

# OUR SHIR SHALOM

Congregation Shir Shalom of Westchester and Fairfield Counties

Summer 2022 / Tammuz-Av-Elul 5782

## ATID: THE CAMPAIGN FOR OUR FUTURE

Our vision is to enhance Congregation Shir Shalom as:

- A vibrant, dynamic, and inspiring Jewish community
- An institution built on a growing foundation of generosity and participation
- Our area's center for lifelong Jewish learning, prayer, and music as well as a place where people come for enrichment, connection, inspiration and shalom



# 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.

## JULY-AUGUST WORSHIP AND HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

July 1	6:30 p.m.	Kabbalat Shabbat
July 8	5:30 p.m.	Tot Shabbat
	6:30 p.m.	Kabbalat Shabbat
July 9	9:00 a.m.	Torah 101: Shabbat AM Study
July 15	6:30 p.m.	Kabbalat Shabbat (in person only)
July 22	5:15 p.m.	Shabbat SHAPicnic
	6:30 p.m.	Kabbalat Shabbat
July 29	6:30 p.m.	Kabbalat Shabbat
July 29		Rosh Chodesh Av
July 30	9:00 a.m.	Torah 101: Shabbat AM Study

August 5	6:30 p.m.	Kabbalat Shabbat
August 7		Tisha B'Av
August 12	5:30 p.m.	Tot Shabbat
August 12	6:30 p.m.	Kabbalat Shabbat
August 13	9:00 a.m.	Torah 101: Shabbat AM Study
August 19	6:30 p.m.	Kabbalat Shabbat
August 26	7:30 p.m.	Kabbalat Shabbat (online only)
August 27		Rosh Chodesh Elul

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



Alyssa Grossbard-Kronstat and Jason Kronstat, and children Alexander and Max (Ridgefield, CT)  
Shari and Richard Zins, and children Jamie, Rachel and Harley (Ridgefield, CT)  
Lauren Pessin, and children Gisselle, Amanda, Christian Sau and Eury (Bethel, CT)

### ***And our newest ECC families:***

Courtney and Evan Katz, and daughter Maya (Ridgefield, CT)  
Liz and JD Beebe, and daughter Sunnie (Ridgefield, CT)  
Steven and Andrea Waldinger, and son Elijah (Ridgefield, CT)  
Ilana and Jordan Cohn, and daughter Audrey (South Salem, NY)  
Jeffrey and Colleen Wolfson, and son Rashi (Ridgefield, CT)

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

# CONGREGATION SHIR SHALOM OF WESTCHESTER AND FAIRFIELD COUNTIES

46 Peaceable Street, Ridgefield, CT 06877 203-438-6589

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

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES, CLERGY AND STAFF

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**[Execvp@OurShirShalom.org](mailto:Execvp@OurShirShalom.org)**

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Leslie Gottlieb, Religious School Director Emerita

**[Leslie@OurShirShalom.org](mailto: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



Sunday, May 22 was a beautiful day. Nearly 150 congregants gathered at Congregation Shir Shalom for a celebration of our community

and to learn about our Atid Campaign for Our Future. I am grateful to Dr. Jeff and Kim Knispel, Tara and Max Axler, and Dr. Stan and Lynn Broder for sponsoring and helping to organize a fantastic gathering, as well as Dr. Terry and Bob Henry and Mark and Ann Block for helping underwrite some additional costs. I have adapted some reflections that I shared that evening.

As I begin my tenth year in our community, I could not have imagined such a gathering nine years ago...

We have been through a lot over the past nine years, as Jewish Family Congregation and Temple Shearith Israel joined together to become Congregation Shir Shalom. Together we have celebrated and mourned. I think especially of my colleagues, Cantor Kerry Ben-David, and Rabbi Marcus Burstein, of blessed memory. We have witnessed civil unrest and violence and gathered together seeking comfort and strength. We have redefined Jewish community through a pandemic, bid farewell to long serving staff team members, and welcomed new staff and families to our sacred community.

I am also thinking about who I was nine years ago.

My mother died in May 2013, a few weeks before I was starting to serve our community. During her final weeks and in the weeks after her death, I was moved by a group of families who surrounded my parents with love and support. The "Kallah" was formed when I finished Elementary School, from a group of ten-ish families at our synagogue who lived in the same neighborhood and wanted to remain connected as their children went on to different Middle and Junior High Schools. My parents had friends from many walks of life, but the Kallah was different. They met monthly, initially as a book club, with semi-annual gatherings for me and my friends. As we became

**"People want connection and meaning in their lives and our synagogue is a starting point."**

adolescents, our parents supported and advised each other. They supported each other through the illnesses and deaths of their parents, through career changes, divorce and their own health challenges, as my generation married and our parents became grandparents. Together they traveled the East Coast and the World.

This is not a unique experience. I have witnessed a similar phenomenon in our community, as families come together to support each other and celebrate even after their children become Bar and Bat Mitzvah or move out after college.

This is, however, a hope and vision for the future. People want connection and meaning in their

lives and our synagogue is a starting point for enduring and meaningful relationships. Congregation Shir Shalom is uniquely positioned and structured to help form, deepen, and add connections and meaning to our lives.

The Jewish landscape has changed significantly over the past nine years. When I started, there were six more full time rabbis and two more congregations in our area. Danbury had a local Jewish Federation as well as Jewish Family Services.

