

B'nai Sholom Reform Congregation

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E-mail: office@bnaisholomalbany.org
November 2024

Phone: 518-482-5283
Visit us at <https://www.bnaisholomalbany.org>
Cheshvan/Kislev 5785

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, November 1 Saturday, November 2	KABBALAT SHABBAT + SYNAGOGUE SCHOLAR EXTENDED STUDY OF THE PROPHETS (HYBRID)	7:00 PM 10:00 AM
Friday, November 8 Saturday, November 9	TOT SHABBAT NEW MEMBER KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE TORAH STUDY (ZOOM)	5:30 PM 7:30 PM 10:00 AM
Friday, November 15 Saturday, November 16	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE TORAH STUDY (ZOOM)	7:00 PM 10:00 AM
Friday, November 22 Saturday, November 23	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE (ZOOM ONLY) TORAH STUDY (ZOOM) TORAH SERVICE	7:00 PM 9:30 AM 10:30 AM
Friday, November 29 Saturday, November 30	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE TORAH STUDY (ZOOM)	7:00 PM 10:00 AM
Friday, December 6 Saturday, December 7	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE EXTENDED STUDY OF THE PROPHETS (HYBRID)	7:00 PM 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...

Over the course of the holiday season, I made a few references to holiday glitches (including a very unfortunate Hebrew misspelling on Sukkot gift boxes being marketed online) and situations that demonstrate a lack of true understanding of our annual observances. Recently, I discovered another one.

Just as I was taking a deep breath after Simchat Torah – the holiday that marks the conclusion of this extended season of reflection, celebration and togetherness – I looked at a Jewish calendar I had received in the mail. For the last Shabbat in October, it listed the Torah portion as *parashat* Bereshit (Genesis) as expected. After all, following Simchat Torah, we go back to the beginning, restarting our annual Torah reading cycle. However, the calendar also marked that date as “Leil S’lichot” – the Shabbat of repentance that precedes Rosh Hashanah and traditionally kicks off the holiday season.

My first panicked thought was, “NO!!! We just *finished* the holidays! I’m not ready to start all over again!!!” But once I had time to determine that it was a print error and remind myself that we are, indeed, heading into the only month on the Jewish calendar with no holidays other than Shabbat, I realized that I didn’t have much cause to panic in the first place.

Yes, the S’lichot service, Rosh Hashanah, Shabbat Shuvah (the Shabbat of “turning” during the Days of Awe), Yom Kippur, Sukkot, and Simchat Torah do require a mountain of preparation that usually starts months in advance. There are prayer services to plan, sermons to write and music to rehearse; the Torah scrolls, ark and reading table need to switch from their everyday colors to holiday whites (with polished silver) and back again; the Annual Guide, Book of Remembrance and holiday announcement sheets are prepared and printed; four or five different sets of prayer books are put out at different times; honors are assigned; holiday luncheon, oneg and break-fast hosts are identified; volunteers are recruited for safety, greeting, and technology roles; guests are registered; microphones are tested; Torah chanting is practiced; the sukkah goes up and needs to come back down...

But the calming thought that settled me down after considering what a second round of holidays would entail is that every step of the way, there was help. You all stepped up to be part of the process, sharing your time, energy and skills to make this holiday season a success. **THANK YOU ALL!!!** We couldn’t have done it without you.

So, while I am ultimately glad that we are officially concluding this High Holy Day season and moving deeper into the year 5785, I am confident that B’nai Sholom can handle whatever comes our way.

L’shalom,

Rabbi Weisbrot

From Our President...

(A recap of my remarks at our Yom Kippur 5785 services)

Got Your Ticket?

Well, hello, there! I've been wanting to catch up with you. Ten days ago, we were together on Rosh Hashanah. And now, we're back wrestling with ourselves, feeling anguish because of our wrongdoings and insensitivities. Put a pause on Happy New Year; it's time to finish important work.

There's an urgency to resolve miscommunication and hurt feelings in time to get through those gates with a clean slate.

If there were a ticket of admission for those gates, what would it look like? I picture a balance sheet with two columns, one listing the wrongs we've done and the other showing whether our apologies and good deeds bring us to the zero balance we hope for or... to somewhere else? Could **bonus** points be allotted for *tzedakah* or *tikkun olam* or by supporting B'nai Sholom, where *tzedakah* and *tikkun olam* are nurtured? I know I'd be wondering: can I use my bonus points to bring my balance to zero or even a positive number? Ooh ooh, can I roll them over to next year? Do they accumulate interest?

