



January and February Worship Schedule

January 7	6:00 p.m.	Kabbalat Shabbat Worship
January 8	9:00 a.m.	Torah 101
January 14	5:30 p.m. 7:30 p.m.	Tot Shabbat Kabbalat Shabbat Worship: Honoring the memory of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
January 15	9:00 a.m.	Shabbat Morning Study: MLK & The Jews
January 21	7:30 p.m.	Kabbalat Shabbat Worship
January 22	9:00 a.m.	Torah 101
January 28	7:30 p.m.	Kabbalat Shabbat Worship

February 4	6:00 p.m.	Kabbalat Shabbat Worship
February 5	9:00 a.m.	Torah 101
February 11	5:30 p.m. 7:30 p.m.	Tot Shabbat Kabbalat Shabbat Worship
February 18	7:30 p.m.	Kabbalat Shabbat Worship
February 25	7:30 p.m.	Kabbalat Shabbat Worship
February 26	9:00 a.m.	Torah 101

Please join us in-person or online for our Shabbat Services.

New Congregant Welcome, School Holiday Celebrations & Teens cooking with Cantor



CONGREGANT SPOTLIGHT

Joel and Eileen Segalman: TSI Legacy member-1994 (27 Years!)

Tell us about what brought you to Ridgefield and the area?

Eileen: We met in Massachusetts and then he bought a (podiatry) practice in Connecticut. We dated long distance for several years because I was still living in Massachusetts. At the time he was living in Hamden and my vision of CT growing up was not that. I had moved home with my parents and my dad had got some horses and it was what I always dreamed of when I was little. When we knew we would be in CT, we said we needed to find something like that.

Joel: In 1994, Ridgefield was ranked the best town at that time. We had gotten engaged and she was going to come down to move in with me in CT. So since my parents were on Long Island and we were going to drive from Hamden to Long Island for Thanksgiving weekend we both said let's take a look at that town Ridgefield.

Eileen: It was actually this day. It was the holiday stroll. Santa was coming to town the Friday after Thanksgiving and that was the first time we were ever in Ridgefield. It was something like out of Norman Rockwell.

Joel: What caught my eye was the amount of young couples with kids walking and just seeing very happy people. I remember looking at Eileen and we both said this is where we want to be. It seemed perfect and 27 year later it's still perfect.

What is your Jewish journey to becoming congregants at the temple?

Joel: I'm not religious person but I came into this planet with two things. I came in with my life and I came in with my Judaism and I will go that way. It means that much to me. I think it came when I learned about the Holocaust. That really anchored it in for me. It was such a powerful thing for me. I said to myself there is no way if that happened to our people I am going to drop the ball. For the people who died for just being Jewish how could I just let that go? It's the ethnicity of who I am and my people. I feel the fabric of them in my blood. It's in my DNA.

Eileen was born a Catholic and fell away from it. She saw how ethnic I was and Judaism kind of interested her to the point where she eventually converted on her own. It's such a strong internal thing that there is no way that I did not want my kids to at least understand that. Prior to even getting married we did join the temple. We joined in 1994 right away because we were a part of this town now. We didn't know anybody. Once we joined the temple, Rabbi Haddon became not only our rabbi at that time, but we would go out to dinner with him and his wife and another couple who became our friends. We instantly had people we loved and enjoyed being with.

What memories stand out from your time as congregants? What keeps you connected to the community?

Joel: A conversion, wedding, 2 Bar Mitzvahs and 1 Bat Mitzvah. We've had some tragedy. My father who passed away 2 years ago has a brother. I get a phone call on the Friday night of July 4th weekend that my only uncle is at Westchester Medical Center because he had a cerebral hemorrhage. I drove right down, and they say that your uncle is dying. He will not leave this hospital and over the next few days we have to discuss the situation. On Monday July 5th, I get a phone call around 6 p.m. that he's struggling. They say, "At this point we would like to give him more morphine and take him off life support." I hop in the car and we go to the hospital. I'm holding my uncle's hand as he's passing and we're waiting for him to pass on. 10 p.m. comes and my uncle does not pass away. I have to leave and the nurses say "If he passes in the middle of the night do you want us to call you?" I say "Call me any time." Tuesday, July 6th at 5:05 a.m. my mother is calling me. I figured my uncle died. I picked up the phone and said "I know. I was with him last night." She said, "No no no. Listen there's another tragedy. Something else happened. Your niece was in a car accident and passed away." I went into shock and broke down.



Continued on next page...

Rabbi Reiner was the biggest source of help for my sister, for myself, for my family. My sister is from Great Neck and not a member of a temple. Rabbi Reiner called me up and said "Your family is going through an extraordinary level of trauma. I want to see your sister, speak with her and let me come down to do a memorial service on Friday." He moved mountains to be there.

Eileen: It goes back to what my father always said when we would talk about religion. There are a couple times in life when people come back to their religion - in tragedies, in death, in war suddenly people become spiritual again. There are moments in life when you need that. Rabbi Reiner was there for his sister and made all the difference in the world. He is very authentic. It comes from his heart and comes from his soul. When I've had conversations with friends over the years who drop out after their kids went through their bar or bat mitzvah what happens with those other life events? This is our community.

Joel: For the rest of the world survival is a passive thing they do on their own. For Jews they need each other and it's been proven to us in history. I will forever be a member of that temple even if for whatever reason I could never put a foot step in the door. It will forever be a brick and mortar for me, for my family, for other families and for future generations.

*Thank you to Jaime Kaplan for the **Spotlight** Photograph and to Christina Gogish and Linda Hirschfeld for this special feature.*

From the Congregants Committee

Our congregation welcomed over 40 new families this year, including ECC families, Religious School children, singles and empty nesters. It takes a village as they say and we have an amazing village (community)!

