

March-April 2026
Adar /Nisan/Iyar 5786

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THE SCHRIER

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER OF WEST PASCO
Home of Congregation Beth Tefillah

Passover

Please join us for our annual Seder on
Thursday, April 2, 2026 at 3:00 pm.

The cost for this traditional and delicious* Seder is:

Members	\$36.00
Children of members (3-13)	\$18.00
Non-members	\$50.00
Children of non-members (3-13)	\$25.00

There will be no at-the-door tickets. Everyone must have an RSVP so that we know how much food to purchase and prepare.

The deadline for reservations is
Thursday, March 19, 2026.

* New and improved menu!
Your choice of brisket or salmon!

Thanks to a grant from the Jewish Federation of Florida's Gulf Coast there is no increase in the cost of this Seder (even though costs have risen) and we have updated the menu!

MARCH-APRIL HIGHLIGHTS

- * Monday 3/2 6:00 pm
Ice Cream Social and
7:00 pm Megillah
- * Sunday 3/8 2:00 pm
Rutgers lecture
- * Monday 3/9 JCC Board
Mtg. 7 pm
- * Thursday 4/2 3:00 pm
2nd Seder
- * Thursday 4/9 Yizkor
Services 9:30 am
- * Monday 4/13 JCC
Board Mtg. 7 pm
- * Tuesday 4/14 Yom
Ha'Shoah
- * Tuesday 4/21 Yom
Hazikkaron
- * Wednesday 4/22 Yom
HaAtzmaut

Shabbat Services
Conducted by Ron Becker and Perry Werbel

EVERY FRIDAY EVENING AT 7:00 PM
EVERY SATURDAY MORNING AT 9:30 AM

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE-by Eileen Hochstadt

Courtesy of Aish.com and the author, Rabbi Mordechai Becher from Yeshiva University

Being Jewish Without All the Answers

Judaism doesn't demand certainty, only commitment to the journey.

There is a Hebrew word, *Emunah*, commonly translated as faith or belief. Yet the word carries another equally powerful meaning: loyalty. Judaism does not demand belief alone, nor loyalty alone, but a fusion of both. Thus, Abraham is described as a man of faith, while Moses is praised as G-d's most loyal servant.

This raises a profound question: can belief and loyalty endure in the presence of doubt, protest, and even complaint against G-d? Faith does not preclude questions. From the very beginning of his relationship with G-d, Abraham exemplifies this tension. One of his first recorded encounters occurs when G-d informs him of the impending destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham does not respond with silent submission; he argues. He challenges the Judge of all the earth, asking how justice could allow the innocent to perish alongside the guilty. Later, when promised the land of Israel, Abraham again questions G-d: "How shall I know that I will inherit it?"

Faith does not preclude questions. Arguing with G-d Moses, too, repeatedly challenges G-d. When first commanded to lead the Israelites out of Egypt, he resists, insisting that he is not a man of words and that his brother Aaron would be a better leader.

After Moses' initial confrontation with Pharaoh only worsens the Israelites' suffering, he turns to G-d in anguish: "Why did You send me? From the moment I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, things have only become worse." Later, following the sin of the Golden Calf, when G-d proposes destroying the people and beginning anew with Moses, Moses refuses. He defends Israel with the ultimate act of loyalty: "Erase me from Your book if You will not forgive them."

Abraham, Moses, and David are described as faithful, loyal, and righteous, yet they all questioned G-d and cried out in protest. King David, perhaps the most emotionally transparent of all biblical figures, gives voice to faith in turmoil through the Book of Psalms. These prayers-recited for millennia by Jews and non-Jews alike-are filled not only with praise, but with anguish, confusion, and protest:

"My G-d, my G-d, why have You forsaken me?"

"Why, O Lord, do You stand far away?"

"How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?"

"Awake! Why are you sleeping, O Lord? Why do you hide your face?"

Continued on page 7

Please visit the JCC's web page at:

jccwestpasco.com

(our easy-to-remember site!)

