

## ***Passover Guide 5785 / 2025***

Dear Congregants,

This year, we will gather for the Passover Seder -- for a second year in a row -- with Jewish brethren most likely still held captive in Gaza. Enslaved, enchained, and suffering the most excruciating of experiences, all while we sit at our tables retelling the story of our ancient enslavement in Egypt. Though our people have had an unbearably difficult year-and-a-half, it is imperative that we celebrate Passover to the fullest. We must not forsake our time-honored rituals and traditions just because we are enduring a difficult period in our history. In my view, quite the opposite. We must renew our sacred traditions as a reminder of why it is all so worthwhile.

Passover's miracles were direct demonstrations of Divine power. God's miracles enabled our movement from slavery to freedom. The Purim story is notably different. The Jewish people were saved, but it was human bravery, courage, and action that set the course for our salvation. Yes, we always believe in the hidden hand of God, but human fortitude and perseverance shifted the events of Purim in our favor.

This year, we ought to look to both Purim and Pesach for inspiration. God's miracles, represented through the Pesach story, are fundamental. Our human fortitude and achievements, represented through the Purim story, are instrumental. We look to the hostage families who carry a broken nation on their shoulders, reminding the State of Israel's politicians of its solemn pledge to the Jewish people; we look to the members of the IDF who are our heroes and defenders; we look to the Jewish activists on campuses across the country who refuse to back down from anti-Jewish bias and bullying; we look to the social media warriors who refute every lie and refuse to leave anti-Jewish prejudice unchecked. The list goes on. We are standing on our feet, unwilling to falter, because of our belief in our people, our tradition, and a deep sense of pride in our history.

We can draw from Purim and Passover as a means to fully embrace our rituals and customs this Passover. Again this year, I ask that you leave an empty seat at your seder table. As the great Jewish poet Emma Lazarus taught us, "Until we are all free, we are none of us free." May this Festival of Freedom grant us blessing, health, light, and hope.

Chag Sameach.  
Rabbi Ari Isenberg

***Save The Date***  
***Thursday, April 2, 2026***

*Wait, 2026? Yes!*

*...we are delighted to let you know that we're in the early stages of planning  
a **CBI Community Seder** for Thursday, April 2, 2026,  
led by Rabbi Ari Isenberg and special guests.  
More details to come in the fall, but save the date for now!*

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**Matchmaker, Matchmaker...**

Do you have room to welcome a guest at your seder?

Would you like to be a guest at someone's seder table?

Our Clergy team would love the opportunity to match you up, so don't delay:

Contact **Ayana Harry** at [aharry@cbi-nj.org](mailto:aharry@cbi-nj.org) or by phone at 973-379-3811 (ext. 120)

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**Selling Chametz**

Since ownership of *chametz* is not permitted during the holiday, ideally any *chametz* in one's possession would be given away or destroyed before the holiday begins. Since this often represents a financial hardship and/or needless waste, the practice arose for people to store away their *chametz* before *Pesach* and arrange to legally sell it for the duration of the holiday. To have your *chametz* sold, email **Ayana Harry** at [aharry@cbi-nj.org](mailto:aharry@cbi-nj.org) by **April 9** with the following information:

- The address of your primary residence (and secondary, if applicable)
- An acknowledgement that you grant CBI's clergy permission to serve as the agent to secure the sale of your *chametz* on your behalf

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**Charity for Passover Goods (*Ma'ot Chittim*)**

It is customary to give *Ma'ot Chittim*, charity for the Passover needs of those who cannot afford Passover food and added expenses. We urge anyone who is able to be generous this year to consider making a contribution. Donations will be directed to the Metro area's *Ma'ot Chittim* Fund as well as to Leket Israel, and can be channeled through Rabbi Isenberg's Discretionary Fund:

Online donations can be made at <https://cbi-nj.org/online-tribute-form/>. Please select the option "Rabbi's Discretionary Fund" and write "Ma'ot Chittim" in the description box. You can also mail a check into CBI, and earmark it for the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund, *Ma'ot Chittim*.

## When Passover Begins on Saturday Night... like this year

### Fast of the Firstborn

In recognition of the rescue of Israelite firstborns from the 10th plague (while Egyptian firstborns died), a firstborn traditionally observes this fast. Most years it occurs on Erev Pesach. This year, since Erev Pesach is Shabbat, the fast moves to Thursday, April 10.

CBI and TBAY (Temple Beth Ahm Yisrael, Springfield) will join forces for minyan that morning at 7:30 a.m. For minyan Zoom links and information, consult our weekly emails as the date approaches.

### Bedikat Chametz

Searching for chametz takes place this year on Thursday evening (April 10). Consider participating in this symbolic search for chametz in your home. With compliments of the Rabbinical Assembly, [here's a printable version](#) of the blessings to recite. It's also a great way to engage the youngest in our community. Consider a [DIY kit](#) or purchase one [here](#). Enjoy this unique ritual by candlelight.

