

All,

The promise of parsley at Passover is the promise that seeds planted in the Spring will blossom in the summer. I'm grateful to the many congregants who volunteered their time and their expertise to help Shir Tikvah grow this past season. Here are a few highlights.

Thank you to Barry Epstein and the Development Committee for their fundraising in support of John Humleker's retirement party at the end of last month. Join Barry and your friends at a [Great Gathering](#) this summer!

Thank you to Jacob Thiels who, for his Eagle Scout service project, built four wood benches along the Minnehaha-side of our building, sitting on a circle of bricks and mulch. Come have a seat in the shade and admire the view, including the lovely rain garden installed some years ago by our Green Minyan and supported by the Caryl Barnett Vision Fund.

Thank you to the congregant members of the Hiring Committee for their successful work. Please join me in welcoming new Executive Director [Alison Olig](#). Alison returns to the Twin Cities after graduating from the U of M law school some years ago, before she left to start her career as a non-profit executive and stewardship leader.



We're also excited to have our new Finance Manager [Courtney Nguyen](#), who you will also recognize as being one of Sara Lahyani's ace assistants.

I send a *todah rabah* to MJ Gilbert, Steve Greenberg, and the team of talented congregants who are leading music this summer while Rabbi and Noam Lekach-Rosenberg immerse themselves in the wonder of welcoming their first child.

High Holy Days

We will be returning to South Minneapolis for High Holy Days 2019/5779-80, hosted by our friends at [St. Joan of Arc Catholic Community](#). We will use their worship space in the gym, attached to a school on their campus. That gym will be free of christological symbols and holds more than 800 of us. Our leadership team, organized by Sara Lahyani, have been visiting there recently to make sure that we have good sound, good light, and good sightlines. Look for the mailer coming soon!

Co-location exploration updates

As you think about the future of our congregation's building, please add the Minneapolis Park Board's strategic planning to the mix. Our current home will be affected by the [Minnehaha Creek master plan](#) and [Lynnhurst master plan](#). The rec center we use for four classrooms on Sundays is slated for closing—to be replaced, [kitty-corner/catty-corner](#) to us, with a building that might or might not have similar space. The west side of Minnehaha Parkway south of 50th Street might be [closed to cars](#), including the turn-around you might presently use.

To make room for a longer security updates, here's a short summary of current work: A past-due thank you to Rachel Lipkin, who I inadvertently left off my list of members of the [Jewish Identity and Spirituality Working Group](#). We continue to work with lead architect [Paul May](#) at Miller Dunwiddie and our peers at First Universalist to explore the ways in which a shared campus might meet our needs. We have developed a schedule of events through the summer and fall for First Universalist and Shir Tikvah members to get to know each other—look for announcements in the e-news soon. We are working out a statement of legal governance principles to guide future exploration. A short form update is now available in your *siddurim* and [here](#) and I encourage you to give it a read. There's an [updated FAQ](#) up on the website!

As always, feel free to [contact us](#).

Security

Rabbi Latz and I spoke at June 28 on that week's reading, *parshat Korach*. The sermon is available [here](#) and I encourage you to click through as I'll focus on just a portion of it here. To be clear, when I write here using the first person plural, I'm doing so because all of us are part of this covenantal community and all of us contribute to making Shir Tikvah what it is.

We are a congregation whose central narrative and core Jewish value is *hachnasat orchim*—welcoming people. We have built our synagogue to welcome the wandering and the wondering and to create a relevant and animated Jewish life. Even as we see a rise in antisemitism, we know that for members of our community who are women, who are queer, who are trans, who are Jews of Color, who have intersecting identities, the threat of violence has been ever present. Violence against houses of worship is not new and not just Jewish and not just American; we mourn decades of burnt and bombed black churches, violence in Charleston and Virginia Beach, the brutality experienced in New Zealand and Sri Lanka.

It was not part of our strategic plan as a Board or part of the arc of our moral teachings to devote so much of our time and our dollars to security concerns. It is painful to have to do so now.

Many members of Shir Tikvah have shared your concerns about security following the shooting at Tree of Life Congregation in Pittsburgh last October and at the Chabad congregation of Poway this past spring. Your phone calls and emails and letters and personal conversations have been respectful, aching, heart breaking. We have heard many voices. One told us of a

reluctance to attend services without some type of visible security, another decided to forego the last weeks of Sunday school. Some have identified visible and perhaps armed guards as a source of comfort, others have identified *that exact same thing* as a source of disturbance and fear. Holding this painful tension, knowing that any measures we take will for some be an unwelcome compromise, is one of the hardest tasks of leadership—and among the most important.

These commitments frame our efforts here:

1. *Sh'ma Yisrael*: We Listen. We know we are vulnerable and we listen to each other and take each others' fears and concerns seriously, even if we are not able to address them all with equal satisfaction.
2. We recognize that safety and security look different to different people.
3. Our commitment to radical hospitality is, in part, about removing barriers to participation in Jewish life. Because our community is—as Rabbi Lekach-Rosenberg calls us—“gorgeously queer” and seeks to be accountable to our members of color, this process is designed to seek the wisdom and insight of those most often profiled and policed.
4. We are in relationship and in communication with people who are doing this work—such as [JCRC](#), [JCA](#), law enforcement, and [Jews for Racial and Economic Justice](#)—and ensuring safety and security is possible along with holding all our other values.
5. We recognize, as board member Lyonel Norris states so eloquently, that this is a difficult task, knowing that no one will be satisfied with all the manifestations and outcomes of this work, that each of us is tasked with holding some discomfort.

Those are our commitments (so far). We've not disclosed all of the manifestations of those commitments and values put into practice. There are two reasons for that. First, the Safety and Security Committee is hard at work and has yet to finalize the plans they will present to the Board. Second, while we expect that if you look closely you will see new things, much of what makes security effective is most effective when not widely known.

We do know that the energy we need from you as partners in this covenantal community in order to feel safe in our building is going to need to be greater than it has been before. Thank you to leaders [Jeremy Kalin](#), [Joel Zimmerman](#), [Lyonel Norris](#), and [Forrest Yesnes](#), and [our consultant](#), for their work. Thank you to committee members Julie Jacobs, Darla Kashian, Neal Gosman, Tom Cytron-Hysom, and Katie Miller. Thank you, Surene Henderson, former Army medic, for saying “pick me” after hearing the sermon at the end of June. *Everyone*—and particularly those with medical or law enforcement training—is invited to contact the committee to get involved or [Alison](#) to help underwrite. We don't know the resources we have in our congregation if we don't ask.

In hope,
Bruce