CONTINUING OUR STORY | Rabbi Greg Weitzman

There is always something very exciting about the spring. The air begins to warm up, and the sights and smells of the New York City streets change. As the cold crisp northeast air makes way for the warm west winds, this city starts to come to life again. The streets are complete and alive with people walking to and from work, the restaurants and bars are full, and patrons pour out into the streets. The paths in Central Park and those along the Westside Highway burst with runners and the baseball season is just around the corner.

Life in NYC, and everywhere in the world, is set on a beautiful cycle. It is something that I have enjoyed these last 13 years living in the city. As the seasons change and the world turns, I have been comforted by the sense that no matter how dark and cold the winter months are, the spring offers a new chance to spend time in the sun.

This cycle of life is not new to us as Jews. We live our lives on such a cycle. Our weeks are marked by the holiness of Shabbat, our months are marked by the new moons. Yet it is our yearly cycle that is so inexplicably linked to who we are as an ancient people. Our year is marked by not just one New Year, but by four. There is Rosh Hashanah in the fall, Tu B’Shevat in the winter, Pesach in the spring, and Shavuot in the summer. Each of these moments allows us a chance to look back, not only at what it is that we have accomplished, but also to think about what it is that we still need to do.

In a few weeks we will sit around the seder table on Passover, retelling the story of our people’s exodus from Egypt. The story is one of freedom; on one side we entered as slaves and on the other we exited as a redeemed. This liminal moment in our people’s history is crucial to understanding who we are as Jews. We often find ourselves standing at the precipice of something, yet we are unable to take that step, unable to wade into the waters. Passover reminds us that there is usually something that can be gained from jumping in. If nothing else, there is the belief that there will be a new opportunity. Perhaps that is why it says in the Mishnah and in our Hagaddah that it is incumbent on each person gathered at a seder to recite: “B’chol dor vador chayav adam lir’ot et atzmo k’ili hu hatza mitzrayim.” “In all generations it is the duty of every one of us to consider as if they had come forth from Egypt.” Retelling the story to our children and our children’s children reminds them not only of where it is they came from, but that they have the opportunity and the responsibility to carry on the story.

It should not come as a surprise to many of you that we are in the midst of major construction on the fifth floor of our building. This renovation project will produce a cutting edge Early Engagement Center that will function as yet another jewel of Congregation Rodeph Sholom. It may seem cliché at this point, but when we invest in our children we are investing in our future. Last year we celebrated 175 years as a community and now I am filled with great excitement when I think of what the next years will behold. This Early Engagement Center will provide specialized Shabbat experiences for young families, classes for children and their caregivers, support groups, and so much more.

This is a new and wondrous chapter for our Congregation. As the spring begins to make its way into New York City, a new endeavor is beginning to blossom here, too. I believe we all look forward to what the future will hold for this sacred space, as I believe that the next generation of Congregation Rodeph Sholom will continue the legacy of our great and historic community.

Ashley, Eden, and I would like to wish all of you a wonderful start to spring and a zissen Pesach.

CANTORS IN CONCERT: VOICES OF A GENERATION

HONORING CANTOR REBECCA GARFEIN
Wednesday, May 2, 7:30 PM

Congregation Rodeph Sholom hosts a concert on the eve of Cantor Rebecca Garfein receiving the degree of Doctor of Music from the Debbie Friedman School of Sacred Music (DFSSM) at Hebrew Union College, having served the Cantorate with distinction for 25 years. She will be joined by her outstanding Cantorial classmates from NYC and across the country who will also receive their honorary doctorate. Dedicated in loving memory to Cantor Jenny Izenstark, Cantor Garfein’s beloved classmate, best friend, and CRS master b’nai mitzvah tutor, the concert will raise money for the DFSSM in Cantor Jenny’s memory. With accompaniment by Joyce L. Rosenzweig, pianist and artist-in-residence at the DFSSM, the concert features cantorial gems from the best of Chazzanut, Yiddish, Ladino, and Broadway favorites.

Join us for a special Erev Shabbat Service on Friday, May 11, 6:00 pm to celebrate Rabbi Ben Spratt’s and Cantor Shayna De Lowe’s 10 years at Rodeph Sholom featuring the uplifting and enchanting music of Nava Tehila, our Shabbaton artists-in-residence.

