

B'nai Sholom Reform Congregation

420 WHITEHALL RD., ALBANY, NY 12208
E-mail: office@bnaisholom.albany.ny.us
DECEMBER 2022

Phone: 518-482-5283
Visit us at <http://www.bnaisholomalbany.org>
KISLEV/TEVET 5783

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, December 2	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE	7:00 PM
Saturday, December 3	EXTENDED STUDY	9:30 AM
	SATURDAY MORNING TORAH SERVICE	10:30 AM
Friday, December 9	TOT SHABBAT SERVICE	5:30 PM
	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE	7:00 PM
Saturday, December 10	TORAH STUDY	10:00 AM
Friday, December 16	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE	7:00 PM
Saturday, December 17	TORAH STUDY	10:00 AM
Friday, December 23	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE w/Chanukah	7:00 PM
	Candle Lighting	
Saturday, December 24	TORAH STUDY	10:00 AM
Friday, December 30	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE	7:00 PM
Saturday, December 31	TORAH STUDY	10:00 AM
Friday, January 6	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE	7:00 PM
Saturday, January 7	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...

(Delivered at the Installation of Rabbi Danielle Weisbrot October 29, 2022)

Why so late? I've fielded this question at least a dozen times since we started announcing today's event. Of course, people were happy for me, but many wondered, "Why are you just getting installed *now*? Haven't you been there – forever, already?" I then explain about COVID, and how Rabbi Cashman had to wait *two* years for his well-deserved retirement party, and so on. But in any case, an installation is almost never held on the day the new rabbi arrives. It's not a welcome party with a few balloons, or even the beautiful sign on the door that greeted me on my first day here. It's a formalizing of a sacred relationship, and that takes time to build.

I interviewed during a pandemic. Everything was on Zoom. Still, I was able to learn quite a lot about B'nai Sholom. I did this over the course of **eleven** interviews, including a virtual "site visit" composed of a set of nine meetings in 24 hours. It was exhausting, but very telling. Yes, I thought perhaps they were a wee bit anxious about finding a good match... but also, that they felt it was important for the candidates to get to know them and vice versa.

This was a congregation where the interview process didn't just include the Board and the Search Committee, but representatives from a wide swath of committees and roles, spanning a range of ages and interests. They booked a slot for me with the interim rabbi, so I could get a rabbinic-level perspective on the congregation. And they set aside time for me to meet with the Office Manager; as a former executive assistant myself, Christine's inclusion on the docket spoke volumes.

Of course, with so many Zoom meetings in such a short period of time, there were bound to be a few glitches. My master schedule didn't have the Zoom information listed for one of the meetings until the night before. When David Liebschutz forwarded it to me via e-mail, he announced that he had "found the missing link." I replied that evolutionary biologists everywhere would be thrilled to hear it! Knowing him a little better now, I can picture how his face might have looked like when he responded that jokes like that would either cost me the job, or else clinch the deal. I guess we know how that went!

I'd like to extend my thanks:

- To my family, friends, teachers, and mentors for supporting me along the way.
- To the Search Committee – headed by David Liebschutz and Carol Smith – for finding and taking a chance on me.
- To the Transition Committee – from which Maggie Tabak will soon be grateful to retire – for doing everything they could to welcome me, share information and ease my entry into life in Albany and at B'nai Sholom Reform Congregation.
- To the Board, for its leadership, guidance, and partnership – and especially Julie Novkov and Ann Lowenfels, who made and make time for weekly check-in meetings and constant collaboration.

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(Continued from page 2.)

- To the Ritual Committee, which has been my right hand and often a supplemental brain, especially when I first arrived and High Holy Day season was already nigh upon us!
- To the other committees who have shared their energy, ideas and insights and allowed me to share a few of my own as well.
- To my local colleagues – clergy of all faiths, educators, Federation staff and others – who have been truly supportive and made the Capital District feel like a cohesive community.
- And to every member of B'nai Sholom who has shown me kindness, shared their stories, offered a meal or a ride, and made me feel part of this holy congregation.

