



CONGREGATION
SHAAREI SHAMAYIM

Brand Book



INTRODUCTION

A brand is more than just a logo and a color scheme. It represents the foundational identity of your organization, as it's shaped over time. Simply put, **your brand is your reputation** – and the practice of being intentional about developing it.

A brand strategy is critical for any organization: brands build trust. They promise a reliable experience, grounded in shared values and interests. Effectively communicated, your brand becomes a signal, attracting those who belong here and influencing their choice to engage with you.

This Brand Book details the elements of Congregation Shaarei Shamayim's brand identity, grounded in the values, ideals, and vision of its community members.



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BRAND *Foundations*





OUR VISION

At Congregation Shaarei Shamayim, we envision a sacred community that embraces the richness of diversity, fostering acceptance, inclusion, and true belonging. We strive for passionate community action, fueled by authentic spirituality and tight-knit, supportive relationships. Through our collective commitment to pluralistic Judaism, investing in our youth, and each other, we are partners in creating a holier, more just world for all.



OUR MISSION

Our mission is to create a vibrant community where Jews of all backgrounds come together for joyous celebrations, meaningful Jewish ritual, and mutual support. We offer inclusive lifecycle events for every age and enriching Jewish educational programming for children. We invest in our youth and encourage their active participation in synagogue life. Through these pillars, we foster a lifelong commitment to connection, learning, and activism, weaving a tapestry of shared values that resonates throughout our community and beyond.

OUR VALUES

Justice – We are inspired by Jewish tradition to fight for a sustainable world, care for the vulnerable, and create racial and economic justice. We invite speakers to share their knowledge on current issues, partner with community organizations to amplify our voices, and get involved in local efforts to make our city, region, and world a better place for everyone.

Holiness – We know there are many ways to encounter holiness and deep purpose in our lives. We are secular, spiritual, religious, and none of the above. We try to create a meaningful ritual life through Shabbat gatherings, meditation, Torah study, prayer, storytelling, life cycle ceremonies, and holiday celebrations.

Joy – We fully embrace the Jewish initiative to prioritize joy, through celebration, playfulness, and honoring life's milestone moments. Joy is the cornerstone of our spirituality, grounded in Renewal and Reconstructionist philosophy. We bring joy to the community through our programming and hopeful message, and our youth inspire us to lead with levity.

Diversity – At Shaarei Shamayim, diversity is who we are. Diversity of thought, religious practice, Jewish background, race, sexual orientation, ability, gender, relationship to Israel, and much more, is not just accepted but celebrated; it adds strength and enduring value to our community.

Kol Yisrael Arevim Ze Bazeh – *All Israel is responsible for one another.* It is one thing to say we value connection and community; it is another to demonstrate it in the daily lives of our members by volunteering to help one another, organize meal trains, and create lasting friendships. CSS is a community that shows up to take care of one another as much as we show up to celebrate. The result is a warm family feeling, made of tight-knit relationships.

Investing in Our Youth – Children are our hope for a bright future. At CSS, we affirm the innate worth of every child, encouraging their full participation in community life. We invite them to the table with curiosity and invest in their future with deep Jewish education. Recognizing their potential, we strive to be a safe space for their flourishing, encouraging critical thinking, self-reflection, and a love of Jewish tradition.

OUR BIG IDEA

You don't have to *fit in* to belong.

TARGET Audiences



TARGET Audiences

<i>Families with young children</i>	What digital channels are families with young children most likely to be engaged on? How might we communicate that CSS is a good investment of their limited time and resources?
<i>Social justice-oriented adults</i>	What other communities, activities, and causes are vying for this persona's attention? How can we let social justice-oriented adults know that there's a place for their progressive values <i>and</i> their Jewish souls at our synagogue?
<i>People seeking Jewish community who have minimal Jewish literacy</i>	What sorts of barriers to entry might we eliminate for people seeking Jewish community if we keep this persona at the center of our program design and communications? How can we speak their language?

