When: Sunday, December 6, 9:00-11:00 AM  
Where: Congregation Shomrei Torah  
What: Children’s Hanukkah Fair. Join us for music, art, bounce house, face painting, and delicious Hanukkah treats!  
Children of all ages welcome and it’s FREE!

Avoid the call and make contributions in advance! Just log on to our website and click on the Gelt-a-Thon donation button. Or send in a check, call the office and charge your credit card on file, or even come by the office and bring cash. Last year, 135 families donated prior to the Gelt-a-Thon! If you would like to help by making calls, contact the CST office to join our caller group and be treated to a delicious breakfast!

We thank you in advance for your generosity, and have a happy Hanukkah!
Reed Ferrick and John Weinstein, Co-chairs

Night of Lights Hanukkah celebration!  
Wednesday, December 9, 6:15 PM

Let’s rejoice together! We will supply the latkes, donuts and homemade applesauce, so all you need to bring is your menorah (and candles) and favorite dairy/veggie dish to share. Songs will be sung, and of course, dreidels will be spun! Also, please consider bring a wrapped toy, with a label stating the age range and gender, to contribute to our annual toy drive for our friends and neighbors in the Roseland district.

Men’s Bagel Club hosts leader of “Living Wage Campaign”

On Sunday December 6 at 9:00 AM, Martin Bennett, the leader of the Living Wage Movement in Sonoma County, will speak about their campaign to raise the minimum wage in our county to $15 for all workers. He will be accompanied by an in-home services worker who will share their experiences of supporting a family on the current SoCo wage of $11.45 an hour.

Please RSVP if you wish to attend to the CST office at (707) 578-5519 so we can prepare enough gourmet breakfast for everyone. Of course, ladies are also invited.

Martin Bennett, the leader of the Living Wage Movement in Sonoma County, will speak
Rabbi’s Tisch - Dreamers: Hear Their Stories

Friday, December 11, 6:15 PM

Meet four inspiring Dreamers who faced the hurdles of our immigration policies. Brought to the US as young children, they attended local schools, community colleges and graduated from Sonoma State University. As they reached adulthood, their undocumented status threatened to take away the only home they knew and derail their education and career plans. DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals), instituted by President Obama in 2012, granted Dreamers temporary legal status and allows them to work. Anayeli Cruz, raised in Napa, works for Cope Family Center providing needed services to at-risk families. Ariana Aparicio grew up in Point Reyes Station. A grateful recipient of a scholarship from 10,000 Degrees, she was honored to work for this organization that enables students to obtain a college education. She currently works as an Academic Advisor at SSU. Jesús Guzmán grew up in Sonoma and is now Program Director for the Graton Day Labor Center. He founded the DREAM Alliance of Sonoma County to advocate for the California Dream Act. Luis Bravo is completing the Master’s Degree in Counseling program at SSU. In 2010 his undocumented status prevented him from doing an internship. DACA has allowed him to resume his studies and also work for VIDAS, a non-profit immigration legal services organization.

These Dreamers have been recognized with multiple awards for their dedication to the community and to social justice. The Social Action Committee is pleased to sponsor this Tisch and introduce these impressive young people to the congregation. Please join us for a nourishing and informative evening. Shabbat Blessings and dinner at 6:15, program to follow. Reserve your space for dinner by calling the office at (707) 578-5519 or emailing denise@cstsr.org. Suggested donation is $18.

Winter Warmth Drive for our Friends at Elisha’s Pantry ends December 4:

Last chance to participate!

Congregation Shomrei Torah and Congregation Beth Ami are again having a clothing drive to keep our friends in the community warm this winter. We are collecting new or gently used items to distribute to clients of Elisha's Pantry. Donations should be clean and free of holes and stains!

WARM COATS ~ HATS, SCARVES, GLOVES ~ SWEATERS ~ SWEATSHIRTS AND PANTS ~ RAIN GEAR ~ BEDDING ~ SLEEPING BAGS ~ SOCKS

To Participate: Drop off items in the collection bin at CST. Extra Large adult and children's sizes are especially needed. Good condition blankets, sleeping bags and rain gear are high in demand for this year’s anticipated wet weather.

To Be More Involved: Volunteer to help distribute items at the Pantry 2:30 to 5:30 pm during the first 3 Thursdays of December. Adults & children welcome. For high school students needing community service hours for school, this is a great way to accumulate them. It's Super Fun!

To volunteer or for more information please contact contact the CST office at (707) 578-5519.

Carlebach Shabbat - Friday, December 25, 6:15 PM

Often called the Debbie Friedman of Orthodox Judaism, Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach infused traditional worship with new life through his original and accessible folk-style melodies. Carlebach’s music has been adopted by every movement of Judaism and his message that singing in prayer is for everyone resonates now more than ever.

