


















CONGREGATION SHIR AMI

January, 2010

Jan 8-10	Kids Only Shabbaton	Feb 12 6 PM	Kids Shabbat Service
Jan 10	School	6:45 PM	Potluck
		8:00 PM	Shabbat Services led by Suzy Stone
Jan 14 7:30 PM	Rosh Chodesh	Feb 13 3:00 PM	Adult Education
			
Jan 15 8:00 PM	Shabbat Services led by Matt Dreffin	Feb 14	School
			
Jan 16 10 AM	Bat Mitzvah Kaitlin Beckman	Feb 16 7:30 PM	Rosh Chodesh
			
Jan 17	School	Feb 18 7:00 PM	Board Meeting
			
Jan 21 7:00 PM	Board Meeting	Feb 26 7:00 PM	Shabbat Services and Purim party Ld by Matt Dreffin
			
Jan 29 8 PM	Interfaith Service led by Suzy Stone	Feb 27 7:00 PM	Havdalah & Movie Night
			
Jan 30 10 AM	Religious Committee Meeting	Feb 28	School
			
Jan 30 5 PM	Tu B' Shvat Seder with dinner led by Suzy Stone and Diana Zankowsky		

Congregation Shir Ami, 4529 Malabar Ave, Castro Valley CA 94546 - (510) 537-1787

www.CongShirAmi.org - info@CongShirAmi.org

Affiliated with the [Union for Reform Judaism](http://www.unionforreformjudaism.org)

President's Message

Ruth Hartman

Dear Shir Ami members and friends,

As you may know, our Reform movement holds a convention every two years. The most recent Biennial was held in Toronto in early November. (Leah Hartman wrote about her impressions of the event in last month's bulletin.)

At the Biennial Shabbat morning service, URJ president Rabbi Eric Yoffie offers new initiatives for the movement. This year, one of Rabbi Yoffie's topics was our relationship to food. The following is excerpted from an article by Rachel Cohen, who is Senior Legislative Assistant for energy and environmental issues at the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism:

"As Jews, we have always cared about the food that we eat. Some of us choose to embrace traditional notions of *kashrut* – and many of us do not – but we can all agree that our food, and how we get it, plays an important part in our lives.

That's why Rabbi Eric Yoffie opened one section of his 2009 Biennial Shabbat sermon with these words: 'Jewish history begins with a Jew – a new Jew, the first Jew – saying to others: come, eat with me. And ever since this first Jewish meal, Jews have believed that eating matters.'

These words have never been truer than they are for us today. Our Jewish values – caring for our neighbors, being good stewards of our earth and its resources, valuing our family and our community – all point to the need to think critically about the way we eat.

The more we learn about the impact of our current industrial food system on our bodies, our communities, and our planet, the more we are challenged to reconsider our own food choices. Scientific studies, articles in almost every major news outlet, and dozens of recent films remind us how important our food decisions are – and how far we have strayed from sustainable and ethical eating practices."

The Reform Movement's new *Shulchan Yarak, Shulchan Tzedek* (Green Table, Just Table) initiative (www.urj.org/life/food) challenges us all to discuss, debate, and perhaps to change our standards of ethical eating as Jews in the 21st century. This site has a lot of really interesting resources for more thoughtful, intentional, and ethical eating. Take advantage of your URJ membership by reviewing the ideas and suggestions you'll find there.

Rabbi Yoffie went on to declare, "Reform Jews are ethically aware, ecologically responsible, and sensitive to matters of physical and spiritual health. We know that our Jewish tradition speaks to these issues, and that our young people care about them. At such times, Reform Judaism does not remain silent."

In the past, Shir Ami has participated in the UFW grape boycott and other forms of ethical food consumption. Come celebrate Tu B'Shevat, the New Year of the Trees, at our seder on January 30th and explore how the Shir Ami community may rise to this challenge. What steps do you take in your home to express your Jewish values around food? Let me know—perhaps we'll print your stories in next month's bulletin.

B'shalom,
Ruth, president@conqshirami.org

School News

Jan 3 – No School, Winter Break
Jan 10 – Hebrew and Religious School
Jan 17 – Hebrew and Religious School
Jan 31 – Hebrew, Religious School and TuB'Shevat Seder

School Families,

How can it be? Winter break is over and our kids are back to school! Religious School is also back in session on Sunday, January 10, 2010.

January is a very busy month for the youth at Shir Ami.

