

DECEMBER  
2017

# OUR SHIR SHALOM

KISLEV / TEVET  
5778



## DECEMBER WORSHIP SCHEDULE

- |         |          |   |
|---------|----------|---|
| Dec. 1  | 6:00 pm  | Kabbalat Shabbat Worship                                    |
| Dec. 2  | 10:30 am | Shabbat Morning<br>Worship, Bar Mitzvah:<br>Haydn Wilfinger |
| Dec. 8  | 7:30 pm  | Kabbalat Shabbat Worship                                    |
| Dec. 15 | 7:30 pm  | Ruach Shabbat with<br>Chanukkah songs                       |
| Dec. 22 | 7:30 pm  | Kabbalat Shabbat Worship                                    |
| Dec. 29 | 7:30 pm  | Kabbalat Shabbat Worship                                    |



**CONGREGATION  
SHIR SHALOM**  
of Westchester and Fairfield Counties

46 Peaceable Street • Ridgefield, CT 06877  
Phone: (203)438-6589 • Fax: (203)438-5488  
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## FROM RABBI REINER'S DESK

Our three year old son announced recently something that makes most Jewish parents (especially rabbis) uncomfortable: "I love Christmas!" It is impossible to avoid the pervasive presence of a Christian holiday in our towns and I appreciate in a new way the challenge of raising a Jewish child at this time of year. I have always been proud of my Jewish heritage and religion and I cannot remember feeling excluded as a child or marginalized during the winter holiday season though our neighborhood had many more Jews than most of the towns in our area. I do remember one Chanukkah when I left out a glass of milk and Vienna Fingers for the spirit of Albert Einstein who brought me a pair of Chanukkah socks in the middle of the night. In the midst of so much "Christmas cheer" it is especially important to encourage our youth to be proud of their Jewish identity at this time of year.

One way to feel pride as Jews and feel less excluded at this time of year is by embracing and elevating Chanukkah, a minor festival in our tradition that (unlike our major festivals and holy days) is not mentioned in the Torah or even the Hebrew Bible. Isaac Klein in *A Guide to Jewish Religious Practice* (ppg. 226-228) identifies "two strands within the Jewish tradition regarding Hanukkah and its meaning:" First, in the books of Maccabees (not included in the Hebrew Bible), Chanukkah is presented as "a struggle against the suppression of Judaism, culminating in the purification and rededication of the Temple of Jerusalem...[which] took eight days..." Second, in the Babylonian Talmud (a collection of rabbinic commen-

tary from around the sixth century of the Common Era), Chanukkah is presented as "the miracle of the cruse of oil [that lasted eight days]..." — the story that may be more familiar to many of us. Chanukkah is not mentioned in the Mishnah, the "Second/Oral Torah" an early collection of rabbinic commentary compiled around the beginning of the third century of the Common Era. When Chanukkah is first mentioned in the Talmud, "the discussion begins with the question 'What is Hanukkah?' as if the answer were not very well known..." Klein suggests that Chanukkah was left out of the Mishna because "The Romans, who dominated Judaea during the period when the Mishnah was compiled, would have interpreted any emphasis on a Jewish war of independence as a sign of rebelliousness, and this might have had dire consequences for the entire Jewish community..." Chanukkah eventually became a celebration of "the miracles that accompanied the rededication of the Temple, not on the victories of the Maccabees..." But, in the past couple of centuries, "with the rise of Jewish nationalism, Hanukkah assumed a new importance; again the stress was shifted, this time back to the wars for political independence..." Finally, in America, the proximity of Chanukkah to a major Christian holiday, has again influenced our observance of Chanukkah. "The positive influence expresses itself in the greater and more widespread observance of Hanukkah. Negatively, Hanukkah has become more important to many American Jews than some of the major festivals on the Jewish calendar and is celebrated more and more lavishly in order to compete with the celebration of the non-Jewish holiday." Indeed, the 2001 National Jewish Population Survey supported Klein's concerns, revealing that 72% of American Jews light Chanukkah

*con't. on page 14*

## CONGREGATION SHIR SHALOM

of Westchester and Fairfield Counties

46 Peaceable Street Ridgefield, CT 06877 Phone: (203)438-6589 Fax: (203)438-5488

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*Laura Morris*

**Laura@OurShirShalom.org**

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### THE PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE by Gale Berman and Hal Wolkin



Our Congregation Shir Shalom Annual Meeting is approaching and, by now, you should have received the Annual Meeting packet recently mailed to all members. There are a number of important matters on the agenda as you will see when you review the Annual Meeting packet. In addition, the meeting affords us the opportunity to reflect on our collective achievements and to share plans for the future of our community, plans that we trust will provide for our congregation to thrive and to continue to fulfill its mission.

Our Annual Meeting will include a discussion in which Karen Taylor, our Chief Financial Officer, will share comments and take questions with respect to the 2018 Budget. Importantly, the 2018 Budget reflects the implementation of

changes to the way in which we collectively share in supporting the costs of Shir Shalom's operations so that those who are fortunate to be able to provide greater financial support are encouraged to do so.

We will also introduce some recommendations from our "Security Task Force", headed up by Paul Amerling, a member of the Board of Trustees. This Task Force was formed by the Board of Trustees to evaluate how we might improve the security of our building and property and protect that which is most precious, our employees, congregants and guests. While the work of the "Security Task Force" is not complete, we will share with you some of the changes that will be implemented during 2018, as a first step toward achieving our security goals. We hope that you appreciate that improving security is expensive and that security costs are likely to increase significantly in the future. In this connection, you will, no doubt, note the Security Fee that is being added to the membership contribution structure, something that other congregations in more urban areas initiated some time ago.

