

B'nai Sholom Reform Congregation

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June 2015

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visit us at www.bnaisholomalbany.org

SIVAN/TAMMUZ 5775

JOIN US FOR THESE SERVICES AND STUDY SESSIONS

Friday, June 5	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE	6:00 PM
Saturday, June 6	PSALMS STUDY Extended study with coffee and bagels	9:30 AM
Friday, June 12	EREV SHABBAT SERVICE	8:00 PM
	High School Graduation Shabbat	
Saturday, June 13	TORAH STUDY: Shelah-Lekha Num. 13.1-15.41	9:30 AM
Friday, June 19	EREV SHABBAT SERVICE	8:00 PM
Saturday, June 20	TORAH STUDY: Korah Num.16.1-18.32	9:30 AM
Friday, June 26	EREV SHABBAT SERVICE	8:00 PM
Saturday, June 27	TORAH STUDY: Hukkat Num. 19.1-22.1	9:30 AM
Friday, July 3	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE	6:00 PM
Saturday, July 4	TORAH STUDY: Balak Num. 22.2-25.9	9:30 AM



Please make it a priority to attend the

ANNUAL MEETING TUESDAY, JUNE 9, 2015

**7:00 PM Desserts by the Board
7:30 PM Business Meeting**

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....

Ding dong!

Few of us have been spared from missionaries at the door. Whether it's two young men just out of high school in white shirts and ties toting the Book of Mormon, or older adults distributing copies of The Watchtower from their Jehovah's Witnesses church, we're all familiar with these door-to-door religion salespeople. Lately though, I've been getting phone calls at home inviting me to church, or leaving a biblical verse on the answering machine.

I know that the best thing to do is to politely dismiss them. "Thank you, but no; I already have a house of worship" is a good phrase to have handy. They don't want to spend time dealing with the committed; they are looking for the *unchurched*, those who have no attachment to a religious institution. Thus, when I answered the door one Saturday during lunch with a cheerful "Shabbat Shalom" the missionary knew from my words and the big colorful mezuzah that he'd stumbled upon a home that wasn't going to buy what he was selling. He quickly wished me a blessed Sabbath, and moved along.

The reason to avoid engaging missionaries is that they are trained in the use of texts. Most of the rest of us are not. We don't know how to refute their assertions about the Bible, or religion. We tend to put our emphasis on what Jews should do, and not on how to defend ourselves from missionaries.

Sometimes, though, I don't listen to my own good advice. The fact is I know my way around the Bible, biblical theology and concepts, and I know a little about what they're selling, too, so I am confident going into battle with them. So when the phone call came the other day offering me a verse from the Psalms, I asked for it in Hebrew because – after all – only the Hebrew is authoritative. She didn't have it, but I did: right next to me. I read her the verses, thanked her, and hung up.

Three days later, a thick 6x9 envelope appeared in my mailbox with no local return address. It wasn't even addressed; it was hand delivered. Inside was a DVD and a pamphlet directed towards Jews, aimed at bringing them to an acceptance of Jesus as the messiah. I was creeped out thinking that the phone call might have been connected to the envelope.

I checked with the Jewish Federation's Director of Community Relations, who keeps track of threats against Jews. She wants to know about every missionary contact that is aimed specifically at Jews (i.e., not interested in the people who go to every door). If you get any conversionary mail, phone calls, or visitors who are engaging you specifically because they know you are Jewish, please let me know so I can pass the word. If they are from, or inviting you to a specific church, that information is important.

If you want help interpreting what they are saying, I can help. I may not be able to give you a crash course in refuting missionaries, but I can help you understand their back stories, and agendas.

There's a verse in the Christian Scriptures (i.e., "the New Testament") that some missionary groups understand to mean that they have a special duty to try to convert Jews. Many of the large evangelical denominations have historically had divisions devoted to producing conversionary literature aimed at Jews, and have bankrolled organizations and institutions that project Christianity, but in Jewish terminology. For example, they use "Yeshua" instead of "Jesus," and "New Covenant" instead of "New Testament."

Please don't let yourself be a victim of missionaries, especially the ones who present a distorted view of Judaism.

With best wishes for a safe summer, whether at home or away.

Rabbi Don Cashman

B'Yachad Year in Review



B'nai Sholom students have completed their first year at B'Yachad Community Religious School, our joint partnership with Temple Israel and Congregation Ohav Shalom. The year included many special events at all three congregations, culminating on May 3 with a celebration of a wonderful year of Jewish learning, growth, and achievement. The festivities included inspired presentations of singing and dancing by the K-8 grade students. A highlight of the celebration was the achievement of five B'nai Sholom youth who were among the B'Yachad graduating class. Mazel Tov to Shira Novkov-Bloom, Rose Pass, Ben Rethemeyer, Noah Degroult-Elias and Jesse Grisaru.

