OCTOBER 2014 BULLETIN ~Tishrei/Cheshvan 5775



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 <u>Union for Reform Judaism</u>

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School Notes

The school year has gotten off to a great start. We have more students and teachers than last year. We have four Hebrew learner groups and four Judaic Studies groups. We will also have the youngest children join us through Tot Talk.

We have set the calendar for the year and have chosen topics for every Sunday. The theme on the first Sunday was "What it means to be Jewish." The youngest children made Jewish objects in cookie dough using cookie cutters. Older children created a list of Jewish things and then had a friendly boy vs. girl competition on who could find/identify the most Jewish items inside and outside at Shir Ami. The result was a tie!

Sukkot

Sukkot is a joyful harvest festival that begins just five days after Yom Kippur. **On Sunday**, **October 5**, the Men's Club begins setting up the Shir Ami sukkah at 10:00 am. At 12:30 pm, school students and congregants join in decorating the sukkah.

On **Friday, October 10,** Shir Ami will celebrate Sukkot with a potluck at 6:30 pm, followed by a service and a sleepover with students and their families.

Join us under the sukkah!









Event Calendar for October

	Y	ou can	always	find up	-to-the-minute event details at Shir Ami's website, www.congshirami.org!	
Wed.	Oct.	1	6:30	pm	Open practice for all Torah readers on Yom Kippur, 6:30-7:30	
Wed.	Oct.	1	7:30	pm	Jewish Meditation Group, contact Julie Greenfield, meditation@CongShirAmi.org	
<u>High</u>	Holiday	Servic	es will be	e led by	Cantor Judy Caplan Ginsburgh and Rabbinic Interns Julie Bressler and Benj Fried	
Fri.	Oct.	3	7:30	pm	Kol Nidre Service, Yom Kippur eve	
Sat.	Oct.	4	4 Yom Kippur		Morning Service, 10:00 am; Children's Service, 1:30 pm; Discussion in the Garden, 2:00 pm; Yizkor & Concluding Service, 3:30 pm; Break the Fast, 5:00 pm	
Sun.	Oct.	5	9/10:30	am	Sunday School: Hebrew, 9-10:30; Religious, 10:30-12:30	
Sun.	Oct.	5	11:30	am	Tot Talk, a free program for families with children under 5 years old. 11:30-12:30	
Sun.	Oct.	5	10:00	am	Decorate the sukkah, Men's Club begins sukkah decoration	
Sun.	Oct.	5	12:30	am	Decorate the sukkah, Shir Ami school students and congregants join in sukkah decoration	
Thu.	Oct.	9	7:00	pm	Sisterhood/Rosh Chodesh at the home of Diana Zankowsky. Join "Women Under the Sukkah" for a potluck dinner and program. Details will follow by email.	
Fri.	Oct.	10	6:30	pm	Potluck dinner at 6:30 followed by a Sukkot Shabbat Service led by Julie Bressler	
Fri.	Oct.	10	9:00	pm	Sukkot sleepover for students and their families (sleepover begins after service)	
Sat.	Oct.	11	2:00	pm	Booths and Lulavs and Etrogs, adult learning with Rabbinic Intern Julie Bressler	
Sat.	Oct.	11	3:30	pm	A Journey through Kabbalat Shabbat, adult learning with Rabbinic Intern Julie Bressler	
Sun.	Oct.	12	9/10:30	noon	Hebrew & Religious School. Note: possible time change for a field trip. Check your email.	
Wed.	Oct.	15	7:30	pm	Jewish Meditation Group, contact Julie Greenfield, meditation@CongShirAmi.org	
Thu.	Oct.	16	7:00	pm	Board of Directors Meeting at Shir Ami, all are welcome	
Fri.	Oct.	17	* 7:00	pm	Simchat Torah Shabbat Service, led by Rabbinic Intern Benj Fried (*note start time, 7 pm)	
Sat.	Oct.	18	11:00	am	Walk With Rabbi Benj, join us for a walk and talk at Lake Chabot	
Sat.	Oct.	18	4:00	pm	Jewish Musical History, adult learning with Rabbi Benj	
Sun.	Oct.	19	9/10:30	am	Sunday School: Hebrew, 9-10:30; Religious, 10:30-12:30	
Sat.	Oct.	25	9:00	am	Introduction to Judaism, all are welcome to this ongoing class	
Sat.	Nov.	1	1:00	pm	Help decorate Shir Ami for the Chanukah Fair event on November 2	
Sun.	Nov.	2	11:00	am	Chanukah/Holiday Fair and Boutique, 11:00 am-3:00 pm	

In November, Rabbinic intern Benj Fried has scheduled an adult ed book discussion of David Grossman's To the End of the Land.

