

B'nai Sholom Reform Congregation

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OCTOBER 2020

TISHREI/CHESHVAN 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, MEDITATION, CELEBRATION AND STUDY

Zoom links for services are sent out weekly.

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

Friday, October 2 Saturday, October 3	EREV SUKKOT SERVICE SUKKOT – NO TORAH STUDY, Happy Holiday!	6:00 PM
Friday, October 9 Saturday, October 10	EREV SIMCHAT TORAH SERVICE SIMCHAT TORAH – NO TORAH STUDY, Happy Holiday!	6:00 PM 9:30 AM
Friday, October 16 Saturday, October 17	EREV SHABBAT SERVICE NO TORAH STUDY	6:13 PM
Friday, October 23 Saturday, October 24	EREV SHABBAT SERVICE TORAH STUDY: <i>Noah</i>	6:13 PM 9:30 AM
Friday, October 30 Saturday, October 31	EREV SHABBAT SERVICE TORAH STUDY: <i>Lekh Lekha</i>	6:13 PM 9:30 AM
Friday, November 6 Saturday, November 7	KABBALAT SHABBAT EXTENDED STUDY: <i>Va-yera</i>	6:13 PM 9:30 AM

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

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...

Follow Up

In most all endeavors in life, the key to success is follow up. When the teacher says to herself, "I must keep an eye on that child to see that he is doing well," the success of both the teacher and the child depend upon whether or not there is follow up. When the businessperson says, "I see that sales are down in that area, I must check that out tomorrow," the success of the business will depend on whether or not there is attention given to that area of sales. When the mother notes that her daughter seems depressed, then has a heart-to-heart talk and realizes that her daughter's problem stems from an ongoing concern about her friend's slide into drug use, without the proper follow up a life might be lost. In all these circumstances, the key to success is follow up.

And frankly, it is no different in the religious sphere. After Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur, it is so very important that we follow up on all of the promises that we made to ourselves and to others. Did we intend to draw closer to our children? Did we say to ourselves, "I really should come to the Zoom Torah study discussion this year?" Did we feel a spiritual renewal, then promise to attend Zoom services more often? Did we vow to support the Temple by donating as much time as we could? The key to the success of all of these objectives is follow up. In the religious realm, carrying out one's goals is essential to progressing to a higher moral and spiritual state.

Really, what good is it to make a Zoom appearance on Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur if we don't follow through on the promises we made? Is there something so magical about these holidays that our attendance in and of itself is enough to strengthen our religious lives?

This year, let us be honest with ourselves about the promises we have made. Let us resolve to keep all our pledges...about our family, our friends and our commitment to Temple life. Let us continue to travel the path we have set, striving toward the best vision of our best selves.

Follow up. That will lead us to success.

Shanah Tovah,

Rabbi David Katz

From Our President...

It has certainly been a memorable holiday season, and hopefully one with spiritual meaning and renewal for all of us. As we move into the fall, we residents of the Northeast savor the beauty of the season. As you read this, some of us will have taken our first cautious steps back toward in-person gatherings and others might be planning to attend upcoming events. Still, we remain primarily in our virtual space, which for many of us has become a real community in which we gather for worship, learning, and other events.

Many of us also look toward a fall season in which we will continue in our own ways to do the work of Tikkun Olam. Members of our congregation are participating in political work as Election Day nears (and for those of us voting by mail, may already be here!). We work for racial justice, calling attention to the inequities and wrongful uses of state power against people of color and looking for solutions. We also remain mindful of the dangers of anti-Semitism, particularly in a time when too many Americans, including those in or seeking positions of public authority, embrace and amplify dangerous conspiracy theories. But we're also turning inward to think about our congregation and the future we want to build.

I'm grateful to the Rabbinic Search Committee for their work in helping us to better understand ourselves. I'm also grateful to the many members and friends of B'nai Sholom who participated in the Search Committee's focus groups in winter and early spring of 2020 and more recently responded to the survey. We are learning that, while much of how we see ourselves as a Reform congregation isn't all that surprising, we do understand ourselves to be a distinctive congregation with a real purpose in the Capital Region. As we go forward, the Search Committee will use the information gained from these exercises to build our profile in a way to attract a strong set of applicants for our rabbinic position and then to think about how to prioritize applicants.

We are also learning more about our individual capacities through the Moments program and will be thinking about ways that we as a congregation can weave these notes together harmoniously. We hope through this program to increase our collective capacity to work on the things that matter most to us, helping both individuals and our congregation to strengthen our sense of purpose in the community. This engagement, I believe, will also help us to put our best foot forward for rabbinic candidates.