In this week's Torah portion, G-d doesn't just command Noah to build a boat, but essentially a vessel in which to carry the world – or perhaps a seed from which a better world can be planted. The ark contains a small but growing group of relatively righteous people, animals, food – everything they would need to thrive – and, as I mentioned last night, a window to prevent them from disengaging with the world outside the ship, for better or worse.

Like Noah's ark, we too have everything we need to sustain our vibrant community – caring members and friends, a willingness to volunteer and support each other, and a variety of skills and resources to accomplish what needs to be done. We have the “skylight,” staying actively engaged in the world around us, and we do our part to make it a better one for all. I'm glad I was invited aboard the Good Ship B'nai Sholom, and I look forward to continuing our journey together.

L'shalom,

Rabbi Danielle Weisbrot

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 Rabbi Weisbrot – 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*

From Our President...

(Delivered at the Installation of Rabbi Danielle Weisbrot October 29, 2022)

I want to start by recognizing the Transition Committee, who planned today's festivities. They were responsible for saying 'goodbye' to Rabbi Cashman and 'hello' to Rabbi Weisbrot – so they've been working for a *very* long time. Today is their capstone event, and it includes a celebratory Kiddush luncheon. After services, you can get food from the buffet table in the back and then take it outside to eat. If you prefer, you can take your food 'to go' and eat it at home.

During the planning process, I was told that an Installation Ceremony is similar to a Bat Mitzvah. But to me, it seems more like a wedding. Using this wedding analogy, the role of matchmaker was played by the Reform Movement's "Placement Commission." They advised us to start our process with a "self-study" activity – so that we would have a better idea of what we were looking for in a settled Rabbi. This all happened years ago...before Rabbi Weisbrot, before Rabbi Katz, even before COVID. So our self-study process was conducted in person— 10 congregants hosted "community conversations" in their homes. And one or two conversations were held here at B'nai Sholom.

During those conversations, congregants answered questions about B'nai Sholom: most valued features, strengths, challenges, and five-year vision. They also discussed which roles would be important for the settled Rabbi to play and what personal qualities would be important for the settled Rabbi to have. Answers to these questions are summarized here on this sheet of paper – it's amazing I could actually *find* this after all these years!

Now I am going to read the list of important roles, and you think about if you've seen Rabbi Weisbrot play any of them: spiritual leader, pastoral counselor, facilitator of social action and community involvement, supporter of interfaith couples, educator, administrator, participant. Rabbi Weisbrot has already played *all* of these roles. And she has only been here for one year!

And now, I am going to read the list of personal qualities. If we could get anything we wanted – the *perfect* Rabbi – this is the list of personal qualities we wanted: strong interpersonal skills, communicates well with young families and children, flexible, good leadership and administrative abilities, empathetic, spiritual, musical, committed to our congregation. Rabbi Weisbrot has *all* these qualities. She's a perfect fit!

This week we are studying Noah, but last week's portion was Bere'shit. That's where we read about G-d creating the world in six days and resting on the seventh. There is the question about what G-d has been doing since then. Some say since then, G-d has been busy making matches. That's where we get the idea of a "match made in Heaven," something that is preordained, a "bashert."

I believe we have found our Bashert with Rabbi Weisbrot. And I look forward to working with her, and with all of you, to achieve our "Five-Year Vision" – some of our long-term goals haven't been accomplished yet.

Shalom,

Ann Lowenfels, President

A FEW MINUTES WITH THE TORAH

EDITOR'S NOTE: A new feature spotlighting the outstanding d'verei Torah written by congregants. This month: Haazinu, written by Libby Liebschutz and delivered at the October 7 Kabbalat Shabbat service.

