

# B'nai Sholom Reform Congregation

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JUNE 2016

IYAR/SIVAN 5776

## JOIN US FOR THESE SERVICES AND STUDY SESSIONS

Friday, June 3	<b>KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE</b>	<b>6:00 PM</b>
Saturday, June 4	Extended Study: Proverbs	<b>9:30 AM</b>
Friday, June 10	<b>EREV SHABBAT SERVICE</b>	
	SYNAGOGUE SCHOLAR: Steven Stark-Riemer "When is a Tent Not a Tent?"	<b>8:00 PM</b>
Saturday, June 11	TORAH STUDY: <i>Naso'</i> Num 4.21-7.89	<b>9:30 AM</b>
Sunday, June 12	SHAVUOT - Confirmation	<b>10:30 AM</b>
Friday, June 17	<b>EREV SHABBAT SERVICE</b>	<b>8:00 PM</b>
	High School Graduation Shabbat	
Saturday, June 18	TORAH STUDY: <i>Be-ha'alotekha</i> Num 8.1-12.16	
Friday, June 24	<b>EREV SHABBAT SERVICE</b>	<b>8:00 PM</b>
Saturday, June 25	TORAH STUDY: <i>Shela-Lekka</i> 13.1-15.41	
Friday, July 1	<b>KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE</b>	<b>6:00 PM</b>
Saturday, July 2	Extended Study: Proverbs	<b>9:30 AM</b>

### CONGREGATIONAL ANNUAL MEETING -- Sunday, June 5, 2016 at 7:30 P.M.

ANNUAL  
MEETING



Election of officers

Election of trustees for open board positions

Installation of the new leadership

Approval of next year's budget

Election of the Rabbi

Reports on the year by President Mimi Bruce and Rabbi Cashman

*Preceded by:*

a Dessert Reception at 7:00 P.M. provided by the current Board of Trustees

***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*

The creation of a just society is one of the highest goals in Judaism, one which Reform Judaism has especially been devoted to over the years. While Jews of earlier times may have expected that the perfection of our world would be handed down from on high, it was also agreed that the work had to begin with human effort. Based on these beliefs, a score of Reform Jewish social justice activists arrived in Albany in early May for a day of advocacy sponsored by the Reform Jewish Voice of New York State, a statewide affiliate coordinated out of the Reform Movement's Religious Action Center in Washington, D.C.

RJV of NYS grew out of the recognition that much of the nation's social action agenda was happening on the state house level, and that New York's Reform congregations were divided into five different regions in five different states. I am pleased to serve on the Steering Committee of RJV of NYS.

Advocacy Day exists for us to influence legislation that will lead to the ideal world we envision. Just as Maimonides envisioned an escalating hierarchy of tzedakah, where the highest level is to give someone a job or training so that they do not require the community's assistance, so do we aim to create the society where people do not need the intervention of food pantries, soup kitchens, domestic violence shelters, or correctional facilities. Recognizing that these are distant goals, unachievable in the short term, we nevertheless believe that working towards alleviating the need for these is the highest goal.

We focused on three issues this year:

-The Education Tax Credit (S1976A and A2551A). This bill provides for a state income tax credit for contributions to scholarship funds at non-public schools, up to 90% of the contribution in the Senate version. In essence this bill allows contributors to decide where their tax money goes, and it would have the effect of making other taxpayers responsible for the funding of public schools throughout the state, while the private and parochial schools would benefit from what would have been tax dollars. Our long-standing commitment to the public schools, and to the separation of church and state, calls for us to oppose this. The Senate approved it last year and this year; the Assembly will not take it up (for now). Senator Neil Breslin voted against it, and we thanked him for that position. I've had a number of conversations with Assemblymember Patricia Fahy about this, and I know she is opposed. The bill is heavily supported by the Roman Catholic Church, and both our legislators welcome our support since they hear the other side in their own churches.

-Campaign Finance Reform (S60B and A9535). We seek to close the LLC loophole, which will help restore integrity and transparency to the campaign finance system. It has passed in the Assembly, and we thanked Assemblymember Fahy for her vote. Senator Breslin is a co-sponsor. On the day we were there, it came out of one Senate committee, and was sent to another committee which, unfortunately, is not scheduled to meet again this session. Sadly, this is the way things works.

*(Continued on next page.)*

-East Ramapo School District oversight. This school district in Rockland County has 9,000 public school students, but 24,000 ultra-orthodox students in private yeshivas. The latter community has achieved a majority on the [public] School Board, which has used its authority to the detriment of the public school students: they have cancelled classes, full day kindergarten, and extracurricular activities. They sold an unused school building to a yeshiva at well-below market values (later overturned by a court). To prevent further abuses, the State assigned monitors to the district, but they lacked veto power. While an actual bill has not yet been introduced, co-sponsors and interested parties are coalescing around details to call for the empowerment of the Commissioner of the State Education Department to have oversight on fiscal decisions. Assemblymember Fahy is expected to be a co-sponsor. In the Senate, it is welcome to see a bi-partisan group supporting this, particularly since the majority of the public school students are African American or Latino.

