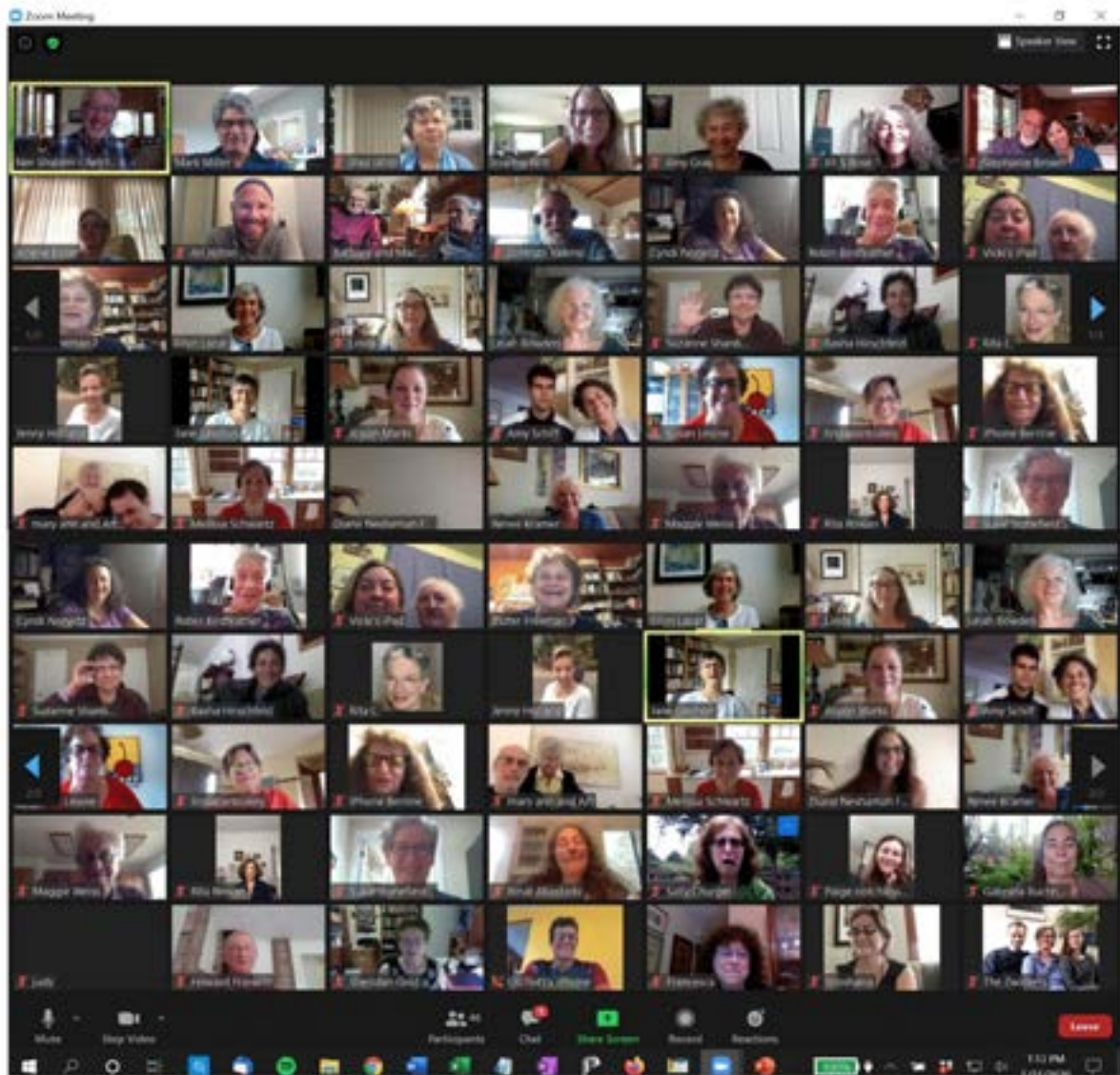


Congregation Ner Shalom Holiday Booklet 5781



In the River of Transformation

Welcome to Congregation Ner Shalom



Our mission:

Congregation Ner Shalom is a warm and inclusive Jewish community. Drawing from our Reconstructionist roots and the soulfulness of Jewish Renewal, we embrace Judaism through ritual, social justice, music, learning and laughter.

