

# THE VIEW

A GUIDE TO OUR PROGRAMS,  
HOLIDAYS AND SPECIAL EVENTS

MARCH - JULY 2024



CONGREGATION  
SHOMREI TORAH  
שומרי תורה

## HONORING Rabbi George

Planning is underway for multiple events honoring and celebrating Rabbi George's many contributions and years of service to Shomrei Torah and the broader community. Mark your calendars to join fellow congregants at the following activities:



**April 7, 3:00 PM:** Members of the Legacy Circle are invited to an afternoon reception, 3-5 PM in Santa Rosa. The event will include a short program honoring Rabbi George and his legacy of *tikkum olam* and *tzedakah*. Legacy Circle members will receive an invitation in the mail and by email.

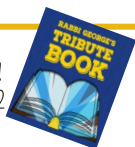


**May 19, 6:00 PM:** Come celebrate Rabbi George and Shomrei Torah's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary at the *Simcha, Simcha* event! The evening fundraiser (6-10 PM) will feature dinner, live music, dancing, and a few special auction items, and will take place at Sonoma County's newest event venue, The Backdrop.

Sponsorship opportunities are available now - providing businesses, organizations, chavurahs, and individuals the chance to show your support for Shomrei Torah and special gratitude to Rabbi George. Visit [www.cstsr.org/sponsorship](http://www.cstsr.org/sponsorship) for information.

Tickets for the celebratory event will go on sale on April 1st and will include opportunities to purchase a table for 10 (\$1,500) or individual seats (\$118 for members and \$180 for nonmembers). Watch your mail for your invitation, and don't miss this once-in-a-lifetime event.

Submit your entry for Rabbi George's Tribute Book!  
Read more on page 2



**May 24, 6:15 PM:** All are welcome to join this fun-filled STaRS Family Shabbat dinner and program with Rabbi George and Cantorial Soloist Erica Wisner.

The kindergartners will be consecrated, this year's B'Mitzvah class will be recognized, and STaRS will honor Rabbi George. \$18 members, \$22 non-members, kids 13 and under free.



**June 14, 6:15 PM:** Join us for a special Shabbat service entirely composed by CST member Nolan Gasser in honor of Rabbi George. With Nolan at the piano, Cantorial Soloist Erica Wisner will be joined by two guest vocalists plus the Shomrei Shira choir.

Come for a musical Shabbat treat and stay for a delicious Oneg following the service. Visit [www.nolangasser.com/](http://www.nolangasser.com/) for more information about Nolan. Free. Please register.



**June 28, 6:15 PM:** Rabbi George's final Shabbat service. Please join us for Shabbat Shalom & L'hitraot (until we see each other again). We will be sending him off with his Tribute Book. Free. Please register.

## FROM GEORGE GITTLEMAN



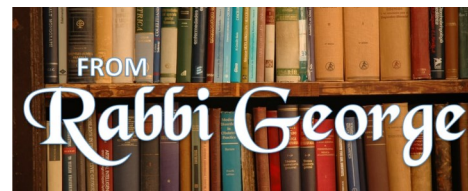
As I write this, a transition is underway: spring is coming! For the Jewish world, this is a time of celebration and renewal. I hope you'll join us for our "Classic Rock" Purim Schpiel this year; so much fun not to mention the Hamen-tashen! You also won't want to miss our community Seder where we feast on matzah, remember the value-laden story of our exodus from Egypt and our journey towards freedom which we are still on today. Throughout the season there is always something worthwhile to engage in like weekly meditation,

Torah study, monthly Tisches and outstanding cultural programs.

This is a time of transition for our synagogue community as well. This is my last spring with you as your rabbi. After I retire in June, I will step back from Shomrei Torah for a few years, to give you time to get to know your interim rabbi and then my successor, before returning as Rabbi Emeritus and an enthusiastic member of the CST community! I am looking forward to a number of opportunities in the next few months when we can gather to celebrate what we have built together. Look for details about these special events throughout this edition of the VIEW.

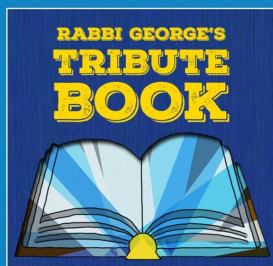
Looking over this View and all we have to offer, I am filled with gratitude to all of those who create the activities that are listed here. That includes the dedicated members of our Board of Directors, the many individuals who commit themselves to the work of our committees, and our small, but mighty, administrative team. Together we bring to life a Jewish community that has been a

wonderful home to my family and me for over twenty-seven years. I am deeply appreciative: thank you! It means a lot to me to know that the community we've created will continue to thrive into a bright future.



Rabbi George's Sermons:  
[www.cstsr.org/rabbi\\_george](http://www.cstsr.org/rabbi_george)

Rabbi George's Blog:  
[www.cstsr.org/rabbi-george-blog](http://www.cstsr.org/rabbi-george-blog)



# 28 Years of memories

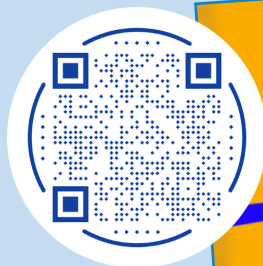
Submission Deadline  
**MAY 19th!**

Share your memories, good wishes, and fond farewells with Rabbi George in this Tribute Book that will be presented at his last Shabbat service on Friday, June 28th.

### Pricing and Details:

[www.cstsr.org/form/tribute-book.html](http://www.cstsr.org/form/tribute-book.html)

Don't want to submit online? Visit or call Shomrei Torah during office hours for pre-cut paper in any of the tribute sizes, 707-578-5519, M-F 9am-1pm, or during CST events.



Our chavurah wishes you the most relaxing retirement and thanks you for your many years of dedication to our community and our lives.

CHAVURAH SHOMEI TORAH

The Rothstein Family thanks Rabbi George for his dedication and warmth all these years! May your retirement bring you many... birds!



SUBMIT YOURS  
TODAY!



