



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**

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

O C T O B E R 2 0 2 1



Notes from Student Rabbi Joshua

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 זכרונום 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 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)



*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.

