

B'nai Sholom Reform Congregation

420 WHITEHALL RD., ALBANY, NY 12208
E-mail: office@bnaisholomalbany.org
May 2026

Phone: 518-482-5283
Visit us at <https://www.bnaisholomalbany.org>
Iyyar/Sivan 5786

B'nai Sholom Reform Congregation is a Brit Olam Congregation in covenant with the world because we seek the world we want for all, not the world as it is. We embrace our sacred responsibility to care for the Earth and its inhabitants, a Jewish tradition of stewardship and partnership in the ongoing work of Creation.

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, May 1 Saturday, May 2	SHABBAT SERVICE W/ B'YACHAD FAMILIES EXTENDED STUDY OF THE TANACH (HYBRID)	7:00 PM 10:00 AM
Friday, May 8 Saturday, May 9	TOT SHABBAT KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE TORAH STUDY (ZOOM)	5:30 PM 7:00 PM 10:00 AM
Friday, May 15 Saturday, May 16	COMMUNITY SHABBAT SERVICE (OFFSITE) TORAH STUDY (ZOOM)	6:00 PM 10:00 AM
Friday, May 22 Saturday, May 23	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE TORAH STUDY (ZOOM)	7:30 PM 10:00 AM
Friday, May 29 Saturday, May 30	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE TORAH STUDY (ZOOM)	7:00 PM 10:00 AM
Friday, June 5 Saturday, June 6	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE EXTENDED STUDY OF THE TANACH (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...

In this period between Pesach (Passover) and Shavuot, we are waiting. Waiting to be guided through the wilderness to the Promised Land. Waiting at the foot of Mount Sinai for Revelation. Waiting for the wheat harvest to ripen in time to offer the first fruits.

But that doesn't mean we have to spend that time twiddling our thumbs (or worse, building a golden calf!). On the eve of Shavuot, there is a tradition of staying up all night studying so we can prepare ourselves to hear the Ten Commandments... and so we don't accidentally oversleep and miss them.

There is also a tradition that stretches out the learning over this whole forty-nine day period, and which requires less caffeine. Many Jews study Pirkei Avot ("Verses/Sayings of the Fathers"), a tractate of the Mishna that doles out mostly concise teachings from our sages. It is a convenient book to study at this time because its six chapters easily fit into a study schedule on the six Shabbats between Passover and Shavuot. The content of the text is also considered appropriate as a method of studying *mussar*, a practice of cultivating specific ethics or character traits called *middot*.

One traditional program of *mussar* study at this time focuses on these seven traits, one per week: *chesed* (loving-kindness); *g'vurah* (bravery/fortitude); *tiferet* (beauty/harmony); *netzach* (endurance); *hod* (gratitude/humility); *yesod* (foundation/bonding); *malchut* (sovereignty). In a separate approach, the Mussar Institute¹ created an "Omer journey" based on one specific verse from Pirkei Avot that outlines seven characteristics of a wise person:

...A wise person does not speak before one who is greater in wisdom, And does not break into a fellow's speech; And is not hasty to answer; Asks what is relevant, and answers to the point; And speaks of the first [point] first, and of the last [point] last; And concerning that which they have not heard, says: I have not heard; And acknowledges the truth... (Pirkei Avot 5:7)²

Whatever method you may use of studying *mussar* – or learning something different, or just engaging in some self-reflection – the goal is the same. We prepare ourselves each year to better hear and accept the wisdom of Torah, to live by its principles and to build a stronger, kinder and more cohesive community.

So, please join us at Shavuot services on Thursday, May 21, stay for a little while after (not all night) for some exciting teachings from your fellow congregants, and however you may have prepared personally for the evening, just bring your best self!

L'shalom,

Rabbi Danielle Weisbrot

¹ <https://www.mussarinstitute.org/omer-2026/>

² Translation adapted from Sefaria.org

From Our President...

