

## This Week's Shabbat Message from Rabbi Rheins

### Finding A Place At the Table

This Shabbat is called *Shabbat HaChodesh* and it coincides with the beginning of the new month of Nisan. The significance of this special Shabbat is that it signals to us that Passover is only two weeks away. Passover begins on the evening of the 14th of Nisan (Friday, April 19). That's right, it's only two weeks away!

Jews know almost instinctively that of all the Jewish observances, we simply cannot miss the High Holy Days in the fall and Passover in the spring. Of course, it would be an incredible blessing to see massive crowds for every Shabbat service and the other Festivals, but that is a work in progress. But our Passover is different. Indeed, it's so popular, many of us even have two *seders*, one on each of the first two nights of the Festival, like a *Pesach* double-header. And its popularity is not just because of the food, though the food is fabulous. Rather, in addition to the richness of the Passover rituals (and the food) there is a simple, essential and profoundly personal experience. Namely, we come together to retell the story of our ancestors and to relate their story to our on-going journey. Each of us is invited to share thoughts and memories to help the *Haggadah* come alive. Each of us is encouraged to look so deeply into our ancestral story that we can feel as if we personally took part in that miraculous exodus, that we too felt the harshness of slavery and exhilaration of freedom. And as we listen to one another, we become more aware of each person's challenges, their set-backs, their achievements, and their marshalling of willful determination to live life with dignity, meaning and purpose. We grow in appreciation for the diversity of our family, friends and community. That is why it is so important for us to make sure that everyone has a Passover *seder* to attend.

Consider the words of the special reading that we have for *Shabbat HaChodesh*:

א וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וְאַל־אֱהָרֹן בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לֵאמֹר : ב הַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה לָכֶם  
רִאשׁוֹן חֳדָשִׁים רִאשׁוֹן הוּא לָכֶם לְחֹדְשֵׁי הַשָּׁנָה : ג דַּבְּרוּ אֶל־כָּל־עַדְתּוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל  
לֵאמֹר בְּעֵשֶׂר לַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה וַיִּקְחוּ לָהֶם אִישׁ שָׁה לְבֵית־אָבִתוֹ שָׁה לְבַיִת : ד וְאִם־  
יִמְעַט הַבַּיִת מֵהַיּוֹת מִשָּׁה וְלָקַח הוּא וּשְׁכֵנּוֹ הִקְרִיב אֶל־בֵּיתוֹ בְּמִכְסֵת נִפְשֹׁת  
אִישׁ לִפְנֵי אֲכָלוֹ תִּכְסּוּ עַל־הַשָּׁה :

**Exodus 12:1** Adonai said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt: <sup>2</sup> This month shall mark for you the beginning of the months; it shall be the first of the months of the year for you. <sup>3</sup> Speak to the whole community of Israel and say that on the tenth of this month each of them shall take a lamb to a family, a lamb to a household. <sup>4</sup> But if the household is too small for a lamb, let him share one with a neighbor who dwells nearby, in proportion to the number of persons: you shall contribute for the lamb according to what each household will eat.

Note that the Torah instructs us to make provisions for small families and individuals. At Temple Sinai we have done just that. Each year we host a Second night Passover *seder* at Temple Sinai. This year it will be on Saturday evening, April 20. The sign-up can be found in the Snippets and on our website. Our Sinai *seder* is heavily subsidized to make it more affordable. In addition, no one is ever turned away because they cannot afford it. Families and individuals simply let me know and all the rest is handled confidentially. It is not too late. If you know of any Jewish family who would like to be a part of our second night *seder*, please encourage them to sign-up.

With Passover only two weeks away, now is the time to find your place at a *seder*!

*Shabbat Shalom!*

Rick

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