



# Shir Notes

The Official Newsletter of Congregation Shir Ami Volume 16, Number 1, January 2018. Affiliated with United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism

See article on page 6 for our tribute to **Rabbi Harold Schulweis** on his third yearzeit at our Shabbat service.

## Events of the Month

### Shabbat services at de Toledo High School

Saturday, January 6 - 10:30 am  
Birthday Shabbat  
Consecration of Officers  
Welcome new members

Saturday, January 20 - 10:30 am  
Anniversary Shabbat  
Linen Shabbat

### Around the Rabbi's Tisch Thursdays, Jan. 4, 11, & 18 7:30 pm at the Vorspans'

Our 5778 season of Rabbi's weekly discussion continues. Call Rabbi at (818) 888-9817 or see flyer.

**Torah and Shabbat Study**  
**Saturday, Jan. 13, 10:30 am**  
**Northridge Mobile Home Park**  
**Stan Schroeder** leads our monthly study and discussion session. Call Stan at (818) 718-7466 or see flyer.

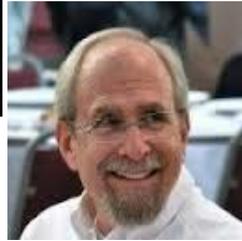
### The Story of the Jews Sunday, January 28 2:00 pm at the Vorspans'

This is the third afternoon of a five part series originally shown on PBS created by **Professor Simon Schama**. This segment covers the enlightenment period. Rabbi Vorspan will lead a discussion following the video. See the article on page 5 and flyer to register.



Visit our website:  
[www.shirami.com](http://www.shirami.com)

## Rabbi's Column



It's nice to know that 2018 will end up on a high: **chai-life!**

But we will begin on an equally high plain as we consecrate our outgoing and incoming officers during services on Saturday morning, January 6.

As has our tradition for more than 2 decades, each Executive board member and Board member will rise for a moment of recognition. We will extend a blessing and a hearty *mazal tov*, conclude services and move on to the Kiddush.

But I hope that at least for an additional moment we can give some thought as to what these dedicated volunteers do during the year.

Meeting regularly each month (and more commonly twice), they keep our synagogue thriving. They plan activities, supervise programs, brainstorm special events, and then go home to work on the details.

And they not only put in all this work to maintain Shir Ami, they've been doing this for years!

Comprising our boards are just about every past president of our congregation. Our incoming President has led us for many more years than he originally signed up for!

Our incoming Executive Vice President was the founding President of the congregation (who was then a youthful 70ish year old!)

Each officer has a story as to why they continue on, year after year. But their dedication and loyalty is shared and their commitment to our community is inspiring.

And their efforts are supported by many volunteers behind the scenes: those that set up our Kiddush after services, send out the mailings, set up and clean up for our activities, and those that involve themselves in the myriad ways that are the lifeblood of our organization.

So come to the Consecration and show support for our volunteer officers and workers. And when they rise to accept leadership responsibilities for yet another year, send them a gracious thought of thanks for all they do for Congregation Shir Ami!

**Rabbi David Vorspan**

### Excerpt from **Miriam Alperin's** tribute to **Rabbi Harold Schulweis**

There was a magnetism and inclusiveness about **Harold Schulweis** that few leaders ever achieve in their lifetime. It took a Jew, a committed Jew, a learned Jew, a rabbi, a mensch, a man who lived Mitzvot rather than preach them to start **Jewish World Watch** – a worldwide movement to actively help the oppressed and maltreated of Africa. While the world watched silently as thousands of men, women, and children died of starvation, Harold Schulweis took action against horrific injustice.

## President's Report

Shalom and Happy New Year!



First, I want to thank all of you who came out to our annual members meeting. We elected our full slate of officers and board members and the Committee Vice-Presidents gave an inkling as to what we can expect in the coming year.

Please join us for our first Shabbat Service of the new year as we consecrate our new Board of Directors and Officers and introduce them to you. We promise at least one new face.

We have exciting new programs to hold your interest this year, as well as our traditional activities. We will continue with our **Shabbat services**, our monthly **Shabbat/Torah Study** session, filling the SOVA barrels and our Thursday night adult education program, "**Around the Rabbi's Tisch** (and on the Rebbitzin's Chairs)." We will also be putting the "action" in Social Action with our **Linen Shabbat** this month.

With regard to our Shabbat Services, if 2017 is any example, make sure you come early to get a good seat. I showed up a little late last Shabbat and had to sit in the front row!

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I invite you all to take part in our activities. We are always in need of helping hands and we have a tradition of never refusing offered help. There is something special about an activity or program that reflects the efforts of all of us working together.

As we look forward to 2018, we realize that we are not only the "*Little schul that does*," but we are also the "**Little schul that does and does and does.**" Take that, Energizer Bunny!

