MOUNT ZION

ITON TZIYON
עיתון ציון

Mount Zion Temple Bulletin
Winter | December 2026 - February 2027 | *Kislev - Adar I 5787*
Vol. 171, No. 2

Mount Zion teens light the Chanukiah.

(2025/5786)



Living the Jewish Calendar

A year to deepen understandings and practices of the holidays

L'Dor VaDor

From Generation to Generation

Mazel Tov To...

Larry and Cathy Bogolub on the marriage of their son *Louis to Lily* on September 19.

Alex Diimig and Jade Theisen on the birth of their daughter, *Tallulah*, on August 14.

Staci and Zach Cohen Cummins on the birth of their son, *Raphael Dov,* on August 21.

Miriam Hauptman and Jon Socha on their marriage on October 11.

Steve Levin (Shayna Miller-Levin) on the marriage of his daughter *Elena to Jake* on October 14.

Max and Jill Stein Lipset on the birth of their son, and **David Lipset and Diana Dean** on the birth of their grandson, *Caleb John Lipset*, on June 6.

Jeff Sims and Judi Orland on the birth of their grandson, *Soren Ark Sims*, on May 22. *Soren is the son of Luke and Callie Sims.*

Daniel Sogin and Emily Duke on the marriage of their son *Jonathan to Caity* on October 10.

Margie and Larry Solomon on the marriage of their son, *Michael Solomon to Kimberly Loo,* on October 17.

Bea (Batya) Spector on the marriage of her daughter, *Anna Danila to Sam Wilson-Moses*, on October 17.

Eric Swabey-Keith, son of **Andy Keith and Laurie Swabey**, on his marriage to **Zia Fox** on October 18.

Traci and Jeff Ward on the birth of their granddaughter, *Elsie Alba Ward,* on April 24. *Elsie is the daughter of Brett and Camilla Ward.*

Letter from the Rabbi



Recently I read a blog post from a young Jewish couple who struggled to "Do Chanukah right."

"During our first year together, Chanukah got lost in the Christmas scramble. Sure, we played dreidel and opened modest gifts, but for the most part, the festival came and went without much fanfare on our part. [The next year] we decided we wanted to 'do Chanukah right.' ...We searched endlessly for the perfect Chanukah decorations, lit the Chanukiah every night, and ate latkes with wild abandon. But somehow, it didn't seem to be enough...The next year, we scheduled Chanukah dinners with friends and participated in the holiday festivities organized by the religious school of our local temple. As we'd done the previous year, we again lit the Chanukiah, ate latkes like crazy, and tried to 'do Chanukah right.' Still, something was missing..."

And so on.

Can you relate? Especially those of you new to Judaism, or rediscovering it after being distant for a while, or those of you with kids, or without kids or with grandchildren or, well, anyone. I often hear folks stressing about "doing it right" whether "it" is Chanukah, or Sukkot, or any of our many holidays.

As you may know, part of Mount Zion's Strategic Plan is to "Deepen Jewish Living and Learning," and our current programming is based on the "Year of Living Jewishly: The Calendar." We are focusing on the hows and whys of Shabbat, holy days, and daily blessings through classes, resources, social media, and discussion cohorts.

I hope you are taking advantage of these opportunities. I also hope you are not falling into the trap of trying to "get it right." Because there is no single *right way* to celebrate; indeed, there is no single right way to be Jewish. Yes, there is a halakhic way - following Jewish law to the letter, (although even that is not singular), but there is also Mount Zion's way, and your grandmother's way, and your neighbor's grandmother's way, and the Sephardic way...You get my point. The Reform Movement's way is to learn all you can and then choose your own way.

Rabbi article continued on p. 4.

"The giving of Torah happened at one specific time, but the receiving of Torah happens all the time, in every generation." - Meir Alter, the Gerer Rebbe

We welcome **Frank Alarcon** and **Melanie Klein** who have completed our conversion program recently and have thus chosen Judaism: **May they go from strength to strength!**

Zichronam Livracha... May their memories be for a blessing

We note with sorrow the passing of our members:



Adam Bahr

Our condolences to his family, including his wife Jessica Bahr.

Shelley Robbins

Our condolences to her family, including her husband John Plano and daughter Isabel Robbins-Plano.

We Extend Condolences to...

Barbara (George) Barany on the death of her mother, *Sylvia Goldenberg*, on October 11.

Stephanie (Michael) Chauss on the death of her mother, *Judith (Judy) Jacobs Strauss*, on September 7. *Our condolences also to Judy's stepson,* ***Jonathan (Kay) Strauss****.*

Nancy Hauser on the death of her sister, *Linda Mason Aminoff*, on October 20.

Terese McCauley, Mount Zion staff member, on the death of her father, *Dan McCauley,* on November 5.

David (Ruth) Olkon on the death of his father, *Ellis Olkon,* on October 14.

Wendy Harris (James) Shapiro on the death of her mother, *Marilyn Dee Harris*, on September 19.

Lyle Sorenson on the death of his sister, *Linda Sorenson*, on September 22.

Jennifer Wallen and to **Benjamin, Avery, and Arion Wallen** on the death of their father, *Chris Wallen,* on October 5.

Join us for Engaging, Musical, Inspiring Shabbat Services!

Friday Night

Kabbalat Shabbat Service: 6:30 pm – Join in person or online (Livestream; Facebook)

Saturday Morning

Torah Study: 9:00 am - In person or online via Zoom

Shabbat Shacharit (Morning) Service: 10:00 am – In person or Livestream

Tot Shabbat: 10:30 am - In person (second Saturday of every month) *Designed for families with children from birth through 6 years old.*

Please see our description of Shabbat services at Mount Zion at mzion.org/pray/shabbat.

Shabbat Services in Margolis Hall!

We move from the formality of the sanctuary to our social hall to create a more intimate service. Our singing is accompanied by violin, guitar, keyboard, and percussion. The evocative music opens our hearts and awakens our spirits.

Shabbat for the Soul

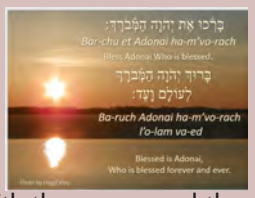
March 12 and April 9



Shabbat is always for the soul, but there is a particularly soulful atmosphere at "Shabbat for the Soul" services. It is a more contemplative worship style with the congregation sitting in the round. We use a single page handout for the prayers. A slower pace enables us to focus on the meditative effect of the music, the potential for deeper awareness and prayer, and the feeling of community.

Hiddur T'filah

December 11, January 8, and February 19



Hiddur Mitzvah is the enhancement of a Mitzvah by making it visually beautiful. In our Hiddur T'filah services, instead of seeing the service in black and white on the pages of a book, our words of prayer are enhanced by beautiful images projected on the wall in Margolis Hall. We take time with the prayers and the music, engaging our senses more fully than usual. We sit in rounded rows to more fully appreciate the community around us.

First Friday Family Shabbat Dinner

December 4, February 5, March 5, April 2, May 7

An informal Shabbat dinner with kid-friendly food, Shabbat blessings, and friends new and old, followed by a spirited, family-friendly Shabbat service featuring our children's choirs.

Food, Friends, Family: Shabbat!

- Arrival and Meet and Greet at 5:15 pm
- Blessings and Dinner at 5:30 pm
- Services at 6:30 pm

Members: $25 for a household; individuals are $10 each.
Non-members: $36 for a household; individuals are $12 each.

JDAIM Shabbat

Friday, February 26, 6:30 pm

We will mark JDAIM (Jewish Disability Awareness, Acceptance, and Inclusion Month) with a rabbinic sermon, rooted in Jewish texts and teachings, on disabilities and inclusion.

A Candlelit Shabbat Dinner - NEW!

Friday, January 15

Following the tradition of our First Friday Family Shabbats, an additional Shabbat Dinner—this time only for anyone 16 and over! This special evening will be a chance to welcome Shabbat with delicious food in a calmer environment limited to 90 people. Connect with other members and embrace the spirit of Shabbat, which invites us to pause, leave the stress of our week behind, and connect with one another.

- Arrival and Meet and Greet at 5:15 pm
- Blessings and Dinner at 5:30 pm
- Services at 6:30 pm

Members: $10 per person; Non-members: $12 per person

Daily Services - on Zoom!

Sunday through Thursday at 5:45 pm on Zoom

An important mitzvah is to participate on the day of a loved one's yahrzeit. Each service is led by lay leaders or Rabbis Adler or Spilker.

Chai Notes



I recently saw a social media post wryly asking why, when so many other mammals hibernate through the winter, we humans expect ourselves to maintain our usual levels of productivity, especially throughout Minnesota's coldest, darkest months. During our November weekend with musician-in-residence Elana Arian, she shared something that has stayed with me: "Judaism doesn't let time pass us by." The Jewish calendar (which by now I hope you know we're especially focusing on at Mount Zion this year!) asks us to notice the changing seasons, how we move from one day to another, and even one time of day to another. So I've been thinking about what our cold-weather Jewish holidays, Chanukah, Tu BiSh'vat, and Purim, have to teach us, especially when we might be more tempted to take a page from Minnesota's Scandinavian heritage and observe *hygge* over *chagim*. (Yes, I know none of these holidays are technically "chagim," but I can't resist an opportunity for alliteration.)

It turns out that, as much as I love *hygge*, our holidays give us solid arguments against holing up on our own for the winter, each of them in their own way reminding us of the importance of staying awake to our own lives and staying connected to our communities. Chanukah arrives when nights are longest, asking us to create light and publicize the miracle of Jewish strength and perseverance. Purim commands us remember a story that began with the threat of annihilation but ends in joy and celebration. In between is Tu BiSh'vat, which, even when the ground is frozen and trees are bare, invites us to reaffirm our sacred duty to protect nature.

None of these holidays asks us to wait until we feel ready or circumstances are ideal. We light candles despite the darkness, and we don't wait for safety to celebrate survival or for spring to appreciate nature and work to protect it. Our tradition gives us rituals that help us meet the world as it is and our calendar tells us to observe them even when we might not feel like doing it. And the best part is, you don't have to give up *hygge* for chagim! Just don't let the cozy get in the way of the communal.

