

# *B'nai Sholom Reform Congregation*

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JANUARY 2018

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TEVET/SHEVAT 5778

## JOIN US FOR THESE SERVICES AND STUDY SESSIONS

Friday, January 5	<b>KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE</b>	<b>6:00 PM</b>
Saturday, January 6	EXTENDED STUDY - Lamentations	9:30 PM
Friday, January 12	<b>EREV SHABBAT SERVICE</b>	<b>8:00 PM</b>
	Synagogue Scholar Harvey Strum - "The Impact of World War I on Jews of the Capital District"	
Saturday, January 13	TORAH STUDY: 'Va-'era'	9:30 AM
Friday, January 19	<b>EREV SHABBAT SERVICE</b>	<b>8:00 PM</b>
Saturday, January 20	TORAH STUDY: <i>Bo'</i>	9:30 AM
Friday, January 26	<b>EREV SHABBAT SERVICE</b>	<b>8:00 AM</b>
Saturday, January 27	TORAH STUDY: <i>Be-shallah</i>	9:30 AM
Friday, February 2	<b>KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE</b>	<b>6:00 PM</b>
Saturday, February 3	EXTENDED STUDY	9:30 AM

***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 others' 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...*

Coming out of Hanukkah, when we celebrate the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem, I've been trying to sort out my feelings about the recognition by the United States of Jerusalem as Israel's capital. Distilling my thoughts as a Reform Jew and a left-of-center Zionist makes for a complicated thought process. In trying to work out a position, I recognize that I can modify, fine-tune, and change my mind.

I start with a few principles: 1) Jerusalem has been the Jewish capital for 3000 years; 2) No one else will look after Jewish interests as well as Jews, i.e. *If I am not for myself, who will be for me*; 3) Israel must remain both a Jewish state and a democratic state; 4) the Palestinians need to have their own homeland; and 5) Israel and the Palestinians must negotiate a resolution to the situation. There are corollaries and sub-principles emanating from these, but I think these are the big ones.

For the entire first millennium BCE, Jerusalem was the Israelite and Judean capital. Following the Destruction and Dispersion, it became a spiritual capital of the Jews. Early in 1949 the Knesset began meeting there, and later that year it was declared the capital. In 1980, a revised Basic Law declares that "Jerusalem, complete and united, is the capital of Israel."

One question is "What is Jerusalem?" Until the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, there was only the Old City; settlement in what's now West (or New) Jerusalem began then. The 1947-48 struggle is well depicted in *O Jerusalem*, the 1972 classic by Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre. The 1967 War brought the Old City and surrounding area under Israeli control, which annexed "East Jerusalem," i.e. the Old City and more, into an expanded Municipality of Jerusalem. These annexations aren't recognized by international law, and have subjected Israel to continual condemnation over the years. Moreover, the international community does not recognize even West Jerusalem as the capital, since the 1947 UN Partition Plan denoted that as an International Zone, neither Jewish nor Arab.

The recent American action therefore ignores international law and the 1947 UN plan. The UN, as we know, spends much energy condemning Israel for everything and anything, and over the centuries the rest of the world has never cared much about Jews. Israel could claim a moral superiority if it extends to minorities the rights deprived of Jews over the centuries. In the pre-1967 borders, Arabs have citizenship and the right to vote; on the other side of the Green Line, the Palestinians are non-citizens in a land that's no longer Jordan, and not Israel. For the demographic argument, let's hope that no Israeli government decides to annex the territory. A better solution would be to stop being an occupying force, but Israel deserves to be secure.

Clearly, a negotiated settlement between the Israelis and the Palestinians would be the best solution to lead to a peaceful coexistence, such as exists with Jordan and Egypt. There are many hard questions, and the geo-politics of that region are inflamed by religious sensibilities. That's the issue in spades with Jerusalem. Within the same square half-mile, there's the Western Wall, al Aksa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock on the Temple Mount/Haram es-Sharif, and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

I, for one, can envision the current Israel capital of [West] Jerusalem remaining so, and that a Palestinian capital could be established in one of the neighborhoods of East Jerusalem. It is hard, however, to imagine the current Israeli government ceding land, even a neighborhood only two miles from Ramallah. Similarly, PA President Abbas, now in the 13<sup>th</sup> year of a 4-year term, is constrained by politics from making concessions.

