

Adar-Sivan 5783 | March-May 2023

Issue No. 114

HAKESHER

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THE CONNECTION

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



**RODEF SHALOM
CONGREGATION**



**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 designated as 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.

Staff Phone Extensions

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Barb Feige.....	X 119
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A PROUD MEMBER OF THE URJ



Our mission: The mission of Rodef Shalom Congregation is to build and sustain a vibrant Reform Jewish community. We guide and support our members in living full Jewish lives throughout the life cycle, based on Torah (study), avodah (worship), and gemilut hasadim (acts of loving kindness). We strive to be a national and international leader in Jewish thought and practice.



Bill Battistone
President of the Board of Trustees
battistone@rodefshalom.org

Dear Fellow Congregants -

The first Seder I ever attended was at my wife's grandmother's house in Des Moines, Iowa. As we moved through the Haggadah, I remember filling myself with matzah, charoset, and maror. I thought that the seder plate was the dinner, so imagine my surprise when the Seder portion ended and my wife's grandmother brought out a feast of brisket, vegetables, kugel, and matzo ball soup!

What resonated with me then about the Passover holiday, and continues to do so today, is the simultaneous blend of individuality and community during the seder. Despite having a pretty straightforward playbook, no two seders are the exact same. Each of us has our own preferences, experiences, and memories of celebrating a Passover seder meal. Perhaps we use more English than others, or maybe we tell the stories slightly differently than someone else. Or, maybe we really emphasize the parts that involve wine!

And while we do these things individually, we are reminded that the celebration of Passover is meant to be a celebration of our community as well. The traditions that are passed along from generation to generation, while unique in some ways, still bond all of us together as a Jewish community. We are reminded that while we all bring a certain uniqueness to the Passover table, we are one piece of a large, powerful puzzle - the Congregation of Rodef Shalom.

I hope you and your family find peace and comfort during this time of celebration, and may we always remember not to fill up on matzah before the dinner starts!

L'Shalom,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bill Battistone".

Bill Battistone
 President, Board of Trustees

Save the Date



Ruth and Bernard Levaur Contemporary Lecture

Sunday, April 23
Levy Hall · 7:30 p.m.
Reception to Follow

***Understanding Gen Z:
 How will the next generation
 shape our Jewish world?***

Rabbi Debbie Pine
 Campus Support Director
 Hillel International



CANTOR SEARCH COMMITTEE PROGRESS REPORT

Eric Schaffer, Chair, Cantor Search Committee
Karen Brean, Co-chair, Cantor Search Committee
cantorsearchcommittee@rodefshalom.org

As this issue of HaKeshet goes to press, the Congregation has entered into negotiations with Cantor Tobias (Toby) Glaser to join us as the Congregation's first ordained cantor. In the last issue our article reviewed the role of the ordained cantor. In this article, we want to tell you more about Cantor Glaser.

Cantor Toby Glaser grew up in Melbourne, Australia. He studied at the University of Melbourne, majoring in German and Music History with a Diploma of Modern Languages in French. After working as a cantorial soloist at several Reform synagogues in Australia, he pursued his passion for Jewish music at Hebrew Union College first in Jerusalem in 2015, and then in New York, graduating in 2020.

Cantor Glaser sang as a student cantor at Greenwich Reform Synagogue in Connecticut as well as East End Temple in New York, before working as Cantorial Intern at Congregation Rodeph Shalom in Manhattan for three years. He has also taught at Central Synagogue, Temple Shaaray Tefila and the Jewish Community Project Downtown. On graduation, he began his career at Congregation Sherith Israel in San Francisco, California, where he continues to serve.



Cantor Glaser has always had a passion for classical music and has studied with leading voice teachers both in Australia and Germany. He has performed with many of Australia's leading opera companies including Victorian Opera, Melbourne Lyric Opera, Melbourne Chorale, and numerous choirs and vocal ensembles. In his worship services, Cantor Glaser loves infusing traditional and well-loved melodies with contemporary flare, leading the community in a variety of musical styles

with percussion instruments and guitar. His style is always eclectic, but draws heavily on traditional prayer modes and Jewish chant with an emphasis on improvisation and innovation.

Reaching this important juncture took a lot of work! In September of 2022, President Bill Battistone appointed a Search Committee, co-chaired by Eric Schaffer and Karen Brean, with members Karl Herrup, Killian Spitz-Cohan, Nancy Rosenthal, Laura Swiss, Marcie Weinstein, and Sarah Wertheimer. The Committee was fortunate to have Kate Kim appointed as their administrative coordinator.

Over the next two months, the Committee reviewed search process alternatives and recommended that the Congregation work with the placement office of the American Conference of Cantors. The Committee completed, and the Congregation submitted, a formal application to the ACC, after which the Committee received resumes and vision statements from a number of qualified cantors. After evaluation of each cantor's resume and vision statement, the Committee selected three candidates for virtual interviews. Each of the three was invited to share music files, sermons, and other materials. The Committee studied these materials, reviewed online services conducted by the candidates, and recommended that the Congregation invite Cantor Glaser to an in-person interview in Pittsburgh.

On January 16-18, 2023, Cantor Glaser met in Pittsburgh with the Committee, the officers of the Congregation, Rabbis Henry, Locketz, Freedman, and Jacob, past presidents, and key staff members. Across the board, those who met with Cantor Glaser were impressed with his creativity, passion, thoughtfulness, and commitment to the full range of work of an ordained cantor.

Cantor Glaser toured the city and was particularly interested in the vibrancy of Pittsburgh's Jewish community. At the conclusion of his visit, Cantor Glaser presented a concert to the Search Committee, the Board of Trustees, Rodeph Shira, and selected staff. The Sanctuary was filled with smiles, singing, and more than a little rhythmic clapping. Committee members received many encouraging comments. Members of Rodeph Shira who attended the concert were extremely impressed and excited about Cantor Glaser's abilities and his genuine interest in leading volunteer choirs.