COMPETITIVE *Analysis*



COMPETITIVE Analysis

<i>Competing Brands</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Beth Israel Center (Conservative)• Chabad of Madison (Orthodox)• Temple Beth El (Reform)
<i>Brand Discovery: brief website analysis</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Competitor websites vary in color and format, but are all relatively conservative in their visual approach. They feature common colors: blue, gray, green, which represent stability, reliability, and Jewish institutions. Temple Beth El's site is a bit more vibrant with a bright green accent, representing youth and education.• Brand logos feature popular Jewish imagery: a star of David, a ner tamid (flame), and a tree.• Neither of the three sites are compliant with <u>website accessibility standards</u>.• All use similar language to describe their mission and community: vibrant, tradition, contemporary, spiritual, and social action. These are common to synagogues everywhere, and don't demonstrate unique differentiators which would signal to prospective members that they will find <i>their people</i> there, however:<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Temple Beth El speaks to creating smaller groups within the larger community to create meaningful relationships over shared interests.◦ Beth Israel Center speaks to balancing tradition with egalitarianism.• Chabad's website looks more current per digital trends than the other two, with subtle imagery, a sleeker image carousel at the top, and a cleaner interface. However, it doesn't feel very personal; it uses stock imagery, no clergy photos on the About Us page, and uses third-person voice to describe itself.• Chabad and Beth Israel's websites feature thoughtfully placed iconography for certain calls to action.• All websites underutilize photography to help tell their story.• All websites have complex navigation menus that are difficult to traverse. <p>For more competitor analysis, view your <u>CSS Brand Brief</u>.</p>

OUR VALUE PROPOSITION

Providing creative Jewish engagement and genuine belonging, grounded in individual authenticity and the celebration of diversity.

BRAND Personality Voice & Tone



01

At the intersection of pluralism and youth is CSS's personality: colorful, vibrant, and joyful. It is best personified as a young adult: rooted in and connected to timeless Jewish values, but young enough to have its finger on the pulse, engaging with youth as a top priority, and committed to social justice. CSS isn't your bubbe's synagogue; it honors diverse lived experiences... whether you have a *bubbe*, a *safta*, or an *abuela*. It is a community for the new millennium.

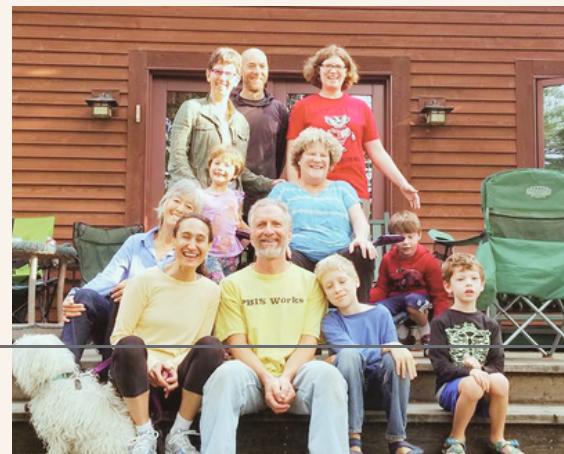
Words used to describe CSS include warm, friendly, and joyful. We are unapologetically progressive, inclusive, and accepting.



BRAND PERSONALITY

02

Nurturing
Playful
Vibrant
Thoughtful
Gal/Guy Next Door



03

We want to sound more playful and fun than our competitors; more practical, with simplified, easy to understand language. We're comforting and familiar: more like an old friend than an institution.

We can also think of it this way: in our writing and visuals, we should lead with casual (versus formal), funny (versus serious), respectful (versus irreverent), and slightly more matter of fact (versus enthusiastic). While we are full of energy and optimism, we're also down to earth and to the point. ([A great article on these four tone dimensions here.](#))



BRAND *Messaging*



04

Key Messages

On inclusivity and warmth

Welcome to Shaarei Shamayim, where our doors open wide to everyone, embracing the myriad of backgrounds and beliefs in our Jewish family. We don't just accept diversity; we throw it a party! No matter where you're from, consider this your cozy haven—a spot where the community spirit is as lively as the hues in our wonderfully varied membership.



05

Key Messages

On thoughtful diversity and pluralism

Discover a synagogue that thrives on a colorful mix of thoughts, practices, Jewish literacy, and views on Israel. Our place is a thriving hub of conversation and learning, where your unique journey is not just welcomed but embraced. Whether you believe in God or not, are Jew-ish or are firmly rooted in tradition, here, we're all about celebrating and respecting the awesome richness that comes from seeing things from different angles.



