

# Chanukah Candle-Lighting Introductory Talk

- Joseph Ozarowski

What are we celebrating in lighting these candles? Lessons to be learned.

## CHANUKA CANDLE-LIGHTING INTRODUCTORY TALK

Tonight, we here in Garden City are pleased to participate in the lighting of the Chanuka candles. Our lighting celebrates the victory of the ancient Maccabees some 2200 years ago over the forces of darkness and tyranny.

The Maccabees, led by Judah and his brothers, struck back at the Greek-Syrian rulers who wished to create a uniform pagan religion in the remnant of Alexander's empire. In the process of oppression, the armies desecrated the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem. Judah and his supporters fought back, eventually liberating the sacred Temple. There, they only found one tiny jar of purest oil to light the Temple light, and the oil was not sufficient to burn and allow time to process new oil. These brave men and women put their faith in the Almighty and lit the lamp. A miraculous event occurred! The small bit of oil lasted for not one but eight days. The major way this series of events is commemorated is by lighting candles, increasing the number of candles each day.

There are several important lessons we in this blessed country can learn from these events. First of all, we learn the lesson of freedom from tyranny. Our country and its ideals stand for that bright light of freedom, shining in an often darkened world. Secondly, we learn the lesson of cultural diversity and integrity. Judah and his band fought for the perpetuation of the Jewish faith, people and culture. Finally, we learn the lesson of faith in times of adversity. Only if we are willing to take risks for the ideals which we believe, will those ideals prevail.