At the conclusion of Cantor Glaser's visit, after reviewing the feedback and completing due diligence, the Search Committee recommended that the Congregation invite him to serve as our first ordained cantor. President Battistone, Rabbi Henry, and officers of the Congregation concurred. This is a wonderful step forward, and we will have more to share in the weeks ahead.



WORSHIP



Finding the Legs of Your Jewish Identity

Rabbi Sharyn Henry

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In January I had the privilege of accompanying a cohort of 19 couples on their Honeymoon Israel trip. The trip provides lots of touring, exploring, tasting, and adventure, along with opportunities to engage seriously in topics couples will encounter in their relationships. A major focus is an exploration of the role of Jewish practice and community in their lives, and a long-term goal of the program is the forging of an inclusive community of couples who live in the same city. I would say that our trip met all of its stated goals, and it's fun to watch from the sidelines as the participants plan all different types of get-togethers. They are also talking about serious subjects – conversion, ritual, spirituality, affiliation, and raising children.

Towards the end of our visit, the group was treated to a talk by Avraham Infeld, author and influential Jewish thinker and educator. Infeld described "The 5 Legged Table" as his metaphor for the components of a strong and stable Jewish identity. According to Infeld, there are five components, or "legs" that combine to make up a person's Jewish identity: memory, family, covenant, Israel and Hebrew.

Choosing at least three of the components of Jewish identity, or "legs" provides a stable platform for living a Jewish life and contributing to the world. He believes that when we identify with/engage in fewer than three, our "table" or platform of Jewish identity will topple over; more than three makes it more sturdy. He points out that by choosing three, every Jew shares at least something with every other Jew, regardless of lifestyle, culture, or customs.



After the lecture, we asked participants to choose which of the five legs they most easily identified with.

The entire group of 38 split into only two categories – *memory* and *family*. Then, we asked them to choose which was the most confusing or foreign, and *covenant* was the winner by far. It's interesting (but not surprising) that the leg which includes prayer, mitzvot, ethics, and rituals, is the most challenging to these young Jews and their partners. Although this exercise has virtually no scientific weight, it echoes what scholars and demographers have been telling us for years, and I think it challenges us, as a congregation (focused so much on prayer, mitzvot, ethics, and rituals) to think about our role in the lives of this generation.

In the meantime, which "legs" make up the foundation for your Jewish identity?



Learning through Playing with Blocks

Mimsie Leyton, Sidney & Shirley C. Rapport Family Center Director

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For the 26 years that I have been the Family Center director, I have been an unwavering proponent of play-based preschool curriculum. This philosophy is based on the idea that young children learn best through hands-on experiential activities rather than through more traditional methods such as frontal teaching or worksheets.



Blocks are one of the most essential materials for early learners. Increasingly, (and exacerbated by the pandemic), young children are sitting in front of two-dimensional screens instead of having playful, hands-on, sensory experiences with three dimensional objects. For years, many child development experts have documented the value of blocks for children's learning offering evidence that when children are given time to plan, construct, and create with blocks, they benefit across all the developmental domains.

Block play is open-ended. There are no set rules; the children are in control of their ideas. They can use their imaginations to follow their own plan, or cooperate with a friend to share a vision and create something together. It requires fine and gross motor skills and enhances children's problem-solving abilities.

Blocks also offer countless opportunities to practice and strengthen math concepts and skills including size, shape, length, measurement, comparison, number estimation, symmetry and balance. And what better way to build self-esteem than to discover that their ideas can be brought to life by creating something unique? You may be surprised to learn that universities use blocks to help teach architecture, and Legos are often used to teach robotics and engineering!

Another really important aspect of block play is that it offers adults a look into the emotional life of the child. For months following the horrific Tree of Life shootings, our pre-k class spent hours building large solid block structures in which they could fit inside. While most of the children had been shielded from the specifics of the tragedy, tension among their caregivers was palpable, and it was obvious that safety and security was on the entire community's agenda. Block play offered a non-threatening and concrete way for the children to gain a sense of control and master strong feelings of fear and uncertainty.

Playing with blocks provides a wide-ranging and versatile learning experience for young children. Think about purchasing a roll of packing tape and seal up your Amazon boxes to create a set of blocks for your home. If you're feeling especially ambitious, make it a family project to decorate them with paint, markers and/or stickers. Add some props such as small vehicles and miniature life figures. I guarantee lots of fun and learning!



Rodef Shalom
FAMILY CENTER
AND PRESCHOOL

**Play and Learn
With Us!**



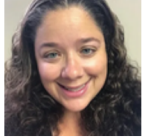
Now Enrolling for 2023-2024

**Our part-day program for
18 months through Pre-K
is nurturing and play-based.**

**Contact Mimsie Leyton
to find out more.**

**Everyone is welcome.
Come join our family!**





Purim and Passover and Shavuot...Oh My!

Yael Eads, Youth Director and B'Mitzvah Coordinator

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For some, the idea of the holidays – any holidays – can be really stressful! When we think of the “holiday season” we often think of Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, and Simchat Torah OR the overall winter holiday season. And while I can appreciate the stress involved in any of these, I can more appreciate the joy that comes with them. This is also true for our upcoming holidays of Purim, Passover, and Shavuot. I often think that spending the holidays with children helps me see the joy in them a bit more than others may be able to. Let me explain:

How can I be stressed about hosting a Purim Carnival for our community when I spend so much time running around, playing games, eating treats, and laughing with our youngest congregants? How can I be stressed about preparing for Passover when the first Seder I get to go to each year is full of only sweet things made with chocolate? (Well, with the exception of that “bitter herb” chocolate.) How can I be stressed about staying up all night studying Torah on Shavuot when I know there is a Shavuot Cupcake Wars coming up and I’m about to see some really talented little cake decorators get to work?

