

Adar I-Iyyar 5784 | March-May 2024

Issue No. 117

HAKESHER

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Check us out on YouTube!
youtube.com/@RodefShalomPgh



**RODEF SHALOM
CONGREGATION**



We are a Reform Jewish Congregation dedicated to melding the traditions of our faith with contemporary life. Our Congregation, chartered in 1856, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is a City of Pittsburgh Historic Landmark. We are a diverse congregation engaged in social issues, culture, and learning—made up of multigenerational, multicultural, and interfaith families and individuals.

Our doors are open to everyone.

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Last December, we had the opportunity to attend the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ) 150th celebration in Washington, DC. We were especially happy to help honor and thank Susan Kalson as she transitioned out of her position as Chair of the Commission on Social Action. It was wonderful to reconnect with friends and colleagues, many of whom we had not seen since before the pandemic. The conference celebrated the history and future of the Reform Jewish community, and reminded us that we are part of a greater whole; a movement of faith and action which uses Jewish thought and tradition as a vehicle for change and innovation.



Then, and in contrast, we traveled to a conference in New York City, called Rising Song, which accurately describes itself as "A Singing Intensive." The program called for stillness, for being present and attuned to the voices around us, and getting lost in a wave of sound and prayer.

The events could not have been more different. The URJ program included schmoozing, seminars and large presentations. It was a bit disorienting (but worth it!) to move from there, a place of frenetic energy, leadership discussions, and politics, to a place of stillness, meditation, and introspection, within the space of 24 hours.

We have been using what we experienced and learned in both environments to reflect on the fluid needs of the Jewish people in general and our congregation in particular. This means that even as we address the direction of the Reform movement, our relationship with Israel, and the role of synagogue life into the future, we must also make space for being present and focused, for appreciating the aesthetic beauty of prayer, and for exploring the countless ways to be Jewish in the modern world.

As we approach our two spring holidays, Purim and Pesach, we again acknowledge the need to hold multiple truths at the same time. Purim, although a time for silliness and laughter, is at its core a holiday which uplifts the role of women in leadership and the Jewish prerogative to stand up against oppression and injustice. Conversely, Pesach, which celebrates our redemption from slavery and the Exodus journey, can also be a more intimate holiday of family celebration and home ritual.

As the war in Israel continues, and our uncertainty and despair may continue to cause us pain and suffering, we invite you to hold these truths together – that we are a dynamic movement of Jewish communities with a powerful heritage creating a vision for the future. We are also singular individual souls who crave stillness and contemplation. While we may enjoy the silliness of Purim and the epic narrative of Pesach, we acknowledge and commemorate the suffering of others and our ongoing work of using Judaism and Jewish practice to improve the lives of those in our communities and around the world. We invite you to join us in this work over the coming months here at Rodef Shalom Congregation.



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Bill Battistone
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Dear Fellow Congregants,

If you are anything like me, you love a good story. I think that is why I have been so enamored with some recent study I have been doing around stories in the Torah that I either had totally forgotten about, or hardly even knew existed. (Sidenote – if you want to talk to me about the story of the mekallel in Exodus, let me know!) In a tradition that is so rich with storytelling, one of my favorites is quickly approaching in the calendar.

The story of Purim is one that I think instantly draws many of us in. It has everything you'd want in a good story – political and palace intrigue, hidden backgrounds of characters, a clear antagonist, and ultimately, a happy ending. And while the story of Purim is a fun one to celebrate not just because of the costumes and hamantaschen (which is what drew me to the holiday initially), the story of Purim, like many things in our tradition, can resonate with all of us even in our complex world in 2024.

Purim teaches us the power of collective strength and the importance of standing up for justice and righteousness. In today's day and age, who could argue that these are two of the most important ideals to be fighting for? We must continue to work toward building a community around strength and resilience, even when the future seems uncertain. We must commit to giving the gifts of compassion, empathy, and kindness to each other and the people around us.

As winter begins to turn to spring, and we look toward new beginnings in 2024, let us celebrate the story of Purim, and may we all strive to be "Esthers" to each other.

Now, as a closing – a simpler way of describing the Jewish holiday as my grandmother-in-law would say, the story could be summarized "someone tried to kill us, we survived, let's eat a cookie!"

L'Shalom,

Save the Date

for the installation of Cantor Toby Glaser

Join us as we officially welcome Cantor Glaser to our community:

Kabbalat Shabbat Service

Friday, March 29



You Rock!