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VOLUME 20 | NUMBER 3
SPRING 2018 | 5778
FROM THE PRESIDENT  |  Martin Flumenbaum

This is my last Chronicle column as president of this incredible institution. When I was first elected president four years ago, I stated that if my term were to be successful, I would have to count on each and every one of you for your wisdom, energy, dedication, and yes, financial support. This Congregation has not let me down. We have together taken Rodeph Sholom to a new high point and to a new phase in its growth as an institution.

As I announced during my Yom Kippur speech to the Congregation, we are in the early stages of a major five-year Capital Campaign that will enable us to reimagine and renovate our facilities, to invest in new programs, and to help us sustain long-term financial stability. I am pleased to report that so far, in this quiet phase of this Campaign, we have received gifts and pledges of over $15.4 million from just 70 families in our Congregation. This is a spectacular response that ensures the success of our efforts.

As part of this Campaign, we are in the process of renovating parts of the third floor, the entire fifth floor, and the lobby – creating a new Rabbinic suite for our younger clergy, new worship space, and new 21st century classrooms for our Religious School and Early Engagement Center. We will also establish an Accessibility Fund to ensure that every family who wishes to be part of this community can join, regardless of financial circumstances. And finally, we aim to increase our endowment to secure Rodeph Sholom’s future for our children and the next generations.

As it has for nearly two centuries, this synagogue remains a vital symbol of continuity for our Jewish heritage, the source of our community and compassion in a city where it is much too easy to feel alienated and lonely – a place to put your faith into action.

Great things are happening here every day. Our clergy are exceptional and their hearts are as big as our sanctuary. They simply never stop urging us – through worship, education, and discussion – to fill our lives with meaning and Jewish values that elevate all of us. We operate one of the finest independent schools in the city – the only nursery through 8th grade Reform Jewish Day School in the city – that teaches over 500 kids each day.

As I have written before, I am the child of Holocaust survivors whose principal goals in coming to the United States were to create a better life for their children and to ensure the continuity and survival of their Jewish faith. We are each just one link between the generations. Our critical mission is to make this community more secure, more vibrant, more meaningful not just for us, but for the next generation. And in so doing, we will find extra meaning in our own lives. I am a much better person for having served as your president. Ruth and I, and my children, Martha, David, Anna, Judy, and grandchild Louise wish all of you a happy and healthy Passover holiday.

RABBI LEVINE JOINS TWO BOARDS

We are proud to announce that our Senior Rabbi Robert Levine has recently joined two important boards:

The Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Clergy Advocacy Board
Voices of faith are critical in conversations about women’s health. Made up of a network of clergy and faith leaders representing diverse denominations and traditions, since 1994 the Clergy Advocacy Board assists PPFA in its mission by adding multi-faith perspectives, voices, and leadership. Members speak out in support of Planned Parenthood in communities and government chambers throughout the U.S.

The Muslim Jewish Advisory Council
The Council is an interfaith, bipartisan collaboration convened by the American Jewish Committee and the Islamic Society of North America. Comprised of 44 political, religious, and business leaders from across the U.S., since 2016 it advocates domestic policy issues of common concern to the American Jewish and American Muslim communities. Reversing the recent rise in hate crimes and promoting the place of religious minorities in American society are its top priorities.

Your congregation appreciates all the good work you do, providing counsel and direction whenever and wherever needed.

Yasher Koach, Rabbi!

“… What is most important is not how you feel, what you believe, or what you promise. In Judaism, you are what you do.”
– Rabbi Robert Levine, There Is No Messiah and You’re It

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PASSOVER SERVICES

Saturday, March 24
11:00 am  Shireinu Shabbat Morning and Passover Service

Saturday, March 31
10:15 am  First day of Passover Festival/Shabbat Morning Service

Friday, April 6
10:15 am  Concluding Passover Service With Yizkor Memorial Prayer

SHIREINU SHABBAT AND PASSOVER/CHAPEL SERVICE
Shabbat Morning, Saturday, March 24, 11:00 AM – 12:30 PM
Share prayer, Torah, music, and nosh! All are welcome to join the Rodeph Sholom family for a warm, inviting, musical, and interactive worship experience. An accessible service that is sensitive to a variety of needs with a Sign Language interpreter. Please RSVP: shireinu@crsny.org or 646.454.3124.