On December 8th, we had a welcome cocktail party for our new congregants to meet each other, meet board members, our staff, and committee chairs. It was a great evening filled with lots of chatting, a welcoming by Rabbi Reiner and President Larry Hoffman, singing led by Cantor Debbie and amazing food made by our Congregants Committee. Each Committee Chair was introduced as well. Thank you to Jamie Kaplan, Linda Hirschfeld, Christina Gogish, Serafima Dashevskaya, Terry Henry and Stacey Wanicur for the delicious spread of apps, sweets, beverages and the beautiful décor. Enjoy some photos of this fun in person event on the cover and below.

March 4, 2022 is Shabbat Across America where we join with congregations across the US and Canada to welcome and experience Shabbat. Please consider inviting your family and friends who are not presently associated with a synagogue. Last Shabbat Across America we including honoring our over 80 congregant families who have been congregants for over 20 years. Stay tuned for more information on this special Shabbat.

For more information on the Congregants Committee and to volunteer to join our committee please contact Bobbie Cohlan: rmcbjc@aol.com.



Congregation Shir Shalom is happy to welcome new Congregant:

Madeleine Sobel from Ridgefield, CT.

We are glad that you have become part of our Congregation Shir Shalom community again and we all wish you a warm welcome!

FROM RABBI REINER'S DESK



Here is an excerpt from the D'var Torah I delivered during our Annual Congregational Meeting on December 12, 2021:

After a minor injury this Fall, I had to wear a rigid splint for two months. Aside from the nuisance, I am amazed at how my body adapted, consciously and unconsciously, to significant limits in the function of my dominant hand. It was difficult to type because I was not able to bend my finger and the splint was wider and longer than my finger meaning many mistaken key strokes. After several decades of speedy and accurate typing, it was fascinating to observe how my brain adapted and took the injured finger out of rotation, using other fingers to cover the same keyboard real estate.

A global pandemic has restricted our interactions and operations and we have rapidly adapted to continue our sacred community. We have changed our operations and approaches, from how we worship to how we celebrate, how we clean to how we teach, how we budget to how we fundraise.

After two months, the splint was removed. The chorus of angels I hoped to hear was drowned out by the hum of the x-ray machine. My finger is tender and stiff and, after only contact with a smooth plastic splint for two months, every surface I touch feels like ice-cold sandpaper. When I asked the doctor if I could play the violin, he said I should take lessons first.

As we approach the end of a second year of a global pandemic, I am conscious of how our lives have evolved. We have fewer restrictions than the earliest weeks when we were locked down. Most in our community are vaccinated. Mask mandates come and go. For a few weeks over the summer we were worshipping indoors without masks. Life is not as it was in December 2019, when we last gathered in the Pavillion for our Annual Meeting.

The removal of my splint allowed me to re-imagine my future. The evolving pandemic is an opportunity for us, as a sacred community, to re-imagine our collective future.

A familiar line from Proverbs (29:18) recalls "When there is no vision, the people perish." This message is presented throughout our scriptural tradition. The Promised Land is a vision for the future presented in Torah, while our Ancient Israelite ancestors were wandering in the wilderness. Torah presents a vision for our future as well: how to live and work together to accomplish greatness.

The section of Torah that we are reading this week (Parashat Vayechi) is the concluding section of the book of Genesis. Jacob and his descendants have gone to Egypt where they find success and stability. As death approaches, Jacob blesses his children and grandchildren by reflecting on their lives and offering hopes for their imagined future.

These closing benedictions capture the essence of our Annual Congregational Meeting. Today is an important opportunity to reflect upon the past year, what we have accomplished as a sacred community.

FROM RABBI REINER'S DESK CONT.

And our Annual Meeting is an important opportunity to imagine and prepare for our future. We will formally elect lay leaders who will help guide our sacred community and help us realize our goals (thank you to the Nominating Committee, led by our Immediate Past President, Lynn Broder, for their work in assembling and empowering a tremendous slate of leaders). And while ratifying our annual budget may seem more accounting and corporate, our tradition teaches "If there is no flour, there will be no Torah..." Ultimately the budget is a projection of what resources we will need in the year ahead and it is a statement of our values, priorities, and aspirations. We allocate funds for programs and staff and clergy and expenses that will serve and advance our sacred community. There is no pig roast line item because it is not a priority for 2022.

In the context of the pandemic and our Atid Campaign for Our Future, I continue to imagine our future as a sacred community: a warm and welcoming, connected and vibrant, engaged and inspired community, with deep and meaningful connections within and among families who celebrate together and support each other through sacred milestones on our respective life journeys.

As we collectively imagine our future, without pandemic restrictions, with adequate resources to accomplish our goals, may we appreciate the sacred work that is at the core of our Annual Meeting.