President's Message

Dear Shir Ami Community,

Relationships can be so complicated sometimes – especially between an adult child and his/her parent(s). The tenuous relationship I have with my mother has been thoroughly tested over the past two months. As some of you know, Bruce and I have been helping my 88-year-old mother and her significant other, Mel (90), move from Southern California to an assisted living place in San Leandro. Needless to say it has been very stressful for all of us.

I am finding, however, that even though we have been at odds for most of my life, helping my mom through this transition in her life has actually allowed me to see the possibility of an improved relationship. The timing of this move couldn't be more perfect – just as we approach the high holy days – a time for t'shuvah which is usually understood to mean repentance. But as I learned in adult education from our new rabbinic intern, Julie Bressler, t'shuvah literally means to return. The ReformJudaism.org website, a resource I turn

to quite often, <u>describes t'shuvah along the same</u> lines:

Its literal meaning is return and, indeed, t'shuvah is a return forward to something holy inside us that hasn't yet reached fruition, a return to the goodness and the caring that could have been and still can be. T'shuvah is our search to find the potential for good and for holiness that has been within us all along but somehow became hidden in the hustle and bustle of everyday life.

This different and new-to-me way of thinking about Yom Kippur is very meaningful to me, and I



am looking forward to spending these days considering the possibilities of a new and improved relationship with my mom. My hope for all of you in my Shir Ami family is the same – to find a connection or something meaningful to you in these high holy days.

L' Shana Tova, Harriet Skelly president@congshirami.org

Introduction to Judaism

The Introduction to Judaism class continues to meet. In August and in September, we learned about the month of Elul (in preparation for the High Holy Days), Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. In September, we learned about Sukkot and Simchat Torah.

We will have two meetings in October: on the 12th at 4 pm in Diana's sukkah and on the 25th at 9 am at Shir Ami. In the class scheduled for October 25th we will begin our study of Jewish lifecycle events.

Throughout the school year, we will be meeting only once per month, intentionally on a Saturday when the rabbinic interns are not in town. The schedule follows:

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

In the Jewish month of Tishrei, there is no shortage of momentous occasions. From Rosh Hashanah to Sukkot, Yom Kippur to Simchat Torah, this month is full of holidays and times to come together as families and communities to celebrate many of the highest points in the Jewish year. It can feel like one spends more time at synagogue than their own home, and by the time Simchat Torah rolls around, many of us are ready to be done and get their evenings back on their regular schedule.

However, Simchat Torah also has the benefit of being one of the most joyous celebrations in Judaism. We celebrate completing yet another year of reading and studying Torah - from the creation narratives in Genesis to Moses' final pleas to the Jewish people in Deuteronomy, and are excited to begin again and have another opportunity to glean nuggets of wisdom from our sacred text.

I spent last Simchat Torah in Amsterdam. We firstyear HUC students had the entire holiday of Sukkot off, so three friends and I decided to traipse around Europe for the ten-day break. By the time we reached Simchat Torah, the second to last day of our trip, we were exhausted. We had traveled through four countries, endured multi-hour bus rides, visited countless museums and tried our fair share of questionable local delicacies. After a busy day visiting the Van Gogh Museum and the Anne Frank House, we almost decided to just stay in for the night. However, we knew this was probably the one and only time we would be in Amsterdam for any Jewish holiday, so we made the trek to the synagogue that housed the Liberal Jewish Community of Amsterdam.

