

B'nai Sholom Reform Congregation

420 WHITEHALL RD., ALBANY, NY 12208

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

JULY 2015

Phone: 518-482-5283

visit us at www.bnaisholomalbany.org

TAMMUZ/AV 5775

JOIN US FOR THESE SERVICES AND STUDY SESSIONS

Friday, July 3	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE	6:00 PM
Saturday, July 4	TORAH STUDY: Balak Num. 22.2-25.9	9:30 AM
Friday, July 10	EREV SHABBAT SERVICE	8:00 PM
Saturday, July 11	PSALMS STUDY Extended study with coffee and bagels	9:30 AM
Friday, July 17	EREV SHABBAT SERVICE	8:00 PM
Saturday, July 18	TORAH STUDY: Mattot-Mase'ei Num. 30.2-36.13	9:30 AM
Friday, July 24	EREV SHABBAT SERVICE	8:00 PM
Saturday, July 25	TORAH STUDY: Devarim Deut. 1.1-3.22	9:30 AM
Friday, July 31	EREV SHABBAT SERVICE	8:00 PM
Saturday, August 1	PSALMS STUDY	9:30 AM
Friday, August 7	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE	6:00 PM
Saturday, August 8	TORAH STUDY: 'Ekev Deut. 7.12-11.25	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....

Every once in a while something so unusual comes across my desk that I just can't believe it. Most of what I do is, if not routine, at least variations on a theme. Now and again, though, a unique question, or situation, or opportunity pops up that is so *yotzei min ha-k'lal* – outside the norm – that “excitement” is an understatement to describe how I feel. Such is the adventure that began last January, and which was a secret I shared with only a very small circle.

Early last January a call came in from a research fellow at the Metropolitan Museum in New York. Patricia C. Pongracz, Ph.D. is a specialist in ecclesiastical art, and is currently researching Tiffany Studios' interiors designed for American synagogues from 1890 through 1930. While innumerable churches have Tiffany windows, heretofore only 9 synagogues had been identified containing work by the Tiffany Studios. Dr. Pongracz has since discovered two more.

In the course of her research, she had come to Albany to visit the Wilborn Temple at Swan, Lancaster, and Jay Streets in Albany. That edifice was the original home of Congregation Beth Emeth, built in the late 1880s following the merger of Congregations Beth El and Anshe Emeth, the latter being a split-off from the former 35 years previously, following the infamous Rosh Hashanah fistfight of 1850 featuring Isaac Mayer Wise. The merged congregation needed a larger home, and this grand structure, dedicated in 1889 by Wise, who returned from Cincinnati for the dedication, served them for almost 70 years. When Beth Emeth moved to its present building, they took the Tiffany windows, where they can be viewed in a smaller hall to the north of the present social hall.

Dr. Pongracz went to view those windows, and was given access to the archives. She found there a 1913 copy of the order from Tiffany Studios for portieres for the “Shrine,” i.e., curtains for the Ark. (I remind you that the Ark in question remained with Wilborn Temple after they acquired the building, but that in 1979 B'nai Sholom acquired it for inclusion in our building.) An email from Susan Libby at Beth Emeth – prefatory to the phone call mentioned above – asked if our curtains were the originals. Could they be the 1913 Tiffany curtains?

About a decade ago we had a conservator recommended by the Albany Institute of History and Art clean and restore these curtains. Several dozen of the tassels were newly fabricated, and a new curtain rod was installed to keep them from dragging. No inkling about anything Tiffany.

I came to learn that Louis Comfort Tiffany and his studio made not only lamps and windows, but also furniture and wallpaper as well. Over the decades, the textiles and their documentation were lost, destroyed, worn out, and/or discarded. Ark Curtains, or what we call in Hebrew the *parokhet*, would be something more likely to survive in that they are protected from light and high usage. If these curtains could be linked to this receipt in the archives, we could be the owners of the only surviving documented Tiffany textiles! Dr. Pongracz planned to visit us a few weeks later, and she wanted to bring another more specialized Tiffany scholar with her. She told me that often Tiffany textiles were so marked on the reverse. If the curtains were not sewn up in the back, perhaps I could see that. Unfortunately the snow this winter postponed the February trip, and only in May did they visit.

Entering our Sanctuary, they were awed by our Ark. We who encounter that Ark regularly are perhaps jaded, but these two experts in old artifacts appreciated this magnificent piece of furniture. I opened the Ark; they looked at the velour, and the tassels. “They've been re-lined; the lining on the back is new,” Dr. Paul Doros observed. He picked up the bottom and looked inside. “Too coarse to be Tiffany,” he said. The inside, he explained, was too modern. It was not the original 1913 *parokhet*, but rather a later replacement that we had: the pair of curtains that you see, as well as the other two and the valance that we possess as well.

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It felt like the closing scene of *The Maltese Falcon*, when the “dingus” is realized as a fake. But just as Sydney Greenstreet and Peter Lorre plan to renew their search, the specialists turned their attention to the glass above the Ark doors with the Hebrew words יהי אור *Y’hi Or* (Let there be light). They looked, they talked, we got a ladder and they climbed, they touched, we discussed, and they pronounced that piece of glass a Tiffany. Being scholars and not appraisers in the art world they couldn’t give an authoritative value, but from B’nai Sholom’s point of view the Ark itself is a priceless connection to the Jewish history of Albany.