Board and Staff

FROM THE OFFICE

Visiting our building: Our office is generally open for phone calls or visits from **10AM-2PM**, Monday-Friday, or by appointment. If you would like to hand-deliver something or need to pick something up, there are clear plastic bins and a mailbox on our porch. Yahrzeit candles, prayerbooks, and Jewish calendars are available for home use. Our staff can be contacted by e-mail at the email addresses listed to the right. Our practice is to not e-mail on Shabbat or other Jewish holy days

BOARD	TEAM
Larry Brooks, Co-President Jeff Gorelick, Co-President President@OurShirShalom.org	Senior Rabbi David L. Reiner MAHL RabbiReiner@OurShirShalom.org
Terry Henry, Executive Vice President Execvp@OurShirShalom.org	Cantor Deborah Katchko-Gray CantorDebbie@OurShirShalom.org
Suzanne Sunday, Vice President Marc Sheridan, Vice President Karen Taylor, Chief Financial Officer Larry Hoffman, Immediate Past President Jody Cross, Secretary Secretary@OurShirShalom.org	Executive Director Mark Block Mblock@OurShirShalom.org
Lynn Broder, Trustee Lesly Burns, Trustee Nicole Kalish, Trustee Steve Landzberg, Trustee Robi Margolis, Trustee Stacey Neumann, Trustee David Pazer, Trustee Adam Rubinfeld, Trustee Eli Schechter, Trustee Michael Zeitz, Trustee Tiffany Zezula, Trustee	Religious School Director Cathy Deutchman Cathy@OurShirShalom.org
Eva Trachtenberg, Youth Representative Board@OurShirShalom.org	Early Childhood Center Director Sarah Denyer Sarah@OurShirShalom.org
	Office Administrator Kim Franz KFranz@OurShirShalom.org
	Allyson Bellio RabbiAssist@OurShirShalom.org
	Alexandra Schroeder Communications@OurShirShalom.org
	Rabbi Emeritus: Jon Haddon D.D. RabbiHaddon@OurShirShalom.org
	Early Childhood Director Emerita Jane Emmer JWeilEmmer@gmail.com
	Religious School Director Emerita Leslie Gottlieb Leslie@OurShirShalom.org

A MESSAGE FROM THE CO-PRESIDENTS

LARRY BROOKS / JEFFREY GORELICK



I welcome this opportunity to introduce myself as I assume the role of co-President at our beloved Congregation Shir Shalom. My name is Jeff Gorelick, and my wife, Margie, and I have been members of the synagogue since 1995. I am a physician based in Danbury since 1989 and Margie is a special education teacher at Danbury High School since 1993. We began in Danbury but moved, along with our three children, to Ridgefield in 1994, soon thereafter adding a fourth (and final!) child and have been here ever since. After settling in, we discovered the warmth and spirituality of Temple Shearith Israel, which became Congregation Shir Shalom.

It has been the focus of our spiritual, religious, and family life as well as an important social resource over these many years. We have celebrated the joy of four Bnai Mitzvot, watching with pride and tears as our children were called to the Torah. We have prayed at over twenty-five years of High Holy Day services, Erev Shabbats, and blessed with wonderful clergy and fellow congregants. That same congregation and clergy with whom we shared so much joy has also been there with support and comfort during times of sorrow, most recently at the loss of my Mom.

Over the years, I have been Brotherhood president and active member, headed the parking lot efforts on the High Holy Days, and Margie is presently Sisterhood co-president. When I was asked to serve, with Larry Brooks, as co-president, I knew that I had to accept because of how important it is to us that we do anything we can to help assure the continued health and growth of Shir Shalom, a place that has given so much to our family.

Along with the help of Terry Henry, executive VP, the wonderful congregants who make up the Board, Rabbi Reiner and Cantor Debbie, as well as all the support staff of the synagogue, I am certain that Larry and I will be able to continue the path of growth and improvement that past leadership has started and I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible in the days ahead.

Jeff Gorelick



I hope you are enjoying the start of the new year and had time to spend with family and friends! It's a pleasure to introduce myself as I join Jeff Gorelick as co-President of Temple Shir Shalom. I joined our sacred community about 15 years ago, after moving from New Jersey to Danbury and shortly before my wife, Jessica, and I were married. Being part of a Jewish community was important to us even in our early days as a family. Jessica decided to convert to Judaism and joining a synagogue that was welcoming and made her feel comfortable was most important to us. We were met with the warmth of Rabbi Haddon and it made for an easy decision to be part of Congregation Shir Shalom, then Temple Shearith Israel.

Since that time, Jessica and I welcomed two beautiful girls, Abigail (11) and Madison (7), and we moved to Ridgefield. Jessica teaches Spanish at Ridgefield Academy, where both our girls attend school. I am very proud that Jessica is also the Service Learning coordinator at Ridgefield Academy which helps our family stay actively involved in supporting organizations such as A Better Chance, Women's Center of Danbury, and Filling in the Blanks.

Abigail and Madison both attend religious school here at Congregation Shir Shalom. In addition to them learning about Judaism, studying Hebrew, making Jewish friends, and talking about issues with fellow Jews, this is time for Jessica and I to enjoy a cup of coffee together or for me to woodwork, my new COVID induced hobby!

I served on the Temple Board about ten years ago and was also the BBYO advisor around the same time. Last year I rejoined the Board and now it's a pleasure to have the opportunity to serve as co-President with Jeff Gorelick. It's also with great appreciation that we will have the continued support of Larry Hoffman (Immediate Past President) and Terry Henry (Executive VP) as well as the collaborative and diligent temple staff and clergy. I can't thank Rabbi Reiner and Cantor Debbie enough for their continued commitment to each one of us. I look forward to working with them and the rest of the Temple Board to strengthen our sacred community.

Please feel free to reach out to me anytime. I look forward to meeting and seeing you soon!

Larry Brooks

CANTOR'S CORNER

CANTOR DEBORAH KATCHKO-GRAY



It's been a whirlwind of a fall and early winter here at Congregation Shir Shalom. Following the High Holy Days, I've enjoyed working with our new Religious School Director Cathy Deutchman with music and creative prayer, as well as Sarah Denyer, the ECC Director, singing songs with our precious little ones. Thanks to Jamie Kaplan, I taught a cooking class to her teens on Eastern European dishes including kasha varnishkes with mushrooms and roasted butternut squash. YUM! Black and white cookies, a Jewish bakery staple, and rainbow cookies which are not traditionally Jewish, but just delicious! I taught it to adults as well recently. I'm not a professional chef, but I enjoy sharing Jewish holiday recipes. Maybe we can do more of this if there is an interest. Let me know!

