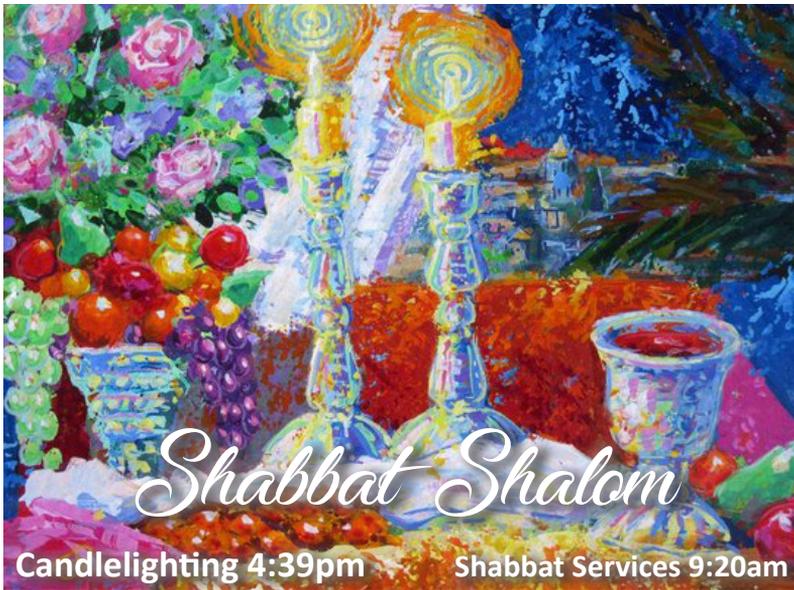




Carnegie Shul Chatter

December 19, 2018



A Tough Year

This has been a year in which it has been hard to be Jewish.

The shootings at Tree of Life were by far the worst of it, but the almost daily reports of anti-Semitic actions both in the United States and around the world are constant reminders that being Jewish is not always easy.

I would like to share an image that was making the rounds on Facebook a couple of weeks ago. It was a Chanukkah post, but it is just as appropriate today. It reminds us of our eternal covenant with God and how we will endure as a People.

It's That Time Again...

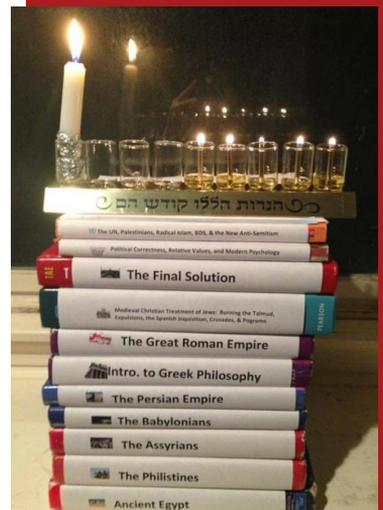
It's that time of the year again – Christmas.

As Jews, we don't believe that Christ was the Messiah and Christmas, his birthday, is not a religious observance for us.

But we cannot ignore Christmas. It is everywhere around us. There are Christmas trees. There are Christmas lights. Radio stations start playing Christmas music 24-7 starting the day after Thanksgiving.

As Kyle sings on one of my favorite South Park episode, "It's hard to be a Jew at Christmas."

When I was a kid in elementary school, the sixth graders went up and down the hall at school singing Christmas songs for the rest of the school. And they weren't just songs like "Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer" or "Frosty the Snowman." They were blatantly Christian songs with lyrics like, "Christ our Savior is born," and





“Come let us adore him, Christ the lord,” and, “Joy to the world, the Lord has come, let earth receive her king,” and proclaiming Christ to be, “the King of the Jews.”

When I was working for State Government in Harrisburg, our office building – a State office building – had an annual Christmas program that included the same songs, sung by our employee chorus. With a Christmas tree and a nativity crèche in the lobby.

So again, is it hard to understand Kyle singing of his being a Jew, “there’s something wrong with me?”

I am not a Scrooge. I enjoy going for a drive every year and looking at Christmas lights, but I must admit that at times I felt like Kyle, that there was something wrong with me for not accepting Christ’s divinity. After all, I live in a society in which Christmas is here, there, and everywhere.

So what do we do about all of the Christmas stuff? Do we hide our heads in shame? Do we say, “There is something wrong with me?” Do we think that having Chinese food is the answer to Christmas?

We are not Christians. Christmas is not our holiday. We should be respectful of our Christian friends and their observance, but we should not attempt to adopt their holiday to cheer up ourselves or our kids. We don’t need a Christmas tree in our Jewish house. We don’t have to take the kids to sit on Santa’s lap (my parents had me sit on Santa’s lap when I was a toddler).

Above all, we don’t have to feel as though, “There is something wrong with me.”

It is we Jews who have a covenant with God. It is we Jews who were given the gifts of Sabbath and Torah. It is we Jews who are God’s chosen people.

There is nothing wrong with us.

Be proud to be a Jew, even on Christmas.

Yahrzeit Plaques

Commemorate a loved one by dedicating a yahrzeit plaque in his or her memory at the Carnegie Shul. These beautiful plaques, mounted on the sanctuary walls, are lit on the loved one’s yahrzeit, Yom Kippur, and days when Yizkor is recited. The names are also read aloud from the Bimah during services on the Sabbath of the yahrzeit and on Yom Kippur. To purchase a plaque, for only \$175, please email Mike Roteman at mrmike7777@yahoo.com.



Please consider sponsoring a Kiddush in honor or in memory of a loved one, for only \$36. Your sponsorship will be announced from the bimah and in the weekly Chatter. To sponsor a Kiddush, email mrmike7777@yahoo.com.