FROM THE RABBI’S STUDY

JUST BEFORE THE DAWN | Rabbi Ben Spratt

Some call it a farce. Others label it the fantasy of a powerless people. Still others see it as an allegory of miraculous survival. The characters are caricatures: The king is a buffoon, the viceroy an evil egomaniac, the heroes are prosaic. And scholars love to note the absence of any real historical validity to the book. But *Megillat Esther*, despite its dubious historicity, remains entrenched in the Jewish heart. Maimonides envisioned that at the end of days, only the Torah and the *Book of Esther* would remain in the Jewish canon, and only Shabbat and Purim will be continued holiday observances. Somehow this tall tale, void of any mention of God, earns a spot beside our most sacred text and above even our High Holy Days.

Later in Jewish history, Purim would become more than a single day, and the tale of Esther more than this singular story. It became an ethic in the face of atrocity. “Anyone to whom a miracle happened, or all the residents of a city, can ordain by mutual agreement or by censure upon themselves and all who come after them, to make that day a Purim” (Rabbi Avraham Danzig, *Sefer Chayei Adam*, Hilkhot Megillah 155, ¶ 41). Over the centuries, hundreds upon hundreds of “special Purims” have been declared and observed, as each community used Purim as its spiritual and psychological frame for moving beyond horror.

And so, we are left with the question of why? Why should this story, at times hilarious, at times ridiculous, at times disturbing, garner such attention?

In good rabbinic fashion, there are many answers for this question. But at a time in our world where the fires of fear and hate rage, this is the message I carry as we enter Purim. Our sages taught: “For the leader, on the deer of the dawn” (Psalm 22:1) – This refers to the generation of Mordechai and Esther, a time darker than night… For when the night darkest? Just before the dawn… What is true of the light of dawn? Its light rays out as it rises; at the beginning, light comes little by little; then it spreads wider and wider; grows and increases; and at last it bursts into shining glory. So too, with Israel’s hope through Esther…”

The power of Purim is its promise of hope. In this way, *Megillat Esther* stands out amongst our sacred texts, and Purim against the backdrop of our array of holidays. We recount our ancestors, at the brink of annihilation, instead rising to see the light of a new day. We revel in the ability to poke fun at ourselves through shpiel, and even laugh in the face of those who would seek our destruction. We remember the fate-shifting power of one Jew claiming her identity. And, as we celebrate the light in Shushan long ago, we reach to see the growing rays of light in our own day.

It is fascinating to note that aside from the reading of the *Book of Esther*, the only other real requirements for the holiday involve gift-giving: *mishloach manot*, the delivering of food to friends, and *m atanot l’evyonim*, gifts for the poor. Maimonides reminds us of the intention behind these central Purim practices: It is preferable for a person to be more liberal with his donations to those in need than to be lavish in his preparation of the Purim feast or in sending portions to his friends. For there is no greater and more splendid happiness than to gladden the hearts of the poor, the orphan, the widow, and the outsider. One who brings happiness to the hearts of those who struggle resembles the Divine Presence.

Just as the holiday itself is meant to instill hope in our hearts, so too our actions on the holiday must inspire such hope in others’ hearts. As Maimonides frames it, by offering support to those in need, we effectively bring God into the world.

…by offering support to those in need, we effectively bring God into the world.

This Purim, join us here at Rodeph Sholom to both fill your own heart with joy and hope, and find ways to fill others’ hearts as well. First, come to our congregational Purim celebration and Carnival on Monday, March 9 to get into the Purim mindset! With clergy in costume, games, and food, we’ll raise levity together. On Tuesday, March 10 we’re experimenting with a new approach into the heart of the holiday with a learning and discussion opportunity, using the Megillah to glean inspiration at this season. With raised spirits, we will then live out that Maimonidean call to raise the spirits of others.

As we recall the redemption of the Jews of Shushan long ago, we as a congregation continue to raise our attention to those in need of redemption today. On Friday, March 20, we will direct our Shabbat services to join communities around the country elevating awareness and action towards the more than 70 million refugees seeking safety and security around the world. As we open minds and hearts, we will also open our hands to create packages for a Syrian relief container, and bring glimmers of light to those persecuted today. See inside this *Chronicle* and on our website for ways to turn hope into action.