So welcome to our home, whether this is your first time or your fiftieth; whether you were here last week or haven't been here since this time last year. We're glad you chose to spend this powerful and vulnerable time of year with us. Enjoy the song and the soulfulness, the learning and the laughter. May you be moved in surprising ways. Despite the Pandemic, we are still finding ways to connect and share Shabbat, education, and comraderie through Zoom. We will persevere.

Wishing you a new year of
sweetness, health, and peace.



Congregation Ner Shalom

www.nershalom.org



“Come, come, whoever you are. Wanderer, worshiper,
lover of leaving. It doesn't matter. Ours is not a caravan
of despair...” Rumi

Dear Friends Old and New,

**In these holiest of days, we welcome you,
whoever and wherever you are.** Around here, we're
not a caravan of despair. Instead, we've reached deep
and found resilience, creativity, and perhaps even hope.

If we were meeting in person, you'd most likely get a
fervent hello and a hug from our greeting team and your
friends at shul.

So this is my way of offering you a virtual hug and a happy new year wish.

In this challenging time especially, I've been deeply appreciative of the community
of Ner Shalom. If you've joined us for services or classes, I hope that you too have found
solace and inspiration here.

In some ways, everything is different. And in others, nothing has changed.
Because what makes Ner Shalom wonderful and spiritual and inspirational is not the
building. It's the people who bring you their best from deep inside their souls.

So it is my deepest wish, whether you're a regular or a one-time visitor from afar
or anything in-between, that you will find the High Holy Day services just what you need
to make it through the rest of this year. I invite you to dip into the well of hope, bask in
the light of inspiration, and embrace the beautiful melodies.

And as it is said on Passover, sort of, “Next Year in The Building!”

L'shalom,

Amy Gray, President



Passover in Sonoma
(c) 2015, Nina Reimer
Oil/mixed media on canvas

L' Shana Tovah
from
Congregation Ner Shalom's
Board of Directors



*May blessings bestow our beautiful community throughout all of 5781!
With love and gratitude,*

Amy Gray, President
Amy Schiff, Vice President
Linda Schneider, Secretary
Mark Miller, Treasurer

Stephanie Brown
Basha Hirschfeld
Art Magnus

Elaine Leeder
Tanya Robertson
Alison Marks
Linda Pantoskey



*Thank You for Choosing Ner Shalom as
Your Spiritual Home!
People know there's something special
about Congregation Ner Shalom.*

They say that the way our inclusive community comes together to support one another is astonishing. Despite fire and pandemic, we have persevered, our love only growing stronger throughout our challenges.

They say the classes and services are a blast, even on Zoom. These days, our music touches our hearts in our homes. Guitar, flute, voice, drum or shofar, the sounds are still a core element of our services. The Good Shabbos Band hasn't stopped playing.

They find the prayers, meditations, and insights of our spiritual leadership, led by Reb Irwin Keller, inspirational and hopeful. Since Covid hit, we hold a Check-In Soup every weekday at 10 am just to make sure people have a chance to talk and check in.



About Congregation Ner Shalom



The building was built in 1910 as the Cotati Women's Club. Since then it was the famous Cotati Cabaret. Today we continue the musical tradition of the building with concerts and lively musical services. We hope to be back in the building soon!

Our congregation formed in May of 1982, when a small group of people came together to start the Sonoma County Synagogue Center. The congregation is affiliated with the Reconstructionist Movement, and continues that affiliation to date.

In 1994 we acquired our historic building. After moving into the building, we renamed ourselves Congregation Ner Shalom – the Lamp of Peace. We are a spirited and diverse community of people from a wide variety of backgrounds. We explore Jewish-centered paths of ritual, learning, song, community-building, social change and mindfulness. We support our children and youth with the Nitzanim program. We welcome visitors, new members, interfaith families, LGBTQI folk, families with special needs – and you. We are also proud to be a scent-free, smoke-free haven, safe for people with multiple chemical sensitivities.

