

B'nai Sholom Reform Congregation

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Visit us at <https://www.bnaisholomalbany.org>

JULY 2023

TAMUZ/AV 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, June 30	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE (INCLUSIVITY)	7:00 PM
Saturday, July 1	EXTENDED STUDY	10:00 AM
Friday, July 7	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE	7:00 PM
Saturday, July 8	TORAH STUDY	10:00 AM
Friday, July 14	TOT SHABBAT SERVICE	5:30 PM
	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE	7:00 PM
Saturday, July 15	TORAH STUDY	10:00 AM
Friday, July 21	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE (ZOOM ONLY)	7:00 PM
Saturday, July 22	TORAH STUDY	9:30 AM
	TORAH SERVICE	10:30 AM
Friday, July 28	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE	7:00 PM
Saturday, July 29	TORAH STUDY	10:00 AM
Friday, August 4	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE	7:00 PM
Saturday, August 5	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...

In my report at our Annual Meeting on June 15, I discussed various individual and synagogue-wide goals I had set or been involved in implementing over the past year and how they've gone.

One of these, which our President, Ann Lowenfels, talked about in greater detail, was stepping up our technology game. In addition to system improvements in our office with more to come), we've also started leaning into some of the possibilities that improved technology offers. For example, this year we invested in the PowerPoint slides that accompany our prayerbook, *Mishkan T'filah*, and also used Zoom – i.e. the ability to hold services remotely – as a safety tool in times of hazardous weather, not just COVID. At the Annual Meeting itself, we harnessed the power of screen share and our sanctuary projector screen to present key documents to in-person and remote participants at the same time, saving paper in the process! Yes, we still experience occasional glitches and work them out as they arise, but I'm impressed by how far we've come.

Another goal was increased engagement with B'Yachad, our shared religious school program with Congregation Ohav Shalom. I had the privilege of teaching at the three family education days built into the program, implementing some of the lifecycle curriculum for the 6th-7th graders, and participating in the Chanukah and Purim celebrations which were hosted at B'nai Shalom. In May, B'Yachad families filled our social hall for a lovely Shabbat dinner, and then joined us for Kabbalat Shabbat services – an event we hope to replicate next year with even greater participation in the service by the students.

A third initiative was to make B'nai Shalom – and myself as a proxy – more visible in the wider Capital District Jewish community. We approached this from a variety of ways, from B'nai publishing our High Holy Day services and children's programs in local resources, to me participating in panel discussions or giving a Yom HaShoah presentation at the East Greenbush Community Library, to our smash hit table at Federation's Chanukah on Jay event. I was also just elected Vice President of the Capital District Board of Rabbis and Cantors, which will keep me engaged in the events and concerns of the community. Next year, we will have an opportunity to welcome even more community members into our doors as we host the annual Founders' Day Shabbat service.

We may still be a few months away from Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur (though that time feels much shorter to those involved in holiday preparations!), but this process of reflecting on our past goals and setting new ones for the future is not limited to the Hebrew month of Elul, which begins August 18th this year. This is a process we should engage in regularly – even daily – though, as humans, it helps us to have reminders and deadlines. Our Annual Meeting was a chance to take a closer look at ourselves as a congregation, before we turn to the work of examining ourselves as individuals. And in both instances, we have a chance to put new plans in place and start a fresh new year with enthusiasm!

L'shalom,

Rabbi Danielle Weisbrot

Would you be interested in hosting a
Rosh Hashanah Luncheon?

Saturday, September 16, 2023



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

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.

Recent Kibbutzniks

Susan, Joseph and Stefanie DeFronzo – In loving memory of Hanna Aron

The B'nai Sholom Board – Congratulations to Martie and Phil Teumim who were honored at JFS's Mensches and Mimosas. Thank you for all you do.

Lois Gordon – In loving memory of Jeannette Lubitch Katz and Sol Gordon

Howie and Marcus Domfort – In honor of the 100th birthday of WW II veteran Sam Goldman on Flag Day, June 14

Volunteer Dinner

On May 19, 2023, 50 congregants got together to enjoy a delicious dinner (courtesy of Ragonese and Member Events Committee and board members), a wonderful service (led by David Liebschutz with music by Melissa Putterman Hoffmann) and a yummy oneg.

This was our Volunteer Dinner – the first in five years – celebrating the many B'nai Sholom members who keep our temple running. With suggested topics on each table to keep the conversation flowing, things proceeded seamlessly from dinner to service to dessert.

It's a lot of work to plan and carry out this dinner, but worth it for the satisfaction attendees seemed to derive from it. Here's to the next one (hopefully, in 2025), and to next year's Longevity Dinner.

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

A FEW MINUTES WITH THE TORAH

Spotlighting the outstanding d'vrei Torah written and delivered by congregants. Melissa Putterman Hoffmann shared some thoughts with us while leading services recently.

