





















CONGREGATION SHIR AMI

April, 2010

Apr 2 8:00 PM 	Shabbat Services led by Matt Dreffin	Apr 25 	School
Apr 3 5:45 PM Doors open at 5:30PM	Community Seder led by Matt Dreffin. See flier for details.	May 2 	School
Apr 4	No School	May 2 2 PM	Mens Club - meet at Shir Ami; see flier for details
Apr 10 1 PM 	Adult Ed led by Diana Zankowsky	May 9 	School
Apr 11	No School	May 13 7:30 PM	Rosh Chodesh
Apr 14 7:30 PM 	Rosh Chodesh	May 14 8 PM 	Shabbat Services led by Matt Dreffin
Apr 15 7:00 PM 	Board Meeting	May 15 10 AM 	Bar Mitzvah - Ryan Seideman
Apr 16 8:00 PM 	Shabbat Services led by Matt Dreffin	May 16 	School
Apr 17 4:00 PM  7:00 PM	Dvar Torah Workshop Havdalah & Movie Night	May 21 8 PM 	Shabbat Services led by Suzy Stone and Diana Zankowsky; Shavuot & Confirmation
Apr 18 	School	May 22 1 PM	Adult Ed led by Suzy Stone
Apr 23 8:00 PM 	Volunteer Appreciation Shabbat Services led by Suzy Stone	May 23  11:30 AM	School End of Year party and potluck Annual Members Meeting - 12:30 PM
Apr 24 1:00 PM 	Adult Ed led by Suzy Stone		

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.ura.org)

President's Message

Ruth Hartman

Dear Shir Ami members and friends,

At the Passover season, our minds turn to the great themes of liberation and redemption. The Exodus story has helped inspire many great liberation struggles throughout history, including the 20th century struggle for civil rights for African-Americans, in which Jews played a significant and well-documented role.

Many of us believe that the struggle for full equality for Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people is a central civil rights issue of our time. On January 29, the Reverend Arlene Nehring of Eden United Church of Christ in Hayward spoke at Shir Ami as part of our interfaith service. Reverend Arlene invited us to participate in a press event that Eden UCC was planning for March 5 on behalf of diversity education and LGBT inclusion. The event was timed to coincide with Castro Valley High School's "Days of Diversity" program, where Reverend Arlene had met with hate and harassment after her 2009 presentation.

Here is the statement that I read at the March 5 press conference:

Good morning. My name is Ruth Hartman, and I am the president of Congregation Shir Ami, a Reform Jewish synagogue that has served Castro Valley's small but vibrant Jewish community for more than 45 years.

As a religious and ethnic minority in Castro Valley, we Jews know the importance of diversity and tolerance in our schools. I myself have been a presenter in the Castro Valley High School Days of Diversity program for nine years. I started out presenting as a Jew in solidarity with a group of Arab women after the events of September 11, 2001 ignited a backlash of intolerance against Arab Americans. Later I presented on Jewish culture, and for the past three years I have played a supporting role to my daughters and other Jewish CVHS students as they proudly share their Jewish culture with their peers.

As a Jew, I am keenly aware of the costs of remaining silent when any group of people are forced to hide who they are, or demonized in the public imagination, or denied equal rights, or targeted for mistreatment. My tradition teaches me that we all have an obligation to speak out when we see any group being mistreated.

So I am proud today to stand here with Reverend Arlene and the members of Eden United Church of Christ and to state without hesitation that the Jewish community of Castro Valley, and progressive Jews throughout the world, stand with you in the struggle for full respect and inclusion for Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, for full recognition of all our families, and for a safe and welcoming learning environment for all our children.

Thank you to Diana Zankowsky for bringing me to the event and demonstrating her support. A big thank you also to Milt Palmer, who collected and printed terrific photos of Shir Ami community that were displayed as part of the "Love Makes a Family" photo exhibit that accompanied the Eden press conference. (You can read two press releases about the event at www.edenucc.org. Both mention our participation.)

I wish you a very happy Passover and look forward to seeing you at the Shir Ami Seder on April 3. As we retell the great story of this holiday, we rededicate ourselves to the work of human liberation that continues on so many levels in our times.

B'shalom,
Ruth
president@congshirami.org

Rabbis' Corner

Matt Dreffin
Suzy Stone

This year, for the first time, I was privileged to lead a mock seder for my family in Phoenix. For my nieces, this was their first or second seder and so they had a lot of questions. When we got to the breaking of the middle matzo, I said: "So now we break this half of the matzo and we hide the other piece of matzo for **dessert**." My five-year old niece looked at me and said: "That sure doesn't look like dessert!" Well, she had a very good point and the entire table had a good laugh. But this got me thinking, where does the tradition of the Afikomen come from?

