

THE CHRONICLE

FROM THE RABBI'S STUDY

CREATORS OF LIGHT | Rabbi Ben Spratt



The rabbis of the Talmud imagine that Adam, the primordial human, one day notices that as the winter weeks progress, the daylight hours diminish. He sees his world growing darker by the day. And he says, "Woe is me! Perhaps it is because I sinned that the world grows darker and is slowly returning to a state of chaos and void. This is what the heavens decreed upon me." So

Adam prays, fasts, and repents for eight days. He cries out wondering why the Creator of light would allow darkness to return to the universe. So God teaches Adam to become a creator of light as well, and gives Adam the knowledge to create fire. In Judaism, light is not a Promethean treasure stolen from the heavens, but a gift from God. In awe and gratitude, Adam recalls God's first act of creation to create light, and turns his eight days of fasting and praying into an annual eight-day festival to celebrate God's creation of light. And this becomes Chanukah.

In the darkest of nights, in the bitterness of winter, this rabbinic frame of Chanukah reminds us that there is a rhythm and cycle in this world. As we at various points in our lives may tremble with fear about an uncertain future or overwhelming challenges, we are reminded that seasons change. As Adam imagined in that moment that the world was coming to an end, one of the messages of Chanukah is to envision our life and our world in a broader perspective. But even more than that, we are given the tools and knowledge with which to kindle light, to spark new hope especially in the darkest of times. On Chanukah we light our candles as a reminder that we, too, can be creators of light, that we, too, can illumine the world around us.

This rabbinic imagination of Chanukah's origin offers another gift as well. As we recall the miracle of oil in the Menorah, and the valiant military prowess of the Maccabees, this Edenic tale calls out an even more universal message. Before there ever existed differing faiths, nationalities, and identities; before *chanukiyot* and Christmas trees; before dreidels or "December decisions" – the rabbis imagine the heart of this season as one in which humanity reaches towards divinity. We are the creators of light in the darkest of days. In a year when Jews and Christians around the world will usher in their respective Festivals of Lights on the same night – a unique alignment when windows of both faiths will be illumining the cold New York streets at the same moment – we are reminded of this universal essence of Chanukah. As Jonathan Wittenberg beautifully wrote:

...Light expresses companionship, creativity, hope, and inspiration. Put on a candle in a dark room and all at once the space has a center; everyone looks toward the flame as if the small dancing fire

had the power to unite our spirits and harmonize our thoughts...darkness and loneliness are not the final reality. Perhaps it would be truer to think of the materiality of our existence in general, and of evil and pain in particular, as if they were a vast tarpaulin dividing us from the warmth and brilliance of an infinite supply of light. That light is capable of piercing the fabric of the dark. Even within our restricted world of matter it glows in candles of courage and hope and creates about itself a radiance that transcends the limitations of space and time. Those are the lights one sees as one travels through the swaying, rocking dark. Those are the lights which, once perceived, burn for longer than one day.

The depth of darkness in our city may leave us cold, isolated, and afraid. Yet we feel the yearning to pray for peace, to imagine a world of wholeness. Thus the one requirement of Chanukah is to kindle our lights of hope and place them such that the world can see. Our one responsibility is to illumine the world beyond the boundaries of our own homes by sparking hope and helping others. We can change from kindling *chanukiyot* to handing out blankets, from savoring latkes to feeding the hungry, from eating chocolate *gelt* to giving coins to those in need. We recall the Creator of light and become creators of light ourselves; we pray to our Source of Peace and pursue peace ourselves.

...we light our candles as a reminder that we, too, can be creators of light, that we, too, can illumine the world around us.

We will lift our voices and spirits in joy with our cantors at the Erev Shabbat Chanukah Shir Chadash service on Friday, December 9! Then join us after the service for a chance to create light and celebrate community at our annual Latke Party. As we bring generosity and gift-giving into our own homes, may this season ignite in us the urgency to extend it beyond our walls. Please bring women's hats, gloves, and scarves, and new unwrapped toys earmarked for Women In Need/Project Moving On, help provide hot meals during these cold days at St. Xavier's Soup Kitchen and, of course, help make CRS a home to those most in need by volunteering in our Shelter. Inside this *Chronicle*, you'll find eight ways to bring light to the world during our Festival of Light!

Micah, Ayalah, Jonah, and I wish you a meaningful Chanukah. May this season bring each of us light around every corner and when we open our eyes to darkness, may we all become the creators of light.

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VOLUME 19 | NUMBER 2
WINTER 2016 | 5777

NEW MEMBER WELCOME | Barbara Zakin



Welcome to all our new members who have recently joined Rodeph Sholom! While this may be your first year in our community, you have now joined generations of congregants before you – for over 175 years we have flourished as a synagogue.

