



Upcoming Events

*Masks are
Required
at all Events*

**3/18 7:00 PM Friday Night
Services with Rabbi Joshua
at the Chavurah House
followed by our annual
Hamantaschen bake off
Oneg**

**3/19 10:00 AM Saturday
Morning Torah Study
with Rabbi Joshua at the
Chavurah House**

**3/19 5:30 PM Saturday
Evening Shushan Purim
Potluck Social followed by
a Megillah Reading at the
Chavurah House**

**3/20 10:00 AM Sunday
Morning Kids Club
with Rabbi Joshua at the
Chavurah House**

**3/20 6:15 PM Monday
Evening Board Meeting
at Carol Madruga's 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



M A R C H 2 0 2 2

Notes from Student Rabbi Joshua

Often thought of as one of the most joyful holidays of the Jewish calendar, Purim is just a few weeks away. It is time to pick out our costumes! And time to make another attempt at making the perfect hamantaschen. It is time to have some fun.

The celebration of Purim centers around four *mitzvot*:

The public reading of the *Megillah*, the Book of Esther

Everyone in the community comes together to hear the story of Esther and Mordechai and how Haman's plot during the times of ancient Persia to destroy the Jewish people was foiled. The reading often includes lots of revelry and silliness. With a special emphasis on making noise whenever Haman's name is mentioned in the story.

Eating a festive holiday meal

Like every Jewish holiday, the food is central. While there are no required foods for the holiday meal, many choose to prepare Persian dishes, or any foods that are "hidden", such as dumplings or keplach. Overall, the *mitzvah* is simply to join friends and family for a festive dinner.

Sending *mishloach manot*

Mishloach manot are gift baskets of at least two prepared foods. The gifts of food are then exchanged with friends. Creating the gift baskets makes for a fun family activity, too!

Giving *Matanot la-eyyonim*

Matanot la-eyyonim are monetary gifts to the poor. These gifts are given so that everyone can afford to celebrate Purim and fulfill the previous three *mitzvot*.

Purim is made up of these four *mitzvot* because together they represent the different relationships we have within our community. We read the *Megillah* as a whole community. We share the festive meal with those closest to us and send *mishloach manot* to friends we might not otherwise see during the holiday. And we give gifts to people in need with whom we may or may not have personal relationships. One who fulfills all four *mitzvot* will have shared a moment of joy with their community as a whole and the individuals that make up the community from their closest loved ones to those they are meeting for the first time. Just as Esther saved all of the Jews of Persia rather than only worry about herself and her family, we celebrate Purim by ensuring that Jewish people everywhere are able to experience this joyous affirmation of Jewish survival.

May you share in all of these mitzvot and share in the joy of the festival of Purim.

L'Shalom,
Josh

NOTES FROM OUR PRESIDENT

by Carol Madruga



Dear Friends,

Are you ready for some fun?

On March 19th we will celebrate Purim together, live and in person. We will begin the evening with a dinner feast, just like many years ago in Shushan, Persia. Purim is one of the happiest day in the Jewish year. We celebrate the time when brave Esther defeated the wicked Haman, making Ahasuerus a better king; got her uncle Mordechai the best job in the kingdom; and saved the Jewish people. It is all written in The Book of Esther, a hand written scroll called the Megillah.

Let's wear our costumes and shake our graggers and drink wine each time we hear Rabbi Josh mention the name Haman. Let's also remember the 4 Purim mitzvot (commandments): #1. Hear the Megillah read, #2. send gifts of food to friends (Shelach Manot), #3. celebrate with a festive meal and #4. give tzedakah.

It will be wonderful to gather in person once again.

Hope to see you all.

Carol Madruga

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

- Ardene Shaeffer - in loving memory of William Katz
- Ardene Shaeffer - in loving memory of Francis Katz
- Ardene Shaeffer - in loving memory of Bernard Gobler
- Rachel Hadley - in loving memory of Steve Leonard
- SaraJane Victor - in loving memory of Marty Victor
- SaraJane Victor - in loving memory of Mary Hofmann

May their memories be a blessing

זכרונום לברכה

Spotlight on our Members

Sheryl Wight

Welcome to the latest installment of our Spotlight on Members feature!
 Congregation Etz Chaim has been incorporated in Merced for over 40 years, and we are enjoying getting to know our members, even better.

This month we've swiveled our spotlight to: Sheryl Wight

Sheryl was born in Brooklyn, NY and her family made the trek from there to Queens, and finally to East Meadow, Long Island, NY, where she and her brother had spent most of their childhood years. The year after graduating from college, Sheryl hopped in her 5-speed Subaru and drove cross-country to start a new, exciting life in the golden state, landing in the Bay Area. She lived there for 5 years until she became more focused in her career goals and earned her teaching credential at San Francisco State University. With the lure of a promising teaching job along with encouraging words from cousin Judith, who was already employed as an educator in town, Sheryl moved from the big city to small town Merced, with the prospect of starting a long-term career in town. She was hired as an elementary school teacher in 1987 and worked in education in the city schools for 32 years before retiring in 2020.