“Be Patient.” “Are you Kidding?”

by

Melissa Putterman Hoffmann

This week's Torah portion is Beha'alotcha. Here are some English meanings ascribed to that word: when you ascend; when you raise the lamps (in the Tabernacle); when you light the lamps. And here is my favorite: when you step up.

The Israelites receive instructions regarding Passover, journey forth from Sinai and complain to God on more than a few occasions. Moses gets an advisory committee. There are incredible vivid images: the cloud that covered the Dwelling Place, the fire-like glow at night in that cloud and God descending from the cloud to talk with the people, the movement of the people on their journey whenever the cloud rose, the magnificent silver trumpets created at God's command to call the people, the people being given so much food after they complained one too many times that it came out of their nostrils and made them sick, an entire corner of the camp bursting into flames because people were unappreciative, leprosy as a consequence for gossip.

Is there a time to voice dissatisfaction? And is there something satisfying about announcing how unsatisfied we are? Should complaints be accompanied by suggested solutions whenever possible? Imagine that we've seen in the news this week that petition scrolls were discovered in a cave in Israel. Outside the cave was an engraved sign that

(Continued on page 5.)

(Continued from page 4.)

said Town Hall Meeting Here with an arrow pointing down. Archaeologists have determined that the scrolls were those of the 70 elders Moses selected to assist him in governing the people. Those 70 elders were the first prototype for lower upper middle management. They didn't have Moses' direct line to God. It's possible that all they could do was listen, perhaps make note of each complaint, and offer suggestions wherever possible. Most likely they missed the mark sometimes - making snarky responses to some complaints and offering suggestions regarding others that no one bought. They must have worked hard though to capture the discussion at each meeting because on the tablets, words are crossed out and substitutions inserted out all over the place. Nevertheless, we have a sort of transcript of that Town Hall meeting.

xx

Welcome to this Town Hall meeting. Who would like to speak first?

[C=complaint; E=Elder]

C We left Egypt 2 years ago. The food is lousy. Speaking of bad food, have you actually tried the manna?

E Arthur Stewart is experimenting with plant-based brisket. Please be patient.

C And now you want us to make a second Pesach - which by the way we haven't made since the night we left Egypt!! Even if some of us are unclean, the Pesach offering with bitter herbs must still be made?

E People will talk. The Sages will note this difficult-to-explain lapse. They'll comment that it was a "disgrace to us Israelites" that for 39 out of 40 years the Passover offering was not brought.

C I heard the one who neglects the Pesach offering to God will be uprooted from his people. A return to Mitzrayim... that might not be so bad.

E God said to tell you that an agent will be available at the gate to escort you back to your original destination.

C Finally we are on our way after being stuck here for over 50 chapters in a book that will come out some day. But all this starting and stopping? The cloud goes up, we move; when the cloud is down over the Dwelling place for many days, we stay. Move, stay. Oy.

C And the noise and the choreography?? Two silver trumpet sounds and we have to assemble. One trumpet blare and only the heads of our families will go. And we have to know which blow is for which direction. What is this? Shushan Brass? And a trumpet sounds when there is an affliction? THERE IS ALWAYS AN AFFLICTION! It'll be a wonder if we ever get anywhere - unless a trumpet blows because we are at war. Then we're going nowhere. Again.

(Continued on page 6.)

(Continued from page 5.)

C And if you ask me, those trumpets look an awful lot like another kind of a horn that will be sounded someday to kick off the Holidays. I wish scholars would just make up their minds. Our tribe is making too many trips to Bat Yam Keal Music as it is.

E Blowing the trumpet is a mitzvah. The allegorical "trumpet" we sound in order to enlist God's help against the evil inclination is our heart-broken cry, the silent tears we shed over being so spiritually weak that we are vulnerable to the evil inclination's strategies. When we beseech God to have mercy on us, God comes to our aid and rescues us from our enemy.

C Are you kidding? And so much for speaking our minds. Last night a whole corner of the camp burned up because people were talking about all the noise and schlepping and bad food. By the way, a little meat and fruit and vegetables like we had in Egypt wouldn't kill anyone. But a **little** quail, not so much that we die with our mouths full.

C And poor Miriam - one comment against Moses' wife and boom - leprosy.

E But when Moses saw his sister's illness he cried out "Oh God, please heal her!" He didn't go into a whole narrative of what happened, why did you become ill? All he felt was a deep concern, and he erupted into a beautiful and simple and eloquent prayer with five Hebrew words-- meaning Please, God, heal her.

C Moses is great and all, and without him, we'd never know what God wanted us to do. But does God only talk to Moses? Can't he talk to us directly without bursting us into flames?

E Thank God Moses finally hired some help. It's been impossible to get his attention for even a minute with all the weeping going on around here. The Talmud puts it succinctly: "If you try to do too much, you end up doing nothing."

