



Your donations will be doubled between January 7th and January 14th, 2021!



This is the last push for the annual Tradition of Giving campaign, which wraps up on January 31, 2021. To help incentivize the message that our goal remains at 100% participation, beloved member Jeffrey Schechter has offered to match every donation from January 7 through January 14, up to \$7,000. Thank you so much, Jeffrey, for this wonderful *mitzvah*.

This is it... If you have not donated to the Tradition of Giving yet, please donate and make our 2nd annual Tradition of Giving, even more successful than the first!



Rabbi's Tisches Committee Highlights

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page 3-4

Covid-19 Update

Since we expect our home on the hill to remain closed through the winter season, the recently created CST Covid re-entry team will spend this time preparing, beginning with evaluating when and how to reopen as safely as possible. Our rabbis and board members are concerned about our health and safety; our goal is to reopen when it is safe for all of our congregants, from the most hardy to our most vulnerable.

Throughout history, Jews have faced and overcome adversity; with seasons of damaging wildfires, Sonoma County Jews have certainly had our share. During these dark times, we have come together to pray, comfort, support, and heal. At the beginning of the pandemic, Rabbi George and Rabbi Stephanie seamlessly transitioned to an online platform to continue to provide comfort, care and connection to our members. With the assistance of our dedicated staff and volunteers, our rabbis have been working to ensure that our community continues to thrive during these challenging times.

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COVID-19 is yet another opportunity for our community to support each

other, albeit this time from afar and often via Zoom. If you have not already done so, we urge you to explore all of the enriching online opportunities available for CST members to pray, learn and gather together.

The CST Covid re-entry team — Co-Presidents, Paul Berlant and Ann DuBay, Dave Fichera, Erica Magers, Jillian Navarro, and Rabbi Stephanie Kramer — will keep you informed about our progress in sculpting our reopening plan based on local and state guidelines. In the meantime, remember that we are a strong and loving community and will continue to learn, pray, and flourish during this difficult moment in history.

Rabbi George will be on sabbatical January-March 2021

Dear Shomrei Torah Members and Friends,

The Torah instructed our ancient, agriculturally based ancestors that their land should not be continuously cultivated. It needs to rest at least once every seven years in order to remain productive.

And just as the land needs a rest to be renewed, so do human beings. That is, of course, one of the amazing potential benefits of Shabbat each week! And it's also the basis of a rabbinic sabbatical, a break from routine and responsibilities in order to seek rejuvenation and enrichment. Toward that end, I will be away on a regularly scheduled sabbatical from January through March of 2021.

Unlike the Torah's legislation that land on sabbatical lie completely fallow, I don't see this period as simply a time for vacation or doing nothing but an opportunity to study, read, write and reflect without distraction. The COVID-19 pandemic will limit my ability to do certain things, such as travel to Israel, but it won't get in the way of my using this period for learning and growth. It is both a gift and an investment you make in me and in the life of the synagogue.

Many Shomrei Torah members have already stepped up to help lead services, Torah study



Rabbi George

and meditation sessions in my absence. Although I'll miss being with you, it's a wonderful opportunity for our community to come together in these activities. And an especially big thank you goes to Rabbi Stephanie in advance for not only fulfilling her many responsibilities at Shomrei Torah but for covering for me as well.

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Thank you, Shomrei Torah, for the gift of sabbatical! I hope and pray that my time away will allow me to return renewed and inspired, ready to continue our journey together.

In gratitude, Rabbi George

RABBI'S **TISCHES**

On the second Friday of each month, join your CST family virtually at the Rabbi's *Tisch* (table) in lieu of regular Friday night Shabbat Services.

Seeds of History with Michael David Lukas

Friday, January 8, 6:15 PM
Zoom and Live Stream info:
cstsr.org/event/rabbis-tisch4.html

A brief reading from *The Last*Watchman of Old Cairo will be followed by a discussion of the novel and the inspiration behind it.

Michael David Lukas has been a Fulbright Scholar in Turkey, a night-shift proofreader in Tel Aviv, a student at the American University of Cairo and a waiter at the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference in Vermont.