As always, if you have any questions or want to provide your input, please feel free to email me at **JDPistol@aol.com**.

Thank you.

**Jordan Pistol**, President

Excerpt from **Rebbetzin Malkah Schulweis** tribute to **Rabbi Harold Schulweis** (transcribed from her introduction to the **Harold M Schulweis Institute** website [www.hmsi.info](http://www.hmsi.info))

Harold was well aware that the Holocaust had shifted moral responsibility in the covenantal relationship. There is a greater role now for the human being. But he worried lest we forget the inviolable sense of the Greater in the process. Therefore he developed his conception of Sovereign. It resulted in a shift from vertical instruction in the congregation to a horizontal process of discussion, question and answer, were all present. Prayer, poetry, song; everything had to testify to its meaning. It was not merely his speaking that gave testimony to sanctity. It was his unconscious way of dissolving the empty space between himself and any other. When he spoke to you no one else existed in public or private expression. We have yet to catch up to him.

## 2018 Shir Ami Officers & Board of Directors

President: Jordan Pistol  
 Executive Vice President: Harvey Cohen  
 Treasurer: Mike Easley  
 Secretary: Karen Benson  
 Program VPs: Sima Schuster and Gladys Sturman  
 Membership VP: Ellen Fremed  
 Ritual VP: Stan Schroeder  
 Social Action VP: Fran Kobulnick  
 Ways & Means VP: Sherry Dollins

Board of Directors:  
 Owen Delman  
 Rebecca Finlay  
 Barbara Grubman  
 Sheilah Hart  
 Steve Schuster



In addition, former presidents Helga Unkeless and Jerry Zatz are Board members.



# DONATIONS

Congregation Shir Ami wishes to acknowledge the following donations:

## Yahrzeits

Fran Friedman for Yetta Slotsky  
 Irwin and Carol Koransky for Charles Altsman  
 Leon and Andrea Nachenberg for Simon Nachenberg  
 Ed Orens for Laurie Orens and David Orens  
 Phyllis Robinson for Bernie Robinson, Sophie Canter, Isaac Robinson, and Caryle Robinson  
 Lew and Claire Silverman for Leah Besbeck  
 Irving Strassner for Clara Levin, Rae Sher, and Eli Strassner  
 Harvey and Linda Tapper for Ruth Tapper

## Birthdays

Harvey Tapper (78)

## Anniversaries

Ann and Seymour Potell (67)

# Birthdays & Anniversaries

## Birthdays

Paul Soifer.....	12/2
(omitted last month).	
Jacque Gordon.....	1/1
Jerry Gort.....	1/2
Leon Nachenberg.....	1/2
Neal Tober.....	1/4
Owen Delman.....	1/7
Karen Harvey.....	1/16
Fenton Harvey.....	1/20
Joan Magit.....	1/20
Claire Silverman.....	1/20
Lawrence Scharf.....	1/21
Fiona Taylor.....	1/21
Lynn Cherney.....	1/22

## Anniversaries

Gale and Jay Cohen.....	1/15	12th
Debra and Wayne Geffen.....	1/23	35th
Marian and Isadore Perlmutter.....	1/30	69th

## Congregational News

Get well wishes *rafuah schleimah* to:

- Fran Kobuknick**
- Al Simon**
- Laura Simon**
- Ann Potell**
- Fran Friedman**
- Phyllis Schroeder**



May they be blessed with a complete recovery in body and spirit.

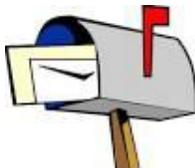
## Congregation Shir Ami Tribute Cards

Thanks to **Phyllis Schroeder** for sending your cards celebrating *simchas* and conveying your get-well and condolence messages.



She is creative with individualized, artistic cards that include a message and color graphics. Call her at (818) 718-7466. Minimum donation of \$5 per card is appreciated.

### Mailbox



Hello,

Many of you may already be aware that my mom, **Esther Karalnick** recently moved to an apartment at Sunrise Senior Living in Woodland Hills. It is a beautiful facility, and friends and family are welcome to take her out, or stop by for a visit. If you happen to be visiting during lunch or dinner, you are welcome to join her in the dining room for a lovely meal. Guest meals are \$10 and do not need to be arranged in advance. Just pay at the reception desk, and they will give you a slip to give the server.

I'm sure Mom would be very happy for any calls or visits. Her new address is:

Esther Karalnick  
 20461 Ventura Blvd. #104  
 Woodland Hills, CA 91364

Phone numbers remained the same:  
 (818) 344-7004 home (818) 939-9253 cell

**Heather Hyman**

### Social Action Committee

We hope you all had a very festive Hanukkah and wish you all a healthy, happy and mitzvah filled 2018!



