

March, 2020 Newsletter

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B'nai Portland



**Thoughts From
Rabbi Laura**

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It's PURIM

COME IN COSTUME TO SERVICES FRIDAY NIGHT!!
BE PART OF THE STORY, THE LEGEND OF
FEMALE HEROES VASHTI & ESTHER! BRING YOUR
BEST HAMANTASCHEN AND COMPETE WITH
OTHER HAMANTASCHEN BAKERS!
A FABULOUSLY FUN SHABBAT!

I believe our Purim story is where Disney gets the premise of its stories minus the evil step mothers. Purim has the drunken, stupid King, evil right hand man, brave women, women getting positions because they are beautiful.....

The Purim story comes from the scroll of Esther, and interestingly this scroll is the only story where God is not mentioned. It is however a mitzvah (commandment) to hear the story and witness the goings on that happened in Shushan.

Don't forget our Fundraiser - see page 2!!!

Mark your calendar for our chocolate Passover Seder April 5th!! More to come on that.

~ Rabbi Laura

Upcoming

All Services begin at 6:30pm
at Lunt Auditorium in Falmouth
unless otherwise noted.

Purim (COSTUMES) Friday, March 6th

**Murder Mystery Saturday, March 21st
St. Mary's Church 7pm**

**Chocolate Seder Sunday, April 5th
4 - 6 pm**



March Shabbat Tzedakah

Personal hygiene products for
families at Through These Doors, a
women and children's shelter.

Sponsored by Laura & Mike Boenisch

OUR MURDER MYSTERY FUNDRAISER IS ON MARCH 21ST -
PLEASE JOIN US AND SUPPORT B'NAI PORTLAND
IN THIS FUN WAY!

And A Silent Auction With Great Items!



WHEN: Saturday, March 21, 2020 7pm - 10pm

WHERE: St. Mary's Episcopal Church
43 Foreside Rd, Falmouth, ME 04105

WHAT: A murder mystery FUNdraising event to benefit B'nai Portland. Featuring a night of Mystery, Mayhem, and Delicious Desserts. ~ BYOB ~

TICKETS: Tickets are \$45 each. Follow this link for more information and to purchase tickets, go to Eventbrite: [Click Here](#)

B'nai Portland is an unaffiliated congregation serving the Jewish community of greater Portland without bias to ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, or level of observance. Visit us at www.bnaiportland.com

Just a Few of our Silent Auction Items:

4 Tickets to a 2020
Sea Dogs Game

Gift Certificates for
Chilton Furniture

Gift Certificates for
Soakology

Red Sox Baseball
Signed by Matt
Barnes

Jewelry and other
Handmade Items

Birthday Party at
Centerpoint Martial
Arts Studio

Basketball signed by
the whole Maine Red
Claws Team

Dinner with the
Rabbi for 6 people

And So Much More!

Please join us for our **ONLY** fundraiser this year.

Buy tickets, bring friends, dress in the Roaring 20s style! Eat scrumptious desserts, chomp on popcorn, and participate in this **SURE-TO-BE-EPIC** evening!



Some things to know about Purim - the most fun Jewish holiday

There's lots of food and drink

Many Jewish holidays incorporate stricter rules, which could include mandatory fasting, but Purim is much

more relaxed. There is only a minor fast the day before Purim, which commemorates the three days Esther fasted before approaching the king. Then, the holiday itself is known for a party atmosphere, with big feasts where you can eat and get drunk (within reason, but it is encouraged).

There's Hamantaschen

One of the best treats for Purim are hamantaschen: triangle-shaped cookie pastries with fruit or savory filling. The treat is said to look like Haman's tri-cornered hat or his ears ("oznei Haman" in Hebrew). Sweet hamantaschen are most popular, with poppy seed, chocolate, date, apricot, or apple filling.

