

# SHERITH ISRAEL NEWS

JANUARY–MAY 2022



**WE'LL MISS YOU:** Sherith Israel will say *l'hitraot* to Rabbi Abby Phelps at a special Shabbat service on June 4.

*CSI says farewell to Rabbi Phelps*

## SEARCH FOR INNOVATIVE STUDIO LEADER UNDER WAY

When Rabbi Abby Phelps announced she is leaving Sherith Israel in July to join her partner, Cantor Richard Newman, in Milwaukee, she set off a bittersweet mix of appreciation, joy and sadness.

"I wish her well," says Rabbi Jessica Graf. "Her heart will be in one place." She praises Rabbi Phelps' leadership of Studio @ Sherith Israel. "Abby helped us create a learning environment that brings Judaism to life."

Everyone who worked or studied with Rabbi Phelps over the past four years shares the same mixture of delight for Rabbi Phelps and appreciation for what she brought to Sherith Israel. Youth program manager Natalie Weizman is excited for Rabbi Phelps' next adventure. She adds, "Rabbi Phelps' love for Jewish education is unique. We are doing things that are

*Studio Leader continues, page 12*

*Ongoing planning for another uncertain year*

## CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES MARK 2022

A new secular year brings yet another leap into the unknown. Sherith Israel leadership is weighing many possibilities to move forward despite Covid-19 and its variants.

### It's all about connecting

Getting people back into our building remains a challenge, particularly since Covid may be here to stay. Although we believe most congregants have been vaccinated, people have different personal circumstances and different risk tolerances. Says board president Lindsay Braunig, "We want to bring people together in person, but we don't want to alienate or isolate people who aren't comfortable with this. We also understand that many congregants have gotten into the habit of not going out."

The pandemic has very much affected children. Rabbi Jessica Graf notes that youngsters have been resilient but still lacked vital opportunities to socialize.

"We hope everyone down to five years old will be vaccinated by the end of January. We know young people and families are hungry for social interaction." She sees the new year offering opportunities to do more programming in all age groups from tots to adults as we strive to return to a near-normal state.

"Isolation is such a huge problem," says Rabbi Graf. "Enthusiastic attendance for online programs has shown us how important it is for people to live in community. People really value what we may once have taken for granted." Towards that end, clergy and lay leaders are re-examining everything the synagogue does. Rabbi Graf is thinking about how we can extend the energy and love our congregants have shown during Covid as CSI goes fully "live" again. "We want to build more community within the synagogue and extend our warmth outside. This will include expanding the

*Challenges, Opportunities continues, page 6*

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

**2ND NIGHT CONGREGATIONAL SEDER**  
6 pm, Saturday, April 16

**MELODIES FROM THE OLD COUNTRY**  
7 pm, Tuesday, April 26

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Member of the Union for  
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Senior Rabbi

Abby Phelps

Rabbi Educator

Toby Glaser

Cantor

#### EMERITUS CLERGY

Lawrence Raphael (z"l) Rabbi Emeritus

Martin Weiner Rabbi Emeritus

Martin Feldman Cantor Emeritus

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## A MOMENT WITH CANTOR TOBY GLASER

### THE EVOLVING BEAUTY OF OUR SIDDUR

**Our beautiful prayers in the siddur are constructed to express our own intentions for a better world and to better ourselves and our communities.** They are designed to draw us into a higher realm, using florid language and complex poetic structures to inspire us to greater heights of faith and connection. We see the prayerbook as a sacred text with its own magic and secrets, which can only be unlocked through careful study and engagement. But how old are these prayers? Where do they come from?

The first and most obvious answer is from the Tanakh. Our siddur contains countless passages that are quotations from scripture. For example, the *Sh'ma* and *V'ahavta* are a selection of excerpts from the books of Numbers and Deuteronomy chosen for their emphasis on love and peoplehood. Other prayers come directly from the prophets. "*Ki mitzion teitzei Torah*" ("For out of Zion shall go forth the law"), a part of our Torah service, is a quotation from the book of Isaiah, with other citations taken from the prophet Micah.

**Later formulations, indeed the entire blessing formula of "Baruch Atah Adonai," have their roots in the First and Second Temple periods.** They gradually became more standardized over time. German liturgist Ismar Elbogen wrote, "Only uniformity of the liturgical ceremonies could guarantee religious unity. For this purpose it was essential to create fixed patterns... As to how this happened, and at whose instance, the tradition is silent." Only under Rabban Gamaliel II, after the fall of the Second Temple, were

these prayers truly codified and standardized, leaving us with prayers such as the *Amidah* in a form quite similar to traditional prayerbooks today.

Yet our siddur was not finished! Beginning around 550 CE, after the "standard liturgy" was considered fixed and unchangeable, a new liturgical genre evolved. Middle Eastern Jewish communities gave us liturgical poetry, the *piyyut*. This flowery poetic style made reference to biblical characters and events, while also tying in liturgical themes and ritual motifs throughout the service. During this time, our famous liturgical poems, such as *Lcha Dodi* and *Adon Olam*, were crafted and disseminated. This tradition, surrounding our fixed prayers with liturgical poetry and contemporary readings, has continued to the present day. The Reform movement's siddur, *Mishkan T'filah*, contains both Hebrew and English readings and meditations that expand on the themes of our traditional prayers, keeping alive in our siddur the spirit of creativity and renewal.

The scholar Reuven Hammer writes, "Approaching God in prayer becomes an experience of reliving history and anchoring oneself solidly in that history. We stand before God not as individuals but as part of a historical entity, and if we are not conscious of that, the liturgy alerts us to it." Just as the Torah is a fixed constant in the Jewish story, grounding our faith, the siddur is the ongoing commentary on our spiritual journey. It reinvents itself in each generation through new theology, philosophy and liturgical innovation. ■

### PEOPLE OF THE BOOK

*"So Moses cried out to the LORD, saying 'O God, pray heal her.'"*

— Numbers 12:13

Miriam and Aaron, Moses' siblings, "spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman he had married" (Numbers 12:1). Whether they referred to Moses' Moabite wife Zipporah or to another, dark-skinned wife, we don't know. But their bad speech incensed God, Who struck Miriam—not Aaron—with snow-

white scales. Moses prayed for her. God healed Miriam but commanded that she be sent outside the Israelites' encampment for seven days. Not all our prayers bring such results. But, as Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel teaches, prayer cannot mend a broken bridge, but it can mend a broken heart. ■

# 4

## Questions for RABBI JESSICA GRAF

**During the pandemic from early 2020 to the early spring of 2022, Congregation Sherith Israel has had to pivot more than once. We've gone from being entirely open to a complete shutdown at the height of Covid. Now, we're in a hybrid state. We asked Rabbi Jessica Graf what it means to gather as a congregation in all these various forms.**

### **Q: What has changed over the last two years?**

**A:** As we look back over the pandemic, it's clear that the way we gather has been re-thought, re-evaluated, re-designed. We now meet in virtual space to do things in ways that no one ever imagined. For example, most of our recent *shiva minyanim* have been on Zoom; we have mourned together, yet apart. We have observed important lifecycle and ritual moments as a community, yet not together in one physical space. As we imagine the eventual end of this pandemic, we are challenged to reconsider the ways we gather and how we create community.

