

The Current

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

MAYIM RABIM

 מֵיִם רַבִּים

 CONGREGATION



Formulating Mayim Rabim's Shabbat and Holiday Policies

Mayim Rabim is a community known for its inquiring minds. I have had the honor the last three years of engaging the Mayim Rabim community in discussion surrounding our values regarding Shabbat, the Jewish Sabbath. Together we have studied texts on the meaning of Shabbat and the reasons behind observance. We have delved into traditional and contemporary sources. We have shared our own personal practices and, as one of our study sessions was called, “wrestled with rest.” We embarked on a Reconstructionist process of rooting ourselves in the Jewish tradition and engaging in reflection on our own approaches regarding Shabbat.

While Mayim Rabim was founded in 1992, it has yet to formalize a set of communal guidelines regarding Shabbat and Holidays. We have policies on Kashrut; Minyan; Aliyah (to the Torah); Gender Identity, Sexual Orientation, and Gender Non-conformity; and Youth Bar/Bat Mitzvah. When I began serving the Mayim Rabim Community three and a half years ago, it soon became evident that without guidelines regarding Shabbat and Holidays, Mayim Rabim had nowhere to turn to answer questions when asked concerning our practices. Now we are concretizing our communal customs that will enable us to keep our Shabbat and Holiday time together holy.

We have been clear from the start that we cannot and do not desire to dictate personal practice. Individuals and households decide for themselves how they will observe Shabbat and Holidays. It is our Mayim Rabim time together that the policy addresses.

Following a number of study sessions examining Shabbat, a committee of Mayim Rabim members has worked diligently for over two years drafting a Shabbat and Holiday policy. We used our working sessions to articulate our understanding of Mayim Rabim communal Shabbat and Holiday norms that never have been codified, traditional tenets and values of Shabbat and Holidays, our own personal observances, and the values we hoped to convey to members and guests. We challenged and re-challenged ourselves and each other on issues such as musical instruments, cell phones, writing, video, photography, Mayim Rabim business, and activist work on Shabbat. We struggled with values for keeping Shabbat and Holidays when they conflicted with other values held dear or competed with strict observance. For example, while videoing a service was seen as disrupting the peace of Shabbat and Holidays, we recognized as our community ages, allowing streaming of services to homebound members upheld our values of accessibility. Finally, we wrote up a policy that we believe reflects how we want to observe Shabbat as a community.

We will be introducing the Shabbat and Holiday Policy to our community for the first time at the Mayim Rabim annual meeting on Sunday, February 28 from 2:00 to 4:00 PM. **Your feedback is vital** as we move ahead to adopt a policy that can deepen our collective Shabbat and Holiday experience. As a congregant your response and input will be an important part of the process in crafting this policy. *Rabbi Sharon Stiefel*



Ritual and Program Schedule



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

Friday February 5, 6:15 – 7:30 PM

Kabbalat Shabbat Service

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

Tuesday February 9, 7-8:30 PM

Touched by an Angel, Part II, Study Session led by Rabbi Stiefel

What does Judaism say about subversive angels? Are there "bad angels" and do Jews believe in them? Who are Satan and Lilith? Come discover the rich and varied role evil angels may play in the Jewish tradition and some modern insights into the relevance of these angels today.

Saturday February 20, 9:30 AM – Noon

Shabbat Morning Service

Torah Portion: Tetzaveh "You shall command."
Services led by Rabbi Stiefel and congregants.
A dairy vegetarian potluck lunch follows services.
Childcare is provided.

Sunday, February 21, 4:00 – 5:30 pm

Book Group Gathering

We are reading *All Who Go Do Not Return: A Memoir*, by Shulem Deen.

We will meet at the home of Martha Baxter.
For street address, email office@mayimrabim.org.

Sunday February 28, 2 – 4 PM

Annual Meeting of the Congregation

Please arrive by 1:45 PM. Due to other events at the building that day, we will need to start and end the meeting on schedule.



...and in March

Saturday March 5, 9:30 AM – Noon

Shabbat Morning Service - Bat Mitzvah of Claire Diamond-Wheeler

Torah Portion: Vayakhel "You shall assemble."

Services led by Rabbi Stiefel, Claire, and congregants.

The congregation is invited to lunch in Claire's honor following services.

Childcare is provided.

Friday March 18, 6:15 – 7:30 PM

Kabbalat Shabbat Service

Services led by Rabbi Stiefel and congregants.

A dairy vegetarian potluck Shabbat dinner follows services.

