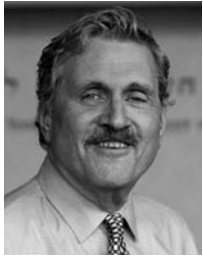


THE CHRONICLE

FROM THE RABBI'S STUDY

FOCUS ON ONE THING | Rabbi Robert N. Levine, DD



Famed Jewish American writer, Bernard Malamud, whose first novel *The Natural* was turned into one of the great baseball movies of all time, also published a thought-provoking short story called *The Jew Bird* in 1963. The protagonist is the classic Borscht Belt bird named Schwartz. *"If you haven't got matjes, I'll take schmaltz,"* he declares and makes himself at home as a Jewish role model and tutor for young Maurice Cohen, son of embattled parents Harry and Edie.

Schwartz is not just a casual visitor; in fact he is fleeing persecution by anti-Semitic birds and seeking refuge. Schwartz becomes a Jewish exemplar to Maurice, teaching him to pray, study Torah, and live Jewish values that prove too much for Papa Harry, who picks Schwartz up, swings him around his head, and throws him out into the night.

Malamud is recalling the traditional Yom Kippur practice of *kapara* in which the release of birds, similar to the biblical scapegoat, signifies the removal of sin from our presence, so that *teshuva*, a fresh start, is possible.

*You are an incredible person with infinite potential ...
The High Holy Days offer you a way to begin.*

Today we still can watch the *Chasidic* community continue the practice of *kapara* in stunned disbelief. However, this is precisely the time of year when, in a decidedly different manner, we too want to unburden ourselves from unwanted baggage.

Of course, there are Jews who inherit memorable religious practices and values and seek to get rid of them. They are too busy, too self-possessed. But as scholar Leon Wieseltier wrote in his book, *Kaddish*, *"... do not throw out traditions that have made it all the way to you."*

Your ever-increasing involvement in Congregation Rodeph Sholom is testimony to the fact that you love our magnificent synagogue and the brilliant, tenacious heritage we strive to uphold. Yet, there is a great deal that we do want to toss out of our lives, particularly at this time of year. At this moment, many of you are casting glares of disbelief and anger toward Washington, but on the eve of the High Holy Days, I am equally focused on you. All of us harbor bigotries we need to expunge.

The *yetzer hara*, the evil inclination, too often overwhelms us and we harbor petty thoughts, jealousies, and anger. Forgiving that person in your life who has caused you pain will help you both. For example, you can reduce the anger toward your divorced mate and make life more palatable for your children. Those of you who harbor addictions (and alas they are epidemic in our land) can stop fooling yourself, take yourself out of denial, and seek the help that may be your lifeline to survival.

Like our ancestors who sent the goat into the wilderness, we can lift the burden of sin off of ourselves. You are an incredible person with infinite potential. Don't let your obsessions, demons, hostilities keep you from becoming the person you always wanted to be. The High Holy Days offer you a way to begin.

"You're asking a lot of us, Rabbi," you may be thinking. Not really. Take a step in this preparatory month of Elul. As author Alan Lew wrote in his book, *This Is Real and You Are Completely Unprepared*:

"Just choose one simple and fundamental aspect of your life and commit yourself to being totally conscious and honest about it for the 30 days of Elul ... The essential act of the High Holy Day season is teshuva, a turning towards mindfulness and an important step in this process, is a kind of turning in to examine our perceptive mechanisms, the way we see the world ... When the shofar blows, it reminds us to turn our gaze inward, and to place judgment at the gates of our consciousness, to shift our focus from the outside world to the considerable activity taking place in the window through which we view it."

Mindfulness can help us squelch denial and take us to a place that is self-reflection, self-forgiveness, after which we can reach out to repair the world one person, one relationship at a time.

Focus on one thing and you may feel the presence of God inspiring you, blessing you, forgiving you as well. Gina, Judah, Ezra, Katie, and Maya join me in wishing you a healthy and meaningful 5778.

**RABBI LEVINE'S 25TH ANNIVERSARY
SPEAKER SERIES
WITH ABIGAIL POGREBIN:
Keeping The Faith: Perspectives on God,
Belief, and Religion in Challenging Times
Monday, September 11 | 7:00 PM**

SEE PAGE 4.

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FALL 2017 | 5778

FROM THE PRESIDENT | Martin Flumenbaum



Welcome back. I hope everyone had a relaxing, safe and healthy summer and is looking forward to a rewarding and spiritual High Holy Day season.

As I begin my fourth and final year as president of this great institution, I want to thank all of you for making this past 175th anniversary year so special.

During my last Yom Kippur speech to this Congregation, I talked about the baby naming ceremony for my first grandchild and the meaning of *l'dor v'dor* – from generation to generation – and how the synagogue remains today, the most vital symbol of continuity in Jewish history. The watchwords for the 175th yearlong commemoration were “**remember, rejoice, and renew**” – remember our history, rejoice in our community, and renew our commitment to this vibrant Congregation’s future.

