

B'nai Sholom Reform Congregation

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MARCH 2013

ADAR/NISSAN 5773

JOIN US IN MARCH FOR

Friday, Mar. 1	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE	6:00 PM
Saturday, Mar. 2	TEXT STUDY: Prophets <i>Hosea</i>	9:30 AM
Friday, Mar. 8	EREV SHABBAT SERVICE	8:00 PM
	Social Action Shabbat	
Saturday, Mar. 9	TORAH STUDY: <i>Vayakhei-Pekudei</i> Ex. 35.1-40.38	9:30 AM
	SHABBAT MORNING SERVICE	10:30 AM
	All School Shabbat and Kiddush Lunch	
Friday, Mar. 15	EREV SHABBAT SERVICE	8:00 PM
	Grade 4/5 Shabbat Dinner	6:30 PM
Saturday, Mar. 16	TORAH STUDY: <i>Vayikra</i> Lev. 1.1-5.26	9:30 AM
Friday, Mar. 22	URJ FOUNDERS' DAY SERVICE at Congregation	
	Gates of Heaven, Schenectady	7:00 PM
Saturday, Mar. 23	TORAH STUDY: <i>Tzav</i> Lev. 6.1-8.36	9:30 AM
Friday, Mar. 29	EREV SHABBAT HOL HaMOED SERVICE	8:00 PM
Saturday, Mar. 30	TORAH STUDY: Exod. 33:12 – 34:26	9:30 AM
Sunday, Mar. 31	EREV LAST DAY OF PASSOVER, WITH YIZKOR	7:30 PM
Friday, Apr. 5	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE	6:00 PM
Saturday, Apr. 6	TEXT STUDY: Prophets <i>Hosea</i>	9:30 AM
	Extended study with coffee and bagels	

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 Future

Yom Kippur Morning 5773 – September 26, 2012

Imagine with me for a few minutes.

Imagine, that all of us, all humans, were given a single opportunity in our lives to travel. Not to any place, but to somewhere else in time.

This time travel would come with a round trip ticket. You could go anywhere at anytime, and come back with only the normal passage of time. You went away for a week, you'd be a week older; you went away for a month, you'd be a month older.

Instead of taking your week-long December break with your kids at your in-laws, you could cross the Delaware with George Washington. Instead of Passover at your sister's, you could be with Hillel when he first made the sandwich with matza, bitter herbs, and probably the Paschal offering. Or you could cross the Sea with Moses! Instead of downloading Bob Dylan's new album last week, you could go to the Newport Folk Festival in July 1965. Or spend the afternoon with your parents. Or take tea with Jane Austen. Or go woolly-mammoth hunting. Or you could visit the Museum on Mars in 5000 years, or the colony near Alpha Centauri 50,000 years from now.

If you could make this journey just once, would you go to the past, or would you venture into the future?

Moses, in the Torah portion we just read, addresses those standing before him one day around 1225 BCE. He says the Covenant is being made that day not just with those who are actually standing there, but also *את אשר איננו פה עמנו היום* "with those who are *not* here with us this day." The longstanding interpretation history of that passage, indeed the one that is logical, says that Moses is referring to future generations. The Covenant was not just with they who came forth from Egypt or who were born on the way, but with all the subsequent generations, up to and including us, and those who will come in the future, too.

Moses was given the opportunity to do some time travelling himself according to the Talmud (Men. 29b). He saw God putting little crowns, decorations, on the Hebrew letters of the Torah, and asked God what they were for. God said, "Some day there will be a great teacher, Akiva ben Joseph, who will infer heaps and heaps of laws just from all these little decorations."

Moses said, "I'd like to see that," and all of a sudden he was transported into a classroom and sat in the last row. But he couldn't follow there discussions. When they came to a certain point, one of the disciples asked Rabbi Akiva, "How do we know this?"

Said Akiva, "It is a law given to Moses at Sinai."

Moses was reassured, and returned to his own time.

