

# *B'nai Sholom Reform Congregation*

420 WHITEHALL RD., ALBANY, NY 12208

Phone: 518-482-5283

E-mail: [office@bnaisholom.albany.ny.us](mailto:office@bnaisholom.albany.ny.us)

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

AUGUST 2023

AV/ELUL 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, August 4	<b>KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE</b>	<b>7:00 PM</b>
Saturday, August 5	EXTENDED STUDY	10:00 AM
Friday, August 11	<b>TOT SHABBAT SERVICE</b>	<b>5:30 PM</b>
	<b>KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE</b>	<b>7:00 PM</b>
Saturday, August 12	TORAH STUDY	10:00 AM
Friday, August 18	<b>KABBALAT SHABBAT + TORAH SERVICE</b>	<b>7:00 PM</b>
Saturday, August 19	TORAH STUDY	10:00 AM
Friday, August 25	<b>KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE</b>	<b>7:00 PM</b>
Saturday, August 26	EXTENDED STUDY	10:00 AM
Friday, September 1	<b>KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE</b>	<b>7:00 PM</b>
Saturday, September 2	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...***

As I've mentioned before, many of the familiar Jewish holidays have an agricultural connection and are tied to the climate and planting cycle in the land of Israel. Ergo, much of our holiday cycle seems out of sync to those of us living in New York – never mind those in the Southern hemisphere!

Tisha b'Av is a different type of holiday, though. This year, the 9<sup>th</sup> of the month of Av corresponded to July 27, but the season surrounding it is much longer. Tisha b'Av is connected to history, not ecology. In the three weeks leading up to it – beginning with the 17<sup>th</sup> of Tammuz, a fast marking the breaching of the walls of Jerusalem – we recall the destruction of the Temple. During the “Three Weeks” as they are commonly called, we are supposed to be in a state of mourning. After Tisha b'Av, we turn things around, with seven weeks of consolation, reading comforting passages from the prophet Isaiah.

So, for a full ten weeks, the Jewish calendar attempts to direct our emotions.

It can be hard to summon grief on cue, especially in the summer, as many of us plan vacations, barbecues, and time with family and friends. But I think it can be equally challenging to take comfort when directed as well, all the more so when we are surrounded by causes of extreme discomfort – from the passage of the judicial overhaul in Israel to rising incidents of antisemitism, to the current political climate in the US, to the *actual* climate. We have plenty to be concerned about and it can require active effort to follow the directive to comfort ourselves.

I think our tradition acknowledges this struggle best through numbers. We get three weeks to mourn, but a full seven weeks to recover. Isaiah, on God's behalf, repeats his words of comfort twice: *nachamu, nachamu ami* – take comfort, take comfort my people. And we can continue to seek the comfort of strength in numbers, whether by joining a group movement to advocate for positive change, or, in our individual times of grief, feeling the support of family and community.

Remember that your B'nai Sholom family is always here for you, and we look forward to seeing our numbers (i.e. all of *you*) on full display in September as we gather for the High Holy Days!

*L'shalom,*

Rabbi Danielle Weisbrot

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

During B'nai Sholom's Annual Meeting on June 15, congregants approved the budget and elected new officers and board members for 2023-2024. Thank you to all new and returning board members for stepping up: Josh Brody, Liz Davis, Howie Domfort, Julie Friedman, Gail Golderman, Lois Gordon, Laura Kaplan, Maegan Knauf, Julie Novkov, Martha Rozett, Hayden Schwartz, Phil Teumim and Shari Whiting!

Also during the meeting, I reported on the status of our congregational affairs. The by-laws require a *written* annual report, so I am recapping my oral presentation here. If you would like to see a longer version of this report, please contact the temple office.

Now that the COVID tsunami is finally subsiding, we are all starting to rise from the wreckage and resume our active lifestyles. At B'nai Sholom, last year's activities seem to fall into three separate categories: what's old is new (things we used to do but had to stop during COVID); same but different (things we used to do, but now we do them differently); and new/new (things we didn't do before, but now we are doing them).

### **WHAT'S OLD IS NEW**

We're back to serving food at B'nai Sholom, including Rosh Hashanah luncheons, the Progressive Dinner, the Volunteer Dinner and Onegs. We are back to hosting musical events, including coffee houses and concerts. And we're back to in-person learning, including Synagogue Scholars, book discussions, and courses taught by Rabbi Weisbrot and visiting scholars.