Six years after Temple Shearith Israel and Jewish Family Congregation united to become Congregation Shir Shalom, after two years of an ongoing global pandemic, we are facing a

wonderful opportunity to redefine Jewish community, as Jewish communities across the country continue to redefine synagogue affiliation and connection, adapting modes of engagement. We are blessed with an influx of families, young and old, moving to our area seeking Jewish connection, eager to build and deepen meaningful relationships with Judaism and our community. We are blessed with nearly eighty families that have been affiliated with our congregation for at least twenty years; families that have found connection and meaning in our Jewish community, and are committed to a vibrant Jewish presence in our area.

We are at a moment of inflection. Like the Israelites gathered on the precipice of the Promised Land, we can see a bright future ahead and we have an opportunity to support and shape that future.

(continued on page 22)

# SUMMER THOUGHTS AND LOOKING FORWARD!

Cantor Deborah Katchko-Gray



Summer is my time to recharge and refresh, and I'm so fortunate to be doing it in Lewes, DE the last few years with family and friends

visiting. **I will be running a service during the summer to relieve our hard-working Rabbi Reiner on August 26 at 7:30 p.m. by Zoom only.**

Please join me from the comfort of your home with siddur in hand ready to sing along!

I have planned a very exciting year of musical concerts and services for our Shir Shalom community. Please mark the dates down from the flyer that is included in this bulletin. I'm especially pleased to bring back the Shabbat Morning Music and Meditation services December 17, March 18 and May 6. We begin with a light breakfast and continue noshing and davening throughout the informal, spiritual and musical service. I love the freedom to grab more coffee, another tiny bagel or

pastry and resume praying. It must be the little child in me, but that freedom is wonderful!

Older children will love this service as well. If anyone wants to sponsor it for a birthday or simcha the cost of the food is \$300.00 and is truly appreciated. Thank you!

If you are going to be in the Lewes, DE area, I will be leading a Havdala on the Beach on Saturday, July 30 at Cape Henlopen Pavilion southside for the Seaside Jewish Center at 7:00 p.m.

**"I have planned a very exciting year of musical concerts and services for our Shir Shalom community."**

Please consider singing with the Shir Shalom Adult Choir for the High Holydays!

If you've been attending services, you probably know the music.

Our rehearsals will be Sundays from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., September 11, 18, and 25. Our new accompanist Bob Scrofani is delightful and eager to meet you. He is also available for Bar/Bat Mitzvah services to add more music to our worship.

I'm looking forward to our concert series beginning with Rabbi Debbie Zecher's very creative Jewish Caroling - three Jewish Carol composers featured in a show she's done in New York City at cabarets to great acclaim. Join us on December 11 at 3:00 p.m.

The best cellist and piano duo, Julian Schwarz and his gifted wife Marika Bournaki will return for a longer performance of their world class music on Sunday, March 12 at 3:00 p.m. I asked them to play the really sparkling hits of their repertoire

so be prepared to clap a lot after every piece. They are amazing!

First place winners in a European competition of 120 duos - Outstanding!

Beth Styles will return with her beautiful uplifting music, piano, voice as well. I'm thrilled Beth is getting widely appreciated in the Jewish musical world. She will bless our services with her gifts on Friday, November 18, March 24 and May 19 at 7:30 pm.

I look forward to singing and praying with you all year!

Shalom,

*Cantor Debbie*



## High Holiday Choir Rehearsals Resume!

All are welcome to sing with us! Rehearsals on Sunday, September 11, September 18, and October 2 from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. in the sanctuary. Any new singers please contact [cantordebbie@ourshirshalom.org](mailto:cantordebbie@ourshirshalom.org).

Looking forward to singing together again!

# CO-PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Jeff Gorelick



Hello from the executive offices of Congregation Shir Shalom (also doubles as my dining room table at home!). As

co-Presidents, along with my other half, Larry “the Mensch” Brooks, we wish to offer congratulations on finished school years and welcome to summer fun and family time. If vacations are planned, we wish you reasonable (or better) weather, fun, safety, and the beauty of togetherness.

We have been busy as your Presidents along with your executive committee, volunteer Board of Trustees, CSS staff, Cantor, and Rabbi in addressing issues facing our sacred community and synagogue. Mark Block, our executive director has addressed some facility issues such as a broken boiler and parking lot resurfacing as well as daily management and operations. He has done a great job and he has our gratitude. The religious school and ECC, under the supervision of Cathy and Sarah and their wonderful teachers, both ended successful

years with unending platitudes from the parents and children they serve. ECC Summer Fun camp has also kicked off. Patrick has been his usual comforting, reassuring, and professional presence at our front door and will now also be assuming more responsibilities for which he will undoubtedly be successful.

The Atid campaign continues to flourish following our successful, joyous, and emotional gathering on May 22, made possible by the generosity of the Knispel and Axler families and all who attended and

**"The Atid campaign continues to flourish following our successful, joyous, and emotional gathering on May 22."**

gave and have given. A special shout out to Tara and Max Axler who have spearheaded this campaign tirelessly for nearly three years, relentlessly, and with the selflessness and compassion that they run their lives. We are forever in your debt. A group of over a dozen of your fellow congregants volunteered to participate in a phonation the evening of July 6. Many of you received a letter from Rabbi Reiner beforehand as well as

email communication. Please give it the thought and consideration that our wonderful synagogue and community deserve and please give whatever you can. It is our goal and would be a wonderful accomplishment if we could get 100% giving participation among our congregation, regardless of amount, so everyone feels a common cause and involvement. These funds are to allow for more programming, services, upkeep of our facilities, and offering assistance, when necessary, to our fellow congregants in need, so

they may continue to have a House of Worship, a spiritual home.