This upcoming year we will focus on renewing our commitment to the Congregation’s future. Throughout the summer, we have worked on plans to enhance, maintain, and modernize our 87-year-old home – reimagining our facilities from the lobby, to worship spaces, to classrooms.

In August, we will relocate our business office staff to nearby space on 84th Street, and transform a portion of our third floor into a suite for all of our Associate and Assistant Rabbis. Currently, these rabbinic offices are divided among three floors, limiting interaction among the clergy, creating significant inefficiency for countless programs, and failing to provide

congregants with appropriate space for pastoral services. We expect construction on the new Rabbinic Suite to begin right after the High Holy Days.

We are also in the process of finalizing plans to redesign our fifth floor space to better serve the needs of our Religious School-aged children and for families with very young children. Starting this September, we will consolidate the RSS Early Childhood program for two and three year olds in our 84th Street building, thus giving us a perfectly timed opportunity to re-envision the entire fifth floor. We will create a new Center for Early Engagement, flexible use space for worship and gathering, a youth lounge, and numerous modern classrooms for Religious School-aged children.

Finally, sometime in 2018, we will begin renovations on our lobby that will provide a more secure, open, intimate, and welcoming entry for members and visitors alike. Our plan is to relocate the security desk into the vestibule between the main entrance and lobby, create more flexible meeting and gathering space for community events by opening up the President’s Office, and visually uniting the synagogue and school building on 84th Street by enlarging windows and doors into the Courtyard, and adding an accessibility ramp.

We have completed an exceptionally strong year as an institution – spanning worship, social action, education, and celebration – and we look forward to an even more rewarding and dynamic year ahead. Ruth and I, and my entire family, wish all of you a happy, healthy, and productive New Year.

Welcome New Trustees to the Synagogue Board

EILEEN KLEIMAN

Eileen Kleiman and Peter Lurye began attending services at CRS in 1999 when their son, Jacob, entered the RSS 3s. He and his younger brother, Sam, attended the RSS Early Childhood program through 8th grade. Eileen served for three years (2005-2008) on the Parents’ Association Executive Committee, including one year as treasurer and one year as president. While president, she served as the PA Liaison to the RSS School Board and also sat for two years on the School Board’s Finance Committee. Eileen serves on CRS’s Investment and Budget Committees. In 2016 she participated in the Leadership Training program and this year she looks forward to serving as treasurer of the Sisterhood Steering Committee.

JEFF RAVETZ

Jeff and Laurie Ravetz have been members of CRS for 14 years, since their son Gabriel was in RSS 3s. They have three children, Sam is 23, Gabriel is 18, and Lindsay is 15. Gabriel and Lindsay are RSS graduates. Jeff and Laurie feel a strong desire and obligation to give back to this community. Laurie runs the Teen Impact Project organizing CRS’s b’nai mitzvah community service projects. Jeff has served on the RSS Board of Trustees for the past six years and now serves on the RSS Real Estate and the CRS Education Committees. Jeff served as the Chairman of the Long Island division of March of Dimes and is currently the Vice Chair of the Sports & Arts in Schools Foundation. During the past 18 years, he has coached kids’ baseball, softball, and basketball teams in West Side Little League, CYO, and the Uptown Athletic Club.

BETH RUBIN

Beth Rubin and Mitchell Hofing have been members since 1998, ultimately getting more and more involved at CRS. Both of their sons, Josh and Benji, attended RSS from the Early Childhood program through 8th grade. The family has made it a priority to stay at the Homeless Shelter two to three times a year. Beth ushers during the HHD services and is a member and Associate



Pictured left to right: Jeffrey Ravetz, Eileen Kleiman, Beth Rubin, and Susan Wasserstein

Producer of the RS Theater Company. She served on the 2015 Nominating Committee and participated in the 2016 Leadership Development program. Beth and her family went on the 2011 CRS Family Trip to Israel; and she and Mitchell went on the 2015 CRS Trip to Cuba. Beth is currently the chair of Sisterhood and also works on Brotherhood’s Annual Film Festival.

SUSAN WASSERSTEIN

Susan Wasserstein and her husband, George Sard, have been enthusiastic and committed members of Rodeph Sholom since 1990. Their son Michael, now 29, began the RSS Early Childhood program at the age of two and their daughter Rachel, now 27, was part of the RSS pioneer grade that went through 8th grade. Susan participated in the PTA Auction, the Baby Boomer Shabbat Dinner Program and has been a Sisterhood volunteer. She is on the Board of Directors of Citizens’ Committee for Children of NY. Susan and her family are grateful for the wonderful support of the Rodeph Sholom community and consider the friends they have made here as extended family.

“Let respect for the community always be with you.”

(Talmud)

HIGH HOLY DAYS 5778

Selichot | Saturday, September 16

8:00 – 9:30 pm: Beginning with Havdalah, Selichot Service followed by refreshments.