Could this American recognition push thing along? Could this little bit of movement make Palestinians act before something more drastic occurs? It's possible, but more likely is the perception that America is no longer a neutral party, not that its pro-Israel stance could have ever been in question.

Ideally, I'd like the entire world to acknowledge Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Israel, but I don't see that happening until the children of Isaac and the children of Ishmael sit down and work things out. And that parcel of land in the Talpiot section of Jerusalem that the American have owned for years in contemplation of building an embassy? They should sell it and build apartments, saving one for me. It's a great area.

With enduring hopes for peace in 2018 and beyond –

*Rabbi Don Cashman*

# Synagogue Scholar Series

Our ongoing series of talks by presented following the Friday night Shabbat service

**January 12** – Professor Harvey Strum – “The Impact of World War I on Jews of the Capital District”

This talk on the impact of World War I on the Jews of the Capital District will focus on three major issues - fundraising for war relief to aid the displaced Jews of Eastern Europe and Palestine, the growth of Zionism in the Jewish community and the conflict with anti-Zionists led by the leadership of the neighboring Reform Congregation Beth Emeth, and the search for an American identity by supporting the war effort. Harvey will briefly mention how the Jewish community reacted to pogroms in Poland, Ukraine, and Palestine between 1917-29.

Harvey Strum has taught history and political science at the Sage Colleges for 31 years. He worked on several exhibitions from 1998-2006 on the history of Jewish farmers and the history of Jews in Troy, Albany and Schenectady. His article on Schenectady Jewish immigrants is published on line at the New York History Review and his article on the impact of World War I appeared in Hudson River Valley Review in spring 2016. He spoke about the history of Albany's Jews at the State Library in September and about World I and Jews of the Capital District at the Schenectady County Historical Society in October.

**February 9** - Professor Martha Rozett - A Book Discussion: "Their Promised Land: My Grandparents in Love and War" by Ian Buruma. *Please see related article on page 5.*

**Post Script to Barney Horowitz's Bagel Bakers Union, Local 338 presentation** - For those who can't get enough of "the donut with a college education" google "Brooklyn Public Library" and "bagels." The library has lovingly restored 7 minutes of archival 1979 footage which goes behind the scenes at a Brooklyn bagel shop as the guys make the day's bagels.

## CALLING ALL BAKERS

**Two great opportunities to show off your skills!**



The Social Action Committee needs bakers for two events. These need not be fancy cookies -- brownies and chocolate chip cookies are always popular. If you have a great gluten-free or nut-free recipe, please bake it! Items should be finger-friendly and freezer space is available to store your goodies if you want to make them ahead of time.

On Saturday, **January 13**, B'nai Sholom and two other congregations will host an International Folk Dance event in support of Family Promise of the Capital Region. Dancers get hungry, so we need delicious goodies to refuel them!

And once again, B'nai Sholom Social Action Committee will provide desserts for *Empty Bowls* which will be held on Sunday, **February 4**. The event is sponsored by Hunger Action Network of New York State and the Focus Churches to raise funds for and awareness about hunger in the capital region and throughout the state.

To volunteer to bake, please call Becky Marvin at 439-4574 or email her at [rmarvin@nycap.rr.com](mailto:rmarvin@nycap.rr.com).

International Folk Dancing  
Delmar Presbyterian Church  
585 Delaware Ave, Delmar  
Saturday, January 13, 2018, 6:30-8:30 pm

**To Benefit *Family Promise of the Capital Region*  
Supporting homeless children and their families**



**An Interfaith Event, sponsored by B'nai Sholom Reform Congregation,  
Delmar Presbyterian Church, and Journey United Church of Christ**

B'nai Sholom's Joan and Jim Savitt, experienced folk dance teachers, will teach international dances, including Israeli dances. People of all ages will be included as we all learn together.