There is more we are discussing and working on to strengthen what is, already, a thriving, growing, and healthy Jewish community for us all to

call home and to have as our support in both times of happiness and sadness. As it is there for us, may we also be there for her. Larry and I wish you all good health and happiness this Summer and thereafter, shalom!

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

*Jeff Gorelick*

## WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

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

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.



# PEOPLE TAKE VACATIONS, RELIGION DOES NOT

Mark Block, FSA, Executive Director



Life in Fairfield and Westchester Counties traditionally moves at a slower pace during the summer months.

The temperatures are higher, our youngsters are enjoying ECC Summer Fun and campers are off enjoying the summer with old friends and making new ones. Many families will be vacationing before the start of a new school year, and it is noticeable in the Shir Shalom community as this "quiet" time includes a well-earned hiatus taken by many staff members and communal leaders.

This doesn't mean that synagogue life comes to a halt. There are weekly Kabbalat Shabbat summer services to participate in person and via Zoom, and Shabbat mornings feature Torah 101 with Rabbi Reiner. Additionally, we have the time to give more attention to sprucing up our facility. If you are away for the summer, you'll come back to touched up painting, cleaned carpets, manicured grounds with our ECC vegetable gardens produce growing daily and all the

things necessary to be ready for the activity the start of ECC and religious school will bring after Labor Day.

On that note, this period between Passover and the start of the High Holy Days that begins in late September this year is a great time to reflect on the past few months, as well as recharge our lives with renewed optimism.

People might take a vacation, but our religion does not.

Summer is a welcomed relief following another stressful year of

**"Shir Shalom stands as a citadel for the Jewish faith in our community."**

Covid-19 and all the uncertainty we were faced with variants, infections, reinfections and concern for the health and safety of all our congregants, visitors, and guests. It was also a time to emerge from the Covid cocoon which many did as we had extremely successful Purim and Passover holidays and a wonderful May congregational event where many came together for the first time in over two years. It was then that in addition to the terrific food, drinks,

and camaraderie that we talked more directly to you about the Atid capital campaign. Many of you have heard about this critical campaign these past couple of years and many of you have pledged your support to ensure our sacred community grows and flourishes, not just survives. You can read more about the campaign and its purposes in this bulletin. I hope that those who have yet to be a part of this important investment in our future will answer the call, just as we thank those who have done so already. Let's all do our part so that we can say we are 100% committed, regardless

of the dollar amount we pledge. Shir Shalom stands as a citadel for the Jewish faith in our community, casting a beacon to all those who seek to explore, expand, and practice Judaism in a warm, welcoming

home where we are all welcome without judgement.

Before facing a new Jewish year filled with challenges and achievements, don't overlook the fact that Shir Shalom will continue to nurture our lifelong relationship with our faith.

Make Judaism part of your daily life today and the years ahead.

*Mark Block*



## 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.

# ATID: THE CAMPAIGN FOR OUR FUTURE!

## Our Shir Shalom

Congregation Shir Shalom is a warm, welcoming, and inclusive congregation that plays a vital and valuable role in our lives as a spiritual home and sacred community. Talented and caring clergy and educators inspire us through participatory and musical worship and enriching educational opportunities for all ages. We aspire to enhance our lives, our community, and our world through worship, lifelong learning, the pursuit of social justice and Tikkun Olam, and adding to our meaningful social and personal connections. As we celebrate and honor our heritage, we are imagining a generational legacy for the future.

## Our Future (Atid) Together

Our vision is to enhance Congregation Shir Shalom as:

A vibrant, dynamic, and inspiring Jewish community  
An institution built on a growing foundation of generosity and participation

Our area's center for lifelong Jewish learning, prayer, and music as well as a place where people come for enrichment, connection, inspiration and shalom (peace).

## How we will get there...Atid: Campaign for Our Future

Congregation Shir Shalom is in the public phase of its \$3 million campaign to meet our needs and strengthen our sacred community for our bright Atid (Hebrew for

Funds raised for the Atid Campaign will support three priorities:

### House of Connection (*Beit Knesset*) Fund

The need for relationships and connection is more significant now than ever before, when we gather in person and online. The Beit K'nesset Fund will set our congregation apart from all other activities vying for your time. Your support of this fund will lead to the hiring of an additional member of our staff team focused on congregant outreach and retention, cultivating/ deepening relationships, and adding meaning to our lives. Congregation Shir Shalom will also develop affinity-based micro-communities, establish a more day-to-day relationship building approach, identify and develop future leaders of our congregation, and engage congregants and families so we all feel more connected.

### House of Learning (*Beit Midrash*) Fund

Our tradition emphasizes the importance of learning and we are committed to welcoming and including learners from diverse backgrounds in our sacred community. Our enduring commitment to this congregation is to establish life-long enriching connections beginning with our youth. The Beit Midrash Fund will support our congregation and ensure financial sustainability and socio-economic diversity: all congregants will be welcome participants in our congregation and Religious School. The Beit Midrash Fund will ensure that our House is open to all (for learning, prayer, and community) by offsetting/financing extenuating circumstances that would otherwise lead to a loss of revenue or prevent congregants from fulfilling financial obligations to our congregation including community commitments, tuition, and registration fees for special events.

### House of Prayer (*Beit T'Filah*) Fund

Throughout Jewish history, our sages have emphasized the importance of praying in beautiful sacred spaces that inspire us in our prayers and beyond. Our synagogue requires attention and dedicated resources for maintenance and necessary improvements ensuring it remains a beautiful sacred space for inspiration, whether we are physically present or remote when we gather for learning, prayer, and community. The purpose of the Beit T'filah Fund shall be to properly maintain the synagogue and make important building updates and repairs identified in an independent Capital Reserve Study completed in 2019, as well as necessary maintenance and upgrades to technology required for continued remote participation.

