



Upcoming Events

10/8 6:15 pm Board Meeting at Carol Friedman's home

10/2 7:00 pm Erev Rosh HaShanah Services on the patio of our Chavurah House

10/3 10:00 am Rosh HaShanah Services on the patio of our Chavurah House

10/11 7:00 pm Kol Nidre Services on the patio of our Chavurah House

10/12 10 am Yom Kippur Services on the patio of our Chavurah House

The High Holidays Schedule is posted on page 3

10/19 9:00 am Sukkah Building on the patio of our Chavurah House Followed by a potluck dinner at 6:00 pm

10/25 7:00 pm Simchat Torah Services on the patio of our Chavurah House

The Maggid

C O N G R E G A T I O N E T Z C H A I M

P O B O X 3752 MERCED CA 95344

O C T O B E R 2 0 2 4



Notes from our Rabbi

Preparing for the High Holy Days is Like Preparing for Your Funeral

I hope the title caught your interest. Yes, the High Holy Days or *Yamim Ha-nohrah-im* (literally “the Days of Awe”) are, in a way, about preparing for your funeral. We are reminded about this with the numerous references to the book of life as well as by the haunting prayer, the *Unetaneh Tokef*, which asks us to reflect on the possibility that these High Holy Days may be our last. “On Rosh Hashanah it is written, on Yom Kippur it is sealed: how many shall pass on, how many shall come to be, who shall live and who shall die...”

The imagery of these days is that of a trial. On Rosh Hashanah, we praise God as King (or “ruler” in gender neutral terms) far more often than at other services. God is seated on the throne of judgment, and we are on trial for our lives. A preliminary decision is rendered on that day, but final appeals and sentencing are suspended for 10 days during which “repentance, prayer and charity temper the severity of the judgment.” If you were indeed on trial for your life, if you were indeed facing your own death, how would you prepare?

Traditionally, the days leading up to these High Holy Days should be filled with introspection. “Whom have I hurt? Where have I gone wrong? How can I apologize? How can I make things better?” This is the time to make lists, call the people that are important in your life and break out the tissues.

More often than I'd like, I'm called upon to help families prepare for funerals. Sometimes, I'm given the privilege of calling upon someone on their death bed. Whatever the circumstances, at these times I hear a lot about the loves in their life, dreams fulfilled and unfulfilled, and the funny, wonderful things that make up relationships. Too often, I hear the ache of “if only we'd had more time,” “if only I'd said,” “if only I'd done.”

Well guess what? You have the time. Now. Today. Your funeral is coming; only God knows when -- but we all know that it's coming; statistically speaking, the death rate is 100%. If you take seriously the work of the High Holy Days, I can promise you that you will have a more meaningful experience in early October as we once again gather to read the words and chant the melodies. But far more importantly, I can promise that you will create some beautiful chapters in your own book of life and ensure that your memory will be a blessing to those who care about you.

NOTES FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Shana Tovah/Gut Yom Tov/Happy New Year, everyone!

Thank goodness fall is finally here, and the temperature outside is becoming more pleasant. This is just in the nick of time, too, since we expect to hold Rosh Hashanah services outdoors on the evening of October 2nd as well as 10am the following morning. With any luck, we might have a nice breeze to carry the sound of the shofar and help us usher in the New Year.

Speaking of shofar, this year's Yom Kippur lesson on Saturday, October 12th, by Rabbi Lotker will be all about the shofar! His description of the lesson follows below. You are invited to bring your own shofar(s) to the lesson if you have one. Following a day of Yom Kippur services and reflections of our actions, our Break-the-Fast Potluck will begin after Havdallah and Kiddush at 7:30pm. Even if you cannot join in all services Saturday – even if you do not fast – you are invited to join in the potluck. This is a guilt-free congregation. The detailed schedule of the High Holy Days is on the following page. Come to the services that you can attend and celebrate the holiday with us.

