New Member Shabbat  
Friday, February 1, 6:15 PM  
Our clergy, staff and Board of Directors invite members who have joined the synagogue in the past year to attend the New Member Shabbat service. We will officially welcome you to the CST community with a blessing on the bima and a special oneg. This is also a great time to meet new people and connect with your new community!

Passover Seder  
Saturday, April 20, 6:15 PM  
Passover at Shomrei Torah is more than the retelling of the ancient story of the Exodus; it also honors our ongoing struggle for freedom, justice and equality. Our annual Seder on the second night of Passover welcomes both members and non-members. Seating in the sanctuary is limited; please reserve your seat early to ensure your place at our Seder table.  

The cost is as follows:  
$36.00 member adult  
$46.00 non-member adult  
$18.00 member child (12 and under)  
$23.00 non-member child (12 and under)  
Free for children under age 5.  
Reservations are required as well as meal preference of chicken or vegetarian. RSVP to the office.

Rabbi’s Tisch with Rabbi Geoffrey Dennis  
“Mystical Parables: Kabbalistic Storytelling in the Book of Brilliance”  
Friday, February 8, 6:15 PM  
$18 suggested donation for the catered dinner, please RSVP to the office.  

What can princesses, palaces, and gardens teach us about God? Sefer ha-Bahir, the Book of Brilliance, is the earliest known work of classic Kabbalah. It’s also a treasury of esoteric parables designed to captivate and educate the reader about divine mysteries.  

Geoffrey Dennis is currently rabbi of Congregation Kol Ami in Flower Mound, TX. an adjunct faculty in the Jewish and Israel Studies Program at the University of North Texas since 1999, where he teaches Bible, Rabbinic literature and Kabbalah.  

A writer and researcher, he has published numerous articles, essays, and encyclopedia entries. He is the author of two books, The Encyclopedia of Jewish Myth, Magic, and Mysticism, now in its second edition, and Sefer Ha-Bahir: The Book of Brilliance. He is also an engaging public speaker. His university courses are consistently ranked among the most popular in the JISP.

“ A writer and researcher, he has published numerous articles, essays, and encyclopedia entries.”

Shabbat Game Night  
Friday, February 22, 6:15 PM  
Following services, please join us for a burrito bar dinner. Bring your own board games, cards and tile games to play!  

Please RSVP to denise@cstsr.org so we know how much food to provide. The cost of this meal is $10 per family.
**Bagel Club**  
*Sunday, February 3, 9:00 AM*

The Bagel Club meets once a month to enjoy a delicious bagel breakfast followed by a speaker. Women as well as men are welcome. $7-$10 donation requested for brunch. Please RSVP to cstbagelmen@gmail.com to reserve your seat and brunch.

**Talmud Circle Part 2:**  
**Tractate Ta'anit - Acts of God: Responses to Natural Disasters**  
*Sundays: February 3, March 3, April 7, May 5, June 2*  
3:00 PM – 5:00 PM

Tuition: $75 - $125  
Register at: catalog.lehrhaus.org/course/2019/winter/TC850-ST

Rabbinic tales of drought, disaster and charismatic holy men illuminate critical questions about power, ethics and ecology in Jewish late antiquity. Through a reading of the Babylonian Talmud tractate Ta’anit (on fasts in response to drought), we will discuss how the Talmud challenges Deuteronomy’s claim that virtue can assure abundance and that misfortune is an unambiguous sign of divine rebuke. Many of these narratives blunt the moral condemnation inherent in disaster – and suggest that blessing often lies beneath the surface of apparent misfortune. This community learning program is a continuation from the Fall of 2018. New participants are welcome.

**Mindfulness Meditation**  
**Buddhist Practice, Jewish Wisdom - Rabbi George Gittleman**  
*Wednesday, February 6, 7:00 PM*  
*Sunday, February 17, 3:00 PM*  
*Wednesday, March 6th, 7:00 PM*  
*Sunday, March 17, 3:00 PM*

FREE, please RSVP to the office.

