

All,

We are in the month of *Elul*, the month of preparation for the High Holy Days. The poet [Dane Kuttler](#) writes “Shofar: the great calling, awakening. A summons: the time is now. The place is here. Every day, a blessing. Every day, the call. Every day, a mirror. Every day, a window.” This month we prepare to connect with the past thousands of years of ritual, the past year of our deeds, hopes, and shortcomings, **and** with the present—the community that we make that also holds us, the *shir tikvah* (“song of hope”) we sing together. Every day this month, we look in the mirror at ourselves and commit to doing more of the sacred for ourselves; every day this month, we look out the window at the world and commit to doing more of the sacred for others. Come, let Shir Tikvah be the vessel for that work.

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](#). A warm *todah rabah* to our Rabbis and staff, particularly Sara Lahyani, for their work in making that space a warm and welcoming place for our worship. Thank you as well to our greeter and usher volunteers who remind us with their presence that Shir Tikvah can be anywhere we come together. And a thank you to the Safety and Security Committee and *shomrim* volunteers for the ways in which they have stepped up to the challenges the world puts before us. An update on our security plans was sent out by email to members on August 22. [Email me](#) or [Nikolina Erickson-Gunther](#) if you’d like to see it anew. If you wish, join us after Shabbat on September 20 for a listening circle, a safe space to share what our security situation might stir up for you. This will not be the place to offer suggestions or modifications to the High Holy Day plans, but to move through feelings. We are also interested in future improvements both spiritual and practical.

My last few letters to you have included a heavy emphasis on security at the High Holy Days and I hope that you have reached whatever that equilibrium is for you between vigilance and peace so that you may fully enter this great spiritual season. Our website has information on the [many adult education programs](#) and the [worship schedule](#) for the next few weeks—check it out and see where it takes you!

Facilities updates

Just last week, you received the news that our discernment period about potential co-location at 3400 Dupont has ended. You can find that letter, from clergy and lay leaders at both First Universalist and Shir Tikvah, [here](#). I am saddened by this turn of events. The vision we were developing with First U about what a shared campus could mean for the world we live in and for the future of our own congregation was compelling, and saying good-bye to it is tough. Internally, the Board will look to absorb what we have learned about Shir Tikvah’s needs and potential. I am pleased to report that we will be partnering with First U on racial justice work in the next few months—watch this space and your e-news for updates. As I wrote you back in [December 2018](#), “We might succeed at this work and, as a congregation,

decide to embrace co-location. We might not succeed, in which case we will go back to the drawing board, so to speak, to continue our efforts to resolve the meaningful shortcomings of our current facility.” To the drawing board!

Board updates

I want to thank John Walthour for his board service, which he recently elected to conclude. I have appointed Dave Snyder to fill out John’s term, with hearty enthusiasm from the board. Dave’s mother, Rhona Liebel, was a founder of our synagogue. Dave was Shir Tikvah’s first bar mitzvah. And Dave’s eldest will be become *bar mitzvah* this spring. We are so glad to have Dave, his history, and his [Jewish Community Action](#)-organizer’s energy on the board.

The board held a retreat at the end of August. Here’s a photo of board members Bonnie Westlin and Eli Kramer. The snapshot captures some things I love about Shir Tikvah: two smart people I admire greatly, in conversation about how to serve the synagogue and community they love, on benches built and donated by a young congregant (Jacob Thiegs) for an Eagle Scout service project, under a lush late-summer tree canopy, in front of a building that houses many wonderful memories.



At the retreat, each [board member](#) told a personal “Shir Tikvah story.” Together, we worked on deepening our understanding of how our mission to be a radically hospitable community reveling in Torah and how our three long-standing and ongoing priorities—racial justice, facilities, lifelong learning—can be made ever more present.

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

In hope,
Bruce



