From the desk of Ruth Estrich, President of Congregation Shirat Hayam

Strategic Planning. These are two words that generally hold little interest for most people, but not for me! I would be hard pressed to think of two words that have had more of an impact on my current life. I spent the last fifteen years of my career as the Chief Strategy Officer of what became a very successful company – it was that corporate success that allowed me to retire and create a home for myself back on my beloved Marblehead harbor. I would also assert that I would not be the president of Shirat Hayam were it not for strategic planning.

When I say that, it is not for the reasons you may be imagining. I did not have a personal plan that included leadership at a synagogue. In fact, when I first came to the North Shore, I really didn’t have any plans at all. I didn’t know what retirement was going to look like, but I knew I wanted to see if I could create it in my hometown. One of my first actions when I got here was to join CSH. Shortly after meeting Rabbi Michael, I must have told him of my pre-arrival life. He told me about the strategic planning committee at the synagogue and asked if I had the time and interest to sit in on a meeting. I had both. And I’m still going to meetings!

Strategic Planning is generally defined as an organizational activity to identify and prioritize goals, define the actions to meet those goals, set a timeline, mobilize the resources and define a follow-up and reporting process to successfully execute on the plan. The horizon of the plan is usually in the 3-5 year span of time. Exciting, right? The truth is and my many years of experience have shown me that for many people, the process of strategic planning is not very engaging or interesting. It is often more interesting for people to relate to the opposite of strategic planning – to tactical actions. Would you rather go shopping for a new dress or would you like to review your total wardrobe to evaluate the current state of your holdings, identify the gaps, and plot a multi-year strategy to plug the holes?

Shirat Hayam Unveils An Updated Strategic Plan

Dennis Friedman, Rabbi Michael, Cantor Sarah, and board members David Zion, Steve Solomon, Maria Samiljan and Gitte Kushner at the most recent Strategic Planning Committee meeting.

Entrance Policy
At the door, proof of vaccination for anyone 12+ or show a negative test result produced within 72 hours of entry. Thursday 7:30 am minyan, Friday night and Shabbat services are in-person and online. Calendar subject to change. Visit www.shirathayam.org for all links and updates.

Calendar
OCT/NOV 2022

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 1
9:00 am Renewal Service with Rabbi and guest musician Lautaro Mantilla; Traditional Shachat led by Jan Brodie; CJE (grades K-6)
10:00 am Shabbat Shuvah Torah Service (Torah Yoga with Stacie; No Nosh & Drash)
11:15 am Mourner’s Kaddish, Healing and Talk followed by Shabbat Café

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 2
11:00 am Annual Memorial Service at Shirat Hayam Cemetery rear, Peabody, with clergy

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 4
Kol Nidre

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 5
Yom Kippur

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 7
6:00 pm Kabbalat Shabbat at CSH

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 8
9:00 am Renewal with Rabbi, Cantor and guest musician Jeremiah Klaman; Traditional Shachat led by Jan Brodie (No CJE)
9:50 am Torah Service with Bat Mitzvah of Maria Sokolov; Nosh & Drash led by Janis Knight, Torah Yoga with Stacie Nardizzio
11:15 am Mourner’s Kaddish, Healing and Talk followed by Ruach Rally and Shabbat Café

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 9
10:00 am Help build our sukkah (at Shirat Hayam); Open to all. Bring your drills. RSVP to Barn@Shirathayam.org.
6:00 pm Erev Sukkot from CSH (via Zoom)
RABBI’S CORNER

Our Strategic Plan — The Road Map

In the spring of 2015, prior to arriving at Shirat Hayam, I read The Boys in the Boat, the epic true story of the University of Washington rowing crew who won the gold medal at the 1936 Berlin games. One of the key themes to their success was rowing the boat together, as one. I thought this was a great metaphor for successful synagogues and communities: to work together, as one.

At Shirat Hayam this teamwork advanced in the spring of 2017, when Larry Groipen insisted that we initiate a strategic planning process. The consultant we hired, Dennis Friedman, focuses not only on generating the plan, but on the execution of the plan. This piece is essential: all too often, strategic plans at non-profits sit on the shelf, looking great on paper, but failing to achieve their objectives.

This initial strategic plan concluded in April 2020, just as COVID hit. Under the leadership of our current president, Ruth Estrich, we recently completed a new strategic plan that takes us through December 2024.