There's fun heckling

During the synagogue service, the "megillah," or scroll, of Esther is read aloud, telling the story of Esther and Haman. Because the book says Haman's name was "blotted out," everyone in the synagogue stamps their feet, yells, and heckles using "graggers" (ratchet noisemakers) all 54 times his name is read in the story.

There are baskets of candy

A Purim tradition is to send out baskets of food and drink ("shalach manot"/"mishloach manot") to family and to the poor. They are filled with food that is ready to eat, like pastries, wine, candy, chips, and other foods and delights.

The Purim Story in a Nutshell

The story of Purim is told in the Biblical book of Esther. The heroes of the story are Esther, a beautiful young Jewish woman living in Persia, and her cousin Mordecai, who raised her as if she were his daughter. Esther was taken to the house of Ahasuerus, King of Persia, to become part of his harem, and he loved her more than his other women and made her queen. But the king did not know that Esther was a Jew, because Mordecai told her not to reveal her nationality.

The villain of the story is Haman, an arrogant, egotistical advisor to the king. Haman hated Mordecai because Mordecai refused to bow down to Haman, so Haman plotted to destroy the Jewish people. In a speech that is all too familiar to Jews, Haman told the king, "There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of thy kingdom; and their laws are diverse from those of every people; neither keep they the king's laws; therefore it does not profit the king to suffer them." Esther 3:8. The king gave the fate of the Jewish people to Haman, to do as he pleased to them. Haman planned to exterminate all of the Jews.

Mordecai persuaded Esther to speak to the king on behalf of the Jewish people. This was a dangerous thing for Esther to do, because anyone who came into the king's presence without being summoned could be put to death, and she had not been summoned. Esther fasted for three days to prepare herself, then went into the king. He welcomed her. Later, she told him of Haman's plot against her people. The Jewish people were saved, and Haman was hanged on the gallows that had been prepared for Mordecai.

Purim is celebrated on the 14th day of Adar, which is usually in March. The 14th of Adar is the day that Haman chose for the extermination of the Jews. In leap years, when there are two months of Adar, Purim is celebrated in the second month of Adar, so it is always one month before Passover.

PURIM

The festival of Purim commemorates the salvation of the Jewish people in ancient Persia from Haman's plot "to destroy, kill and annihilate all the Jews, young and old, infants and women, in a single day." It is celebrated with Megillah readings, gifts of food, charity, feasting, and merriment.

Purim means "lots" in ancient Persian. The holiday was thus named since Haman had thrown lots to determine when he would carry out his diabolical scheme.

Despite the somber story, there is a spirit of liveliness and fun on Purim that is unparalleled on the Jewish calendar. If ever there were a day to "let loose" and just be Jewish, this is it! [Read why here.](#)

It is also customary for children (and adults, if they desire) to dress up in costumes. [Read why here.](#)

On the day before Purim (or on the Thursday before, when Purim is on Sunday), it is customary to fast, commemorating Esther's fasting and praying to God to save the people. [Read more here.](#)

Links to Purim recipes and projects:

<https://www.forkly.com/food/celebrate-purim-with-8-traditional-jewish-recipes/>

<http://www.aish.com/h/pur/p/>

<https://joyfuljewish.wordpress.com/2011/03/10/purim-puppets-from-wooden-spoons/>

https://www.chabad.org/kids/article_cdo/aid/361573/jewish/Coloring-Crafts.htm

<https://www.bimbam.com/purim-gragger/>

Friday Torah Study and Dinner February 28th

Please join us in celebrating Shabbat and discussing the weekly Torah reading at the same time!

Fun and informative, as well as delicious!

Contact Rabbi Laura for more information and to RSVP:

rabbibnaiportland@gmail.com

Hamentaschen Bake Off!

Bake your best and we will taste them and vote on our favorites! You can never have too many Hamentaschen!



Check out our website at
www.bnaiportland.com

Simchas & Sorrows

Congratulations and Happy Birthday to Rabbi Laura who will be another year older on March 16th.

Please let B'nai Portland know of any simchas or sorrows so we can share them with the Congregation.