### **Q: How has your thinking about the need for a physical synagogue building changed during the pandemic?**

**A:** When I was the director of congregational engagement for Synagogue 3000, I worked with synagogues around the country, investigating their innovations and cutting-edge ideas. Our staff was largely split into two age groups—half were hired as young thinkers, excited to brainstorm about the next iteration of religion in America. Half were seasoned professors, older and well-respected scholars of synagogue life in America. We had many spirited conversations about the future of religion in general and Judaism in particular. Ultimately, a divide forced us to reconsider what we believed. The young folks on staff—except for me—were quite convinced that synagogues were obsolete. They felt sure that communities without walls would replace houses of worship. The scholars saw a need for sacred spaces that Jewish communities could call home. I fell in the latter category, despite my age. Our sanctuary provides comfort and inspiration for everyone who comes inside!

However, we've survived this pandemic (so far!) by focusing on the people in our community—a modern diaspora. Our ancestors taught us how to thrive while yearning to return home, and we have. For 18 months, we could only gather on Zoom, yet we remained connected. Community is elastic. While our gathering in the synagogue space has been disrupted repeatedly, our community has proven vibrant, strong and very much alive, despite the fact that we've mainly seen each other in tiny rectangles on a screen for more than a year.

### **Q: How will we gather going forward? What have we learned about what best fits the needs of our community?**

**A:** Despite my frustrations with technology, Zoom hasn't been all bad. It's allowed us to mark Jewish time together, to gather, to share in-jokes and to visit each other virtually at home. I expect that Zoom will continue to be the platform of choice for some events, even after we are fully back to normal programming. For example, hearing a speaker on Zoom can allow for more focused listening—and a front row seat for everyone. Some activities will be best in hybrid form. People far away or not feeling well can join live events and services remotely. That opens our programming to more people.

I am looking forward to in-person, age-related activities. It's helpful for people to talk about issues with people in similar circumstances. We are focusing on new young-adult programming, as well as increasing our tot and toddler offerings. I still have my heart set on a women's spiritual retreat in Costa Rica. Gordon and I are dreaming about the arts-oriented Israel trip we had to put on hold. And our cancelled study trip to the Arizona-Mexico border to learn about immigration still inspires me.

### **Q: What other learning can we take with us from this period?**

**A:** Perhaps the most exciting thing we learned during this time came from our growing awareness of the many issues throughout society that require our attention. Realizing that our interests and values transcend the diversity of our identities allows us to connect deeply with one another. We have learned how crucial community, broadly defined, is for health and support, life and meaning. And we know that we have many things in common with others, even as we celebrate our diversity.

I look forward to continuing to strengthen and build our community through meaningful conversations, both within and outside of the congregation. Please join me as we move ahead into a post-pandemic future. ■





## CONGREGATION SHERITH ISRAEL YAP YOUNG ADULT PROGRAMS

**GATHERINGS:** Our Young Adult Programs create fun ways for 21- to 40-year-old Jewish adults to meet, including a spooky Halloween at Sherith Israel (upper left), an evening at The Academy of Sciences (upper right), and a get-together at Palmer's Tavern on Fillmore Street (lower left). Coming soon, Tu B'Sh-Pot at Liberty Cannabis on Bush Street.

### *Innovative, imaginative programs*

## CREATING A NEW JEWISH COMMUNITY FOR YOUNG ADULTS

**What do Palmers Tavern, the California Academy of Sciences, Liberty Cannabis on Bush Street and Sherith Israel have in common?** They are all venues for gatherings of 21- to 40-year-old Jewish adults under the auspices of CSI's new Young Adult Programs.

The activities, just beginning as we start to emerge from Covid restrictions, are spearheaded by **Cantor Toby Glaser** and CSI membership and development manager **Talia Banarie**. Executive director **Gordon Gladstone** cites the "happy accident" of hiring Talia, who came to Sherith Israel with young-adult programming experience through Moishe House in Monterey and Jewish camping. She is also linked into several Jewish-themed young adult groups on social media, which she uses to promote the new Sherith Israel events. Cantor Glaser was involved in leading Tribe, a group with a fresh take on Jewish tradition and culture for young adults, while he was a cantorial intern at Congregation Rodeph Sholom in New York. Their monthly get-togethers took place in a local bar.

"Creating community means having warm experiences with the same group of people over time," comments Cantor Glaser. "That's how you build community. Young Jews in San Francisco are craving that."

**With lots of fun events on the calendar, response to the program has been positive.** First up was a Sukkot gathering in the parklet booths at Palmers on Fillmore Street. "Given the role of palm fronds, it was kind of a pun," notes Talia. Forty people crammed the sidewalk by the restaurant. **Rabbi Abby Phelps** and membership chair **Christina Jefferson** joined in. Next

came an October Halloween program at Sherith Israel. After Friday-night services, music director **Jonathan Dimmock** went up to the choir loft to play Bach's Toccata and Fugue in D Minor (familiar to many from *Phantom of the Opera*), which sounded spooky enough to make anyone shiver. After that welcome, the group repaired to the chapel to paint pumpkins and tell Jewish ghost and monster stories. "We talked about Lilith, who is being reclaimed by Jewish feminists, as well as the Golem, the Leviathan and other Jewish lore," says Talia.

In November Talia organized another successful gathering at the California Academy's Night Life evening event. Sherith Israel subsidized the \$10 tickets. Adds Talia, "We're using a mix of social and Jewish content to build community."

The event at Liberty Cannabis—Tu B'Sh-Pot—is scheduled after services on Friday, January 14, in observance of Tu b'Shvat. The host of the oneg is **Rabbi James Kahn**, director of national outreach for Holistic Industries, the dispensary's parent company. He will talk about the archaeological evidence of cannabis in Jewish practices. Who knew?

"I enjoy the imagination and fresh perspectives Cantor Glaser and Talia bring to the programs," says Christina, who is always looking for ways to grow CSI membership. "Sure, we'd like to show participants why they should consider membership, but it's not in the forefront. The goal is to create community, which invites more collaborative, relaxed and engaging conversations."

Adds Cantor Glaser, "People need consistency and a spiritual home. If we can create that, we will have succeeded." ■



*An evening filled with music and light*

## CANTOR TOBY GLASER INSTALLED ON SHABBAT CHANUKAH

After a year and a half as Congregation Sherith Israel's cantor, Toby Glaser has been formally installed. The welcome event took place during a festive Shabbat Chanukah that also commemorated the rededication of the Second Temple in ancient days. For us it was a rededication of being together—safely—after the isolation of the pandemic.

Congregational president **Lindsay Braunig** said it best: "Cantor Toby joined us during the deep, dark days of the pandemic. He had to immediately jump in and lead Shabbat services *remotely*, work with b. mitzvah students *remotely*, integrate with the rest of the staff and clergy team *remotely*. He also had to plan our first remote High Holidays. He did all this with the excellence, professionalism and attention to detail that he brings to everything he does."

The in-person service gave Cantor Glaser one of his first real opportunities to bring the full range of his musical talents to the congregation. "I wanted to highlight Koleynu, our congregational choir, at the service," he said. "I don't think people realize how much work Koleynu has done this year, including several rehearsals for the High Holidays before we had to go back to virtual services. We had been doing pieces on the theme of light, and I thought, wow, this would be really great for the Chanukah program." It was.

Cantor Glaser also wanted to showcase the wonderful new Jewish music that's coming out by contemporary and young composers. The program concluded with a piece written by **Rabbi Josh Warshawsky** and **Colleen Dieker**, both active in contemporary Jewish music. "It is a setting of the *Yotzeir Or* text and uses themes of creation and the idea that the Earth was created with a hum, building into all the acts of creation."