Many scholars believe that the word Afikomen comes from the Greek, which means: "after-dinner revelry." As you may know, the rabbis modeled the Passover Seder off of the Greco-Roman symposium. A symposium consisted of an elaborate meal with many courses (much like a seder) and unlimited wine.

While the Rabbis were inspired by the idea of the symposium, they also created the seder in moral opposition to the unbridled revelry of the Greco-Roman tradition. For instance, while one can drink as many glasses of wine between the first and second cups of the seder, the Mishkan forbids drinking extra wine between the 3rd and 4th cups. I guess this was an ancient form of "sobering up" before heading out on the streets.

In order to enforce this idea of sobriety, the Babylonian Talmud teaches: "Ein mafferin achar hapesach afikomen." This means, there should be nothing consumed after the afikomen. In essence, this was a ritual way for the Rabbis to ensure that the seder-goers were not consumed by drunken revelry; but rather, they finish the night by focusing on the symbolic significance of the night. I guess you could say that the Rabbis were the ancient progenitors of M.A.D.D. (Mothers Against Drunk Driving). Well, that might be a stretch! But next time someone asks you how the Afikomen become dessert, I think we will all have a very interesting story to tell!

Chag Sameach!
Rabbi Suzy

We'd like to hear from you

Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR) in Los Angeles is the graduate school that our student rabbis attend. The school, in the interests of helping our students learn and grow while at their student pulpits, has asked us to provide regular, written feedback to the students and their advisors. That means that they want to hear from us after EVERY visit by each of the student rabbis. Diana Zankowsky has taken on the job of Lay Advisor and she will collect and convey that feedback. Please communicate both positive and corrective feedback to Diana, (at dzankowsky@aol.com) no later than Tuesday after a rabbi's visit. Thank you in advance for contributing to our student rabbis' educations.

School News

April 4 No School – HAPPY PASSOVER

April 11 No School – CVUSD – HAPPY SPRING BREAK

April 18 School

April 25th School

Dear Shir Ami families,

On March 14 a combined group of members from Temple Beth Sholom and Congregation Shir Ami met at Shir Ami to discuss the merger of the two religious schools. Rinat Manhoff, director-to-be of the combined school, led the meeting. Rinat started out the meeting by asking everyone to share their favorite memory regarding Jewish education. I have to admit that as a somewhat literal person I sort of thought to myself, “this is a waste of time, we need to get down to the business questions surrounding this merger.” What I soon realized was that Rinat’s vision for the meeting was spot on. As people started speaking about what was important to them it became clear that we were a group of people with a shared journey and shared hopes for our families. Many people shared memories of how meaningful it was to see their children become a Bar or Bat Mitzvah, some shared memories of being welcomed at a Jewish camp, others the joy of hearing their children sing songs learned at religious school, and several who had great memories of teaching others about Judaism.

The second part of the meeting involved breaking into groups of teachers, parents, board members, or rabbis. These groups were tasked with generating a list of items that represented their vision for the school. Again the visions of individuals from Beth Sholom and individuals from Shir Ami were in sync. Parents hoped for larger peer groups for their children. Teachers were dreaming of better chances for interaction with each other as well as a supportive curriculum. Board members started with the benefit of community interactions, and ended up talking about the bottom line - membership development for both synagogues. Our Rabbi Matt and Beth Sholom’s Rabbi Manhoff got a chance to talk about how rabbinic coordination will work in the new school.

In the end, groups came together to add any final thoughts of vision for the schools. At this point, one of the moms from Temple Beth Sholom said, “ Well, it is kind of scary.” That moment was very telling for me as I too have had scared feelings about this venture. I think these feelings for me come from not wanting to change the special place that Shir Ami has been for my family. One day last year as I pulled into the driveway of Shir Ami with Spencer he said, “Ah, feels like a home.” How could I put that at risk? When the Beth Sholom mom expressed her fear I realized we all value a special place, our special place. I believe this shared value will help both synagogues keep their cultures intact as we join together for a healthier school. So I say to you my beloved Shir Ami families - let’s not be scared or worried. We are doing a good thing. We are teaching our children an amazing lesson in human cooperation. We are strengthening our religious school and our synagogue.

