



December 2021

# The Menorah

Temple Emanuel ~ 600 Lake Hollingsworth Dr.  
Lakeland FL 33803 ~ 863-682-8616

## Welcome to THE CHANUKAH ISSUE of The Menorah!

The events that inspired the holiday took place during a particularly turbulent phase of Jewish history. Around 200 B.C., Judea—also known as the Land of Israel—came under the control of Antiochus III, the Seleucid king of [Syria](#), who allowed the Jews who lived there to continue practicing their religion. His son, Antiochus IV Epiphanes, proved less benevolent: Ancient sources recount that he outlawed the Jewish religion and ordered the Jews to worship [Greek gods](#). In 168 B.C., his soldiers descended upon [Jerusalem](#), massacring thousands of people and desecrating the city's holy Second Temple by erecting an altar to Zeus and sacrificing pigs within its sacred walls.

Led by the Jewish priest Mattathias and his five sons, a large-scale rebellion broke out against Antiochus and the Seleucid monarchy. When Mattathias died in 166 B.C., his son Judah, known as Judah Maccabee ("the Hammer"), took the helm; within two years the Jews had successfully driven the Syrians out of Jerusalem, relying largely on guerilla warfare tactics. Judah called on his followers to cleanse the Second Temple, rebuild its altar and light its menorah—the gold candelabrum whose seven branches represented knowledge and creation and were meant to be kept burning every night.

According to the Talmud, one of Judaism's most central texts, Judah Maccabee and the other Jews who took part in the rededication of the Second Temple witnessed what they believed to be a miracle. Even though there was only enough untainted olive oil to keep the menorah's candles burning for a single day, the flames continued flickering for eight nights, leaving them time to find a fresh supply. This wondrous event inspired the Jewish sages to proclaim a yearly eight-day festival. (The first Book of the Maccabees tells another version of the story, describing an eight-day celebration that followed the rededication but making no reference to the miracle of the oil.)

Some modern historians offer a radically different interpretation of the Chanukah tale. In their view, Jerusalem under Antiochus IV had erupted into civil war between two camps of Jews: those who had assimilated into the dominant culture that surrounded them, adopting Greek and Syrian customs; and those who were determined to impose Jewish laws and traditions, even if by force. The traditionalists won out in the end, with the Hasmonean dynasty—led by Judah Maccabee's brother and his descendants—wresting control of the Land of [Israel](#) from the Seleucids and maintaining an independent Jewish kingdom for more than a century.

Jewish scholars have also suggested that the first Chanukah may have been a belated celebration of Sukkot, which the Jews had not had the chance to observe during the Maccabean Revolt. One of the Jewish religion's most important holidays, Sukkot consists of seven days of feasting, prayer and festivities.



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## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Services are Friday evenings at 7:30 pm and Saturday mornings at 9:30 am**

**Chanukah Celebration is Sunday 12/5 at 4:30 pm.  
See page 15 for more info.**

**Book Club is meeting in person 12/7 at 11 am. See page 11 for details. Come for lunch even if you haven't read the book!**

To stay in touch and learn more about what is going on in our community

visit our [website calendar](#)

and

our [Facebook page](#)

## **BAR MITZVAH NEWS** by Kevin Estroff



Max Estroff is a 7th grade honor society student at Lawton Chiles Middle Academy in Downtown Lakeland. This used to be the school that his grandfather went to (just a few decades ago) so I can say that Max was always destined to be there.

His favorite hobbies include baseball, basketball, roller hockey, tennis, golf, lacrosse, snorkeling, lobstering, fishing, football, soccer, playing video games, and especially driving his parents and brother crazy.

Baseball has become Max's passion which was evident when he had 4 RBI's in a game recently against the pitcher and team that ended up winning the little league world series.

Every summer, Max not only enjoys all of these previously mentioned hobbies, but finds the time to attend Camp Blue Star in North Carolina. Max's other hobby is that of a WW2 historian. In fact, his upcoming birthday wish is to drive in a real WW2 tank to follow in the footsteps of the allies.

Max is known by his family and friends as an energetic, caring, happy, thoughtful, nice, and energetic (it's worth mentioning twice) kid. We can't wait until January 8th when he will become a wonderful man.



