



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 All events are held at Shir Ami, unless otherwise indicated.

Find up-to-the-minute event details at Shir Ami's website, www.congshirami.org/monthly-calendar

Thur.	Feb.	2	7:00	pm	Shir Ami Board Meeting, held at Shir Ami. Open to all members
Sun.	Feb.	5	9, 10:30	am	SCHOOL: Hebrew School, 9 am; Religious School, 10:30 am
Thur.	Feb.	9	7:00	pm	Shir Ami Finance Committee Meeting
Fri.	Feb.	10	7:30	pm	Shabbat Shira Service led by Rabbi Bryan Zive
Sat.	Feb.	11	3:00	pm	Tu BiSh'vat Seder, Rabbi Bryan Zive and Diana Zankowsky will lead this special seder, a celebration of the trees. See flier, page 5
Sun.	Feb.	12	9, 10:30	am	Hebrew School, 9 am; Religious School, 10:30 am. Tu BiSh'vat seder from 11 am-12:30 pm for all children and their families, including Tot Talk
Sun.	Feb.	12	10:30	am	Tot Talk will join the school children and their families at a Tu BiSh'vat seder, 11 am-12:30 pm
Sun.	Feb.	12	2:00	pm	Eden Area Interfaith Council, First Annual Meeting. RSVP HERE . Held at Eden United Church of Christ
Sun.	Feb.	19			NO SCHOOL
Sun.	Feb.	19	10:00	am	Lox and Bagel Brunch and Discussion: <i>An Insider's Perspective on Israel's Soldiers</i> . See flier, page 7. Information and reservations, events@congshirami.org
Fri.- Sun., February 24-26. Shir Ami's 2017 Annual Women's Retreat. See flier, page 6. Register by February 8!					
Sun.	Feb.	26			NO SCHOOL
Thur.	Mar.	2	7:00	pm	Shir Ami Board Meeting, held at Shir Ami. Open to all members
Fri.	Mar.	3	7:00	pm	Shabbat Service led by Rabbi Liora Alban
Sat.	Mar.	4	10:00	am	Bar Mitzvah and Reception of Rowan Lepkowsky at Eden UCC
Sun.	Mar.	5	9, 10:30	am	SCHOOL: Hebrew School, 9 am; Religious School, 10:30 am
Sun.	Mar.	5	10:30	am	Parent Meeting. Join other parents at our school meeting. Held from 10:30-11:30 am

WHAT IS TUBISH VAT?

ONE OF THE JOBS OF BULLETIN EDITOR IS MAINTAINING CONSISTENCY THROUGHOUT THE BULLETIN. THIS CAN BE DIFFICULT WHEN CHANGING HEBREW TO ENGLISH. SHIR AMI WILL CELEBRATE TU BISH'VAT, THE NEW YEAR OF THE TREES, WITH A SEDER ON SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11. IN THE CORRESPONDENCE I RECEIVED THIS MONTH FOR THE BULLETIN, FIVE DIFFERENT SPELLINGS WERE USED FOR THIS DAY WHICH

LITERALLY MEANS THE 15TH DAY OF THE JEWISH MONTH OF SH'VAT:

TU BISHEVAT, TU BISH'VAT, TU B'SH'VAT, TU BISHVAT AND TU B'SHEVAT. A GOOGLE SEARCH ALSO BROUGHT UP THE FOLLOWING QUERIES: "WHAT IS TU B SHEVAT?" AND "WHAT IS TUBISH VAT?"

IN THIS MONTH'S BULLETIN, I WILL USE THE SPELLING TU BISH'VAT. THE EXCEPTION TO THIS

COMMITTEE SPOTLIGHT: COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

Each month we use this column to spotlight one of the committees (or groups) that help make Shir Ami special. This month's column is written by Harriet Skelly, Communications Committee Chair

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

Communications Committee Chair, Harriet Skelly

The Shir Ami Communications Committee is responsible for communicating both internally to our members and externally to our larger community.

We communicate in various ways: via the Website, Face Book, Twitter, bulletin, email blasts, event reminders, announcements at services and advertisements in papers and online sites. Hopefully these methods of communication are integrated in a way that helps you know what is going on when.