As our sages remind us, “the night is darkest just before the dawn.” This year, may our Purim festivities kindle our spirits, may our Purim actions kindle the spirits of others, and may we all turn together to create the true light of dawn.
HONORING AN ENDURING FRIENDSHIP

Rob Steinman, President of the CRS Board

Janet was an amazing woman, leader, and pioneer. I am blessed to have known Janet my entire life. She was always present: a lifelong friend to my mother and father and our family, a great leader for Congregation Rodeph Sholom, and a sage and trusted friend and mentor to me after my parents died. From her lovely, regal presence on our bimah to her warm guidance in our boardroom, Janet’s love of our synagogue and all our congregants always shone through.

As I said in my acceptance speech when I became president, I am comforted by the knowledge that, as our president, I am standing on the shoulders of giants. We have been blessed with spectacular past presidents who have left us a tremendous legacy and a Congregation that is in its best condition in its history.

I thank our Honorary President for Life, Janet Neuberger, for her steadfast vision, her leadership, and her love for this wonderful Congregation. I am so privileged and grateful to follow such an amazing leader. While I can never fill her shoes, I will feel her presence every time I walk in the building. She inspired me to become more involved and I am honored to be continuing her tradition of service to Congregation Rodeph Sholom.

A TRUE RODEPH SHOLOM HISTORIC FIGURE

Rabbi Robert Levine

I was elected Senior Rabbi of this incredible congregation the same year Janet Neuberger was elected the first woman president in our history. We developed an instant rapport and respect for each other. Though Janet had an incredible bond with my beloved predecessor Gunter Hirschberg, she never once told me that “this is the way we do things at Rodeph Sholom.” Janet welcomed my leadership ideas. She thought young and had a vision firmly focused on the future.

Janet Neuberger was involved in some of the most important decisions in recent memory including the founding of our Nursery School, expansion of the Rodeph Sholom School and the hiring of only the second gay or lesbian rabbi in a mainstream congregation. When we celebrated our congregation’s 150th Anniversary, Janet made sure to include as many members of our community as possible.

Janet and her wonderful husband, Richard, were so kind and welcoming to Gina and me. She would often tell me with a twinkle in her eyes that the Search Committee really liked me, but they absolutely fell in love with my wife. Congregation Rodeph Sholom has lost a great leader. Gina and I have lost a dear friend. She and Richard are surely holding hands in the next life. Meanwhile her legacy at Rodeph Sholom is profound and secure.

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD: VOTE REFORM ON JANUARY 21!

“This is a critical time for our Reform Movement and an opportunity for you to have a significant role in strengthening the future of Reform Judaism in Israel. Your vote in the upcoming WZC elections can make a difference.”

—Rob Steinman, President of the CRS Board

The 2020 World Zionist Congress Elections are coming soon. The WZC is the World Zionist Organization’s (WZO) legislative body that meets every five years in Jerusalem. The Association of Reform Zionists of America (ARZA) represents the American Reform Movement in the WZO, enabling us to help strengthen the Reform Movement in Israel. These elections are the only democratic opportunity American Jews have to influence Israeli society as we continue our efforts towards equality, pluralism, and tolerance.

Your vote is critical to maintaining a large Reform presence in Israel and the United States. You will be sent a reminder that voting opens on January 21 and will remain open until March 11. It will take less than 90 seconds to participate and you can do it from your mobile device! Our votes will ensure that the Reform Movement’s voice and priorities are heard in Israel. If you are 18+ and identify as Jewish, we hope we can count on you to vote Reform.
**PURIM SERVICES AND EVENTS**

**Saturday, February 29**
4:30 – 6:00 pm | Sholom Sprouts Havdalah and Hamantaschen
Get ready for Purim at this Sholom Sprouts Purim family event, especially for children 3-5.

**Saturday, March 7**
11:00 am | Shireinu Shabbat Morning Purim Service
A warm, inviting, musical, and interactive service accessible and sensitive to families with special needs. Open to the entire community and all ages are welcome. With ASL. RSVP: shireinu@crsnych.org or 646.454.3124

**Sunday, March 8**
10:30 am – 12:00 pm | Sholom Sprouts Purim Concert and Celebration

**Monday, March 9 | Erev Purim**
5:30 pm | Purim Shpiel and Carnival
Come in costume and see the clergy all dressed up in the Purim Shpiel. Bring a box of pasta as a grogger, which will be donated to the West Side Campaign Against Hunger. Then join in the Carnival!
7:00 pm | Purim “After Dark”
This adults-only event will have you celebrating like it’s 499!

