

B'nai Sholom Reform Congregation

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MAY 2022

Phone: 518-482-5283
Visit us at <http://www.bnaisholomalbany.org>
NISSAN/SIVAN 5782

***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, May 6 | KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE | 7:00 PM |
| Saturday, May 7 | EXTENDED STUDY | 10:00 AM |
| Friday, May 13 | TOT SHABBAT SERVICE | 5:30 PM |
| Saturday, May 14 | KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE | 7:00 PM |
| | TORAH STUDY | 9:30 AM |
| | SATURDAY MORNING TORAH SERVICE | 10:30 AM |
| Friday, May 20 | KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE | 7:00 PM |
| Saturday, May 21 | TORAH STUDY | 10:00 AM |
| Friday, May 27 | KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE | 7:00 PM |
| Saturday, May 28 | TORAH STUDY | 10:00 AM |
| Friday, June 3 | KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE | 7:00 PM |
| Saturday, June 4 | EXTENDED STUDY | 10:00 AM |
| | YIZKOR & TIKKUN LEIL SHAVUOT | 7:30 PM |

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...

The Torah gives us lots of “mountaintop” moments, from Noah’s ark landing in the mountains of Ararat (Gen. 4:8), to Abraham preparing to sacrifice Isaac on a mountain (Gen. 22:2), to the moment of Revelation at Sinai – the literal pinnacle of our experience as a Jewish people. Mountaintops are impressive, not just because they provide a magnificent view, but because getting up to them takes effort, preparation and endurance. Noah could not have landed on a mountaintop without first building the ark and keeping it afloat for 40 days and 40 nights. Abraham and Isaac, along with their servants and donkeys, journeyed for three days to find the designated site, and then our patriarchs had to make the climb, carrying firewood, a knife and a flint.

At Mount Sinai, our preparation was of a different sort; we were told to cleanse ourselves, abstain from sex, and stand *back* from the mountain, rather than physically ascend. It was a period of spiritual preparation. And that tradition continues to this day. Each Torah service builds slowly – from the morning blessings, to the Shema and its blessings, to the Amidah, and then finally to the height of the Torah service itself – before we settle back down with our concluding blessings and songs. [At one point in time, Jews recited the 10 Commandments during daily prayer, though the practice was later discontinued.]

Similarly, during this period of counting the Omer – the intervening weeks between Passover and Shavuot – we prepare ourselves to be “present” at Mount Sinai once again. Some have the tradition of studying a chapter of Pirkei Avot (a tractate of Mishna known as the “Sayings/Ethics of our Ancestors”) each Shabbat. Others may use this time to study or cultivate *middot* (values or ethics) such as lovingkindness or inner strength. And as the holiday of Shavuot begins, we have the tradition of a Tikkun Leil – staying up all night (or as long as you can make it) to study Torah in preparation for the festival morning.

At B’nai Sholom, we will have many opportunities to dive into the Sinai experience. Along with our recent change to 7 p.m. Kabbalat Shabbat services on Fridays, we are also starting monthly Shabbat morning Torah services at 10:30 a.m.; the first one is coming up on **Saturday, May 14**. Also, for those who are interested in learning more about Jewish liturgy – and perhaps joining the pool of congregants who lay lead services in my absence – I’ll be leading a two-session class on **Thursday, June 16** and **Wednesday, June 22**. Please also stay tuned for details about our Tikkun Leil Shavuot the evening of **Saturday, June 4**, and feel free to reach out to me if you’d like to teach something that night!

Wishing us all a meaningful time of personal and collective growth as we continue our climb!

L’shalom,

Rabbi Danielle Weisbrot

From Our President...

This month's Bulletin arrives in your mailbox in that strange interlude between Passover, the festival of our freedom, and Shavuot, the time when we celebrate the awe-inspiring moment of receiving the Torah at Sinai and becoming the Jewish people. Traditionally, it is the time for counting the omer, the 49-day period commemorating the early grain harvest. Each day combines to form a bridge between freedom as simple liberation from slavery on the one hand and the assumption of our new status, responsibilities and identity on the other. Strictly observant Jews also experience this reflective period by refraining from holding large celebrations or parties and reciting the count daily.

