

# *B'nai Sholom Reform Congregation*

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MAY 2021

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IYAR/SIVAN 5781

***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, GOOD DEEDS, CELEBRATION AND STUDY**

Zoom links for services are sent out weekly.

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

Friday, April 30 Saturday, May 1	<b>KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE</b> TORAH STUDY WITH RABBI KATZ LAY-LED TORAH STUDY	<b>7:30 PM</b> 9:00-9:45 AM* 10:00 AM
Friday, May 7 Saturday, May 8	<b>KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE</b> <b>NO TORAH STUDY WITH RABBI KATZ*</b> LAY-LED TORAH STUDY	<b>6:13 PM</b> 10:00 AM
Friday, May 14 Saturday, May 15	<b>TOT SHABBAT SERVICE</b> <b>KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE</b> TORAH STUDY WITH RABBI KATZ LAY-LED TORAH STUDY	<b>5:00 PM</b> <b>6:13 PM</b> 9:00-9:45 AM* 10:00 AM
Sunday, May 16	<b>SHAVUOT STUDY &amp; SONG – Blintzes and coffee!</b> T	<b>9:00 PM</b> til around midnight. Details to follow.
Friday, May 21 Saturday, May 22	<b>KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE</b> TORAH STUDY WITH RABBI KATZ LAY-LED TORAH STUDY	<b>7:30 PM</b> 9:00-9:45 AM* 10:00 AM
Friday, May 28 Saturday, May 29	<b>KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE</b> TORAH STUDY WITH RABBI KATZ LAY-LED TORAH STUDY	<b>7:30 PM</b> 9:00-9:45 AM* 10:00 AM
Friday, June 4 Saturday, June 5	<b>KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE</b> TORAH STUDY WITH RABBI KATZ LAY-LED TORAH STUDY	<b>6:13 PM</b> 9:00-9:45 AM* 10:00 AM

*\*Unless otherwise noted in the weekly announcements.*

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***

## *Rabbi's Message...*

# Prayer and Zoom

I want to take you on a train ride, not on an ordinary train mind you, rather on a train of thought. My mind has been traveling long distances as I ponder how Zoom has already changed our Jewish prayer experience and where we might be headed down the line. We have experienced a time of sickness, danger and death, and though we are now seeing the light at the end of the tunnel it is unclear where the tunnel will lead.

Historically, our cohesiveness as a community has depended on physical proximity. This is evidenced by religious laws that have been designed to keep us together in shared spaces.

Twenty-four hundred years ago, the Jewish community was living in exile in Babylonia, now modern-day Iraq. Our ancestors looked to their Greek neighbors and saw them building theatres and gymnasias, creating their cities and generally doing just fine living far from their homeland. What did our forbearers do? Using the elements of geometry, they created imaginary spaces on Shabbat in which they would dwell alongside their Jewish neighbors...this, to strengthen the bonds of fellowship. They called these spaces *eruvim*. Orthodox Jews still abide by the laws of the Shabbat *eruv*, not permitting themselves to carry belongings unless they walk within a bounded area.

Another invention Jews created to make sure they would share the same space was the minyan. There had to be a critical mass of bodies - 10 adult Jewish men - to permit the recitation of key prayers and reading from the Torah scroll. Not minds, but the presence of bodies was required to form a minyan.

When Jews had no choice but to be physically distanced from fellow Jews at the time of prayer, they were given specific advice on how to prioritize their options. So it is written in *Midrash Tehillim* 4.11: "When you pray, pray in the synagogue of your city; if you are unable to pray in the synagogue, pray in your field; if you are unable to pray in your field, pray in your home; if you are unable to pray in your home, pray on your couch; and, if you are unable to pray on your couch, meditate in your heart." (An interpretation of the verse: "Commune with your own heart upon your bed in stillness." Ps. 4:5)

Now we have experienced a new way to create community - Zoom - and it is appealing in a number of ways. Certainly, one cannot deny the convenience. There is no schlep to the synagogue, no donning of an overcoat to fight the cold wind. One can sit in one's home and still say "Hi" to friends. And since there is no rush out the door to get from home to synagogue, now there is more time to eat a leisurely dinner. Okay, it's true, there is less privacy....or should we say, less opportunity to modulate one's privacy - no sitting in the back row or to the side of the sanctuary - only video on or video off. But all in all, this is a very easy way to pray.

