

# The Current

“The VOICE over many waters ...” Psalm 29

MAYIM RABIM  
 מַיִם רַבִּים  
 CONGREGATION



## On Miracles

Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel once arrived late to a speaking engagement and said to those gathered, “I just saw a miracle!” The audience waited for explanation and he finally said, “I watched the sun set.” He continued, “Every sunset is a miracle if we will only open our eyes and minds and spirits to the wonders of it.”

Chanukah is heavily associated with miracles: the victory of the Maccabees as underdogs; the oil that was supposed to only last for one day continuing for eight.

Each letter on the dreidel is the first letter of a word, which together comprise the phrase “A great miracle happened there.” The letter *nun* is the first letter of the Hebrew word *nes* or miracle.

Traditionally the Chanukah menorah is put on a windowsill to “*pirsum hanes*,” to publicize the miracle so that all passers-by can see. We are broadcasting the miracles of the past.

Reconstructionist Jews generally do not subscribe to a theology in which the Almighty suspends the forces of nature to act in the universe. The idea of God's exercising control and direction over the workings of the world may not be relevant to many of us. Yet, we can still acknowledge miracles in the sense when we experience holiness, awe, mystery and gratitude for the interconnectedness of all things. As my colleague Rabbi Jason Gary Klein writes, “From the structure of our bodies that allows us to breathe without conscious effort to the power of connection between people to the wonders of nature, we are surrounded by miracles.” In our daily prayers, a sentence from the Amidah proclaims, “We acknowledge you, declare your praise, and thank you for our lives entrusted to your hand, our souls placed in your care, for your miracles that greet us every day, and for your wonders and the good things that are with us every hour, morning, noon, and night.”

The legend of the Chanukah oil burning for eight days gives us an opportunity to ask: What are miracles? Do we believe in them? Have we witnessed them in our time? On Tuesday, December 20 at 7 pm we will have an education session on Chanukah and miracles. Come ready to explore a variety of interpretations regarding miracles.

If we are feeling low of spirit -- be it due to an excruciating election and/or the days getting shorter -- we know that we still can acknowledge the miracles in our midst morning, noon, and night.

*Rabbi Sharon Stiefel*



*All events are held at 4401 York Avenue South  
in Minneapolis (Friends Meeting House)  
unless otherwise specified.*

**Friday December 2, Shabbat Night Out:  
Home hospitality potluck dinners**

Please email [isaac\\_kaufman@yahoo.com](mailto:isaac_kaufman@yahoo.com) if you would like to attend.

**Sunday December 4, 4:00 PM**

**Mayim Rabim outing to *The Bakken Trio*, with David Krakauer**

**Purchase Tickets at [www.bakkentrio.org](http://www.bakkentrio.org)**

**Contact [robinkingcooper@gmail.com](mailto:robinkingcooper@gmail.com) for seating and dinner arrangements.**

**Saturday December 17, 9:30 AM - Noon  
Shabbat Morning Service**

Services led by Rabbi Stiefel and congregants followed  
by Kiddush and dairy vegetarian potluck lunch

**Sunday December 18, 4:00 – 5:30 PM**

**Book Group, reading *Saint Mazie* by Jami Attenberg**

The Mazie of Jami Attenberg's new novel is Mazie Phillips Gordon, an actual New Yorker. Though born in Boston just at the end of the 19th century, she moved to New York City at the age of 10 to live with her sister Rosie. An attractive girl with a robust sense of life, Mazie grew up to become an exemplary ordinary citizen with a soul of gold, a charitable heart and abundant desires. And a great subject for writers who love New York.

**Where:** the home of Elaine Frankowski (for street address email [office@mayimrabim.org](mailto:office@mayimrabim.org)) **or check your Mayim Rabim directory.**

**Expect:** good conversation and light refreshments

**Tuesday, December 20, 7:00 – 8:30 PM**

**Chanukah and Miracles – taught by Rabbi Stiefel**

The legend of the Chanukah oil burning for eight days gives us an opportunity to ask: What are miracles? Do we believe in them? Have we witnessed them in our time? Come ready to explore a variety of interpretations regarding miracles.

