

All,

In perhaps my favorite Hasidic story, a rabbi challenged his students to tell him when night ended and day began. After several sensible but rejected answers, the students pleaded, “Please tell us the answer. How should one determine when night has ended and day begun?” The rabbi responded “It is when you look into the face of a stranger and see your sister or brother. Until then, night is still with us.” By that measure and metaphor, we are still deep in the night. But in the physical world right now, each day, there’s a little more dawn and a little more dusk. [Light is returning](#). This neat [time table](#) will show you all that you are gaining in sunshine. Let us use this light to strengthen our work to see all the siblings among us.

Please consider applying for the Board, or encouraging someone else to, by Feb. 28!

As a Board, we want to be more transparent and inclusive in how we select future board members—and create clearer pathways into congregational leadership and work, such as serving on committees. To do this, we are opening up a short [application](#) form for Board service to help the Nominations Committee select people for the three Board openings this year. If you are interested in bringing your skills, expertise, and experience to help lead the congregation, we encourage you (or encourage you to encourage another member you think would be great) to complete the short application form by February 28th. This will put your name on the Nominations Committee’s radar. From there, the committee will review applications, conduct interviews, and select people to propose to the Board to fill the current openings. At the remote annual meeting (see next paragraph), the congregation will elect its new board members. We hope that this process will not only create access to board service, but also allow for those interested in serving our community in a more robust way to be connected with deeper engagement opportunities. Please email [Bonnie Westlin](#) and [Jeff Danovsky](#), the Nominations Committee Chairs, with questions.

We need your approval for a remote annual meeting

It seems unlikely that we will *all* be able to gather for our annual meeting. Our bylaws do not permit us to conduct an annual meeting remotely. We went through this change last year but last year’s change was only for 2020. So, we’re going to need your approval to hold a remote (or mixed) annual meeting for 2021. Please watch your email in the coming weeks for the ballot supporting a bylaws change to allow a remote annual meeting and related information. The annual meeting, however it happens, will include a year-end summary, a presentation of next year’s budget, and voting for this coming fiscal year’s officers and trustees.

Amended and restated bylaws

As shared at the 2020 Annual Meeting and in last month’s letter, the Board is in the process of finalizing amended and restated bylaws to propose to the congregation for approval at the Annual Meeting. The goal of this updating is to reflect and embrace modern technology, reflect the phenomenal growth of our congregation, clear up some inconsistencies in the current bylaws, increase the congregation’s flexibility, and ensure the amended bylaws serve us for the next 30 years, just as our first set has. We believe the proposal you will see also continues to center Shir Tikvah’s values and commitments while also allowing for the smooth operation of our amazing organization.

COVID & the Caring Community Committee

Our Caring Community Committee is working hard through COVID. The Committee has planned virtual get-togethers to keep people connected. Are you interested in participating in or hosting a night of your own? So far there are plans for a

knitting circle, a cookbook project, and a game night. The committee also has the person-power needed for providing meals, making virtual visits, or running errands if you know of someone who could use support, reach out to [Eileen Rosenthal](#), and if you can volunteer, to co-chairs [Rondi Atkin](#) or [Caroline Schultz](#).

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?

Rondi Atkin shares “In 1960, when I was eight, settled in the Jewish community of north Minneapolis, walking distance of Plymouth Avenue, where we did our shopping; Beth El Synagogue, where my parents became active members; and Talmud Torah, where I, my brother, and all our friends went every day after school. I was Bat Mitzvahed and confirmed. On Friday night, my mother lit candles, and my parents went to services. We celebrated holidays at tables filled with close friends and good food. But as an adult, I stopped practicing and moved away from the Jewish community, eager to be part of a larger world. When my dad died in 2013, I wanted to say kaddish for him. I had heard of Shir Tikvah as a progressive, smart congregation and decided to check out their Friday night services. I figured I would go once a month for a year, give a donation, and be on my way. Soon, I was attending weekly, and before the year was over, I had joined, seduced by the spirit of its worship, its mission of Tikkun Olam, and the warmth of its community. I volunteered for the Caring Community and, through delivering meals, visiting the sick, and helping at shivas, formed bonds with many members. I am now the Caring Community co-chair, Shir Tikvah’s official silver polisher, a participant in Torah studies, and a regular at morning minyan and Friday night services. In the rest of my life, I teach writing at Minneapolis College, practice tai chi, cook scrumptious meals for myself, read and write, dance around my living room, and take walks with my twelve-year-old rescue dog, Sadie. I am thankful to my parents who taught me to love Judaism and know they are smiling to see that I have embraced a Jewish practice within a community that embraces me.”



Dara Rudick and Ryan Allen write “Members since 2016, we participated with our parents, Elaine and Jerry Rudick, for years before joining ourselves. We felt the need to connect with an organization committed to the social justice work that we seek to support. It has truly been a blessing to be a part of this loving, amazing congregation with wise and passionate leaders. In a year of much sadness and loss—including Ryan’s mom dying unexpectedly in March, losing an uncle to suicide, and processing the loss and impact of a pandemic, blatant displays of racism, and police brutality particularly toward our communities of color—Shir Tikvah has been a grounding presence in our lives. We’ve attended all but three ‘Shabbat in the Clouds.’ We sing loudly along in our living room, and it is a joy to open the door and share the music and sabbath with our Powderhorn Park neighbors during the *L’cha Dodi*. We love you Shir Tikvah!”



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

Bruce