In this tradition, the 33rd day, Lag BaOmer, stands as an exception, with a lifting of the restrictions and is a popular wedding day in some communities. As so often happens, this very old holiday takes on a strikingly modern cast through its association with the end of a dreadful plague that had struck Rabbi Akiva's students. Perhaps we will be fortunate enough this year in mid-May to see our own plague shifting into sharp decline, brightening the summer months ahead with the promise of travel and shared time together in the same space with far less anxiety.

I don't know about you, but all too often over the last several months, I've found my thoughts turning to the weary resignation expressed by the writer of Ecclesiastes. The wheel of time turns, but things do not change. We believe we've figured things out, but we regress. While the pessimistic author, whom Wikipedia informs me was writing sometime between 450-200 BCE, obviously wasn't thinking about COVID-19, the war and dreadful atrocities in Ukraine, the threat of climate change, or legislation and state policies actively seeking to cut back on hard-fought rights in the United States, the sentiment fits. Perhaps, though, our path from Passover to Shavuot can leave us in a more hopeful place both emotionally and spiritually. So, what did we learn in our journey to Sinai?

- We had to believe that things would get better. We relied on the Eternal to provide for us on a daily basis and to lead us through the desert to a new reality. At times, the people faced a choice to stay on this path or turn back, and sometimes this choice was a close call, but we stayed on the path of reaching toward the future.
- We had to do it together. Moses may have been the leader, but he recognized the importance of the community and refused the Eternal's offer to ditch the complaining, stubborn, resistant group who had left Egypt and start afresh. We did not disappoint him; we came together to forge a real community. Moses learned to delegate authority and to disperse command, and ultimately every person, both adult and child, stood before the Eternal at Sinai.
- We had to commit to do the work. Living in the desert was more than mere survival. Censuses were taken. Government and law were developed. Rituals were built. The sacred housing for the tablets was created.

(Continued on page 4.)

(Continued from page 3.)

- We had to reach a place of receptivity when we could envision ourselves and our destiny as so much more than a ragged tribe of wanderers. We had to make ourselves ready to embrace and commit to living up to a moral code so radical that it has survived to this day. We knew we would fail often on an individual level, but we were willing to identify ourselves with that set of aspirations.

Nothing new under the sun? No, on that day there was. The problems we face are not small, but ambition and even audacity are wired into our collective DNA as a people. Our tradition says that on that day at Sinai, we all stood together – everyone who was born Jewish, who would be born Jewish in the future, or would choose Judaism or feel themselves to be chosen by Judaism as their life's path. And so, in the midst of everything that is going on in the world, we will keep moving forward toward renewing our covenant of hope and life.

L'shalom,

Julie Novkov



...to Samantha Ley and Matt Zaremsky, on the birth of their daughters, Maya and Juno, born April 15.

...to Hugh Smith, who graduated summa cum laude from Case Western Reserve University in January with a Bachelor of Science in Engineering degree in materials science and engineering. Hugh will start a doctoral program in materials science and engineering at MIT this fall.

...to Candy Raderman, on the engagement of her daughter, Alissa Hatch, to Daniel Green of Albany.

...to Judy Lee and Bill Herbert, on the birth of their granddaughter, Annabel Lee-Herbert Fuchs, to Lisa Lee-Herbert and Dan Fuchs on March 13.

...Lois Gordon, on the birth of her granddaughter, Claire Sarah Gordon, to Steve and Amanda Gordon on March 25.

Our Recent Kibbutzniks

Lois Gordon – In honor of the birth of my granddaughter, Claire Sarah Gordon

B'nai Sholom's Caring Community

The Caring Community can call on congregants who are willing and able to mobilize quickly when events such as births, bereavement and accidents make their inevitable way into our lives.

If you or someone you know needs assistance, help and support when:

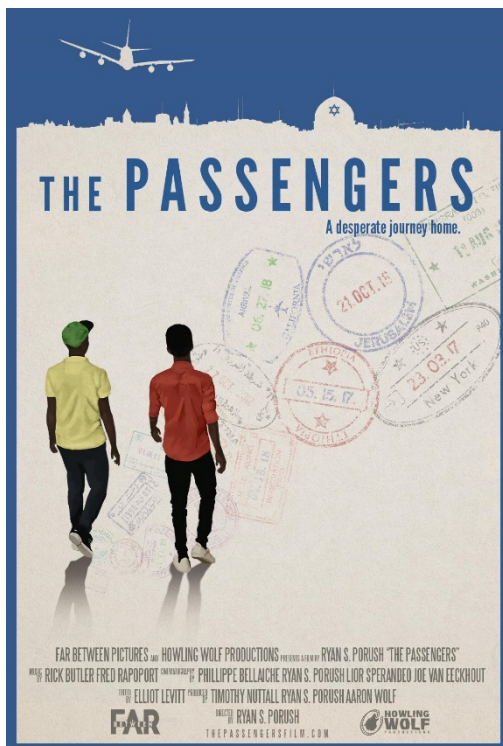
- ✓ someone is sick or confined
- ✓ a new baby arrives
- ✓ there's been a death in the family
- ✓ there's a tragedy, accident or trauma

please call the office manager and/or Rabbi Weisbrot – 518-482-5283 – to notify us of the situation so we can initiate our support services.

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

***** Special Event *****

Q&A With Filmmaker Ryan Porush Thursday, May 12, 7:30 PM (via Zoom)



Ryan Porush, who made the film *The Passengers*, will join us in a Q&A about the making of this award-winning documentary and the status of Ethiopian Jewish immigration to Israel.

Porush is a documentary filmmaker and writer based in Los Angeles. He has produced, filmed and edited documentaries and short films around the world, with an emphasis in telling longform, intimate character-driven stories that highlight communities in transition. Ryan's first feature film, *The Passengers*, won the Human Rights Jury Prize at the 2020 Atlanta Jewish Film Festival.

The Passengers tells the story of two young Ethiopian Jews, Demoz and Gazi, as they travel to America seeking advocates who will help pressure Israel into granting them citizenship. Along the way these unlikely spokesmen confront culture shock, homesickness and the frustrations of a grassroots campaign as they navigate the thorny politics surrounding Ethiopian politics and the Zionist ideal.

The film will be available for streaming May 8-12. There is no cost for this program, but please register for the film link and May 12 Zoom event by contacting the office.

Social Action/Social Justice

FIGHTING CLIMATE CHANGE – OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

RAC—NY



The Climate Covenant Campaign is a new, two- to three-year effort of the Religious Action Center of New York of the Reform Movement. A “retreat” for the Capital Region will be held on **Sunday, May 22**, from 10 AM – 2 PM at Congregation Beth Emeth. This is an opportunity to learn from leaders of the movement in the fight against global warming and how we can come together in our larger community to make a difference.

Register here: To register, and for more information and questions, contact Barry Pendergrass: bpenderg37@gmail.com. You can also register using [this link](#) in the online Bulletin.

TIKKUN OLAM OPPORTUNITY – RIVERSWEEP



Enjoy the outdoors while “repairing the world.” On **Saturday, May 7**, we will again participate in Riversweep. This year’s site is part of the Albany-Hudson Electric Trail. Sign up for an hour or more.

To sign up, and for additional information and questions, please contact Barry Pendergrass: bpenderg37@gmail.com. You can also sign up using [this link](#) in the online Bulletin.

IF IT’S SPRING, IT’S TIME TO CLEAN OUT YOUR CLOSET!



Once again, we are collecting **SPRING** and **SUMMER** clothing for donation to those in need in our region. We will collect **CLEAN, GENTLY USED** clothes and shoes.

Please **SORT TWICE: BY GENDER** (male/female/unisex)
and also

BY AGE (infant/child/teen/adult). **Be sure to label your bags.**

You may drop off your donations at the synagogue:

1. during the week of May 9 **WHEN THE BUILDING IS OPEN****;
2. Sunday, May 15, 11 AM to 1 PM.

****Please place bags neatly in the marked classroom (Room 6). Do not leave bags outside of the building. Thank you!**

Social Action/Social Justice (cont.)



Volunteer to make a difference

What is Family Promise?

Family Promise of the Capital Region (FPCR) is a chapter of a national organization with more than 180 affiliates across the country that for over 25 years has helped homeless families back on their feet, with an 80% success rate. FPCR is a network of faith communities providing a local response for homeless children and their families. B'nai Sholom is the only synagogue participating in this local interfaith initiative.

Who is served by Family Promise?

