

The Current

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

MAYIM RABIM
מים רבים
CONGREGATION



Praying with their Legs

As I write this column, it has been a week full of focus on the terrible killings in Paris — first the killings at the satirical newspaper and then the ones at the kosher supermarket. How does one respond to the barrage of tragedy in our world every day? When it happens at a kosher store, we personalize it. We imagine ourselves picking up challah at Breadsmith or The Kosher Spot.

French police called rabbis minutes before Shabbat started and asked them to cancel Shabbat services at their synagogues for security reasons. Imagine living in a place where welcoming in Shabbat, where holding services, is a security risk.

During our services taking place the same day as the kosher supermarket attack, we lit two extra Shabbat candles for those whose Shabbat was disrupted by the attack, seeking to bring more light into the world.

I later learned from one colleague that he refused to devote any time during services to the events in France on the Shabbat after the killings. Afterwards, when congregants asked why, he explained that it was imperative that terrorism not be handed an opportunity to diminish the holiness of Shabbat and to deny Jews the opportunity for collective prayer, study, and strengthening Jewish life.

Less than a week after the attacks a historic unity march against extremism took place in Paris with more than forty world leaders present. Both Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas marched alongside France's President Hollande, along with millions of French citizens. Such a show of support at a time of mourning! Such a show of unity at a time of sorrow! This was a universal statement declaring a refusal to stand idly by when others are killed for what they say or believe in.

When Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel returned from marching with the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in Selma, he said “I felt my legs were praying.” Millions in France could say the same this week when they let it be known they would not let their lives be dictated by hate and fear. It was a moment of millions standing up to pray with their legs.

We know that there is a long road ahead. Fifty years after Selma, recent events have taught us that we still have not entirely achieved the civil rights we've strived for. The Jewish communities in France and Europe have a long road ahead. Perseverance is an imperative.

As the traditional folk song “Step by Step” reminds us,

Step by step, the longest march can be won, can be won
Many stones can form an arch, singly none, singly none
And in union what we will, can be accomplished still
Drops of water turn a mill, singly none, singly none.



Ritual and Program Schedule



Friday, February 6, 6:15 – 8:00 PM

Tu B'Shevat Seder and Potluck Dairy Vegetarian Shabbat Dinner

Note: that there will not be a Kabbalat Shabbat service this evening

Tu B'Shevat, the Jewish New Year of the Trees, celebrates the time when the sap of the tree starts its ascent from the roots. Originated by 16th century mystics, this seder offers us an opportunity to join together for conversation and song as we engage in a mindful celebration of the earth with fruits, nuts and four cups of grape juice over a potluck dinner. Challah, beverages, special fruits, nuts, and grape juices will be provided. Bring a vegetarian dairy dish to share if you can.

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

Sunday February 8, 2:00 – 4:00 PM
Annual Meeting of the congregation

Sunday, February 15, 4:00 – 5:30 PM
STUDY SESSIONS WITH RABBI STIEFEL

Reconstructing prayer – Praying as a Reconstructionist (part two)

Reflecting Reconstructionist ideas, our prayer book makes small changes in the language of some of the traditional prayers to reflect the movement's inclusive values. In this session, we will continue to highlight the whats, whys and hows of these changes and have an opportunity to weigh in on whether they reflect our current sensitivities.
(Attendance at previous session not required.)

Saturday February 21, 9:30 AM – Noon
Shabbat Morning Service – Torah portion: Parshat Terumah (Offering)
Shabbat morning services led by Rabbi Stiefel and congregants,
followed by potluck dairy vegetarian lunch
Children's educational program at 10:00 AM
Childcare is provided

Saturday February 21, 7:00 – 9:00 PM at 4401 York Ave S
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! Light refreshments
and friendly competition will be provided. See you there!

And Coming in March ...

Wednesday March 4, 6:00 – 8:30 PM
PURIM! Play, Dinner, and Megillah reading.

Friday March 13, 6:15-7:30 PM
Kabbalat Shabbat services followed by potluck Shabbat dinner

Tuesday, March 24, 7:00 – 8:30 PM
STUDY SESSIONS WITH RABBI STIEFEL
Delving into the Haggadah
Come explore the meanings in the symbols and stories of the Haggadah, our Jewish guide for telling the Passover story at the Seder. Whether you are leading or attending a Seder, this class will shed insight on the traditional text and offer new interpretive possibilities as well.

