# **The Hourglass**

BULLETIN OF THE HEBREW CONGREGATION OF ST THOMAS

MARCH 2021

# Passover: We come together to "Zoom" out of Egypt

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### **March-Early April Services and Programs**

Parashat Ki Tisa/Shabbat Parah Exodus 30:11 - 34:35 Ezekiel 36:16-38

 5 Erev Shabbat Service,
 Fri 7:00 PM AST (6:00 PM EST) https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3407744312 Meeting ID: 340 774 4312

6 Shabbat Morning Worship and Study, Sat 10:30 AM AST (9:30 AM EST) https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3407744312 Meeting ID: 340 774 4312

> Parashat Vayakhel-Pekudai/ Shabbat HaChodesh Exodus 35:1 - 40:38 Ezekiel 45:16 - 46:18

12 Erev Shabbat Service,

Fri 7:00 PM AST (6:00 PM EST) https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3407744312 Meeting ID: 340 774 4312

13 No Shabbat Morning Worship and StudySat

Parashat Vayikra Leviticus 1:1-5:26 Isaiah 43:21 - 44:23

- 19 Erev Shabbat Service, 7:00 PM AST/EST
- Fri <u>https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3407744312</u> Meeting ID: 340 774 4312
- 20 Shabbat Morning Worship and Study,
- Sat 10:00 AM AST/EST NOTE NEW TIME https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3407744312 Meeting ID: 340 774 4312

Parashat Tzav/Shabbat HaGadol Leviticus 6:1-8:36 Malachi 3:4-24

- 26 Erev Shabbat Service, 7:00 PM
- Fri https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3407744312 Meeting ID: 340 774 4312
- 27 No Shabbat Morning Worship and Study

Sat



### Pesach/Passover

27 First Night Seder: In Our Homes

Sat We come together for a Virtual Seder 7:00 PM; see details on page six <u>https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3407744312</u> Meeting ID: 340 774 4312

28 First Morning Passover
 Sun No Clergy Cookoff this year
 Pesach Festival Morning Svc, 10:00 AM

including Hallel (Psalms of Praise) https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3407744312 Meeting ID: 340 774 4312

### April

### Seventh and (Reform) Last Day of Pesach

2 Erev Shabbat and Concluding

Fri (Last Night) of Pesach Service, 7:00 PM https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3407744312 Meeting ID: 340 774 4312

- 3 Pesach Concluding Festival Morning and
- Sat Yizkor Memorial Service, 10:00 AM https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3407744312 Meeting ID: 340 774 4312

# Timeless and Timely: Making the Message Speak To Us Today

## Message from Rabbi Michael L. Feshbach



In Purim spiels throughout the land, those annual parody performances which retell the book of Esther in ways fresh and farcical alike, every year there are... complaints. Purim plays are all about poking fun, often at figures in the news or public life. Invariably, those we mock or cut down to size are politicians, of every ilk.

Almost inevitably, someone gets offended. "Can't you just stick to traditional themes?" Or, God forbid: "that's political."

But turning our real lives and those in it upside down, that is what Purim is all about. There are scholars who believe that the book of Esther itself was, basically, a burlesque of sorts. It is not that we are making a parody out of actual history. The original tale itself was one wack-a-doodle way to cut down those who loomed large and dark in our lives. The particular figures may have been... imagined. The danger of despots was very real... even if the characters in the story are composite and caricatures alike.

Purim was last month. But I want to suggest the possibility that even Pesach, even our way of retelling the story of Passover, that, too, was... well, it may also have been a form of political commentary on those in power, and those who would control our lives. It sounds, it seems, it smells like history. We are speaking about ancient Egypt, events which, as formative as they were, (perhaps) took place a long time ago. If records reflect anything accurate, we must have been in Egypt around 1400-1200 BCE. It was 3400 years ago.

But the Seder itself is a meal in the format of a *much later* culture. The events are from one time period. The way we commemorate them is from another. The evidence of that is clear. And the hints are there, for all to see.

First of all, we do not eat the lamb. (Well, some Sephardic communities do, but that is a discussion for another time.) In the days when the Temple stood, we would have done so. So a central element here has to be from sometime after 70 CE.

Secondly, we set aside a cup of wine for Elijah.

