

It can be found on our website.

## FROM THE RABBI

*Esther Hugenholtz*

One of the weirder features of being a small town rabbi is having synagogue stuff shipped to your house in case the synagogue is closed on the weekends. As of today, several large and heavy boxes are cluttering my vestibule holding matzah and other supplies for the Second Seder. It feels like the start of a sweet Chassidic story set in the shtetl, but Amazon Prime'd in that very 21st century way.

Pesach continues to be one of the most popular and enduring celebrations for American Jews. About 70% of US Jews will either celebrate, host or be invited to a Seder, and a surprising number of non-Jews too who enhance our shared joy at our holiday tables. While some of the more arduous preparations may not take people's fancy, it is otherwise easy to understand why Pesach is so well-loved: food, family, friendship and the sharing of a

This year, perhaps, it is the story of both. As we find our new footing with COVID, we will gather at our tables with gratitude and humility for what we have lived through these last three years. (Never do I want to go back to the Zoom-Seders of 2020!) At the same time, ever-increasing authoritarianism around the globe and in this country, makes the Passover message all the more relevant and perhaps prophetic. The Seder calls us to reckon with the Pharaohs in our lives; both the inner Pharaohs of our own susceptibility to prejudice and will to power as well as the external Pharaohs we encounter in the power structures of our society. Neither holy task is mutually exclusive: we both need to speak truth to power in the public square and wrestle with our own 'yetzer hara' ('evil inclination', though better translated as 'inclination