

## **ANSHE EMETH'S E-NEWS FOR MARCH 2024**

**Temple Shabbat Service – Friday, March 22, for Purim. Saturday, February 3 - In-person or Zoom!**

6 p.m – Pizza and salad supper

7 p.m. – Make and bake hamantaschen

7:30 - Shabbat Service and Purim Megillah reading/skit

Oneg to follow with warm hamantaschen

### **Yahrzeit's for March... of Blessed memory:**

**Lillian Altschul, Berne Cohen, Edith Kastner Benjamin, Gert Liss, Harry Schutz, Israel Schuchat, Lois Snyder.**

### **WATCH FOR APRIL 12 : SPECIAL NEW TORAH SCROLL COVER DEDICATION!!!**

Shabbat service with torah scroll cover dedication 10 a.m., carry-in lunch , noon and class offered to members and the public at 1:30 p.m.

### **MisheBerach – Prayers for Healing:**

**David Ferrell, Terry Livingston, Neal Schmidt**

### **Letter from Rabbinic Intern Gretchen:**

Dear Congregation of Anshe Emeth,

Soon we will celebrate Purim, which falls on the 14<sup>th</sup> of the Jewish month of Adar. During the month of Adar, we are commanded to increase in joy. We celebrate Purim by baking hamantaschen, filled cookies resembling the triangular hat worn by the wicked Haman (Booooo!). We wear costumes and deliver sweet treats to our friends and neighbors, almost like trick or treating in reverse. We listen to the book of Esther, and we use our groggers whenever someone mentions You Know Who. Often we put on a Purim spiel, a satirical play based on the story of Esther. We may sing songs, tell jokes, and play games. Some grownups may indulge in adult beverages. Jewish holidays run the gamut from somber to joyous, but no other Jewish holiday is as merry and just plain silly as Purim.

Yet the fact that we must be commanded to be joyous suggests that the Purim spirit does not always come naturally. Sobering news from Israel could easily put a damper on our celebration.

Antisemitic and anti-Jewish rhetoric is on the rise in our own country and around the world. At times like this it may help us to remember that although the story of Esther has its share of humorous incidents and a more or less happy ending, it has its darker elements as well. King Ahasuerus orders his first queen to parade herself before a crowd of drunken men, then banishes her when she refuses. He chooses his second queen by commanding the young women of his kingdom to compete in a beauty pageant, then he threatens Esther with death if she visits him without permission. The king is easily persuaded to put his seal on an edict of genocide against the Jews. Even after Esther reveals the wicked plot against her people, the king does not cancel the first edict calling for an attack on the Jews on the 13 th of Adar. Instead, he issues a second edict permitting the Jews to fight back, and the book of Esther ends violently. In times of danger, feasting and games are not frivolity but an act of defiance. They tried to kill us, we survived, let's eat!

While Mordecai sometimes gets all the credit, Esther is the true hero of the story of Purim. She is the one who risked her life for her people by visiting the king without permission and revealing her Jewish identity. Mordecai's defiance of You Know Who and his stirring pep talk no doubt helped to inspire Esther's bravery and cleverness. Esther may also have been inspired by another role model. In recent years, King Ahasuerus' first queen Vashti has received increasing recognition from women in the Reform movement as a feminist role model. Vashti was giving a banquet for the wives of all the officials, courtiers, nobles, and governors of the kingdom when the king sent messengers commanding her to display her beauty to his male guests. All the wives witnessed the king's order, and all the wives witnessed the queen's refusal. It was the men of the kingdom who urged the king to banish Vashti, for fear that her example would inspire all their wives to stand up for themselves. Vashti's well-publicized defiance of King Ahasuerus' orders may well have set the precedent for Esther to disobey the king as well.

The book of Esther is unusual in that the story never directly mentions God. Mordecai does tell Esther that if she does not risk her life to stop the plot against her people, "help will come from another place." Some think Mordecai is saying God will save the Jews miraculously if Esther does not step up, but we never find out because the Jews save themselves. According to Rabbi Nina Beth Cardin, "Purim teaches us that God will no longer intervene for us and save us, at least not obviously and supernaturally. It says that God will be hidden but not distant, silent but not inactive. God will work through us in our daily lives. And any one of us, every one of us, can become the instrument of God, for good and not for evil, for life and not for death." *Chag Sameach!* This Purim may we all be joyous and brave.

**With grateful thanks:**

**Luke Bowman** for yet again, working on electrical needs of the building.

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**Or go to your Zoom App and put in this information:**

**Meeting ID: 764 372 3318 Passcode: 0092**

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