As we begin the new year as individuals and as a congregation, we face unprecedented challenges and uncertainties from the environment around us. It's important to remember, however, that we have come so far and adapted to so much already. I'm thus confident that we will meet these challenges with optimism and energy, working together to imagine and build the future we want.

Shanah Tovah!

Julie Novkov

Introducing “Moments”

Dear Congregant,

On Rosh HaShanah I proposed an experiment to create a congregation-wide program that has great potential to strengthen our community. This year we are requesting that you make a commitment of time to the Temple by designating a certain number of opportunities for the Temple to engage you. We are calling these “Moments.” To donate “Moments” is to write a blank check for a specific number of times the Temple can ask you to participate in some service, program, lesson or event, in the course of this next year. In essence you will become a “Super Volunteer” for the Temple, the type of helper who walks into the campaign office and declares: “What would you like me to do? Put me to work!”

In a few weeks you will be asked to complete a survey inquiring about your interests, desires, skills and aspirations. There will be more questions than a typical survey and it will take about 20 minutes to complete. Why so extensive? For many reasons. If you say you once played or currently play a brass instrument, the Temple will know if there is the potential to create an army of shofar blowers for Rosh HaShanah. Knowing when you usually have free time can make scheduling Temple events more effective. Finding out if you share interests with other members will allow the Temple to develop new programs that will connect you to others in a more profound way.

You may already be donating many hours to the Temple. I know many are. Since I arrived in Albany, I have been awed by the dedication and hard work of so many congregants. And it’s wonderful to see! This request to donate a certain number of moments is “above and beyond” what you are doing now.

So why participate?

First, you will be a model for others. When asked if you are part of the program, your positive response might influence the congregant who used to be active but perhaps has fallen away from Temple life. Second, the Temple may not be aware of many of your hidden talents and skills. Just completing the survey will strengthen the synagogue’s “known assets,” because it will bring to light the combined knowledge and talents of its members - which is the truest treasure. And finally, on a personal level, becoming a “Super Volunteer” may help you to stretch a bit by, say, being asked to attend at a Zoom program or study session you might not ordinarily have chosen.

Your survey will arrive by email shortly. I encourage you to fill it out as soon as you can. Your answers will be shared only with the B’nai Sholom “Moments” Task Force headed by Ben Marvin and Amy Koren-Roth and will not be published.

When every person chips in, the whole community is strengthened.

B’nai Sholom Reform Congregation will surely thrive through the participation of everyone who cares.

Once again.... Shanah Tovah!

Rabbi Katz

October 9 Simchat Torah Service to Feature “Torah Tots”



As usual this year, we will celebrate the completion of the annual cycle of reading the Torah with a special holiday service on erev Simchat Torah. Not much else will be as usual, however! Many of us love this holiday for our chance to hold and dance with the Torah, to parade around the sanctuary, to see the entire scroll unrolled, to learn which highlights are beneath our own fingertips as we carefully hold the edges of the scroll, and to receive a candy bar to remind us of how sweet the learning of Torah is meant to be.

None of that will be quite the same over Zoom this year. Instead, we will adapt to our new technological format by taking advantage of new ways we can celebrate.

One feature of our holiday observance this year will be Torah Tots. All parents and grandparents of the youngest members of our community are encouraged to dress your children like a Torah for the holiday. That way you can dance around your own home with your Torah Tot, and the rest of us will love watching it. The more Torah Tots fill our Zoom gallery, the more fun it will be!

This year the holiday falls on Friday night, October 9, through sundown on Saturday, October 10, so our holiday observance will be combined with our erev Shabbat service and begin at 6:00 p.m. There will be no separate Tot Shabbat or 8:00 p.m. service that night.

B'nai Sholom's Caring Community

The Caring Community can call on congregants who are willing and able to mobilize quickly when events such as births, bereavement and accidents make their inevitable way into our lives.

If you or someone you know needs assistance, help and support when:

- ✓ someone is sick or confined
- ✓ a new baby arrives
- ✓ there's been a death in the family
- ✓ there's a tragedy, accident or trauma

please call the office manager and/or the rabbi – 518-482-5283 – to notify us of the situation so we can initiate our support services.

“On three things does the world stand: On Torah, on worship and on deeds of lovingkindness” Pirkei Avot 1:2.

PLEASE NOTE: Amy Koren-Roth is Chair of the Caring Community. Her cellphone number is **INCORRECT** in the 5781 ANNUAL GUIDE/DIRECTORY. Amy's correct number is 518-495-2277. Please make the change. Thank you.

Come Outdoors with B'nai Sholom!

Plans are underway for a series of fall (and possibly winter) events designed to deepen our connections to Jewish spirituality, the natural world and each other. Plus, they involve getting together live and in person!

