



MISSION

This statement was written in 2003 after 550 conversations and congregational meetings. At its core, it represents our mission:

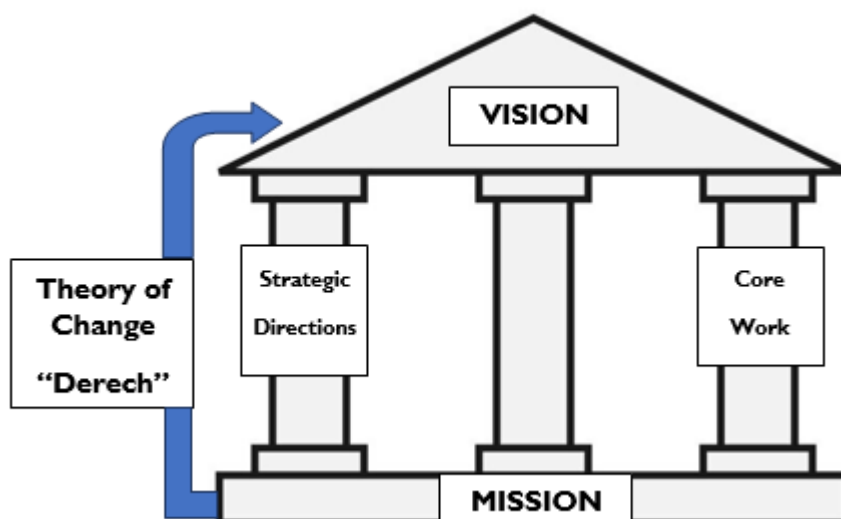
A welcoming and vibrant Jewish spiritual home

Mount Zion Temple is a Reform Jewish congregation devoted to lifelong learning, worship, and acts of loving kindness. In our holy community, we celebrate, comfort, and create meaning in our lives while we seek justice in our world.

[See the rest of the statement here.](#)

VISION

Our Jewish congregation envisions a community and a world where all people experience *Shalom* (wholeness and peace), *Tzedek* (justice), *Shayachut* (belonging), and *Simcha* (joy).



OUR 2040 *DERECH* (PATH)

As we live out our mission, this is the *Derech* (Path) we will follow toward our vision:

Jewish congregation:

- We will exemplify inspiring Judaism.
- We will invite Jewish choices as we honor our community members who are not Jewish.
- We will learn from our Jewish history as we innovate in study and practice (Torah), spiritual gathering (Shabbat), impactful action (Tzedek), and our responsibility for the Jewish people worldwide (Israel).

Shalom (Wholeness and Peace):

- We will be a caring, compassionate community.
- We will create an environment where everyone can bring their whole selves and listen to each other with curiosity.

Tzedek (Justice):

- We will hold ourselves personally accountable as we work with partners in the work of *tikkun olam* (healing and repair of the world).
- We will be stewards of the earth, support those who are disadvantaged, and counter oppression in its many forms.

Shayachut (Belonging):

- We will connect in person, *panim el panim* (face to face), as we strengthen online connections.
- We will nurture our intergenerational and inclusive community and engage those not yet in our community.

Simcha (Joy):

- We will celebrate life, *l'chaim*!

Through our core work and strategic directions we will move forward on our Derech/Path.

CORE WORK

This is what Mount Zion does:

- Connect:** We create a community for youth, young families, empty nesters, singles, and seniors.
- Learn:** We teach all ages from tots to seniors.
- Pray:** We worship regularly and support and celebrate through the cycles of life.
- Act:** We perform acts of loving kindness and justice, and wrestle with our relationship with Israel.
- Sustain:** And we sustain the physical infrastructure, financial strength, and organizational practices of Mount Zion to insure its viability into the future.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Over the next five years we will focus additional energy and resources on four Strategic Directions to augment our Core Work and move us forward on our Derech (Path).

1. **Deepen Jewish Living and Learning:** Find new ways to deepen Jewish knowledge and invite diverse Jewish choices and spiritual practices. For example:
 - a) **“How to”** – Teach liturgy and rituals for all ages and stages, Jewish identity, Reform perspectives, etc. Offer “What does it mean to be Jewish?” and “What does Reform Judaism say about ...?” classes.
 - b) **Adult learning** – Expand our adult education offerings in partnership with local (Hineini) and national learning platforms.
 - c) **Chevruta** (Partner; one-to-one learning) – Focus on chevruta study to build relationships, practice, and commitments.
 - d) **Improve Spaces for in-person gathering** – Renovate Harris Chapel and the Perwein-ZaiKaner Terrace for flexible spaces inside (moveable chairs) and outside (retractable cover for sun and rain).
 - e) **Expand how and where we worship** – Expand our worship to include parks and natural environments; experiment with different worship modalities
2. **Engagement and Belonging 2.0:** We have succeeded in making many congregants feel a strong sense of belonging and we are attracting new members. We still have more to learn about being truly inclusive and how to engage people who are targeted by oppression, young people not feeling the need for synagogue-life or who are challenged in connecting to Jewish life because of their feelings about Israel, and those who have not