## RABBINIC TRANSITION UPDATE

### Application process underway for rabbi search committee

This Spring, Congregation Shomrei Torah's Board of Directors (and many other hard-working volunteers) are actively preparing for Rabbi George's June 2024 retirement and the transition to new rabbinical leadership – including developing a process for selection of a “settled” (long-term) rabbi.

Please read on for information about the interim rabbi selection; how you can participate in the search for our settled rabbi; and a timeline of key activities.

### Interim Rabbi

Since last Fall, a search committee co-chaired by Board President Eli Weinzveg and Board Secretary Judith Richlin-Klonsky, and including Board members Sharon Bauman, Erica Magers, and Jillian Navarro (z”l), have been reviewing resumes and interviewing candidates to serve as CST's interim rabbi. They expect to introduce the one-year interim rabbi to the congregation by early Spring.

### Search and Selection Committee for Shomrei Torah's Settled Rabbi

Based on members' expression of interest statements, the Board of Directors will be selecting a committee of 10-12 individuals who represent the breadth of the CST community, looking for a dynamic mix of different generations, length of membership, and types of synagogue involvement and leadership.

The rabbinic recruitment and selection process will extend from July 2024 through June 2025, and is anticipated to include multiple in-person meetings (monthly at a minimum), thorough review of applicant packets, several

online and in-person interviews and follow-up discussion. Committee members should be prepared to spend 10-15 hours a month on the process.

The committee will operate within the general framework that has been set out by the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR), to assure a thorough and fair selection process. Among other things, participants must commit to absolute confidentiality regarding the applicants and the deliberations of the committee.

Please note that serving on the committee is not the only way to have input into rabbinic transition at Congregation Shomrei Torah.

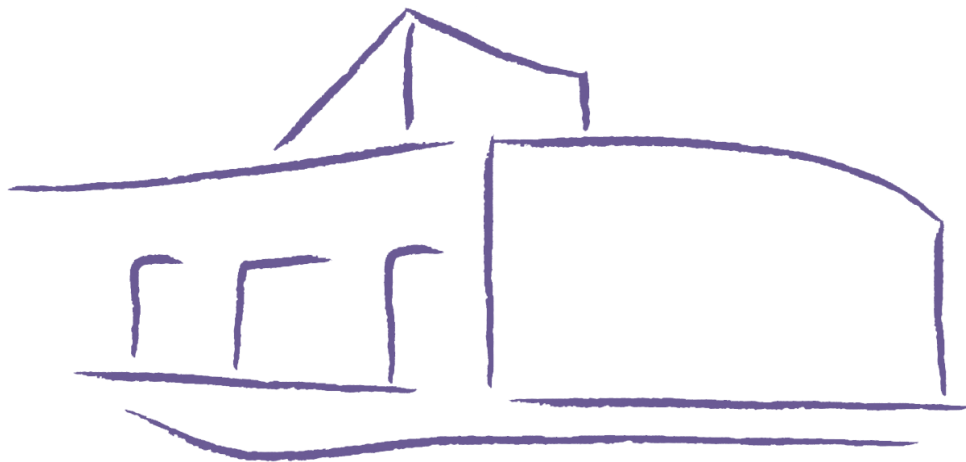
Your efforts to assist in preparing events saying “good-bye” to Rabbi George are welcome. All members will be invited to attend programming designed to introduce finalist candidates to the congregation. And you can join in by answering the call to help plan events to welcome the new long-term rabbi.

*If you are interested in participating on the Rabbinic Search and Selection Committee, complete the application on the Transition webpage or contact the office for a paper form.*

*Applications are due by 5PM, March 15. Selection of the committee will be made by late April.*

### Timeline

- ◇ **March 15, 2024, 5:00 PM:** Applications expressing interest in serving on the Rabbi Search and Selection Committee are due. Selection of committee members is expected to be completed by late April.
- ◇ **April – June 2024:** Multiple ‘goodbye’ events celebrating Rabbi George's almost 30 years of services to CST. See the transition webpage for details. Contact the office if you would like to assist with any events.
- ◇ **July 1, 2024:** Expected start date of the interim rabbi, who will serve Congregation Shomrei Torah for one year while an in-depth search is underway for our settled rabbi.
- ◇ **July 2024-June 2025:** Rabbinic recruitment and selection process for our settled rabbi.
- ◇ **January 2025-June 2025:** Planning and assisting with welcoming events for our new rabbi!



Regular updates can be found at [www.cstsr.org/rabbinic-transition-updates](http://www.cstsr.org/rabbinic-transition-updates)



**JOIN US ON THE SECOND FRIDAY  
OF EACH MONTH AT 6:15PM**

**\$18 CST members  
\$22 non-members  
Kids 13 & under free**

**Evening Schedule**

6:15 – 6:45 PM – Shabbat Blessings & Meal  
6:45 – 7:10 PM – Mi Shebeirach & Kaddish  
7:15 – 8:15 PM – Speaker Presentation

Reserve your seat: [www.cstsr.org/rabbis\\_tisch](http://www.cstsr.org/rabbis_tisch)

**March 29th**



**Rabbi Michael Robinson Memorial  
Tisch with Mike McGuire**

Senator Mike McGuire is looking forward to having an interactive conversation about social justice and the important work being done in the Golden State.

He is a third generation Northern Californian whose family farmed prunes and grapes in the Alexander Valley of Sonoma County for nearly a half century. He served on his local school board, city council, and board of supervisors before being elected to the State Senate.

**April 12th**



**With Marvin K. White from GLIDE**

Marvin K. White is the Minister of Celebration at Glide Memorial Church in San Francisco. Marvin is a writer, artist, preacher and public theologian, articulating a vision for social, prophetic and creative justice. Stay tuned in your weekly email for updates on Marvin's talk.

**May 10th**



**Music of the Moment: Exploring Israeli  
Musical Responses to October 7th**

Yom Haatzmaut is a time to recognize the creation of the state of Israel through celebration and song. Often, artistic responses to a traumatic event are created after a considerable period of reflection and collective processing by the impacted group. In the case of the war in Israel, musical responses are happening in real-time.