As we proceed from here, a meeting is planned between Rinat Manhoff, Barb Haber, myself, Rabbi Manhoff, and Rabbi Matt to iron out details regarding finances, how to organize meeting locations, Hebrew school times, a theme for the year, staffing, etc. Rinat has been working on a tight agenda to make this meeting productive. We will also have available by phone Rabbi Fine from the URJ who is an expert on collaborations between synagogues. Rabbi Fine is offering us an amazing amount of support and is even willing to fly down at the URJ’s expense should that seem beneficial.

Please feel free to contact me if you have questions or input. I value your feelings.

Sincerely,
Jodi

Adult Education

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

Introduction to Judaism: Our next meeting of our ongoing class will be on April 10th from 1 pm to 3 pm. At this class, we will look at the “new” holidays, those added since WWII. We will look at the history, the observance and the liturgy for the worship services. Contact Diana Zankowsky, dzankowsky@aol.com for more information.

In the 1st century, Rabbi Ben Bag Bag was famous for saying, "Turn the Torah, turn it again and again, for everything you want to know is found within it." (Pirke Avot 2:25) Are you not sure how to 'turn' the Torah? On April 17th, Rabbi Matt will be offering a one-time glimpse into methods and tactics for creating successful *Divrei Torah* (Words/Explanations of Torah) and Sermons. The goal of this program will be to familiarize you with resources and techniques of delivering a *D'var Torah*, help you become more comfortable in delivery of the *Dvar Torah*, and to allow you to find your own voice within these sermons. The program will begin promptly at 4 pm. All skill levels are welcome. See you there!

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: Due to The Community Passover Seder, there will be no Israeli Film on the evening of April 3rd. Chag Sameach!

Thanks to high demand, on April 17th, Shir Ami Movie night will be switching away from the scheduled movies to bring you *Metallic Blues*. This comedic-drama centers around two used car salesmen who need to deliver a 1985 Lincoln Continental Limousine to Germany. On their journey, Jewish identities will be challenged and perceptions of history will change. Nominated for 4 Israeli Academy Awards (winner of 1), this film will give us a glimpse into the relationship between Israel, Europe, and America. This film will be preceded by Havdalah, which will start at 7 pm.

“What does GOD have to do with it? Jewish Perspectives on Life, Death and the Afterlife” In the next two classes of adult education we will be focusing on Jewish teachings regarding end-of-life issues. We will be delving into Jewish sources that help us understand how to make decisions about our own life, as well as those that we care for, by looking to both ancient Jewish sources, as well as, modern day responsa ('teshuvot'). These classes will focus on medical ethics from a Jewish perspective. Note time change to 1:00 pm for the April and May meetings of this class.

Rosh Chodesh Group

Jan Dombrower



Sisterhood:

"Delight in Your Soul" was the theme of this year's Sisterhood retreat. We met in a new location at the Westminster Retreat Center in Alamo. The nearby location made for quick travel time and a restful weekend. And, delight in our souls we did.

After a wonderful ice-breaker, snacks, Shabbat dinner, and settling into our rooms, we enjoyed a meaningful and original Shabbat service. The Dvar Torah spoke of defining our souls, specifically our passions and desires, and then igniting our souls with a life style that would support them.

Throughout the weekend, we enjoyed our "Cafe Soul." Women could pick from the menu and then enjoy cappuccinos, lattes, mochas, hot chocolate, and tea. Afterwards we made a craft of decorative buckets so we could "fill our buckets." Throughout the weekend, each woman's bucket was filled with feelings, support, and encouraging words from the rest of the woman. Each woman was able to take with them the lovely messages they received in their bucket

Saturday brought a great breakfast with Torah study, a meaningful Shabbat morning service, and the enjoyable listening circles. For each activity the theme of "our souls" rang through.

Afternoon activity consisted of decorating mirrors (the window to our soul). The end products were beautifully decorated decoupage mirrors. As they were all set out to dry, the room looked like a boutique with all the creative, beautiful mirrors.

Havdalah and dinner brought in the evening. We were then entertained and displayed our acting talent with the original play that we all participated in. There were costumes, rehearsed lines, and audience participation in this wonderful play. There was plenty of laughing and everyone was impressed about how great it was. Afterwards, we played a rousing game of Jewish Apples to Apples. There was more laughing and fun into the night.

Sunday we had our book discussion, more Cafe Soul, and a program of original, thought provoking and creative Torah and Talmudic study activities. Lunch and closing circle ended the awesome weekend. Thank you to all involved in the planning and execution of each activity and for making such a memorable weekend.