Visiting the future, looking into the future, is, unfortunately, not something we actually get to do. The past leaves remnants, objects, documents, ideas, consequences, but the future is, at best, an educated guess. Can we surmise what the future holds in store for us?

My whole professional career there's been a saying around that the Jews view themselves as "the ever-dying people." It was one of those cynical, humorous truisms we told about ourselves, like the apocryphal telegram: "Start worrying. Details to follow." It was *hameyvin yavin* – those in the know understood the shorthand.

I got curious and wondered if the origin of that phrase was known. I got very lucky. "Israel, the Ever-Dying People," it turns out, is the name of a 1967 essay –based on a 1948 Hebrew original עם ההולך ומת- by Simon Rawidowicz, a professor at Brandeis from 1951 until his death in 1957, by way of Lithuania, Bialystok, Berlin, Israel, London, and Chicago. Rawidowicz wrote

[One] who studies Jewish history will readily discover that there was hardly a generation in the Diaspora that did not consider itself the final link in Israel's chain. Each always saw before it the abyss ready to swallow it up. There was scarcely a generation that while toiling, falling, and rising, again being uprooted and striking new roots, was not filled with the deepest anxiety lest it be fated to stand at the grave of the nation, to be buried in it. Each generation grieved not only for itself but also for the great past that was going to disappear forever, as well as for the future of unborn generations who would never see the light of day.

It's the Jewish equivalent of "the more things change, the more they stay the same."

In the lifetimes of the people in this room we've been threatened by the Nazis and the Communists in Europe; secularism, assimilation, and our own apathy here in America; and in the Middle East: the Arab nations, the Palestinians, and currently, the specter of an Iran with a nuclear weapon. Those are just the biggies of the last 70 years. Some might want to add neo-Nazis here and abroad, the Christian evangelicals that are out to convert us, and cults that hijack our children.

It's a Jewish tradition, I guess, to be pessimistic about future. We are, after all, a People that writes happy songs in minor keys. [*sung mournfully:*] *Uru ahim b'lev same-ah: Rise up, brothers, with a joyful heart!* [from "Hava Nagilah"- (Come, Let Us Rejoice)]

This afternoon we, here at B'nai Sholom, will play an important role in the crafting of the Judaism of the future when we pilot test a new service for Minha, for Yom Kippur afternoon. The feedback that we and a few dozen other Reform congregations in the country provide will aid in the creation of the next generation of Reform liturgy for Yom Kippur. We are told "Let's not think about how it's always been, but about how it might be."ⁱⁱ

You might naturally wonder – I surely do – how changes in the liturgy affect the religion on one hand, and us, ourselves as individuals, on the other hand. I often think that the prayers in the Jewish worship service are a values clarification exercise. They tell us what is important to us, to our culture, to our unique form of religion. To be sure, many other things are going on in the prayers, and some of them we retain out of historical consciousness or great emotional bonds or even just because we like the tune. The Reform Rabbinical community is still trying to figure out how to handle U-netaneh Tokef - "Who shall live, who shall die"- and whether we include it merely as an historic artifact, or find some vestigial meaning in it, or modify it somehow so that something of meaning can be derived, or whether to jettison it altogether. But the climax of the prayer serves to teach us an important and lasting lesson: that our actions have consequences. That, in and of itself, is an important value.

This new Minha service changes the focus of the service totally. The way Yom Kippur services have been –in the traditional Musaf, and in the Reform Minha–was to focus on the past. The core was the Avodah, the ritual of the High Priest, seeking atonement for himself, his clan, and for the entire People of Israel with the slaughter of bullocks, a goat, and rams. Also, there was a whole section on the Hadrianic persecutions of the second century. Our *Gates of Repentance* took these two pieces and transformed them into an elegant history of

the world from the vantage point of the Jew: Creation, Election, Revelation, Monarchy and Temple, Destruction, Exile, Return, Destruction, Exile, Wandering, Scholarship, Persecution, Community building, Holocaust, Statehood...and into the future, when the utopian visions of the Prophets might finally come to pass. Informative, edifying, moving at times, but...how does that help us on Yom Kippur? How does that motivate repentance? How does that facilitate atonement? How will it make me a better person?

