

B'nai Sholom Reform Congregation

420 WHITEHALL RD., ALBANY, NY 12208
E-mail: office@bnaisholomalbany.org
February 2025

Phone: 518-482-5283
Visit us at <https://www.bnaisholomalbany.org>
Sh'vat 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, January 31 Saturday, February 1	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE EXTENDED STUDY OF THE PROPHETS (HYBRID)	7:00 PM 10:00 AM
Friday, February 7 Saturday, February 8	SHABBAT SHIRAH WITH TORAH SERVICE TORAH STUDY (ZOOM)	7:00 PM 10:00 AM
Friday, February 14 Saturday, February 15	TOT SHABBAT KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE TORAH STUDY (ZOOM)	5:30 PM 7:00 PM 10:00 AM
Friday, February 21 Saturday, February 22	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE TORAH STUDY (ZOOM)	7:00 PM 9:30 AM
Friday, February 28 Saturday, March 1	JDAIM 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...

For such a short month, February – at least the way the Jewish and secular calendars fall this year - has a lot to offer. Of its four Friday nights, two of them will have a special focus and new(-ish) faces up front.

On February 7, our usual Kabbalat Shabbat service will be given a musical boost - and a Torah reading - in honor of Shabbat Shirah, the Sabbath of Song. This special Shabbat aligns with parashat B'Shalach in which we read about the parting of the Reed Sea and the verses of praise sung by Moses, Miriam, and all the Israelites to thank the Eternal for their survival. So, we will celebrate as well: with voices and "timbrels in our hands," plus guitar, violin, piano, ukulele, and a wonderful group of congregants to help lead us.

Famously, in those ancient verses, it is Moses who starts singing. His chant begins in the singular, out of his own personal joy at the miracle of the parted waters: "I will sing to the Eternal" (Ex. 15:1). But when Miriam begins her response, it is phrased in the plural: "Let us sing to the Eternal" (Ex. 15:21). Although her song is ostensibly addressed to G-d as well, the verse indicates that she sings it to/for the people and invites them to join her. It is an act of radical inclusion – making space and creating an opportunity for the whole community to participate in the experience. She helps broaden Moses' poem of praise into a communal collaboration of song and dance.

Which brings us to the other extra-special Shabbat this month: JDAIM Shabbat on February 28. February is Jewish Disability Awareness Acceptance and Inclusion Month and to highlight that important reminder of the need to be inclusive all year, we will have a guest speaker. Melanie Hecker, a local disability advocate, will talk about her experiences of Jewish communal life as someone with a disability as well as strategies for building on our progress. Like Miriam's example, I hope Melanie Hecker's voice will help make us even more adept at creating access opportunities for everyone in our community.

Whether in person or via Zoom, we hope to be able to *include* you in participating in these beautiful and important services!

L'shalom,
Rabbi Weisbrot

Join Us for Joyful Noise on Shabbat Shirah

Shabbat Shirah is Friday, February 7. Join us for this extra-musical Shabbat service (with Torah reading) as we celebrate and recall with joyful noise the Parting of the Sea. Music provided by Rabbi Weisbrot and fellow congregants.

Thank You!

Two simple words that carry so much weight. Very early in their expressive language development, we teach our children this phrase. Generally, "What's the *magic word?*" ("*please*") runs in tandem with this lesson in social etiquette, because we realize that how you present yourself to others is vital in forming and maintaining personal relationships and, quite frankly, it is just plain nice.

At this juncture, on behalf of B'nai Sholom Reform Congregation's Social Action/Social Justice Committee, I want to thank you for supporting our many important causes: the New and Gently Loved book collections, Vera Propp Literacy Fund and Books for Babies Fund, Fresh Food for Families (Free Food Fridge and Street Soldiers), seasonal clothing collections, interest in climate news (contact Barry Pendergrass to receive his amazingly comprehensive and informative monthly notes), and participation in annual Red Cross Blood Drives.

In partnership with our friends at the Delmar Reformed Church, we prepare meals and provide companionship for our Family Promise guests. Our commitment is every few months and the rewards that you take from this can be attested to by those of us who have joined in these evenings. The yearly Family Promise *Doors to the Future* fundraising event and the annual auction, which supports the myriad of goods and services that are provided free of charge to the guests, are supported by all you have donated.

And then there is the annual Trunk or Treat held at the Schuyler Inn Family Shelter in Menands and the many times we have provided new and gently used books for these folks.

