

B'nai Sholom Reform Congregation

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

Phone: 518-482-5283
Visit us at <https://www.bnaisholomalbany.org>
Av/Elul 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, July 31	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE	7:00 PM
Saturday, August 1	EXTENDED STUDY OF THE TANACH (HYBRID)	10:00 AM
Friday, August 7	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE	7:00 PM
Saturday, August 8	TORAH STUDY (ZOOM)	10:00 AM
Friday, August 14	TOT SHABBAT	5:30 PM
	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE	7:00 PM
Saturday, August 15	TORAH STUDY (ZOOM)	10:00 AM
Friday, August 21	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE	7:00 PM
Saturday, August 22	TORAH STUDY (ZOOM)	10:00 AM
Friday, August 28	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE (ZOOM)	7:00 PM
Saturday, August 29	TORAH STUDY (ZOOM)	9:30 AM
	SHABBAT MORNING SERVICE	10:30 AM
Friday, September 4	TOT SHABBAT	5:30 PM
	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE	7:00 PM
Saturday, September 5	EXTENDED STUDY OF THE TANACH (HYBRID)	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...

Anyone who has participated in our weekly Torah study or monthly Tanach study sessions is probably familiar with my position on Hebrew prepositions: that there are not enough of them. And that makes our sacred texts beautifully, teasingly ambiguous. Something as simple as the letter *lamed* can leave us wondering whether a psalm was written *to* David, *for* David, or even *by* David. But every once in a while, I think maybe English needs some prepositional clarity as well – especially around ideas of time.

We strive to be “on time.” For some of us, that means arriving just at the minute a class begins. For others, “on time” means showing up at least 5-10 minutes early, leaving a cushion for unexpected delays and not wanting to cause one yourself. And for those who operate on “Jewish Standard Time” or similar cultural variants, it can mean getting somewhere less than 10 minutes late... give or take. (If you’ve ever read *The Phantom Tollbooth* by Norton Juster, feel free to add his humorous commentary on wasting and killing time here as well.) But to me at least, the word “on” implies being somehow outside of time, as if we’re trying to balance on a ball. We are always working around it, hoping we won’t let it slip from under our feet or roll right past us.

Judaism encourages us instead to live “in time.” Yes, this is the source of ambiguity I mentioned earlier. We can easily read “in time” as a synonym for “on time.” I got there before the deadline – just in time – mission accomplished! But I understand it more literally than that. We are supposed to live not just by a schedule, which is important, but truly be *inside* of time, immersed in the moment or the season. When the Second Temple was destroyed and rabbinic Judaism took hold, we replaced physical sacrifices with prayers, no longer making pilgrimages to Jerusalem with bushels of barley or goats and turtledoves, but carving out holy “space” in sanctified time. Heschel, in *The Sabbath*, calls Shabbat “a palace in time which we build.” It’s up to us to designate its boundaries and then dwell within it.

Even though we are still more than a month away from Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, preparations have already started. Some tasks need to be completed “on time.” There is silver to polish, onegs and lunches and break-fast meals to arrange, honors to assign, and volunteers to recruit. AND... we should also make sure to live *in* this time. The month of Elul, starting August 13, is our window in which to ready ourselves for the Days of Awe. In addition to all of the logistics of planning hearty dinners or checking travel arrangements, we should make sure to live within the pre-holiday moment – reflecting on the year gone by, thinking about how we spent our time, how we want to experience it going forward, and remembering to be truly present along the way. If we accomplish that, we can honestly say we were prepared *in time* for the holidays.

L’shalom,
Rabbi Weisbrot

From Our President...

Building Connections

Greetings to all! In July, our new Board of Trustees had its first meeting. Although many of us have been serving on the board for one or more years already, many of us are in new roles, and the board itself has five new members. This turnover is by design – intended by the founders of B’nai Sholom to ensure that the board does not become isolated from its members and that it remains representative.

Turnover is good in many ways, but it can have some challenges as well. Managing projects, for example, can be more efficient when a team has worked together closely for a long time. Institutional knowledge can be lost when there is a large or sudden change or (as with COVID) when there is a long hiatus. Sometimes, new gaps become obvious – something that someone had just always done isn’t being done anymore, and if it still needs doing, the members of the new team have to work to figure out how to do it.

The good news is that goodwill and ingenuity can overcome a lot of these temporary obstacles. Better yet, new people bring new energy and experience and vision to their roles, and this can shine a light on things that hadn’t been getting done before that might need doing.