Events will take place at Five Rivers, Thacher Park, Henry Hudson Park, the Crossings, or similar outdoor sites.

- For those who enjoy a hike, small groups will walk to a remote location for an outdoor service of prayer, song and personal reflections that emphasize the experience of God in nature. Participants may also choose to engage in a longer hike together before or after the formal program. Later in the year we might cross-country ski or snowshoe.
- For those who like being out-of-doors but would rather skip the walking part, we will offer a small group outdoor service located close to a parking lot.

Both types of events will include activities for participants to get to know each other better.

Social distancing, masks, and limits on group size will all be employed to ensure the safety of all participants. Advance registration will be required to keep numbers low and to communicate regarding safety protocols.

Please watch the weekly e-announcements for specific dates and how to sign up.

In the meantime, we are looking for congregants interested in helping to lead these events. If you are interested in helping or want more information, please contact Libby Liebschutz at 518-466-7034 or libbyliebschutz@gmail.com.

SOCIAL ACTION – SOCIAL JUSTICE

RIVERSWEEP Clean-up Set for October 18, 2020

Interested in doing some good for people and the planet? Riverkeeper, a non-profit dedicated to protecting the Hudson River, is organizing River Sweep this October. Groups throughout the Hudson region will be sprucing up natural areas to enhance visitor experience and reduce impacts on wildlife. In partnership with Riverkeeper, the Capital Region Interfaith Creation Care Coalition (CRICCC) is sponsoring River Sweep at Hudson Shores Park in Watervliet on Sunday, October 18. CRICCC is a local coalition with members from different faith communities who learn and share ways to save our natural heritage. Barry Pendergrass of B'nai Sholom is a co-organizer of the River Sweep at Hudson Shores Park.

Volunteers are needed to collect litter and spruce up Hudson Shores Park on the 18th from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. It could be a great family activity and you may be surprised by this hidden gem of a park. A couple hours commitment will make a big difference in a facility that has gorgeous views and great river access but could use some help. Why not stop by and 'pitch in'? Contact Barry Pendergrass at 518-489-4558 for more information.

Be A Kibbutznik

In lieu of the cost of preparing food for an oneg, make a contribution to commemorate an event or honor or remember someone special. Contact Lois Gordon at rgordon1@nycap.rr.com by Tuesday of the week you want to be recognized in the weekly e-announcements. When you send your check to the temple, be sure to indicate that it is for the "Be A Kibbutznik" program.

October Kibbutzniks

Shari Whiting – In memory of her brother, Ron Kaplan

Rita and Arthur Alowitz

Deb Adler – In honor of my twins, Alexandra Cole and Amelia Addor on their 30th birthday

Gail and Larry Volk – In honor of Rabbi Cashman's retirement and Welcome to Rabbi Katz

The following Yahrts will be observed in October:

10/2 Frederic Adler; Ruth Ottenheimer; Anna Catherine Lipka; Peter Strassberg; Maurice Pass; Bertram Hess*; Joe Meer; Eva Teumim

10/9 Maurice Samuel Schwadron*; Peter Kurak; Sarah Cohen; Theodore "Ted" Shultz

10/16 Robert Gordon; Seymour Marvin Steinhart; Pearl Tress; Sadye Lazoroff Rabineau; Esther Soffer*; Irving Englander*; Gertrude Shapiro*; Meyer Sklar; Julius Turoff

10/23 Fanny Binewitch*; Julius Goldfarb; Irene Krochmal Swiwcz; Nathan Kaufman*; Anna Cohen; Julius Domfort; Ruth Devore; Margaret (Peggy) Kleinfeld

10/30 Sabina Millens; Jack Myers; Sarah Renee Whiting; Jacques M. Gilly*; Rose Kaufman*; M. Michel Dobris*; Robert L. Mutschler*; Norma Haas; Louis Horowitz; Anne Maurer

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

THE CONGREGATION NOTES WITH THANKS THESE CONTRIBUTIONS

General Fund

In memory of **Seymour Youngelman** by Roy and Judy Fruiterman

In memory of **Arthur Nitka** by Mark and Cheryl Reeder

In memory of **Michael Goody** by Nancy Goody

In memory of **Rae Goody** by Nancy Goody

In memory of **Charlotte Sacks** by Paula Philo

In memory of **Edith Cabelly** by the Seguire Family

In honor of **Roy and Judy Fruiterman** by Seth Edelman

Social Action Committee – Black Lives Matter Fund

To help defray **the costs of purchasing and replacing the BLM banner, and if need be, ensuring its security** by Julie Novkov

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

In honor of **Rabbi Katz** by Claire Sigal

Rabbinic Search Monthly Update: Going Forward

This fall the Search Committee is working on two items: the completion of a survey on the rabbinic search priorities (the follow-up to our group conversations held last winter), and the completion of the application for a settled rabbi to begin next July. We are making good progress on both fronts. Currently, we are compiling the results of the survey. These will provide us with important guidance about the search process, and we thank all who participated.

