

HAMIGDALOR

המגדלור



4839 Market Street, Unit C, Ventura, Ca. 93003 Phone (805) 644-2899

December 2025

www.congregationAmHaYam.com

Rabbi's Words



My friends,

Heading into December, our thoughts turn to many things, Christmas holiday music from every speaker in the mall and on TV, thoughts of the New Year before us and for the Jewish community, we think of the Festival of Lights or Chanukah. I want to share a few thoughts about Chanukah with our community.

To begin with something fun and perhaps frivolous, I want to share some photos related to Chanukah and one might be moved to ask, "Rabbi, it's the Festival of Lights! Where is the Chanukiya (Menorah)? What's with the doughnuts"? Let me explain. For sure the Chanukiya is very much the symbol of the holiday. As we add each night one more candle, we increase light and raise the level of joy. As we observe the mitzvah of the lighting of candles, we recall the miracle of the oil, that lasted much longer than it should have. In that tradition of recalling the miracle of the oil, we eat food fried in oil. If you come to my home during the Chanukah holiday, you have every chance to be treated to a fried foods feast. Schnitzel (with fresh squeezed lemon and NOT catsup) and latkes are mainstays. Latkes can be made from many sources, sweet potato or yams or zucchini. I prefer the classic of potato and onion and lots of sour cream over it. The applesauce topping hits me as an error and definitely not done by the people from my side of the river. 🙄 Now, if you have spent any time at all with me after services then you know several things about me. You know that our gathering together and sharing conversations and nibbles is something I much look forward to and enjoy. I enjoy sharing a story, some torah and news of the day and I much value hearing the stories of others. But above all, if you've watched me, you know I've yet to meet a pastry or sweet or butter/dairy fat I didnt like.

Fried foods go with Chanukah and sweets go with Chanukah. In my days as a Rabbinic Student in Jerusalem, I encountered סופגניות-sufganiyot-doughnuts. And not the marginal product we get here called sufganiyot, but some truly good product! You can see in one of the pictures the large display of sufganiyot. Bakery after bakery proudly displays their best and finest for sale. In the name of celebrating the Festival of Lights, I tried as many varieties as I could. All in the name of holiday observance and research, of course. Here are a few ‘take aways’. First, the Israelis devote serious time and effort to their sufganiyot products. They mix and match an almost limitless blending of fillings, icings and toppings. My friends, let me assure you, these products are (ח-ושלום) not low-calorie/high fiber diet food. Au contraire!! These Israeli delectable delights are the polar opposite of healthy dining. They are as הקדוש ברוך הוא (the Holy One Blessed be he) intended them to be enjoyed. Lots of sugar, fats and more sugar with some carbohydrates holding it together. In the picture of the 3 sufganiyot on the plate, you see the large plastic tube sticking out of the sufganiyot? This is Israeli ingenuity at its best and finest. The sack is filled with chocolate syrup. One squeezes it and injects the extra chocolate directly into the sufganiya for additional chocolate, extra sugar and increased joy and enjoyment. Finally, I do feel I owe a report on my research for the best tasting blend of filling and icing. In my humble opinion and sweet tooth, the sufganiya with chocolate icing and filled with halvah was the best of the best. Was it totally ‘over the top’? Yes, absolutely. Was it amazingly good, totally Israeli and demanded not one but 2 per serving? Definitely yes.

Let me finish with a more serious note about the Festival of Lights. In the Talmud in tractate שבת דף כא: Shabbat page 21b, the laws of Chanukah candle lighting are debated and reviewed. The sages attempt to reconcile the many customs and habits. From their discussion we get the direction to start with one candle and go UP to eight, so we increase sanctity and not reduce it. On that same page our sages ask a rather simple question but a clearly important one: מאי הנוכה?? What is Chanukah? They are asking in the text and their discussion, what is this observance and why are we doing it? It’s a basic and yet very good question.

