

SEPTEMBER 2014 BULLETIN ~Elul/Tishrei 5774/5775



CONGREGATION SHIR AMI

4529 Malabar Ave,
Castro Valley, CA 94546

Email: Info@CongShirAmi.org

Web: www.CongShirAmi.org

Congregation Shir Ami in Castro Valley is an intimate, intergenerational Reform Jewish Community that welcomes interfaith families.

Affiliated with the Union for Reform Judaism

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Rosh Hashanah

Rosh Hashanah (literally, "Head of the Year"), the Jewish New Year, is the beginning of a 10-day period of prayer, self-examination and repentance. This period, known as the "Days of Awe" or "High Holy Days" is widely observed by Jews throughout the world, many with prayer and reflection in a synagogue.

Customs associated with the holiday include sounding the shofar, eating a round challah, and tasting apples and honey to represent a sweet New Year.

Shir Ami is a member of the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ). Access the URJ website for resources on customs, rituals, and family activities. You will not be disappointed! <http://www.reformjudaism.org/jewish-holidays>.

Thank You, Volunteers

Thank you to the following members who helped at Clean-Up Day on August 24th to prepare Shir Ami for the Labor Day BBQ, the start of school, and the High Holy days:

Jan Dombrower, Rose Firestone, Bonnie Frey, Judy Ganz, Sara Lamnin, Harriet Skelly, Jane Steele, Diana Zankowsky, and Jon Zimmerman.

Your work and commitment to Shir Ami is much appreciated!





Event Calendar

Wed.	Sep.	3	7:30	pm	Jewish Meditation Group , sponsored by Julie Greenfield
Thu.	Sep.	4	7:00	pm	Board of Directors Meeting at Shir Ami, all are welcome
Sat.	Sep.	6	9:00	am	Introduction to Judaism , all are welcome to this ongoing class
Sun.	Sep.	7	9/10:30	am	First Day of School: Hebrew, 9-10:30; Religious 10:30-12:30, note changes of times
Fri.	Sep.	12	7:30	pm	Shabbat Service , led by Julie Bressler (join us as Julie leads our first service this fall)
Sat.	Sep.	13			Rabbinic Intern Julie Bressler will lead an adult learning class, details to follow
Sat./Sun.	Sep.	13/14			Castro Valley Fall Festival, help us staff Shir Ami's booth or stop in for a visit
Sun.	Sep.	14	9/10:30	am	Sunday School: Hebrew, 9-10:30; Religious 10:30-12:30
Wed.	Sep.	17	7:30	pm	Jewish Meditation Group , sponsored by Julie Greenfield
Sun.	Sep.	21	9/10:30	am	Sunday School: Hebrew, 9-10:30; Religious 10:30-12:30
Sun.	Sep.	21	11:30	am	Tot Talk, now called Kinder Kibitz, is a free program for families with children under 5 years old. Preschool activities allow families with young children to become acquainted with one another and with our school. 11:30 am -12:30 pm
High Holiday Services will be led by Cantor Judy Caplan Ginsburgh and Rabbinic Interns Julie Bressler and Benj Fried					
Wed.	Sep.	24	7:30	pm	Erev Rosh Hashana, Rosh Hashana Evening Service
Thu.	Sep.	25	10:00	am	Rosh Hashana Morning Service
Thu.	Sep.	25	2:00	pm	Children's Service
Thu.	Sep.	25	3:30	pm	Tashlich at Lake Chabot
Sun.	Sep.	28	3:00	pm	Annual Shir Ami visit to Chapel of the Chimes Cemetery
Fri.	Oct.	3	7:30	pm	Kol Nidre Service, Yom Kippur eve
Sat.	Oct.	4	10:00	am	Yom Kippur Morning Service
Sat.	Oct.	4	1:30	pm	Children's Service
Sat.	Oct.	4	2:00	pm	Discussion in the Garden
Sat.	Oct.	4	3:30	pm	Yizkor and Concluding Service
Sat.	Oct.	4	5:00	pm	Break the Fast at Shir Ami

President's Message

Dear Shir Ami Members and Friends,

Wow, the summer just sped right by me this year! I am, however, ready for Fall and for the start of the new year. Here's some of what is happening at Shir Ami for September:

Shir Ami Hebrew and Religious School

The school committee set the calendar for school. The first day will be September 7, with a new start time for Hebrew School – 9:00 am. Religious school will start at 10:30 am for all students and the end of school will be 12:30 pm. The schedule for the year has been integrated with the religious calendar and our Rabbinic Interns will be teaching classes this year. The curriculum has also been set for the year and each class will be working on the same theme or subject geared to their age level. As of now we have 17 students – twice what we've had for the past few years!

