

Not Jewish?

PARTNERS OF JEWS, YOUR OPPORTUNITIES AT SHIR HADASH

You Are a Member

YOUR SYNAGOGUE HOME

Congregation Shir Hadash opens our doors and our hearts to all of our members: Jews, partners and spouses of Jews, children of a Jewish parent. Whether you are affiliated with another religious institution or Congregation Shir Hadash is your only affiliation, Shir Hadash is a place you can call "home." You are part of our Shir Hadash family. Your questions are always welcomed by our clergy and leadership.

WHO MAY BE A MEMBER

Membership at Shir Hadash includes adult Jewish members, their spouses or partners and their children. If a Jewish spouse dies, or a couple is divorced, the non-Jewish partner is welcome to continue participating as a member. The parents or guardians of Jewish children are always welcome to join our congregation.

MEMBERSHIP HAS ITS PRIVILEGES!

We hope that you will find meaningful opportunities to participate at Shir Hadash.

All adult members of Congregation Shir Hadash have voting rights at congregational meetings.

Shir Hadash committees and groups are open to all of our members. Partners of Jews often serve as committee members and may take on more responsible leadership roles as committee chairs, board members or officers of the congregation. The Shir Hadash Men's Club and Sisterhood invite all men and women in the congregation to become active members.

All of our members are welcome at every service. When you attend our worship services, you are invited to participate with the congregation in the way that you feel most comfortable. Please pray along with us, whenever the spirit so moves you.

YOU ARE INCLUDED!

PARTNERS OF JEWS...YOUR OPPORTUNITIES AT SHIR HADASH WORSHIP, STUDY, CONVERSION

WORSHIP

Members are often given opportunities to participate in the service by lighting Shabbat candles or leading the Kiddush following services, reading a prayer or participating in the Torah service. Directions are provided in advance to help you feel comfortable. Certain ritual honors are reserved for adult Jews, such as being called up for the Torah aliyah, and the wearing of a tallit. If you have any questions, please contact the clergy.

If you or a loved one, Jewish or not, are in need of prayers for healing, we will gladly include their names on our Prayer for Healing (Mi Shebeirach) list. Please contact the office to advise the clergy of your needs.

ADULT STUDY

Our congregation's adult study opportunities are open to all members of our community. During the year, a wide variety of educational and entertaining programs are offered. Several programs may be of particular interest to you.

"A Taste of Judaism" provides an overview of the central tenets of Judaism in just three free classes.

"Introduction to Judaism" is the class for you if you are interested in a more comprehensive study of Judaism and an introduction to Hebrew. Though conversion candidates do take this course, it is not designed exclusively for them; at any time, the class consists of Jews, partners of Jews and members of the local community interested in learning more about Judaism.

Adult Hebrew offerings will help you participate in our worship services. And, if you have children who are learning Hebrew, you will be more able to help them with their homework!

You may wish to attend *"Introduction to the Worship Service"*, explaining the structure of the service and the meaning of many prayers. This understanding can enhance your worship experience at Shir Hadash

OUR RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

If you are a parent of a Religious School student, you will find that Jewish parents and partners of Jews are treated similarly. Please participate with your child in our family education programs and other opportunities for parental involvement in our Religious School such as helping in the classroom, serving on committees and participating in family education programs.

Our faculty is sensitive to the fact that many of our Religious School students have a non-Jewish parent and many of our students have at least one non-Jewish grandparent. If any questions arise, please contact Rabbi Levenberg.

CONSIDERING CONVERSION?

Perhaps you are interested in becoming a Jew. While non-Jews are more than welcome to continue their Congregation affiliation and involvement for a lifetime, we encourage and support conversion for those who are interested.

If you are interested in exploring conversion, the process might begin by consulting with a clergy member, participating in an educational program to learn more about Judaism (such as Taste of Judaism and Introduction to Judaism). Candidates for conversion are encouraged to attend worship services and to begin living a Jewish life. Our clergy is delighted to consult with you on this significant step.

PARTNERS OF JEWS...YOUR OPPORTUNITIES AT SHIR HADASH MARRIAGE, BIRTH, B'NAI MITZVAH

YOUR MARRIAGE

Our congregation honors and recognizes every marriage, whether between two Jews or between a Jew and a non-Jew, whether between a man and a woman or between two people of the same gender.

