

YES! SHERITH ISRAEL

The newsletter of Congregation Sherith Israel • San Francisco, California • JULY–SEPTEMBER, 2015



Congregation provides key input

RABBINIC SEARCH COMMITTEE SUBMITS PLACEMENT APPLICATION FOR CANDIDATES

After extensive congregational input, the rabbinic search committee has submitted Sherith Israel's application to the Rabbinic Placement Commission administered by the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) and Union for Reform Judaism (URJ). "Hearing from the congregation has been invaluable in defining what qualities and skills we are looking for in our next senior rabbi," says **Valerie Jahan**, chair of the search committee. "We're confident that our application reflects the views of the congregation."

More than 140 congregants, responding to an online survey designed by the search committee, cited approachability, the ability to relate to congregants of all ages and skill delivering stimulating sermons as important attributes of our new senior

Rabbinic Search continues, page 14



CHECKING THE SURVEY: Search committee members (l-r) **Craig Etlin**, **Amy Mains**, **Dan Schumm** and **Stacy Passman** review the online congregational survey conducted in early spring.

Thank you to Janice and Lowell Sucherman

NEW SOUND SYSTEM READY FOR HIGH HOLY DAYS

Sh'ma Yisrael. Hear, O Israel.

Listening is central to our experience as Jews. But what if you can't hear well in the sanctuary? What happens when the voices of our clergy are muffled? Or the notes of our song leaders, choir and musicians spring around the room, colliding and overlapping so congregants can't hear crisply?

Almost everyone has had an uncomfortable experience with sound at Sherith Israel. In some seats, voices can be hot and piercing; the same voices, heard from other seats across the room or under the balcony, might be virtually inaudible. When it opened in 1905—before Lee For-est invented the audio amplifier—our

20,000 square-foot sanctuary was lauded for its acoustics. But those acoustics were not designed for amplified sound.

Thanks to a generous gift from the Sucherman Fund for Special Projects, Sherith Israel will bring the sanctuary's sound capabilities into the digital 21st Century in time for the High Holy Days. It's not a moment too soon.

"We've tried simple fixes, but they weren't sufficient," says **Rabbi Larry Raphael**. "Now, thanks to **Janice** and **Lowell Sucherman**, we can make a permanent fix. Rabbi Raphael is delighted the sound system will be in place by the High Holy Days. "Our visiting cantors from Argentina, **Diego Rubinsztein** and

New Sound System continues, page 17

All This Inside? YES!

July–September, 2015

A Moment with Rabbi Larry Raphael	2
4 Questions for Rabbi Julie Saxe-Taller	3
Fall Festivals	4
High Holy Day Schedule	5
Adult Programs	6
Jewish Book Club	7
Early Childhood	8
Religious School	9
Israel Reflections	10–11
Profile: Jim Hurwitz and Jody Glaser Hurwitz	12
News Nosh	13
Passages	15
Tikkun Olam Corner	16

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Giants Jewish Heritage Night
MONDAY, JULY 27, 7:15 pm

Erev Rosh Hashanah
SUNDAY, SEPT. 13, 7:30 pm



CONGREGATION
SHERITH ISRAEL

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Member of the Union for
Reform Judaism since 1903

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Senior Rabbi

Julie Saxe-Taller
Associate Rabbi

Jessica Zimmerman Graf
Rabbi, Director of Magalim

EMERITUS CLERGY

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Martin Feldman *Cantor Emeritus*

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YES! SHERITH ISRAEL

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A MOMENT WITH RABBI LARRY RAPHAEL

TALMUD: ANCIENT AND MODERN

It has been four years since I began teaching Talmud downtown at noon every other week. The first three years focused on the Babylonian Talmud, considered the “authoritative” version of the Talmud and edited into its current version around 600 CE. During most of this past year we have looked at the Jerusalem Talmud. We found that in regard to human nature and finding meaning in our lives, the past bears a remarkable resemblance to the present and has much to teach us.

Each Talmud session includes 8–15 Sherith Israel congregants. Most work nearby. Others journey downtown to spend a valuable hour immersing themselves in ancient Jewish texts that remain relevant. None has extensive experience with Talmud—truly a lifetime study. But they keep coming back.

Each session, we take a classic Talmudic text and pore over each word, each phrase, each sentence. We take our time. Our analysis begins with trying to understand what the rabbinic authors—writing between the second and seventh centuries—meant. To gain context, we ask what prompted them to write what they did. Then, most importantly, we discuss the ways the text speaks to our present-day lives.

If this was purely an academic exercise, if we were only seeking to understand what the Rabbis meant, we would not accomplish what I hope is the goal for every class I teach. We’d fail to understand the ways in which our Jewish tradition continues to inform the lives we lead. For example, last fall we began with a text that says we have daily obligations to fulfill, which include honoring our fathers and mothers (the Fifth Commandment).

But what does this mean to each of us? Not everyone is a parent. Not everyone knew their parents or even liked them. Conversely, not everyone has a child. The Torah poses questions. The Talmud offers explanations. For starters, the Rabbis do not tell us we must love our parents. They *do* tell us we must provide for them in their older years. Why not love? And what kind of care must we provide? Our discussions were lively. Each of us, whether our parents are alive or not, was touched deeply.

Our class is now on summer break. We’ll resume after the High Holy Days. And we’ll find more opportunities to see how our ancient tradition can spur deeper, more reflective thinking to meet the needs of our own time. Join us. ■

PEOPLE OF THE BOOK

“Find yourself a teacher. Get yourself a friend. And give everyone the benefit of the doubt.” Pirke Avot 1:6

One can study alone, but the Sages emphasize that studying with at least one other person is preferable. Why? A teacher can guide and open new areas of investigation. A friend can offer different insights. In this regard, a teacher often becomes a friend and a friend a teacher.

How do we make sure we learn? While we have our own opinions, of course, we value others’ points of view as well. Thus the Mishna (3.2b) says that when two are sitting and words of Torah pass between them, the Shechinah is with them. ■

4

Questions for RABBI JULIE SAXE-TALLER

Summertime means longer days, leisurely weekends, vacations and the call of the outdoors. We asked Rabbi Julie Saxe-Taller her perspective on how being outdoors can enhance our Jewish lives. What can we learn from spending time outside this summer, whether we head for the hills or lounge on our deck?

Q. Many of us think of ourselves as the “People of the Book.” Where does nature fit into this Jewish identity?

A: The Torah, our book, was born in the desert. Our psalms and prayers are full of references to nature because that’s where we originally experienced the power of the Divine. We are thrilled by the beauty of a desert landscape, the majesty of the mountains, the calm of a placid lake, or the power of the ocean. The wonders of nature affect us both physically and spiritually. The “Divine” becomes less abstract when we recognize it as the source of what we are experiencing. Historically, Jewish spirituality grows out of this kind of direct encounter with nature and our responses to it.

Reading books, and Torah specifically, can connect us to the Divine as well. But our sacred books are also meant to be studied in a dynamic way, and in connection to the real experience of the natural world to which they continually refer.

Q. Whether we’re in our backyards or hiking the High Sierra, how does being outside put us in touch with our spiritual selves?

A: We can feel “spiritual” anywhere. There is a story about a boy who goes into the forest to connect with God. When his father asks him why he needs to go to the forest when God is the same everywhere, the boy answers, “I know that God is the same everywhere, but I am not.”

I love this story because it acknowledges the impact our environment can have on us. We are part of nature. Connecting with the natural world by breathing fresh air and seeing other living things puts us back in touch with who we are. In addition, being present in the moment is key to many spiritual practices. Slowing down enough to notice an animal or insect, to appreciate a change in a plant or tree can be amazingly satisfying. In fact, God spoke to Moses only after Moses had slowed down long enough to watch the burning bush and see that its flames did not consume it.