In the month of December, I take part in an Inter-faith program at Crespi Carmelite Catholic High School in Encino. For the hundreds of young High School aged men and the faculty of the school, I answer that question. The answer goes like this, and I promise you will hear me expound on this again and again, because I believe with all my heart, it is important. In the time of the Maccabees and the breakup of the empire of Alexander the Great, the dominant culture was that of the Greeks. That includes all the scholarship, culture, folklore and pantheon of gods the Greeks are deservedly well known for. That culture and pantheon left no room for the practice of Judaism nor retaining the Jewish culture of the time. The easy path, the path of least resistance would have been to assimilate into the larger Greek world, culture and faith and way of life. To hold out against this tide was futile and most of the Mediterranean world had already surrendered to it and embraced it. The Jews of the land of Israel, under the leadership of the Maccabees demurred. They resisted assimilation and being absorbed into the Greek culture and world. They resisted because they believed in Our Father in

Heaven and not the Greek pantheon and they believed in the “peoplehood” of the Jewish people. They fought a violent and bloody war to maintain their unique faith and unique identity. Because they did, we are here today, lighting the Chanukah lights, from 1 to 8, increasing in holiness and joy each night of the holiday.

My wife Judy joins me in wishing our entire community and the Jewish community around the world, a joyful and meaningful Chanukah!!

Rabbi Ron



Bonus-Rabbi's Words

I do get asked, what do you call a group of rabbis? My answer is a group of rabbis is called a “gaggle”. As in ‘a gaggle of rabbis’. When does a gaggle of rabbis gather? In this case as a rabbi in the community I do get asked to set on the SoCal Bet Din (Rabbinic Court). A Bet Din needs 3 rabbis to compose it. Recently I was serving on the Bet Din for conversions and a face familiar to Congregation Am HaYam was there. Rabbi JB Sacks was sponsoring a candidate for conversion and while he and I have exchanged both emails and phone calls, we had not met in person before. So to my great delight I got to meet Rabbi Sacks and hear some of his history and wisdom and share our mutual affection for service to the Jewish community and to Congregation Am HaYam.



Message From Brenda Rich



Greetings: I hope you all had a wonderful Thanksgiving and enjoyed all the trimmings of the day but also on the following days. But in addition to enjoying the abundance of food, I hoped you took the time to be thankful for the food you had, the family and friends, if possible, were there to help you celebrate, for just being alive and able to celebrate all the blessings in your lives.

Let us always remember the blessings. And let us hope the remains of the two remaining hostages are returned to their families.

And now comes December and we look forward to Chanukah-the festival of lights. May our days be brightened by the flames of the candles and be increased as the candles increase each night.

Rabbi Ron will be presenting a special session on Zoom on Tuesday, December 9th at 7 p.m. on Chanukah: History, Folklore and Light.

We will be having a Community candle lighting for the first night of Chanukah on Zoom at 7 p.m. on Sunday, December 14th led by Rabbi Ron with singing.

On Thursday, before the start of her Mussar class at 7 p.m. on Zoom, Fran Lande will be leading us in candle lighting for the 5th night of Chanukah.

Have your Chanukiyah ready for both nights. Zoom links will be sent via email.

Services will be led live by Rabbi Ron and live streamed at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, December 5th and Saturday at 10 a.m. on December 6th.

As Rabbi Ron will be out of town at a family Simcha, services on Friday, December 19th and December 20th will be led by Hazzan Mike Stein. These will be live and live streamed at CAH. These will also be our celebration of Chanukah services and filled with lively music and good food at the Kiddush sponsored by Donna Gustafson. Yes, there will be lots of Sufganiyots. Sorry Rabbi Ron!!!

Wishing you all a very Happy Chanukah.

Shalom, Brenda

Sorry it's taken me to thank all that made voluntary contributions to CAH above their dues and made pledges in support of CAH. You are all deeply appreciated. If your name is not listed and you did make a donation, Please let me know immediately.

VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS:

Neal Abramson

Sydell & Bernie Bubman

Arlenr & Jerry Davis

Stephen Goch

Donna Gustafson

Brenda Rich

PLEDGES:

Alma Boronkay

Stephen Goch

Joel Gordon

Deborah Katler

Miriam & Darryl Mack

Brenda Rich

Mark Rich

Nancy & Lonny Scharf

Sabrina Sexton

Lee & Michael Weiss



CONGREGATION AM HAYAM CHANUKAH 2025

Chanukah: History, Folklore & Light A Conversation with Rabbi Ron

Tuesday, December 9 • 7:00 pm • on Zoom

Join Rabbi Ron for an engaging evening exploring Chanukah—the blessings, the candles, the doughnuts, and the deeper meaning of this beloved holiday.

- What is the actual history of Chanukah?
- What parts are folklore and legend?
- Which stories are the tales we all grew up with?

Zoom links will be sent via email the week of the event.



Community Chanukah Candle Lightings

First Night Candle Lighting

Sunday, December 14 • 7:00 pm • on Zoom

Join our community on the first night of Chanukah as we light candles together, sing the blessings, and share the light.

Candle Lighting Before Mussar

Thursday, December 18 • 7:00 pm • on Zoom

Light Chanukah candles together at 7:00 pm, followed by Fran Lande's Mussar class.

Zoom links for these events will also be sent via email.

COMING SOON!

**ANI V'ATA—
TOGETHER WE WILL
CHANGE THE WORLD**



**LEARNING ABOUT ANTISEMITISM TO TAKE ACTION IN A CORNER OF
THE WORLD**

A program to explore and learn together about when anti-Zionism is racism and when is it not? And a speaker/ workshop on an action component supporting Jewish students on local college campuses as they navigate college life.

This is made possible by a grant from the **Pacific Southwest Region of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism**

Mussar: Deepening Our Character

Mussar classes continue in December.

Come join us as we continue our exploration of middot/ soul traits. Each week we gain insight into the meaning of various middot and how to better balance the role each can play in our daily interaction.

No previous knowledge of Hebrew or text study required, just a desire to learn and make sense of our lives. You can join us even if you have not been able to attend the previous classes. **We will be studying Responsibility/Achrayut.**

Classes will be on December 4th, 11th and 18th (Chanukah candle lighting on 18th) at 7 pm on Zoom.

Classes will return on Jan 8th.

For more information, please contact Fran Lande, Life-Long learning chair at fblande@gmail.com.



WELCOME HOME

We rejoice in the freedom of those who have returned from captivity. May their healing be complete, and their lives filled with peace.

WE REMEMBER

Those who did not come home — may their memories be a blessing, and may the light of our community honor their lives.



WHAT DO YOU PUT IN YOUR RECYCLE BIN ?

If you are putting newspapers, magazines, shredded mail, frozen meal containers and glass in your bin for the city to pick up that is great. **If you are still putting in soda cans and water bottles, please consider saving them for CAH.**

Soda cans are recyclable. Plastic water bottles, both plain and flavored can be recycled. From the small 4 ounce to the large half gallon bottles can bring money in to CAH.

If you think a few cents doesn't matter, I can tell you a small income on a regular basis adds up. Since we started in 2014 CAH has earned \$ 1,173.32. You can bring the recycles to services or you can save them in 13 or 33 gallon bags and I will be happy to pick them up.

There are lots of holiday parties coming up between now and New Years Eve. You might ask neighbors to save them.

Call me for any questions or to pick up. You can call me at home or leave a message on the temple phone at 805-644-2899.

Thank you so much.

Ruth Resnick



GIVING

**SUPPORT YOUR SYNAGOGUE WHEN YOU DINE, SHOP,
TRAVEL OR FOR ENTERTAINMENT**

**PURCHASE GIFT CARDS ([SCRIP](#)) FOR YOUR FAVORITE
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VENUES AND MORE.**

**YOU GET DOLLAR FOR DOLLAR VALUE FOR
WHATEVER YOU PURCHASE, WHILE AM HAYAM GETS A
PERCENTAGE.**



Click picture above for link to retailer list.

