

B'nai Sholom Reform Congregation

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APRIL 2022

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Visit us at <http://www.bnaisholomalbany.org>
ADAR II/NISSAN 5782

B'nai Sholom Reform Congregation is a Brit Olam Congregation in covenant with the world – because we seek the world we want, not the world as it is.

JOIN US FOR PRAYER, MEDITATION, CELEBRATION AND STUDY

Zoom links for services are sent out weekly.

Please call the office for information about telephone access to prayer services.

Friday, April 1	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE	6:13 PM
Saturday, April 2	EXTENDED STUDY	10:00 AM
Friday, April 8	TOT SHABBAT SERVICE	5:00 PM
	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE	6:13 PM
Saturday, April 9	TORAH STUDY	10:00 AM
Friday, April 15	EREV PESACH – First Seder - NO SHABBAT SERVICE	
Saturday, April 16	PASSOVER – First Day	
	TORAH STUDY	10:00 AM
Friday, April 22	YIZKOR FOR SEVENTH DAY OF PASSOVER	6:45 PM
	PASSOVER KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE	7:30 PM
Saturday, April 23	TORAH STUDY	10:00 AM
Wednesday, April 27	YOM HASHOAH SERVICE	7:00 PM
Friday, April 29	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE	7:00 PM
	SOCIAL ACTION SHABBAT	
Saturday, April 30	TORAH STUDY	10:00 AM
Friday, May 6	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE	7:00 PM
Saturday, May 7	EXTENDED STUDY	10:00 AM

Visit <https://reformjudaism.org/learning> for each week's parashah.

B'nai Sholom Reform Congregation, a Reform Jewish synagogue, is a community that fosters individual, family and congregational spirituality by engaging in worship and prayer, promoting learning on all levels, supporting each other's needs, bettering our community and our world, and forging connections with worldwide Jewry.

We take pride in being warm, welcoming, informal, progressive, open-minded, diverse, and participatory.

We strive to create a vibrant Jewish present, linking our ancient traditions with the promise of the future.

From Our Rabbi...

For those who were able to join this year's Purim shpiel (and if you missed it, I'm happy to send you the hilarious – ok, corny – recording!), you may remember that I opened with the “traditional three-fold benediction” for Purim: “They tried to kill us. We survived. Let's eat!” I shouldn't have been surprised at all that the whole room was able to supply the ending, since this summary seems to apply to the majority of our Jewish holidays. The third part, though – the eating part – may be even more important than you think.

Most Jewish holidays have some food that connects to the core meaning of the day, from apples and honey for a sweet Rosh Hashanah to fried foods that remind us of the miracle of oil on Chanukah. For Tu BiShvat, the Kabbalists (a sect of Jewish mystics) created a ritual meal to help us connect to the four categories of tree fruits on a spiritual level: for example, we eat fruits with a hard rind or shell, like nuts, which remind us of our instinct to be defensive; foods like maple syrup represent getting to the pure essence of ourselves, and so on.

On Purim, we traditionally eat hamantaschen – triangular cookies in the shape of Haman's hat (or possibly his pockets or his ears). More importantly, we observe the traditions of *mishloach manot*, sending packages of food to friends and family, and of *matanot l'evyonim*, giving gifts to the poor or oppressed (see [Esther 9:22](#)).

On Passover, however, we shift our attention away from tasty confections. Our primary food association is, of course, matzah. [Deuteronomy 16:3](#) tells us to avoid eating *chametz* (leavened foods) and asks us instead to eat *lechem oni*. We usually translate *lechem oni* as “bread of affliction” – whether the affliction of slavery or our own gastrointestinal reactions to eating that much matzah! – but *oni* also means poverty. Matzah is the “bread of humility” (a slice of humble pie, as it were). When we clean out the puffed-up *chametz* from our homes – perhaps even some leftover hamantaschen – we create an opportunity to search our hearts as well. Do we have any excesses of pride that we need to deflate a bit? Do we have the humility we need in order to admit to ourselves when we've fallen short on our new year's resolutions... and then risk more failure by trying again? Are we prepared to make personal sacrifices to help those in need – giving of our time, energy, skills or resources – and treat everyone with compassion?

Our holiday foods are an important part of how we digest the deeper messages of the Jewish calendar. The Tu BiShvat fruits help us stay grounded and connected to the natural world. Hamantaschen bring us the sweet taste of victory and encourage us to share the wealth with others. And matzah reminds us to settle back down again, evaluate what feeds our self-image and recommit to nourishing healthy egos in the year ahead. Wishing you all a happy and healthy Pesach!

