

Mount Zion Hebrew Congregation

1961-1974

“We weren’t from here.”

Increased national social mobility brings many non-native St. Paulites to the congregation.



Rabbi Frederick Schwartz (bottom row, right) and Rabbi Jerrold Goldstein (bottom row, left) with the Confirmation Class of 1967. Debbie Friedman, renowned songwriter and singer was in this class, (fifth student from the right in the front row). Along with her classmates, she benefited from Rabbi Schwartz's strong encouragement to think for herself and express herself. Her early composition "Sing Unto God: A new approach to Sabbath Worship" was performed at Mt. Zion by her high school Highland Park Senior High Camerata.



Debbie Friedman (right) from her recording "In the Beginning."

Pioneering in Empowering our Youth and Developing Future Leaders

1963 Assistant Rabbi Jerrold Goldstein (1963-66) participates in and is arrested in Civil Rights March.

1964 Confirmation class of 50+ students (baby boomers).

1965 Olin-Sang Ruby Union Institute (OSRUJ) is important to Rabbi—many children attend Reform Jewish summer camp. First full time administrator hired. Weekly noon study introduced. Johnson Rabbinic Center built.

1968 Melamed Board Room dedicated. Downtown Rashi Group begins, continuing until this day. First Annual Liberal Arts Festival: Theodore Bikel.

1969 Debbie Friedman leaves for study in Israel with help of Temple scholarships, assisting Temple Youth Group (TYG), Junior Youth Group (JYG), and the after Religious School with her songleading. She is named regional and national songleader for NoFTY and NFTY. Her letters from Israel are published in bulletin (see right).

1971 Mt. Zion Temple Sisterhood Centennial.

1972 Sanctuary is refurbished with red carpeting and brightly colored panels in Margolis Hall. "Sing Unto God: A new approach to Sabbath worship" by Debbie Friedman is sung by Highland Park Senior High Camerata at the Temple. Art Expo '72 event commemorating 25th Anniversary of Israel includes works for sale by Shalom of Safed.

1973 William Salzman stained glass window "Aaron, Jacob, Moses and Job Wrestling with God" is donated by Rae and Bernard Druck and installed in Margolis Hall.

Do you recognize these Jewish professionals?

Mt. Zion has contributed many leaders to the Reform movement.

If we have omitted anyone, please let us know!!

Rabbi W. Gunther Plaut is widely recognized for his many publications include the *Torah Commentary*, and *Haftarah Commentary*.

Alan Bennett after serving as our Temple Educator, went on to be a prime mover in founding NATE. He also started NoFTY.

Debbie Friedman, songleader, composer, singer, confirmed 1967.

Members who, while not confirmed,

call Mt. Zion "home":

Jeff Segal is currently in Rabbinic School at HUC.

Heidi Waldman is in Philadelphia at Reconstructionist Rabbinical College.

The following rabbis and cantors were confirmed at Mt. Zion: Rabbi Richard Hertz confirmed 1920s. Rabbi Herbert Rutman confirmed 1951. Rabbi Jonathan Plaut confirmed 1958. Rabbi Mark Peilen confirmed 1967. Rabbi Don Rosoff confirmed 1969. Cantor Debbie Winston confirmed 1971. Rabbi Ilene Melamed confirmed 1972. Ellie Steinman confirmed 1995 is beginning her training at HUC in the fall of 2003.

A LETTER FROM DEBBIE:

Dear Nofty, Nftty, and Mt. Zion:

It is 3:45 P.M. I have just come back from my daily shower. I was combing my hair about five minutes ago — which was when I returned from showering when all of a sudden Leslie, one of my friends, called to me. I ran outside frantically, not knowing what to expect. I looked at the sky, and there staring me right in the face was a beautiful red, blue, yellow orange and green rainbow. None like I've ever seen before! It is now 3:50 — it's gone. Had I waited to look, I would have missed the whole thing. I felt inspired to write you all because right at this moment I feel that there is more significance to what just happened than meets the eye. At the beginning of this letter, I wanted to write to you about Israel and about what I have been seeing and doing here for the last two months. If I get around to it, I will tell you. But now back to the rainbow. . . I think that it is possible to draw a parallel between the rainbow and life which in essence will explain to you my present philosophy which is that of life on the Kibbutz. Too many times we all wait for things. We plan and plan for tomorrow, and we tend to forget about TODAY or NOW. So many precious seconds pass us by and we are not content with the things we have now. Life is so short! Although I am nowhere near any fighting, I've come to realize that I must do what I feel at the moment if it makes me happy because who knows if I'll even be around ten minutes from now. So many little things happen to you everyday. Every word you speak, every person you meet, every song you sing makes for a new experience if you open your hearts. No, Israel is no paradise, by any means — but the whole country radiates with "LIFE" and "HOPE" for peace TODAY — TOMORROW and ALWAYS! There is a saying I used to throw around quite a bit — I always meant it as a joke, but it's really true. "Live each day as though it will be your last, and someday you'll be right."

