

B'nai Sholom Reform Congregation

420 WHITEHALL RD., ALBANY, NY 12208

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February 2024

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

Sh'vat Adar I 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.

Friday, February 2	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE with guest speaker Rabbi Lauren Tuchman	7:00 PM
Saturday, February 3	EXTENDED STUDY	10:00 AM
Friday, February 9	TOT SHABBAT SERVICE	5:30 PM
	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE	7:00 PM
Saturday, February 10	TORAH STUDY	10:00 AM
Friday, February 16	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE (ZOOM ONLY)	7:00 PM
Saturday, February 17	TORAH STUDY	9:30 AM
	SHABBAT TORAH SERVICE	10:30 AM
Friday, February 23	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE	7:00 PM
Saturday, February 24	TORAH STUDY	10:00 AM
Friday, March 1	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE	7:00 PM
Saturday, March 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...

Since 2009, February has carried the distinction of doubling as **Jewish Disability Awareness, Acceptance, and Inclusion Month (JDAIM)**.

JDAIM encourages us to raise awareness and champion the rights of people with disabilities to be included in all aspects of Jewish life. The goal is to help everyone in our community feel respected, valued, and included for who they are, within the wide scope of abilities and identities.

As you may know, our Inclusivity Collaborative led an effort to take a deeper look at inclusion at B'nai Sholom. They gathered input on ways we could make the physical building more accessible (e.g. rearranging seats in the sanctuary to leave more spaces for people who use wheelchairs, walkers, or other assistive devices), and – at our Inclusivity Shabbat service last June – taught us about the importance of language in helping people feel included (e.g. using their correct pronouns).

This month, we will have the opportunity to learn from another wonderful teacher. Rabbi Lauren Tuchman will be coming to Albany the first weekend in February to present a series on “The Transformative Power of Inclusive Torah.” Rabbi Tuchman will be delivering the sermon at B'nai Sholom's Shabbat services on **Friday, February 2**, to be followed by a Q&A session before the oneg. You can also continue learning with her throughout the weekend – during/after Shabbat morning services at Congregation Ohav Shalom on February 3, and the morning of Sunday, February 4 at Congregation Agudat Achim. I hope you will be able to take advantage of one or more of these opportunities!

However, while acknowledging February as JDAIM is important, we also recognize that the work of making our Jewish community and our synagogue accessible is not limited to – and cannot be accomplished in – a single month. To continue learning about disability inclusion, resources are available at JDAIM.org; the Reform Religious Action Center (RAC.org), also has suggestions for ways [congregations](#) can get involved in JDAIM and ways that you can be an [ally](#) to people with disabilities.

I look forward to continuing to learn and work together to make B'nai Sholom as inclusive as possible!

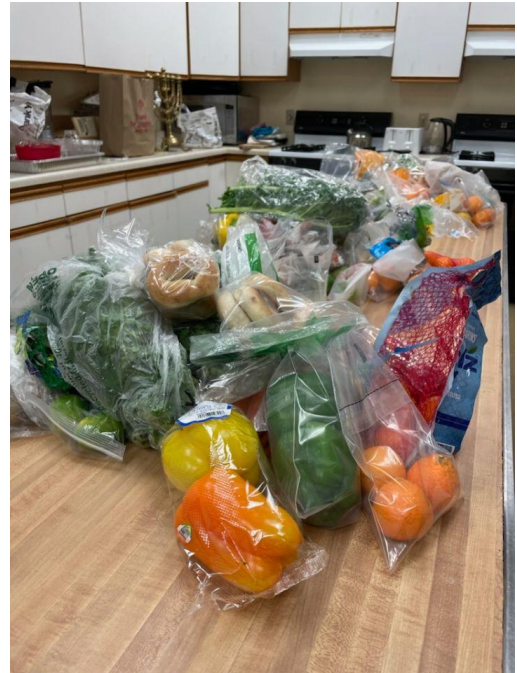
L'shalom,

Rabbi Danielle Weisbrot

Shop, Sort and Fill – It's a Mitzvah

On a brisk, sunny day in late December, the two shoppers approached their task like professional athletes preparing for the big game. List in hand, pencil at the ready, through the produce aisle, choosing, weighing, bagging, comparing. What's on sale? Are those really a better deal? Are there any damaged ones in the bag? Turn, inspect, repeat.