L'shalom,

Rabbi Danielle Weisbrot

From Our President...

As I write for April's bulletin, the world is watching as Ukraine, led by charismatic Jewish president Volodymyr Zelenskyy, resists a massive unjustified Russian invasion of its sovereign territory. The attack on Ukraine has generated global rage and condemnation, with some of the strongest voices coming from the United States. For many American Jews, the situation sparks particular investment: a significant number of American Jews trace their ancestry back to Eastern European Jewry, and Vladimir Putin's cynical claim to be "denazifying" a nation with a Jewish president rings hollow. We have joined our voices to the international community to denounce the invasion and attacks on civilians as war crimes and look for ways to support Ukraine and Ukrainians. The United States and its residents seek to stand forth as a moral beacon as Ukrainian flags fly and buildings are lit in yellow and blue. We press our government to stand forth as leaders and defenders of a just global order that will protect democracy and international accountability.

Little noticed in this tense time was a ruling issued by the United States Supreme Court on March 3. In *United States v. Zubaydah*, the Court found that the government could use the state secrets doctrine, the principle that the need to protect national security can override a litigant's efforts to obtain information vital to the success of a lawsuit, to thwart Abu Zubaydah's decade-long effort to bring accountability to those responsible for his torture at a CIA "black site" in Poland.

In the immediate aftermath of the September 11th attacks, the CIA suspected Zubaydah of being a senior al-Qaeda member with prior knowledge of the attacks. When he was captured by Pakistani officials, he was handed over to the CIA and transferred to a "dark" detention site in March 2002. There, he was subjected to what our government termed "enhanced interrogation" – he was waterboarded at least 80 times, once nearly to the point of death, subjected to simulated live burials in coffins, and raped. A bipartisan Senate Armed Services Committee report concluded that these techniques caused or were contributing factors in the deaths of several prisoners. He was transferred again to a site that many believe was in Poland in 2002 and finally sent to Guantánamo Bay in September 2006, where he has remained ever since. No evidence linking him to the September 11 attacks has ever been made publicly available.

Zubaydah has been seeking legal accountability for years. The European Court of Human Rights ruled that both Poland and Lithuania were in part responsible for the wrongs done to him, but the CIA destroyed videotaped evidence of his interrogations. His lawyers have pressed for the United States to bring criminal charges against him so that his guilt could be disputed in court, but the United States has refused, presumably since much of the evidence that could be presented against him is the fruit of torture. His legal team was working with Polish prosecutors to subpoena those responsible for his mistreatment, CIA contractors James Mitchell and Bruce Jessen, to require them to answer questions under oath about what happened. The latest ruling from the Supreme Court, while it leaves the door open for Zubaydah to refile his suit in a way that does not require the CIA to reveal information about the location of these sites, shamefully delays Zubaydah's pursuit of the truth.

(Continued on page 4.)

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Zubaydah is not the only person who has sought to use the American justice system to shed light on these events. Khaled El-Masri, a German and Lebanese citizen, was seized in 2003 under the mistaken belief that he was an al-Qaeda operative and, like Zubaydah, transferred to a black site and subjected to torture. In his case, the CIA finally acknowledged that he had been detained in error and dumped him in Albania. The ACLU brought suit against the CIA on his behalf in 2006, but the suit was dismissed under the state secrets doctrine. El-Masri finally secured a favorable judgment in the European Court of Human Rights in 2012, which found that Macedonia had violated his rights under the European Convention by transferring him into US custody where he was subjected to torture. The European Court of Human Rights, however, has no jurisdiction over the United States or the CIA.

I am not saying that the wrongs of the United States leave our nation incapable of holding a moral high ground to condemn violations of the international order. Our wrongs, however, make me uneasy, especially because of an apparent national agreement, engaged by all three branches of government under now four different presidential administrations, to refuse to look back and atone. In Jewish terms, we cannot ever fully leave behind our bad actions, even if we vow to do better in the future, if we do not attempt to understand why we engaged in wrongful behavior and to bring justice to those we have wronged. And in the world of international relations, our standing to call out other nations for violations of international law is weakened.

As we prepare for Passover and think about our external freedom from slavery, I encourage us to remember what Moses demanded. He did not just ask Pharaoh to let the children of Israel go. He asked that we be released to worship our divinity and ultimately to receive the timeless code of ethics that would forge us into a people. As we pray for peace now and condemn the actions of other nations, let's not forget that we too have a sacred obligation to hold ourselves accountable for what is done in our name.