The existence of a strategic plan has yielded enormous benefits. Major initiatives in the first plan included: Trumot HaLev (our voluntary commitment membership model); the New Wave; Shir Chesed, and other affinity groups. We made internal advances as well, growing our membership by 30 percent and balancing our budget.

Most importantly, however, is how the strategic plan changes our processes. First and foremost, it galvanizes the professional team and the lay leadership to “row the boat together.” With shared goals and initiatives, we work together to advance Shirat Hayam. From my experience, in the absence of a strategic plan, we retreat into our personal silos and work on what we each think is most important. With a strategic plan, we have a destination to row towards together and in sync: an explicit and agreed upon common goal.

A second major benefit is that the strategic planning process helps us identify the most fundamental and essential issues facing the congregation. Then, we develop a plan to address each issue and assign someone to be responsible for its implementation.

Third, the strategic planning process creates accountability. Dennis, our consultant, meets with the team (me, Cantor, Ruth, Steve Solomon, David Zion, Maria Samiljan and Gitte Kushner) every two months. Each of us is responsible for deliverables. This structure creates mutual accountability, which is particularly challenging when dealing with a combination of professionals and lay people.

Lastly, strategic planning makes Shirat Hayam a metric-driven congregation. When we began our work, we discussed what the goals of Shirat Hayam were. I said, “Build community. Touch people's hearts. Bring people closer to God.” But how do you measure that? Now, I’ve come to accept and realize that if every encounter with our congregation leaves you feeling welcomed, connected, and enriched, and, if we’re delivering the most fulfilling spiritual experience and the best childhood and teen education on the North Shore, then people will respond with their feet and their pocketbook. We will retain members, new members will join, and financial contributions will grow. Financial and membership metrics are measurable, and they are also indicative of building community, touching people’s hearts and bringing people closer to God.

In conclusion, I am grateful to Larry Groipen for initiating strategic planning at Shirat Hayam. And, I am grateful to Ruth Estrich for continuing this invaluable process. Strategic planning aligns the professional team and lay leadership to work together to tackle the most pressing and fundamental challenges Shirat Hayam faces. It makes us accountable to each other, maximizing the likelihood of success. It evaluates success qualitatively, not with guess work about how people are feeling or growing in their spiritual practice. Strategic planning makes being the rabbi of Shirat Hayam enjoyable and rewarding, because, like the boys in the boat who won gold by rowing the boat together, we, too, can lead Shirat Hayam to the highest heights.

L’shanah tovah tikateivu v’tehateimu—may you be inscribed and sealed for a good year.

Message from the President

As you read this issue of the New Wave, we should be in the heart of the most sacred period in the Jewish year— the 10 days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. The days of repentance have always been a time of great reflection for me—reviewing my past misdeeds, seeking forgiveness and making promises to myself and others about future behavior. For many, this year has been a bit of a blur. The newness of the pandemic has worn off and yet, the contours of our new realities have grown tiresome and many of us are trying to evaluate the path forward. In so many ways, the importance of our synagouge community has continued to grow as we have returned to being together and as I have personally let go of my prior life elsewhere. In so many ways, you have all opened your arms to me, and so I will include you all in my end of year tradition: “To those I may have wronged, I ask for your forgiveness. For those I may have helped, I wish I could have done more. For the many I neglected to help, I am truly sorry. And to those who helped me, I am deeply grateful.” May we all be written in the Book of Life. May we all find love and joy in the New Year.

Warmly,
Ruth
Cantor’s News

Ready for the High Holy Days?

As the summer comes to a close, I find I am frequently asked this question when I run into congregants, whether it’s at the Shabbat kiddush lunch or at the JCCNS pool with my kids: “Are you ready for the High Holy Days?”

When I reflect on that answer, I marvel at the teamwork it took to get me ready for the holidays last year. I relied upon Rabbi Michael, our professional musicians, former Shirat Hayam cantors, my teachers at ALEPH Ordination Program, my husband Peter, and many more just to be ready musically to stand in front of you on Rosh Hashanah, ready to go. It truly took a village.

This year, when I calmly answer, “Yes,” it is only because of the support and assistance I received as the brand new cantor here last year.