On Thursday, June 25, the 54th Annual Meeting of the B'nai Sholom Reform Congregation will take place. That sounds formal, as if it should start with a shofar blast. We'll be drawn to 420 Whitehall Road (or the Zoom link) by ***sheer excitement*** and maybe a pre-meeting nosh - eager at the prospect of coming together and governing ... ourselves. Okay, "sheer excitement" may be an overstatement, but we come because we need to be counted and because we count. Gathering in order to be counted is a familiar responsibility in our tradition. And once our census is taken, the activities of hearing reports and voting on issues like the budget and our future leadership are at the core of the rights and responsibilities of being a congregational citizen. Did you know that if we are not in sufficient numbers in person and on Zoom, the good news is that we could go home early; the unfortunate news is twofold: we would need to come back until enough of us were present to do our work, and those of us who thought we were finishing our leadership terms would not be done just yet. We would need to remain in our roles until the meeting and vote-counting take place. This is good incentive to watch for the notice of the meeting to arrive and to put the event on our calendars.

The Annual Meeting marks the end of a cycle and sets us on course to navigate the next year. While we meet, our focus turns back and forth between the past and what is to come. We hear reports of what has happened since our 53rd Annual Meeting, and then look toward the future, where we vote on proposals of future projects. We vote on new leadership that will join our Board of Trustees. And we thank those who are concluding their leadership role on the Board. And then we go home.

I have always enjoyed the excitement of the vote on leadership and the act of celebrating the contributions of those whose Board work is concluding. During the past two years I have developed an even broader appreciation of just what we are thanking people for when they agree to come onto the Board or finish their Board terms. This year we will acknowledge the work of, and give mighty thanks to, Maxine Goldberg, Lois Gordon, Laura Keller and Ann Lowenfels. ***Todah rabah*** all around - to those who are leaving, those just coming into leadership roles, and to you - the congregation for your active participation in making B'nai Sholom work.

L'shalom,

Melissa Putterman Hoffmann

Here for You: The Caring Community

The Caring Community is here to support you through life's ups or downs — in times of joy as well as times of illness or sorrow. We have had a great response from volunteers eager to cook, drive you to appointments, run errands, participate in a shiva minyan or just visit. So please call on us if there is anything you need for any reason and give our volunteers the opportunity to perform a mitzvah!

“With A Little Help From My Friends”

Here’s something that will cost you time and some physical labor, will bring you camaraderie and perhaps some laughs along the way, and we promise you, the joy of knowing you have performed an act of *Tikkun Olam*.

Are you available for four or five hours to grocery shop (using provided gift cards), sort the foodstuffs, clean out three refrigerators in Albany and fill those three with nutritious fresh food? Are you available to shop for three hours and bring the items to Academy Park on the third Friday of a month at around 6 PM?

If you answered “yes” or “maybe” to either of the above questions, then consider contacting Valerie Tabak or Becky Marvin and we can find an experienced shopper/refrigerator filler or shopper/deliverer for you to work with.

You know, it is quite possible that you can make a new friend or share some much-needed time with a fellow congregant who is already in your life, while you feed our neighbors in Albany.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Social Action/Social Justice Committee

Your Mom Says, “Clean Out Your Closets!”

May 12 - 17 Spring Clothing Drive

We will accept clothing for all seasons. Drop off your clothing from Tuesday, May 12 through Friday, May 15 when the synagogue office is open (PLEASE DO NOT LEAVE BAGS OF CLOTHING OUTSIDE THE DOOR). Sort and label by gender and age: Men, Women, Any Adult, Kids etc. There will also be a live, assisted drop-off on Sunday, May 17, from noon until 2 PM.

What Can I Bake for You? Cookies? Brownies?

by Becky Marvin

Now that I have your attention, my real question is, "*What matters to you?*" Is it...

- ...Climate change?
- ...Immigrant rights?
- ...Voting rights?
- ...Affordable housing?
- ...Something else?

Well, there is a place to go to find others who are just as concerned. And, in fact, you are needed there to represent B'nai Sholom! I'm talking about the Religious Action Center, also known as RAC. RAC-NY is the social action and social justice advocacy arm of the Reform Jewish Movement in New York State.

Barry Pendergrass has been doing a wonderful job keeping B'nai Sholom connected with RAC-NY. But, he cannot continue to be the only one who attends meetings and represents the congregation while keeping all of us informed and educated.

