

Let Torah be a way of life, and welcome every person as a friend - Pirke Avot

CHANUKAH AT EMETH: LATKES, LAUGHTER & CANDLE LIGHTING

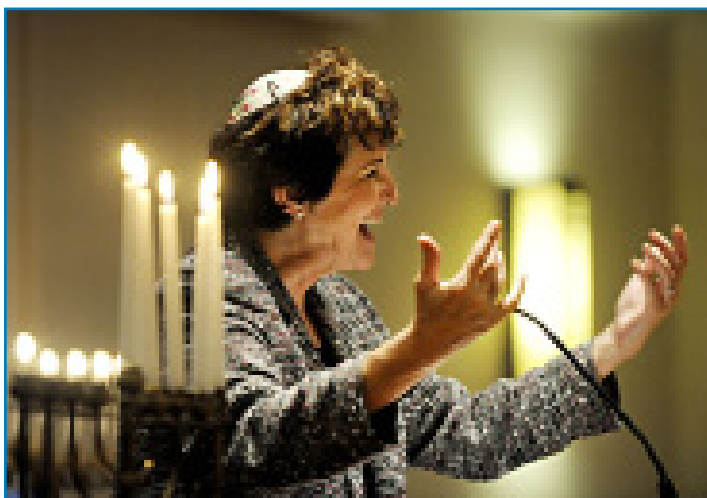
Report by Susan Meyers - Photos by Rick Coencas



Emeth's annual Chanukah party was a wonderful, fun filled evening. Over seventy people enjoyed the generous variety of delicious latkes with all the trimmings that graced the pot luck buffet. The highlight of the evening was the candle lighting: What an amazing array



of Chanukiot! There was one shaped like a cat, one that looked like a fire engine, and even one made with mah jongg tiles. As we chanted the prayers each family gathered near their Chanukiah, and all fifty Chanukiot were lit together creating a beautiful glow in our sanctuary.



The celebration continued with dancing led by Rena Dubin and her daughter Aliya Glatt.

Above photo by Lora Schraft, Morgan Hill Times photographer

Congregation Emeth

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Kol Emeth is published three times per year. Congregation membership includes a subscription to this publication.

This newsletter can also be viewed online at www.emeth.net

Follow Congregation Emeth on Facebook for the latest news and photos.



To submit articles and/or event photos, please email them to Communications Director, Elizabeth Mandel, at communication@emeth.net.

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CELEBRATING SHABBAT WITH CRAIG TAUBMAN!

Members of Congregation Emeth, their guests, and visitors from other South Bay synagogues experienced a truly memorable, uplifting Friday Night Live Shabbat service, lead by singer/songwriter Craig Taubman.



Emeth's Chai School students had a special session with Craig and band member Lior Ben-Hur before services.



Craig Taubman with Rabbi Israel and President Susan Meyers

We are grateful to **Rabbi Israel** for bringing Craig to us. And thank you to **Craig Taubman** for sharing his wonderful melodies and energy with our small congregation.

CHAI SCHOOL STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT SIMCHAT TORAH



CONFIRMATION

Five of Emeth's teens were confirmed this fall. As part of the service, each student gave a brief d'var Torah on the theme:

If I am not for myself, who will be for me?

If I am only for myself, what am I?

If not now, when?

- *Hillel the Elder (Talmud; Ethics of the Ancestors)*



Teens being confirmed—L-R: Natalie Valentine, David Miller, Rachel Neto, Kelsey Valentine, and Masha Maskel—are honored with an aliyah

February 2015

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SISTERHOOD NEWS

Marilyn Freund, Sisterhood Co-President

Sisterhood's annual Chanukah fundraiser and gift exchange at the home of **Patty Baggese** was a tremendous success. The 20 women attending brought clothing,



Sisterhood Chanukah party

sundries, and toys for the Lord's Table. In addition, funds raised were used to purchase a challah cover from Ghana's Jews for Emeth onegs, as well as items for Christmas dinner at the Lord's Table.