This awareness of working as a team to create a vibrant synagogue experience is what I bring into the High Holy Days of 5783. A new year brings new opportunities to expand this team — our revived Adult Choir and trope classes will empower new people to stand in front of you on Rosh Hashanah, ready to go. It truly took a village. Many blessings,

Cantor Sarah
Strategic Plan
Continued from page 1

Nordstrom’s here we come! The “Hows” of life (e.g., How do I make enough money to be able to afford a BMW convertible?) are often much more compelling for people than the “Whats” (e.g., What do I really need to be happy?).

But for me, I have always been oriented to the big picture. I like connecting the dots. I am often more comfortable looking at things from 10,000 feet than dealing with the actual on-the-ground turn-by-turn directions. Both orientations are important. One is not more important than the other. Yet I maintain that if you don’t first think strategically and thoughtfully evaluate and plot the long term objectives, you will not be assured that you are taking the right steps—your tactical choices will not matter as much because your destination is not going to be optimal (unless you are incredibly lucky—and luck is NOT a good strategy!).

Shirat Hayam has had a Strategic Plan since 2017. Rabbi Michael has been shepherding this effort along with a consultant, Dennis Friedman. Our most recent committee meeting was on September 1 on my deck (see photo including Dennis, Rabbi Michael, Cantor Sarah, and board members David Zion, Steve Solomon, Maria Samiljan and Gitte Kushner). We think it is important for all of you to know what we are up to and how you can help us successfully meet our plan.

Our strategic plan is made up of four components: Our Vision, Our Mission, Our Critical Goal Categories and Our Interim Goals. Our Vision is probably quite familiar to you all: “Shirat Hayam offers multiple pathways to Jewish life, learning and prayer. We will deliver the most fulfilling spiritual experience and the best childhood and teen education on the North Shore. Every encounter with our congregation will leave you feeling welcomed, connected and enriched. We embrace our responsibility to invest in strengthening our Jewish community for generations to come.”

We use these words in many venues—on our website, emails, everywhere we can. It helps to remind us why we are all here doing what we are all doing. It is forward looking or aspirational. It is like the lighthouse in the harbor—it shines a light on who we are, what we stand for, and where we’re going.

Our Mission lays out our overall goals to be met by December 2024. It’s how we measure progress towards achieving our vision, reaching the lighthouse in the faraway harbor. It addresses membership, including our goals for both new members and retention of existing members, our focus on young families and specifically children between the ages of 0-7, and our financial goals to include a balanced budget so that we can reinvest investment interest in our reserves and the establishment of an endowment project to allow for legacy commitments especially from those of us who are of a certain age. I am especially excited about this part of our strategy as it will give me great comfort to know that I can contribute to securing the future of our congregation and our community long after I am gone.

Our Critical Goal Categories identify the key groups of activities which must happen in order for us to achieve our mission goals—things like ensuring that our revenue streams are sufficient to achieve a balanced budget, building the Shirat Hayam brand, driving participation through effective marketing and communication, and creating a culture of participation throughout the congregation.

The final component of our strategic plan are Our Interim Goals, the actual tasks. These by definition are very specific and have target dates and committee member owners who are responsible for organizing the resources and specific tactical efforts required to get the job done. Much of our meetings at this point are spent discussing status, identifying and solving roadblocks, and keeping the individual projects moving. Like any long term project, once you have put in the time to evaluate the marketplace, once you have identified the competition and your internal strengths and weaknesses, and once you have set your priorities and your plan, the heart of the work begins. Marshaullng resources, maintaining enthusiasm, solving problems, creating solutions and keeping all of this going month after month and year after year is the stuff of success. These Interim Goals hold us accountable—to each other and to you.

I remember being in the middle of my career and hearing the story of people who spent years climbing the corporate ladder, only to find out that the ladder they had been climbing had been leaning on the wrong wall. Strategic planning helps to ensure that we as an organization, we as a synagogue, are focused on the right things. It keeps us intentional; it keeps us inspired. And perhaps most importantly, it keeps us accountable—it keeps us moving, together. Each of you can join in. Each of you can contribute to the dream. And each of you can be part of making that dream an ongoing reality. Stay tuned over the High Holy Days to hear more and to think about how you can help us row this wonderful boat of ours called Shirat Hayam!

