

B'nai Sholom Reform Congregation

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

SEPTEMBER 2020

ELUL 5780/TISHREI 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, September 4	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE	6:00 PM
Saturday, September 5	EXTENDED STUDY	9:30 AM
Friday, September 11	TOT SHABBAT SERVICE	5:30 PM
	EREV SHABBAT SERVICE	8:00 PM
Saturday, September 12	TORAH STUDY: <i>Nitsavim-Va-yelekh</i>	9:30 AM
	SELICHOT	9:00 PM
Friday, September 18	EREV ROSH HASHANAH	8:00 PM
Saturday, September 19	ROSH HASHANAH MORNING/TORAH SERVICE	10:00 AM
	SHOFAR SERVICE* (See Page 5)	2:30 PM
Friday, September 25	EREV SHABBAT SERVICE	8:00 PM
Saturday, September 26	TORAH STUDY: <i>Ha'azinu</i>	9:30 AM
Sunday, September 27	KOL NIDREI	8:00 PM
Monday, September 28	YOM KIPPUR MORNING/TORAH SERVICE	10:00 AM
	STUDY SESSION	1:00 PM
	HEALING SERVICE	2:30 PM
	AFTERNOON/TORAH SERVICE	3:00 PM
	YIZKOR and NE'ILAH	(approximately) 5:30 PM
Friday, October 2	EREV SUKKOT SERVICE	6:00 PM
Saturday, October 3	NO TORAH STUDY, Happy Holiday!	

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

An Interesting Year

There is a famous Chinese curse, which roughly translated, goes like this: "May you live in interesting times." At the beginning of this Jewish year, living with social distance, we might also ponder...how interesting will our year be?

Of course, our lives can be interesting not only in negative ways but in positive ways, too. Children are born, lovers become husbands and wives, babies take their first steps, special anniversaries are celebrated. But just as easily accidents can happen, a virus can strike and death can take a loved one. All in all, it very well may be better to have an *uninteresting* year.

During this High Holiday season, we may ponder the highs and lows of our lives. We may ask ourselves how far we have come, how far we yet have to go. We may recognize our struggles and we may rejoice in our accomplishments. We may concentrate on the events that stand out...on every interesting and extraordinary moment.

But we would be wise to appreciate the everyday, very *uninteresting* moments of our lives as well. There is our family whom we love and who loves us. There are our friends who we are thankful to have when we are alone. There is the food that we enjoy, the books we read, the movies on television we see, the bed we lay down upon when we go to sleep at night. Were we to describe to a publisher any of these moments or people, they might present too dull a plot. They might not be deemed to be *interesting*. But oh, how important they really are!

The religious life is not lived on the top of mountains or in a constant gaze at ocean waves. The religious life is lived in the everyday moments that give meaning to our lives. Life is to be appreciated when the stranger smiles, when the baby extends its arms toward us, when we open the door of our houses to meet a new day. Every day we should be thanking God for what is ordinary in our lives.

Nancy and I wish you and those you love a year of happiness and good health.

L'shanah Tovah,

Rabbi Katz

How to Contact the Rabbi

Dear B'nai Sholom Members,

A number of people have asked me how I'm best contacted.

Here's the short answer:

If you have a family emergency or other urgent matter, call my cell: 443-377-6674. Also email me at rabbidavidkatz18@gmail.com. During work hours it's also wise to leave a message at the Temple.

For a quick answer to a simple question or to inform me of something I need to know, email me personally (not by a c.c., please) at rabbidavidkatz18@gmail.com. (If you have already sent an email to rabbi@bnaisholom.albany.ny.us, please resend it to the gmail address.)

For substantive matters, phone me or set up a Zoom meeting.

For an appointment, email me directly or call Christine in the Temple office. She can tell you when I am available.

And of course, Shabbat and holidays are not appropriate times to communicate unless it is an emergency.

Now, here's a fuller explanation...

In case of a crisis:

I am here for you 24/7. If you suffer a death in the family or there is a crisis that deserves immediate attention, call my cell phone: 443-377-6674. If I don't pick up the phone immediately, leave a message and call again soon.

Quick communications:

Email is the best way to get a short answer to a simple question. I don't usually use texting. My email address is: rabbidavidkatz18@gmail.com. If you don't hear back from me within a day or two, please resend the email.