I love finding joy in what I do, the happiness in my Judaism, and the joy in what our kids do. Watching everyone talk and smile and laugh and enjoy time with one another, all while also celebrating the holidays is one of the greatest joys that comes from working with kids. So this year, when our next trio of holidays is on the horizon, don’t stress and think, “Oh My!” Instead, find the joy and I can guarantee the stress will start to slip away.

Upcoming Youth Events

- March 10** **Family Shabbat**
- March 17-19** **NFTY Sprinter At URJ Camp Harlam**
- March 26** **Empty Bowls Bake Sale**
- April 2** **Chocolate Seder**
- April 14** **Family Shabbat**
- April 23** **Yom Ha'atzmaut with PJ Our Way**





The Key to a More Meaningful Seder? Ask the Children.

Rabbi Larry Freedman, Director of the Joint Jewish Education Program

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A key step to a meaningful seder is to get a good haggadah. If you stick with whatever you have, but people complain, well, it might be time to invest in something more up-to-date.

As you think about picking a haggadah, remember – you are in control. Get some post-its and mark what you will and will not be reading this year as you make your way through all 15 steps.

Mishkan HaSeder

The latest from the Reform movement, it is "narrative" style, meaning it has parts for a Leader and for the Group. but it also has plenty of alternative readings and footnotes to stir questions and conversations.

A Different Night

Now a modern classic, this intentionally overstuffed Haggadah is incredibly engaging with traditional and modern takes. It requires the leader to choose in advance what to include and what not to include. You might never have the same experience twice!

A Pesach seder isn't just for children, but children are the most important part of the seder.

I'm reading a book by Mark Gerson called *The Telling*. It's a series of short essays that came out of conversations he has had about the Haggadah. (Haggadah means, "the telling.") He looks at Exodus 12:14 which is about the tenth plague just before the Hebrews are freed. God tells the Hebrews, "You shall celebrate this day as eternal decree through the generations."

Gerson wonders just how they would accomplish this command, to celebrate as an eternal decree. He offers a variety of ideas, monuments and so forth, but none can be guaranteed to be eternal. And then in Exodus 12:26, Moses offers, "And when your children ask you, 'What does the ceremony mean to you?' Then tell them."

Not if, but **when** they ask. Have a seder, engage the rituals and customs, and children will ask. They will be curious. And if they are content to wonder but not vocalize, then you can prompt them. What do you think of this? Do you know why we do that? What are your thoughts about all this? A proper seder is one where people ask questions and engage each other. A proper seder is one where time is allowed for conversation and debate and discussion. A proper seder involves the children, and since there are always new children, it will be eternal!

When my children were little, our seders were little. We did all 15 steps – It's not that hard to do and the children enjoy the physicality of so many of those steps. As my children got older, our seders became longer because my boys were able to contribute to the conversation (and able to stay awake longer). The different tastes, the dipping, the songs, the questions, the wine or juice, the excitement of family and friends – the whole thing is fun for adults, but made for children so that we can teach them the lessons we learned from our time in slavery.

And what are those lessons?

Well, ask your children, of course.



Spring Reads

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It may still be winter, but our next group of holidays will soon spring forth on us. From Passover seders, to Purim carnivals, to celebrating the birthday of the Torah, may we all find joy and happiness in the springtime holidays. The following are four books available in the Lippman Library to explore, two each for children and adults.

Passage to Pesach: Preparing for Passover Through Text and Tradition

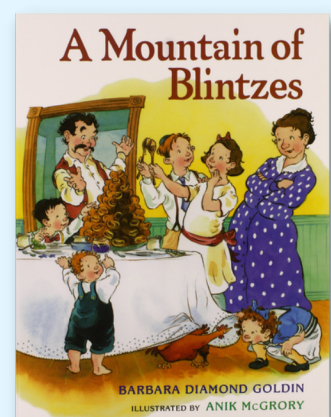
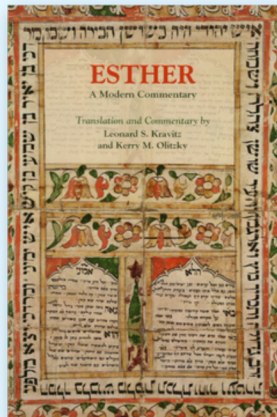
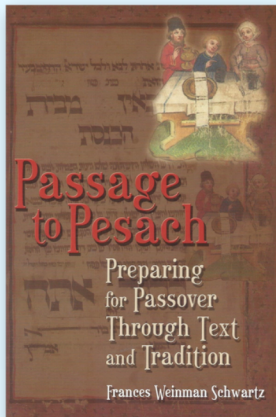
by Frances Weinman Schwartz

For adults, this book attempts to explain and make sense of our Passover practices and traditions, and why we do them. Divided into three parts, Part 1 serves as a brief introduction while Part 2 dives into the five Shabbatot (or series of special Sabbaths that lead up to Passover) and how they pertain to the holiday. The final part discusses the significance of the Seder itself and associates and connects the traditional cups of wine with various Seder customs.

Esther: A Modern Commentary, Translation and Commentary

by Leonard S. Kravitz and Kerry M. Olitzky

For adults, this commentary discusses the Megillah of Esther and is divided into ten chapters, one devoted to each of the chapters of the Megillah. Each chapter is divided into two sections. The first discusses and analyzes specific passages in the Megillah, while the second section goes over general historical musings and questions related to Purim.



The Better-Than-Best Purim

by Naomi Howland

For young children, this hysterical book tells the story of a woman baking hamantaschen for Purim by herself after her pets ignored her requests to help assist in the baking. But the reason for her pets' choosing to not help in making hamantaschen is because they are instead busy decorating the living room for a Purim party, much to her delight when she finds out!

A Mountain of Blintzes

by Barbara Diamond Goldin | Illustrated by Anik McGrory

For later preschool and early grade school aged children, this tells the story of a family, too low on money to be able to make enough blintzes, coming up with creative ways to ensure that they will be able to enjoy this most essential and delicious of Shavuot treats. Loosely on a traditional story from Chelm, the book includes a blintz recipe for family enjoyment.

