

# Students celebrate Seder: Elon community comes together

by Rachel Southmayd, April 6, 2010

Around the world, holidays are celebrated with food, friends and family. In the Jewish faith, the spring holiday of Passover is no different. Elon University's Hillel hosted its annual Seder on March 30. McKinnon Hall filled with students, faculty, prospective students and their families and community members, both Jewish and non-Jewish, for this event.

The entire holiday lasts eight days and is celebrated to commemorate the exodus of the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt. Its name comes from the 10th plague, when Jewish households were "passed over" and their first borns were not killed, as happened in Egyptian households.

The highlight of Passover is the Seder, which literally means "order." It is a lengthy meal with unique food, prayers and rituals.

Junior Tracy Weisberg was the event coordinator for Passover. She said Hillel sold 125 tickets in the days leading up to the event and were continuing to sell more at the door.

"This is so Jewish students can have a Seder and so the non-Jewish students can come and learn," she said.

Many Jewish families celebrate Passover with lots of families and friends, according to the leader of the service and co-coordinator of Elon Passover ceremony this year, Zach Rhodes.

"Passover is about getting together with family, celebrating our religion and eating a good meal," said freshman Julie Morse.

The Seder has 12 parts, each with its own meaning. Various members of Hillel helped by reading different prayers. Associate dean of students Jeff Stein and his family also participated by lighting the candles in the beginning of the service.

Elon President Leo Lambert was in attendance with his wife and mother. He helped by reading the 10 plagues in the "Maggid" section of the service.

The "Shulchan Orech" section of the Seder includes eating a large meal, which was catered by Elon's Dining Services and fully kosher. The meal also featured matzoh balls made from scratch by members of Hillel.

"Matzoh" is a form of unleavened bread. When the Jewish people left Egypt, they did not have time to let their bread rise, so they baked it on their back into cracker-like sheets. During Passover, many Jewish people abstain from eating forms of leavened products like bread, cake or cookies.

Weisberg stressed that the event wasn't just about eating good food.

"It's more just to remember the story and to celebrate with family and friends," she said.