In addition to my professional life at Shir Shalom, I've always been involved in projects that lift my spirits and challenge my knowledge. I'm still writing a book about my years as a student of Elie Wiesel called tentatively, "Class Notes- A Lifetime of Learning with Elie Wiesel." Recently I was filmed for a documentary on Elie Wiesel focusing on his role as a teacher. He certainly was my mentor and teacher who continues to make an impact on my life. I'm honored to share my thoughts and experiences with the documentary film. They filmed me at home and at temple, because if you have been in my office, you'd see the wall of personal notes from Wiesel and many photos and articles framed related to him.

I feel like I'm checking off mini goals along the way.

My music library was extensive and reflected 20 years in the conservative movement, with many manuscripts and original papers from my grandfather. I realized they need to be at Hebrew Union College's Library rather than my study in Ridgefield. The director came and took many boxes to be shared and archived at Hebrew Union College in New York. I also donated many boxes of music and books to a cantorial student who shared it with many colleagues at the same school. Early spring cleaning and moving musical treasures on to other homes where they can be appreciated.

Anat Hoffman, director of Women of the Wall has asked me to put a choir together for the monthly Rosh Chodesh services at the Kotel. This is an amazing project sponsored by the Women Cantors' Network and is getting closer to completion. I found a music director in Jerusalem, figured out which music should be arranged for choir, and hired Beth Styles to do the arrangements. We made a teaching recording for the newly forming choir, and I hope to see this project come to fruition this spring. We need the Kotel Agreement to be in place so security and respect will be the atmosphere for a beautiful musical service. I am hopeful that it will all come together, and I would love to be at the first WOW Choir service sharing in the prayers and music when that happens.

I serve on the board of our local Federation of Jewish Philanthropy and the Jewish Women International Clergy Task Force. I truly believe we can make a difference in our lives by going outside our comfort zones and trying to help others in different ways.

Hoping for a healthy and happy Spring for all.

Shalom
Cantor Debbie Katchko-Gray

CANTOR'S CORNER

CANTOR DEBORAH KATCHKO-GRAY



Music and Cultural Arts at Congregation Shir Shalom

Schedule of Events & Services



Friday, March 11th: 7:30 PM: Shabbat with special musical guest: Mark Fineberg, reed artist.

Friday, April 8th: 7:30 PM: Julian Schwarz, cello and Marika Bournaki, piano: World class musicians performing Jewish Music in our sanctuary as part of our Friday evening service.

Sunday, April 24th: 2 PM: Songs and Stories of Elie Wiesel: Cantor Katchko-Gray shares a lifetime of learning from her teacher.

Friday May 13th: 7:30 PM: Spirited and Soulful Music with Beth Styles.

All programs are sponsored by the Cantor's Music Fund. Thank you for your donations.

CRAFTS WITH CANTOR DEBBIE

Challah Cover Workshop for Shir Shalom Adult Education

Sunday, March 13th: 1 - 3:00 PM: Open to adult Congregants
(limited to first 15 to register)

Sunday, March 27th: 12 - 1:00 PM: Workshop for RS students/families
(limited to first 15 to register)

Sunday, March 27th: 1 - 3:00 PM: Open to adult Congregants
(limited to first 15 to register)

Learn to make a beautiful challah cover using Swedish Weaving and a fabric that is easy on the eyes!

All materials covered by Cantor Debbie- if you have specific colors you want, please bring DMC Pearl Cotton #5 skeins in the colors you want. You'll need two of each color.

RSVP to adultprogramming@OurShirShalom.org by Feb. 1st



Decorating Chanukah Shells with Cantor Debbie.

RITUAL COMMITTEE

BY MICHAEL SALPETER AND LAURIE DUBIN

THE RITUAL COMMITTEE
January/February 2022

“There is a word that is seldom said, a word for an emotion almost too deep to be expressed: the love of the Sabbath.”

— Abraham Joshua Heschel

Each Shabbat people around the world, from all different branches of Judaism, hold one basic principle in common: the love of Shabbat. Even in our community, one small slice of the Judaic world, we choose different methods to celebrate Shabbat. Some of us attend services in person, some online, some of us visit family members or share Shabbat dinner with friends. Whatever form of celebration you follow, we hope that spending an hour or so on Friday evening with your Shir Shalom family is included in your plans.

On Friday evening December 10th, Beth Styles was once again in our sanctuary entertaining and moving us with her repertoire of her compositions. The service was followed by a “grab and go” Oneg Shabbat where attendees were encouraged to fill bags with a variety of treats that was provided by the ritual committee, hang around to schmooze with their friends and take their bags with them. We are hoping that this new form of an old tradition can be repeated in the weeks ahead. Also this spring we will see the re-emergence of participation by religious school classes being incorporated into particular Friday evening services. Tot Shabbat services have also been planned for families with pre-school age children.

This time of year presents itself with the parade of “spring” festivals – Tu B’shevat, Purim and Passover. We will be revisiting how we may celebrate these holidays, incorporating guidance from our medical team. Stay tuned to email communications for updates in the weeks and months to come.

If you have any suggestions on how we can make the celebration of Shabbat and festivals more meaningful for you and your family, please share your ideas with the members of the ritual committee.

Michael Salpeter and Laurie Dubin



Join Rabbi Reiner on select
Saturdays at 9AM in 2022 for Torah
101. Please check our weekly eblast
and Shir Shalom calendar for dates.