Artists in the genres of pop culture, avant-garde music, and protest music are responding to the war and the hostage situation with a sense of urgency as they create out of their own experience.

Cantorial Soloist Erica Wisner will join Cantor Shapiro for this multimedia program that will bring examples of music related to Israel's independence and will also explore differing musical responses to the war, such as nationalism, hope, revenge, and solidarity.

**No Tisch in June or July**

Our monthly Rabbi's Tisch (table) is in lieu of regular Friday night Shabbat service. We start with Kiddush, enjoy a catered communal dinner, then gather around a tisch for Shabbat blessings, Kaddish, and the special evening program.







### Taking a long view.

I am high as I write this. 35,000 feet high, to be exact! It is the end of January, and I am on a plane home after four days in Washington, D.C., with a delegation of youth from Congregation Shomrei Torah attending the L'Taken Seminar. L'Taken

is a teen social justice and educational leadership program of the Religious Action Center (RAC) of the Union for Reform Judaism. It exposes students to a variety of major public policy issues, bringing Jewish values to bear on important social problems.

Eleven CST youths participated in L'Taken this year and selected three issues to focus on: environmental racism, gun control, and antisemitism. If you missed their presentations, you can hear their impactful speeches by reviewing the recording of the February Rabbi's Tisch.

During our weekend, a legislative staff member said something that gave me a new perspective. They said, "80% of our work is useless. We are here for the 20% that makes a real difference and to play the long game."

What did he mean by "long game?" One past example from the RAC is when the organization opened its headquarters to civil rights leaders such as Martin Luther King Jr., enabling them to have a centralized location in D.C. in their efforts to influence policy, protest, and organize. This played a role in the long-term success of the movement.

And now the RAC looks to the future by welcoming over 1500 youth annually to participate in the lobbying process for critical issues like First Amendment rights, economic justice, and human rights. The young people they train today can have an important influence on the future. At least one con-

gressional staff member is a graduate of the L'taken program. But even those who do not become politically active can be effective change agents in their workplaces and communities.

Congregation Shomrei Torah is no stranger to taking the long view. The L'Taken trip is partially subsidized by the Rabbi Michael Robinson Memorial Fund, a fund generously created years ago by John Weinstein and Heidi Stewart, and supported by the contributions of many members. The Rabbi Michael Robinson Memorial Fund is just one of many examples of the CST past inspiring the present and future. From the CST founders who met in Room 7 at Christ Church United Methodist to imagine and then create our current synagogue home, to the legacy of Rabbi Michael Robinson (z"l), to all of you who have, across the decades, created and supported Shomrei Torah programming, it is the long view that got us to where we are today.

Thinking about "the long game" changed my view. I will continue to concentrate on the everyday demands of synagogue life, but now I also recognize the long arc of Shomrei Torah history. As we look to the months ahead, we will celebrate our 50th anniversary and say goodbye to Rabbi George. I encourage you to explore the many opportunities described in these pages to engage this spring.

I hope we take a lesson from the CST youth who attended the L'Taken Seminar this past winter and from the founders of Congregation Shomrei Torah. May our actions be bold, and the decisions we make today sustain our synagogue for us in the present and create the way forward for the future of our community for generations to come.



### Who can sponsor an Oneg?

YOU! Individuals, committees, chavurahs, B'Mitzvah cohorts, etc!

### Why sponsor an Oneg?

In honor of a milestone, the birth of a child, anniversary, or just because. It is a great way to contribute back to the community and to support the work of our Oneg committee.

[www.cstsr.org/form/oneg](http://www.cstsr.org/form/oneg)

### What does sponsoring an Oneg entail?

You can shop for and bring your own refreshments on the Friday of your Oneg OR you can make a one-time donation of \$108, and we will shop for you!

### How do I sponsor an Oneg?

Complete the Oneg Sponsorship Form, and a member of our staff will connect with you to begin planning.

FROM **ERICA WISNER**  
CANTORIAL SOLOIST & B'MITZVAH COORDINATOR



I don't know about you, but it's so easy for me to get stuck in my head. How often do I drive somewhere and arrive at my destination only to realize I can't recall what I saw along the drive? My eyes were open, I saw enough to navigate safely, but my mind was somewhere else. I made myself a promise years ago that upon walking from my car into the synagogue, I would never take the

stunning view for granted. I wanted to look at it and truly see it. That mindfulness allows me to step out of my head and allows my heart to be at the forefront. Congregation Shomrei Torah's vista is a blessing. How incredible to look out at the mountains and be reminded that there is something greater at play than the thoughts running through my head! Something greater of which I am just one small part. Something greater to be grateful for. Along with a few deep breaths, while taking in the view, I re-center and chant a bit of Psalm 121 – Esa Einai:

אֶשָּׂא עֵינַי אֶל־הַהָרִים מֵאֵין יָבֵא עֲזָרִי: אֶזְרִי מִצֵּם יְהוָה עֲשֵׂה שְׂמִיךְ וְאָרֶץ:

Esa einai el heharim mei-ayin yavo ezri. Ezri mei-im Adonai, oseh shamayim va-aretz.

I will lift up my eyes to the mountains, from where does my help come from?  
My help comes from Adonai, who made heaven and earth.

I live with to-do lists, worries, and stresses; I imagine you do too. These are very real things that won't disappear with moments of mindfulness. However, I find there are tremendous benefits in finding small practices that remind me to be present and open my eyes and my heart. As Rav Ferris Bueller reminds us: "Life moves pretty fast. If you don't stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it."



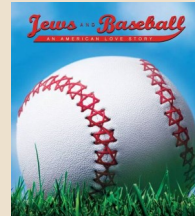
**Security  
Workshop**

**Security Workshop for  
CST Members**

Tuesday, March 12, 7:00 PM

Are you curious about our security protocols and the

work of our dedicated security committee members? The security committee invites congregants to attend the upcoming security workshop. Aspects of our Emergency Action Plan will be covered as well as a walking tour of our facility that highlights aspects of our security infrastructure. Due to the nature of this workshop, no recordings can be taken or distributed. Offered in person only to CST members. Registration required.