Challah covers by Ghana's Jews

In January, seven Sisterhood women enjoyed a delightful theater outing, ***Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus***.

The new **Emeth Cookbook** is now available for \$18 from Emeth's gift shop. Over 50 cookbooks have already been sold. The gift shop is frequently open when Emeth's religious school is in session or can be opened by appointment (email Marilyn or Patty at Sisterhood@emeth.net).



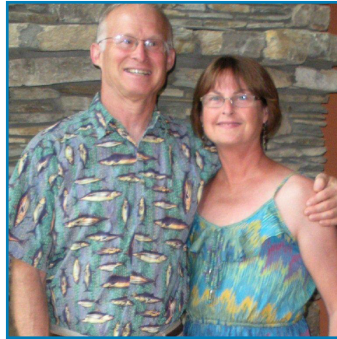
Debbie Zajac, Lauren Jenkins, Marilyn Freund, Joan Meyer, Aileen Teren-Foster, Patty Baggese, Joyce Maskel

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Susan Braun, Membership Chair

Joelle & Joel Wolf

Originally from Hammond, Indiana, Joelle Wolf and her husband Joel currently reside in Cupertino. Joelle worked for 20 years in the ICU at Stanford Hospital as a registered nurse. During this time, and when her children Elliot and Erin were attending religious school, she accepted a position teaching Hebrew to pre-b'nai mitzvah students. Joelle has continued teaching Hebrew students for more than 14 years.



Joelle provides students with a variety of fun and engaging activities (in Hebrew), including her famous vowel aerobics - just ask one of her students to show you an “oo oo oo!” This year, students have also been working on their Torah trope. You will often see Joelle jumping around in the front of the class, waving her arms frantically, as she provides the students with a visual representation for each trope sound. I’m not certain who enjoys the experience more - the morah (teacher) or the talmidim (students). Either way, positive energy abounds - it is important to Joelle that the students feel motivated and enjoy coming to class.

Joelle loves playing mah jongg, badminton, and cheering the Oakland A’s. She’s fiercely competitive. You haven’t lived until you’ve accompanied her to an A’s game - what fun!

Sherry Michelson

After meeting the man of her dreams and a 15 month long distance relationship, Sherry recently relocated from Boston to the lovely Bay Area. Her background is in sales and hospitality and she is currently looking for full-time work.



Achache Family

The Achaches are a multi-cultural, multi-national, and multi-lingual family. They speak English, French, Serbian, and Greek at home!



Suzana and Jim relocated to Morgan Hill about a year ago from Los Angeles. They have four children and another on the way. The two older children, Eleni, 13, and Yanis, 12, recently came from Greece and attend Jackson Elementary. Eleni plays chess; she has won several medals in Los Angeles and will continue to play in Silicon Valley. Yanis plays water polo for the Morgan Hill Water Polo Club. The two younger children, 2 1/2-year-old Leo and 1 year old Eve, keep Suzana busy. Leo likes to play with small cars and already has a collection.



Jim is originally from France, and his family is originally from Algiers. He studied in Montreal and now works at Google in wireless product development and consulting. His two passions, other than his family, are flying and scuba diving.

Suzana is from Serbia and was living in Greece when she met Jim. She is a talented artist and graduated from the “School of Design” in Belgrade, Serbia. Her art has been displayed in Europe, and in 2008 she was commissioned to paint the icons in a Greek Orthodox church located on the beautiful Aegean island of Skiathos, Greece. She also is a member of UNESCO and has had her artwork in several exhibitions. Her artwork can be viewed on <http://www.sukimodernart.com>. She has generously offered to paint a “Tree of Life” in Emeth’s social hall.