Religious School meets three times to study:

January 10	Compassionate Rachel
January 17	Twelve Tribes
January 31	Joseph in Egypt and the TU B'SHVAT SEDER

We will be communicating with the parents via email about the Tu B'Shvat Seder and to ask for help with the ritual foods. **Everyone is invited to join the school at the TU B'SHVAT SEDER at 11:45 on January 31, 2010.**

If you already registered, the *Community Youth Shabbaton* is on January 8–10, 2010. The bus leaves promptly at 1:30 from Beth Emek in Pleasanton. Please contact us at education@congshirami.org if you are interested in carpooling to the bus.

Our High School students are invited to attend the *West Coast Party* January 15-18, 2010. **Registration will close January 4, 2010.** Go to http://newman.urjcamp.org/yearround/retreats/west_coast_party for more information.

I know we are just packing away the Chanukah decorations, but it is not too early to begin thinking about summer camp. Financial Aid is available for all Jewish camps. See the camp websites for more information.

We are fortunate to have **Camp Kadima** in our back yard. Camp Kadima is a Jewish Day Camp sponsored by the three local temples: Congregation Beth Emek, Temple Beth Torah and Congregation Shir Ami. Many of our older teens work at the camp so your child will feel right at home. See the Camp Kadima website at <http://campkadima.bethemek.org/index.shtml> for more information.

Camp Newman, the Reform Jewish sleep away camp near Santa Rosa is also currently registering campers for the summer. Go to <http://newman.urjcamp.org/register/> for dates and more information.

Camp Tawonga, on the Tuolumne River in the Stanislaus National Forest, is a JCC (Jewish Community Centers) Association camp that incorporates outdoor activities in Yosemite National Park into their programs. More information is available at www.tawonga.org.

We still need sponsors for some of the Religious School Onegs. Please contact Judy justjc@sbcglobal.net at to schedule your hosting date.

Because we are in each classroom every week, we see the impact of missing students on the energy and involvement of the student who are present. Our teachers prepare wonderful lesson plans that create excitement and spur interaction of students in every class. Please make sure your student is here whenever possible so that every student can have a positive experience at Shir Ami.

Barbara Jorgia Haber

Adult Education

In January 2010, Congregation Shir Ami will have several different adult education offerings.

Introduction to Judaism: We have expanded our on-going monthly class for adults interested in conversion. We are now welcoming any member of our community interested in learning more about Judaism. We will continue to meet on Saturdays. Our next meeting will be on January 9th from 1 pm to 3 pm. At this class, we will continue to look at our liturgy in the Mishkan T'fillah and we will look ahead to Tu b'Shevat and our connection to our Earth. Contact Diana Zankowsky, dzankowsky@aol.com for more information.

“What does GOD have to do with it? Jewish Perspectives on Life, Death and the Afterlife” Rabbi Suzy Stone’s class will not meet this month. The next meeting will be in February.

Adult Hebrew: Judy Ganz continues to teach the weekly “Learning Hebrew through Prayer” class, for those who already have basic literacy skills. Please contact Judy at jbganz@aol.com if you are interested in joining.



Movies: On January 16th, Shir Ami’s Israeli Movie night brings to you *Shalosh Imahot* (3 Mothers), a multigenerational saga detailing the redemptive journey of three beautiful triplets. It was nominated for nine Israeli Academy Awards (won 2) and offers an emotional exploration of memory, loyalty, betrayal, and self-sacrifice among family. When one sibling falls ill and longs to come clean about a long-buried family secret, she enlists the aid of another’s daughter in producing a video that will finally bring the family’s long-gestating issues out into the open. Needless to say this heartfelt confession prompts tempers to flare and reopens old wounds, sending all three sisters on a soul searching journey into the past in hopes of coming to terms with sixty-years of self-imposed silence. This wonderful film will follow *Havdalah*, which will start at 7:00 pm.

Rosh Chodesh Group

Jan Dombrower



Sisterhood:

Everyone had a great time at our Sisterhood Hanukkah party. Gathering at Ellen Gave's home, we lit our Menorahs for the 6th night and sang the prayers. The variety of Menorahs and candles made for a beautiful sight of glittering lights.

Then, we ate delicious latkes and salads. There were a variety of latkes including sweet potato and original. We had jelly donuts and gelt for dessert.