Looking ahead to January 20, our next big community mitzvah project is our annual **Linen Shabbat** for the **domestic violence shelters** we help sponsor. Please see the Linen Shabbat flyer in this newsletter. I am still unable to speak and cannot take any phone calls yet, so please call **Sheilah Hart** at (818) 884-2342 for more information. I am hoping to see you all there with your new linen donations. **Kitty Glass**, our guest speaker from **JFS Domestic Violence**, has new information to share regarding their domestic violence programs. Please see Kitty Glass's letter thanking us for our Target gift card donations for the shelters on page 9.

Please continue to bring your non-perishable and non-breakable food items for **SOVA** to the bins in the lobby of de Toledo High School at all our services and events.



Congratulations to our Committee on doing their usual great job at our annual **Hanukkah/Shabbat mitzvah event party at West Valley Healthcare**. See picture on right.

Save the date Sunday, June 3 for our annual **Walk Around Lake Balboa**. We have creative plans for this special mitzvah project.

On a more personal note, we thank **Rabbi Vorspan** for standing by us during this very difficult time. And we thank our **Board of Directors** for their lovely tribute card, wishing me well during my surgery and recovery. We could not have done this alone!

Special thanks to the entire Committee for offering all their help to us during my surgery and recovery. I greatly appreciate the get well cards and good wishes I received from everyone! Sorry, I am unable to speak to you and take your calls, but i am told of all your prayers and good wishes. It surely has helped me during this difficult time. Please continue sending me messages.

Shalom,  
**Fran Kobulnick**, Social Action Vice President



### Operation Gratitude and Project MOT by Charlene Kazel

It's out with the old year and in with the new year as we begin the year 2018.18 stands for *chai* - life and hopefully this year we will be blessed with peace - what a beautiful gift that would be!

OK, now New Year's Eve is over and time to watch the Rose Parade with many beautiful floats and the theme this year is *Making a Difference*. That's what **Operation Gratitude** has been doing since 2003. And after the parade there's food, of course, to be shared with family and friends as we watch the Rose Bowl game. I hope the team you are rooting for wins.

But, you're always a winner with me for all the love and generosity and gifts you've donated to **Operation Gratitude**. Our commitment to this organization is day to day, week to week, month to month, and year to year as we spread joy to our protectors, those in service to our country and our first responders. In my daily prayers I ask for peace and that everyone deployed abroad come home safely.

The last day of this month is *Tu B'Shevat* the Hebrew New Year for Trees. May all our thoughts and prayers be carried in the wind and may we breeze through life with ease.



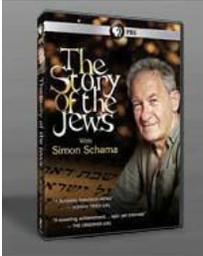
## ***The Story of the Jews* Sunday, January 28**

by Stan Schroeder

Rabbi Vorspan will offer the third of a five part video series at his home Sunday, January 28 at 2:00 pm. We will watch the video and then he will lead a discussion of our unique heritage. The series is free to members, **but you must register in advance as seating is limited.** See the flyer to register.

The following is from the documentary website.

Prize winning author of fifteen books and Emmy-Award winner **Simon Schama** brings to life Jewish history and experience in a new five-part documentary series ***The Story of the Jews with Simon Schama***. The five-hour series follows Schama – who has written and presented 50 documentaries on art, literature and history and is a Contributing Editor of the *Financial Times*, as he travels from Russia and the Ukraine to Egypt, Israel and Spain, exploring the imprint that Jewish culture has made on the world and the drama of suffering, resilience and rebirth that has gone with it.



The series is at the same time, a personal journey for Schama who has been immersed in Jewish history since his postwar childhood; a meditation on its dramatic trajectory, and a macro- history of a people whose mark on the world has been out of all proportion to its modest numbers. “If you were to remove from our collective history” said Schama, “the contribution Jews have made to human culture, our world would be almost unrecognizable. There would be no monotheism, no written Bible, and our sense of modernity would be completely different. So the history of the Jews is everyone’s history too and what I hope people will take away from the series is that sense of connection: a weave of cultural strands over the millennia, some brilliant, some dark, but resolving into a fabric of thrilling, sometimes tragic, often exalted creativity.”

***The Story of the Jews*** draws on primary sources which include the Elephantine papyri, a collection of 5th century BC manuscripts illuminating the life of a town of Jewish soldiers and their families in ancient Egypt; the astonishing trove of documents – the Cairo Geniza – recording the world of the medieval Jews of the Mediterranean and Near East; the records of disputations between Christians and Jews in Spain, correspondence between the leader of the Arab revolt during the First World War, **Emir Feisal** and the leader of the Zionist movement **Chaim Weizmann**.

