



Upcoming Events

**12/6 7:00 pm Friday
Night Services at our
Chavurah House**

**12/14 Adult Ed
with Rabbi Lotker
(via ZOOM) at our
Chavurah House**

**12/20 Friday Night
6:30 pm Potluck
7:30 pm Lay Led
Services at our
Chavurah House**

**12/28 6:00 PM
Chanukah Party at
Sheryl Wight's**

**12/3 6:15 pm Board
Meeting at Carol
Friedman's home**

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

D E C E M B E R 2 0 2 4

President's Notes

Hello, Etz Chaim family

Have you finished your holiday shopping? Started, at least? Tell me: Is it just my family, or did everyone seem to get socks and/or pajamas for Chanukah as a child on one of the nights? I recall one of my non-Jewish friends being jealous that we had eight nights of gifts, but she didn't know that they were often little items – mostly like stocking stuffers – and one of the nights was going to be socks. Surely this happened to you, too! (Don't get me wrong: I did get some cool items, too. Thanks, Mom!)

I have Chanukah – or Hanukkah if you prefer – on the brain because we have not one, but two holiday-focused events this month. The first is a deep exploration of our light-filled holiday, as well as a bit of comparison to other religions' celebrations of light, by Rabbi Lotker for Adult Education on December 14th. You may think you know all there is to know about it, but I am pretty sure he'll surprise us with something new and possibly shocking.

Two weeks after, we will fill the dark December night with light at the December 28th Chanukah party! You are invited to bring your own Chanukah menorah (a.k.a. hanukkiah) and candles to the party so we can bathe the event in so much light that the sun will become jealous. I also encourage you to join in the pirate gift exchange – like a white elephant exchange but with cool gifts and lots of stealing! Information about the event follows in the Maggid. I am already rubbing my hands with glee as I think about latkes and order Chanukah-themed socks online. Kidding, kidding...

I look forward to seeing you at one or more events this month since we have an event for every type of Etz Chaim member in December – religious, not-so-religious, scholarly, young, not-so-young, and fun-loving: formal service on the 6th, Adult Ed about Chanukah on the 14th, a potluck followed by lay-led service around the dinner table on the 20th, and the aforementioned Chanukah celebration to end all celebrations to cap it all off.

B'shalom,
Belinda

Adult Ed with Rabbi Lotker

So Many Miracles of Hanukkah:



Let's learn together
 on Saturday, December 14th
 at 7:00 PM at our Chavurah House

There's a lot about Hanukkah:

- Like the literal meaning of the word *Hanukkah*.
- Like the reason the rabbis tried to suppress Hanukkah for 500 years.
- Like the amazing cosmological miracle that took place during the first Hanukkah.
- Like why Hanukkah and Sukkot are so closely linked.
- Like why Christianity owes its existence to Hanukkah and why we owe our knowledge of Hanukkah to Christianity.
- Like the deep spiritual lessons of Hanukkah.
- And, last but not least, what is the only correct way to spell Hanukkah/ Chanukah!

a ZOOM link will be provided upon request

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**

HAPPY HANUKKAH



Latkes!



Desserts!

Our congregational party will be on
December 28, 2024
at Sheryl Wight's House
Starting at 6:00



Menorahs!



Dreidels!

Fun
Games
Dreidel
Pirate Gift Exchange

The Congregation will provide latkes

Please bring:

1. A wrapped gift if you plan to participate in the "Pirate Gift Exchange." A desirable gift would be ideal for this, something homemade or purchased, valued between \$15.00 - \$20.00.
2. Your Hanukkah Menorahs and candles to light.
3. Finger foods, an appetizer or dessert.



**Desirable Gifts
for Stealing!**



Yummy Food!

Welcome to our Puzzle Page!

HANNUKAH WORD SEARCH

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

ANTIOCHUS

BLESSINGS

CANDLES

DEDICATION

DOUGHNUTS

DREIDEL

EIGHT

FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS

FRIED FOOD

GELT

HALLEL

HANNUKIAH

KISLEV

LATKES

MACCABEES

MAOZ TSUR

MENORAH

MIRACLE

POTATO PANCAKES

REBELLION

SUFGANIYOT

TEMPLE

Welcome to our Puzzle Page
Sudoku

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

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

Other Planned Community Events

December 28 - Chanukah Party

1st Fridays: 7:00 Formal Lay Led Services with Torah Reading

3rd Fridays: 6:30 Potluck and 7:30 Lay Led Kabbalat Shabbat Services

at our Chavurah House on Parsons Ave

December Yahrtzeits

Jeffrey S. Bernstein
 Ilse Brodman
 Max Brodofsky
 Renee Conan
 Martha Dake
 Rose Friedberg
 Bernard Goldstein
 David Kiriara
 Milton Kleitman
 Ben Lewis
 John Lewis
 Rose Litowsky
 Aaron Passovoy
 Louis Peletz
 Harold Zimmerman

Birthdays

Catherine Friedman	12/1
Harlan Dake	12/2
Cynthia Giventer	12/5
Erica Dake	12/9
Chas Jolly	12/14
Jim Madruga	12/29

Campership!

**UPDATED!
ACTIVE!**

Please try to use it!
Amazon.com donates to our
 Campership Fund when you
 make purchases by accessing
 them through the Amazon 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.