



Upcoming Events

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

8/9 6:00 pm Dinner Social at Vista Ranch
RSVP by August 5th - link in email

8/24 11:00 am Saturday Potluck Brunch on the patio of our Chavurah House.
RSVP by August 22nd - link in email

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

A U G U S T 2 0 2 4

Notes from our President

I'm not a religious Jew. I was invited by a colleague to my first Etz Chaim event, a Passover Seder, in 2011, and it was great – welcoming, educational, fun, and delicious. However, I didn't really join in activities or become an active member until several years later. I didn't know anybody. I thought "Adult Education" was bible study. (A few of you reading this now might be thinking, "It's not?") I wasn't sure what to wear/bring/expect at the various events.

Once I started participating more regularly in congregational activities – both social ones and services - I got to know who's who and what's what. This eventually brought me to my unexpected current position as President. (How did this happen?!) Because of my own experience in verry slowly joining this charming little congregation, my goals this year as President are to 1) increase membership, and 2) help other new(er) Mercedians like me know what Etz Chaim is all about: what it's like, what it offers, and why it's such a wonderful chosen family to be a part of.

To get the ball rolling, I'm creating "Belinda's Primer on Etz Chaim," a *very* mini guide for newcomers. Those who already know the ins and outs – they who have been members of Etz Chaim for decades – will get to see the congregation through a relatively new member's perspective. Be on the lookout for it at the start of the school year because it's never too late to learn.

In the meantime, we have two activities planned purely for the enjoyment of each other's company, and we hope you will join us. On Friday, August 9, we are meeting at Vista Ranch at 6pm for a no-host dinner with live music. Vista now requires reservations, so please RSVP on the Vista RSVP link in the email no later than Monday, August 5th, if you are interested. The second social is a Bagel Brunch potluck at 11am on Saturday, August 24th, on the patio of the Chavurah House. We'll provide shade, coffee, bagels, and cream cheese; you bring something else to share if you can. Let us know if you're coming by adding your name and dish, if any, to the other link in the email. I hope to see you there!

B'Shalom,
Belinda Braunstein
President

What a wonderful weekend with Rabbi Lotker!

On Friday night we welcomed the new Torah we received from Baltimore Hebrew University by officially walking with her under the chuppah provided by Rabbi Lotker and held aloft by fellow congregants, and situated her in our bookcase/ Aron Kodesh; we formally welcomed our newest Jewish Member, Henry Fultz, who dunked himself in our local Mikvah (AKA Lake Yosemite) 3 times under Rabbi Lotker's supervision and guidance earlier in the afternoon; and the Rabbi showed us differences between our current Torah and the new one, most markedly that our current Torah is a ;Vav' Torah - what's Vav got to do with it? He asked us. Well, each line at the top (or most of them) begin with the Hebrew letter Vav.... WOW!

Welcome Henry to our local tribe, and **CONGRATULATIONS** on your successful conversion.

Rabbi Lotker explaining the process just before we headed out to Process with our new Torah and install her in her new home.



Henry, heading into the 'Mikvah'

Henry, before the 1st dunking

Officially Jewish Henry, getting out of that COLD water!



Saturday Morning Services were great, with Rabbi Lotker reading from our New Torah, and Henry being called to the Torah for the 1st Aliyah, in honor of his recent conversion to Judaism. Services were followed by a wonderful luncheon and the day culminated with Havdalah followed by Saturday evening Adult Ed wherein Rabbi Lotker pointed out some obvious and some subtle Jewish traditions and practices.

Rabbi Lotker reading from our new Torah, during Shabbat Services

Rabbi Lotker leading Havdalah, before Adult Ed



Rabbi Lotker leading Adult Ed - Exploring the Jewishness of Fiddler on the Roof

Welcome to our Puzzle Page!

Tisha B'Av

(The 9th of Av)

The 9th of Av (August 13-14) is the saddest day of the Jewish Year. It is a day of fasting, similar to Yom Kippur, but whereas Yom Kippur is a fast of cleansing and seeking forgiveness and reconnection, Tisha B'Av is a day of great mourning for the Jewish Community.