### Your Participation is Key

We aspire for 100% participation in the Atid Campaign and look to you and the entire Congregation Shir Shalom family to step up and pledge support for this ambitious and important effort. Please add your support to that of Congregation Shir Shalom's leaders and congregants by investing generously to help secure the future of our sacred community as those who came before have done for us. Every investment is appreciated, valued, and important and will help ensure that Congregation Shir Shalom remains a sustainable, vibrant and thriving center for Jewish life in this community.



**PLEASE MAKE YOUR GIFT TODAY!**

**Rabbi Reiner will happily answer your questions.  
You may email [RabbiAssist@OurShirShalom.org](mailto:RabbiAssist@OurShirShalom.org)  
or call 203-438-6589.**



# Congrats To Our



# 2022 Graduates!

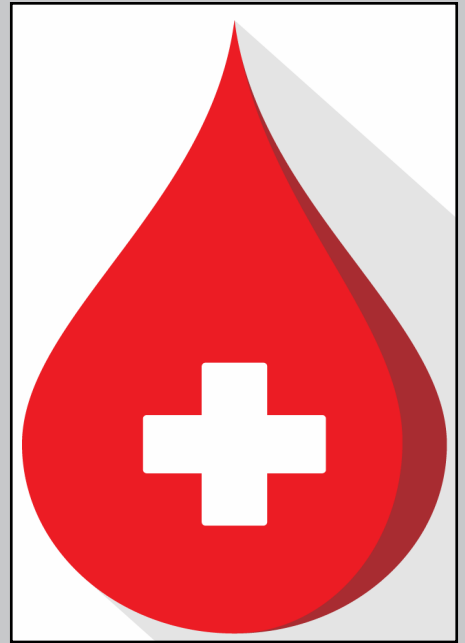
Congratulations from Shir Shalom to you!

Isabella Alvarez  
Zachary Amerling  
Brooke Axel  
Marley Bender  
Ben Jolly  
Chloe Jureller  
Andrew Knispel  
Allison Kramer  
Lucy Landzberg  
Amanda Roberts  
Aaron Rubinfeld  
Abby Segalman  
Amy Stark  
Harley Zins

We wish you all the best wherever your future leads you and remember you have a home here at Congregation Shir Shalom!



## BLOOD DRIVE



We are co-hosting a Blood Drive on Wednesday, August 24, 2022 which will be held at the Jesse Lee Church in Ridgefield.

Please come to Jesse Lee to donate life-saving blood.

Date: Wednesday,  
August 24, 2022  
Time: 11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.  
Location: Jesse Lee Church  
Martin Hall  
207 Main Street  
(corner of King Lane)  
Ridgefield, CT

## MAZAL TOV!

Congratulations to our ECC family, Melissa Rifkin and Gino Picano on the birth of their baby boy, Leonardo Alexander Picano on Thursday, May 19, 2022.

May he be blessed with good health in all the days to come!

# Congregation Shir Shalom CULTURAL ARTS CALENDAR 2022-2023/5783

**Sponsored by The Cantor's Music Fund**

## **NOVEMBER 6**

Beryl Diamond Chacon, violin and  
Roni Ben Hur, guitar  
Ladino, Classical, Jazz Brazilian Music  
@ 3:00 p.m.

## **NOVEMBER 18**

Spirited and Soulful Kabbalat Shabbat  
Beth Styles @ 7:30 p.m.

## **DECEMBER 11**

Debbie Zecher  
Jewish Caroling  
Annual meeting @ 2:00 p.m.,  
followed by concert @ 3:00 p.m.,  
hors d'oeuvres/wine & cheese following

## **DECEMBER 17**

Shabbat Music and Meditation  
Nosh and daven 9:00 a.m.  
Service @ 9:30 a.m.

## **JANUARY 14**

MLK Shabbat  
Kimberly Wilson  
Service @ 7:00 p.m.

## **MARCH 12**

Julian Schwarz and Marika Bournaki  
Music that Celebrates Life!  
Cello and piano duets @ 3:00 p.m.

## **MARCH 18**

Shabbat Music and Meditation  
Nosh and daven 9:00 a.m.,  
Service @ 9:30 a.m.

## **MARCH 24**

Spirited and Soulful Kabbalat Shabbat  
Beth Styles @ 7:30 p.m.

## **MAY 6**

Shabbat Music and Meditation  
Nosh and daven 9:00 a.m.,  
Service @ 9:30 a.m.

## **MAY 19**

Spirited and Soulful Kabbalat Shabbat  
Beth Styles @ 7:30 p.m.



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

# FORTY YEARS OF THE WOMEN CANTORS' NETWORK

Cantor Deborah Katchko-Gray (Opinion, Reprinted from The Jerusalem Post)

Forty years is a significant amount of time in any circumstance, and in the life of an organization, it gives us a chance to reflect. I thought about what 40 years means in Biblical tradition and was surprised how many references to 40 there are! I knew Moses was on Mount Sinai for 40 days and nights receiving G-d's laws. Spies were sent for 40 days to check out the Promised Land; the prophet Jonah warned Ninevah for 40 days to behave, and the generation leaving Egypt had to wait 40 years before a new generation was allowed to enter the Promised Land of Israel. That's what Biblestudy.org had to say about 40.