Q. How is nature reflected in the Jewish ritual calendar?

A: Numerous Jewish practices help us take note of the time of day, week, month and year. Many of these are connected with nature. We say the *Shehechyanu* when we bite into a fruit that has come back into season. We sit in a sukkah under a full autumn moon and give thanks for all kinds of harvest. We symbolically toss our sins into a body of flowing water at Rosh Hashanah, reminding ourselves that, like the moving water, we too can change.

The Jewish calendar is both solar and lunar. Hebrew months are lunar, comprised of a single lunar cycle, from the new moon to the full moon and back again. The first of each month, *Rosh Chodesh*, is a minor holiday. Passover and Sukkot begin on the full moon, as does Purim, while Rosh Hashanah coincides with the new moon of *Tishrei*. But our festivals are also inextricably connected to the solar seasons, so in order to prevent Passover from showing up in July and Sukkot in spring, we adjust the calendar with a leap year that adds an entire month, seven out of every nineteen years. This complex calculation is a key to the Jewish-nature connection.

Q. How do you—and how can we—make time to be outdoors regularly?

A: Even though spending time outdoors is tremendously important to me, I still find it hard to get myself outside, even just to my backyard. The sense that I need to get one more thing done from my to-do list is very compelling. Somehow the power of the outdoors is only apparent once I am there. Recently I have been managing to step outside every morning to daven, listen to the birds and watch the plums ripening on our tree. We don’t have to go to a national park or push our limits on a steep hike to sense our connection to a tree, feel the fresh air on our faces, enjoy the sky, or stand in the fog or sunshine, allowing ourselves to be energized by these simple and essential things. When we see each other during the summer and early fall, I’d love to hear your stories about your outdoor spiritual connections. ■

AVODAH / WORSHIP

SHABBAT services

FRIDAY EVENINGS

6 pm: Kabbalat Shabbat services

7:15 pm: Kiddush and oneg

Join us for services each Friday, followed by Kiddush and a friendly oneg for schmoozing, noshing and making new friends.

FAMILY SHABBAT

Second Friday of the month

6 pm: Kabbalat Shabbat services followed by Kiddush, congregational dinner and potluck dessert

The second Friday of the month features our lively Family Shabbat with Religious School song leader Lior Ben-Hur and his band, Sol Tevel, followed by an informal congregational dinner and potluck dessert.

SATURDAY MORNINGS

9:15 am: Torah study

Congregants and guests are invited to study the weekly parashah (Torah portion), complete with learning from traditional and contemporary sources, all laced with lively discussion. Enjoy bagels and lox, coffee and tea.

10:30 am: Shabbat morning services

Intimate and informal, services follow the basic structure of our *Mishkan T'filah* prayerbook. All Shabbat morning services include chanting or reading from one of our Torah scrolls.



CHARDONNAY SHABBAT

August 28

6 pm: Shabbat services

7:15 pm: Kiddush and oneg

Enjoy a welcome back from summer vacation and say hello to your CSI friends while sipping chardonnay after services.

¡BIENVENIDOS! With mucho gusto, we welcome back Argentine cantors **Diego Rubinsztein** and **Inés Kapustiansky** to be our chazanim for the High Holy Days. Diego and Inés will work with our clergy and organist **Jonathan Dimmock** to make our High Holy Day services meaningful and inspirational. Our musical soloist **Emily Pelc** will sing with the choir for the holidays. And they will all sound fantastic with our new sound system (see page 1).



Marking a remarkable holiday season

FALL FESTIVAL CELEBRATIONS

SUKKOT INGATHERING

Just five days after Yom Kippur, we observe seven days of Sukkot. The autumn festival, also known as the feast of booths or tabernacles, commemorates both the harvest and the fragile dwellings the Hebrews lived in during their 40 years wandering in the wilderness after the revelation at Sinai. We will take two opportunities to mark the holiday.

Friday, Sept. 25

6 pm: Shabbat services

7:15 pm: Kiddush and oneg

Since Sukkot is also a time for us to remember people who do not have appropriate shelter or enough to eat, please bring canned goods to share with the San Francisco-Marin Food Bank.

SHABBAT SUKKOT SEDER

Friday Oct. 2, 6–8pm, includes dinner

A Seder on Sukkot? Lively Shabbat services in Newman Hall will be followed by a wonderful dinner featuring fall dishes and rituals that connect us to the season and each other. Our one-page “Sukkot Haggadah” is full of songs, questions and a unique blessing of gratitude for the fall harvest. *RSVP: David Agam, 415.346.1720, x17.*

SIMCHAT TORAH

Sunday, Oct. 4

The fall holiday season wraps up with a joyous celebration of Torah. We will mark the annual completion of the cycle of weekly Torah readings with events during both the morning and evening.

9:30 am: Shacharit (Morning) service in the sanctuary

Join a community-wide Shacharit service, including Religious School T'filah, in the sanctuary.

10 am: Sukkot Yizkor (Memorial) Service

After the Religious School students head to their classrooms, adults will continue with a traditional Yizkor service, an opportunity to share special memories of loved ones who have died in recent years. Kiddush in the Tree of Life Room follows Yizkor.

11 am–12:15 pm: X-rated Torah Tour Sanctuary

Join CSI rabbis for an adults-only tour of the Torah, featuring stories they never told you in Religious School. ■

HIGH HOLY DAYS 2015 /5776

S'LICHOT

Saturday, September 5

8–10 pm: Havdalah, dessert and contemplation

You are invited to CSI for dessert and Havdalah, plus reflections, meditations and music, as we prepare for the High Holy Days. During the evening we'll dress our Torahs in their festive white covers for the holidays.

EREV ROSH HASHANAH

Sunday, September 13

7:30 pm: Evening service

ROSH HASHANAH

Monday, September 14

9:30 am: Morning service

9:30–11 am: Youth service

11:30 am–12:15 pm: Tot Yontif

All services and programs are at Sherith Israel unless otherwise noted.

TASHLICH

Monday, September 14

(Rosh Hashanah afternoon)

11:30 am–3 pm: Picnic at Crissy Field

1:30 pm: Tashlich service at the beach

Whenever your Rosh Hashanah morning service finishes up at CSI, come down to East Beach at Crissy Field for a congregational Tashlich picnic and short service. Schmooze, relax and think about the New Year. Bring your own lunch or get food from the ever-popular Sunrise Deli food truck.

COMMUNITY MEMORIAL SERVICE AND MITZVAH DAY AT THE CEMETERY

Sunday, September 20

Hills of Eternity Cemetery, Colma

10 am: Join Religious School families, fourth-grade and higher, for a history stroll around the Hills of Eternity cemetery. Place pebbles of remembrance on, scrub moss off of and make rubbings from our oldest historic headstones.

11:15 am: Participate in the mitzvah of a traditional book burial and a graveside memorial service.

2 pm: Join Rabbi Jessica Zimmerman Graf and Cantor Roz Barak in the annual service of remembrance in the Home of Peace chapel.

KOL NIDRE

Tuesday, September 22

7:30 pm: Kol Nidre service

YOM KIPPUR

Wednesday, September 23

9:30 am: Morning service

9:30–11 am: Youth service

11:30 am–12:15 pm: Tot Yontif

12:30–2:30 pm: Adult programs and discussions

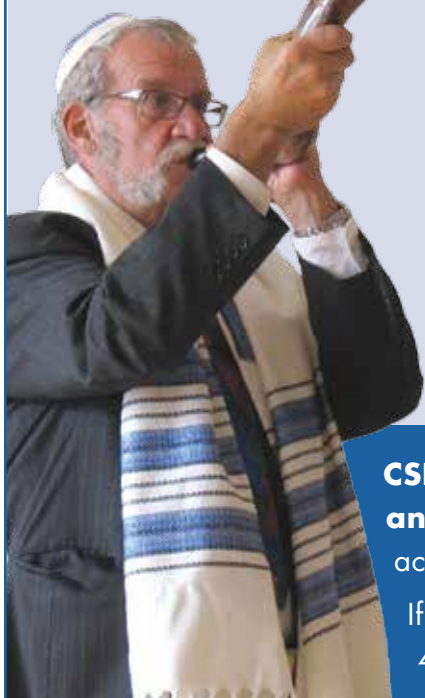
3 pm: Afternoon service

4 pm: Healing service

5 pm: Yizkor

6 pm: Neilah

7 pm: Break-the-fast



CSI welcomes everyone to participate in our High Holy Day services and programs. We offer assistive listening systems, large-print prayer books, accessible restrooms, transfer wheelchairs and an elevator.