Kinder Kibitz (previously known as Tot Talk)

Kinder Kibitz is back again this year! This free program is designed for children ages 0-5 and their

parents/caregivers to learn a little bit about being Jewish and to socialize and have fun through age-appropriate, hands-on activities. The first meeting will be Sunday, September 21 from 11:30 am to 12:30 pm.

Religious Events and Activities

Shir Ami welcomes back Rabbinic Intern Benj Fried and looks forward to meeting our new intern Julie Bressler. We also welcome Rabbi/Cantor Judy Caplan Ginsburgh from Alexandria, LA as our cantorial soloist for the High Holy days. I am really looking forward to having Rabbi/Cantor Judy join us after listening to her MP3 files and visiting her website: <http://www.judymusic.com/>. Erev Rosh

Hashanah is September 24 and services start at 7:30 pm.



For all of the activities and events please refer to the Events page (page 2) of this bulletin.

L' Shana Tova!

Harriet Skelly

president@congshirami.org

Introduction to Judaism

Our next two meetings will be on September 6th and October 25th at 9 am at Shir Ami.

The Introduction to Judaism class began in June and has now met six times. In August, we learned about the month of Elul (in preparation for the High Holy Days), Rosh Hashanah and the beginnings of Yom Kippur. In September, we will learn more about Yom Kippur, and about Sukkot and Simchat Torah.

In September through May (the school year) we will meet only once per month, on a Saturday when the rabbinic interns are *not* in town. The schedule follows:

September 6	October 25	November 1
December 13	January 17	February 14
March 28	April 11	

Dates may have to change; check the congregational calendar at www.congshirami.org for the latest information.

There is no cost for the class except for the purchase of the required text: "Every Person's Guide to Judaism" by Stephen J. Einstein and Lydia Kukoff. If you haven't yet attended but want to join, please email Diana (religion@congshirami.org) with any questions and to confirm your attendance.

Rabbinic Interns' Page

Gearing Up for the High Holy Days: Reflections for Elul

An old Chassidic rabbi rose to give his Yom Kippur sermon when his beloved granddaughter, no more than 2 years old, walked up to the bima to be with her grandpa. The rabbi picked up the precious girl and continued with his sermon. While he was talking, she was fidgeting in his arms and grabbing a hold of his beard. The congregants noticed, but they were so enchanted by the cuteness of the girl that they just said "Awww" as the rabbi continued with his sermon. The girl then grabbed the rabbi's glasses off his head and started to play with them. The congregation was a bit shocked but still felt tenderness towards the young child. The rabbi then stopped his sermon and addressed the situation. "She's just precious, isn't she. No matter what she does in my arms, you would forgive her anything. The question is, at what age does it stop being cute and forgivable? Four? Six? Ten? The thing to remember is that from God's perspective, we are all, no matter our age, as precious and deserving of forgiveness as this precious child."

This story of love and forgiveness is a message we need to hear as we prepare this final month before the beginning of 5775. We have entered the Jewish month of Elul, the sixth month of the year that immediately precedes Tishrei, the coming of the new year. The rabbis teach us that Elul is actually an abbreviation for *Ani L'Dodi V'Dodi Li*, each Hebrew letter of Elul starting one word of that phrase. Of course, this phrase is the famous saying from Song of Songs: "I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine." It is a message of love and intimacy, but it also conveys an undying commitment to stay in relationship. We have just concluded the month of Av, the month of destruction and sadness that contains our communal day of mourning on the 9th day of the month. After that message of desolation, we enter Elul, and just as the saying from Song of Songs teaches us, out of the destruction comes renewed relationship. This relationship with God

is exactly what we need as we enter our time of deep introspection and accounting.

As we tallying up our *cheshbonei hanefesh*, our accounting for our souls, and realize all the times we have come up short this year, I think it's important to remember one thing. Don't let your shortcomings make you feel small, insignificant, or unworthy. We are all God's beloved by virtue of our striving to be better, and, indeed, simply by virtue of being created in God's image. It is not punishment for sin that God desires but rather that we all take this time of reflection to renew our commitments and come all the closer to God. *Ani L'Dodi, V'Dodi Li*. May this month live up to its name for us so that we can come to our Days of Awe feeling loved.