### **SAME BUT DIFFERENT**

With Social Action, we have some ongoing projects, some new projects and some new volunteers. We continued working on a three-year climate change initiative with RAC-NY, combating hunger and homelessness with a variety of community partners, increasing childhood literacy with "Books for Babies" and supporting voting rights with postcards to Georgia. We also hosted blood drives and clothing drives and participated in the annual Pride Parade.

Our collaborative religious school B'Yachad has a new structure and B'nai has some new roles. We transitioned from partnering with two synagogues to partnering with one. The B'Yachad board now consists of six members: three from B'nai Sholom and three from Ohav Shalom. The school has about 30 students altogether. Ohav hosted the classes (Wednesdays and Sundays) and B'nai hosted the Purim Celebration and a Shabbat Dinner (followed by a Kabbalat Service).

### **NEW, NEW**

We hosted a farewell luncheon for Rabbi Cashman in June and an installation ceremony for Rabbi Weisbrot in October. We also hosted a Family BBQ (which will be repeated on August 20), and we participated in a community-wide Chanukah on Jay event (with arts/crafts and a new brochure).

We launched a brand new website, after working with Addicott Web for more than a year. Our new website has a modern and professional look and is easy to navigate. Its bold and consistent design promotes our congregation as engaging, warm and vibrant.

*(Continued on page 3.)*

*(Continued from page 2.)*

We had some new activities, too. Our Inclusivity Collaborative (formerly known as Audacious Hospitality) conducted a review of our physical building, prepared a survey to assess everyone's sense of belonging, assembled a group of liaisons to work with committees and planned an Inclusivity Shabbat service on June 30.

And we have some new priorities. The visibility of our security activities has increased. We started using the "Power of Hello" when welcoming people, promoted the idea that security is everyone's responsibility and prepared to change security codes for entering the building and disabling the alarm system. *[Note: these codes were changed on July 25. If you have a key and didn't receive the new codes, contact the Office Manager.]*

There is also some financial news. We were awarded a \$50,000 grant from New York State for "Securing Communities Against Hate Crimes": \$10,000 was spent on blast-resistant window films, and \$40,000 will be spent on outdoor lighting for the driveway. *[Note: After the Annual Meeting, we were awarded an additional \$50,000 grant for an access control system, door repairs and locks, and other safety amenities].* We also received almost \$40,000 in donations through the Anniversary Fundraising Appeal. This money will help support improvements to our audio/video capacity in the Sanctuary, a new heating, ventilation and air conditioning system, new flooring in the classroom wing, and driveway repairs. Finally, we purchased rights to 10 new burial plots at Elmwood Hill Cemetery.

What's new with building and grounds? We received a large donation of desks/chairs for staff, credenzas and a whiteboard. We completed some upgrades: painting, computer networking and interior lighting. We've been actively working on a large-scale de-cluttering project. We have a new oak tree dedicated as a memorial to our founders and a new fox family!

As far as people are concerned, we have eight new member units (that's 14 people). These new members received Shabbat goody bags, invitations to brunch at a member's house, and they were profiled in the Bulletin. Some new members have already helped plan events and advance our Social Action agenda. Others have already attended Tot Shabbat, benefit concerts and weddings. We've also had 11 resignations—some of these congregants moved, some changed their affiliations and some left for other reasons.

And finally in the new/new category...82 of our congregants tried something new. They donated time (also known as "Moments") by attending classes and events and by helping with various activities (including mailings, advocacy calls, holiday baskets and furniture installation).

If you would like to try something new, there are lots of opportunities here at B'nai Sholom. You can help with "once and done" tasks, or you can help with ongoing planning efforts, or both. Examples of new things to try include sponsoring an oneg, helping fix things in and around the building, operating the new audio/video equipment, advocating for causes, providing direct service to those in need, donating blood, volunteering at the Regional Food Bank, being an event-greeter, coordinating greeters for the upcoming High Holiday season, and more! Contact info for these and other projects is listed in the Annual Guide.

L'shalom,

Ann Lowenfels, President

# Torah Services at B'nai Sholom: A Hidden Treasure

-- Melissa Putterman Hoffmann

My introduction to regular services (versus Torah services) was on Friday evenings. The lighting of the candles signified the beginning of a holiday. I came to love the liturgy about light being changed into darkness and the whole idea of having reached the end of the week and then beginning a new week together. I enjoy our prayer book and the elements everyone brings to worship – congregants engaged in fellowship, the wonderful music, Rabbi Weisbrot leading us through worship and sharing her insights through her sermons, and the wonderful growing cadre of lay leadership who conduct our services when our Rabbi is away.