December: Get in on All the Excitement Here at CAH!

Here at CAH we offer an extensive set of ongoing, recurring events.

Brenda sends out the link for the Zoom or YouTube link ahead of time, so that it will be towards the top of your Email inbox. Services are coordinated by Rabbi Goldberg; all other events are coordinated by our Life-Long Learning Chair, Fran Lande. If you have questions about our non-service offerings or have suggestions for other events, please contact Fran. Please contact fblande@gmail.com

EVENT	LEADER	DAY and TIME	DATES
Erev Shabbat at CAH	Rabbi Ron Goldberg	Friday, 7:30p at CAH and Streaming	December 5
Shabbat at CAH	Rabbi Ron Goldberg	Saturday, 10a at CAH and Streaming	December 6
Erev Shabbat at CAH	Hazzan Mike Stein	Friday, 7:30p at CAH and Streaming	December 19
Shabbat at CAH	Hazzan Mike Stein	Saturday, 10a at CAH and Streaming	December 20
Chanukah: History, Folklore & Light	Rabbi Ron Goldberg	Wednesday 7p on Zoom	December 9
Chanukah Candle Lighting- First Night	Rabbi Ron Goldberg	Sunday 7p on Zoom	December 14
Mussar Candle Lighting Dec 18	Fran Lande	Thursdays 7p on Zoom	December 4, 11, 18
Ritual Meeting	Neal Abramson	Sunday 10a on Zoom	December 14
Board Meeting	Brenda Rich	Sunday 11a on Zoom	December 14

In Memory Of

Lynn Freeman IMO Faye Zebberman
Deanna Marenstein IMO Mitzi & William Hornick
Rick Newberger IMO Judy Newberger
Brenda Rich & Mark Rich IMO Irene Rich
Nancy & Lonny Scharf IMO Ed Halpern & Mike Haas

In Honor Of

Judy & Joel Adelman IHO Brenda rich for MM bag
Lynn Freeman IHO Rabbi Ron Goldberg & Brenda Rich for being
there in my time of need

Birthdays

Kathy Spencer 12/22
Rabbi Ron Goldberg 12/30

Anniversaries

Arlene & Jerry Davis 12/16

Get Well

Fil Barton	Steven Goch
Alma Boronkay	Fran Lande
Lee Rothschild	Arlene Davis
Rick Newberger	Jerry Davis



Yahrzeit

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 5 and SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6

*Arthur Kerbel, Father of Bunny Kaufman z'l
:*Baylis Ruben Resnick, Husband of Ruth Resnick
*Marion Wayne, Mother of Ann Sperber z'l

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 19 and SATURDAY, DECEMBER 20

Samuel Davis, Father of Gerald Davis
Farha Perez, Aunt of Fil Barton
*Max Sperber, Father of Jack Sperber z'l
*Abraham Israel "Sol" Kozuch, Father of Maurice Kozak

May their memories be for a blessing

*Inscribed on our Memorial Wall

Updated CAH Protocols for Services

(Revised, June 2024)

Now that the Omicron surge has waned, we are ready to remove some of the protocols that have been in place.

1. Everyone must be fully vaccinated to come to services and events held in our CAH home. Proof of vaccination should be shown the first time entering.
2. Social distancing will be maintained. All rows can be utilized.
3. Wearing masks is optional (as all are fully vaccinated).
4. For those who cannot attend services, we will continue live-streaming our services.
5. **Those having aliyot and honors may again do so from Bimah. We will maintain the music stand in front of the Bimah for those who would prefer to do their honor from there due to distancing or mobility issues.**

Best Practices/Etiquette Upon Moving Back

Not everyone is equally comfortable with touch at this time, whether it is a handshake, a hug, or a Shabbat shalom kiss. We can express our joy in seeing each other without these, but if it's something any of us want to do, please ASK the person you are about to greet in a physical way first. Please do not take anyone's "NO" as a rejection. Please support everyone in the comfort level in which they find themselves.

