

Lee Weisser - March 2024



Lee with Rabbi Ayala, who is showing the Torah cover made by the women who recently celebrated their adult Bat Mitzvah.

I recently returned from a trip to Israel to vote for our Reform values at the World Zionist Council in my role as president of ARZA Canada.

I made sure to include a visit to our friends at Bavat Ayin. I participated in their Kabbalat Shabbat service, where Rabbi Ayala included Miriam's Song, which we at Temple Emanu-El had sung together with them on Zoom in recent years.

Rabbi Ayala noted that, since October 7, the congregation has been including more contemporary Israeli songs into their worship. And, with support from Temple Emanu-El, they have been able to hire musicians to play during their Kabbalat Shabbat services.



Noga and Lee

I was hosted for Shabbat dinner by Noga Maliniak, who visited Temple Emanu-El last October, soon after the massacre of October 7. I was graciously invited to

their family dinner with Noga, her husband, some of her children and grandchildren, and their grand-dog Tillie.

Noga's two sons have just returned from reserve duty, one in Gaza and one in the north. The families are now making the transition back to 'normal'. And her daughter-in-law recently ran for councillor in the town of Rosh HaAyin, in spite of the pressures of being the only parent at home for four months during the war. Although she didn't win, her thoughts are so inspiring:

"My favourite flower has always been a sunflower. This is a flower that simply radiates joy and optimism. And this is exactly my mood today!

I gained so much, and here are some points why you must fight and get into politics!

Because talking about values is not enough. It must be translated into representation, budgets and decisions in the field.

Because it's so much more satisfying to create solutions and promote them.

Because when we women choose to enter this arena, we give courage to others, and in fact create the equality we demand."

Our Israeli friends are so inspiring to me! If they can continue to find joy in the midst of war, surely, we can too...

Look for my upcoming ARZA Canada newsletter to see the results of fighting for our Reform values at the World Zionist Council.

And be sure to attend Shabbat morning services on Saturday March 16, where I will deliver a D'var Israel on my recent trip.

Lee Weisser