



Sha'arei Shalom

Monthly Newsletter

April 1, 2013

Contact Us

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Upcoming Events

- TORAH STUDY April 5th @ 6:30 p.m.
- SHABBAT SERVICE April 5th @ 7:30 p.m.
- SHABBAT SERVICE April 26th @ 7:30 p.m.

All Congregation Services take place at the Ashland Community Center, 162 West Union Street (unless otherwise noted).

OTHER EVENTS

- Book Group – April 7th @ 10:00 a.m.
- Evergreen – April 17th @ 7:30 p.m.
- Knitting/Crocheting Circle—April 14th @ 10:00 a.m.
- Hebrew School Open House—April 28th @ 10:00 a.m.

Hebrew School Open House

Sunday April 28th and May 5th

10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m., Ashland Middle School

Please spread the word about our wonderful school and community!

Rabbi's Letter

by Margie Klein

This Passover my teacher Rabbi Ebn Leader shared a beautiful teaching that I'm privileged to share with you.

The Mishnah teaches that the Israelites celebrated not one, but four New Year festivals each year. The two most prominent were Rosh Hashanah, which marks the beginning of the world, and Nissan, the month of Passover, which marks the Exodus from Egypt, the beginning of the Jewish holiday cycle, and the beginning of the reign of kings in Israel.

Each New Year, and each holiday in the Jewish calendar, offers its own potential for spiritual growth, connection, and renewal. In Tishrei, as we count the ten days from Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur, we do tshuvah, transformation. We work hard to change and forgive, and on Yom Kippur, we are free to start anew.

In Nissan, starting on the second day of Passover, we also count days and find freedom, but in the opposite order. Whereas in Tishrei, first we do the work, and then we find the freedom of a clean slate on Yom Kippur, in Nissan, first we are granted freedom through the Exodus from Egypt, and only *then* do we start counting the 49 days of the omer. Together, we count from Passover to Shavuot, from the moment of freedom to the moment of *purposeful* freedom, the freedom to serve God and live holy lives.

The Midrash teaches that the Israelites initially questioned Moses' promise of God's redemption, because they knew they had gone astray. "How can we be redeemed when all Egypt stinks of idolatry!" In other words, the Israelites in the Midrash know that they don't *deserve* to be redeemed. And yet, as the Midrash teaches, God redeems them anyway, out of love and grace.

Passover celebrates the gifts of freedom and joy that come not as a result of hard work and careful planning, but out of God's grace. And yet, this moment of grace is only the beginning. After the gift of freedom, we have to start counting. We have to build a vessel that can hold their freedom, and put it to good use. In the Torah, the Israelites counting led to Shavuot and the receiving of the 10 commandments and the Torah, a guide for how to live holy lives.

Today, Passover can represent the moments of opportunity that we may not merit, but which come into our lives anyway. The counting journey to Shavuot reminds us to step up and merit the chance we've been given by doing our best with what we've been granted. When we are blessed with an unexpected promotion, it is our responsibility to work hard and make the most of it. If we are blessed with a child, it is our responsibility to be good parents. So it is with Passover -- for whatever reason, deserved or not, God's given us an extra chance and we should grasp this holy opportunity for all it's worth.

During the seder's four questions, we proclaim - on all other nights, we eat both *chametz* (leavened products) and matzah (unleavened bread), but tonight only matzah. In Hebrew, the word **chametz** is related to the verb *hachamitz*, to miss an event or opportunity, and **matzah** is related soundwise to *limtzoah*, to find. On all other nights of the year, sometimes we're on the right path, sometimes not -- and often it's very hard to tell which. On Passover, we are blessed with knowing we are on the right path, even if just for one night. Then, it is up to us to make the most of it, to listen to our hearts and do the work of **mitziah**, of finding the right path on our own and making the hard choices. And, using another seasonal metaphor, God's expressed his faith in us by putting us into the lineup for opening day -- now it's up to us to reward God's confidence by playing so well that everyone knows we belong on the team.

So, may we all be blessed this Spring to appreciate the gifts we have been granted by grace, and use them to find our way, step by step, to creating holier lives and a better world.