On to the dairy section. Do people prefer this over that? Is including almond milk a good decision? And then there is yogurt. So many choices and what do kids really like? Butter. Folks really appreciate this sweet offering. Eggs. How to divide the cartons so that there is equal distribution among the three refrigerators that we are tasked to fill. And portions – don't forget that we want several people to be able to have eggs from each refrigerator.



Bread: Best "sell by" dates, grains, no added sugars. Why are the pita breads expiring tomorrow? Good thing we checked that out. And then the checkout process. Shopping partner has been vigilant keeping a running tally as we add each item that is placed in the cart to the subtotal. \$226.18! The goal was \$225. It takes time, it takes patience, it's worth it.

Back to B'nai Sholom to separate the bulk fruits and vegetables into smaller packages and then divide the entire haul into three equal portions. Repack it all into the car and on our way to follow the GPS to our assigned locations. How many times we wonder why we don't know the neighborhoods better than we do. They are not far from places we each frequent. We know why. I feel a sense of shame. People appear on foot or by motor vehicle as we fill the brightly decorated fridges.



We are blessed, we are thanked, we are humbled.

It takes time, it takes patience, it takes money. It's worth it. Please donate to the Free Food Fridge Fund. Helping to feed our neighbors is truly a mitzvah.

Cooperation Nets Nine

A joint blood drive was held at B'nai Sholom on December 22. Nine of the 12 donors were BSRC congregants and the others came from Ohav Shalom and Temple Israel. The Red Cross workers were ably assisted by volunteers including Anita Stein and Jim Savitt. Kudos to Steve Klein for coordinating our first joint blood drive.

New Way to Contribute: The DONATE Button

Did you know there's a great new way to donate to B'nai Sholom? It's the DONATE button on the website. 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 (but not temple dues – at least not yet). We're excited to offer this alternative and hope you explore it and the new website at 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

Purim Potluck and the Megillah: An Evening of Mouth-Watering Fun!

Dinner and a Show! Well, actually, **Dinner with Esther and Company**.

On Saturday, March 23, at 5:30 PM the Purim fun begins at B'nai Sholom with a potluck (sign-up link to follow in other communications) followed by a costume parade at 6:30 and a congregant-reading of the Megillah at 7:00. Bring your imagination; puppets and song are welcome. Please contact Maxine Goldberg or Melissa Putterman Hoffmann with any questions.

Bring on the Shtick!

*******SPECIAL EVENT*******

Zoom with Veteran NBC Middle East Correspondent MARTIN FLETCHER Wednesday, February 7, at 7:15 PM

B'nai Sholom will host by Zoom **veteran NBC correspondent Martin Fletcher** to provide his insights on the post-October 7 world and the ongoing Israel-Hamas war, a conflict where several of his family members were taken hostage. Martin has covered world events for 40 years, mostly for NBC News including 26 based in Israel as its correspondent and/or bureau chief. Dubbed the "gold standard of television war correspondents" by fellow journalist and CNN anchor Anderson Cooper, Martin has won almost every award in TV journalism, including five Emmys, three of which were for his reporting from Israel - one for the first Palestinian uprising, one for the second uprising and the third for coverage of Israel's war with Lebanon in 2006. Martin has also written four novels and three works of nonfiction in his illustrious career, including *Teachers* (2023), about people he has encountered in his reporting who have shown resilience despite the hardships of war, revolution and natural disasters.

Watch for the Zoom link in the weekly e-mail and please join us for what should be an extraordinary evening. Open to members of the B'nai Sholom community and friends.

