

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

LATKES — LIGHTS — LAUGHTER

Photos by Elizabeth Mandel

86 members of all ages joined in a festive Shabbat service, Chanukah celebration, and tribute to outgoing administrator Debbie Zajac. After a delicious potluck and latke buffet, families lit their Chanukiah together in



the sanctuary. Following the short musical service, led by Rabbi Israel, with songs led by Chai School students and cantorial soloist Angela Gold, President Becky Neto presented **Debbie Zajac** with an inscribed brass Chanukiah and a plaque for Emeth's Garden of Tranquility in appreciation of her 12 years of service as our volunteer administrator.

The plaque reads:

**HONORING DEBBIE ZAJAC
FOR DEVOTED SERVICE
TO CONGREGATION EMETH**



Particular thanks to Marilyn Freund, Becky Neto, Charlene Rose, Tamara Goldie, and Sony, Jacob & Nick Lem-off for setting up for the party and to Susan Latin, Maria Walters, and Daria Ogden for hosting.

Congregation Emeth

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Rabbi	Debbie Israel
Administrator	Charlene Rose
Controller	Barry Freund

2016-2017 Board

President	Becky Neto
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Library	Linda Reisenberg
Ritual	Michael Oshan
Sisterhood	Patty Baggesse, Marilyn Freund
Technology	Arthur Rudin

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

For the best (color) reading experience, this newsletter should 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 Communication Director / Kol Emeth Editor, Elizabeth Mandel, at communication@emeth.net.

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Michael Oshan

SURVEY RESULTS: HIGH PARTICIPATION IN SERVICES

Michael Oshan, Ritual Committee Chair

The Ritual Committee and Rabbi Israel thank the 59 members who participated in the Worship Survey sent to members after the High Holidays. The high response rate indicates that members are involved and care. Subtracting those members who were either unable to physically attend services or participate in an online survey, the equivalent number of participants is about 78% of the available households, reasonably representing the active membership.

The survey determined an active cross section attended HHD services. 49% attended five or more of the seven services and 91% were at two or more services. Surprisingly, this year more attend the day time services than evening services of both Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. 97% of respondents were satisfied overall, with 55% being very satisfied. The main components for satisfaction were the Rabbi's bimah presence and her sermons (96%), as well as a format that emphasized congregant inclusion and participation (93%).

Only 64% rated "Options for Children" satisfactory, with 37% "neutral". These results are in conflict with verbal feedback and also inconclusive because we don't know the children's ages, if they even attended the children's programs, or if respondents reacted to the lack of babysitting or programming for very young children. This population's wants and needs will be further investigated.

Attendance at Shabbat services involved at least 89% at one or more service during the past six months. As expected, the services tended to attract different populations. Friday Night Live is especially attractive to those who are 50 and over and presumably without younger children while Short 'N' Sweet appeals more to younger members with children. Shabbat morning services, which includes bar/bat mitzvah, has the biggest variance in attendance. The services, timing, and formats will be further evaluated by the Ritual Committee and the Education Committee to determine if any changes should be made.

45% of members reported being regular attendees, a good percentage for most congregations. Only 17% rarely attend, and 41% reported being occasional attendees. The Ritual Committee will be discussing what can be done to encourage others to participate more, attempting to determine what the 41% "occasional" participants want and need.

The Ritual Committee greatly appreciates everyone's participation in the survey and will use the results in ongoing decision making. The committee is also eager to hear directly from the membership on an ongoing basis as we strive to offer the most spiritual and meaningful High Holiday and Shabbat/Holiday services possible. Thank you to Dr. Jerry Dubin for his professional expertise in analyzing the data.

A COMMUNITY CHANUKAH EVENT

Once again we partnered with BookSmart to provide a fun children's event for both Emeth and community members who wanted to participate in Chanukah activities. Children decorated cookies, made Chanukah cards, enjoyed stories, and played dreidel.



Thank you to **Marilyn Freund**, **MariaElena Jarson**, and **Emily Shem-Tov** for a fun afternoon!

