



Upcoming Events

12/7 6:00 pm
Board Meeting
via ZOOM

12/12 12:00 pm -
Distance Shabbat Soup
and Latke Social on the
patio at the Chavurah
House (Bring your own
Beverages)

1/8 6:30 pm
Friday Night,
Kabbalat Shabbat
Services
Via ZOOM

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

D E C E M B E R 2 0 2 0

Notes from our President

Dear friends,

Oh Chanukah Oh Chanukah come light the menorah...

I am like a child when it comes to Chanukah. I love to decorate our home, I love to bake and decorate Chanukah cookies, play the dreidel game, and oh yes the latkes! Bring them on and don't forget the applesauce!

Congregation Etz Chaim is going to try for another distance event (we had to cancel the last one, due to cold weather and lateness of the hour), and I am excited to have something to look forward to! We planned this one for Saturday December 12th at noon (12/12 at 12!), to try to maximize the outside warmth. We will fry latkes and have a couple of pots of soup for an outdoor distanced Chanukah celebration on the patio of the Chavurah House. We hope the sun will be out and we can comfortably gather outdoors.

In keeping with our tradition of tzedakah, we will be participating in a new coat drive. Please bring a new coat to donate to someone less fortunate than we are. We will take them to our friends at United Methodist Church to distribute for us. If you would like to participate in the coat drive but will not be joining us for the Chanukah lunch, you can drop coats off at my home.

I hope you have all been healthy and are staying safe.

It has definitely been difficult to not see each other. Please reach out to one another by phone, and let your Etz Chaim family know you are thinking of them.

Looking forward to seeing you all very soon,
Carol Madruga

Best wishes to
Student Rabbi Elias
and his beautiful bride
Michelle



as they embark on the
wonderful journey of building
their lives together

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Judith Salzberg

Welcome to the 2nd installment of our new feature!

Congregation Etz Chaim has been privileged to host many Rabbinical Students through the years. We almost always get a Student Rabbi in their second year of Rabbinical School, right after they come back from their year in Israel. The Student Rabbis always bring something new to us, and we strive to provide them with a diving board into their future as Ordained Rabbis. We thought it would be fun to research to find out where our Student Rabbis are today.

We are very pleased to highlight another of our many outstanding Student Rabbis, David Levinsky

In 1999 student Rabbi David Levinsky joined our Temple community bringing warmth, scholarship, fun, and music to our congregation. He was also a dynamic teacher for our congregation's students.

Rabbi David Levinsky was born and raised in the city of Chicago, and he knew even as a child that he wanted to become a Rabbi. Although they were not particularly religious, his parents were members of a congregation and David was fascinated with many aspects of being Jewish.

David received his B.A. with Honors at Indiana University, and his rabbinic ordination from Hebrew Union College Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati in 2002. He was urged by his professors to continue his academic work, so he continued his studies at Stanford University where he earned a Ph.D. which focused on "The Interaction of Jews and Christians in the late ancient Eastern Mediterranean."

David spent 5 years serving the Chicago Sinai Congregation. He also served as the rabbi for the JCC in San Francisco, heading the Taube Center for Jewish Life.

In 2015 Rabbi Levinsky was invited to be the head Rabbi at Temple Har Shalom in Park City Utah, as well as hold the Saidye Rosner Bronfman Rabbinic Chair at that Temple. David loves interfaith work, participating in the Interfaith Council of Park City and sitting on the board of the international Parliament of World Religions.

Rabbi Levinsky's wife is a professor of Education, and they have one 16 year old child. David's hobbies include record collecting, playing the guitar in a rock band and skateboarding.

I encourage you to follow this URL to a You Tube video of a TV newscast about David when he first joined Temple Har shalom in Park City Utah in 2015.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=imOpTPLmf-4>



Spotlight on our Members

Sheryl Wight

Welcome to the 2nd installment of our new feature!

Congregation Etz Chaim has been incorporated in Merced for over 40 years. 40 YEARS!

We thought it would be fun to post a 'getting to know you, even better' column.

We are very pleased to continue with one of our more recent members:

Ann de Ayora

Ann has had a fascinating and intriguing life spanning several continents! She was born in Budapest, Hungary in 1928. Her parents were Jewish but only went to synagogue for major Jewish holidays. Ann remembers celebrating secular holidays as a child, including Christmas with a tree in their house every year. Ann recalls being a young girl and attending a weekly class where the students learned about the Ten Commandments and studied Hebrew.

