



# Shir Notes

The Official Newsletter of Congregation Shir Ami Volume 23, Number 3, March 2025. Affiliated with United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism

**Jenn Dollins** is our Office Manager. Her email is [shirami6353@gmail.com](mailto:shirami6353@gmail.com). Phone: **(818) 818-6094**.

## Events of the Month

### Shabbat services at de Toledo High School and on Zoom and Livestream

Saturday, March 1 10:30 am  
Birthday Shabbat  
Saturday, March 15 10:30 am  
Anniversary Shabbat

### Around the Rabbi's Tisch via Zoom

Thurs, March 6, 20, & 27  
7:30 pm See flyer for more information

### Shabbat Torah Study Saturday, March 22, 10:30 am at Schroeders'

**Stan Schroeder** leads our monthly study and discussion session. See flyer for more information



Esther and Mordecai  
Art de Gelder 1685



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

## Rabbi's Column



This month we celebrate Purim beginning on Thursday evening, March 13.

Purim is a time of transformation, a day when we can become anyone we want to be, even if only for a short while. For me, it was always an opportunity to present myself in the most dashing and heroic way possible. I would visit costume stores in search of the perfect outfit, gravitating towards figures of nobility and adventure. One year, I was a mighty pharaoh of Egypt, adorned in regal robes and a golden headdress. Another time, I became a swashbuckling pirate, complete with a feathered hat and a confident stance. Each costume allowed me to step into a role that made me feel strong, powerful, and undeniably attractive.

At Purim carnivals, I noticed a stark contrast in the way others chose to dress. While I sought to embody nobility and charm, many around me opted for silly or exaggeratedly comical costumes. There were clowns with oversized shoes and painted faces, jesters with wild colors, and even people dressed as food items or absurd creatures. It puzzled me at first—why would anyone want to present themselves in a way that made them look foolish? Yet, year after year, they returned in their playful disguises, embracing the silliness of the holiday in their own way.

This contrast led me to an interesting realization: the way we present ourselves on Purim is not so different from how we present ourselves in life. Just as we can choose to wear costumes that highlight our best features, we can also choose how we present our personalities, actions, and attitudes to the world. Some people move through life with confidence, grace, and dignity, like a king or a hero. Others choose to act the part of the clown, making themselves look ridiculous through their behavior, words, or choices. The decision is ours to make—do we want to be seen as our best selves or as something less?

Purim, then, is more than just a day of masquerade; it is a reflection of the choices we make about our identity. It reminds me that I can decide, every day, whether to be the dignified, noble person I aspire to be or to present myself in a way that diminishes my own worth. Just as I carefully select a costume that makes me feel my best, I should also strive to embody the best version of myself in life. Because in the end, the way we choose to be seen—on Purim and beyond—shapes the way the world responds to us.

**Rabbi David Vorspan**



Don't forget to set your clock forward one hour for Daylight Saving Time Sunday, March 9.

See Stan's Purim poem on page 8.

Fast of Esther and Megillah Reading March 13  
Purim March 14  
Shushan Purim March 15



© Can-Stock Photo - 0240378453

### President's Report



Shalom,

As a presidential prerogative, this year March 1 has special meaning for me and my family. At the March 1 Shabbat services, the yahrzeits for both my father, **Bertram**, and my mother, **Paullette** will be announced. Additionally, March 1 will be the 100<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary of my mother's parents, **Robert and Rozaine Vision**. These are the people who made me what I am today and are part of my and our Jewish tradition. Part of that tradition is the basis for a question I had with regard to announcing yahrzeits of people for whom there are no parents, spouses, siblings or children left to say Kaddish.

The answer, I believe, is that while we may not say Kaddish for those grandparents and great-grandparents, that does not mean they can be forgotten. At family get togethers for holidays, we still like to tell and hear stories about those that are only with us in memory. At one of the holidays, we had a guest who was amazed at how well we spoke of grandparents, aunts, and uncles as though they were still alive. Well, we could not have spoken so well if the grandparents and aunts and uncles had not given us such great memories to tell.

