.com

- Adult Education Committee
- Carpool
- Choir
- Fundraising committee
- Gift Shop
- Hospitality/Kitchen
- Membership
- Men's club
- Office
- Oneg Shabbat Committee
- Ritual Committee
- Sisterhood
- Social Action
- Special Events Committee



Don't Forget!!

Sunday December 5th at 12:30pm
Hanukkah Latkes Lunch—\$12.00

Sunday Dec 12th at 2:00pm
Congregation meeting



Sylvia Choy

Part Time - Private Duty Home Care

"Your Family's Love Through Us"

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| • Medication Management | • Home Cooked Meals |
| • Hospice & Respite Care | • Doctors Visits |
| • Alzheimer's Care | • Restroom/Bathing Assistance |
| • Light Housekeeping/Laundry | • Beauty/Barber Service |

602-686-0839

The Bureau of Jewish Education of Greater Phoenix presents –



Sunday, December 19th 11:00 AM

Dr. Mark Gotfried

Seniors, Let's Talk About a Good Night's Sleep – Your Way to Better Health

After graduating from the University of Illinois with a degree in medicine, Dr. Gotfried completed his internship and residency at Michael Reese Hospital in Illinois. He is a recently retired board-certified physician in internal medicine, pulmonary disease and sleep disorders. Dr. Gotfried joined Pulmonary Associates in 1983 following the completion of a pulmonary fellowship at the University of Arizona.

Participants will have the option of exploring a variety of meaningful topics together in a learning community at the Ina Levine JCCampus Auditorium, or from the comfort of your own home via Zoom.

Speaker Series will be presented virtually. For those comfortable with gathering together to watch the speakers on the large screen at the ILJCCampus, we will serve coffee, tea, juice and danish.

**REGISTER FOR PROGRAMS TO RECEIVE A DISCOUNT [visit
www.bjephoenix.org](http://www.bjephoenix.org)**

Note from the Editor

I am not a critic nor a censor. We published the Rabbi's article as written. Rabbi Lipschultz tells the story of his childhood memories of Christmas and Chanukah, and some of the challenges created by celebrating both.

Morrie Hesch

December 2021

Kislev—Tevet 5782

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 27th of Kislev 5:47pm Chanukah: 4 Candles 3rd Day of Chanukah	2 28th of Kislev 5:47pm Chanukah: 5 Candles 4th Day of Chanukah	3 29th of Kislev 5:01pm Chanukah: 6 Candles 5:01pm Candle lighting 5th Day of Chanukah	4 30th of Kislev 6:00pm Chanukah: 7 Candles Rosh Chodesh Tevet Parashat Miketz 6:00pm Havdalah 6th Day of Chanukah
5 1st of Tevet, 5782 5:47pm Chanukah: 8 Candles Rosh Chodesh Tevet 7th Day of Chanukah	6 2nd of Tevet 8th Day of Chanukah	7 3rd of Tevet Pearl Harbor Day	8 4th of Tevet	9 5th of Tevet	10 6th of Tevet 5:02pm Candle lighting	11 7th of Tevet Parashat Vayigash 6:01pm Havdalah
12 8th of Tevet	13 9th of Tevet	14 10th of Tevet Asara B'Tevet	15 11th of Tevet Observer Deadline	16 12th of Tevet	17 13th of Tevet 5:04pm Candle lighting	18 14th of Tevet Parashat Vayechi 6:04pm Havdalah
19 15th of Tevet	20 16th of Tevet	21 17th of Tevet	22 18th of Tevet	23 19th of Tevet	24 20th of Tevet 5:07pm Candle lighting	25 21st of Tevet Parashat Shemot 6:07pm Havdalah
26 22nd of Tevet	27 23rd of Tevet	28 24th of Tevet	29 25th of Tevet	30 26th of Tevet	31 27th of Tevet 5:12pm Candle lighting	

Our logo is a Shield of David made up of a calligraphic interpretation of the Hebrew initials of the Congregation, BETH EMETH, which means House of Truth.



Beth Emeth Congregation **Executive Board**

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Tom Behrendt
Jordan Colbert
Rhoda Lessner
Paula Forster
Paula Forster
Kat Magedman
Rhoda Lessner

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Vice President
Vice President
Vice President
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PICK UP A GIFT AT THE JUDAICA SHOP



Do you have a tzedakah box?
Get one at the Judaica shop, fill it up and donate your savings to the Synagogue as a gesture of kindness and faith.

Sensational jewelry,
candleholders, mezuzahs,
Seder plates and other
beautiful holiday and
special occasion gifts.

We also now have several fine art pieces for sale.

Personal showings call Barbara Newman: 623-388-4958

or,

Stop in anytime Monday - Friday 9am to 12pm

(Payment accepted by check or cash only)