



CONGREGATION SHIR AMI

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Castro Valley, CA 94546

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Congregation Shir Ami in Castro Valley is an intimate, intergenerational Reform Jewish Community that welcomes interfaith families.
Affiliated with the [Union for Reform Judaism](http://www.URJ.org)

OCTOBER 2013 (Tishrei ~ Cheshvan 5774)

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What’s Happening at Shir Ami?

This month is relatively quiet after the start of public school, the start of Shir Ami religious school and a succession of religious holidays that included Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, and Simchat Torah. There is still much happening at Shir Ami, however, so mark your calendar and join us at one of the upcoming services or special events. See page 2 for event listings or check our website, www.CongShirAmi.org



New Program-- Tot Talk begins October 6

Shir Ami is excited about launching our newest program, TOT TALK. Tot Talk is free-of-charge for children ages 0-5 years and their parents in the Castro Valley area. Tot Talk will provide a venue for traditional and nontraditional families with preschool-age children to connect, make new friends, schmooze, and have fun with their babies/toddlers. Bring your family; bring your friends! All are welcome.

Have you checked out our “new” website?
The website provides easy access to Shir Ami events, articles and programs,
www.CongShirAmi.org

Event Calendar

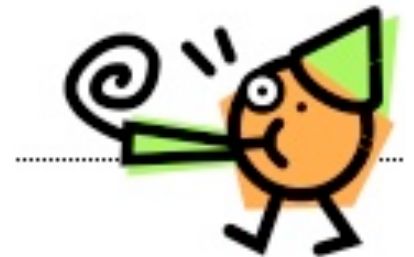
- Sun. Oct. 6 11:30 am **Tot Talk**, held monthly, is FREE and is open to all families with children under 5 years old. Bring your young child and join the family fun.
- Fri. Oct. 11 6:00 pm **Kids' Shabbat at 6:00 / Potluck Dinner at 6:45 / Shabbat Service at 7:30** led by Benj Fried
Food assignments: A through N, **Salad** or **Side** dish and help **clean up**; O through Z, **Main dish**
- Tue. Oct. 15 7:00 pm **Board of Directors Meeting**. All are welcome
- Sun. Oct. 20 2:00 pm **Event: Rescue in the Philippines** Held at the Castro Valley Library.
- Fri. Oct. 25 7:30 pm **Shabbat Service**, led by Megan Brudney. Consecration of new Hebrew learners.
- Sun. Nov. 3 11:30 am **Tot Talk**, held once a month, is FREE and is open to all families with children under 5 years old. Bring your young child and join the family fun.
- Tue. Nov. 12 7:00 pm **Board of Directors Meeting**. All are welcome.
- Sat. Nov. 16 **Event at Southgate Community Center: End Hunger** and Homelessness
- Sun. Nov. 17 **Chanukah Fair & Boutique**. Open to the public. Invite your friends and neighbors. Remember, First Night of Chanukah begins November 27, the eve before Thanksgiving!
- Fri. Nov. 22 7:30 pm **Shabbat Service**, led by Megan Brudney
- Fri. Nov. 29 6:30 pm **Potluck Dinner, Chanukah Service**, led by Diana Zankowsky
- Fri. Dec. 6 7:30 pm **Shabbat Service**, led by Benj Fried
- Tue. Dec. 17 7:00 pm **Board of Directors Meeting**. All are welcome.
- Fri. Dec. 20 6:30 pm **Potluck Dinner at 6:45 / Shabbat Service at 7:30** led by Megan Brudney



Welcome New Members!

Shir Ami welcomes the following new members to our congregation.

- * Rita Weikal
- * Helene and Darwin Paz and their son, Edison
- * Amy and Kayvon Haghighi and their daughters, Azam and Ada
- * Jeremy and Dennise Templeton, and their sons, Connor and Caelan
- * Debbie Schriber
- * Elayna Contreras and her son, Alex
- * Liane Carmi and Donna Katrina Orpilla and their son, Jacob
- * Karl Felperin



If you have not yet met, take a moment to say “hello” and get to know our new members.

President's Message

President's Message for October
2013 Bulletin

Shalom Shir Ami,



Trick or Treat! For me, the month of October has always been symbolized by the icons of the holiday of Halloween. Images of toothy smiling jack o'lanterns, floating ghosts, and green-skinned witches riding broomsticks fill my mind during this time of year, as they have since I was a child. Then, my parents struggled between wishing to fulfill my desire for fun, treats and the camaraderie of my non-Jewish friends, and wanting me to embrace my Jewish heritage and culture and not participate in the festivities. They never really came to a formal resolution on the issue, instead, allowing me to make my own decision once I became a teen (hint: this decision involved candy corn).

