

B'nai Sholom Reform Congregation

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MARCH 2022

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Visit us at <http://www.bnaisholomalbany.org>

ADAR I/ADAR II 5782

B'nai Sholom Reform Congregation is a Brit Olam Congregation in covenant with the world – because we seek the world we want, not the world as it is.

JOIN US FOR PRAYER, MEDITATION, CELEBRATION AND STUDY

Zoom links for services are sent out weekly.

Please call the office for information about telephone access to prayer services.

Friday, March 4	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE	6:13 PM
Saturday, March 5	EXTENDED STUDY	10:00 AM
Friday, March 11	TOT SHABBAT SERVICE	5:00 PM
	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE	6:13 PM
Saturday, March 12	TORAH STUDY	10:00 AM
Wednesday, March 16	EREV PURIM <i>It's Our First Purim...50 Years Later!</i>	7:00 PM
Friday, March 18	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE	7:30 PM
Saturday, March 19	TORAH STUDY	10:00 AM
Friday, March 25	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE	7:30 PM
Saturday, March 26	TORAH STUDY	10:00 AM
Friday, April 1	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE	6:13 PM
Saturday, April 2	EXTENDED STUDY	10:00 AM

Visit <https://reformjudaism.org/learning> for each week's parashah.

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 other's 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...

As we prepare to leave winter behind us, we enter a season of expectation, celebration and new life in our tradition. Many of us are already planning our Purim costumes! But don't worry; even though the next set of holidays may tend to *spring* up on us each year, there are plenty of reminders on the calendar to keep them front and center

This year happens to be a leap year, when we get a full month added to the Jewish calendar! There is an additional month of Adar (I know, not a terribly creative naming convention...) that gets placed *before* the regularly scheduled month of Adar. So, in Adar I (the leap month), we got Purim Katan – “Little Purim” – as a taste of the greater festivities to come. We also have *five* (5) special Shabbatot spanning 7 weeks (this year from Feb. 26 – Apr. 9), each reminding us of something different: **Shabbat Shekalim** (“Shabbat of Shekels”) announces that Adar II is starting soon; **Shabbat Zachor** (“Shabbat of Memory”) tells us Purim is in a few days; **Shabbat Parah** (“Shabbat of the [Red] Heifer”) prepares us to welcome the month of Nisan, in which Passover falls; **Shabbat HaChodesh** (“Shabbat of the [New] Month”) marks the actual start of Nisan; and **Shabbat HaGadol** (the “Great Shabbat”) immediately precedes Passover. No matter how many times we may try to hit “Snooze” or “Dismiss,” our Jewish calendar reminders for Purim and Passover just keep popping up.

So what can we do to prepare, other than baking hamantaschen for Purim, and then making sure to get rid of them all before Passover? Both of these are holidays of introspection as well as celebration. We recall how close we've come, time and again, to being destroyed, and we are called upon to take action in response. On Purim, the directive to celebrate comes in the same breath – or at least the same verse – as the exhortation to provide for those in need. Mordechai establishes Purim as an annual celebration, “the same days on which the Jews enjoyed relief from their foes and the same month which had been transformed for them from one of grief and mourning to one of festive joy. They were to observe them as days of feasting and merrymaking, and as an occasion for sending gifts to one another and presents to the poor” (Esther 9:22). So, in addition to attending or participating in our sure-to-be-hilarious Purim celebration here at B'nai Sholom, you can also make plans to give *tzedakah*/charity to the poor; this may be a great day to make a contribution to your favorite charity. You may also consider hosting someone new at your Passover Seder or donating your extra *chametz* (leavened bread) to one of the local food banks/pantries. I suggest setting your own calendar reminders now... the holidays will be here before you know it!

PS – speaking of reminders, remember to fill out the Shabbat service times survey in the weekly announcements e-mail!

L'shalom,

Rabbi Danielle Weisbrot

From Our President...

Purim, like most of our holidays, has multiple layers of meaning and grows with us as we gain experience in life and consider different parts of the story. Young children (and their parents) can celebrate the holiday as a joyous and chaotic break from the dreariness and grey sameness of an endless Albany winter. Costumes! Games! Candy! Hamantaschen! And who on earth wouldn't love a story that has not one but two queens, an unambiguously evil villain who receives his just desserts, a reversal of fortune engineered by two brave heroes who embrace their Jewish identities and an ending exhorting us to have a party every year?

