

# *B'nai Sholom Reform Congregation*

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MAY 2023

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IYAR/SIVAN 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, May 5	<b>KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE B'YACHAD SHABBAT</b>	<b>7:00 PM</b>
Saturday, May 6	<b>EXTENDED STUDY</b>	<b>10:00 AM</b>
Friday, May 12	<b>TOT SHABBAT SERVICE KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE</b>	<b>5:30 PM 7:00 PM</b>
Saturday, May 13	<b>TORAH STUDY</b>	<b>10:00 AM</b>
Friday, May 19	<b>VOLUNTEER DINNER VOLUNTEER SHABBAT SERVICE</b>	<b>6:00 PM 7:30 PM</b>
Saturday, May 20	<b>TORAH STUDY</b>	<b>10:00 AM</b>
Thursday, May 25	<b>YIZKOR SERVICE EREV SHAVUOT + CONFIRMATION SERVICE</b>	<b>7:00 PM 7:30 PM</b>
Friday, May 26	<b>KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE</b>	<b>7:00 PM</b>
Saturday, May 27	<b>TORAH STUDY</b>	<b>10:00 AM</b>
Friday June 2	<b>KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE</b>	<b>7:00 PM</b>
Saturday, June 3	<b>TORAH STUDY</b>	<b>10:00 AM</b>

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...***

We are all on a journey – at least according to the Hebrew calendar. At this point in the year, we recall our wandering in the desert, making our way from Egypt to the Promised Land; from Redemption to Revelation; from Passover to Shavuot. We count the days, one by one, as we prepare ourselves for a symbolic reenactment of our awe-filled encounter with the Eternal at Mt. Sinai.

On Shavuot, we celebrate *matan Torah* – the giving of Torah – and, traditionally, chant the Ten Commandments as a representative of the whole. However, the *giving* of Torah is only of value if there's someone prepared to *receive* it as well. This is our project as a Jewish people and, in the Reform Movement, as a representative of the whole, our Confirmation student(s).

What is Confirmation, you ask? In the early days of the Reform Movement (Enlightenment Era Germany), key reformers like Israel Jacobson rethought our strategy for coming of age ceremonies. Bar mitzvah was, of course, exclusively for boys at the time, and, though most did engage in study to prepare and marked the occasion by blessing or chanting from the Torah, the only official requirement involved was turning thirteen. So, the confirmation ceremony was born.

Confirmands are a little older – nowadays generally in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade – and have had more time to continue their Jewish studies. It didn't take long for girls to be included in the mix, so the confirmation process has been egalitarian almost from the beginning and remains open to students of all gender identities. Some refer to the ceremony as *Kabbalat Torah* – the receiving of Torah – as each successive generation of students reaffirms its commitment to Jewish study, values, and community.

This month, we will have the honor of celebrating our own **Ethan Goldberg** during our Erev Shavuot Confirmation service on **Thursday, May 25**. Ethan has engaged in a year of study and reflected on what aspects of Jewish life are the most meaningful to him. He will share some of his thoughts during the service, and, in keeping with Shavuot's theme of transmitting knowledge, will also follow with a presentation of his research on various cultural/ethnic foods in Israel.

As always, I look forward to celebrating and learning with you!

*L'shalom,*

Rabbi Danielle Weisbrot

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

As we move from Passover to Shavuot, we encounter Yom HaAtzma'ut — Israel's Independence Day. I don't remember celebrating that holiday when I was little, but I do remember learning that all Jews worldwide had a right to receive citizenship in Israel. I was amazed but oddly comforted by this idea. Later, I learned that many Americans viewed Israel as their only democratic ally in the Middle East. This made me feel proud, and also a little frightened. Eventually, I encountered more complex topics and learned about Israel's boundary issues, water shortages, the Palestinian conflict, the struggle to balance secularism and religious practices, etc. These and other issues have plagued Israel since its inception.

Now, as Israel turns 75, its status as a democratic nation appears to be at risk. The current majority coalition includes ultra-right-wing parties, and they are working hard to marginalize all progressive voices. Many of their proposed changes directly target the Jewish Reform Movement.

Over the years, I have avoided discussing Israel's political situation in public. But the time has come for American Jews to make our voices heard.

Specific ideas about how to support Israeli democracy and the Israeli Reform Movement are available online from the Union of Reform Judaism (URJ), the Association of Reform Zionists of America (ARZA), the Israel Movement for Reform and Progressive Judaism (IMPJ) and the Israel Religious Action Center (IRAC). I plan to act on these suggestions myself, and I am looking forward to working with all of you as we find our voice in this on-going discussion about the future of Israel.

*L'shalom,*

Ann Lowenfels

### **Save the Date!!**

# **ANNUAL MEETING**



**B'nai Sholom's Annual Meeting**

**Thursday, June 15, 7:00 PM**

Multi-access – Live in the Sanctuary  
and via Zoom

Watch for more information in the  
coming weeks.

