

All,

Healthy or wishing to return to health, keeping cool or struggling, hopeful, despondent, energized for change, daunted, or alternating between all of these things as frequently as every few minutes: I see you. As my friend and teacher Rev. Jen Crow at First Universalist has reminded me, we are all in the same storm but we are not all in the same boat. If you are able, perhaps you have chosen to assist both those rescue boats that aid the most vulnerable *and* Shir Tikvah, the spiritual skiff that links you to generations of brave sailors. With that [כְּוָנָה/kavanah](#), consider our Spring Event, which honors service leaders to Shir Tikvah, [supports us financially](#), and shares its proceeds with [Jewish Family and Children's Services of Minneapolis](#) and [Jewish Family Services of St. Paul](#). So, on May 31 at 4 p.m., sail with us on Zoom for the festivities with a very special captain, Sven Sundgaard! (I promise there's only one more nautical metaphor in this letter.)

Building updates

Our building remains shuttered. Rabbi Latz, Alison and I emailed about our first closure on March 12 and on March 24, extended it to May 15. May 15 is nearly upon us and we are going to keep the building closed. At this point, we can't say when we will open for general use. Our [sextant](#) will be sound science and public health, and we are much more likely to follow the guidance of local luminaries like Governor Tim Walz and Commissioner Jan Malcolm than those, uh, people further to the east. Whatever the situation, I know how much comfort I have received from (and I hope we collectively have given) those Shir Tikvah folks who would be homebound even if there were no pandemic or who don't live in Minnesota. Leadership is committed to keeping those connections robust even when we return to in-person worship. I do hope that you have been joining us for Zoom worship, Zoom meditation, Zoom adult learning... There are opportunities in every week's e-news (now on Mondays).

Also, the Board has put a pause on looking at our space or other spaces as we consider our facilities needs. There simply isn't bandwidth for this work right now and it has become, unfortunately, a little less pressing.

Annual Meeting

Thank you to the 291 of you who voted "yes" to allow us to have this annual meeting online. Shir Tikvah's Annual Meeting, which will be held on [Sunday, June 14, 2020 at 10:00 am on Zoom](#). You received the formal notice and Board slate on April 29. **We need** 110 members to log in, or 56 households, so please put this on your calendar and plan to join us.

The work we did with our by-laws to allow the Annual Meeting to happen remotely was necessarily narrow. In doing it, however, we came across a number of things that should perhaps be considered by the congregation, to update our bylaws to our current times and commitments, and to make sure they

reflect current law. Thank you to Amy Funk, Howard Orenstein, Lillie Benowitz, and a small to-be-determined task force for looking into this. All by-laws changes have to be approved by the congregation so we will keep you posted!

High Holy Days

This is the time of year when our Rabbis and staff begin to plan the High Holy Days. This year, there is uncertainty around the logistics as never before, but I can make the following commitment: Shir Tikvah will, as always, provide meaningful, inspiring, participatory, intellectual, and emotionally real Jewish observance for the High Holy Days.

Our evolving youth and family education program

At the end of April, the Ann Kaner-Roth (z"l) Fund supported a lecture by [Rabbi Benay Lappe](#) of [Svara](#), "a traditionally radical yeshiva dedicated to the serious study of Talmud through the lens of queer experiences." The lecture was delivered to the Education Dream and Design Team, who emailed you some [exciting announcements](#) about their work at the end of April, to the STiFTY Board, and to the Board. I hope you have been following the Dream and Design Team's work about their proposed new vision statement for Shir Tikvah's education programs. Thank you to Dana Bennis and Melissa Machovsky (co-chairs on the project) and Forrest Yesnes for their leadership. Below: Rabbi Lappe and some familiar Zoom students! Here's a [link](#) to an engaging (and shorter) version of some of the teachings she shared.



Racial Justice Task Force

Marra Gad, a film and television producer, and the author of [*The Color of Love: A Story of a Mixed-Race Jewish Girl*](#), wrote last week for [Tablet](#) about her recent experience attending the URJ's Biennial. Her [Tablet column](#) is a distressing and worthwhile read about persistent and explicit racism in our community. We need to do better and for those of us who aren't Jews of color, it should start with awareness and empathy. (You can order the book at your local independent bookseller as well as through the Amazon link there; I'm adding it to my bedside table.) To gauge how well Shir Tikvah is doing in creating awareness and action toward racial justice in our congregation, Shir Tikvah's Racial Justice Task Force has launched an [assessment](#) and extended until the end of the month the deadline for filling it out. I encourage you to take the [assessment](#), to wrestle with it, and also to reach out to leaders Tamar Ghidalia, Jim Rubenstein, Gayle Zoffer, or Rabbi Lekach-Rosenberg with questions about or comments on the survey.

In our continuing COVID appreciation series, a special thank-you to mask-sewers Kat Gordon, Anne Lawson, Elai Gurfein, and Tricia Cornell, health care worker Joel Albers, and infrastructure workers Alexa Kircher Fang and Jacob Heinrich.

In hope,

Bruce

Shir Tikvah

