

B'nai Sholom Reform Congregation

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E-mail: office@bnaisholomalbany.org
July 2024

Phone: 518-482-5283
Visit us at <https://www.bnaisholomalbany.org>
Sivan/Tamuz 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, July 5	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE	7:00 PM
Saturday, July 6	EXTENDED STUDY OF THE PROPHETS (HYBRID)	10:00 AM
Friday, July 12	TOT SHABBAT	5:30 PM
	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE	7:00 PM
Saturday, July 13	TORAH STUDY	10:00 AM
Friday, July 19	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE W/ BEN MARVIN	7:00 PM
Saturday, July 20	TORAH STUDY	10:00 AM
Friday, July 26	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE (ZOOM ONLY)	7:00 PM
Saturday, July 27	TORAH STUDY	9:30 AM
	TORAH SERVICE	10:30 AM
Friday, August 2	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE	7:00 PM
Saturday, August 3	EXTENDED STUDY OF THE PROPHETS (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...

Have you ever visited another synagogue, turned to the Shema/V'ahavta, thought "I know this one!" and prepared to chant along, only to realize that the tune they use is just slightly different than the one you know? "How could this be?" you wonder. "It has all the same little marks around the words that I've seen in our prayerbooks at B'nai Sholom!"

Those marks are called cantillation marks, trop or *ta'amim* and their purpose is to standardize the pronunciation and reading of our sacred texts. The Masoretes, groups of Jewish scribes, created the system before/during the 10th Century CE to clarify (or dictate) the vowels, punctuation and chanting rhythm of the Tanach. However, we're not always so good at agreeing on a single authoritative text or interpretation in our tradition. Debate and disagreement are baked in – and often results in a beautiful cacophony!

A good example of this is the Ten Commandments (*Aseret HaDibrot*). As I mentioned on Shavuot – when those verses are typically chanted – there are two separate sets of cantillation marks assigned to those words: the lower trop (*ta'am tachton*) and upper trop (*ta'am elyon*), one created by scholars in the land of Israel and the other based on the Babylonian tradition. In addition to these types of distinctions, there are also separate tunes assigned to the prophets (Haftarah portions), the Scroll of Esther (Purim megillah), Lamentations, Song of Songs, Ruth, Ecclesiastes and the Song of the Sea, as well as special High Holy Day Torah trop – same marks, different sounds. Beyond this, there are also different chanting traditions that largely depend on your community (e.g. Ashkenazi or Sephardi/Mizrachi Jews) or your denomination (e.g. Reform or Conservative).

It may sound a bit overwhelming, but it's incredible to have such a wonderfully diverse tradition. It leaves plenty of room for each community to have a standard practice and also for individuals to buck the trend based on their own identity or that of their teacher. Plus, knowing that trop is a varied tradition can take some of the pressure off getting the tune "right"!

If you have experience chanting Torah, or if you can read Hebrew and have always wanted to give it a try, feel free to reach out to me. We'd love to hear some new voices chanting at Shabbat services or even on the High Holy Days! (Don't worry – recordings and practice sessions will be provided as needed.) This is how we keep our tradition(s) alive and thriving.

L'shalom,

Rabbi Weisbrot

From Our President...

At B'nai Sholom Reform Congregation, we elect a new president every other year – usually on even years. So now it is time for my term to end and for a new president's term to begin. Each president serves during a different historical era, and we each encounter different unanticipated situations. During my tenure, B'nai adjusted to a new Rabbi, a new office manager and a new war in the Middle East. Against this backdrop, we also worked to achieve a few goals that I had identified at the beginning of my term. I would like to take a few minutes now to reflect briefly on each of these goals.