Jennifer Strauss-Klein, Cantor

Trope Troupe

... the more Torah, the more life. -Hillel

Todah Rabah to our September-November Ba'alei Korei (chanting Torah): Marjorie Dana-Levine; Pearl Freidberg; Sally Glick; Siana Goodwin; Rebekah Jacob; David Knapp; Nadia Levine; Bob Mast; John Mast; Pearl McSpadden; Betsy Rest; Jenni Schwartz; Zelda Strauss-Klein

Todah Rabah to our September-November Haftarah chanters: Netta Hardin; Abbey Kanzer; Eric Lund

Todah Rabah to our Ecclesiastes/Kohelet: chanter: Siana Goodwin

To sign up to chant Torah or Haftarah on Shabbat, e-mail Cantor Jennifer Strauss-Klein at jstraussklein@mzion.org.

Letter from the Rabbi *(continued from p. 2)*

So, as we provide resources, please see them as information, as opportunities for learning and then for choosing. Ask not "how do I do it right?" but instead, "how can I celebrate with meaning and with joy?" The answers will be different for each of us, and will change over time as our situations change, and as we change.

Our young bloggers finally came to understand that, and ended their post with this prayer for Chanukah: "*Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha'olam; Blessed are You who makes us holy, not through our own neurosis, self-doubt, and pressure, but by opening us up to the lights of our holiday candles....*"

My wish for you this Chanukah and for the rest of our Year of Living Jewishly, is that your learning will deepen not just your knowledge of the practices but of the meaning they can bring to your life, and that your celebrations will increase your joy, not your stress.

Chag Sameach!

Esther Adler, Rabbi

See page 15 for a ***welcome to new members*** *and an update on* ***sabbatical leaves****.*

The Caring Community Team

Warm Hearts, Warm Meals, and a Cure for the Winter Blues!

Winter days may be cold and snowy, but a little kindness can go a long way toward brightening someone's day! Mount Zion's Caring Team is here to help all of us spread warmth throughout our community by providing meals, offering rides, and lending a helping hand when needed.

Whether you're making or delivering a meal, giving someone a ride, or simply reaching out, these acts of *chesed* (loving kindness) can make a big difference. And the best part? Helping others is a wonderful way to chase away your own winter blues!

Join our volunteer database or join the Caring Community Team and help us warm hearts this winter. Please contact Mandy Roll-Kuhne (mzcaringcommunity.mandy@gmail.com) or Rabbi Adler (eadler@mzon.org) to join us or with any questions.

Craft for Comfort: Calling all Makers!

We are running low on the handmade shawls and lap blankets that our clergy bring to congregants who are hospitalized.

Do you knit or crochet? Know how to make fleece tie blankets?

We'd love your help replenishing our supply!

We welcome handmade shawls and lap blankets in any color or pattern. Simple, beginner-friendly patterns are perfect! **Please use soft, machine-washable yarn**, and aim for shawls approximately 24" x 60" for shoulder shawls, and approximately 36 x 40 for lap blankets. Small fleece tie blankets work as well. They don't have to be fancy or complicated. Simple is beautiful!

Whether you make one or several, your handiwork will help bring warmth and comfort to someone who could use a little extra care from our community. Please mark them "For Rabbi Adler" and drop them off in the office or on the shelf in the cloakroom. If you have questions, reach out to Rabbi Adler (eadler@mzion.org). Thank you!

From the President



"The 0-2 pitch, [crack] lined into the gap in left-center, Chourio back, he makes the catch! The Brewers win the pennant! Oh my God, the Brewers win the pennant!" – Jeff Levering - Milwaukee Brewers radio play-by-play – October 15, 2026

As a sports fan, I've always disliked it when athletes thank God after their team wins a big game. It seems to take free will and self-determination away from us individuals. Does God really care whether St. Mary's beats Georgetown at the buzzer in the second round of the NCAA tournament? Were the Hoyas not sufficiently devout? I'd like to think God has bigger concerns.

By contrast, I loved the call above from the Brewers' announcer. Unlike rote statements following a big win (even when athletes sincerely believe, they sound cliched), if you listen to Levering's call, he was undoubtedly caught up in the moment. His invocation of the divine sounded natural. Any Milwaukee Brewers fan could tell you that winning the pennant and first World Series title felt truly awesome. After the final out, a 56-year-old weight was lifted from my shoulders. The Brewers had been the Vikings of baseball–often great but never the best. As I mentioned from the Bima that Friday when referring to the Brewers' World Series victory, (tongue only somewhat in cheek) "Surely, we live in an age of miracles."

On the theme of the maybe miraculous, I recently traveled to Israel on a trip sponsored by the St. Paul Jewish Federation and Birthright. I had last been there 40 years ago and did not know if I would ever return. While we did some sightseeing, our focus was volunteering and bearing witness. We gardened for survivors of the October 7th terrorist attack on Kfar Aza, packaged grain for those experiencing food insecurity, engaged with Ethiopian refugees making Aliyah, and planted lettuce and garlic at an organic farm overlooking the Sea of Galilee, where troubled youth are given a fresh start. Throughout our trip, Israelis told us how much it meant to them for us to be there. We also bore witness to the Nova Music Festival massacre site. I've been to Yad Vashem, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, and Dachau, but Nova felt different. It was devastating to see pictures of and read about these young, beautiful souls slaughtered in what should have been a time of joy.

Any transition from Nova was going to be difficult, but the human spirit is amazing, and by evening, we felt joy ourselves. We welcomed Shabbat with Yemenite songs and were soon praying at the Western Wall. By the next afternoon, I jogged on a portion of a converted railroad track that originally ran from the Port of Jaffa to the Old City, prayed at the Wall again, and attended a Reform Shabbat service where I and four other Mount Zion members were called up for an Aliyah. What an honor to do so in Jerusalem!

Throughout our travels, we met with a diverse group of Israelis to learn about their challenges and their successes. I was struck by their resilience, but even more by their ability to live life with unbridled joy, even in the face of hardships that we diaspora Jews cannot imagine. In the spirit of joy and with full recognition of the comforts of our diaspora life, I must confess that on my second trip to the Wall, not only did I pray for myself, my friends, family, community, country, people, and all humanity, but I may have also slipped in a little prayer for the Brewers to win the World Series. Hedging my bets, as they say. So, now, on the other side of it all, I would like to say, "Thank God."

Jon Strauss, President

Executive Director Corner



Dear Mount Zion community,

As the days grow shorter and we head toward the light of Chanukah, I want to share how much has happened in our building and community over the last few months. From a packed morning exploring the hidden corners of our historic home to solar panels now powering it, these past months have been about caring for the place that holds our congregational life.

More than 100 people joined us on Sunday, November 1, for **From Boiler to Bima and Beyond**, a behind-the-scenes look at Mount Zion. We began in Margolis Hall with the story of Erich Mendelsohn's 1954 landmark on Summit Avenue, then toured spaces most members never see, from the boiler room to the new roof. We ended in Harris Chapel with a first look at plans for its renewal. The stories and memories people shared reminded me how deeply this building is woven into our lives. More on our renovation plans in the coming months.

Mount Zion's solar array is now connected to the Xcel Energy grid and producing clean power for our building. Built to withstand Minnesota hail and last 40 years or more, the panels may still be serving today's religious school students when they bring their own children here.

Thank you to the more than 100 households who have already given $70,000 toward our $170,000 L'Chaim 5787 Annual Campaign goal. Mount Zion is where we sing, study, celebrate, and sit with one another in joy and in grief. Your gift, in any amount, keeps this *makom kadosh*, this sacred place, warm and open to everyone who needs a place to belong.

Welcome, Brenda Janisch Hoban! Brenda joined us in early November as our new Education and Communications Coordinator. Please stop by the office and say hello.

AppleFest! More than 280 people filled our sukkah on Sept 27. Thank you to our sponsors: Mount Zion Brotherhood, Ruth and David Olkon, the St. Paul Jewish Federation, and Women of Mount Zion Temple. Thank you also to our AppleFest volunteers!

Thank you for all the ways you show up for Mount Zion, from joining a tour to making a gift to simply walking through our doors. I wish you and your families a joyful Chanukah and a warm, healthy winter.

Kate Tucker Scher, Executive Director

Our Education and Communications Coordinator:

Brenda Janisch Hoban



bjanischhoban@mzion.org

Brenda provides administrative support, focusing on the Religious School. She will also assist with Temple communications.

Brenda brings more than 15 years of experience working in nonprofit and school settings, with a background in marketing and communications at Groves Learning Organization, Lyngblomsten Care Center, and Breck School. She holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Graphic Design from the University of Minnesota.

Outside of work, Brenda enjoys pottery, reading, and walking her dog.

Mount Zion Strategic Plan Review and Update

From the **Kivvun La'Atid Implementation Leadership Task Force** (KILT)

BACKGROUND: In 2021/5781, Mount Zion's Board of Directors created the *Kivvun La'Atid Task Force*, chaired by then-President-Elect Michael Wall and soon-to-be-President-Elect Amy Schwartz Moore, to develop and conduct what would become an exceptionally rich, thorough, community-wide process of reflection, deliberation, visioning, and strategic planning. That process resulted in a Vision, Mission, *Derech* (path) to the year 2040, a list of our Core Work, and a five-year strategic plan (2023-28). That strategic plan centers on four strategic directions, or strategies, that Mount Zion needed to do in the near term. **The plan was adopted unanimously by the Board of Directors on June 13, 2023**, and can be viewed at mzion.org/about/vision.

A strategic plan is only as good as its implementation. To assure that the strategic vision established by the congregation is realized over time, and to adjust course as necessary based on experience and changing circumstances, the Board also created the Kivvun La'Atid Implementation Leadership Task Force (KILT), which includes leaders of strategy-specific task forces. Early into the implementation, three of the four strategies pointed to a need for a new position at Mount Zion. KILT developed a job description for a Director of Congregational Engagement, updated from the previous role held by Shai Avny. We were fortunate to hire Rabbi Renetzky for this role.