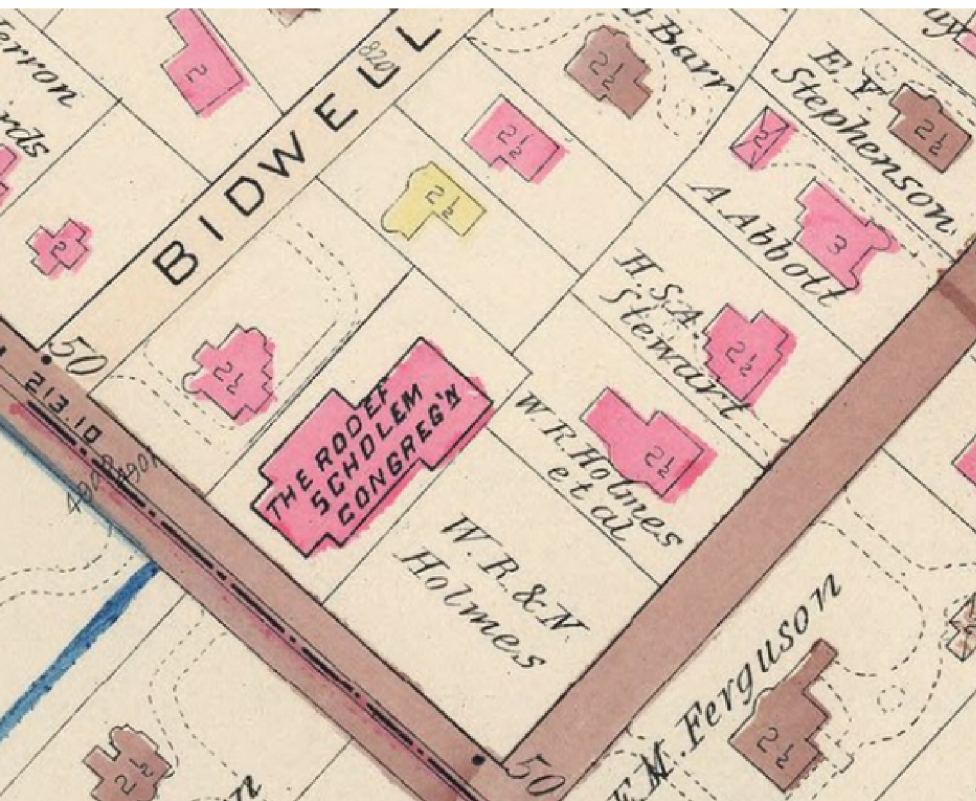


The Lay of the Land

Martha L. Berg, Archivist

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When I started working at Rodef Shalom, a few people told me that, in the early 20th century, antisemitism was so prevalent in the East End of Pittsburgh that, in order to purchase the lot the sanctuary building stands on, the Congregation had to put up a proxy Gentile buyer as a middleman.



1910 Atlas of Greater Pittsburgh
Image courtesy of historicpittsburgh.org

Recently, I undertook a land history study for 4905 Fifth Avenue, which gave me a chance to test this story against real-estate facts, and the story proved to be a myth. While I am sure that there was discrimination against members of Rodef Shalom, antisemitism had nothing to do with the lot sale that brought the congregation to our current location. On April 22, 1905, the middle lot in the block of Fifth Avenue between Morewood Avenue and Bidwell (later changed to Devonshire) Street was transferred to Abraham Lippman, as Trustee for Rodef Sholem (as it was then spelled) by the executors of the estate of Bernard Rafferty for the sum of \$60,000, which would be more than two million in today's dollars.

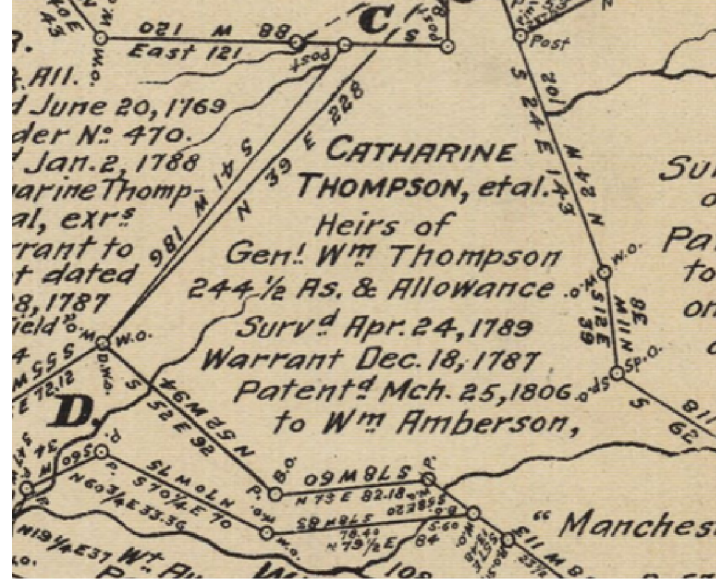
Going backwards in time from Rodef Shalom's purchase, the ownership of the lot reflects the development of the

Shadyside neighborhood during the 19th century. Bernard Rafferty was an Irish-born Roman Catholic who had started his Pittsburgh life as a drayman—a cart driver—and ended as the owner of a prosperous feed business. Rafferty bought the lot in 1884 in two parts, one a small sliver from Josephine E. and Edmund Morewood Ferguson, who gave the name to Morewood Avenue. Ferguson and his brother were partners with Henry Clay Frick in his original coke operation. Rafferty acquired the bulk of the lot from Samuel and Amanda Keys. According to his 1895 obituary, Samuel Keys "was for 40 years in the shoe business, but was perhaps better known as a turfman" who bred and raced horses.

