

B'nai Sholom Reform Congregation

420 WHITEHALL RD., ALBANY, NY 12208

Phone: 518-482-5283

E-mail: office@bnaisholom.albany.ny.us

visit us at <http://www.bnaisholomalbany.org>

AUGUST 2020

AV/ELUL 5780

***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 are sent out weekly for services.

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

Friday, July 31	EREV SHABBAT SERVICE	8:00 PM
Saturday, August 1	TORAH STUDY: <i>Va-'ethannan</i>	9:30 AM
Friday, August 7	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE	6:00 PM
Saturday, August 8	TORAH STUDY: <i>'Ekev</i>	9:30 AM
Friday, August 14	TOT SHABBAT SERVICE	5:30 PM
	EREV SHABBAT SERVICE	8:00 PM
Saturday, August 15	TORAH STUDY: <i>Re'eh</i>	9:30 AM
Friday, August 21	EREV SHABBAT SERVICE	8:00 PM
Saturday, August 22	TORAH STUDY: <i>Shofetim</i>	9:30 AM
Friday, August 28	EREV SHABBAT SERVICE	8:00 PM
Saturday, August 29	TORAH STUDY: <i>Ki Tetse'</i>	9:30 AM
Friday, September 4	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE	6:00 PM
Saturday, September 5	EXTENDED STUDY	9:30 AM

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

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...

I've never wanted to live on a kibbutz. Though the ideal of socialism is appealing - who could be against sharing? - I would find the environment too confining. One of the great advantages of living in a more open social setting is how easy it is to make new friends. Outside a kibbutz I may be part of a long-standing social circle, but right around the corner a new social circle could become available to me at any time.

The reason I like the possibility of entering a new social circle is the opportunity to reinvent myself. On a kibbutz everyone knows my entire history, but in a new social circle no one remembers my flaws and past mistakes. There was a time when every product being sold on TV claimed to be "New and Improved!" and today a long-running TV show promotes an upcoming episode as "All New!" In a new social circle, I can present my *self* as new and improved. In fact, I can recreate any part of my *self* that I wish.

When people meet me and find out that I am a professional Interim Rabbi, they often ask, "Isn't it hard to move around from one place to another?" Let me say right out that it is hard. But having the opportunity, year after year, to become a blank slate, to become a better Rabbi and a better Jew, makes it worth it. Every day is Groundhog Day for me. (Here I refer to the movie starring Bill Murray.) Every day encourages that same lovely introspection that comes in Elul, the month before the High Holidays when we prepare ourselves to change.

For B'nai Sholom, our year together will be a time of introspection and an opportunity to re-envision the congregation. Certainly, we will become more and more familiar with one another as the year unfolds, but for now, it is not such a bad thing to meet as strangers. History offers context and establishes identity, but history can also confine. When strangers meet, everything becomes possible.

L'shalom,

Rabbi David Katz

From Our President...

As we grapple with the continued impact of COVID-19, gradually moving toward a plan to reopen B'nai Sholom safely, I think a lot about the meaning of our building. As Jews, we call our sacred space a sanctuary, a concept that goes back to biblical times. At B'nai Sholom, our own description of ourselves as a warm and welcoming congregation invokes this idea. Many members of our congregation, as well as Rabbi Cashman and Rabbi Katz, have participated energetically and creatively in the process of expanding this sacred space so that it can reach out into our homes and connect our community digitally. It's certainly not the same as being in our physical spiritual home, but it's been awe-inspiring to me to watch people come together to make this work.

The concept of sanctuary, however, also pushes us to think about for whom our synagogue is a home. Like many of you, I have been profoundly moved by recent episodes of police violence against African Americans and the strong challenge raised by Black Lives Matter. The movement encourages a broader consideration of the long shadow that white supremacy has cast over American history. And while it is easy to condemn racism in others, the movement has pushed well-meaning white Americans, including white Jews, to turn our critical eyes toward ourselves. A congregant shared with me [a powerful essay by Black Rabbi Sandra Lawson](#) that highlights the ways that Jewish communities often render Black Jews invisible.

I've sometimes felt powerless when facing such a big, structural and deeply historically embedded problem. Pirkei Avot assures me that I am not obligated to complete the work of dismantling racism, but as a Reform Jew generally and as a member of a Brit Olam congregation, I know I am not free to abandon it.

Our Social Action Committee has developed a plan to address this dilemma. The members recommend several specific actions that they detail in this Bulletin, some of which they will direct and some of which can flow through other committees. I invite our congregation to take up this work with love and hope, to bring justice and inclusion to our Jewish spaces. These actions will help us to make sure that our sanctuary, whether physical or virtual, is living up to the highest Jewish ideals.