B’nai Sholom itself has undergone a few major changes in the last few years. We’ve welcomed Rabbi Weisbrot, introduced hybrid options to our services and meetings, hired new office staff, introduced security protocols and embarked on an upgrade to our contact management and billing systems. During that time, some volunteers have also changed over. Some have bowed out of long-time roles, such as oneg coordinator, while others have stepped up to fill new ones, like web administrator. One thing that has not changed is our ethos: this has always been the kind of place where people step up to help each other.

My first-year goal as president is going to be to learn the ropes that tie this place together, notice where some may be fraying and continue my predecessors’ work to strengthen them. I hope that as the year goes by, we will all have more understanding of the ways we intersect, who we can call on when we need help, and how to avoid getting burned out by being “the only one” who does a thing that we value. I hope to hear from you!

L’shalom,

Liz Davis

Bye-bye Birdie, Hello Bluesky!



B'nai Sholom is now on Bluesky, adding another platform to our social media outreach!

Bluesky is one of the most popular alternatives to what was formerly known as Twitter, which the congregation left following that platform's change to X. Bluesky is similar to Twitter/X but without the toxicity. Bluesky looks and works a lot like Twitter/X. There's a reason why: Twitter co-founder and CEO Jack Dorsey backed the company (though he has since left the board). Bluesky offers a friendlier environment where people and organizations are free to post without being slammed by trolls.

To find us, go to bsky.app, click on "Explore the app" and search for "Bnai Sholom" (with no apostrophe). If you're already on Bluesky, our handle is bnaisholomalbany.bsky.social. Be sure to follow us and encourage others to do so as well!

Religious School Registration is Open for 2026-27 School Year

Jewish learning and community are more important than ever. And more fun, too! B'Yachad offers children and their families a quality Jewish education, with updated materials, hands-on projects and activities, engaging programs and vibrant family holiday celebrations.

To register your child(ren), go to www.byachad.org/registration-forms.

Got questions? Check the flyer in this issue, or contact the B'nai Sholom office.

B'Yachad is the place to be, so don't delay!

20s and 30s Group Bagel Brunch

Beginning in August, the 20s and 30s Group will be hosting a monthly bagel brunch. Our first brunch will be held Sunday, August 2, at 10 AM at the synagogue. \$10 per person will help cover the cost of food and drinks.

Bagel brunches will be held on the first Sunday of each month. If you can't make it this month, be sure to save our upcoming dates: Sept. 6 and Oct. 4.

To RSVP, please reach out to Hailey Hanoufa (haillepski@gmail.com) or use the link in your weekly email. We hope to see you there!

Shop and Fill (“Singing in the Rain” Edition)

The June *Shop and Fill* for three Free Food Fridges was all about dodging the heavy rainfall; with that, we were somewhat successful. Companion and able-bodied shopper/mathematician Anita, calculator app in hand, and I went through the aisles of the Hannaford at Colvin and Central avenues with precision and were greeted by a cashier who was totally unintimidated by our exceptionally large order. Our packer was receptive to our assistance and semi-micromanaging, and we were on our way to B’nai Sholom to sort and portion the food.

Packaging was made even more efficient due to the generosity of the store manager who granted my wish for the donation of about 15 or so small plastic containers, into which we put portions of berries, broccoli and tomatoes. After a conversation with the manager about what we would be doing with all the groceries we always purchase at his store, he summoned the produce manager, Carl, who agreed to order an entire case of said containers for our needs. Guess who called me and apologized for the delay? Yes, and we will be the recipients of these for our future sort and fills.

The thin plastic produce bags that the manager of the Delmar Hannaford provided to us more than a year ago have been vital for packaging hard fruits and vegetables as we seek to ensure that the food we purchase with your generous donations is kept as clean and fresh as possible. The refrigerators do not always pass the “white glove test,” and although we clean them if they require it, ensuring that the end recipients receive food that is free of contaminants is important to us.

Are we happy to be the consumers of plastic containers and bags? No, but to that point, we reuse every bag in which the bulk bags of produce are packaged and have tried many iterations to use the least amount of plastic. If you have any suggestions as to how we can portion fresh fruits and vegetables ensuring they stay as clean and fresh as possible, please let Becky and me know.

As always, we were greeted by grateful end recipients of the fresh food, and despite a few deluges we felt the same satisfaction that we always feel when we finish the *Shop and Fill* day. Bittersweet that our neighbors are in need, and happy that we can help some of them. That alone provides sunshine.

--Valerie Tabak



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!

Are You a Victim of a (Veggie) Crime?

Are your neighbors leaving piles of zucchini on your porch in the dark of night? Did you plant too many cucumbers? Fear not! You can share your unwanted bounty by finding a Free Food Fridge. These brightly painted fridges are open for donations 24/7.

