

# United Synagogue livestreaming Purim service for those affected by coronavirus

In guidance approved by the Chief Rabbi, the US stresses that those in good health should attend Megillah readings in shul



The United Synagogue will be livestreaming the Megillah on its Facebook page at around 6.30 tonight for those unable to attend US Purim celebrations because of "legitimate coronavirus considerations [as set out in government guidelines and the previous United Synagogue guidance]." The US will also livestream a Megillah reading tomorrow morning at 11.

In guidance approved by Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis, the US stresses: "Megillah readings are going ahead in our communities and if you are well, you should attend."

On Radio 4's *Thought for the Day*, Rabbi Mirvis reflected that "this year, our Purim celebrations are affected by the coronavirus, as you would expect for a festival which is so dependent on communal interaction.

"In this context, over the past few days I have come to appreciate the power of the handshake. Finding myself in the midst of large crowds, it has been a challenge, on account of the coronavirus, to refrain from naturally extending my hand. I've been struck by the significant difference that the absence of a handshake makes.

"The covid-19 epidemic should prompt us to value life, to appreciate the simplest of human interactions and, in the spirit of Purim, to reach out to the elderly, the frail, the housebound and those in quarantine, who now rely on our consideration and compassion.

"We might not be able to shake their hands. But we must ensure that they feel the warmth of our humanity."

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