

SHERITH ISRAEL NEWS

SEPTEMBER–DECEMBER, 2016



Focus on congregant participation

CANTOR DAVID FROMMER OFFERS LIFETIME LOVE OF JEWISH MUSIC

Cantor David Frommer has been singing Jewish music since he was a child. Cantor Frommer, who joined the Sherith Israel family on July 1 after serving at Congregation Shomrei Torah in Santa Rosa, grew up in New York. He, his sister and his parents attended then-Conservative Congregation B'nai Jeshurun on Manhattan's Upper West Side. (His father grew up Orthodox in the Bronx, his mother Reform in Lexington, Kentucky; the family later attended New York's Reform Central Synagogue.) B'nai Jeshurun focused on music and Cantor Frommer traces his musical passion to that congregation.

"Unlike today, all the music at B'nai Jeshurun was played just on the organ," says Cantor Frommer. Uniquely for that time during the mid-80's and 90's, the organ—not a guitar—facilitated congregational singing. "Everyone was meant to sing along, rather than the organ supporting a choir. I found the organ the most majestic and inviting instrument. And I'm thrilled that our sanctuary is blessed with our Murray Harris organ, a remarkable instrument."

Cantor Frommer continues, page 14



CANTOR DAVID FROMMER listened to and sang Jewish music from his earliest years. As a child, he turned down an offer from a famed New York choral group because he only wanted to sing from the bimah.

From the basement to the attic

STRENGTHENING SHERITH ISRAEL FOR THE FUTURE

Ten years after Sherith Israel made a commitment to the congregation, the City of San Francisco and future generations of San Francisco Jews, the second phase of our seismic retrofit is well underway. Construction started in April, and the project is on time and on budget. When this phase is completed in January, our building will be fully compliant with San Francisco's Unreinforced Masonry Building ordinance.

We celebrated the beginning of construction in April with a rousing *Shehechyanu* at Hard Hat Shabbat 2.0. The next Monday, our construction team, **Plant Construction Company**, began the job by removing and carefully storing the internal organ pipes that sit behind the decorated pipes above the bimah. With the pipes safely tucked away, the area

was then ready for work to begin on the north wall. Other prep tasks included erecting construction steps on the roof near the dome, making forms to shape new concrete beams in the attic and clearing the crawlspace under the building so the foundation can be reinforced with concrete "outriggers."

Since then the building has been filled with contractors—on the roof, in the attic and in the basement. The first order of business below decks was to remove hazardous materials—asbestos used as insulation around pipes in the basement and crawl space of our 111-year-old building. "The abatement part of the project is now complete," explains architect **Ellen Schumm**, a member of the building and grounds committee and a key member of the Sherith Israel team

Seismic retrofit continues, page 17

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

New Clergy Installation
FRIDAY SEPT. 16, 6 pm

Erev Rosh Hashanah Dinner
SUNDAY, OCT. 2, 6 PM



SHERITH ISRAEL

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Member of the Union for
Reform Judaism since 1903

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Julie Saxe-Taller

Rabbi

David Frommer

Cantor

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A MOMENT WITH CANTOR DAVID FROMMER



UNITING IN SONG, UNITING IN SPIRIT

“Shiru l’Adonai shir chadash, ki nifla’ot asa—Sing to God, sing a new song, for God has done wonderful things!” (Psalm 98:1)

It’s safe to say there’s a lot of newness around Sherith Israel these days. We have a new senior rabbi, a new phase of the seismic retrofit, an acting interim executive director, a new presence in our Early Childhood Education program and, of course, a new cantor. I understand this may feel unsettling to some, but I am both honored and overjoyed to be joining this congregation at such a critical and exciting juncture in its history. We have an unprecedented opportunity to make our synagogue even more exciting as it maintains its historic place at the center of San Francisco religious and communal life.

I believe music has a powerful role to play in enhancing the relevance of Sherith Israel’s worship. More than anything else, our success or failure in this enterprise will depend on the spirit that permeates our efforts and on the soul of Sherith Israel that we cultivate. Music is the language of the soul—a force that binds us together in a shared sense of history and purpose. According to researchers at the University of Gothenburg in Sweden, singers in a choir are unified by more than just their voices. Their very heartbeats actually synchronize in a shared rhythm as a result

of the music they make together. If you don’t believe me, ask NPR!

Our Jewish sages recognized this phenomenon centuries before we had the science to prove it. “Alone, I cannot lift my voice in song,” wrote Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz in the eighteenth century. “Then you come near and sing with me. Our prayers fuse and a new voice soars. Our bond is beyond voice and voice. Our bond is one of spirit and spirit.”

In my first few months as your cantor, I have felt blessed to worship with congregants who already appreciate the truth in Rabbi Pinchas’ message. We have experienced inspiring *ruach* and *kavana*—enthusiasm and intention—in our praying together. My hope is that more congregants and members of the Jewish community will enrich and share that experience.

Whether or not you know Hebrew, or think you sing on key, I urge you to join your voice and your spirit with ours at Shabbat services. I dream of our prayers resounding through the vaulted heights of our majestic sanctuary, borne on the wings of melodies by Shlomo Carlebach, Debbie Friedman and Louis Lewandowski. But I cannot realize that dream alone. I need your help. Let us work together to sing that future into existence and, as the Psalmist says, to turn that which is new into that which is wonderful. ■

PEOPLE OF THE BOOK

“The trumpeters and the singers joined in unison to praise and extol the LORD” — 2 Chronicles 5:13

King Solomon completes construction of the First Temple in Jerusalem and has the Ark of the Covenant placed in the Holy of Holies. The Levite singers with cymbals, harps and lyres, along with 120 priests blowing trumpets, make music. Included in the Temple

singers are the descendants of Korach, who led a rebellion against Moses (Numbers 16ff). Eleven psalms are attributed to the Sons of Korach, attesting to the power of music to raise people to new levels of holiness. ■

4

Questions for RABBI JESSICA GRAF

We welcome Rabbi Jessica Graf as the tenth senior rabbi in Sherith Israel's 165-year history. A daughter of the congregation, she had her bat mitzvah and was confirmed here. Rabbi Graf brings a wealth of knowledge and enthusiasm to her new position. We asked her to share her vision for the future of the congregation.

Q: As someone who grew up at Sherith Israel, where does your vision for the congregation fit on the change versus continuity continuum?

A: I am excited about connecting our past with the future. Our history is an inspiration. I think we all feel that way when we spend time in our beautiful sanctuary with its profound sense of spiritual space and the memory of the generations that have come before us. It's clear we have inherited something very meaningful. At the same time, we are poised to springboard to a wonderful future. I want to build on what we already have and open ourselves to creative new ways of doing things.

In Kohelet (Ecclesiastes), Judaism teaches us, "There is nothing new under the sun." Human nature hasn't changed from Torah times on, which is why I think reading the Torah every week is still so relevant. We see ourselves in those Biblical characters, our ancestors. At the same time, in each generation we address our human issues in a new context because the world around us has changed so much. The ability to use Judaism as a tool to understand our own lives and to bring it into our contemporary world is a great gift.

Q: What contemporary approaches would you like to bring to the congregation?

A: As I said, human nature hasn't changed. People still want to share their lives. In the old days, communication and gathering started by someone blowing a shofar from a mountaintop. Today we have Facebook and Twitter to help us communicate—even from great distances. For example, previously unavailable liturgical poems and music from around the world are now available in online databases. I want to bring the best of what's out there to Sherith Israel. A big part of that vision is having a clergy partner like Cantor David Frommer, who is going to bring us a spiritual connection to a broader and deeper range of Jewish music, and an opportunity to learn from these new sources.

Q: With your experience working for Synagogue 3000, how do you plan to reach people who have felt that Judaism is archaic or outside their day-to-day lives?

A: I'm looking forward to helping people get past barriers to entry, whether it's language, music or a feeling of discomfort. I want people to feel empowered. Ber-

nie Marcus, the founder of Home Depot, was our chief funder at Synagogue 3000. He talked about the success of Home Depot: the sense of empowerment people get walking into a store and finding an expert with an orange apron to ask for help. At Sherith Israel, we're the people with the orange aprons. We have the expertise, and we are eager to share our knowledge so people can take what they've learned here and try it out at home. The Apple Genius Bar is similar. You can stop by whenever you need help, but a lot of creativity and learning happens when you experiment at home. The idea is not to have the clergy hand you a Jewish practice, but to help you build one, Home Depot-style.

It's a wonderful model because Judaism is profound and wise. If we can make it more accessible people will see so much beauty in it. My vision is to help people participate in new aspects of Jewish life, adding new tools to their Jewish toolboxes.

Q: How do you see your vision of making Judaism more accessible play out at Sherith Israel?