**Tuesday, March 10 | Purim**
8:00 – 9:30 am | Purim Service with Megillah Reading
We are starting our Purim morning service early to accommodate working adults. There will be learning and discussion with a festive chanting of the Megillah. Then we’ll enjoy some delicious hamantaschen!

**A PURIM MITZVAH**
*Give to the Needy (Matanot L’evyonim). As Rabbi Spratt teaches us on Page 1, we are commanded to take care of the less fortunate by giving money or food to at least two needy people during Purim, and to give a donation when asked. This mitzvah may be accomplished by donating to the CRS Food Drive which provides much needed help to our neighbors. Our partners include the Westside Campaign Against Hunger, the HUC Soup Kitchen, and the Church of St. Matthew and St. Timothy. One of Purim’s primary themes is Jewish unity. Taking care of one another enables everyone to join in the festivities.*

*To make a donation: rodephsholom.org/give/donate-now and select Food Drive*

**NATIONAL REFUGEE SHABBAT**

**Friday, March 20 | 6:00 PM**

*Bless what brought us through The sea and the fire … You have taught us to push against the walls, To reach out and pull each other along.*

——Marge Piercy

**EREV SHABBAT SERVICE at 6:00 PM**
The National Refugee Shabbat 5780, a project from HIAS, is a special service for congregations across the country to dedicate a Shabbat experience to refugees and asylum seekers. There are now more than 70 million people who have fled their homes due to persecution and violence. The involvement of Jewish congregations and organizations advocating for, volunteering with, and raising awareness about refugees and asylum seekers around the country and the world has made a difference. Together we can continue to raise awareness and reaffirm our commitment to welcoming them in our communities.

**PACKING RELIEF SUPPLIES**
Following the Service we will sort and prepare packages of much-needed medical supplies to send to Syria. The Multifaith Alliance for Syrian Refugees is the nation’s leading interfaith response to the Syrian refugee crisis with more than 100 participating organizations. They provide humanitarian aid directly to war victims inside Syria and they raise funds for organizations that provide direct services on the ground. MFA has delivered more than $137 million of relief, including clothing, blankets, food, sanitary items, medications, medical equipment and supplies, and water filtration kits.

The supplies we pack up will be shipped in a container sponsored by CRS. And we will be able to track its progress at multifaithalliance.org/container as the life-saving aid makes its way to those in need in Syria!

*Help prepare the relief packages! RSVP: rodephsholom.org/refugee-shabbat*

**PASSOVER SERVICES, SEDERS, AND EVENTS**

**Wednesday, March 25**
6:30 pm | Seder Preparation Session with Mark Gerson
See Adult Programming on Page 5.

**Saturday, March 28**
11:00 am | Shireinu Shabbat Morning Passover Service
Share prayer, Torah, and music! This service is a warm, inviting, musical, and interactive worship experience where everyone can just relax and be themselves. And there is even plenty to nosh! It is accessible and sensitive to a variety of needs with a Sign Language interpreter. RSVP: shireinu@crsnych.org or 646.454.3124

**Thursday, April 2**
4:30 – 6:00 pm | Sholom Sprouts Chocolate Seder
With Grandparents

**Wednesday, April 8 | First Night of Passover**
6:00 – 8:30 pm | Congregational Seder
Our annual Congregational Seder is an opportunity for our Rodeph Sholom family to sing, pray, and share a delicious, traditional dinner. Together we will read the Hagaddah and compare and contrast its various traditions and discuss how and why different stories of the same event come to be told and passed down. Rabbi Ben Spratt and Cantor Shanya De Love will be leading the seder. It is a fun-filled evening of warmth and camaraderie among friends, family, and clergy. Members and children (five years and older): $36. Non-members and children (five years and older): $72. Tickets must be purchased by April 2 at 4:00 pm: For tickets go to rodephsholom.org/seder. For questions, please call Miriam Baron at 646.454.3043.