Many great disasters are said to have befallen on the 9th of Av, including the expulsions of Jews from England and Spain, and the destruction of both the 1st and 2nd temples of Solomon are also attributed to have occurred on this particular date, both disasters leaving the Western Wall standing (currently known as the Wailing Wall). As the siege of Jerusalem preceded the destruction of the Second Temple (in 70 CE), many Jews refrain from public celebrations (like weddings) the 3 weeks prior to Tisha B'Av; and from the 1st of Av in particular, many people don't eat meat and behave as they would when in mourning (cover mirrors, don't shave, etc), and eat a milchig (meatless) meal when they do break their fast.

M K H C R H L T V F S D F K P
 A M D O C T N M E S A P A A O
 D E S T R U C T I O N S S M T
 W L S U J X S E O M O S O V T
 M A J S C A G T G L O U I N A
 H S I F E E T I O V R U A Z E
 H U D L G C H M E N Y T S A F
 P R I X I C O N I N T H Z L C
 X E Q L L N A N F E E I J A H
 I J G I P P G R D F M L S I H
 G S M R J N J W C I P N K H G
 T E M V L E G D A X L K H X A
 S U D O A M E A T L E S S R Y
 T P T U J S T S A X L M L H R
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- | | |
|-------------|--------------|
| AV | NINTH |
| DESTRUCTION | SECOND |
| FAST | SIEGE |
| JERUSALEM | SOLOMON |
| MEATLESS | TEMPLE |
| MILCHIG | TISHA |
| MOURNING | WAILING WALL |

Welcome to our Puzzle Page
Sudoku

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

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!

**We updated our link,
and it now is viable again.**

**Please try it out next time you 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)

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

- Carol Madruga - In loving memory of Wolf Rosenberg
- Ardene Shaeffer - In loving memory of Wolf Rosenberg
- Paul Fromson - In loving memory of Wolf Rosenberg
- Ardene Shaeffer - In loving memory of Sanford Gobler

May their memories be a blessing זכרונם לברכה

- Carol Madruga - In celebration of Henry Fultz' Conversion to Judaism
- Ardene Shaeffer - In celebration of Henry Fultz' Conversion to Judaism
- Ruth Wax - In celebration of Henry Fultz' Conversion to Judaism
- Rachel Hadley - In celebration of Henry Fultz' Conversion to Judaism
- Belinda Braunstein - In celebration of Henry Fultz' Conversion to Judaism
- Paul Fromson - In honor of his Granddaughter Tatum Fromson's outstanding Bat Mitzvah
- Ruth Wax - In honor of her Granddaughter Tatum Fromson's outstanding Bat Mitzvah
- Mark Staats - In celebration of our new Torah
- Paul Fromson - In celebration of our new Torah
- Ardene Shaeffer - In celebration of our new Torah
- Rachel Hadley - In celebration of our new Torah
- Carol Madruga - In honor of Rabbi Lotker, and a wonderful weekend of activities

Other Planned Community Events

- August 9 - No Host Dinner Social at Vista Ranch
- August 24 - Saturday Social Bagel Brunch and Potluck
- 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

Weekly Shabbat Challah Deliveries

Resuming 1st Friday in September

Contact Rachel Hadley (rhadleyfam@gmail.com) for more information, or to be added to or removed from the deliveries list

(Merced area deliveries only)

(No challah deliveries May - August)

August Yahrtzeits

Rose Bauman
 Sylvia Blatt
 Jacqueline Davis
 Lillian Davis
 Al Fromson
 Sanford Gobler
 Bertha Goldstein
 Bill Griffith
 Ruth Lasman
 Lillian Misrack
 Mildred Rebhun
 Lionel Rebhun
 Mary Robinson
 Elisabeth Lowy Rosenzweig
 Isaac Schkloven
 Edna Tucker

Birthdays

Adam Kleitman 8/4
 Tommy Giventer 8/12
 Eileen Ambrosini 8/22
 Elisa Kleitman 8/22

Campership!

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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:*

*Bill Ellis 11/2023
 Debra Kleitman 11/30/2023
 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.