Barb Feige, The Murray Klein Executive Director

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By the time you read this, I will be in the final weeks of my tenure at Rodef Shalom Congregation. Leading this historic institution and spending time in the jewel of a building have truly been my honor, privilege, and joy for these past two years. It is a proud capstone to my career. When I started at RSC (as Interim Director, remember?), I was charged with providing stability, increasing transparency, improving morale—as well as the standard Executive Director goals of forwarding the mission, vision and values of the organization. I leave hoping that I indeed accomplished those tasks.

If I've had the opportunity to work with you, you likely learned that my highest compliment is "You rock!". I even give out "thank you rocks" for accomplishments and jobs well-done. Allow me, in my *HaKesher* farewell, to talk about some Rodef Shalom "rock stars".

I want to thank the truly amazing **Staff** here. Each one of them is a gem: hard-working, committed, and caring. New tasks are taken on – if not exactly with joy, at least with only a little grumbling. More importantly, the job gets done; and it gets done in a timely, appropriate, and professional way. I am so grateful to have joined their team.

The **RSC Board of Trustees** has had a lot to deal with these past few years. The average of five-hours-a-month that we often talk about being required for non-profit board service is one-quarter of what most of our Trustees have been dedicating to Rodef Shalom. Yet they remain involved, supportive, hands-on and grounded in community service and planning for the future. There are not enough rocks to thank them sufficiently for all they do and for their support of my efforts.



Our auxiliary groups – Women of Rodef Shalom and the Brotherhood – and our committees are comprised of outstanding **Volunteers**. From organizing programs and events to providing guidance and policy, their commitment enriches the fabric of our congregation. They dedicate countless hours nurturing our community and exemplifying the true meaning of service and *tikkun olam*. I have so enjoyed working with all of them.

I also extend my gratitude to the **Congregants** of Rodef Shalom; their dedication and participation form the heart and soul of our community. Their active engagement, heartfelt prayers, and warm camaraderie create a welcoming environment. Their commitment to learning, growing, and supporting one another exemplifies the essence of Jewish values in action.

There are exciting things on the horizon! As you navigate the journey ahead, I wish you clarity and wisdom. May you have the courage to follow your hearts. Here's to embracing the challenges with resilience, stamina, and faith. I wish you all the best! May the future be filled with success, happiness, and prosperity.

May you go from strength to strength. You all rock!!



Take the Time for Imaginative Play

Ellie Feibus, Sidney and Shirley C. Rapport Family Center Director

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Imaginative play, is more than just playing pretend and dress up. It is a very special time when children use their lived experiences, mixed with uninhibited logic, and inventive creativity in the pursuit of understanding. What looks to most like a simple game of house, is to the child an anthropological study of last night's dinner conversation. They use their imagination to recreate the experience, make logical connections from reality to play, and add a fanciful costume to express themselves.

Through keen observation of this play, early childhood educators learn who the child is, how they approach social situations, and their understanding of the world around them. In addition, the educators discover the interests of the child and in turn use their findings to create meaningful experiences to connect with their students.

In our Berkman Family Center, imaginative play extends beyond the traditional dress up area and is seamlessly integrated into all areas of the classroom. Our educators encourage the children to extend their play and explore their imaginations to the fullest. Through thoughtful engagement and questioning, our educators use the observation of imaginative play as a conduit for building meaningful, respectful, and supportive relationships with their students.

I encourage everyone to take time to play!



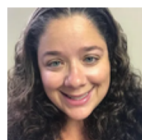
Summer Camp in the Berkman Family Center

Weekly Sessions: June 17 – August 2

Monday – Friday | 9:00 – 1:00

Ages 18 months through 5 years

Enroll today at rodefshalom.org/familycenter



Putting Together a Purim Carnival

(A sneak peek behind the scenes)

Yael Eads, Youth Director and B'Mitzvah Coordinator
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If you have ever been to a Rodef Shalom Purim carnival, you know all about the fun that you'll get to experience. If you've never been to a Rodef Shalom Purim carnival, then I urge you to make this year the year that you do. A Purim carnival isn't just for young kids – it's a time for everyone to have fun, be a little silly, enjoy some yummy foods, and just let loose a bit. This is even true for the dozens of teens who have worked for months preparing this event for you.

