

All,

We are about halfway through the Hebrew month of *Elul*, leading us to the Days of Awe. The Hebrew letters for *Elul* are *aleph*, *lamed*, *vav* and *lamed*. From the [Song of Songs](#) (and/or from most every Jewish wedding), you may know *ani l'dodi v'dodi li*, the poetic phrase “I am my beloved’s and my beloved is mine,” which begins with the same four Hebrew letters. Think of this then as a month of loving and being loved, for we have a lot of love to give and we all need a lot of love right now.

Our tradition instructs us to send that love internally and externally. We need to be kind to ourselves because the great reckoning of the *Kol Nidre* confessional prayer (the [viddui](#)) is coming and it might be best to enter that work from a place of strength and openness. The internal spiritual arc of the High Holy Days, our passage from error and transgression to another chance—to make amends and to do better—requires us to engage the world, to improve ourselves in how we relate to others. *Elul* is thus also a month to start sending our love outward, to seek change in the world as we seek to change ourselves.

Find all the things about Shir Tikvah’s High Holy Days at our bespoke, artisanal, locally sourced, organic, new and limited edition website, [here](#). There, you can learn about the near-daily events, the regular classes, the service work, all of the things that our staff and rabbis, with help from many lay leaders, have planned for us for the next six weeks. You can also find the place to submit names for [Yizkor](#)/remembrance and to make donations to support Shir Tikvah.

One of the *Elul* events is a limited in-person gathering, to blow/listen to the shofar in various parks around Minneapolis. You can find Shir Tikvah on Sunday, September 6th at Folwell Park and Sunday and September 13th at Lake Nokomis Park at Derby Avenue, both days starting at 4 pm sharp. Before you go, here are our [physical distancing guidelines](#). Enjoy these photos from our last gathering at Wabun Picnic Grounds (thank you, Raena Davison, Assistant Director of Youth & Family Education):



Population study!

Throughout 2019, the Minneapolis and St. Paul Jewish Federations, in partnership with Brandeis University's Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, conducted a study of members of the Jewish community in the Twin Cities. This is the first population study in 15 years. You can find a press release announcing the release of the recently completed study [here](#), or you can read the study itself [here](#). There are many interesting findings to be gleaned, from geography, Jewish engagement, views on Israel and many other topics.

Here are a few facts to entice you to read more. The Jewish population of the Twin Cities has increased since 2004 and is estimated now to be about 64,000. Almost 70% of Jewish adults here have a college degree and 46% have a graduate degree. Intermarriage is a significant driver in the growth of Jewish households (34,500 households). Seven percent of households include a person of color and nine percent include a person who identifies as LGBTQ. Thirty percent of Jewish households do not have three months of savings, more than a third of households with pre-college kids are anxious about financing college, and nearly 1/3rd are not confident in their ability to support themselves in retirement. Please, dive into the study and see your community.

Mazal Tov/Todah Rabah

Congratulations and thank you to Rabbi Rappaport for her service to this broad Jewish community. Starting this month, Rabbi Rappaport is serving as a rabbinical representative on the board of the Minneapolis Jewish Federation. She is also now the Chair Elect at the [Minnesota Rabbinical Association](#), a forum for rabbis to confer about community issues and facilitate cooperative programs among congregations and agencies. I know that she will bring insight and compassion to her coming years of volunteer service for each of these organizations.

Thank you, again

I'm pleased to announce that we have received additional support from the Minneapolis Jewish Federation. On behalf of Shir Tikvah, I thank the Federation for the \$16,300 grant to help us cover our extended Zoom license, our High Holy Days technical production support, and several months of an as-yet-unhired part-time manager for our Zoom work. On behalf of the congregation, thank you to Executive Director Alison Olig for drafting the grant request. And thank you to you, members of our congregation, for your continued support of Shir Tikvah. While we very much need and appreciate the Federation's support, it is "[viewers like you](#)" who really build and maintain Shir Tikvah.

A reminder

Our building [remains closed](#). In this pandemic, our hearts ache over how isolation and loneliness are also contagious and sometimes become (or exacerbate) mental illness. If you are concerned about your or a loved one's mental health, please consider reaching out to [Jewish Family and Children's Services](#) (in Minneapolis), [Jewish Family Services](#) (in St. Paul), [NAMI-MN](#), or call the national suicide prevention hotline for immediate support at 1-800-273-TALK.

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

Bruce