Thursday March 24, 5:45 – 8:00 PM

PURIM! Pizza Dinner, Play and Megillah reading

Please note that we will be celebrating on Purim day,
not the evening of Purim.

Tuesdays, March 22 & 29, April 5, May 3 & 10, 7 – 8:30 PM

Technology and the Dance Between Jewish and World Civilizations

an adult learning series taught by Rabbi Jeffrey Schein.

What is the nature of our relationship to technology as Jews and as human beings? We explore Jewish wisdom as a way of gaining perspective on our personal, digital behaviors. We take a hard look at Judaism's stake in this ongoing communications revolution.

Our varied sources include Marshall McLuhan's *The Medium is the Message* and Mordecai Kaplan's notion of Judaism as an evolving religious civilization. This series is part of a national Covenant

Foundation Project, *Text Me: Ancient Jewish Wisdom Meets Contemporary Technology*, that is helping to underwrite the cost of the program.

Cost: \$50, \$36 for members of Mayim Rabim and Hineni Supporters.



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

We acknowledge with gratitude these donors to the general fund:

- Rabbi Renee Bauer • Martha Baxter • Jo Devlin & Linda Crawford
- Dana Fox – in memory of Larry Kivens in honor of Jerri & Mike Pumroy's new grandson
- Ina & Larry Gravitz – In appreciation of Jim Miller's performance at the talent show
Mazel tov to Jerri & Mike Pumroy on the birth of their first grandchild, Eli Nathan Rubenstein
- Lou & Anne Holzman • Phyllis Simon & Martin Nisenoff • Rabbi Sharon Stiefel
- Chaim & Evelyn Teitelbaum • Josh & Diane Wirtschafter



Thanks to Sandra Levine and Belle for assembling the annual appeal mailing!

תודה רבה

December 2, 2015 Board Meeting

Board Members attending: Celia Gershenson, Larry Gravitz, Marc Lamm, Sandra Levine, Helen Romanishan

Guests attending: Barbara Nordstrom-Loeb; Dana Fox, Ron Giteck

Ad Hoc committee on Shabbat and Holiday Communal Practice

Barbara Nordstrom-Loeb presented draft recommendations of the ad hoc committee. This will be presented to the congregation at the Annual Meeting on February 28. Discussion followed.

Committee updates:

- Finance: final figures on proceeds of the fundraiser are not available yet, but are probably around \$1,500.
- Youth Programs: Planning the Chanukah party for December 13
- House: Camille Bryant has been hired to open/close for the potlucks. The House Committee Chair position is still vacant.
- Membership: Barbara Sarapas's membership was accepted.
- Election Committee: An Election Committee was appointed, consisting of Marc Lamm, Ron Giteck, Dana Fox, and Debbie Hahn Fisher.

Bylaws:

The Board reviewed and approved draft changes to the bylaws to be introduced at the Annual Meeting.

The Board meets on the first Wednesday of the month. The next meeting will be on January 6, 2016.



Finance Committee Update – Midyear Report

Mayim Rabim is a good steward of your dollars:

- Our members and others attending High Holiday services contributed generously, slightly exceeding our \$2,500 goal.
- General donations (unrestricted) year to date are \$2841.
- The Fall Fundraiser netted \$1,694 thanks to many who lent support in various ways.
- Mayim Rabim’s primary source of income is member dues, accounting for almost three-quarters of our revenue. At mid-year we are on-target to reach our projections.
- Our Expenses are at 51% mid-year; some budget lines are slightly underutilized and some payments are paid upfront for the fiscal year so we are in a good position and expect to end the fiscal year within our budget.
- Rabbi Development Fund subsidy will be drawn as needed to balance the budget at year-end, up to \$7,000. The Rabbi Development Fund was established in 1999 and is dedicated to enable the congregation to afford the cost of having a rabbi.

Mid-year Budget Report — 45 households			
FISCAL YEAR ENDING 6/30/16	BUDGET 2015-2016	ACTUAL TO DATE	% OF BUDGET
INCOME			
Dues	\$37,136	\$27,369	74%
Other Income (not Rabbi Fund)	\$6,510	\$7,607	117%
Rabbi Development Fund subsidy	\$7,000	\$0	0%
TOTAL INCOME	\$50,646	\$34,976	69%
EXPENSES			
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$50,646	\$25,823	51%
Rabbi Development Fund balance at start of year	\$62,477		



From Larry Gravitz, Finance Committee Member

Mayim Rabim is also a good steward of your values.

The Finance Committee usually meets at the Common Roots Café at the corner of 26th St. and Lyndale Avenue in Minneapolis.