The Purim carnival is the highlight of the year for our 6th-12th graders. It's the time that they are in the leadership role, creating this carnival from the ground up with our youth advisors overseeing the event and being present for guidance. But that is all we, as the adults in the room, offer... guidance when needed. Everything that you see comes from the minds of the youth of our congregation: what games do we need, what activities do we want to do, what foods should be served, etc. The planning for this event begins months before.

Beginning in January, our teens come together to lay out the framework for the year, and of course, every year is different than the prior one. They spend time brainstorming together on what works and what doesn't and what can be done this year to make it even more special than last year. The teamwork involved in making this a reality is crucial, and watching kids ages 12-18 work together as partners is what makes this event come together so well.

After the initial groundwork is set, the group comes together every other Sunday afternoon to prepare. They spend time each week working on theming, coordinating, and planning what the morning will look like. This all leads up to the night before the carnival when our entire youth department, along with our friends at Congregation Beth Shalom, come together to set everything up. When you walk into Freehof Hall for the carnival the next morning, you walk into whatever it is the teens have decided you should experience this year. Maybe you're walking into the wizarding world of Harry Potter, being sure to say hi to Hedwig the Owl on your way in, or maybe you are stepping into a galaxy far, far away, being sure to avoid the Stormtroopers.

Whatever you walk into this year, we hope you enjoy it! We hope you can have a bit of fun, be a kid again, and have a very Happy Purim.



Upcoming Youth Events

Sunday, March 10
Purim Prep (Grades 6-12)

Saturday, March 16
Purim Party (Grades K-5)

Saturday, March 16
Purim Overnight (Grades 6-12)

Sunday, March 17
Purim Carnival!

Sunday, April 7
Empty Bowls Bake Sale

Sunday, April 21
Chocolate Seder (Grades K-4)



We All Have Our Own Reasons to March for Israel

Rabbi Larry Freedman, Director of the Joint Jewish Education Program

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Yom Ha'atzmaut, Israel Independence Day, will be particularly powerful for some this year, tricky for others. On one hand, following the horrific, barbaric attack Israel suffered on October 7, 2023, many of us will want to be at events that support the right of a sovereign nation, our nation, to repel and suppress terrorism.

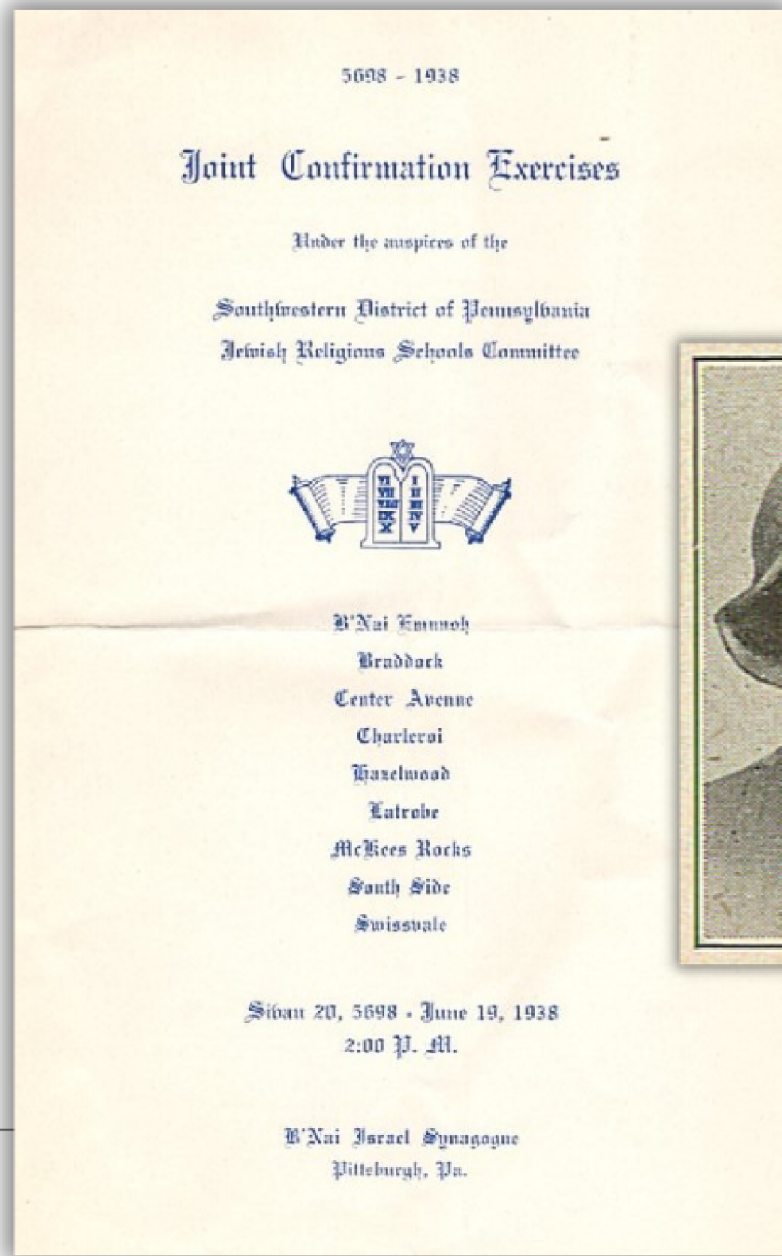
Yet given the level of Israel's response, many of us are concerned, to say the least, for the numbers of Gazans dead and displaced. We have been taught through the words of Isaiah to alleviate the suffering of the oppressed and no one can say the Gazans aren't suffering. But then again, their suffering hasn't come out of nowhere. We remember who started this and what exactly Hamas did. We know about the tunnels under civilian schools and hospitals and so forth. And yet, it gives many pause to see what it takes for a sovereign nation, our nation, to repel and suppress terrorism. War is hell. It is also deeply uncomfortable.

