



CONGREGATION SHIR AMI

4529 Malabar Avenue
Castro Valley CA 94546

Web: www.CongShirAmi.org
Email: Info@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

Event Calendar Find up-to-the-minute event details at Shir Ami's website, www.congshirami.org
All events are held at Shir Ami unless otherwise noted.

Tue.	Feb.	2	7:00 pm	Shir Ami 50th Anniversary Celebration Planning Meeting, events@congshirami.org
Thur.	Feb.	4	7:00 pm	Shir Ami Board Meeting, held at Shir Ami. Open to all members
Fri.	Feb.	5	7:30 pm	Shabbat Service, led by Rabbi Bryan Zive
Sat.	Feb.	6	10:00 am	<i>Coffee & Commentaries</i> , with Rabbi Bryan Zive. This session held at Shir Ami, coffee provided
Sat.	Feb.	6	3:00 pm	Reform Judaism's <i>Hot Button Issues: Cremation and Burial</i> , with Rabbi Byran Zive
Sun.	Feb.	7	9; 10:30 am	9 am, Hebrew School; 10:30 am, Religious School
Tue.	Feb.	9	7:30 pm	Rosh Chodesh, look for details by email, or contact sisterhood@congshirami.org
Sun.	Feb.	14		NO SCHOOL
Wed.	Feb.	17	7:30 pm	Meditation group, no experience needed. Contact Julie Greenfield meditation@congshirami.org
Sun.	Feb.	21	9; 10:30 am	9 am, Hebrew School; 10:30 am, Religious School
Sun.	Feb.	21	11:30 am	Tot Talk, a free monthly program for preschoolers and their families
Sun.	Feb	28		NO SCHOOL
February 26-28: Shir Ami's Women's Retreat: Celebrating Our Resilience. Rabbi Julie Bressler will be a participant at the retreat				
Sun.	Mar.	6	1:00 pm	Shir Ami volunteers work with EAIC members at Alameda County Food Bank, 1 to 4 pm
Sun.	Mar.	20	11:00 am	Shir Ami 50th Anniversary Celebration. Go to: shirami50.mydagsite.com

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Shir Ami Community and Friends,

In response to a hate crime against Muslims that occurred at Lake Chabot in early December Shir Ami invited several faith groups in our area to meet with us and figure out how to support our Muslim neighbors. As a result of our faith organizations getting together the Eden Area Interfaith Council (EAIC) was formed to reject bigotry against our Muslim neighbors and to demonstrate how people of all faiths can love, learn, and live together in peace.

Our first activity was a Unity in Community rally and march in downtown Castro Valley on Saturday, December 26. Over 200 people (attendees of various faith groups, community leaders and residents including 35 Shir Ami members) came together. Each of the faith groups and community leaders were asked to say a few words in support of peace, religious freedom and acceptance for all people living in the United States. Below is the message I gave which was influenced by the Union for Reform Judaism's (URJ) Religious Action Center (RAC) and Rabbi Judy Schindler's blog post written after the San Bernadino incident.

We, as Jews, who have known the plight and pain and persecution of anti-Semitism denounce Islamophobia that seeks to taint the image of Islam by painting extremists and true followers of the Muslim faith as one.

We, as Jews, who have known xenophobia that caused hearts and doors and borders to be closed as we were turned away and our bodies were consumed by the fires of the Holocaust, call upon all of us to support those who teach, live, and seek peace in their quest to live in safety and sanctuary.

Discrimination on the basis of religion is un-American, unconstitutional, and dangerous. Jewish history has taught us that those who will discriminate on the basis of religion threaten the lives and well-being of countless human beings. As Jews, we know the heart of the stranger, and we will not stand idly by when members of another religious group are singled out as strangers."

It should be expected that through our congregations we will make a collective effort to bring our progressive, Reform Jewish values to bear in the community at large. We will be engaged on issues of local, national and global concern; we will participate in interfaith coalitions and activities; we will speak out on behalf of the vulnerable; and we will seek justice for all. This is who we are.

The EAIC meets once a month and plans events that will strengthen our communities' relationships and educate the greater Eden Area community on Islam. I am really excited about our scheduled Alameda Co. Food Bank event on March 6 from 1pm – 4pm where members from the EAIC will work side by side to help derail hunger. See the flier below.