- **Goal 1. Continue offering quality programs.** During the past two years, we offered Shabbat services every Friday night, a Tot Shabbat service every month, Yizkor services four times a year and High Holiday programming every fall. We even added a monthly Torah Service to our schedule. We continued to support a variety of educational programs including weekly Torah study sessions, interesting courses, diverse speakers, meaningful movies, lively book discussions and collaborative religious schools for both children (B'Yachad) and youth (Mifgash). We provided many social justice opportunities to promote legislative advocacy, environmental activism, voting rights, literacy, food security and access to health care. Clearly, there was no shortage of high-quality programs at B'nai Sholom!

- **Goal 2. Increase our appeal to existing and new members.** To strengthen our sense of community, volunteers organized Shabbat dinner programs, Rosh Hashanah lunches, wine and cheese receptions, coffeehouses, summer barbecues and many other special events. Our Caring Community continued to support congregants in need. Our Inclusivity Collaborative conducted a building-wide assessment and a member survey, and our congregation voted to modify B'nai's bylaws so more members would be eligible to sit on the Board of Trustees. To increase our visual appeal, we overhauled B'nai's website, beautified our landscape, completed a massive clutter cleanup campaign and raised money to replace our carpet and floor tiles. We gained eight new member units this year (19 people) and eight new member units last year (14 people). It's worth noting that we also lost about 15 member units during the same timeframe -- mostly due to attrition.

- **Goal 3. Increase the efficiency of our operations.** A few years ago, B'nai switched from having a full-time Rabbi to having a part-time Rabbi. Last year, we reduced our office manager's weekly hours from 28 to 24, and we increased Mayan Hands' rental space from two rooms to three. Taken altogether, these changes have enabled us to balance our budgets *and* maintain our equitable dues structure.

To simplify our committee structure, we sorted 27 existing committees into seven new ones. This restructuring process made it easier for the Board of Trustees to network with congregational leaders. It also made it easier for volunteers to communicate with each other and develop similar policies and procedures. At B'Yachad, we simplified the Board structure, reduced the number of partner synagogues, clarified roles and responsibilities, passed new by-laws and established a new fee structure for unaffiliated families.

As far as technology is concerned, we made a lot of progress in our efforts to digitize the office environment. The Rabbi, office manager, president and committee chairs all have OneDrive accounts and can store important documents online. We have a new PC in the main office and a new online calendar for scheduling events. Behind the scenes, we managed to resolve a number of licensing issues so the office computers and copier are now operating much more smoothly.

We finished installing and learning to use our new video conferencing equipment, and we still offer hybrid services each week. We also continue to hold many of our planning meetings on Zoom—which is more convenient for young families, travelers, snowbirds and others. Additional operational improvements include online signups for volunteering and attending events, new safety film on our windows and doors, enhanced outdoor lighting and upgraded door hardware.

Some additional improvements will be implemented next year. Pending congregational approval, the Rabbi's hours will increase slightly over the course of her five-year contract and her part-time schedule will become more regular. Each month, she will be out on the 3rd Friday and the weekdays leading up to the 3rd Friday. We are going to conduct a member survey of congregational interests, which will make it easier for committees to identify and recruit interested volunteers. We are also planning some activities geared to 20- and 30-year-olds. Using grant money, we will install a new access control system with video surveillance and intrusion detection.

Overall, serving as president has been a challenging but gratifying experience for me. Thank you all for giving me the opportunity to leave my mark, and I hope I have inspired others to leave theirs. I also want to thank everyone who supported me throughout my term, especially my husband, Steve Redler.

L'shalom,

Ann Lowenfels

Note from the Publisher and Editors:

A Different Look to the Monthly Bulletin: We Want Your Thoughts

The monthly Bulletin has looked pretty much the same for quite a number of years – so perhaps it's time for a freshening. You may have noticed that this and the June Bulletin look a little different – printed on standard letter paper instead of heavier ledger paper, a slightly smaller font size and stapled. It's an experiment in what a redesign of the publication could look like.

And we would love to know your thoughts on it. Do you like this version? Dislike it? Is the font size more eye-friendly for you? Is there a different font that you would prefer? Stay with a stapled binding, corner staple, or stick with folded as before?

