

# *B'nai Sholom Reform Congregation*

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

KISLEV/TEVET 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, December 3	<b>KABBALAT SHABBAT + Chanukah Celebration</b>	<b>6:13 PM</b>
Saturday, December 4	EXTENDED STUDY – Beginning with Samuel Chapter 12	10:00 AM
Friday, December 10	<b>TOT SHABBAT SERVICE</b>	<b>5:00 PM</b>
	<b>KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE</b>	<b>6:13 PM</b>
Saturday, December 11	TORAH STUDY	10:00 AM
Friday, December 17	<b>KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE</b>	<b>7:30 PM</b>
Saturday, December 18	TORAH STUDY	10:00 AM
Friday, December 24	<b>KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE</b>	<b>7:30 PM</b>
Saturday, December 25	TORAH STUDY	10:00 AM
Friday, December 31	<b>KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE</b>	<b>7:30 PM</b>
Saturday, January 1	EXTENDED STUDY	10:00 AM
Friday, January 7	<b>KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE</b>	<b>6:13 PM</b>
Saturday, January 8	TORAH 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...***

Shalom, B'nai Sholom!

Here we are again at “Thanksgivukkah.” Although Chanukah and Thanksgiving haven’t literally overlapped since 2013, the fact that our Jewish Festival of Lights begins only days after our American holiday of gratitude is worth considering.

As you may know, the great sages Hillel and Shammai were constantly in tension with each other over the “right” way to observe holidays, traditions and *halacha* (Jewish law). One famous squabble was a lengthy debate over how to light the Chanukah candles: Shammai proposed we start with eight candles on the first night and decrease from there; Hillel suggested the reverse, that we start with one candle and build up to eight.<sup>1</sup> You can guess who won that argument...

One tradition holds that the reason for building up the number of candles each night is that the miracle of the oil was greater each night. If one day’s worth of oil could last for two days, that’s perhaps within reason. If it lasts for three days, that’s impressive. If it lasts for four days, wow! Et cetera. In this way, increasing the number of lights on our menorah each night reminds us to be more and more grateful for the blessings and miracles in our lives.

To that end, I hope many of you will join us for a brief nightly candle lighting on Zoom this holiday. We’ll gather (electronically) at 7 pm to share a few moments of celebration as a community, with different hosts leading us in the candle blessings, and perhaps a story or a song. The exception, of course, will be December 3 – Shabbat Chanukah – when we’ll have a full service starting at 6:13 pm as usual; those attending in person can bring their lights with them, and those logging in from home can extend the brightness near and far.

I, for one, am thankful to be part of this congregation. I look forward to seeing many of you over the holiday, at Shabbat services, at our regular Saturday morning Torah study, at the new monthly section of Torah study I’ll be leading on Thursday nights (the first session is December 16 at 7:30 via Zoom – look for the link in the weekly e-blast!) and at our other upcoming meetings and events.

Wishing you all a season of warmth, light, gratitude and friendship!

*L’shalom,*

Rabbi Danielle Weisbrot

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<sup>1</sup> Talmud Bavli, [Shabbat 21b](#)

## *FROM OUR PRESIDENT...*

A constitutional scholar and long-term scholarly friend of mine, Mark Graber, is fond of pointing out that in the United States, pretty much every organization from the local chess club to every serious effort in the nation's history (both successful and unsuccessful) to establish a government has led off with some sort of constitution-writing process. Most organizations don't consider making serious changes to their governing processes unless they've entered some kind of crisis. But for residents of the US, transparent governance is important – important enough that any organization significant enough to have a tax profile or be registered with the state has to have some kind of formal structure codified in written bylaws.

Don't worry! None of this is meant to warn the congregation that we are on the verge of a revolution or even a major overhaul of the bylaws. Rather, I write this month to discuss in more depth the role of our major governing body, the Board of Trustees. While the Board has a formal purpose in managing policy and making decisions, it also has an important role serving as a conduit and sounding Board for ideas and discussions brought by congregants. While most of what the Board discusses comes from our many committees, our structure also empowers individuals to bring urgent concerns to the Board's attention for consideration.

The Board of Trustees meets monthly, almost always on the first Tuesday of the month at 7:30 PM. (Exceptions to this tend to be months when there's a conflict, like this September when the first Tuesday of the month fell on erev Rosh Hashanah.) Board meetings are listed on the calendar sent out with the Bulletin every month. Before the pandemic, these meetings were held at B'nai Sholom, but since March 2020, all Board meetings have taken place on Zoom.

Any congregational member may attend Board meetings. To keep things simple, we've been using the same Zoom link every month, which any Board member or I can provide to you by email (to facilitate copying and pasting). The president of the Board provides a draft agenda about a week before the Board meeting and asks at that time if any Board members or the Rabbi know of additional items that should be included. On the Sunday or Monday before the meeting, the finalized agenda and any related materials are circulated.