Shalom,

Julie Novkov

SOCIAL ACTION/SOCIAL JUSTICE

At the request of the Board of Trustees, the Social Action Committee has developed a blueprint for response to and participation in “Black Lives Matter.” The Committee’s recommendations were approved at the Board meeting on July 7. As the URJ has stated, “Black Lives Matter” is a Jewish value, as our teachings call for equality for all, fair treatment of your neighbor, and the laws apply to everyone.

1. In response to the question, “Ayecha?” (Where are you?) we are adopting the phrase, ***Hinenu. We are here. Black lives matter.*** Our solidarity will be shown to the community with a banner on the building as well as stated on our website and Facebook page.
2. As a *Brit Olam* congregation, all committees are asked to incorporate racial justice and equality into their programming and actions. Congregants are asked to participate in these programs, undertake individual learning and action, advocate for and support communities of color.
3. The Congregation will partner with other initiatives and organizations when appropriate. These organizations could include: the Religious Action Center, the NAACP #WeAreDoneDying campaign and The Poor People’s Campaign.
4. The Social Action Committee will work in tandem with the Board, other committees and Rabbi Katz to develop programs to educate the congregation. Many of these could be accomplished online.

Programs under consideration are:

- Congregational book selection and discussion groups
- speakers
- outreach to Jews of Color
- films
- sermons

Topics under consideration are:

- Criminal justice
- Voting rights and reform
- Environmental impact on minority communities
- Jews of Color
- Economic justice
- Health care
- Innate bias

To read a comprehensive statement of affirmation by the Reform Jewish Leadership of URJ go to:

<https://urj.org/blog/2020/06/12/reform-jewish-leadership-statement-black-lives-matter-jewish-value>

Congregation Says Goodbye at Rabbi Cashman's Farewell Friday Night Service

Scores of congregants, friends, fellow rabbis and family joined Rabbi Cashman via "The Temple of Zoom" for his final Friday night service June 26, wishing him mazal tov in retirement and much happiness in the years to come. The rabbi has served B'nai Sholom for 35 years as spiritual, religious and educational leader. While we had hoped to celebrate his retirement with him in person, everyone called in using Zoom in order to stay safe during the COVID-19 pandemic.

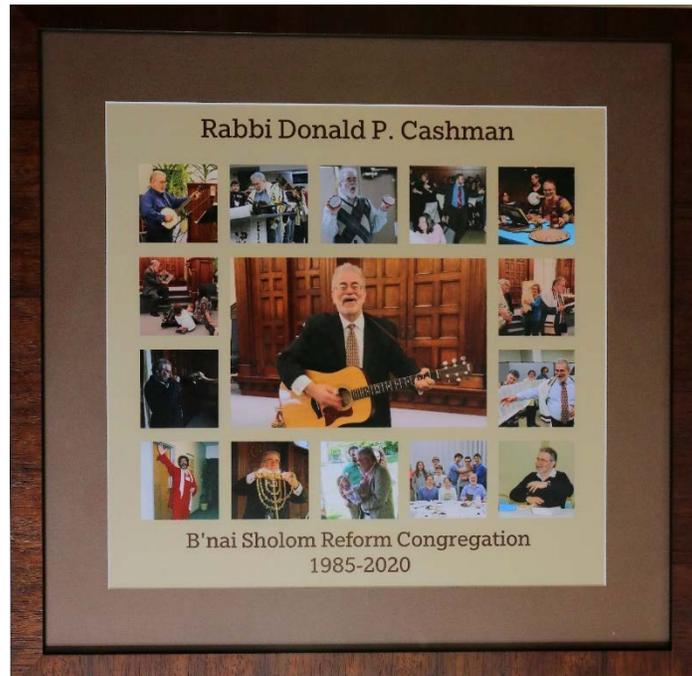
The rabbi led the service from B'nai Sholom, providing a familiar scene by standing in front of the Ark, singing and playing his guitar. Participants watched and listened (or sang at home with muted mics) to the familiar tunes via desktop computers, laptops and telephone screens across the Capital Region and beyond. Board of Trustees President Julie Novkov reminded us of the many memorable ways the rabbi connected with congregants and the greater Capital Region community. The rabbi's sermon highlighted four messages that had dominated his sermons throughout his tenure: imitate God, do something, increase holiness and appreciate the time in which we live.

