

HAPPY PASSOVER TO OUR JEWISH FRIENDS AND COMMUNITY – Sundown, April 1 – 9, 2026

Passover (Pesach) is a festival of liberation. Marking the Hebrews' liberation from slavery in Egypt and exodus to the holy land. It is celebrated at home and not in synagogues. Family and friends gather for festive dinners in which they remember the hardships that Hebrews endured as slaves in Egypt. Seders recall the Exodus. Remembering the haste with which they departed, Jews eat unleavened bread (matzo) and foods recalling hardships Jews suffered, as well as the miracles (plagues) that Moses used to persuade pharaoh to let his Hebrews go. The seder begins with readings from a Haggadah, a booklet that recounts the story, responding to questions – “Why is this night different from all other nights..” -- posed by the youngest child. Although there are standard Haggadah, many families use versions, sometimes purpose written, that address contemporary issues. One thing they have in common is raising questions and having fun: Serious discussion devolves into singing songs and a search for the *afikomen* – matzo that has been hidden by children or adults – without which the seder cannot end. The underlying theme is that ancient struggles liberate not only those who fled Pharaoh's Egypt, but also those who celebrate Passover today. Retelling the ancient story reinforces a hope – “This year here, next year in Jerusalem (figuratively)” – of liberation.

Passover falls in the Hebrew month of Nissan and often coincides with Easter. Central to the life and death of Christ, the Last Supper was a celebration of Passover. The term itself refers to one of the ten plagues – the death of the first-born child – inflicted on the ancient Egyptians: The angel of death passed over homes whose doorposts were smeared with lambs' blood.

(Passover Article, submitted by: Dr. Steven Wolinetz, Jewish Community Havura)