A: We want to create a wonderful Shabbat morning family experience with a service, lunch and an opportunity for families to get to know each other. I would like more community-building Havdalah opportunities in people's homes, where people can interact both socially and around a Jewish topic or theme. I would like all the Jewish holidays to be opportunities for joyful celebration and meaningful introspection. Joy is a big part of living Judaism, and our vision is to increase joy in all aspects—study, music, festivals and all our programming.

We also want to build a sense of social justice, both inside the community and outside. Social justice often is defined as helping others. But social justice is also about creating a sense of justice (*tzedek*—or righteousness) for us internally, as well. How do we connect better with one another and support each other better? That's going to be a focus that Rabbi Julie Saxe-Taller and I will continue to talk about throughout the year. We also want to strengthen the understanding that our "San Francisco values"—honoring the environment, for example—are deeply held Jewish values, too. ■

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.

SATURDAY MORNINGS

9:15 am: Torah study

Congregants and guests study the weekly Torah portion with learning from traditional and contemporary sources, 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. Services include chanting or reading from our Torah scrolls.

Dreidels, menorahs and latkes...

**CELEBRATE
CHANUKAH AT CSI**
Friday, Dec. 30, 4–6 pm

ECE CHANUKAH PARTY

Enjoy the light in their eyes as our youngest members watch in awe as the candles are lit for Chanukah. The party continues with latkes for all.



**SHABBAT
CHANUKAH**
6 pm

Come light your menorahs with Cantor David Frommer. Latke dinner and music follow our family Chanukah service.

New ways to celebrate together

FALL FESTIVAL SEASON BRINGS NEW DELIGHTS

Sukkot, the festival of “booths” or “huts” commemorates both the fall harvest and the Israelites’ forty years of wandering in the desert. Sherith Israel will celebrate in several new ways this year, including our first “Hachutzah” outdoor event. Come and enjoy!

ECE SUKKAH-DECORATING BRUNCH

Saturday, Oct. 15, 10:30–Noon

Cantor David Frommer will lead early childhood and Marin Day School families as they decorate the sukkah on the play yard, sing, dance, play games and enjoy brunch together.

HACHUTZAH— A PRE-SUKKOT ADULT HIKE

Sunday, Oct. 16, 10 am–Noon

Reweave the connection between Judaism and the natural world at our first Hachutzah hike. “The word Hachutzah means ‘outward’ or ‘heading out,’” explains Rabbi Julie Saxe-Taller, who will lead the hike. Meet at Sherith Israel for an easy-to-moderate hike that will accommodate various abilities and desires. As always in San Francisco, bring water and dress in layers. *Information: Rabbi Julie Saxe-Taller, 415.346.1720, x25, or rabbijst@sherithisrael.org.*

SUKKAH OUTSIDE THE BOX: CSI YOUTH GROUP KICK-OFF

Sunday, Oct. 16, 12:30–2:30 pm

This is our first Big Jewish Fun event of the year (see page 9 for more). Religious School students will “turn a sukkah upside down,” as they enjoy interactive, collaborative activities including cooking, architecture and dance, all designed with input from the high school students.

EREV SUKKOT UNDER THE STARS

Sunday, Oct. 16, 6:30 pm

Join the clergy and fellow CSI-ers for a lively urban outdoor Erev Sukkot party. We’ll build a sukkah, eat and party after a brief Erev Sukkot Service.

Surprise location and details to be announced via email.

SUKKAH PARTY IN CANTOR FROMMER’S SUKKAH

Monday, Oct. 17, 6–8 pm

Enjoy wine and cheese with Cantor David Frommer and his family. RSVP: *Nia Taylor, ntaylor@sherithisrael.org, or 415.346.1720, x17, for the address.*

MOVIE NIGHT WITH DINNER IN THE SUKKAH

Wednesday, Oct. 19, 6–9 pm

The 2005 Israeli film “Ushpizin” is groundbreaking on more than one count. A rare collaboration between secular and ultra-Orthodox Israelis and one of the first movies filmed in Jerusalem’s Mea Shearim with ultra-Orthodox actors, it is a warmhearted story of marriage among Hasidic Jews. The film focuses on a childless couple without the means to celebrate Sukkot. After much prayer they receive an unexpected gift of money ... and then unexpected guests. *Dinner \$15 per person. RSVP to Nia Taylor, ntaylor@sherithisrael.org, or 415.346.1720, x17.*

SHABBAT SUKKOT

Friday, Oct. 21, 6 pm

Come shake the lulav and smell the etrog during our Sukkot services. A freilich harvest oneg follows with noshing and dancing. Please bring canned foods to benefit the JFCS pantry for distribution to people in need.

SHABBAT MORNING AND YIZKOR (MEMORIAL) SERVICE

Saturday, Oct. 22, 10:30 am

Enjoy morning worship and the opportunity to remember loved ones who have died in recent years.

SIMCHAT TORAH

Sunday, Oct. 23, Time TBD

We’re planning a fun celebration as we mark the end of the annual cycle of Torah reading and begin again with Bereishit (Genesis). We’ll sing and dance with the Torah. Watch your email and Under the Dome for details. ■



NEW YEAR, NEW SPIRIT: HIGH HOLIDAYS 5777

In the fresh spirit of new beginnings, Rabbi Jessica Graf, Rabbi Julie Saxe-Taller and Cantor David Frommer looked at the schedule of services for the High Holidays and tweaked it to make services more family friendly. "So many people have mentioned that they enjoy going to Tot Yontif or Youth Services with their children or grandchildren, but hate to miss our adult services," says Rabbi Graf. "To eliminate that dilemma, we decided to adjust the schedule to avoid overlapping services as much as possible."

New this year, Tot Yontif services (newborn–5 years) for both Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are scheduled for 5 pm. On Erev Rosh Hashanah, Sunday, October 2, a congregational dinner catered by **Mary and David Sperber** of Town's End Restaurant & Bakery (details below) is scheduled between Tot Yontif and adult

services. Youth Services (5 and up, all ages welcome) will take place at 9 am before morning adult services on October 3 and 12.

"This practical time shift makes it possible for everyone to come together during the holidays," adds Rabbi Graf. "Everyone is invited. Please join us for any or all of the services."

TRY SOMETHING NEW:

Check out S'lichot: Sins, Cider and Cinema on Saturday, September 24. It's that time of year again when we admit we weren't as great as we wanted to be, resolve to be better in the year ahead and agree about how much easier it is to apologize over text than in person.

Join us for the opening program of our High Holiday season as we study themes of self-reflection and improvement through songs, texts, discussion and best of all, movies! We'll provide seasonal munchies—apple fritters, popcorn and cider. See you there!

Come to East Beach at Crissy Field, 4 pm on Rosh Hashanah afternoon, Monday, October 3, for Tashlich. "It's a beautiful way to symbolically cast off our sins," says Rabbi Graf, who will be joined at the beach by Rabbi Saxe-Taller and Cantor Frommer.



SCHEDULE

S'LICHOT

Saturday, September 24
8 pm—Sanctuary

EREV ROSH HASHANAH

Sunday, October 2

5–6 pm: Tot Yontif—Sanctuary

6–7:30 pm: Dinner catered by Mary and David Sperber of Town's End Restaurant & Bakery. *Members: \$18 adults/\$8 children 5 and up; nonmembers: \$36 adults/\$18 children.* RSVP by Sept. 27—Newman Hall

7:30 pm: Service—Sanctuary

ROSH HASHANAH

Monday, October 3

9–10:30 am: Youth service (children 5–9)—Newman Hall

10 am: Service—Sanctuary (sitters and activities available for children 5 and under)

4 pm: Tashlich—East Beach at Crissy Field

KOL NIDRE

Tuesday, October 11

5–6 pm: Tot Yontif—Sanctuary

7:30 pm: Kol Nidre service—Sanctuary

YOM KIPPUR

Wednesday, October 12

9–10:30 am: Youth service—Newman Hall

10 am: Morning service—Sanctuary

1–3 pm: Programs and discussion

3:30–5 pm: Afternoon and healing service—Sanctuary

5 pm: Yizkor—Sanctuary

6 pm: Ne'ilah (Closing the Gates)—Sanctuary

7 pm: Break-the-fast—Newman Hall



If you need additional tickets for the High Holidays, please contact Nia Taylor, 415.346.1720, x17, or ntaylor@sherithisrael.org. Additional member tickets are \$180 for all services. Tickets for nonmembers are \$360.

ADULT PROGRAMS

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

ADULT HEBREW

Sundays (after High Holidays)

Fred Nervo

9 am: Beginning Hebrew

Hilda Isaacson

9:45 am: Continuing Beginning Hebrew

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

PRIME TIME CLUB

For congregants 65 and up
Second Fridays, Noon–2 pm
(lunch included)

In memory of Max and Marilyn Singer

Join congregants to have lunch and hear speakers on a variety of Jewish and secular subjects, as well as engage in interesting discussions.

