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## Seder Dessert brings Temple Women Together

Cathy Dausman



Photo Cathy Dausman

Nearly one hundred Temple Isaiah women from teens to retirees gathered the evening of April 4th in Lafayette for an early Seder celebration. Seder is a Jewish ritual feast marking the beginning of Passover. Temple Isaiah is a Reform Synagogue serving Contra Costa County. Instead of a full meal, the women enjoyed a "Dessert Seder," something that was developed five or six years ago. Deb Phillips, Communications Director, explains:

"Our dessert Seder is organized by Temple Isaiah's women's auxiliary group as a kind of pre-Passover celebration. Because most members celebrate Passover in their homes with their families and small groups of friends this is an opportunity for the women of Temple Isaiah to celebrate in a larger group with people who might not be at the Seders they attend.

Rabbis Nicki Greninger and Judy Shanks led the scripted celebration. Live music accompanied singing, and there was dancing in the aisles to Miriam's Song (Debbie Friedman).

Passover begins at sundown April 18 this year.

"A traditional Seder is both a service and a dinner. There is a book used called a Haggadah that guides participants through the service. There are certain readings and prayers that are said and specific ceremonial foods that are eaten," Phillips says. Seder rituals are much the same throughout the world.

Just as sorrows and blessings have marked the Jewish faith over centuries, dessert came only after breaking matza, drinking wine, eating bitter herbs, and listing the ten plagues. The women concluded with a prayer "that next year we will celebrate in a world at peace."

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