

# CITY & REGION

BREAKING NEWS AT CALGARYHERALD.COM

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Ted Jacob, Calgary Herald  
Yudi Matusof, 12, centre, helps his brother Avremy, 7, light the menorah on the second day of Hanukkah in their southwest Calgary home Thursday, while their father, Rabbi Menachem Matusof, looks on with his youngest child, Shlomo, 13 months.

## Calgarians invited to menorah lighting

LEA STORRY  
CALGARY HERALD

It's the second day of Hanukkah and Jewish people around the world are celebrating the festival of lights.

Rabbi Menachem Matusof said the event is an important one for everybody, no matter what their beliefs.

"The Jewish people were oppressed when they weren't allowed to practise their own religion," said Matusof, executive director of the Chabad Lubavitch of Alberta, a group dedicated to creating awareness of Judaism. "The message

is one of freedom of expression and freedom of religion."

The rabbi invites Calgarians of all faiths to the 22nd annual community menorah lighting on Sunday in the City Hall atrium at 5 p.m. He said there will be music and food and fun for the whole family.

"It's a wonderful event," said Matusof. "It's an event that unites the community in a positive way, and there are latkes — what kind of other encouragement do you need?"

Hanukkah involves lighting candles on a candelabra, or menorah, over eight days. Eliezer Segal, a religious stud-

ies professor at the U of C, said the holiday is a commemoration of ancient events that took place in second century BC.

Segal said Jews in Jerusalem revolted after being under Greek rule. When the oppressors tried to paganize their temple, the Jews rose up under a priest and his five sons, the Maccabees. They restored the temple to a Jewish place of worship.

As for why Hanukkah runs for eight days, Segal said there are several explanations.

"When they came to purify the temple, they discovered they couldn't light the cande-

labra. They only had enough oil for one day and it took eight days to bring in purified oil. But there was a miracle, and the one-day supply of oil lasted eight days."

Besides the lighting of the menorah, special prayers are recited, while other customs have evolved according to where Jewish people lived.

"Jews of German extraction, who are most of the Jews in North America, eat fried potato pancakes — latkes," said Segal. "Middle Eastern Jews will eat a kind of jelly-filled doughnut."

Another custom that orig-

inated in Eastern Europe is Hanukkah Gelt. This is money or gifts given to children.

"In North America, everything gets commercialized, and with the Christmas shopping mania, it has translated into expensive gifts," said Segal. "But this isn't traditional."

The dates of Hanukkah are determined by the Hebrew calendar, which is defined by phases of the moon. This is why the days change depending on the year. In 2010, Hanukkah began at sunset Thursday and will end next Thursday.

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