As your co-presidents, we will report on "The State of the Congregation" sharing the progress that Shir Shalom has made since the "Union" in 2015 and our goals for the future.

A member of "The Financial Planning Board" which manages our Endowment Fund (including its portfolio), and provides investment advice with respect to our Investment Fund will report on the investment strategy, portfolio mix and performance of these funds.

You will be asked to cast your vote to approve the 2018 Budget, to approve certain clarifying amendments to the congregation's By-laws, to approve a revised Endowment Fund governance document

(con't. on page 12)

## THE CANTOR'S CORNER

by Cantor Debbie Katchko-Gray



Many of you know my mentor and teacher was Professor Elie Wiesel of blessed memory. His classes and lectures through the years shaped my cantorate as much as music and my family tradition. He taught me the miracle of Jewish survival and how to live as

if each day is a precious gift. Recently Boston University honored him with a day of learning and celebration-

"Celebrating the Life of Elie Wiesel in Word, Image and Music".

I was privileged to share the musical joy he taught me on many occasions, some as informal as a car ride from Boston to New York due to a plane delay, or a ride to New York due to a limo driver issue. Singing together and hearing his melodies from childhood were inspiring and uplifting. When he turned 70, I led a singalong in his office after a three day symposium and a friend, Cantor Riki Lippitz, wisely recorded it (on a tape recorder!). Years later I had it digitally enhanced in


a studio and presented it to him at his 80th birthday symposium at Boston University. Now he is gone, but his songs remain. I had the honor of singing several of them with Riki at Boston University. I hope to sing them with you as well, perhaps as a Friday evening program or a Sunday morning adult ed. May his music remain and continue to remind us of our Jewish spark that cannot be extinguished. As we get closer to Hanukkah I always think of my cousin and survivor Cantor Leopold Sznear's lesson of the NER-the light- In order to be a light to others you need the two letters in the word NER, NUN for neshamah, (you need a soul) and RESH for ruach- (you need spirit). If you have a good soul and good spirit, you can be ner to others- a light.

May we all be a NER this Hanukkah and always.

Shalom,

Cantor Debbie Katchko-Gray

**JEWISH YOGA** - Dec. 10 9:15-10:15 with Cantor Niema Hirsch in the pavilion.



Federation for Jewish Philanthropy of Upper Fairfield County  
All-Star Community Staged Reading of

# Fiddler on the Roof

*Featuring a cast of Upper Fairfield County Rabbis, Cantors, Agency Leaders, and more*

**Sunday, December 3, 2017 at 4 pm**

Event held at Congregation Rodeph Sholom, 2385 Park Avenue, Bridgeport

*FIDDLER ON THE ROOF is presented through a special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI). All authorized performance materials are also supplied by MTI. [www.MTISHOWS.com](http://www.MTISHOWS.com)*





## FROM THE EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER

by Jane Emmer

**W**e were very busy at The Early Childhood Center this month. During November we welcomed guests to two Young Community Shabbat celebrations. We celebrated Thanksgiving with a feast and lots of cooking activities. We created, learned, shared and

continued to develop a thriving learning community. We greeted many mystery readers and learned from our Israeli emissaries.

In December we will focus on the importance of GIVING. We are proud to participate in The Gift of Chanukkah and Toys for Tots. We will vote on where to donate our Tzedakah money just before we leave on winter break.

Important dates to remember:

Priority Registration  
for Congregants ONLY ends 12/15/17

**A Magical Chanukkah Celebration****December 17th, 3:00-4:30PM***for Families with Young Children**Including the Comedy Magic of**Danny Diamond**Hanukkah sing-a-long with Cantor Debbie**And a special Chanukkah snack*

## RITUAL COMMITTEE

by Laurie Dubin and Michael Salpeter



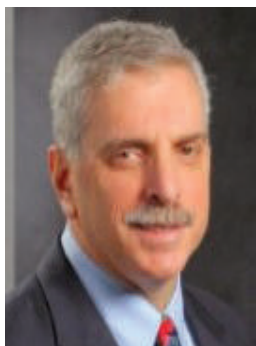
**D**uring World War II a group of Jews in what was then occupied Czechoslovakia managed to save about 1800 Torah scrolls from synagogues throughout the country which had been destroyed by the Nazi invaders.

These sifrei Torah therefore survived the war and about 50 were distributed to synagogues in the Moravia and Bohemia regions to be used by reestablished congregations. The remainder languished in the basement of a synagogue in the vicinity of Prague. In 1964 the

Jewish community of Westminster in London, England formed the Memorial Scrolls Trust and set out to bring the remaining sifrei Torah to London, restore them and distribute them on permanent loan to synagogues around the world.

We at Congregation Shir Shalom are fortunate enough to be in the possession of two of the scrolls on loan from the Trust. One of the scrolls originated from the city of Brno in what is now the Czech Republic, the second largest city to Prague. This scroll was obtained by the members of Jewish Family Congregation in the 1980s. Our other holocaust sefer Torah originated in the town of Kromeriz and was loaned to Temple Shearith Israel.

Last week the 7th grade students in our religious school were tasked with finding out as much information as they could about these scrolls, their originating communities and the Memorial Scrolls Trust. There is much more information available about



(con't. on page 11)



## FROM THE RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

by Leslie Gottlieb

### Tzedakah and Social Justice at the Religious School

We teach our students that tzedakah means justice and then ask them to consider what our obligation is to others based on that construct. Each grade at Religious School, with guidance from our teachers, decides on how to bring justice to our world. The students make the final determination as to what is particularly meaningful to them at their various stages of development.

