



Welcome to Tzedek Chicago!

This welcome kit includes a description of our mission and vision, a statement of core values and a calendar of events for 2015-2016.

It also includes information on how to join, and how to follow us online. Tzedek Chicago is mostly paper-free, so please join our Facebook group and e-mail mailing list (see “Staying in Touch” at the end of this document). Also visit our website, tzedekchicago.org

What We Do

Shabbat Eve Celebrations

When the sun goes down on Friday evenings, Shabbat invites us to experience the world “as it should be:” a taste of eternity through prayer, song, study, and a shared meal. On Shabbat we imagine all that has been divided has now come together, all that is broken has been repaired and all that is wrong has been made right.

Our Shabbat Eve Celebration features Rabbi Rosen and other invited speakers/teachers/performers for an evening of prayer, poetry, song and learning – all designed to give us a taste of a world made whole. The celebration continues with a Shabbat dinner and festive schmoozing.

“Religion for Radicals” Torah Study

The word “radical” originally comes from the Latin “*radicalis*” meaning “root” or “going to its origin.” In other words, true radicalism occurs when we dig deep into the essence of things in order to nurture the process of transformative change.

In our “Religion for Radicals” Torah Study, Rabbi Rosen and another faith leader from Chicago’s social justice community engage in a dialogue over the weekly Torah portion, highlighting the ways in which it promotes a spiritually/political radical message for our time. Our learning is followed by a delicious Shabbat lunch, where we continue to discuss and digest what we have learned together.

Holiday Celebrations

“Prayer is meaningless unless it is subversive, unless it seeks to overthrow and to ruin the pyramids of callousness, hatred, opportunism, falsehood. The liturgical movement must be a revolutionary movement, seeking to overthrow the forces that continue to destroy the promise, the hope, and the vision.” (Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel)

Every major Jewish holiday contains its own revolutionary message: on Rosh Hashanah we gather to acknowledge a Power yet greater than our own; at our Yom Kippur services we openly proclaim our complicity in the wrongs committed by our community and nation; at our Hanukkah celebrations we reclaim the ancient nonviolent message: “Not by might and not by power”; during the Passover seder we apply the lessons of the Exodus to stand in solidarity with *all* who are oppressed.

If you are looking for joyful ways to celebrate the holidays in order to reclaim the promise, the hope and the vision, we invite you to join us!

Social Justice Organizing

While we support activism by people of conscience, we understand that institutional change invariably occurs when communities organize to build movements. To this end, Tzedek Chicago will become active in the growing grassroots solidarity movement that is organizing for a just peace in Israel/Palestine. We will also participate in Chicago's rich and venerable organizing tradition by partnering with local community groups working for justice in our community. In setting our organizing priorities, we will look to our membership for their experience, expertise, skills and energy.

Children's Programming

Tzedek Chicago offers special programming for children at services and other congregational programs. For more information, please check the online calendar throughout the year at tzedekchicago.org.

We do not at the moment operate a Religious School program; however private Hebrew B'nai Mitzvah instruction can be arranged through Tzedek Chicago.

Life Cycle Ceremonies and Pastoral Care

Rabbi Rosen serves as the part-time rabbi for Tzedek Chicago and is available on a limited basis for private pastoral needs of members and for life cycle ceremonies such as baby namings and weddings.

Tzedek Chicago - Our Core Values

We value...

... a Judaism beyond borders

We celebrate with a Judaism that builds more bridges, not higher walls. Our religious services and educational programs promote a universalist Jewish identity – one that seeks a greater engagement in the world around us. Within our congregation, we view our diversity as our strength. Membership is not restricted to Jews or those who are partnered with Jews; our community welcomes all who share our values.

In our activism, we advocate for a world beyond borders and reject the view that any one people, ethnic group or nation is entitled to any part of our world more than any other. Guided by the values in Jewish tradition that bids us to care for the earth that we share with all peoples and all life, we promote personal behaviors and public policies that will ensure preservation of our planet's natural resources and its survival for future generations.

...a Judaism of solidarity

We are inspired by prophetic Judaism: our tradition's sacred imperative to take a stand against the corrupt use of power. We also understand that the Jewish historical legacy as a persecuted people bequeaths to us a responsibility to reject the ways of oppression and stand with the most vulnerable members of our society. In our educational programs, celebrations and liturgy, we emphasize the Torah's repeated teachings to stand with the oppressed and to call out the oppressor.

Through our activism and organizing efforts, we pursue partnerships with local and national organizations and coalitions that combat institutional racism and pursue justice and equity for all. We promote a Judaism rooted in anti-racist values and

understand that anti-Semitism is not separate from the systems that perpetuate prejudice and discrimination. As members of a Jewish community, we stand together with all peoples throughout the world who are targeted as “other.”

...a Judaism of nonviolence

In our education, celebration and communal observances, we honor those aspects of our tradition that promote peace and reject the pursuit of war as a solution to our conflicts. We openly disavow those aspects of our religion – and all religions – that promote violence, intolerance and xenophobia.