06

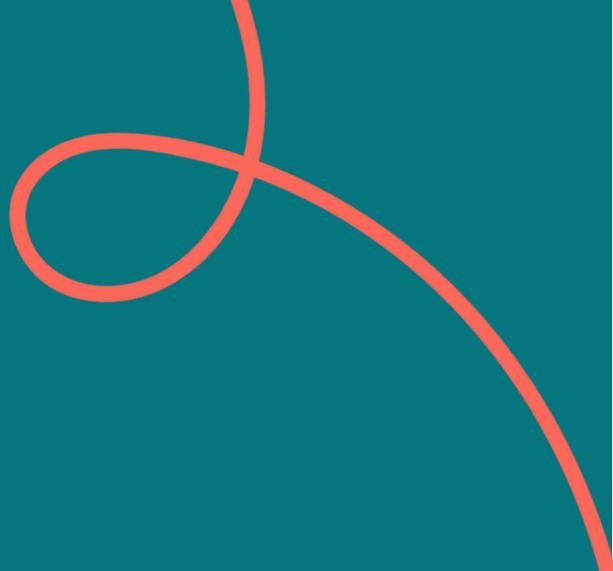
Key Messages

On tight-knit community, genuine connections

Step beyond the sanctuary, and you'll find Shaarei Shamayim is more than a synagogue—it's a family! We're a cozy crew that believes that caring for each other isn't just a Shabbat thing, it's an everyday affair. Our friendships don't stop at the gates; they're as lasting as the traditions we hold dear. Come be part of a community that's not just about lighting candles but igniting passion for community and justice at every age. Supporting each other? That's our superpower!



07

Words our brand loves

Authentic	Fun	Sacred
Belonging	God-Optional	Supportive
Bright	Hang Out	Tapestry
Chill	Hues	Texture
Colorful	Jew-ish	Threads
Down to Earth	Laid-Back	Tight-Knit
Dynamic	Laughter	Unity
Egalitarian	Lively	Variety
Energy	Mosaic	Visionary
Fabric	Progressive	Warm
Family	Rich	Weave
Forward-thinking	Socially Conscious	Youthful

VISUAL *Identity*



VISUAL IDENTITY

CSS's visual identity is grounded in our three primary differentiators:

Warm and welcoming, genuinely, no matter who you are or what your background is

Diverse in Jewish practice, race, age, sexual orientation, ability, and stance on Israel

Tight-knit, where members celebrate and take care of one another, and are highly engaged in synagogue life

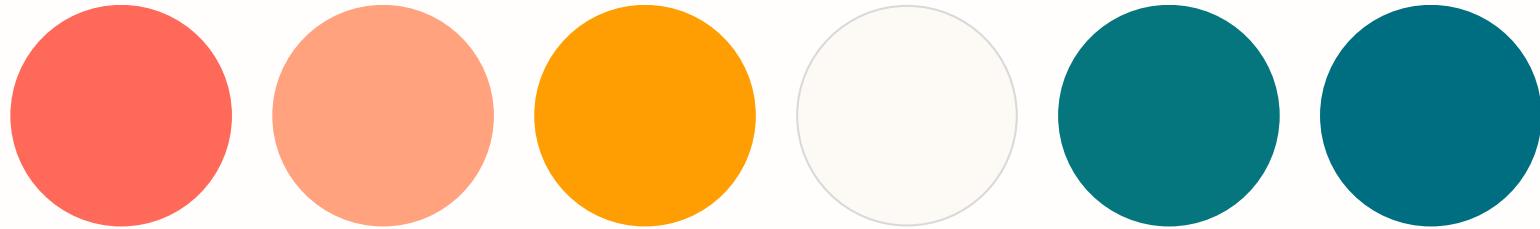
Visual cornerstones

A Variety of Colors
Braids + Threads
Handmade
Modern
Playful

Simple
Tallit + Tzitzit
Tapestries + Quilts
Weaving
Youthful Colors + Imagery



COLORS



Persimmon

#FF695A

R 255 C 0
G 106 M 73
B 91 Y 62
K 0

Hit Pink

#FFA27D

R 255 C 0
G 161 M 45
B 125 Y 49
K 0

Orange Peel

#FF9E02

R 255 C 0
G 158 M 45
B 0 Y 100
K 0

Linen

#FDF9F4

R 253 C 0
G 249 M 1
B 244 Y 3
K 0

Mosque

#05757E

R 5 C 88
G 117 M 38
B 126 Y 45
K 11

Blue Lagoon

#006E81

R 0 C 90
G 110 M 44
B 129 Y 39
K 11

Winning Color Combinations

Persimmon + Hit Pink + Orange Peel
Persimmon + Mosque
Hit Pink + Linen + Blue Lagoon
Orange Peel + Linen + Mosque

Color Combinations to Avoid

Mosque + Blue Lagoon
Hit Pink (text) over Orange Peel (background)



We use bright, airy, and colorful imagery to represent our community and programming.