Mindfulness Meditation is the practice of cultivating our attention on the present moment: body sensations, mood and the neverending stream of thought that flows through our minds. Through focused attention—meditation—we become more aware of what is true for us and the degree to which our thoughts, habits and life patterns serve our goals and higher aspirations.

Are we happy? Are we living the life we want to live? As we learn to see our truth more clearly a path opens to living a fuller, happier, healthier life. Jewish mindfulness adds the teachings of our tradition to complement and deepen the experience. This 4-session course will include teaching, meditation instruction and periods of silence. No previous experience is necessary.

**Jewish Literary Circle**  
*Thursday, February 21, 6:15 PM*

*The Weight of Ink, by Rachel Kadish*

The Jewish Literary Circle, a Life Long Learning program, meets monthly, to read Jewish literature and other published material in an atmosphere of stimulating discussion. Participants choose the reading selections. Participants choose the reading selections.  

FREE, all are welcome, please RSVP to the office.
We are different and unique in so many ways. No two people are the same. And yet, we are all supposed to be “equal.” How can that be?

Regardless of our background and identity, where we come from, and the language we speak, we all laugh, cry, rejoice and grieve in the same language. We share so many questions and challenges that the world around us brings to teens and their families.

The Diversity and Inclusivity Summit is bringing teens and parents from all over Sonoma County together to learn how to make our communities a more welcoming place. Come listen and bring your questions. Let’s share our differences and our likenesses and see where we meet in the middle. Join for a deep dive into ways you can create the world you want to see.

Save the date for our last summit: April 8, Creating a Culture of Inclusion.

Jewish Baking with Ronnie Campagna: Rugelach
Sunday, February 24, 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM
Free, Attendance limited. RSVP to the office.

The first rugelach class was so popular that we are doing it again! Rugelach, an addictive Jewish pastry, is easy to find in Jewish bakeries in New York, Los Angeles and all over Israel, but it’s almost impossible to buy in Sonoma County. In this second in a series of Jewish cooking and baking events, participants will learn about the history and varieties of rugelach while creating this sweet treat from start to finish (in two hours). Memories of your mom’s light-as-a-feather matzoh balls? Wishing you could make delicious and beautiful challah? Babka? Hamantaschen? Passover desserts? Something else? Email the office with suggestions and to show interest so we can look into creating this series.

Embracing Those Living with a Chronic Illness or Disability - Diversity and Inclusivity Summit
Monday, February 25, 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM
Free, bring a friend!

We are different and unique in so many ways. No two people are the same. And yet, we are all supposed to be “equal.” How can that be?

Regardless of our background and identity, where we come from, and the language we speak, we all laugh, cry, rejoice and grieve in the same language. We share so many questions and challenges that the world around us brings to teens and their families.

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Save the date for our last summit: April 8, Creating a Culture of Inclusion.

Death: A Spiritual & Practical Exploration from a Jewish Perspective
Three Wednesdays: February 27, March 6, March 13
10:00 AM - 11:30 AM
Free, please RSVP to the office.

This 3 session class taught by Rabbi George and Rabbi Stephanie will explore from a Jewish perspective the main spiritual and practical issues that arise around death. No previous knowledge is necessary. You are welcome to sign up for the series or for whatever session(s) are of interest to you.

Session Topics:
February 27: The End of Life - Preparation and Approaches Including the Question of Assisted Suicide
March 6: The Jewish Way in Mourning - Jewish Practices and their Meaning
March 13: Does the Soul Survive? Jewish Views of the Afterlife
Companionship or Death

As we approach Tu B’Shvat, I am reminded of the story of Honi Hamagil, Honi the Circle-Maker and the Carob tree.

Honi lived in Israel around the year 100 BCE. He was a shaman and a miracle-worker. He’s called “the Circle-Maker,” because, in times of drought he would draw a circle, stand in it and refuse to move until God made the rain fall.

One day, Honi was journeying on the road and he saw a man planting a carob tree. He asked, “How long does it take for this tree to bear fruit?” The man replied, “Seventy years.”