Congregation Shomrei Torah’s Seventh Annual Posada Toy Drive

We are once again collecting new or very gently used toys to donate to the children of our local community this holiday season.

Please put wrapped gifts into the blue bin in the synagogue entryway, through December 18.

Wrapped gifts should have a tag indicating gender (girl, boy or either) and age range (baby, 3–5, 6–10, 10–14, 15 & up)

Sponsors: Social Action Committee and STARS

To help volunteer please contact the CST office at (707) 578-5519.
January Rabbi’s Tisch with Rabbi Leah Lewis
**Friday, January 8, 6:15 PM**
Are religious people more ethical? Does observing the commandments and going to services make you a better person? In the early 19th century, parts of the Old World Jewish community came to the shocking conclusion that observance and behavior were not necessarily related; you could be very religious and also a scoundrel. In response, they created a new movement called mussar, to marry Jewish religious observance and ethical behavior. Come hear Rabbi Leah Lewis, Rabbi and Director of Lifelong Learning at Congregation Shir Ha-Ma’a lot in Irvine, speak about these topics following a delicious catered meal. Cost is $18. RSVP to CST office.

Ashkenazi and Sephardic Cooking Classes
**Sundays, January 10 and 31, 3:00 – 5:00 PM**
Chef Les Goodman was practically raised in the French kitchens of his mentor—Chef Andre Rochat—Las Vegas’ “original celebrity chef.” Michelin-starred dining rooms gave him roots in classical French cuisine, and his work and travels through India and Thailand gave him an appreciation for global flavors and techniques. Les arrived in Sonoma County in 2008 to work for Charlie Palmer’s Dry Creek Kitchen and found his passion—combining international experience with local cuisine and West County wines. He has a passion for good Jewish deli food. His Goodman’s Jewish Deli is popular and can be found at local Sonoma County farmer’s markets. Please RSVP to the CST office, (707) 578-5519. Free.

Shabbat with Guest Cantor Mary Thomas
**Friday, January 22, 6:15 PM**
Join Rabbi Kramer and Cantor David for a Cantorial Shabbat as they welcome their classmate, Cantor Mary Thomas, to Shomrei Torah for a special service of our Jewish musical heritage. She currently serves as Associate Cantor at Temple Beth El in Charlotte, NC, and has been nationally recognized for her work in Jewish education and engagement.

Shabbat at Armstrong Woods, **Tu B’Svat**
**Saturday, January 23, 10:30 AM**
Come celebrate the birthday of the trees through an experiential Shabbat service surrounded by the beauty of 1,000-year-old redwood trees. This service will be family-friendly and followed by a potluck picnic.
SAVE THE DATE

Special Torah Study, Shabbat Service and Luncheon
Saturday Morning, February 6, 2016
Led By Rabbi Stephanie and Cantor David

For many years, up to two dozen congregants have met every Saturday morning in the Kolbo room to read from the weekly Torah section and discuss its meaning and relevance for us in today’s world. The session goes from 8:45 to 10:15 AM, and all CST community members are welcome to attend, weekly or just once in a while, actively participating or just listening.

On February 6, 2016, the Torah Study will take place in the Sanctuary to accommodate both the regular attendees and those of us who will be attending for the first time in a while or perhaps for the first time ever. We encourage you to come and explore the world of the Jewish Torah with us at that time!

At 10:30 AM, all Torah Study attendees are invited to remain and join us in the beautiful Shabbat morning service, along with others who may not have been able to attend Torah Study. Immediately after services and kiddush (around 12:00 PM), we will share a light luncheon.

Rosh Chodesh
February 6, at 7:00 PM

The next Rosh Chodesh women’s group will be February 6, at 7:00 PM—Rosh Chodesh for the month of Adar 1.

The month of Adar is a time for madness and fun. There are two months of Adar this year. Come and play games with us as the first Adar approaches—wear funny hats and find ways to let loose. Feather boas are encouraged!

Please call Judith Goleman to RSVP—or just show up, ready to be silly.

Tot Shabbat
Friday, December 11 at 5:00 PM

Hope all of you had a festive Thanksgiving holiday. Wishing all of you a Hanukkah Chag Same’ach. We look forward to seeing you Friday, December 11 at 5:00 PM for our monthly Tot Shabbat and a little Hanukkah fun.

Blessings,
Tot Shabbat Lauren

2016 Social Action Goes to the Movies

The Social Action Committee launches its 2016 film series with films and a forum that focus on mental health. The films and forum are open to the public free of charge but donations are welcome.