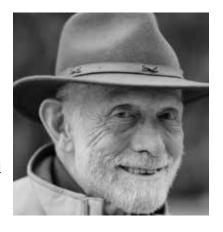


The Way Out of No Way with Michael Nagler

Friday, February 12, 6:15 PM

Zoom and Live Stream info: cstsr.org/event/rabbis-tisch5.htmll

Following up on his film, *The Third Harmony*, this presentation by nonviolence scholar Michael Nagler will open the window to the inspiring developments in nonviolence theory and practice that have emerged over the last thirty years. Michael will trace its roots in Jewish tradition as



he describes the 'state of the art' right now and the resources it offers us to get through our contemporary problems with creative tools that not only solve immediate problems but also put us on the path to lasting peace.

Michael Nagler, PhD, is professor emeritus at UC Berkeley, where he founded the Peace and Conflict Studies Program and taught upper-division courses on nonviolence, meditation and other subjects. He has spoken and written on peace and nonviolence for many years and is president of the Metta Center for Nonviolence. On the second Friday of each month, join your CST family virtually at the Rabbi's *Tisch* (table) in lieu of regular Friday night Shabbat Services.

The Perils and Possibilities of Water in Israel with Dr. Rachel Havrelock

Friday, March 12, 6:15 PM

Zoom and Live Stream info: cstsr.org/event/rabbis-tisch6.html

Water distribution has sustained the State of Israel and exacerbated its conflicts. This talk will assess the current water situation in Israel, explain its historical roots and propose ways in which water management could support a new peace movement.

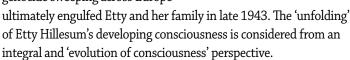
Rachel Havrelock is Professor of English and Jewish Studies at the University

of Illinois at Chicago where she also directs The Freshwater Lab, focused on water justice and species survival amidst accelerated climate change.

Unfolding toward Being: The Evolution of Consciousness of Etty Hillesum with Barbara Morrill, PhD

Friday, April 9, 6:15 PM
Zoom and Live Stream info:
cstsr.org/event/rabbis-tisch7.html

Etty Hillesum, a young Dutch, Jewish woman of twenty-seven, found an inner path to liberation in the face of the horror of her times. The Nazi genocide sweeping across Europe



This exploration will offer a contemporary yet ancient perspective that tracks Etty Hillesum's own radical evolution of consciousness in a treacherous time in European history. We glimpse Etty's two and a half year diary that reflects a mere 'moment' in time, that is, indeed, timeless.

Our speaker, Barbara Morrill, PhD, is an Associate Professor and former chair of the Integral Counseling Psychology Program at The Institute of Integral Studies in San Francisco. She is a Clinical Psychologist licensed in CA and has been in private practice in Palo Alto for 30 years.

Peace in the Middle East with Jordan Reimer: the Strategic Context of the Israel-UAE Deal

Tuesday, January 12, 7:00 PM

Zoom info: cstsr.org/event/peaceinmiddleeast

The normalization between Israel and the United Arab Emirates (and Bahrain) is a rare piece of good news from a conflict-torn region. But who exactly are these new partners of Israel? And what are their motivations?

Join Jordan Reimer in exploring the political dynamics of the Middle East today. He will uncover what's behind the historic agreement and what it means for the United States, the Palestinians and the future of the region.

Jordan Reimer is a policy analyst at the RAND Corporation.
Previously, he served as a Middle East intelligence analyst at the New York City Police Department and policymaker at the Department of Defense. Reimer has an MPA from the Princeton School of Public and International Affairs and is a term member at the Council on Foreign Relations.



From the Ashes: How our Czech Torah was Saved and Given New Life

Wednesday, February 3, 7:00 PM Zoom info: cstsr.org/event/fromtheashes

Congregation Shomrei Torah is honored to be the custodian of one of 1,564 Torah scrolls rescued from the ashes of Jewish communities destroyed during the Holocaust. The name "Shomrei Torah" translates as "Keeper of Torah," chosen by the synagogue's founding families in honor of our Holocaust Torah.

Lois Roman, a Trustee of the Memorial Scrolls Trust (MST), will speak about the journey of our scroll from before WWII to modern day. A series of miracles allowed a huge hoard of Czech Torah scrolls to survive the devastation of the Shoah and stand as a testament to the communities that perished. After a miraculous story of survival, these scrolls arrived in London and were dispersed on permanent loan to caring communities around the world. To those who were entrusted with the scrolls, they are a symbol of hope as well as sorrow.