When I think about 40 years of the Women Cantors' Network (WCN), I think about the early days and how vastly different things are now. It is like a totally new generation is in place, and the

changes are seen as natural, and the way things should be. I am amazed at how 40 years has changed the character and behavior of clergy, and for those who haven't figured it out, there are consequences to the sexual and abusive behavior once accepted as the norm.

I remember clearly the insane comments thrown at me as I began my journey as a conservative woman cantor in 1981, after leading services since 1976 in Boston in area conservative shuls.

"What will they think of next? Topless cantors?" "Breastfeeding on the bima?" "Anything to bring in the congregation I suppose" "what will you do if you have children?" "I guess they are tossing out kashrut too!"

It was if this was a freak show at a circus- something exotic to gawk at, and ponder how will we even look at, no less hear a woman cantor. If this wasn't bad enough, there was the isolation from any colleagues in my community, and one who actively worked against me; keeping

I would say these experiences made me bolder, made me a bit angry and fearless. What did I have to lose? I began an organization totally open to any woman cantor (and any male who wanted to join) regardless of certification or degree. It was a totally radical idea that we can learn from everyone - there may be someone with no formal training who I can learn from. My goal was to open the doors wide and share any knowledge, music, ideas with anyone who loves being a cantor, or who wanted to be a cantor. It should be a

safe space of music, spirit, and learning. It turns out, it's not such a radical idea, but in 1982 it was seen as heresy.

I was belittled and demonized for many years for "legitimizing illegitimate cantors". As the years went by, people saw that talent and creativity have no boundaries; that we can evolve

and become cantors in more than a few ways.

I always said that not everyone can go to as seminary for 5 years, including a year in Israel if you have a family or a spouse with a job with boundaries. Why punish someone because they need an alternative?

It turns out there are plenty of alternative today! It took a few decades but today there are several paths to getting certified as a cantor. In 1981 that was not the case.



me from any community concerts and protesting my admission to the Cantors Assembly; after I passed the rigorous exam. The irony was, I was refused admission based on one complaint that my position wasn't "full time" when the Membership chair encouraged me to apply because my "part time" job of 42 B'nei Mitzvah and all services was more than many male cantors full time jobs at the time. A clear example of sexism at the time, that would not be tolerated now.

(continued on page 12)



## WOMEN CANTORS' NETWORK (CONT'D)

Perhaps I was a bit bold when I proudly told any reporter who asked me about my new position as the second full time conservative female cantor, that “I beat out 18 men who all graduated from the seminaries”

When I began the Women Cantors' Network a dozen women came to a conference I advertised, in Norwalk, CT at my synagogue, Congregation Beth El. Two of those women became presidents of the organization and live on in our hearts. Both were extraordinary; Cantor Sue Roemer z”l and Cantor Doris Cohen z”l. Sue Roemer was the first woman cantor I had heard about. I was studying for the High Holydays at Boston U Hillel with a brave and forward-thinking Rabbi Joseph Polak when he told me, “There’s someone who is doing what you want to do. You should meet her. Sue Roemer from the DC area” Sue Roemer showed up at the first conference in Norwalk, and our deep friendship began. When Rabbi Jon Haddon, former Director of the School of Sacred Music at HUC met her at a WCN conference years later he proclaimed, “Sue Roemer has more talent in her left pinky than anyone I’ve ever met!” Here was a

woman who could lift the spirits of a room of strangers and use music as a healing power in ways we barely understood. It was an incredible experience - her music, her teaching, her conducting, her piano and singing, it was a whirlwind of brilliance, heart and soul. She needed a place to share as well, and the WCN became her safe space and home.



Doris Cohen was Sholom Secunda’s favorite singer in his choir, and the backbone of anything she got involved in. Solid, caring, talented and smart- Doris became our next president after me and our unofficial historian over the years. She was a beloved cantor in her community and quietly without any fanfare led

as a spiritual leader with a gorgeous voice and soul.

I learned much from these two women of blessed memory. These are the kinds of women cantors that had no professional platform to share and learn,

At the WCN they could get support and sing as a community of sacred leaders. The WCN was and continues to be a life support for singing spiritual leaders.

At our most recent conference in Oklahoma City, the keynote speaker; Heather Aranyi spoke about “Trauma, Music and the Breath”. She told us that communal singing is one of the best things you can do for yourself and for others. As we sang together over several days, in worship and informal song shares, we all experienced a lighter spirit, a deeper breath and a happier heart.

I’m looking forward to the next celebration at 50.

As my cousin, Cantor Leopold Sznear z”l said, “life goes one way - forward”.

*Cantor Deborah Katchko-Gray*



## ADULT PROGRAMMING NEWS

On Sunday, April 24, 2022 Adult Programming hosted our own Cantor Debbie. Cantor shared her memories of a lifetime of learning and songs from her beloved teacher: “Songs and Stories of Elie Wiesel.” Cantor put together a display of books and CDs. Nothing can be compared with a personal experience when telling a story. Thank you, Cantor!

Please stay tuned for other interesting programs that will be coming after High Holidays.

# NEWS FROM THE RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

Cathy Deutchman, Director



"The beginning of our happiness lies in the understanding that life without wonder is not worth living."  
— Abraham

Joshua Heschel

This July, Sarah Denyer (ECC Director) and I are hosting a Family Picnic Shabbat and children will be making firefly catchers. We talked about wonder, and how children

have no shortage of the ability to wonder. As adults, we may feel there aren't as many opportunities as possible for wonder and awe.