Our gift exchange/ and gift "steal" was really fun. The gifts were stolen away several times over, but everyone ended up with a really nice gift. We chatted, laughed, and satisfied our palates. The evening was a great success as we honored the tradition of the sisterhood Hanukkah party that has been going on for many years.

Next month's Rosh Chodesh will be on Thursday, January 14th at 7:30 at the home of Sara Lamnin. It will be hosted by Sara and Marlene Lamnin. It will be a fun evening with games such as Jewish Trivia. We will bring in the new month of Shevat.

We are excited about having our new Shir Ami members and new community members join us in our Sisterhood/ Rosh Chodesh group. We welcome all of you and look forward to many enjoyable times together.

Please look in your email for the reminder of the upcoming Rosh Chodesh with address and directions included. Hope to see you there.

Registration is now open for our annual women's retreat, scheduled for March 5-7, 2010. This year we'll be at a new location in Alamo, less than a half-hour drive from Shir Ami. See flier in this bulletin for details.

Coming to the retreat but haven't yet registered? Here's info from Diana about this year's fascinating book discussion selection:

The book that I've chosen for the Women's Retreat is Day After Night by Anita Diamant, published by Simon & Schuster in 2009. It is available in hardcover and audio (either by download or on CD); the paperback is not due out until next summer.

The story is historical fiction (the back story is in the Epilogue), a tale about four women who survived the Holocaust, each in a different manner. They meet in pre-state Israel where they are incarcerated in a British prison camp, Atlit, because they each lack the proper papers to immigrate. Though haunted by unspeakable memories and innumerable losses, these women find salvation through the bonds of friendship and love as they confront the challenges of rebuilding their lives.

I've chosen this book for several reasons. The story is told in a very readable manner and should be accessible to all. Diamant is a skillful writer and develops her characters clearly and well. The protagonists are all women, which is appropriate for our retreat. And, at various places in the novel, each woman regains part of her capacity to take pleasure and delight in herself, in her friends and in the new world in which she finds herself. We may find parallels to ourselves and our world in this lovely new book.

The Community Page

January, 2010

Yahrzheits:

January 15, 2010

Joseph Bressler, father of Florrie Finkle
Zac Cohen, long time member of Shir Ami
Bridget Laky, past president and long time former member of Shir Ami
Peter Rosenberg, uncle of Alex Druker
Helen Rosner, long time active member of Shir Ami

January 29, 2010

Tyler Brooke, husband of Georgie Brooke and father of Toni Schulberg
Cecilia Kramer, grandmother of Marion Kramer
Rolf Weinberg, husband of Ingrid Weinberg; a charter member and mainstay of Shir Ami for many, many years

Kaddish List: (to be read both services in January)

Sharon Lawrence, aunt of Kaitlin and Matt Beckman
Jack Farbstein, uncle of Ruth Rosenthal
Sarah Leona Markus, grandmother of Noah Markus
David Sapper, father of Danielle Keil
Alyce Nasatir, mother of Cary Nasatir
Jacob Ross, father of David Ross
Doris Greenfield, mother of Julie Greenfield
Jack Skelly, father of Bruce Skelly
Jean Skelly, mother of Bruce Skelly

May their memory be a blessing...

Ever wonder how the names read out loud for Yahrzheit and Kaddish at Friday night services get on that list? If you are a member of Shir Ami, and want a personal reminder for the Yahrzheit of a loved one, just send Toni Schulberg the following information: the name of the deceased; the relationship of that person to the member of Shir Ami; the full date (month, day, year) that person died; and whether you want to use the Hebrew or English calendar for their Yahrzheit (Toni will look up the Hebrew date for you). Questions? Call Toni at 278-1695 or e-mail her at Yarzheit@congshirami.org.

TODAH RABAH FOR THESE GENEROUS DONATIONS:

- From Irina & Alex Druker.
- From Tyler Dean: in Memory of his father at his Yahrzeit.
- From Ruth Levin: in Honor of her daughter, Elizabeth Levin.

A contribution to Shir Ami is a great way to honor, remember, or show appreciation for someone special. It's easy. Send a check and note to:
Florrie Finkle (her address is included on Shir Ami's roster) Florrie will send a card to the person you are honoring and your dedication will appear on this page.

Thank you to our Oneg Hosts:

December 11th: The Carmack/Rosenthal Family

December 18th: The Keils

Thank you to Nancy Storch and the members of the Sisterhood/Rosh Hodesh group for the donation of the beautiful stained glass menorah.

What's Nu?