FOUR STRATEGIES: The Strategic Plan identified four key areas of effort (four Strategies) for the coming period. Below are updates on the work of each of the four strategies in the recent period.

Update on Strategy #1: Invest in Leaders and Strengthen Management

After the pandemic, when so much changed related to congregant involvement in committees, there was a pent-up need to assess our lay leadership structure of committees, write/revise charters, and to make the process for serving on committees more transparent to the congregation. Strategy 1 also includes a separate focus on leadership development and a third on our internal financial management. To date, this is what has been done:

- **Committee Structure Updates:**
  - 2024: A Kehillah Council focused on the many ways our committees function.
  - 2024: Amy Schwartz Moore, Rabbi Spilker, and Kate Tucker Sicher outlined an initial set of recommendations and began implementing some changes.
  - 2026: The Board approved a new Task Force led by Robert Garfinkle to recommend changes to committee structure and practices.
- **Leadership Development:**
  - 2025: Tracy Fischman and Robert Garfinkle led a Kehillah Council session to gather ideas for ways to identify and develop future leaders.
  - 2026: There has been follow-up on some of these ideas in the way the Nominating committee works and in other areas, but we are putting significant efforts (programs) on the back burner to prioritize other efforts right now.
- **Financial Reporting and Oversight:**
  - 2024: Kate Tucker Sicher and Amy Schwartz Moore drew up plans to merge the Dues Committee and Budget Committee.
  - 2026: Treasurer Warren Cohen oversaw the merger of the two committees and wrote a new charter to clarify lay leadership and staff roles. Work has begun to streamline the congregation's many small funds and to improve the reporting to the Board of Directors.

Update on Strategy #2: Deepen Jewish Living and Learning

This strategy calls for finding new ways to inform individual Jewish choices and enhance meaning through education and spiritual / ritual practices. Priorities of this strategy include teaching ritual and practice by establishing a year-long Jewish living program, building a chevruta (or paired-learning) initiative, connecting generations, recruiting and retaining teachers, expanding recognition of life events, broadening creative worship through music and spiritual practices and re-imagining our community's prayer and worship space in the Harris Chapel. In 2024, a strategic working group developed a framework for implementing these priority areas. The once-dormant MaZAL (Mount Zion Adult Learning Committee) has been revitalized to carry out the work.

Last year's signature initiative was engaging over 100 people in Chevruta (paired) learning which was a priority of this Strategy. Chevruta learning empowers participants to explore their own deep, Jewish questions in partnership, enhancing both their Jewish knowledge and their community connections.

This year's initiative is a comprehensive effort to help congregants with "Living the Jewish Calendar."

Other accomplishments include expanding adult education offerings, intergenerational efforts such as L'Dor V'Dor Day in the Religious School and the Grands and Fams matching program to partner people across the generations;and a re-vamped madrichim (teacher assistant) program that trains teens in tutoring and supporting the Religious School's lower-school classrooms.

> **"A strategic plan is only as good as its implementation.**

Update on Strategy #3: Engagement and Belonging 2.0

Engagement has long been a strategic focus (and indeed a strength) of the Mount Zion Community. This strategic initiative calls on our community to continue intentionally becoming ever more inclusive, welcoming new members, and creating a sense of belonging for all.

After the Board of Directors authorized the hiring of a Director of Congregational Engagement in 2024, Rabbi Renetzky expanded **offerings for people in their 30s and 40s, young families**, and other groups. These efforts are also continually advanced by Director of Youth and Young Adult Engagement Abby Farber. Volunteering is now more centralized thanks to the launch of an online Mount Zion volunteering platform in Spring of 2025. Congregants also find it easier to greet one another in person since the launch of the voluntary – and extremely popular – ***Shem el Panim*** **("Putting Names to Faces") Nametag Initiative in 2026.**

The Engagement and Belonging Working Group, which met from January through October of 2026, helped guide strategic efforts and identify priorities among the many aspects of Engagement and Belonging 2.0. Led by chair Ruth Hampton Olkon and supported by Rabbi Renetzky, the group taught and highlighted the power of key practices related to welcoming and belonging at a Kehillah Council session at Sholom Home in August 2026. The group is now passing the baton to a **newly forming Engagement Committee, focused on advancing these intentional connections, promoting volunteerism, expanding MZ Small Groups and MZ Connect as platforms, and systematically seeking to address the other areas of this Strategy.** (see page 10)

Update on Strategy #4: Repairing our World – Protect People and the Planet

This strategic initiative is grounded in Jewish values and challenges our congregation to address two great challenges to these values: the climate crisis and the rising of "othering" and hate in our society. Our efforts are intended to build on the work of the past several decades, in which we have taught, wrestled with, and acted upon these Jewish values in our religious school, through community partnerships, and by the Tzedek committee.

The working group dedicated to this effort, chaired by Past President Michael Kuhne, turned first to the matter of climate justice. The group engaged congregants in a year-long process to create a congregational position statement on protecting the planet, unanimously adopted by the Board of Directors in May 2025. This led to the creation of the ***Shomrei Adamah*****/Keepers of the Earth Commitee, charged with bringing the ideas and principles outlined in the position statement to life.**

Mount Zion continues to put these ideals into action, perhaps most dramatically with t**he installation of solar panels on the newly-installed roof of the religious school wing this summer**. Many congregants also participated in a **re-design and renewal of our grounds,** creating multiple spaces of natural beauty aligned with environmental stewardship. Our environmental footprint continues to improve within our walls through the use of compostable products, and the installation of dramatically more efficient heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) equipment and controls. Finally, educational efforts have included environmental product and practice fairs, presentations by experts and advocates such as Representative Athena Hollins, co-author of the climate Superfund act, and a Mitzvah Day that featured storm sewer stenciling in partnership with Friends of the Mississippi.

NEXT STEPS: So much has been accomplished since the strategic plan was adopted in 2023, and so much remains to be done. Watch this bulletin and your email for opportunities to participate. One step at a time, we continue to strive to realize our congregational Vision: a community and a world where all people experience *Shalom* (wholeness and peace), *Tzedek* (justice), *Shachayut* (belonging), and *Simcha* (joy).

Kivvun La'atid Leadership Team: Chad Weinstein, *KILT Chair and President-Elect.* Members; Robert Garfinkle (#1: Invest in Leaders and Strengthen Management), Sarah Weinman (#2: Deepen Jewish Living and Learning), Ruth Hampton Olkon and soon Sharon DeMark (#3: Engagement and Belonging 2.0), Michael Kuhne (#4: Repairing our World – Protect People and the Planet), Jon Strauss, *President*, Kate Tucher Sicher, *Executive Director,* Rabbi Heather Renetzky, *Director of Congregational Engagement,* Rabbi Adam Stock Spilker.

How are we doing?

Reflecting and Responding to the 2026 Congregational Survey



Kehillah (Community) Council

Tuesday, December 8, 7:00 – 9:00 pm at Mount Zion and via Zoom

Open to *all* Mount Zion Members. All Board and Committee Chairs are expected to attend.

At the December Kehillah Council, we will take a look at the responses from our just-completed survey of congregants. Many of you participated—we received 342 responses in all. Beginning in 2017, we have conducted a similar survey every three years. It always provides valuable feedback to the clergy, staff, and leadership about how congregants feel Mount Zion is fulfilling its mission and meeting the moment.

Our discussion will begin with a presentation of the results by congregant and professional evaluator Lija Greenseid, and will be followed by time for analysis and discussion. We are counting on you, our community of leaders, to look at this data together and help us understand what is being said and what lessons we can learn from this survey.



First Night of Chanukah: Friday, December 4 / 25 Kislev

New! Holiday guide for Chanukah (see p. 19).
More questions about Chanukah? Go to: myjewishlearning.com

Friday, December 4 - Chanukah Shabbat Extravaganikah

5:30 pm – First Friday Family Shabbat Dinner - An informal Shabbat dinner with kid-friendly food, Shabbat blessings, and friends new and old. (Registration required).

6:15 pm – Lighting the Giant Chanukiah - Festive candle lighting before we enter the sanctuary for Shabbat services.

6:30 pm – Chanukah Shabbat Service - Show off your Chanukah spirit! Wear your festive blue and white, sparkle and shine in glittery outfits, rock your favorite Chanukah socks, or get creative with anything that celebrates the Festival of Lights. The more festive, the better!

After services – Enjoy games, sufganiot (donuts), and more!

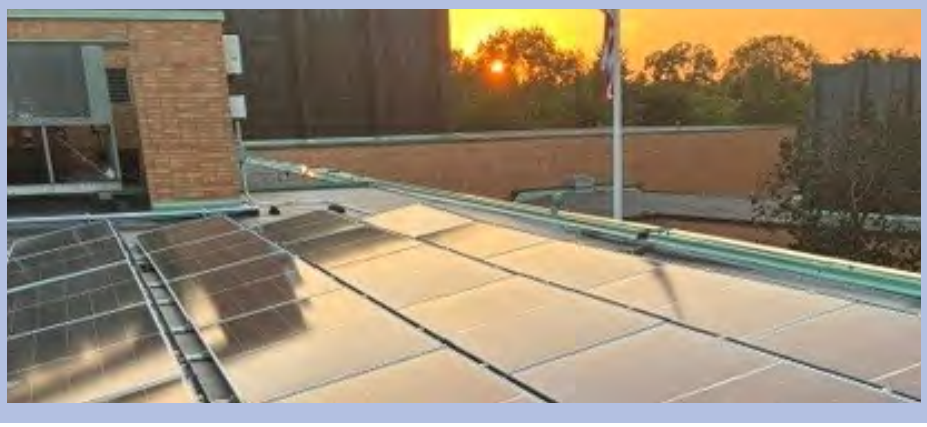
Second Friday, December 11

6:30 pm – Shabbat Services

Followed by a festive Oneg!
With latkes! If you have a favorite, nut-free condiment, please bring it!