**"Children have no shortage of the ability to wonder."**

In the section of her book on emotions and experiences about things that are beyond us, author Brene Brown mentions both wonder and awe. She describes awe as a wish

to let shine, to acknowledge, and to unite, while wonder inspires in us a wish to understand.

Shabbat, as the ancient Rabbis imagined, provided time for wonder and space for awe. I'd like to suggest ANY time can be an opportunity to contemplate something bigger than ourselves. This summer, eat some ice cream or catch a firefly and share the twinkling light with someone you love. Notice if you feel awe and wonder and maybe even experience joy in the process!

*Cathy Deutchman*



*See you at our Shir Shalom*

## SUMMER SHABBAT... SHA-PICNIC!

— — — — —

**FRIDAY, JULY 22, 5:15 P.M. - 6:30 P.M.**  
**@ CONGREGATION SHIR SHALOM**

**MEET ECC DIRECTOR, SARAH DENYER AND  
B'YACHAD SCHOOL DIRECTOR CATHY DEUTCHMAN**

**Activities for Tots-Tweens**

- Make firefly catchers, enjoy playground, Gaga, and more!
- Musical service led by Rabbi Reiner
- Pizza, pasta and salad for \$5/person or bring your own picnic, then make your own ice cream sundae!

Registration and advanced payment appreciated

**REGISTER HERE**





# OUR EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER

Sarah Denyer, Director



The ECC's Summer Fun Program began on June 14th and the children are really enjoying themselves!

We have

more than thirty participants this summer and four of our ECC teachers run the program along with seven responsible and caring teenagers. The program is broken into three two week-long themed sessions, "Science and Nature", "Arts and Crafts" and "Goop Lab," and

takes place outdoors for most of our mornings together. In addition to the thematic projects of the day, our children engage in a variety of activities including sprinkler and water-play, making mud, painting

"We look forward to more explorative learning and excitement."

at the easel, creating artwork at the Art Station, obstacle courses and lawn games, riding in wagons and on bikes, playground play, sidewalk chalk art, balancing on stumps and

building with a variety of materials.

We have one pet at Summer Fun this year, a praying mantis named Leda. We are having fun observing her and a few brave friends have even gently held her! We will release her into the forest toward the end of the program.

Special thanks to Cantor Debbie who stopped by last week for songs on the patio during our end of day popsicle time!

We look forward to more explorative learning and excitement with our ECC cuties for the remainder of Summer Fun!

*Sarah Denyer*





## RITUAL COMMITTEE

Picture this...

Birds chirping, meaningful song lyrics, thought provoking sermons, holding a book, and sitting in the shade with a gentle breeze blowing... sounds uplifting? It's summer Shabbat services!

Most Summer Shabbat services (July and August) start at 6:30 p.m. This will afford families the opportunity to come home from work or camp, attend services and still leave during daylight. We are offering one service in July and one in August that are at the 7:30 p.m. time and are on-line only. Information will be coming out soon for the dates in the weekly eblast. Please join us for meaningful prayer and conversation with your fellow congregants. Summer Shabbat services are a pleasant way to end the work week.



Here is a look ahead to some of the services and events in September and October. Details will be provided at a later date.

Friday, September 9 – Barbeque following the Tot Shabbat service

Saturday, September 17 – Selichot

Sunday, September 25 – Erev Rosh Hashanah

Monday, September 26 – Rosh Hashanah

Tuesday, September 27 – Second Day Rosh Hashanah

Tuesday, October 4 – Kol Nidre

Wednesday, October 5 – Yom Kippur

The clergy, staff and members of the Ritual Committee are already planning for the 5783 High Holy Day services. Services will be in person as well as on-line.

The Ritual Committee consists of people who have an interest in planning services and holidays. We love it when a congregant shares about a successful holiday event or ideas for one. As always if you have any comments or suggestions, please see one of us at services or email us at [ritual@ourshirshalom.org](mailto:ritual@ourshirshalom.org).

*Michael Salpeter and  
Laurie Dubin*

## CONTRIBUTIONS

### GENERAL FUND

Terry and Robert Henry  
Mark and Ann Block

### In Memory of:

Helen and Jack Bergson, z"l  
David and Phyllis Amerling

### In Honor of:

Jake Levi becoming Bar Mitzvah  
Eva and Michael Kaplan  
Fly the Colors and Rotary  
Joseph Ellis

### RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

Joseph Niola

### In Memory of:

Ellen Granat, z"l  
Andrew and Lynne Stark  
Walter Vendig, z"l  
Richard and Linda Vendig

### In Honor of:

Alex becoming Bat Mitzvah  
Jason and Lisa Shaplen  
Eve Bursuker becoming Bat Mitzvah  
Veronica Bursuker  
Joel and Shira's wedding  
Joel Schechter  
Joel and Shira's wedding  
Debra and Richard Bush

### CANTOR'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

Somers Holocaust memorial  
Commission

### In Honor of:

Alex becoming Bat Mitzvah  
Jason and Lisa Shaplen  
Eve Bursuker becoming Bat Mitzvah  
Veronica Bursuker

### Education Fund

Gerry Hecht  
The Axler Family

# WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING @ OUR SHIR SHALOM



Late spring and early summer have been busy at our Shir Shalom. Congregants enjoyed coming together for a welcome back/Atid capital campaign reception, our annual Pride Shabbat, and religious school and early childhood sessions ending and Summer Fun beginning. You can even see how our early childhood vegetable garden grows! We look forward to an active, spiritual and fun-filled fall!







