

Hello Temple Sinai!

This past Friday night, it was exciting seeing so many new faces and returning faces joining our regulars for folk shabbat. If you tell your friends about our warm, inclusive, fun community and invite them to services, we will grow and flourish. Word of mouth is one of the best things we can all do to make our temple what we hope it will be.

This email has four parts:

- 1. This weekend's Shabbat services,**
- 2. Special upcoming services,**
- 3. Adult B'nai Mitzvah**
- 4. Report back about the Women's March**

1. SHABBAT SERVICES

Community Shabbat Dinner & Youth Led Kabbalat Shabbat Service

Friday Night: Dinner 5:30pm, Service 6:30pm

Come celebrate and encourage our 6th and 7th Graders as they lead services and show us what they've been learning and thinking. We start by sharing a Community Shabbat Meal at 5:30pm (bring a dish to share, if you can), and then our service will begin at 6:30pm. Students will lead prayers and share a D'var Torah. You'll be impressed!

Here is a song we will be doing for the first time at this service. It's a Debbie Friedman version of "Im Ein Ani Me Li" , If I am only for myself, who will be for me?, the famous saying of Rabbi Hillel Here's a recording of it, that is a bit hokey, but gives you the tune:

[Click Here to Listen](#)

Shabbat Morning Services

Saturday Morning: 9:30am

Honor Shabbat by joining us for our uplifting, calming, chanted traditional morning service that has lots of greatest hits of Jewish music we only hear on Shabbat mornings. It lasts exactly one hour.

Torah "Salon"

Saturday Morning: 10:30am – 12noon

Several people have commented that our Torah study is more like a salon during the Enlightenment, where people come together informally to discuss the philosophical issues of the day. Our Torah "Salon" is inclusive and discussion-centered, where we endeavor to understand the Torah portion of the week, and relate it to the issues of the day and the issues in our lives as modern people. Join our vibrant group of people for a bit of intellectual and spiritual reflection and exchange.

Our Torah Portion this week is [Parashat Bo, Exodus 10:1- 13:16](#) that tells the final plagues, the leaving of Egypt, and the commandment to celebrate Passover.

2. UPCOMING SPECIAL SERVICES and TIMES

Tu B'Shevat Seder

Friday Night: January 18 | 5:30pm

In Vermont, it is the depth of winter, but in Israel, the almond trees will soon have tiny buds as the land looks toward the beginning of spring. In Jewish tradition, Tu B'Shevat is the special new years for trees. Originally, this had to do with the ancient tax year, since trees were one of the ways a person's wealth was counted, but in the middle ages, mystical Jews fleeing the Spanish Inquisition transformed Tu B'Shevat into a celebration of God's gift of nature, and the divine flow of energy in nature and in us. **We will have a very special Friday night service, that combines some of our normal prayers with a Tu B'Shevat Seder, a meal**

where wine, fruits and nuts native to Israel are eaten ceremonially, and with readings that celebrate nature and the power of trees. Please join us!

WHAT TO BRING: Please, bring red wine and white wine, and a dish for the pot luck meal

A Martin Luther King Shabbat Service w/ Song of the Sea Torah Reading Saturday Morning: January 19 | 9:30am

Please come and help us celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., on a very auspicious Shabbat when we read the Song of the Sea, the song of celebration at freedom led by the Miriam and the Israelite women once they were safely out of Egypt. Instead of our usual Torah Study, we will have a Torah reading, (so please come and help make sure we have a minyan!) If you have favorite short readings from Dr. King, please email me.

Apres Ski Torah Study & Havdalah

Saturday Afternoon: January 19 | 4:00pm

We will have our usual engaged and participatory Torah study, followed by a short Havdalah service. Everyone is welcome. We will be considering the Torah portion in light of modern notions about freedom and liberation, particularly those of Dr. King and the Women's March.

3. ADULT B'NAI MITZVAH MEETING

First, I need to apologize that it has taken me so long to make this happen. My intentions were much better than my execution.

We have a group of members who have expressed interested in working toward an adult bat or bar mitzvah. We will be having an informational meeting and check-in on **Sunday, January 20 at 11:00am at Temple Sinai.**

We will talk about what we will study, check in about the range of Hebrew levels, and make a plan to move forward. If you are interested but can't come, please let the rabbi know. If you already have basic Hebrew skills, **please strongly consider signing up for Judy's Hebrew II class starting Jan 17** (more info below.)