If you have questions or if we may be of further help, please contact David Agam, 415.346.1720, x17, or dagam@sherithisrael.org.

ADULT PROGRAMS

upcoming courses & events

ADULT HEBREW Sundays

Fred Nervo

9 am: Beginning Hebrew continues for the present cohort

A new cohort begins after the High Holy Days

Hilda Isaacson

9:30 am: Beginning Hebrew

10:30 am: Continuing Beginning Hebrew

11:30 am: Advanced Beginning Hebrew

Fee: \$50 per semester, includes books; scholarships available. Nancy Sheftel-Gomes, 415.346.1720, x28, or nsgomes@sherithisrael.org.

SHOFAR CALLING!

Pre-High Holy Day events with clergy in congregants' homes

Saturday, Aug. 22, 7 pm: Wine and cheese, hosted by Margaret and Mel Scheinman

Sunday Aug. 30, 10:30 am: For parents of ECE-age children, hosted by Alicia and Evan Kletter

Sunday, Aug. 30, 7 pm: Dessert and coffee, hosted by Dara and Andrew Rosenfeld

Tuesday, Sept. 8, 7 pm: Wine and cheese. Hosts to be announced.

Prepare yourself for the High Holy Days and meet other congregants informally as we share thoughts and study with two or all three of our rabbis. They'll also explain some of the music our Argentine cantors will sing during the holidays.

RSVP: David Cynman, 415.346.1720, x31, or dcynman@sherithisrael.org

MAGALIM (CIRCLES)

People. Learning. Community.
Join Rabbi Jessica Zimmerman Graf, director of Magalim, for exciting activities at CSI and around San Francisco.

WOMEN AND MONEY:

A DISCUSSION

With Melissa Sugarman Slayen
Wednesday, July 29, 6:30-8 pm

Discuss often-challenging financial matters from a woman's perspective. Melissa offers a dozen years in the investment business, and has worked for such companies as Smith Barney, Oracle, PriceWaterhouse Coopers and CareerGroup, Inc.

SUMMER DROP-IN MAHJONGG Sundays, 10 am

Bring your card, a set of tiles if you have them and some snacks, too. If we have at least four players, the day is a go. *Sign up: sherithisrael.org. Go to Calendar, click on Sunday mahjongg and place your name on the sheet of players.*

Resuming this fall

PRIME TIME CLUB

For congregants 65 and up

In memory of Marilyn and

Max Singer (lunch included)

Second Friday of the month,
noon-2 pm

DOWNTOWN TALMUD CLASS

Rabbi Larry Raphael

Thursdays (alternate), noon-1 pm

CONVERSATIONS

ABOUT CONVERSION

Maurice Kamins

Mondays (monthly), 6:30-8 pm

Eric Drucker: 415.346.1720, x24, or edrucker@sherithisrael.org.

LANDING YOUR DREAM JOB

Joanne Yawitz

Tuesdays, Sept. 29-Nov. 3, 7-9 pm

Dreaming of a more satisfying job? Out of work and not sure how to make headway in today's job market? Shave months off your job seeking and increase your salary. Attend this hands-on workshop led by CSI congregant Joanne Yawitz and jumpstart your career search. Come away with practical tools for finding the job that gets your juices flowing.

Topics include:

- Preparing a resume that gets flagged by potential employers
- Uncovering opportunities that fit your skills and aspirations
- Honing effective interviewing skills
- Identifying your transferable skills
- Creating your ideal job
- Expanding your professional network
- Assessing job opportunities for personal fit
- Negotiating an offer

Limited to 10.

Fee: \$300 CSI members, \$350 nonmembers.

Bonus to attendees: one-hour complimentary career coaching strategy session with Joanne.

RSVP: Joanne Yawitz, 415.342.3023 or jyawitzbvr@gmail.com.

ongoing programs

CARING COMMUNITY

Assists members in times of need and joy.
Eric Drucker, 415.346.1720, x24, or edrucker@sherithisrael.org.

TORAH STUDY

Saturdays, 9:15-10:15 am

Studies weekly Torah portion. Bagels and lox.

CHICKEN SOUPERS

Sundays, 9 am

July 12, Aug. 2 and Sept. 6

Prepares and delivers food to people with disabilities or chronic illnesses, in cooperation with JFCS. Nancy Sheftel-Gomes, 415.346.1720, x28, or nsgomes@sherithisrael.org.

HAMOTZI

Prepares and delivers nutritious meals to homeless shelters every Sunday, 9:30 am-12:30 pm, except July 12, Aug. 2 and Sept. 6, when HaMotzi volunteers meet from noon-3 pm. Nancy Sheftel-Gomes, 415.346.1720, x28, or nsgomes@sherithisrael.org.

KOLEYNU CONGREGATIONAL CHOIR

Sings at holidays and Shabbat services.

OFFICE VOLUNTEERS

Greet visitors at our front desk, answer phones or help with office tasks. David Agam, 415.346.1720, x17, or dagam@sherithisrael.org.

FOR YOUR ADDITIONAL READING PLEASURE Recommended but not selected for 2015-2016 book club

All the Light We Cannot See by Anthony Doerr

All Who Go Do Not Return by Shulem Deen

Little Failure by Gary Shteyngart

The Color of Water by James McBride

The Kill Artist by Daniel Silva

The Nightingale by Kristin Hannah

The Rise and Fall of a Jewish American Princess by Barbara Rose Brooker

The Wanting by Robert Lavigne

"LET'S PLAY TWO!"

BASEBALL NIGHT AT CSI WITH MARTY LURIE

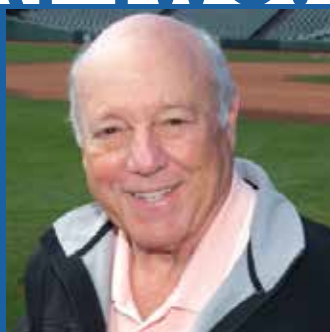
A religious school benefit

Join us at CSI for an evening of baseball talk with KNBR 680's Marty Lurie, baseball aficionado and commentator. Discuss how the Giants keep a championship tradition going, the game of baseball and Jewish ballplayers. Nosh on ballpark classics: hot dogs, popcorn, soda and beer. Enter the auction for Giants tickets, memorabilia and more. All proceeds go to the religious school scholarship fund.

TICKETS:

Kids' club: under 13	FREE
Individual: age 13 & over	\$ 18
Reserved seat table (8 seats)	\$180
Box seat table (8 seats)	\$360
Luxury box table (8 seats—includes table service)	\$540

Information: David Cynman, 415.346.1720, x31,
or dcynman@sherithisrael



**Tuesday, July 21
7 pm**

GIANTS' JEWISH HERITAGE NIGHT

**San Francisco Giants vs.
Milwaukee Brewers**
(with Jewish all-star
Ryan Braun)

Monday, July 27

**Pregame Party:
5-7 pm**

**First Pitch:
7:15 pm**

Join the Bay Area Jewish community and Congregation Sherith Israel at the Giants' annual Jewish Heritage Night. Your ticket includes a seat in the Jewish Heritage section, a limited-edition Giants Kiddush cup and admission to the Jewish Heritage Night pregame party in Seals Plaza.