The Achache family has joined Congregation Emeth to learn and continue the Jewish traditions and culture of Jim’s family.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS (CONTINUED)

Carla Silverstein & Barbara Dorndorf

Carla, daughter of members **Pi and Cathy Silverstein**, grew up in Morgan Hill. In her spare time, Carla collects advanced degrees in psychology, addiction studies, and nutrition, and enjoys her counseling job working with clients suffering from cancer or eating disorders.



Barb recently retired from Visa as a fraud and data analyst. She enjoys cooking, loves playing and watching ice hockey (go Sharks!), and plays tuba and trombone in The Community Women's Orchestra.

The couple (married last July by Rabbi Israel) currently live in Burlingame and are busy looking for a new house further down the Peninsula.

Oberquell Family: Andrea, Chad, and Tyler

The Oberquell family moved to Morgan Hill about a year ago from San Jose. Andrea is an avid cook and baker and will be making hamantaschen for our Purim carnival. Chad works in construction. His hobbies include darts and pool. He has played pool in a league. Son Tyler, is ten years old and is in fourth grade. He is a talented Tae Kwon Do student and is progressing very quickly.

The family joined Emeth to become involved with the Jewish community. Tyler loves Hebrew school and getting to know other Jewish children. Andrea feels comfortable, very much at home, and a part of the Emeth family.

MAZEL TOV TO OUR MEMBERS!



Ruth Erickson

Ruth Erickson, a resident of Hollister, was named 12th Senate District's Volunteer of the Year in September, for her continued dedication and commitment to San Benito County.

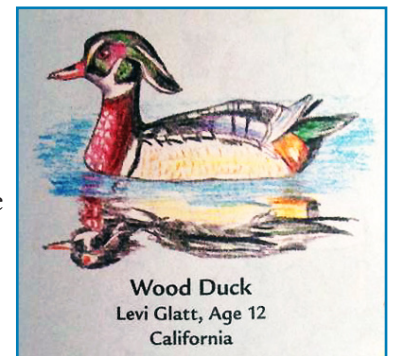
"Ruth has made a lasting and positive impact in San Benito County, volunteering for dozens of agencies and organizations,

ranging from public service to education to community service," said State Senator Anthony Cannella.

Ruth has been a volunteer for the San Benito County Free library for more than 30 years. She has also worked with fellow community members to make the heart of downtown Hollister less of a highway and more available for community events, benefiting local businesses.

Levi Glatt, son of **Rena Dubin** and **Harlan Glatt** (and grandson of **Rabbi Debbie Israel** and **Jerry Dubin**) is a published artist!

Levi, age 14, submitted a drawing entitled "Wood Duck" to Highlights Magazine a couple of years ago and his work is now featured in the January 2015 issue.



Wood Duck
Levi Glatt, Age 12
California

"I have always loved the Highlights Magazine, so I am very proud that my work got published," he said. "It is very satisfying knowing that many people will see my artwork in this month's issue. I take art lessons, and I draw and journal a lot on my own. I feel like this is a nice reward for all my hard work."

Editor's note: Highlights has a circulation of 2 million and receives 35,000 submissions a year.

EMET DOR KEF VISIT JEWISH LA

Rachel Neto, Senior member of EDK

Six hour car rides are never fun ... unless you are with your youth group, heading to "Jewish LA" for the weekend. **Rabbi Israel** drove **David Miller, Natalie and Kelsey Valentine, Nathan Yacono, Matthew Ogden, Quinn Neto** and myself over the MLK Jr. weekend. There we met up with Rabbi Israel's friend, Rabbi Jay Sherwood and three of his youth group members from The Redlands.



L-R: Nathan Yacono, David Miller, Kelsey Valentine, Matthew Ogden, Quinn Neto, Rachel Neto, Natalie Valentine



Quinn gets into character at the Skirball Center

Saturday morning started with Shabbat services overlooking the Santa Monica pier. Next, we headed over to the Skirball Cultural Center where we learned about the migration of Jews all over the world and enjoyed the new kids' exhibit of Noah's Ark. At the Hollywood Walk of Stars, we found many names of Jews; there are more than you would think. We ended our Shabbat with a Havdalah service at an uncommon location—the site of the first Jewish cemetery in LA, currently behind Dodger's Stadium. And we ended our day by eating at Nagila. This is a kosher restaurant that has a dairy side and a meat side with a small gate in the center so you can enjoy a meal with your friends who are eating an opposite dish.