The congregation presented two gifts to show appreciation of Rabbi Cashman. Phil Teumim announced the congregation had raised funds for a carbon-fiber guitar, which the rabbi could select when the pandemic allows for a trip to the store. This type of guitar is supposed to fare better in the dry heat of Israel than other types, and the rabbi and Sharona plan to move to Israel in a couple of years. Dayle Zatlin presented a memory book of milestones and celebrations during the rabbi's past 35 years at B'nai Sholom. Called "Memories of B'nai Sholom 1985-2020: Through the Years with Rabbi Donald P. Cashman," it was developed with the participation of scores of congregants who submitted photos and written memories. Dayle also unveiled a photo collage of the rabbi that will hang at B'nai Sholom. ***(Please see photo on the next page.)***

Melissa Putterman Hoffmann announced three books will be added to the B'nai Sholom library in honor of Sharona, reflecting her interest in folk dancing, mysteries and feminist Jewish thought. Congregants with musical voices then sang a clever version of *Dayeinu* with new lyrics written by Deb Adler that extolled all the rabbi has done at B'nai Sholom, noting that each accomplishment would have "been enough."

The "retirement section" of the service concluded with Melissa, Deb and Libby Liebschutz singing Debbie Friedman's *T'fillat Haderech*. Melissa noted that this "travelers' prayer" was appropriate for anyone beginning a new undertaking and, therefore, was a prayer for both Rabbi Cashman and for the congregation, as we all approach the changes ahead. Following the presentations, the rabbi delivered a moving prayer for the congregation.

Photo Collage of Rabbi Don Cashman



Become A Kibbutznik

As you know, our biennial auction, which provides crucial support for our temple, was canceled. To alleviate this situation, the Fundraising Committee would like to introduce you to a new concept called **Become A Kibbutznik**. Since the basic concept of a kibbutz is communal living and support for the group, we felt this was an appropriate name for our idea.

We're suggesting that members of the congregation offer the money that would be spent on our Friday night Onegs for use of temple operating expenses. Any amount could be contributed but it would be helpful if you could consider a minimum of \$36. You will have the opportunity to include a celebratory, honorary or memorial message that will be announced in the weekly e-announcements and in the monthly Bulletin.

This will be ongoing so you can **Become A Kibbutznik** at any time during the year. If you have something to celebrate, someone to honor, want to remember someone or just contribute, please send your check to the temple. Indicate that it's for "**Become A Kibbutznik**" and your purpose. We thank you for your support at this difficult time.

JULY/AUGUST KIBBUTZNIKS

Sheila and Bill Schwartz – *In honor of their grandson Jacob Jimenez's graduation from Monmouth University*

Amy Sternstein – *In honor of the Sweet 16 birthdays of Marshall Mushkin and Nettie Spaghetti, her cats.*

Lois Gordon - *In honor of Steve & Amanda's new house in Phoenix, AZ*

Order Form

Memories of B'nai Sholom 1985-2020:

Through the Years with Rabbi Donald P. Cashman

Yes, I would like one or more copies of the book!

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Hardcover, 140# Pearline paper

_____ # of copies X \$69 each = _____

Soft cover, 100# premium luster gloss paper

_____ # of copies X \$42 each = _____

TOTAL AMOUNT DUE: _____

If you have any questions, please feel free to call the Office Manager at 518-482-5283.

Make check payable to "B'nai Sholom Reform Congregation" and mail with this form to:

B'nai Sholom Reform Congregation
420 Whitehall Rd.
Albany, NY 12208

News from the Member Events Committee

The Member Events Committee has experienced challenges recently, in the sense of trying to figure out how one can plan events when “social distancing” is the name of the game. Of course, we had to postpone our Volunteer Dinner/Shabbat and – unfortunately – the Rosh Hashanah Luncheons that we love cannot happen in person this year. But we put our heads together at our last meeting and some of the more tech-savvy members are envisioning something on Zoom for the fall – October, perhaps. We will meet again in August to plan this, and you’ll hear more about it when it has taken shape.

In the meantime, we look forward to meeting Rabbi Katz (in person, we hope?), and certainly appreciate the ability to conduct services via Zoom, whereby we can see our friends and fellow congregants on the screen, if not in person. We wish everyone as good a summer as is possible, and hope that things keep getting better in our area, as opposed to the resurgence in cases with which other, less cautious, states are dealing. We are grateful for Christine’s keeping the home (synagogue?) fires burning and getting out this Bulletin that helps keep us connected.

Editor’s note: One of a continuing series of personal expressions written by congregants and contributed by the Ritual Committee under the theme of “I Come to Services Because...”

Why I Enjoy Going to Services

By Mari Vosburgh

If I were writing this pre-coronavirus, this would be my answer: for the people, the voices, and the prayer book.

