TIKKUN LEIL SHAVUOT

Welcoming Shavuot

Sunday, May 16 & Monday, May 17

Shavuot, our celebration of receiving Torah at Mt. Sinai, is at once both our most fascinating and least celebrated festivals. Our practice at Congregation Shir Hadash has been to welcome Shavuot with a service led by our 10th grade Confirmation students and then hold study sessions. This year, we’re adding exciting new opportunities:

Join us at 6:30 pm for our service led by Confirmation students.

…and/or…

Join us at 9:00 pm for a one-hour session with our Clergy. We’ll begin together, split into three different breakout rooms of your choice for study, and then reconvene as a community.

…and/or…

Pre Register and study in either of the following nation-wide programs with inspiring teachers:

• **ShavuotLIVE** (Sunday at 3:00 pm through Monday at 9:00 pm) will include: Rabbi Rachel Sabath Beit-Halachmi, PhD (*Three Theories of Revelation: What Really Happened at Sinai?*); April Baskin (*Lech Lecha...to Senegal: A Jew’s Journey to Making African Aliyah*); Rabbi Benay Lappe (*Talmud Texts from Mount Sinai*); and Wendie Bernstein Lash (*Contemplative Spiritual Practices for Revelation*).

  To register for this free 30 hours of study (pick any session or all sessions), go to: [jewishlive.org/shavuot2021](https://jewishlive.org/shavuot2021).

• **Small Congregations Tikkun Leil Shavuot** from Temple Sinai in Reno (Sunday at 4pm-Monday 5am) will include rabbis and cantors teaching on: Personal Ten Commandments; May the Force Be with You; Heaven and Hell in Judaism; Forbidden Tales of the Bible.

  To register for this free 13 hours of study (pick any session or all sessions), go to: [sinaireno.org/2021/04/21/shavuot-5781/](https://sinaireno.org/2021/04/21/shavuot-5781/)

However you choose to spend Shavuot, may it be a blessing.
"We strive to support all of our youth and families in a variety of ways in which they can connect with Judaism."

FROM RABBI SCHWARTZ

Introducing Kulanu

How do we create a sacred community that creates a sense of joy and belonging for our youth and families? Many supplemental Jewish education programs focus on learning-then-doing where teachers lead discussions, give information, and “complete” learning with an activity of some sort—often resulting in something along the lines of a dozen identical crafts hanging on the hallway bulletin board.

At Congregation Shir Hadash, we believe in impactful Jewish learning-through-doing. This is inspired by a dialogue between Rabbi Tarfon, Rabbi Akiva, and the sages, who debated the question, “Which is greater, study or action?” They concluded that studying is greater because it leads people to take action. Studying offers us guidelines for what kind of action to take.

And study, or learning, can take place both in and outside of the classroom, in formal and informal settings, where all of us as a community come together to bring Judaism alive in vibrant and lasting ways.

We strive to support all of our youth and families in the variety of ways in which they can connect with Judaism. By learning and living Jewishly, and by understanding our collective history and traditions, we can find meaning and purpose for our lives today.

A team of dedicated teachers, parents, and congregants have worked with me over the past months to embrace the opportunity that a congregational transition and a pandemic have provided for us to examine who we are as an education program and who we want to become. As a result of the work we have done together, I am thrilled to share with you that, beginning this Fall, no longer will our youth and families be participating in “Religious School,” “Hebrew School,” or “Hebrew High,” but they will be part of Kulanu (“All of Us”): The Center for Jewish Education and Engagement for Youth and Families, in Memory of Mel Jacobs. This also means that Shir Family, Club456, SALTY, and all youth and family engagement initiatives all now fall under the umbrella of Kulanu.

Kulanu is a multi-faceted approach to Jewish learning that lets go of the notion of “school” and replaces it with “experience.” It is an approach to Jewish learning that continues to be in memory of Mel Jacobs, our congregation’s first president who was a champion of youth education.

We are constantly reflecting upon all the different ways in which our youth and families can learn through and engage themselves in inquiry and discovery. This is directed by the youth and families, with an emphasis on providing opportunities for them to take ownership of what and how they engage with their own expressions of Judaism.