Natalie, Kelsey and Rachel in Noah's Ark

On Sunday, we woke up, packed our lunches, and headed off to "Jewish Disneyland." Rabbi Jay had prepared a "Jewish Disneyland Trivia Photo Challenge" for us. Throughout the day we looked for the many parts of Disneyland that had Jewish aspects about them. So next time you go, look for the mezuzah on a doorpost.



EDK visitng "Jewish Disneyland"

My favorite part of the trip was Shabbat morning services. Having services out of the sanctuary was very different for me. It was so beautiful and peaceful sitting under the palm trees. All members of EDK would like to thank **Rabbi Israel** for taking us on this memorable trip.

On our last morning, we went to Mount Sinai Memorial Park Cemetery. A beautiful mosaic on one of the walls, 120 feet long and 36 feet tall, named many Jewish people who made a difference in America. Our last stop of the trip was Elat Burger for lunch.



David, Nathan, Matthew, and Quinn at the Santa Monica pier

RUTH KRELL STEINFELD: CHILD SURVIVOR OF THE HOLOCAUST

Rabbi Debbie Israel

On Wednesday, February 11, Congregation Emeth welcomed Ruth Krell Steinfeld, from Houston, Texas, to speak about her experiences as a child survivor of the Holocaust.

After Ruth's presentation, the congregation received a specially framed Holocaust Torah fragment, from John Fensterwald, San Jose. Fensterwald had received the fragment from his 91-year-old friend, Karin Fortun Van Strein. This Torah fragment, from Deuteronomy 32:1, is part of Moses' final poem to the Israelites, the beginning of the chapter Ha-Azinu. This chapter is the last one read in the synagogue on Shabbat morning before Rosh Hashanah.



Rabbi Israel with her long-time friend Ruth Steinfeld



John Fensterwald presents Torah fragment to President-elect Becky Neto

Karin Fortun Van Strien was born in Thuringen, Germany in 1924. The fragment, apparently part of a Torah which has been torn and partially burned during Kristalnacht, "the Night of the Broken Glass", was rescued by her father, Fritz Fortun, who served as an officer in the German Army during the war. He preserved the fragment, recognizing its importance, and stored it in the family chest. Karin, who married a Unitarian minister, David van Strien, and moved to Peterborough, New Hampshire after the war, was given the parchment by her father. She says she is "thrilled that the parchment has come back to life."

Kristalnacht took place in 1939. At that time Emeth's guest speaker Ruth Steinfeld was only 6-years-old, living in Ladenburg, Germany. Her sister Lea was only a year older. In 1940, Nazi soldiers put took her entire family on a train, heading to Drancy, a French concentration camp, where the men and women were separated; she never saw her father again. At the urging of their mother, she and her sister were rescued by the Agency for the Rescue of Children and the French underground, and were taken into France where she lived as a hidden child throughout the remainder of the war.

After the war, Ruth and Lea were brought to America where they joined their grandfather and an uncle who had managed to leave Germany before the war.

But the highlight of Ruth's story begins in 1981, when she went to the Gathering of Holocaust Survivors in Israel. It was there that she went to a dedication of a beautiful monument, which included her parents' names. For her, it was as if she was finally burying her parents. Afterwards, she went back to Ladenburg, her little hometown in Germany, and confronted her past in a profound way. "I couldn't ever forget, but I could forgive. I no longer had to live with the hate and the pain that I lived with all of my life," she told the standing room audience at Congregation Emeth. "From that moment on, things have been different. I finally found peace."

