



# 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](#)

## MAY 2014 (Iyar~Sivan 5774)

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### Shir Ami Can Use Your Help-- Are You Available?

Shir Ami works because many volunteers generously share their time and energy with our community in a variety of capacities. Every year at our annual meeting (June 1<sup>st</sup> this year) we elect officers for our board of Directors, and the President of the Board appoints members to a number of standing committees. If you are not participating on the board or on one of the standing committees\* and think you would like to, please send a note to [info@congshirami.org](mailto:info@congshirami.org) for more information, and a board member will get back to you. Newcomers welcome.

\* Standing committees: Communications; Religious; Religious Events; Membership Outreach; Membership Lifecycle; School; Building & Grounds; Social Activities; Sisterhood; Men's Club; Social Action; Adult Education.



# Event Calendar

Tue.	Apr.	30,	7:00	pm	Rosh Chodesh hosted by <b>Barbara-Ann Lewis at her home.</b> Dinner provided. Bring a dessert or nuts to share.
Fri.	May	9,	6:30/ 7:30	pm	<a href="#">Potluck Dinner and Shabbat Service</a> led by Benj Fried. This is Benj's last weekend with us until next fall.
Sat.	May	10,	10:00	am	<b>Men's Club hike at Lake Chabot</b> with Benj Fried, <b>followed by Men's Club Luncheon</b>
Sat.	May	10,	2:30	pm	<b>Introduction to Mysticism and Hassidism</b> with Benj Fried
Sat.	May	10,	4:30	pm	<b>Town Hall Meeting</b> with Benj Fried, vision and discussion of worship and Adult Ed for next year
Sun.	May	11,	9:15/ 10:30	am	<b>Hebrew and Religious School</b>
Fri.	May	16,	7:30	pm	<a href="#">Shabbat Service</a> led by Megan Brudney. This is Megan's last weekend with us
Sat.	May	17,	3:00	pm	<b>Book of Ruth Text Study</b> , with Megan Brudney
Sat.	May	17,	5:00	pm	<b>Fun for All! <a href="#">Community Dinner</a> Celebrating the State of Israel</b> , with Megan Brudney. Come eat together and say goodbye to Megan who will not be able to attend school tomorrow
Sun.	May	18,	9:15/ 10:30	am	<b>Hebrew and Religious School</b> , this is the last day of school this school year
Tue.	May	20,	7:00	pm	<b>Shir Ami Board Meeting</b> , all are welcome
Wed.	May	28	7:30	pm	<b>Rosh Chodesh/Sisterhood</b> , hosted by Sara Lamnin at Shir Ami-- look for more information by email
Sun.	Jun.	1,	12:00	pm	<a href="#">Annual Membership Meeting</a> , lunch and childcare provided
Fri.	Jun.	6,	7:30	pm	<b>Shabbat Service</b> led by Diana Zankowsky.
Tue.	Aug.	19,	7:05	pm	<b>Save the Date, Jewish Heritage Night</b> , the Oakland A's vs NY Mets



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## President's Message

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### President's Message for May 2014

Shalom Shir Ami,

With Passover behind us, and while we're in the midst of Counting of the Omer, I wanted to take this opportunity to remind you about remaining activities for our 2013-14 season, as well as some opportunities for you this summer.

First, in May we have our final Shabbat services of the (fiscal) year with our Student Rabbis. Friday, May 9<sup>th</sup> will have Rabbi Benj Fried leading our Shabbat service following a potluck dinner. Not to worry, Rabbi Benj will be returning to us in August and will be part of the Shir Ami Community for another year. Rabbi Megan Brudney will be leading the Shabbat service on Friday, May 16<sup>th</sup>. As she is a 3<sup>rd</sup> year HUC-JIR student, this will be Rabbi Megan's final service with us. I wish her well with her continuing education, and thank her immensely for the time she's devoted to us and for the energy she's brought with her each and every visit.

While May denotes a dénouement for Megan and a hiatus for Benj, there's plenty more to come, as June will start our tradition of guest and lay-led summer services. It's a special experience to lead our congregation in prayer and song, and for those of who who've often said "How come we don't sing this prayer on Shabbat?" or "I'd really like to see this theme explored in a sermon!", well the summertime is your chance. Our Religious Committee Co-Chairs David Schulberg and Diana Zankowsky are eager to find folks who're willing take the reins and lead a Shabbat service. I encourage you to contact them ([religion@congshirami.org](mailto:religion@congshirami.org)) to discuss your ideas and interest. And if you don't want to do it alone, they'll be happy to match you up with other members who'd like to co-lead.