January 2017

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SISTERHOOD NEWS

MAH JONGG CLASS

Susan Meyers

Cathy Gill, our head teacher, and assistants **Patty Baggese** and **Susan Meyers**, introduce the American Mah Jongg game to our class of ten women who are eager to learn the game and become Mah Jongg Ma-vens! Starting on Monday January 9 and continuing for the following six weeks, we will meet at temple for an afternoon of instruction and practice.

For the past several years members of Emeth Sisterhood have met in each other's homes to enjoy playing Mah Jongg, learning the complicated strategies and contributing a little tzedakah each time for our Emeth community. The game is fun and challenging but more than a game, the Mah Jongg brings us together to enrich our friendships.



*If you play or are interested in learning please contact **Patty Baggese** at sisterhood@emeth.net.*

CHANUKAH FUNDRAISER

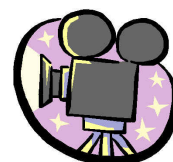
Marilyn Freund, Sisterhood Co-President



Emeth's Sisterhood welcomed 31 for an evening of philanthropy and fun. Features included a Falafel Stop catered dinner, drawings for the Chanukah gingerbread house centerpieces, gift swap surprises, and donations of hats, gloves, blankets, socks, and toys for the Lord's Table. Sisterhood collected \$225 for jackets for The Lord's Table and \$300 for EDK's upcoming trip to Jewish LA. Thank you all for your phenomenal generosity!

UPCOMING MOVIE NIGHT

Please Save the Date for a Sisterhood outing to see *The Zookeeper's Wife* on Monday, April 3. Details will follow.



RABBI'S 10TH ANNIVERSARY & SUKKAH DEDICATION

On a rainy Shabbat in October, we celebrated Sukkot and Rabbi Debbie Israel's 10th anniversary with dinner in the social hall followed by a magical, misty service outside in our new, permanent Sukkah.



The congregation honored our Rabbi by dedicating our new "Garden of Tranquility" to her. The dedication reads:

DEDICATED TO
RABBI ISRAEL
IN HONOR OF HER
10TH ANNIVERSARY
AS SPIRITUAL LEADER OF
CONGREGATION EMETH



Click on the above image to view the Memory Album

Friends and family provided additional dedication plaques for the garden in Rabbi's honor and in honor of loved ones. The board presented her with a memory album in recognition of what she has meant to us over the past 10 years. They also presented her with a piece of art entitled "Woman of Valor" inspired by King Solomon's conclusion to Proverbs, *Eshet Chayil*. Thank you to **Emeth's Board** for hosting dinner and organizing this memorable evening, the **Ritual Committee** for planning the service, and **Michael Oshan** for leading this special service.

BIRTHRIGHT PROVIDES INSIGHTS ABOUT ISRAEL

Monica Flynn

It is impossible, when in Israel, to miss the significance of the state to every Jew in the world. All Jewish communities may teach their members that the existence of the State of Israel is vital, but it doesn't really sink in until people see the place itself. Only in Israel is our shared Jewish history sprawled out, along with our vibrant future.

Before Birthright, I absolutely did not fully understand Israel's importance. And there was no defining ah-ha moment on this trip where it hit me that—oh my goodness—this is our place; It was more of a slow, dawning realization. While it crept up slowly and unexpectedly, I truly began to understand during trips to historical sites.

This is part of the magic of Israel, the intertwining of ancient history into the future. Elsewhere, the future comes at a cost to the past. Old buildings are torn down for the convenience of new, people's roots are forgotten in order to make room for modern lifestyles, and ancient ways of thinking are looked down upon and erased for the latest trend. Progress at the expense of history has become the norm. However, in Israel, people from the world with only Judaism as a common thread pay homage to their past as a way of defining their future.