L'shalom,

Julie Novkov

Take a "Sideways Dive" into Torah Study with Rabbi Weisbrot

On **Thursday, April 21, at 7:00 pm**, join Rabbi Weisbrot on Zoom for a monthly "sideways dive" into other facets of Torah study – midrashic interpretations, Talmudic commentary and whatever other thoughts and insights come up in the group. No prior registration or experience necessary; just look for the Zoom link in the weekly e-blast!

Casting Call for Service Leaders and Singers



Would you like to lead or co-lead a service? Or how about singing a solo or serving as soloist on a Friday night?

Please consider joining the pool of B'nai Sholom lay service leaders and singers. You'll be glad you did, and the congregation will enjoy additional faces at the pulpit.

Training will be offered for those interested in leading services or singing the songs – or for those who just want to learn! If you have already been trained, this opportunity is still for you as some of the service content has changed.

Please contact Rabbi Weisbrot or Melissa Putterman Hoffmann for more information.

COVID Response Committee Sets Unmasking Timeline



Last month, the Governor lifted New York's masking requirement for businesses and schools. Additionally, the CDC released new metrics for determining if masks are necessary (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/science/community-levels.html>). In response to these changes, the COVID Response Committee has developed an unmasking timeline for B'nai Sholom:

- Shabbat services on 3/11/22: Masks were made optional on the bimah for people who are fully vaccinated and required for everyone else.
- Purim Shpiel on 3/16/22: Masks were made optional on the bimah for people who are fully vaccinated and required for everyone else.
- **Starting 3/18/22: Masks are now optional at B'nai Sholom for everyone who is fully vaccinated. This policy applies to all services, events and activities.**
 - Socially distanced seating continues to be available throughout the sanctuary.
 - All services continue to be multi-access, so anyone who prefers to join remotely is able to do so.

The COVID Response Committee continues to meet regularly and will review and revise this masking policy as needed. Up ahead, the committee will discuss timelines for unmasking children and for serving food at B'nai Sholom.



B'nai Sholom's Caring Community

The Caring Community can call on congregants who are willing and able to mobilize quickly when events such as births, bereavement and accidents make their inevitable way into our lives.

If you or someone you know needs assistance, help and support when:

- ✓ someone is sick or confined
- ✓ a new baby arrives
- ✓ there's been a death in the family
- ✓ there's a tragedy, accident or trauma

Please call the office manager and/or Rabbi Weisbrot – 518-482-5283 – to notify us of the situation so we can initiate our support services.

"On three things does the world stand: On Torah, on worship and on deeds of loving kindness." Pirkei Avot 1:2

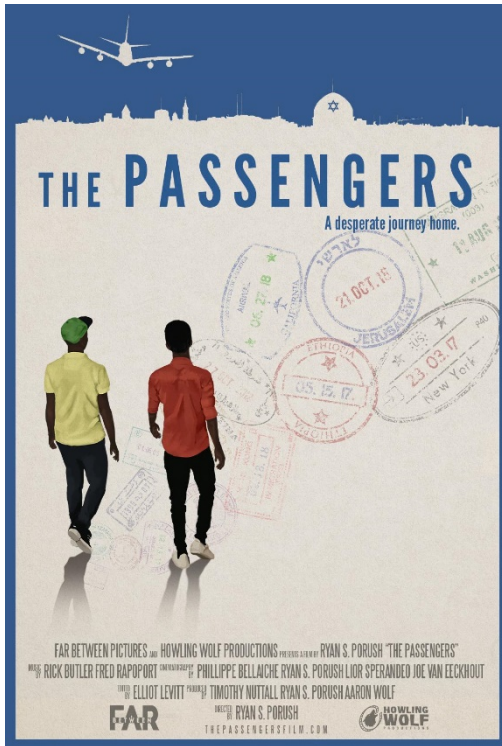
Our Recent Kibbutzniks

Gail and Larry Volk -- In honor of our double chai wedding anniversary

***** **Special Event** *****

Q&A With Filmmaker Ryan Porush

Thursday, May 12, 7:30 PM (via Zoom)



Ryan Porush, who made the film *The Passengers*, will join us in a Q&A about the making of this award-winning documentary and the status of Ethiopian Jewish immigration to Israel.