Rabbinic Intern Benj Fried

Welcome, Rabbinic Intern Julie Bressler

September 12 & 13

Join us as we welcome Rabbinic Intern Julie Bressler to her first full weekend at Shir Ami.

- On Friday night, September 12th, Julie will lead Services.
- On Saturday, September 13th, Julie will lead an Adult Learning Class. Look for details in Shir Ami's weekly email blast.



Benj Fried
rabbi.benj@CongShirAmi.org

Rabbinic Interns



Julie Bressler
rabbi.julie@CongShirAmi.org

Community Events

Kinder Kibitz

Congregation Shir Ami invites you to its free preschool program, now called...**Kinder Kibitz**.

The first meeting of the year will be Sunday, September 21st from 11:30 am to 12:30 pm.



The program is designed for children ages 0-5 and their parents/caregivers to learn a little bit about being Jewish and to socialize and have fun. Congregation Shir Ami is a small, friendly, Reform synagogue located at 4529 Malabar Avenue in Castro Valley (off Redwood Road). Come meet your local Jewish Community. Our web address is: www.congshirami.org/ For more info contact Bonnie at outreach@congshirami.org

Shir Ami Garden

Do you like gardening? Do you want to be involved in the appearance of our Shir Ami property? If so, please join me in a committee to plan, maintain and upgrade our landscape.

Our objectives is to plan future landscape additions and to set up a roster for watering and some weeding what is there!

If you wish to participate, contact Milton Palmer, Facilities@CongShirAmi.org, or call [510-582-6250](tel:510-582-6250),



San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society

Topic: Discovering My German-Jewish Heritage
Speaker: Diane Ober

Sunday, September 14, 2014

Rhoda Goldman Plaza

2180 Post Street

San Francisco

parking information at <http://www.sfbajgs.org/>.

Doors open 1:00 p.m.; program begins 1:30 p.m.

From detailed records kept by the Nazis, Gestapo, and German State, Diane was able to discover how her family fared under Nazi rule, from deportation to escape to the Shanghai ghetto and to life in America.

There will be time before and after the talk to brainstorm with others about your genealogy questions. Coffee and tea will be served. Meetings are free and everyone interested is welcome to attend. For more information visit <http://www.sfbajgs.org/>.

Jewish Meditation Group

A new group for practice of Jewish meditation and spirituality is forming at Congregation Shir Ami. We will meet two Wednesdays per month on a dropin basis. Exact format to be decided by group; probably to include guided meditations, silent meditation, chanting, movement, and drash (a talk). First two meetings will be Wed., 9/3 and Wed., 9/17 at 7:30 at Shir Ami. No meditation or Jewish religious experience necessary. Free to members; by donation from non-members. For more info, contact Julie Greenfield; Meditation@CongShirAmi.org

Hebrew & Religious School starts in September at Shir Ami!

September 7th, 14th and 21st

New Times!

9:00 am Hebrew Instruction begins (3rd grade and up)

10:30 am Religious School starts

(child pick-up at 12:30 pm)



**A new year of learning and
fun begins on September 7th.**

Any questions?

**Contact Jane Steele
and Rick Goldhoff at**

education@congshirami.org

Shabbat Service
Friday, September 12th, 7:30 pm
at Congregation Shir Ami

Parsha Ki Tavo

This parsha tells of the ceremony of the first fruits (בִּכּוּרִים, bikkurim), tithes, and the blessings from observance and curses from violation of the law. One of its themes is reliving our history through the words and prayers that we say.



Art by **Lilianne Milgrom**

(<http://womenofthebook.org/artists/lilianne-milgrom/>)



**This is our first service of the year,
and our first service led by new
Rabbinic Intern Julie Bressler,
so please join us!**



High Holy Days Schedule



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High Holy Days Services, 2014/5775



Rosh Hashanah

Wednesday, September 24 Evening Service	7:30 PM
Thursday, September 25	
Morning Service	10:00 AM
Children's Service	2:00 PM
Tashlich at Lake Chabot	3:30 PM

Yom Kippur

Friday, October 3 Kol Nidre Service	7:30 PM
Saturday, October 4	
Morning Service	10:00 AM
Children's Service	1:30 PM
Discussion in the garden	2:00 PM
Yizkor and Concluding Service	3:30 PM
Break the Fast	5:30 PM