People

The congregants are the #1 reason I go to services. Over time and through shared experiences, they have come to be my synagogue family. When I enter the Sanctuary there are always friendly people to greet me, and if I go alone someone beckons to me to sit with them because that’s the kind of conviviality we enjoy in our temple. Before the service begins there is a lot of lively chatter as people catch up on each other’s lives. It is a powerful feeling, this sense of being part of a spiritual community. The invisible links connecting us to each other and to those no longer here form a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. At B’nai Sholom, I feel the same sense of family as I did as a child attending services at the tiny 228 year-old Trinity Lutheran Church of Stone Arabia, New York – of being at home, of being nurtured.

The bonds that exist among B’nai Sholom congregants carry over into our committees and strengthen them. I have learned through my involvement with the Social Action Committee how much a few people can accomplish when united in common purpose.

Voices

This is my #2 reason for attending services: group music and reading. The therapeutic effects of both are well-documented and the pleasures are undeniable. On any given Friday night, you can

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participate fully in the service, reading and singing along in time with others, blending your voice with the entire congregation. Our combined voices are always transporting, and no one need ever hold back from singing for lack of talent. There is pleasure in recognizing individual voices in the group: a resonant bass voice across the aisle; a soprano harmonizing behind you; someone with great enunciation in the back row reciting a prayer and giving it added significance; the familiar voice of a dear friend.

Rabbi Emeritus Cashman had an endless supply of new melodies for familiar lyrics, and I hope we can continue this tradition of trying new tunes. Who has not walked toward the Social Hall for Oneg humming his catchy version of “Shalom Aleichem” after hearing it during services? And though not a human voice, Lenora’s singing bowls take us into another dimension when we are privileged to hear them.

Prayer Book

The text of our prayer book provides an opportunity to step out of our ordinary lives - to transcend the mundane and think about our place in the world, what kind of people we are, what we have done that is helpful or hurtful to others, how we can contribute to Tikkun Olam. We can ponder the holy instead of the secular. We can try to put our past week in perspective and reflect on how to meet challenges to come.

Over time, the more we attend services, the more meaningful the passages become through association and repetition. There is great comfort in their familiarity. Some passages remind me of beautiful songs (Debbie Friedman’s “Sh’ma-You Shall Love,” Noah Aronson’s “Let There Be Love”). Others evoke especially meaningful services I’ve attended, such as my children’s b’nai mitzvah services. I always smile when I open to “When we behold Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and stars that You set in place – What are we humans that You are mindful of us?” (Psalm 8:4-7), a favorite of my late mother Adah. One of my personal favorites shares the page with *Lo Yisa Goy*: “Don’t stop after beating the swords into ploughshares, don’t stop! Go on beating and make musical instruments out of them. Whoever wants to make war again will have to turn them into ploughshares first.” (Israeli poet Yehudah Amichai).

The Zoom Reality

Writing the above during the 2020 pandemic is like chronicling an interrupted dream. At a Zoom service the people are confined in small rectangles, seemingly staring at us or off into space. The personal chatter is awkward at best as we adapt our social skills for the software. We cede page control to a designated page-turner, and our voices must be muted since the lag turns our group singing and reading into a cacophonous mix of pitches and tempos.

But there are many positives: we’re still showing up. We’re still worshipping together, we’re talking when there’s an opportunity, we’re connecting, and even though we can’t hear each other during the service we’re singing and praying together. We can see lips moving, if not hear the sounds they produce. We can see people’s pets, see their homes, their children, see if they are holding up okay during this time of isolation. We can send messages privately (like passing notes in class) or to everyone. Attendance is better than ever. While we await the joy of returning to services in our sanctuary, we infinitely adaptable humans are getting by with our technology and ingenuity.

A great way to let family, friends, colleagues and neighbors know you are thinking of them.

Send the Sweetest of Greetings!



Just in time for Rosh Hashanah, we will ship an 8 oz. jar of Kosher clover honey with a personalized card reading:

"Shana Tova - Wishing you a Healthy and Happy New Year." - signed with your name.

Cost is **\$12.00 per jar.**

The deadline has passed for free shipping within the U.S. A shipping charge of \$5.50 is now added to your order. Additional fees apply for international orders.*

Ordering is quick and easy!

Go to www.honeyfromtheheart.org/BSR.

* Shipping

- Add \$5.50 per jar for shipping within the U.S.
- Regardless of order date add:
 - \$22 for Canada and \$30 for other countries
 - \$5.50 for APO/FPO military addresses
- Order through August 21st for delivery by Rosh Hashanah. Orders accepted throughout the High Holidays.