Find us on Facebook, too
(and don't forget to 'like us').

Visit Our
Website

A Message From Ron Becker

Dear friends, as winter rapidly gives way to spring, we celebrate numerous joyful events. The changing season reminds us of how closely we live by our *Luach*, the religious calendar that advises us of all that makes each day special with instructions on any specific ritual (and if appropriate, celebratory) event. As I write this, we are entering the month of Adar, a month in which we are commanded to "increase our joy". And why is this? Not only are we experiences the new spring season, but we are anticipating the holiday of Purim and the festival of Pesach. We anticipate the holidays through our physical and spiritual preparations throughout the coming weeks.

Spiritually, we read through the Book of Exodus (Shemot) each week, and we observe several special Shabbatot. We have already experienced Shabbat Shekalim (which occurs just before or on the first day of the month of Adar) and now look forward to three more. The first will be Shabbat Zachor, the Sabbath of Remembrance which is always observed on the Shabbat before Purim. On that day, we read about the evils of Amalek and all who followed. We are taught not to hate people who behave badly, but to remember, hate, and eradicate evil. On this Shabbat which takes place on February 27/28, we particularly recall the evil Haman who sought to destroy the Hebrew people of Shushan. Then our Luach reminds us that on Monday, March 2nd, we observe a fast day to recall that Queen Esther fasted on this day before summoning up the courage to face the King and expose Haman's evil plot. Then that very evening, we celebrate Purim with parties, costumes, noisemakers, gifts of charity, Mishloach Manot (gifts of food and drink to friends and family), and appropriate foods (in our community celebration, that means lots of Hamantaschen, ice cream, and perhaps some leftover wine from our New Year's Eve party).

And that brings us to the next Special Shabbat, Shabbat Parah, which occurs on March 6/7 and marks the beginning of preparations for Pesach. It derives its name from the Temple practice of the sacrifice of the Parah Adumah (red heifer) in preparation for the Passover observance.

And continuing to turn the pages of our Luach, we encounter Shabbat HaChodesh taking place on March 13/14 and always occurs either just before or on the first day of the month of Nisan. The special Maftir (2nd scroll) reading (Exodus 12:1-20) describes the night of the very first Pesach including the eating of unleavened bread, bitter herbs, the Pascal Lamb and other reminders of both the story of and various laws of the festival that we are commanded to observe.

Continued on page 8

DATES TO REMEMBER

3/1 Bingo 1:30 pm
 3/2 Bingo 11 am
 Ice Cream Social 6:00 pm
 Reading of the Megillah
 7:00 pm
 3/3 Purim
 3/6 Religious Services 7:00 pm
 3/7 Religious Services 9:30 am
 Bingo 3 pm
 3/8 Daylight Saving Time begins
 3/8 Bingo 1:30 pm
 3/8 Rutgers Lecture 2:00 pm
 3/9 Bingo 11 am
 3/9 JCC Board Meeting 7 pm
 3/13 Religious Services 7:00 pm
 3/14 Religious Services 9:30 am
 Bingo 3 pm
 3/15 Bingo 1:30 pm
 3/16 Bingo 11 am
 3/20 Religious Services 7:00 pm
 3/21 Religious Services 9:30 am
 Bingo 3 pm
 3/22 Craft Fair 9 am-3 pm
 3/22 Bingo 1:30 pm
 3/23 Bingo 11 am
 3/27 Religious Services 7:00 pm
 3/28 Religious Services 9:30 am
 Bingo 3 pm
 3/29 Bingo 1:30 pm
 3/30 Bingo 11 am