We are a sacred community—kehillahkedoshah. We foster Jewish identity formation, build meaningful connections, and create a sense of joy and belonging for youth and their families. We are Kulanu. We look forward to sharing with you more about our program at our Congregational Meeting on May 16.
Teacher Recognition Shabbat Service

**Friday, May 7, 7:00 PM [zoom]**

Mark your calendars as we honor our teachers and *madrachim* for their work over the past year in this special Family Service Shabbat. Because of them, we have maintained a sense of community and connection—even virtually.

Designed for elementary school aged children and their families, this service is filled with camp-style music and engaging hand motions, and is led by Rabbi Riter, Rabbi Schwartz, and our song leaders.

Let’s celebrate our teachers together!

Please register and the Zoom link will be sent to you in an email.

Shavuot Service with Confirmation

**Sunday, May 16, 6:30 PM [zoom]**

The entire community is invited to celebrate the Confirmation Class of 2021. In keeping with Congregation Shir Hadash tradition, these 10th graders will complete their year of study by leading us in a Shavuot Evening Service and sharing their insights on what it means to be a 21st-century Jewish teen. With Rabbis Riter, Schwartz, and Aron, and Cantor Felder-Levy.

**Confirmation Class of 2021**

- Isaac Behnke
- Eli Bernstein
- Malcolm Berry
- Melissa Burstein
- Mason Chesser
- Leah Freeman
- Eric Musicer
- Sophia Rosito
- Michal Schreiman

May Services

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**SAT**

| SUN  | 6:30 pm | Shavuot Service with Confirmation [zoom] |
| 16   | 9:00 pm | Shavuot Study Session [zoom] |
| FRI  | 7:30 pm | Shabbat Service [zoom] |
| 21   | 10:30 am | B’nai Mitzvah of Jaz & Jaxon Charnaw [zoom] |
| FRI  | 7:30 pm | Shabbat Service [zoom] |
| 28   | 10:30 am | Bat Mitzvah of Caileigh Pate [zoom] |

**SUN 16**

Live via Zoom. Sign up at shirhadash.org/calendar.
Shtisel: The Netflix Hit Series & An Inside Look at Ultra-Orthodox Life, Part 2
Wednesday, May 5, 10:00 AM  zoom

The long awaited Season 3 of the Israeli drama series Shtisel has just debuted. The internationally acclaimed series introduced, for the first time, the ultra-Orthodox (Haredi) Jewish community in Jerusalem and provided an insider’s view into their daily lives and their interaction with the secular majority around them. Join us to get a glimpse at the real world behind the popular series. Moderator: Anat Balint, Jewish Studies Program, San Jose State University.

In Part 2 of this program, meet Yehonatan Indursky, the co-writer of Shtisel and the creator of several other highly acclaimed films on ultra-Orthodox Jews. He is a graduate of the elite ultra-Orthodox Ponevezh Yeshiva, and later a top alum of the Jerusalem Sam Spiegel Film School.

Congregation Shir Hadash, Temple Emanu-el, Congregation Sinai, Congregation Beth David, Consulate general of Israel, Jewish Silicon Valley and the Jewish Studies Program at SJSU are pleased to bring this program to you.

LUNCH & LEARN

Discover the Secrets of San Jose
Tuesday, May 11, 11:30 AM  zoom

We are fortunate to have local writer Cassie Kifer, author of Secret San Jose: A Guide to the Weird, Wonderful, and Obscure, as our Lunch & Learn guest speaker today.

Her unconventional guidebook takes you through bizarre and fascinating stories that define San Jose’s history. Player pianos, disappearing lakes, ghost towns, buried limbs, a scientific landmark in San Jose that moonlights as a mausoleum, sacred street-food that will bring you closer to enlightenment—these are just a few stories you might not know about Northern California’s biggest city.

Whether you are a life-long San Jose area resident, new transplant, or first-time visitor, come join us and learn about all the quirky and beautiful places our city has to offer.

