Shir Chesed: Our Song of Lovingkindness

Shir Chesed (“Our Song of Lovingkindness”) is in its fourth year of service and the group boasts 65 members with nine caring teams. Services have expanded over the years from just assistance at times of bereavement to now offering help for those returning from the hospital, welcoming new babies and celebrating milestone birthdays.

The group’s activities also include knitting baby hats and prayer shawls for congregants, delivering honey and cards for Rosh Hashanah and bringing chicken soup to those dealing with bereavement, returning from the hospital, or celebrating a new baby. The group also delivers an occasional meal and sets up meal trains to provide a steady flow of dinners delivered to those in prolonged need.

Many members’ first experience with Shir Chesed was as a recipient of its outreach.

Team leader Judi Simmons believes that Shir Chesed is a big part of the makeup of the CSH community-at-large. “It is a group of people who exude kindness and selflessness,” she said, and she wanted to be among those who reach out to help others.

When her husband of 49 years, Stephen, passed away suddenly during Covid in 2021, her family could not sit shiva. Brenda and Shelly Cohen came to her door with chicken soup, goodies and comforting wishes. Shir Chesed members came to the online shiva and called her. Many months later, she received a beautiful hand written note which she cherishes still because “they remembered her and Steve and that was very supportive and meaningful,” she said.

“Knowing how I felt during that time makes me realize the value of Shir Chesed and makes me want to continue to do as much as I can for others in their time of need,” she said. She continues dropping off soup and sending notes to welcome new babies, “so for happy times as well!!!” she noted.

Sue Weiss is a team leader who also directs the Shir Chesed Kitchen volunteers who create the meals that are delivered to Shir Chesed recipients. “I believe everyone is here on this Earth to help each other. During difficult times of illness or loss, we need to let people know they are not alone,” she said. She has been helped and supported by the thoughtfulness and support of others, and she wants to show gratitude and appreciation in return.

Her biggest reward comes when she sees a smile on the face of the person who answers her knock on their door with a meal, or watches people at a shiva mingling and giving hugs of support to each other, or hears someone express their thanks for a phone call, “so easy and simple to make. But when I see someone who has been struggling move forward little by little and get back into life, that is the greatest reward of all,” she added.

“Shir Chesed is important because we live in a crazy upside-down world. It’s important because we are taught in our tradition to extend a helping hand, to support the community, to leave the world a little more gentle and kinder than we found it. People need people, and Shir Chesed provides that possibility,” she said.

Team leader Phyllis Karas became involved because she relished the idea of being part of a small group of congregants who might be able in some small way to help others in their time of need.

Continued on page 5

As of March 25, 2022:

• Masks are optional.
• At the door, proof of vaccination for anyone 12+ or show a negative test result produced within 72 hours of entry.
• For full policy please see website.

Calendar
APRIL 2022

FRIDAY, APRIL 1
6:00 pm Kabbalat Shabbat at CSH

SATURDAY, APRIL 2
Shabbat Synaplex
9:00 am Renewal: Traditional Shacharit led by Beni Summers
9:00 am CJE (grades K-6)
10:00 am Torah Service followed by Drash given by Beni Summers
Avodat T’shura: Jewish Frameworks For Expanded States; Torah Yoga with Stacie; No separate Nosh & Drash

SUNDAY, APRIL 3
11:00 am CSH and JCCNS present a Women’s Seder Pre-registration necessary. No walk-ins.

TUESDAY, APRIL 5
4:00 pm CJE (grades 2-7)
7:00 pm Compilce, online documentary about the SS St. Louis followed by Q&A and discussion. Register at shirathayam.org/tzedek-lakol-justice-for-all/ (see p. 5)

FRIDAY, APRIL 8
5:30 pm Holy Happy Hour Minyan with guest David Sparr. In-person. Light refreshments 5:30 pm followed by musical service 6 pm.
Rabbi’s Corner

The American Rabbinate

On February 22, 2022, Yehuda Kurtzer published a Facebook post (https://bit.ly/kurtz22) on “… the state of the liberal rabbinate [e.g. Conservative, Reform, Reconstructionist, etc.] here in America.” Kurtzer, 45, is President of the Shalom Hartman Institute of North America, a leading center of Jewish thought and education. His concerns focus primarily on rabbinic education (the seminaries), but also include the congregations, American Judaism and the jobs themselves. He posits that the dysfunction and decline in the liberal American rabbinate is “of existential concern for the vitality of American Judaism.”