Now, each cup reflects a promised Divine action in Exodus 6. Each act, fulfilled, was paired with wine: "I will free you," "I will take you," "I will redeem you."

What, though, is the unfilled promise associated with the cup of Elijah? It is this: "I will lead you into the land."

contiunued on the next page

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But that happened! It was a promise fulfilled! After the Exodus, we did come in to the land. Yes, there was the traumatic destruction of the First Temple, and the Babylonian exile. But that lasted less than a century, and we were (some of us, sort of) back again.

Then, however, there was the destruction of the Second Temple. And the Bar Kochba revolt in the mid-second century. And from those events, well, it would be a long time before we would be "back." Almost 2000 years would pass before we came to "be in our land," with power and independence, once again.

So the cup of Elijah, paired with the promise of power and life in our land, but set aside as unfulfilled, as a hope *for the future*, that, too, had to be from sometime in the second century, at the earliest.

And then there is the tale at the heart of the Haggadah.

I have <u>written elsewhere</u>, with credit to my teacher, Rabbi Lawrence Hoffman, about the Secret Message of the Seder. I have even attempted to turn this into a <u>reading</u>, to be shared and discussed as part of the reading.

Rabbi Hoffman proposes that the familiar phrase "my father was a wandering Aramean," was *deliberately misread* over a thousand years after the exodus, by the early Rabbis, to revise the message, and apply it to a (to them) contemporary ruling power. The line was reread to say, or rather to hint at, a different message: "A Roman sought to destroy my father."

What if this is correct? What if, at the center of the Seder, we are meant to hear, and understand that "the Romans are out to get us"? The timing fits, the context fits, the message fits.

If that is true, then Passover, like Purim, in its evolution, and the Seder *in its most "traditional" form*, is all about speaking truth about the reality of our lives, even if that meant mentioning by name the oppressive forces... yes, the malevolent political forces... all around us. If that is true then, truly, the tradition *is* contemporary commentary. To speak truth to power, and to do so in the here and now, not just in endless and irrelevant repetitions of a dusty old tale.

No one is suggesting (well, few within the Jewish world, anyway) that we should turn houses of worship and religious services away from timeless themes, or into explicit campaigns for or against particular politicians. But our tradition is meant to speak, in forms oblique and explicit alike, about our real, and present lives. We are called and expected to respond to the people and policies that have an impact, on us and on others.

We strive for messages that matter, eternal and impactful lessons, and timeless themes. But we do so through the lens of the timely. We do that. And we always have.

May the ancient message of freedom from oppression and liberation and redemption live on in our lives, not merely as ancient abstractions or disconnected stories... but for true, and for real, and for now. A good Pesach, to one and all.

## Join Us Live on Zoom for Passover! To our Congregants and Chai Members

## Message from Marilyn Blackhall, President



Isn't it hard to believe that Passover is almost here, and we will not be having our in-person Seders with scores of people to share the holiday. My thoughts are with all who are accustomed to spending the first Seder, at our Synagogue as a congregation, and my heart also goes out to those who usually are with their nearest and dearest families for Passover, but will not be now. The year has truly taken a toll on all of us but, at the same time, we have also seen so many acts of generosity and kindness that it does have the positive effect of making us appreciate the absolute best in scores of people.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish each and every one of you a *Zeissen Pesach* (a Sweet Passover) and I hope that you will join us at our Zoom Community Seder. Details are included in this Bulletin. Knowing Rabbi Feshbach's talents for creating wonderful services, this should be incredibly special (though different from that with which we are accustomed.)

I just read something and at the risk of an element of plagiarism... I truly hope that we are all able to find "joys" in each of our "oys" this year. Many times the "joys" are disguised in the "oys" and we have to look long and deep to find them, but a silver lining is usually there somewhere. Finding the silver lining is a challenge which I hope that we all will strive to achieve, this Passover, in at least in a portion of our lives.

Both Synagogue members and Chai members, if you have expertise in Synagogue projects and want to join one of our committees, please contact me directly or via info@synagogue.vi.

Take care, stay safe and get vaccinated !!!