We can read the holiday in other ways. In recent years, feminist readings have emphasized the role of Vashti, elevating her from a minor character whose only significance is to clear the way for Esther, to a model for strong women, banished because she refused to obey the king's humiliating command. The holiday also has a dark side. Underneath the hilarity that accompanies a story where all ends well lies a genuine threat to the Jews that resonates across history. And when Haman – and his presumably uninvolved sons – meet their gruesome fates, we do not pause the celebration for a moment to acknowledge their deaths, unlike our experience with the Egyptians at the Red Sea. To the contrary, we cheer these deaths.

But what does Purim teach us about Jews and Judaism? We get two archetypes. Mordechai is the very visible and known Jew, a leader in the community, who earns Haman's ire through his public performance of Judaism in not bowing down. Esther, well, what can we say? "But you don't look Jewish!" Indeed, through her entire preparation period, her relationship with the king and her interactions with Haman, no one seems to realize that she is a Jew until she publicly asserts her Jewishness and warns the king that Haman's decree will reach her too.

Mordechai and Esther are opposites in many ways. Male and female, of course, but their interaction styles differ greatly, with Mordechai as an assertive and confrontational type, while Esther prefers gentle, drawn out persuasion. Mordechai saves the king from physical peril, while Esther rescues him from moral peril. Haman fears both of them, but in different ways, reacting confrontationally to Mordechai and with obsequiousness to Esther. Ultimately, though, both are absolutely necessary to execute the Purim reversal of fortune that saves the Jews. And herein lies an important lesson about diversity.

At the February board meeting, the Board of Trustees voted to commit our congregation to the URJ's Audacious Hospitality initiative. As the URJ describes it, "Audacious Hospitality is a transformative spiritual practice rooted in the belief that we will be a stronger, more vibrant Jewish community when we fully incorporate the diversity that is the reality of modern Jewish life." This practice aligns with Reform Judaism's understanding of itself: "As a movement, we stand for a Judaism that is inclusive and reflective of a wide range of identities and accept the responsibility of dismantling oppression both inside and outside of our communities."

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Many of us have been involved in or experienced diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) programs in other organizations or in our workplaces. These efforts often emphasize righting historical wrongs of oppression and exclusion or embracing an ethical stance of equality and inclusion. Implicitly, they orient toward the dominant group and presume the need for persuasion. Maybe the Purim story, though, points us in a slightly different direction. Mordechai's moral compass and his robust, open and visible representation of the Jewish community is necessary to thwart Haman, but so too is Esther's very different way of being Jewish. Both Mordechai and Esther have to realize that Esther's full inclusion not just as a member of the Jewish community, but as a crucially placed leader, is the only path forward for Jewish survival. Mordechai and Esther, coming from different backgrounds and ways of being, work together. Mordechai's insistence that Esther is, despite her difference, the best and only advocate for the community, persuades her to step forward bravely as a Jew.

Audacious hospitality will likewise make us stronger by embracing our differences as advantages and reaching out to be a congregation known for its openness and welcoming nature. This orientation will help us to follow in Mordechai and Esther's footsteps, unifying around our different ways of being and experiencing Judaism to dismantle internal and external oppression. While I certainly don't anticipate an existential conflict that ends in the same bloody fashion as the Purim story, we will likely face some challenging times ahead. May we, like the protagonists in the Book of Esther, face them together, openly, and experience a joyous outcome in which we celebrate our diverse Jewish identities.

L'shalom,

Julie Novkov

Take a "Sideways Dive" into Torah Study with Rabbi Weisbrot

On **Thursday, March 24 at 7:30 pm**, join Rabbi Weisbrot on Zoom for a monthly "sideways dive" into other facets of Torah study – midrashic interpretations, Talmudic commentary and whatever other thoughts and insights come up in the group. No prior registration or experience necessary; just look for the Zoom link in the weekly e-blast!