According to Pirke Avot in the Mishnah, the world stands upon three things: Torah, law; avodah, service to Gd; and acts of loving kindness, g'milut chasidim. These ideas are incorporated into most lessons throughout the grades in one way or another.

Some interesting thoughts on tzedakah include...

"Tzedakah and acts of kindness are the equivalent of all the mitzvot of the Torah" – Jerusalem Talmud, Pe'ah 1:1

"Greater is tzedakah than all the sacrifices" – Talmud, Sukkah 49b "If only the people who lived in the generation of the Flood and the people of Sodom had given tzedakah, they would not have perished" – Midrash Zutta, Song of Songs 1 "Great is tzedakah, for since the day that the world was created until this day the world stands upon tzedakah" – Midrash Tanna d'Vei Eliyahu Zutta 1

Last year, students sent donations to organizations that include: ROAR (Ridgefield Operation for Animal Rescue), the Prospector Theater of Ridgefield, the Metropolitan Council on Jewish Poverty, Heifer International, Holocaust Children of Survivors organization, and many others. Participation in Religious School carries with it a commitment to improving the lives of others.

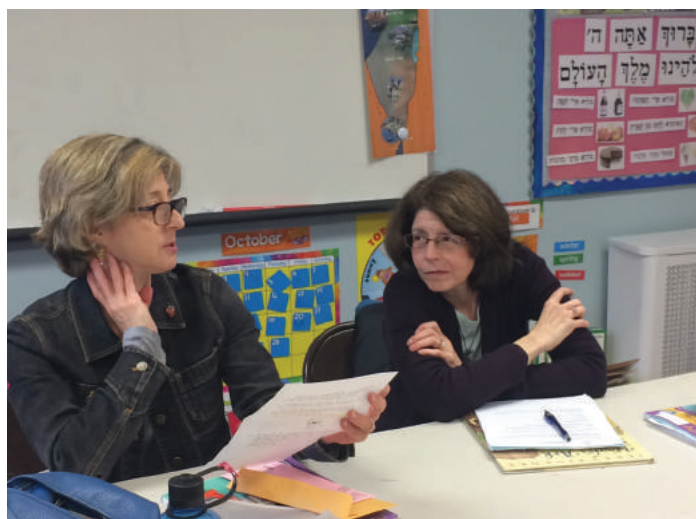
Our NFTY Youth Group has moved to this platform, too. They are meeting more regularly on Sundays to help with temple social action projects as well as their own. They are percolating an idea now that includes an annual Run to support various charities as worthwhile causes are determined. It is the student and Youth Group bodies that determine where our energy must be directed so as to have the most impact based on the sensitivities of our youngsters and teens. This seems like the right recipe for send-

ing our young adults into the world with a mind set on tikkun olam.

At our school consecration services this year, we welcomed eighteen new students to our rolls. We encourage these students and their families, as well as all others in our program, to join us in an overall effort to make the world a better place through the efforts of the school's tzedakah program. Whether it's a few coins, or donating food and clothing to the poor, we hope to instill a passion for service--- even with our smallest new charges. Parents can reach out to individual teachers at any time to offer their support.

Our students in grades 9-12, joined by Rabbi Reiner and other chaperones, are given a wonderful opportunity each year to attend the Religious Action Center (the RAC) in Washington, D.C. in February. Together they celebrate Shabbat together and have a havdallah service at the Jefferson Memorial with hundreds of teens from across the country. Students meet with their regional legislators and prepare remarks to present based on areas for which they are passionate. Our trip this year is scheduled for February 23-26. To learn more, check out their website. We hope to send an even larger group than last year to D.C. This is a wonderful way for teens to learn about how policies are developed--- and how government can be used to effect social justice and change to improve lives of real people.

Stay tuned to hear more about our ongoing student service and tzedakah projects...





## RELIGIOUS SCHOOL AND ECC - CANDID PHOTOS



Confirmation students learn to create a page of Talmud



Religious School and our Early Childhood Center students busy enjoying, learning, and having fun!

The Early Childhood Center at Congregation Shir Shalom  
announces Session 2 of our new program:

# Practically Preschool

A program for Toddlers and a “Grown Up”  
Wednesdays from 9:15 to 10:30 A.M.

Children participate alongside their grown-up partners—taking the lead once they feel comfortable and have an understanding of the routine of the class. Singing, art projects, a sensory table, a read-a-loud, and even more are packed into this first class experience

Starting in January we will offer entry to our 2's program and/or a gentle separation component.



## PRACTICALLY PRESCHOOL REGISTRATION

Child's Full Name \_\_\_\_\_ DOB \_\_\_\_\_  
Parent's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**\$180 TUITION 1/10/2018 – 3/28/2018**

For more information, please contact Jane Emmer at [JaneEmmer@ourshirshalom.org](mailto:JaneEmmer@ourshirshalom.org)



46 Peaceable Street, Ridgefield, CT 06877 • 203-438-6589 • [www.OurShirShalom.org](http://www.OurShirShalom.org)



# Introducing Practically Religious School



A **NEW** monthly program for preschool children ages 2–4. This program provides a great way for children to learn more about Jewish holidays and meet new friends! Enjoy music, movement, story time, crafts and more! Children 3 and under—and non-temple-member children of all ages participating— need to be accompanied by a parent. To register, complete RS registration forms (use program name) on our website. To register, complete RS registration forms (use program name) on our website.

