

The Twenty-Sixth Annual Passover Gathering: Tuesday Morning, April 3 "Together for Tomorrow"



Our Twenty-Sixth Annual Passover Gathering will be held on the first day of *Pesah*, Tuesday morning, April 3, with festive holiday services beginning at 9:30 a.m.

The Passover Gathering is a concrete manifestation of the title of our recently launched 150th anniversary campaign, "AJ at 150: Together for Tomorrow."

The magnificent campaign brochure affirms that "In AJ we have found our chosen community, in which

we seek to enrich life and provide it with meaning through the spiritual resources of Judaism and friendship."

It is to bring us together for one of the spiritual highlights of the Jewish year that I instituted the Passover Gathering. I was discouraged by the poor attendance at services on *Pesah*. While the *seder* is one of the most universally observed Jewish rites, *Yom Tov* services went begging for worshipers. And yet, in Biblical times, Passover was the beginning of the new year. Passover celebrates our freedom as a people. Indeed, Passover celebrates being a people, a proud people. So, I mused, would it be too much for us to come together on *Pesah* in a great assembly, just as we do on *Rosh HaShanah* and *Yom Kippur*? Semi-annually we could rededicate ourselves to Jewish living and our people.

Now I am a realist, too. And I was content to challenge the congregation to come in numbers sufficient to fill the Sanctuary on the first day of Passover. With each succeeding year, I saw the numbers grow. It was heartening to see how many members made the effort to be in *shul* on the first day of *Yom Tov*, even when it was normally a weekday. Colleagues from all over the country asked me about this great congregational success. It was a source of great pride to me, and to the congregation.

In recent years, though still strong, the numbers have slacked off. So this year, on the Twenty-Sixth Annual Passover Gathering, on the cusp of our 150th year, I am asking for your help in revitalizing this AJ original and infusing it with new energy. Let us fill the Sanctuary — each person doing his or her part, one person at a time, family by family.

Come to this year's Passover Gathering. It will be a brief period of spiritual peace. A time of healing and rejuvenation. A time of joy and spirit. A time to recall our liberation as a people in ancient times, and to thank God for the freedoms we enjoy today. It will be a time for us to be "together" as a congregation, facing a bright "tomorrow."

The *Talmud* says "When a large crowd of Jews comes together, God is glorified." Let us come together for God's glory, for our own spiritual well-being, for our nation, our people and our synagogue.

Cindy and I, our children, and all of the members of the synagogue professional staff join in extending to you our heartfelt best wishes that this festival season will be filled with joy and peace. May it be a time for expressing love to those who are dearest, and achieving reconciliation among those who have been estranged. During this season, when we remember our exodus from Egypt, the most formative event in the history of our people, may we rededicate ourselves to living full, intense, and productive lives as Jews and as human beings.

May God bring peace to our hearts and homes, to our nation, our homeland of Israel, and the whole world. Tuesday, April 3. Put it on your calendar. The Twenty-Sixth Annual Passover Gathering.

Hag Kasher V'Sameach! A kosher and happy *Pesah* to one and all.

CONGREGATION
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