However, we should also ask what we have lost when we are unable to gather in the same place. The oneg is no small thing. It is a time to kibbitz and catch up, to nosh and to exchange notes. On Zoom, there is no shaking of hands or kissing on cheeks, no subtle signals to be noticed that a friend is sad and in need of reassurance, no way to ask about the yahrtzeit being observed, no opportunity to help in the kitchen. To be "together" means "to gather" and we have lost a great deal in this regard.

Should Zoom and streaming remain as regular options after the pandemic has run its course? The official committee of Reform scholars, who study such questions, i.e. the Respona Committee of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, gives us guidance. *Post-pandemic*, unless the Reform Jew is participating in an interactive prayer forum (like Zoom), he or she has not fulfilled the responsibility of praying. Reciting prayers as one watches a service is not Jewish worship, rather *being in relationship with the community* which itself is in relationship with God, is key. The Respona Committee concluded their very thoughtful analysis by saying: "When the (medical and governmental authorities) stop restricting attendance at public functions, this *hora'at sha'ah* ('a ruling for a temporary situation') should be set aside. People should return to the synagogue and the practice of interactive virtual *minyanim* should cease." (For the full responsum go to: <https://www.ccarnet.org/ccar-respona/5780-2/> )

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But can't you hear the arguments that will follow? They ring loud and clear even if they may not yet have been given voice! What of our elderly who don't want to drive in the dark – shouldn't we have an *ongoing* alternative for them? And what about the weather - what happens when there is a blizzard? Should we be encouraged to drive in hazardous conditions? Should we cancel services and do nothing in its stead? And what about the relatives in California who are asking if they can "attend" the Bat Mitzvah service on YouTube because they can't make the trip to Albany? Rabbi, isn't it better to be connected through technology than not at all? We should see technology as a *gift*, or at least as a useful alternative!

To be sure, creative solutions will need to be found if the community is to remain strong. In a small congregation such as ours, were congregants given a weekly alternative to attend online services, this could very well diminish attendance at the in-house service, demoralizing those who choose to make the trip to synagogue. That would be a terrible outcome.

The Ritual Committee, guided by Rabbi Weisbrot, no doubt will seek answers to these questions. How will that conversation go? The Moments survey asked if congregants would - post-pandemic - be willing to drive someone to services. That could be the beginning of a solution for those who have difficulty driving in the dark. When there is very bad weather on a Friday afternoon, there might be a 4:00 p.m. online announcement as to whether or not there will be a Zoom Shabbat service or an in-house Shabbat service, one or the other, for the *entire* community. This would address the problem of inadvertently creating a divided community. Who knows what answers will be proposed and what solutions will be found?

What we do know is that, ready or not, the train has left the station and there is no going back. Complicated questions are coming our way fast and furious and what is decided will be of the greatest consequence. The pandemic has made it necessary to stay apart from one another. Just how we get back together will be equally as challenging.

L'shalom,

Rabbi Katz

## **Cain v. Abel: New Perspectives on World's First Murder** ***Final Midrashim Class Taught by Rabbi Dan Ornstein***

On Thursday, May 13, at 7:00 p.m., as the third and final class of Rabbi Katz's course "The Legends of Our People," Rabbi Dan Ornstein will teach from and speak about his new book:

### **Cain v. Abel** **A Jewish Courtroom Drama**

From the Jewish Publication Society....

"Enter the packed courtroom and take your seat as a juror on the Cain v. Abel trial. Soon, the prosecution and defense attorneys (angels from Jewish legend) will call Cain, Abel, Sin, Adam, Eve and God to the witness stand to hear their private perspectives on the world's first murder. Great Jewish commentators throughout the ages will also offer contradictory testimony on Cain's emotional, societal and spiritual influences. As jurors, when we mete out Cain's punishment, must we factor in his family history, psychological makeup and the human impulse to sin?

"This presentation constitutes a highly eclectic and gripping compilation of insights by Jewish commentators on the Cain and Abel story. Courtroom scenes are juxtaposed with the author's commentary, advancing novel insights and introspection. As each of us grapples with Cain's actions, we confront our own darkest traits. If Cain is a stand-in for all humanity, what can we do to avoid becoming like Cain?"

Join us then!

To order Cain v. Abel, go to <https://jps.org/books/cain-vs-abel/> or find it on Amazon.