We are fortunate that we are not at loggerheads with our legislators, as were some of the other delegates. I've felt this blessing in past years even more when advocating for women's health issues. If you live outside our synagogue's immediate area (e.g., the districts of Senators Amedore and Farley, or Assemblymembers McDonald, Lopez and McLaughlin) your experience may be different and your voice might be even MORE important. Reaching out to your legislator with a quick phone call or an email can be very important. On one visit, I saw the office staff with a tally sheet on one issue-the pros and cons were duly recorded, and the legislator would presumably vote with the majority.

I like to think of these advocacy visits as "Bringing the Messianic Age, one vote at a time."

*Rabbi Don Cashman*

## New Books in the B'nai Sholom Library – Serious Thinking for Complicated Times



*Not in God's Name: Confronting Religious Violence* by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks (Schocken Books, October 2015)

An important book written by a thoughtful, articulate, knowledgeable man.

*Influence of Jewish Law in Some American Constitutional Amendments* by Roberto Aron (AuthorHouse, July 2012).

The author is a lawyer who has taught at New York University and the Law School of Tel Aviv University. The library committee thought some of our lawyers might find this interesting. We'd be thrilled if someone read it and told us what you thought!

**Did you know that the library has many wonderful novels for children and adults? Prepare for those lazy days of summer; stop by the library and check out new books and old favorites.**

## Come Support “Refugee Awareness” at B’nai Sholom’s June 24 Shabbat Services

- The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the refugee branch of the United Nations, estimates that there are 9.2 million refugees in the world.
- The Religious Action Center (RAC) of Reform Judaism has named June “Refugee Awareness” Month. The political rhetoric in the presidential election has been vitriolic about refugees which compels the Social Action Committee to support the RAC’s effort.
- COME HEAR THE STORY OF ONE FAMILY. COME HEAR HOW B’NAI SHOLOM HAS HELPED.

It has been a year since B’nai Sholom’s Social Action Committee initiative with Family Promise of the Capital Region began. Family Promise is an interfaith response to support homeless families with young children. We partnered with one of the host sites, Delmar Presbyterian Church, to house and feed families one week at a time, four times a year. The first guests were a family who had arrived from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and had to leave their accommodations in Alban. Diane and Atsu and their two children, Arnold and Mounya are now living in their own apartment. Diane will speak about the journey that refugees take and the difficult decision to leave family, friends and community to start over in a new country.

### B’nai Sholom Contributes to Family Promise’s Successful First Year



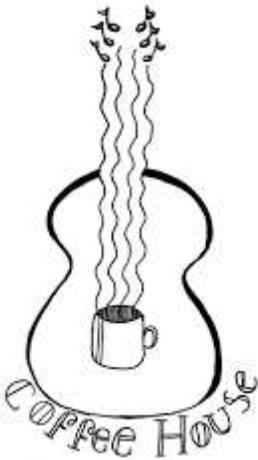
B’nai Sholom’s Family Promise volunteers have been busy at work helping launch the program’s inaugural year in the Capital District. We partnered with the Delmar Presbyterian Church, hosting weeks three times in 2015 and twice so far in 2016. Seventeen of our volunteers prepared dinners and provided companionship as well as helped fill in for overnights when needed. Still others have volunteered at the day center at Bethany Reformed Church which was especially helpful during Christian holidays. All of our volunteers have indicated that they found their experiences to be positive and almost 100% of the volunteers have already participated twice. While there are four families currently being assisted by the program, over the course of the year the program has successfully supported eight families on their way to self-sufficiency. To find out more about the Family Promise program and how you can help, please contact Gail Volk at [gailvolk@aol.com](mailto:gailvolk@aol.com) and please come to the Refugee Awareness Shabbat on Friday, June 24 to hear a presentation from a Family Promise alum who will provide a great understanding about her family’s refugee experience.

#### **FAMILY PROMISE VOLUNTEER TRAINING OFFERED**

*Helping homeless families with young children*

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer for the B’nai Sholom initiative with Family Promise, please contact our coordinator,  
Gail Volk at [gailvolk@aol.com](mailto:gailvolk@aol.com)

## Coffeehouse Delights Attendees B'nai Sholom



The B'nai Sholom coffeehouse, Bet Kafeh, is a wonderful evening filled with story and song. On April 16, hosts Phil Teumim and Will Vail opened the coffeehouse with a few oldies and a mix of sea shanty and cowboy songs from their repertoire as the Delmariners and Delmar Desperados. After a few songs, they turned over the mike and we uncovered some fantastic talent from within the congregation.