Mazal tov to the Keil family on Sarah's becoming bat mitzvah on December 19. We are all very proud of her!

Daryl Berman participated in the annual School of the Americas Watchprotests at the gates of Ft. Benning, in Columbus, Georgia in November. Daryl, along with Rev. John Wichman and Amy Rickard of the Westminster Hills Presbyterian Church and Jim Forsyth of Starr King Unitarian Universalist Church, joined with 15,000 others from every state and many countries. The protest was started in 1990 by Fr. Roy Bourgeois, a Maryknoll Father and Vietnam vet, to speak out against the U.S. role in training Latin American soldiers in repressive U.S.-supported military regimes. A bill to close the training center at Fort Benning, HR2567 (McGovern, D- MA), has 89 coauthors including Reps. Barbara Lee, Pete Stark and Jerry McNerney.

SHIR AMI MEN'S CLUB

We are organizing a new Men's Club for our congregation. Come join us for our first event, a planning meeting and breakfast to discuss possible future activities including an Hebrew Union College (HUC) speaker, blood drive, gardening and maintenance projects for the synagogue, community service... and more!

Breakfast at Doug's Place
20871 Redwood Rd, Castro Valley
Sunday, March 7, 2010
10:45 am

To RSVP, to get more information, and to share your ideas on what the Shir Ami Men's Club should be about (in case you can't be there on March 7), contact Jonathan Zimmerman at jonathan-zimmerman@sbcglobal.net or (510) 220-3345

AMERICAN NERD

Midrasha program offers eclectic learning opportunities for teens

Tri-Valley/Tri-Cities Midrasha, in collaboration with Congregation Beth Emek, recently co-hosted Benjamin Nugent, author of the book "American Nerd: The Story of My People." In the spirit of the evening, the teens--along with Midrasha Director Day Schildkret--greeted the author in full-out "nerd" dress to learn about the ethnic and racial stereotypes behind nerdiness. The literary event was part of the 21st Annual Contra Costa Jewish Book and Arts Festival.

Three weeks later, in an event co-sponsored by Beth Emek's Israel & World Jewry Committee, the teens met with Akiva Tor, the Consul General of Israel to the Pacific Northwest. Mr. Tor spoke about "Israel: Challenges and Opportunities," including Israel's desire for peace alongside an independent Palestinian state and the concern about nuclear proliferation in Iran.

Tri-Valley-Tri-Cities Midrasha is a community-based program for Jewish teens in grades 8 through 12, co-sponsored by Congregation Beth Emek. For more information about the program, including upcoming activities and enrollment, contact TV/TC Director Day Schildkret (director.tvtcmidrasha@gmail.com or 925-549-1664).



**The Tzedakah Box
A Social Action Column
Daryl Berman, Julie Greenfield, Sara Lamnin**

*Almost always, the creative dedicated minority has made the world better.
-Martin Luther King*

**Join us for the annual Peace March in Hayward, Monday January 18, 2010.
10am at Hayward City Hall, 777 B Street, Hayward, 94541**

**No speeches, just Martin Luther King's words and the opportunity to be a
presence for peace.**

*Change does not roll in on the wheels of inevitability, but comes through continuous
struggle. And so we must straighten our backs and work for our freedom. A man
can't ride you unless your back is bent.*

-Martin Luther King

Tarps and Sleeping Bags Needed. The Hayward Community Action Network is collecting tarps of any size, sleeping bags, and toiletries for individuals who are homeless in Castro Valley and Hayward. To volunteer, donate, or for more information, email haywardcan@gmail.com, visit haywardcan.weebly.com or call (510) 432-7703.

SHIR AMI BULLETIN BOARD



Safeway eScrip Renewal

It is time to renew your Safeway eScrip for Shir Ami.

Shir Ami's Store on CafePress.com

Our latest and greatest fundraiser is our very own store on CafePress.

Thanks to the talents of Jeff Blum who designed the stained glass panel in our front door, and David Holsey who developed Jeff's design into our new logo, we have items for sale that have the official Congregation Shir Ami logo.

You may have seen a small sample of them at the year-end picnic where the teachers were given their very own Shir Ami mugs. But wait, there's more. If you go online to our store at <http://www.cafepress.com/CongShirAmi> you will find a wide variety of products, including t-shirts, sweatshirts, hoodies, not to mention cool gift ideas like mugs, travel mugs, note cards, journals, tote bags, and more.