Schama talks about the turning points of the drama with living witnesses like **Aviva Rahamim** who as a 14 year old walked across the Sudanese desert to try and reach Israel; **Yakub Odeh**, the Palestinian whose village was destroyed in the war of 1948, and **Levana Shamir** whose family members were imprisoned in Egypt at the same time. He debates the meaning of new archaeological discoveries of the Biblical period with **Yosef Garfinkel** of the Hebrew University, the Dead Sea Scrolls with their chief curator **Pnina Shor**; the character of the Talmud with **Leon Wieseltier**, literary editor of the *New Republic*, the photographic record of Israel’s history with **Micha Bar Am**; German cultural treasures from Enlightenment Germany, and the music of **Felix Mendelssohn** with the critic **Norman Lebrecht**.

The series, first broadcast in the United Kingdom on BBC fall 2013 was acclaimed in the British press as “an astonishing achievement, a TV landmark, idiosyncratic, accessible but always authoritative.” It includes new archaeological research which is transforming our understanding of the earliest world of the Jews, and highlights evidence from the visual arts – synagogue mosaics, spectacularly illustrated Bibles; the brilliantly colorful decoration of synagogues (contrary to impressions of a monochrome religion) as well as the glorious music which carried Jewish traditions through the centuries.

Whether he is amidst the stones of 11th century Judea, the exuberantly decorated cemeteries of Ukrainian hasidic rabbis, the parlors of **Moses Mendelssohn’s** Berlin or the streets of immigrant New York, Schama brings together memory and actuality, past and present, sorrows and celebrations, vindications and challenges and makes felt the beating pulse of an epic of endurance that has been like no other; a story which belongs to everyone. [end of documentary website]

See the flyer for information about our presentation of this epic series. You may also call me at (818) 718-7466 if you have any questions.



Cordoba, Spain



Simon Schama in Satanov, Ukraine

## Rabbi Harold Schulweis z”l Yahrzeit

by Stan Schroeder

Congregation Shir Ami paid tribute to the memory of Rabbi Schulweis at our Shabbat service December 16. **Rabbi Vorspan**, our special guest **Miriam Alperin**, and I spoke of our personal memories of one of the pre-eminent leaders of liberal Judaism in the 20th century on the weekend of his third yahrzeit. I also requested testimonials of **Rabbi David Wolpe**, **Rabbi Stewart Vogel**, **Rabbi Ed Feinstein**, and **Rebbetzin Malkah Schulweis** that I shared with the congregation.

The rest of this column contains excerpts from the program. The full program is featured on our website [www.shirami.com](http://www.shirami.com). Select **Rabbi Schulweis Yahrzeit**.

### Rabbi David Vorspan

Following my ordination I worked two years at Temple Beth Emet in Anaheim. When the position I had was being phased out in the mid-70s, I applied for two rabbinic positions in the San Fernando Valley. The first was at Valley Beth Shalom in Encino where I was interviewed by Rabbi Schulweis. He told me he had errands to run and would I mind if the interview was conducted in his car. I agreed and Rabbi Schulweis focused his questions on my theology and what philosopher/theologians I had read. I believe he felt my relationship with God was of primary importance to serving as a rabbi at VBS. As it turns out, I accepted the position at Temple Beth Ami in Reseda. However that time with Rabbi Schulweis has been with me ever since.

Rabbi Schulweis has had a profound influence on Conservative Judaism. His emphasis on human responsibility is evident in how he personally prayed. He would end his prayers of appeals to God with the two words: “through me.” I encourage us to end our prayers likewise and accept responsibility for the required actions.

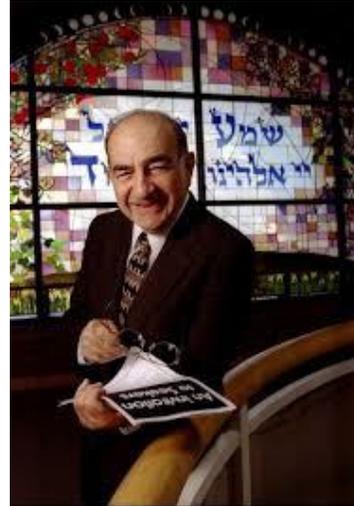
### Rabbi David Wolpe, Sinai Temple

**Harold Schulweis** was unparalleled in his range of his gifts, the depth of his passion and the creativity he brought to the American Rabbinate. Capable of recognizing the good without being polyanish, of condemning the wrong without being narrow or scolding, his was a voice of hopeful conscience. Everyone in the rabbinate and indeed in the entire Jewish community is better because he made us better, and his memory continues to bless us with a vision and a model sorely needed in our fractured times.