Erev Rosh Hashanah | Wednesday, September 20

Evening Congregational Services

6:00 – 8:00 pm in the Main Sanctuary, Schafler Forum, and Schnurmacher Chapel

Rosh Hashanah – First Day | Thursday, September 21

*Family Service**

9:00 – 10:30 am in the Main Sanctuary (featuring the Children's Choir)

*Young Families Service**

9:15 – 10:00 am in the Schafler Forum

Adult Study Opportunity

9:00 – 10:30 am at St. Matthew & St. Timothy's Church (26 West 84th Street)

Teen Service (Grades 7-12)

9:30 – 10:45 am in the Leader Board Room

Congregational Services

11:00 am – 1:45 pm in the Main Sanctuary, Schafler Forum, and Schnurmacher Chapel

Rosh Hashanah Experience with Rabbi Camille Angel

11:30 am – 1:15 pm at St. Matthew & St. Timothy's Church (26 West 84th Street)

High Holy Days Hands On for Grades 2-6

10:30 am – 1:45 pm in the 84th St. Building

Rosh Hashanah – Second Day | Friday, September 22

Congregational Service

9:30 am – 12:00 pm in the Main Sanctuary

Rosh Hashanah Shireinu Service for Families with Special Needs

11:00 am – 12:00 pm in the Schafler Forum with a Sign Language interpreter. Let us know you're coming: specialneeds@crsnyc.org or 646.454.3124

High Holy Days Hands On for Grades 2-6

9:30 am – 12:00 pm in the 84th St. Building

Tashlich

Following Congregational Services in Central Park

Kol Nidre | Friday, September 29

Early Service (Family Friendly)

5:00 – 6:30 pm in the Schafler Forum

or

Evening Congregational Services

7:00 pm in the Main Sanctuary, Schafler Forum, and Schnurmacher Chapel

Yom Kippur Day | Saturday, September 30

*Family Service**

9:00 – 10:30 am in the Main Sanctuary (featuring the Children's Choir)

*Young Families Service**

9:15 – 10:00 am in the Schafler Forum

Adult Study Opportunity

9:00 – 10:30 am at St. Matthew & St. Timothy's Church (26 West 84th Street)

High Holy Days Hands On for Grades 2-6

10:45 am – 2:30 pm in the 84th St. Building

Morning Congregational Services

11:15 am – 2:30 pm in the Main Sanctuary, Schafler Forum, and Schnurmacher Chapel

Yom Kippur Experience with Rabbi Camille Angel

11:30 am – 2:00 pm at St. Matthew & St. Timothy's Church (26 West 84th Street)

Afternoon Congregational Services

3:00 – 4:15 pm in the Main Sanctuary and Schafler Forum

Yizkor Services

4:15 – 5:00 pm in the Main Sanctuary and Schafler Forum

Neilah Services

5:15 – 6:30 pm in the Main Sanctuary and Schafler Forum

Havdalah

6:30 pm in front of the 83rd Street building or in the Schafler Forum

Erev Sukkot | Wednesday, October 4

4:30 pm *Erev Sukkot/Family Sukkot Experience* in the Sukkah

Sukkot | Thursday, October 5

10:15 am *Sukkot Morning Service*

Erev Simchat Torah | Wednesday, October 11

6:00 pm *Erev Simchat Torah/Shemini Atzeret Service*

Simchat Torah | Thursday, October 12

10:15 am *Simchat Torah/Yizkor Morning Service*

FOR YOUR SAFETY AND SECURITY

Tickets for all services have barcodes to be scanned.

* All Family Services require a separate ticket other than the Congregational ticket. Please RSVP, print, and bring this ticket to be scanned.

Yom Kippur Food Drive. Food Drive bags will be given out on Rosh Hashanah and your filled bags will be collected by City Harvest on Yom Kippur, Saturday, September 30, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm in front of the Synagogue building on West 83rd Street.

SELICHOT | Saturday, September 16
8:00 PM: Havdalah and *Selichot Service*

In advance of the High Holy Days, *Selichot* opens the season of penitential prayers and offers us the chance to reflect on the past year and consider changes in the New Year. The *Selichot* service, which takes place on the Saturday night preceding Rosh Hashanah, is an occasion for spiritual preparation when we begin our process of *teshuvah* – repentance. We will open with Havdalah followed by the *Selichot* service with its urgent prayers and impassioned melodies to inspire us for the days ahead.

JOIN THE CRS ADULT VOLUNTEER CHOIR

Do you have a desire to sing and learn about our Jewish musical heritage? No experience is necessary, just a basic knowledge to participate in the Second Day of Rosh Hashanah services on Friday, September 22 at 9:30 am. Rehearse with Cantor De Lowe and our organist, J David Williams:

Thursday, September 14 | 6:00 PM
Friday, September 22 | 8:15 AM

To join, contact the Cantors' Study:
646.454.3039 or jsimson@crsnyc.org.

SAVE THE DATES

Friday, September 8, 6:00 pm: EREV SHABBAT 9/11 MEMORIAL SERVICE.

Monday, September 11, 7:00 pm: RABBI LEVINE'S 25TH ANNIVERSARY SPEAKER SERIES WITH ABIGAIL POGREBIN: *Keeping The Faith: Perspectives on God, Belief, And Religion In Challenging Times*. Tickets are free but registration required at rodephsholom.org/rabbilevine.