# *Save the Date!*

## Late Night at B'nai Sholom

On Sunday, May 16, starting at 7:30 p.m. we will have our annual "Late Night: Shavuot." More information to follow!

### An Evening with the Katzes

#### Featuring Rabbi David Katz and Nancy Katz

*Tuesday, May 25, at 7 p.m. (via Zoom)*

Recently, the Adult Ed Committee came across a fascinating interview with Rabbi Katz (see below) in a Rochester publication that discussed his interest in synagogue dynamics and his life as an interim rabbi at eight congregations across 10 years. It also featured a few paintings by Nancy, an accomplished artist, and discussed her ability to find inspiration wherever the location.

The article intrigued the committee, especially where the past year really limited opportunities to get to know them. So to satisfy our interest, and yours, we are scheduling a Zoom with the Katzes where, in a Q & A, we can learn about the challenges of the interim path with all its packing and unpacking, how a couple center themselves in ever-changing settings, and insights learned from a life on the road. Along the way, perhaps the Rabbi will share his observations on change management and the direction of 21<sup>st</sup>-century congregational life. We also hope to see more of Nancy's artwork including her painted ceramics.

Come join us as we get to hear from Nancy and Rabbi Katz and their stories from the road.

(Note: The link will be included in the weekly e-mail )

<https://rochesterbeacon.com/2021/02/16/rochester-born-rabbi-helps-synagogues-heal/>

## **May Kibbutzniks**

Ellie and Randy Davis - In honor and appreciation of the Rabbi Search Committee

Deb Adler - In honor and appreciation of the Rabbi Search Committee

Christine Blackman - With gratitude and appreciation for the Rabbinic Search Committee and the massive amount of work and time they put in

## ***From Our President...***

By the time you read these words, the details will have faded. Daunte Wright will be yet another Black man dead at the hands of a police officer. You may have to stop for just a moment until you recall: oh yes, the one who died apparently because the officer thought she was reaching for her Taser but grabbed her gun instead. You may then remember the grotesque timing of this event on a Sunday in April near Minneapolis, where the trial of Derek Chauvin, the police officer accused of murdering George Floyd in May 2020 by kneeling on his neck, was in progress. I hope that by the time you read these words, the details will have faded through the simple passage of time and not because yet another horrific incident has occurred, searing the gaping racial wounds of our country with more acid.

My academic work, which focuses in part on how American law and constitutionalism have addressed questions of race throughout history, helps me to think about and understand what is happening. In a project I'm writing now, one part discusses the violence perpetrated against Black veterans after their return from World War I. This violence often triggered no state investigation or response and sometimes involved state perpetrators. My aim is to think about the impact that violence had on Black claims for rights and recognition and how Black claims for rights and recognition contributed to the savage backlash. This work, however, is primarily analytical, and the safe barrier of over 100 years' remove makes it easier to do.

Grappling with what is happening now is hard. How can we make sense of these repeated episodes, much less know what to do? I suggest that Jewish values can provide a framework through which we can criticize the abuse of state power, hear and share the pain of our friends in the Black community and argue for change from our own powerful and unique perspective as Reform Jews. Our tradition teaches important lessons and underlines our obligation to stand for justice and Tikkun Olam. Here are a few ways we can confront these problems through this lens:

*Community stewards are never above the law and indeed may be held to higher standards of responsibility and care.*

During their sojourn in the desert, the Israelites learned about the obligations they had assumed through their new covenant with the Eternal. The covenant involved specific duties beyond those in the Ten Commandments, many relating to ritual practice and Temple sacrifices. But the priestly clan assumed a significantly more extensive set of obligations. Their responsibility for the safety and spiritual care of the community did not lift them above the law. Rather, this responsibility entailed an agreement to be held to a higher standard and to be even more careful in their dealings with the Eternal than other community members.

*Fear can lead community stewards with limitless power into terrible actions.*

The Pharaoh of the Torah was a god to Egypt who wielded vast power but clearly held the responsibility for protecting and serving his people. In Joseph's day, the Pharaoh wisely relied on his counselors' advice to store grain in anticipation of a drought, staving off mass starvation and fulfilling his stewardship duties effectively. A later Pharaoh, however, feared the Jews inhabiting Egypt. His anxieties about this group of outsiders appeared to increase as they grew in numbers and influence in Egypt (perhaps something like the Black veterans I've studied who returned to their homes in the south after World War I). His response was to command genocidal infant slaughter and the imposition of slavery.

