

All,

I love this picture-in-words Dave Snyder (Board member, confirmation teacher, one of Shir Tikvah's earliest b'nei mitzvah kids, current bar mitzvah parent) posted on Facebook this past week:

Sometimes I am so overcome with emotion, while celebrating Shabbat at Shir Tikvah, I can only whisper the words of prayer as my eyes well up. Immense emotion, joy and beyond joy, the ocean that contains joy like a current among many. Last Friday it happened three times: watching Jessica Wicks overcoming such pain to join us and hold the Kiddush cup... hearing Nora Cornell's powerful *d'var* calling us to pause over how we diminish our joy over the suffering of our "enemies," and calling for mass resistance to the Pharaoh of the day (Nora, my former confirmation student, who walked with me through the streets of Hebron, our hearts breaking, with the Shir Tikvah delegation last spring!)... and the blessing we lifted up to Jayce Koester and Jordyn Rachel Whitman, as they prepare for interviews for Rabbinical school, to add their energies and insights to help shape our Judaism, and lead our people in new ways for the next 50 years. My voice reduced to a whisper, and still our voices and harmonies swelled and rose louder and fuller than I can recall ever hearing us before. In the darkness, such a light. Thank you, little Shul.

The Shabbat Dave [rhapsodizes](#) about also included some fifty guest members of the North American Federation of Temple Youth (NFTY), hosted at Shir Tikvah by our youth group, STiFTY, ably supported by Forrest Yesnes, our Director of Youth Education and Programming. And the next Shabbat? Well, our amazing lay song-leaders and three rabbis played to a full house of about 300 and guest speaker [Eric Ward](#) taught us some deep Torah about our current moment, antisemitism and allyship. And this week's Shabbat? Our 30-member choir, directed by Aaron Kapaun and accompanied by Eric Brook, will sing a program honoring those murdered at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, with teaching leadership from STiFTY. "Thank you, little Shul," indeed.

I couldn't be more proud of the work we do. Where is Shir Tikvah moving you today? Do you have words I should share with our larger community? [Email](#) me!

Two things to do:

There will be three [Congregational Meetings on Safety & Security](#), each one identical in structure. Come study, listen, learn, and be heard. The meetings are Sunday, February 9 from 9:30-11 am, Thursday, February 13 from 5-6:30 pm and Tuesday, February 25 from 7:30-9 am. Please RSVP to one of them [here](#).

Join the Shir Tikvah Racial Justice Task Force for the launch of its Racial Justice Video and Book Club. The group will start with a viewing and discussion of *Race: Power of an Illusion*. Learn some history, have an opportunity to chat, improve your ability to talk about the concept of race and its consequences. Tuesday, Feb. 25, Tuesday, March 3, & Tuesday, March 17. 7:00-9:00 p.m. Wolfe Lake Condominiums in St. Louis Park. Sign up [here](#) and find more information on this incredible film series [here](#).

One thing to move from “I’m thinking about it” to “I’m doing it”:

Maybe you’d like to show off some of your Judaica, explain your family history, or share a personal story of your Judaism? Maybe you’ve been thinking about contributing to the congregant-driven and congregant-curated museum space in our *oneg* hall? 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 [Gay](#).

Two things to think about, and maybe even do without further prompting:

Have you tried Thursday morning *minyan*? It is part prayer, part study, and it is always full of engaging conversations. One of the Board’s themes for the year is deepening our collective understanding that we each make the *minyan*, we are each the tenth person who makes our worship and work in the world possible. Thursdays at 7:45 to 8:45 am.

Purim is March 9 and there will be a *Megillah* celebration. Adults who act, who want to act, who once acted, well, all roles must be cast! [Sign up here](#). Who knows where it might take you?

Two things to ponder:

The Citizen Advisory Committee working with the parklands along Minnehaha Creek continues its work. The current (January 2020) proposal for our corner of the world no longer includes blocking car traffic on the Parkway. You will see on page 3 of [this link](#) that the current community center is eliminated, along with the turn-around many of us use as a waiting area or to get going the right direction after a Religious School drop-off. There’s a proposal for a new building kitty-corner from *shul*. Details on the new building are not being worked on now. This is a reminder that we could lose many of the classrooms we currently rent and will need to find a new solution as long as we continue to run our education programs the way we do now.

A friend, a former [kibbutznik](#), joined my family for worship with Eric Ward this past week. Among the many positive things she shared was how pleasing it was to be in a space where community seemed warm and open, where songs flowed easily into and out of rounds, and where people raised their hands to show empty seats next to them. It felt, she said, just like the services of her youth. I’m always happy to hear Shir Tikvah praised. But I also wonder, based on the same Friday night experience, what is the meaning of our radical hospitality, our point of pride, when someone is asked when they converted or if they’re Jewish? When a woman with a cane struggles up the stairs to the sanctuary? When we assume “the custodian will take care of it” and leave scattered plates and cups in the *oneg* hall and the sanctuary? We are defined in many ways by the Shir Tikvah shuffle. We take the life of this community into our own hands. How can we extend that care to how we notice one another, and the responsibility each of us has to protect this loving, gentle, fierce community? I would love to hear what you think.

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

In hope,

Bruce