

**“Being Black in America” with Dr. Ruth Allen Ollison**

**Why Shir Shalom families and friends, from 12 to 90+, should hear what Ruth has to say**

Ruth is everything you want a speaker to be—personable, easy to like, full of great personal stories, and most importantly, she’s interested in you. She wants to know why you want to hear her talk about what it’s like to be Black in America.

Ruth grew up in a tiny rural all-Black community in the American south, the daughter of a single mom who worked all her life but never made more than minimum wage. Did Ruth’s mom serve her kids three nutritious meals a day? Did her mom have a car? Has Ruth ever been to Vermont? Has Ruth (or her husband or son) ever been stopped by police for “driving while black?” How did she grow up to be an Emmy-winning TV reporter and a TV News Director (the boss who makes the most money) who won the Emmy for “Best News Show in Dallas”? Why did she stop being a journalist so she could become a Baptist pastor and start a church in building that used to be a crack-house in Houston?

The other night, my teenage grandkids asked my husband and me what racial discrimination looked like and felt like when we were growing up in Washington, DC in the 1950s and 60s. It was hard to explain that we didn’t know that our neighborhoods and elementary schools, movie theaters and swimming pools were all-white because of systemic racism. We said we mostly couldn’t see discrimination.

We invite you to meet my friend Ruth at 7:30 on Saturday night. After an hour, we think you’ll have a better understanding of what it’s like to be Black in America.

--Margie Elsberg, Shir Shalom member & Ruth’s long-time friend