Tuesday, September 12, 11:30 am – 1:30 pm: LUNCH TOGETHER. Enjoy socializing and an engaging presentation, with a dairy lunch. A contribution of \$8 is suggested. Next dates are Tuesdays, October 10 and November 7. Co-sponsored by Adult Education, the Caring Community Committee, and Sisterhood. Contact: lunchtogether@crsnyc.org.

Thursday, September 14, 12:00 – 3:00 pm: MAH JONGG. Novices and veteran players are all welcome! Cards will be available for purchase. In the Board Room. Next dates are Thursdays, October 19 and November 9. RSVP: mahjongg@crsnyc.org.

Tuesday, October 3, 6:30 pm: MINYAN LAUNCH NIGHT: CREATING SACRED COMMUNITY. See Page 6.

Saturday, October 7, 6:00 – 8:00 pm: HAVDALAH UNPLUGGED. See Page 9.

Friday, October 13, 6:00 pm: SHIR CHADASH EREV SHABBAT/ CONSECRATION SERVICE. For new students in the RSS Elementary Division and Religious School.

Friday – Sunday, October 27 – 29: MITZVAH WEEKEND. Join us for our annual weekend of social action. See Page 5.

Monday, October 30, 7:00 pm: INSIDE FAUDA WITH LIOR RAZ. Join us for an exclusive NY appearance with Lior Raz, the creator and star of the hit Netflix series *Fauda (Chaos)*, in collaboration with UJA-Federation of NY. This thrilling Israeli TV series tells the story of a counterterrorism unit of the Israel Defense Force and is based on Raz's own experience. Along with clips, Q&A follows the discussion. Tickets go on sale Wednesday, September 6 at rodephsholom.org/fauda.

Thursday, November 2, 7:00 – 8:30 pm: CRS BOOK CLUB. Self-moderated meetings in the Board Room at the Synagogue. Next date is Thursday, December 7. Contact: bookgroup@crsnyc.org.

Friday, November 10, 8:00 am – 2:30 pm: RSS BOOK FAIR. In the Schaffler.

Friday, November 10, 6:00 pm: SHIR CHADASH EREV SHABBAT/ KRISTALLNACHT SERVICE. We commemorate the Night of Broken Glass, November 9, 1938, the beginning of the Holocaust.

Friday, November 17, 6:00 – 7:30 pm: EREV SHABBAT/MEYER W. NATHANS SERVICE AWARD SERVICE. See Page 5.

Tuesday, November 28, 7:00 pm: ADULT B'NAI MITZVAH INFORMATION SESSION. See this page.

Thursday, November 30, 6:30 – 8:30 pm: CHAMBER MUSIC AT RODEPH SHOLOM. Join us at 6:30 pm for the Reception; and 7:00 pm the Concert starts. Artistic Director Eliot Bailen leads the chamber ensemble highlighting our Jewish musical heritage. Contact: chambermusic@crsnyc.org.

SUKKOT

Erev Sukkot | Wednesday, October 4

3:30 – 4:30 pm: *Sing in the Sukkah*

4:30 – 6:00 pm: *Family Sukkot Experience in the Sukkah*

5:30 – 6:00 pm: *Blessings with clergy in the Sukkah*

Sukkot | Thursday, October 5

10:15 am: *Sukkot Morning Service (Schnurmacher)*

ADULT EDUCATION COURSES

Exploring the World of the Rabbis:

The Rabbinic Revolution that Changed Everything

Rabbi Sarah Reines | Tuesdays, 7:00 pm

November 7, 14

The early rabbis faced a radical shift with the collapse of Biblical Judaism. In its place, they shaped a new world view and understanding of our peoplehood and faith. Over two sessions, we will explore how the Rabbinic revolution remade Judaism, linking ancient text to contemporary experience, and setting a path that is still playing out today.

Personal and Spiritual Pathways Through the Psalms

Rabbi Jacqueline Ellenson | Fridays, 12:00 – 1:30 pm

September 15, October 6 (in the Sukkah), November 10, December 8, through June

Through our continued study of Psalms, we discover resources for our life and for our Jewish journey. A perfect preparation for Shabbat, it's a participatory learning experience with poetry and song. All are welcome, new and returning students alike. Each session is a stand-alone.

Shabbat Study Series:

Words on the Page, Prayers of our Hearts: Shabbat Morning Liturgy

Saturdays, following Shabbat morning services. Lunch included.

October 21, December 2, February 10, April 21

We'll nosh while exploring the history, meaning, and possibilities of the Shabbat morning service and what the words meant then and what they mean for us now. Hebrew familiarity is not required, curiosity is! Come to one session or as many as you can.

Jewish Basics

Clergy team | Wednesdays, 7:00 – 8:30 pm

Beginning September 13

This introductory class will cover the Jewish holidays, foundational Jewish texts, mitzvot, and great Jewish questions. We will explore Judaism's three pillars, Torah (learning), Avodah (prayer) and Gemilut Chasadim (acts of loving kindness), over two semesters. If you want to enrich your understanding of Jewish faith and culture, this is the class for you. For those who are interested in conversion, this course offers a stimulating and thoughtful introduction and is required.