E And Moses asking for help may be a sign that just because he's grown in stature, it doesn't mean his sense of self-importance will grow beyond all bounds. He's doing the best he can, and we'll try to be better advisors.

xx

One thing about complaining: we get to give voice to that which ails us. And while misery loves company, it can feel good to know that we are not alone in our dissatisfaction. We may wish that others in our work group or community would just get the work done without questioning or debating, but when we see complaining and problem-solving, we know that others are feeling safe and *included* enough to step up and have a stake in our work together.

Shabbat Shalom

Social Action/Social Justice

What Do Gypsy Jazz, Humorous Songs and a Love Story Have in Common?

On May 6, a concert and coffeehouse collaboration raised more than \$500 for victims of the Mississippi tornadoes. In addition to several congregants who stepped up to the microphone, storytellers Frank and Dee Wind shared their tale of first meeting, charming all. Laughter filled the room in response to the humorous songs of Jeff Klamka and Phil Teumim, and the evening ended with energetic and toe-tapping Gypsy jazz from Dave Ray's group, *Gadjo*.

Many thanks to Phil Teumim and Carol Smith for organizing the evening and to all who performed. The proceeds were sent to the North Mississippi Rural Legal Assistance Project, which helps residents with legal issues resulting from their losses caused by the tornadoes that devastated parts of the state earlier this spring.

Thinking About Food

Have you planted a vegetable garden? Are you still planning to do so? Please consider some "refrigerator-stable" bounty that we can include when filling three FREE FOOD FRIDGE refrigerators. You know, cucumbers, zucchini, peas, green beans...you get the idea.

Thanks to the generosity of you, our congregants, thus far, our goal for an every-other-month "shop and fill" has been achieved. BUT, we have *just* enough gift cards to do our June shop and fill, and of course we would love for you to continue with these generous donations.

Another thought: you know those "BOGOs" that our local markets put out there and you say, "I can't possibly use such an amount of...refrigerator-stable fresh fruits and vegetables"? If mid-August sees these deals coming your way, an extra bag of oranges, apples, lemons, limes (you get the idea) would benefit those whose food budgets have little room for fresh produce.

Any questions? Please reach out to Becky Marvin or Valerie Tabak. We would love to unburden you of your offerings.

Please do not drop these items off at the synagogue.

Happy Gardening!

Social Action/Social Justice (continued)

Proud to Celebrate Pride

What an amazing day!

The weather, the crowds, the colors, the positivity, the **LOVE**.

And there we were, our group who proudly marched behind the **B'nai Sholom Reform Congregation** banner, waving enthusiastically and handing out candies and other treats to the assembled masses, as we marched from Washington Park in Albany, down State Street, Lark Street, Madison Avenue and back to our beautiful park.

And there they were, the cheering crowds, some even shouting, "Hey, I'm Jewish!" and one person who happily pointed to a particular tattoo on his multi-tattooed bare chest, some Hebrew letters...not enough time to decode them. He was so pleased to see us.

Our happy band of marchers assembled at the designated lineup spot where we were strategically situated to have had the opportunity to congratulate and speak with the new president of the New York State United Teachers, Melinda Person, and her wife and four children, who were standing at their float being greeted by Albany Mayor Kathy Sheehan and her entourage. Congressman Paul Tonko greeted the group at the NYSUT area, and when acknowledged by a member of our group, came over to talk and pose for pictures! He was thanked for all of his support and his keen interest in our environment and other significant topics of the day.

Did we mention **colors**? Clothing, flags, streamers, floats and the outfits that were so beautiful and creative! Everyone showered the participants and spectators with an outpouring of, "You matter, we love you, we support you, we are all in this life **TOGETHER!**"

With thanks to Candy Raderman, who coordinated our group, and to all who could be there either marching with us or celebrating this special event.

May we always be **PROUD** to share our love and support with our community and our world.

Blast-Resistant Film Installed on Temple Glass Surfaces

The Safety and Security Committee is happy to announce that 3M Ultra Safety & Security Window Film was installed on the temple's glass surfaces on June 7 and 8. This is the first of two projects that were funded by the 2021-22 Securing Communities Against Hate Crimes Grant that the temple received. The blast-resistant window film provides the following protections:

- Mitigates hazards from shattered glass during natural disasters.
- Helps protect people from flying glass shards – one of the most common causes of blast-related injuries and fatalities.
- Delays any forced entry attempts, permitting people in the building to leave via the emergency exits and/or provide time for first responders to arrive should someone try to force their way in.
- Significantly blocks the amount of harmful UV rays that cause fading, helping to extend the life of furnishings.

There is a curing period, however, so please note the following:

- It is necessary to allow 90 days for complete curing before cleaning the newly filmed windows.
- Bubbles, cloudiness and streaks are normal during the curing process. Expect to see uniform water bubbles and/or blisters immediately after installation.