***Mazel tov to Max and the Estroff Family from all your friends at Temple Emanuel!***



## 10 Best Traditional Chanukah

- Latkes.
- Beef brisket.
- Roasted chicken.
- Kugel.
- Matzo ball soup.
- Rugelach.
- Sufganiyot (Jelly-Filled Doughnuts)
- Challah

*What's your favorite?*



## **Tis the Season: Hanukkah in Lakeland**

Given the theme for this month's Menorah, my column will be looking at celebrations and the spaces we've used to enjoy the holiday.

First, are some images from Hanukkah, 1953. By the early 1950s, the synagogue was housed in the brick mansion on Lake Hollingsworth (where the Education Building is located now). The house was renovated in 1948 to accommodate the congregation's needs—the upstairs was made into a large room with a slightly raised platform on one end where the ark was installed. (The ark, which had been created to occupy the larger space on Patterson street was too tall for the new space and so it had to be shortened. If you look at some of the old confirmation pictures, you can see the tops of the lions' heads touching the ceiling!) For Sunday school programs, the ark was covered with a curtain so that the space could be used for assemblies.



In the photo (left), students prepare to sing a song as teachers Charlotte Marks (far left), Sue Trohn (right, with glasses) and (unknown), try to keep them focused. Among the singers are Mark Miller, David Stone, Elliot Plincus, David Estroff, Natalie Schaffman, Jay Ura, Louis Stern, Michael Wolf, Sandra Wolfson and many, many more!

The home-made dreidels (right) look a bit cramped in the corner of the hall—though that might be an effect of their wonderful hats! I can't imagine that they would have been able to spin without causing large-scale destruction. Still, notice the excellent Hebrew lettering!



Continued on next page...



Rabbi Alexander Gelberman looks on as students tell the story of Hanukah. Gelberman was Temple Emanuel's Rabbi from 1948-1955, occupying the pulpit longer than any other leader until Rabbi Gorod (1969-1977).



No party was complete without Cokes and treats. The gathering is downstairs from the performance space, in the living room of the mansion. The Religious School made impressive use of the space. (Notice the smallest children in the fireplace!)

The Temple moved into its brand new building in 1965 and the Education building we now enjoy went up just a few years later. While regular Sunday school classes all took place in the Ed building, most celebrations were in the main building. The cramped quarters of the mansion were replaced by the roomy space of Berkowitz Hall.



Continued on next page...

## About The Archives Continued from Page 5

Regardless of location, the women of Temple Emanuel have made us all loosen our waist-bands with their skills. Temple cooks Millie Vandroff and Charlotte Marks (the teacher from 1953, p.4!) prepare latkes as Ruth Schneider and Bea Trohn inspect their work (1981). The Temple's new kitchen (which is currently undergoing renovations) was a great improvement over the cramped quarters in the house.



Not all events related to Hanukah have taken place in our social hall. Our beautiful sanctuary has also been the venue for many celebrations. The one below, in 1996, included a trivia game about Hanukah that brought grown-ups to the steps to participate.



The Jeopardy contestant moms at left include Bonnie Odro, Debbie Herman, Tammy Serebrin and Tammy's mom!

Norma Jo Vaillette leads the group in song (right).



Regardless of where the celebrations took place, Temple members have always enjoyed each other's company, finding holidays brighter and more enjoyable when we were all together.

We hope to see you at the Hanukah party on Sunday where we can make even more memories!





## **Monthly Profile: This month we feature Board Member Shelley Robinson**

Read other profiles at: <https://templeemanuellakeland.com/member-profiles/>

### Tell us about your family:

1. Where did you grow up? I was born and raised in Atlanta, GA until I ventured off to college at the University of Georgia about an hour outside of Atlanta.

2. Who are/were your siblings, parents, and grandparents and what affect did they have on the person you have become? Thank G-d my parents are still alive and reside in Atlanta in the house I grew up in. My Mom grew up Reform and my Dad's family was Conservative. When they married and had children, they decided that they wanted more than what the reform synagogue had to offer their children, so they joined the traditional synagogue, Shearith Israel, where several of their friends were members. I don't really think they knew what they were getting themselves into. My Mom ended up working at Shearith Israel for 31 years, ultimately serving as Executive Director. I have three siblings, an older brother who lives in Atlanta, an older sister who lives in Alma, Georgia and a brother who passed away when he was five.