Porush is a documentary filmmaker and writer based in Los Angeles. He has produced, filmed and edited documentaries and short films around the world, with an emphasis in telling longform, intimate character-driven stories that highlight communities in transition. Ryan's first feature film, *The Passengers*, won the Human Rights Jury Prize at the 2020 Atlanta Jewish Film Festival.

The Passengers tells the story of two young Ethiopian Jews, Demoz and Gazi, as they travel to America seeking advocates who will help pressure Israel into granting them citizenship. Along the way these unlikely spokesmen confront culture shock, homesickness and the frustrations of a grassroots campaign as they navigate the thorny politics surrounding Ethiopian politics and the Zionist ideal.

The film will be available for streaming May 8-12. There is no cost for this program, but please register for the film link and May 12 Zoom event by contacting the office.



New Members!

The congregation extends a warm welcome to our newest members:

- Scott Miller and Sarah Waxman

Social Action/Social Justice

FIGHTING CLIMATE CHANGE – OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

ADD YOUR VOICE!

FRIDAY, APRIL 22 – CLIMATE CAN'T WAIT RALLY at the Capitol

Climate Can't Wait will hold a major Earth Day rally at the State Capitol. Find the forthcoming details at www.climatecantwait.org.

RAC-NY

The Climate Covenant Campaign is a new two- to three-year effort of the Religious Action Center of New York of the Reform Movement. A “retreat” for the Capital Region will be held on **Sunday, May 22**, from 10 AM-2 PM at Congregation Beth Emeth. This is an opportunity to learn from leaders of the fight against global warming and how we can come together in our larger community to make a difference. CONTACT BARRY PENDERGRASS FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO SIGN UP: bpenderg37@gmail.com

TIKKUN OLAM OPPORTUNITY – RIVERSWEEP

Enjoy the outdoors while “repairing the world.” On **Saturday, May 7**, we will again participate in Riversweep. This year’s site is part of the Albany-Hudson Electric Trail. Sign up for an hour or more with Barry Pendergrass: bpenderg37@gmail.com

CHEFS AND BAKERS NEEDED FOR SOUP KITCHEN IN APRIL

On April 17, 2022 (which happens to be Easter Sunday), B'nai Sholom, through the Social Action Committee, will renew its longstanding commitment to serve our less fortunate neighbors a hot and nutritious meal at the Sister Maureen Joyce Center, 369 Livingston Ave., Albany. Volunteers are encouraged to help prepare and serve the meal from 11 AM-2 PM that day.

Additionally, fresh baked dessert goods will be collected from congregants to be distributed to our guests with their meal.

If you would like to volunteer that day, please contact Steve Klein – 518-526-2651 or steven.klein@cseainc.org – or Janet Strominger – 518-421-2241 or jstrominger@yahoo.com.

If you are interested in baking goodies, please contact Becky Marvin: 518-439-4574 or beckymarvin4574@gmail.com. Becky also has freezer space so you can bake anytime.

Thank you!

WELCOMING THE STRANGER – FRIDAY, APRIL 29, 7:00 PM SOCIAL ACTION/SOCIAL JUSTICE SHABBAT

Why Albany is a Destination for Refugees and How You Can Help

In 2019, the Capital District was home to more than 64,000 immigrants. Who are these immigrants and refugees? Why do they come to upstate New York? At Shabbat services we will welcome a speaker from the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants. We will also share information about resources and volunteer opportunities.

B'nai Sholom Legacy Society

Ensuring the Future
of B'nai Sholom ...



... Creating a Jewish Legacy Today.

Save the Date! for a Legacy Reception

Gather for refreshments and conversation with congregants
as we recognize Legacy Society members
and explain how they are already benefitting B'nai Sholom

Thursday, May 19, 2022

7:00 to 8:30 p.m.

Location TBA

All congregants are invited and encouraged to attend!

"As my ancestors planted for me, so do I plant for those who will come after me."-- Talmud Ta'anit 23

MEMBER

Spotlight

On our Newest Members

Editor's Note: A series of articles from the Membership Committee to introduce those who have recently joined B'nai Sholom. This month we welcome Sam Fein.



Sam grew up in Newton, Massachusetts, and moved to the Capital Region to attend Union College. He graduated in 2012 and has lived in Albany since 2013. Sam has a deep family connection to Albany: his great-grandfather grew up on Delaware Avenue and met the woman who became Sam's great-grandmother at a Zionist club at the University at Albany. Sam's family owned a chain of furniture stores in the Capital Region, including

Breslaw Brothers Furniture on South Pearl Street.