For a sensitive personal matter or question, i.e. one that requires a judgment call or the conceptualization of an event - please phone me.

Please don't c.c. me. I am unable to respond to or enter most group conversations because the number of communications along with their threads makes my mailbox unmanageable. That's why it's always best to send or forward a personal email to me. (If I'm c.c.'d. in a minor matter, you may get a friendly response to take me off the c.c. list.)

When am I available?

My day off will be Mondays. For the fastest response, email me on another day.

For meetings, I am most available all day Tuesdays and Wednesdays – and if need be Thursdays during the day. If you have a timely or urgent matter, call and we'll find a time to meet no matter when. If you want to include me in an online group meeting, please contact me before sending out a group invitation so I can share available dates with you.

Office hours? For a Rabbi, maintaining office hours is not easily done and in the age of COVID, not advisable. Shoot me an email or if the matter is urgent give a call.

Again, I'm here for you always.

That's about it.

Thanks,

Rabbi Katz

From Our President

As we shift from summer to fall, I, like many of you, find myself going back and forth between hope and fear. Our local leaders have worked hard to manage the COVID-19 crisis and have done an admirable job of keeping us informed. We are among the fortunate few who can rely on contact tracing and relatively quick and widespread testing, and our infection rates have been low. Yet in many states with uncontrolled spread, as I write, children are going back to school with minimal precautions and young people are being strongly encouraged to return to their colleges and universities for in-person instruction.

In politics, it's the same dichotomy. On the bright side again, many members of our congregation likely felt inspiration from the messages of unity, progress, restoration and reconciliation from late summer political events. These messages, however, share space with hateful and divisive rhetoric that emphasizes some of the worst values that the United States has held: xenophobia, paranoia and racism.

As Jews, while we acknowledge a change of seasons, the beginning of a fresh educational cycle for some of us and the anticipation of a consequential election, we also approach our moment of renewal as we prepare to greet the new year. We wish each other a sweet new year and take the focused time to reflect on what we have done for good and ill over the course of 5780. We look ahead to 5781, perhaps with hope, but also with uncertainty about the future.

During the holiday season, we recite the UnetanaH Tokef, a prayer dating back centuries (an early fragment was located in the Cairo Genizah). This powerful prayer envisions Adonai judging and inscribing the fate of every living creature, though we are advised that t'shuvah, tefillah, and tzedakah can "avert the severe decree." The idea that individual good deeds might wheedle an interventionist G-d into holding back on the bad stuff has echoes in other religious traditions, but it probably isn't much comfort to most Reform Jews today. Rather, the prayer is a reminder that we don't know what's coming. The bad stuff may come like a bolt of lightning out of a clear blue sky. Not the wild beast, but the lost job. Not martyrdom by fire, but a struggle with cancer. Not the sword, but the anxiety and disruption, and possibly physical effects, of a global pandemic that almost certainly none of us had in mind when we stood together within the comforting walls of B'nai Sholom last September.

But grim as this is, it's not the full message either of the prayer or the holidays. Yes, we should reflect and repent, but we should also look forward with hope and open our hearts to the possibility of unexpected blessings. And we should remember that the prayer and our holidays are communal, drawing us together to share our strengths as well as our weaknesses and misfortunes.

Rosh Hashanah invokes the imagery of birth. It thereby invites us to dream possibilities and futures as expansive as the sky above our heads, a future that might tug at our heartstrings the way the first sight of a new baby does. As we clear our slates and begin anew, we can focus on where we can go as individuals and as a congregation. What unexpected blessings might come to us? Will we be open enough to see them? And how can we work together to make our best dreams a reality?

Shalom,
Julie Novkov

A New Kind of High Holy Day Observance Or: Why Are These Days Different from All Others?

Yes, it's true: B'nai Sholom will observe Selichot, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur at a safe distance this year. All of our services will be online and not in person. Rabbi Katz, our cantorial soloist, harpist, shofar blowers and other participants will come to us on our devices, with services adapted to electronic media. Safety is our first consideration.