Joseph Graham, a contractor who also has a street named after him, bought the land in 1846. Other owners included a butcher, a land developer who had served in the American Revolution, a manufacturer and retailer of copper and tinware, and several others going back to William Amberson's 1806 purchase. Another owner with a street named after him, Amberson was born aboard a ship coming from Ireland to the US. He was a trader with Native Americans in Western Pennsylvania, was an officer in the Revolution, served as the first treasurer of Allegheny County and a judge in Mercer County, and was, most significantly to our story, a part-owner of the short-lived iron blast furnace that began to change Shadyside from farmland to an urbanizing neighborhood of Pittsburgh.

Amberson bought his 244-acre tract from Catharine Thompson, the widow of a Revolutionary War Brigadier General. She acquired it by warrant from the State of Pennsylvania in 1787. Before that, ownership goes back to the land granted to William Penn by England's King Charles II. Originally, the space Rodef Shalom now occupies was a small part of the ancestral lands of the Haudenosaunee, Lenape, Osage, and Shawnee peoples, among others.

For a more detailed land history account, please visit rodefshalom.org.



Warrantee Atlas of Allegheny County
Image courtesy of historicpittsburgh.org

Mark Your Calendars

Stay tuned to our weekly emails for more information!

March 27 - May 7

The Healing Garden

An exhibit of drawings by members of the Allegheny Highlands Botanical Art Society

April 3

Music at Rodef Shalom

Arias and Duets from the World of Grand Opera

April 5

Congregational Seder

We invite you to come to our table this Passover.

May 1

Music at Rodef Shalom

Quartets for Piano and Strings

May 12

Congregational Picnic

Everyone is invited! Our lawn will be packed with activities for the whole family.

June 11

Celebrating Mimsie!

A family-friendly celebration for our retiring Family Center Director





Nate Whitlatch

March 11

Nate is in 7th grade at Winchester Thurston School. He loves playing basketball and soccer among many other sports and loves spending times with friends upstreet. Emma Kaufmann Camp is where Nate calls home in the summers. Nate chose to support No Kid Hungry for his Bar Mitzvah project as the mission of this organization means a lot to him. In his spare time, Nate enjoys skiing, playing golf, and spending time with his younger siblings George, 8, Jonah, 8, Joshua, 6, and Jillian, 1.



Zachary C. Farber

March 18

Zac is a 7th grader at Dorseyville Middle School. He enjoys spending time with his siblings, Max, Jake and Samantha, especially skiing with them. He also plays golf, football, lacrosse and wrestling. He is a loving grandson to Zelda Curtiss and Nancy and Shelley Farber. When not busy with school and sports, he has a passion for exotic cars.



Aaron Kahn

April 15

Aaron is a seventh grader at Winchester Thurston School. He enjoys soccer, lacrosse, and skiing, and is a member at the Friendship Circle. For his bar mitzvah project he is raising money for local organizations that combat food insecurity, including 412 Food Rescue and the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank.



Summer Isabella Franco

May 20

Summer Franco is a 7th grader at Community Day School in Squirrel Hill. She also attends Pittsburgh Ballet Theater School, where she specializes in ballet and jazz. She has performed in the Nutcracker at the Benedum since 2nd grade and has played such roles as a toy soldier, a mouse, a child in the party scene, and a sheep. Inspired by her Torah portion on the census and her interest in equality and social justice, she developed a 10 video series counting down to Election Day filled with voter information. The videos were designed to encourage voter turnout and were posted on

her parents' Facebook and Instagram accounts receiving over 800 views in the week leading up to the 2022 election. Summer is considering careers in teaching and journalism.

Welcome to our New Members

Lissa Guttman
Robin Hitchcock and Collin Diedrich
Aimee and Heath Leff
Rebecca Wells and Dylan Powell
Dorothy Yam

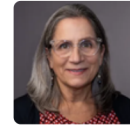
Loss of connection and social isolation has affected more people than ever before during the pandemic. We recognize that some of our members, especially new ones, have had a different membership experience than expected and are desiring a stronger connection to others within our Rodef Shalom community.

If you would enjoy meeting new members and welcoming them into the fold of our congregation, please get in touch with Kristin Karsh, our Director of Membership, to be matched with a new member household.

Welcome to our World

Micah Isaac and Natalie Kate Samson
Born December 5, 2022
Children of Betsy and Ben Samson
Grandchildren of Mimsie Leyton

Adalai Ana Rotberg
Born January 18, 2023
Daughter of Claudia and Braden Rotberg



Kristin Karsh

Director of Membership and Human Resources
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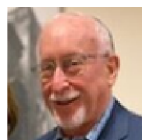
Meet our New Members:

Robin Hitchcock and Collin Diedrich

Robin is the Academy Director at the nonprofit Arcade Comedy Theater downtown (arcadecomedytheater.com). Collin is an infectious disease scientist (immunologist) at Pitt and founded and is President of the nonprofit Learning Disabilities Association of Pennsylvania (ldaofpa.org). Collin's nonprofit helps students and adults with learning disabilities and ADHD find success. Robin and Collin's nonprofits offer a collaborative program using improv comedy to teach life skills that can especially help students with learning disabilities improve communication and enjoy creative expression. They are guided by the deep desire to help people when they can and absolutely loved a recent service by Rabbi Sharyn Henry where she focused on people living by an "I got you" mentality.



Robin and Collin have been married for 11 years and celebrated their first three anniversaries living in Cape Town, South Africa. Collin grew up in a Reform household, and Robin in a secular family. After Collin's Binai Mitvah with his twin sister, he didn't have a desire to go back to any synagogue until last year, more than 25 years later. Robin is enjoying learning more about living a Jewish life and wants to continue studying. Collin and Robin love going to services at Rodef, but sometimes their busy schedules make that difficult, so they're hugely appreciative of the option to watch services online. They like to share their Shabbat celebration with their cats Gigoo and Sprink. It's been rewarding and exciting for them to become part of this community, and they hope to slowly become more involved and meet more members. Collin and Robin got you.