Other highlights of the evening included a video greeting from **Cantor Richard Cohn**, director of the Debbie Friedman School of Sacred Music at Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion in New York, as well as video greetings from cantorial friends, colleagues and mentors from around the country.

In her remarks, **Rabbi Jessica Graf** welcomed Cantor Glaser as an integral member of the clergy team, bringing us beautiful music as well as teaching and inspiring others. "We chose Chanukah as the perfect moment of dedication," she noted. "Chanukah represents challenges and darkness. In the darkest time of the year, we are commanded to fill the world with light."

With our new cantor firmly installed, Sherith Israel's world is also filled with beautiful music. ■



## CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES, from page 1

scope of our successful online program Conversations from the Front Lines to mirror society through a Jewish lens.”

### Working with changing guidelines

A key issue remains how changing state and local health mandates will affect when and how congregants come back into the building for various activities. Kabbalat Shabbat services returned to the sanctuary in June, only to be driven back online by Delta a few weeks later. By fall, we were back in the sanctuary—vaccinated, boosted and masked—on Friday nights.

In-person Torah Study on Saturday mornings came back and then was suspended. According to executive director **Gordon Gladstone**, “Opening the building relates to guidelines from the state and the city—often flexible—plus advice from our medical advisory committee.” Gordon believes that based on our vaccination and mask rules, we are a safe place. He points out, “We don’t have to do things in the same way we did pre-Covid.” New technology like Owls—video cameras that turn to the speaker—may make Zoom sessions more effective. Zoom and YouTube likely will remain part of CSI programming.

Still, there’s no substitute for in-person contact. Sherith Israel’s Littles program for tots was halted when the pandemic hit and has not resumed because Zoom does not work for very young children. On December 5, we held a Littles event in Lafayette Park, coordinated with Studio. The park has become something of an extension of the synagogue.

### Board and committee meetings

“I’m anxious to have in-person board meetings,” Lindsay says. Some of our newest board members have never met other board members. Live meetings build stronger relationships and trust thanks to the nuances of interpersonal communication. “Some trustees weren’t ready before the Omicron variant emerged,” Lindsay acknowledged, “and now we will clearly have to give it more time before we meet in person. However, I’m hopeful that we can revisit the possibility of in-person meetings before too long.”

The building itself has not been forgotten. “We continue to think about making our building more inviting and functional,” says Gordon. An update is being

considered for Newman Hall, with new paint and carpeting at a minimum. “It’s a great space,” says Gordon, “and we can add a real ‘wow’ factor.”

*A key issue remains how changing state and local health mandates will affect when and how congregants come back into the building for various activities.*

### Getting the word out

Building membership—and increasing dues revenue—is a perennial issue for synagogue leadership because the income supports programming and helps meet long-term, often unexpected, challenges. Sherith Israel is exploring a marketing campaign focused on social media to get the word out about how much we have to offer San Francisco Jews. A small task force is exploring options and interviewing marketing companies. “This is an investment on which we’ll be careful spending money,” Gordon says. “The key is whether it offers the possibility of significant returns.”

### Young adult programming

CSI is reaching out to adults from 21 to 40. Membership and development manager **Talia Banarie** and **Cantor Toby Glaser** have begun young-adult programming, including post-Shabbat Friday get-togethers on Fillmore Street. “In 2022, we want to do more,” Gordon says. “We’re planting seeds, hoping that young adults looking for Jewish connections will someday become CSI members.” (See story on page 4.)

### Finding a new educator

With the news that **Rabbi Abby Phelps** will relocate to Milwaukee to be with her partner, **Cantor Richard Newman**, we have initiated a search for a new head of Studio @ Sherith Israel and other youth programs. R’Abby, as she is known by many of our teens, has been instrumental in creating the “Studio” concept of religious school. The search committee will be chaired by trustees **Erik Migdail** and **Judie Wexler**. (See story on page 1.)

### The search for added revenue

Like all other synagogues, Sherith Israel must meet expenses for clergy, staff, our facility and programming. As congregants know, dues take us only so far, even though some congregants generously pay more in dues than is required. Our Annual Fund, thanks to generous contributions by congregants, provides significant additional funds. But we constantly look for other ways to raise revenue.

Facility rentals have been successful but will continue to be a challenge in 2022, when we will lose both of our current anchor tenants. San Francisco School House, which has rented the upper floor of the Temple House building, will leave us in early June. The nearby Hamlin School, which has rented our commercial kitchen for the last year during an extended construction project, will eventually return to its own facility.

Ad hoc rentals are slowly coming back, Gordon reports. We have acquired a summertime tenant for the upper floor of the Temple House. In addition, **Corey Christopher-Waxman**, our office/facilities manager, has been getting phone calls from interested groups and individuals.

Sherith Israel also is planning a fundraising/community-building event for the first weekend in May. The Gold Rush Gala, which was planned for May 2020, was canceled by the pandemic. Our new event will be held on May 7 at the Randall Museum. “This will be a great opportunity for congregants to come together socially and celebrate being a community,” adds Lindsay.

### Cautious optimism

The road ahead in 2022 may twist and turn month by month. Lindsay says that we’re ready to meet new challenges and find new opportunities. “We’ve done a great job keeping the community together through the worst of the pandemic. Congregants have seen the value of belonging to a synagogue community and the very special connections it offers. We’ll keep attuned to what they and Jews in the greater San Francisco community are looking for.” ■





## BEHIND THE SCENES WITH GORDON GLADSTONE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

### CREATING AN INTENTIONAL JEWISH COMMUNITY

Last November I attended the annual conference of the **National Association for Temple Administration**. As a member of the national board, I was looking forward to seeing my colleagues in person for the first time since 2019. After serving as a co-chair of the 2020 conference (all online), I was also looking forward to not having any major responsibilities.

So what was the hot topic as we gathered around conference tables in Scottsdale? It was not, as you might have guessed, the state of Covid, or the prospect of another round of Paycheck Protection Program funding, or some mundane aspect of building security. Instead, the topic that dominated our discussions was the question of belonging.

In his keynote address, **Rabbi Elan Babchuck** of the National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership provided some interesting facts. First, 94% of American Jews are proud to be Jewish, but only 31% affiliate with a synagogue. Second, 53% of Jews under 30 identify as cultural Jews. This same age group values community more than religion, but also attends religious services at a higher rate than their parents. While there are ample reasons to be concerned about the current state of Jewish life in America, there is also a great deal of potential.

**To tap that potential, Rabbi Babchuck recommended changing how we think about what we do.** He urged us to move from creating programs that entertain to programs that offer real engagement, providing people with opportunities to be the authors and owners of their experiences rather than consumers.

His suggestions mean that our expectations need to change; we need to stop creating programming simply to fill the calendar. Staff needs to allow space and time for members to come forward with their own ideas. Members in turn will be encouraged to take on a larger role in creating, planning and executing programs and events. As any experienced youth advisor knows, programs instigated by the participants have a much higher turnout than those planned by staff.

When people feel ownership of programs, they activate their own social networks in ways that staff cannot. Congregants are transformed from consumers to leaders, becoming ambassadors for Sherith Israel. This results in a richer communal experience for all, enabling our community to grow and thrive.