Jewish Basics 2.0

Clergy team | Mondays (time to be announced)

Beginning October 30 | 8 sessions

Have you or your partner converted within the last 5 years? Dive deeper into topics learned in the introductory class: Shabbat, righteous giving, prayer, kashrut, and more to deepen your understanding of Jewish life, learning, and practice.

To register for any programs listed here, go to:
rodephsholom.org/adulted

ADULT B'NAI MITZVAH
INFORMATION SESSION

Tuesday, November 28 | 7:00 PM

Whether or not you became a bar or bat mitzvah in your youth, CRS offers adults the opportunity to renew your commitment to Judaism and Jewish learning. Led by Rabbi Ben Spratt and Cantor Shayna De Lowe, this 18-month experience (Winter 2018 – Spring 2019) will be an exhilarating way of finding your place in Judaism and the Jewish community. Along with learning and strengthening your Hebrew, you will learn cantillation and sacred chants, the purpose of Judaism and the intention of Jewish practice, and study Jewish traditions and texts from an adult perspective. Embark on a journey of transformation with your clergy and fellow congregants. Discover your place in our story!

LEARN MORE ABOUT THESE PROGRAMS AND OTHER EVENTS AT RODEPHSHOLOM.ORG

~ Pursuing Mitzvot ~

MITZVAH WEEKEND AWARENESS • ADVOCACY • ACTION SPOTLIGHT ON MENTAL HEALTH Friday – Sunday | October 27 – 29

*“A Jew is asked to take a leap of action
rather than a leap of thought.”*

(Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel)

One day, one weekend can make a difference in the lives of the people we touch in the community and in ourselves. This year's theme of mental health awareness and advocacy will be highlighted in our annual weekend of social action and educational events.

Awareness It kicks off on Friday night's Erev Shabbat Mitzvah Weekend Service at 6:00 pm with artist-in-residence Cantor Patti Linsky, who will share her own struggle with mental health in a sermon delivered in song entitled *The Spirituality of Recovery*.

Advocacy Following Saturday's Shabbat Morning Service at 10:15 am highlighting advocacy, there will be a lunch-and-learn with Cantor Linsky leading a discussion on finding sacred connection through Torah study. Then following Saturday evening's Havdalah at 6:00 pm, Cantor Linsky performs her one-woman show, *Altar EGO*, which explores issues of self-identity and soul searching, and is infused with tongue-in-cheek humor and zest for life.

Action The weekend culminates on Sunday, Mitzvah Day, a whole day dedicated to helping those in need in our community.

Join in! Contact: mitzvahday@crsnyc.org.

THANK YOU FOR SERVING | Yvette Perry

We Rodeph Sholom congregants are welcome to participate in every aspect of temple life. And nowhere is this encouraged more than to join a committee – and even chair one. Committee members make a unique difference in enriching programs and services. So, too, when asked to join the Board. By sharing one's particular expertise and experience, you ensure that we may continue to cultivate potential growth opportunities.

When a Trustee steps down, it is a fitting time for us to say *thank you*. So it is that we thank **Paul Arnsten, David Fleischer, and Brian Perman**. Your service helped effect change and contributed in achieving goals.

We are grateful for your commitment and the extra time and extra effort you took to make a difference in our community. Your good work made our spiritual home more welcoming and more inclusive – a true mitzvah. Paul, David, and Brian, we say thank you and *Yasher Koach!*

CRS HOMELESS SHELTER

The Rodeph Sholom Shelter begins its 35th year, the 2017–18 Shelter season, on Monday, October 16. Since March 1, 1983, we have provided a clean, safe, and caring temporary home for homeless men. Thousands of congregants have participated for one or two nights each Shelter season, some spend at least one night per month at the Shelter. It will remain open Monday through Friday, until June 2018. Would you like to volunteer for this meaningful congregational cause? Contact: kbarrett@crsnyc.org.

MEYER W. NATHANS SERVICE AWARD

Erev Shabbat Service | Friday, November 17 | 6:00 PM

Each year the Congregation honors a member who has displayed exceptional service to our Synagogue over a period of years. Named in honor of Meyer “Mike” Nathans, this award has been given since 1990 to congregants who exemplify the type of selfless goodwill to the community for which Mike himself was well known. (See website for details.)

MAZEL TOV TO THE RECIPIENTS OF THE 2017 GEMILUT CHASADIM AWARDS



*RSS/CRS Security Advisory Committee
Pictured left to right: Suzanne Waltman, Ricky Dessen, Chris Falkenberg, Erina Polovets (who accepted for her husband, Stan Polovets), and Steve Pearlman (Not in attendance: Dan Dubno, Jeremy Kroll, Stan Polovets, and Michael Silverman)*



*Mitzvah Weekend Volunteers
Carolyn Meckler and Jill Kasner*



*NFTY-NAR
New Member Chair
Isabel (Izzy) Hochman*

Shimon (the son of Rabban Gamliel) says: It is not what one says, but rather what one does, that makes all the difference in the world.