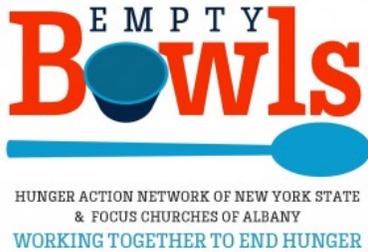
Monetary donations to Family Promise, while not required, are appreciated.

<http://www.bnaisholom.albany.ny.us>

## B'nai Sholom 2018 Summer Campership/Israel Trip Scholarships

Scholarship forms for camp and Israel trips for the summer of 2018 are now available for pick-up at the B'nai Sholom office. You will find them on the table by the main offices. Submission deadline is January 31, 2018. The form is also available at <http://www.bnaisholom.albany.ny.us/scholarship-application-form>.





SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2018  
12:30 pm through 2:30 pm  
Delmar Reformed Church, 386 Delaware Ave.,  
Delmar  
General Admission: \$25, Seniors, Students,  
Children: \$15

A festive family event to support our efforts to end hunger and promote food justice. Choose a locally made soup bowl and enjoy gourmet soups, bread and baked goodies. The bowl is yours to keep as a reminder of the many empty bowls in the world. Your attendance supports the service and advocacy work of hunger Action Network of New York State and the FOCUS Churches of Albany. B'nai Sholom is a member of Hunger Action and our congregational bakers provide the goodies!

Tickets may be purchased in advance by going to the Hunger Action website:  
[www.hungeractionnys.org](http://www.hungeractionnys.org)

## 2018 Synagogue Scholar Book Talk Friday, February 9

Their Promised Land: My Grandparents In Love And War  
by Ian Buruma

Martha Rozett will offer a book talk on this memoir in letters by Ian Buruma, author of many books about China, Japan, World War II, and other subjects. He is a distinguished journalist who has recently been named the editor of *The New York Review of Books*, a publication to which he has contributed for three decades. The book is available on the rack in the hallway or through your local public library.

This is a story of assimilation, sometimes uneasy, not only because the family was affected by anti-Jewish prejudice, but also because they were very aware of the different kinds of Jews they encountered. Buruma says: "Now their kind of melting into the Gentile world might be considered a form of denial, even cowardice," but he refuses to see it that way. So he has written a thoughtful book filled with love letters written from "the trenches in France, from Oxford and Cambridge in the 1920s, from Germany in the 1930s, from a variety of places in World War II," transforming them into a story that will give us an opportunity to reflect on the many varieties of "Jewishness."

Buruma's account of his British grandparents' marriage, is told partly through letters they sent one another from 1915 to 1945. The Schlesinger and Regensburg families, says Buruma, "were English in the way their German Jewish ancestors were German...more so, or at least more self-consciously so, than the 'natives'." He continues: "Already solidly middle-class in Germany, my family did even better in England, where at least one of my two maternal great-grandfathers made a fortune as a stockbroker in the City of London. It is the old immigrant story, assimilation as the sign of higher education and prosperity [and] marks of difference –language, customs, dress, even religion, at least of the Orthodox kind – had been discarded. They wished to be accepted as something they genuinely were: loyal citizens steeped, often more so than the Gentiles themselves, in the cultures they had made their own."

# IT'S TIME FOR THE B'NAI SHOLOM REFORM CONGREGATION ANNUAL PURIM BASKET EXTRAVAGANZA!

*Therefore do the Jews of the villages that dwell in the unwalled town, make the fourteenth day of the month Adar a day of gladness and feasting and a good day, and of sending portions one to another.  
Esther 9:19*

Purim is a day of taking and giving pleasure. For years, we have rejoiced in our deliverance from Haman by sending gifts of special foods to friends and relatives. *Tzedakah* is performed by donating food or money and *mishloah manot* by sending sweet treats to friends. Once again, our congregation would like to provide you with the opportunity to fulfill two of the *mitzvot* of Purim – the giving of *Tzedakah* and *Mishloah Manot (Shalakhmones)*.

