

# Mount Zion Hebrew Congregation

## Still Pioneering...

### 1993-Present Re-“Jew-venation”



Rabbi Martin (Misha) Zinkow (above) on the bima on Friday night when the children come forward to say Motzi before everyone exits the service for the oneg Shabbat.  
Photograph by Paul Najlis; from the archives of Mt. Zion Temple.



Rabbi Elka Abrahamson (above) with Bat Mitzvah student in front of the Burning Bush Torah holder, designed by Georgette Sosin. Rabbis Abrahamson and Zinkow instituted a custom of having lunch with the b'nai mitzvah students as a start to the B'nai Mitzvah weekend.  
Photograph by Paul Najlis; from the archives of Mt. Zion Temple.



Rabbi Adam Stock Spilker (left) and Cantor Rachel Stock Spilker with their children Eiden and Mirit on the occasion of Eiden's consecration. Parents of the consecration students design mantles for the miniature Torah scrolls presented to the students at consecration under our chuppah. As Assistant Rabbi, Rabbi Spilker took on the roles of leading the Youth Activities and Adult education programs. He was elected as Senior Rabbi in 2001. Cantor Spilker is the Temple's first invested cantor and she has immeasurably strengthened and broadened our music program and the quality of the b'nai mitzvah training. Over 80 children participate in our choirs and the whole congregation is singing. Today our congregation finds itself in a spiritual and loving mutual relationship with all the clergy.  
Photograph courtesy of Sue Lund, Photographer.



Cantor Jennifer Blum standing in front of the closed ark. Along with her other duties, Cantor Blum conducts the junior high choir, Shir Chants. She has a wonderful rapport with her students. Photograph courtesy of Sue Lund, Photographer.



Rabbi Esther Adler-Rephan (above) blessing Jennifer Bjork at her Bat Mitzvah. Rabbi Adler-Rephan first joined Mt. Zion as interim rabbi. She brings sensitive pastoral skills, and brilliant teaching to our congregation.  
Photograph courtesy of Sue Lund, Photographer.



### Spiritual Pioneering and Synagogue 2000 Creating a Holy Community

**1993** Pulpit Search Committee of 50 works hard, and hires Rabbis B. Elka Abrahamson and Martin (Misha) Zinkow as first husband-wife team, sharing position as Senior Rabbi (1993-2000).

**1994-95** Membership: 760. Religious School: 250 students. Operating budget: \$776,000. Adult Education committee renamed MaZAL (Mount Zion Adult Learning). High Holiday services open to everyone at no charge. Increased attention to young families and children leading to recharged Parents and Tot's Committee. Hebrew School meets Wednesday (same night as "church/choir night" in St. Paul). Revision of High Holiday Prayerbook for Family Services. Edelstein Biblical Garden installed. Phase I of capital campaign begins: "Lehadlik Ner To Light the Flame." KULAM program implemented to include children with disabilities in Religious School. Seniors Unlimited begins. Rosh Chodesh Group started by Rabbi Abrahamson. St. Paul Community/Talmud Torah/Mt. Zion partnership is created to provide Hebrew education to Mount Zion students. Bulletin is produced "in house." Library is refurbished. Participatory Shabbat Morning services introduced, with guitar by Todd Seabury-Kolad. Social Action committee is renamed Tzedek Committee.

**1996-97** 140th anniversary celebration. Rosh Chodesh/Women's Spirituality group grows stronger. Mt. Zion begins two year participation in Synagogue 2000. Synagogue 2000 was a \$2.1 million national project in which 16 congregations (eight Reform, eight Conservative) collaborated to create models for synagogues as spiritual communities in the North American context. Rabbi Lawrence Hoffman and Rabbi Ron Wolfson spearhead this national project. During this two-year period, Mt. Zion Synagogue 2000 committee focuses on making congregational prayer and services more meaningful for our diverse membership. Synagogue 2000 Identity Day. "Hebrew For Everyone" policy instituted, with Hebrew studies beginning in second grade. Mount Zion invites Saint Paul churches to join in interfaith Thanksgiving worship. Service becomes an annual event with 1000 in attendance by 2003.