**"Jews & Baseball": An Afternoon at the Movies**

Sunday, March 24, 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM

It's time for opening day, so come on out to the ball game, munch on some peanuts and Cracker Jacks, and enjoy this lively and thorough account of Jewish America's love affair with baseball. "Jews and Baseball: An American Love Story" traces Jewish involvement in the history of the sport from the game's earliest days.

Written by Pulitzer Prize winner Ira Berkow and narrated by Dustin Hoffman, the film brings to life dramatic moments in this history and demonstrates how Jews shaped baseball and baseball shaped them. Offered in person only. No charge. Please register to attend.



**Aleph Bet for Beginners**

10 Thursdays at 7:00 PM beginning April 4.

No cost for members, \$180 non-members.

In this 10 session course, learn the fundamental building blocks for reading Hebrew and some fundamental Jewish concepts. Taught by Rabbi Cheryl Rosenstein.



**Rabbi George at GLIDE**

Sunday, April 28, 11:00 AM

Please join us at GLIDE Memorial Church in San Francisco, 330 Ellis Street, San Francisco, CA 94102, as Rabbi George Gittleman will be the honored guest giving the sermon at the Sunday Celebration. This will be a very rare opportunity to hear our own Rabbi preach along with the famous GLIDE Ensemble choir and the Change band.

GLIDE is a nationally recognized center for social justice, dedicated to fighting systemic injustices, creating pathways out of poverty and crisis and transforming lives.





## The Jewish Meditation Center Congregation Shomrei Torah

Jewish mindfulness connects meditation to the wisdom of our tradition and the seasons of the Jewish calendar. No previous experience or knowledge is necessary to take part.

By practicing together, we enhance our ability to listen to the voice within and expand our sense of interconnectedness.



**Rabbi George**, leader of the Shomrei Torah community for more than 25 years, a graduate of the Institute for Jewish Spirituality's Jewish Mindfulness Meditation Teacher Training Program. Over the last two decades, he has developed Buddhist and Jewish meditative practices.



**Alissa Hirshfeld, M.A.**, a licensed psychotherapist and certified Jewish Spiritual Director, has been practicing meditation for over 30 years; has studied with many esteemed Jewish and Buddhist meditation teachers; and has taught mindfulness meditation and yoga in secular, religious, and healing settings.

## MEDITATION RETREAT

### Freedom is an Open Heart

Sun, March 31, 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

*\$12 members, \$18 non-members.*

Join Rabbi George and Alissa Hirshfeld for a mini retreat in preparation for Pesach. Slavery is not just a physical state but also a state of mind. Mind and heart are linked; when we suffer from negative thoughts about ourselves and others our hearts harden and we become slaves to emotions like fear, anger, resentment, and even hate. Mindfulness practice brings awareness to the causes of suffering, opening us to compassion for self and others. In that big, heart opening space, freedom awaits.

No previous experience is necessary.

## Weekly Meditation

### Tuesdays

Join us by Zoom or Live Stream three Tuesdays per month, 5:30-6:30 PM. Conducted by Rabbi George Gittleman or Alissa Hirshfeld, meetings include teaching, meditation instruction, and periods of silence.

#### Tuesday Sessions

March 12, 19, 26  
April 9, 16, 30  
May 14, 21, 28  
June & July - TBD

### Thursdays

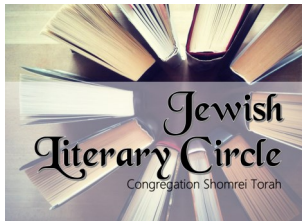
Join us by Zoom every Thursday morning from 7:30-8:00 AM. These brief meditation sessions are facilitated by Lisa Ehrlich or another member of the Creating Sacred Space community. It's an opportunity to start the day from a place of peace and reflection and deepen our practice together.

All are welcome, whether you are new to meditation or an experienced practitioner looking to deepen your practice. Visit the meditation page for dates, to view past sessions and access meditation resources. Contact the office to be added to our weekly email reminder list.

[www.cstsr.org/meditation.html](http://www.cstsr.org/meditation.html)

*No previous experience or knowledge is necessary.*

## INTEREST GROUPS



### Jewish Literary Circle

Third Thursday of the month at 4:30 PM

Please join us in person at CST or on Zoom. The Zoom link is available in our weekly CST Connect email, or by request.

Free, all are welcome. Our focus is Jewish literature and other published materials. Through lively discussions, participants enjoy each other's insights. If you have questions about the group or are interested in joining please contact the office.

#### Upcoming Topics:

- **March 21:** Boston Girl by Anita Diamant.
- **April 18:** Metamorphosis and Other Short Stories by Franz Kafka, translated by Michael Hofmann.
- **May 16 and June 20** topic to be announced soon.



### Women's Groups at CST

Women's groups are a great way to connect with other members. Please contact the office for more information and to get involved.

**Women's Dinner Groups** - The original dinner group, formed in 2018, continues to meet at different restaurants each month. Two additional groups have formed since then. In each of the groups, the members started as strangers and, over time, have become treasured friends.

**Knitting & Crocheting Group** - Second and last Mondays of the month from 1:00 to 3:00 PM.

**Book Club** - First Tuesday of the month, 2:05 PM - 4:00 PM. March 5, April 2, May 7, June 4, July 2.



### To care and to be cared for are two of the greatest gifts in life.

The Caring Committee serves our Shomrei Torah community by reaching out to our members who are isolated, ill, recovering from surgery, or recently hospitalized.

We make friendly phone calls and provide meals or organize a Meal Train. We always welcome new committee members, but you don't need to become a committee member to participate in this mitzvah. Contact the CST office to get involved.



A chavurah is a small social group of like-minded members who gather for the purpose of sharing communal experiences such as lifecycle events and/or celebrating Shabbat and holidays. It's a great way to

make new friends, have fun, grow closer, and strengthen the connection with other CST members.