The Red Bookshelf, an organization in Albany whose mission is to put books into the hands of children and adults, never charging for any of these volumes, received a handsome donation from our congregation. If you are interested in volunteering with them, Lois Gordon is one of their dedicated supporters who repair and organize the books.

As Becky Marvin wrote in last month's Bulletin, luggage was needed by the immigrants who were forced to leave their hotel in Albany, and piles of luggage were donated by our synagogue families. Becky pointed out that the attorney who contacted her stated, "B'nai Sholom has the reputation for social justice work and the ability to respond quickly."

Thank you, B'nai Sholom Family! You are truly an amazingly generous group.

Valerie Tabak - Co-chair, Social Action/Social Justice Committee

Computer Peripherals Needed

The Safety and Security Committee needs two (2) keyboards and one (1) mouse to access the storage drives where we keep our security camera videos. If you have computer mice or keyboards that you do not need, please consider donating them to B'nai Sholom. Simply drop them off in the office. Please contact Howard Stoller, hstoller103@gmail.com, to let him know that you plan to donate so we can let subsequent potential donors know that this need has been met. Thank you!

New Safety Features at B'nai Sholom

The Safety and Security Committee recently prepared a building schematic that shows where the exits, fire pull stations, fire extinguishers, AED (automated external defibrillator) and First Aid kit are. This schematic will be posted around the temple, and one is included with this Bulletin.

We ask that you review the diagram to ensure that you know, at a minimum, where all the exits are and, ideally, where all the listed features are located. Then, when you are in the building, take a walk around to locate the items shown on the schematic. Doing this will make us all safer in the event of an emergency, since we will know the best way to exit the building and what supplies and equipment are available for handling health and safety situations that may arise.

Donate Online Easily with the DONATE Button

There's a great, convenient and secure way to donate to B'nai Sholom: 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 at <https://www.bnaisholomalbany.org>.

Adult Ed Virtual Author Series

Best-Selling Author of Historical Fiction Shelly Sanders Thursday, February 6, at 7:30 PM (via Zoom)

Join us as we Zoom with author Shelly Sanders to discuss her book, *Daughters of the Occupation*. Inspired by true events in World War II Latvia, this is an emotionally charged novel of sacrifice, trauma, resilience and survival, as witnessed by three generations of women. Whereas her previous works focused on Russian Jewry, this book explores Jewish life in Latvia and the American diaspora. Although it is a work of fiction, it's deeply rooted in Sanders' own family history and in her efforts to retrace the lost stories of relatives and historical events. With its emotional whirlwind of trauma and survival, *Daughters of the Occupation* is a story that will stay with readers long after they've closed the book.

Sanders is a Canadian journalist and writer of historical fiction, this being her fourth book. Her upcoming novel, *The Night Sparrow*, is to be released later this year on Harper Paperbacks.

This special event is open to members of the B'nai Sholom community and friends. Multiple copies of *Daughters of the Occupation* can be found in the local library system and at the synagogue. See weekly e-mail for link.

Pulitzer Prize-Winning Author Jonathan Eig Wednesday, April 2, at 7:30 PM (via Zoom)

In a very special event, B'nai Sholom is hosting Jonathan Eig, author of the 2024 Pulitzer Prize-winning *King: A Life*, which *The New York Times* hailed as the definitive biography of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Per the Pulitzer committee, it is "a revelatory portrait of Dr. King that draws on new sources to enrich our understanding of each stage of the civil rights leader's life, exploring his strengths and weaknesses, including the self-questioning and depression that accompanied his determination."

Eig's previous book, *Ali: A Life*, won a 2018 PEN America Literary Award, and he served as consulting producer for the Ken Burns-directed PBS series "Muhammad Ali." Eig, a former senior writer for *The Wall Street Journal*, has written several other biographies and works of non-fiction. Eig also appears on a weekly podcast with his Rabbi discussing the current parsha.

And Upcoming in our Zoom with the Author Series:

David Bezmozgis: *The Betrayers*, a *New York Times* Editors Choice – Date TBD

Spotlight on New Members: Melissa and Jeremy Lyon

One of a series of articles from the Membership Team to introduce those who have recently joined B'nai Sholom. This month we welcome Melissa and Jeremy Lyon and their two children, Ronen and Annabelle.