*continued on next page*



**December 24 – January 1, Chanukah**  
*Light first candle Saturday, December 24*

**Tuesday, December 27, 5:30 – 7:30 PM**

Chanukah Party, —stories, songs, dreidels, candles, food ,fun!!  
5:30 - 6:00 Schmooze, art project, dreidel games, 6:00 – Story read by  
Rabbi Stiefel, 6:15 - Light Candles & Sing, 6:30 - Eat latkes and  
**vegetarian Chinese food.**

*...and in January and February*

**Friday January 6, 6:15 – 7:30 PM**

**Kabbalat Shabbat Evening Service**

Services led by Rabbi Stiefel and congregants.  
A dairy vegetarian potluck Shabbat dinner follows services

**Saturday Jan 14, 6:30 – 9:00 PM**

**Annual Game Night**

Please bring board games, card games, dice games, drawing games, games  
of skill, and/or games of chance. Any and all games and gamers are  
welcome! Expect light refreshments and friendly competition.

**Saturday January 21, 9:30 AM - Noon**

**Shabbat Morning Service**

Services led by Rabbi Stiefel and congregants followed by  
Kiddush and dairy vegetarian potluck lunch.

**Sunday January 29, 2:00 – 4:00 PM**

**Annual Meeting**

Member discussion, celebration of accomplishments, and *What's Next.*

**Friday, February 10, 6:15 – 8:00 PM**

Tu B'Shevat Seder and Potluck Dairy Vegetarian Shabbat Dinner  
There will not be a Kabbalat Shabbat service this evening.

**Saturday February 25, 9:30 AM - Noon**

**Shabbat Morning Program**

Continental breakfast and study, followed by a brief service.



If you would like to make a contribution, send it to Mayim Rabim Congregation, 2751 Hennepin Ave S, Suite 236, Minneapolis, MN 55408. You may also donate online through PayPal on our website: [www.mayimrabim.org](http://www.mayimrabim.org)

*We extend thanks to —*

- Robin King Cooper for facilitating the follow-up Board Planning meeting;
- David Liss for printing hard copies of our newsletter

*offer condolences to —*

Kim Ferencik, Isaac Kaufman, Jonah and Asher, on the death of Kim's father, Marlyn Ferencik.



*and refuah shleimah to*

Roz Baker, Joe Rine, and Barbara Sarapas



*recognize these High Holiday donors —*

Sheila and Phillip Fishman, thanking the Rabbi and congregants for their hospitality  
Caroljean Coventree, to thank all the people who made the Days of Awe, awesome

Martha Baxter

David Barta and Rachel Rogers

Denise Pasmarter and Robin Brown, in honor of everyone who worked so hard to make the High Holiday services possible

Charlotte Sniderman, wishing Mayim Rabim Congregation a happy healthy and sweet new year

Linda Crawford & Jo Devlin, in appreciation for the Mayim Rabim community

Karen Helfand and Susan Woodstrom, in memory of Hillel Gershenson

Sandy Gerber and Dick Thomas, in memory of Samuel Gerber

*and these General Fund donors —*

Deborah and David Tabert



## This was the Fall FUNdraiser that was

A warm thanks to all who contributed time, support, musical and artistic talent, goods, and attended.

### **Event Organizers:**

Dana Fox, Elaine Frankowski, Marc Lamm, Sandra Levine

### **Talent:**

Howard Goldberg, Rabbi Sharon Stiefel & Davida Alperin, Isaac Kaufman, Rabbi Jeffrey Schein, Arlo Abrams, Felix Abrams, Jim Miller, Marc Lamm, Jeanie Hoffman, Johanna Lester, Lionel Davis, Josie Winship, Spencer Chandler



**Marc asking for a dime**



**Rabbi and her lulav etrog lesson**

### **Individual Auction Donors:**

Amy Sheldon, Barbara Sarapas, Carolyn Belle, Dana Fox, David Liss, Deborah Schein, Deborah Tabert, Denise Pasmanter, Elaine Frankowski, Ina Gravitz, Jerri Pumroy, Joe Rine, Karen Helfand, Larry Gravitz, Martha Baxter, Rabbi Jeffrey Schein, Patty Diamond, Rabbi Sharon Stiefel, Robin Brown, Robin King Cooper & Mel Gray, Ron Giteck, Roz Baker, Sandra Levine

### **Commercial Auction Donors:**

Barbette Restaurant, Bibelot, Brave New Workshop, Calhoun Beach Framing, Christos Greek Restaurant, D'Amico & Sons, French Meadow Bakery & Café, Haskell's - The Wine People, Jungle Theater, Mall of America, Milio's Sandwiches (Mike Liautaud), Minnesota Honey Company, Minnesota Jewish Theatre Company, Park Square Theatre, Park Tavern, Riverview Theater, Roller Garden Skate Center, Sebastian Joe's Ice Cream, St. Paul Saints, Stages Theatre Company, Surdyk's Liquor & Cheese Shop, The Malt Shop, The MN Twins Baseball Club, Three Rivers Park District, Twin Cities Gay Men's Chorus, Wild Rumpus, Wuollet Bakery