**INSTRUCTOR:** Jessica Aframe

Month	Sundays from 9:15–10:15 A.M. Families are welcome to stay for the Religious School service from 10:15–10:45 A.M.
September	17
October	22
November	5
December	3
January	21
February	25
March	4–Purim Carnival 25
April	22
May	6

Program Fee (per household):

Registered ECC or Religious School Families: \$100

Temple Members: \$118 / Non-Members: \$180

Please make your check payable to:

Congregation Shir Shalom

**CALL TO REGISTER:**

203-438-6589 or

Visit our website:

[OurShirShalom.org](http://OurShirShalom.org)

**Deadline: 8/31/17**



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## EXCERPTS IN JEWISH HISTORY

By Lewis Siegel

## THE MAN WHO TRIED TO STOP THE HOLOCAUST

Near the corner of 37th St. and Madison Ave. in New York City, in front of the Polish Consulate, there is a statue of a man playing chess. This innocuous scene is made far more dramatic by the inscription on the stone, which says in part, "The first to tell the Allies about the Holocaust".

Jan Karski, a Polish Catholic, was born Jan Kozielski in 1914 in Lodz. Growing up in a mixed neighborhood, he had a number of Jewish friends. He completed his education in 1938 and in 1939 began work in the Polish ministry of foreign affairs. Shortly afterward, he joined the Polish Army but was captured by the Russians and placed in a detention camp. Karski managed to escape and then joined the Polish underground. Unfortunately, he was soon captured by the Nazis and tortured. Again, some underground fighters helped him escape.

Karski was committed to fighting the Germans one way or another. In August 1942, disguised with a Star of David armband, he sneaked into the Warsaw Ghetto. He was appalled at the living conditions of the Jews, and even more appalled when he was made aware that thousands were being sent to extermination camps. Several Jews that he met pleaded with him to get out and tell the world what was happening. He stealthily made his way out of the Ghetto and went by train to a concentration camp at Izbica, where, disguised as a Ukrainian guard, he witnessed the killing of countless numbers of Jews. He also saw them forced into crowded trains and sent to the camp at Belzec to suffer the fate of the gas chambers.

Carefully, with a series of diverse moves, Karski made his way to Gibraltar and finally to London. It was now February 1943. He had a meeting with Anthony Eden, the British Foreign Secretary, who seemed unmoved by the plight of the Jews. Having no success, Karski traveled to the United States, where he managed to arrange a meeting with President Roosevelt, who also did not appear to be moved by Karski's story. Roosevelt told Karski to go see Felix Frankfurter, a justice of the Supreme Court and

also a Jew. Frankfurter not only was unconvinced by the horrors related to him, but actually said to Karski, "I am unable to believe you". Although frustrated by his lack of success, Karski, under orders from his superiors in the Polish Government in exile, spent the remainder of the war in the United States, because he was told that he was on the Nazi's wanted list. The best he could do was to travel around the United States giving interviews and writing articles about his experiences. In 1944, he wrote a book called, "Story of a Secret State" in which he described his harrowing experiences with the Russians and the Nazis.

After the war, Jan Karski enrolled in the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University where he received a doctorate degree. He remained at Georgetown as a professor until he retired in 1984. In 1965 he married a Jewish dancer and choreographer, Nola Nrenska, who herself had lost an astounding 74 relatives in the Holocaust.

Jan Karski received much recognition for his war efforts, including several honorary doctorate degrees. In 1982, the State of Israel honored him as, "Righteous among the Nations". A practicing Catholic, he figuratively referred to himself as a Christian Jew. Jan Karski died in July 2000 at the age of 86. In May 2012, President Barack Obama awarded Jan Karski the Presidential Medal of Freedom posthumously. The final words inscribed on his statue at 37th St. say it very simply, but nevertheless, say it all— "A just man".



*"Excerpts in Jewish History" is a regular feature in our Shir Shalom newsletter, written by Lewis Siegel, who wrote a similar series for Focus, the newspaper of the Jewish Federation of Greater Danbury. He is also the author of A Brief History of Modern Israel and The Evolution of Zionism.*



# Religious School Chanukkah Program

Sunday, December 17th, 10:15am - 11:30am

- During RS Regular Program-

Parents and All RS Students Are Welcome  
Chanukka Treats and Music with Cantor Debbie

Dedicating our lives to Tikkun Olam:  
Congregant and Student Presentations Featuring...

**Lou Haber** - Hazon Seal of Sustainability

Organization dedicated to help us to keep our planet and local  
region sustainable and green

**Bobbie Cohan** - Project Somos Children's Village

## RITUAL COMMITTEE (con't.)

the community of Brno due to its large size. They learned that there were approximately 11,000 Jews residing in Brno in 1941, and it is believed that less than 1000 survived the Nazi death camps. About 6 years ago, Zachary Gottlieb, son of our religious school director Leslie Gottlieb, visited the Jewish Museum in Prague and obtained for us the database of Brno victims. Each Shabbat evening we read approximately 10 names from this list to help remember the Jewish community that was destroyed and no longer exists. We also know that this sefer Torah was dedicated in the 1830's either by or in honor of a man named Avram Weiner.

Kromeriz was a much smaller town and had a Jewish population of about 400 in 1941 and approximately 300 members of

this community perished. Since we do not have as much knowledge about the Jewish community of Kromeriz as we would like to have, we are hoping that if you are planning on visiting Prague any time soon that perhaps you will visit the Jewish Museum and obtain information from the staff that you could share with our congregation. In the meantime we suggest you read about these communities and the Trust on their respective websites and help memorialize those who have no surviving family members to remember them.