#### Learn more about Chavurahs:

[www.cstsr.org/chavurah-social-groups](http://www.cstsr.org/chavurah-social-groups)



### Torah Study

Saturday Mornings at 8:45 AM

CST's Torah Study is a lively discussion of the week's Torah portion, led by Rabbi George or a temple member. Participants represent

a range of knowledge and perspectives. Newcomers are welcome, whether you've read any Torah or know Hebrew. We invite you to study with us.

### Torah Readers & Darshanim Needed!

Guardians of Torah and Torah wrestlers: we want you! CST has a longstanding tradition of members chanting Torah and giving the drash (sermon) at Saturday morning services. To sustain this custom, we need more volunteers for this mitzvah. If you are interested, fill out this brief form:

[www.cstsr.org/form/torah-readers](http://www.cstsr.org/form/torah-readers)



### What's Cooking at CST?

No cost for members, \$18 non-members. Space is limited, register early!

Thursday, March 28, 7-8:30 PM

Mujadara (Lentils and Rice with Caramelized Onions) taught by Jed Meshulam, a new member of CST, and a current student in culinary school at SRJC.

Jed provided a wonderful dish for Break The Fast and is honored to offer this cooking class for you.

Thursday, April 18, 7-8:30 PM

Passover Desserts taught by Ronnie Campagna. Tired of your "go-to" Passover desserts? Looking for some variety for Passover (and for gluten-free family members and friends)? In this demonstration class, you will learn new recipes and tips for a variety of Passover sweets that are sure to impress your guests.



## INTEREST GROUPS



### 2024 MEN'S RETREAT APRIL 14

**together. pray. eat. connect.**

**date:** sunday, april 14

**time:** 9:00 am – 4:00 pm

**location:** TBD, convenient to downtown santa rosa

**cost:** \$25 includes welcome snacks and lunch

this will be meaningful time to celebrate our relationship with Rabbi George and form new and deeper relationships with each other.



**RSVP BY MONDAY, APRIL 1**

**how to register?**

go to CST website below or scan QR Code  
[www.cstsr.org/event/mens-retreat.html](http://www.cstsr.org/event/mens-retreat.html)

### Women's Retreat is back & better than ever!

November 15, 16, and 17, 2024



This year's retreat will be a time for camaraderie, relaxation, and shared experiences with our wonderful Shomrei women! Taking place at the beautiful new lodge at Camp Newman in Santa Rosa.

Cost: \$400 per member (double-occupancy room), meals included. Space is limited. Be on the lookout for more information and registration opens soon.

Let us know you're interested by visiting  
[www.cstsr.org/event/womens-retreat-2024.html](http://www.cstsr.org/event/womens-retreat-2024.html)



### Bereavement Lunch

#### Bereavement Lunch

Sunday, March 3, 12:30 PM

*There is comfort in community.*

The Caring Committee invites those who have lost loved ones in the past few years to attend a special gathering. Rabbi George will be facilitating a conversation about grief. Lunch will be served. In person only. Free. Please register.



The Legacy Circle was created in 2011 and has over 100 members who have chosen to remember Shomrei Torah in their will and estate planning as a named beneficiary. Others have created an "endowment" to support a particular program.

The Mission of the Legacy Circle is to provide a philanthropic environment that enables members to insure the future of Shomrei Torah in a format that is supportive of both the areas of interest of the donor and the anticipated needs of our Reform Jewish community.

As we look forward to many more years of service to the Jewish community of Santa Rosa and Sonoma County, your Legacy gift will play a large part in insuring that our congregation and its programming are strong and vibrant.

Learn more about the Legacy Circle:  
[www.cstsr.org/legacy\\_circle](http://www.cstsr.org/legacy_circle)



Visit us on Facebook [www.facebook.com/ongregationShomreiTorahSantaRosa](https://www.facebook.com/ongregationShomreiTorahSantaRosa)

# SHOMREI TORAH CULTURAL COMMITTEE PRESENTS

## A Season of Eclectic Music and Art

Register to attend at [www.cstsr.org/cultural-events](http://www.cstsr.org/cultural-events)



### Shomrei Torah Art Show

The Shomrei Torah Cultural Committee invites you to come and view the art produced by our very own Shomrei Torah congregants. There will be 30 artists exhibiting their works. You will be amazed by the talent and quality of the artists, their creativity and the art at

Shomrei Torah. There will be lovely refreshments, both sweet and savory for your enjoyment. Art will be for sale.

### Four Dates to Choose From!

#### Opening & Artist Reception

Sunday, March 17 | 1:00 - 5:00 PM

#### Open Viewings

Monday, March 18 | 4:00 - 7:00 PM

Tuesday, March 19 | 4:00 - 7:00 PM

Wednesday, March 20 | 4:00 - 6:00 PM



### An Evening of Music with Marni & Jonathan Davis

Saturday, April 6, 7:00 PM

Jazz, Standards and Show Tunes by Loesser and Frishberg with vocalist Marni Davis and Piano Trio led by Pianist Jonathan Davis.

Shomrei Torah is blessed with people who are willing to share their talent with our congregation. Please join the Cultural Committee in welcoming to the bima Shomrei Torah members vocalist Marni Davis and pianist Jonathan Davis. They will be performing songs by composer/lyricist Frank Loesser and by jazz pianist and songwriter Dave Frishberg.

Loesser was a Pulitzer Prize-winner, who also received a Tony Award for *Guys and Dolls* and an Academy Award for best song, "Baby, It's Cold Outside".

Frishberg was an American jazz pianist, vocalist and songwriter whose songs have been performed by Rosemary Clooney, Mel Tormé, and many others. He wrote the song "I'm Just a Bill" for the ABC Schoolhouse Rock! Series.



### Save the Date for our upcoming Annual Meeting

Sunday, June 23, 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM

The Annual Meeting is an important opportunity for members to learn more about the operations of Shomrei Torah, engage in conversations, vote for new Board of Directors and approve the annual budget. The Annual Meeting is for members only. Lunch will be served. Registration required.