Yom Ha'atzmaut, the Hebrew date, falls on May 14th this year, the actual secular date; a happy calendrical coincidence. The Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh is planning some activities that may include a short walk through the neighborhood on or around that date.

I think J-JEP should make a big showing. Because Israel is coming up on 76 years old, our children and our parents and not a few grandparents don't recall what it was like to be a Jew without international representation. We don't remember what it was like before a State of Israel inspired tremendous cultural outflowing and pride among Jews everywhere. We should relearn that and hold up signs and flags to celebrate what this astonishing achievement means to us. At the same time, we don't forget the problems a modern nation has. We don't forget the politics, the way Conservative and Reform Jews are treated by the Rabbinate, the frustration so many have with the Occupation in the West Bank. We don't forget any of that.

And still we celebrate this amazing place that has done so much for the Jewish people. Each one of us has reasons to be proud. Each one of us has reasons to be critical. That's how it goes with sovereign nations. Raising a flag, raising our voice doesn't mean we set aside our values or dreams for the Jewish state. It means we support Israel and always demand the highest level of morality from her. It also means we ought not stay at home on May 14th.

Each of us celebrates Israel for our own reasons. Come join in to express yours.





An Experiment in Religious Education

Martha L. Berg, Archivist

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What is the best way to provide religious education for our children? This question has been asked in every generation, with a wide variety of answers. In the first half of the twentieth century, one answer for Jewish children dispersed widely throughout Western Pennsylvania was developed by the Southwestern District of Pennsylvania Jewish Religious Schools Program (SWD).

Rodef Shalom's Rabbi Lippman Mayer first proposed the idea of "Mission" schools to reach unaffiliated children, and the first classes were held in the Washington Street shul in the Hill district in 1894. Taken on by the Columbian Council Settlement as one of a wide range of programs it offered to recent immigrants, the Center Avenue Religious School blossomed into a community-wide project under the dedicated and inspirational leadership of Miriam Schonfield in 1907. She had begun teaching younger children at the Columbian Council School when she was only eleven years old.

Religious schools in the outer districts of Pittsburgh and in the smaller surrounding towns were developed first through local Mothers' Clubs, which worked to assure financial stability for the schools. Tuition for each child was \$1.00 per year, and the Columbian Council, now the National Council of Jewish Women, Pittsburgh Section, provided textbooks, volunteer teachers, and administrative supervision.

As the SWD program grew, Rodef Shalom's Sisterhood joined Council as an equal partner in this educational collaboration, providing financial backing and holding teacher Training Institutes regularly at Rodef Shalom. By 1925, there were 43 religious schools with more than 3,000 students. The schools ranged from Ambridge to Wilkinsburg and included locations in East Liverpool, Ohio, the Western PA School for the Deaf, and two "reform schools."

The annual report for 1925 stated that SWD "does not advocate reform, conservative, or orthodox. It offers Judaism in whatever form the community desires." It did, however, institute joint confirmation exercises for school graduates in 1915, continued annually for decades.