“What a story! I love the way the Talmud connects environmental sustainability with emotional wellbeing. We are all part of a web of being that spans both time and space, the physical and the spiritual. We harvest from trees planted before we were born; we plant trees so that our children will have something to harvest after we are gone in ways both real and metaphorical. And, as important as these vertical intergenerational connections are, they do not sustain us without the horizontal connections of family, friends and community.

The Talmud is telling us what we all intuitively know already: we are whole and complete only when we feel connected to those in our community and to the chain of tradition that links past to present to future.

At this season of Tu B’Shvat, may we feel enriched by all we are given by those who have gone before us, even as we nourish the community we have while planting the seeds for future generations.

The inspiration for this blog and a few of the words came from Rabbi Rachel Barenblat, velveteenrabbi.blogs.com.
March Rabbi’s *Tisch* with Professor Benjamin Benson  
“Stewards of Eden: Sonoma County in Native Times”  
*Friday, March 8, 6:15 PM*  
$18 suggested donation for the catered dinner, please RSVP to the office.

Longtime member and beloved professor Benjamin Benson will present an illustrated lecture regarding his current research into the ancient Native American heritage of Sonoma County. He will focus on new discoveries about Native American traditional relationships to the natural habitat, discoveries that greatly contradict conventional assumptions.

Professor Benson will incorporate his research in paleontology, archaeology and ethnology, with an emphasis on Native philosophical and spiritual foundations for thousands of years of Native environmental harmony in Sonoma County. This presentation will have direct relevance to the California environmental movement and to progressive Jewish environmentalism.

Professor Benjamin Benson is an Environmental Anthropologist who taught for over 30 years at the Santa Rosa Junior College and is currently a Professor of Native American Studies at Sonoma State University, the Cultural Resources Coordinator at the Pepperwood Preserve and a consultant to Smithsonian Institution’s Museum of the American Indian and to the California Academy of Sciences.

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Dinner and Dialogue with Israeli Palestinian Christian Dr. Niveen Rizkalla  
*Sunday, March 17, 6:15 PM*  
Free, please RSVP to the office.

We first met Niveen as part of the IsraAID team that came to help us during the fires. A psychologist who specializes in trauma, Niveen came to our aid during the worst days of the fire, offering counsel and comfort to many. Since then, we have worked with Niveen on a number of fire-related programs. Niveen has an interesting and compelling story as a psychologist working with trauma victims all over the Middle East and also as an Israeli Christian Palestinian. Join us as we share a meal and hear Niveen’s story.

Niveen is a post-doctoral research fellow at the Mack Center for Mental Health and Social Conflict. Prior to her arrival at Berkeley, Niveen served as the volunteer coordinator at the Haifa Rape Crisis Center and the Ministry of Health’s Mobile Clinic, where she treated women, men and LGBTQ individuals in prostitution; trained professionals and volunteers on sexual violence and frequently presented at conferences and gave guest lectures. Her research interests focus on trauma – PTSD, complex PTSD, vicarious traumatization, secondary traumatic stress, posttraumatic growth and victims of torture and war in addition to women, gender based violence (e.g., sexual violence and prostitution).

She also is working on the traumatic experiences and physical and mental health of Syrian refugees and the staffers who assist them in Jordan (Middle East). Couples’ intimacy, marital satisfaction and the intimate relationships of traumatized populations are other areas of interest. Her most recent project delves into secondary traumatic stress, intimacy, posttraumatic growth and coping mechanisms among staffers who assist refugees and war traumatized populations across Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Asia.

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Purim Carnival  
*Sunday, March 10, 11:15 AM - 2:00 PM*  
This event is FREE and open to the community! Food will be available to purchase. Join us for a day of fun, Purim games, crafts, music and much more! Come in costume to win a prize!  
Adults: While the kids play, relax and have a drink and nosh in the adult area.
The folk music movement of the 1960’s helped to galvanize social change in America. Not surprisingly, many of the successful songwriters of the folk era, calling upon their heritage and their sense of Tikun Olam – repairing of the world – were Jewish. Writers and performers such as Bob Dylan, Phil Ochs, Paul Simon, Leonard Cohen, Peter Yarrow and Fred Hellerman of the Weavers wrote some of the most iconic songs of the folk era.

