



## Upcoming Events

**6/2 10:30 Sunday Social and Annual Membership Meeting on the patio of our Chavurah House. Please RSVP to Rachel**

**7/20 6:30 Potluck Dessert Social and Movie Night featuring Fiddler on the Roof, at our Chavurah House**

**7/26 7:00 Rabbi Lotker will lead us in welcoming our new Torah and lead Friday Night Services on the patio of our Chavurah House.**

**7/27 10:00 AM Saturday Morning Services followed by lunch on the patio of our Chavurah House.**

**7/27 7:00 PM Adult Ed with Rabbi Lotker - Deep Jewish Insights from Fiddler on the Roof.**

# 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

## President's Note



J U N E 2 0 2 4

It is bittersweet as I write my newsletter this month. After two years of leading our congregation, my term is up and we have new leadership to take the helm as we continue to grow and move forward.

I believe it has been a great two years. I had big shoes to fill after taking the leadership reigns from Carol Madruga. Thanks to an amazing leadership team, we quickly overcame the hardship of not having a student rabbi and ended up discovering Rabbi Lotker! These past two years Rachel and Linda Anne led our formal and Lay Led services while Belinda and John K. led the charge on all our social functions. These past two years we have continuously welcomed new members and grown as a community and have continued to make the Chavurah House our permanent home for all our events.

The last time I was president we switched over to the new Shabbat and High Holiday prayer books. At the end of this term we will be receiving our new torah, so graciously donated by Baltimore Hebrew Congregation. I couldn't be prouder of all we have accomplished, and I could not have done any of it without all our Board Members, Carol Madruga, Ruth Wax, Carol Davis and everyone who has attended any of our events and helped build our kehillot, or community.

But good things don't have to come to an end. I could not be more excited to invite you to our annual membership meeting on June 2nd when we elect our new slate of officers. Belinda has agreed to lead us over the next two years with Rich K. serving as her Vice-President. Rich has been a staple in our community and a past president. The rest of our board has agreed to stay on and guide our congregation as we continue to grow.

I invite you all to join us for a very special weekend beginning on Friday, July 26th. Rabbi Lotker will be here for the weekend and will lead us as Congregation Etz Chaim welcomes our new torah at Friday night services and also welcomes Henry Fultz as a Jew. PLEASE join us for this very special occasion. Saturday morning, the 27th, Rabbi Lotker will lead us in a full Torah Service and welcome Henry up for his first Aliyah and then read from our new torah for the 1st time. We have more great social activities planned for this month and the upcoming months, so be sure to read more in the rest of the Maggid.

I will end with a heartfelt thank you to all of YOU. You have trusted me to lead our congregation and I want to thank you for that honor. It is truly an honor to lead beside all the amazing board members and see each of you at our services and social events. It truly takes a village to keep our little congregation vibrant.

I hope you feel the same way I do about Congregation Etz Chaim and find your own way to help our congregation grow and continue to be a special place that welcomes everyone.

B'Shalom,  
Greg Friedman

**Please join us on  
Sunday, June 2<sup>nd</sup> at 10:30 AM  
on the Patio of our Chavurah House  
for our  
Annual Membership Meeting Brunch  
And Vote (welcome) the 2024/ 2025 Board**

**Etz Chaim 2024-2025**

**Proposed slate of officers**

**President** – Belinda Braunstein (1st of 2 year term)

**V.P.** – Rich Kleitman

**Secretary** – Cathy Hofmann

**Treasurer** – Rachel Hadley

**Members at large** - (each serves for two years)

Carol Friedman – 1st year

John Kiriara – 2nd year

John Hofmann – 1st year

Ardene Shaeffer – 2nd year

Linda-Anne Rebhun – 1st year

Sheryl Wight – 2nd year

**Please RSVP to Rachel to ensure we have enough tables set.**

Welcome to our Puzzle Page!

Shavuot began as a harvest festival, but it also commemorates the revelation at Sinai and the giving of the Torah. Traditions of the holiday include eating dairy, nighttime learning, and decorating houses and synagogues with plant life.

How much do you know about this spring holiday?

True or False:

- Shavuot is celebrated on the 50<sup>th</sup> day of the counting of the Omer
- The Torah forbids eating meat on the first day of Shavuot
- It is traditional to read/ study the Book of Ruth on Shavuot
- After the Israelites received the Torah, they could no longer eat the meat they had prepared, and thus ate only dairy
- The word “Shavuot” means 7 weeks
- We read the Ten Commandments from either Exodus or Deuteronomy on Shavuot
- Many Jews make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem on Lag B’Omer to visit the gravesite of Rabbi Shimon Ben Yochai
- Counting the Omer consists of counting the 7 weeks (49 Days) between Passover and Shavuot
- The Omer is a time of semi mourning when celebrations (including weddings) are forbidden
- Lag B’Omer is the 33<sup>rd</sup> day of the Counting of the Omer, and it is permissible to celebrate and get a haircut.

Welcome to our Puzzle Page  
Sudoku

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

***Our Fiscal Year is July - June***

*\$500.00 per Year per Family Unit*

*In July, 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**

We gladly accept Donations/ Tributes  
to help defray the cost of bringing  
Rabbi Lotker to Merced for Services

Send all donations to  
Congregation Etz Chaim

P O Box 3752  
Merced, CA 95344

# 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

## Other Planned Community Events

- June 2 - Annual Membership Meeting and 2024 / 2025 Board Elections
- July 20 - Dessert Social and Movie Night
- July 26 - Torah Commemoration with Rabbi Lotker
- July 27 - Shabbat Morning Services with Rabbi Lotker
- July 27 - Adult Ed with Rabbi Lotker
- October 2nd - Rosh Hashanah Services with Rabbi Lotker
- October 11th - Yom Kippur Services with Rabbi Lotker

### The Music Man is playing at Playhouse Merced June 1st and June 2nd

Please support both Playhouse Merced and our own Noah Guidone in his first major theatrical role

Tickets can be purchased on line at:

[07. Music Man via ThunderTix](#)



# June Yahrtzeits

Elaine Drucker  
Frances Fromson  
Max Giventer  
Hyman Greenwald  
Mary Kiriara  
Samuel Lerer  
Celia Matlin  
Nettie Reiter  
Hyman Reiter  
Evelyn May Shoemaker  
Margaret Stohr-Stephenson

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

*Phillip Pansky 09/30/2023*

*Bill Ellis 11/2023*

*Debra Kleitman 11/30/2023*

**זכרונום לברכה**

*May their memories be a blessing*

# Birthdays

Anya Schwartz	6/7
Michael Kiriara	6/15
Judy Dake	6/17
Rich Kleitman	6/17



[www.Jewishmerced.org](http://www.Jewishmerced.org)

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.