FPCR serves families who have lost their housing due to a variety of reasons including loss of job, reduction of working hours or rising rents. Existing social service agencies refer families to FPCR and continue to provide services as necessary. Families are screened to meet FPCR standards: no active drug/alcohol abuse or untreated mental illness. Adults continue to work or seek better employment; children continue to attend their home schools.

Why is this program needed?

When a family loses their housing suddenly, often the only option is to use shelters. However, shelters are usually segregated by gender. A single mother with a 14-year-old son and an 8-year-old son may be told that she and the younger son can go to the women's shelter but the 14-year-old will have to go to the men's shelter by himself. Family Promise keeps families together, sheltering at local faith congregation facilities until they find a permanent home.

How does B'nai Sholom participate?

B'nai Sholom is the support congregation to Delmar Presbyterian Church (DPC) during the weeks that DPC hosts the Family Promise families. Four times a year, B'nai Sholom volunteers work in teams of two, planning and preparing dinners for two nights; volunteers arrive at the church at 5 PM and stay until 9 PM when DPC volunteers arrive to spend the night. The number of Family Promise guests varies; dinners are generally planned for 6-10 adults. We share dinner with the guests, clean up and then are available to read to children, provide homework assistance or have a companionable conversation.

How do I sign-up?

Anita Stein is B'nai Sholom's coordinator. To volunteer, or if you have questions, please contact Anita at anitastein75@gmail.com.

We're Marching at Capital Pride -- SUNDAY, JUNE 12

Will you be marching behind the B'nai Sholom banner? Part of our covenant with the world as a Brit Olam congregation includes supporting the rights of the LGBTQ+ community and of all people. Rabbi Jonah Pesner (Senior Vice President of URJ) said, "In actions to repair the world we can hear God's voice."

The civil rights for the LGBTQ+ community are rooted in the belief that all human beings are created *b'tzelem Elohim*, in the image of God, and in Leviticus 19:18 we are told, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

If you'll be marching, be sure to call Candy Raderman at 518-466-2328 or email Becky Marvin at beckymarvin4574@gmail.com so we can keep count and arrange carpools if necessary.

THE LANDSCAPE COMMITTEE IS WAKING UP FROM HIBERNATION



We plan to hold a clean-up day on Sunday, May 15, from 9 AM–Noon (with a rain date of Sunday, May 22). Please come help with whatever tools you might like to bring, such as a rake, pruning shears, shovel. We will provide direction.

This spring the Landscape Committee will: plant native plants, renovate the circle garden, and donate and plant a beneficial white oak tree in front of the synagogue. Perhaps some of our youngest members would like to give the tree a name.

Look for more in the weekly e-announcements.



The congregation extends a warm welcome to our newest member:

Ken Tannen

BE ON GUARD AGAINST EMAIL SPOOFING SCAM.

STAY ALERT! If you see a suspicious email that claims to come from Rabbi Weisbrot or someone else at B'nai Sholom, double-check the email address 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 email to the correct address for the supposed sender or call them directly to confirm.

B'nai Sholom Legacy Society

Ensuring the Future
of B'nai Sholom ...



... Creating a Jewish Legacy Today.

Please Join Us for a Legacy Reception

Gather for refreshments and conversation with congregants
as we recognize Legacy Society members
and learn how they are already benefitting B'nai Sholom

Thursday, May 19, 2022, 7:00 to 8:30 P.M.

Home of David Ray and Mimi Bruce, 4 S. Lyons Ave., Menands

All congregants are invited and encouraged to attend!

RSVP to Mimi Bruce at mbrucemd53@gmail.com or 518-469-9554

Or respond to the Evite you will receive

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

JESSE SAPERSTEIN, AUTHOR AND ADVOCATE FOR PEOPLE WITH AUTISM, TO DISCUSS LIFE AS A JEW ON THE SPECTRUM IN TALK AT B'NAI SHOLOM

Jesse Saperstein, popular author, advocate for people with autism and motivational speaker, will discuss his experiences as a Jew living on the autism spectrum in a talk Friday, June 3, during the congregation's Shabbat service.

The program was originally planned for February, which is Jewish Disability Awareness and Inclusion Month. It has been moved to June so that we can have a live audience to better engage with Jesse's presentation and meet and greet him in person.