His post sparked a robust online debate. In the comments people shared additional challenges facing rabbis, including: 1) the inability to pursue a vision; 2) obstacles to change and transformation, and 3) the negative impact on family life. Importantly, these are three areas where Shirat Hayam shines.

1) Pursuit of a Vision—Strategic Plan

In August, 2017, the first strategic plan of my tenure was launched. This expired in 2020. We’ve been working on a new plan, recently completed, and will publicize its details soon. In a nutshell, it unites the professional team and laity in rowing the Shirat Hayam boat forward together, making real congregational improvements and achieving measurable goals. Since it’s our vision, not merely my vision, accompanied by a plan, I feel supported and energized.

2) Overcoming Obstacles to Change—Ritual Flexibility

A defining characteristic of Shirat Hayam’s vision is, “We will deliver the most fulfilling spiritual experience …” This requires experimentation, input, and the ability to make changes to worship services quickly and easily. Shirat Hayam does not have layers of ritual bureaucracy. Instead, on an ad-hoc basis, we are able to include key stakeholders in discussions about key issues, resulting in a partnership for continuous improvement. At the same time, clergy feel trusted and empowered to innovate.

3) Clergy Family Life—Work-life Balance

Entering the pulpit, I knew the job would be 24/7. The fact that our Hebrew school meets on Shabbat mornings, however, is a game-changer for clergy. In addition to Shabbat, most clergy are also required to work Sundays, as that’s when Hebrew school traditionally meets. Don’t get me wrong. I often work on Sundays, officiating at funerals and baby-namings and leading special programs. But the absence of a required Sunday workday means that, by default, I have one day each week without restrictions to spend with my family.

Kurtzer’s post and the comments offer important insights into the challenges facing American Judaism. At the same time Shirat Hayam offers a model of a clergy-friendly congregation. It’s what I emphasized when recruiting Cantor Sarah. I thank you, Congregation Shirat Hayam, for being who you are; let us rejoice together.
Cantor’s News

Passover and Me

Passover was my favorite holiday growing up. There is something about gathering as a family to tell the same story year after year, using the same books, eating the same foods on the same plates! Although one could say that sounds like every Jewish holiday, for me, Passover was set apart by the intricate story telling. In fact, I used to make a Passover Jeopardy game for everyone to play at the table based on the Exodus story. Fast forward to Passover today, as a woman and Jewish professional. A meaningful addition to my family’s Passover season has been the inclusion of a women’s seder. The last women’s seder I did in Florida, my mom and two daughters attended and participated. Aria sang Miriam’s Song with me, and it is still one of our favorites to sing for Pesach! This year, I am excited to see what Passover is like at Shirat Hayam, and to add my own music to the story.

Many blessings,
Cantor Sarah

Message from the President

My dear friend, Michele Tamaren, used to talk about liminal space, which comes from the Latin word “limen” — literally meaning threshold. It refers to the time between when one thing ends and the next begins. Most of us, I assert, are currently living in liminal space, and are wishing it would end. We want to get back to pre-pandemic options. We want peace. We want gas prices to go down and the stock market to stabilize. We want to feel hopeful about our children’s futures. People generally feel uncomfortable when in liminal space. They either long for what was or yearn for what they want to come next. Yet in truth, liminal space can feel uncomfortable when in liminal space. They either long for what was or yearn for what they want to come next. Yet in truth, liminal space can be a time of great growth and transformation. It can help source greater understanding and wisdom. It can clear the path for deeper insights and inspire new possibilities. But it requires patience (savlanute) and faith (bitachon).

In the weeks to come, as we move towards the Spring and traverse our individual and collective paths through what I call “no-longer-and-not-yet,” may we remember to believe that it will all work out, in its own time, just as the trees will leaf out again and the flowers will bloom exactly on schedule, and it is all a blessing.

Warmly,
Ruth Estrich

Please join Rabbi Michael, Cantor Sarah and the Shirat Hayam community for a virtual Passover 2nd Night Seder

Saturday, April 16 at 6 pm*

Have your candles, seder plate and Passover table prepared. A link to the Haggadah will be provided but hard copies will be available to pick up beginning April 12.

Go to https://shirathayam.org/passover/ to register for your link.

*Following the first part of the seder, enjoy dinner with your family and/or others and rejoin us for the closing part of the seder.

Open to all and for all ages.

