



Upcoming Events

4/5 6:00 pm
Board Meeting
via ZOOM

4/9 6:30 pm
Friday Night, Lay Led
Kabbalat Shabbat
Services
Via ZOOM

4/11 9:00 am
Walk and Talk
(and trash pick up)
Meet at the
Via Moraga

4/14 7:00 pm
Game Night!
Zoom link will be
provided via email

4/23 6:30 pm
Friday Night
Distanced Shabbat
Potluck and Social
on the patio at the
Chavurah House.
We will move indoors
if the weather turns
cold. Please RSVP to
Carol Madruga.

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 P R I L 2021

Notes from our President

Tikun Olam, a Hebrew phrase that means repair the world. The phrase is found in a body of classical rabbinic teachings called the Mishnah, and it is often used when discussing social issues. This past year it seems as though our world needs so much repair. Although it is easy to sit back and say “what could I possibly do?” Members of our little Congregation Etz Chaim have found ways to make a difference. A group of us have been taking a walk together once a month and picking up trash from our neighborhoods (lots of trash). Ruth has been helping distribute food once a week at The United Methodist Church, and I have been using my nursing skills to give Covid vaccines. Belinda has entertained us via Zoom with game night and thanks to Rachel, Greg and Carol Davis, we have had Zoom Shabbat services. This past Sunday we had 14 congregation volunteers weeding and cleaning up the yard at the Chavurah House.

Please let us know if you have ideas of how to make a difference, and watch the Maggid for announcements if you would like to join us in one (or more) of our currently planned activities.

Call one another to check in, and please do take your opportunity to get vaccinated, so we can begin to meet in person once again.

Looking forward to seeing you again very soon.

Happy Spring!

Carol

Save the Dates

4/9 6:30 Lay Led Kabbalat Shabbat Services - Zoom link will be provided via email.

4/11 9:00 am Monthly Walk and Talk—Meet at the Via Moraga, contact Carol Madruga for details

4/14 7:00 pm Game Night! - Zoom link will be provided via email. Please RSVP

4/23 6:30 pm Distance Shabbat Dinner - Chavurah House patio - **Please RSVP**

We will eat indoors if the weather is inclement; therefore we are limiting participation to 10 people

5/7 6:30 pm Distance Shabbat Dinner on the patio at Chavurah House followed by Lay Led Kabbalat Shabbat Services

Fun Times

Thanks to Belinda Braunstein for hosting a VERY entertaining evening via ZOOM and introducing us to several **really fun** online games!

Plan to join us on Wednesday April 14th at 7:00 pm for an evening of laughter and camaraderie.

<https://bash.video/9hd-wvp-nh4/Etz-Chaim-Game-Night>

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

Rachel Hadley - in appreciation for all of your help at the Chavurah House, both financial and physical, and for your emotional support too! I am a very lucky person to have such a warm and loving congregational family!

Ardene Shaeffer - in loving memory of Bernard Gobler

Ardene Shaeffer - in loving memory of Frances Katz

Ardene Shaeffer - in loving memory of William Katz

Carol Madruga - in loving memory of Francine Conae

May their memories be a blessing

זכרונום לברכה

We've confirmed the Slate for our new Board,
And it looks like the same Board all over again!

Our members stepping up for another year:

President - Carol Madruga
Vice President - Greg Friedman
Treasurer - Rachel Hadley
Secretary - Cathy Hofmann
Members At Large -
Belinda Braunstein, Linda Anne Rebhun, Judith
Salzberg, Ardene Shaeffer, Sheryl Wight

We have up to 3 Members At Large positions
available to be filled.

Please volunteer to help support
and lead our Congregation!