An Important Change for the Reopening Task Force

In the summer of 2020, with COVID cases falling and the prospect of High Holidays looming with a new interim Rabbi at the helm, B'nai Sholom assembled the Reopening Task Force to consider complicated questions around COVID safety. When the Task Force invitation first went out, I fear that I may have included the words “short term” in my email. Since then, the members of this group – co-chair Eric Goldberg, Maegan Knauf, Ann Lowenfels, Melissa Putterman Hoffmann, David Ray, Hana Sullenger, Phil Teumim and first Rabbi Katz and now Rabbi Weisbrot – have had many meetings to figure out guidelines for different events and spaces and to grapple with the constantly changing public health situation.

The omicron surge and its rapid decline underlined how quickly things can change and how new variants and new information can influence best practices for health and safety. These developments also emphasize the long-term nature of the problem. We have also seen public health institutions providing less prescriptive guidance to businesses and organizations, leaving us with more responsibility to establish what we see as appropriate safety measures.

In light of all of this, the Reopening Task Force has been re-envisioned and renamed, though our basic agenda – to develop safety guidelines and work with committee chairs to apply these guidelines – remains the same. We now have a **COVID Response Committee** that will have regular meetings, though it also will be available to address emergent concerns. In upcoming meetings, we will think through our return to multi-access services, how we might handle outdoor events and what we should do this year for High Holidays. We will also remain alert, ready to reconvene on an ad hoc basis if we see signs that the public health situation is becoming more worrisome. If you are interested in joining the Response Committee, please contact Ann Lowenfels annlowenfels@gmail.com or me julienovkov@hotmail.com.

I am very grateful to the formerly Task Force, now Committee, members who have done so much to help get us through this difficult and confusing time.

Julie Novkov
President

Our Recent Kibbutzniks

Joseph DeFronzo – In honor of all who participated in Shabbat Shirah, with a special Thank You to Rabbi Weisbrot and Melissa Putterman Hoffmann

Tabak-Smith Family – In honor of Valerie Tabak’s birthday

AUDACIOUS HOSPITALITY

How can we be even warmer and more welcoming?

At the February meeting of the Board of Trustees, the members considered and approved a proposal that B'nai Sholom join the Audacious Hospitality initiative. This is a significant step for us as a congregation, and it will engage many of our committees and programs. Moreover, we will need your help to be successful!

In recent years, the Union for Reform Judaism launched its “Audacious Hospitality” initiative to encourage and assist congregations in becoming more diverse and inclusive of Jews from a wide variety of backgrounds. One reason for the initiative is a recognition of current demographic trends:

- At least 12-15% of Jews in the U.S. identify as Jews of Color of African, Latinx, Asian or mixed-race descent, and about 10% of U.S. Jews are of Mizrahi or Sephardic heritage.
- Approximately 10% of North American Jewry identifies as part of the LGBTQAI community. For those ages 18-29, that figure is close to 20%. These are likely undercounts in that some people do not openly identify.
- Jews with disabilities account for 20% of North American Jewry.
- A very large proportion of North American Jews have an interfaith family. Since 2000, 71% of non-Orthodox Jewish marriages in the U.S. have been interfaith.

Jews in these groups and their non-Jewish family members often endure “micro-aggressions” from well-meaning congregants or due to longstanding congregational practices that do not sufficiently take account of appropriate ways to treat all members of our community like they belong. Such belonging must begin the moment a person first enters the door or otherwise first encounters the congregation and extend to worship, life-cycle events, education, communication, governance, and general community kindness, caring and friendship.

Much of this work is already underway at B'nai Sholom, so this should not be regarded or described as a “new” initiative. Given our size, the demographics of Albany and of our current membership, our resources and the current state of our diversity and inclusion work, the Audacious Hospitality initiative conducted at B'nai Sholom will be broadened into an effort to make *all* people feel welcome.

The URJ's Audacious Hospitality initiative proposes a set of steps to help a congregation improve its diversity and inclusiveness:

- The work is led by a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Working Group facilitator and a co-facilitator who are responsible for the project's implementation.
- A DEI Working Group is formed, with an attempt to draw its members from a diversity of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, differing abilities and Jewish backgrounds and heritage.

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- The Working Group conducts an evaluation of the congregation's current level of hospitality. URJ has provided a Community Assessment Workbook that includes a lengthy set of questions that can be used for this purpose, although the Working Group can also tailor its inquiry to B'nai Sholom's specific circumstances.
- The Working Group uses the assessment process and discussions at meetings to develop recommended goals.
- The Working Group presents its goals initially to the Board for input and approval. Implementation of the goals may then be carried out by staff, clergy, board members and committees. The board may choose to adopt recommendations that call for hiring outside resources, e.g., to provide training for congregants, to improve accessibility of our website or to make physical changes to our building.