MAKE YOUR OWN MIRIAM’S CUP

We first meet Moses’s sister Miriam as she is placing him into the waters of the Nile, hiding him in the reeds. From that first moment, along with the miraculous continuous well of spring water that followed her through the desert, and her victory song and dance after leading the women across the Red Sea, Miriam has been associated with water. As a leader of the Hebrew women, she showed courage, wisdom, and ingenuity. Placing Miriam’s Cup on our seder tables filled with water honors the role that women played in the Exodus from Egypt.

Here’s what you need:
1 glass footed goblet
Blue beads, all different shades (represents water)
Small bells (represents Miriam’s timbrel)
Craft wire – about 18 inches
Gold and silver paint pens

How to make it:
String and secure a bell on the end of the 18-inch piece of wire. String the beads through the wire. Twist the wire around the top bead to secure. Wrap the beaded wire around the glass stem to decorate the cup. Use the paint pens to write “Miriam’s Cup” or in Hebrew “Kos Miriam” on the glass.

Place your beautiful Miriam’s Cup next to Elijah’s Cup on the seder table. Pesach Sameach!

The Congregational Passover Seder

Friday, March 30, 7:30 PM
Following the Erev Shabbat Service at 6:00 PM

The fifteenth day of Nisan is the ritual observance of Passover in which we commemorate it with a festive meal – the seder. The Congregational Seder is an opportunity for our Rodeph Sholom family to come together to remember, to ponder the questions of freedom, and to rejoice! We read from the Hagaddah, which tells the story of the Exodus from Egypt – our journey from slavery to freedom.

Rabbi Ben Spratt and Cantor Shayna De Lowe will be leading this fun-filled evening of song and prayers and a delicious, traditional dinner. Enjoy the warmth and camaraderie of your friends, family, and clergy – a celebration of freedom and family!

Make your reservation now. Members and children (five years and older): $36. Non-members and children (five years and older): $50. Please RSVP at passover@crsny.org or call Miriam Baron at 646.454.3043.

Image: ©Challis and Roos

John Kowal/Rev. Preston Washington
28th Annual Freedom Seder

Friday, April 13, 7:00 PM
Following the Erev Shabbat Service

Join us for our annual joint Seder in the Schaffer Forum following the Erev Shabbat Service with clergy and congregants of Memorial Baptist Church sponsored by the Community Concerns Committee. Together we will rejoice in song and words the special relationship we have with Memorial Baptist, just as we share our stories of Exodus and freedom. To make a reservation, please RSVP at freedomseder@crsny.org or call Miriam Baron at 646.454.3043. If you have questions, please email freedomseder@crsny.org. Please send your check of $25 per person to Congregation Rodeph Sholom, Att: Freedom Seder, 7 West 83rd Street, NY, NY 10024, payable to CRS.

“And I brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you from the house of bondage. I sent before you Moses, and Aaron, and Miriam.” (Micah 6:4)
LEARN MORE ABOUT THESE PROGRAMS AND OTHER EVENTS AT RODEPHSHOLOM.ORG
#CRSSTRONG at URJ Biennial!

Almost 6,000 Jews within the Reform movement attended the 74th URJ Biennial convention in Boston this past December. And CRS was there! In fact, we were the second largest delegation attending. Under the heading “Reimagining Jewish Life,” Israel and social action were explored in learning sessions and talks. Each day’s theme – innovation, action, faith, or community – featured speakers including Senator Elizabeth Warren, Israeli author David Grossman, and RAC’s Rabbi Jonah Pesner. Delegates savored praying together at Shabbat services and hearing lots of engaging and joyful music.

“Let us allow our Torah to be a prism to view our current predicament and perhaps to help us envision a more healthy, whole and hopeful future.”

