

B'nai Sholom Reform Congregation

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MARCH 2020

Phone: 518-482-5283

visit us at <http://www.bnaisholomalbany.org>

ADAR/NISSAN 5780

JOIN US FOR PRAYER, MEDITATION, CELEBRATION AND STUDY

Friday, March 6	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE	6:00 PM
Saturday, March 7	EXTENDED STUDY	9:30 AM
Monday, March 9	EREV PURIM: The Talmud of the future will say <i>"There never were days in Albany like Purim at B'nai Sholom when Cashman was the rabbi."</i>	7:00 PM
Friday, March 13	TOT SHABBAT SERVICE	5:30 PM
	EREV SHABBAT SERVICE	8:00 PM
Saturday, March 14	TORAH STUDY: <i>Ki Tissa'</i>	9:30 AM
Friday, March 20	EREV SHABBAT SERVICE	8:00 PM
Saturday, March 21	TORAH STUDY: <i>Va-yakhel</i>	9:30 AM
Friday, March 27	FOUNDERS' DAY The annual gather of Capital District Reform Synagogues will take place this year at Congregation Beth Emeth at 7:30 PM. There will be no service at B'nai Sholom	
Saturday, March 28	TORAH STUDY: <i>Va-yikra'</i>	9:30 AM
Friday, April 3	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE	6:00 PM
Saturday, April 4	EXTENDED STUDY	9:30 AM

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.

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.

From Our Rabbi...

The Book of Esther, in the form we have had it for 1800 years, is – to coin a phrase – “Fake News.” Kings of the Achaemenid Dynasty (yes, you have to know this for the test) were permitted to marry women only from seven royal families, and some Judean girl certainly didn’t fall into that cohort. Giving someone the right to execute an entire minority, even for a payoff – unlikely. These are just some of the factors that make it clear that our Megillah is a well-edited composite of several different stories: a political intrigue, a harem tale, a royal plot, flavored with Jewish paranoia. Furthermore, the book does not take place in the land of Israel; there is no mention of God, sacrifice, or overt religious practice. There’s more drunkenness and raunchiness squeezed into ten chapters than you can find anywhere else in the Bible. The reason for the book? It’s a vehicle to explain and endorse the late winter festival of Purim.

It was probably the last book to be admitted into the Hebrew Bible. (The canonization process takes place over several centuries. In the early 2nd century they were still arguing about Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes, and don’t even mention Esther, but by the 5th century Esther is in). They needed to get Esther in the biblical canon, because they loved Purim!

And we love Purim, too!

Erev Purim celebration – Monday evening, March 9

6 PM Potluck dinner
“In Search of Nutrition”
Reserve at

<http://www.luckypotluck.com/potluck/Purim3>

Followed by – at 7 PM sharp

Stripping away the layers of falsehood

When Queen Vashti abdicates, they appoint

The Search Committee

A Purim Midrash in a couple of scenes and songs

And the Megillah, too!

- All are invited to come in their most imaginative searcher, seeker, explorer, and/or finder garb to locate and recruit a new Queen.
- What queenly qualities will qualify someone to quickly acquiesce? Will we have a quartet of candidates? Will we again – maybe for the final time – quaff tequila during our quaint ritual?
- We shall not quell our joy, not be quiet in our revelry, nor get queasy from hamantaschen.
- This might be our quackiest and quirkiest Purim shpiel yet.

Social Action

RAISE YOUR VOICE

Social Justice has been my passion forever. No surprise that after moving to Albany in September of 2012, joining BSRC's Social Action Committee (SAC) was one of my first actions. Through SAC I came to learn about the Religious Action Center's (RAC) work and was heartened to learn about a network of social justice aware Reform Jews across the country. Even better, we have a state chapter, RAC NY, where I have been a lay member representing BSRC, which focuses on State specific issues. It has been so rewarding to be doing Jewishly aligned advocacy work. It not only is work that benefits the larger community in addressing systemic change through policy it also is good for my soul! When so much divides us as a country and even from others within the Capital District, participating in RAC NY advocacy brings me in contact with a community of like-minded people. I have enjoyed being a part of the BSRC team under Rabbi Cashman's leadership, especially during RAC NY's Advocacy Days.