Of course, for a practical matter, we have never met those who had one of the greatest impacts, our names. In the Ashkenazi tradition of naming children after those who had passed on, the only way you have of remembering the person after whom you have been named is by the stories you are told before it's too late. Fourteen years ago, my mother and I were visiting relatives on the east coast for my mother's sister's funeral. While sitting *shiva* we came across a box of photographs and my mother was called into service as she was the only one left who could identify some of the faces and match them with names.

Many of our members may very well be the last ones who can remember who the faces are in old family photos. I suggest that if you have not already done so, please pass on as your legacy the names and any information you have about those people to your family to keep the chain of tradition alive.

As for events in March, we are keeping our chain of tradition alive with Shabbat Services, Rabbi's Tisch, Shabbat/Torah Study Session. We would love to see you in person or remotely via Zoom.

As always, if you have any questions or want to provide your input, please feel free to email me at [JDPistol@aol.com](mailto:JDPistol@aol.com).

**Jordan Pistol**, President

January 31, 2025

Dear Friends,

Once again, I'm deeply gratified and humbled by your ongoing support of our JFS Hope domestic violence program. The Linen Shabbat was spectacular, and it will supply our shelters for a long time. The comfort and warmth that the linens and pillows will provide most definitely will be deeply appreciated by our wonderful survivors. When they arrive at our shelters, they will receive their new sheets and pillows to wrap themselves in at night for a good rest. These are folks who likely haven't slept well in months; however, coming to us and receiving all new bedding will be a great gift.

JFS Hope is also deeply grateful that this tradition has been ongoing for so many years. It means to us that you have made a commitment to the women and children we serve to see that they are sleeping comfortably in a warm and nurturing environment.

I always love to see everyone at the Shabbat service. It's a special event for our program and we wholeheartedly thank you for making this a priority each year. We hope the tradition will continue for many more.

The staff joins me in thanking you as well with warm wishes for a year filled with much health and happiness.

Warmly, Kitty

**Kitty Glass**, Community Outreach Coordinator

### Jewish Proverbs

Among those who stand, do not sit; among those who sit, do not stand. Among those who laugh, do not weep; among those who weep, do not laugh.

As he thinks in his heart, so he is.

Anyone who teases you loves you.

As you do, so will be done to you.

As you teach, you learn.

Ask about the neighbors, then buy the house.

"Rejoice not at thine enemy's fall"- but don't rush to pick him up, either.

A bird that you set free may be caught again, but a word that escapes your lips will not return.

A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.



A family of services. A family that serves.





# DONATIONS

Congregation Shir Ami wishes to acknowledge the following donations:

## Yahrzeits

**Correction:** Last month Janet and Harvey Kirshbaum should have been **Janet and Richard Kirshbaum**

- Corinne Geller for Hildegard Geller
- Ethel Granik for Sarah Goldberg
- Carol and Irwin Koransky
- Stan Rosenbluth for Sadie Rosenbluth
- Ed Schneier for Esther Schneier and mother
- Bonnie and Rabbi David Vorspan for Leonard Meshul and Sime Meshul
- Stan and Phyllis Schroeder for Sally Schroeder

## Birthdays

Bonnie and Rabbi David Vorspan in honor of Rabbi Ahud Sela (48)



David and Bonnie Vorspan 2023

## Birthdays & Anniversaries

### Birthdays

- Neil Hatterm..... 3/9
- Jerry Michaelson..... 3/19

### Anniversaries

- Paula and Lou Loomis..... 3/3 52nd
- Rae and Armand Wazana..... 3/11 58th



David and Max Vorspan around 1980

## Dry Bones HAR HAR HAR



## Congregational News

Get well wishes *rafuah schleimah* to:



- Lew Silverman      Paula Loomis
- Phyllis Schroeder      Sheilah Hart

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

## Congregation Shir Ami Tribute Cards

Our **Tribute Card Coordinator** will send your cards celebrating *simchas* and conveying your get-well and condolence messages.

Call **Helga Unkeless** at (818) 340-5751 or (preferably). email [Helgaunkeless@yahoo.com](mailto:Helgaunkeless@yahoo.com)

Minimum donation of \$5 per card is appreciated.