While a complete schedule and sign-on information will be sent out by email in September, here is a list of planned services:

Selichot 9 p.m. Saturday, September 12

Rosh Hashanah

Evening service, 8 p.m. Friday, September 18

Morning/Torah service, 10 a.m. Saturday, September 19

Virtual luncheons, Noon-2 p.m., following Rosh Hashanah morning service

Shofar service, 2:30 p.m.* **(Our shofar service this year will be separate from the morning service and promises to be unique and dramatic. Watch your email for all the details.)**

Yom Kippur

Kol Nidrei, 8 p.m. Sunday, September 27

Morning/Torah service, 10 a.m. Monday, September 28

Study Session led by David Liebschutz 1-2:30 p.m.

Healing service 2:30 p.m.

Afternoon/Torah service, 3 p.m.

Yizkor and Ne'ilah, 5:30 p.m. approximately

Break-fast

"Beyond picking up the prayer books, *Mishkan Hanefesh*, before the holidays, the spirit of our services can be enhanced in different ways," explains Rabbi Katz. "Let's all dress in our High Holiday best, gather objects of Jewish significance and put them next to us within our Zoom frame, and perhaps add some flowers as well. If we plan carefully, we can create a community at prayer."

A few more points:

- A *Mishkan Hanefesh* pickup schedule will be emailed.
- There will be a link for a free Selichot flip book that can be used on any device.
- No tickets will be required to participate.
- Friends and family anywhere in the world are invited.
- Invitations to virtual luncheons will be sent out soon.

A season like no other is almost here, but B'nai Sholom remains the same warm, welcoming and vibrant community. Sign in!

SOCIAL ACTION – SOCIAL JUSTICE

What Does It Mean to Be a Brit Olam Congregation?

The word *brit* means circle, ring or chain, and from this derives the meaning of “covenant” or binding agreement....an agreement without end, like a circle. *Olam* is the world or universe. When the Jewish people stood at Sinai and received *Torah*, they entered into a covenant with God. We agreed to be partners in perfecting God’s world and God would keep us as “chosen people.” At Shavuot we say that we all stood at Sinai...even the future generations. Therefore, we are all still in covenant with God.

In late 2017, B’nai Sholom became one of the first 100 Reform congregations to sign the *Brit Olam* from the Religious Action Center (RAC) of the Reform Jewish movement.

This *Brit Olam* is a “Covenant with our World because we see the world we want, not the world as it is.” It is a contract to help create “a World of Compassion, Justice and Wholeness.”

Across North America and around the world, vulnerable populations face profound challenges. In the Reform Jewish movement, we are committed to meeting the urgency of now with moral leadership through congregational and community-based action.

Brit Olam congregations are focusing on:

- Immigration Justice
- Gun Violence Prevention
- Environmental Justice
- Racial Justice
- Reproductive Health and Rights

As members of B’nai Sholom, all are part of the *Brit Olam* and may partake in the culture of sacred and civil dialogue in our congregation where all opinions are heard.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO WORK TO BETTER OUR WORLD, PLEASE CONTACT THE SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE! THERE IS MUCH TO BE DONE!



PITCH IN (or OUT) for Family Promise

B’nai Sholom is a support congregation for Family Promise of the Capital Region, which assists homeless children and their families. Due to the pandemic, spring fundraising events were cancelled and a new virtual event has been created.

Pitch a tent in your backyard and watch the stars. Pitch a tent in your living room and watch the stars (on TV.) Get sponsors for each hour or day you agree to sleep anywhere but your bed. OR sponsor your brother-in-law, your grandkids, your dog. *Please see the flyer enclosed with this Bulletin.*

SOCIAL ACTION – SOCIAL JUSTICE

Reclaim Our Vote

Rabbi Yitzhak taught that, “A ruler is not to be appointed unless the community is first consulted” (Babylonian Talmud Berachot 55a). Rabbi Yitzhak further explained that in the Torah, Bezalel could be chosen to build the Tabernacle only with the community’s approval. This deeply embedded ethic of political participation has guided Jews to enthusiastically participate in the American electoral process.*

The Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism (RAC) has offered us the opportunity to help fight voter suppression nationwide by joining in the Civic Engagement Campaign for 2020, the postcard writing campaign. We already have access to the postcards and postage, along with the addresses from down south. A link to a YouTube video ensures that the process is helpful and clear.