Synagogues are intentional communities. We will them into existence, and they only persist as long as people feel a sense of belonging. Inertia will not get us very far. Sherith Israel came into existence in 1851 to create community in the excitement of Gold Rush San Francisco. Every change in every generation since then has taken place in response to the desires of that particular generation.

Our challenge is to craft a framework for synagogue life that the rising generation finds compelling and meaningful. *Pirkei Avot* 2:21 says that we are not obligated to complete the task, nor are we free from its obligation. Our task is clear, and the work starts now. ■



**LET THERE BE LIGHTS—AND PLENTY OF THEM:** Congregants gathered in our sanctuary for Shabbat Chanukah and brought their chanukiot. The sixth night glowed, as did participants who proved that *nes gadol haya po*—a great miracle happened here. Sherith Israel worshippers also officially welcomed **Cantor Toby Glaser** as our cantor on an evening filled with music and light. (See story on page 4.)



# WHAT'S HAPPENING

For more information on upcoming events, including vaccine and mask requirements and Zoom and YouTube Live video links, please visit our online event calendar at [sherithisrael.org/calendar](https://sherithisrael.org/calendar). Check weekly email updates in Under the Dome for more detailed information.

Questions? Contact executive director Gordon Gladstone, [ggladstone@sherithisrael.org](mailto:ggladstone@sherithisrael.org), 415.346.1720, x125, or program manager Peter Bonos, [programs@sherithisrael.org](mailto:programs@sherithisrael.org), 415.346.1720, x124.

## Shabbat

### FRIDAY EVENINGS

**6 pm: Kabbalat Shabbat**

*In person in our historic sanctuary!*

Welcome Shabbat with Rabbi Jessica Graf, Rabbi Abby Phelps, Cantor Toby Glaser and music director Jonathan Dimmock. Also streams on YouTube Live and Zoom.

### SATURDAY MORNINGS

**9:15 am: Torah Study**

Discuss the weekly Torah portion with Sherith Israel clergy, congregants and guests. Zoom sessions until further notice.

**10:30 am: B. mitzvah ceremonies**

In-person attendance by invitation only. Streams on YouTube for the congregation.

**Jan. 22:** Aurelia Wunsh

**March 5:** Max Eisenberg

**April 9:** Mo Kletter

**April 30:** Ava & Amelia White

## Special Shabbats

### SHABBAT PURIM

**March 18, 6 pm**

A fun-filled evening of song and drink (and something to nosh). Come find out what Cantor Toby Glaser has dreamed up for this year's spiel!

### PESACH YIZKOR AND MUSICAL SHABBAT

**Friday, April 22**

**5:30 pm: Yizkor Service**

Remember your loved one at this service traditionally held at festival time.

**6 pm: Musical Shabbat**

Join renowned klezmer violinist and teacher Jake Shulman-Ment for an evening of music and ruach.

*Additional special Shabbats will be announced in Under the Dome.*

## Groups and Classes

### PIRKEI AVOT STUDY GROUP

**Rabbi Abby Phelps**

**Thursdays, 5 pm on Zoom**

Explore Pirkei Avot (Wisdom of Our Ancestors), an ancient rabbinic text offering timeless ethical and spiritual guidance.

### ADULT INTERMEDIATE HEBREW

**Noa Levy**

**Sundays, 1–2 pm on Zoom**

Hebrew for the advanced beginner, focusing on reading and deeply understanding prayers from the Siddur. Information: Noa Levy, [noalevy8@gmail.com](mailto:noalevy8@gmail.com).

### INTRODUCTION TO JUDAISM

**Clergy and lay leaders**

**Wednesdays, 6:30 pm, begins Feb. 2**

Fascinating for those on the path to conversion or Jewish-curious and Jews wishing to go beyond their Sunday school days! The course includes basics of Jewish texts, history, ritual and thought.

### INTRODUCTORY HEBREW

**Fred Nervo**

**Wednesdays, 6:30 pm**

**begins May 4 in person**

Learn to read and pronounce the letters of the Hebrew alef-bet and become familiar with the prayerbook, basic blessings and core parts of the liturgy. No prior knowledge required. Information: [programs@sherithisrael.org](mailto:programs@sherithisrael.org)

### MEMOIR WORKSHOP

**Gale Gottlieb**

**Mondays, biweekly, 3 pm on Zoom**

Share memories from another time, wishes for the present and desires for the future. Members only. Information: Gale Gottlieb, [galegott@gmail.com](mailto:galegott@gmail.com).

### JEWISH MYSTICISM

**Natalie Weizman**

**Wednesdays, Feb. 9–March 9**

**7:15–8 pm on Zoom**

Explore the earliest form of Jewish mysticism, Merkabah Mysticism, focusing on the creation of the world, organization of the heavens and doings of the angels.

## JEWISH BOOK CLUB

**Mondays monthly, 4 pm on Zoom**

Participants discuss outstanding books—paperbacks and ebooks only. Information: Julie Lekach House, [juliehousesf@gmail.com](mailto:juliehousesf@gmail.com).

**Jan. 24:** *Inheritance: A Memoir of Genealogy, Paternity and Love* by Dani Shapiro

**Feb. 28:** *An Unexpected Afterlife* by Dan Sofer

**March 28:** *Mazel* by Rebecca Goldstein

**April 25:** *Growing Up Below Sea Level: A Kibbutz Childhood* by Rachel Biale

**May 23:** *One Bay One Book: The Hidden Palace* by Helene Wecker

**June 27:** Annual book-picking session

## Events

### Conversations from the Front Lines

### ALL ABOUT OMICRON

**Dr. Jonathan Graf**

**and Dr. Sarah Doernberg**

**Wednesday, Jan. 12, 5 pm on Zoom**

Learn more about the Omicron variant of Covid-19 with Dr. Jonathan Graf and Dr. Sarah Doernberg, associate professor in the Division of Infectious Diseases and medical director of Adult Antimicrobial Stewardship at UCSF Medical Center.

### Commemorating Yom HaShoah MELODIES FROM

### THE OLD COUNTRY

**Violinist Jake Shulman-Ment**

**Tuesday, April 26, 7 pm**

The rich Jewish landscape of Eastern Europe was a treasure trove of klezmer music and Yiddish folk and art songs, most unknown to contemporary audiences. Many later Yiddish songs were written in response to the Holocaust. Discover this rich musical heritage with collaborations and solo pieces performed by Cantor Toby Glaser, music director Jonathan Dimmock and guest violinist Jake Shulman-Ment, one of today's most highly regarded klezmer musicians and an international teacher. In person—proof of vaccination and mask required. Registration required.



## **GOLD RUSH GALA**

**Saturday May 7**

**6:30 pm: for families with young children**

**7–10 pm: for adults**

**7:30 pm: Havdalah, dinner buffet,  
DJ & dancing**

**Randall Museum, 199 Museum Way**

Enjoy a golden opportunity to get together, celebrate our Gold Rush roots and raise funds for Sherith Israel. Food? Dig into a mother lode of substantial hors d'oeuvres. Dress code? From black tie and sequins to your stylin' blue jeans. *Information about tickets and sponsorships in upcoming Under the Dome and emails.*

## **MARTIN WEINER ANNUAL LECTURE**

**Rabbi John Rosove**

**Friday, May 13, 7:15 pm**

Sherith Israel's beloved former associate rabbi will comment on why both Judaism and Israel matter in a time of religious, cultural and political challenge.