As you can see in this winter issue of *The Chronicle*, we are a thriving community with programming, worship, and educational opportunities for all ages. On page 4 is a list of the season's events and Adult

Education courses. I hope that you will get involved and experience all that we have to offer. I myself was new to Rodeph Sholom last year, and I have felt embraced and at home in this warm and welcoming community. I hope that you will as well.

I look forward to meeting you in the coming year and wish you an enjoyable and meaningful experience at Rodeph Sholom. The theme for the year-long celebration of our 175th Anniversary is **Remember. Rejoice. Renew.** I see you, our new members, as a wonderful symbol of renewal, vital to our continued growth.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

New Members from October 20, 2015 – October 25, 2016

Maren Pyenson and Bruce Abramson	Yael and Jonathan Denbo	Marta and Isack Kohn	Jane Ranzman
Jonathan Adelson	Eunice and Stephen Diamond	Carolyn Weinberg and Philip Korn	Sabrina Blum and Eli Richlin
Toby and Ken Alfred	Lili Schwimmer and Michael Dresner	Carly Shapiro and Spencer Korwin	Julie and Fredric Rosenberg
Felicia and Keith Anzel	Katherine Rosman and Joseph Ehrlich	Lauren Kellner and David Kremenitzer	Adorys Velazquez and Mark Rosenwasser
Galina and James Appell	Amy Feinstein	Rebecca and David Leckstein	Samuel Eugene Sapinsley Lewis
Galit Atlas and Tamir Koch	Cherise Solomon-Feld and Randy Feld	Jaime Levy	Rebecca Merksamer and Kenneth Scher
Sandi and Andrew Baer	Jessica and Doug Fenton	Robert I. Lewy	Carrie and Stephen Schreckinger
Sara and Daniel Bain	Dr. Oscar Garfein	Sarah Maccabee	Katie and Lyle Schwartz
Jessica Balaban	Tanya Simon and Evan Garfein	Rhonda Mace	Kim and Stephen Shankman
Lindsey and Todd Bavaro	Sandy Gelbard	Barrie and Andreas Mann	Hillary and David Sherman
Gina and Michael Beinus	Suzanne Glass	Pamela and Zach Mann	Alexandra Starr
Fran Belasco	Jessica Crysler and Michael Gordon	Brooke and Eric Meltzer	Harriet Stein
Leora Ben-Ami	Stacey Berman and Adam Gracia	Haviva Weitz and Seth Merl	Samuel Sunshine
Daniella and Adam Berkson	Pam and Gary Hacker	Stacey and Josh Merwin	Diana and David Swartz
Michaela and David Biltekoff	Laura and Adam Hanina	Sara Meyer-Davis	Sierra and Jason Tobias
Jill Bishins	Sadie Mitnick and Sophie Hawkins	Pamela and Howard Mittman	Ashley Tyrner
Corrie and David Blatt	Linda and Jonathan Heller	Heather and David Morris	Dawn Utstein
Allison and Jay Blick	Sarah and Steven Hershkowitz	Sybille Bruun and Tyler Moss	Tony Uzan
Molly MacDermot and Gene Boxer	Ingrid and Chris Innes	Jody Kaban and Edward Newman	Moran Erde and Ron Vaksin
Aisling Ryan and Sascha Brodsky	Jennifer and Darryl Jacobson	Jane and Richard Novick	Simon Weil
Elana and Mitchell Brody	Lan Nguyen and Daniel Jewel	Lauren and Robert O`Leary	Heather and Scott Weiss
Barbara Buff	Erez Kalir	Aly and Jacob Organek	Sara and Oliver Wiener
Jennifer and Dan Castaline	Marcia Kaplan	Andrew Pearlman	Claudia Heilbrunn and Gareth Williams
Maurice Chalfin	Lisa Jacobson and Danny Karpf	Samantha Fogel and Michael Pearlman	Karen Abravanel and Jonathan Yaeger
Jodie Citroen	Angela Abramian-Katz and Eric Katz	Yael Kahn and Antonio Pinto	Shannon and Joel Yodowitz
Rachael Alexandroff and Benjamin Cogan	Maxine and Edward Kerschner	Jessica and David Politis	Alison and Daniel Zelenko
Tiffany and Matthew Cohen	Adrienne Frohlich and David Kleinhanzl	David Poulad and Patrick Bowers	
Marissa and Bradley Coleman		Lisa and Barry Procopio	
Sharone David		Sally Ann Jacobs and Joel Quall	

*“The greatest thing that makes me satisfied is to serve the people.
Really. It’s the greatest pleasure. I don’t think to wound is a pleasure.
I think to save is a pleasure.”*

(Shimon Peres 1923–2016, Charlie Rose Show)

FROM THE PRESIDENT AT CHANUKAH | Martin Flumenbaum



When I spoke to the congregation on Yom Kippur, I talked about the very first time I walked into the main sanctuary for the High Holy Days in 1976 and the importance and meaning of a phrase that we repeat and generally sing in every single service – “*L’Dor Vador*” – “from generation to generation.”