Becky’s Book Club

Join Becky’s Book Club facilitator and leader, Amy Cohn, for CSH monthly discussions. Named in memory of Becky Shepard z”l, who started the CSH congregational book club and passed away in 2014, the meetings take place on Zoom and are open to the community. The group will discuss The Lincoln Highway by Amor Towles on Oct. 17 (A captivating piece of historical fiction that transports its audience on a rollicking cross-country adventure that is ripe with unforgettable characters, vivid scenery and suspense and keeps readers flying through the pages by the author of A Gentleman from Moscow.)

All meetings start at 7:30 pm after minyan. Live Zoom link is available at shirathayam.org. Go to the Get Involved tab, click Affinity Groups and then click Becky’s Book Club.

UPCOMING...

Nov. 14: Oh William! by Elizabeth Strout
Dec. 12: Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone by JK Rowling
Jan. 9: People Love Dead Jews by Dara Horn
Feb. 13: A Pigeon and A Boy by Meir Shalev (Translated by Evan Fallenberg)
Mar. 13: The Song of the Jade Lily by Kristy Manning
April 17: Crossroads by Jonathan Franzen
May 8: Hidden Valley Road by Robert Kolker
June 12: Crying in H Mart by Michelle Zauner
CJE News

From the desk of Janis Knight, Director, Center for Jewish Education:

Look at all the paint!

We had such a colorful first week of school — we had so much fun making this beautiful picture.

The children painted on this canvas with their hands. This was a group project that allowed us to see the children’s creative side and the colors the children chose.

As the year progresses, we will increase the variety of materials used while repeating loved activities. Through repetition of child led activities and the introduction of new methods and materials the children will learn and grow!

Infant learning in progress!

Our babies are working on their gross motor skills by sitting up and moving their arms to touch the different circles. Feeling different textures in every circle and recognizing different colors of the rainbow as they play. This helps to stay in a sitting position longer while being entertained by the circles.

Sensory play is important for brain development! Infants are in the sensorimotor stage of development and learn through their senses. Touching, tasting, smelling, looking, and listening are infused into infant curriculum each day!

Our babies are off to a great start and we are excited to support their growth this year!

In this picture we are working on gross motor skills by doing tummy time and also fine motor skills by reaching out and touching the many different fabrics on the hoola hoop. Infants can touch and feel different textures, see many different colors and patterns, and listen to the sounds the hoola hoop makes.

Smiles and sensory play!

C JE News

From the desk of Andrea Bernard, Director, Center for Early Education:

Exploring with paint in Toddlerville!

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Smiles and sensory play!

C JE News

From the desk of Janis Knight, Director, Center for Jewish Education:

I recently attended a day-long retreat for Jewish educators made possible by a grant from the Ruderman Family Foundation. The title and purpose: Caring for our Kids, Parents and Ourselves. Our facilitator was Rabbi Melissa Stollman, who helped our community in Parkland, FL find healing after the school shooting. Trained as a rabbi, an educator, and a Jewish communal professional, she provided some great insights.

We talked and thought deeply about the overwhelming circumstances of the last couple of years – the losses, the changes that felt like losses, the pervasive feeling of danger and anxiety, and the sheer exhaustion caused by constantly adapting to new norms. We are still struggling to understand the impact of the rapidly mutating nature of the pandemic and our responses to it.

Reports, anecdotal and data-based, are coming in from Jewish camps, educators, social workers and teen workers.

You may have seen some of the reported effects on people in your own life:

• There is more anxiety and depression;
• People have shorter tempers and act out more;
• Social norms for discourse, public life, and politics have become harsher;
• There has been grief, loss, overwhelm and the goal posts keep changing!

Dr. Betsy Stone, another specialist in trauma and Jewish youth, suggested that we Jews are feeling a particular kind of anxiety. Our strength as the Jewish people has always been the strength of our communities as we stand together against external threats and support each other in bad times and good. We, as CSH, have always felt welcomed into the building and nurtured on Shabbat mornings when we come together to pray, sing, practice yoga, learn, or just have Kiddush together.

But COVID made gathering together a danger and a source of enormous anxiety. We yearned to be together, to hug one another, to laugh and eat together as we always have – to watch the kids run around the social ball dropping bagel crumbs and laughing and playing together. The awful paradigm shift for Shirat Hayam was that our very strength became an internal threat. Thank G-d that we can now gather safely again, support and hug one another, eat and pray and talk together.