You can learn more and register at the following address:

www.bit.ly/1QchJQa

Harriet Skelly, President
Congregation Shir Ami
president@congshirami.org

TOGETHER LET'S DERAIL
HUNGER IN OUR COMMUNITY

VOLUNTEER TO SORT FOOD

SUNDAY, MARCH 6 | 1 TO 4 P.M.
ALAMEDA COUNTY FOOD BANK | OAKLAND



LEARN MORE & REGISTER:
www.bit.ly/1QchJQa



SPONSORED BY THE
Eden Area Interfaith Council
EDENINTERFAITH.ORG

RABBINIC INTERNS' CLERGY COLUMN

This month's Rabbinic Interns' column is submitted by Student Rabbi Julie Bressler

I spent many weekend mornings of my childhood at food banks, anti-war rallies, book donation sorting events, and coat and sock drives. Looking back, I give my parents a lot of credit for being the ones who organized the food drives and Adopt-a-Family programs and made this focus on social action seem so normal to me growing up. Throughout those years, I knew helping others was important and I was involved in my Jewish community, but I did not really equate our efforts as being anything particularly Jewish. This week's Torah portion, Mishpatim, teaches us differently. After weeks of dramatic biblical narratives (slavery, plagues, Exodus from Egypt, 10 Commandments and more), we have entered a long stretch of the text teaching us biblical law. After finally achieving freedom, our ancestors needed to build a society. Among laws of societal organization and food practice, these chapters also specifically tie Judaism to social justice for all, especially vulnerable people like widows and orphans. One core value sticks out amongst them all:

וְגֵר לֹא תוֹנֶה וְלֹא תִלְחָצֶנּוּ כִּי גֵרִים הֵייתֶם בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם

V-ger lo toneh, vlo til-cha-tzei-nu: ki gerim hayiitem, b'erezt mitzrayim

“and you shall not mistreat a stranger, nor shall you oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt” (Exodus 22:20).

As Jews, we are not allowed to forget what it was like to be oppressed, to be an outsider, to suffer unspeakable torments. We remember and mention our redemption from slavery everyday in prayer, on nearly every holiday, and through reenactment on Pesach. Even though Egyptian slavery happened thousands of years ago, we Jews are meant to recall it as if we ourselves suffered. Some in our midst literally wear a reminder of slavery on their arms. When discussing this parsha with my friend Rabbi Bill Berk a few years ago, he remembered being approached by an older woman in his congregation after speaking about this portion who thanked him for the service and his sermon, and then lifted up her sleeve to reveal a tattooed number. “You know, she said, we talk so much about our biblical slavery, but I was a slave just

sixty years ago”. This reminds us that slavery isn't just our ancient history; it is our modern history as well.

Despite this incredibly influential narrative and memory, the text of Mishpatim still outlines the treatment of slaves. At first, I was frustrated by this seemingly bizarre contradiction. How could people who had just escaped from slavery in Egypt continue to own slaves? Shouldn't the negativity of their personal experiences make them want to completely eliminate this practice from their emerging society? I found some comfort in the explanation of Rabbi Irving Greenberg who stated “Each generation lives up to the Exodus principles to the extent possible in its generation and tries to advance a bit further, closer to the level of perfection. Any covenant that respects freedom must allow for process.”

This idea reminds me of the Hebrew verb “LaZooz”, meaning to move, but just a little. Eliminating slavery all at once would have been impossible 3300 years ago. Progress was achieved through small steps that moved the process of liberation forward. Various laws, including those that focused on protections for the slaves, anticipated the end goal without setting up unrealistic expectations. From forbidding a master to work a slave on Shabbat to disallowing the return of a refugee slave to his master, these changes were slow, yet steady.

Because of our history and our values, we say “never again.” We were the stranger and the slave and as soon as our ancestors had the authority and autonomy, they codified and elevated the treatment of the other, the stranger. We are commanded to raise up the weak and support the fallen. This propensity and commitment towards justice and action is in our DNA, our Torah and our messaging. This is why it should make us angry and compelled to act not only when this injustice happens far away but also under our noses – in our communities, in Israel and even in our synagogues. We at Congregation Shir Ami hear this call and act – from setting up interfaith rallies against violence to working at the food bank. As we move further into 2016, let this be a year where we continue to listen to the charge of our text to seek justice and pursue it. Find your cause, discover your passion and let this community support you in making the change you wish to pursue.

RABBINIC INTERNS' SCHEDULE

February 5-7, with Rabbi Bryan Zive

Fri., Feb. 5, 7:30 pm, Erev Shabbat Service. Join Student Rabbi Bryan Zive for an uplifting and spiritual Shabbat evening service full of prayer, song and a sermon that is sure to be a pre-Super Bowl treat!