Parents, the Board and the Religious School Committee followed this first year with cautious optimism after the decision to partner with B'Yachad. B'nai Sholom continues to maintain a Religious School Committee, which, during this inaugural year, was co-chaired by Maxine Goldberg and Mark Silverbush. The BSRC Religious School Committee worked closely with Rabbi Cashman on a number of items and events throughout the year, such as planning and organizing Shabbat potlucks, the Eisner retreat, T'filat Talmidim and Parent Education. The committee worked closely with the B'Yachad board and provided regular communication to religious school families during the year of transition. The Religious School committee was also able to learn about the exciting work of the four rabbis and cantor involved with B'Yachad.

As agreed upon back when the decision to partner with B'Yachad was reached, the Religious School Committee collected year-end feedback. The feedback was shared with B'Yachad. By and large, the first year experience was praiseworthy:

- B'Yachad is a very welcoming and vibrant environment.
- Special events have been enjoyable.
- The collection of local youth into a community school aids Jewish identity.
- The opportunity to attend an increased number of B'nai Mitzvah services is great.
- The previous educational experience of our youth allowed a smooth adjustment to the B'Yachad curriculum.
- Several parents commented that their concerns about a negative conservative/reform issue really did not materialize.
- Our students feel part of a larger Jewish community.

B'Yachad, which means "together," was formed a few years ago when Ohav Shalom and Temple Israel combined their religious schools. The school is dedicated to teaching Torah, *tefillah*, Hebrew language, holidays, history, Israeli studies, ethics, morals and *mitzvot* to students in kindergarten through 8th grades. Students in grades K, 1 and 8 attend B'Yachad one day a week, while those in grades 2-7 attend two days a week. Beyond 8th grade, B'Yachad encourages young adults who have become bar or bat mitzvah to continue their education by studying at Mifgash, Albany's community Jewish high school program.

B'Yachad will take place at Temple Israel for the 2015-2016 school year. The B'Yachad teachers and staff are busily in the process of moving classroom supplies to Temple Israel in preparation for September and the new school year.

Spotlight on Our High School Graduates



As the school year draws to a close, B'nai Sholom will celebrate its graduating high school seniors at a special Shabbat service and oneg on Friday, June 12. Everyone is encouraged to wish our students well at the High School Graduation Shabbat. Here's an update on our graduates and their future plans:

Shaina Degroult-Elias will be graduating from Bethlehem Central High School, and is looking forward to her summer as a counselor at Eisner Camp. As an Olim Fellow, she will gather with peers from around the country for special leadership weekends throughout next year. In the fall, she will attend SUNY Plattsburgh to study international business.

Ryan Fleischer will also be graduating from Bethlehem HS. He won a multicultural achievement award from UAlbany, the Herbert Applebaum Memorial Scholarship from the JCC, and a silver key painting award. Ryan is also founding member of the Flam Flams, whose music is played regularly on WEQX. He's working this summer as a camp counselor at Camp Givah and swim coach at the YMCA. He will attend Northeastern University in the fall in the College of Art and Media Design.

David Force will be graduating from Christian Brothers Academy, where he wrestled and plays lacrosse. He will attend SUNY Plattsburgh in the fall, where he was recruited as a lacrosse player.

Also graduating from Bethlehem High School will be **Grace Klein**. Among other honors, she was honored for being president of Students for Peace and Survival in both her junior and senior years. Grace will be heading to New York City to attend New York University in the fall, where she hopes to study international relations.

Gabriel Shlomo is graduating from Voorheesville High School. Gabe has been working as a volunteer in the youth services section of the Guilderland Public Library. He is an excellent cook and has been practicing Asian dishes lately. This fall, he will attend the Culinary Program at Schenectady County Community College.

Mitchell Sklar is graduating from Guilderland High School, where he ran both cross country and track. He also participated as a Boy Scout throughout high school and finished as a Life Scout. In the fall, he will attend SUNY Oswego, where he plans to study electrical engineering and computer science.

Another Guilderland High School graduate will be **Eliza Smith**. She is a member of the National Honor Society, and, with Hannah, an active dancer with Tina Marie's Dance Academy Competition Team. This summer, Liza will take a gap year to work with FEMA Corps (a division of AmeriCorps) for 10 months, beginning in July. After that, she will be attending Northeastern University in the fall of 2016, studying psychology/behavioral neuroscience.