The Folk Experience – Cindy Paley, Mike Sirota, and Ed Labowitz – present a 3-part harmony musical program of American folk songs from Jewish songwriters of that great folk era. Their concert is part nostalgia, part entertainment, and part sheer joy as everyone in the audience sings along with the help of lyric booklets. It’s a hand clapping, foot-stomping happening!

Cindy Paley has delighted Jewish communities across the country with her spirit and rich repertoire of Jewish music. As a Cantorial Soloist, Cindy is the soul of Leveisha and the Valley Beth Shalom N’shama Minyan, both creative Shabbat women’s services in Los Angeles.

Ed Labowitz and Mike Sirota are part of another trio, The Folk Collection, that has performed for the last fifteen years throughout the country, singing the classic songs of the folk era. When not singing with that group or The Folk Experience, Mike is the Cantor at Temple Ami Shalom in West Covina. As a Los Angeles entertainment lawyer, Ed represented many of the folk groups of the 60’s, including The Kingston Trio and The Limeliters, with whom he jams from time-to-time.

A Season of Mussar with Sharon Schwartz
Seven Wednesdays: March 20, April 3, 17, May 1, 15, 29, June 5
10:00 AM - 11:30 AM
$136 for the series, please RSVP to the office (scholarships available)

Mussar is a Jewish spiritual practice that gives concrete instructions on how to live a meaningful and ethical life. Based on the idea that by cultivating inner virtues, we improve ourselves, Mussar allow for more meaning and balance through study, practice and contemplation.

Sharon, a trained Mussar facilitator, will offer a beginner course called Season of Mussar I, a curriculum created by Alan Morinis, the founder of The Mussar Institute. For more information visit mussarinstitute.org/courses/season-of-mussar

Adult Purim Piano Bar
Wednesday, March 20, 7:00 PM
Come sing along to the music of everybody’s favorite Jewish piano man, Billy Joel! Bring your groggers and your beverage of choice as storyteller extraordinaire Norman Eisley helps us retell the story of Esther.

We’ll chant some Megillah and, together, enjoy singing classics like Uptown Girl, Tell Her About It and My Life.

Congregational Retreat
April 26–28, 2019
Please join your congregational family for a community healing retreat. Activities or “chill-tivities” for every type of CST family, big or small – fun for all! Bring your spouse, your kids, your grandparents or just bring yourself. Enjoy the beautiful surroundings in the Marin Headlands, completely accessible for all, close to the beach and ocean air, a break from your allergies. Fun includes hiking, art, study, campfire, lighthouse tour, yoga or sitting with your book surrounded by nature.

Location: Point Bonita YMCA, Sausalito
Price includes the whole weekend – boarding, meals and activities!
Adults 18+: $200
Kids 4-17: $125
Kids 0-3: FREE
Family cap of $500
Scholarships available upon request. Final payment due by March 15, 2019. Reserve your spot with a non-refundable $100 deposit by contacting the office.
Environmental Action Committee

Tip of the Month

“I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food.”

~ Genesis 1:29-31

The environment is not just the world outside of ourselves. In holistic terms, the terrain is a reference to our internal environment, the ecology of the body.

To support your body’s immune system, be sure your diet includes plenty of natural vitamin C. This powerful antioxidant plays a central role in the repair and regeneration of tissues, and helps protect cells throughout the body. Good food sources of vitamin C include:

1. Broccoli
2. Cantaloupe
3. Kiwi
4. Oranges
5. Peppers
6. Pineapple
7. Pink grapefruit
8. Strawberries

Consider organic forms of these foods, as several are on the Dirty Dozen List from the Environmental Working Group. You may also want to try supplemental vitamin C. While it is available in many forms, Dr. Andrew Weil suggests using a simple vitamin C supplement derived from D-glucose, taken with a meal to prevent stomach upset. For more information, www.ewg.org/foodnews/dirty-dozen.php.