**Volunteers:**

Robin Brown, Patty Diamond, Sam Diamond, Claire Diamond-Wheeler, Dana Fox, Elaine Frankowski, Ron Giteck, Ross Giteck, Howard Goldberg, Larry Gravitz, Isaac Kaufman, Ellie Kopperl, Marc Lamm, Pat Levine, Sandra Levine, Jim Miller, Denise Pasmarter, Kim Pinzino, Jerri Pumroy, Jeffrey Schein, Deb Schein, Deborah Tabert, Jack Wheeler, John Wheeler, and others who pitched in spontaneously



**Mayim Rabim Board Meeting Summary—October 5, 2016**

Board Members attending: Celia Gershenson, Ron Giteck, Ina Gravitz, Larry Gravitz, Sandra Levine, Jeffrey Schein

**Committee updates:**

- Ritual: Centered around High Holidays. All agreed that the services and the luncheon went very well. Approximately 50 people attended. More help is needed for the Break the Fast clean-up.
- Membership: The September 18 informational meeting had 9 attendees. Two indicated that they intended to join.
- Tikkun Olan: The August 31 program on mass incarceration and the September 14 discussion of the book *The New Jim Crow* were well attended.

The remainder of the meeting was devoted to discussing the Rabbi's contract. The next Board meeting will be on November 9, 2016.

**Year End Appeal**

**We've just concluded a successful fundraiser; funds came from the silent auction and admission at the door. You'll be hearing more about that next month.**

**But we are a small congregation carrying a financial burden that might daunt a larger congregation. In spite of our heart-warming success with the fundraiser there will still be a year-end appeal to support our operation and inevitable rises in ongoing expenses.**

**The year-end appeal letter will present the details of our financial needs. This is just the heads-up.**



Please note that we cannot publish the entire content of most announcements. For complete information visit the internet address or use the telephone number listed. -ed.

**Sunday, December 4, 1:30 – 4:30 PM**  
**Jewish Community Action Annual Meeting**

Join Jewish Community Action for "Community (In)justice: A Jewish Response to Mass Incarceration" where we'll discuss, learn about, and act on criminal justice reform through Jewish text, tradition, and teaching.

After learning from Jewish text and tradition together we'll invite elected officials and community leaders to join us for conversation and action. The afternoon will be a great way to connect our Jewish call to *tikkun olam* with a pressing national conversation.

**Where: Adath Jeshurun Congregation**, 10500 Hillside Lane West, Minnetonka, MN 55305

**When:** Doors open at 1:00 PM; program starts at 1:30  
Register online here

**Childcare** available.

Contact [jayce@jewishcommunityaction.org](mailto:jayce@jewishcommunityaction.org) with questions.



**Sunday, December 4, 4:00 – 6:00 PM**  
**The Bakken Trio with David Krakauer**

David Krakauer, the amazing and accomplished Klezmer clarinetist will perform David Schiff's *Gimpel the Fool*, a klezmer piece based on an Isaac Singer short story. The Bakken Trio is a Twin Cities based, premier chamber music ensemble .

**Where:** Temple Israel, Minneapolis

**Purchase Tickets:** [www.bakkentrio.org](http://www.bakkentrio.org)



**December 6 - 21, 2016**

***The Magic Dreidels*** by Jenna Zark, based on the book by Eric A. Kimmel

Jakob, a curious young boy with a knack for misplacing things, loses his Hanukkah dreidel down a well. A goblin living in the well replaces his dreidel with magical ones, setting off a series of adventures for Jakob with his father and his lonely neighbor, Fruma Sarah. A charming and festive holiday tale for the whole family, *The Magic Dreidels* is an opportunity to learn about the cultural traditions of Hanukkah, and the universal themes of sharing, compassion, and friendship.

**Location:** Highland Park Community Center at 1978 Ford Parkway in St. Paul

For tickets, call the Minnesota Jewish Theatre box office at 651-647-4315.



**Wednesday, December 7, 7:00 PM**  
**Tamar Eisenman In Concert**



Guitarist singer/songwriter Tamar Eisenman is one of Israel's unique female rock voices. Currently based in New York City, her new solo performance brings an accurate combination of vulnerability and ruggedness, shyness and extroversion of rock & folk. All these nuances blend into a musical concoction she calls "HipRock".

