

# Congregation Anshe Emeth



## E-Newsletter December 2025

### Services, Led by our *Shaliach Tzibur*, Jese Shell

#### **Saturday, December 13 at 10:00**

- Shabbat service, followed by a Pre-Hanukkah Lunch Party including latkes, applesauce, and jelly donuts!
- Bring your menorah for ***Menorah Scenes: Stories of Light***. (see further explanation later in this newsletter)
- Continuation of *My Jewish Year* book discussion, Chapter 9: Hanukkah Reconsidered

#### **Saturday, January 10 at 10:00**

- Shabbat service followed by an oneg

#### JOIN IN PERSON OR ZOOM

To Join Zoom Service:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/7643723318?pwd=STJIR1drNXFoL29XRGw0L1AzMThxQT09>

Or go to your Zoom App and put in this information:

Meeting ID: 764 372 3318 Passcode: 0092

Or simply dial by your location:

646 876 9923 US (New York)

When prompted, put in for the Meeting ID: 764 372 3318 and push #

Passcode: 0092 and push #

## **Shining Light in Our Small but Mighty Community**

***Jese Shell- Congregation Anshe Emeth***

As the days grow shorter, night comes faster, and the winter winds settle over our fields, forests, and neighborhoods of West Central Ohio, our beloved community prepares once again to kindle the lights of Hanukkah—a festival that reminds us that even the smallest flame can illuminate great darkness. For our congregation, this message resonates deeply in my heart and soul. Each candle we light celebrates the enduring Jewish values of hope, courage, and joy, and affirms that we, too, carry a radiant spark that brightens the world around us.

The story of the Maccabees teaches us this lesson with timeless strength. A small band with unwavering conviction, they stood against an empire—not because they were mighty in number, but because they were steadfast in faith and purpose. Their resilience is not merely a tale of ancient heroism; it is a reminder that even when circumstances seem insurmountable, persistence and unity can create miracles. The miracle of the oil, lasting eight days instead of one, became a symbol of the Jewish belief that when we bring our best effort, G-d multiplies the light.

Our own Jewish heritage in the American South offers a parallel story of resilience. Many Reform congregations, of German origin, did not celebrate Hanukkah or even recognize it until the late 1850s, some even adopting a more secular rendition of Christmas, as displayed by the majority around them. One well-known tale recounts how, in the late 19th century, a handful of Jewish families in a small Southern town gathered each winter to celebrate Hanukkah in a makeshift shul above a general store. They lacked a proper hanukkiyah, so one of the farmers crafted a wooden one from leftover fence posts. Its candles flickered unevenly, but its light filled the room with warmth, laughter, and song. Despite their limited resources, these families built a Jewish life grounded in hospitality, mutual support, and joyful tradition—values that continue to inspire congregations like ours today, remembering that even a minor holiday can have a major impact.

As we light our own hanukkiyot—some new and polished, others lovingly passed down—we join both the Maccabees and those Southern Jewish pioneers in a shared legacy of perseverance. Hanukkah invites us to seek joy not only in celebration but also in community and in the light of G-d and living His mitzvot: in showing up for one another, in sharing food and stories, and in remembering that our collective light is far brighter than any single flame.

May this Hanukkah bring renewed strength to us all. May the lights we kindle shine outward, illuminating our homes, our neighbors, and our region with the steadfast glow of Jewish resilience and joy.

***Chag Urim Sameach—Wishing you a bright and joyful Festival of Lights!***

## Yahrtzeits for December . . . Of Blessed Memory

*Charles Bailen  
Herman Barr  
Harvey Buller  
Saul Goodman  
Nathan Katz  
Frieda Kramer  
Erving Kastner  
Howard Kastner  
Teddie Litchfield  
Fannie Louis  
Ruth Louis  
Elliott Murstein  
Lila Murstein  
Mark Shaffer  
Brian Stuckey  
Arthur Willner  
Jacob Zimmerman*

## Mi Shebeirach . . . Prayers for Healing

Mitzi Seaman  
Neal Schmidt  
Joey Ferrell  
David Ferrell  
Cory Lemmon  
Mike Freed  
Rosanne Youngstein  
Holly Stephenson

## Thank you for your support . . .

- Jon Holt
- Eric and Holly Stephenson
- **Hillary Zimmerman** and **Gloria Bailen**, in memory of parents **Charles Bailen** (December Yahrzeit) and **Zena Bailen Utrecht** (June Yahrzeit)
- Eileen and Steve Litchfield

## **Mazel Tov!**

. . .**to all of us** on receiving *two* grants—a Hartzell Grant and a grant through the regular grant cycle— from the Piqua Community Foundation! This money will provide funding for the installation of protective storm windows on the three south-facing stained glass windows.

Steve, Mike, and Judy met with people from the Piqua Community Foundation to show them our building and share more about who we are and what we do. Representatives from the foundation might join us on December 13!

. . .**to the Bowman family** on their new nephew/grandchild, Asher. Welcome to the world, Asher! We are glad you are here.

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## **Janessa and Lora enjoying a beautiful fall day!**

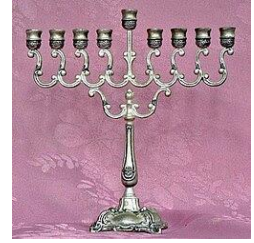
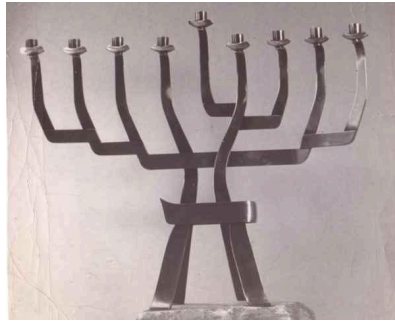




We had a lively and meaningful Simchat Torah celebration on November 1, playing “Pass the Torah” as we processed 7 times around the sanctuary, singing and waving flags. Thank you Jese!



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## Menorah Scenes: “Stories of Light”

**When:** During our Pre-Hanukkah Party after services on Saturday, December 13

**What:** Since we are having a Pre Hanukkah party, we won't be able to light candles together. But we CAN take this time to enjoy and appreciate our Hanukkah Menorahs as we wait for our latkes to be ready!

Please bring your menorah, and any objects or pictures connected to your menorah that have special meaning for you.

We will offer everyone a chance to tell a short story about their menorah. For example: Why is it special to you? Where did it come from? Who gave it to you, and when? What cherished memories are connected to this menorah, or what memories do you hope to make with it?

**Where:** In the Social Hall. We will have a table set up with space for everyone's menorah display.

**Why:** In *My Jewish Year*, Abigail Pogrebin talks about Hanukkah as a time to make connections. Let's connect with each other over our stories—of family, of friends, of good times and difficult times—that are inspired by the light of our Hanukkah menorahs.

**Every story counts.**

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## Hanukkah Happenings in the Area

Dec 21, 7:00-10:00 pm: Beth Jacob Adult Hanukkah Party, featuring the Life and Music of Louis Armstrong

Go to <https://jewishdayton.org/events/> to see more Hanukkah events in the Dayton Area!