Last month's Rosh Chodesh brought in the new month of Nisan with fresh flowers and dessert! First, we had readings, candle lighting, and blessings about the month, Nisan, the month of Pesach. Nisan is also a time of freedom, new beginnings, and spring. Each woman shared what her Passover plans were and we also said a Mi She' berach for some members' loved ones for healing.

So, in honor of the new month we created fresh flower arrangements out of beautiful spring flowers. There were sunflowers, irises, carnations, tulips, greenery, and more. We embellished the arrangements with butterflies, frogs, and birds. Each arrangement was in a spring colored basket. At the end of the night, the room was adorned with a dozen beautiful, creative flower arrangements and each woman got to take theirs home. After the instruction, they will be able to replace the flowers with new fresh ones for their Passover table if they wish.

Each woman brought a dessert, kosher for Passover. We had ices, chocolate chip cookies, Pesach fruit sorbet, cinnamon crisp cookies, macaroon cheesecake, chocolate jellies, and truffles. It was delicious. Recipes were available to take home and try for our own Passover.

At next month's Rosh Chodesh we will be bringing in the month of Iyar. We will meet on Wednesday, April 14th at the home of Judy Ganz at 7:30. We will have a program about Israeli Independence day. Stay tuned to your email for more detail. Hope to see you there.

The Community Page

April, 2010

Yarzeit List

April 2, 2010

May Ganz, former member and mother-in-law of Judy Ganz

Benjamin Halpern, father of Harriet Skelly

Jack Skelly, father of Bruce Skelly

April 16, 2010

Betya Druker, mother of Alex Druker

Marjorie Wolf, aunt of Ruth Hartman

Bernard Nasatir, father of Cary Nasatir

April 23, 2010

Keith Carter, brother of Bruce Carter

Gordon Greenfield, father of Julie Greenfield

Kaddish List (*those who have died during the past 11 months*)

{Please read at all services in April}

Clara Schneider, mother of Marilyn Schneider, and grandmother of Irene, Sarah and Carolyn Gilchriese

Darlene Golembo, sister of Sharon Golembo

Ita Klebanova, mother of Sofiya Blank

Sharon Lawrence, aunt of Kaitlin and Matt Beckman (Barbara Haber's ex-sister-in-law)

Jack Farbstein, uncle of Ruth Rosenthal

Sarah Leona Markus, grandmother of Noah Markus

TODAH RABAH FOR THESE GENEROUS DONATIONS:

- Judy Ganz in honor of Matt Ganz' yarzeit;
- Judy Ganz-- in memory of Sam and May Ganz
- Rose and Hillie Levine—in honor of Sam and Ann Blank's 60th wedding anniversary.
- Rose and Hillie Levine in honor of Matt Ganz's yarzeit
- Rose and Hillie Levine for a speedy recovery for Todd Finlay
- Irena and Alex Druker for their generous donation.

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 March Rabbinic Intern Hosts:

- Harriet and Bruce Skelly
- Milton and Pat Palmer

Thank you to our March oneg hosts:

- Milton and Pat Palmer
- Mary Ann Leshin

What's Nu?

Congratulations to Hana Hartman, Emma Silver, and Spencer Blum who developed and delivered an excellent presentation on Jews and Judaism at Castro Valley High School's Days of Diversity program on March 12.

Kaitlin Beckman volunteered as a model at the Castro Valley Education Foundation's fashion show fund-raiser on March 26. She was smashing and had a great time!

Shir Ami is now in possession of a new wireless PA system to use for special events like the upcoming Passover seder, the Labor Day BBQ, and Purim carnival. Many thanks to Cary Nasatir for his help in purchasing this system!

This page is in transition. If you have any news you would like included in the Community Page, or input into how you think it should look, please e-mail your feedback to community@congshirami.org.

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



**AN OPPORTUNITY AND A CHALLENGE
FOR SOUTH HAYWARD PARISH***

The Problem: Finding fresh fruits and vegetables to insure that the folk who use the SHP Food Pantry and other food distribution programs in Hayward have what they need to maintain good health with a well balanced diet.

The Opportunity: Each Saturday as the Hayward Farmer's Market closes around 2:30 PM, unsold produce is often thrown away. Many pounds of usable fruit and vegetables go into the land fill. The Market managers would be delighted to have the Parish contact the vendors and arrange to pick up this unwanted produce. The Parish owns a large cargo van to transport produce to a central distribution site where cooperating food pantries could pick up what they can use.