From the first email in January, I shared each development with Mimi Bruce, our President, and Hal Rosenthal, Chair of the Ritual Committee. Once the glass was declared “Tiffany,” the question was when and how do we reveal it to the congregation. We decided that the Annual Meeting was an appropriate moment. A few hours before that meeting, I contacted Johanna Marvin, now a teacher in Indiana, who, for a pre-Bat Mitzvah project at the time our building was being refurbished in 1998, took that glass home and scraped off the brown paint which had been covering it for some unknown time. Our experts had been apprised of that, and I was told that mercifully there were no scratches on the glass, but we really shouldn’t ever again entrust a 12 year old with that valuable irreplaceable artifact.

L’shalom,

Rabbi Don Cashman

Annual Meeting Approves Budget, Officers, and Trustees



The B’nai Sholom Reform Congregation Annual Meeting was held on Tuesday, June 9, 2015. The meeting began at 7:35 pm, following a “Desserts by the Board” event, with an enthusiastic crowd of just under 50 members in attendance. President Mimi Bruce called the meeting to order and Rabbi Cashman opened with a short D’var Torah on the inevitability of change. The President’s Report continued that theme, focusing on the losses and gains seen by the congregation over the past year, and giving an account of the work of the various committees. The Rabbi similarly presented an overview of the year from his perspective, and also described the recent visit of Tiffany scholars to examine our ark. (See separate article about the result of that visit!)

The budget was presented by Finance Vice President Liz Davis and approved by the congregation. The estimated dues income in the budget is based on a 2% dues increase previously approved by the Board; such an increase will raise full family dues by \$40 this year. Fourteen of the 15 Board members will be returning for another year term, and Brian Sinkoff was elected to fill the vacant seat. Deb Adler will step down as secretary; Joel Bloom will assume that position.

After ten years as a trustee, Jodi Kerper will be retiring. In acknowledging the “new beginning” of this next stage in her life, Mimi presented her with a six pack of He’Brew “Genesis” craft beer and a lovely silver Kiddush cup. The officers and Board of Trustees members were installed and the Annual Meeting was adjourned at 8:40 pm.

B'Yachad Graduation and Siddur Ceremony

It has been a busy and exciting May at the B'Yachad Religious School, the collaborative school of Congregation Ohav Shalom, Temple Israel, and Congregation B'nai Sholom. As the school year came to a close, B'Yachad recognized the achievements of its students of all ages at a school wide closing celebration with song and dance. May was particularly exciting for the second graders, who celebrated a Siddur Ceremony to recognize their growth as accomplished young Jewish learners, and the eighth graders, who reached a milestone of study and a culmination of their elementary Jewish learning.

On May 1st, B'Yachad's eight second graders, taught by Judy Avner, participated in a Siddur Ceremony, in which they received their first prayer books. The second graders led over forty family members and friends in a beautiful Kabbalat Shabbat service. Each student took part in leading a different prayer and together as a class they chanted different Shabbat hymns. The students were very excited, as they enjoyed singing the songs they had worked hard to prepare and showing their families the skills they had learned. The service was followed by a Shabbat dinner with the second graders and their families. The dinner included partaking in Shabbat rituals that the students had learned: the students and families lit the Shabbat candles, and said blessings over the Challah and grape juice. (Please see photograph of second graders posted on the web.)

On May 3rd, B'Yachad honored its thirteen eighth graders at their Graduation, attended by their friends and families, as well as the sixth and seventh grade classes. The Graduation began as Ruth Malka, B'Yachad Principal, gave an opening speech with advice to the graduates on how to embrace their Jewish learning as they move on to new experiences. The graduating students each spoke individually, sharing their thoughts and analysis of a portion of Jewish text. The students displayed the knowledge and understanding they gained throughout their time at B'Yachad and this year, as they learned from their teacher Dan Scher and the Rabbis. Rabbi Rena Kieval, Rabbi Dan Ornstein, and Rabbi David Eligberg led the students in Tefillat HaDerech, the traveler's prayer, and in the Shehecheyanu blessing. The students were presented with diplomas and were congratulated by the Rabbis and Principal, Ruth Malka. The ceremony concluded with festive music and the singing of Oseh Shalom led by Rabbi Don Cashman and with Cantor Rogerio Marx leading everyone in the Israeli and American national anthems.

B'Yachad wishes the best of luck to the eighth grade graduates as they continue their journeys in high school and looks forward to seeing them expand their Jewish education and experiences.

The following Yahrzeits will be observed in July.