The Social Action Committee is hard at work putting on programs and events to educate and inform. As we head into this important political year, we will again be spearheading a postcard campaign for the congregation with Reclaim the Vote. It will be focused on getting out the vote throughout the country.

We also are working on local issues and hope to bring forward educational forums and opportunities to canvas door to door for non-partisan issues. We have other ideas in place as well; please stay tuned!



# Holidays at CST

SATURDAY, MARCH 23, 6:15 PM



## A CLASSIC ROCK PURIM

### Purim Spiel

Saturday, March 23, 6:15 PM

Get ready for the most rockin' Purim Spiel in town! Featuring songs by The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, Queen, Elton John, Allman Brothers Band, Grateful Dead and more! Free. Please register.



### Passover Seder

April 23, 6:15 PM

\$22 members,  
\$40 non-members.

*What plagues you? What liberates you?* Passover at Shomrei Torah is more than the retelling of the ancient story of the Exodus; our interactive community Seder also honors our ongoing struggle for freedom, justice and equality. A delicious Passover meal will be served.



**Rosh Hashanah** Begins October 2  
**Yom Kippur** Begins October 11

## Remember Us... Then & Now

*The B'nai Mitzvah Project  
Brings to our hearts and minds,  
the memory of children lost during The Holocaust.*



Join us for Sonoma County's  
Annual Holocaust  
Commemoration

Remembering Victims of the  
Holocaust and Genocide  
Worldwide

Sunday, May 5th 2-3:30  
Friedman Center



### Yom Hashoah Commemoration

Sunday, May 5, 2:00 PM

Friedman Center, Santa Rosa.

Featuring Geshar Calmenson and the work of the Remember Us project, the B'nai Mitzvah Project that brings to our hearts and minds the memory of children lost during the Holocaust. Registration required for in person and Zoom attendance. Sponsored by Jewish Community Center of Sonoma County, Sonoma County synagogues, The Alliance for the Study of the Holocaust and Genocide, and other organizations.



### Tikkun Leil Shavuot

Tuesday, June 11, 6:00-10:00 PM

Almost 500 years ago, the mystics of Safed began a new ritual as part of their Shavuot celebration – they stayed up the night of Shavuot and studied Torah, symbolically

recreating the revelation on Mt. Sinai, which Shavuot commemorates.

Stay tuned in your weekly CST Connect emails for more information and registration for this event.



Greetings CST *Kehillah* (Community),

As we approach the halfway mark for the school year, I think it's important to reflect on all of the hard work and accomplishments of our students. They have been learning the Hebrew language, building their understanding and embodiment of Jewish values, and giving back to their community through *Chesed* (Acts of Loving Kindness).

One important question I ask myself often is - how can the modern Religious School make itself relevant to the youth of today? How do we marry ancient wisdom and 21st century trends? And time and time again our students show up when they feel like they can make a difference to their world. With everything going on in the news it can seem like there is no way to help make things better and we can feel a sense of hopelessness. This can translate into cynicism and negativity towards the positive or the spiritual.

But when students get a chance to see that their individual efforts can yield a real and impactful result - there's a shift. Suddenly, they want even more participation. This has shown itself in two major ways this year. First, we held a community service day for the new JCC SoCo Preschool where we helped to redo their outdoor space and help fix things around campus that needed some love. After this event, the kids asked where we were going to "be helpers" next.

The second way I've seen this is when Executive Director Katie Evenbeck and I took eleven teens to the L'Taken Seminar hosted in Washington D.C.

each year by the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ). After our busy day of lobbying and reading speeches to our representatives, the teens were sad that they couldn't keep lobbying because it was so much fun to be heard by people that matter.

And in this spirit we will continue our year focusing on the things that matter to our students - the ability to apply Jewish values into action and relate the texts they read in class to their personal lives. As all of the teachers guide their students in their learning we are thrilled that they continue to show up with their whole hearts when we give them the chance to engage in meaningful ways.

For all of the ways you can get involved and engaged with STaRs and our mission to embody Jewish values, please visit the Religious School page on our website. Because for every person who encourages our students on this path of *Tikkun Olam* (repairing the world), they will be stronger in their abilities to learn and hold meaning in an ever-changing world.

*L'Shalom,*  
--Lara Brown

# Shabbat ShaBoogie

Fridays from 5:45 PM - 6:15 PM  
March 22 | April 26 | May 24

A special pre-Shabbat Service for preschool children ages 0-5 and their families. No registration needed.

# Mazel Tov

## B'Mitzvah Celebrations

Please contact the  
office for this  
information.





## Kehillah Sonoma County Teens 9th - 12th Grade

*A meeting space for Jewish connection  
and conversation.*

Celebrating over three decades of  
Jewish teens sharing current teen  
topics and values together through a

“Jewish Lens.” Teens find their groups to be an important  
community and that the discussions help them to discover  
their own beliefs and voice. Join for connection and fun!

Meetings for the 2023-2024 school year will be on  
alternating weeks, approximately twice a month at  
Congregation Shomrei Torah.

To enroll, contact the office.



## Chevrutah: A Jewish Youth Group for 7th & 8th Graders

Welcome to Chevrutah, the middle  
school class with a renewed focus on  
social/educational experiences  
dedicated to fostering friendship,  
personal growth, and self-reflection.

Chevrutah, a mandatory component of CST’s B’Mitzvah  
Program, is designed to engage students in self-reflection and  
help them make better choices throughout their lives. By  
incorporating Jewish values, teachings, and traditions, this  
youth group offers a unique perspective on personal  
development. Students will explore various topics such as  
empathy, resilience, responsibility, and ethical decision-  
making, all within a Jewish context.

For more information, contact the office.