Dedication of Mount Zion's New Solar Panels - During Chanukah

Wednesday, December 9, 7:15-7:30 pm *– Margolis Hall*



Join for a brief ceremony featuring live-streaming video of the solar panels from the roof. We'll gather in warmth in Margolis Hall for brief messages, lighting of the Chanukah candles, and a celebratory l'chaim!

Our Bodies, Our Souls

30th Annual Jewish Retreat for Women

Manna: What Sustains Us?

January 22, 4 pm – January 24, 9 am

Reasons to Attend Our Bodies, Our Souls (OBOS) This Year:

- **Connect** – Build or deepen friendships with interesting, engaging, creative women from their 20s to their 80s in a fun, casual setting.
- **Relax** – Enjoy time to unwind, let go, and breathe more deeply as you nestle into a woodland lodge.
- **Uplift** – Participate in creative services looking out onto a beautiful nature scene. Listen to the voices of 50 women singing together in prayerful services.
- **Nourish** – Allow the retreat staff to prepare delicious meals for you. We will do our best to honor specific dietary needs.
- **Rejuvenate** – You choose how you spend your time: inspiring Shabbat services, interesting workshops, walking in the woods, a Shabbat nap, creative art projects, schmoozing, clothing swap, quiet meditation, or getting a massage. This retreat is for YOU!
- **Learn** – Be inspired by fantastic teachers.
- **Inspire** – Sing, dance, listen, and enjoy the sounds of women's voices rising together! Dynamic and talented songleader Wendy Goldberg will weave melodies, harmonies, and music throughout our retreat.
- **Affirm** – Enjoy an environment that affirms each person's unique gifts. The positive, friendly atmosphere of the retreat welcomes new participants and helps everyone feel part of the larger community of women at Mount Zion.
- **Comfort** – The retreat takes place in lovely Stillwater, MN at the peaceful Dunrovin Retreat Center, located on 50 acres along the St. Croix River. You may choose a single or double room. Linens and towels are provided.
- **Discover** – Come find out what makes this Shabbaton one of the greatest offerings for women of any age at Mount Zion Temple!

Register early to reserve your spot!

Priority registration is given to members through January 4. Final day to register is January 10.

Cost: Members: $245; Non-members: $295 (includes lodging for two nights, five delicious meals, and all programming).

Finances are not a barrier to participation. Email Cantor Spilker for confidential financial assistance (available to members).

A note about refunds: *Until Jan 4: Full refund, less 8% transaction and administrative fees; Jan. 4-17: 50% refund; No refunds after Jan 17.*

Register at mzion.org

The Clara Margolis Women's Leadership Fund is offering a generous discount on the Mount Zion registration rate for MZ members in their 20s and 30s who are attending OBOS for the first time. Contact Cantor Spilker at rspilker@mzion.org.

OBOS is made possible, in part, by a generous donation from the Women of Mount Zion.

B'nei Mitzvah

Natan Glozman
February 20, 2026

Picture removed online

Natan Glozman is the son of Katya and Eugene Glozman. He has an older sister, Naomi, and his grandparents are Lyuda Tychinina and Irene and Jacob Glozman. Natan is in 7th grade at Saint Paul Academy, where he enjoys winning championships with the soccer team. He plays soccer year-round for the Saint Paul Blackhawks and keeps up with professional basketball, football, and (of course) soccer - ask him anything about Chelsea! He loves to play cello as a soloist and in his school's chamber orchestra. In his free time, he likes to play sports and video games with his friends. Natan plans to volunteer for and donate a portion of his Bar Mitzvah gifts to Neighborhood House, an organization that supports local immigrants and refugees.

Noah Savage
February 27, 2026

Picture removed online

Noah (Hebrew name Noach Yosef – נֹחַ יוֹסֵף) is the son of Amanda Schwartz and Bryan Savage and older brother to Corey (Coco). He is the much loved grandson of Marc and Terri Schwartz, and Gabby and Dan Matzdorff. A seventh grader at Scott Highlands Middle School, Noah is creative, curious, and loves figuring out how things work. Passionate about art, he is also an avid reader and anime fan who enjoys gaming, chess, and Dungeons & Dragons. At home, he shares his life with two cats and two dogs, although the cats have a special place in his heart! In honor of his Bar Mitzvah, Noah plans to donate a portion of his gift money to an animal rescue organization, reflecting his love for cats and his desire to help animals in need.

Engagement

Join us for the 2nd Annual

Noon Year's Eve Pajama Party

For Tots and their families

Thursday, December 31, 10:30am-12:00pm

Come in your PJs and ready to party! We'll welcome the new year together with games, food, and silliness. We'll count down to 12 (midday) in the spirit of the new year, all in time for our youngest Mount Zion members to get to naptime! RSVP at mzion.org.



MZ New Member Informal Q & A with Rabbi Renetzky

Sunday, January 11, 10:30-11:45 am

For new members and open to all interested.

Putting Names to Faces

Request a permanent congregational nametag!

In January 2026, we started an initiative called *Shem el Panim* / Putting Names to Faces. This is a voluntary initiative allowing any members who are 13 and older to request a permanent nametag to wear at Mount Zion throughout the year. Nametags help foster connections within the Mount Zion community and increase a sense of belonging – "Everybody knows my name!" Nametags are available on Friday evenings and Saturday mornings as you enter the lobby. Nametag requests are processed weekly and available to wear by the following Shabbat.

Would you like to request a nametag?

Contact our Event Coordinator, April Colacci at acolacci@mzion.org to receive a personalized form for your household.

Join the Engagement Committee!

All Mount Zion members are welcome!

First meeting: *Sunday, January 24, 9:00-10:15am*

Did you know that Engagement and Belonging 2.0 is a key part of our strategic plan? We are forming an Engagement Committee to implement engagement opportunities and share ideas with the Board of Directors. Committee members will:

- Lead and support engagement initiatives such as oneg discussion tables, geographic/neighborhood social groups, and MZ Small Group expansion.
- Help welcome new members through individual outreach and attendance at events.
- Attend monthly meetings (when able) to provide updates on initiatives and check in about next steps.

Want to learn more or interested in joining our first meeting? Reach out to Engagement and Belonging Committee Chair, Sharon DeMark sdemark@comcast.net and Director of Congregational Engagement, Rabbi Heather Renetzky hrenetzky@mzion.org.

20s/30s Group

- **Shabbat Dinner (with Moishe House) – Friday, November 20, 7:45pm** – Join us for Shabbat services at 6:30pm with the congregation, followed by a festive Shabbat dinner!
- **Chanukah Party – Sunday, December 6, 6-8pm** at Abby's house – Celebrate Chanukah with dinner, drinks, board games, and lighting the chanukiah. RSVP for address.
- **Episodes and Eats Series – Thursdays, January 7, 14, 28, 6-7:30pm** - Each week, we will eat dinner and watch a Jewish TV episode, then discuss the episode together.

If you'd like to receive emails about 20s/30s programming, please email Abby Farber, Director of Youth and Young Adult Engagement, at afarber@mzion.org

Brotherhood

Brotherhood is proud to announce David Epstein as our new president. We invite anyone with interest in the Brotherhood to come to our meetings. Don't worry about having to eat first because we serve a light supper at the meetings. One of our goals for the next year is outreach to get more of the younger men at Mount Zion interested in participating in Brotherhood.

Upcoming Events:

Brotherhood Meetings
Tuesdays, December 15 & February 16, 6:00 pm

Dinner at Malcolm Yards
Thursday, December 17, 6:30-8:30 pm

Game Night in February
Date TBD - watch for more info in Mount Zion weekly emails. We invite all men at Mount Zion to join us!

Meet Brotherhood's New President: David Epstein



Mount Zion has been an important part of my life for as long as I can remember. I have been a lifelong member of the congregation, beginning with my consecration, followed by my Bar Mitzvah in 1968 under Rabbi Schwartz and my confirmation in 1971. Rabbi Schwartz was instrumental in drawing me into congregational life, including youth group activities and regional gatherings, whether here at Mount Zion, in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin, or elsewhere. Rabbi Lerner later officiated at Carol's and my wedding in 1983.

Carol and I have two children. Our daughter, Emily, is married to Mark Trudeau, and they have three wonderful daughters. Our son, Joshua, completes our family.

Professionally, I am a real estate broker with my company, Total Freedom Realty. My work includes real estate sales, rental property management, and property renovations.

Outside of work, my biggest interests are music and bicycling. I currently play in several musical ensembles and, of course, enjoy making music at Mount Zion whenever I can.

I look forward to serving as President of the Mount Zion Brotherhood, contributing my time and experience, and getting to know more members of our congregation. Some of my goals are to create fun and engaging events, bring in interesting and educational speakers, and broaden participation so that more members feel connected to the Brotherhood. I welcome your ideas and look forward to getting to know you!

Please feel free to reach out to me:
Call or text: 612-701-5575 / Email: David@totalfreedomrealty.com

David Epstein, Brotherhood President

Adult Night Out with the Jewish Songwriter Project

Saturday, February 13, 7:00 pm at Mount Zion
Presented by Glenn Hardin, Trevor McSpadden, Dan Baker, and Rebekah Jacob



From Irving Berlin and George Gershwin to Bob Dylan and beyond, Glenn, Trevor, Dan, and Rebekah will lead the community in a singalong of show tunes, pop hits, rock classics, and more. A bit of historical context, biographical info, and casual humor will be included at no extra charge!

Co-sponsored by Mount Zion Brotherhood and Women of Mount Zion Temple.

Women of Mount Zion Temple

For the most up-to-date information, contact Liz Stein lizlstein@gmail.com to be added to the WMZT email list.

Women of Mount Zion were honored on Shabbat October 30. This photo features some of the esteemed leadership!



Women's Spirituality



Please join us on **Sundays, January 10, February 21, March 14, April 18 (all at Mount Zion), and May 2 (off site) from 9:45-12:15 pm** for our hybrid (in-person and Zoom) gatherings where we will explore different concepts in Jewish Spirituality. We also have time to share and listen compassionately during our check-in time. Meetings run from 9:45 am-12:00 pm with time to schmooze until 12:15 pm. All who include women in their identity are welcome to join us! Questions? Contact Jen Hakes at jenniferhakespt@gmail.com.

