

# OUR SHIR SHALOM

Congregation Shir Shalom of Westchester and Fairfield Counties

Spring 2022 / Iyyar-Sivan 5782

# Let's Celebrate!

**Sunday, May 22nd from 5pm to 7pm**

**Please Join Us For A  
Community Celebration - Shaping Our Future**

Join Rabbi Reiner and Cantor Debbie to celebrate our community, meet new and longstanding congregants, new members of our professional team, and reconnect.

There will be heavy hors d'oeuvres, delicious desserts, refreshing beverages, and visible smiles.

We have been raising money for our future through the ATID campaign. Come hear from our leaders how we are using the funds to shape our future and how you can participate.

We hope to see you at this festive celebration graciously hosted by the Knispel and Axler families.

Limited babysitting available (pre-registration required).

**All Congregants Welcome. Free of Charge!**

# OUR WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Join us in-person or via Zoom for all worship services throughout the year.  
Zoom links are made available through our weekly congregant eblast.

## MAY-JUNE WORSHIP AND HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

May 1 Last Day of Religious School  
 May 4 Yom HaZikaron (Israel Memorial Day)  
 May 5 Yom Ha'atzma'ut (Israel Independence Day)  
 May 6 6:00 p.m. Kabbalat Shabbat  
 May 13 5:30 p.m. Tot Shabbat  
 May 13 7:30 p.m. Kabbalat Shabbat  
 May 20 7:30 p.m. Kabbalat Shabbat  
 May 21 9:00 a.m. Torah 101: Shabbat AM Study  
 May 21 10:30 a.m. Shabbat Morning Worship,  
 Bat Mitzvah: Alexandra Shaplen  
 May 22 5:00 p.m. Community Celebration -  
 Shaping Our Future  
 May 27 7:30 p.m. Kabbalat Shabbat  
 May 28 9:00 a.m. Torah 101: Shabbat AM Study  
 May 28 10:30 a.m. Shabbat Morning Worship,  
 Bar Mitzvah: Evan Sherling

June 3 6:00 p.m. Pride Shabbat  
 June 4 9:00 a.m. Torah 101: Shabbat AM Study  
 June 4 10:30 a.m. Shabbat Morning Worship:  
 Bar Mitzvah of Aaron Rosenfeld  
 June 4 8:00p.m. Erev Shavuot Worship with Yizkor  
 and Text Study  
 June 10 5:30 p.m. Tot Shabbat  
 June 10 7:30 p.m. Kabbalat Shabbat  
 June 17 7:30 p.m. Kabbalat Shabbat  
 June 18 9:00 a.m. Torah 101: Shabbat AM Study  
 June 18 10:30 a.m. Shabbat Morning Worship,  
 Bat Mitzvah: Eve Bursuker  
 June 24 7:30 p.m. Graduation Shabbat

*Please join us in-person or online for Shabbat, holiday  
and festival Services!*



Susi and Noah Manheimer,  
and their children Zoe and  
Skyler (Ridgefield, CT)

Brandeth and Laurence Krulik,  
and their children Ryla and  
Layne (Pound Ridge, NY)

Adam and Jennifer Tesler,  
and their children Magnolia  
and Grayden (Wilton, CT)

**We are happy that you  
have become part of our  
Congregation Shir Shalom  
community, and wish you  
a warm welcome!**



Mazel Tov to Vicki and David  
Yolen on the birth of their  
granddaughter, Audrey Lillian  
Yolen, to parents Doug and  
Jen. Audrey was born March  
31, weighing 7 lbs., 11 oz. and  
measuring 20.5 in.



Mazel Tov to Angela and Steve Kesselman on the birth of their son,  
Maddox Andrew. Maddox was born on April 12, weighing 7 lbs., 5 oz.  
and measuring 19 in.

# CONGREGATION SHIR SHALOM OF WESTCHESTER AND FAIRFIELD COUNTIES

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email: [office@OurShirShalom.org](mailto:office@OurShirShalom.org) [OurShirShalom.org](http://OurShirShalom.org)

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**Leslie@OurShirShalom.org**

## OFFICE HOURS

Our office is generally open Monday-Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and by appointment. If you are unable to visit during our office hours, there is a clear plastic bin on the porch by our main entry door. Yahrzeit candles, prayer books, Jewish calendars and seasonal items are available for home use. Our clergy and staff are eager to connect by email or telephone and (consistent with our Jewish values) our practice is not to check or respond to e-mail on Shabbat or other Jewish holy days, except in the case of a life-cycle emergency. Thank you.

# FROM THE RABBI'S DESK

Rabbi David Reiner



*The column below was published in the Danbury NewsTimes on Saturday, April 16th. While Passover has concluded, the Omer*

*(the seven weeks following Passover, leading to the Festival of Shavuot) is an opportunity for continued reflection on the historical, agricultural, and spiritual themes of Passover.*

In March 2019 I traveled to El Paso, Texas and Ciudad Juarez, Mexico to witness conditions on the United States-Mexico border. Three years later, after many changes in our world, I returned to the border region, visiting a migrant shelter in San Diego, again witnessing the brokenness of the immigration system in our country. In preparing to celebrate the Jewish festival of Passover, detailed in the book of Exodus, I will explain to my children (as written in Exodus 13:8) "this is because of what the Eternal did for me when I went free from Egypt."