For information on ticket costs for non-members, contact David Schulberg
(religion@congshirami.org)

Memorial Service Information



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Dear Friends:

You are undoubtedly aware of our upcoming High Holiday Services, Rosh Hashanah on September 24th & 25th and Yom Kippur on October 3th & 4th. This year, we look forward to welcoming back student Rabbi Benj Fried & our new student Rabbi Julie Bressler from Hebrew Union College. Benj will be a 3rd year student and Julie is a 2nd year just back from Israel & Camp Newman. In addition, we will have a new & wonderful cantorial soloist, Judy Ginsburgh from Louisiana. We are looking forward to beautiful High Holiday services. We know that you will enjoy our program with more participation from our members.

This year's High Holiday ticket prices will be the same as last year. If you have any guests, we will have tickets for \$300 per family and \$150 for singles available by contacting me. This donation can again represent partial membership at Congregation Shir Ami. Full-time college students and members of the armed forces on active duty are always welcome as our guests at no charge.

Once again we ask you for a Memorial Contribution. Please return the stub below to my address or my email as soon as possible, for *tickets* (non-members only) and *memorials*. The names of the departed will be read at the Yom Kippur Memorial (Yizkor) Service. We do **not** depend on last year's list.

Thank you for your help. I would like to extend my best wishes for a healthy and happy New Year to you and your family.

Sincerely,

David Schulberg

Co-Religious Committee Chair

religion@congshirami.org

To: David Schulberg 16174 Via Arroyo San Lorenzo, CA 94580-2506

Enclosed is a check for ___ tickets @ \$_____ for

Name: _____

Address: _____ Enclosed is my

Memorial Contribution for \$_____ in memory of: _____

(Please Print Clearly)

Rosh Chodesh/Sisterhood

UPCOMING ROSH CHODESH

Details of our next Rosh Chodesh will be sent by email. See you there!

ROSH CHODESH RECAP

Every summer, Sisterhood likes to have a summer outing. This year we went to Chouinard Winery for a picnic, wine, and music in the beautiful wooded setting. The 80's band, *The San Leandroids*, entertained us and we had a wonderful time listening, singing along, and dancing.

Eighteen of us (sisterhood and families) enjoyed the afternoon and evening. Thank you to the van drivers, snack contributors, and everyone who participated.



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

Donations

Donations as of August 20, 2014

- Danielle Keil, In Memory of Kevin Keil
- Vicky Sapper, In Memory of Kevin Keil
- The Becker Brothers, Mike, Rich, Steve, and Stu, In Memory of their parents, Jerry and Verla Becker, founding members of Shir Ami
- Lina Teferi, In Memory of her mother, Manya Kostovetsky
- Nancy and Art Liskewicz, In Honor of Bruce Skelly
- Pat and Milton Palmer, In Honor of Bruce Skelly
- Helen and Noah Markus, Yahrzeit
- Marion Kramer, High Holiday Donation
- Edetha Speceal, former member of Shir Ami

Yahrzeits

September 2014 Yahrzeit List

(as of 8/17/14)

September 12, 2014

Shaiva Berenstein,
Blanche Rose Berman,
Ben Blank,
Martin Brody,
Mildred Einbund,
Charles Einbund,
Maurice Finkle,

mother of Judy Ganz
mother of Daryl Berman
father of Sam Blank
grandfather of Noah Markus
mother of Nate Einbund
father of Nate Einbund
husband of Florence Finkle,
and former president of Shir Ami

September 24-25, 2014

Maurice Aronowitz,
Jack Farbstein,
Leona Rosenthal,

David Sapper,

Abraham Wolf,

[Rosh Hashanah]

father-in-law of Hillie Levine
uncle of Ruth Rosenthal
mother of Ruth Rosenthal and grandmother of
Evelyn, Lisa, and Jacob Carmack
father of Danielle Keil,
and ex-husband of Vicki Sapper
father of Ann Blank

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

Bobbie Clark,

sister of Marci Loss

Do you want to have Kaddish read for a loved one at Friday Service?

Is there someone for whom you'd like a Yahrzeit reminder? It's easy. Please email Toni Schulberg at yahrzeit@CongShirAmi.org. Include your name, the name of the person who died, the date they died (month, day and year on the English calendar), their relationship to you and whether you want to use the English or Hebrew date in the reminder to you. Toni will send the reminder as you requested.