

Purim Customs & Practices

When: Purim begins on Saturday, March 19 at night, after Shabbat, and lasts through the day of Sunday, March 20. The fast of Esther is observed on Thursday, March 17.

Work is permitted on Purim. However, we usually spend most of the day in fulfillment of the various *mitzvot* of Purim, as will be enumerated below.

The Four Parshiot: There are special Torah readings as the *maftir* during four *shabbatot* from the Shabbat before Rosh Chodesh Adar until the Shabbat before Rosh Chodesh Nisan. The *Shabbat* before Purim we read *Parshat Zachor – remember* – and this serves as an affirmation to remember the evil that occurred to the Jewish people in the past and a commitment to never forget, and never again allow genocidal murder to take place. According to most authorities, hearing this portion of the Torah read is one of the 613 *mitzvot*. You are encouraged to be in shul on Shabbat morning, March 19 to fulfill this obligation.

Ta'anit Ester – the fast of Esther: We fast on the day before Purim in commemoration of the fasting that the Jews observed on the day of the battle. The name of the fast is associated with Queen Esther, as she had declared three days of a national fast before approaching the king to request the annulment of Haman's decree. Since the day before Purim is Shabbat, the fast is observed on the Thursday before Purim, March 17. This fast is observed from morning to night, beginning at 6:02 am and ending at 7:53 pm. If you have special circumstances that may make it difficult to fast, please consult with the rabbi.

Reading the Megillah: It is a mitzvah to hear the *Megillah*, the scroll of Esther, read both at night and during the day of Purim. At Beth David we will be reading the *Megillah* on Saturday night, March 19 at 8:15 pm and Sunday morning, March 20 at 9:00 am, following Shacharit. If you cannot make the morning reading, it will be read again at the shul at 1:30 pm, prior to the festive meal.

It is customary to contribute to synagogue maintenance before hearing the *Megillah*, in commemoration of the *machatzit hashekel*, the three half shekels that were given each year in Adar for the maintenance of the

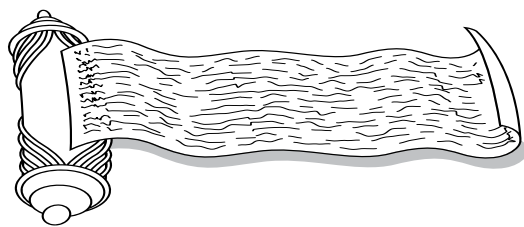
holy Temple in Jerusalem. Since Purim starts right after Shabbat, we make this contribution either on the Fast of Esther before Mincha, or before we read the *Megillah* on Purim day.

Matanot La'evyonim – Gifts to the poor: It is a mitzvah to give at least two gifts to each of two poor people on this day as Purim charity. The rabbis will be collecting and distributing Purim charity to local Jewish poor through the Jewish Family Service and to the poor in Israel through the *Od Yosef Chai* organization. Contributions for this purpose should be made to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund and please note how you wish your contribution to be divided, between local or needs in Israel. Contributions for local needs must be made by March 14, while gifts for Israeli poor may be made until the morning *Megillah* reading.

Mishloach Manot – food gifts to friends: Commonly known as *shalach manos*, we give at least two portions of ready-to-eat foods to at least one other person. The mitzvah of sharing Purim joy through food is commendable, but more of our holiday funds should be allocated for gifts to the poor.

Seudat Purim – the Purim feast: It is a mitzvah to participate in a festive meal on Purim day (not at night). Beth David will conduct its annual Purim Seudah on Sunday, March 20 at 2:00 pm. *See announcement in this issue!*

Special prayers: On *ta'anit Esther* we add special prayers and Torah reading at both the morning and afternoon services, as is customary for fast days. On Purim we add *al hanissim* in Grace after meals and the *amida*. If one forgets, it need not be repeated. There is a special Torah reading in the morning, before the *megillah* reading. The day after Purim is known as **Shushan Purim** and is the day that Purim is celebrated in Jerusalem. We do not say *tachanun* in honor of day.



Purim Schedule

Ta'anit ester

Thursday, March 17	<i>Fast begins</i>	6:02 am
	Shacharit	6:40 am
	Mincha	6:40 pm
	<i>Fast ends</i>	7:53 pm

Shabbat Zachor

Friday, March 18	Shacharit	6:40 am
	Candle Lighting	6:55 pm
	Mincha	6:55 pm
Shabbat, March 19	Shacharit	9:00 am
	Parshat Zachor	10:30 am
	Mincha	6:45 pm

Purim

Saturday, March 19	Shabbat ends	7:56 am
	Ma'ariv	8:00 pm
	Megillah	8:15 pm
Sunday, March 20	Shacharit	8:30 am
	Megillah	9:00 am
	Second Reading	1:30 pm
	Mincha	2:00 pm
	Purim Seudah	2:00 pm
	Ma'ariv	8:00 pm

Expo Here We Come!!!

Beth David Synagogue has been invited to participate in this year's Emerging Communities Relocation Expo, sponsored by The Orthodox Union, on March 27, 2011, at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in New York City.

The event, advertised to locals in the tri-state area and beyond, highlights relocation to Jewish communities showcasing their uniqueness and opportunities.

Please Note

When making a donation to the synagogue, in honor of or in memory of someone, please keep in mind that a **minimum** donation of \$5.00 **per name** is required if you wish the family to receive notification of the contribution.

Matanot La'evyonim— Purim Charity

One of the *mitzvot* of Purim is to deliver gifts to the poor on Purim day. Your rabbis will again distribute gifts to local needy through the Jewish Family Service, and to Israeli poor through the Od Yosef Chai charitable organization.

Believe it or not, there are Jewish needy in our city and when they have received help at holiday time, they have expressed great thanks and satisfaction. Purim, being a holiday dedicated to "*simcha*" – joy, requires us to assure that all Jews can rejoice. The poor rejoice when they have the means to sustain their lives, leading to the importance placed on this mitzvah.

In order to participate in this mitzvah, donations may be sent to the shul or given to one of the rabbis by March 14. Donors are asked to mark their checks as "Purim charity" and specify whether they wish the money to be distributed locally or in Israel. Contributions received after March 14 will be sent to Israel. Those contributions may be made up to the *megillah* reading on Purim morning.

JEWISH FAMILY SERVICE

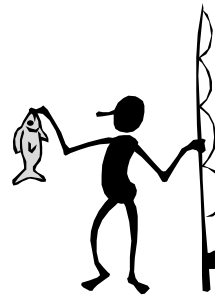
presents

LUNCH & LEARN

WEDNESDAY – March 30, 2011

12:00 PM at the JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER

SNOW DATE: (In case the Vestal Central Schools are closed on March 30, this program will take place on Wed., April 6)



Bring on the return of Spring with our guest speaker, Jennifer Kakusian, our very own Jewish Federation Administrative Assistant. She'll be sharing "Fish Tales" with you as she shares her love of fly fishing, information about our rivers and streams and personal stories about her experiences as a fly fishing guide.

\$9.00 PER PERSON

**Prepaid Reservations Required
Required by March 21, 2011**

Make checks payable to **Jewish Family Service** and mail to:

Jewish Family Service, 500 Clubhouse Road,
Vestal, NY 13850

For more information call
Jewish Family Service at (607) 724-2332