- 7/3 Saul Ikler, Eugene Weiss, Buehl Ray, Robert Harris, Cindy Berkowitz*, Janet Greenbaum *, Samuel Englander*, Celia Kaufman*
- 7/10 Lillian Shanks, Stanley Samuels, Sonny Brenner, Eleanor Finkelstein, Esther Epstein*, Harold Roth*, Hyman Moskowitz, Gerald Fruiterman, Elaine S. Cashman, Barbara Wachs
- 7/17 Naftali Propp, Ludwig Bergman*, Leslie Adler, Rosemary Roe, Jean Norris Rudman, Gerda Frankel, Ellen Rudinger, Morris Bosin, Paul Tafler*, Rose Lazoroff*, Edith Eidelman, Eleanor Friedman, Barney Ginsburg*, Rudolph Stern*
- 7/24 Dror Koren, Adele Pastor, Bernice Smith, Evelyn Pogoda, Benjamin Binewitch*
- 7/31 Helen Adler, Kim Kuang Ho, Anne Bergman*, Rose Pollack, Peter Pflanz, Alex M. Rabineau*, Samuel C. Warshaw*

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

Keeping the Promise

B'nai Sholom's participation in support of Family Promise is off to a great start, thanks to coordinators Becky Marvin and Gail Volk and an enthusiastic response to the call for volunteers, especially from Valerie Tabak and Amy and Yossi Koren-Roth, who cooked for a homeless family in June. Thirteen BSRC congregants attended volunteer training in May with Family Promise of the Capital Region, a local interfaith organization that supports homeless families with children. Currently, there are 12 churches that are host sites, which provide families with a "home-base" of operation that includes dinner, a room where the family can sleep together, and breakfast one week at a time on a rotating basis. During the day families receive support services at the Family Promise Day Center that will lead ultimately to finding permanent housing.

Delmar Presbyterian Church hosted guests overnight during the week of June 7. As the support congregation to Delmar Presbyterian, BSRC was responsible for providing dinner and companionship for two nights of that week to the first guest family in the program. Valerie Tabak provided a friendly voice of familiarity to Mom, Dad, 2-year old son and 2-month old daughter by conversing in their native French. Amy and Yossi Koren-Roth also provided a taste of familiarity with the African flavored meal they provided.

Two more families entered the program in mid-June, so Family Promise is now serving five adults, two teens, two young children and an infant. BSRC is scheduled to serve dinner and provide companionship for two more evenings during the week of August and again in November.

Becky Marvin and Gail Volk are coordinating Bnai Sholom's participation in this project under the auspices of the Social Action Committee. Our success depends on the participation of our volunteers. Many thanks to Valerie, Amy and Yossi, and congregants who are scheduled for upcoming months. If you are interested in participating by offering companionship at the program or by cooking, please contact Gail Volk at gailrvolk@aol.com or [518-439-4130](tel:518-439-4130). Training will be provided.

THE CONGREGATION NOTES WITH THANKS THESE CONTRIBUTIONS...

In memory of **Gerry Green** by Randy and Ellie Davis.

In memory of **Earl Marvin** by Ben and Becky Marvin

In memory of **Werner P. Frankel** by Herb and Ruth Swift

In memory of **Ernst Swiwcz** by Herb and Ruth Swift

General Fund

In appreciation by Jodi Kerper and R. Karl and Ben Rethemeyer

Books for Babies Fund

In memory of **Olaf "Sonny" Hausgaard** by Barry Pendergrass and Ann Shapiro.

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

In appreciation by Matthew Malsky and Nancy Newman

In appreciation by Justin Birzon

The following congregants have shown generosity in signing up for additional Patron Dues:

Barbara and Jack Devore

David Ray and Mimi Bruce

Jim and Joan Savitt


Hal Rosenthal and Mari Vosburgh

THANK YOU

to all congregants for our 29th successful blood drive on May 3rd. The Red Cross collected 12 units of blood, which can potentially help 36 patients. Since we started our drives in December 2000, we have collected an astounding 114 gallons of blood. We credit our ongoing success to the many volunteers and donors who participate.

to the following congregants who recently hosted an Oneg Shabbat: Debra Greenberg and Liz Grisaru, Maxine and Eric Goldberg, the Youth and Hospitality Committees, Cheryl and Mark Reeder and Anne Hausgaard.


to the Bulletin Brigade who helped fold, insert and stuff envelopes to get the June Bulletin out: Cheryl and Mark Reeder, Joan Savitt, Anne Hausgaard, Terry Royne and Ellie Davis.



Life is filled with challenges. JFS can help.

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- Transportation for Jewish seniors
- Support through terminal illness or trauma

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Jewish FAMILY Services

Supported by the Jewish Federation of Northeastern New York

Nazel Tov

.....to Bea Malsky, who graduated from the University of Chicago in June with degrees in sociology and in gender and sexuality studies

RABBI: Donald P. Cashman
PRESIDENT: Melody Bruce
OFFICE MANAGER: Christine Blackman
BOOKKEEPER: Lisa Allendorph
OFFICE HOURS: MON/WED/THURS/FRI 9:30 AM – 2:30 PM
The office will be closed the week of August 3-7.

Unlike in past years, the bulletin will be published each month on the regular schedule throughout the summer.

As a rule, the BULLETIN DEADLINE is the second Wednesday of each month.

Period Covered	Deadline
August	July 15
September	August 12

Articles and news received after deadline are subject to omission.