October is such a busy month of introspection and celebration, with Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkoth, and Simchat Torah following in quick weekly succession. Our Sukkoth potluck, celebrating the fall harvest and commemorating the Israelites' 40 days in the wilderness, will be Saturday, October 19th. Just one week later, we will sing and dance out hearts out in joy during our services for Simchat Torah – “Rejoicing of the Torah” – on Friday, October 25th. The more people we have together to celebrate the conclusion of yearly reading cycle of the Torah, the more raucous our celebration can be!

What a month this will be!

B'Shalom,
Belinda Braunstein
President

More Than Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About the Shofar

Rabbi Michael Lotker

Do you know why we sound the Shofar on Rosh Hashanah? Rabbi Sa'adiah Gaon, who lived more than a thousand years ago in Egypt, gave us 10 specific reasons, and I bet you haven't heard nine of them. Do you know that our sounding the Tikiah G'dolah on Yom Kippur is actually not called for 98% of the time? Do you know the reasons for the specific sounds that we make on the shofar? Do you know what the rules are to have a kosher shofar? Do you know how the Kabbalists/mystics understand the role of the shofar? Do you know what the mitzvah of shofar really is? Would you like to try sounding a shofar?

Please plan to come to our shofar study session on Yom Kippur afternoon (Oct. 12th) at 4 PM to study with us, and BYOS (bring your own shofar) if you have one.

High Holy Days Services 2024/5785

Congregation Etz Chaim

Chavurah House

on Parsons Ave, Merced

Services will also be transmitted via ZOOM

LED BY RABBI MICHAEL LOTKER

ROSH HASHANAH

WEDNESDAY
OCTOBER 2

7:00 p.m. Evening Service

THURSDAY
OCTOBER 3

10:00 a.m. Morning Torah Service
followed by a Tashlich Service
on the Bridge at Rahilly Park

YOM KIPPUR

FRIDAY
OCTOBER 11

7:00 p.m. Kol Nidre Service

SATURDAY
OCTOBER 12

10:00 a.m. Morning Torah Service
1:00 p.m. Healing Service
2:00 p.m. Open Discussion
4:00 p.m. Lesson
5:30 p.m. Yizkor (Memorial Service)
6:30 p.m. Neila (Closing Service)
7:30 p.m. Havdalah, Kiddush and
Break-the-Fast Potluck

- It is traditional at this time of year to make donations in memory of loved ones. Please fill out a **Yizkor Card**. You may mail your card and donation to P.O. Box 3752, Merced 95344-3752 or give to Rachel Hadley or Belinda Braunstein no later than Kol Nidre. Other donations will also be gratefully accepted throughout the High Holy Days.
** Please contact Greg Friedman for ZOOM link information
*** For our **Break-the-Fast**, please bring a main dish, and either a side dish or dessert - enough to feed your group heartily (these people will be hungry!)
- Tzedakah (food or clothing) for the less privileged in our community is welcome at any service



Tributes

Anytime you are celebrating a special event, let us share in your joy. We welcome tributes in honor or in memory of loved ones, births, weddings, Bar and Bat Mitzvahs, and honoring special events. Send your Tributes to PO Box 3752 Merced CA 95344

Harlan and Judy Dake - In loving memory of Wolf Rosenberg
Mark Staats - In loving memory of Esther bat Miriam

May their memories be a blessing זכרונם לברכה

Harlan and Judy Dake - in honor of Carol and Jim Madruga's 50th Wedding Anniversary
Rich Kleitman - in celebration of Henry Fultz' conversion to Judaism

Other Planned Community Events

- October 2-3 - Rosh HaShanah Services with Rabbi Lotker
- October 11-12 - Yom Kippur Services with Rabbi Lotker
- October 19 - Sukkah Building, Sukkoth Potluck
- October 25 - Simchat Torah Services
- December 28 - Chanukah Party

*Remembering is
a message from
the heart*



IN MEMORIAM



PLEASE INCLUDE THE NAME(S) OF MY
DEPARTED LOVED ONES DURING YIZKOR/MEMORIAL SERVICE

IN LOVING MEMORY OF
(please print phonetically)