3. What was your childhood like? I have very fond memories of my childhood...our life was centered around education and our synagogue and its religious school. Outside of that I danced for eight years until I decided I wanted to play basketball. My siblings and I were all very active in BBYO (B'nai B'rith Youth Organization).

Are there any funny family stories you can share? Being the baby of the family, I was always the one chosen to change the channel on the television (yes, there was a time before remote controls) as well as the one called upon to run upstairs to retrieve whatever was left there. My family made it into a game, called me Speedy Gonzalez, and would time me to see how fast I could run. ;)

4. How did you meet your spouse? Do you have children/grandchildren?

David and I met on a shuttle bus in Phoenix, Arizona, travelling to the same healthcare conference. It wouldn't be until the next year at the same conference in Las Vegas that we would spark a flame. Two years of dating long distance and only missing seeing each other two weekends, I moved to Florida and we began our lives together. We are blessed with two wonderful two-legged children, Jillian (18) and Jarod (13) as well as two fabulous four-legged labradoodles, Paddy and Shammy.





## Education – Military Service- Work/Career- Interests

5. If you served in the military, tell us what branch, where, and what your job was.
6. Where did you go to school-college-degree-major? I attended the University of Georgia and received my BBA in marketing as well as SUNY-Albany receiving an MA in Organizational Communication.
7. What is or was your occupation? Currently I serve as the Vice President of Human Resources for our technology companies.
8. What was the most interesting job you ever had....or the most unusual? The most interesting job as well as the most difficult job I have ever had is raising children!!
9. What are your interests and hobbies? My passion first and foremost is tennis. I do enjoy working out, listening to music, going to theater, needlepointing, reading and watching the University of Georgia play football.

What book is on your nightstand right now? On my nightstand currently is “God of Becoming and Relationship: The Dynamic Nature of Process Theology.” I am also reading “Being Mortal.”

## On Being Jewish

10. How long have you been a member of Temple Emanuel? I joined Temple Emanuel shortly after I moved to Lakeland...so I would say I have been a member for 21 years. What committees or leadership roles have you had or perhaps would like to have at Temple Emanuel? I have held lots of positions at Temple Emanuel from USY Advisor when I first moved to town to Sunday School teacher and principal to ritual committee to fundraising to Rabbi search committee and now Vice President.
11. What does being Jewish mean to you? To me, being Jewish is the cross-section of faith and culture. It is embracing every facet from the foods we eat to the traditions we keep to the holidays we celebrate to attending services to understanding our history and our culture to helping our community. Being Jewish means l’dor v’dor...from generation to generation, passing down the traditions while keeping religion relevant to our times. For me being Jewish is about the choices we make to stay grounded in who we are while paving the way for future generations.

## Reflections

12. Who has been the biggest influence in your life and why? My parents have been the biggest influence in my life. Through tragedy they taught us strength, that love conquers all and life is for the living. Through their actions they taught us the importance of family, to be strong of faith as well as to give back to the community.
13. What is one thing people would be surprised to learn about you? One surprising fact is that I used to follow the Grateful Dead!
14. Is there anything you would do over if you had the chance? No. I truly believe that there were lessons for me to learn from each of my experiences – both good and bad. If I changed my path, I wouldn’t be who I am today.
15. Looking back, what is the best advice you would give your younger self? To quote Matthew McConaughey “You are the author of the book of your life. Turn the page.” If you are stuck in a rut or not happy with the trajectory of your life, make a change. You have the power to make your life what you want it to be.

*Thank you so much Shelley for sharing your story with all of us! If anyone reading this would like to be our next profile, please contact [irmacole26@gmail.com](mailto:irmacole26@gmail.com)*

## BOOK CLUB

The next Temple Emanuel Book Club meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 7th at 11 am. Location will be outside at The Joinery by Lake Mirror, 640 E. Main Street. Our book selection will be "We Share the Same Sky" by Rachel Cerrotti. The Amazon Smile link can be found below. Please join us and bring your friends!