Before the meeting, you will  
receive an email with the agenda  
and handouts.

# Fundraiser of Music, Poetry and Stories to Aid Mississippi Tornado Victims



The many talents of the region's Jewish community will be on display at B'nai Sholom's **Open Mic and Benefit Concert Saturday, May 6, 7 PM** at the synagogue.

Hosted by Phil Teumim, the event will showcase the singing, storytelling, poetry recitation and musicianship of the Jewish community. All funds raised will go to aid the North Mississippi Rural Legal Services – Tornado Disaster Legal Assistance Project, which helps residents of north Mississippi with

legal issues resulting from their losses caused by the recent tornadoes that devastated part of the state.

Free admission; donations are encouraged and appreciated.

The first part of the evening will be an open mic. Everyone is invited to perform: sing a song, play an instrument, tell a story, read some poems or tell a joke or two. Listen and appreciate, or perform and be appreciated.

After intermission, enjoy a concert by the evening's artists: songs by premier acoustic trio Phil Teumim, Will Vail and Jeff Klamka; Gypsy jazz by Gajjo (featuring Dave Ray, John Whitbread, Larry Stallman and Steve Stringer); and stories by professional storytellers Frank-Lee Speaking (Dee Lee Wind and Frank Wind).

Coffee and light refreshments will be available.

Advance registration by email to [filibuck@gmail.com](mailto:filibuck@gmail.com) is highly encouraged to ensure a performance spot on the program, so sign up now.

See you there!



**Where Would B'nai Sholom Be Without YOU?  
Will You Be with Us on Friday, May 19?**



All volunteers should have received their invitations to a special dinner to celebrate their service to B'nai Sholom.

If you have not responded to Deb Nozik ([dnozik@aol.com](mailto:dnozik@aol.com) or 518-439-7008), please do so right away.

Because the dinner is being provided for you, some food must be ordered, and those who are cooking need to know now how much food they must prepare. Beverages and place settings will be provided. Since this event is traditionally very well attended and the social hall holds a maximum of 100 people, a timely RSVP is crucial.

Join us on 5/19, so that we may honor you for your service to our synagogue!

**Your Member Events Committee**

Would you be interested in hosting a  
Rosh Hashanah Luncheon?

**Saturday, September 16, 2023**

**We provide invitations, stamps, & assistance  
coordinating this POTLUCK event.  
Please contact Katelyn Ouellette DiPaola  
for more details.**

**[K.Ouellette89@gmail.com](mailto:K.Ouellette89@gmail.com) or 518-225-2843**

B'nai Sholom Rosh Hashanah Luncheons are a longstanding tradition that has been enjoyed by our members and guests for years. It is a wonderful way to visit with other congregants, reconnect with old friends and make new connections.



## 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*

## Adding Names to the Healing List for Services



The Caring Community would like to remind our congregation how to add a friend, loved one or yourself to the Mi Shebeirach list of those in need of healing prayers to be read at services. Simply call or notify the office by email if there is someone in need. Please be sure that the person is aware that you are requesting this and would like to be included. If someone is added during services, please follow up with the office. It is helpful to know how long to maintain the person on the list (e.g., a week, a month, until further notice?). Also notify the office if there are any changes – if you/they are ready to be removed from the list or need extra time.

If someone is not comfortable having their name read aloud, they may prefer to be listed using their Hebrew name if they have one, or to be added to a separate list of names that is read silently; please let the Rabbi or office know of your/their preference.

## Progressive Dinner a Hit



Thanks to the participants in our Biannual Progressive Dinner on March 11. From all reports, everyone felt that it offered ample opportunity to socialize and enjoy great food. The Member Events Committee is grateful to the appetizer preparers and the hosts – Barbara and Jack Devore, Jeanette and Stephen Gottlieb, Libby and David Liebschutz, Maggie Tabak/David Smith, and Martie and Phil Teumim – all of whom contributed hugely to its success.

Many thanks go as well to Christine Blackman, who came in early to set up and bought tablecloths, decorations and centerpieces on her own to help make the event more special. We look forward to our next dinner, which we hope to hold in March of 2025.

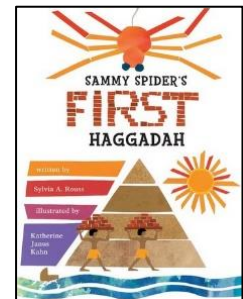
## Families Gather at B'nai Sholom for Tot Seder



Families from B'nai Sholom's Tot Shabbat cohort gathered for a kid-friendly seder program on the second night of Passover, Thursday, April 6, 2023. Parents and children took turns reading from a short, brightly illustrated haggadah that posed the Four Questions, told the Passover story and then proceeded to answer the questions. Along the way, we sang songs, acted out some plagues, hunted for the afikomen and, of course, ate and drank the usual ritual foods – grape juice, matzah, horseradish, haroset and

parsley dipped in salt water.