Responding to Antisemitism

Salem Leaman, COSA Committee Co-Chair

Since its inception in 2019, the Community Outreach and Social Action Committee (COSA) of Rodef Shalom has had two objectives. One is to organize the clothing, food, and toy drives to which many of you have so graciously donated. The other, of equal importance, is the goal of providing our membership with programming designed to inform us and help us deal with the fast-growing racism that is all around us. Indeed, in this era of rapidly increasing antisemitism, this component of our mission has become a critical imperative.

As you read this issue of *HaKeshet*, COSA will have just completed its first post-pandemic programs concerning a meaningful and logical response to antisemitism.

The first part of this two-part series was made up of Rabbis Henry and Locketz leading a discussion of Deborah Lipstadt's well-informed book *Antisemitism: Here and Now*.

This was followed by a speakers who further delved into the pervasive, dangerous, and very complex dilemma that is antisemitism. It was presented through Rodef Shalom Brotherhood's Herzog Breakfast, co-sponsored by Women of Rodef Shalom and COSA. This is a format which COSA hopes to use again as a vehicle to promote further programming that addresses, in addition to antisemitism, other forms of the racism that threaten our democratic principles.

Upcoming Food Drive for



EAST END COOPERATIVE MINISTRY

EECM's Community Food Services offers food assistance and meals to those in our community who are experiencing food insecurity.

**We are collecting donations of
non-perishable food items:**

March 6-18
in the Commons Area

Sunday, March 19
10am - 2pm
in the Porte-Cochere

Thank you in advance for your gracious
and much-needed donations!

BROTHERHOOD

Tim Litman, Brotherhood President

brotherhood@rodefshalom.org

Greetings to the members and friends of Rodef Shalom Congregation's Brotherhood! We are grateful for the many active and honorary members who pay dues to support our mission and many causes. Together we are continuing to support our Congregation in inspiring Jewish religious activities, providing cultural and educational opportunities, and fostering a spirit of camaraderie through social events.

Throughout the fall and winter, our long-running sponsored events, including the Herzog Breakfast and East Winds Symphonic Band Concert, have seen a lot of success. We are looking forward to engaging the Congregation in more programs like these in the coming months.

Our members come from all walks of life and have varied interests, and we are always looking for new faces to join us and become part of our community. Contact me at litpak@aol.com with any questions or to find out how to get involved. Our dues are just \$36 per year and support not only dynamic programs like those mentioned above, but also contribute to events including this year's Purim Carnival, and capital projects such as the current refurbishing of the stained glass windows in the Main Sanctuary. Together we can make a difference.

Terry J. Starrett, President of Women of Rodef Shalom

sisterhood@rodefshalom.org

The Women of Rodef Shalom (WRS) continues to be active in many areas. This season we have:

- Delivered Hanukkah gift bags to congregants who are homebound or in care facilities
- Assisted with the Herzog Breakfast
- Participating in and supporting Community Outreach and Social Action activities

The next few months we will be involved with:

- Passover Bags
- Purim Carnival
- Book Reviews
- Planning for the Women of Reform Judaism Convention here in Pittsburgh



Thursday, March 30

3:00 PM-9:00 PM

Area Director Training **or** WRJ Spotlight
Maggie Feinstein, 10.27 Healing Partnership
Stars of Hope Mitzvah Project



Friday, March 31

8:30 AM-9:00 PM

Skills Workshops, including: Budgets/Fundraising, Membership/Programming,
Leadership, WRJ Advocacy, Life Changes
Keynote Speaker Pam Cowan, "Breaking the Glass Ceiling"
Torah Yoga
"The Value of WRJ" Shoshanna Dweck, WRJ VP of Advocacy
Shabbat services led by Nefesh Mountain



Saturday, April 1

8:30 AM-9:30 PM

Torah Study
Shabbat services led by Nefesh Mountain
Passover Bags Mitzvah Project
Installation and Havdallah
YES Fund Basket Raffle
Nefesh Mountain Concert



Sunday, April 2

8:00 AM-12:00 PM

Board Meeting/Training **or**
A Chat with Past WRJ President Lynn Magid Lazar
Woman of Valor Brunch

Mazel Tov!

Our very own
Jan Shaw
will be installed this
spring as the next
President of the WRJ
Atlantic District!

We are excited to
host the Atlantic
District Convention
in Pittsburgh
this spring.

The weekend
features educational
sessions, engaging
speakers, and
workshops, along
with special guest
musical group
Nefesh Mountain.

Reach out to
volunteer or attend!

Gardening Jewishly: Share the Bounty

Dasya Petranova, Director of Rodef Shalom Biblical Garden and Landscapes

biblicalgarden@rodefshalom.org · 412.621.6566 x143

It's that time of year. The catalogues have started arriving. You're getting that mental itch to acquire that new cultivar. Your hands are just a little too clean lately. It is time to plan the garden.

One part of gardening we often forget to plan for is our bounty. Last year we ate so much zucchini we couldn't look at one for a month! Your neighbor may have had a similar conundrum with their harvest. Luckily for us, we have *pe'ah* (corners), *leket* (gleanings), and *shichcha* (forgotten produce) to guide us in our gardening. In short, these agricultural terms show up in the Torah to designate what portions of our harvest we should set aside for others. While we may not be toiling in the fields as our ancestors did, we can still find ways to share our bounty with our community every step of the way.



You can purchase 100 grains of corn for \$4, but you aren't going to be able to grow 100 corn plants in your backyard! We often find that we have an abundance before we've even begun to plant, and in these instances, we can look toward our community. Talk to your friends and neighbors, find out what they are planting in their gardens, and order together.

Still have half a pack of seeds remaining? You could store these for next year, but their germination rate might be lower later. What to do? Add them to our seed library (created by congregant Nuala Cloonan pictured on the left) or to Grow Pittsburgh, providing access to those who have a need for seeds and will make sure they are used.

