

B'nai Sholom Reform Congregation

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DECEMBER 2023

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Visit us at <https://www.bnaisholomalbany.org>
KISLEV/TEVET 5784

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.

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|-----------------------|---|-----------------|
| Friday, December 1 | KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE | 7:00 PM |
| Saturday, December 2 | EXTENDED STUDY | 10:00 AM |
| Friday, December 8 | TOT SHABBAT SERVICE | 5:30 PM |
| | KABBALAT SHABBAT + CHANUKAH SERVICE | 7:00 PM |
| Saturday, December 9 | TORAH STUDY | 10:00 AM |
| Friday, December 15 | KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE (ZOOM ONLY) | 7:00 PM |
| Saturday, December 16 | TORAH STUDY | 9:30 AM |
| | TORAH SERVICE | 10:30 AM |
| Friday, December 22 | KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE | 7:00 PM |
| Saturday, November 23 | TORAH STUDY | 10:00 AM |
| Friday, December 29 | KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE | 7:00 PM |
| Saturday, December 30 | TORAH STUDY | 10:00 AM |
| Friday, January 5 | KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE | 7:00 PM |
| Saturday, January 6 | 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 the daylight hours begin to shrink at this time of year, I have a little trick I like to use: just when the darkness starts encroaching a little too much for comfort, I start counting. I calculate the number of days until the winter solstice – when I know the darkness will be at its peak – and then remind myself that that date also marks a turning point. From that time on, it will start getting brighter. If, let's say, there are three weeks to the solstice, then in six weeks, we'll be back to this amount of daylight; and after that, every day promises more and more light.

While this trick works well in circumstances like the earth's orbit, I'll admit it can be harder to employ when the darkness is less predictable. If only we had a calendar that let us know when all the hostages would be returned; when the Israel/Gaza war and its devastating effects would end; when the recent spike in antisemitic and anti-Muslim threats and violence would once again begin to ebb.

Chanukah reminds us, though, that the sun isn't our only source of light. We can be God's partners in bringing more light to the world – through candles and prayer; by supporting each other in our moments of despair; by speaking up or out to advocate for justice and compassion; by living our daily lives with courage; and by gathering in community, where we can share the light of each other's faces.

May the candles of our *chanukiyot* (Chanukah menorahs) be a sign of greater light to come, *bimheirah b'yameinu* – speedily, in our days.

L'shalom,
Rabbi Danielle Weisbrot

BE ON GUARD AGAINST EMAIL/TEXT SPOOFING SCAMS

STAY ALERT! If you see a suspicious email or text message that claims to come from Rabbi Weisbrot or someone else at B'nai Sholom, double-check the 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 message to the correct address/number for the supposed sender or call them directly to confirm.

***A hearty B'nai Sholom welcome to
EMILY PICKERING,
our new Office Manager!!***

The Movies Return

'Farewell Mister Haffmann'
Admission - - \$5

Saturday, December 16
7:30 p.m.

After an almost four-year hiatus, B'nai Sholom is returning to in-person screenings. Our first showing will be **"Farewell Mister Haffmann"** (France 2022) about a Jewish jeweler who, fearing the worst, arranges for his family to flee the city and offers his employee the chance to take over his store until the conflict subsides. But his own attempts to escape are thwarted, and Haffmann is forced to seek his assistant's protection, a risky proposition for both men.

The film masterfully guides the viewer through the world of Vichy, France, where lives are irrevocably shaped by the twin scourges of war and the black market. Rich in moral complexity and empathy, this is grand, big-screen adult entertainment at its finest.

Annual Book Talk – January 12, 2024 **"Behind Enemy Lines:** **The True Story of a French Jewish Spy in Nazi Germany"** by Marthe Cohn with Wendy Holden

For 18 years, congregant Martha Rozett has presented a book talk each winter at B'nai Sholom on a book of interest to our congregation and the larger Jewish community. At first, the talks were scheduled on Sunday afternoons, but in recent years (except for the 2021 pandemic year) they have taken place during or just after a shortened Friday night service. The title is announced a couple of months in advance so people can locate and read the book, and the talks generate lively discussions.