Our Torah Scrolls

Some particular items of note here at Ner Shalom. We have two Torah scrolls, each with a story of migration and renewal. Our first Torah, scribed in the 1700s, is from Sobeslav, a small Czech town whose Jewish community was destroyed in the Shoah. We see ourselves as the stewards of the memory of the Jews of that town, whose names you see framed against our eastern wall.

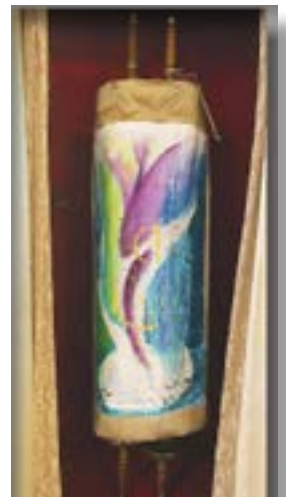
Our second Torah scroll is a gift of Rabbis Daria and Josh Jacobs-Velde who used the torah in their outdoor renewal synagogue, Zmanim. It had belonged to Daria's great-great-uncle, also a rabbi, whom she never met. Some years ago his colleagues at an interfaith retreat center he'd founded sought her out to take the scroll, and she subsequently gifted it to us. The beautiful mantle was created by Ner Shalomer Leah Bowden.

Our Piano

And you will notice our baby grand piano. It is also a survivor. When the Nazis came to power, Erna Salm, a concert pianist in Darmstadt, shipped this German-made Steinway to Rotterdam. She and her husband barely escaped, eventually making it to Chicago. After the war she was able to retrieve the piano and play it the rest of her life. This piano is a gift of her son, David Salm.

Join Us

It is a new year and a new beginning. We hope that many of you will consider joining our lovely congregation this year. We are a vibrant community that values the needs, hopes and unique gifts of our members. For more information, contact Stephanie Brown at stephanieb1818@gmail.com or (650) 387-4417.



“Greetings to all for a sweet,
healthy and sane New Year.
May it be a year which bends
towards tolerance, peace, and
love.”

Barbara Lesch and
Michael “Mac” McCaffry



*Hang in there
and Keep
Checking In
-Basha*

*Wishing the
Ner Shalom community
a year of health,
sweetness and joy!*

With gratitude!
Reb Irwin Keller and Family



From my family to your family,
L'Shana Tova! May the new
year bring you blessings!

Vicki, Robert and Rachel Allen
and Myrna Jensen.

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**Wishing the Ner Shalom
community a year of
sweetness and health!**

*Suzanne Shanbaum and
Jane Lawhon*

*Thank you, Members and Friends of
Congregation Ner Shalom*

For your generosity throughout 5780!

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Rachel Abrams
Naomi Abrams-Rittenhouse and Eric Rittenhouse-Abrams
Deborah Alcouloumre and Terry Caldwell
Vicki Allen
Val Ansel
Alexandra Appel
Howard Balfour
Janine Bamberger
Karen Barad
Sonia Beck
Henriett Bensussen
Robin Birdfeather
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Neil Hancock
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Elizabeth Block and Evri Kwong
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Esther Warkov
Rabbi Jay Weinstein
Maggie Weiss
Cy Wilcox
Melissa Willaby
Helene Willis
Joanne Witt
Susan Worden
Brad Young
Alan and Sharon Ziff
Mia Zimman
Nicole Zimmerman and Kristen Sorenson
David Zwicker and Annemarie Goslow-Zwicker

*Thank you
everyone for
your generosity*

Support Ner Shalom

Consider Joining Ner Shalom!

We would love for you to join our wonderful community. Here's how:

If you would like to become a member, email Membership Chair Stephanie Brown at stephanieb1818@gmail.com.

If you are not currently a member and have purchased tickets to *all* High Holy Day services at Ner Shalom for \$193.00, we are pleased to offer a Trial Membership through December 31st for only \$42.00. Contact the office to add today!

At \$235.00, It's the best deal in town, since it includes the price for the High Holy Day tickets! PLUS member discounts on any classes!

Please contact the office at (707) 664-8622 or info@nershalom.org.