Synagogue Scholar Talk by Mary Warrener

**Sunday, February 25, 10:30 AM
Preceded by bagels and coffee/tea 10:00-10:30 AM**

**"Cut Off: Shylock, Antisemitism, Value and Irony in
'The Merchant of Venice'"**

Perhaps the most frequently asked question about Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* is whether it is an antisemitic play or a play about antisemitism. Maybe it's both. In this comedy with the soul of a tragedy, all truths are questions and all insights ironic. As many commentators have pointed out, antisemitism is also a series of contradictions, but the only truth they seem to yield is the truth of antisemitism itself, the oldest and most durable hatred. The resurgence of this hatred has been in evidence since the beginning of the 21st century, but it is clearly escalating. Is it possible that a play first produced over 400 years ago can shed some light on this hatred, on the fears we are facing now, even if the only moral clarity it offers is a better understanding of who we are and what we value?

Mary is a professor at SUNY Orange Community College, where she taught the college's Shakespeare course for 23 years, as well as other literature, writing and philosophy courses. Over the years, Mary has given a number of presentations and led discussions on Shakespeare plays, including *The Merchant of Venice*.

Movie Night

Saturday, March 9, at 7:30 PM

"The Levys of Monticello"

When Thomas Jefferson died in 1826, he left behind a mountain of personal debt, which forced his heirs to sell his beloved Monticello home and all its possessions. "The Levys of Monticello" (2022) is a documentary film that tells the little-known story of the Levy family, which owned and carefully preserved Monticello for nearly a century – far longer than Jefferson or his descendants. The remarkable story of the Levy family also intersects with the rise of antisemitism that runs throughout the course of American history.

Admission is \$5 and non-members are requested to pre-register via website link.

Chai Flicks Film Group Discussion

Thursday, February 8, at 7:30 PM

For the past three years B'nai Sholom's film group has been meeting bi-monthly to discuss movies that have been available through the ChaiFlicks streaming service. The next movie is "**A Winter Journey**," dealing with themes of guilt and Jewish identity as a son confronts his father about his experiences in the Kulturbund, or Jewish Cultural Association, a remarkable ensemble of Jewish musicians, actors and dancers that was maintained as an insidious propaganda tool by the Nazis. The film is also available for free streaming at Tubi and all are welcome to join the discussion. Contact Barney Horowitz at horowitz28@verizon.net for the Zoom link.

Spotlight on New Members: Lacey Putnam

Editor's Note: *One of a series of articles from the Membership Team to introduce those who have recently joined B'nai Sholom. This month we welcome Lacey Putnam.*

Lacey was born in Great Neck, New York, and lived there until she went to college at Barnard in New York City. It was in NYC that Lacey met her future husband, Randy, while he was finishing his law degree at NYU and Lacey was becoming a licensed mental health therapist.

After finishing their education, they moved to Omaha where they lived for 13 years. In 2005 Lacey's parents moved to Delhi, New York. Lacey and Randy relocated to Albany to be closer to them and provide assistance if needed. They chose Albany to give them access to an airport, which Randy needed to meet his work-related travel needs. The couple live in the Buckingham Pond area in Albany.

Recently retired, Lacey spent much of her professional life as a mental health therapist in many not-for-profit settings, including those addressing addictions (gambling, substance abuse), services for people with disabilities, and group homes. She is politically active, volunteering for the League of Women Voters; she also enjoys running, riding her bicycle and visiting her family. Lacey said she volunteers with the Albany Jewish Community Center delivering meals and serving meals to people who participate in the congregate meal program. She enjoys this work because "it feels good to make sure people get the food they need to stay healthy and well." Lacey enjoyed playing with her dog who unfortunately died recently. Lacey and her husband hope to begin dog-watching to maintain her contact with canines.

Lacey mentioned that our synagogue reminds her of the liberal, progressive synagogue in which she grew up. Similar to the synagogue in Great Neck, B'nai Sholom has a strong base in social action and working in the community. She mentioned that when she and her husband were getting married, they could not find a rabbi who would marry them; today, Lacey said she feels B'nai Sholom is inclusive and welcoming to interfaith families and expects her non-Jewish husband will join her at times for prayer and study as well as B'nai Sholom-sponsored social activities.