– Rabbi Rick Jacobs, URJ president, at the 74th URJ Biennial convention

MEYER W. NATHANS SERVICE AWARD HONORS SLOAN SCHICKLER

Recognizing individuals for their outstanding contribution to service over many years to our congregation, we were very pleased to present Sloan Schickler with the Meyer W. Nathans Service Award this past winter. Sloan demonstrates what it means to be an active and engaged member of our community. Sloan and her husband, Dr. Paul Riska, have two daughters, Elisabeth and Julia, both b’not mitzvah and Confirmands of CRS. A seasoned lawyer, she is presently of counsel to the NY office of Wong Fleming. Sloan was instrumental in updating the Religious School’s mission statement. It was through her tremendous work with our educators, clergy, and teen consultant that the Confirmation Capstone Berlin trip came to be. With consideration and good insight, she has been invaluable as a levelheaded participant in the Education, Religious School Youth, Sisterhood, and Communications committees. We salute you, Sloan, with appreciation for your dedication and commitment and we say Yasher Koach!

SPRING SHABBATON WEEKEND WITH ISRAELI MUSIC SENSATION ~ NAVA TEHILA ~

Friday, May 11, 6:00 PM: Erev Shabbat Service
Saturday, May 12, 10:15 PM: Shabbat Morning Chapel Service and 6:00 PM: Havdalah

Musicians from the musical congregation known as Nava Tehila will be artists-in-residence for our Spring Shabbaton. Nava Tehila (Hebrew for “beautiful praise”) is an emerging Jewish Renewal prayer and study community. Since 2004 they have been creating innovative prayer experiences that are upbeat, spiritual, and meditative. Their music is rooted in Middle Eastern and Indian spiritual mantras as well as their own contemporary Israeli music, making for a peaceful and relaxed atmosphere. On guitars and vocals are Daphna Rosenberg, whose music is influenced by folk, rock, and Klezmer, and Yoel Sykes, who is inspired by rock, too, and also blues, reggae, and flamenco, Arabic, Moroccan, and African music. We are in for a fascinating and unique musical Jewish experience!
Writing this article in the throes of a frigid January, it is hard to imagine that when this edition of The Chronicle hits your mailbox, the sun will be setting after 7:00 pm, our winter coats will be packed away (God willing!), and the first flower buds of spring will be poking through the dirt. At the end of a long, dark winter, spring always seems to ring in with a sense of relief, hope, and renewal. Warmer days are ahead and it feels like anything is possible!

This is certainly a time of renewal and growth for Rodeph Sholom. If you’ve stepped foot inside our building in the last several months, then you know that we are in the midst of some significant construction. Half of our third floor has been transformed into an office suite for our junior rabbis, a beautiful space that reflects the high regard in which we hold our clergy and provides quiet space for congregants waiting to receive pastoral care. If you haven’t seen it, stop by and say hi!

Simultaneously, we have begun a complete renovation of our entire fifth floor. This redesign will better serve the needs of our Religious School, bringing classrooms up to speed with 21st century technology, creating a long-sought-after youth lounge for teens, and specialized art, music, and cooking spaces for younger students. During the day, the fifth floor will become the dedicated home of our ever-growing Early Engagement program, with a variety of classes and content for families with young children. Two large multi-use spaces on the floor will maximize our use of space and allow for larger groups to gather for worship and socializing.

Later this year, we will begin a restoration of our lobby that will both preserve the historic beauty of our main entrance and provide a more gracious and welcoming entry point for all who walk through our doors. The security desk will be relocated into the vestibule between the front doors and the lobby, both to enhance security and to improve the flow of traffic. We will also open up the President’s Office to create more space for gathering and community events and will install a Living History exhibit to showcase the Rodeph Sholom story both past and present. Lastly, a wheelchair accessible ramp will be installed in the courtyard, which will make our 83rd Street building fully accessible to the 84th Street RSS building.

This is just a taste of some of the most exciting projects on our horizon. As we move into spring with enthusiasm for what’s in store, I look forward to sharing this season of renewal with you. May the days ahead be days of possibility for our entire community.

If you’re interested in learning more about these projects, please contact me at llevine@crsnyc.org or 646.454.3050.