The Board meets the 1st Monday every month,
at 6:00 pm, via Zoom

**We will vote in the Board during our
Annual General Membership Meeting and Brunch
on Sunday, May 16th, at 10:30 am
on the patio of the Chavurah House**

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 a member family who is a treasure to us all: The Friedman Four

Both *Greg* and *Catherine* are California natives, *Greg* from Stockton and *Catherine* from Fresno. They met in college while both were attending Fresno State, and that is just the beginning of the story with these two. They lived for a short time in Salinas, but Merced became their home when *Greg's* job at *Marie Callendar's* brought them to town with the opening of the new restaurant many years ago. *Catherine* was pleased about moving to Merced because it enabled her to be closer to her family, who reside in Fresno. The Friedman family has been involved with Etz Chaim since 2003, when our beloved student Rabbi Ruth reached out to them and invited them for a potluck dinner. They have been very active members ever since then. Our congregation has helped instill a Jewish identity for their children Jacob and Rebekah, and has opened its arms as a loving community for all of their family.

Catherine teaches first grade at Franklin School for Merced City School District. She has been with the district for 21 years.

Greg currently works for the ROP department at the Merced County Office of Education. He spent the beginning of his working years in the restaurant industry. He is a bike enthusiast and spends much of his free time participating in long haul bike rides all around the state. He wisely (editor's opinion) has retired from Iron Man triathlons.

Rebekah is 19 and is currently a sophomore at UC Davis, studying Communications and Sociology. Due to her participation with us from a young age, she continues to be very active in the Jewish community wherever she goes. She is an enthusiastic participant in Hillel at UC Davis and has attended URJ Camp Newman for 13 summers, both as a camper and an employee.

Jacob is 16 and a sophomore at Merced High School. He is very active in FCCLA (Family, Career, Community Leaders of America), and is a tennis expert, playing on the varsity tennis team.

The family has a pet cat named *Stripes*. She had the good fortune of showing up on the family's back patio and they fell in love with her. *Stripes* became a part of the family, saving the most love and affection for her favorite human *Greg*, even though he originally didn't want to keep her (Shh....don't tell *Stripes*!)

Friedman family hobbies include traveling, attending live theatre performances, doing puzzles, and playing board games. Of course, *Greg* loves cycling, and occasionally *Catherine* rides with him.

Now for some Friedman family trivia:

Rebekah's first concert was with Taylor Swift when she was 8 years old. *Jacob* owns 11 Rubix cubes and can solve them in under a minute. (Wow!!) With the exception of Las Vegas, prior to marrying *Greg*, *Catherine* had never been outside of California. *Greg* has known his best friend since kindergarten!

Thank you Friedman family, for being such great supporters of Etz Chaim. You are a familiar face at Friday night services and all activities with our congregation.

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

Let's meet monthly for a
Walk and Talk,
and pick up trash we find along the way.
We'll start this month's Walk and Talk
on Sunday, April 11th
at 9:00 AM,
in the Via Moraga Neighborhood.
We'll meet by Yosemite Ave and the bike path
on Lake Road, and we'll walk towards
the Lake/ University,
and come back.
Please bring a garbage bag and gloves,
and wear comfortable walking shoes,
sunglasses and a hat.

Please call Carol Madruga for more information.

April Yahrtzeits

Herman Berger
Abraham Braunstein
Dina Braunstein
Vince Campi
Sol Drucker
Jacob Goodstein
Bill Hofmann
Saul Matlin
Eric Pollak
Fanny Rosenbaum
Diane Russell
Dulce Spangler
Hilda Strangarity
Abe Tenenbaum

May Yahrtzeits

Francine Conae
John Cornejo
Bennett Dake
LeRoy Katz
Jenny Kleeblatt
Elliott Lewis
Chaya Lieberman
Maureen Miller
Max Osband
Abraham Reiter
Rose Robinson
Willard Robinson

Upcoming Birthdays

Lyra Hofmann Mook	4/18
John Kiriara	4/21
Greg Ambrosini	4/22
Cathy Hofmann	4/23
Noah Guidone	5/6
Howard Shainberg	5/10
Marlowe Shaeffer	5/12
Dempsey Hofmann	5/14
Sara Giventer Kaber	5/28
Mathilde Hofmann Mook	5/31

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Congregation Etz Chaim
P O Box 3752 Merced CA
95344