When Miriam Schonfield died in 1934, the SWD office relocated to Rodef Shalom. We have in the Archives several boxes of records left by Saul Spiro, SWD's Field Supervisor from 1937 to 1942. These include very detailed reports on each school, including lesson plans, confirmation essays, attendance reports, and teacher lists. By the late 1940s, demographic shifts, the establishment of religious schools by new congregations, and the consolidation of smaller schools led to declining enrollment, and the SWD ceased operations in 1966.

Thousands of children passed through the many religious schools operated by the SWD over the years. The benefits of this successful experiment go beyond religious education. The project demonstrates community-building beginning with the Mothers' Clubs, which were sometimes the basis for founding new congregations. It fostered a long-term partnership between two of the most significant women's organizations in the city. And it provided opportunities for the young adult teachers to receive training, socialize with their peers, and maintain their connection with the Jewish community.



Miriam Schonfield



Spring Reads

Sam Siskind, Librarian

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Spring is quickly approaching and with the gradually warming temperatures and lengthening days come the joyful holidays of Purim and Passover. As the carnivals of Purim and the Seders of Passover get ready to commence, what a wonderful opportunity to read up on these two celebrations. Here are some selections available in our Lippman Library that may inspire some new delicious recipes and holiday traditions, as well as broaden your horizon of what these two holidays can be.

Freedom Journeys: The Tale of Exodus and Wilderness across Millennia

by Rabbi Arthur O. Waskow and Rabbi Phyllis O. Berman

In this book for adults, the authors examine the story of slavery and the Exodus and draw a comparison to our modern-day global struggles. This idea and comparison is consistent with the theme of Passover as a universal and eternal struggle for freedom and independence in each generation.

The Jewish Holiday Baker

by Joan Nathan

Hamantaschen are a delicious and iconic Purim treat. But what other dessert for the joyful Adar holiday can become something new to discover? Who better than the celebrated Joan Nathan to broaden the scope of Purim treats. She provides recipes for a prune and nut roll as well as cinnamon-nut cookies called "Travados." And, yes, of course Nathan provides some hamantaschen recipes as well. This cookbook provides several Passover recipes as well including one for Italian matzah, consisting of only matzah cake meal and water, plus Kosher for Passover recipes for biscotti and macaroons.

Meet the Hamantaschen: A Purim Mystery

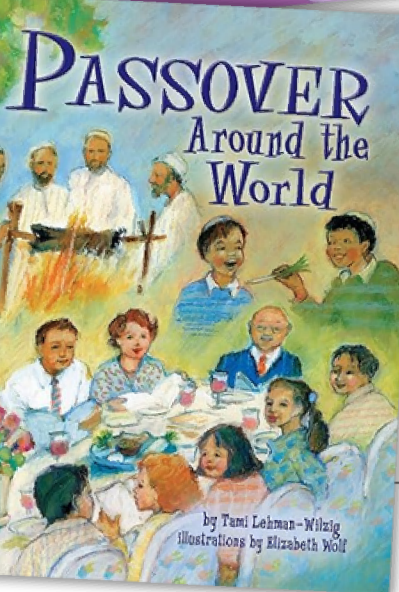
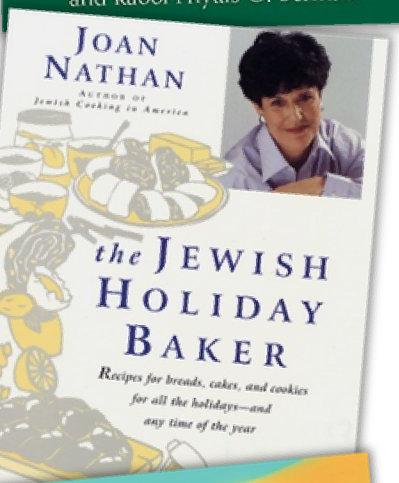
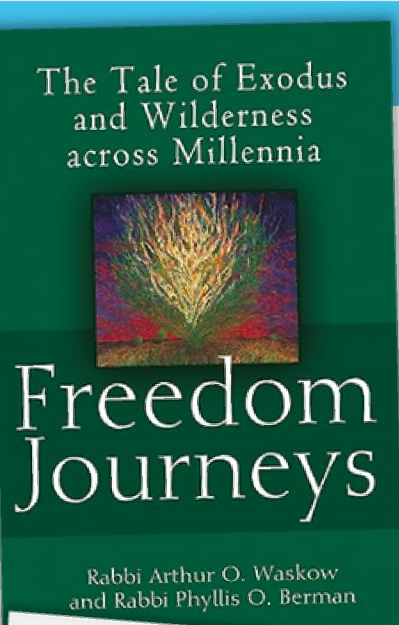
by Alan Silberberg

