

John Berner

Multiculturalism

Event 1- Pass-over

Thursday, April 5, I attended a pass-over through our Stout Newman Group. I have an uncle who is Jewish, so I had experienced a pass-over many years ago, but I was too young to understand what a great deal of it meant.

We went through the prayers and traditions as the Jewish do at their pass-over, but we stopped every now and again to learn about what we were doing and why we were saying certain things. Our event took place in an attic where servers were appointed. Every table left one seat open for guests, one of which the Jews expect to be Alijah. We ate matzoh, but first having saved broken pieces wrapped in a napkin and placed in a safe place. We symbolically mingled bitter and sweet foods to recognize the hardships of slavery that the Jews had faced at one time and the hopes and joys that await. Every sip of our drinks had to be equally spaced throughout the meal. We reserved a time to open a door to allow Alijah to come in, which is only a few minutes. I don't understand that practice myself because I would think it would be more appropriate to invite Alijah to the whole dinner celebration.

It was an interesting experience that was kept positive, and wasn't much of a shock. Most of my own beliefs are derived from the religion, and looking at some of my own traditions, they don't seem to be too much different. I could see where my traditions are just as different to the Jews, as theirs is to me.