Lacey has several goals she hopes to achieve with support from B'nai Sholom. She expects B'nai Sholom will help her re-engage her Jewish side! She wants to be in the presence of Jews more often, to discuss what is happening in the world from a Jewish perspective and to continue her community work not just as a person but as a member of the Jewish community. Lastly, Lacey wants opportunities to participate in Jewish learning – she commented she hasn't focused on Jewish learning since her bat mitzvah and is excited to see the many learning opportunities B'nai Sholom offers.

When asked if there was anything to add, Lacey said she has been married 31 years, loves living in the Capital Region and is very excited about having joined B'nai Sholom.

Onegs Are Back in Full Swing! Want to Host One?

Do you have a wedding anniversary, birthday or yahrtzeit to honor? Hosting an Oneg is one way to share your joy or remembrance with your friends in the B'nai Sholom community. Hosting is simple: provide food and beverages that the community can share after Shabbat services while everyone socializes. If you have an upcoming event to celebrate, or a loved one to honor in a special way, please sign up online to host an Oneg at our SignUpGenius site using the link found in the Weekly E-announcements. You will be able to check the dates for which hosts are needed. If there are open dates, the committee will reach out to congregants to inquire about hosting. If you have any questions or need the sign-up link sent to you, please contact Laura Kaplan at lckaplan79@gmail.com.

Our Recent Kibbutzniks

Lois Gordon -- Congratulations to Jodi Squadere on being a Golden Shovel recipient from Cornell Cooperative Extension of Rensselaer County

Mazal tov!

... to Jody Squadere, who received Cornell Cooperative Extension of Rensselaer County's Golden Shovel award.

... to Barbara and Rich Nussbaum on their new grandson, Octavio "Tavi" Enzo Garcia, born December 16 to Cate and Miguel Garcia.

Thank You!

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

...to the following congregants who recently hosted an oneg Shabbat or kiddush lunch: Gail Golderman; Maxine Goldberg; Mari Vosburgh; Worship and Related Activities Committee.

The following Yahrtszeits will be observed in February:

2/2

Elizabeth Nelson Mutschler*; Ronald Weisdorffer; Allen Heffler; Hilda Smith; Ida Shapiro Jaffe*; Irving Schwartz; Sylvia Schwartz; Merle Schaffer Sperber*; George Raderman; Leonard Samuels; Sandra Samuels

2/9

Isaac Adels*; Ethel Hesch Berke*; Lillian Hammer*; Hyman Miller; Frank Weinberg*; Harvey S. Schwartz*; Morris Alowitz*; Roz Walker*; Jack Jarett; Arthur Katz; Esther Rosenberg*; Bernard Royne; Ethel Strohl; Lillian Dinkin; Sarah Koblenz Pock*; Eleanor Newman Blum

2/16

Morris Cohen; Sherryl Pflanz; Helen Rehr; Rose Goldberg; Ida Goldstein; Benjamin L. Dubb; Barbara Sternstein

2/23

Paul Goldstein; Irma Bruce; Frederic Neuburger; Joyce Epstein*; Augusta Lichtenfels*; Leah Altmayer; Pearl Ronay; Sophie Scholl Small; Arlan Walker*; Muriel Rosenthal; Joyce Yaffe; Edith Watnik

3/1

Ruth Warshaw*; Samuel Strohl; Lena Semelisky*; Morris Wagner*; Frances K. Singer*; Ida Roth*; Samuel Joseph Zuckerman

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

The Congregation Notes with Thanks These Contributions:

General Fund

In memory of **Walter and Mariah Hock** by Marcia Tress

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

In honor of **Edith Goldstein** by Lorraine Van Akkeren

Endowment Fund

In memory of **Mindy Kramer** by Harvey Schwartzman

Social Action/Social Justice Fund

Lorraine Van Akkeren

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

Stacey Wager and Jeff Greenberg

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 email address or phone number 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 or number for the supposed sender or call them directly to confirm.

RABBI: Danielle Weisbrot can be reached at rabbi@banisholomalbany.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: TUE/WED/THURS/FRI 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

March

February 14

April

March 13