A YIZKOR/MEMORIAL CONTRIBUTION TO CONGREGATION ETZ CHAIM IS ENCLOSED

NAME

ADDRESS

PHONE

Supper in the Sukkah

Please join us
on the patio of our Chavurah House
Saturday, October 19th
at 9:00 am as we
assemble and decorate our
annual community Sukkah

And then return at 6:00 pm
with your potluck delight
so we may feast together
in the glow of our
beautiful Sukkah

*Please RSVP for the potluck to
Rachel at: rhadleyfam@gmail.com
so we can set up enough tables and chairs
to accommodate the number of people who will be coming*

Simchat Torah

Please join us
on the patio
of our Chavurah House
Friday, October 25th
at 7:00 pm
as we gather
to rejoice in the Torah
with Services,
singing and dancing

Welcome to our Puzzle Page!

HIGH HOLIDAYS WORD SEARCH

J C F N M E L H C I L H S A T
O S O O T N G R E R A E I T N
N L R I T E N T I N E P E O O
A R G H Y W I S A N R S R J I
H U I A E Y T H D P H T H U E
L P V L N E S O N U C P S D F
E P E L O A A F V R F T I G I
T I N A H R F A I I E N T E L
T K E H M R H R D T A E J M F
I M S C N N E F D Y S M R E O
K O S I N S N H U E T E K N K
R Y I Z K O R O I C I N E T O
O O C N O I S S E F N O C R O
F I E R D I N L O K G T F L B
J D E L A E S E L P P A O Y R
X X C H A G X S A M E A C H X

APPLES

ATONEMENT

BOOK OF LIFE

CHALLAH

CONFESSION

FASTING

FEASTING

FORGIVENESS

HONEY

JONAH

JUDGEMENT

KITTEL

KOL NIDREI

NEW YEAR

PURITY

ROSH HASHANAH

SHOFAR

SEALED

SINS

TASHLICH

TESHUVAH

TISHREI

VIDDUI

YIZKOR

YOM KIPPUR

Welcome to our Puzzle Page
Sudoku

This one is a bit harder than normal, to give us something to help keep our minds off eating on Yom Kippur

7							6	5
	1		8			9		
			2					
					3	4		
		1			6		7	
	3			9			5	
							3	
9					1			8
6			7	5				9

Our Fiscal Year is July - June

\$500.00 per Year per Family Unit

Please mail your 2024/ 2025 Dues payment to:

Congregation Etz Chaim

P O Box 3752

Merced CA 95344

For those who prefer, we do accept monthly Dues payments year round

Help replenish our Campership Fund!

Every time we make

a purchase through Amazon.com

Amazon.com donates to our Campership Fund when we make purchases by accessing them through their link on our webpage.

(www.jewishmerced.org)

Or type in: **tinyurl.com/supportEtzChaimthroughAmazon**

October Yahrtzeits

Herman Braunstein
 Peggy Braunstein
 Ethel Brodie
 Jerry Colnic
 Mireille Csapo
 Evelyn Tepperman Goodstein
 Jessie Welsh Hofmann
 Marilyn Holman
 Marla Kramer
 Francis Lesser
 Gesa Lewis
 Joseph Matlin
 Mildred Moore
 Elbert Myles
 Sarah Penn
 Frieda Rosenbaum
 Robin Winkelstein
 George Wolf

Birthdays

Jacob Friedman	10/6
Vanessa Hofmann	10/24
Aidan Mook	10/28
Leah Wight	10/31

Campership!

**UPDATED!
ACTIVE!**

Please try to use it!
Amazon.com donates to our
 Campership Fund when you
 make purchases by accessing
 them through their link on our
 webpage
 (www.jewishmerced.org)



*Those we remember in the
 year of their passing:*

Wolf Rosenberg 06/2024

זכרונום לברכה

May their memories be a blessing



John Hofmann and Greg Friedman have donated gallons of blood in the Congregation's name.
 Any Congregant can access blood via the credit accumulated under the Congregation's name.