Monica at Masada

The Kotel, or remnant of the Western Wall of the Holy Temple was the most moving example. As our group encountered this pillar of the collective Jewish memory, our guides told us that crying or feeling overwhelmed was perfectly natural and expected. I wasn't the only one skeptic; however, as I approached the Wall and tried to find an empty space, the Kotel's importance hit me in a most unexpected way. Directly in front of me stood an African woman in a beautiful and elaborate headscarf, a Chasidic woman in the traditional head covering and sober black

clothing with her children, an Israeli teenager, and a young American tourist wearing workout clothes and a Nike backpack. Such different people, yet these Jews, with their drastically different garb, languages, and customs, were all overcome with tears. It wasn't the wall that moved me, it was their reactions and togetherness.

Despite millennia of adversity, Jews have survived and continue to honor our history. From every corner of the earth, we feel a pull toward each other and our roots. Israel preserves our past and safeguards our future as a community. And because of this tiny country, Jews will survive and thrive for generations to come.

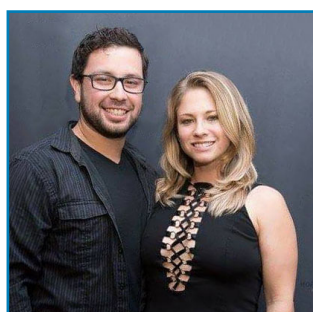
Editor's note: Monica, the daughter of Denise Weyl, just returned from Birthright Israel which offers free 10-day trips to Israel to young Jewish adults between the ages of 18 and 26. We thank her for sharing her experiences!

Mazal Tov!

Jay Weisblatt, son of Emeth members **Donna and Mel Weisblatt**, and Heidi Rhodes, daughter of Carol Rhodes, were married on October 16 at Pasatiempo Inn, Santa Cruz. Family from across the country and across the pond celebrated this memorable day. Daughters Maddie and Ally participated in the heartfelt ceremony.



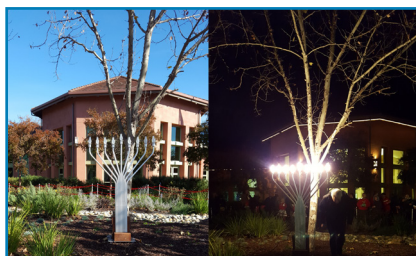
L-R: Marci Weisblatt Gordon, David Gordon, Alexandra Weisblatt, Madeline Weisblatt, Heidi Weisblatt, Jay Weisblatt, Jacob Gordon, Donna Weisblatt, Mel Weisblatt



Sarah Yacono, daughter of **Robin and Tom Yacono** is engaged to Armando Romero. They are planning on a Spring 2018 wedding.

A SPECIAL MITZVAH!

Many thanks to **Cathy and Pi Silverstein** for the donation of Emeth's magnificent new indoor-outdoor Chanukiah (Chanukah menorah).



At the holiday parade

We look forward to using it as we join in Morgan Hill's holiday celebrations for many years to come!



At Emeth's Chanukah celebration

Mitzvah Makers

Special thanks to our members for their leadership and support on recent special projects:

- ♥ **Pre-Yom Kippur work day** - Raul and Cindy Fernandez, Marilyn Freund, Grant Gordon, MariaElena, Aaron, Raquel, Isaac & Ari Jarson, Talia Jordon, Bryson, Marby & Meghan Lee, Susan Meyers, Michael Oshan, Andre, Becky & Quinn Neto, Mike, Matthew & Jacob Ogden, Rich & Sheryl Pupko, Emily, Shachar, Clara & Miriam Shem-Tov, Nathan Yacano, Nancy Fishman, and Beth Killough
- ♥ **Pressure washing and re-stripping the parking lot** - Andre Neto
- ♥ **Overseeing hiring of our new administrator** (see p9) - Susan Braun
- ♥ **Pre-HHD and Religious School admin support** - Alexandra Mandel
- ♥ **Tech support for new copier and administrator's new computer** - Arthur Rudin
- ♥ **Survey Assistance** - Jerry Dubin
- ♥ **Switching out HHD prayerbooks** - Rachel and Quinn Neto
- ♥ **Trash Patrol** - Bryson Lee (for being trash man for the past couple of years, Nick Lemoff (for taking over on Tuesdays), Ari and MariaElena Jarson (for taking over on Thursdays)
- ♥ **Facilitating publication of articles in local papers** (see pp 7 and 10) - Elizabeth Mandel
- ♥ **Building tether ball and fixing the basketball hoop** - Mike Ogden and Eric Killough
- ♥ **Improving financial reporting process** - Barry Freund and Bryson Lee
- ♥ **Cleaning out the freezer** - Marilyn Freund
- ♥ **Setting up and hosting Chanukah party** (see p1)
- ♥ **Community Chanukah event for children at BookSmart** (see p3)
- ♥ **Sisterhood Chanukah party** (see p3) - Patty Baggese and Marilyn Freund
- ♥ **Arranging for discounted purchase of jackets for The Lord's Table** - Cathy Silverstein
- ♥ **Ongoing support of the Lord's Table** - Susie Freiburg, Sandy Gabe, Jarson family, Geoff & Sandra Jackson, Rabbi's Discretionary Fund
- ♥ **Christmas Lord's Table** (see p10)