“found” Mount Zion yet. There are also opportunities for initiatives for all ages and stages to deepen a sense of belonging as we build a more connected community. *For example:*

- a) **Audacious Hospitality** – Train all congregants in effective welcoming practices but focus on a substantial number of volunteers to support broad welcoming and integration of people into our community.
- b) **Inclusion** – Build our capacity to include young adult Jews, Jews of Color, LGBTQ+ Jews, interfaith families, fellow travelers, people of all abilities, and single people, so they can bring “their whole selves” to MZ.
- c) **Caring Community** – Re-create the infrastructure of matching volunteers to congregants in need. Support our elders and those who are isolated or lonely.
- d) **Youth and Young Families** – Publicize to the broader community low-cost events and times/spaces for relationship building. Shift our vision of membership. Emphasize that we offer Jewish experiences for free with the knowledge that some will come only once, some multiple times, and some will likely join.
- e) **Platforms** – Expand MZ Small Groups to tap into congregants’ creativity. Strengthen our culture of experimentation and revision.
- f) **Intergenerational** – Foster creative, artistic expressions of identity and engagement to bridge the generations.
- g) **Online** – Expand MZ Connect. Engage congregants virtually in Mount Zion’s travels, asynchronous online discussion forums, and more.
- h) Consider a **Brit/Covenant of Membership** as an opt-in program – Some of our members would choose this to commit to deeper engagement (learning, community-building, and volunteerism.)

3. Respond to Threats to People and Planet: Grounded in our texts and stories of **Yetziat Mitzrayim** (We were redeemed from Egypt; we know what it is like to be the stranger.); **B’tzelem Elohim** (We are all created in the image of God.); and **Tikkun Olam** (The world was created imperfectly; we partner with God to repair it.); we will engage in personal practices, congregational initiatives, and strategic partnerships to address rising oppression in our society (ie, antisemitism, racism, homophobia) and the climate crisis. As a synagogue, we will be actively non-partisan and seek to heal polarization in our society. *For example:*

- a) **Co-create congregational positions through congregational engagement** as we have done for health care, marriage equality, and immigration – This would be an action plan of steps that can be taken as a congregation, practices to encourage our members to adopt, and ways to influence the broader community. A goal will be to find common ground in our shared values and engage all across the political spectrum in imagining then supporting effective policies.
- b) **Study** – Create and sustain a community of learners to study:
 - Structural oppression with a focus on antisemitism, racism, and homophobia.
 - The issues of our climate crisis and understand how we can be better stewards.
- c) **Partners** – Work with local, national, and global partners including churches and mosques:

- People: e.g., Hallie Q Brown (Rondo Neighborhood), Neighborhood House, the city of St. Paul, Minnesota Multifaith Network, Jewish Community Relations Council, Jewish Community Action.
 - Planet: e.g., MNIPL (Minnesota Interfaith Power and Light) and Dayenu: A Jewish Call to Climate Action.
- d) **Facilitate opportunities for community service/action** – Offer concrete ways to act with others through tutoring, advocacy at the Capitol, food shelf, meals, clothing drives, clean-ups, home improvements, etc.
- e) **Maintain our building in ways that mirror our values** – We need to update our HVAC system. How do we do so in a way that addresses the environment, air quality (vis a vis pandemic), and fair labor responsibilities?

4. **Invest in Leaders and Strengthen Management:** The transition to a new executive director and subsequent adjustments that flow from new leadership provide an opportune moment to refresh and invest in Mount Zion's people and policies. From a position of strength and stability we can grow staff capacity, broaden lay leadership, and reconsider governance structures to strengthen Mount Zion for the future. *For example:*

- a) **Staff and Leadership Development** – Consider opportunities to grow staff and lay leadership skills and capacity. This might include training and mentoring, helping to build professional networks, strengthening organizational flexibility, and more
- b) **Committees and Volunteerism: Reinvigorate committee charges and missions** – Refresh and inspire volunteering at Mount Zion, including participation in standing committees. Encourage a culture of participation among all members and expand opportunities for ad hoc volunteering to draw on/engage a wide population of congregants.
- c) **Financial Management and Board Fiduciary Responsibility** – Ensure that lay leaders and congregants understand our financial structures, budget, and dues. Seek to broaden financial understanding among lay leaders and develop a new generation of financially-savvy leadership. Review financial oversight practices and ensure the Board is appropriately trained and engaged.
- d) **Unleash Initiative and Experimentation** – Strengthen our culture of experimentation and revision. Grow an organizational culture that encourages more initiative on the part of congregants and staff. Grow leadership and community by involving more people in creating the congregation they want to be a part of.
- e) **Create a culture of gratitude** – Bolster our commitment to honor the work of staff and congregants alike in building this *kehillah kedoshah*, sacred community. Support a culture that has gratitude at its center.