If you'd like more information about joining the Working Group, please contact Julie Novkov or Rabbi Weisbrot.

The Way We ~~Were~~ Are Sometimes Can Be!! **It's B'nai Sholom's First Purim...50 Year Later!**

You say you weren't there in 1972 for Purim at the brand new B'nai Sholom Reform Congregation?

Well, you know the music from then, right?

"Heard It Through the Grapevine"

"American Pie"

"I'd Like to Teach the World to Sing"

"Lean On Me"

"Time In a Bottle"

Purim song parodies will abound on **Thursday, March 16 at 7 pm**, with the extravagant production of "**The Way We ~~Were~~ Are Sometimes Can Be!**" by B'nai Sholom's own world-renowned Shushan National Touring Company and Timing Association.

Your fellow congregants will perform for your not-necessarily-sober pleasure, both in-person (we hope) and by Zoom (which definitely did NOT happen in 1972!).

The Megillah will be read; laughter will abound; costumes will be flaunted; graggers will be whirled...fun will be the order of the evening!

This production won't be repeated until 2072, so don't even think about missing this one. Start readying your costumes now and flock to the synagogue for fun and laughter. Queen Esther and Mordechai will be there – you should be, too!

Thinking of Spring? Think Flower Power!

Are you tired of winter? Do you dream of the days when you can be back in your yard planting things? The Fundraising Committee has a way to cheer you up while also helping our temple.

We have partnered with "Flower Power" to offer you a wide variety of flower bulbs and seeds as well as vegetable and herb seeds...strawberries, too. You can find all of the eye-popping choices at <http://BnaiSholom.fpfundraising.com>. The website includes the hardiness zone for each plant, so you can share the site with your family and friends across the country (not including Alaska or Hawaii).

Orders can be placed any time until May 15. Products will be shipped directly to purchasers after April 1. Buyers pay a flat shipping fee of \$6 no matter the order size, a great encouragement for those who want to create a new garden or, to be even more environmentally friendly, to naturalize the yard and decrease the amount of ecologically harmful, labor-intensive grass lawn. There are collections for bees, butterflies and hummingbirds, as well as supplies for creating your own salad or herb garden and so much more. All plants are of the highest quality and come with an unconditional, 100% replacement guarantee.

This is a win-win-win fundraising program: you get to enjoy choosing and planting your beautiful flowers or vegetables and then delight in watching them grow; you get to help the environment by increasing biodiversity while reducing the amount of unproductive grass lawn; and our congregation receives 50% of all sales at no cost to us. So please visit our personalized website <http://BnaiSholom.fpfundraising.com> and also share it with friends, family and on social media. Help us help our temple and the environment. And keep dreaming of the warmer days of spring!

Song of the Sea: A Most Special Musical Shabbat

How did it come about? No one knows for sure, but Libby Liebschutz carried the idea of Shabbat Shirah from a hypothetical "wouldn't it be nice" to an actual "put it on your calendar" this past January. Our musical Rabbi Weisbrot (we have been lucky to have rabbis who inspire us to find joy in music at B'nai Sholom) carried the spark and worked with our enthusiastic Ritual Committee to make Shabbat Shirah a reality this year. As producer extraordinaire, Joe DeFronzo helped people work on two possibilities: one that could be in person, and one that would take place on Zoom if our service needed to be remote (as it indeed did).

From the "overture," Dave Ray helped set a tone of congregant celebration with backup provided by Mimi Bruce on percussion. Julie Novkov and Joel Bloom taught a lovely *nigun* from their previous congregation. Seth Edelman began the service with warmth and light when he lit and blessed the Shabbat candles. Phil and Martie Teumim introduced a new and energized "Mi Chamocho." Roy and Judy Fruiterman brought us back from the silent prayer with the beautiful "Erev Shel Shoshanim." Joe DeFronzo sang a joyful "Oseh Shalom." At the pinnacle of the evening, Rabbi Weisbrot chanted the week's Torah portion, the "Song of the Sea," and Joan and Jim Savitt moved us when they read the translation. Stefanie DeFronzo further illuminated the evening with "Eli Eli." And at the closing, "Miriam's Song" was sung by Deb Adler, Martie Teumim, Rabbi Weisbrot, Lena Hausgaard and Nancy Goody.

