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Hillel to Commemorate Hanukkah with Annual Dinner, Celebration
November 20, 2006

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. - IWU's chapter of Hillel, the national association for Jewish college students, will host its annual Hanukkah celebration Tuesday, Dec. 5, at 5:30 p.m. in the Main Lounge of Illinois Wesleyan University's Memorial Center, 104 E. University St., in Bloomington.

The event, which will consist of a short religious service, the telling of the Hanukkah story and a traditional Hanukkah dinner catered by Sodexo, IWU's food service provider, is free and open to the public.

Hanukkah, which means "dedication," is celebrated each year for eight consecutive nights beginning on the 25th day of Kislev, the third month in the Jewish lunar calendar, which corresponds roughly with December in the Gregorian solar calendar. The holiday commemorates the re-dedication of the Jewish temple after it was defiled by the Syrians, who in 165 BCE outlawed Judaism and dedicated the temple to the worship of Zeus. Under the guidance of one of their high priests, a Jewish group called the Maccabees revolted against and eventually defeated their persecutors.

Celebrating the victory, the Jews rededicated the temple to God, but only had enough oil to light the temple lamps for one night. Miraculously, the lamps remained lit for eight days, long enough for the community to prepare more oil. In celebration of this event, each year Jewish families traditionally light one candle each night for eight nights in a particular kind of candelabra called a menorah and exchange gifts.

For additional information, contact senior Alissa Sherman, president of IWU Hillel, at asherman@iwu.edu.

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