This is a particularly happy choice of venue because it is an independent, family owned local establishment. It is convenient, moderately priced, has good food and provides us with a meeting room. However, its main attraction, for Larry, is the sign in the café's window. It reads:

Hate has no business here.
We stand with our **MUSLIM COMMUNITY MEMBERS**
We stand with **REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS** in our community.
ALL ARE WELCOME HERE.

Does your coffee shop and do all the stores you support reflect these values?



Adding Mayim Rabim's Voice to the Voices of Justice and Compassion

Rabbi Stiefel, along with more than 1000 rabbis across the country, signed the following **National Rabbinic Statement in Support of Welcoming Refugees** that was delivered to the U.S. Congress last month in support of the resettlement of Syrian refugees. This issue goes the heart of our congregation's commitment to Tikkun Olam. Thank you to Rabbi Stiefel for adding her name to this effort and may 2016 be a better year for those displaced from their homes in Syria and other war-torn parts of the world.

In support of welcoming refugees

We, Rabbis from across the country, call on our elected officials to exercise moral leadership for the protection of the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program.

Since its founding, the United States has offered refuge and protection to the world's most vulnerable. Time and time again, those refugees were Jews. Whether they were fleeing pogroms in Tzarist Russia, the horrors of the Holocaust or persecution in Soviet Russia or Iran, our relatives and friends found safety on these shores.

We are therefore alarmed to see so many politicians declaring their opposition to welcoming refugees.

Last month's heartbreaking attacks in Paris and Beirut are being cited as reasons to deny entry to people who are themselves victims of terror. And in those comments, we, as Jewish leaders, see one of the darker moments of our history repeating itself.

In 1939, the United States refused to let the S.S. St. Louis dock in our country, sending over 900 Jewish refugees back to Europe, where many died in concentration camps. That moment was a stain on the history of our country – a tragic decision made in a political climate of deep fear, suspicion and antisemitism. The Washington

Continued on next page



Post released public opinion polling from the early 1940's, showing that the majority of U.S. citizens did not want to welcome Jewish refugees to this country in those years.

In 1939, our country could not tell the difference between an actual enemy and the victims of an enemy. In 2015, let us not make the same mistake.

We therefore urge our elected officials to support refugee resettlement and to oppose any measures that would actually or effectively halt resettlement or prohibit or restrict funding for any groups of refugees.

As Rabbis, we take seriously the biblical mandate to "welcome the stranger." We call on our elected officials to uphold the great legacy of a country that welcomes refugees.

In February the Mayim Rabim Book Club is Reading

All Who Go Do Not Return: A Memoir by Shulem Deen

The club will meet on Sunday, February 21, from 4:00 to 5:30 PM at the home of Martha Baxter, address available from the office.



Review by [Mike Sloan](#)

Shulem Deen's memoir, *All Who Go Do Not Return*, succeeds in explaining one man's harrowing battle against faith. Deen is the creator of *Unpious*, an online journal for "voices on the Hasidic fringe." His narrative flows beautifully on the page, especially considering that he grew up in a Yiddish-speaking household. In telling his tale, Deen understands the importance of playing devil's advocate and thinking carefully about what others believe during tense moments. His handbook on a Hasid's struggles contains one surprise after another. Only someone who has been expelled from a community could recount so vividly and viscerally what sort of pain comes with this type of substantial loss, and Deen loses more than you might think. His memoir keeps the reader glued to the page from beginning to end--and by providing thorough, concise explanations of concepts readers may find foreign, he makes it unnecessary to have Wikipedia nearby. *All Who Go Do Not Return* is intended not only for Jewish readers, but for all who want to see the world through Deen's clear eyes. He is a curious individual who finds everything intriguing. Parents should read this text. Those who long to be accepted, who have felt lost, should pick up this book. This is a book for the nomad, the explorer, the insatiable.

There are 17 copies in library system and the book is available in paperback from Graywolf Press 2015, 288 Pages \$16.00, ISBN: 978-1555977054.

Welcome new member Rob Momose



Rob was born in Yokosuka, Japan and came to Minnesota at age eight with his new adoptive American parents. He was raised as a Buddhist by his Japanese mother and later as a Christian by his adoptive parents. In 2003 Rob converted to Judaism through Temple of Aaron in St. Paul. He has three adult children: a daughter living in Seal Beach, California and two sons living near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. He has six grandchildren. Rob currently resides in South Minneapolis.





Saturday, February 6, 2016, 7:00 – 10:00 PM



ENGAGE! An Evening of Adult Jewish Learning

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 classes: text study, literature, mysticism, cooking, the arts and so much more. Includes two class sessions followed by schmoozing over foamy flights and salty snack with live music.