### Rabbi Stewart Vogel, Temple Aliyah

While many people revered his public persona and impact, for me as a new rabbi, I was inspired by his work ethic and his humility. Rabbi Schulweis never

## Rabbi Harold M. Schulweis April 14, 1925 - December 18, 2014



**Congregation Shir Ami  
December 16, 2017**

came to synagogue with the idea that his wisdom and oratory skills could allow him to get by with extemporaneous comments or sermons. When he came to services his comments were always prepared in outline form and his sermons always typed out in full. In the book of Numbers (12:3) we read, “Now Moses was a very humble man, more so than any other man on earth.” These words perfectly describe the character of Rabbi Schulweis. *Zichrono leev'rakha* - may his memory always be a blessing and his legacy an inspiration.

### Rabbi Ed Feinstein, Valley Beth Shalom

In our history, there is a rare and special tradition of Jewish spiritual revolutionaries who were called upon to rescue Judaism at moments of profound disruption: **Yohanan ben Zakkai** after the destruction of the Temple, **Maimonides** when philosophy shook the foundations of Jewish faith, the **Baal Shem Tov** addressing a generation deeply disillusioned and despairing of faith. At these extraordinary moments, Jewish existence reached a crisis – when the sacred narratives of the past expired, and new narratives were yet to be born. These were the singular personalities who perceived that the survival of the community depended on its ability to transcend, to transform, to reinvent its ideas and institutions. They provided resilience, the courage and the inspiration to let go of the old, and to imagine the new. Rabbi Schulweis stands within that extraordinary tradition. As we sing at Hannuka: *Hen b'chal dor, yakum hagibor, goel ha-am*. In every generation, a hero arose to save our people.

See **Miriam Alperin's** excerpt at bottom of page 1.  
See **Malkah Schulweis's** excerpt on page 2.

**Editor's note:** This page was originally published January 2015. Stan Schroeder

## My Memory of Rabbi Schulweis

by Rabbi David Vorspan

The year that I was ordained, Valley Beth Shalom had an opening for an assistant Rabbi, and I was intrigued enough to interview for it. Which meant a sit-down with **Rabbi Harold Schulweis**.

Little did I know it would be a sit down in his car!

When I entered his office, he told me he had to run an errand, and would it be O.K. if we had a conversation on the way, to which I agreed.

And so on the way to wherever, I was interviewed by Rabbi Schulweis.

I remember him asking me questions about my concept of God, who my favorite theologians were ("You, Rabbi Schulweis!" I remember responding) and other issues a Rabbi had to respond to.

But my memories of that afternoon are of a person who had already developed a national reputation, but who was so approachable and casual. I think he would have asked questions about my beliefs and feelings even if it weren't for a job interview. He was interested in what others thought, on what others were doing, how others were changing the world for the better.

I took a position with a different congregation, but I was enthralled every time I heard Rabbi Schulweis speak, because it was always thoughtful and thought provoking. But my lasting memory will always be of that afternoon, of a man caught up in the task of maneuvering a car through the streets of Encino, but whose attention was also on a young Rabbi struggling to answer life's most intriguing questions while hoping to arrive at the destination in one piece!

**Rabbi Harold Kushner**, author of *When Bad Things Happen to Good People* :

"**Harold Schulweis** was always my role model of what a rabbi could aspire to be and do, even as I realized I could never match his energy, his boundless compassion and his ability to see challenges where the rest of us only saw problems. He never let me forget whom we as individuals and as a Jewish community were obliged to care about, and he taught me what I needed to do for them. I am proud to think of him as my mentor, my inspiration, my friend."



## My Experience with Rabbi Schulweis

by Stan Schroeder

**Rabbi Vorspan** wrote in his accompanying article about his interview with **Rabbi Schulweis** while a much younger Rabbi Schulweis was driving his car through the streets of Encino. I had a parallel experience in 2010 (almost 40 years later), but I was doing the driving. I went to a Simchat Torah program at Valley Beth Shalom. I attended many classes, programs, and services there as they have so many wonderful events open to the public.

The Simchat Torah program included a book auction of autographed books by the five VBS rabbis who were there. The book by Rabbi Schulweis was the last to be auctioned, I had made up my mind I was going to bid whatever I needed, regardless of which book they had selected. It turned out to be *Evil and the Morality of God*, one of his first books published in 1984. It is an academic dissertation of a single complex argument for a theology Schulweis calls "predicate theology". I was the only bidder.

After the auction I spoke to Rabbi Schulweis and told him I purchased the book hoping to be able to discuss it with him after I read it. He readily agreed. A few weeks later I called him and we arranged to meet. He no longer drove, but still maintained an office at VBS. We agreed that I would pick him up at his home in Mountain Gate, a beautiful community in the hills on the west side of the Sepulveda Pass. I had sent him something about myself and some of my writing at his request.

So I drove him to VBS and we talked in the car about my interests and involvement in Reconstructionism. He had been a student of **Mordecai Kaplan** at the Jewish Theological Seminary and adapted many of Kaplan's ideas into his theology. Then we talked for a while in his office. I don't really understand *Evil and the Morality of God*, but I understood the author - a brilliant man of principle who brought God's qualities to the world and brought out the best in those he touched.