You can honor your fellow B'nai Sholom friends and support the congregation's fundraising efforts while participating in this wonderful tradition. A package generally contains Hamantashen, wine or fruit juice, fruits, nuts and other sweets. It is a mitzvah to send to at least two people, but through our congregational Mishloah Manot, you may send to as many as you please within the temple membership.

## HOW DOES IT WORK?

On the attached list, please check the families to whom you would like to send Mishloah Manot. Follow the instructions on the order sheet. Return by **Friday, February 16, 2018**. Listed families will receive only one gift basket with a card listing the names of all the families who had wished to send this greeting. Every family will receive a gift basket.

## WHAT IS THE COST?

Your cost is \$10.00 for the first package and \$1.80 for each additional name that you check on the list.

## HOW CAN I GET MY BASKET?

Baskets may be picked up at Erev Purim Services on **Wednesday, February 28** or during office hours from March 1 through March 7. Any bags not picked up by March 7 will be donated.

**PLEASE NOTE THAT WE WILL DELIVER TO OUR HOMEBOUND CONGREGANTS.**

**CHAG PURIM SAMEACH**

*Mark Your Calendar!!!*

**B'NAI SHOLOM  
GOODS AND SERVICES AUCTION  
Saturday, March 3, 2018**

**Doors open at 6 p.m.  
Live auction starts at 6:30 p.m.**

**Welcome to our Biennial Goods and Services Auction!**

You're invited to bid on fine goods and a unique array of services donated by your fellow B'nai Sholom members. Board members will be calling to ask you to contribute by offering items for our live and silent auction.

Previous auctions have offered one-of-a-kind items, movie tickets, themed baskets, dinners and baked goods, use of vacation homes, gift certificates for entertainment and useful services like general home repair and landscape work.

So, think about what you could provide and who you know who would be willing to contribute and let our board members know when they call you.

Don't miss out on a fun evening with lots of good entertainments and a chance to support B'nai Sholom.

*Refreshments will be available. Crepes will be offered by the Social Action Committee for \$5 each to benefit Family Promise.*

*Admission is \$5 per person*

*Come early to browse the silent auction items on display!*

## **Brit Olam signed and delivered!**

On the recommendation of the Social Action Committee, the Board of Trustees signed the *Brit Olam* from the Religious Action Center (RAC) of the Reform Jewish Movement. B'nai Sholom President Libby Liebschutz delivered the contract at the Union for Reform Judaism Biennial Convention the first week of December.

The *Brit Olam* is a "Covenant with our World because we see the world we want, not the world as it is." It is a contract to help create "a World of Compassion, Justice and Wholeness."

RAC was hoping that 100 Reform Jewish congregations would sign because: *Across North America and around the world, vulnerable populations face profound challenges. As the Reform Jewish Movement, we are committed to meeting the urgency of now with moral leadership through congregational and community based action.*

While our congregation did not have to commit to every point in the *Brit* or have programming for every item, B'nai Sholom has met many of the parameters. Below is the *Brit Olam*. The contract check list is in **bold** and descriptions of our pertinent activities follow each parameter.

WE SIGN THIS BRIT OLAM on behalf of **B'nai Sholom Reform Congregation** in **Albany, NY.**

We, the clergy and lay leaders of **B'nai Sholom Reform Congregation** commit to form a team (or designate an existing team) with at least one clergy member (if our community has one) and two lay leaders to lead our community in one or more of the following: (check all that apply)

- **Acting in solidarity with vulnerable communities**

BSRC/SAC works with these vulnerable communities:

THE FOOD INSECURE through participation:

- collecting food for Regional Food Bank
- working at the Sunday Soup Kitchen
- membership in Hunger Action Network of New York State (HANNYS)
- participation in Empty Bowls fundraising event for HANNYS

-THE HOMELESS

- support congregation for Family Promise of the Capital Region

-REFUGEES AND RELIGIOUS MINORITIES

- Iftar Friendship Dinner with the Turkish Cultural Center
- sponsored Refugee Shabbat
- SA Shabbat to focus on Palestinian-Israeli high school students "Through Others' Eyes"

- **Building relationships across lines of difference in our local community**

BSRC/SAC has sponsored programs about:

-REFUGEES AND RELIGIOUS MINORITIES

see activities listed above

-PRISON POPULATION AND RACIAL MINORITIES

- SA Shabbat focused on the "New Jim Crow" and prison system

(Continued on next page.)