Among other distinguished teachers, our member Rabbi Jeffrey Schein will be offering *L'Dor V'Dor: How Technology Sustains, Nurtures, and Disrupts Communication Between Generations of Jews*, a taste of his upcoming five session class at Mayim Rabim.

When: Saturday, February 6, 2016; 7:00 – 10:00 PM

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

Cost: \$18/person (free for under age 30)

To Register, click on this link:

<https://www.stpauljcc.org/events/engage-5712/>

To see descriptions of the available classes, click on this link:

<https://www.stpauljcc.org/programs/special-events/engage/>

Sunday, February 7, 2:00 PM

Rimon Artist Salon Goes Backstage at The Adoption Play Project

Theater artists Alan Berks and Leah Cooper offer a window into the evolution of a work-in-progress at a *Rimon Artist Salon, Backstage at The Adoption Play Project*. Joining them onstage is writer/moderator Sharon DeMark. *Backstage at The Adoption Play Project* features excerpts from Berks' and Cooper's play.

The Adoption Play Project, produced by Wonderlust Productions, began in the fall of 2014 and is based on more than 1000 stories related to adoption gathered from hundreds of community members. Using a mixed cast of professional performers and adoption community members, *The Adoption Play Project* looks at how "kinship by design" impacts families and influences American culture in unspoken ways.

Sign language interpretation is available upon request with 10 days advance notice.

Where: Intermedia Arts, 2822 Lyndale Ave. S., Minneapolis

Register: online at www.rimonMN.org or by contacting the *Rimon* office at 952-381-3449

Cost: \$12 (\$6 for ages 30 and under)

The *Rimon Artist Salon Series* is funded in part by a gift in memory of David Tychman and a gift from Bruce Goodman. It is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a grant from the Metropolitan Regional Arts Council, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund.

Rimon is an initiative of the Minneapolis Jewish Federation.



Tuesdays, February 9 – March 15, 7:30 – 9:00 PM
The Jewish Course of Why

What happens when you survey 30,000 people, asking for the questions they are most curious about, and address them with insights from some of the greatest minds in Jewish history? *The Jewish Course of Why* happens.

The Jewish Course of Why brings you face-to-face with Judaism's spirit of free questioning, debating and discovery. Are you prepared to tackle the quizzical, queer, and seemingly unanswerable questions about Jewish belief and practice, to range from fun, light, and off-the-beaten-track questions, to more complex and controversial issues? Ever wondered why there are so many Jews in Hollywood? Why Jews eat *gefilte fish* and *cholent* and wish each other *mazal tov* and *l'chaim*? Why the Bible sanctions slavery and animal sacrifices? What are the causes of antisemitism? What does Judaism say about Christianity? About the role of women in Jewish life?

For more information, contact teacher Rabbi Zalman Bendet at 651-998-9298 or rabbizalman@spchabad.com. Register on www.myjli.com by February 9. JCC Members, contact Barbie Levine at 651-255-4734 for the JCC member promo code.

Where: St. Paul JCC, 1375 St. Paul Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55116

Cost: \$85, \$65 JCC Member Value Price

In partnership with The Rohr Jewish Learning Institute.





Thursday, February 11, 7:30 PM

**An Israeli, a Palestinian, and an Improbable Friendship
Anthony David on his book, *An Improbable Friendship***

Award-winning biographer and historian Anthony David brings us the story of unexpected friendship and unearths the true pasts of two outstanding women. His book, **An Improbable Friendship – The Remarkable Lives of Israeli Ruth Dayan and Palestinian Raymonda Tawil and Their Forty-Year Peace Mission** is the dual biography of Israeli Ruth Dayan, now ninety-eight, who was Moshe Dayan's wife for 37 years, and Palestinian journalist Raymonda Tawil, Yasser Arafat's mother-in-law, now 74. It reveals for the first time the two women's surprising and secret 40-year friendship and delivers the story of their extraordinary and turbulent lives growing up in a war-torn country. Their story gives voice to Israelis and Palestinians caught in the Middle East conflict and holds a persistent faith in a future of peace.

Where: St. Paul JCC, 1375 St. Paul Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55116

Cost: \$10, \$7 JCC Member Value Price

Register: online at www.stpauljcc.org

Presented in partnership with National Council of Jewish Women, Greater Minneapolis Section.