We should acknowledge that our mission statement guides us to be inclusive, and to welcome interfaith families. To me, welcoming those of other faiths means respecting the customs and supporting the values of those raised in other faiths. This issue was brought up at a recent Religious Committee meeting, at which a request was made to keep the weekend before Halloween clear of Shir Ami child-centered events in order for interfaith families to celebrate how they wish and not "miss out" on any congregational activities. I'm gratified to say that the Committee accommodated this request with little debate, thus the reason for our Kids Shabbat taking place on October 11th. This simple example shows the respect we exhibited when discussing aspects of other faiths, and our ability to make decisions that reflect this respect.

A deeper question to ask is: is the celebration of Halloween appropriate or not for American Jews? I found some guidance on this issue on-line in a response from Jeffrey Goldwasser, a Reform Jewish Rabbi serving Congregation Beth Israel in North Adams, MA. Rabbi Goldwasser pointed out that Halloween has its origins as a Celtic harvest holiday, and was only later appropriated as the

eve prior to All Saints Day. When Halloween came to America, it was again transformed into an amalgam of symbols from the Celtic holiday, the Christian custom of traveling from house to house, harvest symbols (such as the jack o'lantern), and contemporary symbols of fright and death. As Rabbi Goldwasser puts it, "The holiday, as it is observed in America, has entirely lost its connection to any religious meaning or observance." He goes on to give the okay for those Jews who wish to celebrate the holiday to do so, just as they already celebrate Thanksgiving and Independence Day.

As with any Jewish issue, one can find a counter-opinion that seems equally as valid. Salomon Gruenwald, a Conservative Rabbi at Congregation HEA in Denver, CO, dissuades Jews from participating in Halloween as "... (it) glorifies the occult and makes death terrifying. That's not a very Jewish value. We see death as a part of life and not something to be feared." Regarding the point that Halloween has gone beyond its Celtic and Christian origins and has acquired a secular meaning, Rabbi Gruenwald says "Origins are an important component (to Jewish objections to Halloween), but at the same time we have to recognize that Halloween has evolved into a secular American holiday. It's a model of pluralism and multiculturalism. But as Jews, it's not what we do." Rabbi Gruenwald does go on to say that there's nothing wrong in supporting our non-Jewish friends and neighbors with their celebration of Halloween by handing out candy. He states, "We can still be generous, and not shutter our windows."

While I didn't expect to find a definitive answer in my on-line searches on this topic, several themes resonated with every new opinion I found. As I already mentioned, respect is paramount in any discussion on Halloween or the broader topic of Jews participating in non-Jewish holidays. It's important that we acknowledge the other-faith origins of such holidays, and explore the values those origins reflect. Odds are, those values can also be found within Judaism, which can lead to conversation about our holidays and customs that promote them. Also, it's equally important to

communicate with your family about what participation in Halloween means to you and, if you don't want children trick-or-treating, why not. I realize that this is sometimes not easy to do, but children learn a lot from their caregivers'



actions so perhaps action is what's called for, and not just discussion.

These elements – respect and communication – are at the heart of Reform Judaism. I encourage you to use them when making these decisions, not to mention the harder ones. Until next month...

Jon Zimmerman, president@congshirami.org

Community News

Tot Talk: Sunday Oct. 6, 11:30 am

Tot Talk, held monthly, is FREE and is open to all families with children under 5 years old. Bring your young child and join the family fun.

Kids' Shabbat/Potluck: Friday, Oct. 11 6:00 pm, Childrens' Service/ 6:45 pm, Potluck/ 7:30 pm Shabbat Service

Event: Rescue in the Philippines: Sunday, Oct. 20, 2013, 2-5 p.m.

How the Filipino government rescued over 1300 Jews during WW II) Reservations are limited. R.S.V.P. required, see flier [Rescue in the Philippines](#)



Chanukah Card and Cookie-Making Saturday, Nov. 9th.

A fun event for the whole family, led by master card maker, Harriet Skelly. Bring a friend, everyone is welcome! Check the Shir Ami Calendar for further details and timing, www.CongShirAmi.org

Adult Beginner's Hebrew Class at Shir Ami

Have you always wanted to learn Hebrew?

Shir Ami member Judy Ganz will be starting an **Adult Beginner's Hebrew Class** this fall. Judy is a patient guide as students learn to read Hebrew, become knowledgeable and comfortable with the prayers recited at services, and gain a better understanding about the language of Judaism.