**Thursday, April 9 | First Day of Passover**
10:15 – 11:45 am | Passover Morning Service

**Monday, April 13**
6:00 – 9:00 pm | Vegan Seder
For details, go to rodephsholom.org.

**Wednesday, April 15**
10:15 am | Concluding Passover Service with Yizkor
As well as commemorating our loved ones, new this year we will have the opportunity to discuss our journeys through the grief process.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT RODEPHSLOLOM.ORG
JANUARY

Thursday, January 2, 7:00 – 8:30 pm: CRS BOOK GROUP. All are welcome to join these self-moderated discussions in the Board Room. Next dates are Thursdays, February 6, March 5, and April 2. Contact: bookgroup@crsnync.org.

Monday, January 6, 6:30 pm: SISTERHOOD DAYS FOR GIRLS. Next dates: Mondays, February 3, March 2, and April 6. Contact: sisterhood@crsnync.org.

Tuesday, January 7, 7:30 pm and Wednesday, January 8, 6:30 pm: AUDITIONS FOR RS THEATER COMPANY PRESENTS THE WEDDING SINGER. Performances will be on Wednesday, April 29, 7:00 pm; Thursday, April 30, 7:00 pm; Saturday, May 2, 8:00 pm; and Sunday, May 3, 1:30 and 6:00 pm. See Page 5.

Thursday, January 9, 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: Thursdays, February 13, March 12, and April 16. RSVP: mahjongg@crsnync.org.

Friday, January 10, 10:15 – 11:15 am: INTERPRETIVE CHALLAH SHAPING WITH RABBINIC INTERNS VANESSA HARPER. Register at rodephsholom.org/challah.

Tuesday, January 14, 11:30 am – 1:30 pm: LUNCH TOGETHER. Join us for an engaging presentation, discussion, and a dairy lunch. Suggested contribution is $10. Next dates are Tuesdays, February 18, March 17, and April 21. Contact: lunchtogether@crsnync.org.

Thursday, January 16, 7:00 pm: SISTERHOOD COCKTAIL HOUR. Learn more about Sisterhood and make connections with other women of the congregation. RSVP: rodephsholom.org/sisterhood.

Friday, January 17, 6:00 pm: EREV SHABBAT SERVICE/DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR COMMEMORATION. A moving service to honor Dr. King’s dream of hope.

Tuesday, January 21: VOTING IN THE WORLD ZIONIST CONGRESS ELECTIONS BEGINS. Participating in the WZC elections is the only way we can weigh in democratically about issues in Israel. Vote Reform! See Page 2.

FEBRUARY

Saturday, February 1, 10:15 am: SHABBAT MORNING BROTHERHOOD/SISTERHOOD SERVICE. 12:45 pm: INSPIRING WOMEN OF THE CONGREGATION ANNUAL LUNCHEON. Contact: sisterhood@crsnync.org.

Friday, February 7, 6:00 pm: EREV SHABBAT INTEGRATED SHIREINU SERVICE 10TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION. Oneg to follow. See this page.

Saturday, February 8, 6:00 pm: HAVDALAH UNPLUGGED. A oneg end-of-Shabbat ritual with our clergy that we celebrate with wine and song. Next date is Saturday, April 4.

Thursday, February 13, 7:00 pm: MIDRASH HOUR 20. The performance by students from the Rodeph Sholom School and the Religious School of Etz Chaim (Tree of Life) features songs co-written by Eliot Bailen and the students. All are welcome to the evening show in the Schaffer. Details on our website.

Friday, February 28 and Saturday, February 29: WINTER SHABBATON WITH CANTOR EVAN KENT. See Page 5.

MARCH

Tuesday, March 3, 6:30 pm: THE 100 MOST JEWISH FOODS COOKING EVENT. Presented by Sisterhood with RSS PA. RSVP: rodephsholom.org/sisterhood.

Thursday, March 12, 7:00 pm: CHAMBER MUSIC AT RODEPH SHOLOM. Led by our congregants, Artistic Director Eliot Bailen and flutist Susan Rotholz, it’s a showcase of Jewish music in Israeli contemporary, European classical, and American folk genres featuring world-class musicians. Next concert: Thursday, April 23, 7:00 pm.

Friday, March 20, 6:00 pm: EREV SHABBAT SERVICE/NATIONAL REFUGEE SHABBAT. A special service for congregations across the country to dedicate a Shabbat experience to refugees and asylum seekers. 7:30 pm: Following the service we will prepare and sort packages of medical supplies to send to Syria. See Page 3.

Friday, March 27, 6:00 pm: EREV SHABBAT SERVICE. Guest speaker to discuss the Census.