What happens at a Board meeting? We open by reviewing and approving the previous meeting's minutes. A Board member provides a short d'var Torah on the weekly parashah (often a fascinating part of the meeting for me – Board members come up with some really interesting interpretations for us to ponder). The Rabbi delivers a report or introduces any issues she wants the Board to consider (I remember well the meeting last year when Rabbi Katz used this time to introduce us to the Moments program!). And then we move into discussing a wide variety of topics. They range from post-mortems on recent events to brainstorming for upcoming events and programs to discussing proposals brought to us by committees. Committee proposals may be brought to the Board for input, to make the Board aware of committee plans and secure

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support and participation from Board members or, if needed, to gain Board approval. Some committees and representatives, including Social Action and B'Yachad, report at least briefly to the Board at our meetings each month on their activities. We are working on implementing a system whereby the Board will receive written reports from all committees in advance of our meetings. Occasionally we will tackle policy proposals or consider whether to authorize expenditures that are more than a few hundred dollars. In the spring, we discuss the proposed budget at several meetings before it goes to the congregation.

Within this framework, there's room for congregant participation and concerns. At any time, any member of the congregation can contact any Board member – our contact information is available in the Annual Guide – to request that an item be placed for discussion on the Board's agenda. As the agenda-setter, I am likely to ask that congregant to provide a brief written backgrounder for the Board members to consider and encourage the congregant to attend the meeting to explain the issue in person, but we are always ready to take up and consider such items.

The president, in consultation with the Board, also prepares the agenda for the annual congregational meeting. If a congregant has an issue or proposal they would like to discuss at the annual meeting, we believe it would be better to run it through a Board meeting first for refinement and clarification. Some issues might be resolved successfully without requiring consideration at a congregational meeting, while others will benefit from having been discussed in a smaller meeting in advance. We will remind congregants of this opportunity in the spring in ample time before our annual meeting is scheduled.

In short, though, I remind you that the Board of Trustees is YOUR Board of Trustees. We are always happy to hear about ideas you have for B'nai Sholom and to welcome you into the governance process.

L'shalom,

Julie Novkov

## **Layers of Learning: A New “Sideways Dive” Into Torah**

Every Saturday morning, our B'nai Sholom Torah study group takes a deep dive into either the Torah portion of the week or, monthly, a selection from the Prophets. Starting **Thursday, December 16, at 7:30 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!

# News from the Social Action/Social Justice Committee

## Supporting Voter Rights

A big thank you to the congregants who, along with Rabbi Weisbrot, participated in the Religious Action Center (RAC) of the URJ's National Call-In Week in support of voting rights. They joined other New York State congregations for the **Reform Movement Freedom to Vote** Call-in Days, November 8-11, by calling our U.S. Senators and President Biden to ensure that critical voting rights bills pass.

Mimi Bruce

Nancy Goody

Marilyn Spencer

Valerie Tabak

Julie Novkov

Maggie Tabak

Barbara Devore

Lois Gordon

Gail Volk

Jesse Dinkin

Linda Strohl

Seth Edelman

Gail Golderman

Dave Ray

Martie Teumim

Amy Koren-Roth

Rich Strohl

Becky Marvin

If we omitted the name of any other caller, please know that we are glad you joined in on this effort and be sure to let us know that you did!



Join Family Promise of the Capital Region for a celebration of a successful six years serving homeless families. During the pandemic, congregations (including B'nai Sholom) have continued to provide meals to guest families. Also, Family Promise has provided assistance to many additional families, thus preventing them from becoming homeless.

To join in the celebration:

<https://www.familypromisecr.org/events/>

## News from the Social Action/Social Justice Committee (Cont'd)

### How to Make a Big Impact on Climate Change

The Drawdown Project ranked refrigerant management as the #1 most impactful way to reduce emissions that cause global warming. Why? Because the global warming potential (GWP) of leaked refrigerants is thousands of times greater than carbon dioxide. That is why the Capital Region Interfaith Creation Care Coalition has undertaken a campaign to encourage supermarkets to transition to the newest refrigerants for their coolers. You can help reduce greenhouse gas emissions at home by taking these three steps:

1. Properly recycle appliances with refrigerants. Find out how those appliances are supposed to be recycled in your community and do the right thing.
2. When you shop for new appliances, find ones with low-GWP refrigerants, such as R290 and R600.
3. When working with an HVAC technician, make sure they follow the rules. If you have a central air-conditioning system in your home, hire an EPA-certified HVAC tech to do the maintenance and repairs. Leaks should be fixed and, at the end of their life, refrigerants should be reclaimed.

For more information, see <https://sustainhv.org>.