The building was incredibly ornate and looked more like a country club than a synagogue (it was even surrounded by a moat!). We hesitantly entered the sanctuary and found seats near the back. As the service began, we greatly appreciated that we pray in Hebrew, because we understood none of the Dutch that filled the interim between prayers! Although we had tried to inconspicuously watch from the side, as soon as the Torah scrolls were removed from the ark and people began dancing, we were swept up in the crowd. As we danced the Hora around the sanctuary, we suddenly found ourselves right in the middle of the circle. Within a few moments, we had Torah scrolls in our arms. My friends and I embraced the moment as all the faces around us expressed pure joy and excitement at this scene. Minutes later, the entire community cheered as the cantor finished the final verse of Deuteronomy and the rabbi picked up immediately with the first verse of the Torah. The cantor even finished the service by chanting the Kiddush using each of the festival trope settings!

There was such genuine excitement and happiness in this sacred space that night. With memories of the Holocaust still quite fresh in this region, this community's existence is nothing short of a miracle. This community is proud, vibrant and growing. We learned that night that Jewish peoplehood is a strong and powerful force that welcomes us in everywhere. We could not communicate much with the person sitting next to us, until we could join together in Hebrew songs and prayers that transcend physical and lingual barriers. Together, we celebrated and sang as each of us were thankful for the opportunity to proudly express our Jewish identities in a region where this reality is not taken for granted.

I encourage you to participate in Simchat Torah services, coming up this year on October 17th. Dance and sing joyously with the Torah and celebrate another successful year of Jewish peoplehood, community and education.

Rabbinic Intern Julie Bressler

Adult Learning with the Rabbi

October 11, with Rabbi Julie Bressler 2:00 pm. Booths and Lulavs and Etrogs

What is Sukkot about anyway? We will look at some of the most interesting and surprising texts related to this holiday - including the surprisingly egalitarian ways in which the holiday was celebrated in antiquity!

3:30 pm - A Journey through Kabbalat Shabbat Ever wonder why Friday night services are structured the way that they are? What the prayers mean and what the original liturgists meant? Kabbalat Shabbat is a relatively new service that has become one of the favorite services across all sects of Judaism. Come to learn why and how! This will be the first part of a several part series as we work through the Friday night liturgy (prayers/psalms, etc).

Interns

[continued on next page]



rabbi.beni@CongShirAmi.org



Julie Bressler rabbi.julie@CongShirAmi.org

Adult Learning [continued]

October 18, with Rabbi Benj

11:00 am, Walk with Rabbi Benj

Rabbi Benj wants to hear about your summers and catch up. Come for a walk with him on Saturday morning at Lake Chabot. We will do a very brief text study on our walk in commemoration of Simchat Torah.

4:00 pm, Jewish Musical History

Come explore the major trends in Jewish musical history with Student Rabbi Benj. We will start at the very beginning of the history of Jewish music, listen to the great works of the Classical Reformers who laid the foundations for synagogue music, and explore the new and exciting trends coming from camp and Israel. We will conclude the afternoon with a Havdallah service.

Jewish Meditation Group

A group for practice of Jewish meditation and spirituality. Held at Congregation Shir Ami two Wednesdays per month on a drop-in basis. Exact format to be decided by group; probably to include guided meditations, silent meditation, chanting, movement, and drash (a talk). Next two meetings will be Wed., 10/1 and Wed., 10/15 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

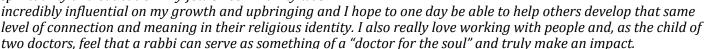
Getting to Know Our Rabbinic Interns

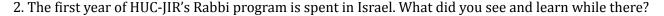
In September, Jon Zimmerman conducted a mini-interview by email with each of Shir Ami's interns, Julie Bressler and Benj Fried. The interview was a short Q&A of five questions to help the Congregation get to know the interns better. Thank you, Jon!

Five Questions for Rabbinic Intern Julie Bressler

1. Let's start with everybody's favorite question: Why do you want to be a Rabbi?

I want to be a rabbi because I believe in the Jewish people and strengthening our communities through connection, prayer, spirituality and education. My Jewish community was





I really loved living in Israel. It was certainly challenging at times (sometimes you just miss the one-stop-shopping of Target or understanding every word the bus driver says!), but I learned a great deal about both the country and myself. I really enjoyed living in an area that lives on Jewish time - in Jerusalem, nearly everything shuts down at around 3 pm on a Friday and you can feel the anticipation of Shabbat building in the air throughout the day. The sense of Jewish peoplehood is really strong there despite the tensions and challenges between the sects. After living in Israel, I feel a different response when I see Israel being discussed on the news as I truly sensed the complexity and diversity that permeates every aspect of Israeli society. The situation is very complicated, but day-to-day life in Israel manages to continue even in the most challenging times. I had many opportunities to travel throughout Israel and enjoyed my trips to the north of Israel (the Kinneret region) the most. There are beautiful vistas, tons of history and many hidden gems throughout the area. Wherever I walked in the country, I felt that I was walking on stones that had so many stories to tell - so much history of the Jewish people and so many others. It really made every visit, even just to the beach, that much more heightened.