I talked about the importance of the synagogue in today’s society and why it remains the single most important symbol of continuity in the Jewish religion, an essential resource for community and caring, and for putting one’s faith into action.

And that is precisely what we have been doing here at Rodeph Sholom throughout the fall.

Our worship services and our schools are thriving. Our Mitzvah Day weekend, part of our extraordinary series of events commemorating our 175th Anniversary, was a spectacular success, bringing together nearly a thousand members – parents, grandparents, and children – to participate in numerous projects designed to help others, not only in our community but throughout the city. As I said in my speech, there is no more important work that we do as a synagogue than our efforts to feed the hungry, to provide shelter for the homeless, and to provide comfort and opportunities for those with special needs or those that just need special care.

And that brings me to another initiative that we need to address as an institution – the daunting refugee crisis that plagues so many throughout the world. Under the leadership of our Social Action and Inclusion Committees, we are moving forward with developing an appropriate

approach for our synagogue to help mitigate what is clearly the most devastating humanitarian crisis of this century. We as Jews cannot be complacent in our response. We know full well the horrors of being refugees, of fleeing persecution, and of violence. And we know firsthand what happens when countries are complacent in the face of such crisis. As Rabbi Levine has reminded us from the pulpit many times, our values and our Torah command us to “welcome the stranger.”

Our Social Action and Inclusion Committees will be collaborating with other religious organizations, as well as establishing our own synagogue and individual initiatives, to address this critical issue on many fronts, including education and advocacy. As an institution and as a community, we must provide a reasoned and forceful counter to the often hateful and xenophobic speech that we all experienced during the past presidential election campaign.

Chanukah provides us with the perfect opportunity to remember our heritage and to renew our commitment to others. At its core, Chanukah celebrates life – the victory of courage over oppression and of light over darkness. A small band of Jewish warriors can make a difference. The miracle of the eight days of light teaches us that light can shine so much brighter and so much longer than any of us individually have any reason to imagine.

As we light the Chanukah candles this year with our families, let us all think of ways that we can provide light for the millions of refugees who so desperately need our help. Ruth and I and our entire family wish you a joyous Chanukah and a happy, healthy, and bright 2017.

CHANUKAH HAPPENINGS

LIGHT THE 1ST CANDLE SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24

EREV SHABBAT/CHANUKAH SHIR CHADASH SERVICE

Friday, December 9 at 6:00 PM

We will celebrate Chanukah, the Festival of Lights, in the Sanctuary with our Cantors, choirs, and musicians through song.

CHANUKAH LATKE PARTY | Friday, December 9 at 7:30 PM

Join us for the Congregational Oneg Shabbat Latke Party, co-sponsored by Brotherhood and the Membership Committee, with a Candlelighting Ceremony following the Erev Shabbat/Chanukah Shir Chadash Service.

CHANUKAH SHIREINU SERVICE AND CELEBRATION

Saturday, December 17 at 11:00 AM – 12:30 PM

Share prayer, Torah, music, and dreidels! An accessible service that is sensitive to a variety of needs and interpreted in Sign Language. Open to the entire community and all ages are welcome. In the Schafler.

Bring Hope on Chanukah: 8 Nights, 8 Ways

- VOLUNTEER** to spend a night in our Rodeph Sholom Shelter. Sign up on VolunteerHub (crsnyc.volunteerhub.com).
- SERVE** a meal at St. Xavier’s Soup Kitchen. Sign up on VolunteerHub (crsnyc.volunteerhub.com).
- SHARE** the Chanukah spirit at the Congregational Chanukah Latke Party on December 9. Please bring a toy (new and unwrapped). Toys will be distributed to children and families transitioning out of homelessness through Women In Need/Project Moving On.*
- SUPPORT** the Israel Committee’s ongoing projects. Contact: israelcommittee@crsnyc.org.
- PROVIDE** food for those in need this holiday season. Make a donation to the CRS Food Drive. (See Page 6.)
- WELCOME** guests and visitors to CRS. Volunteer to be a Shabbat Greeter. Sign up on VolunteerHub (crsnyc.volunteerhub.com).
- SHINE** your light at CRuSTY’s Beit Café on Saturday, January 21, at 5:00 pm.
- SPREAD** warmth throughout the cold winter months. Please bring women’s hats, gloves, and scarves earmarked for Women In Need/Project Moving On.

* Toys will be collected throughout December and January!

SAVE THE DATES

Check the website for updates.

