



# 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

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## Notes from Student Rabbi Joshua

### Upcoming Events

*Masks are  
Required  
at all Events*

**10/1 7:00 PM Friday Night  
Services with Rabbi Joshua  
via ZOOM**

**10/2 10:00 AM Saturday  
Morning Torah Study with  
Rabbi Joshua via ZOOM**

**10/2 7:00 PM Saturday  
Evening Adult Ed with  
Rabbi Joshua via ZOOM**

**10/3 10:00 AM Sunday  
Morning Kids Club with  
Rabbi Joshua via ZOOM**

**10/4 6:15 PM Monday  
Evening Board Meeting  
at Carol Madruga's House**

**10/16 6:00 PM Saturday  
Evening Distanced  
Potluck Dinner /  
Havdallah / Social  
on the Patio of the  
Chavurah House**

Shalom!

Simchat Torah marks the end of a month filled with significant Jewish holidays one right after the next. Simchat Torah, is literally translated as meaning “rejoicing in Torah”. Simchat Torah celebrates our completion of the annual reading of the entire Torah and also celebrates our immediate start of the reading of the beginning of the Torah. There is significant meaning in the fact that it is not enough to complete the annual reading but we must immediately begin the annual cycle of reading right away with no gap. There are a range of ways communities celebrate Simchat Torah. Most often, the community comes together in song and dance while parading the Torah around their sanctuary.

We carry the Torah in a circle seven times because seven is a symbol of completeness. Just as the creation of the world took seven days, we create seven circles to celebrate a complete reading of Torah. Some say, we actually form eight circles with the eighth circle being at the time when we read the final words of Deuteronomy and read the first words of Genesis. The eighth circle goes beyond completeness just as the divine is beyond our understanding of completeness.

The tradition of reading the whole Torah annually dates back to 7th century CE in Babylon. The Babylonian rabbinic tradition split the 5 books of Moses into 54 portions which could be read in a single year. Since there are more portions than weeks in the year, some portions were read as a pair. In 5th century CE Palestine, there was a triennial pattern. The Palestinian tradition divided the Torah into smaller portions that were read over the course of three years. The majority of Jews follow the Babylonian tradition of completing the full reading in one year, however there are some that have attempted to return to the Palestinian system.

When we celebrate Simchat Torah as a community, we are joining our celebration with all Jews from around the world in the current era and are also linking our community with all Jews throughout our history. This is a powerful reality and intensifies the way we celebrate and the way we read Torah. We read and study the exact same words of Torah that have guided the Jewish people for thousands of years. Just as Rabbi Ben Bag Bag said “Turn it over, and [again] turn it over, for all is therein” (Pirkei Avot 5:22).

Each time we read and reread Torah, we discover new insights within the Torah as well as within ourselves. As you make meaning of this holiday and embrace it, please understand that the Torah, our Tree of Life, is one of the most significant physical items in our tradition that has been passed through the ages linking our modern day practices with those of our patriarchs and matriarchs. The act of renewal and repetition of the reading cycle that we are embracing here in our community is being done in very similar fashion across the nation and across the world. May your connection to Torah inspire you, renew you and help you find meaning and purpose in the year ahead.

L’Shalom,  
Josh

## 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: Phaedra and Cathy Hofmann**

Both Cathy and Phaedra were born in Merced and grew up in tight-knit neighborhoods. As young adults, they both left to experience life outside the Central Valley, but made their way back to earn degrees and pursue careers as teachers.

The Hofmanns have a very full house. Aside from Cathy and Phaedra, there are Aidan, Lyra, and Mathilde. Aidan and Lyra attend Buhach Colony in Atwater. Aidan plays the flute and is co-captain of the Buhach Color-guard. Lyra is an incredible artist and creative force. Mathilde is part of the public Montessori program at Ada Givens in Merced. The human members are surrounded by a pack of four-legged animals. They have four dogs and three cats, which really means the family is locked in a constant battle with animal hair!

Cathy and Phaedra are both teachers, with Phaedra teaching at the high school level and Cathy teaching sixth grade. In their free time, they enjoy travel, exercise, music, puzzles, reading, paddle-boarding, theater, and true crime podcasts.

Cathy was pretty much "born into" Congregation Etz Chaim, as her parents were founding members. Although she has not always been active, Cathy has participated in congregational activities her entire life. The family loves the feel and intimacy of a small congregation. They like that they can participate in religious ceremonies and events in a way that is, perhaps, less formal and a little more comfortable than larger congregations with several more members.

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

### 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*

Ardene Shaeffer - In loving memory of Mary Hofmann.  
Rachel Hadley - in loving memory of her Grandmother Mildred Moore

*May their memories be a blessing זכרונם לברכה*

## Rabbi Visits for the Year

Month	Dates	Holiday (if any)	Friday Night Dinner Host	Friday Night Oneg Host	Saturday Night Dinner Host
August	20 - 22	Rabbi's First Visit	Rachel Hadley	Carol and Rachel	Carol Madruga
September	6 - 7	Rosh Hashana	Greg Friedman	The Board	
September	15 - 16	Yom Kippur	Judith Salzberg		
September	17 - 19	Sukkot			
October	1 - 3	Simchat Torah			
November	5 - 7	No Holiday			
December	3 - 5	Hannukah			
January	14 - 16	Tu B'Shvat			
February	11 - 13	No Holiday			
March	18 - 20	Purim		Hamentaschen Shlach Manot	
April	1 - 3	Pre Passover			

*Contact Carol Madruga if you would like to sponsor an Oneg Shabbat*

*Don't Forget to Pay Your Dues!*

## Other Planned Community Events

**October 16** - Community Potluck / Havdalah Social

**November 20** - Community Potluck / Havdalah Social

**December 18** - Community Potluck / Havdalah Social

**January 29** - Community Potluck / Havdalah Social

**February 26** - Community Potluck / Havdalah Social

**April 16** - Community Seder

**May 28** - 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 Parson's Ave*

# October Yahrtzeits

Herman Braunstein  
 Peggy Braunstein  
 Ethel Brodie  
 Jerry Colnic  
 Evelyn Tepperman Goodstein  
 Jessie Welsh Hofmann  
 Marilyn Holman  
 Marla Kramer  
 Francis Lesser  
 Gesa Lewis  
 Joseph Matlin  
 Mildred Moore  
 Elbert Myles  
 Sarah Penn  
 Frieda Rosenbaum  
 Morton Rosenbaum  
 Robin Winkelstein  
 George Wolf

# October Birthdays

Jacob Friedman 10/6  
 Vanessa Hofmann 10/24  
 Aidan Mook 10/28  
 Leah Wight 10/31



# Campership!

**Save Mart** supermarkets donate to our Campership Fund when you shop using their Store Card. Contact Greg Friedman at [president@jewishmerced.org](mailto:president@jewishmerced.org) to get enrolled.

**Amazon.com** donates to our Campership Fund when you make purchases by accessing them through their link on our webpage ([www.jewishmerced.org](http://www.jewishmerced.org))



*Those we remember in the  
 year of their deaths:*  
 Mary Hofmann 5/7/2021  
 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.