By the late 1930s, rumors were spreading in Hungary about how the Germans felt about Jews and what they would do to the Jews who lived in that country. Against the advice of family members, Ann's father decided that it was time to leave Hungary. In 1940, Ann's family had to convert to Catholicism before they could get their passports and board a train to leave the country. They headed to Casablanca, Morocco, not speaking a word of French. Given time, Ann became comfortable with the language and the schools. She still remains friends with many of her classmates from Casablanca. While living there, Ann's family received news of some relatives who were taken by the Germans to labor camps, and these relatives were never heard from again.

In Casablanca, Ann met and married the love of her life, Diego. They married in 1947. Ann and Diego wanted to move to the US after the war; however, it was almost impossible to get a visa to enter the United States. Instead they applied for visas to enter several South American countries. Argentina granted them visas and they then moved to Buenos Aires. They traveled from Casablanca on an old WW1 cargo ship to get there. The young couple didn't speak Spanish and they had no money, yet they treated the journey as a big adventure, and were happy when they made it to their destination. One of their two sons, Michael, was born in Argentina.

In 1952, they arrived in the US and moved to New York City. Their second son Paul was born there. The family lived in several different towns in NY, and as Diego got better jobs, they eventually moved to Long Island. In 1967, the family moved to Glendale, CA, where they lived until 1990. Their worldwide journey ended in 1990, when they moved to Merced to be closer to their children and grandchildren. Ann's husband Diego died in 2008, after 61 years of marriage.

Aside from her 2 sons Mike and Paul, Ann has 6 grandchildren and 9 great-grandchildren. She considers herself blessed to have such a wonderful family!

In her free time, Ann likes to read, write, and play bridge. She also loves cooking and spending time with her family. When Ann was physically able, she traveled a great deal and enjoyed visiting other countries. She has explored all over the world including countries in Asia, South America, Europe, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and all over the US.

A fun fact about Ann.....I bet nobody in Etz Chaim knew that Ann can speak, read, and write in 5 languages: English, Spanish, French, German, and Hungarian. Her family is always amazed at how she can speak in various languages with different people and not get at all confused!

Being a member of Congregation Etz Chaim brings Ann back to her Jewish roots and allows her to be proud of who she is. For Ann, having had to leave Hungary as a child because of her family's Jewish background was very difficult. Raising her own family as Catholics, she hid her true religion because she was afraid something bad might happen here. Ann is pleased that she doesn't need to do that anymore. She is very happy to be a part of a Jewish community here in Merced that shares her same beliefs and experiences.

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

Let's Celebrate Chanukah
while still maintaining
Social Distancing

We welcome you to join us on
Saturday, December 12th, at noon for
Soup and Latkes
on the Patio of our Chavurah House
Please bring your own beverages

Tzedakah Donation Opportunity*:
Please bring a NEW COAT for a
man, woman or child

Please RSVP to Carol Madruga
209 631-7441

*If you want to participate in the Tzedakah opportunity but are unable to attend our Chanukah Party
you may drop the coats off at Carol's home.

Save the Dates

- 12/12 12:00 pm Distance Chanukah soup & latke party - Chavurah House patio -
Maybe with marshmallows roasted over the fire pit!!!
- 1/8/ 6:30 pm Lay led Zoom Shabbat
- 1/29 Zoom Shabbat
- 2/12 6:30 pm Lay led Zoom Shabbat
- 2/26 Zoom Shabbat
- 3/12 6:30 pm Lay led Zoom Shabbat
- 3/27 or 3/28 Zoom Passover Seder
- 4/16 6:00 pm Distance Shabbat Dinner - Chavurah House patio
- 4/30 Zoom Shabbat
- 5/7 6:00 pm Distance Shabbat Dinner - Chavurah House patio

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 Bernard Gobler
Ardene Shaeffer - in Loving Memory of Francis Katz
Ardene Shaeffer - in Loving Memory of William Katz

May their memories be a blessing

זכרונם לברכה

December Yahrtzeits

Jeffrey S. Bernstein
Ilse Brodman
Max Brodofsky
Renee Conan
Martha Dake
Rose Friedberg
Bernard Goldstein
David Kiriara
Milton Kleitman
Ben Lewis
John Lewis
Rose Litowsky
Aaron Passovoy
Louis Peletz
Harold Zimmerman

יִכְרֹנָם לְבִרְכָּה

May their memories be a blessing

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
Esther Jacobson
Albert Kalmus
Bertha Salwen Kleitman
Eugene Lewis
Uasina Mantin
Sonia Matlin
Milton Matlin
Pauline Miller
Donald Moore
Marvin Peletz
Rose Davidson Peletz
Rebecca Shapiro
Leonard J. Yamshon
William Zwilling

Upcoming Birthdays

Catherine Friedman	12/1
Harlan Dake	12/2
Cynthia Giventer	12/5
Erica Dake	12/9
Chas Jolly	12/14
Jim Madruga	12/29
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



Congregation Etz Chaim
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