**Rabbi "Yitz" Greenberg**, eminent Modern Orthodox rabbi who promotes Jewish - Christian relations:

"**Harold** was a prophet. By this I mean that he saw ahead of his time and of his generation and prescribed what the Jewish people needed to do in this moment of transformation. This was a crossroads where much could be gained or all could be lost. Harold showed us the way."

**Editor's note:** This page was originally published January 2015. Stan Schroeder

## Biography of the Month: Rabbi Harold Schulweis

by Stan Schroeder

**Harold Schulweis** was born in the Bronx, NY April 14, 1925 to secular parents who respected Zionism and Jewish traditions. His father was



an editor of *The Jewish Daily Forward*. His early Jewish education was influenced by his grandfather, **Rabbi Avraham Rezak**, who introduced him to the Talmud. In 1945, Schulweis graduated Yeshiva University with a degree in philosophy. Later he enrolled in the Jewish Theological Seminary, where he studied under **Mordecai Kaplan** and **Abraham Joshua Heschel**.

Schulweis's first pulpit was Temple Beth Abraham, a Conservative congregation in Oakland in 1952. Among the innovations he introduced was the inclusion of women in *minyanim* and *bat mitzvah* ceremonies for girls. Instead of sermons, he used the allotted time for questions and answers. He became the senior Rabbi at Valley Beth Shalom in Encino in 1970. Under his leadership, VBS grew into one of the largest Conservative congregations in the western US. Responding to the loneliness and isolation of suburban life, Schulweis introduced synagogue-based "*Chavurot*" in 1971.

Schulweis is considered to be among the most influential rabbis of his generation in a career spanning his work not only as a religious leader, but also as a social activist and prolific author. When people would ask how they could believe in God after the horrors of the Holocaust, Schulweis would point to the moral courage shown by gentiles who saved thousands of Jews from the Nazis, such as **Oskar Schindler**. That attitude led him to establish what became the **Jewish Foundation for the Righteous** in 1986, providing financial support for 600 gentiles in 20 countries who had helped save Jews.

Not quite 20 years later, he founded **Jewish World Watch**, which raises about \$2 million a year to fight genocide in Africa and improve the lives of survivors.

On December 18, Rabbi Schulweis died in his home in Reseda following a long battle with heart disease. Since then there has been an outpouring of memories and laudatory statements from across the Jewish and civic communities.

The current senior rabbi at VBS, **Ed Feinstein**, said, "He gave us the capacity to be believing Jews because he offered a kind of theology that moved the center of responsibility from God in heaven to us. When humans take responsibility for one another, that's an expression of God's presence in the world."



Retired Los Angeles County Supervisor and longtime political heavyweight **Zev Yaroslavsky** remembered how, as a college student, he became the Los Angeles co-founder of the movement to pressure the Soviet Union into allowing refuseniks and other Jews to leave for Israel and other countries. At the time, most Jewish establishment organizations looked askance at the efforts and tactics of the young protesters, but Schulweis backed them from the beginning.

**John Fishel**, former president of the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles, sought out Schulweis for advice when he arrived in this city in 1992 and, in turn, Schulweis drafted Fishel to serve on the board of Jewish World Watch. "Harold always took on causes and projects others didn't want to wade into. His knack was to recruit people of stature and then keep them focused on the job."

**Rabbi Uri Herscher**, founding president and CEO of the Skirball Cultural Center, was a freshman at UC Berkeley when he first heard Schulweis speak at a Rosh Hashanah service, and became a friend and admirer for life. On a later occasion, Herscher introduced Schulweis to an audience, saying in part, "Harold Schulweis is a rabbi. This is a little like saying, a **Rembrandt** is a painting. Or a **Stradivarius** is a violin...He is a rabbi of rabbis...He has, as much as any rabbi in our time, given Judaism meaning, relevance and renewed purpose."

I consider Rabbi Schulweis to be the bridge between Reconstructionist Judaism as espoused by his teacher Mordecai Kaplan (and the source of my theology) and Conservative Judaism that Kaplan strove to influence (with limited success). Schulweis, through his book *For Those Who Can't Believe: Overcoming Obstacles to Faith*, and his teachings gave voice to a realistic and inspiring Judaism.

### TREE OF LIFE

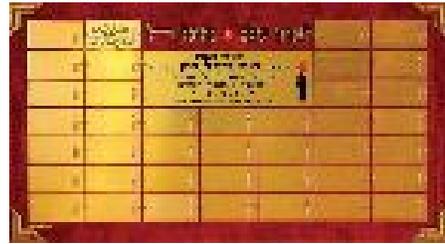


This beautiful Tree of Life, with leaves priced at \$100 and rocks at \$250 (one remaining), makes a perfect way to celebrate family occasions and support Congregation Shir Ami.