- **Acting at the local, state/provincial, and/or federal levels to address the root causes of injustice through advocacy and/or congregational or broad-based community organizing**

BSRC/SAC has sought to act by:

- providing a “hunger unit” for the religious school which included education and advocacy
- participation in Reform Jewish Voice advocacy days
- year-long focus on advocacy and education about critical issues
- SA Shabbat with speaker from NYCLU

- **Participating in one of the Religious Action Center’s current Urgency of Now Campaigns to act at the local, state/provincial, and/or federal levels**

1. **Protecting the rights of transgender students in our school district**
2. **Defending the rights of immigrants at risk of deportation**
3. **Reforming the criminal justice system to end mass incarceration**

BSRC has been active in Reform Jewish Voice (RJV) which advocates on many of these issues.

- **Participating in a future Urgency of Now Campaign**

-The Social Action Committee would be willing to undertake education re: topics and would consider taking action with BSRC Board approval

- **Participating in a state-wide campaign with the Religious Action Center’s state affiliate**

-Rabbi, congregants and SAC members participate in RJV Advocacy Days  
-With BSRC Board approval would consider future participation on specific issues

- **Fostering a culture of sacred and civil dialogue in our congregation where all opinions are heard**

The contract was signed by Rabbi Cashman, Libby Liebschutz (President) and Becky Marvin (Social Action Committee Co-chairperson)

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO WORK TO BETTER OUR WORLD, PLEASE CONTACT THE SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE! THERE IS MUCH TO BE DONE!

## Photography Display A Success

The photos by Israeli Arab and Jewish High School Aged Youth which were featured at Social Action Shabbat and Shabbat Hanukkah were beautiful and appreciated by all who saw them. If you would like to learn more about The Center for a Shared Society at Givat Haviva, their website is: [www.givathaviva.org](http://www.givathaviva.org).

Contributions for the organization may be sent to:

Through Others’ Eyes

c/o Givat Haviva

601 West 26<sup>th</sup> St., Suite 325-25

New York, NY, 10001

There is also a beautiful “Words with Action” pewter necklace available for \$40 of which \$10 goes to the program. It may be ordered at [givathavivanecklace@gmail.com](mailto:givathavivanecklace@gmail.com)



# Union for Reform Judaism Biennial Update

Three members of the board of trustees participated, along with Rabbi Cashman, in the 2017 Biennial Convention of the URJ held December 6<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>. During the three days, Rabbi Cashman, Libby Liebschutz, Hana Sullenger, and Barbara Devore attended workshops that covered four tracks: strengthening congregations, engaging youth, welcoming all, and tikkun olam (repairing the world). The sessions were extremely helpful, including those addressing creating a welcoming environment for interfaith families, transgender individuals, and people with disabilities. There were multiple sessions providing important information on attracting young people and couples with young children to your synagogue. The workshops in the strengthening congregations track addressed creating a stable financial future, ways to enhance lay leadership, and a roadmap for a healthy rabbinic transition. The track addressing tikkun olam included a session about how congregations can advance rights of refugees and immigrants, and another featuring new social justice songs written to advance current issues. We also attended a workshop addressing the Jewish community in the year 2050. The days and evenings were filled with music, opportunities for text study, and morning and afternoon services. Several of us attended a creative service using poetry and another participated in a service highlighting the voices of women in prayer.

We had the opportunity to hear inspiring speeches by Governor Charlie Baker, the Reverend William Barber, Senator Elizabeth Warren, and Booker Prize winning author David Grossman. On an informal basis there was also the opportunity to speak with clergy and lay leaders from across the country; all were eager to share their experiences and knowledge with us.