One of the highlights of the evening was Aaron Davis, son of Liz Davis. Aaron mesmerized everyone with his piano playing. He played Moonlight Sonata (Beethoven) and came back later to play an original piece. Another highlight was Jeff Klamka's performance. Jeff played a couple of humorous and touching folk songs that he wrote and were a real treat for the audience. Marc Hecker, from the Albany community, performed a couple of folk songs as well. Then Will and Phil returned to the stage to sing a few more songs and that closed out the first half.

The second half of the coffeehouse began with Will and Phil and then we welcomed Dr. Richard Propp to the stage. Richard told a story about when he was at Union College. He wove the threads of the story together in a wonderful way, mixing humor and insight. Ask him about learning French the next time you see him! Rabbi Cashman also entertained us with some songs, some for Passover. Finally, Monica Vail played a few songs with Will. Monica is an accomplished fiddler. The coffeehouse closed with welcoming Jeff Klamka back to the stage for one more original song and then he played with Will and Phil on The Band's The Weight.

All in all, the evening was a delight!

## YOBS Chocolate Seder a Success!

*By Asher Novkov-Bloom*

On Sunday, April 17th, the Youth of B'nai Sholom held a Chocolate Seder for the congregation! We had a great turnout of over a dozen people and enjoyed a variety of chocolate spins on the classic Seder. We had chocolate-covered strawberries instead of parsley dipped in salt water, sour candies instead of bitter herb, and a delicious chocolate pudding instead of charoset, among other chocolate substitutes. Our winner for the afikomen hunt was YOBS member Shira Novkov-Bloom who won a giant inflatable matzah ball!

## *Mazal Tov*

to Matthew Rockefeller, son of Nancy and Larry Rockefeller, on his engagement to Elizabeth ("Lizzy") McGough, R.N., of Rochester, New York.

## **THANK YOU**

to the following congregants who recently hosted an Oneg Shabbat: Linda and Rich Strohl, Dave and Sue Weiss, Fran and Steve Berg, Nancy and Larry Rockefeller, Rabbi Cashman and Sharona Wachs, Maggie Tabak and David Smith, Sandra Rosner and Jeffrey Haas, the Membership Committee and Bill and Sheila Schwartz.

to the Bulletin Brigade who helped fold, insert and stuff envelopes to get the May bulletin out: Joan Savitt, Gary Hoffmann and Richard and Marilyn Strassberg.

**The following Yahrzeits will observed in June**

- 6/3 Joseph Finkelstein\*; Lena Rosenblatt\*; Earl Marvin; Ernst Swiwc; Werner P. Frankel; Julius Golderman; Frances Ochshorn Black\*; Louis H. Sobell\*; Bea Fogel; Saul Goldstein\*
- 6/10 Donald Putterman\*; B. Howard Savitt; Jacob Aronson\*; Babette Singer Samuels; Nathan Hess\*; Gertrude Einstein\*; Edward Shapiro; Sol Gordon; Dorothy Raderman; Jack Raderman
- 6/17 Dora Edelman; Lorena Abrams\*; Mildy Fischel;
- 6/24 Gerry Green; Isadore T. Jaffe\*; Selma Jarett; Leo Levin; Jerome Hoffmann\*; Martin Neuburger; Jeanette Katz; Jennie Dubb\*; Mary Finnan Blakeslee; Goldie Fisher; Bernard Herbert; Ella Kerper; Minerva Knee; Marion Goldstein\*

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

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

**General Fund**

In memory of **Frances Dobris** by the Family of Frances Dobris.  
 In memory of **Dorothy Lazaroff** by the Family of Dorothy Lazoroff.

**Rabbi's Discretionary Fund**

In honor of **the engagement of Matthew Rockefeller and “Lizzy” McGough** by Nancy and Larry Rockefeller.

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

**CLINICAL SOCIAL WORKER POSITION**

**Jewish Family Services is seeking a dynamic clinical social worker** with a breadth of clinical knowledge and experience to work with individuals, older adults and families. The successful candidate will assist a diverse caseload with life's planned and unplanned challenges and transitions. Responsibilities include direct services to clients including individual, family, group therapy, case management and community outreach. Particular focus is on providing services in the Jewish community.

LCSW required, LCSW-R preferred.  
 Part-time, 20 hours to start. Flexible hours. Albany based. EOE

**Please send cover letter and resume to:**  
 Social Worker Search | Jewish Family Services of NENY  
 877 Madison Avenue | Albany, NY 12208  
 Or email info@jfsneny.org | jfsneny.org

JFS is a non-sectarian human service organization founded in 1854 with a mission to strengthen individual, family, and community life by helping people through life transitions and personal challenges. Our services are guided by the Jewish values of treating people with dignity and compassion.



**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

**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><u>Period Covered</u></b>	<b><u>Deadline</u></b>
July	June 15
August	July 13

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