**UNDERWRITING OPPORTUNITIES**

Gifts that partially or fully underwrite large projects at CRS are a wonderful way to make a tangible impact in our community. Here is one immediate opportunity:

**Congregational Passover Seder**

Our beautiful Congregational Seder brings together a wide spectrum of our community including young families, singles, senior citizens, members, and non-members. A gift of $10,000 will cover the synagogue’s expenses over and above revenue from participants. A gift of $1,000 will cover the cost of guests from a nearby senior citizen center who seek a place to celebrate Passover but are unable to pay.

Please contact Lyndsie Levine, Director of Development at llevine@crsnyc.org or 646.454.3050 to discuss how you can help.

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**PROJECT MOVING ON NEEDS YOUR IN-KIND DONATIONS**

For more than 30 years, working together with WIN (formerly Women In Need), Rodeph Sholom has operated Project Moving On, a program of our Social Action Committee. Project Moving On provides up to ten WIN families each month with cartons of food and other kitchen items as they move from a WIN shelter to their new homes. Tucked into the cartons are gifts of donated books, toys, and clothing for the children.

To continue to make these gifts, Project Moving On needs an ongoing supply of either new or gently used children’s books and clothing. You can leave your gifts, labeled for WIN, with the security guard at the desk in the synagogue lobby at any time. Thank you for your ongoing support of this important program.

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"Hospitality is even more important than encountering the Shekhinah, God’s intimate presence.” (Talmud)

As the problem of homelessness has grown, volunteering at our Shelter is a rewarding way to provide some small measure of help to some of our city’s neediest. It is open Monday through Friday until June, providing a clean, safe, and caring temporary home for homeless men. Many congregants participate for one or two nights each Shelter season. Others spend at least one night per month at the Shelter.

To volunteer for this caring mitzvah, sign up at: rodephsholom.org/social-action/opportunities-to-volunteer/

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**COUNSELING & SUPPORT SERVICE**

Ruth Kobrin, LMSW, CRS’s resident social worker, helps congregants face life’s challenges, problems, and crises. She provides counseling and offers information and assistance on health care, facilities, and assisted living situations. Ruth also reaches out and visits our lonely, ill, and housebound. And it’s all confidential. If you need help, call her – we’re fortunate to have this valuable resource.

Contact Ruth for an appointment: 646.454.3180 or rkobrin@crsnyc.org.

(Ruth Kobrin, LMSW is Senior Social Worker at Congregation Rodeph Sholom, part of the Partners in Caring program of UJA-Federation of New York.)
Religious School

WHAT A YEAR! AND THERE’S MORE TO GO! | Kerith Braunfeld and Marcia Stein

1. 2nd and 6th graders learning how a Torah is written from a soferet (female scribe). Then they tried their hand at scribing with special calligraphy pens.

2. To celebrate Israel’s 70th birthday, 6th graders visited with an Israeli pastry chef. She talked about growing up in Israel and moving to America for culinary school. They helped prepare delicious treats, too!

3. With ruach (spirited energy), students receive kippot at Tefillah upon completing a Hebrew Contract with prayers they mastered in reading and chanting — winding up with the Golden Kippah!

4. 3rd graders learn values playing the Mentsch game. “Who demonstrates a value from Genesis?” “What value have you acted upon?” Studying Jewish tradition and text, they will find the answer to the question, “How can I be a mentsch and act on these values that I learn?”

5. During a visit from the Jewish Museum, 5th graders learn the value of hiddur mitzvah, beautifying the mitzvah. They viewed illuminated manuscripts and created their own illuminated masterpiece using hand-crushed pigments!

Rodeph Sholom School

It is never too early to think about school for your child! Rodeph Sholom School is the only N-8 Reform Jewish Independent Day School in NYC. At RSS, students are guided by Jewish knowledge, values, and ethics to become self-confident and socially responsible leaders. We offer spring tours for families looking to apply for school year 2019-20. Space is limited so please contact our Admissions Office at 646.438.8600 to schedule a tour. No prior Hebrew language is required and need-based Financial Aid is available.

Learn more: rodephsholomschool.org

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REGISTER FOR 2018–19
RELIGIOUS SCHOOL
BEFORE JUNE 30
This will ensure that your child can attend the First Day of School!