# Passover 2021

"with" The Hebrew Congregation of St Thomas

# **A Virtual Seder** for the First Night of Pesach

Saturday, March 27, 2021 beginning at 7:00 PM

Join us as we "Zoom" out of Egypt, broadcast live from the home of Rabbi Michael Feshbach and Julie Novick

### You can join in with us for **The First Night Seder: Part I (Before the Meal)** by going to Zoom: <u>https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3407744312</u> or use Meeting ID: 340 774 4312.

We will turn the stream "off" at *Shulchan Oreich* (the meal itself).

We will then reconvene, at 9:00 PM, using the same Zoom link, for

## First Night Seder: Part II (After the Meal),

which includes finding the *Afikomen*, opening the door for Elijah, and many of the traditional and beloved "fun" songs, from "Who Knows One" to "*Chad Gadya*."

### Download the Haggadah

we will use at our Seder, to follow along or for your own use: <u>A Family Haggadah for Passover</u>

# Why This Year Is *Still* Different From All Other Years?

## **A Passover Conversation and Check In**



# Tuesday, March 23 , 2021, 7:30 PM

COVID has become a slog, a marathon.. Passover is supposed to be about freedom, and liberation! Relief may be in sight, but we have not yet reached the Promised Land

Join Rabbi Michael Feshbach

for a virtual conversation about ongoing ways in which Pesach remains so very different during the pandemic, what plans we are making, and how we feel about what is going on around us.

> The conversation will include a "brush-up" on Passover traditions, and a "check-in" with participants on what we can all do for ourselves, and each other, during this still strange and surreal holiday season.

# Zoom: <u>https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3407744312</u>

Meeting ID: 340 774 4312



With questions or for more information, call 340-774-4312 or write to us at info@synagogue.vi



# *M'chirat Chametz*; "Selling" the Leaven in our Homes

In Jewish tradition, there are three basic commandments at the heart of the holiday of Pesach. We commanded to
1) Tell the Story (which we do at the Seder).
2) Eat Matza (technically we are only commanded to do this on the first night of the holiday) and, finally

**3) To Not Eat Chametz for Seven Days** (*Chametz* is any food product made from wheat, barley, rye, oats or spelt that has come into contact with water and been allowed to ferment and "rise.")

Reform rabbis rarely say "should" about ritual commandments, preferring to empower people to make their own choices. I actually believe, however, that avoiding *chametz* for the week of Passover

is a **unique and particularly important act in Jewish life.** Although I observe a moderate level of the general dietary laws, it does not offend me when someone eats non-kosher food in front of me. Bread during Passover is another story.

# Putting leaven aside for a week is, traditionally, a core marker of Jewish identity.

For centuries, Jews who observed little else still did this.

The custom is an amazing opportunity for Spring Cleaning - especially now, this year, when so many of us are spending so much time at home! And yet, while throwing out that which may be on the borderline of going bad is quite satisfying, and giving away some of our good food to those who need it is a worthy act, it is neither practical nor responsible to waste good food.

And so a custom has developed of simply setting aside some of the food which is not allowed during Passover, but not getting rid of it. Except, technically, we are not allowed to "own" chametz during the holiday.

Here, the genius of Jewish law comes up with a "legal fiction" the act of *symbolically* selling what *chametz* may remain in our homes. Through various mechanisms, the food "reverts" to our possession after the holiday.

For any of you who would like to participate in, or perhaps "try on" this tradition, there is a form on the next page by which I would become your "agent" in this act, taking care of the sale for you.

> However you observe the holiday, may it be fulfilling, happy -- and healthy and safe in this still very challenging year!



In one level of preparation, much of our *chametz* (food not acceptable during Pesach), or materials containing such unacceptable food – might be discarded or given away before the holiday begins. Any remaining *chametz* should be stored in such a way that we are sure not to use it during the holiday. Its actual ownership is transferred until the holiday ends.

Should you wish an "agent" in the fulfillment of this tradition, please complete the following form by Monday, March 22, 2021, and submit it, by email, directly to Rabbi Feshbach, at his synagogue email: <u>rabbifeshbach@synagogue.vi</u>. If you cannot cut and paste the language of the form, just submit the information requested below, adding a sentence that you agree to the language stated on the form.