## **CONGREGATIONAL ANNUAL MEETING**

**Tuesday, May 24, 6 pm**

Learn about the state of the congregation, elect new members of the board of trustees and Hills of Eternity board, and welcome new officers.

## **SITY Events**

### **MISHLOACH MANOT FUNDRAISER**

**Feb. 6–25**

Send your loved ones hamantaschen and Purim joy while supporting SITY programs and the SITY scholarship fund. *Natalie Weizman, nweizman@sherithisrael.org.*

### **YOM HASHOAH SEDER**

**Thursday, April 28, 6:30 pm on Zoom**

Join Sherith Israel Temple Youth (SITY) in a moving observance of Yom HaShoah.

We'll gather not just to remember the pain of the Holocaust, but also to celebrate our survival. This Seder is completely teen-led. *Please donate generously. All funds go directly to SITY.*

## **Volunteer Opportunities**

### **HAMOTZI & CHICKEN SOUPERS** **Newman Hall**

**HaMotzi:**

**Sundays, 9:30 am–12:30 pm**

**Chicken Soupers:**

**Sundays, monthly, noon–3 pm**

**Feb. 6, Mar. 6, April 3, May 1**

**All volunteers must be vaccinated and must sign up in advance.**

Each week HaMotzi volunteers prepare healthy meals for two San Francisco shelters. Chicken Soupers cook and deliver meals monthly for clients of Jewish Family and Children's Services.

Donations of homemade baked goods are encouraged. *Contact: Nancy Sheftel-Gomes, hamotzi@sherithisrael.org, to arrange a volunteer shift, shop, pick up donations, cook or deliver food.*

### **SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE**

Help get out the vote, support immigrants and refugees, and advocate for senior and homeless housing. *Information: Karen Alschuler, kalschuler@gmail.com, or Stacy Passman, spassman@gmail.com. See Tikkun Olam Corner, page 14, for current activities.*

### **CHESED COMMITTEE**

The Chesed Committee reaches out to members of our community in times of need, celebration, or transition. In collaboration with the clergy, we provide support through phone calls, visits and cards; arrange for meal delivery and rides; assist with shiva; and connect people to resources in the Jewish and general communities. We invite everyone to bring our community together by joining our network of giving and receiving care.

*If you or someone you know in the congregation would like to receive support, please contact Talia Banarie, tbanarie@sherithisrael.org, 415.349.5209. If you would like to help out (even a one-time commitment is appreciated!), please contact Janet Parker, jparkersf@gmail.com, 415.282.1495.*

## **Second-Night Passover Seder**

**A fundraiser for  
Chicken Soupers  
and HaMotzi**



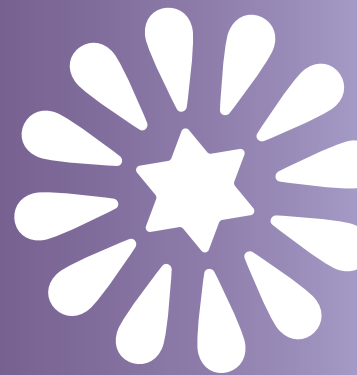
Celebrate Passover *in person* with Rabbi Jessica Graf and Cantor Toby Glaser as we reflect upon our ancestors' liberation from bondage and their historic fight for freedom at our family-oriented second-night Seder. In keeping with CSI tradition, we'll raise funds for our fabulous Chicken Soupers and HaMotzi programs to feed homebound seniors, those in need of healing and residents of local shelters.

*Please donate generously.*

*Information: programs@sherithisrael.org.*

## **Farewell Tribute for Rabbi Abby Phelps**

**Saturday, June 4, 5 pm**



Celebrate Shavuot and reflect upon an impactful four years with our beloved rabbi educator R'Abby before she moves to Milwaukee.

Be part of the video tribute reel by recording a one-minute dedication message with your family.

See Under the Dome emails for event details and video submission instructions later in the spring. *Information: programs@sherithisrael.org.*

*Finding community and building relationships*

### PROFILE: ZAC BLOOM AND KRISTY BRUEHL

Anyone who has ever “temple-shopped” can relate to “you know it when you feel it.” Kristy Bruehl and Zac Bloom felt it when they came to Sherith Israel. They experienced a feeling in their *kishkes* that they were in the right place, that they had found their second family, their *mishpachah*.

For Kristy and Zac, Sherith Israel has become a *haimish* home away from home. The couple moved to San Francisco from New York City in the summer of 2018 and soon brought CSI into their lives. Zac, coming from a Reform Jewish upbringing, and Kristy, a recent convert to Judaism, have made fast and close connections with the congregation. With their first child on the way, they are giving Sherith Israel a vital role in their young family’s future, embracing its welcoming, supportive invitation to build lasting friendships and solid community.

“One of the things we appreciate about Sherith Israel is its approach to Judaism,” Zac says. “There’s a willingness to evolve while honoring the longstanding aspects of tradition. You can participate in an ancient culture and at the same time not be beholden to outmoded forms of thinking.”

**Zac and Kristy experienced their Sherith Israel “aha” moment at a Shabbat service not long after they’d arrived in San Francisco.**

Zac grew up in a Reform temple in Santa Monica, but he hadn’t been active in a congregation for years. Kristy, a San Francisco native, had an association with Judaism from attending friends’ *b. mitzvahs* as a teenager, including some at CSI.

Zac’s cousin, an owner of Wise Sons Jewish Delicatessen, knew **Gordon Gladstone**, our executive director, from their student days at U.C. Berkeley. That connection led Zac and Kristy to Kabbalat Shabbat services. What they saw and heard in Sherith Israel’s sanctuary that evening was encouraging and fulfilling.

“We really connected with it. After services we stayed a bit,” Kristy recalls. “People introduced themselves and were so open. There was acceptance of people who’d converted. There’s no one way to be Jewish, and Sherith Israel really supports that.” Adds Zac, “The diversity of the congregation—of background, sexual orientation, Judaism-by-choice—offered a value and a perspective that was comfortable for us.”

**The couple’s involvement deepened quickly.** Rabbi Jessica Graf invited Zac and Kristy to join young adult activities, where they met other young couples. Some included non-Jewish partners, like Kristy, who had decided to make the journey to Judaism with the guidance of Sherith Israel’s clergy and lay leadership.

Kristy’s own journey was illuminated by religious study and Hebrew language learning, with thoughtful mentoring from longtime Sherith Israel leader **David Newman**. “David gave me perspective from somebody who’s been involved with the synagogue,” Kristy says. “We’d talk about things related to Sherith Israel and the

community. He helped me when I was working through my essays, asking me questions to help me think through it more. This reinforced my decision that this was the right path for me.”

When Kristy went to the *mikvah* in May 2021, Rabbi Graf and **Rabbi Abby Phelps** were there. “It marked a meaningful new chapter and beginning for me. I really appreciated it,” says Kristy, who leads a team focused on the business side of Apple’s news operation.

Zac, a brand strategist who helps companies understand their customers and how best to serve them, finds meaning as a Hebrew tutor for Studio students. He also has offered his professional expertise in brand strategy to help the congregation define what makes Sherith Israel unique. “How are we at Sherith Israel different,” Zac asks, “and how can we communicate those differences to young families looking for a Jewish community?”