Two shout-outs go to Revan Knauf, who did a beautiful job singing the first half of the Four Questions and who also found the afikomen. (Afikomen prizes were awarded all around, with each child taking home a small goody bag.) Maegan Knauf, mother of Revan and her little sister Ashla, said, "Our family had a great time at the seder. The girls enjoyed participating in the readings and the singing."



Libby Liebschutz organized and led the seder, following a format that has been used the last few years via Zoom. "It was wonderful to be together in person this year instead of on Zoom," she noted. Katelyn Ouellette DiPaola, who has taken over the role of Tot Shabbat Coordinator from Libby, worked with Libby and Rabbi Weisbrot to plan the program and ensured that families were informed of all the details. Barbara Devore, Ann Lowenfels, Steve Redler and David Liebschutz helped with the set up and clean up and joined with the families for the seder. "All their support and help was

really crucial," said Libby, "and it lent a nice family feel to the event to have the extra adult congregants mixed in with everybody at the tables."

[Check out the Passover page on our website to see photos of the event.](#)

## Our Recent Kibbutzniks

Becky and Ben Marvin	In honor of the 105 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of Ben's father, Earl Marvin
Ben Marvin	In appreciation of Ann Lowenfels for the oneg following the Purim celebration
The DeFronzo Family	In Loving Memory of Leonarda DeFronzo and Michael DeFronzo

## B'nai Sholom Cemetery



B'nai Sholom maintains a cemetery for the benefit of its members, located in a picturesque, dedicated section of the Elmwood Hill Cemetery in Troy, New York. Members of the congregation and families may purchase burial rights in advance to ensure availability in time of need. The temple strives to keep this service as affordable as possible. Current pricing, set by the temple board at the March meeting, is:

- Members of the congregation - \$800
- Non-member relatives of congregation members - \$1,200
- Non-relative, non-members \$1,500

A member in good standing is one who is current in all financial matters pertaining to B'nai Sholom Reform Congregation to include membership dues and other fees or pledged obligations.

Non-member relatives are those persons for whom a B'nai Sholom member has a Jewish obligation to mourn (i.e. parent, sibling, child and spouse/domestic partner).

Additional charges such as costs of the burial service, disinterment, re-interment, monument foundations and markers apply.

For information and to see pictures of the cemetery or to purchase a cemetery privilege, please contact the office.

## **BE ON GUARD AGAINST EMAIL SPOOFING SCAM**

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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.

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# Social Action/Social Justice

## Did You Wind Up Tossing It Out?



In advance of Passover, I went through my multi-shelved pantry to separate what I deemed to be “yes”, “no” and “throw.” It got me thinking about what a luxury it is to have enough food security to be able to harbor food that I, quite frankly, forgot about. You know, the pita chips that you opened and somehow shoved into the back, the crackers, the poor little Goldfish...?

And so started the yearly “toss.” Those expiration dates that beg to be argued with, the “preservative-free” foods that develop that rancid aroma and force another round of “the toss.” This year will be different! Wait, didn’t I say that during Yom Kippur?

It can and it will be different. I will buy less and wait until we actually **need** more. I will make a concerted effort to decrease my carbon footprint by reducing my contributions to the landfills. In short, I will be a better citizen of my community and my planet.

Now that this has been decided, I will have extra grocery money and can purchase more Hannaford/and or ShopRite gift cards through the Fundraising Committee that will be used to fill **Free Food Fridges** in Albany. As representatives of our Social Action/Social Justice Committee, Janet Strominger and Steve Klein fulfilled that *mitzvah* on April 16. Thanks to all who have, and hopefully will continue to, contribute to this most important program, \$225 filled three fridges with fresh fruits, vegetables, healthy beverages and assorted dairy items.

If I feel like I need to revive “the toss,” I can toss some extra change or singles into the jar that is on Christine Blackman’s desk in the synagogue office. I know that I am not alone in this “Jewish Rite of Spring,” so please join me in using our grocery resources wisely and including others who don’t have the luxury of excess.

– Valerie Tabak



## **Social Action/Social Justice (continued)**

### **Fun and Fellowship at the Food Bank**



There is absolutely nothing like watching a newly four-year-old Jocelyn DiPaola run around tossing rotten fruits and vegetables into an enormous bin, then completing jump shots to secure attempts at placing plastic wrappings and other assorted papers into a very tall receptacle. It was joyful to observe this enthusiasm as “Jojo” cheerfully took the items from the group of adults and completed her missions with style and a smile.