Thursday, December 1, 7:00 pm: CRS BOOK GROUP. All are welcome. Meetings are self-moderated in the Board Room. Next dates are Thursdays, January 5, February 5, and March 2. Contact: bookgroup@crsnyc.org.

Friday, December 2, 6:00 pm: EREV SHABBAT SERVICE IN HONOR OF RABBI LEVINE'S 25TH ANNIVERSARY. See Page 5.

Saturday, December 3, 6:00 pm: HAVDALAH WITH RABBI LEVINE. See Page 5.

Thursday, December 8, 1:00 – 4:00 pm: MAH JONGG. Novices and veteran players are all welcome. Cards are available for purchase. In the Board Room. Next dates are Thursdays, January 12 and February 9. RSVP: mahjongg@crsnyc.org.

Friday, December 9, 6:00 pm: EREV SHABBAT/CHANUKAH SHIR CHADASH SERVICE. The service will be ASL-interpreted. **7:30 pm:** CHANUKAH LATKE PARTY. In the Schafler. See Page 3.

Tuesday, December 20, 11:30 am – 1:30 pm: LUNCH TOGETHER. A dairy lunch will be served. A contribution of \$10 is suggested. Next dates are Tuesdays, January 24 and February 14. Co-sponsored by Adult Ed, Caring Community, and Sisterhood. Are you on the mailing list? Contact: lunchtogether@crsnyc.org.

Saturday, January 7, 10:15 am: SHABBAT MORNING SERVICE WITH SPECIAL SPEAKER. Joey Weisenberg, musician, composer, and community singing teacher, will guide us on making the most out of the music we make in prayer. In the Schnurmacher Chapel. **12:30 – 2:30 pm:** CANTOR DE LOWE HOSTS SPECIAL EVENT. Speaker and lunch in the Eisner following Morning Services.

Friday, January 13, 6:00 pm: COMMEMORATING DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. EREV SHABBAT/SHIR CHADASH SERVICE. Annual Shabbat Service honoring Dr. King's dream of hope. ASL-interpreted.

Friday, January 20, 7:30 pm: BROTHERHOOD FILM FESTIVAL. Following Erev Shabbat Services, join us for a special movie screening sponsored by Brotherhood. In the Schafler. Contact: brotherhood@crsnyc.org.

Saturday, January 21, 12:30 pm: SHABBAT LUNCH AND LEARN. In the Board Room.

Saturday, January 21, 5:00 pm: CRUSTY BEIT CAFÉ. In the Schafler.

Friday, January 27, 6:00 pm: EREV SHABBAT SERVICE/MEYER W. NATHANS SERVICE AWARD.

Saturday, January 28, 1:00 pm: BROTHERHOOD FILM FESTIVAL. Following Shabbat Morning Services, join us for a special movie screening sponsored by Brotherhood. In the Schafler. Contact: brotherhood@crsnyc.org.

Friday, February 3, 6:00 pm: EREV SHABBAT YOUTH SERVICE.

Saturday, February 4, 10:15 am: SHABBAT MORNING BROTHERHOOD/SISTERHOOD SERVICE. In the Eisner.

Saturday, February 4, 12:30 – 2:30 pm: INSPIRING WOMEN OF THE CONGREGATION ANNUAL LUNCHEON. Get inspired by CRS women discussing their careers, lives, and Jewish journeys. Complimentary lunch following the Shabbat Morning Service. Contact: sisterhood@crsnyc.org.

Tuesday, February 7: AN EVENING OF COMMUNITY AND COMEDY. Continuing our 175th Anniversary Celebration, join us for laughs, stories, and entertainment! Ticket info to come.

Saturday, February 11, 6:00 pm: HAVDALAH UNPLUGGED. In the Eisner. Join us at 6:00 pm for hors d'oeuvres and conversation, followed at 6:45 pm with the Havdalah Service. All are welcome for this musical and meditative ceremony.

Saturday, February 25, 1:00 pm: CHAMBER MUSIC AT RODEPH SHOLOM: MUSIC OF VICTIMS, SURVIVORS, AND ISRAEL'S BEST. Artistic Director Eliot Bailen leads the chamber ensemble highlighting our Jewish musical heritage. In the intimate setting of the Schnurmacher following Shabbat Morning Services. Contact: chambermusic@crsnyc.org.

ADULT EDUCATION COURSES

**From Orchard Street to Central Park West:
Jewish History with a New York Lens**

Rabbi Daniel Bronstein, PhD | Tuesdays, 7:00 pm
December 6, 13, 20

As part of our 175th Anniversary Celebration, we will learn about the history of Jews in our beloved city from the Revolutionary War to the immigrant experience on the Lower East Side to today's Upper West Side. Rabbi Bronstein teaches history and sociology at Hunter College.