**Bleacher seats,
\$35 per person**

Tickets: David Cynman,
415.346.1720, x31,
or dcynman@sherithisrael



JEWISH BOOK CLUB

**Mondays,
7 pm**

5:45-6:45 pm: Pre-book club yoga with Amy Plevin
Chapel; mats provided. Suggested yoga donation: \$10

Aug. 24: *Call It Sleep* by Henry Roth. Published in 1934, Roth's classic presents a "dangerously imaginative" immigrant child coming of age in the slums of New York. Led by: Jan Maisel.

Sept. 28: *The Assistant* by Bernard Malamud. A non-Jew falls in love with the daughter of his employer—a Jewish grocer on New York's Lower East Side. Led by: Adrienne Kristine.

Oct. 26: *The Betrayers* by David Bezmozgis. In one whirlwind day, disgraced Israeli politician Baruch Kotler, a former Soviet dissident, confronts the man who betrayed him and his own betrayals of others. Led by: Hilda Isaacson.

Nov. 23: *The Mezuzah in the Madonna's Foot* by Trudi Alexy. An insider's history of the Marranos of Spain and other secret Jews. Led by: Helaine Weinstein.

Jan. 25: *The Physician* by Noah Gordon. In the eleventh century, a young Christian with a strange gift claims to be a Jew and goes on a remarkable journey to study medicine in Persia. Led by: Valerie Jahan.

Feb. 22: *The Paris Architect* by Charles Belfoure. During the Nazi occupation of Paris an architect confronts the relationship between his moral imperative and his political reality. Led by: Nancy Sheftel-Gomes.

March 28: *The Glass Room* by Simon Mawer. In 1930s Czechoslovakia, a wealthy assimilated Jewish man and his non-Jewish wife build their dream home only to confront the Nazi takeover. Led by: Sally Flanzer.

April 25: We'll discuss the selection of the One Bay, One Book event.

May 23: *The Mathematician's Shiva* by Stuart Rojstaczer. Sasha sits shiva for his mother, the famed mathematician and Polish refugee Rachela Karnokovitch, only to be besieged by a strange group of mathematicians seeking her solution to a vexing problem. Led by: Cathy Taylor.

June 27: Book selection meeting for the upcoming year.

Nancy Sheftel-Gomes, 415.346.1720, x28, or nsgomes@sherithisrael.org.

"Connections: Jews in relationships" is the theme of this year's selections.

TALMUD TORAH/EDUCATION

early childhood

ECE programs

PLAYGROUPS

**Mondays and Fridays
10:30 am–noon**

Crawl, climb, jump and giggle with San Francisco families in our huge, bright indoor play space. Enjoy our playtime and music program—including songs, puppets, bubbles and parachute games—with early childhood director Jeni Markowitz Clancy. Fridays include a special Shabbat program with Rabbi Julie Saxe-Taller. *Rates: Drop-in: \$12 per visit; 10-visit card: \$65 for CSI members; \$80 for nonmembers. Golden Gate Moms Group special rates apply only for the second Monday of the month. Just drop in; no sign-up necessary. Eric Drucker 415.346.1720, x27, or edrucker@sherithisrael.org.*

MAMAS GROUP

**Fridays, 9:15–10:30 am
Contact Rabbi Julie Saxe-Taller
for the fall group**

The Mamas Group is on summer break. Join Rabbi Julie Saxe-Taller and new moms this fall for meaningful discussions about parenting, motherhood and bringing Jewish values and traditions into the family. *Ten-week series: \$100 for members; \$125 for nonmembers. Rabbi Julie Saxe-Taller, 415.346.1720, x25, or rabbijst@sherithisrael.org.*

FAMILY SHABBAT

**2nd Friday of the month
Aug. 14 and Sept. 11
6 pm: Services in sanctuary
followed by Kiddush,
congregational dinner
and potluck dessert**

Celebrate Shabbat with other CSI families with young children and the congregation in a service featuring Lior Ben-Hur and his band. Rabbi Julie Saxe-Taller and Rabbi Larry Raphael share stories meaningful for congregants of all ages.

SHOFAR CALLING

**Sunday Aug. 30, 10:30 am
Hosted by Alicia and Evan Kletter**

A gathering specially for parents of ECE-aged children. Prepare yourselves for the High Holy Days and meet other congregants informally as we share thoughts and study with our rabbis. *RSVP: David Cynman, 415.346.1720, x31, or dcynman@sherithisrael.org.*

TOT HIGH HOLY DAY PROGRAMS

**Rosh Hashanah
Monday, Sept. 14
11:30 am–12:15 pm**

**Yom Kippur
Wednesday, Sept. 23
11:30 am–12:15 pm**

Join Rabbi Julie Saxe-Taller, early childhood director Jeni Markowitz Clancy and the ECE community for High Holy Day services for young children and their families. The services will feature wonderful songs, prayers and learning appropriate for the whole family. *Eric Drucker 415.346.1720, x24, or edrucker@sherithisrael.org.*

ECE BRUNCH IN THE SUKKAH

Saturday, Sept. 26, 10:30 am–noon

Come and help decorate our early childhood community's beautiful sukkah. Share songs, stories and a wonderful brunch with old friends and new on the Marin Day School playyard. *RSVP: Eric Drucker 415.346.1720, x27, or edrucker@sherithisrael.org.*

YAD B'YAD FAMILY PROGRAM

**Sunday, Oct. 4, 10 am
Continuing throughout the year:
Nov. 8, Jan. 10, Feb. 21, April 3 and
May 22**

Yad b'Yad, hand-in-hand, experience tzedakah and gemilut chasadim—charity and acts of lovingkindness—with other CSI families with young children. Together we will work at the San Francisco Food Bank, plant a garden, cook for a shelter, or make blankets and cards for hospitalized children. We'll also enjoy storytelling, music, art, celebrations and traditions to take home throughout the year. *Free, open to children ages 4–6 (PK–K) and their families. CSI members and nonmembers are welcome. RSVP: Jeni Markowitz Clancy, 415.346.1720, x32, or jclancy@sherithisrael.org.*

CSI MARIN DAY SCHOOL PRESCHOOL TOURS

You are invited to tour our unique preschool for children 2–5 years old. The Sherith Israel campus of Marin Day School offers an outstanding early childhood curriculum and extended-day program with a warm experience filled with Jewish values, traditions and celebrations. *Contact Jeni Markowitz Clancy, 415.346.1720, x32, or jclancy@sherithisrael.org, to set up an appointment.*



For more information about ECE programs, contact CSI early childhood director Jeni Markowitz Clancy, 415.346.1720, x32, or jclancy@sherithisrael.org.

HAND-IN-HAND, FEEDING THE HUNGRY: It's never too early to start involving families in the experience of tzedakah and gemilut chasadim—charity and acts of lovingkindness. With a generous grant from the Jewish Resource Specialist Program of the Early Childhood Initiative of the San Francisco Jewish Community Federation and Endowment Fund, and the Jim Joseph Foundation, CSI is starting the Yad b'Yad (hand-in-hand) program for families with children aged 4 to 6. The six sessions focus on celebrating mitzvot as families.

"This program builds on the sweetness of the preschool experience, engaging families at that special moment of early childhood just before and during kindergarten when they are eager to contribute to these important tasks," says CSI ECE director **Jeni Markowitz Clancy**.

"We are grateful to our funders for supporting this project."

religious school

Planning ahead for 2016–17

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL REASSESSMENT UNDER WAY

Good isn't good enough when it comes to providing a Jewish education to young people. With that axiom in mind, CSI's Religious School has begun a year-long assessment to determine what's working now and to identify new opportunities. The school's last review is five years old. "That's almost a lifetime in relation to synagogue life," notes education director **Nancy Sheftel-Gomes**.

Nancy, eager to hear what parents have to say, calls parent input vital for the health of any school. She utilizes a "value proposition canvas" when meeting with parents, students and teachers. "We examine what we're offering, how we're teaching and students' reactions to determine how components of our programs meet student and parent needs."