Mimi grew up in Memphis, Tenn., and Jeremy grew up in Houston, Texas, where they met. They moved to New York in 2015 for Mimi to attend graduate school and have loved living in the Northeast. The Lyons have two children: Ronen, who is 6 years old, and Annabelle, who is 2 years old. Ronen is in first grade at Lynnwood Elementary and loves dinosaurs, Pokémon, skiing, rough-housing and spending time with his family. Annabelle loves gymnastics, cats, arts and crafts and playing doctor.

Mimi and Jeremy moved to Albany in 2022 when Mimi started as an assistant professor of public policy at UAlbany. Jeremy works in the tech industry – at a software company called

Uniphore – and gets to work remotely from their home in Guilderland. In their free time, Mimi and Jeremy both like to run. Mimi also is learning to ski and loves to read fiction, bake and play Mah Jong. Jeremy loves to play guitar and garden when it's nice outside.

The couple found B'nai Sholom because they both grew up in the Reform tradition and were looking for a place where they sang the same songs they remember. They also know a few fellow congregants through UAlbany. Since neither one is from here, they are hoping that joining B'nai Sholom will help them get to know more people in Albany who share Reform Jewish values, especially love of learning, joy and an appreciation of chutzpah.



Won't You Join Us for B'nai Sholom's Progressive Dinner?

Please mark your calendars!

Please join us for B'nai Sholom's Biannual Progressive Dinner on Saturday, March 15, 2025, sponsored by the Member Events Team. These dinners have been great successes in the past, and we're certain that this one will be no different.

The evening will begin with appetizers at B'nai Sholom at 6 PM. Participants will then go to a host's home for dinner at 7, then to another home for dessert at 8:30. It will be a night for adult conversation and companionship, so no kids, please.

Our hosts are all set! Be sure to RSVP via Evite (going out in early February)!

Sign up to bring an appetizer for eight (if you're not hosting) by contacting Bettina at bfstoller@gmail.com.
We need your help to make this the enjoyable event it has been in the past.

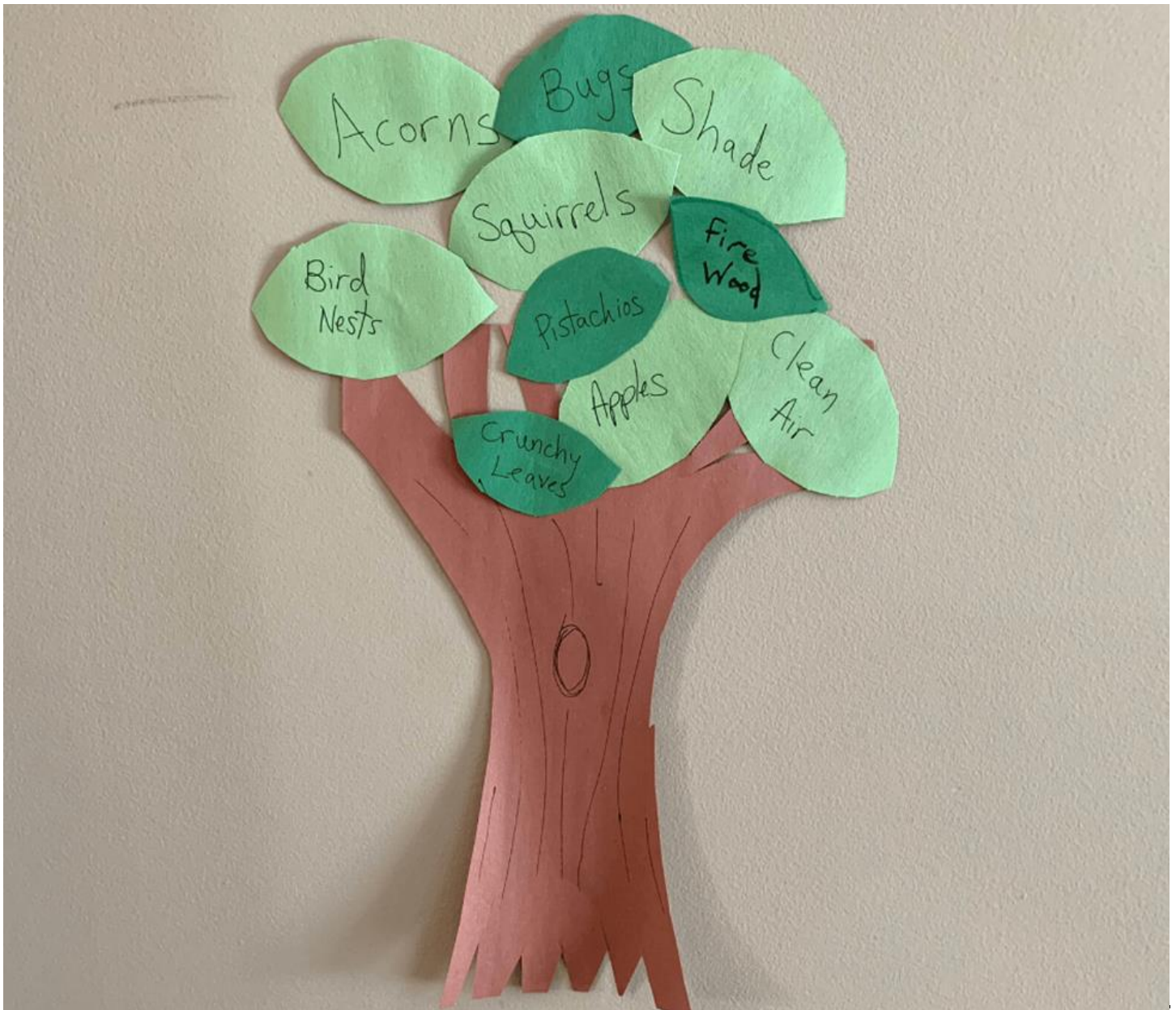
Something for Kids...