We truly look forward to receiving your ideas and recommendations. Please email them to Ben Marvin at bamarvin4574@gmail.com.

Many thanks! Rabbi Weisbrot, Ben Marvin and Emily Pickering

Arts and Crafts at the Welcome Center

Coloring book pages of Middle Eastern vases brought to life with crayons.

Bubble wands made from wire and colored string.

Stenciled squares of bright plastic hung along a string clothesline on the wall.

B'nai Sholom members generously donated art supplies to the West Hill Refugee Welcome Center to support this important program. With summer vacation approaching, the arts and crafts program provides a popular activity for children living in the Center's immigrant neighborhood. Families from different countries reside in houses lining the block leading up to the Center at 104 Ontario Street. The Center bought or rehabilitated most of the homes for new immigrants settling in Abany. The Welcome Center also provides ethnic cooking lessons, English classes and other activities to integrate families into Abany's community.

Members interested in volunteering may contact the Center, which will extend a warm welcome to B'nai Sholom.

And thanks to all who donated art supplies for the children!

Want to Bring the Auction Back?

Some of us may remember the Goods and Services Auction and the fun led by our able auctioneers. The FUNdraising Committee is considering organizing another auction, but we need some input from you to ensure it's a success.

For this to be a profitable venture, we need you to consider if you could donate a service, item or an event of sufficient value to make it worthwhile.

In the past, some of the things donated included an offer to draw up a will, landscaping a garden, offering a second home for a weekend retreat, painting a room, leading a kayak trip, being a writing coach, cooking a dinner, offering tickets to an arts event or museum memberships, and more.

One year, someone offered not to sing if someone else bid on it! Singing lessons, anyone?

Use your imagination and think about your abilities and resources. If you feel you'd like to contribute to this effort, please contact Margie Pass: margiepass@aol.com.

Joy Between the Rain Showers

A merry band of congregants woke up on Sunday, June 9, looked out the window and groaned. But before having to make a tough decision, the downpour stopped and we all headed to Washington Park to join in celebrating and supporting the LGBTQ+ community. The Capital Pride Parade was larger than ever, and B'nai Sholom had the privilege of leading off the "Yellow" section comprised of religious organizations. We marched to cheers and received high-fives. As soon as we re-entered the park an hour later, the skies threatened us again. A special thank you to Melissa Putterman Hoffmann and Gary Hoffmann for arriving early to check us in and stake our spot.

Need Help with Transportation? Here's Some Info from the Caring Community.

Congregants who need transportation assistance may find help from both the Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA) or from our own Caring Community:

CDTA Star Program for Public Transportation

If you, a family member or a friend is unable to use public transportation due to a disability, you may apply to access door-to door-service (e.g. to B'nai Sholom) if within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile of a regular bus line and schedule. To start the process, call the CDTA at 518-482-2022 or provide your name and address on their website www.cdta.org, and CDTA will send an application. The individual completes Part A, and a physician completes Part B to establish eligibility.

The program is described at www.cdta.org/star-program. A Star Program Handbook and Booking Guide is also available online.

Caring Community

Caring Community volunteers may also be able drive a fellow congregant for errands and appointments. If you need help with transportation, or if you are interested in becoming part of our "on call" list of volunteer drivers, please contact Nancy Maurer at nancymaurer5@gmail.com.

"On three things does the world stand: On Torah, on worship and on deeds of lovingkindness." Pirkei Avot 1:2

Social Action/Social Justice Committee Expands Its Outreach

Did you know that when we first brainstormed how we could help with food insecurity in our community, we called the program/fundraising **Free Food for Families**? We stocked Little Free Food Pantries with the enormous amount of shelf-stable foodstuffs you donated during one of our food drives and delivered food to the Regional Food Bank. When you continue to place items in the boxes that are located near the entryway closest to the offices, that food and the personal care items continue to be shared on a regular basis.