Check our website and Under the Dome for specific programs once the High Holidays conclude.

Information & RSVP: Nancy Sheftel-Gomes, 415.346.1720, x28, or nsgomes@sherithisrael.org. Todah rabbah—many thanks—to the Max and Marilyn Singer Foundation for its continuing support of the Prime Time lunch series.

HACHUTZAH: CSI GETS OUT

First outing: Sunday, Sept. 16
10 am–Noon

Rabbi Julie Saxe-Taller

The word *Hachutzah* means “outward” or “heading out.” Join Rabbi Saxe-Taller for the first of a series of programs bringing us outside to celebrate our holidays and re-weave the connection between Judaism and the natural world. We’ll launch the series with a pre-Sukkot hike for adults on October 16th, the Sunday morning of Erev Sukkot. Meet at Sherith Israel for an easy-to-moderate hike with options for various hiking abilities and desires. Bring water and wear layers of clothes that don’t mind dirt. (This is San Francisco, after all, so our usual weather can suddenly turn cool.)

Rabbi Julie Saxe-Taller, 415.346.1721, x25, or rabbijst@sherithisrael.org.

AN INSTRUCTION MANUAL: BEFORE THERE WAS YOUTUBE THERE WAS TALMUD

Sundays, Nov. 6, 13 & 20

10–11:15 am

Rabbi Jessica Graf

Did you know that the Talmud’s lessons include a discussion on how long one should spend on the toilet and whether an animal can be used for a wall of a sukkah? Join Rabbi Graf in the chapel for a lively look at our not-so-untouchable instruction manual for life. No Talmud experience necessary.

Rabbi Jessica Graf, 415.346.1720, x18, or rabbjgraf@sherithisrael.org.

LET’S MAKE MUSIC: ALTERNATING KOLEYNU CHOIR AND TROPE CLASSES

Sundays—Dates to be determined—
11:15 am–12:30 pm

Cantor David Frommer

Singing brings us closer to the Creator and our own souls. Join Cantor Frommer in our sanctuary to prepare with our Koleynu choir—all you need is to love to sing. And learn trope so you can better appreciate chanting Torah and even do so on the bimah. Check our website and your email for more details.

Cantor David Frommer, 415.346.1720, or dfrommer@sherithisrael.org.

ONGOING PROGRAMS

CARING COMMUNITY

Assists members in times of need and joy. Nia Taylor, 415.346.1720, x17, or ntaylor@sherithisrael.org.

TORAH STUDY

Saturdays, 9:15–10:15 am

Studies weekly Torah portion.

Bagels and lox.

HAMOTZI & CHICKEN SOUPERS

HaMotzi: Sundays, 9:30 am–12:30 pm

Chicken Soupers: One Sunday a month, Noon–4 pm, Sept. 4, Oct. 23, Nov. 6, Dec. 4

HaMotzi volunteers prepare 100 meals for two shelters in San Francisco each week. Chicken Souper volunteers prepare meals for clients of Jewish Family and Children’s Services each month. Volunteers are needed to shop, pick up donations, cook and deliver. Nancy Sheftel-Gomes, 415.346.1720, x28, or nsgomes@sherithisrael.org.

KOLEYNU CONGREGATIONAL CHOIR

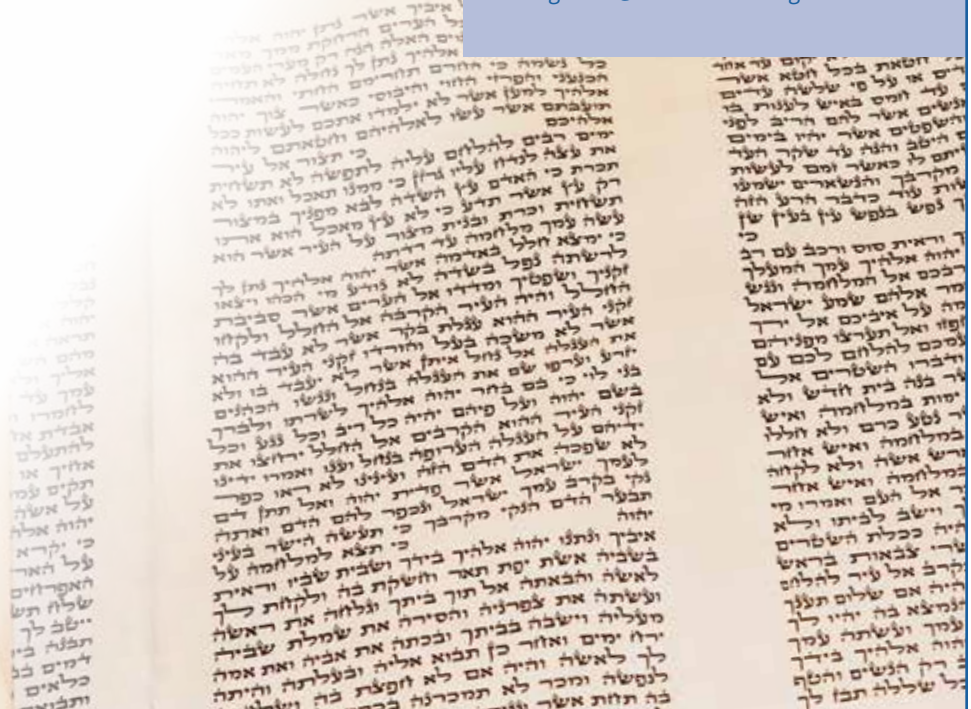
Sings at holidays and Shabbat services.

Cantor David Frommer, 415.346.1720, or dfrommer@sherithisrael.org.

OFFICE VOLUNTEERS

Greet visitors at our front desk, answer phones or help with office tasks.

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



JEWISH BOOK CLUB—Mondays, 7 pm

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

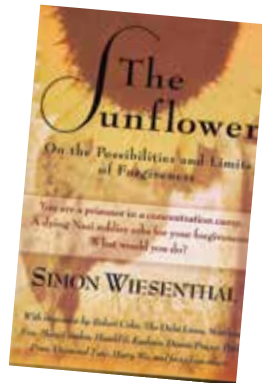


Sept. 26

***Mornings in Jenin* by Susan Abulhawa and *Khirbet Khizeh* by S. Yizhar.** Discussion leaders Sally Flanzer and Susan Alexander. *Mornings in Jenin* traces the multi-generational history of a Palestinian family removed from its village after the formation of the State of Israel in 1948. The novella *Khirbet Khizeh*, a landmark of Israel literature, presents an Israeli soldier participating in the expulsion of Palestinians from their village in 1948 and the battle he wages with his conscience.

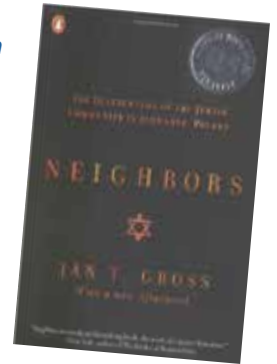
Oct. 10

***The Sunflower* by Simon Wiesenthal.** Discussion leader: Nancy Sheftel-Gomes. While a prisoner at a German concentration camp, Wiesenthal was taken to the bedside of a dying SS member to hear his confession. He offered no forgiveness. Wiesenthal tells that story and offers 53 essays by writers from many cultures on repentance and forgiveness.



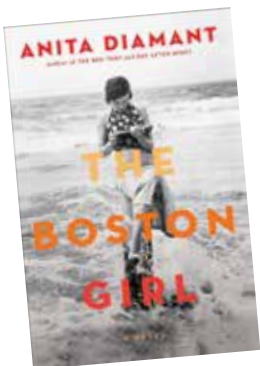
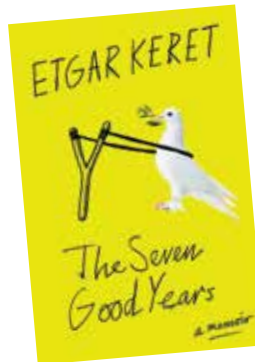
Jan. 23

***Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland* by Jan T. Gross and *The Zookeeper's Wife: A War Story* by Diane Ackerman.** Discussion leaders: Jan Maisel and Jane Cutler. Jan Gross tells the story of a Polish town in summer 1941. Christians—half the population—killed 1,600 of their Jewish neighbors leaving only seven survivors. The slaughter was not ordered by the German occupiers. Diane Ackerman recounts the true story of Jan and Antonina Zabinski, who saved 300 people from the Nazis by hiding them in the Warsaw Zoo.