“A Reason to Live”—This powerful documentary about teen and young adult depression and suicide captures 12 personal stories of despair and hope. February 20.

“The Mask You Live In”—Addresses the issues boys and young men have in dealing with society’s narrow definition of masculinity. This film directed by Jennifer Seibel Newsom, is an official selection of the 2015 Sundance Film Festival. March 19.

“Poster Girl”—Traces a high school cheerleader, turned machine gunner in the Iraq War, as she returns home to deal with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). April 16.

All films will be on Saturday nights at 7:30 PM. A panel discussion featuring local and regional experts and people affected by mental illness will follow each of the films.

The Social Action Committee’s series on mental health will wrap up with a Community Forum on Depression, Sunday, May 22, starting at 2:00 PM, in recognition of May National Mental Health Month. The Forum will host leading experts and give voice to those who suffer from depression, as well as to those who are closest to them. A featured speaker will be Sonoma County Supervisor Shirlee Zane, whose experience with her husband’s depressive illness and suicide instilled in her a strong commitment to community mental health care.

The entire four-month series on mental health is co-sponsored by Sonoma County NAMI (National Alliance of Mental Illness), Jewish Family and Children’s Services, Sonoma County Behavioral Health, and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.

In recognition of “The Social Action Goes to the Movies” film series, CST was honored in April of 2015 with an honorable mention Fain Award for “exemplary social justice work” from the Union of Reform Judaism’s Religious Action Center in Washington, D.C.
What Would You Do If You Knew You Wouldn’t Fail?

Each night of Hanukkah, the blessing for lighting the candles on the Hanukkiah, we say a blessing acknowledging miracles performed for our forefathers at this time in ancient days.

I have never understood why we say the prayer for miracles on the first night: if the miracle of Hanukkah is the longevity of a small amount of oil, the miracle has not happened yet on the first night.

We know that the amount of oil found was supposed to last one night. I wonder how the Jews reacted as nightfall approached at the end of the first day. Once the miraculous oil continued to burn, were the Jews anxious? Shocked? Elated? The Jews had just been victorious in battle, winning a war when all odds were against them. Their temple had been destroyed and they gathered to rebuild what was in shambles.

But the oil that was only supposed to burn for one day continued into the second, third, fourth... for eight full days.

There is only one explanation for saying the blessing for miracles on the first night: we say the blessing for miracles before the miracle even happens because we have ultimate faith.

The Hanukkah story is all about faith, faith that a small Maccabee army could overcome a fierce military giant. Faith in the rehabilitation of the Jewish people in ancient times. And the faith the Jews needed to have to light the menorah in the first place.

It was brave to use the only oil they had to light the lamp. What if it hadn’t lasted? What would they have done? Taking a leap of faith is often the bravest thing a person can do. Taking that initial step can often be viewed as miraculous.

Everyone encounters first steps that seem daunting, scary and seemingly impossible. “What would you do if you knew you wouldn’t fail?” I love this question, especially in the context of Hanukkah. Take a moment and really answer this question honestly. What would you do if you KNEW you wouldn’t fail?

During this season of darkness, we have to look for light. Act like our ancestors and don’t hesitate to light your figurative menorah... and immediately give thanks for the miracle that is yet to be. Happy Hanukkah!

B’shalom,

Rabbi Kramer

Share Your Jewish Journey With Us!

Over the years, many of our congregants have participated in a CST tradition on Yom Kippur afternoon by describing their individual paths to Shomrei Torah. And by each journey’s end, we knew three members of our community better than we had before.

Please add your own Jewish journey to a treasury of stories now being collected for placement in the Shomrei Torah Library.

Why We’re Collecting Jewish Journeys

Every person’s path is meaningful.

For the individual, remembering, reflecting, and writing is a way to honor the traveler(s) and the road taken.

For our CST family, each journey we read will deepen our knowledge and appreciation of our remarkable and diverse community as it preserves the congregation’s precious Jewish history.

For the rabbis and cantor, for teachers, and even for older students in our religious school, certain journeys in part or in their entirety may serve to illustrate lessons or serve as sources of historical detail.

How To Take Part

Simply mail, email as an attachment, or drop off at the office your previously presented Jewish journey OR a newly written story of 750 words or less (preferably typed) to one of the following addresses by April 1, 2016, at latest. Earlier submissions are encouraged!