This is an invitation for you to join us on Monday, March 16, 2020 for RAC NY Advocacy Day. Given our close proximity to the Capitol, it would be wonderful to expand our synagogue's representation! Please contact me, Gail Volk, at 518 439 4130 or gailvolk@aol.com and say, **"YES! This is important and I want to advocate!"**

The focus of our advocacy for 2020 is:

Protect Our Courts Campaign Information via Immigration Defense Project

A young man in the Bronx came to the U.S. at three years old from the Ivory Coast. As an adult, he had big plans for building a life with his wife, a U.S. citizen. Working as a barista, he had just applied to college and was in the process of applying for a green card. After appearing in court on a misdemeanor case with no prior criminal record, he was ambushed by a team of 8 to 10 ICE officers just outside a Bronx courthouse. Close to one hundred public defenders walked out of the courthouse in protest upon hearing news of his arrest.

Background:

Courthouses in New York and elsewhere have increasingly become places where immigrants appearing on unrelated matters have been taken into federal immigration custody by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

From 2016 to 2017, New York saw an unprecedented increase in ICE arrests during courthouse operations of approximately 1200 %. In 2018, ICE arrested nearly seventeen times the number of people at New York courthouses as in 2016. Advocates have also noted that ICE's courthouse actions have grown more brazen and aggressive, with reports of ICE using physical force against arrestees, surveilling people in courtrooms and hallways, and even eavesdropping on privileged attorney-client conversations.

(Continued on next page.)

In a statewide survey by the Immigrant Defense Project, more than **two-thirds of advocates** who work with survivors of violence said they have clients who have deferred seeking help from the courts due to fear of ICE.

The practice of courthouse arrests undermines the public safety for all New Yorkers, and as a result, the NY State Courts took a first step, allowing ICE officials into State courts only if they have a judicial warrant or order. The Protect our Court Act would codify and strengthen these protections, working towards a time when immigrant New Yorkers can access courts without fear of being arrested by ICE. The bill would:

- Make it unlawful for ICE to make a civil arrest while a person is going to, attending or leaving all state and local courts unless the officer presents a valid judicial warrant or court order. Most ICE arrests are for civil violation of federal immigration law.
- Protects a person from *civil arrest* not only inside of a courthouse, but also while they are going to or leaving the courthouse. This is an essential protection since ICE arrests are often conducted right outside the courthouse doors.
- Extends protection to *any* person who is a party or potential witness in a civil or criminal court proceeding, including family and household members.
- Empowers the New York Attorney General to pursue legal action on behalf of individuals arrested in violation of this law.
- Recognizes individuals have a right to pursue civil legal claims when they are arrested.



BE INSPIRED! MARK THESE DATES ON YOUR CALENDAR!

TAKE ACTION

Friday, April 24, is Social Action Shabbat. As the 50th anniversary of Earth Day approaches, B'nai Sholom has joined CRICCC (Capital Region Interfaith Creation Care Coalition) working to make a difference in the future of our planet. Come and learn about this and other Social Action programs.

DROP IT IN THE BUCKET FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN

There will be a bucket auction for great gifts, wine and food and lots of fun at the spring fundraiser for Family Promise at Glennpeter Jewelers. Join us for "Give Your Heart to a Homeless Family" on Thursday, April 30.

Social Action (continued)

THANK YOU and a tip of the measuring cup to all the wonderful bakers who provided a delectable, delightful and delicious denouement to the annual Empty Bowls. The event raises funds for programs to combat hunger through both advocacy and meal sites. It was also great to see so many congregants there, too.

Martha Rozett
Mari Vosburgh
Martie Teumim
Susan Radosh
Deb Nozik
Anita Stein

Bettina Stoller
Nancy Goody
Maxine Goldberg
Paula Philo
Cheryl Reeder
Gail Myers

Judy Fruiterman
Valerie Tabak
Laurie Shanks
Ann Shapiro
Sharona Wachs
...and apologies to anyone I missed.

Social Action: Fulfilling the Brit Olam

MITZVAH DAY IS APRIL 26TH!