Martha's 19th book talk is scheduled for January 12, 2024. Over the years, friends have suggested titles, and this year Roy Fruiterman introduced her to Marthe Cohn's **"Behind Enemy Lines: The True Story of a French Jewish Spy in Nazi Germany,"** published in 2002 and still in print. Cohn, a remarkable and courageous young French woman fluent in French and German, served as a spy for the French First Army in the final year of World War II. Slipping behind enemy lines disguised as a young German nurse seeking information about a fictional German fiancé, she gathered information from sympathetic or unwitting Germans and then rode her bicycle back across the border to report on troop movements to the French intelligence service.

Today, Cohn is an astounding 103 years old and the subject of a delightful 90-minute 2019 documentary called "Chichinette: The Accidental Spy." "Chichinette" ("little pain in the neck") was the nickname the French Army intelligence gave to their small, persistent, lively colleague.

You can find the documentary online and the book is available as an e-book at the Albany Public Library and used and new in paperback (we will order a copy for the B'nai Sholom library and have asked Book House to order a couple of copies.) The title "Behind Enemy Lines" is a popular one, so be sure to search for the book written by Marthe Cohn with Wendy Holden.

New Members Welcomed at Dinner and Service

On November 3, B'nai Sholom celebrated New Member Shabbat with a special dinner and service. Because COVID had prevented us from holding such an event for several years, we used the occasion to welcome and bless all those new members who have joined the congregation since the fall of 2021. In coming years, we plan to make New Member Shabbat an annual event, generally scheduled on the first Shabbat in November.

The Social Hall was filled that evening with congregants enjoying a dinner of catered entrees and pot-luck sides furnished by the more longstanding members. After dinner, participants engaged in a congregant "scavenger hunt" as a fun way for all members to get to know each other better.

At the erev Shabbat service, Rabbi Weisbrot likened B'nai Sholom to a wedding chuppah and to the tent of Abraham and Sarah, both open on all sides as a gesture of welcome to the community. She called all new members to the bimah for a short ceremony of welcome, which concluded with the Priestly Blessing. Many congregants lingered at the oneg after the service to enjoy delicious treats and to continue conversations begun earlier in the evening.

Many thanks to the Membership Team for organizing this event and to the many congregants who lent a hand to set up or clean up for the dinner and oneg!

What a Response!

We asked, and you came through in the most generous way: bags and boxes of coats, pants and sweaters, for children and adults, garments that you, our fellow congregants, sorted and delivered for our **Fall Clothing Drive**, culminating October 29.

With limited hours of access to the synagogue and the cold and rain of the "in-person" drop-off day, you showed up to make this a very successful event.

Our band of volunteers -- Steve Klein, Melissa Browne, Lois Gordon, Hayden Schwartz, Jesse Dinkin and Valerie Tabak -- loaded many pounds of donations into three cars, which were then driven to the Holiday Inn in downtown Albany.

Once approved for entry into the premises, we saw some people who traveled great distances and needed to overcome many obstacles that continue to provide challenges to their relocation and assimilation into life in our area.

Imagine coming to a country with little more than the clothes on your back and facing what promises to be a frigid Northeast winter.

If you missed the Clothing Drive, or find additional items to donate, it's not too late. Please reach out to Valerie Tabak or Hayden Schwartz. The demand is great, and we will be delighted to distribute any additional clothing that you provide.

As always, thank you, fellow congregants.

Welcome to our new members!

We welcome our newest members:

**Alex Wiegand & Sean O'Connor
Ry & Sasha Suraski
Lacey Putnam**

We're so pleased you have joined us!

Our Recent Kibbutzniks

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Shari Whiting | In memory of my daughter, Sarah |
| Lois Gordon | In honor of our new members and of Rabbi Weisbrot and the Membership Committee's ongoing work |
| Valerie Tabak and Jesse Dinkin | Heartiest congratulations to Maggie Tabak, Guilderland Town Judge-elect, on her well-deserved win |