This cute story for later preschool/early grade-school aged children imagines a trio of hamantaschen as detectives. With a large number of illustrations, they attempt to solve a Purim mystery while a cast of characters put on a Purim play. Complete with comic lines and funny situations, Silberberg's story is as appropriately silly and joyful as the holiday itself.

Passover Around the World

by Tami Lehman-Wilzig, illustrated by Elizabeth Wolf

For children ages approximately 8-11, this fascinating book explores Passover traditions from multiple countries throughout the world, including Turkey, India, and Iran among others. Each chapter focuses on a family in a specific country and their Seder, holiday traditions, and practices. Filled with history as well as ethnic recipes, adults and parents will also find much to explore and learn in this book.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Stay tuned to our weekly emails for more information!



MARCH 1
4:30 PM

SHABBAT WITH YOU

For families with young children | Register at rodefshalom.org/shabbatwithyou

MARCH 11
6:00 PM

THE SOFER: ARTIST RECEPTION

A program Rodef Shalom Congregation Jewish Museum | RSVP at rodefshalom.org/thesofer

MARCH 17
9:30 AM

TEA AND HAMANTASCHEN

Join us for tea, hamantaschen, and joyful community | RSVP at rodefshalom.org/tea

MARCH 17
10:00 AM

PURIM CARNIVAL

Enjoy a morning full of fun, food, games, and prizes!

MARCH 20
7:30 PM

ISRAEL SPEAKERS SERIES AT TEMPLE SINAI

Israel's History – A Deep Dive into a Disputed Land | Register at tinyurl.com/israelseries

MARCH 23
7:30 PM

PURIM WITH TREE OF LIFE

Celebrate on Erev Purim with a Maariv service, Megillah reading, and Purim shpiel!

MARCH 25
7:00 PM

ROY SONNE: VIOLIN FAVORITES

RSVP for this free concert at rodefshalom.org/sonne

MARCH 29
5:30 PM

INSTALLATION OF CANTOR TOBY GLASER

Join us as we officially welcome Cantor Glaser to our community!

APRIL 5
4:30 PM

SHABBAT WITH YOU

For families with young children | Register at rodefshalom.org/shabbatwithyou

APRIL 22
6:00 PM

CONGREGATIONAL PASSOVER SEDER

Join our community on the first night of Passover for a warm and engaging Seder.

APRIL 23
10:00 AM

PASSOVER MORNING SERVICE AT TEMPLE SINAI

We'll join our friends at Temple Sinai for the first day of Passover.

APRIL 25
7:00 PM

WOMEN OF RODEF SHALOM INCLUSIVE SEDER

Save the date for this special Seder using an inclusive Haggadah created by WRS members.

APRIL 29
10:00 AM

PASSOVER MORNING AND YIZKOR SERVICE

Join us in person or online for our Passover Morning and Yizkor Service.



Lunch Time Torah: Spring Holiday Edition

Thursdays, March 7-April 18 (No session on March 28) | 1:00-2:00 p.m.

Free for Members · \$54 for non-members | Register at rodefshalom.org/lunch

Bring your lunch and join Rabbi Jessica Locketz to learn about the spring holidays — Purim and Passover. Our sessions in March will focus on Purim: its eclectic cast of characters, Hollywood-worthy plot, and the diverse ways it is celebrated today. Our April sessions will look at the traditional and not-so-traditional (coffee beans, anyone?) symbols of the Seder Plate as well as the 'highlights' of the Seder Ritual.



Enjoying havdalah with our newest members in February.

Welcome to our New Members

Carmen Cole, Daniel Connelly and Elizabeth McDonald, Richard Feldstein, Julia Garfinkel, Ehud HersHKovich and Erina Goldwasser, Kim Patterson, Laura Silver Veach

Mazel Tov!