Many American synagogues are asking these questions. It’s a challenge to honor a synagogue’s culture and history, yet tailor services and programs to a younger generation raised in a secular, technology-based society. Zac acknowledges the paradox of fewer young Jews participating in Jewish traditions while expressing a longing for connection and community. Zac knows they’ll find both in ample supply at Sherith Israel, just as he and Kristy have.

“It’s an interesting moment to be a younger congregant,” Zac says. “There’s a sense of rebirth and that things will be different in ways we can’t forecast right now. Kristy and I are excited to see where it goes.” ■



**FEELING THE CONNECTION:** Zac Bloom and Kristy Bruehl knew they had found a welcoming Jewish community the first time they attended Shabbat services at Sherith Israel.



If it's winter—and it definitely is—then **CSI's HaMotzi volunteer cooking team** cooked up a storm to provide dinner for the San Francisco Interfaith Winter Shelter at St. Mary's Cathedral over Christmas weekend. We've been doing this mitzvah for about 25 years, but took last year off because of Covid. Since the virus is still a threat, volunteers prepacked the delicious meals into individual servings instead of staffing buffet lines. What remained the same? The gratitude expressed by the residents and shelter staff and the commitment of the 60 HaMotzi volunteers who shopped, sliced and diced, packed, delivered, and served. The menu? Roast chicken, dressing, cranberry sauce, savory stuffed peppers, pasta, chicken enchiladas with Cuban black beans, pies, and home-baked cookies and breads worthy of a 5-star restaurant. "It felt good to do this mitzvah again," noted HaMotzi coordinator **Nancy Sheftel-Gomes**. Yasher koach for a job well done ...

**M**azel tov! The grapevine worked just as intended: **Shira Braunig** told her mom, **Lindsay**, and Lindsay told the **News Nosh**. The News Nosh fact-checked, and sure enough, **Heath Connell** proposed to **Natalie Weizman**, CSI's youth programs manager, on her birthday in December. "The Studio students were the first people I told in person," said Natalie. "The *madrichimot* were very excited and went with me to tell **Nancy Sheftel-Gomes**. Then I told my second- and third-grade class, who had been asking about being in the wedding since they found out I had a boyfriend." Wedding plans: Eloping with a party following, coordinated by CSI party mavens **Cece Kaufman** and **Maacah Marah** ...

**T**he same fantastic event team, **Cece** and **Maacah**, along with **Erika Kieffer**, member events coordinator at SFMOMA, are doing all the heavy lifting—or should we say deep digging—

for the congregation's long anticipated Gold Rush Gala. Originally planned for spring 2020, but postponed like so much during the pandemic, the kick-up-your-heels party will take place in the new outdoor courtyard at the Randall Museum on Saturday, May 7. Be there or be square ...

**E**mails have been flying about **Steve Wasserman's** new book, *Grasping at Straws: Letters from the Holocaust*. The book, available from Amazon, recounts the lives of Steve's mother's family, the Ichenhäusers, as they sought to escape Nazi Germany. Their story is told mainly through letters written by family members before and during the war and through letters family friends wrote of their efforts to escape. These original documents portray the tragic decisions that determined their fates. Steve has been researching and writing *Grasping at Straws* for almost five years as a labor of love and tribute to his mother, aunt and grandparents. He also wants to give voice to those who did not make it and have no survivors to tell their stories ...

**C**ongrats to **Judie Wexler** on retiring after a long career as an educator, most recently as president of the California Institute for Integral Studies. Now Judie has time to help with the search for a new head of Studio...

**V**alerie and **Thierry Jahan** are kvelling because daughter **Lillian** graduated from the School of Nursing at UPenn this year with her Bachelor of Science in nursing. In February Lillian starts her new job in the Neuro ICU at Jefferson Hospital in Philadelphia. Lillian joins brother **Kenny** and his wife, **Amanda**, on the East Coast. They are in Boston, where Kenny was the public face of TScan Therapeutics' IPO this year. Meanwhile here in SF, brother **Robert** cooks at Turntable at Lord Stanley on Broadway and Polk, where he spied the **News Nosh** and her long-time date, **David Newman**, out for an anniversary dinner.

And Valerie continues her family's longstanding tradition of serving the community by joining the board of the Jewish Home, now known as the San Francisco Campus for Jewish Living. Her parents, **Arlene** and **Steve Krieger**, and her paternal grandfather, **Clarence Krieger**, each served as president of the board at the Jewish Home. Maybe a new presidency is in Valerie's future...

**A**nother next-gen CSI-er, **Matthew Auerbach**, advises the youth group Reno Jewish Teens in addition to his day job as the college campus coordinator for the Pacific Northwest at Stand-WithUs, an Israel education organization fighting antisemitism around the world...

**C**ongrats to Lowell High sophomore **Tatum Himmelstein**, who made the Varsity Mock Trial team. **Zack Brayer**, a sophomore at Balboa High, is also on his school's Mock Trial team. Perhaps the CSI teens will meet up on opposite sides of an issue while learning how the law works...

**H**ills of Eternity board member and lawyer **Ruth Auerbach**, quite familiar with how the law works, took up challah baking during the pandemic. She showed off inventive challah after inventive challah as we chanted *Motzi* in our Zoom squares at our virtual Shabbat services. Some favorites: a Liberty Bell for July 4th, a rainbow challah for Pride week, a Thanksgiving turkey, and a lulav and etrog for Sukkot. For **Cantor Toby Glaser's** installation, Ruth brought a challah with a musical staff and notes to "Rock of Ages" to the sanctuary. They all looked good enough to eat... ■

*By the News Nosh, aka Ellen Newman.*

*Please send bits and bites of gossip to [ellennewman@earthlink.net](mailto:ellennewman@earthlink.net). Be sure to put "News Nosh" in the subject line.*

## SEARCH FOR INNOVATIVE STUDIO LEADER UNDER WAY, from page 1

completely innovative because she brought a lot of creativity to developing lessons and curricula.”

For **Nora Herndon-Lazerwith**, president of Sherith Israel Temple Youth, the first clue that Rabbi Phelps would “fit in” with CSI’s youth program was the way she embraced being called “R’Abby.” “She has a way of making the people around her feel cared for, and it makes her a really excellent mentor and friend.”

Rabbi Phelps will also be missed by adult learners. **Tracy Boxer Zill**, a long-time member of the Torah Study group, lauds “the incredible preparation and quiet sense of humor she brings to Torah Study.” He notes that Rabbi Phelps often points him to sources he would not have found without her guidance. “We are truly going to miss her, but I completely understand her move to be with Richard.”

**Rabbi Phelps’ news triggered a search for an educator to run our youth education programs and build on her innovative approach to Jewish education.** CSI board secretary **Erik Migdail** and board member **Judie Wexler**, both experienced educators, will chair the search committee. Working with Rabbi Graf, Rabbi Phelps, executive director **Gordon Gladstone** and board president **Lindsay Braunig**, they drafted a job description that was posted on a number of Jewish job sites in December.

Rabbi Graf’s goal is to find “another wonderful and creative educator who shares a vision of growing and expanding Studio and building on what we have in place now.” That person may or may not be a rabbi educator. She is confident the search will be successful because “Rabbi Phelps leaves us with a really strong group of teachers and students and their families who are fully committed to our community. This is a really exciting moment.”

**The feelings cut both ways.** Rabbi Phelps is “really grateful for the support of this warm, enthusiastic and creative community.” She calls her first full-time rabbinic experience “a huge deal for me. I’ve really loved building such a rich community of teachers and families within Studio.” She is also moved by CSI’s focus on inclusion and social justice, adding “this is one of the most engaged lay populations I’ve encountered.”