Xander Kesselman (left) and his brand new brother Maddox sit with their father, Steven Kesselman in the lobby under the beautiful painting created by his great grandmother Edith Goldman z"l.





# WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING @ OUR SHIR SHALOM



# JULY YAHRZEITS

## FRIDAY, JULY 1

Belle Baker  
aunt of Carlyn Bergman  
Jack Cohen  
grandfather of Tiffany Zezula  
Milton Kempler  
father of Felice Kempler  
Harold Margolis  
father of Elise Aries  
Harold Pecker  
father of Sunnie Colen  
Ruth Pottish  
aunt of Richard Mishkin  
Morris Pottish  
uncle of Richard Mishkin  
Ethel Price  
grandmother of Terry Henry  
Richard Segalman  
uncle of Joel Segalman  
Kylie London Vanderbilt  
niece of Joel Segalman  
Arthur Zucker  
father of Bobbie Cohan

## FRIDAY, JULY 8

Annette Belsky  
Toby Berman  
mother of Michael Berman  
Cecile Swedlin Berman  
mother of Maddie Sobel  
Rose Kaplan Davis  
mother-in-law of Elyse Davis  
Ellen Granat  
mother of Lynne Stark  
Abe Lederman  
father of Linda Lederman  
Joseph Orlan  
father-in-law of Adrienne Orlan  
Oscar Ratner  
uncle of Judith Strom  
Alan Rubinfeld  
father of Adam Rubinfeld  
Mona L. Rymberg  
aunt of Judith Strom

## FRIDAY, JULY 15

Lawrence Besserman  
husband of Judith Besserman  
Richard Dutka  
Helen Eydenberg  
grandmother of Susan Westlake  
Minnie Fremed  
mother-in-law of Resa Fremed  
Paula Fulton  
mother of Shara Birn  
Joseph Goldberg  
father of Jacob Goldberg  
Carol Held  
mother of Lindsay Held  
Diane Kalish  
mother of Jonas Kalish  
Herbert Markham  
uncle of Richard Mishkin  
Dr. Marvin H. Terry Grody  
father of Erica Levens  
Anita Mishkin  
mother of Richard Mishkin  
Albert Ross  
grandfather of Karen Brenner  
Bessie Ross  
grandmother of Karen Brenner  
Max Schattner  
Minnie Sherr  
grandmother of Elyse Davis  
Carl Sonnett  
father of Meridith Sonnett

## FRIDAY, JULY 22

Al Arenson  
father of Linda Arenson  
Susan Aufesser  
Seymour Barth  
father of Edward Barth  
Stanley Bergman  
father of Michael Bergman  
Kenneth Bookspan  
father of Dawn Roberts  
Paul E. Busch  
friend of Barbara Manners  
Laura Fiderer  
wife of David Fiderer  
Sam Ginsberg  
grandfather of Jamie Garrett  
Harold Hagen  
father of Ellen Lipton  
Norman Hirt  
father of Judy Hirt-Manheimer

## FRIDAY, JULY 22 (CONT'D)

Jean Jonisch  
mother of Geroge Jonisch  
Sheldon Kempler  
brother of Felice Kempler  
Shirley Lazarus  
mother of Lorraine Lazarus-Morley  
Fannie Rotenberg  
grandmother of Elise Aries  
Lola Staub  
grandmother of Maggie Staub  
Hannah Vandervelden  
daughter of Steven and Judy Vandervelden  
Herbert Waldman  
father of Alan Waldman

## FRIDAY, JULY 29

Beatrice Alper  
mother of Lonnie Shapiro  
Jerry Blum  
father of Joshua Blum  
David Brenner  
father of Andrea Davis  
Sadie Dutka  
Sarah "Sally" Kalem  
grandmother of Beth Waldman  
Lenore Gorman  
mother of Martin Gorman  
Warren Isman  
father of Ken Isman  
Henry Langer  
grandfather of Karen Gerard  
Joel Levitt  
father of Audra Emmerich  
John Swedlin  
father of Maddie Sobel

# AUGUST YAHRZEITS

## FRIDAY, AUGUST 5

Rheba Alpert  
grandmother of Karen Blum  
George Brody  
great uncle of Joan Isman  
Sam Feinleib  
grandfather of Leslie Gottlieb  
Milton Feldman  
father of Stuart Feldman  
Kathy Goodman  
mother of Victoria Friedman  
Edward Gray  
father of Scott Gray  
Charles Karsch  
grandfather of Karen Blum  
Philip Manners  
father of Barbara Manners  
Edward Joel Mendell Mirkin  
brother of Judith Strom  
Jennie Mirsky  
grandmother of Carlyn  
Bergman  
Kenneth Randel  
father of Susan Randel  
Joseph Salpeter  
father of Michael Salpeter  
Hugo Sternberger  
grandfather of Alice Gottlieb  
Matthew Weber  
brother in-law of Barbara  
Manners

## FRIDAY, AUGUST 12

Helga Allen  
mother of Rona Salpeter  
Richard Glass  
brother of Michelle Blum  
Julius Goodman  
Seymour "Bud" Sapadin  
father of Brian Sapadin  
Pearl Feldman  
mother of Stuart Feldman

## FRIDAY, AUGUST 19

Belle Baier  
mother of Shelby White  
Pauline Binstock  
relative of Moreton Binn  
Charlotte Broder  
mother of Stanford Broder  
Michael Brodsky  
father of Karl Brodsky  
Jack Darvick  
father-in-law of Elinor Darvick  
Reuben Ginsberg  
great uncle of Jamie Garrett  
Joseph Hodas  
father of Elinor Darvick  
Claire Markham  
aunt of Richard Mishkin  
Goldie Mitzelman  
grandmother of Karen  
Taylor and Lori Stalowicz  
Helen Orlan  
mother-in-law of Adrienne  
Orlan  
Betty Rettberg  
mother of Valerie Rich  
Stella Shapiro  
mother of David Shapiro