Calendar

Continued from page 1

SATURDAY, APRIL 9
Shabbat Synaplex
9:00 am Renewal;
Traditional Shacharit led by Jan Brodie
9:00 am CJE (grades K-6)
10:00 am Torah Service celebrating the B’nai Mitzvah Sister 10th anniversary reunion.
No Nosh & Drash or Torah Yoga

MONDAY, APRIL 11
6:30 pm Becky’s Book Club, Author Pamela Rotner Sakamoto will join group to discuss her book, Midnight in Broad Daylight.

TUESDAY, APRIL 12
4:00 pm CJE (grades 2-7)
7:30 pm Torah Hub (JCCNS) with Rabbi Michael Economic Principles of Ancient Israel. Register at sewing@jccns.org.

THURSDAY, APRIL 14
7:30 am Fast of the First Born & Siyyum morning minyan in person.

FRIDAY, APRIL 15
6:00 pm Kabbalat Shabbat
7:30 pm Pesach service with Noam Sender; Traditional Shacharit
9:00 am Renewal; Traditional Shacharit led by Jan Brodie
10:00 am Torah Service; Torah Yoga with Stacie Nardizzi; Nosh & Drash with Noam Sender
2-7)

SATURDAY, APRIL 16
First Day of Passover
9:00 am Renewal;
Traditional Shacharit led by Cantor Sarah
No CJE
10:00 am Torah Service; No Torah Yoga or Nosh & Drash
6:00 pm Virtual Second Night Seder with Rabbi and Cantor (see pg. 3 to register)

See our website calendar (https://shirathayam.shulcloud.com/calendar) for upcoming Traditional Shacharit leaders, Renewal guest musicians and Nosh & Drash leaders.

TUESDAY, APRIL 19
7:30 am Hol Hamoed Pesach service at CSH No CJE

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 20
7:30 am Hol Hamoed Pesach service at CSH

THURSDAY, APRIL 21
7:30 am Hol Hamoed Pesach service at CSH

FRIDAY, APRIL 22
7:30 am Hol Hamoed Pesach service with Yizkor at 9:15 am at CSH
6:00 pm Kabbalat Shabbat at CSH

SATURDAY, APRIL 23
Shabbat Synaplex
9:00 am Renewal; Traditional Shacharit led by Jan Brodie
No CJE
10:00 am Torah Service; Torah Yoga with Stacie Nardizzi; Nosh & Drash with Janis Knight

TUESDAY, APRIL 26
4:00 pm CJE (grades 2-7)

FRIDAY, APRIL 29
6:00 pm Kabbalat Shabbat at CSH

SATURDAY, APRIL 30
Shabbat Synaplex
9:00 am Renewal with guest musician Noam Sender; Traditional Shacharit led by Jan Brodie
9:00 am CJE (grades K-6)
10:00 am Torah Service
7:30 pm Pesach service at CSH
9:00 am Renewal; Traditional Shacharit led by Cantor Sarah
No CJE
10:00 am Torah Service; No Torah Yoga or Nosh & Drash
6:00 pm Virtual Second Night Seder with Rabbi and Cantor (see pg. 3 to register)

Open to all and for all ages.

Life of the Congregation

Congregation Shirat Hayam | 781.599.8005 | www.shirathayam.org | NEW WAVE 3
Lovingkindness

Continued from page 1

When she received help herself, she was deeply grateful for the warm visit from a fellow volunteer — as well as for the delicious soup.

Her biggest reward is hearing from a recipient that something as simple as delivering a challah or receiving a phone call truly made a difference during her time of need.

“In today’s meshuginah world, even in a congregation as large as Shirat Hayam, it makes a difference to know that when you are in need, you are not alone and that fellow congregants care about you and want to help in any way they can. It just seems like the Jewish way to live,” she said.

Founder Bethany Roditi envisioned revitalizing the Shirat Chesed community when she first joined Shirat Hayam in 2017. “Shir Chesed has exceeded my initial vision by far,” the developmental psychologist and special ed. teacher said. Instead of a small committee, Chesed has joined Shirat Hayam in 2017. “Shir Chesed has not only been offering gestures and services of lovingkindness to congregants in need, but it has also strengthened our CSH community. I couldn’t be happier,” she added.

Karen Madorsky, who has lived in the area for a long time, nonetheless treasures that she has met many new people willing to help others through her involvement in this meaningful endeavor. “Although Covid forced us to curtail some of our services, we were able to continue to make connections in new ways. For example, we participated in calling synagogue members who were isolated,” she said. When her husband was facing illness, they experienced first-hand the lovingkindness of this group.