The big change in Minha, for now at least, is that the Avodah and the Martyrology are absent. In its place is a Tefillah with enhanced focus on Middot, personal qualities, attributes, or traits that we consider meritorious. The goal of the service is Tikkun Middot: repairing and strengthening those qualities that enable us to be good people. After all, is that not what most would say is the enduring benefit of religion: that it dictates a way for us to be good, and that it inspires us and aids us in that direction. Thus, we shall emerge from here and go into the future as people more able to achieve the high goals we have set for ourselves: to be more loving, more disciplined, more forgiving, grateful for what we have, more able to create a peaceful home and lives of holiness.

When Moses spoke about the generations to come, he was poised just east of the Jordan River as the Israelites were about to enter the Promised Land. For him, for them, the future was to be in the Land of Israel, and had not history been so quirky, the ancient Israelites would have disappeared along with the Amalekites, Ammonites, Canaanites, Edomites, and dozens of other peoples of antiquity. How especially quirky that 1,878 after losing sovereignty over their land, this people would return from the four corners of the earth to re-establish their homeland. In 1900 less than 1% of world Jewry lived in Palestine, and just under 10% lived in the United States. Today, each has about 40%.

In the future – 40 years from now – the best guess is that 55% will be in Israel, and 35% here.

That assumes, however, that the ravings of the Iranians remain just words, and not actions. The Arab nations started threatening to drive the Jews into the sea nearly 65 years ago, and more than once have they tried. But ill-equipped and untrained troops are very different from nuclear weapons controlled by a maniac. It is important for Israel not to underestimate its enemies, and not to dismiss their threats as mere verbiage. We can imagine what Mahmood Ahmadinejad might say today at the UN. We can only hope and pray that diplomatic measures and economic pressure will stifle the Iranians' ability to deliver on their threats and desires. And we must also hope and pray that the Israelis, who have every right to be worried, do not make things worse. While a majority of Israelis is opposed to a pre-emptive strike, the Israelis' audacity is legendary, from snatching Eichmann off the street in Buenos Aires, to the raid on Entebbe, to the bombing of the Osirak reactor. We can appreciate the fact that Prime Minister Netanyahu takes his responsibility to safeguard his country very seriously, as we know that all leaders of Israel have. We also know that Israel is used to being the punching bag of the world community, and will act in its own perceived self-interest, even if it irritates everyone else.

The future of Israel is, of course, not totally dependant on the Iranians failing to live up to their vicious bluster. Moving ahead in a peace process towards secure borders with the Palestinians safely ensconced in their own state would be great for Israel domestically and in the international arena. Dealing with the Jewish settlers in the West Bank will remain a political stumbling block in making this happen.

The impact of the ultra-Orthodox is another unknown for the future of the State of Israel. If they only could be convinced that earning a living, paying taxes, and serving in the Army or in some other sort of national service were worthwhile pursuits, everyone will be better off. Of course, their march towards the medieval, with separate seating on public

buses and different sidewalks for men and women only serve to cleave the country further in two.

Before long, Israel will be home to the majority of the world's Jews for the first time in 2000 years, proving that dreams and hopes can become realities. But a return to the Land is not enough. The simple Zionism of just living there denies the great upward march of the Jewish People throughout time, as the Prophets built on the Torah, and the Rabbis amplified the message of the Prophets. *Or lagoyim*, a light, a beacon to the nations is our task; ראשית צמיחת גאולתנו "the beginning of the flowering of redemption" is supposed to be the theological meaning of the State. Justice must prevail in the land, as traditional and modern reality are woven together to create the holy nation as envisioned.

Judaism tries to enrich our present, using tools from the past, in order to prepare the way for the glorious and ideal future. While part of the Jewish way has been to pray that God would send the Messiah, another parallel strand says that we have to lay the groundwork; we have to bring the Messiah. We build our lives around memories, but aim for a glorious future.