## FRIDAY, AUGUST 26

Rose-Mary Binstock  
relative of Moreton Binn  
Lev Gogish  
husband of Serafima  
Dashevskaya, father of Vlad  
and Ilya Gogish  
Robert Hammer  
father of Michael Hammer  
Colette Horvilleur  
mother of Laurence Furic  
Jacob Levine  
grandfather of Stephanie  
Herbstman  
Mitchell Perrin  
father of Charles Perrin  
Perry Reynolds  
father of Jean Haddon  
Ruth Schichman  
grandmother of Joe Altman  
Fred Schwartz  
father of Vicki Yolen  
Rochelle Simson  
sister of Andrea Jacobs  
Justin Waithe  
friend of Dana Harnett



## In Memoriam

The Memory of the Righteous is a Blessing

We extend condolences to Tammi Jacobs Shulman and her children, Samantha and Andrea, following the passing of Tammi's father, Allan Stanley Jacobs, z"l on June 20, 2022.

May his memory be for a blessing.



# CONGREGANT SPOTLIGHT

## Terry and Robert Henry



### **How long have you lived in this area and what brought you here?**

We each came to the area for work, Bob in 1978 relocating from Cleveland, Ohio and Terry in 1990 from Riverdale, New York. We actually met for the first time in 1990 while working for Boehringer Ingelheim at its headquarters in Ridgefield, although at that time, we were simply work acquaintances. It was not until many years later that we met again while working at another company, and we had our first date in October, 2002. We got engaged in March of 2003 and were married in Las Vegas in June of 2003.

### **Tell us a little about your family, your careers and other interests.**

We have four children between us from our previous marriages (two sons and two daughters) and six grandchildren.

Bob is a mechanical engineer by education and has held professional engineer licenses in CT and NJ. During the latter part of his career, Bob worked as a facility director in the pharmaceutical industry. He currently serves as commander of

the Greenwich Sail & Power Squadron and volunteers as a docent at the New England Air Museum at Bradley Airport.

Terry is a chemist by education, and for the past 18 years has had her own quality and compliance consulting practice for pharmaceutical and medical device companies. She is involved in J Street, which supports Israel, and a proponent of the two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. She is also involved with the Yale University Graduate School Alumni Association.

### **Share your experience and involvement at Shir Shalom.**

Terry has been a member of Shir Shalom since moving to Ridgefield, and became a trustee on the TSI Board early on. She served as

**"Giving of our time is very satisfying. Look for opportunities to give."**

President of the Board in 1999 and 2000. While President, Terry had the "great honor" of meeting and bringing Cantor Debbie to our temple family.

Terry and Bob were very supportive of the merger that resulted in what we now know as Congregation Shir Shalom. Especially exciting was the opportunity to meet new people and make new friends. Terry was deeply involved in the merger planning team and chaired the committee tasked with coming up with a new name for the new entity. The



resulting recommendation, which took three months to finalize, was quickly embraced by all. "Everybody could relate to the new name." The merger has re-energized our sacred community and brought new leadership and new ideas to the forefront.

Bob, too, has been involved in numerous temple projects. As a member of the Housing Committee, he coordinated recent security upgrades and the VoIP telephone project.

### **What is your favorite Jewish holiday and what are your favorite Jewish foods?**

Passover for the memories, family and tradition and for the charoseth, best matzoh ball soup and brisket.

### **What is the importance of the temple in Jewish life in our area?**

It is a challenge to be Jewish in an area with a small Jewish population.

(continued on next 22)

## CONGREGANT SPOTLIGHT (CONT'D)

It is important that there be a center for Jewish life. There is a special connection with other Jews. It's really that connection – giving of time and effort, using the skills we have, meeting people, having relationships – “There's something in it for me. There's

something in it for you.”

### How can people become connected?

Giving of our time is very satisfying. Look for opportunities to give. What can I do to give my time? For example, coming to a social action activity

such as cooking for the soup kitchen. And from a congregant's standpoint, everyone starts on the outside looking in, and we can make it easier for new people by asking them to help.

People have to be willing to do one thing. Just show up and try it out.

## FROM THE RABBI'S DESK (CONT'D)

Enter our Atid Campaign for Our Future. Atid is the Hebrew word for “future.” We have received \$2.4 Million pledged by 76 donors, including 100% of our Board, Clergy and Staff Teams. I am grateful to our campaign chairs, Tara and Max Axler, for their tremendous energy, leadership, and contributions. We aspire to raise \$3

Million to support a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable future for Congregation Shir Shalom. And, while \$3 Million will help us ensure a brighter future for our sacred community, we also aspire for 100% participation.

You should have received a letter about our campaign in the mail. Please let me

know if you have any questions.

***Thank you, in advance, for investing in the future of Congregation Shir Shalom.***

*Rabbi David Reiner*

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DANIEL P. JOWDY  
DIRECTOR

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Keep your eyes open for our  
2022/5783 High Holiday  
mailing being sent to you later  
this summer.

You'll find all the information  
you need to join us for a  
spiritually uplifting season of  
services and programs.

Rosh Hashanah begins the  
evening of September 25.  
Yom Kippur begins at  
sundown on October 4.