

Hello Temple Sinai!

Congratulations to our Kitah Vav class on leading a meaningful and participatory class service on Friday night. It was great to see so many people for dinner and the service.

Thanks to everyone who signed up for the course I'm teaching on anti-Semitism. There are only four spots left so [let Stacie know](#) if you want to sign up. If many more want to take it, I will offer it again this spring, so even if the class is full, put your name on the wait list so I can contact you.

There are FOUR IMPORTANT PROGRAMS coming up that I need to share with you.

- [SCHOLAR IN RESIDENCE, Rabbi Michael Cohen, January 31- February 1](#)
- [WORLD ZIONIST CONGRESS ELECTIONS: Vote Reform!](#)
- [AIPAC ANNUAL POLICY CONFERENCE - Youth Opportunity](#)
- [SINAI TRIP TO ISRAEL](#)

I think I will start with this Week's Service information, and share more on the others below. You may also click on each of the programs above to go directly to that part of the email.

THIS WEEK'S SHABBAT SERVICES –

- **KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICES**
Friday, 6:30 pm

Feel tired, disconnected and haggard at the end of a hard week? Coming to services are a great way to recharge, connect, and remind yourself that life is a great gift. We will sing some old favorites and some new songs (particularly by Dan Nichols who will be coming to Sinai as Artist in Residence in May), and this week, as we finish Genesis, we will reflect on the wild ups and downs in the lives of Jacob and Joseph, and how it reflects Jewish life in our own lives. Oneg to follow.

One song I'll be including is the "[Acheinu Kol Beit Yisrael](#)," which is a prayer and song for when members of our community are missing or threatened. It is a prayer for safety for the Jewish community. This song has often moved me to tears, and one of the most meaningful moments in my life has been chanting this with hundreds of others when people were missing during floods in Israel a few years ago. Here is a link to the song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pyOAXGvDAXA>

Here are links to some of the [Dan Nichols Songs](#) I'll be including this week:

[BEYOND \(Hatzi Kaddish in English\)](#)

[YIHU LERATZON/MAY THE WORDS OF MY MOUTH](#)

• SHABBAT MORNING SERVICES

Saturday, 9:30 am

A one-hour, peaceful chanted service, mostly in Hebrew, with a focus on the “greatest hits” of Shabbat Shacharit services, plus some new tunes - a great way to get to know the service and start your day. All are welcome. Here is a link to Dan Nichols’ Songs we will be incorporating:

[SHIREI ZIMRA](#)

• TORAH STUDY – *PARASHAT VAYECHI* Saturday 10:30 am

We complete the book of Genesis (Breishit) this week as we study **PARASHAT VAYECHI** that includes some revealing interactions between members of Jacob’s family, and the underlying tensions emerge even in the midst of a joyous reunion. Why do our family dynamics come out so strongly at celebrations? [Parashat VAYECHI Genesis 47:28-50:26](#) (Click for URI’s Page on this Torah Portion, with modern commentary.) Click [Parashat Vayigash at Sefaria](#) with clickable commentary. (Just click on any verse and a list of commentary options opens up on the left).

SCHOLAR IN RESIDENCE – Rabbi Michael Cohen

In anticipation of Tu B’Shvat -

SHABBAT ON JUDAISM AND THE ENVIRONMENT

January 31-February 1, 2020

Join the Temple Sinai community as we celebrate Shabbat together and reflect, study, and learn about Judaism’s teaching about the environment, and our responsibilities to it and to one another. [Schedule details forthcoming.](#)



Rabbi Michael Cohen is a long-time environmental activist who, while in high school, co-founded the first recycling center in Ewing, New Jersey in 1976. He graduated, with a B.A. in History, from the University of Vermont, where he also received the Paul Evans History Award for his honors paper on “Lenin’s Theory of Self-Determination and the Muslims of the Soviet Union.” In 1990, he graduated from the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College and became the first full-time rabbi of the Israel Congregation in Manchester Center, Vermont. Since 2000, he has divided his time between Vermont and Kibbutz Ketura, Israel. He has written extensively about the environment and the Middle East peace process in North American and Middle Eastern publications and is the author of *Einstein’s Rabbi: A Tale of Science and the Soul*. Rabbi Michael has been a visiting faculty member at Bennington’s Center for the Advancement of

Public Action since spring 2012 teaching classes on conflict resolution, as well as different aspects of Biblical studies. He also served as Director of Community Standards in the Office of Student Life from fall 2013-fall 2015.

WORLD ZIONIST CONGRESS ELECTIONS: WE NEED YOUR VOTE!

THE WORLD ZIONIST CONGRESS (WZC) IS ONE OF THE FEW REPRESENTATIVE GLOBAL DEMOCRATIC BODIES OF THE WORLD'S JEWISH PEOPLE. The Reform Movement has become one of the key parties that make up this voting body.



WORLD ZIONIST CONGRESS ELECTION

WHY VOTE?

Your vote is the only democratic opportunity you have to influence Israeli society as we continue our efforts towards equality, pluralism and tolerance.

Vote January 21 through March 11, 2020.