## Jewish World Watch

Rae Wazana is our Jewish World Watch representative.

Excerpted from their website [www;jww.org](http://www;jww.org)



**The Democratic Republic of the Congo** has endured decades of armed conflict, child soldiering, gender-based violence and widespread disease. Jewish World Watch is working with local change-makers to provide vital educational opportunities, rescue children from armed militias and holistically heal women following sexual attacks.

**Key Facts:** 5.4 million killed in conflict, 1000s of children in militias, 1,152 women raped a day, 7 million children not in school

### Rapid Response Missions in the Congo

These missions provide holistic medical care, psychosocial assistance and collect evidence to bolster legal efforts against perpetrators of sexual violence.

### Negotiating the Release of Child Soldiers

In the Congo, JWW is helping to secure the release of boys and girls from armed groups, many of whom are being used as child soldiers and sex slaves. From 2019-2020 JWW funded the release and rehabilitation of 1,436 children former child soldiers and sex slaves.

### Congo Peace School

The Congo Peace School provides peace-related education for children unable to afford school fees, taking them off the streets and into classrooms.

### Sons of Congo

Sons of Congo is a men's mentorship program that aims to create a social change movement to protect Congolese women. It does so in a unique way — by tackling the root cause of the violence against them: the mindset of the perpetrators.

**The Rohingya people in Myanmar** are suffering one of the world's most recent genocides that began as a targeted campaign of violence by the Myanmar government in 2017. Today, more than one million survivors are living in refugee camps in Bangladesh. Jewish World Watch provides crucial support within the camps – filling educational gaps for Rohingya children and addressing the COVID-19 crisis.

**Key Facts:** 2017 genocide began, 1.7 million people displaced, 60% of refugees are children, 1 in 6 Rohingya in Myanmar held in concentration camps

**Children's Education:** Jewish World Watch supports an innovative program that enables Rohingya children to learn in their own language — the Rohingya dialect — for the first time. We are currently working with 75 schools in the refugee camps,

**Safe Housing:** To keep Rohingya survivors safe from extreme weather in the camps in Bangladesh, JWW supported the construction of 50 waterproof bamboo shelters capable of housing up to 500 people.



Award-winning educational program uses a digital projection system teaching in Rohingya native dialect.

## Top Ten Ways the Purim Story Would Go Down in Modern Times

Behrmanhouse.com adapted from Bangitout.com

10. King Ahashuerus hosts the hit reality show "What Not to Wear" and invites Queen Vashti as his first contestant.
9. The king's ministers, looking for the most beautiful women throughout 127 provinces, dispatch e-mails demanding that recipients "forward this letter to ten friends," and warning: "DO NOT BREAK THIS CHAIN."
8. Esther meets the other girls in the harem on "The Real World: Shushan" and is chosen queen by millions of loyal MTV fans.
7. Mordechai uses the video camera in his iPhone to film Bigtan and Teresh plotting to kill the king, and Shushan TV broadcasts the images thousands of times every day.
6. A firm believer in the philosophy "You gotta play to win," Haman picks the fateful date to annihilate the Jews while on local cable TV, appearing briefly between reruns of "Seinfeld" and "Channel 9 News."
5. Esther's three-day fast outrages the U.S. Surgeon General, who sternly warns that everyone MUST eat at least ten fruits and grains each day.
4. To protect the king and Haman from hordes of paparazzi, Esther hires bodyguards to patrol her private feast.
3. Nike offers Mordechai a multimillion dollar contract to wear their sneakers when Haman leads him through town on the king's horse.
2. Haman's execution is posted on You Tube.
1. Esther runs for president.



## Talkin' About My Generation: Peace and Love

by Lou Loomis



I'm a *Boomer*; a "Baby Boomer." I was born in the post World War II era, where America was optimistic about nearly everything. We had defeated the Nazis, and made the world safe for democracy. Israel was created as the long-dreamed for Jewish homeland as well as a safety net for those escaping the horrors of antisemitism. I grew up in idealistic times, where everything and anything was possible. It was filled with "Peace and Love," including some mind-bending drugs, but we boomers had solutions to everything. My generation would right any of the wrongs leftover from previous and less-enlightened generations, like racism, poverty, violence... etc. My generation would do it.