Thank you to all our musical and music-loving congregants!

Social Action/Social Justice

Social Action For Climate Change And The Environment

Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act – The draft Scoping Plan from the Climate Action Council is available for comment. The Scoping Plan is the methods outlined by the Council for the state to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions, supply adequate renewable energy and address climate justice, as mandated by the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act.

- This Scoping Plan is the most significant policy statement New York State will make for the foreseeable future.
- The comment period is 120 days beginning January 1, 2022.
- See: <https://climate.ny.gov/Our-Climate-Act/Draft-Scoping-Plan>

WHAT YOU CAN DO: Review the plan and comment

Glass Recycling – The Northeast Recycling Council released draft legislation on minimum recycled content for glass food containers. Representatives of government, industry, trade associations and non-profits collaborated on the draft law. Recycling standards would improve the market for used glass. Used glass improves the manufacturing process and saves raw material extraction and energy.

- See link on the Northeast Recycling Council's website: <https://nerc.org/projects/current-projects/glass-committee>
- Currently you can bring clear glass bottles and jars (clean) to bins at Honest Weight Food Coop.
- A reported collection center for colored glass is at Hannaford Supermarket, near the Asian market.

WHAT YOU CAN DO: Recycle your glass responsibly

Bottle Bill - The Expanded Bottle Bill (A8668), sponsored by Assemblymember Kevin Cahill, has been introduced in the Assembly and is currently in the Environmental Conservation Committee. The bill does not yet have a sponsor in the Senate; it is expected to go to the Senate's Environmental Conservation Committee, chaired by Senator Todd Kaminsky. The bill adds sports drinks to the deposit requirements and increases deposits to 10 cents. New York's bottle bill was first enacted in 1982 and amended 10 years ago to include water bottles. The State keeps unclaimed deposits as general revenue.

WHAT YOU CAN DO: Call your state senator and urge him/her to sponsor the Senate bill; call your Assembly representative to vote "Yes" on the Assembly bill

The Big Bold Jewish Climate Fest was a huge success. We encourage everyone to check their website and watch a recorded presentation of a topic of interest. This event is galvanizing a movement within Judaism. See: <https://www.jewishclimatefest.org>

WHAT YOU CAN DO: Log on and watch

We are encouraged to set goals for our individual synagogues to reduce our carbon footprint. Is there support within B'nai Sholom for such a commitment?

WHAT YOU CAN DO: Let Barry Pendergrass bpenderg37@gmail.com know you have an interest in setting goals and recommending steps for B'nai Sholom.

Social Action/Social Justice (continued)

Chefs And Bakers Needed For Soup Kitchen In April

On **April 17, 2022**, which happens to be the second day of Passover as well as Easter Sunday, B'nai Sholom Reform Congregation, through the Social Action Committee, will renew its longstanding commitment to serve our food-insecure neighbors a hot and nutritious meal at the Sister Maureen Joyce Center, 369 Livingston Ave., Albany. Volunteers are encouraged to help prepare and serve the meal from **11 AM-2 PM** that day.

Additionally, fresh baked dessert goods will be collected from congregants to be distributed to our guests with their meal.

If you would like to volunteer that day, please contact Steve Klein at 518-526-2651 or steven.klein@cseainc.org – or Janet Strominger at 518-421-2241 or jstrominger@yahoo.com.

If you are interested in baking goodies, please contact Becky Marvin at 518-439-4574 or beckymarvin4574@gmail.com. Becky also has freezer space so you can bake anytime.

Thank you!

Food Drive Success!

In late January, we held our second food drive jointly with Delmar Presbyterian Church, our Family Promise partner congregation. The food will be distributed to the “little free pantry boxes” placed around Albany by OpenWorld Relief and the box placed by Bellevue Reformed Church in Schenectady. The food is being stored at B'nai Sholom, and Ish, the van driver for Family Promise, will restock the pantry boxes.