Tu BiShvat Thankfulness Tree

Tu BiShvat is a holiday celebrating everything that trees give to us. It coincides with the blooming of the almond trees in Israel. Here's a fun Tu BiShvat activity for kids:

Hang a blank tree trunk on a wall and every day for a week, come up with reasons we are grateful to trees. For example: They produce food for us like fruit and nuts. They are habitats for all kinds of animals. They help keep the air clean, and their roots prevent erosion. They also provide us with all sorts of materials when they're cut down.

(From: www.everydayjewishmom.com)



Mazal tov!

... to Hayden Schwartz and Alison Nickford on their December 31, 2024, wedding.

Thank You!

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

... to the following congregants who recently hosted an oneg Shabbat or kiddush lunch: Hayden Schwartz, In gratitude for celebrating our wedding on Shabbat Chanukah with B'nai Sholom; Laura Kaplan; Lew Sperber; Maegan Knauf.

Our Recent Kibbutzniks

Lewis Sperber In celebration of my chanting my Torah parsha, 63 years later.

The Congregation Notes with Thanks These Contributions:

General Fund

In Memory of **Alfred Waxman** by Linda Finkle

In Memory of **Leo Cabelly** by Robin Seguire

In Memory of **Avraham Kohen** by Amy and Yossi Koren-Roth

Jeffrey and Teresa Weisbrot

Free Food Fridge

Jamie Kammer

Adult Education

In Appreciation of **Barney Horowitz and David Rudinger** by Lewis Sperber

Annual Fundraising Appeal

Lewis Sperber; David and Libby Liebschutz; Ruth Burkowsky; Gary Hoffmann and Melissa Putterman Hoffmann

In Memory of **Marjorie & Carl Granitski and Eleanor & Stanley Rosenbaum** by Kathy and Jeff Rosenbaum

In Memory of **Herb Swift** by Leo and Martha Levy

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

In **Honor of and Gratitude for Rabbi Weisbrot** by Lewis Sperber

Endowment Fund

Jeffrey and Teresa Weisbrot

YK Break Fast

Doug Goldman and Malinka Gutierrez

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

The following Yahrzeits will be observed in January:

2/7

Ida Shapiro Jaffe*; Irving Schwartz; Sylvia Schwartz; 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 Roynce; Ethel Strohl; Lillian Dinkin; Tirza Freeman; Bertye Balin; Morris B. Saxe

2/14

Sarah Koblenz Pock*; Eleanor Newman Blum; Morris Cohen; Sherryl Pflanz; Helen Rehr; Rose Goldberg; Ida Goldstein; Irving Watnick

2/21

Benjamin L. Dubb; Barbara Sternstein; Paul Goldstein; Irma Bruce; Frederic Neuburger; Joyce Epstein*; Augusta Lichtenfels*; Leah Altmayer; Pearl Ronay; Sophie Scholl Small; Merle Schaffer Sperber*; George Raderman

2/28

Arlan Walker*; Muriel Rosenthal; Joyce Yaffe; Ruth Warshaw*; Samuel Strohl; Lena Semelisky*; Morris Wagner*; Frances K. Singer*; Ida Roth*; Samuel Joseph Zuckerman; Feige Marion Brody

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

March

February 12

April

March 12