Probably few, if any, of us think about the future along the lines of the great eschatological descriptions given by the Prophets, or the Sages, by any of the other great writers and thinkers over the ages; or even by the science fiction writers of our own time. We mostly measure the future by decades: till graduations, weddings, babies, b'nai mitzvah, grandchildren, retirement; the order will vary by circumstance.

We wonder, I bet, about our legacies. When we are gone, what will the world of our children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren be like? What have we done to ensure a world of goodness for those follow us? Will they have air to breathe, water to drink, soil that will nourish them? Will their brains melt from all the cell phone towers and wi-fi zones that we've created for ourselves? Will their quality of life be as good as ours, or better? Or worse? The news, I'm afraid, is not positive.

But maybe I'm so pessimistic because I'm a member of the ever-dying People. Is it in my genes to find the gloomy cloud that blocks every ray of sun? No, because just as every generation raised the specter that it could be the end of Jews and Judaism, they continued to work to prevent it.

And now that task is ours: to be part of that Covenant that Moses declared on that day – part of a group who would choose life and goodness, and reject evil and death. Our resolve on this Day of Atonement is to choose goodness for ourselves, to transmit it to those around us, to spread it in our communities and our nation and throughout the world...and thereby enabling that love of goodness to move into the future...each day bringing us just a bit closer to that ideal world of perfection, a day when a Day of Atonement will no longer need to exist.

XXX

Please note that office hours have reverted to normal schedule. The office will be open on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. The office will be closed on Tuesday.

WHAT'S AHEAD IN ADULT ED.....

The Adult Education Committee presents a film by noted Romanian Film Director Radu Gabrea

“Gruber’s Journey”

Italian Journalist Collides With The Romanian Holocaust

Romanian, German & Italian with English Subtitles

“Best Director,” 2009 Levante Int’l Film Festival (Italy)

Saturday, March 16

7:30 p.m.

In June 1941, Curzio Malaparte (Florin Piersic Jr.), an Italian journalist and member of the Fascist party, arrives in the Romanian city of Iasi on the way to cover the Russian front. Suffering from severe allergies, he is referred to Josef Gruber (Marcel Iures), a local Jewish doctor. Desperate to find the now-missing doctor, Malaparte navigates the outrageous and increasingly sinister bureaucracy of Nazi-occupied Romania. What begins as an absurdist wild goose chase leads directly to the heart of the final solution, and the disastrous fate of the local Jews.

Following the film, a discussion will be led by B’nai Sholom congregant **Steven R. Nozik**. Dr. Nozik is a licensed psychologist with the Stratton Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Albany, where he created and led the first Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder program treating combat veterans. He also is an Adjunct Professor of Psychology in SUNY Albany’s Department of Psychology.

Refreshments will be served

Suggested donation \$3

Made Available by the National Center for Jewish Film / 100 minutes

“A Conversation” Keeps going

“A Conversation” is our occasional program for non-Jewish congregants and Rabbi Cashman to get together. We’ve met twice: once to talk about the fall holidays, and again to talk about Hanukkah. We’re getting together again on March 3, and April 21 to talk about Passover, and Israel respectively, and you’re invited to join in the conversation on these Sundays from 9:30-10:30 am in the Library.

IT’S SNOWING...ARE WE OPEN? IS THERE A MEETING? IS THERE SCHOOL?

You can find out quickly by listening to these radio stations: WRVE, WFLY, WGY, WYJB or watching these television stations: WNYT TV, WRGB TV, WTEN TV, WXXA TV. We will also post cancellations on our web site and change the telephone message (by 8 am on Sunday mornings). You may also go to our website and subscribe to cancellation e-mails. n.b. cancellation of committee meetings are NOT on radio or TV. Watch for email or call the office and listen to recorded message.