“Excerpts in Jewish History”

To the Shir Shalom Congregation,

After writing 64 short stories based on events in Jewish history, I have decided to retire from writing. I would like to thank Rabbi Reiner, the Temple Board, and the Congregation for giving me the opportunity to present these articles in the Shir Shalom newsletter for the past seven years.

I wish to especially thank Eve Siegel for her ideas and excellent editing during that entire period.

I hope that our very talented congregation will bring forth a person or persons who will use this section of the newsletter to present new and exciting material on Jewish history, or any other subject that the congregation would enjoy reading.

My best wishes and most of all, good health to everyone.

Lew

“Excerpts in Jewish History” has been 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*.



Please join us in thanking Lew Siegel for his many contributions of interesting and entertaining historical features in our Shir Shalom Bulletin over the past several years! He has written 64 articles for our community’s enjoyment and Jewish education. We truly appreciate every article.

Thank you Lew!

Our Early Childhood Center by Sarah Denyer (ECC Director)

Autumn at the ECC was wonderful! Our students continue to enjoy being with their classmates and are all flourishing. We have re-instituted our weekly “Mystery Reader” and it has been heartwarming to have parents and grandparents back in the classrooms on a regular basis.

Our special Young Community Shabbats for Thanksgiving and Chanukah were great opportunities for our whole ECC community to be together. For Thanksgiving we had a joyful time in the sanctuary, with our usual songs and blessings as well as some Thanksgiving selections and short performances by the Pre-K and Purple Room students. We concluded with a quick nosh on the dance floor. Chanukah was celebrated in a similar manner, with the food being more plentiful, including latkes made by ECC grandmother Serafima Dashevskaya, and applesauce and donuts made by our students.

The ECC families participated in both a Thanksgiving Food Drive and a Holiday Pajama Drive. Both efforts produced plentiful results and the Community Center of Northern Westchester was grateful for our participation.

We hope January will bring lots of outdoor play in the snow! We look forward to celebrating Tu B’Shevat and having our families join us in the sanctuary for a Special Tu B’Shevat Young Community Shabbat on January 14th.

Lastly, we are grateful for the guidance from Shir Shalom’s Medical Team for helping us navigate ever-changing pandemic concerns. It is comforting to have medical professionals to consult with during these challenging times. We have managed to keep Covid out of our classrooms and are thankful for the support of our families in keeping everyone healthy!

SOCIAL ACTION NEWS



We want to thank Andrea deLange and our RS teacher Gerry Hecht who volunteer twice a week at the Daily Bread Food Pantry. They have become an integral part of the team at the Pantry and their service is greatly appreciated. Also, a big thanks to Debbie Landzberg for continuing to volunteer at the Dorothy Day Hospitality House. Volunteering provides critical help to people in need within our community, but the benefit is also for you, the volunteer. Get involved, meet new friends, and have an impact on your community. ***See below for ways to get involved.***

Daily Bread Food Pantry: This Danbury-based food pantry has been open throughout the pandemic thanks to the support of the community. DBFP continues to provide more than sixty pounds of fresh, healthy food items to more than two hundred struggling households twice weekly – three times pre-pandemic numbers! The pantry is always in need of enthusiastic volunteers and monetary donations to cover the significant costs of several thousand pounds of food each week. Please call 203-826-8252 if interested in volunteering and go to www.dailybreadfoodpantry.com to make a donation.

Community Center of Northern Westchester: Located in Katonah, the CCNW's Food Pantry and second-hand clothing boutique is serving a huge number of families and would welcome socially distant volunteers and financial donations can be made at their website: <https://communitycenternw.org/>

Dorothy Day Hospitality House: Your help is needed at this Danbury soup kitchen. Please consider one or both of the following!

1. Go to www.dorothydaydanbury.org to sign up for sandwich-making and drop-off.
2. Congregation Shir Shalom is gathering a group of volunteers to purchase and prep very simple meals for hungry guests periodically in 2022. Please contact Amy Margulies for more information at margulies07@gmail.com.

...And Last But Not Least, For the Teens: Ben and Jacob Voellmicke, assisted by their Mom Lisa, have been working to organize the teens to participate in Social Action activities. Thank you again, Ben & Jacob. Please reach out to them for more information on how to get involved jacobvoellmicke2005@gmail.com and bvoellmicke@gmail.com.

Looking ahead, we plan to host a Breakfast Run for the Spring, 2022 and in May will be Mitzvah Day. Stay tuned!

Many thanks everyone!

Debbie Lavin , Amy Margulies and Debbie Landzberg
Social Action Committee Co-Chairs

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT SHIR SHALOM SISTERHOOD

Greetings from Sisterhood!

Sisterhood Sends New Year's Wishes for a Happy and Healthy 2022!!!

Can it be that 2021 is coming to a close? Margie, Christina and Laurie want to thank everyone who has joined Sisterhood this year, many for the first time and many as long time members. Many of us have enjoyed both virtual Sisterhood activities and a re-start of in-person gatherings while mindful of COVID concerns.

Sisterhood has joined with other committees in the spirit of giving, contributing both new and gently used winter-wear for use by families in need. Women of all ages have shared delicious nibbles and friendship, all in support of making connections while supporting our Jewish community.

Many thanks to Cantor Debbie who provided wonderful and successful craft opportunity (multi-generational) as well as music and spirit to Sisterhood events.

Many thanks to the administrative support, and security staff for seamless and safe access and use of the building and facilities for the Sisterhood Kick-off, the Sisterhood Hanukkah Party, weekly Mah Jongg, Monthly Book Club, and more! Sisterhood members Stacey Sussman and Yvette Carp have taught a new crew of Mah Jongg players to join our already loyal group of players!