Thank you from CST staff

The temple staff wishes to thank the recent volunteers who have given us their time in the office to help us with the many tasks required to keep the temple running smoothly. Our deepest appreciation is extended. If you would like to volunteer on a regular basis or even just once, please sign up at www.signupgenius.com/go/9040f48a9a62aa57-office

CST Welcomed Palestinian Peace Activist Sulaiman Khatib on December 11

A standing room only crowd came to CST on a Tuesday night to hear the personal story of Sulaiman Khatib. His commitment to non-violence and willingness to work with both Israelis and Palestinians resonated with the audience of congregants and community members. Thanks go to Rabbi Stephanie, who met Sulaiman in the West Bank, invited him to CST and skillfully chaired the program.

Are You Interested in Traveling to Israel and the West Bank?

After the insightful and moving presentation by the Palestinian peace activist Sulaiman Khatib, many congregants asked about the possibility of a CST trip to Israel and the West Bank. This would be a trip to not only explore and deepen our connection to Israel but also to understand the perspectives and experiences of Palestinians. As I saw on my recent trip, there is humanity on both sides. If you are interested in visiting Israel and the West Bank, please email me at rabbikramer@cstsr.org.

Inclusivity, Diversity, Access, and Equality are Core Values for CST

We believe that everyone should be treated with respect and dignity, regardless of sex, gender identity, or expression. In accordance with our values, everyone at CST is welcome to use bathrooms that best align with their gender identity. The Board of Directors is in the process of discussing and evaluating changes to the current bathroom configuration at CST, toward a goal of providing restrooms that are more reflective of our values of inclusivity and equality. Input on this topic is welcome, please contact Sharon Bauman, sbauman@manatt.com, with any suggestions or concerns.
Jewish Teens Love CHAVERIM

Jewish teens from all over the county meet by grade level twice monthly on a week night for dinner and a compelling discussion. Contact Rick Concoff, Teen Education Director, about joining today! (707)477-9196 or concoff@yahoo.com.

Gelt-a-Thon Success!

On December 2nd, tireless volunteers called our entire congregation for our annual Gelt-a-Thon fundraiser. Thank you so much for your generosity; we raised over $40,000!
Thank You to the Congregation!

A huge thank you to all the generous CST members and friends who donated gifts to this year’s annual Posada Toy Drive put on by Comité VIDA. The Posada was well attended by families living in the Roseland District with over 260 happy children participating in various holiday art activities, receiving presents from Santa Claus and toothbrushes from the tooth fairy. Shomrei Torah’s Social Action Committee (SAC) worked alongside STAaRS to collect many carloads of presents. Bikes were donated and repaired by Community Bikes and given away in a raffle.

Anyone interested in finding out more of what the Social Action Committee is doing and how you can be part of a wonderful group of folks, feel free to contact the office. We meet the first Monday of the month at 7pm in the Kolbo room.

December Board Wrap-Up

There’s been so much going on at CST—from Shasbanukah and our Interfaith Thanksgiving to a talk by Palestinian Peace Activist, Sulaiman Khatib, CST continues to offer a wide variety of programming that is resonating with our members. Members of the Board are still working on strategic fundraising models and opportunities that are coming your way—stay tuned. Our one and only fundraiser, the December Gelt-a-thon resulted in a 52% participation rate with just over $40,000 raised. This amount was more than some years but less than 2017.

Another important ongoing issue for the Board is the topic of emergency preparedness for both man-made and natural disasters as well as daily ongoing security issues facing our staff and congregants. Several people have been tasked with research and results/plans will be shared as they become available. The Board approved adding three hours of security on Saturday mornings when there is no B’nai Mitzvah so now every Saturday morning service will have coverage. We know this will add expense which, of course, raised another discussion of how to fund these security issues.