But back to our zucchini conundrum. No matter what we do, that surplus harvest hasn't been avoided, and we still have too much. Rabbi Moses Alshikh points out the use of singulars and plurals in the rule of *pe'ah* indicating the crop is not yours singular but yours plural. So after all that, it should be your aim to be plural in your harvest. The only solution? Sneak zucchini onto your neighbor's porch.



**RODEF SHALOM
BIBLICAL
BOTANICAL GARDEN**

2023 Special Exhibit: Miriam's Song

Opens Sunday, June 4

*Displaying the Agriculture, Horticulture,
and Archeology of the Ancient Near East*

Visit Us

Sundays–Thursdays 10:00 AM–2:00 PM
Monday until 5:00 PM



Over 115 Years Later...

Marlee Lyons, Director of Facilities and Sustainability
lyons@rodefshalom.org · 412.621.6566 x112

On January 18 I took a field trip to Pittsburgh Stained Glass Studio to visit "The Twelve Tribes." It is hard to believe that they are over 115 years old. The tour of the studio lasted about an hour and just about every team member there was working on a "piece" of our window at a different stage during the restoration process. The glass is being cleaned, repaired, painted, and reassembled, but more importantly, it will be equipped to handle at least another 115 years while still looking fresh.

A fun take away from my visit is that our stained glass is a bit unique. Most stained glass windows, even ones as old as ours, tend to be symmetrical in form and patterns throughout, but "The Twelve Tribes" deviates from this practice. Kirk Weaver, owner of Pittsburgh Stained Glass Studios, explained that the lack of uniformity in the stained glass gives it a blurred appearance improving the overall look of the window when it harnesses light. This adds to the breathtaking elicitation of emotions we feel when first walking in the Main Sanctuary.

Reinstallation is scheduled for May 2023.



Panel with the tribe of Benjamin being put back together piece-by-piece.



Partially restored tribe of Judah glass panel.



Restored panel of the tribe of Zebulun is a testament to the hard work, dedication, and hours of labor the team at Pittsburgh Stained Glass has put into this project.

The intricacy of the lead work around the ship and water took 20-hours.



Pittsburgh Stained Glass Studio found one small mistake in the Lehman window. Here is a blown-up image of where the mistake is located. Can you find it?

Hint: Purple
The answer is on page 19.



Passover – Do I Have To?

Barb Feige, The Murray Klein Executive Director

feige@rodefshalom.org · 412.621.6566 x119

I have a love/hate relationship with Passover. I do the whole thing – clean the tops of the door sills, scrub the kitchen, burn out the oven, bring up the numerous boxes from the basement, and switch out the everyday dishes with the Pesach ones. I have a terrific husband who does much of the schlepping and cleaning, but it's still a lot to do, and I have yet to really find the spirituality in schlepping. It just isn't fun holiday prep.

But then there is the seder. Although I am often tired from preparing a large meal for a tableful of guests and planning activities to keep the little kids engaged, I find a great deal of meaning in the ritual, the text, and the traditions. The four types of children resonate with me – I have been each of them at one time or another. I enjoy the analysis and discussion of the text. We have fun props for each of the ten plagues. (That last one, though... tough to have fun with that one.)

For me, Passover is a celebration of Freedom. Maybe it's because my parents were Holocaust survivors or because I've known victims of domestic violence and folks in recovery from drug and alcohol addictions. And maybe it's because the threats to freedom are ever-present.

Passover is our annual reminder of why we need to be engaged in the struggles for justice – racial justice, social justice, reproductive justice, economic justice. We must always strive for equity. *Tikkun olam*/repairing the world is our duty.

In January we emailed each of our members an invitation to log in and access their member account through our new member portal, **My Rodef Shalom**.

We encourage you to log in update your personal and family information, view our member directory, make payments, and more!

If you need assistance or did not receive an email with your personal login link and tutorial, please contact Kate Kim at kim@rodefshalom.org.

The name of our congregation is itself an instruction to do right, to be a "Pursuer of Peace." As the old protest chant goes "No Justice, No Peace," and conversely "Know Justice, Know Peace." We work to be an example of a kind and conscientious community; a place of acceptance and compassion; of accessibility and inclusivity; of respectfulness and appreciation.

We engage in this work whole-heartedly and congregation-wide: From our Community Outreach and Social Action Committee's food and clothing drives, to JJEP's weekly tzedakah collection, to partnering with community organizations to raise awareness on a host of issues. But to really do good, we need you. YOU are the *rodef shalom* that is tasked with pursuing peace, justice, and equity. It is a big job, no doubt. But I have faith that we can accomplish great things when we do them together.

So yes, I absolutely have to do Passover. And if I can help YOU – to do Passover or to pursue peace – just give me a call.

Chag Sameach Purim v'Pesach.

Wishing you a very happy Purim and Passover.





Your Legacy Strengthens our Congregation

Mayda Roth, CFRE, Director of Development
 roth@rodefshalom.org · 412.621.6566 x140

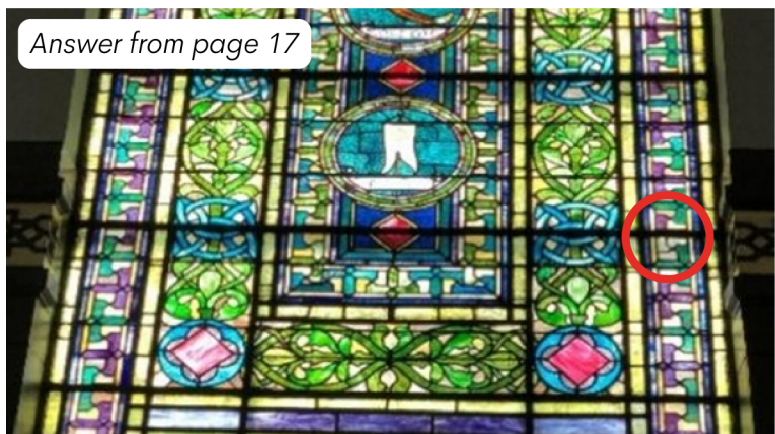
How is Rodef Shalom Congregation strong? Committed members, volunteers who generously give their time, a devoted Board of Trustees, caring and dedicated staff and clergy, and financial support equals a strong Congregation.