Saturday March 28, 9:30 – Noon
Breakfast, followed by study session, Shabbat morning services, and Kiddush.



Donations/Acknowledgements

General Fund

- Anonymous
- Dudley Flamm
- Elaine Frankowski
- Ina & Larry Gravitz - *in loving memory of Ina's grandparents, Rose and Abraham Feuer*
- *in loving memory of Larry's mother and father, Edith and Sydney Gravitz*
- Susan Heineman
- Dave & Ellie Kopperl - *in honor of Emi Stiefel Alperin's Bat Mitzvah*
- Denise Pasmarter & Robin Brown
- Josh & Diane Wirtschafter

In memory of Larry Kivens

- Carol Ann Dunphy
- Dana Fox
- Joseph Novich
- Jerri Pumroy
- Debby & Ted Jewett
- Peni & Steve Gensler
- Dale & Lois Dobrin
- Judy & Eddie Kaplan
- Rabbi Renee Bauer, *with blessings to the whole congregation*
- Denise Pasmarter & Robin Brown

Thanks very much/Todah Rabah

The Chanukah Party was a great success in terms of fun, food, and fellowship. Thanks to the "Fathers of Young Children Chanukah Party Planning Committee," Isaac Kaufman, Jeremy Fisher, and Josh Abrams!

Thanks to Jerri Pumroy and Dana Fox for cleaning and organizing our cupboards at the Friends Meeting House!





MAYIM RABIM BOARD MEETING — December 10, 2014

Here are the items the Mayim Rabim Board considered/ discussed/announced in December and the actions taken.

Actions:

The Board approved our being a sponsor for the Jewish Family and Children's Service HealthyYouth Healthy Communities program that will be held in March. The Board appointed Marc Lamm and Dana Fox to the Election Committee. An email will go out soliciting more committee members

Items considered/discussed/announced:

The Youth Education report was discussed.
The Ritual Committee is asking for more service leaders and Torah readers.

The annual congregational meeting will be at the Friends Meeting House on Sunday, February 8, 2015 between 2:00 & 4:00 PM.

The Finance Committee reported on the budget. The November fundraiser and talent show was successful both in raising money and in community participation.

MAYIM RABIM BOARD MEETING – January 15, 2015

Here are the items the Mayim Rabim Board considered/ discussed/announced in December and the actions taken.

Actions:

The Board retroactively voted to hire Jack Wheeler to open and close the Meeting House for services as needed.

The Ritual Committee has set dates for services through the High Holidays. They are looking for volunteers to lead services or read Torah as well as tutors to encourage participation.

Items considered/discussed/announced:

The Ad Hoc Shabbat Practices Committee reported on their work reviewing and clarifying the congregation's Shabbat observance policies.

The Finance Committee reported on the current budget.

The second annual Art Schmooze will be held on April 19, 2015.

The Board will meet next on Thursday, February 5, 2015.



SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2015

ISRAEL ADVOCACY CONFERENCE

CONFRONTATION TO CONVERSATION – ISRAEL ON CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY

MOUNT ZION TEMPLE; 1300 SUMMIT AVENUE, ST. PAUL

10:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Conference includes plenary sessions, panels and breakout sessions.

Participants will leave inspired to engage in Israel advocacy on campus and in the community and equipped with tools for success. Conference registration is FREE.

Breakfast and Lunch included.

Register at <https://mnisraelconference.eventbrite.com>

FEBRUARY 14 - MARCH 8, 2015

MINNESOTA JEWISH THEATRE COMPANY

AT THE HIGHLAND PARK THEATER CENTER,

ST. PAUL SATURDAYS AT 8:00 PM,

SUNDAYS AT 1:00 PM & 7:00 PM "STARS OF DAVID"

This new musical revue includes personal portraits of over 30 accomplished Americans as they reflect on their Jewish heritage and the role it has played in their lives. With original songs by some of theater's most noted composers and lyricists, including Duncan Sheik, Marvin Hamlisch, and Sheldon Harnick, stories are portrayed of people such as Leonard Nimoy, Sarah Jessica Parker, Al Franken, Kenneth Cole, Tony Kushner, Steven Spielberg, and Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Based on the book by Abigail Pogrebin, conceived by Aaron Harnick; directed by Michael Kissin



Tuesday, February 17, 7:00 PM

Jewish Disability Awareness Month (JDAM) film –

Sabes Jewish Community Center (JCC)

(4330 Cedar Lake Road S, Minneapolis)

A special screening of the film, “A Blind Hero: The Love of Otto Weidt,” will be held as part of Jewish Disability Awareness Month. Jewish Disability Awareness Month is a unified effort among Jewish organizations worldwide to use common programs to raise awareness and foster inclusion of people with disabilities, their families and those who love them.