Sat., Feb. 6, 10:00 am, Coffee and Commentaries: Enjoy your Shabbat morning with Student Rabbi Bryan Zive. Sip on your coffee or a spot of tea while we study the weekly Torah portion. (Nothing formal, just fun!) **Location for this month is Shir Ami- coffee will be provided!** (Prerequisite: Come ready for an engaging conversation!) This week's edition: *"Challenging our leaders"*

Sat., Feb. 6, 3:00 pm, Reform Judaism's Hot Button Issues: Our introduction to Reform Responsa (Rabbinic committee rulings) will include the most pressing, controversial and hot topic issues facing the Reform Movement. We'll use Responsa to help clarify some of your burning questions! This month's topic: *What does Reform Judaism say about Cremation and Burial practice?*

Feb. 26-28, Rabbi Julie Bressler will be attending and participating in the Annual Shir Ami Women's Retreat



Rabbinic Interns

Julie Bressler rabbi.julie@congshirami.org

Bryan Zive rabbi.bryan@congshirami.org



Shir Ami at unity rally, 2015



Shir Ami at anti-racism rally, 1992



SCHOOL NOTES

On January 10th, thirty three members of Shir Ami (18 children, 15 adults) went on a field trip to the Contemporary Jewish Museum in San Francisco. Many took BART and others drove. We all started in a big room by participating in a technology/art project. Kids chose various recycled materials and attached them in various ways. One part spun around. There were two lights. The project created reflections and movements that were interesting and beautiful. Then we broke up into two groups and toured the museum. It was a nice community building event.

Coming up in religious school are the topics King David, King Solomon and shabbat. We are starting a new chug: drama.

TOT TALK

Our next Tot Talk is on **Sunday, February 21, at 11:30 am**

Tot Talk is a free, monthly program for preschoolers and their families, providing an opportunity to connect with the Jewish community.

MEDITATION GROUP

The meditation group will meet **Wednesday, February 17, 7:30 pm**. No experience needed. Contact Julie Greenfield, meditation@congshirami.org

SISTERHOOD/ ROSH CHODESH, FEBRUARY

Next Rosh Chodesh will be held on **Tuesday, February 9**. We will bring in the month of Adar I. Stay

tuned for more details by email. sisterhood@congshirami.org.

SHIR AMI SISTERHOOD

For information on Sisterhood events and to be added to our email list, contact Jan Dombrower Chimpky: sisterhood@congshirami.org

2016 WOMEN'S RETREAT

February 26-28, 2016
(See flier in this Bulletin.)

Connect with your Jewish sisters and have a great getaway! Join us for this annual weekend of women's friendship, worship, creativity, music, and play. Rabbinic Intern Julie Bressler joins us to share her spiritual leadership. Newcomers are *very* welcome.

Contact Ruth Hartman, events@congshirami.org, if you have questions.



FEBRUARY 2016: YAHRZEIT & KADDISH

February 5, 2016 Yahrzeits

Susan Weinberg Andersson,	daughter of Rolf & Ingrid Weinberg, and former member of Shir Ami
Paul Bergel,	father of Marci Loss
Shellie Cohen,	active member of Shir Ami
Beatrice Dombrower,	mother of Jan Dombrower-Chimpky
Harold Dombrower	father of Jan Dombrower-Chimpky
Gene Gash,	Shir Ami organist for many years
Sherrie Kidwell,	Shir Ami member
Florence Lewis,	mother of Peter Lewis
Civia Rudman,	former member of Shir Ami
Jacob Small,	grandfather of Toni Schulberg
Fannie Heimowitz,	mother of Stan Heimowitz
Syd Kramer,	uncle of Jan Dombrower
Leon Meier,	long-time member and one of the founders of Shir Ami
Sy Moubert,	long-time former member of Shir Ami
Chris Partridge,	son of Ricki Weintraub, former member of Shir Ami
Rivka Rosenberg,	grandmother of Alex Druker
Clara Schneider,	mother of Marilyn Schneider, and grandmother of Irene, Sarah and Carolyn Gilchriese



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

Neil Joseph Kellman,	brother of Jessica Collett
Sonja Romero,	birth mother of Lori Knopf Santora
Karl Felperin,	member of Shir Ami
Florrie Finkle,	long time member of Shir Ami
Sara Belenki	mother of Arkady Massen
Irwin Martin Mitchell,	father of Helen Markus
Hillie Levine,	charter member and mainstay of Shir Ami for many years

More pictures from the Contemporary Jewish Museum



SHIR AMI 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION, MARCH 20

Shir Ami 50th Anniversary Celebration

It's hard to believe that 2016 has arrived. With that arrival, the pace and momentum of our event speeds up. We have only 2 months and a couple of weeks until our celebration! We are really feeling the event taking shape.

Our website is up and running! Please check us out on: shirami50.mydagsite.com

Tickets can be purchased for the brunch. You can reserve seats with your family and friends, too! We are printing a program and selling advertising to fund it. Please consider an ad or ask a local business to congratulate Shir Ami.