Because we are always keeping our committee's eyes and ears open to what is happening in the community, we discovered the *Free Food Fridges*, and soon we became regular shoppers and stockers for this worthy organization.

Recently, one of our committee members educated us about the *Schenectady Street Soldiers*, an amazing group that distributes prepared meals and fresh grocery items, personal care supplies and clothing on Sundays.

We are pleased to announce that we will be assisting, on a semi-regular basis, this group by shopping for and delivering fresh food items for Sunday distribution.

B'nai Sholom community, it is because of your generosity that we can expand our outreach and assist more individuals in need. We thank you in advance for sharing your resources. Whether monetary donations, purchasing an extra Hannaford card in memory/honor of a loved one or special occasion, or by sharing some of the bounty you cull from your own vegetable garden with Free Food Fridges (Find A Fridge Free Food Fridge Albany), you are doing a *mitzvah*.

How fortunate we are to be surrounded by such a generous community!

SAVE THE DATE! Our 3rd Annual Summer Barbecue is Sunday, August 18

Mark your calendar now to join with congregants and friends of B'nai Sholom for our family barbecue on Sunday, August 18, at Bethlehem's Elm Avenue Park.

We'll supply grilled food – including vegetarian fare – and ask everyone to bring a side dish or dessert to share. This will be a fun opportunity for us all to enjoy each other's company, as well as good food, games, music, children's activities and more!



Spotlight on New Members: Dee and Frank Wind

Editor's Note: One of a series of articles from the Membership Team to introduce those who have recently joined B'nai Shalom. This month, we welcome Dee and Frank Wind.

Dee moved to the Capital Region from Long Island in 1966 after graduating from Boston University and marrying an Albanian. Frank was born in Brooklyn, raised in Queens, attended Queens College, the University of Kansas and Florida State University. He lived in Los Angeles, Denver and Houston before moving here in 2001.

Dee has been a professional storyteller since 1984. Frank is a retired geologist and micropaleontologist. When they met in 1999, Frank became interested in storytelling, and now they perform together as "Frank-Lee Speaking."

They love to travel, especially to Scotland. That's their "happy place."

The Winds originally joined B'nai Shalom in 2001, shortly after they were married, but never really became active in the community. They were members for about six years before moving to Castleton. They recently felt the need to belong to a temple community again. Over the years, they had kept in touch with some of the wonderful B'nai Shalom members and decided to rejoin.

Dee and Frank hope to become active and supportive members of the temple's thriving community. In addition to enjoying hiking and biking, Dee delights in socializing with friends and gets pleasure from reading and exploring spiritual practices. Frank's passions include photography, gardening, cooking and baking. They enjoy attending live theater and actively support the local theater community.



ZOOM WITH AUTHOR
Jessamyn Hope
Tuesday, September 23, 7:15 PM

B'nai Sholom will host via Zoom author Jessamyn Hope as she discusses her novel *Safekeeping*. This debut work is largely set in a secluded kibbutz in 1994, with a disparate cast of characters. Hope's novel, written from multiple perspectives, makes the reader feel a part of the tightknit and at times stifling community. In skillfully executed dramatic irony, Hope leaves the readers in a position of understanding far more about the residents than they do about each other. *The Boston Globe* called it "luminous, irreverent and ambitious," while the *Toronto Globe and Mail* characterized it as "a page turner that satisfies all the cravings of escapist reading while meeting the real world head-on."

Hope's short stories have been widely published, received two Pushcart Prize honorable mentions and anthologized in *Best Canadian Essays* and *The New Spice Box: Contemporary Jewish Writing*. She grew up in Montreal, has long lived in New York City and is spending the year in Tel Aviv.

More information will follow, but multiple copies of her books are available in both the synagogue library and that of the local library system. Contact Barney Horowitz at horowitz28@verizon.net for more information.

