



new london
synagogue



Thank God for Purim

I'm very definitely in the mood for Purim this year. It's not just the fun. It's the sense that in a world of moral collapse and existential danger, there is a story of heroism and bravery.

There's something so moving, to me, especially this year, in the refusal of Mordechai to bow before Haman, the courage Ester shows realising that she has become Queen, "for this very moment" and making the case for the saving of her people. There is something so very contemporary, especially this year, in realising the connections between the sexual impropriety of the beginning of the story and the emergent threat that emerges for all the Jews. There is something so very freeing in having a good ol' chance to boo. The depths, the wit, the savage satire of Megilat Ester has never felt more sharply drawn and more necessary.

Then there is the fun; do join us in costume – you are welcome even not in costume, but even a pocket handkerchief or an extravagant shade of lipstick would count. For our youth – for our next generation – we have activities and groggers. For our bellies we have a delicious post-Megillah feast, replete with pub quiz. We'll be collecting sums to support the work of the Separated Child Foundation, which works to support unaccompanied children refugees in the UK and help them fulfil their potential – Ester too was a separated child.

Youth activities from 5:30pm Monday. Maariv and Megillah reading at 6:30pm to be followed by the Feast. We are still taking bookings for the Feast – click here <https://shulcloud.newlondon.org.uk/event/purim1.html>. And if you would rather a less boisterous opportunity to mark the festival, we would love your company on Tuesday morning 3rd from 7:30am for Shacharit and Megillah reading.

On Access to the Kotel

Close observers will know of the troubling development in the long story of allowing the Western Wall to be a place for all Jews to gather for prayer. For many years, a section of the Wall to the right of the main Plaza - known as Robinson's Arch or Ezrat Yisrael – has been available for egalitarian services, open to any minyan that did not insist on a separation between men and women and certainly open for women to read from the Torah. Many of our members have been there, some have even celebrated BMs there. For many years the Government has been obligated to upgrade the existing scaffold-supported structure with something more permanent.

A High Court injunction to enforce this obligation prompted far-right Haredi MK Avi Maoz to bring a bill before the Keneset giving the Chief Rabbinate full control over all parts of the wall. At a preliminary meeting, Israeli MKs voted 56-47 in favour of the Bill.

It's deeply disappointing to feel the sharp push-away from those who voted in support of the Bill. It's deeply damaging to the attempt to hold together the People of Israel as one people experiencing mutual obligations no matter where and how we live as Jews. There is more information in the excellent Masorti Judaism newsletter (sign up from the bottom of the page at <https://masorti.org.uk/>). I also recommend the speech given by Rabbi Gilad Kariv MK, formerly head of the Israeli Reform movement, who is emerging as one of the most important voices in favour of both the Jewish and Democratic dreams of the State of Israel. The speech is pugnacious and blunt, but shares powerfully of the relationship between specific actions like this Bill and the future of our relationship with the State of Israel.

<https://www.facebook.com/reel/1632846154535159>

Please also consider signing this petition on the Bill and access to the Kotel.

https://lp.landing-page.mobi/index.php?page=landing&id=623423&token=50da2b63584b8091afdf7325d985e22e&CustomerId=1073627&ProjectId=1059306&Domain=lp6.me&Key=6NN2S&i=18632&utm_source=InforuMail&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Acts+against+Kotel+bill&upixel=5ic7vbihlr50000029hl6sg90geprh

Shabbat Shalom,
Chag Purim Sameach,

Rabbi Jeremy