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*A good community steward empathizes with, protects and advocates for the people even if they have done wrong.*

The Eternal was enraged with the Israelites after the episode of the golden calf and asked Moses to depart so that the Eternal could unleash anger and destroy them, beginning again with Moses to found a new nation. Moses – unlike earlier figures, like Noah – challenged this proposal and convinced the Eternal not to harm the people. Our tradition emphasizes this moment as an important moral development and sees Moses as the superior community steward because of it. And we ourselves are the spiritual descendants of the wrongdoers saved through Moses' intervention, calling to the Eternal every year for compassion and mercy on Yom Kippur.

*We may not stand aside, indifferent, in the face of pain and injustice.*

After witnessing the murder of Abel, the Eternal asks Cain where his brother has gone. Cain callously replies that he does not know. The Eternal responds, "Your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground!" an arresting metaphor that underlines the horror not only of what Cain has done but of his indifference to his brother's death. We must stop, absorb and respond to violent and unwarranted death. The lesson of compassion and empathy is underlined by the haunting verse in the Book of Jeremiah: "A voice is heard in Ramah, mourning and great weeping, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more." A sign seen frequently in BLM protests last summer evokes this verse for us, claiming that all mothers were summoned when George Floyd called out for his mother during the assault that led to his death. We must open our hearts to hear the mourning of our nation's Rachels and stand together to address the structural problems that keep producing these criminal tragedies.

L'shalom,

Julie Novkov

## Meet Our New Rabbi: Danielle Weisbrot



With great joy, B'nai Sholom welcomes Danielle Weisbrot to lead the community as our rabbi.

Weisbrot's appointment was approved by the congregation at the special meeting in March and will take effect July 1, 2021.

Weisbrot will succeed Rabbi David Katz, who has guided the congregation for the past year as interim rabbi following the June 2020 retirement of Rabbi Cashman, our spiritual leader for 35 years.

"Words cannot do justice to the warmth and positive energy that we know Danielle will bring to her rabbinate. She loves to help guide a congregation in worship, she loves to teach, she loves to sing and she loves to bake. This is the beginning of a wonderful partnership, and we are so looking forward to Danielle joining our community and our future," said President Julie Novkov.

"B'nai Sholom is a welcoming and dedicated congregation with a passion for *tikkun olam* – repairing the world. I am honored and excited to be their new rabbi and to become part of the Albany community," said Weisbrot.

Weisbrot is a senior rabbinic student at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR) in New York and will be ordained as a rabbi in May. She hails from New Hyde Park, Nassau County, where she has been an active participant in her synagogue and often led services when their settled rabbi or cantor was away. She worked for 10 years primarily in the non-profit educational sector before beginning rabbinic training. As a student rabbi, Weisbrot held the pulpit for two years at North Fork Reform Synagogue in Southold, Suffolk County, where she led services, taught and proved instrumental in transitioning the congregation to virtual services during the pandemic.

Weisbrot is particularly focused on social justice issues. Throughout her time at HUC-JIR, she volunteered in the student-run soup kitchen on the campus, rising to the position of head chef. Weisbrot describes her work as "a labor of love."

Weisbrot holds a Master of Arts degree in Hebrew literature from HUC-JIR, receiving multiple awards, and a Bachelor of Arts degree from Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, graduating summa cum laude with a major in English and a minor in Judaic studies.

# Update on Reopening B'nai Sholom

## **B'nai Sholom's 8-person Reopening Task Force met on 4/11/21.**

- The Task Force agreed on a 3-phased reopening process, which is outlined below.
- We also developed an implementation plan for Phase 1: testing the feasibility of holding in-person services on Friday night.
- Phase 1 will be implemented on 4/16/21, 5/7/21, 6/18/21 and 6/25/21.
- We will assess Phase 1 and discuss future developments under the leadership of Rabbi Weisbrot.
- Stayed tuned for further details and updates.

## **Phase 1: Reopening Task Force tests the feasibility of holding hybrid in-person/live-streamed services on Friday nights**

- a. arrange camera and microphone so that services can be conducted on-site and live-streamed at the same time ('hybrid model');
- b. practice using this hybrid model with a small group of people on-site: those necessary to conduct the service, operate the equipment or involved in the test run;
- c. practice using this hybrid model with a slightly larger group of people on-site;
- d. determine feasibility of using this hybrid model with a larger group of people .