**Erik and Judie plan to begin interviews early in 2022 and hope to have someone in place before Rabbi Phelps leaves.** Their goal is to give the new head of Studio a chance to work with Rabbi Phelps and the Studio teachers before the new school year begins after the High Holidays in 2022. The search committee embraces a wide range of stakeholder perspectives. The committee includes **Andy Denmark**, **Doug Gould**, **Gaby Makstman**, **Lida Morgenstein** and **Nancy Sheftel-Gomes**.

**A key element of Studio under Rabbi Phelps has been making Jewish education joyful.** “The more learning feels like a joyful activity, the better it serves everyone,” explains Erik. “Jewish education can be serious without being solemn.” He describes his approach to the search: “We’re looking for someone who can extend the work that Rabbi Phelps did to envision Studio @ CSI and distinguish it from other religious schools, keeping it aligned with the values of the wider congregation.”



**R’ABBY IN ACTION:** (Top to bottom) Rabbi Abby Phelps pointing toward the unrolled Torah scroll at our Covid-safe Simchat Torah celebration in Pine Lake Park; teaching the Alef-Bet to younger children at Studio @ Sherith Israel; and with the 2019 Confirmation Class.

Erik and Judie each bring decades of education experience to the search. Erik has taught high school English in San Mateo County for more than 20 years. Judie has both taught and served as an administrator at the college level. She retired in 2021 as president of the California Institute for Integral Studies. Their experience brings a deeper perspective to the search.

“We will notice things that other people might not see in terms of innovation,” says Erik. Judie believes that they can raise a different set of questions because of their backgrounds. In addition to the obvious need for subject-matter expertise, she says the committee will be looking for demonstrated administrative ability, the nuts-and-bolts of running a school.

**Because youth education plays such an integral role in her vision for the synagogue, Rabbi Graf intends to be very involved in the search process.** “This is very important to me as we grow and strengthen our team and look to the future,” she explains. “I want to bring in a wonderful educator who shares our vision of growing and expanding Studio and building on what Rabbi Phelps has created.” ■





## STUDIO SPOTLIGHT

### RABBI EDUCATOR ABBY PHELPS

## REFLECTIONS ON LEARNING

*Who is wise? One who learns from every person, as it is said: "From all who taught me have I gained understanding." (Psalms 119:99)—Pirkei Avot 4:1*

**We recently encountered this passage in my Pirkei Avot study group, and it felt incredibly apt as I reflected on the past few years.** I have been so blessed to be part of this warm, generous and passionate community. I have learned so much from every member of it.

Our school-aged Studio participants continually remind me to keep my mind and heart open. Studio @ Sherith Israel's mission is to help youth grow in curiosity, kindness and Jewish identity, but I have learned every bit as much from our students as they have from me. Whenever I lead T'filah with **Cantor Toby Glaser**, I am struck by our students' insightful questions about God, Creation and more during "Stump the Rabbi." I'm also struck by their genuine gratitude for things like health, safety and the love of friends and family when we give thanks for daily miracles.

Their parents inspire me, too, through their dedication to building Jewish learning and living into their children's lives. They do this despite logistical obstacles (of which the pandemic created many!) and through their support of our programs and each other. Our *madrichimot*, staff and faculty's sheer joy in teaching and mentoring our students helps me stay connected to what originally drew me to Jewish education.

**Our teens have taught me about dedication and resilience.** We often hear teens described as cynical. In my experience, nothing could be further from the truth. Teens care so deeply about everything from social and environmental justice, to their performance in school, to one another's well-being that I sometimes fear their hearts will burst.



**WHO IS THAT MASKED RABBI?:** Even Covid couldn't conceal **Rabbi Abby Phelps'** enthusiasm for teaching Torah to students of all ages.

It has been a privilege to help them see Jewish tradition as a source of both comfort and challenge, a stabilizing refuge and an invitation to introspection and reevaluation. During the pandemic, I have been amazed by their ability to adjust and their commitment to staying connected. I also cannot get enough of their quirky senses of humor. I was beyond moved when they presented me with a slideshow of images of me—made from gourds. They called it "L'dor V'Gourd." When Cantor Glaser first arrived, they did the same for him. **Rabbi Graf**, I think you're next!

**As many of you know, I also have a passion for adult education.** The adult learners in our community are nothing short of exceptional. I defy anyone to find a more learned or dedicated Torah Study group than ours at any Reform synagogue. Our adult learners push me to stretch my ideas and increase my knowledge so that I can bring them new perspectives on Torah. I am especially grateful for everything I have learned from the members of my Pirkei Avot study group. Preparing for our sessions and debating matters of spirituality and ethics with this profoundly thoughtful and *menschlich* group was a lifeline for me throughout the pandemic.

And speaking of *menschlichkeit*, I am so proud of the tireless efforts of so many in our congregation to enhance inclusion and advance social justice. Many communities claim to be dedicated to social action, but ours follows through, continuing without interruption to assist refugees and immigrants and provide hundreds of meals to people experiencing food insecurity, no matter how challenging the pandemic made those efforts.

**Lastly, I am so grateful for everything I have learned from our outstanding Sherith Israel staff and clergy team.** I extend a special thank you to Rabbi Jessica Graf, to whom I am eternally grateful for entrusting me with the leadership of Studio @ Sherith Israel, and from whom I have learned invaluable lessons about how to be a better educator and rabbi. Likewise, thank you Cantor Glaser. You have been a wonderful partner in bringing Jewish music and learning to congregants of all ages.

I also need to thank our youth program manager, **Natalie Weizman**, whose boundless enthusiasm and creativity have been instrumental in every success we have had in our youth programs over the past several years. And *todah rabbah* to **Nancy Sheftel-Gomes** for building our youth education program before I arrived, and for everything she continues to do as the leader of HaMotzi and Chicken Soupers. She is an active participant in synagogue life and a friend and mentor to me. It has been an honor to step into her legacy of teaching youth to think deeply, to treat all people with dignity and compassion, and to step up to take action whenever the need arises.

I am confident that the strength of her legacy and the combined efforts of our clergy, staff, faculty and families will ensure a bright future for Studio and Sherith Israel for many years to come. ■



## NEW CLIMATE CHANGE GROUP

**Add climate change to the impressive list of issues that the social action committee will tackle in 2022.** Congregant **Carol Kingsley**, long active in the gun control fight, will spearhead a group to educate and engage the congregation around the existential global threat of a warming planet.

"I come to the issue with little formal education," Carol confesses, "but after the High Holidays, I vowed to become more knowledgeable and engaged." She sees the program as modeled after our Conversations from the Front Lines Zoom series discussing Covid-19, tapping scientific and policy expertise within the congregation and in the broader community.

Carol hopes to engage CSI in identifying actions with which to impact the issue. She foresees Sherith Israel working with Jewish and non-Jewish organizations to pressure politicians and corporations to address climate change seriously. "Our older generation created the urgency. We have known how serious climate change is for some time and have done nothing."

## IMMIGRATION WORK

**Despite the constraints imposed by the pandemic, Sherith Israel's work to support immigrants—including refugees and asylum-seekers—continues.** That includes our partnership with the Nueva Esperanza Accompaniment Team to provide direct support to immigrant families. Social action co-chair **Stacy Passman** reports that we are currently working with an Afghan family and a man from Venezuela.

