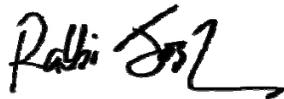


Next week, **Wednesday, March 4**, we celebrate **Purim**, starting with pizza at 6:00, our children's costume parade and adult costume competition at 6:30, service and Megillah reading at 7:00, and Spiel at 8:00.

Purim, of course, celebrates the victory of Esther, Mordechai, and the Jews of Persia over the plans of the wicked Haman who sought to destroy them. Haman convinces King Achashverosh to agree to his plan by saying, "There is a certain nation scattered and spread out among the nations in all the countries of your kingdom. Their laws are different from the laws of every other nation. They do not even follow the King's laws; so it does not pay for the King to let them stay alive. If it please the King, let a law be written that they should be destroyed..." (3: 8-9) The words of the Book of Esther capture in a nutshell the Jewish diaspora experience of being marginalized, labelled as 'other' and accordingly made radically vulnerable in so many of the lands of our dispersion. Even in recent weeks we have seen Jews specifically targeted in the streets of Paris and Copenhagen, murdered by those who hate values of tolerance and freedom, seventy years after the end of World War II and the greatest tragedy any people has ever known.

In just over a month I have the profound honor of leading a group of congregants to Israel, the state built on the ashes of the Holocaust and the one place where Jews will never be "scattered" and "different." As Jews, the State of Israel belongs to all of us and at this rare moment we have the opportunity to help shape its course and direction. Between now and April 30, elections are being held for the World Zionist Congress, the body that meets every five years and helps set the budgets and policies for Israeli and international bodies for the coming years. You are eligible to vote in this important election by registering at <https://www.myvoteourisrael.com/>. The Reconstructionist movement is supporting the [ARZA](#) slate of which we are an official partner, but you can learn about all the different slates and their policies [here](#) to help make your decision. Please be sure to register and vote to add a voice for progressive values and peace in Israel to help ensure, in the words of the Book of Esther, "light and gladness, happiness and honor" (8:16) for Jews everywhere.

Chag Sameach,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rabbi Sol". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.