If these walls could hear our inner dialogue during services, especially the High Holy Days, they'd probably tell us that what they hear every year boils down to two things: "Am I doing enough?" and "What else do I need to do or can I do to deserve that ticket of admission?"

It just so happens I have a cheat sheet for bonus points. And I'll share it with you right after I tell you what you're already doing to add to the positive column on your sheet. I'm talking about the impact that you here in the Sanctuary and you, Zooming in across the *ethernet*, have on B'nai Sholom when you do righteous/good/kind things like:

- Collate and staple the Bulletin
- Volunteer in the office
- Host an Oneg
- Come to a service (bonus points double when it's your first time being here)
- Zoom in through the cable like particles of light
- Attend Temple meetings
- Make suggestions
- Make complaints
- Support causes important to B'nai Sholom and the Jewish people
- Work on committees
- Become a Chair
- Arrange chairs
- Put up the sukkah
- Sing in the choir
- Are called to the Bimah
- Change a light bulb
- Sit here in the Sanctuary adding your Ruach to group prayers

Your list of contributions is impressive!

Think of your impact on B'nai Sholom as something like a carbon footprint – only one of a healthy, continually regenerating life force vs. any greenhouse gases emitted into the atmosphere. If I were you, I'd be feeling pretty good right now, maybe ready to think about what's next.

On Rosh Hashanah, we left off with the world outside those doors. Here are some thoughts about how to sustain our synagogue and the world:

Our Social Action/Social Justice Committee and our Communications Team researched and recommended several of the suggestions in the Tzedakah section of your announcement sheet. The organizations and causes listed there are as diverse in mission and the needs they target as are you, our congregants, in your social and political passions.

As for supporting and growing B'nai Sholom:

Our FUNdraising Committee includes members with experience in financial administration and fundraising. They develop ways to support the spiritual, educational and humanitarian work at B'nai Sholom. In 2022-23, they called and you answered. And here are some things we have been able to accomplish largely because of your generosity and from grants written by congregants:

We have a new tech system for video conferencing, including a camera that swivels to capture various points of the Sanctuary (so look alive, back there).

We have up-to-date safety and security systems in place.

We have improved handicap access.

We installed those lovely lights along our driveway, making the front part of our property safer at night.

We are about to install new flooring and a new HVAC system (which we are in definite need of).

And saving the most meaningful for last, we've been able to increase our Rabbi's hours from 75% to 80% with a plan to move to full time. (Rabbi: You knew about that, right?)

The FUNdraising Committee's current project is Celebrating 50 Years and Beyond: a 2024-2025/5785 Appeal. This campaign will raise funds for our synagogue now and into the future. Look for more information about it and additional fundraisers on your announcement sheet, the Bulletin or website.

So, there. You have your own cheat sheet for bonus points.

I'd like to end by thanking the many who make everything possible here.

We've talked about you, the cornerstone of B'nai Sholom, and Rebecca Cotler and Elizabeth Huntley, who provide the music that heals and carries us through the High Holy Days; our Office Manager Extraordinaire, Emily Pickering, who is the glue that holds everything in place; and our Rabbi Weisbrot, who is not only our spiritual leader but also our resident songbird and IT guru.

Today, let's also appreciate our:

Board of Trustees, who take on a substantial time commitment for several years and manage the affairs, revenues and property of the congregation, as well housetrain new presidents.

Our Community Engagement Committee, with its three Teams: Caring Community, supporting congregants in times of crisis or joy; the Communications Team, keeping congregants and the wider Jewish community informed about events and activities taking place at B'nai Sholom; and the Membership Team, not only recruiting members, but helping them make connections with congregants and families – connections that tell them, "You belong here."

The Lifelong Learning Committee, where Jewish learning is a lifetime project. They offer opportunities for all ages starting with our youngest congregants and their families in programs like Tot Shabbat and youth education at B'Yachad and Mifgash, continuing with our emerging 20s and 30s Group, and going on to Torah Study and adult education classes, speakers and films.

The Facilities Management Committee, with whom you no doubt started your day being identified and welcomed in the parking lot and assisted by greeters on your way here. This committee makes sure B'nai Sholom is a safe, comfortable, sustainable and attractive place to gather – inside and out.

Our Social Action/Social Justice Committee keeps us aware of the needs and injustices that lie beyond those doors and engages in efforts to make the world a better place. Committee projects include: literacy, combatting homelessness and hunger, climate change, universal health care, and writing campaigns to let the public know what they can do to help.