**Our Haven and Our Strength: Personal and Spiritual Pathways
Through the Psalms**

Rabbi Jacqueline Ellenson | Fridays, 12:00–1:30 pm
December 9, January 13, February 10, through June

A contemplative approach to our texts and the search for wisdom within them. This lunchtime class is a personal and participatory learning experience with poetry and song. All are welcome.

How To Raise a Mentsch

Rabbi Sari R. Laufer | Fridays

December 16 at 8:00 am (79th Street), March 3 at 8:30 am (83rd Street) through May

We'll discuss the challenges and opportunities on raising mentsches in today's world. Whether raising a toddler or teenager, Jewish teachings inspire our lives and our parenting.

Sacred Time: Counting Moments and Making Moments Count

Susan Ticker | Tuesdays, 7:00 pm

January 10, 17

The Kiddush blessing is our springboard to explore what it means to make time holy and how we can bring those ideas into our daily lives. In a personal and participatory setting with our Community Engagement Director.

Shabbat Study Series:

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

Saturdays, following Shabbat services. Lunch included.

January 21: The Amidah with Rabbi Sari Laufer

The ancient rabbis described prayer as avodah she-ba'lev, the service of the heart, yet our services are filled with words. 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

Wednesdays, 7:00–8:30 pm

Open to all who want to take a closer look at how and why Jewish rituals have developed and how they create meaning in our lives.

Semester 2: Jewish Living: Big Questions and Key Text

Rabbi Greg Weitzman and Rabbinic Intern Juli Karol

January 25, February 1, 8, 15, 22, March 1, 8, 15, 29, through April

Hebrew Mini-Marathon

Wednesday, December 7 at 7:00 pm

Beginning Hebrew | Sara Rosen

Mondays, 6:30 pm | January 23, 30, February 6, 13, 27

Thursdays, 8:30–9:30 am | January 14, 21, 28, February 4, 11, 25, March 10, 17

Beginning Hebrew students need to purchase a practice book for \$40 available from Sara Rosen.

Continuing Hebrew | Sara Rosen

Mondays, 7:30–8:30 pm | January 9, 23, 30, February 6, 13, 27

Prayer Book Hebrew | Sara Rosen

Tuesdays, 6:00 pm | January 10, 24, 31, February 7, 14, 28

To register for any programs listed here, go to:
rodephsholom.org/education/adult-learning

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

We Remember Chanukah Past



Rabbi Hirschberg and Cantor Biran lighting the *chanukiah* in 1987.

MEYER W. NATHANS SERVICE AWARD HONORS CATHERINE SULL AND DR. JACALYN SHAFER

Friday, January 27 at 6:00 PM | Erev Shabbat Service



The Meyer W. Nathans Service Award is presented annually to recognize individuals for their outstanding contribution of service over many years to the Congregation. We are

very pleased to announce that Catherine Sull and Dr. Jacalyn Shafer will be honored as this year's award recipients. This award is named for Meyer "Mike" Nathans who inspired the Congregation's leaders to devote their talents to the welfare of our Synagogue.

Catherine and Jackie joined Rodeph Sholom in 1997 and were married here by Rabbi Levine and Cantor Garfein in 2015. Their children, both of whom are RSS graduates, Ben Ami, 17, is a bar mitzvah and Yafit, 22, is a bat mitzvah and Confirmand of CRS. From the beginning, they have been an actively involved family, including being ongoing Shelter volunteers with their young children.

Catherine has worked tirelessly on many projects and events and has received two Gemilut Chasadim awards. The first was for producing the *Midrash Hour*, a Rodeph Sholom School and Religious School collaborative. An annual favorite that told the story of Torah text in an original musical, Catherine managed over 300 School students who wrote songs, sang, danced, made costumes, and designed the set. The second award was for overseeing the 6th floor ushering on the High Holy Days for many years. She and Jackie started the LGBTQ Committee, as well as serving on the Ritual, Community Concerns, Inclusion, and 175th Anniversary Kick-Off Committees. Jackie is a pediatrician highly regarded for being caring, trustworthy and, as many clergy know, always available and on the American Board of Pediatrics. Together with the clergy, they organized the first family trip to Israel.

Clearly committed to *tikkun olam* and giving back, Catherine and Jackie, we thank you for your commitment and generosity. We are grateful for all that you do for the Rodeph Sholom community and look forward to recognizing your contributions on January 27.

175TH ANNIVERSARY EVENTS

RABBI ROBERT LEVINE'S 25th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Friday, December 2

Erev Shabbat Service This joyous service will feature special guests, music, and more. It will be followed by an *Oneg* where you may re-connect with clergy alumni.

Saturday, December 3

Havdalah Rabbi Levine and his CRS rabbinic colleagues, past and present, will engage in a fascinating theological conversation. A beautiful *Havdalah* service will conclude the festivities.