When you purchase an item from our store, 25% of the purchase price goes directly to Shir Ami. Do yourself a favor, and do Shir Ami a favor, by taking a few minutes to go to our online store and start shopping.

Used Cell Phones Wanted

Barbara Heimowitz is still collecting used/old cell phones that you leave at Shir Ami to be sent in for cash. You can bring in your cell phones to Shir Ami anytime – just leave them in the box in the kitchen. Any questions? Please call Barbara.

Shir Ami Contacts

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Yahrzeit Listings:

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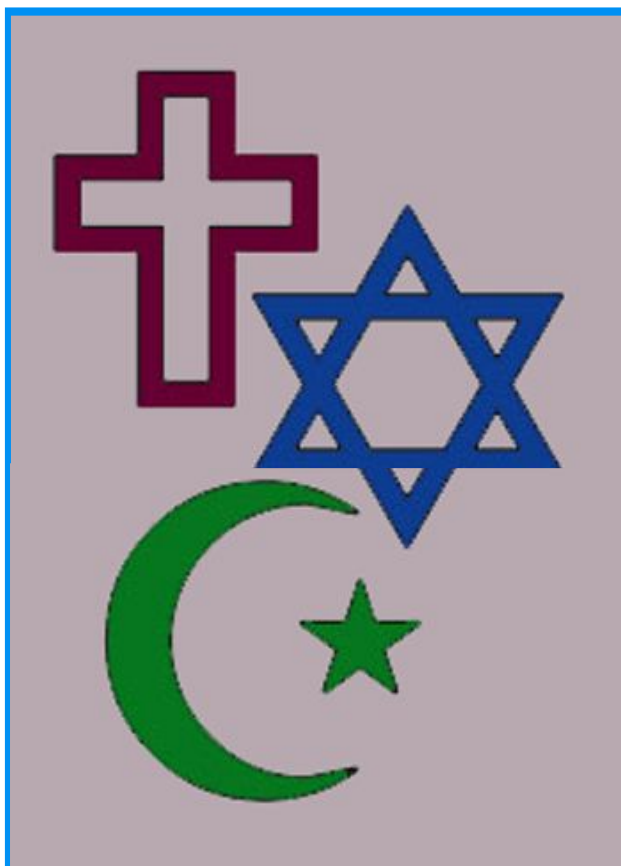
Donations:

General Funds, Special Funds,
Wall Plaques
Florrie Finkle
donations@congshirami.org

Interfaith

Service at Congregation Shir Ami
4529 Malabar Avenue, Castro Valley

Friday, January 29, 2010, 8:00 – 10:00PM
in Commemoration of Martin Luther King week



Shir Ami will be welcoming the Rev. Dr. Arlene K. Nehring,
Eden United Church of Christ,
who will join Rabbinic Intern, Suzy Stone, in
a Shabbat Service and interfaith discussion on
Peace, Freedom and Social Justice.

All are welcome,
bring a friend to this important meeting

Tu b'shevat

Israel's holiday of the trees



Tu b'shevat celebration and Seder at Shir Ami!

Saturday, January 30th at 5:00 PM

Adults \$15.00

Under 12 years old \$10.00

Non-members \$18.00

*Services will be led by
Suzy Stone and
Diana Zankowsky*

Please join us in our Fourteenth Annual
Shir Ami Women's Retreat

Delight In Your Soul

Friday, March 5 – Sunday, March 7, 2010

At the beautiful Westminster Retreat Center
In Alamo, California (new location)

Come share in a weekend of discovering what delights your soul. Uncover your inner spark, refresh and renew your spirit. Join us in a weekend of women's friendship, worship, creativity, inspiration, and play. Rabbinic Intern Suzy Stone joins us once again as a scholar-in-residence. Our new site makes the retreat more accessible than ever, and this year's cost is lower than the past several years! Newcomers are *very* welcome.

*Space limited to 20 women. Register ASAP, no later than **February 15.**
Contact Ruth: 510-582-3379 or ruth@wordcraft.com.*

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Please register online at <http://www.CongShirAmi.org/wr2010.php>, and mail your check (payable to Ruth Hartman the same day to 18850 Cull Canyon Road, Castro Valley, 94552. Or complete this form and mail with your check. Deadline is February 15.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

I enclose a check for \$245, OR

I enclose a deposit of \$____. I will pay the balance on ____.

I need a ride.

I have the following special needs (mobility, vegetarian, etc.):