We were so sure of ourselves. We had the best music, the Beatles and the Stones, we had long hair and groovy threads. We lived blessed lives.

And then the Vietnam war happened, Boomers were not afraid of communism and did not consider the conquest of Vietnam any kind of global threat. And that was the first time I can recall that my generation stumbled. I was drafted and sent to Vietnam and lo and behold, saw with my own naive eyes how terrible communists treated our fellow human beings; anyone whose ideas differed from them was a target for elimination. That made me realize that all was not well in the Boomer Garden of Eden; the garden of Peace and Love.

Having lived as a boomer and seeing its effect on the following generations, I have many stories and observations, and I may write about it at another time, but for now, I want to single out one particular impact the boomer philosophy has made in Israel.

On October 7, 2023 twenty-one communities in southern Israel were targeted by Hamas terrorists. Many of the communities were kibbutzim following the collectivist ideology of working together for the common good. That good included their neighbors in Gaza.

A large percentage of the people who lived in the kibbutzim attacked on October 7 were socialist, pro-Palestinian activists, people who worked very close to the population of Gaza, who took children to Israeli hospitals for cancer treatments, people who gave work to the Gazans in the southern camps, people who many of them considered the people of Gaza as part of their families.

One Gazan of note worked for 30 years as a gardener in Be'eri (near the east border of Gaza with Israel), slept in the houses of its inhabitants, ate at their tables with their families.

Several survivors recognized him among their executioners. He was the one who made the map of the kibbutz, who detailed each house, how many rooms, how many inhabitants, how many children and even how many pets lived there.

The idealistic Kibbutzniks thought that they could live together in peace, that the years of relationships with these people had forged a friendship, that they saw them as allies, that they were not their enemies. The Israelis would greet or say good-bye to their Gazan neighbors by saying *Salaam Aleykum* (Arabic for peace upon you) while in return, the neighbors would wish Shalom Aleichem in return. Peace was considered a real possibility.

So it was that on October 7, the Gazans, repaid that trust in the form of rape, torture, mutilation, beheadings, kidnappings and fire.

Not long after the events of October 7, I witnessed a heated debate between an Arab defender of Hamas, and a pro-Israeli American. At the start of the debate, the Arab labeled the American an occupier, despite the fact that the American lived in the US and owned no property in Israel. The American was also branded a racist, only because he was Jewish. The American parried every jibe by the Arab that he was evil and just another Hitler. While he could not deny the American's claims that Hamas engaged in terrorism, the Arab continued to blame Israel and America for any evil act that took place, be it by Gaza's Hamas or Israel's IDF. Then the Arab revealed that he was an attorney, born in Gaza, but now living in Egypt. The American then asked the Arab if he considered himself to be an occupier.

The Arab denied it, until the American asked him what language he spoke. "Do you speak Egyptian?" "No, I speak Arabic." Do the people of Gaza speak Gazan, or Arabic, like yourself?" "Arabic," he replied. And then the American asked "So, do you consider yourself and the people of Gaza to be occupiers?" Surprisingly, the Arab suddenly excused himself, saying he was out of time and had to leave. And then came my personal moment of realization. The American said goodbye by wishing the Arab "Salaam Aleikum." **But the Arab did not reply.** It may be cultural, but it appears that the people of Gaza do not want peace nor are they taught peace.

(continued on page 9)

## Leopoldstadt on Broadway – support for The Blue Card by Fiona Taylor

*Editor's note: I published this article by Fiona in our 2023 and 2024 March Shir Notes. As I write this, February 23, 2025 I see that Dr. Eisenbach, now 101, spoke to the Jewish community at Chapman College two days ago!*

*His book, by Karen McCartney, **Where you Go, I Go, The Astonishing Life of Jacob Eisenbach**, is a fascinating and terrifying page turner, and his story is unforgettable.* Stan Schroeder

As some of you may remember, a few years ago, we chose to support **The Blue Card** for our (then) annual Walk Around Lake Balboa. This organization helps to support aging and, in many cases, indigent Holocaust survivors who have little or no means for survival. There are still elderly Jews around the world and specifically, around the U.S., who need help for their daily needs.



