



COURTESY PHOTO

Zoriy Zinger, a world-class violinist, will perform at the Kabbalat Shabbat service.

Community invited to Kabbalat Shabbat service

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Congregation Beth Sholom of Leesburg invites the community to what is being billed as a “special, warm, joyous, and festive” Kabbalat Shabbat service at 7 p.m., Friday.

“I am immensely excited about this continuing tradition of our congregation, both because of the highly spiritual nature of this all-musical service and because it affords us the opportunity to bring to our synagogue the extraordinary violinist, Zoriy Zinger,” said Rabbi Karen Allen.

She said the name Kabbalat Shabbat refers to the Friday evening service that welcomes the Sabbath. Many of its central prayers were created in Tzfat, a city in northern Israel which became the largest center of Jewish population in the 16th century. Also called Safed, the city remains to this day the center for study of Kabbalah, the wisdom of Jewish mysticism, which is traditionally said to have been revealed to the Israelites along with the Torah at Mt. Sinai.

Originally studied by only a few initiated scholars, Kabbalah has been made widely accessible in our generation, the rabbi said.

“Zoriy Zinger and I have enjoyed a long collaboration as concert artists,” Allen said. “Shortly after beginning my tenure as rabbi of Congregation Beth Sholom in 2008, I composed piano and violin arrangements to accompany the vocal liturgy for the Friday night service, drawing melodies from the Orthodox, Conservative and Reform traditions represented by our membership.”

Through this musical service, Al-



RABBI KAREN ALLEN

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Margo Berkoff,
secretary for Congregation Beth Sholom

len introduced Zinger to the congregation.

“To everyone’s delight, an affectionate and enduring relationship was created,” the rabbi said. “It has been our pleasure to offer to the community, on behalf of the congregation and with the generous assistance of the Melon Patch Theatre, a

growing series of concerts combining popular and classical music.

“Now, we welcome our friends and neighbors to share with us the musical and spiritual enjoyment of the Kabbalat Shabbat service,” she added. The service is free.

Margo Berkoff, secretary for Congregation Beth Sholom, believes attendees will be touched by the uplifting service of music and song led by the rabbi playing her keyboard and Zinger, a world-class violinist, who was a soloist in the Russian Symphony Orchestra before reaching fame in America.

Zinger has performed at Lincoln Center, programs on television, and stage shows with popular musical artists, including Ray Charles and Ricky Martin.

The Kabbalat Shabbat takes the form of the usual Friday night service for Congregation Beth Sholom members, and the service will be enhanced with musical instruments and additional songs.

Berkoff believes the service will be meaningful and special for those of Jewish faith.

“You won’t want to miss this wonderful celebration of the Jewish spirit in music from Reform, Conservative and Orthodox traditions,” Berkoff said. “You will leave humming or singing tunes that you learned as a child, along with versions of prayers that you may have heard for the first time.”

Refreshments will follow the service.

The synagogue is at 315 North 13th St., Leesburg, with the entrance on Center Street. For information, go to www.bethsholomflorida.org, or call 352-326-3692.