YOU could be THE ONE to help make a difference! You do not need to be a member of the Social Action/Social Justice Committee to step up. RAC-NY meetings are held once or twice a month (depending on your area of focus) and are on Zoom. If you are interested in learning more about how you can get involved, please reach out to Barry Pendergrass, Valerie Tabak or Becky Marvin.

Remember...When You Help, All of Us Benefit!

Have You Ever Swept a River?

If the answer is "no," then it's time to join other B'nai Sholom congregants as we combine forces with the Capital Region Interfaith Creation Care Coalition for a litter cleanup in the Corning Preserve in Albany as part of RIVERSWEEP! We'll be working from 11 AM until 2 PM on **Sunday, May 3**, and we'll meet at the playground off Quay Street. Come for the whole time or just for an hour. Kids welcome! It's usually a nice day on the Hudson, so grab your work gloves and a "grabber" if you have one.

Contact Barry Pendergrass for more information bpenderg37@gmail.com

Save the Date!!! Time to Show Our Pride!!! Sunday, June 14

It's Flag Day! Join us as we wave not only the red, white and blue but also our rainbow flags in the **Capital Pride Parade and Festival**. Contact Becky Marvin (beckymarvin4574@gmail.com) to join in showing our pride as a welcoming congregation!

AI and Scams: How to Stay Safe and Fight Back **Sunday, May 31, 10 AM at the Synagogue** (In-person and via Zoom)

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is supercharging scams, elevating them to a whole new and even scarier level. As digital scams become more sophisticated, can you even trust your own eyes and ears?

Now more than ever, we need to ratchet up our security game to safeguard our personal information and money.

Come to B'nai Sholom **Sunday, May 31 – 10 AM bagels/juice/coffee, 10:30 AM program** – to learn how to stay safe from the newest fraud and scams that are targeting all of us. Our own **Sean O'Connor** will arm us with the latest fraud trends to watch out for and provide tips and resources to protect ourselves and our families.

Sean is the supervisor of a team in ITS dedicated to supporting the NYS Department of Health, encompassing software development, installation, upgrades and troubleshooting. Sean also applies his knowledge to his role as website administrator for B'nai Sholom.

This program is being offered just to B'nai Sholom congregants. Watch the weekly e-announcements for Zoom link. Contact Ben Marvin bamarvin4574@gmail.com for more information.

Rosh Hashanah Luncheon Hosts Needed

Would you be willing to open your home for a potluck luncheon after Rosh Hashanah services on Friday, September 11, 2026? We are looking for hosts for large or small groups of congregants. If this idea appeals to you, please contact Joan Savitt jnsavitt@yahoo.com, Lene Hausgaard or Jamie Miller for more information. It's not too hard, and you can do it!

Don't Miss Out!!! ***Spring Into Auction! For Family Promise***

Get your bids ready for some wonderful baskets, jewelry, food and drink as well as other fabulous items. **Preview week begins Sunday, May 24, and the bidding kicks off May 31.** For the Auction link, go to <https://www.familypromisecr.org/> beginning May 24.



LONGEVITY SHABBAT & POTLUCK DINNER



Our Chai-Plus members received invitations to this May 22 event in April. The Member Events Team reminds you to RSVP to Deb Nozik (whose contact info is in the invitation) and via SignUpGenius by May 4; please be sure to contact Deb and not the Office Manager.

While you're contributing to the meal and bringing your own beverages and place settings, we still need to know whether you plan to come and what you'll bring, to ensure adequate food and seating. Gifts will be given out at the dinner, instead of at the service, and we may have a group activity at the dinner as well.

We look forward to seeing as many of our long-term members at this special evening as possible, and – of course – all other congregants who wish to attend.

Calling All Chocolate Lovers! ***What's Your Favorite Chocolate Go-To?***

Love chocolate? Now is the time to share your sweet tooth!

B'nai Sholom will sponsor a basket of chocolate goodies for the Spring Online Auction to raise funds for Family Promise of the Capital Region. B'nai Sholom is a support congregation for this wonderful non-profit that supports families facing homelessness by offering shelter, case management and other services.