Many new congregants have joined Sisterhood and we are thrilled to welcome them all!

Sisterhood hopes to plan a Virtual Sip & Chat at some point in January such that regardless of weather and/or where Sisterhood members find themselves, we can be together to catch up and enjoy each other's company even for just a little while. Watch for announcements of the date and time, and how to access the Zoom link. Also take note, that **Book Club will next be meeting on Monday, February 7, 2022** to discuss a "The Book of Lost Names," in-person at the synagogue at 7:00 p.m. All Sisterhood members are welcome to join in the discussion and camaraderie."

We are always interested in hearing about ideas and opportunities for connection of interest!

Laurie Wolkin, Margie Gorelick and Christina Gogish



Above: Sisterhood Chanukah Party

**Relax your body,
calm your mind,
renew your spirit...**

RHONDA S. LACKOW
Licensed Clinical Massage Therapist

Rhonda has a diverse private practice, providing a nurturing, healing experience to clients of all ages. She has been practicing therapeutic massage since 2005 and helps clients manage stress, loss, illness, and life transitions. She is trained and experienced in Swedish, Deep Tissue, Reflexology, trauma treatment, Oncology massage, pregnancy and post-natal massage, Myofascial Release, Reiki, and Hospice massage and energy work.

GIFT CERTIFICATES AVAILABLE

📍 158 Danbury Rd. Suite 3, Ridgefield, CT
📞 203-733-7198 ✉️ rlackow@gmail.com

FROM THE DESK OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MARK BLOCK

Don't Remember, Renew

Hillel was a poor man who earned no more than a meager amount a day. He was a proud and studious man. He cared for his family by keeping half of his earnings and the other half he gave to the guard at the Beit Midrash, the hall for studying Torah, for his work in protecting the House of Study. But as we often know from history all that appears good is not as it seems. One day the guard would not let Hillel in, he had earned nothing to give him. This did not deter Hillel, he climbed onto the roof and listened to the teachings as they emanated up through the chimney. In the morning the scholars in the study hall were curious why the light wasn't shining into the house, what they discovered was Hillel outside with snow covering him. That was how much Hillel wanted to learn – everyday.

Fast forward many years later and Hillel's descendent, Rabbi Gamliel was removed from his position as Head of the Beit Midrash for shaming another Rabbi. Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah was appointed in his place. As it happens on that day, the guard was removed from his post as doorkeeper and the doors of the study hall were opened to enter. Benches were added to the study hall, and others were welcomed to study together.

This story provides us with a view on two openings to Jewish life. One is closed, guarded and exclusive. The other is accepting, inclusive and welcoming. But this isn't a story that is all one or the other. It is neither black nor white, for Hillel is a hero, as much as Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah is. We are challenged to color in the lines with shades of grey that cause us to think about what it takes to build and maintain a house of worship, study, and assembly.

This is not a new struggle; it is one that has evolved with considerable effort throughout Jewish history. What happens when a synagogue is too closed, too discerning – we risk becoming like Rabban Gamliel, and harming those in our community – freezing them out. We all know the benefits of a warm, welcoming environment, open to everyone; after all, it is the kind of communities we live in. We must renew, not remember. We must turn from the sheen of being impenetrable and involve ourselves in the difficult work of growing, changing, learning, and making ourselves even more relevant in today's world, a world too easily disengaged where the barriers to entry are far greater than the guard at the door of the study hall.

Nathaniel Hawthorne wrote in *The House of Seven Gables*, "We shall live to see the day, I trust ... when no man shall build his house for posterity. Why should he? He might just as reasonably order a durable suit of clothes, – leather, or gutta-percha, or whatever else lasts longest, – so that his great-grandchildren should have the benefit of them and cut precisely the same figure in the world that he himself does. If each generation were allowed and expected to build its own houses, that single change, comparatively unimportant in itself, would imply almost every reform which society is now suffering for."

We must build our own Beit Midrash, not as one to knock people down, but one that renews us and invites and encourages us so we may keep re-building and re-designing the portals that will be necessary to engage us today in an increasingly different world from the one we were so familiar with just a couple of short years ago. If we do that, we will be successful in expanding our sacred community and defining our study hall as one that is truly built for the long-term.

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in honor of Penelope and Calvin Wein becoming B’nai Mitzvah

in memory of Barbara Kielhofer, z”l, sister of Tracey

Weisberg

in honor of the naming of our granddaughter, Emme Faye

in memory of Freda Shuler, z”l and Bernard Shuler, z”l

in memory of Phyllis Bellio

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in memory of Charles Fremed, z”l

in gratitude

We Appreciate Your Generosity!

Yom Kippur Pledges

Thank you to the generous families listed below who have pledged to our Yom Kippur Appeal:

Elliot & Laura Agisim
David and Phyllis Amerling
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Kurt Voellmicke &
Lisa Ipp-Voellmicke
Alan and Beth Waldman
Marty Weisberg
Margaret Weissman
Hal & Laurie Wolkin
David & Victoria Yolen

Thank you to the following families for their donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund and Cantor's Discretionary Fund in memory of Jeffrey Gorelick's mother, Rachel L. Gorelick, z"l.