We also offer Friends of Ner Shalom, a way to support our synagogue without the full commitment of membership. If you have any questions about which will work best for you, please contact our Membership Chair **Stephanie Brown at stephanieb1818@gmail.com**



eScrip

Did you know? You can earn money for Ner Shalom simply by signing up for an eScrip account at www.escrip.com. When you checkout during your usual shopping at participating markets, show your eScrip number and voila - a portion of your bill is donated to the shul. Help out today at participating local locations:

Woodland's Market
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Mollie Stone's
Fircrest Market
Oliver's Market
Glen Ellen Village Market
Scotty's Market

The website lists additional merchants (non-grocer) that accept eScrip.

Once signed up, ask your particular market how eScrip works for them.



Nitzanim: The Flower Buds of Our Community



The Ner Shalom Nitzanim program is a rich and exciting offering for young people, K-8, and their families. It is an opportunity to deepen in Jewish experience, learning through song, prayer, nature, art, story, movement, text and discussion. Through the Nitzanim program, we will nourish our young people so they can blossom and draw sustenance from Judaism's deep and ancient roots.

With the onset of Covid-19, parents and children are maintaining connections through Zoom. We have been hosting Shabbat, Havdallah, and other gatherings online. Janet Rae and friends have recorded numerous stories and lullabies to continue weaving deep Jewish truths into the daily lives of our precious youth. Responding to Black Lives Matter and other movements in the United States, parents have been gathering on Zoom to discuss anti-racist parenting. www.nershalom.org/youth.



We look forward to the time we can return to being together physically, and in the meantime will meet our families in whatever creative ways we can, to be supportive Jewish guides in their children's upbringing.





Mindful of Race: Book Study and Meditation

Tuesdays October 6 through November 3, 5:30-6:45 pm

Facilitated by Amy Schiff

A five-week book study and meditation group focused on *Mindful of Race: Transforming Racism from the Inside Out*, by Ruth King. The group will read the book together, share discussion, and practice the meditations in the book. Amy says: This book has been an invaluable resource to me: eye-opening, challenging, and practical. King posits that racism is a heart disease “and it’s curable.” Her book breaks it down into three sections: (1) understanding habits of harm (=diagnosis); (2) mindfulness (= heart surgery); and (3) cultivating a culture of care (=recovery). Suggested donation: Members \$5, Guests \$10. No one turned away for lack of funds.

Letters of Creation (sessions #9-12)

Mondays, October 12, 19, 26 and November 2 from Noon to 1:00 p.m. PST

Facilitated by Gesher Calmenson

Jewish tradition tells us that the letters of the Hebrew aleph bet are the building blocks by which G-d created and continues to create the world. In this series of meetings we will engage the letters one at a time and, as we choose to do, respond to them with our own creativity. Each session features a short talk about the mystical properties of a particular Hebrew letter, followed by an open space for participants (who wish) to share their prayers, poems, songs, crafts, drawings, writings, reflections—whatever they have been moved to bring into being in response to the form, sound, and spiritual content of letters visited in previous sessions. Enrollment in prior sessions is not required.

Gesher Calmenson is a Jewish Family Education Fellow, Bar/Bat mitzvah tutor, founder of Remember-Us.org, and retired Ner Shalom School Director. He enjoys studying the Hebrew letters, especially what has been written about them by our Sages. This forms the basis for the material he will share in this class.

Yiddish Tish

Wednesdays, October 7th, November 4,
December 2 and as announced at 12 Noon

Led by Reb Irwin

Join us for the joy of diving inside Yiddish texts. We read and translate from the Yiddish together, but no previous Yiddish knowledge is required.



Lifelong Jewish Learning

Sacred Worlds: Conversations about the Jewish and Buddhist Traditions

Mondays, November 9 and 16 from Noon to 1 PM PST

Facilitated by Reb Judith Goleman and Basha Hirschfeld

Sacred world, Emptiness, the interdependence of all things, compassion - are these Buddhist or Jewish ideas? For many years, while Basha Hirschfeld was learning about Buddhism and Reb Judith Goleman was studying to be a Rabbinic Chaplain, they would get together over coffee and compare notes, making the connections between these two deep traditions. Join Judith and Basha as they continue their conversation and share that process with you. Bring your questions and join in the discussion.