**B'nai Sholom – Temple Israel – Ohav Shalom – Beth Emeth
Check-in and lunch start at 11:30 at Beth Emeth**

Register by April 19th by using this link:

<https://forms.gle/8Ld3FMZTcmHsFQg58>

Please refer to the flyer enclosed with this March bulletin for additional details and a list of projects.

WORLD ZIONIST CONGRESS ELECTION continues through March 11. Support Reform Judaism in Israel by voting at www.ZionistElection.org and voting for Slate 2 – Vote Reform or, use the enclosed paper ballot.

Mark Your Calendar!!!
NEW DAY & TIME

B'NAI SHOLOM
GOODS AND SERVICES AUCTION
Sunday, March 29, 2020
Doors open at 3 pm
Live auction starts at 4 pm

**WATCH YOUR WEEKLY ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR A SELECTION OF
ITEMS OFFERED THIS YEAR.**

We invite you to help make our auction a success by donating a good or service you offer or asking local businesses to do so. Letters to verify the auction for businesses and a tax deduction form on the reverse side are available in the small meeting room. Make copies as needed or email rgordon1@nycap.rr.com and we'll send them to you. Some previous offerings have included: home repair services, one-of-a-kind items, themed gift baskets, vacation offerings, day trip outings, memberships, baking for events or items with a Jewish cultural theme. Use your imagination!

Please leave your donations in the small meeting room by the coat closet any time the temple is open. Identify your items on the paper provided and be sure to attach it to your item. The deadline for getting your donations to us is **March 15**. The synagogue will be open from **10 am to noon** that day for drop off.

We ask that your donations be unused and in good condition.
Don't miss out on this fun event with lots of great entertainment
and a chance to support B'nai Sholom!

Admission: \$5 per person
Refreshments will be served.

Come early to browse the silent auction items on display!
We look forward to seeing you there.

Join Us for B'nai Sholom's Tot Passover Seder

All are invited to gather with B'nai Sholom congregants in the temple social hall at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 9, 2020 for a second night Passover seder specially geared to children ages four and under. We will tell the story, sing songs, ask and answer the Four Questions, and enjoy a traditional Passover meal in a simple, interactive way to engage the youngest members of our community.

Advance registration is required, and there will be a small charge to cover the cost of food and materials. More details and a registration form will be posted on the B'nai Sholom website and included in the April bulletin. If you are interested in attending (or helping!), please contact Libby Liebschutz at 518-466-7034 or libbyliebschutz@gmail.com.

(Note that, due to this special event on Thursday, April 9, there will be no Tot Shabbat on Friday, April 10.)

Safety and Security Committee

The newly formed Safety and Security Committee is up and running. Among other things, we are drafting a Synagogue Safety and Security Policy, reviewing safety upgrades to the building, and applying for Department of Homeland Security grant money. Anyone interested in joining, or with any questions or concerns, may contact co-chairs Eric Goldberg at (518) 334-6410 or Steve Klein at (518) 526-2651.

Where Would B'nai Sholom Be Without YOU? Where Will You Be on Friday, May 15th?



All volunteers (you know who you are) and your families are invited to a special dinner to celebrate the many people who make our synagogue thrive. You will be receiving an invitation by mail in April.

This is not a potluck dinner. Food, place settings, and beverages will be provided. All you must do is RSVP once you receive your invitation, since the social hall only holds 100 people.

What we are asking now is that you save the date – that's it. Mark your calendars, so that we may honor you for your service to our synagogue.

Hope to see you there!

B'nai Sholom's Member Events Committee

It's party time! Seeking helpers for Rabbi's Farewell Event.

It's not too late to get in on the action of helping send Rabbi Cashman off in style. Our Farewell Committee is hard at work on many aspects of the June 14, 2020 brunch in his honor, but we can use more hands. Available now but busy in May and June? Or the other way around? We've got all kinds of tasks for both now and later.

In particular, Nancy Maurer is looking for a decorating crew. Are you a creative type that can help her with design? Skilled at making stuff? Great at shopping, begging, borrowing materials? Willing to help set up the day of the party? Please contact Nancy at 518-439-0544 (home), 518-495-6030 (cell), or nmaur@albanylaw.edu.