Our Worship and Related Services Committee is part of every detail of services. The Ritual Team works with the Rabbi to maintain and enhance the spiritual life of the congregation. The Technology Team broadcasts those services, and (I'm giving this team a new name) the Oneg, Etc. Team coordinates the onegs and luncheons that make for community.

The Special Events Committee is behind all the special annual and biannual fun: dinners, coffeeshouses, chili competition, fair trade, Rosh Hashanah luncheons. The list goes on and on.

The Finance and Administration Committee helps us now and into the future by planning the synagogue's budget, overseeing the endowment and investments, creating fundraising projects and participating in the administration of our cemetery plots.

And the Inclusivity Collaborative raises awareness and appreciation of diversity so that everything we do at B'nai Sholom is as respectful and inclusive as possible.

I hope our time today renews you as you work through the challenges that Yom Kippur puts in front of us. And I wish you recalibration and renewal as the gates close and another year lies ahead. See you on the other side of the gates.

G'mar chatimah tovah (גמר חתימה טובה) (A good final sealing)

Donate Online Easily with the DONATE Button

There's a great, convenient and secure way to donate to B'nai Sholom: through the DONATE button on the website. It's a safe alternative to sending checks through the mail, and you can use this feature 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 <https://www.bnaisholomalbany.org>.

Every Voice, Every Vote

For the last several months, B'nai Sholom congregants have been participating in the URJ's "Every Voice, Every Vote" project. We have sought to provide power this election season to state-based campaigns and movement-wide topics. Postcards have been written and sent to support voting rights, reproductive rights in Virginia, Florida and Georgia, and New York's Equal Rights Amendment.

Since the vote has not been held as of this writing, we hope we have played a part in helping our democracy to thrive and providing space to encourage more of us to participate in political action. Thank you to all who participated!

There's a Chill in the Air ...

Despite the extended mild weather and sunny skies, we all know winter is coming. Once again, we are collecting clothing for donation to those in need in our region.

We will collect CLEAN, GENTLY USED clothes and shoes – all seasons accepted.

Please be sure to SORT TWICE: BY GENDER (male/female/unisex) AND ALSO BY AGE (infant/child/teen/adult). **Be sure to label your bags.**

You may drop off your donations at the synagogue:

TUESDAY, November 12, through FRIDAY, November 15, *WHEN THE BUILDING IS OPEN***

Or on **SUNDAY, November 17, 11 AM to 1 PM.**

...Or Is It Just Music I Hear?

During the same week that we are collecting clothes (see above), we will also accept musical instruments for the Albany Symphony Vanguard. These instruments will be distributed to local schools whose music programs are underfunded. ***PLEASE, NO guitars, banjos, recorders, keyboards or pianos.***

*****Please place them neatly in the marked classroom; do NOT leave clothes or instruments outside the building. Thank you!***

Free Food Fridges: The Feeling You Get Knowing You've Helped Families Eat Healthfully

An eager trainee and I set off on a beautiful fall morning for a long and productive day. When filling Free Food Refrigerators in Albany, I define *productive* as seeing the look of joy on an individual's face when that person realizes that the fresh food that is being placed into one of the fridges that we have been asked to fill is theirs for the taking.

We don't always see the recipients when we set out to shop, sort, separate, bag and deliver to our waiting appliances, but when we do, it is heartwarming to see the look of utter delight and to hear the gratitude directed toward us.

During our latest "fill," each of the refrigerators that we serviced was startlingly empty. The only time I think I may encounter a fridge in this state is at the appliance store. The white walls looking at us seemed almost unnatural. Even when I do a clean-out for Passover or in preparation for an extended time away, there is always something to block the glare of the walls.

I don't know about you, but there are (frequent) times when I think to myself, "I am starving!" Is this the case? Is it actual starvation or is it that I am so accustomed to having food on some sort of regular schedule that a few hours' delay sets this feeling into motion? I think about this when we shop and fill. I think about folks who can't buy healthy food, who are creating meals that do not include fresh greens or fresh fruit. My companion and I laughed about growing up with assorted canned and frozen vegetables and really having had no awareness of what the actual vegetable looked like or even tasted like. Our parents did this for convenience and in my case (my companion being many years my junior) the novelty of the canned and frozen experience, and that importing and shipping weren't what they are in today's world. Farm labor and immigration is an article and discussion for another time.