The story of Passover is the ultimate story of human migration. The ancient Israelites fled oppression and violence, seeking safety and opportunity. As a Jew, as a United States Citizen, as a member of the human family, I believe in our fundamental responsibility to welcome the stranger.

My beliefs are rooted in our

Scriptural tradition: the audacious hospitality of our patriarch Abraham, described in Genesis 18 is a model for my sacred work. When strangers approached, Abraham ran to greet them. The preceding verses suggest that Abraham was recovering from a major medical procedure (at the age of 99) when he rushed to greet approaching strangers and welcome them into his tent. Elsewhere in Scripture (Leviticus 19:18) we are commanded to "love your neighbor as yourself" and in Numbers 15:15 we are reminded that citizens and strangers are the same before God. Thirty-six times in the pentateuch we are commanded to support the stranger, widow, and orphan. None of

**"We used to support refugees because they were Jewish; now we support refugees because we are Jewish."**

these commandments are dependent upon immigration status.

My beliefs are shaped by familial experience: four generations ago my family fled violence, antisemitism, and scarcity in Eastern Europe hopefully seeking safety and opportunity in the United States. My experience is not unique; how many of our families came to America fleeing persecution or seeking safety and opportunities for a better life? HIAS (the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society), one of nine official refugee resettlement agencies recognized by the United States government and the United Nations, has a tagline: We used to support refugees because

they were Jewish; now we support refugees because we are Jewish.

My beliefs are informed by personal experience. Today I am blessed to lead and worship with congregants who fled persecution in foreign lands, arriving in the United States seeking freedom of religion, freedom from oppression. When I walk the streets and woods of Ridgefield and Danbury carrying or holding hands with our seven- and two-year-old, I think of the detained families I witnessed along our nation's southern border, carrying, or holding the hands of their young children behind barbed wire fences, seeking the freedom and safety I enjoy without fear. And I think of the

parents I witnessed in an ICE detention center, facing civil charges, awaiting deportation hearings, unable to hold the hands of their children. When I read from Psalms, I remember the bedside Bibles opened to the book of Psalms at a shelter/dormitory for

unaccompanied minors in El Paso, psalms expressing a hope for a better future, and I am struck by the similarities and differences in my hopes and the hopes of someone fleeing violence and oppression.

This March, informational signs in the shelter we visited were written in English, Spanish, Haitian Creole, and Russian, reflecting the origins of most clients. A Russian family arrived during our visit. They fled St. Petersburg, afraid of what would happen because they opposed the Russian government. Because EU countries were closed to Russian

*(continued on page 13)*

# THE CANTOR'S CORNER

Cantor Deborah Katchko-Gray



Beautifulizing a mitzvah through art and aesthetics is called, Hiddur Mitzvah. There are many ways to apply this to our Jewish

lives, choosing a beautiful menorah, a special kiddush cup, a well-formed etrog, setting a beautiful Shabbat table. Today it's easy to purchase beautifully made Jewish ritual items, but what a thrill it is to create them ourselves! That's something I've been enjoying for many years, thanks to my friend, Ellen Temkin who taught me Swedish Weaving for making tallitot and then challah covers. Over the years I've made more than I can count, and love creating personalized ones using fabric from loved ones, a baby blanket, a grandparent, etc. Rabbi Reiner has several tallitot I made for him, and each one has a small piece of a jacket his beloved mother of blessed memory wore to his Bar Mitzvah. It doesn't get more meaningful than that! Including fabric of loved ones, brings them into our prayers with a tangible physical presence. How comforting to hold a piece of a loved one, or a remnant of a baby blanket while praying?

I decided to teach interested Shir Shalom Sisterhood women how to make a challah cover using Swedish Weaving. After two workshops and ten eager students, we are now meeting at my house to finish and work on additional projects. Once

you start this, it's very hard to stop. It's relaxing and creative – something to clear the mind which we all can use!

I'm proud of my new stitchers – may we continue to enhance and beautify the mitzvah – hiddur mitzvah through our handmade challah covers. A tallit may be next! How about a new parochet/curtain for our Torah ark/ Aron Kodesh? Any great seamstresses out there?

I love the idea of Hiddur Mitzvah and have made a few things for the temple, mostly around the Torah. I made a Torah cover that is used between readings, and a Torah belt that holds it together using fabric from Rabbi Reiner's mother of blessed memory and Rabbi Marcus

"I love the idea of Hiddur Mitzvah, beautifying a mitzvah through art."

Burstein of blessed memory. A nice way to remember special people with a tangible literally touching experience.



Recently for a milestone birthday I found a fantastic gift for the temple if I may say so. When you read the Torah and the Aliyah ends, usually the Torah is closed, the yad holds your place (or rolls around and you frantically look for your next reading), while the blessing is chanted for the next Aliyah. I found

an Israeli silversmith who made a large oval with a large cut out in the center that you place over your last word chanted. It's like a Jewish paperweight, but a Torah reading place holder. Brilliant! I was happy to purchase it for the temple in honor of my birthday. I hope to see all our Torah readers enjoy using it. That's Hiddur Mitzvah!

Look around the temple and see where Hiddur Mitzvah can be applied?

We can always use more beauty and meaning in our Jewish ritual lives.

