When the first Hanukkah candle is lit this Saturday evening, the glow will remind those of the Jewish faith of a miracle with oil that took place more than 2,000 years ago when the Jews drove a foreign army out of Jerusalem and rekindled the eternal light in the Temple with pure oil.

Legend relates that only enough oil for one day could be found, but it miraculously lasted for eight days. To commemorate this event, colorful candles are lighted each night of the holiday.

The custom of serving fried foods, particularly latkes (potato pancakes), grew out of the miracle of the oil, and have become the symbol of the holiday.

Latkes are usually served with sour cream and applesauce.

TRADITIONAL POTATO LATKES

1 pound potatoes

1/2 cup finely chopped onion

1 large egg, lightly beaten

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/2 to 3/4 cup olive oil

Sour cream and applesauce for accompaniments

Peel potatoes and coarsely grate by hand, transferring to a large bowl of cold water as grated. Allow potatoes to soak for another 2 minutes after last batch is added to water, then drain well in a colander.

Spread grated potatoes and onion on a kitchen towel and roll up jelly-roll style. Twist towel tightly to wring out as much liquid as possible. Transfer potato mixture to a bowl and stir in egg and salt.

Heat 1/4 cup oil in a 12-inch nonstick skillet over moderately high heat until hot but not smoking. Working in batches of 4 latkes, spoon 2 tablespoons potato mixture per latke into skillet, spreading into 3-inch rounds with a fork. Reduce heat to moderate and cook until undersides are browned, about 5 minutes. Turn latkes over and cook until undersides are browned, about 5 minutes more. Transfer to paper towels to drain and season with salt. Add more oil to skillet as needed. Keep latkes warm on a wire rack set in a shallow baking pan in oven.

Makes 12 to 16 latkes.

CHUNKY CINNAMON APPLESAUCE

2 pounds cooking apples

1/4 cup butter

1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice

1 teaspoon cinnamon

4 to 6 tablespoons sugar

Peel, halve and core apples. Cut them into thin wedges or slices.

Heat butter in large, heavy saucepan or flameproof casserole. Add apples and sauté over medium-high heat, turning pieces over from time to time until they are coated with butter. Add lemon juice, cover and cook over low heat, stirring often, for about 20 minutes until apples are very tender. Stir in cinnamon and 4 tablespoons sugar.

Cook over medium heat, stirring until mixture is thick and nearly all liquid in pan evaporates. Adjust sugar and heat until all sugar is dissolved. Serve warm. Yields 4 to 6 servings.

CRANBERRY-COCONUT MACAROONS

2/3 cup sugar

2 large egg whites, lightly beaten

1/2 cup dried cranberries, finely chopped

Zest of 1 orange, finely grated

2 teaspoons vanilla extract

1/2 teaspoon fine salt

3 cups (about 8 ounces) finely shredded unsweetened coconut

Preheat oven to 350°F. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment.

Whisk the sugar, egg whites, cranberry, orange zest, vanilla and salt in a large bowl. Toss the coconut with the egg mixture until completely coated.

Moisten your finger tips with water. Form about 1 heaping tablespoon of the batter into pointed mounds or pyramids on the prepared pans, spacing them about 1 inch apart.

Bake until the edges are golden brown and the entire macaroon is nicely toasted and dry, 16 to 20 minutes. Transfer to a rack to cool. Serve.

Store macaroons in a tightly sealed container for up to a week. Makes about 2 dozen.

NOODLE KUGEL

1 pound wide egg noodles

4 tablespoons butter

1 pound cottage cheese

2 cups sour cream

1/2 cup sugar

1 cup milk

5 eggs

2 teaspoons vanilla extract

1 cup light brown sugar

2 cups pecan pieces

1 teaspoon cinnamon

Preheat the oven to 350°F.

Bring a pot of salted water to a boil. Add the noodles and cook until tender, 6 to 8 minutes. Remove and drain. Toss the noodles with the butter.

In a large mixing bowl, mix the cottage cheese, sour cream, sugar, milk, eggs and vanilla. Mix well. Fold in the noodles. Mix well. Pour the mixture into a buttered 9-by-13 -inch pan. In a small mixing bowl, mix the brown sugar, pecan pieces and cinnamon together. Mix well. Sprinkle the mixture on top of the egg mixture, evenly.

Bake for about an hour or until the pudding is set. Remove from the oven and cool before serving. Yields 12 servings.

COTTAGE CHEESE LATKES

1 cup cottage cheese

3 eggs, separated

1 cup flour

2 tablespoons sugar

1/2 cup heavy cream

Pinch salt

Grated zest of half a lemon

1/2 cup vegetable oil for frying

Powdered sugar

Jam

Beat cheese, egg yolks, flour, sugar, cream salt and lemon zest until smooth. Beat egg whites until stiff but not dry and fold into cheese mixture.

In large skillet, heat oil. Spoon 2 tablespoons of batter into hot oil, flatten with back of spoon, and cook about 2 minutes on each side or until golden brown. Drain on paper towels and keep warm in oven. Serve sprinkled with powdered sugar and pass the jam. Makes about 2 dozen.