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## *President's Message*

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I hope this message finds everyone safe and feeling well. We live in unprecedented times, but we will get through this together as a close-knit community. For example, this year, Purim at Temple B'nai Israel was very special. Rabbi Paul Tuchman and Pastor Jessica McClure Archer from Sampson Mills Church taught the story of Esther in two sessions to over 25 members of both of our congregations along with a few from other area churches. Then on the morning of March 4, several of our women taught these women how to make Hamentashen. On a Sunday evening in March, Alan Iszauk, along with his wife Debbie prepared a delicious pasta dinner which celebrated the culmination of the Stock Game. Congratulations to the winners and a thank you to all who purchased certificates. We owe much gratitude to Alan and Debbie who put so much time and effort into this major fundraiser. A big crowd, mostly in costume, from TBI and several local churches participated in the reading of the Megillah and enjoyed delicious Hamentashen.

As I look out of my window watching the snow and freezing rain, it is difficult to believe that we will soon be celebrating Passover. I began writing this right before the global emergency of the coronavirus descended on us. In spite of regional, national and global challenges, people around the world will continue to celebrate the holiday of Pesach with their family traditions and local customs. The afikoman has been said to be a valuable protection from a host of ills and was frequently used in bargaining. Gold and silver that the Egyptians showered on the Israelites to hasten their exodus is commemorated by the Jews of Hungary when they display these valuables on the holiday table for decoration. Old stories such as smacking each other with onions and using real brick in haroset are abundant. A rich heritage is available to read to learn how our ancestors and fellow Jews celebrate this meaningful holiday.

One thing for certain, food appears to be woven in the treasured history of Passover. There are different customs all over the world as to what is served on this holiday. Clothes are an important component as well since this was customarily the time to get new apparel. Passover is generally considered an "at home" holiday and is one of the most widely celebrated of the Jewish holidays. It is vitally important to make your own traditions. Create memories for your family so that they will carry on l'dor v'dor, from generation to generation. This is the only way that future generations will continue to observe the significant journey from slavery to freedom as well as the birth and rebirth of spring.

This year we could create new traditions by having our Seders on-line using modern technology. It is true that we are all coping with the many challenges that the unknown has brought us. Remember, the word Seder means order. I think that the words of the Haggadah will be more meaningful as we understand a little better what it meant for the Jews to leave Egypt and overcome their difficult times.

It is important for us to reach out to those who are isolated right now. Do your part by calling those you haven't spoken with in a while. Kindness and friendship should be a part of our social distancing.

The Jews of Egypt did not know what was in store for them. They had faith. G-d took them out of Egypt toward a better life. We will come out of this "plague" and together celebrate a hopeful future.

**Wishing you Chag Pesach Sameach,**

**Janice**