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### Annual Synagogue Scholars Book Talk Returns

The Adult Education Committee is resuming its Synagogue Scholars series, beginning with Martha Rozett's annual book talk and discussion following Friday evening services on a date in late winter/early spring. This year's book is *Outwitting History: The Amazing Adventures of a Man Who Rescued Millions of Yiddish Books* by Aaron Lansky, the founder and president of the National Yiddish Book Center in Amherst, Massachusetts.

Lansky's 2004 account of his adventures, which began when he was 23 years old, is a wonderful collection of tales about a rag-tag group of young people who saved Yiddish books from extinction, one trip at a time, with borrowed cars and rented trucks, last-minute phone calls and a growing circle of supporters. Lansky and his volunteers visited with elderly Jews who had no one to pass their books on to, and in the process they forged a community and preserved a history and language that was in danger of being forgotten. The book is often hilarious, always heartwarming and, above all, a record of the way the Yiddish language and culture – once thought to be dead – outwitted history by surviving and flourishing.

Interested in reading *Outwitting History*? Copies are available in the Albany Public Library system and at your favorite bookstore. We will acquire a copy for the B'nai Sholom library, which congregants will be encouraged to sign out and return promptly so that others can borrow it. And be sure to watch for an announcement of the date of Martha's Synagogue Scholars talk.

## **Calling Our Musical Congregants**

Making a joyful noise on Shabbat Shira, when we read the Song of the Sea, is a beloved Jewish tradition. On **Friday, January 14 at 7 pm**, we hope singers and instrumentalists will lead the congregation in a musical celebration before and during service. Perhaps you'd like to sing one prayer in the liturgy? Or play an interlude during a silent prayer or before services? Or prepare a group song? This is your chance to share your musical gift with B'nai Sholom! Contact Joseph DeFronzo at [jdefronzo1@gmail.com](mailto:jdefronzo1@gmail.com) to explore the possibilities.

## **“Meet The Rabbi” Open House Draws a Crowd**

Despite the cold, damp weather on Sunday, October 17, more than 80 B'nai Sholom congregants and friends gathered under and around a tent pitched at the back of the parking lot for our “Meet the Rabbi” Open House. Sponsored by the Membership Committee, the event brought people together in an informal setting for a fun afternoon of activities and conversation, all designed to enhance our connections to each other and to our new rabbi, Rabbi Danielle Weisbrot.

A constant stream of children occupied the bounce house and engaged in craft activities in the tent, adults mingled around the various tables showcasing B'nai Sholom committees and activities, and everyone enjoyed the cider and donut holes. Our B'Yachad religious school director, Ruth Malka, was also on hand to meet families and provide information. Meanwhile, the Social Action Committee extended the hours of its winter clothing drive to enable congregants to drop off used clothing and then stay to converse with Rabbi Weisbrot and other attendees.

The high point occurred midway through the afternoon event as everyone crowded into the tent to hear the results of the “Guess to Know the Rabbi” contest. Emcee Susan Aron read through each question of the multiple-choice quiz that had been distributed in advance online, while Rabbi Weisbrot revealed the winning answers. In case you missed reading about them in the Rabbi's message in the November Bulletin, the all-important answers were:

- Favorite holiday: Passover
- Favorite ice cream: vanilla bean
- Her bat mitzvah portion included: the priestly blessing
- Pet she never owned: cat
- She's read more than six times: *Pride & Prejudice*
- Biblical leader she would most like to emulate: Devorah
- Favorite snack: all of the above (cheese, chocolate *and* Jujubes)

Contest winners, who tied at four correct answers each, were Debra Nozik, Valerie Tabak, Rema Goldstein, Gail Volk and one person who did not include their name. Congratulations!

Although gray skies threatened rain throughout the afternoon, it only actually rained for the 10 minutes all were gathered under the tent to hear the contest results. A grateful shout out goes to our resident meteorologist Mike Sullenger, who was monitoring the radar on his phone and told us exactly when to hustle everyone under cover.

Sincere thanks go to the many volunteers who helped with set up, clean up, crafts, refreshments, monitoring the bounce house and tabling for the various committees!