Religious School News

Religious School Calendar

December 5 - 3rd Grade Shabbaton

December 6 – Lower School Chanukah Celebrations

December 9 – Chai School Chanukah Celebrations

December 23-January 3 – No Religious School - Winter Break

January 6 – Religious School/Chai School Returns

January 10 – Lower School Returns

January 17 – No Religious School - MLK Day

January 24 - 1st and 2nd Grade Families Tu BiSh'vat Seder

January 31 - 6th Grade B'nei Mitzvah Family Tallit Workshop

February 14 – No Religious School - Presidents' Day

February 17 – No Lower School - Conferences

February 26 - 27 - 4th Grade Shabbaton

February 28 - 6th Grade B'nei Mitzvah Family Tzitzit Tying Workshop

March 7 – L'Dor V'Dor Day

March 14 - 6th Grade B'nei Mitzvah Family D'var Torah Workshop

March 21 – Purim Carnival, No Religious School Class

March 28-April 4 – No Religious School - Spring Break

March 28 - 30 - 8th Grade Washington DC Trip

April 7 - Religious School/Chai School Returns



PURIM at Mount Zion:

A Fun Jewish Holiday for All Ages!

Sunday, March 21

9:30 am – Purim Service/shpiel & Megillah Reading

10:30 am-12:30 pm – Purim Carnival – Open to Everyone!

Purim commemorates the story of Esther, who rescued the Jews of ancient Persia (now Iran) from persecution. Traditions include dressing in costume and eating hamantaschen (triangular stuffed pastries). It is our spring time chance for some fun!

Youth Engagement News

Youth Group Dates

Noar Tzion (3rd-5th Grade)

- **Chanukah Olympics (Sun, Dec 6, 12:15-2pm)** – Join us for an afternoon of friendly competition with games, challenges, and puzzles! We'll have lunch and Chanukah treats as well!
- **Escape Room (Sun, Feb 7, 12:15-2pm)** – Participate in a lively challenge at Mount Zion and collaborate with your peers to escape! We'll have lunch and treats too!

JYG (6th-8th Grade)

- **Puzzles and Pizza (Sun, Nov 22, 12:15-2pm)** – Create your own pizza for lunch and engage in physical, creative, and intellectual puzzle challenges!
- **Canvas and Cookies (Sun, Jan 10, 12:15-2pm)** – Paint a masterpiece and munch on yummy snacks!

SPORTY (9th-12th Grade)

- **Chanukah Party (Sat, Dec 5, 5:30-8pm)** – Join us at Mount Zion for a great evening including Jew-pardy, Chanukah activities, Thai food, and celebrating the second night of Chanukah! SPORTY Board has lots of exciting surprises planned!
- **Lock-In (Fri-Sat, Jan 29-30)** – This annual SPORTY tradition promises to be a fun night with dinner, services, late-night activities, and lock-in favorites! We can't wait to spend the night at MZ with you!

Youth Group Kick-Off Events!

All 3 of our youth groups had kick-off events in October! Noar Tzion made art at Crafternoon, JYG had a pre-Shabbat picnic and decorated cookies, and SPORTY baked and painted pumpkins!









Our staff received a beautiful gift from member Sharon DeMark:

This is an original artwork depicting 49 objects found throughout Mount Zion. Together they form a portrait of our community, each piece holding its own story and meaning in our congregational life. We are deeply grateful to Sharon for this thoughtful gift. Please stop by the office to see it in person!



Thank You...For Your Contributions

These donations were received between August 18 to November 11. Donations received after November 11 will be included in the next bulletin.

Rabbis' Discretionary Fund

In appreciation of:
Rabbi Esther Adler & Rabbi Adam Stock Spilker
Carolyn Glickstein
The Marriage of Caity Berk & Jonathan Sogin
Emily Duke & Daniel Sogin
The Marriage of Jon Socha and Miriam Hauptman
Debra & Paul Hauptman
In honor of:
Rabbi Adam Stock Spilker
Loren Lerner
Pearl McSpadden's Bat Mitzvah
John Mast
Rabbi Misha Zinkow's 70th Birthday
Margie Abrahamson
In memory of:
Judy Brier
Arnie Brier
Marilyn "Dee Dee" Harris
Sue Winthrop
Rabbi Leigh Lerner
Jamie & Karen Forman
Florence Loren Lerner
Mark Margolis
Louis & Nancy Melamed
Sue Winthrop
Shelley Robbins
Seth Levin & Mia Nosanow
John Plano
Chris Wallen
Douglas & Elizabeth Wallen
In yahrzeit memory of:
Lilo Auerbach Haeusler
Fred Haeusler & Leslie Martin
Donations:
Sarah Graveley
Bruce & Judith Tennebaum

Cantors' Discretionary Fund

In memory of:
Dorothy Lipschultz
Ellen, Janet & Tom Lipschultz
Shelley Robbins
Karen Gjerstad & Kent Simon
John Plano
Carol Smith
Sarah A Carpenter
Chris Wallen
Elizabeth & Douglas Wallen
In yahrzeit memory of:
David Burgess
Bill & Gloria Levin
Donations:
Sarah Graveley

Maxine Applebaum Art Enhancement Fund

In memory of:
Rabbi Leigh Lerner
Jimmy & Sally Beloff
Bevan & Judy Marvy

Bloom Library Fund

In honor of:
Sally Rubinstein's Aliyah on Yom Kippur
Mitch & Sally Rubinstein
In memory of:
Joan C Barch
Mitch & Sally Rubinstein
Rabbi Leigh Lerner
Mitch & Sally Rubinstein
Edna H Paskins
Mitch & Sally Rubinstein
Jerrold H Paskins
Mitch & Sally Rubinstein
Robert W Paskins
Mitch & Sally Rubinstein

Caring Community Fund

In memory of:
Dorothy Lipschultz
Ellen, Janet & Tom Lipschultz

Cemetery Maintenance and Beautification Fund

In yahrzeit memory of:
George Lloyd Levin
Bill & Gloria Levin

Edelstein Family Biblical Garden Fund

In yahrzeit memory of:
Rose Edelstein
Randy & Tom Edelstein
George Esrig
Randy & Tom Edelstein
Ann Mendelson
Randy & Tom Edelstein

Irene Finberg Camp Scholarship Fund

In memory of:
Judith Strauss
David & Mary Ann Wark

Nancy & Jimmy and Natalie & Buddy Harris Leadership Fund

In memory of:
Marilyn "Dee Dee" Harris
Lenny & Lynn Snyder & Family
Rabbi Leigh Lerner
Barney & Pam Harris
Lynn & Leonard Spicer
Joanne & Bruce Levy

Robert & Jean Harris Summer Camp Endowment Fund

In memory of:
Marilyn "Dee Dee" Harris
Devorah Harris
Rabbi Leigh Lerner
Devorah Harris
Peggy Miller
Devorah Harris

Mildred and William Harris Chapel Fund Endowment Fund

In appreciation of:
The Harris Chapel Redesign Committee
Bill & Gloria Levin

Sarah and Yale Johnson Family Fund

In memory of:
Susan Gray
Elaine & Michael Johnson
Joni Lynn Mefford
Beth & Todd Johnson & Family
Elaine & Michael Johnson & Family
William Ramseyer
Elaine & Michael Johnson

Kibud Morim (Honoring Teachers) Fund

In memory of:
Henry Borow
The Borow Moore Family

Annette K and James A Levine Choir Fund

In honor of:
James Levine
Raline Paper

Malmon-Cohen Education Fund

Donations:
Arnie Diamond & Cynd Friedman

Mandel Music Fund

In memory of:
Rabbi Leigh Lerner
Diane & Roger Tygier

Melamed Family Lecture in Liberal Religion Fund

In honor of:
Rabbi Ilene Melamed's Birthday
Louis & Nancy Melamed

Mitzvah Foodshelf

In honor of:
Ellen & Joe Konstan's Anniversary
Barbara Kletzman
In memory of:
Linda Mason Aminoff
Nancy Hauser
Judy Brier
Brian & Judy Krasnow
Marilyn "Dee Dee" Harris
Barenbaum & Devitt Families
Brian & Judy Krasnow
Bunny & Judy Kuller
Rabbi Leigh Lerner
Harriet Guthertz
Mark Margolis
Fred Haeusler & Leslie Martin
Anne Hope
Andrea & Jack Silverman
David & Mary Ann Wark
Richard Wolkoff
Lee Tama Litman
Frances Fuerstneau
Lloyd Kepple
Patricia Schulz
Beverly Wittgenstein
Shelley Robbins
Diane & Richard Opensky
In yahrzeit memory of:
Deannie Boltax
Bonnie Abrahamson
Yehuda Fraenkel & Family
Alexandra Oppenheimer
Joel Oppenheimer
Ben, Alexandra, and Larry Oppenheimer
Sylvia Strobing Wolkin
Stephanie Wolkin
Donations:
Harvey & Judy Arbit
Andy Fein
Bill & Gloria Levin
Marilyn Silver

Fund for Mount Zion

In memory of:
Rabbi Leigh Lerner
Bill & Gloria Levin

Raline and Bill Paper Emergency Assistance Fund

In memory of:
Marilyn "Dee Dee" Harris
Raline Paper
Rabbi Leigh Lerner
Raline Paper
In yahrzeit memory of:
Bill Paper
Raline Paper

Jane Steinman Music Fund

In yahrzeit memory of:
Jane Steinman
Jessica Steinman

Torah Restoration, Maintenance and Improvement Fund

Donations:
Andy Fein

Torah Tones Fund

In memory of:
Shelley Robbins
Adrienne Eisenmann

Tzedek Fund - Social Justice

In honor of:
Fred Haeusler & Leslie Martin's 22nd Anniversary
Fred Haeusler & Leslie Martin
In memory of:
Sylvia Bander
Michael Bander
Rabbi Leigh Lerner
Ellen & Martin Sampson
In yahrzeit memory of:
Esther Ruder
Corol Gurstelle
Lena Schneider
Carol Gurstelle

Yahrzeit Fund

In memory of:
Lee Levitan
Julie, Jonathan, Tyler, & Cameron Burbey
Bobbi Levitan
Arthur Rock
Sue Grupe
In yahrzeit memory of:
Alvin Abrahamson
Bonnie Abrahamson
Ben Bergal
Jean & Michael Folger
Nathan Goldstein
Michelle P Karon
Lois Hoffman
Jan Hoffman
Joseph Levine
Allen & Nancy Levine
Marcella Sechter
Pearl Rosen
Mordecai Shallom
Elsie Shallom
Richard Splinter
Jessica & Neil Segal
Betty Steinberg
Larry Steinberg
Benjamin Titow
Arlene Spilker

Z Willard Finberg Education Fund

In memory of:
Marilyn "Dee Dee" Harris
Anonymous
Bill & Gloria Levin

Tu BiSh'vat Shabbat:

Welcome the season of growing & giving back

Friday, January 22, 6:30–7:45 pm at Mount Zion (No charge, but RSVP requested to help us plan).