Shalom,

*Cantor Debbie*

# CO-PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Jeff Gorelick



Could it be?  
Is Spring finally here?  
It appears so,  
and with it,  
green leaves  
and flowers,  
warmer  
temperatures,  
but even more

welcome, is a return to normalcy. Shabbat services in person, spiritual and social gatherings, and smiles not covered by masks!

Larry Brooks and I, with the invaluable help of other volunteer congregants, Rabbi Reiner, Cantor Debbie, Mark Block, and the wonderful staff at Congregation Shir Shalom (CSS), continue our collective effort to maintain the positive momentum building at CSS, our sacred community. Despite Covid, we have had growth of membership, including a number of young families, facility improvements (some voluntary and others not unfortunately, e.g. new boiler), and expanded programming, e.g. Sisterhood related mah jong, book club (I get brownie points with my wife for mentioning sisterhood!).

Please continue to access our weekly emails and upgraded website (thanks Mark) for all upcoming events and services.

Hopefully you have received notice for our upcoming **"Community Celebration - Shaping Our Future" event on Sunday, May 22 from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.** After a shut down winter, it should be a great gathering with food, drink, and good friends. I would be remiss if I did not take this opportunity personally and on behalf of the congregation to extend **our**

**"Our vision is for Shir Shalom to continue and grow as a center of Judaism."**

**sincerest gratitude to Tara and Max Axler and the Axler Family** who, over the last three years, have gone above and beyond, giving their time and resources so generously to help make a vision into a reality by chairing the Atid campaign. The vision is for Shir Shalom to continue and grow as a center of Judaism serving those in Ridgefield and nearby communities religiously, socially, educationally, and

philanthropically. The Atid campaign is the vehicle by which to achieve that reality by raising enough funds to provide much needed financial security and also allowing us to expand services and programming. Due to a combination of hard work by the Atid campaign committee and the generosity of many Shir Shalom families, the campaign already has commitments in excess of \$2.3 million – a great start. Your fellow congregants serving as officers and board members are all in and our hope, and frankly expectation, is for

100% congregation member participation regardless of amount given. It will symbolize our common commitment to this campaign's mission.

In closing, I wish all you Moms and Dads early Happy Mother's Day (May 8) and Father's Day (June 19) wishes and look forward to seeing EVERYONE on Sunday, May 22nd – drinks are on Tara and Max!

if you would like to connect, please do not hesitate to send Larry and I an email to [president@ourshirshalom.org](mailto:president@ourshirshalom.org).

*Jeff Gorelick*



## TORAH STUDY

Join Rabbi Reiner on select Saturday mornings at 9:00 a.m. for Torah 101.

You'll find this opportunity to engage in the study of our faith, observances and text to be extremely uplifting and interesting as we learn together. Check our weekly eblast and calendar for dates and in-person and Zoom information.

# KEEPING THE LIGHTS ON

Mark Block, FSA, Executive Director



We continue to emerge from the Covid pandemic facing strong headwinds not felt in the organized Jewish

community in years past; some of the concerns and some of the thinking on how we can fully come out of the storm stronger, more vibrant and poised for growth – with a greater sense of purpose as an institution of Jewish life are being debated today.

Not long ago a growing body of research was presented to debunk what is referred to as the “overhead myth.” In an open letter from GuideStar CEO Jacob Taylor, Charity Navigator Ken Berger and Art Taylor of BBB Wise Giving Alliance they wrote, “Overhead costs include important investments charities make to improve their work...when we focus solely or predominantly on overhead...we starve charities of the freedom they need to best serve the people and communities they are trying to serve.” These individuals espouse what executive directors across North America advocate; the fact that ‘a few bad apples’ have been allowed to create confusion in donors’ minds about what matters most when judging a non-profit. They argue that the so-called overhead ration should not be used as an indicator of non-profit performance. Instead, they urge that more attention be given to the issues of governance, leadership, transparency and results.

Here at Shir Shalom we have been fortunate over the years with two legacy synagogues to have in each generation a cadre of financial leaders in the congregation. These men and women have taken the long view that the enduring health of the synagogue was a priority for themselves and their families, and for the community as a whole, therefore, they led by example in their charitable contributions. We continue to have that today, and it is being manifested through our

**"It is through your contribution that allows the light to illuminate the sanctuary."**

Atid campaign. These generous congregants and families have made it a point to earmark a charitable donation to ensure the viability of Shir Shalom not only for today, but tomorrow as well. When they were asked to step up and answer the call they did so, and others are continuing to do the same, generously. We now reach a time where every congregant needs to answer the call, as generously as they can so we can proudly say Shir Shalom will achieve 100% participation. For some this is a multi-year annual pledge commitment of thousands, for others it is a pledge of hundreds. Whatever the amount a critical goal beyond the dollars raised is the level of participation. We seek 100% participation, not because we believe we can achieve more than our goal, but because it is a strong, visible message that highlights the commitment we have as a congre-

gation to do what we can to support our synagogue – one that continues to be a beacon drawing those seeking to explore their own spirituality here in Upper Fairfield and Westchester Counties.