A longtime friend of Rabbi Israel, Ruth has devoted her adult life to speaking about the Holocaust, especially to schools throughout the greater Houston area. Ruth is a founding member of the Holocaust Museum of Houston.



The evening was co-hosted by Emet Dor Kef, Emeth's teens, and Sisterhood.

Editor's note: Rabbi Israel wrote the above article for the March, 2015 issue of JValleyNews.

SOCIAL ACTION: THE LORD'S TABLE

To learn more about St. Joseph Family Center and the Lord's Table Hot Meal program, go to <https://stjosephsgilroy.org/about/what-we-do/>

For donations suggestions, go to <http://1027kord.com/10-things-food-banks-need-but-wont-ask-for/>

LOOKING FOR A NEW COORDINATOR

Geoff Jackson, Social Action Chair

After many years Sandra and I will be stepping down from coordinating this event. We are looking for a volunteer(s) to take up the reins. We express our sincere thanks to our Emeth friends for all the help they've given us over the years. We will prepare a detailed list of instructions, sample flyers, etc. to hand over to the new coordinator(s). We will still be involved as volunteers if needed.

MariaElena Jarson, her children and some of her students have joined us for our ongoing monthly Lord's Table event. MariaElena and her children have been so moved by some of the deprivations they have observed that they are helping the Lord's Table staff every Thursday!



Geoff instructs Emeth's visiting students at the Lord's Table

FROM FLOUR TO MITZVAH

Photos by MariaElena Jarson



In November two Chai School classes, Zera-im and Gesher, made challah for the hungry. The students served the bread at the Lord's Table. Everyone had a tremendous amount of fun, and the children were thrilled to be helping.

SOCIAL ACTION (CONTINUED)



Students serve their challah at the Lord's Table.

HELP THE NEEDY

Clothing Donations for the Lord's Table



Please donate clean clothes, shoes, camping gear, and backpacks to help needy people in our community. The Lord's Table feeds the hungry each week in Gilroy. They also provide free clothing, blankets, sleeping bags, tarps, and other camping gear to the homeless. My family helps feed the hungry at Lord's Table each Thursday. We can pick up your donations and take them to people in need. (408) 476-5422

Raquel Jarsen made this poster to encourage donations to clients at the Lord's Table. Donations can be dropped off in the bins at Emeth.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

MariaElena Jarsen, Chai School Teacher

Raquel is collecting clothing, camping gear (tarps, bedding, ponchos, tents, etc.), backpacks & bags, shoes, and refillable water bottles for the homeless. We take the items to Lord's Table each Thursday when we volunteer, then they are passed out to the clients at the Lord's Table for no charge.

As we spend time serving at Lord's Table, we've noticed which items would be especially helpful for the homeless people. We've also realized that some items, like reusable bags, water bottles, and hats, are almost disposable to the rest of us (especially when they're given for free at trade shows, conferences, and events) but make an immediate difference when offered to people who spend their time carrying all their possessions standing outside in the elements.

- Having extra bags to give to the clients can make the difference between them wearing everything they own and having a few spare items in reserve. A bag to carry also allows people to save some food for later; this is especially important for people relying on food kitchens for their meals.
- Many people come in completely dehydrated. They will stand at the drink table and drink their one allotted drink, then rapidly refill their cups with three to four cups of water and just drink it standing because they are so thirsty. Reusable water bottles would help them.
- Hats, handkerchiefs, socks, even underwear, if they're clean and in reasonable condition, will be used to help make a person in need more comfortable.

HELP US FIND A NEW FACILITY PARTNER

Grant Gordon, Ways & Means Chair

Until 6 years ago, Emeth did not have a home of our own. We wandered from facility to facility, appreciative of the hospitality shown to us by local schools and churches.

For the past 3 ½ years, we have extended our hospitality to Church On The Rock (COTR). They have been a wonderful partner and, in addition to helping Emeth reduce our debts by almost \$100K, they left us with the gift of a new sound booth, padded sanctuary chairs, an improved sound system (speakers and amplifiers), two projectors, and two powered projection screens.