3/31 Search for chometz (night)
 4/1 Erev Pesach/1st Seder
 4/2 Religious Services 9:30 am
 4/2 JCC Seder 3:00 pm
 4/3 Religious Services 7:00 pm
 4/4 Religious Services 9:30 am
 Bingo 3 pm
 4/5 Bingo 1:30 pm
 4/6 Bingo 11 am
 4/9 Religious Services/Yizkor
 9:30 am
 4/10 Religious Services 7:00 pm
 4/11 Religious Services 9:30 am
 Bingo 3 pm
 4/12 Bingo 1:30 pm
 4/13 Bingo 11 am
 4/13 JCC Board Meeting 7 pm
 4/14 Yom HaShoah
 4/17 Religious Services 7:00 pm
 4/18 Religious Services 9:30 am
 Bingo 3 pm
 4/19 Bingo 1:30 pm
 4/20 Bingo 11 am
 4/21 Yom HaZikaron
 4/22 Yom HaAtzmaut
 4/24 Religious Services 7:00 pm
 4/25 Religious Services 9:30 am
 Bingo 3 pm
 4/26 Bingo 1:30 pm
 4/27 Bingo 11 am

Candle Lighting Times



March 6	6:16 pm
March 13	7:20 pm
March 20	7:24 pm
March 27	7:28 pm
April 3	7:32 pm
April 10	7:36 pm
April 17	7:40 pm
April 24	7:44 pm

RINGING IN 2026



Many people worked many hours to make sure that 2026 came in with a bang! They deserve our heartfelt thanks.

“Special thanks to Jerry Landsburg, Debbi Robinson, Danielle Merkle, Natalie Cohen. They were the committee members who busted hump to make this happen. Thanks to Eileen for all the support, running, sanity and helping me get all the last minute goodies together. Thanks to Jeff Hochstadt for the Silent Auction plaques and assistance with the raffles. And thanks to Laura Bernas for some much needed assistance in tear down! And thanks to Megan and Freedom for all the help the night of the party and wonderful desserts and hors d'oeuvres that everyone loved! Thanks to Adam Hochstadt for help covering the walls and climbing up and down a ladder with a migraine, making the music work and fixing the fuses when I blew them!”

Wendy Seldin

Photos by Danielle Merkle

GAME NIGHT!

We're bringing back GAME NIGHT at the JCC.

On the second Saturday night of the month, starting March 14 from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm, come to the JCC and meet your friends for a card game, board game, mahjong, etc. There is a nominal cost of \$5.00 to cover soda (pop for those in the Midwest) and snacks. See you on March 14th!

FLEA MARKET AND CRAFT FAIR

March 22, 2026 9:00 am to 3:00 pm

Vendors are invited to sell their crafts and treasures!

Contact Debbi
to reserve your space.
Cost is only \$20.00 per vendor which
includes a 10 X 10 booth,
free lunch and one raffle ticket.

Don't have anything to sell?
Then come on by and browse all the booths.
Get a jump on next holiday's shopping!



Scenes from a Shabbat Kiddush Luncheon

Photos by Barbara D. Johnson



PURIM

On Monday evening, March 2nd we will have an ice cream social at 6:00 pm and then step inside the sanctuary for the reading of the Megillah at 7:00 pm.

All are welcome.
Costumes are also welcome.



FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE

The Fundraising Committee of the JCC is working tirelessly to generate events for our members' enjoyment and generate income to help offset the large bills that we receive. We hope you avail yourselves of these events and support the local businesses that help pay for these events.

Please patronize these businesses that help support our JCC.



SAVE THE DATE

The Jewish Federation of Florida's Gulf Coast is holding their Annual Women of Distinction program.

This event will take place on Sunday, May 3, 2026.

Our Jewish Community Center/ Congregation Beth Tefillah recipient of this award is:

Ana Calderon

More information to follow.

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY LECTURE

On Sunday, March 8, 2026 Nancy Sinkoff, Professor of Jewish Studies and Academic Director of the Allen and Joan Bildner Center for the Study of Jewish Life at Rutgers University will host a lecture on the topic "Did American Jews Ever Agree About Israel?"

This informative program will begin at 2:00 pm and is free of charge, but reservations are necessary.