If we look at our heritage a little more Jewishly you might say we are all Levites. The Tribe of Levi is often referred to as the underappreciated cousins of the Kohanim – the priestly tribe that descended from Aaron – Levites were consigned to washing the priests’ hands. You may be

wondering what this has to do with overhead costs. As a Jewish communal professional I deal in overhead costs on a daily basis. What does it cost for landscaping, oil, snow removal, maintenance supplies

and general building upkeep? What are the expenses for an oneg, the electricity and more? I think you get the point. To do the work of a Jewish communal professional I have to know what it costs for keeping the lights on and what I can reasonably expect our congregation to contribute to cover the costs of our annual operating expenses. These are the expenses unrelated to our clergy, and yet they are the expenses that when added together can put a tremendous strain on the synagogue’s financial resources.

The not-for-profit world is much more open to discussing with its contributors the costs of overhead expenses and we have become better at doing so with you in recent years. Exodus 27:20-21 discusses the building of the Tabernacle and states: Command the Children of Israel, to

*(continued on page 8)*

# KEEPING THE LIGHTS ON (CONT'D)

Mark Block, FSA, Executive Director

bring you pure oil of pressed olives to keep the lamps burning continually... Aaron and his sons are to keep the lamps burning before God from sunset until daybreak. [This shall be] a law for the ages, throughout your generations, on the part of the children of Israel.

The Torah commands us to “keep the lights on.” The people of Israel are asked to support the sanctuary; above all other donations, this is the only one that is required on an ongoing basis. This instruction, an actual “law for the ages,” was commanded long after the Temple was destroyed in 70 C.E. Ancient rabbinic commentary makes the shift clear when it says: [This shall be] a law for the ages, throughout your generations, on the part of the children of Israel.” Even though the Temple has been destroyed and its candles extinguished, there still stand houses of prayer and houses of study in which we must light candles, for those are called “micro-temples” (Midrash Ha’Gadol, Leviticus 6:2).

In Jewish communities over the centuries and in America starting with the earliest synagogues in Touro, RI and New York City, the commandment of “keeping the lights

on” became a powerful guiding principle. In community after community—from 11th-century Spain to 19th-century Lithuania – there were always associations called “Shemen la’Maor” (Oil for Lighting) or “Ner Tamid” (the Constant Candle) whose primary mandate was to fundraise for the oil to illuminate the sanctuary and cover other overhead costs.

While we have moved from candles to electricity – from wood to oil and natural gas, it is through the personal touch of your contribution as a member of our congregational community that allows the light to illuminate the sanctuary, heat the pavilions and so much more. This purely individual illuminating act is a critical one of both a personal and collective responsibility to keep our house of gathering and worship running.

While the act of donating keeps the lights on, you can walk throughout the building and read the plaques recognizing donations and service made over the years that have served to sustain our sacred community. They are not all from the wealthy, but they were all made by those who have an institutional love for Shir Shalom.

These individuals and families felt fervently that the sustainability of the synagogue could not be met solely by an annual community commitment – that the health of the synagogue requires generous and oftentimes continuous contributions to maintain its fiscal health. So, while the appearance of these plaques are a testament to the memory or honor of those for whom they are named the result should be a constant reminder that each of us must contribute, not just to keeping the lights on, but to ensuring they burn bright and that the synagogue as a sacred space remains vibrant and grows.

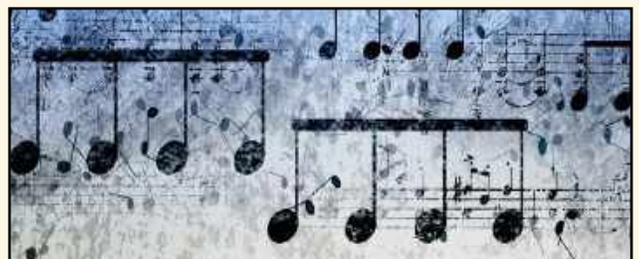
While the commandment of contributing toward the “oil for lighting” has become symbolic of the debate about overhead costs, we must recognize the important role each of us plays in keeping the lights on in a complicated world during a complicated time in American Jewish history, and equally as important you are to be thanked for doing so, even as we encourage all congregants to “bring to light” their contribution through the Atid campaign for the benefit of our entire Shir Shalom community.

*Mark Block*

## MUSIC AND CULTURAL ARTS

Join Cantor Debbie and Rabbi Reiner in welcoming Shabbat on Friday, May 13 at 7:30 p.m. with the spirited and soulful music of our special musical guest, Beth Styles.

*Sponsored by the Cantor’s Music Fund.*



## RITUAL COMMITTEE

Shavuot is probably the least understood and least celebrated by the members of our community. Spring activities are in full bloom (excuse the pun), religious school is over and Passover has been observed and enjoyed. So what is Shavuot exactly and why are we writing about it?

There are three harvest festivals that occur in the Hebrew calendar – Sukkot, Passover and Shavuot. Most of us know about the practices of Sukkot including the building of a sukkah and the culmination of this festival being the joyous celebration of Simchat Torah. Passover tends to be the one holiday that is most celebrated and enjoyed by Reform Jews particularly with the attendance at a seder. Shavuot, in addition to celebrating the Spring harvest marks the remembrance



of the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai seven weeks after the exodus from Egypt.

For many people Shavuot is a time of recommitment to Torah and to Jewish life as a whole. Perhaps it is time for all of us to recommit to

our community life at Shir Shalom. As this article is being written we are planning for the return of our Community Second Night Seder. Of course our last seder where we were all together in a common space was in 2019, so expectations and excitement are high. Friday night services are being attended by larger numbers of people both in person and Zoom format. We are hoping to be able to return to hosting some more of our former events as well as some potential new ones.