Now, aside from plucking chicken feathers from dead whole chickens from our chicken coups — which is really unbelievable, I get up at 6:00 in the morning or (5:45) depending on what I've done the night before.) I work from 6:30 to 11:30 A.M. in the kitchen. I either peel potatoes, clean squash, clean cauliflower, pick apart lima beans to separate the good from the bad, clean carrots, wash pots and pans or peel squash. It allows a lot of time for thought, and believe me, I think of you all often. I miss those of you who I know that are reading this — and those of you whose faces I know, I miss also. I am looking forward to seeing you again — it makes my work go fast when I think of home. Well anyway, on with the day. I go home in the afternoon, shower and dress, sometimes I sleep for a few hours. I rest in the afternoons either by talking to people or reading or writing many letters that I owe. In the evening, I go to my Kibbutz families house — drink coffee, tell them about my day (all in Hebrew — my Hebrew is now fluent!) and we talk about Israel and the States. In the evening, I either visit people or go to the lounge to drink coffee. On Tuesday evenings we have films from the States.

Well I have only to apologize for the fact that I wander away from the subject and that I don't paraphrase. But when I write, I write what I think and feel and not necessarily according to what I have originally set out to write. I'll close by saying that the time goes by very quickly here. I don't expect that you accept all that I've written about—only that you think about it. A people cannot exist without common goals, a common feeling. We must learn to think about the present if there is to be a future. Thank you again for this opportunity. Shalom and love to you.

Yours,
Debbie

Reprint of a letter from Debbie Friedman in the Mt. Zion Temple Bulletin 1/30/70. Rabbi Schwartz was an ardent Zionist and encouraged our youth to go to Israel. Debbie was awarded a Temple Scholarship to study in Israel in 1969. After her confirmation Debbie assisted TYG (Temple Youth Group), JYG (Junior Youth Group) and the Religious School with her songleading. In 1968 she was named the regional and national songleader for NoFTY and NFTY. From the archives of Mt. Zion Temple.

Pioneering Programs

1975-1993

“Learning to open the door”—creating a welcoming community with interfaith couples and increased gender sensitivity.

Pioneering Programs that have stood the test of time

1975 *Gates of Prayer* introduced soon after it is published. Sephardic pronunciation of Hebrew adopted. Holly Callen is hired as Temple's first full-time female cantorial soloist, serves the Temple for 20 years.

1976 First congregational trip to Israel. "Viable Futures" Strategic Planning Task Force (1976-79) is established, with funding to accomplish its goals, including: hiring educator, round tables, nametags, and everyone asked to be welcoming.

1977 Rabbi Lerner performs first interfaith wedding with support of the congregation. He is ostracized by the Minnesota Rabbinical Council. Relationship with African-American community is established with Black-Jewish Dialogue, Black-Jewish Investment Group, MLK celebration at Temple with Metropolitan Male Chorus.

1978 Havurot, Tot Shabbat, and Mt. Zion's own Hebrew School begin.

1980 Part-time educator is hired. Learning Center, separate from library, is opened in the Religious School with books, materials, and curriculum. Southeast Asian immigrant family is sponsored by Temple. First congregational Break-the-Fast. Special Sabbath service greeting new Russian immigrants.

1981 Mixed Doubles group started for intermarried couples. First adult *Anshei Mitzvah* class. Sisterhood initiated program linking congregants to students of Judaism becomes Jews by Choice support group under Rabbi Kadden's leadership. Three more Southeast Asian families sponsored.

1982 125th anniversary celebration. First Z. Willard Finberg Family Education Day. Dr. Jerry Brakke is hired as organist/accompanist.

1983 Services conducted at Sholom Home and United Hospital. Rabbi Lerner travels to Soviet Union to visit Refuseniks in Moscow and Leningrad. First annual Tu Bishvat Seder. Social action includes help in homeless women's shelter and food drives for two foodshelves.

1984 Membership involvement committee started to meet Viable Futures goal of integrating members. Childcare Committee formed, establishing Friday night babysitting cooperative. Front entrance and restrooms are made handicapped accessible. Debate on providing sanctuary for Central American refugees.

1985 Purchase of *tallitot* and *kipot* for the Temple. Religious School: 250 students. Yale Johnson Memorial Rabbinic Center is completed.

