



The Maggid



C O N G R E G A T I O N E T Z C H A I M

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J A N U A R Y 2 0 2 2

Upcoming Events

*Masks are
Required
at all Events*

**1/14 7:00 PM Friday Night
Services with Rabbi Joshua
Via ZOOM**

**1/15 10:00 AM Saturday
Morning Torah Study with
Rabbi Joshua via ZOOM**

**1/15 7:00 PM Saturday
Evening Adult Ed with
Rabbi Joshua via ZOOM**

**1/16 10:00 AM Sunday
Morning Kids Club with
Rabbi Joshua via ZOOM**

**1/17 6:15 PM Monday
Evening Board Meeting
at Carol Madruga's House**

**1/29 11:00 AM Card
Making Social with Sheryl
Wight on the patio of the
Chavurah House -
weather permitting -
bring your own lunch -
stay to pull some weeds
after lunch!**

Notes from Student Rabbi Joshua

Tu Bishvat, the Jewish celebration of nature, and more specifically the holiday that honors trees, will occur on the 15th of the Hebrew month of Shvat (Sunday, January 16 and Monday, January 17, 2022). This unique holiday is commemorated by planting trees, both locally and in Israel; appreciating trees and by consuming and enjoying the many fruits that are harvested from trees.

If ever there were a holiday that seemed to speak to all of us that know and love Merced, this might be the one! After all, take any road in any direction from the center of town and you will find yourself very quickly immersed in an orchard or ranch full of wonderful fruits and nuts. While we take this natural beauty for granted, consider taking a pause at one point during Tu Bishvat to reflect on this natural blessing that surrounds us.

There are many opinions as to why we celebrate trees and their fruits during the middle of winter. One belief comes from Medieval kabbalists, who sought to find the mystical elements within Judaism. They believed that Tu Bishvat is in the winter precisely because it highlights the potential that each seed has. When seeds are planted, they all provide the same hope and opportunity. At that time, we cannot see the tree that it will become or the fruit that it will someday bear. However, we know that many of the seeds will someday reach maturity, if we provide them with the right conditions, and we also know that, if all goes well, these trees will then produce a wonderful fruit or nut for consumption. So from the time of planting we have aspirational hope of what will be. Each one of us is a seed in our own way. As human beings we also have a spark of the divine within us. The potential to grow this spark and share it with those around us is a very unique trait. For the kabbalists, the purpose of Tu Bishvat is to help increase the Divine Presence in the world as a part of *Tikkun Olam*, our work in repairing the world.

“Whoever has more wisdom than deeds is like a tree with many branches but few roots, and the wind shall tear them from the ground... Whoever has more deeds than wisdom is like a tree with more roots than branches, and no hurricane will uproot them from the spot.” (Pirkei Avot 3:17)

As we all reflect on the meaning of this holiday, please consider the purpose of this day. Just as seeds need soil, water, sunlight to grow, people also need the right conditions to grow to their full potential. May this holiday be a period of rededication and renewal for each of us, as we commit ourselves to aspiring toward our full potential.

L'Shalom,
Josh

NOTES FROM OUR PRESIDENT

by Carol Madruga

Dear Friends,

It is 2022.

Happy New Year! Starting a new year always feels like a new beginning to me, a time to start over with a clean slate, and a time to make personal promises. Sometimes I keep the promises and sometimes my attempts are short lived. As Jews, we have a few different new year celebrations. On January 16-17 Jews around the world will celebrate Tu B'Sh'vat, the new year of trees, one of the few Jewish holidays that is not connected to a historical event. Holidays can do more than remind us of the past, they can promote us to celebrate our hope and intention to make the world a better place. This being the birthday of trees, it is a perfect time to become involved in making our world a greener, healthier place. What will your part look like? Planting a fruit tree? Creating a Tu B'Sh'vat seder where you eat foods that connect all living things to the earth? Or perhaps a blessing to celebrate nature.



When I was a child I remember saving my money to buy a tree in Israel. We slipped our quarters into a cardboard folder made specifically for the occasion. It always made me feel so important to buy a tree; to be making the land of Israel green and lush with forests. I have to admit that for many years I actually thought that each of those trees that I paid for had a tag around it with my name on it. It was a huge disappointment to find out that was not the case; but I took solace in knowing that making a difference has always been part of who I am. There are many Jewish traditions during Tu B'Shvat associated with planting trees, harvesting the fruit, drinking and even mixing red and white wines to celebrate the season. I encourage you to think about what speaks to you and celebrate!