While fundraising depends on friendraising, it depends on time, talent and treasure. These terms are in scores of fundraising books and repeated over and over at fundraising lectures and conferences. Our volunteers give of their time and talent at our Congregation. Hundreds upon hundreds of members and non-members donate their treasure as well.

What makes a difference in sustaining Rodef Shalom are after-life gifts. We are one of 758 organizations nationally that participate in the Harold Grinspoon Foundation's Life & Legacy® program encouraging bequests. Because of Mr. Grinspoon's vision to create a culture of after-life giving, more than \$1.34 billion has been pledged to sustain the future of our federations, synagogues, camps, JCCs and a wide range of Jewish service organizations throughout the United States. Yes, that's over a *billion*!

Get ready to be amazed by the success already achieved by our Pittsburgh cohort with its nineteen members that began in 2018. Administered by our Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh, 684 donors have pledged more than \$35 million toward congregations, our day schools, and service organizations. That incredible amount of support has been accomplished in just five years.

Answer from page 17



Our Congregation is the beneficiary of estate gifts helping ensuring our sustainability. From gifts that we have received in the four-figure range up to the seven-figure range, every gift makes a difference. A sampling of comments from our donors include:

"My friends and I are part of a caring community at Temple."

"I want a future for Reform Judaism in Pittsburgh."

"Rodef Shalom Congregation is my spiritual home. I want my children and grandchildren to have it as their home."

Your gift can make a difference.

We are anchored in the phrase "Chazak, chazak, v'nitchazeik" recited at the conclusion of reading each of the five books of the Torah. It translates to, "Be strong, be strong, and we will strengthen one another." As we count on each other, we strengthen one another - now and in the future.

To learn how you can become a member of our Rodef Shalom Legacy Society, call me at 412.621.6566 140. I look forward to welcoming you.

Happy Pesach!

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October 23, 2022 through January 31, 2023

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Listings are in loving memory unless noted otherwise

October 23 to October 31

Loved ones by Helen E. Blumberger and family, **Edith Donnenberg** from Drs. Vera and Albert Donnenberg, **Gail, Arnold, and David Ryave** by Sharon Ryave Brody and Ben and Josh Brody, **Alex Edward Seed** by Sally and Lanny Seed, **Rebecca Weisberg Siegel** by Naomi Weisberg Siegel, **Lester R. Smith** by Hilary L. Smith

November

Dr. Falk and Marian Lambie Arnheim by Louise Arnheim; **Oscar Balter** by Marjorie Balter, **David Alan Binakonsky** by Jeannie and Dr. Harry Binakonsky* and Harriet and Leonard Weitzman*, **Richard Hohenstein** by Marian Hohenstein, **Edward J. Kelsky** by Judith K. Lebovitz and Family, **Karen Lynne Kotovsky** by Dorothy, Cher and Irwin* Kotovsky, **Phillip I. Lynch** by Beatrice L. Conn, **Barbara Rogal, Louise Feldman, and Robert Feldman** by Jay, Debbie, Jeanne, and Robbie Rogal

Rhea Fischer Ryan by Thomas C. Ryan, William H. Ryan, and Maizie Louise Ruben, **Gloria Spiegler** by Colleen and Oren Spiegler, **Robert Wolf** by Susie Wolf*

December

Joey Apter by Marcella Apter*, **Bernita Buncher** by Caryn Rubinoff, **Lillian Feinert Golden** by Audrey N. Golden, **Esther Wool Greenberg and Samuel Greenberg** by Anna R. Greenberg, **Irene Jacob** by Women of Rodef Shalom, **Clara Jean Cooper Kline** by Debra Demchak and the Kline Family, **Mrs. David J. Levenson** by Edgar L. Levenson*, **Anna R. Lynch** by Beatrice L. Conn, **Sam B. Morris** by Claire Morris*, children and grandchildren, **Lillyann G. Parker and Hyman Parker** by their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, **Stanley W. Rosenbaum and Robert Alan Rosenbaum** by Lois A. Rosenbaum*, **Florence M. Rosenberg** by Shirley Katz and Marjorie Silverman, **Norman H. Schlesinger** by Beatrice Schlesinger* and family, **Sara J. Singer** by Janie and Dr. Barry Kart and Lauren Kart, **Dr. Joseph R. Sugerman** by Jean P. Sugerman, **Jerry T. Silverman** by Marjorie, Stephen and Jane Silverman

Honoring

Ginny Shenkan and Margie Ungar by Paula Ohringer*

January

Phyllis B. Green by Patricia and Sanford Berman, **Bernice and Marvin Herzog** by Jeff Herzog and Lynn Gorman, **Vigdor W. Kavaler** by Mina*, Kelly and John David Kavaler, and Marti and Barry Fischer, **Bertha Louik** by Anna R. Greenberg, **Howard Rom** by Bette Rom, **Edgar Schaffel** by the Schaffel/Pace family, **Irma and Maurice Schoenberger** by Eleanor L. Schoenberger, **Alex Edward Seed** by Amy Schlesinger, **Dr. Raymond Stept** by his wife and children, **Murray C. Thaw** by Cecyl M. Thaw

**Z"l, of blessed memory*

Despite our best efforts, errors may occur.
Contact the Development Office should you have any
changes at 412.621.6566 x140.

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**RODEF SHALOM
CONGREGATION**

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**Sunday, March 5
10:00 AM - 12:00 PM
\$5 per child at the door**