We were lucky to have had a wonderful speaker at our event on June 4, 2017 – **Dr. Jacob Eisenbach** – a now-retired dentist who lives in Orange County. Originally from Lodz, Poland, he and his brother were concentration camp survivors who suffered greatly: he told us his incredible story and I remember one member of our congregation asked him “After all you went through, how could you still believe in God?” His response was “How could I not?”

Dr. Eisenbach continues to speak to audiences on a regular basis – even now, at almost 100 years of age – I see that, most recently, he spoke in Dana Point in January 2023.

It is very encouraging to know that the Broadway company of **Leopoldstadt** has given support to The Blue Card and that they featured a donation page in their program. For anyone who visits New York while the play is still on Broadway, I would suggest going to see it.



May we indeed “never forget” and remember those who suffered during the darkest time in the 20<sup>th</sup> century

## Purim in Israel

### Then...

The source of this holiday is in the Biblical **Book of Esther**, traditionally read twice on Purim – once on the eve of Purim and once on the day of Purim, which relates the saving of Persian Jewry from **Haman**, chief minister to Persian **King Ahashuerus**, who was plotting to kill all the kingdom’s Jews (the time frame of this story is estimated as between the destruction of the First Temple and the building of the Second Temple, in the late 6th century BCE). His new queen, **Esther**, and her cousin and/or uncle **Mordechai**, collaborated to turn the fate of the Jewish people around, succeeding without one mention of God in the entire 10-chapter book.

The date on which Purim is observed, the 14th of the Jewish month of Adar (usually in March, this year March 14), in keeping with the date Haman had determined for all the Jews to be killed. In Jerusalem, being a “walled city”, Purim celebrations continue through the following day, which is called Shushan Purim.

### And now...

They tried to kill us. God saved us. Let’s eat.” That is the theme of many of the Jewish holidays, and Purim is no exception, except in this case we also drink alcohol, give charity to needy people and give gifts of food to friends.

On Purim, in order to celebrate the complete turnaround of the Jews’ lot (in Hebrew *pur* – hence the name Purim) and of the hidden face of God in the story, we dress up in costumes and drink alcohol which both help us see the world from a different point of view.

One of the biggest Purim events in Israel is the **adloy-ada** (parade/carnival). In Jerusalem there are plenty of festivals and parties, some for families and children, some for those who want to go all out with their drinking, dressing up, and dancing until they can no longer tell the difference between Haman and Mordechai.



## Purim Plays and Carnivals

by Rabbi Daniel Kohn

(extracted from MyJewishLearning.com)

Spiel is a Yiddish word meaning a “play” or “skit.” A Purim spiel is actually a dramatic presentation of the events outlined in the Book of Esther. Featuring the main characters, such as King Ahasuerus, Mordecai, Esther, and the wicked Haman, the Purim spiel was a folk-inspired custom providing an opportunity for crowds to cheer the heroes (Mordecai and Esther) and boo the villains (Haman). It is a staple of many modern synagogue Purim celebrations for children to attend the ritual chanting of the Book of Esther and Purim carnivals dressed in costumes depicting these main characters.

Often, a synagogue religious school will hold a costume contest and organize a parade of all the costumed children. While it is traditional to masquerade as characters from the story of Esther, many Jewish families celebrate Purim as an alternative to Halloween, with children dressing in non-traditional costumes and masks. There is no “right” or “wrong” costume for Purim.

In relatively modern times, the popularity of these Purim shpiel plays and the boisterous audience reaction they engendered, spilled over into the actual synagogue celebration of Purim when the scroll of Esther is chanted in Hebrew. There is an ancient tradition derived from the Torah that one is supposed to “blot out” the mention of Haman as a form of enduring spiritual punishment and ignominy for his actions. Therefore, synagogue attendees attempting to “blot out” Haman’s name will literally shout, catcall, boo and swing noisemakers, called groggers, to drown out the name of Haman as it is read.