(Pirke Avot 1:17)

DEVELOPMENT | Lyndsie Levine

In the past several months, I've had a few opportunities to step out from behind my desk to participate in a very special and personal ritual – the process of conversion. The conversion ceremony takes place at a *mikvah*, or ritual bath. There is a *beit din*, a “rabbinic court” that consists of three people (at least one Rabbi) who authorize a person's conversion to Judaism, and I have had the honor of being one of them. It has been a privilege to meet these students, hear their stories, and be there after they emerge from the water to offer a hug and a *mazel tov* – a first embrace by a new community. It is a deeply moving experience. I've seen tears and shed them myself, remembering what is beautiful about our sacred community, imagining what it must feel like to stand on the precipice of a decision I never had to make. In Rabbi Noa Rachael Kushner's *Meditation Before Mikvah*, there is a passage that the *beit din* reads to the convert:

*It is between you and the water now
The water is the medium
Inscribing your decision
to become a Jew*

*You have brought yourself here
You will rise from the waters
a child of Zion*

*The world bows in deference to your insight
The heavens sing in your honor
In faith, Israel offers you mikvah
The gift of living water
Go to it as you would your next breath*

*Blessed is the Holy One Who witnesses the
transformation of souls.
Blessed is the Holy One Who has chosen you
for the people Israel.
Blessed are you who chooses the people Israel
through the water.*

As I read these words aloud I wondered about this idea of choice. What does it mean to be chosen for the people Israel and also to choose it yourself? Is this profound decision limited to those who leave behind a former religion and “choose the people Israel through the water?” Or is it something we all must actively seek, even those of us born into the people Israel or simply living a Jewish life? I like to think it's the latter.

One of the most rewarding things about working in a synagogue is seeing

how many people make an active choice each day to be part of our sacred community. That choice might look different for different people. Some find connection through worship and ritual, others through educational enrichment, some through social experiences, and others still through acts of *tikkun olam* and *tzedakah*. Regardless of how we have come to this community, what makes it special is that we've all made an active choice to be part of it.

As we approach a new year, I ask you to keep in mind how you choose to be part of and support our shared community. Many congregants are surprised to hear that their membership dues do not cover the full cost of the synagogue's operations (last year it was 54%). It is only through your philanthropic support that we are able to offer increasingly high quality education opportunities, explore innovative worship experiences, provide a foundation for the next generation to connect with Judaism, create enriching programs for a community of active seniors, support a network of clergy who are there for us in our most significant moments, and so much more. The Yom Kippur Appeal (YKA) is our largest source of unrestricted revenue outside of membership dues, and without it, none of this would be possible. Every contribution we receive for the YKA is a meaningful way to support – and yes, to choose – our sacred community.

Rodeph Sholom is here for all of us because of all of us. Thank you for all you do to make that a reality. All good wishes for a sweet and happy 5778.

A NEW YEAR, A NEW PATH FROM THE EDITOR | Yvette Perry

Beginnings are made up of hope and good intention. Likewise it is how we enter into the High Holy Days every New Year. Through prayer, we seek courage to make this next year a fruitful one.

When I think of new beginnings I think of my father who came to this country from Paris right after WWII, eager to start a new life. With determination, he created a family, made friends, and built a career. A Zen proverb goes: *Obstacles do not block the path, they are the path.* Rabbi Lamm concurs in *The Power of Hope*: “... the tendency often is to focus on the risks of a new situation when the risks may actually be a lot less than you think.” The lesson is we should trust our hopes and not our fears; and concentrate on our goals instead of obstacles.

These Days of Awe are a time to reflect on where we want to take our lives and how we want to get there; a time to embrace the possibilities, to immerse ourselves in introspection and soul-searching. We ponder how we can live more fully in the treasured time we are given. We can't re-live the past, we must move on.

Every single moment of our lives we have the opportunity to choose our future. It may not be as formidable as relocating to a new country. We can benefit, too, from little changes. What we do today will determine what we face tomorrow. Each thought, moment, decision, and experience leads us to a new path on our journey.

How do we begin our journey? Rabbi Levine writes in *Where Are You When I Need You*: “... [It is] a feeling inside, something that just told you what the right decision was. Is that your conscience? Is that God talking? Is it both?” As we prepare ourselves for a New Year, we take a deep breath and listen to our inner voice. We just might hear the voice of God guiding us on our path.

MINYAN LAUNCH NIGHT: CREATING SACRED COMMUNITY

Tuesday, October 3 | 6:30 PM

Making connections. We learn from social science that people flourish when we belong to a small community and make meaningful relationships. With this new program, CRS wants to help you make intentional connections – with other members, our community, Jewish tradition, and with God. Each Minyan of eight to twelve members will meet monthly for a seven to nine-month period. Choose a Minyan that speaks to your own interests and passions, one that might ignite something new in you, and one that suits your schedule. Jewish wisdom can help create connection. With a new sense of heightened belonging, CRS can be a home for all.

Interested? Contact minyan@crsnyc.org.