Note: Rabbi George will read each submission.
LEGACY NEWS

Our Values and Our Legacy

Here are three questions for you to consider:

What event or activity at Shomrei Torah have you found most meaningful?
When this question was posed a year ago to a group of CST members in a session on strategic issues, the responses were, as you would expect, quite varied. They ranged from the march of the Torah to our new synagogue to various children’s events to Yom Kippur services. The consensus in the group was that CST appeals to our members in different ways and that it does this very successfully. How would you respond? Chances are that your answer reflects the values you most cherish.

What Jewish values do you most want to leave to future generations?
If you read through the Legacy Circle profiles of those who have chosen to recognize CST in their estate planning documents, you will also notice a variety of salient values that are emphasized. Prominent among them are transmission of progressive Jewish values to future generations, involvement in a reform Jewish community, sustaining Jewish traditions, respect for diversity and human rights, and social and environmental action aimed at tikkun olam.

How can we best ensure that the values and practices we most care about live on for generations to come?
Obviously, transmitting values within our families is critical. But it is only through vibrant, active institutions that we can succeed in transmitting values. If just one-third to one-half of our members join the 15 percent of members who are currently in the Legacy Circle, we will have our best chance of ensuring that future generations will enjoy the benefits for which we are currently so grateful.

Roy Sparrow, Co-Chair Legacy Circle

Environmental Action Committee

Tip of the Month

“The Earth was here before us and was given to us. Never have we so hurt and mistreated our common home as we have in the last 200 years…”

Pope Francis 2015 Encyclical on the Environment

Celebrate an eco-friendly Hanukkah with Green Goods and Green Food!

- Use eco-friendly candles made of beeswax.
- Opt for reusable gift wrap and send e-cards (instead of snail mail)
- Buy organic, fair trade chocolate gelt.
- Make pumpkin latkes from organic produce and free-range eggs (and be sure to serve organic applesauce and sour cream!).

http://www.greentipoftheweek.com/enjoy-a-green-chanukkah.html
http://www.onegreenplanet.org/vegan-food/tips-for-having-a-healthier-hanukkah/
http://www.coejl.org/resources/hanukkah-8-days-of-action

The Environmental Action Committee wishes you a Happy Hanukkah!

CST’s New Tzedakah Box!

More than a year in the making, Shomrei Torah’s newly installed Tzedakah box is now accepting donations. The box was designed by CST member Linda Weiss in collaboration with Rabbi George Gittleman and Ben Benson. It was handcrafted by Weiss, a noted silversmith, and by cabinetmaker Greg Zall. The colored glasswork is by Dr. Charlie Catlett.

Our new Tzedakah box was conceived as a gift from the congregation to Rabbi George on the occasion of the 18th anniversary of his rabbinate—his “chai” year. The 18-inch tall box is made of natural cherry wood and depicts an olive branch on each side made of inlaid argentium sterling silver. In addition to symbolizing peace, the olive branches are a visual link to the nearby Heritage Cabinet, the bima furniture, and the signature olive tree on the patio just outside the building entrance. The colored glass panels on either side of the box, illuminated by interior LED bulbs, correlate to the twelve tribes of Israel. Next time you enter Shomrei Torah, please take a moment to admire this work of art, and consider making a donation, 100% of which will directly benefit those in need.

Cemetery Plots Available

Cemetery plots (1 or 2 together) in original Shomrei Torah section of Franklin Cemetery. Nice spot near the only olive tree and bench. Selling for original purchase price ($2,195 each). Lots in old section no longer available. Price of lots in new CST section now $2,895. Please call the CST office at (707) 578-5519.
Israel on Campus: New CST Resource Guide for Students and Families

If events concerning Israel get out of hand on the campus you or a family member attends, you’ll want to know this resource guide is at the ready. See our website, www.cstsr.org under Community | College or, go directly with this link http://www.shomreitorah.org/college-students/. There are many annotated leads to good information, including some items you may want to read now. If it’s urgent, the immediate points for contact are Paula Simon, Director of Operations and Special Projects, Jewish Community Relations Council, psimon@jcrc.org, (415) 977-7401, ext. 101, and our clergy and staff via the temple office, (707) 578-5519. The resource guide was prepared by a collaboration of the Social Action Committee with our regional Jewish Community Relations Council.

Chavurah News


Our Chavurah has fifteen people—a mixture of couples and singles. Some of our original members have been together for 15 years; the newest members joined six months ago. We get together about 10 times a year. We celebrate Jewish holidays, and enjoy various outings, such as musical events, movies, plays and other live performances (John Oliver was a highlight), and an occasional jaunt to the Bay Area.