The Tree is on a rosewood background and consists of gold-colored leaves and rocks. It is displayed at all Congregation Shir Ami services and events.

For more information or to place an order, call Sherry Dollins at (818) 886-7590.

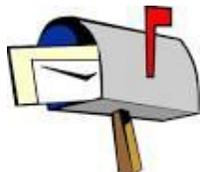
### Congregation Shir Ami Memorial Board



If you would like to honor the memory of your loved ones by dedicating plaques on our new Memorial Board, please call Sherry Dollins at (818) 886-7590 so she may mail you an order form. The cost of each plaque is \$36.

Each plaque may contain up to three lines of engraving: English name, Hebrew name, and the years of birth and death. Both of our Memorial Boards are displayed at all our services.

### Mailbox



Dear Friends,

On behalf of the women and children served at the Family Violence Project of Jewish Family Service, I wish to thank you all for your generous and kind donation of **Target gift cards** to our program. Your commitment to our work has been deeply appreciated and your contribution will ensure that our shelter residents have a wonderful holiday season.

We are humbled by your generosity and enthusiasm for our program. We could not provide all the little "extras" without the support of our community, and Shir Ami has been an integral part of that. Please know how grateful we are to you.....and a special "shout out" to **Fran Kobulnick** for being such an amazing advocate.

As always, we feel passionate that all women and children deserve to live in violence-free homes and we thank you for joining us in that mission.

The staff joins me in wishing you and those you love a holiday season filled with good health, happiness and joy.

Warmly,  
**Kitty Glass**, Community Outreach Coordinator

The **JFS/Family Violence Project** provides help and counseling to survivors of domestic violence and their children. Along with a 24-hour crisis hotline, the Family Violence Project maintains emergency shelters, transitional housing, comprehensive counseling, and an education and prevention outreach program. Included within FVP is a special program for older victims of domestic abuse. Family Violence Project offers a 40 hour domestic violence certificate for volunteers and professionals.



## Shop at Ralphs - Earn Money for Shir Ami

by Maralyn Soifer

Here is an easy way to earn money for our Temple. We

are now officially a **Ralphs' community agency**. All you have to do is follow these simple instructions to help earn money for Congregation Shir Ami.



1. If you don't have a Ralphs' rewards card already, go to the store or go to website **www.ralphs.com** and select **Order a Ralphs reward card**.
2. Once you have your card, go to the website: **www.ralphs.com** and select **Create an account**
3. If you have an account, your email address is your account ID. If you forgot your password, select **Forgot your password?** and you will receive an email with instructions to reset it. Follow the instructions to enter your email address and create a new password.
4. If you already have a Ralphs' reward card and an account, you will see Account Summary when you login. You can change to our Temple by clicking on **Edit** within **Community Rewards**.

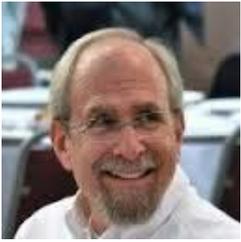
You can do a search for Congregation Shir Ami by putting in the number **92785**. Our congregation will pop up and click on the button next to the name. Click on the button that saves the changes.

5. You should also check the bottom of your receipt when you shop. It should say "**At your request, Ralph's is donating to CONGREGATION SHIR AMI**".
6. If all else fails, call me in the evening at (818) 704-0306. I'll be happy to walk you through it.
7. Start Shopping!

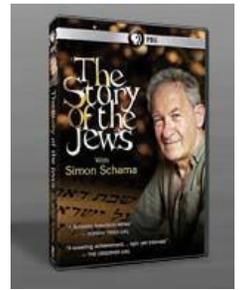
**Make sure that the clerk swipes your card each time you shop. Verify that your receipt shows a contribution to Congregation Shir Ami at the bottom.**

**Important Note: All participants must confirm their selection annually starting in September. On or after September 1, sign into your account and reconfirm Community Rewards selection.**

Congregation Shir Ami  
P.O. Box 6353  
Woodland Hills, CA 91365



**Sunday, January 28 at 2:00 pm**  
**Third Episode of *The Story of the Jews***



Five part PBS documentary created by **Simon Schama**

Congregation Shir Ami presents **Rabbi David Vorspan** hosting and discussing this award winning series in his home “theater” at 22320 Philiprimm St. in Woodland Hills. **It is free to our members on a “first come, first serve” basis.** This third episode is *A Leap of Faith* and covers the enlightenment period.

Simon Schama presents this epic series exploring the extraordinary story of the Jewish experience from ancient times to the present day. Both deeply historical and utterly contemporary, this is a compelling film about distinctiveness and difference, separation and isolation, tolerance and prejudice. It is also a celebration of the ways in which Jewish thought, imagination, and achievement have transformed the world for us all.

