

The Maggid Apr 2026

Congregation Etz Chaim

P O Box 3752
Merced CA 95344



Passover (Pesach) is one of the most significant Jewish holidays, commemorating the Exodus of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. Its name comes from the miracle in which God “passed over” the houses of the Israelites, sparing them from death during the tenth plague on Egypt.

Passover takes place in early spring, beginning on the 15th of the Hebrew month of Nisan and lasting for seven days in Israel and eight days in the Diaspora. During Passover, Jews abstain from all leavened products (hametz) and eat unleavened bread (matzah). The primary ritual of Passover is the seder, a 14 step ritual meal that commemorates the Exodus from Egypt and forecasts future redemption as well. “Seder” means “Order” and refers to these building blocks of the ritual meal.

1. Kadesh - Kiddush
Blessing the wine at the start of the meal
2. Urchatz - Wash
The Leader washes hands in preparation for eating the Spring Vegetable
3. Karpas - Spring Vegetable
Any vegetable that’s not bitter may be eaten (parsley, celery, green onion)

4. Yachatz – Divide

Break the middle matzah into two parts. The larger part gets wrapped and saved for the conclusion of the meal.

5. Maggid - Narrate

- Point out the symbols of affliction on the Seder Plate
- Invite strangers to join
- Refill the wine cups
- The youngest person at the Seder asks the Four Questions
- Respond to the Four Questions
- The Four Sons
- The Ten Plagues – since our ‘cup of salvation’ cannot be regarded as full when we recall the suffering of the Egyptians, a drop of wine is removed from our cup when each plague is mentioned
- Dayenu - “it would have been enough for us”
- Thankful for God’s deliverance, we praise God with the word of praise” “Hallel” (or “Halleluia”)
- Two Psalms of Praise
- Drink wine, with the blessing of salvation

6. Rochtzah – Wash

Now that we are ready to eat our meal, we all wash our hands, and say the blessing

7. Motzi Matzah – Eating Matzah

The first food at the meal is the matzah. We say our normal Hamotzi (for bread) and then a blessing for Matzah

8. Maror – Bitter Herbs

Dip the Parsley into Salt Water to remind us of the bitterness of Slavery, and say a blessing before eating it

9. Korech – Hillel Sandwich

Combine horseradish and haroset on a piece of matzah, and remember that Hillel used to combine lamb, matzah and bitter herbs to intermingle slavery and liberation in one mouthful

10. Shulchan Orech

A Feast! As we celebrate our fellowship with each other and God

11. Tzafun – Dessert

- a. The Afikomen is found and everyone gets a piece

12. Barech – (Birkat haMazon) – Grace After Meals

After Birkat haMazon, fill the third cup of wine and say the blessing

13. Hallel – Psalms of Praise

Sing songs – Chad Gadya, Adir Hu, Echad Mi Yodea...

14. Nirtzah - Conclusion

L’Shanah HaBa’ah B’Yerushalayim (Next Year in Jerusalem!)

President's Message from Belinda Braunstein

It's only April, yet we are already nearing the end of the congregational yearly calendar! Of course, the biggest upcoming event is this weekend's community Passover Seder. RSVPs are required, so if you plan to come but didn't RSVP by the March 31st deadline, email Rachel at rhadleyfam@gmail.com **right now** to see if there is still space available.

This year, Greg Friedman will be leading the seder using newly purchased copies of the JewBelong Haggadah, which comes with a "no-JewBarrassment (that nervous feeling when you think you should know something Jewish but you don't, and yes, we've all been there) guarantee." It is a very modern Haggadah.

We have just one more potluck followed by lay-led service, which will be on Friday, April 17th, beginning at 6:30pm. Come for the excellent food, a meaningful service, and welcoming camaraderie. A few days after that, we should hear from Hebrew Union College about whether or not we can expect a student rabbi in the fall. If not, Carol Madruga and others have been working on a backup plan related to hiring a very experienced rabbi for High Holy Days and occasional services. We hope to have some details for you - along with board-supplied bagels and lox - at the annual membership general meeting and brunch potluck on Sunday, May 3rd, at 10:30am.

I look forward to seeing you soon. May your house be free of chametz (leavened grain products), your matzah balls fluffy, and your brisket tender. May you enjoy this holiday with family and friends.

Chag sameach,

Belinda Braunstein

Please Join us on
Sunday, May 3rd for our
Annual Membership Meeting
and Board Elections

10:30 AM

On the Patio of our Chavurah House

Coffee, Bagels and Cream Cheese
will be provided

Potluck all other Brunch items

*The Slate of Officers is still being finalized.
We will send it out via separate email shortly.*

**Please RSVP to Belinda Braunstein
bbraunstein@ucmerced.edu**

Activities

Please plan to join us:

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

Other Upcoming Community Events

May 3 - Annual Membership Meeting and 2026/ 2027 Board Elections

2025/ 2026 Annual Dues are DUE

Our Fiscal Year is July - June

\$500.00 per Year per Family Unit

Please mail your 2025/ 2026 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

April - August

***(Schedule changes should be anticipated -
but we'll strive for)***

**3rd Fridays: 6:30 Potluck and 7:30 Lay Led Kabbalat Shabbat Services
at our Chavurah House on Parsons Ave**



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

Congregation Etz Chaim gratefully acknowledges the following tributes:

Rich Kleitman in loving memory of his grandfather Jacob Goodstein

Rich Kleitman in loving memory of his uncle Jacob Goodstein

May their memories be a blessing זכרונם לברכה

Rachel Hadley in Honor of those who helped weed and clean our Chavurah House: Carol Madruga, Belinda Braunstein, Rich Kleitman and Sheryl Wight. It looks GREAT!

Puzzle Page Sudoku

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

More Beautiful than Before...



April Yahrzeits

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
John Kiriara 4/21
Greg Ambrosini 4/22
Cathy Hofmann 4/23

In the year of their passing

Mary Kaplan (01- 2026)
Daniel Goodstein (03- 2026)

זכרונם לברכה

May their memories be a blessing

Sudoku Solution

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