Patricia and Jerry Kreitzer were new to Massachusetts and had searched for two years for a congregation to call home. “After only two visits, it was clear that Shirat Hayam was our choice,” they said.

Teams. They joined as new members, but looked for ways to get to know more people and found the answer in the Shir Chesed Leadership Team. They offered their expertise in community building to help organize the teams and list of services, and to record the contact data. When Covid isolation intervened, they responded with online Chicken Soup Lunches.

They are still challenged to get congregants to let Rabbi Michael know when they are ill. “Often, we find out through word of mouth because people sometimes don’t feel they want help,” they said. Adapting to the Covid restrictions and deciding what services to withdraw and which to restart has been another challenge.

They have also had to develop a way to keep good, efficient records. “Whenever we face a problem, the four of us on the Leadership Team work together so well to come up with solutions,” they said.

Going forward, Shir Chesed will be reevaluating what services will be offered in light of the lifting of mandates. They also look forward to resuming biannual meetings, one with a speaker and one as a celebration to give back to all the wonderful volunteers of the caring community.

For the past two years, they have been working on creating a bereavement booklet that will help direct congregants when faced with the death of a loved one. “This project is close to completion, and we look forward to having it available to the congregation,” they added.

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Shir Hayam Co-sponsors the Documentary Film, “Complicit,” with a Virtual Screening

Join Epstein Hillel School, CSH and community partners on April 5 at 7:00 pm for an online screening of COMPLICIT, the story of the SS St. Louis and the 937 Jewish refugees who were turned away entry to the United States in 1939, followed by a Q&A with the film’s creator, two survivors of the St. Louis, and a nationally renowned Holocaust scholar.

The Voyage of The SS St. Louis is one of the most important events in American, Holocaust and Jewish History. This documentary film has been touring the US and internationally for the last 6 years. raising the consciousness and increasing the awareness of millions of people.

Registration at shirathayam.org/tzedek-lakol-justice-for-all/
From the desk of Janis Knight, Director, Center for Jewish Education:
March brought back CJE Tuesday afternoon elective classes. Our students are exploring their Judaism in creative ways, including Judaism and the Force (Star Wars and Judaism have more intersections than you’d think!), Jewish Holiday Cooking (some wonderful hamantaschen and matza recipes have happened), Jewish Mosaic Making (bringing back an ancient art form), and Beginner’s Ukulele, during which we learned to play the basics, including “The Alef-Bet Song” and “Shalom Chaverim.”

Second and third graders baked hamantaschen and create gorgeous glass Seder plates, and all students participated in “Ask the Rabbi” during our regular Tefilah time. Kindergarten and first grade continued learning Hebrew words for body parts by playing Hebrew Twister, heard the Purim story from Morah Rachel’s class and presented their own “Puppet Purim Shpiel.”

From the desk of Andrea Bernard, Director, Center for Early Education:
The Pre-K children made their very own loaf of vegan challah! This special challah was made from scratch with our very small (and very clean) hands! It was so much fun to “mix up the dough, and braid it just so,” just like in the challah song that we sing with Cantor Sarah. If you would like to make your own batch of vegan challah we are happy to share the recipe with you! https://tasty.co/recipe/vegan-challah-bread

Challah making — vegan style — with the pre-kindergarten class.
Our deepest condolences to those who have passed away.

Relatives of Members:

Edward Barrell
2/11/2022
Uncle of Susan Weiner

Laura Bendetson
2/16/2022
Mother of Carol Shube
Grandmother of Alex Shube and Doug Shube

CONDOLENCES

from Janice Kelley
Aunt, Tillie Kantrowitz
from Natalie White and Family

from Sura Rozenblum
from Perlina Levitin

Aunt, Matilda Skolnick
from Rosalyn Shapiro

Mother, Sarah Denbo
from Samuel Denbo

BRODY MINYAN FUND

Get well wishes for Ann Segal from Herb Goldberg

Get well wishes for Larry Goldberg from Natalie White and Family

In honor of Natalie White's special birthday from Doris Villa

In honor of the birth of our grandson, Wesley Scott Petrosic from Joanne and Ed Smith

In honor of the birth of a grandchild to Boris and Irene Roytenberg from Natalie White