We are looking for both familiar and favorite items as well as gourmet items...from Hershey bars to fancy bonbons; chocolate-flavored coffee to chocolate liqueur, beer or wine. Please donate your favorite item to our basket to make it extra special. Chocolate-themed items (mugs, candles, tea towels, etc.) are also welcome along with gift cards to candy stores, bakeries and ice cream shops. Use your imagination to find items that will brighten up the collection. Just keep in mind that we will assemble the basket in early May and the auction will be held the first week of June.

To donate an item, please contact Becky Marvin or Valerie Tabak.

For Kids and Families...

Shavuot

Shavuot recalls the story of the Israelites receiving the Torah at Mount Sinai. The Ten Commandments are read in synagogues, just as they were in the desert on Mount Sinai over 3,300 years ago. During Shavuot, many people eat dairy foods like ice cream. This is a reminder of the sweetness of the Torah. One family activity that's always enjoyable is an ice cream sundae party.

Name: _____

SHAVUOT

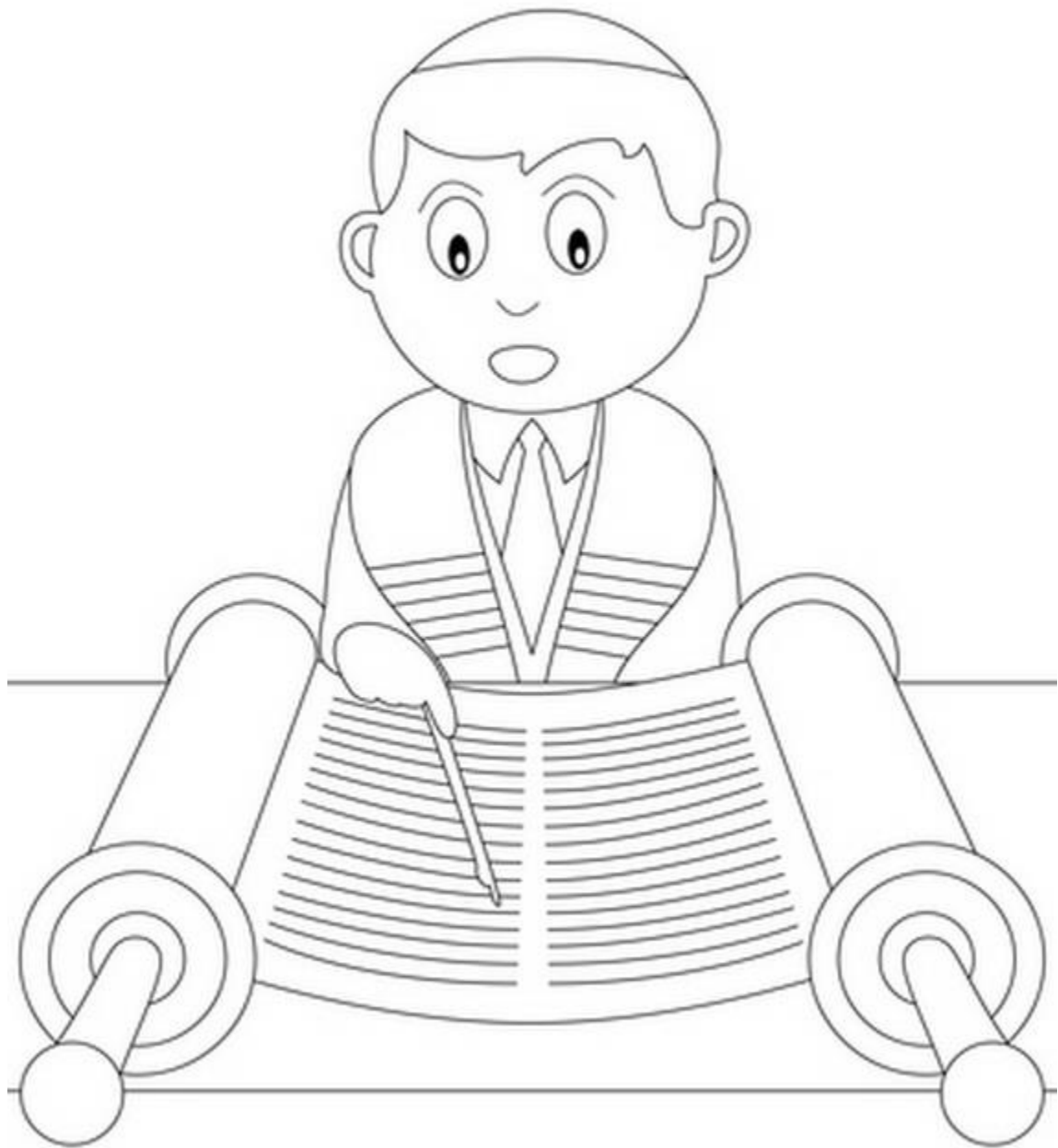
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SHAVUOT
HOLIDAY