Religious School

ISRAEL AT 70: AM, ERETZ, AND MEDINA – PEOPLE, LAND, AND STATE | Kerith Braunfeld

This is a special year as we will celebrate the State of Israel's 70th birthday. It's amazing to think that just last year we celebrated Rodeph Sholom's illustrious 175th anniversary, and that the modern State of Israel is only turning 70.

The word *Israel* itself is fascinating and enigmatic unless defined further. Israel can be *Am Yisrael*, the people of Israel, not just those who live in Israel, but all Jews around the world. It can mean *Eretz Yisrael*, the physical land of Israel, the Promised Land of the Torah. Then, there is *Medinat Yisrael*, which is the modern State of Israel that was established on May 14, 1948 – 70 years ago come this spring.

Each year in Religious School, we choose an overall theme for the school. It does not change our regular curriculum; rather it provides a lens through which we explore our content. Celebrating Israel's 70th birthday and these three aspects of the word *Israel* affords us the opportunity to discuss important topics with our students, such as the diversity of *Am Yisrael*, recognizing that Jews come in all different colors and from all over the world, teaching important lessons such as accepting the other, those who are different from us,

and exposing our students to the varying beliefs held by Jews.

We'll also learn about the land itself, *Eretz Yisrael*, its geography, how Israel maximizes its resources, its hotly contested physical borders, and why it's described as a land flowing with milk and honey. Reflecting on *Medinat Yisrael*, the modern State of Israel, we'll focus on its history, the advances it shares with the world, the different narratives of its inception and the challenges it faces due to its diverse population.

David Ben Gurion, Israel's first Prime Minister, said it best, "*In Israel, in order to be a realist you must believe in miracles.*" While the State of Israel isn't perfect, no state or country is, it is our Jewish homeland and as its national anthem states, "*Then our hope, the two thousand year old hope, will not be lost: to be a free people in our land, the land of Zion and Jerusalem.*" We express our hope and vision for the miracle that Israel is now and all that we hope she will become.

We are looking forward to another exciting year in Religious School and wish you *Shanah Tovah*, a year full of blessings, renewal of faith, spirit and soul. **שָׁנָה טוֹבָה!**

WELCOME NEW STAFF

We start a new year welcoming two new members of the Religious Education team.



Jessica Cohen, our new Assistant Director of Religious Education, joined the CRS staff as a Religious School teacher in 2012. She spent two years as a Community Educator at Temple Israel Center of White Plains and has been working as a Principal Researcher and Educator on *The Narrative Project* helping Jewish educators incorporate personal narrative work into their teaching. She earned a BA in Religious Studies from Rhodes College and an MA in Jewish Education focusing on Educational Leadership from The Jewish Theological Seminary's William Davidson Graduate School of Jewish Education. Having grown up in Memphis, TN, Jessica is now a happy New Yorker.



Daniel Strauss is our new Assistant Director of Teen Engagement. He comes to us having served as the Director of Youth Engagement for two synagogues on Long Island, which is where he found his passion for working with teens and children. Determined to make a difference in the world, he led his teens in a diverse array of social justice initiatives. Along with his work in the Jewish community, Daniel is an accomplished musician and audio engineer. He has worked at recording and post production studios and loves nothing more than to jam on his piano and guitar.



A wonderful program to share with your child! Receive FREE high quality Jewish books and music in the mail each month for children 6 months to 7 years old. The first program of the year will be **Challah for Hunger** on Saturday, October 28 at 10:30 am. Then the second Thursday of each month at 4:30 – 5:15 pm will be PJ & Play Story time! **Go to rodephsholom.org to sign up.**

Rodeph Sholom School

NEW BEGINNINGS | Danny Karpf

During my first year as Head of Rodeph Sholom School, I invite you to learn more about this special community and place of learning that my family and I have discovered. Last year, my wife Lisa and I were thrilled to witness our sons, Toby (beginning Kindergarten this fall) and Leo (beginning Grade Three), finding inspiration and joy in the rich academics while being embraced by the warm, nurturing community. Notably, our boys particularly loved Hebrew, Jewish Studies, holiday celebrations, and weekly Kabbalat Shabbat. And we all appreciated joining CRS during the wonderful celebration of the congregation's 175th anniversary. After the school year ended, we took a family trip to Israel for our close friends' son's bar mitzvah, adding a beautiful capstone to a fabulous year of Jewish learning.

As I begin my tenure leading RSS into its 48th year, I look forward to building on the strong programs and rich traditions that have distinguished us, while helping the school excel in new and exciting ways. I've been impressed by a curriculum intentionally designed to support students from early childhood through early adolescence. At RSS, children can be children – while simultaneously preparing for success in high school and beyond. Our self-confident students – having found their voices and built their skills – matriculate to top high schools ready to take on the world and seek to make it a better place. Along with CRS, we have the ability to support families in raising value-centered children in an increasingly complex world.

I am proud to be part of the only Reform Jewish independent school in the region, and one of only 12 in all of North America. We have a truly unique opportunity to graduate outstanding leaders ready to make a lasting impact in their communities. Please help us spread the word about this gem of a school. And if you have a school-aged child not yet enrolled, come visit us! If we haven't yet met, I look forward to connecting in the months ahead.