Goodbye Car Parade for Rabbi Aron
Saturday, May 15, 2:00–5:30 PM
Shir Hadash Parking Lot

This is your time to drive through the Shir Hadash parking lot for a no-contact, in-person goodbye to Rabbi Aron.

Feel free to hold up a sign, decorate your car, or even make a little (not too loud!) noise to show your appreciation!

Registering for a time slot is required so that the parade can run smoothly. We appreciate your cooperation.

Please sign up here for your time slot.

Rabbi Aron will also be leading Shir Shabbat Services this morning, Saturday, May 15, at 10:30 am, along with Lay Cantor Mark Allen. Carolyn Kerlin will read the Haftarah. You may register here.
This is a new column to provide a brief update on the work being accomplished by the Rabbinic Transition Committee. It will appear periodically for as long as the work of the Steering Committee continues.

Currently the Benchmarking Committee, the Engagement Committee and the Settled Rabbi Search Committee are all actively involved in work on behalf of Congregation Shir Hadash. They are all at different stages of their work. For now we will address the status of the first two committees and we will go into more detail on the latter in the next issue of the Notes.

The Benchmarking Committee, led by Jean Bronstein and Cary Coutant as co-chairs, completed the administration of the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ) survey in the October through December 2020 period. They received the results of the survey from the URJ in mid-December and spent the rest of December, January and into February analyzing and discussing the information the congregation provided. The Benchmarking Committee then began to plan for focus groups to supplement the results of the URJ Survey. The focus groups were conducted between April 4 and 18, 2021. The results of the focus groups are being cumulated now. In parallel with this work, the Benchmarking Committee is preparing a summary of both the survey and focus group results. That report is expected to be available to the Board first and then to the congregation in the May–June timeframe. Rather than try to summarize the results of the survey and the focus groups in this column now, we will await the report from the Benchmarking Committee, which will permit a much more thorough discussion than can occur in this space.

The Engagement Committee, led by Chairperson, Naomi Parker, put together a schedule of meet and greets with Interim Senior Rabbi Ted Riter. These Zoom meetings were scheduled and completed for a majority of the functional and social groups throughout the Temple. These have gone very well. If you have input from these meetings that you would like to register, please contact Naomi Parker or Rich Pickard. These meetings are very likely similar to meetings that will be scheduled when the new Settled Senior Rabbi begins their work at CSH currently anticipated to be July of 2022. God willing, these future meet and greets will be in person.

Some questions have been raised about Rabbi Aron’s status as Rabbi Emerita, and since CSH has not had a Rabbi Emerita before, we thought we would let the community know that Rabbi Aron will continue to be a treasured member of our community. Nevertheless, when someone like Rabbi Aron retires, we are advised that it is standard practice per the CCAR for the Rabbi to step away from her duties and even the community for some time to enable the new Interim and Settled Senior Rabbis to establish themselves within our congregation. But for Covid-19, Rabbi Aron probably already would have left to spend time on the East Coast with her children and grandson who live there. She and Michael are now planning to begin such a trip at the end of May 2021. Rabbi Aron plans to return to Los Gatos and CSH periodically and to be away for a time. She has an office at the Temple located near the preschool. She will likely in the future assist with certain rabbinical functions, but that will be after the Interim Senior Rabbi and the new Settled Senior Rabbi are established and at her and their discretion. Rabbi Aron wants to follow this established protocol.

We hope this article is informative. It may raise questions. If so, please feel free to raise them via email to me at steeringcommittee@shirhadash.org.

Women’s Study Group
Thursday, May 20, 10:30 AM

Whether you were a regular at these group meetings in the past, or considering attending, we welcome you to join us for this new chapter of the Women’s Study Group. Everyone is welcome.

Throughout our Jewish history, music has offered us strength and comfort. Join us on May 20 when Cantor Devorah Felder-Levy will share text and music that can give us strength, offer us comfort and hopefully lead the way to being resilient.
**SPOTTLIGHT ON:**

**Ritual Committee**

Each month, we introduce one of the many committees at Shir Hadash and learn from members or chairs about the activities and goals of the committee. This way, our entire community can learn more about the many ways to get involved at Shir Hadash and the ways we work together to form an even stronger community. This month, our spotlight is on the Ritual Committee. Read on below to learn more from Mark Allen.