Here are the current locations in the Capital Region:

Albany

RADIX Center, 153 Grand St.
In Our Own Voices, 245 Lark St.
Love Albany Center, 8 Kate St.

Troy

Troy People's Health Services, 3319 6th Ave.
YESFOLK, 1467 5th Ave.
Create Community Studios, 621 River St.
Troy Area United Ministries, 372 2nd St.

Schenectady

Schenectady Community Action Program (SCAP), 913 Albany St.
Fehr Ave. Farm, 49 Fehr Ave.
Rotterdam Community Center, 75 Curry Rd.

Even if you didn't plant a vegetable garden or aren't the victim of stealthy vegetable crimes, you can help B'nai Sholom feed our hungry neighbors by donating to our Fresh Food for Families fund. These funds are used to purchase Hannaford and Price Chopper gift cards from our Fundraising Committee. Congregants volunteer to shop and stock. Contact Valerie Tabak or Becky Marvin if you want to shop or stock.

Let's Gather as a Movement at the URJ Biennial 2026!

The Union for Reform Judaism (URJ) is once again hosting a fully in-person Biennial — the largest gathering of Reform Jews and a powerful opportunity to connect, learn and lead together.

The Biennial brings together lay leaders, clergy, professionals and emerging leaders from across North America for meaningful learning, inspiration and community-building. Whether you are seeking fresh ideas, deeper connections or renewed energy for your leadership, Biennial is a space for you!

This year's Biennial will be in Philadelphia, PA, from December 10-13, 2026. Learn more and register at [URJ.org/BIENNIAL26](https://urj.org/biennial26).

We hope to have a delegation from B'nai Sholom attend the Biennial and qualify for a small congregation discount of \$250. We may be able to travel on a bus with our friends at Beth Emeth.

Please contact David Liebschutz, Finance VP, dliebschutz@gmail.com if you have any questions or are interested in attending.

Adult Ed Programs - Fall 2026

(Watch for Announcement of Dates and Times)

- "RELATIONSHIPS IN OUR SACRED TEXTS" – a three-session class taught by Rabbi Weisbrot using the Torah and Talmud to explore parent/child, marriage/family, and possibly teacher/student relationships. (In person)
- "THE SONG OF LIFE" – a presentation by Mimica Tzena Hyman on the incredible story of how all 275 Jews living on the Greek island of Zakynthos, including her father and his family, were protected from the Nazis by their neighbors during the Second World War and consequently all survived. (In person)
- "AMERICAN JEWS IN THE CIVIL WAR" – a talk by Richard Kreitner, author of the groundbreaking and highly praised new book, *"Fear No Pharaoh: American Jews, the Civil War and the Fight to End Slavery,"* addressing how Jews engaged with debates and moral questions of that tumultuous period in American history. (Zoom only).
- "ROCK 'N' ROLL TRIBE: THE JEWS OF EARLY ROCK AND ROLL" – a Synagogue Scholar talk by Phil Teumim including a multimedia presentation covering selected songwriters, performers, record producers, DJs, impresarios and venues of that era and a few personal experiences. (In person)

Rosh Hashanah Luncheon Invites Coming Soon

All congregants and their families are invited to attend a Rosh Hashanah potluck luncheon after services on Saturday, September 12. Look for your invitation to a Rosh Hashanah luncheon arriving in early August.

Our Kitchen Asks: If You Bring It, Take It Home

The newly appointed Kitchen Clean-up Committee needs your help. When you bring food and drink to B'nai Sholom for an oneg or an event, you may be tempted to leave the leftovers in the Oneg fridge for others to enjoy.

Please don't! That fridge is now so full that it has become unusable. And nothing says "Mess" like a half-full bottle of soda lying on its side with a loose cap!

So, if you bring it, please take it home. Always!

Thank you to all, from the Committee

Landscape Team Update 2025-26

Your Landscape Team works hard to neaten and beautify B'nai Sholom. Volunteer landscape workers last year were Ellie and Randy Davis, Maxine and Eric Goldberg, Lois Gordon, Bob Negris, Kathleen O'Conner, Barry Pendergrass, Mari Vosburgh, Cheryl and Mark Reeder, Gwen Spicer, Ken Tannen and Martie Teumim (team lead).

Last year, Barry Pendergrass and Ken Tannen pruned and weeded the area on the northwest corner of the building to make room for our new HVAC system.

In the fall, we contracted with Advantage Tree to cut down and remove a dead tree on the lawn. They also kindly scooped up some of our dead branches and placed them on the pile in the woods free of charge.