Work on the application for the settled rabbi is proceeding. There are several parts to the application, and we have a workgroup dedicated to completing it. The information from the survey and the group conversations will help us immensely. Our goal is to submit the application by mid-October after the Board reviews and approves it at its October meeting.

As a reminder, here is the timeline for our search:

August – October 2020	Complete the settled rabbinic application and submit to CCAR
November – December 2020	Conduct remote interviews; narrow list of candidates to 2-3 finalists
January 2021	Conduct Zoom interviews (in lieu of in-person interviews, per CCAR guidelines)
February – May 2021	Make a recommendation to the Board on which candidate to receive an offer; Seek congregational approval; contract negotiations
July 2021	Settled Rabbi starts

And, as always, if you have any questions or concerns, please contact us at rabsearch@bnaisholom.albany.ny.us. Thanks once again for your support in this vitally important process!

Carol Smith and David Liebschutz, Co-Chairs
Rabbinic Search Committee

Editor's note: One of a continuing series of personal expressions written by congregants and contributed by the Ritual Committee under the theme of "I Come to Services Because..."

Why I Go to Synagogue for Shabbat Services

By Joseph DeFronzo

I always look forward to going to Shabbat services every week. As the week progresses, my anticipation increases and a feeling of openness and spirituality engulfs my heart and soul.

I enjoy each step of the process in preparation for Shabbat. I begin the ritual early Friday afternoon: preparing the Shabbat candles, taking the challah out of the freezer (which my wife Susan lovingly baked the week before) and setting out the prayer book, my yarmulke and the Kiddush cup. Fifteen minutes before the candle-lighting time, I place the challah in the warm oven.

As we go on with the prayers, the fragrance of the challah and the flickering of the candles create the most peaceful aura in our home with emotional, mental and spiritual levels around us. The sipping of the wine captures one's symbol of blessing and judgment....is this what is meant by '*In Vino Veritas*'?

Over dinner a feeling of calmness settles in as Susan and I anticipate the evening service and curiously discuss what Shabbat is all about.

Although I feel I have been a de-facto Jew for many years, it has only been one year since I converted. My conversion has broadened my ardor and perspective in faith and prayer, something that I had lost for many years. This is one of the main reasons why I enjoy going to services. I enjoy the effects of socializing with people who have the same commitment and who also enjoy participating in the solemnity and purpose of the service.

It is indeed the praying and singing with everyone that increases trust and intimacy for me and which strengthens the meaning of the service; it makes one vulnerable to each other and to the very existence of spirituality within oneself. This is what Judaism brings to me and is reinforced every time I go to services.

Although with services on Zoom, the warmth of being physically around others in synagogue isn't there, nevertheless, the spirit and devotion is absolutely present for me each week.

*The congregation would like to
welcome our new member*

Hayden Schwartz

Are We Allowed in the Synagogue? Reopening Task Force has the Answer

B'nai Sholom's Reopening Task Force started meeting regularly in July. In keeping with Jewish values, we are prioritizing the health of our congregants, staff, tenants and visitors by continuing to hold all meetings, services and study sessions online. For rare situations where it is necessary to physically enter the building (for example, to pick up prayer books or to stuff envelopes for a mailing), we're asking everyone to follow NYS mandatory guidelines for religious institutions:

- Limit in-person presence as much as possible
- Sign in when you arrive at the building
- Answer the screening questions about symptoms and recent contacts
- Use the hand sanitizer that is located near the entrance
- Wear a face mask
- Stay 6 feet away from other people
- Only use restrooms when they are empty (1 person at a time)

We are all looking forward to a brighter, more carefree future at B'nai Sholom!

Life is filled with challenges.
JFS can help.



JFS provides a continuum of supportive services for children, teens, adults, families and seniors, including:

- Counseling for anxiety, depression or grief & more
- Home visits and assessments for seniors
- Transportation for Jewish seniors

Contact us to learn more:
518-482-8856
jfsneny.org



**Jewish
FAMILY
Services**

JFS wishes you and your family a meaningful,
happy and healthy New Year.

RABBI: David Katz
RABBI EMERITUS: Donald P. Cashman
PRESIDENT: Julie Novkov
OFFICE MANAGER: Christine Blackman
BOOKKEEPER: Jean Dashnaw can be reached at bookbnaisholom@gmail.com
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 nd 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>
November.....	October 14
December.....	November 11