**1997-98** Cantor Rachel Stock Spilker hired as Mt. Zion's first invested cantor. Rabbi Adam Stock Spilker hired as Youth Programs director and Adult Education coordinator. Administrative and Rabbis offices reformed. Women's Spirituality group replaces Rosh Chodesh Group; Our Bodies Our Souls shabbaton program begins. Congregational annual camping trip begins in June with two families and expands in six years to 70 members. Religious School wing remodeled, Johnson Social Hall created. Groundbreaking ceremony May 17, 1998 for Religious School wing. 230 families raise \$2.3 million in pledges for "Lehadlik Ner To Light the Flame." William Lipschultz and J. Peter Wolf elected as first co-Presidents. Invested endowment funds: \$3.2 million. Increased enrollment in religious school necessitates two sessions of Hebrew on Wednesdays. Worship Committee renamed T'fillah Committee.

With a focus on social justice, Torah and building a holy community, the congregation is energized by another period of great creative dynamism.

### Restoring our Synagogue

The architectural firm of Bentz, Thompson, Rietow, Minneapolis led the remodeling effort of the entire building, including the sanctuary. Red duct tape which had held together the seams of the 1960's red carpeting became the symbol of the project. "Stick with us during the renovation." The renovation was made possible by the successful \$10 million "Lehadlik Ner To Light the Flame" Capital Campaign." As part of the remodeling of the sanctuary, the bima was lowered one step, the furnishings were made moveable, and the platform was curved and widened to accommodate choirs and alyahs. The former bima became the site for an elevator to make fully accessible what had been the least accessible bima in the Twin Cities. The more muted colors consistent with Mendelssohn's preferences were restored. The sanctuary was rededicated in April, 2001.

Picture courtesy of Bentz, Thompson, Rietow.



Groundbreaking ceremony for the Religious School Wing Renovation, May 17, 1998. Left to right: Rabbi B. Elka Abrahamson, Rabbi Adam Stock Spilker, Rabbi Martin (Misha) Zinkow. The Religious School renovation was a priority of Rabbis A. and Z. During their seven year tenure, Rabbis Abrahamson and Zinkow saw the completion of the capital campaign and the planning of all the renovations, the completion of the remodeling of the Religious School, Administrative and Rabbinc wing and the addition of Johnson Social Hall. The sanctuary, kitchen and social hall remodeling was completed a year later in 2001.



### Restoring our Scrolls—and our Souls



Selections from the scrapbook by Faye Kelberg of Mt. Zion's Torah Restoration Project during 2001-02 with Sofer Neil Yerman showing the information we learned about our Torah scrolls during the course of the project.

Page from the scrapbook (below) by Faye Kelberg of Mt. Zion's Torah Restoration Project with Sofer Neil Yerman, 2001-02. This page shows the ways in which our youth participated in the Torah restoration: cleaning, repairing, and stitching the parchment, and holding the scribe's hand to repair the letters. Over a third of the congregation took advantage of individual opportunities to "write" a letter with the scribe during his three residency visits with us. The whole congregation took great inspiration from participating in the Torah scroll restoration—restoring our souls.



## RABBIS

1993 - 2000 Rabbis B. Elka Abrahamson and Martin (Misha) Zinkow  
1997-present Rabbi Adam Stock Spilker, Assistant 1997-2000, Associate 2000-01, Senior 2001 to present  
2000-present Rabbi Esther Adler-Rephan, Interim 2000-03, Associate 2003-present

## CANTORS AND OTHER JEWISH PROFESSIONALS

**CANTORS AND CANTORIAL SOLOISTS**  
1953-2003 Sydney Berde, cantorial soloist  
1975-92 Holly Callen, cantorial soloist  
1987-97 Debbie Winston, cantorial soloist  
1993-97 Maggie Burton, cantorial soloist  
Todd Seabury- Kolod, song leader  
1997-present Cantor Rachel Stock Spilker, Mt. Zion's first invested cantor  
2001-present Cantor Jennifer Blum

**EDUCATORS**  
1987-2002 Kay Mogelson, Learning Center Director 1987-99, Principal, then Educator 1990-99, Special Programs Coordinator 1999-2002  
1999-present Stephanie Fink, RJE, Mount Zion's first RJE Educator.

**ADMINISTRATORS**  
1980-94 Jesse Rosten  
1994-98 Shelley Miller  
1998-1999 Leslie Martin  
1999-2003 Jane Steinman

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
2003-Present Jane Steinman

St. Paul, Minnesota