Be a Mitzvah Maker: Volunteer!

A complete list of volunteer opportunities is available at <http://www.emeth.net/support-emeth/volunteer>.

INTERFAITH COMMUNITY of SOUTH COUNTY

Article by Susan Meyers

Photos by Rick Coencas

In November, the Interfaith Clergy and Interfaith CommUNITY of South County (ICSC) presented a beautiful Thanksgiving service followed by a social hour with delicious cakes, pies and cookies. 350 people attended the service and



participated in singing along with a four-bell choir. The event reminded us once again of the American values we all share.

2017 promises to be a year filled with educational, social and service activities and programs. Starting in January, the clergy and lay interfaith groups invited the community to our second annual Martin Luther King service. This event, held at St. Mary's Church in Gilroy, with 500 participants, was an opportunity for the ICSC to celebrate our first anniversary!



We will continue our educational program entitled "The Faith of Our Neighbors" as Congregation Emeth hosts "The Faith of Our Neighbors: Judaism" on April 30 and the Advent Lutheran Church hosts "The Faith of Our Neighbors: Lutheran" in the fall. We expect that our service activities will focus on issues related to the homeless population in South County. In January we plan to participate in the census count. Run by the County, the census count is required in order to request funding to support programs to assist those who are homeless. And, finally our planned social activities include our participation in the Fourth of July Parade in Morgan Hill and the Memorial Day Parade in Gilroy.

We strongly encourage members of Emeth, along with members of the sixteen faith organizations participating in the ICSC, to join us in our efforts... "To create compassionate communities through educational, social, and service programs."

ICSC events are listed in Emeth's monthly flyers and on our website calendar. Please contact Susan Meyers at pastpresident@emeth.net with your questions, comments and suggestions.

THANKFUL FOR COMMUNITY

How one local organization is making changes to our social fabric

By Debra Eskinazi
Lifestyles Editor

GILROY  DISPATCH

Reprinted with permission
November 24, 2016

While some are interested in building walls, one group in the South Valley community is building bridges and working to create a more peaceful, tolerant world. Made up of 16 different faith organizations, the Interfaith CommUNITY of South County (ICSC) gathered for a special service on Thanksgiving Eve.



TOGETHER IN UNITY The full group of clergy representing all of the faith groups involved in InterFaith Community of South County



NEIGHBORS & FRIENDS The Interfaith Community of South County making strides in Morgan Hill's Fourth of July Parade in 2016.

Although the ICSC is still in its first year, the group's facilitator, **Susan Meyers**, says the group began as a response to increased hostilities, "not just in our area, but all over the country—around people who are Muslim."

[Click here for a link to the complete Gilroy Dispatch article](#)



We have rescheduled our program with the South Valley Islamic Community teens to February 26, 3:30-5:30 pm, in the sanctuary of Congregation Emeth. Jacqueline Regev, Education Director of the Central Pacific Region of the Anti-Defamation League, will facilitate our program. All of Emeth's high school and middle school teens and parents are invited and encouraged to attend.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Marilyn Freund, Membership Chair



KILLOUGH FAMILY

Beth, Eric, and Emma Killough live at Take a Chance Ranch in Morgan Hill with their horses, goats, dogs, and cats. Beth is a psychotherapist and she also does leadership and team culture work with corporate groups with the help of their horse herd. The business is called *The Circle Up Experience*. Eric is in the legal technology and information management field. They both love books. Beth and Eric met in graduate school for poetry. Emma loves animals, art, and music. The family loves nature and hiking.