Jesse is the author of *Atypical: Life with Asperger's in 20 1/3 Chapters* and *Getting a Life with Asperger's*, both published by Penguin Group (USA). He lives with Asperger's syndrome, a high-functioning form of autism that impairs social abilities while enhancing many other qualities. Jesse was included as one of the 50 unsung American heroes in *American Spirit* by New York Times bestselling authors Taya Kyle and Jim DeFelice.

Jesse's numerous public speaking credits include the United Nations, lecturing at the Mall of America in Minneapolis and a February 2020 appearance on "Dr. Phil."

After graduating from Hobart and William Smith Colleges in 2004, Jesse conquered the 2,174-mile Appalachian Trail to benefit the Joey DiPaolo AIDS Foundation, raising more than \$19,000 to enable children who had contracted HIV/AIDS through prenatal transmission to attend summer camp. He moved to Albany in 2015 to live in his first apartment as an independent adult. Jesse serves as the media and activities liaison for the College Experience Program run by Living Resources Inc. with The College of Saint Rose, which gives individuals with disabilities the ability to attend a mainstream college with a modified curriculum and provides life skills as well as employment training.

For more information about the program, contact Roy Fruiterman, Committee on Disabilities chair, at rfruiterman@gmail.com.

We look forward to learning from Jesse!

The Congregation Notes with Thanks These Contributions:

General Fund

A donation from Howard Domfort

In memory of **Herbert Malsky** by Nancy Newman and Matthew Malsky

In memory of **Claire Roth** by Yossi and Amy Koren Roth

In memory of **William Lacov** by The Seguire Family

In memory of **Dorothy Lazoroff** by The Family of Dorothy Lazoroff

In memory of **Frances F. Lazoroff Dobris** by the Family of Frances Dobris

In memory of **Irma Schwartzman** by Mindy Kramer

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

In memory of **Rhoda Green** by Ellie and Randy Davis

In memory of **Eli Klausner** by Linda and Ethan Klausner

Endowment Fund

A donation from Richard McGowan

Vera Propp Books for Babies Fund

In honor of **Claire Sarah Gordon, granddaughter of Lois Gordon** by Amy Sternstein

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

In memory of **Hyman Tress** by Marcia Tress

In memory of **Herb Swift** by Nancy Newman and Matthew Malsky

A donation from Ruth Swift

A donation from Richard McGowan



Save the date
Shalom, Wachs-Cashmans!

Festive Brunch

Honoring
Rabbi Donald P. Cashman and Sharona Wachs
as they set off for Israel
after 35 years with
B'nai Sholom Reform Congregation

Community Celebratory Brunch

Sunday, June 26, 2022

Albany Jewish Community Center

Watch for invitation and further information

The following Yahrtzeits will be observed in May:

5/6 Carla Oblas; Louis Samuel Harris; Samuel Bach*; Anna Liff*; Aaron Harold Rosner; Bernard Earl Shanks; Moses Khazam

5/13 Gordan Goldstein; Mel Lee; Claire Roth; Dorothy Lazoroff*; Minnie Velk*; Glory Swartz; Hanna Aron; Herbert Horowitz; Alan Berke*; Louis Rosenblatt*; Hyman Tress; Edgar Altmayer; Henry Kramer; Sophie Goldstein*; Gertrude Sperber*

5/20 Helaine K. Plaut; Renee Stoller; Meyer Tabak; Ida Domfort*; Elaine H. Neuburger; George Singer*; Frances F. Lazoroff Dobris*; Hyman W. Zima*; Rose Rogers Singer*

5/27 Dorothy Parnes; Vera Walker*; Robert Goody; Lillian Raskin Kuperman*; Morris Friedman; Philip Haas; Sol Goldstein*

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

RABBI: Danielle Weisbrot can be reached at rabbiweisbrot@bnaisholom.albany.ny.us

RABBI EMERITUS: Donald P. Cashman

PRESIDENT: Julie Novkov can be reached at julienovkov@hotmail.com

OFFICE MANAGER: Christine Blackman can be reached at christine@bnaisholom.albany.ny.us

BOOKKEEPER: Maryann Wygel can be reached at bookkeeper@bnaisholom.albany.ny.us

OFFICE HOURS: TUE/WED/THURS/FRI 9:30 AM–4:30 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 that the Bulletin is sent out in a timely manner.

| <u>Period Covered</u> | <u>Deadline</u> |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| June 2022..... | May 11 |
| July 2022..... | June 8 |