## **Phase 2: Committees use a safety checklist\* to plan in-person services, meetings and events:**

- ✓ Limit attendance so that participants from different households can maintain a social distance of at least 6 feet at all times, and 12 feet if there will be chanting or singing.
- ✓ Maximize ventilation and outdoor air flow to the greatest extent possible.
- ✓ Separate seating by at least 6 feet; 12 feet if there will be singing or chanting (irrespective of whether the services are indoors or outdoors).
- ✓ Require face coverings at all times.
- ✓ Inform participants that they should not attend if they have a temperature above 100F, symptoms of COVID-19 in the past 14 days, a positive test in the past 14 days, close contact with a confirmed or suspected COVID-19 case in the past 14 days, or traveled recently to a restricted place.
- ✓ Clean and disinfect high-risk areas before and after the event.

\*Safety checklist is based on NYS Department of Health's Guidance for Jewish Observances.

## **Phase 3: Reopening Task Force updates safety procedures when post-vaccine guidance becomes available**

# UPDATE ON Social Justice Advocacy

## *Help Us Support New York State Parole Reform and National Voter Access*

B'nai Sholom is participating in both statewide and national social justice advocacy activities this year: parole reform in New York state, and voter access across the United States.

### *Parole Reform*

Congregants from B'nai Sholom, Beth Emeth and Gates of Heaven have met with NYS Senators Neil Breslin and Michelle Hinchey and Assemblywoman Pat Fahy to urge support for the "Less is More" parole reform bill ([S.1144/A.5576](#)). This bill would end the widespread practice of sending people on parole back to jail for technical parole violations – such as being out after curfew or missing an appointment with a parole officer.

Unfortunately, the "Less is More" bill was not included in this year's state budget, so it is more important than ever for us to advocate for our legislators to sponsor and support it. We have been working on this project through RAC-NY, the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism's New York chapter, and we are now embarking on Phase 2. Please offer to participate in an upcoming Zoom meeting with legislators and/or phone banking over the next month.

### *Voter Access*

Nationally, the Reform Movement's 2021 [Racial Justice Campaign](#) will fight to strengthen voter access, election integrity, campaign finance and government ethics starting at the end of April. This campaign is in direct response to the 47 states that have introduced voter suppression bills. It will be an opportunity for members of B'nai Sholom to encourage U.S. Senate passage of the For the People Act, which the House has passed but faces hurdles in the Senate, and the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act.

### *Become Involved*

To work on one or both campaigns, please contact Gail Volk at [gvolk53@gmail.com](mailto:gvolk53@gmail.com) or 518-439-4130 to show your support and find out how you can get involved. Elected officials care what their constituents think. Let your voice be heard!

## **Family Promise Auction Features Talented B'nai Sholom Congregants!**

Our congregation has many talented authors, musicians and makers, and they have donated their works to support Family Promise of the Capital Region through the Family Promise online auction, May 2-9. As a support congregation, B'nai Sholom is committed to assisting homeless children and their families achieve affordable and sustainable housing.

There will be many wonderful items, outings and more from local retailers and services. Be sure to pay close attention to the "local talent" baskets featuring books by Martha Rozett and Stephen Gottlieb, needlework and felting by Martie Teumim and Judy Fruiterman, jewelry by Sharona Wachs, music by Phil Teumim as well as artwork and photography by Nancy Katz, Marilyn Spencer and Ben Marvin.

So, beginning May 2, plan to bid at the Family Promise Online Auction by going to [www.familypromisecr.org](http://www.familypromisecr.org) and clicking on the auction link.

## B'nai Sholom Wine & Entertainment Gift Basket Raffle

Now's your chance to win the May/June "Wine and Entertainment" gift basket worth over \$250 in gifts!



Basket includes two bottles of wine, a \$25 gift card to The Cheese Traveler, wine glasses, a \$50 gift card to New World Bistro and two movie tickets to the Spectrum, a \$25 gift card to Amazon, an \$80 gift card for a massage and more!

Raffle tickets are \$2 each, 3 for \$5 or \$20 for the full sheet. Do not cut up the tickets. Complete each ticket with your name, email address and phone number. (You can use address labels.) Send the completed tickets with your check to B'nai Sholom **no later than May 28**. The drawing will be held promptly after that date and the winner will be notified.