For more information contact:

Maxine Goldberg

• 518-729-4751 / maxm0304@yahoo.com



A portion of your purchase benefits B'nai Sholom & World ORT*

*World ORT funds a global educational network, schools, colleges, and international programs which propel more than 300,000 students in 35 countries to develop careers and lead fulfilling independent lives. For more information go to ortamerica.com.

The following Yahrzeits will be observed in August.

8/7 Diane Burkowsky; Milton Swartz; Lorraine Tharus; Esther Binewitch*; Isidore Dinkin; Phyllis Gilsenberg; Eva Gordon; Gina Kleinfeld; Walter L. Grayson, Sr.

8/14 Samuel Walker*; Ed Pacuk; Gerald Hazard; Miriam Falb; Lore Hauptman; Robert Stoller; Elaine S. Cashman

8/21 Frieda Hoffmann*; Paul Edward Krochmal; Albert Einstein*; Ann Radosh; Oscar Rozett; Angelina DiPaola

8/28 Rose Kesler; Sydell Morris; Marvin J. Finkelstein*; Arthur T. Singer*; Franklyn Cole*; Nathan Green; Louis Greenstein*; Belle Schwartz; Martin Klein; Minna Katzin*

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

THE CONGREGATION NOTES WITH THANKS THESE CONTRIBUTIONS

General Fund

In memory of **Jason Countryman**, grandson of Anne Hausgaard by Barney Horowitz.

In memory of **Jason Countryman**, grandson of Anne Hausgaard by Becky and Ben Marvin.

In memory of **Harold Roth** by Amy and Yossi Koren-Roth.

In memory of **Dror Koren** by Amy and Yossi Koren-Roth.

In memory of **Ronald Kaplan**, brother of Shari Whiting by Becky and Ben Marvin.

In honor of **Rabbi Don Cashman** by Nancy Maurer and Bruce Bell.

In memory of **Sonny Brenner** by Cheryl and Mark Reeder.

In memory of **Gerda Frankel** by Ruth and Herb Swift.

In memory of **Hyman Moskowitz** by Gail and Larry Volk.

In honor of **Rabbi Don Cashman with all our love and gratitude for everything he has done for our family over the years** by Laurie Shanks and Terry Kindlon.

B'nai Sholom Legacy Campaign Fund

In memory of **Jason Countryman** by Mimi Bruce and David Ray.

Endowment Fund

In honor of **Rabbi Don Cashman's retirement** by the Marvin Family.

Social Action Fund

In honor of **Becky Marvin's special birthday** by Ben Marvin.

Social Action Fund – Books for Babies

In honor of **the birth of Sylvie Grace Garcia**, granddaughter of Barbara and Rich Nussbaum by Becky and Ben Marvin.

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

In honor of **Rabbi David Katz** by Becky and Ben Marvin.

ADULT EDUCATION - FALL 2020

Unlocking “Noah” (via Zoom)

Teacher: Steven Stark-Riemer
Thursdays, September 10 through October 15
10:00 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. (the first and last weeks will run longer)
\$45 non-member; \$35 members

Using the 2014 film “Noah” starring Russell Crowe as a point of departure, this course will examine the ancient Jewish apocryphal and Midrashic literature that was used by the film’s creators to flesh out the rather spare biblical story. Contrary to many reviewers, who accused the moviemakers of making up much of the material in their film, the movie actually is carefully researched and well-grounded in Jewish literature written roughly between 200 B.C.E. and 100 C.E. that did not make it into the Hebrew Bible.

This is a 6-week course that begins with a showing of the film via shared screen on September 10 and October 15 with four study sessions in between. Those who prefer to watch on any other device at a time of their own choosing may do so. Following the re-screening, Steve will lead a discussion of any effect the study sessions had on the second viewing.

Registration Form for Adult Education Classes – Fall 2020

Name(s) _____

Phone _____

Address _____

E-mail _____

Unlocking Noah _____\$45
B’nai Sholom member discounted fee _____\$35

Return form with check payable to: “B’nai Sholom”

**Send to: B’nai Sholom Reform Congregation
420 Whitehall Road, Albany NY 12208**

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- Counseling for anxiety, depression or grief & more
- Home visits and assessments for seniors
- Transportation for Jewish seniors

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JFS wishes you and your family a meaningful,
happy and healthy New Year.

RABBI: David Katz

RABBI EMERITUS: Donald P. Cashman

PRESIDENT: Julie Novkov

OFFICE MANAGER: Christine Blackman

BOOKKEEPER: Jean Dashnaw can be reached at bookbnaisholom@gmail.com

OFFICE HOURS: MON/WED/THURS/FRI 9:30 AM–3:30 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>
September.....	August 12
October.....	September 9