



Mount Zion Temple



For More Information:

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Local Muslim, Jewish and Christian Communities Come Together to Learn From Middle East Peace and Reconciliation Efforts

Two men—a Palestinian and an Israeli—are coming to the Twin Cities this March to share their stories of pain and hope. Like so many in the region, both men have lost close family members to the ongoing fighting. They also have an inspiring story to tell; they belong to a group called [The Parents Circle – Families Forum](#) which is working towards peace, reconciliation, and tolerance in their troubled homeland.

From March 1-3, Wajih Tmaiza of Hebron and Roi Golan of Tel Aviv will be speaking at events at the Islamic Center of Minnesota, Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, and Mount Zion Temple. These three religious communities have collaborated on prior public dialogues in an effort to create a more nuanced, balanced, and informed understanding of the lived realities of Israelis and Palestinians. The upcoming events, called Reconciliation Not Revenge, represent a deepening of that dialogue.

“As our three congregations have worked together on these difficult issues, it has helped create new friendships and new understandings,” said Rabbi Adam Spilker of Mount Zion Temple. “We hope that people from many different faith communities will join us in this important conversation.”

The events are free and open to the public. They are:

- **Friday, March 1, 7:30 p.m., Mount Zion Temple**, 1300 Summit, St. Paul. (All are welcome to join Sabbath Services at 6:30 p.m.)
- **Sunday, March 3, 9:30 a.m., Gloria Dei Lutheran**, 700 S. Snelling, St. Paul. (All are welcome to join services at 8:45 a.m. or 10:45 a.m.)
- **Sunday, March 3, 2 p.m., Islamic Center of MN**, 1401 Gardena NE, Fridley. (All are welcome to join a 1:30 p.m. prayer service. The 2 p.m. event includes viewing the film *Two Sided Story*, which features the work of The Parents Circle, with a Q&A to follow.)

Tmaiza lost a brother and two nephews to the conflict. Golan lost his brother. Event organizers hope their presentations will humanize the conflict by presenting narratives from each community, breaking down the stereotyped impressions of those on “the other side.” They hope to show that even for those most deeply hurt by the conflict, it is possible to talk about it in a respectful, humane way. Organizers hope to create opportunities for all of us to practice respectful dialogue, and explore ways that people of faith can contribute to peace and justice for Israelis and Palestinians.

The events also are an opportunity to introduce Minnesotans to the phenomenal work of The Parents Circle. It’s a unique organization made up of more than 600 bereaved families, half Israeli and half Palestinian, all of whom have lost a close family member as a result of the prolonged conflict. Its work has shown that reconciliation between individuals and nations is possible. The Parents Circle has no stated position on the conflict’s political solution, but most of its members agree that the solution must be based on free negotiations between the leadership of both sides that ensures basic human rights, the establishment of two states for two peoples, and the signing of a peace treaty. The organization has concluded that the process of reconciliation between nations is a prerequisite to achieving a sustainable peace.

The Jay Phillips Center for Interfaith Learning and the St. Paul Interfaith Network are cosponsoring the event. Other cosponsors are: Beth Jacob Congregation; Center for Jewish Studies of the University of Minnesota; Grace Lutheran Church of Apple Valley; Hamline University; Izun/Mizan: A Film and Dialogue Series; Jewish Community Relations Council of Minnesota and the Dakotas; Macalester College; Muslim-Christian Dialogue Center at the University of St. Thomas; Religious Studies Symposium of Bethel University; and Shish Café.

This interfaith program is supported by a Congregational Interfaith Grant from the Men of Reform Judaism (MRJ), made possible by funding from the Jewish Chautauqua Society, MRJ’s interfaith education project.

An event flyer is available at: www.reconciliationnotrevenge.com

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Editors: In addition to covering the events themselves, Wajih Tmaiza and Roi Golan are available for interviews between events, starting Thursday morning, Feb. 28. To set up interviews or for other questions, contact Rabbi Adam Spilker at 651-698-3881, or aspilker@mzion.org