Rabbinic Pastor Judith Goleman MFT is a chaplain and also has a private practice in individual and couple counseling in Sebastopol (currently by Zoom). As teenager she fell in love with the joyous tales of the Hasidic Rabbis of the 18th century, who saw God as the deep nature of everything in Creation (including us in our true potential). As an adult she encountered this spirit in the Jewish Renewal movement, and was lucky to study for her ordination as a Rabbinic Pastor in this spiritual approach. It also informs her psychotherapy practice.

Barbara (Basha) Hirschfeld has been a student of Buddhism for over 25 years, and of Judaism all her life. She is one of a few lucky students of Ani Pema Chodron and through her of the Shambhala lineage, as first taught by Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche. She teaches meditation in the North Bay at various venues and owns and runs a retreat space in west Sonoma County called "Open Sky Retreat Space." Her favorite thing is to bring together the two wisdom traditions, and to explore how her Buddhist training can inform her Jewish faith.

Jeremiah: Exile, Prophet, Poet

Mondays November 30th and December 2nd at Noon PST (dates to be confirmed)

Facilitated by Ari Hilton

Have you ever wanted to learn more about the Prophets in Judaism? Those brave souls who listened to G-d's words warning our ancestors of what could come if they strayed from their practices. When and where did they live? How did they deal with it all? And why did they keep proclaiming when it was a dangerous job, to say the least? One answer might be for Hope and a Future. Here's a chance to explore the historical context and the modern meanings of one of our most known Prophets, Jeremiah. Even though he lived and wrote more than 2,500 years ago, his words bring depth to our modern Jewish experience and practice. We'll spend 2 sessions exploring his world, his words, and even his scribe. Join us on a journey into our past that is also one into the future.

Ari Hilton is a speaker, writer, and Biblical scholar. He creates and teaches religious education curricula (Jewish, Christian, and Interfaith traditions), teaches about LGBTQIQA+ issues in undergraduate settings, and serves as an Interfaith lay chaplain. Ari holds a Master's of Theology and Ethics from Bangor Theological Seminary. He has extensive training in Christian history, theology, and practice which offers a unique perspective in Jewish learning. Being an openly transgender/Queer person contributes immensely to an expansive and radically inclusive teaching and understanding of the Torah.



Speaking About Death

Facilitated by Sharon Ziff with with guest speakers Reb Ari Hilton and Reb Judith Goleman.

Sharon Ziff's coursework on death returns in 2021. The focus for this class will be on Jewish beliefs on what happens after you die.

The Cosmic Tree of Life

A teaching by Shoshana Fershtman in honor of Tu Bish'vat: The New Year of the Trees.

And More!

Every January there is a Beit Midrash Brainstorming Session to plan for programming in the coming year (usually on a Monday evening). Do you have an idea for a class? Please e-mail Barbara Lesch McCaffry, the Beit Midrash maven, if you would like to join us or suggest something at mccaffry@sonoma.edu.

Please consult the weekly e-blasts and the calendar of events at NerShalom.org for details regarding upcoming Beit Midrash offerings via Zoom with links to registration for each of these classes.



Proudly Introducing

The Ner Shalom Garden

It's finally a reality! In June, Vice President Amy Schiff and Administrative Assistant Paige Hotchkiss-Needleman spear-headed the garden project. Now, three beds boast numerous crops from kale to lemon verbena. Congregants have already received bounty from this marvelous organic operation. With a new grant from the Interfaith Sustainable Food Collaborative, we will soon organize a work party to build a fourth bed. Questions? Suggestions for the Fall/Winter crop? Want some produce for yourself? Contact Amy at amyschiff757@gmail.com or reach out to Paige in the office at paige@nershalom.org.



congregation נר שלום
ner shalom



Learn more about our spirited Congregation at www.nershalom.org.

There, you will find information about our Tzedek social justice program, Good Shabbos Band recordings on SoundCloud, links to register for Beit Midrash, the link to sign up for the weekly newsletter eBlast and the donate button.

Thank you for choosing to spend your High Holy Days with us.

L'Shana Tovah!