Training video for postcards here.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q3Z9AYeKQPg&feature=youtu.be>

This is something that can be done at home. Interested? Please contact Valerie Tabak at walksing53@gmail.com or Becky Marvin at beckymarvin4574@gmail.com.

This project does not support a specific political party or candidate(s). It supports the right of individuals to register to vote.

**2020 Union for Reform Judaism*

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 anyone who enters 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!

B'nai Sholom Reform Congregation's Caring Community

When events such as births, bereavement and accidents make their inevitable way into our lives, it's comforting to know that your community is here for you. Most people are eager to help their friends and neighbors at these times. Our congregation is full of people who can and want to help.

The Caring Community can call on congregants who are willing and able to mobilize quickly. You or someone you know may need 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

When you have a need, 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.

The congregation notes with profound sorrow the deaths of:
Seymour Youngelman, father of Debbie Youngelman;
John Rozett, husband of Martha Rozett and father of Alex and Josh.
May their memory be for a blessing.

MAZAL TOV!

.....to Barbara and Richard Nussbaum on the birth of their granddaughter Sylvie Grace Garcia to Cate and Miguel Garcia.

.....to Becky Marvin, who received a NY Senate Proclamation from Sen. Neil Breslin for her work on the community-wide T-shirt Totes Project.

Update on Our Rabbinic Search

The Rabbinic Search Committee has completed the first phase of its work with the installation of Rabbi David Katz as our interim rabbi for 2020-21 and holding the community conversations as part of our self-study process.

Our work for the year ahead will have two parts: the first will be a congregational survey this summer to help the committee (and congregation) set priorities for our application for a settled rabbi, and the second will be the actual search process, which will begin after Labor Day. Work on both the congregational survey and the application are underway, and we hope to complete both by October.

For the second phase of our work, the committee has undergone some membership changes. David DiPaola has stepped off the committee but will remain involved as a board member and Treasurer of the synagogue. Ann Lowenfels will remain on the committee but has stepped down as co-chair in order to focus on her role as President-Elect and member of the Reopening Task Force. Past-President and current committee member Carol Smith has agreed to step up as co-chair for the second phase. Thanks to David and Ann for their great work this past year and to Carol for stepping into this important role.

We also want to welcome to the committee two new members: Barbara Devore and Joel Bloom. Barbara worked very closely with the committee over the past 18 months as President and will be an excellent addition to our ranks. Likewise for Joel, who brings a wealth of knowledge about surveys and experience as the son of a Reform rabbi and congregational leader. Looking forward to having both Barbara and Joel join our ranks this month.

As always, please email or call Carol or David with any comments or questions about the process.

Update from the Finance Committee

Thanks to the generosity of many congregants whose names are being kept confidential in the spirit of tzedekah, we are pleased to share the news that have received pledges to date of \$18,060 in Patron Dues for 2020-2021. Patron Dues are used to defray B'nai Sholom's ongoing expenses.

We also understand that congregants with unpaid balances from fiscal year 2019-2020 whose incomes have been affected by current events may need to have those dues payments deferred, and we will do so. We want our members to feel confident that they are full participants in the life of B'nai Sholom regardless of their level of financial support.

News from the Communications Committee

B'nai Sholom's Web Team is expanding and is looking for your assistance. We're seeking a congregant who has programming and webmaster experience to help maintain and improve the temple's website.

Is this you? If it is and you're interested, then please contact Bruce Goldstein at 518-765-2893 or wa3afs@arrl.net.

Become A Kibbutznik

As you know, our biennial auction, which provides crucial support for our temple, was canceled. To alleviate this situation, the fundraising committee has introduced a new concept called **Become A Kibbutznik**. Since the basic concept of a kibbutz is communal living and support for the group, we felt this was an appropriate name for our initiative.

We're suggesting that members of the congregation offer the money that would be spent on our Friday night Onegs, for use of temple operating expenses. Any amount could be contributed but it would be helpful if you could consider a minimum of \$36. You will have the opportunity to include a celebratory, honorary or memorial message, which will be announced in the monthly Bulletin and weekly e-announcements.

This will be ongoing so you can **Become A Kibbutznik** at any time during the year. If you have something to celebrate, someone to honor, want to remember someone or just contribute, please send your check to the temple. Indicate that it's for "**Become A Kibbutznik**" and your purpose. We thank you for your support at this difficult time.

