

RABBI RACHEL GRANT MEYER served as Assistant Rabbi at Congregation Rodeph Sholom after her ordination by HUC-JIR in 2012. Prior to rabbinical school, Rabbi Meyer worked as a Program Associate in the KESHER: College Department at the URJ. While in rabbinical school, Rabbi Meyer interned with Rabbis for Human Rights and Brit Tzedek v'Shalom (now J Street), was a chaplaincy intern at New York-Presbyterian Hospital, and served as student rabbi at Congregation Beth Shalom in East Liverpool, OH. In June 2015, Rabbi Meyer joined HIAS, the world's oldest, and only Jewish, refugee resettlement organization, as Director of Education. She also sits on the steering committee of Reform Jewish Voice of New York.

Like all of us, I learned so many things from Rabbi Levine during my time at CRS. Some of my sweetest memories of him, though, involve watching him tell his famous StuPu stories to the littlest CRS members. Rabbi Levine skillfully figured out a way to keep everyone laughing while also teaching important life lessons about things like inclusivity, how to cope with loss, or how to be a good friend through the adventures of StuPu. This is just one small example of the way he always manages to weave humor and fun into the deep wisdom he shares with all of us.

RABBI AARON D. PANKEN, PH.D., served as Rabbi Levine's first Assistant and Associate Rabbi at Congregation Rodeph Sholom from 1991-95. He is President of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, North America's premier Jewish seminary. At HUC-JIR, he has taught Rabbinic and Second Temple Literature since 1996, and has served as Vice President and Dean of the New York campus. An alumnus of the Wexner Graduate Fellowship, he earned his doctorate at New York University.

"It's nice of you to come, Rabbi Levine was just here." This is a refrain I heard constantly during my years at Congregation Rodeph Sholom. In Rabbi Levine we have a beloved leader, teacher, speaker, mentor and friend, yes; but there is no one who is a better pastor to his congregation. In joy or sadness, in sickness or in health, he stands by your side, a sacred companion who knows just what to do.

RABBI RANDY ELLEN SHEINBERG served as Assistant Rabbi of Congregation Rodeph Sholom from 2003–08 and has served as the Rabbi of Temple Tikvah in New Hyde Park since its founding in 2008. In addition to ordination from HUC-JIR, she holds a B.A. in English Language and Literature and an M.A. in Public and Private Management from Yale University. She is a fellow of the Institute for Jewish Spirituality (IJS) Hevraya program, and piloted the Tikkun Middot project. She is certified as a Spiritual Director and a Wise Aging Facilitator. She has served as treasurer of the Yale Slifka Center for Jewish Life, and in various lay leadership roles in the CCAR.

Purim was always a great deal of fun at CRS. One year I wore a full Winnie the Pooh costume to a preschool event, and learned the hard way that a costume with a head could scare the little ones. Once I was part of the chorus of clergy who sang backup as Rabbi Levine sang boastfully (to the Gilbert and Sullivan tune) "I am the very model of the Modern Reform Rabbinate." It was fun to watch him ham up the part. But, spoof aside, the words are true. With his warmth and wit, intelligence, passion for Judaism, and love of his community, Rabbi Levine is the very model of the best of the Reform rabbinate. Mazel tov on this wonderful milestone!



Rabbi Robert N. Levine D.D.

25th Anniversary Celebration

December 2 - 3, 2016

3 Kislev 5777

CONGREGATION RODEPH SHOLOM

A Message from the President

This Congregation has been blessed with exceptional stability in its senior clergy over its 175 year history. Robert Levine is only the 12th person to hold the title of Senior Rabbi, and there are only two other rabbis in our entire history who have held the title longer. Under Rabbi Levine's leadership, this Congregation has nearly doubled in size during his 25 year tenure. We have always been impressed by Rabbi Levine's intellect and knowledge. But what has deeply touched virtually every member of this 1,800 family Congregation is Robert's character and inherent humanity. He is a truly committed, caring and compassionate leader.

Martin Flumenbaum
President

BIOGRAPHIES AND MEMORIES

RABBI CAMILLE SHIRA ANGEL began her rabbinic career at Rodeph Sholom in 1995. After five fabulous years, we launched her to San Francisco's Congregation Sha'ar Zahav, where she served as Senior Rabbi for 15 years. In 2015, Rabbi Camille joined the faculty at San Francisco's independent Jewish day school, Brandeis, where she teaches 8th grade Jewish studies, Shoah studies, and modern Israel.

First impression of my future supervisor was at the Hebrew Union College placement interview. Robert asked in quite a matter of fact way, "How many funerals have you done? I'm not looking for someone to hand hold; I'm looking for someone who can assist me." I liked that because, at the time, while I knew I needed a mentor, I also knew I could give something unique to death rituals. Death is what brought me to life in my rabbinate. I have empathy for the bereaved. Robert recognized my gifts and my authenticity, and he gave me my first job. As an "out" lesbian in the late 20th century, that simple act took courage and integrity. Robert believed in me from the start. He took a risk on me and, together, we made it matter!

RABBI MATTHEW D. GEWIRTZ served as Rabbinic Intern, Assistant and Associate Rabbi of Congregation Rodeph Sholom for 13 years. In 2006 he began his tenure as the Senior Rabbi of Congregation B'nai Jeshurun (Short Hills, New Jersey). A strong advocate of social justice, Rabbi Gewirtz is a founding executive committee member of the Newark Coalition for Hope and Peace, an interfaith organization of Jews, Christians, and Muslims that is committed to ending gang violence in Newark.

Both Robert Levine and Congregation Rodeph Sholom represent for me the thread which has sewn together the tapestry which has helped build my life, as a human being, Jew, and rabbi. Rodeph Sholom is still my home. When I walk in through its doors, I am flooded with memories of joy, growth and community. I celebrated some of my most joyous moments and mourned some of my saddest moments at CRS. Robert is my mentor, and whether I speak to him or I lose touch with him for a few months, his counsel guides my way, even a decade later. He took raw material in me and helped me find my way to our rabbinate of integrity, meaning, and purpose.

RABBI LISA GRUSHCOW, M. PHIL., D. PHIL. joined Congregation Rodeph Sholom as Assistant Rabbi upon graduation from HUC-JIR in 2003. After graduating from McGill University in 1996, she was named a Rhodes Scholar and spent three years at Oxford University, where she earned a master's degree in Judaism and Christianity in the Greco-Roman World, and then a doctorate. In 2012, she assumed the role of Senior Rabbi at Temple Emanu-El-Beth Sholom, the only Reform synagogue in Montreal. She is the author of *Writing the Wayward Wife: Rabbinic Interpretations of Sotah*, and the editor of *The Sacred Encounter: Jewish Perspectives on Sexuality*. Rabbi Grushcow is co-president of the Montreal Board of Rabbis, and a member of the President's Rabbinic Council of HUC-JIR. In 2015, *The Jewish Daily Forward* nominated Rabbi Lisa Grushcow as one of America's 33 Most Inspiring Rabbis.

Rabbi Levine is a rabbi's rabbi, and continues to be my greatest teacher. With a single comment, he can get to the heart of what needs fixing in a sermon. More important, he teaches a theology of presence. Put simply: showing up matters. Caring about people matters most of all. And so my greatest memories of him are of how he was always there for me when I needed him, both personally and professionally. In my fifth year now in a new congregation, I still think: WWRD - What Would Robert Do?