## **Our Recent Kibbutzniks**

Amy Sternstein

In memory of Marshall, the sweetest, most loving cat you could ever know

## **The following Yahrtzeits will be observed in December.**

12/3 David Cohen\*; Bertha Markstein Peckerman\*; Paul B. Blum; Richard Malkin; Edward Wallant; Albert J. Abrams\*; David Gottlieb; Jack Pendergrass; Jacob Lichtenfels\*; Gertrude Slotnick

12/10 Grace Fruiterman; Rita Binenkorb Ray; Sadie Cohen\*; Hannah R. Jaffe\*; Franklin Steinhardt\*; Marvin Millens; Ruth Samber; Erwin Winston\*; Jacob Lazoroff\*; Freda Kussack; Harry Cohen\*; Ruth Aronson\*; Estera Fiks; Adah Vosburgh

12/17 Norma Belle Singer Beatman\*; Samuel Link; Saul Mouchly Small; Hannah Tabak; Adele Broch Krochmal; Morris Adler\*; Cornelius Epstein\*; Waldamar Knieling; Bernard Fleischer\*; Julian Wager

12/24 Florence Morse; Alfred Watman; Judith S. Dobris\*; Anita Dubb\*

12/31 Arnold Rosenberg\*; Roberta Minzer; Mildred Adler\*; Olaf "Sonny" Hausgaard; Lore (Laurie) Lee; Rachel Trombley Porter; Benjamin Sacks; Irving Goodman\*; Michael Leon Kramer\*; Vera Winston Propp\*; Gerald Davis; Jean Pacuk; Joseph Velk\*; Bertha Ginsburg\*; Alan B. Cashman

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## **WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!**

The congregation extends a warm welcome  
to our newest members:

Sam Fein

Shmuylovich Family: Eva, Aleksey, Liliya and Natalie

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## The Congregation Notes with Thanks These Contributions:

### General Fund

In memory of **Ric Crawford** by Deb Adler who donated his tools to B'nai Sholom for use in maintaining the building.

A donation for **technology expenses** by Ann Lowenfels and Steve Redler

In appreciation of **Rabbi Weisbrot performing his wedding** by Elliot Fiks

In memory of **Estelle Nitka** by Cheryl and Mark Reeder

Donation from Howard Domfort

In appreciation of **B'nai Sholom being such a welcoming temple for the High Holy Days** by Hedy Lowenheim

In honor of **attending the services on October 1<sup>st</sup> with our new Rabbi, Danelle Weisbrot** by Gloria Ferras and Lawrence Konstan

In memory of **Richard Brower** by the Brower/Gilly/Zankowsky Family

In memory of **Norman Rosenthal** by Mari Vosburgh

In honor of **the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of David Liebschutz's Bar Mitzvah** by Barney Horowitz

In honor of **the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of David Liebschutz's Bar Mitzvah** by Judy and Roy Fruiterman

In memory of **Libby Glowatz Weisbrot** by Terry S. Curiale

### Vera Propp – Books for Babies Fund

In memory of **Harvey Tress** by Lawrence P and Sara Weist

In honor of **the birth of Ben and Becky Marvin's grandson, Noah** by Mari Vosburgh

Bruce and Edith Goldstein

Martha Rozett

Anita Stein

Amy Vastola

### Social Action – Fresh Food for Families Fund

Maxine, Eric and Ethan Goldberg

Bruce and Edith Goldstein

Hedy Lowenheim

Martha Rozett

Ann Shapiro and Barry Pendergrass

Anita Stein

Amy Vastola

### Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

In appreciation of **Rabbi Weisbrot's support for the celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of his bar mitzvah** by David Liebschutz

In appreciation for **the fine job Rabbi Weisbrot did of making my brother's wedding a joyous event** by Bettina and Howard Stoller

In honor of **the birth of Mark and Cheryl Reeder's new granddaughter, Bella Rose** by Gary and Melissa Putterman Hoffmann

In honor of **the birth of Ben and Becky Marvin's new grandson, Noah Joseph** by Gary and Melissa Putterman Hoffmann

In honor of **David Liebschutz's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of his bar mitzvah** by Gary and Melissa Putterman Hoffmann

A donation from Mimi Bruce and David Ray

A donation from Shari Whiting

# Shop for socks and support B'Yachad Religious School!



Go to:

<https://byachadschoolsockfundraiser.com/>

A portion of every purchase benefits B'Yachad! Order ASAP so they'll arrive in time for Chanukah!

You may also order socks to be donated to people in need in the Capital Region (directions included).

Please contact Lara Kassel, B'Yachad Religious School Board President, at [laradk@gmail.com](mailto:laradk@gmail.com) if you have any questions.

Thank you for supporting B'Yachad Religious School!

**RABBI:** Danielle Weisbrot can be reached at [rabiweisbrot@bnaisholom.albany.ny.us](mailto:rabiweisbrot@bnaisholom.albany.ny.us)

**RABBI EMERITUS:** Donald P. Cashman

**PRESIDENT:** Julie Novkov can be reached at [julienovkov@hotmail.com](mailto:julienovkov@hotmail.com)

**OFFICE MANAGER:** Christine Blackman can be reached at [christine@bnaisholom.albany.ny.us](mailto:christine@bnaisholom.albany.ny.us)

**BOOKKEEPER:** Maryann Wygel can be reached at [bookkeeper@bnaisholom.albany.ny.us](mailto: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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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>
January 2022.....	December 8
February 2022.....	January 12