The relationship between CRS and RSS is strongly valued and admission priority is given to all current member families.

Please join us at our Fall Open Houses:

2s and 3s families: Wednesday, October 18, 6:30 pm at 7 West 83rd Street
PK/K families: Tuesday, November 14, 6:30 pm at 168 West 79th Street
RSVP: 646.438.8600

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT RODEPHSHOLOM.ORG

I N M E M O R I A M

Stephen Markowitz, uncle of Suzanne Dickman

Madeline Siegel, mother of Glen Siegel

Jay Rosovsky, brother of Dr. Ann Beaton

Noel Freeman, father of Michael Freeman

Mary Rittenberg, mother of Sam Rittenberg

Dorothy Ziman, mother of Ken Ziman

Rochelle Gendler, mother of Ellen Gendler

Paul Carter, father of Robert Carter

Phyllis Glucroft, wife of Chester Glucroft

Helen Gelfand, mother of Janice Gelfand

Nancy Mendelow, widow of Steven Mendelow,
mother of Dr. Cara Mendelow and Pam Christian

Margot Aronsohn, sister of Janet Stovin

Patti Aronsohn, niece of Janet Stovin

Gabe Pressman, husband of Vera Pressman,
father of Michael Pressman

Ann Taub, mother of Sylvia Ames

Eduardo Moss, father of Sandra Ross Buzali

Catherine M. Pfund, mother of Susan Zizmor

Robert Bass, husband of Denise Goldman,
father of Hayley and Natalee Bass

Gertrude Pincus Mintz, mother of Dr. Betty Mintz

Nancy Green Waxman, wife of Dr. Howard Waxman,
mother of Brandon and Jesse Waxman

Ivan 'Ike' Kranich, father of David Kranich

Dr. Herbert E. Lieb, father of Richard Lieb

Nancy Slosberg Klotz, mother of Hilary Steinman

Catherine Crown, sister of Dr. Nancy Crown

Sally Botwinick, mother of Richard Botwinick

*The Rodeph Sholom School gratefully
acknowledges the support received from
The Fund for Jewish Education.*

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Life Monument Funds, Inc. and
UJA-Federation of New York.*

“
... *The primary purpose
is to praise, to sing,
to chant.
Because the essence
of prayer is a song,
and man cannot live
without a song.*”

(Talmud)

Community Matters

HAVDALAH UNPLUGGED

Saturdays | 6:00 PM

October 7, November 18, December 16

The perfect way to start a new week, Havdalah Unplugged features music and stories and a chance to kick back, reflect, and soak up positive energy. This energizing, thoughtful, and connective service has already become a CRS tradition. The next set of services will begin in March 2018.



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L'SHANAH TOVAH

PRAYER FOR ISRAEL IN THE NEW YEAR

*Our dream of ...
 life and strength of our
 people;
 light and peace for our
 Holy Land.*

(Mishkan HaNefesh)

ABOUT CONGREGATION RODEPH SHOLOM

Rodeph Sholom, one of New York's most distinguished Reform congregations, embodies a strong commitment to purposeful Jewish living and the pursuit of human dignity. Our congregation is a true community, excelling in meaningful worship, educational opportunity for all ages, social and tzedakah programs. We strive to be an extended family of people who care about each other and our community.

Founded in 1842 on the Lower East Side, we recently celebrated our 175th year, and have always sought to blend the teachings of our Jewish heritage with the best lessons of modern culture. We are proud of our beautiful worship services, our commitment to social action, and our emphasis on Jewish education for people of all ages. Rodeph Sholom was the first Reform congregation to open a Jewish Day School. Our schools, like our congregation, are flourishing. Remaining true to our name which is Hebrew for "pursuer of peace," Rodeph Sholom takes great pride in our history and is hard at work to fulfill the promise of our future.



Congregation Rodeph Sholom

Robert N. Levine, D.D. Senior Rabbi
Benjamin H. Spratt Associate Rabbi
Greg D. Weitzman Assistant Rabbi
Juliana S. Karol Rabbinic Intern
Rebecca Garfein Senior Cantor
Shayna De Lowe Associate Cantor
Ephraim Biran Cantor Emeritus
Tobias Glaser Cantorial Intern
Barbara Zakin Executive Director
Marc Fried Chief Financial Officer
Lyndsie Levine Director of Development
Ruth Bernstein Director of Membership Services
Rachael Evans Operations Director
Kirsten Major Communications Manager
Gail Becker Sexton
Rodeph Sholom Religious School
Kerith Braunfeld Director
Marcia Stein Associate Director
Jessica Cohen Assistant Director
Dina Newman Assistant Director of Youth and Teen Engagement
Daniel Strauss Assistant Director of Teen Engagement
Rodeph Sholom School
Danny Karpf Head of School
Susan Weiss Newman Head of Schnurmacher Early Childhood Division
Colleen Dundon Head of Hirschberg Elementary Division
Maxine Borenstein Head of Middle School Division
Leslie Silverstein Director of Admissions and Financial Aid



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