One of the goals of the committee this year is to update and augment the Members Only area of the website. This area houses documents such as our Communications Guidelines, Bylaws, Rabbinic Intern Host Instructions, Oneg Instructions, our Members Roster, Archived Bulletins, Financials, and Reimbursement form. What else would you, as a member, like to see in this area? Please email Communications@CongShirAmi.org with your suggestions.

I want to acknowledge our Webmasters, Bruce Skelly and David Schulberg. They created our website using a template from the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ). David's main responsibility is updating and maintaining the calendars – a critical function which keeps Shir Ami operating smoothly. Bruce is mainly responsible for the back-end technical functions and for uploading content such as fliers, information in the accordion (lower right hand section of the home page), etc.

I want to thank our Bulletin editor for the last 7 years, Rose Firestone, for all of her work on our fabulous bulletin. Putting together this beautiful document is a LOT of work. Rose's last bulletin will be the June/July 2017 bulletin. Currently the bulletin comes from Rose as a PDF document and Bruce cuts and pastes the different sections of information into different areas of the website. We are considering omitting the step of putting everything together in one PDF and putting the information in the appropriate areas. However we **WANT** and **NEED** to know from our members what parts of the bulletin you use, what you would miss, etc. Please send an email to Communications@CongShirAmi.org with your opinions. Also, I invite you to take a minute and send Rose a thank you at Editor@CongShirAmi.org.

ARE CHANGES COMING TO THE SHIR AMI BULLETIN?

Harriet Skelly mentioned in the article above that I will be giving up my job of bulletin editor. I have enjoyed the job as editor-- it has kept me connected to the congregation and the many activities we do at Shir Ami-- and I would continue if I lived closer and was able to participate in Shir Ami activities.

Shir Ami is special. Thanks to you all for the wonderful place you have created. Shir Ami supports members' spiritual, emotional, intellectual and social growth while strengthening the greater community of which we are a part. Our world is a better place because of the bright light of Shir Ami.

Planning the transition to a new editor has caused us to examine carefully the role of the bulletin in the life of Shir Ami. Here are some thoughts that we are pondering:

- the bulletin is just **one** of the strategies Shir Ami uses to disseminate information. Email blasts, the website, social media, etc., are also very valuable

- some members never look at the bulletin, others read it from beginning to end as soon as they receive it. All seem to be getting the information they need
- I have been told that the event calendar on page 1 is the "most useful" part of the bulletin-- could the Shir Ami website calendar be a substitute for this event calendar?
- how many members regularly use the website?
- how many read the bulletin?
- can cows fly? (random thought I've been pondering)

Changes to the bulletin are coming. We are not sure what they may be or if they will be large or small. The Communications Committee continues to focus on quality communication, and as Harriet says above, they **WANT** and **NEED** to hear from you.

Email Communications@CongShirAmi.org

With love,
Rose Firestone, Bulletin Editor

RABBINIC INTERNS' CLERGY COLUMN

We have the honor of reading from *Parashat Yitro* throughout the month of February this year! It comes as no coincidence that, during this month, I also share the honor of serving our community through jury duty. When we receive our summons in the mail, so many of us think to ourselves, "I wonder how I can get out of this"? While I am not normally an exception, it has been over six years since I've last served and I became excited at this possibility of seeing our judicial system at work.

How do *Parashat Yitro* and jury duty compare? With a few small changes, Yitro, the Priest of Midian, suggests that Moses use a justice system similar to one that we know today. The model is built on a hierarchy according to the severity of the issues. Minor issues are dealt with by the lower court, and more serious issues are dealt with by Moses himself. Only at that point, after Moses has established a justice system, the people are given the Ten Commandments and accept it.

Why now? Why is the Torah given to Israel at this point, and why is it suddenly necessary?

Rabbi Uri Ayalon suggests the people of Israel, deciding to accept a fair and equitable human justice system, was the moment for which God had waited. From God's perspective, the Israelites can only receive Torah once they're worthy of it through self-sustainable basic values and principles set down by a justice system.

When presented with this new system, the Israelites

respond *na'aseh v'nishmah, we will do as we shall hear*". *Na'aseh*: we will do our part in upholding our own morals, and *Nish'mah*: we will hear God's suggestions of morality that provide the foundations that we will accept and institute today. In other words, once we know and understand the limits of our action, we can work together as a community to uphold it lawfully. This allows us to function as a moral society, one where we are responsible for one another's actions.