And then there's the treasure that's hidden no more. About once a month, Rabbi Weisbrot conducts a Torah service and it's often on a Saturday morning. In the morning, saying prayers and singing with the sunlight streaming through the windows is a lovely experience. And when the Torah is introduced, everyone who wants to can have a hand in carrying it, dressing and undressing it, chanting blessings and reading translations. Occasionally Torah services take place on Friday nights and the experience is equally magical. Instead of just reading passages *about* the Torah, we have it in our midst.

If you haven't had the chance to enjoy a Torah service, consider joining one. The schedule is included in the Weekly E-announcements.

---

***Our next Torah service is set for Friday, August 18, at 7 PM.***

---

B'nai Sholom possess two *sifrei* Torah (Torah scrolls). Come. Get to know them, and appreciate the history they carry.

## **SCHMOOZING and FREE STUFF!**

**Sunday, September 10, 10 AM to 1 PM**

Come join other B'nai Sholom members to say hello as we reconnect in person. Bagels and coffee and tea will be offered.

Also, choose from a variety of new and gently used games, puzzles, art supplies, books and never-offered auction items for the taking. Monetary contributions gratefully accepted.

# SAVE THE DATE!

## Friends Helping Friends Day

### Wednesday, October 18, 2023

**BOSCOV'S** is once again holding **Friends Helping Friends Day**. This is an opportunity to receive up to 25% off everything you buy in-store on that day. Plus, you may win a \$100 gift card to Boscov's!

Shopping passes are just \$5, which goes directly to B'nai Sholom. You can pick them up at the temple during office hours: Tuesday – Friday 9:30 am to 4:30 pm.

## Interested in Studying Pirkei Avot?

- "The world stands on three things: On Torah, on worship, and on kindness to others."
- "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? And being for myself, what am 'I'? And if not now, when?"
- "It is not incumbent upon you to complete the work, but neither are you at liberty to desist from it."

The above are just a few of the many familiar sayings found in Pirkei Avot, or Ethics of the Fathers, one of the best known and most cited of Jewish texts. Adult Ed is considering doing a monthly study of this book of six chapters, one per month, led by Rabbi Weisbrot. First, though, we would like to establish if there is interest and what days/times might work. So, if studying this foundational work seems appealing, just let Adult Ed know by contacting Barney Horowitz at [horowitz28@verizon.net](mailto:horowitz28@verizon.net).

## 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*

# **Social Action/Social Justice**

## **DIAPER DRIVE!**

### **UNITED STATES COMMITTEE FOR REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS**

Albany, NY Field Office

USCRI-Albany is in need of diapers for our clients!

*Sizes 4, 5 and 6 are especially needed!*

We are also accepting donations of wipes, strollers and unexpired car seats.

Use our Amazon Wishlist link to donate: <https://bit.ly/3NkgVML>

or schedule a drop off at 99 Pine Street, Albany from 9 AM-4:30 PM Mondays-Fridays by emailing Kelley Gourley: [kgourley@uscrimail.org](mailto:kgourley@uscrimail.org)

***Please note that diapers and wipes may be dropped at B'nai Sholom or at USCRI.***

**DO NOT LEAVE STROLLERS OR CAR SEATS AT THE SYNAGOGUE.**

***Please make arrangements for them to be dropped off at USCRI***

## **FIRST IMPRESSIONS**

### ***First-time Free Food Fridge Volunteer Reports from the Field***

New congregant, Alyssa Talanker, volunteered to help stock three Free Food Fridges with experienced volunteer, Janet Strominger. As she reported to the Social Action/Social Justice Committee, Alyssa was very moved by her experience and would definitely shop and stock again.

Here are Alyssa's scenes from a Free Food Fridge:

- A teenage couple deep in conversation waiting for the empty fridge to be filled.
- A man with a bag of plastic bottles asking for a bowl so he could pour Cheerios from an open box in the fridge.
- Replacing rotten apples with a bag of fresh ones and oranges.
- A 12-pack of yogurt that consumed a lot of space in the shopping bag sparsely filling a fridge shelf.
- A local resident explaining Hannaford fills the fridge twice daily because it is always empty.
- Making a mental note to bring reusable shopping bags and paper bowls the next time I fill the fridges.

