



Shoreshim

INFORMATION FOR FOLKS INTERESTED IN SHORESHIM

Welcome! Here is some basic information about Shoreshim, including registration details. First, just the FAQs. You can find lots more info at www.restonshoreshim.org and by calling us at 571.445.0563. Thanks!

We are a small Jewish *havurah* who welcome you, your interest, your family, whatever. Though well into our fourth decade, Shoreshim is a community, not an institution. Consider:

- *We value our independence and thrive through members' active participation.*
 - Being an ***independent*** and unaffiliated *havurah* allows us free choice in whether and how to include (or not include) various traditions of Reform/Conservative/Reconstructionist/ Orthodox Judaism or other religious/non-religious traditions and norms. We chart our own path, focusing on Jewish tenets of community, social justice (*tzedakah*) and education.
 - What 'branch' of Judaism is Shoreshim? Ah, the eternal question. . . . Some responses:
 - Whatever we decide – we get to pick and choose traditions/approaches from any or no 'branch'. . . . That's why Shoreshim is 'dis-organized' Judaism – we're active, personal and innovative. Organized, but not tied to a particular tradition.
 - Participatory Judaism. Our members tend to find that Shoreshim is the most meaningful form of Judaism we've ever known – and participation has a lot to do with that. Active engagement (in contrast to passively sitting in *shul*) helps each person's Jewish identity to bloom as we celebrate the holiday cycle and life-events, both individually and as part of a Jewish community. Perhaps this participatory form of Judaism, in a community engaging with one another, is what leads our kids to be so comfortable growing up Jewish. . . .
 - Shoreshim means 'roots' in Hebrew. So we're about our roots – cultivating what nourishes us – not pruning the thicket of the so-called 'branches' of Judaism.
- *Who we are and where we gather.*
 - Shoreshim comprises about 85-100 members, including children, empty nesters & single folks. We live in different parts of Northern Virginia: Reston, Vienna, Herndon, City of Fairfax, Sterling, Oakton, Great Falls, Falls Church, Loudoun County, etc. We rent facilities, usually in Reston, or meet in members' homes for some occasions.
 - Some members are Israeli or European, from the Left Coast, the Midwest, the boroughs, etc. Various baseball teams & *mah jong* leagues are represented. Both sides of the aisle. Etc.

- A lot of individuals and spouses come from different religious backgrounds, and many aren't/weren't Jewish. We don't frown on interfaith couples or converted Jews. Just as in having people with different backgrounds in Judaism, we find that having folks who grew up in non-Jewish backgrounds makes us a more vibrant and interesting *havurah*. Some families have only one spouse as a member (*e.g.*, if a non-Jewish spouse doesn't want to formally be part of a Jewish group for whatever reason). But both spouses often attend our fun gatherings. Every so often you find yourself remarking: "Oh, s/he's not Jewish?" – after you've been hanging out for years with somebody.
- *How Shoreshim has thrived for going on four (4) decades (a/k/a 'how do you pull this off as a volunteer group?')*: Shoreshim isn't a flash-in-the-pan breakaway *havurah* that soon will fizzle or merge into a larger synagogue. Taking a cue from our ancestors, we got roots ("shoreshim"). So, to butcher a Bob Dylan line (Mr. Zimmerman likely copped it from Tanakh), 'we ain't going nowhere.'
 - **We are open to all** and welcome everyone to our free services and celebrations.
 - **Our Individual Members**: Our members take turns organizing our holiday gatherings, both logistically and for content. Members often want to do something special and get help in doing so. It works great: that's what Jewish community is – in evolving tradition, we care about each other and help out. One member likes to lead our chanting. Some others like to accompany with music. Others like to read Torah (*e.g.*, at High Holiday services). Some like to be a 'ritual resource' to answer other members' questions. Still other members like to lead services or put written material together. Others like to focus on *tzedakah*, continuing education, day trips, the Retreat, discussion groups, *etc.* The varieties are unlimited.
 - **'da Board'**: Our capable, energetic and often-thanked board handles key planning functions through monthly meetings. We have a fairly small feedback loop, so we can readily respond to members' needs and desires. Eventually, every member serves at least one board cycle.
 - **Shoreshim Hebrew School**: Shoreshim started around 1975 when families wanted kids to go to a ***good, affordable and local Hebrew School***. Years later, Shoreshim Hebrew School keeps getting better and better – it's a vital force within Shoreshim.
 - Our Hebrew school meets in Reston every Monday afternoon for 2 hours.
 - Shoreshim hires professional educators – both our Director and our teachers have many years of educational experience. They work hard on curriculum and session plans, and they keep the focus both fun and structured. The School uses BJE (Board of Jewish Education) metrics as a starting point for shaping the curriculum to the particular needs of these particular children. Sometimes a Rabbi gets involved. Parents too.
 - The kids also attend a lot of gatherings and are featured at some of them. Both children and adults have a lot of fun. And both look forward to our annual Retreat in West Virginia