The reassessment started last May with a meeting of parents. A topic of particular interest was Sunday morning t'filah—worship—and how it fits with the parents' practices or expectations. This summer, teachers and teens will discuss school programs from their distinctive perspectives. Following the High Holy Days, focus groups will provide insights from parents and middle school students.

In late fall, parents and other adult congregants, including members of the board of trustees, will observe classes. "We want a range of observers," says

Nancy. "Education is a community responsibility. We want to make sure that parents', students' and teachers' goals are aligned with the congregation as a whole."

Information from focus groups and observations will be compared with the results of the last assessment. Analyses will lead to a plan of action, which Religious School staff and parents will begin creating this January. The plan will include more creative and productive ways to maximize use of the school's budget. Some of what is learned may be implemented in the spring 2016 semester. The full plan will be completed in May or June and then put into action for the 2016–17 school year.

The goal is to make Religious School even more stimulating and effective. The reassessment process also offers an additional advantage, Nancy points out. More parents—including new parents—have the opportunity to get involved in their children's Jewish education and in synagogue life. "Parents often find there's a lot more for them at Sherith Israel than they expected." ■

Religious School parents and other congregants are invited to get involved in the reassessment. Contact Nancy Sheftel-Gomes at 415.346.1720, x28, or nsgomes@sherithisrael.org.

WELCOME-BACK BRUNCH

Sunday, Sept. 27

10 am–noon

All Religious School parents are invited to eat, schmooze and hear about the upcoming school year.

religious school programs

SUNDAYS

**First day of fall semester:
Sunday, Sept. 27**

**Preschool to Grade 8
9:30 am–12:15**

**High School
Grades 9 to 12
12:30–1:45 pm**
(Lunch included)

**Hebrew School
Grades 3 to 5
12:30–2:00 pm**

Students bring lunch and eat with teachers in Newman Hall, then go to class to learn the basics of reading, writing and speaking Hebrew, focusing on prayerbook literacy.

TUESDAYS

Beginning Sept. 29

**Hebrew School
Grades 3 to 6
4–5:45 pm**

Basics of reading, writing and speaking Hebrew, focusing on prayerbook literacy.

**REGISTER ONLINE:
www.sherithisrael.org/education**

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL OFFICE

**415.346.1720, x24, or
edruicker@sherithisrael.org**

SHABBAT AT THE BEACH:

CSI families celebrated Shabbat with **Rabbis Julie Saxe-Taller** and **Jessica Zimmerman Graf** and ECE director **Jeni Markowitz Clancy** at Crissy Field overlooking the Golden Gate Bridge.



ISRAEL IMPRESSIONS

Six CSI congregants traveled to Israel this spring. **Lynn Sedway** and **Lisa Erdberg** spent five days in Jerusalem on a New Israel Fund study tour focusing on religious pluralism and the state of Judaism in Israel today. "It was an intense, immersive and transformative experience," says Lisa. Lynn adds, "I have always thought of Israel as a Jewish state. I came away with great clarity about the enormous issues that arise when 'church' and state are not separated. The situation in Israel in some ways is so controlled by the ultra-Orthodox that I began to wonder if Israel is not an Orthodox Jewish State, with all others, the non-Orthodox and non-Jews, being second-class citizens. I hope I am wrong."

Sheldon and **Rhoda Wolfe** were part of a group from the Jewish Community Federation studying programs funded by Federa-

tion's Israel and Global Committee. They visited a dozen programs providing jobs and education for Israeli Arabs, Bedouins, Ethiopians and Haredim (the ultra-Orthodox). One exceptional program was a factory built to cook thousands of meals for local school children. "It is a state-of-the-art facility that employs 23 Bedouin women who are earning a salary for the first time," says Shel. "The concept will be duplicated in other Bedouin communities, which is a game changer." Comments Rhoda, "Seeing fantastic programs like this one made this an inspiring trip."

David and **Ellen Newman** explored Israel from Metula in the north to Eilat in the south. Here is a sample of their photos and observations. ■

BORN IN THE DESERT: After eight days in the deserts of Israel and Jordan, it became clear that Torah and Judaism were born in the desert.

At Makhtesh Ramon (far right), a giant erosion crater in the Negev, it was easy to imagine the Israelites wandering through the wilderness.

Nearly 6000 years ago, Timna, just north of Eilat, was the site of the world's first copper mine.



JERUSALEM: People in the City of David are passionately attached to their corners of a very small space. The covered bridge leads from West Jerusalem to the Temple Mount and Dome of the Rock (left). Entry to the Temple Mount is controlled by Jordan. Women crowd into their side of the Western Wall (bottom right) because it is smaller than the men's side.



EREV SHABBAT IN TEL AVIV: On Friday afternoon Tel Aviv pulses with different energy than Jerusalem. More about community than piety, Erev Shabbat draws people to beaches and cafes to welcome their day of rest.



YOM HA'ATZMAUT (ISRAEL INDEPENDENCE DAY): Like July 4th, Independence Day means rambunctious fun, fireworks and street parties. But in Israel the announcement of independence—just 67 years ago—and the struggle to maintain it, is within the memory of many people today.

Yom Ha'atzmaut follows directly after Yom HaZikaron, Memorial Day, on which shops and restaurants are closed. People visit cemeteries. Evening is quiet, a rarity in Tel Aviv. At 8 pm and again at 11 am, sirens sound. Everyone (really) stops to stand and remember.



BORDERS AND DEFENSE:

Borders are rarely out of sight. The green valley beyond the buildings of Metula (right) is Lebanon. Imagine Sonoma as Israel, Napa as Syria and Mendocino as Lebanon.

From Jerusalem's Mount Zion Hotel near the Old City (above), one can see the cable car over the Hinnom Valley that was used to supply fighters on Mt. Scopus during the War for Independence.

Soldiers are everywhere, here boarding the light rail in Jerusalem (right). New recruits are taken to many of Israel's historical and memorial sites, including Yad Vashem (far right), to learn about the land they are charged with protecting.



METHUSELAH
Sprouted from an ancient seed from the Masada excavations.
With thanks to the Louis I. Borek Natural Medicine Research Center, Hadassah Medical Center



KIBBUTZ KETURA IN THE ARAVA VALLEY:

Located north of Eilat, Ketura originally specialized in dates for export. Today the kibbutz houses Israel's original field of solar panels, conducts agricultural research and designs innovative low-tech housing. It is also the

home of the Arava Institute, where researchers from around the region and the world explore transnational environmental problems. Methuselah (far left) is a date palm sprouted from 2000-year-old seeds found at Masada.

CSI CONGREGATION SHERITH ISRAEL

people

A quarter century of feeding the hungry

PROFILE: JIM HURWITZ AND JOANN (JODY) GLASER HURWITZ

In the late 1980s, the HIV/AIDS epidemic was rampant, and San Francisco was an epicenter of the deadly disease.

San Francisco's Jewish community responded to the suffering with compassion and concern. In 1988, the city's Jewish Family and Children's Services called on Congregation Sherith Israel and Congregation Beth Sholom to support a monthly effort to provide food and a personal connection for Jews afflicted with the deadly disease.

Jim and Jody Hurwitz were volunteers in Sherith Israel's participation early on, delivering food and visiting with the sick and dying. But the program was only about a year old when a need arose for leadership; CSI's then-senior rabbi **Martin Weiner** asked Jim and Jody to handle the responsibility. "It was a good project and I enjoyed doing it," Jim recalls. "I figured we might as well keep it going."

And that's exactly what Jim and Jody did. For more than a quarter of a century, Jim and Jody, with help from dedicated volunteers—some with more than two decades of involvement—were the heart and soul of CSI's Chicken Soupers program, bringing nutritious food and nourishing company to chronically ill and homebound Jews in San Francisco.