If for some reason you are not able to attend please think of making a contribution to commemorate our congregation's 50th Anniversary.

It is very exciting to see the results of all of our efforts. Thank you to all of our volunteers for making this possible!

More than anything please join us in the joy of our Congregation's celebration.

We look forward to seeing you there!

B'shalom
Melanie and Barbara

SHIR AMI ANNIVERSARY EVENT SPONSORSHIP



Congregation Shir Ami will be celebrating our 50th anniversary as a synagogue in Castro Valley on March 20th, 2016 at the Crow Canyon Country Club. There are several sponsorship opportunities. Your sponsorship will increase your visibility among the attendees and Shir Ami Community and invited guests. You will have special recognition in the event program and a mention on the Shir Ami website.

Yes! I would like to commit to being a sponsor at the 2016 50th Anniversary Event for Congregation Shir Ami at the following level:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1/8 page Ad - \$25 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1/2 page ad - \$90 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1/4 page Ad - \$50 | <input type="checkbox"/> Full page ad - \$150 |

Contact Person _____ Office Name _____

How would you like your sponsorship ad to read as? _____

Address: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Any artwork will need to be camera ready.

Enclosed is my check (payable to Congregation Shir Ami) in the amount of \$ _____

Deadline for ordering an ad is February 15, 2016. Contact events@congsirami.org with questions.

Return via mail to Congregation Shir Ami—

PO Box 2099, Castro Valley, CA 94546



You're Invited!

**Congregation Shir Ami's
50th Anniversary**

March 20, 2016 at 11:00 AM

**Crow Canyon Country Club
711 Silver Lake Drive Danville, CA 94526**

Adults – 14 and over: \$36

Kids – 6-13 years old: \$18

3-5 years old: \$9

under 3: no charge

**Please visit our website to make your
reservations: <http://shirami50.mydagsite.com>**

Questions? E-mail: 50th@congshirami.org

Join us for our 20th Annual

Shir Ami Women's Retreat: Celebrating Our Resilience

Friday, February 26 – Sunday, February 28, 2016

At the beautiful San Damiano Retreat Center in Danville

Connect with your Shir Ami sisters and have a great getaway! Join us for this annual weekend of women's friendship, worship, creativity, music, and play. Rabbinic Intern Julie Bressler joins us to share her spiritual leadership. As always, newcomers are *very* welcome.

The cost for the weekend is \$260.

Please register online at <http://goo.gl/forms/ySH5QfQ8f8> and mail your check, payable to Ruth Hartman, the same day. (Mailing address is at the online registration site.)

*Register ASAP, no later than **February 1.***

Questions?

Contact Ruth Hartman: 510-543-6902 or events@congshirami.org





Congregation Shir Ami *Cookbook*

Created by the 2015 Confirmation Class, this cookbook contains a collection of recipes from current members as well as featured favorites from the Congregation's 1969 edition cookbook .



The cookbook can be purchased for \$15 each, making it a great holiday gift! Fill-in, tear-off and mail-in the slip below to order now...

Yes! I would like to order ____ cookbook(s) at a price of \$15.00 each. Total amount enclosed: \$_____

Checks should be made payable to **Congregation Shir Ami**, and sent to: Congregation Shir Ami – Cookbook, P.O. Box 2099, Castro Valley, CA 94546

Questions? E-mail: treasurer@congshirami.org

מחזור לימים הנוראים

משכן הנפש

MISHKAN HANEFESH
Machzor for the Days of Awe



Congregation Shir Ami has purchased new High Holy Day prayer books. This new machzor, called **Mishkan HaNefesh**, has modern and gender-equality content, updated translations, rich commentary, and a beautiful selection of poetry. Mishkan HaNefesh provides an environment for those of all backgrounds to find meaning in the High Holy Days.

Each regular print 2-volume set can be sponsored for a donation of \$50; large print for \$75; and pulpit edition for \$100. Your donation is a great way to recognize important people and events in your life. **To sponsor a set of Mishkan HaNefesh prayer books, please fill out and send in the form below.** Questions? Contact mishkan@congshirami.org, or call Jon at 510-220-3345.

Make check payable to: **Congregation Shir Ami**. Send to: HHD Prayer Book, c/o
Congregation Shir Ami, P.O. Box 2099, Castro Valley, CA 94546

Enclosed is a check for \$_____ for _____ set(s) of Mishkan HaNefesh
(please include as many types & inscriptions as appropriate)

Name: _____

Set Type (Regular/Large Print/Pulpit/Music): _____

Inscription #1: _____

Inscription #2: _____