This new docu-drama tells of “unsung Schindler” Otto Weidt, the owner of a brush and broom factory in 1940s Berlin, who saved Jews from Nazi death camps. Weidt, who was blind, employed Jews with vision and hearing disabilities assigned to him from the Jewish Home for the Blind, as well as Jews who did not have disabilities.

This community-wide event is sponsored by Jewish Family and Children’s Service of Minneapolis (JFCS), the Sabes JCC, Twin Cities Jewish Film Festival, and ReelAbilities.

A dessert reception will be held following the screening.

Tickets are \$4 in advance or \$7 at the door.

No one will be turned away for financial reasons.

Tuesday, Feb. 17, 6:30 –8:30 PM

**Jewish Family & Children’s Services workshop for interfaith families –
JFCS (13100 Wayzata Blvd, Minnetonka).**

Jewish Family and Children’s Service of Minneapolis (JFCS) will host the second session in its three-part series, “Educational Programs for Interfaith Families.”

The workshop, “Parenting Jewish Children When You Are Not Jewish,” is specifically designed for interfaith families where one parent is not Jewish.

It will address challenges and solutions that non-Jewish parents deal with and how to respond to difficult questions from your children about identity, belief and practice.

The Interfaith Series is presented at no charge, but donations are appreciated.

Register for the February session by Feb. 10 by calling Barbara Rudnick at 952-542-4825 or emailing brudnick@jfcsmpls.org.



Sunday, February 22nd, 10:30 – 12:30 AM at Adath Jeshurun.

How Much is Enough? Does Today's Economy Encourage Wastefulness?



What lessons about economic justice can we learn and apply from the tradition of Shmita?

How might the principles of Shmita inform our collective actions and individual choices?

5775 is a Shmita year. According to the Torah, during Shmita (the sabbatical year) land lies fallow, debts are forgiven, and slaves are released. Today, we see our society struggling with an environment out of balance, overwhelming debt, workers without sick leave, and massive gaps in wealth and income. So we ask: what can Shmita teach us about tikkun olam – repair for ourselves, our communities, and the world?

Join Jewish Community Action along with Adath Jeshurun's Hesed Committee, Etz Chayim Committee, and Women's League

To explore Shmita principles for today

How Much is Enough? Does Today's Economy Encourage Wastefulness?
Featuring practical break-out sessions on food, energy, and the economy.

Sunday, February 22nd, 2015, 10:30am-12:30am
Adath Jeshurun Congregation, 10500 Hillside Lane West, Minnetonka

A light lunch will be served. You are encouraged to bring gently used items to donate for the Women's League annual garage sale and will also have a chance to sign up for Adath's Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) box.

Part of a year-long series. RSVP for lunch to Rachel English at rachel@jewishcommunityaction.org/651-632-2184

**JEWISH
COMMUNITY
ACTION**



Vote ARZA [Association of Reform Zionists of America] ארצה

Between January 15 and April 30, 2015, the American Zionist Movement (AZM) is holding elections to determine U.S. Jewish representation to the World Zionist Congress (WZC), the highest legislative body of the World Zionist Organization (WZO). The WZO provides a forum for the world's Jews to come together and deliberate about issues affecting both Diaspora Jews and the state of affairs in Israel. These elections are the strongest way for progressive American Jews to promote and encourage the ideals of justice, equality and democracy in Israel and help build the kind of Jewish state we all know is possible.

The Reconstructionist movement does not currently have an active institutional presence in Israel. We are most closely aligned with the Reform movement in Israel—they work intensively for values and institutions entirely compatible with a Reconstructionist vision. Rabbi Rick Jacobs, the head of the Union for Reform Judaism, powerfully advances our interests when he engages in conversation and negotiation with Israeli leaders on such issues as an egalitarian presence at the Western Wall. The platform of ARZA (Association of Reform Zionists of America) for this upcoming election advances core issues dear to most Reconstructionists:

- Women's rights and gender equality
- Religious equality
- Peace and security in the region

Several Reconstructionists are on the ARZA slate. Rabbi Deborah Waxman, president RRC and Jewish Reconstructionist Communities, is a member of the ARZA slate, along with David Roberts, board chair, and these Reconstructionist leaders: Rabbi David Teutsch, Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum, Rabbi Nina Mandel, Rabbi Elliott Tepperman, Rabbi Jessica Lott, and Jason Bonder (RRC '15).