May also features the final two sessions of our Hebrew & Religious School for the year, on May 11<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>. Education Director Danny Farkas,

teachers Diana Zankowsky and Jan Dombrower, and teaching assistants Sophia Silver, Adam Blum, Gabi Keil, and Sarah Keil have made this year's school a fun and vibrant experience for all of Shir Ami's youth. I thank them for their efforts this year, as they've done a fantastic job. I would also like to thank School Committee Co-Chairs Jane Steele and Rick Goldhoff for the generous amount of time and attention they've dedicated to supporting the teaching staff, as well as Harriet Skelly, Bonnie Frey and Marlene Lamnin for their great work in launching Shir Ami's Tot Talk program.

As for what's on the horizon, I first ask you to please attend our **Annual Membership Meeting**, scheduled for **Sunday, June 1<sup>st</sup>** this year. Lunch and child-care/supervision with both be provided, and it should be a fun and informative afternoon as we review our accomplishments this year, vote for our Board members and budget for next year, and participate in a workshop on the vision and structure of our Hebrew & Religious School.

Finally, if there's one thing that's synonymous with summer, it's baseball. Men's Club Co-Chair Fred Zankowsky has already procured our congregation tickets for the Oakland A's Jewish Heritage Night on August 19<sup>th</sup>. If you're an A's fan, a baseball fan, or just like the thought of getting kosher-style food at a baseball game, I encourage you to contact Fred ([mensclub@congshirami.org](mailto:mensclub@congshirami.org)) to make sure you reserve your tickets now.

Have a wonderful month of May!

Jon Zimmerman, President

[president@congshirami.org](mailto:president@congshirami.org)



### **May 2014 What's Next?**

Recent news articles about the situation between the Israelis and the Palestinians give us little reason to hope that any kind of resolution can come to our homeland. Negotiations seem to have gone up in smoke as the Israelis are refusing to release Palestinian prisoners they agreed to, and the Palestinian Authority has asked to join the Geneva Convention, violating an agreement they made with Israel. It seems that both sides are retreating away from the negotiation table and into the hard-line positions they have that prevent them from seeing the other side. Secretary of State John Kerry, in an ominous sign for the fate of these talks, said that the United States' interest in maintaining these talks is finite, and that if no progress was made, that they would back away and move elsewhere. Of course this is understandable, because of the volatile situation in Ukraine, but it is sad that these talks, once heralded as a major break-through for both sides, seem to have disintegrated, leaving us with no achievement.

It is hard to pinpoint exactly what prevents these two parties from coming to an agreement. It would be in both of their interests to strike a peace deal—Israel would gain the peaceful existence it has desired for its entire national history, and the Palestinians would have a state. But something is preventing it. I believe that the sticking point is not actually about the city of Jerusalem or what exactly the borders would look like. The real sticking point is that neither side can let go of the historical narratives that they have held to this point. Both sides believe that the land is theirs. Both sides do not acknowledge the other side's position or respect each other. Many Palestinians do not acknowledge Jewish suffering at the hands of the Nazis, and many Israelis do not acknowledge the pain that the Palestinians have suffered in order to establish the Jewish state. While we might know what an eventual agreement roughly looks like, negotiation is impossible when neither side can accept the narrative of the other as having at least some legitimacy.

The question that remains for us is: what now? Ari Shavit, the author of the much acclaimed book that came out last year (strongly suggested read!) [My Promised Land](#), said on a recent NPR interview that

he hoped that if the talks failed to produce anything, that at least they would come out with a Plan B. What might a Plan B entail? While I was in Israel last year, I heard many stories of both Israelis and Palestinians, and I heard about the struggles they have in day-to-day life. It seems to me that while a major peace deal between Israel and the Palestinians is far from us right now, that there are many things that can be done in the meantime to make the lives of people on both sides better. This Plan B might take the form of an "Economic Reengagement" of sorts. The Israelis could ease passage of the Palestinians between the West Bank and Israel to allow people who had work and family in the state of Israel. This could allow both these Palestinians to resume a level of normalcy in their lives that was disrupted with the construction of the security wall and reduce the level of alienation between Israelis and Palestinians. Israel could also ease passage of trade goods to the Palestinian territories so that their economy can move more smoothly. Helping the Palestinian economy both helps the Palestinian people, because it alleviates the crushing poverty and the astronomically high unemployment rate, and it helps Israel because it can help create a good economic trade partner and it can foster good will between the two sides. These are all things that can be done, I believe, without risking the security interests of Israel and without achieving a peace deal between both sides.

