Congregation Shirat Hayam’s Inclusion Initiative fosters a warm, accessible, and sensitive spiritual home for all. Inspired by the Jewish imperative of compassion and justice, we welcome and support children and adults with a wide variety of sensory, physical, learning, and emotional needs. CSH has created an open, inviting synagogue experience for persons of every sexual orientation and gender identity, and provides accommodations to help make our building and services inviting and safe for everyone.

CSH has been recognized as a Ruderman Synagogue Inclusion Project Partner and USCJ-Keshet Leadership Member. This year we are proud to announce that Shir Nefesh was awarded a community grant in the amount of $4,500 to help fund our Mental Health Nosh and Drashes, classes and a Shabbaton which our member, Mimi Nelson Oliver will lead on how Music, Meditation, and Movement can improve mental health. Also, The Ruderman Synagogue Inclusion Project has offered us $2,500 to host an amazing spring concert on May 2nd featuring the Me2Orchestra composed of musicians living with mental illness. Please save the date.

We continue to offer Nosh and Drash programming several times a year. Last year, our own Michele Tamaren kicked off our programming with a Nosh and Drash entitled “Shir Nefesh: Song of the Soul.” In February, JoAnn Simons, CEO of Northeast Arc and one of Boston’s Power 50 by the Boston Business Journal, spoke about “Jewish Life and Disability-Through My Eyes.” In early March, Kendra McDonald from the Samaritans presented a moving and heartfelt discussion on suicide.

Because of the pandemic, our programming came to an abrupt end. In this new year of 5781, we have some amazing programs and Nosh and Drash speakers lined up, and we hope to be able to present them in person, but if necessary, we will meet on Zoom. On October 1, Nutritionist Linda Jean will speak on “A Healthy Food Pantry: How to stock an adequate food supply during a pandemic and beyond.”

We are thrilled to present a 5-week discussion series on Zoom led by Hadassah Margolis, MS, LICSW from October 15-November 12 on Spirituality and Mental Health- A Discussion Series. See the flyer for how to register. Our complete list of
speakers on topics such as racial issues, grief, LGBTQ issues, and autism for the coming year will be published soon. Those of you who have expressed an interest in our Shir Lanu/Shir Nefesh initiative will be contacted in the next few weeks. We invite anyone who would like to join the committees to please call the office.

Shanah Tovah U’Metukah, and please stay well and safe!

Barbara Sidman and Ellen Gordon

Co-chairs of Shir Lanu