SPRING HOLIDAYS 2013

PASSOVER BEGINS (first Seder) Monday, March 25. Light candles
YOM TOV Tuesday, March 26.
Erev 7th Day YOM TOV: Sunday evening, March 31. Light candles
Service with Yizkor at 7:30 PM

7th Day Monday, April 1

- Reform Jews and Jews in Israel observe 7 days of Passover, which ends after sundown on Monday April 1.
- Non-Reform Jews in the Diaspora observe an additional day of Yom Tov at the beginning (Wednesday March 27) and at the end (Tuesday, April 2)

YOM HASHOAH (Holocaust Memorial Day) (Light Yahrtzeit candle)
Albany Communal Observance this year at B'NAI SHOLOM
SUNDAY, APRIL 7, at 6:45 PM.

YOM HaZIKKARON (Israeli Memorial Day) (light yahrtzeit candle for family's soldiers)
Begins April 13 after Shabbat, and April 14.

YOM HA-ATZMA'UT (Israeli Independence Day)
Begins April 14 at sundown, and April 15.

LAG BaOMER begins Saturday April 27 after Shabbat, and April 28.

EREV SHAVUOT Tuesday, May 7, Services at 7:30 PM. (Light candles)
Wednesday May 8 is Yom Tov.

FALL HOLIDAYS 2013

Erev Rosh Hashanah	Wednesday, September 4
Rosh Hashanah	Thursday, September 5*
Kol Nidrei	Friday, September 13
Yom Kippur	Saturday, September 14
Erev Sukkot	Wednesday, September 18
Sukkot 1	Thursday September 19*
Erev Sh'mini Atzeret/Simhat Torah	Wednesday September 25
Sh'mini Atzeret/Simhat Torah	Thursday, September 26*

* non-Reform Jews in the Diaspora will add an extra day. In Israel, the second day of Rosh Hashanah is observed.

You think the holidays are early? Wait till Hanukkah!

Passover Photographs, Please!

B'nai Sholom congregants have beautiful and heartfelt traditions at Passover. Your Web Site team would love to feature photos of your own Passover seder on our congregational web site, www.bnaisholom.albany.ny.us.

We encourage you to take photos, identify everyone in them, and e-mail them to publicity@bnaisholom.albany.ny.us (or drop them off at the office for us to scan in and display).

Thanks!

By submitting your Passover photos, you are giving B'nai Sholom express permission to display them on the congregation's website and Facebook page, regardless of the subjects' ages. If you are at all concerned about posting photos of children, please do not send photos of or with them.

Passover seats, please! Do you have room at your seder for other congregants? Or for college students? Do you need a place to go for seder? Please contact Becky in the synagogue office: 482-5283.

Social Action

Mark Your Calendars: Our next blood drive will be held on Sunday, May 5 from 8 am to 1 pm in the social hall. March 10 is the cutoff date for donating prior to that drive. Many thanks to those who already signed up to volunteer or to donate - we will call to remind you in the spring.

If you are interested in becoming more involved in our blood drives, please call the temple office. We are always in need of volunteers to help recruit donors and to help run the drives. It's a good way to get to know your fellow congregants!

Mazel Tov!

--to **Melanie Rockefeller** who has maintained a 4.0 in her graduate studies at the University of Maine and has been appointed to the Admissions Committee for School of Social Work.

--to **Matthew Rockefeller** who was named to the Dean's List with Honors at SUNY Brockport.

MONDAY NIGHT SONG SESSIONS are now every other week, on the 1st and 3rd Mondays of the month (instead of every week). Drop-ins welcome! If interested, please contact Libby Lliebschutz at 439-5089 or libbyliebschutz@gmail.com

From the Fundraising Committee:

Shop online

PASTE IN DEB'S COPY

Chilipalooza Results:

It was a lively competition at this year's Chilipalooza, held on February 2. We had a great selection of meat and vegetarian chilis from which to sample. The five that made it into the final round were (these are listed in no particular order): Deb Adler, David Liebschutz, Ric Crawford, Janet Strominger and Cheryl Reeder. We had another round of tasting and voted on the top three of these five. And here are the results.....