For other volunteer opportunities, contact Libby Liebschutz at 518-466-7034 (cell) or libbyliebschutz@gmail.com

The **Nominating Committee** to select this year's candidates for open officer and board of trustees positions consists of:

Libby Liebschutz, chair; Deb Adler, Ellie Davis, Eric Goldberg, Steve Klein, Ben Marvin, and Julie Novkov. Anyone who wishes to propose a candidate should contact a member of the committee.

Editor's Note: This is the first of a series of personal expressions written by congregants and contributed by the Ritual Committee under the theme of "I Come to Services Because..."

I Come to Services Because...

By Anne Hausgaard

I come to services because it's nice to be with the group, talking to people, hearing their stories. My cousin said I should be a social worker. When I'm here I see people my age who have similar backgrounds to mine. I came here because I had a friend who belonged here. She told me stories about people who came here, and I thought I would like it here. I came and I brought my two young boys. My husband, Sonny, started to come because I thought it would be on his intellectual level. Lena started coming when Rabbi Cashman joined us.

I like to hear the Rabbi's sermons. Sonny and I used to talk about them in the car. Sonny came to Torah study with me and got so involved that he started to help run Torah study. We went to Israel with the congregation. I just enjoy coming here. Everybody's been very supportive, especially after Sonny died. I think I've belonged here for 40 years.

Rabbinic Search Update – Where We Are Now

The Rabbinic Search Committee's charge is to recruit and retain a new spiritual leader to succeed Rabbi Cashman, who is retiring in June 2020. The overall goal of the search process is to find the best match for our congregation. Last year, the committee recommended that the best strategy for B'nai Sholom would be to hire an interim rabbi in 2020 and a settled (permanent) rabbi in 2021. The Board of Trustees agreed and adopted that recommendation.

Since then, we received, reviewed and ranked resumes and personal statements from seven candidates for interim rabbi. Of those, we identified four as the most promising, conducted Skype interviews with them, then invited for in-person interviews the two whom we believed would most closely fill our needs during the interim period. Their visits in December and January included separate meetings with the search committee, the board, Rabbi Cashman, Christine Blackman, adult education and ritual committee members, past presidents and committee chairs.

Both rabbis clearly possessed very positive attributes. Unfortunately for B'nai Sholom, both withdrew their applications before we could extend any offers to them.

Consequently, we have requested the CCAR to change the status of our search from "resumes held back" to "receiving resumes." The next steps will be to go over resumes that we previously received along with any new ones and follow up with appropriate candidates. We have already scheduled a Skype interview with one promising candidate.

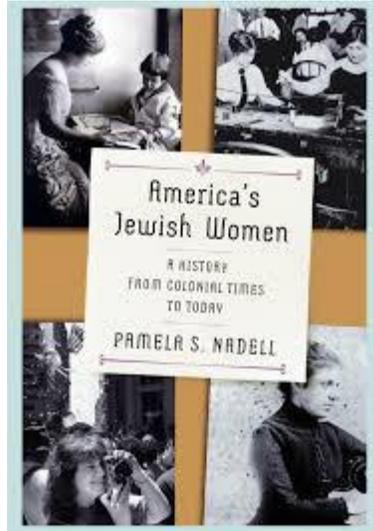
Our timeline calls for an interim rabbi to be on-board by this July. The committee is confident that this is still an achievable goal.

Meanwhile, the self-study process continues. Eighty-five congregants participated in the in-home group discussions, describing what they value most about B'nai Sholom, what they feel are the congregation's strengths and challenges, their vision for the future, what roles they feel a settled rabbi should play and what qualities he or she should have. Results will be summarized and shared with the search committee, the board and with congregants at the annual meeting in May. Results will also be used to inform the development of a short questionnaire, which will be circulated in the future to ensure all topics are addressed over time.

Lastly, thank you to all who attended February's special congregational meeting. Your interest, your questions and your support were appreciated greatly!

As always, you can stay up-to-date on the search through the monthly Bulletin, the B'nai Sholom website and the weekly email announcements. Any questions about hiring the interim rabbi or the self-study process should be directed to the committee co-chairs, David Liebschutz and Ann Lowenfels.