**AND...** Congratulations to Arthur Alowitz, our March/April "Foodie" gift basket winner!

## **Come Outdoors with B'nai Sholom!**

Do you find your spirituality in nature? Join us for one or more hour-long programs of sharing prayers and personal reflections, combined with walking, at Five Rivers Environmental Education Center in Delmar. Weather permitting, the program will take place at 10:30 a.m. on Sunday, May 16, and Sunday, May 30. Social distancing, masks, and limits on group size will all be employed to ensure the safety of participants. Registration is required at least one day in advance so we can limit numbers if necessary and communicate regarding safety protocols and weather accommodations. Register by calling Libby Liebschutz at 518-466-7034 or emailing her at [libbyliebschutz@gmail.com](mailto:libbyliebschutz@gmail.com).

## **Soup and Sweets**

On Sunday, April 4, six volunteers from B'nai Sholom prepared and distributed 80 meals at the Sister Maureen Joyce Soup Kitchen. Each carry-out meal was supplemented with home-baked sweets provided by congregants.

Thank you to Anita Stein, Wayne Olinzock, Dayle Zatlin, Hayden Schwartz, Janet Strominger and Steve Klein for donning chef hats; and thank you also to our accomplished bakers: Barbara Devore, Bettina Stoller, Dayle Zatlin, Martie Teumim, Cheryl Reeder, Amy Koren-Roth, Valerie Tabak, Bea Fox, Marilyn Spencer, Lois Gordon and Becky Marvin.

## **Zoom Trivia Night Reveals Congregants' Competitive Streak**

On Saturday night, March 20, 20 eager participants gathered over Zoom to test their general trivia skills for B'nai Sholom's Virtual Trivia Night, hosted by the Membership Committee. Participants were also able to test their knowledge of Passover through bonus questions supplied by Rabbi Katz. Judging by the laughter and banter during the evening, as well as the positive comments shared with the committee afterward, a good time was had by all. Who knew that our congregation had so many trivia and game enthusiasts!?

The committee would like to thank all those participants who offered helpful suggestions to work out the kinks in scoring, timing and team composition – those suggestions will certainly be implemented in any future game nights. Special thanks to Rabbi Katz for his engaging bonus questions, to Susan Aron for serving as emcee with both humor and efficiency, to Becky Marvin for sharing her Trivial Pursuit-Genus Edition, which was used for the questions, to David Liebschutz for keeping score, and to all the participants who offered other Trivial Pursuit editions to use the next time. Stay well until we meet again to test our skills in all things random and sometimes useless – let's hope the next time can be in person!

## **B'nai Sholom Hosts its Second Zoom Tot Seder**

Twenty-nine people “gathered,” via Zoom, for a virtual seder geared specifically for our Tot Shabbat families on Sunday, March 28. Using *Sammy Spider’s First Haggadah*, the participants talked about the Passover symbols, asked and answered the Four Questions, told a bit of the story, sang songs with motions, and of course ate matzah, maror and haroset and drank grape juice. Libby Liebschutz coordinated the event and led the seder. Six tot families, with a total of 10 children, were joined by B’nai Sholom president-elect Ann Lowenfels (with Steve Redler) and vice-president Eric Goldberg (with Maxine and Ethan), while treasurer David DiPaola (with Katelyn and Jocelyn) participated both as a board representative and a tot dad. Special thanks to Libby; to Katelyn Ouellette DiPaola and Matt Zaremsky for delivering *haggadot* to the participants; to the Zaremsky-Ley family for leading the candle-lighting blessing; and to Ethan and Eric Goldberg for their rendition of the Four Questions.

## **Spotlight on Our Newest Members**

*Editor’s note: A new feature from the Membership Committee to help all congregants get to know our new members.*

### **Seth Edelman**

Seth grew up in Queens but has lived in the Capital District for 46 years, currently in Colonie. Until a few years ago, he lived in rural Rensselaer County, where he built a small barn by himself and had large vegetable gardens, fruit plantings, dairy goats and chickens. Seth reports that he is divorced and has two adult married children and three grandchildren.

Seth came to Albany for a graduate degree at SUNY and stayed to work for state government as a manager, primarily in budgeting and contracts. Now retired, he walks a couple of hours early each morning, practices the piano and listens to classical music, among other pursuits. He loves the forest and nature in general and is a preserve steward for the Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy. He has also been an active volunteer for Community Hospice since 1995 and has clocked 75,000 miles picking up and delivering blood and blood products for the Red Cross.