Feb. 27

***The Seven Good Years* by Etgar Keret.** Discussion Leader: Cathy Taylor. Israeli short-story writer Keret offers a non-fiction book detailing the seven years between the birth of his son following a terrorist attack and the death of his father, a Holocaust survivor.

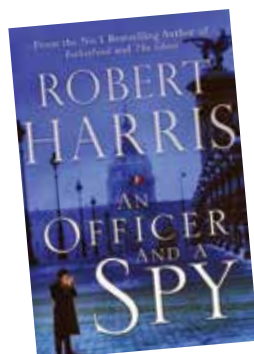


Nov. 28

***The Boston Girl* by Anita Diamant.** Discussion leaders: Adrienne Christine and Hilda Isaacson. Addie Baum grows up in Boston's multicultural North End in the early 20th century. Unlike her immigrant parents, she embraces America and struggles to find her place in a new world.

March 27

***The Kidnapping of Edgardo Mortara* by David I. Kertzer.** Discussion leader: Blanche Kahn. Historian Kertzer details the June 1858 kidnapping of a Jewish boy in Bologna, Italy. Because a household servant had secretly "baptized" Edgardo, he was considered a Catholic by the Church and taken from his family by officers of the Inquisition to a special monastery where his conversion would be completed.



May 22

***An Officer and a Spy* by Robert Harris.** Discussion leader: Julie Lekach House. This historical novel examines the effect of the conviction of French captain Alfred Dreyfus on the head of France's counterespionage agency, Lt. Colonel Georges Picquart. As Picquart sees that Dreyfus may be innocent, he suspects that another spy is loose in France. He also begins to doubt his country and himself.

TALMUD TORAH/EDUCATION

early childhood

ECE PROGRAMS

PLAYGROUPS

Mondays and Fridays, 10:30 am–Noon

Get your playgroup groove on with JAMaroo Kids in Sherith Israel's bright, beautiful indoor space. Dance, music and story time add up to a fun play experience for children, parents and caregivers. San Francisco-based JAMaroo Kids offers dance, music, yoga and more at 100-plus Bay Area preschools (including CSI Marin Day School Preschool) and community centers. *Drop-in fees: \$15 per visit.*

Information: Nia Taylor, 415.346.1720, x17, or ntaylor@sherithisrael.org.

FAMILY SHABBAT

**2nd Friday of the month, 6 pm
Sept. 9, Oct. 7, Nov. 11, Dec. 9**

Celebrate Shabbat with other CSI families with young children and the congregation in a service that features Lior Ben-Hur and members of his band. Our clergy share stories meaningful for congregants of all ages. Dinner, made possible by generous donations to the Shabbat Oneg Fund, follows services. *RSVP for dinner by the Monday before: Nia Taylor, ntaylor@sherithisrael.org, or 415.346.1720, x17.*

CSI MARIN DAY SCHOOL TOURS: Tour our unique preschool for children 2–5 years old. The Sherith Israel Marin Day School Preschool offers an integrated Jewish curriculum and extended-day program that provides a warm experience filled with Jewish values, traditions and celebrations. Sherith Israel members enjoy priority for enrollment. *Contact our preschool office, 415.775.2211, to set up an appointment or site director Nichole Sullivan, nsullivan@marindayschools.org.*

TOT YONTIF, EREV ROSH HASHANAH AND EREV YOM KIPPUR **Sunday, Oct. 2 and Tuesday, Oct. 11, 5 pm**

Celebrate the High Holidays with your entire family, babies to grandparents. These family-friendly services led by all our clergy will set the mood for the entire holiday season. On Rosh Hashanah, October 2, enjoy a congregational dinner catered by Town's End Restaurant & Bakery between Tot Yontif and adult services at 7:30. *Dinner: members \$18 for adults/\$8 for children 5 and up; nonmembers \$36 for adults/\$18 for children. RSVP by Sept. 27: Nia Taylor, 415.346.1720, x17, or ntaylor@sherithisrael.org.*

SUKKOT BRUNCH

Saturday, Oct. 15, 10:30 am–Noon

Help decorate our backyard sukkah with the whole Sherith Israel Early Childhood community, Rabbi Jessica Graf and Cantor David Frommer. Share a delicious brunch, singing, dancing and playing together. Watch for your special invitation and invite your friends to join the fun.

TOT SHABBAT AT SHABBAT CHAI **Saturday, Oct. 29, 10:30 am**

Celebrate a tot-friendly Shabbat as part of our all-community Shabbat Chai. Cantor David Frommer leads this delightful Shabbat morning family experience with songs and storytelling, wrapping up with a joyful Kiddush with juice and challah. It's a lovely experience to share with your Early Childhood friends and their little ones. An all-congregational potluck lunch follows.

HAVDALAH PJ PARTY

Saturday, Nov. 12, 4:30–6 pm

Bring your little ones in their PJ's for singing, playing, a pizza party and Havdalah, led by Cantor David Frommer and Rabbi Jessica Graf. *Dinner and activities: \$18 per family. RSVP by the Monday before: Nia Taylor, ntaylor@sherithisrael.org, or 415.346.1720, x17.*

ECE CHANUKAH PARTY

Friday, Dec. 30, 4–6 pm

Enjoy the light in their eyes as our youngest members watch in awe as the candles are lit for Chanukah. The party continues with latkes for all.

SHABBAT CHANUKAH

Friday, Dec. 30, 6 pm

Come light your menorahs with Cantor David Frommer. Latke dinner and music follow our family Chanukah service.



SHABBAT LEARNING: Cantor David Frommer leads Shabbat for all grades at the Sherith Israel MDS preschool, as well as providing Jewish content support for the Jewish classrooms. He'll also be a fun presence at all of our ECE events like Tot Shabbat and Havdalah PJ party.

"We approach raising the next generation of Jews as a partnership between families and the synagogue," says Cantor Frommer. "It's our job to provide families with tools and confidence. Our goal is to connect the school experience back home so we can maximize this terrific resource."

religious school

Tuesday Hebrew School dropped

PRE-K TO 8TH-GRADE PROGRAM NOW ONE (LONGER) DAY A WEEK

Innovation to meet the needs of students and parents forms a major theme of Sherith Israel's Religious School. This year, a new schedule offers relief to busy parents and children. We're dropping Tuesday Hebrew School and adding Hebrew learning to a slightly longer Sunday. "We can accomplish our goals with one-day-a-week school for pre-K through eighth graders," says education director **Nancy Sheftel-Gomes**. To do so, Religious School on Sundays will start and end 15 minutes later (9:15 am–12:30 pm). The school year also will be extended to 28 Sundays from the usual 24 or 25.

Hebrew will not get short shrift as Hebrew activity takes place on Sundays. Students through second grade, while not yet studying Hebrew formally, will have the language integrated into other classroom studies. "The earlier the exposure, the better," says Nancy.

Third- through sixth-grade students will augment their classroom learning by engaging in 30 minutes of online Hebrew at home during the week. Children know their way around technology, Nancy points out. Last year, students used iPads and computers in the classroom. The devices were paid for from former **Senior Rabbi Larry Raphael's** discretionary fund. Consultant **Debbie Jacoby**, who used to teach at Sherith Israel, is working with parent volunteers to choose the most effective programs offering interactive exposure to Hebrew. Debbie, who will come to Religious School once a month, will monitor our progress.

To make one-day-a-week Religious School work, time is being streamlined.

A pilot on Mother's Day saw school start at 9 am with students going right into class. T'filah was held after Hebrew. Based on feedback, regular start time will be 9:15 for all pre-K through eighth graders. T'filah will be held in the first half hour before Hebrew because many parents enjoy worshipping with their children. "Of course," says Nancy, "we'll make adjustments as necessary during the year. Flexibility really pays dividends."

Framing Jewish Education will be part of the eighth-grade curriculum. For the past decade or so, Sherith Israel has made the Jewish Lens part of our curriculum. Developed with assistance from the UJA/Federation of New York, Jewish Lens uses photographs and photography, as well as text, to provide a window into Jewish life and learning. Young people connect intellectually and emotionally with Jewish traditions and our community.

Now Jewish Lens offers a new program for eighth grade funded by the Covenant Foundation—Framing Jewish Education. Jewish Lens sought the participation of 15 religious schools in the U.S. Sherith Israel was accepted. Framing Jewish Education offers a 12-week curriculum that provides students opportunities for meaningful introspection in the very transformative year following bar or bat mitzvah. Parents will be involved as well. Significantly, the Covenant Foundation will pay for teacher training and provide teachers with stipends.