The Following Yahrtzeits will be Observed in December

- 12/1 Elihu Propp*; Frances Rudinger; Ray Stephany; Richard L. Brower*; Paul B. Blum; David Gottlieb; Jack Pendergrass; Donald Tannin; David Cohen*; Bertha Markstein Peckerman*; Albert J. Abrams*; Sanford Liebschutz
- 12/8 Albert J. Abrams*; Sadie Cohen*; Grace Fruiterman; Hannah R. Jaffe*; Rita Binenkorb Ray; Florence Levion Levin; Alexandr Levitski; Franklin Steinhardt*; Marvin Millins; Erwin Winston; Jacob Lichtenfels*
- 12/15 Jacob Lazoroff*; Freda Kussack; Ruth Aronson*; Estera Fiks; Adah Vosburgh; Harry Cohen*; Norma Belle Singer Beatman*; Samual Link; Saul Mouchy Small; Hannah Tabak; Adele Broch Krochmal; Gertrude Slotnick; Freda Kussack
- 12/22 Lillian Tannan; Waldamar Knieling; Cornelius Epstein*; Florence Morse; Alfred Waxman; Judith S. Dobris*
- 12/29 Morris Adler*; Anita Dubb*; Arnold Rosenberg*; Roberta Minzer; Mildred Adler*; Olaf "Sonny" Hausgaard; Lore (Laurie) Lee; Rachel Trombley Porter; Benjamin Sacks; Herbert Swift; Irving Goodman*; Julian Wager

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

Thank You!

...to the following congregants who recently hosted an Oneg Shabbat or kiddush lunch: Libby Liebschutz, Ian Schleif, Amy Koren-Roth

The Congregation Notes with Thanks These Contributions:

General Fund

In appreciation of **Cheryl Reeder** by Amy and Yossi Koren-Roth

In memory of **Murray Redler** by Steven Redler

In memory of **Estelle Nitka** by Cheryl and Mark Reeder

Andrew Haber and K. Gladstone

Yom Kippur Break-Fast

In support: Arthur Alowitz; Julie Novkov and Joel Bloom; Amy and Yossi Koren-Roth; David Liebschutz; Carol Smith; Barney Horowitz; Melody Bruce and David Ray; Barbara and Jack Devore

High Holy Days

In support: Barbara Aronson

Megan David Adom

In support: George Trahan; Adele Strominger

Endowment Fund

In appreciation of **Martie and Phil Teumim** by Becky and Ben Marvin

Social Action/Social Justice Committee – Free Food Fridges Fund

In memory of **Lillian Golderman** by Gail Golderman and Rochelle Goldfarb

In appreciation of **Jean Brower** by Becky and Ben Marvin

In celebration of the **birth of their granddaughter, Annabelle Joy**, by Melissa Browne and Mary Warrener

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

In honor of the **wedding of Kyle Hatch and Abby Belansen** by Candy Raderman

In celebration of the **birth of their granddaughter, Annabelle Joy**, by Melissa Browne and Mary Warrener

Our Recent Kibbutzniks

In honor of **Sarah Whiting** by Sharon K. Whiting

In honor of **Judge-Elect Margaret C. Tabak** by Valerie Tabak and Jesse Dinkin

In loving memory of **Judy Dobris** by The Family of Judy Dobris

In loving memory of **Jack Pendergrass** by Ann Shapiro and Barry Pendergrass

New on Our Website – The DONATE Button

Did you know there's a great new way to donate to B'nai Sholom? The DONATE button on the website is now operational. This is a safe alternative to sending checks through the mail, and you can use this button for all your donations, including but not limited to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund, Endowment Fund, Social Action Fund and Tributes. We're excited to offer this alternative and hope you explore it and the new website at <https://www.bnaisholomalbany.org>.

Caring Community: Helping to Help Each Other

When a congregant is experiencing a time of stress such as an illness, a death in the family or a new baby, B'nai Sholom's Caring Community offers a helping hand.

But the Caring Community can't do that without you.

We need congregants to sign up for the "on call" list to cook, to drive a fellow congregant to a medical appointment or to attend a minyan during shiva. Signing up does not mean you have to do it when it is not convenient. It means we can call and ask.

If you are willing to help in times of need, please contact Nancy Maurer by email: nancymaurer5@gmail.com

Don't delay, reach out today.

"On three things does the world stand: On Torah, on worship and on deeds of lovingkindness." Pirkei Avot 1:2

RABBI: Danielle Weisbrot can be reached at rabbi@bnaisholomalbany.org

RABBI EMERITUS: Donald P. Cashman

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

OFFICE MANAGER: Emily Pickering can be reached at office@bnaisholomalbany.org

OFFICE HOURS: TUESDAY-FRIDAY 9:30 AM–4:00 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.

Period Covered

Deadline

January 2024

December 13

February 2024

January 10