[www.memorialscrolltrust.org](http://www.memorialscrolltrust.org)  
[www.jewishbrno.eu](http://www.jewishbrno.eu)

[www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/brno](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/brno)  
[www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/kromeriz](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/kromeriz)

## SISTERHOOD

by Nancy Cavillones



Hello, Sisters! November was a fun and exciting month. We had our first cooking class, which was a delicious and educational evening with Nancy Wolfson-Moche. Susan Bard led a hike at Devil's Den in Weston, and Suzanne Sunday supported a circle of knitters. Thank you, ladies, for your help!

And here we are, in December. Of course, the Chanukkah dinner is the highlight of the month and I hope to see all the sisters at Bernard's on December 14th. We have a fun evening planned!

If you have a small business, and you would like the Sisterhood to help you promote it, please reach out to me for an exciting opportunity. Email me at [sisterhood@ourshirshalom.org](mailto:sisterhood@ourshirshalom.org).

Every month, the Sisterhood makes tzedakah. Your Sisterhood dues help support our charitable efforts. In addition to making a monetary donation, the Sisterhood is exploring service projects, both locally and internationally. If you would like to help spearhead a service project initiative, please get in touch!

This month, a donation will be made to Project Somos. Project Somos is an eco-sustainable village for at-risk women and their children. Project Somos is an orphanage prevention program that strives to allow children to remain with their mothers. Their ultimate goal is to give mothers the support, the strength and the skills they need to live independently, in their own communities, with their children and move their family towards a better future. For more information and to make your own donation, visit [ProjectSomos.org](http://ProjectSomos.org)

Remember, to enjoy the Chanukkah dinner and popular activities like Adam Broderick Night, you need to be a paid member of the Sisterhood. If you have not yet paid your dues, you can send a check to the Shir Shalom office or pay online at <http://bit.ly/sisterhoodmembership>. Membership is \$55 for temple members. Your Sisterhood dues support charitable giving and Sisterhood programs.

Please join us on Facebook! Just search for Shir Shalom Sisterhood.

Hope to see you soon!  
Nancy Cavillones  
Sisterhood President

## THE PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE (con't.)

("Amended and Restated Endowment Fund Purpose and Governance Articles"), and to elect Trustees and Officers. We are excited that several new people have volunteered their time and energy to participate in the leadership of our congregation. Their names are listed in the "Composition of the Board of Trustees" in your meeting packet.

This is our community, our congregation and it is important for all of us to participate in its governance, and one of the best ways to do so is to attend our An-

nual Meeting on Sunday, December 3rd at 10 a.m. If you are unable to attend the Annual Meeting, we urge you to properly complete and return your "Voting Proxy" (included in the meeting packet) so that your voice can be heard.

We look forward to seeing you at the Annual Meeting.

Gale Berman and Hal Wolkin  
Co-Presidents



## SOCIAL ACTION

by Debbie Landzberg and Debbie Lavin



## SOCIAL ACTION NEWS

Our Breakfast Run to Help the Homeless Really Helped....

Many weeks of planning culminated in a busy and meaningful weekend. We were able to make a bit of a difference to many dozens of homeless and desperately needy individuals – offering them generous hot breakfasts, bagged lunches, snacks and treats, an array of cold weather clothing and much-needed toiletries. How wonderful that we had this opportunity to reach out!

**We extend a huge thank you to the many volunteers and donors who made this important program possible:**

Our religious school students for writing heart-warming notes and decorating lunch bags for Breakfast Run clients and students' families for donating underwear and socks!

Our Packing Day/Run volunteers: Adam, Ally, Frank and Susan Andrade, Gale Berman, Alexa, Evan, Karen and Scott Brenner, Carrie Chanin, Serafima Dashevsakya, Laurie Dubin, Jacquie Goldner, Jeremy and Sophia Haber, Linda Hirschfeld, Braden and Lisa Kurtz, Debbie Landzberg, Debbie Lavin, Amy, David, Ethan and Jake Margulies, Jacob and Kurt Voellmicke and Emily and Miranda Wein and youth group and BBYO members!

-Shir Shalom's Sisterhood for funding our egg sandwich ingredients

-Jeff and Kim Knispel for their donation of several boxes of hand lotions

-Jim Silverman (Amy Margulies' dad!) of Convenience Kits International for his generous gift of toiletry items

-Heather and Jeff Butchen for providing brand new tee shirts for every client who met our caravan!

We can't forget to acknowledge the following generous vendors: Caraluzzi's Supermarkets, Dunkin' Donuts of Cross River and Goldens Bridge, New York, Stop and Shop of Ridgefield and Walgreens Pharmacy of Ridgefield.

We look forward to our next outreach effort, the nighttime Midnight Run, early in the Spring of 2018 on behalf of this needy population. Please let us know if you'd like to get involved.

Laurel Ridge Nursing Home

Attention 6th and 7th grade students and their families!

We have a wonderful opportunity for you! Bring a little bit of joy – and assistance – to the frail elderly. Please contact us for more information.

Blood Drive - Date to be announced

Mitzvah Day Planning is Underway! All hands on deck!

Do let us know if you're able to join our planning team for this meaningful and memorable annual event ...or to help man one of the activities that day.

Thank You Also to This Month's Partner-Agency Volunteers:

Nancy Cavillones, Cantor Debbie, Debbie Landzberg, Polly Schnell and Lynne Stark for working on behalf of the Daily Bread Food Pantry; Linda Hirschfeld and Polly Schnell for their help prepping and serving a meal to Dorothy Day Hospitality House clients; and Resa Fremed, Jacquie Goldner, Rabbi John and Jean Haddon and Polly Schnell for conducting Torah study sessions and bringing the joy of Shabbat to the Jewish men and women of Danbury's Federal Corrections Institute

Help Us Help Others This Year!

