Kivvun La'Atid: Mount Zion 2040

Approved unanimously by Mount Zion's Board of Directors on June 13, 2023.

In 2021, the *Kivvun La'Atid*: Mount Zion 2040 Task Force was charged by the Board of Directors with envisioning how Mount Zion will be a vibrant, welcoming, and inspiring Jewish spiritual home in Minnesota for generations to come. We spent 2022 in study and reflection of trends in American religious and Jewish life and model practices around the country. In 2023 we then turned to creation of a vision for 2040 and a strategic plan for the next 3-5 years. Based on our learning and the input we received through congregational engagement, we drafted a strategic plan that includes a vision, mission statement, a *derech* (path), and four strategic directions to move us toward the vision. We held three congregational Future Fair/Town Halls to engage congregants in our draft and solicit feedback, held a teen forum and sent out an online survey to the whole congregation. We incorporated this input in subsequent drafts of the strategic plan. The strategic plan was unanimously approved by the Board on June 13, 2023. We then began planning its implementation.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Over the next five years we will focus additional energy and resources on four Strategic Directions.

1. **Invest in Leaders and Strengthen Management:** An organization with a small staff and ambitious plans can maximize its capacity by growing and supporting lay leadership. From a position of strength and stability, we will train a new generation of lay leaders and reconsider organizational practices. *For example:*

    a. **Volunteering and Committee Participation:** Review committee responsibilities and volunteer opportunities to ensure that our efforts best support the vision, mission, and *derech* (path) of Mount Zion. Evaluate and improve governance committees and practices, ensuring that the Board and committees have clear responsibilities and diverse, rotating memberships.
    b. **Lay Leadership Development:** Create a recruitment and training program to identify future leaders, perhaps in cadres that grow and learn together. Introduce new leaders to the history and culture of Mount Zion, examples of thriving congregational models, and organizational partnerships locally, nationally, and world-wide.
    c. **Financial Management and Board Responsibility:** Review and improve budget and finance practices and broaden financial literacy. Review Board financial oversight responsibilities and grow a new generation of financially savvy leaders. Better align dues, fundraising, development, investment, and budget strategies.

2. **Deepen Jewish Living and Learning:** Find new ways to inform individual Jewish choices and enhance meaning through education and spiritual / ritual practices. *For example:*

    a. **Teach Ritual and Practice** to learn more about various Jewish traditions and share our personal practices and insights with each other. For example, we could establish a "Year of Living Jewishly: The Calendar" at Mount Zion, during which we

focus on learning the practical "how to's" and exploring the "why's" of Shabbat, holy days, and daily blessings through classes, online and material "tool kits" (and future resource library), social media, and discussions.

b. **Strengthen and Expand our Adult Education Offerings** in partnership with local organizations (e.g., Twin Cities Mussar and Hineini) and national learning platforms (e.g., Hadar, Svara, URJ, HUC-JIR, and Hartman).
c. **Chevruta** ("one-to-one learning"): Pair and support congregants to build relationships as they meet and learn together.
d. **Spirituality:** Broaden creative worship through diverse Jewish musical traditions, embodied spiritual practices, and outdoor settings.
e. **Connecting Generations:** Expand intergenerational interaction through cultural and social justice programming, family education, mentorship programs, and engagement with holidays and traditions.
f. **Teachers:** Recruit, train, and inspire a new generation of teachers for our Religious School and Life-Long Learning.
g. **Expand Recognition of Life Events:** Increase opportunities to celebrate or mark significant moments through life.
h. **Building Renovations:** Renovate Harris Chapel and the ZaiKaner-Perwien Terrace to make more flexible indoor and outdoor spaces.

3. **Engagement and Belonging 2.0:** Many congregants already feel a strong sense of belonging and new members are joining our community. We will work to be more inclusive and will embrace the transformations that will follow. We will pursue new ways to attract young and disengaged Jews and actively engage the diversity of the Jewish people as we provide opportunities for all ages, stages, and abilities. *For example:*

    a. **Welcoming and Beyond:** Train congregants in effective welcoming practices and expand the number of volunteers who will help create a culture of belonging.
    b. **Audacious Hospitality and Inclusion:** Develop ongoing training and continually improved resources for the Board, clergy, staff, and congregation to find paths of engagement for all, with a specific focus on Jews of Color, LGBTQ+ Jews, and Jews with disabilities. In addition, increase our efforts toward engaging other groups, including but not limited to young adults, single people, interfaith families, people who are not Jewish, atheists, agnostics, and Jews not raised as Reform. Address accessibility barriers through better signage, building updates, and other practices. Communicate and sustain the innovative, decades-long work of KULAM, our religious school inclusion program.
    c. **Volunteerism:** Expand volunteerism by supporting and appreciating volunteers.
    d. **A Caring Congregation:** Reenergize the Caring Community Team infrastructure to facilitate all of us helping congregants in need. Improve our support for our elders and those who are isolated or lonely.
    e. **Families with Young Children:** Offer and publicize events and times/spaces for relationship building that are easily accessible to families with young children. Attract new households to Mount Zion from the greater Twin Cities area.
    f. **Platforms to Unleash Initiative:** Building on the success of MZ Small Groups, continue to strengthen and foster our culture and practice of congregant empowerment and experimentation.
    g. **Online:** Expand MZ Connect. Engage congregants virtually in Mount Zion's travels, asynchronous online discussion forums, active learning, online discussions and more.

4. **Repairing our World - Protect People and the Planet:** We ground ourselves in Jewish values and personal stories of *Yetziat Mitzrayim* (We were redeemed from Egypt and we know what it is like to be the stranger,); *B'tzelem Elohim* (We are all created in the image of God.); and *Tikkun Olam* (The world was created imperfectly and we partner with God to repair it.)

   Over the past decades we have taught, wrestled with, and acted upon these Jewish values in our religious school, through community partnerships, and by the Tzedek committee. We have studied Jewish texts, considered how they relate to current events, and acted with conviction as we committed to being stewards of justice and democracy.

   We occasionally have engaged the entire congregation in conversation so that we could act as a synagogue, for example, with health care, the marriage amendment, and immigration justice. We adopted Congregational Position Statements on these issues via our defined process. **Today, we are faced with two great challenges: the climate crisis and rising "othering" and hate in our society.** We want to amplify what we are already doing, and will continue to do, as our core work of *tzedek*. Then we will create Congregational Position Statements so that we can develop bolder initiatives and build stronger strategic partnerships. *For example:*

   a. **Expand and Sustain a Community of Learners** to learn more deeply about the history of antisemitism, racism, and anti-LGBTQ+ attitudes and legislation, along with reflecting on who will be most affected by the climate crisis and how these may all intersect. Share these learnings with the entire congregation.
   b. **Listen and Learn:** Bring in speakers from different perspectives who can address these topics and support communication practices to have respectful conversations in line with our *derech* (path).
   c. **Personal and Congregational Practices:** Expand our education and encourage congregants to be reflective and make effective climate resilient choices at home and at Mount Zion, and find ways to maintain and update our building and practices in line with our values. To address increased hate in our society, provide ways that we can be allies, friends, and advocates for ourselves and others in responding to increased hate and its effects. Continue to offer concrete opportunities to act including both service-related and advocacy options.
   d. **Advocate and Act:** Advocate for stronger community-wide changes to blunt the increasing threats from climate change and "othering" and support those most affected by their deleterious effects. With Congregational Position Statements, we can speak in the name of Mount Zion.
   e. **Partners:** Deepen our collaboration with local, national, and international partners and with different faiths' houses of worship.