New in the Library



America's Jewish Women: A History from Colonial Times to Today
By Pamela S. Nadell
Published by W. W. Norton

The 2019 National Jewish Book Awards were announced last month. *America's Jewish Women* won the Everett Family Foundation Jewish Book of the Year Award.

See the whole list here: <https://www.jewishbookcouncil.org/pb-daily/2019-national-jewish-book-award-winners>

An Easy Way to Help B'nai Sholom and Save on Taxes

The Finance Committee would like to advise congregants who are over age 70 ½ that now is the perfect time to arrange for direct payments from their retirement accounts to B'nai Sholom to cover their 2020 regular and patron dues payments. This portion of their RMD (required minimum distribution) will not be subject to tax! Talk with your tax or financial adviser for details on whether and how you can take advantage of this benefit.

MAZEL TOV!

.....to Mark and Cheryl Reeder on the birth of their grandson, Theo David Newton, on February 11, 2020, to their daughter, Lucy and her husband, Doug Newton.

Thank You!

.....to the following who recently hosted an oneg Shabbat: Rabbi Cashman and Sharona Wachs, Sharon and Mark Sklar, David and Katelyn Ouellette DiPaola, the Ritual Committee, Lois Gordon, Maxine, Eric and Ethan Goldberg and Nancy Goody.

.....to the Bulletin Brigade who helped fold, insert and stuff envelopes to get the February Bulletin out: Steve Ableman, Joseph DeFronzo and Cheryl Reeder.

B'nai Sholom Legacy Society

Ensuring the Future
of B'nai Sholom ...



... Creating a Jewish Legacy Today!

THANK YOU

to the 43 Legacy Society members who have pledged or
made an after-life gift or current contribution to
BSRC's endowment.

It's not too late to join them!

Contact a member of the Legacy Committee for more
information: Mimi Bruce, Chair; Libby Liebschutz, Barry
Pendergrass, Dave Ray, Stuart Schwartz, and Howie Stoller

"As my ancestors planted for me, so do I plant for those who will come after me." -- Talmud Ta'anit 23

The following Yahrts will be observed in March:

3/6 Gertrude Fass; Samuel Caplan*; Harold Nozik; Mitchell Burkowsky; Harold Strassberg; Barry Brody; Edith Watnick; Alfred Cohen*; Elsie Meer; Adele C. Blumenthal

3/13 Evelyn Rosen; Albert Blakeslee*; Lazar Kleinfeld; Sylvia Lande; Izadore Pollack; Loretta Weinstein; Judith Klein; Louis Schaffer; Benjamin Steinhart; Julie Lawrence*; Donald A. Wexler*; Evelyn Turoff*

3/20 Penny Wheeler Hatch; George Kurak; Max Rosen; Doris Stephany; Dora Stein; Samuel Berman*; Richard Rosenthal

3/27 Helga Bessac; Samuel Adels*; Harry C. Katzin*; Lilyan Oblas*; Leonarda Defronzo; Sara Steinhart; Joseph Caplan*

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

THE CONGREGATION NOTES WITH THANKS THESE CONTRIBUTIONS

General Fund

In memory of **Barbara Sternstein** by Amy Sternstein.

In memory of **Helen Rehr** by Judy and Roy Fruiterman.

In honor of **the High Holy Days** by Hedy Lowenheim.

In memory of **Bernard Smith** by Arthur and Rita Alowitz.

In memory of **Morris Alowitz** by Arthur and Rita Alowitz.

In memory of **Sylvia A. Brownstein** by Arthur and Rita Alowitz.

IT'S SNOWING—ARE WE OPEN? Check the telephone message on the B'nai Sholom answering machine for up-to-date information about cancellations. We will also try to post cancellations on our website. Email blasts will go out for congregational events, and committee members will be notified. All this is predicated on having power.

RABBI: Donald P. Cashman

PRESIDENT: Barbara Devore

OFFICE MANAGER: Christine Blackman

BOOKKEEPER: Jean Dashnaw can be reached at bookbnaisholom@gmail.com

OFFICE HOURS: MON/WED/THURS/FRI 9:30 AM–3:30 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 the bulletin is sent out in a timely manner.

<u>Period Covered</u>	<u>Deadline</u>
April.....	March 11
May.....	April 8