One-time and ongoing opportunities available for everyone - Contact [SocialAction@OurShirShalom.org](mailto:SocialAction@OurShirShalom.org)

*From Rabbi Reiner's desk- con't. from page 2*

candles, making Chanukkah the most observed Jewish holiday. 67% of American Jews participated in a Passover Seder, and participation in other Jewish holidays that are mentioned the Torah have significantly lower rates of participation: 59% fasted on Yom Kippur, and only 28% lit Shabbat candles regularly.

As I prepare for Chanukkah this year and seek to find ways for all our youth to feel positive about Judaism and not feel excluded, I am also reflecting on the elevation of Chanukkah as something of a paradox: In order to not feel excluded at this time of year, are we assimilating by elevating a minor holiday grounded in resistance to assimilation? Perhaps this question is too cynical and I do not want to sound like the "Grinch who stole Chanukkah!" We can also celebrate Chanukkah as a victory of freedom over tyranny, with a seemingly eternal message of bringing light and hope in the midst of darkness. The progression of Chanukkah interpretations over history certainly invites us to make this festival relevant to our own times as well. But where the commercial (not religious) Christmas season begins before Thanksgiving and continues into the New Year, should we limit our celebration of Chanukkah to eight nights? How can we elevate Chanukkah authentically, both to share the universally relevant messages and to ensure that Jews feel proud and not excluded at this time of year?

I invite your thoughts in response to all these questions. I look forward to hearing from you and hope that you and your family find much light and joy in whatever way you spell and celebrate the Festival of Chanukkah!

Rabbi David Reiner





# SPIRITED AND SOULFUL SHABBAT AT SHIR SHALOM

2017-18 (5778) FRIDAYS

October 13— **BETH STYLES**  
**7:30 PM**

Composer of award-winning  
new Jewish music  
Vocalist, pianist, arranger



November 10— **BETH STYLES AND  
MARK FINEBERG**  
**7:30 PM**

Reed artist—saxophone, flute,  
clarinet, veteran of Broadway,  
blues, pop, R and B, jazz and  
klezmer!



December 15— **CHANUKAH RUACH**  
**7:30 PM**

A Musical Celebration!

January 12— **MUSIC SHABBAT  
SPIRITUALS FOR  
MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY**  
**7:00 PM**

Gigi Van Dyke and the  
Serendipity Chorale sing spirituals  
in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



February 9— **MARK FINEBERG**  
**7:30 PM**

March 9— **BETH STYLES**  
**7:30 PM**

March 23— **MUSIC SHABBAT  
A SUITE SHABBAT**  
**7:30 PM**

Julian Schwarz, cellist,  
Marika Bournaki pianist,  
Paul Frucht, composer



April 13— **BETH STYLES**  
**7:30 PM**

April 27— **MUSIC SHABBAT  
LEON SHER**  
**7:30 PM**

Cantor, music director,  
composer

**Celebrating Cantor  
Debbie's 18th year!**



May 11— **MUSIC SHABBAT  
ISRAELI SONGS**  
**7:30 PM**

Teen Emissaries

May 25— **MARK FINEBERG**  
**7:30 PM**

June 8— **BETH STYLES**  
**7:30 PM**

Our warmest wishes for the forthcoming Chanukkah and holiday seasons. May you celebrate these days surrounded with the love and caring of family and friends.

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## DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Margaret Adasko	Cheryl Chess	Jake Heffler	Matthew Teich
Arel Meister-Aldama	Hannah DeLucia	Vivian Hoffman	Eva Trachtenberg
Isabella Alvarez	Jo Drawec	Andrea Jacobs	Margery Wallach
Danielle Bender	Jenna Dubin	Jonas Kalish	Richard Wetchler
Brian Bender	Danielle Finke	Steve Kaye	Caleb Wilfinger
Garry Berger	Sylvia Freidenrich	Andrew Knispel	Lucas Winson
Karen Blum	Jennifer Gantwerker	Gabrielle Krampf	Bryan Wolkin
Neal Blum	Ira Gerard	Linda Krulwich	Bianca Zaken
Rena Bruckman	Elaine Gordon	Lisa Leibowitz	Tiffany Zezula
Marcia Carroll	Janine Gordon	Judith Strom	Nathan Zezula
Henry Cavillones	Jean Haddon		

## DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

Cantor Debbie and F. Scott Gray  
Mark and Debra Lavin

Lew and Eve Siegel

Ian and Robin Harris  
David and Leslie Moss

## MAZEL TOV!

Please join us for Shabbat morning worship during the month of December. On Saturday, December 2nd at 10:30am, Haydn Wilfinger will be called to the Torah to help lead services as he becomes a Bar Mitzvah. Haydn is the son of David and Elise Wilfinger, and the stepson of Steven Meyers. Haydn lives in Ridgefield with his older brother, Caleb, and two younger sisters, Danielle and Lauren Meyers.

Haydn enjoys playing tennis and, during the fall and winter season, he can often be found watching football. His favorite TV show is "The Good Place" and, at the top of his list, he enjoys spending time with his family, particularly during Chanukkah when the whole family celebrates together. Although Haydn's favorite school subject is science, he aspires to pursue a career as a Broadway actor.

Haydn is proud to be a Jew because Jews are resilient and true to their religion. Becoming a Bar Mitzvah is meaningful to Haydn as he would like to encourage others to become more involved in Judaism and how they practice their faith.