Our participation in the biennial provided information we will share with the entire congregation over the next year. As participants we have access to all sessions, including the recorded session and supplemental materials. If you have any questions about specific topics, please contact one of the participants.

The 2019 biennial will take place in Chicago on December 11<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup>. Mark your calendars!

## The following Yahrzeits will be observed in January.

1/5 Michael Leon Kramer\*; Vera Winston Propp\*; Gerald Davis; Jean Pacuk; Joseph Velk\*; Walter L. Hock, Jr; Eleanor Marvin; Kitty Lazoroff\*; Sylvia Brownstein; Mortimer Henry Englander\*; Ethel Horowitz; Avraham Koren\*; Melvin Joseph Rosenkrantz; Julian Wager

1/12 Minnie Edel\*; Martin Loeb\*; Tobey Katz; Theron Vosburgh; Leo Cabelly; Janice Kerper; Bertha Ginsburg\*; Allan B. Cashman; Tirza Freeman

1/19 Rena Bach\*; Harold M. Smuckler\*; Bertha Friedman; Marion Hock\*; William Smith; Bernard Smith; Bertye Balin

1/26 Leonard Samuels; Elizabeth Nelson Mutschler\*; Ronald Weisdorffer; Allen Heffler; Ida Shapiro Jaffe\*; Sandra Samuels; Irving Schwartz; Sylvia Schwartz; Irving Watnick; Merle Schaffer Sperber\*

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

## *Thank you!*

to the following congregants who recently hosted an Oneg Shabbat: Linda and Rich Strohl, James and Joan Savitt, the Social Action Committee, Susan Radosh and Steve Klein and Sandra Rosner and Jeff Haas.

to the Bulletin Brigade who helped fold, insert and stuff envelopes to get the December bulletin out: Joan Savitt, Steve Ableman, Rema Goldstein, Mark and Cheryl Reeder and Anne Hausgaard.

## *Congratulations*

to Paul Finkelman who has been named the new President of Gratz College.

### **THE CONGREGATION NOTES WITH THANKS THESE CONTRIBUTIONS...**

You can contribute online at: <http://www.bnaisholom.albany.ny.us/donations>

#### **General Fund**

In appreciation for **guest tickets for the Days of Awe** by Robin Belansky

In appreciation for **guest tickets for the Days of Awe** by Margery and David Kashman

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

**A Charitable Bequest to B'nai Sholom** by the Estate of Ida Domfort

In memory of **Judy Dobris** by the Family of Judy Dobris

In memory of **Estera Fiks** by Howard, Bettina and Jeremy Stoller

In memory of **Gertrude Slotnick** by Howard, Bettina and Jeremy Stoller

In memory of **Adah Vosburgh** by Mari Vosburgh

In memory of **Theron Vosburgh** by Mari Vosburgh

In memory of **Teddy Knee** by Michael Knee and Karen Kirchofer

In memory of **Gerald Davis** by Randy and Ellie Davis

#### **Library Fund**

In honor of **his sister, JoEllen Duckor's ordination as a Rabbi on December 3 in New Zealand** by Ian and Judith Duckor

#### **Scholarship Fund**

Barbara and Jack Devore

Mark and Cheryl Reeder



**IT'S SNOWING—ARE WE OPEN?** Check the telephone message on the B'nai Sholom answering machine for up-to-date information about cancellations. We will also try to post cancellations on our website. Email blasts will go out for congregational events, and committee members will be notified. All this is predicated on having power.

**RABBI:** Donald P. Cashman

**PRESIDENT:** Elizabeth Liebschutz

**OFFICE MANAGER:** Christine Blackman

**BOOKKEEPER:** Lisa Allendorph

**OFFICE HOURS:** MON/WED/THURS/FRI 9:30 AM–3:30 PM

**As a rule, the BULLETIN DEADLINE is the second Wednesday of each month. With so much information to report, adherence to the deadline is critical to ensuring the bulletin is sent out in a timely manner.**

<b>Period Covered</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
February.....	January 10
March.....	February 14

*Articles and news received after deadline are subject to omission.*