Catherine Reisman

Shomrei Torah Men in Retreat

Thirty-eight CST men spent the weekend together recently at the Enchanted Hills Camp near the Napa Valley. It was a weekend filled with music, games, food, camaraderie, spirituality, fellowship and fun. The solid turnout was punctuated by the eleven members who were attending for the first time. Thanks goes out to the hard-working Men’s Retreat Committee, especially co-chairs Norman Eisley and Sam Rose. The CST Men’s Retreat is held every other year, with other men’s get-togethers in between. If you are interested in being a part of the Men’s Retreat Committee, please contact the temple office for more information.
Business to Business at Shomrei Torah

Are you a business person or professional searching for opportunities to grow your business? Congregation Shomrei Torah has just the opportunity for you. Join our B2B@CST Business Networking Group and meet an interesting variety of business people just like you. Each of us are members of CST and are committed to growing our businesses and helping you grow yours through leads that we share within the group.

You’ll meet an eclectic mix of members including financial planners, chiropractors, tax preparers, estate attorneys, asset managers, business and employment consultants, realtors, home remodelers, fine artists, graphic artists, photographers and more. Not only is the B2B@CST group good for business, but you’ll forge and strengthen new friendships and alliances to connect to our robust community. Sonoma County is a great place to live and joining B2B@CST will make your life here even richer!

Join our B2B@CST Business Networking Group and meet an interesting variety of business people just like you.

Care packages for college students!

Matzah toffee, a wind-up dreidel, a Seder plate, chocolate gelt—just a taste of what we sent last year to 45 Shomrei Torah college students. Would your college student enjoy some holiday treats? Let us know his or her college address and we will send fun and delicious Passover greetings from their Shomrei Torah family! Current addresses needed by the beginning of March for the Passover mailing.

We would love to include all college students! Please email the CST office (ra@cstsr.org) with the following information: your student’s name, college name, year in school, college mailing address, email, plus your name, phone number, and email. If your student received mailings during the 2014-2015 school year, you will need to resubmit information to be included again this year, even if the address hasn’t changed.

Would you like to help bake or assemble the packages? Contact the CST office at (707) 578-5519.
Advertise in The Voice... Advertisements shall be limited to one-half page maximum size; advertisement positioning in The Voice will be on a rotating basis; the appearance and content of the advertisements shall be in good taste. Because this is a subjective assessment, final approval of any advertisement shall be at the discretion of the executive director, the Rabbi(s) and/or the editor of The Voice.

The Voice Display Ad Rates
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Other advertising arrangements can be made by contacting the Executive Director. Ads and payment must be received in the temple office by the 5th of the month to start in the next month's issue.

For more information, call 707-578-5519.
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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 principles of equality, freedom and shalom among all peoples.

DECEMBER SERVICES

Friday, December 4
6:15 pm - Shabbat Service

Saturday, December 5
Weekly Torah portion: Vayeishev
8:45 am - Torah Study
10:30 am - Shabbat Service
Bat Mitzvah of Amelia Brown 10:30 AM – 12:00 PM

Friday, December 11
6:15 pm - Rabbi’s Tisch
“Dreamers” sponsored by the SAC

Saturday, December 12
Weekly Torah portion: Mikeitz
8:45 am - Torah Study led by John Hart
10:30 am - Shabbat Service

Friday, December 18
6:15 pm - Shabbat Service

Saturday, December 19
Weekly Torah portion: Vayigash
8:45 am - Torah Study
10:30 am - Shabbat Service
Bar Mitzvah of Toby Feibusch 10:30 AM – 12:00 PM

Friday, December 25
6:15 pm - Shabbat Service
featuring the music of Shlomo Carlebach

Saturday, December 26
Weekly Torah portion: Va-y’chi
8:45 am - Torah Study
10:30 am - Shabbat Service

JANUARY SERVICES

Friday, January 1
6:15 pm - Shabbat Service

Saturday, January 2
Weekly Torah portion: Shemot 6
8:45 am - Torah Study
10:30 am - Shabbat Service

Friday, January 8
6:15 pm - Rabbi’s Tisch with Rabbi Leah Lewis

Saturday, January 9
Weekly Torah portion: Va’eira
8:45 am - Torah Study
10:30 am - Shabbat Service

Friday, January 15
6:15 pm - Shabbat Service

Saturday, January 16
Weekly Torah portion: Bo
8:45 am - Torah Study
10:30 am - Shabbat Service

Friday, January 22
6:15 pm - Shabbat Service
featuring guest cantor Mary Thomas

Saturday, January 23
Weekly Torah portion: B’Shalach
8:45 am - Torah Study
10:30 am - Shabbat Service in honor of Tu B’Shvat

Friday, January 29
6:15 pm - Shabbat Service

Saturday, January 30
Weekly Torah portion: Yitro
8:45 am - Torah Study
10:30 am - Shabbat Service