We hope to see you in our building or online and help add to the *ruach* (spirit) that has been a hallmark of our congregation for many years.

*Michael Salpeter and  
Laurie Dubin*

## GREETINGS FROM SISTERHOOD

Snow and ice are melting and Sisterhood wishes everyone a happy and healthy Spring-into-Summer! Sisterhood has been able to follow through with many of our plans since our last message to everyone. A small group of us enjoyed a lovely “First Day of Spring Hike” at the Leon Levy Preserve in South Salem. The grounds were a little wet and muddy from those very wet weeks, but we were all happy to be there (including several canine participants!). Book Club is alive and well with an in-person discussion of the book “Last Summer at the Golden Hotel.” The characters were entertaining and the story allowed for some sweet reminiscences for those in the group. The next book

will be “The Seven Husband’s of Evelyn Hugo” with discussion/ camaraderie scheduled for Monday, June 6 at 7:15 p.m. (in-person) at the synagogue. Many thanks to Phyllis Shaw and Andrea deLange for organizing and leading this effort. Mah Jongg continues to go strong with more members interested in learning and gathering weekly to play on Thursday evenings from 7:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m. at the synagogue. Sisterhood was delighted to pitch-in for the Purim Carnival by supplying traditional baked goods for participants and a great time was reportedly had by all.

As many of you know, Shir Shalom has in the past had a very active

Social Action Committee and has asked that Sisterhood join in supporting some of their efforts in our local communities. We will be talking together about that in the coming weeks and look forward to hearing from people who have interest in that aspect of synagogue life.

Finally, we want to thank all who engage with Sisterhood and look forward to more meaningful and fun opportunities together!

On to Spring!

*Laurie Wolkin,  
Margie Gorelick and  
Christina Gogish*

# SOCIAL ACTION NEWS

Our local food banks, food pantries and shelters are doing their best to provide warm meals and a safe place to sleep during this difficult time. There are many ways you can get involved and have a caring impact on your community.

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

1. Congregation Shir Shalom is helping to provide a warm meal once a month – we are urgently needing volunteers to help prepare a meal (roasted chicken pieces or similar) plus mashed potatoes and salad. There may be some financial reimbursement available from the Social Action budget for these next few months. Thank you to Amy Margulies and Lisa Ipp-Voellmicke and her sons Jacob and Ben Voellmicke for preparing this meal for 100 folks in March.

2. Go to [www.dorothydaydanbury.org](http://www.dorothydaydanbury.org) to sign up for sandwich-making and drop-off.

**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](http://www.dailybreadfoodpantry.com)

to make a donation. Thank you to Gerry Hecht, Andrea de Lange and Debbie Landzberg for volunteering at the Daily Bread.

**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/>



**Laundry Love:** This important program allows people with limited resources to wash their clothing free-of-charge at White Street Wash in Danbury. Coordinated by local temples and churches, Laundry Love has helped many struggling families in our area. The program is very much in need of funds to pay for laundromat gift cards and laundry detergent for clients. If interested in donating, checks can be written payable to St. James' Episcopal Church (fiduciary of Laundry Love). Memo line should read "LLGD" or "Laundry Love of Greater Danbury." Please mail to:

St. James Episcopal Church  
Attention: Denise Holl, LLGD  
25 West Street  
Danbury, CT 06810

**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. Please reach out to them for more information on how to get involved [jacobvoellmicke2005@gmail.com](mailto:jacobvoellmicke2005@gmail.com) and [bvoellmicke@gmail.com](mailto:bvoellmicke@gmail.com). Community service credit for school is available!

**Blood Drive:** We will be co-sponsoring a Red Cross Blood Drive with Jesse Lee Church on Wednesday, August 24, located at the Jesse Lee Church in Ridgefield. We encourage all who are able to donate life-saving blood.

**We are urgently needing additional volunteers to help organize and participate in Social Action Activities. If we want to do a Breakfast Run or Midnight Run next year, we need volunteers to help organize these much needed events. My co-chair had to step back from co-chairing due to other commitments. So I need help with these events, or we will not be able to do them. Please contact us at [SocialAction@ourshirshalom.org](mailto:SocialAction@ourshirshalom.org).**

Many thanks everyone!

*Debbie Lavin and  
Debbie Landzberg*

Social Action Committee Co-Chairs

# NEWS FROM THE RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

Cathy Deutchman, Director



Last Sunday, May 1 was the last day of Religious school for the school year. What a year! We began inside out,

with outdoor classrooms to allow teachers and students to safely interact. With the colder weather we went indoors and on Zoom, with families, teachers, Mentors and students showing flexibility at each step along the way.

"B'Yachad means  
"We're together."

We recently opened registration with a new name for the school, and some changes to our teen leadership program. I'm excited to share that Shir Shalom Religious School's new name is: B'Yachad: Jewish Learning Together.

B'Yachad means "we're together," which is the way education is delivered here at Shir Shalom. Jewish teachings and traditions are passed on in a community collaboration between teachers, clergy, parents, and peers. Here at B'Yachad, we believe in fostering Jewish friendships, connection, and community, creating joyful Jewish experiences, Jewish learning that's relevant and relatable, and inspiring lifelong learners.