Jewish Literary Circle

Third Thursday of each month at 6:15 PM

Our focus is sharing insights and lively discussions about Jewish literature and other published materials. Recently we hosted Liz Fox, author of *We Are Going to Be Lucky*. Through her parents' letters to each other, she tells the story of a first-generation Jewish American couple who are separated by war. Liz described how she assembled the letters and she and her husband did a reading for us.

Our thanks and well wishes to Marian McKenna who has ably led the group since its inception. She and her husband, Greg, have moved east to be near her mom. Sandy Sidorsky will now be leading the group.

Upcoming selections:

- January 21: The Best Place on Earth, by Ayelet Tsabari
- February 18: Spies of No Country, by Matti Friedman
- March 18: The Secret Chord, by Geraldine Brooks
- April 15: You Must Know Everything by Isaac Babel (Audio story, we will listen together)

Participants will meet in late March to recommend selections for the next 6 months. If you are interested in joining us for the upcoming meetings and/or would like to attend the planning meeting, please contact Sandy at sandy@sidorsky.com.

Wise Aging with Rabbi Meredith Cahn

Fridays at 11:00 AM

January 8, February 5, March 5, April 2

For the Zoom link, please email Rabbi Meredith at mcahn2@mac.com

This group is based on, but not limited to, *Wise Aging: Living with Joy, Resilience and Spirit*, by Rabbi Rachel Cowan and Linda Thal. We will explore how to find meaning, joy, acceptance and wisdom on our journey into our later years. Jewish and other texts, reflection and sharing will let us learn from each other and from our sources.





Creating Sacred Space - Meditation

Jewish mindfulness adds the teachings of our tradition and the seasons of the Jewish calendar to deepen the meditative experience. Sessions include teaching, meditation instruction and periods of silence. By practicing together, we enhance our ability to listen to the voice within and expand our sense of interconnectedness.

Our Sunday-afternoon sessions from 4:00-5:15 PM are typically conducted by Rabbi Gittleman, a graduate of the Institute for Jewish Spirituality's Jewish Mindfulness Meditation Program and a practitioner of both Buddhist and Jewish meditative practices over the past two decades. While he is on Sabbatical (January-March), we are excited to welcome guest leaders.

For exact dates and more details about our guest speakers, visit www.cstsr.org.

Rabbi Lavey Derby

Reb Derby is a rabbi and teacher who has been leading meditation and retreats for over 20 years and is part of a family line of rabbis that traces back to the year 1550.

Alissa Hirshfeld

Alissa is a longtime student and practitioner of meditation and mindfulness, as well as a Jewish Spiritual Director and psychotherapist.

Adele Pickar and Judith Richlin-Klonsky

Adele and Judith, friends and longtime Shomrei Torah members, will bring their combined experience in meditation, Qigong and Jewish practice to lead a session of relaxation, brief study and meditation.

Cantor Kerith Spencer-Shapiro

Cantor Kerith, cantor at University Synagogue in Los Angeles, also serves as adjunct faculty with the Institute for Jewish Spirituality, where she was a member of their first Clergy Leadership Program cohort.

Creating Sacred Space sessions are open to all (feel free to bring family or friends!), via Zoom or Live-Stream. For a weekly email reminder and the Zoom link, sign up through the office at aa@cstr.org.

HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS

Bagel Club

The Shomrei Torah Bagel Club has lined up some interesting programs for your



first Sunday of the month Zoom viewing. Since the Bagel Club is meeting on Zoom, you will provide your own bagel, lox and cream cheese, but we are hoping it won't be too much longer until we can meet together for brunch. Watch the Shomrei Torah emails for zoom links and more information.

Sunday, January 3, 9:00 AM



The speaker will be Karlene M. Navarro, Esq., Director of the Independent Office of Law Enforcement Review and Outreach (IOLERO).

IOLERO was expanded at the last election to provide stronger oversight of the Sonoma County Sheriff's office. Director Navarro will talk to us about the responsibilities of her office and what the passing of Proposition P means to all of us who live in Sonoma County.

