

An evening of inter-faith enlightenment

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Maundy Thursday, the evening before Good Friday, is the commemoration of the Last Supper before Jesus was crucified. Communion is an important part of our weekly worship, but this is the day we remember that very first breaking of the bread.

At St. Simon's Oakville, we've traditionally held a pot-luck supper to remember the meal Jesus shared with his disciples. This year, we decided to get a little closer to the experience by learning about the Passover supper Jesus would have shared with his friends.

One of our ladies' Bible study groups took it upon themselves to organize the dinner. Darcey Lazerte, our Rector, invited his friend Rabbi Stephen Wise from the Shaarei-Beth El Congregation in Oakville to lead us through some Passover traditions. The Bible Study group prepared a meal of lamb stew, salad and bread for over 70 people. Under Rabbi Wise's direction, they prepared Passover



Seder plates for each table. These included symbolic foods eaten or displayed at a Seder: a roasted lamb shank bone, a roasted hard-boiled egg, horseradish or other bitter herbs, Charoset, salted water and celery. Along with these items were three pieces of matzah. Each of these foods has a special meaning that harkens back to the Jews' exodus from Egypt.

With great patience, insight and humour, Rabbi Wise took us on a journey through the

Passover Seder traditions. He explained the significance of each item on the plate. For example, Charoset – a mixture of apples, walnuts, cinnamon and sweet red wine – represents brick and mortar, symbolizing how hard the Jews worked when they were slaves in Egypt.

He brought the fun, interactive, family-oriented nature of the Seder to life. He invited us to recline while we drank our four cups of wine (well, grape juice!) and explained why it's important

to do so. He introduced us to the Haggadah, which is the story of the Exodus from Egypt, including the 10 plagues and the miracles performed by the Almighty. He shared his huge collection of Haggadahs with us, including a Maxwell House version that was a marketing sensation when it was introduced in the 1930s!

It was a great evening of enlightenment and fellowship - the perfect prelude to a very meaningful Maundy Thursday service. It reminded us that mov-

◀ Rabbi Stephen Wise from the Shaarei-Beth El Congregation Oakville was invited by his friend Darcey Lazerte, Rector of St. Simon's Oakville to lead people through the Passover Seder.

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ing forward in our faith journey often involves looking back at our roots. And it exemplified a key element of our mission statement at St. Simon's, which is that we are caring people, committed to building community. Our community includes not only fellow Anglicans, but also our inter-faith neighbours such as Rabbi Wise and his congregation.

Diana Coen is a parishioner of St. Simon's Oakville.