**February 13 – March 6
Minnesota Jewish Theatre Company (MJTC)
*The Tale of the Allergist's Wife***

From director Warren Bowles and star Sally Wingert. Marjorie Taub is depressed, frustrated and utterly dissatisfied. Plunged into the throes of a midlife crisis, no one is safe from her theatrical eruptions of self-doubt and self-pity. Neither Ira, her philanthropic yet distracted husband, nor Frieda, her mother who has a penchant for colon talk, can distract her from her angst. That is, until a mysterious childhood friend arrives and shakes things up. Flamboyant and full of surprises, this Tony-nominated satirical romp is sure to leave audiences laughing with abandon.

Where: Highland Park Community Center Theater, 1978 Ford Parkway, St. Paul, MN 55116

Cost: from \$20 – \$32. Student and group discounts are available.

Individual tickets go on sale January 8. To order, call **(651) 647-4315** or visit www.mnjewishtheatre.org.



Sundays, February 14 – April 17, 10:30 AM – Noon
The Arab Israeli Conflict Through Literature
A 10-week literature workshop on the Arab Israeli conflict

Literature provides an enlightening standpoint from which to view the nuances of the conflict between Jews and Arabs. Join us for an exploration of how writers — Israeli Jews, Israeli Arabs and Palestinians — have addressed the conflict. Their work — personal, powerful, intimate — looks at the human encounters of daily life that affect both communities. Dr. Arie Zmora, historian and director of multiple US government-sponsored cultural exchange programs in the Middle East, leads this 10-week program.

Where: St. Paul JCC, 1375 St. Paul Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55116

Cost: \$200, \$150 for JCC members & Hineni sustainers
Register by February 10, online or by calling the Front Desk at 651-698-0751. Hineni Sustainers must register by calling the Front Desk.

A joint program of the St. Paul JCC and Hineni, A Center for Adult Jewish Learning & Contemplative Practices, Talmud Torah of St. Paul.

Sunday, February 21, at 4:00 PM
The Twin Cities Jewish Chorale winter concert — L'Dor Vador

The program features three versions of **L'Dor Vador** (From Generation to Generation) by composers Steve Cohen, Josh Nelson, and Eliot Levine. Other pieces include Lewandowski's "Hal'luyah"; a selection from Yehezkel Braun's "Shir Hashirim"; and, a Sephardic tune, Yom Gila (Day of Joy), among others. The concert concludes with Cantor Buckner and choir performing "Sheheheyanu" (we reach this season) and "Kaddish" by Naftali Cohn.

Where: Adath Jeshurun Synagogue, 10500 Hillside Lane W., Minnetonka.

Cost: \$15, \$10 students/seniors.

SHARE A SMILE

Brighten a senior's day and have some fun. Hang out with a Minneapolis or Suburban Hennepin County elder on an ongoing basis and do things you both enjoy. Small groups and families welcome; youth must be age 12 or older and supervised by an adult.

Please contact Jeanne the HOME Program, Volunteer Coordinator at scsvolunteer@seniorcommunity.org or call 952-767-7894 for more information about unpaid volunteer options.

The HOME Program telephone number for elders seeking a Friendly Visitor or other services in Hennepin County is 952-746-4046.

Senior Community Services is a nonprofit organization with five programs serving seniors age 60+ and caregivers statewide. For more information please visit www.seniorcommunity.org or call 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.



From Your Editor

(with a nod to Will Shakespeare)

Now is the winter of our discontent [and 40° below wind chill certainly generates discontent] made glorious February by a superabundance of entertainments, learning and study opportunities and ritual celebrations. No longer do we have to regret the passing of the New Year of the Trees or crouch at home waiting for the sun to rise at a civilized hour. We can don boots, scarfs, hats and gloves and venture forth to take advantage of what St. Paul and Minneapolis are offering this month.

See you all around the Twin Cities.

ALL MONTH – TOILETRIES DRIVE CONTINUES!

The Tikkun Olam Committee, working with Jewish Family and Children's Service (JFCS), is collecting toiletries to pass on to families in need. Please bring hotel/airline and full size unopened products to services all month. There will be a collection box at the door. Dave Kopperl will collect and deliver them to JFCS.



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
Sandra Levine, Treasurer and Finance Co-Chair
Helen Romanishan, Secretary
Celia Gershenson, Member At-Large
Larry Gravitz, Member At-Large
Jeremy Fisher, President Emeritus
Sharon Stiefel, Rabbi
Dana Fox, Congregational Administrator
Committee Chairs: Ken Granle, Tikkun Olam
Isaac Kaufman, Membership;
Barbara Nordstrom-Loeb, Ritual
Dana Fox, Finance Co-Chair
Patty Diamond, Youth Programs

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.

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