**Where:** Sabes JCC



[Buy Tickets](#) \$12 Advance; \$15 Same Day

*In collaboration with the Israel Center of the Minneapolis Jewish Federation.*





**December 7 through December 14, 2016**  
***Spiritual Journey: What Drives Your Faith?***

**Talmud Torah of St. Paul is offering a free Speaker Series as part of its 60th anniversary celebration.**

**December 7, 6:00 – 7:00 PM**

**Rabbi Tamar Grimm** is the assistant Rabbi at Beth Jacob Congregation, a Conservative synagogue in Mendota Heights.

**Wednesday, December 14, 7:00 – 8:00 PM**

**Rabbi Sharon Stiefel** is the Rabbi at Mayim Rabim Congregation, a Reconstructionist congregation in Minneapolis. She is also the Rabbi/Spiritual Counselor for Sholom Hospice.

**RSVP to:** [info@ttsp.org](mailto:info@ttsp.org) or (651)698-8807.

**For more information** [ttsp.org](http://ttsp.org)

**Where:**

Talmud Torah of St. Paul  
768 Hamline Avenue South  
St. Paul, MN 55116

**Cost:** All events are free and open to the community.





**Saturday, December 10, 7:00 pm**  
**Talmud Torah of St. Paul 60th Anniversary Community Celebration**

The celebration will include opening remarks by former St. Paul mayor George Latimer, an opportunity to catch up with old friends and teachers, photograph and memorabilia displays from the school's archives, as well as an art fair and (of course) plenty of food! Attendees are welcome to bring their own TTSP photos or memorabilia to share with others.

Activities will also include:


- Dancing with Shira Schwartz
- Games with Hector Sztainer
- Learning with Rabbi Yosi Gordon

**Where:** Talmud Torah of St. Paul

**Price:** Suggested donation starts at \$18 / person

**Register Online:** Click [Here](#)

**More information:** (651)698-8807; [info@ttsp.org](mailto:info@ttsp.org); [ttsp.org](http://ttsp.org)



**Sunday, December 11, 2016, 1:00-2:30 PM**  
**Torah Yoga for Hanukkah**

Explore the themes of this beautiful holiday – miracles, light, courage, trust and dedication - with your mind and body.

**Special guest teacher:** Diane Bloomfield, creator of Torah Yoga

**Where:** Mount Zion Temple

**Cost:** \$18/person. Registration fee goes directly to Diane

**Registration:** <https://ttsp.org/hineni/registration/yoga-and-torah>

Advanced registration preferred. Walk-ins are welcome.



**Sunday, Dec. 18, 1:00-4:30 PM**

**Miracles: An Afternoon of Jewish Arts and Learning**

How do different people understand miracles? Did the miracles in our ancient stories, like the Hanukkah story, really happen? Are there miracles today? Come for a thought-provoking and experiential afternoon. This program is geared to artists and non-artists alike. Participants will

- Study text
- Engage with a panel of thoughtful teachers
- Take part in creative exploration (written or visual)

**Where:** St. Paul JCC

**Teachers:** Rabbi Sim Glaser, Rabbi Tamar Grimm, Rabbi Adam Stock Spilker, Lynda Monick-Isenberg (visual artist), and Diane Pecoraro (poet).

**Cost:** \$50; \$35 for Hineni supporters and JCC members

**Register by Dec. 7** at <https://ttsp.org/hineni/registration/miracles>

Presented in collaboration with St. Paul JCC and Sabes JCC

Community Partners: Beth Jacob Congregation, Mount Zion Temple, Temple Israel.



**Continuing Hineni events**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month 7:00-8:00 PM at Beth Jacob Congregation**  
**Contemplative Chanting**

Next session: Thursday, December 8

Led by Sara Lynn Newberger

**1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Shabbat morning of the month, 9:15 -9:45 AM at Beth**  
**Jacob Congregation**  
**Shabbat Morning Meditation**

Next meeting: December 3

Led by Sara Lynn Newberger

**Tuesdays at 8:15-9:30 AM at Talmud Torah of St. Paul (every other**  
**week)**

**Torah and Mindfulness:**

**Weekly Torah Portion through the Lens of Hasidic Masters**

Next study session: Dec. 13

Led by Sara Lynn Newberger



## ...and in February

**February 4, 7:00PM**

### **ENGAGE! An evening of Adult Jewish leaning**

ENGAGE with top-notch teachers in an evening of lively Jewish learning. Rabbis, university professors and lay leaders share their passions in a wide array of topics: text study, literature, cooking, mindfulness, the arts and so much more. Includes two classes. After classes, enjoy live music while schmoozing over mulled wine, spiced cider and more.

