



CONGREGATION SHIR AMI

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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](#)

FEBRUARY 2014 (Adar 1 ~ 5774)

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Shir Ami Community

“Small, but mighty” is an apt description of Shir Ami. Run by volunteers, Shir Ami, well managed and fiscally strong, is also committed and involved with our greater community, our nation and our world. There are many ways to be involved at Shir Ami, including: attend a Friday evening service, bring your child to Sunday school, volunteer in the garden (see page 5), attend an A’s baseball game (see page 5) or participate in Shir Ami’s business affairs (our next Board meeting is February 11). Enjoy!

Rose Firestone, editor@CongShirAmi.org.

Shir Ami School visits Urban Adamah



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Event Calendar

Havdallah at Shir Ami,
Harriet Skelly and Jon Zimmerman



- Tue. Feb. 4 7:30 pm **Rosh Chodesh/Sisterhood**: *Channeling your Inner Esther and Vashti*, at Shir Ami.
- Fri. Feb. 7 7:30 pm **Welcoming Shabbat**: **Shabbat service** led by Shir Ami's Rabbinic Intern Benj Fried and Reverend Katie Kandarian-Morris from Starr King Unitarian Universalist Church.
- Sat. Feb. 8 3:30 pm **Adult Ed**: with Benj Fried: **Exploring Theology through Art and Text.**
- Sun. Feb. 9 10:15 am **Morning service** at **Starr King Unitarian Universalist Church**, 22577 Bayview Avenue, Hayward, led by Reverend Katie Kandarian-Morris and Shir Ami's Rabbinic Intern Benj Fried.
- Tue. Feb. 11 7:00 pm **Board of Directors Meeting**: At Shir Ami; all are welcome.
- Fri.-Sun Feb 21-23 **Women's Retreat**: Save the weekend for our 18th Annual Women's Retreat.
- Fri. Mar. 7 7:30 pm **Shabbat Service**: led by Benj Fried.
- Fri. Mar. 14 7:00 pm **Purim Shabbat Service**: led by Megan Brudney.
- Sun. Mar. 16 **School Purim Carnival and Tot Talk.**
- Fri.-Sun Mar. 21-23 **Cantor-in-Residence**: Save the dates for Cantor Ken Cohen, who will lead services and classes throughout the weekend.
- Sat. Apr. 19 4:30 pm **Community Passover Seder**: led by Allie Fischman.
- Sat. Apr. 26 **Book Discussion, *My Life*, by Golda Meir**: led by Megan Brudney.
- Tue. Aug. 19 **Save the Date, Jewish Heritage Night**: the Oakland A's vs NY Mets.



Pictures from **Tot Talk**, a free monthly program for families with children under age 5



President's Message

President's Message, February 2014 Bulletin

Shalom Shir Ami,

This month features an annual tradition at Shir Ami, our Welcoming Shabbat service. For me, this Shabbat service is extraordinary, and there are several reasons why I am both proud of, and grateful for this event. I'd like to share these reasons with you, along with information about what's in store for this year's service including an added reciprocal service that will further extend our welcome.

While some have referred to this as Shir Ami's "Interfaith Service", it really isn't. The Welcoming Shabbat is just that, a Shabbat service intended to welcome our non-Jewish friends and neighbors into our home for an evening of prayer, songs and Torah. It is specially designed by our Student Rabbi to be more accessible to non-Jews than our usual Friday night service. For example, you'll notice that more of our prayers and songs will be recited in English rather than Hebrew. Also, our Torah service becomes an adult education opportunity about why and how we read the Torah, and the lessons we learn from its stories. These facets enable the Welcoming Shabbat service to serve as means to help our secular neighbors understand, and hopefully appreciate this small Jewish community that exists in their midst. And of course, like many Jewish events, it ends with food – a special Oneg for the larger-than-usual sized crowd that attends.

The Welcoming Shabbat service resonates with me personally as it provides an opportunity for my non-Jewish friends and acquaintances in the Castro Valley and Hayward area to learn a bit more about my religion and why its important to me, and thus learn more about me. Throughout my life, many of my friends have not been Jewish and this difference in religion often acted as a thin membrane that limited our closeness and understanding of one another. For me, the Welcoming Shabbat service serves as a tool for interpretation so that my Jewish customs become

less mysterious to others, and they learn that there are more similarities than differences in the customs we practice and the values our religions teach us.