Sunday, February 7, 9:00 AM



We will hear the familiar, beautiful voice of our Cantorial Soloist, Erica Wisner. Erica will talk to us about being a Cantorial Soloist at Shomrei Torah and perhaps we can even get her to sing something for us.

Sunday, March 7, 9:00 AM

The program for March is not yet finalized, but you can be sure it will be a good one!

Martin Luther King Shabbat

Friday, January 15, 6:15PM Streamed only: www.cstsr.org

Join us for a moving Shabbat service commemorating the spirit and work of Dr.

Martin Luther King, Jr. This service will feature the CST Choir and include songs of justice and hope as well as music from the Civil Rights era.



Purim

Thursday, February 25, 6:15 PM

Join us LIVE for a Zoomtastic Pandemic Purim! In the spirit of the classic book series, the CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE SPIEL is a hilarious, interactive retelling of the Book of Esther! In most of the scenes, the action stops in the middle and the narrator poses the various possible endings to the viewing

audience, who will vote to choose which scene or ending they want to see next.

While the plot of the story doesn't change, there is an opportunity to explore the motivations and meaning behind the characters' choices. You won't want to miss this pandemically perfect spiel! Register for the zoom link in advance.

Passover

Sunday, March 28, 6:15 PM

Streamed only: www.cstsr.org

"There's no Seder like our Seder, like no Seder we know!" Get ready for a Passover story set to Broadway melodies! Inspiring



and fun parody for all ages. Join Rabbi Stephanie, Cantorial Soloist Erica Wisner, and a variety of Shomrei Torah members as we make our way through the Broadway songbook and go from slavery to freedom. Parody adaptations generously shared by Temple Beth El of Boca Raton, FL.

Yom Haatzmaut Celebration

Friday, April 16, 6:15 PM Streamed OR ZOOM ??

We will be coming together for a virtual tour of Israel led by a professional Israeli tour guide! Don't forget your virtual sunscreen, hat, and water and get ready to



experience the beauty of Israel from the comfort of your living room! We will be on the same Zoom link as our normal Friday night Shabbat services.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEI&B) Task Force

Shomrei Torah is an inclusive and welcoming community, encouraging participation from all who seek a connection to Jewish life regardless of religious background, race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, political affiliation, ability, age, sexual orientation or gender identity. As part of our commitment to being an open tent, a place that welcomes all people, including those who have been historically and institutionally marginalized or excluded from the Jewish community, we are forming a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEI&B) Task Force.

The goal of our DEI&B task force is to ensure Shomrei Torah welcomes all people, celebrates our differences and fosters a welcoming community of inclusion and understanding so that everyone may participate in all religious practices and in the entire community life of the congregation. We would welcome your involvement in our task force as we launch a review of our policies, programs, practices. We'd love to hear from you, all ideas are welcome. To join the DEI&B Taskforce, please contact the office.

Social Action Committee - A Challenging Year for Us All

2020 will certainly go down as the most challenging year in our lifetimes. Along with the rest of the world, the Social Action Committee had to go "underground" as Covid swept the nation, but that did not stop our organizing and activism.

From our homes and places of shelter, SAC stayed busy presenting Zoom forums on climate change and the ballot propositions. We did non-partisan Get Out The Vote outreach in crucial areas of the country via mail, text and phone. Also, members of SAC called many of our CST families to check on them during this isolation-filled time. Often, new connections were made with members who shared their own stories of the lockdown.

This is also a time of transition. Long time co-chairs Ellen van den Berg and Bruce Berkowitz are stepping down after six years. During their tenure, much has been accomplished and the Social Action Committee has had a significant impact on the congregation and the larger community.

The new Chair starting in January is Judy Kay. Judy brings a strong commitment to the values of SAC and CST and is a very organized and hard-working member of our team. We have survived 2020 and look forward to taking on the challenges and opportunities of 2021 and beyond. We invite you to attend one of our monthly meetings if you'd like to see what we're all about. We meet (on Zoom these days) at 7pm on the first Monday of the month.