during peak leaf season. . . . ***Shoreshim's got Roots!***

-- It seems a miracle to many of us who grew up otherwise, but our kids keep saying they look forward to going to Shoreshim Hebrew School. And our teenagers are pretty comfortable with Jewish identity. Don't mess with a good thing. ☺

-- Mixing the generations is pretty central. In this day and age of non-nuclear families, you might want to think of Shoreshim as a big 'cousins club' that celebrates one another's individual and family mile-markers. Not to mention *Pesach, Sukkot, Simchat Torah*

Shoreshim often invites **outside resource people** to lead services, events and discussions – educators, rabbis, cantors, musicians, *etc.* They work with both adults and Shoreshim youth. The D.C. Metro area has wonderful professionals who tend to love our *havurah kavanah* – our spunk. Speaking of which: *Why doesn't Shoreshim have its own rabbi/cantor/shul?* That depends on whom you ask

- Some say it's to keep the cost structure lower – for only \$325, we hold about 40 gatherings!
 - o And that isn't even counting informal group gatherings, such as the Shoreshim book, discussion or movie groups, home potlucks, *tzedakah* drives, Torah study group, *etc.*
 - o Our approach also keeps tuition for attending our weekly Shoreshim Hebrew School quite low. Run by professional educators with a high-caliber curriculum of Judaics and Hebrew, it costs only \$450/student for the whole year!
 - o a key Shoreshim tenet is that celebrating and learning about Judaism, and doing *tzedakah*/social justice, isn't predicated on paying thousands of dollars in dues or tuition (and anyone who finds the low dues or tuition burdensome contacts a board member privately.)
- Others might say that by not employing our 'own' rabbi, we can fashion our way of celebrating Jewish holidays and life cycle events as we wish – whether within a tradition or in a personally meaningful way – or both. And that by not owning a building, we can focus on exactly that – rather than on endlessly raising money to pay the mortgage or rent. Always innovating and progressive, we manage to side-step endless Talmudic debate over what is 'acceptable' Jewish practice.
- Still others might point out that we don't need to 'lock in' our own rabbi, since the D.C. Metro area is lucky to have phenomenal Jewish resource people. Shoreshim has very strong relations with many of them, often going back for many years.

How Shoreshim communicates:

1. Each member gets calendar updates. This shows who's doing what for which holiday, and if a particular Metro-area Rabbi will lead the service or discussion.
2. We also use 'evites'. You can RSVP with info of how many will attend which event and what food you'll bring (a lot of our events are either potluck or catered on a low-cost, pay-as-you-go basis). Our evites go out to people in the greater DC Metro area who have expressed interest in Shoreshim. All are welcome.
3. In addition, all members are automatically added to the Shoreshim Members Only e-list. It is how we communicate as a group that makes our own decisions. We also find that schmoozing, hanging out and phone calls work quite well.

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By now, you're likely thinking, "Wow! I want to be a member"
Shoreshim is glad you're interested and we hope you will fill out the Registration Form below:



Shoreshim

REGISTRATION FORM Adults: \$325/yr/adult annual dues (child member status: free)

Adult Name #1: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Tel.: _____(h); _____(m); _____(w)

Email: _____

Adult Name #2: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Tel.: _____(h); _____(m); _____(w)

Email: _____

Children: Information about our children helps Shoreshim plan, regardless of whether a child will be at Shoreshim Hebrew School (our school covers grades K-6; the *bar/bat mitzvah* year is a matter of private training with help if desired). Note: we never share this information with any person or group, nor do we do so with the “Adult” information noted above.

School Registration (\$450/child):

Child's Name:	Birthday:	School this Sept.	School grade:

Other children in your family (*i.e.*, not registering for Shoreshim Hebrew School):

Child's Name	Birthday	School/College this September	School grade

See you early and often! Welcome to Shoreshim, Judaism's best kept secret!

<p>Please mail your filled-out Registration Form to: Shoreshim - P.O. Box 2516, Reston, VA 20195 Questions? Please call us at (571) 445-0563</p>
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