Simon Michael Schama, CBE is an English historian specializing in art history, Dutch history, and French history. He is a University Professor of History and Art History at Columbia University, New York. He has won several awards for his varied historical books and productions.

You can register by email to **stan101@pacbell.net** or phone Stan at **(818) 718-7466** or mail the tearoff below to Congregation Shir Ami, PO Box 6353, Woodland Hills, CA 91365.

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Please reserve \_\_\_\_\_ places for 3rd Episode: *The Story of the Jews*  
Sunday, January 28 at 2:00 pm.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

## Thursdays January 4, 11, and 18, 7:30 - 8:30 pm “Around the Rabbi’s Tisch” at the Vorspans’

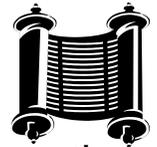


This popular Shir Ami educational series continues the first half of its 5778 season. Come join us for our weekly discussion of Rabbi Vorspan’s selected topics of Jewish interest. We discuss Jewish texts and current events as they relate to Jewish values and our lives as Jews. This is a unique opportunity to learn and share in an informal format around the Vorspans’ dining room table.

The Vorspans’ home is located at 22320 Philipprimm St. in Woodland Hills. Call Rabbi Vorspan at (818) 888-9817 for more information.

## Saturday January 13, 10:30 am: Torah/Shabbat Study at Northridge Mobile Home Park

Stan Schroeder leads a Shabbat study session one Saturday morning a month at 10:30 at the Northridge Mobile Home Park Rec Room, 19120 Nordhoff St. We discuss the weekly Torah portion, the Shabbat prayers that are included in our Contemporary service, and various subjects relevant to Conservative Judaism.



Our next session will be January 16. The Torah reading will be parsha *Va’era* (Exodus 6:2 - 9:35), the pleading by Moses and Aaron in the name of God to Pharoah to “let My people go ...” and the first seven plagues. We are commanded “*la asok b’divre torah*” (to engage in the study of Torah). Join us and fulfill the mitzvah.

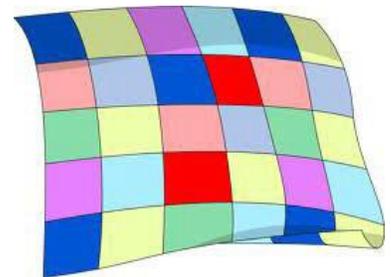
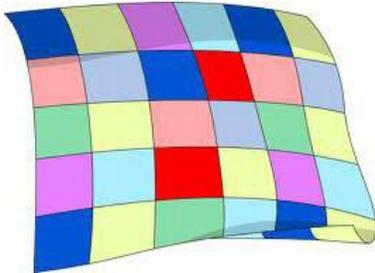
Call Stan at (818) 718-7466 for more information.

Please join Congregation Shir Ami  
on Saturday, January 20 at 10:00 am  
(Service starts at 10:30 am)



at de Toledo High School  
for a special Linen Shabbat.

Please bring **NEW** twin, full, or queen size blankets or quilts, **NEW** full or twin size sheet sets, **NEW** full or twin size waterproof mattress pads, **NEW** pillow cases, and **NEW** bath towels and washcloths to Shabbat services on **Saturday, January 20th**. They will be given to moms and their children in domestic violence shelters. There will be a speaker to discuss the shelters and ongoing projects.



We look forward to seeing you and your family at this special community *mitzvah* project Shabbat. Please bring your non-perishable food donation to the service.

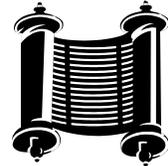


For more information, please call  
**Sheilah Hart** at (818) 884-2342.



**Congregation Shir Ami Schedule of Shabbat Services 2018**  
**Conducted by Rabbi David Vorspan at**  
**de Toledo High School, 22622 Vanowen St., West Hills**  
**Services held in library near the front entrance**

**Saturday 10:30 am (unless otherwise noted)**



**January 2018**

Saturday, January 6 - Birthday  
Consecration of Officers  
Saturday, January 20 - Anniversary  
Social Action Linen Shabbat

**February 2018**

Saturday, February 10 - Birthday  
Saturday, February 24 - Anniversary

**March 2018**

Saturday, March 10 - Birthday  
Saturday, March 24 - Anniversary

**April 2018**

Saturday, April 14 - Birthday  
Saturday, April 28 - Anniversary

**May 2018**

Saturday, May 12 - Birthday  
Saturday, May 26 - Anniversary

**June 2018**

Saturday, June 9 - Birthday  
Saturday, June 23 - Anniversary



David Vorspan  
Rabbi



Jordan Pistol  
President

***If you would like more information about our congregation please visit our website at [www.shirami.com](http://www.shirami.com)***