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

- Ardene Shaeffer - in loving memory of her mother, Muriel Gobler
- Ardene Shaeffer - in loving memory of her brother, Jeffrey Gobler
- Rachel Hadley - in loving memory of her father, Donald Moore
- Rachel Hadley - in loving memory of her grandmother, Pauline Miller
- Rachel Hadley - in loving memory of her grandmother, Marjorie Hadley
- Rachel Hadley - in loving memory of her good friend Celia Matlin, in honor of her birthday

May their memories be a blessing

זכרונום לברכה

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: Carol Madruga

Carol was born in Fresno, California in 1952. Her parents visited Fresno in 1950 and fell in love with it. They moved to Fresno from Brooklyn, NY and never looked back. Carol was raised with her older sister Francine and her younger brother David. They were members of Congregation Beth Jacob, a conservative synagogue in Fresno. The congregation was always a small group, and she has wonderful memories of all the synagogue activities, as well as being involved with USY as a teenager, attending weekend events in Northern California.

In 1972, while Carol was attending college in Sacramento, her father passed away. At the end of the semester, she moved back home to help her mother and she enrolled in Fresno State College at that time. On her first day of classes, the first class of the morning, Carol met Jim Madruga and they were married 2 years later. Jim's work brought them to Merced.

She was working in a department store when a little gray haired lady came to the counter to purchase Jewish New Year cards. Carol asked her if there were Jewish people in Merced and she replied, "Of course there are!" Carol told her that she was new in town and that she was Jewish too. Carol was invited to attend High Holiday services at Castle Air Force Base. That lady was Celia Wolf, a longtime member of the Jewish community of Merced. For many years, Celia's husband George was the lay leader of the congregation. This very group later became Congregation Etz Chaim in about 1978, so Carol has been involved since our congregation's inception. She has held many board positions, including having held the position of president 3 times, including the past 2 years, where she has served as our congregation's leader. Carol loves belonging to our congregation because she feels so connected to the other members. They are like family to her. She feels that it is wonderful to be involved in keeping Judaism alive in Merced.

Carol and Jim have been married for 47 years, and they have 2 married sons. Morgan is married to Cassandra, and Mathew is married to Sarah. They are the proud grandparents of 6 fabulous grandchildren.

Carol is a registered nurse and has spent 30 years working in the maternity department at Mercy Hospital. She loves to travel all over the world, and to spend time with her family and friends. She has visited 6 of the 7 continents and has taken 15 cruises. This coming April, she hopes to travel to France where she will take a river cruise.

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

Please Join Us

Saturday, January 29th

11:00 AM

*As Sheryl Wight shows us
how to make Greeting Cards,
on the patio of the Chavurah House.*

*Sheryl will provide some materials, and we are
welcome to bring our own.*

Please bring your own lunch.

*All are welcome to stay afterwards
to pull weeds, as they are threatening to
overtake the yard!*

**Please RSVP to Carol Madruga, to provide Sheryl
with an idea of how much stuff to bring**

Rabbi Visits for the Year

<i>Month</i>	<i>Dates</i>	<i>Holiday (if any)</i>	<i>Friday Night Dinner Host</i>	<i>Friday Night Oneg Host</i>	<i>Saturday Night Dinner Host</i>
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	Carol Madruga		Rachel Hadley
October	1 - 3	Simchat Torah			
November	5 - 7	No Holiday	Carol Madruga		
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

January 29 - Card making / Weed pulling Social

February 26 - Community Potluck / Havdalah Social

May 7 - Community Potluck / Havdalah Social

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 Parsons Ave*

January Yahrtzeits

Alan Blankstein
 Harry Brodie
 Herman Brodie
 Donald Coleman
 David Davis
 Evelyn Giventer
 Jeffrey Gobler
 Muriel Katz Gobler
 Mary Greif
 Lena Hackman
 Jacob Hackman
 Marjorie Hadley
 Albert Kalmus
 Bertha Salwen Kleitman
 Eugene Lewis
 Sonia Matlin
 Milton Matlin
 Pauline Miller
 Donald Moore
 Marvin Peletz
 Rose Davidson Peletz
 Rebecca Shapiro
 Barbara Winkelstein
 Leonard J. Yamshon
 William Zwilling

January Birthdays

Everest Colnic 1/5
 Diane Amussen 1/8
 Greg Friedman 1/13
 Rachel Hadley 1/14
 Sylvia Ruth Mason 1/23
 Linda-Anne Rebhun 1/30

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:*

Mary Hofmann 5/7/2021
Alan Snelling 8/25/2021

זכרונם 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.