From the beginning, Jim took charge of obtaining, preparing and cooking the food, drawing on his experience in the restaurant business. Menu planning and food preparation started on Friday night. Sunday morning, Jim would be in the Newman Hall kitchen early, working with diligence and dedication, supervising volunteers as if the people Chicken Soupers served were coming to his house to eat.

Jody took responsibility for everything outside of the kitchen: organizing volunteers for cooking and deliveries, contacting recipients to remind them to expect

Sunday afternoon visitors, and coordinating with JFCS to make sure the program ran smoothly.

"It was something that worked and felt good," Jody says. "It's been a wonderful experience at every level."

The couple divorced in 2002, but continued to lead Chicken Soupers. For the past decade or so, Jim's self-described "right hand" in the Newman Hall kitchen has been girlfriend **Lauren Vucinich**. Meanwhile, Jody continued to organize volunteers and liaison with JCFS.

"Jim and Jody have been the anchors of this program," says **Rachel Kesselman**, director of volunteer and community outreach programs at JCFS, who started working with Jim and Jody 24 years ago. "I can't say enough good things. When you believe in something and you make a commitment, it becomes part of your life. That's what happened with Jody and Jim."

On a Chicken Soupers Sunday, Newman Hall's stainless-steel kitchen bustles with chopping, cooking, and kibitzing all day. Chicken Soupers volunteers cook during the morning. Their HaMotzi counterparts, who cook for homeless shelters, take over in the afternoon. The Chicken Soupers team prepares a nutritious meal for those in need. Other volunteers package the food, and still others make the Sunday afternoon deliveries.

The food boxes typically include roast chicken or meat loaf, vegetables, plus half-a-dozen pint-sized containers with salad, beans, and pasta. Cookies, candy, and fresh fruit are the dessert. And it wouldn't be Chicken Soupers, of course, without soup—always one quart of chicken noodle soup and one quart of another kind of soup.

Jim and Jody stepped away from running Chicken

Soupers earlier this year. The effort is currently led by CSI education director **Nancy Sheftel-Gomes**. And while Chicken Soupers is entering a new chapter without Jim and Jody, the program remains a cornerstone of Sherith Israel's activism in the San Francisco Jewish community.

Looking back at his involvement with Chicken Soupers, Jim observes how this monthly commitment brought him fulfillment and purpose. "It's just been terrific," Jim says. "You're doing a mitzvah for people in need."

And Jim, whose parents joined CSI in 1932, reflects on the importance of dedicated fellow volunteers. "Without them," he says, "it's impossible to get the job done."

Adds Jody: "I'm grateful that I was able to do it and make it work. It became part of who I was and Jim was. It was a labor of love, and I will miss it." ■

COOKING UP LOVE: For more than 25 years, **Jim Hurwitz** and **Jody Glaser Hurwitz** headed Chicken Soupers at CSI, providing food to chronically ill and homebound Jews in San Francisco.



Kudos to **Lisa Eltinge**, honored this April as a finalist for the San Francisco Education Fund's 2015 Distinguished Service Award for her work at Mission High School's College and Career Center. A development and fund-raising professional, Lisa transformed the center by focusing on career development opportunities for students...

Congratulations to **Hope Greenhill** for receiving the Housing Justice Award from the Justice & Diversity Center of the Bar Association of San Francisco. Hope, who received her award from **Judge Ronald Evans Quidachay** of San Francisco Superior Court, was recognized for her pro bono representation of low-income tenants being sued to be evicted. If you are interested in doing pro bono legal work with the JDC or volunteering in some other capacity, contact Hope at hlgsfca@gmail.com or 415.346.6271. Each caller will be rewarded with a piece of chocolate. A description of the JDC programs is available at www.sfbbar.org/jdc/legal-services/volunteering.aspx...

Leslie Gordon's new novel, *Heads or Tails*, explores themes of friendship, loyalty and challenges to one's identity. It's garnering five-star reviews on Amazon. And **David Perlstein's** short story "The Laughing Room" appears in the 2015 VIVARIUM issue of *pacificReview*, the annual literary/arts journal of San Diego State University. David authored the novels *Flight of the Spumonis* and *The Boy Walker*...

Pediatrician **Valerie Jahan** says that fellow pediatrician **Valerie Flaherman**, assistant professor of pediatrics at UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital, was interviewed on KQED Radio's Forum by **Michael Krasny**. She spoke about the growing demand for breast milk and the ethical and safety implications of online sales and donations...

Paula Birnbaum and her University of San Francisco class, "Special Topics: Israeli and Palestinian Art," were profiled in the *j Weekly*. Paula, a professor of art history specializing in women's art, hopes that studying art from the region can foster understanding and peace...

Belarus is a hot destination this summer. In June, **Evan Kletter**, president of CSI's Board of Trustees, went there with his sister **Michelle**, brother **Jason** and Jason's wife and kids, plus their aunt and uncle. The Kletter clan visited a cousin in Minsk, and went to Krakow, Auschwitz and the Schindler Factory in Poland. **Ena Zheng** also traveled to Belarus recently. She went for business (her company is based there) on her way home from celebrating husband, **Erad Fridman's** birthday in Israel...

Rabbi **Julie Saxe-Taller**, husband **Michael**, son **Sam** and Michael's mother **Dolores**, also are heading to Belarus. They'll visit Minsk, Pinsk and Drohitchin, the town where Dolores' grandparents grew up. "I'm excited to see places like Minsk and Pinsk, which I have heard about but can't quite imagine, and to meet members of their growing Jewish communities," says Rabbi Julie...

Closer to home, **Ruth Auerbach**, **Rita Jeremy** and **Steve Weiner** attended SF's first celebration of Jewish Heritage Month at City Hall in May. Ruth reports that "**Elana Kaufman**, who grew up at Sherith Israel, gave a lovely talk about growing up bi-racial and walking up the Fillmore Street corridor between her home near lower Fillmore and Sherith Israel for Hebrew school..."

Patty Axelrod, **Julie House**, **Arlene Krieger**, **Sabrina Bluestein**, **Jan Maisel**, **Denise Migdail**, **Lida** and **Nina Morgenstein**, **Ellen Newman** and **Monica Zimmerman** attended the Jewish Community Federation and Endowment

Fund's Power of One event celebrating the invaluable work of women in the Jewish community. **Lynn Sedway**, a former winner of the Judith Chapman Memorial Women's Leadership Award, was a member of the host committee...

Hats off to **Blake Robins**, LMSW, who passed her exam and is now a licensed master social worker. Time to hang out that shingle... And mazel tov to **Dan Schumm**, recently retired as the chief administrative officer for the UCSF department of surgery...

Ruth Auerbach, along with sister **Judy** and her boyfriend and their sister-in-law **Geri**, walked the Pacific Crest Festival's 10K race in Sunriver, Oregon. Husband **Dave Levin** and son **Matthew** completed the 5K while brother **Harry** ran the half-marathon. The races benefit several nonprofits...

In July, **Jake Himmelstein**, son of **Cece Kaufman** and **Dan Himmelstein**, travels with his team to Arizona to compete in the MLB USA baseball 14U National Championships. Talking about sports, **Lillian Jahan** will move to France to play pro basketball in La Rochelle...

Marching for Pride: CSI-ers joined with other Jewish groups, including members of synagogues, the American Jewish World Service and the Union for Reform Judaism, plus a spirited group from Camp Newman. CSI-ers included **Lindsay Lassman** and **Ohad Ben Yoseph** with son **Ethan**; **Nancy**, **Jonathan** and **Sabina Brunn**; **David Cynman**; plus ECE participants **DC**, **Ilana** and **Zoe Zilberman**. **Ira Fate-man** and **JoBeth Walt** "stopped by" to say hi. ■

By the News Nosh, aka Ellen Newman.

Please send bits and bites of gossip to ellennewman@earthlink.net. Be sure to put "News Nosh" in the subject line.