## DECEMBER YAHREZEITEN

**Friday, December 1st, 2017**

Marvin Baker	uncle of Carlyn Bergman	Ethel Feinleib	grandmother of Leslie Gottlieb
Gertrude Frankel	grandmother of Scott Brenner	David Sol Friedman	father of Bryon Friedman
William Goldman		Louis Heit	grandfather of Stephen Heit
Jack Himoff		Herman Hoberman	grandfather of Meridith Sonnett
Frances Kempler		Beatrice Krulwich	mother of Jeffrey Krulwich
Evelyn Kurzweil	mother of Ken Kurzweil	Isadore Lichtbach	grandfather of Ian Leitner
Lillian Lotstein	mother of Susan Lapine	Howard Malloy	father of Betsy Higgins
Seymour Needleman	father of Ken Needleman	Arlene Richner	aunt of Ellen Strauss
Benjamin Ringler	grandfather of Elyse Arnow	Peter Vandervelden	father of Steven Vandervelden
Fred Yolen	uncle of David Yolen		

**Friday, December 8th, 2017**

Paul Abraham	father of Julie Sacks	Harold Broder	father of Stanford Broder
Leo Fine	grandfather of Peter Fine	Natalia Glicklich	mother of Mark Glicklich
Abraham Isaac Gordon	father of Elaine Gordon	Violet Murad	mother of Menashe Murad
Marvin Olarsch	father of Judy Vandervelden	Frank Policoff	grandfather of Steve Kaye
Jacob Puteska		Ruth Rosenthal	grandmother of Susan Westlake
Lauren Rousseau		Alfred Strauss	grandfather of Ellen Strauss
Pamela Siegel	cousin of Rosalind Kopfstein	Rose Zilber	grandmother of Barry Kay

**Friday, December 15th, 2017**

Martin Davis	grandfather of Suzie Rabinowitz	Alexander Davis	father of Jay Davis
Mary Jane Denzer	mother of Holly Alexander	Yvette Epstein	mother of Andrea Jacobs
Bernard Glaser	father of Laura Agisim	Joan Hammer	mother of Michael Hammer
Joan Holson	mother of Robin Heit	Millie Jacobs	mother of Alan Jacobs
Dorothy Karl	mother of Rosalind Kopfstein	Mina Kaye	mother of Steve Kaye
Belle Krietzberg	great aunt of Joshua Arnow	Grayce Romeo	
Meyer Varty	father of Gail Henner		

**Friday, December 22nd, 2017**

Rita Bergman	mother of Michael Bergman	Seymour Berman	father of Michael Berman
Evelyn Brenner	grandmother of Scott Brenner	Gussie Ellis	mother of Joseph Ellis
Seymour Eslofsky	father of Ellen Barth	Anna Heit	grandmother of Stephen Heit
Sadie Kaplan	grandmother of Steve Kaye	Arthur Karsch	father of Karen Blum
Billie Kaserman	mother of Wendy Meyer	Joy Koy	great aunt of Jamie Garrett
Jane Langer	grandmother of Karen Gerard	Jeff Lederman	brother of Linda Lederman
Oscar Lowy	grandfather of Terry Henry	Michael Mishkin	father of Richard Mishkin