The Killoughs joined Emeth to acquire Jewish education for Emma and to be with families with young children. Beth's parents, Nancy Fishman and Ronnie Wilner, also recently joined Emeth.

GOLDIE-BROWN FAMILY

Tamara Goldie, David Brown, and sons Max and Ethan recently moved to Morgan Hill. Their family also includes a sweet golden retriever, two cats, and a bird.



Dave is a digital 3D artist and illustrator. He is very creative and enjoys working with his hands, with his many interests including gardening, sewing, practicing different forms of art, home building projects, and cooking. He also enjoys reading and watching science fiction genres.

Tamara is a college counselor at San Jose State and De Anza College. She enjoys camping, bike riding, hiking, and exploring new trails in the South County. She loves taking her kids to new places and exploring all that the Bay Area has to offer.

Max is in sixth grade. He enjoys role playing games, chess, and video games. He is active in Boy Scouts and enjoys outdoor activities. He recently started riding lessons, and he cares deeply animals and the environment. Ethan is in second grade. He loves all sports but especially baseball, and he currently plays on the Morgan Hill Pony League. Ethan also enjoys riding his bike and playing with his fantasy toys. He is active in Cub Scouts.

HENIG FAMILY

Residents of Gilroy, Adam and Jennifer Henig, along with their sons, Jacob, 4.5 years old, and Alex, 2.5 years old, are excited to join Congregation Emeth.



Adam grew up attending a conservative synagogue in San Leandro and hopes to instill a similar upbringing for his own family. Adam works for the City of Saratoga as a Recreation Supervisor, while Jennifer is a Special Education Coordinator at San Benito High School in Hollister. Jacob attends the City of Morgan Hill's community preschool, where Alex plans to follow suit next year.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS (CONTINUED)



DOUBEK FAMILY

Penny and Scott Doubek have rejoined Emeth after a hiatus. Their three sons, Josh, Michael, and Sam, grew up in Congregation Emeth and had their Bar Mitzvahs here.

Scott runs facilities for Cavium Technologies Nation Wide. He is kept busy traveling building offices from So Cal to Boston. Penny is regional Sales Manager for Bay Equity Home Loans, running their Santa Clara, Hollister, San Benito, Monterey and Santa Cruz businesses. She is in charge of offices in Morgan Hill, Los Gatos, Salinas, Carmel and soon to be Santa Cruz.

Josh lives in Virginia and attends George Mason University where he is completing a degree in Conflict Resolution and International Management. Michael lives in Incline Village in Lake Tahoe and works for Vail Resorts at North Star as an outdoor EMT and Rescue/Ski Patroller. Sam is an Art Major and Asian Studies minor at the University of Puget Sound.

Family hobbies and interests include gardening, skiing, tennis, fishing, hiking, traveling, beautiful beaches, and entertaining at home. They are interested in supporting Emeth through participation in fundraisers and Sisterhood events. Welcome home to Emeth, Penny and Scott!

WELCOME NEW ADMINISTRATOR

Susan Braun

We would like to welcome **Charlene Rose**, Congregation Emeth's new administrator, who is replacing Debbie Zajac after her many years of service.

Charlene brings a wealth of experience and talent to our congregation. She has worked in marketing, office management, and event planning. She will be creating HaMadrach (our weekly email) and monthly flyers, performing administrative duties for the congregation, and assisting Rabbi Debbie Israel.



Charlene has vineyard and winery experience and will be working with Denise Weyl on our upcoming wine event later this year. We are fortunate to have her join the Emeth family.

Please introduce yourself to Charlene and join us in welcoming her!