TORAH
ICECREAM

DAIRY

HARVEST



Thank You!

...to the fantastic Bulletin Brigade who folded and stuffed the March Bulletin: Lew Sperber; Ken Tannen; Martha Rozett; Anita Stein, Mari Vosburgh; Mark Reeder Rema Goldstein.

...to the following congregants who recently hosted an Oneg Shabbat or kiddush lunch: Ian Duckor; Jude Sagor – In in honor of the B'nai Sholom Congregation.

Mazal Tov!

...to Lois Gordon on her new grandson, Jack Robert Gordon, born to Steven and Amanda Gordon!

...to Stacey Wager on her new grandson, Elliot Isaac Cotler, born to Becca and Max Cotler!

The Congregation Notes with Thanks These Contributions:

General Fund

In memory of **Judith Klein** by Susan Radosh and Steven Klein

In memory of **Sidney Devore and Albert Lowenfels** by Jack and Barbara Devore

In memory of **Annette MacKay Tannen** by Ken Tannen

In memory of **Judy Reeder and Caleb Reeder Sr.** by Mark and Cheryl Reeder

In memory of **David Ray** by Ann Shapiro and Barry Pendergrass

In memory of **Albert Lowenfels and David Ray** by Melissa Browne and Mary Warrener

In memory of **Dorothy Lazaroff and Frances Dobris** by Jack and Barbara Devore

In honor of **Bruce Goldstein's 80th Birthday!** By Lorraine Van Akkeren

Mishloach Manot

Susan Radosh and Steven Klein

Free Food Fridges

Laurie Shanks

In memory of **Adele Blumenthal, Edward Blumenthal and Philip Zatlin** by Dayle Zatlin and Joel Blumenthal

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

The congregation mourns the recent passing of

Albert Lowenfels,
Father of Ann Lowenfels and father-in-law of Steve Redler

David Ray,
Husband of Mimi Bruce

William Herbert,
Husband of Judith Lee

May their memories forever be for a blessing.

The following Yahrtzeits will be observed in May:

5/1

Manuel Aronson*; Joseph Ottenheimer; Anne Smuckler Paktor; Betty Altschuler Gottlieb; Selma Koota; Eleanor Zaremsky; Sidney Devore; William Lacov; Moses Khazam; Bernard Earl Shanks; Lena Wolf*; Sophie Goldstein*; Gertrude Sperber*

5/8

Lieselotte Weiner; Cecelia Zimmelman*; Ron Royme; Daisy Belasen; Fay Levinn; George Rudinger; Philip Zatlín; Murray Talanker; Hedy Zimra Suraski

5/15

Carla Oblas; Louis Samuel Harris; Anna Liff*; Samuel Bach*; Moses Khazam; Gordan Goldstein; Mel Lee; Claire Roth

5/22

Dorothy Lazoroff*; Minnie Velk*; Hanna Aron; Glory Swartz; Alan Berke*; Herbert Horowitz; Louis Rosenblatt*; Hyman Tress; Sol Goldstein*; Edgar Altmayer; Helaine K. Plaut; Renee Stoller; Harry Weiss; Meyer Tabak; Ida Domfort*; Dorothy Raderman; Jack Raderman; Elaine H. Neuburger; George Singer*; Sam Rauch

6/5

Rabbi Bernard Bloom; Frances F. Lazoroff Dobris*; Rose Rogers Singer*; Hyman W. Zima*

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

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

June

May 13

July

June 10