Thank you to all the generous donors who brought items. Special thanks to the B'nai Sholom volunteers who braved the cold during our outdoor collections:

Lois Gordon, Barry Pendergrass, Ann Shapiro, Steve Klein, Marilyn Spencer, Anita Stein, Maxine Goldberg, Amy Vastola, Hayden Schwartz, Mari Vosburgh and Becky Marvin.

If you missed the collection but want to support the little pantries, here are the locations where you can place items at any time:

- Our Lady of Americas Shrine Church, 273 Central Ave. (N. Lake St.), **Albany**
- South End Children's Café, 25 Warren St. (Phillip St.), **Albany**
- West Hills Cultural Hub, Quail and 1st Streets (park shed), **Albany**
- Temple Israel, rear parking lot next to St. Peter's Hospital garage, **Albany**
- Bellevue Reformed Church, 2000 Broadway (Genesee St.), **Schenectady**

SAVE THE DATE

Social Action/Social Justice Shabbat will be observed on **Friday, April 29**.
Join us at services as we highlight the mitzvah of ***Welcoming the Stranger***.

Spotlight on our Newest Members: Jaimie Miller

Editor's Note: A series of articles from the Membership Committee to introduce those who have recently joined B'nai Sholom. This month we welcome Jaimie Miller and Teresa and Jeffrey Weisbrot.

Jaimie did not grow up in the Capital District. She was born and raised in Spring Valley, Rockland County. In late 1987, Jaimie and her husband Gerry moved to Albany so that Gerry could accept a promotion with the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance. While Jaimie stayed behind for a month with Rachael, their newborn, Gerry ended up moving up to Albany the weekend of the massive October blizzard of 1987. Jaimie and Rachael made the trek north a few weeks later and have been living here for the past 34 years!

Jaimie explained that she was raised Jewish but did not belong to a synagogue while growing up in Rockland County. As their children got older, they looked for a synagogue that could provide them with information about Judaism and help them know more about our history and culture. Because Gerry is not Jewish, it was also important to belong to a synagogue where he would feel comfortable and welcomed.

Jaimie retired two years ago from Albany High School where she worked as a teaching assistant in the Special Education Department. While employed, she volunteered with the Theatre Ensemble and was the adviser for the Peace and Social Actions club. Jaimie is delighted to be able to continue her work in addressing social issues as a member of the B'nai Sholom Social Action committee.

Several years ago, Jaimie left B'nai Sholom but ended up continuing to take advantage of our events and opportunities for prayer, including Shabbat Chanukah, High Holiday services and the auction and Chilpalooza. She often accompanied her daughter Rachael, who joined B'nai Sholom several years ago. This year Jaimie decided to renew her membership because, she said, "I never really left."

We are so glad to be able to welcome Jaimie back to the B'nai Sholom community!



Spotlight on our Newest Members: Teresa and Jeffrey Weisbrot

Jeff and Teresa are the parents of our new spiritual leader, Rabbi Danielle Weisbrot. Residents of New Hyde Park, Nassau County, they are both retired. Teresa was an elementary school aide for over 25 years, working mostly as a lunch aide and in a kindergarten class. Jeff worked for the last 27 years of his career in IT at Morgan Stanley on back office systems for the retail brokerage business. Teresa spent time as president of the PTA at both the elementary and high schools their children attended. Currently, Jeff is a member of the executive committee of Temple Tikvah of New Hyde Park, where he is responsible for overseeing the investment account and serves as financial secretary. Teresa and Jeff enjoy watching TV, going to concerts ('60s rock), going to the movies, eating out, cruising and, when possible, going to the gym.



When asked if there are other things we should know, Jeff explained that he has a somewhat strange sense of humor. He believes it is the creation of a life that has been the subject of highly stressful jobs, as well as being kidnapped at a young age, working in the World Trade Center for both the 9/11 and February 1993 attacks on the building, and having narrowly missed the shooting on the 5:33 PM Long Island Railroad train the day of the mass shooting in December 1993. Lastly, Jeff noted as a family they are open to supporting each other and those they come in contact with. They have taken in many people over the years to allow them to get on their feet, and this value of helping others has been passed down to Rabbi Weisbrot.

Next time you see Jeff and Teresa on Zoom or on their next visit to the synagogue, please introduce yourself!

Survey Reveals Our Experiences with Anti-Semitism

There were 31 responses to the synagogue survey on anti-Semitism, and the good news is that 28 of the responses indicated having experienced no anti-Semitism.

