

Temple Beth Shalom

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21 Adar 5778 (March 8, 2018)

Temple Beth Shalom Congregant(s)
18 Sweet Passover Lane
Brigajewn, NJ 08203

Dear Treasured Congregant(s),

This year's exceptional relevance of the holiday of Passover cannot be lost on us. Each year, we re-live our ancestors' experience of the Exodus and we make it our own. We make it our own because it is our own experience. Each of us would not exist were it not for the courage of generations past who, when their very existence was threatened, sought new places nearby and far away to build a community where they could elevate themselves both with mundane tasks and holy ones.

Jews, in recent years and over the millennia, like all human beings, have wandered not for the sake of wandering but to find a place of their own; a place to be able to realize every day dreams as well as a safe place to liberate their souls. The wisdom of our tradition teaches us that each generation would be nothing without the experience of the first generation of Jews who left slavery behind in Egypt for its own freedom. Our ancestors' freedom is therefore our freedom. Our freedom is our descendants' freedom, and so on.

The *Tanakh* (*Torah-Nevi'im-Ketuvim* – the Hebrew Bible) and many other Jewish holy texts guide us toward our understanding of what it means to be a good Jew. So much of that definition has to do with the details of our relationship with each other. How we speak to each other, how we should care for each other, even how we should rebuke one another – all have specific guidelines according to Jewish law and tradition.

Connected to these laws and traditions are customs that organically grow out of them. If we are to appreciate our freedom, we must invite those “less free” to our seder table. Even more important, we must make certain that all Jews share in the joys of *Pesach*, particularly when they are too poor to do so. And there are more of these Jews than we realize. As we would not leave behind our Jewish kin to suffer in Egypt, so too, we do our best today to make it possible for each Jew to celebrate *Pesach* in his or her own home.

Each year, as a part of the ritual of preparing for *Pesach*, we clean our homes and we restrict our access to our *hametz* (either by throwing it away, giving it away, or storing it away). And whatever *hametz* we have left (or have stored away), we sell to a non-Jew so that we do not possess the very thing that our ancestors were denied. As we make our homes free from *hametz*, we free ourselves from that which enslaves us: the *hametz* in our lives.

Passover Yizkor 5778

Saturday, April 7, 10am

May this year's *Pesach* bring us a freedom greater than any year before as we fulfill our *Pesach* obligations both in our homes and in our lives.

Please take a moment to fill out the form below to sell your *hametz*. And, if you are able to fulfill the accompanying mitzvah of *Maot Hittin*, please include a donation to help your fellow Jews less fortunate than yourself observe this most important holiday. It is in keeping with our *Pesach* observance that we pledge to our fellow human beings, Jew and non-Jew alike, not to leave them behind.

The initial 75% of your donation will go to help poor Jews observe *Pesach* (the mitzvah of *Maot Hittin*) – the names of those charities to which I send the funds I collect from this letter, can be obtained by simply requesting it from me after *Pesach*. In recognition of our requirement to treat the stranger among us kindly for we, too, were strangers in the land of Egypt, the remaining 25% of your donation will be sent to the global Jewish charity, Mazon (www.mazon.org), which provides assistance to those in dire need.

May you have a sweet and happy *Pesach*,

Rabbi Gerald R. Fox

PS: If you are looking for some new ideas for this year's *Pesach*, please take a look at the Passover page of what is often referred to as one of the most influential websites for individualized Jewish learning (<http://www.myjewishlearning.com>) – there is something for everyone to make your Passover even more fun and meaningful this year (the videos are especially accessible and enlightening)! Here's the direct link:

(<http://www.myjewishlearning.com/category/celebrate/>)



Authorization for the Sale of *Hametz* – *Pesach* 5778

I/We, _____, empower and permit Rabbi Gerald R. Fox to act in my/our behalf, to sell all the *hametz* (leaven) and all products and items containing even the slightest amount of *hametz* possessed by me/us knowingly or unknowingly as defined by Torah and Rabbinic Law, and to lease all places wherein the above-mentioned products owned by me/us may be found, at:



and at these additional address(es): _____.

Signed this _____ day of March, 2018, by _____

NOTE: The above takes effect as of Friday, March 30, 2017 at 12pm Noon.

In addition to fulfilling the mitzvah of selling my/our *hametz*, I/we would like to fulfill the mitzvah of *Maot Hittin*. Enclosed is a donation of \$_____.

(NO DONATION IS REQUIRED TO SELL YOUR HAMETZ.)