Wishing everyone a happy spring and look forward to working together to foster Jewish learning.

*Cathy Deutchman*



# OUR EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER

Sarah Denyer, Director



We are enjoying watching signs of Spring pop up at the ECC! Our students have been embracing the change of

seasons with a variety of activities. They have made Springtime artistic creations and crafts. Outdoors the children have taken Earth Day Nature walks, monitored the growing buds on our trees and bushes, observed the growth of sprouting bulbs, and planted seeds to prepare for cultivating our garden in a few short weeks!

Passover at the ECC was a great

experience for all! In addition to hearing Passover stories, building cities with a variety of materials and lots of matzah tasting with different toppings, each class made a Passover keepsake to share at their family Seders. Our 2's Class made Cups for

**"Our students have been embracing the change of seasons."**

Elijah, the 3's made Matzah Covers and the Pre-K made Seder plates and afikomen pouches. During the week of Passover, we gathered together with Cantor Debbie for songs, blessings and to have a taste of the Charoset that each child

helped make. Left-over matzah was ground into meal by the children using a mortar and pestle and made into matzah balls for delicious soup served at our oneg after ECC Shabbat. Yum!

We look forward to continuing our six-week Summer Fun Program on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings, June 14-July 21. There are still spots available for 3, 4 and 5-year-olds. Contact Sarah@oushirshalom.org to learn more. We welcome middle school-aged volunteers for any or all weeks of the program. Please reach out to me if you have an 11-14 year old who loves young children and is interested in helping out!

*Sarah Denyer*



## SPECIAL WISHES TO MOMS AND DADS!

We wish all the moms and dads in our community a very Happy Mother's Day on May 8, and Father's Day on June 19. We hope you spend your special day doing all the things you enjoy so much!

## NEWS FROM BROTHERHOOD

With spring in the air, the Brotherhood is looking to spring into action. We are targeting an outdoor park-related event in May or June (final date and place TBD). Anyone with ideas, interest, energy and a willingness to help out, please email Steve or Larry:

slandzberg@gmail.com  
larrybhoffman@gmail.com

*Steve Landzberg*



*Stitching together at Shir Shalom. Challah cover workshop with Cantor Debbie.*



## FROM THE RABBI'S DESK (Cont'd)

airlines they transited Tajikistan, Turkey, and Amsterdam before flying to Mexico, requesting asylum upon entering the United States. We were told that an increasing number of clients were arriving from Russia and Ukraine, seeking safety from violence and war.

I believe a person cannot be “illegal.” An individual may have entered the United States without permission or appropriate documentation; calling a trespasser “illegal” dehumanizes and denies agency and ignores the complexity of human migration. After witnessing conditions on our border, I am amazed by the simplicity and complexity of systems and processes for non-citizens, migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees to enter our country. And, as I reflect upon what I witnessed, I am reminded of my obligation to welcome the stranger. Whether we are welcoming a family fleeing the fear of war in Ukraine, the fear of political oppression in Russia, the fear of gang violence in Central America, or the fear of scarcity anywhere in the world, I believe in our responsibility to teach ourselves and our children what was done for us in generations past. Nearly all of us came to the United States of America seeking freedom and safety with a responsibility to share those opportunities.

*Rabbi David Reiner*

# PURIM CARNIVAL AND CELEBRATION

Purim was the perfect holiday to open our doors and welcome people back into our building to celebrate. We gathered to enjoy a fun carnival, made noise, laughed and rejoiced during this year's shpiel and Megillah reading.



# PASSOVER SECOND NIGHT SEDER

Close to seventy congregants and guests joined the Rabbi and Cantor to enjoy celebrating the Passover holiday during the return of our in-person second seder, the first since 2019. It was a wonderful evening for everyone who attended.



## WHO WE ARE

We are a vibrant and inclusive community inspired by Jewish values and traditions.

## WHAT WE DO

We honor the diversity of our backgrounds, experiences, and aspirations.

We celebrate our shared values: the study of Torah, participatory worship driven by music, the promotion of lifelong learning, the ongoing project of Tikkun Olam (Healing the World), and the work of social justice.

We embrace the responsibility/task of being “a light unto the nations,” building a brighter future for our community and the world.

# MAY-JUNE YAHRZEITS

## FRIDAY, MAY 6

Art Arenson  
uncle of Linda Arenson  
Rae Arenson  
aunt of Linda Arenson  
Ruth Cohen  
grandmother of Steven Kaye  
Selma Gimple  
mother of Debra Bush  
Robert Greenberg  
brother of Adrienne Orlan  
Paul Harris  
uncle of Ian Harris  
Klare Heller  
mother of Paul Heller  
Milton Hollar  
husband of Claire Katz,  
father of Erica Holler  
Andrew Krulwich  
brother of Jeffrey Krulwich  
Jeanette Moskowitz  
great-grandmother of Stacey  
Rubinfeld  
Joseph Price  
grandfather of Terry Henry  
Florence Rubin  
grandmother of Susan Dufner  
Evelyn Rubinfeld  
grandmother of Adam  
Rubinfeld  
Annabel Schwartz  
mother of Victoria Yolen  
Marvin Stark  
father of Andrew Stark  
Henrietta T. Ringler  
grandmother of Elyse Arnow  
Walter Vendig  
father of Richard Vendig  
Louis Warton  
father of Gale Berman