This class is for BEGINNERS. No knowledge of Hebrew is needed. This class will be started **only** if there are at least four people **and a suitable time can be arranged**. Please contact Judy directly if you're interested, hebrew@CongShirAmi.org. Classes will start soon.



Shir Ami Donors

Shir Ami thanks the many very generous members who made donations to defray High Holiday expenses:

- Marian Kramer for carpet cleaning and repair in honor of her father, Col. Arthur Kramer, for flowers for Yom Kippur in memory of her mother, Gertrude Kramer
- Harriet and Bruce Skelly, toward the Cantor's fee for the High Holy Days
- Toni and David Schulberg, toward the Cantor's fee for the High Holy Days
- Sharon Golembo, for Yom Kippur Break the Fast
- Fred and Diana Zankowsky from the Jewish Heritage Night tickets from the Oakland As game
- Rita Weikal, "for the Highest Good" (direct quote)

Thank you to the following for their High Holy Days donations:

- Susanna and David Bensinger (Mother and step-father of Ruth Hartman)
- Jeffrey and Nancy Brudney (Megan's parents)
- Henry Bennet (Former Shir Ami President for MANY years)

Thank you to the following for their ongoing monthly support:

- Harriet and Bruce Skelly, DSL Line
- Edetha Speceal, Donation

High Holiday Food Drive Success

This year's High Holiday food drive was a tremendous success. The Congregation raised over \$1,400 in monetary donations, as well 8 heavy bags of groceries. Proceeds from this drive were given to the South Hayward Parish's Food Pantry and Comida para Cherryland, run by Eden UCC. Shir Ami has had a long history of supporting these local organizations, and we're glad that our membership continues to sustain these efforts. Special thanks to Tom Spitzer for organizing the food drive this year, Ace Spitzer for assisting with the food delivery, and most importantly, all those who made contributions.

For those who didn't get their chance to donate, it's never too late to do so. Donations can be sent directly to the South Hayward Parish, 27287 Patrick Avenue, Hayward, CA 94544, or Eden UCC, 21455 Birch Street, Hayward, CA 94541. Checks should be made payable to those organizations, respectively. Donations to the South Hayward Parish can also be made on-line at www.southhaywardparish.org.

The note below illuminates how significant the High Holiday donations are to our community.

Mr. President,

I had the pleasure of delivering the checks from the High Holy Days Food Drive to Rev. Nehring at Eden UCC. She indicated that the amount of money collected would fund the Comida Para Cherryland food bank for three sessions (a month and a half), providing food for an estimated 225 families.

Yours,

Bruce (Skelly)

Yom Kippur Break-the-Fast Thank You

Many thanks to the people who contributed food, labor, and/or financial support to the success of our Yom Kippur Break-the-Fast:

Ruth Rosenthal	Jon Zimmerman	Rick Goldhoff
Ruth Hartman	Lina Teferi	Rita Weikal
Barbara and Stan Heimowitz	Lisa Steindel-Byrn	Rose Firestone
Deena Levine	Marci Loss	Sara Lamnin
Diana and Fred Zankowsky	Maria Salcedo	Sharon Golembo
Harriett Skelly	Pat and Milt Palmer	Toni Schulberg
Jeff Blum	Peter and Lorraine Lewis	

Apologies to any helpers who were overlooked in this list!

SCHOOL NOTES

Shalom,

I am Danny Farkas, the new educational director at Shir Ami.

It is with great excitement that I welcome everyone to our 2013-2014 (5774) school year. This will be a year filled with great learning experiences for all of our students. We have an excellent faculty lined up.

During the school year we have some great all programs planned for our students We will be having interfaith education food justice, and holiday themed programs. We will be having a purim carnival, and a mock-seder for passover.

I am very excited to be part of the Shir Ami community.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

education@CongShirAmi.org

Thank you and L'shana Tova,

Danny Farkas

School Begins September 29

New Education Director: **Danny Farkas**

Danny has a B.A. from the American Jewish University and has worked for over 8 years in the field of Jewish education where he developed an experiential Jewish Leadership course. He is the Educational Director at Congregation Shir Ami in Castro Valley. Danny teaches at the TV/TC and Oakland Midrasha campuses.

Welcome, Danny!