Our American democratic system is only as strong as its citizens allow. We decide when ideology turns into reality. Moses felt the burdens of making unilateral decisions and needed help from his community to sustain a just society. No one person makes **the** difference, but one person can make **a** difference, which is why I am so excited to serve on Jury Duty! It's my privilege to serve our community and uphold the responsibility of a system that makes our democracy so unique.

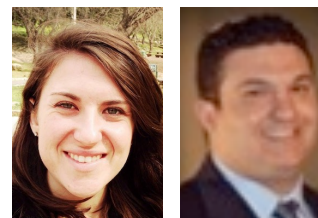
The next time you receive a jury summons in the mail, use it as a reminder for your communal responsibility and make a difference!

Student Rabbi Bryan Zive

RABBINIC INTERNS 2016-2017

Rabbi Liora Alban
rabbi.liora@congshirami.org

Rabbi Bryan Zive
rabbi.bryan@congshirami.org



Feb. 10-12 with Rabbi Bryan Zive

Fri., Feb. 10, 7:30 pm, Shabbat Shirah Service.

Here's your chance to be up close and personal with the Torah! Rabbi Bryan will lead an uplifting and celebratory *Shabbat* service observing our reading of "The Song of the Sea"! See the words of *Mi Chamocha* in the Torah, along with its unique layout in the scroll and celebrate our own freedom along with those of the Israelites!

Sat., Feb. 11, 3:00 pm: Tu BiSh'vat Seder.

Rabbi Bryan and Diana Zankowsky will lead a festive inter-generational Tu BiSh'vat Seder, filled with readings, a few songs and 15 types of fruits and nuts, representing the 4 different physical and spiritual worlds from Kabbalah as well as the 4 seasons! It'll be a lovely and scrumptious event!

Rabbi Bryan's events will be held at Shir Ami.

Feb. 24-26, Rabbi Liora Alban

Feb. 24-26, Rabbi Liora will join the women at Shir Ami's 21st Annual Women's Retreat. See page 7 for retreat information.

Rabbi Liora will be spending her February visit at the Sisterhood Retreat. She looks forward to getting to know the women of Shir Ami while praying and learning together. She hopes this will be a weekend of spiritual rejuvenation and looking towards the future.

EDEN AREA INTERFAITH COUNCIL

All members of Congregation Shir Ami are invited to the First Annual Meeting of the Eden Area Interfaith Council on Sunday, February 12, at 2 pm at Eden UCC. This will be an opportunity to witness and participate in the growing development of our Interfaith connections, with a short formal business meeting, some interfaith/cultural entertainment, and some time to schmooze! [RSVP HERE](#)

TOT TALK

Sunday, February 12, 10:30 am-- Special time! Special program! Tot Talk will join with the religious school children and their families to celebrate Tu BiSh'vat

Please RSVP your plans for attending this special Tot Talk.

ROSH CHODESH

About 14 members and guests of the Shir Ami Sisterhood met at Shir Ami on Thursday night, January 26, to welcome the new month of *Shevat* with lighting candles, reciting blessings for the new month, Torah readings, singing, and, of course, sharing food. The month of *Shevat* is identified in the *Mazzaroth* (constellations) with "D'Li", a vessel of water, and thus connected to Miriam, who is also known as a "vessel of water". Miriam's well was a porous boulder, said to have been created at twilight of the first Shabbat of Creation; it was the source of water that followed the Israelites through their wandering in the wilderness until Miriam's death. To further remember Miriam, the Shir Ami "sisters" crafted symbolic timbrels from bamboo hoops and lace cloth, and sang Miriam's song, among others, led by the voice and music of Debbie

Friedman. The event was led by Barbara-Ann Lewis, with Sara and Marlene Lamnin supplying the refreshments.

Interested in Sisterhood events?

Contact Jan Dombrower Chimpky at sisterhood@congshirami.org

SHIR AMI'S 21ST ANNUAL WOMEN'S RETREAT, FEB. 24-26

There is still time to register for Shir Ami Women's 21st Annual Retreat: *The Joy of Friendship*.