Sam is an Albany County legislator representing the 6th district, which includes parts of the South End and Arbor Hill. Sam explained the community he represents is impacted by high poverty as well decades of disinvestment and a history of racially discriminatory policies such as redlining. He is a strong advocate for policies that advance the causes of racial and economic justice.

Sam's hobbies include playing the guitar, participating in outdoor activities, traveling and having conversations about politics, current events and world history. When Sam was looking for a synagogue, he was drawn to B'nai Sholom because our progressive values are consistent with his own progressive social justice-oriented Jewish values. He noted that B'nai Sholom is a smaller congregation that has a strong sense of community.

Sam joined B'nai Sholom to connect more with the Jewish community, grow spiritually, meet new people and engage in Jewish social justice actions

When asked if there was anything else he wanted people to know about him, Sam mentioned that on his mom's side his grandparents were Holocaust survivors who fled the Nazis in Poland and came to America after the war. On his dad's side, his grandfather was an economist who believed health care is a human right and fought for a single-payer health care system, while his grandmother was very involved in Jewish philanthropy work and was president of Combined Jewish Philanthropies in Boston. In closing, Sam said the values that his grandparents taught him are very important to who he is and have led him to try to make a world a fairer and more just place.

The Congregation Notes with Thanks These Contributions:

General Fund

To express ongoing appreciation for **Saturday morning Torah Study, with particular warm and welcoming thanks to Rabbi Weisbrot** by Karen Klevanosky

In memory of **Helen Goody** by Nancy Goody

In memory of **Caleb Reeder** by Mark and Cheryl Reeder

In memory of **Judy Reeder** by Mark and Cheryl Reeder

In memory of **Lieselotte Wiener** by Ruth Swift

In memory of **Rebecca Miller Shultz** by Becky and Ben Marvin

In memory of **Herb Swift** by David and Libby Liebschutz

Caring Community Fund

In honor of a **very special person, Dr. Yossi Koren Roth** with thanks from Cubby and Judy Ross

Vera Propp Books for Babies Fund

In honor of **Annabel Lee-Herbert Fuchs**, granddaughter of Judy Lee and Bill Herbert, by Becky and Ben Marvin

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

In loving memory of **Leonarda and Michael DeFronzo** by the DeFronzo-Aron Family

The congregation notes with sorrow the death of:

Efrosini Frankel, wife of former congregant
Julius Frankel

May her memory be for a blessing.

The following Yahrtzeits will be observed in April

4/1 Sara Steinhart; Harold Lazoroff*; Irma Schwartzman*; Helen Goody; Lillian Gaes Schwadron*; Michael DeFronzo; Caleb Reeder

4/8 Elizabeth Stedman Tuck; Milton Farkas; Christa Polednik; Rebecca Miller Shultz; Gerald Minzer; Dorothy Hess*; Hazel Propp Sohmer; Fanny Engler*; Jacob Hammer*; Sheldon Bosin; Mota Teumim

4/15 Rachel Abrams*; Goldie Goldstein; David Fiks; J. Milton Steinhardt*; Larry Propp; Richard Propp*; Judy Reeder; Herbert Malsky; Rhoda Green

4/22 Sara Rockovitz Propp*; Manuel Aronson*; Anne Smuckler Paktor; Joseph Ottenheimer; Betty Atschuler Gottlieb; Eleanor Zaremsky; Sidney Devore; William Lacov; Lena Wolf*; Muriel Cohen*

4/29 Lieselotte Weiner; Cecelia Zimmelman*; Fay Levinn; George Rudinger; Edward Blumenthal; Anna Raderman

**Denotes that a Perpetual Memorial has been established.*

RABBI: Danielle Weisbrot can be reached at rabbiweisbrot@bnaisholom.albany.ny.us

RABBI EMERITUS: Donald P. Cashman

PRESIDENT: Julie Novkov can be reached at julienovkov@hotmail.com

OFFICE MANAGER: Christine Blackman can be reached at christine@bnaisholom.albany.ny.us

BOOKKEEPER: Maryann Wygel can be reached at bookkeeper@bnaisholom.albany.ny.us

OFFICE HOURS: TUE/WED/THURS/FRI 9:30 AM–4:30 PM

Articles and news received after the deadline are subject to omission.
As a rule, the Bulletin deadline is the 2nd Wednesday of every month. Adherence to the deadline is critical to ensuring that the Bulletin is sent out in a timely manner.

<u>Period Covered</u>	<u>Deadline</u>
May 2022.....	April 13
June 2022.....	May 11