

All,

The Book of Job reminds us that snow is one manifestation of God's ineffable might: "God's voice thunders in marvelous ways; God does great things beyond our understanding. God says to the snow, 'Fall on the earth,' and to the rain shower, 'Be a mighty downpour.'" (Job, 37:5, 6.) Note that snow is not one of Job's official tests.

The prophet Isaiah sees how snowfall sustains us: "The rain and snow fall from the sky and do not return, but instead water the earth and make it produce and yield crops, and provide seed for the planter and food for those who must eat." (Isaiah 55:10.) We've since learned more about the [water cycle](#); the water returns to the heavens.

We have reached the season of snow and with it, Shir Tikvah has a request of you.

A request: build our community

When we think about our security mantra of being warm, welcoming and safe, our volunteer and professional team has identified that among the greatest risks of injury in and around our building comes from snow and icy sidewalks on Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays.

If there's snow fall late on a Wednesday afternoon or on a Friday, or a Saturday morning, or Saturday night into Sunday morning, or- you get the point. Our staff has done their best to have snow removal work that will manage our walks before our heavy-use time arrives but it is, so to speak, tough sledding. Executive Director Alison Olig has looked at hiring someone to handle snow on short-notice for these times but the more certain getting someone at a very specific time becomes- and no one will promise that it happens exactly when we most need it- the more expensive the work gets.

Here's the thing though: many of you come to Shir Tikvah yourselves on Wednesday afternoons, Friday evenings, Saturday mornings, and Sunday mornings. Is there among you a few who might be willing to answer Alison's call and commit to arriving 20 minutes earlier on an as-needed basis to pick up a snow shovel/run the snow blower and spread some ice-melt? **You** raising your hand to do this work as needed is both certain and cost effective. Perhaps more importantly, however, it is an act of creating the community, a moment of participation in our covenant. Please drop [Alison](#) a note saying "[yes, yes, we can.](#)"



A builder of the community

One way Jacob Andrews chooses to express his deep gratitude for Shir Tikvah is to offer his particular skills and tools. Jacob is a repairer of wood. He had some free time between paid gigs and came to touch up all the places where our wood gets worn down by contact with furniture, random dings, etc. As I told Jacob when I stumbled on him doing this work, scratched wood is one of those things I had noticed and which negatively contributed at a low level to my aesthetic reaction to the place, and his newly repaired wood is one of those things I might not have been able to identify as causing a small boost in my sense of the building. But now that his work was revealed to me, the repairs make me so happy. See for yourself next time you're in the building and thank you, Jacob, for *hidur mitzvah*, the mitzvah of making beautiful and maintaining our house of worship and study.

I posited at erev Rosh Hashanah that “Shir Tikvah is only what you commit to making it and only what you commit to making it each time you gather with others from and of Shir Tikvah.” What can you help make Shir Tikvah today? If you’ve got a skill that our community might need and you’re willing to volunteer your time, could you drop [Alison](#) a note? Not sure what to do right now but feel the urge to do something? Here’s the link to our page for [Give to the Max](#), which lands November 14 (although you can make your gift sooner).

Facilities update

In November 2016, the board chartered the Facilities Assessment Group. That committee produced a report in August 2017. From then until August 2018, the board pursued three tracks simultaneously—leasing/buying, remodeling, and partnering. From August 2018 to September 2019, we invested time and money in a deep exploration of a shared campus with First Universalist at 3400 Dupont. You can trace it all [here](#). Having just concluded the third year on this big strategic question, I can say with certainty that we have learned a great deal. Our expanded knowledge base will help us move faster and more deliberately—ask better and more informed questions, with a greater understanding of our needs and wants—as we continue to work on the challenges of our building. We are continuing to explore leasing and buying and partnering. I hope that we have established transparency and congregational engagement and we will continue to hold up those commitments in this work.

A Shir Tikvah Museum

We are inviting folks to temporarily display, perhaps for a month, a piece of their own Judaica, a story about it, and a photo of themselves or their family. Through this project, which will go into a new secured cabinet in the *oneg* hall, we hope to learn more about each other and the breadth of our beautiful stuff! Thank you to Gay Grieter, Rachel Orzoff and Claude Reidel for their leadership of this new committee. If you’d like to learn more or participate, contact chair [Rachel](#).

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

In hope,
Bruce