Images should be in color and treated with the “Aura” filter in Canva for a soft and warm look and feel.

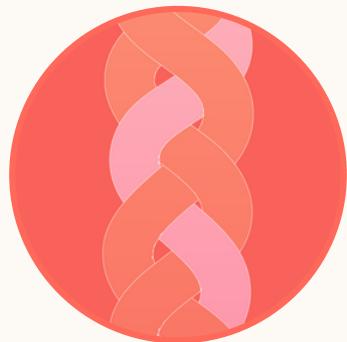
We like images that contain lots of people and lots of action: a group of children, members engaged in a ritual or activity, and community meals.

We also like warm colors in our images that reflect the colors in our brand identity.

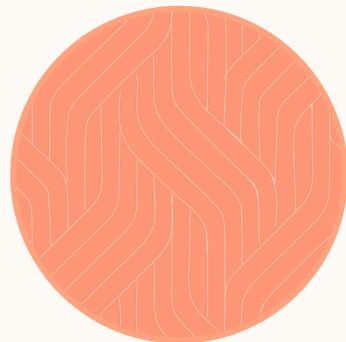
Where possible, photos of real people and synagogue members are preferred. Where stock imagery is necessary, we try to select photos that look authentic and informal. We avoid stock photos that look corporate.

We strive for diverse representation in our photography, including racial diversity, diversity in physical ability, or other. We are committed to authentically representing the diversity in our community and are mindful not to tokenize community members with perceived differences in our communications.

PATTERNS



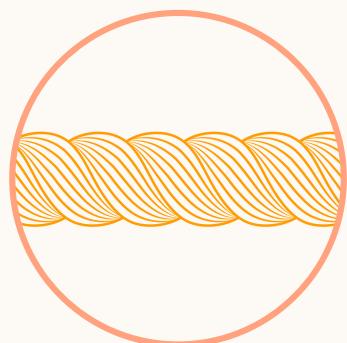
Pattern 1



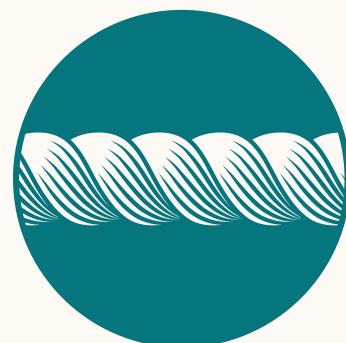
Pattern 2



Pattern 3



Pattern 4



Pattern 5



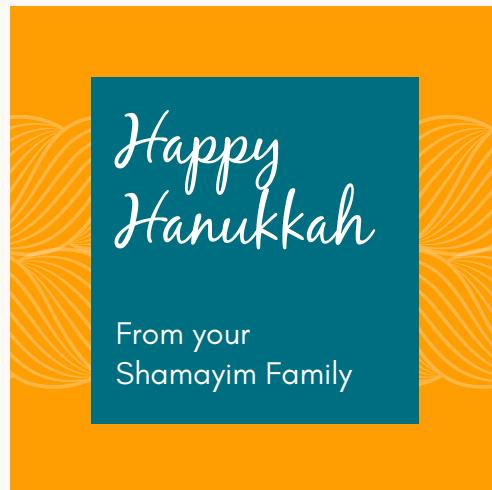
Pattern 6

Pattern 1: a Havdalah candle, braid, or woven thread image is placed at 100% opacity on one side of the graphic, framing the page.



Foreground

Patterns 4 & 5: the image is placed horizontally in the center of the graphic, spanning the full width. It is at 8% to 20% opacity, depending on the background color. Content is placed over the pattern.



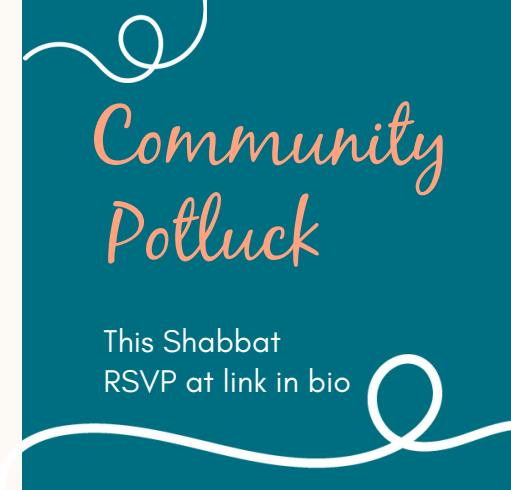
Semi-Transparent

Patterns 2 & 3: a braid or woven thread image is placed above a solid color background, spanning the full graphic. It is at 8% to 14% transparency, depending on background color.



