

## March 2020 Message from Rabbi Dubin

Dear Friends,

Passover is approaching quickly. We may not have celebrated Purim yet, but the time to begin cleaning and prepping our homes (and ourselves) for Passover has already arrived. As we begin to consider what we will do with all our chametz (our religiously forbidden food products for Passover), I'd like to offer two suggestions, both of which can be followed in the same home:

First, as we look through our pantries and refrigerators, I encourage us all to gather our unopened, non-perishable items – such as pasta, – and bring them to the Temple lobby by Friday, April 4, so we can bundle them together in order to make a significant donation to those in our larger community who are hungry.

And then, after we have done that, I encourage all of us to participate in an ancient tradition (though new to us this year at JCNWJ) called *mechirah*, which is the selling whatever “Forbidden-for-Passover” foods might still be left in our possession. This includes crumbs that we missed while cleaning, but it also includes foods that we knowingly keep in our home because we choose not to throw them into the garbage or compost. Any food that we sell may remain in our homes, so long as it is put away, out of site.

So how does this process work? While it is ritually forbidden for Jews to own any of these foods during Passover, it is perfectly acceptable for non-Jews to own them during Passover. With this in mind, I, as your rabbi and agent, will act on your behalf in conducting the transaction with our friends at Washington's [Mount Pisgah AME Church](#). Prior to Passover, I will distribute the contract below to all Temple members. Anyone wishing to participate will sign and return the signed contract, along with a donation of your choice made out to the Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey (the donation is not mandatory, but it is highly appreciated) to Allison Thurber.

Alternatively, you can hand deliver your signed contract and donation check to me at the Temple, no later than Friday, April 4.

On Sunday, April 6, I will include every member who opts into the process when I create a contract to sell the whole lot to Mt. Pisgah Church. Reverend Bracy will sign on behalf of the church and surrender the sum of \$1.00 in exchange. The food itself will never change hands; only the ownership of it will. And then, when the festival is over, I will execute another contract with Reverend Bracy, in which she will sell the lot of food back to its original owners for the sum of \$2.00.

I encourage all of us to participate, not only because I believe there is value to following Jewish tradition, but even more importantly, because I have every confidence that anyone who chooses to participate in this way will find themselves experiencing an even more meaningful Passover celebration this year. By preparing

our homes to be rid of all chametz ownership, I believe we are actually preparing ourselves to appreciate the meaning of Passover at an ever-deepening level.

*L'Shalom,*

Rabbi Dubin

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