Stephanie & David Bell
Lynn & Stan Broder
Heather & Jeff Butchen
Janis Dardick
Carol Dudnick
Beth & David Goldsmith
Stephanie & Matt Herbstman
Louise Hochberg
Marla & Barry Kay

Leslie & David Kramer
Ellen Lipton
Bonnie & David Pazer
Suzie & Dan Rabinowitz
Eileen & Joel Segalman
Gerri & Jay Silver
Allison & Jon Stockel
Matt & Jill Teich

JANUARY YAHREZEITEN

Friday, January 7th, 2022:

Peter Aries	father of Richard Aries	Joan Fields Berg	mother of Jeff Berg
Penny Binn Binstock	relative of Moreton Binn	Rhoda Brand	mother of Michael Brand
Ernest Elkin	father of Stephanie Herbstman	Helene Fuchs	grandmother of Hanky Kutscher
Jean Kaplan	grandmother of Susannah Altman	Sanford Kessler	father of Ronni Hammer
Helene Kutscher	mother of Dr. Martin Kutscher	Renee Miller	mother of Linda Hirschfeld

Friday, January 14, 2022:

Sharon Eisberg	mother of Tiffany Zezula	Morris Geller	grandfather of Jamie Garrett
Yetta Goldberg	mother of Jacob Goldberg	Roslyn Harris	mother of Ian Harris
Joan Landzberg	mother of Steve Landzberg	Arthur L. Penzel	father of Lesly Burns
Shirley Schwartz	grandmother of Lisa Kurtz	Ruth Sunday Davis	mother of Suzanne Sunday
Bernard Raider			

Friday, January 21, 2022:

Max Banner	father of Barbara Brodsky	Gregory Davis	son of Elyse Davis
Muriel Fried	aunt of Lonnie Shapiro	Solomon Fremed	father-in-law of Resa Fremed
Ruth Glaser	mother of Laura Agisim	Julius Hubsher	father of Jeffrey Hubsher
Oliver Cohan Hughes	son of Tyler and Hillary Hughes, grandson of Rick and Bobbie Cohan	Eugene Kahn	father of Leslie Gottlieb
Joseph Mirkin	father of Judith Strom	Marshall R. Lavin	father of Mark Lavin
Zelda Morley	mother of Larry Morley	Abraham Mirkin	grandfather of Judith Strom
Susan Pleener	sister-in-law of Liz Winson	Cal Mishkoff	uncle of Joan Isman
Joseph Rosenhouse	father of Harry Rosenhouse	Lawrence Stewart Raynor	
Steven Zeitlin	brother of Ianne Poushter	Bernard Schwartz	grandfather of Lisa Kurtz
		Herbert Zieselman	father of Judi Stooogenke

Friday, January 28th, 2022:

Stella Baker	grandmother of Carlyn Bergman	Douglas Birdsall	father of Emily Wein
Marvin Burg	brother of Judith Besserman	Marcy Cohen Lissau Daniels	
William Drucker	father of Janine Gordon	Nancy Ellis	wife of Joseph Ellis
Judith Eydenberg	mother of Susan Westlake	Joy Ginsberg	mother of Jamie Garrett
Kenneth Greenberg	husband of Barbara Safran	Fred Greenberg	father of Adrienne Orlan
Saul Jacobs	father of Alan Jacobs	Sarah Katz	mother of Claire Katz
Edward Kleinbaum	grandfather of Stacey Rubinfeld	Irma Lowy	grandmother of Terry Henry
Philip Levens	father of David Levens	Benjamin Rothberg	cousin of Judith Strom
Albert Strom	father of Robert Strom	Fanny Siegel	mother of Lewis Siegel
Cary Wellington	father of Brad, Abby and Ben Wellington	Norma Zucker	mother of Bobbie Cohan

Condolences

To Richard Burg on the death of his brother, Jack D. Burg

To Dr. Jeff and Margie Gorelick on the death of his mother, Rachel Leah Gorelick

Drs. Helene and Roger Karlin on the death of their daughter, Lindsay Karlin

FEBRUARY YAHREZEITEN

Friday, February 4, 2022:

Hannah Hirt	mother of Judy Hirt-Manheimer
Ruth Kahn	mother of Leslie Gottlieb
Nathan Kaplan	grandfather of Susannah Altman
Theodore Mallon	father of Linda Krulwich
Irving Reichenthal	father of Sandra Rosenhouse
David Siegel	father of Lewis Siegel

Diana Hirt
Jacob Kaplan
Norman Levitt
Rhoda Moss
Michael Robinson
Anna Weintraub

sister of Judy Hirt-Manheimer
grandfather of Steve Kaye
father of Bonnie Dietzek
mother of David Moss
relative of Moreton Binn
grandmother of Karen Gerard

Friday, February 11th, 2022:

Carole Alexander	mother of Neil Alexander
Sam Farber	father of Hildi Glicklich
Charlene Lavin	mother of Mark Lavin
Freda Manus	mother of Rhoda Manus
Betty Mirkin	aunt of Judith Strom
Norman Sage	father of Robyn Cohen
Millicent Stark	mother of Andrew Stark
Jeannette Walker	mother of Jay Walker
Eugene L. Wishod	husband of Lora Wishod
Benjamin Wishod	father-in-law of Lora Wishod

Hannah Drucker
Reveka Gogish

Stephen Margolis
Hubert Ryan
William Shoff
Rose Vayda
Brett Winson

grandmother of Janine Gordon
grandmother of Ilya and Vlad Gogish,
mother-in-law to Serafima Dashevskaya
husband of Robi Margolis
father of Eve Siegel
grandfather of Jeffrey Hubsher
relative of Moreton Binn
husband of Liz, father of Danielle, Caitlin
and Lucas
niece of Karen Taylor and Lori Stalowicz

Rita Zelin

Friday, February 18th, 2022:

Harvey Alterman	husband of Rhonda Manus
Lucille Colville	mother-in-law of Ronni Rosenstein
Mollie Darvick	mother-in-law of Elinor Darvick
William Frankel	grandfather of Scott Brenner
John Grzymala	father of John Grzymala
Sam Munsart	uncle of Joan Isman
Diane Silverman	grandmother of the Margulies family
Burt Yolen	father of David Yolen