Many synagogues hold special family or children’s services on Purim, or make a point of including families in the chanting of the Book of Esther so that the children will be able to not only attend in costume, but shake their noisemakers and contribute to the merriment through making lots of noise. In fact, a growing custom is to hold an arts-and-crafts session for the children in advance of the Purim festivities so that children can make their own groggers and masks to wear.

Purim shpiels have evolved over time into the presentation of humorous skits not just about the story of Purim, but also about leaders and well-known people in the community. In synagogues, members may write and act in funny skits gently mocking the rabbis, cantor, president, and other people. In Jewish religious day schools, no teacher ever escapes the mocking attention of their students in such Purim shpiels.

Purim spiels also include popular songs sung with new, creative funny lyrics lampooning community leaders.

Some congregations go to elaborate lengths in producing spiels, sometimes writing mini-musical plays, or with some people renting expensive outrageous



costumes. It is also traditional for religious leaders to deliver “Purim Torahs,” which are farcical, sometimes nonsensical, sermons about ridiculous topics. Often, the synagogue bulletin for Purim will be a special joke edition with many funny, ludicrous articles.

Dr. Jeffrey Rubenstein, a professor of religion at New York University writes that Purim is a holiday characterized by “liminality,” that is, a day in which traditional social boundaries and rules of etiquette are deliberately blurred. Purim is a day for a community to “blow off steam” by celebrating this ancient escape from destruction. Therefore, it is a day of topsy-turvy antics, especially in the Purim shpiel. In addition to drinking more alcohol than usual, well-respected leaders are lampooned, children dress up as adults and, especially in Israel, men often dress up as women and vice versa. It is a day in which society as we know it is turned upside down.

But the celebrations of Purim are ultimately for a religious purpose — to celebrate the unseen presence of God who saved the Jewish community in Persia thousands of years ago. While Purim shpiels and graggers may seem to diminish the spiritual importance of the holiday, they are part of an ongoing celebration of good over evil, and a festival celebrating God’s presence in Jewish history.

### The Month of Adar

Known as a month of celebration and happiness, the late-winter month of Adar contains the joyous holiday of Purim that takes place mid-month. Purim, however, isn’t the only thing that makes Adar special. The Talmud tells us that “when the month of Adar arrives, we



increase in joy” to welcome a season of miracles. Accordingly, the Talmud tells us that this month is fortuitous for the Jewish people.



## Purim 5785 (March 14, 2025)

Don't think of the Purim story as history.  
Who wrote it remains a mystery.  
Tradition says it was our hero Mordechai;  
For various reasons, that doesn't fly.

Think of the story as more of a fable  
With wisdom for us here who are able.  
Let's look at the characters in turn,  
Then decipher the lessons we can learn.

Ahasuerus is King of the vast Persian empire,  
With Queen Vashti dressed in royal attire.  
She refuses to appear at his huge celebration  
Replete with unlimited supply of libation.

We don't know why she refused to be seen at the bash;  
Some say she might have had a rash.  
What ever the reason, a new Queen was needed,  
And Esther, Mordechai's niece/cousin succeeded.

Haman, a minister in the Court, and a Jew-hater,  
Prepared a decree a few years later.  
All Jews in the Empire would be killed that year;  
Mordechai and his people had reason to fear.

He turned to Queen Esther to appeal to the King.  
She replied that would not be an easy thing.  
After three days of fasting she devised a plan  
How she could expose that villain Haman.

In her chamber at a feast on the second night  
To the King and Haman she declared the Jews' plight.  
In a flurry of intrigues, Ahasuerus finally saw the light.  
He hung Haman, promoted Mordechai, and did what was right!

The Jews were saved and the Purim holiday created.  
And during the month of Adar our joy is elevated.  
Queen Esther's actions in her time of duress  
Set an example for us when we're under stress.

We never know when events occur in our life,  
In these days when we encounter trouble or strife.  
Each one may be called upon to choose,  
Living the values we've learned as Jews.