One of our most interesting and successful efforts involved a mother and daughter from Argentina, who were in San Francisco so the daughter could undergo an experimental treatment for a rare genetic disorder at UCSF. The support team included **Ximena Hasbach, Mikiko Huang, Janet Parker, Leslie Rabine** and **Bill Shore**. Bill noted that the family's transportation and housing expenses were covered as part of clinical trial, but other needs such as navigating the medical care system were particularly difficult. This is where Mikiko and Bill as physicians stepped in, helping the family communicate with their UCSF doctors.

Janet broke down other barriers when it came time for them to return to Argentina and the daughter's specially designed wheelchair did not fit on the medical plane. With days spent on the phone, Janet persuaded United Airlines to send the wheelchair ahead, and it was waiting when the family arrived a couple weeks later.

## VOTER DRIVE

**Sherith Israel's voter outreach work during the 2020 campaign never really stopped.** In 2022, we will focus on sending postcards to the mostly southern states that have enacted laws restricting access to the polls. Says **Steve Garber**, who led the 2020 postcard drive, the goal is "to make sure people know how to register if they aren't already registered and how to vote once they are registered." Steve would love more volunteers. *Contact Steve at [slg0pge@yahoo.com](mailto:slg0pge@yahoo.com) or 510.682.4693.*

## FAITH IN ACTION PARTNERSHIP

**Stacy calls our collaboration with Faith in Action the "heart and soul" of our social action work.** We partner with other San Francisco and Bay Area congregations and community organizations to protect low-income and working people from eviction and create a housing fund. Much of that work has been lobbying the City of San Francisco to help with the fund and to create more senior housing. Faith in Action will advocate for a vacancy tax on empty commercial and residential property. It is also the umbrella organization for our accompaniment efforts on behalf of refugees and asylum seekers.

*To get involved or for more information about our social action programs, contact Karen Alschuler, [kalschuler@gmail.com](mailto:kalschuler@gmail.com), or Stacy Passman, [spassman@gmail.com](mailto:spassman@gmail.com).*

## HAMOTZI AND CHICKEN SOUPERS

**Continuing our fight against food insecurity, HaMotzi provides meals to two homeless shelters every week.** Chicken Soupers provides food monthly to homebound San Franciscans. Remember to support our second-night congregational Seder, our major fundraiser for HaMotzi and Chicken Soupers. *To volunteer to prepare food, shop, pick up donations or deliver: Nancy Sheftel-Gomes at [hamotzi@sherithisrael.org](mailto:hamotzi@sherithisrael.org).*

## JEWISH COALITION FOR LITERACY

If you've been bemoaning the toll that Covid has taken on the educational development of children in public schools, now is a great time to act! In an hour a week, from your own home, you can help a struggling young reader become more confident and successful. It will change a child's life—and your own!

*For information about JCL, contact Janet Parker, [jparkersf@gmail.com](mailto:jparkersf@gmail.com), 415.282.1495. To register for the upcoming free online training sessions on Monday, Jan. 10, 4:30–6:30 pm, and Wednesday, Jan. 26, 10 am–noon, please go to [jclread.org/volunteer](http://jclread.org/volunteer). ■*



**NEEDLE MAGIC:** The knitting affinity group, **Ruth Auerbach, Diane Fellman, Valerie Jahan, Denise Migdail, Kerryn Schwarz, Nancy Sheftel-Gomes** and **Frieda Weiner**, donated three blankets they made to The Linus Project, which provides lovingly made blankets to children in need.



## BIRTHS

Etan Fridman, child of Ena and Erad Fridman

Aviva Goldrei, child of Simon Goldrei and Amica Cohn-Goldrei

## BABY NAMINGS

Mason Parascandolo, child of Chris Parascandolo and Jacqueline Wachtel

## B. MITZVAH

Emma Raukman, child of Gary and Katherine Raukman 8/7/2021

Ike Braunig, child of Lindsay and Warren Braunig 8/14/2021

Harrison Maring, child of Harry and Karen Maring 8/28/2021

Gil and Ronen Passman-LaPushin, children of Stacy Passman and Daniel LaPushin 10/2/2021

Olive Shepherd, child of Erik Shepherd and Shelley Berniker 10/23/2021

Ben Keston, child of Vicky Keston 11/20/2021

Aurelia Wunsh, child of Mitchell and Supriya Wunsh 1/22/2022

Max Eisenberg, child of Jeff Eisenberg and Melinda Aquino 3/5/2022

Mo Kletter, child of Evan and Alicia Kletter 4/9/2022

Ava and Amelia White, children of Melissa and Josh White 4/30/2022

## WEDDINGS

Jessica Erickson and Adam Pauls

## NEW MEMBERS

Kathryn Amenta

Michelle Andelman and Daniel Friedman and child Theodore

Jessica DiMartino and Ben Bernstein and children Zev and Leo

Michelle Filiba and Matthew Feldman

Yelena Frid and Boris Malamud and children Benjamin and Mary

Mary Kemp

Sandra Lipkowitz

Devra Moehler

Yuliya Patsay and Stanislav Kaushanskiy and children Aliza and Miriam

Joseph Paulson

Daniel Ratner and Celia Saino and child Avi

Randy Reynolds and Allison Goffman

Myles Saron

Neil Schreiber and Taylor Mageland

Mark Solovey and Liza Leykina

Doug and Judy Weil

## CHOOSING JUDAISM

Myles Saron

*May the memory of the righteous be for a blessing.*

Adrienne Kristine

Henry Kronberg, father of Jean Freeman and father-in-law of Kenneth Freeman

Patricia (Pat) Mednick, sister of Jerome Mednick and sister-in-law of Ellie Mednick

Judy Migdail, wife of Mark Migdail, mother of Erik Migdail and mother-in-law of Denise Migdail

Stuart Seiler, husband of Gaye Seiler

Harold Weiss, father of Dan Weiss and mother-in-law of Lisa Weiss



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Join our *Circle of Lights* legacy society by including Sherith Israel in your estate plans.

**Questions?** Contact Gordon Gladstone, executive director, 415.346.1720 x125 or [ggladstone@sherithisrael.org](mailto:ggladstone@sherithisrael.org)

*Fall 2022 opening date postponed*

## CSI PRESCHOOL PLANS ON HOLD

Sherith Israel's plans to open a preschool program in the fall of 2022 have been put on hold for the time being, according to board president **Lindsay Braunig**. She cited two factors in the decision to push the opening date back to fall of 2023: the inability to find a director for the program and the sale of the property we had hoped to use as a play space to another buyer.

Lindsay remains optimistic that the preschool will still happen. "We are continuing to explore alternatives for the play space," she says. "And we will renew the search for a program director with the vision to create a Jewish preschool program that will make Sherith Israel an inviting place for young families."



**SHERITH ISRAEL**

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Member of the Union for Reform Judaism since 1903

# GOLD RUSH GALA

**SATURDAY  
MAY 7**

Enjoy outdoor festivities at the redesigned Randall Museum in Corona Heights.

**6:30 PM**

Live animal presentation by Randall Museum staff for families with young children

**7~10 PM**

A golden opportunity to gather, celebrate our community and raise funds for Sherith Israel

**7:30 PM**

Havdalah followed by dinner buffet, DJ, dancing and dessert

*DRESS CODE: Anything from black tie and sequins to your stylin' blue jeans*