The challenge: In order to take advantage of this opportunity the Parish must be able to promise consistency...that we will pick up produce every week! And this means finding person power. In the long run, we are searching for a funding source that will allow us to pay some folk to undertake this project. But in the short run, needed produce is going to waste. So the challenge becomes finding volunteers who are able to help. The van driver will be the key to the project. The driver needs to show proof of auto insurance as required by the State and a clean DMV printout. One regular helper will be needed. We will also be looking to our friends in the Community Action Network and Day Labor Center projects for additional help.

The question: Know someone looking for a serious volunteer opportunity? How about you? Want to ask questions, explore the possibilities? Want a speaker for your group? Contact Betty DeForest: 510 782-5462 or email deforestbetty@hotmail.com.

*Shir Ami is a member of the South Hayward Parish. For information about the Community Action Network and SHP, visit haywardcan.weebly.com

SHIR AMI BULLETIN BOARD



Good Friday Vigil of Caring at Children's Memorial Grove

Every Friday during the period of Lent leading up to Easter, our partners in the South Hayward Parish hold Vigils of Caring to honor the lives of people who have died by violence in the Hayward Area. We gather on a street corner or in a parking lot, learn a bit about the person's life and death, and share prayers.

These vigils will culminate on Friday, April 2 (Good Friday), at the Alameda County Children's Memorial Grove on Fairmount Ridge. We will meet at the Chabot Regional Park entrance (nearby but not exactly at Lake Chabot) between 11:30 and 11:45, and the group will walk up to the grove together.

For more information, please contact Daryl Berman, baryl@pacbell.net.

Ladino Song Learning Workshop

I am elated to announce the start of a Ladino song learning workshop in the East Bay. The sessions will run four Sundays starting Sun. April 18 from 7:30 to 9:30 PM at a location near BART. I will be providing music, lyric, pronunciation guide, historical and geographical background, and recordings. Please see flier attached in this bulletin.

Mark Levy mitzvahmus@aol.com 888 505 8953

Temple Beth Sholom Annual Texas Hold'em Tournament

Once again, on April 24, 2010, Temple Beth Sholom in San Leandro will be joining up with the Lyons Club for a fun and exciting evening of Texas Hold'em Poker. Raffle Prizes, a Nosh, and a Good Time for All! Doors open at 6:30pm, Play Commences at 7:00pm Sharp! Please call the TBS Office at 510- 357-8505 to RSVP Today! Tickets are on sale now! \$36 per player and \$18 for those who just come to nosh and relax.

Shir Ami Contacts

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yahrzeits@congshirami.org

Donations:

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

Congregation Shir Ami
Community-Wide Passover Seder

Saturday, April 3, 2010, 5:45 - 9:00 PM
 Five Canyons Recreation Center
 5150 Private Recreation Road
 Castro Valley, CA 94552

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"Justice" - Arthur Szyk Haggadah

Shir Ami will be retelling the liberation of the Jewish people from slavery and their redemption. The Evening Service will feature Passover songs and music. Rabbinic Intern Matt Dreffin will conduct the Seder.

A festive kosher-style Holiday meal will be served.

Costs: Shir Ami Members \$25, all children 12 and under \$10. Adult Non-Members \$30. No charge to military personnel.

Additional contributions to defray costs are appreciated. No Shir Ami member will be turned away because of inability to pay.



Seating is limited ~ please provide the information below

Name _____ Phone _____ Email _____

No. _____ adult Shir Ami members @ **\$25** = \$ _____ No. _____ adult non-Shir Ami members @ **\$30** = \$ _____

No. _____ children 12 and under @ **\$10** = \$ _____ Additional donation to help defray costs = \$ _____

TOTAL \$ _____

Your Reservation is made by check, payable to Congregation Shir Ami, and mailed with the information above no later than MARCH 29 to:

**Congregation Shir Ami
 ATT'N: Community Passover Seder
 4529 Malabar Ave
 Castro Valley, CA 94546**

Please include your check; money will not be accepted at the door

OUR URBAN ORCHARDS

CAN PROVIDE FOOD TO THOSE IN NEED

Is there more fruit on your tree than you family can eat?

Would you like to share it with people in our community who need food for their families?

What can You do?

Call us.

We will come to your home and harvest your fruit.

We then share it with the hungry in our community.

South Hayward Parish

27287 Patrick Avenue

Hayward, CA 94544

(510) 782 3663

The mission of the South Hayward Parish is to engage people of faith in the endeavor and partnership of building and maintaining a just and nurturing community.

South Hayward Parish is a nonprofit.

Tax ID # 94-2250549



This service is made possible in part by a grant from Waste Management STOP WASTE PROGRAM.