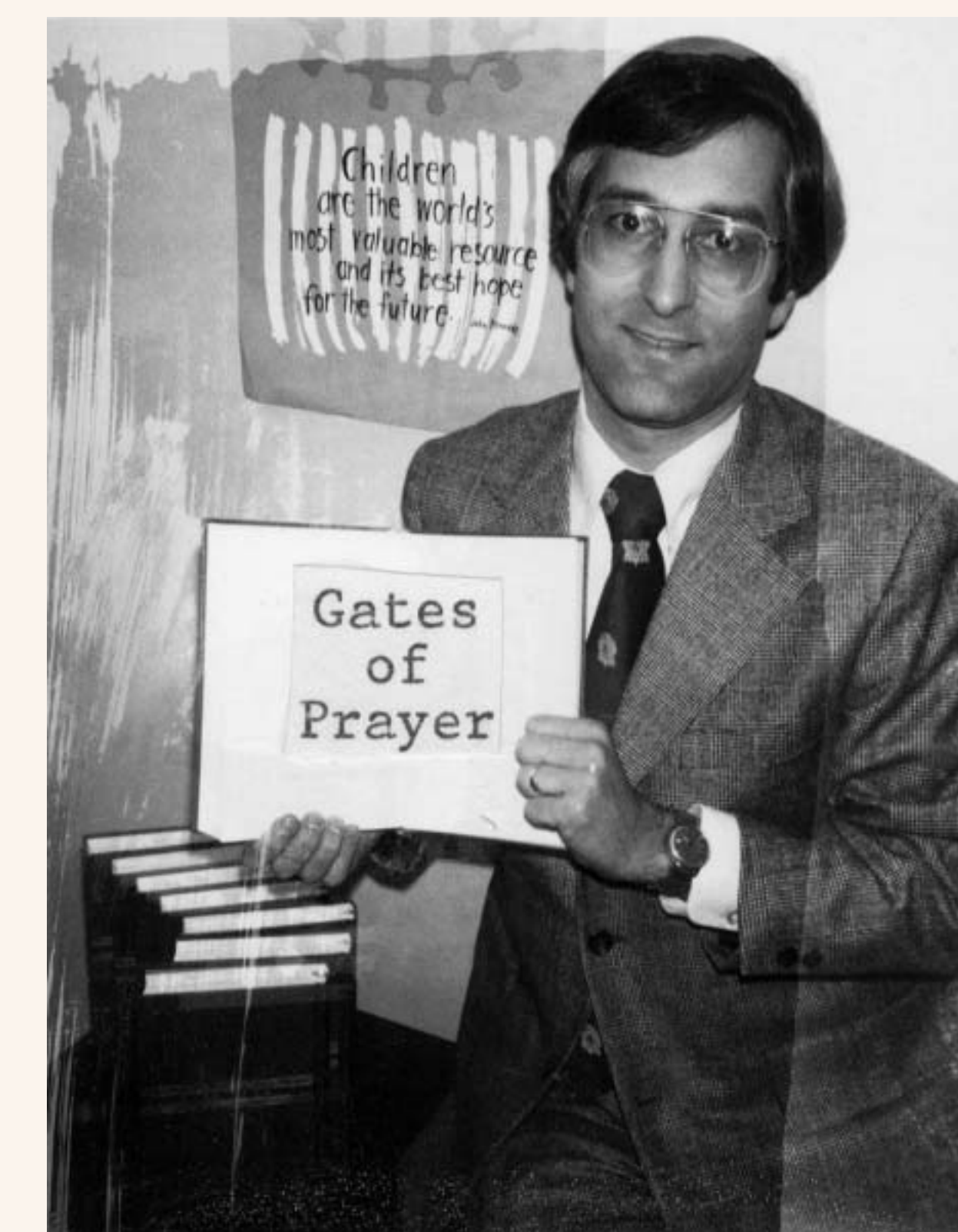
1986 Black-Jewish cooperative effort: Sign in favor of freeing Soviet Jewry and "Saying No to Apartheid." More involvement of cantorial soloist at Shabbat services.

1987 Family congregational trip to Israel. Judy Rose is first woman Temple President. Rabbi Lerner heads United Jewish Fund and Council Annual Campaign. Centennial celebration of Erich Mendelsohn. Services conducted two times a month at Sholom Home. New Torah covers presented: The Four Seasons. Mitzvah Food Shelf Program started by Sisterhood. Mt. Zion opens Hebrew School branch in Southern suburb of Eagan (program lasts several years) and Religious School changes hours to 9:30-12:15. Mexican Outreach to Marrano Jews in Xalapa, Mexico. Rabbi Offner leaves and starts a new congregation, Shir Tikvah.

1989 Rabbi Lerner leaves after 17 years to go to Montreal. Rabbi Lerner Break-the-Fast Fund is established. Regular Religious School dinners are introduced. Investment committee is started with Temple's first endowment funds from the Axelrod and Rosenthal Estates. "Futures Committee," the second strategic/long-range planning committee begins, finding that 1/4 to 1/3 of congregation is intermarried.