Temple Security is Everyone's Responsibility

Since temple security is everyone's responsibility, whenever we consider letting into our building anyone we do not know, we must function as greeters, employing the "**Power of Hello.**" This screening method is the protocol that the US Dept. of Homeland Security recommends, which our temple has adopted. Using it enables us to balance the need to be warm and welcoming with making sure that everyone who comes through our doors is safe and secure. Information on the Power of Hello can be found at <https://www.icrcny.org/2020/12/new-cisa-resource-for-screening-the-power-of-hello/>.

We should use the Power of Hello at scheduled temple events, where we may have formal roles as greeters, or if we are in the building and happen to answer the doorbell. Our screening should take place outside the building, where we determine whether to grant access to people by asking what brings them to B'nai Sholom, how they found out about us, whether they know a member and if so, who, etc. People routinely come to temples looking for money and/or asking to use the bathroom; unfortunately, it is risky to let people in even for these reasons in times of widespread antisemitism.

However, rather than merely turning away someone who says they need help, we can refer them for assistance to the City of Albany Neighborhood Specialist for our area, Folake Oyedokun, 518-419-1402, foyedokun@albanyny.gov, as she can help people get non-city services.

Mazal tov to:

...Barbara Devore, who received in May the Beacon Leadership Award from the Independent Living Center of the Hudson Valley and presented by Benita Zahn, former WNYT NewsChannel 13 health reporter and anchor. The award is "in recognition of her lifelong commitment to disability rights."

...David and Libby Liebschutz on the engagement of their daughter, Rebecca, to Koshy Thomas.

...Nancy Maurer, who retired from Albany Law School in May after 40 years of teaching as a professor. According to the Law School, "The clinical, lawyering, and field placement programs as we know them today are stronger thanks to her influence."

...Rabbi Weisbrot on being elected Vice President of the Capital District Board of Rabbis and Cantors.

The congregation mourns the passing of

**Rabbi Bernard Bloom
Bailey Bloom**

Father and mother of Joel Bloom
Father-in-law and mother-in-law of Julie Novkov

May their memory forever be for a blessing

The Congregation Notes with Thanks These Contributions:

General Fund

In memory of **Claire Roth** by Amy and Yossi Koren-Roth
In memory of **Rabbi Bernard Bloom** by Amy and Yossi Koren-Roth
In memory of **Helaine K. Plaut** by Becky and Ben Marvin
In memory of **Earl Marvin** by Becky and Ben Marvin
In memory of **William Lacov** by the Seguin Family
In memory of **Ilene Goldman** by Lori Stuart
In memory of **Joel Bloom's parents, Rabbi Bernard Bloom and Bailey Bloom**, by Ellie and Randy Davis

Social Action Committee Fund

In the blessed memory of and in honor of **lives well lived: Rabbi Bert Bloom and Bailey Bloom** by Jesse Dinkin and Valerie Tabak.

Social Action Committee – Fresh Food Fund

In support: Joan and Jim Savitt; Maxine and Eric Goldberg; Becky and Ben Marvin; Linda and Rich Strohl; Jesse Dinkin and Valerie Tabak

Landscaping Committee Fund

In honor of **Barry Pendergrass for his leadership, knowledge and passion** by Becky Marvin

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

In gratitude for **the time, commitment and guidance through Ethan's confirmation. We are blessed to have Rabbi Danielle Weisbrot in our lives**, by Eric, Maxine and Ethan Goldberg
Donation from Margo J. Sussman and Selwyn E. Ramp

The following Yahrzeits will be observed in July:

7/7 Celia Kaufman*; Robert Harris; Lillian Shanks; Richard T. Crawford; Eleanor Finkelstein

7/14 Harold Roth*; Esther Epstein*; Seymour Youngelman*; Morris Bosin; Sonny Brenner; Naftali Propp; Paul Tafler*; John Rozett; Leslie Adler; Rosemary Kindlon Roe; Abraham Silverbush; Gerda Frankel; Jean Norris Rudman; Hyman Moskowitz; Gerald Fruiterman; Barbara Wachs; Edith Eidelman; Barney Ginsburg*; Rudolph Stern*

7/21 Etta Talanker; Rose Lazoroff*; Ellen Rudinger; S. Gerald Duckor; Dror Koren; Adele Pastor

7/28 Bernice Smith; Fred Aron; Anita Domfort; Raymond Novkov, Jr.; Benjamin Binewitch*; Helen Pollack Adler; Alex M. Rabineau*; Samuel C. Warshaw*; Rose Gottesman Pollack; Rex Vail

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

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.

RABBI: Danielle Weisbrot can be reached at rabbiweisbrot@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>
August.....	July 12
September.....	August 9