

Don't miss Congregation Anshei Israel's



Purim Celebration & Se'udah

Saturday, February 23 - Sunday, February 24, 2013

Experiencing Purim

Our Purim celebration begins in the synagogue where the Megillah, the story of Esther, is read to young and old alike. At no other time during the Jewish year is the synagogue this lively or noisy. Full of melodrama and a plot that twists and turns, Purim is all about masks, hidden layers, and double meanings. On the surface the tale represents good overcoming evil. More deeply, it highlights standing up for who you are, fighting against hatred and feeling proud of being Jewish.

Purim tells the story of Esther and Haman, and begins with a feast in the kingdom of Persia, hosted by King Ahashverosh. The king was flaunting his riches and treasures for all to see, and decided that his beautiful wife, Queen Vashti, should also be displayed. But when the king sent for Vashti, she refused to appear before him. In anger, he threw Vashti out of the palace.

In search of a new wife, the king chose Esther, a young and very beautiful Jewish woman. Esther's uncle, Mordecai, cautioned her not to tell the king that she was a Jew.

King Ahashverosh bestowed a special honor on Haman, his power-hungry assistant, telling all the people in his kingdom to bow down to Haman. As a Jew, Mordecai refused. Haman became enraged and devised a plan to kill all the Jews. He even bribed the king into signing the declaration.

To determine the date the Jews were to be attacked, Haman drew lots ("purim" in Hebrew). Mordecai, however, discovered Haman's evil scheme and revealed it to Esther. Esther decided she must tell Ahashverosh, even if it meant her life.

King Ahashverosh was horrified to learn that his beautiful wife and her people were in danger. Haman was condemned to be hanged on the gallows and Mordecai was elevated to the position of Prime Minister. The Jews were safe once again, and Esther and Mordecai proclaimed the day to be one of feasting and merrymaking.

Today, when the Megillah is read, a great noise erupts every time Haman's name is read out loud. Young and old use groggers (noisemakers) to make as much noise as possible. It is a day of magic for everyone, not just a dress-up holiday for children. Adults are given permission and even commanded to drop heavy responsibilities, and lighten their loads and spirits. Put on a wig or outrageous make-up, or wear silly clothes and embrace the child within. Allow fantasy to transform reality for a day of utter enjoyment.

This year's family Purim celebration will include a very special Se'udah (festive meal) & stories, songs & fun for all ... It's a mitzvah to eat, drink & be merry on Purim. Join us!

SATURDAY, FEB. 23

Traditional Megillah Reading

6:56pm in the Epstein Chapel

SUNDAY, FEB. 24

Minyan/Traditional Megillah Reading

7:30am in the Epstein Chapel

Family/Creative Megillah Reading & Costume Parade

10:00am in the Sanctuary

Se'udah (festive meal)

11:00am in Rabbi Breger Hall

Quiche, cereal, yogurt, mini bagels, fruit & hamentashen!

**\$8 per person (ages 3+) OR
\$20 per family of four with RSVP
by Feb. 20 (\$13 pp at the door)**
Visit www.caiaz.org
or call 745-5550, ext. 242

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