Mt. Zion focused on Black-Jewish relations with a Black Jewish Dialogue group, a Black-Jewish Investment Group, and a celebration of Martin Luther King's birthday that predated the state and national holidays. This picture was taken in 1986. From the archives of Mt. Zion Temple



1990 *Gender Sensitive Gates of Prayer* adopted. Bulletin is issued monthly. Computer Task Force report: ultimately there will be seven computers on site (386, 386SX, 286). Plans begin for renovation of the front lobby; Firestone Art Gallery and Administrative hallway; renovation of Lipschultz Lounge; renovation and construction of terrace and outdoor chapel dedicated to Zaikaner-Perwien. Hand of Friendship is begun at services. Congregational Involvement Committee is established. Endowment brochure is produced. Beginning discussions about giving our historical materials to the Jewish Historical Society of the Upper Midwest.

1991-92 Lipschultz Lounge is refurbished; major renovations of lobby (Pistner Lobby); front doors, windows, hall and woodwork are completed. The Connie Fox Showcase is installed. Hebrew School computer lab installed. Recycling begins at Temple. \$10 million endowment campaign begins. Friday night services are broadcast on community cable station (Channel 34) weekly. New Americans Committee is established. High Holiday Family Service Prayerbook is redrafted.

1992-93 Mt. Zion participates in the Minnesota Composer Forum Church Synagogue Residency with Randall Davidson. First annual bike tour of old Jewish St. Paul. Interfaith Clergy Institute and Interreligious seder. Harris Chapel is remodeled; Board Room is refurbished. Computerization of Temple completed by July 1993. Library is computerized.



Mt. Zion Temple Sisterhood Mitzvah Food Shelf project started with a lone collection food cart in the lobby in November 1987. Since then food has been collected weekly at Religious School and monetary contributions have been collected from the membership to sustain several local foodshelves, including Neighborhood House and Hallie Q. Brown, another settlement house. From the archives of Mt. Zion Temple



Rabbi Lerner led the first Mt. Zion congregational trip to Israel in March, 1976. From the archives of Mt. Zion Temple

Rabbi Leigh D. Lerner became Senior Rabbi at Mt. Zion after serving as Assistant Rabbi. He served the congregation for 18 years (1971-89). In this picture, he stands with a sign showing the Temple's early adoption of *Gates of Prayer* shortly after its publication in 1975. Rabbi Lerner adopted gender-sensitive language in the early 1980's, long before the gender-sensitive edition was published. From the archives of Mt. Zion Temple



Suite of Torah mantles designed by Paula Pergament in 1987: The Four Seasons. Picture was taken in 2003 after the mantles were restored. From the archives of Mt. Zion Temple

RABBIS

- 1961-65 Rabbi Bernard Martin
- 1963-66 Rabbi Jerrold Goldstein, Assistant, Associate 1965-66
- 1966-74 Rabbi Frederick C. Schwartz
- 1969-71 Rabbi Jim Michaels, Assistant
- 1971-89 Rabbi Leigh D. Lerner, Assistant 1971-75, Senior 1975-89
- 1981-84 Rabbi Bruce Kadden, Assistant
- 1984-88 Rabbi Stacy Offner, Assistant 1984-87, Associate 1987-88
- 1989-93 Rabbi Leonard A. Schoolman
- 1990-93 Rabbi Cheryl Rosenstein, Assistant 1990-92, Associate 1992-93

CANTORIAL SOLOISTS AND OTHER JEWISH PROFESSIONALS

CANTORIAL SOLOISTS

- 1953-2002 Sydney Berde
- 1959-77 Carolyn Kahn
- 1975-92 Holly Callen
- 1985-87 Lloyd Robinson
- 1987-97 Debbie Kane Winston
- 1992-95 Rafi Dworsky

ACCOMPANISTS

- Agnes Lisowski, organist
- Kay Olson, organist
- 1982-present Dr. Jerry Brakke, organist

ADMINISTRATORS

- 1965-79 Myron (Mike) Shapiro
- 1979-80 David Savage
- 1980-94 Jesse Rosten

EDUCATORS

- 1967-70 Mike Fefferman, Education and Youth Activities
- 1970- ? Len Nachman, Religious School Director
- 1978 Mansoor Alyeshermerni, Educational Consultant
- 1978 Wendy Bennett, Educator, Youth Director
- 1979 Susan Gordon, Youth Director
- 1980-87 Nancy Novak, Principal
- 1987-89 Trudi Rahamim, Principal
- 1988-91 Dr. Isaac Eshel, Principal, then Educator
- 1980 Linda Finberg z"l, First Learning Center Director
- Judi Golden, Learning Center Director
- 1987-2002 Kay Mogelson, Learning Center Director 1987-99, Principal, then Educator 1990-99, Special Programs Coordinator 1999-2002

St. Paul, Minnesota