New! Holiday guide for Tu BiSh'vat (see p. 21).



Celebrate Tu BiSh'vat, the Jewish New Year of the Trees, during a special Friday night in Margolis Hall. Our shortened Shabbat service and community seder will weave together t'filah, seven special species of foods, wine or juice, blessings, song, and conversation. **This spiritual, snack-filled journey is open to all ages.**

Together, we'll celebrate the renewal of the natural world and plant the seeds for a season of growing and giving back at Mount Zion. This evening will kick-off spring opportunities to care for Mount Zion's trees, plants, gardens, and grounds in support of our *Shomrei Adamah*/Keepers of the Earth Committee conservation efforts, culminating around Passover and Earth Day 2027.

Celebrate with us, then help us grow what comes next.

5787 Yom Kippur Fast Appeal

*Yasher koach to our community for the **$19,178 tzedakah raised** for the below organizations. We also donated **2,453 pounds of food** to Neighborhood House for the Yom Kippur Food Drive.*

Jeremiah Program: $1,582

Jewish Community Action: $1,081

Nechama: $1,456
A Jewish Response to Disaster

Leket Israel: $688

MZ Cemetery - Perpetual Maintenance: $1,556

Neighborhood House: $4,742

Our Synagogue Partnerships: $516
Reform Congregations in Modiin and Bat Ayin

IMPJ: $1,129
Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism

Hallie Q Brown Community Center: $1,049

Mazon: $1,410
A Jewish Response to Hunger

Welcoming the Stranger: $3,969
An Immigration Justice initiative of our Tzedek Committee

Rabbi and Cantor Sabbaticals

As I shared last year, Rabbi and Cantor Spilker and Cantor Strauss-Klein are splitting their sabbaticals over a three-year period. Thus, Rabbi Spilker was on sabbatical this past January and February and will be away for these months in 2027 and 2028. Cantor Spilker was and will be on sabbatical for February each of those years. Cantor Strauss Klein took sabbatical for the month of July in 2025 and 2026 and will do so again in 2027. And though Rabbi Adler has not yet taken a sabbatical in her 26 years she has no immediate plans this year and may opt to take sabbatical leave before her retirement.

We are fortunate that the clergy work as a team and will be able to cover for each other as they do throughout the year. While Rabbi Spilker is on sabbatical in January and February, we will increase the time commitment for Rabbi Adler. Rabbi Renetzky will also step in to teach the Confirmation class and lead some additional services. Both rabbis along with our cantors will be available for life cycle events to support the congregation. We have hired a B'nei Mitzvah tutor to cover when Cantor Spilker is away in February.

If you have any questions, please be in touch.
Jon Strauss, President (jons@sapientialaw.com)

B'ruchim HaBa'im
Welcome to our new members!

Lauren Bain and Dan Millikin
and their children Liora, Naomi, and Micah

Melanie and Scott Klein

Stephanie and Peter Malinow

Megan and Mac Plumstead, and their child Olivia

Madeline and Tate Roselius, and their children Miriam and Lily

Stuart and Martha Schmitz

Ted and Yona Weinberg

A Day of Talmud Learning

Sunday, February 28, 10:00 am - 5:00 pm
Weyerhaeuser Board Room at Macalester College
Cost: Sliding scale $50-72, lunch included, no one turned away for lack of funds

Explore the fantastical world of the Talmud—a wild and wonderful textual record of generations of rabbinic debate, discussion, and stories. No background knowledge needed! We'll deepen our understanding of the Jewish past and improve our Jewish learning chops by studying one short passage of the Talmud. We'll study this passage in the original Aramaic and Hebrew. All are welcome, from experienced students of Talmud to those taking their first steps into Jewish learning.

This program is co-sponsored by Mount Zion, Shir Tikvah, Beth Jacob, and Macalester Jewish Organization.

Following our Derech (Path) and as stated in our congregational position statement on Protecting the Planet: *Bring in, as we consider advocacy, "speakers from different perspectives," as stated in our Strategic Plan, "who can address these topics and support communication practices to have respectful conversations in line with our Derech (path)."* **We therefore present:**

Data Centers: Pros and Cons

Sunday, January 10, 10:00 - 11:45 am

In Person @ Mount Zion's Harris Chapel and online via Zoom
Sponsored by MZ's Shomrei Adamah/Keepers of the Earth Committee

Join us to hear a range of perspectives on the energy and environmental impacts of the AI data center boom nationwide and here in Minnesota. Our expert panel will discuss a variety of topics including groundwater and noise impacts, implications for household electricity costs, the renewable and fossil fuel energy resources used to power data centers, how local communities and state regulators are responding to data center proposals, and what to expect from the state legislature on data centers in the upcoming legislative session.



Alexandra Klass, moderator
James G. Degnan Professor of Law, University of Michigan Law School
Co-director, Michigan Law Environmental and Energy Law Program



James Coleman
Julius E. Davis Professor of Law, University of Minnesota Law School
Nonresident Senior Fellow, American Enterprise Institute



Brian Bell
Partner
Dorsey & Whitney LLP



Luke Norquist
Staff Attorney and Skadden Fellow
Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy

"Living the Jewish Calendar" Fair!



Deepen your understanding of the Jewish holidays through two exciting events! Take home resources, activities, recipes, and more to enhance your own practice.

SPRING: Sunday, Feb 7, 9:30 - 11:30 am – Explore Purim, Passover, the Omer, Shavuot, Tisha B'Av, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, and Sh'mini Atzeret/Simchat Torah

- Information geared for all knowledge and experience levels
- Sample festival foods and drinks
- Gain confidence in leading your friends and family through at-home holiday rituals
- Optional 30-minute workshops at 11:00 am led by our rabbis and cantors

Chevruta

Chevruta learning is a traditional Jewish method of one-to-one learning, in which a pair of learners works in partnership to read and discuss Jewish texts through self-guided exploration. Join an upcoming class or learn the material on your own. If you're interested in learning the material independently, reach out to Rabbi Renetzky at hrenetzky@mzion.org.

Cost per course: Members: $54; Non-members: $72
Contact Kate Tucker at ktucker@mzion.org for financial assistance.

The God I Found

Wednesdays, 7:30-8:45pm, January 6, 13, 20, 27, February 3, 10
Register at mzion.org.

Have you ever felt God when staring out at Lake Superior? Was God in the room when your child was born? Have you found God in the liturgy of Yom Kippur or when sitting by the bedside of a sick friend? Explore different frameworks for understanding our ever-evolving relationship with the creator. Bring your spiritual experiences *and* your skepticism.

The Stories We Tell and What Stories Tell Us: Storytelling on Passover and Beyond

Wednesdays, 6:00-7:15pm, April 7, 14; May 5, 12, 19, 26
(No class April 21, 28 for Passover)
Registration coming soon!

Storytelling is a key component of the Passover seder. Why do we tell stories? How can we get more out of them? And how can telling a familiar story in a new way change who we are? Explore these questions and more as we investigate storytelling in the seder and beyond.

Coming this Spring:

At Life's End: Jewish Beliefs and Rituals on Dying, Death, and Mourning

Wednesdays, March 10, 17, 24, 31, 7:00-8:30 pm
Taught by Rabbi Adler

Cost: $36 members/$72 public per person
Confidential financial assistance is available to members by contacting our Executive Director, Kate Tucker, at ktucker@mzion.org.



Jewish mourning practices are both ancient and psychologically sound. In this course we study the Jewish sources and practices around dying, death, and mourning. We will explore both the hows and the whys of what Jewish law calls on us to do or not do, and how we make choices as Reform Jews.

Learn to Read Hebrew!

Wednesdays, March 17-May 5, 6:00 - 7:15 pm
(no class April 21 and 28).
Taught by Nancy Flynn

Tuition *(includes all materials)*: $75 members/$100 non-members
Register at mzion.org. (Minimum of seven students).



This class covers the building blocks of written Hebrew, offering you the ability to begin to read the prayers in Hebrew. You will learn the letters and begin basic reading, focusing on increasing access to any siddur (prayerbook)!

Confidential financial assistance is available to members by contacting our Executive Director, Kate Tucker, at ktucker@mzion.org.

An Ethiopian Jewish Journey: Stories and Culture

Chef-in-Residence Beejhy Barhany

Friday, April 2-Saturday, April 3
Sponsored by MaZAL and the Israel Advisory Committee



Friday, April 2

6:30 pm Shabbat Services
Beejhy will tell a story during the service.

After services (approx. 8:00 pm)
Beejhy will tell her personal story as an Ethiopian Jew.

Saturday, April 3

3:00-4:30 pm – Ethiopian Coffee Ceremony
4:30-6:00 – Berbere Spice Workshop and Havdalah
Member price for each - $18, non-member $25
Member price for both - $25, non-member $36

Beejhy Barhany is a chef, author, and cultural bridge-builder who uses food as a universal language to connect communities worldwide. She is the founder of the Beta Israel of North America Cultural Foundation and the proprietor of Tsion Café in Harlem. Her cookbook, *Gursha: Timeless Recipes for Modern Kitchens from Ethiopia, Israel, Harlem and Beyond*, was the first Ethiopian Jewish cookbook from a major American publisher. *Gursha* was recognized among The New York Times' Best Cookbooks of 2025, named a finalist for the Jewish Book Council awards, and nominated for a James Beard Award.