Would you be interested in hosting a
Rosh Hashanah Luncheon?

Thursday, October 3, 2024



We provide invitations, stamps, & assistance coordinating this POTLUCK event. Please contact Katelyn Ouellette DiPaola for more details:

K.Ouellette89@gmail.com

B'nai Sholom Rosh Hashanah Luncheons are a longstanding tradition that has been enjoyed by our members and guests for years. It is a wonderful way to visit with other congregants, reconnect with old friends and make new connections.

Calling All Musicians for the High Holidays

As the shofar sounds, awakening us to worship, let's add some joyful and contemplative noise of our own. We are looking for choir singers and for musicians to accompany the B'nai Sholom Choir during the High Holidays. Guitar chords would suffice, as would other instrumentation. As someone once said, "the more, the merrier." If you are interested, please contact Joe DeFronzo.

Mazal tov!

...to Gail Golderman, who received a "Cooking is Love Made Visible" award from the South End Children's Café in Albany.

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: Laura Kaplan – In memory of her grandparents; Joel Bloom; Gary Hoffmann and Melissa Putterman Hoffmann – In memory of Jerry Hoffmann; Ann Lowenfels; Bill and Monica Sharp; and our Shavuot potluck contributors: Libby and David Liebschutz, Mark Waldman, Deb Adler, Anne Hausgaard, Mimi Bruce and David Ray, Melissa Putterman Hoffmann and Gary Hoffmann, Bruce and Edith Goldstein.

The following Yahrzeits will be observed in July:

7/5

Minerva Knee; Rubin Fiegelson*; Ilene Goldman; Cindy Berkowitz*; Lynn Horowitz; Saul Ikler; Janet Samuels Greenbaum*; Julius Golderman

7/12

Samuel Englander*; Buehl Ray; Celia Kaufman*; Robert Harris; Lillian Shanks; Richard T. Crawford; Eleanor Finkelstein

7/19

Esther Epstein*; Harold Roth*; Seymour Youngelman*; Morris Bosin; Sonny Brenner; Paul Tafler*; Naftali Propp; John Rozett

7/26

Leslie Adler; Rosemary Kindlon Roe; Abraham Silverbush; Gerda Frankel; Jean Norris Rudman; Etta Talanker; Rose Lazoroff*; Ellen Rudinger; S. Gerald Duckor; Dror Koren; Soloman Dachman

8/2

Adele Pastor; Bernice Smith; Fred Aron; Benjamin Binewitch*; Anita Domfort; Raymond Novkov, Jr; Helen Pollack Adler; Alex M. Rabineau*; Samuel C. Warshaw*; Hyman Moskowitz

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

The Congregation Notes with Thanks These Contributions:

General Fund

In Memory of **Ida Domfort** by Howard Domfort

In Memory of **Virginia Hazard, Mother of Brenda Hazard** and **David Goldfarb, Father of Rochelle Goldfarb** by Melissa Putterman Hoffmann and Gary Hoffmann

In Memory of **Ilene Goldman** by Lori Stuart

In Memory of **Philip Zatlin, Charise Joy Pfeffer, Feige Marion Brody, David Goldfarb, Virginia Hazard and Gail P. Ryan-Tannen** by Becky and Ben Marvin

In Honor of **Professor Bill Simons** by Barney Horowitz

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

In Appreciation of **Becky and Ben Marvin** by Mari Vosburgh

Legacy Endowment Fund

In Honor of **Rabbi Weisbrot** by Mimi Bruce and David Ray

In Memory of **Earl Marvin** by Becky and Ben Marvin

In Memory of **Helaine K. Plaut** by Becky and Ben Marvin

Richard and Barbara Nussbaum

Lewis Sperber

Barney Horowitz

Vera Propp Literacy Fund

In Memory of Rebecca Miller Shultz by Becky and Ben Marvin

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

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: 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

August
September

Deadline

July 10
August 14