Our activism is based upon a vision of shared security for the world; we support the practices of nonviolence, civil resistance, diplomacy and human engagement. Through our advocacy, we take a stand against militarism and colonialism, particularly when it is waged in our name as Jews and Americans.

We oppose all forms of communal, family and interpersonal violence and support organizations working to strengthen community health, and peaceful, supportive coexistence. In all aspects of our communal life, we expect our members to treat each other with respect, engagement, and openness to the differences among us.

... a Judaism of spiritual freedom

We promote spiritual exploration and encourage our members’ diverse beliefs. Some of our members adhere to more traditional views of the divine while others view God as a human expression of our highest, most transcendent aspirations. Others do not define themselves as religious, but identify with the humanist and cultural aspects of Jewish tradition.

In our learning and liturgy, we honor the inherent integrity of all faith traditions and reject all forms of religious exceptionalism. We actively partner with other faith

communities in ways that celebrate our shared values and common humanity. In our activism, we actively work for religious freedom in our country and throughout the world.

...a Judaism of equity

In accordance with Torah's imperative that there should be no needy among us, we work in solidarity with those who assert that poverty has no place in a civilized and moral society – and that all people have the right to safe food and water, safe living spaces, health care and education.

We are committed to transparent and egalitarian governance and decision-making in our congregational life. We value the contributions of all members equally, regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, wealth or social standing.

...a Judaism beyond nationalism

While we appreciate the important role of the land of Israel in Jewish tradition, liturgy and identity, we do not celebrate the fusing of Judaism with political nationalism. We are non-Zionist, openly acknowledging that the creation of an ethnic Jewish nation state in historic Palestine resulted in an injustice against its indigenous people – an injustice that continues to this day.

We reject any ideology that insists upon exclusive Jewish entitlement to the land, recognizing that it has historically been considered sacred by many faiths and home to a variety of peoples, ethnicities and cultures. In our advocacy and activism, we oppose Israel's ongoing oppression of the Palestinian people and seek a future that includes full civil and human rights for all who live in the land - Jews and non-Jews alike.

Calendar

Please consult our online calendar for updates as the year progresses: (<http://tzedekchicago.org/calendar/>)

September 2015

Monday, September 14: Rosh Hashanah Service

Tuesday, September 15: Tashlich

Tuesday, September 22: Erev Yom Kippur Service

Wednesday, September 23: Yom Kippur Service/ Break Fast

October

Friday, October 2: Shabbat Service and Dinner

Saturday, October 24: Torah Study and Shabbat Lunch

November

Friday, November 6: Shabbat Service and Dinner

Saturday, October 21: Torah Study and Shabbat Lunch

December

Saturday, December 5: Torah Study and Shabbat Lunch

Friday, December 11: Shabbat Dinner and Hanukkah Celebration

January 2016

Saturday, January 9: Torah Study and Shabbat Lunch

Sunday, January 24: Tu B'shvat Seder

February

Friday , February 12: Shabbat Service and Dinner

Saturday, February 27: Torah Study and Shabbat Lunch

March

Friday, March 4: Shabbat Service and Dinner

Wednesday, March 23: Purim Celebration

April

Friday, April 8: Shabbat Service and Dinner

Wednesday, April 27: Passover Seder

May

Saturday, May 14: Torah Study and Shabbat Lunch

Wednesday, May 25: Evening Program

June

Friday, June 3: Shabbat Service and Dinner

Sunday, June 12: Tikkun Leyl Shavuot

Join Tzedek Chicago

Tzedek Chicago is a membership-based congregation, with a dues structure reflecting our inclusive community. Dues for the coming year (June 2015 through July 2016) are set at \$150 per adult member. There are no membership dues for children or students, but our events are free and open to all.

Please also consider making an additional donation beyond the membership fee! We are a fledgling organization and your contribution will help make Tzedek Chicago a success.

The easiest way to join is online - Please visit <http://tzedekchicago.org/join-us/>

Or, just fill out this page and return it with your check (*no credit cards!*) to:

Tzedek Chicago
P.O. Box 7046
Evanston, IL 60204

How many adults (age 21+) are joining? _____

Compute your total: \$150 x _____ = _____

Additional donation: \$_____

Please list the names of all adult members who are joining, with their e-mail addresses:

Your mailing address:

Phone number: _____

Stay in touch

You won't be receiving much (if any) postal mail from Tzedek Chicago! We plan to communicate with members through email and Facebook - the best way to stay in touch is to sign up for our e-mail newsletter and our Facebook group, if you are a Facebook user.

- Sign up for the **email newsletter** using this link: <http://bit.ly/1e4aGss>
-
- Join the Tzedek Chicago **Facebook group** using this link: <http://on.fb.me/1QQLd7F>
-
- We are maintaining a **private database** of our members. Please use this link (<http://bit.ly/1GILLhG>) to access an online form that will let you input contact and other key information for each joining adult. This will help us stay in touch with you, and help us understand a bit about your needs and interests.