Hannah Suib is graduating from Voorheesville High School as a high honors student. She is a member of the Science Olympiad team, which made it to the State competition this year. She has been a member of the Tina Marie's Dance Academy Competition Team for the past 16 years. This summer, she will be a counselor at Eisner Camp. She is going to Brandeis in the fall with plans to major in biochemistry and to minor in dance.

Congratulations to these students and their families, and best wishes for the future!



to **Matthew Rockefeller**, who graduated summa cum laude from SUNY Brockport with a degree in history and received the Robert Griswold History Award and Scholarship, presented to the History Department's Outstanding Graduating Senior. He plans a career as a teacher.

to **Rebecca Liebschutz**, who graduated from the University of Michigan with joint degrees in program in the environment-and in philosophy, politics and economics. This summer she is leading children's programs at the U. of Michigan's Matthaei Botanical Gardens while she plots her course for the future.

to **Lincoln Frasca**, who was named to the Dean's list at the University of Vermont.

to **Valerie Tabak and Jesse Dinkin** on the engagement of their daughter, Casey Dinkin, to Dr. David Woodland.

to **Mark Rosenthal**, son of Hal Rosenthal and Mari Vosburgh, who received a Master of Science in Public Health from Emory University.

to **Barney and Lynn Horowitz** on the birth of their granddaughter, Gavriela Hadar Horowitz, born April 20 to Abby Horowitz and Eli Rosenberg.

The following Yahrzeits will be observed in June.

- 6/5 Earl Marvin, Werner P. Frankel, Ernst Swiwcz, Julius Golderman, Louis H Sobell*, Frances Oschshorn Black*, Bea Fogel, Arthur T. Singer*, Joseph Finkelstein*, Lena Rosenblatt*, Paul Tafler*, Marion Goldstein*
- 6/12 Jacob Aronson*, Babette Singer Samuels, Gertrude Einstein*, Edward Shapiro, Nathan Tauss, Max Brownstein, Sol Gordon, Nathan Hess*
- 6/19 Mildy Fischel, Gerry Green, Lorena Abrams*, Nathan Tauss*
- 6/26 Selma Jarett, Martin Neuberger, Jeanette Katz, Mary Finnan Blakeslee, Bernard Herbert, Goldye Fisher, Sylvia Alowitz Brownstein, Minerva Knee, Ella Kerper, Isadore T. Jaffee*, Jennie Dubb*, Rubin Fiegelson*, Solomon Dachman

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

THE CONGREGATION NOTES WITH THANKS THESE CONTRIBUTIONS...

In memory of **Frances Dobris** by her family.

In memory of **Dorothy Lazoroff** by her family.

In memory of **Glory Swartz** by Jack and Barbara Devore.

In memory of **Olaf "Sonny" Hausgaard** by Brenda Hazard and Steven Morse.

In memory of **Lieselotte Weiner** by Herb and Ruth Swift.

In appreciation of **Ben Marvin's photography talents** by Phillip Teumim.

Books for Babies Fund

In honor of **Matthew Rockefeller** who graduated summa cum laude from SUNY Brockport and won the Robert Griswold History Award and Scholarship, presented to the History Department's Outstanding Graduating Senior by Nancy and Larry Rockefeller.

Social Action Fund

In honor of **Melanie Rockefeller** and her social work with the homeless in Portland, Maine by Nancy and Larry Rockefeller.

THANK YOU

to the following congregants who recently hosted an Oneg Shabbat: Julie Friedman and Bob Negriz, Richard and Jill Rifkin, the Membership Committee, Mark and Jasmine Fleischer, Liz and Jim Davis

to the Bulletin Brigade who helped fold, insert and stuff envelopes to get the May Bulletin out: Cheryl and Mark Reeder, Rema Goldstein, Marilyn and Richard Strassberg, Joan Savitt and Ellie Davis.

Join Us!

**High School Graduation Shabbat
June 12**

Come and celebrate with the families of high school seniors who are graduating this spring.



Helping Families



JFS became my medical advocate and my pillar when I was diagnosed with cancer. They helped my family feel less overwhelmed.

JFS' Norek/Moses Transitions Program supports families who are coping with serious illness. We're your partner in navigating doctor visits and follow up tests, breaking down complex medical information, accessing benefits and more. Our goal is to help you focus on your health and your family.

Please contact us to learn more:

518-482-8856 | jfsneny.org



Supported by Jewish Federation of Northeastern NY

- 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

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
July	June 17
August	July 15
<i>Articles and news received after deadline are subject to omission.</i>	