Friday, October 11
Kids' Shir Ami Shabbat

6:00 PM Kids' Shabbat
6:45 PM Pot Luck
7:30 PM Shabbat Services



Services conducted by Benjamin Fried

Please participate in Shir Ami's rotating food assignment
A through N: Salad or Side dish; help with clean up
O through Z: Main Dish

Bring a friend

Coming Event



Barbara-Ann Lewis

***will host a discussion and preside over a documentary film
on how The Philippines rescued 1200 Jews from Germany during WWII***

***Sunday, October 20th, 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM
at the Castro Valley Library***

Speakers

***David Nigel, Historian and Mary Farquer, daughter of survivors
Both speakers were living in The Philippines during the rescue operations***

Limited seating; RSVP by September 20th to
events@congshirami.org

(Free and open to the public)

Paresha Sarah

Sarah died at the age of one hundred and twenty seven in Hebron. She was eulogized by Abraham. Her burial place was a cave purchased by Abraham 3700 years ago for the burials of our Biblical Fathers and Mothers.

The Cave of Machpelah Tomb of the Patriarchs



*Burial place of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca and Leah
Hebron, West Bank*

**Shabbat Services Friday, October 25th at 7:30 PM
will be conducted by**

Megan Brudney

eScrip

Be a mensch and sign up or renew your eScrip account!

Visit www.escrip.com to enroll or renew now.

Earn money for Shir Ami at NO cost to you.

Register online

- Enter your Safeway club card, credit card (optional) and choose the non-profit (that's Shir Ami!) that will receive your donations
- When you shop at Safeway and use your card or credit cards, a percentage automatically goes to Shir Ami

If you have already registered for eScrip, you need to RENEW every year.

- All it takes is one click. Simply visit www.escrip.com and click on "Yes! Renew".
- Make sure that your credit cards and your loyalty cards numbers are up to date in their system.
- You can find your personal information under the *my eScrip* tab.

eScrip sponsors other participating merchants-- register at eScrip for any other loyalty cards that you use.

Online shoppers can also earn rewards. Go to <http://shopping.escrip.com/> and then click through your retailer of choice before making your purchase. (You can earn up to 2.4% on most purchases on Amazon.com.) Again, this is free and easy.

Please contact Bonnie Frey at outreach@congshirami.org if you have any questions.
Thanks

Bonnie Frey
Membership Co-Chair, Congregation Shir Ami

Rosh Chodesh/Sisterhood

UPCOMING ROSH CHODESH

The next Rosh Chodesh will be on Wednesday, October 9 at 7:30 at Shir Ami. Rita Weikal and Jan Dombrower will be your co-hosts. We will bring in the month of Cheshvan.

Traditionally Cheshvan is known for not having any holidays. It follows the month of Tishrei which is full and rich with holidays and celebrations. BUT, hold on.....there is a holiday which we will be acknowledging.... Jewish Mother's Day!

This holiday commemorates the passing of Rachel, the matriarch, on the 11th of Cheshvan. Rachel was Jacob's beloved wife and was the principal of his household and thus the principal of the entire house of Israel.

The Jewish people are nurtured by the Jewish mother both physically and spiritually. We will review the story of Rosh Chodesh, have discussion, reflection, and sharing about Jewish Mother's Day and enjoy autumn refreshments. Look for an email reminder.

Hope to see you there.

ROSH CHODESH RECAP

Last month, Sisterhood gathered under the Sukkah at the home of Diana Zankowsky. It was a wonderful evening-- sharing a potluck of soup and salad, doing the mitzvahs of Sukkot, inviting honorary guests in, sharing what "home" means to us, and doing a craft project to add to the decorations on the Sukkah. We planned our upcoming year and welcomed familiar faces and new members.

Rosh Chodesh/ Sisterhood -- pictures from last month's gathering under the sukkah



Help South Hayward Parish

South Hayward Parish (SHP), an organization we are members of, continues to do great work in the community every day. Demand for SHP services is increasing, and SHP has been able to serve a growing clientele in its emergency food, GED, homelessness, economic development, and immigration advocacy programs without increasing its budget. SHP's growth over the past eighteen months has really been rather amazing given the fact that it has not had any more resources to work with.

SHP currently has a problem, which we hope will be temporary. Due to uncertainty over funding authorizations at all levels of government, SHPs funding for the fall has actually declined and committed funds have been delayed. A handful of individuals have stepped into the breach with a commitment to match contributions that we can raise from SHP member congregations (Good Shepherd Lutheran, South Hayward United Methodist, Starr King Unitarian Universalist, St. Clemens Roman Catholic, United Church of Hayward, New Bridges Presbyterian, in addition to Shir Ami). These individuals will match up to \$2000 of contributions, so we are having a drive to try to raise \$2,000 from our congregations by October 15. If we can do it, the matches will turn our \$2,000 into \$4,000 which will be a big help to get through this very tough period.