## FRIDAY, MAY 13

Gerald Held  
father of Lindsay Held  
Andrew Hyman  
friend of Richard Mishkin  
Irving Ipp  
father of Lisa Ipp-Voellmicke  
Rosalyn Levitt  
mother of Bonnie Dietzek  
Sherry Levy-Reiner  
mother of Rabbi David Reiner,  
wife of Rabbi Fred Reiner

Eva Schenk  
mother of Alice Gottlieb  
Robert Shaplen  
father of Jason Shaplen  
Ruth Teich  
mother of Matt Teich

## FRIDAY, MAY 20

Philip Abrams  
father of Elyse Davis  
Eileen Brody  
cousin of Joan Isman  
Fred Dietzek  
father of Alan Dietzek  
Hyman Ellis  
father of Joseph Ellis  
Mildred Geller  
grandmother of Jamie Garrett  
Regina Henry  
mother of Robert Henry  
Marvin Katz  
father of JoAnn Gorman  
Miriam Langer  
mother of Karen Gerard  
Claire Levens  
mother of David Levens  
Edith Redman\*  
mother of Debra Lavin  
Murray Rose  
father of Andrew Rose  
Leon Shimkin  
grandfather of Janine Gordon  
Dov Stern  
step-father of Barbara Manners  
Ludwig Sternberger  
uncle of Alice Gottlieb  
James Sullivan  
friend of Ken and Joan Isman  
Gisela Warton  
mother of Gale Berman  
Judge William Gindin  
stepfather of Janine Gordon  
Indy Goldman

## FRIDAY, MAY 27

Thomas B. Newman  
father of Kelly Lash  
Pauline Block  
grandmother of Barbara  
Manners  
Samuel Gerard  
grandfather of Ira Gerard

Abraham Goldfield  
father of Laurie Wolkin  
Anne Gordon  
mother of Elaine Gordon  
Diana Kalter  
mother of Marcia Needleman  
Max Moskowitz  
cousin of Stacey Rubinfeld  
Norman Remler  
father of Leslie Moss  
Samuel Silverman  
grandfather of Richard Burg  
Carol Wiener  
friend of Susan Randel

## FRIDAY, JUNE 3

Bertram Bildner  
father of Rachele Axel  
Nathan Binstock  
relative of Moreton Binn  
Madeleine Eisberg  
grandmother of Tiffany Zezula  
Marilyn Eslofsky  
mother Ellen Barth  
Everett Felper  
father of Margie Gorelick  
Leela Mallon  
mother of Linda Krulwich  
Samuel Mirsky  
grandfather of Carlyn Bergman  
Marlene Ellen Klotz  
Clarissa Zaltzberg

## FRIDAY, JUNE 10

Rose Abrams  
grandmother of Elyse Davis  
Henry Bangser  
father of Robert Bangser  
Helen Bergson  
mother of Phyllis Amerling  
Elliot Buchman  
father of Amanda Eisen  
Martin Bush  
father of Richard Bush  
Norma Ginsberg  
grandmother of Jamie Garrett  
Paul Mallon  
brother of Linda Krulwich  
Shirley Novom-Cowan  
grandmother of Jeff Gorelick  
Lillian Paget  
mother of Debra Paget

# JUNE YAHRZEITS

John Weiller  
husband of Jane Weiller  
Judith Birnbaum

## FRIDAY, JUNE 17

Martin Fiderer  
father of David Fiderer  
Harold Fisher  
father of Larry Fisher  
Elizabeth Levine  
grandmother of Stephanie  
Herbstman  
Sandra Schulman  
grandmother of Dana Harnett  
Gideon Tiktin  
father of Ron Tiktin

David Dutka  
Adolph Joseph Auerbacher  
Maurice L. Cohen

## FRIDAY, JUNE 24

Allen Alexander  
step-father of Hal Wolkin  
Joan Arnow  
mother of Joshua Arnow  
Freida Binstock  
relative of Moreton Binn  
Ed Blum  
father of Neal Blum  
Gussie Boudier  
grandmother of Claire Katz  
Jack Brill  
father of Elyse Arnow

Max Burg  
father of Judith Besserman  
David Edelman  
grandfather of Dana Harnett  
Amy Franklin  
stepsister of Ken Isman  
Eli Lackow  
father of Rhonda Lackow  
Al Landzberg  
father of Steven Landzberg  
Martin Langer  
father of Karen Gerard  
William Miller  
father of Marlin Lipman  
Martin Shapiro  
father of David Shapiro  
Lillian Benjamin

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DANIEL P. JOWDY  
DIRECTOR

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# CONGREGANT SPOTLIGHT

Dr. Jeff and Margie Gorelick



**Jamie:** How did you come to live in the area?

**Jeff:** We lived in New York City for six years while I finished my training as a urologist at NY Presbyterian/Cornell and at Memorial Sloan Kettering. We had two of our kids there and moved up to Danbury in 1989 with Margie on bed rest at 36 weeks pregnant. I joined another doctor in solo practice in Danbury that I just thought was a great opportunity for growth and have worked at that same practice since then. Margie has been at Danbury High School teaching for 28 years.

