

About Reconstructionist Judaism

Reconstructionist Judaism is a progressive movement that makes Judaism relevant to contemporary life, emphasizing social action, the arts, and community, while still honoring Jewish tradition. We constantly experiment with new ways of worshipping, studying, and strengthening the community to make our Jewish experience more meaningful.

Our services include many of the same prayers as a Conservative service, but with a more dynamic approach. Like a Reform synagogue, we freely incorporate musical instruments into our services. And we incorporate new music and all of the arts as we explore spirituality.

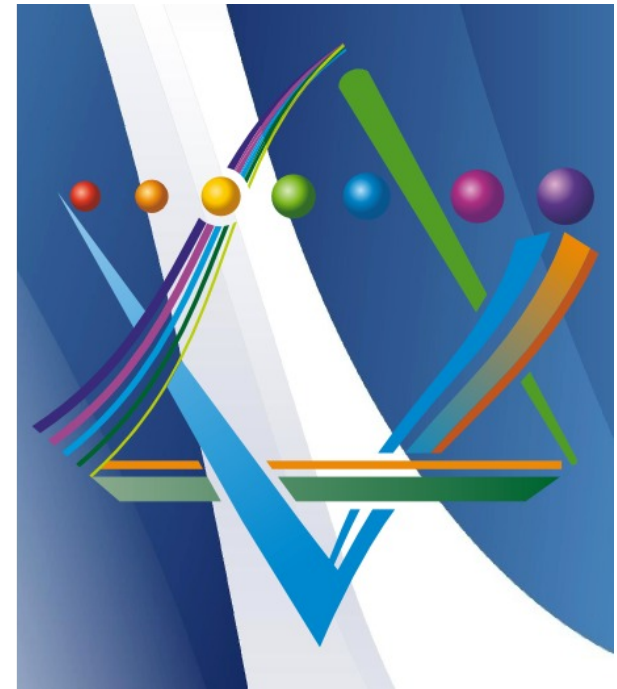
Egalitarian, democratic, welcoming of interfaith families, participatory, innovative, and with diverse ideas about God, Reconstructionist Judaism infuses the wisdom of traditional Judaism with modern sensibilities. You will be amazed at how great it feels to practice Judaism in a way that is meaningful and relevant to your life.



Shir Hadash Founding Rabbi Eitan Weiner-Kaplow embraces the pillars of community, creativity, and caring to enhance the celebration of our Jewish tradition and heritage. He was ordained at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College and holds degrees in social work from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Middle Eastern archaeology from Rutgers University.



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Welcome to Shir Hadash. We are a progressive, inclusive, dynamic Reconstructionist congregation located in Wheeling, Illinois, and serving the Jewish community in the north and northwest suburbs of Chicago. In Hebrew, “Shir Hadash” means A New Song, symbolic of our commitment to celebrating Judaism with meaning and creativity.

Our Rabbi

Founding Rabbi Eitan Weiner-Kaplow brings meaning and music to every Shabbat service, bar or bat mitzvah ceremony, lifecycle event, adult education class, and religious school service. He is extremely accessible and involved in the congregation.



Our Education Director

Geoffrey Prass is guided by the philosophy that experiential education lies at the core of any effective classroom. Geoff has the ability to connect with young people from preschoolers to teenagers. He recognizes the importance of bringing parents into both the school and congregational life, helping form a strong community.

Our Music Director

Music is part of the fabric that makes Shir Hadash a unique and joyous experience. Marek Rachelski is a highly accomplished musician and a resourceful and multi-faceted leader with extensive experience in choral and orchestral preparation and performance. He leads our adult *Lahaka* choir, which performs at numerous services each year and on the High Holidays.

Tikkun Olam

Our community holds annual blood drives, volunteers at local soup kitchens, runs food and coat drives, packs High Holiday food baskets for needy families, and conducts social action through our school and our youth group.

Creative Worship & Ritual

Our services are inclusive, unique, and enriching. We bring creative ways of interpreting Torah stories and lessons. We incorporate contemporary, traditional and original melodies, dramatic skits, and modern and interpretive dance. Performances by our choir, the *Lahaka*, enhance many of our services.

Adult Programming

We offer many adult learning and social activities, including a book club, WISH women's club, MOSH men's club, movie nights, and coffee house open mic nights. Classes include Adult Bar/Bat Mitzvah, Torah Study/Modern Jewish Philosophy, Adult Hebrew Reading, and Introduction to Judaism. We also offer programs on genealogy, travel, history, and current events.



Shir Hadash Religious School

At our Sundays-only religious school, our goal is to teach history, tradition, music, Hebrew, holidays, ethics, culture, Torah, prayer, the State of Israel, and the Holocaust while focusing on making Judaism relevant to today's children. Our cutting-edge curriculum inspires students to care, question, and think deeply about Judaism, the Jewish community and their own personal Jewish identity.

Dynamic B'nai Mitzvah Services

At Shir Hadash, becoming a bar or bat mitzvah allows students to demonstrate their ability to take on the responsibility of community leadership. Each ceremony is unique and personalized according to the skills, interests, learning styles, talents, and abilities of the individual student.

Teen Programming

- Our youth groups offer our teens many social and philanthropic opportunities within the Chicago area.
- Our religious school's "Madrachim" program engages our high school students as teaching assistants. They act as role models, lead small-group activities, and assist individual students.
- The 8th-12th grade "Havayah" Judaic studies program meets on Sundays following religious school and emphasizes leadership training, ethical decision making, technology (coding, app/game design), and arts production (sound and video studio skills). High school seniors engage in a "Senior Seminar" to prepare them for Jewish life on the college campus.