Due date for retreat registration is February 8.

Held at the beautiful San Damiano retreat Center in Danville

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 Liora Alban joins us to share her spiritual leadership. As always, newcomers are very welcome.

Please complete and submit [this form](#) and then put your check in the mail today. The cost is:
\$265 for a double room
\$300 for a single room
\$100 for Saturday only, 9 am - 10 pm with lunch and dinner

Make checks payable to Ruth Hartman and send to address on page. Email retreat@congshirami.org or call Ruth, [510-543-6902](tel:510-543-6902), with any questions.

BOOK FOR WOMEN'S RETREAT DISCUSSION

Dear Sisters,

Each year at our retreat, Diana Zankowsky picks a book and leads us in a lively discussion. Here (drum roll!!) is this year's book:

In the midst of a blizzard, in a two-family brownstone in Brooklyn, two babies are born minutes apart. The mothers are the wives of two brothers, sisters by marriage. The story is a multi-generational tale, starting with the births at home in a blizzard and covering more than two decades of growth and change in the friendship between the two women.

The book is [The Two-Family House](#) by Lynda Cohen Loigman, published in March 2016. It is available in hard-cover and paperback, in a Kindle version, through Audible and on Audiobook's audio CD. Used copies are available through Amazon and the Alameda County Library has copies for loan.

Photo from January 2017 Martin Luther King, Jr. Rally and March



TU BISH'VAT SEDER, SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 12

Tu B'Shevat Seder
Celebrate the Jewish Holiday of the Trees!



Saturday, February 11, 2017, 3:00 pm

led by Diana Zankowsky and Rabbinic Intern Bryan Zive

Come enjoy wine, juice, fruits and nuts for all seasons!

\$5 charge for persons 13 and over

No charge for youth under age 13

Please RSVP by February 5, 2017 by Evite, or by sending an email to events@congshirami.org

Send your check payable to Congregation Shir Ami to:

**Tu B'Shevat Seder, Congregation Shir Ami
4529 Malabar Ave., Castro Valley, CA 94546**



Shir Ami Bagel and Lox Brunch and Discussion:

*An Insider's Perspective on
Israel's Soldiers*

Sunday, February 19, 2017
10:00 am – 12 Noon
Congregation Shir Ami
4529 Malabar Ave,
Castro Valley, CA 94546

Donation: (Send checks to Congregation Shir Ami at
address above)

If prepaid by February 13th:

Members \$10, Non-members \$15

If paid at the door: \$15 per person



*Joining us will be Friends of the Israeli Defense Force
Executive Director Jonathan Bernstein and Naval Officer
and Captain in the Israeli Submarine Flotilla, Afif Faerman.
Afif will share his experience as an officer in the Israeli
Navy. Jonathan will describe how over 3,000 young men
and women from the diaspora currently serve in the IDF.*

Bagels, lox, sweets and beverages will be provided.

RSVP: e-mail: events@congshirami.org or by E-vite

Join us for our 21st Annual

Shir Ami Women's Retreat: The Joy of Friendship

Friday, February 24 – Sunday, February 26, 2017

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 Liora Alban joins us to share her spiritual leadership. As always, newcomers are *very* welcome.

The cost for the weekend is \$265/double room, \$290/single room, \$100/Saturday only (with lunch and dinner).

Please register online at <https://goo.gl/forms/nFFvK3vKpuA6gAts2> 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.**

**Date changed to
February 8!**

Questions?

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

FEBRUARY 2017 YAHRZEIT

February 10, 2017

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
Sherrie Kidwell,	Shir Ami member
Civia Rudman,	former member of Shir Ami
Jacob Small,	grandfather of Toni Schulberg
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
Ingrid Weinberg,	long-time member and one of the founders of Shir Ami



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

Les Golembo,	brother of Sharon Golembo
Marvin Schuelke,	father of Susan Spitzer
Sam Blank,	husband of Ann Blank and long time member of Shir Ami
Debra Blum,	mother of Jeff Blum
Travis Mahoney,	nephew of Wendy Crow
Loren Simpson,	husband of Sidney Simpson, prior member of Shir Ami, and cousin of Toni Schulberg

Photo from the Martin Luther King, Jr. Rally and March in Hayward, January 2017

