

# **Lutheran Foundations: A Confirmation Curriculum<sup>©</sup>**

## **It Starts Here! Stories of the Old Testament**

### **The Tomorrow River Lutheran Parish**

#### **Year 1, Lesson 27:**

#### **Esther**

The Book of Esther was the last of the 24 books of the Hebrew Bible to be accepted into that canon. It was written perhaps 400 or 500 years before Jesus lived. It contains lots of Persian words and references – though some of what is referred to is inaccurate. It is set in the city of Susa, the winter capital of the Persian Empire.

There is real question among scholars as to whether or not Esther should be regarded as historical – even in part.

The Jewish holiday of Purim is connected to the story of Esther and generally occurs during the month of March and involves all of the following:

- Exchanging gifts of food and drink
- Giving to the poor
- Eating a celebratory meal (with alcoholic beverages)
- Reading the book of Esther, and whenever Haman's name is mentioned (54 times), the congregation makes noise to blot out his name
- Sometimes there are public celebrations, parades and masquerades

The book of Esther is intended to let us know that God is working in human events, though often we cannot see God's hand until later...

Whatever the historicity of the story, it has penetrated into our culture and into the faith practice of our Jewish neighbors. You should know this story!