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Illinois Wesleyan University Chapel Hour

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November 17, 2005

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Illinois Wesleyan University Chapel Hour

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – Illinois Wesleyan's *University Chapel Hour and Special Events and Services* and the IWU chapter of Hillel will sponsor a Hanukkah celebration on Tuesday, Dec. 6, at 5:30-7 p.m. in the Main Lounge of Memorial Center (104 University St., Bloomington).

The service, which will provide traditional Jewish food and customs, is free and open to the public.

The Jewish tradition of Hanukkah, which means "dedication," began in c. 165 BCE. In 168 BCE, the Hellenist Syrians seized the Jewish holy Temple and dedicated it to the worship of Zeus after the Greek king of Syria, Antiochus outlawed Judaism and ordered the Jews to worship Greek gods. In a little village called Modiin, not too far from Jerusalem, the villagers, later called the Maccabees, rebelled under the guidance of Mattathias, a Jewish high priest against the Greek army. After three years of fighting, the Maccabees won the battle.

Upon returning to the Temple, the Maccabees wanted to light the menorah in celebration of their victory, but could only find enough oil for one night. Surprisingly, it is said that the menorah burned for eight days, which was enough time for the people to prepare more oil.

Ever since the victory over the Greek army, Jews have celebrated Hanukkah to commemorate the "eight-day miracle." On each successive night, celebrants light an additional candle until the eighth night, when all the lights are lit to symbolize the greatness and growth of the "eight-day miracle."

For additional information, contact the Illinois Wesleyan Chaplain's office at (309) 556-3005.



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