AN EVENING OF COMMUNITY AND COMEDY

Tuesday, February 7

Join us for a laugh-filled evening of comedy, storytelling, and entertainment. Stay tuned for details to come including the great headliners, special surprises, and ticket info.

PUTTING A LIGHT ON A LIFE FROM THE EDITOR | Yvette Perry

Chanukah is the celebration of light and all that light represents. Often in life a seemingly small detail that can easily be overlooked casts a light on something that's more significant if you stop to take the time to examine it. Give it a bigger picture and, in the process, give the story its due. Such is the case when you consider an entry in our Temple Funds fall contribution list. I refer to one caring congregant's donation in appreciation of Sheryl Hurst's proper burial from NYC's potter's field to Union Field Cemetery. Within that small entry, a larger story of our community's determination to memorialize a beloved member's life is revealed.

There are more than a million people buried in potter's field, near the Bronx on Hart Island. It is overgrown and in ruins. There are no tombstones. Instead, a *New York Times* investigation found that there are neglected people buried in trenches, their stories untold.

Many of us remember Sheryl Hurst at Shabbat services and holiday events. She had badly burned her face falling on a heater years before joining our congregation. Nevertheless, she found joy at services, sang in our choir, and was converted here. She was in her 30s, without a caring family. An embraced member of the CRS community, we became her family.

When she didn't show up for a special service our clergy, security director, social worker, and congregants looked for her, only to find that she had died and already sent to Hart Island. Through everyone's perseverance, nine months later she was buried in Union Field Cemetery with a headstone inscribed: "*Forever in Our Hearts.*"

By putting a light on this story, we are reminded that we are foremost a caring community. Our light never goes out.

(Sheryl's story is posted at rodephsholom.org. Contact Union Field Cemetery at 718.366.3748.)

DEVELOPMENT | Lyndsie Levine

Chanukah. A season of miracles, possibility, the triumph of light over darkness. Yes, the Chanukah story is one of divine intervention – oil that burned for eight days when it was only supposed to last for one. But it is also a testament to human action and the resilience of the Jewish people. It is a story of those who sacrificed their lives rather than abandon their beliefs, a tale of great bravery and resolve. It reminds us not only to open ourselves to the possibility of miracles, but to remember that what we do as people matters.

Our actions are important. They affect our families, friends, and community. As the old Jewish proverb goes, “Do not be wise in words – be wise in deeds.” It is advice I take to heart.

In this first year of serving as your Director of Development, I have spoken to so many people who have tremendous love for CRS, who proudly identify as part of this community, and truly call this place home. As we near the end of the year, I hope you will find a way to turn that love for our community into action that will support it – in particular, by participating in the Yom Kippur Appeal. We rely on your generosity, not only to support the congregation’s ongoing operations, but also to help us respond to needs within the community as we identify them. Without philanthropic giving over and above membership dues, we would not be able to provide dues abatement to those in need of financial assistance, hire off-duty police officers to protect our building, or develop a new Shireinu B’nai Mitzvah track to support students with special needs. Your actions matter.

I hope that you will join me in supporting Congregation Rodeph Sholom with your *tzedakah* this year. If you have never contributed to the YKA, please consider making your first gift in this milestone year for our congregation, our 175th Anniversary. Your participation, at any level, will make a difference. If

you have supported the Appeal in the past, I hope we can count on your generosity again this year. And if you are able to consider increasing your support – even by 5-10% – it would be deeply appreciated.

Our community is stronger when we all do what we can to support it. May we all open our eyes to the miracles around us and remember the power we have to create them ourselves. Here’s to a happy and healthy 2017!

Making your gift: If you would like your donation to qualify for a 2016 tax credit, please be sure to make an online gift by midnight on December 31 or send in a check before the end of the year. Any mail postmarked by December 31 will qualify. Please note that the synagogue offices will be closed from December 26 to January 2, so if you would like to make a gift of appreciated stock, please be sure to leave enough time for the transaction to be completed during this busy season. You can call the Development Office at 646.454.3052 for transfer instructions.

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 an immediate opportunity:

Adult Education: Help underwrite one year’s worth of Hebrew or other continuing education opportunities for the entire community (\$30,000). A gift of \$10,000 will help underwrite a multi-week course or speaker series. A gift of \$5,000 will underwrite an outstanding guest lecturer.

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

CONGREGATION RODEPH SHOLOM: A CARING COMMUNITY | Ruth Kobrin, LMSW

I wear many “hats” at Congregation Rodeph Sholom—assisting those in personal crisis, helping one deal with life’s daily challenges, facilitating support groups, making referrals to helpful resources, and convening workshops on topical issues.

What I find exceptionally wonderful and heartwarming, however, is experiencing the concern, care, and assistance which an individual congregant or group of congregants gives to another in need.