Many past Welcoming Shabbats have featured specially invited guest clergy and their congregations. This invitation enables us to initiate new relationships with other religious groups that share the same values we do. We also ask that the visiting clergy give a sermon that evening, which offers Shir Ami members a perspective on who they are as well as the similarities and differences in how they – through their faith – express commitment to these values.

This year we've invited Reverend Katie Kandarian-Morris, the Parish Minister for Starr King Unitarian Universalist Church, and her congregation to participate in the Welcoming Shabbat service, set for Friday, February 7th and led by Student Rabbi Benj Fried. In talking with Reverend Katie, it's clear to me that she and members of her faith share the values of choice, intentionality, and social justice that Shir Ami holds so dear. I am looking forward to her sermon with great anticipation. I am also thrilled that this year our invitation is being reciprocated: Members of Shir Ami are invited to attend a service at Starr King that Sunday, February 9th. I would ask you to attend if at all possible, so that Shir Ami can show the same appreciation and enthusiasm that we love to see at our Welcoming Shabbat.

Please use this year's Welcoming Shabbat as an opportunity and extend the invitation to attend to your friends and colleagues who would enjoy learning about Judaism and what it means to you. I look forward to seeing you there.

Toda Raba v'Shalom,



Jon Zimmerman, president@congshirami.org

Rabbinic Interns' Page

February 2014 The Joy of Jewish Leap Year

On February first we observe Rosh Chodesh—the recognizing of the new month—for Adar, the final month of our Jewish year before the renewal of Nisan and the Passover holiday it brings (Mishnah Rosh Hashanah 1:1 explains that there are four new years, and our Rosh Hashanah is just one of them).

Each of our months has a certain mood or character, and Adar has the pleasant distinction of being the happiest month: Talmud Ta'anit 29a states that "*mishenichnas Adar, marbim b'simcha*": when Adar begins, we must increase our joy. This is a most unusual commandment! It appears as a comment on Mishnah Ta'anit 4:6, which explains that when the month of Av enters (around August) we must diminish our joy—since just nine days later we observe the Tisha b'Av fast mourning the destruction of our Temples and other Jewish national tragedies. While there are a variety of specific laws that underscore and formalize the sobriety of Av, there are in fact no rules governing the happy behavior we must show in Adar. In contrast to the strictures of mourning, we are left to our own devices to determine how we will express the joy of Adar.

I welcome you all to take advantage of this joyful month and try to live with increased happiness throughout. Take extra time to enjoy the beauty of the Bay Area; reach out to someone you miss; reread your favorite book and then pass it on to a friend; volunteer at your favorite non-profit; linger

over Shabbat dinner. As our texts imply, you can choose the way that is most meaningful to you.

As an additional treat, this year is a Jewish leap year. Instead of the secular calendar's one-day adjustment, the Jewish calendar adds an entire extra month: a second Adar! These leap years occur seven times every nineteen-year cycle in order to keep our lunar calendar in line with our solar seasons. As we know from Thanksgivukah, our holidays were quite early this year; now, after the correction of our second Adar, we will enter a relatively "late" year in comparison with the secular calendar.

I'll be returning to Shir Ami for the Women's Retreat from February 21-23 and then for the culmination of our Adar joy over Purim, March 14-16. I'm looking forward to seeing you all and wish you a joyous double-Adar in the meantime!

B'shalom, Student Rabbi Megan Brudney



Benj Fried
rabbi.benj@CongShirAmi.org

Rabbinic Interns



Megan Brudney
rabbi.megan@CongShirAmi.org

Adult Education with the Rabbis

Saturday, February 8, Benj Freid

3:30-5:30 pm: A Cross Cultural Look at Theology. A two-part adult education in which we will explore theology through text and art. In the first half, we will do a text study of New Testament texts to learn about their Jewish origins and where they part ways from Judaism. In the second part, we will look at art across cultures to learn about other belief systems.

Saturday, April 26, Book Discussion, *My Life*, by Golda Meir.

Megan Brudney will lead a discussion of Golda Meir's autobiography, *My Life*. This first-rate account of the history of Israel is told through the compelling and modest voice of one of its most important founders, Golda Meir. This simply and powerfully written book will further our understanding of Israel.

Shir Ami Information

Shir Ami Volunteer Gardeners Needed

Who is interested in gardening and working in the yard?
We are looking for volunteers who want to spend time at Shir Ami planting, watering, weeding and making our home an even nicer place to be.

If you are interested, phone Milton Palmer at [510-582-6250](tel:510-582-6250), or email Facilities@CongShirAmi.org. We are a volunteer organization-- everything we are is through our own efforts!