Yom HaShoah

Please join us on Tuesday, April 14 where we will observe Yom HaShoah at the New Port Richey City Hall 5919 Main Street New Port Richey, FL 34652 at 6:00 pm with the annual proclamation and presentations by the Mayor and City Council.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE continued from page 2

Here we find three of Judaism's greatest figures-Abraham, Moses, and David-described as faithful, loyal, and righteous, all of whom argued with G-d, questioned G-d, and cried out in protest. Their lives teach that faith and doubt are not opposites. Loyalty can coexist with struggle.

Emunah Is a Path, not a Position

Emunah is not a static or binary state. It is not something one either possesses or lacks. It is a path. This truth was powerfully embodied by Agam Berger, a 20-year-old Israeli soldier kidnapped by Hamas on October 7, 2023, and held in captivity for 482 days. During her imprisonment, she discovered a Jewish prayer book among the remnants of an abandoned Israeli military outpost. That moment became a turning point. Under brutal conditions, she chose to observe Shabbat, fast on Yom Kippur, light a Hanukkah candle, and mark Passover with corn flour, carefully avoiding leavened bread. After her release, she declared, "I was kidnapped because I'm Jewish. You can't take away my Judaism." On the helicopter returning her to Israel, she held a sign reading: "I chose the path of faith"-a verse from Psalm 119.13

Agam Berger returning to Israel from Gaza, with her sign: I chose the path of faith. Faith, *emunah*, is described here not as certainty, but as a choice-one step after another. Like any journey, it includes obstacles, detours, and moments of exhaustion. A loyal soldier may harbor doubts yet remains committed to the mission. A loving relationship may experience anger and uncertainty yet endures because it has been chosen.

Loyalty and Faith

There is a haunting story-its precise details uncertain yet echoed in many verified accounts-of three rabbis imprisoned in a Nazi concentration camp who convened a Beit din, a Jewish court, to put G-d on trial for allowing the Holocaust. After deliberation, they found G-d "guilty." Moments later, as the sun began to set, one rabbi stood and announced: "Mincha!" It was time for the afternoon prayer. And they prayed.

Rabbi Benjamin Blech, in his book Dear G-d, Why? recounts a reflection by Elie Wiesel after liberation from a concentration camp. Some survivors sought food, others revenge. A third group gathered to recite Kaddish, the mourner's prayer. Wiesel said he understood them-though he felt, at that moment, that G-d did not deserve it. Yet Wiesel remained a loyal Jew, observing Shabbat and putting on tefillin throughout his life.

The patriarch, Jacob, is described by the Torah as "settling down, in the place where his fathers were temporary dwellers." Rabbi Mordechai Yosef Leiner, known as the *Ishbitzer*, writes that G-d made it clear to Jacob that he cannot and should not expect tranquility and ease in this world. Those qualities are for the future, Messianic times. While the person dwells in this world, G-d expects progress and growth. Because of that, G-d also expects, mistakes, doubts, and a lack of clarity. But He also expects loyalty and faith.

These stories teach a radical and enduring truth: spiritual seriousness does not require spiritual certainty. One can question G-d and still walk with Him. One can protest and still pray. Faith is not the absence of doubt-it is the decision to remain loyal despite it.

Respectfully Submitted

Your faithful President, Eileen M Hochstadt

A Message From Ron Becker continued from page 3

Thus, the Luach connects us to our ancient past and at the same time, prods us to intensify our physical (house cleaning, purchasing Kosher for Passover food, etc.) and spiritual preparations for Pesach, now only a couple weeks away.

And we complete the special Shabbat cycle with Shabbat Hagadol which takes place on March 27-28. This observance marks the Shabbat immediately preceding Passover and is named for the Haftorah (lessons of the Prophets) that we chant on that day. We read from the Prophet Malachi (3:4-24) of the coming of the Prophet of Eliyahu (Elijah) which foreshadows the role that Elijah plays at our Pesach seder as a harbinger of coming of the messianic age.