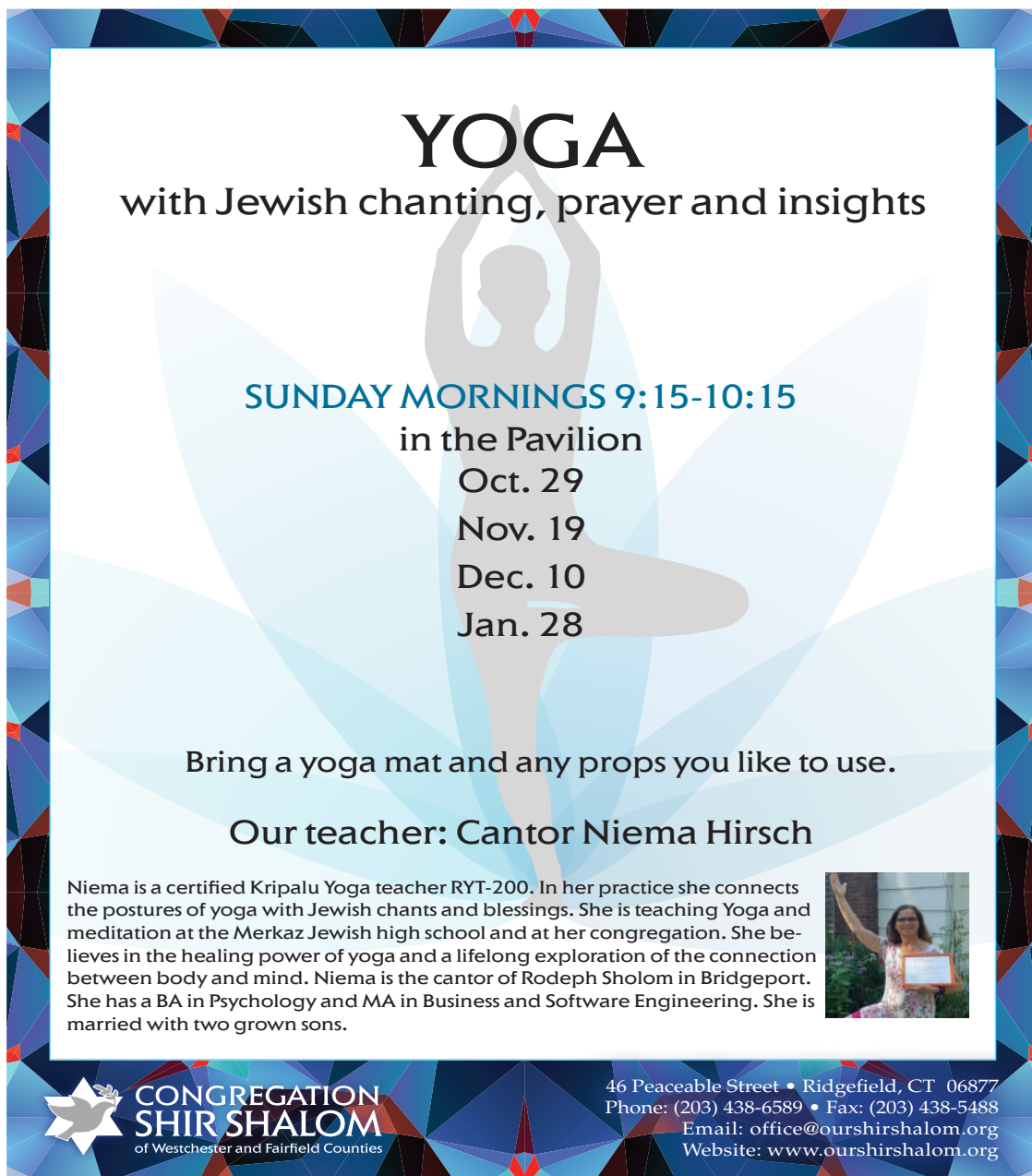


**Friday, December 29th, 2017**

Samuel Antkies	father of Michael Antkies	Harry Becker	grandfather of Lynn Becker
Mildred Block	aunt of Barbara Manners	Martha Cohen	grandmother of Tiffany Zezula
Jack Eber	grandfather Lynn Becker	Pearl Elkin	grandmother of Stephanie Herbstman
Gay Golman	aunt of Jamie Garrett	Ruth Henner	mother of Howard Henner
Paul Lowy	father of Terry Henry	Jacob Schneider	grandfather of Margie Gorelick
J. Teitler	cousin of Laura Leitner	Minnie Wallach	mother of Roy Wallach

We extend condolences to...

The Davis family, following the death of our congregant, Jay Davis, husband of Elyse Davis.



# YOGA


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Niema is a certified Kripalu Yoga teacher RYT-200. In her practice she connects the postures of yoga with Jewish chants and blessings. She is teaching Yoga and meditation at the Merkaz Jewish high school and at her congregation. She believes in the healing power of yoga and a lifelong exploration of the connection between body and mind. Niema is the cantor of Rodeph Shalom in Bridgeport. She has a BA in Psychology and MA in Business and Software Engineering. She is married with two grown sons.



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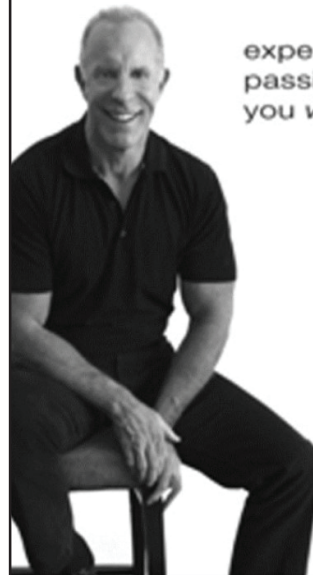
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DECEMBER 2017

KISLEV/TEVET 5778

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					<b>1</b> 11:30 am Young Community Shabbat 6:00 pm Kabballat Shabbat	<b>2</b> 9:00 am Torah 101 10:30 am Shabbat Morning Worship- Bar Mitzvah of Haydn Wilfinger
<b>3</b> Religious School 10:00 am Annual Congregational Meeting (snow date is 12/10/17) 12:15 pm NFTY Youth Group	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> Religious School 5:30 pm NFTY Youth Group URJ Biennial	<b>7</b> Religious School URJ Biennial	<b>8</b> 11:30 am Young Community Shabbat 7:30 pm Kabballat Shabbat URJ Biennial	<b>9</b> URJ Biennial
<b>10</b> Religious School URJ Biennial	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> Erev Chanukkah 1st candle	<b>13</b> Religious School Chanukkah- 2nd candle	<b>14</b> Religious School Chanukkah- 3rd candle	<b>15</b> 11:30 am Young Community Shabbat 7:30 pm Ruach Shabbat with Chanukkah songs 4th candle	<b>16</b> 9:00am Torah 101 Chanukkah- 5th candle
<b>17</b> Religious School- Chanukkah Celebration 12:15 pm NFTY Youth Group 3:00 pm ECC Chanukkah celebration Chanukkah- 6th candle	<b>18</b> Chanukkah- 7th candle Rosh Chodesh	<b>19</b> Chanukkah- 8th candle	<b>20</b> Religious School 5:30 pm NFTY Youth Group	<b>21</b> 12noon-2pm "Lunch & Learn" with Rabbi Haddon- "The Real Story Behind Somewhere Over the Rainbow" Religious School	<b>22</b> 7:30 pm Kabballat Shabbat	<b>23</b>
<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> Office Closed	<b>26</b> Office Closed	<b>27</b> Office Closed	<b>28</b> Office Closed	<b>29</b> Office Closed 7:30 pm- Kabballat Shabbat	<b>30</b>
<b>31</b>						

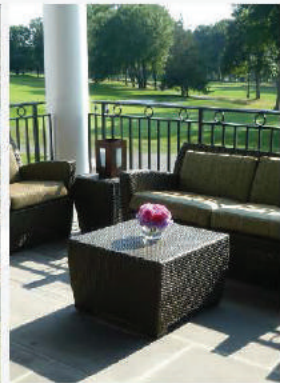


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