

# Temple Hatikvah



Tevet/Shevat/Adar 5780

January/February 2020

## Message from the Rabbi

Dr. Jack L. Sparks

### New Years, again?

How many times per year can we say, "Happy New Year?" According to our tradition, there are 4 times mentioned in our rabbinic literature, and of course, the secular New Year on January 1st.

What are the 4 mentioned? During the spring, the 1st of Nisan is considered the first month of the lunar calendar. Typically, it was considered the new year for counting the years of the reigns of kings in ancient Israel. It is also tied to Passover, as it is the anniversary of our escape from Egypt.

The 2nd new year is on the first day of Elul, usually in August. Each year, everyone was expected to present a tithe to the Temple. The first day of Elul marks the beginning of counting the year for animal

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## We've got a lot going on!

### HEBREW YEAR 5780

#### JANUARY 2020

11th	Saturday	6:00 PM	Oneg
24th	Friday	7:30 PM	Oneg

#### FEBRUARY 2020

8th	Saturday	4:00 PM	Bless the Animals
21st	Friday	7:30 PM	Oneg

#### MARCH 2020

7th	Saturday	6:00 PM	Purim Play/Party
20th	Friday	7:30 PM	Oneg

#### APRIL 2020

9th	Thursday	6:30 PM	2nd Seder
24th	Friday	7:30 PM	Yom Hashoah/Yom Ha'atzmaut

**PLEASE NOTE - WE ADDED SATURDAY SERVICES**

# Message from the Rabbi

Dr. Jack L. Sparks

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tithes. It also commemorates the beginning of the Days of Awe; almost like our American April 15th tax date, when we send Uncle Sam our annual taxes.

The 3rd new year is Rosh Hashana, which falls during the 7th month of Tishri typically in September. It marks the birthday of the world and is used as the date to calculate the start of Sabbatical year (every 7 years), and the Jubilee year (every 50 years), when the land is left fallow.

Finally, the 4th new year is the 15th of Shevat, known as Tu B'shevat, the new year of trees in late January or early February. According to the Torah, fruits cannot be consumed from trees less than three years old, and this date was used as the starting date for determining the age of trees. Although the other 3 new years mentioned above are not typically celebrated today, Tu B'shevat is. It is considered a minor holiday and one is permitted to work and carry on their daily business, which we typically don't do on major holy days. A contemporary custom is to plant a ceremonial tree in Israel in honor or in memory of a loved one. The Jewish National Fund helps us with this.

All four of these dates are men-

tioned in the Mishnah, a collection of Jewish laws from which to study and learn, to grapple and grow. The Mishnah was compiled by Rabbi Judah Ha-Nasi, 130 years after the destruction of the 2nd Temple in the 2nd century and much like any good resource, it presents many different sides of a discussion, allowing the reader to come to his own conclusion.

And now, the newest entry on the list: January 1st. Our secular New Year was instituted by Julius Caesar in the year 45 BCE. Prior to Caesar's calendar reform, the world followed the Roman calendar which had been in place since the 7th century BCE. The Roman calendar followed the Jewish lunar calendar which had its basis in astronomy. Caesar's astronomer, Sosigenes, made some interesting discoveries and recommended the secular calendar as we know it today.

When is the right time to wish anyone a Happy (and healthy) New Year? We now have 5 opportunities and each of them are right. May this be a healthy year for you and those we love. May we only know inner contentment, wholeness and peace.

***Amen, Dr. Jack L. Sparks, Rabbi***



# Chanukah at the Temple





# Chanukah at the Temple



Shabbat service December 13th



# Bless the Animals and Nature

**Saturday, February 8th at 4:00 pm**

Bring your pets  
(the well-behaved  
ones)  
and stories  
to share.



# PURIM

Wear your funny hats,  
silly costumes and masks,  
and bring a friend!

Pot Luck/Covered Dish  
Members are FREE  
Non-Members are \$10

## SAVE THE DATE

**Saturday, March 7th  
6:00 pm at our Temple**



# The Hope.

Eilat Schmalbach

A new year always brings with it new hopes, dreams and resolutions. How are we to find the right direction, the positive attitude and the constructive action plan? Simply by planning and believing. By accepting the unplanned, the accidents, the errors, and welcoming the miracles.

In the yoga session in memory of our Priel, we tried to reach the light. An obscure light, but one that existed and will always be available to us. Breath deep. Inhale, exhale. Count to ten, relax. Smile. No thoughts, only rhythmic breathing. Stretching an arm, a leg. Yes, we are embracing a new year, we are being inspired, looking forward to another new beginning. Searching for light. The Light.

Hanukkah and Christmas both are holidays of light - and this year they came together, mixing the Jewish with the Christian; the celebration of victory and

celebration of birth. The symbolic search for light originates in creation, when light is created prior to the constellations and the sun. Light becomes the essence of what is Godly, what is inspiring. The Torah and the Jewish people, we were told, will become a light to the nations; and indeed, we did. Inspiring learning, kindness, good deeds and love - this is the message radiating from our Jewish texts and beliefs. Our world, no doubt, is full of darkness. Some of it is human made and some is beyond our capacity to understand or influence. Yet one little candle, one little smile, one caressing hug or a word can drive away the darkness.

In this time of a new beginning, I pray we will be able to embrace the light and continue to search and find more of it in our daily lives.

**Amen, Eilat**