D'var Torah for Oct. 7, 2022: Haazinu (Deuteronomy 32:1-52) by Libby Liebschutz

This week's Torah portion is Haazinu. We're almost at the very end of the Torah; Moses is at the very end of his long speech to the Israelites; he's about to ascend Mount Nebo, where he will die. He composes a song, a poem, and the Torah says he teaches it to all the Israelites. It's supposed to be an easy way for them to remember all that he has told them.

The song is arranged in an unusual form. It looks like two columns, but you just read the lines across both columns, so that each line is a pair of couplets. In a little over a week, on Erev Simchat Torah, when we unroll the entire scroll, I'll look for the Song of the Sea, as I always do. It's easy to pick out, with its distinctive pattern, like an openwork brick wall. Somehow, I've never paid enough attention to this parshah, which is the *other* song of the Torah attributed to Moses and which is also distinctive looking. This year I'll be looking for it, too.

The poem has some distinct sections.

It begins with praise of God, ascribing to God the qualities of God as a Rock, as a father and as an eagle who cares for its young, setting them safely on high on a mountain. God is described as establishing the boundaries of the world with reference to the people of Israel, making sure they occupy the land and live well on it, are well fed and well taken care of.

Then the poem envisions Israel growing fat and happy, forgetting about God and neglecting their duties to God.

God becomes vexed by the people's behavior and punishes them with disease, famine, plague and enemies.

BUT – God will not let any of these threats wipe out Israel entirely. The reason given is that God doesn't want Israel's enemies to believe that their gods are superior or otherwise that the God of Israel fails to protect His chosen people. So, rather than God allowing enemies to overrun Israel, God will vindicate his people and his status and will destroy those who don't believe in God. In the poem, God says,

“When I whet My flashing blade
And My hand lays hold on judgment,
Vengeance will I wreak on My foes,
Will I deal to those who reject Me.
I will make My arrows drunk with blood –
As My sword devours flesh—
Blood of the slain and the captive
From the long-haired enemy chiefs.” (Deuteronomy 32:41-42)

(Apparently this passage was the basis for Julia Ward Howe’s lyrics in the “Battle Hymn of the Republic,” when she wrote, “He hath loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible swift sword.”) The poem concludes with a final set of couplets,

O nations, acclaim God’s people!
For He’ll avenge the blood of His servants,
Wreak vengeance on His foes,
And cleanse His people’s land. (Deuteronomy 32:43)

Like Jacob, who wrestled with the angel, I struggle with this passage. Yes, in many ways it’s incredibly comforting and wonderful to think of God as specifically watching out for the Jewish people as the chosen people, making sure we never die out as a people, even if we stray and suffer. But – do we really think God is up there dealing with the world like a giant Risk game board, moving armies and boundaries around, making sure our “enemies,” whomever they may be, are smitten and defeated? Are we comfortable with a vision of God wielding “His terrible swift sword”? Are we even comfortable with the notion of being “chosen”?

The tension in Judaism between a universal God, who is the God of all peoples, on the one hand, and the particular, parochial God who watches over a chosen, anointed people, goes back pretty much to the beginning. On the one hand, as we just read in our prayer book, we’ve always revered God as the creator of the world, light and dark, the waters, the earth and the heavens. All peoples of the earth were descended from Adam, and therefore all peoples of the world were and are “b’tzelem Elohim,” created in the image of God. So, God is one, the earth is one, all peoples are children of God. On the other hand, we have countless passages, both in Torah and elsewhere in the Tanakh, of God’s special relationship with us as the chosen people, always preferred over a host of less worthy enemies who fail to recognize God or worship as we do. This week’s parshah is only one typical, summary example.

Traditionally, I think this tension gets resolved through the concept of covenant. God is the God of all the earth and all the people, but if you sign up to believe in the Torah and agree to follow its commandments, you get special attention. The covenant of the Jews was made at Sinai, where all the people assembled say, in one voice, “All that the Eternal has spoken we will do.” (They say that before they’ve even heard the rules, Exodus 19:7, but they repeat it again after Moses has relayed and explained all the law received on the mountain, Exodus 24:3, Exodus 24:7.) We believe all the Jewish

people were at Sinai and that the covenant was made for all time and for all Jews, past, present and future.

