

What Jews believe

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<http://southvalley.com/about-judaism/>

The local interfaith community gathers to learn about religion



RITUAL ITEMS A kippah, or head covering featured with a traditional yad, or pointer for reading from the torah—handwritten parchment scrolls believed by Jews to contain the five books of Moses.

If you've ever wondered what Jesus has to do with Judaism or what the Jewish concept of sin is, these are the types of questions that will be addressed during the Interfaith Community of South County's (ICSC) event *The Faith of Our Neighbors: Judaism*.

"The idea is to educate one another," says Susan Meyers, facilitator for the ICSC. "People have questions about one another's religion that they sometimes don't feel comfortable to ask."

This upcoming event marks the first in a two-part educational series *The Faith of Our Neighbors*, which provides a forum for the community to gather and learn about religious practices that differ from their own. The second event on Mormonism is planned for fall 2017.

Made up of 16 different faith organizations, the ICSC comes together to build community between people of different religious backgrounds.

"I think as we build a compassionate community, which is the goal of the South County Interfaith Community, the more we know about one another," says Meyers. "We get rid of some of the ideas that we have that maybe keep us apart. It's just inviting you to say 'This is who we are. We're more like you than we are different from you, so let's work together.'"

The series includes short presentations about faith, followed by an open question and answer session. "This is people's opportunity to come, to be in a synagogue," says Meyers. "Some people have never been in a synagogue."

Meyers says rabbi Debbie Israel of Congregation Emeth in Morgan Hill is going to speak about Jewish traditions, and rabbi Joshua Labon will address the relationship between American Jews and Jews in Israel. "There is a woman who is going to read from the torah," Meyers says. "We'll have it open so people that have never seen a torah and are interested in that can come up and take a look."

During the presentation, Meyers will be speaking about the Jewish concept of repairing the world, called tikkun olam. The term is often used to refer to issues dealing with social justice and social action. Meyers, who is also a congregant at Congregation Emeth, says the congregation has committees for social justice and social action and often works on projects with Saint Joseph's, "helping people, feeding people who are homeless, who need a place to go to get a meal."

Their social justice committee, she says, looks more deeply at what changes people can make legislatively. "What kind of policies should we be suggesting to our legislators, or supporting that our legislators have already gotten started," she explains.

Meyers says she expects many questions will be answered, including "How are Christmas and Chanukah the same or different?", and "What is the Jewish concept of heaven, hell?"

Meyers adds that the more people that are ready to create a compassionate community, the smaller the number of people who are not part of that movement.

'The Faith of our Neighbors: Judaism' takes place on Sunday, April 30, 2017 from 4-6pm at Congregation Emeth at 17835 Monterey St., Morgan Hill.