Learn more and vote at www.JewishRecon.org/vote-ARZA.



Twin Cities Jewish Book Series

February 15, 2015 –7:30 PM – St Paul JCC

Hanna Raskin – *Yelp Help: How to Write Great Online Restaurant Reviews*

The great Jewish traditions of eating and analyzing come together in “Yelp Help: How to Write Great Online Restaurant Reviews,” a how-to book for civilian food critics.

For Tickets: call 651-698-0751

February 26, 2015 –7:30 PM – St Paul JCC

Allen Salkin – *From Scratch: Inside the Food Network*

From Scratch: Inside the Food Network is an exhilarating roller coaster ride from chaos to conquest – and sometimes back again.

Tickets: \$25 (includes copy of book), call 651-698-0751

March 1 – 4:00 pm at [Moscow on the Hill](#), 371 Selby Ave., St. Paul

Transcontinental Express: New Jewish American Fiction

Boris Fishman

A Replacement Life

Marina Rubin

Stealing Cherries

The tidal wave of Jewish émigrés from the former Soviet Union has unleashed a new group of writers who use their adopted tongue to make sense of American immigrant realities. In co-sponsorship with the Twin Cities Jewish Book Festival, *Rimon** presents Marina Rubin and Boris Fishman, two of these rising writers, at *Moscow on the Hill* in St. Paul. Joining Marina and Boris in the discussion will be a contributing writer from the *Jewish Daily Forward*.

* in partnership with [Rimon Salon Series](#), an initiative of the Minneapolis Jewish Federation, Genesis Philanthropy Group and Russian American Jews of Minnesota.

Tickets: \$12, call 651-698-0751

Comments, please

Fellow members of Mayim Rabim, fellow readers:

This is my first outing as Current editor. I would appreciate any comments you have about this issue, about things you'd like to see in future issues, about things that could be more useful.

I can promise to hear everything you say and take it seriously.

I cannot promise to make every change you suggest. However, anything you have to say will steer this publication in a direction that's useful to the congregation.

Please email all comments to Elaine.frankowski@gmail.com

Let Me Introduce Myself

My name is Elaine Frankowski. I've just signed on for a two-year term as the Current's editor. My job — receiving articles monthly by the 15th of every month (firm deadline) from our Rabbi, our congregation's president, committee chair-people and other 'usual contributors', plus one time submissions from anyone with a letter to the editor, some news, or some views. Once received, these articles undergo an editing process where something like "Let's eat Grandma" gets a life-saving comma and hyphens appear where needed. Then on to other eyes for vetting and finally to David Liss who formats your words and my commas into our visually pleasing monthly issue. One final look by your editor and the 'other eyes' and a newsletter goes to press, in this case the Internet and a few hard copies.

If you have news to publish or a reaction to last month's issue please direct your words to elaine.frankowski@gmail.com

And remember, please, under this new editor's watch, the 15th of the month isn't just a suggestion, it's a rule. This new broom may be sweeping a little stiffly in the beginning, but she's trying.



MAYIM RABIM CONGREGATION is affiliated with the Jewish Reconstructionist movement (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:

Marc Lamm, President
Denise Pasmarter, Vice President
Celia Gershenson, Vice President, Ritual Affairs
Sandra Levine, Treasurer
Helen Romanishan, Secretary
Sydne Westorff, Chair, Tikkun Olam
Larry Gravitz, Member At-Large
Jeremy Fisher, President Emeritus
Sharon Stiefel, Rabbi
Dana Fox, Congregational Administrator
Committee Chairs: Isaac Kaufman, Membership; Jerri Pumroy, House; Barbara Nordstrom-Loeb, Ritual Co-Chair
Dana Fox, Finance Co-Chair

Need information about Mayim Rabim?
Want to know times and places of events?

Website: www.mayimrabim.org

Email: 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.

Submit to Elaine Frankowski at:

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