"I'm always excited by every school year," says Nancy. "Each is a challenge filled with new opportunities. Our children will benefit, and so will their parents." ■

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL PROGRAMS

SUNDAYS

Includes T'filah and Hebrew

Preschool to Grade 8
9:15 am–12:30 pm

High School
Grades 9 to 12
9:45–10:45 am

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL OFFICE

415.346.1720, x28, or
nsgomes@sherithisrael.org

BIG JEWISH FUN ONE SUNDAY A MONTH

Students in multiple grades from Grade 2 up will enjoy fun activities after religious school each month:

- Grades 2-4
- Grades 5-7
- Grades 8-12

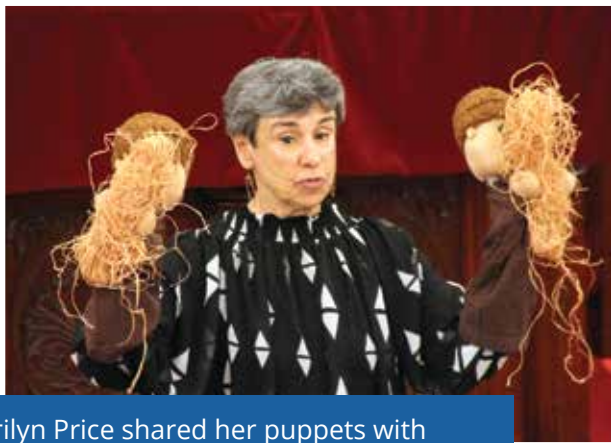
Natalie Weizman and Orr Agam lead the program, which includes movies, bowling, performing mitzvahs, baking, crafts and eating. Only cost is admission fees where applicable.

RABBI LARRY RAPHAEL ~ CELEBRATING HIS

On May 20 and 21 the congregation, community leaders, fellow rabbis and Rabbi Raphael's family from around the country gathered to celebrate his retirement after 13 years as senior rabbi at Sherith Israel. The 250-plus guests enjoyed a joyous weekend of Torah, storytelling and good fellowship. Rabbi Raphael's special guests—including his brother **Rabbi Marc Raphael** and sister-in-law **Linda Raphael**, storytellers **Arthur Strimling** and **Marilyn Price**, **Rabbi Gerald Weider**, USF professor **Peter Novak**, and composer and singer **Danny Maseng**—all contributed to a wonderful weekend, that included a congregational Friday night dinner catered by Town's End Restaurant & Bakery and Saturday's pre-concert gala.



Rabbi Raphael's family turned out in force to celebrate with him.



Marilyn Price shared her puppets with us as she described the good things that happen when people help each other.



Storyteller Arthur Strimling enthralled guests as he described how the Saturday afternoon matinee was his shul growing up. We could almost taste the popcorn.



There wasn't a spare seat at Torah study, led by Rabbi Marc Raphael, professor of religious studies at William & Mary University. Linda Raphael, director of the Medical Humanities Program at George Washington University School of Medicine, facilitated one of the afternoon workshops.



Rabbi Gerald Weider, rabbi emeritus of Congregation Beth Elohim in Brooklyn and a friend of Rabbi Larry's since the two rabbis met as students in Jerusalem, participated in Shabbat morning services

STORY

Thanks to the committee for their hard work on this memorable event: Susan Borkin, Jonathan Burton, Lisa Erdberg, Mimi Gauss, Sheila Gordon, Cece Kaufman Himmelstein, Valerie Jahan, Maurice Kamins, Arlene Krieger, Alan Mirviss, David Newman, Ellen Newman, David Perlstein, Jean Schore, Ellen Schumm, Lynn Sedway, Bill Shore, Karen Zelmar and Lonnie Zwerin.



Following dinner and Havdalah, event co-chairs Valerie Jahan and Lynn Sedway presented Rabbi Raphael with a Giants' jacket and tickets for his favorite pastime. Go Giants!



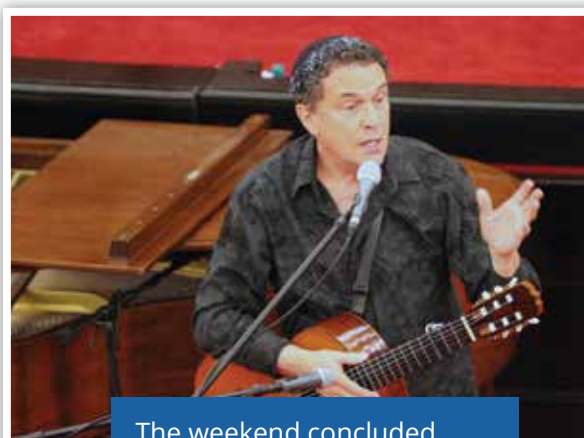
Sherith Israel board president Evan Kletter and his wife Alicia enjoy the festivities.



Congregants Julie Lekach House, Stan Lekach, Steve Olson, Joan Libman and Jim Coughlin at the pre-concert gala Saturday night.



Rabbi Larry Raphael with his colleagues Rabbi Julie Saxe-Taller and Rabbi Jessica Graf.



The weekend concluded with a rousing concert by singer-songwriter Danny Maseng.

Full-immersion Judaism

PROFILE: FRED NERVO

Many people who have become Jews by choice at Sherith Israel have Fred Nervo to thank. Fred is one of the many dedicated volunteers who, along with our encouraging clergy, shepherd people through this pivotal experience. In this role, which he has performed at Sherith Israel for many years, Fred wears several *yarmulkes*: teacher, confidant, cheerleader, mentor. He finds out why his students want to become Jewish, assigns study materials, accompanies them to services and introduces them to the congregation. Fred listens to their concerns and hesitations, and applauds when they receive their certificate of conversion.

Conversion is a delicate task, according to Fred. It means facing not only one's own questions and doubts, but also scrutiny from parents, friends and extended family. So before a potential convert begins, he asks: "How comfortable are you going to be when you are the only person in your family observing Judaism?"

Fred understands the challenges—because he's lived them. Fred converted to Judaism four decades ago at Sherith Israel. Raised Catholic in Mexico City, he immigrated to San Diego at 13. His family was devout, but as a teenager newly

arrived in the U.S., Fred had difficulty with Catholicism's "strict interpretation of laws and conservatism."

Adopting a new religion, especially Judaism, wasn't something Fred considered. That changed when he met **Eileen Channy**. As a law student, Fred was working the 2 a.m. closing shift at a liquor store on Powell Street near the St. Francis Hotel. In September 1962 he met Eileen, the storeowners' daughter. Says Fred: "We became really good friends, but I was engaged to a girl from San Diego and Eileen was dating other boys. I broke my engagement, and in June of 1965 we became a couple." Eileen and Fred married in November 1966 in a Jewish ceremony at her parents' house. This year they'll celebrate their 50th anniversary.

The newlyweds created a Jewish home and soon welcomed two sons, **Daniel** and **Gabriel**. When it was time for the boys to attend religious school, Eileen and Fred accompanied friends to a Simchat Torah service at Sherith Israel. They liked what they saw and stayed.

Not long after his children started religious school at Sherith Israel, Fred decided to convert. The Nervos celebrated Jewish holidays, but Fred wanted something deeper and more personal—a faith that allowed him choice. "When I came to Judaism," Fred recalls, "I found exactly what I was looking for."

Fred's conversion process involved studying once a week with a couple from Sherith Israel, **Vera** and **David Kipnis**. "After a year," he says, "they decided I was ready." Not long after, Fred and his family stood on the bimah as then-Senior Rabbi Martin Weiner and then-Cantor Martin Feldman conducted his conversion ceremony.

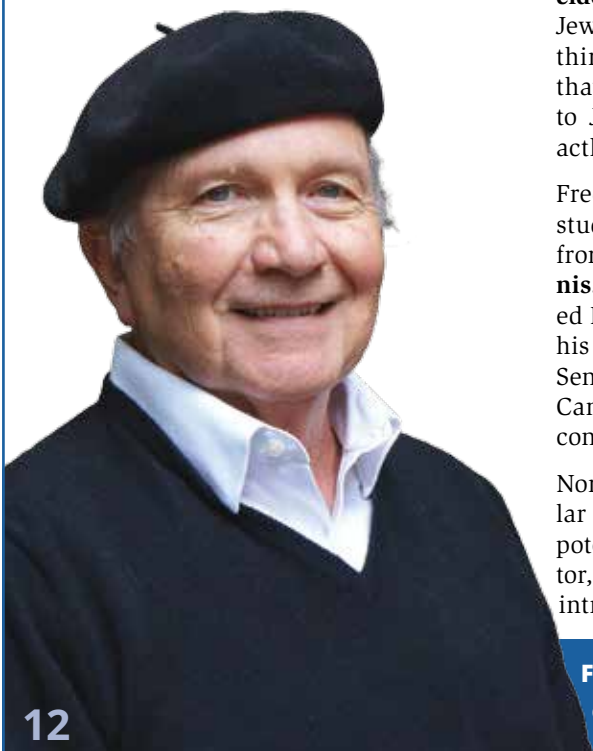
Non-Jews at Sherith Israel follow a similar path. After meeting with a rabbi, potential converts are assigned a mentor, like Fred. Students attend a weekly introduction to Judaism course taught

by Sherith Israel's clergy. They're also encouraged to take weekly elementary Hebrew language lessons, which Fred teaches, having attended Ulpan Beit ha Am in Jerusalem, where he completed half the course that people making aliyah normally take.