The cracks in the parking lot had sprouted weeds. We killed them with vinegar, a safe alternative to toxic herbicides, and removed them by hand.

Pulling weeds out of the gardens, especially the moss by the sidewalk, was done with precision by LandTeam volunteers.

Bob Negris is our 'master edger' who keeps the gardens looking neat and uses his truck for landscaping projects when needed.

Take a look at our mighty white oak on the Whitehall Road side of the temple. We planted it a few years ago to provide environmental benefits such as food for birds, insects and mammals and for carbon sequestration.



Some failing potted plants were removed from the sanctuary to be nursed back to health. New ones will be added that better fit the sanctuary's light and changing temperatures.

We rarely have scheduled meetings. Instead, we set a Work Day when the weather looks good and enough volunteers can come. Ongoing work includes weeding, edging and some pruning. Dates and times of upcoming landscape Work Days will be announced in the weekly email. We can always use more helpers, even for one time or a few hours – no experience necessary!

For Kids and Families...

Rosh Hashanah

Check out the website Jewish.MomsAndCrafters.com. It has some creative craft ideas for Rosh Hashanah, including free, downloadable holiday cards.

Rosh Hashanah

P A A A G R O G E A L E U A L
P H A P P A E S T A Y S T T V
M O E R P R A F O H S Y E I F
I S N Y Y A Y L R P G L H C A
T P O H P A N E O M Y G E I P
Z S Y N A G O G U E P R U A P
V L A A Y G W H A Y P P N E L
O R M A S T T M A L S Y E Y E
T R R P O M E G R A N A T E S
H S H A P P Y N E W Y E A R Y
G Y O Y H N O A Y O Y A A E P
G P A S P H T L V G P L V A A
Y E O H O O G A Y S H E O H Y
E W T A H L M C H A L L A H E
C N U S O A G A P M Y E N O H

APPLES
POMEGRANATES

HONEY
SYNAGOGUE

CHALLAH
MITZVOT

SHOFAR
HAPPYNEWYEAR



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Thank You!

...to the fantastic Bulletin Brigade who folded and stuffed the July Bulletin: Ken Tannen; Joan and Jim Savitt; Martie Teumim; Mari Vosburgh; Rema Goldstein; Dee Wind; Anita Stein.

...to the following congregants who recently hosted an Oneg Shabbat or kiddush lunch: Ann Shapiro and Barry Pendergrass, Martie and Phil Teumim.

The Congregation Notes with Thanks These Contributions:

General Fund

In memory of **Sonny Brenner** by Mark and Cheryl Reeder

In honor of **Caring Community** for the support shown by congregants on the death of my sister, Ruth Blair, by Carol and Martin Gnacik

Free Food Fridges

In memory of **Dave Ray** by Susan Aron and Joseph DeFronzo

Rabbi Discretionary Fund

In appreciation of **Rabbi Weisbrot** for her guidance and care on the death of my sister, Ruth Blair, by Carol and Martin Gnacik

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

The congregation mourns the recent passing of

Ruth Blair, Sister of Carol Gnacik and
Sister-in-law of Martin Gnacik

May her memory forever be for a blessing.

The following Yahrtzeits will be observed in August:

8/7

Helen Pollack Adler; Samuel C. Warshaw*; Alex M. Rabineau*; Rose Gottesman Pollack; Thomas Duerr; Rex Vail; Peter Pflanz; Jacob Stein; Alice Tausig Rozett

8/14

Diane Burkowsky; Lorraine Tharus; Milton Swartz; Rose Putterman*; Isidore Dinkin; Eva Gordon; Annie Frances Via Grayson*; Esther Binewitch*; Walter L. Grayson, Sr.*; Elaine S. Cashman

8/21

Samuel Walker*; Arthur Jacob Sharp; Ed Pacuk; Gerald Hazard; Lore Hauptman; Miriam Falb; Gina Kleinfeld

8/28

Robert Stoller; Frieda Hoffmann*; Cecily Redler Jacobs; Paul Edward Krochmal; Angelina Dipaola*; Ann Radosh; Oscar Rozett; Abraham Sperber*; Albert Einstein*

9/4

Sydell Morris; Franklyn Cole*; Nathan Green; Marvin J. Finkelstein*; Arthur T. Singer*; Louis Greenstein*; Belle Schwartz; Martin Klein; Minna Katzin*

**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.

NOTE: Recently, there has been a wave of unsolicited emails asking you to rate or recommend someone for a position. Please watch out for these and do not click on the links; they are also a scam!

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.

<u>Period Covered</u>	<u>Deadline</u>
September	August 12
October	September 9