It was an exceptionally long day. We take pride in selecting the best food that your donations make possible. We try to provide enough portions so that many people can benefit from a single shop. We are becoming expert in cutting a carton that holds 18 eggs into 3 equal pieces and carefully taping the boxes so that their precious contents travel safely to their new homes. We work hard. And yet nothing can be accomplished without you and without your continued generosity.

We thank those of you who are frequent supporters of the Fresh Food for Families fund-raiser and who purchase extra Hannaford cards or add funds to your card purchases. We thank you for adding some cash to the canister we leave available at the synagogue. Those dollars do add up! We thank those of you who honor and remember your loved ones by making monetary donations that support our work. Most of all, we thank our synagogue family for caring about our neighbors who benefit from our food initiatives and for that, we are truly a productive community!

Valerie Tabak

Spotlight on New Members: Rob, Madeline and Joshua Forman

One of a series of articles from the Membership Team to introduce those who have recently joined B'nai Sholom. This month we welcome Rob, Madeline and Joshua Forman:

Rob and Madeline are in their early 30s, and Joshua – a/k/a J.P. – arrived August 23, 2024. They celebrated Joshua's brit milah at B'nai Sholom just a few weeks ago.

Rob has lived in Albany since attending UAlbany about 15 years ago, where he completed both his BA and MPA degrees. He was born on Long Island and moved to the town of Yorktown in the Hudson Valley when he was 11.

Madeline grew up in Cold Spring, just across the river from West Point, and has lived in Albany since she was 7. She's a graduate of the Academy of the Holy Names, went to Le Moyne College and then transferred to UAlbany, earning a BA in history.

Rob and Madeline met in 2015 and married in 2020 during the early days of the pandemic. Their wedding was mostly a virtual affair, with just the two of them and two witnesses at the ceremony in Albany's Washington Park.

Madeline currently works as a sales director for a local senior housing community, and Rob clerks for the New York State Assembly.

When asked what motivated them to join a synagogue, they said they knew they wanted to raise their children in the Reform Jewish tradition similar to their own upbringing. They added that they knew B'nai Sholom would be a good fit for their family because the Formans share with B'nai Sholom a belief in many of the congregation's values, such as community building and social justice.

Lastly, Rob and Madeline said, "One of the goals for Joshua and any other children we may have is for them to grow up in a house and community who believe in respect for all and will stand up for the rights of others."

Welcome Rob, Madeline and Joshua!



Adult Ed – Late Fall 2024

Synagogue Scholar Series

"My Father the Arms Smuggler" – A Talk by Phil Teumim November 1, 2024 (Following Shabbat Service)

What do these things have in common: an Ashkenazi kid growing up thinking he's Sephardic, a song of Israeli freedom fighters, a radiant panel heater, and a couple of boxes in the basement filled with dummy ordnance and disarmed munitions?

Come to B'nai Sholom to learn the answer. Long-time congregant Phil Teumim will speak about his father's role in smuggling weapons manufacturing machinery and technology to a defenseless Israel in the months immediately preceding and following Israeli Independence Day in May 1948, while British and U.S. arms embargoes were in place. Phil's father, Mota Teumim, then traveled undercover to Israel to set up a munitions factory using the smuggled machinery, only returning home to his wife and young children once the factory became operational.

The presentation will take place after the evening's Kabbalat Shabbat service.

Documentary Film Screening: "Above and Beyond"

In conjunction with Phil's talk, we are making available to view via streaming the documentary "Above and Beyond." The film recounts the story of Jewish American pilots who, beginning in 1948, secretly fought for Israel in its war of independence, when the Israeli military was nascent. Produced by Nancy Spielberg, younger sister to Steven, this film celebrates the pilots who laid the foundation for the Israeli Air Force. Men of incredible bravery, they helped turn the tide of the war. It will be available to stream from October 27 to November 2. Contact Barney Horowitz for the link at horowitz28@verizon.net.

Chaiflicks Film Group Discussion (Via Zoom) Thursday, November 21, at 7:30 PM

On this date we will be hosting a discussion of the film *Ida* (Poland 2015), a moving and intimate drama about a young novice nun who, on the verge of taking her vows, makes the shocking discovery that her parents were Jewish and perished under German occupation. Her journey thereafter and its excavation of truths creates a film that the *New Yorker* called "a masterpiece" and *The New York Times* "One of the finest European films in recent memory."

All are invited to watch *Ida* and join in the discussion. The film is available via the Chaiflicks streaming service and on Amazon Prime and Apple TV, with many copies in the local library system.