To those who see this singling out of a people as offensive, as an essentially racist, exclusive club, some commentators say, "But the club is open to anyone who agrees to accept the covenant!" Indeed, this is the vision of Isaiah – when he prophesizes about a world where all the peoples will beat their swords into plowshares and "learn war no more," he envisions all the nations coming together to an elevated mountain of Adonai, "to the house of the God of Jacob; that He may teach us His ways and that we may walk in His paths." (Isaiah 2:2-3)

Does that concept have continuing validity in the modern age? Do we continue to hope for a world where all the nations accept Torah as the one true path? Do we believe that God will pick winners and losers in battle or plague or famine based on who has or hasn't adopted the ancient Sinai covenant? Or even based on who follows the ethical mores of the Torah? Or who is naughty or nice? The Haazinu poem says God will preserve the Jews even if we fail to follow in God's ways. We will presumably perpetually be given another chance to repent and reform.

Modern Jews and certainly the Reform movement have struggled with the concept of chosenness. Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan, a founder of Reconstructionist Judaism, rejected the idea. According to Kaplan, "The idea of the Chosen People was justifiable religious doctrine in ancient Judaism, but today it is not merely untenable, but also detrimental to a normal adjustment of the Jew to his environment." (Sefaria: Kaplan on Chosenness, October 14, 1945).

The concept of the universality of a God for all people resonates with us as modern, progressive Jews. It's consistent with our tenets of tolerance of people of all nations and races and faiths; our efforts to make the world a better place for them as well as us. We pray for peace and add "v'al kol yosh'vei tevel," "for *all* who inhabit the earth."

And the concept of a universal God also resonates as we move away from the concept of an anthropomorphic God, a white-haired guy in the clouds, a being with a face to show or hide from us, who wields a flashing blade. Instead, some of us envision God as a sort of energy force field, the source of creativity in the universe. On Yom Kippur morning, we read, of God, "Your Oneness is the life of the cosmos."

But many other scholars see chosenness, or at least the covenant, as essential to maintaining Judaism as a coherent, unique religion. Indeed, if you take the oneness of God in the universe to its logical extreme, you are faced with a host of questions: If God is everywhere, in everything and everyone without any differentiation, shouldn't you have a special relationship with God simply by virtue of being born? If we're all the children of God, all connected to the life force of the universe, what's the point of being a Jew? Especially for those of us who weren't already born Jewish? If we agree to follow the mitzvot, but there's no reciprocal obligation on God's part, what kind of covenant is that? Does Judaism lose its coherence without the foundational underpinning of covenant?

I'm not prepared to give any answers today. Indeed, I might propose that our Adult Education Committee consider offering a whole course on the topic of chosenness. (I know Rabbi Weisbrot will be teaching a class in December on "The Jewish Family Tree"

in which she will explain some of the history of the different Jewish movements, and this topic may end up being covered a bit in that context.)

I'm grateful for the giving of the Torah, whether it was delivered in a cloud on a mountain or evolved over centuries among the people of the ancient Near East. I'm grateful for and proud of the Jewish tradition that preserved and publicized the ethics and values of the Torah, which was an incredible contribution to the advancement of civilization. Indeed, I am one of many who have affirmatively thrown in my lot with the Jewish people because I liked the idea of living my life in accordance with the mitzvot of the Torah and the ethics of Judaism. I don't need any special favors from God to convince me that it's a way of life that's both constructive and meaningful.

In the meantime, I will continue to wrestle with our foundational texts. The wrestling forces me to think, to consider my values, to examine my place in the universe. It was Socrates who said, "the unexamined life is not worth living." May we all then, find worth in living by examining our lives in light of our heritage of Torah and our relationship with God, whatever that may be.

Mitzvah Opportunities

Midrash Psalms 118:17

When you are asked in the world to come, "What was your work?" and you answer, "I fed the hungry," you will be told, "This is the gate of the Eternal, enter into it, you who have fed the hungry."