Of the three responses that reported an anti-Semitic incident, one involved the member receiving long emails at least once a year at their university from various individuals spouting anti-Semitic conspiracy theories or just generally ranting about Jews. The emails sometimes went to several in the academic unit indiscriminately and at other times were directed to people with Jewish-sounding last names.

The second reported incident involved a small package with no identification left at the temple's mailbox. It was from a group proselytizing for born-again Christianity and contained copies of "New Covenant – Psalms" addressed to "G-d's special rabbi." The books had notes

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in the margins and a letter in the back that being born again is the only way to achieve heaven and avoid the "Lake of Fire 'hell.'" The Albany police were called but advised that the package was safe to open. Other area synagogues and institutions received the same packages; the Jewish Federation of NENY collected them and was in communication with law enforcement as well.

The third reported incident involved two temple members who were installing the "Black Lives Matter" sign. A white male parked a black pickup across the street from the synagogue and walked to within 10 feet of where the temple members were standing. The man was very angry and asked the people putting up the sign, "Are you Jewish?" and also said, "All lives matter." When one of the temple members tried to defuse the situation, the man walked away, saying something about the temple members not being like other Jews. The banners subsequently disappeared twice overnight, though one time may have been the result of a windstorm.

Thanks to the synagogue members who participated in the survey. Sharing these experiences makes us all safer, since we know better what to look for. In addition, having completed the survey will, hopefully, improve our chances of being awarded a federal grant to fund projects to protect our members and building from hate crime attacks. The results of the survey were shared with the FBI.

The Congregation Notes with Thanks These Contributions:

General Fund

Ann Lowenfels and Steve Redler (*For Technology and Furnishings Fund*)

In memory of **Leo Cabelly** by The Seguire Family

In memory of **Harvey Tress** by Marcia Tress

In memory of **Marian Hock** by Marcia Tress

In memory of **Norman Rosenthal** by Mari Vosburgh

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

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

In honor of **Morris Alowitz** by Arthur and Rita Alowitz

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

In memory of **Florence Levin** by Ben and Becky Marvin

In honor of **the 100th anniversary of his father's death** by Seth Edelman

General Fund – In Memory of Herb Swift

Christine Blackman

Rondi Brower and Phil Gilly

Rae Clark

Barbara and Jack Devore

Libby and David Liebschutz

Maggie Tabak and David Smith

Marcia Tress

Caring Community Fund – In Memory of Herb Swift

Jesse Dinkin and Valerie Tabak

Rochelle Goldfarb and Gail Golderman

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund – In Memory of Herb Swift

Susan Radosh and Steve Klein

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

In appreciation of **Rabbi Weisbrot and all the participants in Shabbat Shirah for warming our hearts** by Bruce and Edith Goldstein

In memory of **Florence Levin** by Marcia Tress

The congregation mourns the passing of these family members whose deaths occurred in recent months:

- Hilda Smith, mother of Rita Alowitz
- Florence Levin, mother of Nancy Rudinger
- Harvey Schwartz, father of Stuart Schwartz

May their memories forever be for a blessing.

The following Yahrzeits will be observed in March.

3/4 Jerome Morse; Abe Rudman; Gertrude Fass; Samuel Caplan*; Harold Nozik; Mitchell Burkowsky; Irma Weiss

3/11 Barry Brody; Evelyn Rosen; Albert Blakeslee*; Lazar Kleinfeld; Sylvia Lande; Izadore Pollack; Loretta Weinstein; Judith Bond Klein

3/18 Louis Schaffer; Benjamin Steinhart; George Kurak; Max Rosen; Doris Stephany; Dora Stein; Adele C. Blumenthal

3/25 Samuel Berman*; Richard Rosenthal; Helga Bessac; Samuel Adels*; Harry C. Katzin*; Lilyan Oblas*; Leonarda Defronzo; Joseph Caplan*

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

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OFFICE HOURS: TUE/WED/THURS/FRI 9:30 AM–4:30 PM

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

As a rule, the Bulletin deadline is the 2nd Wednesday of every month. Adherence to the deadline is critical to ensuring that the Bulletin is sent out in a timely manner.

<u>Period Covered</u>	<u>Deadline</u>
April 2022.....	March 9
May 2022.....	April 13