- A fragile, elderly congregant was bathed, fed, and visited daily.
- A congregant, too depressed to be in touch with the Congregation, was sought out, befriended, assisted with daily chores, and made to feel whole again.
- A congregant, made homeless through a personal crisis, was aided in finding shelter and in feeling that a new beginning in life was possible.

As we begin a new year and celebrate our Congregation’s 175th Anniversary, we are blessed to be able to continue helping others and be part of a caring community.

Ruth Kobrin, LMSW is Senior Social Worker at Congregation Rodeph Sholom, part of the Partners in Caring program of UJA-Federation of New York. Providing counseling and support services, she also offers information and assistance to those needing health care, facility, or assisted living situation. For confidential assistance, please contact Ruth for an appointment: rkobrin@crsnyc.org or 646.454.3180.

CRS FIGHTS HUNGER | Yvette Perry

Hundreds of thousands of Jewish New Yorkers live close to poverty (1.7 million New Yorkers live in poverty). Our mitzvah to help is sorely needed. Every year Rabbi Levine asks us to donate nonperishable food on Yom Kippur morning. When we arrive, the City Harvest truck parked in front of our building is surrounded by congregants with full shopping bags, always an uplifting sight.

This year, thanks to you, Congregation Rodeph Sholom donated 18,442 pounds of food, exceeding last year’s donation by 112 pounds! This total includes the generous donation of 7,487 pounds made by the Mendelow family through a purchase from Goya, Inc. Our contribution helps City Harvest deliver 55 million pounds of food to emergency food programs throughout the city this year. Doing this mitzvah, our community embodies Isaiah’s prophetic call to us on Yom Kippur—to respond to the needy in our midst and feed the hungry. We can all continue this vital undertaking by supporting the CRS Food Drive throughout the year.



Religious School

THIS LITTLE LIGHT OF MINE: CRS YOUTH

CRuSTY Youth Groups for Religious School and RSS | Dina Newman and Sara Spanjer

Candles play a special role in the Jewish faith, appearing in the many customs passed down from generation to generation. Each week we bring in Shabbat with the light of twin candles and close it with the Havdalah candle. We remember loved ones who have left us with a *yahrzeit* candle, and the *Ner Tamid* (eternal flame) burns brightly on the bimah as a reminder of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. But it is the *chanukiah*, lit on the eight nights of Chanukah, which is perhaps every child's favorite Jewish encounter with candlelight.

Chanukah is the festival of lights—sure, we're celebrating the miracle of oil that lasted eight nights, but what we're truly celebrating is the light sustained by that oil. In the midst of the destruction of the Temple, the light of the menorah shone brightly. In today's world filled with so much negativity and hate, we strive to teach the youth of CRS that our role as Jews is to bring light to the world. One of the many ways we do this is by helping those who are less fortunate. Each year we incorporate a number of mitzvah projects into our Children's High Holy Day Experience. This year the kids made fleece blankets for the homeless. Then the Senior Youth Group (CRuSTY) delivers the blankets and other necessities into the hands of the homeless through the Breakfast Run on Mitzvah Weekend and the Midnight Run in January – a highlight for many of our teens moved by seeing where their hard work goes and how much it is needed and appreciated. During the holidays and on Mitzvah Weekend, our kids prepare decorations for the underprivileged youth of Lincoln Square Neighborhood Center.

Our Junior Youth Groups use their regularly scheduled programming as an added opportunity to give back. This year 2nd and 3rd graders participate in Crafts for a Cause, making stuffed animals for tots. The 6th and 7th graders engage in a Shabbat Service Blind Experience to learn the importance of inclusion for persons with disabilities in the Jewish community. Senior Youth

Group continues their mitzvah work on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day at the HUC-JIR Soup Kitchen. Among all of our grades, students from PJ Library through seniors in high school learn about and participate in Challah for Hunger, braiding challah with friends to raise money for a worthy cause.

While our kids spend quite a bit of time bringing the light of mitzvot to the world around them, our CRS Youth community is a light unto itself. Through the many opportunities our children find here, they connect with one another, our clergy, and staff. The kids who walk through our doors each week, no matter which building or for what reason, walk through with smiles on their faces knowing that this is their home. Our children treat the maintenance staff with the same love and respect as they do the clergy and we could not be more proud. CRS Youth love their own youth community and they are continuously bringing light to the greater CRS community. We see them ushering on Friday nights with a friendly "*Shabbat Shalom*," assisting teachers in Religious School classrooms through the *Madrichim* program, spending evenings at our Homeless Shelter, and volunteering with Backpack Buddies, bringing food to insecure families. They spread their joy and laughter to us all throughout the building.