There are many ways to fulfill the mitzvah of feeding the hungry in our community. Check out these opportunities and volunteer as a family!

Regional Food Bank of Northeastern New York

<https://regionalfoodbank.net/volunteer/>

Sort and pack food at the Latham warehouse or staff the holiday food drive at Crossgates Mall.

Catholic Charities

Call 518-641-6953 or email Barb.Willis@ccrcda.org to register for email notifications of distribution dates

Pack and distribute food boxes at weekly drive-through events around the Capital Region.

Social Action/Social Justice

“Books Are a Uniquely Portable Magic”

~Stephen King

Help to make the “**Magic**” –

Between December 1 and December 21, we are collecting gently used children’s books (think ages 4 through 16), to be donated to the “Keep What You Love Library” that we established (pre-COVID) at the Schuyler Inn Homeless Shelter in Menands.

ADDITIONALLY...

The children would love to have the gift of a new book. While planning the upcoming season of gifting, we ask that you please consider choosing and donating a book that you think could help to make the holidays happier for a child who lives in the shelter.

PLEASE...

Separate the new from the gently used books so that we can “gift bag” the new books.

We Plan to Deliver the Books on December 22.

WE BUNDLED UP!

At our semi-annual clothing drive in early November, we received boxes, bags and bundles of clothing. A big thank you to Anita Stein, Hayden Schwartz and Steve Gottlieb for staffing the Sunday drop-off, and a huge thank you to Jesse Dinkin and Dinkin for loading up their cars and hauling it all to the City Mission for distribution throughout the region.

P.S. A special thank you to Jesse Dinkin, who was omitted from the “cramped hands club” list, for his voter postcard campaign efforts.

COLLECTIVE EFFORTS

- Family Promise of the Capital Region has put out a call for personal care and hygiene products for families in need...
- The US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants has an urgent need for cleaning products as well as personal care and hygiene products for newly arrived clients...

...so how can you help? Maybe ask each of your guests to bring an item to Thanksgiving dinner? Or you could look for *Buy One Get One Free* offers when you grocery shop. Staying at a hotel over the holidays? Bring home the extra toiletries.

Drop off items in the marked bin at B’nai Sholom during the month of December.

Recommended items include shampoo, disposable razors, toothbrushes and toothpaste, diapers, deodorant, sanitary napkins and tampons, paper towels, toilet brushes and holders, sponges, rubber gloves, soap and detergent, wastebaskets and trash bags.

News from the Fundraising Committee

Thank you to everyone who participated in the "Friends Helping Friends" shopping day at Boscov's on October 19. Many congregants were seen at the event, and we hear there were some successful shopping steals to be found. A thank you also goes out to Boscov's for allowing all nonprofits participating to keep the donations contributed for the passes. Between the passes we purchased and those sold to the public at Boscov's, the Fundraising Committee had a fruitful (and fun) day.

Next up? Holiday giftwrapping. Leading up to the Chanukah/Christmas holidays, Boscov's will provide a table and giftwrapping supplies for nonprofits to giftwrap customers' purchases from the store. All donations go to the nonprofit. Do you like to giftwrap? Want to have some fun with the 'Fun'draising Committee? Then contact Ellie Davis at 518-466-2838 or davisj0726@email.com and we'll work out a shift for you to participate. We'd love to have you join us!

BE ON GUARD AGAINST EMAIL SPOOFING SCAM



STAY ALERT! If you see a suspicious email that claims to come from Rabbi Weisbrot or someone else at B'nai Sholom, double-check the email address of the sender – it may be a scam. When in doubt, **do not click on any links or attachments** and **do not reply** to the message. Send a fresh email to the correct address for the supposed sender or call them directly to confirm.