SEPTEMBER KIBBUTZNIKS

Barbara & Richard Nussbaum - In honor of Sylvie Grace Garcia, our newest grandchild, daughter of Cate and Miguel Garcia

Ethan Goldberg - In appreciation of the entire B'nai Sholom community for their support on the occasion of my Bar Mitzvah

Rabbi Cashman - In memory of Elaine S. Cashman, on her Yahrtzeit

Lois Gordon - In memory of my beloved mother-in-law, Eva Gordon

Shop at Supermarkets, Help B'nai Sholom

In addition to becoming a Kibbutznik, here's another way that you can help B'nai Sholom's treasury:

Grocery store gift cards are available to purchase for personal use or to donate to needy organizations. At no cost to you, the temple earns 5% on each dollar spent. Contact Ellie Davis at davisj0726@gmail.com for more information.

The Fundraising Committee continues to brainstorm ideas to raise funds for the synagogue in a virtual environment. We welcome all suggestions!

The following Yahrzeits will be observed in September:

9/4 Rae Goody; Michael Goody; Marvin Morris; Leah Royne; Pauline Tauss; Edith Cabelly; Elsie Logwood; Morris Parets*; Edward Hoffman; Ethel Link; Abraham Sperber*

9/11 David Engler*; Vivian Quell; Harold Quell; Lubi Radosh; Marylin Ruben; Joseph (Norm) Ouellette; Ari Propp; Rifka Propp; Charlotte Sacks; Shari Knieling; Alice Winston*; Betty Herbert; Rose Levine Goldstein*; Mollie Belkin Lazoroff*; Henry Nussbaum

9/18 Martin Kleinfeld*; Yetta Berman*; Jakob Simon Krochmal; Arthur Nitka; Saul Toback; David Binewitch*; Samuel Pock*; Jeannie Bick; Rose Dietchman; Pauline Stern*; Rose Pass

9/25 Donald Goldberg; Asher Kaplan; Luci Shapiro

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

THE CONGREGATION NOTES WITH THANKS THESE CONTRIBUTIONS

General Fund

In memory of **Seymour Youngelman** by Jack and Barbara Devore.

In memory of **Milton Swartz** by Jack and Barbara Devore.

In memory of **Lorraine Tharus** by Jack and Barbara Devore.

In celebration of **Ethan Goldberg's Bar Mitzvah** by Jack and Barbara Devore.

In memory of **Jason Countryman** by Ellie and Randy Davis.

In memory of **Seymour Youngelman** by Ellie and Randy Davis.

In memory of **Ilene Goldman** by Lori Stuart.

In celebration of **this year's Days of Awe** by Brett Orzechowski.

In memory of **Robert Stoller** by Howie and Bettina Stoller.

In memory of **Gina Kleinfeld** by Howie and Bettina Stoller.

In memory of **Paul Krochmal** by Ruth and Herb Swift.

In memory of **Jason Countryman** by Roy and Judy Fruiterman.

In memory of **John Rozett** by Roy and Judy Fruiterman.

In memory of **Seymour Youngelman** by Ben and Becky Marvin.

In memory of **John Rozett** by Ben and Becky Marvin.

In appreciation for **being able to join my brother and his wife, Bruce and Edith Goldstein, for Services and Torah Study** by Lorrie Van Akkeren.

With gratitude for **Torah Study, Hebrew Study and other classes** by Irene Harbison.

In honor of **Rabbi Don Cashman's retirement** by the B'Yachad School Board.

In honor of **the Golden Anniversary of Roy and Judy Fruiterman** by Ben and Becky Marvin.

In memory of **Seymour Youngelman** by Rondi Brower and Philip Gilly.

Adult Education Fund

In memory of **John Rozett** by Gary and Melissa Putterman Hoffmann.

Torah Maintenance and Study Fund

In memory of **Jason Countryman** by Gary and Melissa Putterman Hoffmann.

Caring Community Fund

In honor of **Ethan Goldberg's Bar Mitzvah** by Herb and Ruth Swift.

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

In memory of **Seymour Youngelman** by Gary and Melissa Putterman Hoffmann.

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- Home visits and assessments for seniors
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518-482-8856
jfsneny.org



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: MON/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 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>
October.....	September 9
November.....	October 14