Warm regards,
Rabbi Margie

President's Corner

by Jane Greenstein

Just one more day of matzah! While the kids are counting the hours until they will have pizza again, I always find myself just a bit sad to leave Passover behind--so many old family memories and traditions to relive; time set aside to see family and friends; another point in the calendar to remind me to stop and think about my life and my world. Despite my enjoyment of the holiday, I'm still always surprised that there is anything new to glean from the seder. After all, I have attended close to 100 over my lifetime. This year, however, I found myself repeatedly saying "this reminds me of something Rabbi Margie said at the model seder yesterday." And my boys surprised me with new contributions they made based on things they had learned (and remembered!) in Religious School that I myself had never known. Our involvement with Sha'arei Shalom continues to bring new knowledge and awareness to my life, helping me feel a deeper connection to something greater than myself. It also reassures me that through our congregation, my children have the foundation of Jewish knowledge and identity that will help root them as they grow.

On Friday, April 5th, we all will have the opportunity to witness how much the children of our community learn in our Religious School. The 3rd-7th grade students will be co-leading Friday Night Services with Rabbi Margie. We hope you will join us as we bring in Shabbat together, but also as we all *kve//* (revel in our pride)! If you are not yet a part of our community but are considering enrolling your children in our school, please come join us for this very special Shabbat as well as for one of our upcoming Open Houses—Sunday April 28th and Sunday May 5th. We look forward to having you experience the engaging ways we are passing on Jewish tradition to the next generation.

If you would like to donate a siddur in honor of/in memory of someone or in celebration of an event, please contact Jane Greenstein at president@shaareishalom.org. The cost is \$36 per Siddur.

Upcoming Services and Holiday Celebrations

Our next Friday night service will be on April 5th at 7:30 p.m. Join us for a traditional Friday night Shabbat service followed by a community oneg. Our Hebrew School students, grades 3-7, will be co-leading with the Rabbi. Come see how accomplished our students are!

Our April Torah Study will take place the same night at 6:30 p.m., directly before the Shabbat Service. This participatory discussion of the week's torah portion is for teens and adults.

On April 26th at 7:30 p.m., we will have another traditional Friday night service followed by a community oneg. We will be acknowledging the bat mitzvah of Olivia Salkind, which will take place the following morning.

Birthday Wishes

Aaron Greenstein turns 11 on April 4th.

Ethan Prybyla turns 14 on April 5th.

Healing Prayers

We send prayers for continuing healing to member Judy Shapiro, who is recovering from a lengthy illness. Cards and good wishes can be sent to her at home: 659 Main Street, Ashland MA 01721.

We also send healing prayers to former member and board member, Elissa Naiman, who is continuing to undergo treatment for lung cancer. Those who would like to reach out to her can mail her at 16 Indian Spring Road, Ashland 01721 or email her at elissa.naiman@verizon.net.

Prozdor Presentation at Sha'arei Shalom!

On Sunday April 7th, at 12 Noon, come to an interactive presentation about Prozdor

Prozdor is a vibrant school that provides Jewish teens the resources, support, and community to embark on their own Jewish journey. On Sunday mornings over 500 Jewish students gather to explore their Judaism and connect with friends from all over Southern New England. More than just Hebrew school, Prozdor complements everything Jewish teens are doing in and out of school and instills a sense of strength and belonging that prepares students for life beyond high school. Student choice, a spirited and diverse community, and an exceptional teaching staff are the fundamental pillars of the Prozdor experience that empower our students to be connected and confident with their own Jewish identity.

rsvp to Lisa Clay at lcc1129@yahoo.com if you and your child will attend

For more information about Prozdor, please contact Dan Brosgol, Director of Prozdor, at dbrosgol@hebrewcolleg.edu or 617-559-8802.

Religious School Update

by Lisa Clay

Happy April! After a great Passover model seder during Hebrew school and a little break due to Passover/Easter, we are back to classroom learning in April. This Friday, April 5th, grades 3 through 7 will participate in our Shabbat service. This is a wonderful time to celebrate Shabbat together as well as celebrate the learning that is happening in each class. Each grade will participate in leading the prayers that they have been learning. The Hebrew School is also sponsoring the Oneg. Be sure to sign up to bring something and make sure to be there with your children!

[Click Here to Sign Up for Friday Night's Oneg](#)

This month families will also have an opportunity to learn more about Prozdor Hebrew High School and the opportunities there for post Bar/Bat mitzvah. We also have a week of for April vacation. Note the important dates:

April 5: 7:30 pm Shabbat Service - Grades 3-7 participating, Hebrew School sponsors Oneg
April 7: Noon-1 pm - Prozdor presentation for 7th-8th grade families and anyone else who is interested
April 14-21: April Vacation - no Hebrew School
April 23: Back to class!
April 28: Hebrew School Open House - invite friends!
May 6: Hebrew School Open House - invite friends!