Shalom



Shir Ami Women's Retreat, Friday - Sunday, February 21 - 23, 2014

Join us for our 18th Annual (our Chai year!) Women's Retreat at the beautiful (and new to us!) San Damiano Retreat Center in Danville

Connect with your Jewish sisters and yourself! Join us for a weekend of women's friendship, worship, creativity, music, and play. Rabbinic Intern Megan Brudney joins us to share her musical and spiritual leadership. As always, newcomers are very welcome.

The cost for the weekend is \$250.

Please register online at <http://tinyurl.com/kfgepgg>, and mail your check, payable to Ruth Hartman, the same day. (Mailing address is at the online registration site.)



Register ASAP (At the time of publication, there were still a few spaces available.)

Retreat, 2013

Questions? Contact Ruth Hartman: 510-582-3379 or events@congsHIRAMI.org

The theme of our 18th annual retreat, ***Our Chai Tapestry***, will be woven throughout the weekend's activities

The book discussion, led by Diana Zankowsky, will be on Dara Horn's fourth novel, ***A Guide for the Perplexed***, published in 2013- "a spellbinding novel of how technology changes memory, and how memory shapes the soul."

Jewish Heritage Night, August 19

Save the date! **The A's 4th annual Jewish Heritage Night is scheduled for Tuesday, August 19. A's vs. the NY Mets.** Once again, the event features a special seating area, food item, giveaway, are FREE parking! Discounted group tickets will be available soon. Thanks again & Go A's!

Shir Ami thanks the following for their Donations Mid-December 2013 to Mid-January 2014

- Barbara Finkle, (not specified)
- Sidney and Sandra Jacobson (Diana Zankowsky's parents), (not specified)
- Ruth Hartman and Gary Wolff, "Year End" Donation
- Carol and Michael Cohen, In Honor of our Rabbinic Intern, Megan Brudney
- Irina and Alex Druker, Yahrzeit
- Avra Elbinger and Lawrence Molton, Donation
- Edetha Speceal
- Florrie Finkle, Yahrzeit for her mother, Tessie Bressler
- Tyler Dean, (son of Jan Dombrower), Yahrzeit for his father, Larry Dean

Welcoming Shabbat/Sabbath Services



Join Student Rabbi Benj Fried from Congregation Shir Ami and Reverend Katie Kandarian-Morris from Starr King Unitarian Universalist Church to reflect on intentionality and social justice, and how both faiths have worked through embracing old and creating new traditions.

**All are Welcome to attend
both collaborative services!**



Friday, February 7, 2014 at 7:30 PM
Congregation Shir Ami
4529 Malabar Avenue, Castro Valley



Sunday, February 9, 2014 at 10:15 AM
Starr King Unitarian Universalist Church
22577 Bayview Avenue, Hayward

**For more information, call (510) 432-7703
or e-mail: president@congshirami.org**

Rosh Chodesh/Sisterhood

UPCOMING ROSH CHODESH

Our next Rosh Chodesh will be held on Tuesday, Feb 4 at 7:30 at Shir Ami. We will bring in the new month of Adar 1, the month of preparation for Purim.

The theme will be **Channeling your Inner Esther and Vashti**. We will be discussing the similarities and differences of each woman. Then, we will share what attributes of these women we possess or would like to develop. We will have an easy craft related to the royal “bling” accessories of the time.

Your hosts will be Jan Dombrower and Barbara Heimowitz. Watch your email for more information and event reminder.



Pictures from last month's gathering



For more information on Sisterhood/Rosh Chodesh, contact Jan Dombrower Sisterhood@CongShirAmi.org



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February Yahrzeit List

February 7, 2014 (as of 1/14/14)

Susan Weinberg Andersson, Esther Cooper, Harold Dombrower Sherrie Kidwell, Civia Rudman, Jacob Small, Fannie Heimowitz, Florence Lewis, Leon Meier, Sy Moubert, Chris Partridge, Rivka Rosenberg, Edna Vanous, Ingrid Weinberg,	daughter of Rolf & Ingrid Weinberg, and former member of Shir Ami aunt of Ann Blank father of Jan Dombrower Shir Ami member former member of Shir Ami grandfather of Toni Schulberg mother of Stan Heimowitz mother of Peter Lewis long-time member and one of the founders of Shir Ami long-time former member of Shir Ami son of Ricki Weintraub, former member of Shir Ami grandmother of Alex Druker long time active member of Shir Ami long time founding member of Shir Ami
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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

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.



Photos from TuBiSh'vat Seder at Shir Ami.



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