Darren Cook and **Luis Marquez** on passing their U.S. citizenship tests

Maria and Luis Marquez on their marriage

Leo Warner-Fricke on becoming a B'Mitzvah

Elana Weisfield on becoming a Bat Mitzvah



Darren Cook from our security team



Luis Marquez from our facilities team

May their memory be a blessing

Kenneth Franklin, Beverly Selig Mermelstein, Marcia Netzer, Joni Berkman Ostrow, Charles Reichblum, Arlene Roberts, Edward Snyder, Eleanor "Cissy" Stone



Let us host your next event or meeting!

Valli Davis, Director of Facilities

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As the new Director of Facilities, I'm thrilled to have the opportunity to connect with you. I have a diverse background in building maintenance and construction, office construction and renovations, event planning, and office management.

In addition to my professional pursuits, I am a proud parent to a wonderful son, who is now 33. Beyond that, my heart is filled with joy as I've had the privilege of fostering nine children, creating a loving and supportive home environment. On the home front, my furry family includes three dogs and four cats, adding a delightful touch of chaos and joy.

I am looking forward to assisting you in creating beautiful memories for your special occasion here at Rodef Shalom Congregation. Whether you're planning a reception, birthday party, bridal celebration, meeting, or lecture, our historic and versatile building is the perfect backdrop.

For inquiries on rental options and to discuss how we can help make your next *simcha* or event at our Congregation memorable, please reach out to me.



Jasmin Tamar Ost

April 6

Jasmin was born in Pittsburgh, PA. She attended Rodef Shalom for pre-school and has attended the Winchester Thurston School thereafter. Jasmin is active in Theater and Basketball. She was a "Bird Girl" in the recent school production of *Seussical the Musical*. During the summers, Jasmin attends Camp Walden in Cheboygan, MI. For her Bat Mitzvah Project she raised money for Girls Up by holding a bake sale. She is also working with local food bank. She is the fourth Ost child to become a B'Mitzvah at Rodef Shalom Congregation.



Hannah Elizabeth Goetz

April 13

Hannah Goetz is a seventh grade student at Marshall Middle School in North Allegheny. She plays volleyball for her school and club teams and enjoys playing her flute in both the jazz and school bands. In her free time, Hannah enjoys traveling with her family and attending Emma Kaufmann camp. Hannah is the daughter of Jill and Adam Goetz, the sister of Ethan, Brandon and Addison Goetz and is the granddaughter of Linda and Jeffrey Raden and Janice and David Goetz. For her Bat Mitzvah project, Hannah is organizing a book drive through her school to donate to a local children's organization. She loves reading and believes all children should have the chance to share in the joy of reading a good book.



Sarah Beth Paulina Winikoff

April 27

Sarah is a literary artist at Pittsburgh CAPA. She enjoys reading, writing, drawing, painting, and ice-skating. Sarah Beth is the sister of Corin and Rosie and the granddaughter of Barbara and Arnold Winikoff and Lane and Caroline Liston.



Mary Anne Light "Maryn" Lang

May 4

Mary Anne Light Lang, known by all as Maryn, is the daughter of Mollie and Tom Lang and the granddaughter of Mary Anne and Hoddy Hanna of Pittsburgh and Aimee Lang of Deerfield, Illinois and Richard Lang of Chicago. Maryn is a seventh grader at Shady Side Academy where she participates in the musicals, chorus, jazz band, and plays goalie on her lacrosse team. Inspired by the Remember, Renew, Rebuild campaign to support Tree of Life, Maryn has created and placed donation jars throughout the community to raise money and awareness.

Focusing on Climate Change

Opportunities in our Biblical Botanical Garden



This year, the Community Outreach and Social Action (COSA) Committee plans to engage and re-engage with congregants of all ages through its commitment to addressing climate change and resilience.

COSA Committee members are exploring ways to continue and expand on environment-focused programming, activities, and efforts including additional Reverse Tashlich activities, such as the Frick Park clean-up over the High Holidays, and increasing our Congregation's recycling efforts.

During the Spring, COSA's focus on climate change and resilience is coming to our backyard with garden-related talks and activities. On Sunday, March 10th, Biblical Botanical Garden Director Dasya Petranova will present a talk on readying the environment for a grow space, planning the season, and repurposing items for gardening.

On Sunday, April 14th, Dasya will be running a hands-on training module on planting vegetables with special emphasis on understanding the impact of climate change on cultivated plant life. These sessions will be useful to those planning their own gardens this year. In addition, she has identified an area adjacent to the Biblical Garden that would be a good spot for a vegetable garden. COSA is assisting Dasya in this project to recruit and train volunteers, and ultimately donate the vegetables to local food banks in fresh food deserts.