The following Yahrzeits will be observed in December:

12/2 Richard L. Brower*; Paul B. Blum; Richard Malkin; David Cohen*; Bertha Markstein Peckerman*; Edward Wallant; David Gottlieb; Albert J. Abrams*; Jack Pendergrass; Donald Tannen; Jacob Lichtenfels*; Albert Marcus*; Sylvia Goldstein Marcus*

12/9 Grace Fruiterman; Rita Binenkorb Ray; Florence Levion Levin; Marvin Millens; Ruth Samber; Sadie Cohen*; Hannah R. Jaffe*; Erwin Winston*; Jacob Lazoroff*; Freda Kussack

12/16 Ruth Aronson*; Adah Vosburgh; Harry Cohen*; Norma Belle Singer Beatman*; Samuel Link; Saul Mouchly Small; Hannah Tabak; Adele Broch Krochmal; Lillian Tannen; Sanford Liebschutz

12/23 Waldamar Knieling; Cornelius Epstein*; Florence Morse; Alfred Waxman; Judith S. Dobris*; Anita Dubb*; Gertrude Slotnick; Estera Fiks

12/30 Roberta Minzer; Mildred Adler*; Olaf "Sonny" Hausgaard; Lore (Laurie) Lee; Rachel Trombley Porter; Benjamin Sacks; Herbert Swift; Irving Goodman*; Michael Leon Kramer*; Vera Winston Propp*; Gerald Davis; Jean Pacuk; Morris Adler*

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

ADULT EDUCATION – Late Fall 2022

The Jewish Family Tree (In-person and via Zoom)
Teacher: Rabbi Danielle Weisbrot
Thursday, December 1 and 8; Wednesday, December 14
7:30 PM to 8:30 PM
\$20 non-member; \$15 member

Who started the Reform Movement? Is there more than one way to be Orthodox? Do Jews around the world all pray the same way? Come learn about the spectrum of Jewish life – how and when the different movements were born, what makes them unique, distinctions among some global Jewish communities and how all our varied branches intersect on the Jewish Family Tree.

Book Folding Class (In person ONLY at B'nai Sholom)
Teacher: Beth Oldrich
Monday, December 12
7:00 PM to 8:00 PM
No Fee

Join us on December 12 as we bring back by popular demand Beth Oldrich, author of *Book Folding for Beginners and Beyond*, for another workshop. Book folding is the art of repurposing hardcover books into book sculptures, a modern twist on origami. It's an easy craft to learn, is eco-friendly and would be fun for ages 13 to adult. We will be making a **dreidel**, just in time for Chanukah. See examples of book folding projects at Beth's website: <https://sites.google.com/view/bookfolding/home>.

There is no charge and all one brings to the workshop are scissors and a hardcover book at least 250 pages and 8½ inches tall with no photos to use for the folding.

Contact the office (518-482-5283) to register or use the form included.

Beth is the daughter of temple members Bruce and Edith Goldstein.

Annual Synagogue Scholars Book Talk with Martha Rozett **Set for January 6, 2023**

Book Talk Selection: *PEOPLE LOVE DEAD JEWS*, by Dara Horn
Dara Horn's essay collection, *PEOPLE LOVE DEAD JEWS*, has a title that seems designed to offend or challenge the reader. Most of the 12 essays were published elsewhere in recent years and some have been the subjects of a podcast on Tablet. Horn is a terrific novelist (*THE WORLD TO COME, ALL OTHER NIGHTS*) with a doctorate in Hebrew and Yiddish literature. In the course of her reading, she realized that Jewish literature often lacks the kinds of happy endings, or resolutions, that we expect from fiction. She is troubled by the way readers expect "uplifting" stories about Jews and their rescuers that emphasize redemption, arguing that such stories minimize the suffering experienced by the Jewish people throughout history. Hence, her premise that people who are moved by dead Jews – Anne Frank is the preeminent example – are uncomfortable with living ones. This is a provocative book, but a timely one, for we live in a world where anti-Semitism, both subtle and violent, continues to be widespread.