## Form for the Selling of Chametz

I, the undersigned, fully empower and permit Rabbi Michael Feshbach to act, in my behalf, to sell all *chametz* possessed by me – knowingly or unknowingly – as defined by Torah and rabbinic law, and to lease all places wherein *chametz* owned by me and in my possession may be found.

This transaction will be in effect for the duration of Pesach, which this year begins with sundown on Saturday, March 27, 2021, and runs through the end of the day on Saturday, April 3, 2021 (if you observe seven days) or Sunday, April 4, 2021 (if you observe eight days).

Address at which	<i>Chametz</i> is located:	
City:	State/Territory:	Zip Code:
Email:	Phone:	
Signed:	Date: _	
	signature welcome)	

It is traditional to consider a gift of *tzedakah* (charity) to the synagogue or to a local organization helping feed the hungry in conjunction with the assignment of this agency.

# *Erev Yom HaShoah* Holocaust Martyr's and Heroes' Remembrance Day

Wednesday, April 7, 2021

A Service of Commemoration and Respect followed by Reflections on Antisemitism Holocaust Imagery and Racism in the United States Today

We begin our online gathering at 7:30 PM. Zoom: <u>https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3407744312</u> Meeting ID: 340 774 4312

Details to follow

# Yom HaAtzma'ut Israel Independence Day Wednesday, April 14, 2021

*Erev Yom HaAtzma'ut* Program begins at 7:30 PM Details to follow.

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3407744312 Meeting ID: 340 774 4312



Register at huc.edu/HUCConnect

SCRIPTIONS: JEWISH THOUGHTS AND RESPONSES TO COVID-19 Wednesday, February 10, 2021 at 1:30 pm ET

SPEAKING RELIGIOUS TRUTH TO POLITICAL POWER: VALUES & VOICES 2021 Thursday, February 11, 2021 at 6:30 pm ET

CONFRONTING HATE IN A BROKEN WORLD: LESSONS FROM THE CAREER OF MARC TANENBAUM Thursday, February 18, 2021 at 4:00 pm ET

LANGUAGE AND RACISM IN THE UNITED STATES TODAY Tuesday, March 2, 2021 at 5:30 pm ET

RACE AND IDENTITY TODAY Thursday, March 4, 2021 at 5:30 pm ET "LET MY PEOPLE GO:" PERSONAL REFLECTIONS ON FREEDOM AND INJUSTICE Tuesday, March 23, 2021 at 6:00 pm ET

CHILDREN AND THE RIGHT TO VOTE Thursday, March 25, 2021 at 1:00 pm ET

> JEWS OF COLOR Tuesday, May 11, 2021 at 6:00pm

INTERSECTIONAL JEWISH IDENTITIES Thursday, May 13, 2021 at 3:00pm ET

NOT THE SAME AS WHITE: LATINX STUDENTS TALK ABOUT JEWISH SCHOOLING Thursday, June 10, 2021 at 7:00pm

> JEWS, WHITENESS, POWER AND PRIVILEGE Tuesday, June 22, 2021 at 1:30 pm ET



In partnership with HUC-JIR

Judaism & Women's Studies

### GENDER AND LITURGY Tuesday, February 2, 2021 at 1:00 pm ET

Rabbi Dalia Marx, Ph.D., Rabbi Aaron D. Panken Professor of Liturgy, HUC/Jerusalem Shani Ben-Or, Cantorial Student, HUC Debbie Friedman School of Sacred Music

### INFERTILITY IN THE ANCIENT WORLD Tuesday, March 9, 2021 at 6:00 pm ET

Kristine Henriksen Garroway, Ph.D., Visiting Assistant Professor of Hebrew Bible, HUC/Los Angeles IF FLAME FALLS ON CEDARS, WOMEN LEADERS WILL PUT OUT THE FIRE: THE BIBLICAL DEBORAH REIMAGINED Thursday, April 22, 2021 at 1:00 pm ET

Wendy Zierler, Ph.D., Sigmund Falk Professor of Feminist Studies and Modern Jewish Literature, HUC/New York

Register at huc.edu/HUCConnect







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# **Birthdays and Anniversaries**

### **March Birthdays**

March 8
March 8
March 9
March 18
March 25
March 26
March 26
March 28

### **March Anniversaries**

Abe and Wendy Tarapani March 23



# רפואה שלימה

A complete recovery to:



**Robin Adler** Laurie Allen **Charles Arthur** Pauline Balsam **Amiel Cohen** Kayla Copeland **Quinn Copps** Yigal Ehrlich Jared Falek Gina Talia Farahnick Marci Finkelstein Paula Finkelstein **Wycliffe Francis** Julie Friedman Marilyn Grishman Violet Adelaide Johnson Rabbi Bruce Kahn Toby Kahn Natalie Kapstein Jay Kranitz Helen Leneman Sheri Levson Linda Lewensohn **Steven Markowitz** 

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Please be in touch with us to let us know of any updates. Hopefully we will hear from you with good news, of recovery and a return to health for you or your loved ones. You can write us at info@synagogue.vi.

### We remember former members and those who are dear to our members.

### Week of March 1-4

Samuel Aufseher, Ben E. Bayne, Benjamin Goldberger, Sol Goldman, Erno Havas Rose Krasnick, Elizabeth Victoria Levin, Abraham A. Matt, William Charles Moch Raymond Newman III, Charlotte Paiewonsky, Peggy Polesky Rabbi Theodore Tsuruoka, Louis Weinberg, Bessie Zahler

### Week of March 5-11

Max Breslow, Capt. Costas H. Coulianos, Zira Golde Dreis, Harriet Fleishman George Glassman, Ruth Horwitz, Mabel Alfreda Johnson, Bernard Kaufman Charlotte Kaufman, Lucie J. Levin, Albert A. Lustig, Zorah Paiewonsky Beatrice F. Rudnick, Lillian M. Stern, Betty Tenenbaum

#### Week of March 12-18

Regina Abrams, Moris Berner, Leonard Buder, Laura Fenster Dr. Solomon Jollek, Dr. Herman Kaplan, Lena Kaplun, Edwin Lick Marie Dorethea Roberts, Nakiya Marie Roberts, Leah Schouchana Alan B. Schwartz, Harry Schwartz, Kate M. Shpetner Lewis Stern, Roselle Jacobs Teperman

### Week of March 19-31

Michael E. Beck, Louis S. Borow, M.D., Margaret Cohen, Gladys Steinhoff Falek Earl W. Fleeger, Sam Gruber, Moshe Horwitz, Abraham Kezner, Sidney Krasnick Michael G. Mallin, Lena B. Matt, Eric Munoz, Hanus Nettl, Sylvia Oberweger Norman Orenstein, Annette Perlberg, Julius Roberts, Joel Michael Schafer



### We remember our Chai Members and those who are dear to our Chai Members

#### Week of March 1-4

Rudy Abraham, Lillian Blacker, Elliot Brahms, Shirley Bressler, Ruth Fuller, Diana Gardner, Dora Gerstein Morris Green, Walter Hoexter, Norman Howard, Robert Jaffe, Louisa Levin, Steven Levine, Harold Levy Diane Lichterman, Muriel Lubin, Michael Lustig, Edna Paget, Abraham Perlman, Sam Post, Nathan Rotfort Audrey Rubner, Rose Rudberg, Ellen Schindler, Tikva Sheena, Ida Silverman, Chaim Snitman William Strauss II, Stanley Tuerk, Sara Weintraub, Clara Weisberg, Doris Weiss, Belle Wolpert Tessie Zimmerman, Bruce Zoeller

#### Week of March 5-11

Norman Alter, Bette Austrian, Murray Beck, Harry Black, Rise Bressler, Cheryl Britt, Reba Faigeles Helen Fierberg, Gladys Fisher, Hyman Fox, Rosa Frank, Ruth Freedman, Alex Glass, Manny Goldblatt Goldie Goldstein, Janet Goodman, Morris Green, Julius Greenberg, Beatrice Greenstone Murray Greenstone, Harvey Harshman, Jack Hindin, Michael Hoffman, David Jones, Samuel Keene Max Klein, Jesse Kline, Ida Kronheim, Anne Lefkoff, Felicia Levitt, Benjamin Lichtman, Sarah Lichtman Donald Lowtwait, Steve Lutkoff, Bernard Maletzky, Sophie Markowitz, Saul Mayerson, Renee Messing Bernard Miller, Charlotte Mills, Frank Niedergang, David Perkin, Morris Plevner, Edward Portnoy William Ragless, Lynn Rosemore, Seymour Rosen, Sandra Rotenberg, Anne Rotenberg, Marshall Safron Henry Saltiel, Pauline Selzer, Helen Shapiro, Rosalynn Sherman, Bennie Shulman, Helen Shulman Joel Slavin, Joseph Solomon, Libby Sonkin, Roberta Tighe, Charles Toffel, Harold Walerstein Emanuel Weinberger, Milly Weitzenkorn, Paula Yavitz, Abraham Yermanok