As always, one of the most exciting topics of discussion was our thriving religious school and teen youth activity. The L’Dor V’Dor program on January 27 was an opportunity to connect all generations at CST with a special morning of food, learning and fun. Take pride in the number of teens who attended both the Los Angeles trip (13 teens) and the L’Taken trip to Washington, D.C. (19 teens) with Malcolm and Rabbi Stephanie – which is so much more than some much bigger congregations. Until next time...
Los Angeles Teen Trip
January 4-6, 2019

In the program’s third year, Rabbi Stephanie and Malcolm took 13 young teens from Shomrei Torah to explore Jewish Los Angeles. Living in Sonoma County, our teens do not usually have exposure to what Jewish life is like for other American Jews. During this trip, they got to see some of those differences in action.

They visited the mikveh at the American Jewish University, learning about how it is operated and when one would use it. They also experienced a lively Shabbat evening service at Beit T’shuvah, a landmark Jewish residential rehabilitation center. They heard new melodies coming from the full band, testimonials from residents and their families, and even tasted salted caramel challah baked in-house. They also visited the Museum of Tolerance and the Skirball Museum (which featured an exhibit on Supreme Court Justice, Ruth Bader Ginsberg).

Additionally, these young teens spent time at B’nai David-Judea, a modern orthodox congregation in the historic Pico-Robertson neighborhood. They had a morning program with their seventh grade class, discussing their similarities, differences, and asking questions. Many of our participants had little to no exposure to someone who lives a Jewish life like they do.

By the end of this three day trip, our young congregants bonded and learned together. Hopefully, each one of them has a new appreciation and understanding for Judaism, its practices, and its customs.
L’Taken Washington DC Trip - January 11-13, 2019

Shomrei Torah sent a group of teens to Washington DC for the L’Taken Social Justice Seminar for the eighth consecutive year – regardless of the longest government shutdown in American history. Despite the shutdown and a two-day snowstorm, our 15 teens still accomplished something incredible.

The Religious Action Center, the legislative branch of the URJ, brought together dozens of congregations from all over the US for this seminar. During their four days in DC, our teens participated in programming and simulations all geared toward the understanding of these three important points: what issues are in need of advocacy, why the pursuit of justice is inherently Jewish, and just what can a teen do about it. In addressing these, the RAC made space for the teens dive deep and taught them how to be an effective advocate. All this culminated in our teens meeting with representatives on Capitol Hill.

Most of the congressional offices were opened, despite the shutdown, so our teens were able to lobby on issues upon which they are the most passionate. Staffers from the offices of Senators Kamala Harris and Dianne Feinstein and Representatives Jared Huffman (CA-2) and Mike Thompson (CA-5) were there to listen to what the teens had prepared. The Shomrei Torah delegation chose to lobby on campaign finance reform, funding disability education programs, immigration reform, gun violence prevention, LGBTQ+ rights, comprehensive sex education, and climate change. While explaining why these issues were important to them as teens and as Jews, they requested cosponsoring for legislation the Reform movement supports.

Our teens were challenged in a unique way while they were in DC. This caliber of experiential education is something truly special, and we know just how vital the work is. These fifteen young adults know what they must do now to make their future a better place.

We encourage you to join us at Shabbat services honoring our L’taken participants on Friday, February 15 at 6:15 PM to hear what our teens had to say to our elected officials.
Whatever your reason to belong, Shomrei Torah belongs to you!

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FEBRUARY SERVICES

Friday, February 1
6:15 pm — New Member Shabbat Service

Saturday, February 2
Weekly Torah portion: Mishpatim
8:45 am — Torah study led by Rabbi George
10:30 am — Shabbat Service

Friday, February 8
6:15 pm — Rabbi's Tisch with Rabbi Geoffrey Dennis

Saturday, February 9
Weekly Torah portion: Terumah
8:45 am — Torah study led by Rabbi Geoffrey Dennis
10:30 am — Shabbat Service

Friday, February 15
6:15 pm — Shabbat Service

Saturday, February 16
Weekly Torah portion: Tetzaveh
8:45 am — Torah Study led by Rabbi George
10:30 am — Shabbat Service

Friday, February 22
6:15 pm — Shabbat Game Night

Saturday, February 23
Weekly Torah portion: Ki Tisa
8:45 am — Torah study led by Rabbi Stephanie
10:30 am — Shabbat Service

See our latest calendar at www.cstsr.org

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.