And with all of this preparation behind us, we are finally ready to celebrate Passover in body and in spirit! The Luach helps us attain the holistic integration of our physical, spiritual, and emotional selves to attain a higher purpose in life. We search for and dispose of hametz on erev Pesach, the evening of March 31st then on the following morning we observe another fast day, Ta'anit Bekhorim (the fast of the firstborn) to help us appreciate the rescue of the Israelite firstborn from the 10th plague while morning the Egyptian firstborn who perished. There is a custom to avert this fast through a Siyyium (scripture study session of a tractate of Rabbinic scholarship).

Then as we reach the festival itself, the Luach instructs us on all aspects of observation of the holiday including candle lighting instructions, the details of our special prayers and Torah and Haftorah readings, and instructions for conducting the Pesach seders of which our community seder will take place on the afternoon of the first day of the festival (which makes it the 2nd seder) at 3 pm on Thursday, April 2nd preceded by a very special morning religious service at 9:30 am in which among other things, I will don the Kittel (signifying humility and purity) for the Musaf service and the prayer for the dew, *הטל הרח ומוריד הטל* just as Israel begins its dry season.

And finally, we read in our Luach of the traditions and practices of all eight days of Passover including Chol Hamoed, the intermediate days and the last of the festival when we hold our religious service at 9:30 am on Thursday, April 9 and include the Yizkor memorial prayer as we remember those who came before us and helped shape our lives as we shape the lives of those who come after us—l'dor v'dor, from generation to generation.

Before we leave the month of April and the spring season, our Luach instructs us on the observances of Yom HaShoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day on April 14th) on which day we will hear the annual proclamation of the mayor and council of the city of New Port Richey at 6 pm, Yom Hazikaron (Israel Memorial Day on April 21st) and Yom Ha'atzmaut (Israel Independence Day on April 22nd). And all the while, our Luach instructs us on the ritual of the Counting of the Omer which we do each night between the holidays of Passover and Shavuot.

I am happy to share the Luach that our synagogue uses with you. We keep a copy on the Bimah in the Sanctuary (*Luah Hashanah 5786: A Guide to Prayers, Readings, Laws, and Customs for the Synagogue and for the Home* by Rabbi Miles Cohen and Leslie Rubin. So now that I have shared information on our Luach and how we live fully and Jewishly each day, let's spend the next two months together as a community outlined below and share the beautiful season of spring with all of its beauty and as we are commanded "increase our joy"!

Ron Becker, Spiritual Leader

Monday, March 2 We will be celebrating the joyous holiday of Purim on Monday, March 2nd beginning with a social hour (with lots of Hamantaschen and ice cream) at 6 pm and followed by the reading of the Megillah (the Book of Esther) at 7 pm.

Sunday, March 8 We will be hosting a lecture by Nancy Sinkoff, Professor of Jewish Studies and Academic Director of the Allen and Joan Bildner Center for the Study of Jewish Life at Rutgers University at 2 pm. Her topic is "Did American Jews Ever Agree About Israel?" and the talk will be followed by a reception featuring delicious desserts crafted by our own Megan Hochstadt of "Meganables Edibles". The program is sponsored by the Rutgers University Foundation and will be open free of charge to the public. It will be a unique opportunity for us to hear from a distinguished scholar on a critical topic that concerns us all and attract Rutgers alums to our synagogue.

Sunday, March 22 We will host a large "flea market/craft fair" event in the parking lot of the synagogue between 9 am and 3 pm which will feature many vendors selling a variety of goods with food and drink available and a chance to share an event with old friends and make new ones! Admission is free, and booths are available for vendors at a cost of \$20. Anyone who is interested in being a vendor should contact the office at 727-847-3814.