**Jamie:** What do you teach?

**Margie:** I teach high school special education. I co-teach U.S. history and teach dyslexic kids' reading.

**Jamie:** Were you part of this synagogue when you lived in Danbury?

**Jeff:** When we were in Danbury, we were members of the United Jewish Center in Danbury. Then when we moved to Ridgefield, we joined Jewish Family Congregation. There was a great rabbi who was there for a little over a year. Then

we looked around and we wound up joining Temple Shearith Israel with Rabbi Haddon in 1994. I organized High Holiday parking for 26 years rain or shine and was president of the Brotherhood way back when. Now I am co-president of the board with Larry Brooks.

**Jeff:** Margie and I go way back though. I gave her my ID bracelet in 7th grade, and she was my slow dance at my bar mitzvah. We grew up a block from each other in West Orange, NJ.

**Margie:** My mom was a teacher at his elementary school.

**Jeff:** I was always at their house, and we grew up together. Margie's family was very involved with their



we have loved being members of the synagogue both before and after the union. We would never want to live in a town without a Jewish community and a center for that.

**"The time we put into whatever volunteer work at the synagogue is time well invested."**

synagogue. My parents were very pro-Israel and with a very Jewish home but not much in terms of going to synagogue. When we moved up here, moving to a non-Jewish area worked towards making us more observant and more committed. We sent our kids to Maimonides Jewish Day School.

**Margie:** Which was fabulous! They had an hour and a half of Hebrew every day and were fluent. They thrived and loved the school.

**Jeff:** When it comes to coming here,

**Margie:** We have made many of our friends through the synagogue, from our Maimonides days and Sisterhood. The Sisterhood is great because there's mah jongg, book club, hikes. We just have a nice group of friends here. Stacey Sussman and Yvette Carp are recruiting and teaching new people mah jongg on Sunday evenings. We like to support each other.

**Jeff:** I would classify us as type A personalities. Margie has always worked full time even when we raised four kids. She always does all this other stuff like being co-president of the Sisterhood. I work 65-70 hours a week.

*(continued on previous page)*

# Contributions

## GENERAL FUND

### In Memory of:

James Taylor (z"l)

Karen Taylor and

David Kaminer

David Adam Hagen (z"l)

Ellen Lipton

Arthur Margolis (z"l)

Robi Margolis

### In Honor of:

Stacey Sussman and Yvette Carp for teaching Mah-Jongg

Elyse and Betsy Davis

Wedding of Leslie and David Moss's daughter

Elyse Davis

## RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

Suli and Howard Fassler/Magaliff

### In Memory of:

Mary Salpeter (z"l)

Tracey and Martin Weisberg

Michael Salpeter

Hilda Vendig (z"l)

Richard and Linda Vendig

### In Gratitude:

Lora Wishod

Robi Margolis

Elinor Darvick

## MUSIC FUND

Myrna Robinson

### In Memory of:

Helen Pilch (z"l)

Alan Pilch and Elaine Gordon

## CANTOR'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

Cantor Josh Breitzer

### In Memory of:

Fay Goodman Weisberg (z"l)

Tracey and Martin Weisberg

### In Honor of:

the naming of Cantor Katchko-Gray's three granddaughters

Rhonda Manus

Alice and Alan Gottlieb

Terry and Bob Henry

### In Gratitude:

Gloria Safran

Robi Margolis

## CONGREGANT SPOTLIGHT (CONT'D FROM PAGE 18)

Dr. Jeff and Margie Gorelick

Margie: And Jeff is a mohel!

Jeff: One year in the winter there was a congregant who was due to have a bris and the nearest mohel was 30-40 miles from here. There was a snowstorm and the mohel couldn't get there. From that point on Rabbi Haddon encouraged me to become a mohel. 20% of my practice was pediatric urology anyway so I operated on kids all the time. There was this course at Hebrew Union College in Los Angeles for healthcare professionals who could prove they are competent at the medical act of a circumcision. The course would give you the spiritual part, all the history and ordain you. It was very interesting. I've been doing it for about 18 years. Doing a bris is really nice. It's a happy occasion.

Margie: It can be nerve racking though.

Jeff: Our first grandchild was a boy. I said I'll find a good mohel because I didn't think it was appropriate that I be the mohel. My daughter and my wife ganged up on me and insisted that I do the bris. I begrudgingly did the bris.

Margie: Our daughter was saying "You cannot mess this up, Dad. Don't mess this up. Don't take too much, don't take too little. Make it right." He's profusely sweating, pouring down on the baby. I think it can be very stressful.

Christina: What piece of advice would you have for someone thinking about joining Shir Shalom?

Margie: Definitely join the temple and get involved in all the things happening through the temple like Sisterhood.

Jeff: You'll find you get much more back from it than you put into it. The people you'll meet, the support you'll get.

Margie: It's like a family.

Jeff: My dad was a Cuban immigrant, a Cuban Jew. He came here in his late teens and didn't speak much English when he came. He was very thankful and your classic grateful immigrant. He had a picture of John F. Kennedy and Mickey Mantle in the kitchen. He wound up becoming a vice principal of a big high school in Jersey. The American dream. We feel the time we put into whatever volunteer work at the synagogue is time well invested to help contribute to its security and existence. We would feel horrible if it went by the wayside and looking back, we didn't do anything.

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