Parenting and Grandparenting with Mussar

Cantor Strauss-Klein, facilitator
Sundays, 9:45-11:15 am, Jan 10, 24, 31, Feb 21, 28, March 14.
Cost: $180. Scholarships available.

A six-session taste of Mussar exploring how Jewish wisdom strengthens relationships with children, grandchildren, and family.

New to Mussar? Go to livingmussar.org to complete an interest form and receive registration information.

Returning participants should contact their facilitator to secure a spot.

LIVING MUSSAR

Building a Jewish Home, Creating a Jewish Family



Mon, March 15, 29, April 5, 7-8:30 pm
Rabbi Adam Stock Spilker
$36 members/$72 public per person
Register at mzion.org.

Confidential financial assistance is available to members by contacting our Executive Director, Kate Tucker, at ktucker@mzion.org.

What does it mean to have a "Jewish" home? This three-part class is for couples or single heads of households who want an open and structured way to reflect. The emphasis of the class will be on making choices that are right for you after study and discussion on key questions of Jewish life. Examples: What Jewish values will we emphasize? What books and art will be in our home? What rituals will we incorporate? What will Shabbat look like in our home?

Social Action Update

Tzedek = Justice

Justice, Justice!

The Tzedek Committee continues its pursuit of justice, focusing on Racial Justice, Climate Justice, Gender Justice, and Immigration Justice. This year we have focused on Democracy Defense, with the realization that all of our justice initiatives depend upon a functioning democracy, the Rule of Law, and the commitments outlined in our Bill of Rights and Constitutional amendments.

Minnesota saw record numbers of voters in our Midterm elections. The Tzedek Committee's Voter Engagement group set up information tables and provided up-to-the-moment voter information for Mount Zion members and visitors throughout the fall. This winter we will focus on ensuring that our elected officials take office without interference. Tzedek committee members have partnered with UNIDOS and other national organizations, organizing congregations and neighbors to ensure that our democracy holds strong.

If you are concerned about whether any election results might be discounted or delayed, we have contingency plans for how best to respond. Our current focus at Mount Zion is to strengthen our connections and ground ourselves in reflection, responsibility, and care for each other. Please contact Melanie Klein (melaniepttrsn@gmail.com) to learn more or to become involved.

Immigration Justice

Our Welcome the Stranger initiative continues to help immigrants within our community by providing food, gift cards, bedding and towels, furnishings, and other personal items. Here are some ways you can help and spread the word to others in your network.

Please consider donating to Welcome the Stranger to support our efforts on behalf of immigrants and asylum seekers. You may give a donation at mzion.org or send a check to the Temple noting that it is for the Welcome the Stranger Initiative. No amount is too small. Thank you for considering this mitzvah!

The Mount Zion Tzedek Committee has been helping a family of Eritrean migrants—asylum seekers—over the last year. As some of you know, the mother of the Eritrean family that we are assisting is a chef. Freweini (the mother) has cooked two meals for gatherings of Mount Zion members, and we are planning a third dinner in the spring. if you would like to explore ways in which you can assist the family, please reach out to Mark Joffe at marksjoffe@gmail.com.

Dinners at Immigrant-Owned Restaurants

To support local, immigrant-owned restaurants, the Tzedek Committee's Welcome the Stranger initiative is organizing dinners at local restaurants. This is a wonderful opportunity to support an immigrant-owned restaurant while socializing with fellow congregants at Mount Zion. In 2026, we enjoyed delicious meals at Cheng Heng, El Burrito Mercado, and Nico's Tacos! **Our next dinner will be on Sunday, January 31, 4:00 p.m.** We limit participation to 20 guests. We will publicize the location in the Mount Zion weekly newsletter.

East Side Learning Center

The Tzedek Committee partners with the East Side Learning Center in St. Paul. If you are interested in tutoring a child, please contact JoAnn Nathan at nathanjoann@comcast.net or Karmit Bulman at karmitbulman@gmail.com. More info at eastsidelearningcenter.org

Share your Stories with MN Truth Council

Bearing witness to traumatic events is an act of courage. The state of Minnesota is working with the Advocates for Human Rights to collect and archive our experiences of Operation Metro Surge. We invite you to tell your story. Whether you interacted directly with ICE, took part in the response, or watched the surge unfold on the news, *your story matters*. Stories will be archived as part of Minnesota's Truth Council. The Tzedek committee has a trained story collector ready to hear from you. ***Stories can be collected through December.*** For information, contact Robin at robin87654@yahoo.com.

Join the Effort to Oppose Appleton ICE Detention Center

There is a 1,600 bed ICE detention center that is being prepared to be used later this year in Appleton, MN. Members of this synagogue are working with both local community members in Appleton and groups from around the State to oppose the opening of this facility. Groups from the Twin Cities are going up to Appleton on a monthly basis to help protest. There are also regular virtual meetings to discuss the situation from a grassroots perspective, including legal/legislative paths to oppose the facility. Please contact Mark Goldberg at markabaddon@gmail.com if you are interested in getting involved.

Gender Justice

Tzedek Committee Leadership Team member, Ellen Kennedy, presented to the United Nations Human Rights Committee in Geneva this past November. Her organization, World Without Genocide, submitted two 'shadow reports' - one about the abridgment of the human right to bodily autonomy over the entire life course including conception, contraception, reproduction, and end of life decisions; and the other on the abridgment of the human right to a safe, clean, and sustainable environment.

Climate Justice

Tzedek committee members met with the *Shomrei Adamah*/Keepers of the Earth committee this Fall to share perspectives and brainstorm ways that we can work together to protect our multispecies and mitigate on-going harms to our environment. More details will be forthcoming.

You are welcome at any and all Tzedek events! Please look to the weekly Mount Zion newsletter and the monthly Tzedek News Blast for updated opportunities

Visit our website to sign up for our monthly newsblast and receive the most current information on Tzedek actions and events. On the Mount Zion homepage, click on "Act" and then "Social Justice" (mzion.org/act/social-justice).

If you are interested in volunteering or learning more, contact Diana Dean (dianamdean@msn.com).

Tzedek Shabbat

Friday, January 15, 6:30 pm

At this Shabbat, we honor the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. During services, we'll hear about the Minnesota Truth Council. Discussion to follow services.

Chanukah
חנוכה

MOUNT ZION

Chanukah, also known as *Chag Urim*—the festival of lights—celebrates the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem in 164 BCE after it had been defiled by the Syrian Greeks three years earlier. The holiday has a complex history. The earliest mentions of Chanukah focus on the military victory of a ragtag group of Jews who resisted a Greek authority that was outlawing Jewish practice. Later texts emphasize the miracle of the oil; when they went to rededicate the Temple, the Maccabees only found one tiny bottle of oil and the oil miraculously lasted eight days. Today, this winter holiday serves as a reminder of the faith and light we can find in the darkness.

Featured Cookbook

Sephardic Holiday Cookbook
By Gilda Angel
This cookbook features recipes from many backgrounds--Turkish, Syrian, Moroccan, Algerian, Rhodian, Persian, Greek, Spanish and more. Explore 20 pages worth of Chanukah recipes! **Check it out from our Mount Zion library!**



Musical Moment

Tired of listening to the Maccabeats on repeat? Enjoy this eclectic and diverse Chanukah playlist curated by Cantor Spilker! **Find it on our Chanukah page at mzion.org**.



Order of Operations

Pirsumei nisa (publicizing the miracle of Chanukah) is the central mitzvah of Chanukah. We do this by lighting a *chanukiah (menorah)* and placing it in a window or somewhere else visible to passersby. But which candle do you light first and at what point do you say each blessing? **Find the blessings on the Chanukah page of our website and learn the tune from Cantor Strauss-Klein in a video on our YouTube page.**

1. Put candles in the *chanukiah* from right to left. Don't forget your *shamash* (the helper candle).
2. Light the *shamash*.
3. Say the first blessing, which blesses the candlelight.
4. Begin lighting the candles. Light the newest candle first (on the left).
5. While lighting the candles, say the second blessing, which remembers the Chanukah story.
6. On the first night, after lighting the candles, say the *Shechiyanu*, the blessing for reaching this moment.
7. On Shabbat—light the Chanukah candles and then light the Shabbat candles. We light the Chanukah candles first because, traditionally, we do not kindle a new flame once Shabbat has begun.



Fun fact: In addition to the special candle lighting blessings, we add a special prayer to both the *Amidah* (the "standing prayer" during services) and the *Birkat Hamazon* (blessing after meals) that remembers the Maccabees and gives gratitude for the miracles of Chanukah. See page 264 of our *Mishkan Tefilah* Shabbat siddur. Reciting Hallel—a special set of psalms—during Shacharit (the morning service) throughout Chanukah is a mitzvah.

Beyond the Latke

Chanukah food traditions from around the world

While latkes now seem like a Chanukah staple, that wasn't always the case. Chanukah used to be associated with the Midwest favorite: cheese! Why? The heroine Judith slew the Syrian general Holofernes by first feeding him lots of salty cheese and wine to lower his defenses. This scared off his army, which led the Jews to victory. Cheese was easy to come by in the Mediterranean and Middle East, so cheese latkes became a favorite way to celebrate Chanukah. But in Eastern Europe, potatoes were more readily available. Jews all over the world continue to celebrate Chanukah with recipes reflective of their region, especially those cooked in oil. **Learn more at reformjudaism.org.**

Berenjenas con miel: Deep-fried eggplant rounds drizzled with honey (Spain)
Buñuelos: Fried dough dessert (Mexico, Cuba, Colombia)
Panelle: Fried chickpea fritters (Italy)

Frituras de malanga: Taro fritters (Cuba)
Gulam jamun: Deep-fried milk balls, typically soaked in rose-flavored syrup (India)
Zengoula: Funnel cake (Iraq)

> Chanukah is a cozy holiday for my family. We usually stay in and light candles and stay at the table until they burn out--making guesses as to which one will be first. That togetherness is so special at such a busy and dark time of year.
>
> -Meredith Hicks, Mount Zion member, Phoenix's mom

> What is special about Chanukah is how it brings everyone together and we can celebrate together. To bring light we remember that everyone has good in them. A family tradition is to burn the latkes.
>
> -Phoenix Gerhardstein, age 10

Where does Gift Giving Come From?