Promise Metrowest

Providing dinner at the Federated Church for visiting homeless families—May 5th

by Robin Maher

As you may know, The Federated Church of Ashland has joined the Family Promise MetroWest and will be a host organization again. Sha'arei Shalom is a support Congregation to the Church, and as such, will assist in the efforts to make the visiting families as comfortable as possible during their stay.

The Federated Church will next be hosting for one week beginning May 5, 2013. **Sha'arei Shalom is committed to providing the meal for Sunday night, May 5th.**

Our commitment is to deliver the meal to the Church around 5 – 5:30 pm and have at least one adult to stay and help serve. The adult, and any child 12 and over, who stays, must have completed the training offered by MIHN. A small number of children under the age of 12 are welcome to play with or help entertain the small

children. Please consider volunteering. It is a very rewarding experience. **Please e-mail me or call me if you can help in any way. We need volunteers to provide the main entrée, a couple of side dishes, salad, bread, a fruit salad, and dessert.** Please contact Robin to let her know how you can help.

Thank you in advance.

Robin Maher
Project Chair
Cell:617-962-8756
Home: 508-231-0883
e-mail: brialexi@msn.com

Relay for Life—Team Members Needed **by Rose Spitzer**

Sha'arei Shalom is participating in our 9th Relay for Life. Our team, Sha'arei Shalom Fights Cancer, along with 50+ other teams raises money throughout the year to be ready for the event each June. For 22 hours, on June 15-16, 2013 we walk the track of Ashland Middle School, as a community, celebrating the lives of survivors and remembering those we have lost to the cruel disease that is cancer. There are different activities scheduled throughout the day for people of all ages to enjoy.

Last year, Sha'arei Shalom Fights Cancer was unable to have a full site at the Relay. We chose to have 'virtual presence' – we said we would all raise money even though we could not be there together. As you may remember, as the Relay date got closer, I became more and more uneasy about missing The Relay. The weekend before the Relay I realized that it was not just about raising money – but about the 'feeling' of being a part of a bigger whole. In years past, we have walked as a 'marker of time' - my Aunt Jamie's diagnosis, my cousin's diagnosis, the yartzeit of my Mom's brother, the diagnosis of friends and the celebration of years free of cancer. We immediately decided that it was time to raise money – as much as we could in the 6 days that we had left! I sent a letter to everyone that had supported us in the past, and in 4 days, we raised over \$1000! It felt so good but not complete. I knew I had to be at the Relay. When we arrived at the Relay that night I felt like I belonged there, much like I do at Sha'arei Shalom. With the Mullers and the Handelmans walking with me, I decided that night that Sha'arei Shalom Fights Cancer would be back in 2013 with a fully staffed site, an evening of community and caring, and as many team members as I could gather!

Now is the time to join my fight. I cannot do this alone. Join our team and help raise money for the American Cancer Society. All you NEED to do to join is pledge to raise at least \$113 – but I challenge you all to raise much more than that! We will have a fire pit, a BBQ dinner and tents for spending the night – GET INVOLVED! As soon as I we have a team built, I will hold a team meeting so we can share fundraising ideas and I can share more with you about details of the weekend.

In the past, we have had Mindy Murray as our fearless leader of team, Sha'arei Shalom Fights Cancer. After my feelings last year at the Relay and remembering how truly special and important it is to me (as well as my family) I asked Mindy if I could take over the reins and lead our congregation in this life-changing event. I am proud to say that I am this year's team captain for Relay 2013! Every year when we participate in this wonderful community function, I realize how influential we can be and how far a dollar goes when searching to find a cure for cancer. Participating in this wonderful event has brought many of us closer as a congregation, a community and as friends.

Please plan to join us at the Ashland Middle School on June 15-16 – even if you do not join our team. We will need walkers – each team commits to having a member walking the track at all times – we will have a sign-sheet for time slots closer to the event date. Please also come and hang at our site – it's an amazing experience and I can't wait to share it with you!

To join our team, please sign up at: [Click here to join our team!](#)

Comfort and Caring Shawls

by Margot Podtburg

The Helping Hands Committee would like to introduce a new way that we can help one another during times of serious illness and challenges. A Comfort and Caring Shawl can be a thin scarf, a shrug, a wide shawl or a lap blanket. What makes it a comfort and sharing shawl is the intentions of the creator. Shawls are made with love and care by a volunteer within our Sha'arei Shalom community for someone within our community. They represent prayers for the recipient's health, joy and peace as well as hopes for comfort for the recipient. The shawls would be delivered to recipients either by the Rabbi or by someone with Helping Hands accompanied by a note explaining the shawl.