After a year or more of study, a mentor decides when a student is prepared for conversion. Then three adult Jews, acting as a *beit din*—a religious court—determine if he or she is in fact ready to become Jewish. The last step is a visit to the traditional mikvah for a ritual immersion in water. This symbolizes one's immersion in Judaism and the promise of a new start. The new Jew-by-choice is then welcomed by the congregation during Shabbat services. For both the convert and the congregation, Fred observes, "It's very emotional."

For Fred, immersion with Sherith Israel and Judaism reflects his willingness to serve and his love of learning. Twice he has attended Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati for two-and-a-half weeks of training to be able to assist a congregation that does not have a rabbi. On occasions when Sherith Israel's clergy haven't been available, Fred has led Shabbat services. He has also studied singing, including lessons with a professional tenor from the San Francisco Opera. During the High Holidays he has chanted Torah as a lay cantorial soloist. Fred proudly recalls how, shortly after his adult bar mitzvah, Cantor Feldman chose him to be Sherith Israel's substitute cantor for the six weeks he was in Israel.

Fred, now retired, spent much of his career specializing in immigration law helping people convert from one way of life to another. Looking back, he considers his own Jewish immigration—first as a convert and now as a teacher of converts—and shares this realization: "If I hadn't become a lawyer, I probably would have become a rabbi." ■



FRED NERVO: Fully immersed at Sherith Israel, Fred teaches Hebrew and is a conversion mentor, choir member, Torah chanter and occasional substitute clergy.

In a July 4 Independence Day shout-out, Sherith Israel was listed as one of nine Jewish places to visit in America by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. “For more than 150 years, Americans have been going west to embrace the new — or, at least, escape the old,” notes the article. The JTA piece describes our iconic Moses window as “a midrash — an alternative biblical story — that conflates the Jewish yearning for a promised land with the American dream of new beginnings.” Timely, as we begin again with a new team and a newly retrofitted sanctuary...

Sherith Israel was well represented at Jewish Community Relations Council’s June celebration for executive director **Rabbi Doug Kahn** on his retirement after 34 years of service. On hand for the send-off: **Jim and Claire Davis, Cantor David Frommer, Arlene and Steve Krieger, Jan Maisel, Ellen and David Newman, Rabbi Larry Raphael, Mel Rosen, Rabbi Martin and Karen Weiner, Steve Weiner and Norm Dito, Howard Wexler, Shel and Rhoda Wolfe, and Alan Zimmerman...**

Sherith Israel leadership extends out to the community. Former president **David Newman** has been named to the board of JCRC and chair of its public policy committee. Former president **Lynn Sedway**, long active with the Jewish Community Federation, has been appointed to its board...

Another past president of CSI, **Sharon Silverman**, has taken over as president of Hebrew Free Loan, which helps Northern California Jews become and remain self-sufficient with its outstanding loan program. Also on the board of Hebrew Free Loan: **David Blatteis, Arlene Krieger, Stuart Pollak, Sabina Polnar, Steve Sachs, Lisa Spiegel and Howard Shwiff...**

Continuing our pattern of community leadership, **Hal Auerbach** was elected chair of the residents’ council of Rhoda Goldman Plaza...

Jonathan Graf and Thierry Jahan were named Master Clinicians of the

Department of Medicine at UCSF. The Council of Master Clinicians was established to honor faculty members whose professional focus is clinical care, and who provide such care with uncommon skill and grace. In essence, Master Clinicians are “the doctors’ doctors.” Dr. Graf is director of the UCSF Rheumatoid Arthritis Clinic. Dr. Jahan is clinical professor of medicine and the Bonnie J. and Anthony Addario Endowed Chair in thoracic oncology at UCSF...

In other medical news, mazel tov to **Oral and maxillofacial surgeon Len Tolstunov**, assistant clinical professor at UCSF and UOP schools of dentistry, who recently published two surgical manuals on procedures for dental implants...

In legal news, this April the San Francisco Public Defender’s Office honored defense attorney **Michael Gaines**, a member of the CSI board of trustees and secretary the Hills of Eternity Cemetery board for his work as a criminal defense attorney and former public defender...

Attorney **Fran Schreiber** is on the board of KidsCareEverywhere, a nonprofit that delivers care to children in low-income countries through free, comprehensive, easy-to-use medical software that helps diagnose and treat young patients. The organization’s gala takes place on November 20. Contact Fran at fschreiber@kazanlaw.com for more information...

Summer means Jewish camping, and CSI campers spent their summers at Jewish camps throughout California and the West: Be’chol Lashon — **Shoshana Alessi and Satya Sheftel-Gomes**; Camp, Inc. (Steamboat Springs, Colorado) — **Cash Ashkinos and Holden Rosenfeld**; Camp Newman — **Abraham Baldonado, Alana David and Noah David**; Camp Ramah — **Gabriel Benjamin and Sylvia Benjamin**; Camp Tawonga — **Ike Braunig, Jonathan Brunn, Sabina Brunn, Asher Etlin, Emily Etlin, Abe Feldman, Bianca Glaubach, Mazalit Glaubach, Rivers Golkin, Story Golkin, Moses Kletter, Shin Lee, Lena Mitchell, Ayelet Passman-Lapushin, Gil Passman-Lapushin, Ronen Pass-**

man-Lapushin, Sarai Ratner, Sam Saxe-Taller, Ashton Szarnicki, and Aurelia Wunsch....

Learning the pleasure of volunteering young, last year’s **seventh-grade Religious School class** won a Marin Academy Youth Grants Board award of \$750 for their backpack project, which filled and donated 50 backpacks to refugee children resettled by the East Bay Federation. The students worked with **Rabbi Julie Saxe-Taller** to apply for the grant. They also staffed a booth at the Purim Carnival where attendees filled the backpacks and they wrote messages of welcome for the refugee children. *Yasher koach...*

Congrats go to **Chiara Bartfeld Kuryan**, daughter of **Melanie Bartfeld Kuryan** and **William Kuryan**, for receiving her masters in public health from UCLA. We wish her well as she embarks on her career as an analyst health navigator at UCSF...

Check out **Rabbi Julie Saxe-Taller’s** column on Tisha B’Av in the August 12 *J Weekly*. Rabbi Saxe-Taller calls for an act of transformation—*teshuvah*—in our criminal justice system. CSI is working with Reform CA, a group of California Reform synagogues and organizations actively supporting the passage of Proposition 57 on the November ballot...

Finally, centenarian **Doris Sperber** was an “item” in Leah Garchik’s July 27 column in the *San Francisco Chronicle*. Quoting Leah, “Last week’s item about the 108-year-old Newark woman said she was “probably” the oldest person in the Bay Area. Not so. Doris Sperber turned 108 in January, and lives at the Jewish Home for the Aged. One of her sons is **David Sperber**, who, with his wife, **Mary Sperber**, is owner of Town’s End Restaurant & Bakery.” Doris had her adult bat mitzvah at CSI at the impressive age of 100. ■

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

BOARD PRESIDENT EVAN KLETTER



A GREAT KIND OF BUSY THIS SUMMER

“How’s your summer going?” That seems to be the question everywhere I go. Which is usually followed up by, “Have you taken any trips? Are you going anywhere.” This summer, Sherith Israel is going places. The summer has been very busy for our synagogue. Obviously, with a new senior rabbi and cantor in place, and our current search for a new executive director, a lot is going on. We are truly ushering in a new era—one that continues to embrace our traditions of worship, study and community hospitality while boldly moving forward with a new energy for Jews of all generations.

Also, it’s difficult not to notice the scaffolding as crews work on the necessary seismic retrofit to our beautiful and historic building. As the work is underway, so is the fundraising to help pay for it. There is still work to do on both fronts. We’ll do it.

And as we all work diligently behind the scenes, no one is working harder than Nancy Sheftel-Gomes. Our erstwhile religious school director has stepped up to the plate in the biggest way possible as our acting interim executive director. It has been incredible to work with Nancy and see her commitment and passion for Sherith Israel. She is constantly thinking about our synagogue community during the day and all hours of the evening. I know because she texts me. It is hard to imagine where we would be without her during these transitional times. So here’s a big shout out to Nancy.