TIKKUN OLAM — REPAIRING THE WORLD — A NEW COMMITTEE FOR EMETH

Susan Meyers, Tikkun Olam Chair

This year the Emeth Board of Directors is initiating a new committee focused on Tikkun Olam—Social Justice. As members of a Reform Congregation, we have a valuable resource in the URJ Religious Action Center—engaging in issues related to Jewish Values. In January we will explore the issues, review the information from the URJ, meet with representatives from the URJ *Tikkun Tikvah* group and, together, we will decide which of the issues is most compelling to our committee.



Our Torah teaches us “...*Justice, Justice You Shall Pursue!*” Justice, expressed in Parshat Shoftim, is one of the eternal religious obligations of Judaism. Our Tikkun Olam committee is an opportunity for us to engage together in this central theme of Judaism.

Please contact me at pastpresident@emeth.net if you would like to participate in our goal setting and/or committee.

A JEWISH BLESSING: SERVING TURKEY, PLAYING SANTA FOR FAMILIES IN NEED ON CHRISTMAS

By Marisa Kendall

Photos by Karl Mondon

San Jose Mercury News

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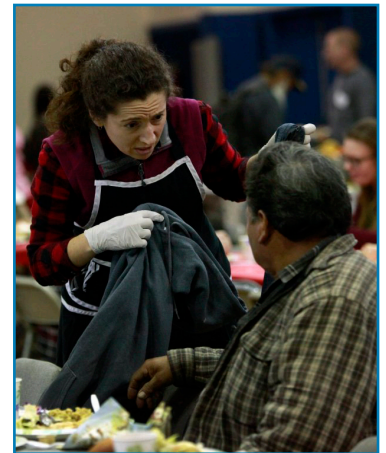
December 26, 2016

Festivities at St. Joseph's Family Center on Christmas kicked off with a Jewish blessing and ended with a visit from Santa.



Susan Meyers, one of the founding members of Congregation Emeth's annual Christmas Day meal service, plays Santa Claus's elf.

The center has brought Jewish and Christian traditions together every December 25 for a quarter-century — ever since a few members of the nearby Congregation Emeth synagogue first offered to take over for the nuns who were handing out free Christmas meals to people in need. The idea was to give the church workers a break so they could celebrate Christmas with their own families, letting the task of preparing and serving the Christmas meal fall to people who don't celebrate the holiday



Maria Elena Jarson offers a warm coat to a man attending the annual Christmas Day meal at St. Joseph's Family Center.

"It's just nice to give the staff the day off," said Denise Weyl, a member of Congregation Emeth <read more>

[Click here for a link to the complete San Jose Mercury News article](#)

Thank You to Lord's Table Volunteers

Curt Palm

Photos by Nancy Altman



Workers at the Lord's Table (many of these people also donated food): Andrew Glover / Cheryl & Mark Thompson / Debbie Zajac / Denise Weyl / Donna & Mel Weisblatt / Jack Shorr / Joan Halperin / Ken & Susie Freiberg / Maria Elena, Aaron, Raquel, Isaac & Ari Jarson / Maureen Chassy / Nancy Fishman & Ronnie Wilner / Sheryl & Rich Pupko / Sandra & Geoff Jackson / Sandy Gabe / Scott Bassett / Susan Meyers & Michael Oshan / Wendy Thowdis & Michael Kerner / Gary Zatkin.

Turkey Roasters: Ken & Susie Freiberg / Curt Palm & Nancy Altman-Palm / Denise Weyl / Cheryl & Mark Thompson / Susan Meyers / John Jenkins / Maureen Chassy / Sandy Gabe / Elizabeth Mandel / Marilyn Freund / Rich & Sheryl Pupko / Wendy Thowdis & Michael Kerner.

Gift Card solicitation (Safeway, Nob Hill, Walmart, Target & Costco) and food shopping with gift cards: Cathy Silverstein.

Present wrapping: EDK teens.

Donation of toys and clothes: Rabbi's Discretionary Fund, Sisterhood and Emeth members.

We served 180 clients. Thank you all!