In memory of Philip Linsky from Sandy Gold Shalit and Carl Shalit; Eli Talkov

In memory of Laura Bendetson, mother of Carol Shube from Ellen and Richard Alexander; Lois and Bobby Kaplan; Lois Ogan; Phyllis Sagan

CANTOR'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

Get well wishes for Ann Segal from Leslie and Bob Ogan

In appreciation of Cantor Sarah from Bernice Lieberson; Janet and Bob Lieberson; Lisa Shuman and Mark Needles

In appreciation of Ann Segal from Drs. Lisa and Stephen Pymate

In celebration of the birth of Asher Noah Witzkowski, grandson of Bethany and Moshe Roditi from Diane and Ed Knopf; Drs. Lisa and Stephen Pymate; Sara and Marc Winer

In memory of Cantor Sarah's ordination from her proud parents, Darlene and Richard Pachter

In honor of Cantor Sarah's ordination from Kate Borten; Charlotte Fine; Leslie and Bob Ogan; Rabbi Robert Silvers

In memory of Leonard Lieberson from Susan Goldberg

Get well wishes for Ann Segal from Rosalyn Shapiro

CENTER FOR JEWISH EDUCATION

In memory of Laura Bendetson, mother of Carol Shube from Linda and Steven Aste

In honor of my special birthday from Carol Levin

GENERAL FUND

In celebration of the birth of Asher Noah Witzkowski, grandson of Bethany and Moshe Roditi from Diane and Ed Knopf; Drs. Lisa and Stephen Pymate; Sara and Marc Winer

In memory of Philip Linsky from Myrna and Harry Grossman; Lois and Bobby Kaplan; Lori and Jon Kreevoy; Alice and Charles Leidner; Janet and Bob Lieberson; Lois Miller, Larry Miller and Jim Miller; Marjorie and Randy Patkin; Penny and Sy Schwartz; Arlene and Jack Stahl

In memory of Laura Bendetson, mother of Carol Shube from Ellen and Richard Alexander; Lois and Bobby Kaplan; Lois Ogan; Phyllis Sagan

In memory of Laura Bendetson from Bernice Lieberson; Janet and Bob Lieberson; Lois Ogan; Phyllis Sagan

In memory of Philip Linsky from Myrna and Harry Grossman; Lois and Bobby Kaplan; Lori and Jon Kreevoy; Alice and Charles Leidner; Janet and Bob Lieberson; Lois Miller, Larry Miller and Jim Miller; Marjorie and Randy Patkin; Penny and Sy Schwartz; Arlene and Jack Stahl

In memory of Laura Bendetson, mother of Carol Shube from Ellen and Richard Alexander; Lois and Bobby Kaplan; Lois Ogan; Phyllis Sagan

PRAYERBOOK PURCHASED

In memory of

Father and Grandfather, Myer Rubin from The Preman Family

In appreciation of Rabbi Sarah's ordination from Karen and David Rosenberg

In memory of Laura Bendetson, mother of Carol Shube from Karen and Mark Meyer

In memory of

Father, Harold Weiner from Lawrence Weiner

Father, Harold Weiner from Lawrence Weiner

CANTOR'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

Get well wishes for Ann Segal from Leslie and Bob Ogan

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In honor of Cantor Sarah's ordination from Kate Borten; Charlotte Fine; Leslie and Bob Ogan; Rabbi Robert Silvers

In memory of Leonard Lieberson from Susan Goldberg

Get all our loved ones from Esther and Richard Salinsky

Mother, Lillian Cohen
Grandmother, Sara Sudnowsky from John Cohen

Mother, Anna Sudenfield from Paul Sudenfield

Mother, Ida Gruzen from Phyllis Kaplan

All my loved ones from Ruth Wolff

Mother, Mary Valle from Susan Goldberg

KIDDUSH FUND

Get well wishes for Ann Segal from Rosalyn Shapiro

Wishes of good health for Janice Levine from Charlotte Fine

In celebration of the birth of Wesley Scott Petrosic, grandson of Joanne and Ed Smith from Diane and Ed Knopf