Thelma Apel
Cantor Kerry Ben-David
Sandra Elkin
Robert Felper
Eric Spencer Morley
Morris Rymberg
Charles Warton

grandmother of Valerie Rich

mother of Stephanie Herbstman
grandfather of Margie Gorelick
father of Larry Morley
uncle of Judith Strom
brother of Gale Berman

Friday, February 25th, 2022:

Bernard Baker	father of Carlyn Bergman
Vivienne Bruckman	stepmother of Rena Bruckman
Gloria Katz	mother of JoAnn Gorman
Gerald Levine	father of Joan Isman
Rose Robinson	relative of Moreton Binn
Edward Shade	uncle of Diana Friedlander
Rose Shoff	grandmother of Jeffrey Hubsher
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grandmother of Margie Gorelick
grandmother of Laurie Dubin
stepfather of Alice Gottlieb
aunt of Diana Friedlander

NEWS FROM RELIGIOUS SCHOOL DIRECTOR CATHY DEUTCHMAN



The prayer for healing (see below) is more relevant to me today than ever before. The pandemic has gone on too long, and whether we have had COVID or known others infected, we've all been affected. Thinking about getting COVID can make us feel sick, so we need help to stay healthy in our body and spirit. Maintaining courage is essential during this difficult time.

Recently I listened to a podcast (<https://affordanything.com/341-courage-and-the-consequences-of-inaction-with-ryan-holiday/>) about courage, in which a participant maintained that having courage requires mental fortitude and resilience. The word for courage in Hebrew is ometz lev. During Chanukah, many of our Shir Shalom teachers taught the students this value when re-telling the Chanukah story. Courage (ometz lev) is a recurring theme in our stories; the Jewish people had to be resilient or perish.

As parents, we are seen as role models for our children, whether we realize it or not. How can we transmit the value of courage? Find strength from sources that feed us in a positive way, face adversity openly and honestly, gain strength from the community.

Shir Shalom is a place to connect with other Jews. This winter/early spring, please join your child's grade level shabbat program, family education program and school-wide Purim celebration (details to follow). May we all find the courage to make our lives a blessing and send healing to ourselves and others so we can navigate these times as gracefully as possible.

Mi shebeirach avoteinu
M'kor hab'racha l'imoteinu
May the source of strength,
Who blessed the ones before us,
Help us find the courage to make our lives a blessing, and let us say, Amen.

Mi shebeirach imoteinu
M'kor hab'rachah l'avoteinu
Bless those in need of healing with r'fuah sh'leimah,
The renewal of body, the renewal of spirit, And let us say, Amen

If you wish to listen to Debbie Friedman's version, please go to this link:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pHKo3CjuzpY>

Wishing everyone a happy, healthy 2022!
Cathy Deutchman



Mazel Tov!



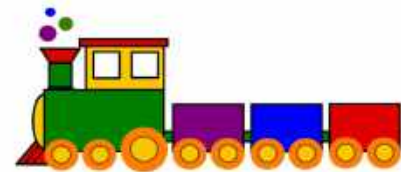
Join us in wishing **Mazel Tov to Larry and Vivian Hoffman** who are excited to share the recent birth of their grandson: **Levi Herbert Hoffman**, born on October 13th at 6:33 p.m., weighing 7 pounds, 7 ounces, to proud parents Sarah and Greg Hoffman!



Join us in wishing **Mazel Tov to Marilin and Steve Lipman** on the birth of their beautiful baby granddaughter:

Vivienne Cecile deCesare Lipman, born November 1st.

Congratulations also to the Lipman's son and daughter-in-law who are beyond thrilled.



ADULT PROGRAMMING

On Sunday, November 14th, we hosted the author and businesswomen Shari Wallack. Shari's presentation was full of reflection on her unexpected travels during the pandemic, her new friendships and humor. She also read some excerpts from her book "From Hell to Challah." Cantor Debbie moderated the talk, so we had a lively discussion during Shari's interview. Shari was very excited to meet our congregants and proposed to come in person in May and teach us how to make blitzes. Please stay tuned for more details in the future. On Sunday, January 9, 2022 we will host David Page, a renowned food writer:

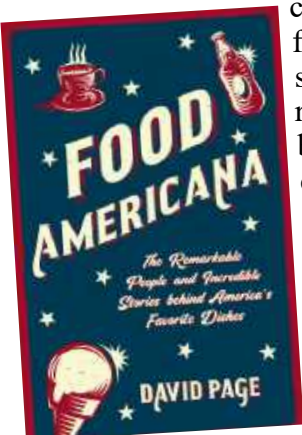
Behind the pages with David Page **Sunday, January 9th at 3PM via Zoom**

"Food Americana: The Remarkable People and Incredible Stories behind America's Favorite Dishes"

A fascinating exploration of how America created a national cuisine from the foods of many other countries. Jewish-specific content includes the fascinating story of bagels and lox, from behind the counter at Russ & Daughters appetizing store on the lower east side, to Marvin Lender describing the history of Lender's Bagels, to Mel Brooks reminiscing about lox as a once-a-week treat as a child. And there's also the real backstory of Jewish love for Chinese food. Safe treyf anyone? What is American cuisine? What national menu do we share? What dishes have we chosen, how did they become "American," and how are they likely to evolve from here? *Food Americana*, answers all these questions and more.



Author Bio: Two-time Emmy winner David Page changed the world of food television by creating Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives. Before that, as a network news producer, he traveled America and the world covering the biggest stories, and indulging his love for terrific food. He's passionate, engaging, humorous, and he has fascinating stories to tell.



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