[https://smile.amazon.com/We.../dp/1094153729/ref=sr\\_1\\_1...](https://smile.amazon.com/We.../dp/1094153729/ref=sr_1_1...)

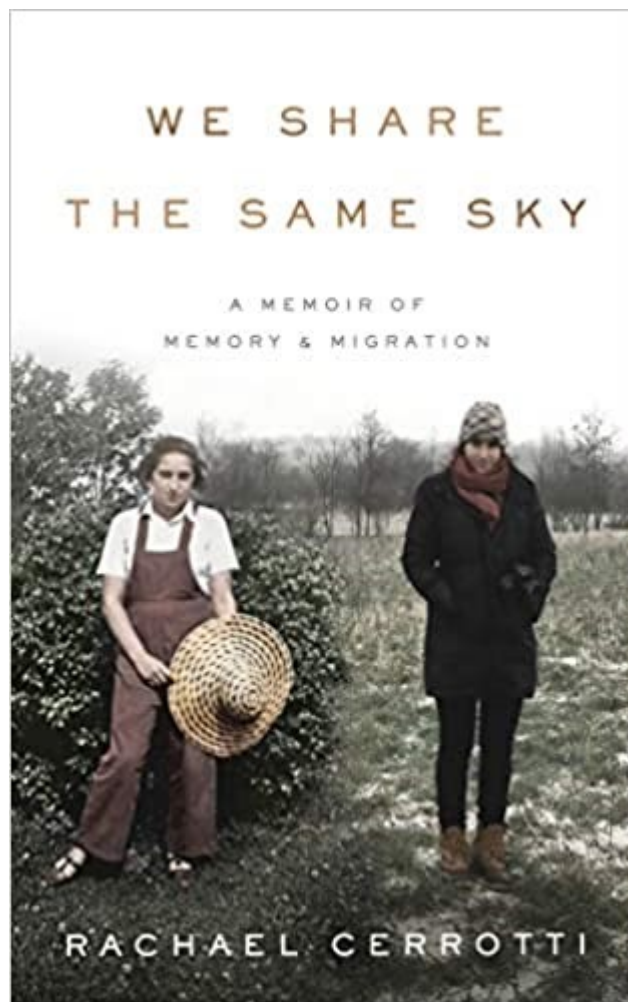
A granddaughter's decade-long journey to retrace her grandmother's wartime escape and weave together the thin threads of family history.

In 2009, Rachael Cerrotti, a college student pursuing a career in photojournalism, asked her grandmother, Hana, if she could record her story. Rachael knew that her grandmother was a Holocaust survivor and the only one in her family alive at the end of the war. Rachael also knew that she survived because of the kindness of strangers. It wasn't a secret. Hana spoke about her history publicly and regularly. But, Rachael wanted to document it as only a granddaughter could. So, that's what they did: Hana talked and Rachael wrote.

Upon Hana's passing in 2010, Rachael discovered an incredible archive of her life. There were preserved albums and hundreds of photographs dating back to the 1920s. There were letters waiting to be translated, journals, diaries, deportation and immigration papers as well as creative writings from various stages of Hana's life.

Rachael digitized and organized it all, plucking it from the past and placing it into her present. Then, she began retracing her grandmother's story, following her through Central Europe, Scandinavia, and across the United States. She tracked down the descendants of those who helped save her grandmother's life during the war. Rachael went in pursuit of her grandmother's memory to explore how the retelling of family stories becomes the history itself.

"We Share the Same Sky" weaves together the stories of these two young women -- Hana as a refugee who remains one step ahead of the Nazis at every turn, and Rachael, whose insatiable curiosity to touch the past guides her into the lives of countless strangers, bringing her love and tragic loss. Throughout the course of her twenties, Hana's history becomes a guidebook for Rachael in how to live a life empowered by grief.



Contact is Jane Renz: [jane7751@aol.com](mailto:jane7751@aol.com)

Deadline for the next issue of *The Menorah* is February 28, 2022.