***Please help us to keep this much needed bi-monthly project alive by continuing to donate to our Free Food Fridge Fund and of course we will purchase the grocery cards from the Fundraising Committee.***

## *Mazal tov:*

... to Julie Novkov, who was named dean of the University at Albany's Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy. A professor of political science, Julie has served as interim dean of the college since July 2021.

... to Nancy Maurer and Bruce Bell on the marriage of their son, Dan, to Orel Roni, in Israel in July.

## *Thank You!*

...to the fantastic Bulletin Brigade who fold and stuff the monthly bulletins: Jim Savitt and Joan Savitt; Martha Rozett, Martie Teumim; Rema Goldstein, Anita Stein, Barbara Devore, Joe DeFranzo, Amy Sternstein, Deb Adler, and Cheryl and Mark Reeder

...to Lois Gordon, our dedicated Cleanout Coordinator, who volunteered countless hours to the temple cleanout project which began in October 2022

...to everyone, members and non-members, who volunteered so much of their time to help with the huge cleanout project

...to the following congregants who recently hosted an oneg Shabbat or kiddush lunch: Ann Shapiro and Barry Pendergrass, Carol Smith, Barbara and Jack Devore, Maxine and Eric Goldberg, Martie and Phil Teumim, the Ouellette DiPaola family and Valerie Tabak and Jesse Dinkin

Interested in providing sweet treats at an oneg Shabbat or kiddush lunch? Contact Katelyn Ouellette DiPaola: [k.ouellette89@gmail.com](mailto:k.ouellette89@gmail.com) or 518-255-2843.

## **The following Yahrzeits will be observed in August:**

8/4 Peter Pflanz; Jacob Stein; Alice Tausig Rozett; Diane Burkowsky; Milton Swartz; Lorraine Tharus; Rose Putterman

8/11 Esther Binewitch\*; Isidore Dinkin; Phyllis Gilsenberg; Eva Gordon; Walter L. Grayson, Sr.\*; Annie Frances Via Grayson\*; Samuel Walker\*; Ed Pacuk; Gerald Hazard; Elaine S. Cashman

8/18 Gina Kleinfeld; Miriam Falb; Lore Hauptman; Robert Stoller; Freida Hoffmann\*; Paul Edward Krochmal; Arthur Jacob Sharp

8/26 Albert Einstein\*; Angelina DiPaola\*; Ann Radosh; Oscar Rozett; Sydell Morris; Franklyn Cole\*; Nathan Green; Marvin J. Finkelstein\*; Arthur T. Singer\*; Belle Schwartz; Louis Greenstein\*

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



**The Congregation Notes with Thanks These Contributions:**

**General Fund**

In memory of **Rabbi Bert and Bailey Bloom** by Amy Sternstein

In honor of **the departing board members – Elizabeth Alowitz, Susan Aron-DeFronzo, Roy Fruiterman, Linda Strohl and Maggie Tabak** by Ann Lowenfels and Steve Redler

In memory of **Fred Aron** by Susan Aron-DeFronzo and Joseph DiFronzo

In memory of **Rabbi Bernard Bloom and Bailey Bloom** by Becky and Ben Marvin

In honor of **Carol Smith in celebration of her special birthday** by Becky and Ben Marvin

In memory of **Gerda Frankel** by Ruth Swift

In memory of **Ernst Swiwcz** by Ruth Swift

In memory of **Werner P. Frankel** by Ruth Swift

In honor of **Scott Wexler who inspires us – a donation from Shira Schneider and Norm Gross to be used by the temple to do a little good in our community.**

In memory of **Harold Roth** by Amy and Yossi Koren-Roth

In memory of **Dror Koren** by Amy and Yossi Koren-Roth

In memory of **Nathan Green** by Ellie and Randy Davis

In gratitude for **Rabbi Danielle Weisbrot's heartfelt memorial service for our sister-in-law, Mindy Kramer** by Sandra and Ivan Kramer

In memory of **Ann Radosh** by Susan Radosh

In memory of **Sonny Brenner** by Cheryl and Mark Reeder

**Social Action/Social Justice Committee – Free Food Fridges Fund**

In honor of **Ethan Goldberg's confirmation** by Amy Sternstein

**In support:** Sharon and Corey Bellack; Rabbi's Discretionary Fund; Valerie Tabak and Jesse Dinkin;

## 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 [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>
September.....	August 9
October	September 13