3. What do you hope to get from your internship at Congregation Shir Ami?

I hope to learn a lot and grow in my skills as a future rabbi. From service leading to adult education, I know that I have a lot to learn and you all can teach me a great deal, so I'm looking forward to working together. I hope to learn about how a successful small congregation runs and where members need to put their energy for the community to thrive.



4. Are there specific activities that you'd like to do while interning at Shir Ami?

I hope to make Havdallah a part of most of my visits, host movie nights, teach Israeli dancing and encourage more congregant participation in services and service leading!

5. How can Shir Ami's members help make your internship the best it can be?

I want to hear from you! Please feel free to contact me at <u>rabbi.julie@congshirami.org</u> with questions, ideas, feedback or anything. I want to ensure that I am bringing topics and programs that are interesting to you all, but I can only know that if you share that information with me.

Five Questions for Rabbinic Intern Benj Fried

1. While this is your second year with us, since Shir Ami has some new members let's ask the question: Why do you want to be a Rabbi?

I want to be a rabbi because I perceive a need in our people created by the culture we live in to find meaning, community, and holiness. I believe that our people are good-hearted individuals that want to raise loving families, do some good in the world, and feel connected to something greater than them. Our culture teaches us extreme individualism that I think hinders us emotionally and spiritually. I want to be a rabbi, because I find in Judaism the tools to create meaning in our lives-- a compelling set of values, beautiful worship, and texts and tradition to expand our mind through life long learning. I love these things, and I want to share them with others and hopefully inspire them to live well intentioned, connected, and spiritual lives.

2. What did you learn from the Congregation and your experience as a Rabbinic Intern last year that was unexpected?

The most significant thing that has really surprised me about working at Shir Ami is the way that a small congregation really works together to create that sense of community where everyone feels a certain amount of buyin. Having grown up in a very large congregation, I was inspired to Judaism by amazing leaders and inspiring rabbis. But I think at Shir Ami I really learned that there is another model that works extraordinarily well. In essence, Shir Ami has taught me very compelling models of lay leadership.

3. Are there some specific things (e.g. activities, prayers, songs) that you didn't get to do last year that you'd like to try this year?

This year I would really like to expand our worship experience beyond what we normally do at Shir Ami. This means both expanding our repertoire and also doing some interesting things with t'fillah. For instance, I am envisioning a service in which we try to do the full experience of the Kabbalat Shabbat experiences. I also want to get creative with other aspects of services, such as including more poetry for iyyunim.

4. Is there anything that Shir Ami members can do to help improve upon your experience from last year?

One of the things that I did not get to do much of last year was pastoral care with congregants. I understand why this might be the case: I have only been with Shir Ami for a year, and I am very young. However, I want to make sure that the congregants view me as a resource and someone they can talk to if they need someone to talk to.

5. Over the summer, you worked as a clergy providing spiritual care services at Stanford Hospital in Palo Alto. Can you tell us what insights the experience has given you for your prospective career?

One of the most important insights that I got from my time at Stanford was that you can't always measure success by the typical ways of measuring it. With regards to patient visits, there are hidden benefits to the patients even if they don't talk about spiritual matters with the chaplain or even if they send the chaplain away. For instance, for a patient who doesn't talk about spiritual matters, they often just feel gratified that someone would listen to him and bear witness to his pain. Even the person who sends the chaplain away is at least asserting control over his environment when he might not be able to make any other decisions that day. I think that this is often times applicable to the ways rabbis interact with their communities. Success is often not in number of seats filled or number of people at an event.