Finance Committee

The CST Finance Committee is one of the lesser known but very important standing synagogue committees. The group meets every other month to assess our financial statements, our investment performance and the budget. They also review contracts and discuss the more important financial challenges facing CST, making recommendations to the Board accordingly.

The Committee has spent a good part of its time the last few years refining our financial reports to be more compliant with accounting standards and has recently recommended to the Board that we change accounting firms. In addition, and for the same reasons, we have recruited and recommended hiring an outside accountant to perform annual reviews. Accurate and compliant financial statements are essential to our long-term financial health.

Earlier this year, the Committee met and discussed in depth the possible consequences of the pandemic on our finances and made resulting recommendations to the Budget Committee. By taking a proactive stance, we were able to anticipate possible pitfalls and put plans in place to address potential concerns.

We have a very active and dedicated committee. Nevertheless, we are interested in adding new members, because at least half of the current committee members have been on the committee since before our synagogue was built nearly fourteen years ago. While the cultural perspectives they bring are invaluable, new viewpoints and perspectives are welcome to ensure we keep our discussions relevant.

While several members are CPAs, it is not mandatory that Committee members have strictly financial backgrounds. Those with business backgrounds or just an interest and knowledge in finances are welcome to apply to become members. If interested, please contact the Committee chair, John Weinstein at weinstein.john@gmail.com to learn more.

Caring Committee

To care and to be cared for are two of the greatest gifts in life – and the benefits are equally rewarding whether you are the giver or the receiver. For these reasons, and because the need is so great right now, I urge you to think about joining the Caring Committee's meal train. This small but mighty group provides meals to congregants who are recovering from illness, injury or the birth of a child.

They desperately need your help. During the initial days of the pandemic, participation in the meal train dropped sharply. We now know that COVID-19 cannot be transmitted via food. Dropping off meals can be done safely using disposable containers and leaving the meal at the front door. Please consider becoming part of this *mitzvah* by contacting Bonnier Ferber Hart at (707) 480-1666 or *bonnie113@sbcglobal.net*.

CST Choir

The Shomrei Torah choir continues to make music "together" during the pandemic! If you're interested in finding out about upcoming opportunities to bring music to the community, please contact Cantorial Soloist Erica Wisner at <code>ericaw@cstsr.org</code>

Religious Practice Committee

The Religious Practice Committee meets monthly to offer planning support to our rabbis and religious programming. Several years ago, we proposed and implemented the synagogue's live streaming services. At the time, we set out to increase access to services and special events online, but we never imagined how important it would become during the current pandemic. Now, our virtual services and programs allow us to stay connected to one another despite the many challenges we have faced in recent months.

We are proud of the high level of programming we have been able to maintain through the hard work and dedication of our staff and volunteers. This year's exceptional virtual High Holy Day services were successful thanks to the countless hours of planning, drafting, recording and editing by our administrative staff, Rabbis George and Stephanie, Cantorial Soloist Eric Wisner, the choir, soloists, musicians, Torah readers, Board Members and speakers. We look forward to continuing to connect to our members and the community with engaging services and programming online and in person, as soon as we can do so safely.

Cultural Committee

In 2019, Rabbi George formed a new Cultural Committee designed to present Jewish cultural events, free of charge, for the enjoyment of the congregation and to facilitate community building. Committee chair Beverly McChesney, along with Catherine Reisman, Dena Lash, Lori Lapides and Ronnie Campagna, work to provide interesting, uplifting events (and, before Covid, great snacks).

Concerts have come from a wide range of Jewish culture including Jewish folk songwriters with the Folk Experience ensemble, a transcendent evening of music held on the anniversary of Kristallnacht, featuring Jewish composers interred during the Shoah, one of our favorite groups, the San Francisco Yiddish Combo, aka Dirty Cello, an evening of storytelling with Joel ben Izzy and, most recently, a virtual concert of peace and social justice music.

Unfortunately, two planned events had to be cancelled or delayed due to the pandemic, but we look forward to re-scheduling and adding new events for 2021. For more information, contact Beverly McChesney or the CST office.