APRIL

Friday, April 3, 6:00 pm: EREV SHABBAT SHIR CHADASH SERVICE/RSS 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION. See Page 7.

Friday, April 17, 6:00 pm: EREV SHABBAT YOM HASHOAH SERVICE. Monday, April 20 (Erev Yom HaShoah) – Tuesday, April 21 (Yom HaShoah): READING OF THE NAMES: YOM HASHOAH COMMEMORATION. The Upper West Side community gathers to read the names of Jews among the six million murdered in the Holocaust. Rabbis begin the reading at 10:00 pm at an UWS shul and continues throughout the night and following day at the JCC in Manhattan, 334 Amsterdam Ave. at 76th St. See the CRS website for the exact time that CRS rabbis and congregants will read names. Come to read or to witness.

Friday, April 24, 6:00 pm: ISRAEL COMMITTEE EREV SHABBAT SERVICE, DINNER, AND BROTHERHOOD MOVIE NIGHT. A special “Isreel” Shabbat Service followed by dinner and discussion with Q&A led by the directors of Colliding Dreams (2015), who will screen an excerpt from their documentary about Zionism’s impact on Jews, Israelis, and Palestinians. Co-sponsored by the Israel Committee.

Celebrate Shireinu’s 10th Anniversary
EREV SHABBAT INTEGRATED SHIREINU SERVICE
Friday, February 7 | 6:00 PM

“If we build it, they would come,” said Rabbi Levine on the idea to develop a special needs spiritual community here at Rodeph Sholom. And come they did. The entire congregation is invited to celebrate this thriving experiment in connection that has since turned into an influential model replicated by congregations around the country. The service will feature a panel discussion with reflections from clergy, congregants, and volunteers who have been inspired and transformed by their involvement in this vital project. The celebration will continue at the special oneg following the service.

Details on the Shireinu Purim and Passover services on Page 3.

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

THE CHRONICLE | WINTER/Spring 2020 | 5780
WINTER SHABBATON WITH CANTOR EVAN KENT
Friday, February 28 | 6:00 pm: Erev Shabbat Service
Saturday, February 29 | 10:15 am: Shabbat Morning Chapel Service
6:30 pm: Havdalah

Cantor Evan Kent is our special musical guest for Erev Shabbat Services and guest darshan Shabbat morning. Saturday evening, after Havdalah, he will present his story of aliyah in his one-man show, Shards. Cantor Kent is on the faculty of HUC-JIR in Jerusalem and served as Cantor at Temple Isaiah in L.A. for 25 years. With music, storytelling, and puppets, Cantor Kent links his immigration story with that of his grandparents from Russia to the U.S.

Personal and Spiritual Pathways Through the Psalms
Rabbi Jacqueline Koch Ellenson | Fridays, 12:00 – 1:30 pm
January 17, February 21, March 20, April 17, through June
All levels are welcome, new and returning students.

Shabbat Study Series: Why Judaism – Essential Texts
Clergy | Following Shabbat Morning Services
January 18, March 7
A post-worship study on Jewish identity and belonging. Lunch included.

Taste of Torah: Exploring the Insights of our Weekly Torah Portion
Tuesdays, 7:00 pm: January 21, March 24
Tuesdays, 9:00 am: February 4, April 28
Each of our clergy leads us in studying a portion of the Torah.

Tales of Three Rabbis
Rabbi David Ellenson | Tuesdays, 6:30 pm
February 4, 11, and 18
We will study the life and times of the 19th century Rabbis Aaron Wise (CRS), Isaac Mayer Wise (Cincinnati), and Benjamin Szold (Baltimore).

NEW: CONGREGANT SERIES 5780
Author Natalie Silverstein with Rabbi Erica Gerson
Thursday, February 6, 6:30 pm
How do we teach our children the most important values? Learn how to bring service and kindness into our daily lives.

Seder Preparation Session
Author Mark Gerson | Wednesday, March 25, 6:30 pm

Jewish Basics
Clergy | Wednesdays, 7:00 – 8:30 pm through May
Learn about the holidays, foundational texts, conversion, and mitzvot.
Cost: $720.

Jewish Basics 2.0
Clergy | Thursdays, 6:30 pm through May
For those who converted within the last five years. Cost: $180.
Contact: Rabbi Weitzman@crsny.org.