In memory of

Grandmother, Mary Goldberg from Charlotte Fine

Mother, Lillian Rubin
Mother, Ida Kagan from Donna and Spencer Kagan

In honor of my special birthday from Carol Levin

Father, Ben Pike from Ellen and Richard Alexander

Father, Irving Feldman from Judy Feldman

Get all our loved ones from Esther and Richard Salinsky

Mother, Lillian Cohen
Grandmother, Sara Sudnowsky from John Cohen

Mother, Anna Sudenfield from Paul Sudenfield

Mother, Ida Gruzen from Phyllis Kaplan

All my loved ones from Ruth Wolff

Mother, Mary Valle from Susan Goldberg

In memory of

Grandmother, Mary Goldberg from Charlotte Fine

Mother, Lillian Rubin
Mother, Ida Kagan from Donna and Spencer Kagan

In honor of my special birthday from Carol Levin

Father, Ben Pike from Ellen and Richard Alexander

Father, Irving Feldman from Judy Feldman

Get well wishes for Ann Segal from Karen and David Rosenberg

In memory of Laura Bendetson, mother of Carol Shube from Karen and Mark Meyer

In memory of

Our parents, Lorraine and Edward Berman from Elizabeth and Daniel Berman

Husband, Ralph Kaplan from Harriet Kaplan

RITUAL FUND

In memory of

Grandfather, Jacob Goldberg from Charlotte Fine

Father, Lawrence Abrams from Izzi and Howard Abrams

Father, George Swartz from Irene Carlino

Sister, Laurie Swartz Bodek from Rita Swartz

SHIR CHESED FUND

In appreciation of Shir Chesed from Norma and Sherman Freedman; Bernice Lieberson; Nancy and Herb Miller; Ann Penderest

Get well wishes for Ann Segal in honor of Cantor Sarah's ordination

In memory of Philip Linsky from Bette and Daniel Shoreman

In honor of the birth of Simone Helena Heretz, granddaughter of Eileen Trebbin

In honor of the birth of Asher Noah Witzkowski, grandson of Bethany and Moshe Roditi

In memory of Laura Bendetson, mother of Carol Shube from Karen and Mark Meyer

In memory of

Mother, Rose Alfon from Barbara Berman

Sister, Harriet Mack from Bette Shoreman

Mother, Florence Blayer from Caryn Berman

Father, William Greensblatt from Judy Simmons

Mother, Edith Cohen from Wendy Dubinsky

TORAH FUND
Interview

Continued from page 8

on Friday mornings every week for 4 months, somehow I managed to get there on time! Our conversations continued after each session and eventually he realized I was a good find and our relationship blossomed. We married in October 2018.

Norm: Through my volunteer work once a month at Bridge Over Troubled Waters (a mobile clinic nicknamed “VAN”) in Boston, I was exposed to a totally new community of street kids, many of whom had gender and other LGBTQ identity issues. They came to us for health care and referrals for their unique needs. I made an arrangement between the VAN and Children’s Hospital Adolescent Unit (where I was working) so these youth could be treated at Children’s, even if they had no insurance. They were a group at high risk for self-harm.

I developed a reputation of being interested in caring for them and I had full support from my superiors at Children’s, as long as I also used this as a training experience for the house staff and fellows. My reputation grew and I recognized that I needed more education, so I started attending international meetings. The Dutch were the leading experts.

I am proud of and grateful to Children’s Hospital for being so supportive. In 2007, we opened the first Transgender Clinic in an academic medical center for adolescents in North America. With the help of our program as a model of excellence, 70 clinics throughout the US have been established. One of my last accomplishments before I retired in 2017 was to secure a $5 million grant for collaborative longitudinal research with three other national clinics.

What first brought you to CSH?

Judith: I moved to Revere in 2013, still employed by Lahey Clinic. My plan was to retire in 2015 after 40 years of service. As soon as I settled in, my first goals were to obtain a library card from Revere Public Library and to actively search for a local synagogue. Shirat Hayam was recommended by several local friends who were members. I came as a guest a few times and, without trying any others, decided this place was for me. A spacious parking lot, a welcoming community, multiple offerings such as Nosh & Drash, yoga, spiritual Renewal and a familiar Conservative service followed by a delicious Kiddush — I had found exactly what I was looking for. I joined Becky’s Book Club, studied with Rabbi Michael in his adult ed courses and participated in Torah Hub. I feel blessed to have made some wonderful friends with shared values.

Norm maintains ties to Temple Emanuel in Newton, where he has been a member for over 40 years and sings the choir. However, after his first Shabbat morning service at Shirat Hayam, he feels he belongs here too. He enjoys the intimacy of the service and warmth of the congregation and clergy. On several occasions when Rabbi Michael asked for volunteers to give a D’var Torah in his absence, Norm has stepped up to the plate. He also led the Becky’s Book Club discussion when we read This Is How It Always Is, a novel about gender dysphoria. The group was enthralled by his insight and knowledge. He also led a well-attended Nosh & Drash about transgender youth.