The tradition of giving gelt (money, or in most cases today, chocolate coins) goes back to the time of the Maccabees, who distributed coins to Jewish widows, soldiers, and orphans after the rededication of the temple. Gift giving is a practice that took hold among Eastern European immigrants in the late 19th century/turn of the 20th century.



Kavanah (intention) Corner

One *midrash* (rabbinic story) teaches that the faith of the Maccabees was itself a miracle. They lit the *chanukiah* in a time of great upheaval, even when they didn't have enough oil.



Here are some prompts to get you thinking about the meaning of Chanukah.
Journal about them, discuss them over candlelight, or tape them to your fridge!

- What are sources of faith or conviction in your life? What buoys you in challenging times?
- The Maccabees resisted assimilation and held onto their Jewish beliefs and practices. What beliefs and practices do you hold onto as a Jew even though they might go against the grain of mainstream culture?
- The story of Chanukah is, in part, about resisting authority and standing up for what you believe in. When have you questioned or resisted authority? Is pushing back on the status quo comfortable or uncomfortable for you?

Tu BiSh'vat

ט״ו בשבט

MOUNT ZION

Tu BiSh'vat, literally "the fifteenth day of [the month of] *Sh'vat*" is also called "The New Year of the Trees," "The Birthday of the Trees," or "Chag Ha-Ilanot" (The Festival of the Trees). This holiday has practical roots (pun intended!). In Temple times, Israelite farmers were required to tithe their yearly produce. Like our modern day tax day, the 15th of the month of *Sh'vat* was the cut off for fulfilling the tithe from the previous year.

In the fifteenth century, Kabbalists (Jewish mystics) gave Tu BiSh'vat greater spiritual significance by making various symbolic connections between trees and the Divine. Once a minor festival, Tu BiSh'vat gained attention and popularity. Today, this holiday has become a celebration of trees and nature—a Jewish earth day marked by planting trees in Israel and holding Tu BiSh'vat seders around the world.

Featured Tradition

Tu BiSh'vat Seder

The Tu BiSh'vat seder was created by the Kabbalists and celebrates God's presence in the natural world. Modeled after the Passover seder, it involves a series of symbolic snacks! According to Kabbalah, there are four worlds or levels of creation: *azilut* (emanation), *beriah* (creation), *yetzirah* (formation), and *assiyah* (action). Each corresponds to specific types of fruit and nuts, differentiated by their combinations of skins and pits. We also drink four cups of wine or grape juice aligned with the four seasons. ***What fruit and nuts would you include at your Tu BiSh'vat seder?***



First cup: Winter (white)



Second cup: Spring (light pink)



Third cup: Summer (dark pink)



Fourth Cup: Fall (red)



Azilut: entirely spiritual



Beriah: entirely edible



Yetzirah: edible outside, inedible inside



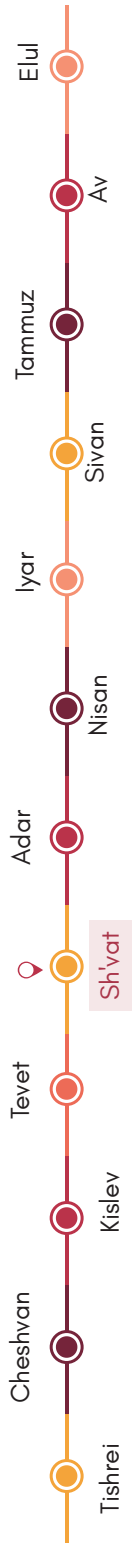
Assiyah: inedible outside, edible inside

Learn more about how to host a Tu BiSh'vat seder at reformjudaism.org.

Fun Fact:

Why celebrate trees in the middle of winter?! The rabbis of the Talmud (Talmud Bavli, Rosh Hashanah 14a) chose the 15th of Sh'vat based on rainfall in the land of Israel. By the middle of Sh'vat, the majority of the annual rainfall had fallen, so it was considered to be the end of the previous year of rain, and therefore the end of the produce year.

> I love Tu BiSh'vat because it is THE holiday that focuses on the REAL world, the world that happens without our attention - seasons changing, plants growing, cycles of life happening - and we appreciate and celebrate the gifts and miracles that underlie our existence.
>
> - Siana Goodwin, Mount Zion member



Happy New Year...Again!

You might be familiar with Rosh Hashanah, but did you know that there are actually four distinct new years on the Jewish calendar? Like a fiscal year, academic year, and calendar year, each of these new years served a distinct purpose in Temple times.



The New Year for Years (Rosh Hashanah)—The first of *Tishrei*, determining the order of the festivals and the counting of years. This helps establish the Sabbatical and Jubilee Years.



The New Year for Trees (Tu BiSh'vat)—The fifteenth of *Sh'vat* (or the first of *Sh'vat* according to Beit Shammai!), the date by which fruit tree tithes are established.



The New Year for Kings—The first of *Nisan*, the date from which the years of a king's rule are counted.



The New Year for Animals—The first of *Elul*, the date by which animal tithes are established. All animals born before this date belonged to the previous tithe year, whereas those born after that date belonged to the next tithe year.

Tu Bi or not Tu Bi?

Move over Roman Numerals!

In Hebrew, the number 15 is *chamishah asar*. So where does the "Tu" in Tu BiS'hvat come from??

Hebrew has its own system of numerical annotation using letters. Each letter represents a number based on its position in the aleph bet: *Aleph* (א) is 1, *bet* (ב) is 2, etc. The letters are combined to make bigger numbers, e.g. *yod bet* (יב) is 12.

The letter *yod* (י) is 10 and the letter *hay* (ה) is 5. So why isn't 15 written as יה? This is part of the four-letter name of God (יהוה), and we treat God's name as especially holy. So instead of *yod* and *hay*, Hebrew uses *tet* and *vav* (טו)—the equivalent of 9 and 6—to add up to 15. When pronounced like a word, טו sounds like "Tu." (And in case you were wondering, the "Bi" in Tu BiSh'vat, just means "in").



Torah Teaching

Tu BiSh'vat doesn't appear in the Torah. However, our environmental responsibility to protect trees—and the earth—has a direct source in Deuteronomy:

When in your war against a city [and] you have to besiege it a long time in order to capture it, you must not destroy its trees, wielding the ax against them. You may eat of them, but you must not cut them down. Are trees of the field human [and able] to withdraw before you into the besieged city? (Deuteronomy 20:19-20)

This verse is the basis for the commandment of *bal taschit* (do not destroy), an environmental ethic to not destroy or waste natural resources.

How do you observe the commandment of bal taschit?



Musical Moment

Tu BiSh'vat is an opportunity to think about our relationship with nature and the climate. *Hope With Our Hands*, written by Zo Tobi, and *L'dor Vador*, written by Rena Branson are songs of hope, resilience, and action written for the Jewish climate justice movement. These songs were produced by Dayenu, an organization that builds a multi-generational Jewish movement to confront the climate crisis "with spiritual audacity and bold political action." ***What would your Jewish climate justice anthem sound like?***

Scan the QR code to hear both songs on the Dayenu website.

Rabbi Adam Stock Spilker
Rabbi Esther Adler
Cantor Jennifer Strauss-Klein
Cantor Rachel Stock Spilker
Rabbi Heather Renetzky, Director of Congregational Engagement
Kate Tucker Sicher, Executive Director
Alisha Sawyer, Religious School Director
Abby Farber, Director of Youth and Young Adult Engagement
Jonathan A. Strauss, President
Charles A. Weinstein, President-Elect

Teresa Matzek, *Iton Tziyon*, editor
tmatzek@mzion.org
Website: www.mzion.org



First Night of Chanukah:

Friday, December 4 / 25 Kislev

Friday, December 4 - Chanukah Shabbat Extravaganikah
Friday, December 11 - Festive Oneg with Latkes
See p. 8

INSIDE

Rabbi's Letter	2
Service Schedule	3
Cantor's Letter	4
From the President	5
Strategic Plan Update	6-7
Engagement	10
B'nei Mitzvah	10
Brotherhood	11
Women of MZT	11
Religious School	12
Youth Engagement	12
Contributions	14
MaZAL	16-18
Social Action Update	19

L'Chaim Mount Zion's 5787 Annual Campaign!

A Sacred Place for All of Us: Sustained by All of Us

Mount Zion is where we sing, study, argue, celebrate, and sit with each other in joy and in grief. It is one of the last places you can walk in without a ticket or an appointment and find community waiting. That kind of place doesn't sustain itself; it is sustained by all of us, together. Your gift to the L'Chaim 5787 Annual Campaign keeps this *makom kadosh* (sacred place) warm in its welcome, wide in its embrace, and open to everyone who needs a place to belong.

MOUNT ZION
L'CHAIM 5787
ANNUAL CAMPAIGN

Your generosity shows up all around our building. This fall, our new solar array began producing clean power for Mount Zion, built to last 40 years or more, a living expression of our values as *Shomrei Adamah*, Keepers of the Earth.

We are sincerely thankful to the more than 100 households who have already given $70,000 toward our $170,000 goal. Every gift, regardless of size, strengthens our community and sustains all that we do together.

Give now at www.mzion.org/donate.

Robert Mast, Chair, Giving Committee

P.S. If you have questions about giving options, such as donor-advised funds, IRA distributions, or stock gifts, please contact Mount Zion's Executive Director, Kate Tucker Sicher, at ktucker@mzion.org or 651-698-3881. Gifts to the Annual Campaign are 100% tax-deductible.