But the shadow remains. There is still an anxious air to coming together in large groups. People have more complex feelings when entering the synagogue. We still have boxes of masks and bottles of hand sanitizer out. According to Dr. Stone, the very sight of someone wearing a mask for their own protection can bring up the anxiety and fear we felt at the beginning of the pandemic. That remembered fear and anxiety makes some of us angry – and we turn that anger on each other. And that’s just the adults of our community!

The children have been similarly affected. Their emotional and social learning has gotten thrown off the expected track. Students “seem younger” and “less mature” than we would typically expect. They are more anxious and act out more in search of expected norms and boundaries. Thank goodness for the strength of Jewish community – we’ve got this!

Shabbat gives us a model for regularly stopping and taking a metaphorical breath. We have a place to safely gather in community at the synagogue to see and be seen as people who matter to others. The CJE teachers and I provide the lessons of Social Emotional Learning that children need to function as healthy, resilient people and that are found in the very fabric of Jewish communal life and learning.

The expected norms and routines are being re-established for our children: come to synagogue, eat challah, sing these songs, play with these people, learn from this teacher. We welcome children by name, hear about their activities or pets or families or school day, share excitement, talk about values. This is how we build resilience and emotional strength in children – and how we build a Jewish community.
CONDOLENCES

Our deepest condolences to those who have passed away.

Members:

Rose Arlene Shapiro
August 4, 2022
Wife of Harland Shapiro z”l

Helene Azanow
August 21, 2022

Ruth Turkanis
August 30, 2022
Mother of Barry Turkanis

Relatives of Members:

Dr. Barry Brooks
August 9, 2022
Father of Howard Brooks

BRODY MINYAN FUND

In memory of
Father, Norman Jepsky
from Bob Jepsky

Mother, Marilyn Levy
from Rosanne Jepsky

Brother, Joel Noe
from Stacey Gordon

Father, Al Osattin
from Stuart Osattin

CANTOR’S DISCRETIONARY FUND

In appreciation of Cantor Sarah from Alvah Parker

In honor of Michele Tamaren’s birthday from Nancy Klayman

KIDDUSH FUND

In honor of Attorney Loring Fluke’s special birthday from Janice Levine

CENTER FOR EARLY EDUCATION FUND

In honor of the birth of Sydney Lily Kublin, granddaughter of Phyllis and Alan Bolotin and great niece of Elaine Linsky
In honor of the birth of Sigmund Nathan Andler, grandson of Beth and Marc Andler from Leslie and Bob Ogan

CENTER FOR JEWISH EDUCATION

In memory of Ruth Turkanis from Beverly Kahn

FEINSTEIN SCHOLARSHIP FUND

In memory of
Grandmother, Bella Goldsmith from Joyce Bornstein

GENERAL FUND

In memory of Ruth Turkanis from Marci and Stuart Alperin, Stephanie and Andrew Katz, Harryette Katzen

In memory of Barry Brooks from Caryn and Barry Cohen, Maria and Stephen Williams

In memory of Claire Spielberg, mother of Jay Spielberg from Susan Weiss

In memory of
Father, Nathan Baseman from Deborah Sudenfield

Father, Aaron Reifler from Ellen Reifler

Father, David Messenger from Mark Messenger

MERKEN TALLIT FUND

In memory of
Father-in-law, Harry Merken Friend, Stanley Berliner

RABBI’S DISCRETIONARY FUND

In appreciation of Rabbi Michael from Daniel Rubin, Jay Spielberg

In memory of
Father, Jerry Ogan from Robert Ogan

Husband, Harvey Greif from Ronna Greif

Brother, Leslie Denbo from Samuel Denbo

SHIR LANU

In honor of Michele Tamaren’s special birthday from Devorah Feinbloom-Rosenberg

In memory of
Father, Jacob Dubinsky from Michael Dubinsky

TZEDEK LAKOL - RACIAL JUSTICE INITIATIVE

In memory of
Aunt, Hilda Nowakowski Aunt, Sylvia Babbitt from Ann Pendexter

Mother, Cecelia Raycher

Father, John Raycher from Patricia Kreitzer
Save the Date
Help build our Sukkah

Calling all those who have a hammer or screwdriver and know how to use it...