Tuesday, March 24 We will volunteer at Metropolitan Ministries bringing sustenance, clothing, and hope to those in need at the headquarters at 3216 US-19, Holiday, FL 34691, at 11am-2 pm. Please sign up to help at this link: <https://vhub.at/1L1BLIK>

Thursday, April 2 We conduct our Passover religious service at 9:30 am and then we will hold our annual Passover community seder at 3 pm. We read the Haggadah and enjoy a wonderful Pesach meal together.

Thursday, April 9 We conduct our last day of Passover religious service at 9:30 am including the Yizkor memorial prayer.


Tuesday, April 14 We will observe Yom HaShoah at 6 pm at the New Port Richey City Hall at 5919 Main St, New Port Richey, FL 34652 with the annual proclamation and presentations of the Mayor and City Council.

Saturday, April 25 We are cosponsoring the annual African American Club Scholarship dinner at Seven Springs Country Club at 3535 Trophy Blvd, New Port Richey, FL 34655 just off Little Road. All are encouraged to attend this important community fundraising event.

Sunday, May 3 Please save the date to attend the gala Jewish Federation of Florida's Gulf Coast Women of Distinction celebration. This year we honor Ana Calderon for all that she has done for our synagogue and the community. Details on location, time, and cost to follow!

March 2026



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Show Me the Money Bingo 1:30 pm	2 11 am Bingo Ice Cream Social 6:00pm. Reading of the Megillah 7:00 pm	3 Purim	4	5	6 68 68 Religious Services 7:00 pm	7 Religious Services 9:30 am <i>Ki tissa</i> Bingo 3 pm
8 Show Me the \$\$ Bingo 1:30pm Rutgers lecture 2:00 pm Start of DST	9 11 am Bingo JCC Board Meeting 7 pm	10	11	12	13 68 68 Religious Services 7:00 pm	14 Religious Services 9:30 am <i>Vayakhel-P'kudei</i> Bingo 3 pm
15 Show Me the Money Bingo 1:30 pm	16 11 am Bingo	17	18	19	20 68 68 Religious Services 7:00 pm	21 Religious Services 9:30 am <i>Vayikra</i> Bingo 3 pm
22 Show Me the Money Bingo 1:30 pm	23 11 am Bingo	24	25	26 Rosh Chodesh	27 68 68 Religious Services 7:00 pm	28 Religious Services 9:30 am <i>Tzav</i> Bingo 3 pm
29 Show Me the Money Bingo 1:30 pm	30 11 am Bingo 	31 Search for Chometz (evening)				



April 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 הח 7:31 pm Erev Pesach Fast of the firstborn 1st Seder	2 הח after 8:25 pm Religious Services 9:30 am 2nd Seder at the JCC 3:00 pm	3 הח 7:32 pm Religious Services 7:00 pm Pesach 2	4 Religious Services 9:30 am Pesach 3 Bingo 3 pm
5 Show Me the Money Bingo 1:30 pm	6 11 am Bingo	7 הח 7:34 pm	8 הח after 8:28 pm	9 Religious Services & Yizkor 9:30 am Pesach 8	10 הח 7:36 pm Religious Services 7:00 pm	11 הח after 8:31 pm Religious Services 9:30 am <i>Shemini</i> Bingo 3 pm
Pesach 4	Pesach 5	Pesach 6	Pesach 7	16	17 הח 7:40 pm Religious Services 7:00 pm Rosh Chodesh	18 הח after 8:35 pm Religious Services 9:30 am <i>Tazria-M'izore</i> Rosh Chodesh Bingo 3 pm
12 Show Me the Money Bingo 1:30 pm	13 11 am Bingo JCC Board Meeting 7 pm	14 (Please see page 6) Yom HaShoah	15	23	24 הח 7:44 pm Religious Services 7:00 pm	25 Religious Services 9:30 am <i>Aharei Mot-K'doshim</i> Bingo 3 pm
19 Show Me the Money Bingo 1:30 pm	20 11 am Bingo	21 Yom Hazikkaron	22 Yom HaAtzmaut Earh Day	30		
26 Show Me the Money Bingo 1:30 pm	27 11 am Bingo	28	29			