Stay tuned for more details about these and additional events and volunteer opportunities in our congregational emails and *HaKeshet*.

Finally, continuing COSA's commitment to supporting the community through drives, watch for details in the Spring to support the Western Pennsylvania Diaper Bank.

Sign up for a talk or activity. Contact us with questions or to volunteer at COSA@rodefshalom.org.

Thank you,
Your COSA Co-Chairs
Karen Brean and Rebecca Gildengers

**Here in
Pittsburgh,
we roll out the
welcome mat.**

In the last issue of *HaKeshet*, the COSA Committee reported that it held its first successful **Welcome Home Team Refugee Resettlement Project** in October, setting up a home for a refugee family new to Pittsburgh. The program, in collaboration with the Jewish Family and Community Services of Pittsburgh, is pleased to announce that it will be undertaking more Welcome Home projects this Spring and looking for volunteers.

If you are interested in joining a team to help set up a new home for a refugee family, please contact one of the project organizers – Salem Leaman, Peter Rosenfeld, or Bob Rosenthal, at COSA@rodefshalom.org.



Attend a program, **volunteer** to brighten someone's day with soup or flowers, or **nominate yourself to help lead** as we plan future programs and activities.

This Spring, Women of Rodef Shalom will be hosting a variety of programs, including:

- An exercise class focusing on balance, endurance, flexibility, and fall prevention
- Our inclusive Seder
- Our WRS/Brotherhood Shabbat Service

These individual programs are in addition to the previous and on-going WRS programs such as the sewing and knitting group, bridge, book reviews, and delivery of "soup from the heart" to those who need a little TLC.

WRS supports Congregational activities and programs in many ways for a range of ages. Just about anywhere you turn, WRS has provided some support: Preschool, J-JEP, and Youth Group. Bimah flowers and food for the Oneg, Kiddush, and Break-the-Fast. Camp Scholarships. Gift Corner. Purim Carnival and Congregational Picnic. The list goes on.

Our involvement doesn't stop at our doorstep. WRS is part of the global network of Women of Reform Judaism (WRJ), where we all work together to empower women and communities.

Each Spring, WRS elects a new slate of leaders. Our leaders work together to think through ways to support our each other, our Congregants, and our community, with programs and funds. **Think about joining us and helping guide our work. If you're interested in being nominated for a position on the WRS Board, please contact Karen Brean, Nominating Committee Chair, at kmbrean@gmail.com or by phone at 412.977.0271.**

BROTHERHOOD

Tim Litman, Brotherhood President

litpak@aol.com

As I mark my fifth year as president of Brotherhood, I am proud to reflect on our contributions to both our Congregation and the community. Looking forward, we are eager to continue this work and make an even greater impact. Here are some of the projects we have planned:

- **Sponsoring** the East Wind Symphony Band concert for the 42nd year in a row, of which all donations go to the JFCS Squirrel Food Pantry. Last year, we were able to donate nearly \$2,000!
- **Collecting** day-old baked goods and produce from Shadyside's Market District and delivering them to the East End Cooperative Ministry three times a week to create meals for those in need, part of a tradition we have continued for over 50 years.
- **Coordinating** our Congregation's Yahrzeit reminder program that helps fund our critical projects.
- **Honoring** Executive Director Barb Feige's service to the congregation upon her retirement this spring.
- **Hosting** a variety of speakers on current topics through our Herzog Breakfasts.
- **Cooking and serving** at our Purim Carnival and other congregational events.
- Our members look forward to **meeting with Temple Sinai's Brotherhood** to discuss future programming collaborations.

Our Brotherhood values friendship and camaraderie through helping our Congregation and community. We hope you will consider joining us in these projects. Membership is \$36 per year, and you can send checks to our attention at Rodef Shalom Congregation. For any inquiries, feel free to contact me via email at litpak@aol.com or phone at 412-390-8373. We look forward to welcoming you as part of our group of friends.

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November 1, 2023 through January 31, 2024

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**Z"l, of blessed memory*

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Sunday evening, June 23, 2024

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Eradicate Hate Global Summit Founders

*Learn how you can be on our Tribute Committee
by emailing roth@rodefshalom.org.*

RodefShalom.org/Peace

SEEK PEACE AND PURSUE IT

רודף שלום