If you knit or crochet, you can help by making a shawl. If you are unable to make a shawl, you can still help by providing a gift card so that those of us who can so that we may purchase yarn to create a shawl. Our hope is to have several shawls on hand in case of an immediate need, and then to replenish the shawls as they are distributed. We also have a newly created knitting circle (see below) who can help you learn to knit/crochet and can help you make a shawl for someone you know. If you would like help making a shawl or would like to donate a gift card for supplies, please contact Margot Podtburg at mpodtburg@hotmail.com.

Monica Weinstein Women's Book Group

by Cindi Muller

In March we happily welcomed Debbie Dolin and Lisa Friedman into our group as we discussed "The Painted Drum". Our book club will be meeting again on April 7th at 9am at Bodacious Bagels. We will be discussing "Up from the Blue" by Susan Henderson. Ladies, please feel free to join us. It is a great way to meet other women in our congregation who also enjoy a good book, good bagels and good conversation.

Evergreen

by Sheila Watnick

At the March 20th meeting of Evergreen at the home of Lucy Tannen, members celebrated Sheila Watnick's birthday. Two members shared job hunting explorations hoping that age IS an advantage. The group also discussed Passover plans.

The next meeting will be on **Wednesday, April 17th, at 7:30 p.m.** at the home of Linda Hecker. Female temple members 60 and over are welcome. Contact evergreen@shaareishalom.org.

Knitting/Crocheting Circle

by Margot Podtburg and Cindi Muller

The Sha'arei Shalom Knitting & Crochet Circle met this past Sunday morning over a delicious potluck Passover breakfast at Toni's house. Many thanks to the Spitzers for a beautifully decorated table. We shared Passover recipes and knitting/crochet tips. To illustrate that you are never too old to learn and never too young to teach. Rose taught Rachel & Cindi how to make a Sashay scarf. Margot demonstrated her crocheting for Talia and Toni shared her newest trick of the trade with Lisa. There was much laughter and so much fun that we were all a little saddened to realize that it was time to move on with our day. If you too think that you might like to take up the challenge and learn something new, please consider joining us at our next meeting. The Knitting/Crochet Circle will next meet April 14th at 10am at Toni Spitzer's house. If you would like information please contact Cindi Muller at cindimuller@hotmail.com

Teen Scene Movie Club

By Zak Weinstein and Alyssa Dver

The last meeting of the Teen Scene Movie Club took place on March 16th. The kids watched "The Truman Show" and afterward had a rousing conversation about this thought-provoking and engaging film. Due to Spring Break and other scheduling conflicts, the group will not meet in April. The next meeting will be on Friday May 24th from 7-10 p.m. at the Weinstein's house (30 Chestnut Street, Westborough). The group is for all Sha'arei Shalom members ages 13-16. Reconnect with your classmates and friends - have fun and maybe even learn some cool things.

For more information about the group, contact Alyssa via text (7742450181) or email (alyssadver@verizon.net).

Mahjong Anyone?

Jenine Pollack is looking to form a mahjong group. If you know how to play, or are interested in learning, please email her at jeninepollack@hotmail.com

Babysitting!

We have two young ladies in the congregation who wanted our membership to know they are available for babysitting. They are Etana Handelman and Lexi Maher. Here are their introductions:

Hi, my name is Etana Handelman. I am looking for opportunities to babysit. I have a unique background as I am the big sister of four little sisters and a brother. As a result I have experience with children of all ages including babies and toddlers. I also successfully graduated from the Babysitting training at Ashland Recreation Center which included CPR and first aid. I am free to babysit Tuesdays, Fridays, Sundays, and most Saturdays. If you are interested in my babysitting services please call [508-881-7188](tel:508-881-7188). Thank you, Etana

My name is Lexi Maher. I live on Pennock road and I love children. I am 12 years old and have taken the Red Cross babysitting course. I can babysit on weekends and various weekday nights. Contact me with any questions at:

508-231-0883 or 774-279-6647
leximaher@hotmail.com

American Red Cross Babysitter Training Class

To provide youth who are planning to babysit with the knowledge and skills necessary to safely and responsibly give care for children and infants. This training will help participants to develop leadership skills; learn how to develop a babysitting business, keep themselves and others safe and help children behave; and learn about basic child care and basic first aid. The recommended age for this course is 11-15 years old.