Phil Teumim, Hailey and Gabe Hanoufa, Hayden Schwartz, Valerie Tabak, Jesse Dinkin, Ann Shapiro, Barry Pendergrass, Gail and Larry Volk, Becky Marvin, Anita Stein, Wayne Olinzock, Will Vail and Katelyn Ouellette DiPaola were all able to witness this while they busily worked their way through boxes and boxes of produce at the Regional Food Bank of Northeastern New York in Latham. The group was able to put together dozens of boxes of fruits and vegetables that would be delivered to food pantries throughout the areas that the Regional Food Bank services.

Per our “supervisor” for our shift, we completed an enormous amount of work in record time, cleaned our work areas, and were on the road in under the allotted 1½ hours.

If you would like to join in the next adventure at the Regional Food Bank, please contact Hayden Schwartz at [h.schwartz91@gmail.com](mailto:h.schwartz91@gmail.com).

As soon as we assemble a team, we can secure a date. And as Jocelyn can attest to, kids are welcome!

### **Don't Forget to Sign Up!!!!**



**Riverkeeper Sweep on May 6:** Join the crew as we clean-up at the Corning Preserve. If you plan on pitching in, be sure to let Barry Pendergrass know so he can send you details about place and time. Contact Barry at [bpenderg37@gmail.com](mailto:bpenderg37@gmail.com).

## **Social Action/Social Justice (continued)**

### **Show Your Solidarity and Support: Capital Region Pride Parade on June 11**



I was finally in town for the Capital Pride Fest last year. It was amazing to see the many diverse groups coming together in solidarity and support of the LGBTQ community...from law enforcement agencies to churches, synagogues and unions. B'nai Sholom will proudly march again behind our banner and showing our true colors. Candy Raderman will be our point person on the ground. Please let me know if you plan to attend so we can

coordinate carpools: [beckymarvin4574@gmail.com](mailto:beckymarvin4574@gmail.com).

### **Opening Your Vein Was Not In Vain**

**DONATE BLOOD  
SAVE LIVES**



Our Blood Drive on March 10 was a moderate success with a strong showing from B'nai Sholom congregants: six of the 10 donors. Since two donors gave "power red," a total of 12 units of blood and blood products were collected. B'nai Sholom has a long history of blood drive participation prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Let's keep rebuilding our donor base. Let's keep saving lives. Hope to see you at the next drive!

## The Congregation Notes with Thanks These Contributions:

### General Fund

In memory of **Lieselotte Weiner** by Ruth Swift  
In honor of **Libby Liebschutz on the occasion of her birthday** by Sarah Liebschutz  
In memory of **Rhoda Green** by Ellie and Randy Davis  
In memory of **Moses Khazam** by Carol and Doug Smith and Family  
In memory of **Sidney Devore** by Barbara and Jack Devore  
In honor of **Johanna Marvin Kitchell on being named a 2023 Yamaha “40 Under 40 Music Educator”** by Becky and Ben Marvin

### Social Action Committee – Fresh Food Fund

In support: Valerie Tabak and Jesse Dinkin, Ellie Davis  
In memory of **Lillian Golderman** by Gail Golderman  
In memory of **Rebecca Miller Shultz** by Ben and Becky Marvin

## The following Yahrzeits will be observed in May:

- 5/5 Murray Talanker; Carla Oblas; Louis Samuel Harris
- 5/12 Gordan Goldstein; Mel Lee; Claire Roth; Dorothy Lazoroff\*; Glory Swartz; Hanna Aron; Herbert Horowitz; Alan Berke\*; Hyman Tress
- 5/19 Edgar Altmayer; Henry Kramer; Helaine K. Plaut; Renee Stoller; Meyer Tabak; Ida Domfort\*; Elaine H. Neuburger; Sol Goldstein\*; Harry Weiss
- 5/26 Frances F. Lazoroff Dobris\*; Hyman W. Zima\*; Carol Winston; Dorothy Parnes; Vera Walker\*; Sam Rauch

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

## **Mazal Tov!**

...to **Harvey Strum**, whose article “Albany Jews: Solidarity of All Israel, 1853-2021” was just published in Volume 59, Number 2, 2023 issue of the *National Social Science Journal* online about the identification of Albany's Jews with the problems of Jews abroad like the Russian pogroms of 1903-05.

...to **Becky & Ben Marvin**, whose daughter, Johanna Marvin Kitchell, was named a 2023 Yamaha “40 Under 40 Music Educator.”

**RABBI:** Danielle Weisbrot can be reached at [rabiweisbrot@bnaisholom.albany.ny.us](mailto:rabiweisbrot@bnaisholom.albany.ny.us)  
**RABBI EMERITUS:** Donald P. Cashman  
**PRESIDENT:** Ann Lowenfels can be reached at [annlowenfels@gmail.com](mailto:annlowenfels@gmail.com)  
**OFFICE MANAGER:** Christine Blackman can be reached at [christine@bnaisholom.albany.ny.us](mailto: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 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 10
July.....	June 14