**TEEN PROGRAMS  
AT SHOMREI TORAH ♥**

 <a href="https://cstsr.org/shorty">cstsr.org/shorty</a>	<b>SHORTY - TEEN SOCIAL GROUP</b> Social Events Community Planning Lasting Memories
 <a href="https://cstsr.org/kehillah">cstsr.org/kehillah</a>	<b>KEHILLAH - TEEN DISCUSSION GROUP</b> Jewish Problem-Solving Application of Jewish Values Friendship and Meals
 <a href="https://cstsr.org/madrichim">cstsr.org/madrichim</a>	<b>MADRICHIM - TEEN WORK GROUP</b> Give Back to the Community Work Readiness Skills Leadership Building

**More Programs & Info :**  
[www.cstsr.org](https://www.cstsr.org)

## STaRS & YOUTH



### Family Shabbat & Purim Kickoff

Friday, March 22, 6:15 PM

Join us for a Tisch-style Purim kickoff. Come in costume and strut your stuff in our costume parade! Dinner will be served.

\$18 members, \$22 non-members, kids 13 and under free.



## COMMUNITY FAMILY SHABBAT ALL ARE WELCOME!

REGISTER FOR  
FAMILY SHABBAT



[www.cstsr.org/  
family-shabbats.html](http://www.cstsr.org/family-shabbats.html)

COMING  
SOON:

3/22/24  
4/26/24  
5/24/24

NON-MEMBERS - \$22  
MEMBERS - \$18  
UNDER 13 - FREE

# Save the Date!

FOR RISING  
TK-2ND GRADERS

SESSIONS 1 & 2  
JUNE 17 - JUNE 28

SESSIONS 3 & 4  
JULY 8 - JULY 19

SHOMREI TORAH  
**SIMCHA**  
SUMMER  
CAMP  
2024

9:00 am to 4:00 pm  
8:30 am Early Care for Extra Fee

FOR MORE INFO VISIT [CSTSR.ORG/SUMMER-CAMP](http://CSTSR.ORG/SUMMER-CAMP)



### Landslide Update

With Purim occurring next month, the Landslide Committee volunteers have been thinking about this holiday that celebrates a world turned on its head. V'nahafoch hu! Everything shall be flipped (or reversed)! Navigating the world of federal disaster relief can certainly be an upside-down process, and we're incredibly grateful for the creativity, diligence, and resolve of Katie, our Executive Director, and Pieter, our Facility & Operations Manager, as well as the insights and expertise offered by other members of our community.

Thanks to these efforts, two Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) applications have been submitted and signed off on. As this issue of The View goes to press, we are awaiting reimbursement for remediation costs incurred to date. In the meantime, we have met with representatives from both the City of Santa Rosa and FEMA to coordinate our efforts.

Thanks to the good relationships we've forged, the City has continued to be helpful. Last month, when several of the tarps covering the slide ripped and exposed the hillside to new rain, the City acted quickly in coordination with Shomrei Torah; the tarps were repaired or replaced within 24 hours.

Our contracted geotechnical engineer continues to make weekly inspections, and he informs us that this winter's rains have not caused new movement of the hillside. Parking continues to be available, but it is quite limited in the lower lot area. Therefore, we continue to provide shuttle service for our larger events and services.

As of January 2024, we are working with a new shuttle service provider. Becoming Independent is a North Bay-based nonprofit organization with a fleet of passenger vans used for transporting clients. During weekends, Becoming Independent will now be our preferred shuttle service.

Our rental costs will directly support the nonprofit's work "helping people with intellectual and developmental disabilities live meaningful and productive lives." This new shuttle arrangement will save Shomrei Torah money and support a deserving fellow nonprofit in Sonoma County. As always, your safety is our primary concern and drives all decisions regarding parking and access.

Thank you for your flexibility, support, and patience as we navigate the remediation and repair waters. We hope to have more good news to share soon. Be sure to read the weekly CST Connect email for any special messages and updates.

Landslide Taskforce: *Nicollette Weinzev, Christopher Rieger, Ann DuBay, Donna Waldman, Jeremy Olsan, Amy Haedt*

*Income and expenses related to the landslide are not a part of the Shomrei Torah operating budget and, therefore, are not reflected in the financial update in this edition of the View.*

*\$55,984 in gifts and grants have been received to cover expenses related to the landslide. As of the end of December, we have incurred \$104,821 in expenses related to the landslide. The Board of Directors has approved funds from the building maintenance endowment to cover the landslide expenses while we await FEMA reimbursement to Shomrei Torah.*



We extend our heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of you for your remarkable generosity and unwavering support. Together, we have achieved an extraordinary milestone, raising over \$141,000 or almost 95% of our \$150,000 goal to bolster our programming and fortify the bonds within our vibrant Jewish community. Thank you to the 257 households that helped us reach this milestone.

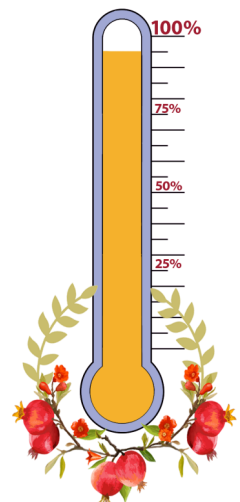
We are grateful to Padi Selwyn and Reuben Weinzev for their exceptional leadership and generosity in offering a \$10,000 matching gift, which inspired countless additional donations. Their commitment has truly been a catalyst for our success. We also extend our sincere thanks to our volunteers who contacted 275 households and to Marsha Jacobs for organizing the call-a-thon.

Thank you for your dedication, your passion, and your commitment to our shared mission. Together, we are building a brighter, stronger future for our beloved community.

If you are interested in being a part of the Tradition of Giving Team, please contact Katie Evenbeck. This successful fundraising effort stands as a testament to the generosity of our congregation members.

**Thank you!**

Sincerely, Nicollette Weinzev  
Tradition of Giving Committee  
Chair



# FINANCIAL UPDATE

## Update from the Treasurer

We are pleased to report that the committee has welcomed a new addition to our ranks; Craig Foster, a retired CPA. We look forward to Craig's contribution to our committee.

The committee continues to fine tune the format of our financial statements and should be completing this task in the month of February; thank you to Katie Evenbeck, Pieter Palmer, and Kevin Scheier for your hard work in completing this task.