BEHIND THE SCENES WITH EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AMY MALLOR



IT'S ALL ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS

Summer means upcoming vacations and trips, a chance to escape the daily routine, to get away—sometimes physically, in many ways spiritually. Summer also reminds us that the High Holy Days are not far off. As a matter of fact, Rosh Hashanah begins on the evening of September 13—part of summer this year and not autumn. So summer gets us started thinking about our relationship with God, however we see God. But it's critical that we also evaluate our relationships with people.

The Talmud (Shevuot 39a) instructs: “*Kol Yisrael arevim zeh b'zeh.*” All Israel is responsible, each for the other. When we confess our sins on Yom Kippur, we do so as a community. Perhaps each of us was lucky enough to commit none. Or one. Maybe only two. But as a people, we understand that we have doubtless committed them all. So we take on guilt communally. That's part of establishing

relationships with each other, not just on a local scale, but also on a global one.

The staff at Sherith Israel takes relationships seriously. For the New Year, we'll be working under an approach we call *bein adam l'adam*—between person and person. It's all about creating more meaningful relationships as we work together. Its purpose is to help us integrate all of what we do under one umbrella—to plan better together, to communicate better together and to involve not only each other but also all congregants in more activities.

You are a critical element in *bein adam l'adam*. It's all about stepping up to the plate and joining with fellow congregants in one or more of the many programs we offer at Sherith Israel. Of course, that starts with Shabbat and holiday worship. Sherith Israel is, after all, a sacred community. And when you read our weekly

e-newsletter, *Under the Dome*, and this newsletter, you know there's a lot for you at CSI. Study Torah and Talmud, feed the homeless, discuss great books, help congregants in time of need, learn the basics of Hebrew, attend a class, enjoy interesting speakers and more.

During the New Year, staff will be working hard to support these programs and develop more. Our purpose is simple. Sherith Israel is a community that fosters relationships. And nothing builds relationships between people like shared experiences—experiences that inspire, inform and, yes, entertain.

I invite you to spend a bit of time this summer thinking about how you can be part of *bein adam l' adam*. You'll play a key role in creating and sustaining relationships that will help us, in this broken world, to strengthen wholeness, justice and compassion. ■

RABBINIC SEARCH, from page 1

rabbi. Other priorities included the ability to build the congregational community and increase membership, conduct meaningful religious services and help Sherith Israel achieve greater financial security. A summary of the survey results is available on our website under Blogs.

Additionally, the search committee hosted five small-group discussions—three for the congregation at large, one for Religious School parents and another, hosted by **David** and **El-len Newman**, for former congregational presidents (names in italics) and their spouses. Attendees included **Valerie Jahan**, **Lynn Sedway**, **Bill** and **Shira Shore**, **Paul** and **Lee Ann Steiner**, **Diane Green**, **Alan** and **Monica Zimmerman**, and **Sheldon** and **Rhoda Wolfe**. Current president **Evan** and **Alicia Kletter** also attended.

The input process was capped on May 28 with a town hall meeting, facilitated by Amy Asin, URJ vice president and director of strengthening congregations. Forty congregants joined committee members to discuss how Sherith Israel meets their needs, what congregational and personal needs are not being met, their vision of what the synagogue ought to be like

five years from now, key qualities of rabbis they have known and traits they seek in our new senior rabbi.

Committee members laud this congregant input. “We’ve done a lot of listening,” says **Warren Braunig**. “It has helped us sharpen our focus on the ideal rabbi for our unique community.” **Amy Widdowson Mains** states, “Ensuring that the next leader of our community is able to bridge generations, technologies and a dramatically changing city demographic is a huge responsibility and privilege. In speaking with congregants throughout this process, I find it empowering to know that we are looking to our future together during this exciting time.” Committee chair Valerie Jahan adds, “It was reassuring to see that the congregational input from group conversations, the survey and the town hall meeting were not surprises. They reinforced the ideas the search committee started with when we first met.”

In addition to reaching out to the congregation, the search committee spoke with representatives of the CCAR and URJ for advice on the process. In early May, the committee Skyped with **Rabbi Alan Henkin**, CCAR director of rabbinic placement in New York. Rabbi Henkin affirmed that the committee was

PASSAGES

A hearty mazel tov to each of our families celebrating the following simchas:

BIRTHS

Ashland Rose Johnson, daughter of
Aaron and Jami Johnson, May 20

Maya Klein, daughter of Arthur Klein and
Ingrid Evans, May 23

Amari and Jasper Sheftel Gomes, sons of
Aumijo and Hilary Sheftel Gomes,
grandsons of Nancy Sheftel-Gomes and
August Gomes, June 22

ENGAGEMENTS

Daniel Berman and Sara Crumley

NEW MEMBERS

Daniel Berman and Sara Crumley

Penny Boyes

Richard Isaac Harris

Aaron and Jami Johnson, daughter
Ashland Rose

Jonathan Keilson and Rebecca Felsenthal

Kristen Zeitser, son Alex

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May the memory of the righteous be for a blessing.

Nancy Borkin, sister of Susan Borkin

Roslyn Brock, mother of Wende Brock

Jill Lee, mother of Aaron, Josh, and
Sam Lee

Jay Pidto, husband of Lynne Baer

Beverly Price, mother of Suzanne Price

Dorothy Weinstein, mother of
Helaine Weinstein

RABBINIC SEARCH, from page 14

undertaking the proper procedures in its search and was on schedule. He emphasized that the search for a senior rabbi involves four phases:

- *Pre-search/study:* The synagogue completes its research and submits an application to the Rabbinic Placement Commission.
- *Search:* The committee reviews resumes forwarded by the placement commission and interviews candidates. It then recommends a candidate to the CSI Board of Trustees for approval.
- *Contract phase:* The search committee negotiates contract terms with the prospective new senior rabbi following his/her agreeing to a letter of intent.
- *Transition:* A new committee plans and implements the transition from **Rabbi Larry Raphael** to our new senior rabbi, including transferring knowledge and creating milestones.

Rabbi Henkin stressed that synagogues don't need to find the

perfect rabbi—an impossible assignment—but the right fit.

The month before, **Rabbi Jan Offel**, URJ consulting and transition management specialist, flew up from Los Angeles. Rabbi Offel discussed transition management and the option of choosing an interim rabbi trained specifically to serve temporarily if an appropriate candidate for the position is not identified.

In late June, the committee completed the first phase of the process by crafting its Rabbi Search Application for the Rabbinic Placement Commission. The application profiles Sherith Israel as a community, delineates our key issues and lists the qualities we seek in our next senior rabbi. Following approval by CSI's board, the application was sent to the CCAR. The next step will be for interested rabbis to send the CCAR their resumes, which will be passed on to the search committee.

Going through resumes and conducting interviews with candidates lies ahead. As the Carpenters sang in their classic 1970 hit, "We've only just begun." ■



JEWISH COALITION FOR LITERACY

Summer Book Drive

Summer is a wonderful time to go through all your children's and grandchildren's books to weed out the old and prepare for the new school year. If you have gently-used books for kids from birth to 5th grade, please bring them to the bin outside the Religious School office. They will be given a new home with the children and families of Guadalupe Elementary School in San Francisco's Excelsior District.

If you'd like books picked up: Janet Parker, 415.282.1495, or jparkersf@hotmail.com.

JCL Tutor Training and Orientation

Thursday, Sept. 3, 1–5 pm

Become one of Congregation Sherith Israel's cadre of volunteer reading tutors. Our fall 2015 training and orientation session takes place at CSI on Thursday, September 3, at 1 pm. JCL places tutors in public elementary schools to share the magic of reading and give children a better chance to succeed. All it takes is as little as an hour per week.