All couples are invited to participate in a pre-nuptial blessing (aufruf) on the bimah, during a worship service, prior to the wedding.

Rabbi Fleekop officiates at interfaith marriage ceremonies under limited conditions, which he will be happy to explain to you. Shir Hadash may be the venue for these weddings. Our synagogue may also be the venue for weddings officiated at by other rabbis. The name of the clergy member should be submitted to Rabbi Aron for approval prior to reserving the synagogue.

In addition, our rabbis are delighted to invite you to join the congregation in front of the ark for special anniversary blessings.

For more information, please contact either Rabbi Aron or Rabbi Fleekop.

YOUR JEWISH BABY

The child of a Jewish parent and a non-Jewish parent, by birth or by adoption, who is raised exclusively as a Jew, is considered to be Jewish here at Congregation Shir Hadash and by the Reform movement. The fact that the child has a non-Jewish parent does not make the child less Jewish in our eyes. Please ask any of the clergy if you have questions about standards for raising one's child "exclusively" as a Jew, or if you wonder about how your child's Jewish status is perceived among Conservative or Orthodox Jews, or in Israel.

Non-Jewish parents and grandparents may enjoy significant roles in raising a Jewish child, beginning with the Baby Naming or Brit Milah (Covenant of Circumcision). Our clergy are eager to make all of these occasions joyous for you and all members of the family.

Please contact one of the rabbis to discuss these rituals, as soon as you know that you are expecting. We can be your guides.

YOUR CHILD'S BAR/BAT MITZVAH

We want your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah to be a joyous occasion for the entire family.

We honor your commitment and support. While there are differences between the roles of Jewish parents and partners of Jews, our congregation strives to provide meaningful opportunities for everyone to participate. Grandparents and other relatives also are invited to take part in the ceremony in significant ways.

On Friday night, you may be asked to bless the candles or to lead Kiddush. On Saturday, we hope you will participate in the parents remarks during the presentation of the tallit, you are present on the bimah for the passing of the Torah, you stand with your Jewish partner for an aliyah (Torah blessings) during the Torah reading and recite the Shehecheyanu (prayer of thanksgiving) as a family in celebration of the event.

PARTNERS OF JEWS...YOUR OPPORTUNITIES AT SHIR HADASH A CARING COMMUNITY, RESOURCES

TIMES OF DIFFICULTY

When times are difficult, the rabbis and cantor provide counseling to all of our members. During times of illness, the rabbis and cantor visit all of our members, Jews and partners of Jews, at home, in local hospitals and convalescent facilities. Through our Caring Community, members assist with food, transportation, visitation and other needs. Please contact the office to discuss your needs with the clergy.

WHEN A LOVED ONE DIES

Congregation Shir Hadash, your community, and the clergy are here for you in your hour of loss. Whether your loved one is Jewish or a non-Jewish relative, we will seek to provide comfort during your time of need. Contact the clergy to advise them of your loss when the time comes.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I DIE?

Our clergy will officiate at all funeral services for burial or cremation for partners of Jews if the wish of the deceased is to have a Jewish service. Congregants are encouraged to clarify this desire with their loved ones while they are living. Funeral or Memorial Services for members may be conducted at Congregation Shir Hadash.

Our clergy also will participate in the non-Jewish funeral of a non-Jewish partner in a way that is religiously appropriate and which supports the Jewish family members.

RESOURCES

We also recommend the following books and pamphlets, all of which are available in our library.

Websites: Interfaithfamily.com

Brochures:

Intermarried? Reform Judaism Welcomes You (URJ Press)

Books:

- Kertzer/Hoffman, *What is a Jew?*
- Andrea King, *If I'm Jewish and You're Christian, What are the Kids?*
- Mogel, Wendy, *The Blessing of a Skinned Knee: Using Jewish Teachings to Raise Self-Reliant Children*
- Stephanie Hubert Schneider, Ph.D., *Raising a Spiritual Child: A Jewish Perspective*
- Mindy Avra Portnoy and Shelly O., Jacqueline Haas, *Mommy Never Went to Hebrew School*
- Nancy Fuchs and Nancy Fuchs-Kreimer, *Parenting as a Spiritual Journey*
- Keen, Jim, *Inside Intermarriage: A Christian Partner's Perspective on Raising a Jewish Family*

HELPFUL NUMBERS AND ADDRESSES

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