Stan Schroeder





## TREE OF LIFE

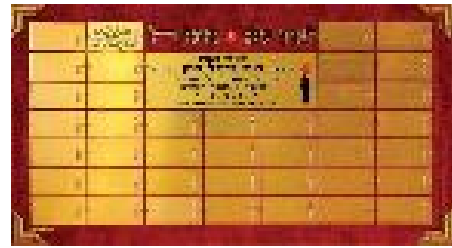


This beautiful Tree of Life, with leaves priced at \$100 and rocks at \$250 (one remaining), makes a perfect way to celebrate family occasions and support Congregation Shir Ami.

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 Helga Unkeless at (818) 340-5751.

## 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 Helga Unkeless at (818) 340-5751 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.

## Talkin' About My Generation: Peace and Love (continued)

Again, as an American who grew up an idealistic hippy and a surfer, I couldn't conceive anyone not wanting to live in peace with their neighbors. My values were shaped by a post-World War II ethos—where being a Jew meant being happy within my own skin, and being grateful for the gifts of my American birthright. So, I am doubly blessed: I am an American and a Jew. I still want Shalom for everyone I meet, but I am now certain that my wish for others is not always reciprocated. And I think this is also now true for Israelis.

*Shalom Aleichem*



"You cannot negotiate peace with someone who has come to kill you." - Golda Meir

## Shop at Ralphs - Earn Money for Shir Ami

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 Ralph's rewards card already, go to the store or go to website [www.ralphs.com](http://www.ralphs.com) and select **Order a Ralphs reward card**.
2. Once you have your card, go to the website: [www.ralphs.com](http://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 Ralph's 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. 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

## **“Around the Rabbi’s Tisch” on Zoom March 7, 21, and 28, 7:30 pm**

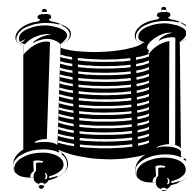


This popular Shir Ami educational continues its Spring semester. Come join us for our weekly discussion of Rabbi Vorspan’s selected topics of Jewish interest.

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.

This semester we will again hold our sessions on Zoom. The link is [https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86440082040?pwd=bG4venRKTW9lVzhwVWVS  
RGgraEFJdz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86440082040?pwd=bG4venRKTW9lVzhwVWVSRGgraEFJdz09)

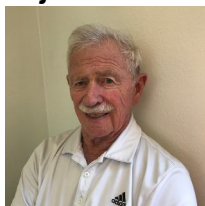
**Meeting ID: 864 4008 2040 Password: 677588**



**Saturday March 22, 10:30 am**

**Torah/Shabbat Study at Schroeder home and via Zoom**

Stan Schroeder leads a discussion of the weekly Torah portion and various subjects relevant to Conservative Judaism.



Our next session will be March 22. The Torah portion is *Vayakhel*, Exodus 35:1 - 38:20, describing the building of the *mishkan*. We will also discuss one of our Shabbat (and daily) prayers. This session will be held at the Schroeder home, 8450 Winnetka Ave. #14. Call Stan at (818) 718-7466 or email [stanpacbell@gmail.com](mailto:stanpacbell@gmail.com) for more information.

**Congregation Shir Ami Schedule of Shabbat Services 2025  
at de Toledo High School, Zoom, and Livestream [www.shirami.com](http://www.shirami.com)**

**If you want to be added to our email list, please send an email to [stanpacbell@gmail.com](mailto:stanpacbell@gmail.com) and you will receive ongoing information.**

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

**January 2025**

Saturday, January 4 - Birthday, Consecration of Officers

Saturday, January 25 - Anniversary, Linen Shabbat

**February 2025**

Saturday, February 1 - Birthday

Saturday, February 15 - Anniversary

**March 2025**

Saturday, March 1 - Birthday

Saturday, March 15 - Anniversary

**April 2025**

Saturday, April 5 - Birthday

Saturday, April 26 - Anniversary

**May 2025**

Saturday, May 10 - Birthday

Saturday, May 24 - Anniversary

**June 2025**

Saturday, June 7 - Birthday

Saturday, June 21 - Anniversary



David Vorspan  
Rabbi



Jordan Pistol  
President

For Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86440082040?pwd=bG4venRKTW9lVzhwVWVSRGgraEFJdz09>

**Meeting ID: 864 4008 2040 Password: 677588**

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