CST Women's Interest Groups

The CST Women's Interest Groups have adapted to the coronavirus by meeting on Zoom to allow women in the congregation to stay connected and share interests. The movie group, which meets once a month on the second Sunday of the month, has been watching movies on Netflix or Amazon Prime and discussing each month's choice on Zoom. The knitting and crochet group also meets on Zoom on the fourth Monday of the month. Participants share patterns, finished products and advice. The dinner group is meeting in the afternoon, on Zoom for now, for Happy Hour instead of dinner. The afternoon book group will resume after CST reopens. For information about any of these groups or ideas for new groups, contact Ronnie Campagna at ronniecc@gmail.com.

Torah Study

Torah Study takes place every Shabbat (Saturday) morning from 8:45-10:15 AM. Each week, a lively discussion of the week's Torah portion is led by one of our rabbis or a temple member. Newcomers are welcome, whether or not you've read any Torah or know any Hebrew. You may call the office to arrange to borrow a Torah text with commentary. We invite you to join us! Contact Fran Danoff with any questions at frandanoff@aol.com.



The Year So Far in STaRS

Our religious school program this year has been very different. While we haven't been able to meet in person, when we meet virtually every Sunday morning, our religious school community is as strong as ever. Our families have been diving into the art projects, text discussions, recipes, videos, virtual activities and more. It has been so rewarding to watch students continue to learn and grow together during these times, and we have gotten great feedback from our parents. Thank you families for joining us in learning this year. It is so exciting to see all the wonderful things you create each week and to hear about the discussions you've been having about the lessons!

Teen Leadership and Professional Development Program - For teens grades 8th-12th

It is not too late to participate in our Leadership and Professional Development program! Register at *cstsr.org/form/teenleadership* to join us for the remaining sessions. Registration is \$18.

We meet on the following Sundays at 4pm:

January 10th:

Representing Yourself Virtually w/ Dave Fichera

February 7th:

Writing an Effective Resume w/ Cara Baum

March 7th:

Building Healthy Relationships w/ Shalom Bayit

April 11th:

Personal Finance 101 w/ Norm Eisley

SHORTY Events - For teens grades 9th-12th

We had so much fun during our virtual Chanukah party and can't wait for our SHORTY events for the rest of the year!! Look at the calendar on our website or reach out to Morgan, youth@cstsr.org, for Zoom information.

SHORTY PowerPoint Night

January 9, 7:30-8:30 PM

The TikTok sensation is coming to SHORTY! Present on your favorite niche topics in a fun PowerPoint extravaganza.

SHORTY Community Watch Club

February 7, 14, 21, 28, 5:00 - 6:00 PM

Kick back and share some laughs as we watch Community together on Netflix!

SHORTY Purim Party

February 26, 8:00 PM

Join us for a virtual Purim celebration for the ages!

SHORTY Bob Ross Paint Night

March 13, 4:00 PM

Let's take a break and relax with the calming presence of the one and only Bob Ross. We'll be watching an episode of *The Joys of Painting* and crafting together over Zoom. Not a painter? No worries! Bring supplies for your favorite crafting or art projects and let's unwind and create together.

SHORTY Passover Party

April 3, 3:00 PM

We'll be celebrating Passover together virtually with lots of Passover shenanigans and maybe even a cook-off? Join us to celebrate the Exodus right!

SHORTY Self-Care Night

May 22, 8:00 PM

Take a night off from studying for finals to relax and hang out with your friends at CST. Bring your favorite way to relax to the Zoom call.

- **TEMPLE** NEWS -

2nd Annual Tradition of Giving — A Reason to Celebrate!

As the year on the calendar turns to 2021, there are many reasons to celebrate. First, we made it—collectively and individually – and, although it hasn't been easy...we are still here!

We are also very grateful to members Marsha Jacobs and Donna Waldman for taking on and organizing our December 13th phone call Give-A-Thon. A big thank you as well to the many volunteers who made calls this year from the comfort of their homes. We thank all of you who stepped up and donated.

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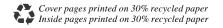
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TIME SENSITIVE



Help us reach our 100% participation goal! Donate before January 31, 2021. www.cstsr.org

Having Trouble Connecting to Us Virtually?

- Need help with Zoom or Streaming?
- Would you like to listen through your phone?

We are here to help!

Call (707) 578-5519

Or email zoom@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.

Congregation Shomrei Torah

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(unless otherwise noted) FAX (707) 578-3967

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