Please send inquiries, info, articles, images, comments, etc. to [irmacole26@gmail.com](mailto:irmacole26@gmail.com)



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FOR==

# BOOK CLUB



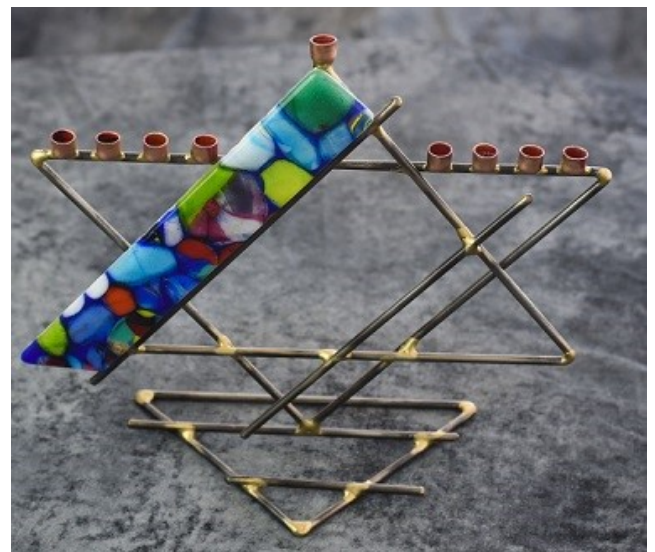
**TUESDAY DECEMBER 7TH**

**11 AM TO 12 PM**

**OUR SELECTION IS  
"WE SHARE THE SAME SKY"  
BY RACHEL CERROTTI**

**ALL ARE WELCOME**

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**Left: 2020 at  
RP Funding  
Center**

**Below:  
Chanukah 2019**





## CHANUKAH 2018





# TEMPLE EMANUEL INVITES YOU TO A Chanukah Celebration

Sunday - 12/5 - 4:30 pm

Outside on the Temple Patio...Mostly!

Bring your Menorah and Candles to Light.

Enjoy Latkes and Live Music!

Fun Activities for the Whole Family!





# HELP TEMPLE EMANUEL

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## **Donations to Temple Emanuel**

Temple Emanuel sincerely thanks members and friends for their generous donations over the years. Our needs have been many with the Temple renovations and we thank everyone who has given to many of our funds, such as:

- ♦ Capital Improvement Fund
- ♦ Building Fund
- ♦ Religious School
- ♦ Kitchen Fund
- ♦ Prayer Book Fund
- ♦ Charity Fund
- ♦ Rabbi's Discretionary Fund
- ♦ Also Donations for Yahrzeits, Condolences, and many Happy Occasions

As with any non-profit, membership dues covers only a portion of the operating expenses. All donations, no matter the amount, are truly greatly appreciated. Listed on the next page are the donations received by Temple Emanuel from 8/16-11/11/21. Thank you one and all!



Follow **Temple Emanuel on Facebook** to keep up with the latest news and events.

<https://www.facebook.com/TempleEmanuelLakeland>

Also check out our **Website** for our History, Calendar, Photo Gallery, Member Profiles, Videos, Archives, and more! You can pay dues and donate right from the website too! [www.templeemanuellakeland.com](http://www.templeemanuellakeland.com)



## TEMPLE EMANUEL IS GRATEFUL FOR YOUR DONATIONS!

Temple Emanuel acknowledges with deep appreciation the following donations made from 8/16-11/11/21:

### Kol Nidre Appeal and High Holidays

Bayla and Irwin Singer  
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Dr. Jordan and April Eckert for Helene Porfiriadis  
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Stuart and Carolyn Neuberger  
Tammy and Ira Serebrin

### Charity Fund

Dr. Marvin and Bonnie Odro in memory of David Ittleman  
Joan Greenbaum in memory of Milton Wyman

### Religious School

Dr. Floyd Stern and Diane Bornstein in memory of Maxine and Daniel Stern  
Ruth Dobkin in memory of Norman Routenberg

### Cemetery

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Sharon Stone in memory of Jenny Stone

### Yiskor

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### Rabbi Discretionary Fund

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Annie Spiro in memory of Dr. Victor Spiro  
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Elaine Fleisher in memory of Dr. Victor Spiro and Martha Sanders  
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Joan Greenbaum in honor of Allen Shane's birthday  
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