Hebrew Basics
Melissa De Lowe | Thursdays, 8:45 – 9:45 am
February 20 through May 7

Making Meaning of B’nai Mitzvah
Rabbi Benjamin Spratt | Tuesday, March 10, 6:30 pm
Add meaning for your families in the b’nai mitzvah process.

To register: rodephsholom.org/get-involved

ARE YOU LIVE STREAMING?
From the Editor | Yvette Perry

There I was, sitting in my High Holy Day seat on Yom Kippur, knowing I wasn’t going to be able to stay the whole day. But I also knew there was something I could do! As soon as I arrived home I went to our website and clicked the Live Streaming link.

With my copy of the Mishkan Hanefesh in hand and Rabbi on the bimah right in front of me, I spent the most amazing, fulfilling, and intimate afternoon of prayer. It was just me and our clergy. I followed along with my prayer book. The Vidui, the Avinu Malcheinu, the Aleinu, . . . then Ne’ilah, the gates are open, the gates close, and finally Rabbi Levine’s blessing. My soul was filled.

I’m not advocating to skip services. The chance to pray with community is potent and gratifying. But those times that we can’t be there, we are very lucky to have this worthwhile connection possible.
DEVELOPMENT | Lyndsie Levine

Happy New Year! I hope that 2020 is off to a great start for you and your loved ones. Here are some important updates from your Development Team for the new year:

YOM KIPPUR APPEAL (YKA)
There's still time to contribute to the synagogue’s annual fund.
You are probably aware that our membership dues only cover about half the cost of running our synagogue. This means that your donation to the Yom Kippur Appeal (our annual fund) directly supports our operating budget — your participation is needed and appreciated. If you have contributed to the YKA in the past, we thank you and ask you to consider increasing your support this year if you can. If you have not given before, please make this year your first. Our community is stronger because of your support. Thank you!

L’DOR V’DOR CAMPAIGN
It’s not just about our building.
By now you hope we’ve had the chance to see our updated lobby, renovated fifth floor, and new third floor clergy suite. But did you know that our L’Dor V’Dor campaign is about more than just building improvements? Through this campaign, we are also making investments in our:

• Endowment, which is small for a synagogue of our size and doesn’t adequately support our operations.

FOOD DRIVE
Our community’s commitment to social justice.
Food insecurity is a real and growing problem in our city and Upper West Side community. Through the CRS Food Drive we support three important institutions making a difference:

• West Side Campaign Against Hunger, our local fresh and canned food pantry serving the UWS and Northern Manhattan.

• HUC Soup Kitchen, which provides hot meals each Monday evening.

• Church of St. Matthew and St. Timothy, where Sunday Meal gives nourishment and fellowship to 100 neighborhood residents.

A gift of any size will help us fight food insecurity and support our neighbors. To donate, visit our website or send a check to CRS.

IN MEMORIAM

Herbert Thau, father of Jonathan Thau
Steven Oreck, son of Paula Oreck
Barbara Carter, mother of Robert Carter
Werner H. Kramarsky, father of Dan Kramarsky
Frances Krause, mother of Robin Krause
Stanley Price, father of Jonathan Price
Werner Wolfgang (Chuck) Weiss, husband of Helen Weiss and father of Dr. Walter Weiss
Elizabeth Landau Kolman, mother of Jacqueline Stern
Hermine Katz, mother of Amy Katz
Suzan Drogin, stepmother of Marcy Drogin
Gilbert Tetreault, uncle of Sara Bonin
Stanley Rosner, father of Adam Rosner
Esther Amsterdam, grandmother of Justin Koplin
Jerry Silverman, brother of Mary Ann Siskind and uncle of Laura Siskind
Florence Fox, mother of Rena Kiosk
Sandra G. Lipton, sister of Joan Sarnoff, aunt of Susan Sarnoff Bram
Stephen Swid, husband of Nan Swid, father of Scott Swid
Thomas Gallai, father of Jacqueline Veisaid
Lawrence Mitnick, uncle of Andrea Cohen
Barbara Wambach, sister of Hilary Hersh
Eugene Levy, father of Jeffrey Levy
Fernie Fine, mother of Ellen Fine
Joseph Kadin, father of Lisa Kadin
Natalie Fuchs, mother of Stephanie Lascher, grandmother of Renee Lascher and Micah Lascher
Janet Neuberger, widow of Richard, and mother of Mark Neuberger and Nancy Kannerman
Howard Friedman, father of Jan Constantine
Samuel Rosenblum, brother of Jamie Roinman
Judith Greenberg, mother of Jocelyn Nager
Dr. Burton Katz, father of Dr. Andrea Katz
Elizabeth Eiger, niece of Esta Stacher
Barbara Eiger, mother of Esta Stacher, and grandmother of Emily Stacher and Michael Stacher
Golda Benson, mother of Mitchell Benson
Cindy Katz, sister of Jeremy Temkin
John Dennison, father of Timothy Dennison