A financial setback; The Employee Retention Tax Credit (ERTC) funds we were expecting to arrive by now may be off the table as part of the budget juggling going on in Congress. This, of course, is a disappointment as we have been looking forward to these funds to help with our cash position for the remainder of the year.

The YTD update on our budget is shown in the chart for the six months ended 12/31/2023:

Please understand that some of the variances are caused by timing differences from month to month and are the result of budget estimates versus the reality of the financial fluctuations of a dynamic organization such as CST. In addition, security expenses (part of Operations Expense)

have increased to keep CST, employees, congregants and visitors safe. All in all, we are on a reasonable path going into the final six months of our fiscal year.

Respectfully submitted, Reuben Weinzev  
Vice President of Finance and Treasurer

	Year-to-date Actual	Year-to-date Budget	Year-to-date Variance
<b>Income</b>			
Annual Commitments	454,344	401,000	53,344
Donations	21,294	30,000	(8,706)
Fundraising Income	103,581	90,275	13,306
Release From Restricted Funds	159,000	159,000	0
Earned Income	90,756	49,750	41,006
Religious School	55,052	44,805	10,247
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>884,027</b>	<b>774,830</b>	<b>109,197</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Salaries and Wages	373,004	342,573	30,431
Employee Benefits	69,007	76,979	(7,972)
Payroll Taxes	21,224	23,000	(1,776)
Professional and Contractor Fees	84,748	62,300	22,448
Religious School Expenses	3,565	9,000	(5,435)
Facility Expenses	59,800	61,750	(1,950)
Operations Expense	94,856	73,500	21,356
Information Technology	9,207	7,500	1,707
Travel	2,179	3,750	(1,571)
Business Expenses	9,284	9,200	84
Meeting Expenses	1,821	3,000	(1,179)
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>728,695</b>	<b>672,552</b>	<b>56,143</b>
<b>Net Operating Surplus (Deficit)</b>	<b>155,332</b>	<b>102,278</b>	<b>53,054</b>







## Welcome New Members

Please contact the office  
for this information

**Support Shomrei Torah every time  
you shop at Oliver's Market.**



Obtaining your Oliver's Market Community Card is easy. Just ask the cashier when you check out for the simple registration form.

That's it! Now 3% of your purchases at Oliver's Market goes right back to Congregation Shomrei Torah.

**Thank you for  
your support!**



[www.oliversmarket.com/community-card/](http://www.oliversmarket.com/community-card/)

## Office Closures Coming Up

Monday, May 27  
Wednesday, June 19  
Thursday, July 4



## We want everyone to feel safe and comfortable.

Congregation Shomrei Torah continues to seek to minimize any health threat to elderly and medically vulnerable members of our community and our guests.

- Masks are optional but welcome. Bring your own or feel free to take a disposable one from the basket on the welcome table.
- Air purifiers are located in primary meeting spaces. Note that they are capable of circulating the air throughout the entire room, including the central areas.
- A dispenser for hand sanitizer is available at the back of the sanctuary.
- Feel free to move chairs for distancing or ask for help to rearrange seating. Our staff and volunteers welcome requests for assistance.



Congregation Shomrei Torah is an inclusive Jewish community open to people of all ages, races and abilities. Welcoming interfaith families, people who are single, and LGBTQ+.

## DONATE

Did you know that you can make a donation anytime using our website? Simply pick a fund, add a dedication, and click submit.

### General Fund

Not sure where to donate? A gift to the General Fund enables us to direct funds wherever they are needed most.

### Rabbi George Discretionary Fund

Used to help people in need, to enhance synagogue programming and support community organizations that further our mission.

### Billie Blumenthal Religious School Scholarship Fund

Created in honor of Billie Blumenthal, Religious School Director, may her memory be for a blessing.

### Building Facilities Fund

This fund supports the maintenance of our synagogue facilities as well as any potential future renovations.

### Laur DeAguiar Fund for Music

Established in loving memory of Laur DeAguiar to provide ongoing support for our music program and care of our piano.

### Rabbi Michael Robinson Fund for Social Justice

In memory of the Social Justice work of Rabbi Michael Robinson, z'l, former rabbi of our congregation.

### Social Action Committee

Supports a variety of Social Justice actions in and outside the community.

And many more . . .

**Read full descriptions and see a  
full list of funds by visiting**

[www.cstsr.org/giving\\_opportunities](http://www.cstsr.org/giving_opportunities)

## Congregation Shomrei Torah

2600 Bennett Valley Road  
Santa Rosa, CA 95404

[WWW.CSTSR.ORG](http://WWW.CSTSR.ORG)

(707) 578-5519

### OFFICE HOURS

Monday–Friday  
9:00 AM–1:00 PM;  
2:00 PM–5:00 PM  
*by appointment only*

### RABBI

George D. Gittleman

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Katie Evenbeck

### CANTORIAL SOLOIST, B'MITZVAH & CHOIR DIRECTOR

Erica Wisner

### DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION & YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Lara Brown

### OFFICE & COMMUNICATION MANAGER

Julie Hash

### FACILITY & OPERATIONS MANAGER

Pieter Palmer

### ADMINISTRATOR

Angelica Steinman

### FACILITY ATTENDANT

Austin Piehoff

### EVENT LIAISON

Diane Larkin



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More Information available at:  
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## CONGREGATION SHOMREI TORAH

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A Progressive Reform Jewish Community  
Blending the Traditional with the Innovative

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(707) 578-5519

2600 BENNETT VALLEY ROAD,  
SANTA ROSA, CA 95404



## THE PURPOSE OF THIS CONGREGATION

- To worship God in accordance with the beliefs and teachings of Reform Judaism.
- To cultivate and nurture in ourselves and our children a love and understanding of Jewish heritage.
- To develop a sensitive, caring and supportive congregational community where all are welcome and included.
- To act with responsibility and compassion in our community.
- To support the principals of equality, freedom and shalom among all peoples.