



Upcoming Events

*Masks are
Required
at all Events*

**4/1 7:00 PM Friday Night
Services with Rabbi Joshua
at the Chavurah House**

**4/2 10:00 AM Saturday
Morning Torah Study
with Rabbi Joshua at the
Chavurah House**

**4/2 5:30 PM Saturday
Evening BBQ Potluck
Social followed by a game
with Rabbi Joshua at the
Chavurah House**

**4/3 10:00 AM Sunday
Morning Kids Club
with Rabbi Joshua at the
Chavurah House**

**4/4 6:15 PM Monday
Evening Board Meeting
at Carol Madruga's House**

**4/23 11:00 Mother's Day
Card Making Social at the
Chavurah House
(Donations for materials
are appreciated)**

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 3 7 5 2 M E R C E D C A 9 5 3 4 4



A P R I L 2 0 2 2

Notes from Student Rabbi Joshua

As the hours of daylight continue to stretch, day by day, and the signs of the rebirth of spring begin to showcase the beauty of nature all around us, the Jewish people know that the Festival of Passover is just around the corner. In just a few short weeks we will gather with friends and family for the Passover Seder, which is the ritual retelling of the Exodus from slavery, our journey from Egypt, our passage across the Red Sea and our entry into the land of Israel. While the ancient story feels very routine to many of us, we learned over the past two pandemic Seders, even what was once thought to be routine, should not be taken for granted.

Certainly, three years ago a Zoom Seder, even for friends and family, spread across the country and the world was not a thing. Even the roles that each of us felt that we played in our own family and around our own Seder tables may have been too rigid.

For example, One of the key elements of the Seder is the idea that we teach our children about the story of the Exodus using first person language. We will say "It is because of what God did for me when I went free from Egypt" (Ex 13:8). Yet none of us have this first hand experience of having traveled the journey of the Exodus. Instead we take this first person language based upon our age. The traditional Seder has the eldest, possibly the grandparents and parents, speaking to the children and young adults at the table. With the exception of the youngest at the table asking the four questions, the conversation is all in one direction. From the oldest to the youngest.

Let me suggest that we have an opportunity to allow everyone at the Seder table to be both a teacher and a learner. The information flow need not run in just one direction. While the emphasis is on educating the next generation, let us not forget that we all have the opportunity to find new meaning in this festival season. Additionally, as we consider the aspects of the four children, the wise, the wicked, the simple, and the one who does not know who to ask, we should remember that one's lot is not cast forever and we all embody elements of each child at different times.

Judaism has a tenant that calls upon all of us to be lifelong learners. Thus while the story may remain constant - the way the stories resonate with us and how they impact us can change from year to year. Additionally, many, especially the younger folks amongst us, often find new ways to connect our story with the modern world in bringing current suffering to the forefront of our minds or by introducing additional symbols to the Seder plate.

As we celebrate the rebirth that comes with spring, the freedom of our people that comes with Passover, and the excitement that comes with sharing our Seder table with family and friends, as we learn to deal with COVID-19 for the long term, let's not take the story of Passover for granted or settle into static roles of either being a teacher or a learner. Let's challenge each one of us to try to be both a teacher and a learner as you celebrate your own Seder and subsequent Passover.

Rabbi Joshua's article is continued on Page 3

NOTES FROM OUR PRESIDENT

by Carol Madruga

Dear Friends,

Spring is in the air and that is always a good sign. After a winter of being indoors due to cold dreary weather, we throw open our doors and welcome the warm air and blossoms surrounding us. In the springtime we celebrate Passover, the oldest Jewish holiday. It was under the first full moon of spring so many years ago that the Israelites escaped from Egyptian slavery. Jews all over the world remember this event by eating special foods linked to the bitterness of slavery and the sweetness of freedom. The highlight of Passover is the Seder, a dramatic and somewhat playful meal rich with stories, food and song.



Although our Congregation is not hosting a Community Seder this year, I hope you will be able to share Passover with family and friends. Later in April we will celebrate Yom HaShoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day. In 1933, Adolf Hitler and his followers started implementing their racist ideals of persecution of Jews in Germany. By 1941 the Jews were being killed in mass genocides lead by Hitler. Liberation came in 1945 when Hitler was defeated. By understanding what happened when the world allowed intolerance and hatred, perhaps we can prevent this from happening again. On Yom HaShoah we remember the Holocaust and try to imagine the pain of the lost Jews of Europe. We also remember those who risked their lives to save their Jewish neighbors. Take time to remember.

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

Carol Madruga - in loving memory of Philip Victor
 Carol Madruga - in loving memory of Marty Victor

May their memories be a blessing

זכרונום לברכה

Rabbi Joshua's article continues below:

During this period of reflection, I also want to share my gratitude and appreciation to the entire Etz Chaim community for welcoming me into your faith community and allowing me to serve as your Student Rabbi for this past year. It has been an honor to meet all of you, share worship and learning with you and have the chance to build relationships together. As many of you know, my class at HUC-JIR has had a rather atypical first two-years due to the impact of the pandemic so my "year in Israel" is being condensed into a semester in Israel, so my Passover visit will be my last to Merced. For my third year of study, I hope to focus more heavily on the role of the student Rabbi as an educator to help provide an additional perspective for my intellectual curiosity.

Again, I want to thank each of you for your warmth and hospitality and for welcoming me as you have. Thank you also to the leadership of Congregation Etz Chaim - Carol Madruga, Greg Friedman, Rachel Hadley, Cathy Hofmann, Belinda Braunstein, Ardene Shaeffer, Sheryl Wight - who are willing to play a leadership role in helping to build this Jewish community.

With warmth & appreciation,

Student Rabbi Josh

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	Linda Anne Rebhun
Carol Friedman	Ardene Shaeffer
John Hofmann	Sheryl Wight

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

Other Planned Community Events

April 23 - Mother's Day Card Making Social (donations for materials appreciated)

May 1 - Friendship Picnic at United Methodist Church

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*

Farewell to Joshua

BBQ Social / Potluck

at 5:30

followed by games

on Saturday, April 2nd

at the

Chavurah House

**The Congregation will provide
Burgers and Hotdogs**

*Please RSVP to Carol Madruga, 209 631-7441
To let us know how many people are coming
And what side dish you plan to bring*

April Yahrtzeits

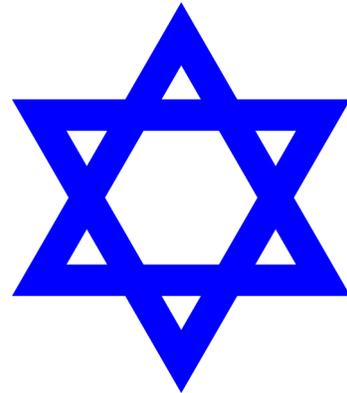
Eta Bauman
 Herman Berger
 Dina Braunstein
 Abraham Braunstein
 Vince Campi
 Sol Drucker
 Jacob Goodstein
 Bill Hofmann
 Saul Matlin
 Eric Pollak
 Fanny Rosenbaum
 Diane Russell
 Dulce Spangler
 Hilda Strangarity
 Abe Tenenbaum

April Birthdays

Lyra Bela Hofmann Mook	4/18
Sebastien Csapo	4/20
John Kiriara	4/21
Greg Ambrosini	4/22
Cathy Hofmann	4/23
Ruth Wax	4/27

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:
 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.