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MAZEL TOV TO THE RODEPH SHOLOM CONFIRMATION CLASS!

Erev Shabbat Service  |  Friday, May 18, 6:00 PM
Join us as we celebrate their commitment to Judaism and to Congregation Rodeph Sholom.

Honor our Confrmands:

Sophie Askanase  |  Margot Krauss
Andrew Bank  |  Jordyn Lichtstein
Amanda Bosses  |  Lindsay Ravetz
Jack Braun  |  Skylar Sherman
Sydney Cohen  |  Alexis Siegel
Gabriel Feldman  |  Bradley Silverman
Jenna Freeberg  |  Maya Singer
Madison Gallagher  |  Nina Sloan
Juliette Haas  |  Sophia Walluck
Max Joffe  |  Kasey Wilner
Rebecca Kaplan  |  A festive Oneg Shabbat will follow the service.

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IN MEMORIAM

Philip Morris Kaye, father of Lainie Kaye Kaplan
Richard Neuberger, husband of Janet Neuberger
Eugene Sard, father of George Sard
Nora Schwartz, mother of Dr. William Schwartz
Ellen Linden, mother of Jacqueline Linden
Gerald Berman, father of Andrew Berman
Jon Alan Slater, cousin of Sloan Schickler
Patricia Ann Morris, mother of Suzanne Dickman
Marion Neyer, mother of Norma Lesser
Paula Stein Weisburt, mother of Hazel Manheimer, grandmother of Edward Manheimer
Donna Dennison, mother of Timothy Dennison
Mary Phelan, mother of Peter Phelan
Susan Lefrak, mother of Babs Lefrak
Evelyn Sklar, mother of Amy Krennitzer
Stephen Schecter, our longtime member
Ruth Levy, mother of Ellen Kozlowski
Estelle Levy, mother of Jeffrey Levy
Robert Salberg, brother-in-law of Zelda Eden

Katie Sanders, sister-in-law of Sarah Gardner and Rabbi Tom Gardner
Julian Jadow, husband of Dr. Judith Jadow, father of Eric, Jonathan and Lindsay Jadow
Julia Kashner, mother of Neil Barsky
Daniel Greenfield, father of Jamie Greenfield
Jack Zakin, father of Barbara Zakin, our Executive Director
Karren Kartell Cowl, mother of Lisa Jacobson, mother-in-law of Danny Karpf, Head of School
Arlene Satter, mother of Barry Satter
Harold Stern, father of Steven Stern
David Namias, husband of Barbara Namias
Jack Greenbaum, father of Jody Mansbach
Erwin Markowitz, father of David Markowitz
George Wendler, father of Michelle Canarick
Dorothy Glaser Blitt, aunt of Donna Bascom
Shmuel Koch, father of Tamir Koch
Susan Oreskes, mother of Michael Oreskes
Frank Schnierow, father of Gary Schnierow
Alvin Schragis, father of Steven Schragis

“ We do not rejoice in victories. We rejoice when a new kind of cotton is grown and when strawberries bloom in Israel.”

(Golda Meir)
Enter a dining room in Victorian England, half-starved orphan boys are fed gruel. One boy gathers up the courage to ask, “Please, sir, I want some more.” So begins Lionel Bart’s Oliver!, the Charles Dickens story of how Oliver Twist, who runs away from an orphanage, meets a group of boys trained to be pickpockets by an old thief. We meet unforgettable characters like Fagan, the Artful Dodger, brokenhearted Nancy, and sweet young Oliver. It debuted in London in 1960 introducing the timeless songs, Food Glorious Food, Where is Love?, Consider Yourself, and As Long As He Needs Me. Ultimately, it’s the tale of searching for a home, a family, and most importantly for love.

Performances are Tuesday and Thursday, May 1 and 3 at 7:00 pm, Saturday, May 5 at 8:00 pm, and Sunday, May 6 at 1:30 and 6:00 pm.

Tickets are $27 and can be purchased online at rodephsholom.org/theater or call 646.454.3108. Performances are held at CRS. Volunteers are appreciated. Contact: rstheater@crsnyc.org.
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, Rodeph Sholom has 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.