What are you looking forward to at CSH?

We look forward to more normal times when we can enjoy services without wearing our masks and sitting together again at Kiddush with our Shirat Hayam family.
Every issue, the New Wave spotlights congregants as a way to help us get to know each other by putting a face with a name. This month, Doctors Judith Feldman and Norman Spack share their thoughts about Shirat Hayam and its special, personal meaning.

Where did you grow up? What role did religion and synagogue life play in your childhood and young adulthood?

Judith: I was raised in Chelsea in a loving Conservative, Kosher home rich in Jewish tradition. We attended Temple Emanuel and Shabbat dinner was the family weekly highlight and focus. In addition to ballet and piano lessons, my sister and I attended Hebrew school five days a week as well as the required Saturday morning synagogue experience.

When I was 10-years-old, we moved to Brookline. My mother was a graduate of Hebrew Teachers College and a professional Hebrew teacher and wanted us to live near the new campus so we could continue our Hebrew studies in addition to our secular public education. I attended Brookline High and then Boston University during the daytime, and Prozdor and then HTC in the evenings. I did earn a Bachelor of Jewish Education, but I was terrible at teaching.

Norm: Jewish life in Coolidge Corner was my oxygen. My life was centered around Kehillath Israel. I was Vice President of the junior congregation where 75 high schoolers ran a full Saturday morning service, rotating roles including Torah reading and D’var Torah. For the holidays, we had a huge tent (donated by a temple member) that held 750 of us who gathered from neighboring communities.

Many participants went further on in Jewish education and became leading principals, rabbis and educators. The adult leaders from the Temple (President and board members) often visited our services, prayed with us and were immense role models for us. Those were truly glorious days!!!

I was very active in USY regionally and have wonderful memories of local and national conventions (held during Christmas vacation). Some of my closest friends and longest relationships to this day were created from these experiences.

Tell us a little about yourselves, your work and how you met and then “re-met.”

Judith: Norm and I have known each other since we were 10-year-olds. His father was principal of Kehillath Israel Hebrew School and my mother was a teacher there.

In those days, most of our close friends attended KI Hebrew school, so we all knew each other, even if only from a distance.

Norm and I each pursued careers in medicine. After staying local with Brookline HS and BU, I went to Drexel College of Medicine in Philadelphia. Norm, on the other hand, having lived in a very Jewish community (the “Coolidge Corner—Brookline shetl”) all of his life, wanted to experience the challenge of going to a college where being Jewish would make him a minority. He got what he wished for with Williams College, a small and then all-male liberal arts school where only 10% of the students were Jewish. He then attended University of Rochester Medical School.

We both completed our training, I in internal medicine and Norm in pediatrics, and in 1975 we both moved back to Brookline. By then, Norm was married with two children. I was single. Norm was on staff at Boston Children’s Hospital and I joined Lahey Clinic, then in Kenmore Square.

We were both very involved in Combined Jewish Philanthropies. For years, we were part of the planning committee and were our respective hospital liaisons for the Health Professions Annual Breakfast. We also did fund raising, including on Super Sunday. We really became role models in encouraging our generation to take on leadership roles, especially younger physicians and women.

We would also bump into each other at various Torah study groups and at other Boston Jewish communal gatherings and always made a point to catch up with each other and our families.

At the CJP breakfast in 2017, Norm shared that he was recently divorced. That conversation led to his invitation to attend a Torah study group he had founded at the Harvard Longwood Medical area. Even though it met at 7:30 AM

Continued on page 7

Drs. Judith Feldman and Norman Spack sealed their marital vows with a kiss.

We were both very involved in Combined Jewish Philanthropies. For years, we were part of the planning committee and were our respective hospital liaisons for the Health Professions Annual Breakfast. We also did fund raising, including on Super Sunday. We really became role models in encouraging our generation to take on leadership roles, especially younger physicians and women.

We would also bump into each other at various Torah study groups and at other Boston Jewish communal gatherings and always made a point to catch up with each other and our families.

At the CJP breakfast in 2017, Norm shared that he was recently divorced. That conversation led to his invitation to attend a Torah study group he had founded at the Harvard Longwood Medical area. Even though it met at 7:30 AM

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