*To register, go to jclread.org and press "sign up here!"
Information: Janet Parker, 415.282.1495, or jparkersf@hotmail.com.*

PROP. 47 FOLLOW UP

**Sunday, Aug. 2, 1–3 pm
Glide Memorial Church**

Last fall, members of Sherith Israel worked on California's Prop. 47, which subsequently passed. Prop. 47 reclassified certain non-violent crimes from felonies to misdemeanors. This reversed a major trend that had increased the prison population in California far above the rates of other states. It had a devastating impact on low-income people and people of color because their felony records often prevented them from finding jobs and housing. Now, we have the opportunity to be part of a community effort in San Francisco to implement the changes that Prop. 47 made possible. We will join other community members at Glide Memorial Church to help people change their records and their lives. Training in the process will be given onsite.

Rabbi Julie Saxe-Taller, 415.346.1720, x25, or rabbijst@sherithisrael.org. Between July 12 and 29, while Rabbi Julie is on vacation, contact David Agam, 415.346.1720, x17, or dagam@sherithisrael.org.

MITZVAH DAY AT THE CEMETERY

**Sunday, Sept. 20, 10 am–noon
Hills of Eternity Cemetery, Colma**

Join Religious School families, fourth-grade and older, for a history stroll around the Hills of Eternity cemetery. You can also help with the mitzvah of headstone washing and create headstone rubbings from some of our historic headstones. At 11:15, participants can take part in a traditional book burial and a graveside memorial service.

Nancy Sheftel-Gomes, 415.347.1720, x28, or nsgomes@sherithisrael.org.

NEW SOUND SYSTEM TIED INTO ASSISTIVE LISTENING DEVICES

Sherith Israel has long had assistive listening devices available for congregants with hearing impairments. With our new sound system, hearing should be even better for those who use the devices, according to Helen Luey, chair of the inclusion task force and vice president of the CSI Board of Trustees.

The CSI assistive listening devices are made up of two parts, a receiver and a headset. The volume control on the receiver allows you to adjust the sound to the level you need. "You can think of the integrated system as a tiny radio station that transmits sound directly from the microphone to a hand-held receiver," explains Helen. "Using the system, no matter where you are in the sanctuary, you hear the speaker as if you were in the front row."

CSI's assistive listening receivers and headsets are located on a table outside the sanctuary door prior to and during services. Helen reminds users that the system generally works best if you take your hearing aids out before putting on the headset. Neck-loops are also available for people whose hearing aids are set up to work with assistive technology.

If you have questions about CSI's assistive listening devices, contact executive director Amy Mallor, 415.346.1720, x30, or amallor@sherithisrael.org.

NEW SOUND SYSTEM, from page 1

Inés Kapustiansky, will make the sanctuary jump. It's going to make a huge difference for everyone."

Eric Schoen and **Nikki Stephens**, veteran sound engineers, each with a personal love of synagogue or church music, are designing and installing the new "Sucherman Sound System."

Sherith Israel is a challenging space for sound, acknowledges Eric, a lifelong musician and longtime member of Temple Sinai in Oakland. He has installed and run sound systems at a number of Bay Area synagogues. "Sherith Israel has marvelous acoustics for acoustic sound," says Eric. "Once you start amplifying things, it changes how the sound is received by your ears."

It goes something like this: Sherith Israel is a dome within a dome. This is tricky because a round dome sends sound back down in all directions. It is also very "live" acoustically with hard plaster walls that bounce sound around like ping-pong balls. Add to that the semi-domes above the balcony and the balcony itself, which is also curved, and sound reflects back down to the listener from all directions and at slightly diverging times. "The result is cacophony," laughs Nikki. "It does not make for a good listening experience."

The issue, as Eric describes it, is "intelligibility." When sound comes from more than one direction, offset in time, it loses crispness and becomes muddy. "In the old days before amplification, rabbis and cantors projected their voices to the back of the sanctuary," explains Eric, while demonstrating the outdated oratory style with his booming voice. It's quite the opposite of the more intimate style of services in vogue today. And it does not work well for b'nai mitzvah students or congregants without formal training when they are leading parts of the service.

"Today's services and today's listeners demand a different audio experience," notes Nikki, who works as the audio team leader and head technician for City Church of San Francisco. "People have higher expectations now. They are used to surround sound in movie theaters and even at home."

For Sherith Israel, Eric and Nikki designed a sound system that incorporates a dozen speakers placed strategically around the sanctuary. "Having the sound come out at the same time is a big challenge because of the space," comments Eric. Sound travels out of the speakers at the speed of sound. The challenge is to synchronize the speakers so that the second set fires when the sound from the first set reaches the middle of the sanctuary, a technique called "delaying."

Delaying is made possible by including a digital sound processor, or DSP, in the audio mix. "We have independent control of each speaker, allowing us to time the sound coming out. We delay the second speakers, and we delay the third speakers even more so that the sound is much more intelligible," adds Eric. "There's much less muddiness and less bouncing off walls at different times. That has been one of the biggest improvements, getting a modern DSP to work all these different speakers."



A SOUND INVESTMENT: Sound engineers **Nikki Stephens** and **Eric Schoen** demonstrate CSI's new soundboard, part of the new sound system donated by **Lowell and Janice Sucherman**. With 12 speakers around the synagogue, the new system will improve the listening experience for congregants wherever they sit in the sanctuary.

CSI executive director Amy Mallor sees the new sound system as a terrific investment for Sherith Israel. "It's very frustrating when people can't hear well. In the long term, having the new sound system as permanent equipment will save us thousands of dollars in rentals." In addition to the new sound system, CSI upgraded electrical wiring in the sanctuary and added outlets in the balcony to use if needed for fans on hot days during the High Holy Days.

Longtime members Janice and Lowell Sucherman were delighted to underwrite the audio upgrades for the congregation. They have maintained their philanthropic fund at CSI since their eldest son went to Israel on the confirmation class trip. Originally designed for Israel trip scholarships, the fund has since supported the CSI website, upgraded seating on the bimah and bought the stopgap sound system.

"Improving the sound system resonated with me because I have a slight hearing problem," comments Janice. "I am really looking forward to clearer, crisper sound. It's going to help a lot of people in the congregation." Adds Lowell, "When you come to temple, you like to hear what's going on. The new sound system is going to enhance our ability to enjoy all the songs, prayers and sermons. It's going to improve the enjoyment of coming to services for a lot of people." ■

If you are interested in learning how to use the soundboard and in volunteering to help run sound during services, contact Rabbi Larry Raphael, rabbiraphael@sherithisrael.org.

Todah rabbah — Thank you all for your generous support of Congregation Sherith Israel.

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CELEBRATING 58 YEARS AS A CANTOR: CSI honored **Cantor Martin Feldman** for his 58 years of service to the cantorate and his 43 years of service to Sherith Israel by naming the upstairs foyer in front of the sanctuary in his honor. We celebrated in May with a festive musical service that included **Jonathan Dimmock** on our Murray Harris Organ and the Koleynu Choir. Cantor Feldman celebrates Kiddush with his beloved wife **Nancy**, board president **Evan Kletter** and **Rabbi Larry Raphael**.



CONGREGATION
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MIDRASH FOR WOMEN: CSI's Magalim (Circles) group hosted author **Michal Lemberger** for a special presentation at the home of **Monica Zimmerman**. A longtime friend of **Rabbi Jessica Zimmerman Graf**, Michal shared stories and readings from her new book, *After Abel and Other Stories*. The book focuses on women whose "real" stories were left out of the Torah, including Eve and the wife of Lot. Hearing the stories told from a women's perspective definitely sheds new light on Torah.

Pictured: 1] **Monica Zimmerman**, author **Michal Lemberger**, **Rabbi Jessica Zimmerman Graf**; 2] **Jessica Kraft**, **Vanessa Bilanceri**, **Lindsay Braunig**; 3] **Shira Shore**, **Paisha Rochlin**; 4] **Jenny Benjamin**, **Michal Lemberger**; and 5] **Liat Sadler**, **Rebekah Krell**, **Maacah Marah**.