As you light your candles each night this Chanukah, think of the many instances of light that appear in Judaism that remind us that we can always find light in the darkness. Through the darkest of days, the Jewish people have survived through the light of our youth. We in the Religious School and Youth Department look forward to the continued kindling of these wonderful lights who share of themselves with our community and we look forward to adding many more. Know a great kid in our community? Send them our way, there's something for every kid in the CRS Youth programs. Share the light this Chanukah. *Chag Sameach!*

Rodeph Sholom School

RSS is now accepting applications for the 2017-18 school year. We offer a strong Early Childhood program beginning with a warm and supportive Twos program and continue with an ongoing school through 8th grade that focuses on academic excellence and strength of character through Jewish identity. Affordability is a priority in our community and we offer need based Financial Aid for all families who qualify. CRS members are given priority in the Admissions process.

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The RSS mission is clear in its commitment to social justice, and we are proud to share responsibility for ensuring that students at all grade levels are learning about social issues and experiencing the value of taking active roles in their community.

RSS Kindergarten teacher Stephanie Sokol believes in the importance of exploring the meaning of justice, compassion, and remembrance with her students. Ms. Sokol has taught at RSS for 11 years (since 2006), ranging from Learning Together (2s, 3s) to Kindergarten levels, and she is currently pursuing a third Master's Degree in Educational Leadership at Brooklyn College.

"A significant focus of the Kindergarten curriculum is on the theme of community," she says. "Each classroom creates a kehillah kedoshah, or holy community, where students learn both together and from each other. One of my favorite experiences during our study of the School and Congregation community is visiting CRS's Homeless Shelter. Our students learn that when we are fortunate to have blessings, it is our responsibility to pay it forward to others who are not as blessed."

To learn more about the RSS social justice programming or to take a School tour, go to rodephsholomschool.org or call 646.438.8600.

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

Sponsored by Caroline & Joseph S. Gruss, Life Monument Funds, Inc. and UJA-Federation of New York.



Read with your child! Receive FREE Jewish books and music in the mail each month for children 6 months to 7 years old. The second Thursday of each month at 4:30 – 5:15 pm is PJ & Play Story time!

Go to rodephsholom.org to sign up.

I N M E M O R I A M

Sarah Cohen Gotbaum, mother of Noah Gotbaum

Vera Lefkowitz, grandmother of Jonathan Prusan

Alan Wachs, husband of Barbara Wachs

Margot Milstein, sister of Hanna Altman

Minerva Fox, grandmother of Elyse Fox

Ira J. Weinstein, husband of Barbara Packer,
stepfather of Heidi Eskenazi

Harold (Hap) Wiener, close friend of Jay Kranis

Wendy Brooks, mother of Brett Kaplan

Lynda Weinstein Jalazo, mother of Brian Jalazo

Alfred Wolkenberg, uncle of Bill Solomon

Lillian Guss, aunt of Joyce Robbins

Ronald A. Ross, father of Andrew Ross

Harvey Lustig, stepfather of Lesley Heller

Richard Wechter, husband of Rosie Cohen,
long-time member and Honorary Officer

Rhoda Frankel Lown, mother of Dr. Cara Lown

CARING COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

Would you like to help your fellow congregants during difficult times?

The Caring Community Committee provides opportunities to reach out to one another, especially in times of need. Join a bereavement or support group, be a Shabbat greeter, visit homebound congregants, or reach out to mourners at the end of shiva.

Contact: caring_community@crsnyc.org.

CRS HOMELESS SHELTER

The Rodeph Sholom Shelter, open Monday through Friday until June, provides a clean, safe, and caring temporary home for homeless men. Would you like to volunteer for this meaningful congregational cause?

Contact: kbarrett@crsnyc.org.

HEALING SERVICE

Saturday, February 4, 9:00–10:00 AM

Led by our Clergy, this special service emphasizes the healing of body and spirit. All are welcome to share in song, prayer, study, and silent reflection.

*“There is a crack in everything.
That’s how the light gets in.”*

(Leonard Cohen, September 21, 1934 – November 7, 2016)

HAPPY CHAN UKAH

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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, 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.



Congregation Rodeph Sholom

Robert N. Levine, D.D. Senior Rabbi
Sari R. Laufer Associate 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
Julie Womack Cantorial Intern
Barbara Zakin Executive Director
Marc Fried Chief Financial Officer
Lyndie Levine Director of Development
Ruth Bernstein Director of Membership Services
Rachael Evans Operations Director
Susan Ticker Director of Community Engagement
Kirsten Major Communications Manager
Gail Becker Sexton
Rodeph Sholom Religious School
Kerith Braunfeld Director
Marcia Stein Associate Director
Sara Spanjer Associate Director of Youth and Teen Engagement
Rodeph Sholom School
Dr. Jerrold I. Katz Head of School
Danny Karpf Head of School Elect
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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Rachel Markowitz Sr. Youth Group Co-President

The Chronicle

Yvette Perry Editor