Join the Men’s Club to help build our Sukkah Sunday, October 9 at 10 am. All are welcome!
Bagels and coffee will be served. Bring your drills!

RSVP to Barri@shirathayam.org

SAVE THE DATE!
Havdalah by the Sea
Saturday, November 5th
Goldthwait Reservation, Marblehead
(Accessible for all, parking is available)

Join us for Havdalah as we end Shabbat and begin the new week together in this uplifting ceremony.
5:30 pm: Light Dinner will be served
6:15 pm: Havdalah Service and Bonfire
Followed by desserts, hot drinks and s'mores

Sponsored by the CSH Membership Committee
Watch for more information.

Simchat Torah
Sunday, October 16
5:30 pm  Dinner
6:00 pm  Ma’ariv (with Kaddish)
6:15 pm  Celebration of the Torah followed by Dessert

Open to all* and for all ages!
Registration for dinner required by October 12
bit.ly/SimchatTorah5783

*COVID policy applies.

How to Make a Donation

To make a donation, please visit shirathayam.org/Donate or mail your donation with a check made out to CSH or Congregation Shirat Hayam. Please specify to which fund your donation should be allocated.
Every issue, the New Wave spotlights congregants as a way to help us get to know each other by putting a face with a name. This month, Pam Fine shares her thoughts about Shirat Hayam and its special, personal meaning.

**What was your childhood synagogue experience like?**

I grew up in Fort Dodge, Iowa, a town of about 25,000 folks in the northwest part of the state. We were 90 miles from any city with a synagogue. Because of that, my grandfather, who owned a clothing store in our town, single-handedly had a small synagogue built to accommodate the 25 Jewish families living in the area.

From time to time, we even had a rabbi. Sadly, they did not stay long, given the small congregation and the low salary. I never learned Hebrew or had the opportunity to be involved in any youth activities through synagogue. I also didn’t have many Jewish friends.

I rarely had the opportunity to attend Sunday school and never had a bat mitzvah until I went to Israel on a Hadassah mission in 2018. There, in the hospital chapel surrounded by the beautiful Chagall windows, several of us on the mission went through a ritual bat mitzvah service. I even have the certificate to prove it!

My father loved to celebrate every holiday known to man, though he and my mother were both born to Jewish parents. From Passover seders to Easter baskets and from a Hanukkah menorah to a white Christmas tree with blue ornaments, he was all-inclusive in his love of celebrations. He was also all-inclusive when it came to people, no matter their religion, race or ideology. He truly believed that charity begins at home, and these values remain ingrained in me and my two sisters.

**Is Shirat similar or different? How?**

I guess you can say that on the surface, CSH is a very different experience from the one of my childhood — or is it? CSH is all-inclusive for anyone who wants to join, and I have found a very warm and welcoming community of members there.

I’ve lived in Lynnfield for five years. During my time here, I visited many temples and synagogues, searching for a place that I would feel at home. Finally, right before the pandemic, I found CSH thanks to my son and Rabbi Michael meeting at their sons’ lacrosse game!

I had an instant connection with Rabbi Michael. He is a MENSCH. I really don’t care for religious leaders who stand at the bima with arms outstretched, waiting for lightning bolts to shoot out their finger tips and talk AT the congregation. Rabbi Michael speaks with us and about us and admits when he doesn’t have all the answers.

**How does your experience with Shirat resonate with you personally?**

Love to cook and bake, so I really enjoy helping prepare or serve the kiddush lunches. I also had fun entering the cheesecake contest last month and hope to enter the next competition and become active in other events.

**What activities do you personally participate in?**

I love attending the Saturday morning Renewal service, learning from the interesting Nosh & Drash speakers and talking with other members. It is so much easier for me to come for a Saturday morning service and I appreciate having more than just a Friday night option.

**Anything you’d like to add?**

I moved to Lynnfield to be close to my son and family. They are a mixed faith marriage and currently do not actively participate in any formal religious organization. We do celebrate the holidays at home, much like when I was a child, with all different holidays.

I’m not really sure how I would define spirituality. I have had moments and experiences where I felt there is definitely a much bigger presence than can be seen with our eyes. Sitting in our sanctuary gives me a sense of peace and calm and well-being. Especially given the state of the world these days, this is enormously valuable for me.

I am so happy to be a part of the Shirat Hayam community!