Every donation counts so please contribute whatever you can. The more people who participate the sooner we can achieve the match! The easiest way to contribute is on the website at www.SouthHaywardParish.org, or you can send a check to **South Hayward Parish, 27287Patrick Avenue, Upstairs, Hayward, CA 94544.**

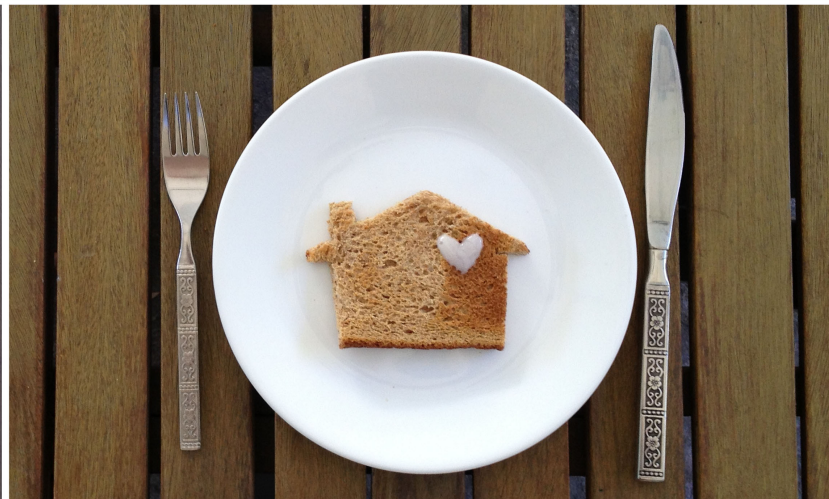
End Hunger Event: Nov. 16

You Have a Place at the Table

Book to Action: Ending Hunger and Homelessness in Hayward

The Hayward Task Force to End Hunger and Homelessness invites you to discuss this issue with guest speakers and fellow community members. Get inspired to take concrete action to end crisis, decrease waste, and increase stability in your community. Help end hunger and homelessness locally through lessons learned in *Tattoos on the Heart* by Gregory Boyle and local programs. The answers are within our reach. Take simple actions to make lasting change.

For More Information:
510-881-7700
sally.thomas@hayward-ca.gov
or 510-432-7703
saralamnin@gmail.com



Saturday, November 16th 1pm - 4pm
Southgate Community Center
26780 Chiplay Ave., Hayward, CA 94545



Task Force to End Hunger and Homelessness in Hayward, Friends of the Hayward Library, Hayward Chamber of Commerce, Hayward Area Recreation and Park District, Hayward Public Library, Eden Area League of Women Voters, South Hayward Parish, Hayward/Castro Valley AAUW, Opportunity and Freedom, The Chabot College Puente Project, and Hayward City Councilman Francisco Zerreño

October Yahrzeit List

October 2013 Yahrzeit List (as of 9/27/13)

October 11, 2013

Anne Aronowitz, mother-in-law of Hillie Levine
Jeanette Brody, grandmother of Noah Markus
Ira Frey, father of Bonnie Frey
Moe Levy, long-time former member of Shir Ami

October 25, 2013

Ruth Bergel, mother of Marci Loss
Beatrice Harrison-Golembo, mother of Sharon Golembo
Katherine Schuelke, mother of Susan Spitzer

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

Leona Rosenthal, mother of Ruth Rosenthal and grandmother of Evelyn, Lisa, and Jacob Carmack
Deborah Mitchell, mother of Helen Markus
Stephen Slavin, long-time close friend of Nate Einbund
Kevin Keil, husband of Danielle Keil, father of Sarah, Gabriella and James, and son-in-law of Vicky Sapper
Susan Weinberg Andersson, daughter of Rolf & Ingrid Weinberg, and former member of Shir Ami
Tom Manley, former member of Shir Ami
Joseph Forman, father of Lorraine Lewis

Do you have a name you would like to have read for Kaddish at Friday services?

Is there someone for whom you'd like a Yahrzeit reminder letter? The process is simple. **Please email Toni Schulberg** (yahrzeit@CongShirAmi.org) and include your name, the name of the person who died, their relationship to you, the date they died (month, day, year in the English calendar), and whether you want to use the English or the Hebrew calendar for your reminder. Toni will send the reminders as requested.



Dinner with Rabbinic Intern Megan Brudney after Havdallah on September 28.