Unfortunately, COTR was recently given the opportunity to rent space in a nearby facility that better meets their current needs and also saves them money on their monthly rent. As a result, we are seeking a new wonderful partner looking to make our facility their “shared” home.

Help us get the word out that we are looking for “non-profit” organizations looking to rent space in Morgan Hill.

Of particular interest are “Religious Non-Profit 501(c)(3) Organizations”. Our facility has also been used for after school classes, reading programs, dance classes, exercise classes, and more. Refer to our Craigslist Posting for more details (<http://sfbay.craigslist.org/sby/off/4888287327.html>).

I encourage you to *forward our posting to anyone you think might be interested* or to someone who might know of someone interested. Please direct all questions or interested parties to **Grant Gordon**, grant.gordon88@gmail.com or (408) 667-0946.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU . . .

Robin Yacono, Social Activities Chair

This year we’ve added a few social activities as a wonderful way to meet new congregants, make new friends and stay connected with existing ones.



In August we hosted a **family pizza and movie party**. We saw *Fiddler on the Roof* and socialized with a wedding cake for dessert during intermission.

In January we hosted an **adult bunco party** with wine and hors d’oeuvres.



Bunco was a ton of fun!

In May we would like to have a **family day at the beach**.

Save the Date for May 17, 2015!



We hope to offer these types of “getting to know you” events at least three times a year. I would love to hear your ideas for next year’s social activities. If you and your family would like to join in the fun, or would like to participate in planning an event, please contact **Robin Yacono**, RTYacono@comcast.net.

SAVE THE DATE:

JULY 12, 2015

THE PRODUCERS

Two years ago, Emeth partnered with South Valley Civic Theatre (SVCT) for a fabulously fun and successful *Fiddler on the Roof* fundraiser, complete with delicious shtetl foods and an exploration of many of our members’ Eastern European heritages.

With *The Producers*, we move to Jewish New York! Plan to join us as we partner once again with SVCT in anticipation of another sold-out cultural event, this time combining one of Broadway’s most acclaimed shows with wonderful New York deli foods.

Planning will start soon. If you would like to join the committee, please contact **Elizabeth Mandel**, ea4mandel@gmail.com.

EDK: A UNIQUE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Rabbi Debbie Israel

Our educational program for teens, Emet Dor Kef (*Emeth's Fun Generation*), is a unique blend of classroom style learning and experiential experiences. This year's dual-track learning program includes both World Religions and Jewish Life Cycles.

World Religions

We began by briefly reviewing Jewish values. In addition to textbook studies, students next attended services at Morgan Hill Methodist Church, with Pastor Patrick Davis also attending our Wednesday night class to provide a broader understanding of Christianity in general and the liberal denominations in particular. At the end of February they will visit St. Mary's Church in Gilroy, where Father Jose Rubio will give the students a tour of the church and discuss Catholicism with them. We intend to also visit Hindu and Buddhist sites on Mount Madonna in the spring.

Jewish Life Cycles

Few students had attended Jewish life cycle events other than their own bar/bat mitzvah, so we agreed to include this in our course of study. When we asked **Becky and Andre Neto** if they would take part in a "mock" wedding, they responded that they had been married by a judge and always wanted a Jewish wedding, officiated by a Rabbi. EDK hosted the Neto's renewal of vows, which was attended by most of the congregation. We are planning to also host a baby naming or *brit*, and to attend a "mock" funeral at our cemetery.



Becky and Andre would like to thank everyone who helped make the day so special.

An Invitation to Your Teen

One of the strengths of our congregation is the ongoing participation of teens in our community. They work in our school, they regularly attend socials outside of organized events, and after bar/bat mitzvah almost every student participates in our learning opportunities. If your teens are among the few who have opted out, please know how wonderfully welcoming our EDK students are to anyone who wants to attend, at any time. Taking "time off" doesn't mean forever! Please talk to **Rabbi Debbie Israel** (the EDK teacher and advisor) about how we can include your teen.