Yes, the peace talks might have failed. But that does not mean that Israel is a hopeless place. There are a lot of things we can do in the meantime. We must always believe in Israel, because it is our homeland, and it will always capture our imaginations. While I recognize the imperfections of Israel, I still love it, and I hope that all of you can share in that love of our home.

Rabbinic Intern Benj Fried



Benj Fried  
[rabbi.benj@CongShirAmi.org](mailto:rabbi.benj@CongShirAmi.org)

### **Rabbinic Interns**



Megan Brudney  
[rabbi.megan@CongShirAmi.org](mailto:rabbi.megan@CongShirAmi.org)

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## Adult Education with the Rabbis

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### Saturday, May 12, Benj Fried

**10:00 am Men's Club Hike at Lake Chabot** with Student Rabbi Benj, followed by Men's Club Lunch

**2:30 pm Introduction to Mysticism and Hassidism**

We are in the midst of the counting of the Omer, a time when we reflect on the spiritual aspects of God. This is an excellent time to get a little bit of background about the tradition where this came from. Student Rabbi Benj will give a brief lesson in the basic beliefs of Kabbalah, the Kabbalists' creation story, and then he will introduce the art of telling a Chassidic Story.

**4:30 pm Town Hall Meeting**

Student Rabbi Benj will deliver a brief statement about his vision for worship and adult education for the following year, and he will solicit ideas about what congregants at Shir Ami would like to learn.

### Saturday, May 17, Megan Brudney

**3:00 pm, Book of Ruth Text Study**

Come explore the Book of Ruth, one of the shortest and most tightly constructed books in our Hebrew Bible, in advance of Shavuot, when it is traditionally read (June 5 this year).



**5:00 pm, Community Dinner Celebrating the State of Israel**

A fun and festive Israel-themed gathering for all ages! In honor of the festive holiday of Lag B'Omer, we'll be coming together for an Israel-themed gathering for all ages featuring Israeli food, music, and dancing! Sunday School families are particularly invited to come join the fun so Megan can say goodbye (as she will not be able to attend Sunday School on the 18th).

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## Shir Ami Information

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**Tuesday, August 19, 7:00 pm, Jewish Heritage Night, Oakland A's Baseball**

Come see Oakland as they host the New York Mets. Contact Fred Zankowsky for your ticket

### Other Community Events

**In Observance of World Fair Trade Day on Saturday, May 10**, there will be a sale of Fair Trade coffees, teas, chocolates and more from 10 AM to 3 PM at Westminster Hills, 27287 Patrick Ave., Hayward. That happens to be the "headquarters" of South Hayward Parish in case anybody is interested in seeing where the operation is located. All sales benefit the SHP food pantry.

**The Alameda County Community Food Bank Event, May 29, 6-8 pm.** An evening of art, nourishment and advocacy as supporters help fill empty bowls in our community. The event takes place at the food bank and features a silent auction, a simple and delicious meal of soup and bread, and rousing children's entertainment. More info online at [http://www.accfb.org/media/media\\_events/](http://www.accfb.org/media/media_events/).

## Parsha Behar ~ On the mountain

On the mountain of Sinai, Moses receives the laws of the Sabbatical year: every seventh year, all work on the land should cease. Its produce becomes free for the taking by all, for man and for beast.