Contact Barney Horowitz for the link at horowitz28@verizon.net.

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: Mark and Cheryl Reeder, for the yahrzeit of Arthur Nitka; The Board of Trustees; Jamie Kammer; Maxine and Eric Goldberg; Shari Whiting

Our Recent Kibbutzniks

Robin Belansky – In memory of my sister, Cookie

The Congregation Notes with Thanks These Contributions:

General Fund

In Memory of **Ruth Devore** by Barbara and Jack Devore

In Memory of **Cecily Redler Jacobs** by Barbara and Jack Devore

In Memory of **Cecily Redler Jacobs** by Amy Sternstein

In Memory of **Adrian Goldman** by Barnett Horowitz

In Memory of **Cecily Redler Jacobs** and **Adrian Goldman** by Ellie and Randy Davis

In Memory of **Adrian Goldman** by Nancy and David Rudinger

In Memory of **Cecily Redler Jacobs, Adrian Goldman** and **Theodore Shultz** by Becky and Ben Marvin

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

Hedy Lowenheim; Cary Qualia; Irving and Rosalind Tauss; Linda Simkin

Landscaping Fund

Howard Domfort

Book of Remembrance

Susan Radosh and Steve Klein; Julie Friedman

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

In Memory of **Helen, Sam and Ira Ginsburg** and **Fred and Eleanor Wagner** by Barry Ginsberg

In Honor of **Rabbi Weisbrot** by Becky and Ben Marvin

Free Food Fridge

In Appreciation of **Judy and Roy Fruiterman** and **Dee and Frank Wind** by Becky and Ben Marvin

Gail Golderman; Jesse Dinkin and Valerie Tabak; Maxine Goldberg; Laurie Shanks

High Holy Days

In Memory of **Abraham and Ruth Graff** by Sherry Graff

Zachary and Kathleen Assael; Roberta Place; Steven Lustig; Howard and Marion Madlin; Michael Malinowitz;

Theodore Samuel; Perry and Lynn Shatsoff; Hillary Persoff; Jaqueline Guterrez; Alexandra Lockey; Mark

Harris; Barney Horowitz

Bosco's Friends Helping Friends

Valerie Tabak; Melissa Browne

Books for Babies

In Honor of **Joshua Powers Forman** and **Daisy Aziza Hatch** by Becky and Ben Marvin

Annual Fundraising Appeal

In Memory of **Rose W. Pass** by Marjorie Pass

In Appreciation of **Elaine and Michael Olshan** by Adam Olshan and Erica Ringewald
Mari Vosburgh

Tot Shabbat

Melissa Browne

Caring Community

Nancy Maurer and Bruce Bell

Please note, some donations will be recorded a month after they are received due to technical issues.

The congregation mourns the recent passing of

Richard Pickering,
Father of Emily Pickering

May his memory forever be for a blessing.

The following Yahrtzeits will be observed in November:

11/1

Eva Teumim; Irene Krochmal Swiwcz; Nathan Kaufman*; Harvey Tress*; Anna Cohen; Julius Domfort; Ruth Devore; Margaret (Peggy) Kleinfeld; Sabina Millens

11/8

Sarah Renee Whiting; Jacques M. Gilly*; Rose Kaufman*; Herman Schoenbach; M. Michel Dobris; Robert L. Mutschler*; Norma Haas; Anne Maurer; Rachel Levy*; Vicki Adler; Julie Fiks*; Julius Turoff*

11/15

Samuel Abrams*; Hortense Schwartz

11/22

Selma B. Kuperman*; Sallie Kaplan; David Bach*; Rose Parets*; Teddy Knee; Elenore Morse; Paulette Tabak; Fred Hauptman; Estelle Nitka; Norman Rosenthal; Morris Raderman

11/29

Ruth Bosin; Irving Oblas*; Samuel K. Jaffe*; Betty Feldman; Mildred Aronson*; Nusia Reichbach* Abraham Porter; Abe Turoff*; Lillian Golderman

12/6

Simon Semelisky*; Elihu Propp*; Frances Rudinger; Ray Stephany; Richard L. Brower*; David Cohen*; Bertha Markstein Peckerman*; Paul B. Blum; Maurice Pass; Ben Waxman

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@bnaisholomalbany.org

RABBI EMERITUS: Donald P. Cashman

PRESIDENT: Melissa Putterman Hoffmann can be reached at president@bnaisholomalbany.org

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

December

November 13

January

December 11