**Cost:** \$20 per person Free for ages 30 and under

*ENGAGE is a joint project of the St. Paul JCC and Hineni. Community partners: Adath Israel Synagogue of St. Paul, Beth Jacob Congregation, Mt. Zion Temple, and Temple of Aaron.*

### **Other opportunities for mindful Jewish learning and experience**

#### **Mindful Tuesdays at Beth El**

1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of the month – Sacred Chanting: Singing the Texts

2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month – Jewish Art for the Heart

3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month – Meditation Circle

4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month – Middot Va'ad

For details, contact Cantor Audrey Abrams at [aabrams@bethelsynagogue.org](mailto:aabrams@bethelsynagogue.org)

#### **RAKE THE LEAVES Fall Yard Clean-Up**

Improve your health while helping a senior remain independent at home. You choose the date and time to rake and clean up the yard. Perfect for individuals, groups, and families. Seasonal: until the snow stays. This is a one-time fun unpaid activity available week days and weekends. Feel free to sign up multiple times.

Exact location TBD in Minneapolis or Suburban Hennepin County depending on where the senior resides. Ongoing unpaid volunteer opportunities are also available. Please contact the Household & Outside Maintenance for Elderly (HOME) Program's Volunteer Coordinator at [scsvolunteer@seniorcommunity.org](mailto:scsvolunteer@seniorcommunity.org) or call 952-767-7894 for more information.

If a senior age 60+ needs raking or other services in Hennepin County contact HOMES at [www.seniorcommunity.org](http://www.seniorcommunity.org) or 952-541-1019. Seniors outside of Hennepin County should contact the Senior Linkage Line at 1-800-333-2433 for information about services in their area.



In 2018, Camp Butwin of the St. Paul JCC will turn 60. They are planning a celebration to commemorate this milestone, and want to be sure they are reaching all who had Butwin in their lives. If you or a loved one ever attended Butwin, please connect via the **Alumni Connect** page on [campbutwin.org](http://www.campbutwin.org). Find out details at <http://www.campbutwin.org/alumni-connect.php>





## From Your Editor

This issue marks the end of my two-year term as editor. I plan to continue for another year and hope to interest someone who would take over in January 2018.

There's a lot of time for me to show someone the ropes. There are lots of templates for columns that make the work easier. People are, for the most part, getting copy in on time. Dana Fox, the copy editor, has eagle eyes that catch the tiniest missing comma or date in the wrong font, not to speak of factual errors, misspelled names and missing credits. David Liss makes up a beautiful final product. You would not be alone in this endeavor. I'd still like to contribute a thought piece every now and then.

This column will appear, without change, until someone steps up



MAYIM RABIM CONGREGATION is affiliated with the Jewish Reconstructionist movement ([www.jewishrecon.org](http://www.jewishrecon.org)). We are an urban Jewish community that comprises people of diverse ages, abilities, sexual orientations, cultural backgrounds, and financial resources. It is our mission to create and sustain spaces that enhance the practice of Judaism in the contemporary world; to that end, we are a house of prayer, of study, and tikkun olam (the repair of the world). As Reconstructionists, we view Judaism as an evolving religious civilization and claim a shared heritage with all Jews. Our synagogue is governed by an elected board of directors:

Sandra Levine, Treasurer and Finance Co-Chair  
Ina Gravitz, Secretary  
Celia Gershenson, Member At-Large  
Ron Giteck, Member at Large  
Jeffrey Schein, Member at Large  
Larry Gravitz, Tikkun Olam Chair  
Sharon Stiefel, Rabbi  
Dana Fox, Congregational Administrator  
Isaac Kaufman, Membership; Barbara Nordstrom-Loeb, Ritual; Dana Fox, Finance Co-Chair  
Ron Giteck, Isaac Kaufman, Adult Programs

**Need information about Mayim Rabim?**

**Want to know times and places of events?**

**Website:** [www.mayimrabim.org](http://www.mayimrabim.org)

**Email:** [office@mayimrabim.org](mailto:office@mayimrabim.org)

**Phone:** 612-247-5490

**Unless otherwise noted, events are held at the**

**Friends Meeting House,**

**4401 York Ave. S, Minneapolis**

**Mailing Address:**

**2751 Hennepin Ave. S, #236, Mpls, MN 55408**



The Current is a monthly newsletter of Mayim Rabim Congregation. Submission deadline is the 15th of each month for the month following.  
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