And while we’re recognizing those who so deftly keep things going, **Nia Taylor** (and dog Hershey) supports Nancy, clergy and the board with great enthusiasm.

Our new clergy team is also jumping in with both feet. Beloved **Rabbi Julie Saxe-Taller** and the newest member of

our clergy team, **Cantor David Frommer**, are presiding over services and other programs during the summer. And there are many sightings of our new senior rabbi, **Jessica Zimmerman Graf**, who has been working from home while on maternity leave.

I hope that you’ll join us for services during the rest of the summer. I also want to be the first to wish you a Happy New Year (5777). While the High Holidays come late this year, be sure to mark your calendar for the exciting and festive installation we are planning for Rabbi Graf and Cantor Frommer on Friday evening, September 16. It’s going to be lots of fun with a San Francisco-themed oneg and signature cocktails.

Excellent things are afoot at Sherith Israel. Be part of it all. ■

CANTOR FROMMER, from page 1

B’nai Jeshurun also provided its music to congregants on cassette. When the Frommer family went to their vacation home upstate, young David insisted on listening to those cassettes. Jewish music totally captivated him. “I didn’t know who the Beatles or Simon & Garfunkel were till I got to college,” he confesses.

Cantor Frommer was so involved with Jewish music as a child that he experienced something of a shock when in second grade his mother brought him to an audition for the children’s chorus at the Metropolitan Opera. “I sang something in Hebrew,” he says, “but they were looking for a song in Italian, the first language of opera.” When they left the audition, young David didn’t expect to be selected and even declared that he didn’t want to be part of the children’s chorus. Yet he was chosen. “I refused to perform with them. I just wanted to sing on the bimah.”

In tenth grade at the Horace Mann School, Cantor Frommer joined the glee club. “It was a very profound experience singing in an organized choir under a well-known music director born in Europe,” he comments. In that year alone, the choir sang works by Vivaldi, Haydn, Faure and Bernstein. “I’d never really heard this before,” Cantor Frommer says. “It was one of the two most impactful musical things that happened to me

before college.”

After finishing high school in Lexington, Kentucky, Cantor Frommer attended Yale, where he sang with Magevet, Yale’s Jewish a cappella group. He davened with the Conservative egalitarian minyan. There he was exposed to, and developed an interest in, the music of Shlomo Carlebach, whose melodies are often sung at Sherith Israel, and a variety of table songs for Shabbat. He earned a B.A. in history with honors.

At Yale, Cantor Frommer developed a great desire to learn more about Judaism and then made the decision to become a cantor. The Reform movement attracted him since it had begun going in new directions, including more Hebrew in services and a greater interest in text study. “As much as I liked the traditional liturgy of the Conservative movement and the all-Hebrew services,” he notes, “I felt that the creative possibilities were broader in the Reform movement. And the Reform cantorial program was very strong. Also, my values lined up with the Reform movement.”

After graduation, Cantor Frommer took a pause and served for 15 months in the Israel Defense Forces’ Nachal Infantry Division. “My four years at Yale—2001–04—were the exact years of the Second Intifada. While I was safe in college, Israelis my age were fighting and dying. I wanted to assume some of

PASSAGES

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

BAR/BAT MITZVAHS

September 24, Holden Rosenfeld, son of Andrew & Dara Rosenfeld

November 12, Otto Handler, son of Daniel Handler & Lisa Brown

November 19, Susan Borkin (Adult Bat Mitzvah)

December 17, Rivers Golkin, daughter of Graham & Lesley Golkin

NEW MEMBERS

Oana Constantin

Tamar Draper

Steven & Alana Green

Joshua & Cassandra Hoffman

Evan Hirsch & Jana Stewart

Jennifer Huang & Elad Gil

Nils Lindquist & Elisabeth Karlsbad

Sara Saltzman & Jeff Schoenfeld

Peter & Joanna Sheridan

Jeffrey & Shari Weissner

May the memory of the righteous be for a blessing.

Frieda Jaburg, grandmother of Laura Donaldson

Judith Hartman, mother of Sanford Hartman

Dale Katz, wife of Charles Katz and mother of Stacie and Debra Katz

Reuben Levin, father of Monica Levin and father-in-law of Nancy Igdaloff

Ira Plotinsky, husband of Edith Plotinsky

Evelyn Galanty Sapper, mother of Neal Sapper and mother-in-law of Sheila Sapper

Jana Smith, wife of David Zalob

Madlyn Stein, mother of Fred & Ellen Stein

Bernard Slomovitz, husband of Harriet Slomovitz

WEDDINGS

Laura Donaldson & Justin Bercovich

NEW BABIES

Isaac Cohen, great-grandson of Sima Grabovsky

Simon Ganot, son of Nicole Matchett & Gabriel Ganot

Zachary Graf, son of Rabbi Jessica & Jonathan Graf

Ethan Hoffman, son of Joshua & Cassandra Hoffman

Ben Koffler, son of Lee Koffler & KB Teo

Vivienne Raukman, son of Katherine & Gary Raukman

Hannah Luba Sadler, daughter of Liat & Peter Sadler

Maximo Amhran Prince-Nudelman, grandson of Jane Cutler

CHOOSING JUDAISM

Laura Donaldson

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Cantor Frommer continued from page 14

that risk myself." During the five years following, he attended Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion's Debbie Friedman School of Sacred Music in New York. Inspired by an American Jewish military chaplain's talk in Jerusalem during his first year of cantorial studies, Cantor Frommer later trained as a chaplain with the New York Army National Guard. Following his investiture, he deployed overseas as the first-ever cantor to serve as a chaplain in the U.S. military. As a chaplain, Cantor Frommer has provided religious support for Jewish soldiers and civilians in Afghanistan, Jordan, Kuwait and Qatar.

At Sherith Israel, Cantor Frommer wants to build on the synagogue's rich tradition of music that is both majestic and inviting. He hopes to foster congregational participation by engaging in the community at every level—from children in early childhood programs and religious school to their parents and the synagogue's retirees. "One of my biggest hopes is to grow our volunteer choir, Koleynu," he says. "We know that many parents have trouble getting out of the house on weeknight evenings to attend rehearsal, so we've decided to move rehearsals to Sunday mornings so they can attend while their children are at religious school." Cantor Frommer sees communal singing as a metaphor for successful living in general. "We can do a lot

of things individually, but we can't harmonize with ourselves," he points out. "Sometimes the most beautiful things in life can only be accomplished by working together."

Jewish liturgical music remains Cantor Frommer's first love. He also listens to Baroque and Renaissance music, as well as the operettas of Gilbert & Sullivan. "My grandfather passed down the love of Gilbert & Sullivan to my father and through him to me. I've gotten my 2-1/2-year-old son **Aaron** interested, as well. He loves G&S, and we go to all the Lamplighter shows." Cantor Frommer also loves musical theater, as well as old Fred Astaire and Gene Kelly films.

Moreover, his musical tastes are expanding. "I love songs, not bands. Any group in any genre may produce an amazing piece of music." He now is drawn to world music, which is reflected in today's wide variety of Jewish music. "I had no interest in hip-hop," he says, "but I love 'Hamilton.'" He has tickets for the show's San Francisco run.

Cantor Frommer is married to Rabbi Carla Fenves, who serves at our nearby sister synagogue Congregation Emanu-El. They have three children: two-and-a-half-year-old Aaron and one-year-old twins **Elia** and **Talia**. ■



Carry your part of the Torah

NEW SOCIAL JUSTICE EMPHASIS ON COMMUNITY

Rabbi Julie Saxe-Taller's new portfolio at Sherith Israel focuses on community, both outside and inside the congregation.

REFORM CA SUPPORTS PROPOSITION 57

Reaching out statewide, Sherith Israel is seeking to reform the state's criminal justice system. We're teaming up with Reform CA, a partnership among the Union for Reform Judaism's Religious Action Center, the Peace and Justice Committee of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, and Just Congregations, in a project called Tikkun Tikvah.

"Restoring hope is the overall idea," explains **Rabbi Julie Saxe-Taller**, a member of Reform CA's statewide leadership team. "Our focus is to pass California's Proposition 57, the Public Safety and Rehabilitation Act, a sentencing reform measure that will be on the California ballot this November." The measure will authorize parole consideration for people with nonviolent convictions, encourage wider use of rehabilitation and education programs, and ensure that more teenagers are tried as juveniles, which will give them greater access to educational and rehabilitation programs.

"Examining the law and how people who commit crimes are judged is very Jewish," Rabbi Saxe-Taller notes. "There is extensive commentary in the Torah, Talmud and other writings on treating people who commit crimes justly."