Please contact Michelle Levenson for more information (617-529-0429, mlevenson@verizon.net)



Are you an alumnus of CYJ in Amherst, NH (03031)?

Our newly formed Alumni Association is looking for you.

Please send a quick e-mail to alumni@campyoungjudaea.com with your name and the years you were at CYJ.

We are looking forward to re-connecting!

DO YOU LOVE TO SING? CHECK OUT SHIR JOY!

Whether you sing professionally or have only sung in your shower, this is your chance to join with other adults who love to sing Jewish music. Shir Joy is a Jewish choir that started up in the fall of 2011. We practice on Sunday evenings from 7-9 pm right at Congregation B'nai Shalom in Westborough. In our first year we had over 35 members from 14 central MA towns & cities. Rehearsals this coming year will begin on October 14 following the High Holidays. Choir participants are not required to be Jewish nor do members need to be affiliated with a Jewish organization to join. We hold several concerts over the year in the Central MA area.

Shir Joy will be directed again this coming year by Jonathan Rappaport, an experienced choral conductor with over forty years of experience. Dues of \$75 per year. Love of Jewish music, and ability to keep in tune with your neighboring singers are required. Although we do make beautiful music together, we also build strong community bonds. We welcome new members. If you are interested in participating or want additional information, check out our website www.shirjoychorus.com, or email ShirJoyMA@gmail.com. Shir Joy is partially funded from a generous grant from Jewish Federation of Central Massachusetts.

WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY FOR YOUNG FAMILIES

PJ LIBRARY IS A JEWISH FAMILY ENGAGEMENT program implemented on a local level throughout North America. We mail free, high-quality [Jewish children's literature and music](#) to families across the continent on a monthly basis.

PJ Library is a program of the [Harold Grinspoon Foundation](#), made possible through partnerships with philanthropists and local Jewish organizations. Today, families in hundreds of communities across the United States and Canada are able to explore the timeless core values of Judaism through books and music.

All families raising Jewish children from age six months of age through five, six, seven or eight years (depending on the community) are [welcome to enroll](#).

<http://pjlibrary.org/>

HOLOCAUST AWARENESS WEEK

APRIL 8–11, 2013

The 21st Annual Robert Salomon Morton Lecture

Author Daniel Mendelsohn



National Book Critics Circle Award winner Daniel Mendelsohn, author of the international bestseller *The Lost: A Search for Six of Six Million*, is the keynote speaker for this year's Holocaust Awareness Week.

Monday, April 8, 2013

5 p.m.

20 West Village F

40A Leon Street

Presented by the Northeastern Humanities Center in partnership with the Holocaust Awareness Committee

All events free and open to the public

northeastern.edu/humanities

Northeastern University
College of Social Sciences and Humanities



Lag Ba'Omer Hike and Picnic, Broadmoor Wildlife Sanctuary

Sunday, April 28

10:30 a.m.-noon

For families with children ages 3-6

\$15/family before Thursday, April 25, at noon; \$20/family, walk-ins

Register [here!](#)

Lag Ba'Omer is a time to remember the scholars and heroes of our Jewish culture and a joyful day to picnic outdoors. Enjoy a family nature adventure led by a Broadmoor educational specialist, followed by a picnic.

We'll provide the dessert; families should bring their own lunch.

*To exercise your mind along with your bodies, you might want to read this **short and informative article** at MyJewishLearning.com about Lag Ba'Omer, a holiday which is little known to many of us. It's traditionally celebrated with the lighting of bonfires and the shooting of bows and arrows, but we've come up with new, kid-friendly ways to celebrate instead!*

[Broadmoor Wildlife Sanctuary](#)

280 Eliot St., Natick

For more information, please contact metrowest@jccqb.org or 508-879-3300

добро пожаловать!

Engaging Metrowest Russian Jewish Families in Jewish Community Life

A grant from the Genesis Fund is enabling us to reach out to Russian Jewish families throughout Metrowest. By developing collaborative relationships, we are identifying and connecting with members of this large and vibrant community through engaging programming and activities.

As part of this program, JFN is also doing special "**Privet Malish**" visits -- **Welcome Baby!** visits with gift baskets and resources tailored for Russian Jewish families.

If you are interested in learning more about our programs or "Privet Malish," or if you know someone who is, please contact our Russian community connector, [Luba Olshan](#), for more information.