Learn more about why voting in this election matters on arza.org.

#VoteReformWZC



The WZC, which traces back to the first World Zionist Congresses called by Theodore Herzl, comprises 500 delegates and meets in Jerusalem every five years. *It enables delegates to exert ideological influence on both Israeli society and the global Jewish agenda, as well as allocate financial and other resources to various organizations – including the Reform Movement – in Israel.*

The 38th World Zionist Congress is scheduled to meet in Jerusalem from October 20-23, 2020; the elections will determine the size of the various delegations to the Congress and are scheduled to be held from **January 21 to March 11, 2020** (MLK Day to Purim).

PARTICIPATING IN THE WZC ELECTIONS IS THE ONLY WAY NORTH AMERICAN JEWS CAN DEMOCRATICALLY INFLUENCE ISSUES AND FUNDING IN ISRAEL.

Currently, the United States has 145 delegates in the WZC, the largest single delegation outside Israel. Thanks to a robust turnout in the 2015 elections, *the REFORM MOVEMENT (ARZA) won more delegates than any other group - 56 of the 145 delegates (39 percent)*. Because of this success, our delegates have been able to ensure that more than \$4 million a year (\$20 million over five years) is being directed to the Israeli Reform Movement, regardless of the opinions of the Israeli State Rabbinate.

A strong election turnout among North America's Reform Jews and our supporters and allies will ensure that financial resources will continue to flow to our Israeli movement – including Reform congregations and institutions. It also will allow us to fill leadership positions in some of Israel's national institutions, including the World Zionist Organization (WZO), the Jewish Agency for Israel, and Keren Kayemeth LeIsrael – Jewish National Fund (KKL-JNF).

A leadership role in KKL-JNF will enable us to ensure that decisions about government and public *spending over the Green Line, including land purchases, reflect the Reform Movement's values and positions*. Only in this way can we continue to build a democratic society in Israel that truly reflects the Jewish values we hold dear: pluralism, equality, economic justice, and peace.

We will be running an active campaign to encourage you to vote during the election, and we will have people able to help you at services. While we may not all identify the same way with the term "Zionism," I hope we can agree to support religious pluralism and protection in Israel, and for the values of the Reform movement to have more sway in some of the major institutions shaping policy there. I hope you will vote.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO VOTE?

PLEASE VOTE if you 1) are 18 or older by June 30, 2020, 2) self-identify as Jewish, 3) agree to the [Jerusalem Program](#), the mission statement of the WZO, and 4) are able to pay a \$7.50 processing fee (we fought to have that lowered and succeeded some, but to vote one must pay the fee).

The logo for the AIPAC Policy Conference 2020 is displayed on a black rectangular background. The text "AIPAC" is in large, bold, white capital letters on the left. To its right, "POLICY·2020" is written in smaller, bold, white capital letters, with a dot between "POLICY" and "2020". Below "POLICY·2020", the word "CONFERENCE" is written in the same large, bold, white capital letters as "AIPAC". At the bottom center, the text "MARCH 1-3 • WASHINGTON, D.C." is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font, flanked by two horizontal white lines.

AIPAC POLICY CONFERENCE 2020

MARCH 1-3, WASHINGTON, DC

Through a generous donor, we have funds to take a group of up to 10 young people from Temple Sinai to this year's AIPAC Policy Conference. I will be going with them together with another adult. If you have a child or close family member who is 15 years to 21 years, and

they might be interested in learning more about Israel on topics ranging from technology to treatment of minorities, hearing directly from the Congressional leaders, and getting the experience of lobbying Vermont's Congressional delegation, please encourage them to sign up by emailing Stacie at administrator@templesinaivt.org. I will be in touch about a meeting before we go, and to get information needed to buy plane tickets. ***I can't buy plane tickets without names, so please sign up as soon as possible.*** Let me know if you have questions.

AIPAC, the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee, is a non-partisan pro-Israel lobbying organization representing a strong American-Israel alliance. As such, it is not often publicly critical of Israeli government policies, but the Policy Conference features hundreds of sessions on a dizzying range of topics, and include a wide-range of opinions and approaches to the issues in Israel.

Coming to AIPAC is quite an eye-opening experience. To be at a conference with 18,000 other supporters is particularly striking when we are from Vermont. It is also a chance to meet our Congressional Representatives and have the experience of being part of the Democratic process. Finally, it is a chance to experience Washington, DC in a very active way that is memorable. So again, if you have a family member from 15-21 who would be interested, let Stacie know.

SINAI TRIP TO ISRAEL



ARZA WORLD *travel*
for REFORM JUDAISM

SERVING THE REFORM MOVEMENT IN NORTH AMERICA

I am sorry I have not made more progress on this sooner. I have been working out the itinerary in more detail, but to be honest, I need to set aside a few full days just to finalize this with the

travel office. Fortunately, January will give me this time, so I will be having a meeting with you, the congregation, in late January or early February to share all the information and details about the trip with you. Tim and I are going to Jerusalem for a short trip in mid- February, and I want to have all the feedback to sit with the agency in person while I'm there.