### Shabbat and Festival Candle Lighting

On **Friday evening, April 11, at 7 p.m.**, ensure you have ignited a flame that can last 25 hours. Some good examples of such flames include: a pilot light on a gas range or gas fireplace; a yahrzeit candle, etc. Make sure that flame source is lit first, and then light your Shabbat candles as per routine.

On Saturday night, do as follows: On Yom Tov, the use of an existing fire for cooking or other purposes is permitted. To light candles for Yom Tov (**Erev Pesach on Saturday night**), use the existing flame source that you arranged on Friday to facilitate your Yom Tov candle lighting. You can light the Yom Tov candles at or after **8:00 p.m.**

### Saying Ha'Motzi on Shabbat, April 11 & 12

The preferred method is to use egg matzah for Ha'motzi on Friday evening and Shabbat lunch. Die-hard challah fans can eat challah on the sidewalk in front of their homes on Friday night if they really want to, but why go through that hassle? There is no debate about Shabbat lunch – it must be egg matzah. By Shabbat lunch, one can no longer eat chametz. In fact, **by 11 a.m. on Shabbat morning, April 12**, one must recite the nullification of chametz formula (found at the beginning of most editions of the Haggadah). My recommendation is that you say this formula when you wake up before heading over to shul.

### **To Clean or Not-to-Clean? To Eat or Not-to-Eat?**

Wondering about a specific type of cheese or grain? Unsure how to clean your microwave? For every kashrut question under the sun, check out the Rabbinical Assembly's updated and complete [Passover Guide](#).

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### **Leading a seder? Key Tips**

The Haggadah is not meant to be a script that is followed word for word but rather an anthology of resources that allows each leader to create a ritual of learning, telling, questioning, and reciting tailored to the ages, stages, personalities, and dispositions around the table. Here are some links that might be helpful in creating a basic outline for the evening:

[Celebrating Passover With Children](#)

[A Seat For Those Who Can't Come Home](#)

[Kveller - How to Prepare a Seder \(hosting, food, and practical concerns\)](#)

[My Jewish Learning - How to Conduct a Seder \(order, ritual, figuring out the Jewish pieces\)](#)

[Congregation B'nai Jeshurun - For the Small or Solo Seder](#)

[Dayenu: Can One Sing Dayenu While There are Still Hostages in Gaza?](#)

[Passover Seder for Young Children](#)

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### **Enjoy Wine, Courtesy of CBI Men's Club**

For delicious wines at discounted prices, order your wine through our Men's Club.

[Click here](#) to submit your order by Wednesday, April 2.

**Important Dates** (\*consult the weekly email just before Passover for any changes to this schedule)

Saturday, April 12 9:30am	Shabbat HaGadol services  No Evening Minyan - 1st Seder	In person, Zoom, and Youtube Live Zoom Meeting ID: 861-1042-1793
Sunday, April 13 9:30am	Festival Services in the a.m.  *Second Seder. No evening minyan	<b>In person, Zoom, and Youtube Live</b> Meeting ID:861-1042-1793
Monday, April 14 9:30am —  8:00pm	Festival Services in the a.m. —  Ma'ariv on Zoom	<b>In person, Zoom, and Youtube Live</b> Meeting ID: 861-1042-1793 — Meeting ID: 837-8380-5144
Tuesday, April 15 7:30am & 8:00pm	Morning/Evening Minyan, Chol Ha'Moed	<b>On Zoom</b> Morning Meeting ID: 861-1042-1793 Evening Meeting ID: 837-8380-5144
Wednesday, April 16 7:30am & 8:00pm	Morning/Evening Minyan, Chol Ha'Moed	<b>On Zoom</b> Morning Meeting ID: 861-1042-1793 Evening Meeting ID: 837-8380-5144
Thursday, April 17 7:30am & 8:00pm	Morning/Evening Minyan, Chol Ha'Moed	<b>On Zoom</b> Morning Meeting ID: 861-1042-1793 Evening Meeting ID: 837-8380-5144
Friday, April 18 7:30am Minyan  —  6:00pm Ma'ariv	Morning Minyan on Zoom only  —  Ma'ariv on Zoom only	<b>On Zoom Only</b> Morning Meeting ID: 861-1042-1793 — Evening Meeting ID: 837-8380-5144
Saturday, April 19 9:30am  10:45am Shabbat K'tanim for toddlers  — 8:00pm Ma'ariv	Shabbat & Festival Morning Service  0-5 year olds and their families are invited to Shabbat K'tanim at 10:45am — Zoom only Ma'ariv at 8pm	<b>In person, Zoom, and Youtube Live</b> Meeting ID:861-1042-1793  — Evening Meeting ID: 837-8380-5144
Sunday, April 20 9:30am   **chametz can be eaten after 8:30pm	Festival Services with Yizkor  Evening Minyan at 8:00pm	<b>In person, on Zoom, and Youtube:</b> Morning Meeting ID: 861-1042-1793 Evening Meeting ID: 837-8380-5144