#### Week of March 12-18

Iva Arnold, Peter Azer, Clara Blumenfield, Philip Bodinger, Marilyn Bressler, Esther Bromberg, Irene Cohan Harry Daneiko, Sydelle Darlow, Seymour Dolby, Percy Dolgin, Lillian Epstein, Selma Fein, Fred Feldman Sumner Flash, Harry Fonoroff, Ruth Furrow, Beatrice Glaser, Hugo Goldberger, Joan Goldenberg Jack Goldner, Linda Harshman, Abraham Hendler, Morris Henechowicz, Rose Jaffe, George Janov Bertha Katz, Max Klein,Beatrice Leavitt, Paul Leston, Evelyn Levin, Gussie R. Lewin, Herman Lowitz Sidney Manton, John Mitchell, Miriam Novick, Roman Ostashinski, Joseph Perlov, Michele Plesser, Phyllis Powell Susan Prince, Frances Randall, Samuel Rider, Steven Robbins, Sally Rosenberg, Jane Rothbart Beatrice Rubinstein, Seymour Saltzman, Nathan Schatz, Morris Scher, Perry Schwartz Benjamin Shwadran, Rose Solomon, Tillie Steinberg, Ruth Zagon

#### Week of March 19-25

Stella Berman, Naomi Berman, Susan Black, Lois Brechner, Seymour Bromberg, Marion Carch Andre Cohen, Elaine Firstenberg, Morris Fishman, Esther Goldblatt, Yehuda Gozluklu, Channa Guttenberg, Joseph Haiman, Hazel Kohn, Sadie Levin, Rose Like, Irene Meister, David Miller Sonia Miller, Rae Muchnick, Marvin Nadel, Harold Novick, Blanche Paverman, Beryl Pell, Tully Plesser Dr. Seymour Pollock, Rae Portnoy, Gail Rider, Jerome Rose, Solomon Rosenzweig, Ethel Rudman Matilda Rudo, Harry Schwartz, Jeanette Solomon, Melvin Stein, Jeffrey Walerstein, Philip Zell Annette Zimmerman, Leo Zornow

#### Week of March 26-31

Harvey Ammerman, Alfred Blatnikoff, Tillie Block, Zelda Brandt, Sally Carr, Bertha Cohen, Sam Cohen Ph.D., Faith Diskin, Lawrence Epstein, Mark Epstein, Robert Fein, Gene Ferstenberg, Lawrence Fine Dora Friedel, Ephraim Friedman, Milton Gimbel, Freda Goldman, Joseph Goldman, Norman Goldstein David Harris, Joseph Harris, Sylvia Hartman, Hyman Hochberg, Leonard Kaplan, Hyman Kurzman Arthur Lancaster, Richard Levitt, Ellis Liebman, Moses Locker, Bertha Lowe, Benjamin Mogul Melissa Neier, Maxwell Peel, Goldie Pollock, Mildred Relkin, Beth Rosenblum, Louis Rudman Shelly Sands, Kitty Schildkraut, Ely Schoendorf, Alice Shein, Bernice Sherman, Hy Sherman, Neil Trager Sydelle Wax, Morris Wilk, Marilyn Wolfson

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Shalom and welcome to a place where history and destiny meet, where looking up, and looking down, and looking around all tell a tale unlike almost any other.

> We have come together here, as a community and as a congregation, in spirituality and study and service, one generation to the next, since 1796 — and in our current building since 1833.

In coming together now, you step into that tradition, and help write the next chapter in our ongoing story.

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### The Hebrew Congregation of St. Thomas

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