At Shir Ami, Friday, May 9th

Potluck Dinner 6:30 PM

Shabbat Service 7:30 PM

led by

Benj Fried

Please participate in Shir Ami's rotating food arrangement

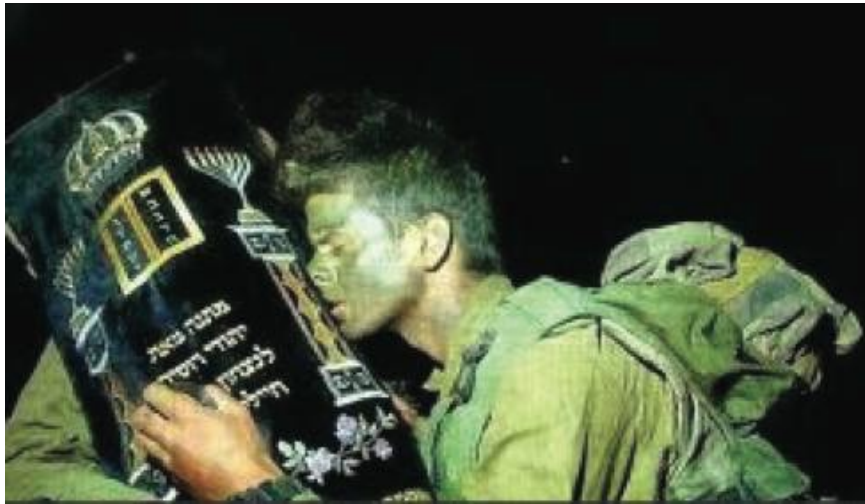
A to S Main dish

T to Z Side dish, dessert

help wth cleanup

## Parsha Bechukotai ~ "If you keep"

Moses is promised that if the people of Israel keep their commandments, they will enjoy material prosperity and dwell securely in their homeland. They also receive warning of exile, persecution and other evils that will befall them if they abandon their covenant. Nevertheless, they will not ever be destroyed.



Events at Shir Ami

Service at 7:30 PM  
conducted by  
led by Megan Brudney

This is Megan's last weekend with us.

**Join us for Shabbat Service on Friday, May 16, 7:30 pm**

and/or join us

**Saturday evening, May 17 at 5:00 pm**

**Community Dinner Celebrating the State of Israel**

a fun and festive evening of food, music, and dancing

Sunday School families are particularly invited to come join the fun so Megan can say goodbye (as she will not be able to attend Sunday School on the 18th).



**Annual Shir Ami Membership Meeting**  
***Sunday, June 1, 2014, 12 Noon at Shir Ami***

Lunch will be provided

**Agenda:**

Accomplishments for 2013-2014  
Election of 2014-2015 Board of Directors  
Presentation and vote of 2014-2015 budget  
Breakout Discussions on  
School Vision, Social Action, and Gardening

*Child-care/supervision will be provided*





# Rosh Chodesh/Sisterhood

## UPCOMING ROSH CHODESH

There are two Rosh Chodesh events this month:

• **Wednesday, April 30 at 7:00 pm**

**Rosh Chodesh Iyar**, hosted by Barbara-Ann Lewis

**For supper !!!!!**

Please bring nuts, chocolate or a dessert to share

• **Wednesday, May 28 at 7:30pm**

**Rosh Chodesh Sivan**, hosted by Sara Lamnin at Shir Ami. Look for an email with further details

## ROSH CHODESH RECAP

Last month's Rosh Chodesh took place at Aran's Art Studio. We brought in the month of Nissan and had a choice to paint and glaze, or paint on canvas with acrylics. Delicious refreshments were served and a great time was had by all. Thanks to our hostesses, Harriet Skelly and Marlene Lamnin and Happy Birthday to Sara Lamnin.

Whimsical tree on canvas by Helene Paz, below.



For more information on Sisterhood/Rosh Chodesh, contact Jan Dombrower [Sisterhood@CongShirAmi.org](mailto:Sisterhood@CongShirAmi.org)



## May Yahrzeit List

### **May 2014 Yahrzeit**

(as of 05/17/14)

#### **May 9, 2014**

Verla Becker,  
Harriet Cohn,  
Nikki Harris,  
Kevin Keil

active early member of Shir Ami  
grandmother of Ruth Hartman  
cousin of Nate Einbund  
husband of Danielle Keil, father of Sarah, Gabriella and James,  
and son-in-law of Vicky Sapper

Bernard Nasatir,  
Hyman Abraham Rebotsky,  
Harold Small,

father of Cary Nasatir  
grandfather of Jonathan Zimmerman  
uncle of Toni Schulberg,  
and former member of Shir Ami

#### **May 16, 2014**

Lisa Sheryl Barth,  
Morris Berman,  
Anne Firestone,  
Harriet Troy,

niece of Melanie Einbund  
father of Daryl Berman  
mother of Bill Firestone  
mother of Nancy Storch

### **Kaddish List** *(those who have died during the past 11 months)* **(read at both services)**

Bobbie Clark, sister of Marci Loss  
Leona Rosenthal, mother of Ruth Rosenthal and grandmother of Evelyn, Lisa, & Jacob Carmack  
Deborah Mitchell, mother of Helen Markus  
Stephen Slavin, long-time close friend of Nate Einbund

### **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](mailto: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.