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In her annual book talk, a tradition begun about 15 years ago, Martha Rozett, professor emerita at UAlbany, will examine four of the essays in *PEOPLE LOVE DEAD JEWS*, leaving time for discussion: "Everyone's (Second) Favorite Dead Jew," "Frozen Jews," "Legends of Dead Jews" and "Commuting with Shylock." The program will begin following the conclusion of our Shabbat service.

MANY MOMENTS IN TIME STRENGTHEN B'NAI SHOLOM AND ENRICH LIVES

Do you have a moment?

Eighteen months ago, that question kicked off a new initiative that promised to offer volunteer opportunities tailor-made to the interests and talents of all congregants and perhaps encourage them to try something new. Congregants were asked to pledge five "Moments" of their time that could be donated to B'nai Sholom and tapped as needed for such things as trying out Torah study or participating in a social action program.

And you came through big time! More than 400 Moments were donated by 80+ congregants. So far, 130 of your Moments have been put to good use for such things as assisting with the Welcome Rabbi Weisbrot Open House, erecting the sukkah, taking part in a guest talk by Rabbi Dan Ornstein, attending Jesse Saperstein's presentation on life as a Jew on the autism spectrum, and helping with projects in the temple office.

When Moments was launched, we recognized that the pandemic would limit the opportunities to use your donated time. So all pledges have had a lifespan of two years. If you've pledged Moments and are contacted by a committee chair looking to tap them, please respond to the outreach. Don't leave the committee chair guessing – let them know whether you'll be there for them. All it takes is a quick email.

And if you're a committee chair with a program or event in the works, there are still more than 250 Moments pledged by congregants who have offered up the most valuable commodity: their time.

Dues pay the bills – volunteer time keeps our congregation vibrant and humming. B'nai Sholom has a history of bringing people together, and through that collective effort, of creating change. That's what Moments is all about.

Our Recent Kibbutzniks

Shari Whiting

In memory of my daughter, Sarah Whiting

The Congregation Notes with Thanks These Contributions:

General Fund

In memory of **Bill Schwartz** by Amy Sternstein
In memory of **Bill Schwartz** by Ben and Becky Marvin
In celebration of **Rabbi Weisbrot's Installation** by Jack and Barbara Devore
In memory of **Seymour Schwartzman** by Mindy Kramer
In appreciation for **being able to share in B'nai Sholom's High Holy Days' services** by Michael Malinowitz
In memory of **Estelle Nitka** by Cheryl and Mark Reeder

Caring Community

In honor of **Ben Marvin and the minyanaires for their kindness and comfort to me and my family** by Sheila Schwartz

Social Action Committee – Free Food Fridges Fund

In thanks to **Valerie Tabak and Becky Marvin for their social action leadership and dedication to just causes** by Gail Volk

Golden Anniversary Fundraising Appeal: Celebrating 50 Years and Beyond

Annual Maintenance and Operations

Susan Aron and Joe DeFronzo
Anne and Lene Hausgaard
Ben and Becky Marvin

Circle of Life Capital Projects

Steven Morse and Brenda Hazard
Phil and Martie Teumim

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

In honor of **Rabbi Weisbrot's installation, may your congregation, the Rabbi and all be blessed** by Terry and Ric Curiale
In thanks for **Rabbi Weisbrot's kindness and compassion before, during and after my husband Bill Schwartz's funeral** by Sheila Schwartz
In honor of **the installation of Rabbi Danielle Weisbrot** by Amy Sternstein
In honor of **Danielle Weisbrot's installation** by Bruce and Edith Goldstein
With thanks to **Phil Teumim for editing my book** by Geraldine Flaxman

RABBI: Danielle Weisbrot can be reached at rabiweisbrot@bnaisholom.albany.ny.us

RABBI EMERITUS: Donald P. Cashman

PRESIDENT: Ann Lowenfels can be reached at annlowenfels@gmail.com

OFFICE MANAGER: Christine Blackman can be reached at christine@bnaisholom.albany.ny.us

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>
January.....	December 14
February.....	January 11