Judy and Roy Fruiterman introduced Seth to B’nai Sholom. According to Seth, B’nai Sholom is “just what I was looking for to renew my lapsed familiarity and ties with Judaism.” He was particularly attracted to our “unpretentious and heimish” quality and is looking forward to becoming part of our Jewish community. Another goal as a BSRC member, says Seth, is “learning that which I failed to absorb in a misspent youth.”

Seth will put his many skills into practice as a new member of the Finance, House and Landscape committees. He says, “I look forward to meeting members in person when the pandemic abates!”

## **The Congregation Notes with Thanks These Contributions:**

### **General Fund**

In memory of **Sidney Devore** by Jack and Barbara Devore.

In memory of **Helen Goody** by Nancy Goody.

With gratitude for **Torah Study and Social Action Committee activities** by Irene Harbison.

In memory of **Lubi and Ann Radosh** by Steve Klein and Susan Radosh.

In memory of **Martin and Judith Klein** by Steve Klein and Susan Radosh.

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

In memory of **Frances Dobris** by The Family of Frances Dobris.

In memory of **Dorothy Lazaroff** by The Family of Dorothy Lazaroff.

In memory of **Claire Roth** by Amy, Yossi, Hadar and Adam Koren-Roth.

In memory of **William Lacov** by The Seguire Family.

In memory of **Christa Polednik** by Christine Blackman.

In memory of **Christa Polednik** by Becky and Ben Marvin.

### **Vera Propp – Books for Babies Fund**

In memory of **Rebecca M. Shultz** by Ben and Becky Marvin.

### **Endowment Fund**

With gratitude for **the Lay-Led Torah Study** by Richard McGowan.

## **The following Yahrzeits will be observed in May:**

5/7 Samuel Bach\*; Anna Liff\*; Louis Samuel Harris; Gordan Goldstein; Mel Lee; Claire Roth; Sol Goldstein\*

5/14 Minnie Velk\*; Dorothy Lazaroff\*; Glory Swartz; Hanna Aron; Alan Berke\*; Louis Rosenblatt\*; Herbert Horowitz; Hyman Tress; Edgar Altmayer; Henry Kramer; Harry Weiss

5/21 Renee Stoller; Meyer Tabak; Ida Domfort\*; Marvin Kerper; Elaine H. Neuburger; George Singer\*; Sam Rauch; Leo Levin; Jerome Hoffmann

5/28 Frances Dobris\*; Rose Rogers Singer\*; Hyman W. Zima\*; Dorothy Parnes; Lillian Raskin Kuperman\*; Vera Walker\*; Robert Goody; Morris Friedman; Philip Haas; Cleone Owen; Marion Goldstein; Dorothy Raderman; Jack Raderman

## **Mazal Tov!**

.....To Nancy Maurer and Bruce Bell on the engagement of their son, Tommy, to Carson Whitesides. The couple are planning a wedding in May 2022.

.....To Deb and Steve Nozik on the marriage of their son, Ethan, to Tess Thapalia on March 14, 2021.

## **Thank You!**

.....To the dedicated Bulletin Brigade – Steve Abelman, Jim Savitt, Joan Savitt, Rema Goldstein, Anita Stein, Barbara Devore, Joe DeFronzo and Anne Hausgaard – who helped fold and stuff the April Bulletin.

# Scholarships Available for Camp Eisner, But Act Now!

For many years, children in our congregation have attended Camp Eisner, a Reform Jewish camp in western Massachusetts, with scholarship support from our Israel Bond Fund. The Scholarship Committee has just learned that Camp Eisner has a few places left in the summer 2021 sessions. There are multiple sessions for each age group but with fewer campers than usual because of state COVID guidelines.

If you are interested in having your child attend Camp Eisner this summer, check the camp website ([www.eisnercamp.org](http://www.eisnercamp.org)) right away and make plans to enroll. Then let the committee know to arrange for a partial scholarship for your child. For info, contact committee chair Martha Rozett at [rozett@albany.edu](mailto:rozett@albany.edu)

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**OFFICE HOURS:** TUE/WED/THURS/FRI 9:30 AM–3:30 PM

Articles and news received after the deadline are subject to omission.  
As a rule, the Bulletin deadline is the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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>
June.....	May 12
July.....	June 9