Congregation Etz Chaim has offered Sheryl the familiarity of Jewish services and brotherhood in the Jewish faith. Having belonged to an extra large reform congregation in East Meadow, Long Island, NY and only knowing that for years, she longed for the company of Jewish people and the familiar prayer and songs she had grown up with. In a town where most people are of other faiths, Etz Chaim has offered the desired brotherhood with a smaller membership, as well as and a much more relaxed atmosphere. Sheryl became involved with our congregation once her children were born.

Sheryl has 2 adult daughters. Leah is working at an elementary school in the Sacramento City School District as a speech language pathologist, and lives in Folsom. Natalie has recently graduated with her BA, but has yet to discover her career path. She is experimenting with different jobs in various locales. Since both girls graduated with their respective degrees during the height of the pandemic in 2020 without any graduation ceremony or recognition, Sheryl is taking them on a family vacation to Alaska this coming June as a way to celebrate all their hard work and accomplishments that have yet gone "unofficially" recognized. Sheryl also has a dog and cat, having recently lost her beloved rescue lab to old age and a failing body.

In her free time, Sheryl loves to exercise and stay moving. She has been downgraded to "walking only" since knee surgery last year. Her small dog benefits from that and they can be seen walking together all around Merced. She also loves to be creative with paper crafts and in particular, rubber stamping greeting cards. A friend of hers recently introduced her to quilting, which she has enjoyed learning. The joy of reading was reborn since she has so much more time to sit down and relax with a book. Sheryl also stays busy these days substitute teaching a few days per week.

A surprising fact about Sheryl is that a family member on her maternal grandfather's side (who she never met) was co-owner of the Chrysler Building in NYC. She also recently learned that many members of her maternal grandmother's family never made it out of Poland during WW2 and perished in the Holocaust.

*Thank you for sharing some pertinent facts about your life
 and letting us get to you know you a little better!*

Join us for a
Persian Purim Potluck
(Old World/ Mediterranean foods)
at 5:30
followed by a
Megillah Reading
at 7:00
on Saturday, March 19th
at the
Chavurah House

*Please RSVP to Carol Madruga, 209 631-7441
so we know how many places to set.*

Rabbi Visits for the Year

Month	Dates	Holiday (if any)	Friday Night Dinner Host	Friday Night Oneg Host	Saturday Night Dinner Host
August	20 - 22	Rabbi's First Visit	Rachel Hadley	Carol and Rachel	Carol Madruga
September	6 - 7	Rosh Hashana	Greg Friedman	The Board	
September	15 - 16	Yom Kippur	Judith Salzberg		
September	17 - 19	Sukkot	Carol Madruga		Rachel Hadley
October	1 - 3	Simchat Torah			
November	5 - 7	No Holiday	Carol Madruga		
December	3 - 5	Hannukah			
January	14 - 16	Tu B'Shvat			
February	11 - 13	No Holiday			
March	18 - 20	Purim		Hamentaschen Sh'lach Manot	
April	1 - 3	Pre Passover			

Contact Carol Madruga if you would like to sponsor an Oneg Shabbat

2021/2022 BOARD - PROPOSED SLATE OF OFFICERS

President: Greg Friedman
Treasurer: Rachel Hadley

Vice President: John Kirihara
Secretary: Cathy Hofmann

Members at Large:

Serving their 1st year, of a two year term: Serving their 2nd year, of a two year term:

Belinda Braunstein
Carol Friedman
John Hofmann

Linda Anne Rebhun
Ardene Shaeffer
Sheryl Wight

Thank you all for your willingness to serve on the
Board of Officers for our Congregation!

Other Planned Community Events

March 1 - Candlelight Community Prayer Vigil - 5:30 Bob Hart Square - Mi She'Berach

April 23 - Mother's Day Card Making Social

May 7 - Dedication Ceremony of Ner Tamid in honor of Mary Hofmann

May 22 - Shavuoth & Annual Membership Meeting and Voting in the 2022-2023 Board

*TBA - Friday Nights: 6:30 Potluck and 7:30 Lay Led Services
at our Chavurah House on Parsons Ave*

March Yahrtzeits

Lillian Bauman
 Louis Dake
 Gertrude Davis
 Bernard Gobler
 David Gregory
 Brenda Hatcher
 Frances Katz
 William Katz
 Stephen Leonard
 Ignacy Lieberman
 Sam Litowsky
 Joseph Matlin
 Michael Rosenbaum
 Adam Schroeder
 Gerald Shainberg
 Morris Shapiro
 Syl Wachs
 Rose Zwilling

March Birthdays

Dave Colnic	3/4
John Hofmann	3/12
Natalie Wight	3/20
Debra Kleitman	3/29

Campership!

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 deaths:*
Mary Hofmann 5/7/2021
Alan Snelling 8/25/2021

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.