ORDERING MEMORIAL WALL PLAQUES AT CAH

Jewish tradition sees memory as a sacred act, allowing us to be inspired by the good in a loved one's life and live more fully in our own days. A yahrzeit plaque allows for a permanent remembrance of a loved one, ensuring that his or her name will be recalled in perpetuity in our congregation. It is very meaningful to see the memorial plaque of your loved one on the High Holy Days, especially at the Yom Kippur Yizkor (Remembrance) service, on the Shabbat close to the yahrzeit, and at other special moments (including Passover, Shavuot and Sukkot Yizkor services).

Names on the plaque are automatically recalled publicly at the Shabbat prior to the yahrzeit at both our Friday night and Saturday morning services just before Mourner's Kaddish.

Ordering a plaque is a wonderful way to pay tribute to that special person or persons of blessed memory.

The current cost of ordering a bronze plaque for the memorial wall is \$360.00 per plaque. If you would like to order two plaques now, the cost will be \$330.00 per name. For 3 or more plaques the cost is \$300.00 per name.

Thank you for considering doing this for your loved ones. Their lives will be remembered and an inspiration to many.

Sincerely,

Brenda Rich

PLAQUE #1–Name of deceased: _____

Relationship _____

Hebrew Name _____ (son/daughter of) _____ and _____

Date of death English

Date of death Hebrew

Before or after sundown _____

PLAQUE #2–Name of deceased: _____

Relationship _____

Hebrew Name _____ (son/daughter of) _____ and _____

Date of death English

Date of death Hebrew

Before or after sundown _____

PLAQUE #3–Name of deceased: _____

Relationship _____

Hebrew Name _____ (son/daughter of) _____ and _____

Date of death English

Date of death Hebrew

Before or after sundown _____

If you have more than three plaques, please place information on additional sheets of paper.

Please mail this form with your check for the amount in full to:
Congregation Am HaYam; Attn: Brenda Rich; 4839 Market St. Unit C; Ventura, CA 93003

December 2025

Kislev/Tevet 5786

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 IMO Frank Spunt	2	3	4 Deepening Our Character 7p on Zoom IMO Saul Kupperman	5 Erev Shabbat Services 7:30p at CAH Light Shabbat Candles 4:29p	6 Shabbat Services 10a at CAH Shabbat ends at 5:28p
7	8	9 Chanukah: History, Folklore & Light 7p on Zoom	10	11 Deepening Our Character 7p on Zoom	12 Light Shabbat Candles 4:30p	13 Shabbat ends at 5:29p
14 Ritual meeting 10a on Zoom Board meeting 11a on Zoom Candle Lighting 7p on Zoom	15	16 IMO Arthur Kerbel Arlene & Jerry Davis Anniv	17 IMO Baylis Ruben Resnick	18 Deepening Our Character w/Candle lighting 7p on Zoom	19 Erev Shabbat Services W/Hazzan Stein 7:30p at CAH Light Shabbat Candles 4:33p IMO Marion Wayne	20 Shabbat Services W/Hazzan Stein 10a at CAH Shabbat ends at 5:32p
21	22 Kathy Spencer B/D	23 IMO Samuel Davis	24 IMO Farha Perez	25	26 Light Shabbat Candles 4:36p IMO Max Sperber	27 Shabbat ends at 5:36p
28	29	30 Rabbi Ron Goldberg B/D	31			



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PAST PRESIDENTS

Mort Resnick
Arnie Fingerhut z'l
Jerry Ruthman z'l
Peter Shack z'l
Brenda Rich

OUR VOLUNTEERS

Kiddushim - Brenda Rich
Oneg Shabbat - Fil Barton
Purchasing - Ruth Resnick
Yahrzeits - Brenda Rich
Migdalar - Mark Rich
Webmaster - Mark Rich

“Rabbi Ron” Goldberg
RabbiRon@CongregationAmHaYam.com

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brenda.bashful16@gmail.com

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