4. REPORT BACK ON THE WOMEN'S MARCH

A group of five people connected to Sinai met with two representatives of the *Women's March Vermont*. We met for about two hours, talking from various points of view about concerns about anti-Semitism in the leadership of the march. The first thing we learned was that *Women's March Vermont* had actually put out a statement on March 13, 2018 denouncing anti-Semitism very clearly. Here is that statement:

Anti-Semitism, misogyny, homophobia, and transphobia are in no uncertain terms unacceptable and inexcusable. Silence in the face of Jewish hate is not an option. While we wish that the National response had specifically done so, Women's March Vermont emphatically denounces Louis Farrakhan's anti-Semitic and homophobic statements. We are committed to the Vermont Trans, Queer, and Jewish communities. We are working hard together to understand the complexities of the relationships that are required for intersectional social justice work, and to recognize that those boundaries are often difficult to navigate. We believe in the Women's March movement, the powerful work we have done, the action that has been inspired since January 2017, and all that we'll accomplish together in the future. We stand by the Unity Principles of Women's March and Kingian Principles of Non-Violence.

We recognize the pain and frustration and damage that has been caused. The national team is creating space and holding conversations with interfaith Jewish, Queer, Trans, and Black communities to bridge our understanding and experience. They will also be hosting a moderated conversation with the goal of better supporting each other in the future, and will also convene an interfaith working group to amend our Unity Principles to include language around religious freedom and equality. The Vermont team invites anyone who has been affected to contact us and share your thoughts and feelings about this issue.

Currently, *the Women's March Vermont* is still affiliated with the national *Women's March, Inc.*, preferring to stay in the process than ceding it. They plan a series of statewide listening meetings in the coming months, and the first one will be at *Temple Sinai*. They also had planned to make another statement, but wanted to have the meeting with us first. They have now released that statement:

Women's March Vermont is a grassroots organization led by six local women, who are each unpaid volunteers. We reiterate our unequivocal denouncement of anti-Semitism, misogyny, homophobia, and transphobia, as we did on March 13, 2018. It is the objective of Women's March Vermont to dismantle the systems of oppression that perpetuate bigotry and discrimination in all forms -- including anti-Semitism and homophobia -- and to uplift the voices of women who are too often left out.

We are an independent but affiliated chapter with Women's March Inc., who we have collectively organized with along with many sister chapters throughout the country. Women's March Vermont does not share any funding with or receive any funding from Women's March, Inc.

Women's March Vermont is committed to having ongoing dialogue where difficult conversations can be had, where space can be made for all of us to confront our own biases and educate ourselves regarding our different struggles, understanding that our collective liberations are inextricably linked. We understand the legitimate hurt felt by many members of the Jewish and LGBTQ community upon statements of support for Louis Farrakhan made by leadership of Women's March, Inc. For those that have felt unwelcome in this movement as a result of that we apologize: we see you, we hear you, and we welcome you. This is not a movement of one, two or three women, but rather this is a movement for all women, femmes, and allies committed to fighting systems of oppression and white supremacy and emphatically rejecting the hate rhetoric that seeks to divide us.

Most of us actively organizing within local chapters expect this bold movement embracing of all women will have its moments of messiness, clumsiness, and discord. All intersectional movements will encounter barriers that require intense discussion, patience and determination and that must be accepting of imperfection. We do not abide a call out culture that aims to tear down or alienate those willing to engage in earnest dialogue. To this extent, we will be embarking on a listening tour across the state, beginning at the Temple Sinai in South Burlington, location and time TBA. We invite anyone interested to reach out. If you'd like to suggest a location in your neck of the woods, please email us at vermont@womensmarch.com.

People of good will are coming to different conclusions as whether or not to march with the national organization in Washington. For example, The *National Organization of Women* has decided to march at the Washington March, but not to offer financial support until these issues are resolved. On the other hand, the *Zioness* movement, formed after Jewish women were asked to leave a lesbian pride march in Chicago in 2017, has announced that they will not attend the Washington March, but rather attend other nearby marches organized independently of the national *Women's March, Inc.*

The Vermont rally in Montpelier will be on January 19, at the same time as our service in honor of Martin Luther King with a Torah Reading of the Song of the Sea, so I am not able to go.

Whether or not to attend is a matter of personal reflection and conviction. Let us trust the good intentions of one another especially when we disagree. I appreciate all of you that have engaged these issues and I hope the information I shared was of service.