**Tell us a bit about yourselves and your role on the committee.**

The Ritual Committee is one of the many organizations within Shir Hadash that is represented on the Board of Directors. I serve as the Chair of the Ritual Committee, working with our Clergy and the other members of the committee to plan and assist in the celebration of our religious services and holidays.

I have been a member of the committee since 2011, and this is my third term as Chair. Jewish music is what drives me, and I sing in the choir as well as lead music at Shir Shabbat, our informal Saturday morning service.

**Could you briefly describe the goal of the Ritual Committee?**

The purpose of the Ritual Committee is to make sure that our ritual observances (i.e., religious services) meet the needs of the ever-evolving Shir Hadash community. We share that goal with our rabbis and cantor.

**What are the areas that the committee works on? Can you tell us a bit about what you have done in the past year?**

The ultimate responsibility for religious observance rests with our clergy. The Ritual Committee is involved in recommending or setting policies regarding our religious services, the use of our ritual space and objects, and in planning and acting as a sounding board for special, holiday-related services throughout the year such as Chanukah and Shavuot. A few years ago, we pilot tested the new prayer books then under development, *Mishkan T’filah* and the High Holy Day *Machzor, Mishkan HaNefesh*, recommending changes. Some of those recommendations were incorporated in the final publications that we use today.

The Ritual Committee may also organize Shabbat dinners or lunches before or after services. We are responsible for filling the volunteer positions for the High Holy Days, for building the temple sukkah, for organizing onegs (when we meet in person), and for filling all the roles for Shir Shabbat. To that end, there are key sub-committee chair roles for High Holy Days, sukkah construction, Shir Shabbat, and oneg, as well as *ad hoc* chairs for other events.

My spiritual fulfillment comes from the music in our services. Though not everyone feels like I do, I want to provide a variety of experiences during services to give everyone the opportunity for spiritual fulfillment.

**Tell us a bit about why you are passionate about the Ritual Committee and its work for Shir Hadash.**

My spiritual fulfillment comes from the music in our services. Though not everyone feels like I do, I want to provide a variety of experiences during services to give everyone the opportunity for spiritual fulfillment.

**Safe Park Dinners**

Shir Hadash is joining in the Congregation Beth David Safe Park program for the month of May. Congregation Beth David is hosting it at the Westhope Presbyterian Church in Saratoga. Safe Park allows people who live in their cars to have safe overnight parking authorized by the city. The program also provides clean bathrooms and mobile shower services and some picnic benches for eating and spending time outside the car.

Beth David is providing hospitality in the morning (7:00-7:45 am) and evening (7:30-8:30 pm) where volunteers will offer guests simple snacks, canned food, hot drinks, and microwavable foods.

Twice a week (Monday & Thursday) Beth David offers hot dinners. Congregation Beth David is looking for volunteers to help with the hospitality shifts or groups that will sign up to provide a hot meal (for 10 guests). Please sign up to help make this Safe Park effort successful. Shir Hadash has hosted Safe Park many times and now has the opportunity to help with this ambitious month long effort. A detailed description of what Beth David needs and a sign up is available [here](#).
At the Annual Congregational Meeting there will be a number of important and interesting presentations, including:

- Presentation of and voting to ratify Board approval of our new Slate of Nominees to the Board of Directors for the upcoming term
- Presentation of and voting to ratify Board approval of the FY 21/22 Budget
- Presentation of and voting to ratify Board approval of revisions to the 2005 Bylaws
- Updates from the Rabbinic Transition Teams, Reopening Task Force, Religious School Re-envisioning Task Force, and SALTY

Click here for the agenda. We will hold a brief general Q&A period at the end of the meeting.

Please RSVP and the Zoom link will be sent to you via email.

We hope to see you at this important meeting.