

The Maggid July 2026

Congregation Etz Chaim

P O Box 3752
Merced CA 95344



This year, Tisha B'Av falls on July 22nd. On Tisha B'Av we remember and commemorate the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem - not once but twice. The first Temple was destroyed in 423 BCE by the Babylonians, leaving only the Western Wall standing; it was rebuilt and later destroyed again in 69 CE by the Romans, and yet again the Western Wall was left standing.

Tisha B'Av (the 9th day of the Jewish month of Av), is the saddest day on the Jewish calendar. We fast from the evening on the 8th of Av until full dark on the 9th of Av.

During this period of mourning we do not:

- Eat or drink
- Wear leather
- Bathe
- Apply ointments or creams
- Engage in intimate activities
- Send gifts
- Wear fine clothing
- Participate in outings or pleasurable activities
- Study Torah (except Lamentations, and other sad elegies marking the various tragedies that befell our people.)

During morning Services we do not adorn our Torah, nor do we adorn ourselves with Tallit or Tefillin.

President's Message from Rich Kleitman

As your incoming President I have three simple messages: Welcome, Thank You and Join Me.

Welcome to a new year with Congregation Etz Chaim. This will be my third time serving as President of the group and I welcome the challenge. I hope you all will welcome our new student Rabbi and continue to enjoy our activities. My first two stints as President took place one year before each of my children's mitzvot. I felt like I was keeping the group together so they could complete their Jewish Education and get a great start on life. If you know my kids you know I lucked out on those dreams. Now I feel like I am serving for me, because I get so much from being a member of this congregation.

I have much to be thankful for. My two kids, my 42 years with my wife of blessed memory, success in work and in my hobbies. Most importantly I am thankful for a congregation which has supported me through both the good times and the difficult times. I recently met with Carol Madruga, our Vice President. She noticed some swelling in my leg and made me promise to go to the ER and get it checked out. Luckily it was not anything painful or dangerous, but it did land me in the hospital for a week. Other than my daughter, the folk who came to visit and called to check on me were mostly fellow members of our congregation. Just one of the many times this group has been there for me. I accepted the role of Vice President not because I wanted to serve as President again, but because I was asked to help Belinda. I have to tell you I am incredibly thankful for all she has done to lead us for the past two years, I hope I can be at least half as successful. If so, the congregation will continue to thrive. So again I say: Thank You.

I have always believed that a leader has two tasks: first to get the job done right and second to keep the group together. It is my hope that you can join me and assist me in doing both. It takes a group for there to be a leader. You all are that group, and keeping you together, thriving and successful is my goal. In my past presidencies we always had a student Rabbi, so I will be falling back on some of those memories and skills to plan this year, however it will not be a success unless we make sure it meets your needs. My favorite prayer is the Shehechianu, the blessing that thanks G-D who has given us life, who sustains us and who has brought us to this season/ moment. My grandmother said it at every family gathering. I hope we can join together and say it often. My favorite Psalm (133:1) is Henei Ma Tov; a Hebrew song of Unity. It is my dearest hope that we can all dwell together in unity.

B'Shalom,
Rich Kleitman



JEWISH FEDERATION OF CENTRAL CALIFORNIA

Be part of something special!

Together WE do Extra-Ordinary Things!



THE STRENGTH OF A PEOPLE
THE POWER OF COMMUNITY

I am very proud to represent Congregation Etz Chaim as a board member of the Jewish Federation Central California.

The mission of this organization is to build and strengthen the Jewish community locally, overseas, and in Israel.

A few of our active committees include:

Jewish Family Services - To provide education, social services and support for the Central Valley Jewish Communities from Merced to Visalia, regardless of age, income or synagogue affiliation, and to strengthen Jewish identity, build community and fortify family life.

Jewish Community Relations - This committee addresses issues important in our Jewish Communities such as combatting antisemitism, promoting strong alliance with Israel, Holocaust education and related topics.

Event and Social Committee - To create community wide events that will involve our donors and create content new to our communities.

Yom Haatmautz Celebration -To celebrate Israel Independence Day, which brings together community, fun, food and awareness.

Please sign up for our weekly newsletter at www.jewishfederationcentralcalifornia.org and consider supporting our Jewish Federation by making a pledge today.

Thank you so much,

Carol Madruga

Welcome to our 2026/ 2027 Board

President (*1st of 2-year term*): Rich Kleitman

Vice President: Carol Madruga

Secretary: Cathy Hofmann

Treasurer: Rachel Hadley

Members at large in 1st year of 2-year term:

Henry Fultz, Greg Friedman, Belinda Braunstein

Members at large in 2nd year of 2-year term:

Sheryl Wight, Ardene Shaeffer, John Kiriara

Welcome to our new Student Rabbi

Thanks to great efforts on behalf of our 2025/2026 Board and in particular our Rabbinical Liaison, Carol Madruga, Student Rabbi Joy Plummer will be leading us this year!

The Board is currently working with the Student Rabbi to determine the dates she will be in Merced, and the full calendar will be posted in our August Maggid.

We are all looking forward to meeting her in August, before she returns to lead our High Holiday Services in September.

Activities

Please plan to join us:

**Friday, July 17, 6:30 pm Potluck dinner followed by
7:30 pm Lay Led Kabbalat Shabbat Services,
at our Chavurah House**

Other Upcoming Community Events

July 11- Movie and Ice Cream Night – at our Chavurah House

August 1 - Swim Party at the Kiriara residence

September 11-12 - Rosh Hashanah Services

September 20-21 - Yom Kippur Services

September 26 – Annual Sukkah Building (morning) and Potluck Dinner (evening)

2026/ 2027 Annual Dues are DUE

Our Fiscal Year is July - June

\$500.00 per Year per Family Unit

Please mail your 2026/ 2027 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

**Monthly 6:30 Potluck and 7:30 Lay Led Kabbalat Shabbat Services
at our Chavurah House on Parsons Ave
will resume in October**

Puzzle Page Sudoku

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

More Beautiful than Before...



*Please send your tributes to:
Congregation Etz Chaim, P O Box 3752, Merced, CA 95344*

Congregation Etz Chaim gratefully acknowledges the following tributes:

Carol Madruga in loving memory of her sister Elaine Drucker

Rachel Hadley in loving memory of her grandfather Sam Miller

Rachel Hadley in loving memory of her good friend Celia Matlin

May their memories be a blessing זכרונם לברכה

Carol Madruga in honor of the marriage of Leah Wight and Eric Crawford



July Yahrzeits

Louise Coleman
Mina Elaine Cuker
Gertrude Kalmus
Otto Knoll
Samuel Miller
Ann Passovoy
Sam Rosenbaum
Nandor Rosenzweig
Grace Salzberg
Judith Sharpe
Charles Stephenson
Doris Talley
Estelle Yamshon

June Yahrzeits

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

In the year of their passing

Mary Kaplan (01- 2026)
Daniel Goodstein (09- 2025)

זכרונם לברכה

May their memories be a blessing

Birthdays

Anya Schwartz	6/7
Steven Lerer	6/8
Michael Kiriara	6/15
Judy Dake	6/17
Richard Kleitman	6/17
Lori Atkins	6/17
Rebekah Friedman	7/1
Henry Williams	7/3
Sam Tenenbaum	7/4
Sheryl Wight	7/4
Zoe Jolly	7/6
Jeff Tenenbaum	7/7
Zachary Kiriara	7/10
Ardene Shaeffer	7/12
Paul Silva	7/19
Ann De Ayora	7/21

Sudoku Solution

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