Note: In November, Rabbinic intern Benj Fried has scheduled an adult ed book discussion of David Grossman's *To the End of the Land.*

High Holy Days Schedule



Affiliated with the Union for Reform Judaism

4529 Malabar Avenue • Castro Valley, CA 94546 • 510-537-1787 • www.congshirami.org

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



4529 Malabar Avenue • Castro Valley, CA 94546 • 510-537-1787 • www.congshirami.org

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
Γο: David Schulberg 16174 Via Arroyo San Lorenzo, CA 945	580-2506
Enclosed is a check for tickets @ \$ for Name:	
Address:	Enclosed is my
Memorial Contribution for \$ in memory of:	
	(Please Print Clearly)

Tot Talk

Congregation Shir Ami invites you to its free program for little ones

Tot Talk

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.

Schedule

Tot Talk Meetings are on Sundays, from 11:30 am- 12:30 pm

September 21, 2014 (first meeting of the year)

October 5, 2014

November 23, 2014

December 14, 2014

January 11, 2015

February 1, 2015

March 8, 2015

Apríl 26, 2015

May 17, 2015 (end of the year party)

Learn, Play and Create Jewish Bonds at Tot Talk



Congregation Shir Ami in Castro Valley, California is a small, friendly Reform Jewish community that welcomes interfaith and LGBTQ families. We make Jewish education fun and joyful for children and adults alike.

For more information, please contact Bonnie Frey at outreach@congshirami.org

Our web address is: http://www.congshirami.org and our Facebook page is https://www.facebook.com/CongShirAmi

Congregation Shir Ami 4529 Malabar Ave in Castro Valley, CA 94546

Please tell your friends and help us spread the word!



Rosh Chodesh/Sisterhood

UPCOMING ROSH CHODESH On Thursday, October 9 at 7:00 pm,Sisterhood is hosting our annual "Women Under the Sukkah" at the home of Diana Zankowsky.

We will have a potluck dinner, program, and we will finalize our schedule for the year. Look to your email for details as the date approaches.

This is our planning meeting for the year. We will select topics, locations and program hosts/leaders. If you cannot attend this meeting, but would like to take part in the schedule, please contact Jan Dombrower, Sisterhood@CongShirAmi.org

ROSH CHODESH SCHEDULE 2014-15

This schedule is subject to change and will be finalized at our October 9 meeting.

Sukkot: Thursday, October 9

Cheshvan: Wednesday, October 22

Kislev: Thurs., November 20 (early because

of Thanksgiving.)

Tevet/Chanukah Party: Weds., December 16

(2nd night)

Sh'vat: Thursday, January 22 Adar: Wednesday, February 18

Women's Retreat: Fri.-Sun., February 20-22

Nisan: Wednesday, March 18 Iyyar: Thursday, April 23 Sivan: Wednesday, May 20 Tammuz: Thursday, June 18







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

Donations

Donations as of August 20, 2014

Iudv Ganz In memory Judy's mother, Shaiva Berenstein

Speedy recovery to Milton Palmer Judy Ganz Contribution towards Rosh Hashana Toni & David Schulberg

Daryl Berman In memory of Blanche Berman Florence Finkle In memory of Maury Finkle

Barbara-Ann Lewis Contribution Marion Kramer Contribution



October 2014 Yahrzeit List (as of 9/28/14)

October 3 & 4, 2014

Gertrude Kramer, Leo Knopf. Sarah Leona Markus, Mayer (pronounced ma-YARE) Yashar, Beatrice Goldman,

October 10, 2014

Jeanette Brody, Rabbi Joseph Glaser, Moe Levy, Sylvia Wolf,

October 17, 2014

Ira Frey, Beatrice Harrison-Golembo, Katherine Schuelke.

<u>Kaddish List</u> (those who have died during the past 11 months)

Harry Yoseph Mitchell, brother of Helen Markus Bobbie Clark, sister of Marci Loss



[Yom Kipppur]

mother of Marion Kramer father of Lori Knopf Santora grandmother of Noah Markus brother-in-law of Ruth Hartman grandmother of Nancy Storch

[Sukkot Service]

grandmother of Noah Markus HUC area Rabbi when Shir Ami began, and a great help to Shir Ami long-time former member of Shir Ami mother of Ann Blank

[Simchat Torah Service]

father of Bonnie Frey mother of Sharon Golembo mother of Susan Spitzer



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 <u>vahrzeit@CongShirAmi.org</u>. 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.