Editor's note: Find other EDK activities, including co-hosting of our Holocaust speaker and a field trip to LA, elsewhere in this newsletter.

Mitzvah Makers

Our board and committee members are dedicated volunteers. We are also grateful to, and would like to acknowledge, those members who step up to take on additional special projects as they arise:

- ♥ **Emet Dor Kef teens & Sisterhood** for hosting the presentation by Holocaust survivor Ruth Krell Steinfeld.
- ♥ **Andre Neto & Arthur Rudin** for spearheading the Sukkah Crew.
- ♥ **Susan Braun** for organizing the dreidel board at Emeth on behalf of Jewish Family Services.
- ♥ **Denise Weyl & Becky Neto** for organizing our annual Chanukah party.
- ♥ **Aileen Teren-Foster & Marby Lee** for taking on the on-going task of inventorying and purchasing Emeth's supplies.
- ♥ **Rena Dubin** for off-loading many clerical tasks from our administrator.
- ♥ **Emet Dor Kef families** (special thanks to **Daria Ogden**) for hosting Becky and Andre Neto's wedding vow renewal.
- ♥ **Geoff & Sandra Jackson** for once again coordinating Christmas Day volunteers at the Lord's Table. We served a record 204 guests, including over 40 children.
- ♥ **Arthur Rudin** for video recording our b'nai mitzvah and special events.
- ♥ **Raquel Jarson** for initiating a clothing drive for the Lord's Table.
- ♥ **Kathy Coencas** for creating the design and layout of Emeth's new cookbook.
- ♥ **Andrea Oberquel** for monitoring our phone and ensuring a timely response.
- ♥ **Donna & Mel Weisblatt** for sponsoring the special program *Scattered Among the Nations*.
- ♥ **Chai School's Zera-im & Geshet classes** for baking challah and serving it at the Lord's Table.

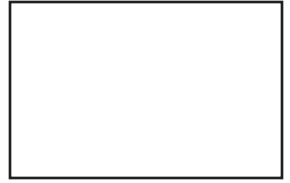
*Be a Mitzvah Maker:
Volunteer!*



Review the complete volunteer opportunity list on our website: www.emeth.net/support-emeth/volunteer or email **Becky** at volunteer@emeth.net.



Kol Emeth
Congregation Emeth
17835 Monterey Street
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IT'S NOT EASY TO BE NEW

Susan Meyers, President

Most of us have experienced that awkward feeling of being the one person in the room who is “the new guy” the person who does not see a familiar face, does not enjoy that warm feeling of “belonging” to the group.

Recognizing that feeling and wanting all of our members to enjoy that warm feeling of belonging, we initiated a program we call “Getting to Know Emeth”.

Each year for the past three years we have invited new members to join us for an evening to *Get to Know Emeth—Our Past, Our Present and Our Future*.

This year five of our newer members participated in the program along with members of our board of directors. We talked about how almost 40 years ago a small group of families created what was then called the South Valley Jewish Community and how, through the dedication and commitment of our members, we grew to become Congregation Emeth with eighty families, a Rabbi, a building a school and multiple programs for children and adults. Board members spoke about their roles and their experience as Board members; and we asked our newer members to help us think about the future. Everyone comes with wonderful, fresh ideas and this group was no exception!

A brief evaluation of the evening revealed that our newer members appreciate Emeth’s warm welcoming community, recognize all the opportunities to participate, and know that when they enter our sanctuary they will see a familiar face and enjoy that feeling of belonging to our Emeth family.

*Editor’s note: Regardless of whether you are a new or a long-term member of Emeth, contact **Susan Meyers**, smeyers.sjsu@gmail.com, if you would like to be invited to a future Getting to Know Emeth program.*