The initiative started with a statewide webinar in July. **Karen, Bill and Elise Alschuler, Ellen and David Newman, Stacy Passman** and Rabbi Saxe-Taller gathered at the home of **Lynn and Paul Sedway** to join the webinar and discuss next steps with similar groups in Los Angeles and Sacramento. To follow-up the conversation with action, Sherith Israel congregants will work on get-out-the-vote education efforts, canvassing, phone banks and collaborative projects with local church groups.

Reform CA also plans voter engagement activities to encourage communities of color—disproportionately affected by lengthy prison terms and lack of rehabilitation programs—to turn out to vote. "This is a Jewish issue because living Jewishly means being involved with the issues of our time," Rabbi Saxe-Taller reminds us.

To participate in training and canvassing, a meeting with Governor Brown in Sacramento and a possible prison visit, contact Rabbi Julie Saxe-Taller, 415.346.1720, x18, or rabbijst@sherithisrael.org.

REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT HOSTS NEEDED

Sherith Israel is also continuing its partnership with HIAS and Jewish Family and Community Services East Bay focusing on refugee resettlement. San Franciscans are needed to host refugees for up to two months. Specifically, people need to have a spare room with access to a bathroom and kitchen. The refugees are already employed, and they have caseworkers assisting them with any major issues. Hosts are encouraged to help their guests become accustomed to the area and learn the basics of life in America. Many lifelong friendships have been formed when locals help refugees get settled.

RETHINKING COMMUNITY AT CSI

Closer to home, Rabbi Saxe-Taller and **Rabbi Jessica Graf** are thinking about how we support each other as a community. "I welcome people to share their thoughts with me about ways to strengthen, broaden and deepen the ways we care for each other here at Sherith Israel," says Rabbi Saxe-Taller. She has been meeting with **Nancy Brunn, Helen Luey, Janet Parker and Rhoda Wolfe** to jumpstart this new initiative.

If you'd like to join the conversation, contact Rabbi Julie Saxe-Taller, 415.346.1720, x18, or rabbijst@sherithisrael.org.

JEWISH COALITION FOR LITERACY

Become a volunteer reading tutor and make a huge difference in a child's life. In just one hour a week you can help a struggling student learn to love reading. Join the **Jewish Coalition for Literacy** as a volunteer reading tutor and help an underserved child succeed. To become a JCL tutor, you must first attend a free training and orientation session. No previous tutoring experience is necessary!

The next San Francisco training takes place at the JCCSF, 3200 California Street. *Information: contact Janet Parker, jparkersf@gmail.com.*

GET OUT THE VOTE FOR PROP 57

Join CSI's **Rabbi Julie Saxe-Taller, Stacy Passman and Karen Alschuler** to get out the vote for Prop 57.

Tuesday, Sept. 27 and Thursday, Sept. 29, 6:30–8:30 pm
San Francisco training

Sundays, Oct. 9 and 23; Nov. 6, 3–6 pm
Canvassing in the neighborhoods

If passed, Prop 57 will ensure that more teen offenders go through the juvenile justice system instead of the adult prison system. The net result is that the teens will have access to more rehabilitation programs, and hopefully better outcomes. Our partners in the project are Faith in Action (formerly SFOP), Reform CA and Bend the Arc: a Jewish Partnership for Justice.

Details: Rabbi Julie Saxe-Taller, rabbijst@sherithisrael.org.

SEISMIC RETROFIT, from page 1

working with the project engineers, architects and contractors. “The basement is fully cleaned out and ready for the rest of the foundation work. It looks like a whole new space.”

The next step below ground was to connect the first-floor wood framing to the brick masonry foundation walls. Then forms for the concrete outriggers were built and steel rebar installed in the forms before the concrete was pumped in. The new outriggers will reinforce and stabilize the original brick foundation. Then the crew, using a machine nicknamed the Beast, started drilling deep holes from temporary openings in the floor of Bart Hall and the outer office of the senior rabbi’s study, through the basement and into the ground. Micropiles—skinny little mini columns—are being strategically placed and grouted to anchor the new foundation outriggers to the ground. Once that project is complete, a new forced-air heating system will be installed to heat the ground floor, just in time for winter.

Upstairs on the roof and in the attic, concrete was poured for new bond beams that will connect to our nitinol tension ties, to be installed later in the fall. The nitinol, an alloy of nickel and titanium, has the special property of “shape memory” that allows it to return to its previous shape if it has been bent, somewhat like Uri Geller’s “bendable” spoons.

“The nitinol rods are being manufactured right now,” notes **Craig Etlin**, CSI vice-president and congregational point person on the retrofit. The seven-foot, quarter-inch rods are being fabricated at a plant in Indiana that makes medical stents out of nitinol. “Because the fabricator is in the business of manufacturing nitinol for use in medical devices, they were able to make the alloy to meet

the exacting standards of our engineers, **Wiss Janney Elstner Associates**,” adds Craig. “WJE tested the performance of the rods at their laboratory in Northbrook, Illinois.”

The installation of pilasters on the exterior of the north wall of the building represents another critical piece of the seismic strengthening. These will tie into the retaining wall separating our property from our neighbor’s. Work on the north side of the building began the first week in August.

In addition to the seismic strengthening work, the project includes accessibility upgrades to bring our classic building into compliance with ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) standards. A unisex accessible bathroom is being added near Bart Hall. In the balcony, a row of pews has been removed to add a platform for wheelchair and companion seating. We will also address leaks in the dome and remove the final vestiges of the salmon-colored paint that once covered the entire building.

“We have a great design and construction team. They have been tremendous partners,” comments Ellen Schumm about **ELS Architecture and Urban Design**, engineers **Wiss Janney Elstner Associates** and **Plant Construction Company**.

Fundraising continues along with construction. Seismic retrofit campaign co-chairs **Lynn Sedway** and **David Newman** are optimistic. “We have been blessed by the generosity of our congregants, who have dug deeper than anyone expected, and to the San Francisco Jewish community, which has recognized the historic and artistic significance of our sanctuary,” says David. “We expect the same generosity to help us finish the challenge.” ■



SIDEWALK CONFERENCE: Jerry Hurwitz, co-chair of the building and grounds committee and a member of the CSI board meets with **Charley Stern**, our owner’s representative. Together with **Van Hart**, also a member of the building and grounds committee, they are taking the lead in selecting the new forced-air heating system for the first floor and a subcontractor to waterproof the dome.



THE BEAST TAKES A BITE: The drilling rig known as “the beast” is getting ready to drill through an opening in the floor of Bart Hall so micropiles can be placed in the basement—all part of strengthening the building.



FRAMED: A new unisex, handicapped-accessible restroom is being built next to the executive director’s office.



ACCESSIBLE SEATING: A new platform is being constructed in the balcony to make room for wheelchair-accessible seating.

DONATIONS

Includes donations from March 1, 2016 – July 31, 2016

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

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Rabbi Julie & Michael Saxe-Taller in honor of Sam Saxe-Taller's Bar Mitzvah

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Steven Greenwald & Rochelle Alpert in honor of Rabbi Larry Raphael's service and commitment to Sherith Israel and best wishes for his retirement
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Gerry Miller & Family in memory of Larry Miller and in honor of Rabbi
Julie Saxe-Taller
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Rachel Stern & Norm Robinson in memory of Marjorie H. Stern
Ron & Anita Wornick
Tracy & Melissa Boxer Zill

Rabbi Larry Raphael

CELEBRATING HIS STORY

This May, Congregation Sherith Israel bid a fond farewell to Rabbi Larry Raphael on his retirement after 13 years as our senior rabbi. Todah rabah to everyone who made the delightful weekend possible.

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HIGH HOLY DAY MACHZORS IN HONOR OF RABBI LARRY RAPHAEL

As a special gift to the congregation in honor of Rabbi Larry Raphael, the following people bought the new High Holy Day machzors (prayerbooks) that we will begin using this year. Thank you to everyone who made this mitzvah possible.

Michael & Amy Allen
William & Karen Alschuler
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Sherith Israel is delighted to invite you to make a little history and step into the future by celebrating the installation of



SENIOR RABBI JESSICA GRAF & CANTOR DAVID FROMMER

Celebrate the installation of **Senior Rabbi Jessica Graf** and **Cantor David Frommer** on Friday evening, September 16. The installation takes place during Kabbalat Shabbat services with festivities to follow.

6 pm Shabbat worship

7:30 pm festivities featuring

- + San Francisco-style noshes catered by Delicious
- + Signature cocktails, wine and music
- + Dancing for the let's-stay-a-little-later crowd

Costs have been generously underwritten by members of our congregation. Many thanks to Karen Zelmar for chairing this event.

RSVP

web: sherithisrael.org **phone:** Nia Taylor, 415.346.1720, x17 **email:** ntaylor@sherithisrael.org