Background

Pattern 6: an image of a single thread is placed in one corner of the graphic. An additional thread can be placed in an opposite corner. They are at 100% opacity and do not interfere with the content.



Corner Treatment

TYPEFACE

Heading Text (Primary)

Blackjack

Heading Text (Secondary)

GLACIAL INDIFFERENCE

(ALL CAPS)

Paragraph Text

Glacial Indifference

EXAMPLE

GET TO KNOW US *brunch*

Join us for a fun-filled brunch where you can get to know our warm and friendly community. We'll bring the bagels, you bring all your pressing questions about membership at Shaarei Shamayim. Questions beforehand? Email us at info@shamayim.org. See you Sunday!

Glacial Indifference

All Caps // 18pt.

Blackjack

Regular // 32pt.

Glacial Indifference

Regular // 12pt.

GET TO KNOW US *brunch*

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BRAND *Goals*



BRAND GOALS

The next step in our brand strategy is to identify the goal of our communications.

Is our primary goal to get more people in the door? To expand our membership?

Or is it to more meaningfully engage current members?

Do we want to consistently demonstrate our value to prospective donors and increase giving by sharing pictures and reflections of recent happenings at Shamayim?

Or do we want to inform them of (and inspire them to attend) future events?

Different objectives will have different communications and content strategies. As we continue to grow our capacity, think about some of these desired outcomes. They will determine the content of our communications and the channels we use to share them.



CONTENT *Recommendations*

CONTENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Once CSS defines our brand goals, we have the opportunity to design a robust and detailed content strategy to meet those outcomes.

In the meantime, we can strive to create content that follows best practices and meets the member needs that emerged from brand development research:

- People want to hear from Rabbi Laurie. To the extent possible, include more from the rabbi in digital content. We might share tidbits of Torah at the top of our weekly emails, or share affirming quotes and bites of wisdom on social media. We might even consider an entirely separate content campaign, like a regular email series containing thoughts from the rabbi.
- Lead with story. No matter what service we provide or what age our constituents are, storytelling is the most powerful way to move them to action. Where possible, share real stories. Whether that's congregant wins (an engagement, a milestone, a promotion), or stories that demonstrate community in action, stories connect people to our mission.
- Pictures, pictures, pictures. As it's said, a picture is worth a thousand words. There is no quicker way to convey a message than through imagery. Include more throughout our materials and let the beauty of our community speak for itself.



CHANNEL *Recommendations*



Channels

<i>Email</i>	<p>By and large, our community reports a preference for email.</p>
<i>Website</i>	<p>Our website should be the central authoritative source for all things Shaarei Shamayim. A regularly updated website is the best way to inform new and current members of our happenings.</p>
<i>Facebook</i>	<p>While Facebook is declining in popularity, it is still active for our 40–65 age demographic. Use it to post news and events, but don't invest in a more robust strategy involving original content for this platform.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore whether our email marketing platform has a social media integration that will automatically post our weekly (and other) emails to our Facebook page.• Recalling Rabbi Laurie's popularity, revisit the practice of having the administrative director post to the rabbi's account to engage members.
<i>Instagram</i>	<p>In the absence of dedicated time for Instagram content development, consider at the very least creating an account and posting a foundational 15 posts. They should be thoughtfully curated. This will accomplish providing social proof to prospective visitors without utilizing ongoing resources.</p>

In our own words

"Shaarei Shamayim offers me a space to be Jewish as I am. It's not asking me to be someone else or even participate in something I don't believe in. It's a community where my whole family is welcome, as we are."

"One of the things I appreciate most is that a number of divergent viewpoints are present and folks are very tolerant of everyone. When I converted I was actually pretty nervous about that but my fears were very much unfounded as I found acceptance at day one."

"Excellent group of like-minded people of all ages and a place where I can finally become the Jewish self that I have always felt deep inside of me."

"CSS is a community of Jews and likeminded people. It is super welcoming and full of families that may be of varying faiths. Whether you believe in god or not, whether you're Jewish or Jew-ish, you will be (sic) find your people."





www.shamayim.org

