

All,

It was after leaving Egypt, the narrow-place, [mitzrayim](#), that the real work of liberation began, the work of building a more just nation than the one that had been left behind. With the Electors meeting next week (on December 14), our work to create a just and whole world—work which has never stopped, work which we cannot abandon, and work which we won't be able to finish—begins again.

Continued Building Closure

It is with sadness, but with continued confidence that we have made the right decision, that I report that the Board has unanimously accepted the recommendation from Rabbi Latz, Alison Olig and me to keep the building closed through May 31, 2021. Of course, we will open the building sooner if public health conditions, including, [im yirtzeh hashem](#), availability and use of a vaccine, permit. This closure will take us past the one-year anniversary of our shuttering of our building and that is a heavy feeling. Our rabbis are already at work creating thoughtful programming to mark that moment and to look forward to our inevitable return to in-person worship. 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.

Chanukah!

You, members, will soon be receiving a "Lat-Kit" (a neologism of latke and kit) from Shir Tikvah! Thank you to Sara Lahyani for organizing this project. In the next few days, check your doorstep or your mailbox for candles, dreidels, gelt, a recipe, copies of the relevant prayers, a game, a list of charitable organizations to consider supporting, and love from your Shir Tikvah family.

Caring Community Committee

While we remain physically distant, many hands continue to work to keep our community stitched together. The Caring Community Committee, which provides a wide-range of member-to-member support, needs volunteers. Please contact [Rondi Atkin](#) or [Caroline Schultz](#). For many of us, giving to others is a way to give to ourselves. Please consider volunteering!

Jewish Academy for Moral Imagination

As those of you with school-aged people in your house know, Shir Tikvah re-designed and re-launched our supplemental education program. Even in COVID-times, enrollment remains very strong. Barry Epstein, who has taught at Shir Tikvah for decades, wrote to share these thoughts: "The curriculum that the Jewish Academy for Moral Imagination (JAMI) team put together is incredible. It has made me reassess what is important for ST to teach our youth. Having the time and the framework to explore Jewish values really represents what is so special about our Congregation. And the kids are drawn to this curriculum. My 6th and 7th grade class is engaged and interacting in ways that I have not previously seen. This is particularly amazing

since all of the classes are online. Forrest Yesnes and Cindy Reich (the Academy's consultant) have done an incredible job in supporting the teachers. [Yasher koach](#) to Forrest, Dana Bennis, Melissa Machovsky and the Lay Committee for their incredible work. And words cannot express my admiration for our visionary Head Rabbi for making this hope into a reality."

We also thank the Louis Herman Memorial Fund, a designated fund of the Jewish Community Foundation of the Minneapolis Jewish Federation, for their \$20,000 grant in support of this program. My kids are both past the age of Hebrew/religious school and my outsider's perspective is that Shir Tikvah has now launched the bold work of moving past my generation's (and my parent's generation, and their parent's generation, *l'dor v'dor*) generally negative experience of supplemental school to something that nurtures and expands our children's experience of Judaism.

Meet Shir Tikvah, in Israel

[Beit Hatfusot](#), the Museum of the Jewish People in Tel Aviv, has a new exhibit called Com.unity, which introduces congregations from all over the world. Components of the exhibit are available online. You can see Shir Tikvah [here](#). Thank you to Nikolina, who manages our photos, and Tricia Cornell for the text.

Rabbi Latz's Sabbatical

Our contractual commitment to Rabbi Latz includes supporting a sabbatical. He is taking the first bit of that time from January 1 to February 14, 2021. Rabbi Lekach-Rosenberg and Rabbi Rappaport will embrace and keep us as they always do, and the Rabbis have worked out among themselves how to share and manage work. You should not expect to hear from Rabbi Latz while he is on sabbatical.

Meet some members!

We miss each other, we miss the opportunities to get to know each other in easy ways, and many of us don't know many of us. To that end, allow me to introduce a few congregants. Every month, I will send a few bios and photos, provided that you [email me](#) a blurb and a photo?



Harry Adler (he/him) and his wife Leslie Adler (she/her) have been members of Shir Tikvah since 2017. Their arms reach wide to embrace their son Isaac and his wife Claire in Brooklyn, and to Wellington, New Zealand where daughter Maya lives with her partner, Koryn. Harry is a retired educator who loves researching genealogy, cooking, reading, and working on social justice issues. Leslie is a psychologist who, with her sister, wrote a nonfiction book about Jewish women in the USSR, [Jewish Luck](#). Their corgis (Tobias and Steve!) love coming to Friday Zoom services especially when there are barkout (breakout) rooms.



Noreen Fisher (she/her) has always been known as Beanie. She writes “My husband, Mike, and I left the Twin Cities twice, first in 1967 for five years, returning here for the birth of our children, Annie and Alex. In 1998, Mike retired and we moved to Sanibel Island. He died in 2002 and I moved back to be near family. I love my children and their spouses, and I am blessed to have three wonderful grandchildren who make me happy every day. I chose to join Shir Tikvah because I needed a new beginning. I connected with Rabbi Offner immediately and was not sure what to do when she decided to leave. I thought it was rude to leave a synagogue when a ‘new’ rabbi was coming so I thought I would give it a year. Well, you know the rest of the story. That ‘new Rabbi’ is why I am here. I knew I had found my home in Shir Tikvah where I would feel included, loved, and my spiritual needs were understood and taken care of. I found a place where all people were accepted and important as the next person.”



“Hello, we are Jess Rochester (she/her), Renae Youngs (she/her), and Stella (tbd). We’ve been members of Shir Tikvah since the spring of 2017 and had been casually attending services and programming for a few years before that. We were part of the influx of new members after the 2016 election. We are an interfaith couple and were drawn to Shir Tikvah as much as for what we were avoiding in a congregation as for what we were seeking — a place to join together with others, engage in social justice, and have a place for both our joy and sadness in this world. Jess works in public health and hunger relief and Renae in program evaluation. Stella is really into the swings at the park and markers. Besides work and keeping up with the kiddo, we’re avid gardeners, cooks, and dog parents to our rescue dog, Fred Rogers. We love seeing all your faces on Zoom and learning and singing together.”

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

Bruce