3 rd place	Janet Strominger
2 nd place	Deb Adler
1 st place	Ric Crawford, for "Emily's Amherst"

Congratulations to all – it was a fun evening and a tasty dinner all in one.
Thank you for attending! *The Fundraising Committee*

TREE OF LIFE, LOVE AND REMEMBRANCE

B'nai Sholom's Tree of Life, Love and Remembrance stands proudly as a vehicle for your thoughts and can honor the living or memorialize those who are gone. Names of deceased loved ones are listed in our memorial book published annually at Yom Kippur. If you are interested, please complete the form below.

I wish to purchase a leaf on the Tree of Life inscribed as follows: (approx. 60 characters)

Examples: *-In honor of Ploni Almoni's 75th Birthday by his children*
-In memory of my beloved wife, Sarah, by Abraham

Enclosed my check to B'nai Sholom for \$360.

Name and Phone Number of Purchaser

PERPETUAL MEMORIAL

A Perpetual Memorial will provide an announcement of the Yahrtzeit of the deceased perpetually and notification will be sent annually. Names are also listed in our memorial book published annually at Yom Kippur

In order to establish a Perpetual Memorial we ask that you fill out this form.

Name of Deceased _____

Date of Birth _____ *Date of Death _____

*Do you prefer Hebrew or English date for Yahrtzeit? If you prefer Hebrew, please give time of death.

Address to which annual notification should be sent:

Name _____ Relationship to Deceased _____

Address _____

Enclosed is my check to B'nai Sholom for \$180.

THE CONGREGATION NOTES WITH THANKS THESE CONTRIBUTIONS...

General Fund

In memory of **Aaron Stoller** by Howard, Bettina and Jeremy Stoller

In memory of **Sylvia Brownstein** by Arthur and Rita Alowitz

In memory of **Leo Cabelly** by Robin Seguire and family

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

In memory of **Bernard Smith** by Arthur and Rita Alowitz

In memory of **Jesse Amanda Flax** by Jerry Flax

In memory of **Sandra Samuels** by Sharon and Mark Sklar

Social Action Fund

In memory of **William Smith** by Beatrice and Jeffrey Fox

In memory of **William Smith** by Valerie Tabak and Jesse Dinkin

YAHRTZEITS

The following Yahrtszeits will be observed in March:

- 1 Evelyn Turoff*, Eugene Tuck, Avi Ezra, Irwin Portnick, Jonas Bernstein*, Stanley Levy, Murray Maurer, Gertrude Fass
- 8 Johanna Bergman Larson, Samuel Caplan*, Harold Nozik, Harold Strassberg, Mitchell Burkowsky, John L. Smith, Barry Brody, Tessie Rose Limmer Bergman*, Susan Luntz
- 15 Albert Blakeslee*, Lazar Kleinfeld, Sylvia Lande, Izadore Pollack, Loretta Weinstein, Roz Spitzberg, Louis Schaffer, Penny Wheeler-Hatch
- 22 Aaron Friedman, George Kurak, Doris Stephany, Samuel Berman*, Helga Bessac
- 29 Simon Finkelman, Samuel Adels*, Harry C. Katzin*, Lilyan Oblas*, Joseph Caplan*, Harold Lazoroff*, Sandra Leah Fishman, Irma Schwartzman*

**denotes that a Perpetual Memorial has been established*

THANK YOU

--to the paper-cut brigade who prepared the February Bulletin:

Carol Fishman-Ng, Barbara Nussbaum, Anne and Sonny Hausgaard, Cheryl Reeder

--to the congregants who provided us with a sweet Shabbat:

Rachel Swift, Amy and Yossi Koren-Roth, Barbara and Rich Nussbaum

B'nai Sholom Reform Congregation

420 Whitehall Rd.
Albany, NY 12208

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

RABBI: Donald P. Cashman

PRESIDENT: Jodi Kerper

OFFICE MANAGER: Rebecca S. Marvin

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL DIRECTOR: Elizabeth Alowitz

***OFFICE HOURS: MON/WEDS/THU/FRI 9:15 AM – 3:00 PM**

Bulletin Deadlines

“As a rule, the second Wednesday of each month.”

Period Covered

April
May

Deadline

March 6
April 10

Articles and news received after deadline are subject to omission