CRS FIGHTS HUNGER | Yvette Perry

Yom Kippur Food Drive
17,762 pounds. That is how many cans of food our Congregation contributed to the 5780 Yom Kippur Food Drive. Wow! The City Harvest truck outside our building on Yom Kippur morning was surrounded by congregants dropping off their full shopping bags. But that was just half of our community’s efforts. Something new was added for this year’s drive—we were able to go online to send food directly to City Harvest’s warehouse by employing our Amazon Wish List!

17,762 pounds. The truck picked up 8,388 pounds. And 9,374 pounds were donated via the wish list. Doing this mitzvah, our community answered 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 effort throughout the year. See this page (above) and the Purim Mitzvah on Page 3 to learn more.

Backpack Buddies: Help Feed Children on the Weekends
Volunteers are needed Wednesday mornings to pack backpacks with non-perishable food that will provide a child with 6 nutritious meals for the weekend. Then on Friday mornings we deliver them to our partners (Lincoln Square Neighborhood Center, Frederick Samuel Community Center, Church of St. Matthew and St. Timothy, and PS 347). Go to rodephsholom.org/volunteerhub.

CRS HOMELESS SHELTER
The Rodeph Sholom Shelter, open Monday through Friday until June, provides 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. Would you like to volunteer for this meaningful congregational cause? Go to rodephsholom.org/volunteerhub.

QUESTIONS FOR OUR DEVELOPMENT TEAM? Call Lyndsie Levine at 646.454.3050.
GROWING UP AT CRS: YOU CAN FEEL THE DIFFERENCE
Kerith Braunfeld

One of the benefits of being at CRS for so many years is being able to watch my students grow from their early years through their teen years and beyond.

Just this year at Mitzvah Day, I ran into a student of mine who had been in High School when I first started working at CRS. He introduced me to his fiancé — what a joy! Some of my students are even married with children of their own. I think it will really hit me when they start to enroll their children in the Religious School — I’dor v’dor, from generation to generation.

The blessing of being part of a synagogue is that we can get to know you and your children and be there with you through every age and stage and for all of life’s ups and downs.

Of course, times have changed since my first years at CRS. Families have changed, our society has changed, and the demands on our time have certainly changed. With all of this, our program needs to change too, to respond to the world in which our children are living.

Our goals for our children and teens today are for each of them to:

• grow in a warm, inclusive community that engages their heart, mind, and soul.
• develop social and emotional skills, preparing them to navigate an evermore complex world.
• build relationships with clergy and teachers who are leaders and role models.
• become a mensch — a good person, living their life according to Jewish values.

We want to give our students skills to lead meaningful and fulfilling lives and show them how Judaism can contribute to this with its ritual, prayer, values, mitzvot, wisdom, tradition, and profound sense of community.

Rodeph Sholom School

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.

RSS 50TH ANNIVERSARY EVENTS

Everyone is invited to celebrate with us!

Friday, April 3 | 6:00 pm
Please join RSS parents and students as Clergy and congregants honor the school’s 50th Anniversary at this special Erev Shabbat service.

Wednesday, May 13 | 6:30 pm
Our year of celebration culminates with an unforgettable, one-time only Jubilee Gala at the Ziegfeld Ballroom. We appreciate the enthusiasm and support of all the Rodeph Sholom congregants who are sure to make this an extra special Gala evening!

Please contact Sarah Schimmel at sschimmel@rssnyc.org to learn more about our 50th Anniversary events.
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.

NATIONAL REFUGEE EREV SHABBAT SERVICE
Friday, March 20 | 6:00 PM

Join us for this special Erev Shabbat where together we can help welcome and raise awareness for refugees and asylum seekers and pack supplies to send to Syria. See Page 3.
rodephsholom.org/refugee-shabbat